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) _____

Property Name: The Nixon-Mounsey House

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

Address: 2915 University Terrace NW, Washington, DC 20016

Square and lot number(s): Square: 1425 Lot: 0804

Affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission: 3D

Date of Construction: 1950 Date of major alteration(s): N/A

Architect(s): William D. Nixon
Architectural style(s): MODERN MOVEMENT / Art Deco

Original use: Domestic / Single Dwelling House Present use: Domestic / Single Dwelling House

Property owner(s): M.D. Garrard and N. Broude

Legal address of property owner: 2915 University Terrace NW, Washington, DC 20016

NAME OF APPLICANT(S) DC Preservation League / Mary Garrard / Norma Broude

***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) 1221 Connecticut Avenue. NW Suite 5A, Washington, DC 20036; (202) 783-5144

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

Signature of applicant representative: Rebecca Miller Date: 8/23/2021

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

Name/title of co-applicant: __Mary D. Garrard, Professor Emerita of Art History, American University_____

Signature of co-applicant: _____

Name/title of co-applicant: _Norma Broude, Professor Emerita of Art History, American University_____

Signature of co-applicant: _____

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: The Nixon-Mounsey House (1949-1976)
Other names/site number: The Broude-Garrard House (1979-present)
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: 2915 University Terrace 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

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date** **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**
In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. **Signature of commenting official:** **Date** **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:) _____

_____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:	x
Public – Local	
Public – State	
Public – Federal	

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	x
District	
Site	
Structure	
Object	

Nixon-Mounsey House
Name of Property

District of Columbia
County and State

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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6. Function or Use
Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Domestic / Single Dwelling House

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Domestic / Single Dwelling House

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
_MODERN MOVEMENT / Art Deco_____

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Yellow brick and glass block walls. Rose-colored stone base of entrance marquee. Stainless steel handrails and metal canopy.

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.)

Summary Paragraph

The Nixon-Mounsey House at 2915 University Terrace NW was designed and built in 1949-50 by African American architect William D. Nixon as a home for his daughter, psychiatrist Ethel Nixon Mounsey, and her family. A well-preserved architectural gem, it is one of the few major surviving examples of the Art Deco style in a large-scale private residence in Washington, DC. Set into the hilly terrain of University Terrace, just north of its intersection with Garfield Street, the house has two visible stories on the street front, and descends to four stories on the back. In form, design, and structure, it exemplifies the Art Deco taste for the organic and curvilinear. Capped by a flat roof, the house consists of a series of undulating yellow-brick units, whose rounded shapes project out from a central core. Glass block walls and windows dramatically accentuate the curvilinear shapes of the structure. The house is located in a heavily wooded area of University Terrace NW, one of two winding, “country road” streets (along with adjacent Chain Bridge Road) on which freed slaves bought lots after the Civil War. Today, remarkably intact, it deserves protection and recognition not only for the excellence and high integrity of its original style, design, materials and workmanship, but also for the integrity of its uses and association.

Narrative Description

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION: EXTERIOR

The overall form and structural design of the building, with which its exterior decoration is fully integrated, is Art Deco in inspiration (illus. 1). The particular form that the building takes, however, is unique due to its adaption to its site. Set into the hilly terrain of University Terrace, the house has two visible stories on the street front, and descends to four stories on the back. From the west (street) front, only the top two stories can be seen (the basement is below ground level). From the south side, it looks like a three-story house with a basement. Only from the rear (east elevation), where the land briefly levels off at the intersection of University Terrace and Garfield Street, can all four stories be seen.

In style, the house combines the sleek modernist design esthetic of the mid-twentieth century with the earlier twentieth-century Art Deco taste for the organic and curvilinear (illus. 3). With its flat roof, it presents to the eye an undulating sculptural form, with rounded units projecting out from a central core (as seen in the plan, there is only one right-angled corner; all other corners are rounded). The exterior surfaces are yellow brick throughout, with a rose-colored composite stone base on the entrance pavilion. The building announces its primary entrance with a prominent marquee, consisting of a semicircular aluminum canopy over the door, and pink steps beneath it that spill forward in expanding semicircular courses (illus. 2). The original canopy was made of plywood and painted yellow-beige to match the brick; when this deteriorated, the present owners restored it with a flat, polished metal surface similar to other Art Deco buildings in Washington, DC.

Glass block walls and windows dramatically accentuate the curvilinear shapes of the structure (illus. 3, 4, 6). To the left of the entrance, tall, thin, curved units of glass block admit a vertical strip of light to both the ground and upper levels (the present owners have installed an elevator at this location inside, a serendipitous placement that unifies exterior form with interior function). To the right of the entrance, a massive curved unit of glass block rises vertically from the ground floor to the upper story. As can be inferred from its zigzag base, this “giant order” of glass block announces and defines the large spiral staircase, a metal structure with curving terrazzo stair treads, that connects the upper and ground floors on the inside.

The west (entrance) façade seems at first glance to be symmetrical, despite the asymmetrical intrusion of the glass block staircase unit on the right, and the receding of the wall plane beyond it. This impression is created by the approximately symmetrical window treatment on either side of the central axis (even though the windows on the right side of the façade are slightly smaller than those on the left). The effect of symmetry is also supported by a wide band, or belt, between the two stories, which projects from the wall plane symmetrically, deepening in projection as it reaches each end of the façade.

The effect of regular order is further strengthened by the use of a repeating module that is almost Brunelleschian in concept. The square shape of a single 8" glass block was taken as a module for the entire design, a concept stated emphatically in the three single glass blocks aligned vertically on either side of the entrance, which admit light into the alcove that precedes the interior entrance door. The triple-square module is restated in the three vertically stacked glass-and-screen panels of the original aluminum storm door, which has been preserved by the present owners. The module appears again in the window units on both floors, where a pair of panels, consisting of three (or four) panes vertically stacked, flank a larger "picture-window" square (these side panels are crank-out casement windows, still in place, but, with modern air conditioning, rarely opened). This window treatment, what we will call a "Deco Palladian" motif, recurs in the larger window units, on both ground and upper levels. The square module is echoed at the ground level in the ten squares and rectangles that project in shallow relief from the rose-colored base of the entrance marquee.

As one moves around the house from the west elevation to the south, the building's three-dimensional, sculptural form is fully revealed (illus. 3, 4, 5, 6). Curves reverberate, their cylindrical volumes heightened by shadows, recalling Le Corbusier's architectural ideal as the "magnificent play of volumes brought together in light."[1] The belt that circled the west façade is now seen to continue on the south wall, its fullest depth creating a strong, dark overhang over the ground floor windows, and providing support for the metal grillwork at the base of the top floor windows.

In the south elevation, the axis changes from horizontal to vertical (illus. 3). Three stories are now fully visible (the fourth appears as a solid base, penetrated by a small triple-unit window). On each of the three floors, a boldly projecting central unit is articulated by a centered tripartite Deco Palladian window. On the basement and ground floor, this window is flanked by broad glass block insets that wrap around the curved corners. On the top floor, originally a sun porch, a smaller Deco Palladian window holds the central axis, and smaller windows fill the corner spaces. The present windows are a modern approximation of the original jalousies of this sun porch.

In the east elevation, all four stories are visible, now including the sub-basement and garage (illus. 5). This elevation presents a flat wall plane, defined on the left by a round corner and on the right by a right angle, broken only by a projecting chimney unit near the center that runs from ground to roof. The cylindrical left corner is articulated on each of the three upper levels by a large window treatment in which a variation of the module occurs (three stacked squares in four vertical units). On the right side, a novel window treatment appears on the ground and upper floors, where glass panels appear to wrap around the sole right-angle corner (a Deco Palladian window on the east runs to the corner, meeting a panel that repeats its central unit). On the third floor of the east elevation, a small "Juliet" balcony originally led off the kitchen; it was replaced by the present owners with a large wooden deck on metal poles, whose footprint, a rectangle with one round corner, echoes a leitmotif of the house. On the basement level, the Deco Palladian window is centered over the garage below.

[1] *Towards a New Architecture* (1923).

Other windows in this elevation are more modest and somewhat irregular in placement, depending on function. On the upper floor, two small bathroom windows of different shapes hug the chimney unit. On the ground floor, we see two single-unit relatively large windows (for kitchen and powder room), and a door that leads to the deck. On the basement floor, three smaller windows of different shapes are grouped near the chimney. At the sub-basement level, on the right side is a two-car garage (built to accommodate 1940s size cars), which had no doors before the present owners installed them. On the left side, an exterior door and a large picture window open to a small utility room housing the furnace.

The north elevation is not easily visible, because the ground level rises steeply upward toward the neighboring house, 2927 University Terrace, designed in 1976 by Hugh Newell Jacobsen, and placed on the near edge of that property. The two houses are separated by a screen of bamboo. On the right side of the north elevation, a chimney stack rises from ground to roof, to accommodate fireplaces on both ground and basement levels. On the left side, single unit windows are vertically aligned, one on each of the top three levels and a small one in the garage. On the basement level, two small windows flank the fireplace, and an exterior door originally opened into the adjacent room. For security reasons, the present owners turned this door into a vertical window filled with glass block.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION: INTERIOR

The house interior remains structurally intact (with minor changes discussed below), thus preserving and reflecting the original construction and occupancy of the architect William D. Nixon and his daughter Ethel Nixon Mounsey's family. The ground floor consists of four rooms and an entrance foyer (figure 1). On entering the house, one immediately encounters architectural drama. Light floods the space through the giant, curving glass block wall. Adjacent to that wall, a curving staircase cascades from the top floor into the entrance hall (illus. 7), with a bump-out on the top floor that creates a counter-curve on the ground floor ceiling. The strong, flowing curves of the ceiling and stair are juxtaposed with the rectilinear zigzag base of the tall vertical glass block unit that connects the two main floors, which at fullest height is fourteen feet. This unit receives strong light, particularly in the afternoon, which washes over the circular staircase to support the pervasive sense of flowing space. The spiral turn of this highly theatrical "Loretta Young" staircase, as it has been called, is defined and accentuated by a thin metal handrail, painted black, and by the bold black strips that edge the terrazzo steps.[2] The lean metal balusters, a looping "P" in shape, were originally painted silver, and are now white.

