

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0228796 DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUN 30 1975

DATE ENTERED SEP 5 1975

**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

Thomas Nelson Page House

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

1759 R Street, N.W.

CITY, TOWN

Washington

-- NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT Walter E.

Fauntroy, District of Columbia

STATE

District of Columbia

-- VICINITY OF

CODE 11

COUNTY

District of Columbia

CODE 001

3 CLASSIFICATION**CATEGORY** DISTRICT BUILDING(S) STRUCTURE SITE OBJECT**OWNERSHIP** PUBLIC PRIVATE BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION** IN PROCESS BEING CONSIDERED**STATUS** OCCUPIED UNOCCUPIED WORK IN PROGRESS**ACCESSIBLE** YES: RESTRICTED YES: UNRESTRICTED NO**PRESENT USE** AGRICULTURE COMMERCIAL EDUCATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT GOVERNMENT INDUSTRIAL MILITARY MUSEUM PARK PRIVATE RESIDENCE RELIGIOUS SCIENTIFIC TRANSPORTATION OTHER: Foreign Legation**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Joseph L. Donnelly

STREET & NUMBER

1511 K Street, N.W.

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

District of Columbia

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE.

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Recorder of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Sixth and D Streets, N.W.

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

District of Columbia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

District of Columbia's Inventory of Historic Sites

DATE

June 27, 1974

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR joint District of Columbia/National Capital Planning Commission
SURVEY RECORDS Historic Preservation Office

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

District of Columbia

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Thomas Nelson Page House (1896) was designed by Stanford White of McKim, Mead and White in an early Georgian Revival style. It occupies a prominent corner on New Hampshire Avenue, three blocks northeast of the intersection of that avenue with Dupont Circle, and is an important element in the New Hampshire Avenue Special Street Facade between Dupont Circle and 16th Street, N.W., a Category III Landmark.

The building faces south at the northwest corner of R Street and New Hampshire Avenue, N.W., occupying the southern portion of a large (almost 1/4 acre), flat, trapeziform site. This site extends 72 feet on R Street, 67 feet on New Hampshire Avenue and includes both lot 135 and lot 136 in Square 153. The Page House is basically an irregular pentagon in shape. The street facades are brought to the building line of the lot, extending 72' on R Street and 36' on New Hampshire Avenue and leaving room for a large garden on New Hampshire Avenue at the northern end of the property. The building is four and one half stories high and three paired bays wide. It is of brick and iron construction with concrete and brick foundations. There is a full basement. The facades are of Harvard brick laid up with thick joints in a Flemish bond with random glazed headers. The base of the building is of granite. Limestone is used for such facade detail as window lintels and bases, the base of the principal story, banding, and chimney caps.

Non-masonry detail--including dormers, cornice, portico, loggias and sash--is painted white, emulating the limestone detail and, in the eighteenth century manner, contrasting with the deep red brick of the walls. The low-pitched mansard roof was originally covered in copper. Dormers are gabled with boldly moulded cornices, simplified pilaster detail and small-paned 8/8 light double-hung sash windows. Chimneys are tall and narrow in proportion, panelled and finished with moulded limestone caps. They are functionally placed, without regard for the symmetry or frontality of the facade composition. An exuberant Doric cornice of exaggerated scale minimizes the impact of roof, dormers and chimneys as seen from the street and helps create an illusion of strong horizontality in this building which is 72' long and 68' high. A simple denticulated architrave creates a transition with the smaller scale of the facade detail below.

The design of the street facades emphasizes the principal social stories--the second and third stories--of the house. The brick of the first story is laid up with horizontal grooving at appropriate intervals, suggesting rusticated stone. The first story is treated as a base and capped with a limestone moulding boldly scaled to relate to the cornice above. At the corners of the facades the rustication detail is carried pilaster-like up the full height of the house to the cornice. Between the third and fourth stories it is interrupted by limestone mouldings which function as capitals of the pilasters. A simple limestone beltcourse runs between these capitals, serving as sills for the fourth story windows and imparting a secondary, frieze-like appearance to the fourth story, while emphasizing the horizontality of the composition.

(Continued on Form 10-300a)

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input 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 type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1896-1922 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Stanford White, of McKim, Mead and White

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Joint Committee on Landmarks has designated the Thomas Nelson Page House a Category II Landmark of importance which contributes significantly to the cultural heritage and visual beauty of the District of Columbia. Built in 1896, it was designed for writer Thomas Nelson Page and his second wife, Florence Lathrop Field Page by architect Stanford White of McKim, Mead and White of New York. It is a notable and early example of Georgian Revival architecture as introduced by this major American architectural firm in the 1880's and 1890's.

