

Revised edition

TRACERIES

2415 Eye Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C.

May 1984

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2415 Eye Street, N.W. is located in Foggy Bottom on the north side of the 2400 block of Eye Street in square 28. As part of a row of small, modestly scaled and simply ornamented brick dwellings, the house illustrates a period in time when this area of Washington, known as Foggy Bottom, was inhabited by working class people who were employed by the many industries that had been attracted to the waterfront at the confluence of Rock Creek and the Potomac River. This house type characterized the nineteenth century Foggy Bottom neighborhood almost exclusively until the mid-twentieth century when development pressures from George Washington University and high-rise apartments began to tear away the fabric of the residential community. This row of houses, 2413-2419 Eye Street, N.W., enhances a small section of Foggy Bottom, west of 24th Street whose residential scale and ambience are still relatively intact and free from twentieth century intrusions.

Historical Background

Foggy Bottom, the area between 21st Street, N.W. and Rock Creek, south of Pennsylvania Avenue, probably acquired its sobriquet in the mid-nineteenth century--a direct reference to the low lying swamp land prone to rising mists. Unlike the Foggy Bottom of today which is dominated by George Washington University, the Kennedy Center, the Watergate and high-rise apartments, the Foggy Bottom of the nineteenth century was characterized by industrial and commercial development. Wharves and warehouses lined the banks of the Potomac River, and the Glass House operated at the foot of 22nd Street from 1807-1833. Other industries that were attracted to the neighborhood included the Godey Lime Kilns on Rock Creek at 27th Street, and the Washington Gas Light Company, which built a major gas storage facility at New Hampshire and Virginia Avenues in 1856. Two prominent breweries were established in Foggy Bottom in the 1870s: John Albert's Brewery (1870), which later became the Abner Drury Brewery, and the better known Christian Heurich Brewery (1872). The workers employed by these industries required housing nearby, giving rise to the construction of small brick row houses like 2415 Eye Street.

Fragments of the nineteenth century neighborhood that grew up around the local companies remain today, especially west of 24th Street. These houses served as home to the laborers and mechanics employed nearby. By mid-century, Foggy Bottom's population of unskilled workers was the largest part of the total population. Foggy Bottom, like the rest of the city, experienced tremendous population growth during the late 1860s and 1870s. The industrial nature of the neighborhood attracted many of the

city's foreign-born citizens--mostly German and Irish immigrants who came to Washington looking for work. The area also possessed a large unskilled black population. Few of these workers could afford the luxury of home ownership, a fact which encouraged speculative building of row houses for quick resale or rental investment by members of the middle class.

Such speculative building was responsible for most of the construction in square 28 where 2413-2419 Eye Street are located. The 1857 Boschke Map indicates a few houses built on the western side of the square, which is bounded by Eye, K, 24th and 25th Streets and New Hampshire Avenue. Snow's Court, the alley inside this square, was inhabited by 1860. The houses there were, for the most part, built by individuals who owned the front part of the lots. However, most of the extant buildings in the square are roughly contemporaneous with the building of 2413-2419 Eye Street (1885). Although some modern intrusions have upset the balance of the north half of the square, the southern part, on Eye Street, is intact as a residential neighborhood.

98-2417
2415 Eye Street, N.W.

On May 6, 1885, M. Clarence Duvall and Mr. Marr, obtained a permit to construct four single family dwellings on lot 3 (now lots 96-99) in square 28 for an estimated total cost of \$5600. On the same day, they obtained a permit to build five brick alley dwellings on Snow's Court, directly behind the four houses facing Eye Street. Duvall, who lived at 308 F Street, N.W., was a real estate and insurance agent. His downtown office was at 925 F Street, N.W. Unfortunately, Marr does not appear in the city directories. Duvall owned the properties and used them as rental investments until 1889, when Thomson Alexander, believed to be a patent attorney, acquired them. The residents of 2415 were members of the working class; their occupations ranged from day laborer to cook to plumber, but the city directories gave no indication of their work addresses. The properties were held as a group until 1908, when 2417 and 2419 Eye Street were sold separately. In 1955, the present owner, Morella Hansen, purchased 2415 from the owner of that and 2413, with the intention of living there herself. This ended the period of renter occupancy.

