

ROMEO AND ELSIE HORAD HOUSE (#31-87)
2118 UNIVERSITY BOULEVARD WEST
SILVER SPRING, MD 20902

MASTER PLAN HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION FORM
APRIL 2024



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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: Romeo and Elsie Horad House
Current Name: Iglesia Cristiana Canaán Church
Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties #: 31-87

2. LOCATION OF PROPERTY

Address Number and Street: 2118 University Boulevard West
County, State, Zip: Wheaton, Montgomery County, Maryland, 20902

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

☒ Buildings
☐ Structures
☐ Objects
☐ Archaeological Sites
☒ Total

☐ Buildings
☒ Structures
☐ Objects
☐ Archaeological Sites
☒ Total

D. Listing in the National Register of Historic Places: The property has not been evaluated for the National Register of Historic Places.

5. FUNCION OR USE

Historic Function(s): DOMESTIC: Single family dwelling

Current Function(s): RELIGION: Church-related facility

6. DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

Site Description: The Romeo and Elsie Horad House is located at 2118 University Boulevard West, approximately one-quarter mile southeast of the intersection of Georgia Avenue and University Boulevard West in downtown Wheaton, Maryland (*App. 1, Fig. 1*). The house presently serves as a church-related facility for the adjacent Iglesia Cristiana Canaán Church at 2100 University Boulevard West. The house and a non-historic gazebo are sited on a deep, rectangular .77-acre parcel. The property is bound by: University Boulevard West to the north; Iglesia Cristiana Canaán Church to the east; a vacant lot to the south; and a single-family dwelling (converted to an office) and an office building to the west.

The house is sited towards the northern extent of the property and setback approximately 25' from the public sidewalk. The property (including the front) is bound primarily by a chain link fence pierced by an asphalt driveway from University Boulevard West. The driveway extends along the west (side) and south (rear) of the house to provide access to a larger parking area and an attached single-car garage entryway on the rear elevation. A concrete pathway from the driveway bisects the front yard and provides access to the front door. The pathway continues to wrap around the east (side) elevation of the dwelling and adjoins the asphalt parking area at the rear. On the east side of the dwelling, a concrete pathway (installed ca. 2017) extends from the house towards the Iglesia Cristiana Canaán Church. The former property owners installed a non-historic gazebo ca. 2005 towards the southern extent of the property. In 2016, the gazebo was relocated to its present location (southeast of the house). Aerial photographs of the property show two non-extant accessory building towards the rear property demolished ca. 2005 and ca. 2016. Presently, the rear yard is covered mostly by manicured lawns with scattered trees (*App. 1, Fig. 7*).

Architectural Description (App. 4, Figs. 1-4):

Romeo and Elsie Horad built the Colonial Revival (Georgian) style house at 2118 University Boulevard West in 1938. The Horad family constructed an architecturally impressive dwelling to reflect the success of their locally prominent, African American family. The hipped roof, symmetrically balanced façade, brick veneer, and central door with decorative surround all reflect the defining characteristics of the architectural style, and in turn, the wealth and status of the Horad-Sewell family.

The house consists of a two-story, three-bay, double-pile central block flanked by one-story, single-pile wings. The east and west wings feature an infilled porch now utilized as a secondary entrance and an attached garage, respectively. The wood-frame structural system with a seven-course American bond brick veneer rests on a poured concrete foundation. Architectural embellishments include a modified basket weave belt course between the first and second stories. The walls support low-pitched asphalt shingle, hipped roofs. Two end-wall brick chimneys rise from the wings, pierce the eastern and western slopes of the main roof, and provide a sense of grandeur and formality.

The façade consists of the three-bay main block and single-bay wings. The first story features a centrally located single-leaf, fanlight, four-panel door. A Colonial Revival-styled wood surround with pilasters and a dentilated pediment frames the door. Three-sided canted bay windows with a coursed stone-veneered base and hipped, copper roof flank the entrance. The replacement windows consist of a central, single-light, fixed-sash and one-over-one, double-hung, sash windows.¹ The second story of the main block consists of one-over-one, double-hung, windows.² The eastern wing—likely an infilled porch—contains a secondary entrance. The

¹ The bay windows originally consisted of central six-over-six, double-hung, wood windows and four-over-four, double-hung, wood windows. These windows were replaced ca. 2015.

² The second stories originally featured a centrally located six-over-six, double-hung, wood-sash window and eight-over-eight, double-hung, wood-sash windows.

single-leaf, single-light, two-panel door with sidelights. The western wing contains a simple ribbon of three fixed windows.³

See Appendix 6: Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form for a detailed description of each elevation.

7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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

The Romeo and Elsie Horad House meets three of the nine designation criteria as described in §24A-3 of the Montgomery County Code. See Section J of this report for a detailed analysis.

B. Statement of Significance:

The Romeo and Elsie Horad House at 2118 University Boulevard West reflects the efforts and achievements of the Webster, Sewell, and Horad families to improve conditions for African American residents of Montgomery County. In particular, Romeo W. Horad, an African American lawyer and realtor, challenged racial restrictive covenants in the District of Columbia, demanded and lobbied for improved educational facilities and infrastructure for Black communities in Montgomery County, established a groundbreaking candidacy for the Montgomery County Council, and coordinated voter registration of African Americans in Maryland. All these actions occurred while the Horad family resided at the subject house, which served as a social and political meeting place. The residence further serves as a reminder of the former African American community established at the turn of the twentieth century in Wheaton.

C. Period of Significance: 1938-1968

D. Significant Dates: 1938 (construction)

E. Significant Persons: Romeo William Horad, Sr. and Elsie Glendora Sewell Horad

F. Areas of Significance: African American Heritage; Social History

G. Architect/Builder: Unknown

H. Narrative:

Historic Context: Richard and Maria Mitchell to Charles and Jane Webster (1857-1912)

In the mid-1800s, present-day downtown Wheaton consisted of a small, rural, crossroads community. Richard T. Mitchell and Maria J. (nee Leanere) Mitchell, his second wife, acquired the 25-acre “Cross Roads Tavern Farm,” in 1857 that included the subject property.⁴ Mitchell operated a long-standing tavern/inn at the intersection of Union Turnpike (Georgia Avenue) and Bladensburg Road (University Boulevard), and later served as postmaster for Wheaton (*App. 3, Figs. 1-2*).⁵ The property’s proximity to the Union Turnpike—a critical transportation route to and from the District of Columbia—led to its exposure to the movements of the Union and Confederate armies. Between September 2nd and 19th, 1862, the Union Army reportedly appropriated

³ The opening originally consisted of a ribbon of three six-light, wood-sash, casement windows.

⁴ On November 15, 1858, Richard T. Mitchell married Sarah Columbia White. It is assumed that Maria J. Mitchell died. “R.T. Mitchell,” November 15, 1858, Maryland, U.S., Compiled Marriages, 1667-1899, Ancestry; “Richard T. Mitchell,” November 26, 1856, Maryland, U.S., Compiled Marriages, 1667-1899, Ancestry; Montgomery County Circuit Court, “George Taylor and Mary Ann Taylor to Richard T. Mitchell,” January 12, 1857, Liber JGH 5, Folio 595.

⁵ At the start of the Civil War, Mitchell paid a substitute, Charles Brown of Germany, to fight in his stead for the Union. Assessment records show that “Richard F. Mitchell” owned two enslaved persons under 10 years old valued at \$125 in 1858. The 1860 United States Federal Census listed no enslaved persons on the property. “Richard T. Mitchell,” U.S., Appointments of U.S. Postmasters, 1832-1971, Ancestry; “Local Matters,” *Baltimore Sun*, December 19, 1862, Newspapers.com.

supplies, materials, and crops from the farm valued at \$2,947 by the Mitchells. This included 600 panels of wood fence, 500 bushels of oats, 4 tons of oat straw, 40 acres of corn, 20 acres of beans, 2 acres of potatoes, 125 cords of pine, 10 bushels of onions, and 4 tons of hay. The government later compensated the descendants of the family \$1,200.⁶

The “Cross Roads Tavern Farm” property remained in the Mitchell family until 1882.⁷ Over the next five years, the farm passed to multiple property owners before it was purchased by George Osborne Belt (the son of a wealthy plantation and business owner) and Kate Cissell (*App. 3, Fig. 3*).⁸ The Cissells subdivided the property in 1894 and conveyed “Sub Lot Number Eight,” a one-acre parcel, to African Americans residents Charles and Margaret A. J. (better known as Jane) Webster (*App. 3, Figs. 4-5*).⁹

Charles and Jane (nee Digings) Webster were the grandparents of Elsie Glendora Sewell Horad (*App. 5, Figs 4-5*).¹⁰ The family history “From Jane & Charles Webster to Elle Jackson (Infant), 1842-1991” provided a detailed account of the life of the Websters. Born ca. 1849 in South Carolina, Charles Webster traveled with the Union Army and buried deceased soldiers as a teenager. After the war, he then briefly worked in South America before returning to Maryland.¹¹ Webster met Jane Digings (his wife born ca. 1850 in Wheeling, West Virginia) and the couple married on July 17, 1868, in Montgomery County.¹² The 1870 United States Federal Census recorded the Websters with their first son Edward living near Barnesville where Charles Webster worked as a farm laborer.¹³ Ten years later, the growing family (six children) including their daughter Martha V. Webster—Elsie Horad’s mother—still resided in the County.¹⁴ In 1894, the Websters purchased the family’s first one-acre property from the Cissells.¹⁵ The deed noted the purchase of the land for \$200, but the Websters were indebted to the Cissells for an additional \$500.¹⁶ In all likelihood, the Websters built their house near the time of purchase (*App. 5, Fig. 1*).¹⁷ The family history stated that the Websters leased, farmed, harvested, and marketed produce from the surrounding land in addition to their property.¹⁸ Descendants described life at the Webster farm:

Life at Wheaton in the old days involved horses, purchased at Chic-Co-Teague (sic) Island, who for the most part were wild. It involved cows, pigs, chicken, geese, turkey and all other farm animals. There was a summer kitchen where the “hands” would come from the fields to eat. A typical mid day meal would be boiled ham, fried chicken, string beans and boiled potatoes, fresh corn on the cob and tomato and lettuce salad would be served. There was a smoke house that always had an inviting aroma. The chicken house was in back of the meat house and was filled with Plymouth Rock chickens. The barn I remember was the second barn on the farm. The first was struck by light[n]ing and burned to the ground.¹⁹

The Websters joined a burgeoning Black community in Wheaton. In 1873, African Americans residents Henry Gaither, Jerry Gaither, and Henry Walker acquired a single acre at present-day 11005 Dayton Street for an

⁶ United States Senate, 60th Congress, 2d Session, “Sarah C. Mitchell, Executrix,” Document No. 655, 1909, HathiTrust.

⁷ Montgomery Circuit Court, “Richard T. Mitchell and Sarah C. Mitchell to Emory Berry,” May 6, 1882, Liber EBP 26, Folio 382.

⁸ Montgomery Circuit Court, “Emory Berry to Bernard Tamblyn,” August 1, 1882, Liber EBP 26, Folio 367; Montgomery Circuit Court, “Bernard and Anna Tamblyn to James Wraight,” September 12, 1882, Liber EBP 27, Folio 991; Montgomery Circuit Court, “James Wraight to George O. B. Cissel,” August 13, 1887, Liber JA 6, Folio 233.

⁹ Staff was unable to find the plat of the subdivision by Cissel, but it is referenced in the conveyance to Charles Webster. Montgomery Circuit Court, “George O. B. Cissel and Kate S. Cissel to Charles Webster,” April 16, 1894, Liber JA 42, Folio 351.

¹⁰ The spelling of Jane’s maiden name in archival records vary between Digings, Diggins, and Didgins.

¹¹ “From Jane & Charles Webster to Elle Jackson (Infant), 1842 to 1991,” Papers of Sewell Horad.

¹² “Charles Webster and Jennie Didgins,” July 17, 1868, Maryland, U.S., Compiled Marriages, 1667-1899, Ancestry.

¹³ 1870 United States Federal Census, “Chas Webster,” Ancestry.

¹⁴ 1880 United States Federal Census, “Charles Webster,” Ancestry.

¹⁵ Montgomery Circuit Court, “George O. B. Cissel and Kate S. Cissel to Charles Webster,” April 16, 1894, Liber JA 42, Folio 351.

¹⁶ Montgomery Circuit Court, “Charles Webster indebted to George O. B. Cissel,” November 9, 1894, Liber JA 47, Folio 212.

¹⁷ “From Jane & Charles Webster to Elle Jackson (Infant), 1842 to 1991,” Papers of Sewell Horad.

¹⁸ “From Jane & Charles Webster to Elle Jackson (Infant), 1842 to 1991,” Papers of Sewell Horad.

¹⁹ “From Jane & Charles Webster to Elle Jackson (Infant), 1842 to 1991,” Papers of Sewell Horad.

African Methodist Episcopal church and cemetery.²⁰ Two years later, Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church laid the cornerstone of their new building and completed the wood-frame house of worship.²¹ The church also served as the first school for the Black children of Wheaton.²² Toward the end of the nineteenth century, several African Americans families including the Gasaways and Powells started to acquire property on Wheaton Lane at Chestnut Ridge (near the present-day intersection of University Boulevard and Inwood Avenue).²³ The growing population lobbied for the construction of a purpose-built elementary school.²⁴ In 1900, the Board of School Commissioners paid \$200 for a one-acre lot from George O. B. and Katie Cissel for the construction of a one-room segregated Black school for the Wheaton community.²⁵ By 1940, the United States Census specifically enumerated the “Negro Section Called Chestnut Ridge,” which recorded approximately 21 owners and 11 renters with a population of 147 persons (*App. 3, Fig. 6*).²⁶

The Websters were leaders of the Black community in Wheaton and Montgomery County. Charles Webster participated in local Republican political conventions. For example, in 1904, the *Washington Times* listed him as a speaker for a ratification meeting and rally of the “negro Republicans of Wheaton” in support of Roosevelt and other candidates.²⁷ Four years later, Webster, along with African Americans Morton M. Newman (Laytonsville), John Addison (Wheaton), and Frank Wodd (Bethesda), distributed a signed circular—reprinted in the *Washington Times*—to rally African American support to the candidacy of Brainard Warner for Congress.²⁸ Charles Webster’s advocacy extended to education as the School Board appointed him as a trustee to the Wheaton school.²⁹

Historic Context: Martha V. (nee Webster) and Edward B. Sewell (1912-1938)

Martha V. Webster (1874-1974), a daughter of Charles and Jane Webster, married Edward Benjamin Sewell (1876-1960) on February 10, 1897 (*App. 5, Fig. 6*).³⁰ The couple resided in Washington, D.C., primarily on P Street, NW, where they raised three children: Elsie Glendora (1898-1990), Webster (1901-1998), and Bernard (1909-2002). Family tradition holds Martha in high esteem as a guiding influence in the household who stressed the importance of education.³¹ Edward Sewell, her husband, worked for the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company for 37 years and then assisted his son with the management of his medical practice.³²

Martha and Edward Sewell acquired their first parcel in Wheaton in 1912. The couple purchased a .991-acre property from the descendants of the Cissel estate for \$500.³³ This land was between the one-acre property acquired by her parents in 1894 and the one-acre property conveyed to the Board of Education in 1900. The lot had no direct frontage on University Boulevard. Therefore, an unnamed road from University Boulevard

²⁰ Montgomery Circuit Court, “William A. Batchelor and Lucretia Batchelor to Henry Walker, Jerry Gaither, and George Gaither,” September 9, 1873, Liber EBP 11, Folio 28.

²¹ “Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church,” <http://www.allenchapelame.org> (accessed February 23, 2024).

²² “Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church,” <http://www.allenchapelame.org> (accessed February 23, 2024).

²³ Montgomery Circuit Court, “William Barnes and Margaret Barnes to William Gasaway,” July 16, 1887, Liber JA 6, Folio 156; Montgomery Circuit Court, “William Barnes and Margaret Barnes to William Gasaway,” May 23, 1891, Liber JA 27, Folio 270; Montgomery Circuit Court, “Charles Coupard and Isabelle Coupard to William Powell,” November 1, 1888, Liber JA 11, Folio 446; Montgomery Circuit Court, “Charles Coupard and Isabelle Coupard to Henson Gasaway,” December 14, 1886, Liber JA 4, Folio 67.

