

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE



**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD**  
**APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC LANDMARK OR HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION**

New Designation     X      
Amendment of a previous designation             
Please summarize any amendment(s)

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Property Name: House of Mercy  
*If any part of the interior is being nominated, it must be specifically identified and described in the narrative statements.*

Address 2000 Rosemount Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20010

Square and lot number(s) Square 2618, Lot 811

Affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission ANC 1D

Date of Construction: 1911 Date of major alteration(s) 2005 (renovations/addition)

Architect(s) Nathan C. Wyeth Architectural style(s): LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
REVIVALS: Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

Original use SOCIAL: civic, EDUCATION: school Present use SOCIAL: civic, EDUCATION:  
school

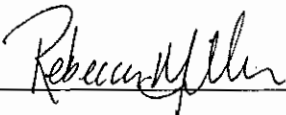
Property owner House of Mercy  
Legal address of property owner 7501 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 600E, Bethesda, MD 20814

NAME OF APPLICANT(S) DC Preservation League; House of Mercy

*If the 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) DC Preservation League, 641 S Street NW, Suite 300,  
Washington, DC 20001, (202) 783-5144

Name and title of authorized representative: Rebecca Miller, Executive Director, DC Preservation  
League

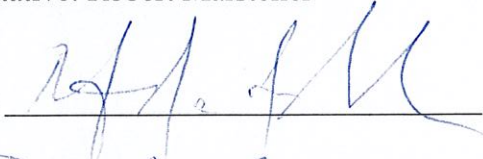
Signature of applicant representative:  Date: 1/30/2024

Name and telephone of author of application DC Preservation League, (202) 783-5144

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Address/Telephone of applicant(s) House of Mercy, 7501 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 600E, Bethesda, MD 20814

Name and title of authorized representative: Robert Marsteller

Signature of applicant representative:  Date: 2/8/2024  
PRESIDENT Date received \_\_\_\_\_  
H.P.O. staff \_\_\_\_\_

**United States Department of the Interior**  
 National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: House of Mercy

Other names/site number: Rosemount Center

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

## 2. Location

Street & number: 2000 Rosemount Avenue, NW

City or town: Washington State: DC County: \_\_\_\_\_

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ **national**      \_\_\_ **statewide**      \_\_\_ **local**

Applicable National Register Criteria:

\_\_\_ **A**      \_\_\_ **B**      \_\_\_ **C**      \_\_\_ **D**

<p>_____  <b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>Date</b></p>
<p>_____  <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>	

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In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

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**Signature of commenting official:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Title :** \_\_\_\_\_ **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government** \_\_\_\_\_

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:  
\_\_\_ entered in the National Register  
\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register  
\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register  
\_\_\_ removed from the National Register  
\_\_\_ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
-



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Site

Structure

Object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL: civic

EDUCATION: school

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL: civic

EDUCATION: school

\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS: Mission/Spanish Colonial  
Revival

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: stucco, brick, concrete, tile

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

House of Mercy/Rosemount Center, built of brick, stucco, and concrete with a tile roof, is designed in the Mission / Spanish Colonial Revival Style. The building, which is 132 feet wide and 96 feet deep, overlooks Rock Creek Park from a ridge on the eastern slope of the Rock Creek Valley. The building, which is a contributing structure to the Mount Pleasant Historic District, occupies current Lot 811 in Square 2618.

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## Narrative Description

Landscape plays an important role in the design of the House of Mercy/Rosemount Center. Constructed in what was a rustic section of the District, the site offered separation from the city streets as well as providing the rural environment, fresh air, and sunlight which were considered essential to physical and emotional well-being in the early twentieth century. The secluded site provided the context for the original House of Mercy to serve as a “sanctuary” for unwed mothers and their babies. The building is situated on the edge of the eastern slope of the Rock Creek Valley. Although the blocks to its east have been developed with row houses, the building’s elevation places its lower story on a level with their upper stories and its upper story permits a view across their rooftops. To the north, the view is across a parking lot to the wooded slopes of Rock Creek Park. To the southeast, there are views across Klingle Road to the rooftops of houses east of Adams Mill Road as well as the steep slopes of Rock Creek Park on the west side of the street. To the southwest and west, the building offers picturesque views of the wooded Rock Creek Valley.

The building includes a main block, north and south wings, and a central courtyard which is open on its west end. The main block and wings have two above-ground stories above a basement level that is almost fully above-ground in places. The building has a complicated relationship to its uneven surrounding terrain. A grey fieldstone foundation and retaining wall that runs along its west side, which overlooks the downhill slope of the valley, is more than a story in height. This wall also extends north of the building to separate its parking lot from the wooded slopes of the park. On the building’s south side, the stucco-clad basement level is almost fully exposed by the downhill slope to Klingle Road. The basement level is also largely above ground on the front, or east, façade, particularly near its southeast corner. On the north façade, the first story is much closer to grade, particularly at its center. Along Klingle Road, the site is bordered by a concrete retaining wall now painted with a procession of colorful murals and on Rosemount Avenue bordered by a fieldstone retaining wall whose height tapers from about six feet at the corner of Klingle Road to about two feet at the driveway on the north side of the building.

The building is constructed in the Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style, which is sometimes described as an aggregation of elements from the California Mission, Spanish Baroque, Moorish Revival, Craftsman, and the Arts and Crafts Movement styles. It displays many elements associated with the style, including stucco wall and chimney finishes, tiled roofs, colorful decorative elements, small porches and balconies, and wooden multi-pane windows with decorative iron grills, an asymmetrical plan with cross-wings organized around a central courtyard, and a complicated multi-sectional arrangement of roofs.

The building’s main entrance faces Rosemount Avenue and is accessed via an adjacent driveway running west, which provides access to a parking lot on the building’s north side and a service road which runs along a terrace-like path following the slope on building’s west (rear) side. Like the rest of the building, the front façade is clad in stucco. It is composed of an extruded central bay with a curvilinear parapet and identical end bays, which comprise much of its length. On each end bay, a shelf-like belt cornice at the level of the first-story sills separates the upper portion of the façade from the lower portion that includes the raised basement. A much less

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extruded belt course runs across each end bay at the level of the second-floor sills. The first story of each end bay has a set of six tall double sash windows with six-over-six lights. These windows are deeply set into rectangular apertures and arranged in a pattern of two windows close together, two widely separated single windows, and a second pair of windows close together. On the upper story, each end bay has a set of seven much shorter rectangular apertures, with a central set of three windows placed close together off set from two closely spaced windows at either end of the bay. Each upper story window contains nine lights, the upper row of which compose a transom-section.

The central bay contains the main entrance, which is reached via a walkway that runs from the northside driveway to a concrete stairway at the corner of Klingle Road. Originally a staircase ran directly east from the main entrance down to street level on Rosemount Avenue, but that staircase was removed, and the opening for it in the retaining wall on Rosemount Avenue has been closed. The existing raised stoop has a staircase on either side with two flights of steps which meet at a landing at a 90-degree angle. The rectangular doorway, which is framed by ionic columns, has deeply inset wooden doors. Above the doorway is a steeply angled, tiled, shed roof whose timber frame's cross-members suggest Craftsman style fascias. The bay's second story has a central twelve-light window flanked by narrow slit windows. The bay is topped by a scalloped parapet with terracotta upper edge coping. Its uppermost section has a blank entablature above a rosette ornament that consists of three concentric rings of brick set endwise surrounding a painted emblem that resembles a religious medallion. This colorful semi-circular element may represent the seal which exemplifies an Episcopal diocese. It incorporates such ecclesiastical symbols as a vesica, or oval backdrop with pointed ends, a Jerusalem cross, a mural crown, the red and white colors of the Episcopal Church flag, and a row of stars, which may represent a localizing element based on Washington's city flag. The main block has a hipped roof with protruding eaves which appears relatively flat on its front side and more steeply sloped to its rear.

The north and south wings, which extend westward from the rear of the main block, are similar but not identical to each other. On its outer side facing Klingle Road, the south façade replicates the pattern of the front façade, with a basement level that is even more exposed, a set of five tall first-story single windows, and six shorter second-story windows. Like the front façade, the first-story windows of the south wing have decorative iron grills. A small cross wing runs north-south at the wing's west end. The cross wing has a hipped roof that is separate from the gable roof of the wing. Its north and south ends are topped by scalloped parapets like that of the front façade's central bay but without the rosette ornament. Following the downhill grade of the valley's eastern slope, a single-story breezeway descends from the cross wing's west façade to a single-story cottage-like extension atop a one-story tall fieldstone foundation that is integrated with the rear retaining wall of the courtyard. The west façade of this extension has a full-width porch beneath a shed roof that provides a spectacular view of the Rock Creek Valley. The breezeway has a gable roof, and the one-story section has its own tile hipped roof.

The north, or outer, side of the north wing follows a similar pattern to the outer side of the south wing. However, the grade of the surrounding ground is much higher and covers much of what would be the exposed basement level on the south façade. The north façade has a center single

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doorway above a metal platform stoop, which is likely a service entrance. Its first-floor windows include several shorter apertures between the doorway and the rear of the main block and none of its windows have decorative grills. The north wing has a set of three stucco-clad chimneys with ornamental covers that mimic the building's roof gables. Like the south wing, it has a cross wing at its west end, but, rather than a breezeway, a boxy three-story modern addition stands at its rear. Its lowest story has a doorway which communicates with an extension of the service road. Between the addition's north side and the cross-wing's west is a single-story service addition that fronts on the lower service road.

The rear façade of the main block and inner sides of the north wing frame the central courtyard; whose fourth side is an open vista to the park beyond a stucco wall atop the lower fieldstone retaining wall. The stucco wall wraps the northwest and southwest corners of the courtyard to connect with the rear of the north façade's rear addition and the cross-wing of the south wing. The courtyard is level and graded to the level of the first-floor entryways. The surrounding façades have similar fenestration patterns to those of their outer sides. The north end wall of the south wing's cross wing has an oval, colored-glass window which evidences its use as the chapel. The central bay of the main block is more extruded than that of its front façade. Instead of an entranceway, the bay has a balcony beneath a shed roof like that on the front façade above a blind alcove at ground level. Beneath the coping of the scalloped upper edge of the parapet is a similar colorful rosette. The spaces on either side of the central bay are filled by one-story shed-roofed additions. The courtyard is a mixture of paved walkways, shrubbery, and playground area.

Although the three second-story windows over the main entrance have lost their ornamental iron grills and all original sashes appear to have been replaced, the House of Mercy/Rosemount Center displays a high degree of integrity. The major alterations appear to be the three-story extension of the north wing and the one-story infill sections on the rear façade of the main block, which are not readily visible from the street.

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### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

#### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL HISTORY

EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE

HEALTH/MEDICINE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1911-1972

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1911

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Nathan C. Wyeth (architect)

Charles A. Langley (builder)

Blackburn Architects (architect - 2005 renovations/addition)

MONARC Construction Company (builder - 2005 renovations/addition)

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

House of Mercy achieves significance under District of Columbia Criterion B and similar National Register Criterion A for its “association with historical periods, social movements and patterns of growth that contributed to the heritage and development of the District.” Originally a refuge for unwed pregnant women who could not obtain support elsewhere, House of Mercy has served a critical role in the local community for over 100 years. Its distinctive building, located in a uniquely secluded “sanctuary” landscape, is closely tied to its vital social support role. The institution has evolved over time, and for the last fifty years it has provided unique bilingual early childhood education and family support services to pregnant women, infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children and their families, focusing its efforts on the neediest of District residents. In these ways its contribution to the heritage and development of the District have been extraordinarily significant.

House of Mercy is also significant under District of Columbia Criteria D through F and similar National Register Criterion C because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, style, and method of construction. The building was constructed in the Spanish Colonial Revival/Mission style, which includes elements from the California Mission, Spanish Baroque, Moorish Revival, Craftsman, and the Arts and Crafts Movement styles. While intended to satisfy the style preferences of its principal donor, the building, as designed by master architect Nathan C. Wyeth, makes the most of that style to express the unique purpose of the institution and the distinctive challenges and advantages of its hilly, secluded landscape. The Mission Style, which was relatively rare in Washington when this building was constructed, expresses at once the great dignity of the institution, its special purpose as a social mission aimed at supporting the disadvantaged, and a unique, homelike warmth that is often missing in other institutional buildings. Its appearance in 1911 presaged the construction of notable Spanish Colonial Revival/Mission style houses in northwest Washington in the later 1910s and 1920s.

Houses of Mercy is remarkably intact and retains a high degree of integrity. It has been well maintained and preserves the original features of design, workmanship and materials that establish its architectural and historical significance. The structure has been thoroughly renovated and modernized on most of its interior spaces but is little changed in its exterior appearance. A service elevator “tower” at the back of the north wing is designed to blend with the existing building and is not visible from the street. Minor changes have been made, such as the removal of small decorative iron balconies on the second story of the front façade and replacement of windows. However, overall, the exterior is little changed.

The building’s period of significance begins with its construction in 1911 and ends with the conversion of the House of Mercy to the Rosemount Center in 1972.



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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

House of Mercy/Rosemount Center has been a significant presence on this site for more than a century. The history of the site prior to the construction of the House of Mercy in 1911 indicates it was a prized refuge in the countryside of the District of Columbia for several previous owners. Once completed, the House of Mercy continued its mission of assisting unwed pregnant women and their babies for many decades. After social mores changed and reduced the need for that specific purpose, the institution changed its name to the Rosemount Center and pivoted to a bilingual pre-K educational center, which was seen as a way to continue the institution's mission of providing support to those in the community who needed it the most. The building's designer, Nathan Wyeth, is a master architect who created a distinctive, landmark structure that gracefully met the House of Mercy's needs and took best advantage of its hilly, wooded site.

**History of the site prior to 1910**

House of Mercy/Rosemount Center sits on a hilltop overlooking Rock Creek Valley in what was outside of Washington City when the District of Columbia was established. This vast area of rolling hills covered with a mix of dense virgin woods, scattered small-scale farms, and rustic country estates was a separate legal jurisdiction called Washington County. The county was traversed by a loose network of ungraded dirt roads, many of them connecting farms to the various gristmills that dotted Rock Creek. The closest road to the tract of land where the House of Mercy would be built was Pierce's Mill Road, which was laid out in 1831 and connected Peirce Mill to the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Road to the east and the Georgetown-Rockville Turnpike (Wisconsin Avenue) to the west. The substantial estate house called Ingleside lay about a quarter mile to the east. That building, the oldest extant structure in the Mount Pleasant neighborhood, is located at 1818 Newton Street NW and is on the National Register of Historic Places.

