

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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 Embassy of Mexico/MacVeagh House

other names/site number Mexican Cultural Institute

2. Location

street & number 2829 16th Street, NW

city or town Washington, D.C.

state District of Columbia code DC county _____ code 001 zip code 20009

<input type="checkbox"/>	not for publication
<input type="checkbox"/>	vicinity

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national ___ statewide ___ local

[Signature] DAVID MALONEY, DC SHPO 12/27/2012
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

DC HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
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:)

Patrick Ardun 2/11/2013
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only one box.)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2		Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

GOVERNMENT/Diplomatic Building

GOVERNMENT/Diplomatic Building

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

20th CENTURY REVIVALS/Beaux Arts Classicism

foundation: Stone

walls: Brick with limestone trim

roof: Terra cotta tile

other:

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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 Embassy of Mexico/MacVeagh House is located at 2829 16th Street mid-block between Fuller and Harvard Streets on the east side of Sixteenth Street. Designed by Beaux Arts-educated and trained architect Nathan Wyeth and constructed in 1910-1911, the former residence-cum-embassy building is an exceptional four-story Beaux Arts mansion notable for its restrained and refined Classical elegance influenced by the Italian and French Renaissance and English Palladian styles and sources. The notably tall dwelling is set upon a low foundation, is clad with a smooth, light buff-colored brick with mortar joints matching the brick, and is covered by a low, hipped roof clad with red tiles. The mansion is divided vertically into three equal bays and is characterized by its arched entry and porte-cochere on the first story, surmounted by a *piano nobile* defined by a large, tri-partite Palladian window on-center of the facade.

The dwelling occupies a sizeable 46,644 square-foot lot of land that extends from Sixteenth to Fifteenth Street, and includes the former dwelling and embassy building (now the Mexican Cultural Institute), a one-story, L-shaped chancery wing connected to the south side of the house, and a garage, converted in 2010 into a visiting scholar's studio apartment at the rear (east) of the lot. The imposing mansion fronts directly onto Sixteenth Street with a small yard taken up by a semi-circular drive leading through the porte-cochere at the front and a conservatory located at the rear of the building. The chancery and garage were added in 1921-1922, as was the porte-cochere, at the time that the mansion was purchased by the Mexican government and converted into the Embassy of Mexico. Designed by local architect Clarence Harding, the garage, chancery and porte-cochere all match the style and materials of the former dwelling designed by architect Nathan Wyeth.

The interior of the house includes a series of luxuriously detailed public rooms and numerous smaller, private ones arranged around a grand three-quarter-turn stair forming an atrium from the first to the fourth floor. The first floor gives direct access to a gracious and elaborately carved wooden stair in the public realm and to what was historically the service area and servants' quarters in the rear part of the house. The second floor, or *piano nobile*, hosts a large dining room, music room, drawing room, and conservatory, all designed for entertaining on an extravagant scale. The third floor contained the McVeaghs living quarters and later those of the ambassador and his family, and consisted of two bedrooms and adjoining baths, breakfast room and porch, and the great library. The great library remains intact as such while the former bedrooms are now used as offices. The fourth floor, devoted to guest bedrooms during the MacVeagh's ownership and later embassy offices, continues to provide offices for the Institute, as well as a conference room, and an exhibition area.

The interior features of the house offer a combination of original MacVeagh-era finishes and furnishings and embassy-era alterations, both of which give the house its extremely rich and distinctive character. Original woodwork survives fully intact in the grand stair, and in all of the trimwork around doors and windows. Similarly, all of the original windows are in place, including those featuring stained and crown glass. The interior walls of several of the great rooms are filled with a combination of "old world" tapestries from the MacVeagh ownership and bold and vivid fresco paintings added by the Mexican government during the 1930s and 1940s as part of its effort to have the embassy reflect the arts and culture of Mexico. Of particular note are the stunning colored murals enriching the stair hall walls, painted by artist Roberto Cueva del Rio, and the conservatory filled with blue and white ceramic tiles from Puebla, Mexico.

Narrative Description

Embassy of Mexico/MacVeagh House: Exterior

The primary facade of the Embassy of Mexico/McVeagh House faces west to Sixteenth Street. It is defined by its smooth buff brick walls fenestrated and articulated with elegant yet austere Classical treatment. It is divided into three vertical bays with a porticoed porte-cochere, added in 1921-22, breaking what was originally a planar wall surface. This planar wall features a set of three arched openings on the ground-level first story, a *piano nobile* immediately above, then a third story followed by a full fourth-story level above a projecting beltcourse.

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On the first story and on-center of the facade, a single, arched wood door is set within a round arch opening trimmed with smooth-cut stone voussoirs. Two, round-arched windows, similarly trimmed with stone, are located to either side of this central entry door. The window openings sit upon a molded sill, which continues across the facade, doing double-duty as a watertable. The windows themselves, single-light paired and arched wood casements are recessed into their openings with iron grates in front of them providing security. The porte-cochere projects off of the center entry bay and is wide enough to allow a single car to pass through. It has paired and fluted Doric columns supporting a flat roof with a balcony and balustrade set atop an academically correct cornice. This cornice, constructed of stone, has a frieze with three fascia and an architrave with alternating metopes and triglyphs. The balustrade is heavy with turned balusters between wide stone end piers with recessed panels on the front and side walls of the corner piers. A Mexican flag flies from on-center of the front balustrade wall.

The second story, or *piano nobile*, separated from the first story by a slightly projecting beltcourse, is characterized by its grand Venetian window in the center bay, opening onto the balcony. Originally, prior to the 1921 construction of the porte-cochere, this window opened onto a narrow balcony supported by broad stone brackets. The Venetian window has a large, round arched opening on-center with narrower rectangular openings to either side. The arched opening, trimmed with stone with a molded keystone on-center, is filled with a half-round transom light surmounting paired casements capped by fixed light upper panels. The side lights include single casements with fixed transoms above. Engaged stone colonettes separate the central arched window from the side windows, while pilasters of the same height frame the outside edges of the sidelights. To either side of this central tri-partite window are long rectangular openings with paired wood casements slightly recessed from the plane of the wall. Window balustrades span the lower portions of these two windows, which, on the interior open at floor level. Molded limestone architraves surround the window openings.

The third story—with three single window openings symmetrically arranged within the three vertical bays of the building—rises above the second story with no horizontal division between them. This lack of horizontal divide accentuates the smoothness of the brick walls and contributes to the building's austere elegance. The windows—rectangular, but almost square—are much shorter than those of the second story, and are slightly recessed into the wall plane with stone architraves surrounding them. Historic paired wood casements fill the openings.

The fourth story, or attic level, distinguishes itself from the third story by virtue of the double beltcourse that separates the two floors. The lower beltcourse is slightly wider and projects more broadly, essentially serving as a cornice to the first three stories. The upper beltcourse is narrower and offers a continuous sill upon which the fourth story windows sit. The band between is filled with buff brick, continuing the smooth brick coursing of the walls below. The window openings are slightly longer than those of the third story, somewhat in conflict with the traditional diminution of orders typical of buildings of the Italian Renaissance. Molded limestone architraves frame each of the windows on the top and sides, while the beltcourse serves as the windows' bottom sill.

A broad hipped and red tiled roof with overhanging eaves supported by modillions caps the attic level of the building. A copper gutter extends along the outside edge of the cornice, while several inside end chimneys rise above it.

The south side elevation of the building includes the south elevations of the four-story main block and the conservatory wing. The main block extends six bays deep with a two-bay-wide projecting bay located on-center, featuring an Italian Renaissance-inspired arcaded loggia at the third story with a balustrade above.

The first story of the south elevation, including the projecting bay, consists of six bays of tall, round arched windows evenly arranged across the wall. These arched windows are identical to those on the first story of the front facade. Like those, these window openings are recessed slightly from the wall, and are trimmed with limestone surrounds. The building's projecting limestone watertable provides a sill upon which the windows sit. The two bays at the end of the main block (beyond the projecting bay) are separated by an exterior chimney stack of buff brick with similar-colored mortar joints matching the building's walls.

The second story of the south elevation consists of long and narrow rectangular window openings, matching those of the second story of the front facade. As on the front facade, these openings have tall French door casements surmounted by two-light transoms all set within a limestone architrave surround. At the center projecting bay, full stone balconies project from the wall in front of the French doors, offering a real, yet narrow, balcony. On the four windows to either side of the central projecting bay, stone balustrades span the lower portions of the windows giving the windows the appearance of having balconies. At the third story, the front and rear bays have two, single window openings like those on the front facade. Within the central projecting bay, however, the rhythm is broken by a set of three, tall arched openings forming a

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sort of upper floor loggia. These arched openings sit upon a limestone beltcourse at their base and feature brick voussoirs at their arches. Limestone roundels decorate the extrados of the arched openings.

The fourth story of this south elevation rises above a broad brick frieze delineated by projecting limestone cornices forming the top and the bottom of the fascia. A row of single windows sits upon the top cornice, including two single windows in the front, four above the projecting bay, and two at the rear of the elevation. All of the windows have molded limestone surrounds and extend almost to the bed moulding of the projecting cornice, giving this full fourth story an attic level effect. The low hipped roof rises above the fourth story with its wide eaves supported by stone modillions. Several brick chimney stacks project from and well above the side slopes of the hipped roof.

The south elevation of the conservatory features three tall arched windows located above what was historically a "servant's porch." After the building was purchased by the government of Mexico, the chancery wing was built to abut the lower level of the conservatory, thereby enclosing the lower story porch, but leaving the principal floor above untouched. The windows of this principal level (second floor on the interior of the house) feature long and narrow casements with fanlight transoms in the arch. An attic-level frieze is pierced with fleur-de-lis windows, while the entire wing is capped by a glazed, metal skylight allowing maximum light to penetrate the conservatory room.

The east elevation of the building consists of the end wall of the main block above and next to the conservatory, and the end wall of the conservatory wing. The conservatory wing is set upon a tall, raised first story with utilitarian windows cut into the brick wall at this lower level. The second story, corresponding with the conservatory proper, has three, tall arched openings. Like those on the south side elevation, these windows have operable casements capped by fanlight transoms and surmounted by fleur-de-lis windows piercing the wing's attic level. The east end elevation of the main block features simple punched windows, rectangular in shape and capped by limestone lintels. A two-story addition built at the northeast corner of the building fills in the area between the taller conservatory wing and the main block.

The north elevation of the building has the least architectural hierarchy and articulation. Unlike the south elevation that offers a projecting bay to relieve the long side wall of the main block, this side elevation extends in a planar manner from front to back. Window openings across this side reflect the interior layout (i.e. stairs against the north wall), thus offering an irregular arrangement in places. The first-story windows are all set above a projecting limestone water table and are all arched and cut neatly into the brick wall without any limestone trim. The second story windows are irregularly arranged and include an oval stained glass window that opens into the second floor music room (on-center a between the Aeolian pipe organ pipes), and a large arched stained glass window that opens onto the flight of stairs rising from the second to the third stories. The third story features a series of single, rectangular openings at the rear of the wall, and a single, tripartite stained glass in the front bay that opens into the library. The fourth floor has a series of ten, single, rectangular openings. The front and rear openings, filled with brick, were either designed as blind openings, or were later filled in.

Interior

The interior of the former dwelling occupies four floors and consists of a series of interconnected rooms (originally 26 in all), some of considerable grandeur, on each floor. The floors are connected by a grand stair that turns as it ascends to create a large atrium. The principal public rooms historically occupied the second floor or the *piano nobile*, and the private family and guest quarters were located on the third and fourth floors. The service area, including kitchen and servants' rooms, was generally relegated to the rear of the first floor beyond the reception area and stair hall and below the conservatory, though a butler's pantry also occupied the northeastern end of the second floor adjacent to the dining room. When the Mexican government purchased the property in 1921, it added a porte-cochere to the front of house, a chancery wing to the southern side, and garage at the rear of the property, but generally left the interior of the house intact to its original configuration and room uses. Indeed, the drawing room, music room, and conservatory continued to provide exceptional venues for private entertaining, while the library, originally designed for the MacVeaghs personal use, was retained as the ambassador's own private library. Beginning in 1925 and continuing into the 1930s, the embassy sought to "Mexicanize" the interior of the house by introducing Mexican furniture and art, most notably brilliantly colored wall frescos by well-known Mexican artists. In 1925, artist Yela Gunther painted murals in the dining room (since covered over), and during the 1930s, artist Roberto Cueva del Rio painted the still extant murals depicting Mexican life, history and culture along the entire stair wall from the first floor to the third. In addition, the conservatory, previously undecorated with exposed brick walls, was renovated in two separate phases and enhanced by the addition of Mexican Puebla tiles, including a tiled banquettes with a fountain against the eastern wall of the room.

