



Montgomery County Planning Board Public Hearing, Worksession and Action on the Mesrobian House: Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, 7410 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase

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Completed: 7/16/2020

Description

The Planning Board will receive virtual public testimony and hold a public worksession on the *Mesrobian House: An Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation* Public Hearing Draft Plan.

Staff Recommendation

Staff will request that the Planning Board approve the Public Hearing Draft Plan and permit staff to make any requested revisions (technical, graphic or editorial) as part of the final editing process before transmittal of the Planning Board Draft Plan to the County Council and County Executive.

Summary

The National Park Service listed the subject property in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) for local significance under Criterion C (architecture) in 2017. The property's listing in the NRHP provides owners with access to state and federal historic preservation tax credits, but offers no protection to the resource outside of a state or federal-funded project. On January 7, 2020, Caroline Hickman, representing the heirs of Mihran Mesrobian, requested evaluation of the subject property for potential listing and protection under §24A of the Montgomery County Code.

In February 2020, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) found that the resource satisfied two designation criteria as listed in §24A-3 of the Montgomery County Code and recommended that the resource be listed in the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites* and designated in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

This public hearing will be conducted virtually with call-in public testimony and live-streaming due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The public hearing was advertised in the *Washington Times* on June 22, 2020.

Attachments: Public Hearing Draft Plan
Appendix 1: Master Plan Historic Site Designation Form




PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT PLAN
for the
MESROBIAN HOUSE

 **Montgomery Planning**

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION





The *Mihran Mesrobian House: An Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, contains the text and supporting documentation for the Public Hearing Draft Amendment. If adopted by the Montgomery County Council and approved by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, this document amends the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation in Montgomery County, Maryland* (1979), as amended; *Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan* (1990), as amended; and *The General Plan* (on Wedges and Corridors) for the *Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties* (1964), as amended.

The Public Hearing Draft presents the Historic Preservation Commission's (HPC) recommendation for the Mihran Mesrobian House located at 7410 Connecticut Avenue, Town of Chevy Chase. Caroline Hickman, representing the heirs of Mihran Mesrobian, requested the evaluation of the subject property for potential listing and protection under Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code. In February 2020, the HPC recommended that the subject property be listed in the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites in Montgomery County* and subsequently designated in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

8787 Georgia Avenue

Silver Spring, MD 20910

Online at: https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/historic/research-and-designation/mihran_mesrobian_house/

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission is a bi-county agency created by the General Assembly of Maryland in 1927. The Commission's geographic authority extends to the great majority of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties; the Maryland-Washington Regional District (M-NCPPC planning jurisdiction) comprises 1,001 square miles, while the Metropolitan District (parks) comprises 919 square miles, in the two counties.

The Commission is charged with preparing, adopting and amending or extending The General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's counties. The Commission operates in each county through Planning Boards appointed by those county governments. The Planning Boards are responsible for implementation of local plans, zoning ordinances, and subdivision regulations and the administration of the bi-county park system.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission encourages the involvement and participation of individuals with disabilities through its accessible facilities. For assistance with special needs (e.g., large print materials, listening devices, sign language interpretation, etc.), please contact the M-NCPPC Montgomery County Commissioners Office by telephone 301-495-4605 or by email at mcpchair@mncppc-mc.org. Maryland residents can also use the free Maryland Relay Service for assistance with calls to or from hearing- or speech-impaired persons; for information, go to www.mdrelay.org/ or call 866-269-9006.

Master Plan for Historic Preservation

The *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* is a functional master plan with countywide application. The plan and the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code, are designed to protect and preserve Montgomery County's historic and architectural heritage. When a historic resource is placed in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, the adoption action officially designates the property as a historic site or historic district, and subjects it to the further procedural requirements of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Designation of historic sites and districts serves to highlight the values that are important in maintaining the individual character of the County and its communities. It is the intent of the County's preservation program to provide a rational system for evaluating, protecting and enhancing the historic and architectural heritage of the County for the benefit of present and future generations.

The following criteria apply, as stated in §24A-3 of the County code when historic resources are evaluated for designation in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation:

Evaluation Criterion (1): Historical and Cultural

The historic resource:

- a. has character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the County, State or Nation;
- b. is the site of a significant historic event;
- c. is identified with a person or a group of persons who influenced society; or
- d. exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political or historic heritage of the County and its communities; or

Evaluation Criterion (2): Architectural and Design

The historic resource:

- a. embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction;
- b. represents the work of a master;
- c. possesses high artistic values;
- d. represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- e. represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or County due to its singular physical characteristic or landscape.

The Process of Amending the Master Plan for Historic Preservation

The Staff Draft Plan (comprised of the Master Plan Historic Site Designation Form and Historic Preservation staff report) is prepared for presentation to the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). The Staff Draft Plan reflects the recommendations of the Historic Preservation staff. The HPC holds a public hearing and receives testimony, after which it holds a public worksession to review the testimony and revise the Staff Draft Plan as appropriate. When the HPC's changes are incorporated, the document becomes the Public Hearing Draft Plan.

The Public Hearing Draft Plan reflects the HPC's recommendations for amending the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. The Planning Board holds a public hearing and receives testimony, after which it holds a public work session to review the testimony, consider the analysis and recommendations provided by the HPC and Historic Preservation staff, and revise the Public Hearing Draft Plan as appropriate. When the Planning Board's changes are made, the document becomes the Planning Board Draft Plan.

The Planning Board Draft Plan is the Planning Board's recommended Plan and reflects its revisions to the Public Hearing Draft Plan. The Regional District Act requires the Planning Board to transmit a master plan amendment to the County Council with copies to the County Executive who must, within 60 days, prepare and transmit a fiscal impact analysis of the Planning Board Draft Plan to the County Council. The County Executive may also forward to the County Council other comments and recommendations.

After receiving the Executive's fiscal impact analysis and comments, the County Council holds a public hearing to receive public testimony. After the hearing record is closed, the Council's Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee holds public worksessions to review the testimony and make recommendations to the County Council. The Council holds its own worksessions, revises the Planning Board Draft according to its assessment of which resources and districts should be designated, then adopts a resolution approving the final amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

After Council approval, the plan is forwarded to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission for adoption. Once the Commission adopts the plan, it

officially amends the master plans, functional plans and sector plans cited in the Commission's adoption resolution.

Implementing the Master Plan for Historic Preservation

Once designated in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, historic resources are subject to protection under the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 24A of the County Code. Any substantial changes to the exterior of a resource or its environmental setting must be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and a Historic Area Work Permit (HAWP) issued under the provisions of §24A-6 of the Ordinance. In accordance with the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* and unless otherwise specified in the master plan amendment, the environmental setting or each site, as defined in §24A-2 of the Ordinance, is the entire parcel on which the resource is located as of the date it is designated on the Master Plan.

Designation of the entire parcel provides the County adequate review authority to preserve historic sites in the event of development. It also ensures that from the beginning of the development process, important features of these sites are recognized and incorporated in the future development of designated properties. In the case of large acreage parcels, the amendment may provide general guidance for the refinement of the setting by indicating when the setting is subject to reduction in the event of development; by describing an appropriate area to preserve the integrity of the resource; and by identifying buildings and features associated with the site which should be protected as part of the setting. For most of the sites designated, the appropriate point at which to refine the environmental setting will be when the property is subdivided.

Public improvements can profoundly affect the integrity of an historic area. Section §24A-6 of the Ordinance states that a HAWP for work on public or private property must be issued prior to altering a historic resource or its environmental setting. The design of public facilities in the vicinity of historic resources should be sensitive to and maintain the character of the area. Specific design considerations should be reflected as part of the Mandatory Referral review processes.

In many cases, historic resources and their associated parcels are also affected by other planned facilities in a master plan; this is particularly true with respect to transportation

right-of-way. In general, when establishing an environmental setting boundary for a historic resource, the need for the ultimate transportation facility is also acknowledged, and the environmental setting includes the entire parcel minus the approved and adopted master planned right-of-way. In certain specific cases, however, the master planned right-of-way directly affects an important contributing element to the historic resource. In such cases, the amendment addresses the specific conflicts existing at the site and suggests alternatives to assist in balancing preservation with the implementation of other equally important community needs.

In addition to protecting designated resources from unsympathetic alteration and insensitive redevelopment, the County's Historic Preservation Ordinance also empowers the County's Department of Permitting Services and the HPC to prevent the demolition of historic buildings through neglect.

Montgomery County provides a tax credit against County real property taxes to encourage the restoration and preservation of privately-owned historic resources located in the County. The credit applies to all properties designated in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* (Chapter 52, Art. VI). The HPC maintains current information on the status of preservation incentives including tax credits, tax benefits possible through the granting of easements, outright grants and low-interest loans. In 2001, the County Council passed legislation requiring an owner of a resource on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* or the *Locational Atlas and Index of*

Historic Sites in Montgomery County to disclose the property's historic status to each prospective buyer before signing a sales contract (§40-12A).

The Amendment

The National Park Service listed the subject property in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) for local significance under Criterion C (architecture) in 2017. The property's listing in the NRHP provides owners with access to state and federal historic preservation tax credits but offers no protection to the resource outside of a state or federal-funded project.

This amendment presents the result of the *Historic Preservation Commission* (HPC)'s evaluation of the *Mihran Mesrobian House* (35/99-1), 7410 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase. In February 2020, the HPC recommended that the resource be listed in the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites* and designated in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. If the Planning Board lists the property in the *Locational Atlas*, the resource would be protected from demolition or substantial alteration under §24A-10, the *Moratorium on Demolition and Substantial Alteration*, until review of the amendment by the County Council. If designated in the *Master Plan of Historic Preservation* by the County Council, the resource would be protected by the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code.

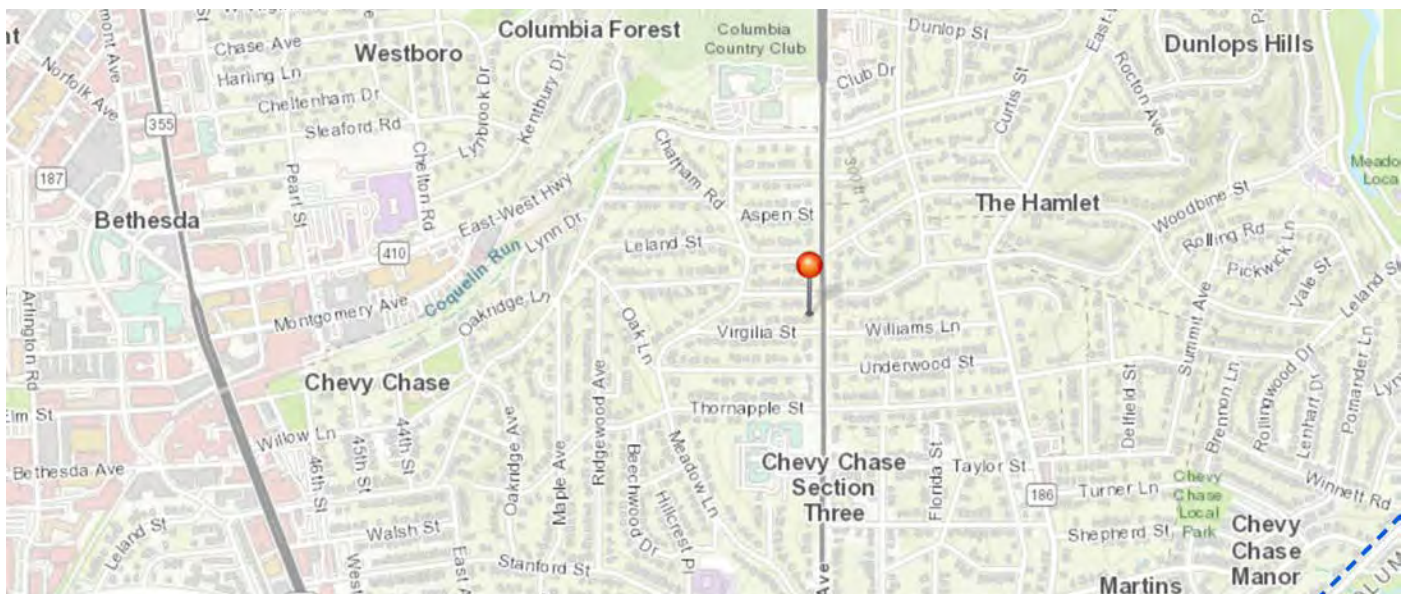


Figure 1: The Mihran Mesrobian House is located in Chevy Chase Village, to the east of downtown Bethesda.
Source: Montgomery Planning GIS.

Description

The Mihran Mesrobian House at 7410 Connecticut Avenue is located in the Town of Chevy Chase, a residential subdivision that was developed in the early 20th century by the Chevy Chase Land Company. The single-family dwelling stands on the southwest corner of Woodbine Street and Connecticut Avenue, the latter being the major north-south transportation artery that bisects Chevy Chase. The property is zoned R-60 for moderate density residential uses with a predominance of detached houses.

Mihran Mesrobian (1889- 1975), a well-regarded Washington-based architect, designed the house in 1941 as the family's personal residence. The Art Moderne-styled, wood-framed dwelling with whitewashed brick veneer consists of two stories and a full basement. The house is capped with a shallow, slate-shingle, hipped roof. Signature elements of the Art Moderne-style include asymmetrical massing, whitewashed brick to resemble concrete, glass block at the front entrance, steel casement windows, and a 2nd-floor sun porch. Narrow brick stringcourses and inset geometric panels further define the elevations. The interior contains an entrance hall from which the common areas are accessed. The first-floor plan is multilevel, with the formal living room, dining room, and den accessed by low rises of stairs. The second floor contains the private areas, with three bedrooms, two baths, and a sitting room that overlooks Connecticut Avenue.

The property, like the neighboring houses on the west side of Connecticut Avenue, is elevated approximately 3-½ feet from the avenue. The red brick and concrete block retaining wall, features piers capped with classical urns. The wall reflects Georgian Revival architecture rather than the Art Moderne style of the house. As a result, the wall facilitates a visual transition with the house and the neighboring traditional houses that line the avenue.

See Appendix X: Master Plan Historic Site Designation Form for a detailed site and architectural description.



Figure 2: View of the front (east) elevation from the center of Connecticut Avenue, 2020.
Source: Historic Preservation Program.



Figure 3: View of the front (east) elevation from the entrance gate, 2020.
Source: Historic Preservation Program.

Statement of Significance

Master architect Mihran Mesrobian designed the Art Moderne-styled house at 7410 Connecticut Avenue for himself and his wife, Zabelle, in 1941. Although Mesrobian was better known for his classically inspired designs of the 1920s and Art Deco buildings of the 1930s, both he and Zabelle wanted a modernist residence. It was the only house he designed for himself and served as his residence until his death in 1975. The house is a highly visible example of a Washington-area residence designed by an architect for his own use due to its location on an arterial road. The modernist house is a striking anomaly among the traditional, revival-style residences that line Connecticut Avenue and side streets of Chevy Chase, MD. Concessions to the Chevy

Chase Land Company's conservative design covenants resulted in a modified design that retains certain modernist elements such as glass block and flat or shallow roofs, while incorporating traditional building elements such as denticulated brick, double stringcourses, incised geometrics and a hipped roof. It is a creative example of the Art Moderne style, reflecting an informed blending of elements of modernism and classicism.

See Appendix One: Master Plan Historic Site Designation Form for a detailed historic context, including the acquisition of the property and construction of the dwelling and information on the Modern Movement and the International and Art Moderne styles.

Master Architect Mihran Mesrobian

Mesrobian (1889-1975) was born in Afyon Karahisar, Turkey. He graduated from the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul in 1908 and began a promising career as a municipal architect in Izmir in the office of the palace architect in Istanbul. The extraordinary circumstances under which he trained and practiced architecture in Turkey during the final years of the Ottoman Empire profoundly altered his career trajectory. His graduation from the Imperial School of Fine



Figure 4: Portrait of Mihran Mesrobian.

Source: Mihran Mesrobian Archive, Private Collection, Washington, D.C.

Arts occurred as the Young Turks, political dissidents, seized power from the sultan, resulting in political and social reforms that would culminate in the founding of the Republic of Turkey. During World War I, Mesrobian served as an army corps engineer in the Turkish army. After the war, he returned to Istanbul and took a position as chief designer in the office of the prominent engineer Ismail Hakki.

In 1921, Mesrobian immigrated to the United States with his wife, Zabelle, and their two young sons. Shortly after relocating to Washington, DC, he entered the architectural office of Harry Wardman. At that time, Wardman was the preeminent real estate developer in the nation's capital. Mesrobian's quick rise to the position of chief architect came during the developer's most ambitious building period that ended only with Wardman's death in 1938. His premier hotels for Wardman include hallmarks of Beaux-Arts classicism such as the Hay-Adams (1927, overlooking Lafayette Park and the



Figure 5: Mesrobian designed the Beaux-Arts styled Hay-Adams Hotel (Washington, D.C.) in 1928. The hotel is listed in the Lafayette Square National Register Historic District.

Source: Library of Congress.



Figure 6: Mesrobian designed the DuPont Circle Building (Washington, D.C.) in the Art Deco-style in 1931. The building is listed in the DuPont Circle National Register Historic District. Source: Library of Congress.

White House), the Carlton/ St. Regis (1926, 16th Street at K Street) and the English revival-style Wardman Tower (1928, 2660 Connecticut Ave NW).

During the 1930s and 1940s, Mesrobian's commissions for apartments, office buildings and shopping centers showed an evolving interest in modernist design, particularly the Art Deco. This new movement stimulated remarkable creativity in Mesrobian's work, especially in his use of architectural ornamentation. His predilection for Near-Eastern motifs reflected his Ottoman heritage and earlier practice of

architecture in Turkey. Notable examples of his innovative schemes of the 1930s are 1350 Connecticut Avenue (Dupont Circle between Connecticut Avenue and 19th Street), the Nejib Hekimian Oriental rug store (18th Street at Connecticut Avenue), and Sedgwick Gardens (Connecticut Avenue at Sedgwick Street). During World War II, Mesrobian designed large-scale, Federal Housing Authority-insured garden apartment complexes in northern Virginia that helped accommodate the influx of government workers to the metropolitan area. In comparison to other garden apartment



Figure 7: Mesrobian designed Sedgwick Gardens (Washington, D.C.) in the Art Deco style for developer Max Gorin in 1931. The apartment building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



Figure 8: Mesrobian designed Wakefield Manor Garden Apartments (Arlington, Virginia) in 1943. Here he designed a brick retaining wall similar to the one at his residence. Source: Arlington County Historic Preservation Program.

complexes, Mesrobian's buildings reflected a higher standard of design during a period of material shortages.

Mesrobian also single-handedly maintained a prolific private practice, producing well-designed buildings for a variety of clients and budgets, skillfully adapting historicist design to modern building typologies, and embracing new stylistic movements with originality. In the past 20 years, the National Park Service listed several of Mesrobian's projects on the National Register of Historic Places.

Designation Criteria

The Mihran Mesrobian House meets two Designation Criteria of the Historic Preservation Ordinance as listed in §24A-3 of the Montgomery County Code.

2.A Architectural and Design: Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction

The Mesrobian House is a premier example of an Art Moderne-styled dwelling with restrained traditional building elements that respond to the surrounding predominance of Colonial Revival architecture. In general, Art Moderne-styled houses emphasized horizontality and featured multi-dimensional rectangular and square forms, smooth exterior wall surfaces, flat or shallow roofs, rounded corners, a high ratio of solid to void, and minimal applied ornamentation.

Responding to the requirements of the Chevy Chase Land Company, Mesrobian respected the surrounding architectural landscape, but incorporated his masterful

interpretation of the Art Moderne-style for his own home. The dwelling features an amalgamation of square, rectangular and rounded forms that create a sculptural quality to the building, but with a massing that aligns with the surrounding Colonial Revival styled-houses. Mesrobian further wove modern building methods and traditional materials. He omitted a stucco or parged finish in lieu of a concrete block structural system with a six-course, American-bond, whitewashed brick veneer. This allowed the traditional building material to be visible but created a smoother finish typical of the Art Moderne-style. Glass block windows with no sills or surrounds amplified the smoothness of the exterior walls, but steel-sash windows (a hallmark of the style) were recessed and had traditional brick sills. Chimneys flank the entry and add the only vertical emphasis to the dwelling, but frame a sweeping, curved glass block wall that leads to the recessed main door.

The brick-and-concrete block wall with classically inspired cast-stone decoration defines the perimeter of the property. The wall provides a visual transition from the Art Moderne-styled house and the neighboring traditional houses. Mesrobian designed similar walls at other notable projects such as Wakefield Manor, a garden apartment complex in Arlington, VA. He incorporated this landscape feature in the design of his own home.

Mesrobian deftly recognized and incorporated elements of the surrounding traditional architecture to create a modern building that embodied the ideal of variation and expression. This Art Moderne-styled building reflected that architecture can be unmistakably modern while producing the look of permanent beauty and comfort recognized by the populace.



Figure 9: View of the front (east) elevation from the entrance gate, 2020.
Source: Historic Preservation Program.

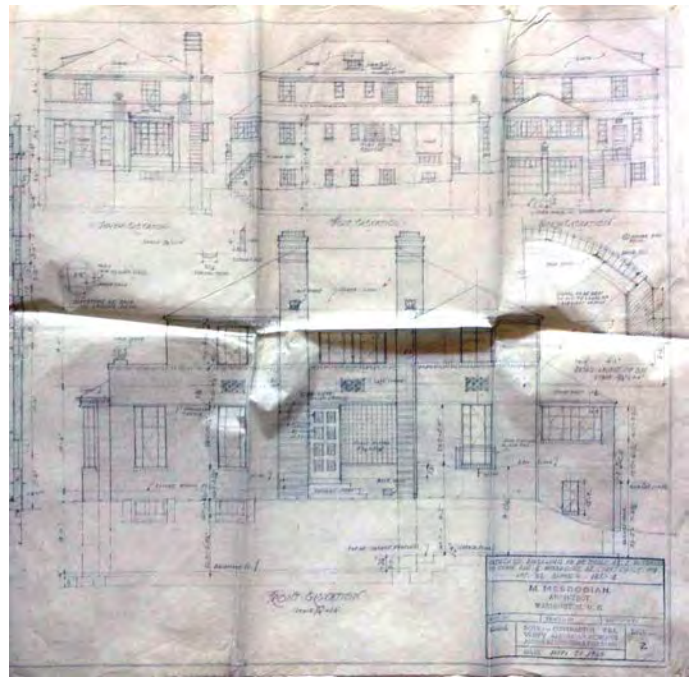


Figure 10: Mesrobian's architectural elevations of the house, 1940.
Source: Mihran Mesrobian Archive, Private Collection, Washington, D.C.



