

**D.C. HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
APPLICATION FOR
HISTORIC LANDMARK**

APPLICATION TO:

New Designation
 Amend a Designation

Summary of Amendments - Statement of Significance for Property in its Entirety
Describe in text.

Property Name Williams-Addison House (DC listing November 8, 1964)
If any part of the interior is being nominated, it must be specifically identified and described in the narrative statements.

Address 1645 31st Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20007
Include zip code

Square and Lot Number(s) Square 1282 Lot 0277 Affected ANC 2E

Architect (s) unknown

Date of Construction circa 1817

Date of Major Alteration (s) 1886 - alterations including roofline of main block and replacement windows; circa 1887-1892 - addition of two-story brick wing to brick ell; circa 1903-1912 - small three-story brick addition to inset of brick ell

Architectural Style/Period Federal style [with Second Empire alterations]

Original Use Residence

Present Use Vacant

Property Owner Equity Appreciation Partners Capital Fund 1, LLC

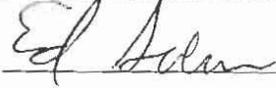
Legal Address of Property Owner 1645 31st Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20007

NAME OF APPLICANT: ANC 2E

(If applicant is an organization, it must submit evidence that among its purposes is the promotion of historic preservation in the District of Columbia. A copy of its charter, articles of incorporation, or by-laws, setting forth such purpose, will satisfy this requirement.)

Address/Telephone of Applicant(s) 3265 S Street, NW, Washington, DC 20007
(202) 338-7427

Name and Title of Authorized Representative Ed Solomon, Chairman

Signature  Date 6/14/07

Signature _____ Date _____

Author of Application and Telephone EHT Traceries, Inc., (202) 393-1199

GENERAL STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The historic property known as the Williams-Addison House at 1645 31st Street, N.W., (Square 1282, Lot 277, Historic Lot 817), consists of a 31,982 square foot lot (approximately three-quarters of an acre) containing the original circa 1817 double brick house and 1899 stable and carriage house (subsequently used as a garage and then altered for residential use). The property, located within the Georgetown Historic District, is designated as an individual historic landmark in the District of Columbia and bears the distinction of being one of the original properties listed in the District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites in 1964.

As the property is one of the District of Columbia's original landmarks, the D.C. Inventory provides very little information about the property, either the house or its setting, which has necessitated a research effort to reveal the property's significance. This research shows that the landmark Williams-Addison House property is one of Georgetown's few remaining nineteenth century mid-size estates, intact to its nineteenth century appearance. This three-quarter acre lot remains a significant open space in Georgetown and recalls the character of Georgetown Heights during Georgetown's nineteenth century heyday. The property's continuing existence as a single-family residence on a large lot illustrates a long and significant association with two of Georgetown's oldest families, the Bealls and the Williamses, and establishes their relationship with the internationally influential Russian Bodisco family. Its association with these families reveals significant information about the patterns of original subdivision, architecture, land holding, and inheritance of nineteenth century Georgetown. The property's history reveals how the Georgetown families intermarried with Russian nobility, illustrating much about Georgetown and Washington's nineteenth century social and international diplomatic history. Finally, the property carries additional significance as the subsequent home to, among others, notable philanthropist Clarence Phelps Dodge and prominent journalist Alfred Friendly later in the twentieth century.

The Williams-Addison House qualifies for landmark status in the District of Columbia according to D.C. Law 2-144, "The Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act of 1978," under the following criteria:

Criterion (b), History: *They are associated with historical periods, social movements, groups, institutions, achievements, or patterns of growth and change that contributed significantly to the heritage, culture or development of the District of Columbia or the nation.*

The Williams-Addison House stands as one of only a few remaining medium-size estates that defined the Georgetown Heights area (north of Q Street) of nineteenth century Georgetown. The land is part of the property inherited by Harriet Beall Williams in 1806 and which has remained essentially unchanged since 1858. The existing house is a three-story Federal style house, built circa 1817 by Leonard H. Johns and his wife Margaret Ann Williams, daughter of Mrs. Williams. The creation of Lot 277, the siting and appearance of the house, and the retention of a large area of open space illustrate significant patterns of development in Georgetown.

The landmark provides a significant example of a nineteenth century Georgetown property that has continuously served as a single-family home to some of Washington's most prominent residents, from the socially prominent Williams-Bodisco family that merged significant American landed gentry with Russian nobility in the early nineteenth century to the Friendlys when, beginning in 1939, it became a gathering place for Washington's political and journalist elite. As part of the land holdings of the Williams family, descendants of Ninian Beall, the property serves as a reminder of how the Georgetown's earliest landed families divided their holdings among successive generations, maintaining the familial connections through both generosity and proximity. The Williams-Addison House, as a building and as a setting, reveals Georgetown's development from the early eighteenth into the early twentieth century, and shows us the relationship of initial, larger estates to the later intermediate-size properties that followed as the original families passed their land to successive generations.

Criterion (c), Individuals: They are associated with the lives of persons significant to the history of the District of Columbia or nation.

The Williams-Addison House represents one part of a complex relationship between the American Williams and the Russian Bodisco families, which resulted from a situation unique to Washington in the nineteenth century. In a period when the Federal City was without the amenities of paved streets, trees, or sidewalks, Georgetown was considered to be the center of fashionable life in the Nation's Capital. The marriage of the beautiful schoolgirl Harriet Williams to the much older Russian Baron and Consul to the United States Alexandre de Bodisco in 1840 captured the public's imagination and the tale of the young American girl becoming a baroness continues to be a Georgetown legend. The subsequent marriage of her brother Brooke to the Baron's niece Caroline de Bodisco established stronger ties between the two families. This soon led to at least four marriages between Georgetown women and Russian men, giving the United States a presence in the Czar's court in the mid-1800s. The impact of the relationship was enhanced by Harriet Williams de Bodisco's great beauty and the Baron's great fortune and diplomatic position, which led to the couple's prominent social and political presence in mid-nineteenth century Washington, D.C. The Baron served seventeen distinguished years as the Imperial Russian Minister to the United States and his diplomat skills are credited with establishing strong bonds between the Russian and United States governments during the mid-nineteenth century. At his death in 1854, he was buried in Georgetown's Oak Hill cemetery. Two of his children and his Russian nephew, also a Russian consul-general to the United States when he died, are buried with him at Oak Hill.

