



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

1. Name of Property

historic name Babcock-Macomb House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 3415 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. not for publication N/A
city or town Washington vicinity N/A
state District of Columbia code DC county N/A code N/A
zip code 20008

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 X statewide _____ locally. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Robert L. Mallett 12/12/94
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property X 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).
- determined eligible for the
National Register
(See continuation sheet).
- determined not eligible for the
National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

Patrick Andrew 2/10/95

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	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> 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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Single Dwelling

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: GOVERNMENT Sub: Diplomatic Building

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

20th CENTURY REVIVALS
Italian Renaissance Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation LIMESTONE
roof TERRA COTTA
walls BRICK

other LIMESTONE: trim, panels

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

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 (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1912-1917

Significant Dates 1912
1917

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Arthur B. Heaton

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

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	320740	4310260	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. SHPO date November 21, 1994
street & number 614 H Street, N.W., Suite 305 telephone 202-727-7360
city or town Washington state DC 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 Republic of Cape Verde
street & number 3415 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. telephone _____
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20008

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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The Babcock-Macomb house is a two-story tan brick rectangular block capped with a hipped red tile roof with wide overhanging eaves. The building is oriented to the southwest facing Massachusetts Avenue. A slightly recessed enclosed one-story porch is connected to the east side of the house, and a two-story rectilinear ell runs perpendicular to the main block in the rear. A one-story arched loggia runs along the east side of the rear ell, culminating in a one-and-one-half story arched porte-cochere. The front facade is symmetrical, with a strong horizontal emphasis. The building is an excellent example of the Italian Renaissance Revival style.

The house is clad in variegated shades of tan brick laid in a Flemish diagonal bond. Additional courses of brick are laid with all vertical or all horizontal stretchers creating a banding effect to accentuate three slightly projecting pavilions on the front facade. The central portico is trimmed with limestone columns, pilasters, entablature and cornice on the first floor. The window sills and lintels are also limestone. The roof is clad in red rounded terra cotta tile.

The central two-story pavilion on the front facade protrudes slightly and is flanked by a narrower pavilion on each side, defined by brick banding. The first floor level of the central pavilion contains a projecting tripartite limestone entrance portico, with two ionic columns marking the central door and an ionic pilaster at each end. Behind the portico is an open recessed porch, with three openings into the house corresponding to the openings in the portico. The central front door is wood, with fifteen lights (3 x 5), flanked on each side by pairs of wood twelve-light (2 x 6) french doors. The portico is capped by an entablature and cornice which projects out slightly farther in the center bay. Above the portico are three pairs of eight-light (2 x 4) wood casement windows with wrought iron balconies. The center window is slightly wider and has a curved balcony.

The side pavilions on the front facade have one window on each floor. The openings on the first floor each have a pair of twelve-light (2 x 6) wood casements. Each opening on the second floor has a pair of eight-light (2 x 4) casement windows.

The side porch was originally open with ionic columns, corner piers, and a classical balustrade. Building permit research indicates that it was enclosed in 1917, with pairs of twelve-light casement windows like those on the first floor front facade. The porch has two bays on the front and rear facades, and four bays on the side. The second bay on the rear facade has a french door. The window openings on the porch are accentuated by bands of decorative brickwork as they are on the front facade of the main house. The balustrade, as indicated on the construction drawings, no longer remains, and was replaced with a simple wrought

¹ While no photographs of the open porch have been located, its design is documented in the original 1912 construction drawings.

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iron rail.² The northwest side facade has two pairs of casement windows on the first floor; and the rear facade has a large twelve-over-twelve round-arched window at the landing of the stair. The remainder of the windows on the side and rear facades are six-over-six wood sash.

The roof has a generous open overhang, supported by decorative wood brackets. Below the brackets is a wide cornice, which according to the architect's original drawings, is of stucco. The cornice has decorative rosettes between the brackets. Below this is a wide band of an abstracted wavy decoration resembling elongated S-shaped flutes; the band is punctuated with undecorated shields near each corner. Below the cornice is a continuous band of vertical brick.

