

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



1070

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Lightfoot, George M. House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1329 Missouri Avenue, NW not for publication

city or town Washington vicinity

state Washington, DC code DC county _____ code 001 zip code 20011

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

DAVID MALONEY, DC SHPO Date 25 Nov 2013

Signature of certifying official/Title
DC SHPO
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Jon Edson H. Beall Date of Action 1.15.14

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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
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing
1	
1	
	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN/Victorian Eclectic

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Wood siding

roof: Asphalt Shingles

other: Copper Dome

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The George M. Lightfoot house is a vernacular, but fanciful 19th century frame dwelling located on the north side of Missouri Avenue between Georgia Avenue and 14th Street in the Brightwood neighborhood of northwest Washington. Missouri Avenue is a segment of Military Road which, cut during the Civil War, served as a ring road to connect the city's Civil War forts to each other. Although it is, today, a major east-west artery connecting the city's upper northeast and northwest quadrants, Missouri Avenue retains certain rural road characteristics, not the least of which is the George M. Lightfoot house. The Lightfoot house and the adjacent Military Road School¹ are the rare survivors of buildings that were constructed along the road during the mid-to late 19th century. The house is set back from the street with a gravel driveway on the west side and is surrounded by a large grassy yard that slopes at the rear. The lawn is filled with bushes and low trees, while more mature shade trees border the property to the west.

The George M. Lightfoot House, built in 1892, is a south-facing, two-story, five-bay frame dwelling with architectural elements and ornamental details typical of the Victorian era. The house is cube-like in form and characterized most prominently by its Moorish-style oriel tower, but also by its tall hipped roof, its wrap-around porch with turned columns, and its long and narrow window openings. The house is substantial in size. It is set upon a raised, rebuilt concrete foundation and features weatherboard walls now sheathed with asbestos shingles. The house is covered by a steeply pitched hipped roof with overhanging eaves and exposed rafters and two tall inside-end brick chimneys projecting from the east and west sides of the roof.

The interior features a central-passage double-pile plan with its original stair, original doors, original trim and wood floors.

Narrative Description

Site

The Lightfoot House is a prominent visual landmark along the segment of Missouri Avenue between the important transportation corridors of Georgia Avenue and 14th Street. Located just west of a group of three post-World War II red brick apartment buildings, the house commands its ¼-acre site largely by virtue of its freestanding stature and by its unusual Moorish-inspired oriel tower that dominates its south-facing Missouri Avenue façade. The house, which has been moved twice on its site, now sits towards the front of its lot, directly facing the road, but has gracious side yards and a relatively deep rear yard preserving to some extent the area's historic rural village physical context. The west side yard of the house merges with the partially wooded and open lot next to it, owned by the National Park Service, which in turn merges with the land surrounding the former Military Road School. By virtue of these adjacent properties, the Lightfoot House thus enjoys a relatively spacious site as it would have historically.

Exterior Description

The George M. Lightfoot House is a south-facing, two-story, five-bay frame dwelling designed in a Victorian eclectic manner that reflects overall massing, and architectural features of the Second Empire style. In particular, the house is a freestanding structure and a square footprint. It has long and narrow floor to ceiling windows, a broad roof form and an active roofline, including its central oriel tower and projecting chimney stacks. It sits upon a raised, rebuilt concrete foundation and features weatherboard walls now sheathed with asbestos shingles. The steeply pitched hipped roof has overhanging eaves and exposed rafters and two tall brick chimneys on the east and west roof slopes. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles.

The south façade of the house faces Missouri Avenue and is divided into five equal bays with an entry on-center and two single, long and narrow window openings to either side. Six wooden steps lead to the central entry, sheltered by a deep porch which extends the full width of the façade and wraps around the east side elevation of the house. The porch has a shallow-pitched roof, clad in asphalt shingles, and supported by hefty turned wood columns. The turned columns are set

¹ The present Military Road School was constructed in 1912, but replaced an older 1865 school building on the site.

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upon square bases with chamfered edges. The column caps feature jig sawn knee brackets with incised detailing. A railing with square balusters spans the porch columns.

The central entry holds a pair of double wood doors with glass in the upper half and wood panels in the lower half, topped by a single-light transom, all set within a wood surround of plain wood trim. An aluminum screen is located on the outside of the original wood door. Two long and narrow, floor length windows flank this central entry. The windows retain their original wood, 4/4 double-hung sash and their plain wood surrounds.

The second story of the south elevation consists of five bays of windows symmetrically arranged above the first story openings. These windows, with their 4/4 wood, double-hung sash, are like those on the first story, but are not as long. The central oriel tower with a modified onion dome is supported by wood brackets with side walls projecting from the front wall, thus forming a hood ornament around the central window. Knee brackets between the oriel posts and sill have incised jig sawn ornament creating an arched opening framing the second story window. The tower rises above the roofline at its front and sides, with single, arched 1/1 wood windows defining each of its three exposed elevations. A Moorish-inspired copper dome with broad eaves and exposed rafters, caps this tower. A sharp finial spire projects from the apex of the dome.

The east elevation of the house is covered on the first story by the wrap-around porch which extends five bays the full-width of the wall. From this east elevation, the six brick piers that support the porch are visible and evenly spaced beneath the porch columns. The east elevation has two openings on both the first and second stories. On the first story, a door opens toward the west end and is reached by a porch stair descending to ground level. The windows match those of the south façade, and consist of 4/4 wood sash with wood surrounds. Above the second story, the hipped roof is broken by an intersecting gable projecting from on-center of the roof slope. This gable is enclosed, forming a sort of pediment, but is clad with asphalt shingles that may or may not be obscuring a former window opening or vent. A brick chimney projects from the ridgeline of this projecting gable and on-center of it. The location of this chimney indicates the likelihood of fireplaces on-center of the first and second floor rooms on this east side of the house.

The north elevation of the house includes a porch spanning two-thirds of the first story. The shed roof of the porch is supported by four plain posts; six plain wooden steps on the west end lead to the porch from the ground with plain wooden railings on each end of the steps. The porch floor is supported by four evenly spaced concrete block piers. The two windows under the porch are floor to ceiling configuration whereas the window south of the porch is 4/4. It is similar in size to the three evenly spaced second story windows though the center window is lower.

The west elevation of the house has two windows on both the first and second stories, all of which have 4/4 wood, double-hung sash similar in size to those on the second story of the front elevation.

Interior:

The interior of the Lightfoot House offers a central passage double-pile plan with a straight flight stair. The central passage is reached directly through the paired entry doors, on-center of the façade. The wood paneled and glazed doors open into the center hall with 12-foot-high ceilings and a straight-flight stair located against the west wall. The stair features turned balusters and a heavy turned newel set at a 45-degree angle and capped by a newel post. A closed stringer with a beaded edge and a reeded stringcourse encloses the stair on its open side.

The central passage opens onto two front parlors, with marbleized mantels on-center of the side walls and two windows on the front wall. A pair of double, wood sliding pocket doors leads from the east front parlor (living room) to the rear parlor (den). A brick fireplace is located in the rear kitchen. The interior retains its original narrow wood floor boards, its plaster walls and its molded door and window trim, including some bulls' eye moldings, and its original high Victorian marbleized stone mantels. The house retains all 30 of its original windows and several of its original fireplace mantels. Three of the four fireplaces in the upstairs bedrooms have been plastered over and the mantels no longer intact.

