

Capitol Hill Restoration Society

22nd Annual House & Garden Tour

13 May 1979



Capitol Hill Restoration Society

The Capitol Hill Restoration Society, a member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, was founded in 1955. It is one of the largest active civic and cultural organizations in the Washington, D.C. area. Its paid membership numbers 1,700 persons who are intensely interested in the cultural and social development of this fine residential area. The purposes of the Society, as stated in its articles of incorporation, are to support and encourage

- the preservation of Capitol Hill as a model urban residential area;
- the preservation of historic sites and buildings on Capitol Hill; and
- good practices in preserving and restoring buildings and grounds.

The Society believes that Capitol Hill should be a good place to live, as well as a place to work, and that its fine old houses can be restored more properly for the benefit of those who are willing to commit themselves to its future, rather than be demolished for office buildings, highways, and parking lots. The Society strives to preserve the traditional heritage of Capitol Hill in history as a place for tasteful, comfortable and rational living.

Activities of the Society include the following:

- initiating and supporting local and national legislation, including the Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act for the District of Columbia;
- acquiring, for use by the Society, the Yost-Leukhardt House — a fine example of late 19th century Victo-

rian architecture that has been lived in continuously by the builder's family;

- identifying, documenting, and fostering the restoration of historical landmarks on Capitol Hill and providing leadership in maintaining the integrity of the Capitol Hill Historic District;
- encouraging and promoting the creation of an environment in which appropriate business development can take place on Capitol Hill;
- cooperating with other local and citywide community organizations in helping to solve city problems;
- working with government agencies to help meet their objectives, while protecting the community interests of Capitol Hill residents;
- appealing those administrative and judicial decisions which have an adverse effect on our neighborhood; and
- conducting research into requests for zoning changes on Capitol Hill, and making recommendations to the D.C. Zoning Commission and Board of Zoning Adjustment.

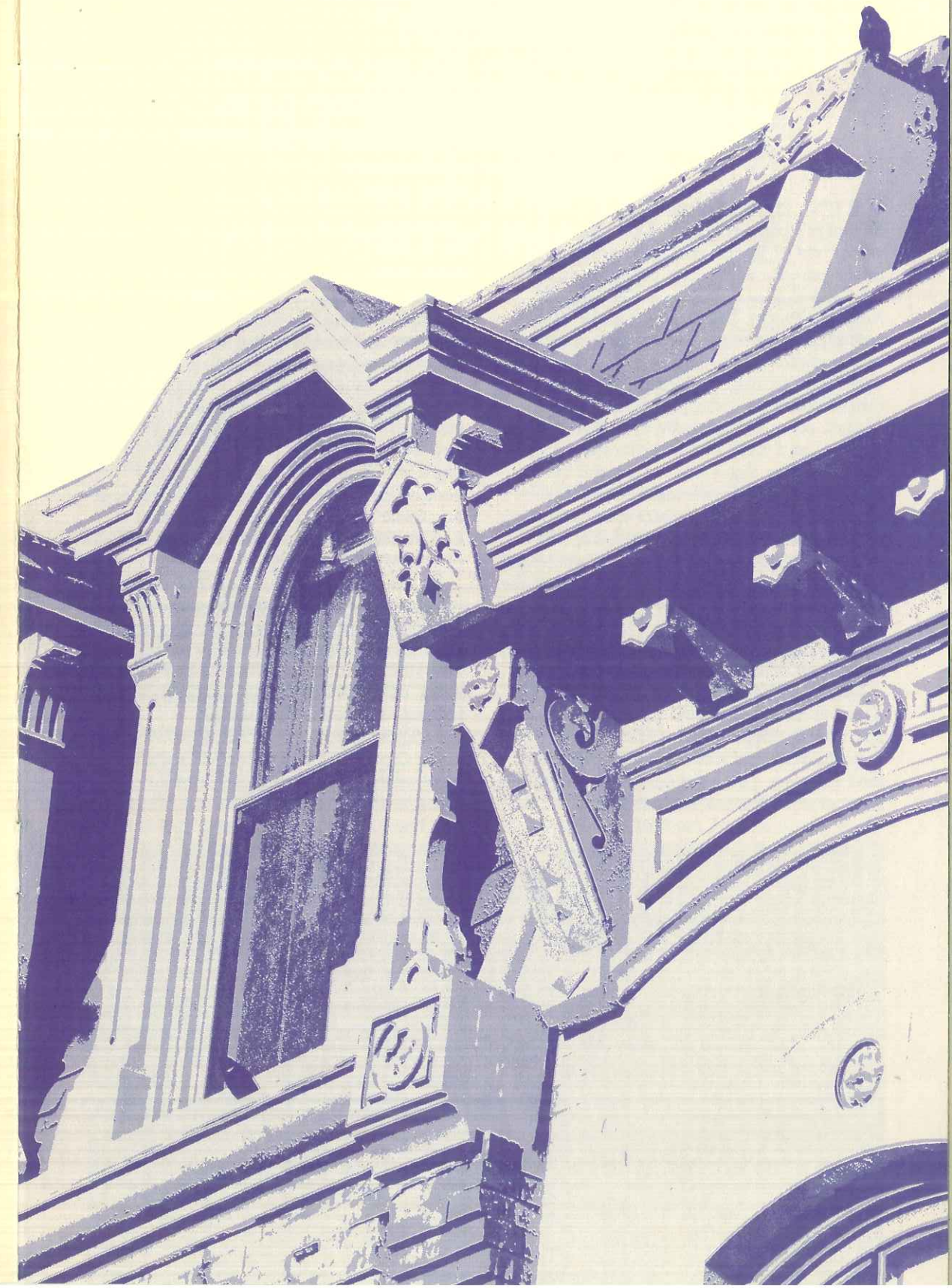
Dues are \$10 a person or \$12 a couple. The Society meets at 8 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month beginning in September and ending in June.

