

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Georgetown Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

Georgetown Historic District

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN

Washington

VICINITY OF

STATE

District of Columbia

CODE

11

COUNTY

District of Columbia 011

CODE

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Multiple public and private owners/Georgetown Citizens Association

STREET & NUMBER

2803 M Street Northwest

CITY, TOWN

Washington

VICINITY OF

STATE

District of Columbia

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Recorder of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

6th & D Streets

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

District of Columbia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey, NPS

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Division of Prints and Photographs, Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Although there are still several examples of pre-Revolutionary houses in Georgetown, such as the Old Stone House on M Street (a unit of the National Park Service), most of the fine old houses which lend such dignity and charm to the area date from the period after 1800. Most of Georgetown is occupied by residential areas whose regular streets and brick or wood frame row houses set the tone for the entire area. Although a variety of styles illustrates the national trend of architectural development from Georgian Mansion and town house through early Federal and Classical Revival houses, to the ornate structures of the ante and post-bellum periods, there are many elements which lend to Georgetown's residential areas a unity and distinctive character. Materials of wood, brick, and cast iron are utilized to develop standard house solutions which are repeated over the streets of Georgetown. Buildings rarely exceed three stories in height; their widths, heights, and setbacks are usually coordinated along particular streets. A harmony of texture and of scale is achieved through these means.

Georgetown's residential architecture can be described as conservative in its orientation. There is very little of the architecture of theatrical display or of violent contrast with the work of the past. While the architectural developments in Georgetown follow leading contemporary trends in the United States, they frequently do not appear until one to three decades later. The delayed adoption of contemporary architectural styles naturally screens out excesses and tends to the normative middle course. Contributing to the continuity in residential architecture is the dominance of the builder-architect rather than the designer architect. Control of the middle and upper-middle class architecture by the constructor accounts in part for the similarities in style.

The builders and architects of Georgetown's northeast evidence a special sensitivity to physical pattern and the context in which their architectural projects are placed. Conveniently salable lots of from 20'x 60' to 20'x 100' provide the basic framework into which fit the normative sidehall plans. Three bays form the normal facade division. There is a careful recognition of the street facade in these buildings; even in free standing structure, there is careful adaptation to the site.

Yet, the distinct and the individual are by no means foreign to Georgetown's architecture. There are a variety of living units within Georgetown, from large apartment buildings and tenant houses to detached, single family residences. Stylistic temporal change throughout the nineteenth century is revealed with special clarity in Georgetown's northeast. It's architecture portrays the gradual change from linear to plastic form, from a stricter definition of order to one allowing more freedom and variety, from facades which are horizontal and balanced to those which are more vertical yet less sheltered.

Individuality and independence are evidenced in several different ways as the century moves to a close. Plans become more asymmetrical as in the Albert Jackson House; and rooms become more distinctively ordered and positioned as in the Mariner-Lewis House. Facades and roof lines become more picturesque and baroque as in Cook's Row. Ornamentation becomes more elaborate and profuse as an outward display of wealth. There is an accentuation on the uniqueness of overall shapes and patterns used on both interiors and exteriors. Everywhere there is the Victorian spirit of floral nature and bracketed villa overcoming the older image of the refined and urban townhouse of the earlier nineteenth century.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES

1751 -

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Many -

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Georgetown was laid out in 1751 and soon flourished as a shipping center. It was incorporated in 1789 and was a pleasant village with regular streets and well-built brick houses when John Adams inaugurated the official life of Washington in the spring of 1800. Handsome brick houses dotted the area from Bridge (M) Street down to the river and a few palatial mansions crowned the heights beyond the city proper. Sprawled along the waterfront were warehouses and wharves, sailor's taverns, flour mills, and a fleet of ships. For the first quarter of the 19th century Georgetown was the center for the social and diplomatic life of the new Capital. Although there are still several examples of pre-Revolutionary houses in present-day Georgetown, most of the fine old houses which lend such dignity and charm to the area date from the period after 1800. These fine old houses illustrating architectural trends throughout the 19th century, combined with the new architecture harmonizing with the old, make Georgetown one of the Nation's outstanding historical and architectural treasures.