Integrity

The George M. Lightfoot House retains a high degree of integrity. Although the house has been moved twice on its site, the moves were done more than fifty years in the past (1931 and 1933), and the orientation of the house remains the same. The house retains integrity of setting in that it still sits along Missouri Avenue, an important east-west road on its ¾-acre lot with mature trees and shrubbery that recall the once-rural character of Brightwood. The house retains integrity of design, materials and craftsmanship. It is a unique Victorian-era suburban villa designed in an eclectic style. Although

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the walls and roof are clad with replacement materials, all of the other materials are original and intact, including all 30 windows, door and window trim, the copper oriel tower roof, porch posts and other details. The Lightfoot House has strong feeling and associations with the past, namely that of the village of Brightwood that developed in the mid-19th century around the intersection of Missouri and Georgia Avenues.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- Ethnic Heritage - Black
- Community Planning & Development
- Architecture

Period of Significance

1892 - 1947

Significant Dates

1892; 1917; 1931; 1933; 1947

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

DeLong

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

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

Period of Significance (justification)

The Period of Significance for the Lightfoot House extends from 1892, when the house was constructed by Frederick Bex until 1947 when longtime owner and resident George M. Lightfoot died.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

The property qualifies for listing under Criterion Consideration B: Removed from its original location. The Lightfoot House has been moved twice in its history—once in 1931 when Military Road was widened to become Concord Avenue and again in 1933 when the federal government purchased the property to build Fort Circle Drive. In both cases, the house was moved on or adjacent to its original site and was placed on its new site with the same orientation.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The George M. Lightfoot House was built as a residence in 1892 for Frederick Bex, a carriage maker in the small crossroads village of Brightwood in what was then still referred to as Washington County in the District of Columbia. The house was purchased in 1917 by George M. Lightfoot, a professor at Howard University, who resided in the home from 1933 until his death in 1947.² Although George M. Lightfoot is not the original owner and builder, the house is named for him due to his associations with the house and the African American community, and due to his family's longtime ownership of the property.

The Lightfoot House meets National Register of Historic Places Criteria A and C at the local level of significance. The house is eligible under Criterion A for two reasons: 1) It is one of only a few surviving houses of Brightwood that predate the area's residential subdivision and that reflect Brightwood's history as a rural village; and 2) it is associated with George M. Lightfoot, an African American Howard University professor of Latin from 1891 to 1939, who purchased the home around 1917. The home represents black homeownership at a time when few African Americans were able to purchase grand homes in Washington's suburban areas. Additionally, Lightfoot, devoted to the cause of classical education for African Americans, was noted for the salons conducted in his home attended by prominent black intellectuals such as Carter G. Woodson, WEB Dubois and Alain Locke. This was during the time when the practice of segregation of public facilities discouraged blacks from gathering in clubs and other public facilities where there might have been similar conversation and exchanges of ideas in comfortable social settings.

The Lightfoot House is eligible under Criterion C as an excellent example of a 19th-century suburban "villa"—a sizeable and freestanding dwelling built in the country, but accessible to the city and occupied by early "commuters." The house is also notable for its distinctive architecture. The two-story, freestanding frame dwelling, by its massing and architectural features, reflects a fanciful Victorian eclectic style that is not common to the District of Columbia.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Significant in the area of community planning and development, the Lightfoot House is one of only a few buildings that survive from the Brightwood village of the nineteenth century.³ Located near Georgia Avenue, initially a Congressionally-mandated turnpike in and out of Washington serviced by stage coaches and later horse-drawn streetcars, the home was built on former farmland in a highland area of Washington County. Later, Fort Stevens, a Civil War fort was constructed nearby, and a road was cut connecting it to other forts in front of the property where the house was eventually erected.⁴ Sections of the road especially where the house is located retain a rural look. By the 1870s, subsistence farming in Brightwood seemed to be on the wane but "gentleman farming", weekending and summering, and related leisure were on the rise. A horse race track with betting, a resort hotel, and annual medieval tournaments were among the attractions that made the highland community a destination for Washington residents. People of means began constructing palatial frame homes for their country estates, and the Lightfoot House, constructed in 1892 by carriage maker, Frederick Bex, is a more modest example of that trend.

The Lightfoot House, significant in the Area of Architecture, is a vernacular, but fanciful and impressive 19th century frame dwelling that provides an excellent example of a Victorian-era suburban "villa." Its architectural elements and ornamental details reflect a stylistic eclecticism that includes, most notably, aspects of the Second Empire style. The house is cube-like in form and characterized by its central oriel tower topped with a Moorish copper-clad dome. Equally distinctive is its tall hipped roof, its wrap-around porch with turned columns, and its long and narrow window openings. It is substantial in size and is set upon a raised, rebuilt concrete foundation. It features weatherboard walls now sheathed with asbestos shingles and a steep pitched roof with overhanging eaves and exposed rafters and two tall brick chimneys. Although the roof is also clad in replacement materials, the dwelling's original entry door and windows are intact, as is the copper-clad dome of the oriel tower.

² The date of purchase is unclear. Lightfoot was assessed for taxes on the property as early as 1917 but did not move into the house until around 1932.

³ Katherine Grandine, "Brightwood: From Tollgate to Suburb" in Kathryn Schneider Smith, ed., *Washington at Home: An Illustrated History of Neighborhoods in the Nation's Capital*, Second Edition.

⁴ Fort Stevens was one of a ring of 164 forts and batteries built to defend Washington, DC during the Civil War. Fort Stevens also has the distinction of being the only site/battle where a United States president came under enemy fire while in office. The Military Road School was constructed in 1864-5 allegedly for children of contraband who had settled in the shadow of Fort Stevens and the succor of Vinegar Hill, the African American settlement that was taken over by Union soldiers to build the fort. Benjamin Franklin Cooling III & Walton H. Owen II, *Mr. Lincoln's Forts: A Guide to the Civil War Defenses of Washington*, (new edition, 2010), p.177.

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The George M. Lightfoot House is significant in the area of ethnic heritage. Lightfoot, African American, purchased the home in 1917 but did not assume residence until 1932. He taught Latin at the prestigious Howard University, from 1891 to 1939. A noted scholar, he regularly conducted salons in the home, which were attended by other prominent black intellectuals such as Carter G. Woodson, W.E.B. Dubois and Alain Locke. Lightfoot died in 1947

Archaeology

No previous archaeological investigations of the property have been conducted. There is moderate potential for historic archaeological resources related to 19th and 20th century occupation, including Civil War-era troop and contraband camps as well as undefined potential for prehistoric resources. The property is situated near a tributary of a stream that drains into Rock Creek and the location would have been favorable for prehistoric occupation.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Brightwood

Brightwood began as an early nineteenth century hamlet in the County of Washington, District of Columbia at a crossroads on Seventh Street (later renamed Georgia Avenue), where Rock Creek Ford Road (formerly known as Milk House Ford), and Piney Branch Road join it. A post office established at this juncture was originally named "Brighton" but was later changed to Brightwood to reduce confusion as there were many Brightons in the region.

Seventh Street was a Congressionally-mandated turnpike serviced initially by stage coaches and later horse-drawn streetcars that traversed the entire north-south length of Washington from the Center Market and the Potomac waterfront in Washington City through the county to Rockville, Maryland. Tolls were collected from travelers who for a time had to travel over a plank road, an improvement made in 1852 to Seventh Street from Boundary Road (Florida Avenue) to Silver Spring just across the District of Columbia line.⁵

Brightwood was bounded on the west by Rock Creek (formerly Piney Branch), a considerable asset to the community. The longest tributary in Washington, it was the best of the "many fast flowing streams to power griste mills" wrote George Washington in justifying the selection for the new capital.⁶ Most of the early residents of Brightwood were farmers with small to large holdings ranging from less than one acre to over 100 acres; and entrepreneurs in businesses related to farming and milling.

