Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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



#### SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

### 1 NAME

HISTORIC

Sixteenth Street Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

Sixteenth Street Historic District

### **2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

| 16th Street, N.W. between     | Florida Ave., N.W. | and Scott Circle (see atta                      | uched)      |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|---|-------------|
| сıту, тоwn<br>Washington      | VICINITY OF        | CONGRESSIONAL DIST<br>Walter E. Fauntroy/Congre |             |
| STATE<br>District of Columbia | CODE<br>11         | COUNTY<br>District of Columbia                  | CODE<br>001 |

## **3 CLASSIFICATION**

| CATEGORY    | OWNERSHIP          | STATUS              | PRESI           | ENTUSE              |
|-------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
|             | PUBLIC             |                     | AGRICULTURE     | MUSEUM              |
| BUILDING(S) | PRIVATE            | UNOCCUPIED          |                 | PARK                |
| STRUCTURE   | X_BOTH             | XWORK IN PROGRESS   | X EDUCATIONAL   | X.PRIVATE RESIDENCE |
| SITE        | PUBLIC ACQUISITION | ACCESSIBLE          | X ENTERTAINMENT | XRELIGIOUS          |
| OBJECT      | IN PROCESS         | -YES: RESTRICTED    | GOVERNMENT      | X_SCIENTIFIC        |
|             | BEING CONSIDERED   | X_YES: UNRESTRICTED | INDUSTRIAL      | TRANSPORTATION      |
| •           |                    | NO                  | MILITARY        | OTHER:              |

### **4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Multiple public and private ownership - see attached list

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

STATE

D.C.

### **5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

rc. Recorder of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Washington,

# **6** REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites

6th and D Streets, N.W.

DATE

June 17, 1977

XFEDERAL XSTATE \_\_COUNTY \_\_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS D.C./N.C.P.C. Historic Preservation Office

CITY, TOWN Washington

STATE District of Columbia

# 7<sup>4</sup> DESCRIPTION

|                                 | CONDITION                          | CHECK ONE                       | CHECK ON | IE         |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------|------------|
| X_EXCELLENT<br>X_GOOD<br>X_FAIR | DETERIORATED<br>RUINS<br>UNEXPOSED | ≚UNALTERED generally<br>ALTERED |          | TE<br>DATE |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Sixteenth Street Historic District is characterized by the linear experience of the street itself. Sixteenth Street, one of the most important numbered streets in the Federal City, is a Major Element of the L'Enfant Plan. This section of the 160-foot wide street, with its vista south to the White House, is contained between two Major Elements of the L'Enfant Plan -- Scott Circle on the south and Florida Avenue, N.W., originally known as Boundary Street,on the north and the sharp rise of Meridian Hill. The only major mid-twentieth century intrusions occur in the blocks immediately north of Scott Circle. However, their effect is off-set by the configuration of the Circle itself, which acts as an anchor to the Historic District. The physical aspect of Sixteenth Street, combined with the architectural quality of the buildings within the district boundaries and the historical importance of the area, constitute the essence of the Historic District. Therefore, the boundaries of the Historic District extend only to the rear property lines of lots fronting on Sixteenth Street and do not extend to the side streets, which are not part of the continuous visual experience of Sixteenth Street.

The buildings in the Sixteenth Street Historic District are varied in type and style but related in conception, scale, materials, and quality of design. The buildings, which represent the work of some of Washington's most prominent architects, were conceived with a similar attitude and designed with a common building vocabulary. Well-articulated and varied facades and rooflines are harmoniously juxtaposed along the street. The integration of scale, proportion, and use add to the historic district's strong sense of place. This sense of place is reinforced by the architectural quality of the buildings in the area.

The structures in the historic district range in type from a small, one-story office building, to three and four-story rowhouses, large detacked houses, churches, small apartment buildings, monumental apartments and institutional buildings. The buildings contributing to the quality of the Historic District generally date from c. 1875 to the 1920's, and their styles, including Italianate, Queen Anne, Richardsonian Romanesque, and the many styles of the Beaux Arts mode, clearly reflect the eclectic character of American architecture during that period. The street was developed primarily with rowhouses, most of which were individually designed and built. Large detached houses are also found within the boundaries of the Historic District, which is one of the best preserved and visually most interesting late nineteenth - early twentieth century streetscapes in the District of Columbia.