Figure 11: View of the front (east) elevation, 2020. The façade features a sweeping curved glass block wall that leads to the recessed main door.
Source: Historic Preservation Program.



Figure 12: Detailed view of the brick and concrete block retaining wall.
Source: Historic Preservation Program.

2.B Architectural and Design: Represents the work of a master

Mihran Mesrobian is recognized as a master architect in the Washington, DC, metropolitan region. His projects include signature hotels, office buildings, apartments and residences constructed for a variety of socio-economic constituencies in diverse neighborhoods, for prominent and lesser-known real estate developers. Many of these buildings are designated national and local landmarks. While Mesrobian is known

for his Beaux-Arts, classically inspired designs, and Art Deco buildings, the subject Art Moderne-styled building is a showcase of his design skill and individuality. He had a preference towards forward-looking designs, forms, and materials and implemented these elements on his own dwelling.



Figure 13: Mihran Mesrobian at his home office, 7410 Connecticut Avenue, 1954.
Source: Mihran Mesrobian Archive, Private Collection, Washington, D.C.

Environmental Setting

The Mihran Mesrobian House is located at 7410 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase, Montgomery County, MD. The proposed environmental setting to be listed in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* consists of the building and its associated 10,800 square-foot lot identified as Account Number 00464605, District 07, as shown on the accompanying map.



Figure 14: Proposed environmental setting for the Mesrobian House.

Design Guidelines for a Historic Area Work Permit

Purpose of the Design Guidelines

These design guidelines are intended to assist the current and future property owners, historic preservation staff, and the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) in the preservation and protection of the historic character and physical integrity of the Mihran Mesrobian House. It is recognized that buildings are not static but continue to evolve over time. These guidelines are not intended to prohibit changes, but rather to preserve the most important physical aspects of the site and ensure that any changes are respectful of and compatible with the historic and existing fabric and character of the house.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

The guidelines utilize the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation listed below.

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Historic Area Work Permits

In approaching possible alterations to a historic home, it is beneficial to review the Preservation Briefs from the National Park Service. The National Park Service has prepared more than 40 Preservation Briefs since 1975, and they cover numerous topics such as roofing, energy efficiency, window replacements and paint. These booklets provide easy-to-read guidance on preserving, rehabilitating and restoring historic buildings that help homeowners, preservation professionals, organizations and government agencies. Preservation Briefs may be viewed online or ordered via the National Park Service website.

A Historic Area Works Permit (HAWP) is required to change the exterior features of a historic site or a building located in a historic district. Per §24A-6 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Historic Area Works Permits (HAWPS) **must be issued** for any work on public or private properties containing a historic resource before the following actions:

1. Constructing, reconstructing, moving, relocating, demolishing or in any manner modifying, changing, or altering the exterior features of any historic site or any historic resource located within any historic district.
2. Performing any grading, excavating, construction or substantially modifying, changing or altering the environmental setting of an historic site or an historic resource located within an historic district.

Examples of projects that require a HAWP include but are not limited to:

- New construction or additions
- Demolition of any exterior elements
- Alteration, addition, or removal of architectural features, including the size, shape, and placement of windows
- Replacement of windows
- Installation of siding or other changes to exterior materials
- Installation of or alteration to site features including walkways and retaining walls
- Grading and removing live trees greater than six inches in diameter
- Painting unpainted surfaces or removing paint from masonry

Alteration to the hand-painted motif on the soffit between the two chimneys.

Examples of projects that do not require a HAWP include:

1. Ordinary maintenance and repair of exterior features
 - This includes painting non-masonry surfaces, painting already painted masonry surfaces, roof repairs, gutters, trim, lights, etc. with materials and design matching what is already in place.
2. Interior alterations to the resources that does not affect the exterior
3. Typical gardening and landscaping
4. In-kind replacement or repairs to the walkways or driveway with matching materials

An overview of the review and approval process is described in §24A-6 to §24A-8 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and on the Historic Preservation program's website: <https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/historic/historic-area-work-permits/>





Montgomery Planning

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

8787 Georgia Avenue

Silver Spring, MD 20910

Online at: https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/historic/research-and-designation/mihran_mesrobian_house/

**MIHRAN MESROBIAN HOUSE (35-99-1)
7410 CONNECTICUT AVENUE
CHEVY CHASE, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD 20815**

**MASTER PLAN HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION FORM
FEBRUARY 2020**

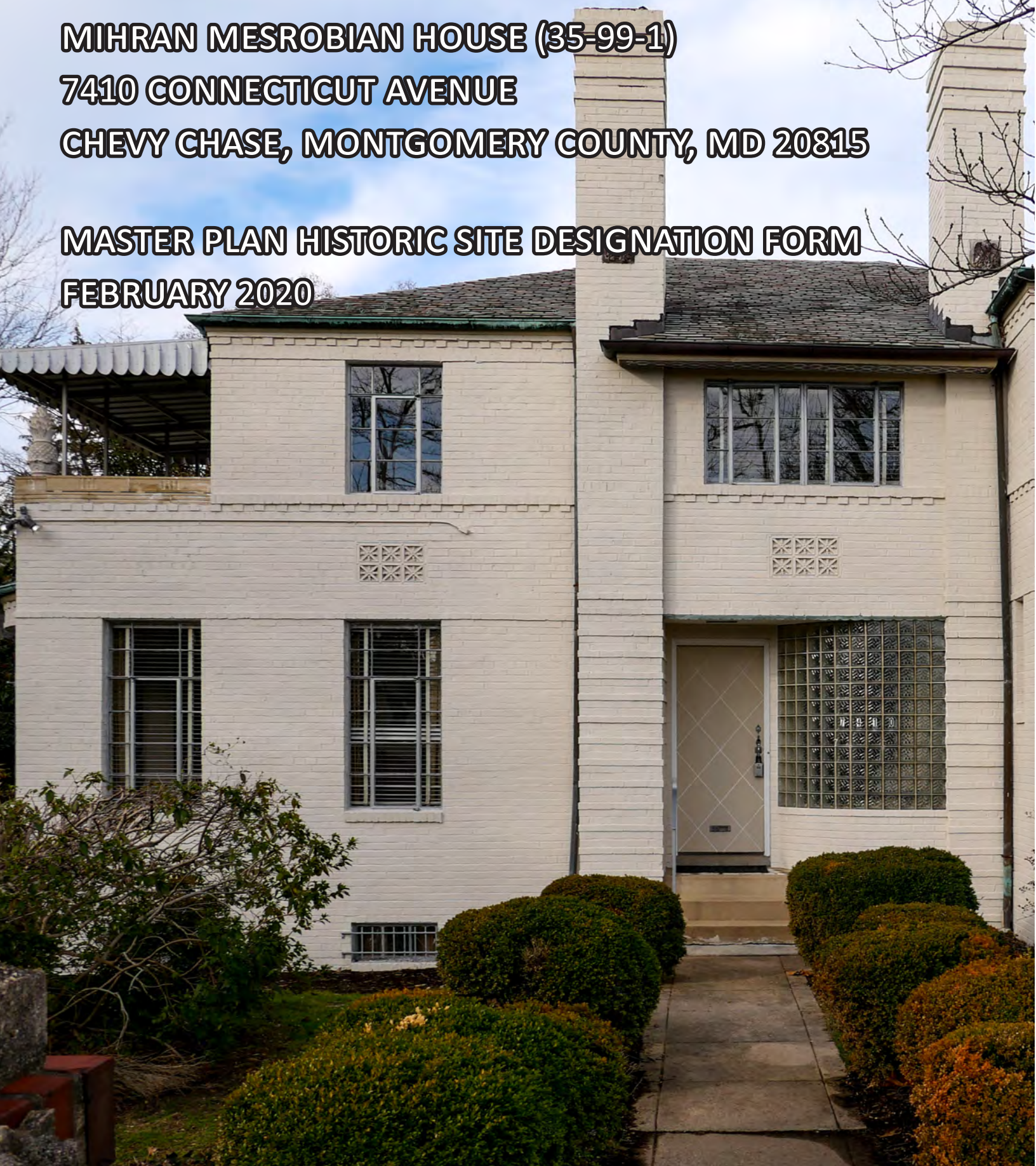


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Maryland – National Capital Park and Planning Commission
 Montgomery County Department of Planning
 Master Plan Historic Site Designation Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Mihran Mesrobian House
 Current Name: Mihran Mesrobian House
 Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties: 35-99-1

2. LOCATION OF PROPERTY

Address Number and Street: 7410 Connecticut Avenue (MD 185)
 County, State, Zip: Montgomery County, Maryland, 20815

3. ZONING OF PROPERTY

R-60: The intent of the R-60 zone is to provide designated areas of the County for moderate density residential uses. The predominant use is residential in a detached house. A limited number of other building types may be allowed under the optional method of development.

4. TYPE OF PROPERTY

A. Ownership of Property

☐ Private
☒ Public
☒ Local
☐ State
☐ Federal

B. Category of Property

☐ Private
☒ Public
☐ Local
☐ State
☐ Federal

C. Number of Resources within the Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Buildings	<input type="checkbox"/> Buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structures	<input type="checkbox"/> Structures
<input type="checkbox"/> Objects	<input type="checkbox"/> Objects
<input type="checkbox"/> Archaeological Sites	<input type="checkbox"/> Archaeological Sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Total	<input type="checkbox"/> Total

The one building and structure consists of the single-family dwelling and its associated brick and concrete block retaining wall, respectively.

D. Listing in the National Register of Historic Places: The National Park Service individually listed the property in the National Register of Historic Places in 2017 under Criterion C for architecture.

5. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic Function(s): DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

Current Function(s): DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

6. DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY¹

Site Description: The Mihran Mesrobian Residence at 7410 Connecticut Avenue is in the Town of Chevy Chase (originally Section IV), Montgomery County, Maryland, a residential subdivision that was developed in the early 20th century by the Chevy Chase Land Company. The single-family dwelling stands on the southwest corner of Woodbine Street and Connecticut Avenue, the latter being the major north-south transportation artery that bisects Chevy Chase.

The subject dwelling is in Subdivision 11, Block 2, Lot 22, Chevy Chase. The land area is 10,800 square feet. It was originally plated as Lot 1 and the north half of Lot 2, Block 2, Section 4, Chevy Chase, and numbered 6810 Connecticut Avenue. The property, like the neighboring houses on the west side of Connecticut Avenue, is elevated approximately 3-½ feet from the avenue. The site is generally level except for the north side, which was altered to accommodate a driveway and entrance to the below-grade garage. The red brick retaining wall/fence and piers capped with classical urns are more in keeping with the Georgian Revival than the Art Moderne style of the house. The revival-style wall facilitates a visual transition with the house and the neighboring, traditional houses that line the avenue.

The main entrance to the property faces Connecticut Avenue. Concrete steps with three risers flanked by metal railings painted silver and concrete ledges rise from the public sidewalk. Variegated red brick piers capped with cast stone, classically inspired urns decorated with fruit flank the entrance to the property. One-brick deep, attached piers topped by cast stone floral decoration further articulate the piers. Semi-circular walls of stretcher bricks capped with upright runners connect the piers and entrance ensemble with the brick and cinderblock wall/fence that encloses the property. Mesrobian's geometric-designed entrance gate features rhythmically spaced pairs of metal pickets, with one pair decorated with a stylized Greek key design; a crossbar decorated with a central rosette; and a chevron and ball finial. The gate is hinged to the north brick pier and swings into the property. An aggregate cement walkway flanked by ground ivy and boxwoods leads to the main entrance of the house.

The walls that surround the property are composed of brick in the east and north entrance areas and the garden nook on the south side of the property. Other areas have a high cinderblock base that supports a six-brick-high upper section. Brick piers capped with cast stone stand at approximately 7-to-9 foot-intervals along the 5-foot-high, 8-inch-thick wall. Open areas in the shape of equal-armed crosses punctuate the upper section of the wall at regular intervals, providing visual interest to the solidity of the wall.

The south wall features a garden niche flanked by piers surmounted with cast stone classical urns and volutes. The niche faces a covered terrace that opens into the dining room. The wall fronting Woodbine Street, on the north side of the property, is punctuated by a 12-foot-span, out-swinging double metal gate painted silver. Red brick piers capped with cast stone urns and semi-circular walls define the entrance to the driveway. A narrow flagstone path rises from the driveway to the front of the house. The steps and wood railing that connect the driveway area and front of the house are not original.

Many of the plantings are original to the time of the construction of the house. The "Plot Plan," dated November 20, 1940, shows several trees and bushes of unspecified types articulating the front and north-east sections of the property and the medians between the public sidewalk and street. Trees that were planted at Mesrobian's directive include the Yoshino cherries that line the front of the property, black walnut, dogwood, magnolia, oak, conifer, and maple. Azaleas, boxwood, ligustrum, roses, hosta, ferns, and ground ivy are also original to the building of the house.

¹ The Description of the Property is copied from the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form written by Caroline Mesrobian Hickman.

Architectural Description: Mihran Mesrobian (1889- 1975), the well-regarded Washington-area architect, designed the house in 1941 as his and his family's personal residence. The Art Moderne style wood-framed structure consists of two stories and a full basement. The elevation facing Woodbine Street features a two-car garage with a den above the garage. The house is constructed of whitewashed brick that is stretcher-coursed except for the stringcourses, which are set with headers. The roof is hipped and is covered with slate. Steel-frame casement windows are used throughout and have a silver color protective coating. Signature elements of the Art Moderne-style dwelling include areas of glass block at the front entrance and both stories of the south elevation, asymmetrical massing, whitewashed brick to resemble concrete, and a 2nd-floor sun porch. Narrow brick stringcourses and inset geometric panels further define the elevations. The interior contains an entrance hall from which the common areas are accessed. The first-floor plan is multilevel, with the formal living room, dining room, and den accessed by low rises of stairs. The second floor contains the private areas, with three bedrooms, two baths, and a sitting room that overlooks Connecticut Avenue.

See Appendix Two for current photographs of the exterior of the house.

Detailed Architectural Description: Designed in the Art Moderne style of whitewashed brick, the Mihran Mesrobian residence is a two-story dwelling with a partially aboveground basement on a concrete slab with horizontal, asymmetrical massing and a hipped, slate roof. Mesrobian's plans and elevations are extant. The front elevation faces Connecticut Avenue and consists of five sections, four of which project incrementally from south to north. The fifth section, which contains the den and garage below it, is slightly recessed. The slightly off-center entrance is quite sculptural due to the interplay of solids and voids, recessed and projecting areas, curved glass-block window, incised and stenciled panels, and shallow stringcourses. Concrete steps with three risers and a metal railing on the south side of the steps lead to the recessed entrance. Brick chimneys flank the entrance. The one on the south side of the entrance several brick lengths from the wall of the house, while the one on the north side projects only slightly from the wall. A series of brick stringcourses define the chimneys at the entrance to the house as well as the upper areas of the chimneys. Each chimney bears a decorative cast-metal eagle located above the second story of the house. A large semi-circular window of glass block articulates the north side of the entrance, providing natural illumination and privacy. Each glass block measures 5¾" by 5¾", with a grid of 12-over-12. Mesrobian's drawing of the six-panel entrance door specifies "stencil work by owners in panels," but the original door has been replaced by one cored with a diamond-shaped pattern. The projecting section of the 2nd story provides shelter for the entrance directly below it. Above the entrance is a rectangular, 6-over-3 light window, with vertical steel muntins articulating sections of two widths: a narrow one (1), and one that is twice the width of the narrow one (2), creating a rhythmic 1, 2, 1, 1, 2, 1 configuration. The two larger sections are casement; the narrower ones are fixed. The brick lintel below the window, which runs between the edges of the two chimneys, is articulated with dentil work. A 3-over-3 inset, incised panel with geometric decorative pattern is centered below the 2nd-story window. The eave between the two chimneys has a soffit with hand-painted stencil work in a geometric pattern of interlocked hexagonal rings of contrasting gray and off-white paint. All the steel mullion windows, which are slightly recessed into the walls, have a brick sill.

The two-bay section of the front elevation to the immediate south of the entrance is slightly set back and features two 3-over-6 light windows that illuminate the living room. The center lights are twice the width of those that flank them. The lower four lights in the center form a casement window; the other lights are fixed. Shallow stringcourses delineate the areas directly above the 1st story windows and the 2nd-story window, which has 3-over-4 lights to illuminate the master bedroom. Dentil work and an inset panel with geometric decoration centered between the 1st and 2nd-story windows further define the area.

The bay to the north of the front entrance comprises the first-floor den and a 2nd floor bedroom. It projects from the entrance and has the same fenestration and decorative detailing as the bay to the immediate south side of the main entrance. The slightly recessed, northern-most bay is punctuated by a window that illuminates the den, with the same configuration as the one on the second story over the main entrance. It also has a 3-over-2 light basement window.

The south elevation features a large semi-circular bay window that illuminates the living room, with four wide vertical steel mullions and six narrow horizontal mullions (5-over-6). Two sections of this window are casement; the rest are fixed. Brick with dentil work and a conical slate roof define the area above the fenestration. Above the bay window is a sun porch covered by a segmented metal roof supported by metal

poles. The plans for the porch floor specify a "Celotex Traffic Top," a type of cost-effective, purportedly imperious flooring material that had only recently come on the market. The terrace has a precast concrete balustrade that is decoratively scored at regular intervals and features large pre-cast concrete pineapple finials at the comers. Capitals of recessed vertical, offset bricks define slightly projecting piers that support the pineapple finials. The master bedroom is accessed from the porch by means of a 3-over-6 light door. The west bay of the south elevation consists of a bi-level covered terrace leading to wooden French doors that open to the dining room. Narrow floor-length, fixed windows flank the French doors. The doors and windows have protective metal grates, which are not original to the house. The terrace floors are polished, irregularly hewn white, black, gray and variegated marble laid in cement with a brick border. A stair with four risers and metal railings connect the terraces. The lower terrace is covered with the same type of awning supported by metal poles as that used for the 2nd story terrace. The upper terrace has brick piers that connect to the metal railings. The upper terrace ceiling is plaster and has a centered light fixture composed of a globe with a metal directional. The bay on the 2nd story has a 4-over-4 light casement window centered above the terrace entryway.

The west elevation consists of the 1st and 2nd stories, a partially above-grade basement, and a 3-over-2 light window in the hipped roof. The fenestration of the elevation is asymmetrically positioned, corresponding to the functions/requirements of the living spaces, not exterior spatial aesthetics. Glass brick with a tight grid pattern of 8-over-6 blocks illuminates the dining room on the first floor. The master bath on the 2nd floor is illuminated with a 6 over 8 wavy patterned block glass. 1-over-3 light casement windows flank the glass brick dining room window. These small windows also are also used to light the bathrooms on the 1st and 2nd floors. The basement-level fenestration consists of 4-over-3 windows with a central casement and 2-over-3 fixed light windows. A brick stringcourse with dentil work defines the area beneath the 2nd floor windows, while a row of brick headers defines the area above the 1st floor.

The north elevation consists of a one-bay wing on its western side that houses the garage and a den directly above the garage, an entrance to the kitchen and to the basement, and three bays on the 2nd story. The bay above the garage (facing west) has a steel casement window divided into narrow and double-width sections that duplicates the den window on the front (west) elevation. Between the den and garage levels, a cast stone eagle, wings fully spread, rises from a brick pedestal atop a brick pier, which bisects the 2-bay garage. The 2nd story den ribbon window, which runs nearly the length of the north elevation, consists of a set of casement windows that alternate with narrow 1-over-3 lights and double-width 1-over-3 lights. A short rise of concrete stairs leads from the driveway to the kitchen and basement areas. Six concrete steps lead to a narrow, railed landing to access the kitchen door, which is flanked by 1-over-4 light windows. Concrete steps lead to the basement entrance, which is sheltered by the landing leading to the kitchen entrance and a retaining wall.

According to Mesrobian's specifications, the basement walls are cinderblock up to grade, 4" brick and 8" cinderblock above grade to the 1st floor, 4" face brick and 4" cinderblock above 1st floor to roof. The plan specifies that the brick will be "bonded at every 6th course with headers." All flashing, gutters and downspouts are copper.

Regarding the wall/fence, family history maintains that Mesrobian could not get enough brick to construct the entire wall because of a wartime shortage—hence the use of cinderblock. The high cost of building such an extensive wall in brick may have also influenced Mesrobian's decision to incorporate cinderblock. Whatever the reason, his drawing for a "Garden Wall, 6810 Conn. Ave., C.C., MD," dated 4 January 1945, specifies the exact quantities of brick and cinderblock. Mesrobian's drawing shows that he originally envisioned the central area of the south wall garden nook to contain a semi-circular niche with water cascading into a large, wide-lipped urn. Neither the semi-circular niche nor the water feature was realized. Instead, a decorative cast stone ram's head defines the space.

Interior: The above-grade enclosed area of the dwelling is 2,534 square feet, with 480 square feet of finished basement area. On the first floor, the primary living spaces are largely defined by differences in elevation. The entrance hall serves as a central core by which to access the rooms on the first and second floors. Indeed, the plan shows Mesrobian's mastery of the tight integration of areas, with a minimum of "wasted" space.

The entrance hall opens on the south side; here two risers descend to the 19'2" x 13'2" formal living room, which has a south-facing bay window. A fireplace with a variegated black marble surround projects at a 45-

degree angle in the northeast corner of the room. On the north side of the entrance hall, a stair with two risers leads to the 18'6" x 18'6" den, which has painted knotty pine wainscoting. A fireplace with red brick surround is located in the southeast wall of the room. It appears that Mesrobian designed and furnished this living space with the interior configuration of Turkish houses in mind, a reflection of his Ottoman heritage. Banquettes of seating line part of the den, while a small operable fountain with lion's head sprout and a basin defines the center of the room. The kitchen is accessed from the den by descending a stair with three risers. The original linoleum-top table and four matching chairs define the breakfast nook in the kitchen, which has non-original linoleum flooring. The entrance to the kitchen that faces south leads on the immediate right to a half-bath with tile floor, a flight of stairs on the east side that lead to the basement, and the dining room to the south. French doors on the south side of the 13'10" x 13' dining room open to the sheltered outdoor terrace. A stair with two risers connects the dining and living rooms. The original steel-color iron railings at these different stair elevations were designed by Mesrobian and are intact. A door on the west side of the entrance hall leads to a coat closet and the flight of stairs leading to the basement. The landing for the staircase leading to the basement connects the stairs leading to both the entrance hall and the passage on the west side of the house that connects the kitchen and dining room.