In addition to its original owners Leonard H. and Margaret Ann Williams Johns, and then her nephew Brooke B. Williams and his wife Caroline Bodisco Williams, 1645 31st Street was owned by Abraham H. Herr, a miller and vice-president of the Corcoran Fire Insurance Company (1876-86) (who had previously owned the Bodisco House), George W. Cissel, partner in the flour mill of Herr and Cissel (later G.W. Cissel & Co.) and his heirs (1886-1914), prominent Washington physician William G. Erving (1914-1933), newspaper publisher and philanthropist Clarence Phelps Dodge and his wife Regina Lunt Dodge (1934-1939), and *Washington Post* managing editor, international reporter, and Pulitzer Prize-winner Alfred Friendly and his wife Jean Ulman Friendly (1939-2006). Thus, the property has been the home

to a series of Washingtonians and distinguished residents who have not only valued its history, but added to its importance by virtue of their own contributions to the city and the country.

Criterion (d), Architecture and Urbanism: *They embody the distinguishing characteristics of architectural styles, building types, or methods of construction, or are expressions of landscape architecture, engineering, or urban planning, siting, or design significant to the appearance and development of the District of Columbia or the nation.*

Today's configuration of land that is now known as the Williams-Addison House and historic tax lot 817 (current Lot 277) dates from 1858, when Brooke B. Williams sold the northern portion of the land that his aunt, Margaret Ann Williams Johns, deeded to him four years earlier. The parcel of land deeded in 1854 comprised the majority of land that Harriet Beall Williams deeded to Leonard H. Johns at the time of his marriage to Mrs. Williams' daughter, Margaret Ann, in 1813 and an additional parcel to the north deeded by Harriet Williams to her daughter in 1841. The original acre deeded in 1813 was carved out of seven acres in the western portion of Square 1282 (originally Georgetown Square 112, part of Beall's Second Addition) that Harriet Beall Williams inherited from her father Brooke Beall in 1805. These seven acres were part of her father's substantially larger Georgetown land holdings, divided among his children, which were part of an even larger landholding of the Beall family in the late eighteenth century known as the Rock of Dumbarton. The Beall family, descended from Ninian Beall of Scotland, who was one of the first to settle in the region of Georgetown in the early eighteenth century, was an original Georgetown landholder. In 1703, Ninian Beall received a grant from Lord Baltimore that included much of the ground on which Georgetown stands, of which 795 acres became known as the Rock of Dumbarton. Lot 277 and the house constructed in circa 1817 illustrate the pattern of development and architecture that was responsible for the nineteenth century development of Georgetown.

Criterion (g), Archaeology: *They have yielded or may be likely to yield information significant to an understanding of historic or prehistoric events, cultures, and standards of living, building, and design.*

The Federal style house is sited on property that has remained essentially unchanged since 1858. Since at least 1894, the footprint of the house has not changed significantly, and the rest of the site is largely undeveloped. As a result, the property offers an excellent site for future archaeological study with the potential to yield significant insight into Georgetown's nineteenth century history. (The presence of the tennis court at the rear of the property, to the east, is not believed to infringe upon any archaeological study.)

Furthermore, the property also meets the National Register Criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

Criterion A: *It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.*

***Criterion C:** It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.*

The Williams-Addison House is identified as historically significant in the 1991 *District of Columbia Comprehensive Plan for Historic Preservation: Historic Contexts for the District of Columbia* under the “Early Architecture of the Federal City and Georgetown (B1)” theme. Although the property is further identified under the subheading “Early Gothic Revival (1830-1860)” with the construction date of circa 1850, research places the building date of the Williams-Addison House to circa 1817. It is recommended that the property be re-listed under the “Large Federal Houses (c. 1790-1830)” subheading.

To date, the property connection with the Addison name is not known. This association may stem from a rental at some time, but current research provides no record of Addison ownership.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

The Williams-Addison House is located at 1645 31st Street in northwest Washington, D.C. (Square 1282, Lot 277). Located within the Georgetown Historic District, the historic property sits on roughly three-quarters of an acre of land near the crest of a hill that rises from Q Street north towards R Street. The dwelling, which is oriented to 31st Street, is sited on the western half of its lot, creating a large open space to the rear. The lot consists of 31,982 square feet.

Directly across 31st Street to the west are the expansive grounds and gardens of Tudor Place, the Federal-era mansion designed by William Thornton, architect of the U.S. Capitol, for Martha Washington's granddaughter, Martha Custis Peter, and her husband, Thomas Peter.¹ To the north of the property stands the four-story Dumbarton Court apartment building built in 1909 at 1657 31st Street, N.W. To the south of the property runs Avon Lane, the approximately 25-foot-wide public alley that runs east from 31st Street to Avon Place, N.W. To the east of the property stand two mid-twentieth century dwellings built on land (then Lot 850) subdivided in the late 1940s into two pipe stem lots (Lots 257 and 258) connecting to Avon Place.²

An 1899 carriage house and garage (originally constructed as a stable) are located along Avon Lane towards the southeast corner of the property. The two-story brick carriage house and one-story brick garage (single-car) have undergone several alterations and repairs throughout the years, most notably the 1978 renovations to the carriage house to accommodate a living space which involved the installation of new fenestration and the raising of a portion of the roof on the north elevation. Adjoining the carriage house at the southeast corner of the lot is a one-story brick garage built in 1935.

Today, much of the site (save the front) is obscured by a tall vertical board fence and overgrown vegetation along the boundary lines. This fence runs straight along Avon Lane and continues around a small area used for parking until it terminates at the eastern edge of the carriage house. Besides the single-family dwelling and outbuildings, the site has a contemporary one-story shed, located along the southern edge, and a tennis court. The tennis court, constructed in the second half of the twentieth century along a north-south orientation, is located to the rear of the property. The remainder of the lot is covered predominantly in grass with several tall mature trees.

