

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

2 1994

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Harris & Ewing Photographic Studio
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1311-1313 F Street, N.W. not for publication N/A
city or town Washington vicinity X
state District of Columbia code DC county N/A code N/A
zip code 20004

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide X locally. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Robert L. Mallett _____
Signature of certifying official Date 10/27/94

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

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4. National Park Service Certification

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I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
(See continuation sheet).
- determined eligible for the
National Register
(See continuation sheet).
- determined not eligible for the
National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

Patricia Andrews

12/16/92

Signature of Keeper

Date
of Action

=====

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

1

1

Noncontributing

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

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6. Function or Use

=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: COMMERCE Sub: specialty store

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: COMMERCE Sub: specialty store

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

20th CENTURY REVIVAL/Italian Renaissance

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

roof METAL

walls STONE/Limestone

METAL/Bronze panels

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
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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 (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
COMMERCE
COMMUNICATIONS

Period of Significance 1924

Significant Dates 1924

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation _____

=====
Architect/Builder Sonnemann & Justement
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Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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9. Major Bibliographical References
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(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: _____

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property less than one acre

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>18</u>	<u>323880</u>	<u>4307170</u>	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
	<u>See continuation sheet.</u>					

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 DC-SHPO date July 19, 1994
street & number 614 H Street, N.W. Suite 305 telephone (202) 727-7360
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20004

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Additional Documentation
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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 Mr. Douglas Jemal, President, Douglas Development

street & number 11611 Old Georgetown Road

telephone _____

city or town Rockville

state MD

zip code 20852

=====
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.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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OMB No. 1024-0018
RECEIVED 413
 2 1994
 INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
 Harris & Ewing Photographic Studio
 Name of property
 Washington, DC
 County and State

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The Harris & Ewing Studio at 1311-1313 F Street, N.W. is a four-story, two-bay commercial row building. The building measures 30.4 feet wide, fronting F Street, and 113.7 feet deep. Constructed of concrete and brick, the limestone facade in the Italian Renaissance Revival style exemplifies the spare ornamentation and simplified silhouette favored during the 1920s for commercial construction.

The facade is organized as a picturesque veneer of limestone applied over a curtain wall of glass. The windows are treated in the straightforward manner of modern construction, with large expanses of glass divided only by thin framing members and simple flat spandrel panels. The limestone veneer is also smooth and flat, with decoration limited to the storefront and two large top floor windows.

The first floor no longer retains its original storefront. Originally, the facade contained a double recessed entryway, one in each of the building's two bays. Each entry was centered within a storefront window which contained a marble base, and metal frame windows. The flooring was terrazzo. A metal canopy extended the width of the building atop the storefront. Transom windows were located in each opening overtop the canopy. The first floor still retains a limestone cornice with small modillions. Just below the cornice "Harris & Ewing" remains inscribed in the stone; on either side of this inscription was a bas relief panel with a floral motif which no longer remains.

The existing storefront is flush with the facade, and contains a single storefront which spans the width of the building, and is capped by a curved metal canopy. A double door is located in the center of the storefront. A single door to the upper floors is located at the west side of the facade.

The upper floors retain their 1924 appearance. The second and third floors each have two large picture window openings, divided into a single large pane in the center flanked by smaller side panes. The window frames are bronze. In each of the two bays, the second and third floor windows are separated by a bronze panel.

The fourth floor windows are smaller than those on the lower two floors, but are also organized into a center pane flanked by thinner panes. Each of these windows is capped by a transom of corresponding panes. The two fourth floor windows have a window surround of quoined stone and are capped by stone lintels supported by decorative stone brackets. Each lintel bears a shield with a triple cross insignia. The most prominent feature of the front facade is a projecting bracketed stone balcony, reminiscent of the early Italian Renaissance, which runs

¹ The original storefront of the Harris & Ewing Studio is evident in a 1932 photograph taken by Theodor Horydczak of the adjacent Brownley Building, located at 1309 F Street, N.W. Photography Collection of Theodor Horydczak, Photographer, Prints and Photographs Collection, Library of Congress.

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the width of the facade below the fourth floor windows. The balcony has an ornamental metal rail. A cornice of smooth horizontal blocks caps the roofline.