A flight of stairs in the entrance hall leads to the second floor. The stairs rise to a landing, then turn at a ninety-degree angle to the second floor. Three bedrooms, a bathroom, and a sitting room (specified "Sewing Room" in the plan) open directly to the hall, which is open to the first floor and defined by railings designed by Mesrobian. The 13'2" x 22' master bedroom has a bathroom with a glass block window illuminating the shower/tub area. On the southeast side of the master bedroom, a door opens to the covered sun porch. The service areas (stairs, linen closet and hall bath), separate the master bedroom from the two bedrooms on the north side of the house, which measure 13' x 12' and 11'2" x 17'. The 1st and 2nd floor plans specify radio outlets in all the living areas. Both floors have 8-foot-high ceilings, with either rough or smooth plaster finishes.

The basement is above grade on the west and north sides of the property and is accessed by the garage as well as an exterior door reached by a flight of steps just west of the garage. In accordance with Mesrobian's drawing "Basement Plan," dated November 20, 1940, the space contains a two-car garage that leads to a narrow hall and stairs to the first floor. Various utility rooms for the heating and cooling, laundry, storage and service comprise the other areas. The "Game Room," 18'6" feet long and 12'10" wide, has a fireplace located in the northeast side of the room, a semicircular niche on the south side of the room, and the original beige-and-blue panel linoleum flooring. Mesrobian's 12'2" long, 8'6" foot drafting room is located on the above-grade north-west corner of the basement, with a window each on the north and west sides of the room. The basement floors are concrete or linoleum over concrete, with the exception of the service room and drafting room, which are pine. The ceilings are rough or smooth plaster.

7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

A. Applicable Designation Criteria as described in Chapter 24A: Historic Resources Preservation, Section 24A-3, Montgomery County Ordinance

The Mesrobian Mihran Residence meets 2 of the 9 designation criteria as described in Section 24A-3 of the Montgomery County Ordinance. See Section J of this report for a detailed analysis.

B. Statement of Significance²:

Master architect Mihran Mesrobian designed the Art Moderne-styled house at 7410 Connecticut Avenue for himself and his wife, Zabelle, in 1941. Although Mesrobian was better known for his Beaux-Arts, classically inspired designs of the 1920s, and Art Deco buildings of the 1930s, both he and Zabelle wanted a modernist residence. It was the only house he designed for himself and served as his residence for nearly thirty-five years, until his death in 1975. The house is a highly visible example of a Washington-area residence designed by an architect for his own use, due to its location on the major traffic artery of Connecticut Avenue. The modernist house is a striking anomaly among the traditional, revival style residences that line Connecticut Avenue and

² The Statement of Significance is copied from the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form written by Caroline Mesrobian Hickman.

side streets of Chevy Chase, Maryland. Concessions to the Chevy Chase Land Company's conservative design covenants resulted in a modified design that retains certain modernist elements such as glass block and flat or shallow roofs, while incorporating traditional building elements such as denticulated brick, double stringcourses, incised geometrics, and a hipped roof. It is a creative example of the Art Moderne style, reflecting an informed blending of elements of modernism and classicism.

C. Period of Significance: 1941-1945 (construction of dwelling and subsequent brick wall/fence)

D. Significant Dates: 1941

E. Significant Persons: Mihran Mesrobian; Zabelle Mesrobian

F. Areas of Significance: Architecture

G. Architect/Builder: Mihran Mesrobian

H. Narrative³:

Historic Context: Chevy Chase Land Company and the Town of Chevy Chase

The Mihran Mesrobian House, 7410 (originally 6810) Connecticut Avenue, is located in subdivision 11, block 2, lot 22 in the Town of Chevy Chase, a self-governing municipality located in Montgomery County, Maryland. The incorporated boundaries of the Town are East-West Highway on the north, Connecticut Avenue on the east, Bradley Lane on the south, and one block east of Wisconsin Avenue on the west.

The Town was part of the subdivision developed by the Chevy Chase Land Company, formed in the 1890s by Francis G. Newlands and William M. Stewart. Newlands' significant early purchase was Chevy Chase, a 305-acre plot of land on the Maryland-District of Columbia border. A trolley line connected the budding development to downtown Washington beginning in the early 1890s. The Town of Chevy Chase experienced significant development after World War I, as the automobile became a primary source of transportation and facilitated commuting to the Washington suburbs. The trolley line was discontinued in the mid-1930s. The Mihran Mesrobian House is in what was originally Section IV, which the Chevy Chase Land Company platted in 1909, a large area situated west of Connecticut Avenue and north of Bradley Lane. The Land Company restrictions for Section IV stipulated a 25-foot setback and a minimum house cost of \$3,000. Only single-family residential construction was allowed. Section IV was incorporated into a municipality in 1918. Houses were overwhelmingly designed in the popular Georgian and Federal Colonial Revival styles, as well as the Tudor Revival, English Cottage, and Spanish Colonial Styles.

Mihran and Zabelle Mesrobian considered several locations in the Washington Metropolitan area to build their house before selecting the Chevy Chase location. They looked at property in Arlington, Virginia, overlooking the Potomac River; and a lot on Quebec Street, NW, just east of Connecticut Avenue, NW. The Chevy Chase location was preferred in large part because of its proximity to public transportation on the major artery of Connecticut Avenue. Neither Zabelle nor Mihran learned to drive a car, and Mihran frequently walked or took the bus to the shops just inside the District line.

Although 53% (176 lots) of the lots in Section IV were purchased as early as March 1910, the land that Mesrobian acquired had remained unsold. He purchased the property in 1938 for \$3,600 from the Chevy Chase Land Company. Mihran and Zabelle Mesrobian received the deed from the Chevy Chase Land Company for Lot 1 and the north half of Lot 2, Block 2, Section 4, Chevy Chase, Montgomery County, Maryland, on 21 December 1938. The property as purchased ran 120 feet fronting Connecticut Avenue, and 150 feet running east to west. The Mesrobians had the land re-subdivided in October 1940 to form two lots. They selected Lot 22 fronting Connecticut Avenue, 90 feet deep, on which to build their house. Mesrobian designed a house for Lot 21 (3902 Woodbine Street), with a frontage of 60 feet. The plans date from nearly the same time as those for

³ The Narrative is copied from the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form written by Caroline Mesrobian Hickman.

7410 Connecticut Avenue, but he chose to work with a traditional design to facilitate its sale. He sold the house on Woodbine to help offset the costs for his new residence.

It is not known why Lot 1 and the north part of Lot 2 remained unsold until the Mesrobians purchased the property. An advertisement for lots for sale in Section IV, in the Evening Star, 5 January 1924, shows that the southern half of the block fronting Connecticut Avenue, and bounded by Virgilia on the south and Woodbine on the north, was already improved. Mesrobian's purchase of the remaining frontage on Connecticut Avenue between Virgilia and Woodbine ensured the placement of only two houses on that block of Connecticut Avenue. The 1909 real estate map listing Thomas F. Fisher and Co. as sole agents, shows that the block was originally divided into three equal sized lots, 1, 2, and 3, each with 80 feet frontage on Connecticut Avenue. The setbacks from the street/building restriction lines were 30 feet from Connecticut Avenue and 25 feet from Woodbine Street. Ara Mesrobian, the architect's son and current owner of the house, recalls that Mesrobian had to get a variance for the garage, as it was slightly outside the setback line.

Historic Context: Modern Movement and the International and Art Moderne Styles

Three preliminary sketches for the Mihran Mesrobian House, termed here as "A," "B," and "C," show that the architect worked with a series of ideas inspired by the Art Deco, Art Moderne, and International styles. None of the drawings, which are rendered in pencil and colored pencil on tracing paper, shows the exact design of the house as built. "A" and "B" are undated; "C" is signed and dated "Sept. 15, 1940." The two undated drawings likely predate the one that Mesrobian inscribed. All of the designs show horizontal, asymmetrical massing; white, smooth-surfaced planes that resemble concrete with little or no ornamentation; glass block windows; and extensive terraces on several levels. Sketches "A" and "B" are exclusively flat roofed, while "C" shows a hipped roof in the rear block of the house that is offset visually by the flat roofs that characterize the front blocks. The undated sketches share commonalities, particularly in the design of the entrance, where significant areas of glass block are employed. Sketch "B" and a corresponding plan and elevation show that the stepped glass block to the north of the entry was to have illuminated an interior circular staircase, for a rather dramatic effect.

Sketch "C" most closely resembles the house as constructed. Both the sketch and the house as built have a hipped roof, recessed entrance with glass block, chimneys located in the central core, and a 2nd floor sun porch on the south side of the house that overlooks the garden. Yet the house as built is not as severely massed and has more ornamentation than the design in "C."

A comparison of the wall design in rendering "B" and the red brick Georgian revival style wall as constructed in 1945 shows that Mesrobian originally envisioned a minimalist, low rectangular wall with concrete piers connected by metal railings. The pared-down design of the proposed wall further emphasizes the modernist features of the house: simplified components with no ornamentation, smooth, white planes, and an extension of the horizontal massing of the dwelling.

Why did Mesrobian significantly modify his earlier, more radical modernist designs for his residence? According to Mihran's sons Ralfe Mesrobian and Ara Mesrobian, the architect sought financing from the Chevy Chase Land Company, which refused to provide it. The Land Company felt that the design was too radical compared with the existing residences in Chevy Chase, which were overwhelmingly built in traditional, revival styles. Mesrobian therefore modified the design of his residence to conform to the Land Company's conservative preferences.

7410 Connecticut Avenue reflects the less radical modernism of Art Moderne than the International Style. Yet we should also evaluate Mesrobian's original modernist vision (his preliminary sketches) with Washington area "cutting-edge" architecture of the late 1930s and early 1940s.

The International Style movement had been established in Europe since the early 1920s, with such proponents as Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe practicing in Germany, and Le Corbusier in France. The housing exhibition at Weissenhofsiedlung, Germany, in 1927 under the direction of Mies, saw the maturing of the International Style. "Modern Architecture: International Exhibition," the seminal exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1932, helped define the new style and strengthen its influence in the U. S. "The International Style: Architecture Since 1922", the companion catalogue by the exhibition curators Henry-

Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, further disseminated the movement. With the closing of the Bauhaus School by Hitler in 1933, proponents of the movement such as Gropius and Mies found a more tolerant climate in the U.S to teach and practice their ideas.

By tradition, the Washington metropolitan area had not widely embraced modernist movements. There are relatively few examples of radical modernist houses by acclaimed International Style/Bauhaus School architects in the area, and they postdate Mesrobian's designs for his residence. For example, the two modernist houses that Walter Gropius' Architects Collaborative designed for the Hechinger family at 2832 and 2838 Chain Bridge Road, NW, date from 1952. The International Style residence located at 3025 Arizona Avenue, NW, designed by Gropius student Thomas Wright, dates from 1961.

However, radical modernist houses were constructed in Bethesda beginning in the mid-1930s and were well publicized locally. The German architects Alfred Kastner (1900-1975) and Oscar Stonorov (1905-1970), who immigrated to the U.S. in 1924 and 1929 respectively, designed 8502 Jefferson and 5603 Roosevelt Streets in 1935 for Republic Steel. As Clare Kelly points out, the houses have a "distinctive European modernist sensibility with boxy modular forms, flat roofs . . . and asymmetrical bands of windows." The modernist house at 6424 Brookside Drive, constructed in 1935 in the Kenwood subdivision of Bethesda, has asymmetrical massing, flat roofs, and sun decks. This large "Motohome," a prefabricated house designed by New York architect Robert W. McLaughlin and sheathed in the newly introduced "Celotex" cement paneling, was featured in the 20 October 1935 edition of the Washington Post (See Appendix Four, National Register Nomination, Supplemental Documentation, for photographs of other similar styled dwellings).

An important source of "cutting edge" modernism for Mesrobian was the "Town of Tomorrow" at the 1939 New York World's Fair, which he and his family saw firsthand when visiting the Fair. Its model houses featured the latest in innovations in materials and products, home design and construction. As early as 1937, advance publicity about models in the "Town of Tomorrow" influenced the building of modernist houses in Montgomery County. These and the World's Fair models themselves must have influenced Mesrobian's decision to design a modernist residence.

The widely publicized modernist "NBC House of the Future" was constructed in 1938 on a highly visible location at 5150 Massachusetts Avenue, Bethesda, by local developer L. E. Breuninger.²⁸ The residence exhibits characteristics of both the International and Art Moderne Styles, with whitewashed brick, flat roofs, recessed entrance and round tower punctuated by glass block, corner windows, and a rooftop terrace. Mesrobian must have held this building in mind during the initial phase of designing his residence. His preliminary sketch "A," and to a certain extent sketch "B" exhibit similarities with the configuration of the entrance of the Massachusetts Avenue house and the use of glass block.

Glass block was a defining architectural material of the 1930s and was used for all types of buildings. Elizabeth Fagan describes the glass as "a relatively new, mass-produced material [that] aligned with the Streamline Moderne ideals of building structures that evoked technology and the idea of the building as a machine." An early, extensive use of the material in Washington is the Streamline Moderne Style Hecht Co. Warehouse of 1937, which is sheathed with ribbon windows of glass brick. According to Fagan, by the 1940s and the decline in the popularity of Streamline Moderne, the material was used almost exclusively in small areas for residential buildings.

Mesrobian used glass block liberally in apartment and small shopping center projects that he was designing in the late 1930s and early 1940s, the same period as his residence. He highly valued the material for its volumetric, light-giving and light-emitting qualities. It provided both diffused light and privacy for the interior during daylight, and exterior light effects produced by interior illumination at night. His idea to use glass block to illuminate the tub area in the master bathroom for the Connecticut Avenue house may have derived from a similar arrangement in the "Town of Tomorrow" Pittsburgh House of Glass (model house #4) at the 1939 New York World's Fair, which he visited. That model house also featured a sun porch opening from the master bedroom, a concept that likewise appears in Mesrobian's house.

Mesrobian's creative mixing of modernist and traditional motifs for 7410 Connecticut Avenue is also evident in the expansive FHA-backed garden apartment complex Lee Gardens South (1941-43, now Sheffield Court),

Arlington, Virginia, which he was designing at the same time his residence was under construction. Despite the FHA 's guidelines advocating the use of revival styles for garden apartment projects, Mesrobian varied the design of the 37 buildings for visual interest. Art Deco, Art Moderne and International Style motifs interplay with Colonial Revival designs. Modernist elements include glass block, casement windows, flat and cantilevered roofs, and bas-relief panels with geometric decoration (See Appendix Four, National Register Nomination, Supplemental Documentation, for other works designed by Mesrobian).

Historic Context: Ownership of the Mihran Mesrobian House

Mihran Mesrobian (1889-1975) and Zabelle Martmanian Mesrobian (1895-1982) purchased unimproved lot number 1 and the north half of Lot 2, Block 2, Section 4, Chevy Chase, Montgomery County, Maryland, on 21 December 1938, for \$3,600 from the Chevy Chase Land Company. They had the property subdivided in October 1940, forming Lot 22, on which they built 7410 Connecticut Avenue. Lot 21 was formed from the rest of the property; Mesrobian designed and built the house on that lot, 3902 Woodbine Street, and sold it. The Mesrobians and their two youngest sons, Ralfe and Ara, moved into the house in September 1941, a few months before the attack on Pearl Harbor and the entry of the United States into WWII. Mihran and Zabelle lived in the house until his death in 1975.

Zabelle continued to live in the house until she moved to an assisted living community in the late 1970s. Ara Mesrobian, the Mesrobians' youngest son, continued to live in the house. After Zabelle died in December 1982, Ara Mesrobian purchased the house from the estate in March 1984 and continues to make it his residence. The architect kept a small record book in which he listed the ongoing costs for 7410 Connecticut Avenue, until the year before he died:

Initial costs comprising the Lot 10, 800 (sq. ft.) x 0.20 - \$2,160;
 Building 1941 - \$15,600; Fence Wall and Gates - \$2,455.
 Improvements and replacements: Basement Finish 1951 - \$785;
 Waterproofing 1954 - \$560; New Boiler 1957 - \$410;
 Air Conditioning 1957 - \$1680;
 Awnings (cloth) 1958 - \$380;
 New Compressor 1959 - \$320;
 Awnings (aluminum) 1965 - \$680;
 New Unit (air conditioning) 1968 - \$680;
 New compressor 1970 - \$730;
 New Aluminum Awnings 1974 - \$220.
 Total costs - \$26,660.

Historic Context: Master Architect Mihran Mesrobian

Mesrobian's projects in the Washington metropolitan area include signature hotels, office buildings, apartments, and residences constructed for a variety of socio-economic constituencies in diverse neighborhoods, for prominent and lesser-known real estate developers. Many of these buildings have been designated national and local landmarks.

Mesrobian (1889-1975) was born in Afyon Karahisar, Turkey. He graduated from the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul in 1908 and began a promising career as a municipal architect in Izmir, then as assistant to Vedat Tek, his former professor at the Academy, in the office of the palace architect in Istanbul. But the extraordinary circumstances under which he trained and practiced architecture in Turkey during the final years of the Ottoman Empire profoundly altered this trajectory. His graduation from the Imperial School of Fine Arts came just as the Young Turks were seizing power from the sultan, bringing about political and social reforms that would culminate in the founding of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. These upheavals and the First World War would upend his early career and compel him to practice his profession elsewhere. Mesrobian served as an army corps engineer in the Turkish army for the entirety of WWI. After the war, he returned to Istanbul and took a position as chief designer in the office of the prominent engineer Ismail Hakki, who was known for his building of apartment houses in concrete.

Mesrobian immigrated to the United States in 1921 with his wife Zabelle and two young sons. Shortly after locating in Washington, he entered the architectural office of Harry Wardman (1868-1938), then the preeminent real estate developer in the nation's capital. His quick rise to chief architect came during the developer's most ambitious building period and ended only with Wardman's death in 1938. Mesrobian also singly maintained a prolific private practice, producing well-designed buildings for a variety of clients and budgets, skillfully adapting historicist design to modern building typologies, and embracing new stylistic movements with originality.

His premier hotels for Wardman include hallmarks of Beaux-Arts classicism such as the Hay-Adams (1927, overlooking Lafayette Park and the White House), and the Carlton/ St. Regis (1926, 16th at K Streets), as well as the English revival-style Wardman Tower (1928), which anchors the Marriott Wardman Park complex at Connecticut Avenue and Woodley Road, NW. Residential developments for Wardman range from the lower-middle-income Fort Stevens Ridge in upper northwest Washington to the middle-to-upper-income English Village in Woodley Park.

Mesrobian's commissions from Wardman and other developers for office and apartment buildings, and shopping centers during the 1930s and 1940s show an evolving interest in modernist design, particularly Art Deco. This new movement stimulated remarkable creativity in Mesrobian's work, especially in his use of architectural decoration. His predilection for Near-Eastern motifs during this period speaks to his Ottoman heritage and earlier practice of architecture in Turkey prior to his Washington career. Notable examples of his innovative schemes of the 1930s are 1350 Connecticut Avenue (Dupont Circle between Connecticut Avenue and 19th Street), the Nejib Hekimian Oriental rug store (18th Street at Connecticut Avenue), and Sedgwick Gardens (Connecticut Avenue at Sedgwick Street). His large-scale, Federal Housing Authority-insured garden apartment complexes in northern Virginia, which helped accommodate the influx of government workers to the Washington area during World War II, continue to provide quality housing in the 21st century. Designs for shopping centers in northern Virginia, his modernist residence in Chevy Chase, Maryland, and St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church in Washington are significant works of the 1940s and 1950s.

His designs for houses in Chevy Chase, Maryland, pre-and-post-date his 1941 residence. 6703, 6705, 6707, and 6709 Melville Place (1935) and 6700 and 6702 Melville Place, between Bradley Lane and Raymond Street (1936), are rather pedestrian colonial revival style dwellings. They were designed for Harry Wardman, at a time when the once-prominent real estate developer was trying to make a comeback after bankruptcy following the Crash of 1929. Mesrobian's designs for the 1957 "Parkcrest" subdivision of more than 50 houses off Jones Mill Road in Chevy Chase, for developer Zenith Homes/Nathan Goldberg, are modest mid-century modern, brick-clad with areas of sandstone defining the entrances.

I. Areas Exempt from Designation: There are no areas exempt for designation.

J. Designation Criteria:

The Mihran Mesrobian House meets two Designation Criteria as listed in Section 24A-3 of the Montgomery County Ordinance.

2.A Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction.

The Mesrobian House is a premiere example of an Art Moderne-styled dwelling with restrained traditional building elements that responds to the surrounding predominance of Colonial Revival architecture. In general, Art Moderne-styled houses emphasized horizontality and featured multi-dimensional rectangular and square forms, smooth exterior wall surfaces, flat or shallow roofs, rounded corners, a high ratio of solid to void, and minimal applied ornamentation.

Responding to the requirements of the Chevy Chase Land Company, Mesrobian respected the surrounding architectural landscape, but incorporated his masterful interpretation of the Art Moderne-style for his own home. The dwelling features an amalgamation of square, rectangular, and rounded forms that create a sculptural quality to the building, but with a massing that aligns with the surrounding Colonial Revival styled-houses. Mesrobian further wove modern building methods and traditional materials. He omitted a stucco or parged

finish in lieu of a concrete block structural system with a six-course, American-bond, whitewashed brick veneer. This allowed the traditional building material to be visible but created a smoother finish typical of the Art Moderne-style. Glass block windows with no sills or surrounds amplified the smoothness of the exterior walls, but steel-sash windows (a hallmark of the style) were recessed and had traditional brick sills. Chimneys flank the entry and add the only vertical emphasis to the dwelling, but frame a sweeping, curved glass block wall that leads to the recessed main door.

The brick and concrete block wall with classically inspired cast-stone decoration defines the perimeter of the property. The wall provides a visual transition from the Art Moderne-styled house and the neighboring traditional houses. Mesrobian designed similar walls at other notable projects such as Wakefield Manor, a garden apartment complex in Arlington, Virginia. Here he incorporated this landscape feature in the design of his own home.

Mesrobian deftly recognized and incorporated elements of the surrounding traditional architecture to create a modern building that embodied the ideal of variation and expression. This Art Moderne-styled building reflected that architecture can be unmistakably modern while producing the look of permanent beauty and comfort recognized by the populace.

