Stanton Park Neighborhood Association
P.O. Box 75085, National Capitol Station, Washington, D.C. 20013-5085

RECEIVED
D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
2005 JAN 24 PM 1:53

January 23, 2005

Zoning Commission for the District of Columbia
441 Fourth St., NW, Suite 220 S
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Case No. 04-22
(Abdo Development, LLC – 220 H Street, NE)

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

I enclose the original and ten copies of the testimony on behalf of the Stanton Park Neighborhood Association.

We will make additional copies available at the hearing.

Sincerely,

Monte Edwards, Co-Chair
SPNA Land Use Committee

Cc: Abdo Development (via fax)

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 04-22
EXHIBIT NO. 28

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.04-22
EXHIBIT NO.28

BEFORE THE BOARD OF ZONING COMMISSION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

RECEIVED
D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
2005 JAN 24 PM 1:53

Statement of Monte Edwards
Representing the
STANTON PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Case No. 04-22
January 27, 2005

My name is Monte Edwards. Together with Drury Tallant, I serve as Co-Chair of the Land Use Committee of the Stanton Park Neighborhood Association (SPNA). SPNA is a civic association that works for improvement of the Stanton Park neighborhood by representing the interests of the north Capitol Hill community in the area bounded by East Capitol Street, 10th Street NE, H Street NE, and 2nd Street NE. My testimony today is in general support of the application, with a specific reservation concerning manner in which the former chapel, and its entrance, will be restored and utilized.

The original structures on this site were constructed in 1873 as the convent for the Little Sisters of the Poor and St. Jopseph's Home for the Aged. The building that faced H Street consisted of three wings that projected out to H Street and thereby defined two courtyards that were open to H Street. The main entrance at 220 H Street, was located in the court yard between the two eastern most wings, (the main entrance is shown in attached Photo 1, probably taken in 1939. Attached photo 2 shows the H Street façade, with the three projecting wings and two court yards. Unfortunately, the main entrance, below the cross, is obscured by trees in the photograph). From that entrance, one would enter into a vestibule, with the formal entrance to the Chapel straight ahead, and on either side were entrances to the convent and home for the aged (see attached photo 3, which shows the chapel entrance at the left and the windows facing H Street on the right).