Architectural Description

2415 Eye Street, N.W., a modest single family house, is one of four in a row of two story brick dwellings raised on English basements. Situated on the property line, they are 12'6" wide and 28' deep. The height of the houses from grade is 26'. Years

of neglect, and structural damage caused by the construction of the Metro system, necessitated alterations and repairs to three of the four houses in the row. 2419 Eye Street is the only one to retain its original two bay facade with 6/6 sash windows, molded brick segmental arches over the openings, and its corbelled brick cornice. Photographs taken in the mid-1950s prove that the four houses were identical, but each displays its own character today.

The original builders, Duvall and Marr, used a traditional row house plan when constructing these houses--two rooms on each floor, one behind the other. The English basement served as kitchen and dining room, and there were two small parlors on the first floor. On the second floor were two bedrooms. This plan type was common in Washington and in other cities for modest workers' housing. On an even smaller scale, the two-room floor plan was observed in alley dwellings, too. Contemporaneous with the construction of the Eye Street houses, Duvall and Marr built five dwellings on Snow's Court, directly behind them. In spite of their smaller dimensions, their appearance and plans were probably the same. These houses, unfortunately, are no longer extant.

When the present owner acquired 2415 Eye Street in 1955, she undertook a major renovation of the interior, including the addition of indoor plumbing. At the time, the house was equipped with an outhouse. The only running water came from one faucet just inside the back basement door. Then, in 1977, the owner retained the architectural team of Hunter and Shirley Kennard, to renovate, expand and extend the house to its present dimension and style. The house is now three bays wide with 1/1 sash windows, whose proportions are longer and narrower than the original 1885 windows; the lintels and sills are made of brick. And, the facade was replaced by a salmon-colored brick veneer. Wooden strips set at angles, ornament the entrance which is rotated 45° from the central axis of the house. Brick stairs with metal railings serve both the main entrance of the first floor and the basement entrance below grade. The architects arranged the interior spaces on descending half levels, which delineate the spaces without obstructive walls. The open plan organizes the space efficiently, while creating an illusion of greater dimensions within the walls of the old house. 2415 Eye Street makes no pretense of its one hundred year age; its modern face lift harmonizes with its neighbors, and does not disturb the residential scale and ambience of the street.

Owners and Occupants

The Owners

<u>Year</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
1885-1889	W. Clarence Duvall	real estate & ins., 308 F St.
1889-1908	Thomson H. Alexander	patents, 1207 N St., N.W.
1908-1921	Joseph Herzog	real estate, 3349 18th St.
1921-1925	Moses Herzog	manuftrs. agt, Atlantic City
1925-1928	Pearl Cohen	occ. not listed in directory
1928-1947	Robert & Ida Kressin	owners of Dime Mess. Srv., 4400 18th Street, N.W.
1947-1956	Margaret Russell	occ. not listed in directory
1958-	Morella Hansen	occ. not listed in directory

The Occupants

1914	James Brochman	plumber
1915-1928	Henry Harris	laborer
1929	William Shields	musician
1930	Mattie Ferguson	cook
1931-1932	George Winder	helper
1933	Lillian Scott	maid
1934	Perly Monroe	laborer
1935	John Thomas	laborer
1936	Alex Aikens	occ. not listed in directory
1937-1938	Mamie Jacobs	occ. not listed in directory
1939-1940	James McKeamer	occ. not listed in directory
1941-1948	Hattie Washington	widow of William
1954	Paul M. Washington	occ. not listed in directory
1957	Morella Hansen	occ. not listed in directory

Bibliography

- Borchert, James, Alley Life in Washington, 1980, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Rogers, Patricia Dane, untitled article, The Washington Star/Home Life, February 20, 1977.
- Sherwood, Suzanne Berry, Foggy Bottom 1800-1975: A Study in the Uses of an Urban Neighborhood, 1978, George Washington University Washington Studies.

