
HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD

Historic Landmark Case No. 17-16

Harrison Street Flats

4315, 4319, 4323, 4327, 4331, 4335, 4339, 4343, 4347 and 4351 Harrison Street NW
Square 1657, Lots 11-20 and 2001-2011

Meeting Date: February 22, 2018
Applicant: Tenleytown Historical Society and D.C. Preservation League
Affected ANC: 3E

After careful consideration of the application and additional research, the Historic Preservation Office recommends that the Board designate the Harrison Street Flats a historic landmark in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites. The SHPO further recommends that the nomination, revised as appropriate, be forwarded to the National Register of Historic Places for listing as locally significant to the District of Columbia.

The Harrison Street Flats were built in 1936 on a side street just off Wisconsin Avenue, two blocks from the District line at Western Avenue. The block of ten two-story brick and stucco flats, each with four apartment units, was designed by the noted architect Appleton P. Clark, Jr., and built by Clarence W. Gosnell. Developer Michael A. Mess obtained the building permit for the project, and Gosnell was the property owner.

The Harrison Street Flats followed a four-family housing model that had recently become well established as a way to provide reasonably priced housing in a city whose population had increased by more than 100,000, or nearly one third, during the 1910s, largely due to the First World War, and would increase by 175,000, or more than one third again, during the 1930s. Production of adequate housing was a primary planning concern for the city during this entire era, and the Harrison Flats give insight into how the city addressed that challenge.



Historical Context

Four-Family Flats

The Harrison Street Flats¹ are an example of the four-family walk-up flats that became common during a new phase of affordable housing construction in the city, beginning in the late 1920s and continuing through the 1930s and 1940s. The private housing developers who mostly built these flats were responding to housing shortages caused by the Great Depression and onset of World War II. Efficient and easily constructed four-family flats were crucial in meeting the city's housing needs during the Depression. They would become even more critical during the war ahead, offering a standardized and tested prototype that both private developers and the government could use to build housing quickly on both open land and small infill sites. Construction permit data shows that 200 such structures were built in 1940, 318 in 1941, 497 in 1942, 576 in 1943, 36 in 1944, and 15 in 1945.

A Zoning Commission study issued in 1935 reported that 256 four-family flats had been built in the city from 1920 to 1933. They were found in many parts of the city, but by no means evenly distributed, as shown by the commission's data analysis, which divided the city into eighteen districts. Their survey of dwellings in four-unit flats found that 21 percent had been built in the section of Northeast that includes the current-day neighborhoods of Trinidad, Carver-Langston, and Brentwood. The second-largest concentration of 13 percent was found in the Southeast quadrant of the original city; and 11 percent were found in the Northeast quadrant of the original city, including the neighborhoods of Rosedale and Kingman Park. Only one percent was recorded in the portion of upper Northwest from Wisconsin Avenue to Rock Creek Park, and none in upper Northwest from Wisconsin Avenue to the Potomac, where the Harrison Flats are located.

Housing Imbalances

The housing data reported by the Zoning Commission quantifies not only the uneven distribution of specific housing types across the city, but also the relative quantities of the various types—single-family dwellings, flats, apartment houses, etc.—being constructed. From 1920 to 1933, there were more than 25,500 dwellings and 23,600 apartment units built, but only about 1,500 units in more affordable two-family, four-family, and above-store flats.

The relative scarcity of lower-cost housing options was a major housing problem by the beginning of the Great Depression. In the boom years of the 1920s, the city added significant numbers of multi-story, especially high-end, apartment houses and single-family houses, but not enough low-cost housing for renters. This reflected a nationwide problem, exacerbated by the banking crises caused by the Depression. One of the first efforts of the Roosevelt administration, as it assumed office in March 1933, was to address the hardship of housing costs for workers by trying to stabilize the interdependent banking, construction, and real estate industries. There were different points of view on whether government-constructed or privately developed housing with government financing support would best be able to meet this housing crisis. Ultimately both methods were pursued, but forceful attention to the problem led to both innovative housing models for efficient and affordable housing of good quality, and a realization that much of the

¹ This report uses the term “flats” rather than “apartments” as used in the nomination, for several reasons: they were identified as flats on the building permit application; zoning officials recognized two-family and four-family flats as building types at the time; and while the terms “flat” and “apartment” were used somewhat interchangeably, “flats” tended to denote small apartments, duplexes, or apartment houses with limited services.

problem needed to be solved not by more single-family housing, but by the type of easily constructed house-like units that four-family flats exemplified. These lessons were not lost on the local planners and builders in the District of Columbia.