Interested in becoming a member? Write to **Capitol Hill Restoration Society, Inc., Post Office Box 9064, Washington, D.C. 20003**, or call **546-6520**.

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Capitol Hill

In 1791, Pierre L'Enfant, designer of the nation's capital, expected the major development of Washington to rise on the broad expanse at the front or east door of the Capitol. That area now includes the National Historic District of Capitol Hill. The community developed slowly and unevenly, its growth spurred primarily by the development of the nation. At first, privately owned buildings sprang up nearest the Capitol, occupied primarily by builders, artisans, and craftsmen who were working there. Workers also clustered around the Navy Yard and later the Marine Barracks. When the federal government moved to Washington in 1800, it came to a city so primitive that then, and for years to come, it was a hardship post for foreign diplomats. By the time the British invaded the capital in 1814, Capitol Hill boasted a modest community with cemeteries, an outdoor market, churches, hotels and taverns.

Some private construction in the 1820's gave the neighborhood a more settled look and with the depression of 1827, a few major speculators sold their unimproved land for taxes. This opened up a large number of individual lots and in most

instances, the purchasers erected improvements within a year. On the eve of the Civil War, Washington was still labeled a sleepy slow-moving town.

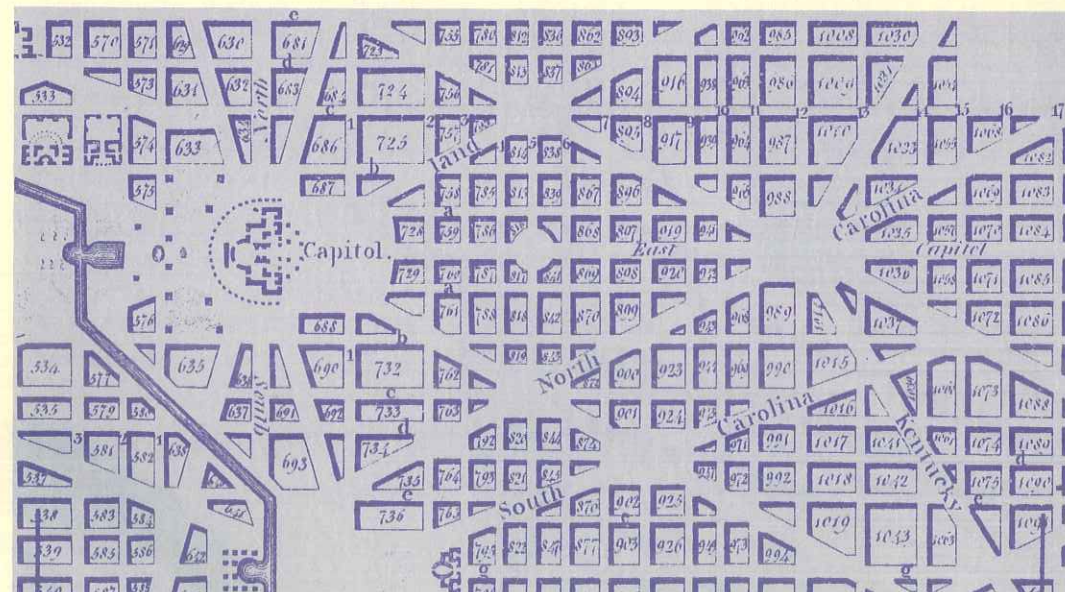
A wave of speculation and new building began throughout Washington immediately after the Civil War. Capitol Hill's long vacant areas such as those to the north and east began to sport row after row of brick houses. Commerce quickened and the community settled back to enjoy the last of the Victorian era in comfortable middle-class style.

Two wars in the first half of the twentieth century, the automobile and the suburban phenomenon almost wreaked havoc on the Capitol Hill neighborhood. Handsome old interiors were chopped up to accommodate a burgeoning population of boarders. Economically stable families fled. Federal expansion demolished entire city blocks. By the end of World War II, few persons were concerned about the existence of a residential community on Capitol Hill.

Many historians say that twenty years must pass before an era or event can be assessed with any degree of accuracy. Today, we not only can begin to weigh that phase of Capitol Hill history which has been influenced by the Capitol Hill Restoration Society and its annual House and Garden Tours, but we can see visible fruits of their labor all around us.

As a small aspect of focusing attention on the importance of the entire community, the history of most buildings selected to be on recent tours have been carefully researched. This year, Victorian architecture predominates, concomitant with the resurgence in interest in Victorian furnishings.

Long-range results can not be known, but today Capitol Hill is a viable heterogeneous community, one committed to urban living.



Tour Houses

Bob & Jo Anna Cooney
713 G. Street, S.E.

A permit to build a two-story brick dwelling with cellar was issued September 17, 1908, to the owner/builder, Francis E. Smith, for an estimated cost of \$3,800. Joseph Bohn, Jr., is listed as the architect. Sixty-eight years to the day after the permit was issued, the Cooneys took possession of the property from the estate of the original owner and began their restoration. Annually on this date, they hold a "workers' party" for all who assisted them.