²⁴ In 1910, the Black population in this section of Wheaton consisted of approximately 90 individuals based on an analysis of the 1900 United States Federal Census.

²⁵ Montgomery Circuit Court, “George O. B. Cissell and Kate S. Cissell to Board of County School Commissioners of Montgomery County,” April 19, 1900, Liber TD 14, Folio 317.

²⁶ The Chestnut Ridge community expanded from Georgia Avenue to Inwood Avenue. 1940 United States Federal Census, Election District 13, Wheaton, “Negro Section Called Chestnut Ridge,” Sheets 61A-62B, Ancestry.

²⁷ “Wheaton Republicans to Open Campaign,” *Washington Times*, September 16, 1904, Chronicling America.

²⁸ “Warner’s Political Contest,” *Washington Times*, April 1, 1908, Newspapers.com.

²⁹ “Rockville and Vicinity,” *Evening Star*, June 7, 1906, Newspapers.com.

³⁰ “Martha V. Webster,” February 10, 1897, District of Columbia, U.S., Compiled Marriage Index, 1830-1921, Ancestry.

³¹ “From Jane & Charles Webster to Elle Jackson (Infant), 1842 to 1991,” Papers of Sewell Horad.

³² “Washingtonians You Should Know: Edward B. Sewell,” *Afro-American*, August 23, 1941, Proquest.

³³ Montgomery Circuit Court, “Charles W. Prettyman to Edward B. Sewell and Martha V. Sewell,” May 11, 1912, Liber JLB 228, Folio 84.

provided access to the .991-acre lot and the Wheaton School (*App. 3, Figs 5, 7-8*). In 1922, the Sewells acquired an adjacent, smaller, .4-acre parcel to the southeast.³⁴ It is unknown how the Sewells utilized the properties as their primary residence remained in Washington, D.C. until the death of Martha's father in 1927.³⁵ The United States Geological Survey's *Washington and Vicinity Map* (1917) and Frank H. Klinge's *Property Atlas of Montgomery County, Maryland* (1931) depict multiple dwellings on the Webster and Sewell parcels.³⁶ Family histories noted several residences lived in by family members, but the exact number of houses and outbuildings on these lots remain unclear (*App. 3, Fig. 10 and App. 5, Figs. 1-2*).³⁷

Charles Webster died on December 21, 1927, and left his property to his daughter Martha Sewell. Family tradition notes the Sewells moved to Wheaton to assist Jane (Martha's elderly mother) with management and upkeep of the land. Martha and Edward Sewell now owned the entire Wheaton property that would comprise the Romeo and Elsie Horad House—the western halves of the one-acre parcel acquired in 1894 and the .991-acre parcel purchased in 1912. In 1938, the Sewells re-subdivided these stacked lots into two distinct parcels that both fronted University Boulevard (*App. 3, Fig. 9*). The parents conveyed the western lot to their daughter and son-in-law, Elsie and Romeo Horad.

Historic Context: Romeo William Horad and Elsie Glendora Sewell (1938-1990)

Romeo William Horad is the son of William Fenton Horad (ca. 1856 – 1934) and Belle (nee Williams) Horad (ca. 1862 – 1926).³⁸ The couple married in Alexandria, Virginia, on November 14, 1879, and resided in the city.³⁹ William and Belle worked as a railroad laborer and domestic laborer (washer), respectively. In the 1880s, the Horads moved to the District of Columbia where they raised a large family including Clara (1879), Fred (1883), Romeo (ca. 1893), Washington (1895), Emma (1896), Edgar (1899), and Florence (1903).⁴⁰ During Romeo's youth, the Horads briefly relocated to Barbour County, West Virginia, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, but returned to Washington, D.C., by 1910.⁴¹ William and Belle gained employment as a painter and dressmaker, respectively.

³⁴ Montgomery Circuit Court, "Dorsey M. Thompson to Edward B. Sewell and Martha V. Sewell," August 31, 1922, Liber 320, Folio 264.

³⁵ "From Jane & Charles Webster to Elle Jackson (Infant), 1842 to 1991," Papers of Sewell Horad; Sewell Horad and Evelyn Horad, interview by Dr. David Rotenstein, May 30, 2017, "Sewell and Evelyn Horad Oral History Interview."

³⁶ Frank Sutton, *Washington and Vicinity, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia* (1917), Library of Congress; Frank H. Klinge, *Property Atlas of Montgomery County, Maryland* (1931), Montgomery Planning.

³⁷ This house was rented to tenants as well. "From Jane & Charles Webster to Elle Jackson (Infant), 1842 to 1991," Papers of Sewell Horad; Sewell Horad and Evelyn Horad, interview by Dr. David Rotenstein, May 30, 2017, "Sewell and Evelyn Horad Oral History Interview."

³⁸ The approximate date of birth of William Fenton and Belle Fenton are based on the 1900 United States Federal Census. The marriage record for the couple lists William and Belle's year of birth as 1851 and 1861, respectively. Family histories list their date of birth as 1859 and 1862. "Fonton [sic] Horad," Virginia, U.S., Select Marriages, 1785-1940, Ancestry; 1900 United States Federal Census, "Fenton Horad," Ancestry.

³⁹ William F. Horad, a widower, had at least three children (William, Charles, and Fenton) during his first marriage to Susan Horad in the 1870s. "Fonton Horad," Virginia, U.S., Select Marriages, 1785-1940, Ancestry; 1880 United States Federal Census, "Fenton Hord," Ancestry; "Fenton Horad," Alexandria, Virginia, City Directory (1881), U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995, Ancestry.

⁴⁰ Archival records document Romeo's year of birth between 1893 and 1895. The date of birth, September 26th, remains consistent across various records. Romeo's headstone listed his year of birth as 1894, and his World War I and II registration cards listed his year of birth as 1895. The District of Columbia Birth Returns, however, recorded Fenton and Belle Horad with having twins (one son and one daughter) on September 26, 1893. Unfortunately, the couple lost a newborn girl (likely the twin of Romeo Horad) on November 17, 1893. Belle and William Horad suffered the death of multiple children as the 1910 United States Federal Census recorded Belle as the mother of thirteen children, six of whom had died. The 1900 United States Federal Census confirms the earlier date of birth as it lists his month and birth year as September 26, 1893. 1900 United States Federal Census, "Fenton Horad," Ancestry; 1910 United States Federal Census, "Fenton Horad," Ancestry.

⁴¹ The 1900 United States Federal Census listed the family in Barbour County, West Virginia. Romeo Horad recollected in a 1950s interview that he delivered newspapers in his youth in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and a family oral history noted this location as well. 1900 United States Federal Census, "Fenton Horad," Ancestry; 1910 United States Federal Census, "Fenton Horad," Ancestry; "Recipe for Success," *Afro-American*, May 12, 1951, Proquest.

The Horads recognized the importance of education. Romeo was enrolled at the segregated Lucretia Mott Elementary School at 4th Street and U Street, Northwest, where he served as the President of the Mott School Athletic Association.⁴² In 1912, Romeo attended the segregated M Street High, known as one of the most prestigious educational institutions for African Americans students. He graduated with a diploma from the school's Department of Business program in 1916.⁴³ At M Street High, Romeo likely met Elsie Glendora Sewell who graduated the same year.⁴⁴

On February 22, 1918, Romeo and Elsie Sewell married in Alexandria, Virginia.⁴⁵ Five days later, Romeo entered the military with his younger brothers William and Edgar for World War I.⁴⁶ He served as a Regimental Sergeant Major in the 92nd Division, 317th Ammunition Train, Headquarters Detachment. On June 15, 1918, Romeo deployed overseas aboard the Covington which landed in Brest, France.⁴⁷ Records suggest that he worked as a court reporter.⁴⁸ After the armistice, Horad returned to the United States aboard the H.M.S (Her Majesty's Service) Aquitania on February 22, 1919, completing nine months of foreign service.⁴⁹

Romeo and Elsie Horad started their life together upon his return from the war. The couple resided in Washington, D.C., where they rented a unit on P Street, Northwest.⁵⁰ Romeo gained employment as a typist and stenographer for the Navy's Inter-Departmental Social Hygiene Board where he earned \$1,300 annually.⁵¹ On February 1, 1920, Romeo and Elsie welcomed their first child, Romeo William Horad, Jr. The Horads' time together must have been brief or disjointed during their first few years of their married life. Romeo attended Western Case University in Cleveland, Ohio, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in 1922.⁵² Elsie enrolled at the Minor Normal School (later named the D.C. Teacher's College) and graduated in 1923.⁵³ While attending school and raising her first child, Elsie had her second child, Sewell D. Horad, on January 26, 1922. The District of Columbia hired her as a probationary teacher for the following school year at the Garrison School.⁵⁴ She remained a teacher with the public school system for 37 years.⁵⁵

Romeo returned to Washington, D.C. and enrolled at Howard University School of Law in 1923. The 44-student body class elected him Vice-President for their class.⁵⁶ In 1925, Charles Hamilton Houston—an American lawyer and educator who established the framework for racial desegregation—joined the faculty, which may have resulted in their future partnerships. Romeo, along with just 60 percent of his initial class, graduated from Howard Law School at the end of the year.⁵⁷ While the couple experienced professional

⁴² "Join Public School League," *Washington Herald*, January 10, 1911, Chronicling America.

⁴³ Numerous articles, biographies, and oral histories stated that he attended the Minor Normal School, but staff found no archival records to collaborate his years of his attendance. "Dignity of Labor Theme of Address," *Evening Star*, June 20, 1916, Newspapers.com; "5,000 At Graduation," *Washington Post Star*, June 20, 1916, Newspapers.com;

⁴⁴ Elsie Glendora Sewell was listed as a graduate of M Street School the same year as Romeo William Horad.

⁴⁵ "Romeo William Horad and Elsie Glendora Sewell," February 22, 1918, Virginia, Bureau of Vital Statistics, County Marriage Registers, 1853-1935, FamilySearch.

⁴⁶ "Horad, Romeo William," Veterans Affairs Master Index, 1917-1940, FamilySearch.

⁴⁷ "Romeo W. Horad," June 15, 1918, Covington, U.S., Army Transport Service Arriving and Departing Passenger Lists, 1910-1939.

⁴⁸ Horner, John V., "Romeo W. Horad, Candidate for Council, Backs Equity," *Evening Star*, December 27, 1948, Newspapers.com.

⁴⁹ "Romeo W. Horad," February 22, 1919, Aquitania, U.S., Army Transport Service Arriving and Departing Passenger Lists, 1910-1939.

⁵⁰ 1920 United States Federal Census, "Horad, Romeo," Ancestry.

⁵¹ Department of the Census, *Official Register of the United States 1921* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1922), 624, Archive.org.

⁵² "Washingtonians You Should Know: Romeo W. Horad," *Afro-American*, February 15, 1941, Proquest; Horner, John V., "Romeo W. Horad, Candidate for Council, Backs Equity," *Evening Star*, December 27, 1948, Newspapers.com; Sewell Horad and Evelyn Horad, interview by Dr. David Rotenstein, May 30, 2017, "Sewell and Evelyn Horad Oral History Interview."

⁵³ "110 Girls Graduate at Miner Normal," *Evening Star*, June 22, 1923, Newspapers.com.

⁵⁴ "James T. Lloyd is Reelected DC School Board President," *Evening Star*, July 2, 1924, Newspapers.com.

⁵⁵ "Elsie Horad, D.C. Teacher, Real Estate Agent, Dies at 91," *Washington Post*, August 11, 1990, Proquest.

⁵⁶ Washington Horad, his brother, enrolled at the Law School as well. Howard University, *The Bison: 1923* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University, 1923), 99.

⁵⁷ Howard University, *The Bison: 1925* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University, 1923), 96-104.

success, the Horad family faced difficult times with the death of Florence Horad Crawford (his sister) in 1923, Belle Horad (his mother) in 1926, and Charles Webster (Elsie's grandfather) in 1927.⁵⁸

Romeo joined the District of Columbia's Office of the Recorder of Deeds in 1926. He first served under Recorder of Deeds Arthur G. Froe, an African American politician and lawyer from West Virginia, who Calvin Coolidge appointed to the prestigious position.⁵⁹ Horad earned \$1,740 per year as part of the staff in 1928.⁶⁰ The following year, he received a year-long sabbatical from the Office of the Recorder of Deeds to clerk for the Municipal Court.⁶¹ He returned before the completion of the year when the United States Chamber of Commerce successfully petitioned the new Recorder of Deeds (Jefferson S. Coage) to appoint Horad as the Executive Secretary. In 1934, President Roosevelt selected Dr. William J. Thompkins as the Recorder of Deeds.⁶² Under his leadership, Horad modernized the land record system for the District of Columbia. He had developed this system over a period of years and implemented the system for \$200,000.⁶³ As stated in the *Northwest Enterprise* (Seattle, Washington):

The new system was designed by Romeo W. Horad, executive secretary to the recorder. It comprises a scientific and concise yet simplified compilation of facts concerning each deed filed in the office, eliminating the necessity of searching through the time-worn bound volumes in which the records formerly were kept.⁶⁴

Three years later, in 1939, the *Afro-American* and the *Chicago Defender* reported that Thompkins removed Horad from the position citing "for the good of the service" after rumored conflicts between the two men.⁶⁵ At that time, Horad earned a salary of \$2,600 per year.⁶⁶ He used the opportunity to pivot from government service to establish R.W. Horad Realty Inc., seek his own political aspirations, and fight for the equitable treatment of African Americans.⁶⁷

Romeo and Elsie Horad moved their family (Romeo Jr., Sewell, and Martha) from Washington, D.C., to Elsie's ancestral family land in Wheaton in 1939. Racial segregation, in particular racial restrictive covenants, limited opportunities for African American homeownership in Montgomery County and the Washington, D.C. region. In Montgomery County, this often required African American families to subdivide existing owned property to increase the number of dwellings units. In 1938, Martha V. and Edward B. Sewell split their Wheaton property into two lots and gifted Lot 1 to the Horads (*App. 3, Fig. 9*).⁶⁸ The couple then built and moved into the subject Colonial (Georgian) Revival house the following year. In a later interview with the *Evening Star*, Horad expressed the following sentiment to a reporter regarding their home:

Of his accomplishments, Romeo W. Horad seems proudest of the home he built ... at 11308 Old Bladensburg Road [present-day 2118 University Boulevard West], Silver Spring. The air-conditioned, Georgian house is evidence of what Negroes can do if given the opportunity. To him,

⁵⁸ "Crawford, Florence," *Evening Star*, October 10, 1923, Chronicling America; "Horad, Belle," *Evening Star*, May 7, 1926, Newspapers.com; "Webster, Charles" *Evening Star*, December 22, 1927, Newspapers.com.

⁵⁹ "Washingtonians You Should Know: Romeo W. Horad," *Afro-American*, February 15, 1941, Proquest; Horner, John V., "Romeo W. Horad, Candidate for Council, Backs Equity," *Evening Star*, December 27, 1948, Newspapers.com.

⁶⁰ "Pay Raise Order Follows Censure of Deeds Recorder," *Evening Star*, December 14, 1928, Newspapers.com.

⁶¹ "Frank Adams Named Assistant District Attorney," *Kansas City American*, December 19, 1929, Newspapers.com.

⁶² "Washingtonians You Should Know: Romeo W. Horad," *Afro-American*, February 15, 1941, Proquest; Horner, John V., "Romeo W. Horad, Candidate for Council, Backs Equity," *Evening Star*, December 27, 1948, Newspapers.com.

⁶³ "New Recording System Far Cry from Slave Deals," *Baltimore Afro-American*, September 26, 1936, ProQuest.

⁶⁴ The Horads professional success again coincided with family loss. In 1936, William F. Horad, Romeo's father, died at Freedmen's Hospital. "Negro Clerical Workers Installing Indexing System," *Northwest Enterprise*, November 25, 1936, Newspapers.com; "Horad, Rev. William Fenton," *Evening Star*, January 2, 1934, Newspapers.com.

