

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Garden Club of America Entry Markers
other names _____

2. Location

street & number _____ ☐ not for publication
city or town _____ ☐ vicinity
state _____ code _____ county _____ code _____ zip code _____

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☐ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby, certify that this property is:

☐ entered in the National Register.

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the National Register.

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ Determined not eligible for the National Register.

☐ removed from the National Register.

☐ other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Comment [LP1]: DO NOT DELETE!
THIS IS A SECTION BREAK.

Garden Club of America Markers
Name of Property

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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
☐ site
☐ structure
☒ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

	buildings
	sites
	structures
8	objects
8	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/Road-related
LANDSCAPE/Object

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/Road-related
LANDSCAPE/Object

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th-Early 20th Century American

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation

walls

roof

other

Aquia Creek Sandstone

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

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Description Summary:

Between April 1932 and October 1933, pairs of stone markers, designed by architect Edward Donn and marking important entrances into the District of Columbia from Maryland and Virginia, were erected at six different locations into the city. These locations, identified through archival resources, appear to have been at Westmoreland Circle, Friendship Heights, Chevy Chase Circle, Georgia Avenue at Kalmia in Maryland, and Key Bridge and the Highway Bridge (14th Street Bridge) in Virginia. Today, three pairs of these markers and one isolated example survives intact, though not necessarily *in situ*. The surviving pairs of markers are located at Westmoreland Circle, on either side of Wisconsin Avenue at Western Avenue in Friendship Heights, and on either side of Connecticut Avenue at Chevy Chase Circle. The isolated example is found in a median at the center of Georgia Avenue at the District line at Kalmia Road and Alaska Avenue. All of the extant markers have signs of weathering, pollution and other abuse. Most, if not all, have been knocked over at some point by motorists, or removed entirely and re-erected in the same general, but not exact same locations. The missing markers were likely removed and discarded during road widenings and/or construction; however, nothing is known for sure of their fate.

General Description:

The markers are upright, rectangular-shaped, dolmen-like stones constructed of Aquia Creek sandstone. Although the stones originally rose approximately five feet in height, they are now of varying heights depending on whether and how many times they have been knocked over and broken by erratic motorists and re-erected on their broken bases. The markers feature fluted shafts with fluting on-center running vertically the full length of the shaft, and horizontally along the edges, forming a defined edge or border.

On the markers located at the Maryland-District line, the seal of Maryland (the shield of the Calvert Coat of Arms) is located on one side towards the upper part of the stone shaft, with "Maryland" incised in uppercase lettering below the seal. On the opposing side and also at the upper part of the shaft, is a cartouche carving representing the District of Columbia and the commemoration of George Washington. "District of Columbia" is incised in uppercase lettering below the cartouche. The District of Columbia cartouche features a bas-relief depicting George Washington standing upon a pedestal with Lady Justice on the ground next to the pedestal holding a laurel wreath at its front. George Washington is flanked in the background by the dome of the Capitol building and a rising sun. In the foreground, an eagle is perched upon a garland emanating from a central laurel wreath.

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The missing Virginia markers originally bore a seal of Virginia on one side and the commemorative seal of Washington on the other side.

An inscribed dedication "Erected by the Garden Club of America 1932" was meant to appear on one of the undecorated sides at the lower part of the marker; however, only one of the markers—the one located on the east side of Wisconsin Avenue at Friendship Heights—still has its dedication visible (some may not have been inscribed, others may be below ground level, others may have broken off). Similarly, a metal fence comprised of four metal bollards with chains linked between them, originally surrounded the markers. Today, only two of the markers retain these chain fences. Finally, the markers were originally set within planting schemes designed by the Maryland and Virginia Garden Clubs, respectively. Today, only the markers on Georgia Avenue and Chevy Chase Circle are set within (recently) planted beds.

The markers, which survive in various conditions of preservation, are individually described below.

