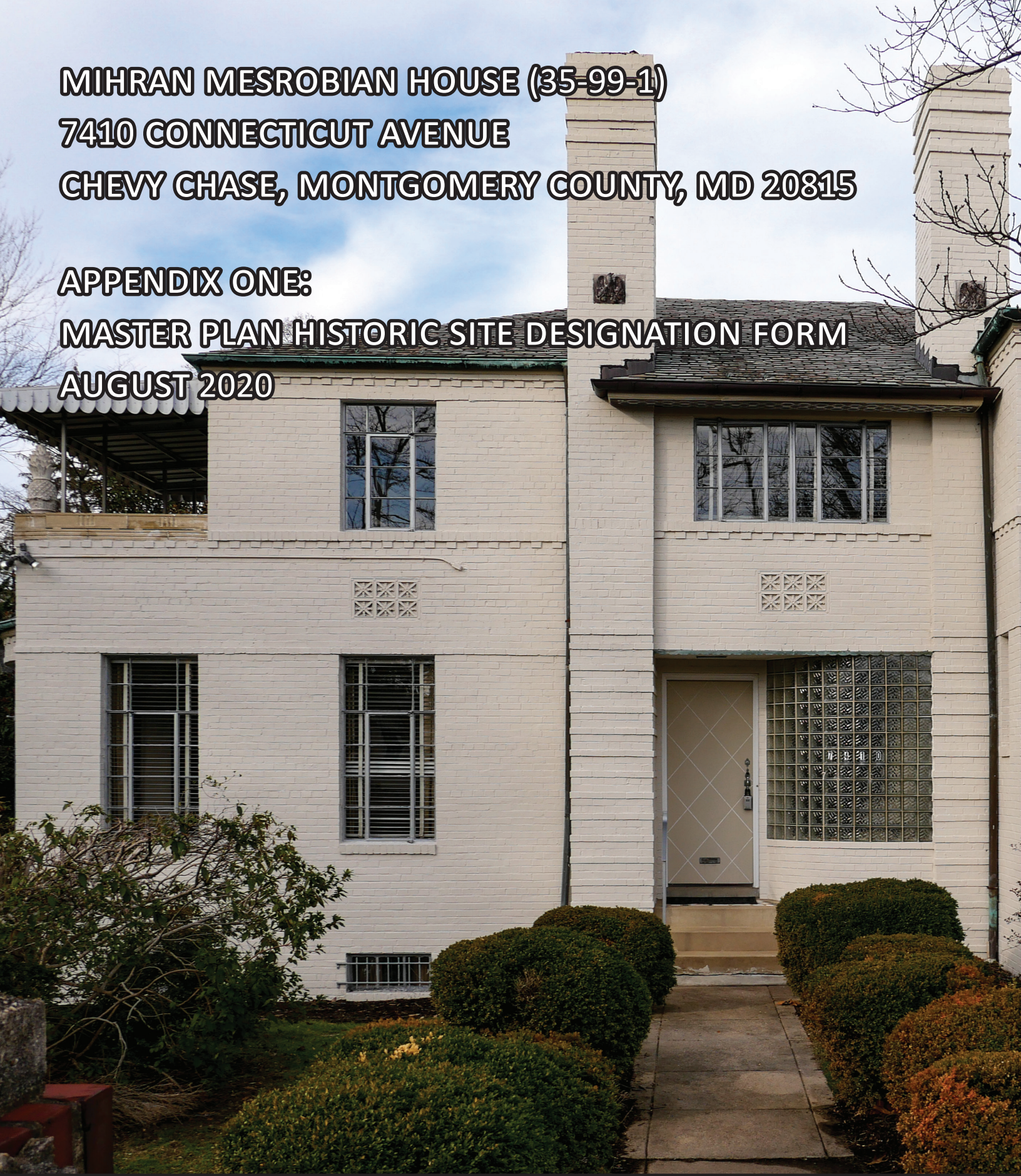


**MIHRAN MESROBIAN HOUSE (35-99-1)**  
**7410 CONNECTICUT AVENUE**  
**CHEVY CHASE, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD 20815**

**APPENDIX ONE:**  
**MASTER PLAN HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION FORM**  
**AUGUST 2020**



 **Montgomery Planning**

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION







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

**1. NAME OF PROPERTY**

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

**2. LOCATION OF PROPERTY**

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

**3. ZONING OF PROPERTY**

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

**4. TYPE OF PROPERTY**

A. Ownership of Property

☒ Private  
☐ Public  
☐ Local  
☐ State  
☐ Federal

B. Category of Property

☒ Private  
☐ Public  
☐ Local  
☐ State  
☐ Federal

C. Number of Resources within the Property

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

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

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



## 5. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic Function(s): DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

Current Function(s): DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

## 6. DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY<sup>1</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

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

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

### **B. Statement of Significance<sup>2</sup>:**

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

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



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

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

**D. Significant Dates:** 1941

**E. Significant Persons:** Mihran Mesrobian; Zabelle Mesrobian

**F. Areas of Significance:** Architecture

**G. Architect/Builder:** Mihran Mesrobian

**H. Narrative<sup>3</sup>:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### ***Historic Context: Ownership of the Mihran Mesrobian House***

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

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

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

### ***Historic Context: Master Architect Mihran Mesrobian***

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

**J. Designation Criteria:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 2.B Represents the work of a master

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

## **K. Conclusion:**

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

## **8. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING/GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**Property Land Area:** 10,800 square feet

**Account Number:** 00464605

**District:** 07

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

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

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

## **9. PROPERTY OWNERS**

Name: Estate of Ara Mesrobian

Address: 7410 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase, 20815

## **10. FORM PREPARED BY**

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

Date: January 2020

## **11. MAJOR SOURCES CONSULTED**

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

**APPENDIX ONE:**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING/GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

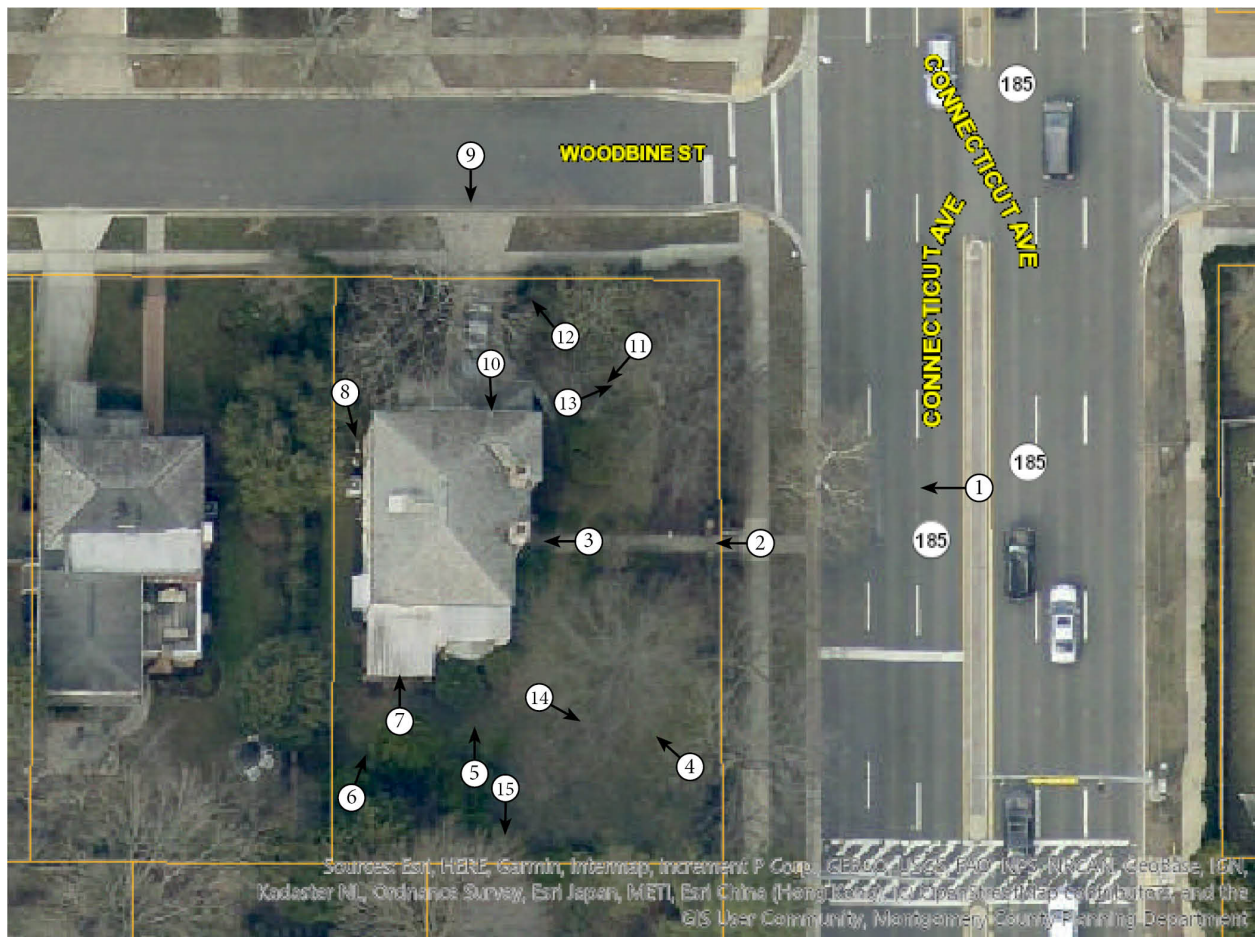


Environmental Setting - Mihran Mesrobian House  
7410 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD



Figure 1: Proposed environmental setting for the Mesrobian House.