⁶⁵ "Romeo Horad Ousted, Report," *Afro-American*, March 25, 1939, Newspapers.com; "Secretary to Recorder of Deeds Fired," *Chicago Defender*, April 8, 1939, ProQuest.

⁶⁶ "Secretary to Recorder of Deeds Fired," *Chicago Defender*, April 8, 1939, ProQuest.

⁶⁷ "Romeo Horad, 74, Head of D.C. Real Estate Firm," *Washington Post*, November 4, 1968, Proquest.

⁶⁸ Montgomery Circuit Court, "Edward B. Sewell and Martha V. Sewell, Subdivision of Sewell Tract near Wheaton, Montgomery County, Maryland," (1938), Plat No. 928; Montgomery Circuit Court, "Edward B. Sewell and Martha V. Sewell to Elsie S. Horad and Romeo W. Horad," February 1, 1938, Liber CKW 694, Folio 431.

it is proof that the race appreciates the advantages of modern living and is entitled to a chance to enjoy them.⁶⁹

The Horads became involved in local and state politics in Montgomery County and Washington, D.C. At that time, African Americans held no political power in Montgomery County. Historic records suggest that the couple joined the “Montgomery County Colored Republicans” in the late 1920s. Romeo and Elsie Horad had been elected Secretary and to the Executive Committee representing Wheaton, respectively.⁷⁰ After relocating to the county, Romeo and Elsie increased their participation with the group. In 1940, the organization elected Romeo as Chairman of the Executive Committee and he received their endorsement to be a delegate to the State Republican Convention, but it remains unknown if he filed the papers to run.⁷¹ The following year, the *Afro-American* profiled Horad as part of their “Washingtonians— You Should Know” series. The paper noted that he focused on his family, work, and home (*App. 5, Fig. 8*).⁷² In 1944, Horad then ran to be a delegate to the State Republican Convention. As reported in *The News* (Frederick, MD), he was the first Montgomery County resident to file for the position. He failed to be elected but received 753 votes.⁷³

After starting his new career in real estate, Horad achieved immediate success and became a member of the Washington Real Estate Brokers’ Association (*App. 5, Fig. 7*).⁷⁴ The association consisted of African American real estate brokers who purchased, sold, financed, and managed properties in Washington, D.C. In 1944, he represented the organization and testified before the United States Senate Subcommittee of the Committee of the District of Columbia. The subcommittee was authorized to investigate the National Capital Housing Authority and make recommendations regarding its future policies. Horad stated that he and the organization were invested in the congressional hearings as the issue affected their profession and impacted the homes of African American residents. He explored with the subcommittee the root causes of the slum-like conditions in Washington, D.C. Horad explained three components that led to these conditions: increase in population, racial restrictive covenants, and community agreements. He stated:

...There has been no opportunity afforded the colored renter or the colored home purchaser to expand. On the other hand there has been relief afforded the white renter and the white home purchaser. He has found relief in the outlying counties; that is to say, he has had the privilege of buying the home of his liking in Montgomery County, Prince Georges County, and in fact in all of the counties surrounding the District of Columbia. As a result of this condition, the colored citizen has had to do one of two things. He has had to go into the attics of existing houses or into basements. There are many basements in the District of Columbia that prior to this condition were considered not fit for habitation. People are living in them now.⁷⁵

Horad’s testimony made headlines in the *Afro-American* who published an article titled “Hitler Preaches Ghetto System, U.S. Practices It” when Horad compared the practice of racial covenants to the creation of ghettos.⁷⁶ This analogy occurred before the widespread knowledge of the German atrocities against Jewish people.⁷⁷ He stated, “The colored people have been forced to live under these unholy and unhealthy conditions because some

⁶⁹ “Romeo W. Horad, Candidate for Council, Backs Equity,” *Evening Star*, December 27, 1948, Newspapers.com.

⁷⁰ “Colored Republicans Elect,” *Evening Star*, August 30, 1928, Chronicling America.

⁷¹ “Colored Republican Club Reorganized in County,” *Evening Star*, April 14, 1940, Newspapers.com.

⁷² “Washingtonians You Should Know: Romeo W. Horad,” *Afro-American*, February 15, 1941, Proquest.

⁷³ The last delegate selected received at least 388 more votes. “Files as Delegate,” *The News (Frederick, MD)*, March 16, 1944, Newspapers.com; “GOP Contests Due for State Delegate Posts,” *Evening Star*, March 17, 1944, Newspapers.com; “Republican Voter’s Guide,” *Montgomery Sentinel*, April 27, 1944, Newspapers.com; “Lightest Vote Reported,” *Evening Star*, May 2, 1944, Newspapers.com.

⁷⁴ “Real Estate Men Give Annual Outing,” *Afro-American*, July 26, 1941, Proquest.

⁷⁵ Investigation of the Program of the National Capital Housing Authority, *Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on the District of Columbia, United States Senate* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1944), 1035-1040.

⁷⁶ “Hitler Preaches Ghetto System, U.S. Practices It,” *Afro-American*, April 29, 1944, Proquest.

⁷⁷ Between 1942 and 1944, the U.S. State Department and the Office of War Information suppressed reports of Germany’s genocidal campaign. Lawrence Baron, “The Holocaust and American Public Memory, 1945-1960,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 17 (2003): 62-88, Project Muse.

of our citizens share the views of Hitler.”⁷⁸ He noted that Congress had the legislative authority to remedy the use of racial covenants.

In his testimony, Horad stressed the importance of home ownership to the achievement of the American dream and the challenges encountered by African Americans in achieving this dream. He contended that white people had unlimited opportunities in Virginia and Maryland where thousands of homes were under construction in desirable neighborhoods with all modern facilities and utilities. On the other hand, government agencies forced landlords (such as Horad) to reduce the number of African American tenants per unit due to overcrowded conditions in Washington, D.C. that led to the separation of children from their parents.⁷⁹ In another example, he referenced two young women from Boston, who the Horads invited to stay at their home at 2118 University Boulevard West. The women’s parents wanted to buy a home for them in the region, but overcrowding and racial covenants precluded the opportunity to purchase a suitable house.⁸⁰ Horad wanted the same opportunities for African Americans and stated the following points as quoted in his testimony:

1. We feel that better homes constitutes a basis on which to building a better race;
2. It will have its proper psychological effect upon its occupants;
3. It will remove the present inference covering the whole group [African Americans] in the slum areas, that they are just a bunch of slum dwellers, and they are all bad; and
4. I will give them [African Americans] an opportunity to live better and to have a greater and better opportunities for health.⁸¹

In Washington, D.C., Horad’s actions extended beyond providing written and oral testimony to legislative bodies. Horad partnered with Italian American real estate brokers Raphael and Joseph Urciolo—and later Charles Hamilton Houston—to purchase houses with racial restrictive covenants on Adams and Bryan streets in Bloomingdale, Washington, D.C. and resell those properties to African Americans. These actions led to a series of court cases that challenged the legality of racial restrictive covenants. As reported in the *Washington Afro-American*, in *Arthur S. Bishop, et. al. v. Sallie Broadway et. al.*, the plaintiffs charged that Urciolo and Horad conspired to sell, convey, lease, and rent properties to African American residents in violation of the restrictive covenants.⁸² In 1942, Judge Daniel W. O’Donoghue issued a judgement that required Sallie Broadway to vacate 122 Adams Street as her occupancy violated the restrictive covenant prohibiting African Americans.⁸³ Two years later, the District Court of Appeals dismissed the plaintiff’s case with prejudice. The court ruled that these particular racial restrictive covenants were illegal based on legal precedence that established racial covenants void if the demographics of the neighborhood changed from predominately white to African American.⁸⁴ The *Washington Afro-American* reported that suits against Raphael Urciolo and Horad—the original realtors who negotiated the sale of the property—were also dismissed.⁸⁵ While Horad is not a named party in the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case of *Hurd v. Hodge* (a 1948 companion case to the Supreme Court case of *Shelley v. Kraemer* which found racial restrictive covenants unenforceable by the courts of the District of Columbia), his pursuit of challenging racial restrictive covenants contributed to the conditions that allowed this case to exist.⁸⁶

⁷⁸ “Hitler Preaches Ghetto System, U.S. Practices It,” *Afro-American*, April 29, 1944, Proquest.

⁷⁹ Investigation of the Program of the National Capital Housing Authority, *Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on the District of Columbia, United States Senate* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1944), 1035-1040.

⁸⁰ Investigation of the Program of the National Capital Housing Authority, *Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on the District of Columbia, United States Senate* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1944), 1035-1040.

⁸¹ Investigation of the Program of the National Capital Housing Authority, *Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on the District of Columbia, United States Senate* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1944), 1035-1040.

⁸² “D.C. Whites Seek Injunction to Uphold Jim Crow Property Clause,” *Washington Afro-American*, October 11, 1941, Newspapers.com.

⁸³ “Colored Tenant Ordered from Restricted Area,” *Washington Afro-American*, February 25, 1942, Newspapers.com.

⁸⁴ “Adams St. Racial Covenant Illegal,” *Washington Afro-American*, October 14, 1944, Newspapers.com.

⁸⁵ “Adams St. Racial Covenant Illegal,” *Washington Afro-American*, October 14, 1944, Newspapers.com.

⁸⁶ For more information, see Sarah Jane Shoenfeld and Mara Cherkasky, “A Strictly White Residential Section,” *Washington History* 29 no. 1 (Spring 2017): 24-41; Sewell Horad and Evelyn Horad, interview by Dr. David Rotenstein, May 30, 2017, “Sewell and Evelyn Horad Oral History Interview.”

In Montgomery County, Horad focused his political and social activism on the improvement of facilities and infrastructure for African American communities. He led the Citizen's Council for Mutual Improvement for Montgomery County, an organization that represented more than 2,000 community members. In January 1948, Horad, as President of the organization, pressed the County government and school board for immediate improvements and contended that the county had a "total disregard for the needs and desires" of the 8,400 African American residents. He argued that all African American schools were inferior to white schools and threatened legal action absent a remedy. The organization requested the following six items as quoted in the *Alabama Tribune* (Montgomery, Alabama):

1. Immediate attention to colored conditions which they described as 'deplorable';
2. Improvement of roads leading to colored communities;
3. Removal of 'Jim Crow' signs on public toilets in the Rock[ville] Court House;
4. Extension of water and sewage lines to colored settlements, 'where practicable';
5. Appointment of some colored policemen; and
6. An opportunity for wealthy colored persons to buy bonds to better facilities.⁸⁷

Later that year, Charles Hamilton Houston—an American lawyer and Civil Rights leader who was Horad's professor during his last year at Howard University—spoke to the organization at a meeting in Rockville. Houston told the organization that "America must learn to live with its Negroes because it is existing in a non-white world."⁸⁸ Horad and the group committed to continued pressure on public officials to improve African American schools, launched a survey of all county schools to determine if equal educational facilities existed, and demand non-segregated playgrounds at Takoma Park. The organization partnered with Dr. Walter G. Daniel, Professor of Education at Howard University, who authored a report that confirmed gross inequities. The Citizen's Council for Mutual Improvement wrote the following, "Continuance of bi-racial character of school organization is inefficient, expensive and can under no circumstance effect an equalization of educational opportunity."⁸⁹ The continued pressure applied by the Horads and community organizations led to the construction of four equalization schools (Emory Grove, Rock Terrace, Sandy Spring, and Edward U. Taylor elementary schools) that provided better facilities and opportunities for Black children in the county. The *Washington Afro-American* recognized Horad on their "Honor Roll" with a merit plaque for outstanding service for his contributions (App. 5, Fig. 10).⁹⁰ The paper stated the following:

Romeo W. Horad...has been selected for organizing and leading the fight in nearby Montgomery County, Md., for better schools, roads, living conditions and the end of jim crow and discriminatory practices.... Through his leadership, the group has brought about the erection of three new schools, now under construction, will get two more consolidated schools and have been promised a new junior high school, junior college, and kindergarten.⁹¹

Horad's civil rights activism culminated in an unprecedented candidacy for political office; no African American had ever been elected to political office in Montgomery County. In 1948, after another unsuccessful run as a delegate to the Maryland State Republican Convention, he joined the race for the 5th District Representative to the newly established Montgomery County Council. Newspapers reported interest due to his groundbreaking candidacy, platform of equity, and backing of African American organizations and residents. The *Evening Star*

⁸⁷ "Marylanders Protest School Negligence," *Alabama Tribune*, January 23, 1948, Newspapers.com; "Montgomery Negroes Ask Better Schools," *Washington Post*, January 14, 1948, Proquest; "County Holds Up Ordinances to Await Rulings," *Evening Star*, March 17, 1948, Newspapers.com.

⁸⁸ "Civil Rights Furor Gives Negroes Balance of Power in Many States," *The Black Dispatch*, October 23, 1948, Newspapers.com.

⁸⁹ "Negro Group Calls on Montgomery Board to 'Equalize' Schools," *Evening Star*, November 15, 1949, Newspapers.com.

⁹⁰ "Honor Roll Winners Given AFRO Merit Plaques," *Washington Afro-American*, May 6, 1950, Newspapers.com.

⁹¹ "AFRO Honor Roll Pays Homage to 10 From Many Walks of Life," *Washington Afro-American*, February 25, 1950, Newspapers.com.

and other national papers such as the *Alabama Tribune* and *Pittsburg Courier* ran a profile of Horad.⁹² Ultimately, he lost the race to the J.D. Bradshaw 8,159 to 1,481 votes, but his candidacy propelled future involvement of African American in local politics.⁹³ Webster Sewell, M.D., Horad's brother-in-law, unsuccessfully ran for a seat on the Montgomery County School Board in 1952.⁹⁴ It was not until the 1970s and 1980s that Montgomery County residents would elect their first African Americans representatives: James Daugherty to the School Board (1970), Roscoe Nix to the School Board (1974), Odessa M. Shannon, first African American woman, to the School Board (1982), and Isaiah Leggett to the County Council (1986).

The subject house at 2118 University Boulevard West remained an important component of the family's political, social, and religious activism. The dwelling served as a tangible connection between the Horads and the African American community in Montgomery County and Maryland. They hosted large gatherings for their religious groups and political allies in the Republican party as the couple pursued the improvement and ultimately desegregation of African American facilities. Evelyn Horad, Romeo and Elsie's daughter-in-law, and Sewell Horad recalled,

Everybody in Washington who knew them came to Wheaton and they had big parties, picnics. People felt as though they were coming to the country because they were.... Well, you know, a lot of times we had roasted pigs...and the churches would come out there to have picnics.⁹⁵

Romeo Horad remained active in local and state politics in the 1950s. He lobbied (albeit unsuccessfully) Governor William Preston Lane, Jr., to appoint Bessie M. Beaman—a Black seamstress from Takoma Park—to the County Board of Education.⁹⁶ In 1951, the newly formed state-wide State Allied Republican Club selected Horad to its steering committee and later named him Vice-President. Horad declared that the Republican Party ignored Maryland's African American residents and stated, "We are not seeking jobs, only recognition. We are here and organized in the interest of good government and the place of Negroes in good government."⁹⁷ The organization with Horad in a position of leadership moved to register 100,000 Maryland African Americans to vote before the primary elections.⁹⁸ Elsie Horad continued to teach in the District of Columbia public school system. She received a real estate license and entered business with her husband after he fell ill in 1945.⁹⁹ Horad retired as a teacher in 1961 after almost thirty-seven years, but continued in the family real estate business until 1987.¹⁰⁰

Romeo Horad died at the Veteran Administration Hospital in 1968.¹⁰¹ Elsie remained the owner of 2118 University Boulevard West, but moved to the District of Columbia. She rented out the property for the next 12 years until her son, Sewell Horad, moved to the house in 1980.¹⁰² At 92 years old, Elsie died in 1990 and the property passed to her three children: Romeo W. Horad, Jr., Sewell D. Horad, Sr., and Martha Belle Horad Jones.¹⁰³ Sewell Horad, Sr., acquired the subject property in 1997. The descendants of the Webster-Sewell-Horad family conveyed the adjacent parcel at 2100 University Boulevard West—the site of the no longer extant Charles and Jane Webster House—to the Iglesia Cristiana Canaán Church in 1999. Sewell D. Horad, Sr., sold

⁹² "Romeo W. Horad, Candidate for Council, Backs Equity," *Evening Star*, December 27, 1948, Newspapers.com; "Negro Back Civic Head for County Council Seat," *Black Dispatch*, January 8, 1949, Newspapers.com; "Back D.C. Civic Leader for Seat in County Council," *Pittsburgh Courier*, January 8, 1949, Newspapers.com.