Sanitary Housing Companies

Washingtonians had already experimented with innovative ways to create affordable rental housing in the District of Columbia. These efforts grew out of the late-nineteenth-century sanitary housing movement, which was itself an off-shoot of the earlier philanthropic housing movement in England. Broadly speaking, the movement was aimed at providing affordable housing of good quality for the working class. In the District, the sanitary housing movement began more specifically as social and urban reformers focused their attention on improving housing for the city's poorest residents, and mainly those living in alleys.

In 1896, the Washington Sanitary Improvement Company (WSIC) became the first sanitary housing company in the District, beginning its foray into the housing market by erecting a row of rental flats on Bates Street, NW. For Bates Street and later projects, WSIC refined a model of two-story flats, with one dwelling unit on each floor. These duplexes were called "sanitary" because each unit provided indoor plumbing, adequate ventilation, and more space than overcrowded alley housing. Because they looked much like rowhouses, the two-family homes also provided the psychological benefit of an appearance of middle-class respectability to persons of modest income.

In 1903, the WSIC was joined by the Washington Sanitary Housing Company (WSHC), founded to provide even less expensive housing for workers who could not afford WSIC rents. During the first decade of the twentieth century, the two companies popularized the two-family flat rowhouse model, which was quickly embraced by the private sector as well. According to this nomination, more than 1,700 of these two-family flats (not all of them intended as affordable housing) were built in the city between 1903 and 1908, the majority of which were privately developed. WSIC and WSHC had constructed about 400 such buildings when they finished their last in 1925.

Standardization of Two-Family Flats

With two sanitary housing companies and multiple private developers with different architects producing significant numbers of two-family flats, it is not surprising that there was significant variation in the configuration and architectural design of these buildings, even during a compressed time period. Variations in lot size and shape led to different building layouts; so did the lot location, whether on a corner or mid-block. For private developers and architects completing a handful of projects here and there, this may not have been a consideration of much consequence, but for companies aiming to provide good-quality buildings at the lowest price, operating on the slimmest of profit margins, and obligated to yield a guaranteed return on investment to shareholders, the benefits of standardization would be obvious.

Driven by such a need to standardize, the sanitary housing companies tinkered with their product, testing and refining the model in successive projects. Working from a rowhouse model, they first experimented with a typical 19th-century rowhouse plan, with two primary rooms in a main block at the front of the house, and secondary rooms in a rear ell pulled back from the lot lines to provide light courts between adjoining buildings. But this extended form was not particularly compact, requiring long and expensive exterior walls at the rear. An improved 1908

plan by Appleton Clark for lower-cost WSHC units eliminated the rear ells, and replaced them with rear porches enclosing winding stairs for access from the second-floor units to the rear yard.

The involvement of private-sector developers also helped to improve the two-family flat model. In the Wardman Flats of 1902, for example, developer Harry Wardman replaced double front doors with a single exterior door, opening into a vestibule with separate unit doors. Wardman had been a contractor for some of the earliest WSIC projects, and used his marketing talent to create a better product that would become more appealing to consumers. This same process of private-market improvement would repeat itself later with four-family flats.

Standardization of Four-Family Flats

After a six-year hiatus, the sanitary housing companies resumed construction in 1931, when architect Appleton Clark assumed WSIC leadership. Clark had already been the designer of most WSIC and WSHC two-family flats since 1907, and in the 1930s, he used his more influential position to move sanitary housing forward to an updated four-flat model.

Conceptually, the transition from a two-family to a four-family flat was a simple one. By removing the demising wall between a mirrored pair of two-family flats, all four units could be served by a single stair rather than two, improving the efficiency. Private developers had already figured this out, as four-family flats underwent the same type of formative innovation seen in two-family flats. Just as with the earlier type, there was initially a wide variation in the configuration and appearance of early apartment buildings with four units, so much so that they could not be considered a particular type. Over time, however, a specific type did emerge, and as it did, the name for these buildings as recorded in permit applications gradually changed from apartments to flats.