**APPENDIX TWO:**  
**EXTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE MESROBIAN HOUSE**



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





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



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





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



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





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



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



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





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



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



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





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



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





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



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





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

**APPENDIX THREE:**  
**CHAIN OF TITLE**

Date: March 30, 1984

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

Grantee: Ara Mesrobian

Cost: Fee Simple

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

Liber: HMS 6363

Folio: 205-208

Date: October 26, 1940

Subdivision: Mihran G. Mesrobian and Zabelle Mesrobian

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

Plat #: 1313

Date: December 21, 1938

Grantor: Chevy Chase Land Company

Grantee: Mihran G. Mesrobian and Zabelle Mesrobian

Cost: \$3,600

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

Liber: CKW 723

Folio: 92-93

**APPENDIX FOUR:**  
**NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION**

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Mesrobian, Mihran, Residence  
other names M:35-99-1

### 2. Location

street & number 7410 Connecticut Avenue n/a not for publication  
city or town Chevy Chase n/a vicinity  
state Maryland code MD county Montgomery code 031 zip code 20815

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Charlotta Anglen Director/SHPO 9-14-2017  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Maryland Historical Trust  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby, certify that this property is:

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

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

Name of Property

Montgomery County, Maryland

County and State

**5. Classification****Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

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

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
1		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

N/A

**number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use****Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

**7. Description****Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Moderne

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Slate

other Glass block, steel, cast concrete

**Narrative Description**

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



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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

Section 7 Page 1

Montgomery County, Maryland  
County and State

### Description Summary:

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

### General Description:

#### Resource List:

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

#### Setting

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

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

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

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

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

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 2

M:35-99-1  
Mesrobian, Mihran, Residence

Name of Property

Montgomery County, Maryland

County and State

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

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

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

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

### General Description

#### Exterior

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

<sup>5</sup> Mihran Mesrobian Archive, Private Collection, Washington, DC.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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

Montgomery County, Maryland  
County and State

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

### Interior

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

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

<sup>8</sup> Mihran Mesrobian Archive.

<sup>9</sup> Interview of Ara Mesrobian by Caroline Mesrobian Hickman, 10 May 2016, Washington, DC.

<sup>10</sup> Mihran Mesrobian Archive.

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

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

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

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

### Integrity

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

<sup>12</sup> Mihran Mesrobian Archive.



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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

### Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

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

### Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

### Period of Significance

1941

1945

### Significant Dates

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

### Cultural Affiliation

### Architect/Builder

Mihran Mesrobian, architect

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

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

### Previous documentation on files (NPS):

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

### Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Mihran Mesrobian Archive, Washington DC

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### Summary Statement of Significance:

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

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

### Resource History and Historic Context:

#### Chevy Chase Land Company and the Town of Chevy Chase

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

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

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

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



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

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

Although 53% (176 lots) of the lots in Section IV were purchased as early as March 1910,<sup>16</sup> the land that Mesrobian acquired had remained unsold. He purchased the property in 1938 for \$3,600 from the Chevy Chase Land Company.<sup>17</sup> Mihran and Zabelle Mesrobian received the deed from the Chevy Chase Land Company for Lot 1 and the north half of Lot 2, Block 2, Section 4, Chevy Chase, Montgomery County, Maryland, on 21 December 1938.<sup>18</sup> The property as purchased ran 120 feet fronting Connecticut Avenue, and 150 feet running east to west. The Mesrobians had the land re-subdivided in October 1940 to form two lots (Fig. 12).<sup>19</sup> They selected Lot 22 fronting Connecticut Avenue, 90 feet deep, on which to build their house. Mesrobian designed a house for Lot 21 (3902 Woodbine Street), with a frontage of 60 feet. The plans date from nearly the same time as those for 7410 Connecticut Avenue, but he chose to work with a traditional design to facilitate its sale. He sold the house on Woodbine to help offset the costs for his new residence.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ara Mesrobian, conversation with Caroline Mesrobian Hickman, 20 April 2016.



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### Modern Movement and the International and Art Moderne Styles

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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By tradition, the Washington metropolitan area has not widely embraced modernist movements. There are relatively few examples of radical modernist houses by acclaimed International Style/Bauhaus School architects in the area, and they postdate Mesrobian's designs for his residence. For example, the two modernist houses that Walter Gropius' Architects Collaborative designed for the Hechinger family at 2832 and 2838 Chain Bridge Road, NW, date from 1952.<sup>23</sup> The International Style residence located at 3025 Arizona Avenue, NW, designed by Gropius student Thomas Wright, dates from 1961.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>26</sup> Recollection by Ara Mesrobian, 20 May 2016.

<sup>27</sup> Kelly, 21.

<sup>28</sup> Kelly, 22.

<sup>29</sup> Elizabeth Fagan, "Building Walls of Light: The Development of Glass Block and its Influence on American Architecture in the 1930s, MS thesis in Historic Preservation, Columbia University, 2015, 119. [http://www.Fagan.Elizabeth\\_GSAPHP\\_2015\\_Thesis](http://www.Fagan.Elizabeth_GSAPHP_2015_Thesis) (accessed 29 May 2016).

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

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

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

### Ownership of the Mihran Mesrobian House

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

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

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

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

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

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

<sup>32</sup> Montgomery County Circuit Court (Land Records), CKW 783, 0473, MSA\_CE63\_741, <http://www.mdlandrec.net> (accessed 2 June 2016).

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



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Improvements and replacements: Basement Finish 1951 - \$785; Waterproofing 1954 - \$560; New Boiler 1957 - \$410; Air Conditioning 1957 - \$1680; Awnings (cloth) 1958 - \$380; Awnings (aluminum) 1965 - \$680; New Compressor 1959 - \$320; New Unit (air conditioning) 1968 - \$680; New compressor 1970 - \$730; New Aluminum Awnings 1974 - \$220.  
Total costs - \$26,660.”<sup>34</sup>

### Architect Mihran Mesrobian

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>34</sup> Mihran Mesrobian Archive.

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

### CHAIN OF TITLE

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

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

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

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



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\_\_\_\_\_. "St. Regis Hotel, Washington, DC" (Carlton Hotel). *Preservation Now: Building on the Historic*. Washington, DC: DC Preservation League, 2008, 6-10.

Hickman, Caroline Mesrobian, and Sally Lichtenstein Berk. "Harry Wardman's Row-House Development in Early Twentieth-Century Washington." In Richard Longstreth, ed., *Housing Washington: Two Centuries of Residential Development and Planning in the National Capital*. Charlottesville, VA: Center for American Places, 2010, 41-60.

