

Reckert House  
3232 M Street, N.W.  
Georgetown  
Washington  
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-120

HABS  
DC  
GEO  
79-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Washington Planning and Service Center  
1730 North Lynn Street  
Arlington, Virginia

HABS  
DC,  
GEO,  
79-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY HABS NO. DC-120

RECKERT HOUSE

Location: 3232 M Street N. W., Washington, D.C.  
(Note: M Street was formerly known as Falls Street and also as Bridge Street)

Present Owner: Donald Lenehan

Present Occupant: Columbia Glass and Mirror Company

Present Use: Retail Sales Store

Brief Statement of Significance: One of the few frame structures remaining in the commercial district of Georgetown.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: The following information is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure was built. The site is part of lot numbered forty-six (46) in square twelve hundred (1200), formerly square 30 in Georgetown, described as follows:

"Beginning at a point on the south line of M Street, formerly Bridge Street, 295 feet west from the southwest corner of M and 32nd Streets; thence south at right angles to said M Street, 93.56 feet; thence southeasterly until it intersects the west wall of the Washington and Georgetown railroad car-house at a point distant 102 feet south from said M Street; thence north with said wall to the south line of M Street; and thence west on Bridge Street, 30 feet to the place of beginning; said land now being taxed as Lot 821 in Square 1200."

- 1824 By deed dated April 28, 1824 and recorded April 28, 1824 Liber WB 8 folio 482 - Francis Dodge acquired a good record title to property.
- 1849 Francis Dodge died testate (will dated January 4, 1849 Wills Book Co. p. 449 - Register of Wills, D.C.)

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- and devised the property to Miss Mary Thomson for the term of her life - and also the rest of the estate to his children - Francis Dodge Jr., Robert P. Dodge, and Allen Dodge.
- 1895 September 24, 1895: The surviving children of Francis Dodge filed a bill for Partition of the property against all the heirs at law of their deceased brothers and sisters.
- 1896 Deed July 28, 1896 recorded July 29, 1896 in Liber 2140 folio 215  
Allen Dodge, trustee  
Adeline Lauman, widow  
To  
Charles G. Reckert  
sale for \$4,800.00
- 1923 Deed January 11, 1923 recorded January 13, 1923 in Liber 4871 folio 190  
Charles G. Reckert and wife Annie M.M.  
To  
George V. Reckert
- 1947 George V. Reckert died testate April 7, 1947 and by will devised the property to his wife Alice E. Reckert  
This was tested in court by Civil Action No. 2111-48
- 1948 May 21, 1948: Complaint to establish title by adverse possession  
Alice E. Reckert (3544 W Place N.W.) Plaintiff  
vs.  
Wm. M. Beall  
Wm. M. C. Dodge  
Sarah E. D. Freeman  
Henry Hanley Dodge  
Donald D. Dodge  
Jane Dodge Elliot
- 1948 Deed November 3, 1948 recorded December 23, 1948 in Liber 8892 folio 36  
Alice E. Reckert  
To  
Leopold Selis and wife Mary  
tenants by entirety
- 1954 Deed July 27, 1954 recorded August 4, 1954 in Liber 10243 folio 96  
Leopold Selis and wife Mary  
To

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George Varoutsos and wife Jennie  
tenants by entirety  
1959 George Varoutsos  
Perry Varoutsos  
joint tenants  
To  
Donald F. Lenehan and his wife Betty B.  
tenants by entirety

2. Date of erection: Probably late 18th Century.
3. Architect: Not known.
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: None known.
5. Notes on alterations and additions: Records at the District Building Permit Department, District Building, District of Columbia provide the following information:

A57641 August 13, 1954 for repair.

"Replace corner stud replace 1x6 facing replace  
downspout and eaves boards repair door and rein-  
force sill with concrete no structural change  
George Varoutsos 2617 Wisconsin Avenue N.W.  
\$250.00" 3 floors, tin roof, thicknesses given  
as 8"/8"/6"

Extensive remodeling was reported in The  
Georgetown May 2, 1963

6. Important old views: None known.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

Washington directories provide the following tenant  
information:

1905-1919	Charles G. Reckert, grocer 1904 at a different address
1920-1942	George V. Reckert, grocer
1943	Vacant
1956	J&P Distr. Inc., whol. paper prod.
1960-1966	Columbia Glass and Mirror Co., Inc.

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Prepared by James Philip Noffsinger  
Architect  
National Park Service  
August 16, 1966

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: One of the old commercial buildings in Georgetown, the Reckert House is also one of the few frame structures remaining in the commercial area. Although it has undergone many alterations and additions since construction, the building--above the much-altered street floor--still retains a great deal of its early domestic character.
2. Condition of fabric: Extensively remodeled in 1963, the structure is in very good condition.

B. Technical Description of Exterior: Note: In evaluating effects of 1963 alteration, photographs from National Commission of Fine Arts file OG.2436 were consulted.

1. Overall dimensions: Approximately 30' (three bays) x 65' (including later addition); two-and-one-half stories in height.
2. Foundations: Stone.
3. Wall construction: Original wood siding is extant on (north) facade, has been covered with corrugated metal on sides in 1963 remodeling. (Clapboard)
4. Chimneys: Chimney at extreme rear of addition is visible in aerial photograph, cannot be seen on site.
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Main double door is essentially unaltered from recent remodeling: only single glazed panel has been replaced by eight-pane light over inset wood panel. (West) side double door is almost identical in design to main door: it was moved one bay west during

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1963 alteration. Neither doorway (or doors) date from original construction as entire street floor facade was altered at an undetermined date from earlier residential face of unknown design.

b. Windows and shutters: Upper windows are 6/6 light double hung wood sash, wood lintels and sills. Pre-1963 windows were 2/2 light. Two paneled louvered shutters were added in 1963. Front shop windows are essentially unchanged except that main windows have been altered from single pane to twenty-four pane, upper transoms to twelve-pane. Transom over main door, single pane, is unchanged. Two (apparently) 6/6 double hung wood sash windows are visible at both second floor and garret levels of west elevation.

6. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: Original east-west gable is tin-covered. Flat roof of rear addition is built-up.

b. Framing: Wood.

c. Cornice, eaves: Eaves project about one foot; soffit is wood. Gutter and return may date well back into 19th Century. Downspout is modern

d. Dormers: Two wood dormers on north gable have gabled tin roofs, 6/6 double hung wood sash windows. Wood molding on east dormer returns inward from pediment, defining shape of tympanum. Single dormer on south gable cannot be approached for recording.

C. Technical Description of Interiors: Street floor has been altered; walls are literally of glass (mirrors). Stairway in southwest corner of street floor leads west and north in two flights to second floor which has two front rooms, an interior room east of the stair and corridor, and a narrow back room. Pressed-fibre board is wall covering, irregular

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width planks cover floor, Garret area is unfinished, probably intact from original construction. Large damaged area on plaster inside west dormer reveals 3" lath strips.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The Reckert House faces north on M Street northwest between Wisconsin Avenue and Warehouse Alley. It is on the fringe of the well-maintained and more vital area of Georgetown's commercial district to the east and north.
2. Enclosures: (Apparently) none.
3. Outbuildings: Later addition to south of original structure cannot be approached for recording.
4. Walks: Fronts on concrete public sidewalk to north.
5. Landscaping: None.

Prepared by Thomas R. Martinson  
Student Assistant Architect  
National Park Service  
August 31, 1966