The house has prominent chimneys on each side, which are flush with the side wall, but protrude through the overhanging roof. Each chimney has a decorative checker-patterned brick arch flanked by pairs of eight-light casement windows. Above each window is a decorative concave parapet, with brick and stone trim. Each chimney becomes narrower as it rises out of the dormer, and is terminated by a limestone cornice and three chimney pots.

On the rear of the house is a brick loggia which connects the house to the porte-cochere.³ The loggia consists of five arches springing from impost blocks with small blue and white rondels with putti in the spandrels. Brickwork defines the columns, capitols, impost blocks and voussoirs of the arches. The arch of the porte-cochere springs from a brick column with a capital and impost block at the same height as those in the loggia. The loggia has a shed roof clad in red tile; the porte-cochere has a hipped roof with red tile.

The driveway, which enters behind the house on 34th Place, continues through the porte-cochere to a detached one-car garage. The garage is dominated by a red tile hipped roof and a large arched central door with six lights. The arch is flanked by two six-light casement windows (2 x 3). The northwest side facade has three six-over-one sash windows; the southeast side facade has a paneled door with a transom.

² There is no documentation that the balustrade was ever constructed, however, it is likely that it was removed in the 1917 remodeling of the porch.

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The Babcock-Macomb house at 3415 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. represents an early Italian Renaissance Revival design by prominent Washington architect Arthur B. Heaton. Constructed in 1912, the carefully designed and sited property conveys the classical elegance of an early twentieth-century suburban residence. As one of the earliest houses along Massachusetts Avenue in the expanding suburbs of northwest Washington, the Babcock-Macomb house established a precedent of design excellence for the avenue north of Rock Creek Park, and the Massachusetts Avenue Heights neighborhood.

The Babcocks and the Macombs

The house at 3415 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. was commissioned by Mrs. Kate Woodman Babcock (1859-1919), the widow of Joseph Weeks Babcock (1850-1909), a wealthy lumberman and prominent Republican representative from Wisconsin's third congressional district. Prior to his congressional service, Mr. Babcock had been twice elected to the Wisconsin State Assembly, and in the early 1890s enjoyed a successful career in the state's lumber industry. When he arrived in Washington in 1893, he was assigned to the House Committee on the District of Columbia. The following year, Babcock became Chairman of the Committee and gained a significant amount of local prominence in that position because of the critical role the Committee played in the development and expansion of the Federal city.⁴ In the process, he also made a small fortune from the inside information he was privy to relative to the development of the city. Constance McLaughlin Green states that "Joseph Babcock, Chairman of the House District Committee for some years after 1895, cleared \$400,000 in Washington real estate and utility stocks simply by using [his] advance knowledge of which sections of the city were to get funds for improvements."⁵ Babcock would certainly have been aware of the intended plans for the subdivision that would become Massachusetts Avenue Heights before his death in April 1909.⁶ However, it was not until 1911 that Mrs. Babcock purchased property in the new subdivision.

⁴ See "Joseph Weeks Babcock," American Biographical Dictionary, District of Columbia, 1908-09. Washington, DC: The Potomac Press, 1908, p. 16; Biographical Dictionary of the United State Congress, 1774-1988, Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1989, p. 558.

⁵ Constance McLaughlin Green, Washington, A History of the Capital, 1800-1950, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962, p. 180.

⁶ Babcock would have been aware that his successors on the District Committee were considering a bill (61st Congress, H.R. 15448) specifically related to the proposed subdivision which would authorize departures from the newly established system of highways plan for the District, necessitated by the unusual topography of the Massachusetts Avenue Heights area.

