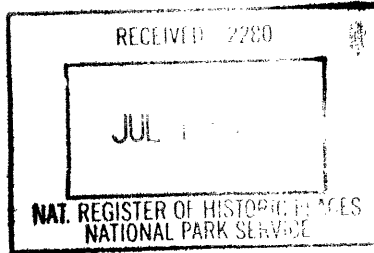


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Spencer Carriage House and Stable  
other names/site number Fraternity House Nightclub

2. Location

street & number 2123 Twining Court, N.W. not for publication N/A  
city or town Washington vicinity X  
state District of Columbia code DC zip code 20036 county N/A code N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
[Signature] 7/18/90  
Signature of certifying official Date  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register (See continuation sheet). Patrick Andrews 8/29/90  
 determined eligible for National Register (See continuation sheet).  
 determined not eligible for the National Register  
 removed from the National Register  
 other (explain):

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private  
 public-local  
 public-State  
 public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)  
 district  
 site  
 structure  
 object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property N/A

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions

Cat: Domestic Sub: secondary structure

Current Functions

Cat: Commerce/Trade Sub: restaurant/bar

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURY REVIVAL

Materials

foundation \_\_\_\_\_  
roof SLATE  
walls BRICK  
other \_\_\_\_\_

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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**8. Statement of Significance**

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1905

Significant Dates \_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person \_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder John McGregor, Master Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on continuation sheets.)

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

1 18 322420 4308500 3 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Stephen Callcott / Architectural Historian  
organization D.C. Historic Preservation Division date May 1996  
street & number 614 H Street, NW, Room 305 telephone (202) 727-7360  
city or town Washington state D.C. zip code 20001

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Eleanor M. Benson  
street & number 1500 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. Apt #7 telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20005

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013 -7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024 -0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 1 **Spencer Carriage House and Stable**  
Name of property  
**Washington, D.C.**  
County and State

The Spencer Carriage House and Stable is located at 2123 Twining Court, N.W. on lots 807 & 808 within Square 68, bounded by O and P Streets and 21st and 22nd Streets, N.W. The building is sited behind the 2100 block of P Street and is accessible through a public alley (Twining Court).

The Spencer Carriage House and Stable was constructed in 1905 to serve as a carriage house, stable and servants' quarters for the residence of railroad executive Samuel Spencer. The building is a free-standing, two-story brick structure measuring 35' wide by 110' long. The building is set upon a raised brick foundation delineated by a brick water table and capped by a shallow hipped slate roof, topped by two picturesque cupolas. The building has regularly spaced window and door openings on the four elevations. Although vernacular in design, the two-story brick structure is imposing in size and scale, and displays handsome proportions and detailing. While designed and executed as a single unit, the building is separated by a fireproof party wall. The eastern portion of the building functioned as the stable, with feed storage on the second floor; the western portion served as the carriage house, with servants' rooms on the second floor. These divisions are no longer evident on the interior, as it has been heavily altered since its conversion to a nightclub/bar. As no plans of the building have been located, the precise layout of the interior remains unclear.

The south wall, facing Twining Court, served as the primary elevation and carriage entrance to the building. The carriage entrance, located toward the west end of this elevation, is flanked by two double-hung sash windows on the west and a row of seven (originally eight) narrow windows to the east. The paired windows west of the entrance corresponded with the carriage room. The narrow windows, located approximately five feet above grade, opened directly into the individual horse stalls. One of the openings has been infilled with brick and a fire door added below. The carriage entrance has a large rectangular opening with double, beaded-board wood doors. The second floor has a row of seven symmetrically placed openings, six of which have double-hung six-over-six windows with shutters. The other opening, located in the second bay from the east end of the building, has a larger opening with a block and tackle above for hoisting hay into the building. The door no longer remains, and the opening has been infilled with a single pane of glass.

The north elevation also faces an alley and the rears of the buildings oriented toward P Street. The first floor has two pedestrian doors flanking a single double hung window. One of these doors probably opened to a

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 2 **Spencer Carriage House and Stable**  
Name of property  
**Washington, D.C.**  
County and State

---

stair, allowing the servants access to the second floor living spaces without going through the carriage house. The other door probably opened directly into the carriage house and stable. The second floor has a row of seven double-hung windows which roughly correspond with those on the south elevation.