Some of the earliest houses in the Historic District stand on the northwest corner of Sixteenth and T Streets. The two Italianate structures at 1900 and 1902 16th Street, N.W., date from c. 1878. The brick houses, which are smaller than most in the area, have wooden trim and bracketed cornices. The simplicity and clarity of these houses hold their own in a district of larger and more elaborate structures.

More common in the district are brick rowhouses with projecting bays and fanciful rooflines. An early example, c. 1875, is 1904 16th Street. This two-story house is two bays wide with a steep-pitched gable over the window bay. A one-story bay window projects from the facade. The decorative pressed brick that outlines the basic elements





| PERIOD  | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW  |  |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| PREHISTORIC<br>1400-1499<br>1500-1599<br>1600-1699<br>1700-1799<br>X-1800-1899<br>X-1900- | ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC<br>ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC<br>AGRICULTURE<br>XARCHITECTURE<br>ART<br>COMMERCE<br>COMMUNICATIONS | COMMUNITY PLANNING<br>CONSERVATION<br>ECONOMICS<br>EDUCATION<br>ENGINEERING<br>EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT<br>INDUSTRY<br>INVENTION | LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE<br>LAW<br>LITERATURE<br>MILITARY<br>MUSIC<br>PHILOSOPHY<br>POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | XRELIGION<br>SCIENCE<br>SCULPTURE<br>SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN<br>THEATER<br>TRANSPORTATION<br>XOTHER (SPECIFY)<br>Local History |  |
|   |  |  |   |  |  |

#### SPECIFIC DATES

**BUILDER/ARCHITECT** 

#### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Joint Committee on Landmarks has designated the Sixteenth Street Historic District a Category II Landmark of importance which contributes significantly to the cultural heritage and visual beauty of the District of Columbia.

The Sixteenth Street Historic District is a linear district which extends from Scott Circle to the original boundary of the Federal City, Boundary Street, now known as Florida Avenue. One of the most important of the numbered streets in the Federal City, Sixteenth Street is a Major Element of the L'Enfant Plan and contains an excellent vista south to the White House. Sixteenth Street is 160 feet wide (the widest of the numbered streets), and the combined effect of the set-backs and the trees lends a grandeur to the street as one progresses north from Scott Circle to Florida Avenue where there is a sharp rise in topography at Meridian Hill. The street contains a mixture of 19th century rowhouses, grand, freestanding residences, and turn-of-thecentury institutional buildings which provides a continuous and interrelated rhythm to the street. Even those buildings designed as late as the 1920's are in keeping with the scale and character and the excellent quality of the architecture of this grand street. The only major mid-20th-century intrusions occur in the blocks immediately north of Scott Circle. However, their effect is off-set by the configuration of the Circle itself, which acts as an anchor to the Historic District. Sixteenth Street has, throughout its history, served as a major focal point for community development, both residential and institutional, and this same juxtaposition continues today.

Sixteenth Street has been historically important since the time of its primary development in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Many men prominent in national politics and community affairs have lived on this section of the street since it became fashionable in the 1890's. Churches and other community and national institutions established their headquarters in the Historic District at the same time. Institutional structures stand sympathetically interspersed among the variety of residential buildings along the street. These larger buildings and churches with towers and spires add to the varied pattern of the streetscape and skyline.

The Historic District, like much of Washington, remained essentially undeveloped until the mid-to-late nineteenth century. Prior to the Civil War most of the structures on Sixteenth Street were shanties; fewer than ten structures of any size appear in what is today the Historic District on the 1861 Boshke real estate map. The population boom brought on by the Civil War and Reconstruction brought rapid large-scale development to Sixteenth Street as well as to the rest of Washington. By the 1880's the street began to take on its present appearance. Rowhouses and detached dwellings were constructed and by the 1890's the street had become a fashionable residential district.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See attached list

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



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|                    |             |   |      |   |  |

Sixteenth Street Historic District - Inclusive Street Addresses

1 Scott Circle

1315 - 2101 16th Street, N.W.

