

PH0011495

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

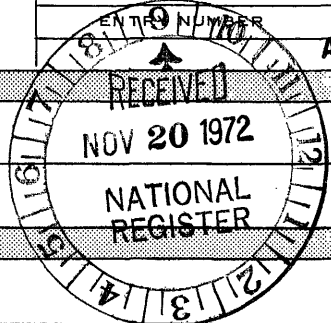
(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:

COUNTY:

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER: _____ DATE: APR 3 1973



1. NAME

COMMON:
The Cosmos Club

AND/OR HISTORIC:
The Townsend House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
2121 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN:
Washington (Congressman Walter E. Fauntroy, District of Columbia)

STATE: District of Columbia CODE: 11 COUNTY: District of Columbia CODE: 001

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Private Men's Club</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
The Cosmos Club

STREET AND NUMBER:
2121 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: District of Columbia CODE: 11

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Recorder of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:
6th & D Streets, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: District of Columbia CODE: 11

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Proposed District of Columbia Additions to the National Register of Historic Properties recommended by the Joint Committee on Landmarks

DATE OF SURVEY: March 7, 1968 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
National Capital Planning Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
1325 G Street, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: District of Columbia CODE: 11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER: APR 3 1973

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Cosmos Club (Townsend House) faces south onto Massachusetts Avenue. It is located on the corner of Florida Avenue, Twenty-second Street, and Massachusetts Avenue and has a paved semicircular driveway defined by a guilloche balustrade leading to the marquise. Finished in 1900, the facade of the mansion consists of Louis XV elements on a Beaux-Arts facade.

The main 3-1/2 story, three-bay block is 36 feet wide by 98 feet deep, while its 2-story flanking composite bay wings are 34 feet wide by 54 feet deep. The house sits on a plain Milford granite base which extends as high as the ground floor window sills. The ground floor has rusticated limestone walls separated from the first floor by a string course. The windows of the ground floor are double-hung, 2/2-light windows, which are protected by decorative cast-iron screens. The central ground floor window in each of the side wings is similar and is flanked by 1/1-light windows and framed by the first floor balcony consoles, the string course, and an over-frieze panel of fruit.

The main entrance is in the center of the main block and can be described as a half-glazed, double entrance door with protective wrought-iron tracery. The cast iron and frosted glass marquise consists of decorative iron side panels and consoles which support a canopy with fleur-de-lis fringe and central escutcheon mount.

The first floor is separated from the ground floor by a string course with a false, plain balustrade which extends to support four, fluted, composite two-story pilasters which punctuate the window bays of the main block. The false balustrade is broken at each main block opening by a decorative, cast-iron railing. In the center of each wing the false balustrade is broken by a limestone balcony consisting of concave end consoles, each with drape, pendant, and rosette, supporting an extension of the building string course which acts as a base for a banister of urn balusters and blocks.

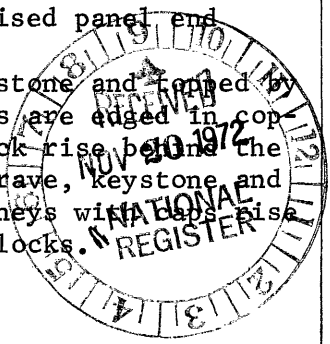
The first floor has floor-length, single pane, casement windows with transoms. The main block lintels are raised and indented to form a rosette guilloche frieze flanked by leaf scroll consoles which support a cyma cornice and shallow hood. The hood curves and flattens to form a raised background for the third floor casement and transom window architraves consisting of crossettes, base scrolls, lintel spray and scrolled keystone.

The first floor central window of each of the flanking wings has a plain keystone. The false balustrade supports prominent quoins, and flanking the central window are single, corner indented panels. The plain frieze of the wings is broken by the window keystone and overhung by floral drapes and pendants above the flanking bay panels. Above the corona cornice is a three bay, oval guilloche-baluster balustrade with prominent raised panel end blocks.

The main block has a slate mansard roof, edged in limestone and topped by a copper torus ridge cap. The flanking slate hipped roofs are edged in copper. The three half-dormer casement bays on the main block rise above the cornice balustrade, each having a blind fan, torus architrave, keystone and segmental hood buttressed by scrolls. Two limestone chimneys rise respectively from the brick-surfaced east and west main blocks.

(Continued on Form 10-300a)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



3. SIGNIFICANCE

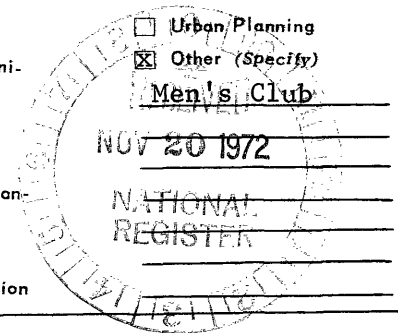
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) erected 1898-1900

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Men's Club</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Joint Committee on Landmarks has designated the Cosmos Club (Townsend House) a Category II Landmark of importance which contributes significantly to the cultural heritage and visual beauty of the District of Columbia. The Townsend House is one of the many elegant and often ostentatious mansions that lined Massachusetts Avenue in the early decades of the 20th century. Completed in 1900 for Richard H. Townsend, a railway magnate, the mansion was designed by the well-known firm of Carrere and Hastings. Reflecting the taste of the period, the house incorporates Louis XV elements on a Beaux-Arts facade. The Cosmos Club, a club whose membership includes distinguished men in the fields of science, literature and the arts, purchased the house in 1950.