⁹³ "Montgomery Charter Council Due to Take Office Monday," *Washington Post*, January 14, 1949, Proquest.

⁹⁴ "Ten Seek Four Places on Montgomery County School Board in First Election of Members," *Evening Star*, October 29, 1952, Newspapers.com.

⁹⁵ Sewell Horad and Evelyn Horad, interview by Dr. David Rotenstein, May 30, 2017, "Sewell and Evelyn Horad Oral History Interview."

⁹⁶ "Lane Urged to Name Negro to School Board," *Evening Star*, February 28, 1950, Newspapers.com.

⁹⁷ "Negroes Black McKeldin, New GOP Club Says," *Baltimore Sun*, October 1, 1951, Proquest.

⁹⁸ "Goal of 100,000 Negroes in G.O.P. Set in Maryland," *Evening Star*, June 18, 1951, Newspapers.com.

⁹⁹ "Capital Spotlight," *Afro-American*, June 30, 1945, Proquest.

¹⁰⁰ "Elsie Horad, D.C. Teacher, Real Estate Agent, Dies at 91," *Washington Post*, August 11, 1990, Proquest.

¹⁰¹ "Romeo Horad, 74, Head of D.C. Real Estate Firm," *Washington Post*, November 4, 1968, Proquest.

¹⁰² "From Jane & Charles Webster to Elle Jackson (Infant), 1842 to 1991," Papers of Sewell Horad; Sewell Horad and Evelyn Horad, interview by Dr. David Rotenstein, May 30, 2017, "Sewell and Evelyn Horad Oral History Interview."

¹⁰³ "Elsie Horad, D.C. Teacher, Real Estate Agent, Dies at 91," *Washington Post*, August 11, 1990, Proquest.

the subject property to Goblam, LLC, in 2016, who then conveyed the land to the Iglesia Cristiana Canaán Church (the current owners of both parcels).¹⁰⁴

I. Areas Exempt from Designation: The environmental setting does not include the church at 2100 University Boulevard West. The buildings formerly associated with the Sewell and Webster families are no longer extant.

J. Designation Criteria:

The Romeo and Elsie Horad House meets Designation Criteria 1.A, 1.C, and 1.D as listed in §24A-3 of the Montgomery County Code.

1.A Historical and cultural significance. The historic resource has character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the county, state or nation.

The Romeo and Elsie Horad House is representative of the development of the African American community in Wheaton. Black residents Henry Gaither, Jerry Gaither, and Henry Walker first acquired a single acre at present-day 11005 Dayton Street to establish the Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1873. The church held the first segregated Black elementary school before the Board of Education acquired a one-acre parcel for a new school at the turn of the twentieth century. The burgeoning community (including a densely populated block known as Chestnut Ridge on Wheaton Lane) expanded as residents acquired property. This included purchase of part of the subject property by Charles and Jane Webster—the grandparents of Elsie Horad—in 1894. By the mid-twentieth century, the African American community at Wheaton consisted of at least 21 owners, 11 renters, and a population of 147 persons. Romeo and Elsie Horad constructed the subject Colonial Revival house on property owned by Elsie’s family in 1938. Most of the resources associated with the Wheaton African American community including Chestnut Ridge, the segregated Black elementary school, and Allen Chapel AME Church are no longer extant or highly altered. Therefore, the Horad House is a singular and critical resource that represents the lost African American heritage in this section of the county.

1.C Historic and cultural significance. Is identified with a person or group of persons who influenced society.

The Romeo and Elsie Horad House is significant for its connection to the Webster-Sewell family and, more importantly, its association with the life of the Horads. The Horad House represents the cumulative efforts of three generations of the family to improve the lives of African Americans in Montgomery County and the surrounding region.

Charles Webster, the grandfather of Elsie Horad, was a leader of the African American community in Wheaton and Montgomery County in the early 1900s. He participated in the local Republican conventions and lobbied support for candidates who supported the improvement of conditions for Black residents. In addition, Webster strove to improve school conditions for Black students as trustee of the segregated Black Wheaton elementary school. Elsie Horad’s brother, Webster Sewell, M.D., played a critical role in the health and welfare of the African American community in Wheaton and Montgomery County. After graduating from Howard University’s School of Medicine in 1930, he returned to Wheaton where he practiced medicine before opening a clinic in Norbeck. The Montgomery County Medical Society named the “Access to Care Award” in his name which recognizes organizations committed to increasing access to health care for people in the National Capital Region. While the Webster House (formerly adjacent to this property) is no longer standing, the Horad House aptly reflects the legacy and influence of the family.

The Horad House represents the political and social significance of the African American couple at the local, state, and national levels in the mid-twentieth century. The Horads played a significant role advocating for the rights and well-being of Black Americans. Born and raised in Montgomery County, Elsie Horad participated with the local political organizations and served as an educator in the District of Columbia school system for 37

¹⁰⁴ Ottery Group, Inc., “Romeo W. Horad House,” (2023), Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form, M:31-87.

years before joining the family's real estate business. Romeo Horad, a World War I veteran, graduated from Howard University School of Law in 1925. He then joined the District of Columbia's Office of the Recorder of Deeds where he revolutionized the land record system. Local and national papers recognized the achievements of the new system with headlines such as "New Recording System Far Cry from Slave Deals" in the *Afro-American* and "Negro Clerical Workers Install Indexing System" in the *Northwest Enterprise*.

After transitioning from government employment to the private real estate industry, the Horads moved their family to 2118 University Boulevard West in Wheaton. As a realtor, Romeo Horad employed a variety of approaches to combat racial restrictive covenants, spanning from persuasive oratory to directly confronting existing laws. He testified before congressional committees regarding the harmful impact of racial covenants and housing discrimination in the Washington metropolitan region on the African American community. Furthermore, he lamented and criticized the complete closure of Montgomery County and the surrounding suburbs to potential African Americans owners and renters. In the capital, he partnered with Italian American real estate brokers Raphael and Joseph Urciolo—and later Charles Houston Hamilton—to purchase white-owned houses with racial restrictive covenants and resell those properties to African Americans. Although Horad was not directly involved as a named party in the Supreme Court case *Hurd v. Hodge* that declared racial covenants unenforceable in Washington, D.C., his persistent efforts to circumvent these housing restrictions significantly contributed to the success of the civil rights movement.

Horad's political and social efforts aimed to enhance the lives of African American residents in Montgomery County. He led the Citizen's Council for Mutual Improvement and lobbied local representatives for new school facilities, transportation improvements, installation of sewage and water lines, removal of segregated facilities at the Rockville Court House, and appointment of Black police officers. Alongside other activists (such as Elsie Horad) and organizations, Horad's efforts to improve public education directly led to the construction of four equalization schools. His civil rights activism culminated in candidacies for political office. In 1948, Horad entered the race for the Montgomery County Council. His unprecedented entry, platform of equity, and backing of African American organizations led to public profiles in local and national newspapers. Horad's actions occurred in an era of racial tensions and threats of violence against African Americans who championed civil rights. While he lost the race, his candidacy paved the way for African Americans to engage in local politics.

Romeo Horad labored on behalf of other political candidates and organizations on the local and state level. He lobbied (albeit unsuccessfully) Governor William Preston, Jr. to appoint Bessie Beaman—an African American seamstress from Takoma Park—to the Board of Education. Horad then served in a position of leadership in the state-wide State Allied Republican Club where he moved to register 100,000 African Americans voters prior to the state's primary elections. He continued to advocate for African American rights and lived at the subject house until his death in 1968.

1.D Historic and cultural significance. Exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political or historical heritage of the county and its communities.

The Romeo and Elsie Horad House serves as a reminder of segregated life in the twentieth in Montgomery County. Romeo and Elsie Horad, like other prospective African American purchasers or renters, relied on the subdivision of ancestral land in Montgomery County due to the pervasive and widespread discriminatory housing practices against people of color. The Horad family championed the importance of home ownership and deemed it critical that their new house reflect the boundless abilities of African Americans when provided opportunities. Therefore, the couple built a traditional, brick-clad, Colonial (Georgian) Revival style house to demonstrate outwardly their professional, economic, and social prominence. The Horad House has character, interest, and value representing the life, endeavors, and achievements of the African American community in Montgomery County. Activists, such as Charles Webster, Romeo Horad, and Elsie Horad, tirelessly worked to improve the lives of African Americans who lived in Montgomery County.

The Romeo and Elsie Horad House stands as a reminder of the African American community in Wheaton. Many resources have been lost due to the demolition of late nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings. This includes numerous houses at Chestnut Ridge (near Wheaton Lane), the one-room segregated elementary school, and the former Allen Chapel AME Church substantially altered by a fire. The loss of these community pillars and the uniqueness of the subject property's history elevates the significance of the Horad

House. Preservation would recognize a cultural asset that reflects generations of African American life and activism and offers a story of a family's resilience and advancement in Montgomery County.

K. Conclusion:

The Romeo and Elsie Horad House retains sufficient historic and physical integrity to convey its period of significance (1938-1968). The house has integrity of location as it remains in its original location on University Boulevard West. The integrity of setting is diminished by the redevelopment of the surrounding area and the loss of other nearby resources related to the history of the African American community in Wheaton. Its uniqueness in the built environment, however, bolsters its significance to understanding the development of Montgomery County. The house continues to express its integrity of design, workmanship, and materials. The building retains its Colonial (Georgian) Revival style design as alterations are limited with no adverse effects to its form and massing. While the present-use or function by the church is unknown, the building continues to read as a single-family dwelling. Therefore, the house retains its sense of feeling and association.

The Horad House is representative of the development of the former African American community in Wheaton and a testament to the resilience, vision, and collective effort of the Webster-Sewell-Horad family to the improvement of the lives of African American residents. The architectural features, design, and context of the house celebrate the unique character of the resource.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING/GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Property Land Area: .77 acres

Account Number: 00963952

District: 13

Environmental Setting Description: The environmental setting incorporates the entire parcel conveyed to Romeo and Elsie Horad in 1938.

Environmental Setting Justification: The environmental setting does not include the parcel to the east (Account Number 00963952) owned by Iglesia Canaán Christian Church. All buildings on this parcel previously associated with the Webster-Sewell families have been demolished. Therefore, no other parcels are within the environmental setting.

9. PROPERTY OWNERS

Name: Iglesia Cristiana Canaán Church

Address: 11409 S. Glen Road, Potomac, MD 20854

10. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: John Liebertz, Cultural Resources Planer III, Montgomery County Planning Department

Date: April 2024

11. MAJOR SOURCES CONSULTED

Ancestry.com [numerous].

Clarke, Nina H and Lillian B. Brown. *History of the Black Public Schools of Montgomery County, Maryland, 1872-1961*. Washington, D.C.: Vintage Press, 1978.

Evening Star [numerous].

“From Jane & Charles Webster to Elle Jackson (Infant), 1842 to 1991.” Unpublished. Papers of Sewell Horad.

Horad, Sewell and Evelyn Horad. Interview by Dr. David Rotenstein. May 30, 2017, “Sewell and Evelyn Horad Oral History.”

Montgomery County Land Records, <http://www.mdlandrec.net>.

Shoenfeld, Sarah Jane and Mara Cherkasky. “A Strictly White Residential Section.” *Washington History* 29, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 24-41.

State Board of Education, [numerous].

Washington Post [numerous].

APPENDIX ONE:
ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING/GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

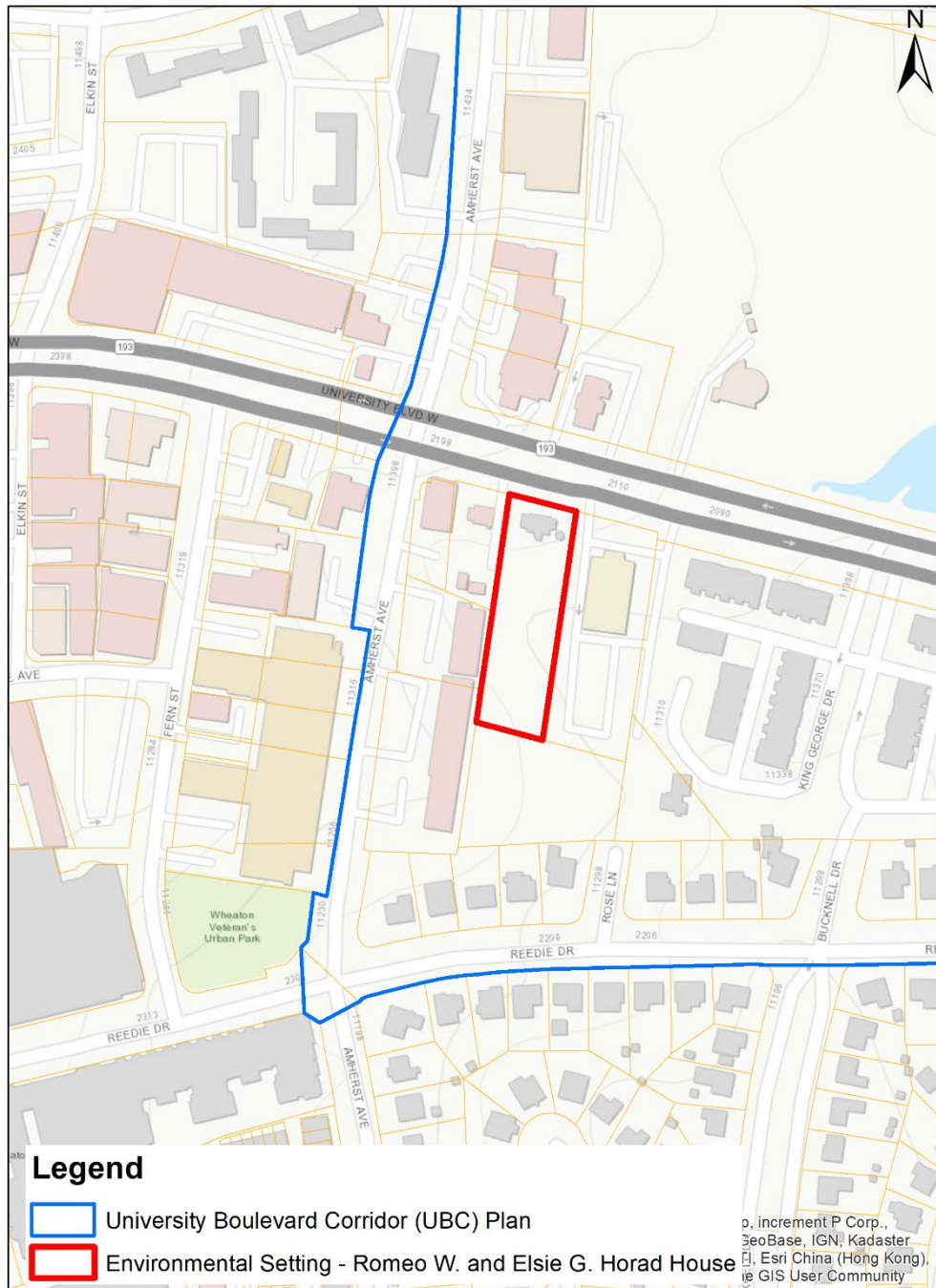


Figure 1: Proposed environmental setting for the Romeo and Elsie Horad House, Wheaton, Montgomery County, Maryland.

APPENDIX TWO:
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Figure 1: Aerial photograph, 1948. The yellow and green arrows point to the WTOP Radio Station and Old Bladensburg Road—present day University Boulevard West—in the foreground, respectively. The red and blue arrows point to the Romeo and Elsie Horad House and the demolished Charles and Jane Webster House in the background, respectively. The family fruit orchard is visible in the midground on the left.



Figure 2: Aerial photograph, 1957. The red and blue arrows point to the Romeo and Elsie Horad House and the demolished Charles and Jane Webster House, respectively. The family fruit orchards are visible to the right.