2.B Represents the work of a master

Mihran Mesrobian is recognized as a master architect in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan region. His projects include signature hotels, office buildings, apartments, and residences constructed for a variety of socio-economic constituencies in diverse neighborhoods, for prominent and lesser-known real estate developers. Many of these buildings are designated national and local landmarks. While Mesrobian is known for his Beaux-Arts, classically inspired designs, and Art Deco buildings, the subject Art Moderne-styled building is a showcase of his design skill and individuality. He had a preference towards forward-looking designs, forms, and materials and implemented these elements on his own dwelling.

K. Conclusion:

The Mesrobian House retains integrity to express its period of significance. The building has integrity of location and setting. The house remains in its original location at the intersection of Connecticut Avenue and Woodbine Street. The property's landscaping retains the major components of Mesrobian's scheme, including the red brick and cinderblock wall, trees, and shrubbery. In addition, the suburban setting remains intact as the surrounding residences were constructed prior to the Mesrobian House. The house has integrity of design, workmanship, and materials. Almost no alterations have occurred as the dwelling continues to represent the Art-Moderne style with traditional architectural influences. Other than the original front door, all character defining features of the plan, form, style, and materials of the building remain intact. The house has integrity of association and feeling. The building continues to evoke its historic character and its use as a single-family dwelling.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING/GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Property Land Area: 10,800 square feet

Account Number: 00464605

District: 07

Environmental Setting Description: The Mihran Mesrobian House is located at 7410 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase, Montgomery County, Maryland. The proposed site to be listed in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* consists of the building and its associated 10,800 square-foot lot identified as Account Number 00464605, District 07, and as shown on the accompanying map (App. 1, Fig. 1).

Environmental Setting Justification: The environmental setting incorporates the entire parcel acquired by Mihran and Zabelle Mesrobian in 1941.

Regulatory Review: The proposed Master Plan site would follow the National Park Service's Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Atypical character defining features of note include the brick and cinderblock retaining wall and the hand-painted stencil soffit between the two chimneys. Both items shall be retained and repaired or replaced in-kind.

9. PROPERTY OWNERS

Name: Estate of Ara Mesrobian

Address: 7410 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase, 20815

10. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: John Liebertz, Montgomery County Planning Department, Historic Preservation Specialist

Date: January 2020

11. MAJOR SOURCES CONSULTED

Hickman, Caroline M. "Mesrobian, Mihran, Residence," Chevy Chase, Montgomery County, Maryland.
National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, September 2017.

APPENDIX ONE: ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING/GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Environmental Setting - Mihran Mesrobian House 7410 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD



Figure 1: Proposed environmental setting for the Mesrobian House.

APPENDIX TWO:

EXTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE MESROBIAN HOUSE



Photograph Key: The circles with numbers show the views of Figures 1-15.



Figure 1: View of the east elevation (façade) looking west from Connecticut Avenue.



Figure 2: View of the east elevation (façade) looking west from the entrance gate.



Figure 3: Detailed view of the front door on the east elevation.



Figure 4: View of the south and east elevations looking northwest.



Figure 5: Detailed view of the bay window on the south elevation.



Figure 6: View of the south and west (rear) elevations looking north.



Figure 7: Detailed view of the bi-level terrace on the south elevation.



Figure 8: Partial view of the west (rear) elevation looking south.



Figure 9: View of the north elevation looking south from Woodbine Street.



Figure 10: Detailed view of the cast-stone eagle above the garage on the north elevation.



Figure 11: View of the north and west (façade) elevations.



Figure 12: Detailed view of the driveway gate accessed from Woodbine Street looking north from the subject property.



Figure 13: View of the front yard and brick and concrete block retaining wall looking east from the northern part of the property.



Figure 14: View of the front yard and brick and concrete block retaining wall looking east from the southern part of the property.



Figure 15: Detailed view of the southern section of the brick and concrete block retaining wall.

APPENDIX THREE:

CHAIN OF TITLE

Date: March 30, 1984

Grantor: Ara Mesrobian (Personal Representative of the Estate of Izabelle Mesrobian)

Grantee: Ara Mesrobian

Cost: Fee Simple

Parcel: Lot 22 in a resubdivision of Lot 1 and part of Lot 2 in Block 2

Liber: HMS 6363

Folio: 205-208

Date: October 26, 1940

Subdivision: Mihran G. Mesrobian and Zabelle Mesrobian

Parcel: Lot 1 and Part of Lot 2, Block 2, Section 4, Chevy Chase

Plat #: 1313

Date: December 21, 1938

Grantor: Chevy Chase Land Company

Grantee: Mihran G. Mesrobian and Zabelle Mesrobian

Cost: \$3,600

Parcel: Lot 1 and Part of Lot 2, Block 2, Section 4, Chevy Chase

Liber: CKW 723

Folio: 92-93

APPENDIX FOUR: NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Mesrobian, Mihran, Residence

other names M:35-99-1

2. Location

street & number 7410 Connecticut Avenue n/a not for publication

city or town Chevy Chase n/a vicinity

state Maryland code MD county Montgomery code 031 zip code 20815

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Charlotte Angler Director/SHPO 9 14 2017
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Maryland Historical Trust
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ Determined not eligible for the National Register.
- ☐ removed from the National Register
- ☐ other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Mesrobian, Mihran. Residence (M:35-99-1)

Name of Property

Montgomery County, Maryland

County and State

5. Classification**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
1		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Moderne

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Slate

other Glass block, steel, cast concrete

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

M:35-99-1

Mesrobian, Mihran, Residence

Name of Property

Montgomery County, Maryland

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Section 7 Page 1**Description Summary:**

The Mihran Mesrobian Residence at 7410 Connecticut Avenue is located in the Town of Chevy Chase (originally Section IV), Montgomery County, Maryland, a residential subdivision that was originally developed in the early 20th century by the Chevy Chase Land Company.¹ The single-family dwelling stands on the southeast corner of Woodbine Street and Connecticut Avenue, the latter being the major north-south transportation artery that bisects Chevy Chase. Mesrobian (1889-1975), the well-regarded Washington-area architect, designed the house in 1941 as his and his family's personal residence. The Art Moderne style wood-framed structure consists of two stories and a full basement.² The elevation facing Woodbine Street features a two-car garage with a den above the garage. The house is constructed of whitewashed brick that is stretcher-coursed except for the stringcourses, which are set with headers. The roof is hipped and is covered with slate. Steel-frame casement windows are used throughout and have a silver color protective coating. Signature elements of the Art Moderne style structure include areas of glass block at the front entrance and both stories of the south elevation, asymmetrical massing, whitewashed brick to resemble concrete, and a 2nd-floor sun porch. Narrow brick stringcourses and inset geometric panels further define the elevations. The interior contains an entrance hall from which the common areas are accessed. The first-floor plan is multilevel, with the formal living room, dining room, and den accessed by low rises of stairs. The second floor contains the private areas, with three bedrooms, two baths, and a sitting room that overlooks Connecticut Avenue. In 1945, Mesrobian designed a red brick and cinderblock fence with classically inspired cast-stone decoration that defines the perimeter of the property. The architect also designed the gates and railings on the property and on the interior of the house. He designed the landscape plan and selected the trees and other plantings, largely Kwanzan cherry trees, boxwoods, azaleas, ligustrum, roses, and ground ivy, a number of which survive.

General Description:Resource List:

House (1 contributing building)
Fence/Gate (1 contributing structure)

Setting

7410 Connecticut Avenue is in Subdivision 11, block 2, lot 22. The land area is 10,800 square feet.³ It was originally platted as Lot 1 and the north half of Lot 2, Block 2, Section 4, Chevy Chase, and numbered 6810 Connecticut Avenue.⁴ The property, like the neighboring houses on the west side of Connecticut Avenue, is elevated approximately 3 ½ feet from the avenue. The site is generally level except for the north side, which was grade to accommodate a driveway and entrance to the below-grade garage. The red brick fence and piers capped with classical urns are more in keeping with the Georgian Revival than the Art Moderne style of the house. The revival-style fence facilitates a visual transition with the house and the neighboring, traditional houses that line the avenue.

¹ Section IV was incorporated as a municipality in 1918 "History," *Chevy Chase, Maryland*, <http://www.townofchevyCHASE.org/history.htm> (accessed 12 May 2016).

² Regardless of whether Mesrobian considered using a steel frame, the material was in short supply due to WWII.

³ "Real Property Data Search, *Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation*, <http://sdat.dat.maryland.gov.htm> (accessed 11 June 2015).

⁴ It is not known when or why the house number changed from 7410 to 6810.

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Mesrobian, Mihran, Residence

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The main entrance to the property faces Connecticut Avenue. Concrete steps with three risers flanked by metal railings painted silver and concrete ledges rise from the public sidewalk. Variegated red brick piers capped with cast stone, classically inspired urns decorated with fruit flank the entrance to the property. One-brick deep, attached piers topped by cast stone floral decoration further articulate the piers. Semi-circular walls of stretcher bricks capped with upright runners connect the piers and entrance ensemble with the brick and cinderblock fence that encloses the property. Mesrobian's geometric-designed entrance gate features rhythmically spaced pairs of metal pickets, with one pair decorated with a stylized Greek key design; a crossbar decorated with a central rosette; and a chevron and ball finial. The gate is hinged to the north brick pier and swings into the property. An aggregate cement walkway flanked by ground ivy and boxwoods leads to the main entrance of the house.

The walls that surround the property are composed of brick in the east and north entrance areas and the garden nook on the south side of the property. Other areas have a high cinderblock base that supports a six-brick-high upper section. Brick piers capped with cast stone stand at approximately 7-to-9 foot intervals along the 5-foot-high, 8-inch-thick fence. Open areas in the shape of equal-armed crosses punctuate the upper section of the wall at regular intervals, providing visual interest to the solidity of the fence.

The south wall features a garden niche flanked by piers surmounted with cast stone classical urns and volutes. The niche faces a covered terrace that opens into the dining room. The wall fronting Woodbine Street, on the north side of the property, is punctuated by a 12-foot-span, out-swinging double metal gate painted silver. Red brick piers capped with cast stone urns and semi-circular walls define the entrance to the driveway. A narrow flagstone path rises from the driveway to the front of the house. The steps and wood railing that connect the driveway area and front of the house are not original.

Many of the plantings are original to the time of the construction of the house. The "Plot Plan," dated 20 November 1940, shows a number of trees and bushes of unspecified types articulating the front and north-east sections of the property and the medians between the public sidewalk and street (Fig. 1).⁵ Trees that were planted at Mesrobian's directive include the Yoshino cherries that line the front of the property, black walnut, dogwood, magnolia, oak, conifer, and maple. Azaleas, boxwood, ligustrum, roses, hosta, ferns, and ground ivy are also original to the building of the house.

General Description

Exterior

Designed in the Art Moderne style of whitewashed brick, the Mihran Mesrobian Residence is a two-story structure with a partially aboveground basement on a concrete slab with horizontal, asymmetrical massing and hipped, slate roof. Mesrobian's plans and elevations are extant (Figs. 2-5).⁶ The front elevation faces Connecticut Avenue and consists of five sections, four of which project incrementally from south to north. The fifth section, which contains the den and garage below it, is slightly recessed. The slightly off-center entrance is quite sculptural due to the interplay of solids and voids, recessed and projecting areas, curved glass-block window, incised and stenciled panels, and shallow stringcourses. Concrete steps with three risers and a metal railing on the south side of the steps lead to the recessed entrance. Brick chimneys flank the entrance. The one on the south side of the entrance several brick lengths from the wall of the house, while the one on the north side projects only slightly from the wall. A series of brick stringcourses define the chimneys at the entrance to the house as well as the upper areas of the chimneys. Each chimney bears a decorative cast-metal eagle located above the second story of the house. A large semi-circular window of glass block articulates the north side of the entrance, providing natural illumination and privacy. Each glass block measures 5 3/4" by 5 3/4", with a grid of 12 over 12. Mesrobian's drawing of the six-panel entrance door specifies "stencil work by owners in panels" (see Fig. 2), but the original door has been replaced by one scored with a diamond-shaped pattern. The projecting section of the 2nd story provides shelter for the entrance directly below it. Above

⁵ Mihran Mesrobian Archive, Private Collection, Washington, DC.

⁶ Ibid.

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Mesrobian, Mihran, Residence

Name of Property

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the entrance is a rectangular, 6 over 3 light window, with vertical steel muntins articulating sections of two widths: a narrow one (1), and one that is twice the width of the narrow one (2), creating a rhythmic 1, 2, 1, 1, 2, 1 configuration. The two larger sections are casement; the narrower ones are fixed. The brick lintel below the window, which runs between the edges of the two chimneys, is articulated with dentil work. A 3 over 3 inset, incised panel with geometric decorative pattern is centered below the 2nd-story window. The eave between the two chimneys has a soffit with hand-painted stencil work in a geometric pattern of interlocked hexagonal rings of contrasting gray and off-white paint. All of the steel mullion windows, which are slightly recessed into the walls, have a brick sill.

The two-bay section of the front elevation to the immediate south of the entrance is slightly set back and features two 3 over 6 light windows that illuminate the living room. The center lights are twice the width of those that flank them. The lower four lights in the center form a casement window; the other lights are fixed. Shallow stringcourses delineate the areas directly above the 1st story windows and the 2nd story window, which has 3 over 4 lights to illuminate the master bedroom. Dentil work and a three-over-three inset panel with geometric decoration centered between the 1st and 2nd story windows further define the area.

The bay to the north of the front entrance comprises the first floor den and a 2nd floor bedroom. It projects from the entrance and has the same fenestration and decorative detailing as the bay to the immediate south side of the main entrance. The slightly recessed, northern-most bay is punctuated by a window that illuminates the den, with the same configuration as the one on the second story over the main entrance. It also has a 3 over 2 light basement window.

The south elevation features a large semi-circular bay window that illuminates the living room, with four wide vertical steel mullions and six narrow horizontal mullions (5 over 6). Two sections of this window are casement; the rest are fixed. Brick with dentil work and a conical slate roof define the area above the fenestration. Above the bay window is a sun porch covered by a segmented metal roof supported by metal poles. The plans for the porch floor specify a "Celotex Traffic Top," a type of cost-effective, purportedly impervious flooring material that had only recently come on the market (Fig. 6).⁷ The terrace has a precast concrete balustrade that is decoratively scored at regular intervals and features large pre-cast concrete pineapple finials at the corners. Capitals of recessed vertical, offset bricks define slightly projecting piers that support the pineapple finials. The master bedroom is accessed from the porch by means of a 3 over 6 light door. The west bay of the south elevation consists of a bi-level covered terrace leading to wooden French doors that open to the dining room. Narrow floor-length, fixed windows flank the French doors. The doors and windows have protective metal grates, which are not original to the house. The terrace floors are polished, irregularly hewn white, black, gray and variegated marble laid in cement with a brick border. A stair with four risers and metal railings connect the terraces. The lower terrace is covered with the same type of awning supported by metal poles as that used for the 2nd story terrace. The upper terrace has brick piers that connect to the metal railings. The upper terrace ceiling is plaster and has a centered light fixture composed of a globe with a metal directional. The bay on the 2nd story has a 4 over 4 light casement window centered above the terrace entryway.

The west elevation consists of the 1st and 2nd stories, a partially above-grade basement, and a 3 over 2 light window in the hipped roof. The fenestration of the elevation is asymmetrically positioned, corresponding to the functions/requirements of the living spaces, not exterior spatial aesthetics. Glass brick with a tight grid pattern of 8 over 6 blocks illuminates the dining room on the first floor. The master bath on the 2nd floor is illuminated with a 6 over 8 wavy patterned block glass. 1 over 3 light casement windows flank the glass brick dining room window. These small windows also are also used to light the bathrooms on the 1st and 2nd floors. The basement-level fenestration consists of 4 over 3 windows with a central casement and 2 over 3 fixed light windows. A brick stringcourse with dentil work defines the area beneath the 2nd floor windows, while a row of brick headers defines the area above the 1st floor.

⁷ The Celotex Corporation's brochure of 1940 boasted that the "Traffic Top" was "the most modern surfacing for exposed roof decks ... impervious to weather," Celotex Corporation, "Build Better for Less Money with Celotex Building Products" (n.p.: Celotex Corp., 1940), 24, <https://archive.org/details/CelotexCorporation0001> (accessed 20 May 2016).

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Mesrobian, Mihran, Residence

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The north elevation consists of a one-bay wing on its western side that houses the garage and a den directly above the garage, an entrance to the kitchen and to the basement, and three bays on the 2nd story. The bay above the garage (facing west) has a steel casement window divided into narrow and double-width sections that duplicates the den window on the front (west) elevation. Between the den and garage levels, a cast stone eagle, wings fully spread, rises from a brick pedestal atop a brick pier, which bisects the 2-bay garage. The 2nd story den ribbon window, which runs nearly the length of the north elevation, consists of a set of casement windows that alternate with narrow 1 over 3 lights and double-width 1 over 3 lights. A short rise of concrete stairs leads from the driveway to the kitchen and basement areas. Six concrete steps lead to a narrow, railed landing to access the kitchen door, which is flanked by 1 over 4 light windows. Concrete steps lead to the basement entrance, which is sheltered by the landing leading to the kitchen entrance and a retaining wall.

According to Mesrobian's specifications, the basement walls are cinderblock up to grade, 4" brick and 8" cinderblock above grade to the 1st floor, 4" face brick and 4" cinderblock above 1st floor to roof. The plan specifies that the brick will be "bonded at every 6th course with headers."⁸ All flashing, gutters and downspouts are copper.

Regarding the fence, family history maintains that Mesrobian could not get enough brick to construct the entire fence because of a wartime shortage.⁹ Hence the use of cinderblock. The high cost of building such an extensive fence in brick may have also influenced Mesrobian's decision to incorporate cinderblock. Whatever the reason, his drawing for a "Garden Wall, 6810 Conn. Ave., C.C., MD," dated 4 January 1945, specifies the exact quantities of brick and cinderblock (Fig. 7)¹⁰. Mesrobian's drawing shows that he originally envisioned the central area of the south wall garden nook to contain a semi-circular niche with water cascading into a large, wide-lipped urn (Fig. 8). Neither the semi-circular niche nor the water feature was realized. Instead, a decorative cast stone ram's head defines the space.

Interior

The above-grade enclosed area of the dwelling is 2,534 square feet, with 480 square feet of finished basement area.¹¹ On the first floor, the primary living spaces are largely defined by differences in elevation. The entrance hall serves as a central core by which to access the rooms on the first and second floors. Indeed, the plan (Fig. 3) shows Mesrobian's mastery of the tight integration of areas, with a minimum of "wasted" space.

The entrance hall opens on the south side; here two risers descend to the 19'2" x 13'2" formal living room, which has a south-facing bay window. A fireplace with a variegated black marble surround projects at a 45-degree angle in the northeast corner of the room. On the north side of the entrance hall, a stair with two risers leads to the 18'6" x 18'6" den, which has painted knotty pine wainscoting. A fireplace with red brick surround is located in the southeast wall of the room. It appears that Mesrobian designed and furnished this living space with the interior configuration of Turkish houses in mind, a reflection of his Ottoman heritage. Banquettes of seating line part of the den, while a small operable fountain with lion's head sprout and a basin defines the center of the room. The kitchen is accessed from the den by descending a stair with three risers. The original linoleum-top table and four matching chairs define the breakfast nook in the kitchen, which has non-original linoleum flooring. The entrance to the kitchen that faces south leads on the immediate right to a half-bath with tile floor, a flight of stairs on the east side that lead to the basement, and the dining room to the south. French doors on the south side of the 13'10" x 13' dining room open to the sheltered outdoor terrace. A stair with two risers

⁸ Mihran Mesrobian Archive.⁹ Interview of Ara Mesrobian by Caroline Mesrobian Hickman, 10 May 2016, Washington, DC.¹⁰ Mihran Mesrobian Archive.¹¹ "Real Property Data Search, *Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation*, <http://sdat.dat.maryland.gov.htm> (accessed 11 June 2015).

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National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places
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connects the dining and living rooms. The original steel-color iron railings at these different stair elevations were designed by Mesrobian and are intact. A door on the west side of the entrance hall leads to a coat closet and the flight of stairs leading to the basement. The landing for the staircase leading to the basement connects the stairs leading to both the entrance hall and the passage on the west side of the house that connects the kitchen and dining room.

A flight of stairs in the entrance hall leads to the second floor. The stairs rise to a landing, then turn at a ninety-degree angle to the second floor. Three bedrooms, a bathroom, and a sitting room (specified "Sewing Room" in the plan) open directly to the hall, which is open to the first floor and defined by railings designed by Mesrobian. The 13'2" x 22' master bedroom has a bathroom with a glass block window illuminating the shower/tub area. On the southeast side of the master bedroom, a door opens to the covered sun porch. The service areas (stairs, linen closet and hall bath), separate the master bedroom from the two bedrooms on the north side of the house, which measure 13' x 12' and 11'2" x 17'. The 1st and 2nd floor plans specify radio outlets in all of the living areas. Both floors have 8-foot-high ceilings, with either rough or smooth plaster ceilings.

The basement is above grade on the west and north sides of the property and is accessed by the garage as well as an exterior door reached by a flight of steps just west of the garage. In accordance with Mesrobian's drawing "Basement Plan," dated 20 November 1940,¹² the space contains a two-car garage that leads to a narrow hall and stairs to the first floor. Various utility rooms for the heating and cooling, laundry, storage and service comprise the other areas. The "Game Room," 18.6 feet long and 12.10 wide, has a fireplace located in the northeast side of the room, a semicircular niche on the south side of the room, and the original beige-and-blue panel linoleum flooring. Mesrobian's 12.2 long, 8.6 foot drafting room is located on the above-grade north-west corner of the basement, with a window each on the north and west sides of the room (Fig. 9). The basement floors are concrete or linoleum over concrete with the exception of the service room and drafting room, which are pine. The ceilings are rough or smooth plaster.

Integrity

The Mihran Mesrobian Residence is essentially unaltered from the time it was built in 1941. It retained integrity of design, workmanship, and materials during the ownership/residency of the architect (died 1975) and his wife, Zabelle (died 1982), and the subsequent ownership by their son Ara Mesrobian. None of the owners has altered or enlarged the residence. The plans and specifications completed by Mesrobian on November 20, 1940 describe in detail how the residence was to be constructed and confirm that the exterior and plan are completely unaltered. An exception is the replacement cloth and metal awnings. The interior is a "time capsule" of products available to homeowners at the beginning of WWII. Interior alterations have been limited to the installation of an air-conditioning system in 1957 and updates to the heating system. Kitchen appliances such as the stove and refrigerator were updated in the 1970s. The integrity of location is intact, with the neighboring houses having been constructed prior to the building of 7410 Connecticut Avenue. The landscaping is very similar to Mesrobian's original scheme, with most of the trees, boxwoods, azaleas, roses, and other shrubs part of the original plantings.