1326 - 2120 16th Street, N.W.

1530 and 1531 P Street, N.W.

1521 Church Street, N.W.

1540 Q Street, N.W.

1526 and 1601 R Street, N.W.

1536 and 1600 U Street, N.W.

2001 New Hamsphire Avenue, N.W.

1601 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.

1600 T Street, N.W.

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of the facade show the imaginative tendencies of the architecture of the period. Handsome wooden fans cap the second story windows. The corbelled, champhered corners of the bay and the original iron steps add distinction to the house. A similar house stands at 1910 16th Street, N.W.

Another early row, which was designed and built as a single unit, includes six houses on the southwest corner of 16th and Swann Streets (1816-1826 16th Street, N.W.). The massing of these three-story houses with bays is simple and the proportions are slender and elegant. Iron cresting, which was popularized during the late Victorian period, caps the roofs.

One of the finest houses in the Historic District, and one of the finest examples of the Italianate Bracketed style still standing in Washington, is the Huntley House at 1601 16th Street. The house was built in 1878 as a free-standing residence. In subsequent years the block was built up with individually designed rowhouses; the Huntley House is now the end house in a row. The bold, elaborate brackets of the cornice and the heavy, decorative tin hoods over the windows are typical of this style.

Perhaps the finest of the Queen Anne houses in the Historic District are those in the row at 1837-1841 16th Street. Built in 1890, these houses incorporate the irregularity of massing, variety of color and texture, and the round turrets of the style. Individually designed and built Queen Anne houses, both detached and row, also appear in the Historic District. Their varied facades, turrets, and fanciful rooflines create a rhythmic interplay of planes along the street facade. The turret is especially prominent on the house at 1633 16th Street, N.W. Primarily built of brick, with wood and stone trim, these houses add color, texture, and visual interest to the streetscape.

Similar contrasts of building materials are also found in the Richardsonian Romanesque houses in the Historic District. The influence of Henry Hobson Richardson hit Washington full-force after the completion of the Hay-Adams houses on the northwest corner of 16th Street and Lafayette Square in 1884. A number of excellent examples of the Richardsonian Romanesque still stand in the Historic District. The Sherman House at 1401 16th Street was built in 1888 by Charles and Samuel Edmonston, the uncle and nephew team that built the Hay-Adams Houses. The large, round-arched entrance and the flat patterned brickwork of Samuel Edmonston's design for this red brick structure clearly reflect Richardson's ideas. The three-story Hampton P. Denman house at 1623 16th Street was designed by Fuller and Wheeler of Albany, New York, in 1886. The combination of ashlar stone and red brick and the vegetal carving on this house are Richardson-inspired.

The outstanding example of this style is the house at 1628 16th Street, which was designed in 1890 by Harvey L. Page, and built by Addison and Lamb. Page, one of Washington's most innovative architects of the period, carefully articulated the transitions within the flat facade through the use of decorative brick and stone

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features. Extended stone lintels and Roman brickwork provide a horizontal foil to the vertical lines of the building.

A house reflecting the varied sources for the eclecticism of American architecture of the period is the Flemish Revival house at 1720 16th Street. The details of this house are derived from Netherlandish sources. The house, built in 1892, has an elaborately scrolled front gable, smaller stepped gables, and an irregular and varied roofline. The brickwork is elaborate and of very fine workmanship.

One of the most popular revival styles of the period was the Colonial Revival, which included both Georgian and Federal Revival designs. An excellent example of the Federal Revival stands at 1601 R Street. The house was designed in 1910 by Jules H. de Sibour, one of Washington's most prominent Beaux Arts architects around the turn of the century. The symmetrical facade is articulated by stone stringcourses and the center bay is accented by an entrance flanked by pairs of Ionic columns and a second story Palladian window.