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### Geographical Data

Lat-Long Coordinates: 38.984616, -77.077568

### Verbal Boundary Description:

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

### Boundary Justification:

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



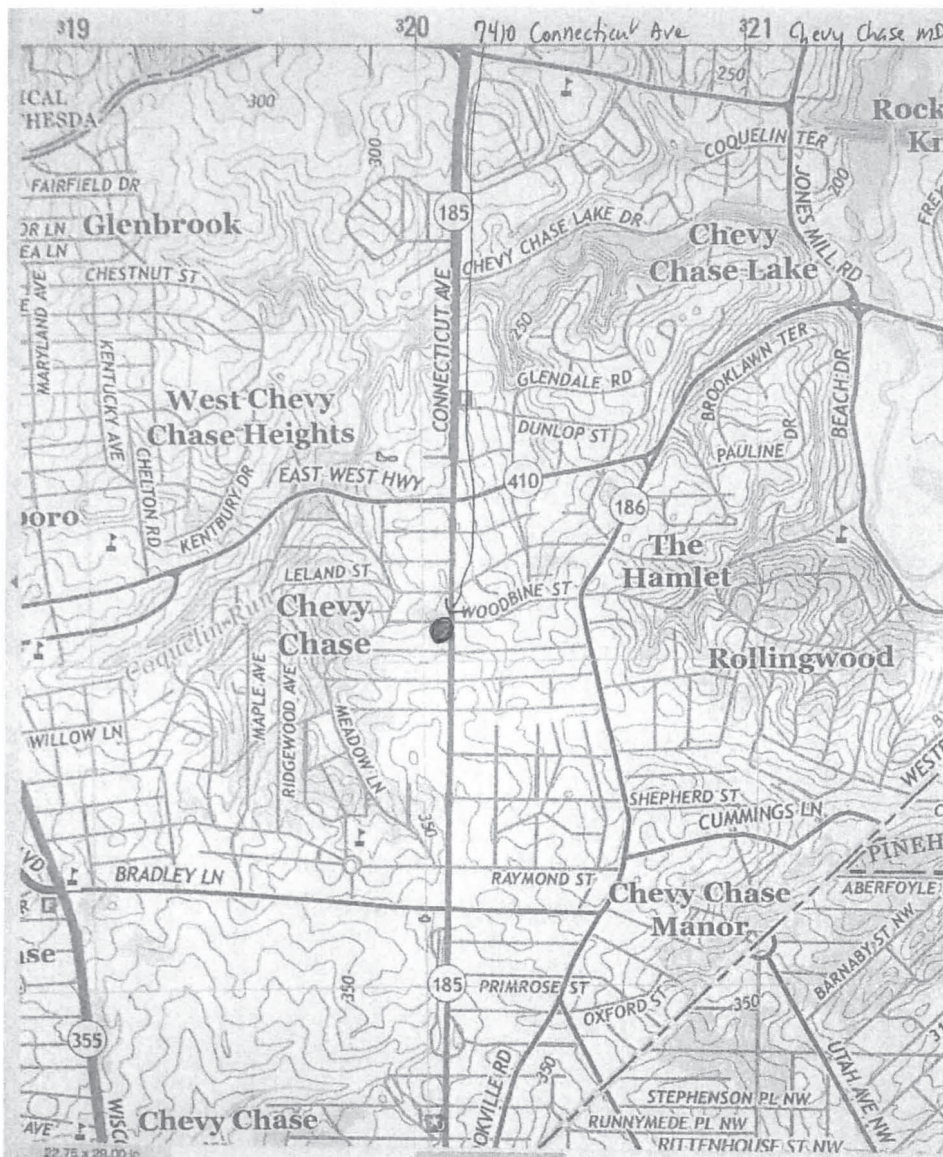
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### Location Map



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### Index to Photographs

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

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

Name of Property: Mesrobian, Mirhan, Residence

Location: Montgomery County, Maryland

Photographer: Caroline Mesrobian Hickman

Date taken: 1 August 2016

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

#### Photo captions:

MD\_Montgomery County

Mesrobian, Mirhan, Residence

0001.tif

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

MD Montgomery County

Mesrobian, Mirhan, Residence

0002.tif

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

MD Montgomery County

Mesrobian, Mirhan, Residence

0003.tif

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

MD\_Montgomery County

Mesrobian, Mirhan, Residence

0004.tif

Front (East/Connecticut Ave.) Façade Entrance

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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### HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS

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

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**2 of 22** Elevations, 20 November 1940

**3 of 22** First Floor Plan, 20 November 1940

**4 of 22** Second Floor Plan, 20 November 1940

**5 of 22** Basement Plan, 20 November 1940

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

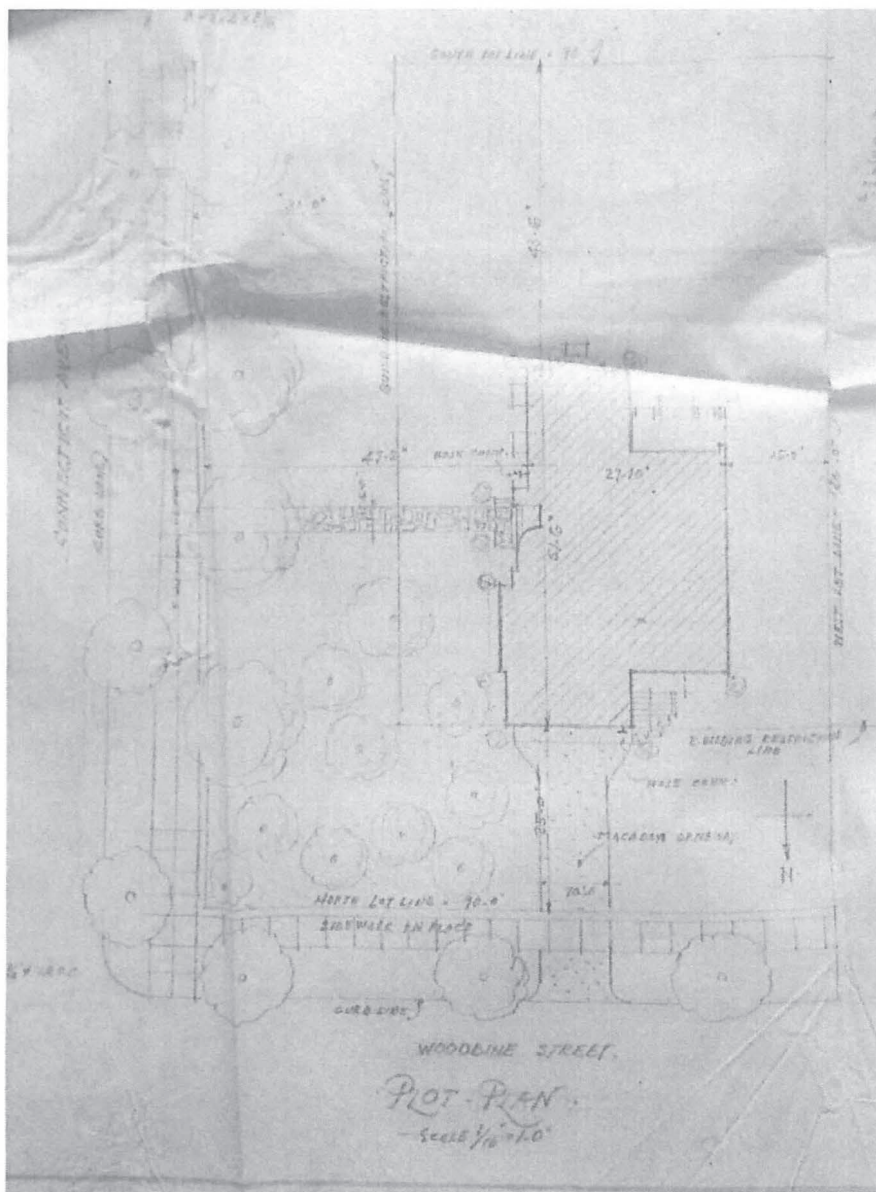
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1 of 22, Detail of Plot Plan, 20 November 1940



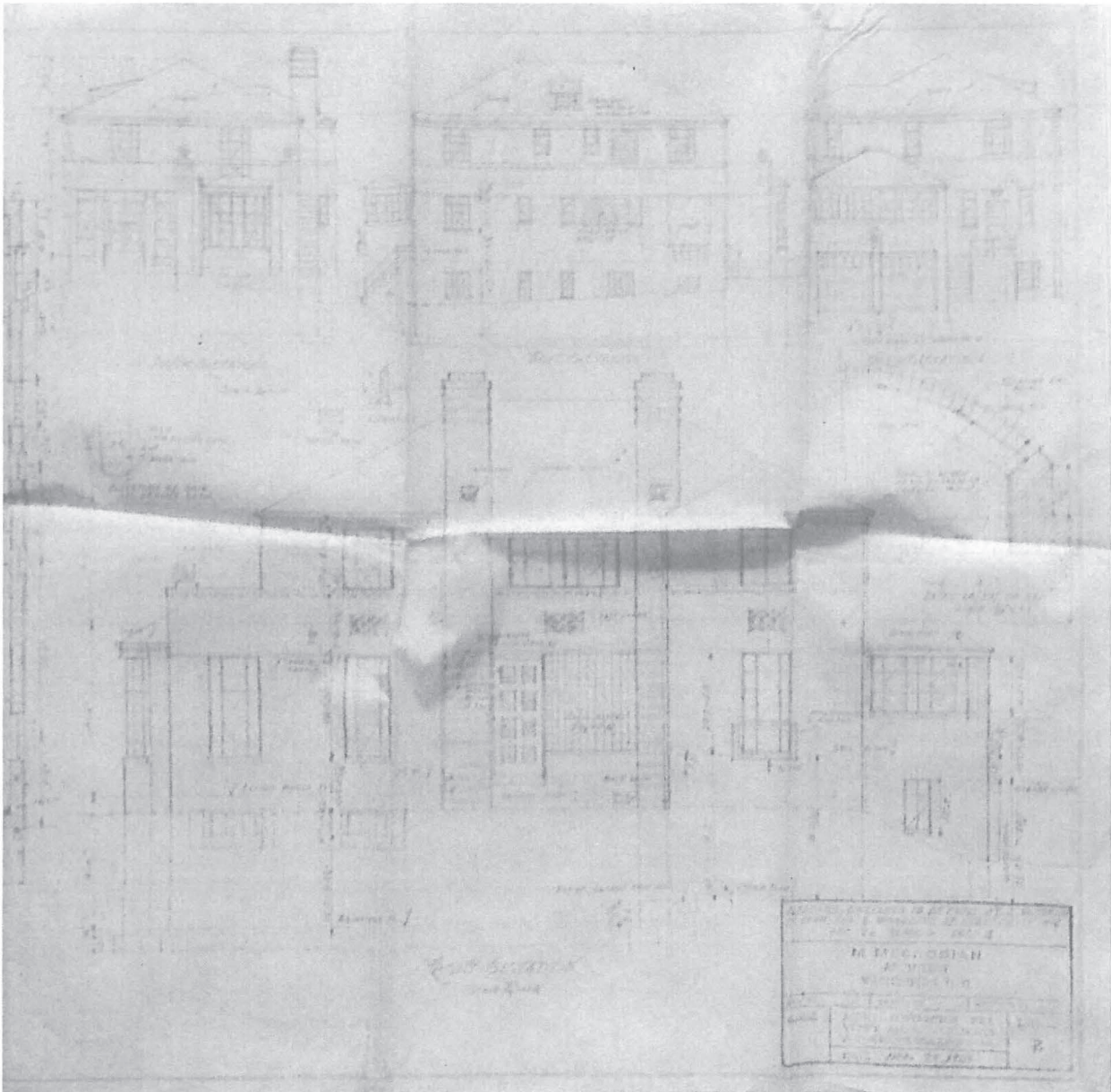
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2 of 22, Elevations, 20 November 1940