A frame country farmhouse was located on the House of Mercy property, at a spot slightly to the west of the current building and overlooking the valley of Rock Creek. Its original date of construction is unknown. This farmhouse and its associated 17-acre estate were acquired by the Rev. John W. French (1809-1871) in 1855. Born in New Haven, Connecticut, French was ordained in the Episcopal Church in 1835 and was a rector in Portland, Maine, before coming to Washington in 1841 to serve as chaplain of the U.S. House of Representatives. Once in Washington, the Episcopal Church employed French as "city missionary," with the job of looking for new converts to the faith. French helped organize the city's fourth Episcopal Church, the Church of the Epiphany, in 1842. French would serve as the church's first rector and oversaw the acquisition of the church's historic site on G Street NW where it remains to this day.<sup>1</sup>

French remained head of the Church of the Epiphany for 14 years. He must have presumed he would remain so for many more when he purchased the property overlooking Rock Creek in

<sup>1</sup> Stetson Conn, *Washington's Epiphany: Church and Parish, 1842-1972* (Washington, DC: Church of the Epiphany, 1976), 1-7.

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1855. French moved in with his wife Clara and seven children, and, according to one account, is responsible for changing the name of the estate from Rorymorent to Rosemount.<sup>2</sup> However, he resigned suddenly in 1856 from his post at Epiphany Church when Secretary of War Jefferson Davis (an Epiphany congregant) asked him to accept a position as chaplain and professor of geography, history, and ethics at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. French would remain at West Point until his death in 1871.<sup>3</sup>

Despite moving to New York, French retained ownership of Rosemount. Upon his death in 1871, Clara French put the Rosemount estate up for sale. The following year, Robert C. Fox (1835-1891), a successful real estate broker and principal of the prominent firm of Fitch, Fox, and Brown, purchased the estate. A native of Virginia, Fox had come to Washington to teach Greek and Latin at Columbian College, which at the time was located nearby on Meridian Hill. Fox made improvements to the estate, expanding the house and offered it for sale again in 1875. The advertisement for the “beautiful and desirable Country Seat,” located “only twenty minutes’ drive from the Treasury Department,” states:

*The improvements consist of two Frame Dwellings of eight rooms each connected by a covered verandah, and a large frame stable, 30x35. All of the said buildings have heavy blue stone foundations and slate roofs, and have been recently made at a cost exceeding \$10,000. The main building stands on an eminence of 119 feet above the level of the creek, and fronts upon a lawn well set in grass and surrounded by a pleasing variety of shade and native forest trees, such as Maple, Mulberry, Hickory, Oak, Chestnut, Tulip-Poplar, &c.*

*Its proximity to the Columbian University, and its rare combination of hill and dale, massive rocks, and shady walks, commend it alike to the gentleman of means seeking a secluded and healthy retreat from the heat of the city, and to those whose business engagements require their presence in or near the city during the summer season.<sup>4</sup>*

Apparently, Fox had no takers, because he continued to live at Rosemount with his wife and two daughters and two domestic servants, Otho and Mary Robinson, into the 1880s. A brief notice in the *Evening Star* in 1881 recounts how Otho Robinson, described as a private watchman, reported that five men had attempted to burglarize the house around 2am one night. The police said that no one had entered the house and dismissed Robinson’s complaint by claiming that he had had a nightmare.<sup>5</sup>

In 1885, Fox sold Rosemount to architect Harvey L. Page. A native Washingtonian, Page was a well-known architect who designed many prominent DC buildings, including the Richmond Flats apartment building (demolished); the original Army and Navy Club Building on Farragut Square (demolished); the landmarked Metropolitan Club; the landmarked Woodward & Lothrop building; and several landmark mansions for wealthy clients. Page worked with another

<sup>2</sup> Mara Cherkasky, *Images of America: Mount Pleasant* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2007), 15.

<sup>3</sup> Conn, 20.

<sup>4</sup> Advertisement: “For Sale - Rosemount,” *Evening Star*, Apr. 6, 1875.

<sup>5</sup> “Otho Robinson’s Nightmare,” *Evening Star*, May 28, 1881.

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architect, William Bruce Gray, and the newspaper article noting his purchase of the Rosemount estate mentioned that Gray intended to build his own summer house on the property near Page's. However, this evidently never occurred.<sup>6</sup> The Rosemount house remained an isolated landmark in the hills overlooking Rock Creek. "The handsome frame house of Mr. Page occupies a prominent site on Rosemont Heights," noted a newspaper article in 1891.<sup>7</sup>

In 1887, attorney Richard E. Pairo purchased 9.53 acres of the Rosemount estate (at the eastern end) from Page to create a new residential subdivision, known as Rosemount Park.<sup>8</sup> Building lots were offered for sale by 1890, although residential development did not occur until many years later. The House of Mercy (Rosemount Center) would be constructed on two lots at the southwest corner of Pairo's subdivision. (See Map 4).

In the meantime, after Rock Creek Park was established by law in 1890, a lengthy process ensued to establish the value of land that was to be purchased as part of the park. The remaining 6.8-acre portion of Harvey Page's estate was designated lot 84 to be acquired for the park. It was discussed at several public hearings of a commission of appraisers established to set values for the many privately owned tracts of land that were to become part of the new park. At a July 1891 hearing, Harvey Page testified that he lived at his Rosemount estate and commuted to his downtown office "usually in fifteen minutes." He said the ground on his property was "undulating, ninety feet above the creek and picturesque," and "adorned by 270 trees, beside a number of peach and other fruit trees and a vegetable garden." Page stated that his "large, comfortable" house was "in good order, with modern improvements, and needed painting, which he had deferred in consequence of the park project." It was "a town house in the country, with every convenience except gas, although he had the pipes."<sup>9</sup>

Page's rosy view of his property was countered by the government's representative, R. Ross Perry, a prominent and accomplished attorney, who believed landowners like Page and others were trying to extract exorbitant compensation for their property. Perry dismissed the argument that a "villa site" like Page's was highly desirable and should be priced accordingly. "There was no demand or market for villa sites, for the reason that the rich did not desire them and the poor could not get them," Perry declared. He also dismissed the recently established Rosemount Park that abutted the Page property as "a most absurd subdivision; one which existed only on paper, with a gully for its single street and no alleys to its lots. It owed its existence to the proposed park, and the sales in it had the same foundation."<sup>10</sup>

Eventually prices for Page's property and the others contributing to Rock Creek Park were determined after the land had been acquired by the federal government. In some cases, the government continued temporarily to rent out dwellings that were located within the park's boundaries. Records show that in 1895 the old Rosemount House (listed as "Frame house, 14

<sup>6</sup> "Activity in Suburban Property," *Washington Post*, Apr. 24, 1885, 4.

<sup>7</sup> "Roadside Sketches," *Evening Star*, Aug. 22, 1891, 8. Note that early records sometimes use the "Rosemont" spelling in place of "Rosemount."

<sup>8</sup> "Sales of Real Estate," *Evening Star*, Apr. 7, 1887; "Making a New City," *Evening Star*, Apr. 30, 1887.

<sup>9</sup> "Rock Creek Park," *Evening Star*, Jul. 29, 1891, 5.

<sup>10</sup> "Mr. Perry's Argument," *Evening Star*, Oct. 23, 1891, 7.

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rooms, stable and carriage house, fair [condition]”) was rented to a tenant named Floyd Harleston for 14 dollars.<sup>11</sup> However, this arrangement did not continue for very long. The structures on the site appear to have been torn down by the turn of the century. Almost all of the former Rosemount Estate—the section that became part of Rock Creek Park as well as most of the Rosemount Park subdivision—remained undeveloped before the House of Mercy was constructed in 1911. The one exception was the home and adjacent dog hospital of Dr. Cecil French, constructed in 1896 at 2021 Klingle Road NW, on the opposite side of Rosemount Avenue from the site where the House of Mercy would be constructed.<sup>12</sup>

### **Establishment and early history of the House of Mercy**

In the late Victorian era, many private charitable organizations were established in the District of Columbia to aid the unfortunate. These organizations included an assortment of hospitals, orphanages, and asylums. Among them, several were dedicated to the support of needy young women and girls. Often poorly educated and unaccustomed to city life, young women flocked to growing cities like Washington in increasing numbers in the years following the Civil War. Without any means of support, some inevitably got into trouble with the law. When they were arrested, most were sentenced to brief prison terms of 20 to 90 days, and their names were regularly printed in the local newspapers.<sup>13</sup> In addition, single women who became pregnant outside of marriage were routinely ostracized by society and often lacked the basic support they needed during and immediately after their pregnancy. Women of means, often in association with religious organizations, increasingly saw it as their mission to take steps to help provide a social safety net to support these women and girls.

The first of these institutions in the District of Columbia was the Young Women’s Christian Association, founded in 1870. The House of the Good Shepherd, founded in Georgetown in 1883 by the Roman Catholic Sisters of the Good Shepherd, had a charter that typified the goals of these institutions. Its purpose was “for the reformation of fallen and unfortunate females who might apply for admission or who were sent to the house by the courts, and for the preservation of young girls and children who, from dangerous surroundings or through want of proper paternal care, are exposed to the danger of being led astray,” according to an 1898 report prepared for the U.S. Senate.<sup>14</sup> Another such institution was the Florence Crittenton Hope and Help Mission, organized in 1888 at 218 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW. The Crittenton Mission was one of a nationwide network of such homes, which admitted “any homeless or fallen woman.”

These homes were generally for white women only, but at least two separate homes were established for Blacks, including the Home for Friendless Colored Girls on Meridian Hill,

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<sup>11</sup> As quoted in “*Bold, Rocky, and Picturesque*”: *Archeological Identification and Evaluation Study of Rock Creek Park*, Vol. 1, (Washington, DC: Louis Berger Group, Aug. 2008), 76.

<sup>12</sup> See Tim Dennée, *Historic Preservation Review Board Staff Report and Recommendation*, Mount Pleasant Historic District, 2021 Klingle Road NW, Case 15-427, Jul. 9, 2015.

<sup>13</sup> Martha Livdahl Grigg, *Mercy! On The Road to Rosemount*, (Washington, DC: independently published, 2015), 4.

<sup>14</sup> Charles Moore, ed., *Joint Select Committee to Investigate the Charities and Reformatory Institutions of the District of Columbia, Part III: Historical Sketches of the Charities and Reformatory Institutions in the District of Columbia* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1898), 141.

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founded in 1886 by a Black house servant named Carolyn Taylor, and the National Association for the Relief of Destitute Colored Women and Children, originally established during the Civil War and later located at 2458 8<sup>th</sup> Street NW, near Howard University.<sup>15</sup> The two institutions for Black women and children depended almost entirely on private contributions and received far less support than the institutions for whites. The Home for Friendless Colored Girls went out of business sometime in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In 1884, the Episcopal Diocese of Washington established its own refuge for needy women, known formally as the Association for the Works of Mercy, at 2408 K Street NW. The institution, which came to be known as the House of Mercy, was founded at a meeting of concerned Episcopal women who met at St. John's Church on Lafayette Square in 1882.<sup>16</sup> They had been tasked by the diocese to develop a new program of mission work in Washington. Officially incorporated in February 1884, the House of Mercy was governed by an all-male Board of Trustees, to handle financial and legal matters, and a Board of Lady Managers entrusted with fundraising and operational management of the home. Like the House of the Good Shepherd, the House of Mercy was exclusively for white girls and women.

The facility on K Street (see Figure 1), a three-story rowhouse, was "partially supplied with furniture and provisions by many generous friends." When it was officially opened by the head of the Church of the Epiphany in May 1884, a memorial service was held in the home's chapel, followed by a procession that "passed from room to room, singing appropriate hymns, with forms of blessing, returning to the chapel where the service was concluded."<sup>17</sup>

The home's first residents were three destitute women who had been staying at a home whose benefactor had died. By 1885, the home was supporting 29 women, aged 15 to 40, and 15 babies. According to the home's annual report, "Many come merely for a home, for a longer or shorter time, others because they wish to keep their babies with them, while a few have entered with the desire to learn self-control, and how to lead a good life." This description highlights the open-ended criteria the home used in its early days regarding how long women could stay at the house and why. Eventually, stricter limits would be established. Of the 15 babies mentioned in the report, six were still at the home, one was sent to an orphanage, one went to a hospital, three had died, and four had been discharged with their mothers.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The association later was renamed the Merriweather Home for Children. Its longtime building at 733 Euclid St NW was landmarked in 2022.

<sup>16</sup> The title "House of Mercy" was officially adopted in 1891, changing the name of the facility from "St. Saviour's Home." See "House of Mercy Incorporated," *Washington Post*, Mar. 25, 1891, 7.

<sup>17</sup> "The House of Mercy," *Washington Post*, May 14, 1884, 1.

<sup>18</sup> The annual report is quoted and summarized in Grigg, 5-6.

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THE HOUSE OF MERCY.

Figure 1: The House of Mercy at 2408 K Street NW. (Moore, 140).

The 1898 U.S. Senate report mentioned above provides this brief profile of the House of Mercy:

*The Association for Works of Mercy, located at 2408 K street NW, was organized and incorporated under the general incorporation law February 1, 1884. The institution is under the care of the Sisters of the Epiphany of the Protestant Episcopal Church, occupies lands valued at \$25,000 and buildings valued at \$10,000. Congress appropriated \$8,200 towards the lands and makes an annual appropriation of \$1,800 for maintenance. The institution accommodates about 24 white girls under 30 years of age, no girl being received for less than a year. White girls of any faith are received. Roman Catholics are transferred to the House of the Good Shepherd. The income from private gifts in 1896 was \$823.28, and the entire expenses were \$2,778.59. The Board of Children's Guardians makes use of the Home to some extent.<sup>19</sup>*

<sup>19</sup> Moore, 143.

