

## PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

1616 McCormick Drive, Largo, Maryland 20774 • pgplanning.org/HPC.htm • 301-952-3680 • historicpreservation@ppd.mncppc.org

# FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATION ON THE **FLYNN-STECK HOUSE (DOCUMENTED PROPERTY 68-074-04)**AND ITS ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING FOR CLASSIFICATION AS A HISTORIC SITE

April 1, 2024

### **Procedural Background**

December 5, 2023	The owner submitted an Application for Historic Site Evaluation in compliance with Subtitle 29-120.01. The property is not listed in the Inventory of Historic Resources.
January 17, 2024	The property owner and the adjacent property owners were mailed 60-day written notice of the time, date, and location of the public hearing (Subtitle 29-120.01).
March 2024	The survey and documentation of the property were completed by Thomas Gross.
March 4, 2024	The property was posted "at least 14 days in advance," according to the provisions of the Prince George's County Historic Preservation Ordinance (Subtitle 29-120.01) and the Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance (Subtitle 27-125.03). Evidence of sign posting and written notice to the property owner are attached.
March 19, 2024	Date of HPC public hearing.

### **Findings**

Description: The Flynn-Steck House is two-and-one-half story dwelling constructed circa 1905 in a simplified Queen Anne style. The main volume of the house features an unusual roof structure, with a cross gable, projecting front gable, and rear hipped portion, all meeting at a flat square roof measuring approximately 12 feet by 14 feet and pierced with a brick chimney. A one-story, hipped roof addition built before 1939 spans the rear elevation. The front elevation is distinguished by a 45-degree corner window on the first story and a bay window sheltered by the projecting front gable on the second story. The exterior of the house is clad in wood lap siding, which until recently was concealed by aluminum lap siding. The sloped portions of the roof are clad in light gray asphalt shingles, while the flat roof is of an unknown material. The house rests on a parged foundation that increases in height as the lot slopes from front to rear. A poured concrete front porch at grade level spans the west (front) elevation, its hipped roof supported by four Tuscan wood columns. The porch is reached from the sidewalk by a walkway of gravel and dry laid square pavers. The one-over-one, double-hung sash windows found throughout the house appear to be original, as does the wood three-panel, eight-light front entry door. A modern wood four-panel door with semicircular window, installed recently, provides grade-level access to the house on the north elevation. A door of unknown vintage provides access to the kitchen through a vestibule set within the rear addition. Modern replacement windows, also wood, have been installed at attic level, while the basement is lighted by modern simulated-divided light vinyl windows.

A detached one-car garage is located northeast of the house, clad in wood lap siding and an asphalt shingle roof with exposed rafter tails. One of the two original three-panel, six-light wood double doors has been removed and the entire opening has been covered by particleboard sheeting. The south elevation contains a wood door and one six-light casement window, while the north elevation has a similar window. The garage, which is depicted on a 1939 Sanborn fire insurance map, is reached by a concrete and macadam driveway.

Setting: The Flynn-Steck House is located at 4049 34th Street in the City of Mount Rainier. The resource occupies a 0.149-acre property measuring 50 feet along the street and 125 feet deep, on the east side of 34th Street between Bunker Hill Road and Shepherd Street. Landscaping in front of the house includes a large

willow oak tree, shrubs, and a small garden with flowers and herbs. The rear yard features several mature trees and a gravel area behind the house. Smaller trees and shrubs line the south property line. A chain link fence encloses the property on three sides, the front section having been removed recently. A gate provides access from Cherry Lane Alley at the rear of the property. The surrounding area is characterized by dense single-family residential development on similarly sized lots, with a former fire station adjoining the property to the north and a church nearby at the intersection of 34th Street and Shepherd Street.

History: The Flynn-Steck House is located on the eastern edge of the original Mount Rainier subdivision, which was platted by Ira J. Baker, Sigmund A. Czarra, and Wallace A. Bartlett in June 1903 on approximately 100 acres of "Chillum Castle Manor" that had been owned since 1891 by the Sawyer family and previously by Thomas Green Clemson of South Carolina. Clemson was the son-in-law of John C. Calhoun, Vice President of the United States from 1825 to 1832 under Presidents John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson. Clemson served as U.S. Charge d'affaires to Belgium from 1844 to 1852 and was a large landowner in South Carolina, but after returning to the United States he settled on property he purchased in Maryland in 1856. He built a residence, "The Home," on the property and lived there until the onset of Civil War caused him to relocate with his family to South Carolina. He owned his Maryland property until his death in 1888. His will provided funds for the establishment of what would become Clemson University.

