

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE



**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD**  
**APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC LANDMARK OR HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION**

New Designation  X  for: Historic Landmark  X  Historic District    
Amendment of a previous designation    
Please summarize any amendment(s)

Property name  Swedish Ambassador's Residence   
*If any part of the interior is being nominated, it must be specifically identified and described in the narrative statements.*

Address  3900 Nebraska Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20016

Square and lot number(s)  1596 / 0832

Affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission  3E

Date of construction  1924  Date of major alteration(s)  1946; 1973

Architect(s)  Arthur B. Heaton  Architectural style(s)  Spanish Colonial Revival Style

Original use  Residence  Present use  Vacant

Property owner  Square 1596 Partners LLC

Legal address of property owner  4300 Fordham Road NW, Suite 230, Washington, DC 20016

NAME OF APPLICANT(S)  Square 1596 Partners LLC / DC Preservation League

*If the applicant is an organization, it must submit evidence that among its purposes is the promotion of historic preservation in the District of Columbia. A copy of its charter, articles of incorporation, or by-laws, setting forth such purpose, will satisfy this requirement.*

Address/Telephone of applicant(s)  Square 1596 Partners LLC, 4300 Fordham Road NW, Suite 230, Wahington, DC 20016, (202) 215-5555 (Mark Knebel)

Name and title of authorized representative  Mark Knebel, Manager, Square 1596 Partners LLC

Signature of representative    Date  9.19.23

Name and telephone of author of application  EHT Traceries Inc, (202) 393-1199

Date received    
H.P.O. staff

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE



**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD**  
**APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC LANDMARK OR HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION**

New Designation \_\_\_\_\_  for: Historic Landmark  Historic District \_\_\_\_\_

Amendment of a previous designation \_\_\_\_\_

Please summarize any amendment(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Property name Swedish Ambassador's Residence (Continued)

*If any part of the interior is being nominated, it must be specifically identified and described in the narrative statements.*

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Square and lot number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission \_\_\_\_\_

Date of construction \_\_\_\_\_ Date of major alteration(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Architect(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Architectural style(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Original use \_\_\_\_\_ Present use \_\_\_\_\_

Property owner \_\_\_\_\_

Legal address of property owner \_\_\_\_\_

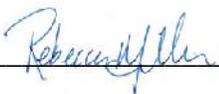
NAME OF APPLICANT(S) Square 1596 Partners LLC / DC Preservation League

*If the applicant is an organization, it must submit evidence that among its purposes is the promotion of historic preservation in the District of Columbia. A copy of its charter, articles of incorporation, or by-laws, setting forth such purpose, will satisfy this requirement.*

Address/Telephone of applicant(s) DC Preservation League, 641 S Street NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20001

(202) 783-5144

Name and title of authorized representative Rebecca Miller, Executive Director, DC Preservation League

Signature of representative  Date September 20, 2023

Name and telephone of author of application EHT Traceries Inc. (202) 393-1199

Date received \_\_\_\_\_

H.P.O. staff \_\_\_\_\_

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.

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Swedish Ambassador's Residence

Other names/site number: David Lawrence Residence

Name of related multiple property listing:

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

### 2. Location

Street & number: 3900 Nebraska Avenue NW

City or town: Washington State: DC County: \_\_\_\_\_

Not For Publication:  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

Applicable National Register Criteria:

\_\_\_ A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
<hr/>	
<b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Title :</b>	<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>

**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:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
-

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Site

Structure

Object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

1

buildings

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

sites

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

structures

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

objects

1

1

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

GOVERNMENT: diplomatic building

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS: Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: stucco, cast stone, terra cotta, stone  
(flagstone)\_\_\_\_\_

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The large residence located at 3900 Nebraska Avenue NW is a 20th century interpretation of the Spanish Colonial Revival/Mission Style, designed by notable architect Arthur B. Heaton and built in 1924 for David Lawrence and his family. From 1950 until 2023 it served as the ambassador's residence for the Kingdom of Sweden. Located northwest of Nebraska Avenue in the American University Park neighborhood, the residence is setback from the street and sits upon the highest point of the approximately 2.7-acre lot. Dense hedges and mature trees line the property, limiting views from the public right-of-way. A tall metal security fence with concrete piers lines the eastern property line with two metal vehicular gates providing access to a curved U-shaped driveway from Nebraska Avenue. The residence itself features a generally L-shaped plan and is constructed of hollow clay tile and finished with stucco with cast stone ornamentation. The hipped roof is covered in terracotta Spanish-style barrel tiles, in keeping with the building's Mediterranean aesthetic. The residence is two stories with a basement that is partially below grade and not visible from the front façade. The façade, which faces southeast, appears asymmetrical, with a centrally located primary entrance framed by projecting wings. The entrance itself features an elaborate cast stone door surround intended to be the focal point. The

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rear northwestern elevation accesses a flagstone and grass terrace. Like the façade, the rear elevation is asymmetrical, with a central entry below a distinctive shaped parapet and an elaborate cast stone surround. The building is notably stylistic, as evidenced by its decorative details such as the elaborate cast stone entry door surrounds, ornamental ironwork, arched windows and doors, and Mission-style shaped parapets. A detached and non-contributing garage and greenhouse building is located northwest of the residence. The former Swedish Ambassador's Residence has undergone at least two alterations, described below, since its construction in 1924. Overall, the residence maintains integrity to the period of significance.

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## Narrative Description

The residence at 3900 Nebraska is a large asymmetrical L-shaped building with its main façade facing southeast. It is set back approximately 170-feet from the street and fronted by a U-shaped drive that exits on to Nebraska Avenue NW. The house is centrally located on the 2.693-acre property which is bounded by Nebraska Avenue NW to the southeast, the Japanese ambassador's residence to the north, a residential neighborhood to the northwest, and Tindall Street and the Temple Baptist Church to the south. The house is two-stories in height with a partially above grade basement located along its northern elevation and is constructed of hollow clay tile finished with modelled adobe-style stucco walls. It is topped by a combination of hipped and flat roofs. Flat roofs are concealed from view by shaped Mission-style parapets. The hipped roofs are covered in terracotta Spanish-style barrel tiles.

Overall, the residence measures 120 feet in width and 72 feet in depth containing 9,334 square-feet with sixteen rooms – seven of which are bedrooms located on the second floor. It consists of a main central block oriented north to south framed by two projecting wings, an asymmetrical service wing extending southeast from the north end of the main block, and an enclosed porch on the southern elevation with a partial second-story sunroom.

There have been two additions to the house since its completion in 1924, including the creation of a sunroom above the original porch in 1940 and a one-story addition at the house's eastern end, which dates to somewhere between 1982 and 1988 based on aerial imagery.<sup>1</sup> The building exterior is covered in modeled stucco walls with a smooth finish. Two stucco-clad chimneys are placed asymmetrically on the main block just before each of the projected wings. The residence has one auxiliary building, a non-original parking garage and greenhouse dating to the late 1970s or early 1980s.

### *The Site*

The dwelling was built on what was originally an eleven-acre site which has over time been reduced to 2.693 acres. The site contains the main residence, which is set back on the property to make space for a sizable U-shaped drive. Between the house and the drive is a shallow flagstone entrance terrace. A similar stone terrace on the rear of the structure accesses a raised lawn area

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<sup>1</sup> See Permit 237840 (October 21, 1940), DC Permit to Repair, Washington, DC, The People's Archive, DC Public Library.

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and overlooks an open vista. The property is lined with mature trees which offer a degree of privacy.

The entrance to the property is along Nebraska Avenue NW. The semi-circular drive has two outputs, both of which were operated by electronic gates put in by the Swedish Embassy at an unknown point. These gates are the same style as the modern metal fence that surrounds the northern and eastern edges of the property. Masonry piers that are finished in stucco accentuate the metal fence along the Nebraska Avenue frontage. To the building's south and off the semi-circular drive is a short stone path that likely originally led to the back terrace. Only about six feet of the path remains intact.

The flagstone terraces at both the front and rear entrances were intentionally designed, and the original plans can be found in the Arthur B. Heaton drawing collection at the Library of Congress. The rear terrace opens onto a flat expanse of grass surrounded by stone retaining walls that vary in height corresponding with changes in grade. The raised lawn is bisected by a flagstone walkway that leads to a stone double-stair accessing the lower lawn and the rest of the site to the west.

There are several large trees surrounding the property, but also a few closer to the residence. A row of white pine and cherry trees behind the Nebraska Avenue fence line provides privacy for the residence from the street. The lawn between the U-shaped driveway is dotted by crepe myrtles, a red maple tree, and a mature ginkgo tree as well as a flagpole at the center of the lawn. The southern property line along Tindall Street includes a chain link fence shielded by various species of trees. The open lower lawn at the rear of the property is dotted by trees including a few mature oak trees. The landscaping as it appears in Figure 7 (taken circa 1980) looked to be manicured and well kept, however much of this has become overgrown, as can be seen in Figures 1, 4, and 6. There are a few features to the landscape that are relevant to note but do not contribute historically to the property. Among these are the development of a detached garage to the north of the residence, a paved parking lot along the south end of the U-shaped driveway, a basketball hoop, and a retaining wall on the property's northern edge.

An asphalt paved drive lined by concrete curbs extends from the U-shaped driveway on the building's north end to access a paved service courtyard including a parking lot with about six parking spaces, the detached garage, and the northern elevation of the service wing. A masonry wall covered in stucco visually separates this service area from the public-facing front yard and drive. A short, stacked stone retaining wall marks the property's northern edge along with a modern metal fence separating the property from what is now the Japanese ambassador's residence.

The garage, built in the early 1980s, is similar aesthetically to the main house. The garage itself is rectangular in plan, though the attached greenhouse leads the building to form a T-shape in plan. The garage offers three noncentral parking bays with vinyl doors, like the replacement garage door on the main structure, and a pair of paneled double-leaf doors on its eastern elevation. The building is clad in white stucco with a heavy dash finish and has a tile roof like the main structure. The rear of the garage features a single-leaf, partially glazed single-light door

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and a one-over-one sash window on its southern elevation. This door, and the rest of the structure, are modern and ahistorical, and therefore is a noncontributing building to the property. The attached greenhouse is glass with a metal frame set on a concrete foundation and appears to be of the same era as the garage and is also non-contributing.



*Figure 1: The southeastern facade. Photo by EHT Traceries.*

### ***The Main Façade***

The main, or southeastern, façade of the house is its most ornate and features the residence's most complex elevation. The entry door and flanking windows on the main block are located between two projecting bays that form a U-shape. A flagstone terrace and steps span the distance between the two wings and serves as an entry court. The southern wing is one bay wide and projects approximately fifteen feet southeast from the face of the main block and is topped by a hipped roof clad in terracotta tile. The northern wing, also one bay in width, features a stepped Mission-style shaped parapet. At the north side of the main block, beyond the projecting bay, a large one and two-story service wing extends westerly.

On the main block of the structure is an asymmetrical grouping of three bays. This expanse is centered around an arched double-leaf paneled wood door with an elaborate cast stone surround in a mixture of Plateresque and Churrigueresque styles. At the peak of this surround is a shielded crest, now depicting the Swedish national emblem. When originally built, this shield featured the carved monogram "ELD" for David Lawrence and his wife Ellanor. A pair of metal lanterns in the Spanish Colonial Revival style flank this door. The windows surrounding the door are all four-light wood-sash paired casement windows. On the first floor, these windows are inset with a

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segmental arched opening. On the second floor, the windows are inset with a rectangular punched opening. These windows are unevenly spaced from the door but are aligned vertically.



*Figure 2. Main entrance and cast stone surround. Photo by EHT Traceries.*

The southern projecting bay features a large arched, double casement window with six lights on the first floor. On the second floor, there is a double-leaf, fully glazed door with five lights accessing an original wrought iron balcony. This fenestration pattern is repeated on the northeastern wall of this wing facing the entry court. South of the projecting bay is a one-story enclosed porch. The porch wing is one bay wide and is slightly set back from the face of the southern projecting wing. At the center is an arched opening with a double-leaf five-light door below an arched transom divided into two lights.

The northern wing, which projects approximately ten feet from the face of the main block, is topped by a flat roof featuring a decorative shaped parapet in the Mission Style with metal coping.<sup>2</sup> The projecting bay is the location of the primary internal stair and is more elaborately decorated than the west wing. It features a pair of arched wood-sash five-light casement windows separated by a cast stone Corinthian column and with a matching cast stone sill on its second floor. A decorative cast stone bas relief depicting a crest below a cherubic figure is

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<sup>2</sup> See complete set of Arthur B. Heaton's drawings for the residence in the Arthur B. Heaton Collection, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs division.

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placed centrally above the second-floor window. There is no fenestration on the first floor due to the placement of the interior stairs.

Directly north of the north wing is a continuation of the main block and eastern elevation of the service wing. It is two bays wide in expanse. The first-floor features two bays, one large arched double casement window and one smaller fixed three-light window. The second floor boasts only one opening, grouped with the large arched window below it. It is a double-leaf six-light, fully glazed door with an original decorative iron balcony.

The final expanse of this façade is the one-story plus basement addition. It is not part of the original structure that was added in the 1980s. The addition is one bay wide and slopes down to the north, with an above grade basement level at the northern end. The flat roof of the addition is encircled by a shed roof clad in terracotta tile. The singular bay houses a large pair of arched casement windows with five lights.

This addition abuts a tall garden wall, which shields the service area and detached garage from view from the front driveway. The garden wall features an infilled arched opening which originally contained a gate accessing a “servants’ porch.” The garden wall then has a sharp change in height which corresponds with the overall steep change in grade.



*Figure 3: Northern Elevation. Photo by EHT Tracerics.*

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### ***Northern Elevation***

The northern elevation appears three stories in height with the basement level fully above grade due to the lowered grade on the north side of the property. This elevation is most easily split into two parts that are separated by the original garden wall. This garden wall also serves as a visual separation between the public facing facade and service courtyard.