Many architects and developers produced four-family apartments and flats. The first recorded in building permits came in 1895, and for the next twenty years, and there was a handful in most years. They could be up to four stories high, but most were two stories and looked like a joined version of typical bay-fronted Washington rowhouses. Interestingly, Appleton Clark designed and built a four-family apartment building in 1908 on land owned by his wife, Florence Perry Clark. Whether this building was simply an investment property, or was also an experiment by the architect with a new building type, is not known. Like the early sanitary housing projects, it retained the rear ell typical of Victorian rowhouses, but its facade is more innovative, emphasizing its character as a single block rather than trying to mimic a pair of rowhouses (see photos).

By the late 1920s, the four-family flat began to standardize as a building type. The prolific architect George Santmyers, often working with the builder-developers Young & Oppenheimer (aka E.B. Young Enterprises), can perhaps be given most credit for the two-story, flat-fronted, centralized building design that became nearly ubiquitous in the 1930s and especially the 1940s. The team also began to standardize the building size and shape for urban sites, repeating slight variations on a typical 32-foot by 36-foot building footprint from 1929 onward. The African-American architect Lewis W. Giles also designed a number of four-family flats, beginning in 1925, and the builders Cafritz Construction Company and Clarence W. Gosnell entered the market strongly in 1931.

Influence of Federal Housing Programs

The 1930s expansion of the federal government and influx of government workers moving into the city renewed the local shortage of affordable housing. Reviving housing markets nationwide was high on the federal agenda, and as often occurred, federal agencies used Washington as testing ground, in this case for public housing such as Langston Terrace (begun in 1935) and federally-assisted garden apartment complexes, such as Colonial Village in Arlington (begun in 1935) and Brentwood Village in the District (begun in 1937). Long active in the sanitary housing movement, Appleton Clark would certainly have been aware of these federal projects, but there is little evidence that 1930s government programs influenced the Harrison Street flats in anything more than a general way, by reaffirming the importance of such attributes as efficient clustered layout, proximity to transportation, and sensitive design creating a home-like atmosphere. The active engagement of organizations like WSIC and WSHC also fit the federal model of encouraging private investors to build well-planned affordable housing.

The Harrison Street flats are not really garden apartments, as suggested in the nomination, except perhaps in the way Clark skillfully divided the project into distinct blocks.² His attention to the composition of buildings in groups is characteristic of these as well as other flats he designed for WSIC (see photos). But unlike garden apartments, the urban four-family flat was a different prototype that was better suited to less-spacious sites.

Influence of Zoning Regulations

The city's zoning regulations had a greater impact than federal planning on the production and especially the location of four-family flats. Washington adopted its first zoning regulations in 1920, just four years after New York City pioneered the new planning tool to promote rational urban development by separating incompatible land uses into discrete areas. The District had long made a distinction between "business" and "residential" streets, with some regulatory implications, but zoning introduced a more comprehensive approach.

A primary expectation of the District's zoning was to protect residential areas by excluding incompatible uses, as shown by this 1920 newspaper announcement:

A step toward making Washington in truth a "city beautiful," by the elimination of unnecessary business places from localities desirable for exclusive residential purposes was taken yesterday in the first meeting of the District zone commission in the District Building.³

The 1920 zoning regulations created four use zones: Residential, First Commercial, Second Commercial (for light manufacturing), and Industrial (for any use), but very soon a clear distinction was made for detached housing:

No distinction was made originally between apartment houses and other residences. In the building boom following the war the apartment house became very important, and a strong agitation among home owners was started to exclude