Their intent was to modernize the house, while retaining its original charm. Doing most of the work themselves, plus help from friends and family, the Cooneys restored or re-created architectural details, fixtures and furnishings. Shortly after drywalling the house, a fire in the attic set the entire project back several months. The flames were dampened — but not the Cooney's spirits.

The atmosphere of American Victoriana is captured in the refurbished house. Old register covers were used as part of the air conditioning system. Imitation fireplaces were made operational and their original oak and iron fronts were restored. The original brass chandelier was refurbished.

Woodwork was stripped and finished by hand. The gray ash walls of the living room complement the dark wicker furnishings and antique lace curtains, reworked by Mrs. Cooney. The



dining room paper was chosen to accent the massive oak furnishings.

The back room upstairs became a functional sewing room. A whimsical note was introduced by the one-way mirrors which provide light between that room and the bath. The middle and front bedrooms are decorated with curtains, cushions and bedspreads worked by Mrs. Cooney. The fans in the bedroom and kitchen, both dating from 1882, were acquired from Mr. Cooney's Uncle Pete's Poolroom.

A striking blend of Victorian elements highlights the kitchen. In this room, and throughout the house, the imaginative cabinet treatments were fabricated by Mr. Cooney.

The back porch was constructed to duplicate a country farmhouse front porch. A railing panel was borrowed to use as a model for the railing panels for the porch. The secluded patio, with its built-in barbeque grill, serves as a spacious area for outdoor entertaining.

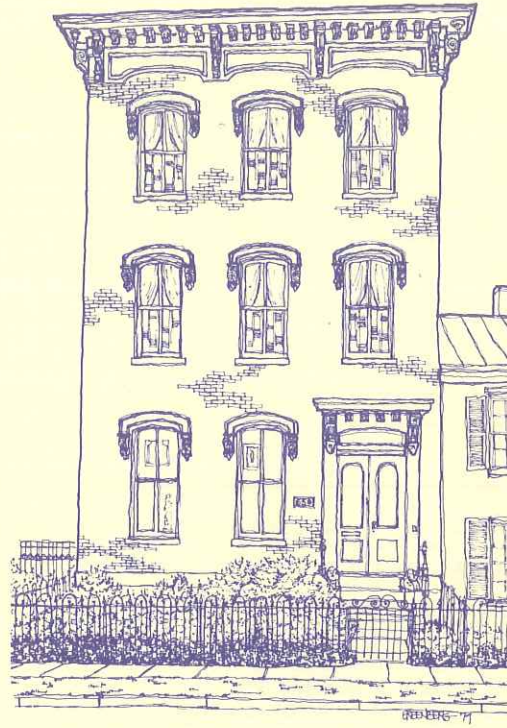
*Mr. & Mrs. Robert E. Reich
650 Independence Avenue, S.E.*

This handsome Victorian house, erected in 1871 by Michael McCormick, is an excellent example of an Italianate style row house, with its highly ornamental embellishments and cast iron bracketed cornices. Mr. McCormick, and after his death his widow, enjoyed this home for almost 70 years. From 1877 until 1888, there was a wide lot to the west which permitted the house to be flooded with light and air and was thought to have been used as a side garden.

This house is well-suited to displaying the Reich's miscellany of American, European and Oriental antiques. The spacious rooms, many windows and side gallery give the house a feeling of openness unique for most urban townhouses.

Double parlors are decorated in two subtly different shades of brown to highlight the striking woodwork. The very old crystal chandelier in the front parlor was purchased in the Marche aux Pucés, Paris, and is obviously of religious origin. The second parlor contains a fine library table, purchased by Booth Tarkington in 1920. He gave it to the novelist Kenneth Roberts in 1933. This room also has a small conversation area beneath family portraits and mementos. The portrait above the mantel is of Mrs. Reich's father.

The second floor, with access also by



a rear staircase from the light-flooded kitchen, serves as the Reichs' main living area. The study provides a work and relaxation area and contains a highly functional combination of two pieces, an old hardware store cabinet and a butler's pantry lock-box cabinet which came from a magnificent Victorian house in the 1700 block of Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., years ago. The master bedroom and bath are the epitome of restored Victorian charm. Made functional by modern appointments, the bath echoes the deep colors and opulence of the period.

The third floor has been arranged as a study and guest room. Natural light and a panoramic view provide a perfect setting for the studio's roll top desk and antique stove. The guest room is a cozy adjunct to this space.

*Michael Tubbs
James F. Burks
27 7th Street, S.E.*

The earliest mention of this property appears when this Square in the City of Washington was recorded on the 10th day of October 1795. Since then, the Square has been subdivided into today's rowhouse dwellings. Because of the renumbering after this division some continuity in ownership has been lost. The earliest owner appears to be William Prout, who held title to the property, unimproved, in 1795. On December 4, 1875 a Robert Prout granted the property to Bernard Waters, with the first record of improvements appearing in the tax records of 1877. Through numerous persons the property succeeded to the present owners in 1965.

It is one of three connected townhouses, representing the then-popular Italianate style with cast iron lintels and bracketed cornices. An initial restoration, undertaken in 1967, was followed in 1977 by excavation of the basement and removal of the kitchen and dining room to this level. The architectural detail of the house was retained while expanding the living space to provide entertainment areas. Delicate, uncluttered furnishings characterize the decor of the home, with accent provided by several noteworthy antiques.