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The House of Mercy as originally established had a distinctly moral objective. It was not meant merely to provide physical and emotional support for women in need but to also mold them into “better” persons who could ultimately sustain themselves and reintegrate with society. An 1893 newspaper article noted that “The home is well equipped for its work and the daily routine is regulated to, as far as possible, improve the character of the girls. Occasional outings are given them and they are encouraged to strive for advancement by quarterly prizes offered for excellence in various branches.”<sup>20</sup>

Some of the girls were apparently brought to the home against their will because they were too much for their parents or guardians to handle. An *Evening Star* reporter visiting the home witnessed a case where a mother brought in a young girl whose “eyes were red with weeping” to stay at the home. “The young girl’s mother brought her there to ask that she be kept until she was eighteen years of age, as she showed a preference for bad company,” the *Star* reported. “The mother was a hard-working woman and could not give constant attention to her daughter.”<sup>21</sup>

An article from 1895 summarized the environment at the home:

*Those under the care of the sisters are taught fine hand sewing, embroidery, and housework. No prison rules are enforced. As a church home, chapel services and religious teaching have the first place, but secular instruction is not neglected, and a night school is an important feature of the work. The sisters regard the institution as a hospital for the care and cure of sick souls.*<sup>22</sup>

By the 1890s, the home, which could accommodate about 30 residents, was too small. Funds were asked of Congress to enlarge the building in 1894, but the following year the request was changed: an entirely new facility was needed. “The house at 2408 K street...is entirely too small for the purposes of the community. The building was erected for a private residence, and is in no way fitted for a religious sisterhood and such works as these sisters conduct,” an article in the *Washington Post* explained. The aim, as stated by the House of Mercy’s sister superior, was to “enlarge[e] the work and improv[e] the grade of the institution, so that women...may be willing to come to us for the help they need.” To meet this need required “a home which will accommodate a far larger number than our present quarters, and in which there will be no dormitories, each inmate having a small room to herself.”<sup>23</sup> The sisters contemplated constructing their new facility on a vacant lot to the north of the K street building, but no such structure was ever built. In fact, when the much larger House of Mercy was later constructed in Rosemount Park, it was still configured with dormitories, which were never eliminated.

In addition to the minors occasionally brought in by their parents against their will, female convicts were sometimes committed to the House of Mercy by the local court system. In 1886,

<sup>20</sup> “Episcopalian Sisters,” *Washington Post*, Sep. 10, 1893, 2.

<sup>21</sup> “City and District: The House of Mercy,” *Evening Star*, Mar. 31, 1886.

<sup>22</sup> “New House of Mercy,” *Washington Post*, Jan. 26, 1895, 9.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

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Congress authorized the D.C. Orphans Court to send female convicts to the House of Mercy if they had been convicted of “any offense punishable by fine or imprisonment for a term of less than two years.”<sup>24</sup> The new responsibilities came with annual federal appropriations that were crucial in sustaining the home financially in its early years, but they also meant individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and circumstances stayed at the home.

It seems clear that the vast majority of the home’s “inmates,” as they were called, appreciated the support they received and benefitted from it. However, the home’s stringent routines and limited interaction with the outside world could be stressful. The newspapers occasionally reported on escapees, although they numbered, on average, only about one a year.<sup>25</sup> In one case, Mary Stewart, a “pretty eighteen-year-old girl,” escaped by apparently scaling a six-foot wall around the rear yard of the home, “aided by a confederate from the outside.” A native of Lewinsville, Virginia, Stewart came to Washington and thrice was arrested for stealing. In the last instance, she robbed the choir at the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany while the church’s pastor was preaching a sermon on crime. Stewart slipped into the cloakroom during the sermon and stole money, jewels, and furs. Confessing tearfully to the crime and supported by her sister from Lewinsville, Stewart gained the sympathy of the church’s pastor, who interceded with the judge to have Stewart committed to the House of Mercy rather than imprisoned. About a week later, she made her escape and apparently was never found again.<sup>26</sup>

Sensational cases such as Mary Stewart’s could adversely affect public opinion about the institution. In 1911, just before the House of Mercy moved to its new quarters, an Episcopal Church official, Bishop Harding, wrote to the local Board of Trade defending the institution from reportedly pejorative statements that had been made in the press. Specifically, Harding stated that of the 20 girls then living at the House of Mercy, only one had been sent by the Juvenile Court. In general, Harding insisted that few children were referred to the institution by the courts and that no taxpayer funds were provided for their support, declaring “our institution is not a prison—we do not aim to punish, but to help to promote the welfare and happiness of young women by remedial and preventive means, and to bring to bear upon them the influences of our holy religion.”<sup>27</sup>

### **House of Mercy 1911-1972**

Though the plan for a new facility near the old K Street house was never realized, the House of Mercy and its advocates continued to push for a new larger home. In 1896, the Episcopal Church issued a flyer describing the need for a new home “in the country,” to be acquired in exchange for the K Street home or in addition to it.<sup>28</sup> The House of Mercy languished in its old quarters,

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<sup>24</sup> Grigg, 6.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, “Four Girls In Flight,” *Washington Post*, Jul. 29, 1895; “House of Mercy Fugitives Captured,” *Washington Post*, Aug. 13, 1896; and “Fugitives Brought Back,” *Washington Times*, Jun. 26, 1902.

<sup>26</sup> “Fled from House of Mercy,” *Washington Post*, Mar. 10, 1905; “No Trace Found of Mary Stewart,” *Washington Times*, Mar. 10, 1905; “Mary Stewart Disappears,” *Evening Star*, Mar. 10, 1905.

<sup>27</sup> “Its Work Defended,” *Evening Star*, Mar. 3, 1911, 17.

<sup>28</sup> Grigg, 7.



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losing funding and support, until a major donation changed the institution's course, enabling construction of its new facility.

The donor was Mrs. Cassie Meyer James (1851-1922), a wealthy heiress and philanthropist. She was born in New York, the daughter of prominent lawyer Theodorus Bailey Myers and his wife Catalina Mason Myers. The family was well known in New York State politics and civic affairs. Cassie married Julian James in 1869, when she was just 18. Tragically, Julian James died the following year. Cassie never remarried; to honor her deceased husband, she went by the name "Mrs. Julian-James" for the rest of her life.



Figure 2: Cassie Myers James, undated photo (Rosemount Center archives).

Cassie and her mother moved to Washington, D.C., shortly after Cassie's father, Theodorus Myers, died in 1888. They came to Washington to be near Cassie's brother, a Navy officer who was stationed here. Cassie then devoted her life in Washington to charitable and philanthropic work. She was a lifelong member of the Episcopal Church and especially interested in supporting activities sponsored by the church. She came to know Rev. Henry Yates Satterlee, the first Episcopal Bishop of Washington, and donated funds to pay off the mortgage on the land the church had bought on Mount St. Albans to build the Washington Cathedral.<sup>29</sup>

At Rev. Satterlee's request, Cassie James took up the cause of the House of Mercy, serving as the president of its board for many years. In 1910 she purchased and donated the land for the new building at Rosemount Avenue and Klingle Road NW in the still-undeveloped Rosemount

<sup>29</sup> "Mrs. Julian James, Civic Leader, Dies," *Evening Star*, Apr. 12, 1922, 13.

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Park subdivision of Mount Pleasant. This hilly property overlooking Rock Creek Park was just the sort of country site, removed from the hustle and bustle of the city, that the House of Mercy had wanted to establish a restful refuge for the women it served. Mrs. James also provided funds to build the new facility, a large, roughly 22,000-square-foot structure, which she directed be designed in the Mission style she had seen and admired when traveling in California.<sup>30</sup> The board of trustees had previously raised money toward a new building; Mrs. James directed that those funds go to erecting an infirmary as a separate attached facility (the former infirmary is now the Rosemount Center director's office).

A building permit was issued in November 1910 for the original U-shaped building.<sup>31</sup> The architect, Nathan C. Wyeth, and the builder, Charles A. Langley, were both highly respected and experienced, and both donated their time on the project. They may have been tapped through Cassie James' connections or through the connections of other board members or Episcopal church officials. Construction began in December 1910 and continued into 1911. A January 1911 newspaper article noted:

*Foundations have been laid for the building, and although progress on the structure has been considerably delayed by unfavorable weather conditions, the contractor, Charles A. Langley, expects to have a large force of artisans at work on the structure in the very near future, so that it can be pushed to completion before the spring is very far advanced.*<sup>32</sup>

Construction took longer than Langley had anticipated. Staff and residents did not move in until September 1911, and the building was officially opened with a reception for the public in October 1911. At that time, 24 girls and 17 children were residents.<sup>33</sup> While the building permit estimated the cost of the structure at \$58,000, the total expense was said to be \$100,000 when the new facility opened. "The building is after the Spanish architecture, built of brick covered with pebble dash [stucco], its bright red tiled roof standing out in marked contrast with the somber brown and the green of surrounding trees," observed the *Evening Star*.

The *Star* article also described the interior layout:

*On the first floor are the playrooms for the babies and very young children, the laundry, kitchen, sewing rooms and two dining rooms, one for the girls, the other for the officers of the home. Everything is given a homelike appearance. In another wing of the building [the southern wing] is the chapel, occupying a single room, finished in polished oak. Services are held here every evening at 8:30 o'clock by Deaconess L. N. Yeo, who is in charge of the mission. Adjoining the chapel is the infirmary, amply fitted out with every convenience and*

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<sup>30</sup> Grigg, 11.

<sup>31</sup> Permit No. 2228, Lot 1, Square 2618. Association for Works of Mercy (House of Mercy), dated Nov. 2, 1910. DC Public Library, People's Archive. The permit shows the original U-shaped building without the infirmary that was built as an extension at the southwest end of the building.

<sup>32</sup> "Charitable Body To Have New Home," *Evening Star*, Jan. 7, 1911, 2-1.

<sup>33</sup> "House of Mercy Is Ready," *Washington Post*, Oct. 23, 1911, 12; "Home For Girls Open," *Washington Post*, Oct. 25, 1911, 5.

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*equipage of a modern hospital. The meeting room for the board of governors, furnished in solid mahogany, also adjoins the chapel....*

*On the second floor are located the dormitories. There are four in all, simply but neatly furnished, with white and brass beds. Besides the dormitories are two nurseries, where competent nurses take care of the infants and instruct mothers in caring for them. The private rooms for the officers of the home are also on this floor, while several rooms are fitted up where girls may go for a quiet half hour to lounge or read. In the basement are the furnace rooms and storerooms.*

*Back of the building, which has a main hall and two large wings, is a spacious court yard, where the girls can play games during good weather under great trees that shade the place. High walls, not to prevent escape, but to add to the general Spanish architecture, surround this court.<sup>34</sup>*

The building featured decorative iron grilles on all the first-floor windows. In 1909, just before the new building was constructed, 19-year-old Alice Collins had escaped from the K Street house by slipping out one of the first-floor windows.<sup>35</sup> While decorative grilles were not uncommon in Spanish Colonial Revival style homes, their inclusion in the new facility made any repeat of such an escape impossible. Nevertheless, their security purpose was downplayed by House of Mercy staff. One staffer said that the grilles “were not needed to keep the girls in but might be useful in keeping unwanted young men out.”<sup>36</sup>

The move from the old downtown location just off Washington Circle to the isolated new home in the woods by Rock Creek Park proved difficult for some residents. In the summer of 1912, Deaconess Lillian M. Yeo reported that a pervasive feeling of restlessness and discontent “in the last five or six months is an extremely serious problem.... The girls dislike the quiet and isolation. We are now completely shut in by trees so that we cannot even see the people going up and down Park Road.” Five girls ran away, and two others tried—many more than had been usual.<sup>37</sup>

The home also faced complaints from its only immediate neighbor, Dr. Cecil French, a veterinarian and zoologist who lived opposite the home on Rosemount Avenue and maintained a dog hospital on the adjoining lot. Dr. French complained that he and his family were plagued by the “incessant and nerve-wracking noises allowed to emanate from the building.” In a letter to the bishop he described an evening “of jollification of the adult inmates” with “piano going, loud laughter and yelling, and shuffling of feet and the usual noises that accompany the dancing performance the inmates are in the habit of going through... at weekly intervals” and further that, while this was going on, an infant in a second-floor room “cried and shrieked steadily in pain, for a period of over half an hour.” Staff assured the bishop that the babies at the home were all doing

<sup>34</sup> “In Ideal New Home,” *Evening Star*, Sep. 25, 1911, 9.

<sup>35</sup> “Girl Quits House of Mercy,” *Evening Star*, May 3, 1909.

<sup>36</sup> Grigg, 12.

<sup>37</sup> Grigg, 12; “Police Hunt Three Girls,” *Washington Post*, May 20, 1912, 3; “Girls Quit House of Mercy,” *Washington Post*, Aug. 1, 1912, 14.

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well and cried no more than other normal babies. French subsequently filed a lawsuit against the home, but in 1912 it was dismissed by the courts as baseless. French and his family apparently moved away soon thereafter. The home received no other complaints.<sup>38</sup>



Figure 3: Undated photo of girls in uniform at play in the courtyard (Rosemount Center archives).

Since 1901, before it moved to its new facility, the House of Mercy had been under the supervision of Deaconess Lillian M. Yeo. Born in Devonshire, England, Yeo came directly to the House of Mercy from the New York School for Deaconesses run by the Episcopal Church. Yeo continued to run the House of Mercy until 1945, for a total of 44 years.

In 1923, Yeo published a memoir of the 22 years she had spent at the home to that point. In the small book, written in the form of a series of letters, Yeo discusses the girls she worked with and how the home operated. She begins with a vignette of what she must have considered the paradigm of her work, the case of “a sixteen-year exhibit of black eyes that snapped, raven hair; a beautiful, vivacious, perfect little imp of Satan.” For two years the girl was confined to the inside of the home. “It did seem hard to shut her away from the world—she was effervescent life itself. But she needed two things—balance and poise.... She at last began to like her work and I watched the long hidden flower of mother-love unfold in her. And one day it opened wide—she had learned to love the frail little slip that was her baby.... Soon after she left us and went to

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<sup>38</sup> Grigg, 12-13; “Verdict for House of Mercy,” *Washington Post*, Dec. 31, 1912, 14. For a full biography of Dr. French, see Tim Dennée, DC Historic Preservation Office Staff Report, 2021 Klingle Road NW, Case 15-427, Jul 9, 2015.

