

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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# 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

Woodrow Wilson House -

AND/OR COMMON

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

2340 S Street, NW.

\_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Washington

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

District of Columbia

\_\_ VICINITY OF

CODE

11

COUNTY

District of Columbia

CODE

011

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

### CATEGORY

- DISTRICT  
 BUILDING(S)  
 STRUCTURE  
 SITE  
 OBJECT

### OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC  
 PRIVATE

BOTH

### PUBLIC ACQUISITION

- IN PROCESS  
 BEING CONSIDERED

### STATUS

- OCCUPIED  
 UNOCCUPIED  
 WORK IN PROGRESS

### ACCESSIBLE

- YES: RESTRICTED  
 YES: UNRESTRICTED  
 NO

### PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE  
 COMMERCIAL  
 EDUCATIONAL  
 ENTERTAINMENT  
 GOVERNMENT  
 INDUSTRIAL  
 MILITARY
- MUSEUM  
 PARK  
 PRIVATE RESIDENCE  
 RELIGIOUS  
 SCIENTIFIC  
 TRANSPORTATION  
 OTHER:

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

National Trust for Historic Preservation

STREET & NUMBER

740-748 Jackson Place, NW.

CITY, TOWN

Washington

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

District of Columbia

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Recorder of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

6th and D Streets, NW.

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

District of Columbia

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1976

XX FEDERAL \_\_ STATE \_\_ COUNTY \_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Division of Prints and Photographs, Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

District of Columbia

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Woodrow Wilson House is a three-story red brick building originally built for Henry Parker Fairbanks by architect Waddy B. Wood in 1915. Located in the Embassy Row section of Northwest Washington, the house was designed in a Georgian Revival style popular in that neighborhood. The most notable features of the rather flat, square, front (north) facade, are three Palladian-style windows, incorporation Ionic columns and fluted semi-circular arches executed in light stone, which span the front, second story level. The small columned central entrance portico on the ground level is surmounted by a small parapet with decorative metal railing.

The first two stories are divided by two string courses, narrow bands of light stone. The third story windows are rectangular, flat-arched and unadorned, with double hung sash of six-over-six lights each. Three oval modillions are located between these six windows, directly above the center of each Palladian window. The slightly projecting cornice is outlined with bands of lighter stone and small dentils underneath a projecting brick section just below the roof edge.

On the rear (south), the house is two-stories, on an elevated terrace. The central bay has a Palladian-style opening (loggia used as balcony), on the second story, protected by a decorative metal railing, above a semicircular wooden bay surrounded by windows. The two flanking bays on each story are rectangular, horizontal, flat-arched windows divided into three panels of lights. The yard to the rear is terraced and the far south section runs down a steep grade to Decatur Place.

The Wilsons built a brick garage on the west, with a porch above it, and put iron gates at the entrance to the drive (west of the house). They installed an elevator and a billiard room, rearranged some interior partitions and built stacks for Mr. Wilson's library of 8,000 volumes (later given to the Library of Congress). Mrs. Wilson, who survived her husband and continued to live in this house for nearly 40 years, donated the property to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the house is relatively unchanged since Woodrow Wilson resided there. It has original furnishings and items personally owned by the Wilsons.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES March 4, 1921-February 3, 1924. (occupation by Woodrow Wilson) BUILDER/ARCHITECT Waddy B. Wood

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Woodrow Wilson, Presbyterian minister's son, who became educator, leader for international peace and 28th President of the United States, retired to this red brick house at 2340 S Street, NW., Washington, D. C. in 1921, at the end of his second term. He died here three years later on February 3, 1924.

Edith Bolling Wilson, his widow, provided that the house be presented to the American people under the guardianship of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, in order to "preserve and maintain the said premises in perpetuity, as a memorial in honor of the Grantor's late husband, the Honorable Woodrow Wilson, a past President of the United States."

Woodrow Wilson was born in Staunton, Virginia in 1856 (see also Woodrow Wilson Birthplace, National Historic Landmark). He attended Davidson College, University of Virginia Law School and received his doctorate from Johns Hopkins University. In 1890 he returned to Princeton as a professor, and in June 1902 he was elected its president. The principles of his drastic and unpopular reorganization of Princeton are embodied in the Preceptorial System, which provided opportunity for individual instruction, and the Quad Plan, which coordinated social and intellectual college life.

On November 8, 1910, Wilson was elected governor of New Jersey; and on November 5, 1912, he was elected President of the United States on a "New Freedom" platform. Although he was determined to follow a neutral course and not be forced into the European War by any material interest or emotional wave, events gradually deepened American involvement. Following the sinking of four American ships, Wilson made his decision. On April 2, 1917, he asked Congress for a declaration that a state of war existed with Germany.

President Wilson's greatest contribution to victory lay in his eloquent voicing of Allied war aims. The height of his influence came with the armistice when he began his long and unsuccessful fight for a lasting and liberal peace under a strong League of Nations. Nevertheless, Wilson remains "historically the eminent prophet of that better World."

(Continued)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 8	3 2 2 0 7 0	4 3 0 9 0 0 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The Woodrow Wilson House is situated on an L-shaped property. It is bounded on the north by the south curb of S Street; on the south by the north curb of Decatur Place, on the east by the adjoining wall and lot line to 2330 S Street (the Textile Museum); on the west the property abuts that of the Austrian Embassy (2346 S Street) and a lot adjoining the north frontage was purchased sometime after the original 1921 purchase by the Wilsons.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Blanche Higgins Schroer, Carol Kolb, Landmark Review Project; Steven H. Lewis, 1964

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Historic Sites Survey Division, National Park Service

3/17/77

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

1100 L Street, NW.

202/523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Washington,

D. C.

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

11/26/80

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

11-26-80

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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Late in 1920, as Wilson's second term neared an end, his wife, Edith Bolling Wilson, began searching for a permanent residence in Washington. One day she happened to visit the house at 2340 S Street, NW., which was for sale though it had been built only 5 years earlier. Delighted with it, she informed her husband that it would make an ideal retirement home. Not long thereafter, on December 14, he surprised her by presenting her with the deed, though he did not personally see the structure until the next day. He and his wife occupied the house on inauguration day, March 4, 1921, following President Harding's swearing-in ceremony at the Capitol. On that occasion, as well as on many later ones, particularly Armistice Days and Wilson's birthdays, throngs of people gathered outside the home to greet the ex-President.

Wilson, partially paralyzed from a stroke he had suffered in 1919, spent his few remaining years in partial seclusion under the continuous care of his wife and servants. Except for a daily automobile ride and a weekly visit to the movies, he rarely left home or received guests, who did include Lloyd George of Britain and Georges Clemenceau of France. In the evenings, Mrs. Wilson played cards with or read aloud to him until he fell asleep. On two occasions, he attended state functions: the 1921 Armistice Day ceremony preceding the burial of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery, and President Harding's funeral in 1923. In the latter year, on the eve of Armistice Day, he broadcast a radio message to the public from his library. The following day, he spoke to a crowd that had gathered outside, his last public appearance. On February 3, 1924, he died in his upstairs bedroom and was laid to rest in Washington's National Cathedral.

Mrs. Wilson continued to live in the residence until her death in 1961. Prior to that time, she had donated it and many of the furnishings to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which in 1963 opened it to the public.