In 1989, when the Embassy of Mexico moved out and into its new embassy quarters on Pennsylvania Avenue, the former dwelling became home to the Mexican Cultural Institution, founded in 1990. The Cultural Institution immediately began to

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restore some of the building's most outstanding features, including the stair murals and the wall paintings in the music room, while adapting some of the spaces to new uses. Bedrooms became offices, for instance, and embassy offices were adapted to gallery spaces. In 2009-2010, the MacVeagh House was fully renovated. The renovation seamlessly introduced modern systems into the historic building, and faithfully restored the most significant interior spaces, while appropriately adapting lesser areas into contemporary exhibition spaces.

The primary entrance of the mansion, on-center of the 16th Street façade, opens into a modest entry hall with a cloak room and reception area to either side. The entry hall features smooth limestone flooring that transitions to a set of three limestone stairs leading up and through paired Doric columns of stone to the grand stair hall, set a couple of feet above the entry hall and offering 13-foot high ceilings. The quarter-turn stair rises three floors and is characterized by its robustly carved stair balustrade and its vivid wall frescos filling the interior of the building's north exterior wall. The stair railing consists of oak balusters and an oak hand railing. The pierced strapwork filling the space between the oak balusters is made of gesso, but is finished to simulate and match the oak balusters and railing. Similarly, wainscoting along the stair wall opposite the railing is of gesso, painted to simulate wood. Above the wainscoting and to the crown molding, the first and second floor stair walls are covered with wall paintings. The scenes, painted from 1933 to 1941 by artist Cueva del Rio depict ancient, Colonial and Modern Mexico.

Halfway up the stairs between the first and second floors and on-center of the wall is a large, arched casement window with leaded panes filled with stained glass. The stained glass scene in the casements appears to be that of an orangery with a lemon tree set within a colonnade, while the fanlight above depicts flanking lions, each sitting next to a Horn of Plenty.

Across from the stair hall on the first floor is a sizeable room measuring 21 feet by 29 feet entered through a tall, paneled oak door. This room served as the ambassador's office (1921-1991), but during the MacVeagh's ownership it may have been a billiards room.ⁱ Beyond the stair hall is an exhibition area, formed of contemporary partitions fitted into the original servants' quarters. The exhibit areas were recently renovated (2009-2010) and fitted with new lighting, state of the art security system, sprinklers, and refinished hardwood floors and glass doors between the exhibit rooms.

The second floor or *piano nobile* holds the mansion's grand and tall (19-foot ceiling heights) public spaces intended for extravagant entertaining: the music room, drawing room, dining room and conservatory. The music room, located at the front of the house facing Sixteenth Street, spans the entire width of the house. It is described in newspaper accounts as being a copy of the music salon at the Chateau de Fontainebleau, and though not accurate, the comparison is apt.ⁱⁱ The room is extravagantly detailed in a Louis XIII-inspired style, and features a low basket vaulted ceiling with ridge ribs, richly ornamented walls, a fireplace with a projecting semi-circular mantel and over-mantel decorated with a fleur-de-lis pattern, and a grand Aeolian pipe organ. Flat wood wainscoting with elaborate painting fills the exposed walls from the floor to an approximately eight-foot height. The panels are painted with slate grey and cream borders and decorated with filigree patterns of muted greens, blues and reds. The centers of the largest panels offer gold paintings of different musical instruments encircled by golden wreaths. Stenciling above the wainscot is meant to simulate tapestry work and is executed in muted colors with a rope border. The front of the music room looks out through the three large French windows on the facade, including the Palladian one on-center. The south end walls are adorned with a fireplace and a grand Aeolian pipe organ, respectively. The pipe organ cabinetry projects from the north wall in three divisions having a central console board with flanking gilded and painted pipes. A stained glass oculus window pinned for horizontal swing is located at the center of this north wall above the middle pipes of the pipe organ. On the opposite south wall, the room's fireplace projects from the wall with a semi-elliptical stone mantel and over-mantel with fleur-de-lis painting, adding to the room's decidedly French feel.

The drawing room which occupies the area opposite the stair hall can be entered from both the stair hall and the music room. This room was known for many years as the "gold room" for its walls and ceiling that were purportedly covered in 14-karat gold foil until it was replaced sometime before 1933ⁱⁱⁱ with antique gold damask. The room is today most notable for its beautifully polished oak parquet floor, and its delicate, though seemingly under-scaled marble fireplace and mantel.

ⁱ According to *Sixteenth Street Architecture*, a sketch floor plan in the embassy archives shows the Ambassador's office as two chambers, yet one early description of the room refers to it as the billiards room. See Jeffrey Carson and Sue Kohler, *Sixteenth Street Architecture*, Volume 1, The Commission of Fine Arts, 1978, p. 494.

ⁱⁱ Recent research conducted by the Mexican Cultural Institute reveals that the Music Room more closely resembles the Salle des Gardes at the Chateau de Fontainebleau.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Sixteenth Street Architecture*, p. 497.

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The fireplace features a black and white-striated marble surround and a grey mantel with white insets decorated with a guilloche pattern.

The dining room, located behind the drawing room and reached from the stair hall, is a large room measuring 33 feet by 40 feet. At one time described as the "largest dining room in the city"^{iv}, this room is baronial in style, and is today characterized primarily by its coffered ceiling, its wood floor with parquet wood surround, and its carved wainscoting. The wainscot, approximately four-feet high consists of flat gesso panels set between oak stiles and rails. The gesso panels have raised bas relief carvings with heraldic shields and emblems, painted to simulate oak. Above the wainscot, the plaster walls had been painted in 1925 by muralist Yela Gunther, but were later covered over.^v A remnant of one of these paintings, discovered during the 2009-2010 renovation, has been revealed and left in situ at the northwest corner of the room. A fireplace on the south wall reaching the height of the wainscot includes a tan and purple-veined cream marble surround and a plaster mantel with paired columns supporting the mantel shelf over a plain mantel frieze. The coffered ceiling is divided into nine plaster panels with ornately detailed cornices framing the panels. The cornices are multi-layered with egg and dart molding above a dentil bed molding and carved modillions or consoles atop a cove molding.

The conservatory, entered from the east end of the dining room via a screen of Corinthian columns, is a light-filled space raised two steps above the floor of the dining room and soaring 24 feet high. It is a distinctly Mexican room, with blue and white tiles from Puebla, Mexico filling the lower part of the walls. A tiled banquette fills three sides of the room, while a tiled fountain dominates the north wall. At the upper wall levels on all four sides of the room, tiles painted with the coats of arms of the Republic of Mexico form a sort of frieze board around the room. They are interrupted at the south and east wall by clerestory windows in the shape of quatrefoils.^{vi} The two great Mexican volcanos—Popocatepetl and Ixtacihuatl—are depicted in painted tile against the north wall of the conservatory above the tiled fountain.

The third floor of the mansion, historically the private quarters of the MacVeaghs includes two bedrooms and associated rooms that now serve as offices and an exquisite library. The library, measuring 28' by 46', spans the entire width at the front of the building and is fully intact to its original MacVeagh period of ownership. The room is characterized by its dark mahogany book shelves above which are hung "old World" tapestries^{vii} in dark blues, greens, and golds, and by its coffered ceiling divided by mahogany beams into fifteen panels. The room is lit on three sides by windows with those on the north end wall being double windows having both interior and exterior sashes with a four-inch air pocket between them. The front wall of the room overlooking Sixteenth Street has three rectangular window openings extending to the floor level with bookshelves in between and wood panels below them. The north end wall includes three window openings—a larger central window with paired casements and two single casements to either side. The interior sash of these windows have leaded glass panes on the lower 2/3 of the window and stained glass panes in the form of crests on the upper third. Each of the four stained glass crests is different, representing either mythological figures or historical typological figures. The south end of the room has a large fireplace on-center of the wall with single casement windows to either side. A tall marble surround with a mahogany mantel supported by mahogany consoles is surmounted by a raised panel overmantel rising to the ceiling. The library ceiling is coffered and features fifteen plaster panels with stenciling.

While the library occupies the front part of the third floor, the former private quarters of the MacVeaghs and later the Ambassador fill the southern side of the house, across and accessible from the stair hall. One of these, shown on plans as the breakfast room features a fireplace on its west wall, while it opens on the southern side to the third floor loggia. This loggia, defined by three large arched floor-to-ceiling windows that look south along Sixteenth Street, was decorated during the 1920s into a "Mexican Nook," with Mexican furniture and Mexican craft items, including pottery and wall hanging weavings, as illustrated in an historic photograph of the space.

The fourth floor, historically providing guest rooms for the MacVeaghs and offices for the embassy, presently offers a series of offices, a conference room and exhibit spaces. The elaborate stair extends all the way to this fourth floor with a protective glass railing built against the atrium side as part of the 2009-2010 renovation. Rectangular window openings on the north side wall and opening onto the stair feature colored crown glass and are trimmed with wood with a projecting

^{iv} "Formal Dining Room, Largest in Capital, Decorated with Gunther Murals," *The Washington Post*, August 31, 1933, p. 11.

^v At least two known historic photos in possession of the Mexican Cultural Institute show these 1925 murals intact. The murals were painted to present Mayan scenes and figures representing everyday indigenous life in harmony with nature.

^{vi} The clerestory windows were historically rectangular in shape as shown in historic photos. They were likely altered in 1937 as part of the effort to "Mexicanize" the room.

^{vii} The tapestries have been described as Gobelin tapestries, but it has not been confirmed whether or not they were indeed the product of the Gobelin Manufactory in Paris, and if so, in what year they were made.

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cornice on top and dentils at the bottom of the window openings. A south facing room, converted into a conference room, opens onto the stone balcony above the projecting bay of the south side wall of the mansion.

Garage

The garage building on the property is located at the rear of the lot facing Fifteenth Street and was added to the site in 1921-1922 when the property was purchased by the Mexican government. Designed by Clarence Harding in a style sympathetic to the main residence, the garage is a two-story, light buff brick structure with matching mortar joints, like that of the main residence, and covered with a hipped roof clad with red tile. It is set upon a low stone foundation and features a broad stone beltcourse dividing the building between the first and second stories and narrower stone beltcourses at the raised foundation level and the second story window sill level. The building is three bays wide on its Fifteenth Street elevation and an irregular two bays wide on the short end. The building historically accommodated three cars in the ground floor garage and living quarters for three chauffeurs on the second floor, but was converted in 2009-2010 into a visiting scholars' suite. The three, wide garage door openings on the street side were removed and replaced with large windows to fit the original openings. These windows consist of paired windows with three long sash in the lower level and six-light sash above. This window configuration matches the original garage door openings that had wood panels in the lower half and six-light windows above. The interior of the building, which had been vacant for more than ten years and had suffered the effects of a fire, was completely gutted to accommodate the new living quarters for visiting scholars and guests. The entrance to the guest quarters is through an original single door opening on the south end elevation of the garage. The second story of the building features single, 1/1 wood windows with stone jack arched lintels above and set beneath the wide eaves of the overhanging hipped roof.

Chancery Wing

The chancery wing consists of two parts constructed in two separate phases. The original wing, built 1921-1922 when the property was purchased by the Government of Mexico, is a low, one-story light buff brick structure abutting the south side elevation of the conservatory and extending south. Designed by Clarence Harding, this wing has five tall arched openings along its exposed east elevation and is covered with a flat roof that supports a tiled roof terrace accessible from the conservatory of the main residence. The second wing, designed by architect Marcus Hallett and added in 1942 is similarly a one-story light buff brick wing that projects perpendicularly off of the first wing and runs west towards Sixteenth Street and the front of the lot. This wing thus runs parallel to the main residence, but is lower than and recessed from it. The front elevation of the wing is three bays wide, and like the original chancery wing, features single arched window openings. These front arches, set upon a stone beltcourse, are trimmed with stone that presents a formal façade that complements that of the main residence. The entrance to the chancery is located through a large arched opening, located along the west side elevation of the first chancery wing and thus reached via a sidewalk running from Sixteenth Street between the mansion the 1942 chancery wing.

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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.)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1910-1942

Significant Dates

1910-1911; 1921-1922; 1942

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Nathan Wyeth

Clarence Harding

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 extends from 1910 when construction of the house was begun until 1942 when the Embassy of Mexico expanded its chancery wing to its present appearance. The Period of Significance includes the years 1911-1916 when the mansion served as the primary residence of Franklin and Emily MacVeagh, and the years after 1921, when the building served as the Embassy of Mexico.