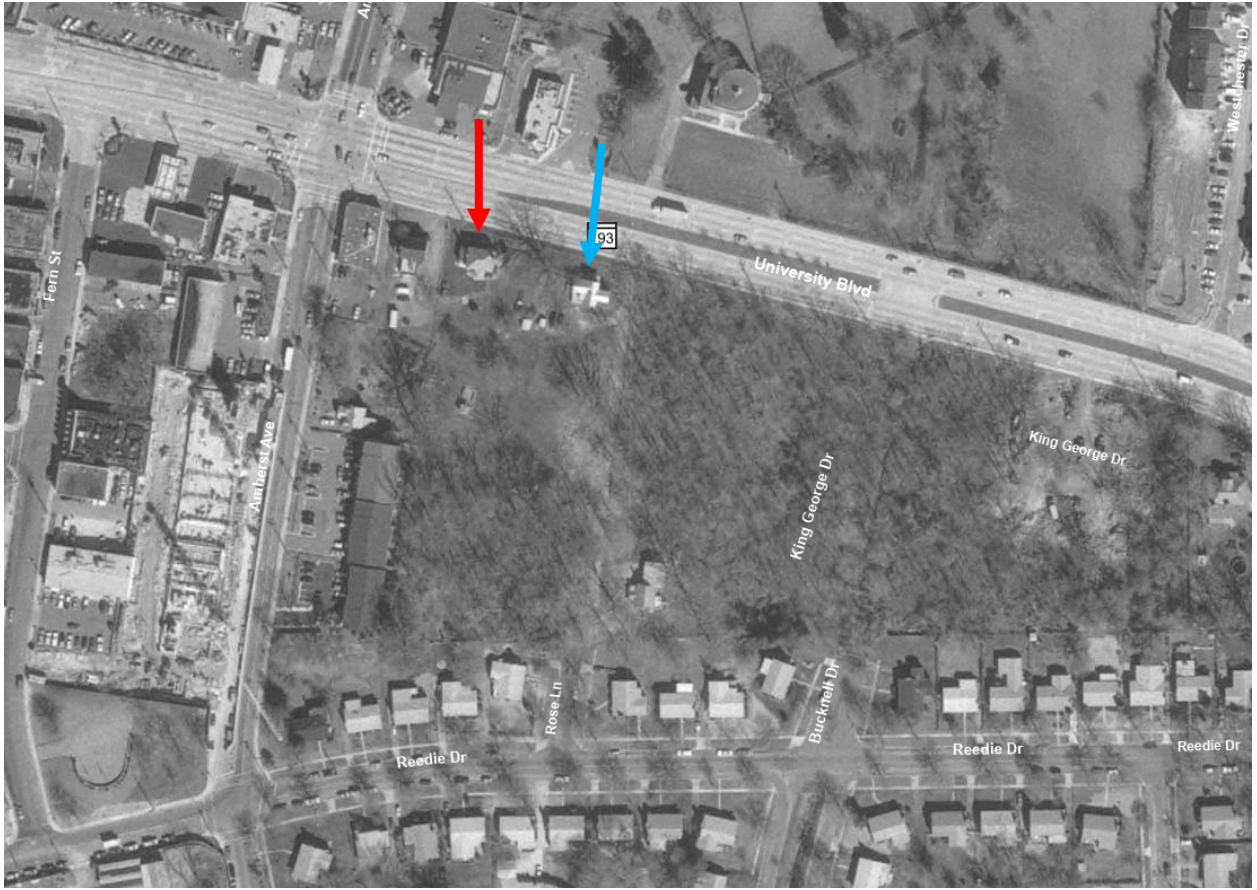


Figure 3: Aerial photograph, 1992. The red arrow points to the Romeo and Elsie Horad House. The blue arrow points to the Charles and Jane Webster House located on Lot 2 of the “Subdivision of the Sewell Tract.”



Figure 4: Aerial photograph, 2002. The red arrow points to the Romeo and Elsie Horad House. The blue arrow points to the previous location of the Charles and Jane Webster House demolished between 1998 and 2002.



Figure 5: Aerial photograph, 2004. The red arrow points to the Romeo and Elsie Horad House. The blue arrow points to the new Canaán Church on the lot formerly associated with the Charles and Jane Webster House.

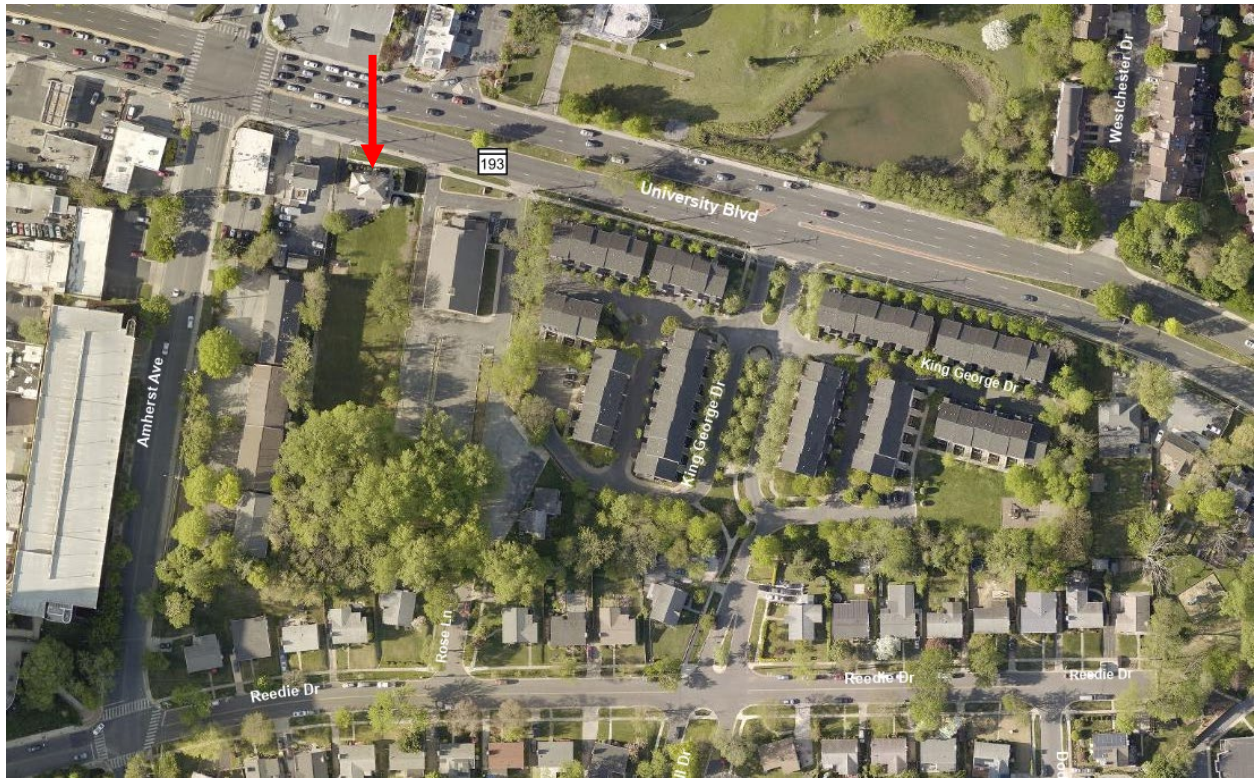


Figure 6: Aerial photograph, 2023. The red arrow points to the Romeo and Elsie Horad House. The aerial depicts site alterations following acquisition of the property by Canaan Church including the relocation of a non-historic gazebo and installation of a concrete pathway connecting the house to the church property.



Figure 7: Aerial photograph, 2023. The blue outline shows the approximate proposed environmental setting of the Romeo and Elsie Horad House.

APPENDIX THREE:
HISTORIC MAPS AND PLATS SHOWING THE SUBJECT PROPERTY

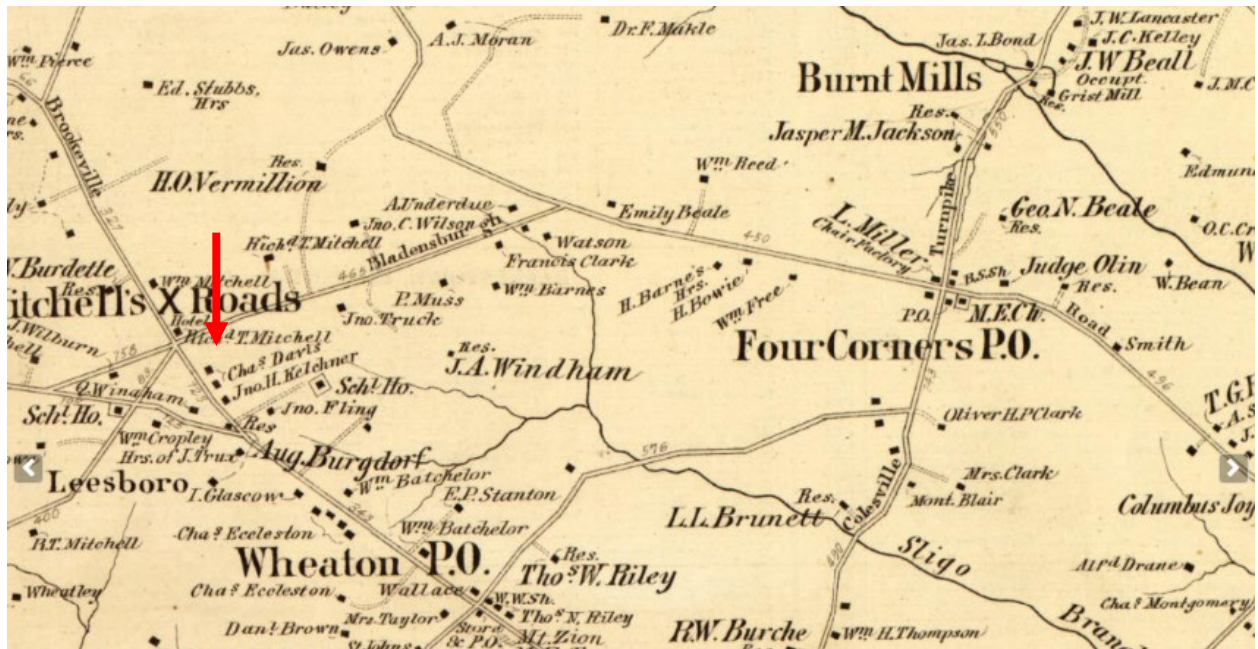


Figure 2: Map of Montgomery County, MD, 1878. The red arrow points to the approximate location of the Romeo and Elsie Horad House constructed in 1938.

Source: G.M. Hopkin's Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington, including the county of Montgomery Maryland, 1878, Library of Congress.



Figure 3: Map showing Bladensburg Road (present-day University Boulevard West), 1894. The red arrow points to the approximate location of the Romeo and Elsie Horad House constructed in 1938. The school to the east was the location of the segregated school for white students.

Source: G.M. Hopkin's Vicing of Washington, D.C., 1894, Library of Congress.

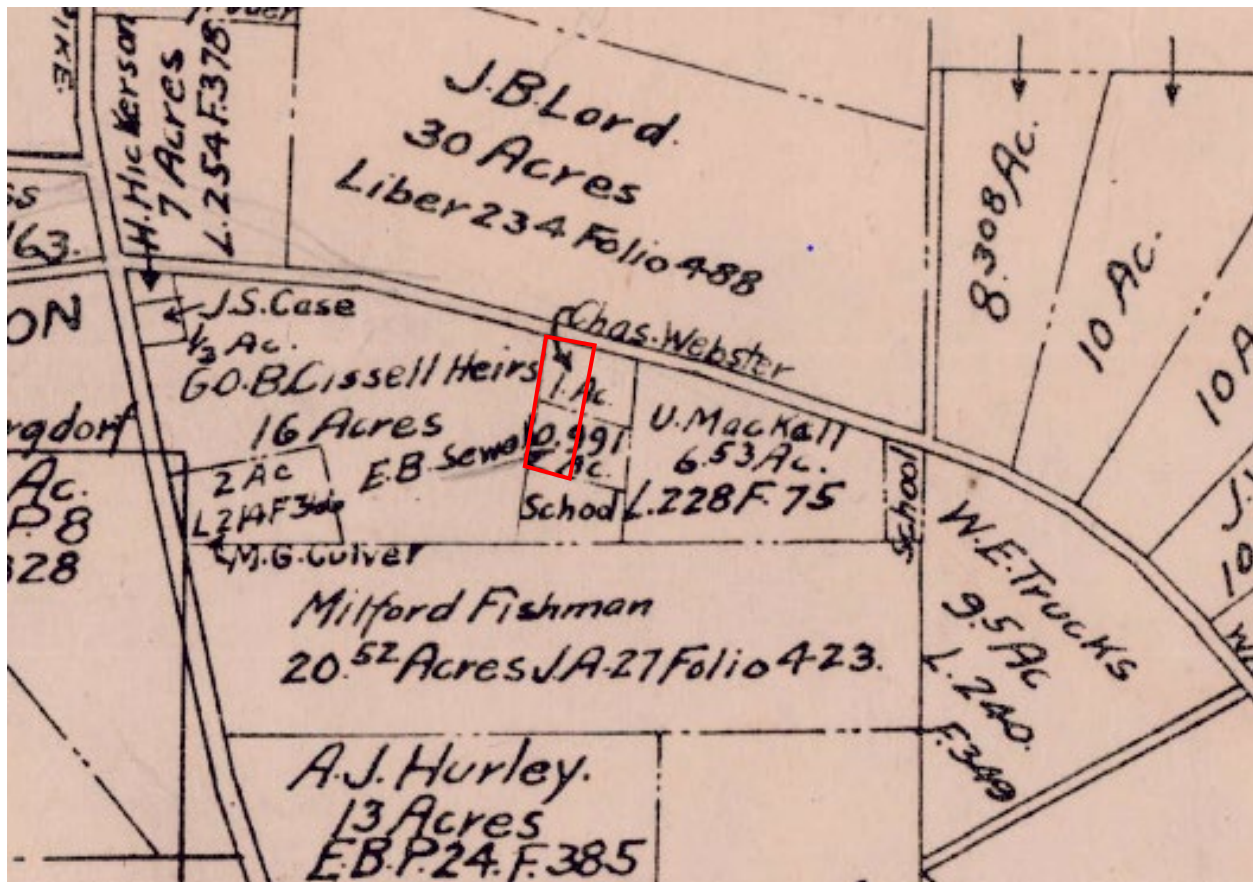


Figure 5: Property atlas showing Bladensburg Road (present-day University Boulevard West), 1916. The red outline shows the approximate location of the subject property located partially on the one-acre Charles Webster lot and .991-acre E.B. Sewell lot. South of the Sewell lot was the school lot for the segregated African American elementary school.

Source: Charles J. Maddox's Real Estate Atlas of Part of Montgomery County, Maryland, Montgomery Planning.