From the foyer, space flows in three directions. To the left, a shallow-headed arch, set at a diagonal, leads into a spacious living room (illus. 9). At the far end of this room, the left corner of the north wall is articulated by a horizontal glass block inset, measuring 6 x 10 blocks. Centered on the north wall is a black-sheathed fireplace, whose mantel and surrounds consist of

[2] The architectural attention devoted to this entrance space is reflected in Mr. Nixon's disagreement with his son-in-law, and his insistence that these strips be painted black, not grey.

flat panels of black glass. The hearth, asymmetrical in footprint, is composed of burgundy square tiles edged in black tile. The Art Deco andirons and fire tools from the original house remain, a gift of the second owners to the present ones. According to Mera Archambeau, the eldest Mounsey daughter and author of her grandfather's biography, *I Remember Poppa,* the living room originally had indirect lighting: "the lights were hidden behind a gracefully rounded molding on all four walls." The owners were told by Mera Archambeau that the original wall color of this room was burgundy-red-pink. A period photograph shows wallpaper with floral designs set within large vertical stripes (figure 2). Another open, shallow archway separates the living room from the music room (so-called by the original family and by the present owners). This room is uniquely rectilinear; all the other rooms in the house, apart from two in the basement, have some curved walls. The glass-wrapped, right-angle corner of the music room is visible from the entrance hall, another design feature that enhances the flow of space.

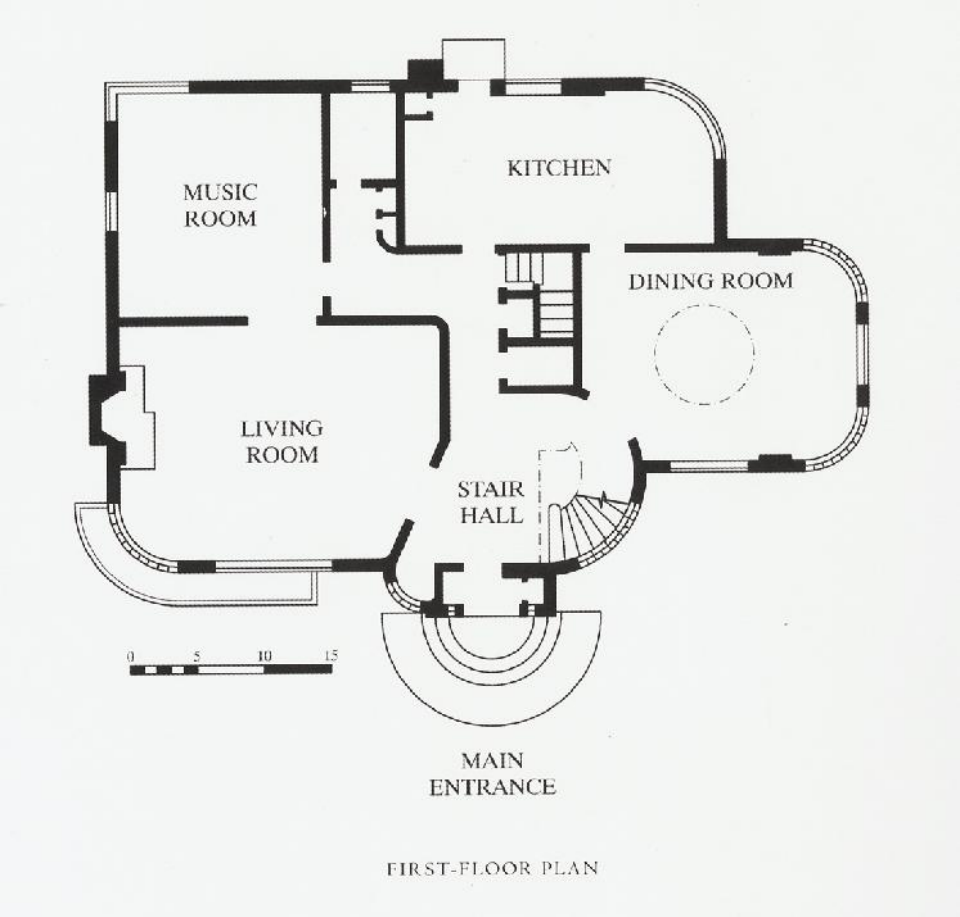

Figure 1: Nixon-Mounsey House first floor plan (First-Floor Plan from Capital Houses: Historic Houses of Washington, D.C., and Its Environs, 1735-1965 by James M. Goode).

Looking to the right from the entrance hall, you see the expansive, light-filled dining room, terminating in two curved glass block windows, which admit strong south light in the morning and midday (illus. 8). Each of these windows measures 6 x 10 blocks, like the window in the living room. One enters the dining room through another arch, this one curved in plan to extend

the circle initiated in the staircase wall. A large circular inset, approximately eight feet in diameter, is centered in the room, to frame the dining table and its lighting. The dining room walls were originally sea foam green, and on the wall adjacent to the kitchen was a mural depicting horses. All walls of the house, except for the kitchen, were painted white by the second owners, and remain white today.

Figure 2: 1950s photo of the living room (Courtesy of the Nixon-Mounsey Family).

The third site line from the entrance is straight ahead into the kitchen, with a view of green outdoor foliage beyond the kitchen door, which is axially aligned with the front door of the house. The original half-glass wooden door was replaced with a full-length glass door by the present owners, and this view now includes part of the wooden deck. Along the central hall, on the right, are two closets, the first twice as deep as the second; the larger closet was originally planned as a telephone booth for private conversations. At the entrance to the kitchen, the central hall follows a curving wall to the left to lead to the music room, then turns right to a powder room. The "corners" of this double bend are rounded, creating convex curves (the first one backs the concave corner of the living room), a feature that supports the flow of movement, both physically and aesthetically. The original tile floor of the powder room was composed of small intersecting black-and-white tiles; the tiled walls are yellow with black and burgundy trim. Both the toilet and sink were burgundy in color. All this is still intact, except for the replacement of the original floor with brown veined marble, and the original burgundy toilet with a black one. The kitchen is an ample rectangular space, illuminated by a large rounded window unit on the southeast corner (three stacked panels in five vertical units), a large window on the east side over the sink, and the full glass door to the deck.

A primary experience of the ground floor is the smooth circular flow around the four rooms. The effect of continuous circulation is supported by the continuity of wooden flooring and door treatments. The original honey-colored red oak flooring has been preserved throughout the ground and upper floors (two bedrooms were later carpeted). Also remaining on these two floors are the original doors, doorframes and baseboards – all of a deeper honey-colored wood. An Art Deco veneer, with subtle mottled and whorled patterns in the wood, can be seen not only on these doors, but also on the exterior front door, where it provides a warm, rich brown complement to the yellow and rose exterior colors. In the entrance hall, the floor space under the stairwell is defined as a counter-curve by an irregular, nine-inch high border, composed of rough stone blocks and thin bricks, pale brown in color. This border, added by Nixon after the family moved in, originally enclosed a space filled with houseplants, as it continues to do today. The same materials are found in the exterior entrance alcove, in the base of a small bench to the right of the front door. They were also used for the fireplace on the basement level. These unusual features have been preserved by the present owners.

Another form of architectural accent is provided by small shallow recesses that occasionally punctuate the interior walls. On the south wall of the music room is a round-headed niche 23" high, which accommodates a vase or sculpture. Near the top of the spiral staircase, a mirrored octagonal recess, 13" in diameter, creates sparkling reflections. A long mirrored rectangular recess was positioned over the bed in the master bedroom, and an upright rectangular recess is found in the front, south bedroom.

The upper floor of the house originally consisted of five bedrooms (now four), two on either side of the central hallway, and a smaller bedroom/sewing room centered at the front of the house. The latter was recently modified to become a landing room on this floor for a small elevator that was added to the house in 2012. Two bathrooms are placed side-by-side at the back of the house. The hallway is articulated, like the hall below it, by two convex curves, one that turns right at the top of the spiral stair, and another leading left around the master bedroom and into the second bedroom. In the ceiling of the hallway, an opaque door opening to a crawlspace beneath the roof has been replaced by a skylight. At the back end of the hall, the two adjacent bathrooms are "announced" by an arch embedded in the walls near the ceiling.

The large master bedroom on the north front of the house resembles the living room below it in having one curved inner corner that backs the convex curve in the hall. This southeast corner of the bedroom is further articulated, however, by rectilinear projections into the room (closets) that frame the alcove-like space as a virtual rectangle with one round corner, a module seen throughout the house. The master bedroom's exterior (northwest) corner is defined by four vertical panels of crank-out casement windows. The northeast corner is intersected by a diagonal plane (behind it is a closet), which balances the glass window unit on the northwest corner. The smaller second bedroom on the north side is rectilinear in plan, echoing the music room on the floor below it, with a right-angled corner window, as described above. The west wall flows forward on a shallow, rounded diagonal, in order to accommodate closets. On the other (south) side of the hall, the bedroom at the front of the house is irregular in shape. It has one convex interior wall, which it shares with the curved space of the staircase landing adjacent to it. This

room, which was occupied by the William Nixon, had other unusual features, such as a working sink framed as an open closet (now replaced by a chest), and a hidden safe in a window frame.

On the south wall, the original glass-paneled door and a pair of mullioned windows bring in light from the adjacent sun porch. The original floor of the sun porch consists of grey tiles set on the diagonal, with large and small red lozenge inserts, and a red tile border. From the sun porch, there is a close view of the metal grillwork set into the exterior window sill, with its geometric design of circles and squares, which was originally painted either silver or a reddish color similar to the floor tile inserts. The fourth bedroom at the back of the south side has a large corner window matching that in the kitchen below (three stacked panes in five vertical units), giving this room strong exterior light. The spaces of this room and the adjacent bathroom were modified by the present owners, who moved the wall of the original bathroom three and a half feet into this space to make room for a shower. In this remodeled bathroom, the projection into the bedroom is articulated by a corner unit of modern glass blocks. The larger bathroom has most of its original features: a tile floor of small pink-and-blue units, and half-tiled walls of pale blue and yellow framed by pink trim. The original square pink bathtub remains, a vintage “Cinderella” corner tub popular in the 1940s and ‘50s.

The basement level of the house was left unfinished by the original owners, but the space distribution was established by 2 x 4 framing. Conceived as a separate apartment or office, perhaps for rental or family use, the basement had one finished bathroom, a laundry room, and three bedrooms leading off a large central space from which a small staircase led up to the ground floor. The present owners expanded the staircase three-dimensionally, with stairs flowing in three directions, to echo the circular exterior stair at the entrance. They finished the walls and surfaces of this floor, converting it into a three-room office space and library. The north front room holds the original fireplace made of irregular, thin pale brown bricks with a metal grill of Art Deco design inserted below the mantel. A rectangular recess above the mantel is framed by the same rough stone of which the mantel is comprised, while the foot-high wall of the hearth is faced with vertically aligned yellow bricks. The fireplace is flanked by two small windows, one square and the other vertical. The south room features a large Deco Palladian window on the south wall, the same size as the one above it, flanked by two curved glass block windows on the corners, which are slightly smaller than the ones above (4 x 10 blocks, rather than 6 x 10). On the east wall there is a glass-mullioned door that was intended to connect to the street level below, perhaps as an entrance to a separate office or apartment; but a staircase was never built. The laundry room on the southeast corner is well lighted by a curved window unit matching that in the kitchen above. The northeast corner room, now a library, has a modified Deco Palladian window on the east, and a glass block vertical window (originally a door) on the north.