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Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

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

The Embassy of Mexico/MacVeagh at 2829 Sixteenth Street is an architecturally distinguished Beaux Arts mansion designed by architect Nathan Wyeth and constructed in 1910-1911. The house was commissioned by Mrs. Emily Eames MacVeagh for her husband Franklin MacVeagh, then Secretary of the Treasury under President Taft. It was one of the earliest houses to be erected along the newly cut stretch of Sixteenth Street in the fledgling Meridian Hill area, just north of the original city boundary at Florida Avenue. Emily MacVeagh purchased part of the land upon which she built her house from visionary developer Mary Foote Henderson. In her effort to transform Sixteenth Street into a grand and ceremonial gateway to the Nation's Capital, Henderson was actively engaged in the development of the area. She envisioned Meridian Hill as an elite residential and diplomatic community along the avenue and at the same time that she was building large mansions, she was encouraging others to do the same. Construction of the MacVeagh house was a major boost to this vision for Meridian Hill and its development in the early 20th century.

In 1921, several years after the death of his wife and following his return to Chicago, Franklin MacVeagh sold the house to the Government of Mexico for use as its embassy. At the time of its sale, Meridian Hill was home to a number of other embassies, including that of the French, Swiss, Spanish, Cuban, Polish, and Lithuanians. During the 1920s, several other embassy buildings were constructed on Meridian Hill and immediately adjacent to the Mexican Embassy, including the Italian Embassy across Sixteenth Street, the Spanish Embassy next door, and the Dutch Embassy across the rear of the Mexican Embassy at Fifteenth and Euclid Streets.

During its 69-year reign as the Embassy of Mexico, the former mansion served as an important cultural symbol for the Mexican community and provided a notable venue for forging Mexican-American relations, especially in the post-World War II era. As part of its effort to make the embassy building a cultural symbol, the Mexican government introduced Mexican arts, crafts and furniture into the house. The result is a unique and stunning interior that fuses the original Beaux Arts architecture with a distinctly Mexican flavor.

The Embassy of Mexico/MacVeagh House meets National Register Criteria A and C at the national level of significance. In particular, the property meets Criterion A for its role in the transformation of Sixteenth Street beyond the city's boundaries from an under-developed area prior to the turn of the 20th century, into an elite residential and diplomatic neighborhood during the early decades of the 20th century. The house further contributes to the rise of Meridian Hill as the home to foreign embassies and to its establishment as Embassy Row during the 1920s before that designation shifted to Massachusetts Avenue in the mid-20th century. The stately house contributes to the larger development of Sixteenth Street beyond the city's boundaries and to its significance as one of the major avenues of the L'Enfant Plan.

The house meets National Register Criterion C as a premier example of a grand Beaux Arts mansion executed in a sophisticated Classical Revival style that reflects elements of French, Italian and English Renaissance-era buildings, and it is the work of master architect, Nathan Wyeth.

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

The Embassy of Mexico/MacVeagh House is significant in the area of Architecture as a refined example of a large, urban residence reflecting an avant-garde, Beaux-Arts style of architecture. The stately dwelling is constructed of light buff brick with limestone trimmings and is capped with a Mediterranean-style, red terra cotta tile roof, reflecting aspects of French, Italian and English Classicism. The house is the work of master architect Nathan Wyeth, the only one of the several Ecole-educated Washington, D.C.-based architects to actually complete its rigorous program and receive a diploma. After years of a distinguished career in private practice, Wyeth became the city's Municipal Architect from 1934 until 1946. As Municipal Architect, Wyeth had considerable influence on the design aesthetic of the city's public buildings. The Embassy of Mexico/MacVeagh House is considered one of Wyeth's finest works as an architect in private practice.

The Embassy of Mexico/MacVeagh House is significant in the area of Community Planning and Development for the important role it played in furthering the vision and development scheme of Mary Henderson for Meridian Hill. The house was built in 1910-1911, as one of the first houses erected along this new-cut stretch of 16th Street, and was an important

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boost to Mary Henderson's plans to create an elite diplomatic community on Meridian Hill and to establish 16th Street as an important ceremonial gateway to the nation's capital. As such, the house provides an excellent illustration of the City Beautiful Movement as executed beyond the city's monumental core and contributes to the larger development of Sixteenth Street and to its significance as one of the major avenues of the L'Enfant Plan.

The Embassy of Mexico/MacVeagh House is significant in the area of Government for its associations with the rise of Meridian Hill as the home to foreign embassies, and to its establishment as Embassy Row during the 1920s before that designation shifted to Massachusetts Avenue in the mid-20th century. The former mansion served as the Embassy of Mexico for 69 years and contributes significantly to the cultural heritage of the District of Columbia. The alterations made by the Embassy of Mexico including the interior artwork contribute to the historic significance of the property.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Meridian Hill and Mary Foote Henderson's "Sixteenth Street":

The Beaux Arts mansion at 2829 Sixteenth Street was constructed in 1910-1911 as one of the first residences on Meridian Hill following initial development of this stretch of Sixteenth Street by Mary Foote Henderson. As one of the first developments that followed Mary Henderson's lead, the building's construction by Mrs. Emily Eames MacVeagh contributed to the growth of Sixteenth Street beyond the city's original boundary at Florida Avenue and helped to promote the transformation of the Meridian Hill neighborhood from an underdeveloped post-Civil War community to an elite diplomatic neighborhood. This transformation began with and was primarily due to the efforts of Mary Foote Henderson who envisioned Sixteenth Street as a ceremonial gateway to the nation's capital. For more than three decades from the 1880s until her death in 1931, Mary Henderson, wife of former Senator John B. Henderson from Missouri, sought to define and maintain Sixteenth Street as the "finest residential avenue in America." To promote her vision, Mary Henderson founded the Sixteenth Street Improvement Association, lobbied Congress to extend the city's infrastructure and landscaping along Sixteenth Street to and beyond Meridian Hill, and personally financed and constructed many of the Beaux Arts mansions to either side of the exceptional neo-Classical Meridian Hill Park which she successfully fought to establish.

At the time that Emily MacVeagh commissioned the construction of the house at 2829 Sixteenth Street, Mary Henderson had completed three residences on Meridian Hill, including the French Embassy at 2460 16th Street, the Venetian Palace at 2600 16th Street and the Lithuanian Embassy at 2620-2622 16th Street, and was in the process of building what would become the Polish Embassy building at 2640 16th Street. Henderson was simultaneously encouraging others to do the same. By 1910, Henderson had sold lots not only to Emily MacVeagh, but to diplomat Henry White who built a Georgian Revival-style house designed by John Russell Pope on his Meridian Hill site, plus she had successfully lobbied for the 1910 Congressional Act to establish Meridian Hill Park. Henderson's own buildings, the construction of mansions by others, and the establishment of the park represent the first major phase in the development of the newly extended and still rugged Sixteenth Street at Meridian Hill.

Over the course of the next two decades, Mary Henderson would continue her speculative development of the area, and further encouraging others to do the same. For each of her houses, Mary Henderson hired the Beaux Arts-trained architect George Oakley Totten, Jr. Using his knowledge of historic architectural styles, Totten designed the houses in an eclectic array of styles, creating a cohesive, yet visually dynamic collection of buildings. At the time of her death in 1931, Meridian Hill was home to the French, Spanish, Polish, Lithuanian, Swiss, Dutch, Mexican and Italian embassies, earning Meridian Hill a national reputation as the city's diplomatic center, or "Embassy Row."

Mr. and Mrs. Franklin MacVeagh and the Construction of 2829 Sixteenth Street

In 1909, President William Howard Taft asked Franklin MacVeagh (1837-1934) to be his Secretary of the Treasury. At the time, MacVeagh, a graduate of Yale University and Columbia Law School, was living in Chicago where he had established a successful wholesale grocery business and where he was serving as a director of the Commercial National Bank of Chicago. His company, Franklin MacVeagh and Company eventually became one of the largest establishments of its kind in the country. In addition to overseeing his own business, MacVeagh was much involved in civic affairs: He was the founder and first president of the Citizens' Association of Chicago; president of the Civil Service Reform League of Chicago (1884-85); president of the Chicago Bureau of Charities (1896-1904); and a trustee of the University of

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Chicago (1901-1913). He was founder of the Municipal Art League of Chicago, a member of the Chicago Historical Society, and had a keen interest in architecture and planning. In 1886, he and his wife Emily Eames MacVeagh commissioned well-known architect Henry Hobson Richardson to design their Chicago house at 1400 Lake Shore Drive.^{viii}

When the MacVeaghs moved to D.C. from Chicago in March 1909, they left behind their Richardson-designed house and moved into the mansion known as the Venetian Palace at 2600 16th Street, N.W. The mansion, built 1905-06 by Mary Henderson as part of her development of Meridian Hill, was then being vacated by Oscar Strauss, the outgoing Secretary of Commerce and Labor under Theodore Roosevelt's administration. Like the Strausses before them, the MacVeaghs rented the house from Mary Henderson. Just months after moving into the Venetian Palace., Emily MacVeagh apparently conceived the idea of secretly building a new house and presenting it to her husband as a Christmas present. The couple must have been enchanted with the fledgling Meridian Hill neighborhood and its future prospects, because before the end of the year, Emily McVeagh had hired Washington architect Nathan Wyeth^{ix} to design the house at 2829 16th Street, just one block north of and across the street from the Venetian Palace. To keep the house's ownership a secret from her husband, Emily MacVeagh arranged to have the property held in trust so that her identity as the property owner would not be revealed.^x In five separate transactions beginning in 1909, the American Security and Trust Company, acting on behalf of Emily MacVeagh, purchased a series of lots in the Meridian Hill subdivision and combined them to form present Lot 38.^{xi} Two of these lots were purchased from Mary Henderson who, given her interest and influence on Meridian Hill, would certainly have been supportive of Emily McVeagh's plans should she have known of them.

A D.C. Permit to Build was issued for construction of the house at 2829 16th Street in January 1910. American Security and Trust Company is listed as the owner, Nathan Wyeth as the architect, and George A. Fuller as the builder. The cost of construction was estimated at \$120,000, making it one of the city's priciest houses at the time.^{xii} Although later newspaper accounts and local tradition hold that Emily MacVeagh did indeed surprise her husband by presenting the finished house to him as a gift, another period account indicates that within ten months, Mrs. MacVeagh had been revealed as the owner of the building under construction, and her surprise gift to her husband foiled:

"Secretary of the Treasury MacVeagh is to receive what probably will be the most expensive Christmas gift, or at least one of the most costly, ever given in Washington. The present is a beautiful home, costing about \$250,000, now in course of construction on Sixteenth Street...Mrs. McVeagh is having the house constructed for her husband, and it is to be presented to him on Christmas day. Mrs. MacVeagh tried to keep the intention a secret, wanting to surprise her husband, and she doubtless would have been successful had not persons who wondered who it was that was building the handsome house on Sixteenth Street investigated and disclosed the facts."^{xiii}

Although not quite ready in time for Christmas, the house was, according to the Building Permit application and the subsequent Inspector's reports, built in less than one year. Excavation of the house began in February 1910 and was listed at 95% complete in January 1911. The American Security and Trust Company, still listed as owner in January 1911, applied for a permit to erect a marquee projection, marking the final stage of construction. The couple moved into the residence in early March 1911. Just prior to their move-in date, on February 18, 1911, the MacVeaghs hosted a party—a dance in honor of Miss Helen Taft, daughter of the President and Mrs. Taft—opening the house up to 350 guests, representing "a gathering of Washington society, including members of diplomatic, official, residential, and army and navy circles." An account of the fete described the newly completed

^{viii} The MacVeagh House at 1400 Lake Shore Drive was built in 1886, the same time as the Glessner House—the only other house in Chicago designed by H.H. Richardson. The MacVeagh House was demolished in 1922 for an apartment building.

^{ix} The architect, Nathan Wyeth was one of Washington's most prominent architects and had connections with Chicago society, so may have already been known to Emily McVeagh. Wyeth's and Emily McVeagh's fathers were both Chicago bankers, and Wyeth had just designed a residence further south on Sixteenth Street, then under construction, for Mrs. George Pullman. Mrs. Pullman was the wife of the late George Pullman, inventor of the Pullman Sleeping Car, and a fellow Chicagoan. See *Sixteenth Street Architecture*, p. 483.

^x *Sixteenth Street Architecture*, p. 483.

^{xi} Lots 9 and 24 were purchased from James Wilson of California; parts of lots 10 and 23, from Mary Henderson; lots 7 and 8 from the children and grandchildren of James G. Blaine; lot 25 from Henry Lewis of Chicago; and lot 26 from Robert Scammell. See *Sixteenth Street Architecture*, p. 483.