EXTERIOR

The Federal style Williams-Addison House is a three-story masonry structure, sited on a level lot that has been graded to meet the gentle slope of the street. The dwelling, as it stands today, is ell-shaped in plan, and is comprised of the original circa 1817 rectilinear block and brick ell set upon a solid masonry foundation and a two-story brick rear addition. Originally constructed as a two-story dwelling, most likely with an end gable roof, the house was altered in 1886 to

¹ Tudor Place, located at 1644 31st Street, N.W., was designated a National Historic Landmark on December 19, 1960 and was listed in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites on November 8, 1964. The property was also listed in the National Register of Historic Places on October 15, 1966.

² Lot 850 and these two mid-twentieth century homes were not subdivided from the landmark Williams-Addison House and are not themselves historically significant.

accommodate a third story in its main block. By the end of the nineteenth century, the brick ell was extended eastward by the addition of a two-bay, two-story brick wing.³ A one-story greenhouse addition, constructed of metal and glass, adjoins this addition at the rear. A three-story, one-bay brick addition, inset within the ell, was added between 1903 and 1912.

The original dwelling is constructed of red brick set in Flemish bond.⁴ The building is capped by a straight-sided Mansard roof (added during the 1886 roofline alterations), covered with hexagonal-shaped slate shingles. Gable and flat roofs top the building's two rear brick additions. The main block contains two exterior brick chimneys, to the south and north respectively. A brick interior chimney pierces the roof of the first addition, with an exterior chimney (now integrated into the structure by the construction of the second addition to the rear) located at the gable wall.

The primary façade, facing west, stands three stories in height and is five bays wide, with stone steps leading to the centrally located entry opening. A series of steps, with cast-iron railings and a pair of lampposts, lead up a birm from the street level to the main entry. The main entryway is composed of to a six-paneled door with sidelights topped with a mullioned transom window. The wooden surround is composed of pilasters that support the entablature and a projecting segmental-arched pediment. The encircling cornice of the pediment has a raked molding and a recessed tympanum. Flanking the central entry to each side are two equally spaced openings, each holding replacement 2/2 double-hung windows. The window openings have flat arch brick lintels and operable louvered wood shutters. The second story of the façade is pierced by five equally spaced window openings. As on the first story, replacement windows sit beneath flat arch brick lintels. The third story, which was added in 1886, is executed in the Second Empire style, with a pedimented dormer windows above the original denticulated cornice set into the decorative Mansard roof.

Limited access to the site, and the overgrown, fenced grounds, has prevented a complete survey of the property. Thus, the following description of the elevations beyond the façade and the site itself is limited in its scope and should not be considered complete.

Composed of the main block and ell, as well as the two-story rear addition, the south elevation features two doors that lead out to a side veranda and a bay window. The bay window was installed circa 1989. The north elevation of the house features a door on the east façade of the three-story addition that leads out to the yard. In the 1930s, this addition was extended slightly to the north, by the construction of a small, three-story bathroom addition. All of the brick additions feature 6/6 double-hung, wood-sash windows and operable louvered wood shutters. The one-story greenhouse addition at the rear of the house is one-bay wide and has an exterior door that leads to the yard.

³ This second two-story addition was most likely added between 1887 and 1892.

⁴ Currently undergoing restoration work, the masonry of the main block of the house has been stripped of paint, exposing the red Flemish-bonded brick.

PROPERTY HISTORY

Today's configuration of land that is now known as the Williams-Addison House and historic tax lot 817 (current Lot 277) dates from 1858, when Brooke B. Williams sold a northern portion of the land that his aunt, Margaret Ann Williams Johns, deeded to him four years earlier. This 1854 parcel of land comprised the majority of land that Harriet Beall Williams deeded to Leonard H. Johns at the time of his marriage to Mrs. Williams' daughter, Margaret Ann, in 1813 and an additional parcel to the north deeded by Harriet Beall Williams to her daughter in 1841. The original acre deeded in 1813 was carved out of seven acres in the western portion of Square 1282 (originally Georgetown Square 112, part of Beall's Second Addition) that Harriet Beall Williams inherited from her father Brooke Beall in 1805. These seven acres were part of her father's substantially larger Georgetown land holdings, divided among his children, which were part of an even larger landholding of the Beall family in the late eighteenth century known as the Rock of Dumbarton. The Beall family, descended from Ninian Beall of Scotland, who was one of the first to settle in the region of Georgetown in the early eighteenth century, was an original Georgetown landholder. In 1703, Ninian Beall received a grant from Lord Baltimore which included much of the ground on which Georgetown stands, of which 795 acres became known as the Rock of Dumbarton.

Brooke Beall divided up his property among his numerous children, leaving each of them approximately the same amount of land in Georgetown. The seven acres that Mrs. Williams inherited were part of land that her father Brooke Beall had purchased from his cousin Thomas Beall (grandson of Ninian Beall and son of George Beall – thus the name “Thomas Beall of George,” as he called himself), but which had not conveyed to Brooke by the time he died in 1803.⁵ As a result, legal proceedings were necessary and delayed the transfer until 1805 when Thomas Beall conveyed the land directly to Mrs. Williams. The following year, in 1806, her husband Elisha O. Williams, a wealthy Maryland landholder, died, leaving her a young widow. Mrs. Williams proceeded to build a new house on the northern edge of the property, oriented to Road (R) Street, and later known as 49 Road Street, for herself and her three children, Harriet Eliza, Brooke, and Margaret Ann.⁶

In 1813, following the marriage of her daughter Margaret Ann, Harriet Williams deeded a portion of her land in Square 1282 to her new son-in-law, Leonard H. Johns.⁷ This portion, approximately one acre in size, formed the property known today as 1645 31st Street, N.W.⁸ By 1817, tax records reveal that the Johnses had built a double two-story brick house valued at \$3,000.00 on their property. Their two-story brick house, although altered with the 1886 addition of a third story, stands on the site today.