The sub-basement consists of the garage and a utility room housing the furnace. Behind this room, the steeply rising ground level was never fully excavated. There is a small window on the south end. At its lower east end stands the hot water heater and shallow shelves for the supplies that the original family stored in this space, which they deemed a bomb shelter. The present owners have excavated the space further to accommodate the elevator’s mechanical room.

EXTERIOR SPACES AND LANDSCAPING

Nixon continued his design concepts into the house's exterior spaces and surrounding landscape. To the left of the front entrance, which Mera Archambeau described as "the only flat ground abutting the house," Nixon designed and built an elevated bed for flowers and plantings, 21" high, 26" deep.[3] This flower box was clad in the same yellow brick as the house, and curved around the wall to the chimney on the north side. This architectural feature remains, and a deteriorating portion was recently rebuilt by the present owners. To the right of the entrance, Nixon developed a series of terraces, whose central feature was a staircase that led down the descending terrain to the lower level on the south and rear (east) sides. This staircase made of brick and framed in cinderblock consisted of a short flight of steps leading down to a landing that curved outward, then expanded into a broad circular staircase, whose downward spiraling contour was traced on its right side by a metal handrail. Though in need of repair, its structure remains visible. The terraced spaces between this staircase and the house were filled with plantings, many of which remain today. At the base of the south wall of the house there is another raised "flower box" – this one larger and of rougher materials than the one on the upper level. To the right of the circular garden staircase, abutting the foundation wall that leads from the house to the street, Nixon designed and constructed a large half-circle fountain framed in cinder blocks, in which the basin is backed with a tall concave semicircular niche. According to Mera Archambeau, the fountain originally held a fish pond. From the ground level one looks over the cinder block foundation wall down into the fountain. This fountain is still standing, but is now filled with soil. Though in need of repair, its structure remains well defined. The southwest corner view of the house includes the fountain, and is visually striking, as the fountain unit carries the theme of curves and counter curves into the surrounding terrain.

The house is accessed from University Terrace by a pair of curved sidewalks that join at the base of the entrance staircase to form a semicircle. The original concrete sidewalks were refaced (and extended to the street) by the present owners with Durastone, a pebbly-textured modern material, in a pale yellow color. The original pink circular front steps have also been refaced in pink Durastone.

INTEGRITY

The Nixon-Mounsey House 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. In 2019, cleaning and repointing of all of the brickwork was carried out, restoring the original beauty of the building's massive yellow-brick and glass block exterior. All of its aluminum frame and glass block windows, as well as its front door and storm door, are original. The façade (west front) has undergone only two minor modifications. Flanking the convex entry stairs, a pair of stainless-steel handrails was recently installed as a safety measure at the request of insurers. The drum of the extant canopy over the entrance doorway, originally made of a thin and constantly deteriorating plywood, has been restored with a flat, polished metal surface similar to that of other Art Deco buildings in Washington, DC. In form, style and material, these adjustments complement and are entirely

[3] Mera M. Archambeau, *I Remember Poppa.* (Barnes & Noble, Nook edition, 2011; Amazon Kindle, 2012).

consonant with the original structure. At the rear of the house, on the third floor of the east elevation, a small balcony that originally led off the kitchen was expanded in 1980 into a large wooden deck supported by steel beams and poles. The footprint of this outdoor deck, a rectangle with one round corner, echoes a leitmotif of the house. Below it, at ground level, a two-car garage, left open and unfinished by previous owners, has been completed with the addition of a concrete floor and a set of glass and metal garage doors. The horizontal panels of these doors harmonize with the shapes of other apertures on this rear elevation and are in keeping with the modern esthetic. In 1992, in order to protect the sun porch on the upper level of the south elevation from deleterious rain intrusion, the original jalousie windows were replaced by eight awning-type windows and one picture window in the existing openings. These are consonant with the design and materials of the windows below them on the south elevation. In 1998, the material of the flat roof, originally made of built up hot tar, was replaced with a functionally superior TPO (thermal plastic) membrane (not visible from the street). With the exception of these completions and minor modifications designed to safeguard the building, the exterior has undergone no significant alteration and the house remains impressively intact.

While the interior is not being proposed for historic designation, it nonetheless also retains a high degree of integrity. The house retains its unique original floor plan on the entrance and upper levels, the only levels that were fully completed during the residency of the Nixon-Mounseys (1949-1976). Modifications on these levels since construction in 1949 have been largely decorative and functional. It was the second owners, Dan and Sharon Campbell (1976-79), who replaced the original dark burgundy and green palette with white walls that reveal and enhance the spatial and structural complexities of the house's curving and flowing spaces. They also installed modern recessed lighting in the living room and completely remodeled the kitchen according to the functional standards of the late 1970s. As the Broude-Garrard residence from 1979 to the present, the updated interior décor of the house has maintained that modern ethos. In the early 1980s, Broude and Garrard completed the basement level of the home, which had been left unfinished by previous owners. They finished the walls and other surfaces of this level, converting it into a three-room office space and library, while maintaining the spatial footprint that Nixon had originally established by means of 2 x 4 framing that remained in place. This distribution of space echoes that of the major rooms on the entry level above, which are original to Nixon's layout. They also replaced the narrow and provisional staircase then in place that led up to the ground floor with stairs that now flow in three directions, to echo the circular exterior stair at the house's entrance. In 2012, they installed a small elevator that services three-levels of the home. It has been inconspicuously incorporated into the original spaces and occupies at interior entry level an existing semi-circular space to the left of the front door and a small corner of the exterior entrance alcove.

In the last forty plus years of their stewardship, Broude and Garrard, who are art historians, have been careful to preserve all of the salvageable original features of the interior that are consistent with modern functionality. These are enumerated in detail in the above description. All of the original red oak flooring, the interior doors, and the two original fireplaces are intact, as are all of the glass-block windows and the curving, two-story, metal and terrazzo staircase that lends period drama to the house's entrance foyer.

In the more than seventy years that have elapsed since its construction, the house has maintained not only the high integrity of its original style, design, materials and workmanship, but also the integrity of its use and association, as a family residence for art educators and social activists. As described below, William D. Nixon was a leading civil rights activist and organizer, who participated in sit-ins in Washington, DC that led to desegregation of public facilities. As president of the Association of the Oldest Inhabitants (Colored), Nixon held many meetings in the 2915 University Terrace house. During the tenure of Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, the house has continued to be a setting for political meetings and social justice activity. During the 1980s especially, when Broude and Garrard served as national leaders in feminist art organizations, logistical meetings and gatherings were frequently held in their home on University Terrace. Their long commitment to helping attain social justice for women, both political and historical, directly parallels William Nixon's lifelong commitment to achieving social equality and justice for African Americans. It is striking that the Nixon-Mounsey House, now the Broude-Garrard House, has been a locus of political and educational activism for 54 of its 68 years in existence.

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.
- [X] B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [X] 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

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
ARCHITECTURE
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance
1950 - 1962

Significant Dates

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
William D. Nixon (1871-1962)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
William D. Nixon (architect)
R.A. Morrison (builder)

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.)

The Nixon-Mounsey House is significant under District of Columbia Criterion C and similar National Register Criterion B for its association with an individual who is significant to the development of the District of Columbia. Born in nearby Herndon, VA, William D. Nixon, the architect of the house as well as one of its first occupants, was a lifelong DC resident, teaching stage design and drawing for forty-three years at Paul Laurence Dunbar High School. He was self-taught as an architect and was a pioneering civil rights activist and organizer in DC, who led and participated in seminal campaigns in the early 20th century to desegregate the city's eateries, public schools, police and fire departments, as well as many other causes of social justice. His activism is evident in numerous letters he wrote to local newspapers and in the civil rights leaders he worked with on a continual basis. He undertook key actions to attain desegregation of public facilities in the 1950s, the same time that he was living at the house at 2915 University Terrace NW. From 1943 until his death in 1962, Nixon served as president of the Association of the Oldest Inhabitants (Colored), and in the later years of his activist work with this group, he held many organizational meetings at his 2915 University Terrace home.

The Nixon-Mounsey House 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 house is one of the few significant surviving examples of the Art Deco style in a large-scale private residence in Washington, DC. The originality of its design within this genre and the integrity of its style and construction are remarkable. The streamlined, curvilinear design, the use of architectural glass block, and the clean, Modernist lines are all striking and unique examples of the Art Deco aesthetic. Today, a well-preserved architectural gem, the house deserves protection and recognition not only for the excellence and integrity of its original style, design, materials and workmanship, but also for the integrity of its uses and association.

The house's period of significance begins with its construction in 1950 and ends in 1962 with the death of William D. Nixon, who lived and worked out of the house he designed.

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

ARCHITECTURE: ART DECO STYLE. The Nixon-Mounsey House is significant as a unique, late example of the Streamlined Moderne variety of the Art Deco architectural style, as applied to a single-family residential structure. Very few such buildings were constructed in the District of Columbia.

The term "Art Deco" was coined in the 1960s by British historian Bevis Hillier to describe the fusion of avant-garde artistic movements with industrial design that crystalized into a distinctive style at the Paris Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes of 1925. Hiller chose the term Art Deco in part to position the style in contrast to the earlier Art Nouveau style, with which it shares some characteristics.[4] In architecture, Art Deco was characterized by a 1928 observer (not using the term, of course) as, "Straight lines; it is angular, geometric and tends to follow cubic proportions… The lines are unvaryingly plain and severe, with touches of decoration in the way of color, wrought iron and glass work, for relief."[5] From this start, Art Deco evolved into a family of "Moderne" styles which shared streamlined planes conveying a sense of motion, lively color accents, bold geometric forms, and machine-age materials, such as polished aluminum. To accent their streamlined curves, Moderne buildings generally eschewed sculptural additions, like piers and cornices, focusing the viewer's attention on the dramatic lines of the overall structure. According to architectural historian David Gebhard, "The ideal Streamline Moderne building was a horizontal rectangular container, usually with dramatic rounded corners and occasional semicircular bays, surmounted by parapets or projecting thin-slab roofs. The image projected was that of a scientifically advanced, effortlessly hygienic world."[6] The exuberance of the Moderne style evoked modernity and glamor, optimism about the future, and the flamboyance of Jazz Age nightlife.