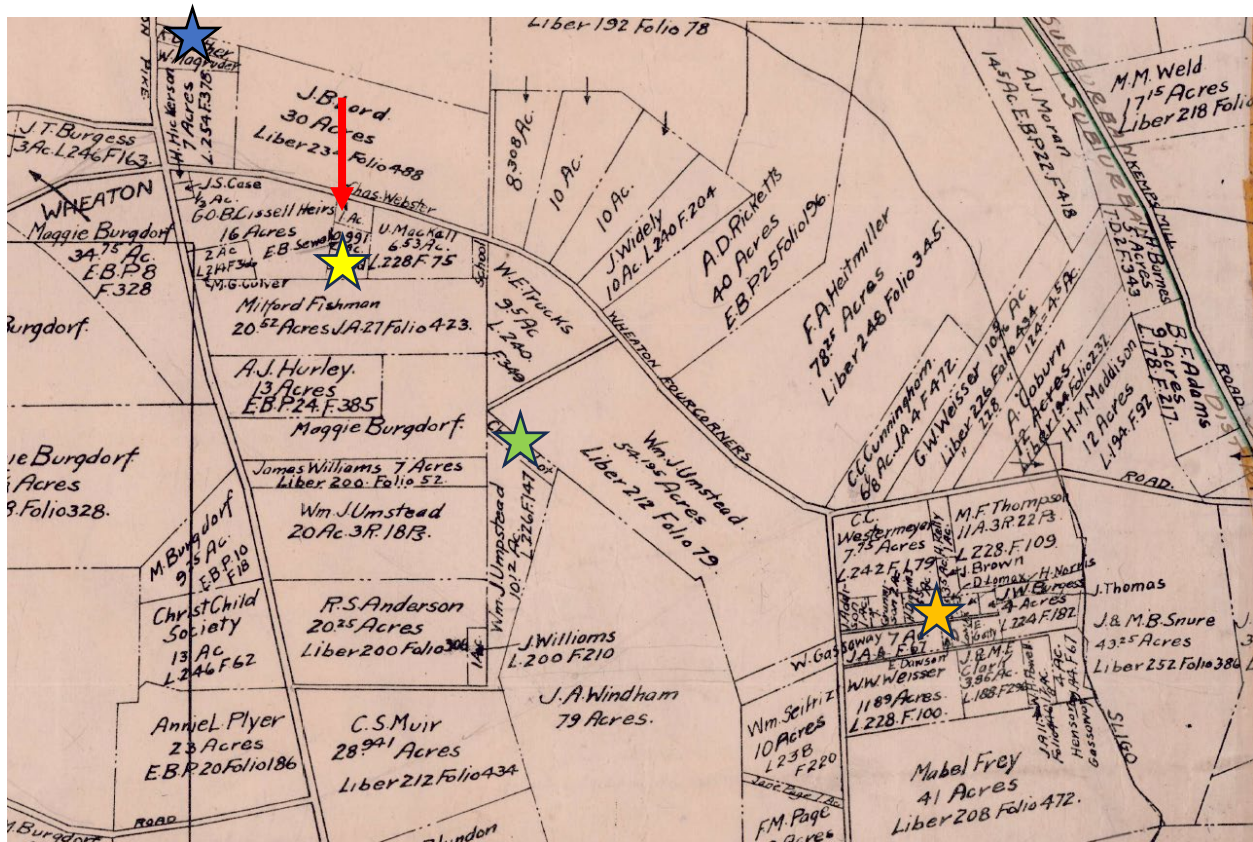


Figure 6: Expanded view of Bladensburg Road (present-day University Boulevard) showing the locations of the African American community, 1916. The Charles Webster and Edward B. Sewell lots (red arrow) was the future location of the Romeo and Elsie Horad House. The four colored stars represent different significant locations within the Wheaton African American community: Richard Gaither property (blue), segregated Black Wheaton elementary school (yellow), Allen African Methodist Episcopal Church and Cemetery (green), and the Chestnut Ridge community (orange)

Source: Charles J. Maddox's Real Estate Atlas of Part of Montgomery County, Maryland, Montgomery Planning.



Figure 7: Topographic map showing Bladensburg Road (present-day University Boulevard), 1923. The red, blue, and green arrows point to the approximate future location of the Romeo and Elsie Horad House (constructed in 1938), Charles and Jane Webster House, and the segregated Black Wheaton elementary school, respectively. The map shows the access road to the school property to the rear of the Webster House.
Source: U.S Geological Survey, Rockville, MD, <https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/topoview>.

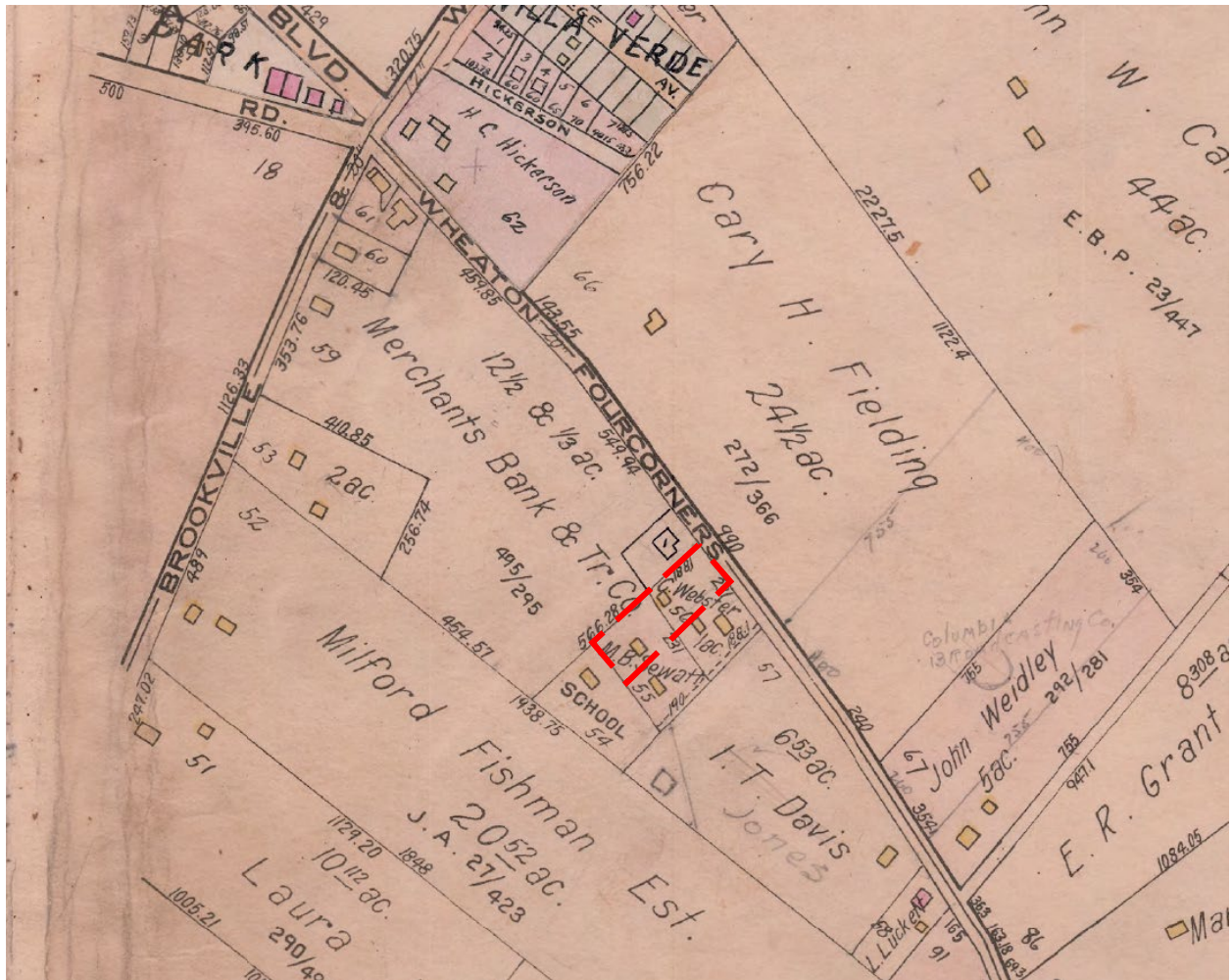


Figure 8: Property atlas showing Bladensburg Road (present-day University Boulevard West), 1931. The red outline shows the approximate location of the subject property located partially on the one-acre Webster lot and .991-acre Sewell lot. Note the number of wood-frame buildings on the Webster and Sewell lots.
Source: F.H.M. Klinge's Property Atlas of Montgomery County, Maryland, Volume One, Montgomery Planning.

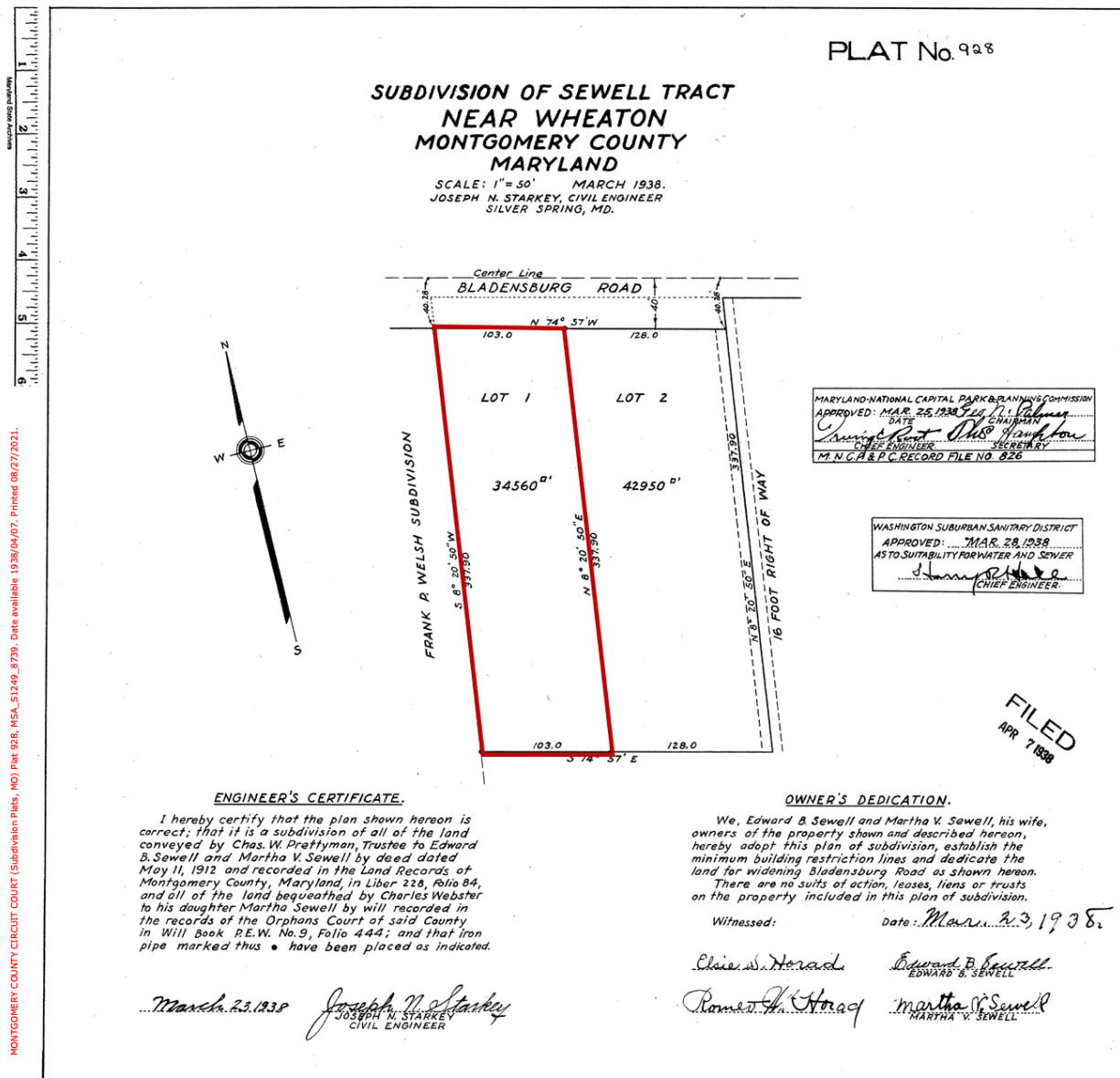


Figure 9: Plat showing the resubdivision of the Sewell and Webster properties, 1938. The red outline shows the subject property and proposed environmental setting.
Source: Joseph N. Starkey's Plat of the Subdivision of Sewell Tract Near Wheaton, Montgomery County, Maryland, MDLandRec.

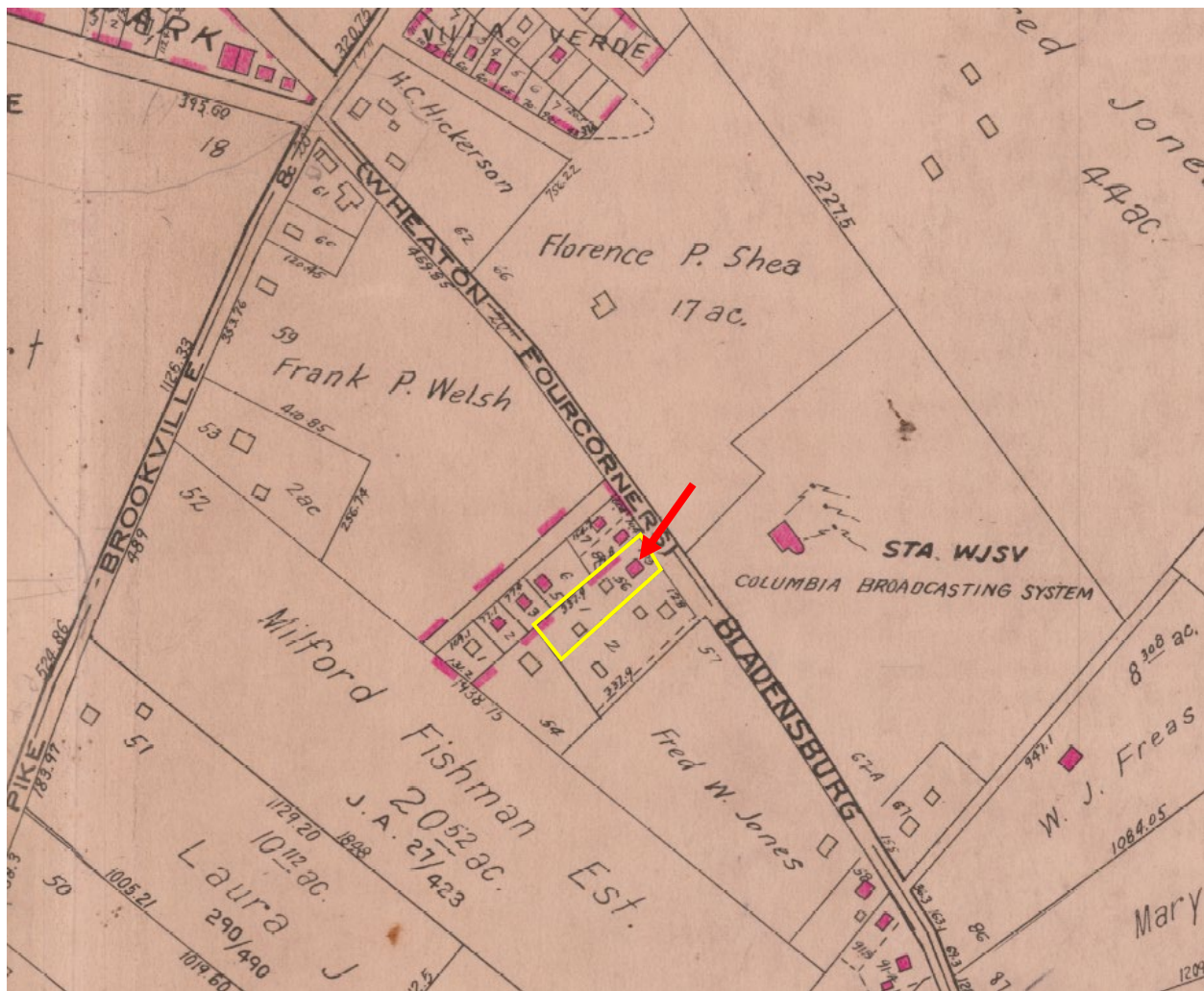


Figure 10: Property atlas showing Bladensburg Road (present-day University Boulevard West), 1941. The yellow outline shows the location of the subject property and the red arrow points to the Romeo and Elsie Horad House. Note the number of demolished accessory buildings to rear of the house.
Source: F.H.M. Klinge's Property Atlas of Montgomery County, Maryland, Volume One, Montgomery Planning.

