

James I. Barrett House
1400 29th Street, N.W.
Washington (Georgetown)
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-180

HABS
DC
GEO
103-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

JAMES I. BARRETT HOUSE

HABS
DC
GEO
103-

Location: 1400 29th Street, N.W., (Georgetown), Washington, D.C.
The house is located on the northwest corner of 29th (formerly Greene) and O (formerly Beall) Streets.

Present Owner: Mrs. Philip Thayer

Present Occupant: Same

Present Use: Private Residence

Statement of Significance: This house is an example of a restrained and formal Victorian dwelling. The exterior is a simple brick cube adorned only by a roof cornice band and capping features for each element of fenestration. A central hall divides the interior into four cubical spaces per floor. The only exception is the living room which runs the full depth of the house.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: The building is located in Square 1258, lot 207 (formerly parts of lots 100-101). The house itself is actually only on part of lot 101. The following is an incomplete chain of title to the property. The references are to the Recorder of Deeds, Washington, D.C.

1795 Deed September 30, 1795, recorded October 3, 1795 in
Liber B folio 354

Thomas Beall

To

Henry Lucas

Lot 101

1807 Deed March 12, 1807, recorded March 20, 1807 in
Liber R folio 143

Henry Lucas

To

Jesse Smith

- 1813 Deed March 15, 1813, recorded June 8, 1813 in
Liber AE folio 454
Jesse Smith
To
Vincent King
- 1816 Deed August 10, 1816, recorded August 27, 1816 in
Liber AM folio 88
Vincent King
To
Caleb Peckam
- 1851 Deed July 30, 1851, recorded January 5, 1852 in
Liber JAS 34 folio 147
Elizabeth Peckam
To
George F. de la Roche
Consideration: \$300.00
- 1854 Deed May 19, 1854, recorded October 30, 1855 in
Liber JAS 103 folio 329
George de la Roche
To
James Isaac Barrett
Consideration: \$1000.00
- 1887 Deed December 12, 1877, recorded December 13, 1887 in
Liber 1288 folio 391
William C. Barrett
To
Eleanor A. Walker, formerly Barrett
Part lot 101, 40' on Green Street
60' Beall Street
- Deed December 14, 1887, recorded December 16, 1887 in
Liber 1295 folio 300
William C. Barrett
To
Eleanor A. Walter
Part lot 101
- 1889 Deed March 28, 1889, recorded March 30, 1889 in
Liber 1377 folio 400
Eleanor A. Walter
To
William H. Manogue
All lot 100 and 101
Consideration \$14,000

- 1890 Deed May 20, 1890, recorded May 27, 1890 in
Liber 1502 folio 91
William H. Manogue
To
James D. Rowe
Consideration: \$5500 for lot 207 (Parts of old
lots 100 and 101)
- 1898 Deed of Trust February 18, 1898, recorded
February 19, 1898 in
Liber 2291 folio 174
James D. Rowe
To
Rawlings and Lockett, Trustees
- 1899 Trustees Deed January 24, 1899, recorded
February 1, 1899 in
Liber 2378 folio 122
Rawlings and Lockett, Trustees
To
Thomas J. Stanton
Sold for default from above trust
- 1922 Deed May 23, 1922 recorded June 2, 1922 in
Liber 4733 folio 209
Thomas J. Stanton
To
Margaret Hartigan
- 1939 Deed November 27, 1939, recorded November 29, 1939 in
Liber 7417 folio 5
Margaret Hatigan
To
Roberto G. de Mendoza
- 1945 Deed June 15, 1945 recorded July 2, 1945 in
Liber 8126 folio 137
Roberto G. de Mendoza
To
Russell Skinner et ux Sina Steenrod
- 1945 Deed June 27, 1945, recorded July 2, 1945 in
Liber 8126 folio 138
Russell Skinner
To
John M. Creighton
Frances Skinner Creighton
Virginia Hughes Skinner

1952 Deed April 4, 1952, recorded April 10, 1952 in
Liber 9689 folio 302
John M. Creighton
Frances Skinner Creighton
Virginia Hughes Skinner
To
James Marshall McHugh
Maxine Davis, his wife

Deed September 5, 1952, recorded September 11, 1952 in
Liber 9799 folio 17
James Marshall McHugh and wife
To
Ellen N. La Motte

1954 Deed January 15, 1954, recorded January 20, 1954 in
Liber 10120 folio 524
Ellen N. La Motte
To
Philip W. Thayer and wife Barbara

2. Date of erection: City directories show the Barrett family occupying the present house in 1867. The Georgetown Assessments for 1871 (National Archives, Microcopy 605, Group 351, roll 13) show an assessment to Barrett for \$6600 for the same property valued at \$1600 in 1865-70 (roll 12). The \$5000 increase signifies the erection of a large house.
3. Architect: Unknown
4. Original plans, construction, etc: None known
5. Alterations and additions: The original kitchen was located in the basement; the present first floor kitchen and bath were added in the 20th century. Also the second floor porch was enclosed, an access was added and a small bath.
6. Important old views: None known