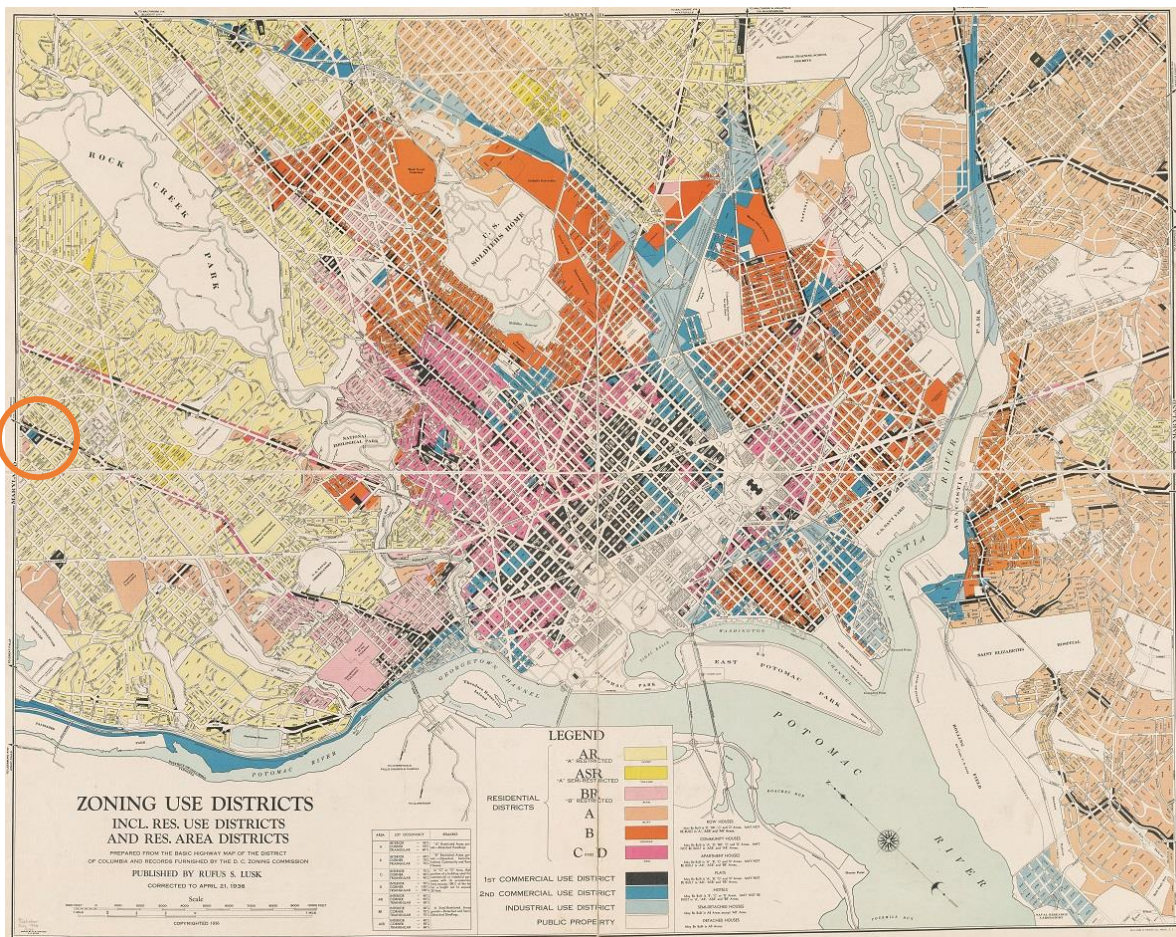
² Webster Gardens in Petworth (1921), Hampshire Gardens in Brightwood Park (1929), and Langston Terrace, all protected by historic designation, are better examples of garden apartments built by the mid-30s. More-spacious sites in Trinidad, Glover Park, and across the Anacostia River allowed for separated buildings and garden apartment layouts in the 1930s and 40s.

³ "Kutz is Chairman of Zone Commission: Capital Will Soon Be Divided into Districts Restricted to Building Types," Washington Post, March 31, 1920, p. 8.

it from restricted residential sections. The motive behind the agitation was to separate rental housing facilities in flats and apartment houses, where the population is shifting, from one-family dwellings with their more permanent population. As a response to this agitation the Zoning Commission created in 1923 a new zoning district, called “A” restricted, from which apartment houses were excluded. In 1926, further restrictions were added, so that only wholly detached single-family dwellings with two side yards, churches and school buildings were to be permitted.

As a result of this defense of the individual home 30.4% of the entire zoned area of Washington, and 35.2% of the residential use areas are zoned “A” restricted. This preponderance of the “A” restricted areas reflects both the popularity of the restriction and the bias of the Zoning Commission in favor of home sections.⁴

The zoning map of 1936 shows how these exclusionary policies were applied in practice. Apartments and flats were almost entirely excluded from the outlying area between Rock Creek Park and the Potomac, except along major avenues. In contrast, they were permitted in, and therefore directed to, large sections of Northeast and Southeast, including nearly the entire area east of the Anacostia River.



