
HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
Historic Landmark Designation Case No. 10-13
The N. Webster Chappell House
4131 Yuma Street, N.W. (Square 1729, Lot 0001)

Meeting Date: March 24, 2011
Applicant: The Tenleytown Historical Society
Owner: The N. Webster Chappell House
Affected ANCs: ANC 3E
Staff Reviewer: Kim Prothro Williams

After careful consideration, staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Review Board designate the N. Webster Chappell House at 4131 Yuma Street, N.W. under the Multiple Property Document: *Tenleytown in Washington, D.C.: Its Historic and Architectural Resources, circa 1770-1941*. It is further recommended that the application be forwarded to the National Park Service for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The Chappell House was built and occupied by an important long-time Tenleytown resident and illustrates the beginning of the suburbanization of Tenleytown.



History and Architecture

Built in 1909-1910, the N. Webster Chappell House at 4131 Yuma Street is a two-story, stucco-clad frame dwelling designed in a transitional Queen Anne style. The house is named for its original owner and long-time occupant, N. Webster Chappell, a member of the locally prominent Chappell family and a builder of many of the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century houses in the Tenleytown area.

The land upon which the Chappell House was constructed was once part of the Dunblane estate. In the first decades of the twentieth century, several parcels of the estate were sold off, including those tracts upon which Immaculata Seminary, Dunblane (the Arts & Crafts Stickley house), Underoak and the Chappell House were eventually all constructed. Chappell, a builder with deep roots in the Tenleytown area purchased Block 2 of the former estate across from the newly erected Immaculata

Seminary in 1909. Chappell's grandfather, John E. Chappell was one of the "Tenleytown Twelve" who established the Methodist Cemetery in 1855 and his brother, Dr. Chappell, owned and occupied a notable frame house that stood at the apex of the intersection of Nebraska Avenue and Albemarle Street before being demolished in 1999.

Prior to purchasing this tract of land, N. Webster Chappell had been actively engaged in the construction of new houses in Asbury Park and the American University Park subdivision as well as in the Mt. Airy subdivision in Tenleytown. Chappell likely saw an opportunity to pursue his own speculative real estate development closer to the heart of Tenleytown. So upon purchasing the tract, he immediately subdivided it into six lots, appropriate for the construction of freestanding, single-family dwelling forms that would attract middle-class residents looking to escape the city, yet readily accessible to the streetcar line which ran up and down Wisconsin Avenue.

Immediately following his subdivision of the tract, Chappell began constructing his own house on the easternmost of the six lots. There he built the present house at 4131 Yuma Street, a then-modern house form that can be described today as a transitional Victorian-era/American Four Square.

Chappell eventually sold the other five lots which were improved with single-family dwellings over the course of the next two decades.

Evaluation

The N. Webster Chappell House qualifies for designation as a historic landmark under the Multiple Property Document *Tenleytown in Washington, D.C.: Architectural and Historic Resources, 1791-1941* and meets D.C. Criteria B (*History*) and D (*Architecture and Urbanism*) and National Register Criteria A (*Events*) and C (*Architecture*) for the following reasons:

History: The property is associated with historical periods and patterns of growth and change that contributed significantly to the heritage and development of the District of Columbia. The Chappell House bridges two major periods in the development history of Tenleytown as it transitioned away from being a distinct nineteenth-century "village" to a twentieth-century residential neighborhood of the city.

Architecture and Urbanism: The property embodies the distinguishing characteristics of architectural styles, building types, or methods of construction, and is an expression of urban planning and siting significant to the appearance and development of the District of Columbia. The Chappell House is an excellent local example of a transitional Queen Anne-style/early twentieth-century American Foursquare that was the product of local builder and longtime member of the Tenleytown community, N. Webster Chappell. The Period of Significance of the Chappell House extends from 1910 when construction of the house was completed, to 1964 when the widow of the original owner/builder N. Webster Chappell died. The property has been carefully maintained by a succession of owners, and it retains sufficient integrity to convey the values and qualities for which it is judged significant.