

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

**NATIONAL
REGISTER**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Pink Palace
Other names/site number Inter-American Defense Board Headquarters

2. Location

Street & Number 2600 16th Street, N.W. Not for Publication
City, town Washington Vicinity N/A
State District of Columbia Code DC County Code 001 Zip Code 20009

N/A

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. Resources w/in Prop.	
		Contr.	Noncontrib.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> Public-Local	<input type="checkbox"/> District	<u> </u>	<u>0</u> Sites
<input type="checkbox"/> Public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> Site	<u> </u>	<u>0</u> Structure
<input type="checkbox"/> Public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<u> </u>	<u>0</u> Objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> Object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing
N/A

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

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

John. [unclear]

6/18/91

Signature of certifying official
D.C. STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. 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 W. Andrews

8/5/91

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/Office

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)OTHER/Venetian Late Gothic Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation: CONCRETEwalls: BRICK (STUCCOED)STONE/Marble

roof: CERAMIC TILEother: _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.**SUMMARY DESCRIPTION**

The "Pink Palace," located at 2600 16th Street, N.W. (Square 2575, Lot 801-3; old Square 16, old Lots 1-3) is a large, boxy, smooth-faced stucco structure designed in the Venetian Late Gothic Revival style (see Figure 1). The structure, designed by architect George Oakley Totten, Jr. in 1905, was commissioned as a dwelling by Mary Foote Henderson, wife of Senator John B. Henderson. The residence was the first in a series of embassies and mansions commissioned by Mrs. Henderson in her effort to transform rural upper 16th Street, N.W. (see Figure 2) into an avenue of grand diplomatic residences based on European models, such as the Champs Elysees. Today, the street is a busy thoroughfare and the building is one of several remaining grand edifices testifying to Mrs. Henderson's efforts. The palatial structure retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Pink Palace is clearly visible from 16th Street, N.W., set on a sizeable piece of property, maintaining an imposing presence (see Figure 3). The high-rise apartment buildings that currently surround the structure were a cause of great concern to Mrs. Henderson, who lobbied hard for regulation to limit their height, in an effort to protect her

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envisioned avenue of low-scale embassies.¹ These apartment buildings were a part of the streetscape, however, by the 1920s (see Figure 4).

The "Pink Palace" is today painted a beige color.² The facade of the building, facing east to 16th Street, N.W., is set close to the street, fronted by a small lawn and short circular front drive (see Figure 5). A set of granite steps leads from the street to the drive, and a second set from the drive to the front entrance. A simple wrought-iron fence, installed in 1987 to replace an older wrought-iron fence which was lower in height, surrounds the building on its 16th and Euclid Street sides.³ One large shade tree and two smaller, coniferous trees comprise the landscaping of the front lawn. The south side of the house (facing Euclid Avenue) is not landscaped. The wrought-iron fence is anchored on the south side by brick piers flanking one of two driveways to the property. A parking lot, entered via the second driveway off 16th Street, is located directly to the north of the building. To the rear of the structure, on the west, is a large, enclosed lawn area for private functions.

The overall massing of the structure can perhaps best be defined as one tall central block, to which have been attached several smaller blocks.

¹ In an undated letter by Mrs. Henderson, presumably addressed to legislators, she makes an appeal for the passage of a bill to reduce a newly-passed zoning law permitting 85-foot-high apartment buildings along upper 16th Street, N.W. Mrs. Henderson claims that such unrestricted development "absolutely confiscates property immediately adjoining it, and it reduces values 50% of all property near it." (Henderson Family Papers, Box 8, Folder 6, Smithsonian Archives.)

² According to the Inter-American Defense Board, this beige color was the original paint color. It wasn't until later in the building's history that it was painted pink, and, at one point, blue.

³ On the original drawings, filed with D.C. Building Permit #2742, June 12, 1905, Euclid Street is named Erie Street.

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The total composition is monolithic.⁴ The main four-story block of the house (originally 40 feet wide by 70 feet deep) and what was originally a two-story portion to its west (now three stories) date to 1905. This original, small two-story section to the west (visible from Euclid Street) was raised to three stories in 1927. The two-story addition to the north (seen from 16th Street) dates to 1912. A small butler's pantry was added to the northwest corner of the original structure in 1920 and raised in 1926.⁵ The large Postmodern-style rear addition, attached to the main block by two smaller blocks on the north elevation, was designed by Frank Koppel in 1988.

The original structure is built upon a concrete foundation. It has brick walls (faced with smooth stucco) and a marble basement and trim ("beaver dam" marble, according to D.C. Building Permit # 2742, June 12, 1905). The 1988 addition is built of a synthetic material identified by the Inter-American Defense Board as Styrofoam, with a fine sand-like coating. The pitched roof of the main block of the house is covered in red Spanish tile. An attic projects above the tile roof and is topped by a galvanized iron balustrade. The flat roof of the 1988 addition is concrete. The original 40' x 70' building had four chimneys. The 1912 addition had two chimneys. Today, the structure has five chimneys.

The house's Mediterranean character is derived from Totten's adaptation of the Venetian Late Gothic style. His selection of this particular architectural idiom is unusual to the District of Columbia. The architect borrowed heavily from both the massing and the decorative

⁴ Originally, the open five-arched loggias on the second and third stories of the south (Euclid Street) elevation would have lent the structure a slightly more open air.

⁵ It is difficult to tell where this pantry is today. It is recorded on the building permit as "brick," so it may or may not be incorporated in the structure we see today. It is possible that this addition may have been demolished after 1926 (when it was raised in height), but before 1988, as the owner of the property, the Inter-American Defense Board, states that the erection of the new addition did not require any demolition.

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vocabulary of the casas (houses) of Venice's Grand Canal, constructed primarily during the 14th and 15th centuries (see Figure 6). The Canal facade of these casas was like a screen, telling little of interior room organization. The Euclid Street facade of the Pink Palace is composed of loggias--which were originally open-air--like those on the elevations fronting Venice's canals.

Like its Italian predecessors, the Pink Palace is composed of basically flat surfaces, with relief dependent upon shallow balconies, and the carving out of the surface into shadowy loggias. Also like its predecessors, the building is four stories tall, has walls of marble and stucco, is capped by a low-pitched tile roof, and is banded horizontally at floor levels by projecting moldings. The most distinctive Venetian features, however, are the ogee arches (variously called inflected arch windows). (See Figure 7). Despite the horizontal banding, the grouping and sheer number of these ogee arches at the second- and third-story levels lend the building a distinctly vertical feel (even more apparent on the narrow east elevation than on the wider south elevation).

More specifically, Totten's Venetian formula made extensive use of the arched window with inscribed trefoil tracery. He also used ogee arched colonnettes at balcony levels, and carved marble balconies, supported by floriated scroll brackets with lions' heads. The relatively simple foliation of the capitals at window levels of the Pink Palace shows more restraint than most Venetian models.

East Elevation (16th Street facade), Main Block

The east elevation of the main block of the structure houses the principal entrance to the building (see Figure 8). This facade is four stories tall, divided vertically into three bays, and horizontally into four bays (by means of a band of molding at each floor level). The corners of the block are defined by stone quoins and the typical Venetian motif of roped columns.

The nine-foot-high basement is faced with marble, with exposed square basement windows. A marble water table separates the basement from the ashlar marble block of the first floor. The front entrance consists of a

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wide wooden door flanked by decorative iron handrails and the original cast-iron lamps with circular globes. Drawings filed with D.C. Building Permit #2742 indicate that, originally, the entrance consisted of a double-leafed paneled door (see Figure 8). Over the door is a heavy stone hood, which once served as the base for a balcony above. The hood is supported by terra-cotta brackets, sculpted in heraldic fashion with lions' heads and simple floral carvings on its sides. The Venetian style twisted rope frames the door.

Typical of the Venetian Late Gothic are the flat-headed, rectangular first-story windows which are paired on either side of the door. These are double-hung, one-over-one sash and protected by vertical bars. The first floor is separated from the second by a marble beltcourse, the underside of which is a quirked cyma reversa molding richly decorated in a pattern of alternating foliage and pellets.

The second and third floors are nearly identical in their appearance and are constructed of brick faced in stucco. In the center bay of both floors is a grouping of three, terra-cotta ogee arches with trefoil tracery glazed at the second story and filled in with a solid material at the third. The ogee arches are separated by marble columns with terra-cotta capitals. In between the ogee arches are slightly raised stucco disks (which are either covering or replacing the marble disks shown on the original 1905 plans of the structure). Surrounding the entire grouping on three sides is a "Venetian cornice" (the term describes the symmetrical fretwork which resembles roping). At the second story, the balcony has been removed. At the third story, serving as a balustrade is a pointed arch colonnette with trefoil tracery.