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In the fall of 1911, shortly after lots were made available, Mrs. Babcock became one of the first purchasers in the newly-platted Massachusetts Avenue Heights subdivision. From a contract negotiated by Thos. J. Fisher & Co. dated September 27, 1911, it is known that Mrs. Babcock purchased Lots 21 and 22 (later known as Lot 34) in Square 1939 for \$14,529.⁷ A deed for the parcel was registered on October 18th, as was a mortgage for the full amount, minus a \$1,000 deposit. The building permit was issued⁹ on June 25, 1912 and the house was probably completed in the following year. However, it appears from City Directories that Mrs. Babcock never occupied the house, choosing to remain in apartments in town throughout the period of her ownership.¹⁰ It is unclear whether the house was intended merely as a speculative investment, or whether once completed, Mrs. Babcock merely changed her mind about living on her own on what was then the outskirts of town. Mrs. Babcock sold the property to Mr. Tucker Sands, a Vice President and Cashier of the National Metropolitan Bank on September 26, 1917. Sands, who lived at 2319 Tracy Place, N.W., also never occupied the house, and rented it for the next two years.¹¹ It was during Sands' ownership that the side porch was enclosed in 1917.

The house was sold again on September 30, 1919 to U.S. Army Colonel Augustus Canfield Macomb, whose family occupied the house from 1919 until 1982. The sons of Colonel Macomb and his wife Ella Chelle McKelden, Lt. Col. John Gordon Macomb, U.S. Army, Philip Livingston Macomb, and Lt. Comm. Alexander Macomb, U.S. Navy, were members of a distinguished family with ties to Washington dating to the first quarter of the 19th century. The Macomb family could count among its forbearers

⁷ "Contract of Sale," Massachusetts Avenue Heights, Kate Woodman Babcock, September 27, 1911. This and other financial records relative to Massachusetts Avenue Heights are part of the Plumb Family Papers located at the Lyon County Historical Museum, Emporia, Kansas.

⁸ See DC Land Records 3473:91 and DC Land Records 3473:95.

⁹ D.C. Building Permit #6177, June 25, 1912. A precise completion date for the house is not available.

¹⁰ City Directories for 1912 indicate Mrs. Babcock resided at #1 B Street, N.W., the address she shared with her husband. There is no listing for 1913, but beginning in 1914 and for several years thereafter, she is listed as a resident of the Kenesaw Apartments, 3060 16th Street, N.W.

¹¹ Sands rented the property to Glenn Stewart, a clerk at the Department of State in 1917; the following year, it was rented to a C.W. Hull, who was connected to the United States Army. No doubt Mrs. Babcock and Mr. Sands were both dabbling in real estate speculation, which was so common in Washington in the late 19th and early 20th century, allowing the house to appreciate in value as the neighborhood developed.

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a number of men who played significant roles in the military and political life of the nation. Included among those were Commodore John Rodgers, U.S. Navy, active in the War of 1812; General Alexander Macomb, the Commanding General of the Army from 1828-1841; and Philip Livingston, Signer of the Declaration of Independence.¹²

Col. Augustus Macomb resided in the house until his death in 1933; his widow continued to live there until 1938. In August 1935, their son Philip purchased Lots 23 and 24 adjacent to the family home, creating the parcel that exists today.¹³ Beginning in 1939 and until his death in 1970, the house was occupied by Alexander Macomb and his wife Edna Wilson Macomb. As a widow, Edna Macomb occupied the house until 1982 when it passed out of the family by sale to the Republic of Cape Verde.

Massachusetts Avenue Extended and Massachusetts Avenue Heights

3415 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. was the first house constructed in the newly-platted Massachusetts Avenue Heights subdivision, and one of the first along Massachusetts Avenue extended beyond Rock Creek gorge. As such, the house played a pivotal role in establishing the character of both the avenue and the new subdivision.

