

BLDG REP
Maryland



OXON HILL MANOR

851/139453

OXON HILL MANOR

DESCRIPTION, EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION

for use as an

OFFICIAL RESIDENCE

Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
January 7, 1972

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INTRODUCTION

TO

A STUDY OF OXON HILL MANOR

Oxon Hill Manor is the 49-room neo-Georgian mansion built in 1929 as the country estate of Sumner Welles. This estate, once part of the lands granted to John Addison in 1685, is located in Prince George's County, Maryland, less than a mile from the Indian Head Highway-Capital Beltway interchange. The Oxon Hill Manor house situated atop the Potomac escarpment affords sweeping views of the river 180 feet below. The rural quality of the estate is effectively preserved by the 150 acres of woodland that surrounds the house.

The historical associations of Oxon Hill Manor are varied. John Hanson, first President of the United States under the Articles of Confederation, is known to have died in the old Oxon Hill Manor house of Maryland's prominent Addison family, and local legend presumes him to have been buried in a mausoleum on the brow of the hill below the plantation house. The present Oxon Hill Manor house was the home of Sumner Welles while he was Franklin D. Roosevelt's Under Secretary of State, and President Roosevelt visited it on occasion. However, a meeting said to have occurred here between Roosevelt and Churchill in 1942 is not supported by evidence.

LOCATION AND ACCESS (See Map No. 1)

The largest remaining parcel of Oxon Hill Manor is the block of land bound by the Capital Beltway and Interchange 38 (to Interstate Route 295) on the north, the Potomac River and lands dredged for gravel on the west, North Potomac View subdivision on the south, and Oxon Hill Road on the east. The Manor house is accessible only from Oxon Hill Road, an 18-foot wide two-lane State highway (Md. 414) which carries a high volume of local traffic. The extension of Interstate 295 south of the Capital Beltway or the construction of a parkway to Fort Washington along the shore would have little impact on Oxon Hill Manor. It would provide no new access, but traffic volume would decrease on Oxon Hill Road. These roads would form a physical barrier between the estate and the river, but would not be seen from the house. At present there is no access from the river, but the gravel pit could be developed as an anchorage and a private road up the escarpment to the house could be constructed if I-295 and the parkway are not built. Operation and landing of helicopters at the house should present no problem. Straight line distance to the White House is 7.4 miles, and Andrews Air Force Base is 6.4 miles away. The U.S. Capitol is 6.4 miles from the Manor house by helicopter, and 7.2 miles by highway.

TOPOGRAPHY AND LAND COVER (See Map No. 1)

The land formation is dominated by the Potomac escarpment--this abrupt change in elevation occurs within less than a quarter of a mile of the river's edge and rises steeply to over 180 feet to a long plateau. The buildings and private roads of the estate occupy this generally flat land at the top of the escarpment. Oxon Hill Road defines the divide of the ridge, and lands to the east of the road drop sharply to Carey Branch. There are no perennial streams on the property but a narrow ravine segregates the northern quarter of the estate from the Manor house grounds. A wider valley separates the estate from the properties in North Potomac View to the south. Except for the second-growth woodland on the abandoned bottom land, the white pine row along Oxon Hill Road, and gardens and lawns of the Manor house, the land is covered by degraded mixed deciduous forest. A brush fire in 1961 destroyed all but the mature trees and now the successive second growth and understory of the forest is dominated by black locust, ailanthus, and honeysuckle.

THE ENVIRONS

The environs of Oxon Hill Manor are characterized by open land and low density development. North of the Capital Beltway is the National Park Service's Oxon Hill Farm. On the east side of Oxon Hill Road at the interchange are large vacant fields, but opposite

Oxon Hill Manor the land is undeveloped woods. This property includes the estate of J. B. Castle and the historic house "Salubria" which is not visible from the road. To the south is the only development apparent from Oxon Hill Manor. This includes the Thomas Addison Elementary School and the subdivisions of North Potomac View and River Ridge Estates. Only a few of these houses are within the view from the Manor house and gardens. The commercial center for this sector of the County is several miles south of the estate on Indian Head Highway.

At present the approach to Oxon Hill Manor from the Beltway is visually unkempt. The earth cuts of the highway construction have not mellowed; the fields and forests have been degraded by disuse and roadside construction stockpiling, and trash dumps are frequent. This appearance will prevail as long as the vacant land is held for speculation. The revitalizing of Oxon Hill Manor as a residential estate would provide a positive force to stabilize and upgrade the area.

These surrounding land uses have no direct impact on Oxon Hill Manor as a residence. However, the proximity to the Capital Beltway and National Airport do contribute to a high level of noise and air pollution. Outside the house the aircraft and highway noise is constantly in the background. This may be less apparent when the

foliage is on the trees in the summer. Inside the house this noise is not noticeable.

In spite of these modern encroachments upon the environment, there is a sense of a self-contained contact with nature when one is on the estate. The present occupant attracts deer near the house by placing salt licks in the garden. This presence of wildlife is indicative of the character of the country setting of Oxon Hill Manor.

ZONING

The entire area adjacent to Oxon Hill Manor is zoned RR (rural residential) with a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet. In 1967 Mr. Fred N. Maloof filed for a zoning change to C2 (heavy industrial) for Parcels 4 and 80 - the 55 acres tract including the Manor house. This has been placed in a "hold indefinitely" category by the zoning review board. The attitude of the board in this and other decisions on nearby plots has been that the problems of flooding, drainage, topography, sewage and traffic do not permit a higher density of land use.

LAND OWNERSHIP (See Map No. 2)

According to the March 1971 revision of tax maps for Prince George's County, there are three owners of the lands in Maryland that made up the Sumner Welles estate. The parcel (P80) with the Manor house is only eight acres and has a 400-foot frontage on Oxon Hill Road. Parcel 80 is owned by the International Capital Corporation, 1701

Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. General George H. Olmsted of the International Bank of Washington at the same address is the principal officer of the Corporation. The evaluation of the property for taxes is \$113,110--\$37,900 for the land, and \$75,210 for the improvements. As long as the bank owns the property Mr. Fred N. Maloof has life tenancy. He has occupied the house since 1952 when he purchased it from Welles.

Surrounding this is a parcel (P4) of 47.38 acres with about 3,000-foot frontage on Oxon Hill Road. The improvements on this property include the entrance gates, north and south entrance roads to the Manor house, and the service buildings--caretaker's quarters, garages, greenhouse, and stables. This land is owned by Financial Realty Company of 811 15th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., and is assessed for taxes at \$224,460.

To the west of these lands is a parcel (P3) of 92.73 acres that is the largest remnant of the Welles estate. This land is owned by Oxon Hill Estates Straw Corporation and evaluated at \$393,290 for taxes. Their corporate offices are in the Woodward Building in Washington. There are no improvements on the property, but the site of the Addison House, family graveyard and the supposed John Hanson tomb are at the northern edge of the parcel.

These three parcels of 158.11 acres are all that remain of the 245 acres owned by Sumner Welles at Oxon Hill. Most of the northern

portion of the Welles estate is now within the right-of-way of the Capital Beltway.

The property west of the Oxon Hill Estates Straw Corporation parcel is designated as right-of-way for the extension of Interstate 295. Present studies also show the proposed Fort Washington Parkway sharing the right-of-way at this point. The river lands are owned by Smoot Sand and Gravel Corporation of 805 15th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. The parcel directly west of Oxon Hill Manor is P9. This is a 196.23-acre plot that is about 90% under water. There was no apparent gravel dredging here at the time of the study, and it was explained that Smoot Sand and Gravel Corporation is under court orders to cease its dredging in this area.

ESTATE GROUNDS AND GARDENS (See photographs and Appendix C & D)

The physical improvements of the estate are concentrated on about 55 acres of high land that fronts on Oxon Hill Road. The entrance gates of the north drive are placed in the extreme northeast corner of the property. This permits the narrow gravel drive, which generally parallels Oxon Hill Road, to meander through the tall trees for a half-mile before it reaches the Manor house. The south drive is more direct. Entering the property at the southeast corner it skirts the outbuildings, which are directly in front of the gate, and follows along the state road until it sweeps into an intersection with the north drive about 250 feet in front of the

forecourt of the Manor house. Until one reaches this point, the landscape planting--mature conifers, holly trees and laurel--conceal the house from all but fleeting glimpses. The service road continues to the rear of the house from this intersection and the north drive, aligned on axis with the main door of the house, continues to the forecourt. The drive is in good condition but the roadside landscape and gate structures have been taken over by weeds and honeysuckle.

The main house dominates the landscape. Heavy planting of shrubs and trees screen the service wing. The lawns and formal gardens to the west and south of the house are oriented to be entered from the house. The formal English box gardens are terraced with a system of steps, walls and balustrades to the lower level of the swimming pool at the south of the house. The gardens are now overgrown with brambles and the terrace pavements have settled. Half of the lawn, which once extended 400 feet down the slope on the west of the house, has now been turned into a vegetable garden.

The rectangular swimming pool (about 25 x 75 feet) appears to be in good condition but there is no apparent circulation or filtering system. There are no poolside structures for changing, showers or poolside service.

The service drive terminates at the north porch of the service wing where there is now a muddy turnaround. This area is cluttered with

a dilapidated shed, dog kennels, discarded building materials, LP gas tanks, a derelict automobile and sundry refuse.

At the southeast corner of the estate near Oxon Hill Road there is a cluster of masonry service buildings in good to fair condition. These include a five-bay car garage connected to the manager's residence-- a six-room house, plus kitchen and bath. At the other end of the garage there is a greenhouse. Nearby is a six-stall stable with a tack room, feed and storage spaces and a small exercise yard.

THE MANOR HOUSE (See plans, photographs and Appendix B, C & D)

The present Oxon Hill Manor house was built in 1929 for Sumner Welles from a Georgian design by the Washington architect Jules H. de Sibour. The house successfully captures the essence of a Georgian country estate in its residential scale of its interior spaces and the development of the site with garden vistas and long views beyond the lawns. However, the architectural embellishment is inconsistent when compared to authentic 18th-century details. Fred N. Maloof has occupied the house since he purchased it from Welles. He now operates it as the "John Hanson Memorial Museum" housing a highly eclectic collection of art and other objects.

The parti of the house is simple, functional and symmetrical. The entrance hall and the stair hall provide a free flow of movement to all the rooms in the main block. The drawing room occupies the entire width of the house on the south and is to the left of the

entrance. The library is behind the entrance hall and between the drawing room and the dining room. The dining room is on the northwest and is entered from the stair hall and library. There is direct access to service pantry on the north. On the east side of the stair hall are the den, cloakroom, powder rooms and stair. The hall gives access to the elevator and the service wing. The chambers on the upper floor are arranged along the central corridor. Three units are on the west, the master suite is at the south end of the corridor, and two remaining bed chambers are on the north. The stair is in the northeast corner of the main block.

The house is entered from a walled forecourt about 100 feet deep and across a brick terrace to a 26 x 31 foot entrance hall. The rooms of the main block are large and their interconnection with each other and relationship with the gardens create a sense of elegance in spite of the flaccid ornamentation. The drawing room is 26 x 45 feet and is entered from the hall and the library. The wood-paneled library of the same size as the entrance hall is the functional center of the plan with access to all the major spaces on the floor. This room is perhaps the most satisfactory space in terms of its architectural details, scale, vistas to other rooms of the house and the view of the Potomac River. The dining room is a mixture of late French 18th-century motifs and is dominated by eight large panels of antique Regency Chinese wallpaper. This room is 41 feet long and 23 feet

wide with a symmetrical arrangement with the fireplace and the window and door openings. The nine-foot-wide hall is the same length as the dining rooms and provides the major entrance to this room as well as circulation to the upper floor and the service wing. The simple grandeur of this space flows upward with the sweep of the wide semi-circular stair. On this floor other rooms in the main block include a den, a cloakroom and two powder rooms. There is a fireplace in each major room. The 13-foot-high plaster ceilings have stylized moldings. The floors are marble on concrete slab in the halls and herringbone oak on slab in the main rooms. There is a five-foot crawl space and boiler room under the floor in this part of the building.

The upper floor consists of six bed chambers each with its own bathroom, fireplace, and a large closet. These rooms range in size from 26 x 20 feet to 16 x 16 feet. The chambers on the north and south corners of the west side of the house have access to the roof of the porches through French doors. The master bedroom has a boudoir with fireplace adjacent to the bath and two of the medium-sized chambers are interconnected. All rooms are entered from a spacious hall which has a continuous row of storage closets on the west wall. There is also access to the service wing from this floor.

The service wing is a three-story, 79-foot-long unit that contains large storage rooms, a wine cellar, incinerator, and two servants'

rooms with bath and large lounging room in the basement. The ground floor includes the kitchen, pantry, cold room and silver safe, flower room and laundry and the servants' "hall" and toilet. On the upper floor there are eight maids' rooms with a bath and four men's rooms with a bath and a segregated corridor. There are also sewing rooms and linen closets on this floor. These floors are connected vertically with a stair and elevator. The elevator is also directly accessible to the main house.

The construction of the house is masonry throughout with exterior brick facing. The first floor construction is reinforced concrete. The upper floor and roof framing is wood. The roofing material is slate with slag decks and copper flashing and rain conductors. The main door, French doors and casement windows are wooden with a high quality of traditionally designed hardware of European type. Most of the exterior trim is wooden with "compo" ornamentation protected by painted metal copings. Terrace floors are herringbone brick on fill with brick steps.

Utilities include public power and telephone provided by an aerial service that is skillfully concealed in the landscaping of the site. Domestic water is supplied from a deep well, and sewage is disposed of through an on-site septic system that is currently discharging its effluent in an open ditch below the service wing. Cooking fuel is provided by several above-ground LP gas tanks. Heat is provided

by an oil-fired steam system with a summer-winter hookup for domestic hot water. An antiquated announcing call system is still in use between the main rooms and the service wing. There is a large coal storage room under the porch but coal is no longer used for fuel.

The condition of the mechanical and electrical equipment including the heating plant, incinerator and elevator could not be determined in this study, although they were reported to be functional. The kitchen equipment, fixtures and furniture date from the original construction of the house in 1929. Although these facilities for food preparation and service are complete, they are worn and drab and do not reflect the modern concept of kitchen operation. Similarly, the large bathrooms reflect 1920 taste with their oversized fixtures and fittings, clear plastic accessories and stylized commode seats in an aseptic white tile setting. All the bathrooms inspected seem to be in good condition.

The construction system of the house is first-class and the condition of the house is sound. There is no evidence of structural failures within the walls and floors of the building. Expedient repairs have been made to the roof of the main building and the porches. At the time of the 1961 brush fire the house was reportedly deluged with water for over twenty-four hours causing damage to the ceiling of the upper stair hall and living room which has not been

repaired. The entrance hall ceiling also shows water damage, perhaps from the bathroom above. The exterior trim of the building is in good to fair condition, with peeling paint and deteriorating "compo" moldings the most obvious defects.

The northwest porch shows serious structural failures of one or more of the major supporting members. All terraces on fill have settled, causing the brick pavement to separate from the terrace walls or steps. The present occupant reports a recent history of termite activity in the basement but claims that it is now under control. Since all the structure below grade is masonry, there should be no serious damage.

EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the absence of criteria for selection of an official residence for a person of high elective office such as the Vice President, the study team adopted the following guidelines for evaluating Oxon Hill Manor. A residence with large interior and exterior spaces for various types of entertaining including sufficient area for service and ancillary support facilities is the prime requisite. Other factors include the quality of the building construction and the extent of the required repairs and alterations, the security and privacy of the grounds and the proximity of the location to the center of Washington as well as its accessibility from outside the metropolitan area.

Oxon Hill Manor rates well in the evaluation of each consideration. Most significant is the fact that it was designed for entertaining. There is a formal forecourt and entrance hall. The drawing room, library and dining room are large and interconnected with wide double doors. There is direct access from each room to the terraces, lawns, and gardens. The dining room will easily seat 24 people at one table and perhaps three times that number at small tables. The arrangement of the rooms and the gardens will accommodate formal receptions, buffets or garden parties with several hundred guests. Also on the main floor is a den which could be used as an usher's office. Nearby are a cloakroom and two powder rooms.

The upper floor could accommodate several house guests and their personal staffs in addition to the official family. The bed chambers, each with private bath, have ample space to serve as personal apartments. These rooms have fireplaces and dramatic views. While there is no intimate family sitting room or dining room, these spaces could be provided by altering a portion of the second floor.

The three-story service wing includes mechanical equipment, space for household storage, food preparation and service, housekeeping, and laundry facilities. Offices for household administration and official aides could easily be provided within the wing. The garage complex and stable area could house maintenance shops and equipment as well as vehicles and bulk storage. The present manager's apartment could serve as offices for operations and security. There is ample area on the estate to construct fences and security structures without disturbing the design concept of the Manor house and its gardens.

The present unkempt appearance of the house and grounds reflects a condition more visual than actual. The fabric and structure of the building are sound, and the major landscape features and plant forms are intact. The repair of the roof, terraces, porches and trim would not be a complicated construction project. The refurbishing of the interior would involve more cleaning and

painting than repairs. A comprehensive program of ground maintenance and selective trimming and planting would quickly rejuvenate the grounds.

If the mechanical equipment is functional as reported, repairs, replacements, and alterations should be approached on the basis of continual programmed maintenance and upgrading of equipment. The scope of the work should not be difficult, since there are ample spaces for horizontal runs and risers within the building. The inclusion of air conditioning equipment and air distribution systems is desirable and can be accomplished without serious modification of the structure or the existing spaces. The installation of modern finishes, fixtures, and furnishings in the kitchen and, if necessary, the bathrooms could be completed without changing the existing partitions or structure.