Primary Sources

- D.C. Building Permits: #1671, May 6, 1885; #1672, May 6, 1885.
Record Group 66, National Archives
- Foggy Bottom/West End Historical and Architectural Survey,
Traceries, 1982
- Polk's City Directories, 1914-1958
- Tax Assessment Records, 1889-1958

Maps

- Boschke Map (1857)
Hopkins Map (1887)

APPLICATION FOR PERMIT TO BUILD.

[BRICK AND STONE.]

Washington, D.C., *May 6th 1885*

To the INSPECTOR OF BUILDINGS:

The undersigned hereby applies for a permit to build according to the following specification:

1. State how many buildings to be erected: *four (4)*
2. Material: *brick*
3. What is the owner's name? *Walter & Mann*
4. Architect's name: _____
5. Builder's name: _____
6. Location? *lot 3 sq. 28*
7. nearest street? *bet. New Hampshire Ave & 25*
8. Purpose of the building? *dwellng*
9. If a dwelling, for how many families? *one*
10. Is there a store in lower story? *no*
11. Will the building be erected on solid or filled land? *solid*
12. Size of lot, No. of feet front, _____; No. of feet rear, _____; No. of feet deep, _____
13. Size of building, No. of feet front, *12 1/2*; No. of feet rear, _____; No. of feet deep, *28*
No. of stories in height, *2 base*; No. of feet in height from sidewalk to highest point of roof, *26 1/2*
14. No. of feet in height from level of sidewalk to highest part of wall, *26 1/2*
15. No. of feet in height from sidewalk to eaves, *26*
16. Size of back building, _____ feet long; _____ feet wide; _____ feet high; No. of stories, _____
style of roof, _____
17. Material of foundation: *brick*
18. Thickness of external walls, cellar or basement, *13"* 1st story, *9"* 2d story, *9"* 3d story, *9"* 4th story, _____
- Thickness of party-walls, cellar or basement, *13"* 1st story, *9"* 2d story, *9"* 3d story, *9"* 4th story, _____
- Are the party-walls solid or vaulted? *solid*
19. What will be the materials of front? *red brick* If of stone, what kind? _____
20. Will the roof be flat, pitch, or Mansard? *flat* Material of roofing, *asph*
21. What will be the material of cornice? *brick iron* Ornamental projections? _____
22. What will be the means of access to roof? *stairs*
23. Are there any highways? _____ How protected? _____
24. How is the building heated? _____
25. Are there any bay windows? _____ height _____ width _____ projection _____ form _____
26. Are there any tower projections? _____ height _____ width _____ projection _____
27. Are there any show windows? _____ form _____
28. What will be projection of steps from building line? *5 feet*
29. Are there any vaults? _____ Dimensions _____
30. Will there be an area? _____ width _____ how protected _____
31. Will there be cellar steps? _____ how protected _____
32. Is the lower story to be used for business purposes of any kind? _____
33. What is the estimated cost of the proposed improvement? *5600*

Signature: *Walter & Mann*

Address: *925 P St*

APPLICATION FOR PERMIT TO BUILD.

[BRICK AND STONE.]