On the east side of the garden wall is a two bay expanse that is part of the one-story addition constructed in the 1980s. These two bays house arched openings with paired casement windows, like those found on the façade. The second story of the main block above the addition is visible from this elevation, where there is a single central bay that features a pair of four-light double casement windows.

Beyond the garden wall is an enclosed service porch at the first-floor level accessed by a series of concrete steps. Below the enclosed porch, at the basement level, is a single-sash four-light window for the ground floor. A segmental arched opening to the south of the window accesses an additional entrance into the ground floor of the main house and service wing. This entrance is defined by a pair of partially glazed double-leaf doors, each with a single light.

The projecting service wing extends four bays to the west of the enclosed porch. The basement level features three garage bays, while the upper floors feature simple punched openings that do not align, reflecting this elevation's utilitarian character. On the east end of the basement level is an opening filled with four casement windows, each with four lights, modified to accommodate a window air conditioning unit. West of this opening, the wall projects slightly and is covered by a shed roof clad in terracotta tiles in the location of the original integrated garage. Two of the three garage bays have been infilled and modified. The first of these openings is now a pair of double-leaf, paneled wood doors. The second opening contains a pair of casement windows, each with three lights. The third and final opening maintains a garage door, though the opening, which originally contained a folding wood door, has been modified to accommodate an overhead vinyl door.

At the first floor, the easternmost bay aligns with the opening on the first floor; however, the opening has been truncated with wood trim and features four three-light casement windows. The following bay has similarly been modified with wood infill and contains a pair of three-light casement windows. The third bay on this expanse is completely infilled and finished with stucco, though the punched opening is still demarcated. The final bay on this floor contains a pair of five-light casement windows matching the historic appearance.

On the second floor, the bays are somewhat irregularly spaced compared to the floors below it. The first two bays hold identical pairs of four-light wood-sash casement windows. The third bay holds a narrow singular, three-light casement window, and the fourth bay holds a pair of four-light casement windows.

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*Figure 4: Western elevation. Photo by EHT Tracerics.*

### ***The Western Elevation***

The western elevation is about eleven bays wide. The projecting service wing on the north end of the main block forms the residence's L-shaped plan and appears as three stories in height due to the lowered grade at the service courtyard while the remainder of the elevation is two stories in height. There is a flagstone terrace that extends the width of the main block of the house.

The western elevation of the service wing is roughly 2 bays wide, though they are unevenly placed. The first floor has a pair of five-light casement windows, as well as a partially glazed single-light door accessible by metal service stairs. These stairs are hidden from the view of the lawn by the privacy fence. The second story of the service wing's elevation boasts a central doorway, complete with a set of six-light, double-leaf doors with a decorative iron balcony.

The main block is centered around a pair of fully glazed, five-light double leaf doors with an elaborate cast stone surround not unlike the surround on the main façade, though slightly less decorative. Like the main entry surround, the detailing is a mix of Plateresque and Churrigueresque styles. This door surround, unlike the one on the main façade, integrates a window on the second story in the place of the shield on the front entry. This entry is supposed to serve as the focal point of this elevation. There is a stepped parapet in the Mission style over this central bay, complete with metal coping. The door is flanked by two original metal outdoor sconces.

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*Figure 5. Rear entrance and cast stone surround. Photo by EHT Traceries.*

The central door is surrounded by two bays on each side of identical jack-arched fully glazed, five-light double leaf doors on the first floor, except for the northernmost bay which features a pair of three-light casement windows and an original wrought iron window grille: a staple in Spanish Colonial Revival style. The grille is similar stylistically to the decorative iron balconies. A temporary metal awning is projected off the first story in this façade. The second story of this elevation offers an array of styles. The first bay is a pair of fully glazed five-light double leaf doors, fitted with a decorative iron balcony. The other bays surrounding the door consist of arched five-light casement windows separated by cast stone Tuscan columns with matching sills. These windows are similar to the decorative window on the front façade but slightly less decorative, being of a lesser column order.

Between these bays and the porch is an atypical vertical grouping of bays. On the first floor, there is a door like others on this floor but with a segmental arch that forms a transom. On the second floor, there is a pair of six-light double-leaf doors, flanked on each side by a narrow, single four-light casement window. A decorative iron balcony is fitted to the outside.

The last two bays of this elevation belong to the enclosed porch. On the first floor, there is a central arched double-leaf six-light door, similar if not identical to others in the residence. On the second floor, in what is now an enclosed sun porch, are two groupings of three four-light casement windows. Each grouping is protected by retractable awnings.

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*Figure 6: The Southern Elevation. Photo by EHT Tracerics.*

### ***The Southern Elevation***

The southern elevation is about six bays wide, comprised of the southern elevation of the service wing and the enclosed porch which stretches the southern portion of the main block.

On the southern wall of the service wing there is a slight projection halfway through the expanse at the location of an internal staircase. Reading from west to east, there is a series of three, four-light casement windows spaced evenly through the recessed portion. On the second floor of the recessed portion is a pair of four-light double casement windows, centered on the recessed wall and not vertically grouped with the windows below it. On the projected wall, there are two bays. On the first floor is a single-leaf, partially paneled single-light service door that exits directly onto the stone porch. There are no other openings on this level. On the second floor, but distinctly to the right of the doorway on the first floor, is a pair of five-light double casement windows complete with arches and a Corinthian cast stone column to separate them. This style exactly matches the window of the front façade.

The following three bays belong to the expanse of the porch. While not depicted on the original elevation drawings dated February 14, 1924, Heaton's archives include studies for the porch extension on the southern elevation beginning in March 1924 and it appears to have been part of the original construction. The first floor is a fully infilled porch. It features three large arched openings evenly spaced throughout the expanse, each filled with five-light double-leaf wood doors with two-light arched transoms aligning with the lights below. The enclosed porch is topped by a flat roof creating an open deck at the second floor with a tall parapet serving as a balustrade. A two bay sunroom addition constructed in 1940 is situated west of an external

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chimney on the second floor of the wing.<sup>3</sup> The addition is topped by a hipped roof and finished in stucco and features two groupings of three four-light casement windows below retractable canvas awnings.

### *Interior*

The interior first floor plan within the main block is organized centrally around a T-shaped, double-loaded corridor providing access to a living room, library, dining room, rear door, service wing, and an office space. Closet storage can be found flanking both sides of the hallway outside the entrance to the office. This corridor also leads to the main staircase, which is one of two points of vertical circulation. The service wing can be entered through the main corridor hallway or through the dining room. Here, a large commercial kitchen dominates the wing. Several storage rooms and a walk-in fridge can be accessed through the kitchen. A narrow hallway houses a service stairway, providing the second means of vertical circulation within the residence.

On the second floor, accessed by the main staircase, there is a vestibule corridor that leads into two rooms, the service wing, and a single-loaded gallery hallway, lined on one side with closet space and window seats. The gallery hallway bears access to four bedrooms, which have some internal communication with each other via shared bathrooms and dressing rooms. Nearly every room has an accompanying en suite bathroom of its own. The southwestern-most room on this corridor is outfitted with a modern kitchenette and serves as the only entrance to the enclosed sunroom. The service wing hallway, accessed by a linear stair from the kitchen at the first floor, is very narrow and leads to three bedrooms, each with private bathrooms, and a half bath. There is also a small linen closet off this hallway.

It is well documented that many of the original finishes and features were destroyed following a serious fire in 1946. It is possible, however, that some original fabric is maintained or has been replaced to replicate the original appearance. Some specific features that appear to date from the residence's original construction, or were replicated following the fire, include the paneling in the library, paneled interior wood doors, the primary staircase, and a portion of the tile floors in the first-floor corridor.

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<sup>3</sup> Sheet 8B, "Porch Addition to the South Elevation" (Revised March 19, 1924), Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Arthur B. Heaton Collection; Permit 237840 (October 21, 1940), DC Permit to Repair, Washington, DC, The People's Archive, DC Public Library.

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### *Integrity*

The residence at 3900 Nebraska Avenue NW retains a high degree of historic integrity from the period of significance (1924-1972). The building remains in its original **location**. While the size of the property has reduced over time, the relationship of the house to the surrounding landscape and surroundings remains intact and thus retains integrity of **setting**. Integrity of **design**, **workmanship**, and **materials** are primarily intact and are representative of the Spanish Colonial Revival Style employed by architect Arthur B. Heaton. As far as documentation allows, it is known that the Swedish government made only a very few, minor alterations to the exterior of the house after it was purchased for the Swedish ambassador's residence. One alteration was the addition of the Swedish coat of arms above the ornately decorated front doorway. The coat of arms consists of three crowns representing the kingdoms of Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, which were united for more than 120 years under a treaty signed in Kalmar, Sweden, in 1397. It replaced what appeared to be a monogrammed emblem of David and Ellanor Lawrence's initials. The interior has been remodeled over time to meet the needs of individual ambassadors. According to a newspaper article from 1974, some remodeling work, including electrical upgrades, was completed during the year-long intermission after the ambassador was called back to Sweden.<sup>4</sup> The second floor of the residence has been renovated in recent years including the addition of a kitchen and remodeling of restrooms. Additionally, all windows have been replaced with new wood-sash, double-glazed windows designed to match the historic appearance. Despite these alterations, the residence maintains its essential character-defining features including its asymmetrical massing, stucco walls, cast stone ornamentation, clay tile roof, flagstone terraces, and wrought iron details. The original building volume and exterior has been only minimally altered by the addition of a one-room addition and sunroom enclosure. The residence retains integrity of **feeling** as a prominent and private 20<sup>th</sup> century estate. The property's integrity of **association** has been compromised by the sale of the property by the Swedish Government for private use.

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<sup>4</sup> "Electrician Accused of Art Theft," *The Evening Star*, July 24, 1974, 34.

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*Figure 7: The front facade of the Swedish ambassador's residence, circa 1980. Photo by Carol M. Highsmith, Library of Congress.*

## 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.

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**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- 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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture  
Social History  
Politics/Government  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1924-1945  
1950-1972  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1924  
1950-1972  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

Sweden/Swedish  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Arthur B. Heaton, Architect  
William P. Lipscomb Co., Builder  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The impressive residence at 3900 Nebraska Avenue NW was originally constructed in 1924 for newspaper journalist and publisher David Lawrence and his family to the design of notable Washington architect Arthur B. Heaton in the Spanish Colonial Revival/Mission Style. The building gained public recognition in the latter half of the twentieth century following its purchase by the Royal Swedish Government.<sup>5</sup> Between 1950 and 1972, the site would become significant for its role in diplomatic history as the residence of the Swedish ambassador, who often hosted members of the diplomatic community and the public to events at the residence. The house was vacated in 1972 during a period of strained relations between Sweden and the United States due to Sweden's staunch opposition to the Vietnam War. In 1974, a new ambassador returned to Washington and resumed residence at 3900 Nebraska Avenue. The residence is significant at the local level under National Register Criterion A and associated DC Criterion B (History) for its social history and for its association with the Swedish Royal Government and its role in diplomatic relations between the United States and Sweden. During its use as the Ambassador's residence, the residence was used as a tool of soft diplomacy, frequently referenced in local and national newspapers as the site of galas, dinners, and residences of both the Washington and foreign elite. The site was specifically impacted by the American involvement in the Vietnam War, as following the bombing of Hanoi in 1972, relations with

<sup>5</sup> Later referred to as the Kingdom of Sweden in official records; name change mentioned in sale of property to Square 1596 Partners, LLC (Deed 2023017644).

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Sweden strained after the country's prime minister spoke out against American involvement. This resulted in the temporary dissolution of a Swedish ambassadorship to the United States and the subsequent vacancy of the house. It is also significant under National Register Criteria C and associated DC Criteria D (Architecture), E (Artistry) and F (Work of a Master) as an excellent example of a Spanish Colonial Revival Style property designed by architect Arthur B. Heaton. The property's Period of Significance spans from 1924, corresponding with its original construction, until 1972 when the Swedish Ambassador was recalled to Sweden during diplomatic tensions with the U.S. temporarily vacating the residence.

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

Since its construction in 1924, the residence at 3900 Nebraska Avenue NW has been the home of several of Washington's most influential figures. Built for newspaper pundit and publisher David Lawrence and his family, the house was meant to be an entertaining hub for DC's social season. Following Lawrence's 24-year ownership, the house served for nearly 73 years as the residence of the ambassador for the Kingdom of Sweden in the United States. While never serving as a center of administration for the embassy, it was frequently the site of high society events that were attended by some of the most influential members of 20th and 21st century Washington society, such as President George H.W. Bush, Senator Edward Kennedy, and Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

***David Lawrence's journalistic career***

David Lawrence (1888-1973), the first owner of 3900 Nebraska Avenue NW, was a well-respected newspaper columnist and magazine publisher who was influential in politically conservative circles. Considered the "dean" of Washington syndicated columnists, he was the founder and editor of *U.S. News and World Report*. He also founded the Washington-based Bureau of National Affairs (now Bloomberg Industry Group), a news agency providing information on legal and regulatory developments for professionals. Though his journalism demonstrated a markedly conservative point of view, Lawrence was a longtime registered Democrat and considered himself a "conservative liberal."<sup>6</sup>

Lawrence was born in Philadelphia on Christmas Day 1888 to Harris and Dora Lawrence. Harris Lawrence was a poor tailor who had immigrated from Poland via England with his young family.<sup>7</sup> David was the couple's first child to be born in the U.S. The Lawrence home was located below Harris Lawrence's modest tailor shop a few blocks from Independence Hall in Philadelphia. In 1892, when David was just 4, the family moved to Buffalo, New York.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Martin Weil, "Columnist David Lawrence, 84, Dies," *Washington Post*, Feb. 12, 1973, C3.

<sup>7</sup> 1900 US Census, Erie County, New York, populations schedule, Buffalo, Ward 13, p. 14, enumeration district (ED) 0097, sheet 14, dwelling 612, family 293, Harris Lawrence; National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) microfilm publication T623, roll 1028.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Slusser, "David Lawrence, 84, Dies; Famed Conservative Writer," *Washington Star-News*, Feb. 12, 1973, B-7.