The west elevation has three double-hung windows on the first floor. The second floor has two windows flanking a decorative recessed brick panel in the center bay.

The east elevation is obscured by a single-story concrete block addition, a fire stair, exhaust fans, generators and garbage dumpsters. While the first floor is completely obscured, the second floor appears to have had three irregularly-spaced windows.

The building is covered by a hipped roof with two picturesque, but utilitarian, cupolas. These cupolas, which provided important circulation for the building, have louvered sides and are capped with attenuated spires.

While the building has suffered minor exterior alterations and extensive interior alterations, its original function as a carriage house is quite evident, both in its overall form and its details. The carriage door, hay door opening, stall windows, and block and tackle are all intact features.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 1 **Spencer Carriage House and Stable**  
Name of property  
**Washington, D.C.**  
County and State

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The Spencer Carriage House and Stable was constructed in 1905 for Samuel Spencer by Washington builder John McGregor. Spencer earned his fortune in railroads, and served as president of the Southern Railroad Company. In 1903, he purchased a house at 2012 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. from the family of the original owner, Joseph Beale. Spencer then purchased the unimproved alley lot in Twining Court, located one and one-half blocks from his new mansion, and hired master builder John McGregor to design and construct the carriage house and stable. The permit for the building was issued on June 5, 1905. The estimated cost of construction was \$11,000. When completed, the stable was connected to the house by telephone, allowing the Spencer family to call a driver when needed.

Spencer's untimely death in 1906 prevented him from seeing the completion of the building. The house and carriage house were inherited by his son, Henry Benning Spencer, who oversaw the building's completion. The Spencer family's groomsmen/chauffeur and his family, and their butler and his wife occupied the apartments on the second floor. For a time during the 1910s, the building was used to house both horses and automobiles, but by 1919, the building was used exclusively for car storage and servicing. Records obtained on the nearby Codman Carriage House indicate that when Ms. Codman sought to have her carriage stable converted to a automobile garage in 1919, she was required to obtain the permission of 3/4 of the property owners within a 200 foot radius of her property. While it is likely that the Spencers were required to obtain the same approval, no such records have been found for the Spencer carriage house conversion. The house at 2012 Massachusetts Avenue served as the Spencer's home until the death of Henry Benning Spencer in 1956. It was sold by his son, Samuel Spencer, to the Business and Professional Women's Foundation. The following year, on November 27, 1957, Samuel Spencer sold the stable building. Today, it houses a nightclub and bar.

**Samuel Spencer**

Samuel Spencer, originally from Georgia, came to Washington in 1894 as the first president of the newly formed Southern Railway. He attended the Georgia Military Institute at Marietta and later graduated at the top of his classes from the University of Georgia (1867) and the University of Virginia (1869) with a degree in civil engineering. Between military school and his college career, Spencer served in the "Nelson Rangers" of the Confederate Army during the Civil War.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 2 Spencer Carriage House and Stable  
Name of property  
Washington, D.C.  
County and State

Between 1870-1894, Spencer worked for the Savannah and Memphis Railroad Company, and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. At the B & O, he rose through the executive ranks to become president in 1887. In 1894, he became president of the newly-formed Southern Railway after it was organized to take over the properties of the old Richmond Terminal and East Tennessee, Virginia & Georgia system. Under his leadership, the Southern Railway system expanded from 4,391 miles of track to 7,515. At the time of his death in 1906, the company employed 40,000 people. Spencer also sat on the Board of Directors for several other railroads and private companies, including the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad Company; the Standard Trust Company of New York; the Hanover Bank of New York; and the Western Union Telegraph Company.

Spencer was killed in a railroad accident in November 1906. After his death, employees of the Southern Railroad approached the executive offices of the company with the suggestions to build a "suitable and enduring memorial" to the late president. A bronze statue of Spencer was commissioned from Daniel Chester French, which was unveiled on May 21, 1910 at Terminal Station in Atlanta, Georgia -- a station built according to Spencer's plan.

After the unveiling of the statue, a book commemorating the ceremony was published which included a biography of Spencer and the speeches of appreciation given by the Governor of Georgia and the Mayor of Atlanta. According to In Memoriam Samuel Spencer, Spencer was a man to be remembered for his accomplishments in the railroad business, and for his integrity and honesty. He was also respected for his public speaking, especially concerning the railroads and their relationship with the public.