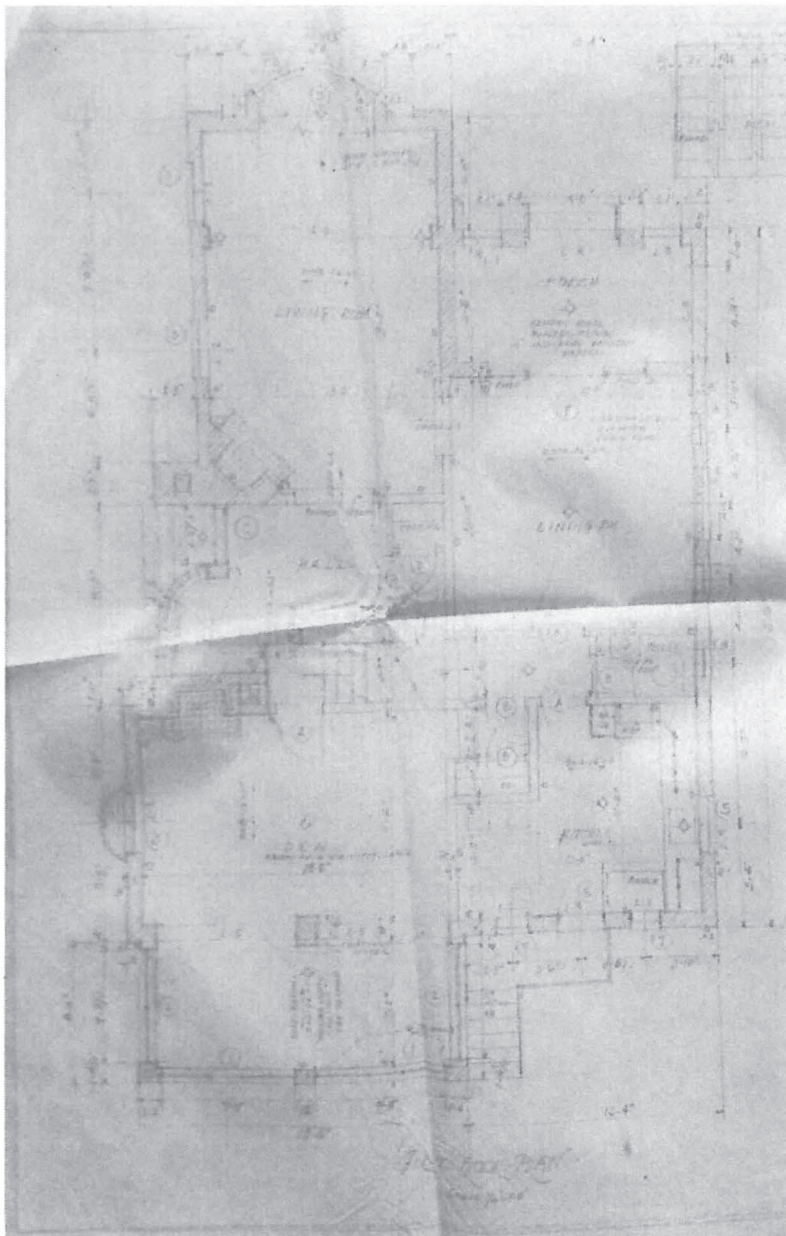
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3 of 22, First Floor Plan, 20 November 1940

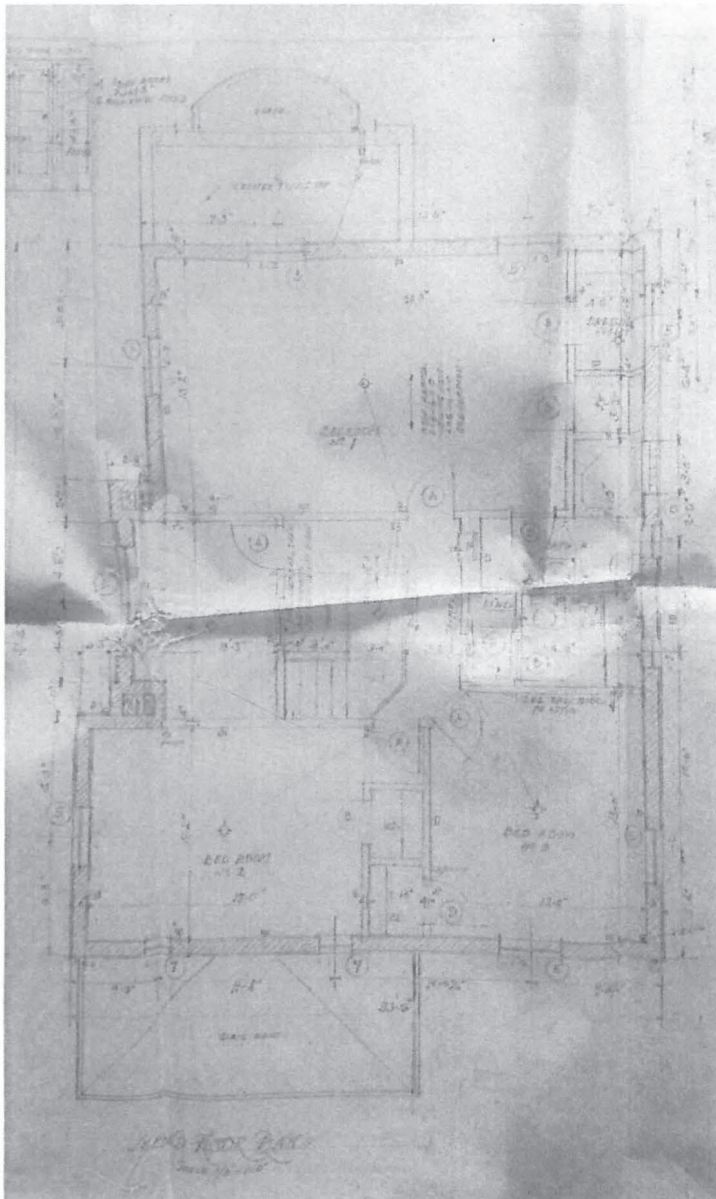
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4 of 22, Second Floor Plan, 20 November 1940