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Lawrence began his newspaper career at age 14 as a sports reporter for the *Buffalo Express*. Money earned from that work helped pay his way to Princeton University, where he continued as a reporter, writing for several different newspapers including the Associated Press. Among other influential people, the young reporter befriended former President Grover Cleveland and his wife Frances Folsom Cleveland. When Grover Cleveland died in June 1908, Frances Cleveland notified Lawrence first, allowing him to get his first big "scoop." He quickly made a name for himself, despite serving as the "summer vacation relief man."<sup>9</sup>

After Lawrence graduated from Princeton in 1910, the Associated Press hired him in their Washington office. He quickly joined the unofficial fraternal order of newsmen in the city. Two years later, more opportunities for success and influence opened when Woodrow Wilson came to the city as the new president. When Wilson had been president of Princeton (1902-1910) and Lawrence a student, (1906-1910), Lawrence had covered Wilson's efforts at educational reform, and the two became friends. In Washington, Lawrence served as one of Wilson's chief connections in the media. This allowed Lawrence to have sources within the White House, which allowed him early access to several news stories – including the White House's negative perception of Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan, who wanted to remain neutral during World War I despite the death of several Americans in the sinking of the British ship RMS *Lusitania*. Lawrence was one of the first to know of the tensions leading to Bryan's resignation.<sup>10</sup>

Though he was described as characteristically shy, Lawrence was a looming figure in Washington society. In 1918, after living in the Washington area for eight years, he married Ellanor Campbell Hayes. The couple had three children—David Jr. (1919-1995), Mark (1921-1991), and Nancy (1922-1968), as well as a child from Ellanor's earlier marriage, Etienne (1906-1976), who Lawrence later adopted. Leaving the Associated Press in 1916, Lawrence joined the *New York Evening Post* for several years and then established his own Consolidated Press Association (CPA) in 1919. The CPA provided features and financial news to major newspapers. In 1923, Lawrence would travel with President Wilson to research the "political sentiments" of citizens across the country in response to the president's appearances.<sup>11</sup> His first independent newspaper was the *United States Daily*, which he established in 1926 to focus exclusively on government activities. He changed this to a weekly newspaper format, called *U.S. News*, in 1933, and further changed it to a weekly magazine format in 1940. In 1946, he established a companion publication called *World Report* to focus on international issues. The following year, the two were combined to form *U.S. News & World Report*, which continues to this day.<sup>12</sup> As his publishing business expanded and matured, Lawrence's reputation as a syndicated columnist and conservative social commentator also grew. His column first ran in *The Evening Star* in 1918 and continued up to his death in 1973. At its peak, it appeared in more than 300 newspapers around

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<sup>9</sup> Slusser, "David Lawrence," B-7.

<sup>10</sup> "David Lawrence, the Columnist, Is Dead," *The New York Times*, February 12, 1973, 30.

<sup>11</sup> "Lawrence travels with President to Alaska, Panama Canal," *The Sunday Star (The Evening Star)*, June 29, 1923, 39.

<sup>12</sup> Weil, op. cit.

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the country. He was also one of the first radio commentators, giving weekly Sunday broadcasts on "Our Government" beginning in 1929.

Much of Lawrence's commentary was about the dangers of big government. He opposed most of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's initiatives but kept a portrait of FDR in his conference room, explaining that FDR was the "patron saint" of his magazine because he had made news about government actions important to everybody.<sup>13</sup> He made an enemy of President Harry S. Truman, who remarked about Lawrence's lack of "intellectual honesty" and accused him of being "counterfeit" in private correspondence.<sup>14</sup> Lawrence championed states' rights, small government, and anti-communism. He supported Senator Joseph McCarthy's efforts to expose U.S. communists in the 1950s. Blind to the pressing issues of social justice that defined his times, he opposed the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. In one particularly myopic column, he complained that the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in August 1963—where Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech—would unfairly deprive downtown businesses of income because residents would be too scared to go downtown that day. "There is nothing in the Constitution which says that the 'right to petition' includes the right to disturb somebody's business, even for one day," he bellowed.<sup>15</sup> Lawrence's social commentary was consistently condemned in the African American press.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, white commentators often pointed out that he was generous with his wealth and had sold his magazine to its employees for a bargain price.<sup>17</sup>

Friends of Lawrence would remark that the man in person was nothing like his "militantly conservative" writing. They describe him as "shy almost to the point of timidity," who would not engage in public argument. He was religious, quietly an active member of the Washington Hebrew Congregation. He believed that "men worked best when they owned what they worked for" – seemingly very different from his allegedly virulent anti-communist beliefs. Even after voting Republican in every election since Herbert Hoover, he maintained until his death that the president he most admired was Democrat Woodrow Wilson.<sup>18</sup>

Despite his prominence in Washington politics, Lawrence explicitly stated that he struggled financially until he was in his 60s. Despite his racially denigrating social commentary, he was recognized in his twilight years for his work in journalism and "devotion to Americanism."<sup>19</sup> In 1970, President Nixon awarded Lawrence the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

### ***Design and Construction of 3900 Nebraska Avenue (1923-1924)***

<sup>13</sup> Alex Kingsbury, "David Lawrence: A Profile," *U.S. News & World Report*, May 16, 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Harry S. Truman, *Longhand Notes – Presidential, 1944-1953*, President's Secretary's Files (Truman), National Archives.

<sup>15</sup> David Lawrence, "Rights March's Economic Costs," *The Evening Star*, Aug. 23, 1963.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, "David Lawrence gets converted," *Baltimore Afro-American*, Dec. 21, 1957, 5; and "David Lawrence and Riots," *Baltimore Afro-American*, Aug. 19, 1967, 4.

<sup>17</sup> Weil, Slusser, Kingsbury, op. cit.; Hank Burchard, "Gifts of David Lawrence," *The Washington Post*, Feb. 11, 1971, F1.

<sup>18</sup> "David Lawrence, the Columnist," 30.

<sup>19</sup> Slusser, "David Lawrence," B-7.

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In 1920, the Lawrence family was living in Chevy Chase, Maryland in a substantial bungalow designed by architect Arthur B. Heaton. In 1922, Lawrence purchased an eleven-acre tract of land in the District of Columbia along Nebraska Avenue for \$25,750.00.<sup>20</sup> The land, owned by Ross R. Perry, Jr., was situated north of Massachusetts Avenue and American University and directly across the street from the Mt. Vernon Seminary. Within a year of the property's purchase, Lawrence commissioned Heaton to design a new residence on the site. The site, located in a rural and sparsely populated area south of Tenleytown, was large and would provide a degree of privacy for its owners.<sup>21</sup>

The Arthur B. Heaton architectural drawing archive at the Library of Congress provides a largely complete collection of drawings related to the Lawrence Residence, including several early undated sketches. These early sketches depict an asymmetrical two-story Spanish Colonial Revival Style residence with attached garage structure with a prominent central entrance. The massing and footprint were ultimately adjusted as part of the final design for the house but many of the design elements depicted in the early sketch were utilized in the final design including the U-shaped drive, stucco walls and clay tile roof, wrought iron features, and prominent entry portal.



*Figure 8. Early sketch of the front (east) facade, undated. Library of Congress.*

The Spanish Colonial Revival style has a complex origin. Revival of historic or traditional architecture was part of the larger “Eclectic” movement in the field and occurred roughly between 1880 and 1940. Even in the beginning of the period in the United States in which revival architecture was prominent, Spanish Colonial was considered mainly the blending of Italian and French influences with the craftsmanship and heritage of Spanish tradesmen. The “Colonial” aspect refers to the further development of the style, both in and out of Spain, by the

<sup>20</sup> District of Columbia, Recorder of Deeds, Deed of Sale, Ross R. Perry, Jr. to David Lawrence, Liber 4759, Folio 001, Washington, District of Columbia, recorded February 10, 1922; District of Columbia, Recorder of Deeds, Deed of Trust, David Lawrence, et ux to Flather, Jr. & Becker Trs., Liber 4759, Folio 003, Washington, District of Columbia, recorded February 10, 1922.

<sup>21</sup> The property was part of the tract of land called “Friendship,” part of Lot 10 of “Grassland” platted by Templeman and Shipman in March 1866; Templeman + Shipman, “Grassland Hamilton Loughborough’s Estate,” Liber District No. 1, folio 41 ½, March 1866, SurDocs, Office of the Surveyor, DC.

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influences of indigenous design and practices discovered during the European exploration and later settlement of the "New World." A 1915 article describes the "distinguishing feature of Spanish Colonial architecture" as "Spanish design of the best period, with Indian execution."<sup>22</sup> The Panama-California Exposition held at San Diego's Balboa Park in 1915 served as the impetus for the spread of this style through the United States.<sup>23</sup> This style, found throughout the Country including in DC, was especially prominent on the West Coast, as well as in Texas and Florida, in recognition of the regions' Spanish colonial heritage.

It is important to note that within Spanish Revival architecture is a series of sub-styles, which reflect artistic movements popularized in Spain before they introduced to the American colonies. The three styles relevant to the residence at 3900 Nebraska Ave NW are Plateresque, Churrigueresque, and Mission style. Plateresque refers to the richly decorative and eclectic style that emerged in Spain during the fifteenth and sixteenth century that featured intricate designs similar to the elaborate work of period silversmiths (the term plateresque roughly translates to "silversmith-like").<sup>24</sup> Churrigueresque refers to the Spanish Baroque style of the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, named for Spanish architect and sculptor José Benito de Churriguera, which was marked by elaborate and sculpted architectural ornament, particularly at entryways.<sup>25</sup> The style was widely used in Mexico in the eighteenth century and inspired Bertram Goodhue and Carleton Winslow, Sr.'s designs as part of the 1915 California-Panama Exposition. Mission style refers to a distinctly colonial and, compared to the previous sub-styles, relatively plain interpretation of Spanish design used most frequently in the religious missions of the "New World." Historic examples of this style can be found throughout the southwest portion of the United States and into Mexico and South America, but reinterpretations can be found throughout the country after the style was featured in the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893.<sup>26</sup>

Heaton's design for 3900 Nebraska employed many of the characteristics of the style including the use of complex massing and asymmetrical facades, low pitched roofs clad in clay tile, stucco wall cladding, round arch openings, and carved wooden doors like those found on early Spanish missions. Enriched entry portals, enclosed courtyards, Mission-style curvilinear stepped parapet walls, and wrought iron grilles and other features are also common features of the style employed by Heaton.

Although Arthur B. Heaton was a prolific designer in the period in which the residence at 3900 Nebraska Ave NW was constructed, it is only the second known residence he designed in the

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<sup>22</sup> Frank P. Allen, Jr., "San Diego Exposition: Development of Spanish Colonial Architecture," *Fine Arts Journal* 32, no. 3 (March 1915): 126.

<sup>23</sup> See Frank P. Allen, Jr., "San Diego Exposition: Development of Spanish Colonial Architecture," *Fine Arts Journal* 32, no. 3 (March 1915).

<sup>24</sup> J. B. Bury, "The Stylistic Term 'Plateresque'," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 39 (1976):199-230.

<sup>25</sup> Gordon Bodenwein, "Thoughts on Church Architecture in Mexico," *The Americas* 13, no. 4 (April 1957): 353-356.

<sup>26</sup> Virginia S. McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses: The Definitive Guide to Identifying and Understanding America's Domestic Architecture* (New York: Knopf, 2013), 512.

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Spanish Colonial Revival style. The first was a house he designed for George H. Judd located at 3411 Massachusetts Avenue NW, built just a year prior in 1923.



Figure 9: 3411 Massachusetts Avenue NW, designed by Arthur B. Heaton's and built in 1923. Photo provided by John DeFerrari.

On December 31, 1923, an application for a permit to build was submitted. The application identified Arthur B. Heaton as the architect and William P. Lipscomb Co. as the builder. The residence would have a concrete foundation and be constructed of terra cotta tile covered in stucco at a cost of \$76,000.00. (Permit No. 5940, Dec 31, 1923). The permit was issued on January 18, 1924.<sup>27</sup> Between 1924 and 1925, Lawrence sold approximately two-acres of land on the northwest side of the property to the U.S. Government and granted easements for the construction and maintenance of a new water pipeline.<sup>28</sup> The pipeline was constructed as part of a major infrastructure improvement program to expand the city's water supply to newly developed areas of the growing city.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> DC Permit to Build No. 5904, January 18, 1924, The Peoples Archive, DCPL.

<sup>28</sup> District of Columbia, Recorder of Deeds, Deed in Fee, David Lawrence, et ux to United States of America., Liber 5154, Folio 085, Washington, District of Columbia, recorded January 12, 1924; District of Columbia, Recorder of Deeds, Deed of Sale, David and Ellanor C. Lawrence to the United States of America, Liber 5388, Folio 427, Washington, District of Columbia, recorded January 30, 1925.

<sup>29</sup>"Estimates for the Conduit," *The Evening Star*, 14 July, 1924, 6; George H. Dacy, "Taking the Hazard Out of Washington's Present Water Supply," *The Sunday Star*, April 29, 1923, 3.

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The design effort continued following the issuance of the permit. Revised elevation drawings in the collection, dated February 14, 1924, depict the house as it appears today, featuring projecting front wings and a recessed entry court with a prominent entry. These drawings also reveal several modifications made during construction, such as the replacement of stone with cast stone for decorative features and the removal of a stone water table and bracketed balconette below the coupled windows on the façade.