¹² Mihran Mesrobian Archive.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- ☐ **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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1941

1945

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Mihran Mesrobian, architect

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

Previous documentation on files (NPS):

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

- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Name of repository:

Mihran Mesrobian Archive, Washington DC

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County and StateSection 8 Page 1**Summary Statement of Significance:**

The Mihran Mesrobian House at 7410 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase, Maryland, was constructed in 1941 to the designs of the well-regarded Washington-area architect Mihran Mesrobian. Mesrobian designed the house for himself and his wife, Zabelle, in the Art Moderne style fairly late in his career. Although Mesrobian was better known for his Beaux-Arts, classically inspired designs of the 1920s, and Art Deco buildings of the 1930s, both he and Zabelle wanted a modernist residence. Preliminary drawings as well as the elevations and plans for the house as built survive. It was the only house he designed for himself and served as his residence for nearly thirty-five years, until his death in 1975. The house is a highly visible example of a Washington-area residence designed by an architect for his own use, due to its location on the major traffic artery of Connecticut Avenue. The modernist house is a striking anomaly among the traditional, revival style residences that line Connecticut Avenue and side streets of Chevy Chase, Maryland. Preliminary drawings for the residence show extensive experimentation with the Art Moderne and International Styles, demonstrating that Mesrobian considered a much more radical, modernistic design than what was built. Concessions to the Chevy Chase Land Company's conservative design covenants resulted in a significantly modified design that retains certain modernist elements such as glass block and flat roofs, while introducing less radical decoration such as denticulated brick, double stringcourses, incised geometrics, and a hipped roof. The Mihran Mesrobian House is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places for its architectural design, by a master architect as his own residence. It meets Criterion C of the National Register of Historic Places as a creative example of the Art Moderne style, reflecting an informed blending of elements of modernism and classicism. The exterior and interior retain integrity of design, workmanship, and materials. The house has not been altered or enlarged since its construction in 1941. The integrity of location is intact, even the basic design of the gardens and most of the original plantings.

The Period of Significance, 1941-1945, encompasses the construction date of the house (1941) and the subsequent construction of the brick fence (1945), during which the resource achieved its historic and current form and appearance.

Resource History and Historic Context:Chevy Chase Land Company and the Town of Chevy Chase

The Mihran Mesrobian House, 7410 (originally 6810) Connecticut Avenue, is located in block number 3900, block 2, lot 22 in the Town of Chevy Chase, a self-governing municipality located in Montgomery County, Maryland (Fig. 10). The incorporated boundaries of the Town are East-West Highway on the north, Connecticut Avenue on the east, Bradley Lane on the south, and one block east of Wisconsin Avenue on the west.

The Town was part of the subdivision developed by the Chevy Chase Land Company, formed in the 1890s by Francis G. Newlands and William M. Stewart. Newlands' significant early purchase was Chevy Chase, a 305-acre plot of land on the Maryland-District of Columbia border. A trolley line connected the budding development to downtown Washington beginning in the early 1890s. The Town of Chevy Chase experienced significant development after World War I, as the automobile became a primary source of transportation and facilitated commuting to the Washington suburbs. The trolley line was discontinued in the mid-1930s.¹³

The Mihran Mesrobian House is in what was originally Section IV, which the Chevy Chase Land Company platted in 1909, a large area situated west of Connecticut Avenue and north of Bradley Lane (Fig. 11). The Land Company restrictions for Section IV stipulated a 25-foot setback and a minimum house cost of \$3,000. Only single-family residential construction was allowed. Section IV

¹³ History," *Chevy Chase, Maryland*, <http://townofchevyCHASE.org.htm> (accessed 2 May 2016).

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was incorporated into a municipality in 1918. Houses were overwhelmingly designed in the popular Georgian and Federal Colonial Revival styles, as well as the Tudor Revival, English Cottage, and Spanish Colonial Styles.¹⁴

Mihran and Zabelle Mesrobian considered a number of locations in the Washington Metropolitan area to build their house before selecting the Chevy Chase location. They looked at property in Arlington, Virginia, overlooking the Potomac River; and a lot on Quebec Street, NW, just east of Connecticut Avenue, NW. The Chevy Chase location was preferred in large part because of its proximity to public transportation on the major artery of Connecticut Avenue. Neither Zabelle nor Mihran learned to drive a car, and Mihran frequently walked or took the bus to the shops just inside the District line.¹⁵

Although 53% (176 lots) of the lots in Section IV were purchased as early as March 1910,¹⁶ the land that Mesrobian acquired had remained unsold. He purchased the property in 1938 for \$3,600 from the Chevy Chase Land Company.¹⁷ Mihran and Zabelle Mesrobian received the deed from the Chevy Chase Land Company for Lot 1 and the north half of Lot 2, Block 2, Section 4, Chevy Chase, Montgomery County, Maryland, on 21 December 1938.¹⁸ The property as purchased ran 120 feet fronting Connecticut Avenue, and 150 feet running east to west. The Mesrobians had the land re-subdivided in October 1940 to form two lots (Fig. 12).¹⁹ They selected Lot 22 fronting Connecticut Avenue, 90 feet deep, on which to build their house. Mesrobian designed a house for Lot 21 (3902 Woodbine Street), with a frontage of 60 feet. The plans date from nearly the same time as those for 7410 Connecticut Avenue, but he chose to work with a traditional design to facilitate its sale. He sold the house on Woodbine to help offset the costs for his new residence.

It is not known why Lot 1 and the north part of Lot 2 remained unsold until the Mesrobians purchased the property. An advertisement for lots for sale in Section IV, in the *Evening Star*, 5 January 1924, shows that the southern half of the block fronting Connecticut Avenue, and bounded by Virgilia on the south and Woodbine on the north, was already improved (Fig. 13). Mesrobian's purchase of the remaining frontage on Connecticut Avenue between Virgilia and Woodbine ensured the placement of only two houses on that block of Connecticut Avenue. The 1909 real estate map (Fig. 11) listing Thomas F. Fisher and Co. as sole agents, shows that the block was originally divided into three equal sized lots, 1, 2, and 3, each with 80 feet frontage on Connecticut Avenue. The setbacks from the street/building restriction lines were 30 feet from Connecticut Avenue and 25 feet from Woodbine Street.²⁰ Ara Mesrobian, the architect's son and current owner of the house, recalls that Mesrobian had to get a variance for the garage, as it was slightly outside the setback line.²¹

¹⁴ "The Romance of Section 4," Elizabeth Jo Lampl and Kimberly Prothro Williams, *Chevy Chase, a Home Suburb for the Nation's Capital* (Silver Spring, MD: Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 1998), 72-75.

¹⁵ Recollection by the author. The streetcar line that traversed Connecticut Avenue from the District to Chevy Chase Lake was taken out of service in 1935; "Trolley Parks and Real Estate Development," Chevy Chase Historical Society, <http://chevychasehistory.org> (accessed 5 May 2016).

¹⁶ Lampl and Williams, 74; William G. Offutt, *Bethesda: A Social History of the Area Through World War Two* (Bethesda, MD: Innovation Game, 1995), 173.

¹⁷ Deed dated 21 December 1938, Chevy Chase Land Company to Mihran G. Mesrobian and Zabelle (sic) Mesrobian, 723,92, <http://www.mdlandrec.net> (accessed 2 June 2016).

¹⁸ The deed is recorded on Plat No. 1313, "Resubdivision of Lot 1 and Part of Lot 2, Block 2, Section 4, Chevy Chase, Montgomery County, Maryland, October 1940." Montgomery County Circuit Court (Subdivision Plats, MO) 1940/10/26, Chevy Chase, Section 4, Block 2, Lots 1-2, Resubdivision; Mihran G. Mesrobian, Plat 1313, MSA S1249-9127, <http://plato.mdarchives.state.md.us> (accessed 31 May 2016).

¹⁹ Plat No. 1313, "Resubdivision of Lot 1 and Part of Lot 2, Block 2, Section 4, Chevy Chase, Montgomery County, Maryland, October 1940."

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ara Mesrobian, conversation with Caroline Mesrobian Hickman, 20 April 2016.

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Three preliminary sketches for the Mihran Mesrobian House, termed here as "A," "B," and "C," show that the architect worked with a series of ideas inspired by the Art Deco, Art Moderne, and International styles (Figs. 14-16). None of the drawings, which are rendered in pencil and colored pencil on tracing paper, shows the exact design of the house as built. "A" and "B" are undated; "C" is signed and dated "Sept. 15, 1940." The two undated drawings likely predate the one that Mesrobian inscribed. All of the designs show horizontal, asymmetrical massing; white, smooth-surfaced planes that resemble concrete with little or no ornamentation; glass block windows; and extensive terraces on several levels. Sketches "A" and "B" are exclusively flat roofed, while "C" shows a hipped roof in the rear block of the house that is offset visually by the flat roofs that characterize the front blocks. The undated sketches share commonalities, particularly in the design of the entrance, where significant areas of glass block are employed. Sketch "B" and a corresponding plan and elevation (Fig. 17) show that the stepped glass block to the north of the entry was to have illuminated an interior circular staircase, for a rather dramatic effect.

Sketch "C" most closely resembles the house as constructed. Both the sketch and the house as built have a hipped roof, recessed entrance with glass block, chimneys located in the central core, and a 2nd floor sun porch on the south side of the house that overlooks the garden. Yet the house as built is not as severely massed and has more ornamentation than the design in "C."

A comparison of the fence design in rendering "B" and the red brick Georgian revival style fence as constructed in 1945 shows that Mesrobian originally envisioned a minimalist, low rectangular fence with concrete piers connected by metal railings. The pared-down design of the proposed fence further emphasizes the modernist features of the house: simplified components with no ornamentation, smooth, white planes, and an extension of the horizontal massing of the dwelling.

Why did Mesrobian significantly modify his earlier, more radical modernist designs for his residence? According to Mihran's sons Ralfe Mesrobian and Ara Mesrobian, the architect sought financing from the Chevy Chase Land Company, which refused to provide it. The Land Company felt that the design was too radical compared with the existing residences in Chevy Chase, which were overwhelmingly built in traditional, revival styles. Mesrobian therefore modified the design of his residence to conform to the Land Company's conservative preferences.²²

7410 Connecticut Avenue reflects the less radical modernism of Art Moderne than the International Style. Yet we should also evaluate Mesrobian's original modernist vision (his preliminary sketches) with Washington area "cutting-edge" architecture of the late 1930s and early 1940s.

The International Style movement had been established in Europe since the early 1920s, with such proponents as Gropius and Mies van der Rohe practicing in Germany, and Le Corbusier in France. The housing exhibition at Weissenhofsiedlung, Germany, in 1927 under the direction of Mies, saw the maturing of the International Style. "Modern Architecture: International Exhibition, the seminal exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1932, helped define the new style and strengthen its influence in the U. S. *The International Style: Architecture Since 1922*, the companion catalogue by the exhibition curators Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, further disseminated the movement. With the closing of the Bauhaus School by Hitler in 1933, proponents of the movement such as Gropius and Mies found a more tolerant climate in the U.S to teach and practice their ideas.

²² Unfortunately their recollections cannot be verified. The Chevy Chase Land Company's archives are currently not accessible. Telephone conversation of Miti Figueredo. VP of Planning and Entitlement. Chevy Chase Land Company, and the author, 18 May 2016.

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By tradition, the Washington metropolitan area has not widely embraced modernist movements. There are relatively few examples of radical modernist houses by acclaimed International Style/Bauhaus School architects in the area, and they postdate Mesrobian's designs for his residence. For example, the two modernist houses that Walter Gropius' Architects Collaborative designed for the Hechinger family at 2832 and 2838 Chain Bridge Road, NW, date from 1952.²³ The International Style residence located at 3025 Arizona Avenue, NW, designed by Gropius student Thomas Wright, dates from 1961.

However, radical modernist houses were constructed in Bethesda beginning in the mid 1930s and were well publicized locally. The German architects Alfred Kastner (1900-1975) and Oscar Stonorov (1905-1970), who immigrated to the U.S. in 1924 and 1929 respectively, designed 8502 Jefferson and 5603 Roosevelt Streets in 1935 for Republic Steel. As Clare Kelly points out, the houses have a "distinctive European modernist sensibility with boxy modular forms, flat roofs ... and asymmetrical bands of windows" (Fig. 18).²⁴ The modernist house at 6424 Brookside Drive, constructed in 1935 in the Kenwood subdivision of Bethesda, has asymmetrical massing, flat roofs, and sun decks. This large "Motohome," a prefabricated house designed by New York architect Robert W. McLaughlin and sheathed in the newly introduced "Celotex" cement paneling, was featured in the 20 October 1935 edition of the *Washington Post* (Fig. 19).²⁵

An important source of "cutting edge" modernism for Mesrobian was the "Town of Tomorrow" at the 1939 New York World's Fair, which he and his family saw firsthand when visiting the fair.²⁶ Its model houses featured the latest in innovations in materials and products, home design and construction. As early as 1937, advance publicity about models in the "Town of Tomorrow" influenced the building of modernist houses in Montgomery County.²⁷ These and the World's Fair models themselves must have influenced Mesrobian's decision to design a modernist residence.

The widely publicized modernist "NBC House of the Future" was constructed in 1938 on a highly visible location at 5150 Massachusetts Avenue, Bethesda, by local developer L. E. Breuninger.²⁸ The residence exhibits characteristics of both the International and Art Moderne Styles, with whitewashed brick, flat roofs, recessed entrance and round tower punctuated by glass block, corner windows, and a rooftop terrace (Fig. 20). Mesrobian must have held this building in mind during the initial phase of designing his residence. His preliminary sketch "A," and to a certain extent sketch "B" exhibit similarities with the configuration of the entrance of the Massachusetts Avenue house and the use of glass block.

Glass block was a defining architectural material of the 1930s and was used for all types of buildings. Elizabeth Fagan describes the glass as "a relatively new, mass-produced material [that] aligned with the Streamline Moderne ideals of building structures that evoked technology and the idea of the building as a machine."²⁹ An early, extensive use of the material in Washington is the Streamline Moderne Style Hecht Co. Warehouse of 1937, which is sheathed with ribbon windows of glass brick. According to Fagan,

²³ Martin Moeller, in his *AIA Guide to the Architecture of Washington, D.C.*, 4th ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2006), 341-42, evaluates the design of these houses as the first truly modern examples built in Washington.

²⁴ Clare Lise Kelly, *Montgomery Modern: Modern Architecture in Montgomery County, Maryland, 1930-1979* (Silver Spring, MD: Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 2015), 16-17.

²⁵ Discussed in Kelly, 19; "New American Motohome Being Built for Lee D. Butler," *Washington Post*, 20 Oct. 1935, R9, with a reproduction of the architect's presentation rendering.

²⁶ Recollection by Ara Mesrobian, 20 May 2016.

²⁷ Kelly, 21.

²⁸ Kelly, 22.

²⁹ Elizabeth Fagan, "Building Walls of Light: The Development of Glass Block and its Influence on American Architecture in the 1930s," MS thesis in Historic Preservation, Columbia University, 2015, 119. http://www.Fagan.Elizabeth_GSAPHP_2015_Thesis (accessed 29 May 2016).

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by the 1940s and the decline in the popularity of Streamline Moderne, the material was used almost exclusively in small areas for residential buildings.³⁰

Mesrobian used glass block liberally in apartment and small shopping center projects that he was designing in the late 1930s and early 1940s, the same period as his residence. He highly valued the material for its volumetric, light-giving and light-emitting qualities. It provided both diffused light and privacy for the interior during daylight, and exterior light effects produced by interior illumination at night. His idea to use glass block to illuminate the tub area in the master bathroom for the Connecticut Avenue house may have derived from a similar arrangement in the "Town of Tomorrow" Pittsburgh House of Glass (model house #4) at the 1939 New York World's Fair, which he visited (Fig. 21). That model house also featured a sun porch opening from the master bedroom, a concept that likewise appears in Mesrobian's house.

Mesrobian's creative mixing of modernist and traditional motifs for 7410 Connecticut Avenue is also evident in the expansive FHA-backed garden apartment complex Lee Gardens South (1941-43, now Sheffield Court), Arlington, Virginia, which he was designing at the same time his residence was under construction. Despite the FHA's guidelines advocating the use of revival styles for garden apartment projects, Mesrobian varied the design of the 37 buildings for visual interest. Art Deco, Art Moderne and International Style motifs interplay with Colonial Revival designs. Modernist elements include glass block, casement windows, flat and cantilevered roofs, and bas-relief panels with geometric decoration (Fig. 22).³¹

Ownership of the Mihran Mesrobian House

Mihran Mesrobian (1889-1975) and Zabelle Martmanian Mesrobian (1895-1982) purchased unimproved lot number 1 and the north half of Lot 2, Block 2, Section 4, Chevy Chase, Montgomery County, Maryland, on 21 December 1938, for \$3,600 from the Chevy Chase Land Company.³² They had the property subdivided in October 1940, forming Lot 22, on which they built 7410 Connecticut Avenue (Fig. 12). Lot 21 was formed from the rest of the property; Mesrobian designed and built the house on that lot, 3902 Woodbine Street, and sold it. The Mesrobians and their two youngest sons, Ralfe and Ara, moved into the house in September 1941, a few months before the attack on Pearl Harbor and the entry of the United States into WWII. Mihran and Zabelle lived in the house until his death in 1975.

Zabelle continued to live in the house until she moved to an assisted living community in the late 1970s. Ara Mesrobian, the Mesrobians' youngest son, continued to live in the house. After Zabelle died in December 1982, Ara Mesrobian purchased the house from the estate in March 1984 and continues to make it his residence.³³

The architect kept a small record book in which he listed the ongoing costs for 7410 Connecticut Avenue, until the year before he died:

"Initial costs comprising the Lot 10,800 (sq. ft.) x 0.20 - \$2,160; Building 1941 - \$15,600; Fence Wall and Gates - \$2,455.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ See Stephen A. Morris, "Lee Gardens," Historic Resources Survey Form, Arlington County, Historic Affairs and Landmark Review Board, 24 Nov. 1986; Richard Striner and Melissa Blair, *Washington and Baltimore Art Deco: A Design History of Neighboring Cities* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2014), 43-44.

³² Montgomery County Circuit Court (Land Records), CKW 783, 0473, MSA_CE63_741, <http://www.mdlandrec.net> (accessed 2 June 2016).

³³ Montgomery County Circuit Court (Land Records) 1984, HMS 6363, pp. 0205-0206, MSA CE 63-6321, MDLANDREC, <http://www.mdlandrec.net> (accessed 31 May 2016).

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Improvements and replacements: Basement Finish 1951 - \$785; Waterproofing 1954 - \$560; New Boiler 1957 - \$410; Air Conditioning 1957 - \$1680; Awnings (cloth) 1958 - \$380; Awnings (aluminum) 1965 - \$680; New Compressor 1959 - \$320; New Unit (air conditioning) 1968 - \$680; New compressor 1970 - \$730; New Aluminum Awnings 1974 - \$220.
Total costs - \$26,660."¹⁴

Architect Mihran Mesrobian

Mesrobian's projects in the Washington metropolitan area include signature hotels, office buildings, apartments, and residences constructed for a variety of socio-economic constituencies in diverse neighborhoods, for prominent and lesser-known real estate developers. Many of these buildings have been designated national and local landmarks.

Mesrobian (1889-1975) was born in Afyon Karahisar, Turkey. He graduated from the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul in 1908 and began a promising career as a municipal architect in Izmir, then as assistant to Vedat Tek, his former professor at the Academy, in the office of the palace architect in Istanbul. But the extraordinary circumstances under which he trained and practiced architecture in Turkey during the final years of the Ottoman Empire profoundly altered this trajectory. His graduation from the Imperial School of Fine Arts came just as the Young Turks were seizing power from the sultan, bringing about political and social reforms that would culminate in the founding of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. These upheavals and the First World War would upend his early career and compel him to practice his profession elsewhere. Mesrobian served as an army corps engineer in the Turkish army for the entirety of WWI. After the war, he returned to Istanbul and took a position as chief designer in the office of the prominent engineer Ismail Hakki, who was known for his building of apartment houses in concrete.

Mesrobian immigrated to the United States in 1921 with his wife Zabelle and two young sons. Shortly after locating in Washington, he entered the architectural office of Harry Wardman (1868-1938), then the preeminent real estate developer in the nation's capital. His quick rise to chief architect came during the developer's most ambitious building period and ended only with Wardman's death in 1938. Mesrobian also singly maintained a prolific private practice, producing well-designed buildings for a variety of clients and budgets, skillfully adapting historicist design to modern building typologies, and embracing new stylistic movements with originality.

His premier hotels for Wardman include hallmarks of Beaux-Arts classicism such as the Hay-Adams (1927, overlooking Lafayette Park and the White House), and the Carlton/St. Regis (1926, 16th at K Streets), as well as the English revival-style Wardman Tower (1928), which anchors the Marriott Wardman Park complex at Connecticut Avenue and Woodley Road, NW. Residential developments for Wardman range from the lower-middle-income Fort Stevens Ridge in upper northwest Washington to the middle-to-upper-income English Village in Woodley Park.

Mesrobian's commissions from Wardman and other developers for office and apartment buildings, and shopping centers during the 1930s and 1940s show an evolving interest in modernist design, particularly Art Deco. This new movement stimulated remarkable creativity in Mesrobian's work, especially in his use of architectural decoration. His predilection for Near-Eastern motifs during this period speaks to his Ottoman heritage and earlier practice of architecture in Turkey prior to his Washington career. Notable examples of his innovative schemes of the 1930s are 1350 Connecticut Avenue (Dupont Circle between Connecticut Avenue and 19th Street), the Nejib Hekimian Oriental rug store (18th Street at Connecticut Avenue), and Sedgwick Gardens (Connecticut Avenue at Sedgwick Street). His large-scale, Federal Housing Authority-insured garden apartment complexes in northern Virginia, which helped accommodate the influx of government workers to the Washington area during World War II, continue to provide quality housing in the 21st century. Designs for shopping centers in northern Virginia, his modernist residence in Chevy Chase, Maryland, and St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church in Washington are significant works of the 1940s and 1950s.

¹⁴ Mihran Mesrobian Archive.