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

1. Washington city directories provide the following tenant information:

1867-69 James Isaac Barrett, carpenter
107 Greene
1870-77 Robert Barrett, widow
1888-90 Brooke B. Williams
1891-96 James D. Rowe, clerk, treasury
James G. Rowe, Milk
1897-98 James D. Rowe, clerk
1900-07 Paul B. Hinzen, clerk, war
1909-22 Paul B. Hinzen
Clara Hinzen
1923-25 Charles Hartigan
1926-27 vacant
1928 Charles B. McVey III
1929 Charles Hartigan
1930 John P. Gregg
1931 John H. Towers
1932 vacant
1933 Charles Hartigan
1934 vacant
1935-36 Charles Hartigan
1937-38 David Saperstein
1939-40 Charles Hartigan
1941 Robert G. Mendoza
1943 Mrs. Rebecca S. Malloreay
1948 Julius Krug
1954 Ellen La Motte
1956 Philip Thayer

3. In 1888 Mr. and Mrs. B.B. Williams were listed in the Washington Elite List: A Compilation of Selected Names of Residents of Washington City D.C. and Ladies Shopping Guide (copies of this guide located in Washingtoniana Room, Main Branch, D.C. Public Library).

Mr. and Mrs. James D. Rowe were listed in the 1892 edition.

4. Mr. George Scheele, a long time resident of Georgetown, recalls that a colored family operated a dairy in the back part of the basement house. This would coincide with the directory listing from 1891-96 for "James G. Rowe, Milk 107 Greene".
5. Thomas Stanton who owned the property between 1899 and 1922 had a grocery store at 1401 29th according to city directory listings.
6. Julius Albert Krug (born 1907) was the chief power engineer of TVA from 1938-1941. He joined the Office of Production Management in 1941 and became Chairman of the War Production Board in 1944. From 1946 to 1949 he was Secretary of the Interior under President Truman.

7. Philip Thayer was a special assistant to the Ambassador to Chile, 1942-1944, and Cultural Relations Attache in that Embassy 1944-5. He was Dean of the School of Advanced International Studies, the Johns Hopkins University, 1948-1961. (Who's Who in America, vol. 32, 1962-63). Mrs. Thayer is the present occupant of the house.

Prepared by Ellen J. Schwartz
Architectural Historian
Commission of Fine Arts
August, 1968

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: 1400 29th Street is a good example of a substantial Victorian free-standing residence. Its scale is not overly grand yet both interior and exterior show an ample spaciousness. Similarly its ornamentation is rich but not overabundant. In its strongly symmetrical plan and its single block massing it partakes of much of the spirit of the earlier 19th century. It is one of the most prominent examples of this conservative Victorian vein in Georgetown.
2. Condition of fabric: This gray painted house is in excellent condition on the exterior and good-excellent condition on the interior. The interior has been modified for 20th century living by the addition of a lavatory at the first floor southeast parlor and the addition of a two story frame section at the west housing a kitchen at the first floor and a bath at the second floor.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: This two story brick free-standing house faces east onto 29th Street at the northwest corner of 29th and O Streets. Its south side is approximately 25' from the centerline of O Street. The three bay front (east) elevation is 36' 9" and the south elevation is 32' 8" long.

At the west the house is entered by a pair of 15 light modern French doors to the north living room. A modern 3' door gives access to the present kitchen from the yard. From this same yard a 4 riser stair extends down from south to north to the basement under the present kitchen.

- b. Windows and shutters: All windows at the east elevation are identical in form. There are five pairs of 4/4 light double hung wood sash windows with each window opening having a segmental head and topped by a cast iron hood. This hood is a single unit over each pair of windows and is topped by two acroteria and supported by three leaf-ornamented consoles. Window sills are straight line design and are supported by three small cast iron brackets. The masonry opening for each pair is about 6' while the height of those at the first floor is 6' 8" and those at the second floor is 6'. Windows at the rear east and south elevations are 6/6 light double-hung wood sash with flat brick arch lintels and no ornamental trim.

Windows at the south elevation are fitted with single panel fixed louver shutters. These are painted gray.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: This flat roof is covered with sheet metal.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The house is crowned by a simple boxed wood projecting cornice and gutter. The eaves are underlined by a dentil band and supported by approximately 2 1/2' high wood scrolling brackets. These brackets are in 4 pairs at the east elevation but occur singly at the other elevations.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: There are none.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The plan is nearly square and is divided down the middle, east to west, by a 6' wide central hall. To the west an enclosed porch has been added. The first floor contains a full length northern living room