Windows in the front parlor are uncovered except for wooden shutters highlighting the original woodwork which decorates the light and airy parlors. The front parlor contains an 18th



century Dutch fall front corner chest and a bougeoir with shade from the French Empire period. A Victorian brass and cast iron stove is located in the rear parlor, from which there is access to the garden.

The fountain in the garden was constructed from a gargoyle from old Trinity Methodist Church, now Capitol Hill Methodist Church. One reenters from the garden through the small library, originally the kitchen. Antique French train lamps provide lighting for the adjoining bath.

Upstairs, the back bedroom is graced with a lovely brass bed, a Burks family piece. The front bedroom is highlighted by an Edwardian writing table.

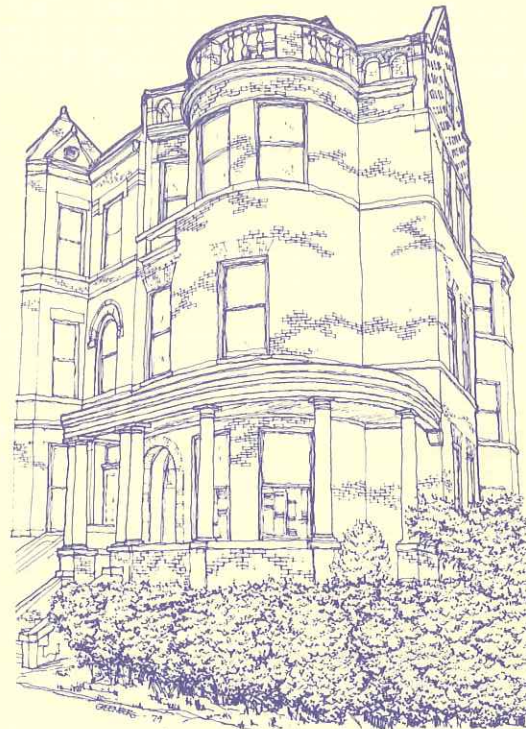
The lower level is remarkably light and airy, an atmosphere achieved by simple room design. The kitchen is highly functional, with access to the garden. The dining room has a lovely pre-Civil war secretary and an American Sheraton chest with reeded columns.

*Bob & Joan Herrema
Children Jennifer & Amy
1207 East Capitol Street*

Appearing in the June 16, 1897, issue of the Star was an announcement of plans by Mrs. A. H. Gray to erect a residence at the corner of East Capitol Street and Kentucky Avenue. Architectural plans by Appleton P. Clark, Jr., one of late 19th century Washington's most prolific architects, reveal that an extremely elegant building was planned. Around the turn of the century, Henry Simpson, prominent in local banking circles, owned the house.

After a long search for the right home to lure his family from Potomac to Capitol Hill, Mr. Herrema purchased the building at auction after its previous owner, singer Esther Satterfield Walker, moved to the West Coast and forgot her Capitol Hill home. This house met Mrs. Herrema's requirements: plenty of sunshine and space for Jennifer and Amy, her active young daughters. Mr. Herrema renovated the five-story building to include a basement apartment and converted a back porch into a sunny breakfast room. Unique to Capitol Hill are its curved front porch and many bays on three sides. These contribute to the spacious, airy feeling of the house.

An Eastlake walnut-framed hall mirror contrasts with the exquisite quartered oak used in finishing the halls and stairways. Carved in the woodwork of the staircase is the date "1897". This woodwork was refinished, while the woodwork in the charming parlor was



enameled white, as called for in the original architect's plans. The curved, molded plaster ceiling in this room was painted a soft blue for accent.

A wider-than-normal hall is used as a dining room. This permitted conversion of the former kitchen and dining room into a charming kitchen-family room to the rear of the dining area. The handsome custom kitchen with its serving bar allows Mrs. Herrema to prepare and serve meals while overseeing her daughters' activities in the family room. An original leaded and stained glass window provides a nostalgic accent to the room.

A completely renovated bath, which includes a jacuzzi, adjoins the master bedroom. The handsome dressing area was custom designed and makes effective use of the entry to the bath.

Jennifer's and Amy's bedrooms are on the third floor, with a stairway leading to their playroom above.

Throughout these rooms, colorful fabrics provide a fresh, light setting for the Herremas' colonial furnishings.

*Patty & Jack Chase
124 13th Street, S.E.*

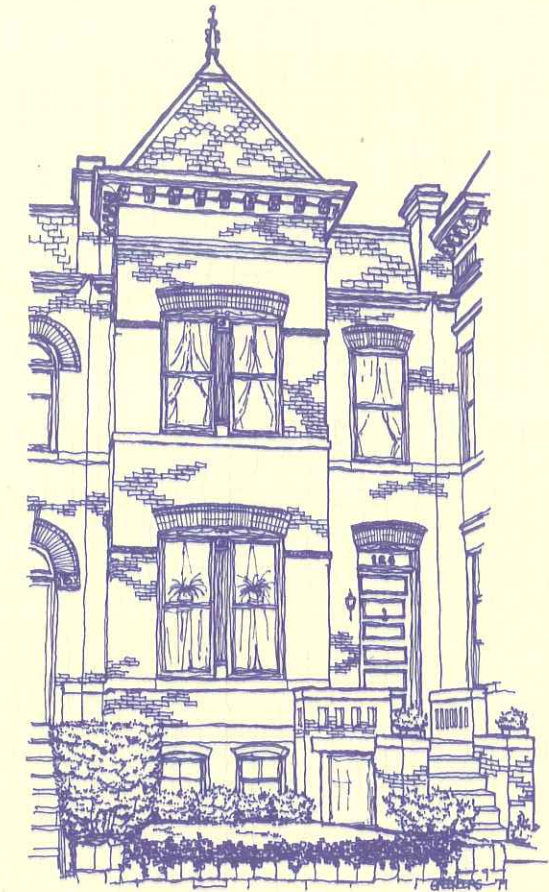
Seven years ago Patty and Jack Chase fell in love with this then-dilapidated Victorian relic. During these seven years, while Mr. Chase was completing a four-year cabinet-making apprenticeship, he, with the help of a few good friends, carried out restoration of the building.