D.C. Zoning Map 1936; site of Harrison Flats circled

⁴ The Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia: Experiences With Zoning in Washington, D.C. 1929-1934, recorded by S.G. Lindholm, p. 9.

The Zoning Commission conferred with community advisory committees when formulating the initial zoning regulations, and vocal community involvement continued at its monthly meetings, which received detailed newspaper coverage. The commission found itself having to mediate between development advocates favoring denser residential construction, and community advocates seeking to protect single-family homes. In 1929, for example, the American University Park Citizens Association successfully argued for rezoning the area along Massachusetts Avenue to the most exclusive residential zone, eliminating the possibility of rowhouses and flats, except for the commercial Spring Valley shopping center. Such regulatory controls largely explain the Zoning Commission's 1935 findings on the scarcity of four-family flats in upper Northwest. Flats were concentrated where the zoning allowed, but the Harrison Street flats were built where so few others existed only because they occupied land zoned for commercial use.

Harrison Street Flats in Context

The Harrison Street flats are notable for exemplifying Depression-era affordable housing, demonstrating the four-flat model as designed by an architect deeply involved in the design and promotion of affordable housing during the first three decades of the 20th century. They are a good example of a block-long group of flats serving as a transition from commercial to residential. The project is also notable for its position in a prosperous section of the city developed almost entirely for single-family detached housing. Its location here shows that affordable housing was needed in all sections of the city.

Significance of the Site

The site developed with the flats was at the terminus of a streetcar line from Georgetown, which had just become a transition point from streetcars to buses providing extended service into Maryland. Facilities near the site included the Friendship Heights transfer terminal (1935) on the Maryland side of the boundary at Wisconsin and Western avenues; the Western Car House or streetcar barn (about 1890) on Wisconsin Avenue; the Western Bus Garage (1934), located just behind the row of flats; and the electrical substation that powered the streetcars. Also in close proximity were Tolman's Laundry, gas and auto repair stations, and various other business establishments.

The location of the flats at a newly established streetcar-to-bus terminal is significant. The bus garage and transfer station, added to supplement the streetcar barn and its power source, had just been opened when the row of flats was built. The transfer station was created to accomplish the abandonment of the streetcar line from Friendship Heights to Rockville, which was part of the Capital Transit Company's modernization program in the midst of the Great Depression. Congress had just approved the creation of the transit company in 1933, allowing the merger of three independent companies, and consolidating the city's entire streetcar system under single management for the first time. The final step in the merger, absorption of the bus-operating Washington Rapid Transit Company, was not accomplished until 1936, but by that time, Capital Transit had already begun a forward-looking program of improving the city's transit system by replacing outmoded streetcars on lines where more flexible, modern bus transit made sense. The Rockville line was one of five major lines abandoned in 1935.

Tenants at the Harrison Flats

Like similar four-flat models built elsewhere in the city during the Depression years, the Harrison Street Flats were intended for rental to persons of moderate means who could not afford to purchase or rent a single-family dwelling, especially in an affluent area like upper Northwest, and perhaps not even a car. The 1940 census bears out that the complex attracted mostly blue-collar and clerical workers, including clerks, salespeople, switchboard operators, machinists and construction workers. The largest group was twelve bus operators and a streetcar motorman, working six days a week or more for the Capital Transit Company. A tubemaker made rubber tires; a bookkeeper worked at an insurance company and a guard at the Interior Department; a private served in the Army. Most were married and they lived with toddlers, teenagers, and adult children; parents, in-laws, and lodgers. Two electrical engineers, a chemist, and a physicist had college degrees; a nurse, stenographer, salesman in a cigar store, and housewife with two young children had two years of college. Of the remaining adults, twenty-one had finished high school, twenty-seven had at least a year of college, and thirteen had a seventh- or eighth-grade education. Two mothers-in-law, born in the 1880s, had only four and five years of schooling respectively.