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His designs for houses in Chevy Chase, Maryland, pre-and-post date his 1941 residence, 6703, 6705, 6707, and 6709 Melville Place (1935) and 6700 and 6702 Melville Place, between Bradley Lane and Raymond Street (1936), are rather pedestrian colonial revival style dwellings. They were designed for Harry Wardman, at a time when the once-prominent real estate developer was trying to make a comeback after bankruptcy following the Crash of 1929. Mesrobian's designs for the 1957 "Parkcrest" subdivision of more than 50 houses off Jones Mill Road in Chevy Chase, for developer Zenith Homes/Nathan Goldberg, are modest mid-century modern, brick-clad with areas of sandstone defining the entrances.³⁵

CHAIN OF TITLE

21 December 1938: Chevy Chase Land Company to Mihran and Zebelle (sic) Mesrobian
Montgomery County, Maryland, Land Records
Liber 723 Folio 92

7 October 1940: Subdivision of lot by Mihran and Zebelle (sic) Mesrobian
Montgomery County, Maryland, Land Records
Liber 21 Folio 1313

30 March 1984: Estate of Zabelle Mesrobian (deceased) to Ara Mesrobian
Montgomery County, Maryland, Land Records
Liber 6363 Folio 205

³⁵ Resources regarding the architecture of Mihran Mesrobian: Caroline Isabelle Mesrobian, "A Selection of the Oeuvre of Mihran Mesrobian," MA Thesis, Tulane University, 1978; Caroline Mesrobian Hickman, Forward, "The Wardman Tower" (Chevy Chase, MD: JBG Co., 2015), 12-15; "Mihran Mesrobian (1889-1975): Washington Architect," *Design Action: The Mid-Atlantic Architecture and Design Review* 2, no. 3 (May/June 1983): 1-4; "St. Regis Hotel, Washington, DC" (Carlton Hotel), *Preservation Now: Building on the Historic* (Washington, DC: DC Preservation League, 2008), 6-10; Caroline Mesrobian Hickman and Sally Lichtenstein Berk, "Harry Wardman's Row-House Development in Early Twentieth-Century Washington," In Richard Longstreth, ed., *Housing Washington: Two Centuries of Residential Development and Planning in the National Capital* (Charlottesville, VA: Center for American Places, 2010), 41-60; "Sedgwick Gardens Apartment House & Interiors," District of Columbia, Historic Preservation Review Board, Application for Historic Landmark or Historic District Designation (Washington, DC), 2014.

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Montgomery Co, MD County and State

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Mesrobian, Mihran, Residence (M:35-99-1)
Name of Property

Montgomery Co, MD
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1									
	Zone	Easting				Northing			
2									

3									
	Zone	Easting				Northing			
4									

☒ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Caroline Mesrobian Hickman, PhD, Art & Architectural Historian

Organization _____ date September 2016

street & number 3828 Gramercy Street, NW telephone 202 270 1519

city or town Washington state DC zip code 20016

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO)

name Ara Mesrobian

street & number 7410 Connecticut Avenue telephone 301 654 2980

city or town Chevy Chase state MD zip code 20815

Paperwork Reduction Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et. seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Section 10 Page 1

M:35-99-1
Mesrobian, Mihran, Residence
Name of Property

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Geographical Data

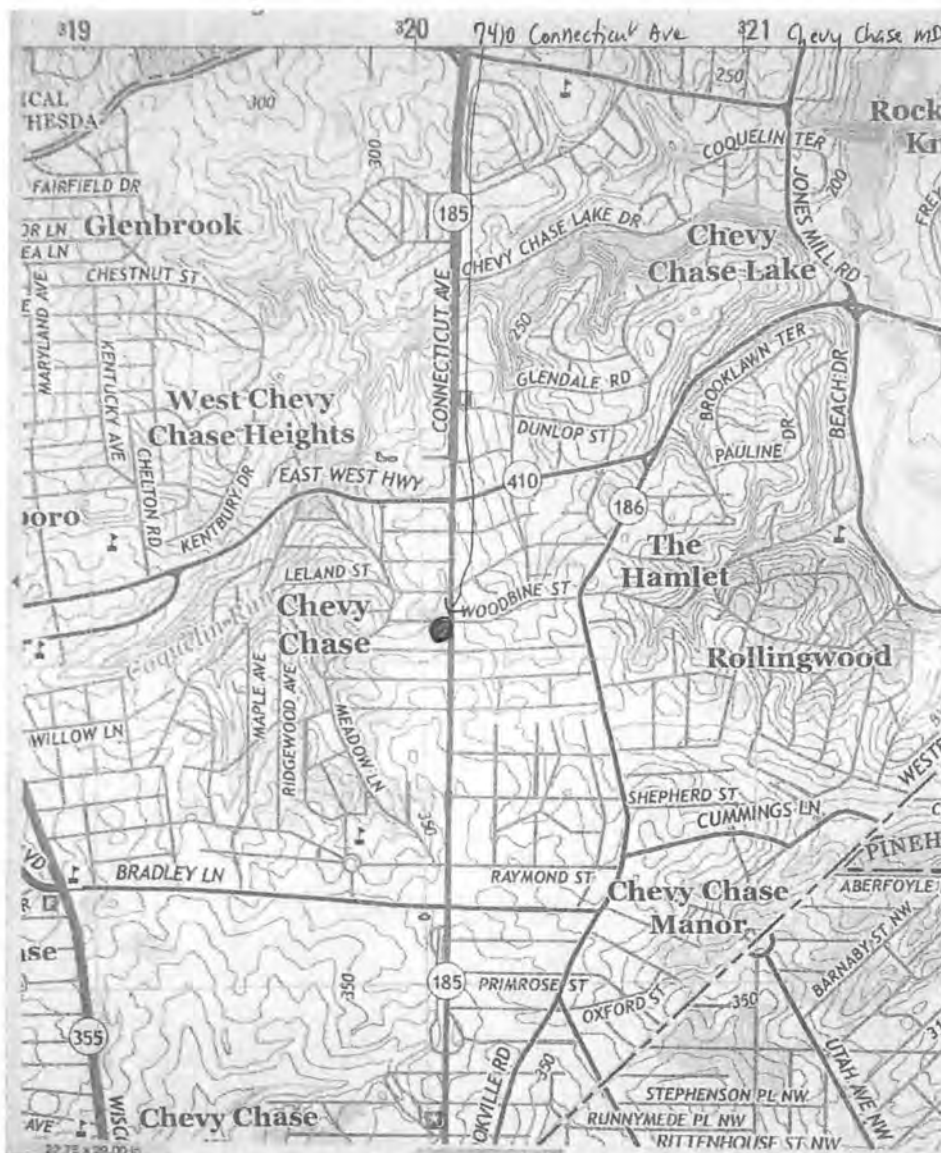
Lat-Long Coordinates: 38.984616, -77.077568

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundaries of the Mihran Mesrobian Residence at 7410 Connecticut Avenue in Chevy Chase, Maryland, include all of the property as part of Lot 22 in Block 2 as noted on Tax Map GN (Maryland Department of Assessments & Taxation Map, Montgomery County, District 07, acct # 00464605), and further described among the Land Records of Montgomery County, Maryland in Liber 6363, Folio 205. The single-family dwelling is located on the southwest corner of Connecticut Avenue and Woodbine Street.

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries represent all of the property historically associated with the resource. Mihran and Zabelle Mesrobian's original purchase of property from the Chevy Chase Land Company, dated 21 December 1938, was Lot 1 and the north half of Lot 2, Block 2, Section IV, Chevy Chase. The Mesrobians subdivided the property into two lots in October 1940. 7410 Connecticut Avenue was constructed on Lot 22, Block 2, Section IV, Chevy Chase, MD.

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Mesrobian, Mihran, Residence
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Mesrobian, Mirhan, Residence
Name of Property

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Index to Photographs

The following information applies to all photographs which accompany this documentation:

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) Number: M:35-99-1

Name of Property: Mesrobian, Mirhan, Residence

Location: Montgomery County, Maryland

Photographer: Caroline Mesrobian Hickman

Date taken: 1 August 2016

Location of original digital files [or negatives]: MD SHPO

Photo captions:

MD_Montgomery County

Mesrobian, Mirhan, Residence

0001.tif

View of Front (East/Connecticut Ave.) Façade with Entrance Piers and Gate

MD Montgomery County

Mesrobian, Mirhan, Residence

0002.tif

Partial View of Front (East/Connecticut Ave.) Façade

MD Montgomery County

Mesrobian, Mirhan, Residence

0003.tif

Additional Partial View of Front (East/Connecticut Ave.) Façade

MD_Montgomery County

Mesrobian, Mirhan, Residence

0004.tif

Front (East/Connecticut Ave.) Façade Entrance

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Mesrobian, Mihran, Residence
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MD Montgomery County
Mesrobian, Mirhan, Residence
0005.tif
Detail Above Front (East/Connecticut Ave.) Façade Entrance

MD Montgomery County
Mesrobian, Mirhan, Residence
0006.tif
Detail of Front (East/Connecticut Ave.) Façade Showing Setbacks

MD Montgomery County
Mesrobian, Mirhan, Residence
0007.tif
Detail of Front (East/Connecticut Ave.) Façade Showing Den

MD Montgomery County
Mesrobian, Mirhan, Residence
0008.tif
View Looking Northwest

MD Montgomery County
Mesrobian, Mirhan, Residence
0009.tif
South Façade Showing Living Room Bay Window and Porch

MD Montgomery County
Mesrobian, Mirhan, Residence
0010.tif
South Façade Showing Porches and Sculptural Detail

MD Montgomery County
Mesrobian, Mirhan, Residence
0011.tif
Garden Niche Facing South Façade

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Section PHOTO Page 3

MD Montgomery County
Mesrobian, Mirhan, Residence
0012.tif
Glass Block, West Façade

MD Montgomery County
Mesrobian, Mirhan, Residence
0013.tif
Garage, Den, and Kitchen, North Façade

MD Montgomery County
Mesrobian, Mirhan, Residence
0014.tif
Detail of Garage and Den, North Facade

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HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustrations courtesy of the Mihran Mesrobian Archive, Private Collection, Washington, DC, unless specified

1 of 22 Detail of "Plot Plan," 20 November 1940

2 of 22 Elevations, 20 November 1940

3 of 22 First Floor Plan, 20 November 1940

4 of 22 Second Floor Plan, 20 November 1940

5 of 22 Basement Plan, 20 November 1940

6 of 22 Advertisement for "Celotex Traffic Top," 1940 (Celotex Corp. Brochure)

7 of 22 Drawing for "Garden Wall," 4 January 1945

8 of 22 Detail, "Garden Wall," 4 January 1945

9 of 22 Mihran Mesrobian in his Office, 7410 Connecticut Ave., 1954, Ara Mesrobian, photographer

10 of 22 Current property map (Maryland Department of Planning)

11 of 22 Plat of Section 4, Chevy Chase, 1909 (Lampl and Williams, 73)

12 of 22 Plat No. 1313, Resubdivision of Lot 1 and pt of Lot 2, 1940 (MD-National Capital Park & Planning Commission)

13 of 22 Real Estate Advertisement for Chevy Chase, MD (*Evening Star*, 5 January 1924)

14 of 22 Sketch "A," undated (1940)

15 of 22 Sketch "B," undated (1940)

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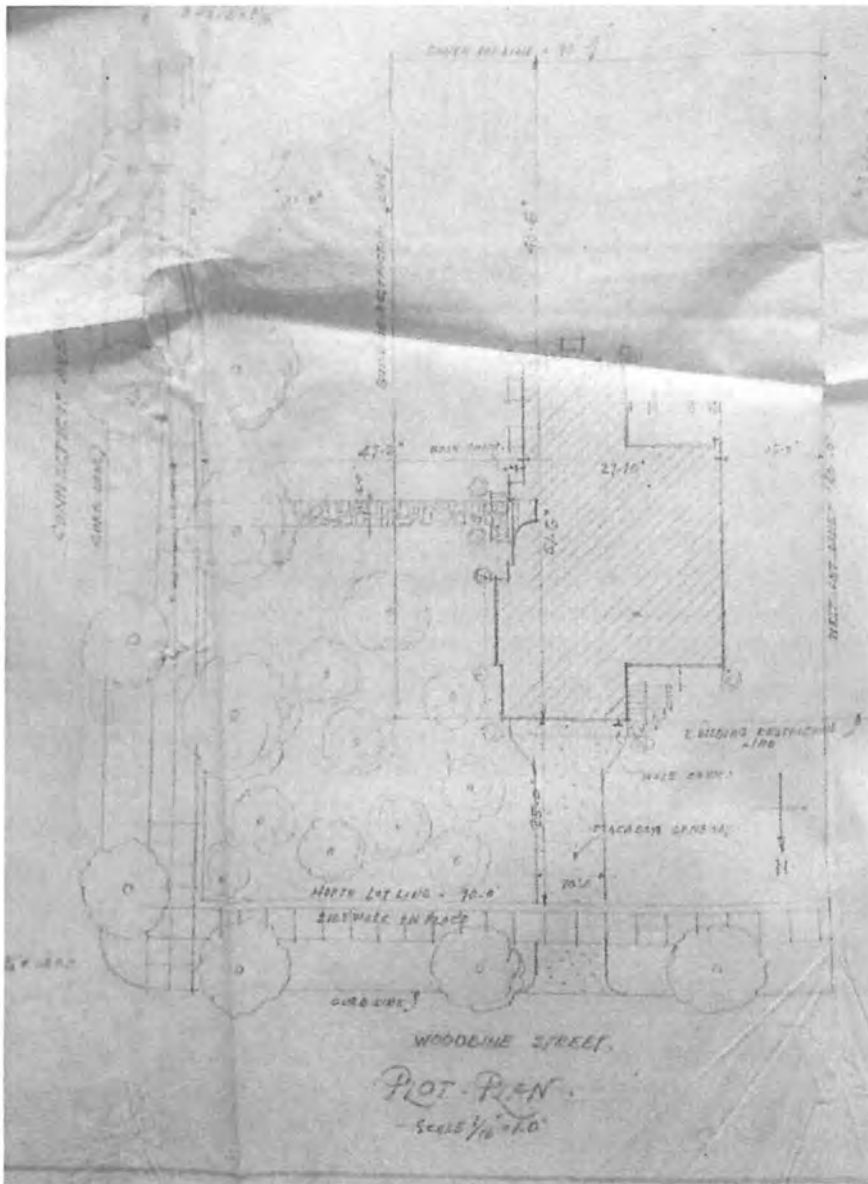
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

M:35-99-1
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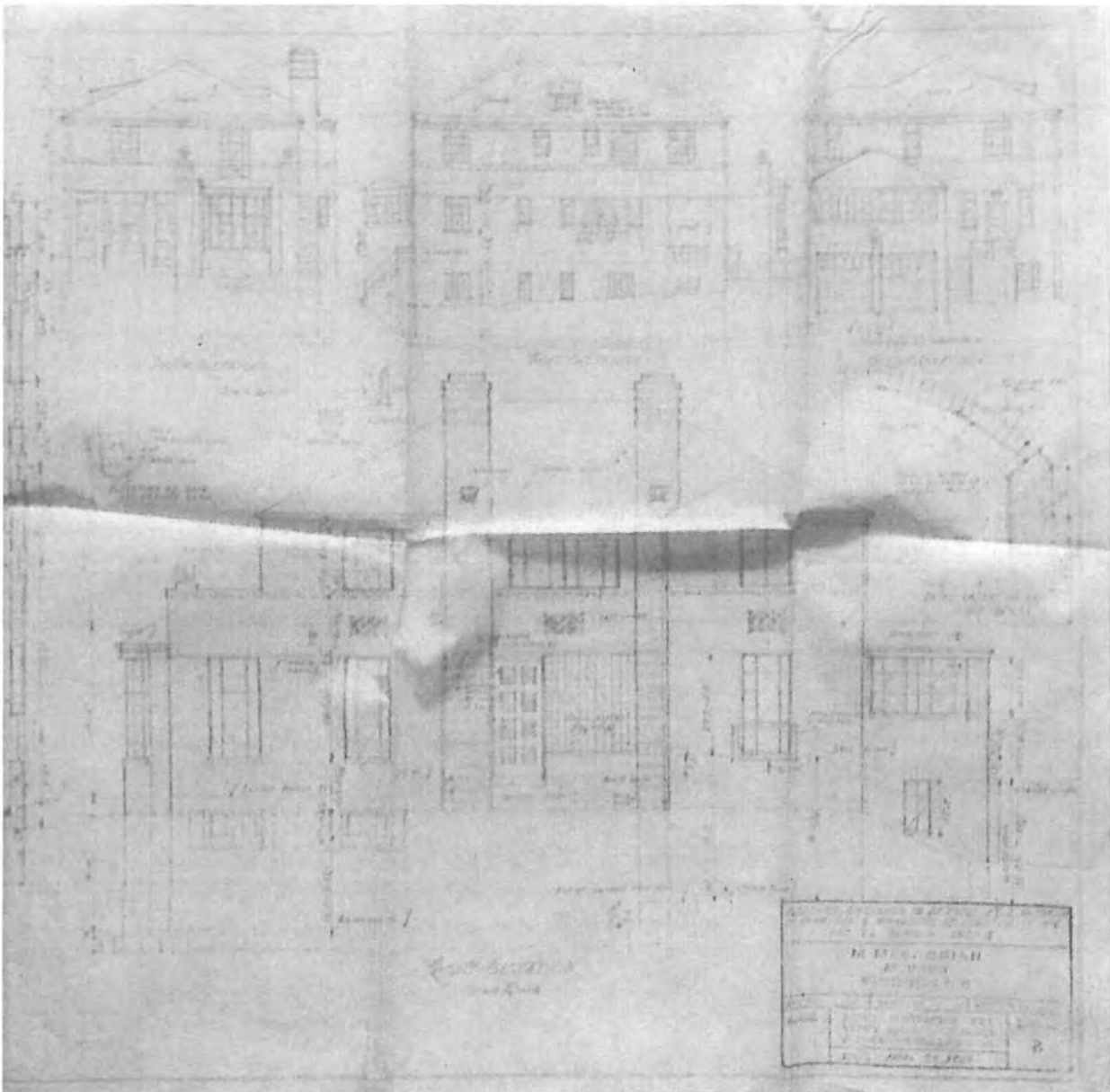
Section SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTATION Page 2

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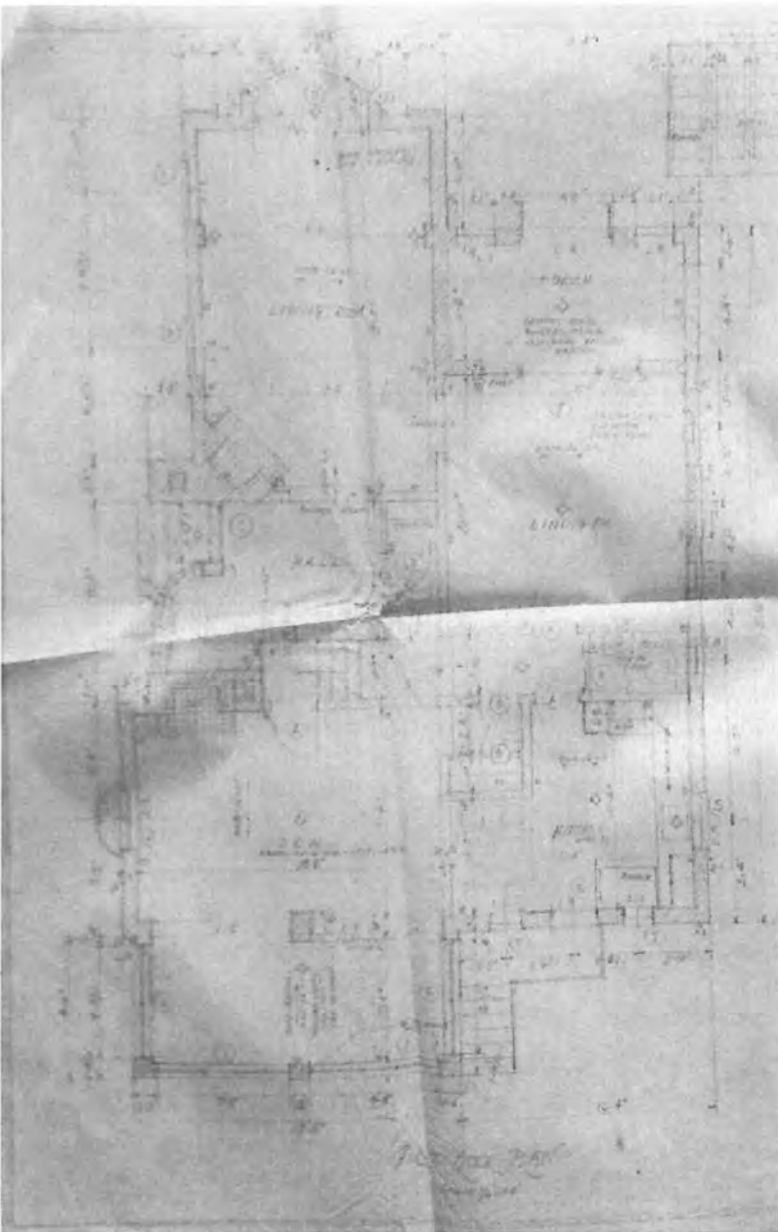
- 16 of 22 Sketch "C," dated 15 September 1940
- 17 of 22 Plan and elevation for Sketch "B," undated (1940)
- 18 of 22 8502 Jefferson & 5603 Roosevelt Sts., Bethesda MD (Kelly, 17)
- 19 of 22 "Motohome," 6424 Brookside Drive, Bethesda, MD (*Washington Post*, 20 October 1935, R9)
- 20 of 22 5150 Massachusetts Avenue, Bethesda, MD (Kelly, 22)
- 21 of 22 "Town of Tomorrow" Pittsburgh House of Glass (model house #4), 1939 New York World's Fair (Gottscho-Scheisner Collection, Prints and Photographs, Library of Congress)
- 22 of 22 Buildings within the Lee Gardens South Apartments Complex (now Sheffield Court), Arlington, VA (<https://farm7.staticflickr.com>)