The former door to the parlor was salvaged for use as a striking entrance door. Mr. Chase designed and fabricated the stained glass transom, as well as the skylight and matching kitchen windows. All the woodwork in the house had been painted, including both oak mantels and the central staircase. All were painstakingly stripped by hand and refinished by Mrs. Chase.

Mr. Chase is particularly proud of their crafts studio on the second floor. He designed the bookcases and moldings, as well as the studio floor. Made of red oak with walnut inlay, it was built by Chase and J. B. Parker, a friend.

The Chase's collection of Victorian furniture has kept pace with the restoration. Many of the Eastlake pieces, purchased in poor repair, show the results of their expert attention. The dining room is furnished with a large Austrian sideboard and Eastlake chairs. Of interest is a lithograph of George Washington arriving for his first inauguration.

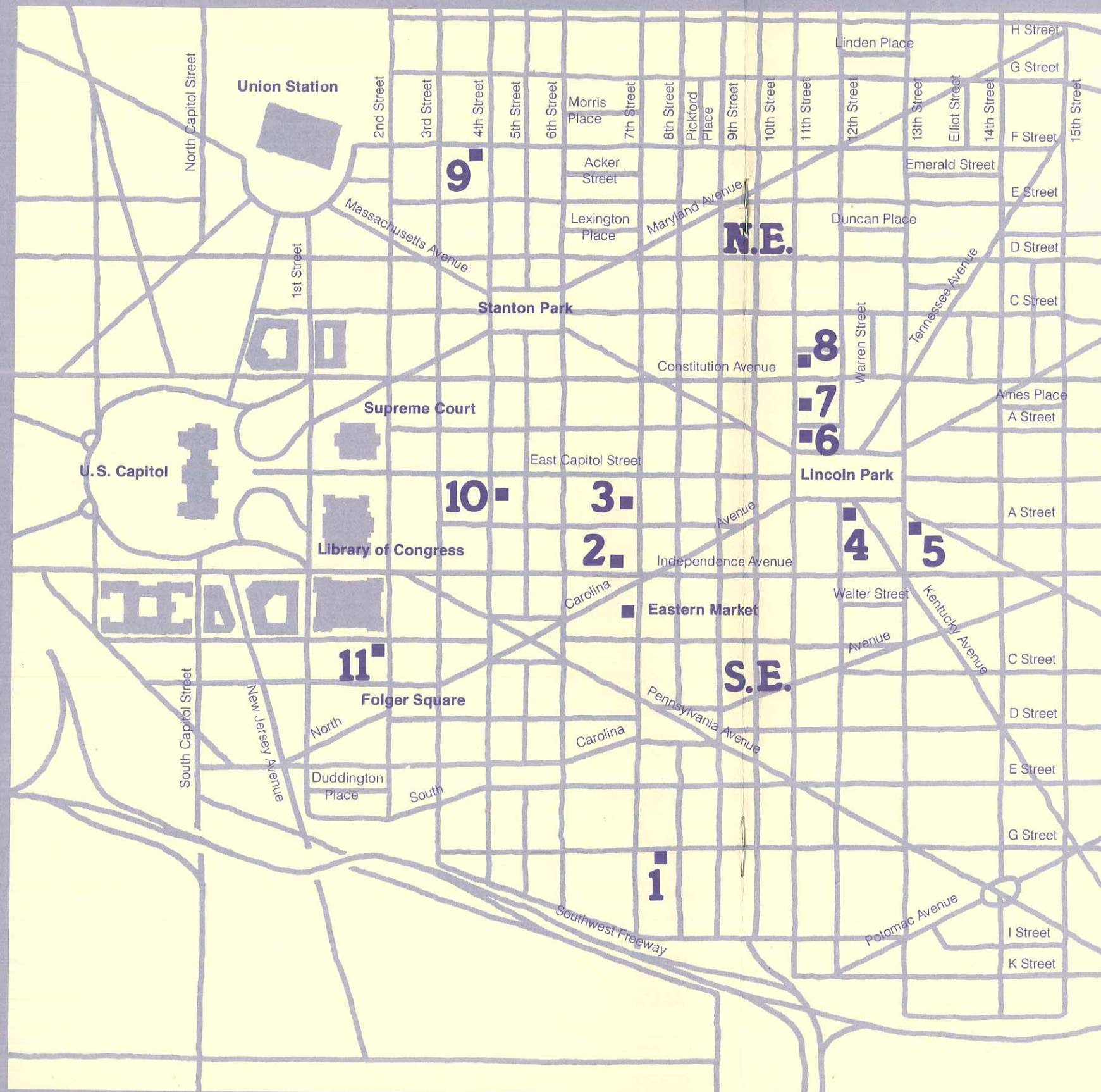
Examples of Mrs. Chase's needlework hobby can be seen throughout their home. Most notable is the crewel



bedspread in the second bedroom. It received an award at the Woodlawn Needlework Exhibit in 1977.