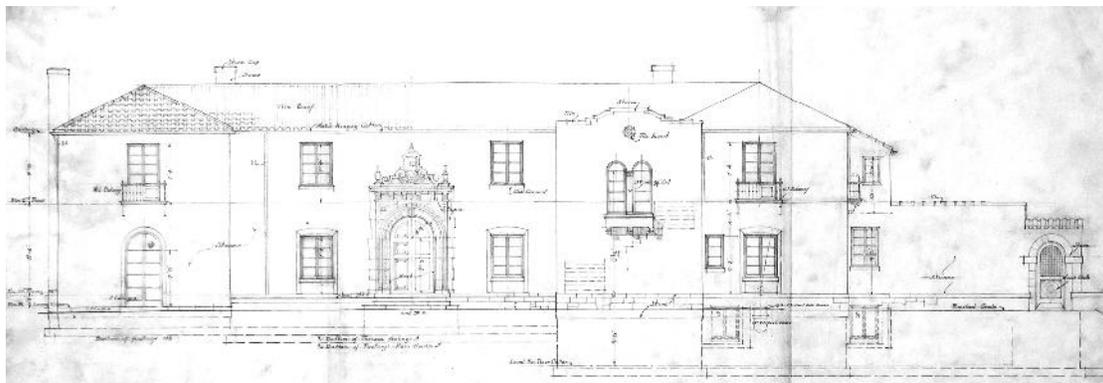


Figure 10. Revised front elevation drawing dated February 14, 1924.

Between February and March of that year, Heaton submitted three studies for a proposed one-story enclosed porch to be constructed on the southern elevation of the house, accessible from the living room. The final plan, dated March 19, 1924, included arched openings with double-leaf glazed doors, consistent with those used elsewhere on the house.<sup>30</sup> Through October of that year, Heaton continued to prepare drawings detailing features for the house including the wood paneled doors, wood trim, wood paneling within the library, radiator grilles, wrought iron detailing, and fireplace mantles.

The collection also includes a plan for the site developed by noted female landscape architect, Ruth Bramley Dean (1889-1932), a prominent garden designer based out of New York City.<sup>31</sup> Dean's design for the eleven-acre site depicted a generous front lawn within the U-shaped drive dotted with large trees. A fence with curved gate walls lined Nebraska Avenue with clusters of plantings providing viewsheds to the entry of the main house. A formal garden was planned on the southeast side of the house accessing a pool garden at a lower grade. At the rear of the house, Dean planned a formal design for the terrace lawn overlooking an orchard below. A series of steps led from the lawn to the orchard and to a long meadow with a stream and springs terminating at a large swimming pool at the southwestern corner of the property. North of the house, Dean planned for a tennis court accessed from the service court along with a greenhouse and orchard accessed by a narrow "farm road." However, very little if any of her original design

<sup>30</sup> Sheet 8B, "Porch Addition to the South Elevation" (Revised March 19, 1924), Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Arthur B. Heaton Collection.

<sup>31</sup> "Ruth Dean (1889-1932)," *Pioneers of Landscape Design*, The Cultural Landscape Foundation, accessed September 1, 2023, <https://www.tclf.org/pioneer/ruth-bramley-dean>; Eve F. W. Linn, "Dean, Ruth Bramley," *Pioneers of American Landscape Design II: An Annotated Bibliography*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1995).

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appears to have been implemented. Of the elements depicted in Dean's plan dated April 1924, only the entrance drive, service court (in part), and stone terraces remain.<sup>32</sup> These features are also identified in earlier plans prepared by Heaton and are not attributable to Dean.

Construction of the house by builder William P. Lipscomb Co. was completed in November 1924.



Figure 11. 3900 Nebraska Avenue in 1925 (Aero Radiators advertisement, *The House Beautiful Building Annual*, 1926, 181.

#### *Architect Arthur B. Heaton (1875-1951)*

Arthur Berthrong Heaton was born on November 12, 1875, in Washington, DC, to Franklin "Frank" Miller and Mabel Berthrong Heaton. He was educated in the public school system in DC, then apprenticed under Library of Congress architect Paul Pelz and at the firm of Marsh and Peter. Soon after, he undertook formal architectural training in Europe, where he studied at the Sorbonne as well as conducted personal studies of European cathedrals. This experience had a lasting impact on him, as he frequently used European influences in his later designs.

His return from Europe marked a fruitful period in his career. Heaton opened his own firm in 1898, where he designed several prominent apartment buildings; the Augusta (1900) and the Highland (1902) still stand. He officially began working as a practicing architect in DC in 1900, joining the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1901. In 1902, he married Mabel Williams, with whom he had two children, Doris Heaton Nash and James Heaton. During this time, he was also an active member and secretary of the Washington Architectural Club, which met regularly to develop drawing skills and attend lectures regarding architectural design.<sup>33</sup>

In the following few decades, Heaton began work on scores of projects, in multiple styles. He designed everything from large private residences to a halfway house to government buildings to

<sup>32</sup> Ruth Bramley Dean, "Preliminary Plan for the Property of Mr. David Lawrence in Washington, DC," (April 1924), Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Arthur B. Heaton Collection.

<sup>33</sup> "Officers Chosen," *The Evening Star*, June 6, 1898, 12; "Club Program," *The Evening Star*, February 2, 1899, 12.

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bus storage facilities in styles that varied from Moderne to Classical Revival. He supervised the construction of the National Cathedral for the first 14 years of its inception, as well as designed rowhouses for neighborhood developments in Burleith.<sup>34</sup> During World War I, Heaton was drafted and served in the construction division of the US Army.

He served as the President of Washington's chapter of the AIA for a year, where he was formally recognized as an architectural fellow of the organization in 1941.<sup>35</sup> He was also considered a member of Washington's elite, as he was a member of the famed Cosmos Club, a parishioner at St. Alban's Church, as well as a member of the Columbia Country Club.

Throughout his work, it seems clear that Heaton's personal mission was to improve the overall aesthetic and quality of buildings in DC. He was involved with slum clearance in DC, especially following the Great Depression. He personally designed an 18-building public housing complex in 1940, named for First Lady Ellen Wilson. He set forth a "modernizing" program for downtown Washington through the DC chapter of the AIA.<sup>36</sup> He also founded the Washington Building Congress, which provided a forum for concerned parties to have a voice in the development of Washington, DC. The organization still exists today.

In addition to his many accomplishments, Heaton was among the first to embrace the automobile both in his personal and professional life. He was an enthusiast for cars, and often included garages in his designs. When Heaton designed the residence for 3900 Nebraska Ave NW, he designed a three-car garage to be included within the ground floor of the house instead of a detached outbuilding. Additionally, he designed the Capital Garage, one of the first commercial garages in the city in 1926, which originally stood at 1320 New York Avenue NW before it was torn down in 1974.

Many of Heaton's works have been recognized for their significance and listed in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites and the National Register of Historic Places. Among these are his designs for Corcoran and Stockton Halls on the campus of The George Washington University, the Washington Loan and Trust Company Building, the Equitable Cooperative Building, Chevy Chase Savings Bank, the National Geographic Society, the Babcock-Macomb House, and others.

Heaton passed away on December 6, 1951, just one year after 3900 Nebraska was sold to the Swedish government. He is buried at Rock Creek Cemetery in Washington, DC.<sup>37</sup>

### ***Lawrence's residence at 3900 Nebraska Avenue (1924-1945)***

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<sup>34</sup> "Designing Parish Building: Architects Preparing Plans for Structure in Cathedral Close," *The Evening Star*, March 30, 1912, 17.

<sup>35</sup> *Who Was Who in America: 1951-1960, Volume III* (Chicago: Marquis Who's Who, Inc., 1966), 385.

<sup>36</sup> "With the Chapters: Excerpts from Chapter Minutes and Reports," *The Octagon: A Journal of the American Institute of Architects* 5, no. 4 (April 1933): 22.

<sup>37</sup> *Who Was Who*, 385.

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*The Evening Star* briefly noted in November 1924 that "Mr. and Mrs. David Lawrence, who formerly lived on West Kirke street, are occupying their new home on Nebraska avenue, in Massachusetts avenue Park."<sup>38</sup> The Lawrence family lived in the house for at least ten years and continued to be associated with it through the World War II years. In 1931, when he was living at the house, David Lawrence made a bid to purchase *The Washington Post* from the estate of John R. McLean. McLean's son Edward (whose Friendship estate was on nearby Wisconsin Avenue) was running the newspaper unsuccessfully, but his estranged wife, Evalyn Walsh McLean, opposed the sale, which did not go through.<sup>39</sup>

While living at 3900 Nebraska Avenue NW, the Lawrences were sometimes mentioned amongst the society pages of *The Evening Star*. Lawrence, a member and sometimes president of Princeton alumni's Triangle Club, frequently held meetings and events for the group at their home.<sup>40</sup> Additionally, both of Lawrence's daughters hosted large wedding receptions at the house that were featured in newspaper reports.<sup>41</sup> In 1936, the Lawrences briefly leased their house to wealthy heiress Elinor Ryan for the winter season "having moved to the Hay-Adams House" on 16<sup>th</sup> Street NW.<sup>42</sup> The lease was for a period of 10 months.<sup>43</sup> The following few years were quiet for the family, perhaps due to a 1938 pipe burst which caused nearly \$100 in damages to the house's main entertaining space.<sup>44</sup> A 1939 article about "future debutante" Nancy Lawrence also suggests the family maintained a dude ranch in Wyoming, which could mean that the Nebraska Avenue residence was only used seasonally.<sup>45</sup> In any event, Nancy Lawrence's debutante season saw many events hosted at the house, such as teas and evening soirees.<sup>46</sup> In January 1940, a formal debutante party was held there for daughter Nancy.<sup>47</sup> Shortly thereafter in December of 1942, Nancy was engaged and married with the following month.<sup>48</sup> The Lawrences were still living there in May 1944, when a newspaper reporter visited to interview son Mark about his service in the Navy in the South Pacific.<sup>49</sup> However, the family moved out of the house permanently within a short time of that interview.

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<sup>38</sup> "Chevy Chase Society Notes of Interest in Record Past Week," *Evening Star*, Nov. 23, 1924. The article incorrectly references the new home's location in "Massachusetts avenue Park" which was located south of the property along Massachusetts Avenue.

<sup>39</sup> "Washington Post Sale Is Agreed To," *Baltimore Sun*, Jun. 16, 1931, 1.

<sup>40</sup> "Society: Secretary of State and Mrs. Kellogg Will Be Entertained by Envoy of Austria and Mme. Prochnik," *The Evening Star*, December 11, 1925, 8.

<sup>41</sup> "Society: Vice President Dawes Host to Irish Diplomat at Luncheon in Chicago Yesterday Afternoon," *The Evening Star*, June 25, 1927, 8.

<sup>42</sup> "Leases House," *Washington Times*, Jan. 10, 1936, 12.

<sup>43</sup> "Capital Residents In the Day's News," *The Evening Star*, January 8, 1936, 20.

<sup>44</sup> "Firemen are Called: Respond When Pipes Burst at Writer's Residence," *The Evening Star*, September 19, 1938, 21.

<sup>45</sup> Catherine Hambley, "Future Debutantes," *The Evening Star*, August 20, 1939, 34.

<sup>46</sup> "Nancy Lawrence Will Make Debut," *The Evening Star*, December 21, 1939, 29.

<sup>47</sup> "Miss Nancy Lawrence Introduced to Society," *Evening Star*, Jan. 4, 1940, B-3.

<sup>48</sup> "Miss Lawrence Becomes Affianced," *Buffalo Evening News*, December 23, 1942, 7; "Miss Lawrence Becomes Bride in Washington: Rose Point Lace Adorns Hoop-Skirted Gown of Cream-Hued Taffeta," *The Evening Star*, January 11, 1943, 4.

<sup>49</sup> "Lt. Lawrence Missed Ship Later Sent to Bottom," *Evening Star*, May 20, 1944, A-7.

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The Lawrences had purchased a large estate near Centreville, Virginia, in 1935, as a country retreat, and they eventually made it their permanent home.<sup>50</sup>

### ***Madana Real Estate Ownership and Fire (1946-1950)***

Following the Lawrences' move to Centreville, the house at 3900 Nebraska Avenue was sold to the Madana Realty Company, which rented it on a short-term basis to various tenants. In 1945, the house was marketed for sale as an "intown" estate suitable for "Private Home, Embassy, Private School or Other Institution."<sup>51</sup>

In December 1946, a three-alarm fire, which apparently started in the basement oil heater, extensively damaged the house. The heater was part of a larger heating system that had been designed by Heaton specifically for the house.<sup>52</sup> Though unoccupied at the time, the mansion had been left with its heater running so it would be warm when it was being showed to prospective buyers. Secluded as the house was, it took some time for the fire to be noticed. Finally, a Navy ensign stationed across the street at the Naval Security Station saw smoke and called the fire department, but extensive damage occurred before the blaze could be extinguished. According to an article in *The Evening Star*, the fire "destroyed the interior" of the 20-room house, causing \$50,000 in damage to a house valued at \$100,000.<sup>53</sup> Several DC building permits dating to 1947 show an immediate investment in restoring the house for sale.<sup>54</sup> An article from that year estimates the repair costs to amount to \$30,000.<sup>55</sup> A 1948 real estate ad suggested that the refurbishment was near completion, if not finished.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> David Lawrence donated the estate, known as Middlegate Farm, to Fairfax County after his wife died. It is now [Ellanor C. Lawrence Park](#).

<sup>51</sup> Advertisement, *Evening Star*, May 5, 1945, B-3.

<sup>52</sup> See Permit 1440 (August 8, 1924), DC Permit to Repair, Washington, DC, The People's Archive, DC Public Library.

<sup>53</sup> "Fire Destroys Home Formerly Owned by David Lawrence," *The Evening Star*, Dec. 2, 1946, B-1.

<sup>54</sup> See Permit 299303 (September 24, 1947), DC Permit to Repair, Washington, DC, The People's Archive, DC Public Library.

<sup>55</sup> "Permit for \$600,000 Building at 12th and G Streets Issued," *The Evening Star*, September 27, 1947, 13.

<sup>56</sup> F. E. Middleton, "Intown Estate: 3900 Nebraska Ave. NW," *The Evening Star*, April 3, 1948, 23.