On either side of the center bay are pairs of glazed ogee arches, which originally had balconies at the third story (the points at which these balconies were connected can be seen clearly today). The glazing on these second-story windows is double hung, one-over-one sash. On the third story, windows are single-paned.

The fourth story continues the three-bay theme, but varies in window shape. The paired and grouped windows on this floor are not as sharply pointed and are squatter in dimension. Glazing is double-hung, with some

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windows containing one-over-one sash and others leaded in the upper sash.⁶ There are also four small, square windows separating the pointed-arch windows. These windows were originally square panels with stucco borders and marble centers. These widely-framed windows are single-paned.

East Elevation, North Wing

The two-story north wing is three bays wide, flush with the surface of the main block and one-bay wide at a distance set back from the facade (see Figures 5 and 8). It originally had a balcony, the ledge of which still remains. The ledge is supported by four foliated scrolls with carved lions' heads (still extant), which were typical of the Venetian Late Gothic period (see Figure 9).⁷ There are rectangular, deeply recessed, flat-headed windows and a door at the northmost bay of this addition on the first-story level. All are covered in iron bars.

Three ogee arches are grouped together at the second story (see Figure 10). The outer two arches are deeply carved with several levels of trefoil tracery and are glazed with French casement windows. The middle ogee arch is filled at the glazing area with a rectangular orange marble panel and, at the tracery area, with a molded triangle. Above the second story is a parapet composed of colonnettes of pointed arches surrounding a recessed wall section with flat-roof. (This recessed section houses the cove cornice of the ballroom.)

⁶ Drawings filed with the 1905 building permit indicate that originally, the upper sash of all these windows were designed with vertical lozenge-shaped leaded panes.

⁷ The lions' heads of the 1912 addition were apparently an afterthought, as they are not shown on the 1912 building plans for the addition. The lions' heads on the main block of the building are, however, drawn in on the original 1905 plans for the structure.

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The South Elevation (Euclid Street Facade), Main Block

The south elevation is slightly more horizontal in feeling due to the length of the elevation. There are, however, essentially three main vertical demarcations on this elevation: the central loggia section, and a paired window section to either side (see Figure 11).

The basement level is marble-faced, with exposed windows. At the first story are 10 flat-headed rectangular or square windows. All are protected by vertical iron bars, and have been since the building's construction. One door, slightly to the west of center of the elevation, leads to this first floor, and is approached by two sets of steps, separated by a landing at the grade change.

As on the east elevation, drawings filed with the 1905 building permit indicate that the second and third story elevations were originally intended to be practically identical in appearance (see Figure 8). Both floors originally contained a five-light arched loggia. Behind the open loggia was the non-bearing wall of an interior room. Both single-leaf doors and French doors opened onto the loggias. At the third-story level, double-hung, one-over-one sash windows led into the loggia. The two end arches of the original loggia had, within the ogee arch, a pattern of double trefoil tracery with quatrefoil tracery above (see Figure 12). Roped marble columns separated the loggia from the outer bays, which had groupings of three windows to either side. These outer windows were glazed in one-over-one double-hung sash at the second story and in single-paned glass at the third story.

The drawings attached to the 1905 building permit indicate that originally--at the second story level--balconies projected at the middle ogee arches of the central-bay loggia and at the side bays of three arches which flanked the loggia. At the third-story level, the pattern was reversed--there were projecting balconies only from the end ogee arches of the loggia. At all other arched openings of the south wall on these two floors, colonetted railings flush with the building surface continued the line of the balcony railings.

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Today, at the second story, the first and third arches of the open-air loggia (from left to right) have been glazed. The second and fourth arches have been stuccoed over. At the third story, the five-light loggia has been enclosed in glass. All balconies are absent today (see Figures 11 and 12).

The fenestration pattern of the fourth floor matches that of the corresponding level of the east elevation.

South Elevation, Three-Story Block

The three-story block to the rear of the main block on the south elevation is also marble at its first story and stucco at its second and third (see Figure 11). Ogee windows continue the motif from the main block onto this appendage. Originally, the first-story level of this block contained double-leafed doors, with multiple square panel moldings. This opening was, at some point, converted to garage doors; today the garage opening has been transformed into a smaller window opening. The second story was originally framed in wood and the third story was an open porch, enclosed by a balustrade. During 1905-27, a bracketed (flat) roof was added above the porch. In 1927, the third story was completely enclosed and the second-story framing rebuilt to support a third story. (See Construction History of this text.) Today, several of the openings of this rear block have been sealed.

South Elevation, 1988 Addition

Placed behind the facade of the older portion of the three-story concrete addition is the south elevation of the 1988 addition (visible from Euclid Street). There is a small paved parking area in front of this elevation and additional parking under the main block of the addition at the ground level. Concrete piers support the upper stories.

At the raised first floor of the building are three long, rectangular flat-headed windows grouped at the center of the elevation. To the right and left side of these are recessed panels. The three windows open out onto a balcony with simple iron rail.

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At the second story are the same, fixed-pane windows, two grouped in the center, with a single one to either side. At the third story, are small, fixed-pane square windows, three grouped in the center, pairs placed to either side. At the cornice level are four, staged Styrofoam corbels.

The West Elevation

The west elevation faces the enclosed lawn area and is designed as the main facade of the addition (see Figure 13). It is divided into three bays and is vertical in orientation. The arrangement of the windows is an attempt to simulate the Venetian Late Gothic rhythm of the original 1905 structure.

Steps lead to a center entrance area, composed of a central tinted glass door and thin tinted lights to either side. All three glazed areas have pointed arches. Unadorned, freestanding columns to either side of the entrance support a projecting, enclosed area in the center bay of the second story. The edges of this addition are faced with three thin strips of glass, placed in a stepped fashion. The glass strips are longest at the corners and shortest as they approach the center of the elevation. These glass strips serve to cut away at the overall impression of a square stucco block. Surface treatment of this elevation is similar to that of the south elevation of this addition. The entire addition is capped in a simple, flat cornice.

The North Elevation

The north elevation is irregular in appearance (see Figure 14). The east end of the north elevation (the portion of the building dating from the 1912 addition) is finished in marble and stucco and is defined by a square band of molding, with a small marble panel insert within it. The edge of this block is quoined in marble. The pointed arch colonnette enclosing the top of the Piano Nobile is visible from this elevation. At the very top of the main block of the house, also visible from this elevation, is the original balustered railing which surrounds the attic area above the tile roof.

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The middle and western sections of this elevation date from the 1988 addition and are also built of Styrofoam. By the appearance of these sections, it is obvious that (at least by 1988) the north elevation was considered to be a more utilitarian side of the building. It is not ornamented or treated as the other facades are. Each section of this modular cluster composing the addition is progressively taller as the building stretches westward, with the final block being four stories tall. There are several rectangular and square fixed-pane, unadorned windows and two louvered openings cut into this wall. The carport, mentioned in the description of the south elevation, can also be accessed at ground level of the north side.

The Interior

The first floor plan contains a square entrance hall with an ornate marble mantelpiece. This entrance hall is flanked by two rooms off of it—one to either side—and contains a grand curving staircase. A long hallway stretches from the entrance hall to the rear of the building, and leads to rooms on either side. The Piano Nobile consists of large, ornate public rooms including a ballroom and a second large public room. Private rooms are found at the rear of the second floor, and on the third and fourth floors.

The interior of the house is richly decorated using a variety of classical and non-classical motifs. The staircase which leads from the front foyer to the second story is made of decorative wrought iron, with bronze figurines supporting lights at the newels of the first- and second-story landings.

Extremely ornate plasterwork abounds in both the second-story ballroom (above the north, two-story 1912 addition) and in the other large front room (original use unknown; on the second floor of the main block, east end). (See Figure 15). Both cornices are extremely elaborate, with multiple layers of molding. Both the second story east rooms contain painted ceiling frescoes. The mantels throughout the house are richly carved from white marble in a variety of styles.

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In the ballroom, a music loft with large rounded arch opens into the room at the west wall (see Figure 16). Fluted pilasters provide vertical rhythm along the walls. Interspersed is classical (as well as late-19th-century Queen Anne) detail, which makes the wall highly textural. There is a wide cove cornice with plasterwork marked by scoring and large, regularly-spaced cartouches. The plasterwork in this room was restored in 1985-86.