As the president of the Southern Railroad, Samuel Spencer came to be one of Washington's most prominent residents. His family continues to reside in Washington, D.C. and remains active in the city's civic and social organizations. His grandson, Samuel Spencer, was President of the District's Board of Commissioners in the mid-1950s.

**John McGregor**

John McGregor was born in Scotland in April 1847. After receiving his education, he worked in the carpentry trade in Glasgow until setting sail for the United States in 1869. Having first settled in Hartford, Connecticut, McGregor moved to Washington in 1871. In Washington, McGregor worked for ten years as a



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 3 Spencer Carriage House and Stable  
Name of property  
Washington, D.C.  
County and State

carpenter at the Botanical Garden. During this time, he became one of an elite group of builders who joined together in 1879 to form the Master Builders Association. Members of the association were recognized for their proficiency in all types of construction as well as their superior knowledge of design and its execution.

In 1881, two years after becoming a Master Builder, McGregor opened his own general building and contracting business. He located the business at 729 12th Street, N.W., where it remained until 1897. At that time, McGregor moved to 518 12th Street, N.W., where it remained until his death in 1911.

As a Master Builder, McGregor specialized in the construction of detached mansions commissioned by wealthy Washingtonians. In addition to constructing residential buildings, McGregor is also recognized for the construction of several commercial and religious structures, including the Hecht Company Department Store at 517 7th Street, N.W. and the First Baptist Church at 16th & O Streets, N.W. His first commissions, after beginning his own firm, came from architect Bruce Gray, a New York architect who formed a partnership with local architect Harvey L. Page in 1879. McGregor's early accomplishments won him more work and quickly established him as a successful builder. From the late 1880s until his death in 1911, McGregor worked with Washington's most prominent architects to design some of the city's finest buildings that continue to line Massachusetts Avenue and 16th Street. McGregor's repeated association with the noted architects and architectural firms, such as Hornblower and Marshall, George Oakley Totten, Bruce Gray, and James G. Hill, indicate that his work as a builder was well-respected and admired within the architectural community.

McGregor's successful work, along with his association with the city's most prominent architects, earned him the position as a truly privileged "Master Builder" working only for the most elite Washington, D.C. clients. Rarely, if ever, did McGregor construct a building that wasn't commissioned by an individual with either a local or national reputation. McGregor is particularly well-known for his construction of several residences for nationally recognized figures, including Senator Matthew S. Quay, Chief Justice E.D. White, and Senator Stephen B. Elkins. McGregor's association with Washington's wealthy undoubtedly won him the commission of constructing Samuel Spencer's stable. While not a large commission for McGregor, it does indicate that his reputation was so well established at this time that he was being sought not in collaboration with an architect, but alone as a design-builder.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 4 Spencer Carriage House and Stable  
Name of property  
Washington, D.C.  
County and State

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McGregor died suddenly in March 1911 at the age of 63. Speculation offered in his obituary states that his death was partially caused by a broken heart for his invalid daughter who had died ten days earlier.

**Carriage Houses and Stables in Washington**

Owning a horse and carriage in the late 19th and early 20th century city was an expensive proposition that was both beyond the financial means and simply unnecessary for most urban dwellers. Maintaining a private horse and carriage required not only a good deal of expensive space for storage, but also a staff to continually feed, shod, groom, exercise and medicate the animals, as well as to make sure that the stable was kept warm and dry. Transportation for the majority of late 19th century urbanites consisted of walking and taking the streetcar. Commercial livery stables were available, both for boarding privately-owned horses for a fee, or more commonly, to lease out a horse and carriage when needed. A few of these commercial livery stables remain and are listed individually or as part of historic districts on the National Register, including: the Tally-Ho Stables in Blagden Alley, N.W.; the Capitol Hill Squash Club Building (historic name unknown) on D Street, S.E.; and the Proctor Alley Livery Stable at 1211-R 13th Street, N.W. The largest horse-related facilities constructed during the era were for municipal, commercial and industrial uses that provided animals for the horse-drawn streetcar system, construction, trash and coal hauling, and the city's fire brigades. These facilities have not been adequately documented or studied in the District of Columbia.