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work, she met a man whom she could love. They were married. They took the boy, now three years old. Then she knew happiness.”<sup>39</sup>

Of the building itself, Yeo states, “From the outside the House of Mercy makes a splendid picture: crowning a steep bluff, its walls rise against the forest background. There is that to its Spanish architecture which harmonizes perfectly with its setting.... A thing of beauty and dignity, withal so sturdy—often I wonder how first sight of it affects the wounded, weary souls who come to it for refuge.”<sup>40</sup>

Yeo also described the major activities that residents engaged in:

*They sew, and when they leave us they have learned to sew well. For this training, we have a large, bright room, which in the evening serves as their sitting room. It has a Victrola. And what with this music and their chatter one would think that the room was full of girls who never had known a care or cross....*

*Then they cook, in teams of three—one for the girls and children, one for the staff, while the third is responsible for the kitchen’s tidiness. We bake all our own bread...*

*Then there is our laundry. “And we man it,” as one of our girls recently said. A large, sunny room with every modern convenience for doing the very finest work. Every girl sooner or later takes to this: the results of her labor are so pleasing to the eye...<sup>41</sup>*

...and the amount of food that was typically consumed:

*Here are some of the orders that must be placed to keep my family well fed for another thirty days: three barrels of flour, a hundred and fifty pounds of sugar, two barrels of potatoes, great loads of rice, macaroni and what not.... Our own garden furnishes us with an abundance of fresh vegetables in spring and summer, the poultry yard yields a more or less constant supply of eggs and fowl. Meat is a regular factor in the dinner menu. And milk!—the quantities we consume are simply enormous.”<sup>42</sup>*

The girls were dressed in blue uniforms with white aprons and caps; no jewelry or makeup was allowed. To enforce house rules, a system of merits and demerits was used. “If during a month a girl should get more than twenty-five of the latter, she cannot go on a pleasure trip during the following thirty days. Of if she gets more than fifty, she is denied the monthly privilege of receiving a visit from relatives. And in extreme cases—such as one receiving more than a hundred demerits—her punishment consists of a ban against her receiving mail or packages for thirty days. Be assured this *is* punishment,” Yeo wrote.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Lillian M. Yeo, *Inasmuch: A Résumé of Twenty-two Years in The House of Mercy*, (New York: Edwin S. Gorham, 1923), 13.

<sup>40</sup> Yeo, 17.

<sup>41</sup> Yeo, 18-19.

<sup>42</sup> Yeo, 66.

<sup>43</sup> Yeo, 49.



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Like most charitable organizations, the House of Mercy was ever dependent on donations and constantly on the verge of insolvency. An endowment fund was started in 1921 to honor Deaconess Yeo's twenty years of service. The fund in coming years would play an important role in keeping the home afloat. An annual apron sale, in which aprons and other articles of clothing sewn by the residents were sold, was another modest source of income that would grow to be a cake and apron sale in later years. Nevertheless, in the 1920s, declining donations meant that the home had to curtail some expenditures, such as for Christmas gifts and activities. Staff salaries were cut 10 percent in 1933, as the Great Depression took hold. In 1937, the home's Board of Lady Managers came up with the idea for an annual "Phantom Dinner." Donors would be solicited to buy a seat at the table for \$2, although no actual dinner event would be held. The successful gimmick drew press coverage and became a mainstay of fundraising for the home.<sup>44</sup>



Figure 4: Deaconess Lillian Yeo and children, 1930s (Rosemount Center archives).

By the 1940s, the home's focus had moved away from attempting to reform "fallen women"—a term that was no longer used—and instead concentrated on assisting unwed mothers and their children. By then, no more referrals from the courts were being received. In 1943, Rev. Joseph F. Fletcher, an expert on social services, conducted a review of Episcopal Church homes in Washington, and offered pointed criticism of the House of Mercy. Fletcher thought Deaconess Yeo was too old and too authoritarian, that the institution kept girls in residence too long, and that it didn't focus adequately on social services. He also thought the building itself needed renovation.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Grigg, 17-21. An example of press coverage is "House of Mercy's Fifth Annual Phantom Dinner Is Still Under Way," *Washington Post*, Feb. 15, 1942, S8.

<sup>45</sup> Grigg, 23-4.

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The House of Mercy closed in June 1945 for renovations, reopening in January 1946 with a new Deaconess and a new focus on short-term care for needy pregnant girls and women and their babies. “The unfortunate girls who are now coming to us are as definitely ‘war casualties’ as if they had been injured upon the field of battle,” the new deaconess declared. Many interior spaces were remodeled, including the nurseries and dormitories, dining rooms, and sitting rooms. New fire exits were also created, and new positions were created for a nurse, dietician, and housekeeper.<sup>46</sup>

In October 1945, the House of Mercy’s board of trustees agreed to deed a strip of land along on the southern edge of the property adjoining Klingle Road to the DC government to accommodate a planned widening of Klingle Road. The strip ranged from six feet wide at Rosemount Avenue to 20 feet wide at the westernmost end of the property. Subsequently, the embankment alongside the road was cut steeply to accommodate the widening, and a concrete retaining wall was erected to support the steep embankment.<sup>47</sup>



Figure 5: A second-floor dormitory, 1950s (Rosemount Center archives).

Unfortunately, the home remained exclusively for white women and girls through the 1940s and most of the 1950s. A circa 1941 brochure specifically states that the home is for whites. It was not until a larger effort to integrate Episcopal facilities was undertaken in the late 1950s that the policy changed. In 1956, the Episcopal Church’s National Council issued a set of guiding principles for removing racial barriers in churches and church facilities across the country. In 1958, the Washington diocese held a convention that issued a resolution calling on local

<sup>46</sup> Jessie Fant Evans, “Revitalized House of Mercy Needs Phantom Dinner Funds,” *Evening Star*, Jan. 27, 1946, A-11.

<sup>47</sup> “Dedication of Land for Widening of Klingle Road,” D.C. Office of the Surveyor, Oct. 31, 1945. The retaining wall is now adorned with a colorful mural.

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congregations to be integrated. The ban on non-whites at the House of Mercy was lifted sometime after that, although it is unclear when non-whites were first admitted as residents.<sup>48</sup>

Increasingly in the 1950s, the House of Mercy's efforts focused on counseling and support for young women experiencing unanticipated pregnancies. However, by the late 1960s, the number of residents began to decline as the concept of a refuge for women with unwanted pregnancies increasingly became obsolete. Enrollment in 1971 was about half it was in 1969. "The moral stigma that led pregnant girls—especially those from middle-class homes—to seek refuge from community censure has faded," the *Washington Post* reported in 1971. The House of Mercy's director, Loise Sullivan, attributed the drop in admissions to increased acceptability of birth control and abortions as well as single parents.<sup>49</sup> The trend was significant and unlikely to change, and as a result, the House of Mercy partnered with the Urban Institute to reexamine its mission and look for better ways to address the most critical needs of women and children in the local area.

### **Rosemount Center 1972-present**

A lack of daycare facilities, especially in the Mount Pleasant and Adams Morgan neighborhoods, was identified as a pressing community need. Large numbers of Spanish-speaking immigrants began settling in these neighborhoods in the 1960s and 1970s, most coming from Central and South America and trying to make ends meet on subsistence wages. Young mothers were severely challenged to care for their newborns and toddlers while needing to hold down fulltime jobs to earn a living. In response the House of Mercy closed in early 1972, reopening later that year as the Rosemount Infant Day Care Center. Many of the infants and toddlers at the Rosemount Center were from Spanish-speaking homes—approximately one third of the original 27 enrollees. The Center, which was alternately known as El Centro Rosemount, developed a bilingual program that allowed both English and Spanish-speaking children to learn a second language. It was the first bilingual infant daycare center in the Washington area.<sup>50</sup>

Within months, the newly established daycare center faced a funding crisis. "Mount Pleasant's two-week-old Rosemount Center, the city's only day-care facility which is both bilingual and infant-oriented, will close at the end of the month unless operating funds can be found," the *Washington Star-News* reported. The House of Mercy projected that it would only be able to supply about a quarter of the annual operating budget of \$100,000 for the coming year with its existing sources. Fortunately, the D.C. Department of Human Resources stepped in to provide needed funding. The *Star-News* article quoted Robert Aptekar, chair of the department's Child Development Division, as saying that the center had "a very impressive program of excellent quality, and magnificent facilities."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> "Episcopalians Hit Race Bars," *Washington Post*, Feb. 24, 1956, 30; Kenneth Dole, "Episcopal Diocese Acts To Advance Integration," *Washington Post*, May 6, 1958, B1; Grigg, 29.

<sup>49</sup> Jeannette Smyth, "Unwed Mothers: The New Freedom," *Washington Post*, Feb. 22, 1971, B1; Grigg, 30.

<sup>50</sup> Jackie Stone, "Homes' New Programs," *Washington Star-News*, Oct. 1, 1972, F-5; Grigg, 33.

<sup>51</sup> Calvin Zon, "Pinch in Day Care," *Washington Star-News*, Dec. 11, 1972, B-4; Grigg, 34.



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As the original class of 27 students aged, the Center renovated upstairs dormitory rooms to offer a bilingual pre-school program. The number of enrollees increased rapidly, and the center gained an excellent reputation. By the 1980s, it was welcoming visiting scholars from American, Latin American, and African schools to observe the children at the center. The Washington Post published an in-depth profile of the center in April 1980, noting:

*Rosemount, located in the Mount Pleasant area, is considered a model day-care center. With 108 children in the building and another 28 placed in city-funded satellite homes, it has a waiting list as long as your arm.*

*One reason for the appeal is its mix. It is multiracial and bilingual. All the signs in the halls are in English and Spanish, and the children are encouraged to pick up each other's languages....*

*The walls are covered with animal pictures and thing pictures: a gorilla, a spoon, crayons, a cat.... The rooms have Dutch doors. Inside are small chairs and low tables and playhouses with holes and chutes for climbing in....*

*One room is for babies in cribs. Another is for creepers, with chickie-yellow curtains and a jungle gym. A third is for toddlers.... Upstairs the rooms are noisier. The emphasis here is on activities and cognitive development, a teacher said, though there is still a good deal of mothering.<sup>52</sup>*

In January 2000, Rosemount Center and its parent, House of Mercy, formed a joint committee to explore potential operational enhancements as the center entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The committee concluded that a substantial renovation of the building would be necessary to bring it into compliance with health, safety and building code requirements. The center hired a new chief operating officer, Jacques Rondeau, to take on the formidable challenge of maintaining operations in the deteriorating building while planning for major, costly renovations. A new development program, headed by Martha Westin Johnson, undertook the unprecedented task of raising the \$6.5 million needed to complete renovations.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Michael Kernan, "The Children's Hours: Debuts and Dramas of Day Care," *Washington Post*, Apr. 2, 1980, B1.

<sup>53</sup> Grigg, 41-7.

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Figure 6: The entrance foyer during renovation in 2005 (Rosemount Center archives).

Renovation work began in late 2004. Blackburn Architects designed the new interior spaces, and MONARC Construction Company performed the work. Much of the interior of the building was gutted and reconfigured to meet modern needs. For example, a large foyer was created at the building's entrance, replacing the original cramped reception area. Disused basement space that had originally served as a coal room was reclaimed as a multipurpose room. Classrooms were reorganized and reconfigured. At the northwest corner of the building a modest "tower" was added to accommodate a modern elevator that provides access to all floors. While work was underway from 2004 to 2005, students and staff were temporarily accommodated at Trinity University in northeast Washington. They were able to return to a fully renovated building in September 2005. Since that time, Rosemount Center has continued to serve approximately 240 families every year, with a waiting list of about 250, indicating the continuing high regard that is held for the institution.

### **Architect Nathan C. Wyeth**

Few, if any, architects have had Nathan C. Wyeth's influence on the Washington cityscape. The House of Mercy was designed at the end of his first decade of practice, during which he created iconic "great houses" and contributed to such monumental public projects as congressional office buildings, the Tidal Basin, and the original Oval Office of the President. In the nineteen-teens, Wyeth designed major hospitals and the Key Bridge. After military service in World War I and a sabbatical that lasted several years, he resumed designing magnificent residences. In 1925 he became a key advisor to Municipal Architect Albert I. Harris and, in 1929, a principal partner in Allied Architects, a firm formed by several of the city's leading architects to pursue large commissions. After Harris' sudden death in 1933, Wyeth succeeded him as Municipal Architect

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and served until 1945. During his tenure, which spanned depression and world war, the District of Columbia constructed an extraordinary portfolio of civic buildings.

Nathan Corwith Wyeth was born April 20, 1870 in Chicago. The Wyeth family had settled in Massachusetts in the 1680s. Nathan's grandfather had established its Illinois branch after he accompanied his brother, the explorer Nathan Wyeth, on his trek to the Pacific Northwest in the 1830s. His family's later generations would include Palm Beach architect Marion Syms Wyeth and the artists N. C., Andrew, and Jamie Wyeth.<sup>54</sup>

Nathan's father Charles J. Wyeth was a prosperous member of that city's Board of Trade and principal in the firm of Wyeth and Vandervoort, which sold malt to the brewing industry. Late in life, Nathan Wyeth repeated a story about being carried from the path of the Chicago fire as a babe in his arms.<sup>55</sup> After the fire, the Wyeths resettled in Evanston. However, in 1873, Charles Wyeth died at age 37, apparently from sudden complications of consumption suffered at a Cairo, Illinois hotel.<sup>56</sup> The first of Nathan's many visits to Europe, in the company of his mother and older brother came shortly afterwards and lasted until 1875.<sup>57</sup>

In 1881, Nathan's mother married General Orlando Bolivar Willcox, a Detroit attorney turned soldier who received the Medal of Honor for leading multiple charges at the Battle of Bull Run in 1862.<sup>58</sup> After surviving a year in Confederate camps, General Willcox had been freed in a prisoner exchange and returned to the Union Army. After the war, he was placed in command of the Department of Arizona and involved in armed conflict with Native American tribes. Because he could not leave his post, Julia Wyeth travelled to Arizona for their wedding. For a half-dozen years, she accompanied her husband to posts across the country, while Nathan and his older brother attended nearby boarding schools. As a child, Nathan attended the grammar school of Racine College, an Episcopal preparatory school in Wisconsin, and as a teenager studied at the Adams Collegiate Institute in Sackets Harbor, New York, where General Willcox was stationed from 1882 to 1886. General Willcox then became commander of the Department of Missouri at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas until he retired from active duty in April 1887. During this time, his family lived in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Nathan attended Michigan Military Institute. Almost immediately after General Willcox retired, Nathan, his mother, his brother, and a young half-brother embarked on a year-long trip to Europe, where Nathan studied watercolor painting in Belgium and Switzerland. General Willcox meanwhile had become Director of the United States Soldiers Home. and Julia Willcox joined him in Washington after the family returned to the

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<sup>54</sup> Christina Wyeth Baker. "An Introduction to the Life and Career of Nathan Corwith Wyeth," (March 2, 2003) (personal to author, unpublished). Christina Wyeth Baker. *The Wyeth and Wythe Families of America. Seven Generations of the Descendants of Nicholas Wyeth* (Heritage Books, 2019) is the definitive genealogical work on the Wyeth family, and her assistance with the biographical information in this nomination is deeply appreciated.