Design as well as construction of the kitchen was a joint venture by Jack and Patty Chase. An eleven foot pantry wall includes a wet bar and swing-out storage cabinets. Two walnut arches lead into the breakfast room, which was added to the original house in the 1920s. This bright and airy room is the home of "Baby", their African Grey parrot.

Their garden was designed for relaxation and ease of entertainment and was, as a friend commented, "obviously done by a cabinetmaker."



Tour Houses

1. 713 G Street, S.E.
2. 650 Independence Avenue, S.E.
3. 27 7th Street, S.E.
4. 1207 East Capitol Street, S.E.
5. 124 13th Street, S.E.
6. 115 11th Street, N.E.
7. 129 11th Street, N.E.
8. 211 11th Street, N.E.
9. 333 F Street, N.E.
10. 14 4th Street, S.E.

Low heeled shoes only, please.

Refreshments

11. St. Peter's Church and Rectory
313 Second Street, S.E.

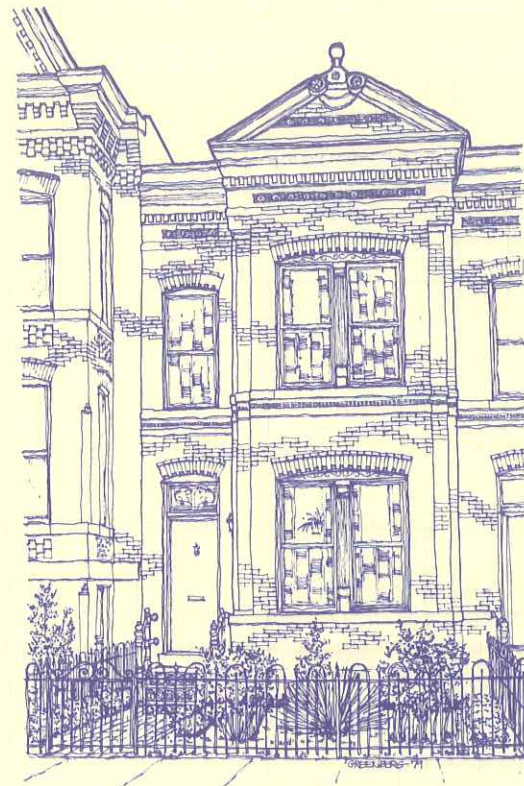
St. Peter's Parish dates from 1821 with the present building succeeding the original on the same site in 1889. It was constructed in the neo-Romanesque style made popular by H. H. Richardson. It includes a nave of six bays with triforium and clerestory and side aisles the full length of the nave, each aisle and the nave terminating in a semi-circular apse.

The Rectory, located on the south side, blends in style and material with the Church building.

*B. David McDowell
Alan Keffer
115 11th Street, N.E.*

On February 11, 1887, a permit to build two two-story with basement houses at 113 and 115 11th Street, N.E. was issued to the owner, J. W. Bayne, at an estimated cost of \$4,500 for both buildings. The architect for the project was T. F. Schneider, one of Washington's leading architects at that time. He also was the architect for such projects as the Cairo Hotel and the Iowa Apartments. This two-story brick bay front is a fine setting for a "modern eclectic" art collection, featuring works of two local artists, Don Nix and Brian McCall. The clean lines of the restoration, as well as the furnishings with their touches of the Orient, are emphasized throughout by dramatic contemporary lighting. Particularly noteworthy is the plaster molding the owners installed in the living and dining areas, an installation made difficult because of the angles of the ceiling. The cabinetry in the dining area was designed and built by the owners.

Upstairs, the front bedroom is a study in contemporary shapes and colors. The warm tones of the bedspread and upholstered fabric wall behind are matched by an extensive wall unit. The cleverly disguised middle bedroom exhibits a masterful use of deep color and wood, highlighted by parquet flooring, matching cabinetry, and a mirrored wall, all installed by the owners. The plum color of the walls echoes the color of the Chinese Art Nouveau carpet.



The study at the rear was designed to display part of the owners' collection of Nippon cloisonné, bronze and glass. To the left is a particularly fine antique music box.

As one returns to the first floor, notice a small watercolor, highest in the arrangement on the front wall of the stairwell. This is a gift from a budding young artist, painted by their next-door neighbor, Graham Caldwell, at the age of three.

Another fine Oriental piece is the antique Korean medicine chest in the dining area on the left as one enters the kitchen.

The delightful rear garden contains a cast concrete fountain which mutes alley noises and lends a softness to the atmosphere.