Developer-Builders

Even before graduating from the George Washington University, Clarence W. Gosnell, Sr. was employed as an estimator for the construction firm of Hemans Ward and John D. Codd. He soon tried his hand at design, credited as “architect” on several new construction and rehabilitation projects by smalltime builders in 1924, 1925 and 1926. By mid 1925, Gosnell had set out on his own as a builder, designing and erecting two four-family flats for Benjamin Harris on Elliott Street NE, the first of dozens of similar apartments he would undertake before the end of the Great Depression. In 1934, he produced similar flats for WSIC in Trinidad, designed by the WSIC director and lead architect, Appleton Clark. Gosnell also developed single-family homes, both rowhouses and detached, and built residential additions. His work focused on housing affordable to the masses, including his modest flats generally designed by C.J. Hartnett, and single-family homes designed by former boss John Codd. Clarence W. Gosnell, Inc. would ultimately relocate to Virginia to construct postwar neighborhoods such as Lee Village in Arlington and Waynewood south of Alexandria.

In Washington, Gosnell collaborated with the prolific George Santmyers, with Leon Chatelain, and with Harry Wardman’s favorite architect, Mirhan Mesrobian. Mid-1936 saw another collaboration with developer Michael A. Mess, first on a series of four-unit apartments in the Glover Park, and then on the Harrison Street project. Gosnell had purchased and resubdivided both parcels, but in both cases the building permits identified Mess as the property owner, suggesting joint financing.

Architect Appleton P. Clark, Jr.

Architect Appleton P. Clark was a leading Washington architect who apprenticed with Alfred B. Mullett, and designed all types of buildings in his distinguished career. He and his wife were active in numerous civic and charitable organizations, and he served on the boards of both Washington sanitary housing companies, finally becoming a director. He had been actively engaged in the sanitary housing movement with WSIC and WSHC since the late nineteenth century, and designed the majority of the two-family and four-family flats the two companies. By 1936, Clark was also designing affordable flats for private developers. In that year alone, he was the architect for several groups, including eight buildings on the 1200 blocks of Raum Street and Simms Place in Trinidad for the WSIC; another group of five buildings in the 1200 block of

Raum Street for the private developer, Edgehill Housing Company; as well as these on Harrison Street. Having spent thirty years (from 1907 to 1938) of his nearly sixty-year career in affordable housing, it must be considered a major achievement of his notable career, equally as important as his accomplishments with other building types.

Architectural Design

Appleton Clark designed the Harrison Street flats by tailoring the four-flat model to include his own innovations, such as the back porches with a spiral stair giving back yard access to each unit. But his architectural conception of the project is notably more sophisticated than the standard repetitive Colonial Revival facades of many other four-unit flats. First, Clark broke the row of ten buildings into two blocks of five units each, separating them by a central yard that gives the block a suggestion of the more spacious landscaping on suburban residential streets. Each block is further subdivided into a five-part composition of three middle buildings—clad with brick on the first story and stucco on the second—book-ended by two all-brick units, creating visual interest and variety.

Clark's use of the contrasting stucco on the upper floors of the middle units shows his architectural skill, reducing the apparent scale of the buildings and introducing a rhythmic variation that makes the row look more like a streetscape of attached houses and less like a single apartment block. The effect is further enhanced by the contrasting decorative detail on the middle and end units, and particularly by the hand-crafted effect imparted by several elements: the texture of the fan-finished stucco surfaces, brick tracery around the door and window surrounds, brick paterae (circular libation-bowl motifs) in the parapets, and cast stone rosettes flanking the arched doorways. A combination of Classical Revival design for the end units and an Arts-and-Crafts inspired English Cottage style for the middle units, Clark's Harrison Street flats stand out as exceptional examples of the often uninspired and monotonous four-flat apartments of the 1930s.

Evaluation Criteria

The Harrison Street Flats meet D.C. Inventory Designation Criteria B (History), and D (Architecture and Urbanism) and National Register Criteria A and C under the Multiple Property Document *Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C., 1880-1945* under the House-Type sub-type. Four-family flats fall within that sub-type, even though not specifically cited in the multiple property form, which dates from 1990 and did not have the advantage of the more extensive data and research available today.

Under D.C. Designation Criterion B and National Register Criterion A, the Harrison Street Flats are significant for their associations with the development of affordable housing, particularly during the Great Depression, as people flocked to the federal city for jobs and a shortage of housing ensued. The Harrison Street Flats further provide a good example of the role of private development on affordable housing in the city and the ultimate influence of the sanitary housing movement; and a good example of how the location of such housing indicated the need for suitable housing near employment in all parts of the city. In the most prosperous part of the District, the flats gave bus drivers, clerks, and families of modest means a good place to live during the Depression.