There was also an enclave of free African Americans who owned land, farmed and ran a dairy, forming the nucleus of a community called Vinegar Hill. Its informal boundaries included the crossroads of the post office and north of the site that eventually held the Lightfoot House. Vinegar Hill gained some renown with the coming of the Civil War when the federal government took the property of the largest landholder, Elizabeth Thomas, to erect the Civil War Fort Stevens. Thomas is well-known in local history for having received a personal promise from President Lincoln that she would be compensated for her confiscated property, but having to sue decades later to have the debt paid at a lesser value than its true worth. Towards the end of the Civil War, a school for black students was built in Vinegar Hill.

By the 1870s, subsistence farming in Brightwood seemed to be on the wane but "gentlemen farming", weekending and summering, and related leisure were on the rise. A horse race track with betting, a resort hotel, and annual medieval tournaments were among the attractions that made the community a destination for Washington residents. People of means began constructing palatial frame homes for their country estates, and the Lightfoot House was a more modest example of that trend.⁷

House and Frederick Bex (1844-1931)

The house that stands today was commissioned in 1892 by then property owner, Frederick Bex. English-born Bex was a prosperous carriage maker and inventor who owned and lived on 73 acres west of Rock Creek until 1891 when his property was appropriated for the development of Rock Creek Park. At that time, his holdings were valued at \$13,309.⁸ It

⁵ Seventh Street was also known as Seventh Street Pike, Plank Road and Brightwood Avenue. The toll was abolished in 1871.

⁶ Quoted in Steve Dryden, *Pierce Mill: Two Hundred Years in the Nation's Capital*, (Washington, DC, 2009), p.1.

⁷ Fort Stevens was one of a ring of 164 forts and batteries built to defend Washington, DC during the Civil War. Fort Stevens also has the distinction of being the only site/battle where a United States president came under enemy fire while in office. The Military Road School was constructed in 1864-5 allegedly for children of contraband who had settled in the shadow of Fort Stevens and the succor of Vinegar Hill, the African American settlement that was taken over by Union soldiers to build the fort. Cooling & Owen, p.177.

⁸ 1887 Hopkins Map, plate 43, shows Bex's land with a structure. "Rock Creek Awards", *Washington Post*, 12/20/1891, p.3, lists values placed on land the government wanted for the park. Bex's was identified as Tract 29. According the Hopkins map, Bex's land bordered the property of BT Swart (see footnote below) who had sold

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was probably shortly after settling this matter that Bex purchased the property that became known as 1321 Missouri Avenue.⁹ The property was immediately adjacent to the Military Road School for black pupils and at the foot of Vinegar Hill.

Almost a year later, a building permit was issued for lot 12 (later identified as lot 421) on Military Road to erect a two-story frame dwelling and a two-story frame stable (with dimensions larger than the house) for a total estimated cost of \$1,800. No architect's name was provided but the builder was listed as DeLong.¹⁰ The permitted house (present-day Lightfoot House), was a unique Victorian dwelling sporting a Moorish-style copper dome that would have marked the building as notable landmark, just as it is today. Although the stable was constructed (the 1903 Sanborn map shows the stable and another outbuilding), it would not survive the house moves of 1931 and 1933.

The 1893-94 "General Assessment for Washington County" lists Bex on Military Road between the Abigail Shoemaker property and the District of Columbia school. His land was .75 acres, and valued at \$188 with \$1200 in improvements.¹¹ In 1915, Bex sued the city to recover \$10,000 in damages to his "\$8,000 house", which he said was built in 1892. While no address was given in the newspaper report of the suit, it stated that a gutter near Georgia Avenue and Military Road was built by the city in 1899 and was allowed to overflow onto his property causing substantial damage and loss of income.¹²

During his life time, Bex was enterprising and inventive. In 1895, he became part owner of the well-regarded McDermott Carriage Company. Interestingly, McDermott subsequently received a contract to provide and outfit an ambulance carriage for Freedmen's Hospital. Bex also patented a dumpcart and a burglar alarm. A few years later, Bex became a co-incorporator of the innovative Epperley Portable Horse Stalls Company.¹³

Meantime, the former farm land and country estates of Brightwood were being subdivided and sold to accommodate new residents drawn away from the center city by the availability and convenience of street car transportation. A very active Brightwood Citizen's Association pushed for improved amenities and a more urbanized identity, all the while trying to protect property of the older inhabitants where possible. The roads became part of the unified DC highway system – new ones were laid and old ones rerouted and renamed. Military Road, for example, became Concord Avenue and then Missouri Avenue. Though the population of Brightwood increased, its development was slower than its booming neighboring community to the south, Petworth.

In the midst of all the changes, though, the house that would become known as the Lightfoot House remained essentially unaltered in appearance. This may have been because Bex sold the house to Lightfoot who did not take residence for almost 15 more years. Bex may have stayed on as a renter as he was living on the property in 1927. By this time, Bex, adapting to the times, was working in auto repair at a shop at 311 Missouri Avenue that also offered livery and blacksmithing services.¹⁴

In 1928, an African American couple, Fred and Alvaris Cureton, a fireman and teacher, were living in the house as renters through 1930.¹⁵ The following year, 1931, Bex, 85, passed away and the house was listed as vacant in 1932. Bex's wife

his land by then.

⁹ There were several owners of the property known for a time as 1321 Military Road, NW prior to Bex's purchase. However, research to date has confirmed only one: BT Swart, county road inspector, farmer, and active Democrat (Carpenter, 1881 and Hopkins, 1887). Based upon these earlier maps, there was already a structure on the property. Other previous owners may have been as indicated by the maps – Lewis Burnett, road house operator and Brightwood's first postmaster (Boschke, 1861); and, AG Osborn, grocer, postmaster, and justice of the peace (Hopkins, 1878).

¹⁰ D.C. Permit No. 0851, 10/11/1892. A notation on the permit report identified the site as located in Peter's Mill tract. Regarding the builder, a search of the city directories for 1890-1893 lists a Jarret [sic] DeLong who was working as a contractor and carpenter in Brightwood. A search of the permit database shows a J. DeLong as architect and builder in 1895 for one other building, a detached frame dwelling on Spring Road, NW.

¹¹ Except for 1878, the Shoemaker family had been shown as the 19th century owners of the property immediately to the east of the Lightfoot property – at 7th and Military Road (Missouri Avenue). According to the 1878 Hopkins, AG Osborn was the owner of seven acres that encompassed the Shoemaker and Bex/Lightfoot land. Indeed, Osborn whose name appeared inconsistently in the Boyd's city directories was listed in 1877, 1879 and 1880 as located in Brightwood as postmaster, grocer and justice of peace. Per Steve Dryden, p.38, Abigail leased her land at that location to a man operating a grocery. However, that time period was given as just before the Civil War. Burnett (see footnote 2) would also fit that description. Cooling

¹² "District Court News," *Washington Post*, 9/08/1915, p. 12.

¹³ *Washington Post*: "In and About Washington," 5/07/1895, p. 4; "New Hospital Ambulance," 10/28/1895, p. 10. *Evening Star*, 8/14/1888; 8/22/1895. "Portable Stall Company Incorporated," *Washington Post*, 11/04/1903, p. 4.

¹⁴ Boyd's City Directories. After 1917, Bex was not listed at 1321 until 1927.

¹⁵ The address during this period was listed as 1321 Military Road. Per the 1930 Federal Census, this was the home of the Cureton's and their two teenage children. They were renting the house for \$50. By contrast, African Americans living on Rock Creek Ford Road, to the north of the Lightfoot house, and on Vinegar Hill, were paying \$5.00 to 12.50 in rent.