The present subdivision of the Oxon Hill Manor estate into several parcels owned by different corporations presents a problem in assembling adequate lands to maintain the character of the Manor and the quality of the environment as a country estate.

Parcel 80 consists of only eight acres, on which are the Manor house, the lawns and gardens. The entrance drive and garage-stable compound are not included. A new entrance drive would have to be constructed from Oxon Hill Road and buildings for ancillary

services would have to be erected north of the service wing if this were the only parcel acquired. While the Manor house and immediate grounds could be preserved and used on the eight-acre tract, the necessary site improvements and the probable future subdivision of the adjacent parcels would destroy the present quality of Oxon Hill Manor. This parcel is not of sufficient size to meet the recommended guidelines for an official residence of the kind under consideration here.

The combination of Parcels 80 and 4 into a 55.38-acre plot is the minimum recommended land area for Oxon Hill Manor. This would incorporate all the major improvements of the Welles estate: the Manor house and grounds, the north and south entrance drive and the garage-stable compound. The boundaries would protect over 3,000 feet of frontage on Oxon Hill Road and all adjacent open land within the view to the southwest of the Manor house. The woodland cover and topography would screen any view of future residential development along the westerly boundary.

The inclusion of the 92.73 acres of Parcel 3 on the west of this plot would provide a buffer between the Capital Beltway and the Manor house. The site of the Addison house, family graveyard, and "mausoleum" are at the northern edge of this parcel. The combination of Parcels 3, 4, and 80 would reassemble the remaining

open land of the Welles estate, further preserving the sylvan quality of the environment and provide a park-like setting for such amenities as woodland trails and bridle paths.

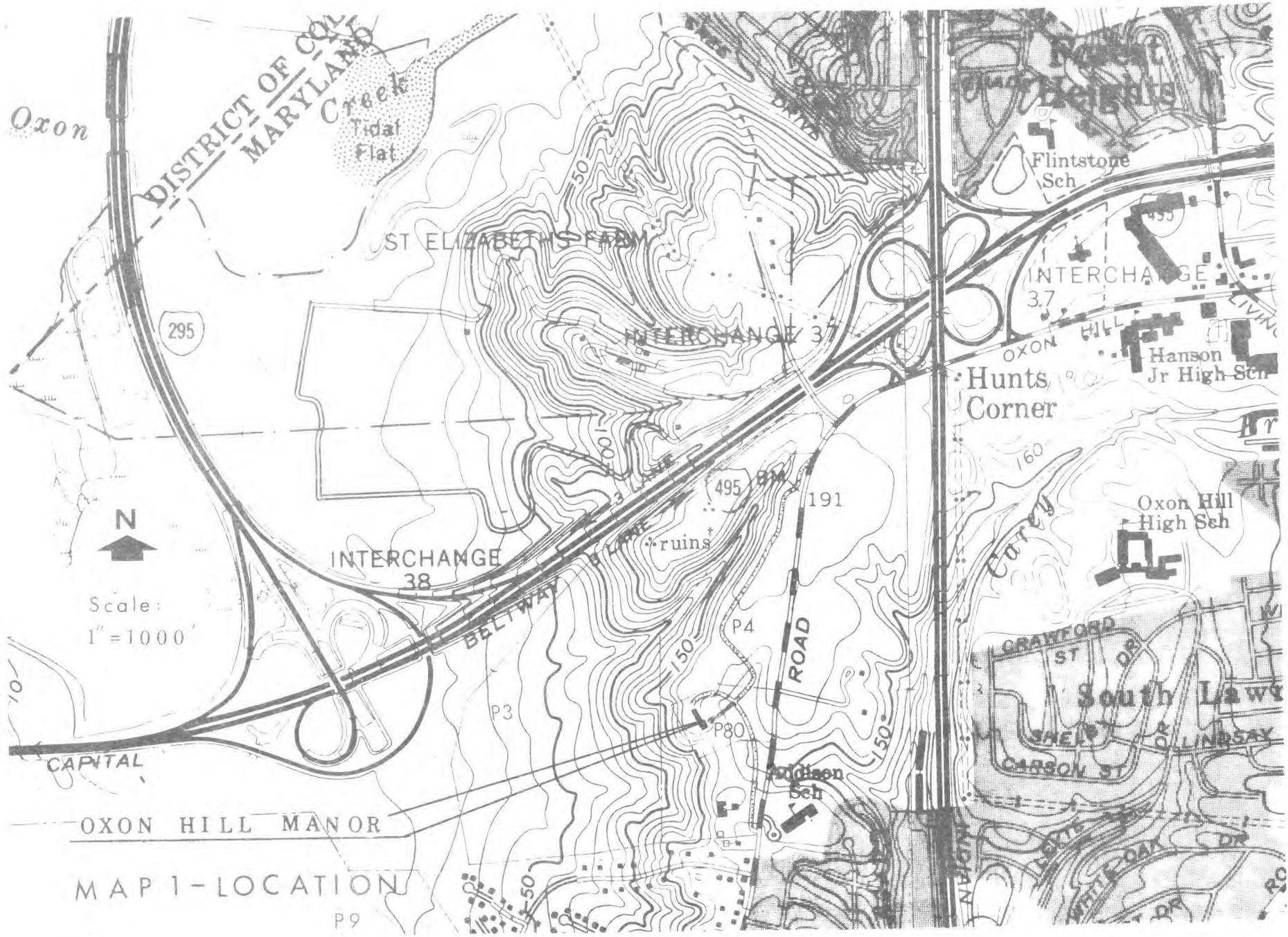
If Route I-295 and the Fort Washington Parkway are not built, the further addition of the riverfront parcels of Smoot Sand and Gravel Company would preserve the entire block between Oxon Hill Road and the Potomac River as open land and provide a water access to the property.

Other considerations that favor assembling the larger parcels of land to form a single block are regional in impact. If all the open land between Indian Head Highway and the river, including the estates of Oxon Hill Manor and Salubria, could be maintained as open land and continue in use as residential estates in perpetuity, the pattern should be set for stabilization of the adjacent land uses beyond the present speculative high density development concept. Limited recreational use of these country estates could be permitted. Public access to the waterfront and boundary sections, including the Addison plantation house site, the family graveyard, and the alleged mausoleum could be managed without infringing on the security and privacy of Oxon Hill Manor.

Although Oxon Hill Manor is not in a prestigious neighborhood and is not within the District of Columbia, it has features of site

and location that are highly desirable. The dramatic relationship of the Manor house and gardens to the undeveloped land that surrounds it and its proximity to the city center and the major highway, air and water transportation corridors of the region place Oxon Hill Manor in a very special category.

It appears that Oxon Hill Manor meets all the requirements necessary for the official residence of a high official such as the Vice President of the United States of America.



Oxon

DISTRICT OF
MARYLAND

Creek
Tidal
Flat

ST ELIZABETH'S FARM

Flintstone
Sch

295

INTERCHANGE 37

INTERCHANGE
3.7

Hunts
Corner

Hanson
Jr High Sch



Scale:
1" = 1000'

INTERCHANGE
38

495

191

Oxon Hill
High Sch

BELTWAY

ROAD

GRAYFORD
ST

South Lawe

CARSON ST

CAPITAL

OXON HILL MANOR

MAP 1-LOCATION

P9

LEGEND

OWNERSHIP MAP

OXON HILL MANOR

- P.3 92.73 Acres Oxon Hill Estates Straw Corporation,
Woodward Building, Washington, D.C.
- P.4 47.38 Acres Financial Realty Company, 811 15th
Street, NW., Washington, D.C.
- P.80 8.00 Acres International Capital Corporation,
1701 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington, D.C.

OTHER LANDS

- P.5 10.65 Acres John W. Miller
- P.7 27.48 Acres J. Brockenridge Bayne
- P.8 7.25 Acres J. B. Castle
- P.9 196.23 Acres Smoot Sand and Gravel Company
- P.16 0.85 Acres Fred N. Maloof
- P.17 9.17 Acres Board of Education
- P.18 22.50 Acres J. Brockenridge Bayne
- A- Subdivision of North Potomac View
- B- Subdivision of River Ridge Estates
- R/W State and Interstate Highway Rights of Way
present and proposed.

MAP 2 OWNERSHIP

N
Scale:
1" = 400'

I-495 R/W (Capital Beltway)

Ruins

I-295 R/W

P3

Manor House

Outbuildings

Md 414 R/W
(Oxon Hill Road)

A

P5

P7

P8

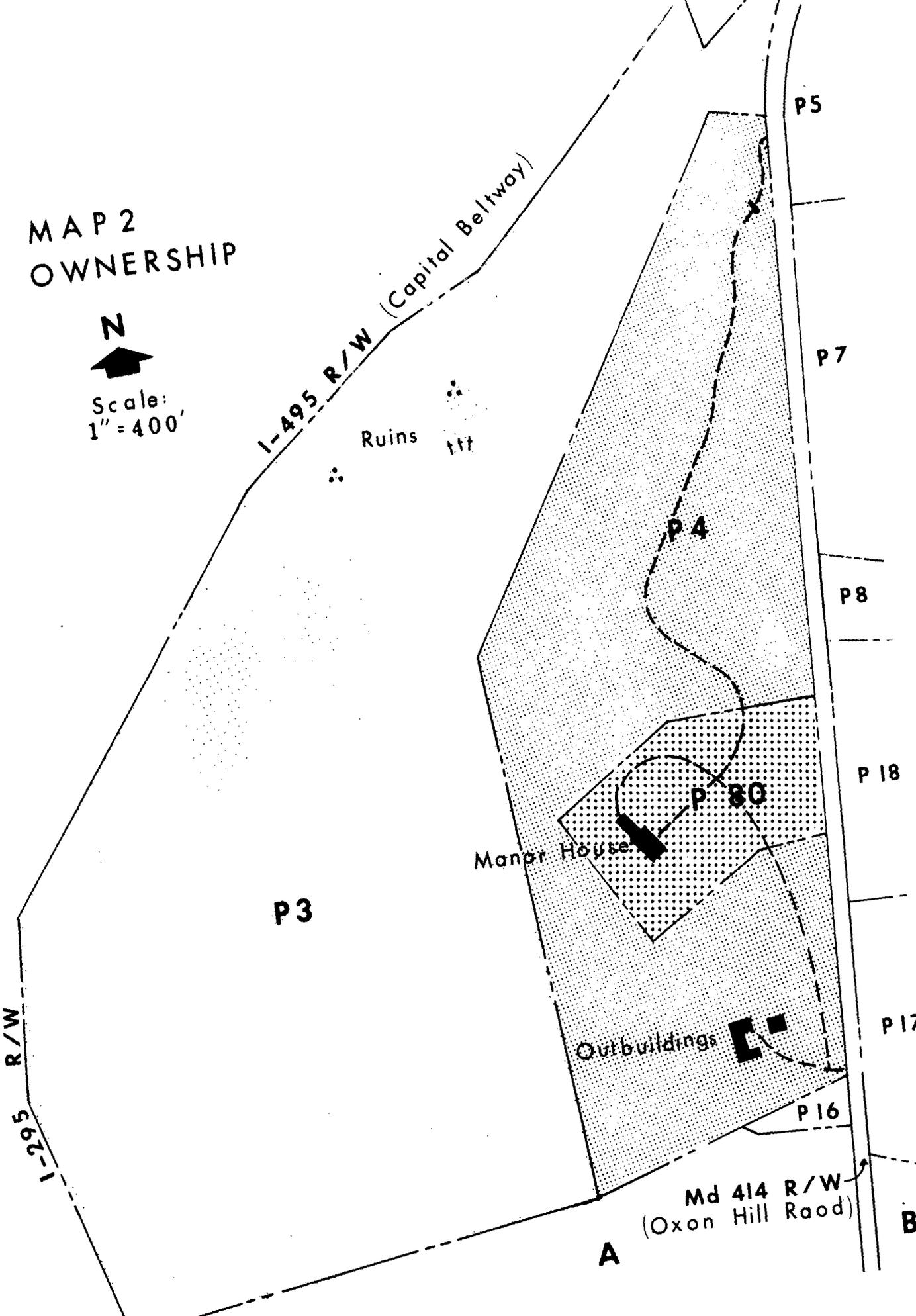
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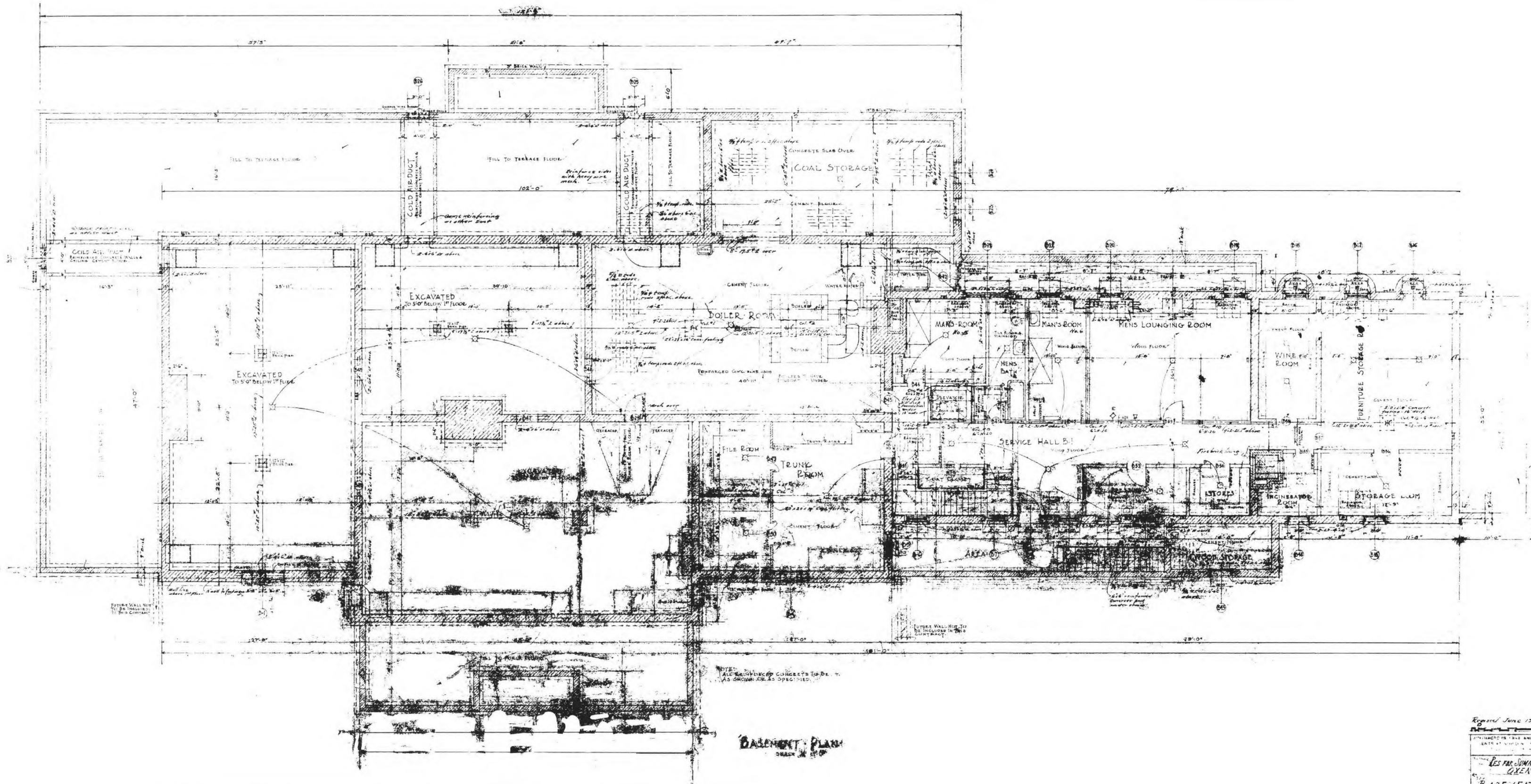
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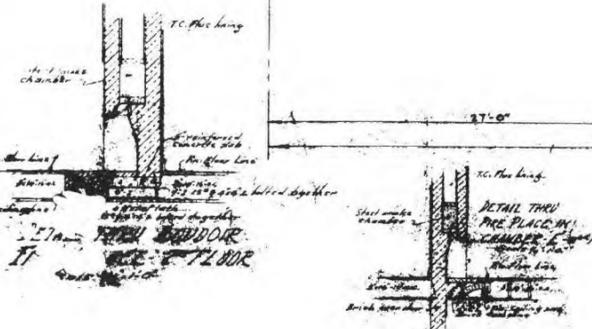
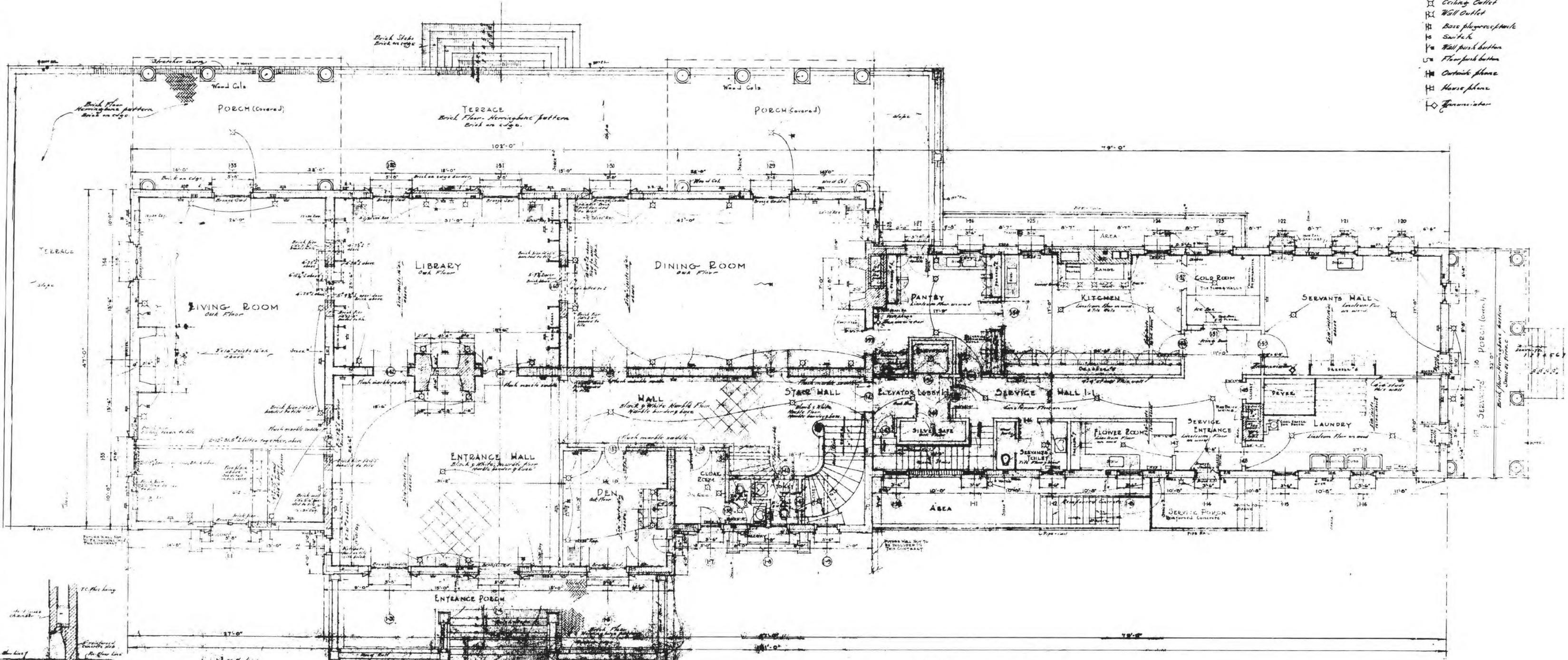