<sup>55</sup> *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: Sixteenth Street Historic District* (Boundary Expansion).2006. Washington, DC: National Park Service

<sup>56</sup> "Chas. J. Wyeth," *Des Moines Register*, April 13, 1873, 1; See also Charles Jones Wyeth, *Find A Grave*, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/229487124/charles-jones-wyeth>.

<sup>57</sup> Wyeth; Passenger List, State of Nevada, Castle Garden, Port of New York, June 15, 1875; [https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/7488/images/NYM237\\_398-0844](https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/7488/images/NYM237_398-0844).

<sup>58</sup> "Medals for Two Brave Men", *Washington Post*, February 27, 1895, 3. General Willcox's medal was awarded many years after the Civil War.

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United States in May 1888.<sup>59</sup> It is unclear whether Nathan stayed on in New York or came to Washington as well.

Nathan Wyeth had intended to devote himself to watercolor painting, but these plans were dashed in the fall of 1888. Charles Wyeth's will had provided his widow and sons with an income based upon a principal of \$100,000 (the equivalent of several million dollars today) placed in trust with the friend who had contributed Nathan's middle name. However, in October the sudden failure of N. Corwith and Company sent ripples through the major New York City banks. It was later revealed Nathan Corwith, a merchant, banker, and speculator nicknamed "the Lead King", had commingled the Wyeth brothers' trust with the funds for his failed business.<sup>60</sup> Litigation outlived Corwith and eventually reached the Illinois Supreme Court.<sup>61</sup> Although it is unclear what assets were recovered, the new trustee did regain several pieces of property, whose sale in turn triggered litigation that rippled across the 1890s. It was now necessary that the Wyeth brothers support themselves by their earnings, and each was forced to borrow money to finance his education.<sup>62</sup>

Architecture apparently seemed a promising fusion of practicality and art. Nathan first ventured into the field in 1889 when he entered a remarkable school and encountered an extraordinary teacher. The Art Schools of the Metropolitan Museum of Art had been established "to furnish to New York a noble class of mechanics and artificers" through specialized training in subjects like mechanical drawing, modeling, carving, carriage drafting, decoration, and sculpture.<sup>63</sup> By the end of the 1880s, the school's focus had shifted from the "industrial arts" to a more conventional fine arts curriculum, with programs in painting, drawing, and architecture. These programs were rigorous, and receiving a diploma required completing "three seasons" of specialized classwork. The architecture program, which included drawing, history, and mathematics, aspired to convey far more than technical skills. In the words of its prospectus:

Beginners in offices are usually set to work to do tracing and similar mechanical work, and the opportunities afforded them to learn the theory of composition are, in most cases, extremely limited. This class has been formed to fill this want.<sup>64</sup>

The school's ambitions for its graduates were lofty, as "it is intended that those who follow this course should be sufficiently advanced to pass the examination required for admission to the

<sup>59</sup> "Gen. O.B. Willcox Buried", *Washington Post*, May 15, 1907, 11. Wyeth (2023).

<sup>60</sup> Corwith was a highly successful speculator in pig lead and real estate from Charles Wyeth's hometown of Galena, Illinois who tried to corner the market in lead, with disastrous results. "A Corner That Didn't Connect," *Rock Island Argus*, Oct 20, 1888, np; "The Corwith & Co. Failure." *Chicago Daily Tribune*; Oct 21, 1888; 16; "Still Talking of Corwith & Co." *Chicago Daily Tribune*; Oct 26, 1888; 5.

<sup>61</sup> "Street v. French," *The Northeastern Reporter, Volume 35* (Chicago: West Publishing Company, 1894) 816. Pages 814-820 describe the case in detail. Wyeth (2023). "For A Dock Property Purchase," *Chicago Daily Tribune*; May 15, 1892, 6; "Dismissed the Bill," *Chicago Daily Tribune*; Dec 23, 1892; 10.

<sup>62</sup> Wyeth (2023).

<sup>63</sup> *Schools of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Prospectus, 1883-84* (np) <https://libmma.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16028coll25/search>

<sup>64</sup> *Schools of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Prospectus, 1888-89* (np) <https://libmma.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16028coll25/search>

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Paris École des Beaux Arts.”<sup>65</sup> The program was unique for its time in that it admitted both male and female students.

The driving force behind the museum schools was a doomed visionary named Arthur Lyman Tuckerman. Tuckerman was a cousin of Lucius Tuckerman, benefactor and trustee of the Metropolitan Museum, who in 1886 had built a notable Richardsonian Romanesque house on Sixteenth Street in Washington. Before becoming “manager” of the Museum Schools at age 26, Arthur had attended the École des Beaux Arts and written several architectural books that became basic references.<sup>66</sup> In his position he acted as both principal and director, determining the curriculum, hiring instructors, enrolling pupils, and administering finances. With the aid of an assistant, he was the sole instructor for the architecture program.<sup>67</sup> Tuckerman tirelessly importuned the museum’s trustees for greater support, and proposed that, although the school was already “conducted on the plan adopted by the great schools of Europe,” it be reorganized on the competition-based École des Beaux Arts model. He simultaneously found time to work as a partner in the architecture and engineering firm of Theodore Weston, a trustee who was designing new north and south wings for the museum.<sup>68</sup>

It unknown how Nathan Wyeth became aware of the museum school. While the Washington connection may simply be a coincidence, it is tempting to speculate that it was through contact between the Willcoxes and the local branch of the Tuckerman family. The families had moved to the city around the same time, and both moved in elite social circles. Decades later, Nathan Wyeth and his wife attended social events with the Washington Tuckermans, and the families’ teenage children were close friends. However this connection occurred, on October 2, 1889, Arthur Tuckerman logged a \$25.00 check to cover an academic year’s tuition in the architecture program for “N.C. Wyeth.”<sup>69</sup> Nathan was committing to an immersive experience. Based on the 1888-89 prospectus, his class met Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday mornings and Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons. A historical lecture was open to all students on Friday afternoon, and at 3:30 PM on Wednesdays Tuckerman staged an innovative cross-program lecture on principles of design.<sup>70</sup>

Nathan Wyeth thrived in this atmosphere. In May 1890, the *New York Times* mentioned that he had received the second largest year-end prize, an \$80 award from trustee D. O. Mills for best work in the architecture class.<sup>71</sup> However, he did not enroll for the third season necessary to obtain a diploma and instead returned to the Willcox home in Washington. Wyeth’s reasons are unknown, but his second “season” at the school coincided with great turmoil within the museum.

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Although he frequently referred to his association with the Ecole, Tuckerman appears to have very briefly attended the school in 1883. See *Dictionnaire des élèves en architecture de l’École des beaux-arts de Paris* at <https://agorha.inha.fr/ark:/54721/09f9b004-c426-4e46-8398-d1acfe5e3e30>

<sup>67</sup> *Schools of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Prospectus, 1888-89* (np)

<sup>68</sup> Morrison H. Heckscher. *The Metropolitan Museum: An Architectural History. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin, Summer 1995)* (Volume LIII, Number 1), 27.

<sup>69</sup> *Account Book of the Art Schools of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1888-1889*, 24  
<https://libmma.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16028coll25/id/573>

<sup>70</sup> *Schools of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Prospectus, 1888-89* (np)

<sup>71</sup> “Prizes for Art Students,” *New York Times*, May 1, 1890, 8.

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In early 1890, the building committee replaced Weston as architect for the north wing with his suddenly ex-partner Tuckerman. While continuing his role in the schools, Tuckerman began laboring over revised drawings in April and quite literally became “consumed with the project.”<sup>72</sup> A year after construction began in October 1890, he was suffering from tuberculosis and was sent abroad by the trustees to regain his health. However, during March 1892, he died in Monte Carlo at age 31.<sup>73</sup> Without his energetic promotion, the Museum schools soon closed.

In June 1890, within a month of returning to Washington, Nathan Wyeth applied for a passport to travel to France.<sup>74</sup> By January 1891, he was living in Paris, and, by the following spring, he was a student at the École des Beaux Arts.<sup>75</sup>

It is often reported that Nathan Wyeth designed a fourth story for the Lemon Building at 1729 New York Avenue NW that was constructed in 1891.<sup>76</sup> The Lemon Building, designed by established architect Harvey L. Page in 1890, was an important office building located only a block from the White House, and it seems unlikely that such a commission would be given to a 20-year-old with a single year of training. The District of Columbia Building Permit Index has no listing for 1729 New York Avenue between its initial permit in August 1890 and the twentieth century. A plausible explanation may be that, in the summer and fall of 1890, Wyeth worked in Page’s office and drew the upper story façade as an amendment to the original plan.

Besides his academic record, little is known of Nathan Wyeth’s life in Paris. In late March 1892, he was admitted to the École on the recommendation of architect Henry Duray, in whose atelier he spent the next three years. He appears to have been a stellar student, receiving medals in descriptive geometry, construction, and modeling, as well as numerous “Mentions” (awards).<sup>77</sup> After designing a gallery for geological and zoological specimens for what today would be considered an undergraduate thesis, he was promoted to the premiere class and joined the atelier of Pascal in 1895. Several Wyeth family members resided in France, and he was visited at least once by his mother and General Willcox, but no record confirms that Nathan visited the United States before his graduation in 1899.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Heckscher, 27-28.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, “Gotham Gossip,” *Daily Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), March 21, 1892, 7; “In Memoriam: Arthur L. Tuckerman,” *Architecture and Building*: (Vol. 16, No. 11, 1892), 208, [https://books.google.com/books?id=PdEIT4dS\\_9oC&pg=PA208&lpg=PA208#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=PdEIT4dS_9oC&pg=PA208&lpg=PA208#v=onepage&q&f=false).

<sup>74</sup> Nathan C. Wyeth, Passport Application 16680, June 2, 1890, [https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/1179168:1174?tid=&pid=&queryId=5316f56f1193d84dd83f99fbd5876f25&\\_phsrc=FmL3130&\\_phst=successSource](https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/1179168:1174?tid=&pid=&queryId=5316f56f1193d84dd83f99fbd5876f25&_phsrc=FmL3130&_phst=successSource)

<sup>75</sup> Dictionnaire des élèves en architecture de l’École des beaux-arts de Paris at <https://agorha.inha.fr/ark:/54721/28a2a52e-31e5-4dc2-8f69-fe2fb50ca7b8> contains digital images of Wyeth’s records from the École.

<sup>76</sup> James Goode. *Capital Losses* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press; 2003), 310. Charles H. Atherton. “An Insider’s Reflections on the Development of Washington 1960-2004.” *Washington History*, 2006, Vol. 18, No. 1/2 (2006), 46.

<sup>77</sup> Dictionnaire des élèves en architecture de l’École des beaux-arts de Paris, <https://agorha.inha.fr/ark:/54721/7>,

<sup>78</sup> Wyeth (2023).

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The chronology of Wyeth's early architectural career is as confusing as that of his student years is vague. *Wyatt's American Architects* states that, upon returning to the United States, he worked as a designer with the Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury in 1899 and the noted New York firm of Carrère & Hastings from 1900 through 1903.<sup>79</sup> Wyeth's AIA questionnaire of 1946 reverses this and states that he worked for Carrère & Hastings in 1899-1900 and the Architect of the Treasury from 1900 to 1903.<sup>80</sup> Although the Carrère & Hastings employment suggests that Wyeth settled in New York, he was in fact a Washingtonian during most, if not all, of this period. In February 1900, Wyeth wrote the École asking that his diploma be sent to him at 2022 R Street NW, and a month later he joined a committee at the Washington YMCA.<sup>81</sup> General Willcox was now in declining health, and the Willcoxes generally closed their house and went away for the summer. On June 4, 1900, a census enumerator listed Nathan as boarding with the family of John Pairo at 2127 Florida Avenue NW, just a few blocks from the Willcox home.<sup>82</sup> On December 23, 1900, the *Washington Post* reported that "Mr. Nathan Wyeth, who has spent the last five years studying architecture in Paris, will be spending the winter with his mother at 2022 R Street NW."<sup>83</sup>

The 1901 and 1903 *Registers of the United States* jibe with Wyeth's 1946 AIA questionnaire regarding his employment with the Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury from 1900 to 1903.<sup>84</sup> Although it is not mentioned in *Wyatt's American Architects*, his AIA questionnaire, and other accounts state that he then transferred to the Architect of the Capitol, where he remained until 1904.<sup>85</sup> During this later year, Wyeth was also receiving commissions as a principal in a private firm. However, these conflicts are not necessarily contradictions. Carrère & Hastings had been involved in the capital's architectural affairs from John M. Carrère's unsuccessful campaign to be named Supervising Architect of the Treasury in the mid 1890s. In 1899, the firm began constructing the Townsend House (later the Cosmos Club) just blocks from the Willcox home, and in 1901 it refurbished and modernized important areas within the Capitol building. In April 1904, it was retained to design the original House and Senate Office buildings, with plans to be drawn within the Office of the Architect of the Capitol.<sup>86</sup> *Wyatt's American Architects* cites these buildings as Wyeth's first "principal work."<sup>87</sup> It is likely that Wyeth shifted

<sup>79</sup> George S. Koyl. *Wyatt's American Architects* (R.S. Bowker, 1962), 784, accessed at <http://www.archive.org/details/americanarchitect001309mbp>, May 1, 2011

<sup>80</sup> "Nathan C. Wyeth: "Questionnaire for Architects' Roster," (July 1946) at AIA Archives Website at [https://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/WyethNathaC\\_roster.pdf](https://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/WyethNathaC_roster.pdf).

<sup>81</sup> Dictionnaire des élèves en architecture de l'École des beaux-arts de Paris, [https://agorha.inha.fr/ark:/54721/7](https://agorha.inha.fr/ark:/54721/7;); "Hold a Business Meeting." *Evening Star*, Mar 20, 1900, 8.

<sup>82</sup> Twelfth Census of the United States. Washington, DC. Enumeration 145, Sheet 4A.

<sup>83</sup> "Social and Personal," *Washington Post*, December 23, 1900, 18.