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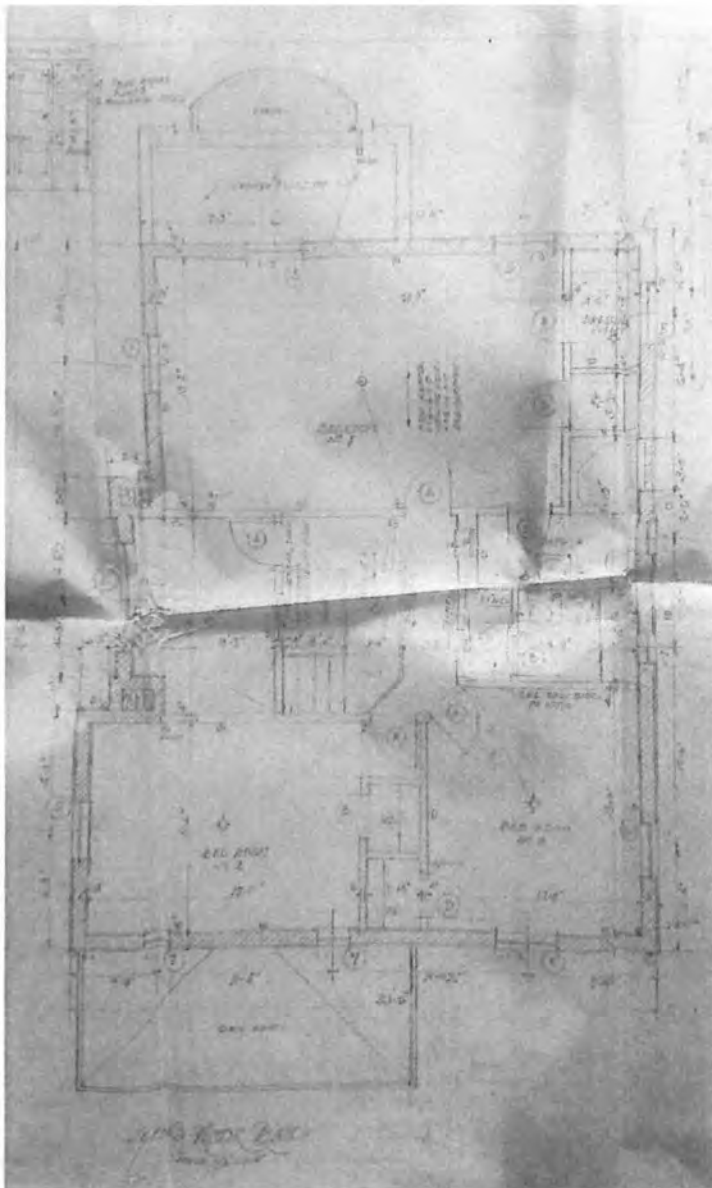
1 of 22, Detail of Plot Plan, 20 November 1940

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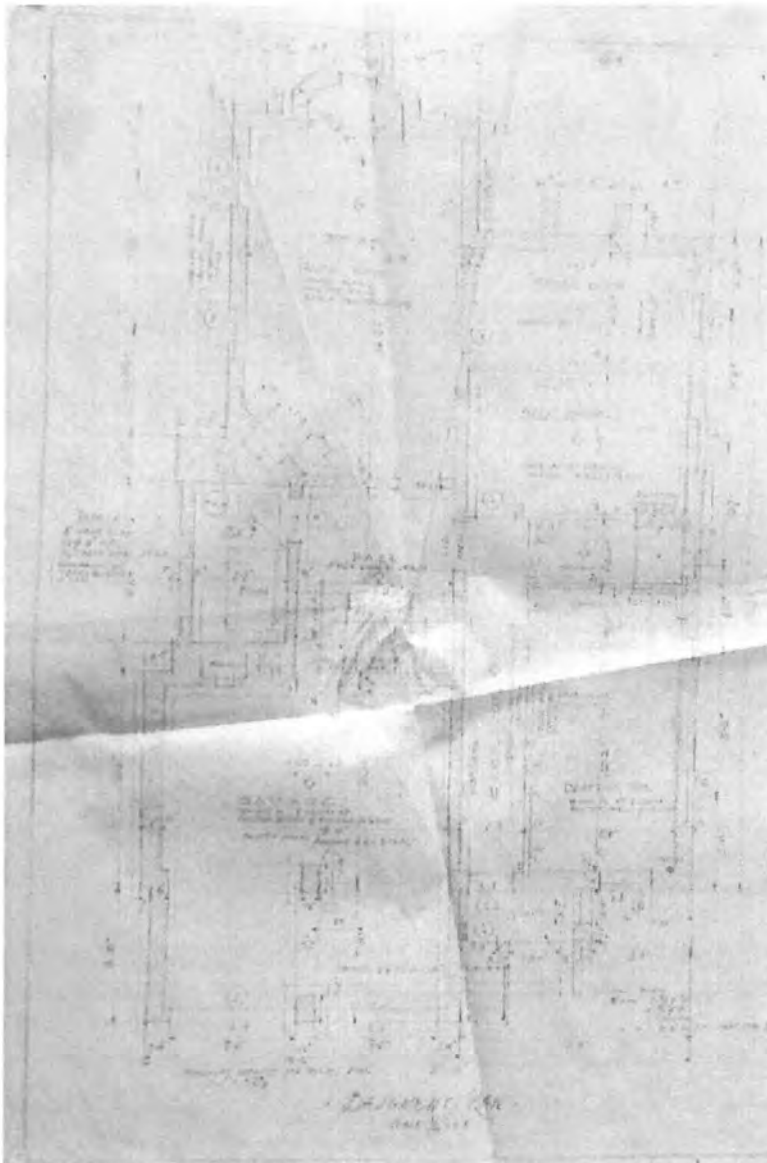
2 of 22, Elevations, 20 November 1940

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3 of 22, First Floor Plan, 20 November 1940

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4 of 22, Second Floor Plan, 20 November 1940

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5 of 22, Basement Plan, 20 November 1940

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CELOTEX ROCK WOOL PRODUCTS
KRAFT-WRAPPED, MEMBRANE-FACED BLANKET . . . PAPER-BACKED BATTS



MAKE your home snug and warm in winter; cool and comfortable in summer. Celotex Brand Rock Wool Products blanket your home to keep heat inside in winter and outside in summer. Icy winds or blistering sun—the fluffy, flexible, water-proofed fibers of Celotex Rock Wool Blanket and Celotex Rock Wool Paper-backed Batts are equal to job of providing year-round insulation.

Made from selected minerals, Celotex Rock Wool is clean, lightweight, fireproof, efficient. Formed into blankets or batts, backed with a vapor-proof paper membrane, it fits snugly between standard joint and stud framing without settling. For high efficiency insulation, ask your Celotex Dealer about Celotex Rock Wool Batts and Blanket.

CELOTEX TRAFFIC TOP
A New Surfacting for Roof Decks and Basement Floors
Available in Red or Green

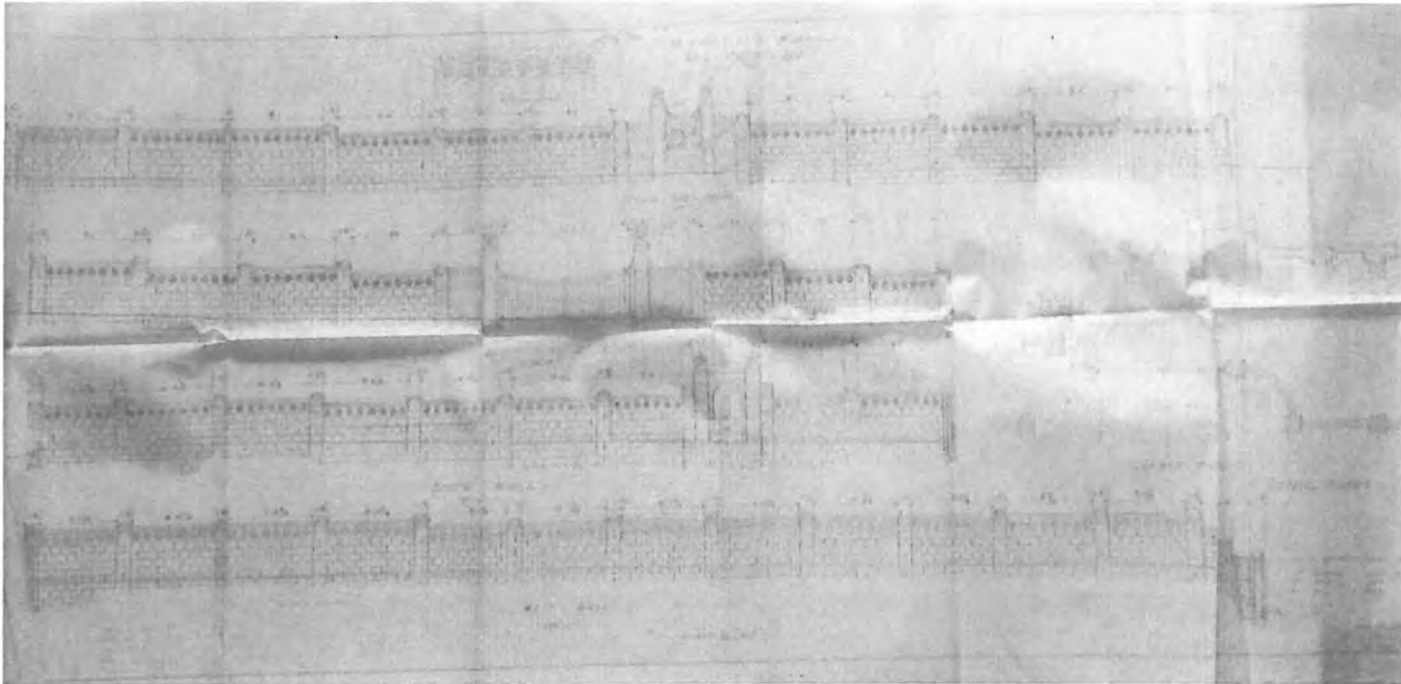


CELOTEX 3/4" Traffic Top, the most modern surfacing for exposed roof decks or basement floors, is impervious to weather and resilient under foot. It prevents moisture condensation on concrete basement floors.

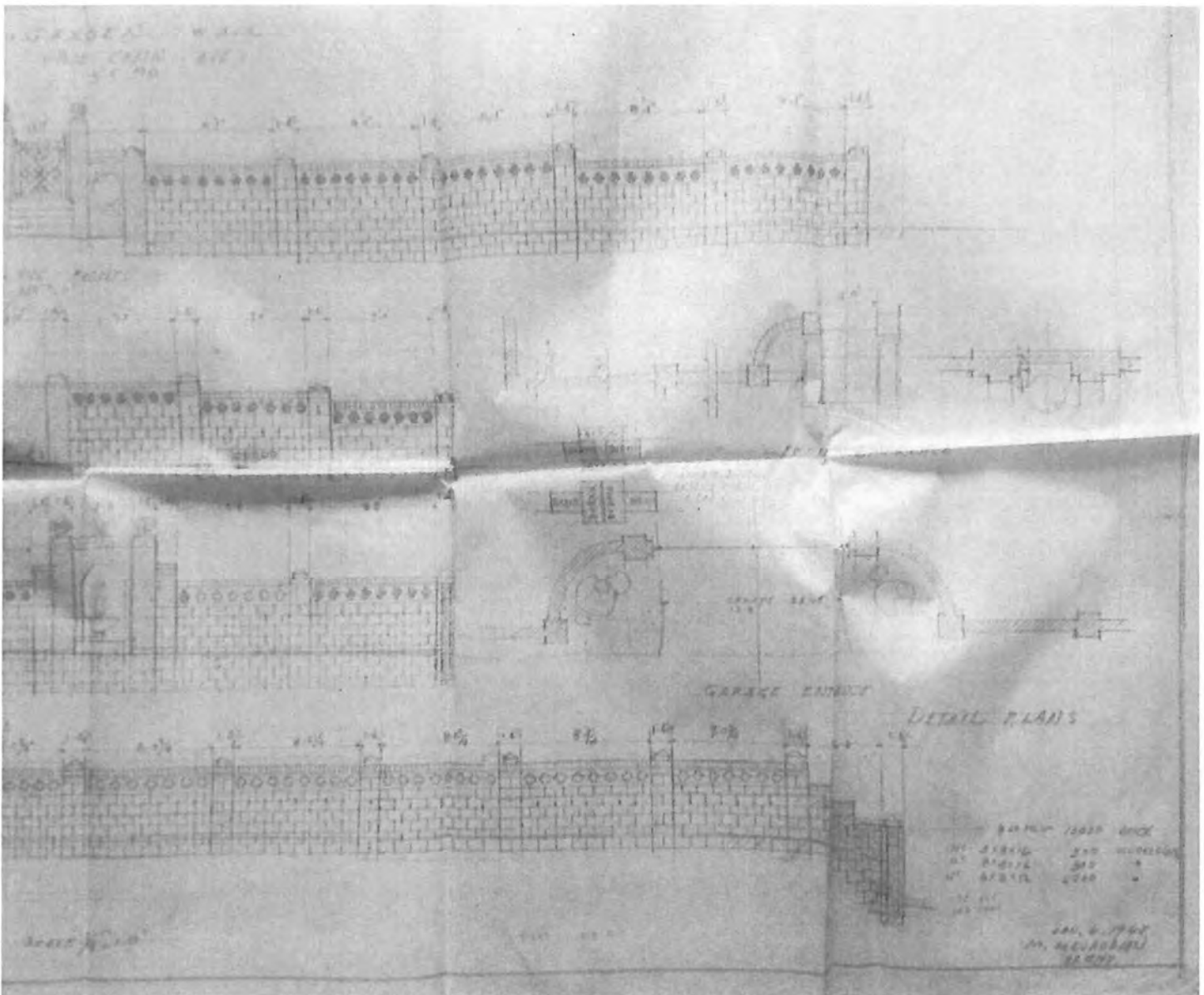
Available in red and green, this improved roof surfacing deadens sound and protects built-up roofing from all kinds of weather. It is permanently protected against termites and dry rot by the exclusive, patented Ferox Process.

If you have been considering tile or other forms for either or both of the above purposes, you will be delighted to find how much less expensive Celotex Traffic Top is—and how completely it meets all requirements.

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7 of 22, Drawing for "Garden Wall," 4 January 1945

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8 of 22, Detail, "Garden Wall," 4 January 1945

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9 of 22, Mihran Mesrobian in his Office, 7410 CT Ave., 1954, Ara Mesrobian, photographer

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Montgomery County

New Search (<http://sdat.dat.maryland.gov/RealProperty>)District: **07** Account Number: **00464605**

The information shown on this map has been compiled from deed descriptions and plats and is not a property survey. The map should not be used for legal descriptions. Users noting errors are urged to notify the Maryland Department of Planning Mapping, 301 W. Preston Street, Baltimore MD 21201.

If a plat for a property is needed, contact the local Land Records office where the property is located. Plats are also available online through the Maryland State Archives at www.plats.net (<http://www.plats.net>).

Property maps provided courtesy of the Maryland Department of Planning.

For more information on electronic mapping applications, visit the Maryland Department of Planning web site at www.mdp.state.md.us/OurProducts/OurProducts.shtml (<http://www.mdp.state.md.us/OurProducts/OurProducts.shtml>).

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Montgomery County

New Search (<http://sdat.dat.maryland.gov/Res/Property>)District: **07** Account Number: **00464605**

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12 of 22, Plat No. 1313, Resubdivision of Lot 1 and pt of Lot 2, 1940 (MD-National Capital Park &

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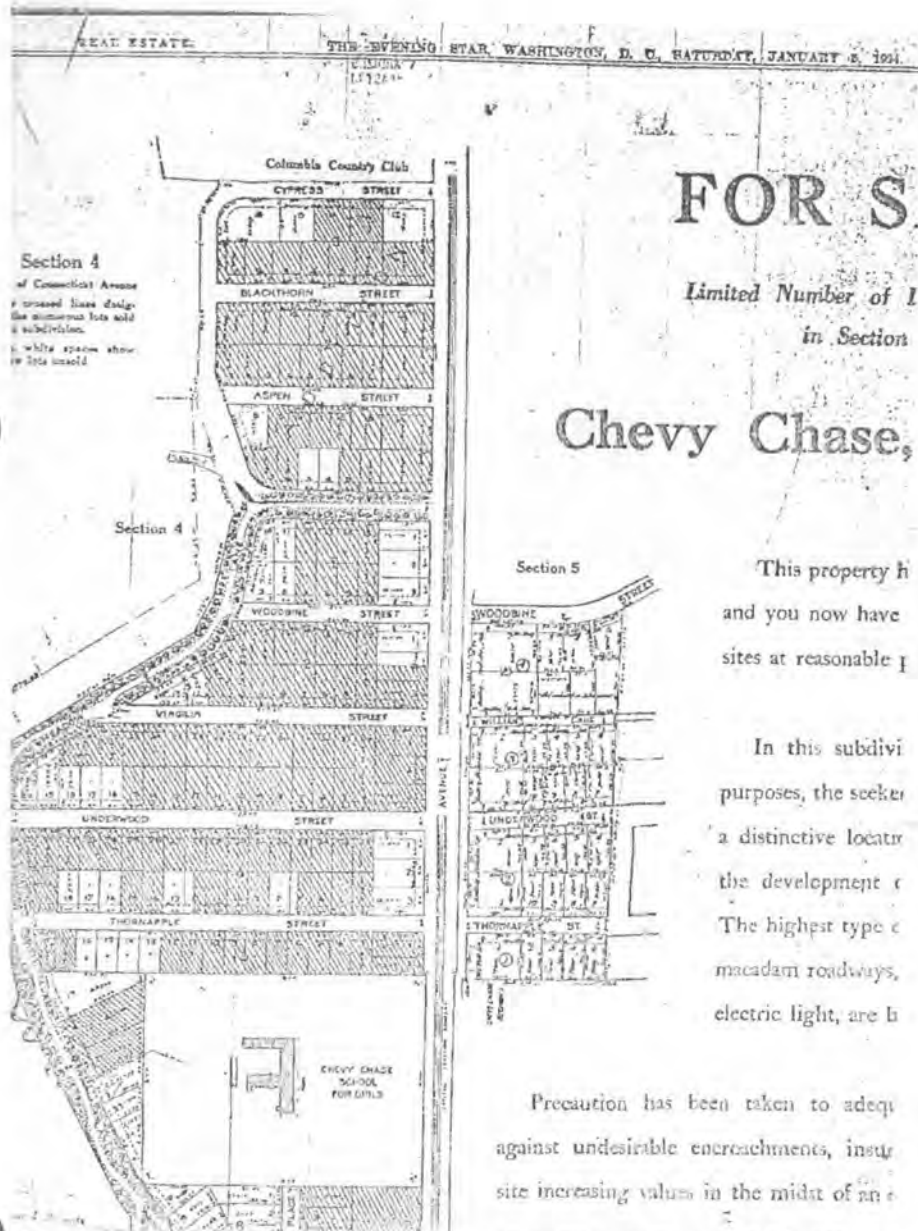
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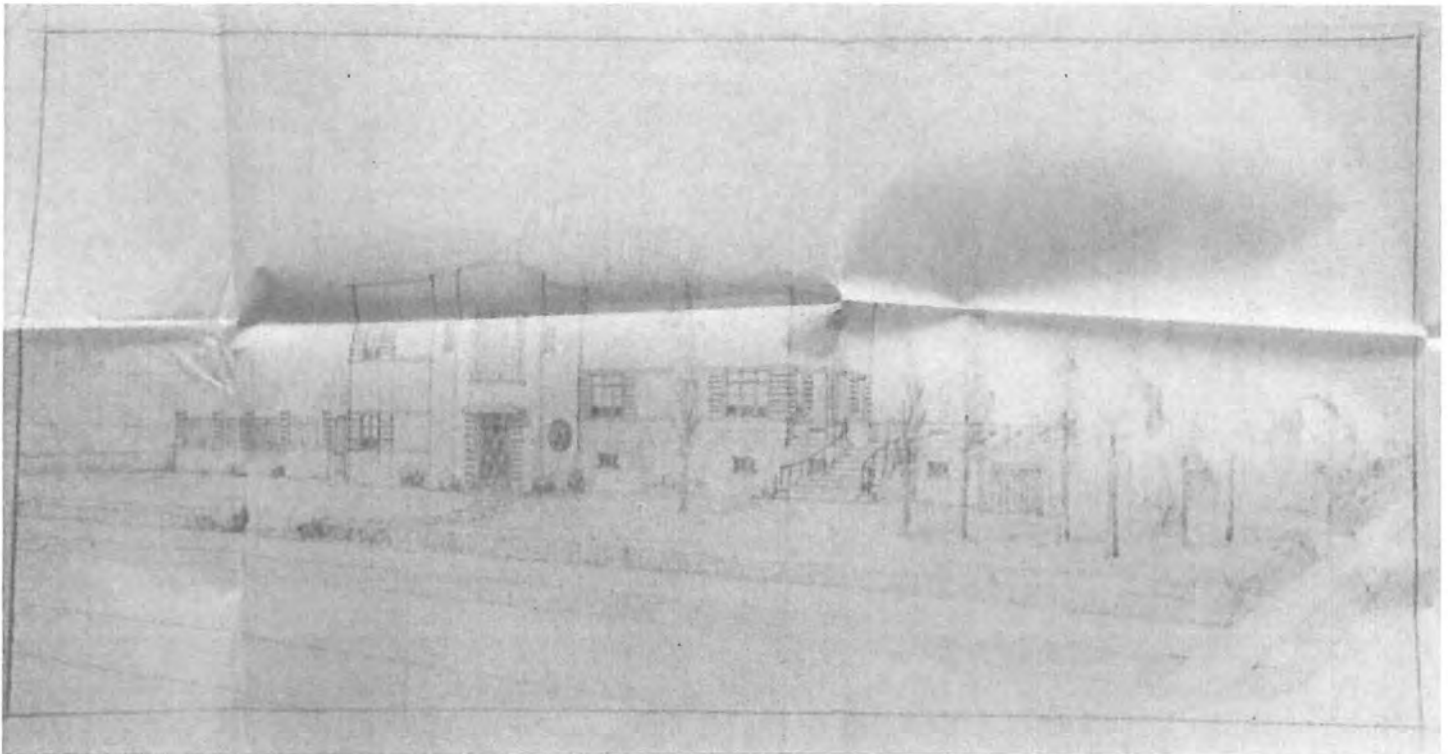
M:35-99-1
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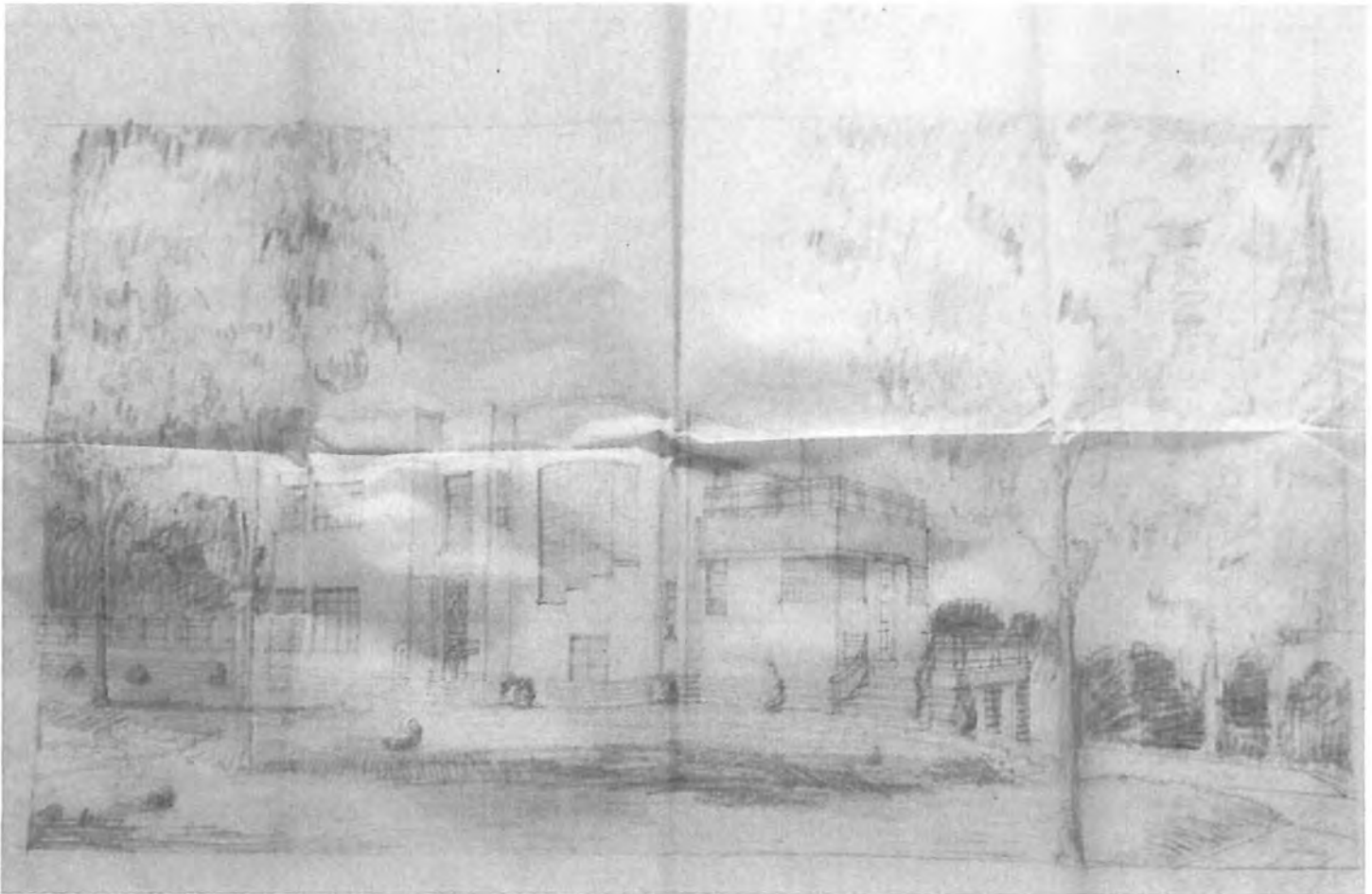
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Planning Division)