The rear facade, and a projecting ell wing, are distinguished by large plate glass windows on the north and east elevations on the upper three floors. All openings on the first floor have been bricked in. The windows on the second and third floors are fixed-in-place aluminum frame, and are not original. The windows on the fourth floor are original; each bronze frame window has a large fixed center pane and is flanked by casements. The same continuous decorative balcony as on the street facade is used on the fourth floor windows. Framing and some hardware from an original canopy system remain on the upper floor window.

The lower three floors of the interior have been remodeled, but the fourth floor appears to be original. Finishes are dignified but unremarkable, with marble and terrazzo floors, wood paneling, and metalwork in the same modernized classical style as the facade. There is a large cove-ceilinged reception room opening off the elevator, several dressing rooms, and two photographic studios at the rear. The studios are large, lofty spaces lit by expanses of glass, about fifteen feet square in the north-facing studio, and fifteen by thirty feet in the east facing studio. There is a third, small studio in a smaller, similar room on the roof.

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The Harris & Ewing Studio at 1311-1313 F Street, N.W. is significant both for its place in the history of photography in Washington, D.C. and for it being a valuable work in the Italian Renaissance Revival style. The building's appearance is the result of a major remodelling in 1924 by the local architectural firm of Alexander Sonnemann and Louis Justement for the photographic studios of Harris & Ewing, Washington's most noted portrait photographer in the first half of the twentieth century and creator of the city's first news photo service. The building represents an important component of Washington's commercial and architectural heritage.

HARRIS AND EWING

The Harris & Ewing firm was founded by George W. Harris and Martha Ewing in Washington, D.C. in 1905. While always keeping the original name, Ewing sold her interest to Harris and left the business about ten years later. Harris continued to run the firm until 1955.

George W. Harris was born in Wales in 1872 and emigrated to this country as a boy. He grew up in Pittsburgh, where he showed an early interest in photography. At the age of 17 he covered the Johnstown Flood of 1889 which helped to establish him as a news photographer. After working in several different parts of the country, most notably for the Hearst News Service in San Fransisco between 1900-1903, Harris covered President Theodore Roosevelt on an extensive train trip. The president personally urged him to start a photographic news service in Washington because it was so difficult at that time for out-of-town newspapers to get timely photographs of notable people and events in the Nation's Capital.

Harris saw the potential for a photographic news service at a time when newspapers were just beginning to use photographs. In his first year in Washington, he signed up forty newspapers for his service, with Martha Ewing serving as a business manager. The studio went on to become the largest photographic studio in Washington and Harris' photographs became widely used by the press throughout the country and the world. His was the only major news photoservice owned and operated wholly in Washington. The business was so successful that Harris went on the open branches of the service in New York and London. In 1939, when Harris celebrated his fiftieth year in photography, he had one hundred employees and a file of over five million photographs. By the time Mr. Harris sold the photonews service business in 1945, it was the largest photographic enterprise in the country, photographing 10,000 people annually. He continued to run the portrait business until 1955.

Harris had a gift for creating a rapport with his sitters and he quickly established himself as the photographer for both official and unofficial Washington. His reputation was such that foreign dignitaries visiting Washington often stopped by 1311-1313 F Street to have their portraits taken by him. He and his studio photographed most of Washington's prominent figures from the presidential administrations of Theodore Roosevelt to Dwight Eisenhower. Among Harris's most famous photographs was a candid series of William Howard Taft called

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"The Evolution of a Smile." Taft had just finished sitting for a formal portrait when he answered the telephone and learned from President Roosevelt that Taft had been nominated as the Republican candidate for President. Harris captured his reaction on film at a time when candid pictures were almost unknown.

Harris and Ewing's association with the building at 1311-13 F Street predates its reconstruction for the business in 1924. Harris and Ewing had started their business in rented quarters in the two-story, two-bay Victorian building which previously occupied the site at 1311-1313 F Street. Around 1920, Harris bought the building and in 1924 he had it rebuilt as a four story limestone clad building by the firm of architecture firm of Sonnemann and Justement. Upon the completion of its remodelling, President Calvin Coolidge took part in the opening ceremonies as the first sitter.² The building subsequently served as the headquarters for the Harris and Ewing photographic studio until the mid-1950s. Mr. Harris was obviously proud of the urbane and up-to-date image that his new building portrayed; an elevation of the building was used in advertisements and on the company stationary for many years.