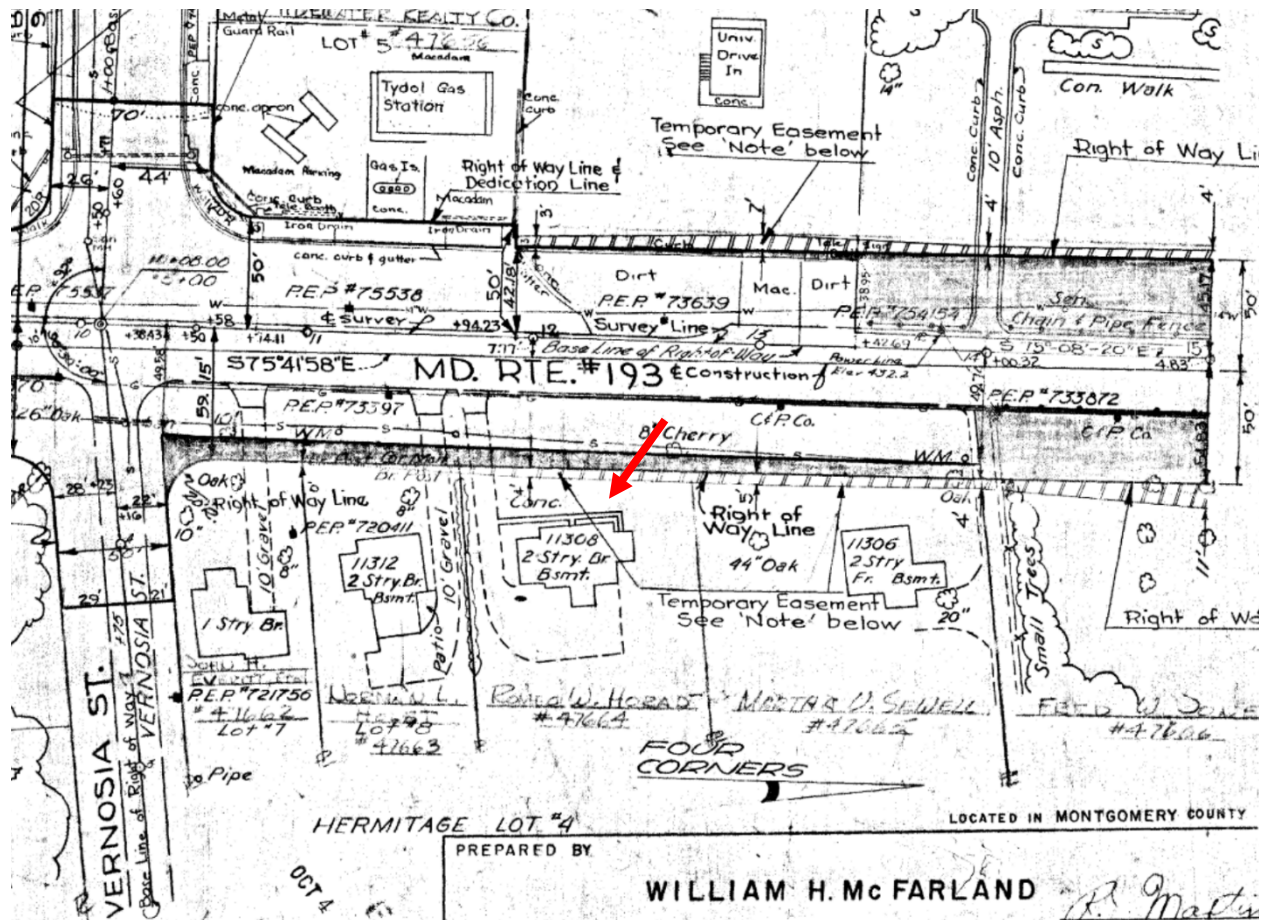


Figure 11: Proposed Widening of MD Route 193, University Boulevard West, 1960. The red arrow points to the Romeo Horad House which had a much larger front yard prior to the widening of the road.
Source: Maryland State Archives.

APPENDIX FOUR:
EXTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE ROMEO AND ELSIE HORAD HOUSE



Figure 1: View of the façade of the Romeo and Elsie Horad House looking south from University Boulevard West, 2022.

Source: Montgomery Planning.



Figure 2: View of the north (façade) and west elevations of the Romeo and Elsie Horad House looking southeast from the sidewalk of University Boulevard West, 2023.
Source: Ottery Group.



Figure 3: View of the south (rear) and west elevations of the Romeo and Elsie Horad House looking northeast from the driveway, 2023.
Source: Ottery Group.



Figure 4: View of the south (rear) and east elevations of the Romeo and Elsie Horad House looking northeast from the rear yard, 2023.

Source: Ottery Group.

APPENDIX FIVE:

HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE WEBSTER, SEWELL, AND HORAD HOUSES AND FAMILIES



Figure 1: View of the Charles and Jane Webster House constructed ca. 1894, date unknown.
Source: Papers of Sewell Horad, Montgomery Planning.



Figure 2: View of the Clarence Webster House located to the rear of the Charles and Jane Webster House, date unknown.

Source: Papers of Sewell Horad, Montgomery Planning.



Figure 3: View of the Romeo and Elsie Horad House, 1991
Source: Papers of Sewell Horad, Montgomery Planning.



Figure 4: Portrait of Charles and Jane Webster, date unknown.
Source: Papers of Sewell Horad, Montgomery Planning.



Figure 5: Photograph of Webster, Sewell, and Horad family, date unknown. Standing in the rear: Edward B. and Martha V. Sewell (parents of Elsie G. Horad). Seated: Charles and Jane Webster (grandparents of Elsie G. Horad and parents of Martha V. Sewell). Children: Sewell D. Horad, left, and Romeo W. Horad, Jr., right (children of Romeo and Elsie Horad).

Source: Papers of Sewell Horad, Montgomery Planning.



EDWARD B. SEWELL

*Figure 6: Photograph of Edward B. Sewell, 1941.
Source: Afro-American.*



*Figure 7: Photograph of the Washington Real Estate Brokers' Association, 1941. The red arrow points to Romeo W. Horad, Sr.
Source: Afro-American.*



*Figure 8: Photographs of Romeo W. Horad, Sr.
Source: Afro-American and Evening Star.*




Figure 9: Photograph of Romeo W. Horad, Sr., 1948.
Source: *Washington Afro-American*.



Figure 10: Photograph of the winners of the Washington Afro-American merit plaques, 1950. Romeo W. Horad, Sr. is seated on the right.
Source: *Washington Afro-American*.

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ROMEO W. HORAD
REAL ESTATE
Broker - Loans - Insurance

See This Week's Specials

Beautiful suburban homes within easy reach of the heart of the city. Comprising 6 large rooms, built-in tile bath, garage, front and back yards, detached. Priced at \$7,000; Easy Terms.

Six rooms, two baths, hot air heat, stone front, full basement. Desirable N.E. section, \$6,500; terms.

1736 Vermont Ave., N.W. Mi. 7626

Evening and Sunday Kensington 191M

Figure 11: Advertisement for real estate business, 1941.
Source: *Washington Afro-American*.

APPENDIX SIX:
MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES FORM

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. M:31-87

1. Name of Property

historic Romeo W. Horad House (preferred)
other Horad House; Sewell-Horad House

2. Location

street and number 2118 University Boulevard W ___ not for publication
city, town Silver Spring ___ vicinity
county Montgomery

3. Owner of Property

name Canaan Christian Church
street and number 11409 S Glen Road telephone
city, town Potomac state MD zip code 20854

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery liber 53884 folio 190
city, town Rockville tax map JQ11 tax parcel N280 tax ID number 00963952

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

___ Contributing Resource in National Register District
___ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
___ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
___ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
___ Recorded by HABS/HAER
___ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
X Other: Montgomery County Historic Preservation Office

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
___ district	___ public	___ agriculture	Contributing
X building(s)	X private	___ landscape	Noncontributing
___ structure	___ both	___ commerce/trade	1
___ site		___ recreation/culture	0
___ object		X religion	0
		___ social	0
		___ transportation	0
		___ work in progress	1
		___ unknown	0
		___ vacant/not in use	0
		___ other:	0

Number of Contributing Resources
previously listed in the Inventory
0

7. Description

Inventory No. M:31-87

Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The Romeo W. Horad House is a Georgian revival dwelling built in 1938 and located at 2118 University Boulevard W in the Wheaton district of Silver Spring, Maryland, approximately 1,100 feet east of the intersection of Georgia Avenue and University Boulevard West. The house is located on its original parcel and appears mostly unaltered from its time of construction. The Horad House is a rare local example of domestic architecture in that it reflects the material character of a middle-class, Black family in rural Montgomery County in the first half of the twentieth century, and it was built to convey the economic and social status of Romeo W. Horad. While the landscape surrounding the property has changed significantly since the dwelling's construction, the house displays a high degree of historic integrity based on aspects such as location, materials, workmanship, design, and feeling.

SITE & ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION¹

Located on a 0.77-acre parcel on the south side of University Boulevard W, the Romeo W. Horad House faces north and is set back approximately 24 feet from University Boulevard W. The property is bounded by a chain link fence (except in its southwest corner, where the fencing is wood and side-by-side), pierced by an asphalt driveway at its northwest corner which passes the house on its west side and ends at the rear of the structure. A concrete pathway leads from the driveway to the front entrance and wraps around the dwelling, meeting the asphalt at the structure's rear. The property is covered mostly by grass lawn, with scattered trees at its rear, and slopes gently downward, away from the road.

The central portion of the wood-frame, brick veneer house is double-pile, two stories high and three bays wide, with single-pile, one-story wings located at its east and west ends. The walls are brick and laid in a common bond variant, with header courses placed every seventh course. The side and rear elevations of the central portion of the house and east wing are embellished with a belt course between the basement and first story that consists of a modified basketweave. The repeating pattern consists of a single row of three horizontal stretcher bricks followed by three vertical stretcher bricks. The roof over the central, two-story portion is hipped and low-pitched, while the roofs over the one-story wings are hipped and meet the central block at their peak; all the roofs are clad in asphalt shingles. Two brick end chimneys rise from the wings at the east and west ends of the house's central block, and the entire structure sits on a poured concrete foundation.

The house's north-facing façade features the building's primary entrance at the center of its first story: a single-leaf, four-paneled door with a fanlight set near the top. Accessed from the concrete pathway, this entrance stands above a boxed concrete platform and is slightly recessed within a colonial revival door surround featuring piers at either side and a flat, toothed pediment. Bordering the entrance on both sides are bay windows containing central, fixed sashes flanked by one-over-one sash windows. The small, hipped roofs over the bay windows are clad in metal, while the walls underneath are clad in a coursed masonry veneer. The one-story wing to the east of the central block—likely an infilled porch, given the size of the window openings on its south and east elevations—contains a secondary, north-facing entrance. This entrance is accessed from the pathway by two concrete steps and features a single-leaf, two-paneled door inset with a one-lite window and is flanked by single-paned sidelights. The portion of the wall under the sidelights is clad in vinyl siding. The one-story wing to the west of the central portion contains a simple, fixed, tripartite window.

¹ The 2023 architectural survey of the Horad House was conducted from public rights-of-way.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. M:31-87

Romeo W. Horad House
Continuation Sheet

Number 7 Page 1

The façade's second story is marked by three window openings: a small, one-over-one sash window is set above the primary entrance, while two larger, one-over-one sash windows are set above the first-story bay windows.

At the house's west side, the one-story wing extends across most of the first story, where the wall is pierced by a one-over-one sash window set in the wing's center. The central block extends beyond the wing a short distance further to the south; in this section, a one-over-one sash window is set adjacent to the wall seam between the central block and the wing. On the second story, two one-over-one sash windows frame the end chimneystack. These windows are not symmetrically placed; the northmost window is set closer to the chimney stack than the southmost window.

The house's rear, south elevation, is marked by a porch extending across roughly the eastern two-thirds of the central block. A shed roof supported by three wood posts covers the porch, which is accessed by a wood staircase leading to a rear entryway, slightly west of center. This entryway contains a single-leaf, two-paneled door inset with a one-lite window. A small, one-over-one sash window is situated to the west of the entrance, while a set of one-over-one, paired windows is located to the east and set behind the porch. At the west wing, a garage door extends across most of the wall and is accessed from the asphalt driveway, while the east wing features a larger window opening; this opening has been filled by a set of fixed, single-pane paired windows above a section of siding. The second story of the central block features three window openings: a small, one-over-one sash window is set above the rear entryway, slightly west of center, and is flanked by two larger, one-over-one sash windows situated above the first-story window openings.

Due to the downward slope of the property's elevation away from the road, the basement level is partially exposed at the house's rear. Near the southwest corner of the central block, a set of concrete stairs leads down to this level and ends at a eled, two-lite, single-leaf door. To the east of this door, adjacent to the porch stairs, is a two-lite slider window. The portion of the elevation under the porch has been enclosed by plywood boards and turned into an interior space; a small single-leaf entryway is located just east of the porch stairs.

The house's east side mirrors the west in that the one-story wing extends across most of the first story. The wing is marked by a large window opening filled with a wide, single-pane, tripartite window set above a section of siding. Another one-over-one sash window is located on the face of the central block to the south of the wing. The second story features the east chimneystack rising from the wing, flanked on its north by a larger, one-over-one sash window and on its south by a smaller, one-over-one sash window; like those on the west side, these windows are not symmetrically placed, and the southmost window is situated closer to the chimneystack. A third, larger, one-over-one sash window is located further to the south, near the building's southeast corner. The basement level is exposed near the southeast corner of this elevation, where a set of concrete stairs leads down to a two-paneled, two-lite, single-leaf door. Abutting the doorway, to its north, is a two-lite slider window. At the far south of the elevation, where the enclosed porch extends beyond the building, a large single-leaf entryway is situated near the corner of the porch.

An unscreened gazebo stands to the east of the house, near its southeast corner, while a small playground set is located further south beyond the rear of the house, in the grass lawn.

8. Significance

Inventory No. M:31-87

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social history	
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____	

Specific dates	1938-1968	Architect/Builder	Unknown
Construction dates	1938		

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register ☐ Maryland Register ☒ not evaluated

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Romeo W. Horad House is significant for its association with Romeo W. Horad, a Black lawyer, real estate broker, and political agent who led a life of local importance in the struggle to advance the rights and wellbeing of Black Americans in Montgomery County (National Register of Historic Places Criterion B). Romeo Horad is also nationally significant for his efforts to achieve residential desegregation in Washington, D.C.² Horad married into the Sewell-Webster family, which had acquired the Horad House parcel in the Wheaton community in the late nineteenth century and which, by its own social and political efforts, sought to advance the rights of Black Americans through education and political activism. Horad constructed the house in 1938, around the time he began his efforts to circumvent racial covenant restrictions and transfer white-owned properties for sale to Black families. Though he was not a party in the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case of *Hurd v. Hodge*, Horad was a partner in the sale of homes in the Bloomingdale neighborhood of Washington, D.C. to Black homebuyers, while those properties were under racially restrictive covenants. The resulting court decision from the 1948 case—a companion case to the nationally significant suit brought in *Shelley v. Kraemer*—effectively struck down all racially restrictive covenants in Washington, D.C.³ Horad later began an initiative to improve the conditions of desegregated schools in the county and ultimately ran for elected office, while the house served as a social and political meeting place for his contemporaries. The Horad House has character, interest, and value in representing his life, endeavors, and achievements.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Horad Predecessors on University Boulevard

The Romeo W. Horad House was constructed by an unknown builder on an approximately one-acre lot in 1938 at 2118 University Boulevard W in the then-rural community of Wheaton in Montgomery County, Maryland. Romeo Horad, a Washington, D.C. native, relocated to the house the same year from the capital with his wife, Elsie Sewell Horad, and their three children, though the property on which the house was built had been in the possession of Elsie's family for generations.⁴ Her grandfather, Charles Webster (ca. 1849-1927), first purchased the lot, titled "Sub Lot Eight," from

² "Civil Rights in America: Racial Discrimination in Housing," *A National Historic Landmarks Theme Study*, National Park Service, March 2021,

https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalhistoriclandmarks/upload/Civil_Rights_Housing_NHL_Theme_Study_revisedfinal.pdf.

³ Sewell Horad and Evelyn Horad, interview by Dr. David Rotenstein, May 30, 2017, "Sewell and Evelyn Horad Oral History Interview."; *Hurd vs. Hodge*, 334 U.S. 24 (1948), accessed at <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/334/24/>.

⁴ Sewell Horad and Evelyn Horad, interview by Dr. David Rotenstein, May 30, 2017, "Sewell and Evelyn Horad Oral History Interview."