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*Figure 12: Front facade of the house covered in ivy, 1948. Photo by Theodor Horydczak, credits to the Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division.*

### ***The Residence of the Swedish Ambassador (1950-1972)***

In early 1950, the residence was sold to the Swedish government.<sup>57</sup> The Swedish ambassador, Erik Boheman, moved in with his family in the spring of 1950.<sup>58</sup> At the time the Bohemans took possession of the house, the front entrance was described as “ivy covered,” which is consistent with photographs taken by Theodor Horydzyck around 1948 (Figure 13). In fact, some of the ivy that previously covered much of the façade had been removed, and eventually it would all be removed. The Bohemans moved from the previous Swedish Ambassador’s residence at 2249 R Street NW, opposite Sheridan Circle.<sup>59</sup> That house, an elegant Beaux-Arts mansion designed by Nathan C. Wyeth and constructed in 1908, became Sweden’s chancery. It is now the Embassy of Kenya.

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<sup>57</sup> DC Recorder of Deeds, February 17, 1950, Doc. 1950006556, Roll 9146, Frame 564.

<sup>58</sup> Marie McNair, "New Embassy Awaits Return of Sweden's Envoy," *The Washington Post (1923-1954)*, April 27, 1950, B5.

<sup>59</sup> Katharine M. Brooks, "Many Parties Are Planned by Diplomats," *Sunday Star*, Apr. 23, 1950, D-1; McNair, "New Embassy," B5.

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THE NEW HOME OF THE SWEDISH AMBASSADOR AND MME. BOHNAN, AT 3906 NEBRASKA AVE.

Figure 13: 3900 Nebraska Avenue as seen in 1950 following purchase by the Swedish Government. *Washington Post*.

The United States and Sweden have had a diplomatic relationship since the end of the American Revolution; Sweden was one of the first countries to recognize the country's independence.<sup>60</sup> In April of 1783, Sweden recognized the United States through a Treaty of Amity and Commerce signed in Paris. Sweden's first consul to the U.S., Charles Hellstedt, was accredited in December 1784. Sweden and the United States have maintained strong ties since that time.

Swedish envoys, like most diplomats, have lived at a variety of addresses in Washington. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, like most diplomats, they leased houses as their official residences. From about 1875 until the early 1900s, Sweden maintained a joint legation with Norway, which was located initially at 2015 G Street NW and then subsequently moved to several other addresses, including 1021 Connecticut Avenue NW, 2011 Q Street NW, and 2109 S Street NW.

In the early twentieth century, the Swedish legation was largely centered in the emerging diplomatic enclave of Kalorama along Massachusetts Avenue NW, west of Dupont Circle. Under Minister Johan A.W. Grip, Sweden established an independent legation at 2117 S Street NW around 1905. When Hermann L.F. de Lagercrantz replaced Grip in 1907, he began looking for a new residence. In 1908, he moved to the newly built mansion at 2620 16<sup>th</sup> Street NW in the competing diplomatic enclave on Meridian Hill then being developed by Mary Foote Henderson. The 16th Street residence was an impressive Spanish Colonial Revival house (demolished in 1964) that presaged Sweden's choice of the David Lawrence house four decades later.<sup>61</sup>

When Johan J. A. Ehrensvärd replaced Lagercrantz in 1910, he moved the residence to 1304 Connecticut Avenue NW. Subsequent ministers gravitated back to the Kalorama neighborhood,

<sup>60</sup> Beatrice Janzon and Sten Sjoström, "Reinfeldt's invitation an early invitation," *Sverige Radio*, May 14, 2007, 2.

<sup>61</sup> "No Swedish Legation," *Washington Post*, May 19, 1907, R2; "Center For Legations," *Washington Post*, Oct. 18, 1908, R6.

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renting houses at 1820 and 2006 N Street NW. Finally, Count Axel F. Wallenberg, appointed in 1921, acquired the mansion at 2249 R Street NW that would serve as the Swedish minister's residence until the David Lawrence House was purchased in 1949. In 1947, the Swedish legation to the U.S. was raised to the rank of embassy, and the Swedish minister at the time, Herman Ericksson, became the ambassador. Erik Boheman replaced Ericksson in 1948 and remained ambassador until 1958.

The new ambassador's residence became known for its large and elaborate receptions. A full year after they moved into 3900 Nebraska Avenue, the Bohemans hosted a special demonstration by the "Sofia Girls," a group of Swedish gymnasts, on their spacious front lawn as part of the first large official function at the new ambassador's residence.<sup>62</sup> Visitors to the residence would remark at the beauty of the property and its aesthetic similarities to the American Embassy in Stockholm, possibly the reasoning behind the ambassador's choice of the property.<sup>63</sup> A typical example was the celebration of the 70<sup>th</sup> birthday of Swedish King Gustav VI Adolf, in November 1952, attended by "several hundred" guests, including diplomats from around the world, U.S. government officials, and Supreme Court justices.<sup>64</sup> Since the Bohemans moved in, the residence on Nebraska Avenue has been home to twelve Swedish ambassadors.

The Bohemans were a driving force behind the residence's renown as a venue for high society events. They hosted debutante balls and teas, frequent dinners for dignitaries of their home country, as well as many others, and entertained Washington's jet set.<sup>65</sup> "In a city full of official dinners nightly," wrote society columnist Betty Beale about an evening at the residence, "...this one was a perfect example of what charm can be attained when the right ingredients are combined."<sup>66</sup> Another regularly held event that the Bohemans introduced was a yearly tennis match between diplomatic embassy envoys; an event which would outlive their ambassadorship.<sup>67</sup>

In 1958, Gunnar Jarring was installed as the new Swedish ambassador to the United States. His tenure was marred by two major scandals. Soon after his appointment, an embassy aide was indicted for embezzling embassy funding. In 1963, a former attaché for the Swedish Embassy in the United States admitted to sharing intelligence with the Soviet Union about Swedish and American military plans. As a "popular figure in Washington," he no doubt would have been entertained at the home of the Swedish ambassador.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Katharine M. Brooks, "Costa Rican Official Arrives for Visit," *Sunday Star*, May 20, 1951, D-1.

<sup>63</sup> Betty Beale, "Swedish Embassy Scene of Debut Party," *The Evening Star*, June 7, 1951, 41.

<sup>64</sup> Katharine M. Brooks, "Swedish Ambassador and Wife are Hosts," *Evening Star*, Nov. 12, 1952, B-3.

<sup>65</sup> Margaret S. Dickey, "Society News: Weather Auspicious for Debutante Set as Week End Nears and Parties Increase," *The Evening Star*, June 15, 1951, 38; Katharine M. Brooks, "Blair House Luncheon; Bohemans Are Hosts," *The Evening Star*, January 11, 1953, 78.

<sup>66</sup> Betty Beale, "Exclusively Yours: Swedish Embassy Party for Nixons Is Top Official Affair; U.N. Chief Dag Hammarskjold Makes Brilliant Impression," *The Evening Star*, April 2, 1954, 42.

<sup>67</sup> Selwa Roosevelt, "Diplomatically Speaking: Annual Diplomatic Tennis Matches Set," *The Evening Star*, September 19, 1955, 31.

<sup>68</sup> "Swedish Embassy Aide Indicted in Fund Loss," *The Evening Star*, May 2, 1960, 27; "Spies: Colonel Stig Wennestrom," *The Evening Star*, December 1, 1963, 184.

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Figure 14: Sweden's Prince Bertil's visit to the United States. Photo credit to *The Evening Star*.

The mid-1960s saw an American infatuation with Swedish royalty after several members of the Swedish royal family toured the country. Princess Christina, upon turning 21 years old, arrived in the United States in the summer of 1965 to attend the World's Fair in New York City and tour the United States. Her stay began at the ambassador's residence, but her schedule was full of receptions and events welcoming her to the United States, including several at the ambassador's home.<sup>69</sup> Washington society was fascinated with the princess, and wrote often about her frequent trips to the city and her stays at the ambassador's residence, in which she received about 1,000 guests.<sup>70</sup> Later that year, her uncle, Prince Bertil, would also make an excursion to the United States, where he was hosted by the Swedish ambassador and even challenged to a game of golf with other European diplomats in the United States.<sup>71</sup> In 1968, Princess Margaretha, the elder sister of Princess Christina, also stayed in the ambassador's residence while on a tour of the United States with her British husband, John Ambler.<sup>72</sup>

Relations between Sweden and the U.S. were strained in the early 1970s due to Sweden's staunch opposition to the war in Vietnam. After Sweden's prime minister, Olof Palme, compared the American bombing of Hanoi in 1972 with Nazi atrocities in World War II, the Nixon Administration withdrew its *chargé d'affaires* from Stockholm and advised Sweden not to send a

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<sup>69</sup> "Princess "Chris:" A Royal Whirl Set in Capital," *The Evening Star*, June 2, 1965, 45.

<sup>70</sup> Ann Wood, "It Was a Royal Good Time: Christina Receives 1,000 at Swedish Embassy," *The Evening Star*, June 8, 1965, 33.

<sup>71</sup> Ann Wood, "Prince Bertil Plays Diplomatic Golf," *The Evening Star*, December 2, 1965, 29.

<sup>72</sup> Jean Powell, "A First Visit for Pretty Swedish Princess," *The Evening Star*, February 16, 1968, 40.

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new ambassador to the U.S., though they had just relocated their chancery to the Watergate complex.

Tensions between Sweden and the United States had meant that the house was completely vacant, and the Swedish ambassador to the United States was barred from keeping residence. The house was unoccupied from 1972 until 1974, marking a significant change in the property's history and diplomatic relationships between the United States and Sweden. During this period, the residence was broken into, and portraits of major Swedish leaders were stolen.<sup>73</sup> These were never replaced.

### ***Later Use by the Swedish Government (1974 to 2019)***

Swedish-American relations warmed again by 1974, when the war was coming to an end. Despite diplomatic tension, trade had not been affected.<sup>74</sup> On the cusp of Nixon's resignation in August 1974, New Ambassador Count Wilhelm Wachtmeister arrived in Washington in June to a warm reception.<sup>75</sup>

Wachtmeister served as ambassador from 1974 to 1989, attaining the coveted title of "dean" of the Washington diplomatic corps in 1986 when he became the longest serving ambassador in the city. Wachtmeister came from a family of diplomats in Sweden and had extensive experience, having served under Dag Hammarskjold when Hammarskjold was Secretary General of the United Nations. Wilhelm and Ulla Wachtmeister stood out from other diplomats, and the gracious Swedish ambassador's residence on Nebraska Avenue gained a reputation as one of the most elegant venues in the city for exclusive parties and receptions attended by celebrities and influential government officials. A member of the residence's staff would later estimate that the diplomats would host about 65,000 people over the course of their 15-year tenure.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> "Swedish Embassy Art Taken in Burglary," *The Evening Star*, February 23, 1973, 27.

<sup>74</sup> Beatrice Janzon and Sten Sjoström, "Reinfeldt's invitation an early invitation," *Sverige Radio*, May 14, 2007.

<sup>75</sup> William Gildea, "Return to Normalcy?," *Washington Post*, Jun. 2, 1974, K1.

<sup>76</sup> Martha Sherrill, "The Wachtmeisters, Staying in Touch," *Washington Post*, May 17, 1989, D14.

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Figure 15: Welcome Reception for Swedish Ambassador Wilhelm Wachtmeister, Spring 1974. Photo credits to the Evening Star, Ken Heinen.

The Wachtmeisters also opened their home to members of the general public, which further compounded their reputation as excellent hosts. One of their first events was an open house at the newly reopened Swedish ambassador's residence, featuring Swedish food and traditional dress.<sup>77</sup> Two years after their arrival in the United States, the Wachmeisters also hosted the Swedish king at their official residence – it was the first time a Swedish monarch visited The United States. They held a casual picnic in his honor.<sup>78</sup>

The most important and, perhaps, signature event regularly held at the Swedish ambassador's residence in Washington was the annual "Opera Ball," attended by Washington's most elite residents. Guests like Joan Kennedy, Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, and Princess Christina were known to have attended; Kennedy served on the board of the event for one year. While the Opera Ball was a charity event, it also served as a "Who's Who" of Washington.<sup>79</sup> Even after the Wachtmeisters' tenure, the ball was described as the "dernier cri" – the latest fashion – of galas into the 1990s.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Ymelda Dixon, *The Evening Star*, July 8, 1974, 34.

<sup>78</sup> Joy Billington, "Smorgasbord of Events Planned for Swedish King," *The Evening Star*, February 15, 1976, 46; Joy Billington, "Nothing Like a Picnic To Bring Together King and Commoners," *The Evening Star*, April 6, 1976, 19.

<sup>79</sup> Ymelda Dixon, "Embassy Becomes a Forest for Opera Ball," *The Evening Star*, June 14, 1976, 43; Lois Romano, "Joan Kennedy, the Center Of Attention at Opera Ball," *The Evening Star*, June 13, 1981, 29.

<sup>80</sup> Alexa Gelmi, "Anticipating Domingo, appreciating Feinstein," *The Washington Times*, June 14, 1994, C12.

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“The Wachtmeisters entertain more or less endlessly. They do it extremely well,” reported *The Washington Post* in 1981. Guests at the ambassador’s residence continued to be a Who’s Who of society in the 1980s, from famous Scandinavians such as Liv Ullmann, Ingrid Bergman, and Björn Borg, to diplomats such as former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski. Poets, painters, and royalty attended events there.<sup>81</sup> It is thought that the ambassador’s wife, Ulla Wachtmeister, may be credited with this predilection for entertaining. Several special features were written about her taste in art and hospitality, describing her as “soft spoken, an indefatigable party goer, an innovative dresser and a hostess of note.”<sup>82</sup>



Figure 16: George H.W. Bush's visit to the Swedish Embassy ambassador's residence on May 15, 1989. Photo credit to the George H.W. Bush Library and Museum.