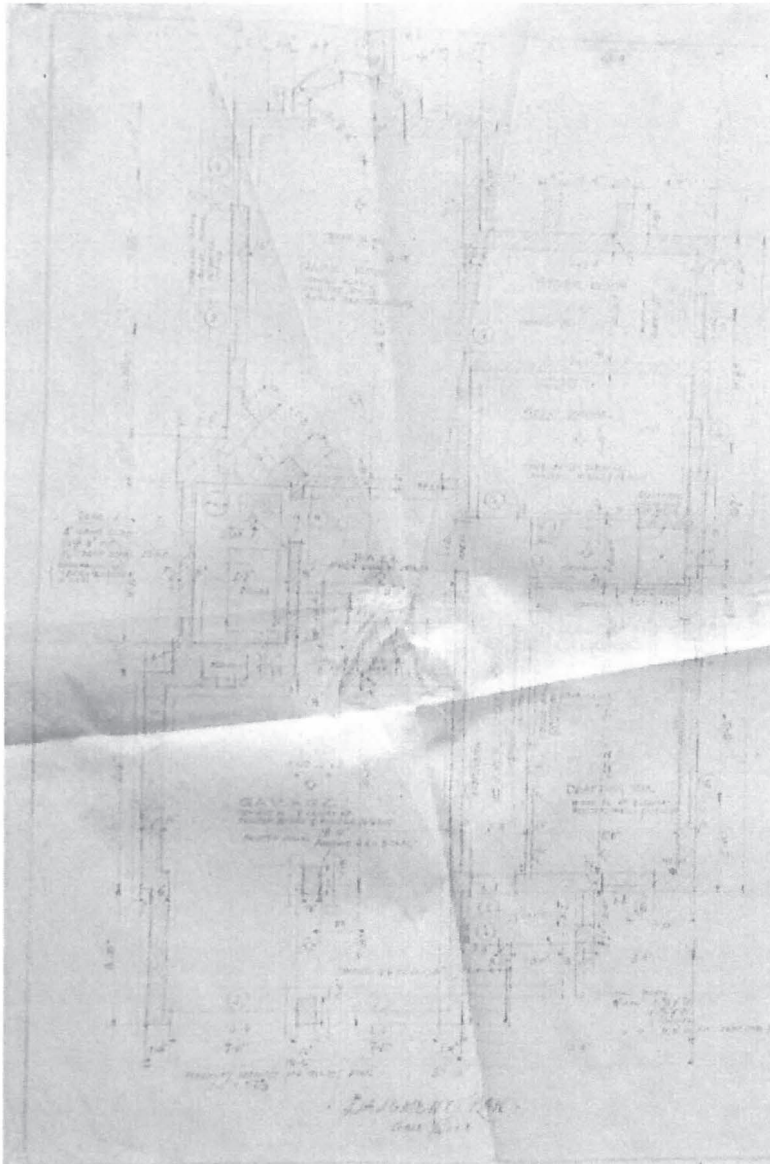
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**CELOTEX ROCK WOOL PRODUCTS**  
KRAFT-WRAPPED, MEMBRANE-FACED BLANKET... PAPER-BACKED BATTS

*Efficient, Permanent, Economical*  
*Vapor-proof, Termite-proof, Fire-proof*

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

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

**CELOTEX TRAFFIC TOP**  
*The Ideal Surfacing for Roof Decks, Over Porches or Garages. As Well As for Basement, Recreation Room Floors.*

**C**ELOTEX  $\frac{3}{4}$ " Traffic Top, the most modern surfacing for exposed roof decks or basement floors, is impervious to weather and resilient under foot. It prevents moisture condensation on concrete basement floors.

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

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

24

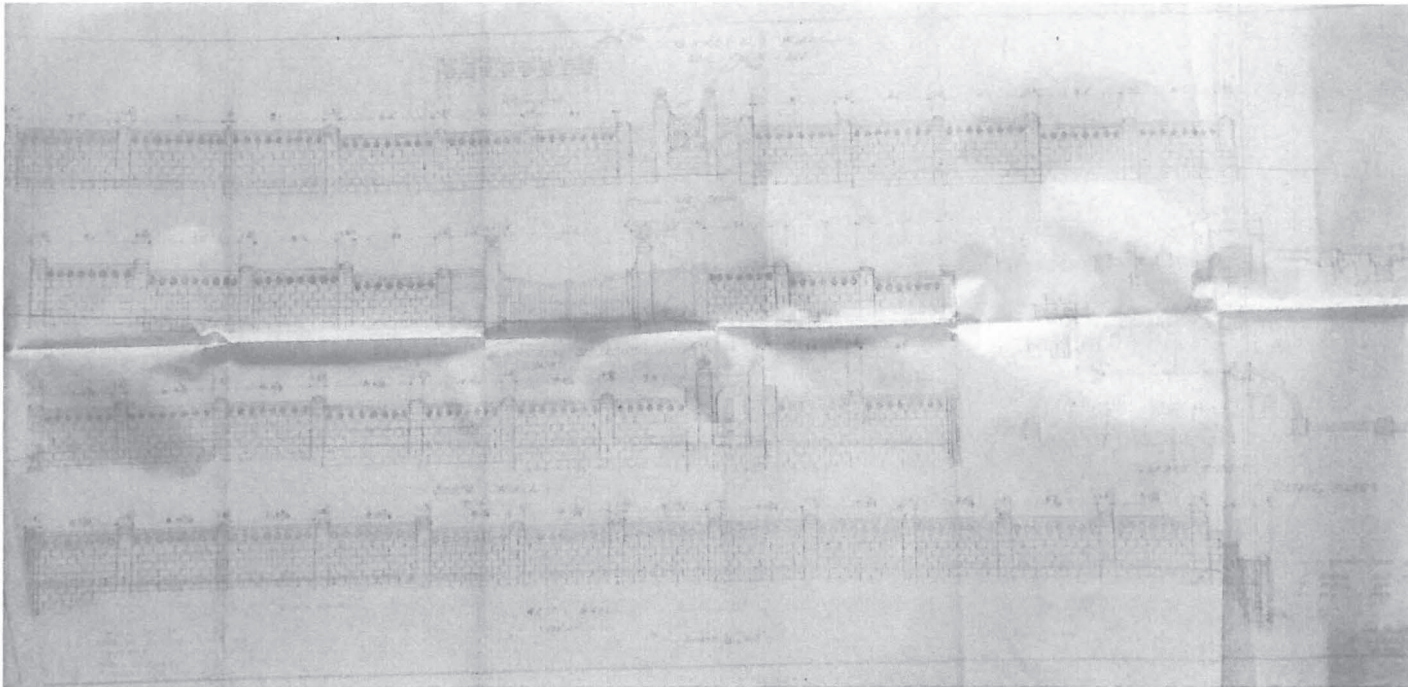
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7 of 22, Drawing for "Garden Wall," 4 January 1945



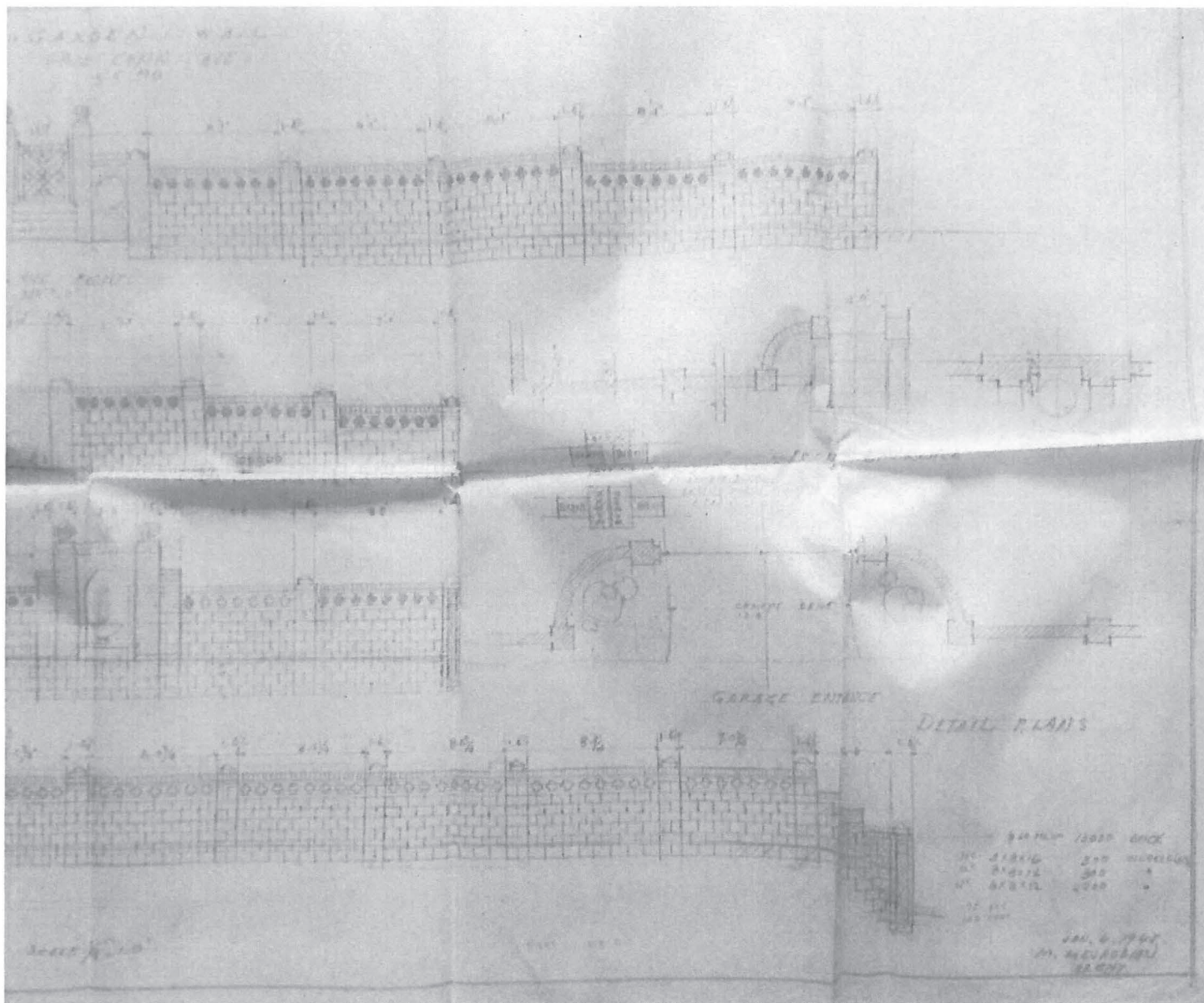
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8 of 22, Detail, "Garden Wall," 4 January 1945

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



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Montgomery County

[New Search \(http://edat.dat.maryland.gov/RealProperty/\)](http://edat.dat.maryland.gov/RealProperty/)

District: **07** Account Number: **00464605**



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

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

Property maps provided courtesy of the Maryland Department of Planning.