Westmoreland Circle Markers:

The Westmoreland Circle markers are located on either side of the grassy circle, at the inside of its circumference and generally on-axis with Western Avenue (on the west side of Westmoreland Circle the extension of Western Avenue is actually the Dalecarlia Parkway). The western-most marker is located beneath an oak tree and is surrounded by its original chain fence. The marker is in relatively good condition with both the District and Maryland cartouches legible, though both seals are quite weathered and worn down. The edges of the marker have suffered abuse, with major spalling in particular, apparent on the southwest edge of the marker, on its upper half.

The eastern-most marker, located in the open with no tree or chain fence for protection, is more susceptible to out-of-control motorists. The marker is not fully upright, but is slightly tilted, having been hit and re-erected on several occasions. The stone face has been sheared away from this marker at one of its lower corners (this corner is presently located towards the inside of the circle on the southeast side), though the Maryland seal remains in excellent condition and surprisingly unweathered.

Friendship Heights Markers:

The Friendship Heights markers are located on either side of Wisconsin Avenue, on the north side of Western Avenue. Here, the markers emerge directly out of the concrete sidewalk and may have been re-erected during the 1977 construction of METRO when they were "discovered" by METRO contractors. The western marker is located just north of the light standard at the

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crosswalk and stands a mere 2-1/2 or 3-feet tall. The District cartouche, on the south side of the marker and facing the District of Columbia, is heavily worn. George Washington and Lady Liberty are still distinct, although the background carvings are barely visible. In addition, the fluting is chipped and worn and cracks are apparent where the marker has been broken and likely re-mounted. This marker has been repeatedly hit by motorists and re-erected on its broken base, thus explaining its reduced height.

The eastern marker is located on the brick sidewalk, between a traffic light and street light standard. This marker is in remarkable shape and is the most intact of all of the surviving markers. The marker stands its original 5 feet in height, has clean fluting lines on the upper 2/3 of the shaft and intact cartouches with that of the District of Columbia on the south side being particularly clear and distinct. The dedication panel bearing the inscription "Erected by the Garden Club of America 1932" also remains intact at the lower part of the western side of the shaft facing Wisconsin Avenue. The bottom third of the shaft is worn and chipped, especially on the southern side facing the on-coming northbound traffic.

Chevy Chase Circle Markers:

The Chevy Chase Circle markers are located well within the inside circumference of the circle and on-line with Western Avenue. The markers are sited in a grassy median between the benches and stone paving that encircle the centrally placed Newlands Fountain and the azalea plantings forming a perimeter to the fountain. The Chevy Chase markers are set so that one has the Maryland seal on the south-facing side and the District seal on the north-facing side, while the other has the Maryland seal on the north-facing side and the District seal on the south-facing side of the marker.

Although the western marker appears to stand at its original 5-foot height, the GCA dedication panel is not visible. It may not exist, or it may be buried below grade. The fluting at the bottom of the shaft is heavily worn and the top of the shaft has a large crack around it where a broken piece was re-attached to the larger shaft.

The eastern marker is the upper-half remnant of the original marker, set upon a concrete base, raising the marker to its full original height. This marker was renovated by Cathedral Stoneworks and re-erected by the Friends of Chevy Chase Circle in 2007. Although the fluting on the shaft is worn and chipped, the south-facing Maryland cartouche is in good condition and remains distinct. The District cartouche is much more worn with even the bas reliefs of George Washington and Lady Liberty completely worn down.

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In 2002, the Friends of Chevy Chase Circle hired Cathedral Stoneworks to restore the two markers. The masons and sculptors re-attached a broken piece of the western marker to the larger stone shaft and restored the D.C. seal, using an "appropriate" material. For the broken eastern marker, they built a new base using Pennsylvania limestone upon which they then erected the surviving Aquia Creek marker, connecting it to the new base by a one-foot brass pin. Where missing, the fluting was duplicated with mortar and a patina was applied over the whole marker to unify the color of the stone and the new base.

