

House
513 6th St., N.W.
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-226

HABS
DC
WASH
183-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
801 19th St., N.W.
Washington, D.C.

HOUSE

Location: 513 Sixth Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Present Owner: Vinard L. and Ollie Paris
3111 Grove Street
Arlington, Virginia

Present Occupant: Tenants.

Present Use: Dwelling apartments and office for sightseeing
tours.

Brief Statement
of Significance: One of the few older town houses remaining in the
area, illustrating its architectural character
before the Civil War.

HABS
DC
WASH
183-PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Francis Mohun, et ux. deeded to George H. Phelps on Jan. 22, 1879 [9D7-132 rec. Jan. 27, 1879]. \$34,000--for several plots, incl. part of lot #5 of sq. 488--begin at SW corner of lot #5, thence north 26', east 93'4", south 26', and west to beginning.

On Nov. 27, 1885 [1153-203 rec. Nov. 28, 1885] George H. Phelps, et ux. deeded to Henry Ruppert. \$11,200--south 26' front and depth of lot #5--begin at SW corner of lot; thence north 26', east to alley 10' wide (i.e. east 88'4"), south with west line of alley 26', west to beginning.

In Court Trustees Deed 2872-116 rec. June 22, 1905 Tooney and Ruppert, trs. deeded to Ferdinand Ruppert on June 8, 1905 (Henry Ruppert died Apr. 4, 1893). Equity No. 25225--decree land be sold--James A. Tooney & John H. Ruppert, court appointed trs., sold it to Ferdinand for \$8,500.

Ferdinand F. Ruppert deeded to John H. Ruppert on June 15, 1905 [Deed 2868-350 rec. July 19, 1905].

According to Deed 4188-413 rec. May 29, 1919, on that date John H. Ruppert, et ux. deeded to Emmet W. Beach.

HABS
DC
WASH
183-

The property was deeded to Nathan Shapiro, et ux. by Emmet W. Beach, et ux. on April 7, 1923 [4941-366 rec. April 26, 1923].

Julia Shapiro, on Sept. 24, 1946, deeded to Ave Y. Yeghenian [8342-595 rec. Sept. 25, 1946].

Deed 10021-625 rec. Nov. 5, 1956 shows that on July 28, 1953 Ave Yeghenian deeded to Morris Abrams, et ux., tenants by entirety.

On Oct. 30, 1956 Morris Abrams, et ux., tenants by entirety, deeded to Vinard L. Paris, et ux., tenants by entirety. [10757-563 rec. Nov. 5, 1956]

2. Date of erection: Perhaps circa 1840.
3. Alterations and additions: The upper two stories were added, perhaps circa 1860.

The building was divided into apartments at an undetermined date.

B. Sources of information:

Primary and unpublished sources: Records of the District of Columbia.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural interest and merit: This house is an interesting example of the architectural type of the mid-nineteenth century, which is still evident despite the modern changes the building has undergone.
2. Condition of fabric: The building is in fair condition with a great portion redecorated.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: (Approx.) 26'0" X 42'5"; front, 3 bays wide; 3 1/2 stories with basement and 1/2 story on roof; rectangular in shape.
2. Foundations: Brick, high.

3. Wall construction, finish and color: The west (front) wall is three bays wide and constructed of brick, laid in Flemish bond and American bond with one course of headers to every five courses of stretchers. This wall is painted cream white with solid white trim.

HABS
DC
WASH
183-

The north wall, once a party wall, is also constructed of brick with American bonding, but is not painted. It reveals the imprints of the former adjacent building and clearly shows the outline of the gable roof of this building.

The east (rear) wall is also constructed of unpainted brick (American bonding) and is three bays wide. There is a one story wing, projected east from the rear wall. This wing is only one bay wide and is constructed of brick. Over this wing is an intermediate two story section which is covered with a combination of wood and shingle siding and is painted white. These rear portions are not original.

At the south is a party wall of masonry, shared by the adjacent building.

4. Structural systems, framing: Masonry exterior walls, timber floor and roof framing.
5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: There is a straight flight of exterior stairs leading to the main entrance. This stairway has had more steps added to it, because of the change of grade that has taken place since the building was constructed. The upper portion of the stairway, being the original, has a cast-iron handrail painted black which spirals around the lower end post. The steps are marble with six 8" risers and 10" treads. The extensions of the stairway are concrete also with six risers and 9" treads. The handrail is plain but also painted black.
6. Chimneys: There is a chimney on the north wall near the rear of the building, and traces of two original chimneys appear on the north wall.
7. Openings:
- a. Doorways and doors: The entrance to the building stands in the left bay of the three-bay-wide wall. It has a 3' opening which is approximately 7' high. This opening is flanked on either side by a one

foot panel which is the height of the opening. The upper half of this panel is glass, having two vertical lights and trimmed in wood moulding. The lower half of the panel has a vertical wood moulded panel.