Under D.C. Designation Criterion D and National Register Criterion C, the Harrison Street Flats provide an excellent example of the four-family flats heavily used for affordable housing in the city from the late 1920s through 1945. The model of two flats per floor accessed by a central door and stair provided an inexpensive, easily constructed type of housing that could be mass-produced while also maintaining a harmonious association with single-family dwellings.

Integrity

In addition to meeting one or more designation criteria, a property must retain sufficient historic integrity to qualify for listing in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites, or the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register describes integrity as the ability of a property to convey its significance and in so doing examines seven aspects or qualities that, together, define integrity. These seven aspects are: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Under the *Apartment Buildings* multiple property document, the degree of integrity required must be sufficient so that the building's specific contribution to the historic context is clearly evident.

Overall, the Harrison Street Flats maintain a sufficient degree of historic integrity. Most of the buildings remain largely as they were built, on the exterior and interior. The facades and their architectural details are largely intact and in good condition, with some reversible window and door changes that do not diminish the essential character of the property. Almost all of the rear sleeping porches and stairs also remain, with less alteration than is typically seen in urban conditions. The architectural design remains clearly evident, and the materials and workmanship are in good condition, including the unpainted facades, hand-troweled stucco finishes, slate roofs, ornamental details, and decorative brickwork and ironwork. Discreet areaways have been added at the base of two buildings, but they have little visual impact.

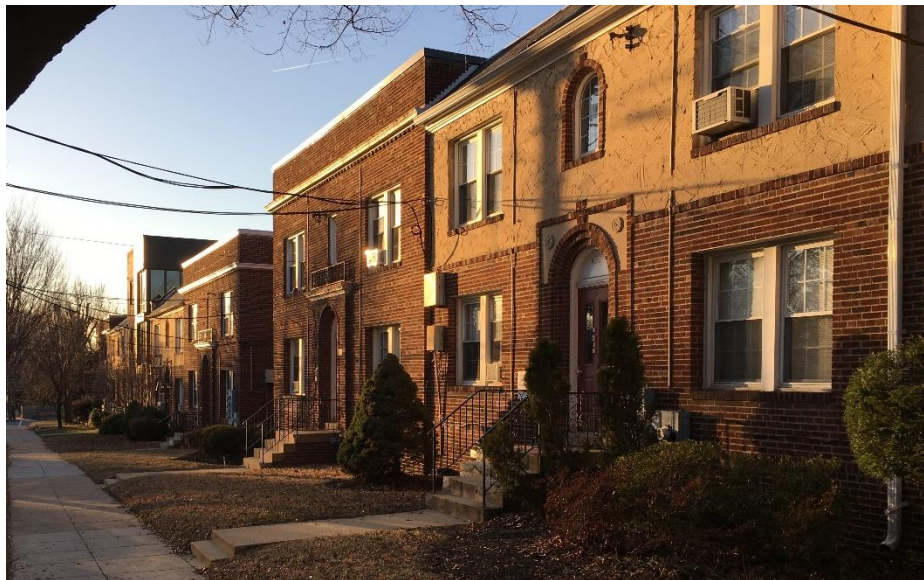
The location, setting, feeling and association of the flats also retain good integrity. The front, rear and side yards remain, as do the surrounding streets and alleys. The important historical relationship to the bus garage is still the same as when the buildings were built. The garage retains good integrity and is protected by a pending historic landmark nomination.



The obvious issue with integrity is the replacement of the middle building in the western row by a three-story condominium built in 2016. The condominium is clad in a similar brick and

maintains a block-like shape akin to the end pavilions, and is at least located in the center of the symmetrical composition. But it is one story taller than the rest of the row, and diminishes its integrity by breaking the horizontal continuity of the stucco-clad middle section. The new building is designed in an asymmetrical contemporary vocabulary with entry through a new side yard, which is marked at the front corner by a two-story glass-and metal oriel. A solid wooden gate opening into the yard replaces the central street door common to the other units.