Institutional uses began to spread up 16th Street at about the same time the Beaux Arts classicism that resulted from the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago began to sweep the country and drastically change architectural fashion. Institutions were building their headquarters in what is now the Historic District and the new Neo-Classicial mode was particularly appropriate for their needs. The conception was grand and monumental, regardless of the actual size of the building. The Carnegie Institution, a philanthropic organization, and the Jewish Community Center were both designed in the Neo-Classical mode. The former was designed in 1908 by the New York firm of Carrère and Hastings and the latter was designed by Washington architect B. Stanley Simmons in 1920.

At the same time the institutional buildings were appearing on the street, churches and apartment houses were also being built. Revival style details were used on these buildings just as they were on domestic structures. The Church of the Holy City, designed in 1895 by H. Langford Warren and built by Paul J. Pelz, one of the architects of the Library of Congress, is an example of late Gothic Revival, with English Perpendicular influences. The 158-foot tower was based on the tower over the entrance to Magdalen College, Oxford. A number of the many stained-glass windows are from the Tiffany Studio in New York.

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Gothic elements were also applied to the Chastleton, one of Harry Wardman's apartment houses in the Historic District. The entrance of this 1919-1920 building has Gothic tracery and gargoyles. In spite of its size the structure still contributes to the Historic District because of its design. The apartment buildings in the district are generally not as large as the Chastleton, with the exception of the Roosevelt, which is even larger. The Roosevelt, like the Chastleton, contributes to the Historic District because of its design, which includes elements from the Renaissance and Baroque revivals.

Most of the apartment buildings in the area are medium-sized, with elements of various architectural styles applied to the facades. Typical of this type of structure are The Tiffany and The Embassy. The Tiffany, with its rusticated lower stories and delicate floral decoration, and The Embassy, with its Georgian Revival details, have an elegance and grace similar to many of the apartment buildings in the Historic District.

One of the most unusual buildings in the Historic District is the Temple of the Scottish Rite at 1733 16th Street. The building, designed by John Russell Pope, was constructed between 1911 and 1915. Pope used the tomb of King Mausolus at Halicarnassus, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, as his model. In 1932 the building was voted the fifth most beautiful building in the world by a group of members of the Association of American Architects. The library, the first public library in the District of Columbia, contains one of the world's largest collections of materials on and by Scottish poet Robert Burns, who was a Freemason.

Within the boundaries of the Historic District, which includes 119 buildings, there are seven intrusions. All are mid-twentieth century, large-scale structures of contemporary design. Four of the seven -- the Australian Embassy, the Melbourne Apartments, the General Scott apartment house, and the National Wildlife Federation -are on or near the southern edge of the district. The other intrusions are the apartment buildings at 1520, 1600, and 2120 16th Street. The fact that four of the intrusions are concentrated in one area lessens their negative impact on the Historic District as a whole. Also, Scott Circle is strong enough on its own right to partially withstand the impact of intrusions and still anchor and define the southern edge of the district.

With the exception of the seven intrusions and six vacant lots along the street, the integrity of the early twentieth century streetscape remains intact. Most of the structures are in good to excellent physical condition. Few alterations have been made to buildings in the Historic District. The District has retained its sense of place and the architectural definition, mixture of building styles and types, and uses that were present in the early twentieth century. The same rich texture and visual impression created by varied designs and materials is also still present. Rhythmic patterns along the streetscape result from projections on facades and rooflines and large buildings, church towers, and spires periodically punctuate the skyline. The building types and their design and conception relate to each other and the Historic District stands today as a strong and cohesive whole.

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Intrusions in the Sixteenth Street Historic District

1601 Massachusetts Avenue 1412 16th Street, N.W. 1520 16th Street, N.W. 1600 16th Street, N.W. 2120 16th Street, N.W. 1 Scott Circle 1315 16th Street, N.W.