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. M:31-87

Romeo W. Horad House
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 1

George O. B. Cissell in 1894.⁵ Cissell, belonging to a family of historically wealthy landholders in Montgomery County and the surrounding region, owned part of a large tract called “the Hermitage,” and had been parceling small portions of the land along the public road in Wheaton since at least 1891, when he and his wife, Kate Cissell, conveyed half an acre to the Montgomery County Board of School Commissioners for the building of the Wheaton School at 1920 University Boulevard W.⁶ Nevertheless, when Webster purchased the small lot, the region was mostly rural, and his parcel was surrounded by much larger, agricultural properties.⁷

Like his neighbors, Charles Webster put the land at his property to working use, developing a farm that came to include fruit orchards and vegetable gardens, a barn, a smokehouse, and a chicken house.⁸ Horad family histories indicate that Webster not only tended to his own property, but that he leased and farmed surrounding lands as well.⁹ He built a residence there in ca. 1903 for himself, his wife, Jane Webster, and their nine children, as well as at least one other dwelling for one of his sons, Clarence.¹⁰ At the time that Webster and his family moved to the Wheaton property, and indeed through the construction of the Horad House some four-and-a-half decades later, they were one of only a few Black families that lived on the road that would later become University Boulevard W.¹¹ During Webster’s residency at the property, he was an active leader for the Black community in both the Wheaton area and the wider region, serving as a trustee for the now-demolished Wheaton Colored School (which stood adjacent to the Wheaton School), participating in local Black Republican political conventions, and supporting candidates for office that were favorable to the Black community.¹²

Charles Webster died on December 21, 1927, leaving his Wheaton property to his daughter, Martha V. Webster Sewell, and her husband, Edward B. Sewell (m. 1897).¹³ Martha and Edward Sewell continued to live at the property in Wheaton following Charles Webster’s death, along with his widow, Jane Webster. The couple had three children, Elsie Sewell (b.

⁵ Montgomery County Deed Records, Liber JA 42:351.

⁶ Margaret M. Coleman, “Wheaton School: MIHP M31:11,” October 27, 1985; “The Hermitage” was first patented to William Joseph in 1689 and consisted of 3,866 acres (T.H.S. Boyd, *The History of Montgomery County, Maryland*, Clarksburg, MD, 1879.)

⁷ “Plat of the Publick Road Leading from Wheaton to Four Corners,” Plat No. 5, Enrolled Nov. 15, 1894, MSA_S1249_25344.

⁸ Sewell Horad and Evelyn Horad, interview by Dr. David Rotenstein, May 30, 2017, “Sewell and Evelyn Horad Oral History Interview.”; “Montgomery Parks and Planning’s Historic Markers Program,” Montgomery Planning, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, updated March 29, 2023, accessed October 23, 2023, <https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/historic/remarkable-montgomery-untold-stories/>.

⁹ Montgomery Planning papers of Dorita Sewell.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Sewell Horad and Evelyn Horad, interview by Dr. David Rotenstein, May 30, 2017, “Sewell and Evelyn Horad Oral History Interview.”

¹² “Rockville and Vicinity,” *The Evening Star*, June 7, 1906, p. 11; “Wheaton Republicans to Open Campaign,” *The Washington Times*, Sept. 16, 1904, p. 7; “Warner’s Political Contest,” *The Washington Times*, March 31, 1908, p. 2; The Wheaton Colored School was located on a lot adjacent to the property parceled by the Cissells for a (white) school in 1891 (Ralph Buglass, “A Century of One- and Two-Room Schools: Teaching Yet Today,” *The Montgomery County Story*, Vol. 58, No. 2 (Fall 2015)).

¹³ “Deaths,” *The Evening Star*, Dec. 22, 1927, p. 9; Montgomery County Will Records, Liber PEW No 9: 444; “Marriage Licenses,” *The Evening Star*, Feb. 9, 1897, p. 3.

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1899)—future wife to Romeo W. Horad—Webster Sewell (b. 1902), and Bernard F. Sewell (b. 1909).¹⁴ All three children received an extensive education in Washington, D.C. Elsie and Bernard worked as public school teachers in segregated Black schools, while Webster Sewell became a Howard University-trained physician and practiced within the Black community of Montgomery County during an era of racially segregated healthcare.¹⁵ In 1938, Martha Sewell subdivided her property into two lots; an eastern lot, which she retained, and a western lot, which she devised to her daughter, Elsie Sewell Horad, and her husband, Romeo Horad.¹⁶

Horad Achievements

Romeo W. Horad was born in Washington, D.C. to Finton Horad, a painter, and Isabella Williams, a dressmaker, in 1894.¹⁷ He attended the segregated Lucretia Mott school at 4th St. NW and U St. NW, serving as the president of the Mott School Athletic Association, and later pursued undergraduate studies at Western Reserve University (Case Western Reserve) and the Minor Normal School (D.C. Teacher's College).¹⁸ Horad completed a law degree at Howard University and was appointed to the Department of the Navy's Inter-Departmental Social Hygiene Board; he later worked as executive secretary of the Washington, D.C. Recorder of Deeds.¹⁹ In 1938, around the time that he relocated with his family to the Wheaton property from Vermont Avenue in Washington, D.C., Horad gave up his career in government to pursue a real estate enterprise.²⁰ From his residence at the house in Wheaton, Romeo W. Horad used this business to advance the cause of residential and institutional desegregation throughout Montgomery County, and through his political aspirations, sought to gain further representation for Black constituents in local governance.

When the Horad family moved into the house at 2118 University Boulevard W (then 11308 Old Bladensburg Road), segregation was enforced in Montgomery County and Washington, D.C. via racially restrictive legal covenants. Such covenants written into deeds excluded potential Black homebuyers from purchasing covenanted properties, and as midcentury suburbanization fueled migration out of settled areas, such contracts also prevented white homeowners from selling to eager purchasers.²¹ Romeo Horad leveraged his legal background and real estate experience to circumvent such covenants, partnering with brothers and real estate brokers Raphael and Joseph Urciolo—and later, NAACP attorney Charles Hamilton Houston—to purchase such homes and resell them to Black families.²² Through this arrangement,

¹⁴ 1910 US Federal Census, Precinct 7, Washington, D.C., Dwelling No. 159, Family No. 164; 1930 US Federal Census, Wheaton, Montgomery County, MD, Dwelling No. 531, Family No. 568.

¹⁵ Teresa B. Lachin, "Webster Sewell and the Struggle for Equal Care," *The Montgomery County Story*, Vol. 64, No. 1 (Spring 2021).

¹⁶ Montgomery County Deed Record, Liber 694:431.

¹⁷ Sewell Horad and Evelyn Horad, interview by Dr. David Rotenstein, May 30, 2017, "Sewell and Evelyn Horad Oral History Interview."; 1910 US Federal Census, Precinct 8, Washington, D.C., Dwelling No. 35, Family No. 42.

¹⁸ "Join Public School League," *The Washington Herald*, Jan. 10, 1911, p. 11; Sewell Horad and Evelyn Horad, interview by Dr. David Rotenstein, May 30, 2017, "Sewell and Evelyn Horad Oral History Interview."

¹⁹ "Romeo W. Horad, Candidate For Council, Backs Equality," *The Evening Star*, Dec. 27, 1948, p. 13.

²⁰ "Sewell D. Horad, 1922-2019," D.S. Rotenstein, April 24, 2019, <https://blog.historian4hire.net/2019/04/24/sewell-d-horad-1922-2019/>.

²¹ See Glotzer, Paige, *How the Suburbs were Segregated: Developers and the Business of Exclusionary Housing, 1890-1960*. Columbia University Press, New York, 2020

²² Mara Cherkasky and Sarah Jane Shoenfield, "A Strictly White Residential Section," *Washington History*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Spring 2017), pp. 24-41.

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several homes on Adams and Bryant Streets in Washington, D.C.'s Bloomingdale neighborhood were successfully turned over to Black families, and Romeo Horad often recruited his son, fellow real estate salesman Sewell D. Horad Sr., to sell the properties.²³ The Urciolo brothers, who also practiced law, regularly foiled racially restrictive covenants in this way, and Raphael was later sued for this scheme; he represented himself, alongside Charles Hamilton Houston, in the U.S. Supreme Court case, *Hurd v. Hodge*, a companion case to the landmark 1948 case, *Shelley v. Kraemer* which struck down exclusionary contracts in the capital.²⁴

Romeo Horad also set his sights on educational segregation and the discrepancies between school facilities for white and Black children. County schools delegated for Black children, many of which were overcrowded, Progressive-era Rosenwald Schools, were in poor condition in the 1940s and lacked sufficient maintenance.²⁵ Horad led a local civil rights campaign for these facilities' improvement, called "The Citizens Council of Mutual Improvement for Montgomery County," which publicly decried the condition of the segregated schools buildings. He also unsuccessfully lobbied Maryland governor, William Preston Lane, Jr., to appoint a Black seamstress from Takoma Park, Bessie Beaman, to the Montgomery County Board of Education.²⁶ This campaign extended beyond educational concerns to other deficient aspects of public and social infrastructure produced as a result of segregationist policies, such as the poor condition of roads and sewage lines in Black communities throughout the county.

Romeo Horad's civil rights drive culminated in an unprecedented candidacy for the Montgomery County Council, as representative for the Sixth District in 1948. Horad ran on a platform promoting equality for Black county residents, and he was endorsed by his 2,000-member strong, "Citizens Council."²⁷ While ultimately unsuccessful, Horad continued to participate in local and county politics, leading an initiative in 1951 to register 100,000 Black Republicans across Maryland.²⁸ Throughout Romeo Horad's residency at the Wheaton property, the house seems to have remained important to his life's work. A 1948 *Evening Star* article about his county council candidacy suggests the house embodied the possibilities that Romeo foresaw for Black Americans:

Of his accomplishments, Romeo W. Horad seems proudest of the home he built 10 years ago at 11308 Old Bladensburg road, Silver Spring [present-day 2118 University Boulevard W]. The air-conditioned, Georgian house is evidence, he says, of what Negroes can do if given the opportunity. To him, it is proof that the race appreciates the advantages of modern living and is entitled to a chance of enjoying them.²⁹

²³ Sewell Horad and Evelyn Horad, interview by Dr. David Rotenstein, May 30, 2017, "Sewell and Evelyn Horad Oral History Interview."; *Hurd vs. Hodge*, 334 U.S. 24 (1948), accessed at <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/334/24/>; *Shelley et ux. v. Kraemer et ux. McGhee et ux. v. Sipes et al.* Cornell Law School Legal Information Institute. Accessed at <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/334/1>.

²⁴ Cherkasky and Shoenfield, pp. 24-41.

²⁵ "Memorandum," Planning, Housing, and Parks Committee, June 7, 2023. Montgomery County Government.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ "Negroes Back Civic Leader For Council Post," *The Alabama Tribune*, Jan. 7, 1949.

²⁸ "Goal of 100,000 Negroes in G.O.P. Set in Maryland," *The Evening Star*, June 18, 1961, p. B.

²⁹ "Romeo W. Horad, Candidate For Council, Backs Equality," *The Evening Star*, Dec. 27, 1948, p. 13.

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The Romeo W. Horad House also served more tangibly as a connection between Horad's life and work and the Black community in Wheaton and beyond. Horad and his family hosted social gatherings at the house for their religious community and political acquaintances in the local Republican party while he pursued his desegregationist work. Evelyn Horad, Romeo W. Horad's daughter-in-law, remembers, "Everybody in Washington who knew them came to Wheaton and they had big parties, picnics..."³⁰ Horad family histories also indicate that many members of the Webster-Sewell-Horad family visited or stayed at the Horad House in the mid-twentieth century.³¹ Martha Sewell, Elsie Sewell Horad's mother, continued to live at the lot just east of the Horad House, and erected a building in the rear that was used as a school at some point for the children of Lyttonsville (then called Linden), a segregated Black community further south in Silver Spring. After her death, Elsie rented the property to a church community that remains at the lot in 2023. Meanwhile, Elsie's brother, Dr. Webster Sewell, continued to practice as the only physician for Black residents in the Wheaton area in the 1940s.³²

Romeo W. Horad died on October 31, 1968 and Elsie Sewell Horad died on July 26, 1990.³³ The house passed to their three children, Romeo W. Horad, Jr., Sewell D. Horad Sr., and Martha Belle Horad Jones.³⁴ Sewell Horad Sr. eventually acquired the full estate in 1997, and he sold the property to Goblam, LLC in 2016.³⁵ The following year, the parcel and the Horad House were acquired by Canaan Christian Church, which currently owns the property, as well as the second Sewell lot to its east.³⁶

Conclusion

The Horad House is significant for its association with Romeo W. Horad, who led a life of national and local importance in the struggle to achieve desegregation in the nation's capital and advance the rights and wellbeing of Black Americans in Montgomery County, Maryland (National Register of Historic Places Criterion B). Horad's actions in this pursuit contributed to the conditions which led to the landmark U.S. Supreme Court Case, *Hurd v. Hodge*, the decision of which struck down racially restrictive covenants across the District of Columbia. Horad had a sustained and productive association with the house, wherefrom he undertook much of his work, and the structure has character, interest, and value in representing his life, endeavors, and achievements. The house also served as a community and social venue where Horad deliberated over his public agenda and hosted political acquaintances. The building is a tangible vestige of the settlement and activity of the Webster and Sewell families, whose members similarly invested their lives and careers into the advancement of Black communities in Montgomery County and whose residency at the property foreshadowed the house's construction. Given the loss of most other segregation-era structures in Wheaton associated with these

³⁰ Sewell Horad and Evelyn Horad, interview by Dr. David Rotenstein, May 30, 2017, "Sewell and Evelyn Horad Oral History Interview."

³¹ Montgomery Planning papers of Dorita Sewell.

³² Ibid.

³³ "Romeo William Horad Sr," *Find A Grave*, <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/1273788:60525>; "Elsie S Horad," *Find A Grave*, <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/1273785:60525>.

³⁴ Montgomery County Deed Records, Liber 5495:399; During Romeo and Elsie Horad's ownership of the property, the parcel was reduced to accommodate the widening of University Boulevard (Montgomery County Deed Records, Liber 2829:150).

³⁵ Montgomery County Deed Records, Liber 15093:566; Liber 52383:192.

³⁶ Montgomery County Deed Records, Liber 53884:190.

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individuals, such as the Wheaton Colored School and the Webster House, the Horad House stands as the last intact material connection to their period of settlement and contributions to social development.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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1910 & 1930 US Federal Censuses. Digital scan of original records in the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Cherkasky, Mara and Sarah Jane Shoenfield. "A Strictly White Residential Section." *Washington History*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Spring 2017), pp. 24-41.

Montgomery County Deed & Will Records.

Sewell Horad and Evelyn Horad, interview by Dr. David Rotenstein, May 30, 2017, "Sewell and Evelyn Horad Oral History Interview."

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property approx. 0.77 acres

Acreage of historical setting approx. 1 acre

Quadrangle name Kensington

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The Romeo W. Horad House is located at 2118 University Boulevard W in Silver Spring, Maryland. The house's parcel occupies approximately 0.77 acres of land.

The lot on which 2118 University Boulevard W is located was previously addressed as 11308 Old Bladensburg Road. In March 1938, at the time the land was last subdivided, the parcel was designated Lot 1 of the "Sewell Tract." Historic land records describe the lot as follows: "Being known as Sub Lot numbered Eight (8), being part of a tract of land called "Hermitage" and more particularly described as follows, to wit: Beginning at a stone marked 7 standing at the end of the 3rd line of Subt Lot No. 7, and running thence reversely with said line S. 7414 degrees E. 14 perches to a stone at the end thereof in the center of a foot road; then with the center of said road N. 914 degrees E 11 4/10 perches to a stone planted in the Bladensburg Road; then with said road N. 7414 degrees W 14 perches to a stone; then S. 914 degrees W. 11 4/10 to the beginning—all the bearings requiring 214 degrees allowance, A.D. 1894, containing one acres of land, more or less," (Montgomery County Deed Records, Liber JA 42:351).

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Grant Cunningham		
organization	The Ottery Group, Inc.	date	November 2023
street & number	P.O. Box 4265	telephone	n/a
city or town	Silver Spring	state	MD

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

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