Georgia Avenue Marker:

The Georgia Avenue marker is a single marker located in a median on-center of the avenue with its original metal bollard and chain fence surrounding it. The median is located just north of the intersection of Kalmia Street on the west and Alaska Avenue on the east, both marking the District line into Maryland. Based upon the central location and upon the marker design which features a single cartouche with the seal of Maryland on the south-facing side of it, it appears that this was originally planned to be a single marker rather than one of a pair of markers.

The marker stands almost its full original height, though there is no dedication panel visible, indicating that it may be below grade and lower than the original intended height. The Maryland seal is in excellent condition as is the fluting, though the shaft itself is cracked for its full length, down the center of the east side wall.

Comment [LP2]: DO NOT DELETE!
THIS IS A SECTION BREAK.

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 pattern of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property 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.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- ☐ **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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Community Planning and Development; Landscape Architecture

Period of Significance

1932-1933

Significant Dates

1932; 1933

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation**Architect/Builder**

Edward Donn, Architect

9. Major Bibliographical References**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

Previous documentation on files (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

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

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Summary Statement of Significance:

The Garden Club of America markers are stone markers that were erected to mark important entrances to the District of Columbia from Maryland and Virginia in 1932 and 1933. Originally planned to be dedicated as part of the 1932 George Washington Bicentennial celebration, the markers were constructed both concurrently with the series of events celebrating the 200th anniversary of Washington's birth and following the celebration. The markers were designed by local Washington, D.C. architect Edward Donn for the Garden Club of America which sponsored their erection in collaboration with the National Capital Parks and Planning Commission and under the review of the Commission of Fine Arts. Of the original six pairs of markers identified as having been constructed, three pairs and one individual marker survive in various degrees of preservation.

The markers are significant both as surviving objects associated with the important George Washington Bicentennial Celebration, a national celebration commemorating the contributions made by the "first true American," and as landscape objects marking the District-Maryland and District-Virginia line at notable entry points into the city. The ornamentation of the stone markers (i.e the depiction of George Washington) is emblematic of the efforts of the era to arouse nationalistic sympathies and, as such, provides an excellent artistic expression of the time.

The markers are significant under Criterion A with Art and Landscape Architecture as the Areas of Significance. The Period of Significance for the markers extends from 1932 to 1933, when the first and last of the markers are known to have been dedicated.

+

Resource History and Historic Context:

Monumental Entryways into the Nation's Capital and The George Washington Bicentennial Celebration (1932)

An Act of Congress, approved December 1924, created The George Washington Bicentennial Commission to study and recommend a "proper" celebration in 1932 of the 200th anniversary of the birth of George Washington. The Commission's purpose was to commemorate "*the first true American*" so that "*future generations of American citizens may live according to the example and precepts of his exalted life and character and thus perpetuate the American Republic.*" As part of this Act, each state was encouraged to appoint state commissions and committees to formulate programs for such a celebration in conjunction with the federal Commission. In addition, the Commission invited the public to send recommendations for this

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celebration. Special events were to be celebrated across the nation, with particular emphasis on places that George Washington frequented. In the nation's capital, a series of major and collateral events were planned for the 1932 celebration, including, among others, the formal opening of the Mount Vernon Memorial Boulevard (Virginia leg of the George Washington Memorial Parkway); completion and opening of the Arlington Memorial Bridge; and construction of the U.S. Supreme Court building. The anniversary events were to take place between February 22 (George Washington's birthday) and November 24 (Thanksgiving Day).

Coincidental to preparations for the George Washington Bicentennial celebration, and as part of the massive public building program then underway, President Herbert Hoover sought special appropriations for "imposing entrances" into "what is destined to be the most lavishly developed capital in the world," as noted in the *Evening Star*.¹ The National Capital Park and Planning Commission (NCPC) began studying ideas for treatment of the various approaches to the city. In particular, in 1929, the NCPC was developing plans for an appropriate approach into the city from Virginia at Key Bridge, a monumental north entrance portal into the city at 16th Street, and lesser portals at various other entry points into the city from Virginia and Maryland.²