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By that time the Historic District could boast of residents with such prominent and well-known names as Corcoran, Riggs, Dos Passos, Biddle, Willard, and Kauffman. Both Russell A. Alger, Senator from Michigan and Secretary of War under President McKinley, and Vice-President James S. Sherman lived at 1701 16th Street, a house recently renovated and converted to law offices. Other distinguished residents of the Historic District have been: Admiral Cary T. Grayson, personal and medical aide to President Wilson and later President of the American Red Cross (1600 16th Street, now demolished); Senator John Sharp Williams of Mississippi (1607 16th Street); Judge Hampton P. Denman (1623 16th Street); Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes (2108 16th Street); John W. Weeks, Secretary of War under Presidents Harding and Coolidge (2108 16th Street); Count Mombello di Sommati (1601 16th Street); and Prince Basil Toutorsky (1720 16th Street). Bank presidents, newspaper tycoons, congressmen, judges, members of the diplomatic corps, and high-ranking government officials have also resided in the Historic District.

The houses these people lived in reflected the evolution of local and national architectural trends from around 1875 on into the early decades of the twentieth century. The eclectic character of American architecture at that time is clearly visible in the well-preserved streetscape of the Historic District. Indeed, this excellent visual record of Washington's late 19th- early 20th century architecture was a primary reason for the designation of the Sixteenth Street Historic District. Here simple c. 1878 rowhouses, an elaborate Italianate Bracketed house, turreted Queen Anne and Richardsonian Romanesque houses, and buildings of the many Beaux Arts eclectic styles of the turn of the century stand together, varied in style but related in scale, materials, conception and building wacabulary. Most of the houses are three or four stories. Brick is the predominant building material, although stone was used for a few houses. A particularly unusual green serpentine stone house stands at 1832 16th Street, N.W., one of only a few such houses in the District of Columbia. Stone was also the primary building material for the institutional buildings and churches in the Historic District.

Institutional uses spread northward from lower 16th Street in the decades surrounding the turn of the century. Churches and other institutions erected buildings along the predominantly residential street. The First Baptist Church (1888), the Church of the Holy City (1894), and Foundry Methodist Church (1904) were among the early churches in the Historic District. The Carnegie Institution, Andrew Carnegie's philanthropic institution, moved into its building in 1908. By 1917 the Women's Congressional Club, founded by Mrs. John Henderson, the guiding spirit behind the development of the Meridian Hill area of Sixteenth Street (a Category III place in the District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites) established its headquarters in the Historic District. One of the most unusual buildings in the district, the Temple of the Scottish Rite, was completed in 1915. Its members have included a number of past presidents. In the 1950's Mary Church Terrell brought the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs to prominence from their headquarters at 1601 R Street, N.W. A number of countries established embassies in the houses and luxury apartment buildings lining

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the street. The Netherlands, Columbia, Persia, Yugoslavia, Venezuela, and Nigeria maintained embassies in what is today the Historic District. The building at 1424 16th Street retains the **na**me "The Embassy" from the days when it housed the Hungarian Legation.

The men responsible for the buildings within the Historic District include many of the most prominent architects and builders working in Washington at the time. Men of local distinction whose designs contribute to the architectural quality of the Historic District include: Nathan C. Wyeth; Appleton P. Clark, Jr.; W. Bruce Gray; Harvey L. Page; T. F. Schneider; Glenn Brown; B. Stanley Simmons; and George Oakley Totten. Carrère and Hastings, Jules H. de Sibour, John Russell Pope, and Fuller and Wheeler of Albany, New York, designed buildings in the district and had national reputations. Well-known developers and builders were also working in the Historic District. One-time real estate magnate, Harry Wardman, built a number of his many apartment houses on this section of Sixteenth Street. John McGregor, Samuel and Charles Edmonston, and the firm of Richardson and Burgess were also active in the Historic District. These men, whose quality of design and workmanship are so vital to the essence of the district, also helped create the built environment of the rest of Washington. On Sixteenth Street their buildings, and those many other men, work together exceptionally well. The imaginative, varied facades of these buildings create a rhythmic streetscape and a continuous visual experience seldom so well preserved in the District of Columbia.

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