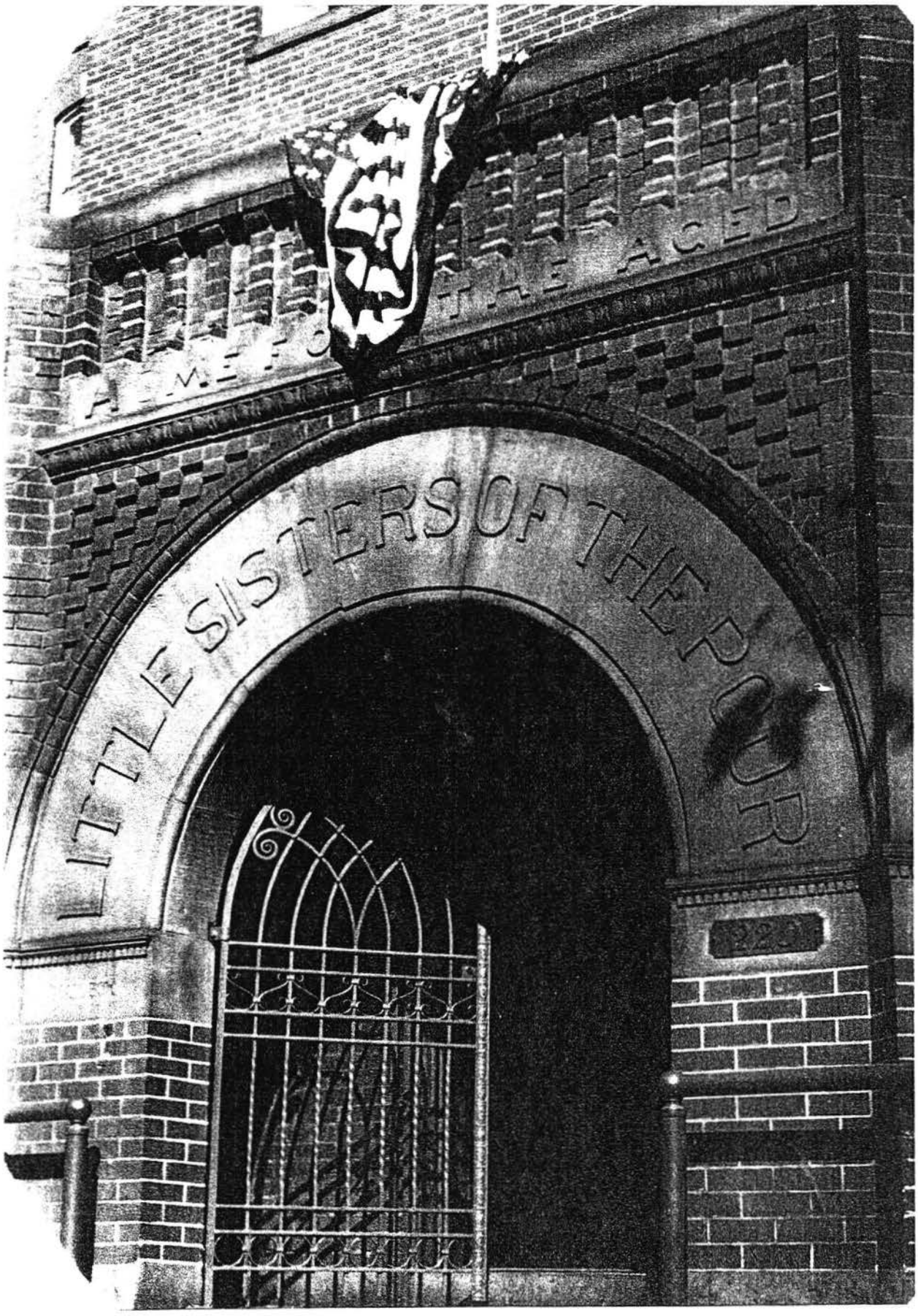
In the 1960s there was significant construction which consisted, in part, of building across the two courtyards, resulting in the present façade that is flush with H Street. That construction resulted in the loss of the ornate H Street entrance and the vestibule, but the formal entrance to the chapel remains, extending from the second to the third floor of the 1960 addition. The developers propose to remove the courtyard additions and thereby restore the H Street façade to its original configuration of with two courtyards facing H Street.