BASMENT PLAN
 SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

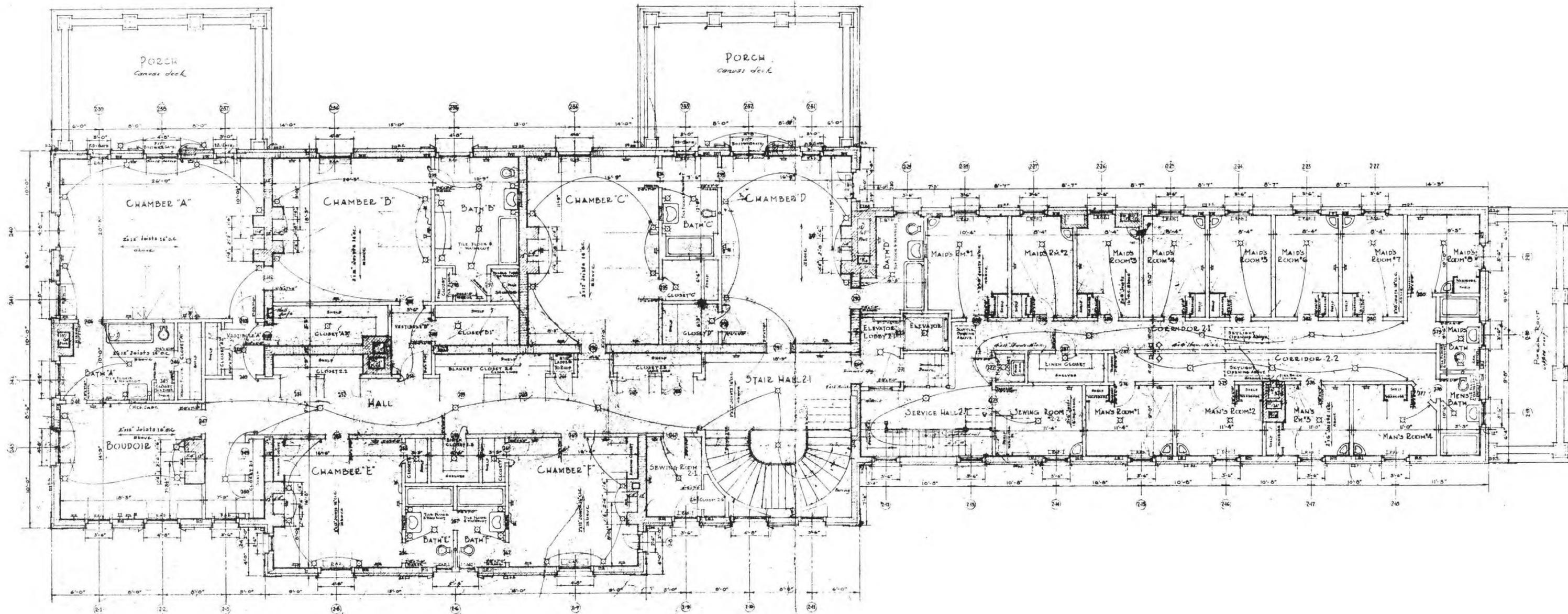
Revised June 17, 1922
 DESIGNED BY S. W. WELLES
 DRAWN BY S. W. WELLES
BASMENT PLAN

- ELECTRIC LEGEND**
- ⊗ Ceiling Outlet
 - ⊠ Wall Outlet
 - ⊞ Base plug receptacle
 - ⊞ Switch
 - ⊞ Wall push button
 - ⊞ Floor push button
 - ⊞ Outside phone
 - ⊞ House phone
 - ⊞ Annunciator



FIRST FLOOR PLAN
 Scale 1/4" = 1'-0"

Handwritten notes and annotations regarding construction details and materials.



-SECOND FLOOR PLAN-
Scale 1/4" = 1'-0"

CONTRACTOR TAKE AND VERIFY ALL DIMENSIONS AT BUILDING BEFORE MAKING DRAWING OR STARTING WORK.	
Building No.	RES FOR SUMMER WELLSHIP OXEN HILL, MD.
Sheet No.	4
SECOND FLOOR PLAN	

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PLATE I

As one approaches Oxon Hill Manor by the long drive, the first clear view obtainable of the Manor house itself reveals the east facade framed between the gate piers of the forecourt.



PLATE II

At the left of the forecourt a wrought-iron gate gives pedestrian access to the formal south gardens.

NPS-HABS Photo by Jack E. Boucher



PLATE III

The south garden, its terraces and swimming pool now disused and overgrown, was designed for gracious outdoor entertaining.



The western rooms with their porches and terraces command a view of broad lawns and the distant Potomac River. Large trees screen the service wing on all sides.



PLATE V

Beyond the main portal is the spacious marble-paved entrance hall, now housing exhibits of the John Hanson Memorial Museum.

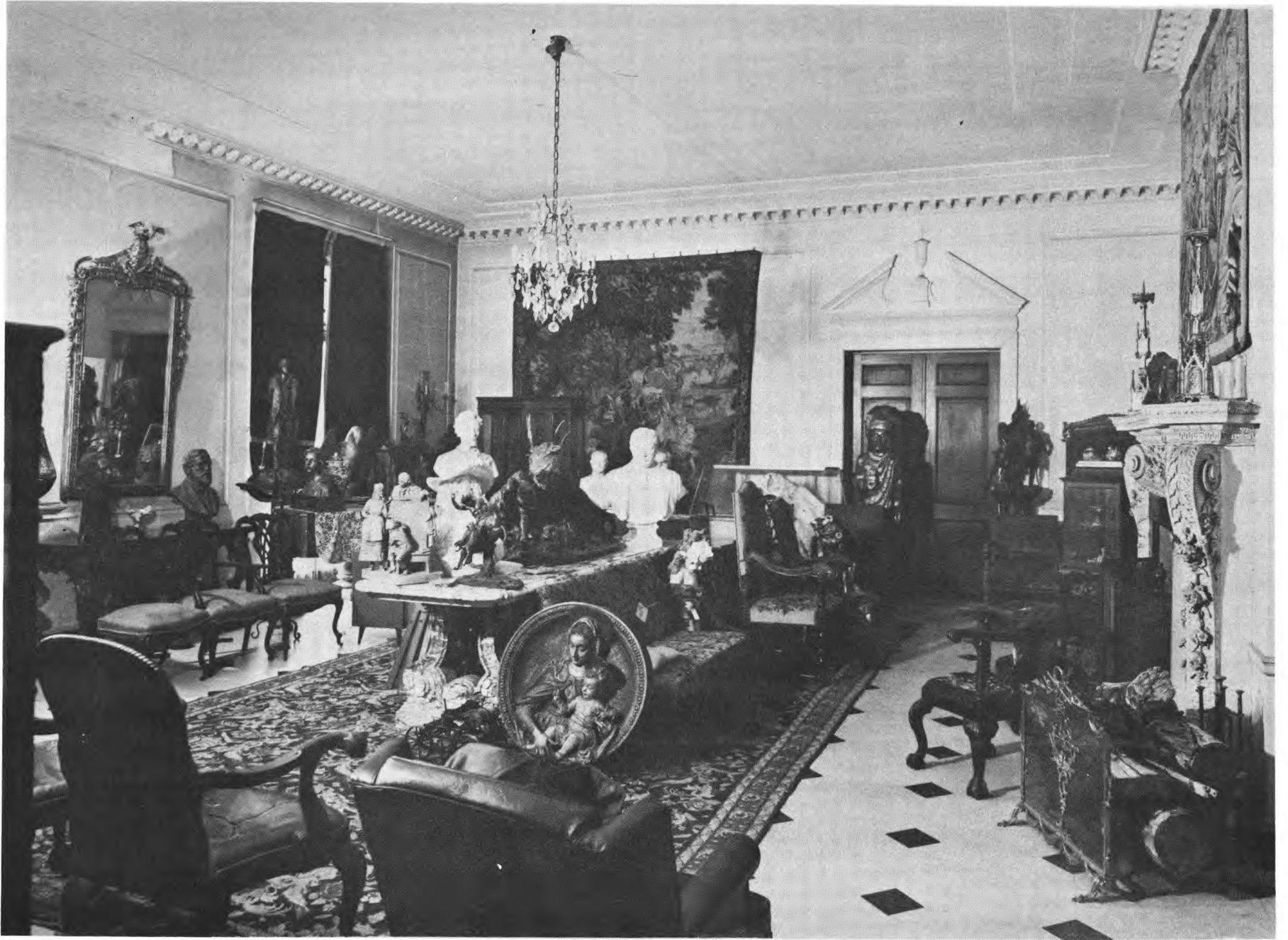


PLATE VI

A richly decorated mantelpiece is
the focal point of the entrance hall.

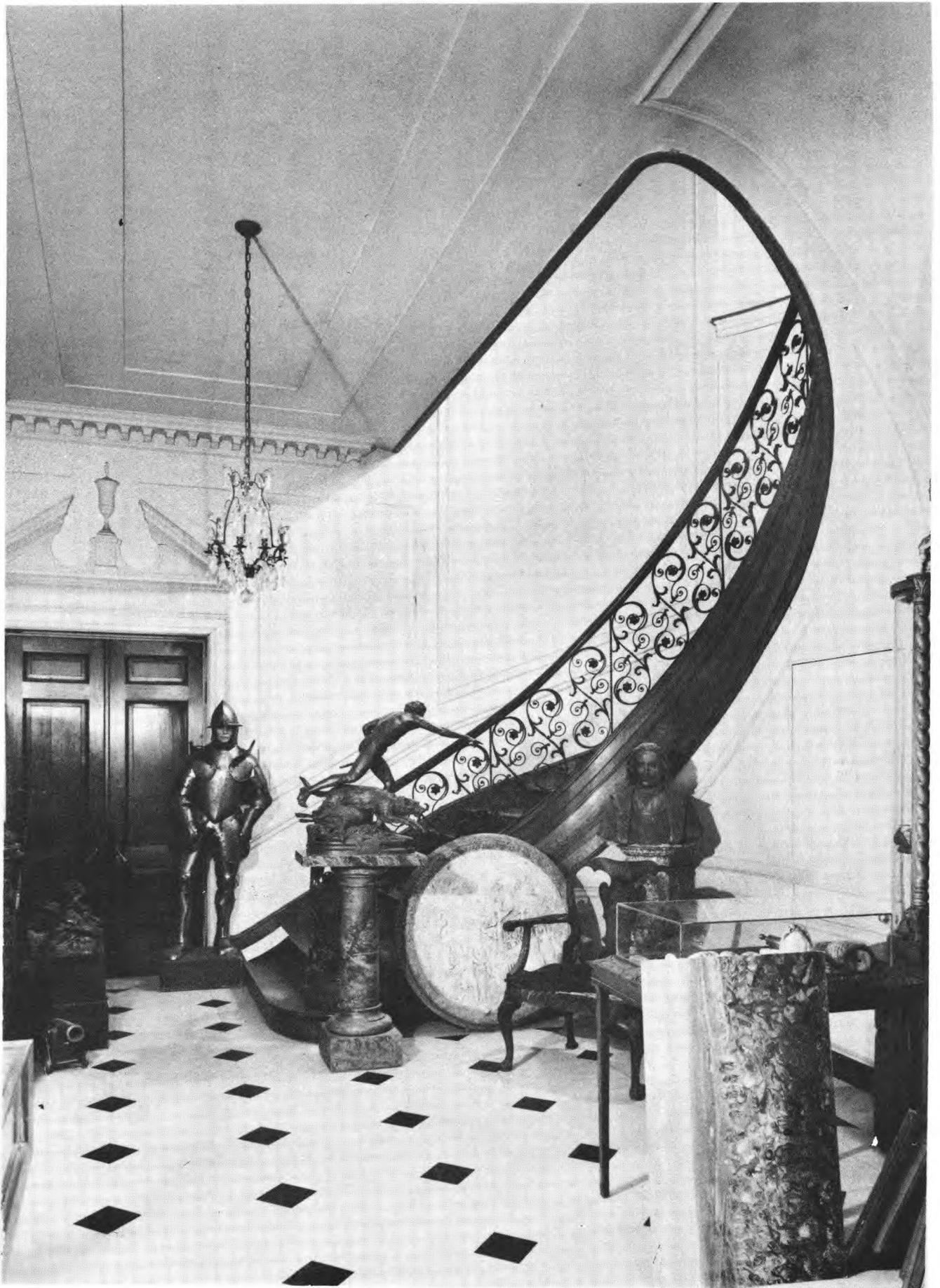
NPS-HABS Photo by Jack E. Boucher



PLATE VII

To the right of the entrance hall the main stair ascends in a graceful curve to the second floor. Beyond the doors are the elevator lobby and the service wing.

NPS-HABS Photo by Jack E. Boucher



The warm tone of its paneling makes the library one of the most attractive rooms in the house



The well-proportioned dining room is designed for formal entertaining. The door on the right is directly opposite the grand stair, and the French doors on the left open onto the terrace. Beyond the tall screen is the service pantry.