Washington, D.C. May 6 1885

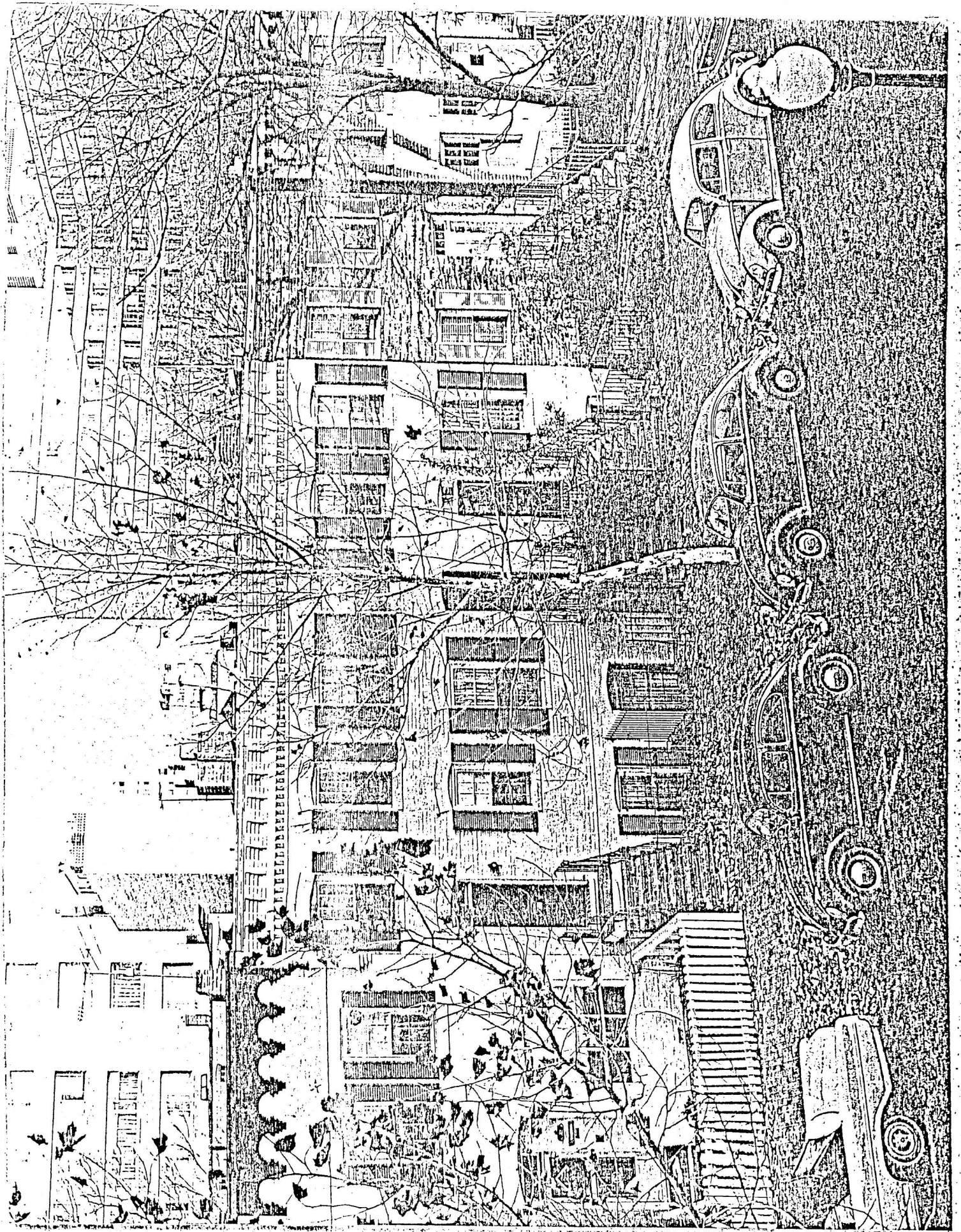
To the INSPECTOR OF BUILDINGS.