The extension of Massachusetts Avenue beyond Boundary Street (Florida Avenue) was dictated by the Highway Act of 1893, and development along the avenue just outside the city limits around Sheridan Circle was steady through the first decades of the twentieth century. Between 1900 and the start of the first World War, the Sheridan Circle/Kalorama neighborhood was one of the most fashionable addresses in the city, with large townhouse mansions lining the newly-laid out streets.

While a small iron bridge crossing Rock Creek was built by a consortium of northwest developers about 200 yards upstream from the present bridge at the approximate location of Normanstone Drive in 1888, it had little impact on spurring development north of Rock Creek gorge. In 1897, designs for an at-grade bridge were prepared by the Corp of Engineers on the alignment of Massachusetts Avenue; the bridge was completed in 1901.¹⁴ However, despite the construction of the bridge in 1901, the area north of Rock Creek was slow to develop, due no doubt to the abundance of building lots closer to the city and a lack of

¹² "Alexander Macomb," Whos's Who in the Nation's Capital, 1938-1939, Washington, DC: Ransdell Inc., 1938, p. 537.

¹³ While Philip probably intended to build his own house on the lot, it remains vacant today.

¹⁴ The present replacement bridge was constructed in 1940. Donald Myer, Bridges and the City of Washington, Commission of Fine Arts, 1974, pp. 65-67.

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transportation serving the area to the northwest. As Massachusetts Avenue was never served by a street car line, and the automobile remained a relatively expensive and untrustworthy transportation option in the first decade of the century, development along the extension of Massachusetts Avenue was slow to take off, and would remain largely undeveloped until the late 1910s.¹⁵

In 1909, a syndicate of investors assembled 288 acres in the area north of Rock Creek gorge.¹⁶ Approximately 70% of the land was held by two parties; American Security & Trust Co. as trustees for the heirs of the late John W. Thompson and the estate of Kansas Senator Preston B. Plumb, represented by Amos H. Plumb. By 1909, American Security & Trust Co. and Amos Plumb began to promote the area. Due to the unusual topography of the area, the investors sought and were successful in receiving an exemption from Congress¹⁷ that required new subdivisions from having to conform to the city's street grid. Once secured, the exemption enabled the developers to maintain and enhance a largely preexisting natural setting of mature trees, rolling hills and ambling creek beds as the basis for their subdivision. After streets were laid out, approximately 140 acres of buildable lots remained for public sale. In 1911, a promotional brochure was produced by Thos. J. Fisher & Co., which touted the new subdivision as the physical, architectural and social extension of Sheridan Circle, "the social center of the city."¹⁸ The brochure went on to note that Sheridan Circle is where,

Scores of successful Americans, whose individual fortunes range from ten to one hundred millions of dollars, within the last five years have built mansions along Massachusetts Avenue and around its newest and most attractive circle.¹⁹

In a further attempt to convey their conception of Massachusetts Avenue Heights as the next location for many of the city's preeminent residences, the developers state:

¹⁵ In September 1907, Washington had only 2,200 registered automobiles. "History of the Automobile in the District of Columbia," Records of the Columbia Historical Society, vol 48/49, 1946, pp. 143-153.

¹⁶ "New Residence Section To Be A City Within A Park," The Evening Star, July 29, 1911.

¹⁷ 61st Congress, H.R. 15448

¹⁸ "Massachusetts Avenue Heights," Promotional brochure published by Thos. J. Fisher, 1911.

¹⁹ Ibid.

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The panoramic view given in this booklet shows Sheridan Circle in its rare residential beauty with the Heights close by, toward which homes of equal magnificence are building. Soon the block or two of intervening space will fill with contemplated mansions for which most of its already has been bought. There the kings of wealth soon must raise²⁰ their modern palaces, and proceed along the royal avenue of their desire.

As seen in the Babcock-Macomb house, and somewhat differently from lower Massachusetts Avenue, the area developed with a more decidedly suburban character. While promoting the area as the logical extension of Sheridan Circle, the developers also actively promoted the area's verdant, picturesque setting as "perhaps the only section which will be a city within a park, or a park within a city" and likened Massachusetts Avenue Heights²¹ to Baltimore's Roland Park, a similarly prestigious suburban neighborhood.