^{xii} This assessment of the house as one of the "priciest" houses at the time is based upon a review of the D.C. Permits to Build database that includes the estimated price of construction of buildings in the permit applications. The MacVeagh House is one of the most expensive private residences of the 1910s.

^{xiii} "Secretary's Wife Building Mansion for Him as Christmas Present," *The Washington Post*, September 27, 1910.

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house, including the "magnificent staircase," the music salon which the local press claimed to be, "a reproduction of a salon in the chateau of Fontainebleau,"^{xiv} its organ, and the large dining room "hung with tapestries and old paintings."^{xv} A more personalized and telling account of the evening's events, however, can be found in a letter from Henry White to his wife:

"Afterwards [following dinner with Henry Adams] I went to Mrs. MacVeagh's ball—the house is very large and roomy, but I do not admire the decorations. The electric light went out and could not be restored and as they had no candles and very little gas, the situation seemed quite serious though I must say it in no way seemed to damp the ardor of the dancing people and guests in general. Mrs. Henderson was equal to the occasion, went home and knocked up her factotum the chef with whom she invaded the French Embassy and subsequently this house which she successfully raided for candles (arousing the astonished Leon from his slumbers). In due time Frank Millet and others appeared with bottles containing candles which gave some light."^{xvi}

As designed by Beaux Arts-trained architect Nathan Wyeth, the MacVeagh residence was indeed conceived on an extravagant scale on par with a French palace where all four floors are connected by the sweeping oak staircase with carved gesso panels between the oak stiles. While the front part of the first floor offered a gracious-enough reception area leading through a set of columns to the staircase, the second floor was devoted entirely to grand public spaces that included the ornately decorated music room, a coffered-ceilinged dining room said to have been the largest dining room in the city^{xvii}, a drawing room referred to in newspaper accounts as the "gold room" for its supposedly 14-karat sheets of gold foil walls, and a conservatory. The third floor consisted of the MacVeagh's private bed rooms, plus a large library that spans the entire front of the house, while the fourth floor provided a suite of guest rooms. The walls throughout the house were hung with paintings and tapestries with those in the library still intact and filling the walls between the room's dark wood paneled wainscot and its coffered ceiling.

For the next few years, the couple hosted dinners and dances at their house on Sixteenth Street, garnering the attention of the Society pages and press, that often included the President and Mrs. Taft. In one account, the house is described as "one of the most pretentious in Washington," and again is described as having a music room that is "literally a reproduction of the one at Fontainebleau," and a drawing room that is "lined with gold." The account also makes note of the "superb pipe organ [that] was installed by Mrs. MacVeagh at great cost, which has a chime of bells attached, with an echo on the fourth floor, where the sleeping rooms of the guests are arranged."^{xviii} This pipe organ, an Aeolian pipe organ, is recorded in company records as having been built for Emily MacVeagh, sold to her for \$15,000, and shipped on November 30, 1910. The organ still survives *in situ*.

In the spring of 1913, Emily MacVeagh fell ill, and although newspaper accounts record her progressive improvement in the months after she first got sick, she apparently never fully recovered. After a protracted illness, Mrs. Emily Eames MacVeagh died in her house in May 1916.^{xix} Following his wife's death, Franklin MacVeagh moved out of the house, reputedly unable to remain in a place so closely associated with her. By then, too, MacVeagh was no longer Secretary of the Treasury, having served in this position only during Taft's administration (March 1909-March 1913), and following his wife's death, had moved back to Chicago. MacVeagh continued to own the residence, though, and rented it out for several years to Breckinridge Long, Third Assistant Secretary of State under President Woodrow Wilson. In April 1917, before actually moving into his newly rented quarters, however, Long offered the mansion to Britain's Lord Balfour and his fellow British commissioners who had come to Washington, D.C. in 1917 as part of the International War Council meeting. This Council, consisting of eminent statesmen from France and Britain, were officially dispatched with the goal of "enabling the United States to avoid the mistakes and difficulties which beset the Allies when they entered the war."^{xx} The Council's arrival was covered by the press, as was Breckinridge Long's offer of a house:

^{xiv} Research into the interior rooms at Fontainebleau does not validate this assertion. According to *Sixteenth Street Architecture* (p. 495), the chamber "seems only a sketch of the Louis XIII style rather than an actual copy" and the stenciling above the wainscot simulates tapestry rather than being tapestry and the vaulted ceiling "too light and delicate and too sparing and hesitant for Louise XIII."

^{xv} "Mr. and Mrs. MacVeagh are Hosts to Miss Taft," *The Washington Post*, February 18, 1911.

^{xvi} As quoted in *Sixteenth Street Architecture*, p. 485-486.

^{xvii} *Ibid*, p. 499.

^{xviii} See Breckinridge Long to Take Possession of New Home Next Week, *The Washington Post*, April 18, 1917.

^{xix} "Death of Mrs. MacVeagh," *The Washington Post*, May 18, 1916.

^{xx} "Allies Shape Aims in Unison with U.S.," *The Washington Post*, April 14, 1917.

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"The leaders of the British party, who are expected here several days before the French commission, will be given the use of the handsome home of former Secretary of the Treasury Franklin MacVeagh in upper Sixteenth Street. Breckinridge Long, Third Assistant Secretary of State, who was just about to move into the house with his family, has offered it to the government for the time necessary."^{xxi}

Once he moved into the house, Breckinridge Long remained there with his family for the next few years. Still, he continued to offer the guest suites to notable diplomats, including in 1919 when Belgium's King Albert and Queen Elizabeth stayed at the house during their visit to Washington. In 1920, Long resigned his post in the Department of State to pursue election to the U.S. Senate from Missouri, but, according to city directories, is recorded as living in the house until 1921. With Long's departure in 1921, Franklin MacVeagh sold the house to the government of Mexico. The post-Revolutionary government of President Alvaro Obregon purchased the mansion to house the embassy and established it as the official residence of its representative in Washington, D.C. Simultaneous to its purchase of 2829 Sixteenth Street, the Mexican government sold its former embassy building at 1413 I Street, NW which had served as the Embassy of Mexico for 40 years. The Mexican government's purchase of 2829 16th Street came after years of supplications by Mary Henderson encouraging the Government of Mexico to move to Meridian Hill, all in an effort to fulfill her vision of establishing a diplomatic community there.^{xxii}

From Private Residence to Mexican Embassy:

For the purchase price of \$330,000, the Mexican government gained possession not only the house, but all of its fixtures and features and the majority of its furniture, rugs and paintings, and of course, the Aeolian Pipe Organ in the music room. At the time of the sale, Franklin MacVeagh was living in Chicago and so presumably had no need for the furnishings still filling his former residence. Only the house's art objects and the paintings which had been a feature of the "gold room" were removed from the house by MacVeagh and his son, Eames. Although local tradition holds that as part of the sale, MacVeagh requested that no major alterations be made to the house until after his death, the Mexican government immediately made several fairly substantive changes, albeit, sympathetic ones. In particular, the Government of Mexico added a chancery wing to the south, a garage at the rear, and a *porte-cochere* to the front of the residence. To affect these changes, the embassy hired local Washington architect Clarence L. Harding who designed all of the changes in keeping with the style and character of the house designed by Wyeth. The two-story garage with its red-tiled hipped roof is set at the rear of the lot and is not visible from Sixteenth Street, yet is readily visible from Fifteenth Street and presents itself almost as a diminutive form of the larger dwelling. The building historically accommodated three cars on the first story and rooms for chauffeur(s) above, but was renovated in 2010 into apartments for visiting fellows. The chancery wing as built in 1921-1922 was a low, one-story wing with arched openings matching those of the main house and located to the south of and perpendicular to the main house and connected to it at the rear. Enlarged in 1942, the chancery is now an L-shaped structure featuring round-arched windows symmetrically arranged across the front and side walls.^{xxiii} The projecting *porte-cochere* at the front of the mansion replaced an iron and glass marquee which originally covered the central entrance.

Manuel Tellez who was responsible for the purchase of the mansion and who became the first ambassador to serve in the new embassy building was also instrumental in transforming the interior of the mansion to reflect the arts and culture of Mexico. Tellez arrived in Washington as First Secretary in 1920, became Charge d'Affaires in 1921, and was appointed ambassador in 1925. When he left Washington in 1931 to become Minister of the

^{xxi} Ibid.

^{xxii} Correspondence between Mary Henderson and Senor Don Francisco Leon de la Barra, Mexican Ambassador, in the spring of 1910, indicates that Mary Henderson was proposing to sell the Government of Mexico a lot of land on Meridian Hill upon which she would design and build its embassy building. The proposal was evidently not accepted, as the Government of Mexico remained at its I Street location until 1921. At that time, George Oakley Totten, Jr., on behalf of Mary Henderson, wrote a letter to the Mexican Charge d'affaires explaining that he was sending blueprints of two embassy buildings, designed by him for Mrs. Henderson and available for the Government of Mexico for its embassy. Rather than build either of those designs on one of the vacant Henderson lots, the Mexican government instead chose to purchase the already built McVeagh house. See Letter to Senor Don Francisco Leon de la Barra from Mrs. J.B. Henderson, March 21, 1910 and Letter to His Excellency, the Mexican Ambassador, from Mrs. J.B. Henderson, May 6, 1910 (Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 7075, Henderson Family Papers, 1868-1923).

^{xxiii} In 1942, a one-story wing was added to the chancery addition, projecting in front of and perpendicular to it. Although thus not recessed as much from the main dwelling, the one-story wing is still architecturally deferential to it.

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Interior in Mexico, he was dean of the diplomatic corps in Washington, and was by all accounts a highly popular and respected figure in this city.^{xxiv} Upon taking up residence in the mansion, Tellez had a vision of making the embassy building a cultural symbol of Mexico. In this effort, he gained the support of then President-elect Plutarco Elias Calles (1924-1928) who inspected the embassy building during a visit to Washington in the autumn of 1924 and expressed approval for the plan.

Beginning in 1925, the Mexican government began redecorating the house, commissioning the first of what would become an extensive series of wall murals and redecorating the conservatory. The renovation was reported in *The Washington Post* which noted:

"The idea, which originated with Ambassador Don Manuel C. Tellez, will be to thoroughly "Mexicanize" the embassy by the importation from Mexico of various articles such as furniture, pictures, plants, flowers and the handiwork of the Aztec Indians. Other items will be imported from Europe as needed. A part of the plan consists of bringing native artists to Washington to harmonize the desired Mexican elements with the architecture and art of the place as they were conceived by the late Mrs. MacVeagh..."^{xxv}

Wall murals, undertaken during the Mexican muralist movement, were painted to bring images of Mexican history, life and culture into the embassy. Vividly colored and bold murals undertaken from 1925 until 1941, ultimately filled the dining room walls and covered the stair hall from the first floor to the third floor. Guatemalan artist Yela Gunther was responsible for the paintings in the dining room, begun in 1925, that once filled the walls above the wainscoting. Gunther was a close friend of the celebrated Guatemalan painter Carlos Merida with whom he started an indigenous or pro-Indian artistic movement in an attempt to find an authentic "American Art."^{xxvi} Indeed, as revealed through historic photos, the paintings in the dining room were Mayan scenes and figures representing everyday indigenous life in harmony with nature, some with trompe l'oeil aspects to them that introduced columns, archways and other architectural elements into the room. Although these murals were covered over in 1945-1946, recent investigations have revealed portions of these murals, faded but intact, behind the present painted surface of the dining room walls.

Mexican artist Roberto Cueva del Rio painted the vibrant staircase murals that ascend the stair wall from the first to the third floors between 1933 and 1941, with a hiatus in between. Cueva del Rio was born in 1908 in the city of Puebla, Mexico and at the young age of 15 was already an illustrator at the newspaper *Excelsior*. His newspaper caricatures won him a scholarship to the prestigious San Carlos Academy of Fine Arts in Mexico City, which permitted him to travel through Mexico, exhibit his drawings and caricatures in one-man shows, and paint murals for public schools and private homes. In January 1930, Diego Rivera, then Director of the Academy, gave Cueva del Rio an effusive letter of recommendation to support his application to travel to the United States. Cueva del Rio came to the United States and beginning in 1933, at the age of 23, commenced what became an eight-year project to paint the stair hall at the Mexican Embassy in Washington. These frescoes depict Mexican life and scenes from Mexican history, including scenes from Pre-Columbian Mexico and the Landing of Columbus. The murals are painted in a style similar to that of the great Mexican painters of the period, including Diego Rivera and remain in excellent condition. The murals garnered great interest and attention even prior to their completion. A 1933 *Washington Post* article noted,

"His fresco, when completed, will cover walls extending up to the third floor, following the grand staircase. At present, it is completed only to the top of the second floor. Young painter Cueva del Rio, a black-haired lad who claims 25 but looks 18, with his assistant is laboring assiduously. He hopes to finish the task by fall, when the ambassador returns and after social activities again will flourish."^{xxvii}

These colored murals drastically altered the appearance of the interior, which based upon historic photos, presented in its first two decades, a rather stark effect of plain plaster walls against the carved wood stair and limestone flooring. Prior to the wall paintings, only the stained glass window opening onto the stair between the first and second stories introduced some color into the muted palette.