Georgetown's history stretches back to 1621, when Henry Fleete, an English colonist from Jamestown, sailed up the Potomac River with a small party of men in search of corn. Fleete and his men were captured by the Anacostan Indians at the village of Tohoga, near the site of the future Georgetown. Held captive for several years, Fleete was eventually ransomed after the other men in his party had been killed.

Attracted by the fertile soil, moderate climate, good transportation along the waterways, and abundant fish and wildfish, Fleete returned to the area in 1632 and developed trade with the Indians. Encouraged by Fleete's success, other colonists came to settle in the area from the Potomac River to the fall line. As the settlement progressed, grants of land were made which would determine the future pattern of development of Georgetown.

In 1703, Ninian Beall, a Scottish immigrant, acquired land which he christened the "Rock of Dumbarton" around the intersection of Rock Creek and Potomac River. Another Scotch settler, George Gordon, purchased a large holding of land in 1743 which he named "Knaves Disappointment". Later renamed "Rock Creek Plantation", it along with Beall's holdings, accounted for most of the land on which the future Georgetown would rest.

To lay out the town, the Maryland Assembly appointed seven commissioners in 1751 to purchase 60 acres from Gordon and Beall. The land was divided into 80 lots which were sold. It was bounded by the Potomac on the south, what is now 35th Street on the west, a few feet west of the present 30th Street on the east, and a few feet south of the present N Street on the north. Brick homes soon dotted the regular streets from Bridge (M) Street to the waterfront.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

H.D. Eberlein and C. Van Dyke Hubbard, Historic House of George-Town and Washington City (Richmond, Va., 1958), p. 5.

Grace Ecker, A Portrait of Old George-Town, Richmond, Va., 1951, p. 4.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Approximately 750 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	18	321210	4309770	B	18	322230	4308630
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	18	321590	4307390	D	18	319750	4308050
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

E 18.319640.4308900

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

NHL Boundary Review Project

ORGANIZATION

National Register of Historic Places

DATE

February 1980

STREET & NUMBER

440 G Street Northwest

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C. 20243

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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(Statement of Significance continuation)

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Tobacco was the lifeblood of the new community, and in 1745, a Rolling House for the inspection and trade of the crop was called for by the Maryland legislature. Completed in 1747, the Rolling House stimulated the growth of the settlement. Licences for taverns were issued to Thomas Odell and Joseph Belt within a few years of its completion. Georgetown soon flourished, becoming a shipping center with a profitable European and West Indies trade. Commerce and industry developed along the waterfront, where wharves and flour mills were raised. The 1763 Treaty of Paris, ending the French and Indian War, opened up trade with the Ohio River Valley area on which Georgetown placed high hopes. Suter's Tavern and the Union Hotel provided fashionable lodging for the merchants and men of leisure who visited the thriving port. Additional entertainment was provided by horse races which were held annually beginning in 1760.

During the Revolution, Georgetown served as a great depot for the collection and shipment of military supplies. When the town was finally incorporated in 1789, it continued to thrive. A textile mill, paper factory, and more flour mills contributed to the industrial texture of the waterfront. By an act of the new Congress Georgetown was declared to be the sole port of entry in "all the waters and shores from Pomony Creek on the north side of the Potomac River to the head of the navigable waters of said river" for all "goods, wares, and merchandise imported into the United States".* The gradual opening of the canal system of the Potomac Canal Company from 1785 to 1802 made Georgetown a terminal port at tidewater for much of the lucrative western trade, which extended as far as Fort Osage on the Missouri River, to Lake Erie, and to Mobile, Alabama.

Georgetown's character would be profoundly affected by the establishment of the nation's capital to its east. It was at Georgetown, in Suter's Tavern, that George Washington met with the proprietors of the lands selected for the new federal city. Pierre L'Enfant worked at Suter's Tavern on his designs for the capital and it was at Suter's Tavern that Andrew Ellicott produced his survey of the city's lands.