⁵ Harriet Williams' sister Christiana Beall Mackall inherited land nearby, known today as Mackall Square. It holds the house that she and her husband built following her ownership in 1805.

⁶ This new house, located at 49 Road Street, was later demolished circa 1902.

⁷ Deed AE-364, March 27, 1813.

⁸ Some time between 1805, when Harriet Beall Williams inherited the western portion of Square 1282, and 1813, when she deeded the future site of 1645 31st Street, N.W. to her son-in-law, she laid down an alley running east from Congress Street. The alley was referred to consistently in deeds as 30 feet wide although early twentieth century surveys determined that it was actually 25 feet wide.

After Johns died intestate circa 1833, a court-appointed trustee deeded the property to Margaret Ann Johns in 1834.⁹ Two years later, in 1836, Harriet Williams added to her daughter Margaret Ann's holdings by deeding her a second parcel immediately north of the Johns' property. (The additional parcel is now the site of the Dumbarton Court apartment building at 1657 31st Street, N.W.). At this time, she also deeded land in Square 1282, just south of the alley that marked the southern edge of the Johns' property, to her other daughter Harriet Eliza Harry and her husband H. E. Harry.

Then, in 1841, Margaret Ann and her brother Brooke Williams deeded property in the interior of the square to John C. Smith.¹⁰ She thus reduced the depth of her total holdings, as measured along the alley from Congress (31st) Street, by about 104 feet to approximately 230 feet.

In 1854, Margaret Ann Johns deeded her property, as reconfigured by the transactions of 1836 and 1841, to her nephew Brooke B. Williams, son of her brother Brooke Williams and his wife Rebecca. The younger Brooke was married to Caroline Bodisco, niece of Baron Alexandre de Bodisco, who had married Brooke's younger sister Harriet in one of Washington's most legendary weddings, held at the Williams' house on R Street. This double connection of wealth and power resulted in a deep bond between the two families, one that would influence Washington's social and political circles for generations.

Brooke B. and Caroline Williams resided in the house at 1645 31st Street for over twenty years, living near Harriet Beall Williams' large house built in 1805 to the north on R Street and the Bodisco House, which served as the home of the Russian Legation, at 3322 O Street. In 1858, President James Buchanan appointed Brooke B. Williams as the U.S. Consul to Revel, now known as Estonia's capital Tallinn. Following his work as a diplomat, Brooke Williams continued his career as a broker in Washington until the early 1890s when his speculations failed and he was forced to sell the family home on R Street, leaving his widow destitute.

The basic configuration of Lot 817 (now 277) was established in 1858, four years after Brooke B. Williams acquired his aunt's property, when he sold the northern portion of the property to John E. Carter. Williams retained frontage of 141 feet along Congress (31st) Street, slightly less than the 150 feet described in the 1813 deed from Harriet Beall Williams to Leonard Johns. After various financial reverses and borrowings against the property between 1869 and 1875, the Williamses sold the house and property in 1876 to Alexander H. Herr. Mr. Herr was a miller, as well as the vice-president of the Corcoran Fire Insurance Company and, interestingly, a previous owner of the Bodisco House at 3322 O Street.

Following the sale of 1645 31st Street to Alexander Herr in 1876, Brooke B. Williams and his wife moved into the Williams' family house at 49 Road (R) Street. It was in this house that the Williamses held the funeral for Caroline's brother Waldemar de Bodisco, nephew of Baron Alexandre de Bodisco and, like his uncle, the Russian consul-general to United States when he died in 1878.

⁹ WB 52-83, June 27, 1834.

¹⁰ WB 86-451, October 29, 1841.

Upon Abraham Herr's death, 1645 31st Street passed to his children, who sold it in 1886 to George W. Cissel.¹¹ Mr. Cissel was a partner of the Herrs in the flour milling firm of Herr & Cissel, located on the Georgetown waterfront, which later became G.W. Cissel & Co. Mr. Cissel, a successful businessman, named 1645 31st Street "Oak Crest," and used the property for extensive and lavish entertainment. In 1899, Mr. Cissel built a brick stable and carriage house at the rear of the lot. It is this stable (garage) and carriage house that are standing, although with substantial alterations, on the property today.

After George W. Cissel's death, in 1904, the property passed to his widow Agnes Moore and then to his only child, S. Sewall Cissel, who eventually went into bankruptcy. As a result of the younger Cissel's bankruptcy, the property was sold in 1914 by the owners of a deed of trust to Dr. William G. Erving.¹² Erving and his wife Emma L., who inherited the property upon Erving's death (circa 1923), also owned the parcel to the rear, designated as tax lot 818 and subsequently as tax lot 836 (after a small portion of the eastern side of the lot had been dedicated to widen the north-south alley).

In 1933, Clarence Phelps Dodge, the noted newspaper publisher, philanthropist, and four-term president of the Washington Community Chest, purchased the property. In 1935 and 1937, he and his wife, Regina Lunt Dodge, included the house among the residences to be shown in the annual Georgetown House Tour, a charity event hosted by Georgetown's St. Johns Episcopal Church since 1927. It is probable that Dodge did not acquire the interior lot, tax lot 836. In 1937, Emma Erving dedicated property she owned to extend the alley running along the southern boundary of both Lot 817 and lot 836, through to Avon Place.¹³ The alley was subsequently named Avon Lane.

Upon Mr. Dodge's death in 1939, his widow sold the property to Alfred Friendly and his wife, Jean Ulmann Friendly.¹⁴ Mr. Friendly was a well-known writer and reporter who won the Pulitzer Prize in journalism for International Reporting in 1968 and served as managing editor of the *Washington Post*. He and his wife entertained extensively at their home, inviting politicians, diplomats, and journalists alike to enjoy their extensive grounds and stately residence. In 1941, they included their residence in the annual Georgetown House Tour.¹⁵

Upon Mr. Friendly's death in 1983, the property passed into his wife's ownership. When Mrs. Friendly died in 2005 at the age of ninety, the property was inherited by her children. In 2006, the property was purchased by real estate developer Marc Teren.