^{xxiv} "Sixteenth Street and Columbia Heights," Unpublished paper, Mexican Cultural Institute files.

^{xxv} "Embassy to Be Converted into Model Mexican Salon," *The Washington Post*, March 29, 1925, p. 56.

^{xxvi} Sixteenth Street and Columbia Heights, Unpublished paper, Mexican Cultural Institute files.

^{xxvii} *The Washington Post*, August 31, 1933.

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In addition to introducing wall murals to the interior, the embassy also renovated and redecorated the conservatory room in at least two separate phases resulting in a light-filled space covered with blue and white tiles from Puebla, Mexico that give the room a decidedly Mexican feel and appearance. Prior to these changes, the conservatory appears, based on historic photos, as an essentially undecorated space with a glass roof monitor and unpainted brick walls. Beginning in 1925, the embassy contracted with horticulturalist Carlos Terrazas to decorate the conservatory and the adjoining terrace above the chancery wing in an "Eden-like scheme" which included tropical birds in cages and native Mexican plants, especially cactus, palms and ferns. As described in the *Washington Post*, the roof garden was to be,

"a grotto of potted plants and shrubbery fashioned in veritable banks, broken with tables softly lighted and a platform at one end where the modern troubadours attached to the embassy may on occasion sing, dance and play the divine notes on their stringed instruments—notes which few other races except the Latin can reach."^{xxviii}

In addition, painter Rafael Yela Gunther was to paint a fountain with "Aztec style" motifs and wall murals, but these were either not completed or were covered by later renovations.

In 1933, the renovated embassy building was publicly acclaimed for its "admixture" of Mexican spirit. Even the library which essentially remained unchanged from the MacVeagh era, was adorned by a dark blue ribose, "the favored scarf of Mexican women," and by two woodcarvings, one being the bust of Padre Morelos—one of the fathers of Mexican independence—and the other, the head of a Mayan Indian. The music room and the "gold" room, however, remained unaltered, the music room being respected as a copy of the music room at the Chateau de Fontainebleau and as an "exquisite apartment in gold and rose," and the gold room for its wall treatment in gold brocade.^{xxix}

Although Ambassador Manuel Tellez was instrumental in establishing the embassy on Meridian Hill, and in seeking to "Mexicanize" the embassy, his successors continued in the same vein, bringing additional Mexican art and culture into the embassy. In 1937, for instance artist Cueva del Rio was hired to undertake a second remodeling of the Conservatory that resulted in the room's present appearance. Blue and white tiles from Puebla, Mexico encircle the room. A tiled banquette fills three sides, while a tiled fountain dominates the north wall. At the upper wall levels on all four sides of the room, tiles painted with the coats of arms of the Republic of Mexico encircle the room. The two great Mexican volcanos—Popocatepetl and Ixtacihuatl—are depicted in painted tile against the north wall of the conservatory, above the tiled fountain. At the upper level between the tiled coats of arm on the south and east walls, quatrefoil clerestory windows replaced the original rectangular ones shown in historic photos. The still intact glazed monitor roof lets abundant light in that historically fed the cactuses and other plants that once filled the room.

Each of the ambassadors has brought with them their own tastes and preferences, making changes accordingly. In 1946, for instance, Ambassador and Senora de Espinosa de los Monteros renovated the house, covering up the dining room murals and importing their personal collection of silver, including "exquisitely carved" tea and coffee services and trays, candelabras, vases, picture frames and "delicately designed" figurines. According to the press at the time, the introduction of silver into the embassy was especially appropriate since "silver has played a major role in the cultural and industrial development of Mexico. It created the greatest wealth of colonial Spain; it brought adventurers and later, businessmen from all parts of the world; and it built those majestic temples in the heart of Mexico, comparable to those of renaissance Spain..."^{xxx}

The Mexican Embassy was the site of many diplomatic events throughout its history. One of particular note, however, was a dinner and reception held on April 30, 1947 for visiting Mexican President Miguel Aleman and

^{xxviii} "Embassy to be Converted into Model Mexican Salon," *The Washington Post*, May 29, 1925, p. 56. A later article notes that during the days of Ambassador Tellez, the roof garden, lighted and beflowered, was the scene of some of Washington's gayest entertaining." See, "Native Colors, Brilliant and Insistent, Strike Vivid Fiesta Keynote at Mexican Embassy; Frescoes Near Completion," *The Washington Post*, August 31, 1933, 11.

^{xxix} "Formal Dining Room, Largest in the Capital, Decorated with Gunther Murals," *The Washington Post*, August 31, 1933, p. 11.

^{xxx} "Gleaming Silver Decorates Mexican Embassy," *The Washington Post*, April 14, 1946, p. S1.

Embassy of Mexico/MacVeagh House

Name of Property

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attended by President and Mrs. Harry Truman. The two presidents had visited each other's countries that year to promote close post-War bilateral relations, and would later, on September 2, 1947, sign the Rio Treaty for hemispheric mutual defense. The dinner and reception was covered by the press, which noted, "The very tops in Mexican hospitality was showered on the President of the United States and Mrs. Truman last night. The Mexican President, Senor Miguel Aleman, returned in lavish fashion the courtesies and honors that have been bestowed upon him since his arrival in Washington as guest of the Nation... Thousands of blossoms were flown from Mexico for the party and the attractive rooms of the imposing building on Sixteenth Street looked like a flower show was being featured."^{xxxii}

The Mexican Embassy occupied the mansion for 69 years, from 1921 until 1989. As the former mansion could no longer accommodate the growing number of Embassy officers and employees, the embassy moved to its present location at 1911 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. while keeping its consular division at the chancery attached to the building at 2829 16th Street. The Mexican Cultural Institute of Washington, D.C., a non-profit organization established in 1990 moved into the mansion immediately after the embassy vacated the building. The Institute is committed to enriching the relationship between Mexico and the United States by sharing Mexico's vibrant cultural past and present with the local community. The Institute presents diverse, on-going cultural programs, exhibitions and tours, and has become a thriving artistic center in the heart of the city. With funding from the embassy, the institute undertook a major renovation of the building in 2009-2010.

Nathan Wyeth: Architect of 2829 16th Street^{xxxii}

Nathan C. Wyeth (1870-1963) was one of the city's best educated and most talented architects of the early 20th century. He was born in Chicago in 1870, his banker father Charles J. Wyeth descended from a Welsh family who settled in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in the second quarter of the seventeenth century., Wyeth's education was at private schools near military installations in Racine, Wisconsin, and West Chester and Sackett's Harbor, New York. He spent the year 1888 in Belgium and Switzerland studying water color painting but the following year enrolled in the Michigan Military Academy. He left to attend the Metropolitan Museum of Art School where in 1890 he won the D. O. Mills Prize for "general excellence in architecture." Wyeth returned to Switzerland and Paris and in 1892 enrolled in the Ecole des Beaux Arts where he studied with Duray Pascal and received a diploma in 1899. Wyeth was the only one of the several architects based in Washington and Ecole-educated to actually complete its rigorous program and receive a diploma.

Wyeth probably came to Washington when he completed his education because his family had settled here in 1895 and he was assured of a prominent place in society. On December 2, 1899 he received a three-month appointment as a designer in the Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury and on January 9, 1900 passed the Civil Service Examination with high scores in drawing, design, technical education, and experience. In June 1900 Wyeth was elected a member of the American Institute of Architects and made fellow four years later. He was very active in the Institute's Washington chapter, serving on committees, lecturing at meetings, and submitting drawings to annual exhibits. Although he was twice invited to serve as a jury member judging architectural competitions and was twice an invited competitor, Wyeth chose not to enter open competitions, unlike a large number of his contemporaries.

Early in 1900 Wyeth was hired by the Washington office of Carrere and Hastings to work on the design of the original House and Senate Office buildings, very refined reinterpretations of the Ministere de la Marine, an eighteenth-century Parisian office building that was considered at the time the most beautiful traditional exemplar for such a building type. In October 1900 Wyeth returned to the Supervising Architect's Office where he remained until January 26, 1904. James Knox Taylor's numerous Colonial Revival federal buildings built during this period were noted for their suave elegance that bespoke of French architectural influence; Wyeth contributed to their character. In 1904-1905 Wyeth was the chief architectural designer in the Office of the Architect of the Capitol.

Wyeth's first private commission was in partnership with William Penn Cresson, who studied at the Ecole from 1898 to 1902. The Wells House at 1609 Connecticut Avenue, begun in the spring of 1904, was designed for the sister of the mayor of St. Louis who wanted an elegant French-style house befitting her family's prominence. Its stone façade, cubic form, Mansard roof, and elegant Louis XVI detailing exemplified Wyeth's future substantial "French" townhouse designs. It was one of two stylistic idioms Wyeth & Cresson favored for their residential designs. The Louis A. Coolidge House erected at

^{xxxii} *The Washington Star*, May 1, 1947.

^{xxxii} This biography on Wyeth was prepared by Pamela Scott, Architectural Historian, for the D.C. Historic Preservation office, 2008.

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2419 Massachusetts Avenue in 1906 represented Wyeth & Cresson's second stylistic paradigm: a red brick, gambrel-roofed Colonial Revival house strongly reminiscent of its New England antecedents, but definitely of its own era. Wyeth was proud of his New England familial heritage and knowledgeable about its architectural traditions as he responded to the backgrounds and status of his varied clients. Wyeth & Cresson designed at least ten distinguished residences (two were double houses) during their partnership that lasted until at least June 1908, ranging in cost from \$14,000 to \$500,000 (the latter the unbuilt John Hays Hammond House, 1907) and a business building for John R. McLean overlooking Lafayette Square (1905) where Wyeth had his office until 1920.

Wyeth drew upon an extensive social network, first established by his step-father and mother, that reached into the White House, but which he actively pursued until his marriage in 1911 to Dorothy Lawson. In private practice between 1908 and 1914 he designed eleven residences, the majority for socially and politically prominent clients and located between 16th Street and Massachusetts Avenue north of Sheridan Circle, including the 1910 MacVeagh House on Meridian Hill. Wyeth continued to work within the two stylistic modes he practiced with Cresson, decidedly French residences with stone envelopes and Colonial Revival ones in brick. Like the MacVeagh House, many of his other residences became embassies, their interiors for the most part surviving intact.

Although Wyeth's reputation as one of Washington's best society architects rests on the consistently high quality of his mansions (the great majority of which survive, one measure of their worth), his approach to architecture was serious—he designed excellent buildings no matter what their purpose. In 1904 the trustees of the Girl's Reform School selected Wyeth & Cresson to design a dormitory for its male employees located on Conduit Road near the District line. In 1909, President William Howard Taft approved Wyeth's scheme to double the size of the president's office space in the White House's west wing. Inspired by the Blue Room, Wyeth placed an oval office in the wing's center, the prototype for the present Oval Office located at the wing's southeast corner.

Wyeth's public commissions on his own include six medical facilities, two of which included residential portions: the dormitory and infirmary for the Episcopal House of Mercy (1910), newly relocated to the corner of Klinge and Park Roads NW; the Columbia Hospital for Women (1913) at 25th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue NW; the Emergency Hospital (1913-15) on New York Avenue between 17th and 18th Streets NW; the Loudon County Hospital (1917) in Leesburg, Virginia; the Children's Country Home (1929; a residential hospital for sick children) at 1731 Bunker Hill Road, NE; and the Glendale Sanitarium (1934) in Glendale, Maryland. Because of a technicality Wyeth was not paid for his 1916 design drawings for Key Bridge but the same year was one of the paid invited competitors for the architectural portions of the Calvert Street Bridge.