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had preceded him in death by several years and they were childless. Surprisingly, Bex's address at the time of his death was given as St. Elizabeth's Hospital.¹⁶

George M. Lightfoot (1868-1947)

The continued preservation of the house that became 1329 Missouri Avenue, NW, is attributable to George M. Lightfoot, his passion for Classics, and his family who still reside in the home.

George Morton Lightfoot was born on December 25, 1868 in Culpeper, Virginia to James M. and Letitia B. Lightfoot. He moved to the District of Columbia where he attended public school and then Howard University Academy to prepare for college. Upon graduation from Williams College in 1891 where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree, he returned to Washington and became an instructor in the Howard Academy. In 1906 he was promoted to instructor in the college. He taught Latin, French, German, algebra, and history. Following his interest in the Classics, he studied and received a Masters of Arts Degree in Latin from Catholic University in 1922. Lightfoot then rose to become a full professor and chair of the Latin Department at Howard, a position he held until his retirement in 1939. He was considered by many, including a former president of Morgan State College, to be one of Howard's greatest teachers. Shortly before his retirement, he was commended for having been the faculty member with the longest tenure at Howard – 47 years.¹⁷

It was his interest in, and advocacy of, the study of the Latin language and literature as the basis for education that propelled him into becoming one of the leading African American intellectuals and educators in the field of Classical Studies. His commitment was exemplified in his gift of \$5,000 to establish a scholarship in Howard's School of Liberal Arts for the study of Latin.

A man of extraordinary accomplishments, Lightfoot was editor of a number of Howard University publications. He was also an early member of the American Negro Academy founded by Rev. Alexander Crummell in 1897 to promote scholarly endeavors by the nation's leading black intellectuals. Though the initiative ultimately was unable to sustain itself, Lightfoot was among the country's "Talented Tenth" who kept the organization alive for over 30 years. Among his Academy colleagues were Archibald Grimke, John Cromwell, Alain Locke, Kelly Miller, Carter G. Woodson, Arthur A. Schomburg, and W.E.B. DuBois, the latter two who had once served as president. An entry on Lightfoot and his accomplishments was included in Woodson's scholarly compilation *Encyclopedia Africana*.¹⁸

Lightfoot also found time to be a civic activist. He was appointed by President Theodore Roosevelt to serve on the District of Columbia Board of Charities. He was also active in his church and noted for his enjoyment of sports.¹⁹

Though he had purchased the property in 1917, it was 1931 before Lightfoot took residence of the property then identified as 1375 Military Road.²⁰ Most likely, Lightfoot moved into the house after it was relocated on its lot (Lot 421). The move was necessitated by the slicing of the southern edge of the triangular-shaped lot for the widening Military Road to become the new Concord Avenue.²¹ The house was moved from the eastern edge of the property to the far western corner. The new foundation was brick. This was the first of what would be two moves for the house in as many years.

After its move, the house was immediately adjacent to the Military Road Public School, established for blacks on the heels of the close of the Civil War, but remained at the foot of an antebellum African American community known as Vinegar Hill. Though the Lightfoots owned other property in the city and had lived close to Howard University, the bucolic setting of this home appealed to them. In addition, this was a time when many of his colleagues and other professional blacks were moving to suburban locations within the District such as nearby Brookland, and east of the Anacostia River to Eastland Gardens and DePriest Village in Capitol View. The stately home and its spacious grounds hosted a number of Lightfoot's

¹⁶ After 1928, Bex was no longer listed as working at the 311 Missouri business either. His death was announced in "Vital Statistics," *Washington Post*, 6/10/1931, p. 20. According to the federal censuses for Washington, DC, 1880 and 1900, Bex and wife, Hannah, had had no children. Hannah's death was reported 9/16/1909 in the *Washington Post*, "Health Office Record", p. 3 – the address was given as Military Road, Brightwood. Bex was not found in the federal censuses for Washington after 1900.

¹⁷ *Afro-American*, "Prof. Lightfoot Rites Listed For Today," 12/27/1947, p. B2; "47 Years on the Job," 1/22/1938, p. 2. "George Morton Lightfoot," *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 33, No.1 (Jan., 1948), p. 119-120

¹⁸ Jacqueline M. Moore, *Leading the Race: The Transformation of the Black Elite in the Nation's Capital 1880-1920* (Charlottesville, 1999), p.195-197. "Session December 29 of Negro Academy", *Washington Post*, Dec. 12, 1926, p. M16; Daniel Lewis, *A Guide to the Microfilm Edition of the Papers of Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History 1915-1950*, p.25. Woodson died before the encyclopedia was completed and published.

¹⁹ "Prof. George M. Lightfoot, H.U. Teacher, Dies at 79," *Afro-American*, 1/10/1948, p. 9.

²⁰ Missouri Avenue was earlier known as Military Road, and then Concord Avenue.

²¹ Building Permit 136964 was issued October 13, 1930 to move the house from the east corner which was in the area taken for the road to the northwest corner of the remaining land in the lot. The lot had been subdivided from parcel 87/78 or Square 2792 lot 421 to now lots 420 and 421, with the city taking 420.

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colleagues from the Negro Academy, Howard University, and national and international visitors at a time when de facto segregation foreclosed opportunities for people of color and means to socialize in grand hotels or restaurants.²²

Then in 1933, the federal government decided to make the plans for a road connecting the remnants of 18 Civil War forts, trenches, and earthworks around the city a reality.²³ It began condemning and purchasing land for the Fort Circle Drive, including lots 421 and the one next to it, 422, for part of Reservation 499. Once again the Lightfoot House had to be moved. Lightfoot purchased the next lot over, 87/500, overcoming resistance from owners who according to oral history were unwilling to sell to a black man. Thus the house was moved a few hundred feet coming to rest on a concrete foundation constructed on the new lot. It still however, retained its original structure, setting and context.²⁴

In 1941, realizing that his intention of developing housing for Howard University faculty on his land was probably not feasible, Lightfoot subdivided Parcel 87/500. The new subdivided property was reclassified as Square 2792 and lots 802 and 803, where the house was now located. He sold lot 802 to the developer of the neighboring Concord Garden Apartments, whose heir, in turn, sold it to her synagogue. The land lay fallow for some years before it was purchased by another developer. His plans to erect 26 townhouses on the site met with considerable resistance, not only from the Lightfoots but also from the community. Acceding to public sentiment, lot 802 was purchased by the National Park Service in 2003, and incorporated into Reservation 499.²⁵

While the remodeled and renovated Military Road School still maintains its presence on the west side of the Lightfoot House, it is now separated from the house by open green space, designated as Reservation 499. On the east of the house, the former Shoemaker property is filled by pre-war apartment buildings originally named Concord Garden Apartments for the 20th century street name, given for a time to that section of Military Road that subsequently became Missouri Avenue.²⁶

The home remains in the family. It is a visible landmark that harkens to a past that has faded. It is also a dogged survivor of condemnation and eminent domain, preserving over the decades the image of country living in a bucolic Washington County. It is for these reasons that the George M. Lightfoot House is significant under Criteria A and C.

²² Oral history from granddaughter Carol Lightfoot Walker.

²³ The McMillan Commission's 1902 plan for Washington included a "Fort Circle Park" system. The purpose of this component of the plan was to recognize the remaining Civil War defenses of the capital and to establish a corridor of parks and roadway connecting the remaining forts. Congressional approval was slow but finally in 1925 the National Capital Parks Commission was created and authorized to begin purchasing fort land that was in private ownership. In the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps was given the charge to reconstruct Fort Stevens near the Lightfoot property. However, the government was never able to complete the project.

²⁴ Deed #1933001597, 401/26/1933, and # 1933005591, April 3, 1933, Recorder of Deeds Online Database. DC Building Permit 161785, April 7, 1933.