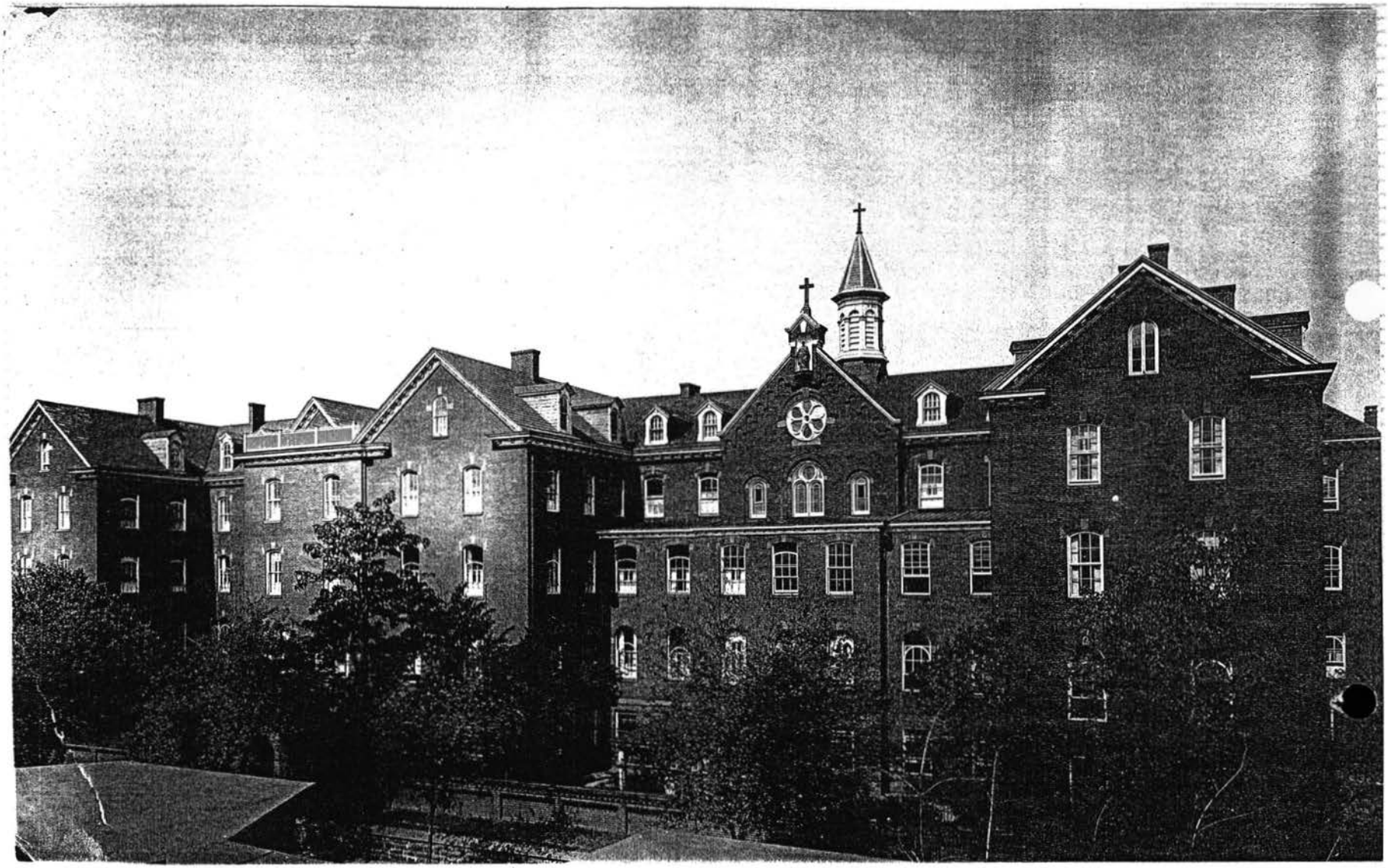
Unfortunately, in the view of SPNA, the Applicant does not propose to provide an H Street entrance from the restored eastern courtyard (Application, Exhibit F, page 21). SPNA strongly supports the Applicant's statement that "One of the great challenges of this project was to refocus attention and the connection of this building and the entire Square to H Street" (Application, page 5). SPNA recommends the restoration of the chapel entrance as a functional entrance to H Street to, in fact, provide a significant architectural and practical feature that would "refocus attention and the connection of this building ... to H Street."

There is also significant architectural richness in the chapel interior, which has in some areas been covered by the Children's Museum (it was the Mexican room), but is basically intact and largely consistent with the 1939 view of the chapel shown in attached photo 4 (Msgr. Fulton Sheen in the photo later became Bishop, and then Archbishop Fulton Sheen). During the operation of the Children's museum, this room was used for community and public meetings, including SPNA's annual dinners. The chapel interior is a space well known and loved by the community. SPNA has suggested that the chapel interior be restored and the possibility of some form of public use be pursued, rather than converting it to private residential use, which would mean that the public would no longer have access to its architectural richness. In preparing for this hearing, I met with the Little Sisters of the Poor, now located on Harewood Street, and described SPNA's interest in maintaining public access to the chapel. Their response was "how about a church." Other options that would permit public access might be a restaurant, but SPNA understands that the developer would prefer no commercial use in the project. A last and minimalist solution would be to use a part of the chapel, appropriately restored, as the vestibule for the restored chapel entrance on H Street.

Under §2403.9(d) of the Zoning regulation, historic preservation and restoration are considered to be public benefits and project amenities. The principal project amenity that is proposed is stated at page 12 of the Application: "...the Applicant will be able to rehabilitate and restore the historically significant portion of the ...building. The adaptive reuse of this structure for residential purposes is a significant project amenity." Note that the Applicant does not claim this as a public benefit. SPNA urges restoration of the chapel entrance and at least a portion of the chapel in a manner that will permit some degree of public access to provide a significant public benefit.