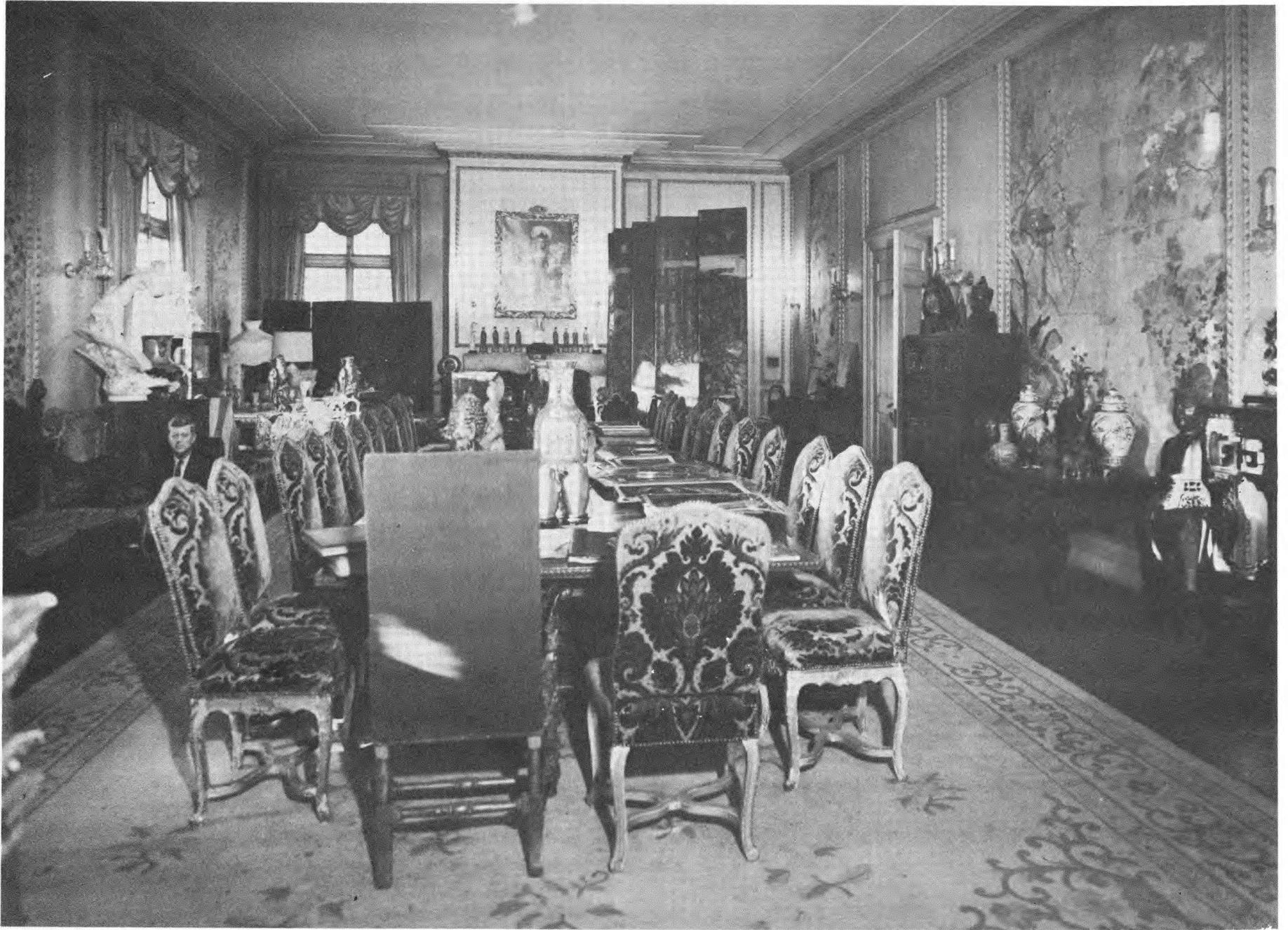
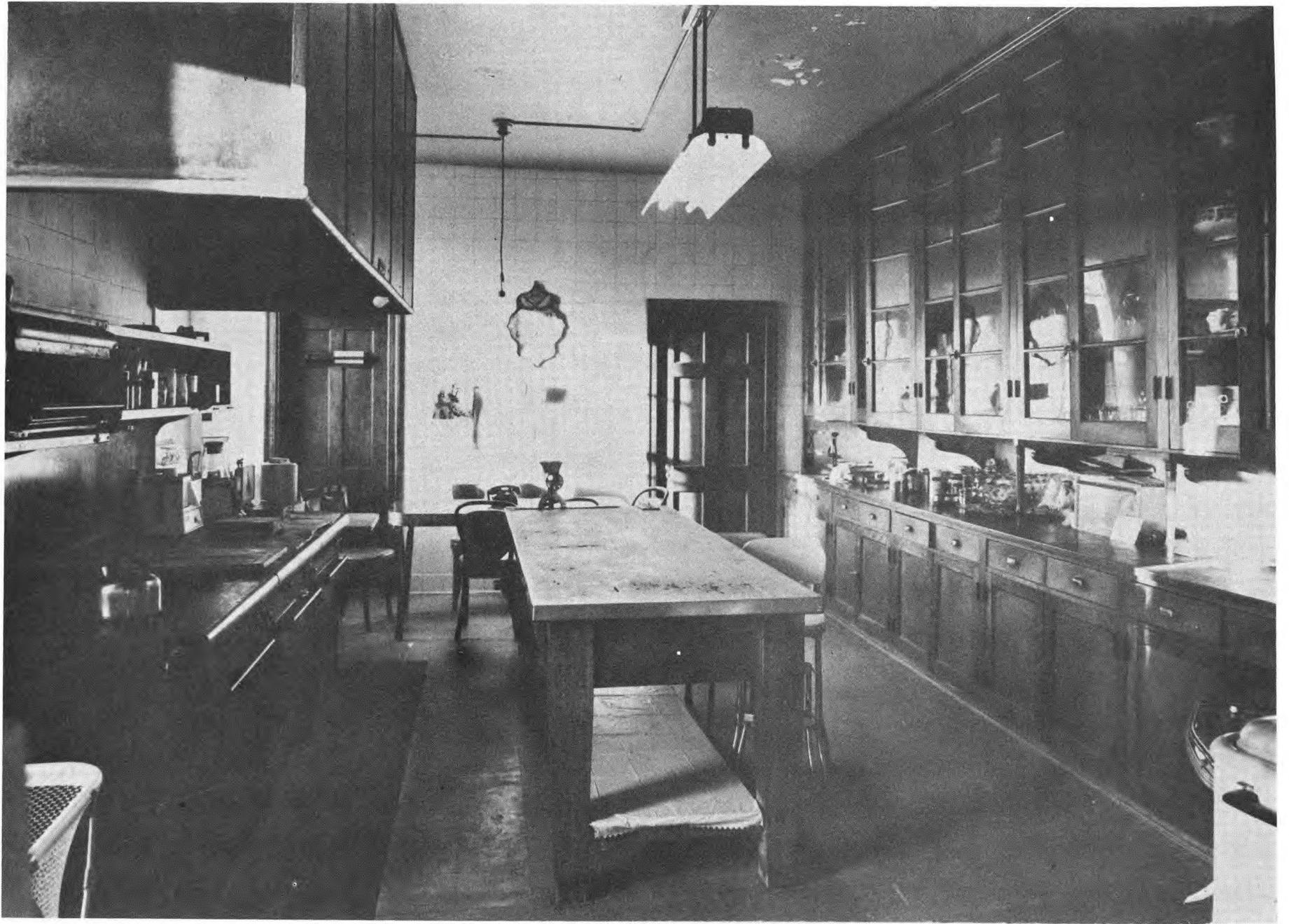


PLATE X

The spacious kitchen with its still functional original equipment and fixtures is only one of several rooms of the house designed for food preparation and service.

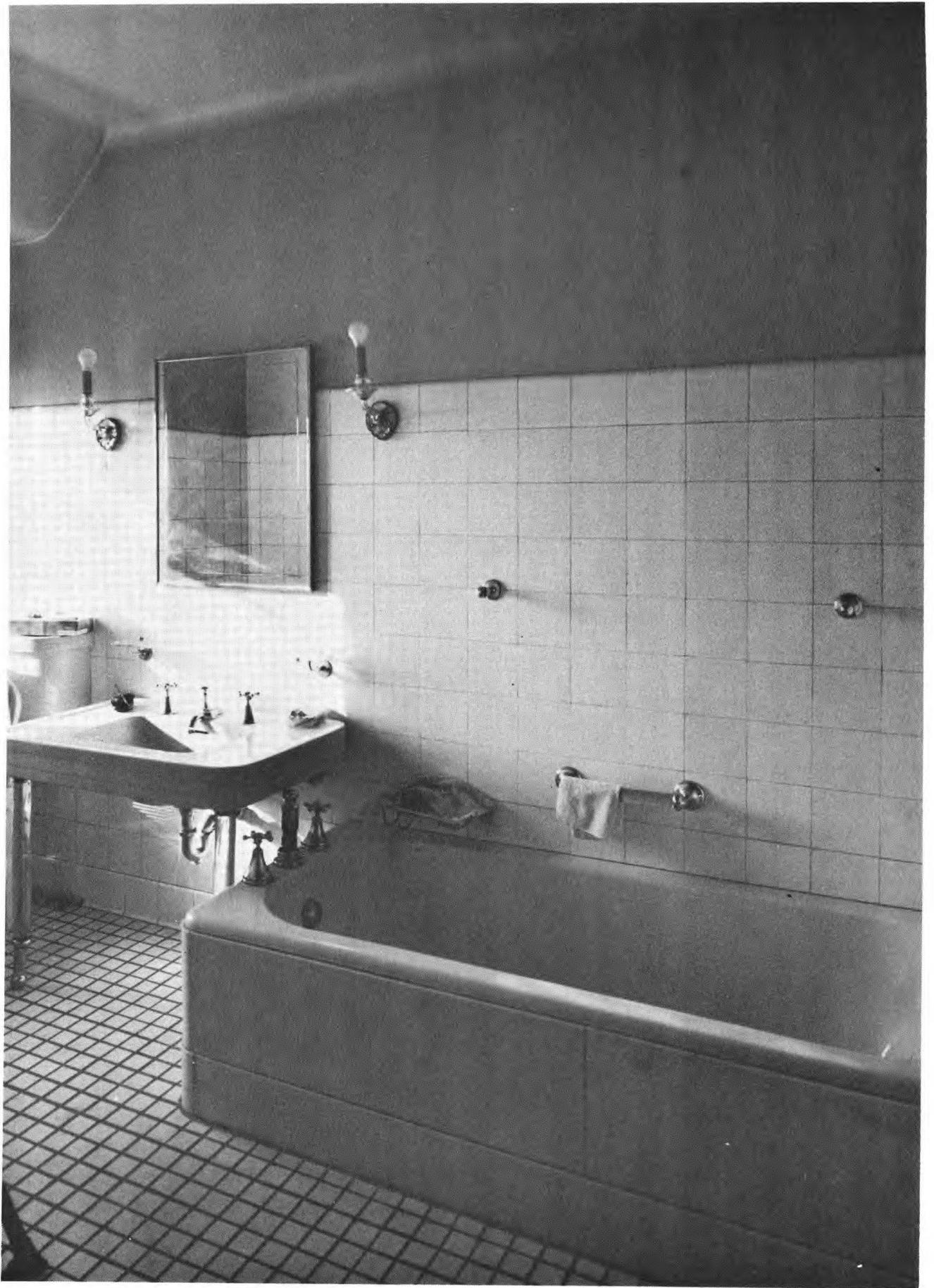


All the principal chambers are ample in size with large windows and a fireplace. A private bath and walk-in closet are accessible from the room.



PLATE XII

The large scale of the room and the fixtures is typical of all the baths in the main building.



South of the Manor house are the manager's residence and shops. Including a greenhouse, this compound provides facilities for operation and maintenance of the estate.



Little remains of the original Oxon Hill Manor house, burned in 1895, except the cellar excavation and a fragment of the wall.



Only two of the three 3 1/2' x 5' granite slabs that formed the floor of the "John Hanson Mausoleum" remain in situ. . Weather and recent vandalizing have destroyed evidence of the building's original design and use.





Oxon Hill Manor
appendix

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
OXON HILL MANOR

OWNERSHIP AND PHYSICAL HISTORY

Recorded history of what would become known as Oxon Hill Manor begins with John Addison, brother of a chaplain to John Churchill, first Duke of Marlborough, and uncle of the noted essayist Joseph Addison. John amassed considerable wealth as a merchant adventurer, and in 1685, as payment for providing overseas passages for colonists, he began acquiring lands from Lord Baltimore near the juncture of the Potomac and Eastern Branch (Anacostia). Soon he established his plantation headquarters there. Addison's public duties included those of colonel of militia, privy councilor to the governor, and foreman of his parish.¹

Colonel John Addison's son Thomas, born in 1769 at St. Mary's City, became the first surveyor of Prince George's County at the age of 17. Like his father, he became active as a merchant and land speculator. He was appointed Lord High Sheriff of the county in 1705, acquired his father's rank of militia colonel upon the latter's death the following year, and served as a judge of the High Provincial Court of Maryland after 1712. After spending a year in London, during which time he visited his literary cousin Joseph, Thomas returned to Maryland in the summer of 1710 to build the brick mansion called "Oxon Hill." The mansion was erected on a hill overlooking the Potomac near Oxon Creek in 1711. An inventory of Addison's properties listed eight other plantations under his general supervision, a mill and a store, 76 slaves and three indentured English servants. Thomas left over 15,000 acres to his children upon his death in 1727.²

Thomas Addison's eldest son, John, inherited his father's plantations and passed the land encompassing the mansion near Oxon Creek on to his son Thomas Addison (c. 1740-1774). A survey of this property, containing 3,663 acres, was patented August 3, 1767, as "Oxon Hill Manor"--the first official use of the name.³

1. Guy Castle, "New School at Oxon Hill Recalls Glories of Old Prince George's," *The Enquirer-Gazette*, Upper Marlboro, Md., Oct. 18, 1957; "With the Rambler in Odd Nooks and Crannies About the City," *Washington Evening Star*, Aug. 3, 1912.

2. Castle, "Glories of Old Prince George's."

3. Ibid.

Upon this Thomas Addison's death in 1774, Oxon Hill Manor was inherited by his five-year-old son Walter Dulany Addison. Thomas Hawkins Hanson, who served under Thomas Addison's brother John early in the Revolution, was appointed regent for the property. He married Addison's widow in 1778. Thomas Hanson was a nephew of John Hanson, first "President of the United States in Congress Assembled" under the Articles of Confederation.⁴

In the fall of 1783, a year after his term in the Congress, John Hanson visited his nephew at Oxon Hill Manor. In ill health, he died there on November 15. The possibility that he was buried on the estate, rather than near his Frederick home, has been the subject of much interest on the part of John Hanson "promoters" in recent years.

According to an Addison descendent, Nathaniel Washington, cousin of George, leased and occupied the estate from 1787 to 1792.⁵

The Reverend Walter Dulany Addison, rector of the Broad Creek Church near Oxon Hill, founder of St. John's Church in Georgetown, and one of the four clergymen officiating at George Washington's funeral, was the last Addison owner of Oxon Hill Manor.⁶ Unable to maintain it, he sold to Zachariah Berry on March 17, 1810, over 1,328 acres of the land patented by his father, including the mansion but reserving the Addison graveyard east of the house.⁷

Zachariah Berry died in 1845, and by the terms of his will the lands purchased from Walter Dulany Addison went to his son Thomas.⁸ Thomas's later life was unfortunate. He became mentally ill, and his wife, fearing his threatened violence, left him in 1874. About 1876 Berry entered a Baltimore asylum for several months, but his initial improvement proved temporary. Management of his properties suffered, and he became indebted

4. Edward S. Delaplaine, "Presidency Forced on John Hanson," *The Post*, Frederick, Md., April 19, 1971; Herbert J. Stoeckel, *The Strange Story of John Hanson, First President of the United States* (Hartford, Conn., 1956).

5. Castle, "Glories of Old Prince George's."

6. Elizabeth Hesselius Murray, *One Hundred Years Ago, or The Life and Times of the Rev. Walter Dulany Addison, 1769-1848* (Philadelphia, 1895).

7. Land Record Books J.R.M. 13, pp. 623, 627, 654; J.R.M. 16, p. 435, Prince George's County Courthouse, Upper Marlboro, Md. (hereinafter cited as PGCC).

8. Book P.C. 1, pp. 284-89, PGCC.

for over \$20,000, unable even to pay his taxes. On February 18, 1878, Berry's adult sons Thomas Owen and Norman petitioned the Prince George's circuit court for a writ of *de lunatico inquirendo*; an inquisition pursuant to the writ on March 7 found Berry mentally incompetent and placed his properties in the hands of trustees to be sold for payment of his creditors. Berry was admitted to Mount Hope Retreat, a mental institution in Baltimore County, on February 19. Sometime between August and November 1879 he died.⁹

A court-ordered survey made by William J. Latimer in 1879 divided Thomas Berry's Oxon Hill property into a total of 49 lots totaling approximately 1,430 acres. The first auction, held July 31, 1879, at the mansion, sold some 42 acres to Dr. John W. Bayne; insufficient or no bids were received for the remainder. By 1886 at least 200 acres had been sold, with other tracts being rented pending sale.

Copy for an auction advertisement described the unsold Oxon Hill Manor property:

A RARE OPPORTUNITY FOR INVESTMENT

TRUSTEE'S SALE OF TWELVE HUNDRED ACRES OF LAND, NEAR WASHINGTON CITY, ADJOINING THE LINE OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, IN SIGHT OF THE CAPITAL

By virtue of the power vested in [torn] trustees in an Equity cause in the Circuit Court for Prince George's County in Equity known as No. 1208 Equity, we will sell at public sale at the mansion house on Oxen [sic] Hill farm on the road leading from Fort Foote to Washington on [blank] day of March 1891 at the hour of One o'clock P.M. if fair if not the next fair day all that valuable Real Estate known as Oxen Hill and Oxen Hill Manor in Prince George's County decreed to be sold and not heretofore disposed of lying between the Fort Foote road and the Potomac River where it strikes the District line together with that part of the Woodland still unsold and called Oxen Hill Manor. Oxen Hill upon which the mansion house is situated contains about 725 acres. This is one of the most fertile, eligibly located and valuable tracts of land in Prince George's County.

9. Chancery Cause No. 1208 Equity, PGCC.

The improvements consist of an elegant brick mansion covered with slate and panelled with cherry, with commodious barns and stables and six tenant houses, also a wharf constructed of limestone [torn] at the public ferry landing opposite Alexandria which is a part of the property. This land is well adapted to market gardening fruit culture and stock raising.