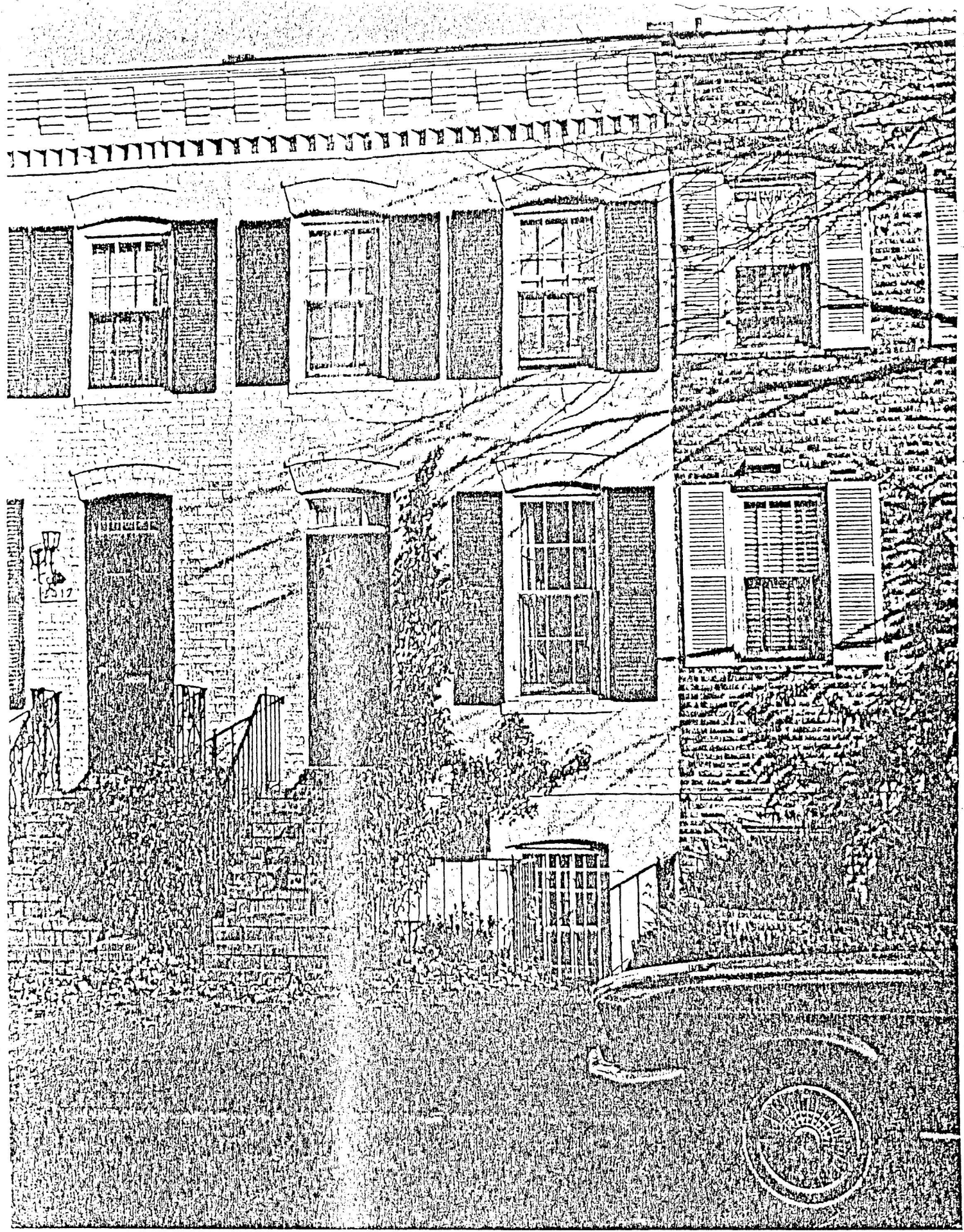
The undersigned hereby applies for a permit to build according to the following specification:

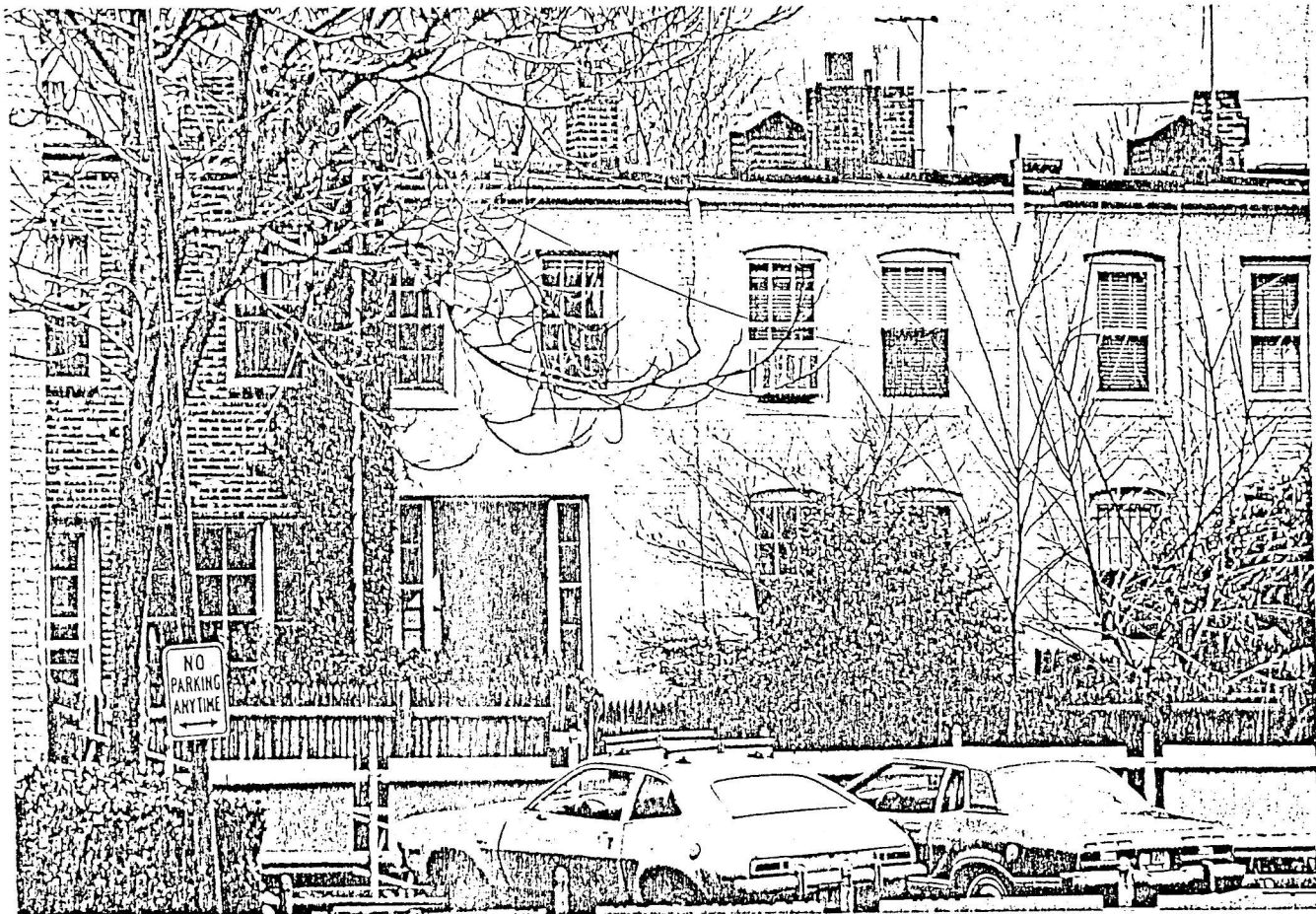
- 1. State how many buildings to be erected. *five*
- 2. Material. *brick*
- 3. What is the owner's name? *Dwight & Mann*
- 4. Architect's
- 5. Builder's
- 6. Location? *Lot 3 Sq 7 8*
- 7. Nearest street? *alley bet D. & 25, New H. Ad. & K. n. w.*
- 8. Purpose of the building? *dwellings*
- 9. If a dwelling, for how many families? *one*
- 10. Is there a store in lower story?
- 11. Will the building be erected on solid or filled land? *solid*
- 12. Size of lot, No. of feet front, No. of feet rear, No. of feet deep.
- 13. Size of building, No. of feet front, No. of feet rear, No. of feet deep. *2 1/2" 2 2"*
- 14. No. of stories in height, No. of feet in height from sidewalk to highest point of roof.
- 15. No. of feet in height from level of sidewalk to highest part of wall. *2 2 1*
- 16. No. of feet in height from sidewalk to eaves. *2 2 1*
- 17. Style of brick building, style of roof. *brick*
- 18. Material of foundation. *found 13"*
- 19. Thickness of external walls, 1st story, 2d story, 3d story, 4th story, 5th story. *found 13" 9" 9" 9" 9"*
- 20. Thickness of party-walls, 1st story, 2d story, 3d story, 4th story, 5th story. *solid*
- 21. Are the party-walls solid or vaulted? *solid*
- 22. What will be the materials of front? *red brick*
- 23. Will the roof be flat, pitch, or Mansard? *flat*
- 24. What will be the material of cornice? *brick*
- 25. What will be the means of access to roof? *scuttle*
- 26. Are there any hot-air ways? *How protected?*
- 27. How is the building heated?
- 28. Are there any bay windows? *each floor with awning*
- 29. Are there any tower projections? *height, width, projection, form.*
- 30. Are there any show windows? *height, width, projection, form.*
- 31. What will be projection of steps from building line?
- 32. Are there any vaults? *dimensions.*
- 33. Will there be an area? *how protected.*
- 34. Will there be cellar steps? *how protected.*
- 35. Is the lower story to be used for business purposes of any kind?
- 36. What is the estimated cost of the proposed improvement? *2400*