Its design is characterized by a knowledgeable adaptation of the vocabulary of 18th century English-American residential architecture to late 19th century considerations of space, scale and function. It was executed at about the same time as White's work at the University of Virginia. In Washington the Page House is a harbinger of the architectural style based on English-American Colonial precedent which was to gain much prominence in succeeding decades. As the home of one of the most noted post-bellum literary figures in the South, the Thomas Nelson Page House was a center of Washington literary life in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. With the exception of alterations made by Stanford White in 1902, the house is largely intact.

Stanford White (November 9, 1853-June 25, 1906) received his architectural training in the office of H.H. Richardson (Gambrill and Richardson). In 1877, together with the principals of the firm McKim, Mead and Bigelow, he toured the Massachusetts coast studying and making measured drawings of colonial and federal architecture. In 1880 this firm was reorganized as McKim, Mead and White. In 1885-86, McKim, Mead and White designed their first Georgian Revival house--the Taylor House at Newport, Rhode Island. By 1896 they had designed several houses in this style, including the Bryan Lathrop House in Chicago for Mrs. Page's brother. In this year also, Stanford White was placed in charge of the restoration of the recently burned Rotunda at the University of Virginia and the design of several new buildings there in the Georgian Revival style. It is interesting to note that the owner of the Page House was the great great grandson of Mann Page I who in 1726 built Rosewell in Gloucester County, Virginia. Rosewell has been called the "largest and finest of American houses of the colonial period." Other works by Stanford White in Washington include the Washington Club (Patterson House) erected at 15 Dupont Circle in 1902, a Category II Landmark listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and alterations to the White House made under President Theodore Roosevelt, also in 1902.

Thomas Nelson Page (April 23, 1853-November 1, 1922) belonged to an aristocratic Virginia family which numbered Carters, Lees and Randolphins among its kin. He grew

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Chicago Historical Society. Records.
2. Dictionary of American Biography.

(Continued on Form 10-300a)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .21 acres
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1 8	3 2 3 0 2 0	4 3 0 8 8 6 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Square 153, lots 135 and 136 9,308 square feet

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CORE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Tanya Beauchamp, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION Joint District of Columbia/National Capital Planning Commission Historic Preservation Office DATE May 14, 1975

STREET & NUMBER National Capital Planning Commission 1325 G Street, N.W. TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN Washington STATE District of Columbia

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

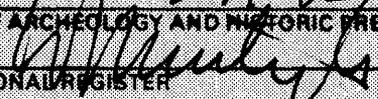
THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL

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

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE  DATE 6-25-75

TITLE Acting Director, Office of Housing and Community Development DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
	DATE <u>9/5/75</u>
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	
ATTEST: 	DATE <u>SEP 4 1975</u>
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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7. Description - Continued

Keystoned lintels and moulded sills of limestone occur at all windows of the principal facades. Lintels of the second and third stories are more elaborate than the others, being winged with doubled keystones. The windows of the second story are especially fine--recessed within blind arches trimmed with doubled keystones and panelled impost blocks of limestone. Each of these very tall windows rests on the limestone base which caps the first story. Wrought iron balconies occur at each of the two windows in both the first and third bays of the second story. A single, similar balcony occurs in the central bay of the third story. Double-hung window sash vary in size from floor to floor. There are 6/6 lights in the sash of the first floor, 9/12 in those of the second floor, 6/9 in those of the third floor and 3/6 in those of the fourth floor. A broad entrance portico occurs in the central bay of the entrance facade. This portico, having the appearance of an Ionic colonnade, rests upon a low granite platform which is reached temple-like by a short flight of steps. Double entrance doors with side lights and an elliptical fan light create a particularly gracious entrance. An oval bulls-eye window is placed at either side of the entrance.

The Rhode Island Avenue facade of the Thomas Nelson Page House is distinguished by a two-story tripartite loggia emphasizing the important second and third stories and dominating the composition of this facade. The loggia is composed of two full orders--Ionic superimposed over Tuscan--extending from the limestone base of the second story to a balustraded parapet terminating at the upper belt course. Wrought iron balconies extend from column to column on each floor. French doors with fan lights occur between each column on the second floor. Casement windows are similarly placed on the third floor. These loggias were originally open and were enclosed by Stanford White in the 1902 remodelling. The garden room in the second story loggia has an unusual vaulted ceiling detailed with plaster lattice work. Minor detail of this facade is similar to that of the principal facade. The remaining sides of the building are relatively unarticulated. Fenestration here has a random, functional appearance. A wrought iron fence, installed in 1903, surrounds the entire property. The garden is at present used as a parking lot by the French.

