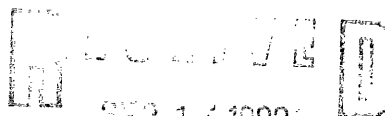


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



27 870

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 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Wetzel, Margaret, House
other names/site number Alumni House, The George Washington University

2. Location

street & number 714 21st Street, N.W. not for publication N/A
city, town Washington vicinity N/A
state District of Columbia code DC county District of Columbia code 001 zip code 20052

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	_____ objects
			_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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.
Carol P. Thompson SHPO Date 9/6/90
Signature of certifying official
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 and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register. Patrick Andrews 10/25/90
 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:) _____
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)
 EDUCATION/College

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (enter categories from instructions)

MID-19th CENTURY/Italian Villa

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other Stone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Alumni House, located at 714 21st Street, N.W., between H and G Streets, is one of the few substantial free-standing brick dwellings remaining in the Foggy Bottom/West End area. Dating from 1853-1857, this structure is a good example of Italian Villa residential design so common in Washington during the middle years of the nineteenth century. The fine proportions and detailing of the main facade attest to the time when the West End was a fashionable residential neighborhood.

This three-story house of common-bond brick faces east on 21st Street, with its main facade arranged in three bays. The basement is raised approximately five feet; sandstone steps lead to a recessed entrance area with tile flooring. A glass transom fills the upper portion of the entrance opening and the existing door is a recent alteration that does not reflect the Italian Villa style of the house. This central entrance at the first floor is flanked by tall windows with ornamental iron balconies. On the second floor, the center window is longer than the other two windows, emphasizing the importance of the central entry bay. The third-floor windows are smaller than those on the lower floors. The front facade windows feature one-over-one, double-hung sashes, and stone sills. One exception is the northern window on the first floor, which has one-over-two double-hung sash.

The smooth planar surface of the walls is broken by a string course of molded brick with a greek Key motif, below the third-floor window sill, and by a continuous stone lintel above the third-story windows. The projecting cornice features a row of dentils beneath a row of scroll modillions. It is separated from the continuous lintel by a few rows of bricks.

The first-floor windows have segmentally arched molded surrounds that match the arch over the door. However, the panes in these windows have flat tops, unlike the arch-topped glass in the entry transom. Above the second-floor windows are circular arch moldings with an elaborate fanlight design. The fanciful floral motifs of the door and window surrounds are highly decorative and contrast sharply with the simplicity of the massing and design of the house.

The roof of Alumni House is gently pitched with side gables. It has been re-roofed with asphalt and gravel. The side and rear brick walls have been painted white. These elevations of the house are characteristically void of ornamentation. A fire escape currently lines the south elevation. Except for

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

ARCHITECTURE
EDUCATION

1853-57
circa 1925-30

1853-57

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Alumni House, a free-standing Italian Villa style house dating from circa 1855, is one of the few residences of this type still standing in Foggy Bottom. It reflects the residential character of the neighborhood during a period when Foggy Bottom was a fashionable place to live. Purchased by The George Washington University in 1931, the house has played a significant and long-standing role in the development of the institution. Students, faculty, and alumni alike have used this building as a campus center and the structure has played a vital role in campus life for many years.

As a fine example of a mid-nineteenth century free-standing Italian Villa style house, Alumni House embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural style and a building type (Criteria C). It is one of the few remaining examples of this building type in Foggy Bottom. Through its long and important role in the development of the University, Alumni House has been associated with an institution that has contributed significantly to the broad patterns of development of the National Capital (Criteria A). The building retains its integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The significance of the building has been recognized by its listing as a Historic Landmark of the District of Columbia.

The George Washington University, by virtue of its academic ranking and its physical presence, stands as a significant institution in the District of Columbia. The history and development of the school, from its early-nineteenth century beginnings to its current status as a major urban university, is inextricably linked to the history and development of Washington. Alumni House is noteworthy among the campus buildings, both as an architectural landmark and as a significant element in the history of the George Washington University.