In 1930, the Garden Club of America (GCA) proposed to sponsor the marking of entrances into the nation's capital, with the idea that the project be carried out in time for the George Washington Bicentennial in 1932. As initially conceived by the National Capital Committee of the Garden Club of America under the chairmanship of Mrs. Frank B. Noyes, the GCA would develop and carry out a planting scheme at certain identified approaches into the city. In October 1930, the GCA furthered the notion of marking the entry points into the city not only by landscaping elements, but by placing "two shafts or columns surmounted by eagles" at the identified entries.³ As noted in a letter from Mrs. William Lockwood, the President of the Garden Club of America, "It is believed that attractive entrances into Washington will not only add to our pride in our Capital, but may also be an inspiration to other cities to increase the beauty of their entering highways." The NCPC endorsed the notion of using columns to mark the approaches to the city and thus began working with the Garden Club of America on developing a design for entry markers.

¹ "Capital Gateway Plans Considered by Commission," *The Evening Star*, 1929.

² In 1929, plans for a monumental portal at 16th Street and the District line were approved by NCPC, while Wisconsin Avenue at Western was also being considered. See "District Portal Plans Approved: 16th Street Parkway Approach is O.K.'d by Planning Commission," *The Evening Star*, June 22, 1929; "Proposed Capital North Portal is Before Planners," *The Evening Star*, July 26, 1929; and "Wisconsin Avenue Entrance to City to be Considered," *The Evening Star*, October 19, 1929, p.12.

³ Letter from Mrs. William A. Lockwood, President of the Garden Club of America to Mrs. Frank B. Noyes, Chairman, National Capital Committee, The Garden Club of America, October 10, 1932.

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Proposed Entry Pylons

In January 1931, the NCPC presented to the Commission of Fine Arts a suggestion for the Garden Club entrances into the city. At this meeting, NCPC suggested re-using 16-foot columns that were being removed from the State, War and Navy building (the old Executive Office Building, now the Eisenhower Executive Office Building) and enhancing them with eagles on top. The Commission of Fine Arts examined the proposed design and unanimously rejected it as “being out of scale and inappropriate as a marker.”⁴ Mr. Moore, Chairman of the Fine Arts Commission noted that “the Garden Club of America would do much better to develop a planting scheme that could be carried out at the various entrances to the District of Columbia...allowing space for some architectural motif appropriately designed that could be erected there later.”⁵

In a letter addressed to Col. Grant of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, CFA Chairman Charles Moore noted that the discarded columns from the State, War and Navy building are “in themselves bad in design and not of the right scale to serve the intended purpose.”⁶ His letter strongly suggested that in view of the limited budget,⁷ the funds should be expended strictly on planting schemes, which “ultimately would serve surroundings of appropriately designed and executed markers.” However, in his letter, Moore also acknowledges that the granite pylons at the Virginia end of the Arlington Memorial Bridge (with eagles atop) could be used, in terms of material and workmanship, as an appropriate model for entrance pylons.

Despite the CFA’s effort to encourage planting-only schemes, the NCPC continued to pursue the idea of monumental entry pylons, seizing upon Moore’s reference to the Memorial Bridge pylons. In February 1931, NCPC presented drawings to the CFA showing a proposed pylon design, modeled after the Memorial Bridge ones. As drawn, the pylons measured 14 ½ feet in height, with the eagles on top rising an additional 2’ 4”.⁸ The NCPC proposed 8 pairs of pylons— “two at each of the eight important entrances to the District of Columbia.” An article on the proposed pylons and an accompanying sketch appeared in the *Evening Star* newspaper (*Figure 1*).⁹ At the February 1931 Commission of Fine Arts meeting, NCPC noted that the

⁴ Minutes from the Commission of Fine Arts, January 6, 1931.

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ Letter from Charles Moore, Chairman, Fine Arts Commission to Colonel Grant, Executive and Disbursing Officer, National Capital Park and Planning Commission, January 7, 1931.

⁷ In January 1931, the Garden Club of America had raised \$4,000 for the project.