<sup>84</sup> Official Register of the United States. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1901). 121; Official Register of the United States. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1903), 113, at [https://archive.org/details/sim\\_united-states-official-register-of-the-united-states\\_1903-07-01\\_1/page/112/mode/2up?q=wyeth](https://archive.org/details/sim_united-states-official-register-of-the-united-states_1903-07-01_1/page/112/mode/2up?q=wyeth)

<sup>85</sup> Antoinette J. Lee. *Architects to the Nation: The Rise and Decline of the Supervising Architect's Office*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 212 also cites this information.

<sup>86</sup> "Architect of Office Building," *Washington Post*, April 12, 1904, 4.

<sup>87</sup> Koyl, 784.

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between public and private employment while working on the same projects at different times as an employee of Carrère & Hastings and the Architect of the Capitol.

Wyeth's talents were such that he would have undoubtedly established a prominent place in the architectural circles of any city. However, Washington of 1900 was perhaps the ideal setting for his career. The Columbian Exposition of 1893 had inspired a Beaux Arts boom which, by 1900, was making it the city's dominant style for government buildings and great houses. The Beaux Arts-inspired City Beautiful movement's principles were coronated as an "official style" by the adoption of the McMillan Plan in 1902, followed by the construction of such dominant buildings as Daniel Burnham's Union Station, York and Sawyer's District Building, the Carnegie Library at Mount Vernon Square, and Carrère & Hastings's Carnegie Institution. While several Washington architects had studied at the École, in 1900 Nathan Wyeth was the first École diplomate practicing in the city.<sup>88</sup>

Wyeth's second advantage was his family's social position. While serving his architectural apprenticeship, he quickly launched himself into the whirl of the capital's high society. In December 1902, he was a guest at the White House debut of Alice Roosevelt and began to be mentioned in society page accounts of balls and receptions.<sup>89</sup> Although he was in his early thirties and probably past his athletic prime, Wyeth was an enthusiastic member of the Washington Fencing Club and played competitive tennis at the club level. In 1901, his work attracted its first attention when a review of the Washington Architecture Club Show at the Corcoran Gallery commented on the "beautifully rendered designs characteristic of the Friend School" offered by N.C. Wyeth.<sup>90</sup>

In early 1904, Wyeth formed a partnership with fellow École graduate William Penn Cresson (1873-1932), later a diplomat, distinguished biographer of James Monroe, and husband of Daniel Chester French's daughter. Wyeth & Cresson, whose offices were at 1517 H Street NW, received its first building permit in March 1904, and executed six other commissions during its three years of activity. Most were fashionable residences with a minimum construction cost of \$25,000, built in an era when developer Harry Wardman built row houses for about \$2,000 each.<sup>91</sup> In 1905, a house at 2209 Massachusetts Avenue became Wyeth's first commission in the Sheridan Circle area. In the next half-dozen years, he would design ten notable houses between this budding "Embassy Row" and the Willcox home on R Street.<sup>92</sup> Square 2516, which wrapped the 2300 block of Massachusetts Avenue NW and the 2200 block of R Street along the circle's northwest arc, became the setting for a particularly distinguished gallery of Wyeth houses. In 1906, Wyeth & Cresson designed a house for F. A. Keep at 2251 R Street. In June 1908, Wyeth, who by then was practicing independently, received the permit to build a house for C. Peyton

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<sup>88</sup> Cynthia Field. Isabelle Gournay, and Thomas Somma, eds. *Paris on the Potomac* (Ohio University Press, 2007). 26.

<sup>89</sup> "Miss Alice Roosevelt Introduced to Society," *Washington Post*, January 4, 1902. 1.

<sup>90</sup> "Art Topics," *Washington Post*, April 7, 1901, E9.

<sup>91</sup> All permit information from DC Historic Preservation Office. "DC Building Permit Database" (2009). Also see "Design Handsome Houses," *Washington Post*, October 6, 1907, R7.

<sup>38</sup> "Palatial Homes Planned," *Washington Post*. Mar 29, 1908; R10.



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Russell at 2249 R Street.<sup>93</sup> Although the Keep and Russell houses were complementary in design, they were not twins. The houses share elements like dentiled cornices and roofline balustrades, but the Russell house is much larger and has a more highly embellished façade. Wyeth cleverly harmonized the houses further by bridging the space between them with a Parisian-style double-arched, enclosed entry drive which communicated with gardens through rear sets of enormous iron gates.



Figure 7: Keep and Russell Houses (2023).

Shortly after construction began on the Russell house, Wyeth received a permit for his largest commission to date. Sarah Wyeth, the architect's cousin, was the widow of pioneering Philadelphia pharmaceutical manufacturer John Wyeth. John Wyeth had prospered during the Civil War through the invention of machinery that formed premeasured medicinal capsules and contracts to supply drugs for the Union Army. The family-owned Wyeth Drug Company, in various corporate incarnations, would grow and remain in business until Pfizer purchased its pharmaceutical line for \$68 billion in 2009. Apparently, Sarah Wyeth became attracted to the Washington social scene and in 1908 commissioned her cousin to design a suitable residence in the city. Its location on the Massachusetts Avenue side of Square 2516 presented a special challenge. The block was emerging as one of the city's premiere addresses, bracketed by eminent Washington architect Glenn Brown's Beale House (1907) at 2301 Massachusetts Avenue and the Moran House (1908) at the corner of 24<sup>th</sup> Street, which was designed by Meridian Hill mansion builder George Oakley Totten and under construction at the same time as the Sarah Wyeth House. The Keep and Russell houses had been elegant, but the Wyeth House needed to be splendid to hold its place amid its neighbors in such a conspicuous location. Nathan Wyeth's bow front design, a novel feature in the block, accomplished this handily. A year later, Wyeth was commissioned to build a house for diplomat Gibson Fahnestock next door. The Fahnestock House, another highly accomplished Beaux Arts design, is among the most famous Washington

<sup>93</sup> "Will Build Fine Home," *Washington Post*; Mar 3, 1908. 16.

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houses of its era. It completed a row of four important Wyeth houses, interrupted only by the Beale residence and the blue-chip firm of Wood, Donn, & Deming's Fitzhugh House at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and R Street on Sheridan Circle.<sup>94</sup>

While the Wyeth and Fahnestock houses were under construction, Nathan Wyeth was expanding his practice beyond society residences. For a partial reconstruction of the Tidal Basin, Wyeth designed the graceful, classically accented Tidal Reservoir Inlet Bridge (1908-09) with Army Corps of Engineers Colonel Spencer Cosby.<sup>95</sup> His next project brought him enduring notoriety. Almost immediately after his inauguration in March 1909, President William Howard Taft ordered a competition to enlarge and make permanent the White House's west wing offices.<sup>96</sup> Wyeth's winning design included a curved windowed wall and presidential office patterned after the White House's Blue Room. Construction of what quickly became known as "the Oval Office" began while the Taft family was summering at Malden, Massachusetts and was completed in the fall of 1909. The finished office attracted considerable mention in the press.<sup>97</sup> Besides his busy practice, Wyeth found time to act as patron to the Architectural Club of Washington, critiquing members' solutions to problems posed by the Beaux Arts Society of New York.<sup>98</sup> He also found romance with Dorothy Lawson, the much younger daughter of a Cincinnati tin plate manufacturer who had spent several social seasons in Washington with an aunt who was an intimate friend of First Lady Helen Taft.<sup>99</sup> Dorothy was related to the Blair family of Maryland and reportedly met Nathan at a function at Blair House, which was then a private residence.<sup>100</sup> After their wedding in 1911, the Wyeths moved in Washington's most elite social and diplomatic circles. Dorothy would have a long and successful career as social secretary to several European embassies.

Wyeth received the permit to build the House of Mercy on November 2, 1910, approximately eighteen months after receiving permits to build both the Fahnestock House and the equally notable Pullman House at 1125 16<sup>th</sup> Street NW.<sup>101</sup> It is possible that he received the prestigious project, for which he donated his services, because he was one of the leading architects in the city.<sup>102</sup> However, he also had several clients among the home's patrons and Board of Lady Managers. They included Mary Russell, who with her husband had commissioned the Russell House on R Street in 1908.<sup>103</sup> Cornelian Peyton Russell (1849-1923) descended from one of Alexandria's most prominent families on his mother's side. Raised and educated in Chicago and New York, there is no record that he ever worked for a living. During a decade spent touring

<sup>94</sup> "New Residence Planned," *Washington Post*, May 2, 1909, CA7.

<sup>95</sup> "Nathan Wyeth Will Become City Architect," *Washington Post*, January 12, 1934, 15.

<sup>96</sup> In 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt had commissioned the firm of McKim, Mead, and White to add west wing offices to the White House. McKim envisioned this space to be temporary, as he had endorsed Daniel Burnham's proposal for a permanent federal office campus in Lafayette Square centered on new presidential offices.

<sup>97</sup> "More Room for President," *Washington Post*, May 20, 1909, 3.

<sup>98</sup> "Prizes for Atelier Work," *Washington Post*, September 28, 1908, 6.

<sup>99</sup> "Miss Lawson Will Wed Mr. Wyeth," *Washington Post*, September 9, 1911, 7.

<sup>100</sup> Wyeth (2023).

<sup>101</sup> "New Chancery Ready November 1," *Washington Post*, September 13, 1914, R3.

<sup>102</sup> "Home For Girls Open," *Washington Post*; Oct 25, 1911; 5.

<sup>103</sup> "Tea for the House of Mercy," *Washington Post*; Oct 27, 1909; 7. "Social And Personal," *Washington Post*; Nov 12, 1908; 7.

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Europe, he married Mary Aertssen (1857-1927), a British citizen, at Westminster Cathedral in 1893. The couple settled in Washington circa 1900, and Mary Russell became active in charities concerned with children. Given the social customs of the time, the other members of the committee also would have been familiar with Wyeth's work through calling at the Russell home and viewing its neighbors. Another Wyeth client on the board of managers was Evelyn McGowan (1853-1931), wife of Rear Admiral John McGowan (1843-1915), who in 1907 had commissioned a Wyeth house at 1420/1424 16<sup>th</sup> Street NW.<sup>104</sup>

The National Register architectural style category that most closely corresponds to the House of Mercy's design is "Mission/Spanish Revival" style. This style was selected by the building's donor rather than the architect, but by this time the architect was moving from the Beaux Arts mainstream toward revival styles. The Pullman House, for example, shows a mixture of French and English renaissance influences. Wyeth had not previously designed a Spanish or Mediterranean style building, and the style would not achieve its peak popularity until after the First World War. However, it was not unknown in the city in 1910. For inspiration, Wyeth need not have looked further than the next-door neighbor to his Keep and Russell houses, the 1904 Wood, Donn and Deming-designed house at 2253 R Street, which incorporates important elements of the style. The nearby Alice Pike Barney Studio House on Sheridan Circle, designed by Waddy B. Wood in 1902-03, is sometimes described as "Mission/Arts & Crafts" style, but includes Spanish Revival features, such as stucco-clad walls, a curved front entry with oak doors, a curvilinear gable, and a terracotta tile roof above protruding eaves. A third Waddy B. Wood-designed house at 2131 Wyoming Avenue NW, constructed in 1907, includes such features as a first-floor arcade with curved arches, second-story balcony with an iron grille, and red tile roof above protruding eaves. Perhaps the finest early example of the Spanish Revival style is the Engine Company No. 21 and Truck Company No. 9 Firehouse on Lanier Place NW. Designed by Appleton B. Clark and constructed in 1908, the firehouse includes such signature features as stucco walls, curved door and window apertures, a curvilinear gable, and a red tile roof above protruding eaves.<sup>105</sup>

After 1910, Nathan Wyeth designed increasingly more prominent buildings. He directed extensive remodeling of the British Embassy in 1910.<sup>106</sup> In 1913, he designed the Columbia Hospital for Women in the Italian Renaissance style, and, in 1915, the city's nine-story Emergency Hospital near the White House.<sup>107</sup> In 1916, he began plans for his most impressive commission to date, the Key Bridge.<sup>108</sup> During World War I, Wyeth served as a major in the Army Sanitary Corps, and spent several years in Switzerland after the war, possibly recovering

<sup>104</sup> "House of Mercy Is Ready," *Washington Post*; Oct 23, 1911; 12

<sup>105</sup> "Engine Company No. 21 and Truck Company No. 9 Firehouse," *DC Historic Sites* website at <https://historicsites.dcpreservation.org/items/show/184>

<sup>106</sup> "Improve British Embassy," *Washington Post*, July 13, 1910. 12. "New Chancery Ready November 1," *Washington Post*, September 13, 1914, R3.

<sup>107</sup> "Hospital Fund Ready," *Washington Post*, December 7, 1913, R3. "Rush New Hospital," *Washington Post*, November 23, 1913, R3. Also "Where the Sick and Injured Are Soon To Find Help," *Washington Post*, November 13, 1913, 14.

<sup>108</sup> Historic American Buildings Survey. "Gibson Fahnestock House, DC-259" (1978), 5.

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from exhaustion.<sup>109</sup> During the 1920s, he rebuilt his practice in Washington, designing elite residences and embassy buildings, but also seeking other types of commissions. In 1925, he was among a dozen architects named to assist Municipal Architect Albert Harris with a backlog of school design projects and he co-founded Allied Architects to undertake other public commissions.<sup>110</sup> In 1924, he began a successful architectural partnership with Francis P. Sullivan. In 1929, he designed a complex of magnificent Georgian-themed houses which adjoined Sir Edwin Lutyens' new British Embassy.<sup>111</sup> That spring, Allied Architects was selected to design the new Longworth House Office Building, with Wyeth as principal partner.<sup>112</sup> When Allied Architects' unsolicited proposal for a Municipal Complex was accepted by the District Government in 1929, Wyeth was retained as chief design consultant.<sup>113</sup> At the same time, Wyeth & Sullivan were serving as consulting architects for a new wing for the Russell Senate Office Building, which was completed in 1933.<sup>114</sup>

Wyeth might have retired after these commissions, but he lost a considerable portion of his wealth in the stock market crash. In 1934, aged 64, he became Municipal Architect of the District of Columbia following the death of incumbent Albert Harris.<sup>115</sup> During his tenure from 1934 until 1946, he supervised the design of numerous schools and libraries, a new National Guard Armory, and the Municipal Center Campus.