Alumni House was built in the mid-1850's as the home of Margaret Wetzel. The house is one of the few substantial free-standing mid-nineteenth century houses left in Foggy Bottom. It stands as a reminder of the era when Foggy

9. Major Bibliographical References

Application to the Joint Committee on Landmarks of the National Capital for Designation of Alumni House as a Historic Landmark. Submitted by The George Washington University and Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A; April, 1987.

Application to the D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board for Designation of The George Washington University Campus Historic District prepared for the Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A by Emily Eig, Traceries, Inc., Washington, D.C., December 12, 1984.

Baist's Real Estate Atlas of Surveys of Washington, D.C., Vol. 1, plan 9, Philadelphia: G.W. Baist, 1965.

"The Campus Plan for the Year 1985 Through the Year 2000", The George Washington University, Office of the President, April 30, 1986.

Goode, James M., Capital Losses, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1979.

See continuation sheet

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
- Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than 0.1 acre

UTM References

A

1	8	3	2	24	6	0	4	30	7	33	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

In Square 79, a portion of former lot 45 consisting of a 40-foot frontage on 21st Street, N.W., by a 45-foot depth, as indicated on the supplemental map.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire lot that has been associated historically with the building.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Anne H. Adams/Architectural Historian

organization Wilkes, Artis, Hedrick & Lane date September, 1989

street & number 1666 K Street, N.W., 11th floor telephone (202)457-7800

city or town Washington state D.C. zip code 20006

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two large windows on the first-floor south wall, all of the windows on the side and rear elevations are 2/2 or 1/1 double-hung. Most have segmental brick arches and wood sills. Some of these sills have been covered with sheet metal. Many of the windows have been altered with air conditioning units or vents. The door in the rear wall of the two-story shed-roofed addition has been blocked up. The two chimneys on the rear wall have been cut off below the gutter. One interior chimney protrudes above the roof.

The interior still contains the original stairway with an elaborate spindle screen in an arched opening along a portion of the stair from the second to the third floor. Some of the original door and window surrounds also remain in the house. Most of the interior finishes, however, are modern.

Alumni House stands as an important example of Italian Villa residential design in an area where few free-standing houses of that style remain. The simplicity of the massing, the balanced composition of the facade, and the bold decorative details -- the prominent cornice and the articulated windows -- convey the essence of the Italian Villa style as it appeared in Washington during the middle years of the nineteenth century.

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Bottom was first developed as a fashionable residential area. The George Washington University purchased the house to meet the growing demand for space on campus, and renovated the building for use as a Student Union. The facility included a dining hall, a ballroom, lounges and a student store. The building later served as a faculty club. The house is currently used by the Alumni Association for offices and various alumni functions and it plays vital role in the university community.

The George Washington University began in 1821, as the Columbian College under a charter granted by President Monroe. The small school was located near Florida Avenue and Sixteenth Street in northwest Washington. By 1870, it had grown to include a medical school and law school. At the urging of William Corcoran, a noted philanthropist and Columbian College trustee, the school was renamed the Columbian University in 1873, and shortly thereafter it relocated to the city's financial district on H Street, between 13th and 15th Streets, N.W.

It was not until 1905 that the University adopted the name of our nation's first president. In 1904, the George Washington Memorial Foundation chose Columbian University to fulfill the first president's dreams for a national university, and the following year, the school was renamed The George Washington University.

Operating now as a national university, the school grew ambitious and began its search for a location which would allow for a spacious, self-contained campus environment. The reality of the cost for such a plan, however, almost destroyed the university. In 1912, faced with serious financial troubles, the university was forced to reorganize and relocated to inexpensive rental property at 2023 G Street, N.W. From this modest new beginning, the school took hold in the Foggy Bottom neighborhood and developed into a leading university.

The history of The George Washington University can be traced through four major periods of development: the Needham years, the Harris Plan, the Marvin era, and the Elliott years.

Charles Needham was president of the university from 1902 through 1912, and was instrumental in transforming the school into a national university. His optimism and visions for the school outpaced financial realities, however, and his quest for a formal campus setting ultimately crippled the school.