To date, the property connection with the Addison name is not known. This association may

¹¹ Book 1202-35, July 31, 1886. City directories from this period, however, indicate that George W. Cissel had lived at 1645 31st Street since 1878, presumably renting the property.

¹² Book 3707-11, March 11, 1914.

¹³ Two years earlier, the parcel of land to the rear of 1645 31st Street, designated as tax lot 836 (formerly 818) was divided in half: 849 to the north and 850 to the south, respectfully.

¹⁴ Book 6771-310, December 28, 1933.

¹⁵ By 1948, the lot to the east, Lot 850, was subdivided into two pipestem lots (Lots 257 and 258) and two brick houses were constructed. In 1962, the public alley extending easterly from 31st Street to Avon Place was officially designated "Avon Lane" and recorded in the District of Columbia Office of the Surveyor.

stem from a rental at some time, but current research provides no record of Addison ownership.

OWNERS OF THE WILLIAMS-ADDISON HOUSE: 1645 31ST STREET, N.W.

Mr. and Mrs. Leonard H. Johns

Leonard H. Johns (? - 1833) and his wife, Margaret Ann Williams Johns (pre-1805-post 1854), lived on the property deeded to Leonard H. by his wife's mother, Harriet Beall Williams in 1813. They constructed a double two-story brick house valued at \$3,000 circa 1817. Upon Leonard H. Johns' death in 1833, the property was deeded to his widow who deeded it to her nephew, Brooke B. Williams, in 1854. Little information about Leonard H. Johns has surfaced during the research efforts.

Mr. and Mrs. Brooke B. Williams

Brooke Beall Williams (pre-1805 – c.1894) lived with his wife Caroline Bodisco Williams (? – post 1896) in the house at 1645 31st Street for over twenty years, having been deeded the house and property by his aunt Margaret Ann Williams Johns in 1854. Following the sale of 1645 31st Street in 1876, the Williamses resided at 49 Road (R) Street, the Williams family estate built by Brooke B. Williams' grandmother Harriet. They remained at the R Street house until circa 1894 when the property was sold owing to financial difficulties.

Brooke B. Williams was the son of Brooke and Rebecca Williams. In addition, he was the brother of Harriet Williams who, in 1840, married the Russian diplomat Baron Alexandre de Bodisco (1786-1854) in one of Washington's most legendary and famous weddings. The international ceremony was held at the Williams' nearby R Street house then known as 49 Road Street, with the reception following at the Russian Legation, known as the Bodisco House at 3322 O Street. Brooke B. Williams married Baron de Bodisco's niece, Caroline Bodisco, in 1848, thereby inextricably connecting the Bodisco and Williams families. Illustrating this connection, the funeral of Baron de Bodisco's nephew, Waldemar de Bodisco, Russian consul-general at New York, took place at the Williams' family estate on Road Street in 1878. A stock broker, Brooke B. Williams was a man of means who lost money in speculations and was forced to sell his family property.¹⁶ Caroline Bodisco, born in Sweden, was a member of wealthy Russian nobility. However, towards the end of her life, following her husband's financial failure and subsequent death, she was admitted into the Louise Home, a charitable Washington institution intended to care for Washington women of gentility who had fallen on hard times. The Williamses had two children, both of whom predeceased their parents.

Mr. Abraham H. Herr

Abraham H. Herr (? – 1886) purchased the property in 1876 from Caroline Williams. A miller and vice-president of the Corcoran Fire Insurance Company, Abraham Herr was residing, by 1871 or possibly earlier, in the house immediately north of 1645 31st Street, N.W., later known

¹⁶ Land records for the period 1869-1875 confirm Brooke B.'s financial difficulties. They include several deeds of trust to secure loans and a deed and release to Joseph Weaver in 1869, a deed from Joseph Weaver to Caroline Williams in 1870 and a deed from the U.S. Marshall to Caroline Williams in 1875. Previously, in 1858, Brooke B. Williams had sold the northern portion of the parcel to John E. Carter .

as 1657 31st Street and now the site of the Dumbarton Court apartment building. He and his son Austin Herr, who was also involved in the family milling business, continued to maintain their residence at 1657 31st street. City directories indicate that by 1879 the Herrs had rented the house at 1645 31st Street to their business partner, George W. Cissell. Before moving to 1657 31st Street, the Herr family had resided at the former Russian Legation located at 3322 O Street which Abraham Herr had purchased from the widowed Harriet Bodisco after she remarried. Upon Abraham Herr's death in 1886, the 1645 31st Street property passed to his children who sold it to his partner in the milling business, George W. Cissell.

Mr. George W. Cissel and Heirs

George Washington Cissel and his heirs owned the property at 1645 31st Street from 1886-1914. After purchasing the property in 1886, he named it "Oak Crest." George W. Cissel (1834-1904) was one of the leading businessmen of Washington, and considered "highly esteemed... as a man of enterprise and of sterling integrity."¹⁷ Born in Howard County, Maryland, to Samuel Cissel, a prosperous farmer, and the niece of Tennessee Representative and Senator John H. Bell, Mr. Cissel was one of nine children. After moving to Washington, D.C., in 1853 and opening a grocery store on 7th Street, Mr. Cissel entered the milling business in 1876. He became a member of the firm of Deener, Herr & Cissel, later Herr & Cissel, which, after buying out Mr. Herr's interest, he renamed G. W. Cissel & Co. The mills, named the Arlington Flour Mills, were located along Georgetown's waterfront. Mr. Cissel was also vice president of the Farmers and Mechanic's National Bank and a director of the Union Trust and Storage Company, as well as several other financial institutions. Mr. Cissel married twice, the second time to Agnes Moore of New Orleans. His only son, S. Sewall Cissel, from his first wife, joined him in his milling business. Experiencing financial difficulties, compounded by the loss of the Cissel flour mill to a fire, S. Sewall Cissel went into bankruptcy.¹⁸

Dr. and Mrs. William G. Erving

In 1914, the property at 1645 31st Street was purchased by the successful Washington physician William G. Erving and his wife, Emma L. Erving. Dr. Erving maintained his office at 922 17th Street, N.W. In addition to the property at 1645 31st Street, the Ervings also owned the parcel to the rear of the lot, designated as tax lot 818 and subsequently as tax lot 836 (after a small portion of the eastern side of the lot had been dedicated to widen the north-south alley, now Avon Place). In 1922, he proceeded to construct eleven one-story brick private garages along the eastern edge of lot 818, possibly as parking for the residents of the nearby apartment complex of Dumbarton Court at 1657 31st Street.¹⁹ After selling 1645 31st Street, Emma L. Erving dedicated the land to open the alley from 31st Street to Avon Place, possibly to provide access for the garages that she and her husband had built (on tax lot 836) in 1922.