While Art Deco was not known by that term in the 1930s and 1940s, Americans recognized it as a trendy style, and, as a general rule, they shied away from such styles – which might prove to be short-lived – in the design of their houses.[7] This is borne out in the fact that Art Deco single-family houses in Washington, DC are relatively rare. Hans Wirz and Richard Striner, in their authoritative survey of Art Deco architecture in Washington, include only six freestanding single-family houses in their list of Art Deco buildings.[8] Generally speaking, detached dwellings are rare among early Modernist buildings in most American cities. There were numerous reasons for this. Single-family dwellings had been the sector of the housing market hardest hit by the Great Depression, and consumer preferences for domestic environments tended to be conservative. As Elizabeth Mock's 1944 MOMA catalogue essay suggested:

> Americans already suffered, if often unconsciously, from the over-mechanization of their lives, and no longer found anything romantic about it. Get up to the jangle of an alarm clock, rush through breakfast to spend an hour or two on a crowded bus or train, or driving yourself through frustrating traffic, pound a typewriter furiously all day with thirty minutes off for a counter lunch, and you're in no mood to come home to even the most beautiful machine *a habiter*. Call it escapism if you will.[9]

[4] David Gebhard, *The National Trust Guide to Art Deco in America* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1996), 2.
[5] Quote from an unidentified commentator in Gebhard, 4.
[6] Gebhard, 10.
[7] Gebhard, 1.
[8] Hans Wirz and Richard Striner, *Washington Deco: Art Deco Design in the Nation's Capital* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1984), 103-109.
[9] Elizabeth Mock, *Built in USA, 1932-1944* (catalogue) (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1944), 13.

A majority of the single-family houses constructed in the 1930s and 1940s were of the Colonial Revival style, a comforting architectural style conveying permanence and stability in a time of social and political upheaval. Nevertheless, stylistically modernistic houses were also built, particularly among architects and builders, who were the ones most attuned to architectural trends and styles. Gebhard notes, "For the limited number of Americans who could afford to build [in the 1930s], a Streamline Moderne dwelling established them in their own eyes and in the eyes of their neighbors as progressive, scientific, avant-garde."[10]

In some cases, designs were adopted that assuaged conservative Washington tastes by blending architectural styles to offer design flair and inventiveness without resulting in an overly modernistic statement. An example is the home of architect Waldron Faulkner, built at 3415 36th Street NW in 1937. Faulkner was a highly respected Washington architect who designed many institutional buildings in his 35-year career. *The AIA Guide to Architecture of Washington* describes the Faulkner home as:

> A domestic version of the stripped classicism that swept 1930s Washington. Vaguely classical, not quite art deco, and almost modern, it exemplifies the struggle of Depression-era architects to reconcile greater architectural trends with the aesthetic conservatism that defined the nation's capital.[11]

Another DC house that was designed by an architect with his own use in mind was the Theodore W. Dominick House, at 3210 Reservoir Road NW, completed in 1937. Dominick (1906-1996), a residential architect, designed a Moderne house with a similar massing and overall look as the Nixon-Mounsey House, which followed it 13 years later.[12] Similarly, developer Elias Gelman built a house with Moderne features for his daughter at 3718 Calvert Street NW in 1939. Like Faulkner's house, the Calvert Street house reflected a mixture of styles. It was designed by the well-known architectural firm of Dillon & Abel.

Examples of single-family houses wherein other Modernist styles, such as the International Style, are combined with Moderne elements are common among the few Art Deco houses in DC. In the Richard England House (1952), located near the Nixon-Mounsey House at 2832 Chain Bridge Road NW and designed by Robert McMillen of the Architects Collaborative, for example, a similar use of clean building lines and glass block as the Nixon-Mounsey House are used, but the house does not display the same curved, streamlined appearance that is typical of Art Deco. Instead its rectilinear composition tends to evoke the Modernist tenets of German-American pioneering architect Walter Gropius.[13]

[10] Gebhard, 12.
[11] G. Martin Moeller, Jr., *The AIA Guide to the Architecture of Washington, D.C.*, 3rd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 304.
[12] "Theodore W. Dominick, Washington Architect," *Post*, Aug. 6, 1996.
[13] Robinson & Associates, *DC Modern: A Context for Modernism in the District of Columbia, 1945-1976*, (Washington, DC: 2009), 34.

The Morris Cafritz House, located nearby at 2301 Foxhall Road NW, is one of the few pre-eminent examples of an Art Moderne single-family home in DC (figure 3). This luxurious 15,000-square-foot, 58-room mansion was designed and constructed between 1936 and 1938 for real estate magnate Morris Cafritz and his wife, Gwendolyn. Its architects, Alvin Aubinoe and Harry Edwards, were the designers of Cafritz's signature Moderne apartment buildings, including the Majestic (1937) at 3200 16th Street NW and the Hightowers (1938) at 1530 16th Street, NW, two large and flamboyantly Art Deco buildings. In *Capital Houses*, James Goode reads the Cafritz House as an outstanding example of Streamline Art Deco for its rounded entry block and exterior ornament.[14] Richard Striner and Melissa Blair consider it "the grandest example of Art Deco in a single-family Washington residence."[15] It is worth noting that this show house, designed and built for a very wealthy client, included much more elaborate and expensive decoration than was possible or even desirable for a more modest dwelling, like the Nixon-Mounsey House.

Figure 3: The entrance to the Morris Cafritz House bears similarities to that of the Nixon-Mounsey House (illus. 2) (Photo by John DeFerrari).

While the Nixon-Mounsey House clearly dates to the late end of Art Deco's lifespan, its construction date of 1950 is not anachronistic. Gebhard, for example, notes that many Streamline Moderne buildings were constructed after 1945, including monumental works designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.[16] The style may no longer have been cutting edge, but its vocabulary remained an

[14] James M. Goode, *Capital Houses: Historic Houses of Washington, D.C., and Its Environs, 1735-1965*. (New York: Acanthus Press, 2015), 431.
[15] Richard Striner and Melissa Blair, *Washington and Baltimore Art Deco: A Design History of Neighboring Cities*. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 48.
[16] Gebhard, 14-15.

important stylistic element of the Modernist movement. Indeed, the National Register, state registries, and local listings across the United States contain numerous Moderne and Moderne-influenced buildings constructed after World War II. Local commercial examples include Silver Spring's Canada Dry Bottling Plant (1946) and Flower Theater (1950), and DC's Hecht Company Department Store (1947).

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION

In 1949, Frank E. Mounsey and Ethel Nixon Mounsey, who had married in 1936, purchased a half-acre lot on University Terrace, NW. The original owner of the plot was Daniel Honesty, who was presumably a freed slave and one of several Black families who purchased lots on University Terrace and Chain Bridge Road just after the Civil War.[17] Immediately after the Civil War, escaped and emancipated slaves settled in the Palisades area, buying parcels of 3 to 5 acres for about $80 per acre. They became truck farmers, carting their produce to the old Georgetown Market. The prominent Black presence in the neighborhood is attested by the "old Negro cemetery" on Chain Bridge Road.[18]

The area within the Palisades neighborhood around University Terrace, Chain Bridge Road, Arizona Avenue and Garfield Street became a favored locale after World War II for a number of unique and individually designed modernist homes.[19] The Nixon-Mounsey House was emblematic of these buildings, which embodied distinctive designs that took advantage of the hilly terrain that had kept large-scale developers from sub-dividing the building lots. The lack of large-scale development also meant there were no restrictive covenants for race or religion, as there were in many other neighborhoods in northwest DC. As such, the neighborhood "was a welcoming place for a new group of educated and professional African American families in the 1940s at a time when housing discrimination persisted in the city."[20]

In July 1949, a permit was issued to Dr. Ethel L. Nixon-Mounsey to build a "two story brick and cinder block house as per plan," on square 1425, lot 804 (a triangular shaped lot). The original plans have not been preserved. The builder was R. A. Morrison of 1130 Girard Street NW. Howard D. Woodson, who signed the surveyor's office permit for Dr. Mounsey, is listed as the designer (the word "architect" is crossed out). Woodson, a structural engineer (more on him below), is likely to have signed the permit in that capacity. But the actual designer and architect of the house was William D. Nixon, Dr. Mounsey's father, according to extensive documentation and family history.

[17] Honesty's name is given as owner of this plot, which originally included the lot uphill next door, in records maintained by the D.C. Historical Society (*Real Estate Atlas,* vol. 3, p. 30, in entries from 1907 through 1937; no name is given in 1945).
[18] Charles E. Davis, Jr., "An Almost Forgotten Era Lives in Memories: Land Titles Tell a Story of Freedom," *Washington Times Herald,* December 3, 1952, pp. 25, 28.
[19] Robert J. Lewis, "Ten Homes Included in Modern House Tour Set for April 20," *Evening Star*, Apr. 12, 1952, B1; Anita Holmes, "Modern Makes the Grade in Tour-Conscious D.C.," *Washington Post*, Apr. 13, 1952, S13.
[20] Judith H. Lanius, "Palisades: Waterways and Views" in *Washington At Home: An Illustrated History of Neighborhoods in the Nation's Capital*, ed., Kathryn Schneider Smith, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 152.

Washington banks would not provide a construction loan to Dr. Mounsey. As Mera Archambeau recounts, "My parents were unable to obtain a mortgage. No institution would lend them money to build the house in that all white northwest community near American University. This was in spite of the fact that my mother was a psychiatrist and my father was Head Admitting Officer at Freedman's Hospital. So, they borrowed from their life insurance policies and were able to secure a loan from a prominent black jeweler."[21] According to James Goode, the jeweler was the Mosley Jewelry Store.

According to Archambeau, Nixon designed the house in 1948, construction began in 1949, and the Mounsey family, including Nixon, moved in in late 1950 or in January 1951. According to an inspection report of 1976: "Basically this house is solidly built. It has an unusual amount of steel beams and reinforced concrete."[22] Nixon manifestly intended to honor the Vitruvian triad, for he paid special attention to firmness and commodity, and was equally concerned with delight.

"During construction," writes Archambeau, "Poppa supervised every aspect and progress of the house. He had a vision and implemented his ideas." Nixon, whom most people called Poppa, had a vision for indirect lighting in the living and dining rooms, a "forward-thinking scheme" that impelled him to oversee the builders very closely. "Poppa was concerned about imperfections in construction, but my parents were concerned because Poppa, age seventy-eight, spent many a December and January night on the site in a sleeping bag so that the builder could not start without his supervision." Nixon's design concept for the house embraced the brick flower box on the front, and the landscaped terracing, staircase, and fountain described above. His aesthetic and horticultural interests converged, Archambeau reminisces, in the "arrangement of colors and sizes of the outside flora and the beautiful indoor arrangements." Inspired by a trip to the Dominican Republic and the lighted flower arrangements in front of the palace at Santo Domingo, he installed lights in his flower garden in the exterior terraces.