Upon assuming the presidency in 1902, Needham set out to elevate the university to national standing. Universities around the country were designing, redesigning and relocating their campuses to meet the challenges of a new twentieth-century aesthetic, and Needham was determined to make his

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university a part of this movement. By 1904, the school had been selected as the university to fulfill George Washington's dream for a major academic center in the District of Columbia, and Needham developed plans to correspond to this new function. A site was selected at Van Ness Park, and an architectural competition was held for the new campus design. Percy Ash, the school's professor of architecture, invited six architectural firms to submit plans proposing a general scheme for the site and specific designs for a memorial building. With the help of Charles Mikimo, Chairman of the Park Commission, and Bernard Green, Superintendent of the Library of Congress, Ash selected George B. Post and Son of New York for their classically inspired design based on the teachings of the Ecole des Beaux Arts. The five-acre site, however, proved too small for the needs of the university and a new search was launched for a more appropriate location.

This change, however, which would require an additional \$2,500,000, caused several of the earlier funding pledges for the Van Ness site to be voided and likewise marked the beginning of the school's financial crises. Bank notes became due on the Van Ness property, refinancing demanded more capital, and operating funds were used to cover the mounting debts. Compounded by the economic panic of 1907, the school found itself unable to pay its professors and on the verge of bankruptcy.

Drastic measures were needed to save the university from financial ruin and in 1908, Needham was swiftly replaced by Admiral Charles Herbert Stockton. After a long distinguished naval career, Stockton was called upon to exercise his strict discipline on the failing school. Costs were cut, realistic goals identified, and finally relocation achieved. In 1912, the school moved to its present Foggy Bottom location and purchased its first building at that site, the former St. Rose's Industrial School.

This step marked the beginning of a new era for the school. With its financial situation now stabilized, and adequate space secured, the school could now concentrate on developing an appropriate campus. Through the influence of newly elected trustee, Maxwell Woodhull, a neighbor to the school, the Board of Trustees was encouraged to expand its campus at the Foggy Bottom location. The once-fashionable neighborhood was in transition, and the lowering real estate prices gave the school the opportunity to acquire the property needed for a formal campus plan.

Between 1910 and 1920, and under the leadership of Stockton, his successor William Collier, and Woodhull, the university gradually acquired numerous lots in the south portion of Square 102, the city block bounded by 20th, 21st, G and H streets, N.W. In 1921, Woodhull bequeathed his house at the corner of 21st

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and G Street to the school, further establishing the University's stronghold in that block.

After World War I, enrollment increased at the university, placing further space demands on the school. Washington developer and university trustee Harry Wardman encouraged the Board to purchase a building at 14th and K Streets for the Law School, but after some deliberation, the Board reaffirmed its commitment to Square 102, and acquired the building strictly for investment purposes. It was now official: The George Washington University would permanently develop its campus at Square 102 in the Foggy Bottom neighborhood of Washington.

Howard Lincoln Hodgkins became president pro tempore in 1921, and immediately set out to develop the formal campus that had been the dream of the school for so many years.

In 1922, Hodgkins proposed the purchase of 2014 H Street, the renovation of the G Street buildings, and finally the development of Square 102 into a formal campus. The plans were presented by Albert Harris, a professor of architecture at the university and the District of Columbia's newly-appointed Municipal Architect.

William Mather Lewis was elected as the permanent president of the university in 1923, and under his direction, the Harris Plan was begun. By 1926, two of the eight proposed buildings of the Harris Plan, were completed. Corcoran Hall, begun in 1923, was located at the western edge of Square 102 and Stockton Hall, completed in 1926, was located across the quadrangle at the eastern terminus of the cross-axial plan.

As the campus was finally taking shape, problems arose concerning the future of the medical school. Talk of mergers with other area health programs not only cast doubts on continuation of the medical and nursing schools, but also halted progress on the development of the other branches of the school. It was not until 1927 that the issue was resolved and that plans for the quadrangle could be resumed.