Clyde and Esther Fowler purchased Lot 11 of Block 1 from Wallace A. Bartlett, Sigmund A. Czarra, and Ira J. Baker in April 1905. In June of that year, they executed a mortgage with the Laurel Building Association in exchange for an "advance" of \$1,800, which they likely used to construct the dwelling on the property.

Originally from Sharon, Pennsylvania, Clyde Fowler was born in 1876 and came to Washington, D.C. in 1896. In 1901, he married the former Esther Swann, daughter of George and Catherine Swann. The 1910 Census records Clyde and Esther Fowler, aged 32 and 25 respectively, living in the subject house with their seven-year-old daughter, Catherine. Clyde Fowler's 1947 obituary states that he worked at the Naval Gun Factory during the time he resided in Mount Rainier. Fowler was a member of the Mount Hermon Masonic Lodge in Hyattsville. The Fowlers sold the property in 1918 and moved to Muskegon, Michigan, where Clyde was employed as superintendent of Linderman Steel and Machinery Company. The Fowlers moved back to Washington, D.C. in 1919, where Clyde entered into the homebuilding business. During World War II, Clyde worked as superintendent at the Engineering and Research Corporation plant in Riverdale (PG:68-22). He died in 1947 at his farm in Prince Frederick from injuries sustained when a tractor overturned on him.

### FLYNN FAMILY OWNERSHIP (1918–1997)

In August 1918, Clyde and Esther Fowler sold the property to Thomas and Adelaide Flynn. Thomas Theodore Flynn, Sr. Was born in Dexter, Michigan in 1879 to parents of Canadian birth. In 1900, he married the former Adelaide E. Jones, who was born in Indiana in 1875. Before moving to Maryland, the Flynns lived in Indiana, where Thomas was employed as a salesman. At the time the Flynns purchased the property in Mount Rainier, Thomas was employed as a carpenter at the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Harford County. The 1920 Census records Thomas and Adelaide Flynn living at the subject property with their son Thomas (18), son Ralph (15), daughter Eileen (12), and boarders Mary and Mary deprene (47 and 22, respectively).

The 1930 Census lists the household as including Thomas, employed as secretary of the local Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA); Adelaide, employed as a government secretary; Ralph, employed as a streetcar driver; Eileen, employed as a stationery store saleswoman; and her husband, George R. Lee, Jr., employed as a truck driver. Also living in the house at the time were Adelaide's sister, Etta Jones, and her husband, Lyman. By the time of the 1940 Census, the household consisted of Thomas, Adelaide (then working as a clerk in the War Department), Eileen, and George Lee, Jr. Ralph Flynn and his wife, Mary, lived

elsewhere in Mount Rainier at that time. Ralph worked for the Bureau of Public Roads and was active in the Mount Rainier Volunteer Fire Department.

Thomas Flynn was still working as secretary for the YMCA in 1950, when he was 70 years old; Adelaide, age 75, and Thomas's aunt, Eulalie Zook, age 91, were also living in the house at that time. Eileen and George Lee lived in Hyattsville in 1950. Thomas retired from the YMCA in 1953 after over 30 years of employment.

Thomas and Adelaide Flynn's eldest son, Thomas T. Flynn, Jr., (1902-1979) was a prolific author of short stories from the 1920s through the late 1960s, writing under the name "T.T. Flynn." In 1923, he married Mary Cecilia Derene, who appears to have been the younger "Mary Deprene" listed as a boarder in the Mount Rainier house in the 1920 Census. The couple moved to New Mexico in 1928 in search of relief for Mary's tuberculosis, but she nevertheless succumbed to the disease the following year. Flynn is recorded as living in Miami, Florida, in 1930. He married a second time to a woman who could not be identified; their brief marriage ended in divorce and produced one daughter, Mary Cecilia (apparently named in honor Flynn's first wife). Flynn married a third time in 1934, to Helen Brown, and they would remain married until Flynns's death in 1979. They lived in Tennessee and had two sons, Thomas B. And Michael, by the time of the 1940 Census. The family may have moved back to New Mexico at some point in the 1950s.