CONSTRUCTION HISTORY OF THE HOUSE

A Permit to Build was issued to John B. Henderson (D.C. Building Permit #2742, June 12, 1905) for the erection of a brick and marble dwelling at 2600 16th Street, at an estimated cost of \$50,000 (see Figure 17). The architecture firm was listed as Totten and Rogers; the builder, Charles A. Langley. The structure was apparently constructed within one year, as a tenant is listed in city directories by 1906.

During 1912, several permits were issued for alterations to the house. In 1912, Isaac Henderson was issued a permit (D.C. Building Permit #4161, March 22, 1912) to repair the wood columns and pilasters on the open loggia in the rear.⁸ The estimated cost of this improvement was \$75. The first significant improvement came later that same year (D.C. Building Permit #5389, May 18, 1912) when the Honorable J. B. Henderson hired architect Totten to design a new addition to the north of the present building. This addition, the second floor of which is the ornate ballroom, was estimated to cost \$28,000. (The permit reads \$28,000/\$1,000.) Two months later in July (D.C. Building Permit #458, July 7, 1912), Henderson was issued a permit to install an elevator in the house for \$2,800.

When Delia Field (Mrs. Marshall Field) became owner of the house between 1912 and 1914, she made numerous and expensive alterations, all within a period of seven years. The first of these changes occurred in 1920, when she reoriented interior elements. In a permit issued in 1920 (D.C.

⁸ Isaac is, in all likelihood, a relative of John B. Henderson, but it is also possible that the name is a misprint.

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Building Permit #6623, May 21, 1920), Mrs. Field requested a change in the location of the service staircase and the elevator. She also added a butler's pantry to what was then the northwest corner of the house. This one-story addition was raised in 1926 (D.C. Building Permit #9951, May 14, 1926).

The first of the two five-light ogee arch loggias on the south elevation was altered in 1924 by Mrs. Field (D.C. Building Permit #11233, June 21, 1924) for an estimated cost of \$1800. Five of the existing arched openings of the loggia were enclosed with window frames at this time. The wall of the room behind the loggia was removed so that the size of the room could be expanded to include the former open-air loggia area. One year later, Mrs. Field made the same set of alterations to the second of the five-light loggias, enclosing the windows with casement sash and frames and again removing the non-bearing wall behind the original open-air loggia (D.C. Building Permit #9962, May 5, 1925).

In 1927 (D.C. Building Permit #9334, May 14, 1927), Mrs. Field enclosed the third-story porch (to the rear on the south elevation) with tile. This necessitated the rebuilding of the second floor frame sun room with hollow tile and the shoring up of the first-floor garage walls.

During 1982-83, the balconies were removed from the structure because of a perceived lack of safety. The Inter-American Defense Board, the owner of the building since 1945, aims to replace the balconies, and has recast new balconies to match the originals.

INTEGRITY CLARIFICATION

Although there have been limited alterations to the property over time, there is no question that the architectural significance of the structure remains intact. The Pink Palace retains its original detail and ornament to a large extent. The glazing of the open-air loggias has had only a minimal impact on the overall appearance of the structure. While the loss of the original balconies is admittedly unfortunate, the owner's intention of replacing exact copies of these elements will succeed in reviving the more sculptural quality which characterized the original structure.

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city worthy of being the nation's capital. This building, popularly known as the Pink Palace⁹, is an excellent example of the type of grand, in-town estate envisioned and constructed by Mrs. Henderson along 16th Street.

The Pink Palace qualifies for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under the following criteria:

Criterion B:

- 1) It is the creation of Mrs. John B. Henderson who, as a stalwart proponent of creating a grand entrance to the city and an "Avenue of the Presidents", was responsible for the early development of 16th Street, N.W., as an elegant thoroughfare.
- 2) It is associated with the lives of Secretary of Commerce and Labor Oscar Straus, the first Jewish Cabinet member; and Secretary of the Treasury Franklin MacVeagh. Both Cabinet members were early residents of the house. In addition, it was the long-time residence of Mrs. Marshall Field, a patron of the arts in Washington and widow of the Chicago merchandizing magnate.
- 3) The building is a notable example of the work of George Oakley Totten, Jr., a prolific and well-known local architect, who specialized in the design of buildings in revival styles. Totten left an indelible mark on Washington, D.C. in general and, as Mrs. Henderson's principal architect, on 16th Street, N.W., specifically.

⁹ It is unknown exactly when this name first was associated with the building. The name was in place by the late 1940s when an article in the Washington Star (August 12, 1949) refers to it as such in quotations. According to the Inter-American Defense Board, paint analysis revealed that the building was originally painted beige. This analysis and recent construction on the building also revealed pink and light blue paint. It is currently painted beige.

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Criterion C:

- 1) The design of the building is an excellent and rare example of the Venetian Gothic Revival style in Washington, D.C.
- 2) The building exemplifies the turn-of-the-century interest of the nation's wealthy in revival styles of architecture executed in a grand and elegant manner.

GENERAL HISTORY

As a result of the Civil War, Washington, D.C. witnessed tremendous growth. Initially, the war effort brought thousands of people to the city. Then, after the close of the war, thousands more fleeing the war-ravaged South settled permanently in the nation's capital. During this time, the city experienced its single greatest leap in population when it grew by almost 75 percent.¹⁰ With this increase came development pressures on outlying rural areas which were open and prime for development, and pressures on the local government to improve city services. Although city amenities did improve under the administration of Governor Alexander Shepherd, the city's wealthy moved continually northward, leaving the unhealthy and unsanitary core of the town.

Despite the growth of the city during these years, development did not reach the traditional city limits at Boundary Street (now Florida Avenue) until the 1880s. At that time, former Missouri Senator John B. Henderson and his wife, Mary, purchased large parcels of open land in many parts of the district--especially north of Boundary Street. For themselves, they built a large sandstone mansion on the then-rural heights of 16th Street above the White House. Although the mansion was considered to be far out of the city, situated in the midst of scattered shanty towns, the Hendersons had a grand scheme to develop the area as a socially and architecturally refined neighborhood. Both were able to envision the

¹⁰ Constance McLaughlin Green, Washington, A History of the Capital, 1800-1950, Vol. I, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976, p. 183.

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eventual growth of the city and both had plans to reap the real estate potential of the land.

However, 16th Street developed slowly over time. It was not until after the turn of the century that the street was graded and paved above Florida Avenue. Until that time, the Hendersons had access only to dirt roads leading into town.

The Henderson's plan was to develop the street as an avenue for embassies. At the turn of the century, only a few embassies were located in buildings which were constructed specifically for embassy use. Most foreign governments either rented or purchased existing buildings, generally in close proximity to the White House.¹¹ The Hendersons, realizing the growing importance of the United States as a world power and the potential need for more embassy space in the city, made a concerted effort to attract foreign governments to 16th Street. This included constructing palatial mansions fitting, in Mrs. Henderson's eyes, the social and official needs of the diplomatic world. As part of the plan, Mrs. Henderson tried to persuade Congress to rename the street "Avenue of the Presidents". She succeeded in doing so in 1913, but the amount of public outcry caused Congress to reverse its decision one year later.

By 1910, the Hendersons had constructed several large mansions along 16th Street, including the Pink Palace. Despite their size and richness in design (or perhaps because of these factors), the Hendersons were unsuccessful at either selling or leasing the majority of the buildings to foreign governments. In order to avoid great financial loss, they resorted to leasing the buildings, in many cases, to private individuals. Such is the case with the Pink Palace.

Constructed in 1905 to the plans of Mrs. Henderson's favored architect, George Oakley Totten, Jr. (of the firm Totten & Rogers), the building is a

¹¹ The British were the first to build a structure expressly for embassy use. In 1872, they erected a building at the corner of Connecticut Avenue and N Street, N.W. Very few embassies, however, followed suit until after World War I.

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quintessential example of the Venetian Late Gothic Revival style. The smoothly stuccoed and marble-trimmed exterior walls feature ogee arches, loggias, carved lions heads and other ornamental elements characteristic of this style. Equipped with large, elaborately ornamented public rooms and smaller private rooms, the building was appropriately fitted for diplomatic functions and cost the Hendersons \$50,000.