The Townsend House, which incorporated the walls of the Hillyer House, was begun in 1898 and completed in 1900. The earlier house was built in 1873 by Curtis Justin Hillyer, an attorney engaged in mining speculation in California and Colorado. It is said that part of the Hillyer House was incorporated in the new mansion because of Mrs. Townsend's superstitious fear of inhabiting a totally new home. Richard H. Townsend, who commissioned the firm of Carrere and Hastings to design the house, was president of the Erie and Pittsburgh railroad. The house was the center of Washington social activity, and it was said that Mrs. Townsend spent as much as \$240,000 a year for entertainment. After the death of her husband in 1902, Mrs. Townsend continued to live in the house with their daughter, Mathilde. Mathilde's first marriage to Senator Peter Goelet Gerry ended in divorce, and in 1925 she married Benjamin Sumner Welles, who was to become Under Secretary of State. Mathilde inherited the property from her mother, and it was during her ownership that the mansion became the temporary residence of Franklin Delano Roosevelt for a few weeks before he entered the White House.

During World War II, in January 1942, the American Women's Volunteer Service used the stables as a canteen. In 1943 the above group moved out, and the house was occupied by the Canadian Women's Army Corps Headquarters Detachment.

After the death of his wife, Mathilde, in 1949, Welles sold the house to the Cosmos Club for \$364,365. Extensive alterations were carried out at this time, and further additions and modifications occurred in 1961 and 1971.

The Cosmos Club was founded on November 16, 1876, by John Wesley Powell (a famous explorer and scientist) and a number of men sharing similar interests. The Club membership includes distinguished men in the fields of science, literature and the fine arts. Over the years the membership has included three presidents of the U.S., 12 nobel prize winners, and many Pulitzer Prize winners.

(Continued on Form 10-300a)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Information compiled by the Commission of Fine Arts, and currently on file at the Commission of Fine Arts.

Information compiled by the Cosmos Club, and currently on file at the Club.

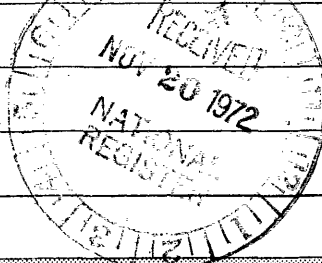
10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		38° 54' 41"	77° 02' 53"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 44,099 square feet

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



18/322400/43087410

OTM REF
12-19-72

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Suzanne Ganschietz, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION: National Capital Planning Commission DATE: 20 August 1972

STREET AND NUMBER:
1325 G Street, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: District of Columbia CODE: 11

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

<p>As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/> State <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name <u>[Signature]</u></p> <p>Title <u>Deputy Mayor-Commissioner</u></p> <p>Date _____</p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p><u>[Signature]</u> Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>Date <u>4/3/73</u></p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p><u>[Signature]</u> Keeper of The National Register</p> <p>Date <u>3-26-73</u></p>
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
COUNTY	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	APR 3 1973

(Number all entries)

7. Description - Cosmos Club

The lavish interior of the Cosmos Club has been finely preserved and maintained and serves well the social functions of the Club. The interiors are eclectic in style and contain elements of 18th Century French, English, and Germanic styles, especially the French styles of Louis XIV and Louis XV. The ground floor entrance has plaster mantles in the Louis XIV manner; paired piers and grey-veined white marble Ionic columns serve as a screen which divides the entrance hall from the Louis XV stairhall. The stairhall, with its decorative wreath, cast-iron railing leads to the first floor which contains the main rooms. The first floor reception room is decorated in mid-eighteenth century Germanic manner. The library has an impressive ceiling with geometric rinceau panels painted white and separated by wooden beams with plaster crossing bosses and talon edging painted to simulate wood. The mantel which dominates the rest of the room is in the 16th century manner. The Long Gallery has oak panels, decorative panel work painted to simulate wood, and fireplaces in the manner of Louis XIV. The original brocatel panels in the dining room have been painted to simulate wood. The ballroom, the most ornate of the rooms, is done in the 18th century French manner. The room is richly ornamented and gilded and has an elaborate decorative rococo coved cornice. Within the cove and centered above each wall is a cartouche flanked by dragons, while at the corners are similar devices flanked by putti. The ceiling which dominates the room consists of three recessed bays. The end bays each have an elliptical rococo panel; the center bay is higher and contains a round allegorical canvas.

8. Significance - Cosmos Club

The Club which occupied many different quarters in the intervening period acquired the Townsend House in 1950. The house was altered to accommodate the needs of the Club by Horace W. Peaslee and Charles H. Tompkins. The 1961 and 1962 enlargements were handled by architect Frank W. Cole and builder George W. Lipscomb.

The original architects of the house were Carrere and Hastings. Carrere (1858-1911) graduated from the Ecole des Beaux Arts and worked in the New York office of McKim, Mead and White. He formed his partnership with Hastings in 1884. Hastings attended Columbia University and then studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts where he met Carrere. In addition to the Townsend House, the firm had several important commissions in the National Capital Region including the Arlington Cemetery Amphitheatre and the Old House and Senate Office buildings.