That same year, however, a new president was appointed to the university. President Cloyd Heck Marvin rejected the principles of the Harris Plan and set out to develop a new image for the university. Marvin approached the university in a completely different manner than his predecessors, bringing a new direction and philosophy to the school. One of his primary objectives was to enhance the image of the university by improving its physical environment and expanding the campus. The Harris Plan was rejected, and Marvin embarked on a new campaign which stressed his belief in functional architecture. Between 1928

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and 1934, the school acquired nineteen additional properties in the areas surrounding Square 102, and several new buildings were erected that set a new style for the school grounds.

Alumni House is just one of several buildings purchased under President Marvin's ambitious expansion campaign for the school. Marvin was named president in 1927, and immediately he initiated plans for revamping the campus. Marvin rejected the formality and scope of the Harris Plan, a campus design begun in 1922 which called for Georgian Revival buildings formally arranged in Square 102. Instead, Marvin believed that new buildings should be expressed in modern formulas and that the campus should expand well beyond Square 102. Between 1928 and 1934, the university acquired 19 additional properties in and around Square 102, including Alumni House in 1931. The institution thus permanently established itself in the Foggy Bottom area. Under Marvin's leadership, the Foggy Bottom area was transformed from a declining residential/industrial neighborhood to a thriving academic center bringing new life and activity to the west end of Washington.

In recent decades, the campus continued to grow under the leadership of President Lloyd H. Elliott. During his presidency from 1965 to 1988, Elliott strengthened the school's position among institutions of higher learning by expanding the school's research capabilities and academic programs. He orchestrated the construction of an additional 3.7 million square feet of space for campus, including a medical school, student center, athletic center, academic building and support facilities. Additionally, he focussed new activity on Square 102 in realization of Harris Plan for a formal campus. The Jacob Burns Law Library, designed by Mills, Petticord and Mills, was constructed in 1970, and the Law School complex, designed by Keyes, Condon and Florance, was completed in 1984. The quadrangle itself was renovated to provide a well-landscaped central focus to the campus continuing the Marvin philosophy of providing a cohesive quality to the university.

The blend of old and new buildings in and around Square 102 provides a richness to the campus. Alumni House, located in Square 79 just west of the university core, is an important factor in creating this rich and varied texture, that tells of the university's and the city's development.