It is unknown whether, at the time of its completion, Mrs. Henderson attempted to find a foreign government for a tenant, or whether she leased it immediately to its first private resident—who occupied the building within a year after the Permit to Build was issued (Figure 2). Secretary of Commerce and Labor Oscar Straus is listed in city directories as the resident of 2600 16th Street, N.W., from 1907 through 1909 (Figure 18). Despite her intention to have legations occupy her buildings, it is unlikely that Mrs. Henderson could have been displeased with having a Cabinet member occupy her building. It is clear, however, that she did not intend to continue renting the building to private individuals. On a 1910 promotional map of Sixteenth Street Heights (almost at the District line) printed by the real estate agent for the area, several of Mrs. Henderson's properties farther south on 16th Street are illustrated. Among them is 2600 16th Street, which is noted as a legation building (Figure 19).

With the election of William Howard Taft to the Presidency and the end of the Theodore Roosevelt Administration, there was a change in Cabinet. Secretary Straus (who left office) moved out of the Pink Palace and the newly appointed Secretary of the Treasury, Franklin MacVeagh, moved in. Secretary MacVeagh occupied the house for approximately two years between 1910 and 1911 as he was awaiting the completion of his own residence almost directly across the street (George Oakley Totten, Jr., architect).

After Secretary MacVeagh moved into his new residence, 2600 16th Street apparently stood empty for a number of years. According to D.C. building permits, a large addition was constructed to the north side of the house

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in 1912.¹² This is the extant, two-story wing on the 16th Street elevation. It is unclear whether the Hendersons made this alteration in an attempt to make the building more attractive to foreign governments or, perhaps, as part of a purchase agreement with Mrs. Marshall Field to whom they sold the structure sometime between 1912 and 1914. Mrs. Field, the recent widow of the Chicago merchandizing magnate, had decided to establish residency in the nation's capital and found the elegant 16th Street corridor a desirable place to live. Although she retained her Chicago home, she made Washington, D.C. her primary residence until her death in 1937.

Mrs. Field entertained lavishly and, according to newspaper accounts, was among the first to raise funds for charity through fashionable entertainment (Figures 15 and 16).¹³ Perhaps not finding the structure suitable for her lifestyle, Mrs. Field began an extensive program of alterations to it (Figure 20). Among these were interior alterations to the butler's pantry and serving areas, changes in location of service stairs and elevators, and the enclosure of the Euclid Street loggia and the sun porch to the rear of the house.

Upon Mrs. Field's death in 1937, the house was inherited by her niece, Mrs. Catherine Beveridge, who lived there briefly until 1939. At that time, she sold it to members of the District Grand Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star—who intended to convert the mansion to a clubhouse and to build a temple in the garden behind the building, fronting Euclid Street. Apparently, these plans were never realized and the house was sold in 1946 to a dentist who leased the house out for private parties. In 1949, the Inter-American Defense Board leased the building with an option to buy. They reportedly purchased the structure and its adjacent

¹² D.C. Permit to Repair #5389, 5/18/1912, was issued to the Honorable J.B. Henderson to "build new addition to north of present building as shown on the plans". George Oakley Totten, Jr. is listed as the architect.

¹³ Washington Star, July 24, 1937.

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grounds one year later for \$180,000.¹⁴ The Inter-American Defense Board has continuously occupied the building since 1949.

THE OWNERS AND RESIDENTS

Mr. and Mrs. John B. Henderson

Mr. and Mrs. Henderson built 2600 16th Street, N.W. in 1905. Although they never lived there, they retained ownership of the building until c. 1914. Together they were responsible for the early development of upper 16th Street, N.W. as an elegant artery of the city.

John Brooks Henderson (1826-1913) was a lawyer and politician who served as U.S. Senator from Missouri between 1862 and 1869. As Senator, he helped draft the 13th Amendment. In 1869, he and his wife returned to St. Louis where he established a successful law practice. He remained in both local and national politics, and returned to Washington, D.C. in 1889 upon his retirement. From that time until his death, he was active in the leadership of a number of organizations including the Smithsonian Institution and the International Pan-American Conference. In addition to these activities, Henderson was involved in large-scale speculation in the local real estate market and developed a wide variety of properties.

Mary Foote Henderson (1841-1931), his wife, was active in the suffrage and temperance movements. The author of children's books and books on health, she was an active partner with her husband in both his private and public activities. She was especially instrumental in the development of 16th Street as an elegant thoroughfare. Upon her husband's death in 1913, Mrs. Henderson continued to campaign from her massive sandstone castle on 16th Street to have that street officially designated as a gateway to the city. Among the schemes for which she vehemently petitioned Congress were the relocation of the White House

¹⁴ Washington Star, "Edwardian Mrs. Marshal Field Once Lived in the 'Pink Palace'", February 6, 1955.

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on upper 16th Street, the location of the proposed Lincoln Memorial at Meridian Hill Park (which she succeeded in convincing the government to purchase and develop as a park), and the renaming of 16th Street as the "Avenue of the Presidents". In this last quest, she succeeded briefly --the street was renamed in 1913, but reverted one year later to its original designation after public outcry.

Oscar Straus

The first resident of 2600 16th Street, N.W. was Oscar Straus (1850-c. 1921), renowned statesman and Jewish philanthropist. Born in Bavaria, he came to the United States as a young child and was educated in Georgia and New York. Upon graduating from Columbia Law School in 1873, he worked in local courts before joining the family business. After playing an active role in the Cleveland-Blaine campaign of 1884, he was appointed by President Cleveland as Minister to Turkey (a post which he filled for one year, 1887-1888). In 1902, Straus was appointed to the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague and was brought into Theodore Roosevelt's Cabinet in 1906 as Secretary of Commerce and Labor. As such, he was the first Jewish Cabinet member, an accomplishment hailed by the press in lengthy articles.¹⁵ Although his term as a Cabinet member was short-lived because of a change in administration, his public service career continued. He was reappointed Ambassador to Turkey, and later served as chairman of the Paris Committee of the League to Enforce Peace, and as a member of President Wilson's Second Industrial Conference. Throughout his life, Straus was a champion of Jewish causes. His extensive papers are housed at the Library of Congress.

Franklin MacVeagh

Following Oscar Straus's residency of 2600 16th Street, Franklin MacVeagh rented the house from the Hendersons while he awaited the completion of his own residence one block to the north. Born in

¹⁵ New York Herald, "Oscar Straus, First Hebrew Chosen for American Cabinet", November 11, 1906.

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Pennsylvania, MacVeagh (like Straus) was educated at Columbia Law School, receiving a degree in 1862. Shortly after graduation, he moved to Chicago, where he became involved in the wholesale grocery business. Following the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, he headed relief organizations, and soon established one of the largest and most successful wholesale grocery firms in that city. In 1881, he became director of the Commercial National Bank, a post which he filled until his appointment by President Taft as Secretary of the Treasury. Active in municipal politics, as well as national ones, MacVeagh was also an active member and supporter of a variety of historical, scientific and literary organizations.

Mrs. Marshall Field

The second owner of the Pink Palace was Mrs. Marshall Field (1853-1937) who purchased the house in c. 1914. Mrs. Field was one of the nation's wealthiest women, having married the elderly Chicago merchandizing magnate Marshall Field in 1905.¹⁶ Formerly Delia Spencer Caton, she was a Chicago socialite and wealthy young widow who had been his neighbor. Field died within months after marrying her. He left her the majority of his vast estate and fortune. Mrs. Field remained in Chicago where she participated generously in charitable functions. In c. 1914, she decided to move to Washington and it is at this time that she purchased 2600 16th Street.

According to a newspaper article announcing her death in 1937¹⁷, she was one of Washington, D.C. society's "grand dames". She completely refurbished the house, filling it with antiques and works of art. A noted patron of music, Mrs. Field entertained frequently, holding musicales in her ballroom (said to be one of the largest private

¹⁶ According to Mrs. Field's New York Times obituary (July 24, 1937), Marshall Field was the wealthiest person in the United States at the time of his death.

¹⁷ Washington Star, "Mrs. Field Dies of Pneumonia", July 24, 1937.

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ballrooms in the city). Mrs. Field did not have any children by either of her marriages and, upon her death, left the house to her niece.

The Inter-American Defense Board

The Inter-American Defense Board relocated from offices in the Old Executive Office Building to this site after the house was occupied by several residents and organizations between 1937 and 1949. The Inter-American Defense Board was founded in 1942 "to study and recommend measures necessary for the defense of the Continent during World War II."¹⁸ Following the war, it was recommended that this multi-national board continue. It is composed of military officers representing the highest eschelons of the defense establishments of all the American nations. Its purpose is to prepare recommendations and consult on the collective self-defense of the Western Hemisphere. It is an adjunct of the Organization of American States.

THE ARCHITECT: GEORGE OAKLEY TOTTEN, JR.