The Woodland consists of about 500 acres divided into lots averaging from 20 to 30 acres lying on the roads to the Navy Yard bridge and to Silver Hill covered with white oak chesnut and pine wood.¹⁰

Samuel Taylor Suit contracted to buy the unsold remainder of Oxon Hill Manor May 23, 1888. He died soon thereafter, and after some complication the property was conveyed by the trustees to his widow, Rosa P. Suit, individually and as trustees for their children, on May 14, 1891.¹¹ On the same date she deeded it to John C. Heald for \$30,000.¹² Heald in turn sold Oxon Hill on February 20, 1892, to Reuben L. Coleman and others.¹³

Coleman acquired certain rights and interests held by other parties in the property during the next few years,¹⁴ and on January 21, 1905, he conveyed Oxon Hill Manor ("also known as Bean's Bargain, Pleasant Hills, Barnaba Manor, Talbot's Lot") to trustees for the Rock Creek Land Company, Inc. (one of whom was the aforementioned John C. Heald).¹⁵

Unfortunately for the cause of historic preservation, Coleman's group conveyed Oxon Hill Manor minus the manor house, which had been destroyed by fire during their ownership February 6, 1895. The *Alexandria Gazette* of the following day gave an account of the fire:

When first discovered, a small spot in the roof only was burning, but it quickly spread, and in 15 or 20 minutes the whole eastern heavens were illuminated by the conflagration-- the fire raging furiously, the flames leaping high, while a

10. Ibid.

11. Land Record Book J.W.B. 18, p. 359, PGCC.

12. Ibid., p. 370.

13. Land Record Book J.W.B. 20, p. 412, PGCC.

14. Land Record Books J.W.B. 25, p. 606; J.W.B. 29, p. 430, PGCC.

15. Land Record Book 21, p. 359, PGCC.

huge volume of smoke settled over the adjoining hills. Numbers of people in the city went to the streets facing the river to look at the fire, which continued to rage for several hours. The origin of the fire is unknown, from the fact that ice in the river rendered it impossible to communicate with the opposite shore. Nothing now remains of the former building but the walls and the four chimneys.¹⁶

The Rock Creek Land Company trustees deeded tracts totaling approximately 775 acres (including the mansion site) to Emma P. Coleman, widow of Reuben L. Coleman, for \$18,000 on January 29, 1907.¹⁷ Emma was dead by 1913, and on February 10 of that year Mary V. Parran, an heir, granted a quit-claim deed to Oxon Hill to R. Lindsay Coleman, another heir.¹⁸ A deed of June 12, 1917, from John C. Parran and others to William K. Quinter and Thomas C. Coleman, trustees, recorded that R. Lindsay Coleman had died intestate and that his relatives were assigning the Oxon Hill Manor property to trustees to dispose of and settle the estate.¹⁹ Quinter and Coleman sold portions of the property to various parties, and on July 20, 1927, they deeded four parcels of Oxon Hill Manor to Sumner and Mathilde T. Welles. The Welleses bought two parts of Lot No. 1, all of Lot No. 2, and part of Lot No. 3 of Thomas Berry's subdivision (as surveyed by Latimer), totaling 245.17 acres more or less and including the mansion site, for \$110 an acre.²⁰

The house at Oxon Hill Manor today was designed for Sumner Welles in 1928 by Jules Henri de Sibour, AIA (1872-1938). Born in Rouen, France, de Sibour was brought to the United States at an early age. He graduated from Yale and the Ecole des Beaux Arts, Paris. Other local buildings

16. Quoted in John Clagett Proctor, *Proctor's Washington and Environs* [a collection of articles written for the *Washington Sunday Star*, 1928-1949, (Washington, 1949)], p. 195.

17. Land Record Book 38, p. 447, PGCC.

18. Land Record Book 84, p. 477, PGCC.

19. Land Record Book 128, p. 1.

20. Land Record Book 293, p. 122. Metes and bounds are given in the deed. According to this and earlier deeds, a plat of the Latimer survey of 1879 was filed in Equity No. 1208. The writer was unable to locate it.

of his design include the Folger Building and Playhouse on 15th Street NW (1906), 1785 Massachusetts Avenue (1910), the Bureau of Indian Affairs (1931), the Chevy Chase Country Club, Science Hall at Howard University, and Keith's Theatre in the Riggs Office Building. The Welles house, located about a third-mile south-southeast of the site of the Addison mansion, is described in the architectural portion of this report.

In 1929 Welles had his property resurveyed into three tracts totaling 244.4289 acres.²¹ J. Breckinridge Bayne and others deeded to Mathilde Welles an additional 68/100-acre July 10, 1944.²²

On October 15 and 28, 1952, Sumner and Harriet Post Welles (Mathilde had died in 1949) deeded to Fred Nejm Maloof 55.387 acres of Oxon Hill Manor plus the former Bayne 68/100-acre, including his house but excluding the site of the Addison house and graves, for a reported \$175,000.²³ Welles sold Maloof an additional 2.78 acres June 8, 1953.²⁴ The rest of his Oxon Hill real estate went to Kenneth Frank on December 13, 1952: four parcels totaling 242.6886 acres minus the 55.387-acre tract sold to Maloof. In the deed, Frank agreed "to dedicate to a responsible organization the burial ground of the Addison family now upon the premises wherein John Hanson, the President of the First Continental Congress [sic], is believed to be buried."²⁵

On August 28, 1967, Maloof sold his 55.387-acre tract (including the Welles house) to the Burpac Corporation of Virginia, established by Howard L. Burris and Russell B. Pace, Jr.²⁶ (Burris, a Washington business consultant with ties to the Johnson administration, was married to the socially-prominent daughter of a former Texas governor.) The sale price was reported to be \$1.2 million.²⁷ Maloof continued to occupy the house; he still operates it, in somewhat deteriorated condition, as the "John Hanson Memorial Museum," housing a highly eclectic collection of art and other objects.

21. Land Record Book 337, pp. 49, 102, 104, 186, PGCC.

22. Land Record Book 769, p. 317; Plat 769, State Roads Commission of Maryland, PGCC.

23. Land Record Book 1554, pp. 360, 365, PGCC; Stephen Neary, "Welles Estate Faces Auction on Monday," *Washington Post*, Mar 18, 1970. According to a *Washington Star* writer, Maloof had recently sold 165,000 acres of pulpwood land in North Carolina for \$1,340,000 (William Fuchs, "Oxon Hill Manor," *Washington Star Sunday Magazine*, Sept. 24, 1967).

24. Land Record Book 1848, p. 119, PGCC.

25. Land Record Book 1567, p. 329, PGCC.

26. Land Record Book 3506, p. 193, PGCC.

27. Neary, "Welles Estate Faces Auction."

Kenneth Frank sold the land he purchased from Welles to Roberto Motta in January and March 1953.²⁸ Motta deeded this land (187.3036 acres) on September 13, 1954, to Oxon Hill Estates, Inc.²⁹

Howard Burris had extensive plans for Oxon Hill Manor. He envisioned a recreational-history area to be called "Heritage Park." On January 10, 1968, he announced: "Visitors will be treated to a panoramic view of Americana--from early colonial times, down through the gaslight era, to modern days. Buildings and exhibits will include such structures as a colonial inn, an early American church, a covered bridge, an Indian village, and a small U.S. town." Rides would be "indoors and educational," with historical themes; the Welles mansion would be used for receptions and "perhaps as a guest house for visiting dignitaries." Preliminary designs were prepared by Nat Winecoff, a former vice president of WED (Walt Disney) Enterprises, Inc., and the builders of Disneyland were to erect the buildings. Zoning applications were filed to reclassify the land for commercial use.³⁰ These plans were reported current as late as April 1970,³¹ but zoning remains rural-residential.

Recent land transactions at Oxon Hill Manor include a transfer of 149.820 acres (including the Addison house site) from trustees for Oxon Hill Estates, Inc., to the Oxon Hill Estates Straw Corporation, October 6, 1969,³² and a sale August 3, 1970, of Burpac's 55.387 acres

28. Land Record Books 1569, p. 293; 1586, p. 100, PGCC.

29. Land Record Book 1773, p. 578, PGCC. Motta appears as one of the principal creditors in a deed of trust dated Aug. 23, 1967, outlining the indebtedness of the P.&B. Co., Ltd., of Virginia (presumably another Pace-Burris corporation) for \$850,000 to Oxon Hill Estates, Inc. (Land Record Book 3501, p. 685, PGCC). This sum is the same as that given in a deed of trust from Burpac Corp. to Naji Maloof (a relative of Fred) et al. Aug. 29, 1967 (Land Record Book 3506, p. 197). The major creditor in the first-mentioned mortgage was William H. Ferguson, Jr.

30. Maxine Cheshire, "Summer Welles Estate May Get a New Lease on Life," *Washington Post*, Jan. 11, 1968.

31. Don Beaupre, "Manor Eyed as a Center for Historic Disneyland," *Prince George's Sentinel*, Apr. 23, 1970.

32. Land Record Book 3775, p. 289, PGCC.

in two tracts: eight acres, including the Welles house, to International Capital Corporation, and the other 47.38 acres to Financial Realty Corporation.³³ The Addison house site, Addison graveyard, and the site thought by some to be that of John Hanson's burial are contained within a 92-acre portion of the Oxon Hill Estates Straw Corporation property north and west of the former Burpac land. This tract has been identified as belonging to the Ferguson brothers of Hampton, Virginia, prominent in shopping center development.³⁴

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Historical associations of Oxon Hill Manor fall primarily into three categories: (1) the Addisons and their role in colonial Maryland, (2) John Hanson's death and possible burial on the property, and (3) Summer Welles's years at Oxon Hill, including reported Roosevelt-Churchill connections with the estate.

1. A very brief sketch has been given of the Addison association. Physical remains of the Addison presence at Oxon Hill include the cellar hole of their mansion and the Addison graveyard, containing, among others, the tombstone of Walter Dulany Addison's wife.

2. A small, partially subterranean brick, stone, and granite structure on the embankment facing the Potomac below the Addison house site (about 200 yards southwest of the Addison graveyard) has been a subject of conjecture for years. A weekly column on Washington's environs, "With the Rambler in Odd Nooks and Crannies About the City," in the *Washington Evening Star* August 3, 1912, referred to this as the "Berry grave vault," noting that it had been broken up for its bricks "in the last decade or so." John Clagett Proctor, in one of his similar columns between 1928 and 1949, also referred to the "Berry family vault," remains of which could be seen in the hillside overlooking the river.³⁵ However, both

33. Land Record Book 3856, pp. 402, 406, PGCC. The writer was unable to fully unravel the relationships of the various parties currently involved in the Oxon Hill real estate in the limited time available for this report.

34. Frederic Kelly, "'Forgotten Man' Not in Tomb," *The Sun*, Baltimore, Sept. 6, 1971.

35. *Proctor's Washington and Environs*, p. 165.

Berry owners of the property appear to have been buried elsewhere: Zachariah at Concord, another of his plantations,³⁶ and Thomas--from an undertaker's receipt found in the courthouse--at Baltimore.³⁷ William N. Morell, a recently deceased Bethesda attorney and former president of the John Hanson Society of Maryland, concluded in the 1930s that the structure was Hanson's tomb and made extensive notes on the subject. In September 1971 the Rev. Alan C. Freed of Dundalk, Maryland, another Hanson enthusiast who has done much research on the subject, conducted an amateur archeological investigation of the presumed grave, but found no human bones. Others have surmised that the "mausoleum"--now virtually destroyed except for some granite floor slabs--was not a burial place at all and/or that Hanson was buried in the Addison graveyard. A recent article in Maryland's *Valleys of History* magazine tells of correspondence between certain citizens of Frederick (where no Hanson grave has been discovered either) and Sumner Welles in 1938. In answering their inquiry about Hanson's possible burial with the Addisons, Welles said, "Unless some record can be found establishing the fact that John Hanson was actually interred in the . . . family graveyard . . . there is no way I know of to find out other than a careful examination of all the remains in the graveyard." He refused to allow such an examination.³⁸ We have already noted the clause in the 1952 deed from Welles to Kenneth Frank referring to the Addison burial ground "wherein John Hanson . . . is believed to be buried."

No conclusions with respect to Hanson's burial at Oxon Hill could be attempted within the scope of this report. Further investigation would require examination of all documentary evidence concerning Hanson's death, careful consideration of possible alternative burials in the "mausoleum," including other Berry family members, and professional examination of what little physical evidence remains on (or in) the ground.

3. Sumner Welles (1892-1961) served as Assistant Secretary of State, Ambassador to Cuba, and Under Secretary of State in the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt. He was instrumental in promulgating the "Good Neighbor" policy toward Latin America, made a significant trip to confer

36. Effie Gwynn Bowie, *Across the Years in Prince George's County* (Richmond, 1947), p. 60.

37. No. 1208 Equity, PGCC.

38. James D. Snyder, "John Hanson," *Valleys of History*, Summer 1970.

with European heads of government in 1940, and assisted in laying the groundwork for what would become the United Nations organization. Personality and policy differences with Secretary of State Cordell Hull forced his retirement in 1943. Thereafter he wrote on foreign affairs, serving as editor of Harvard's American Foreign Policy Library from 1949 to 1953.

The most notable incident reported to have occurred at Oxon Hill Manor during the Welles years was a meeting between Roosevelt and Churchill in June 1942; they are said in recent newspaper articles to have sat under the myrtle tree at the southwest corner of the terrace and discussed plans for the invasion of North Africa.³⁹ This writer could not positively disprove the occurrence of the conference. However, a check of Welles's accounts of the war years in his *Time for Decision* (1944) and *Seven Decisions That Shaped History* (1950) revealed no mention of such a meeting; and Churchill's quite detailed records of his trips to Washington in December 1941-January 1942, June 1942, and May 1943 in *The Grand Alliance* and *The Hinge of Fate* describe no visit to Oxon Hill Manor. The Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, which at the writer's request checked several primary and secondary Roosevelt sources there (including the President's appointment diaries and his personal file), likewise returned a negative report. Finally, Welles's sons Benjamin and Arnold, while recalling occasional social visits by President Roosevelt, did not remember any Churchill appearance at Oxon Hill. Both of them volunteered their belief that the Roosevelt-Churchill meeting there is a fabrication of the present occupant in order to enhance the value of the property.⁴⁰ If Churchill and Roosevelt did happen to visit Oxon Hill together--which appears unlikely--the occasion would seem not to have been of great significance.

Minor items of note associated with the Welles years at Oxon Hill included a ceremony unveiling a roadside historical marker there in 1933 on the 150th anniversary of John Hanson's death, the revelation that Welles had requested and obtained prohibition of Army Air Corps flights over his estate,⁴¹ and his collapse at Christmas 1948 while taking a midnight walk

39. Fuchs, "Oxon Hill Manor"; Neary, "Welles Estate Faces Auction"; Alan C. Freed, "Dundalk Diggers Unearth Possible Grave of First President," *Dundalk Times*, Dundalk, Md., Apr. 1, 1971.

40. Telephonic interviews, Jan. 4 and 5, 1972.

41. "U.S. Army Air Corps Flyers Must Avoid Welles Estate," *The Sun*, Baltimore, Apr. 7, 1940.

on the estate: he lay unconscious overnight in a frozen field before being discovered, but suffered no lasting ill effect.⁴²

42. Stephen S. Rosenfeld, "Sumner Welles Is Dead at 68" (obituary), *Washington Post*, Sept. 25, 1961.

A NOTE ON SOURCES

References used in the preparation of this report were primarily courthouse records and newspaper reports and articles. They are cited in the notes and need not be repeated. Of particular assistance were Mr. Peter Dwyer, historian for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, who steered the writer to the Oxon Hill Manor clipping file at the Prince George's Memorial Library; Messrs. Arnold and Benjamin Welles, who commented on the Welles years from personal experience; and the Rev. Alan C. Freed of Dundalk, who shared his interest in John Hanson, provided other newspaper clippings related especially to his own grave-seeking activities, and suggested additional sources of information. Among the suggested sources contacted were Judge Edward S. Delaplaine of Frederick, who has written on John Hanson, and Mrs. Harriet Bayne Addison Castle, who lives across the road from Oxon Hill Manor at "Salubria." Mrs. Castle has a quantity of primary materials on the Addison family (used by her son Guy in preparing the article cited in this report) and several illustrations of the Addison house. Other persons mentioned by Rev. Freed but not contacted are Mr. James C. Wilfong, Jr., of the C&P Telephone Company, Washington, who has another photograph of the Addison house; Mr. Cary Carson, an archeologist with the St. Mary's City Commission, who has viewed the presumed Hanson grave; Mrs. William N. Morell of Bethesda, who has her late husband's papers on Hanson; and Miss Jeanette Markell of Senator Mathias's office, who has also been working on the Hanson case. Another Addison descendant reported to have family data, in Europe when this report was written, is Mr. Frank Addison of the Union Trust Company, Washington.

Barry Mackintosh
January 4, 1972

APPENDIX B

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY HABS No. MD-301

OXON HILL MANOR

Location: 6701 Oxon Hill Road (west side), Oxon Hill,
Prince George's County, Maryland.

Present Owner: International Capital Corporation,
1701 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D.C.
(Gen. George H. Olmsted, principal officer).

Present Occupant: Mr. Fred N. Maloof and staff.

Present Use: Residence and museum.

Statement of
Significance: This notable neo-Georgian country mansion was
designed in 1928 by Jules Henri de Sibour for
Sumner Welles, career diplomat and Under
Secretary of State in the administration of
Franklin D. Roosevelt. Essentially unaltered,
it expresses a high level of 1920's prosperity.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: The following is a chain of title to the land at Oxon Hill owned by Sumner Welles and since divided among several parties.

1685 Lands in vicinity of Oxon Creek granted by Lord Baltimore to John Addison, merchant adventurer and uncle of essayist Joseph Addison.

1706 Lands inherited by John's son Thomas Addison (1679-1727). Thomas built "Oxon Hill" mansion overlooking Potomac south of Oxon Creek in 1711.

1727 Land inherited by Thomas's son John Addison (1713-1764).

1764 Land inherited by John's son Thomas Addison (c. 1740-1774); survey containing 3,663 acres patented in 1767 as "Oxon Hill Manor."

1774 Oxon Hill Manor inherited by Thomas's son Walter Dulany Addison (1769-1848). Thomas Hawkins Hanson, who married Thomas Addison's widow, served as regent during the boy's minority. (This and above from Guy Castle, "New School at Oxon Hill Recalls Glories of Old Prince George's," The Enquirer-Gazette, Upper Marlboro, Md., Oct. 18, 1957.)