It was only the wealthiest Washingtonians who built private carriage houses and stables, often for multiple horses and to house different types of carriages. While often smaller than commercial livery stables and municipal stables, private stables were often more architecturally ambitious, reflecting the wealth of their owners, and the architecture of the residences to which they were associated. Almost all of the mansions constructed between the Civil War and World War I in the fashionable northwest neighborhoods (from Lafayette Square north and west to Sheridan Circle) had private stables constructed in close proximity. Only two of these private stables have been individually listed on the National Register: the Van Ness Stables at 18th & C Streets, N.W. and the Walsh Stables at 1511-R 22nd Street, N.W. While several others are located in the Dupont Circle and Massachusetts Avenue Historic Districts, most have since been demolished or heavily altered.

Being necessary support buildings that also carried social status, the private stable was treated as an important building type and given careful design attention. Catalogues catering to the horse and carriage

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 5 **Spencer Carriage House and Stable**  
Name of property  
**Washington, D.C.**  
County and State

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industry sold stable and carriage fittings, while architectural books and magazines from the period provided recommendations for the owners and builders of the building type. These recommendations, which were often presented as design standards, vary from journal to journal, but include many of the same basic aspects of stable planning. Frequently discussed features include siting, architectural style, building plan, building materials, light and ventilation. Journals discussed such aspects of design in terms of health and safety for the animals, as well as efficiency and economy of operation for their owners.

While the Spencer carriage house does not employ an imposing architectural style, such as is seen in the French Renaissance Revival styled Codman Carriage House and Stable located in the same block, it does have the characteristics of a well designed utilitarian structure. The building has good proportions, regularly spaced openings, well-organized elevations, and handsome brick detailing -- segmental arched windows, an inset panel on the west elevation, and a projecting belt course and string course -- all of which help tie the large building's design together. The cupolas, which performed the necessary function of providing air circulation, give a decorative flourish to the building's roofline. Many of the aspects of good carriage house design, as is discussed in the period's literature on the subject, are also found in the Spencer carriage house. These include the use of smooth, washable surfaces, such as concrete and painted brick (rather than wood) on the interior; the placement of the servant's quarters above the carriage house rather than the stable for the health and comfort of the servants; the storage of the feed directly over the stables, both for insulation and ease of distribution to the stalls below; the use of corresponding windows and doors to promote cross ventilation; and the use of cupolas to provide additional ventilation.

What is most impressive about the Spencer Carriage House and Stable is its sheer size, which, as a private stable, rivals some of the known commercial livery stables in Washington. The building could house at least eight horses, as judged from the number of exterior stall windows, and would have stored several different types of carriages. In much the same way that an affluent family might own several cars today, the wealthy at the turn of the century would have owned several types and sizes of carriages for various occasions. Riding in Rock Creek Park, in the countryside, to the city's Civil War forts, and around town was a favorite recreational past time which provided the well-off an opportunity to socialize and show off their horses, carriages, and dress.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 6 **Spencer Carriage House and Stable**  
Name of property  
**Washington, D.C.**  
County and State

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The location of the building several blocks from the main house is a feature which appears only with later carriage buildings, after the introduction of telephone technology made it no less convenient for this type of support building to be located away from the residence. When the Spencer carriage house was constructed, the area around this block contained a number of necessary support facilities for the fashionable Massachusetts Avenue, Dupont and Kalorama neighborhoods. Nearby Newport Place was lined with small houses intended for servants, there were several private stables along the alleys of Squares 67 and 68, and a horse-riding school was located at the entrance to Rock Creek Park, between 22nd and 23rd Streets.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 1 Spencer Carriage House and Stable  
Name of property  
Washington, D.C.  
County and State

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 2 Spencer Carriage House and Stable  
Name of property  
Washington, D.C.  
County and State

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 3 Spencer Carriage House and Stable  
Name of property  
Washington, D.C.  
County and State

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 4 Spencer Carriage House and Stable  
Name of property  
Washington, D.C.  
County and State

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**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 10 Page 1 **Spencer Carriage House and Stable**  
Name of property  
**Washington, D.C.**  
County and State

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Verbal Boundary Description:

The building is located at the rear of 2120 P Street, N.W., mid-block on Twining Court, between O and P Streets. The property is located with Square 68, on lots 807 and 808.