George Oakley Totten, Jr., the architect of 2600 16th Street, N.W., worked closely with Mrs. Henderson on this and other buildings in the 16th Street area. Correspondence between the two indicates that Totten consulted Mrs. Henderson on design decisions, including the use of various materials and interior ornamentation.¹⁹ Totten had established a successful career before he began to work for Mrs. Henderson, and despite the large number of commissions he received from her, he maintained a busy practice independent of her. His prolific career spanned over 40 years.

¹⁸ "The Inter-American Defense Board: Defense, Solidarity, Cooperation" Washington, D.C. (Undated informational brochure).

¹⁹ Smithsonian Archives, Henderson Family Papers, Miscellaneous Correspondence.

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Totten was born in New York City in c. 1866. Upon graduating from the Columbia School of Architecture (M.A., 1892), he received the McKim Traveling Scholarship which allowed him to go to Europe. While there, he attended the Ecole des Beaux Arts where he continued his rigorous academic training in classical architecture. Totten returned to the United States in 1895 and took a position as Chief Designer in the Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury--a post which he held until 1897. While serving in this position, he was responsible for the design of the Philadelphia Mint and several post offices around the country.

By 1899, Totten was established in private practice in Washington, D.C., with Philadelphia architect Laussat Rogers. It is their firm, Totten & Rogers, which is listed on the Permit to Build for the Pink Palace. The firm received many commissions in highly visible, elite sections of the city. Their designs are generally historically inspired and take their vocabulary directly from the elegant European palaces of the past. Of particular note are their many buildings within the Massachusetts Avenue Historic District and its immediate vicinity. These include: 2131 R Street, N.W. (1889; home of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1917-1919); 2228 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. (1903); 1742 22nd Street, N.W. (1904); and 2229 California Street, N.W. (1905). The partnership between Totten and Rogers did not last long and was dissolved in 1907.²⁰

At that time, Totten traveled to Turkey where he designed the American Chancery and the Turkish Prime Minister's residence in Constantinople. It was on his return from this trip that Totten's long association with Mrs. Henderson began. It is unknown whether Mrs. Henderson initially knew Totten personally or only was familiar with his work for socially prominent people. She, nonetheless, hired him exclusively for the construction of her most important structures, and, over the years, became closely associated with him. Among these are the former Meridan Hill Club--a complex of artists studios at 2633 15th Street, N.W. (1922); and 2801 16th Street, N.W. (1923). Totten developed buildings himself, acting

²⁰ Building permits predating the dissolution of the firm list only Totten's name, perhaps indicating that Totten was receiving personal commissions before 1907.

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as both owner and architect. In 1924, he designed his own residence at 2633 16th Street, N.W.²¹.

Totten was in high demand by others in addition to Mrs. Henderson. He had many private clients who were interested in constructing large, elegant mansions in the styles Mrs. Henderson was erecting on 16th Street. Among Totten's other commissions are: 2221 and 2223 Massachusetts Avenue (1906-1907); 2221-2223 R Street, N.W. (1908 and 1907, respectively); 2315 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. (1909); 1606 23rd Street, N.W. (1910, currently serving as the Turkish Embassy); and 1900 24th Street, N.W. (1922).

Aside from his design career, Totten had an interest in Mayan architecture, a subject in which he was an authority and on which he authored a book, Maya Architecture (1926). Active in professional organizations, he served as Vice-President and Secretary of the International Congress of Architecture (he was a delegate from 1896 to 1939). He served as President of the Washington Architectural Club (1896-97) and the Washington Chapter/AIA (1932). He was married to the talented, New York City sculptress Vicken Von Post.

²¹ Incorporated into the design of this building are portions of the Warder House, a structure designed by H.H. Richardson, which had recently been dismantled. It was originally located on K Street, N.W.

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3. Streetscape, 2600 16th Street, N.W.
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4. View looking north on 16th Street, N.W., undated.
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From: Arslan, Edoardo. Gothic Architecture in Venice. London: Phaidon
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7. Plate from The Stones of Venice showing arch masonry.
From: Ruskin, John. The Stones of Venice, Volume the First. The
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8. Original drawings for 2600 16th Street, N.W. filed with 1905 Permit
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9. View of lion's head scroll on the Ca D'Oro in Venice.
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15. View of plasterwork in ballroom, undated.
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16. View of music loft in ballroom, undated.
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17. Copy of Permit to Build at 2600 16th Street, N.W., June 12, 1905.
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18. Copy of View of 2600 16th Street, N.W.; c. 1910
Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division,
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NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)
1024-0018

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19. Copy of Border Section of Map, "Sixteenth Street Heights, D.C." 1910; Library of Congress, Geography and Maps Division, G3852-S54G46 1910-S5
20. Copy of Photograph of 2600 16th Street, c.1921
Martin Luther King Public Library, Washingtoniana Division,
Neg. #4506

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SIGNIFICANT PERSONS (Continued)

Straus, Oscar
MacVeagh, Franklin
Field, Mrs. Marshall
Totten, Jr., George Oakley

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SIGNIFICANT PERSONS (Continued)

The historically-significant persons associated with the property (Mary Foote Henderson, George Oakley Totten, Jr., Oscar Straus, Franklin MacVeagh, and Mrs. Marshall Field) are all known to have resided elsewhere at different periods of their lives. They are all historically tied to the Pink Palace because they made the social and political contributions which established their importance in American History while residing at the property. There are currently no other NRHP-listed properties in Washington directly associated with Straus, MacVeagh, or Field.

There are other properties in Washington, DC which have a historical association with both Henderson and Totten as a result of their contributions to the development of Washington during the early twentieth century. However, the strong connection of these two historical figures to the Pink Palace, in particular, was carefully documented and considered against NRHP criteria prior to their identification as significant persons within Section 8.

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National Archives and Martin Luther King Public Library

Traceries Computer Data Base

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1024-0018

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The acreage of the property is approximately one acre.

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 91000916 Date Listed: 8/5/91

Pink Palace Washington, 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 W. Andrus
Signature of the Keeper

1/7/92
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

The acreage of the nominated property is one. This information was supplied by Glen Leiner of the DC SHPO on a continuation sheet dated 12/9/91. The form is officially amended to include this information.

DISTRIBUTION:

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



FIGURE 2

View of upper 16th Street, N.W. looking north showing Pink Palace in foreground. Date: 1907.
SOURCE: Inter-American Defense Board private photograph collection.



FIGURE 4: View looking north on 16th Street, N.W. (undated). Pink Palace at far right. Henderson's Castle, the home of Mrs. Henderson, in foreground. SOURCE: Inter-American Defense Board.