T.T. Flynn had contributed numerous stories to magazines including Clues, Mystery Stories, and Flynn's by the time he and his first wife moved to New Mexico. He later worked mostly in the Western genre and was a member of Western Writers of America. Thomas achieved his greatest commercial success with the publication of The Man from Laramie as a serial novel in the Saturday Evening Post in 1954; the story was made into a film starring Jimmy Stewart in 1955. Flynn also wrote scripts for two episodes of the television series Tales of Wells Fargo in 1959. Thomas and Helen later moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where he died in 1979.

Thomas Flynn, Sr. Died in Albuquerque, New Mexico in July 1957 while he and Adelaide were visiting Thomas, Jr. His remains were returned to Maryland, and he was buried at Fort Lincoln Cemetery in Brentwood (PG:68-15). Adelaide Flynn continued to live at the subject property until her death in April 1966; she is also buried at Fort Lincoln Cemetery. The property was conveyed in 1967 to Thomas and Adelaide's daughter, Eileen E. Lee, and her husband, George. R. Lee. It is uncertain whether Eileen and George lived in the house at that time; they did not own any other property in Prince George's County or at any point before George died in 1975; however, public records indicate that Eileen did live there at the time of her death in April 1997. The subject property was sold in November 1997 by Eileen's son, Robert D. Lee, to Remilekun Ayodeji, who conveyed it immediately to Waleola Duyile.

### STECK FAMILY OWNERSHIP (2003–2023)

In 2003, Waleola Duyile sold the property to Charles F. Steck IV and his wife, Dorothy (Dot) Steck. Charles Steck (1956-2023) was a highly prolific photographer in the Washington, D.C., area, working primarily for the Washington City Paper but contributing also to the Washington Post and other publications. Over the course of his career, Charles assembled a portfolio that ranged from posed portraits of politicians to candid shots of street youth at play. He was particularly known for his black and white photography, which featured artistic use of darkness and shadows. Charles photographed numerous musical artists and bands, both in live performance and for promotional purposes. He served as unofficial photographer at d.c. space, a music venue where Dot worked as a cook and bartender.

Charles also worked for many years as a professional musician, playing bass for the Washington, D.C.-area punk bands Velvet Monkeys and High Back Chairs in the 1980s and 1990s; he also collaborated with numerous other artists, including vocalist Lida Husik and the band Rambling Shadows. Charles brought his

photographic skills to bear on his musical work, shooting album covers and chronicling the backstage life of the bands of which he was a member.

Charles met Dorothy (Dot) Brown while both were students at Winston Churchill High School in Potomac. They married in 1982 and moved thereafter to the Dupont Circle area of Washington, D.C. Dot was employed as a cook at Fannie Mae headquarters in Washington, D.C. at the time they purchased the property in Mount Rainier. She worked as head chef at several restaurants in the District, including El Camino, Taqueria Nacional, Zest Bistro, and Hawthorne. She later took a position as chef at Mundo Verde Public Charter School in Washington, playing a key role in transforming the school's lunch program and kitchen to support healthier and more fresh food options.

Dot Steck was also an artist for many years before moving to the subject house and became a fixture in the artistic community in and around Mount Rainier after the family moved there. She became affiliated with Red Dirt Studio, which occupies the former fire station on the adjacent property; photos from events hosted by the studio show the north wall of the garage on the subject property being used as a display area.

Dot states that part of the reason they purchased the house in Mount Rainier was because the basement provided space for Charles to operate a darkroom. His photography would come to occupy other areas of the house, however; Dot recalls frequently coming home from work to find the living room converted to a studio. The attic became the repository for a large number of boxes containing negatives, which were moved to a rented storage unit after Charles died.

Charles and Dot Steck lived in the house with their sons Avery and Brody and daughter Chloe, all three of whom have pursued music as either a profession or avocation.

### SUBSEQUENT OWNERSHIP

Following the death of Charles Steck in June 2023, Dorothy Steck sold the property to its current owner, 4049 34th Street LLC, in July 2023. Kayleigh Kulp, managing member of the corporation, is undertaking a comprehensive rehabilitation of the house as of the time of this documentation.