⁸ Minutes from the Commission of Fine Arts, February 12, 1931.

⁹ “D.C. Memorial and Entry Pylons Will be Hastened: Garden Club Meeting Discusses new Markers,” *The Evening Star*, n.d. and “Favor 2-Column Portals Design,” *The Evening Star*, December 19, 1930. The latter article notes that the Commission was

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Garden Club planned to erect temporary pylons out of concrete to be ready for the George Washington celebration.¹⁰ The Commission approved the pylon design, but urged NCPC and GCA to make the pylons in permanent form, recommending white cement mixed with white marble aggregate. The Commission further suggested that marble tips might be used in place of eagles.¹¹

Approved Entry Markers

Despite CFA's approval for the entry pylons, development of that particular design scheme appears to have been abandoned in the months following the February meeting. By April 1931, the pylon idea was replaced with a much more modest proposal that included smaller stone markers within a planted bed. The design of these markers, later delineated by architect Edward Donn, was based upon those of the Mason-Dixon Line and the Boundary stones of the District of Columbia.¹² The markers were to be made of Aquia Creek sandstone and were to be adorned with the Maryland Coat of Arms, or the Virginia seal on one side and the seal of the District of Columbia on the other.¹³ In order to negate any future boundary dispute such stones might incur, the CFA proposed that one side of the marker be inscribed with "Presented by the Garden Club of America." The NCPC heartily supported the new design proposal. In a letter to Charles Moore at CFA, Colonel Grant writes, "I am very glad to note that the Fine Arts Commission approves a design similar to the Boundary stones of the District of Columbia as it seems to me that the use of the design of markers approved by President Washington and used on the original District Line is unusually appropriate for anything done in and about the District in 1932."

After conducting a site visit of both the 16th Street and Wisconsin Avenue entrances to the District, the Commission of Fine Arts recommended that a locational plan be developed for the markers and their individual sites, in connection with a "suitable planting scheme." A May 1931 letter from Charles Moore notes that based upon bids received by the architect, Edward Donn,

considering markers at the following five locations: Bladensburg Road, Georgia Avenue, Piney Branch Road, the Highway Bridge and Chain Bridge. Of these identified sites, only the Georgia Avenue site is known to have ultimately received a marker.

¹⁰ The Commission of Fine Arts minutes of February 12, 1931 note that an estimate for constructing the temporary pylons had been secured from Mr. Earley for \$275 each.

¹¹ CFA Minutes, February 12, 1931.

¹² The April 15 minutes of the Commission of Fine Arts indicate that it was the CFA that suggested the Mason-Dixon Line markers as a model for the entry markers. In particular the minutes state, "...the Garden Club of America had decided to accede to the suggestion of the Commission that marking of the entrances to the District of Columbia be mainly planting a marker of Aquia sandstone, like the markers used for the first survey of the Mason Dixon Line. In an April 25, 1931 letter from Col. Grant from NCPC to Charles Moore at CFA, Grant notes, "I am very glad to note that the Fine Arts Commission approves a design similar to the Boundary stones of the District of Columbia as it seems to me that the use of the design of markers approved by President Washington and used on the original District Line is unusually appropriate for anything done in and about the District in 1932."

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the markers could be delivered to the Garden Club, set in place, and carved with the coats of arms for \$500 per pair. In December 1931, following final approvals by NCPC, the Garden Club noted in its minutes that it would erect eight markers, including two at the "Highway Bridge, Mount Vernon;" two at Key Bridge; two at 16th Street and two at Chevy Chase Circle for a cost of \$3,900.00. The Club confirmed that each marker would bear the inscription "Erected by the Garden Club of America 1932" near the base of the markers on the side facing the road.¹⁴

Construction of the Entry Markers

The first pair of entry markers was erected on April 24, 1932 on the Virginia side of Key Bridge. Although erected within the established time-frame allotted for the George Washington Bicentennial celebration events of 1932 as initially intended by the Garden Club of America, no mention of the celebration or any association with it appears in the local press covering the dedication of the markers. The *Evening Star* printed a photograph of one of the entry markers on the Virginia side of Key Bridge with a caption noting that the marker is "one of the new sandstone markers which are being erected at entrances to the District of Columbia by the Garden Club of America." The caption does not identify the other sites.¹⁵