This disruption of the western bar must be weighed seriously in considering the eligibility of the flats as a group with a major intrusion. This report concludes that the integrity is sufficient. Even though compromised, the row of flats as a whole does convey its historic character and significance. The strength and clarity of the architectural design, and the high degree of integrity in the remaining nine of ten buildings, make it possible to understand and appreciate the row of flats as a significant expression of architecture. The undisturbed eastern bar makes it clear what happened to the western one, and what the missing piece looked like. The visual effect of the two bars together can also be appreciated, as shown in the photographs below and on the first page.



Beyond architectural considerations, the significance of this property is also historical, and that aspect of its character is also conveyed. The association of the flats with the adjacent bus garage and commercial context remains appreciable, and it still stands out from the surrounding neighborhood of detached and semi-detached homes as a rare anomaly in a part of the city with scant rowhouse and flat-type buildings.

Comprehensive Plan Guidance

Designation of the Harrison Street Flats would be consistent with policies in the D.C. Comprehensive Plan, provided that public views are considered as cited below. The site is indicated as Moderate Density Residential in the Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map.

Pertinent Comprehensive Plan policies and recommended actions include the following from the Historic Preservation Element:

Policy HP-1.1.2: Defining Significance Broadly

Adopt an encompassing approach to historic significance. Recognize the city's social history as well as its architectural history, its neighborhoods as well as its individual buildings, its natural landscape as well as its built environment, its characteristic as well as its exceptional, and its archaeology as well as its living history. 1003.6

Policy HP-1.1.3: Cultural Inclusiveness

Celebrate a diversity of histories, tracing the many roots of our city and the many cultures that have shaped its development. A multitude of citizens both famous and ordinary wrote its history. Historic preservation should bear witness to the contributions of all these people. 1003.7

Policy HP-1.3.1: Designation of Historic Properties

Recognize and protect significant historic properties through official designation as historic landmarks and districts under both District and federal law, maintaining consistency between District and federal listings whenever possible. 1005.6

Policy HP-1.3.5: Consulting the Public on Designations

Ensure that the views of property owners, Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, neighborhood organizations, and the general public are solicited and given careful consideration in the designation process. 1005.10

Pertinent policies and recommended actions for the Rock Creek West Planning Area, which includes the Harrison Street flats, include:

Policy RCW-1.1.6: Metro Station Areas

Recognize the importance of the area's five Metrorail stations to the land use pattern and transportation network of Northwest Washington and the entire District of Columbia. Each station should be treated as a unique place and an integral part of the neighborhood around it. The development of large office buildings at the area's metro stations should be discouraged. The preference is to use available and underutilized sites for housing and retail uses in a manner consistent with the Future Land Use Map, the Generalized Policies Map, and the policies of the Comprehensive Plan. Careful transitions from development along the avenues to nearby low-scale neighborhoods must be provided. 2308.7

Action RCW-1.1.B: Protection of Neighborhood Architecture and Aesthetics

Consider new tools such as Conservation Districts and changes to the Zoning Regulations to reduce the incidence of "teardowns" in Rock Creek West's single family and row house neighborhoods. While this is a citywide issue (see Policy LU-2.1.6 and Action LU-2.1.D), it is a particular concern in this part of the city. 2308.18

Policy RCW-1.2.1: Urban Design Focus

Focus urban design efforts in the Rock Creek West Planning Area on its commercial centers and major avenues, historic landmarks, historic districts, and areas with significant environmental and topographical features. 2309.1

Policy RCW-1.2.5: Historic Resources

Conserve the important historic resources of the neighborhoods west of Rock Creek, including but not limited to [list of designated historic landmarks]; and the sites of significance inventoried in the Historic Resources Survey conducted by the Tenleytown Historical Society and the National Park System. 2309.6

Policy RCW-2.2.1: Housing Opportunities

Recognize the opportunity for additional housing with some retail and limited office space on the east side of Wisconsin Avenue between Albemarle and Brandywine Streets, on the Lord and Taylor parking lot, on the Metro (WMATA) bus garage site west of the Friendship Heights metro station, and on underutilized commercially zoned sites on Wisconsin Avenue. Any development in these areas should be compatible with the existing residential neighborhoods. 2312.8

Zoning

Zoning for the Harrison Street flats is Residential Apartment RA-2. The RA-2 zone is for areas developed with predominantly moderate-density residential. The maximum allowed height is 50 feet, with 60% lot occupancy and 1.8 FAR.