In 1913, the Battleship Maine Memorial Association (founded in 1909) selected Wyeth to design its monument in Arlington National Cemetery to commemorate the ship's sinking in 1898 and the outbreak of the Spanish-American War. The ship's mast rose from the center of the circular mausoleum—"similar in shape to the turret of a battleship"—the names of the 262 dead carved into its exterior granite walls. When it was dedicated on Memorial Day, 1915, the Lincoln Memorial was still under construction and World War I was being waged in Europe. Wyeth joined former students of the Ecole and other Francophiles in Washington in raising money to send to France. In October 1915 he designed a national pantheon to be erected at Arlington, his proposal a Beaux-Arts version of the Capitol dome filtered through an earlier iteration of the same dome, the U.S. National Pavilion at the 1900 Paris Exposition. Because it honored America's unsung heroes of all wars, Wyeth's pantheon may have been his way of urging America to come to the aid of Europe by entering the war. Carrere & Hasting's Arlington Memorial Amphitheatre (1920) was the partial realization of Wyeth's idea.

Like most other architects in practice in Washington when America entered the war in 1917, Wyeth was commissioned a major in the U.S. Army, working so hard on designing military installations that his health broke down; he spent about five years recovering in a Swiss sanitarium. On April 26, 1926, Wyeth formed a partnership with Francis Paul Sullivan (educated in engineering and architecture at George Washington University) who had been Wyeth's draftsman beginning about 1913. By 1930 the firm Wyeth & Sullivan had designed eight substantial houses in Kalorama and Foxhall, all of them based on American colonial prototypes. Their Duncan Phillips House at 2101 Foxhall Road (1928, razed 1988), for example, was a modern rendition of the Hammond-Harwood House in Annapolis, Maryland.

In May 1925, Wyeth joined thirty-eight other local architects to incorporate the Allied Architects of Washington (to differentiate it from the Allied Architects of Los Angeles) specifically to have the combined architectural, engineering, and drafting capabilities to bid on large government contracts; by 1929 Wyeth was one of seven of its directors. Their first project was an addition to the House Office Building and Wyeth was in charge of the winning Allied Architects team (the

Embassy of Mexico/MacVeagh House

Name of Property

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office held an internal competition based on collaborative competition) for a design that replicated the scale and massing of the original Carrere & Hastings building. Wyeth was the chief architect on the revised design completed in 1933, now the Longworth House Office Building.

In that same year, Wyeth was one of nine local architects selected to design schools under Harris's supervision; he was selected to design the Colonial Revival Calvert Street School (now Oyster Elementary) designed to be an extensible school built wing by wing as funds and needs allowed. By 1929, Wyeth was working part-time the Municipal Architect's Office and in 1934 upon Harris's death, Wyeth was named the city's Municipal Architect. Once he was in charge of the office, Wyeth followed the architectural style sanctioned by Albert Harris and the Commission of Fine Arts in the 1920s—American Georgian—as the most fitting complement to the city's residential neighborhoods as well as the most flexible and economical.

Wyeth may have played some role in the designs of McKinley (1926) and Roosevelt (1932) High Schools, the first two of the substantial "presidents" high schools; he was responsible for the last three, Wilson (1934), Coolidge (1938), and Jefferson (1940). Their common threads are scale, complexity, and decent from the Independence Hall group of three buildings in Philadelphia, their cupolas acting as identifiers in their respective neighborhoods. In contrast, he modeled his Colonial Revival library designs in Georgetown (1934) and Petworth (1936) on Georgian domestic architecture and his fire stations (Rhode Island Avenue, 1937) on colonial market houses. Early in the '30s Wyeth's approach to his historical sources was fairly academic but as the decade progressed his forms became more abstract and his details more generic but each building's historical antecedents were still clear. This progression paralleled national trends in the evolution of the era's Colonial Revival design ethos.

By June 21, 1946, a few weeks after Wyeth's retirement, his successor Merrell Coe presented the design of the Kelly Miller Junior High School before the Commission of Fine Arts. Its abstraction of classical forms and details, brought about by the impact of Modernism, was the beginning of the end of Washington's Colonial Revival school designs. After his death at the age of 93, Wyeth's wife recalled that during his early career he had always wanted to work on large, complex projects; his sixteen years in the Municipal Architect's Office provided him with many opportunities. She also noted that Wyeth never really liked modern architecture.

Embassy of Mexico/MacVeagh House
Name of Property

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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"Native Colors, Brilliant and Insistent, Strike Vivid Fiesta Keynote at Mexican Embassy; Frescoes Near Completion," The Washington Post, August 31, 1933, p.11.

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Preston, Peggy, "Gleaming Silver Decorates Mexican Embassy," The Washington Post, April 14, 1946.

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Other

D.C. Permits to Build, Washingtoniana Division, Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library, microfilm.

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 Less than 1 acre (34,551 square feet)

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>18</u>	<u>3 23 455</u>	<u>43 10 230</u>	3	_____	_____	_____
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2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

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

The Embassy of Mexico/MacVeagh House at 2829 16th Street, N.W. occupies Square 2577, Lot 0038. The lot extends from 16th Street to 15th Street in the Meridian Hill area of northwest Washington, D.C.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Square 2577, Lot 0038 has been associated with this property since construction of the house on the site in 1910-1911. The garage and chancery wings, added 1921-22, were built upon the existing lot.

Embassy of Mexico/MacVeagh House
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kim Williams, Architectural Historian

organization D.C. Historic Preservation Office

date September 2012

street & number 1100 4th Street, S.W.

telephone 202 442-8840

city or town Washington, D.C.

state

zip code 20024

e-mail Kim.williams@dc.gov

Additional Documentation

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: MacVeagh Residence/Embassy of Mexico

City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.

Photographer: Kim Williams

Date Photographed: May 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking northeast showing south and west elevations
1 of 16

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking southeast showing north and west elevations
2 of 16

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking east showing west elevation of house and chancery wing
3 of 16

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking east showing west elevation
4 of 16

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking easterly showing south and west elevations of house and chancery wing
5 of 16

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking northwest showing east (rear) elevation of house with conservatory and chancery wing
6 of 16

Embassy of Mexico/MacVeagh House
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking westerly showing north elevation of house
7 of 16

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Interior view showing reception area and stair hall
8 of 16

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Interior view showing stair with wall murals along north interior wall of house
9 of 16

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Interior view at second floor landing looking towards front music room and parlor with wall murals in stair hall
10 of 16

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Interior view of music room looking north at Aeolian Pipe Organ
11 of 16

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Interior view of dining room with door on left leading into the parlor and door on right into second floor stair hall
12 of 16

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Interior view of conservatory opening off east end of dining room
13 of 16

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Interior view of library on the third floor
14 of 16

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking west from 15th Street looking at rear elevation of house and garage
15 of 16

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking northwest from 15th Street showing south and east elevations of garage
16 of 16

Property Owner:

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

name Government of Mexico / Hector Dominguez, Administrator
street & number 1911 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. telephone (202) 728-1613
city or town Washington, D.C. state _____ zip code _____

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.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

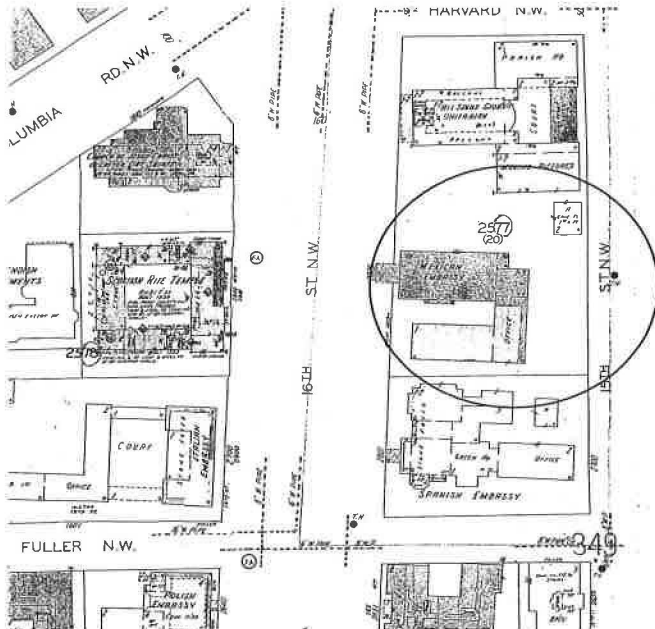
Embassy of Mexico/MacVeagh House
Name of Property Washington, D.C.
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Maps and Images

Page 1



Site Plan showing Embassy of Mexico/MacVeagh House
2829 16th Street
(Map from D.C. Office of Planning, 2012)



Site Plan showing Embassy of Mexico/MacVeagh House
(From Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Company, 1959)

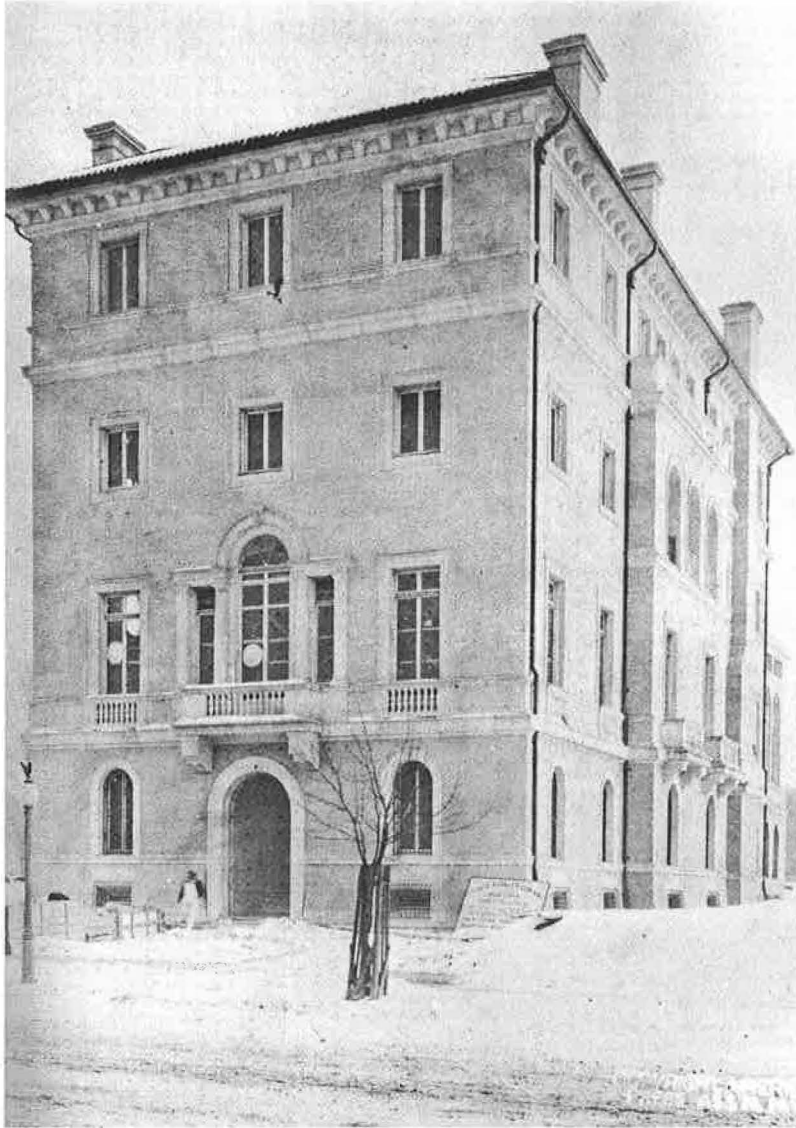
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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Embassy of Mexico/MacVeagh House
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County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Maps and Images

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View of MacVeagh House nearing completion, ca. 1911
(Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division)