¹⁷ "Georgetown Business Man Succumbs to Bright's Disease," *The Washington Post*, August 22, 1904.

¹⁸ "Burglar in Her Room," *The Washington Post*, March 1, 1912.

¹⁹ By 1945, the lower portion of this lot, designated as tax lot 850, was cleared of the garages that ran along the eastern edge of the property.

Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Phelps Dodge

Clarence Phelps Dodge (1877-1939) and his wife, Regina Lunt Dodge, purchased 1645 31st Street around 1933. Under their ownership, the property was included at least twice in the list of Georgetown residences open to the public under the annual spring Georgetown House Tour, a charity event for St. John's Episcopal Church in Georgetown.²⁰

Clarence Phelps Dodge was a newspaper publisher, philanthropist, and president of the Washington Community Chest for four terms. Mr. Dodge completed his education at Westminster School in Connecticut, Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, and graduated from Yale in 1899. Mr. Dodge was the grandson of William E. Dodge, distinguished New York philanthropist and merchant, who founded the notable Phelps Dodge Co. Coming to Washington from Colorado in 1930, Mr. Dodge became active in civic affairs and welfare work. Among other activities, he was a trustee and member of the Executive Committee of the Brookings Institution, a member of the Washington Board of Trade, and a chair of the Committee on Housing in Washington. He was a member of the Burning Tree Country Club and the Cosmos Club. In addition, Mr. Dodge was a trustee of the American University in Beirut (then Syria), which his father, the Rev. D. Stuart Dodge, was instrumental in founding. His wife, Regina Lunt Dodge, was daughter of Judge and Mrs. Horace Gray Lunt of Colorado Springs.

Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Friendly

Alfred Friendly (1911-1983) and his wife, Jean Ulmann Friendly (1915-2005), purchased 1645 31st Street in 1939 from the widowed Mrs. Dodge. Members of Washington's political elite, the Friendlys hosted an annual Christmas Eve party popular among politicians, diplomats, and journalists. In 1941, their property was also included in the Georgetown House Tour. The Friendlys owned 1645 31st Street until 2005, when 90-year-old Mrs. Friendly died, and the property was inherited by her children.

A 1933 graduate of Amherst College, Mr. Friendly (1911-1983) became a Washington newspaperman in 1936, joining the *Washington Post* in 1939, going on to become assistant managing editor in 1952, and then managing editor in 1955. In 1965, he became the *Post's* London-based, roving correspondent in Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting in 1968 for his coverage of the Middle East War of 1967. Mr. Friendly played a critical role in the development of the *Post* during the 1950s and 1960s, widening its appeal from a local into a renowned national newspaper.

²⁰ According to *Washington Post* accounts of the time, 1645 31st Street was included among the houses shown on the Georgetown House Tour in the years 1935 and 1937.

SUMMARY CHAIN OF TITLE FOR THE WILLIAMS-ADDISON HOUSE: 1645 31ST STREET, N.W.

Through deed research summarized in the Peabody Room files of the Georgetown Library, tax record research, records in the Office of the D.C. Surveyor, city directory research, map research, and Proquest searches of the *Washington Post*, the following history has been assembled.

The site of 1645 31st Street, N.W., [originally Congress Street] (Lot 817, Square 1282) was part of a larger property known as the Rock of Dumbarton owned by the Beall family in the late eighteenth century. Over time and succeeding generations the Beall holdings were divided among family members. Some parcels were sold within the family and some passed out of the family.

In the early deeds, property boundaries are often described in terms of other property lines, rather than in feet, thus making it difficult to determine the lines without extensive research. However, there is one constant in the descriptions of the parcel that became the site of 1645 31st Street. Sometime between 1805, when Harriet Beall Williams inherited the western portion of Square 1282, and 1813, when she deeded the future site of 1645 31st Street to her son-in-law, she laid down an alley running east from Congress Street. The alley was consistently referred to in deeds as 30 feet wide although early twentieth century surveys determined that it was actually 25 feet wide. Property descriptions of the parcel begin at the northwest corner of the thirty-foot alley on Congress Street and the line runs east with the ally to a point expressed in terms of property lines of other landholders rather than as a distance from Congress Street. The eastern end point may have been the point at which the alley laid out by Harriet Williams is shown as ending in late nineteenth and early twentieth century maps, a point that is 20-30 feet west of Avon Place, N.W.

1803-1805 Harriet Beall Williams, daughter of Brooke Beall and wife of Elisha O. Williams, inherited about seven acres of property in the western portion of Square 1282 (originally Georgetown Square 112, part of Beall's Second Addition) from her father who died intestate circa 1803. After various legal complexities had been resolved, Thomas Beall deeded to Harriet Beall Williams her share of the property that her father had bought from Thomas Beall but which had not been conveyed to Brooke Beall before his death (Deed M-398, June 14, 1805).

Circa 1806 Elisha O. Williams died. Harriet Beall Williams built a house on R (Road) Street for herself and her young children. She had at least three children: Brooke, Margaret Ann, and Harriet. Her house was subsequently occupied by her son Brooke Williams and his wife Rebecca and their children and still later by her grandson Brooke B. Williams. It was demolished early in the twentieth century.

[1808-12 Assessment of Real and Personal Property for Harriet Williams listed: "part of Rock Dumbarton improved 62 acres" valued at \$2,500 and personal property valued at \$500.]

