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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

Ralph Bunche House

AND/OR COMMON

Ralph Bunche House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

115-25 Grosvenor Road

...NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Kew Gardens

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Ninth

VICINITY OF Queens

STATE

New York

CODE

36

COUNTY

Queens

CODE

081

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

MUSEUM

COMMERCIAL

PARK

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

MILITARY

OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mrs. Ruth Bunche

STREET & NUMBER

115-25 Grosvenor Road

CITY, TOWN

Kew Gardens

VICINITY OF Queens

STATE

New York

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register of Queens County

STREET & NUMBER

9027 Sutton Boulevard

CITY, TOWN

Jamaica

STATE

New York

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None Known

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The two and a half story Ralph Bunche residence, with attached two-car garage, is located at 115-25 Grosvenor Road, in the Kew Gardens section of Queens, New York. Parklane South is the closest street to the west and 116th Street to the east. The long dimension of the lot (approximately 150 feet) and house run east to west. The house is set back about 25 feet from the street and about nine feet above the street. The main entrance (Grosvenor Road side), is reached by curving flagstone steps or slate steps from the side drive.

Collectively, the architectural elements reflect the influence of the English Tudor Renaissance style country house. The house is rectangular in plan with a centered projecting, full three story bay, in both the front (northside) and back (southside) with an attached stone, two-car garage. Adjacent to the front bay is the central chimney, which extends above the roof ridge line and two round terra cotta flues extend above the brick. There is a smaller secondary chimney at the east end of the house. There are two secondary entrances to the house, one from the attached sun porch above the garage on the east side and the other from the attached porch on the west.

The main roof is a steep gable roof (slate shingles) with one projecting dormer in the front and back, with the front bay intersecting the gable with a "Sussex Hip Roof" and the rear bay has a double gable (Renaissance roof). The front roof line extends to the head of the second floor windows while in the rear it is uneven on either side of the bay, to the second floor windows on the west side and to the first floor windows on the east side.

The sun porch roof is also a gable roof with exposed roof truss (simulated half timber style) at the gable end. While the west side porch has a slate shingled shed roof.

The house is wood and brick construction with a textured stucco exterior finish with rendered brick and stone, and wood trim. All windows are the leaded "regency" style and are projected steel casement type. The windows vary in size with the major ones trimmed in wood with a flat arch above and wood sill. There are two bay windows, one in the second floor left front (master bedroom) and one in the rear (livingroom).

The front projected bay has a three-foot high, large-two story leaded, stained glass window with a wrought iron railing around which lights the main staircase. To the west of the window is the rusticated stone, semi-circular arched main entrance. The oak door is recessed three feet and has one rectangular light and simulated wrought iron strap hinges.

Except for minor exterior weather cracking of the stucco, the house is in excellent repair. There are no visible signs of structural damage and the full basement shows no signs of moisture leaks or structural failures. The interior of the house appears to be as built with, in most cases, the original finish (natural) on most of the woodwork. Several of the rooms are still furnished and in the state they were when Dr. Bunche used them, e.g., furniture, photographs, etc. The house and the interior would require almost no major changes to become a landmark site.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
	<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

Afro-American History
Diplomacy

SPECIFIC DATES	1952-1971	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Not Known
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Ralph Johnson Bunche is of national historical importance because he was the highest ranking black in the United Nations Secretariat; the man responsible for negotiating the Israeli-Arab Truce of 1949 and settling the Suez Canal Crisis in 1956; the first black recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize; and the first black man to hold a desk in the United States' State Department. Bunche's life was a series of national firsts. His list of achievements would be notable for any group of individuals. They are extremely impressive for a single man. They are no less than remarkable, approaching the unbelievable, for a black man constantly hampered by racial prejudice. Individual nations throughout the world have lauded Dr. Bunche's great accomplishments and sincere efforts, as have many private and national organizations of the United States. It is no more than proper that his country erect a national memorial to the man and his work.

Ralph Bunche was a black man who established himself as one of America's truly great scholars, social scientists and diplomats. He was born in poverty August 7, 1904, in Detroit, Michigan. His father, a barber, and his mother, an amateur musician, died before he was twelve. While living with his maternal grandmother in California, he graduated from Jefferson High School as one of the ten top ranking students. He won medals for debating, civics and English composition. He also won an athletic scholarship to the University of California where he enrolled in 1922.

Bunche maintained a high scholastic average and participated in athletics and debating. He graduated in 1927 with a bachelor of arts degree, summa cum laude, and was elected Phi Beta Kappa. His excellent scholarship earned him a fellowship for graduate study at Harvard University.

When Ralph Bunche was awarded his Master of Arts degree in 1928, he was offered several teaching positions. He accepted the offer from Howard University where he organized the political science department. One year after his arrival at Howard, he was awarded the Ozias Goodwin Fellowship to obtain a doctorate from Harvard University.