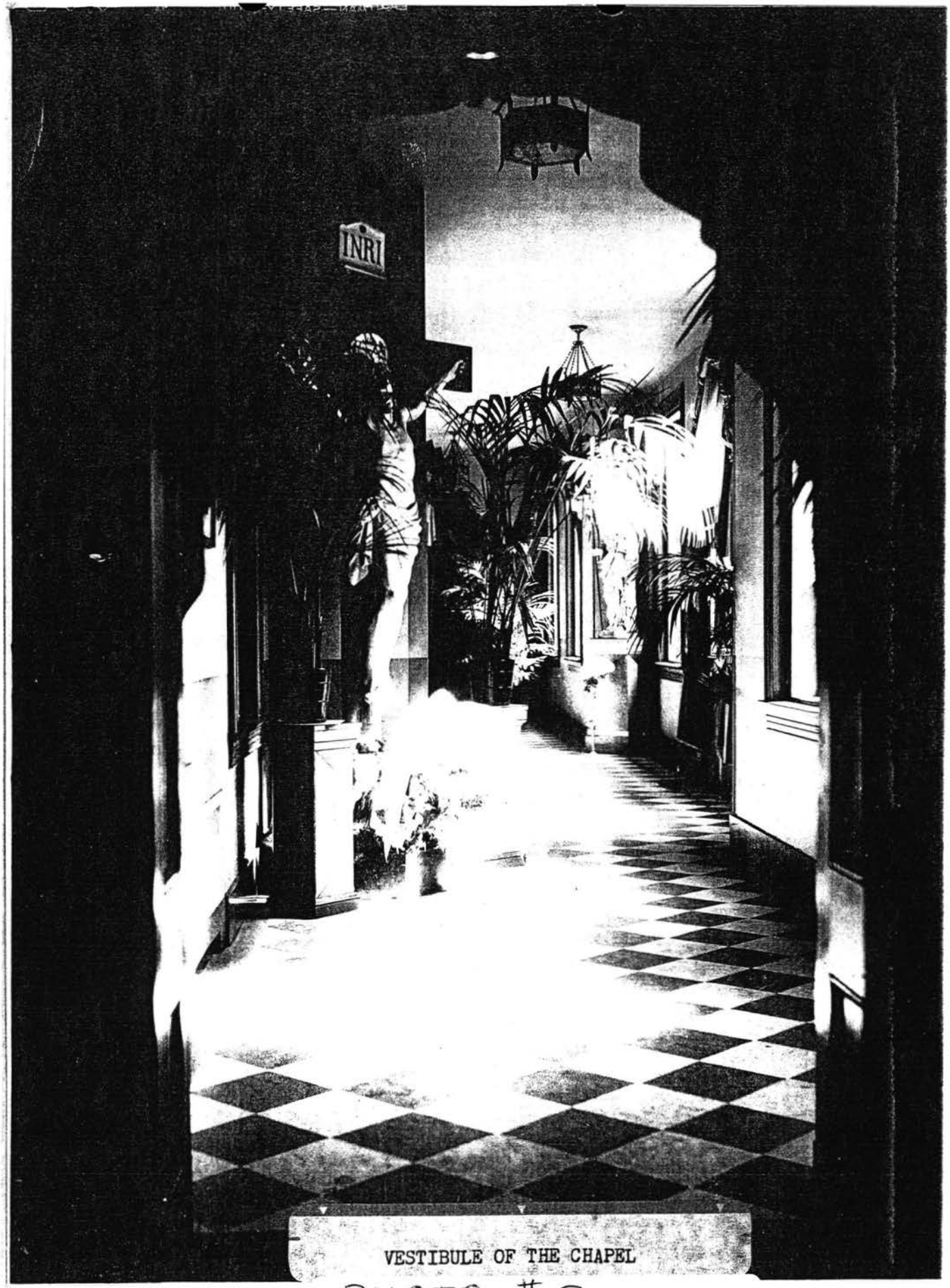
PHOTO. # 1





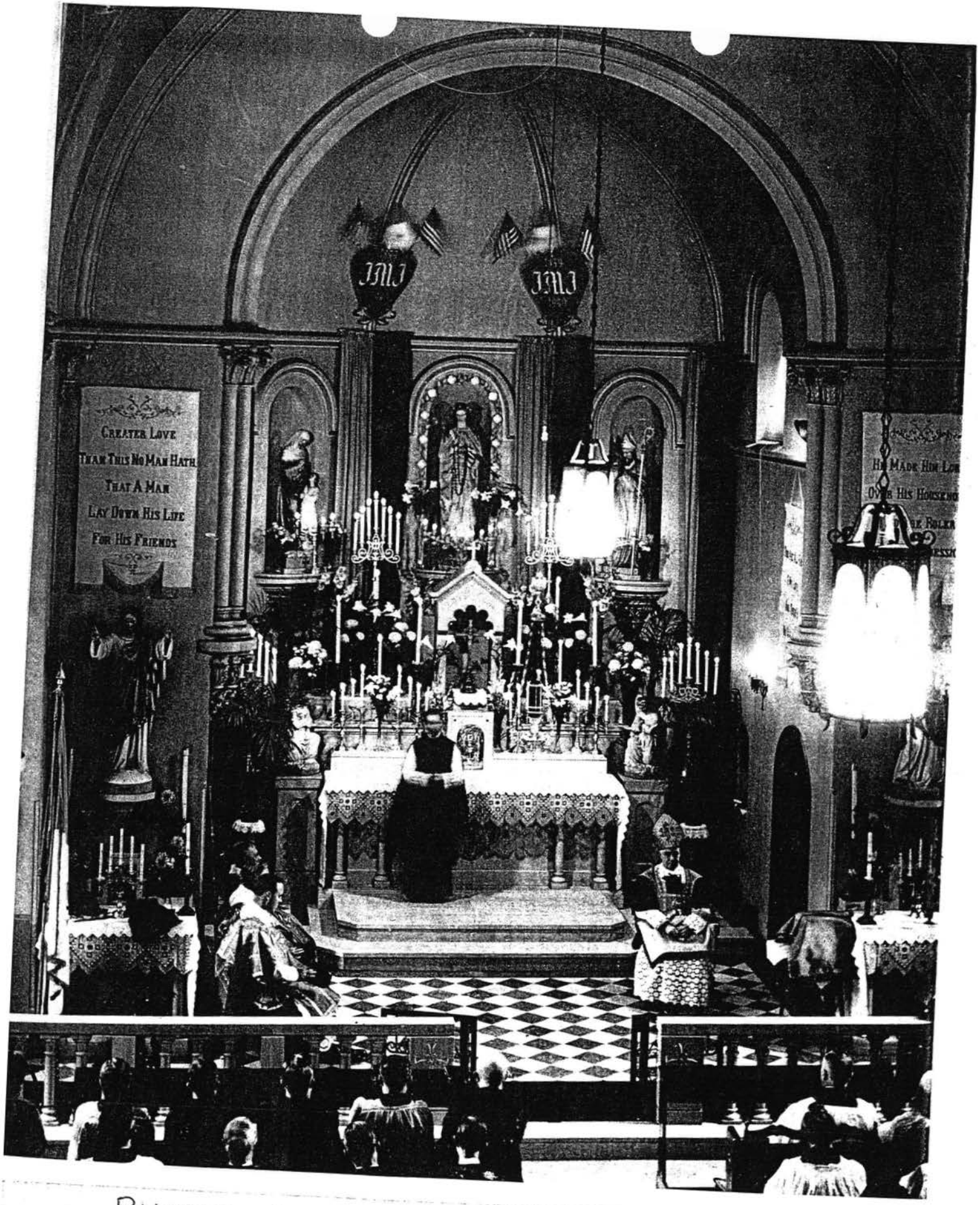
ST. JOSEPH'S HOME
WASHINGTON, DC.

PHOTO # 2



VESTIBULE OF THE CHAPEL

PHOTO # 3



- PHOTO # 4

MOST REV. MICHAEL A. KEYES, S.M. CEL.
RT. REV. MSGR. FULTON SHEEN, PREACHER
AT THE HOME, OCTOBER 18, 1939