"Poppa was very proud of his design and my mother was extremely pleased with her dream house. Sadly, she was only able to enjoy living there for two years, as she died of leukemia in 1952. The rest of us enjoyed living there until my father had a stroke and could not manage the stairs."[23] Nixon died in 1962, having lived for some twelve years in the house he designed.

William D. Nixon (1871-1962) and the Struggle for Equality in the District of Columbia

In addition to being the architect/designer of the Nixon-Mounsey House, Nixon was a pioneering civil rights activist and organizer who fought throughout his life to end segregation and the unequal treatment of the African American community in Washington DC. Many of his efforts were undertaken as president of the Association of the Oldest Inhabitants (Colored), a post he

[21] Archambeau, *I Remember Poppa.*
[22] Walter W. Stoeppelwerth, for Home-Tech Systems, inspection report of July 2, 1976, to Dan and Sharon Campbell, who purchased the house that year from the Mounseys.
[23] Archambeau states that the house was sold in 1978; however, this date is inaccurate. The house was sold to Dan and Sharon Campbell in 1976, as documented by the pre-closing inspection report they commissioned, dated July 2, 1976.

held from 1943 until his death in 1962. The house that Nixon designed on University Terrace, where he lived during the last period of his politically active life, from 1950 to 1962, provided an organizational setting and springboard for many of his later efforts on behalf of the African American community.[24]

Figure 4: William D. Nixon (Courtesy of the Nixon-Mounsey Family).

William Daniel Nixon (figure 4) was born in 1871 in Herndon, Loudon County, Virginia. He was the son of Burrell and Martha Moore Nixon, who had been born enslaved. Burrell Nixon learned to read and write and worked as a messenger to save up enough money to buy his freedom. He subsequently also bought the freedom of his mother and his wife from their owner, Rebecca B. Scott, on October 19, 1860. The family moved to Washington, DC shortly after the

[24] This account of Nixon's biography, and that of the Mounsey family, is based primarily on *I Remember Poppa*, the memoir written by Nixon's eldest granddaughter, Mera M. Archambeau, with additional sources as noted. Mera Archambeau shared further information with the present owners, and Dolores Mounsey gave information to James Goode, beyond what appears in his book, *Capital Houses,* which Goode shared with Broude and Garrard. Another valuable archival source is the collection of five scrapbooks pertaining to the life and career of William D. Nixon and his daughter Ethel L. Nixon Mounsey, MD, which range in date from 1871 to 1970, and are preserved at the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center at Howard University (Staff, MSRC, "NIXON, WILLIAM" (2015). *Manuscript Division Finding Aids,* 148. https://dh.howard.edu/finaid_manu/148).

birth of William, who was educated in the racially segregated public schools of the city and graduated from the Miner Normal School (later known as Miner Teachers College).[25]

Unable to find work after graduation, William D. Nixon, who went by "W.D.," travelled to Detroit, Michigan, where he was employed as a clerk-typist for several years.[26] He returned to Washington, meeting his future wife, Edith Frances Tinney (1875-1921), in 1890. The two were married in 1897. The couple would have two children, Elbert Burrell Nixon (1898-1957) and Ethel Louise Nixon (1910-1953). In 1892, Nixon was offered a position as an art teacher at the M Street High School (later Paul Lawrence Dunbar High School), one of the country's first public high schools for Black students. Nixon was promoted to Assistant Director of Drawing in 1906 and continued teaching art at the school until his retirement in 1935. During this period, Dunbar was an academically celebrated institution that trained many important African American leaders.[27]

Nixon's lifelong involvement in civic affairs and the struggle for social justice and civil rights began at the same time as his teaching career. In 1895, he was elected the first president of the Young Men's Protective League, an African American fraternal organization whose purpose was variously reported in the *Washington Post* as being to "care for the sick and bury the dead," to promote "the social advancement and union of labor combined," and to advance "good citizenship, benevolence, charity, and friendship."[28] The *Washington Bee* credited Nixon with the idea of forming the benevolent organization, which played a prominent role in promoting social activities for young African Americans, both male and female, and in sponsoring benevolent works within DC's African American community. The league remained a prominent social fixture until at least the 1920s.[29] Nixon may have modeled some aspects of the league on the nationally prominent Afro-American Protective League, organized in 1887, which was focused on civil rights and was a predecessor to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).[30] Undoubtedly, Nixon gained leadership experience from his involvement with the league, which he would bring to bear on his future endeavors to promote African American equality.

In addition to the protective league, Nixon served on the board of directors of the Whitelaw Hotel, the only first-class hotel for African Americans in the city, as early as 1917 – two years before it opened.[31] The construction of the Whitelaw, an historic landmark at 1839 13th Street NW, marked an important step in the African American community's efforts to build prestigious

[25] The Miner Teachers College was merged into the DC Teachers College in 1955. The Teachers College was subsequently merged into the University of the District of Columbia in 1977.
[26] Staff, MSRC, op cit., 3.
[27] Mera Archambeau, *I Remember Poppa,* Barnes & Noble, Nook edition, 2011; Amazon Kindle, 2012, and family records. For a history of Dunbar, see Alison Stewart, *First Class: The Legacy of Dunbar, America's First Black Public High School* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2013).
[28] "Young Men's Beneficial Order," *Post*, Apr. 26, 1895; "Young Men's Protective League," *Post*, Mar. 18, 1895; "Colored Protective League," *Post*, Oct. 17, 1895; "Young Men's Protective League," *Post*, Apr. 16, 1905.
[29] "Young Men's Protective League Elect Officers for 1914," *Washington Bee*, Dec. 13, 1913.
[30] B.F. Lee, Jr., "Negro Organizations" in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, Vol. 49, Sept. 1913, 131-132.
[31] Archambeau, *I Remember Poppa*; "Hold Big Banquet," *Washington Bee*, Feb. 28, 1920.

institutions that rivaled the best white facilities. Nixon's involvement with the Whitelaw demonstrates the extent to which he was connected with other prominent Black Washingtonians at this stage in his career, as well as his commitment to the uplift of African Americans in Washington. Granddaughter Mera Archambeau reports that by 1921, Nixon was vice president of the Whitelaw Apartment House Company and served as chairman of the executive committee. In the 1920s and 1930s, Nixon lived with his family in a rowhouse at 1818 13th Street NW, across the street from the Whitelaw.[32] This was the heyday of the hotel and of the celebrated "Black Broadway" community along U Street, just to the north, which represented such a flourishing of African American artistic expression. During this time, Nixon also served as president of the Sponsors of the Police Boys Club Association, District 2; vice president of the East Central Civic Association; and was a member of the NAACP.[33]

Figure 5: Living diorama created by William D Nixon (Photo provided by Norma Broude and Mary Garrard).

During his years as a teacher, Nixon was known for his work as a stage designer, building stage sets for student performances, including "living dioramas" for plays in which students performed as living statues (figure 5). He designed sets for graduation pageants, often basing them on classical works of art. For example, his "Aurora" (1924) was based on the famous Baroque painting by Guido Reni. At the 1924 graduation pageant, Aurora was accompanied by "living statues" of Diana, Hebe, Joan of Arc, and Peace.[34] Other sets created by Nixon included "Temple of Fame (1928), "Wheels of Progress" (1934), and "Temple of Progress" (1935).[35] Nixon chaired the organizing committee for Dunbar High School's First Annual Exhibition of

[32] 1920 and 1930 U.S. Census records.
[33] Archambeau, op. cit.
[34] "Dunbar High Closes Year with Pageants," *Evening Star*, Jun. 15, 1924.
[35] From Dolores Mounsey, as told to James Goode, then to Broude and Garrard.

Painting and Sculpture By Colored Art Students, held at the school in 1919. He subsequently served as President of the Tanner Art League, named in honor of Henry Ossawa Tanner (1859–1937), the first African American artist to gain international fame. In the 1920s, the league sponsored annual exhibitions of African American artists, which were pioneering efforts of their kind in the United States. Privately, Nixon also engaged in commercial work, including designing the packaging for a patent medicine called Harris' New Blood Tonic (the logo showed a rabbit jumping through a hoop).[36]

Nixon's commitment to civic affairs continued during the World War II years. In 1943, he was appointed by the Civilian Defense Committee of the District to organize the East Central area of the Interracial Victory Volunteer Corps, a group called the Black Leaders Corps. That same year he was appointed regional chairman for Region Six by the Civilian Mobilization Executive Committee, a committee that provided a wide range of services for military personnel and their families stationed in the DC area. From 1943-1945, he was president of the Teachers' Benefits and Annuity Association, which provided mortuary and sick benefits to its contributing members.

From 1943 until his death in 1962, Nixon served as president of the Association of the Oldest Inhabitants (Colored), an organization devoted to the betterment of the lives of Washington's African Americans. The group was incorporated on January 15, 1916, and in 1951 it had 357 members. Its civic mission was modeled on that of the earlier Association of the Oldest Inhabitants of the District of Columbia, an organization that admitted only white males. As president of this parallel African American group, Nixon fought for racial integration in the District and offered the support of his organization to victims of civil rights abuses in DC and beyond. He organized pickets and boycotts of stores, schools, police departments and movie theaters.

D.C. Fire Department

One of Nixon's earliest and longest efforts to end segregation in Washington was targeted at the DC Fire Department, a campaign he spearheaded in the 1940s and 1950s. Historically, the DC Fire Department had been integrated. However, in April 1919 – the height of the Jim Crow era, during the Wilson administration – the department adopted a new policy of segregation, stationing all African American firemen at one location, Engine Company 4, at Virginia Avenue and 4½ Street SW, a largely Black neighborhood.[37] While the number of Blacks in the department was enough to staff just one fire company, that changed over time, particularly in the World War II years, when many more Blacks were hired. Beyond being unjust, the fire department's policy was also highly inefficient, with overstaffing in the 1940s at the city's two Black fire stations and understaffing at the many other stations across the District.[38]

[36] Medicine label as described in John Kelly, "A 'Snapshot' of D.C.'s Segregated Past Comes to Light in a Roundabout Way," *The Washington Post,* February 8, 2012, B2, from his interview with Delores Mounsey.
[37] C.O. Glory, *100 Years of Glory: A History of the District of Columbia Fire Department* (Washington, DC: Mount Vernon Publishing, 1971), 76.
[38] "Murphy Still Undecided on Segregation in Fire Ranks," *Post*, Apr. 18, 1948. Engine Company 27, at 4201 Minnesota Avenue NW, was the other Black fire station in the late 1940s.

In 1944, as president of the Association of the Oldest Inhabitants (Colored), Nixon launched a successful campaign to integrate the fire department, linking the segregated firehouses with "the forced movement of the colored district population to the eastern ghettos." In a forceful 1947 letter to the DC commissioners, he argued that these had no place "in the District of Columbia, the cradle of democracy."[39] According to Mera Archambeau, Nixon wrote many letters to the fire chief, District commissioners, congressmen, and the President, and made intricate charts of fire department and other DC government personnel, comparing positions and salaries by race, to make his point.

