

Wheatley Town House
3043 N. Street, N.W.
Washington (Georgetown)
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-186

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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

WHEATLEY TOWN HOUSE

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Location: 3043 N Street, N.W., (Georgetown), Washington, D.C.
The house is the westernmost of a pair of houses on the north side of N Street (formerly Gay Street) described as follows: "...beginning at a point on the north side of Gay Street 40' East...running 120' to the rear line of lot 59; thence East 57'8" then South and thence West on said street...subject as to 1 1/2' front on Gay Street by 52'5 1/2" deep binding on the East side of above described land to right of way as an alleyway for the use of said land and the lot next East thereof..."

Present Owner: Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Roth

Present Occupant: Same

Present Use: Private Residence

Statement of Significance: 3043 N Street is a fine example of a large Victorian town house of the third quarter of the 19th Century. It possesses the grand living spaces, the lushness of ornament and the variety of fine details characteristic of the best work of the period.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: The building is located in Square 1233, lot 827 (formerly Square 63, lot 60). The following is an incomplete chain of title to the property. The references are to the Recorder of Deeds, Washington, D. C.

At the time of the cession of the District of Columbia lot 60 appears to have been owned by Samuel Davidson.

1796 Deed January 4, 1796, recorded February 10, 1796 in
Liber B folio 403
Samuel Davidson
To
Walter S. Chandler

- 1801 Deed August 27, 1801, recorded September 1, 1801 in
Liber G folio 261
Walter S. Chandler
To
John Weems
- 1815 Deed November 4, 1815, recorded November 20, 1815 in
Liber AK folio 203
Elizabeth Weems
To
Thomas Turner
- 1846 Deed March 10, 1846, recorded March 26, 1846 in
Liber WB 125 folio 340
Samuel Turner et ux Amanda M.
To
Thomas Turner, Jr.
- 1855 Deed November 11, 1855, recorded March 29, 1856 in
Liber JAS 1113 folio 350
John Marbury, Trustee
To
Richard Cruikshanks
East part of lot 60
- 1859 Deed March 14, 1859, recorded April 2, 1859 in
Liber JAS 172 folio 54
Richard Cruikshanks et ux Anna Jane
To
Francis Wheatley
- 1884 Deed September 11, 1884, recorded September 11, 1884 in
Liber 1098 folio 80
William A. Gordon, Trustee
To
Marion McCullough
"forming an alley 3' wide and 52' 5 1/2" deep, and
of the height as at present covered by portions of
the houses on said lot and that on lot next East
thereof..."
- 1905 Deed May 9, 1905, recorded May 18, 1905 in
Liber 2870 folio 79
Marion W. McCullough
To
Alice Virginia Winship

- 1918 Deed May 7, 1918, recorded May 16, 1918 in
Liber 4073 folio 169
Katherine Virginia Winship
To
Kendrick Scofield
- 1921 Deed April 29, 1921, recorded May 4, 1921 in
Liber 4527 folio 74
Kendrick Scofield and wife Violetta Sprigg
To
Aileen M. Callaghan
- Deed July 8, 1921, recorded July 15, 1921 in
Liber 4557 folio 381
Aileen M. Callaghan
To
James R. M. Ash
- 1922 Deed February 17, 1922, recorded February 21, 1922 in
Liber 4669 folio 252
James R. M. Ash and wife Fannie B.
To
Theodore W. Wilkinson
- 1948 Deed August 24, 1948, recorded August 26, 1948 in
Liber 817 folio 338
Catherine H. Wilkinson, widow
To
American Security and Trust Company
- 1964 Deed January 9, 1964, recorded January 27, 1964 in
Liber 12143 folio 484
American Security and Trust Company
To
Gordon L. Roth and Kathryn Carson Roth

2. Date of Erection: The Georgetown column of the Washington Evening Star, April 14, 1859 reports the following:
"...and Messrs. Berret and Miem have the contract for constructing two large brick dwellings on Gay Street for F. Wheatley, Esq. The excavations for the foundations of each of these buildings are now being made."

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3. Architect: Unknown
4. Original plans, construction, etc: None known
5. Alterations and additions: The original kitchen was located in the back section of the basement; the present first floor kitchen is a mid-20th century addition. The small study at the first floor stair landing was also added.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

1. In The Recollections of J. Holdsworth Gordon, unpublished manuscript, 1910 Mr. Gordon states that his family moved into the house in 1860 and remained there until 1877, when they moved into a villa at Cooke's row. The Washington Elite List: A Compilation of Selected Names of Residents of Washington City, D. C. and Ladies Shopping Guide (The Elite Publishing Company of Washington, D. C. [copy of the directory located in the Washingtoniana Room of the Central branch of the D. C. Public Library]) gives the following information:

1888	Mrs. L. E. Cammack and drs. Mrs. Ann K. Thompson William T. Harris
1889	Dr. and Mrs. Carl H. A. Kleinschmidt
1890	Dr. and Mrs. Carl H. A. Kleinschmidt Miss Adele Kleinschmidt

Washington City Directories provide the following tenant information:

1886	Annie K. Thompson, wid. Wm. E.
1887	William T. Harris (Beale and Harris) Annie K. Thompson
1891-94	Brooke B. Williams, broker
1914-16	Mrs. Margaret Meinikheim
1917-21	Kendrick Scofield
1923-25	Theodore Wilderson
1930	Ernest Wilkinson
1931	vacant
1932-38	Robert W. Horton

1938-41	Mrs. Leonora Fuller
1942	vacant
1943-48	Mrs. Katherine Wilkinson
1954-56	John I. Thompson
1960	vacant
1962	Benjamin F. Kronfeld
1965	Gordon Roth

2. The Georgetown Assessments of 1865-70 (National Archives Microcopy 605, Group 351, roll 12) show the following assessments to Francis Wheatley:

Lot 60	50' W. Gay Street	120' deep	\$1,800
Improvements:	Two 3 story and finished brick dwellings		\$10,000

3. The Evening Star of Thursday July 14, 1859 in its Georgetown column gives a contemporary appraisal of the houses. "Among all the multitude of fine private improvements erected in our city this season, none shows to more advantage nor is more of a real ornament to the town than the two first-class brick dwellings by Alderman F. Wheatley, on Gay Street, adjoining his own property."

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

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: With its twin to the East, 3043 N Street is one of the finest examples in Georgetown of an upper class Middle Victorian row house. A general openness characterizes the interior arrangement as the high ceilinged rooms are connected by large scale openings and the first floor gives views to both the street and to the rear yard through wide floor-ceiling windows. The facade presents the customary solidity and richness to the street.
2. Condition of fabric: Having been repaired and cleaned within the last five years, the house is in excellent condition on both the interior and exterior.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: This three story brick row house faces South onto N Street between 30th and 31st Streets; its West wall is approximately 105' along N Street from the centerline of 31st Street. The three bay front is 22'-8" wide and the depth of the house is approximately 35'.
2. Foundations: The brick foundation walls of the basement are revealed approximately 6'-8" on the front (South) elevation and approximately 7'-6" on the rear (North) elevation. At the South elevation a red-gray sandstone water table occurs at the sill level of the basement windows.
3. Wall construction: This wall bearing brick structure has a rear (North) elevation faced with rough textured red brick laid in common bond with header courses every six rows. The first two stories are painted white while the third remains its unpainted red-orange color.

The front elevation differs by using a dense smooth unpainted face brick in common bond but with no bonding header courses and with very thin mortar joints.
4. Framing: Not visible
5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: At the South elevation the brick entry stairway and stoop is 5'-8" wide. The ten treads to the entry platform are of red-gray sandstone now refaced with a layer of red bricks. A fine pair of iron railings edge both the stair and the stoop and end in a three quarter turn around the street level metal newel posts.

As an additional feature of the South elevation a 2'-6" iron black balcony extends across the facade at the first floor level.

At the rear there is a simple two story framed three post porch 7'-6" deep. The porch is screened at the second floor level and open to a newly constructed wood deck extension at the first floor.

6. Chimneys: There are two large brick chimneys approximately 3' x 3' at the East party wall located at approximately the first and third quarter points of the wall. Both have simple two coursed brick caps.

7. Openings :

a. Doorways and doors: The handsome entry ensemble of the house includes two rich door frames, a large entry door and a pair of vestibule doors. The sequence begins with a 3'-3" wide wood six panel entry door surmounted by a single light transom window. The rounded edge panels of the door contrast with the rich pedimental cornice supported by lush floral brackets. In the vestibule, doors with semicircular headed tall single pane lights above a circular molded edge panel give access to the stair hall. This vestibule doorway is topped by a flat entablature supported by six small brackets between two larger end consoles.

b. Windows and shutters: The front (South) elevation has 2/2 light double-hung sash for the upper two floor windows and 2/4 light double-hung wood sash for the first floor's floor to ceiling windows. The window openings have stone sills painted white and are crowned by segmental cast iron heads with a central medallion and end drip brackets.

All major windows have internal folding wood shutters; each has an upper and a lower pair of three-part folding vertical panels with adjustable vertical louvered portions. The units fold back into jamb pockets at each side of the window.

At the North elevation the windows are without ornamental trim and simply have the opening bridged by flat, arches of brick.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: The gabled roof with ridge parallel to the street has a standing seam metal covering.

b. Cornice, eaves: The South elevation has a rich bracketed cornice band painted white, capping the facade. At the North elevation however there is

simply a two course corbelled brick cornice band.

c. Cupolas, dormers, towers: None

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The typical 19th century town house plan has a major front and rear room on each floor with an entry and stair hall running the full length of the house at the West party wall.

The first floor plan has a front living room and a rear dining room. A modern kitchen has been added at the North end of the stair hall.

The second and third floors have two bedrooms each with a bath at the Southwest corner of each floor. An unusual feature of the second floor plan is a sitting room at the Northwest corner entered up three steps from the stair landing.

The original kitchen was probably in the front room of the full basement. The rear room at present houses the heating equipment. Two special basement features are a large coal storage room under the South sidewalk and entered by stairs under the entry stairs and a 3' service passage from the street to the rear under the porch. The latter occurs along the East foundation wall.