Wilhelm Wachtmeister was a close friend of Vice President George H.W. Bush and frequently visited the house. With Bush’s election as president in 1988, there was speculation that Wachtmeister would be asked to stay on as ambassador, but he retired as planned in 1989. At the time, the Wachtmeisters were called “the most beloved couple on Washington’s Diplomatic Circuit.”<sup>83</sup>

The *Post*’s 1981 portrait of the Wachtmeisters included this thumbnail sketch of their residence: “The house itself is a masterpiece, a white, Mexican-style residence set back from Nebraska Avenue near Ward Circle, its entrance protected by a sweep of manicured lawn. Eight acres of

<sup>81</sup> Phyllis Theroux, “Acts of Diplomacy,” *Washington Post Magazine*, Nov. 29, 1981, 14-22.

<sup>82</sup> Joy Billington, “Making an Embassy a Home,” *The Evening Star*, August 17, 1980, 104.

<sup>83</sup> Sherrill, “The Wachmeisters,” D1.

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rear gardens slip down toward the baseball field at Friendship playground.... The house appears diplomatically immune from the rest of the world. It is.”<sup>84</sup>

The site of the Swedish Ambassador's residence was not immune to controversy. In the 1980s, the residence itself was in the newspaper for far more than galas. In 1981, following a dispute with the Soviet Union over a manned submarine in one of Sweden's militarized zones, the ambassador publicly snubbed a Soviet embassy party and stayed home to play tennis instead.<sup>85</sup> In 1982, Greenpeace staged a protest on the Swedish Ambassador's Residence by chaining themselves to the gate of the property in order to publicly denounce the dumping of Swedish nuclear waste on French soil.<sup>86</sup> In 1989, the Swedish Ambassador's Residence was the site of a several days long strike by American airline employees protesting the sale of their company, Continental Airlines, to Scandinavian Air Systems, based in Sweden.<sup>87</sup>

Even into the 1990s, the Swedish ambassador's residence was renowned throughout the city for their hosted events. The Wachtmeisters had been a beloved couple on the social scene for about 15 years until their retirement in 1989, but their successors, the Liljegrens, retained the reputation of being the “capital's most popular diplomatic couple.”<sup>88</sup> The Liljegrens were known for their St. Lucia Day every holiday season, their dinners held for American Nobel Prize winners, and their charity events.

In 2003, Swedish Ambassador Jan Eliasson announced that construction would soon begin on a new main embassy chancery (separate from the ambassador's residence). The House of Sweden, as it would be called, is a large, modernist building located at 901 30<sup>th</sup> Street NW on the Georgetown Waterfront, between the mouth of Rock Creek and the large Washington Harbor complex. Designed by Swedish architects Gert Wingårdh and Tomas Hansen to emphasize openness and transparency, the House of Sweden was completed in 2006 and includes both residential and office space, in addition to conference rooms, an auditorium, and exhibition space. Sweden initially leased the basement and the glassy first floor; the cantilevered residential space on the upper floors was separately leased. King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia returned to Washington to inaugurate the House of Sweden in October 2006.<sup>89</sup>

Following ownership of the entire House of Sweden building, the Swedish government decided to consolidate the ambassador's residence within the chancery building in Georgetown, so as to provide a modern and central location—and larger space—for embassy activities and events. Ambassador Karin Olofsdotter moved from 3900 Nebraska Avenue NW to the House of Sweden in 2019. Queen Silvia, former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, and several American Nobel laureates were among the last notable guests to be entertained at the Nebraska Avenue

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<sup>84</sup> Theroux., 17.

<sup>85</sup> Sherrill, “The Wachmeisters,” D14.

<sup>86</sup> “Foreign News Briefs,” *UPI*, December 15, 1982, 1.

<sup>87</sup> Bill Mintz, “Reports of Texas Air's stock surges amid rumors,” *Houston Chronicle*, August 26, 1989, 1.

<sup>88</sup> Kevin Chaffee, “Raising a glass for the NSO,” *The Washington Times*, March 22, 1996, C14.

<sup>89</sup> Benjamin Forgey, “From Sweden, a Glass Box That Holds Real Promise,” *Washington Post*, Feb. 13, 2003; Linda Hales, “Artistic Interpretations of Sweden, Inside and Out,” *Washington Post*, Oct. 21, 2006.

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residence while Olofsdotter was living there from 2017 to 2019. The former ambassador's residence is now vacant.

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Swedish Ambassador's Residence  
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Swedish Ambassador's Residence \_\_\_\_\_

Washington, DC \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Property

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**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):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** 2.693 \_\_\_\_\_

Swedish Ambassador's Residence \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Property

Washington, DC \_\_\_\_\_  
County and State

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                        |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 38.394108 | Longitude: -77.08439 |
| 2. Latitude:           | Longitude:           |
| 3. Latitude:           | Longitude:           |
| 4. Latitude:           | Longitude:           |

**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |          |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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

The boundary corresponds to the boundaries of Assessment and Taxation Lot 832 within Square 1596. The lot encompasses the historic residence and the surrounding landscape representing 2.693 acres

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the house, drive, service court, terraces, and surrounding landscape which are the most historic and original aspects of the property and best represent the site's period of significance.

Swedish Ambassador's Residence  
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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Neale Grisham and Sarah Vonesh (EHT Tracerics, Inc.), John DeFerrari and Douglas Peter Sefton (DCPL Trustees)

organization: EHT Tracerics, Inc.

street & number: 440 Massachusetts Avenue NW

city or town: Washington state: DC zip code: 20001

e-mail neale.grisham@tracerics.com

telephone: 202-393-1199

date: September 20, 2023

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Swedish Ambassador's Residence  
Name of Property

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**Legal Lot Description**

**EXHIBIT Y**

Metes and Bounds Description

**Proposed Lot M**  
**Part of Lot 819, Square 1596**  
**(Part of Former Lot 811, Square 1596)**  
**American University Park**  
3900 Nebraska Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C.

**BEING** part of Lot 0819, Square 1596, (formerly Lot 0811, also known as Parcel 23/41 as shown in County Book 23 at Page 95, and on a Plat of Survey for the Embassy of Sweden recorded on November 26, 1951 and recorded in Survey Book 160 at Page 81 among the Records of the Surveyor for the District of Columbia), said parcel being more particularly described as follows:

**BEGINNING** for the same at a point on the northwesterly line of Nebraska Avenue, NW (100'-wide), said point also being the south corner on the southerly line of Lot 0819, Square 1596, thence leaving said northwesterly line of Nebraska Avenue, NW and running with said southerly line:

1. North 43°23'10" West, 450.98 feet to a point, said point being the northeasterly line of Tindall Street, NW; thence leaving said northeasterly line to cross and include part of Lot 0819, Square 1596
2. North 46°36'50" East, 283.51 feet to a point, said point being on the common line between Lot 0811, Square 1596 and Lot 0809, Square 1640; thence running with said common line
3. South 42°21'00" East, 387.65 feet to a point, said point being on the northwesterly line of Nebraska Avenue, NW; thence running with said northwesterly line
4. South 33°42'00" West, 283.67 feet to the Point of Beginning, containing 117,288 square feet +/- (or 2.693 acres +/-) of land.

Subject, however, to any and all easements, rights-of-ways, covenants, and encumbrances of record.

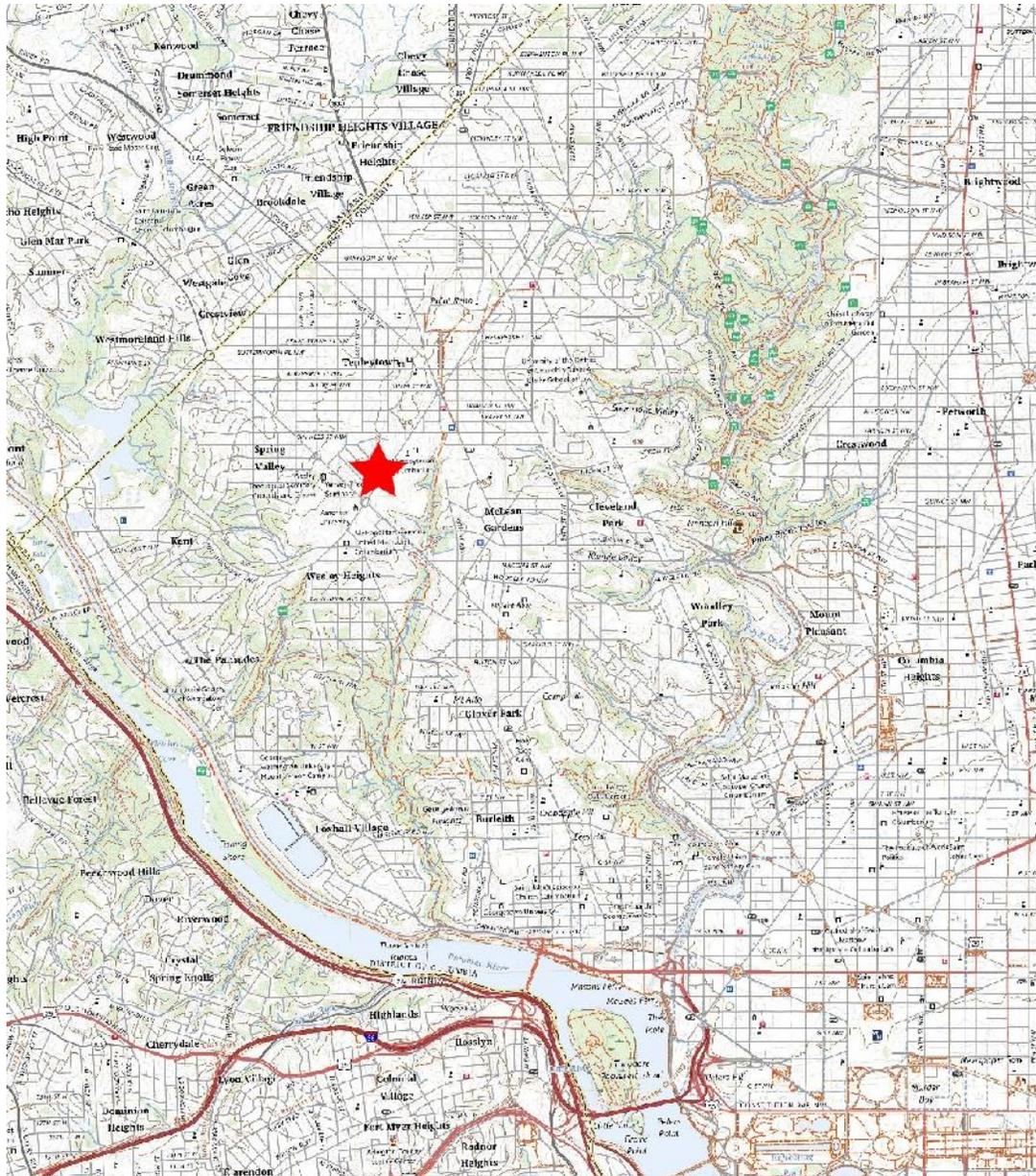


Note: Above described lot is now designated for purposes of Assessment and Taxation as Lot 832.

Swedish Ambassador's Residence  
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*Maps*



Map 1. Detail from 2023 USGS Washington West quadrangle depicting location of the residence (U.S. Geological Survey)

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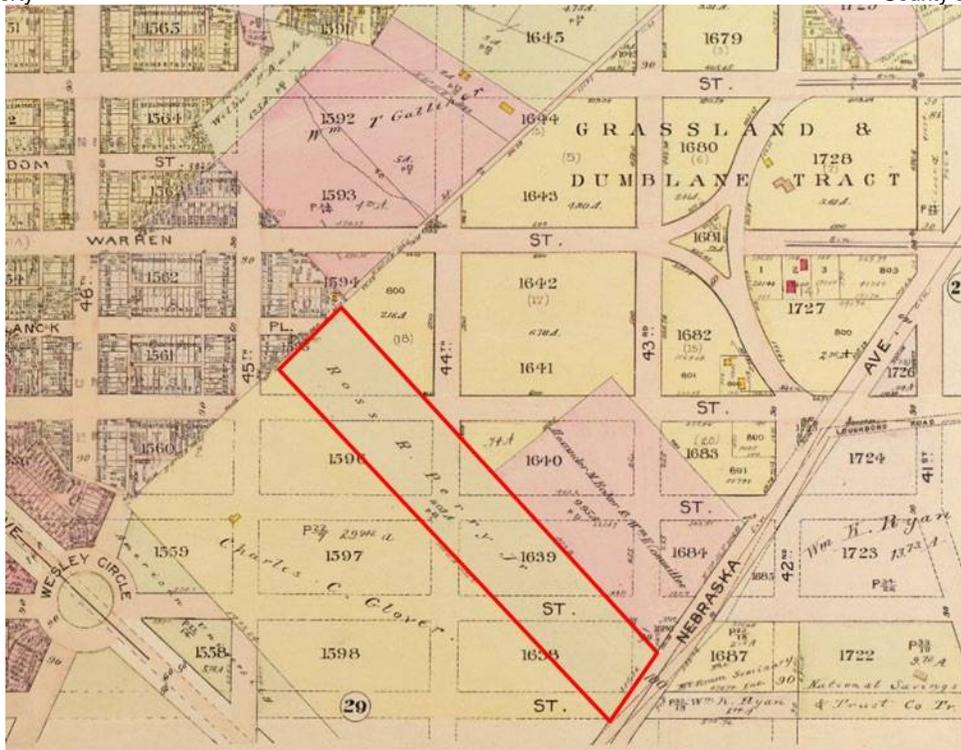
Map 2. Property survey map depicting landmark boundary (Square 1596, Lot 832) (CAS Engineering-DC, LLC).