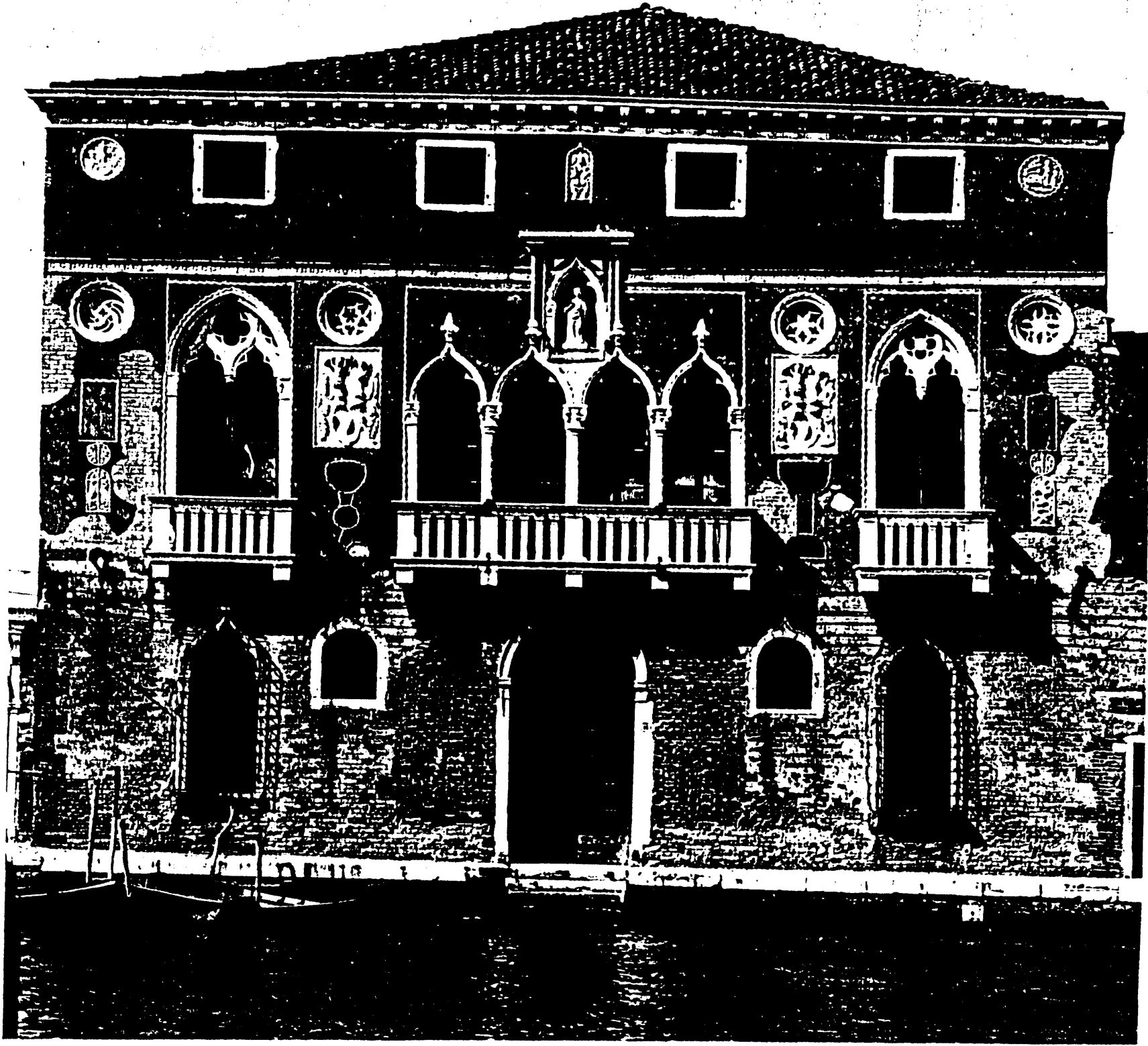
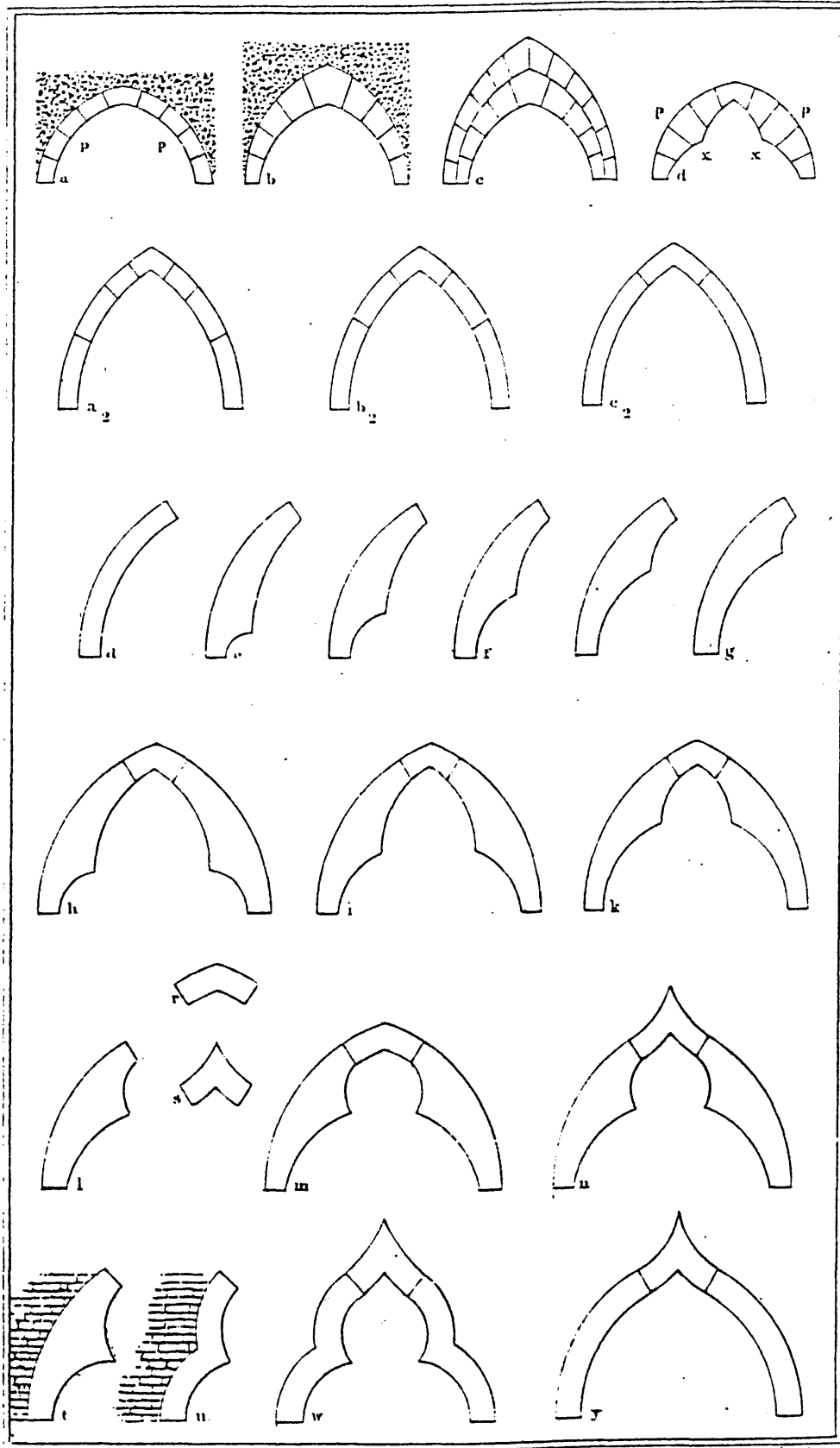


FIGURE 6
Venetian Late Gothic Casa
SOURCE: Edoardo Arslan's Gothic Architecture in Venice.



Arch Magura.

FIGURE 7
 Plate from John Ruskin's The Stones of Venice showing Venetian Late Gothic arch masonry.

HOUSE FOR
HON. J. B. HENDERSON,
N.W. COR. 16TH & ERIE STS.

TOTTEN & ROGERS ARCHITECTS,
808 - SEVENTEENTH ST.