²⁵ Statements from Lightfoot Walker, and Joe Kish, NPS; DC Surveyor's Office; Carrie Donovan, "Park Purchase Ends Fight Over Fort Stevens Project", *Washington Post*, District News Section, May 1, 2003, p. 3-4.

²⁶ 1301-1315 are George Santmyers-designed apartment buildings built in the 1936. By this time the former Shoemaker property was owned by J. Charles Shapiro. Historic Permit Database, Square 2792.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Published Sources

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Boyd, William H., compiler. *Boyd's City Directory to the District of Columbia*. Washington, D.C. By the Author, 1914-1965.

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Maps

G.M.Hopkins Atlases, 1878, 1887, plate 43, 1892, 1894, plate 20

Baist Maps of Washington, D.C. Library of Congress. 1903, 1937

Boschke Topographical Map of the District of Columbia, 1861

Carpenter Map of Washington County, 1881, Plate 12

Newspapers

Baltimore Afro-American

"47 Years on the Job," 1/22/1938, p. 2.

"Prof. George M. Lightfoot, H.U. Teacher, Dies at 79," 1/10/1948, p. 9

"Prof. Lightfoot Rites Listed For Today," 12/27/1947, p. B2.

Evening Star

8/14/1888; 8/22/1895.

Washington Post

"District Court News," 9/08/1915, p. 12

"Health Office Record", 9/16/1909 p. 3

"In and About Washington," 5/07/1895, p. 4

"New Hospital Ambulance," 10/28/1895, p. 10

"Park Purchase Ends Fight Over Fort Stevens Project", District News Section, 5/1/2003, p. 3-4

"Portable Stall Company Incorporated," 11/04/1903, p. 4

"Rock Creek Awards", 12/20/1891, p. 3

"Session December 29 of Negro Academy," 12/12/1926, p. M16.

Lightfoot, George M. House
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"Vital Statistics," 6/10/1931, p. 20

Other Resources

Carol Lightfoot Walker interviews: 5/29/2012, 1/16/2013, 2/11/2013, 2/25/2013

Deeds, DC Recorder of Deeds and DC Archives

#1933001597, 1933005591, 1941013142

Joseph Kish interview, correspondence: 2/11/2013, 2/28/2013

Lusk Real Estate Assessments, Washington County, and Washington, DC. 1893-94, 1908-1909, 1917-1928

Record Group 351 [DC Tax Assessments], National Archives

Washington, D.C. Building Permits Database

Washington, DC Wills, DC Archives

U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Census, Washington, District of Columbia, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930

A Guide to the Microfilm Edition of the Papers of Carter B. Woodson and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History 1915-1950. Compiled by Daniel Lewis. 1999.

http://www.lexisnexis.com/documents/academic/upa_cis/1401_PapersCarterGWoodson.pdf

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property < 1 acre (3292 sq. feet)
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 3 24 048 43 14 513
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The George M. Lightfoot House at 1329 Missouri Avenue, NW occupies Square 2792, Lot 803 near the corner of Georgia Avenue and Missouri Avenue in the Brightwood area of northwest Washington, D.C.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Square 2792, Lot 803 has been associated with this property since the house was moved in 1933, and the property subdivided in 1941.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Patsy M. Fletcher
organization DCHPO date March 2013
street & number 1100 4th Street, SE telephone 202-741-0816
city or town Washington State DC zip code 20024
e-mail Patsy.fletcher@dc.gov

Additional Documentation - See Attached

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: George M. Lightfoot House
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
Photographer: Kim Williams for Photos 1-6 and Ryan Kyra Walker and Tyla Walker for photos 7-11
Date Photographed: June 7, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking north showing south elevation
1 of 11

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking northwest showing south and east elevations
2 of 11

Lightfoot, George M. House
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Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking northeast showing south and west elevations
3 of 11

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Detail of south elevation showing central oriel tower
4 of 11

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Detail of oriel tower
5 of 11

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking south showing north elevation
6 of 11

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View of front entry door from interior. View looking south.
7 of 11

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Central passage and stair.
8 of 11

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Detail showing mantel in east front parlor
9 of 11

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Detail of butler window between dining room and kitchen.
10 of 11

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Detail of brick fireplace in kitchen.
11 of 11

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

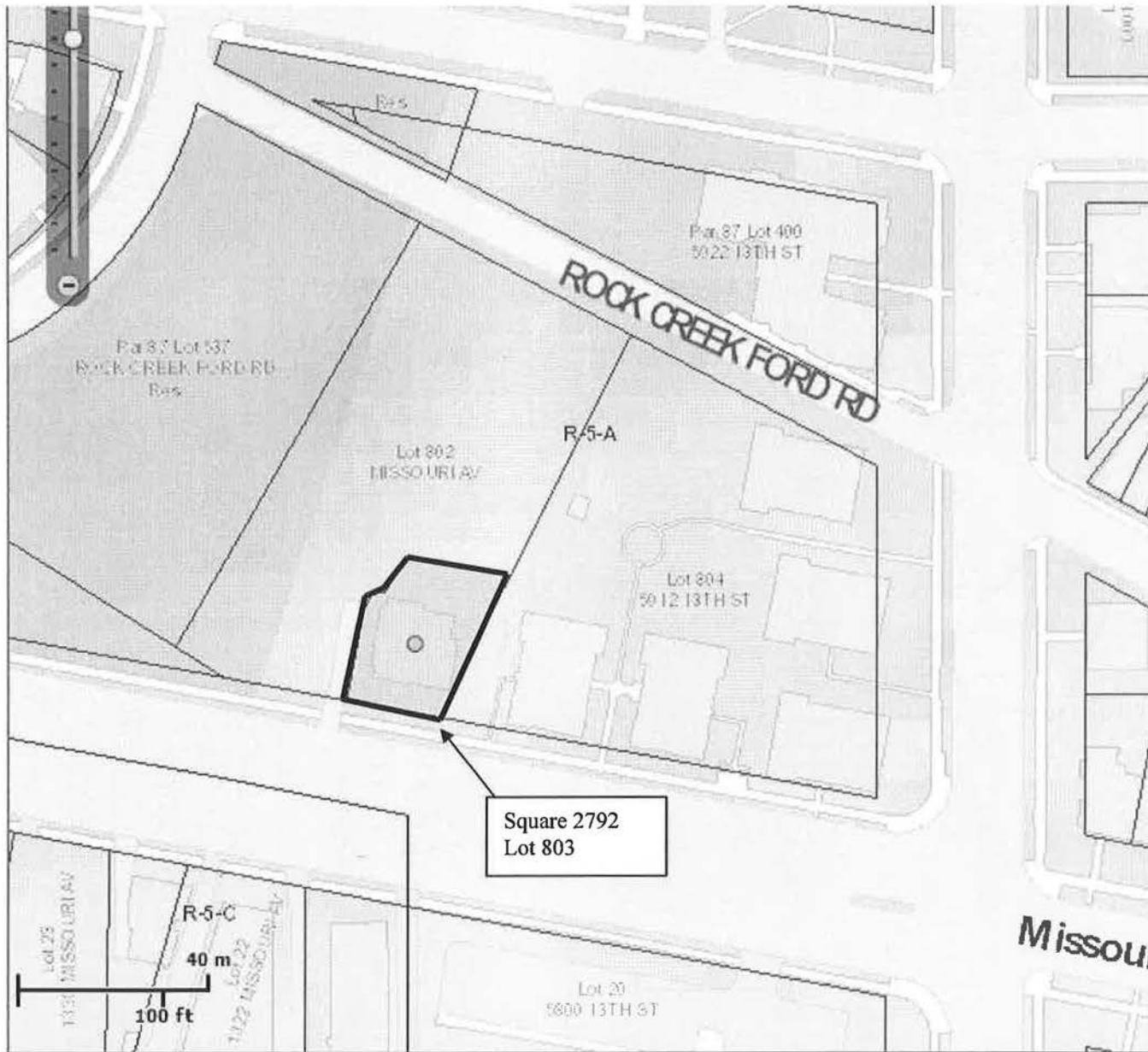
name Carol Lightfoot Walker
street & number 1329 Missouri Avenue, NW telephone 202-726-6123
city or town Washington state DC zip code 200