Significance: The Flynn-Steck House is significant as a substantially intact example of early twentieth-century residential architecture from the early period of development in the City of Mount Rainier. The property also embodies the heritage theme of streetcar suburb development in Prince George's County in the early twentieth century. The resource is also significant for its association with the Flynn family, who owned the property for almost 80 years and included the prolific author Thomas T. Flynn, Jr., and for its association with Dorothy and Charles Steck, prominent figures in the local arts, music, and culinary communities during the 20 years they owned the house.

Integrity/Degree of Alteration: The Flynn-Steck House retains its essential form as an early twentieth-century, simplified Queen Anne-style dwelling, with its distinctive roof structure, 45-degree corner window, second-story bay window, and front porch. The one-story rear addition is likely not original but dates from early in the house's history. Aluminum lap siding was recently removed to reveal the original lap wood siding. The house retains most of its original wood windows; its front entry door is also likely original. Modern replacement windows have been installed at the attic and basement levels. The garage retains its original form, design, and materials, although one of the vehicle entry doors is missing.

The Flynn-Steck House retains a high degree of integrity of location, feeling, and setting and a moderately high degree of integrity of design and materials. The property was owned by the Flynn family until 1997 and by the Steck family until 2023; the house appears largely as it did during the two families' ownership of the property and thus retains a high degree of integrity of association. Overall, the Flynn-Steck House retains a

high degree of integrity.

Historic Preservation Commission Policy #1-87, "Evaluating Integrity, Degree of Alteration, and Scarcity and Frequency," states that a property's integrity should be considered in the context of the scarcity of the resource type it represents, with a less restrictive standard of integrity applied when few or no other similar properties exist in the Inventory of Historic Resources. Although there are several dwellings of a similar style and vintage currently designated as historic sites, the Flynn-Steck House retains a sufficient degree of integrity to warrant its designation on the basis of the criteria cited below.

Public Hearing Testimony: At the Historic Preservation Commission's March 19, 2024, public hearing, Historic Preservation Section staff provided a slide presentation on the Flynn-Steck House and presented its recommendation on the designation of the subject property as a Historic Site. Kayleigh Kulp, managing member of 4049 34th Street LLC, the property owner, submitted a written statement in support of staff's recommendation that the property be designated as a historic site.

#### **Conclusions**

1. Staff concluded that the Flynn-Steck House meets three of the nine designation criteria of Subtitle 29-104(a).

### Historic and Cultural Significance

- 1. A. (i) has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the County, State or Nation
- 1. A. (ii) is the site of a significant historic event
- 1. A. (iii) is identified with a person or a group of persons who influenced society
- 1. A. (iv) **X** exemplifies the cultural, economic, industrial, social, political or historical heritage of the County and its urban and rural communities

### Architectural and Design Significance

- 2. A. (i) X embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction
- 2. A. (ii) represents the work of a master craftsman, architect or builder
- 2. A. (iii) possesses high artistic values
- 2. A. (iv) represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction
- 2. A. (v) **X** represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or County due to its singular physical characteristics or landscape
  - 2. Staff further concluded that, in weighing the alterations that have been made to the structure since its original construction, the Flynn-Steck House can be found to possess sufficient integrity to convey, represent, or contain the values and qualities for which it is judged significant.
  - 3. Staff further concluded that the contribution of the Steck family to the significance of the property, which was not known at the time this historic property evaluation was initiated, merits the inclusion of the family in the name of the property should it ultimately be designated as a historic site.

#### Staff Recommendation

Staff recommended that the Historic Preservation Commission recommend to the Planning Board and District Council that the Flynn-Steck House, Documented Property 68-074-04, and its 0.149-acre Environmental Setting (Lot 11 in Block 1, Mount Rainier), be designated a Prince George's County Historic Site as meeting the following criteria in Subtitle 29-104(a): (1)(A)(iv); (2)(A)(i); and (2)(A)(v).