- 1810 Walter D. Addison sold over 1,328 acres (including house) to Zachariah Berry [Land Record Books J.R.M. 13, pp. 623, 627, 654; J.R.M. 16, p. 435, Prince George's County Courthouse, Upper Marlboro, Md. (hereinafter cited as PGCC)].
- 1845 Zachariah Berry died; Oxon Hill Manor inherited by son Thomas (Book P.C. 1, pp. 284-89, PGCC).
- 1878 Thomas Berry found mentally incompetent by court; property placed in hands of trustees to be sold for payment of debts (Chancery Cause No. 1208 Equity, PGCC).
- 1891 Unsold remainder of Oxon Hill Manor (including house) conveyed to Rosa P. Suit, who sold it to John C. Heald (Land Record Book J.W. B. 18, pp. 359, 370, PGCC).
- 1892 Heald sold Oxon Hill Manor to Reuben L. Coleman et al. (Land Record Book J.W.B. 20, p. 412, PGCC). House burned Feb. 6, 1895.
- 1905 Coleman sold Oxon Hill Manor to trustees for Rock Creek Land Company, Inc. (Land Record Book 21, p. 359, PGCC).
- 1907 Rock Creek Land Company trustees sold 775 acres of Oxon Hill Manor (including house site) to Emma P. Coleman (widow of Reuben L. Coleman) (Land Record Book 38, p. 447, PGCC).

- 1913 Mary V. Parran, heir of the late Emma P. Coleman, granted quit-claim deed to Oxon Hill to R. Lindsay Coleman, another heir (Land Record Book 84, p. 477, PGCC).
- 1917 John C. Parran et al., relatives of R. Lindsay Coleman (who had died intestate) assigned Oxon Hill Manor to trustees William K. Quinter and Thomas C. Coleman to dispose of and settle estate (Land Record Book 128, p. 1, PGCC).
- 1927 Quinter and Coleman sold four parcels of Oxon Hill Manor totaling approximately 245.17 acres to Sumner and Mathilde T. Welles (Land Record Book 293, p. 122, PGCC). Property resurveyed with total of 244.4289 acres in 1929.
- 1952 Welles sold 55.387 acres (including his house but excluding site of Addison house) to Fred N. Maloof; another 2.78-acre tract was sold to Maloof the following year. Welles sold rest of Oxon Hill Manor (approximately 187.3 acres, including Addison house site) to Kenneth (sic) Frank. (Land Record Books 1554, pp. 360, 365; 1848, p. 119; 1567, p. 329 PGCC.)
- 1953 Kenneth Frank sold his portion of Oxon Hill Manor to Roberto Motta (Land Record Books 1569, p. 293; 1586, p. 100, PGCC). Motta deeded this land to Oxon Hill Estates, Inc., in 1954 (Land Record Book 1773, p. 578, PGCC).
- 1967 Fred Maloof sold his portion of Oxon Hill Manor (including Welles house) to the Burpac Corporation (Land Record Book 3506, p. 193, PGCC).

1969 Trustees for Oxon Hill Estates, Inc., transferred 149.820 acres (including the Addison house site) to Oxon Hill Estates Straw Corporation (Land Record Book 3775, p. 289, PGCC). (Addison house site is currently contained in a 92.7-acre portion of this property.)

1970 Burpac sold eight acres, including Welles house, to International Capital Corporation, and its remaining 47.38 acres to Financial Realty Corporation (Land Record Book 3856, pp. 402, 406, PGCC).

2. Date of erection: 1929.
3. Architect: Jules Henri de Sibour, AIA (1872-1938).
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: Structural and mechanical blueprints dated 1928 are in possession of the present occupant.
5. Alterations and additions: A cast-iron porch on the south elevation was added between 1929 and 1934.
6. Important old views: Interior photographs of rooms and furnishings in Town and Country, Mar. 1, 1934, pp. 36-39.

Exterior views in undated (c. 1950) Joseph P. Day, Inc., advertising brochure in possession of present occupant.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

The site is a part of the Addison family estate established in 1685. John Hanson, first "President of the United States in Congress Assembled" under the Articles of Confederation, died in the Addison house (the site of which is nearby but outside the present Oxon Hill Manor property limits) and is believed by some to have been buried in the vicinity. Sumner Welles, Under Secretary of State in the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt, entertained Roosevelt and other persons of prominence at his mansion during the 1930s and 1940s (although a reported Roosevelt-Churchill meeting at the estate in 1942 appears not to have occurred).

C. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Cited land records, Prince Georges County Courthouse.

Interviews with Benjamin and Arnold Welles, sons of Sumner Welles.

Structural and mechanical blueprints for Welles house, J. H. de Sibour, 1928 (in possession of Fred N. Maloof, present occupant of house).

2. Secondary and published sources:

Who's Who In America, Vol. 30 (1958-1959), Chicago, 1958.

Stephen S. Rosenfeld, "Sumner Welles is Dead at 68" (obituary), Washington Post, Sept. 25, 1961.

Barbara T. Brown, "Oxon Hill Manor Near Washington," Town and Country, Mar. 1, 1934, pp. 36-39.

"Oxon Hill Manor," undated sales brochure (c. 1950), Joseph P. Day, Inc., New York and Washington.

Prepared by Barry Mackintosh
Historian
National Park Service
and Denys Peter Myers
Architectural Historian
National Park Service
January 5, 1972

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Oxon Hill Manor is a large, well-built, and lavishly equipped neo-Georgian country house by Jules Henri de Sibour. Set in extensive landscaped grounds, the mansion is typical of stylistically conservative major American houses of the 1920's.
2. Condition of fabric: Maintenance has been neglected, but the building appears to be structurally sound. The terraces have settled several inches in places, and the wooden porches show signs of decay. The roof requires some repair. Plaster in the entrance hall, drawing room, upper hall, and south rooms of the main block has suffered water damage. The present occupant reports termite damage in the basement.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Approximately 181' x 53' overall (excluding terraces and porches): main block approximately 102' (five-bay east front with projecting three-bay central pavilion) x 53' plus service wing extending north approximately 79'. Two stories plus partial basement and unfenestrated attic space.
2. Foundations: Brick on concrete footings.
3. Wall construction: Brick backed by hollow tile. Brick quoins at corners. Brick string course between first and second floors.
4. Framing: First floor is carried on reinforced concrete slabs. Hollow tile interior partitions support wooden joists 2" x 14" (3" x 14" over drawing room) set 16" on center. Roof trusses are wooden. Steel I-beams support those chimneys which do not descend below second floor.
5. Porches, stoops, etc.: All terraces rest on earthen fill. Brick terrace approximately 46' x 12' paved in herringbone pattern spans pavilion bays of main block east elevation and is approached by seven brick risers from asphalt pavement of walled forecourt. Terrace has stone balustrades. South elevation is spanned by brick terrace paved in herringbone pattern. This terrace extends beyond south elevation to connect with west terrace and has no balustrade. Wide bay between south first-floor windows is sheltered by cast-iron

porch with concave slate roof. Five-bayed west elevation of main block has brick terrace approximately 102' x 17' approached by seven brick risers from lawn. Terrace is paved in herringbone pattern and has pair of wooden Roman Ionic tetrastyle porches with balustraded roof decks, each sheltering a first-floor end bay. Similar porch spans first floor of north (service wing) elevation. East wall of service wing has reinforced concrete entrance stoop.

6. Chimneys: There are eight brick chimneys on the main block and two on the service wing. Chimneys are rectangular with brick cornices and stone caps. Six of main block chimneys have flat metal rain deflectors.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Front (east) entrance from terrace has paired three-paneled wooden doors hung below two-light hinged rectangular transom. Wooden architrave has cornice supported on consoles ornamented with "compo" leaves. Above cornice is broken segmental-arched pediment with terra-cotta cartouche in center displaying armorial bearings. Sill is molded stone. Entrances to service wing are from east areaway to cellar, east stoop to first-floor service hall, north porch to laundry, north porch to servants' hall, and west terrace to pantry. All have brick flat arch lintels above two-light transoms. All service doors have six square lights above two vertical panels.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Main block has French casement windows throughout. Principal first-floor windows are paired four-light casements (set under hinged rectangular two-light transoms) and can therefore also serve as doors. Eight first-floor main block windows have wooden molded crosseted architraves with flat cornices. North and south windows of east elevation open onto wooden console-supported balustraded balconies and have triangular pediments. Central west window has architrave duplicating that of main (east) entrance. Two eight-light single casement windows with brick flat-arch lintels and molded wooden sills flank principal north window of east elevation. Two other minor windows, similar except that three-light single casements are set below single-light transoms, are in the north and south faces of the projecting central east pavilion. All but two second-floor main block windows have

four-light casements, those of principal windows being paired. What appears to be central east window is actually two, having heavy mullion masking partition dividing two bathrooms. This disguised pair, and windows over two balconied first-floor windows, have crosseted molded architraves flanked by flat consoles ornamented with scrolled vine motifs of classical Greek derivation executed in "compo." Consoles are placed against pilasters which are set on plinths and "support" minor entablatures abutting roof cornice. Sections of frieze are pulvinated. Sills continue across entire width of motifs. Plinths below sills are "supported" by parapet motifs behind pediments of first-floor openings. Lower and upper enframements thus form continuous vertical elements constituting most noteworthy exterior ornamental features of the house. Central second-floor window of west front and principal north and south windows of same elevation have enframements identical with those just described. Central window is paired casement without mullion (as in east counterpart). Latter two open onto porch decks and have five-light paired casements. Other principal second-floor windows have brick flat-arched lintels with keystone motifs. Minor (single casement) windows lack keystone motifs. Second-floor sills are of molded wood. All Service wing windows have wooden four-over-four-light double-hung sash set under brick flat arches. Service wing window sills are of molded wood. There are no exterior shutters.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Truncated hip roofs, slopes covered by rectangular blue-grey slates. Decks are covered with slag. Flashings are copper.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Wooden cornices of cyma recta form are supported by modillions ornamented with "compo" leaves. Eaves and gutters are concealed behind paneled brick parapets with stone coping. Parapets have small openings for overflow drainage. Downspouts are copper, have boxed headers. Service wing parapets above brick string courses in lieu of cornices are unpaneled.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: Main block is excavated to depth of 5' below drawing room, entrance hall, library, and den floors.

OXON HILL MANOR
HABS No. MD-301 (page 10)

Boiler room is under dining room. Former coal storage space is under north end of west terrace. File room, gun room, and trunk room are under main stairs and north end of stair hall. Service wing basement has service hall running north-south. East of hall are (from south to north) service stairs, entrance from areaway, pressing room, storeroom, incinerator room, and storage room. West of service hall are (from south to north) man's room, elevator shaft, men's bath, man's room, men's lounging room, wine room, and furniture storeroom.

- b. First floor: Main block ceilings are approximately 13' high. Drawing room 26' x 45' opening from entrance hall, library, and south and west terraces occupies south end of main block. Entrance hall 31'2" x 26'6" entered from east terrace, and library 31' x 23'6" opening from entrance hall and west terrace are north of drawing room. Den 14'10" x 16'3" entered from lateral hall occupies northeast corner of main block east pavilion. Lateral hall runs north from entrance hall to elevator lobby in service wing. Cloakroom, two toilets under main stairs, and main stairs, all east of lateral hall, occupy northeast portion of main block. Dining room 41' x 23'6" entered from library, lateral hall, west terrace, and service wing pantry occupies northwest corner of main block. In service wing, silver safe opens from elevator lobby and is placed within well of service stairs. East of service hall north of elevator lobby are first run of service stairs, servants' toilet, flower room, and service entrance. On west, north of pantry, are kitchen and cold room. Laundry in northeast corner and servants' hall in northwest corner occupy north end of service wing.
- c. Second floor: Main block ceilings are 11' high. South end of main block is occupied by master chamber 26' x 20'3" in southwest corner, boudoir 14'9" x 18'3" in southeast corner, bathroom between them, and vestibule to suite and closets. Central hall runs north-south. East of hall are two chambers with two bathrooms between them, small sewing room, and main stairs. West of hall are (south to north) chamber, bathroom, chamber, bathroom and two large closets, and connecting chamber with additional bathroom in south end of service wing. Service wing contains elevator lobby (connected by door with central hall), service hall, and corridor. East of corridor (which is divided by a central partition) are a sewing room and four men's chambers. West

of corridor are seven maid's chambers. Men's bathroom, maids' bathroom, and another maid's chamber are at north end of wing. Second floor is provided with extensive closet and cupboard space opening from principal chambers and central hall. Service corridor has large linen closet.

2. Stairways: Main stairs are oak and have closed string. They ascend 27 risers to second floor in semicircle running east to west. Railing is oak supported by wrought-iron S-shaped scrolls of foliated pattern. Railing and its supports turn at bottom to form newel post of volute plan resting on curtail step. Service stairs are steel and concrete. They run east 4 risers to landing, south 13 risers to second landing, and west 3 risers to second floor. Elevator in service wing runs from basement to second floor.
3. Flooring: Entrance hall, lateral hall, and stair hall of first floor are paved with squares of white marble and smaller squares of black marble set diagonally at corners of white squares. Other first-floor rooms of main block have oak floors laid in herringbone pattern. Second floor of main block has oak floors laid in narrow straight runs. Bathrooms are floored with small square white tiles set with wide lines of dark grouting. Service wing floors are covered by resilient tile.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls of entrance hall, lateral hall, and stair hall of main block first floor are finished in plaster molded into fielded panels above plain dado and molded wooden chair rail. Ceiling has plaster modillion cornice and two unornamented broad shallow flat offsets around periphery. Walls and ceiling are covered with thin closely woven fabric painted white. All other main block first-floor ceilings are identical with hall ceilings in design except for cornices. None have centerpieces. Drawing room walls are flat plaster with plain painted protective fabric as in hall. Ceiling cornice has wide plaster frieze of Adamesque arabesques and octagonally framed urns in low relief, and shallow Roman classical running cornice moldings. Library walls have fielded pine panels with fluted Roman Doric pilasters, recessed book shelves, plain frieze, and carved pine modillion cornice. Dining room has plaster walls divided into panels by half-round moldings of spirally wrapped open ribbon pattern. Eight largest panels are papered with antique Chinese hand blocked and colored paper said to have been removed from an English Regency house. Other panels are protected by plain painted fabric. Cornice has small

plaster frieze of alternating paterae and pomegranates. Soffit of cyma recta cornice is reeded. Walls and ceilings of service wing are of plain painted plaster except kitchen, which has walls covered with square white tiles. Upper main stair hall has same panel motif and cornice as first-floor halls. Central second-floor hall and chambers have plain plaster dadoes below molded wooden chair rails, and plaster upper walls divided into panels by comparatively simple applied wooden moldings. Central hall has cornice with reeded soffit. All second-floor cornices (except stair hall) are wooden. Ceilings are of unmolded plaster. Bathrooms have square white tiles rising two thirds of wall height, with plain painted plaster above.

5. Doorways and doors: All principal first-floor doorways of main block are 5'6" wide. Reveals are paneled. Doors are paired. Each leaf has three fielded panels, but in some instances proportions of panels vary from front to back surfaces to accord with specific decor of rooms. Hall sides of doors have mahogany finish. Drawing room surfaces of doors are painted. Library faces of doors have pine finish. Dining room sides of doors are painted. Second-floor doors of main block are single and have two fielded panels and narrow unfielded horizontal panel at lock stile. All doors of service wing are single six-paneled wooden doors.
6. Interior trim: Doorways of main block first-floor halls have molded wooden architraves above which are pulvinated friezes and tall denticulated triangular broken pediments enclosing slender lidded urns on socles. Drawing room doorways have molded architraves flanked by demi-term motifs headed by lidded urns in low relief "compo." Entablatures above architraves have flat cornices with water leaf running moldings and friezes ornamented by Adamesque "compo" swags and wreaths with lidded vessels of kylix form at centers. Library doorways have pine architraves of bolection profile carved in foliate motif. Dining room doorways have simple molded wooden architraves. Second-floor doorways and interior window architraves throughout have simple molded wooden architraves.
7. Notable hardware: Knockers of paired front doors are bronze lion masks holding heavy rings in their mouths. French windows have bronze fastening rods which seat in bronze saddles and are activated by molded and chased handles. Main block first-floor paired doors have similar fastening devices and

chased gilt-bronze handles. Second-floor and service wing doorknobs are glass. All hardware is of highest quality.