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Lightfoot, George M. House
Name of Property

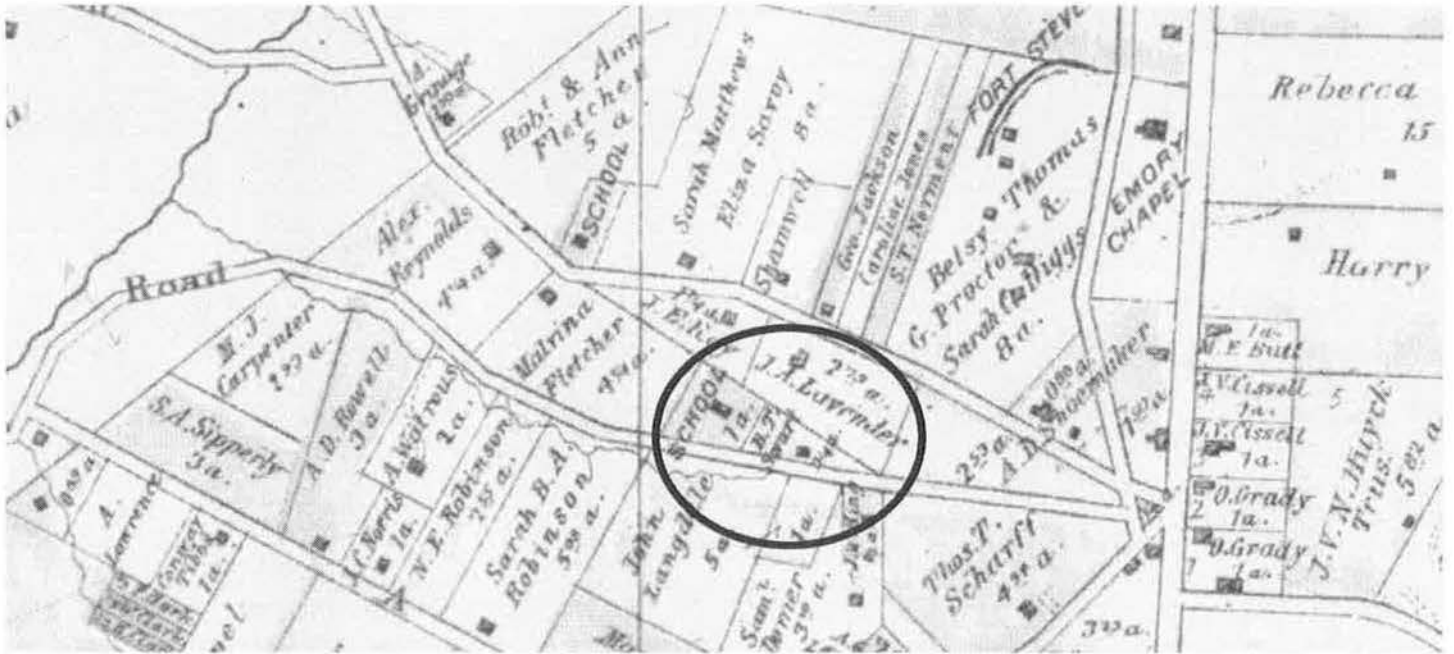
Washington, DC
County and State



Site Plan Showing National Register Boundaries of the Lightfoot House at 1329 Missouri Avenue, NW (Square 2792 Lot 803)

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G.M. Hopkins Map of 1887 – Showing Ownership by BT Swart and a structure on the lot

G.M. Hopkins Map of 1894 – Showing location of house



Lightfoot, George M. House
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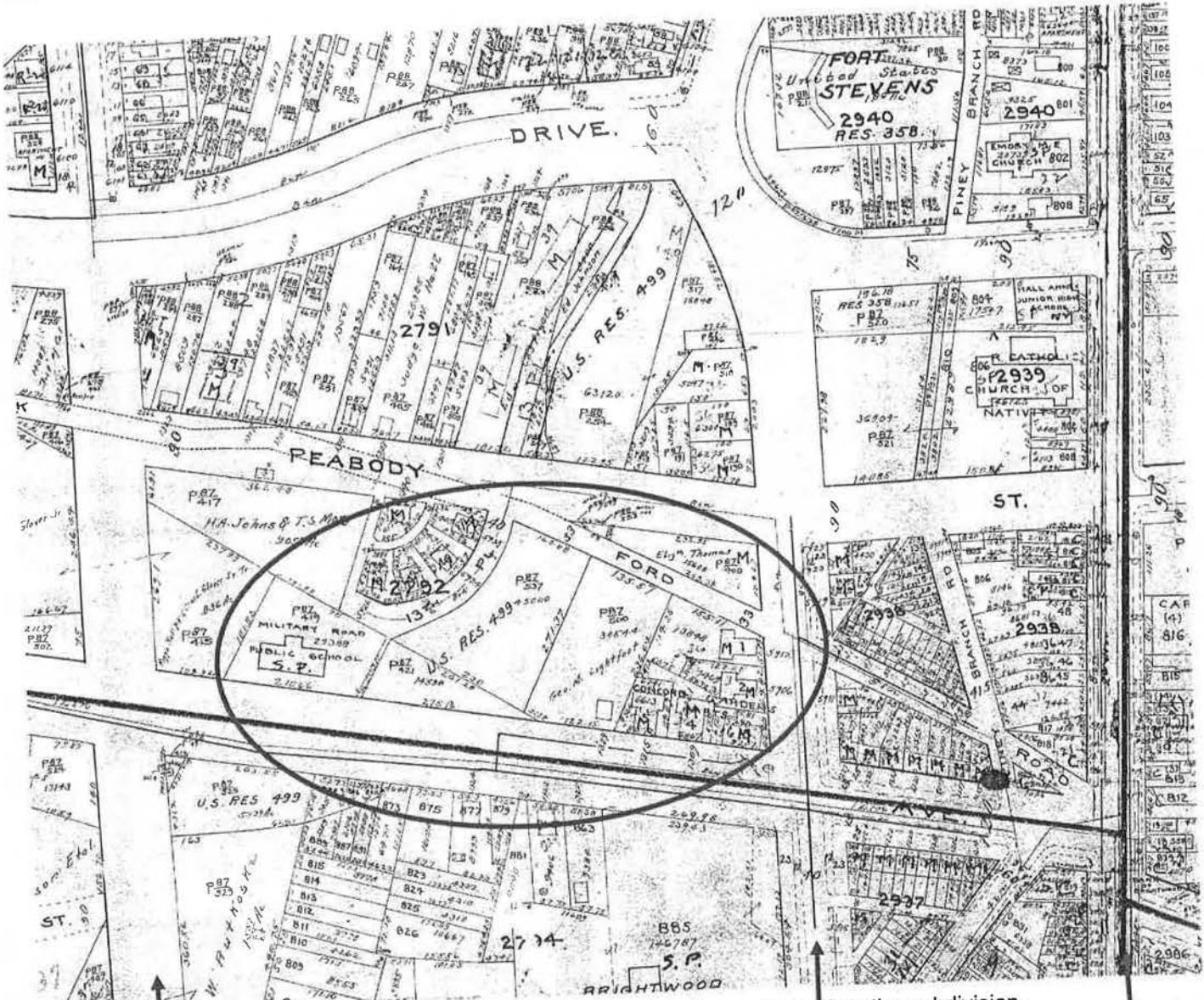
Washington, DC
County and State



Baist Map of 1903 – showing Frederick Bex ownership – the house, stables and an outbuilding

Washington, DC
County and State

Lightfoot, George M. House
Name of Property



Baist Map of 1937 Vol. 3, Plan 20 – Shows final location of the house but before the subdivision.