From the late 1940s into the 1950s, the issue received heightened attention in the press, and Nixon – who was living at the University Terrace house beginning in 1950 – kept the pressure up as city officials wavered in their commitment to desegregation. Encouraging news came in 1949 when Fire Chief Clement Murphy announced that the department would soon be integrated, but he retired shortly thereafter and the integration plan stalled. Murphy's successor, Joseph F. Mayhew, believed integration would be more efficient but delayed its implementation, instead converting three more fire companies to African American stations and reassigning their white staff to other locations to address the staffing disparities.[40] When in 1951 the DC commissioners announced plans to begin assigning African Americans to certain all-white fire stations, Rep. James C. Davis of Georgia, a member of the House committee with oversight of the District, objected, claiming the move would jeopardize the safety of the city.[41] Davis introduced a bill in Congress to segregate the department as a matter of federal law. In a letter published in the *Washington Post*, Nixon stepped in to the fray to point out that the only reason that the racist congressman from Georgia became involved in the issue was because the local white firefighters' union had gone over the heads of their supervisors and appealed directly to him, in what Nixon called "glaring insubordination and disrespect."[42]

Newly appointed District Commissioner F. Joseph Donoghue, a personal friend of President Harry S. Truman, pushed to implement the fire department desegregation in 1952, but was again thwarted by protests from the firefighters' union and objections from Rep. Davis. A seeming turning point came with the inauguration of President Dwight D. Eisenhower in January 1953. Eisenhower moved quickly to issue orders desegregating the DC government and directing the Justice Department to support legal action to desegregate public facilities, like restaurants and theaters, in the District.[43] However, the fire department remained segregated; the commissioners had been coerced by union officials into backing away from the initiative. In response, Nixon kept up the pressure on the commissioners, writing again to the editors of the *Post* that, "The idea of Government employees in the Fire Department seemingly browbeating, intimidating and

[39] "Fire Department Hiring Policies Are Protested," *Post,* Dec. 13, 1944. The quotes are from Nixon's letter to the DC Commissioners, Oct. 9, 1947. The typescript is preserved in the Mounsey family archives, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center.
[40] "Negro Shift in Fire Dept. Approved," *Post*, Sept. 9, 1949.
[41] "Racial Order To Firemen Perils City, Says Davis," *Post*, Oct. 7, 1951.
[42] William D. Nixon, Letter to the Editor, *Post*, Oct. 10, 1951.
[43] Ben W. Gilbert, "President's Program to End Segregation Here," *Post*, Feb. 6, 1953; Don Olesen, "D.C. Orders 23 Agencies To Lower Racial Bars," *Post*, Nov. 26, 1953.

hindering their Fire Chief and the District Commissioners from carrying out the orders of the President of the United States to eliminate racial segregation in all local departments is disturbing and alarming."[44]

In August 1954, the DC commissioners finally issued a formal order ending segregation in the fire department, although it would take several more years for the order to be carried out.[45] The firemen's union asked that implementation of the order be delayed so that more congressional hearings could be held. In 1955, Rep. Davis introduced a bill to reinstate segregation of the department and held hearings where union representatives expressed their racist views.[46] Nixon again took pen to paper as Oldest Inhabitants president, denouncing the racist comments and attitudes of the union officials and urging that they "no longer be on the payrolls of a department which should have the respect and confidence of all well-thinking citizens."[47] Fortunately, the desegregation order was never overturned, and in time the fire department became fully integrated. Nixon's vigilance and persistence in calling out the injustice of the segregated system doubtless helped keep the long-term effort on track, despite the intense resistance from certain white firefighters.

Restaurants

As a vigorous proponent of civil rights and racial integration in the District, Nixon was also a member of the Coordinating Committee For The Enforcement Of The DC Anti-Discrimination Laws and participated in its many activities. Activists Annie Stein and Mary Church Terrell formed the committee in 1949, after a scathing report from the National Committee on Segregation in the Nation's Capital, issued the prior year, noted that the District's 1870s anti-discrimination laws were still in force. The committee undertook a series of public actions to draw attention to and ultimately end segregation in public spaces in the city.[48]

Over several months in 1950, committee members made multiple visits to a total of 99 downtown restaurants and lunch counters known for serving whites only, and informing managers at each location that they were violating DC law. They subsequently (through 1952) organized pickets and sit-ins at retail stores, including Kresge's, G.C. Murphy's, and the Hecht Company.[49] In August 1951, Nixon told the *Atlanta Daily World* that he had filed a formal complaint with the Hecht Company and was anxious to see what stand the DC commissioners would take on the issue.[50] About her grandfather's activities as a member of the committee, granddaughter Archambeau writes:

[44] William D. Nixon, "Eisenhower's Power," *Post*, Dec. 2, 1953.
[45] Grace Bassett, "D.C. Orders Integration of Fire Dept," *Post*, Aug. 31, 1954;
[46] Robert E. Baker, "Foes Attack Integration Of Firemen," *Post*, Feb. 17, 1955.
[47] William D. Nixon, "Firemen's Segregation," *Post*, Mar. 5, 1955.
[48] Chris Myers Asch and George Derek Musgrove, *Chocolate City: A History of Race and Democracy in the Nation's Capital* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 297-304; Sarah Jane Shoenfeld, *National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form for 20th Century African American Civil Rights Sites in Washington, D.C., 1912-1974*, draft (Washington, DC: 2020), 17-18.
[49] Shoenfeld, op. cit.
[50] "D. C. Restaurants Continue To Jim Crow; Court May Act," *Atlanta Daily World*, Aug. 1, 1951.

With other committee members, Poppa in his seventies walked picket lines carrying posters against discrimination. My parents were angry with him for taking me on "sit-ins" to protest segregated eateries. So we made many secret trips. We would just sit and wait to be served even though we knew that they were not going to serve us."

The committee's actions, which took place around the same time that Nixon and his daughter's family moved to University Terrace, proved highly effective. The committee's legal case to reinstate the city's anti-discrimination laws moved through the courts with the support of the Justice Department and President Eisenhower, and in June 1953, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *District of Columbia v. John R. Thompson Co.* that the anti-discrimination laws were still valid.

Housing

As chair of the Committee on Special Assignment for the Federation of Civic Associations, Nixon pursued fair housing at the same time that he was fighting segregation in public places.[51] African Americans had been shut out of living in many neighborhoods of the District because of housing covenants instituted in the first half of the 20th century. Lawsuits in the 1940s challenging those covenants culminated in a ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1948 (*Hurd v. Hodge*) that ended court enforcement of such covenants.[52] Important as it was, the court's ruling left many forces in place, both governmental and non-governmental, that continued to segregate African Americans into less desirable areas of the city. One of the most pernicious was the practice of "slum clearing."

In 1948, as Nixon was working on the design of 2915 University Terrace, a congressional committee held a hearing on a DC government request for $3.4 million to establish a new District Redevelopment Land Agency to spearhead slum clearance. The money was to be spent to acquire land in the Barry Farm development outside Anacostia and in Marshall Heights in Northeast. Nixon saw through this tactic; the intent was clearly to create new "ghettos" for African Americans who would be displaced from more valuable locations closer to downtown. Nixon's position was that a plan for providing fair and equitable housing to all the citizens of the District was needed before any moves were made to acquire specific tracts of real estate and relocate residents. Nixon testified that "without an over-all plan before us, we are forced to conclude that there is a concerted drive by various forces to establish a Hitler-like ghetto in the far northeast section of the District."[53] Nixon's arguments persuaded the congressional committee to reject DC's request for funds.

Nixon may have won that particular fight, but the struggle for fair housing would continue. As mentioned above, 1948 was the year that the final report from the National Committee on Segregation in the Nation's Capital was released. The report excoriated the federal government and local business interests for "building ghettos of the mind, body and spirit" for the city's

[51] In the District, civic associations traditionally represented African American communities. They developed because the city's citizens' associations excluded Blacks.
[52] Shoenfeld, 35.
[53] Robert Bruskin, "D.C. [Denied] Funds to Clear Slum Areas," *Washington Post*, Jan. 31, 1948.

Blacks. The report specifically criticized Maj. Gen Ulysses S. Grant, III, the head of the National Capital Parks and Planning Commission, for "evacuating Negroes from areas where they were free to live in his grandfather's day."[54] After Grant attempted to counter what he called the "false and vicious rumor that a ghetto is being established for the colored population in the far Northeast of Washington," Nixon replied with a lengthy letter printed in the *Washington Post* in which he laid out the facts of the case and argued persuasively that, despite Grant's protests to the contrary, his commission was guilty of building housing that was designed to extend rather than reverse segregation. Additionally, Nixon stated that the 27-member Federation of Civic Associations, which he represented, did not oppose clearing away substandard dwellings, as long as there was a plan in place to ensure equal access to housing across the city.[55] The problem of unequal access to housing continues to this day, in no small part due to the governmental planning activities that Nixon tried to restrain.

Playgrounds

Another desegregation initiative in which Nixon actively participated during the 1950s, when he was living at 2915 University Terrace, addressed DC public school playgrounds. In one of his many letters to the *Washington Post* as president of the Oldest Inhabitants of Washington, DC (Colored), Nixon pointed out to readers that the Civil Rights Act of 1875 specifically desegregated all "places of public amusement," and that the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution also applied.[56] He favored the federal government exercising authority over the city's public playgrounds and ordering them all to be integrated immediately. By the 1950s, a few playgrounds had been integrated, but most were not. The DC government, which had de facto control over most of the playgrounds, had adopted a policy of "gradual" desegregation. Black Washingtonians argued that the gradual approach would not work, because no clear deadline was specified for full integration. The issue dragged on for years, with city playgrounds not becoming fully desegregated until DC's schools were desegregated in accordance with the U.S. Supreme Court's *Bolling v. Sharpe* ruling of May 1954.[57]

Movie Theaters

Movie theaters were another segregated "place of public amusement" that became an object of protest and picketing, beginning with a picket at the Loew's Capitol Theater in January 1949.[58] After the U.S. Supreme Court's June 1953 ruling in *District of Columbia v. John R. Thompson Co.* opened up restaurants, Black activists, including Nixon, redoubled their efforts to desegregate movie theaters. Various tactics were employed. For example, volunteers barraged Julian Brylawski, the owner of the Warner Theater, with telephone calls about his segregation policy. Nixon took part in a number of events. In one case reported in the press, he and three others – Mary Church Terrell, Rev. William H. Jernagin, and Arlene Hays, a white woman – bought tickets as a group to the Loew's Capitol. Seeing the distinguished party, the theater's