*Victor Kamber
129 11th Street, N.E.*

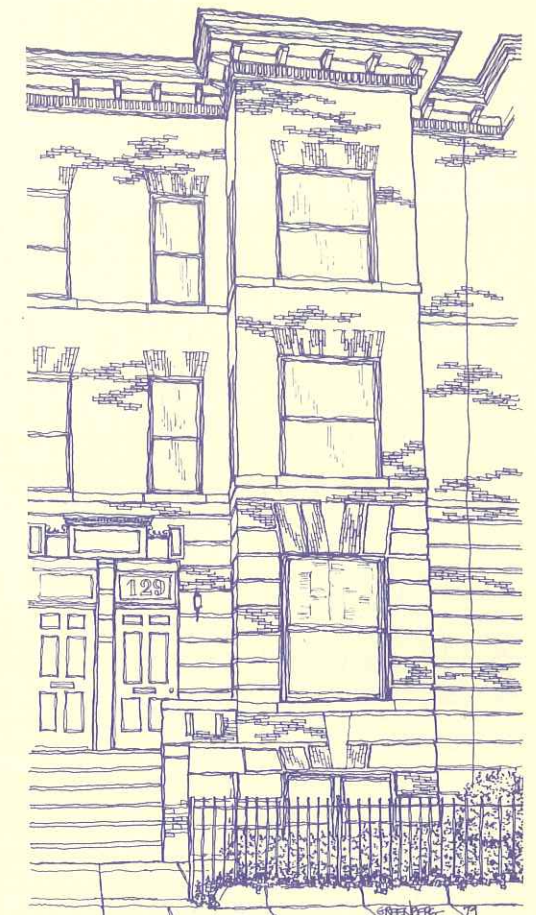
On December 6, 1904, a permit to build two six-family apartments at 129-131 11th Street, N.E. for an estimated cost of \$12,000 was issued to Lottie L. Burn, the owner. Clarence T. Rose acted as architect.

At the time Mr. Kamber purchased one side of the building from Bob Bell, restoration was half-finished. He modified Steve Cymrot's plans to adapt the structure to his life style and to display his extensive art collection.

The intimate hexagonal dining room serves as a showcase for many small pieces of sculpture from his collection. Several primitive dolls displayed against the dark cinnamon walls set the mood for the earth tones used throughout. In contrast, the spacious, stark white kitchen beyond provides a striking background against which examples of kitchen art and paintings by local Virginia artist Fran Chapman are displayed.

Dramatizing the central foyer is a two-story high window, overlooking a uniquely Victorian urban sight, a closed courtyard formed by two adjourning bay windows. A painting by Washington artist Dorothy Hunter hangs at the head of the stairs.

Upstairs the rooms are on a smaller, more intimate scale. The front study is decorated in warm gray tones and contains a multiple oil painting, "Three Faces", by Alan Lewis Pitts, a Syracuse



artist recently moved to the Washington area. On a small balcony leading to the master bedroom are bookshelves and a display of sculpture. Among several portraits one notes a small painting titled "Bella", and two portraits by former Congressman Seymour Halpern, for whom Mr. Kamber once worked. The portraits are of former House Speaker John McCormack and former President Ford.

The spacious gathering room boasts several conversation areas, each featuring displays of art. Near the table grouping hangs a fascinating photo realism work by English artist Guy Gladwell, titled "Pink and Fat", which depicts the same person at different stages in life. Over the mantel hangs the only work purchased especially for the house: it is a portrait by Washington artist John Winslow of his daughter.

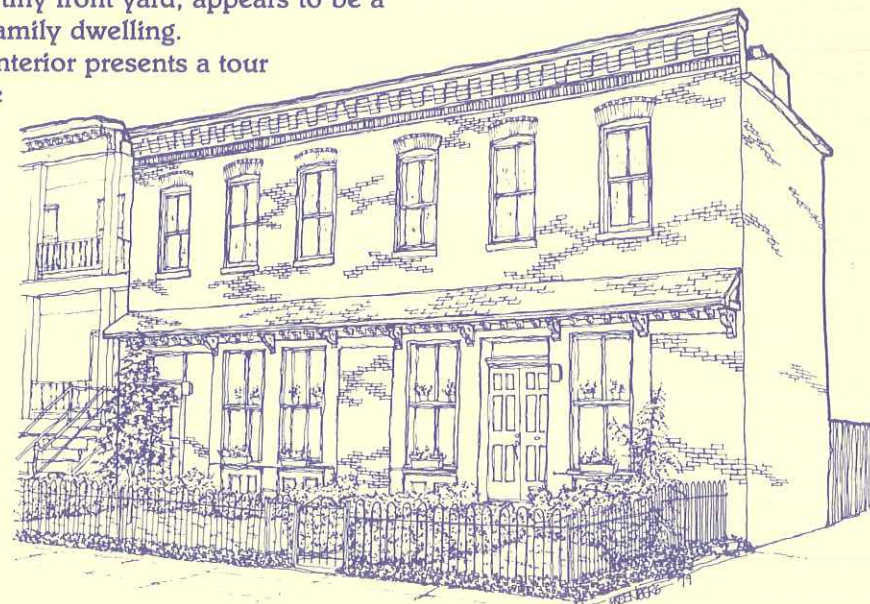
The room is expanded by the view through its wide French doors opening to a deep garden, complete with swimming pool and a fanciful lattice work fence.

Pat Singleton
211 11th Street, N.E.

The first record of a structure at this site was a permit to build a grocery, issued July 23, 1884, for an estimated cost of \$2,000. No architect or builder was listed — only the owner's name, John Mansfield. On May 5, 1890, a permit to repair the building for use as a dwelling and store and to build a two-story brick addition, 17' x 17', was issued to Fritz Yeider.

211-213 11th Street, N.E., are excellent examples of adaptive use of an old, commercial structure. Although the building has been reconstructed to provide two contemporary apartments, only 211 is presented today. From the exterior, this one-bedroom apartment, with its tiny front yard, appears to be a single family dwelling.

The interior presents a tour de force



in its efficient utilization of limited space. The exciting design is immediately evident as one enters directly onto a balcony rimming the large living area one story below. A simple brick fireplace provides warmth and balance to the contemporary design of the room. Along the rear wall the balcony provides space for a galley-type kitchen with an intimate dining area. Off this balcony, to the left, is the bedroom and a bath.