Although Georgetown was included in the new Federal District, it retained its own charter. Nevertheless, it would become the center of Washington's social and diplomatic life in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. As the federal city developed, Georgetown's business and social affairs shifted from the waterfront to Bridge (M) Street which became the principal avenue of approach to the new capital from the western territories. Legislators and their families, encouraged by the dearth of decent homes in Washington city, stayed in Georgetown hotels and taverns and did their shopping there as well.

Georgetown rapidly gained a reputation as the fashionable quarter of the capital which drew eminent visitors from this country and others. The wealthy planter of Maryland and Virginia came to patronize Georgetown's shops, taverns, and hotels. Prospect House, located in Georgetown, was utilized by the State Department as a home for visiting dignitaries. Gilbert Stuart, the famous portraitist of the early Presidents, resided in Georgetown for a time. Georgetown's cultivated social life was especially impressive for foreign visitors, like the English actress George Anne Bellamy, who wrote home: "Never have I attended a more complete banquet

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(Georgetown Historic District Significance)

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or met better dressed or better mannered people than I met on my arrival in Georgetown".*

The future seemed to augur only well for Georgetown at the turn of the century. Population grew rapidly from 3,000 in 1800 to nearly 5,000 in 1810. The first agricultural periodical in America, Agricultural Museum, was begun by David Wiley in Georgetown in 1810. But Georgetown's financial growth proved to be disappointing and its importance as a center of commerce declined with the advance of Alexandria, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. The western and Potomac valley trade did not develop as expected because of the failure of the canal-and-lock system to function except during high water stages of the river.

By 1819, the Potomac Canal Company was almost bankrupt. Partly to revive Georgetown's failing economy, Congress, in 1825, granted a charter to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company to build a canal from the tidewater to the Cumberland. Unfortunately for Georgetown, however, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad reached the Cumberland before the canal, and the western trade on which Georgetown had rested its hopes never significantly materialized.

When the poor prospects for commerce were fully appreciated, Georgetown sought to encourage industrial development to revitalize its economy. The pursuit of this new ambition brought changes in the town's appearance. New flour mills and open coal fields replaced the great tobacco and grocery warehouses of the 1820's. Along the waterfront could be seen a large saw mill, iron furnace and foundry, flour mills, the Pioneer Cotton Company factory, and a rendering plant. The ethnic texture of the town had also changed, for construction of the canal brought many Irish immigrants who mostly settled in the western part of Georgetown.

With the onslaught of immigration and industrialization, Georgetown had become urbanized. In recognition of this development, Congress incorporated it as part of Washington City in 1871. After the Civil War, freed slaves had begun to migrate to Georgetown in increasing numbers until the town was more than 50 per cent black. In the period after World War I, Georgetown gained a reputation as one of Washington's worst slums; its homes were neglected, and the area deteriorated badly. This trend began to reverse in the 1930's, when New Deal politicians and government officials rediscovered its charm and convenience to Washington, Georgetown became once again the chic enclave for the affluent and political.

*H.D. Eberlein and C. Van Dyke Hubbard, Historic House of George-Town and Washington City (Richmond, Va., 1958), p. 5.

*Grace Ecker, A Portrait of Old George-Town, (Richmond, Va., 1951), p. .4.

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The Georgetown Historic District was declared eligible for designation as a National Historic Landmark by the Secretary of the Interior in May, 1967. The boundaries of the Landmark, and those recording the district in the National Register, are the same as the boundaries defined by the Congress in the Old Georgetown Act (P.L. 808, 64 Station 903) in 1950. They are: "Bounded on the east by Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway from the Potomac River to the north boundary of Dumbarton Oaks Park, on the north by the north boundary of Dumbarton Oaks Park, Whitehaven Street and Whitehaven Parkway to Thirty-fifth Street, south along the middle of Thirty-fifth Street to Reservoir Road, west along the middle of Reservoir Road to Archbold Parkway, on the west by Archbold Parkway from Reservoir Road to the Potomac River, on the south by the Potomac River to the Rock Creek Parkway".