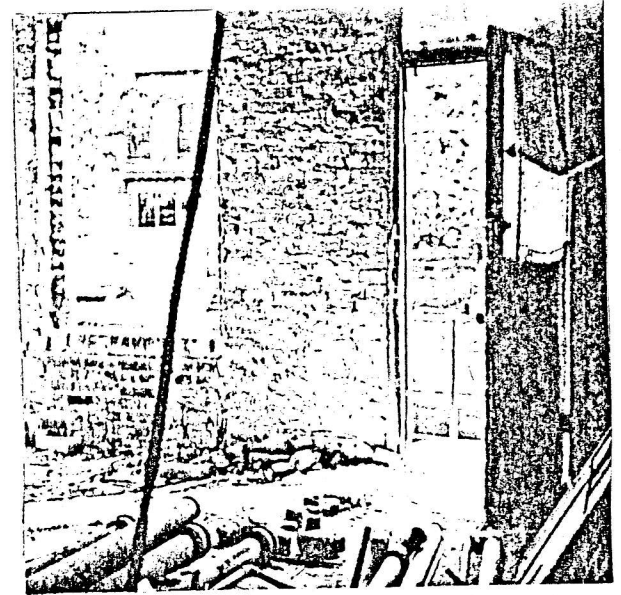
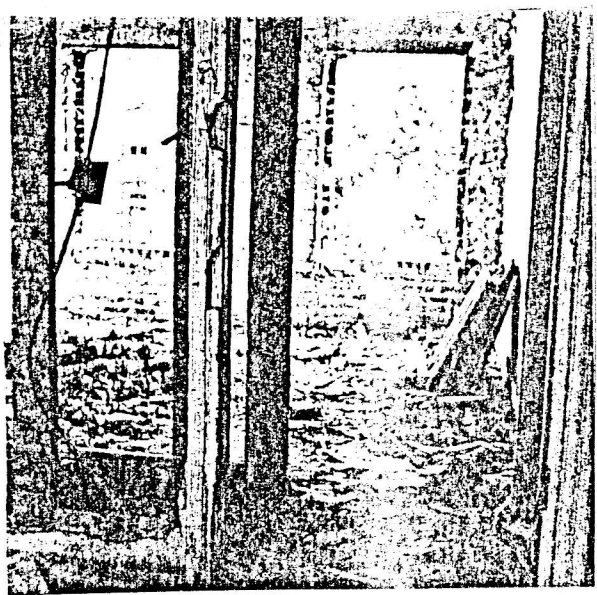
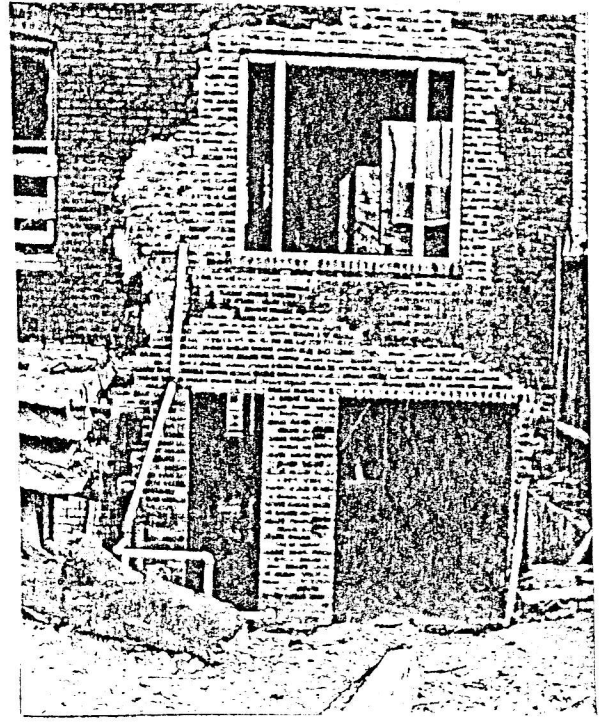
Signature *Dwight & Mann*

