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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	
COUNTY:	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	MAR 16 1972

**1. NAME**

COMMON: (within the Boundaries of the Georgetown Historic District)  
Oak Hill Cemetery Chapel

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
R Street at 29th Street, N.W., Oak Hill Cemetery

CITY OR TOWN:  
Washington

STATE	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
District of Columbia	11	District of Columbia	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 type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
Oak Hill Cemetery Company

STREET AND NUMBER:  
30th and R Street, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN:  
Washington

STATE	CODE
District of Columbia	11

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
Recorder of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Sixth and D Streets, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN:  
Washington

STATE	CODE
District of Columbia	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

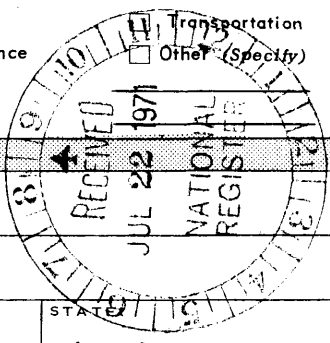
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
National Capital Planning Commission

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

CITY OR TOWN:  
Washington

STATE	CODE
District of Columbia	11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE:

COUNTY:

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER: MAR 16 1972

DATE:

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 Oak Hill Cemetery Chapel, the only known example of Renwick's Gothic Revival church design in the District of Columbia, is located in Oak Hill Cemetery (Georgetown) Washington, D.C. The cemetery grounds are bounded by R Street, N.W. on the south, Montrose Park on the west, and Rock Creek on the north and east. The Chapel (which faces west) is about 350 feet east of the gatehouse and slightly to the north, at about the point where 29th Street intersects R Street. The one story, rectangular chapel measures 23'2" by 41'2", with the buttresses (2 feet deep) adding 4 feet to each dimension. The sides have four bays, the facade one.

The Chapel is constructed of Potomac gneiss, laid in random courses generally 4 1/2 to 9 inches high. Red sandstone is used throughout the building for the water table, the five sided belt course (about 5 in. thick) which runs below the windows, the window enframingent, buttress caps, frieze and cornice, decorative bell cote at the west gable end and the elaborate gothic finial at the east gable end. The east-west gable roof is of grey slate.

The west facade contains the main entrance with a large two leaf pointed door with 4 lancet panels in each leaf. The door is painted brown and is protected by a wrought iron gate with strap decoration (below) and leaf patterns (above). Over the entrance door there is a rose window with wood mullions and frame, and with 12 quatrefoils around the perimeter. At the north and south sides of the Chapel the lancet windows are framed with sandstone and contain wooden frames and mullions. Each window is composed of two lancets with a quatrefoil in the apex. On the rear elevation there is a large lancet window with wooden mullions, painted brown.

The interior is a rectangular space measuring 19'10" x 37'8". The walls are paneled with a dark wood wainscoting to a height of 50". The ceiling is one of the most decorative features of the interior. It is divided into four north-south bays by the roof trusses (whose lower edges form a pointed arch). The slope of the roof in each bay is divided into six squares plus two half squares formed at the top next to the ridge and at the bottom next to the plate. Each square is filled with a large quatrefoil with chamfered edges, through which one can see the vertical boarding of the roof. The trusses which form the four bays have pierced floral leaf drops at the spring. Three of the trusses are free standing; the two at the east and the west are apparently attached to the end walls. All of the ceiling construction is of contrasting hues of dark wood.

The double lancet windows are 44" wide with a brown painted heavy wood frame and mullions. In the apex is a fleur-de-lis quatrefoil pane. The lancets are of light colored glass, with a pink to violet outer border, blue inner border, and light cream or yellow glass in the central panels. The fleur-de-lis and other features are yellowish. Two windows on either side have lower panels which pivot open. The large east window is predominantly light green, with a large central panel depicting a winged angle holding a wreath of victory in each hand.

Both the site and the architecture of the Oak Hill Chapel have remained virtually unchanged in the 120 years since the Chapel was built.

(The above architectural description is taken almost verbatim from Georgetown Architecture, No. 10: see bibliography.)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**3. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1850 date of construction

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Joint Committee on Landmarks has designated the Oak Hill Cemetery Chapel a Category II landmark of importance which contributes significantly to the cultural heritage and visual beauty of the District of Columbia. This pleasing, well proportioned Chapel was designed by James Renwick in 1850 and sits on the highest ridge of the cemetery. The Chapel, often referred to as a miniature Gothic gem is an excellent example of Gothic Revival architecture. The finely proportioned chapel with its double lancet windows, skillful use of material in the contrast of sandstone and gneiss as well as attention to detail reflects the sensitivity of the architect. The Chapel is the only known example of Renwick's Gothic Revival Church design in the District of Columbia. James Renwick, (1818-1895) architect of the Chapel, also designed Grace Church in New York City as well as St. Patrick's Cathedral. He was appointed architect of the Smithsonian Institution in 1846 and the resulting building was one of the most important examples of American Gothic Revival.

The original 12 1/2-acres of the approximately 16-acre site of Oak Hill Cemetery were conveyed to the cemetery company by William W. Corcoran in 1848. In addition to the gift of the cemetery, Corcoran spent over one hundred thousand dollars in its beautification and provided in its charter that it should "be forever inalienable." Corcoran (1798-1888) was an extremely generous man whose most notable gift to the City of Washington was the Corcoran Art Gallery (see National Register: Renwick Museum and also Corcoran Gallery of Art). Captain George de la Roche (1791-1861) was hired by Corcoran to survey and lay out the cemetery. De la Roche was by profession a civil engineer although he did practice architecture; his best known work was the old United States Naval Observatory.

The Oak Hill Cemetery is known not only for its beauty and wooded setting, but also for some of the important monuments located there. The Van Ness Mausoleum (Category II Landmark) designed by George Hadfield and modeled after the Temple of Vesta is found in Oak Hill as in the granite monument to E.M. Stanton, the Secretary of War under Lincoln. Corcoran had the remains of John Howard Payne, author of "Home Sweet Home" removed to the cemetery. Alexander de Bodisco, the Russian Ambassador was buried there in 1854. Corcoran himself is buried in the cemetery. The cemetery gatehouse, built in 1850, is a handsome brick miniature Italianate villa.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Commission of Fine Arts & HABS, Georgetown Architecture--Northwest Washington (Historic American Buildings Survey Selections, No. 10), 1970. pp. 87-94.

Gordon, William. "Old Homes on Georgetown Heights," Records of the Columbia Historical Society. Vol. 18, Washington, D.C., 1915. p. 88.

Washington, City and Capital. American Guide Services, Federal Writers Project, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	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
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	38	54	45
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	77	03	31
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"			
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: church occupies less than one acre on a

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES 15-3/4 acre site.

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
Suzanne Ganschietz, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION: National Capital Planning Commission DATE: 23 March 1971

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**

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:

National  State  Local

Name: [Signature] Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: Deputy-Mayor Commissioner

Date: AUG 16 1971

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

[Signature]  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

ATTEST: [Signature]  
Keeper of The National Register

Date: JAN 6 1972

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

77°03'35" W. Long.

N396,000

E 785,000

III F2

N394,000

N394,000

II E48

II E44

II C17

II B8

III E1

II E19

II E24

II B6

SHERIDAN

II E31

III E32

III E23

GARDEN

II F6

N392,000

E 783,000

E 784,000

E 785,000

E 786,000

77°03'31" W. Long.