1813 Harriet Williams deeded a portion of her property in Square 1282 to her daughter Margaret Ann's husband Leonard H. Johns (Deed AE-365, March 27, 1813). The property was described as fronting Congress [31st] Street. Beginning at the northwest corner of Congress St. and the alley [now Avon Lane] Harriet Williams had created, the property line extended 150 north along Congress (31st) Street and eastward to the lot owned by the heirs of David Peter (location to be determined).

[1815 Assessment of Real and Personal Property for Harriet Williams listed: "6 acres Rock of Dumbarton with improvements" valued at \$6,515 (*probably R Street house*) and personal property valued at \$1,485.]

[1813-18 Assessment of Real and Personal Property for Harriet Williams listed: "6 acres Rock of Dumbarton with improvements" valued at \$7,000 and personal property valued at \$1,485.]

Circa 1817 Leonard Johns owned a double two-story brick house valued at \$3,000 (Records of the City of Georgetown, D.C., Assessment of Real and Personal Property, pg. 106, 1813-18)

1818-19 Tax records for Leonard Johns list "new brick house on Congress Street [?] 175' [Mr. and Mrs.] Williams' lot valued at \$4,000 (Records of the City of Georgetown, D.C., Assessment of Real and Personal Property, pg. 100, 1818-19).

[1818-19 Assessment of Real and Personal Property for Harriet Williams listed: "8 acres Rock of Dumbarton [with] her own improvements" valued at \$6,400 and personal property valued at \$1,600.]

1833 Leonard H. Johns died intestate and his estate was settled in Chancery Cause 244, Rules 3, Dec. 30, 1833. The property was deeded to his widow, Margaret Ann Johns, by the court-appointed trustee (WB 52-83, June 27, 1834).

1836 Harriet Williams deeded an additional parcel to her daughter Margaret A. Johns immediately north of the parcel she had deeded to Leonard H. Johns in 1813 (WB 60-292, November 26, 1836).

In this period Harriet Williams also conveyed property in Square 1282 to her other children. She placed the parcel on which she lived in the northwest corner of the square in trust for her son Brooke and his wife Rebecca and devised their children as the ultimate beneficiaries. The trust provided that when the children reached their majority, the property should be sold and the proceeds divided equally among them. This parcel began at the southwest corner of Congress and Road [R] streets, ran south 377' along Congress, east 330', north 210' to Road Street and 400' along Road Street to the beginning. Harriet Williams deeded property in the southwestern corner of the square, between the 30' alley and Stoddert [Q] Street, to her daughter

Harriet's husband H.E. Harry.

- 1841** Margaret A. Johns and her brother Brooke Williams deeded a parcel in Square 1282 to John C. Smith (WB 86-451, Oct 29, 1841) adjacent to the parcel she retained. (This may be the parcel later known as tax lot 818, and then as tax lot 836 at the rear of the sites of 1645 31st Street and the Dumbarton Court apartment building but further research would need to be done to determine if this was so.)
- 1854** Margaret A. Johns deeded the house now known as 1645 31st Street and property to her nephew Brooke B. Williams in 1854. Brooke B. Williams was the son of Brooke and Rebecca Williams, and brother of Harriet Beall Williams who had married the Russian diplomat, Count Bodisco. Brooke B. Beall had married Count Bodisco's niece, Caroline Bodisco, in 1848.

The dimensions of the property deeded by Margaret Ann Johns to her nephew were significantly different in both length and breadth from property as originally deeded by Harriet Williams to Leonard Johns in 1813. The east line of the parcel deeded by Margaret Johns to her nephew was bounded by the property of John C. Smith (see above) and was 104'3" west of the property line as described in the 1813 deed. The north and south boundaries reflected additional property deeded by Harriet B. Williams to her daughter Margaret Ann. The Congress Street boundary was 227 feet as compared with the original boundary of 150 feet (JAS 87-183, October 13, 1854).

In 1858, Brooke B. Williams and his wife Caroline deed a portion of the property - to the north - to John E. Carter (JAS 150-99, January 19, 1858).

The 1867 city directory listed Brook B. Williams as an exchange broker residing on Congress Street near Reservoir.

- 1865-1870** Assessment of Real and Personal Property for Brooke B. Williams listed: "improvements double two story brick dwelling" valued at \$3,200 and land "153' E side Congress Street 250' deep - on north line" valued at \$4,000 (Records of the City of Georgetown, D.C., Assessment of Real and Personal Property, pg. 544, 1865-70).

[1865-70 Assessment of Georgetown Real Estate for Brooke Williams' Heirs (*property to north*) listed:

- "179' S side Road Street bounded west by Congress Street [---] east by ground of [---] Carter's Heirs and south by ground of J.C. Smith and others" valued at \$4,000.
- "Improvements good brick mansion and outbuilding" valued at \$5,500 (*R Street house*)
- "70' east side Congress Street 135' north line, 125' south [?] line, 45' back line said lot" valued at \$1,450
- "37 6/12' east side Congress Street 125 deep (?)" valued at \$900.]

[1871 Assessment of Real and Personal Property for Brooke Williams Heirs listed land valued at \$5,000, with improvements of \$4,500.]