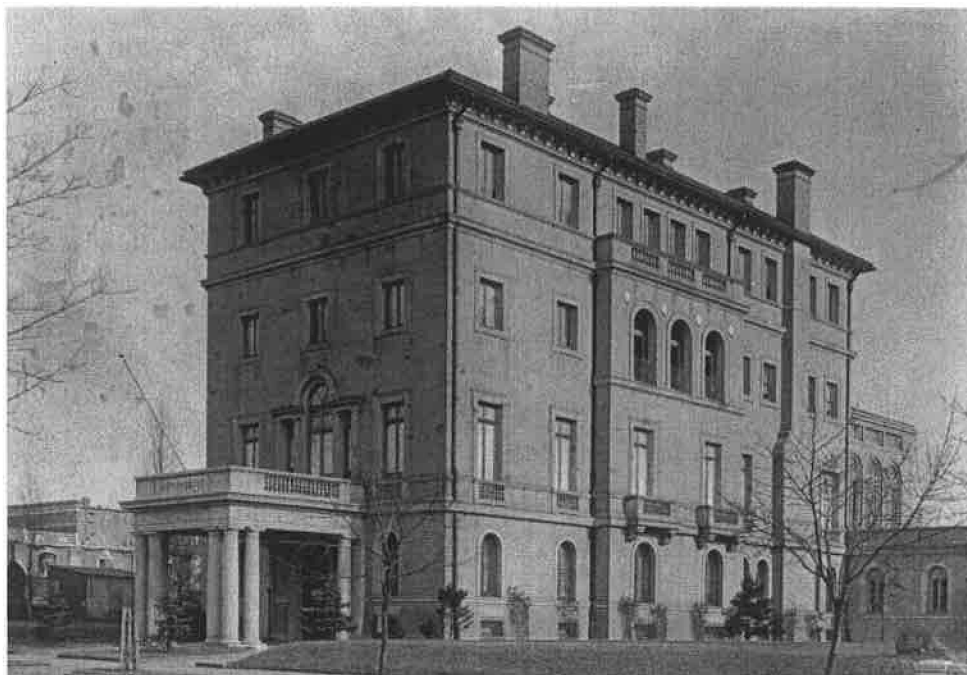
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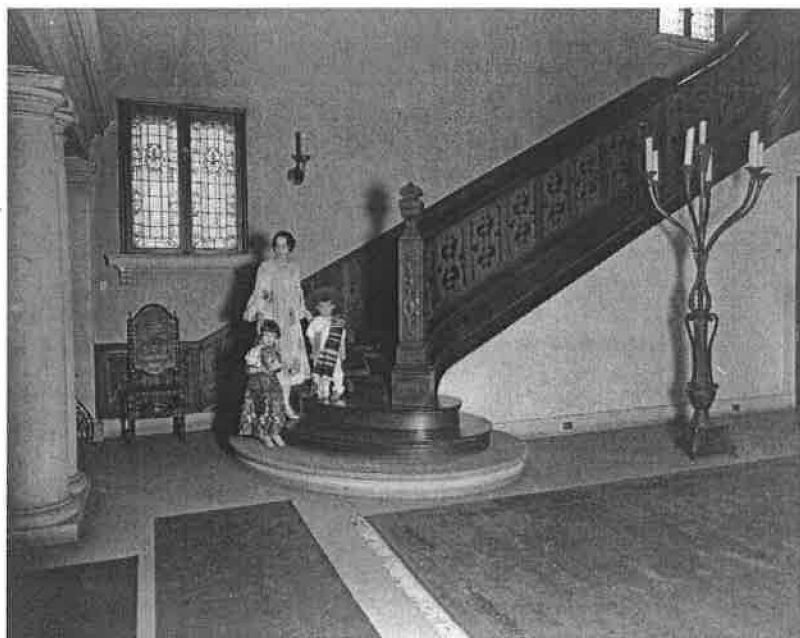
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View of Embassy of Mexico, ca. 1922 following addition of porte-cochere and chancery wing
(From files of the Mexician Cultural Institute)



Interior view of stair hall before wall murals were begun in 1933
(From files of the Mexican Cultural Institute)

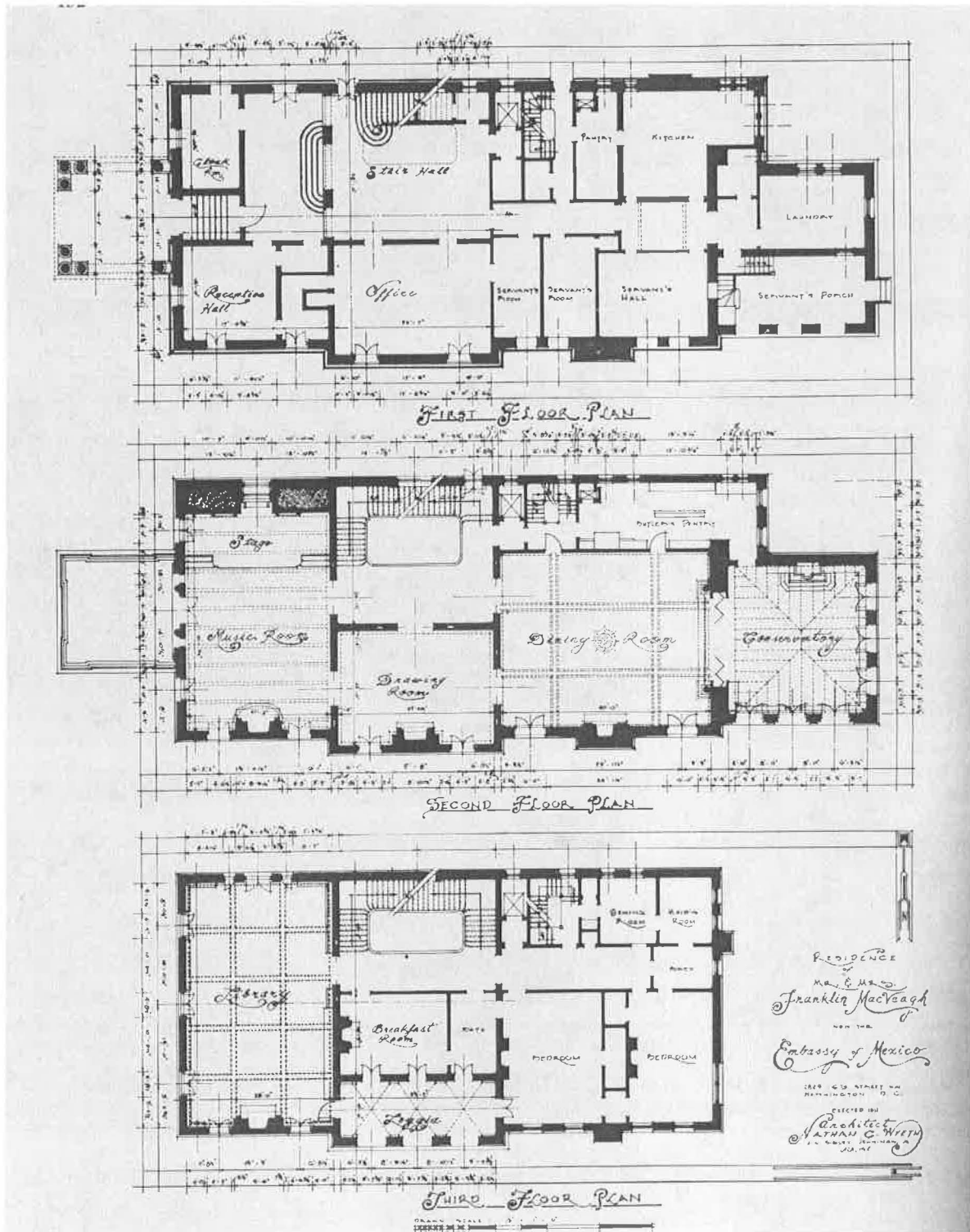
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National Park Service

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Section number Maps and Images

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Plans of the the MacVeagh House, Nathan Wyeth, architect
(from Kohler, Sue and Jeffrey Carson, Sixteenth Street Architecture, vol. 1, The Commission of Fine Arts, Washington, D.C., 1978)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Embassy of Mexico
Name of Property Washington, D.C.
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Maps Page 5



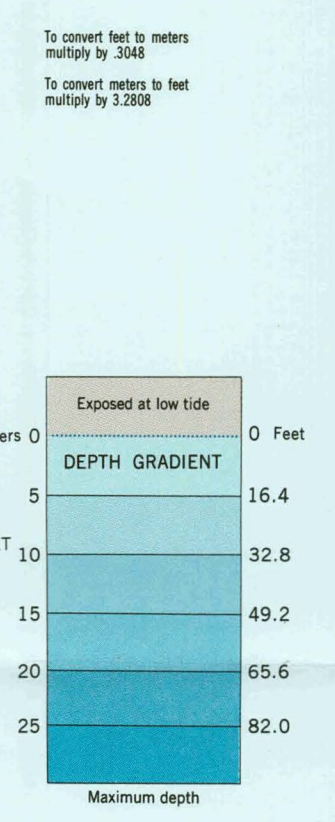
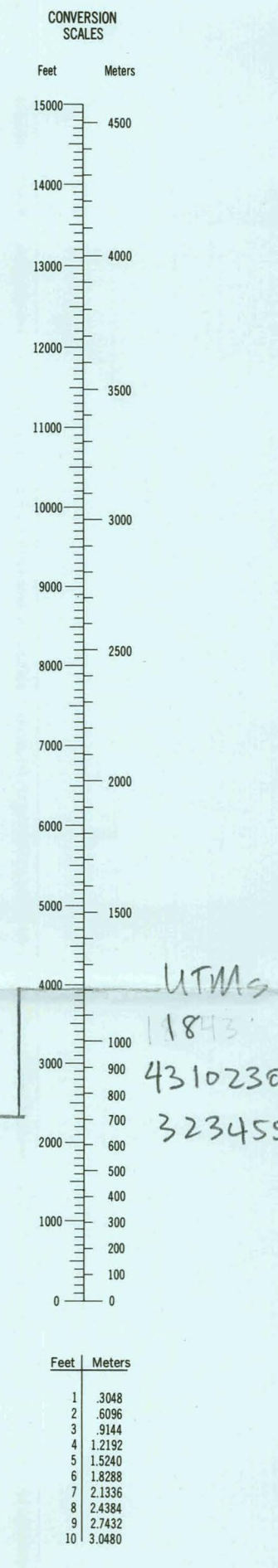
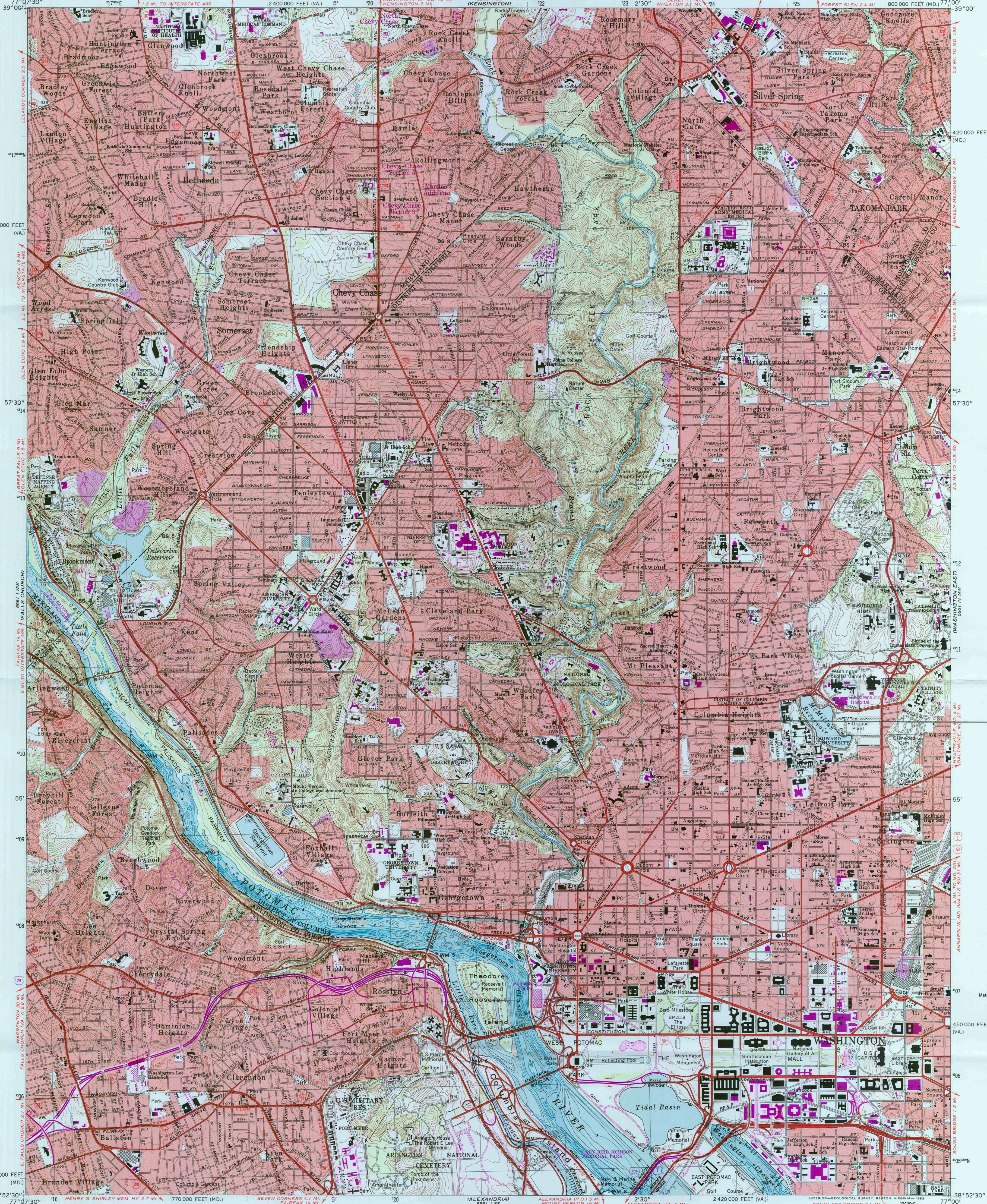
Map Showing National Register Boundaries for Embassy of Mexico (MacVeagh House)
2829 16th Street, NW
Washington, D.C.
(From D.C. Office of Planning, GIS Base Map, 2012)