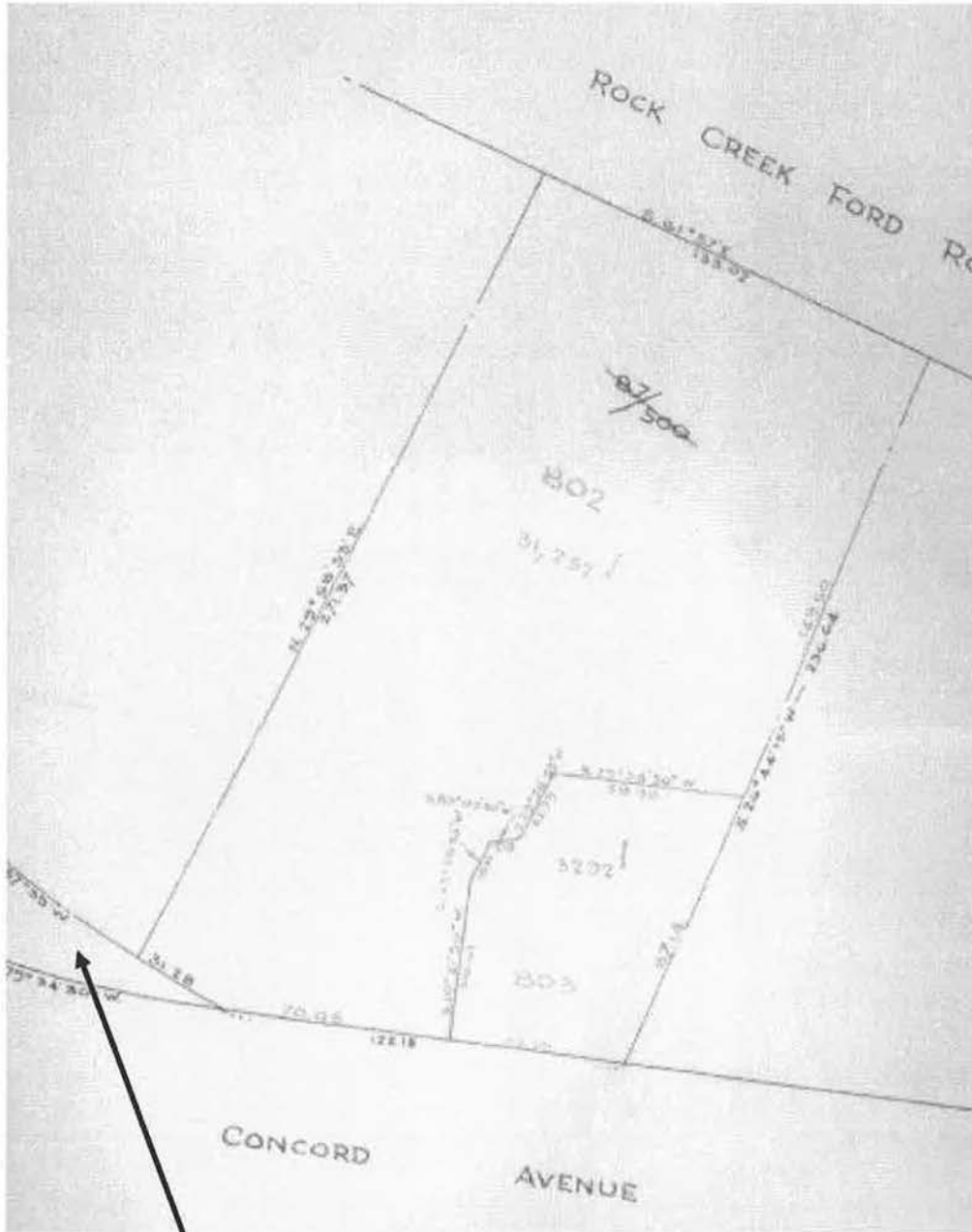
14th Street

13th Street

Georgia Avenue

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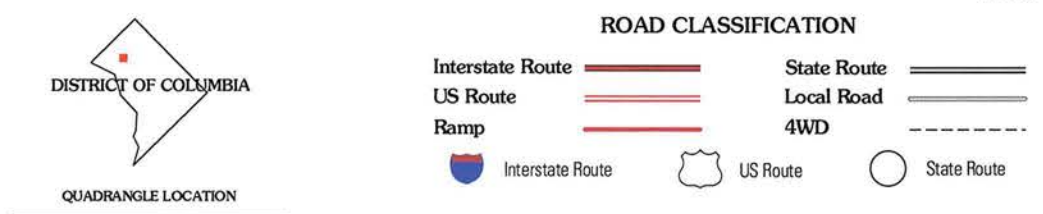
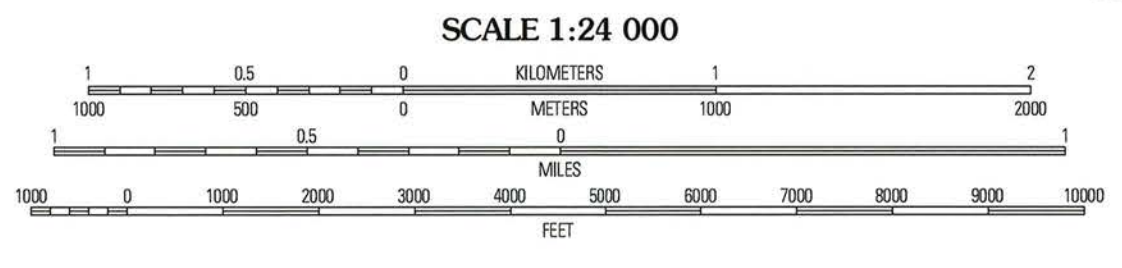
1941 Subdivision of Parcel 87 Lot 500 into Square 2792, Lots 802 and 803, the lot where the Lightfoot House is located. Former lot of the house.