#### **Historic Preservation Commission Recommendation**

Commissioner **Reff** moved that the Historic Preservation Commission recommend to the Planning Board and the District Council that the Flynn-Steck House, Documented Property 68-074-04, and its 0.149-acre Environmental Setting (Lot 11 in Block 1, Mount Rainier), be designated a Prince George's County Historic Site as meeting the following criteria in Subtitle 29-104(a): (1)(A)(iv); (2)(A)(i); and (2)(A)(v). The motion was seconded by Commissioner **Jenkins**. The motion was approved 6-0.

John Peter Thompson, Chairman

c:

Inventory File 68-074-04
Josephine Selvakumar, Community Planner, Planning Area 68

Owner: 4049 34th Street LLC 4709 40th Avenue Hyattsville MD 20781

Prince George's County Council: The Honorable Wanika Fisher, District 2 Wayne K. Curry Administration Building, 2nd Fl. 1301 McCormick Drive Largo MD 20774

The Honorable Calvin Hawkins II, At-Large Wayne K. Curry Administration Building, 2nd Fl. 1301 McCormick Drive Largo MD 20774

The Honorable Mel Franklin, At-Large Wayne K. Curry Administration Building, 2nd Fl. 1301 McCormick Drive Largo MD 20774

Donna J. Brown, Clerk Wayne K. Curry Administration Building, 2nd Fl. 1301 McCormick Drive Largo MD 20774 Municipality:

The Honorable Celina R. Benitez, Mayor City of Mount Rainier One Municipal Square Mount Rainier MD 20712

Interested Parties:
Donna Schneider, President
Prince George's County Historical Society
PO Box 1513
Upper Marlboro MD 20773-1513

Douglas McElrath, Chairman Prince George's Heritage 4703 Annapolis Road Bladensburg MD 20710

Jack I. Thompson, Jr., Chairman Prince George's Historical & Cultural Trust PO Box 85 Upper Marlboro MD 20773

Elizabeth Hughes, Director Maryland Historical Trust 100 Community Place, 3rd Floor Crownsville MD 21032-2023 Capsule Summary PG:68-74-4 Flynn-Steck House 4049 34<sup>th</sup> Street, Mount Rainier, MD 20712 c.1905 Private

The Flynn-Steck House is a two-and-one-half story dwelling constructed circa 1905 in a simplified Queen Anne style, featuring an unusual roof with gable, hipped, and flat sections. The building is oriented along a roughly east-west axis on a 0.149-acre rectangular lot. A one-story front porch, with a hipped roof supported by round columns, extends across the west (front) elevation. The house is clad in wood lap siding and an asphalt shingle roof and retains most of its historic wood windows. The house is in a residential neighborhood consisting mostly of single-family detached dwellings, with a former fire station adjoining the property to the north and a church located nearby.

The Flynn-Steck House is significant as a substantially intact example of early twentieth-century residential architecture from the early period of development in the City of Mount Rainier. The property also embodies the heritage theme of streetcar suburb development in Prince George's County in the early twentieth century. The resource is also significant for its association with the Flynn family, who owned the property for almost 80 years and included the prolific author Thomas T. Flynn, Jr., and for its association with Dorothy and Charles Steck, prominent figures in the local arts, music, and culinary communities during the 20 years they owned the house.

1. Name of F	Property	(indicate preferred na	me)		
historic	Flynn-Steck Hous	e (preferred)			
other					
2. Location					
street and number	4049 34th Street			_	not for publication
city, town	Mount Rainier				vicinity
county	Prince George's C	ounty			
3. Owner of	Property (g	ive names and mailing a	ddresses of all owr	ners)	
name	4049 34th Street L	LC			
street and number	4709 40 <sup>th</sup> Avenue			telephone	
city, town	Hyattsville	S	state MD	zip code	20781
4. Location	of Legal Desc	ription			
courthouse, registry	y of deeds, etc. Princ	e George's County (	Courthouse li	ber 49137 folio	413
city, town	Upper Marlboro	tax map 0049	tax parcel 000	00 tax ID	number 1908037
ContriDeterrRecorHistori	mined Ineligible for the N ded by HABS/HAER ic Structure Report or R	al Historic District tional Register/Maryland lational Register/Marylar	nd Register	orge's County Planning	t Department
6. Classifica	ntion				
Category Count	Ownership	Current Funct	tion		Resource
district X building(s) structure site object	publicprivateboth	agriculture commerce/trade defense X domestic education funerary government health care industry	landscape recreation/cult religion social transportation work in progre unknown vacant/not in u	ess 2	Noncontributing buildings sites structures objects Total  Contributing Resources isted in the Inventory