HABS
DC
WASH
183-

The opening is also flanked on either side by two simple colonnettes, wood moulded and standing between the opening and the flanking panels. They support a simple projecting entablature which spans the top of the opening. This moulded entablature extends past the panels on either side and out onto the wall approximately one foot. Above the entablature is a semi-elliptical fan light with its area divided by four wood moulded strips, evenly spaced and radiating from a wooden semi-elliptical disk at the center of the base of the window. It is trimmed with a wood archivolt. At the center of the moulding, above the window, is a wood moulded motif. All of the trim is painted white.

At ground level on the west wall is a garage or carport opening which is approximately two bays wide and 7' high. On the east wall is a similar opening with approximately the same dimensions. This is a modern alteration.

On the east wall of the east wing is a smaller one-bay-wide garage opening which stands approximately 6' high.

- b. Windows and shutters: At the first story, the center bay is occupied by two windows: one is narrow (one light wide) and double-hung (2/2), while the other is wider (two lights wide), but also double-hung (4/4). The right bay has a double-hung window (6/6) which is three lights wide and which is trimmed in wood moulding, as are all of the windows. Above the first story windows are imprints or tracings of where a cap, probably similar to those remaining, once lay.

The second story has three simple double-hung windows (6/6), one in each bay. There is a cap spanning above each window. This cap is made up of a flat horizontal panel with a projected moulding at its top. At the bottom of all windows is a flat wooden sill. The third story windows are identical to the second story windows.

HABS
DC
WASH
183-

Above the third story windows is a brick band of three corbeled courses, which spans the front of the building and is five courses wide. Just above this band is a half story made up of three horizontally rectangular windows, one in each bay. The windows appear not to open with glass only in the left and center windows. An original screen covers the center window, while the right window is covered with a sheet of metal to bear a modern air conditioner. (Air conditioners rest in all right bay windows.

There is still another half story of windows above the cornice of the building. This level is apparently recent as there are four horizontally rectangular windows with aluminum framing and moulded trim. The windows have moulded mullions and span 2 1/2 bays from the south wall.

The east wall (rear) has simple double-hung windows (6/6) along with the rear wall, which has twin double-hung windows (1/2).

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The roof over the main portion of the building is gabled with the ridge running north to south. There is a two-story portion of the building on the east side (rear) with a sloping roof. The slope runs from west to east. In addition, the one story east wing has a shed roof which slopes from north to south (slope approx. 4:12). The roof of the top half story on the west front is flat.
- b. Cornice: The cornice is simple wood moulded having a plain soffit and supported by four evenly spaced ornamental brackets. There is a simple cornice at the rear.

The roof of the top half story has a simple moulded cornice with a metal water leader on its front.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The entrance, which is at the left bay of the front, leads into a small foyer which, in turn, leads into a larger corridor. Three rooms open into this hall. At the east end of the hall is a stairway which leads to the second floor and to a split level apartment in the rear of the building.

On the second floor is a smaller hall into which four surrounding apartments open. This is typical of the upper floors.

HABS
DC
WASH
183-

The basement consists of a two bay wide garage and a one bay wide room which are not accessible from the first floor.

2. Stairways: There is a central interior stairway with an open well. The steps are wood now covered with composition tile. The 10" treads have 1" nosing of aluminum. There are twelve 7" risers leading to the landing. There are eight risers to the second floor and seven risers which lead to a split level apartment in the rear of the building.

The railing is simple wood moulded painted black with a simple moulded newel post at the base of the stairway.

3. Flooring: The floor is wood covered with composition tile. There are 4" thresholds at doorways.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The ceiling is approx. 10' high and covered with plaster. The walls are plaster with recent paint and 6" wood moulded baseboard.
5. Doorways and doors: Doorways are 2'6" X 6'10" and trimmed in wood moulding. There are also wood moulded corner blocks; all trim is painted white. The doors are wood moulded, painted white and have three pairs of panels vertically aligned. The doors are probably original. A large archway is in the entrance hall. The arch is supported by a pair of moulded columns on either side which rest on wood moulded pedestals. The arch is trimmed in wood moulding with an original light fixture in the center of its plain soffit.
6. Notable hardware: There is an iron fire escape which is suspended along the west (front) wall and which extends up to the third story. This fire escape spans the left and center bay and is accessible from the ground.
7. Mechanical equipment: An old case-iron radiator stands in the entrance hall. Modern lighting and plumbing has been installed, and these fixtures are visible throughout the building.

D. Site and Surroundings:

HABS
DC
WASH
123-

General Setting: The building's front faces west onto 6th Street with adjacent building on south sharing party wall. There is a vacant lot to the north now used for parking. (Adjacent building once occupied this site.)

The ground contours slope west towards 6th Street.

Prepared by: Thomas L. Fauntleroy
Student Architect
National Park Service
June 1969