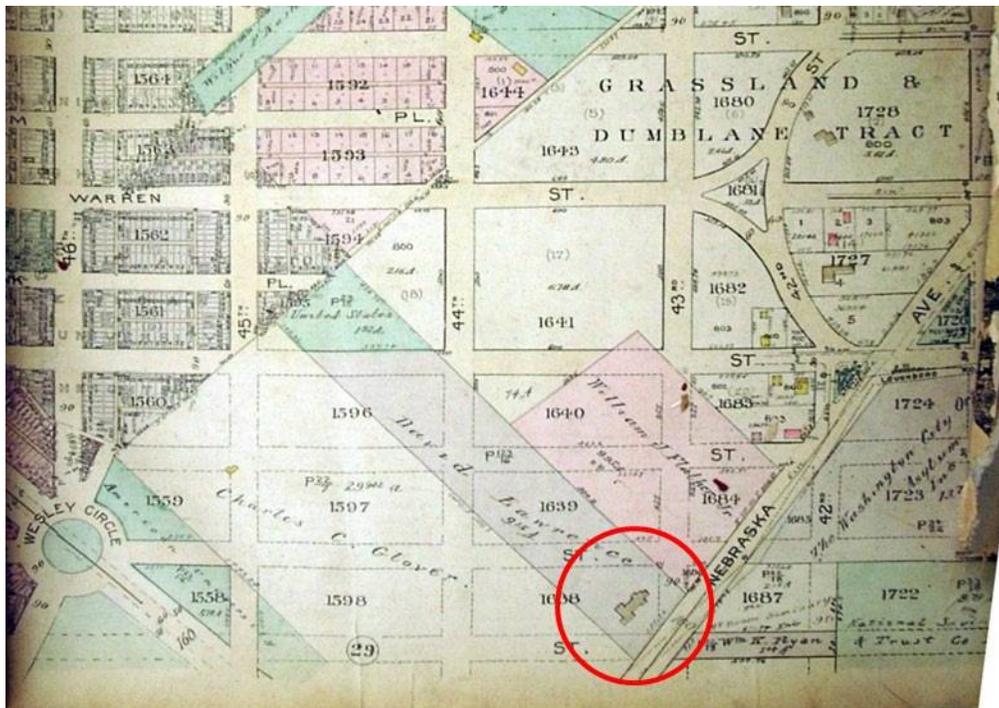
Map 3. Aerial view of 3900 Nebraska NW and landmark boundary (Google Earth, EHT Traceries).

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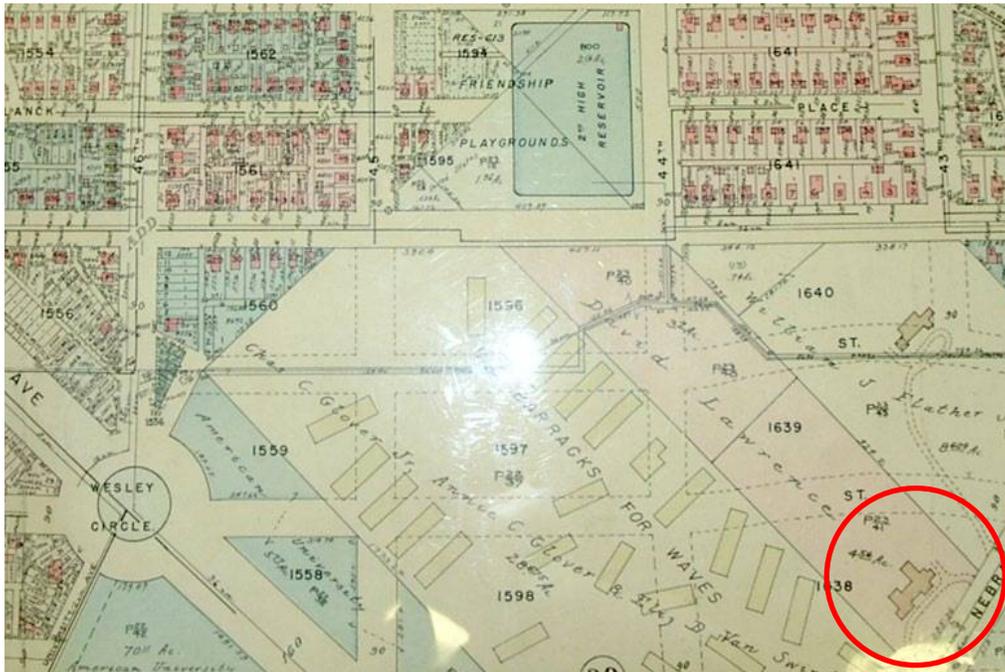
Map 4. Baist Map (1919), Volume 3, Sheet 31, Library of Congress. Red outline indicates property purchased by Lawrence in 1922.



Map 5. Baist Map (1925), DC History Center. Red circle indicates location of house.

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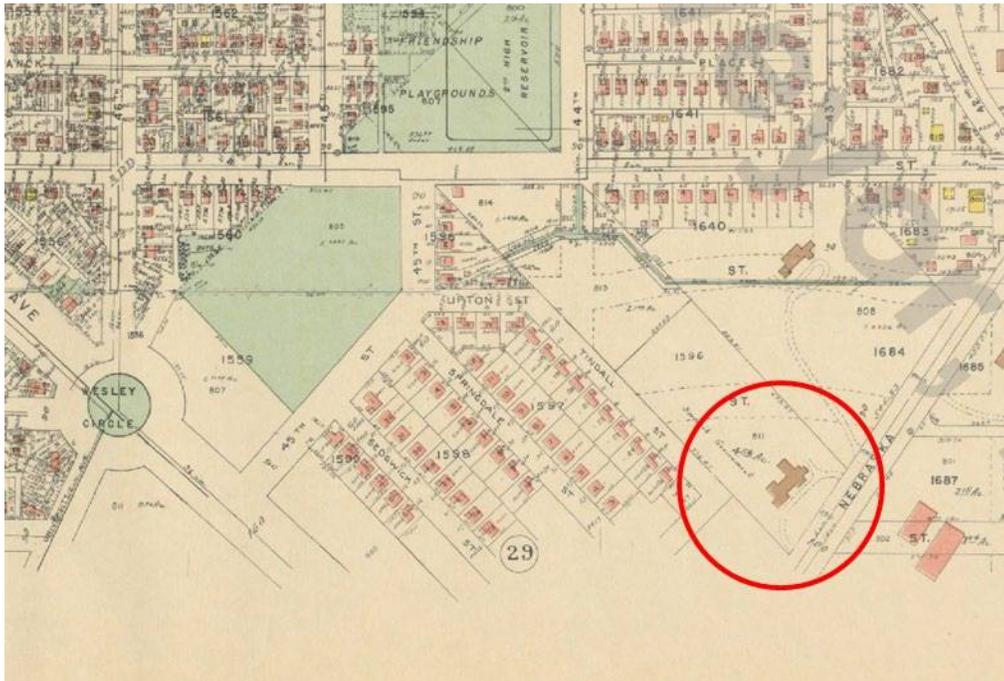
Map 6. Baist Map (1945), DC History Center.



Map 7. Baist Map (1954), DC History Center.

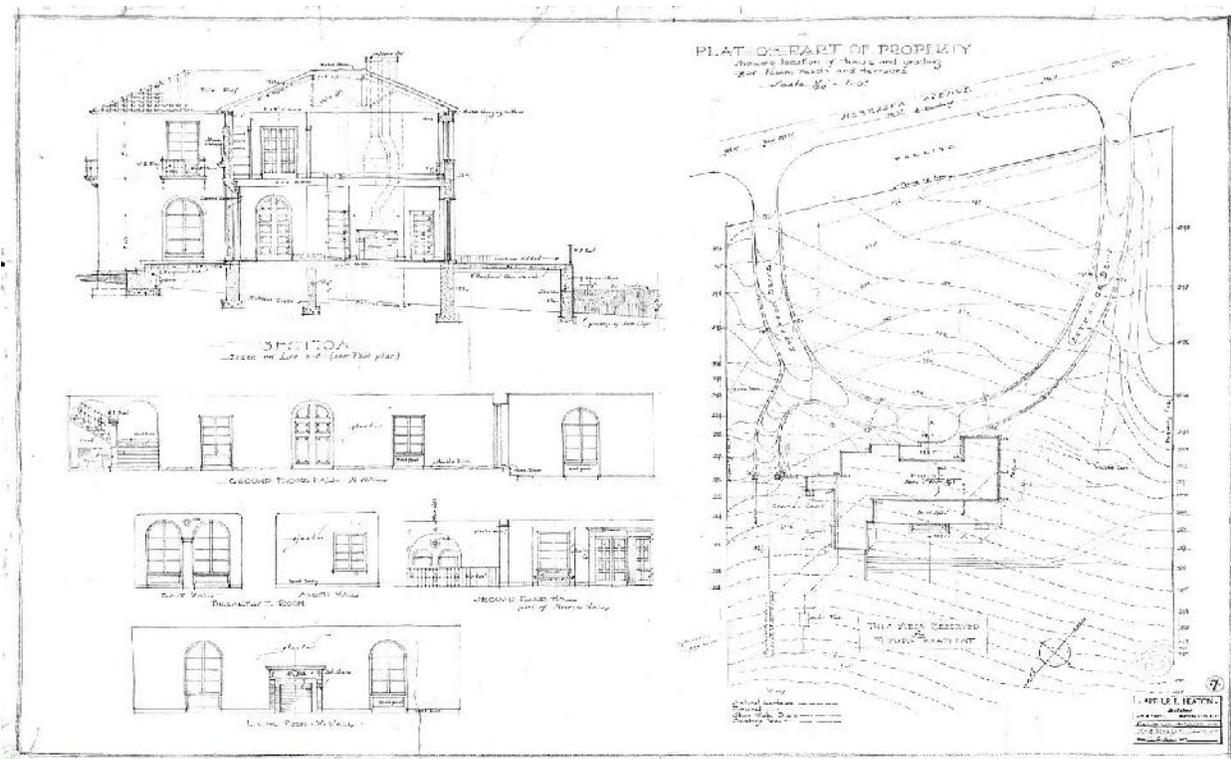
Swedish Ambassador's Residence  
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Map 8. Baist Map (1968), Office of the Surveyor.

**Historic Drawings**



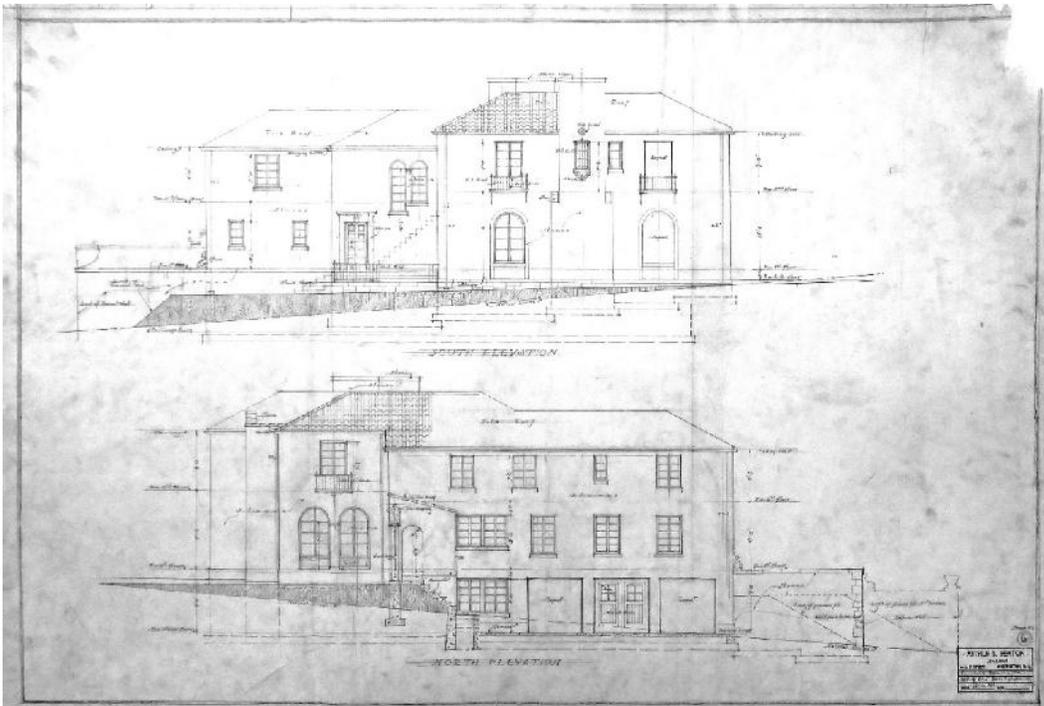
Historic Drawing 1. Site Plan and Section, undated. Heaton architectural drawing archive (Library of Congress).