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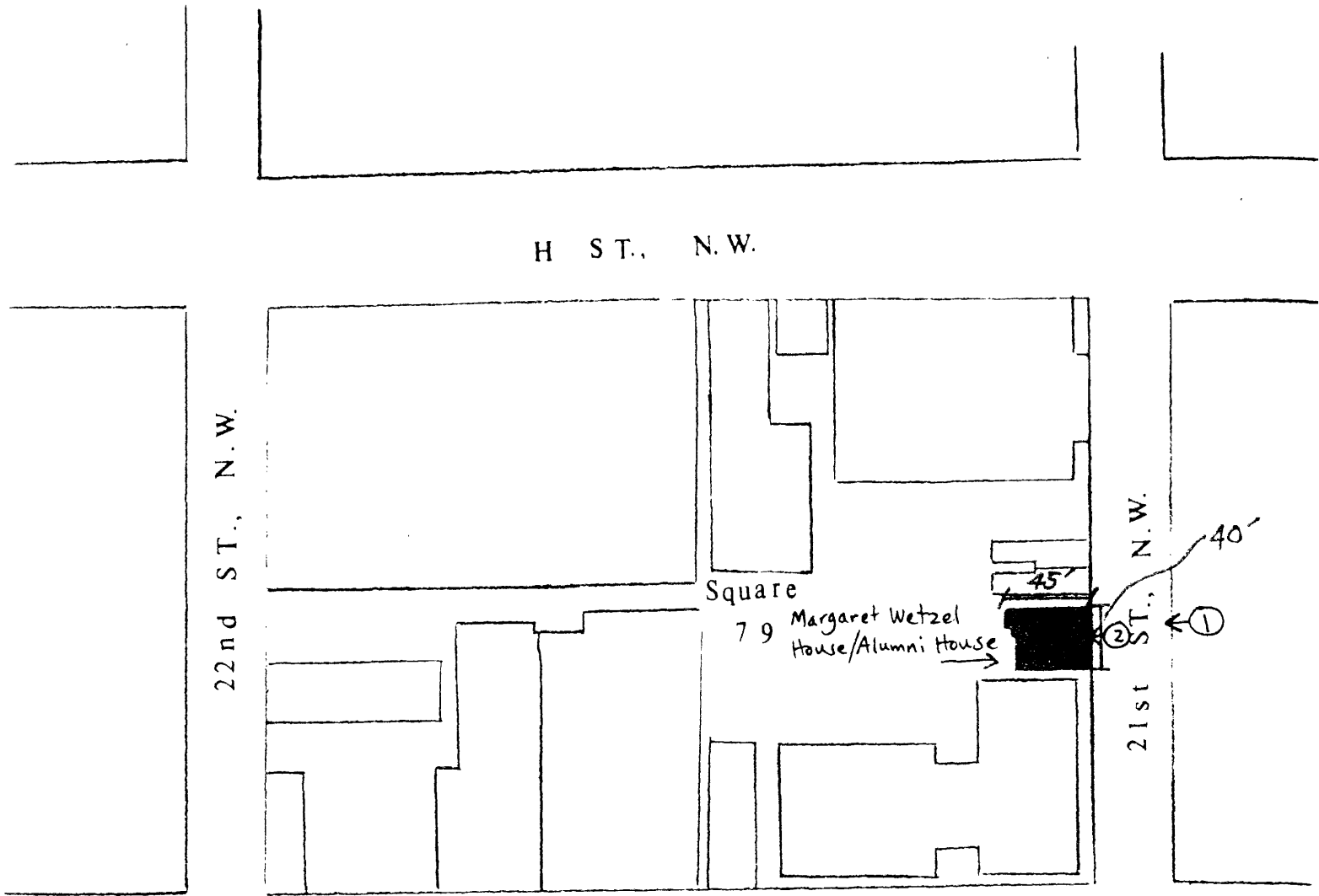
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Kayser, Elmer Louis, Bricks Without Straw, New York: Appelton-Century-
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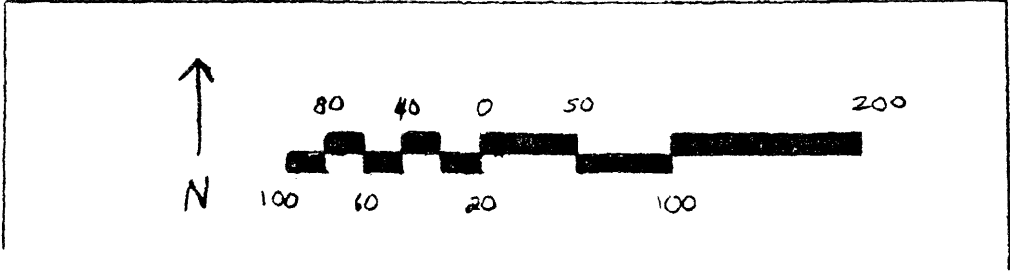


H ST., N.W.

22nd ST., N.W.

21st ST., N.W.

G ST., N.W.



← ⊕ Numbers keyed to photographs

Margaret Wetzel House/Alumni House
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-
1. Margaret Wetzel House/Alumni House
The George Washington University
Washington, D.C.
Anne H. Adams, photographer
November, 1986
Wilkes, Artis, Hedrick & Lane (location of negative)
1666 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.
View of 21st Street facade - looking west
View No. 1

 2. Margaret Wetzel House/Alumni House
The George Washington University
Washington, D.C.
Anne H. Adams, photographer
November, 1986
Wilkes, Artis, Hedrick & Lane (location of negative)
1666 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.
Detail of window and door surrounds of first and
second floor, looking west
View No. 2