8. Mechanical and electrical equipment:

- a. Lighting, etc.: Electric lighting is used throughout. Entrance hall and main stair hall have crystal chandeliers of Louis XV design which appear to be original to the house. Drawing room is lighted by crystal sconces and lamps. Library has gilded brass sconces of rococo design and lamps. (Photographs dating from Welles occupancy show crystal sconces in library.) Dining room is lighted by crystal sconces. Second-floor central hall has small metal rayed star ceiling lights with exposed bulbs. Electric call bell system has signal box in pantry. Elevator is electrically driven.
- b. Heating, etc.: House is heated by oil-fired steam system. Radiators are concealed or boxed. First floor has return air ventilating registers. All principal rooms and chambers have fireplaces. Drawing room fireplace has large rosso antico mantelpiece of Louis XV design. Entrance hall has very elaborate wooden mantelpiece in Georgian style. Opening is crosseted, and chamfered corners have elongated consoles. Applied "compo" ornament (some of which is now dried out and cracked) includes conventionalized foliage, rococo scrolls, and pendent floral garlands. Library mantelpiece of carved pine in Georgian style is ornamented with pendent floral garlands on pilasters and floral swags and a sun mask on frieze. Dining room has large rosso antico marble mantelpiece in Louis XV style with carved shell keyblock. Chamber mantelpieces are veined white marble in Louis XVI style. Pilasters are fluted terms headed by fleurons. Other heating devices include original gas-fired triple cooking range with sheet metal hood in kitchen, plate warming oven in pantry, and steampipe drying rack in laundry.
- c. Plumbing: Bathrooms have original fixtures. Bathtubs of principal bathrooms are enclosed in white marble. Wash stands are supported on clear plastic legs with bright metal feet. Toilets are masked by cane-backed chaises percées. Pantry sink has unusual S-shaped divider, a device to allow use of a common drain pipe.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: Oxon Hill Manor is located at 6701 Oxon Hill Road (west side) in Oxon Hill, Prince George's County, Maryland, on an eight-acre parcel that is a remnant of original Oxon Hill Manor granted to John Addison in 1685. This property is now surrounded by several parcels of undeveloped woodland totaling about 140 acres. These were also once part of John Addison's (and Sumner Welles') Oxon Hill Manor. The Manor house property has a 400' frontage on Oxon Hill Road and is less than a mile from Interchange 38 of the Capital Beltway and about 10 miles from center of Washington, D.C. Long axis of house is oriented 30 degrees west of north with main entrance on eastern side of building. Garden elevation faces towards southwest and commands dramatic view of Potomac River 180' below. Formal gardens and swimming pool (approximately 25' x 70') are on constructed terraces southeast of house. Service yard is north of house.
2. Enclosures: Forecourt, about 100' x 100', at entrance to house is enclosed by approximately 10' high brick wall. Photographs dating from Welles period show that forecourt was once enclosed with iron fence supported by brick piers. Brick curtain wall has since been built between piers. Piers flanking drive entrance are surmounted by wrought-iron lanterns, and those next to them by cast stone pineapples. There are no gates hung at forecourt entrance drive. On south side of forecourt is wrought-iron pedestrian gate to garden approached by semicircular brick risers. Garden gate piers are capped by cast stone urns containing fruit and flowers. On Oxon Hill Road are single brick piers marking each side of north and south drives. At north drive is screen wall with narrow vehicular gate and wrought-iron pedestrian gate. Details of masonry and ironwork are similar to forecourt enclosure. Drive entrances are no longer part of Manor house property.
3. Outbuildings: Outbuildings on property of Manor house are metal gatehouse, storage shed, and enclosure for dog kennels. These structures are modern but in poor condition. Outbuildings contemporary with house are to south near south drive entrance from Oxon Hill Road. These include five-car garage and attached manager's quarters. Quarters contain six rooms with kitchen and bath. At other end of garage is greenhouse. Complex is heated by oil-fired steam system. Nearby is stable with six box stalls and feed and storage spaces. There is large apron in front of garage and fenced exercise yard next to stable. These buildings (except greenhouse) are brick, painted white, and have hip roofs.

4. Walks: Although photographs of grounds during Welles period show woodland paths and trail development, there is now no evidence that can be easily found in underbrush that has taken over gardens and woods. Steps from terraces of house and garden terraces terminate on grass. There is no evidence of pavements around house. Surface of forecourt is asphalt, and drives are gravel.
5. Landscaping: Gardens of house have been neglected, but parti of lawn terraces and planting arrangement is still evident. Lawn extends to west, full width of house over 400' down slope until it merges with woodland. Formal gardens are south of house. Here there are two terrace levels with English box arranged in formal manner about sculptured elements, architectural ornamentations, and niches in east screen wall. From this level double flights of brick steps with wrought-iron railings descend to lower garden and swimming pool. This garden extends about 200' south, and terrace is retained on west by brick wall surmounted by stone balustrade. To east is large lawn at same elevation as main house. Garden and lawn are separated by steep slope and plant material. Entrance grounds are wooded, with specimen trees and shrubs near drive and building. This planting and woods screen service wing from entrance and drive. Entrance gates of north drive are in extreme northeast corner of original Welles property. Narrow gravel drive, which generally parallels Oxon Hill Road, meanders through tall trees for a half mile before it reaches Manor house. South drive is more direct. Entering property at southeast corner, it skirts outbuildings, which are directly in front of gate, and parallels state road until it sweeps into intersection with north drive about 250' in front of forecourt of Manor house. Until one reaches this point, landscape planting--mature conifers, holly trees, and laurel--conceal all but fleeting glimpses of house. Service road continues to rear of house from this intersection, and drive, aligned on axis with main door of house, continues to forecourt. Drive is in good condition, but roadside landscape and gate structures have been taken over by weeds and honeysuckle.

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January 7, 1972

APPENDIX C

Article
from
"Town and Country"
March 1, 1934



PHOTOGRAPHS BY WALTER D. WILCOE

The estate is historic but the fine Georgian house was built for Mr. Sumner Welles, Assistant Secretary of State, by Mr. J. H. de Sibour, the well-known Washington architect

OXON HILL MANOR NEAR WASHINGTON

by BARBARA TRIGG BROWN

It is interesting to conjecture that during the past months spent in Cuba, a country at the time torn by revolution, living there daily "mid shot and shell" as the popular old song put it, the recent ambassador and Mrs. Sumner Welles must often have felt a wave of homesickness for their beautiful Oxon Hill estate, which lies along the Potomac in upper tidewater Maryland, eight miles south of Washington. For certainly it would be difficult to find anywhere a more peaceful and appealing haven. Changing his official title as fast as the chameleon its colors, Sumner Welles, since March fourth last, has been an Assistant Secretary of State, the United States Ambassador to Cuba, and now again, at the time of this writing, Assistant Secretary of State.

To the visitor driving over the Oxon Hill estate, to stand finally in the terraced gardens, high above the river, the thought must come that this is historic ground, and that almost on this very spot the last colonial owner of Oxon Hill must have stood, looking toward Mt. Vernon, a few miles south on the farther shore, as he pondered how swiftly history was being made beneath the roof of General George Washington's home. Oxon Hill estate became such when a grant of land on the Potomac above Piscataway creek was made to Colonel John Addison in the last quarter of the Seventeenth Century. The Colonel died while on a visit to England in 1705. A member of a dis-

tinguished English and Colonial family, the tradition of Oxon Hill Manor as one of the noted Maryland homes continued under various owners. In 1789, when the site for the city of Washington was under consideration, Oxon Hill acres were included in the Maryland survey, but the final choice left them still a part of the countryside, eight miles south of the new nation's capital. The original manor house, known as one of the handsomest of the river homes, was destroyed by fire in February, 1895. A mile from its site, the present splendid Georgian mansion was built by Mr. and Mrs. Welles in 1929. The architect was Mr. J. H. de Sibour, of Washington, D. C.

Situated on a hilltop (Oxon Hill, of course), high above the Potomac, the house is ideally located on a commanding elevation. The approach through a part of the three hundred acres that comprise the estate to-day, is enchanting and unusual. Immediately past the distinctive entrance gates, the road winds beside forestlike growth, with evergreens profuse among the majestic trees. Interspersed are dogwood and redbud, at their height of flowering beauty in the early spring when the simultaneous blooming of thousands of daffodils and narcissus weaves a gold and white carpet for the renascent green and white and red above their lovely, lowly heads. In winter, all along the drive, the river, sparkling in the sun, is glimpsed again and again, below and far beyond the hillside. At a widening

of the drive where branches go off to the garages and other entrance gates, a road to the right opens beneath the pines, continuing between wide lawns straight to the great Georgian house, so splendidly framed in woods and sky.

The simple iron palings of the courtyard, the height of the brick pillars that support the stone pineapples, and the black-painted old carriage-age lanterns, by virtue of their fine scale, are appropriate to the dignity of the house. This is built of brick, with brick quoins and white painted wood trim around doors and windows and roof cornice. Above the entrance door the shield bears the motto "Dieu je dois tout." The courtyard is formally planted with figtrees that bear profusely, magnolias, euonymus, and nandina, with ivy thick about the brick borders, and climbing high on the house. Under the windows on either side the porch are the two most beautiful box bushes on the whole estate, which is noted for its profuse planting of English box.

The entrance doors open into a magnificent hall that, to the right, continues between Mr. Welles' study and the dining-room to end at the graceful curving staircase with its patterned wrought-iron baluster. The walls are white painted plaster. The wooden door frames, with their classic cornices, where again the broken arch of the entrance door is repeated, enclose double mahogany doors. In the drawing-room, entered through the door to the

The pictures of the Welles estate in Town and Country illustrate a charming article by Barbara Trigg Brown—Mrs. David Tucker Brown, of Alexandria, who has made a study of historic places in this region and who is to lecture tonight on Virginia houses and gardens at the Mayflower under the auspices of the Lee Memorial Foundation.

Oxon Hill is a very old estate, a grant to Col. John Addison in the last quarter of the Seventeenth century for land on the Potomac above Piscataway Creek. But the house is new, the original manor house, one of the finest on the river, having been burned in 1895. The present Georgian mansion was built by Mr. and Mrs. Welles in 1929, with J. H. de Sibour as the architect. It is in the true Georgian tradition, however, and, beautifully set on a hilltop among towering trees, has the mellow look which one usually finds only in old houses.

For many years Walter Wilcox—to go back a bit—has devoted much of his time to photography. He has shoals of pictures taken in the Rockies, which are beautiful as landscapes and splendid examples of the photographic art. And he has also done some lovely portrait studies.

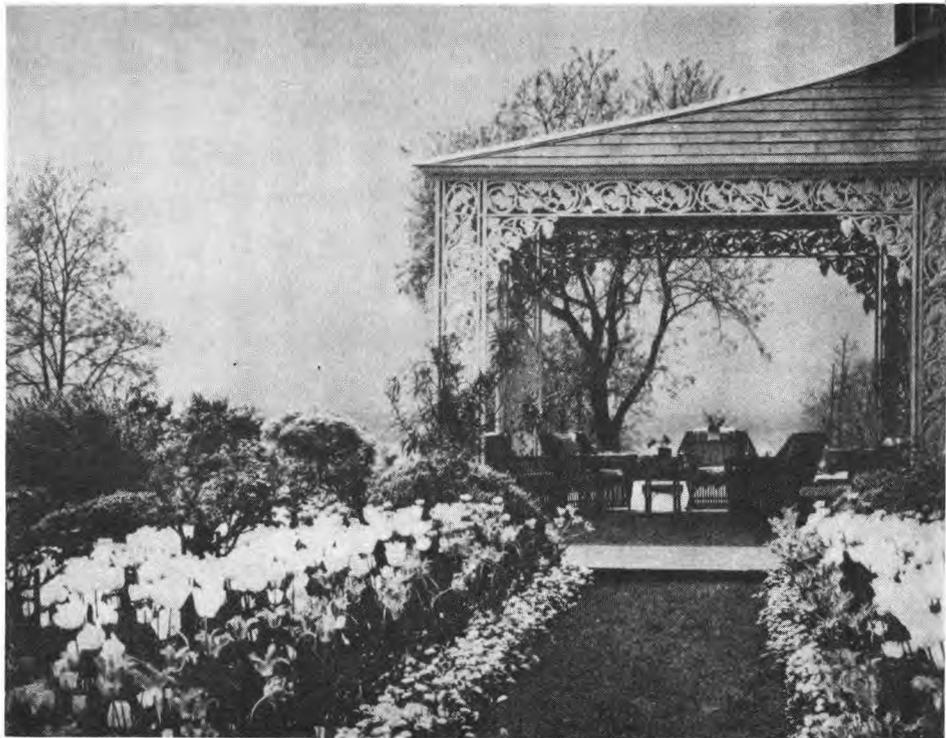
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The Potomac does everything that could be expected of it in the way of grand water views. Its value to the enjoyment of the portico, framed in a luxuriant iron grapevine, in tulip time and at all times, and to the English garden, can be readily estimated. Ellen Shipman was the landscape architect for one of the handsomest gardens in the country

left of the hall, the color of the plaster walls is Colonial gray-green. This gracious room runs the width of the house along the southern, or garden end. The library is a haven for book lovers. The warm brown of the pine panelling, the beautiful detail of the deep door frames, the frieze, pilasters, and the mantel made especially for this room, invest the repeated bookshelves with a congenial setting. Here, indeed, a statesman can find the atmosphere conducive to mental inspiration.

Adjoining this room, the great dining-room runs also at long length on the river side of the house. The walls are of painted plaster, the color a Chinese yellow, that harmonizes with the color in the six Chinese Chippendale panels with their red and white birds, exotic trees and flowers. An exquisite blue toned rug, pale apricot draperies at the terrace windows, Chippendale furniture, and the piece-de-resistance, a very tall and magnificent Chinese screen, make this room undeniably attractive. These three rooms, the drawing-room, the library, and the dining-room, open upon the river terrace where the clipped lawn slopes gently to the Potomac.

The trees, always a part of the entrancing beauty of Oxon Hill, clothe the hillside to the right and grow thick about the river, age-old giants towering among them. At the southern end of the house the gardens stretch away to melt naturally into the beauty of the evergreen woods.





People who love books and people who know architecture appreciate the pine-panelled library which Mrs. Welles has done in warm rose reds. Two great windows open out on the river lawn. The dining-room is light and sunny in color. The walls are painted Chinese yellow as a background for six Chinese Chippendale panels and a large Chinese screen. The rug is Oriental blue. The draperies at the four big terrace windows pale apricot



The drawing-room runs the full width of the house. The walls, with their delicate frieze in the Robert Adam tradition, are painted that grayish green which is so graceful a background for flowers and attractive furniture, which has been collected during various sojourns in Europe. The hall, with its elaborately carved mantel and the black and white marble floor, is in the Italian manner so fashionable in Georgian England



APPENDIX D

Real Estate Sales Brochure

1952

FOR SALE

AS AN ENTIRETY OR IN ACREAGE PARCELS

Beautiful Estate of the
HONORABLE SUMNER WELLES

"OXON HILL MANOR"

OXON HILL, MARYLAND, OPPOSITE ALEXANDRIA
OVERLOOKING THE POTOMAC RIVER
15 MINUTES FROM THE CAPITOL

245 ACRES • GEORGIAN MANSION
SWIMMING POOL • OUTBUILDINGS • HIGH ELEVATION

Suitable as an
ESTATE
INSTITUTION
PRIVATE CLUB
CONVALESCENT HOME
RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

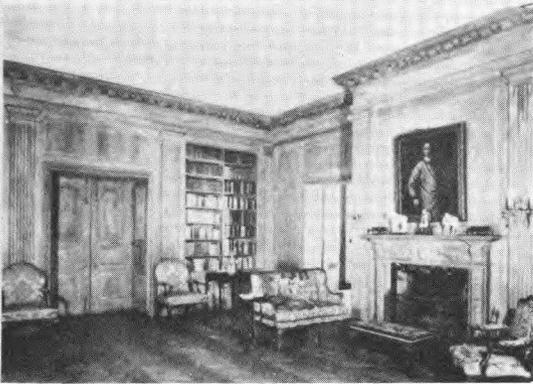
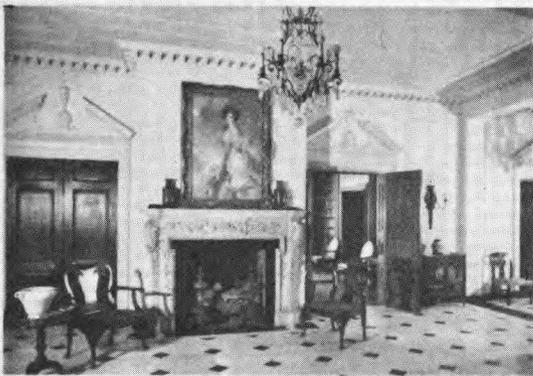
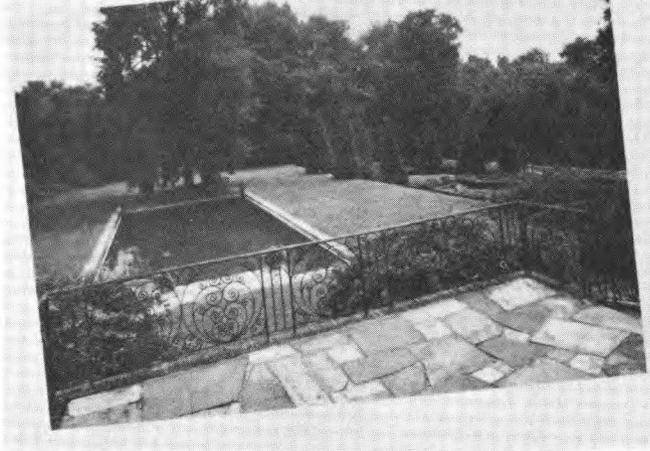
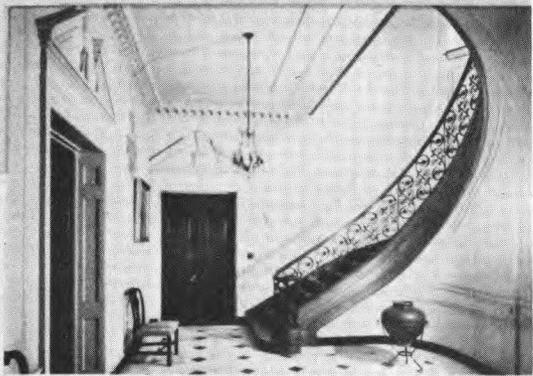
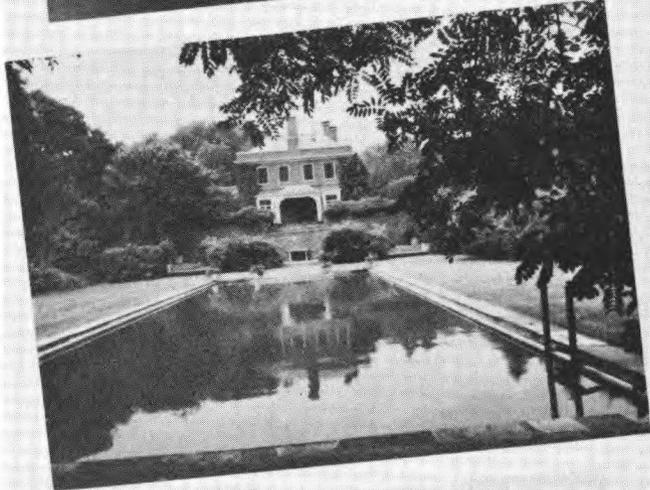
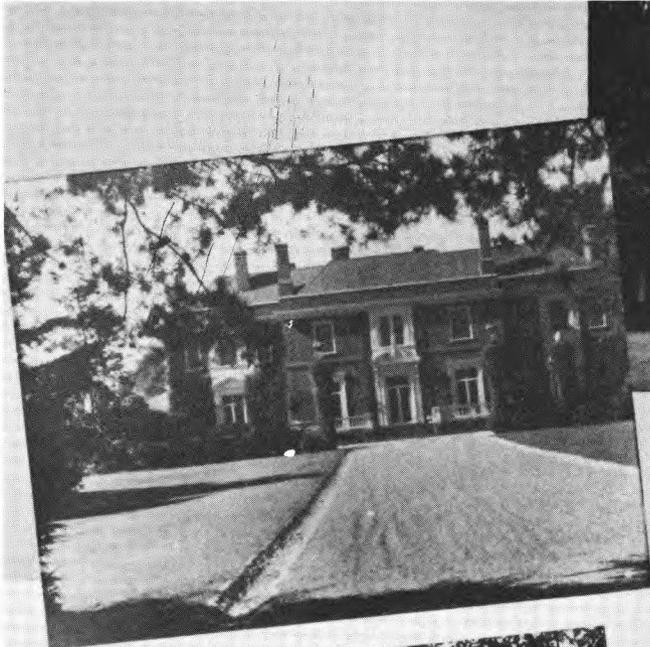


Joseph P. Day
INC.