A project from Wyeth's later career with a particular connection to the House of Mercy is the Hospital for Sick Children at 1731 Bunker Hill Road NE, which Wyeth & Sullivan designed in 1929-30. Like the House of Mercy, "the Children's Country Home," as the building was originally known, was built by a private philanthropic organization, in this case as the first purpose-built children's convalescent home in the District of Columbia. Designed in the manner of a Norman farmhouse or cottage, the hospital is constructed in a "connected corridor" plan, with a two-story central core and one-story wings that frame a courtyard to allow maximum light and air circulation. Its individual components are distinguished by steeply pitched slate gable roofs with asymmetrical dormers and chimneys, as well as a circular stair tower with a conical roof at the intersection of the two legs of the northwest wing.<sup>116</sup>

Despite their dissimilarity in styles, the hospital and the House of Mercy share important characteristics. Each was an urban therapeutic institution that integrated its building with a rustic campus, reflecting its era's belief in the beneficial properties of a rural landscape for mind and body. Both buildings are oriented toward a courtyard which is further enhanced as a key social and play space. Each creates a welcoming, non-institutional ambiance through a plan that

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<sup>109</sup> "Busy Nathan C. Wyeth Designs the Capital's Buildings," *Washington Post*, January 7, 1940. E1.

<sup>110</sup> "12 Named to Aid Harris," *Washington Post*, March 18, 1925, 2.

<sup>111</sup> "Small Group Plans Homes," *Washington Post*, October 8, 1929, 7.

<sup>112</sup> "New House Office Plans Completed," *Washington Post*, April 21, 1929. 9.

<sup>113</sup> "Allied Architects to Aid Center Plan," *Washington Post*, July 24, 1929. 5. See also "Individual Architects Employed on Center Plan," *Washington Post*, October 31, 1929. 10.

<sup>114</sup> "Russell Senate Office Building," Architect of the Capitol Website at <http://www.aoc.gov/cc/cobs/rsob.cfm>.

<sup>115</sup> "Nathan Wyeth Will Become City Architect," *Washington Post*, January 12, 1934, 15.

<sup>116</sup> Kimberly Prothro Williams. *National Register Nomination for Hospital for Sick Children / Children's Country Home* (2003) at <https://historicsites.dcpreservation.org/items/show/91>

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suggests a vernacular building that has expanded irregularly and not fully symmetrically over time. The buildings' unusual-for-the-time architectural styles lend them a romantic and slightly storybook character which suggests respite from the struggles and strain of urban life. The hospital's evocation of a "Normandy farmhouse and cottages" gives it a domestic character, while the House of Mercy's Spanish Colonial Revival/Mission style references a place historically associated with refuge and sanctuary.

Although the Hospital for Sick Children's key designer was Francis P. Sullivan, Wyeth's influence was undoubtedly felt. Indeed, partner Sullivan appears to have also been something of a Wyeth protégé. In 1905, shortly after receiving his architectural degree from George Washington University, Sullivan became a draftsman at Wyeth & Cresson. By 1909, he was the principal assistant in Wyeth's office, and worked on major commissions that included the Swedish Legation, the Chilean Embassy, the MacVeigh House on 16<sup>th</sup> Street, the Columbia Hospital for Women, Emergency Hospital, and Loudoun County Hospital before Wyeth's departure for military service and ensuing sabbatical.<sup>117</sup>

Nathan Wyeth's extraordinary contributions to the District of Columbia cityscape span virtually every area of architecture. His buildings are character-defining residential structures that are contributing to the Dupont Circle, Sheridan-Kalorama, and Greater Sixteenth Street historic districts, as well as non-residential structures that contribute to the Judiciary Square Historic District and the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Landmark District. Other significant works that Wyeth either designed or made significant contributions to include the numerous legislative branch buildings enumerated in this nomination, the Maine and District of Columbia World War I memorials, and the many governmental buildings dating to his tenure as Municipal Architect. His works individually listed on the National Register include the MacVeigh House, the Recorder of Deeds Building and the Municipal Center (Henry P. Daley Building), the latter two being Office of the Municipal Architect projects. In 2019, the Municipal Center and Recorder of Deeds Buildings were listed on the National Register after listing in the DC Inventory of Historic Places in part because they are the work of master architect Nathan C. Wyeth.

### **Builder Charles A. Langley**

Charles Albion Langley (1850-1942) was born in Dover, New Hampshire, and moved to Washington as a young man in 1875. He entered the building trade in Washington in 1879, forming the C.A. Langley Company, and continued as a builder until he retired in 1924, when he turned the company over to his son, Charles E. Langley. According to one press account, Langley "built probably more of the fine residences of Washington than any other individual." Many of these were the mansions and elaborate townhomes near Dupont Circle that were constructed around the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Examples include the Phoebe Hearst mansion at 1400 New Hampshire Avenue NW (demolished); the Sarah Whittemore house (now the landmarked Women's National Democratic Club) at 1526 New Hampshire Avenue NW; and

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

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the William J. Boardman House at 1801 P Street NW. Langley also was one of the contractors on the landmarked Eisenhower Executive Office Building.<sup>118</sup>

In 1889, he was an organizer and first president of the Builders' Exchange of the District of Columbia, which later became the Master Builders Association of Washington, a local trade association. In 1913, as president of the association, Langley proposed working with the D.C. government on a program to beautify Washington by redeveloping run-down sections of the south side of Pennsylvania Avenue (some of which would later become part of Federal Triangle) and by urging the federal government to better maintain buildings that it owned or leased. Langley was also president of the Central Contractors Association and in 1930 was made honorary chairman of the Bridges Committee and the Streets and Avenues Committee of the Washington Board of Trade.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Christine Sadler, "Langley, Builder, Has Served Chillum Heights for 44 Years," *Washington Post*, Mar. 14, 1938, X2.

<sup>119</sup> "Charles Langley, Veteran Builder, Dies at Age of 92," *Washington Post*, Mar. 18, 1942, 21; "Charles Langley Rites Set for Tomorrow," *Evening Star*, Mar. 19, 1942, A-14; "A Builder's Exchange Organized," *Washington Post*, Jun. 21, 1889, 6; "Mar Beauty of City," *Washington Post*, Sep. 21, 1913, R2.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 1.82

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

House of Mercy  
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**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 38.933360 | Longitude: -77.047130 |
| 2. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |
| 3. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |
| 4. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |

**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |          |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary corresponds with the pentagonally-shaped A&T Lot 811 of Square 2618.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary encompasses the extent of the original House of Mercy property. This area includes the full extant of historic resources, and corresponds to the original legal lot designation.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: John DeFerrari and Douglas Peter Sefton (DCPL Trustees), and Zachary Burt (DCPL Staff)

organization: DC Preservation League (DCPL)

street & number: 641 S Street, NW Suite 300

city or town: Washington state: DC zip code: 20001

e-mail: info@dcpreservation.org

telephone: (202) 783-5144

date: January 30, 2024

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

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**Photo Log**

#	Title	Camera Facing	Photographer	Date
1	Damaged early photo of the House of Mercy, Front (East) Façade from Rosemount Avenue	SW	Unknown	Undated
2	House of Mercy, Front (East) Façade from Rosemount Avenue	SW	George Kalec	c. 1955
3	Historical view of the courtyard of the House of Mercy	NE	Unknown	Undated
4	House of Mercy, South Façade, from Klinge Road NW	NW	John DeFerrari	3/19/23
5	House of Mercy, Front (East) Façade from Rosemount Avenue NW	SW	John DeFerrari	3/19/23
6	House of Mercy, Front Façade Parapet detail	W	D.P. Sefton	1/5/23
7	House of Mercy, North Façade	S	D.P. Sefton	1/5/23
8	House of Mercy, West Side from Rock Creek Park, Showing Retaining Wall and Rear Extension of North Wing	SE	John DeFerrari	1/5/23
9	House of Mercy, South Wing, Rear Extension	NE	John DeFerrari	3/19/23
10	South Side of North Wing showing Rear Extension	NE	John DeFerrari	1/5/23
11	House of Mercy, Rear of Main Block	E	D.P. Sefton	1/5/23
12	House of Mercy, North and West Sides of South Cross-wing, Showing Chapel Window and Breezeway Roof	SE	D.P. Sefton	1/5/23
13	House of Mercy, Main Block Rear Façade, Balcony Roof Framing detail	N	John DeFerrari	1/5/23
14	House of Mercy, Main Block Rear Façade, Parapet detail	E	D.P. Sefton	1/5/23

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

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The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.



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Map 1: House of Mercy boundaries, as indicated by blue lines (DC PropertyQuest).

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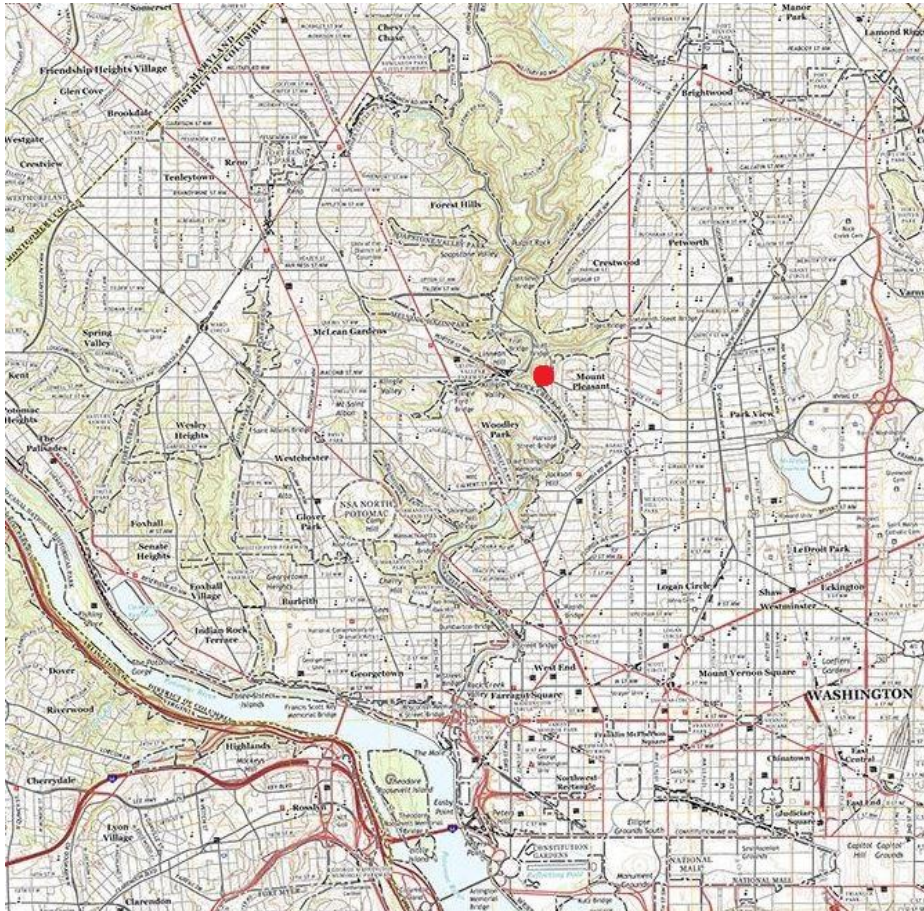
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Map 2: House of Mercy's location within Washington, DC, as indicated by a red dot (USGS).



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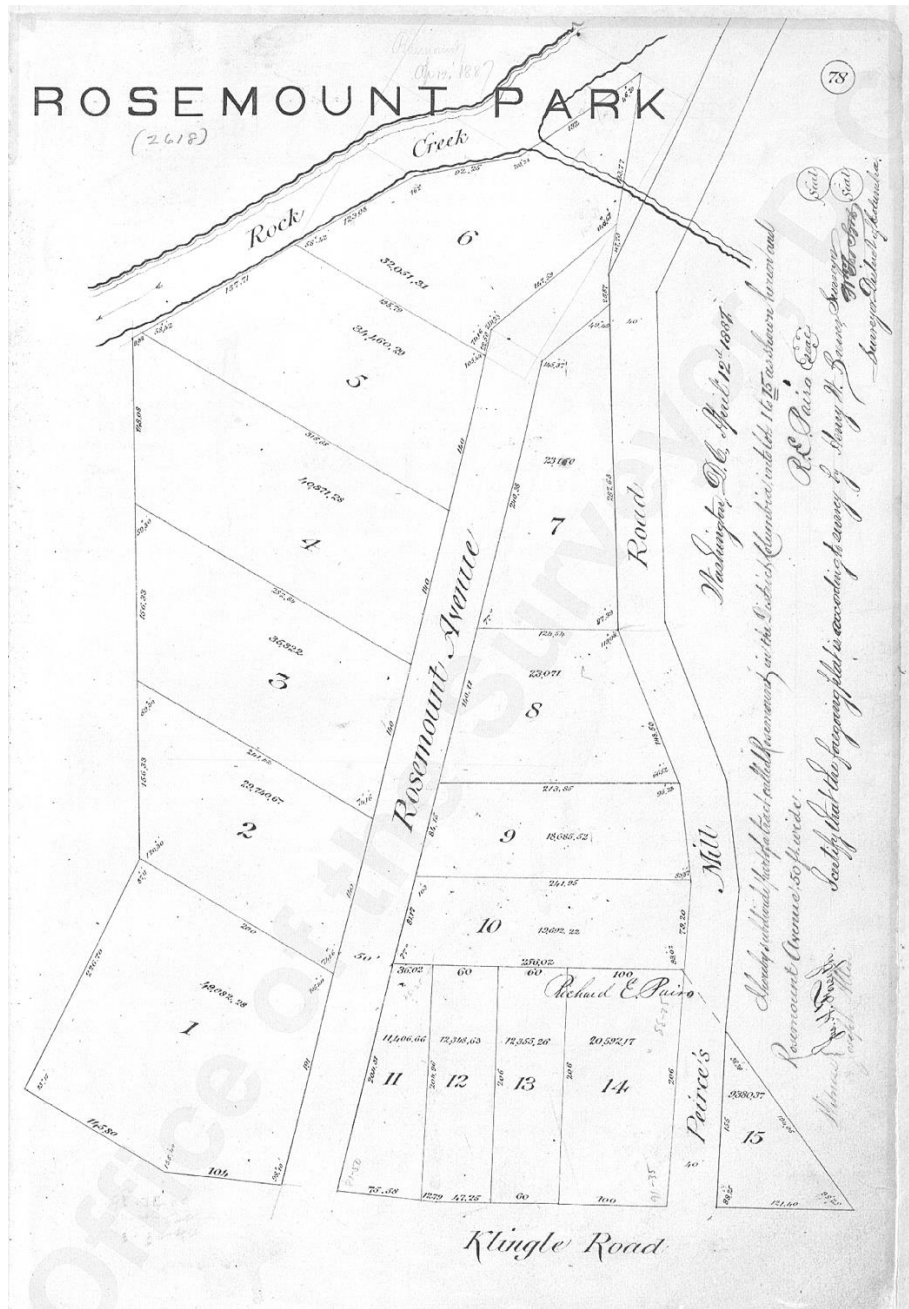
Map 3: Excerpt from N. Michler, *Topographical Sketch of the Environs of Washington* (1867). The site marked "Rev. J. French" just west of where the House of Mercy would later be built. (Library of Congress).