[54] Murrey Marder, "D.C. Business Accused of Maintaining Negro Ghetto," *Post*, Dec. 11, 1948.
[55] William D. Nixon, "Ghettoized Housing," *Post*, Jan. 8, 1949.
[56] William D. Nixon, "Playground Control," *Post*, Dec. 3, 1948.
[57] Shoenfeld, 21.
[58] "Theater Bars Negro Pair in Demonstration," *Post*, Jan. 30, 1949.

manager opted to allow them to attend, although he later told reporters that his whites-only admission policy had not changed.[59] Backing down after receiving a number of complaints, the Loew's chain announced shortly thereafter that its three big downtown theaters would be desegregated.[60] Nixon continued to work with the Coordinating Committee For The Enforcement Of The DC Anti-Discrimination Laws to visit all of the city's neighborhood theaters to ensure they were admitting Blacks. The committee declared victory in February 1954 and then turned its attention to other subjects, including hotel accommodations, with Nixon "shaping the strategy for this latest effort," according to the *Atlanta Daily World*.[61]

The Washington Redskins football team

Nixon also played a key role in a campaign for merit hiring and desegregation of the Washington Redskins football team, arguing that a team representing the nation's capital should not be segregated. According to an article in the *Baltimore Afro-American*, "He carried on the fight for a team representative of the nation's capital, through letters to the Washington AFRO and other papers, at a time when the issue lay almost dormant."[62] Notably, he wrote to Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, to raise awareness of the issue as the football team was about to start playing games at the new municipal stadium (later renamed the Robert F. Kennedy Stadium), located on federally-owned parkland. In February 1961, Secretary Udall notified President John F. Kennedy that "George Marshall of the Washington Redskins is the only segregationist hold-out in professional football.... The Interior Department owns the ground on which the new Washington Stadium is constructed, and we are investigating to ascertain whether a no-discrimination provision could be inserted in Marshall's lease."[63]

Udall subsequently told Marshall that the Washington team could not play at the new ballpark unless the team included at least one African American player. Marshall initially resisted, but Udall's move drew attention in the press, and subsequent demonstrations and picketing from African Americans wherever the team played. Under intense pressure, Marshall finally backed down, and the team was finally integrated the following season.

At Nixon's death in 1962, the *Baltimore Afro-American* called him a "beloved civic leader and civil rights stalwart," terms borne out by his numerous civic actions.[64] In addition to the ones mentioned above, Nixon led a campaign to have the Washington newspapers use the word "colored" instead of Negro, in an effort to better ensure that African Americans were treated with the respect they deserved. At the time, "colored" was considered the more respectful term within the African American community. As president of the Association of the Oldest Inhabitants (Colored), Nixon made many other contributions as well, always looking for ways – small as well as large – to advance African Americans in Washington. For example, through his connections, the group sponsored events to honor outstanding women in the African American

[59] "Drive To Open Movie Houses Intensified," *Atlanta Daily World*, Sept. 29, 1953.
[60] "Three Capitol Theatres Open Doors To Negroes," *New York Amsterdam News*, Oct. 10, 1953.
[61] "Neighborhood Movie Houses End Jimcrow," *Atlanta Daily World*, Feb. 17, 1954.
[62] "William D. Nixon, noted leader, dies," *Baltimore Afro-American*, Mar. 17, 1962.
[63] Quoted in Thomas G. Smith, "1962: The Year that Changed the Redskins," *Washingtonian*, Oct. 10, 2011.
[64] "William D. Nixon, noted leader, dies," *Baltimore Afro-American*, Mar. 17, 1962.

community, featuring such keynote speakers as Nannie Helen Burroughs (1879-1961), a noted educator, religious leader, civil rights activist, feminist, and businesswoman.[65] And in 1950, in an act of calculated subversion, the Oldest Inhabitants group sponsored an African American, Aurelia Roberts, as a candidate for the District's Cherry Blossom Queen, the first time that an African American woman had ever applied.

William D. Nixon's Role as Architect of the Nixon-Mounsey House

Although there is no evidence that Mr. Nixon ever received formal training as an architect, he is nevertheless recorded as the designer and architect of several buildings in Northeast DC. These include residences, no longer extant, at 827 12th Street NE, 245-47 56th Street NE, and 230-32 56th Place NE.[66] For his own family, moreover, he designed and built a vacation cottage in 1922 in Venice Beach on the Chesapeake Bay near Annapolis. That house, at 32 Chesapeake Avenue, was a two-story structure with a basement and covered carport. Adjacent to the larger and better-known Highland Beach, which had been developed by Frederick Douglass and his son, Venice Beach was one of a handful of Black bayside communities that became summertime enclaves for the educated Black elite of Washington, DC. Nixon also designed and built a hotel at Thomas Point in Maryland (1920) and another family vacation home, "Oak Grove" in Herndon Virginia (1925), where his son Elbert spent summers.[67]

Given family documentation and Nixon's prior experience as an architect, it is clear that he was the primary designer of the Nixon-Mounsey House. With its ambitious scale and the sophistication of its stylistic language and architectural structure, Nixon's house on University Terrace differed from his earlier, more modest projects. It was a culminating work for this self-taught designer and architect, whose earlier experience in stage design contributed much to the impressively theatrical qualities of the spaces that he created for his Art Deco home on University Terrace. For the house that would be his daughter's home, Nixon chose a design that stood out from the traditional models that most other Washington houses followed, conveying a sleek, forward-looking feel, as if to emphasize that its occupants were focused on a promising future rather than a revival of the past. The design is as confident and assertive as it is dramatic.

Howard D. Woodson's Role as Structural Engineer for the Nixon-Mounsey House

The building permit for the house at 2915 University Terrace lists Howard D. Woodson (1877-1962) as the architect, although it is likely that he functioned more as an engineer than as a designer. Woodson's career as architect, engineer, entrepreneur, and civil rights activist closely parallels Nixon's. Woodson was among the first African Americans to graduate from the University of Pittsburgh, in his city of birth. Trained as a civil engineer, he worked as a

[65] Archambeau, *I Remember Poppa*; also see *Nannie Helen Burroughs: A Documentary Portrait of an Early Civil Rights Pioneer, 1900-1959*, (University of Notre Dame Press, 2019).
[66] Nixon is listed as both owner and architect of these three properties in HistoryQuest DC (Historical Data on DC Buildings), the online component of the building permits database for extant buildings in Washington, DC.
[67] On these communities, see Eugene L. Meyer, "A Welcoming Enclave With Roots in a Snub," *New York Times*, Sept. 3, 2009, https://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/04/greathomesanddestinations/04Highland.html. Archambeau, *I Remember Poppa,* describes the Virginia and Maryland buildings designed by Nixon.

draftsman for a number of major industrial corporations and was in the studio of the renowned architect Daniel Burnham as part of the team that designed the roof of Washington's Union Station. He moved to Washington in 1907, and began an engineering career with the Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury that lasted more than thirty-five years. [68] Woodson then served as supervising architect for the Universal Development and Loan Company, Inc., a real estate and development company that owned property in upper Northeast DC.[69] He was also involved in the operation of Suburban Gardens, the amusement park for African American patrons (located in the Deanwood neighborhood), as well as an official of many Northeast DC civic groups.

At the time Woodson signed Nixon's permit, he was affiliated with two of Washington's established African American architects. This association may have begun through connections with the District's segregated system of schools for white and African American students. In 1918, Roscoe Ingersoll Vaughn (1884-1971) had founded a private architectural practice, intermittently partnering with Woodson and architect George Alonso Ferguson over three decades. Like Nixon, Vaughn and Ferguson had long and distinguished careers in DC's African American schools. One month after graduating from the Armstrong Manual Training School in 1904, Vaughn returned to his alma mater as a teacher of drafting, an association that lasted for nearly fifty years. Washington-born George Alonso Ferguson (1895-1979), also an Armstrong graduate, was the first African American graduate of the University of Illinois School of Architecture. Like Vaughn, he taught drafting at Armstrong for more than forty years. Among the active roles Woodson assumed in the Armstrong community was president of the PTA.[70] After World War II, the trio united as the architectural firm of Vaughn, Ferguson, and Woodson. As "one of the few black licensed architectural engineers in the District," Woodson typically managed the engineering issues, Vaughn the specifications, and Ferguson acted as senior designer.[71] The firm's larger commissions included churches and commercial buildings, while each partner had individual buildings to his credit.

Although Nixon undoubtedly knew Ferguson and Vaughn through this academic network, his key relationship was with Woodson, whose professional endorsement was likely necessary to obtain the building permit. Their collaborative relationship is further supported by the fact that both men built and owned several houses in Northeast DC, an enterprise of both architecture and construction. Like Nixon, Woodson was an active civic leader, advocating to improve public schools, parks, water/sewer systems, street paving and lighting in African American communities, and pushing the city to create new public high schools for Black students. In 1972, ten years after Woodson's death, the city opened a new high school in Deanwood, naming it in his honor (Howard D. Woodson High School, 5500 Eads Street NE).[72]

[68] Dreck Spurlock Wilson, *African American Architects: A Biographical Dictionary*, 1865-1945 (New York: Routledge, 2004), 638.
[69] www.culturaltourism.org - African American Heritage Trail.
[70] "D.C. Schools: P.T.A. Head Speaks at Armstrong High," *Baltimore Afro-American*, Nov 21, 1931, 3.
[71] historicsites.dcpreservation.org - Civil Rights Tour: Civic Activism – Howard Woodson, Advocate for Northeast.
[72] "Roscoe Ingersoll Vaughn," in Wilson, 579-580; "George Alonzo Ferguson" in Wilson, 197-199; "George A. Ferguson, 84, Taught At Armstrong, Roosevelt Highs," *Washington Post,* Mar. 10, 1979, C4; "Howard Dilworth Woodson," in Wilson, 637-640; "H.D. Woodson" (Obituary), *Washington Post, Mar* 4, 1962, B10.

Original Owners: Frank Mounsey and Dr. Ethel Nixon Mounsey, daughter of William D. Nixon

After the death of William Nixon's wife, Edith T. Nixon, in 1921, and with the help of his own mother, Mr. Nixon raised their then eleven-year-old daughter, Ethel. Their son, Elbert, twenty-three years old at the time of Edith's death, went on to have a life-long career on the staff of the White House. Their daughter, Ethel, for whom Mr. Nixon later designed the home at 2915 University Terrace, graduated from Dunbar High School in 1926 and from Howard University in 1930. She earned her medical degree from the Howard University's School of Medicine, and was the only woman in her graduating class. After interning at Freedmen's Hospital in Washington, DC in 1935, she did a residency at New York University in gynecology and obstetrics, and opened her own ob-gyn medical practice on Rhode Island Avenue NW in downtown Washington. Following the birth of her first child, Ethel Nixon turned to psychiatry, and was the first African American to receive a doctorate in psychology from Johns Hopkins University. Dr. Nixon interned in psychiatry at Gallagher Municipal Hospital in Washington. She did a residency in psychiatry at Freedmen's Hospital, was appointed as staff psychiatrist at Johns Hopkins University Hospital in Baltimore, MD, and later became Chief of Psychiatry at Crownsville Hospital Center in Crownsville, MD.