The first lots to sell in the subdivision in 1911 were those surrounding the Babcock-Macomb house, and located on or close to the avenue. However, Baist maps indicate that many of these lots went undeveloped for a number of years. In an apparent effort to revitalize sales and construction activity, a new brochure appeared in 1917, published by John W. Thompson & Co. and titled "Massachusetts Avenue Park." The subdivision had been effectively divided into two sections, with Massachusetts Avenue Park created in the eastern area around Woodland Drive, and Massachusetts Avenue Heights centered on 34th Street. The two parts were promoted somewhat differently and took on slightly different characteristics, with the large, more extravagant villas erected on more irregularly shaped parcels within the Park, with more moderate houses constructed in the regular gridded blocks within the Heights. Building activity was strong through the end of the 1920s, and the character of each area was firmly established by the 1930s.

In spite of the divergent character of the original subdivision's two sections after 1917, the development of lots fronting Massachusetts Avenue continued largely as it was originally conceived. The precedent set by Heaton's Babcock-Macomb house and John Russell Pope's house 1912 house for Mrs. McCormick at 3000 Massachusetts Avenue established the high style that architects and residents were to repeat. Beginning around 1917 and continuing through the 1930s, most of the Massachusetts Avenue streetscape was completed. As hoped for by its developers, the avenue within the Heights²² did indeed become the social and architectural extension of Sheridan Circle. Although there are some slight variations in

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ "New Residence Section To Be A City Within A Park," The Evening Star, July 29, 1911.

²² Some of the noteworthy buildings erected on the avenue in this period include: the Williams-Szechenyi House by Clarke Waggaman, 1917; the George Judd House by Heaton, 1923; the H.A. Thrift House by Porter & Lockie, 1926; the British

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scale and siting, the Massachusetts Avenue streetscape in the Heights, of which the Babcock-Macomb house is an important early component, represents a significant collection of high style buildings that are reflections of the skill of their designers and the discriminating tastes of their residents.

Architect Arthur B. Heaton

Arthur Berthrong Heaton, FAIA, (1875-1951) was a noted architect in Washington, D.C. whose professional career spanned over fifty years. Heaton was a native Washingtonian, graduating from Central High School. As a student of architecture, he served briefly as an apprentice in the firm of Hornblower and Marshall, and later with Paul Pelz. Heaton opened his own office in 1900. He went abroad in 1903-04 to study at the Sorbonne, and to tour the great cathedrals and antiquities in England, France and Italy. Heaton remained in solitary practice until his retirement in 1949. His drawings have been donated to the Library of Congress, and form an unusually complete documentary into both this one man's design career, as well as the evolution of architecture in Washington in the first half of the twentieth century.²³

During the first decade of his practice, Heaton established himself as a well-respected member of the burgeoning architectural community in Washington. One of his first major successes was the Highland Apartment House, designed in 1901-2, reminiscent of McKim, Mead & White's design for the Villard Houses in New York.²⁴ Its design was recognized by the national architectural journals of the time; an impressive accomplishment for a 26 year old man in his second year of practice.²⁵ From 1899 to 1906, Heaton designed houses for the newly-developing streetcar suburb of Cleveland Park. In 1908, he was appointed Supervising Architect of the Washington Cathedral, for which he served until 1920. From 1907 until 1929, Heaton and his family lived in Cleveland Park in order to be close to his work at the National Cathedral. Before and throughout this period, he designed numerous residences in the neighborhood. In 1917, Heaton designed Whitby Hall, a building for the National Cathedral School for Girls, and in 1923, he was selected to design the addition to the John Eaton School (34th & Lowell Streets, N.W.), both in the Cleveland Park neighborhood.