While working on his doctorate, he was the recipient of a Julius Rosenwald Fellowship which allowed him to study in Europe and North and West Africa for a year. In 1934 he received his Ph.D. degree from Harvard and became the first black to earn a doctorate in political science. He also won the Tappan Prize at Harvard for the best doctoral dissertation in the social sciences.

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Dr. Bunche returned to Howard as a full professor and as Assistant to the President. From 1936 to 1938 he devoted himself to an intensive study of race relations. He served as Co-Director of the Institute of Race Relations at Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania. With a grant from the Social Science Research Council, he studied anthropology and colonial policy at the London School of Economics and Capetown University of the Union of South Africa. In addition, he made a world tour covering points in South and East Africa, Malaya, and the Netherland East Indies gathering knowledge about the cultures of different people.

Between his travels, Dr. Bunche lectured at Howard and various other universities and colleges, wrote several papers on race relations, and worked with the New Negro Alliance, an organization designed to seek fair employment practices and opportunities for blacks through a variety of means, including picketing and boycotting. Dr. Bunche was a militant intellectual who was not afraid to criticize the direction of any of the programs and organizations working for racial advancement. He was also an astute and analytical social scientist who believed that democracy could and should work.

As Dr. Bunche began to establish a reputation as an expert on race relations, the Carnegie Foundation sought him out to assist Dr. Gunnar Myrdal, a Swedish sociologist, in the first comprehensive study of the situation of the Negro in the United States. Dr. Bunche accepted the position as chief aid to Dr. Myrdal and the foundation for An American Dilemma was laid. The two volume study covered every facet of life involving blacks in a white society, and represented two years of research. When Dr. Myrdal published the work he acknowledged that without Dr. Bunche's help, it could not have been done.

In 1941, when World War II was raging in Europe, Dr. Bunche was chosen to help the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). He was designated the senior social scientist in charge of research on Africa and other colonial sections and, by 1943, was promoted to chief of the African Section of the OSS.

In 1945 Ralph Bunche became the first black to hold a desk in the State Department when he accepted the position of Territorial Specialist. As Territorial Specialist, he went to the organizational meeting of the United Nations Organization in San Francisco where he helped to draw up the United Nations' Charter. He also served as a participant in the Dumbarton Oaks Conference and as a delegate to the International Conferences in Europe.

In 1946 Dr. Bunche accepted the post of Director of the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations. The Trusteeship Council was provided in order to safeguard the interest and welfare of non-self-governing peoples in territories held either under League of Nations mandates or detached from enemy countries after World War II.

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In 1948, Secretary General Trygve Lie made Dr. Bunche secretary of the peace-seeking Palestine Commission. Replacing the assassinated United Nation Mediator, Count Folke Bernodotte, a Swedish diplomat, Dr. Bunche brought an end to the Arab-Israeli war in 1949.

News of Dr. Bunche's armistice agreement took the United States by storm. Honors were heaped upon him from all over the world. He was awarded more than thirty honorary degrees, scrolls, awards and designations. The highest honor accorded him was the Nobel Peace Prize. He was the first black to receive the Nobel Prize.

Ralph Bunche went from one position of great responsibility to another. Between serving as professor of government at Harvard, as an advisor to the President of Howard, and as President of the American Political Science Association, he served on the major United Nations negotiating teams and became the principal director of the Trusteeship Division. In 1952, he was a member of the Korean War Policy and Mediation Team. During the 1953 Kashmir situation, Dr. Bunche worked with the Security Council as a mediator between India and Pakistan. In 1955, he went to Africa to obtain information about the nations seeking independence. In 1956, he settled the war in Egypt and the Suez Canal Crisis. In 1958 he went to Ghana to prevent turmoil there and was later appointed Undersecretary for Political Affairs, the highest position of any American at the United Nations.

Dr. Bunche continued and expanded his involvement with the United Nations through the 1960s. His ability to act as a peaceful catalyst in the many explosive situations in the Middle East and Africa continued to win him recognition and praise, both at home and abroad. At home, President Kennedy bestowed upon him the nation's highest civilian award, the Medal of Freedom. On the broader scale, he was appointed Undersecretary General of the United Nations.

During these years, Dr. Bunche's academic achievements continued to be considered with high regard. In 1959, he became the first black overseer of Harvard University. He was also a trustee of Oberlin College. Although his great international accomplishments often overshadowed both this area of his life and his work in the Civil Rights Movement, he continued to work for the causes he believed in and with the leaders he respected. During these years he headed the Policy Committee of the Ford Foundation which funded the Civil Rights Documentation Project in 1969.

On October 1, 1971, Dr. Ralph Johnson Bunche retired from his United Nations' post in ill health. Three months later he died.

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