18 324 048
43 145 13

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83), Projection and
1 000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, Zone 18S
1 000-foot ticks: Maryland Coordinate System of 1983,
Virginia Coordinate System of 1983 (north zone)

UTM GRID AND 2011 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



Imagery: NAIP, June 2009
Roads: ©2006-2010 Tele Atlas
Names: ©2010
Hydrography: National Hydrography Dataset, 2009
Contours: National Elevation Dataset, 2008
Boundaries: Census, IBWC, IBC, USGS, 1972 - 2010

U.S. National Grid
100,000-Square Meter
Grid Zone Designation
18S

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NORTH AMERICAN VERTICAL DATUM OF 1988
This map was produced to conform with version 0.5.10
of the USGS US Topo Product Standard.
A metadata file associated with this product is draft version 0.5.15





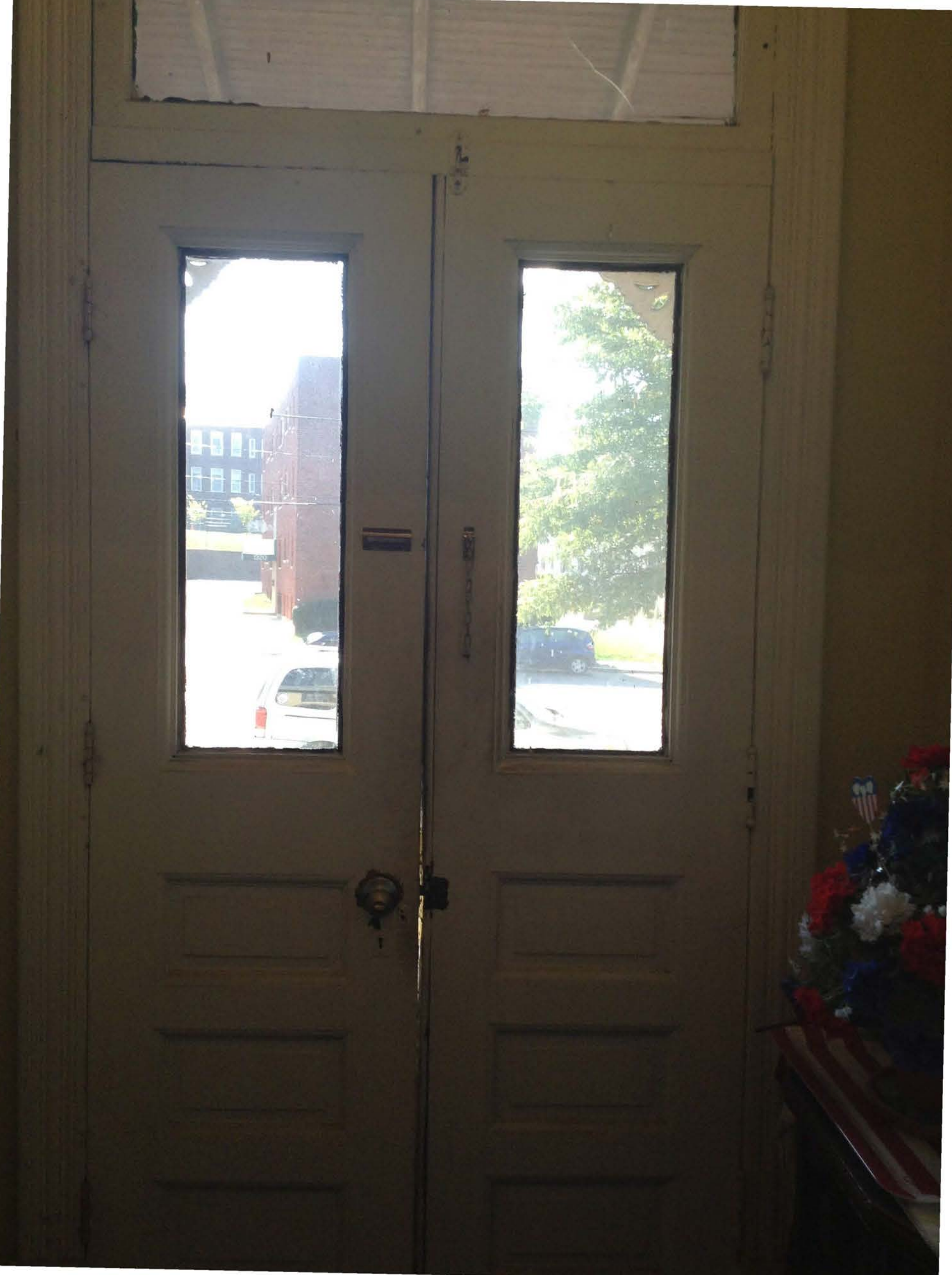


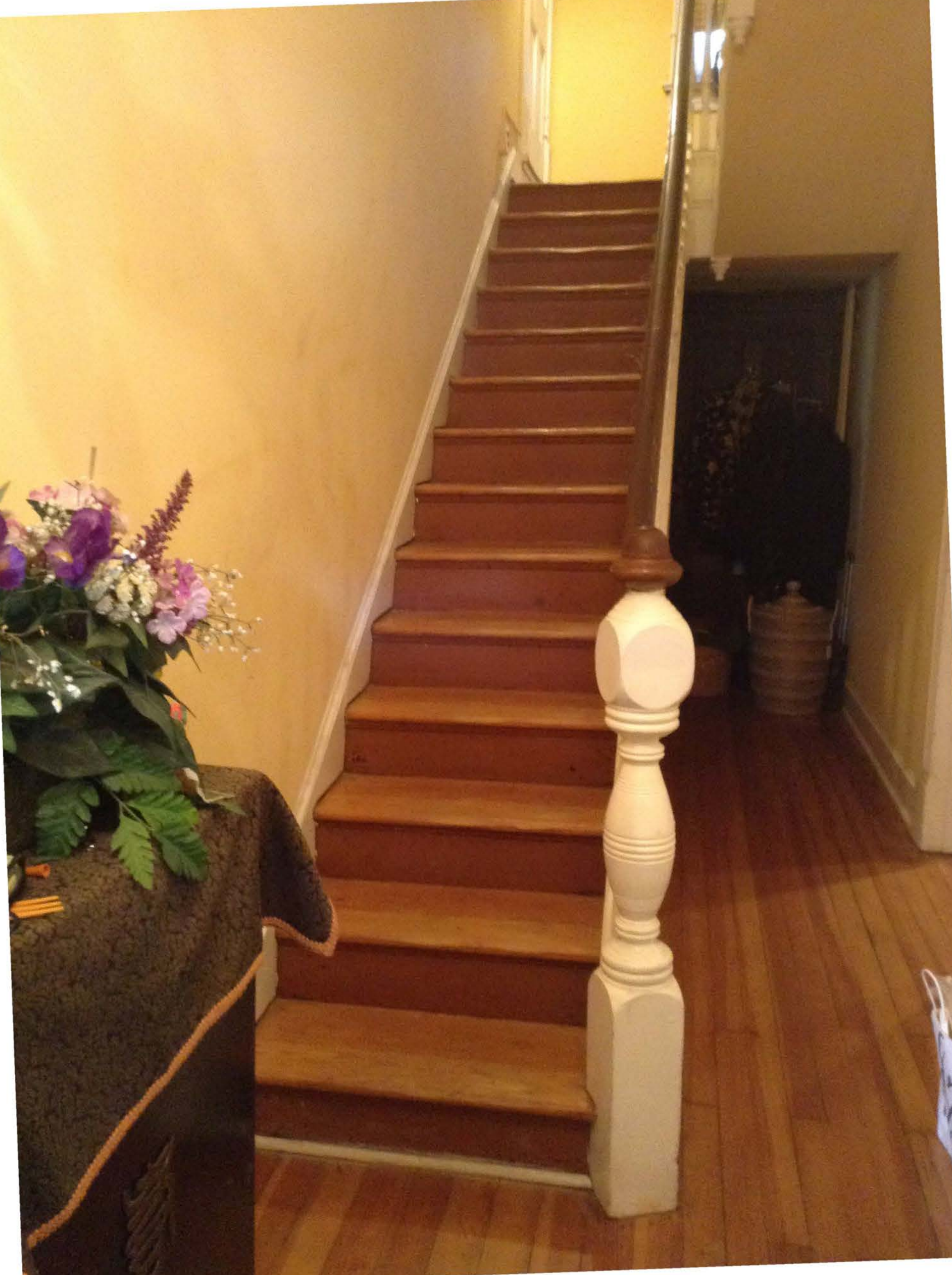


















UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Lightfoot, George M., House
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, District of Columbia

DATE RECEIVED: 11/29/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/15/14
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13001070

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 1-15-14 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.