Bernard P. Day, Pres.
Agent

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Inspection by appointment only



One of the last remaining large tracts within sight of the

"Oxon Hill Manor" is one of the largest parcels of undeveloped privately owned real estate in the immediate vicinity of Washington. It is fifteen minutes driving time from the Capitol. This property has never before been offered on the market. Since Colonial times when it was granted to Col. John Addison, it has been a handsome country estate. John Hanson, the first President of the Continental Congress, died and was buried there.

The property is located in Prince George's County, Maryland on State Route 414, variously known as Ft. Foote Road and Oxon Hill Road. One portion of the property, indicated in this description as Parcel 3 is in the District of Columbia, as well as in Maryland. The property lies to the south of the U. S. Government Farm (St. Elizabeth's Farm) and is bounded by centre line of a private road which is no longer passable. To the west the property is bounded by The Smoot Sand and Gravel Company, which property borders upon the Potomac River. There is an old road approximately on the property line, which road has not been used for many years.

Most of the property lying to the west of the 10 ft. contour interval is essentially sand and gravel. The area of this section of the property is approximately 23 acres, in addition to the 5/6 acres in Parcel 3.

Parcel 1—The manor house plot contains approximately 38 acres fronting a distance of approximately 1,795 ft. along the west side of State Route 414 and extending a depth of approximately 1,100 ft. This tract is artistically landscaped to take advantage of the superb aspect which is afforded by the contours of the property.

In general, it lies between the 100 ft. contour interval and the road, and has an average elevation of about 160 ft. The highest portion is about 190 ft. above mean high water. Roughly, half of this area is devoted to extensive lawns lying to the west of the house, the formal gardens and the landscaped approaches to the manor house. The rest is wooded ravine. These gardens are extensive and lie to the south of the manor house. The normal slope of the hill has been altered by terracing and the gardens embody the best of classical formal planning of which English box forms the main theme. It is because of the box and the general planning that the annual Maryland Garden Tours always include a visit to "Oxon Hill Manor". The focal point of the formal gardens is a handsome swimming pool which also serves as a reflecting pool for the manor house on the one side and splendid trees on the other.

The drives and formal paths are surfaced with gravel and are arranged in such a manner as to accommodate a great number of cars, both for parking and transit without giving the appearance of congestion. The drives and paths take advantage of the beautiful trees, which include specimens of dogwood, beech, redbud and pine. Thousands of flowering bulbs give spring color to the grounds. The

property is enclosed along Route 414 by a fence of steel and wire mesh. Back of the fencing there is a thickly planted band of trees, effectively screening the property.

"Oxon Hill Manor" was built in 1929 and is considered one of the most handsome examples of a Georgian brick manor house. This house was designed by J. H. deSibour, the well known architect. The building is two stories in height and is constructed of brick, reinforced concrete and steel. This building embodies more than the usual protection against fire. The joists between the first and second floors are of steel, as are those supporting the second floor ceiling. The roof is of heavy slate with copper flashing, with the exception of the flat portions of the roof which are surfaced with slag. The only structural lumber used is the roof rafters and sheathing. Below the eaves the building may be classed as fire-proof.

The terrace is of brick with cast ornamental iron grille work and there is an open terrace of flagstone with a handsome wrought iron rail surrounding it. Both of these terraces overlook the formal garden and the pool. There is a terrace extending the entire length of the west side of the house. This is partially covered and affords an excellent view of the Potomac River. Throughout the building it is evident that only the finest workmanship and material have been used.

Basement, which is under most of the house, contains a pressing room, 3 bedrooms and bath, 3 large storage rooms, an incinerator, utility room containing steam boiler which is oil fired and supplemental oil fired hot water heater. There is an automatic elevator from the basement to the second floor.

First Floor, contains a large reception hall with fireplace and a black and white marble tile floor, a large formal drawing room 45 ft. x 26 ft., a wood-panelled library 31 ft. x 21 ft., a dining room 41 ft. x 23 ft., sitting room 16 ft. x 14 ft., and a stair hall with an exquisite circular stairway. All of the foregoing rooms have fireplaces. This floor also contains two powder rooms with adjoining lavatories, large pantry, kitchen, refrigerated room, servants' dining room, washroom, flower room and laundry, as well as a silver vault.

Second Floor, contains 6 master bedrooms, each with private bath and fireplace. The master bedroom has a large sitting room which adjoins it, as well as a porch. There are 12 small rooms and 2 baths located on this floor. There is adequate storage on each floor and the bedroom and hall closets are extremely extensive.

In the southerly portion of this parcel, there is located a five-car garage, adjoining which is the manager's residence, which is an apartment containing living room, dining room, 4 bedrooms, kitchen and bath. This building is heated by an oil fired

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steam system. The greenhouse which adjoins the garage is of the most modern type.

Nearby is a brick, reinforced concrete and steel stable containing 6 large box stalls, tack room, feed rooms and storage space.

Parcel 2—This consists of approximately 200 acres of land of which about 50 acres is cleared meadows and the remainder is woodland. An attractive ravine is on the property adjacent to State Highway 414 and the land gently falls from an elevation of approximately 190 ft. in the vicinity of Oxon Hill Road to below 10 ft. above mean high water in the westerly portion of the property. All of the grades are gentle. The top soil supports a luxurious growth of trees, thus permitting roads and plots to be installed so as to afford the greatest privacy and beauty. Because of the characteristics of this property, the magnificent woods and the fact that this property is so readily accessible, it lends itself admirably to the development of a very high class subdivision. In many parts of this property, merely by thinning some of the trees, vistas can be obtained of the Potomac River, with Alexandria, Virginia in the background.

Parcel 3—This parcel consists of 5.6 acres, triangular in shape, fronting approximately 630 ft. along the mean high water line of the Potomac River and extending an average depth of 970 ft. to the junction of the three dedicated roads as shown on the sales diagram. These roads, at present, do not provide access to the property, except through the U. S. Government Farm. The entire parcel is below the 10 ft. contour interval.

ZONING:

This property is presently zoned as Rural Agricultural, but according to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission enacted by the county commissioners of Prince George's County in 1949, this property is subject to zoning-rural-residential which permits it to be used for all agricultural uses, except those of an offensive nature. Libraries, parks, public buildings and single family attached dwellings, are also permitted. Certain other optional uses may be permitted, such as antique shops, colleges, schools, golf course, cemeteries, hospitals.

For single family dwellings the minimum area of each lot must be 20,000 sq. ft. unless public water supply is provided. In this event the area may be 10,000 sq. ft. Buildings may not cover more than 25% of any lot. The set back line must be at least 25 ft. back from roads, and side lots must be a minimum aggregate of 17 ft. Maximum height permitted is 2½ stories, or 35 ft.

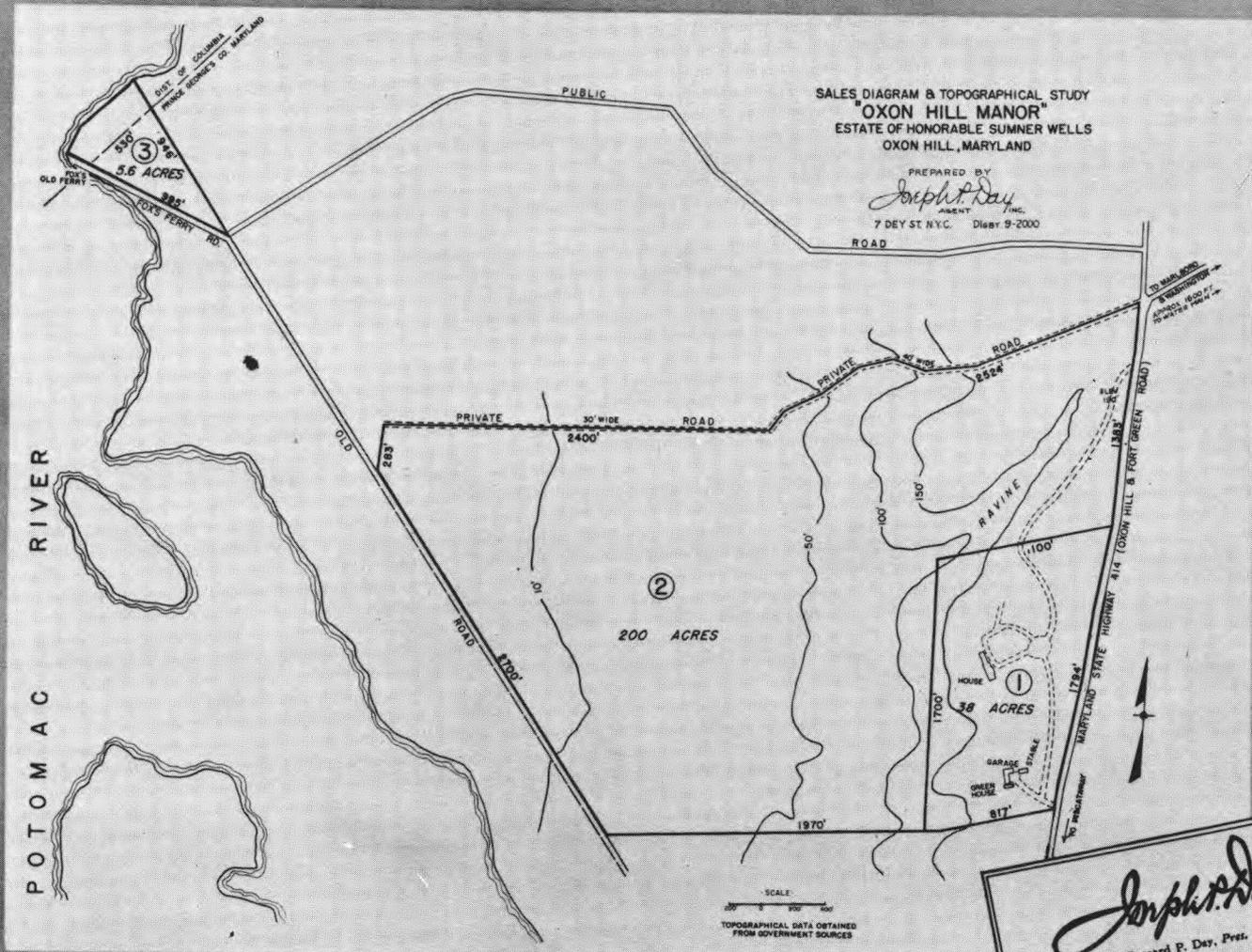
No public water or sewerage facilities serve this property at the present time and the nearest public water supply is approximately 1,600 ft. east of the property. The main is 14" in diameter and may be extended to this property if the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission requirements are met. Sewage disposal may be by means of septic tanks.



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Bernard P. Day, Pres.
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WASHINGTON, D. C. Phone REpublic 7346

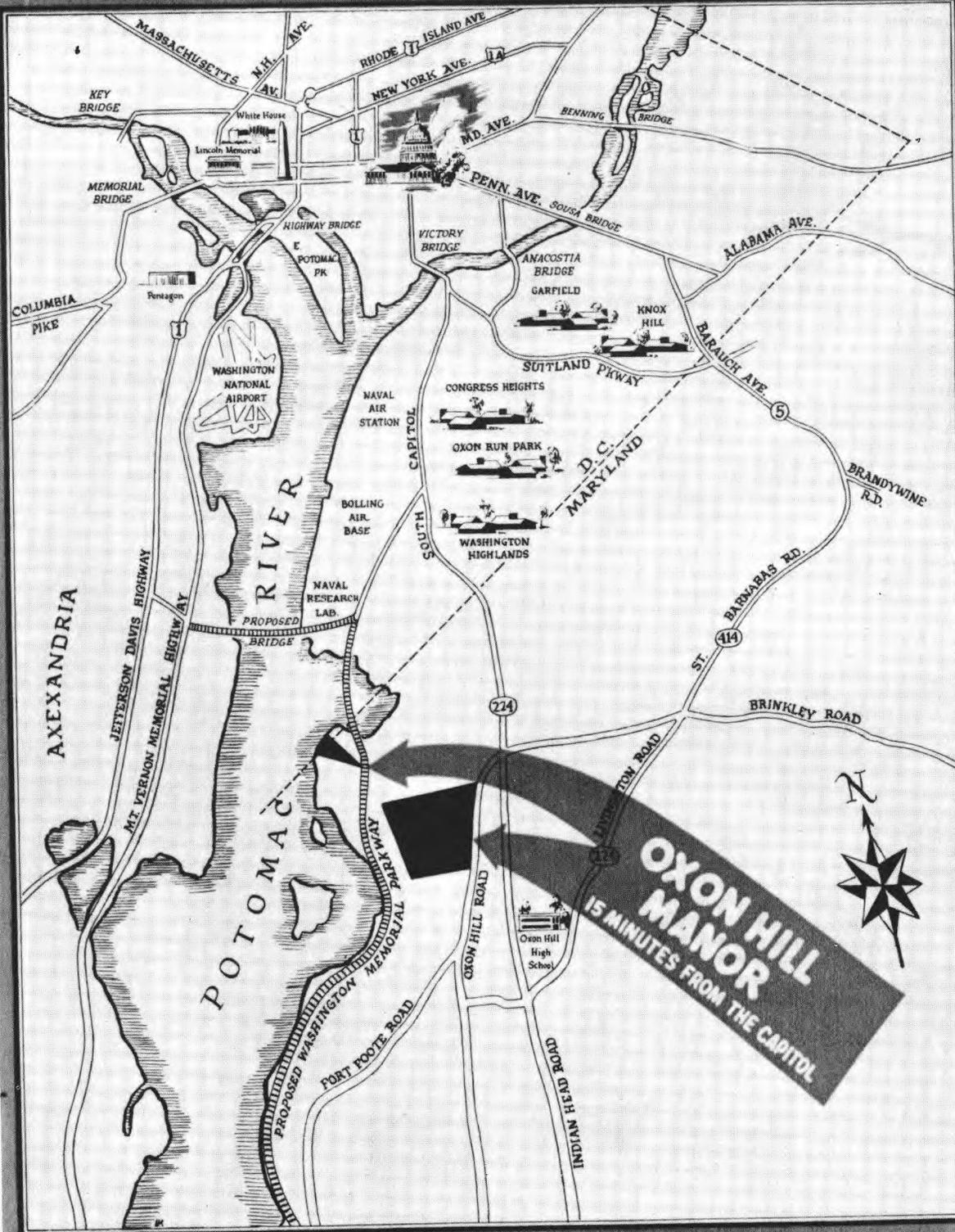


The information contained herein is obtained from sources which we deem to be reliable but no guarantee is made by this office regarding any of the facts mentioned. This property is also offered subject to prior sale, change of price or withdrawal without notice.

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ALEXANDRIA

POTOMAC RIVER

OXON HILL MANOR

15 MINUTES FROM THE CAPITOL



MASSACHUSETTS AVE. N.H. AVE. RHODE ISLAND AVE. NEW YORK AVE. MD. AVE. BENNING BRIDGE. KEY BRIDGE. MEMORIAL BRIDGE. HIGHWAY BRIDGE. VICTORY BRIDGE. ANACOSTIA BRIDGE. ALABAMA AVE. GARFIELD. KNOX HILL. SUTLAND PKWAY. BARAUCH AVE. BRANDYWINE R.D. COLUMBIA PIKE. Pentagon. WASHINGTON NATIONAL AIRPORT. NAVAL AIR STATION. CONGRESS HEIGHTS. OXON RUN PARK. WASHINGTON HIGHLANDS. BOLLING AIR BASE. NAVAL RESEARCH LAB. PROPOSED BRIDGE. JETTERSON DAVIS HIGHWAY. MT. VERNON MEMORIAL HIGHWAY. SOUTH CAPITOL. D.C. MARYLAND. ST. BARBARAS RD. BRINKLEY ROAD. OXON HILL ROAD. INDIAN HEAD ROAD. Oxon Hill High School. 724. 414.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was made by the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, under the guidance offered by Dr. Ernest A. Connally and Thomas N. Crellin. Information and assistance was provided by Mr. Fred N. Maloof, The Rev. Alan C. Freed, Mrs. Guy Castle, Sr., Mr. Gerald Olmsted and others.

The study team consisted of Hugh C. Miller, Architect - leader, Denys Peter Myers, Architectural Historian, Barry Mackintosh, Historian, and Jack E. Boucher, Photographer.