2. Stairways: Because of its monumental carved newel post, its fine turned balusters and curvilinear stringer features the main staircase is an important sculptural feature of the interior. From the entry hall the half-turn stair rises up from South to North a full sixteen risers to the landing and then back five risers to the second floor. At the second level, in a similar manner, the stair ascends twelve risers and back six to the third level. The fruitwood railing is continuous from the newel to the top floor and is made of sections up to 5' long.

The stairs to the basement are directly under the main stairs in a steep straight run thirteen risers from a platform and door under the North end of the eastern stair stringer.

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3. Flooring: The original yellow pine floors have been cleaned and refinished in the last five years. The basement level has a concrete floor.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls and ceilings are of plaster throughout. The hall has had new wallpaper within the last five years over older paper. All other rooms are painted over plaster or over old wallpaper.
5. Doorways and doors: Wooden six panel doors appear to be in most cases original and are approximately 3' x 7'. The frames are trimmed with a wood molding are topped by a straight molded wood cornice. On the first floor a 7'-1" opening between the front and the rear room is fitted with two large eight panel doors which slide into wall pockets.
6. Decorative features and trim: As major decorative features there are on the first floor molded ceiling ornaments in the stair hall and in the front and rear parlors. All are of the heavy Victorian floral type formerly acting as gas lighting fixture bases. In keeping with the large scale of the rooms, the ornaments in the center of both the parlor and dining room ceilings have a large 3'-6" spread.

Trim forms and sizes vary considerably throughout the house from floor to floor. The third floor has a 8" baseboard with simple molded top and simple 5" window and door trim. Doorways are crowned by a 3" architrave board and a 2 1/2" corona. Plinth blocks are used at the baseboard.

At the second level a 10" molded top baseboard is used along with 6" door and window trim. Doorways are without crown molding but do rest on plinth blocks as above.

At the main floor a baseboard of the same type as the second floor is employed but in this case is 11" in height. Door trim is similar to that used in the second floor but with a 3/4 round edge and a 7 1/2" width. Doorways have no crown mold but do rest on plinth blocks.

Additional trim on the first floor includes a picture molding at approximately 2' from the ceiling in both the dining room and living room and a cornice ceiling mold in all rooms.

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7. Notable hardware: The house retains much of its 19th century hardware and this includes brass doorknob rings, brass keyholes, and porcelain doorknobs. Especially notable items of hardware are on the first floor sliding doors. Geometric floral ornaments are cut out in low relief on the plates for the door pulls, lock plates and catch plates.
8. Lighting: There are a variety of 20th century fixtures.
9. Heating: There are several handsome fireplace mantelpieces which act as principal features of the major rooms. On the third floor both fireplaces have been closed but the simple wood mantelpieces remain. These have unfluted but chamfered edge pilasters supporting a 7 1/2" deep mantel shelf.

The second floor fireplaces are both open and are also of brick with wood mantelpieces which are only slightly more elaborate than those above. The front room has a segmental arched opening and a 7 1/2" deep curving plan mantel shelf.

The two major first floor rooms have 6'-0" x 4'-0" high mantelpieces and hearths of white silver-veined marble. Both have semicircular topped fireplace openings 2'-9" x 2'-9" with a decorative floral featured keystone which supports an 11" deep curving mantel shelf. The opening in the dining room is set with a 19th century metal heating ventilator. The metal facing is edged with a stamped floral band and the floral patterned heating grill is backed by adjustable metal vertical louvers. A 2'-9" x 9" metal fender projects from the lower edge of the metal facing and rests on the marble hearth.

The basement has the 20th century addition of a 19th century black marble fireplace mantelpiece.

Modern central hot air heating was introduced into the house according to the owners in the late 1920's. Metal ductwork carries air to rooms on all floors.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: This house is the center unit of a group of three Victorian row houses set on this residential street not far from the shopping area of Georgetown.
2. Enclosures: The rear yard is enclosed by a wooden stockade fence approximately 5' to 6' high.
3. Outbuildings: At the Northeast corner of the lot is a small outbuilding shared by 3041 and 3043 and divided at the center by a North-South party wall. The brick building is approximately 12' square is 9' high to the roof cornice line and is topped by a wood framed pyramidal roof. There are two 2'-10" doors on both the East and West elevations and a pair of windows at the South side. Walls are constructed of common bond and openings are bridged by flat arched brick lintels. The 3041 side of the buildings still serves as a storage facility while that of 3043 has been recently renovated as a "tea house".
4. Walks: At the front (South) elevation there is red brick paving from the elevation to the curb. Within the last five years three paved brick circles strung out and linked along the centerline of the lot have been added in the rear yard. The first begins near the end of the rear wood deck and the last ends near the North edge of the lot.
5. Landscaping: The rear yard has been handsomely landscaped during the last five years with various shrubs and plants around the periphery. A black metal fountain has been placed in the center of the second brick circle. From the center of the West side of the rear yard a large black walnut shades the yard. (The cast iron fountain dates from 1856).

Prepared by: William P. Thompson
Architect
Commission of Fine Arts
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