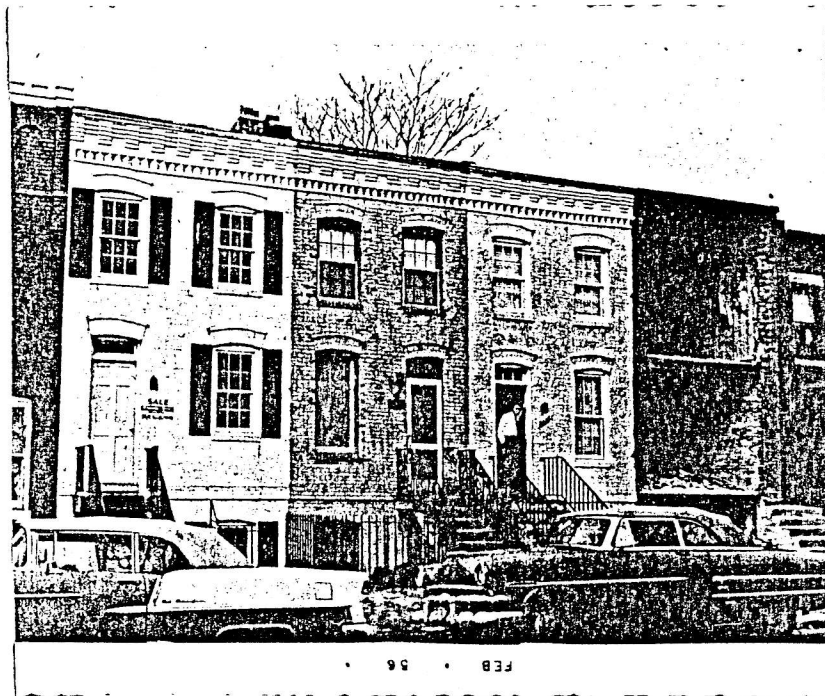
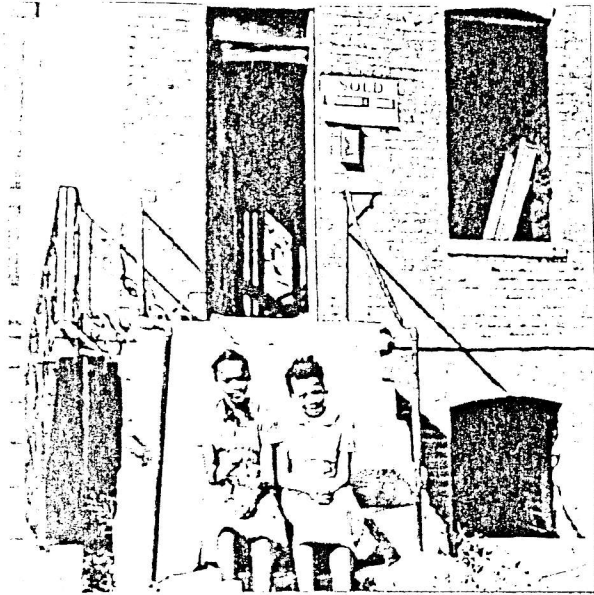
Address *924 2nd St NW*











JULY 1955