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



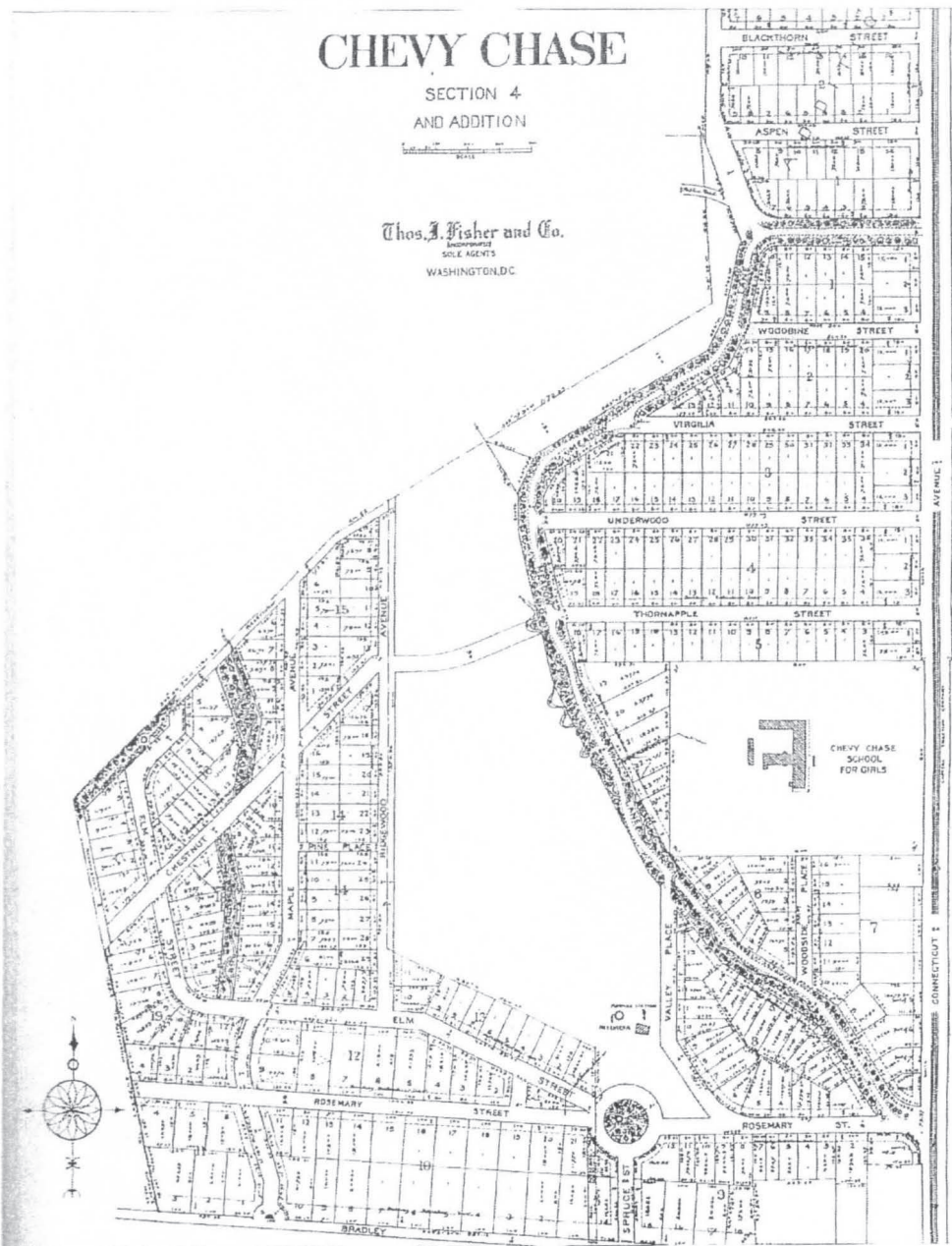
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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Mesrobian, Mihran, Residence  
Name of Property

Section SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTATION Page 14

Montgomery County, MD  
County and State

RESUBDIVISION OF  
LOT 1 AND PART OF LOT 2,  
BLOCK 2, SECTION 4  
CHEVY CHASE  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
MARYLAND  
OCTOBER, 1940 SCALE 1"=30'

PLAT No. 1313

R. W. BERRY  
CIVIL ENGINEER  
7905 MEADOW LAKE  
CHEVY CHASE, MD.

ENGINEER'S CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the plan shown hereon is correct, that it is a subdivision of Lot 1 and the north half of Lot 2, Block 2, Section 4, Chevy Chase, as shown on Plat No. 104, Plan Book No. 2, one of the Land Records of Montgomery County, Maryland, being all of the lands conveyed by the Chevy Chase Land Company to Mihran G. Mesrobian and Zabelle Mesrobian, his wife, by deed dated December 21, 1938, and recorded among the Land Records of Montgomery County, Maryland, in Liber 122, at Folio 27, and that iron pipe marked thus: "x" have been placed as indicated hereon.

Date: Oct. 7, 1940  
R. W. Berry  
Civil Engineer

OWNERS DEDICATION

We, Mihran G. Mesrobian and Zabelle Mesrobian, his wife, owners of the property shown and described hereon, hereby adopt this plan of subdivision and establish the minimum building restriction lines.

There are no suits of action, leases, liens, or trusts on the property included in this plan of subdivision.

Witnessed: Date: OCT. 7, 1940

William B. Smith  
Mihran G. Mesrobian  
Mihran G. Mesrobian

Allen K. Hagerty  
Zabelle Mesrobian  
Zabelle Mesrobian, his wife

WASHINGTON SUBURBAN SANITARY COMMISSION  
APPROVED OCT. 14, 1940  
SUITABLE FOR WATER AND SEWER DESIGN  
WITHOUT SUBMITTING UP TO INSTALLATION

Harry H. Hald  
CHIEF ENGINEER

MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK & PLANNING COMMISSION  
APPROVED OCT. 9, 1940  
DATE  
Harry H. Hald  
CHIEF ENGINEER  
RECORD FILE NO. 1345

WEST WOODBINE ST.

CONNECTICUT AVE.

20

21 7200'

22 10,800'

2

PART OF 2

4

3

FILED  
OCT 26 1940

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



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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### Planning Division)

REAL ESTATE: THE EVENING STAR, WASHINGTON, D. C. SATURDAY, JANUARY 5, 1924.

Section 4  
of Connecticut Avenue  
is shown with design  
the numerous lots sold  
a subdivision.  
white spaces show  
lots unsold

Section 4

Section 5

Columbia Country Club

CYPRESS STREET

BLACKTHORN STREET

ASPHEN STREET

WOODBINE STREET

UNDERWOOD STREET

THORAPPLE STREET

CHEVY CHASE SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

FOR SALE  
Limited Number of Lots  
in Section

Chevy Chase,

This property has  
and you now have  
sites at reasonable prices

In this subdivision  
purposes, the seeker  
a distinctive location  
the development of  
The highest type of  
macadam roadways,  
electric light, are b

Precaution has been taken to adequately  
against undesirable encroachments, insur-  
site increasing values in the midst of an