Ms. Singleman, a Congressional staff member newly arrived in Washington, was searching for an apartment close to her office but which would serve as a suitable setting for the furnishings from her former home in New York. The apartment is decorated with contemporary glass, chrome and mirrored furnishings which complement the architectural design. Even the window shades were reworked for use in their new location.

The simple clean lines of the architecture enhance but do not detract from her paintings, including work by Washington artist Bill Fraser and Capitol Hill's own Agnes Anilian. A large, circular Tibetan stone rubbing provides an interesting foil for her dining table.

David Deal
Douglas Mulligan
333 F. Street, N.E.

On December 10, 1889, a permit to build several two-story row dwellings, including houses numbered 319-335, was issued to the owner/builder Biller B. Groff. His architect was Julius Germüller, who was the architect for many buildings on Capitol Hill.

This home, standing on the northwest border of the Capitol Hill Historic District, is one of more than fifty houses on the Hill which Mr. Deal has restored over the past ten years. His creative adaptation of a moderate-sized Victorian brick bay front house provides a striking contemporary interior. Mr. Deal's effective use of Williamsburg wall colors, complemented with sparing use of pattern and color in fabrics, and tasteful traditional furnishings provide an elegant contrast to the simple lines of the redesigned interior.

The dining room has been relocated at the front and is simply furnished with a dark oval table which reflects the striking glass chandelier crafted by a local Capitol Hill artist. Contemporary art by Randolph Payne and Sam Gilliam grace the walls and accent the muted colors of the room. A sweeping staircase, with marble handrails, leads to a study above. Its cathedral ceiling reveals an interesting pattern in the brickwork where ends of the wood ceiling joists remain.

The center room was expanded to provide space for a luxurious bath with



large oval tub, enhanced with solid brass fixtures.

From the master bedroom at the rear one can look into the landscaped garden.

The spacious contemporary kitchen boasts an excellent use of space in a location convenient for serving. The wood cabinets were designed to blend with the earth tones used throughout the owners' residence.

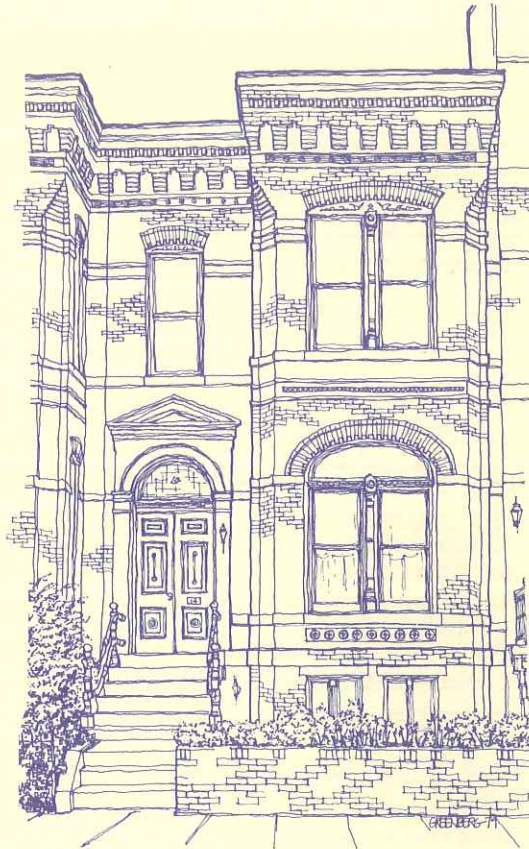
Many structural modifications were made in the living area, including installation of skylights on either side of the new fireplace. Light filtering through these skylights softens the varied textures in this room and provides a serene atmosphere for relaxation.

*Philip A. Ridgely
14 4th Street, S.E.*

This Victorian "Queen Anne" style town house was one of a pair for which a permit to build was issued May 4, 1883, for "two two-story houses with cellar." The owner was H. A. Seymour and his architect was E. S. Friedrich. The total estimated cost for both houses was \$7,000. Its facade is typical of the cut brick treatment of the American version of the English revival of houses from the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods and is pictured as an example in "The Victorian Home in America" by John Maas (Hawthorn Books, Inc., New York, 1974).

The house retains all of its original details and room arrangements, with the possible exception of the removal by a former owner of mantel and a rear staircase in the kitchen. The rear addition was built in the early 1950's. The present owner acquired the house in 1969 when it was being used as three apartments and returned it to a single family home. The mantels in the drawing rooms are fine examples of the period, as is the newell post at the staircase in the entrance hall.

The large home has many period antiques, including Queen Anne, Hepplewhite, Sheraton, and William and Mary. In the second drawing room are a Scottish tall clock (1820) and a rare Clementi square piano (1806). Also in the house are an American pine cupboard (1810), a Georgian chest-on-



chest, and an American sofa similar to the one in the Custis-Lee Mansion. Also to be seen is the fine and extensive collection of Oriental rugs. The paintings and engravings include examples from the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, primarily English.

There are also in the house 18th century Chinese export and Canton china, 19th century clocks, Georgian and American silver, an 18th century American sampler, antique Bohemian glass, Sandwich glass oil lamps, Delft pieces, and Waterford crystal. The dining table is set in Royal Crown Derby china, antique French crystal stemware, and Georgian flatware. A small bricked garden to the rear is framed in shrubbery, roses, and azaleas.

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