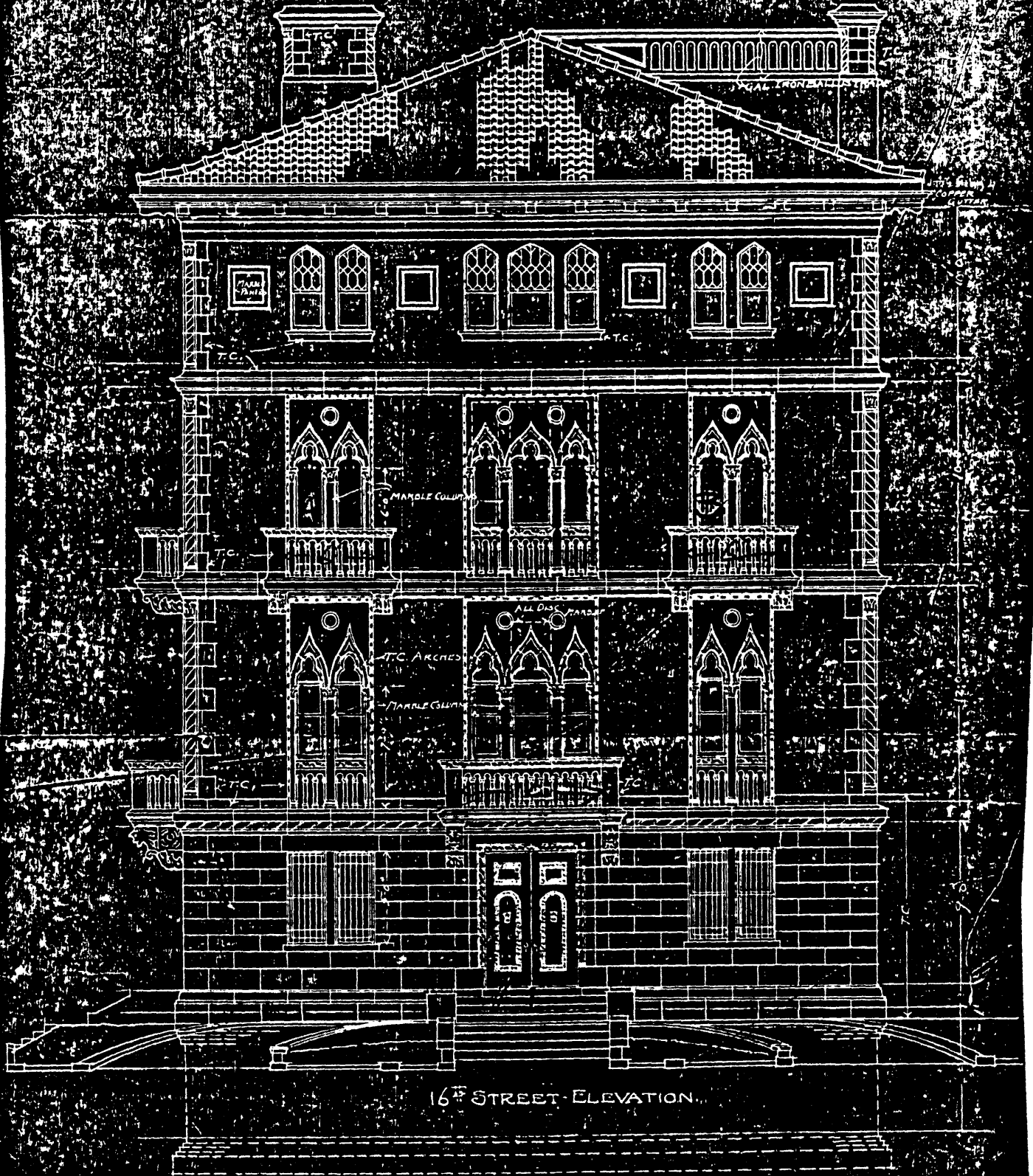


FIGURE 8.
Original drawings for Pink Palace, 2600 16th Street, N.W., included with 1905 Permit
to Build. SOURCE: National Archives.

HOUSE FOR
HON. J. B. HENDERSON,
NW COR. 16th & ERIC STS.

TOTTEN & ROGERS, ARCHIT.
808 - SEVENTEEN

ECTS
H. ST.

COPPER
FLASHING

ERIC STREET ELEVATION

FIGURE 8: Original drawings for Pink Palace, Euclid Street elevation (formerly Erie Street), included in 1905 Permit to Build. SOURCE: National Archives.



FIGURE 8: Original drawing of 1912 addition filed with building permit.
 SOURCE: National Archives



FIGURE 9
Lion's head bracket supporting balcony
at Ca. D'Oro in Venice.

SOURCE: Arslan, Gothic Architecture in
Venice



FIGURE 15

View of ornate plasterwork in ballroom of Pink Palace. Photograph undated.

SOURCE: Inter-American Defense Board.

FIGURE 16. View of music logt on west wall of ballroom of Pink Palace. Photograph undated.
SOURCE: Inter-American Defense Board.



APPLICATION FOR PERMIT TO BUILD.

JUN 12 1905
Washington, D.C. June 12 1905

To the INSPECTOR OF BUILDINGS:

The undersigned owner hereby applies for a permit to build according to the following conditions:

1. State how many buildings to be erected. One
2. No. stories in height. Two
3. If of frame, will the proposed structure be within 20 feet of any lot line?
4. What is the owner's name? John B. McLaughlin
5. Architect's name? John B. McLaughlin
6. Builder's name? John B. McLaughlin
7. House number? 2600
8. Nearest intersecting street? 16th St. N.W.
9. Number of lots in block? 16
10. Area of lot: Front 40 feet, Side 100 feet, Rear 100 feet, Depth 100 feet
11. Size of main building: Width of front 40 feet, Depth 70 feet
12. No. of feet in height from level of sidewalk to highest part of roof 25 feet
13. No. of feet in height from sidewalk to eaves at back 15 feet
14. Size of back building: No. of feet wide 10 feet, No. of feet high 10 feet
15. What is the purpose of the building? Dwelling
16. Will there be a store in the lower story?
17. Will the building be erected on soft or filled land?
18. Width of foundation 3 feet
19. Thickness of external walls: To first floor level 18 inches, All four sides
20. Thickness of party walls: To first floor level 18 inches, 2nd story 12 inches, 3rd story 12 inches, 4th story 12 inches, 5th story 12 inches
21. Will the roof be flat, pitch, or mansard?
22. Will there be any projections beyond the building line?
23. Are there any oriels?
24. Are there any bay windows?
25. Are there any tower projections?
26. Are there any show windows?
27. Projection of main steps from building line 25 feet
28. Are there vaults?
29. Will there be an area?
30. Are there any elevator shafts?
31. How will the building be heated?
32. What is the height of first floor above sidewalk or parking?
33. Has the curb grade been obtained from engineer of highways?
34. What is the height of the present terrace or parking above curb?
35. What will be the height and grade of proposed terrace or parking?
36. Is there a sidewalk, curbing, or improved roadway in front of?
37. Have deposits \$... as required by order of Commissioner?
38. Collector's receipt for above deposits?
39. What is the estimated cost of the improvement?
40. A certificate must be obtained from the Plumbing Inspector of Buildings.

Inspector of Buildings: [Signature]

FIGURE 1 7
Original Permit to Build at 2600 16th Street, N.W. June 12, 1905.
SOURCE: National Archives