While Mr. Harris sold his interest in the news photoservice business in 1945, he continued to operate the portrait division at 1311-1313 F Street until 1955. At that time he opened up a smaller enterprise at 1304 G Street. George Harris died in 1964 at the age of 92. Upon his retirement, he donated his historical photograph files, an estimated 700,000 negatives, to the Library of Congress.

The Harris & Ewing reputation rests on both Harris' elegant and finely finished portraits and the breadth of the firm's documentation of historical, political and social events throughout the period of two world wars. His photo news service came to be used by hundreds of newspapers across the globe. At a time when popular demand for printed news created an unprecedented supply of newspapers, Harris recognized the need for a photo news service which could bring the events of Washington, D.C. to the world.

1311-1313 F STREET

Permit research reveals that prior to 1904, 1311-1313 F Street was two separate buildings, both of which were built prior to 1885. Throughout the late 19th century, the two buildings underwent numerous changes in ownership and storefront appearance. Eugene A. Ridgeway is listed as the owner of both buildings in 1889. In 1893, the new owner of 1311 F Street, Thomas J. Fisher, received a permit to put in a store front and show window on a brick commercial building. In 1899,

² This event, and the others referred to in the application, were captured by Harris in photographs which are located in the Library of Congress. See: "Photography Collection of George W. Harris, Photographer," Prints and Photographs Collection, Library of Congress.

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R.H. Henderson had the first floor facade of 1313, a three story commercial building, remodeled by C.H. Butler. The Cahill Company occupied 1311 by 1900 when Frank Andrews had the show window remodeled by C.A. Langley. Andrews merged the two buildings in 1904 when he contracted with George S. Cooper, a prominent local architect, to remove the partition wall. Both buildings were extended to the rear of the lots; 1313 in 1911 by George S. Cooper, and 1311 in 1924 by S.J. Prescott.

The present appearance of 1311-1313 F Street is the result of a remodelling by the Washington architecture firm of Alexander Sonnemann and Louis Justement for the Harris and Ewing photographic studio. The building's substantial remodelling, which presented a new united facade for the buildings was undertaken in 1924, four years after Harris purchased it. The new facade exhibits Italian Renaissance Revival details which reflected the prevailing taste for architectural classicism in the 1920s. The building's design, both on the front and rear facades, also reflects its purpose as a photographic studio in its use of large windows which served to provide the necessary natural light for photography. The photography studios were located in the rear of the building on the upper three floors. The large rear windows which faced north and east provided the best natural light for photography. A canopy system on the upper floor windows, a portion of which remains, was important for regulating the amount of light entering the studios.

While many of the buildings at the western end of F Street were first constructed in the 1880s, permit research on 1311-1313 F Street and other buildings reveals a steady progression of remodelling and substantial reinvestment during the 1920s and 1930s as each shop vied to present the most modern and appealing image to its discriminating clientele. Many of the restrained and elegantly remodelled facades found in the block are the designs of the city's most notable architects -- A.B. Mullett, Jules Henri de Sibour, Appleton P. Clark, Arthur B. Heaton, Holabird and Root, Porter and Lockie, and Sonnemann and Justement. The resulting designs, often of light colored limestone and with restrained classical detailing evoked a more refined and urbane image than that presented by the aging brown brick Victorian buildings at the older east end of F Street.

SONNEMANN AND JUSTEMENT

The firm of Sonnemann and Justement was a five year (1919-1924) collaboration of two prominent local architects, each of whom had long and distinguished careers in architecture in Washington, D.C.

Alexander H. Sonnemann (1872-1956), the senior partner in the firm, received his architectural training from his father, Karl Sonnemann, a German architect and engineer who emigrated to Washington in 1858 to join the firm of Smithmeyer and Pelz. Karl Sonnemann worked on the construction of the dome of the United States Capitol Building, and later assisted in the design of the main building of the Library of Congress.

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In his sixty year career, Alexander Sonneman designed over forty apartment buildings, and many commercial buildings, rowhouses, and private residences. Among his best known apartment buildings are the Georgian Revival style Kew Gardens at 2700 Q Street, N.W., and the Meridian Mansions (now the Envoy) at 2400 16th Street, N.W. which were once among the city's most sought after apartments. Sonneman also served as the supervising architect for the construction of the north tower of the Kennedy-Warren apartment building. Both Meridian Mansions and the Kennedy-Warren are designated landmarks in the District of Columbia.