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14 of 22, Sketch "A," undated (1940)

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15 of 22, Sketch "B," undated (1940)

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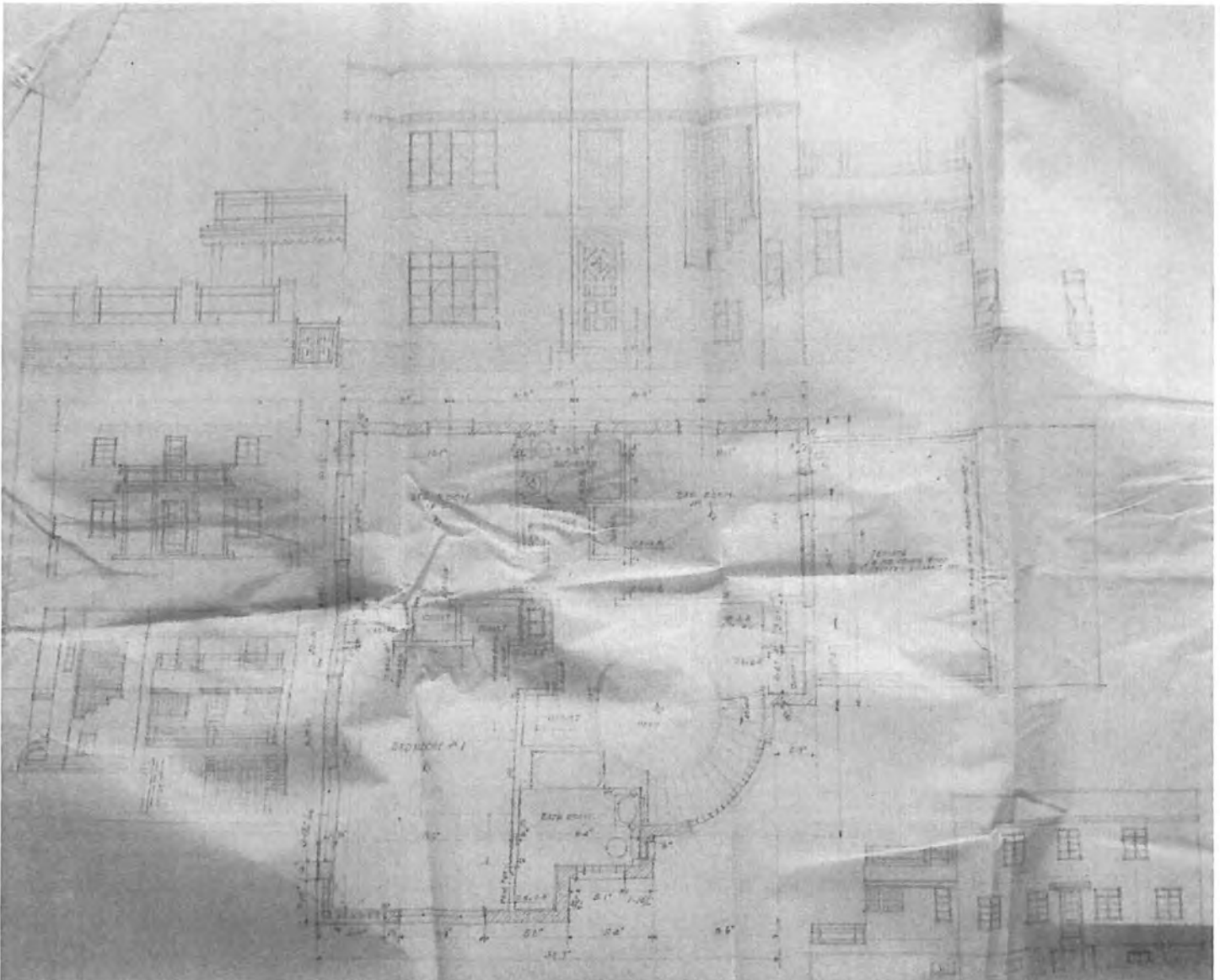
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16 of 22, Sketch "C," dated 15 September 1940

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17 of 22, Plan and Elevation for Sketch "B," undated (1940)

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18 of 22, 8502 Jefferson & 5603 Roosevelt Sts., Bethesda MD (Kelly, 17)

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Section SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTATION Page 21**2-Story House Of 'Motohome' Type Started; It Follows Style Evolved After Five Years of Scientific...**
The Washington Post (1923-1954); Oct 20, 1935; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Washington Post
pg. R9**2-Story House
Of 'Motohome'
Type Started****It Follows Style Evolved
After Five Years of
Scientific Study.**

A new type of prefabricated house, outgrowth of five years' study in scientific laboratories and the result of a movement initiated by Owen D. Young, chairman of the board of General Electric Co. at Purdue University to "explore the science of better living" is under construction on Brookside drive, in Kenwood, Chevy Chase, Md., for Lee D. Butler, Washington automobile distributor. It is a two-story American motohome; much discussed development of Houses, Inc., of New York, a subsidiary of the General Electric Co., and is announced as the largest in process of

New American Motohome Being Built for Lee D. Butler

The first pre-fabricated motohome to be built in the Washington area is under construction on Brookside drive, in Kenwood, Chevy Chase, Md., for Lee D. Butler, prominent Washington automobile distributor. The house is built of prefabricated steel into which are set fireproof panels of compressed asbestos and cement, said to be indestructible. The house contains 12 rooms, 3 baths and a 2-car garage. A moto-unit, a mechanism no larger than a pantry, operates the air-conditioning, heating and hot water units. The above sketch is an artist's conception of what Mr. Butler's new home will look like when completed.

19 of 22, "Motohome," 6424 Brookside Drive, Bethesda, MD (*Washington Post*, 20 October 1935, R9)

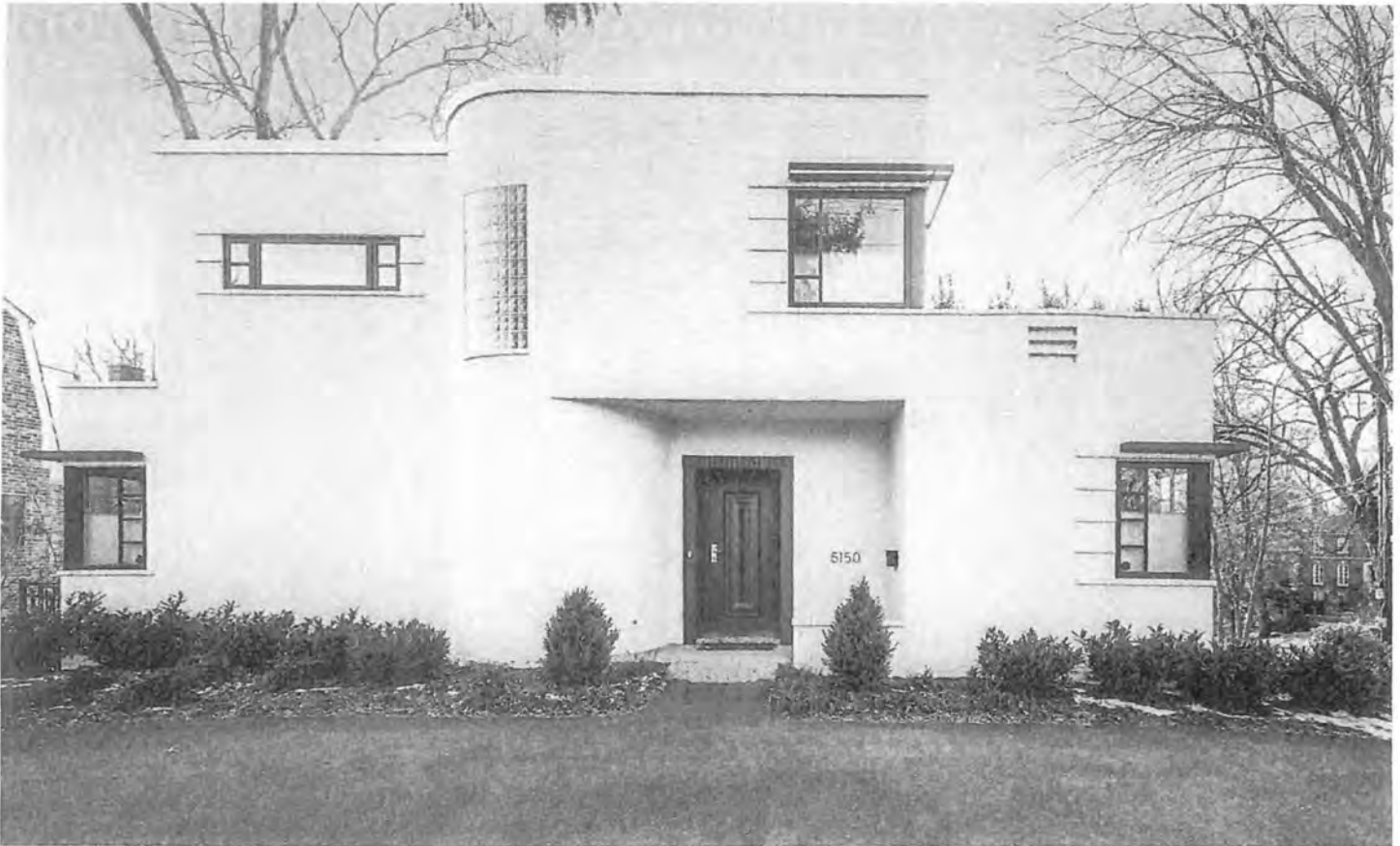
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20 of 22, 5150 Massachusetts Avenue, Bethesda, MD (Kelly, 22)

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21 of 22, "Town of Tomorrow" Pittsburgh House of Glass (model house #4), 1939 New York World's Fair (Gottschö-Schleisner Collection, Prints and Photographs, Library of Congress)

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22 of 22, Buildings within the Lee Gardens South Apartments Complex (now Sheffield Court), Arlington, VA (<https://farm7.staticflickr.com>)



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Mihran Mesrobian Residence

Montgomery Co MD

MD - Montgomery County MD - Mihran Mesrobian Residence - 0001.tif

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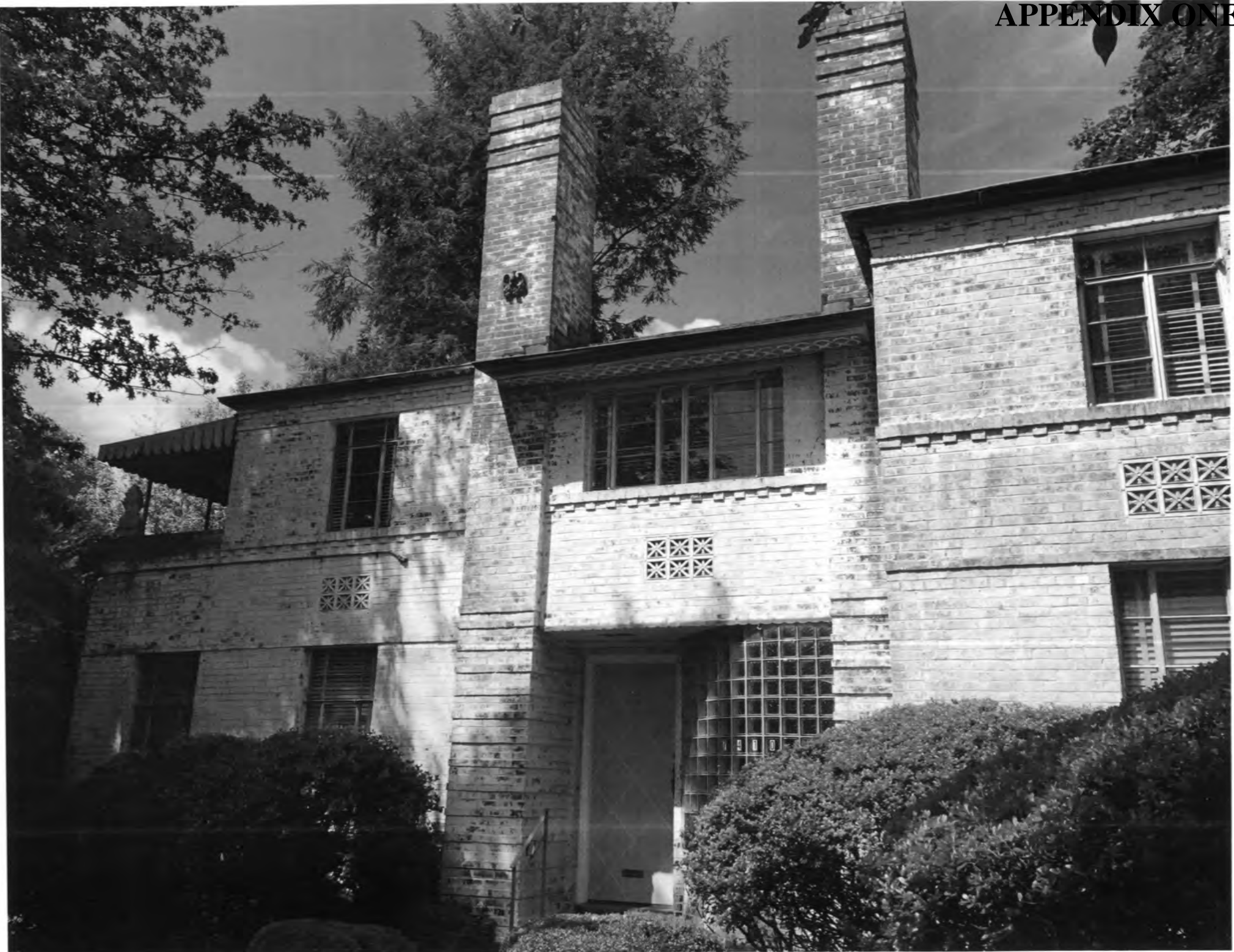
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Mihraan Mesrobian Residence

Montgomery Co MD

MD - Montgomery County - Mihraan Mesrobian Residence - 0002, TAF

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M: 35-99-1

Mihraan Mesrobian Residence

Montgomery Co MD

MD - Montgomery County - Mihraan Mesrobian Residence

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M: 36-99-1

Mihran Mesrobian Residence

Montgomery Co MD

MD — Montgomery County — Mihran Mesrobian Residence — 0004 Tif

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ME35-99-1

Mihir Mesrobian Residence

Montgomery Co MD

MD - Montgomery County - Mihir Mesrobian Residence - 0005.TIF

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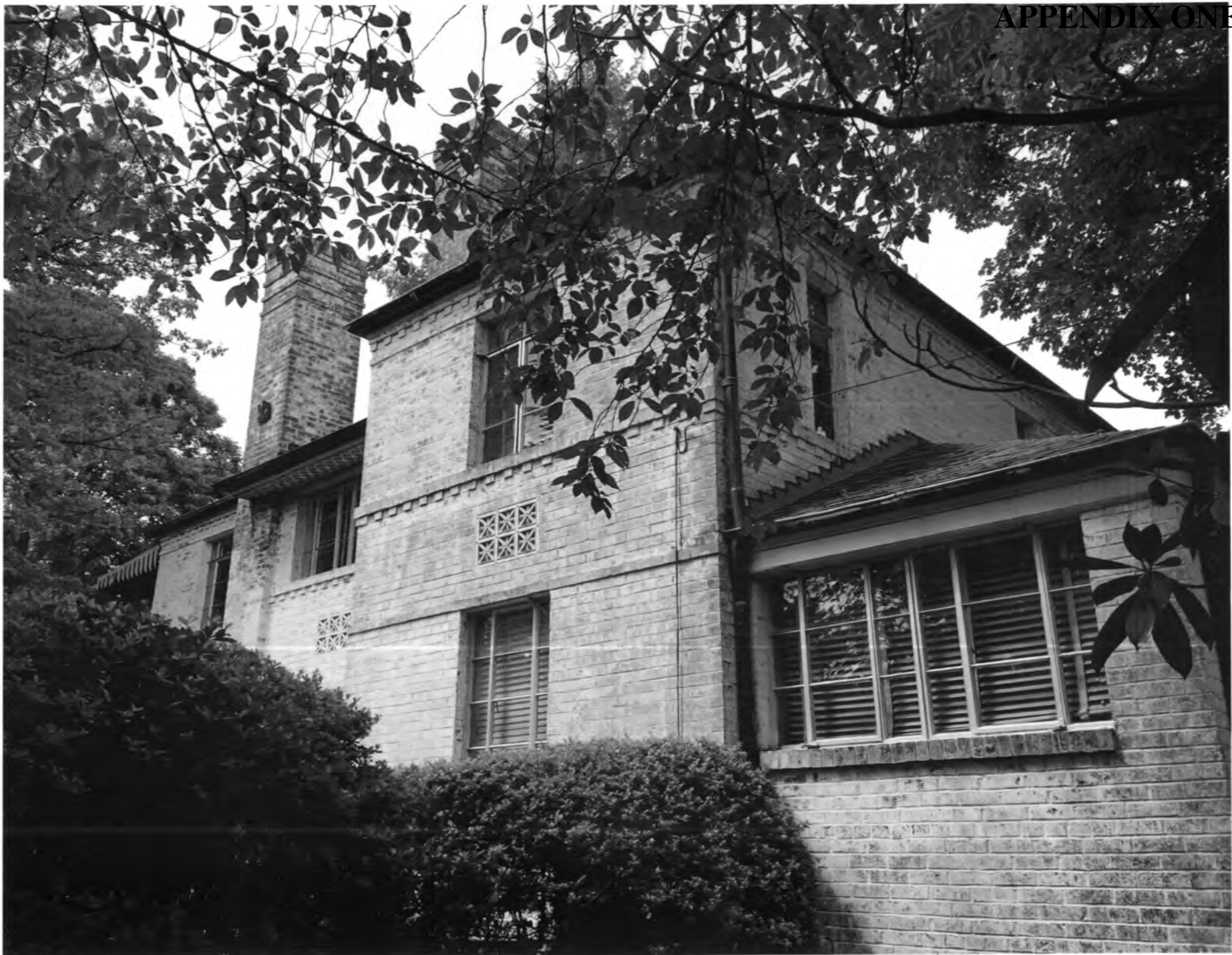
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Mihra Mesrobian Residence

Montgomery Co. MD

MD - Montgomery County - Mihra Mesrobian Residence - 0006, TID

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Ms 35-99-1.

Mihran Mesrobian Residence.

Montgomery Co. MD

MD - Montgomery County - Mihran Mesrobian Residence - 0007. Tif

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Ms 35-99-1

Mihra Mesrobian Residence

Montgomery Co. MD

MD - Montgomery County - Mihra Mesrobian Residence - 0008.tif

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MI-35-99-1

Mihra Mesrobian Residence

Montgomery CO MD

MD — Montgomery County — Mihra Mesrobian Residence — 0009.717

9-9-14



M: 35-99-1

Mihra Menzies Residence

Montgomery Co MD

MD — Montgomery, County — Mihra Menzies Residence — 0010, 7-12

10-7-14



M: 35-99-1

Mihra Mesrobian Residence

Montgomery Co MD

MD - Montgomery County - Mihra Mesrobian Residence. 0011.tif

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Me 35-99-1

Mihon Mesobian Residence

Montgomery Co MD

MD - Montgomery County - Mihon Mesobian Residence - 0012.tif

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M: 35-99-1

Mikhael Mersha Residence
Montgomery Co. MD

MD - Montgomery County - Mikhael Mersha Residence - 0013.TIF

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M: 35-99-1

Mehra Menoban Residence

Montgomery Co MD

MD. Montgomery County — Mehra Menoban Residence — 0014.71-2

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