Embassy by Edward Lutyens, 1927; the A.B. Houghton House by Frederick L. Brooke, 1932; and the Apostolic Delegation by F.V. Murphy, 1937.

²³ Heaton was a prolific architect, as indicated by the Library's collection of over 500 drawings from his 50+ year career.

²⁴ James M. Goode, Best Addresses: A Century of Washington's Distinguished Apartment Houses, pp. 47-49. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Press, 1988.

²⁵ "American Architect and Building News," Vol 91, #1619, Jan. 5, 1907.

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In his residential work, Heaton was steadfast in his adherence to the reinterpretation of historical precedents. He worked in a variety of styles -- Georgian, Colonial Revival, Shingle, Tudor, Gothic, Italian Renaissance, Spanish Mission. Increasingly after the mid-1920s, he worked almost exclusively with Colonial Georgian motifs. As is found in many of his Cleveland Park commissions, Heaton had an early taste for mixing stylistic elements to create eclectic facades, such as the "Tudor Georgian" at 3101 Highland Place (1905).

Heaton's practice resulted in scores of houses, small commercial buildings and apartment buildings. His work includes several locally and federally designated historic landmarks. He had a continuing interest in colonial architecture and made frequent trips to Colonial Williamsburg for inspiration. While considered a traditionalist by his contemporaries, this did not deter him from developing innovative design solutions for new building types where there were no available precedents to follow. Heaton was an early automobile enthusiast (he owned one of the first drivers' permits in the city), and some of his designs, including the Park and Shop shopping Center (3507-3523 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., 1930) and the Capital Garage (1320 New York Avenue, N.W., 1926; demolished), reflect his interest in the automobile, and the need it generated for new building types.

Major projects of Heaton's include the old YMCA building (17th and K Streets, N.W., 1924; demolished), the Methodist Home for the Aged (1924), the National Geographic Society Building (1156 16th Street, N.W., 1930), alterations and additions to the Corby Mansion at Chevy Chase Circle (c. 1914), the Highland Apartments (1914 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., 1902), and the Altamont Apartments (1901 Wyoming Avenue, N.W., 1915). Heaton's Washington Loan and Trust Building (17th and G Streets, N.W., 1924; demolished) received an award of architectural merit from the Washington Board of Trade in 1927. For 15 years (c. 1917-1932), Heaton did major work for the Shannon & Luchs real estate firm, including over 500 houses in the Burleith neighborhood.

Later in his career, Heaton was active in campaigns to clean up slums and improve the city, serving as the leader of the "Renovise Washington" movement during the Depression. This led to his role as a founder and president of the Washington Building Congress. Heaton served as President of the Washington Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1935, and was active in the Washington Board of Trade.

As the supervising architect of the Washington Cathedral during the time of the Babcock-Macomb house's design, Heaton obviously shared with the developers of Massachusetts Avenue Heights the desire for the area to develop as a grand residential boulevard as it approached the Cathedral grounds. His formal, classically-inspired design for the house continues in the tradition of the avenue, presenting a strongly horizontal symmetrical composition, but with an architectural form and character more evocative of a country villa than that presented by the more urban mansions around Sheridan Circle.

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Architectural Influences

The facade of the Babcock-Macomb house is a formal and restrained rendition of an Italian Renaissance country villa, a style that was extremely popular with the wealthy of the period, who saw it as an embodiment of their cultural sophistication. The style was popularized by Charles Adams Platt, the most successful country house architect of the era. In 1908, Platt designed the Villa Turicum in Lake Forest, Illinois, for Harold F. McCormick.²⁶ The house was featured prominently in the architectural press of the period. Architectural Record, for example, in an article on the building noted that "the villa and gardens of Italy have excited the admiration of the world for centuries."²⁷ So popular was this style that the frontispiece of every issue of American Architect during the 1910s featured a prominent building in the Italian Renaissance style. Architectural Record displayed a similar reverence, indicating very clearly that this was the ideal toward which serious architects should aspire.