Over a year later, in October 1933, another pair of entry markers was dedicated at Chevy Chase Circle, along with the Newlands Memorial Fountain. According to the *Evening Star*, the Chevy Chase markers were the "sixth to be placed by the Garden Club of America at important gateways to the city." The article notes that the other four pairs of markers were placed at the 16th Street entrance, at Wisconsin Avenue, at Georgia and Alaska avenues, and on the Virginia side of "both the Highway and Key Bridges." The article also states, "It is hoped that the Garden Club of America will similarly mark other entrances to the city as they are developed into impressive gateways."¹⁶

Of the locations identified in the article, pairs of markers still exist at Chevy Chase Circle and Wisconsin Avenue (at Western Avenue), while a single marker stands at the confluence of Georgia and Alaska Avenues. No markers are presently located at the 16th Street portal, and it is not believed that any markers were ever erected at that site.¹⁷ A single one of the original pair of

¹⁴ Research report on GCA Markers, titled "Relevant Excerpts from Executive Committee Meeting Minutes and Board of Directors Meeting Minutes," 1/20/1931 through 4/13/1977, conducted for Alicia Ravanel for her research on the Chevy Chase Circle markers (from the personal files of Alicia Ravanel).

¹⁵ Between this April 1932 article and the 1933 dedication of the Chevy Chase Circle markers, no other newspaper articles could be found celebrating the erection of the other sets of entry markers.

¹⁶ "Notables Attend Francis Newlands Fount Dedication," *The Evening Star*, October 13, 1933, B-1.

¹⁷ In the "Report of the Commission of Fine Arts, July 1, 1929 to December 31, 1935" the report notes that no markers were erected at 16th Street, "Congress having named the Sixteenth Street entrance Montgomery Blair Portal, a suitable gateway awaits further action as to both design and funds for building."

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markers still stands on the Virginia side of Key Bridge.¹⁸ Finally, two markers not mentioned in the article, but which were erected between 1932 and 1935¹⁹, survive *in situ* at Westmoreland Circle.²⁰ While the markers themselves were donated by the Garden Club of America, the plantings around the markers were donated by the Virginia and Maryland Garden clubs, respectively, while the American Automobile Association contributed small posts and chains encircling the markers.²¹

Despite the Garden Club's intention to sponsor the entry markers as part of the George Washington Bicentennial celebration, the project evolved into a smaller-scale and longer-term one that extended beyond the confines of the February to November 1932 celebration. None of the press covering the marker dedications mentions any association with the 200th anniversary celebration and none of the reports reflecting on the events surrounding the celebration mentions the efforts of the Garden Club to beautify the city's entryways. Even the Garden Club of America in a 1942 report on its achievements, fails to mention the intended purpose of the markers. The report simply notes that markers "mark the entrances to Washington."²²

Siting of Markers

The markers were always intended as ceremonial entry markers simply identifying the approaches into the city from Virginia and Maryland and not as official boundary markers. As noted above, the CFA, in its review of the markers, expressed some concerns over boundary disputes. This concern led the CFA to recommend that the GCA place an inscription on the markers, thus identifying them as memorial markers. A 1935 letter to Charles Moore from a Westmoreland Hills resident questioning the location of the stones validates the CFA's boundary dispute concern. The letter reads:

"I notice the nice Boundary stones which have been put on the circle of Massachusetts Avenue Extended. I like them very much, but if you will notice some time, you will see, I think, that they have not been rightly oriented. The Maryland District Line neither goes

¹⁸ It is not clear if markers were ever erected at 16th Street or not. And, based upon the location of the marker on center of Georgia Avenue at Kalmia Road and Alaska Avenue, it appears that it was originally erected as a single marker, rather than as one of a pair of markers.