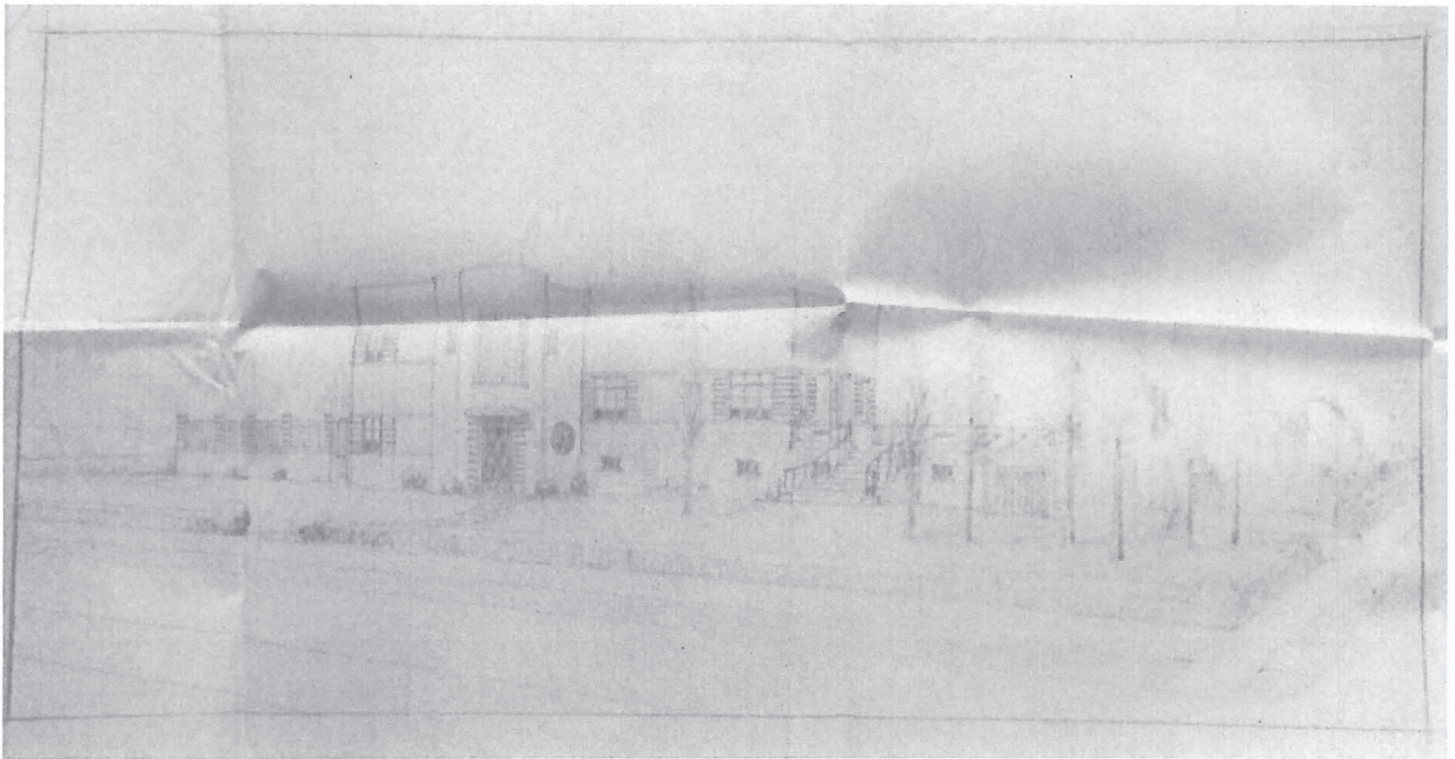
United States Department of the Interior  
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14 of 22, Sketch "A," undated (1940)

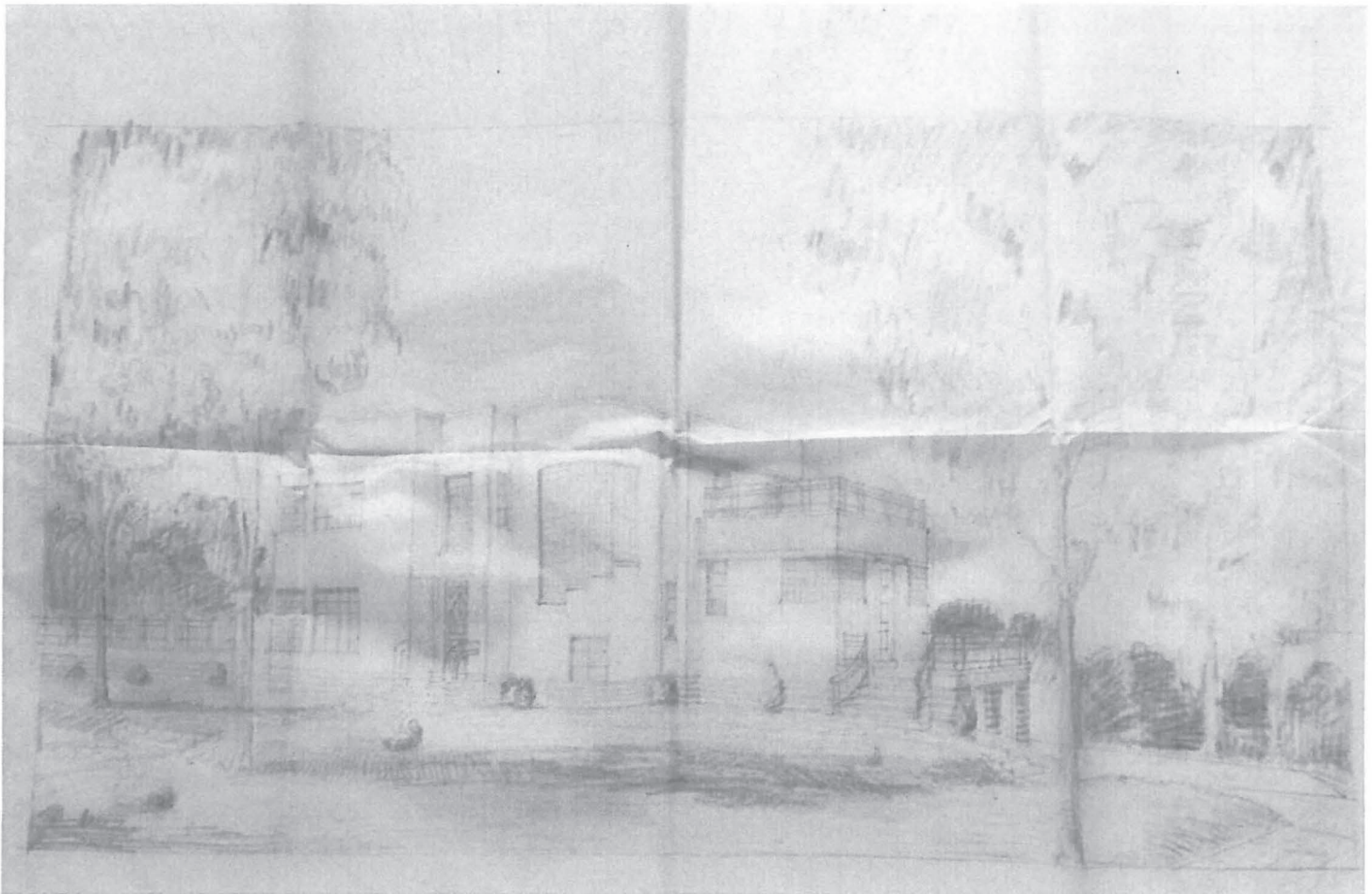
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15 of 22, Sketch "B," undated (1940)