In 1936 Ethel Nixon married Frank Emanuel Mounsey (1910-1987), a native of the British West Indies, and they had three daughters: Mera (b. 1938), Dolores (b. 1941), and Francine (1944-2003). With three daughters and a successful medical practice, Dr. Nixon Mounsey needed a larger home, and her father undertook the design of the new house for her, as discussed above. Mr. Nixon lived in the house with the Mounseys from its completion in 1950 until his death in 1962. Frank Mounsey, Ethel's husband, spent his career in the service of the federal government, first at the Washington Navy Yard and then for the Post Office Department.[73] According to family lore, Dr. Nixon Mounsey may have been contemplating private practice on the lower level of the University Terrace home; however, she died of leukemia in 1952, only two years after the family moved into the house. The lower level remained largely unfinished when Broude and Garrard, the third owners, acquired the house in 1979. They completed the lower level, following the existing 2 x 4 framing that established Mr. Nixon's plan for the layout of the rooms, a layout that echoes that of the major rooms on the floor above it.

Subsequent Owners and Occupants of the Nixon-Mounsey House

Dan and Sharon Campbell, both lawyers in Washington, DC, purchased the house from the Mounseys in 1976. The Campbells sold the house in 1979 to Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, who have lived there ever since.

As the Broude-Garrard House from 1979 to the present, the house has continued to serve as a setting and launching pad for social justice initiatives. Broude and Garrard, now Professors

[73] Goode, *Capital Houses,* pp. 439-40.

Emeritae of Art History at neighboring American University, have been described as "early leaders of the American feminist movement" whose work has "redefined feminist art theory." [74] Both professors held leadership roles in the Women's Caucus for Art (WCA), an activist national organization; Garrard was its second president (1974-76) and Broude was its first affirmative action officer (1973-76). As scholars, Broude and Garrard also worked from home to collaborate in conceiving, writing and launching several volumes of feminist art historical writing that have been influential in their field. Their long commitment to attaining social justice for women, both political and historical, directly parallels William Nixon's lifelong commitment to achieving social equality and justice for African Americans. Thus, the house has been a focal point for social, political and educational activism for 54 of its 68 years in existence.

[74] Quotes from Wikipedia entries: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norma_Broude and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Garrard

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____ 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

Nixon-Mounsey House
Name of Property

District of Columbia
County and State

____ 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 .306_____

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)
1. Latitude: 38.928500 Longitude: -77.097499

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:

Nixon-Mounsey House | District of Columbia
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2. Zone: Easting: Northing:

3. Zone: Easting: Northing:

4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

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

The legal description of the property is:

Part of a tract of land called "St. Philip and Jacob": Beginning for the same at a point in the Easterly line of University Terrace being the most southerly corner of the part of said tract now known for purposes of assessment and taxation as Parcel 12/313 being also the most southerly corner of former Parcel 12/271, as shown on a plat of computation recorded in the Office of the Surveyor for the District of Columbia in Survey book 147 at page 296, and running thence along the easterly line of said Terrace, being the arc of a circle deflecting to the right and having a radius of 180.35 feet, an arc distance of 75.37 feet to a point of tangent; thence still with said line of said Terrace North 24 degrees 54' East 84.335 feet; thence leaving said line of said Terrace and running South 77 degrees 14' 40" East, 148.98 feet and thence South 61 degrees 08" West 236.71 feet to the place of beginning; said described land being now known for purposes of assessment and taxation as Lot 804 in Square 1425.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary of The Nixon-Mounsey House matches 2915 University Terrace NW's square and lot numbers: 1425 and 0804, respectively. Therefore, the house and corresponding parcel define the boundary. See Map 1.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Norma Broude (owner), Mary Garrard (owner), Peter Sefton (DCPL trustee), John DeFerrari (DCPL trustee)
organization: D.C. Preservation League
street & number: 1221 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 5A
city or town: Washington state: DC zip code: 20036
e-mail info@dcpreservation.org
telephone: 202-783-5144
date: August 18, 2021

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.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Nixon-Mounsey House

City or Vicinity: District of Columbia

County: State:

Photographer: See list below

Date Photographed: See list below

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Nixon-Mounsey House | District of Columbia
Name of Property | County and State

1 of 9. West (principal) façade of the Nixon-Mounsey House. View facing east. Justin Scalera, Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Nov. 2, 2020.

2 of 9. Entrance of the Nixon-Mounsey House. View facing east. Justin Scalera, Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Nov. 2, 2020.

3 of 9. South elevation of the Nixon-Mounsey House. View facing north. Justin Scalera, Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Nov. 2, 2020.

4 of 9. South elevation of the Nixon-Mounsey House. View facing north. Norma Broude, Sep. 5, 2020.

5 of 9. East (rear) elevation of the Nixon-Mounsey House. View facing west. Justin Scalera, Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Nov. 2, 2020.

6 of 9. View facing northwest - south and east elevations. Norma Broude, Sep. 5, 2020.

7 of 9. Staircase inside main entrance. Justin Scalera, Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Nov. 2, 2020.

8 of 9. Main floor dining room. Justin Scalera, Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Nov. 2, 2020.

9 of 9. Main floor living room. Justin Scalera, Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Nov. 2, 2020.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Nixon-Mounsey House
Name of Property
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County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Maps Page 1

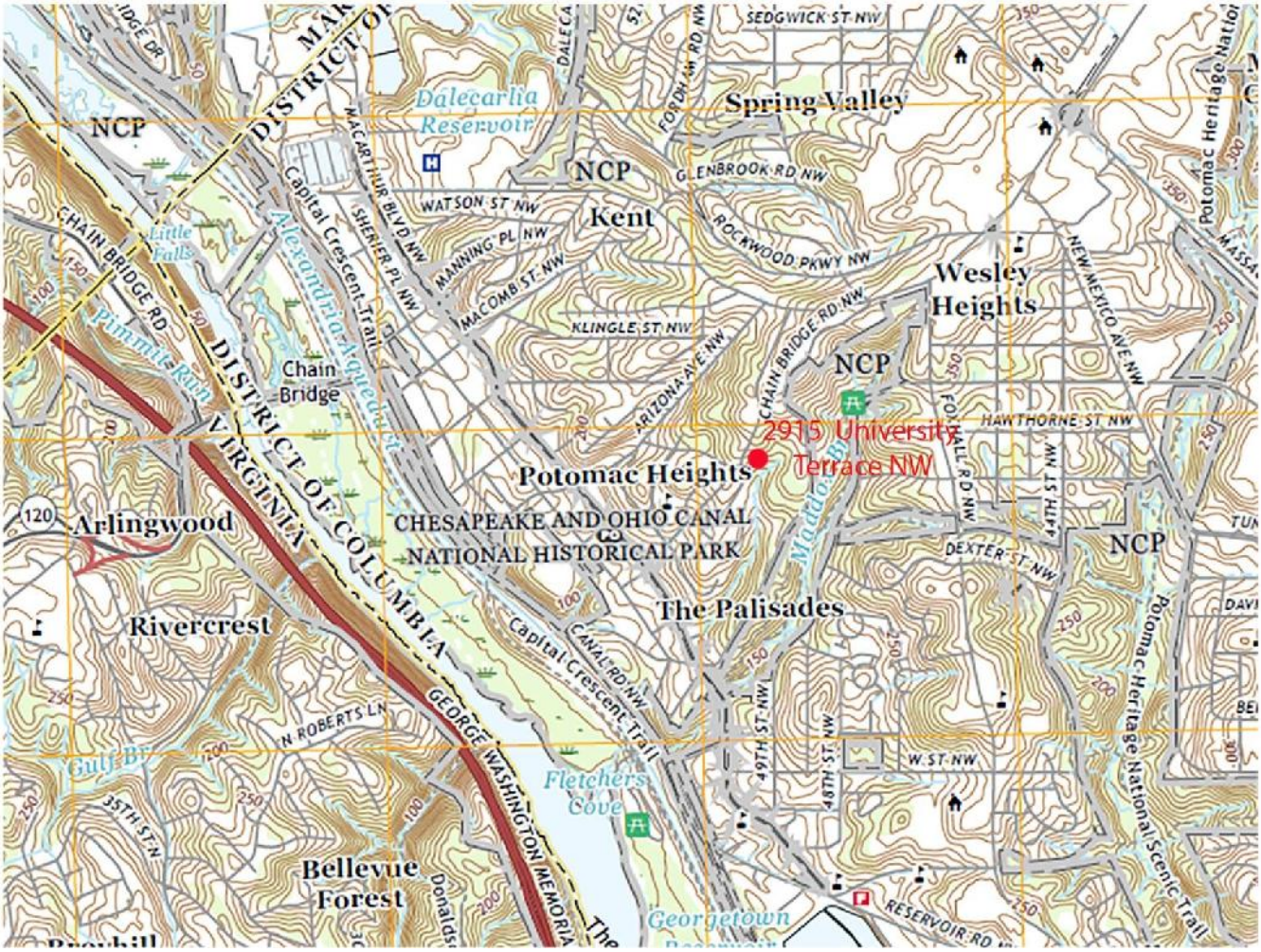
Map 1: The Nixon-Mounsey House at 2915 University Terrace NW, and its corresponding square and lot (PropertyQuest DC).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Nixon-Mounsey House
Name of Property
District of Columbia
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Maps Page 2



Map 2: The Nixon-Mounsey House at 2915 University Terrace NW in Washington, DC (USGS).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Nixon-Mounsey House
Name of Property
District of Columbia
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 1

Illustration 1: West (principal) façade of the Nixon-Mounsey House (Justin Scalera, HABS).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Nixon-Mounsey House
Name of Property
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Illustration 2: Entrance of the Nixon-Mounsey House (Justin Scalera, HABS).

Illustration 3: South elevation of the Nixon-Mounsey House (Justin Scalera, HABS).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Nixon-Mounsey House
Name of Property
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Illustration 4: South elevation of the Nixon-Mounsey House (Norma Broude).

Illustration 5: East (rear) elevation of the Nixon-Mounsey House (Justin Scalera, HABS).

Illustration 6: View facing northwest – south and east elevations (Norma Broude).

Illustration 7: Staircase inside main entrance (Justin Scalera, HABS).

Illustration 8: Main floor dining room (Justin Scalera, HABS).

Illustration 9: Main floor living room (Justin Scalera, HABS).