- 1869-1875** Several *Washington Post* articles written in 1896 described Brooke B. Williams, who died in 1894, as having been a man of means who lost his money in speculations and had had to sell his family property. Land records for the period 1869-1875 confirm this. They include several deeds of trust to secure loans and a deed and release to Joseph Weaver in 1869, a deed from Joseph Weaver to Catherine Williams in 1870, and a deed from the U.S. Marshall to Caroline Williams in 1875. Williams had sold the northern portion of the parcel to John E. Carter in 1858.
- 1876** In 1876 Caroline Williams sold the remaining property to Abraham H. Herr. (The 1875 city directory listed A.H. Herr as the vice-president of the Corcoran Fire Insurance Company.) The deed mentioned that it included a brick dwelling house and buildings. Beginning at the corner of the alley and Congress Street, the property extended 230' east and 140' north (compared with the 227' of Congress Street frontage deeded by Margaret Johns to Brooke B. Williams in 1854).
- 1877** Two improved lots were assessed for Caroline Williams: the first valued at \$7,650 with \$2,500 improvements and the second valued at \$5,889 with improvements valued at \$4,000 (Assessment of Georgetown Real Estate, pg. 170, 1877).
- A.H. Herr assessed with three improved lots: first valued at \$5,376 with \$6,500 improvements, the second valued at \$328 with \$600 improvements, and the third valued at \$7,650 with \$2,500 improvements (Assessment of Georgetown Real Estate, pg. 73, 1877).
- 1876-1886** Upon Abraham Herr's death, the property passed to his children who sold it in 1886 to George W. Cissel, a partner in the flour milling firm of Herr & Cissel which was located on the Georgetown waterfront (Book 1202-35, July 31, 1886). By 1879, city directories list George W. Cissel, of the milling company Herr & Cissel (later G.W. Cissel & Co.) residing at 1645 31st Street, presumably renting from Herr. In the late 1890s, Cissel partners with his son S. Sewell in milling company G.W. Cissel & Co. [Based upon an 1887 Hopkins map, the children of Abraham Herr maintained ownership of the property and the brick dwelling house just to the north of the 1645 31st Street property.] G.W. Cissel names the property "Oak Crest."
- 1899-1900** George W. Cissel assessed with land fronting 31st Street at 141.25', 31,553 sf., ground valued at \$9,466, with \$3,500 improvements and land fronting alley 104.77', 24,644 sq ft. [Lot 818], ground valued at \$2,957 *w/out* improvements (Assessment of Georgetown Real Estate, Square 1282, 1899-1900).
- 1902-1903** George W. Cissel assessed with land fronting 31st Street at 141.25', 31,553 sf., ground valued at \$11,044, with \$3,500 improvements and land fronting alley

104.77', 24,644 sf, valued at \$2,957 with \$300 improvements (Assessment of Georgetown Real Estate, Square 1282, 1902-1903).

[Small brick shed built on rear lot (Lot 818) valued at \$300.]

1907-1914 After George W. Cissel's death in 1904, the property passed to his widow and then to his only child, S. Sewall Cissel, who went into bankruptcy.

1914 As a result of S. Sewall Cissel's bankruptcy, the property was sold by the owners of a deed of trust to Dr. William G. Erving (Book 3707-11, March 11, 1914). (Dr. Erving was a physician who an 1918 city directory listed as having an office at 922 17th Street, N.W.)

1914-1933 William Erving and his wife Emma L. Erving, who inherited the property upon Erving's death (pre-1927), also owned the parcel to the rear, designated as tax lot 818 and subsequently as tax lot 836 (after a small portion of the eastern side of the lot had been dedicated to widen the north-south alley).

1921-22 William Erving: Lot 817 assessed at 31,553 sf, \$7,888 land and \$3,800 improvements; Lot 818 assessed at 24,644 sf, \$2,957 with \$300 improvements (Assessment of Georgetown Real Estate, Square 1282, 1921-1922).

1934-1939 Clarence Phelps Dodge bought the 1645 31st Street property in c.1933 (Book 6771-310, December 28, 1933), and his widow, Regina Lunt Dodge, sold it in 1939. (1932 city directories list him residing at 1645 31st Street.) Clarence Phelps Dodge (1877-1939) was a newspaper publisher, philanthropist and president of the Washington Community Chest for four terms. Coming to Washington from Colorado in 1930, Mr. Dodge became active in civic affairs and welfare work. Among other activities, he was a trustee and member of the Executive Committee of the Brookings Institution, a member of the Board of Trade, and was chair of the Committee on Housing in Washington. He was also a member of the Burning Tree Country Club in Washington and the Cosmos Club.

[In 1935, the parcel of land to the rear, designated as tax lot 836 (formerly 818) was divided in half: 849 to the north and 850 to the south. In 1937, Avon Lane was opened to extend from 31st Street through to Avon Place.]

1939-2006 Alfred Friendly and his wife, Jean Ulman Friendly, bought 1645 31st Street, N.W., in 1939. Alfred Friendly (1911-1983), became managing editor of the *Washington Post*, after joining the Post in 1939, serving as reporter, then as assistant managing editor. In 1965, he became the Post's London-based, roving correspondent in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting in 1968 for his coverage of the Middle East War of 1967.

[By 1945, Lot 850 was cleared of garages running along eastern edge of property.]

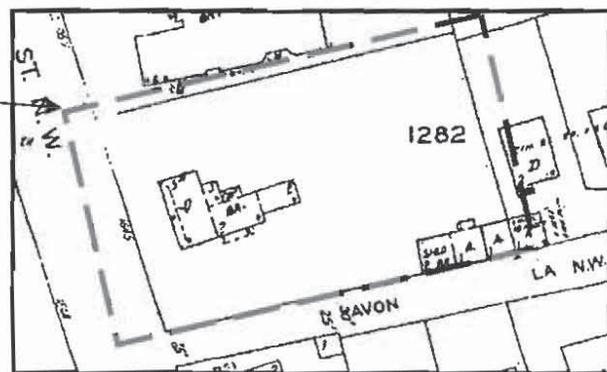
By 1954, Lot 850 was subdivided into two pipestem lots (Lots 257 and 258) and two brick houses were constructed.]

In 1962, the public alley extending easterly from 31st Street to Avon Place was officially designated "Avon Lane" and recorded in the District of Columbia Office of the Surveyor.

- 2005** Jean Friendly dies at 90 years of age and the property was inherited by her children.
- 2006** Marc Teren buys the property for \$6.5 million.



Williams-Addison House
1645 31st Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.
Square 2182, Lot 277
31,982 square feet



*Red indicates boundary of designated area

First American Real Estate Solutions, *The Sanborn Building and Property Atlas of Washington, D.C.*, Vol. 5 (1999), sheet 517.

**All photographs are of:
The Williams-Addison House/1645 31st Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.
EHT Tracerics, Inc., photographer**

- 1) The Williams-Addison House/1645 31st Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.
EHT Tracerics, Inc.
June 2007
EHT Tracerics, Inc.
West Elevation, looking east from 31st Street, N.W.
Photo 1 of 1

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