¹⁹ The Westmoreland Circle itself was opened in November 1932. The markers are known to have been erected by 1935 when a letter was written to the CFA regarding their siting on the Circle.

²⁰ "Opening of Circle Gateway to Hills," *The Washington Post*, November 20, 1932, R2.

²¹ "Fund to Aid Clubs Beautify Portals Pledged by A.A.A.," *The Evening Star*, May 4, 1927. Only two of the surviving markers—one at Westmoreland Circle and the one on Georgia Avenue at Kalmia and Alaska retain the chain fences.

²² "Draft of Report re: Arboretum and Other DC Gardens/Parks written by Peggy Nalls' great-aunt Martha (Mrs. T. H. B.) McKnight for Mrs. Gilbert Hitchcock, Incoming Chair of GCA National Capital Committee," 1942, (copy from the files of Alicia Ravenal and Friends of Chevy Chase Circle).

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through the plane of either their surfaces, or through the corners. I think when you or your representative sees them you will see that they need turning so as to mark the boundary properly.”

A return letter from Moore to the concerned citizen explains that the Westmoreland Circle markers, like those at Chevy Chase Circle, were not meant to mark the actual boundary line, but were simply a notification that one was passing a boundary.

Planting Elements

The Garden Club of America initially conceived of beautifying the city's entryways by planting certain approaches into the city. However, as the project focus turned to stone markers, the planting scheme became a secondary element. A description of the Key Bridge marker in the *Evening Star* states that “a planting of shrubs and ivy ground cover ...will be protected by a temporary wire cover until it is well started” and press coverage of the dedication of the Chevy Chase markers similarly notes that the markers “are surrounded by plantings and shrubbery.” The fragility of even these simple plantings was of immediate concern to those in charge. A letter dated May 31, 1933 from Col. Grant to Mr. Charles Moore provides fair warning:

“...you are advised that the ivy planting will be completed and will be cared for to the best of our ability. These plots, however, are so located that it may be difficult to keep them looking well. They are especially exposed to the sun and further, as you no doubt know, there is no water available in the immediate vicinity for sprinkling. However, an effort will be made to keep them going.”

Another letter two years later from Charles Moore to Colonel Grant illustrates that the maintenance problem of the plantings persisted. In this letter, Moore notes that since the markers at the Virginia end of the “Highway Bridge” are located in “no man's land” and are thus not being cared for, that the “ladies do not wish to order the replanting of them until they could be assured that care will be given to them.”

In addition to the plantings, the entry markers themselves soon became susceptible. A 1941 note in the Garden Club Minutes documents that “crown stones at entrance to District of Columbia” have been lost because of road widening. A 1977 entry indicates that the stone markers had all

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but been forgotten by the GCA when the two Wisconsin Avenue stones were “discovered” by contractors working on METRO construction at Friendship Heights.²³

Today, eight GCA markers remain in various states of preservation at five different entry points into the city (two at Westmoreland Circle, two at Wisconsin Avenue at Western; two at Chevy Chase Circle; one on Georgia Avenue at Alaska and Kalmia; and one on the Virginia side of Key Bridge). Of these eight markers, only the pair at Chevy Chase Circle and the one on Georgia Avenue are surrounded by (recent) plantings. The markers at Friendship Heights emerge from the concrete sidewalks at the busy intersection, while those on Westmoreland Circle protrude from the surrounding grass.

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²³ The minutes state that the contractor “has come upon stone markers” and is “holding the markers subject to the GCA decision regarding disposition.” Although the GCA suggested donating the markers to the National Arboretum, they were obviously re-installed, because the markers still stand today.

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10. Geographical Data

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UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

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☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kim Williams
Organization D.C. Historic Preservation Office date October 2006
street & number 801 North Capitol Street, NE telephone 202 442-8840
city or town Washington, D.C. state District of Columbia zip code 20815

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- X A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

- X Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO)

name National Park Service; District Of Columbia, Department of Transportation
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Verbal Boundary Description:

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Boundary Justification:

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