Embassy of Mexico

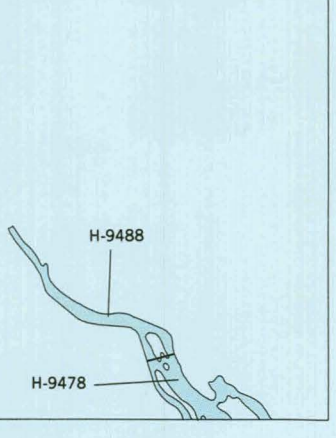
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

WASHINGTON WEST QUADRANGLE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA-MARYLAND-VIRGINIA
7.5 MINUTE SERIES
(TOPOGRAPHIC-BATHYMETRIC)



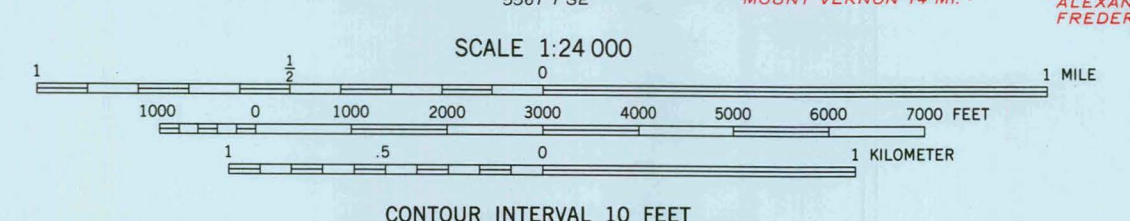
Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey and the National Ocean Service
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, NPS, and WSSC
Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1955. Field checked 1956. Revised 1965
Bathymetry compiled by the National Ocean Service from tide-coordinated hydrographic surveys. This information is not intended for navigational purposes.
Mean low water (dotted) line and mean high water (heavy solid) line compiled by NOS from tide-coordinated aerial photographs. Apparent shoreline (outer edge of vegetation) shown by light solid line
Polyconic projection, 10,000-foot grid ticks based on Maryland coordinate system, and Virginia coordinate system, north zone
1:000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 18
1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 8 meters south and 26 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map
Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled in cooperation with Commonwealth of Virginia agencies from aerial photographs taken 1981 and other sources. This information not field checked
Map edited 1983
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE
HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY INDEX



HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY INFORMATION

Survey Number	Survey Date	Survey Scale	Survey Line Spacing (Naut. Miles)
H-9478	1977	1:5,000	01-08
H-9488	1978	1:5,000	01-05



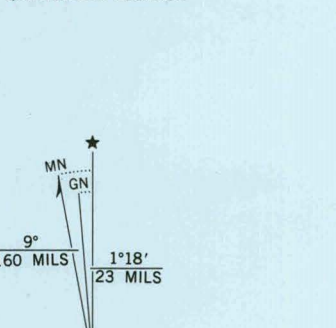
SCALE 1:24 000
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
BATHYMETRIC CONTOUR INTERVAL 1 METER WITH SUPPLEMENTARY 0.5 METER CONTOURS-DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 0.4 METER
BASE MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
BATHYMETRIC SURVEY DATA COMPLIES WITH INTERNATIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC ORGANIZATION (IHO) SPECIAL PUBLICATION 44 ACCURACY STANDARDS AND/OR STANDARDS USED AT THE DATE OF THE SURVEY
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE, ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20852
AND VIRGINIA DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA 22903
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———
Interstate Route ——— U.S. Route ——— State Route ———



WASHINGTON WEST, D. C.-MD.-VA.
38077-H1-TB-024

1965
PHOTOREVISED 1983
BATHYMETRY ADDED 1982
DMA 5561 1 NE-SERIES 9833



UTM
18R
4310230
323455





SNOW
EMERGENCY
ROUTE

28



A large, multi-story, light-colored building with a red-tiled roof. The building features a central entrance with a portico supported by columns. There are several windows, including a prominent arched window on the second floor. The building is surrounded by trees and a black metal fence.

A road with a yellow center line and a white edge line. A red fire hydrant is visible on the sidewalk. A white car is partially visible on the right side of the road.







ENCLAVE
RESIDENTIAL
ROUTE

2827

NO PARKING
EXCEPT FOR
EMERGENCY VEHICLES









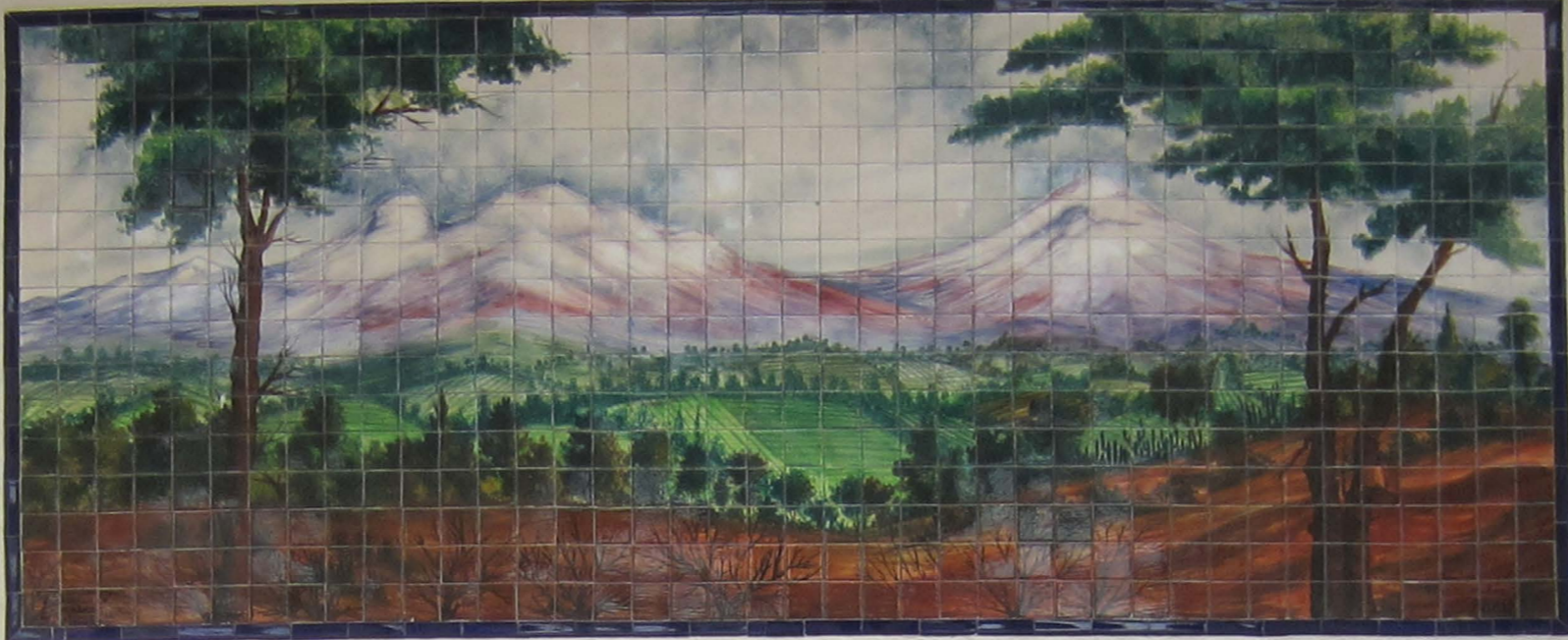








Baja California Oaxaca San Luis Potosí Oahuila Colima Aguascalientes Hidalgo Jalisco Moralo Querearo







ONE WAY
→

PLEASE
WALK



ONE
WAY
→



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Embassy of Mexico--MacVeagh House

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, District of Columbia

DATE RECEIVED: 12/28/12 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/13/13
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13000001

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: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

___ACCEPT ___RETURN ___REJECT _____DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA

Accept AEC

REVIEWER

Patrick Andrews

DISCIPLINE

Historian

TELEPHONE

DATE

2/11/2013

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.

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER



January 2, 2013

Mr. Patrick Andrus
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
1201 I Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20005

RE: Embassy of Mexico/MacVeagh House Nomination

Dear Patrick:

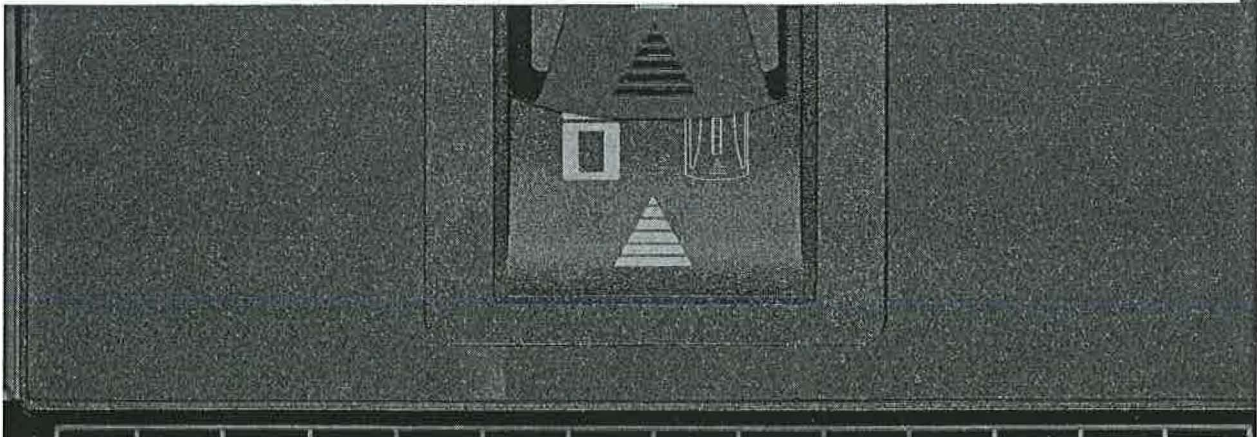
The District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office is, by this letter, requesting an expedited review for listing in the National Register of Historic Places of the recently submitted nomination for the Embassy of Mexico/MacVeagh House at 2829 16th Street in Washington, D.C. (Our office sent the nomination to your attention on 12/28/2012 via FedEx). We are requesting an expedited review in order that the out-going Mexican ambassador to the United States who sponsored the nomination may be honored for his role in the building's designation and preservation before his departure for Mexico at the end of this month.

The District of Columbia Historic Preservation Review Board considered the nomination of the Embassy of Mexico/MacVeagh House at its monthly meeting on December 20, 2012 and voted unanimously for its designation as a D.C. Landmark and for forwarding the nomination to the National Register for listing. All required notices for National Register listing were published as part of that process.

We would be grateful for your assistance in this matter. Our office has been working with the Embassy of Mexico towards this designation for many months and the ambassador's support of preserving this building has been critical in the process. If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to call Kim Williams at 202 442-8840.

Sincerely,

David Maloney
State Historic Preservation Officer





Andrus, Patrick <patrick_andrus@nps.gov>

Embassy of Mexico Expedite letter

1 message

Williams, Kim (OP) <kim.williams@dc.gov>
To: "patrick_andrus@nps.gov" <patrick_andrus@nps.gov>

Thu, Jan 3, 2013 at 1:58 PM

Dear Patrick,

I would like to follow up with you regarding the request by the D.C. Historic Preservation Office to expedite the review of the nomination of the Embassy of Mexico/MacVeagh House at 2829 16th Street, NW. In his letter to you regarding this matter, dated January 2, 2013, David Maloney intended to request that the federal register comment period for the listing be shortened.

Please let me know if our office needs to do anything else to facilitate this request.

Thanks, Kim

Kim Prothro Williams

National Register Coordinator

D.C. Historic Preservation Office/Office of Planning

1100 4th Street, SW Suite E650

Washington, D.C. 20024

202 442-8840

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