The interiors of the Thomas Nelson Page House were designed for entertaining on a grand scale. The house is organized around a magnificent open well staircase which, flowing into a spacious stair hall on each floor, creates a dynamic open space quality in the central core of the house. Individual rooms are ranged along the street facades connecting with each other and with these stair halls. The halls are ceremonial in feeling, the largest rooms in the house. A fine stained glass window occurs at the first landing and is especially noticeable from the second floor hall. Kitchen and reception rooms were located on the first floor; dining room, parlors, music room and conservatory on the second; chambers on the third and servant's quarters on

(Continued on Form 10-300a)

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7. Description - Continued

the fourth. An electric elevator was part of the original construction.

In 1902 various alterations were made to the house including the addition of two stories above the kitchen wing on the west and the enclosure of the open loggias on the east front with hinged sash and partition work. These alterations were designed by Stanford White of McKim, Mead and White, the architect of the original structure. With the exception of these alterations, the house today is largely intact.



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8. Significance - Continued

up on his family place, "Oakland," in Hanover County, Virginia, experiencing at first hand the turmoil of Civil War and Reconstruction. He studied law at the University of Virginia, entering private practice in Richmond in 1874. By 1884, he had begun publishing his stories of the Old South. Within a few years he had established a considerable reputation as a writer and spokesman for the aristocratic South.

After his marriage in 1893 to Florence Lathrop Field he abandoned the practice of law and moved to Washington. Here he devoted himself entirely to his writing. His home at 1759 R Street, N.W., became a center of Washington literary life. Page and his wife entertained lavishly, their home becoming "the chief literary-social center of the South." In 1913, President Wilson appointed Page Ambassador to Italy, a post he held until 1919 when he returned here to resume his literary career just three years before his death.

Florence Lathrop Field Page was the daughter of Jediah H. Lathrop of Washington and the widow of Henry Field of Chicago. Field, a merchandiser who died in 1890, had been associated with his older brother Marshall in Field, Leiter and Co.--the Chicago department store which became Marshall Field and Co. Mrs. Page's brother, Bryan Lathrop, was a prominent real estate man who served as president of the Chicago Symphony Orchestral Assn., trustee of the Art Institute of Chicago and commissioner of Lincoln Park. His residence at 120 East Bellevue Place in Chicago was designed by his good friend Charles F. McKim of McKim, Mead and White in 1892 while the latter was in Chicago in connection with his work for the Columbian Exposition of 1893. The Bryan Lathrop House, listed in the National Register of Historic Places, was one of the earliest and most sumptuous of McKim, Mead and White's Georgian Revival residences. The design of the Thomas Nelson Page House in Washington is similar in feeling and closely related to that of the Lathrop House. The Thomas Nelson Page House has been used as the French legation since 1944.

In the Thomas Nelson Page House the vocabulary of 18th Century English-American architecture has been exuberantly adapted for use in a spatially sophisticated late 19th century townhouse. Limestone and white painted detail contrasts with rough red Harvard brick walls laid in Flemish bond with random glazed headers and thick joints. A bilaterally symmetrical entrance front graces a building whose street facades form an obtuse angle. Horizontality is stressed. Neo-Georgian details include double hung sash windows from 3/6 to 9/12 lights, modified classical cornice, keystoned lintels, rustication of the base, and corner pilaster detail. Late nineteenth century design influence is evident in the pairing of bays, the large scale of the cornice, the loggias, wrought iron balconies, commodious portico, and what one might almost call the arcade motif of the principal story.

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9. Bibliography - Continued

3. The National Cyclopedia of American Biography. Vol. 19, New York: James T. White and Company, 1897.
4. National Archives, Records of the District of Columbia. R.G. 351. Building Permits #1912 (June 22, 1896), #1800 (May 7, 1902), #1484 (March 27, 1903), and #1484 A (July 9, 1903), #2752 (April 17, 1906), #1445 (October 27, 1906), and #1747 (October 31, 1908).
5. New York Historical Society. Prints and Photographs. Roll #882. Tracings of plans, elevations, sections, interior details, iron framing, plumbing, heating and ventilating systems. Alterations and additions of 1902.
6. _____. "Thomas Nelson Page House." American Architect and Building News, Vol. 75. (February 22, 1902, p. 95).
7. Waterman, Thomas Tileston. The Mansions of Virginia, 1706--1776. New York: Bonaza Books, 1945.
8. Withey, Henry F. and Withey, Elsie R. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased). Los Angeles: Hennessey and Ingalls, Inc., 1970.
9. Works Progress Administration. Washington City and Capital, Vol. I. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1937.