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Map 4: Pairo's Subdivision of Rosemount Park, April 12, 1887. The House of Mercy would be constructed on lots 1 and 2 on this map (DC Office of the Surveyor).

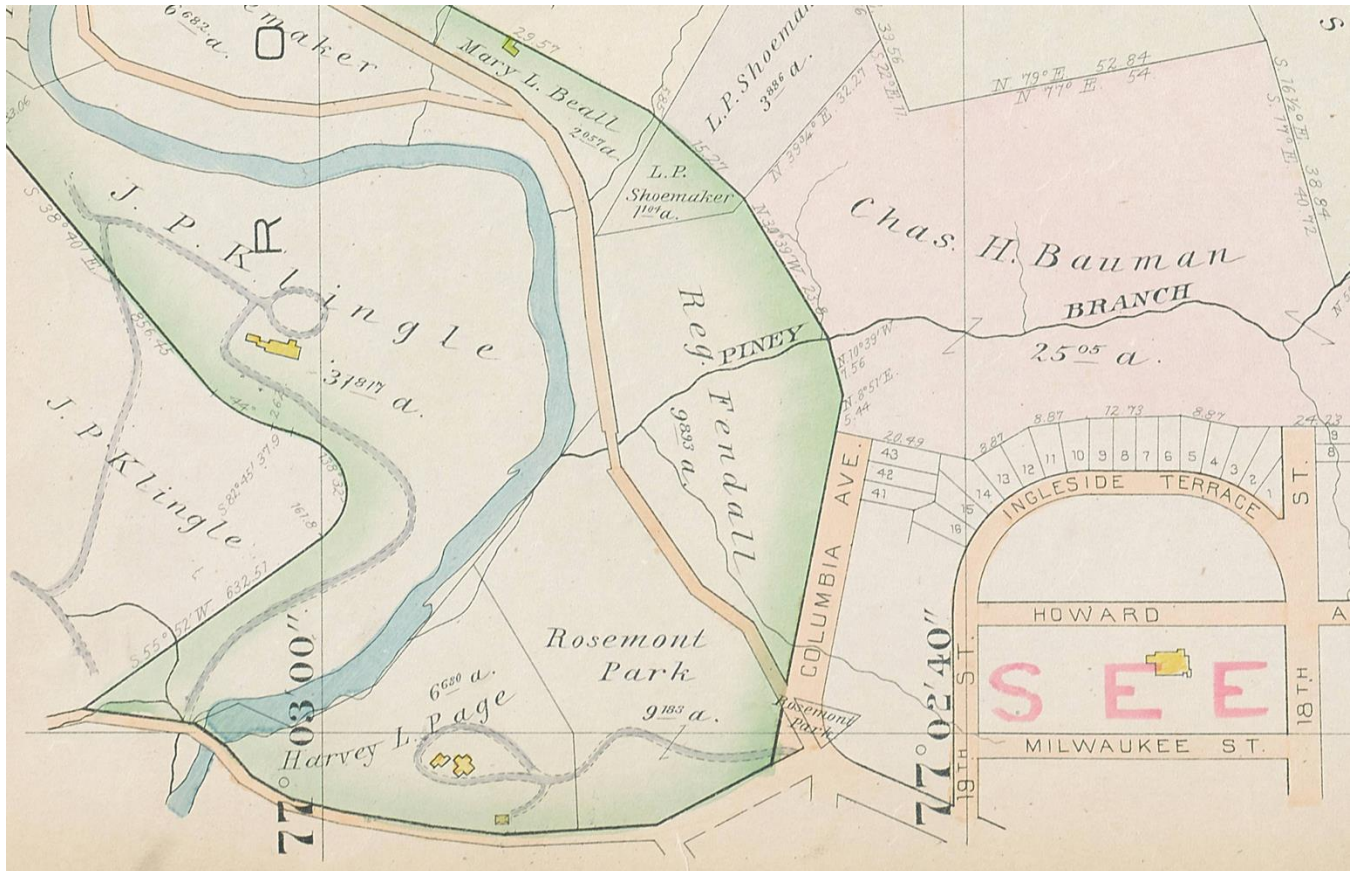


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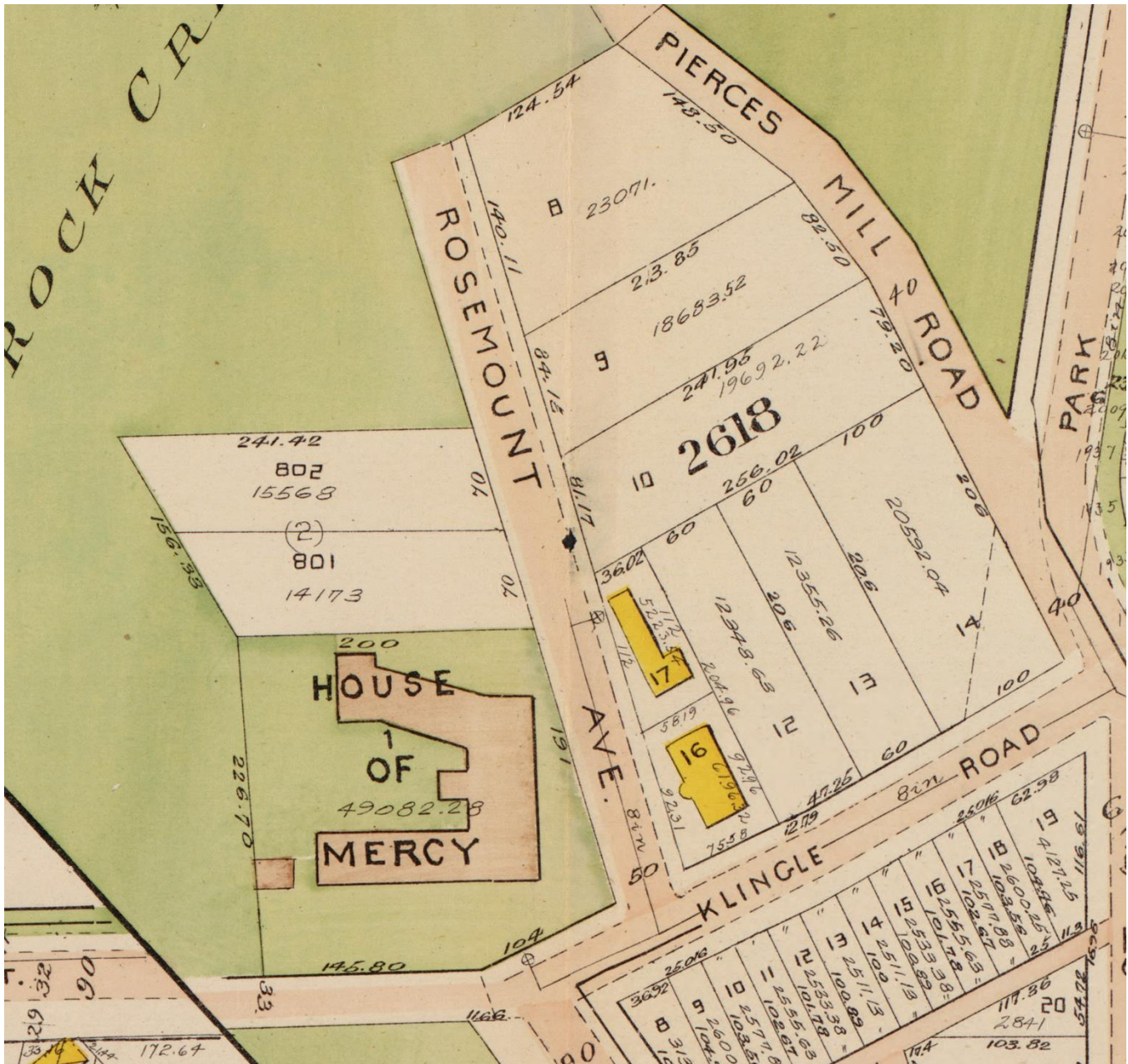
Map 5: Excerpt from Griffith M. Hopkins, *Real Estate Plat-Book of Washington, District of Columbia*, Vol.1 (1894), showing the Harvey Page house and drive and the Rosemont Park subdivision (center bottom). The Page house is just west of where the House of Mercy would later be built. (Library of Congress).

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Map 6: Excerpt from G.W. Baist, *Baist's Real Estate Atlas of Washington, District of Columbia*, 1919, Vol. III, Plat 8. (Library of Congress).

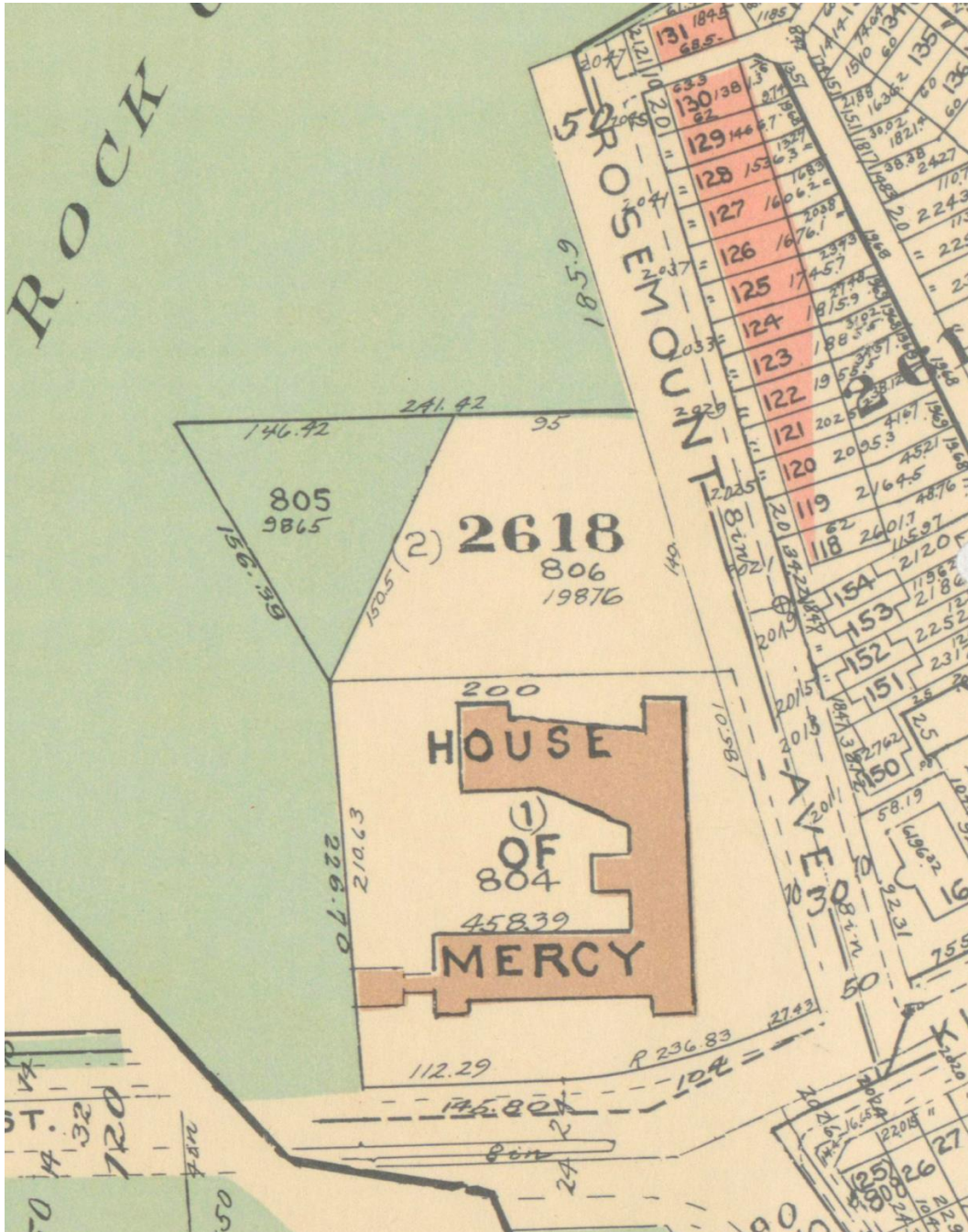


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Map 7: Excerpt from G.W. Baist, *Baist's Real Estate Atlas of Washington, District of Columbia*, 1968, Vol. III, Plat 8. (DC Office of the Surveyor).

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Photo 1: Undated, damaged early photo of the House of Mercy, Front (East) Façade from Rosemount Avenue, showing the original staircase to the main entrance. (Library of Congress).



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Photo 2: House of Mercy, Front (East) Façade from Rosemount Avenue, c. 1955 (Photo by George Kalec. Source: Rosemount Center archives).



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Photo 3: Undated historical view of the courtyard of the House of Mercy (Rosemount Center archives).



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Photo 4: House of Mercy, South Façade, from Klinge Road NW (J. DeFerrari).



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Photo 5: House of Mercy, Front (East) Façade from Rosemount Avenue NW (J. DeFerrari).



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Photo 6: House of Mercy, Front Façade Parapet detail (D.P. Sefton).

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Photo 7: House of Mercy, North Façade (D.P. Sefton).



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Photo 8: House of Mercy, West Side from Rock Creek Park, Showing Retaining Wall and Rear Extension of North Wing (J. DeFerrari).



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Photo 9: House of Mercy, South Wing, Rear Extension (J. DeFerrari).



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Photo 10: South Side of North Wing showing Rear Extension (J. DeFerrari).



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Photo 11: House of Mercy, Rear of Main Block (D.P. Sefton).



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Photo 12: House of Mercy, North and West Sides of South Cross-wing, Showing Chapel Window and Breezeway Roof (D.P. Sefton).



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Photo 13: House of Mercy, Main Block Rear Façade, Balcony Roof Framing detail (J. DeFerrari).



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Photo 14: House of Mercy, Main Block Rear Façade, Parapet detail (D.P. Sefton).