2. Foundations: The brick foundation walls of the basement are revealed about 2' at the south and east elevations.
3. Wall construction: This wall bearing brick structure has an east facade built in running bond smooth face brick. The other three elevations are in common bond with header courses every six rows and are constructed with lesser grade rougher face bricks. All elevations are now painted gray with white painted trim.
4. Framing: The interior is partitioned into four quadrants by 19th century frame walls. Floor framing is said to be wood joists.
5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads: At the west side of the dwelling is a wood-framed two story porch entered from the first floor hallway from the landing to the second floor and from a 5 riser stair from the west yard. Both levels were enclosed in the 1940's and covered with asbestos shingles. The first floor serves as a kitchen while a sitting room, bath and closet occupy the second floor.
6. Chimneys: There are three brick chimneys. Two at the south elevation and one at the center of the north elevations. That at the north and that at the southwest measure about 3 1/2' x 1 1/2' while that at the southeast is approximately 6' x 1 1/2'. All are cement-plaster covered and crowned with simple course brick caps.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The major entry is at the center of the east elevation and has a pair of 19th century 2' 5" three panel heavy wood doors. These are topped by a two light transom set in a segmental headed opening. The entry is framed by a pair of 10" pilaster boards and topped by a pediment supported by two 2' high scrolling wood consoles. The doors are recessed about 1' from the west elevation and this jamb is broken into panels by raised wood moldings. The entry is reached by a run of four 20th century brick steps.

A southeast parlor-library, (with 20th century lavatory), a southwest dining room, and a kitchen in the closed-in porch at the west. At the second floor there are four nearly square bedrooms, a bath at the east end of the stairhall, and a bath at the enclosed west porch. A basement extends under the southern portion of the main block beginning at the south wall of the livingroom above. This contains two large rooms and a furnace room. A wood room extends as a basement under the west porch.

2. Stairways: The half-turn main staircase located in the west half of the stairhall ascends 13 risers from east to west to a landing, and back 6 risers to the second floor. The stair rail of dark hardwood is supported by two Victorian turned balusters per tread. The newel post appears to have been replaced by an early 19th century type, a simple wood turned post. Directly under the main stair a run of 11 risers extend to the basement.
3. Flooring: The original pine flooring of random width 4' 6" runs east to west on both first and second floors. The basement has a concrete floor for the east half and a wood floor at the west half, 8" above the level of the concrete.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls and ceilings are of plaster and either painted or wall papered.
5. Doorways and doors: The vestibule doors at the east end of the stairhall are a pair of 2' 5" two panel wood doors with the upper panel being a single glass light 1' 3" x 3' 9". Above these doors appears a two light transom. The standard door used on both first and second floors is a six panel heavy wood door with a raised molding around each panel.

As part of the alteration of the second floors the doorway between the southeast and the southwest bedroom has been removed and walled-up.

6. Decorative features and trim: The major special feature of the decoration is an 8" coved plaster cornice which occurs in the three major rooms of the first floor. Wood trim includes a 10" baseboard in the first floor main rooms, a 1' baseboard in the stairhall, and 8 1/2"

baseboards on the second floor. Window and door wood trim is 6 1/2" wide and a torus molded edge. Doors have 8" hung plinth blocks and first floor east windows have three small wood console blocks under each pair of windows.

7. Notable hardware: Hardware includes what could be late 19th century glass knobs, and brass escutcheons and key plates.
8. Lighting: The one fixture of note is a glass chandelier in the first floor stairhall. This fixture may be of 19th century date but was installed in the house in the mid-20th century by the previous owner.
9. Heating: Four fireplaces remain open; one at the second floor and three at the first floor. In the living room the north wall fireplace has a 2' 6" semicircular-headed opening, and a white marble hearth and mantelpiece of 19th century date. The 6' 1" x 4' mantel is adorned with a cartouche keystone, simply carved spandrel panels, and torus molded vertical edges. It is topped by a simple mantel shelf with double curving leading edge. In the parlor-library the fireplace opening is 3' and semicircular headed. Again the hearth and mantelpiece are of white marble with the mantel being 5' 8" x 3' 11". It is ornamented with a floral leaf keystone, grove-surrounded spandrel panel and chamfered vertical edges. It is topped by a marble mantel shelf.

The dining room fireplace is 2' 1" wide and is surrounded by a 5' x 4' 4" wood mantelpiece. The opening is framed by a pair of reeded and channelled pilasters 2' 6" high supporting a shallow ogee arch. A slightly curved wood mantel shelf is 9" in depth.

The house at present is heated by a central air system with floor ventilators in each room.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: This house sits amidst a number of large and small 19th century residential structures, both town houses and detached residences.

2. Enclosures: The rear yard is enclosed at the west by a two story brick party wall, at the north by a 7' high wooden stockade fence, and at the south by a 4 1/2' high brick wall.
3. Outbuildings: There are none.
4. Walks: The residence faces east onto a brick sidewalk. At the south is a 5' wide brick walk and a 10' wide concrete walk extending to the curb. At the south side near the east corner is located a handsome circular coal chute cover plate of cast iron. It bears the name of F. & A. Schneider and is embossed with a central rosette and peripheral band of overlapping leaves.
5. Landscaping: The rear yard is paved with brick and edged by plants and shrubs. The east front is edged with shrubs to window sill height.

Prepared by William P. Thompson
Architect
Commission of Fine Arts
June, 1969