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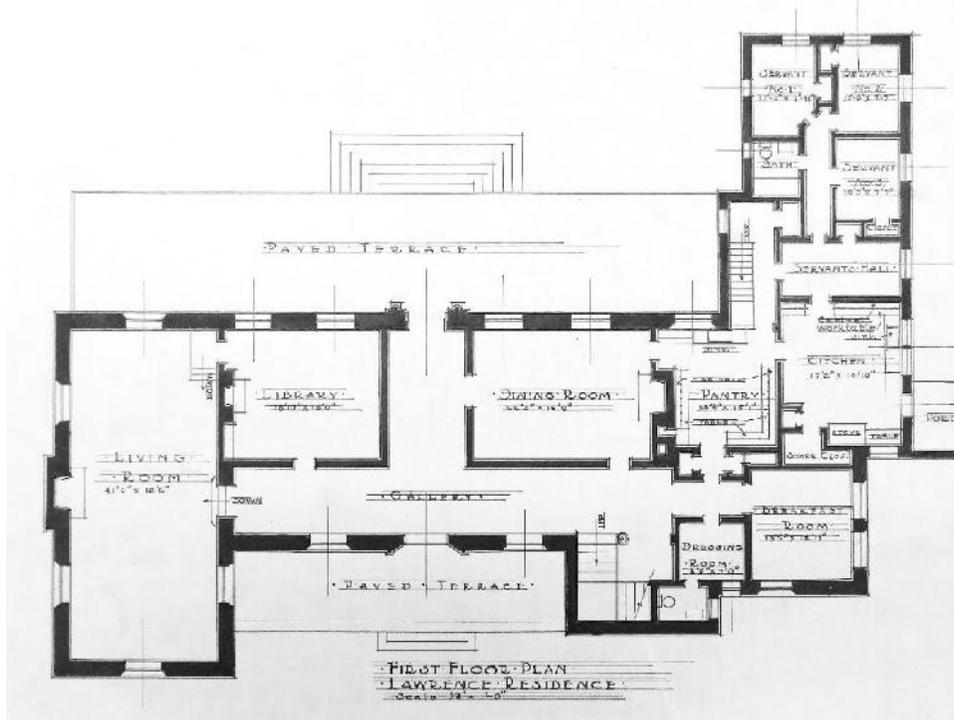
*Historic Drawing 2. Eastern Elevation, facing Nebraska Avenue NW and Western Elevation modified February 14, 1924. Heaton architectural drawing archive (Library of Congress).*



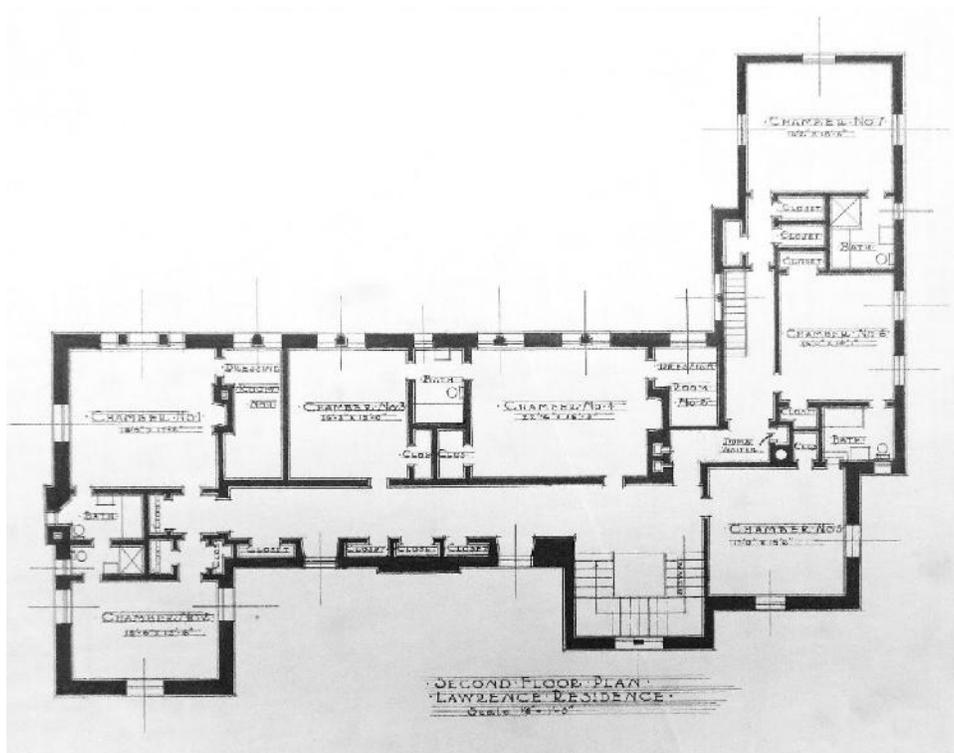
*Historic Drawing 3. Northern and Southern Elevations, modified February 14, 1924. Heaton architectural drawing archive (Library of Congress).*

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Historic Drawing 4. First Floor Plan, undated. Heaton architectural drawing archive (Library of Congress).



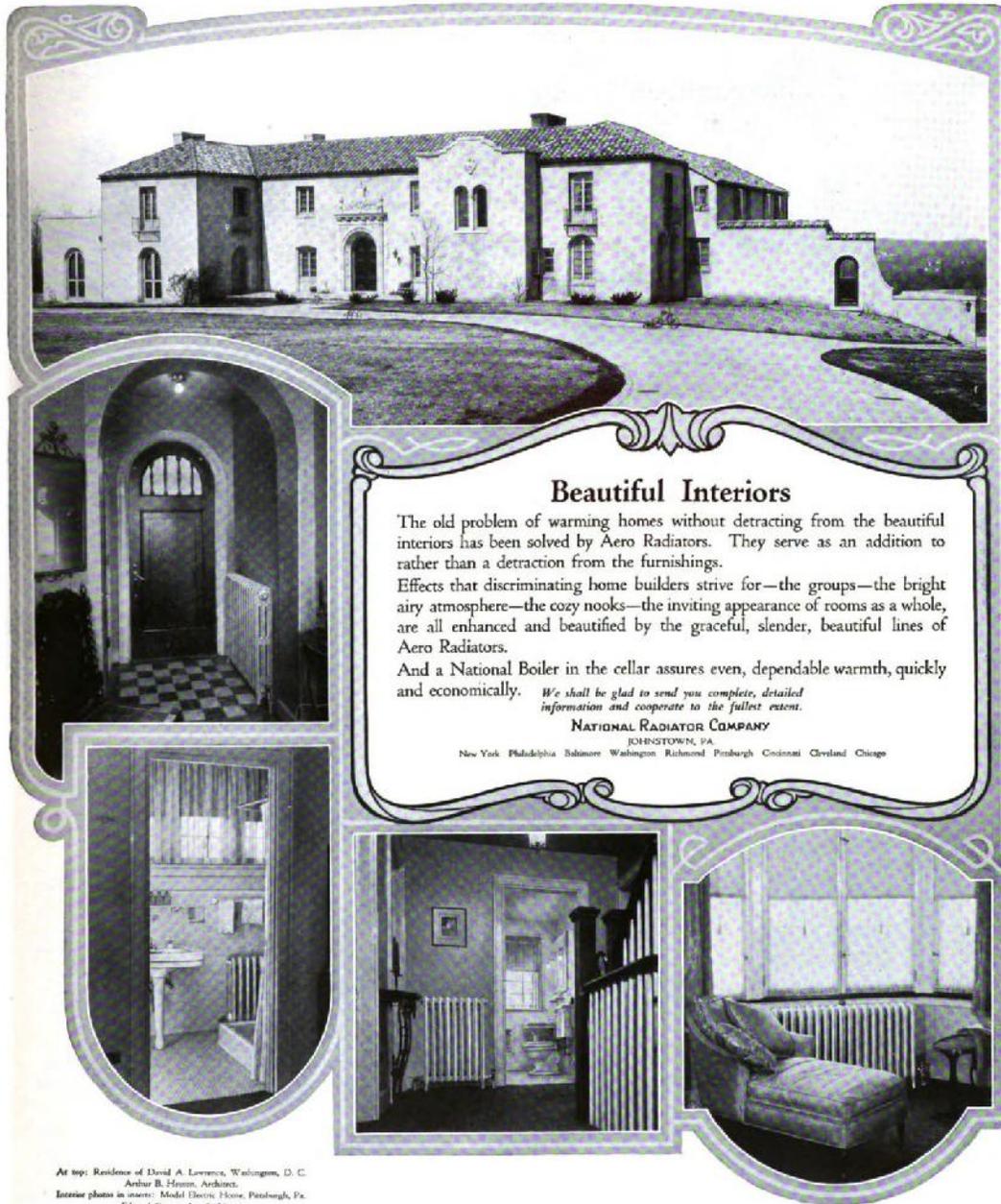
Historic Drawing 5. First Floor Plan, undated. Heaton architectural drawing archive (Library of Congress).

Swedish Ambassador's Residence  
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**Historic Photographs**

THE HOUSE BEAUTIFUL BUILDING ANNUAL



**Beautiful Interiors**

The old problem of warming homes without detracting from the beautiful interiors has been solved by Aero Radiators. They serve as an addition to rather than a detraction from the furnishings.

Effects that discriminating home builders strive for—the groups—the bright airy atmosphere—the cozy nooks—the inviting appearance of rooms as a whole, are all enhanced and beautified by the graceful, slender, beautiful lines of Aero Radiators.

And a National Boiler in the cellar assures even, dependable warmth, quickly and economically. *We shall be glad to send you complete, detailed information and cooperate to the fullest extent.*

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At top: Residence of David A. Lawrence, Washington, D. C.  
Arthur B. Heaton, Architect.  
Interior photos in insets: Model Electric House, Pittsburgh, Pa.  
Edward Grump, Jr., Architect.

BEAUTY and WARMTH with  
**AERO RADIATORS**

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Historic Photograph 1. 3900 Nebraska Avenue (c. 1925) featured in an advertisement for Aero Radiators. The House Beautiful Building Annual, 1926. Note interior photographs are not of 3900 Nebraska Avenue.

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*Historic Photograph 2. Main façade (1948) by Theodor Horydczak. Library of Congress.*



*Historic Photograph 3. Northern elevation and service court (1948) by Theodor Horydczak. Library of Congress.*

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*Historic Photograph 4. southern elevation (1948) by Theodor Horydczak. Library of Congress.*



*Historic Photograph 5. Entry door, note Lawrence's monogram on crest. Library of Congress.*

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*Historic Photograph 6. main façade (1951) by John P. Wymer. DC History Center, John P. Wymer Collection*

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**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

**Photo Log**

#	Title	Camera Facing	Date	Photographer
1	Front façade of the house	NW	8/9/2023	Sarah Vonesh
2	Front façade of the house	SW	8/9/2023	Neale Grisham
3	Southern elevation	N	8/9/2023	Neale Grisham
4	Western elevation	NE	8/9/2023	Neale Grisham
5	Western elevation	SE	8/9/2023	Neale Grisham
6	“Ell” of the house	E	8/9/2023	Neale Grisham
7	Northern elevation with three floors exposed	S	8/9/2023	Sarah Vonesh
8	Northern elevation, featuring garden wall and garage in the distance	SW	8/9/2023	Sarah Vonesh
9	Upper window detail	NW	8/9/2023	Sarah Vonesh
10	Front door detail	NW	8/9/2023	Neale Grisham
11	Typical first story window	SW	8/9/2023	Neale Grisham
12	Rear door surround	SE	8/9/2023	Neale Grisham
13	Balcony detail	N	8/9/2023	Neale Grisham
14	Exterior lighting detail	SE	8/9/2023	Neale Grisham
15	Vista from back terrace, including tennis court	NW	8/9/2023	Neale Grisham
16	Office and adjoining garden wall with decorative nice/infilled garden gate	SW	8/9/2023	Sarah Vonesh
17	Deck and sunroom	N	8/9/2023	Sarah Vonesh
18	National emblem of Sweden in cast stone door surround	NW	8/9/2023	Neale Grisham
19	First floor corridor and original tile	NE	8/25/2023	Neale Grisham
20	Library paneling	SE	8/25/2023	Neale Grisham
21	Main stair hall	E	8/25/2023	Neale Grisham
22	Typical upstairs room	NW	8/25/2023	Neale Grisham
23	Upstairs corridor	N	8/25/2023	Neale Grisham
24	Service wing	W	8/25/2023	Neale Grisham
25	Commercial kitchen	W	8/25/2023	Neale Grisham
26	Sunroom	SE	8/25/2023	Neale Grisham

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations 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.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours

Tier 2 – 120 hours

Tier 3 – 230 hours

Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

Name of Property: **3900 Nebraska Ave NW; the former Swedish Ambassador's residence**

City or Vicinity: **Washington**

County: **n/a**

State: **District of Columbia**



1 of 26. Front façade of the house.

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2 of 26. Front façade of the house, looking west.



3 of 26. Southern elevation, looking northeast.

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4 of 26. Western elevation, looking northeast.



5 of 26. Western elevation, looking southeast.

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6 of 26. Southern and western elevation of the service wing, looking northeast.



7 of 26. Northern elevation of the service wing, looking southwest.

Swedish Ambassador's Residence  
Name of Property

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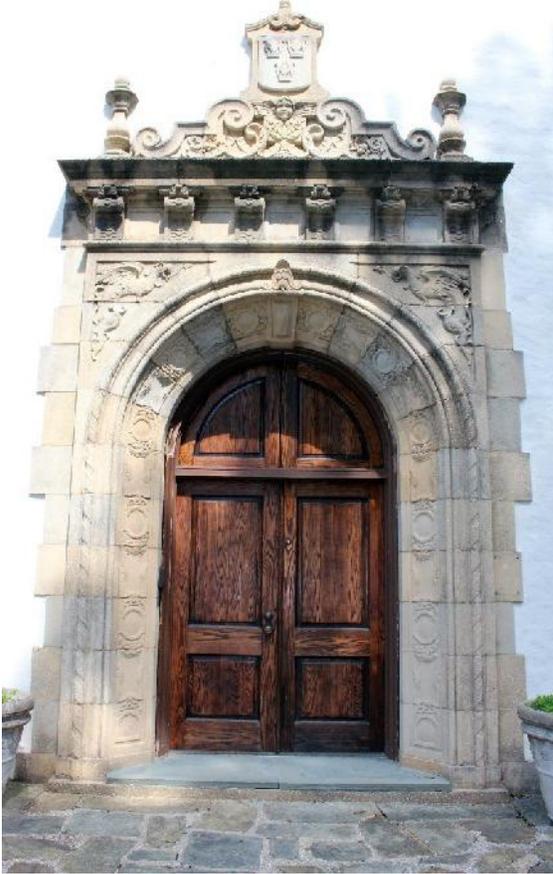
8 of 26. Northern elevation, including the 1980s addition, garden wall and garage in the distance, looking northwest.



9 of 26. Upper window detail of the north projecting bay, looking northwest.

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10 of 26. Front door detail.



11 of 26. Typical first story window.

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12 of 26. Rear door surround.



13 of 26. Balcony detail.

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14 of 26. Exterior lighting detail.



15 of 26. Vista from back terrace.

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16 of 26. Northern elevation of the 1980s addition, looking southwest.



17 of 26. Deck and sunroom.

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18 of 26. National emblem of Sweden in cast stone door surround.



19 of 26. First floor corridor and original tile.

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20 of 26. Library paneling

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21 of 26. Main stair hall.



22 of 26. Typical upstairs room

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23 of 26. Upstairs corridor.



24 of 26. Service wing.

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25 of 26. Commercial kitchen



26 of 26. Sunroom