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



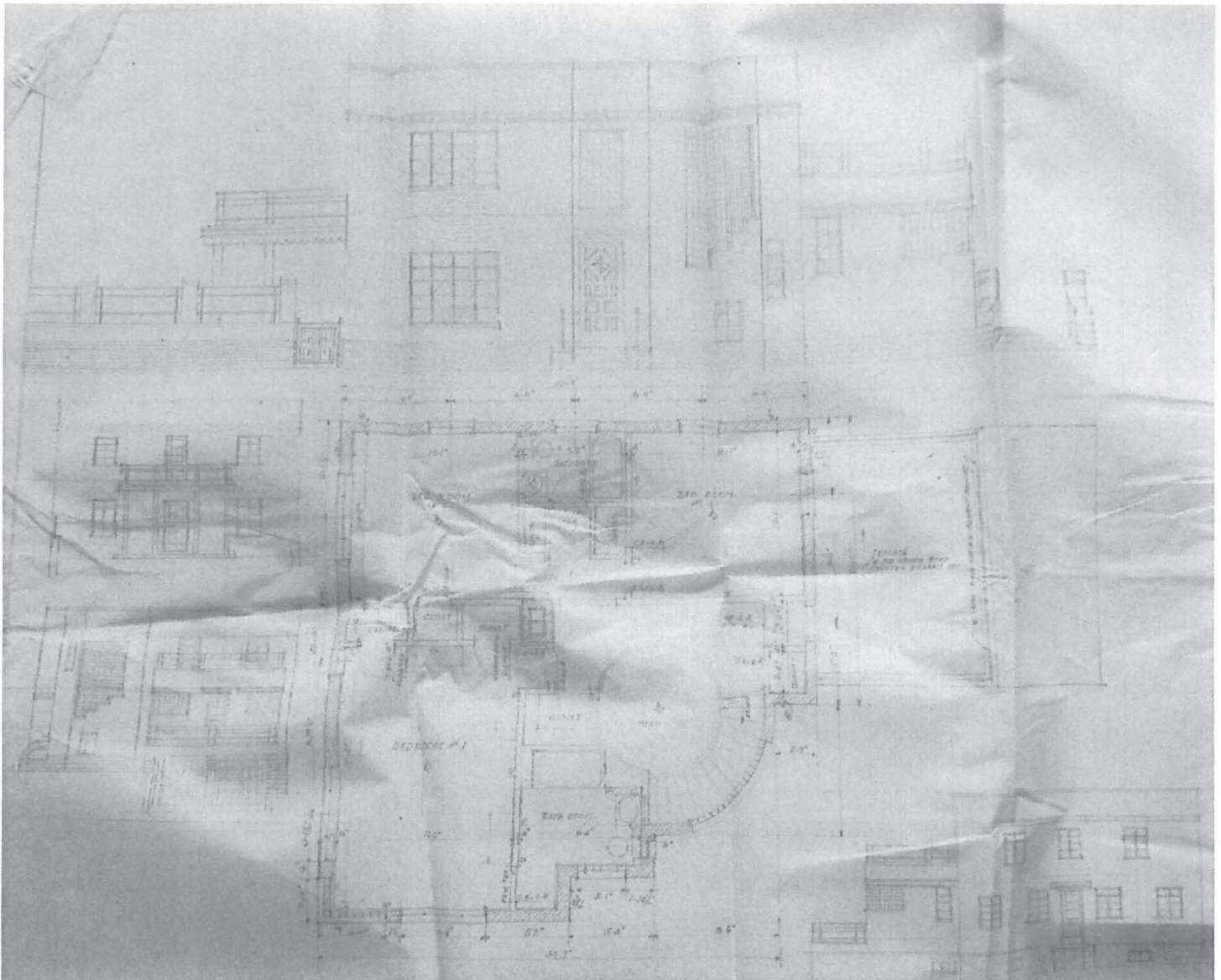
United States Department of the Interior  
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17 of 22, Plan and Elevation for Sketch "B," undated (1940)

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



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

### 2-Story House Of 'Motohome' Type Started

It Follows Style Evolved  
After Five Years of  
Scientific Study.

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

### New American Motohome Being Built for Lee D. Butler



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

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



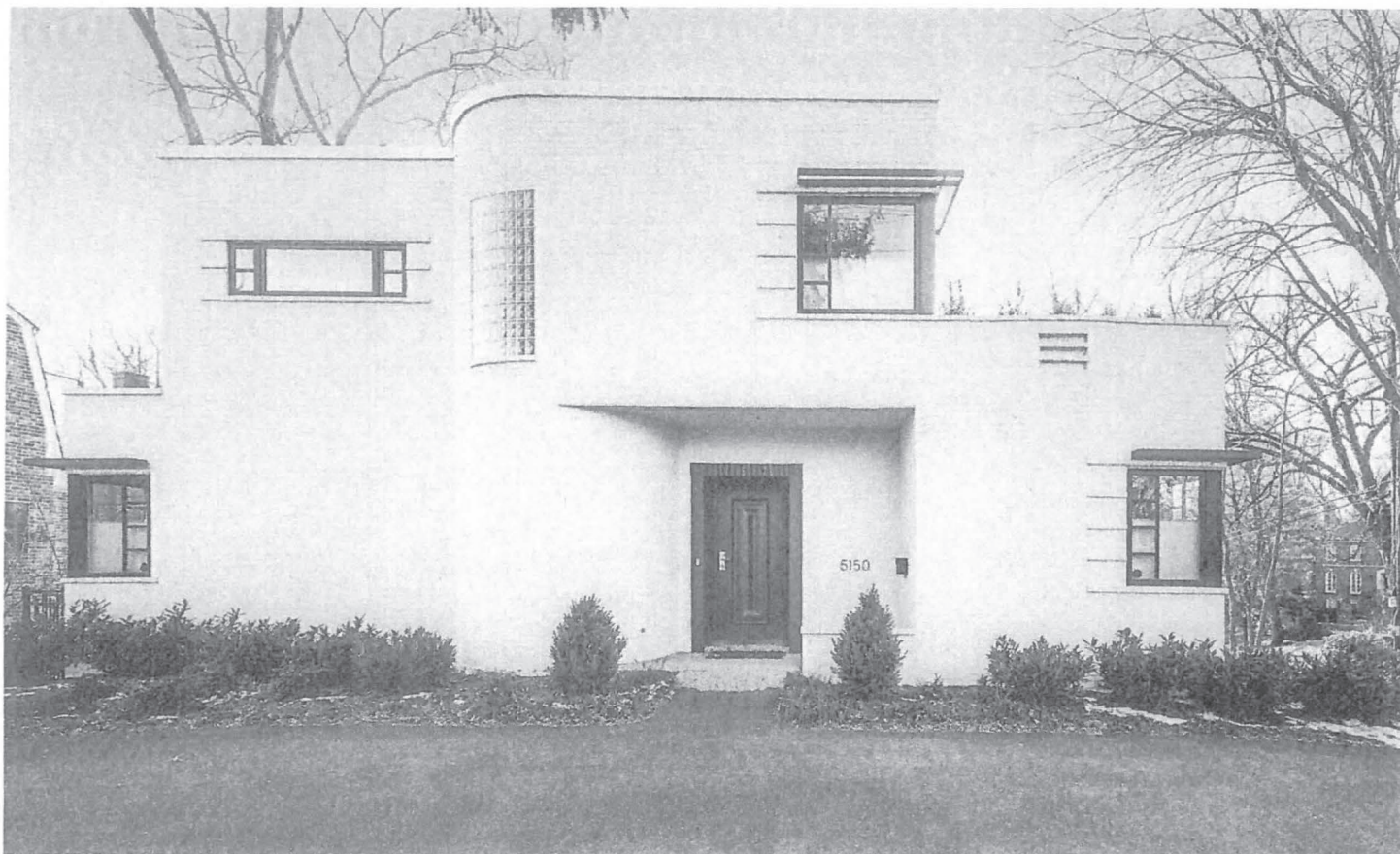
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20 of 22, 5150 Massachusetts Avenue, Bethesda, MD (Kelly, 22)

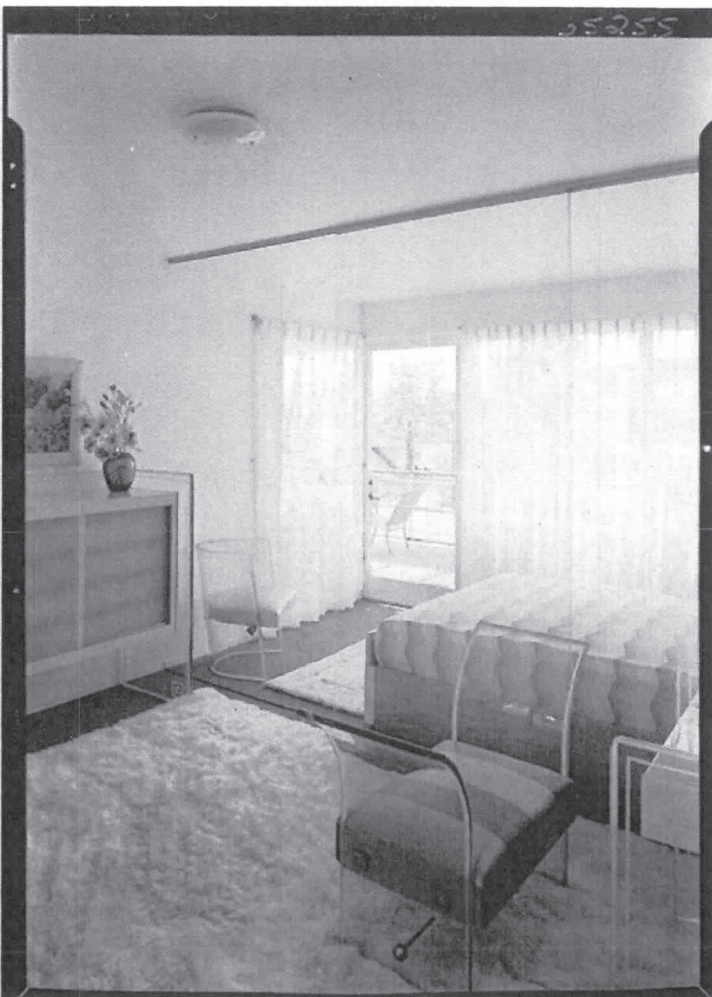
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21 of 22, "Town of Tomorrow" Pittsburgh House of Glass (model house #4), 1939 New York World's Fair (Gottscho-Schleisner Collection, Prints and Photographs, Library of Congress)



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