Sonnemann's extensive practice included the design of houses in all sections of the Washington area. James M. Goode, in Best Addresses, states that, "Many of the best-designed rowhouses in Mount Pleasant came from [Sonneman's] drawing board." When in partnership with Louis Justement, the firm won an architectural award from the Washington Board of Trade for a group of houses on Ogden Street, N.W. He often worked for developer Edgar Kennedy. It was this association that landed him the commission for the Kennedy-Warren, as well as commissions to design the Kenwood Golf and Country Club, and many of the houses in the Kenwood subdivision in Bethesda Maryland.

Louis Justement (1891-1968), a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, was both an architect and a noted city planner. Among his best known buildings in Washington are the U.S. Court House, the Howard University Law School, and Sibley Hospital. Later in his career, Justement was considered an expert on large-scaled public and private housing projects. The Falkland Housing Project and Fort Dupont Dwellings were two of the many that he designed. Through his work on housing, Justement became increasingly interested in the problems of urban decay. In 1946, he published New Cities for Old, a modernist treatise in which he advocated a broad scale approach to city planning and urged for major reconstruction of American cities.

Justement's greatest impact on the city was in the Southwest quadrant, where he was given the opportunity to put some of his ideas on city planning into practice. Justement worked with Cloethiel Woodard Smith on the original proposals for the redevelopment of Southwest Washington, the largest urban renewal project in the country for middle-class housing. At the time, the plan was widely praised and considered a model for the country.

Justement is typical of many architects of his generation. While his training and early work reflect the influence of classicism and traditional architecture, his later work illustrates the radically anti-historical approach to architecture and urban design of Modernism. Justement remains an important architect for both phases of his career.

While each of the individual architects were prolific, the known body of work produced by the partnership is relatively small. Nor is it clear why the partnership between Alexander Sonneman and Louis Justement lasted only five years. While the official partnership was short, it is possible that the two architects

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worked in collaboration for a period that exceeded this. This would explain why attributions of several buildings generally attributed to Sonnemann when he was no longer in partnership with Justement, such as Meridian Mansions, are also occasionally attributed to Justement as well.

Though the work of Sonnemann and Justement is not particularly well documented, and may not be of unusual importance, the design for the Harris & Ewing Studio nonetheless exemplifies the 1920s ideal of integrating modern forms and materials with a veneer of historical allusion. With its generous accommodation of light in the street facade, and expanse of north-facing studio windows, the Harris & Ewing Studio, like the Matthew Brady Studio on Pennsylvania Avenue, stands as an unusual example of the customization of the standard small commercial row building for specialized use.

³ "Louis Justement Dies; Washington Architect," Evening Star, 26 July 1968.

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#1370, 12/22/04; #8832, 4/22/24; #2944, 9/23/24.

D.C. City Directories: 1914, 1915, 1920, 1925, 1930, 1935, 1940, 1943, 1948,
1954, 1960, 1965, 1970, 1973.

D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites Landmark Applications:
"Downtown Historic District Application Form," files of the D.C. Historic
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Tax Assessment Books: 1917-1918, 1921-1922, 1923-1924, 1925-1926.

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

"Man Who Tied Ties for Six Presidents Celebrates 26th Year of Business Here,"
Washington Daily News, 17 Feb 1931.

"D.C. Man Has Photographed World News for 50 Years," Evening Star, 17 Feb 1939.

"Harris Celebrates Today 50th Year as Photographer," Washington Post, 17 Feb 1939.

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17 Feb 1947.

"Presidential Studio Still Awaiting Ike," Washington Post, 17 Feb 1955.

"A.H. Sonnemann, D.C. Architect, Dies." Evening Star, 27 April 1956.

"Sonnemann, Architect, Dies Here at 84," Washington Post, 27 April 1956.

"Martha Newcome Dies; 'Ewing' of Harris-Ewing," Evening Star, 25 Oct 1959.

"George Harris Dies; Filmed Celebrities," Evening Star, 19 July 1964.

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"Louis Justement Dies; Washington Architect," Evening Star, 26 July 1968.

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American Architects Directory, New York: RR Bowker Co., 1955, 1962.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property is located at 1311-1313 F Street, N.W., Square 253, Lot 804, in Washington, D.C. The site is in mid-block on F Street, on the north side of the street.