The Babcock-Macomb house is an excellent example of the Italian Renaissance style as was being interpreted by Platt and others in this period. While the neo-Renaissance country villa Heaton designed was simpler than the Villa Turicum, it was still a very formal, correct, and imposing response to the Beaux-Arts-inspired townhouses around Sheridan Circle. As was found in Platt's designs, the Babcock-Macomb house exhibits an elegant restraint, devoid of overpowering detail or unnecessary elaborateness. Appropriately for a suburban house, Heaton employed classically designed porches, balconies, full length doors and a rear loggia to open the house up to the surrounding landscape.

The brickwork of 3415 is extremely intricate and adds an appealing tactility and contrast to the facade. At the roofline, the combination of the half-round red roof tiles, the wavy scroll of the Vitruvian frieze in limestone-colored terra cotta, and the curving brickwork immediately below all work to create an appealing sense of rhythmic movement.

The intricacy of the brickwork and broadness of the overhanging eaves add hints of the Arts-and-Crafts movement typical of this period and of Heaton's early work, and prevents the house from becoming a dry imitation of historical models. Through publications of the period, Heaton became well aware of the work of a number of Arts and Crafts enthusiasts, most specifically William Price and his colleagues, Wilson Aire and Frank Lawrence Day. Much of Heaton's early work shows an appreciation for the ideas of the Arts and Crafts movement, and application of its aesthetic.

²⁶ Keith N. Morgan, Charles A. Platt: The Artist as Architect. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985.

²⁷ "The Renaissance Villa of Italy Developed into a Complete Residential Type for Use in America: The House of Harold F. McCormick, Esq., at Lake Forest, Ill., Charles A. Platt, Architect," Architectural Record, Vol. 31, No. 3 (March 1912).

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While the 34th Place facade of the Babcock-Macomb is more informal than the front, it is nevertheless impressively detailed and picturesquely massed. As is typical of country houses, the high level of detail on all facades clearly indicates that it was intended to be viewed on all sides. The rear's most attractive feature is the arched loggia (or cloister, as it is called on the original plans), which is evocative of early Renaissance designs. The glazed terra cotta roundels depicting children with outstretched hands are replicas of ones found on the Ospedale degli Innocenti in Florence, designed by Brunelleschi in 1420.²⁸ The cloister runs from the main block of the house along the service wing to the porte-cochere at the rear. This was originally intended to be reached by a driveway from 34th Place, according to the first site plan drafted by Heaton. Apparently, 34th Place was graded too low for this, so a driveway from Massachusetts Avenue was substituted. The garage at the rear of the site echoes the design of the house, with its blind-arched facade and hipped, red-tile roof.

The Babcock-Macomb house is one of the most distinctive residential works of architect Arthur B. Heaton, and one of the very best examples of a freestanding villa in the Italian Renaissance Revival style in the District of Columbia. As the earliest house on this portion of Massachusetts Avenue, located within the Massachusetts Avenue Heights subdivision, it set the tone for subsequent development of both the avenue and the neighborhood.

²⁸ Peter Murray, Architecture of the Renaissance, pp. 9-19, New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1971.

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The Babcock-Macomb house at 3415 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. is located at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and 34th Place, on the east side of Massachusetts Avenue on lots 34, 23, and 24 of Square 1939 in northwest Washington. The property is located within an affluent suburban residential area of Washington, D.C., across the avenue from the extensive grounds of the Naval Observatory and Vice Presidential mansion.

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 94001633 Date Listed: 2/10/95

Babcock--Macomb House DC
Property Name: County: State:

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Patrick Andrews
Signature of the Keeper

2/10/95
Date of Action

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Amended Items in Nomination:

The number of contributing resources recorded in Section 5 of the form has to be amended; the form only lists 1 contributing building, while there are two buildings on the site (the main house and a contemporary garage). The form is officially amended to list 2 contributing buildings.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)