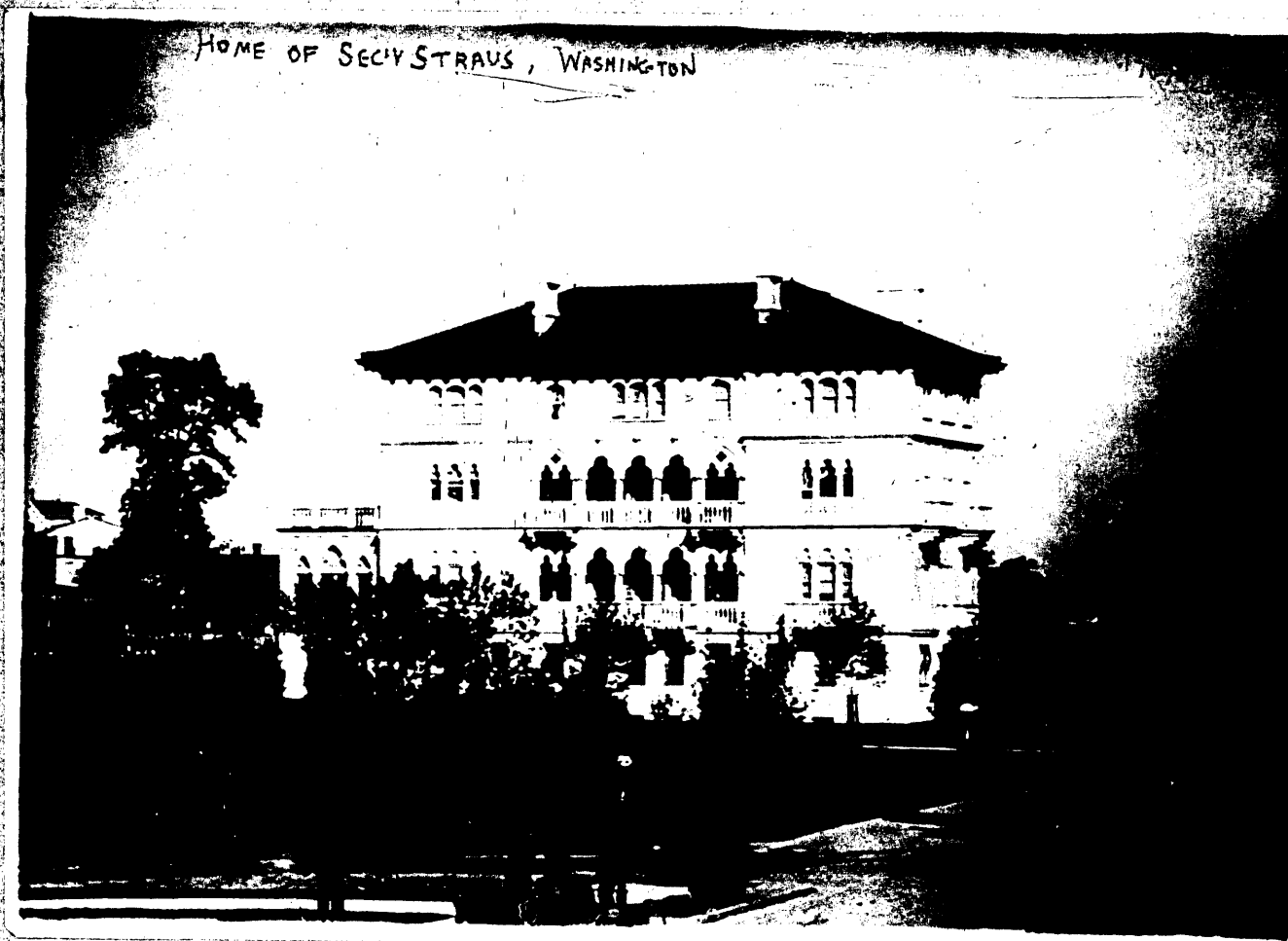
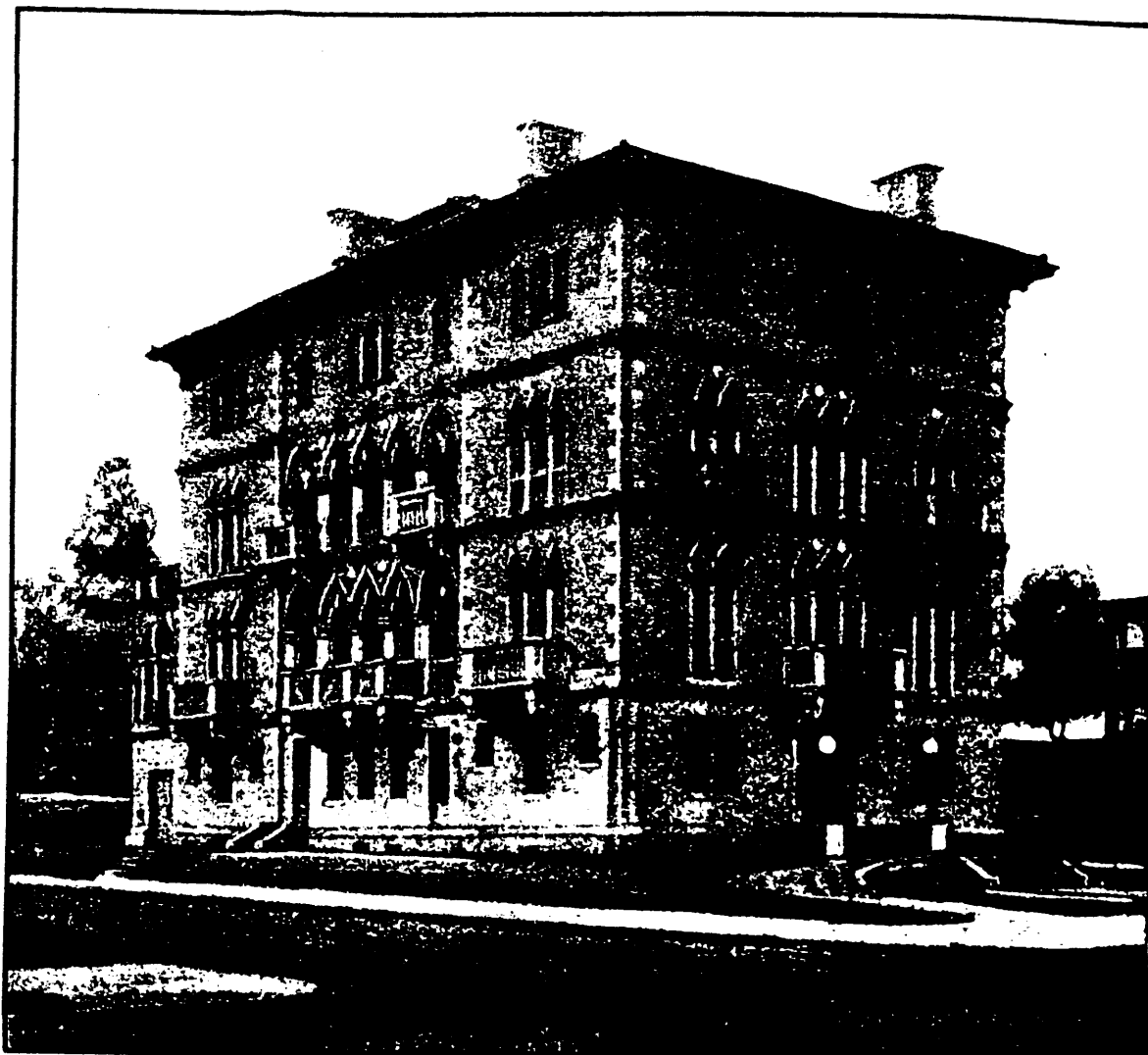


FIGURE 18: 2600 16th Street, N.W., c. 1910

SOURCE: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division
Washingtoniana Files

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LEGATION BUILDING



VIEW OF SIXTEENTH ST.

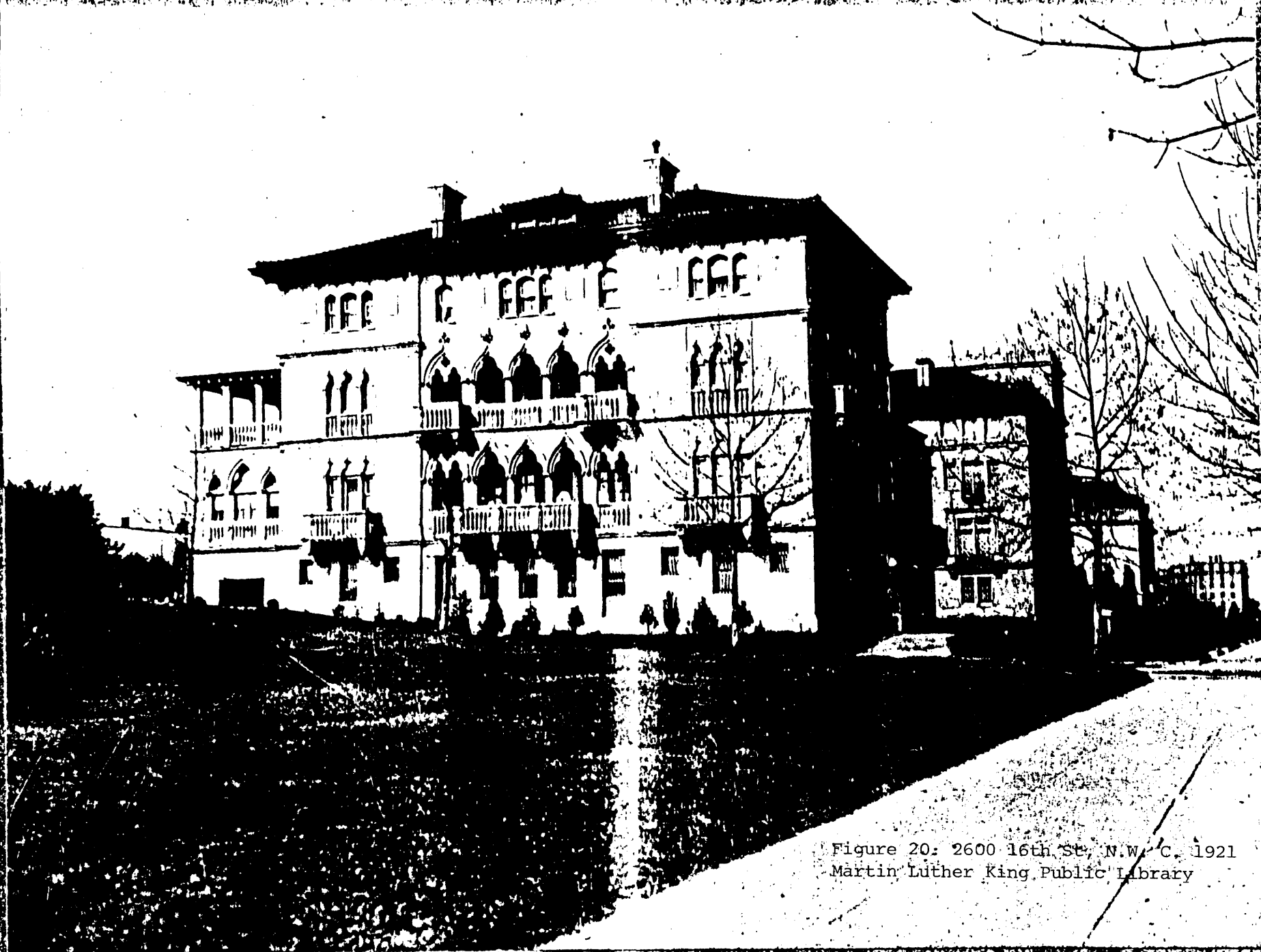


Figure 20: 2600 16th St., N.W., C., 1921
Martin Luther King Public Library

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