### 7. Description

Inventory No. PG:68-74-4

#### Condition

X	excellent	deteriorated
	_good	ruins
	fair	altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

### **SUMMARY**

The Flynn-Steck House is a two-and-one-half story dwelling constructed circa 1905 in a simplified Queen Anne style, featuring an unusual roof with gable, hipped, and flat sections. The building is oriented along a roughly east-west axis on a 0.149-acre rectangular lot. A one-story front porch, with a hipped roof supported by round columns, extends across the west (front) elevation. The house is clad in wood lap siding and an asphalt shingle roof and retains most of its historic wood windows. The house is in a residential neighborhood consisting mostly of single-family detached dwellings, with a former fire station adjoining the property to the north and a church located nearby.

### **DWELLING AND GARAGE**

The Flynn-Steck House is two-and-one-half story dwelling constructed circa 1905 in a simplified Queen Anne style. The main volume of the house features an unusual roof structure, with a cross gable, projecting front gable, and rear hipped portion, all meeting at a flat square roof measuring approximately 12 feet by 14 feet and pierced with a brick chimney. The rear roofline has been altered somewhat during recent rehabilitation work. A one-story, hipped roof addition built before 1939 spans the rear elevation. The front elevation is distinguished by a 45-degree corner window on the first story, a bay window sheltered by the projecting front gable on the second story, and a gabled dormer that previously housed an attic vent. The exterior of the house is clad in wood lap siding, which until recently was concealed by aluminum lap siding. The sloped portions of the roof are clad in light gray asphalt shingles, while the flat roof is of an unknown material. The house rests on a parged foundation that increases in height as the lot slopes from front to rear. A poured concrete front porch at grade level spans the west (front) elevation, its hipped roof supported by four Tuscan wood columns, one a modern replacement. The porch is reached from the sidewalk by a walkway of gravel and dry laid square pavers. The one-over-one, double-hung sash windows found throughout the house appear to be original, as does the wood threepanel, eight-light front entry door. A modern wood four-panel door with semicircular window, installed recently, provides grade-level access to the house on the north elevation. A door of unknown vintage provides access to the kitchen through a vestibule set within the rear addition. Modern replacement windows, also wood, have been installed at attic level, while the basement is lighted by modern simulated-divided light vinyl windows.

A detached one-car garage is located northeast of the house, clad in wood lap siding and an asphalt shingle roof with exposed rafter tails. One of the two original three-panel, six-light wood double doors has been removed and the entire opening has been covered by particleboard sheeting. The south elevation contains a wood door and one six-light casement window, while the north elevation has a similar window. The garage, which is depicted on a 1939 Sanborn fire insurance map, is reached by a concrete and macadam driveway.

#### **SITE**

The Flynn-Steck House is located at 4049 34<sup>th</sup> Street in the City of Mount Rainier. The resource occupies a 0.149-acre property measuring 50 feet along the street and 125 feet deep, on the east side of 34<sup>th</sup> Street between Bunker Hill Road and Shepherd Street. Landscaping in front of the house includes a large willow oak, shrubs, and a small garden with flowers and herbs. The rear yard features several mature trees and a gravel area behind the house. Smaller trees and shrubs line the south property line. A chain link fence encloses the property on three sides, the front section having been removed recently. A gate provides access from Cherry Lane Alley at the rear of the property. The surrounding area is

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# Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Flynn-Steck House Continuation Sheet

Number 7 Page 1

characterized by dense single-family residential development on similarly sized lots, with a former fire station on the adjacent property to the north and a church nearby at the intersection of 34th Street and Shepherd Street.

### **INTEGRITY**

The Flynn-Steck House retains its essential form as an early twentieth-century, simplified Queen Anne-style dwelling, with its distinctive roof structure, 45-degree corner window, second-story bay window, and front porch. The one-story rear addition is likely not original, but an addition of similar dimensions is depicted on the 1939 Sanborn fire insurance map. Aluminum lap siding was recently removed to reveal the original lap wood siding. The house retains most of its original wood windows; its front entry door is also likely original. Modern replacement windows have been installed at the attic and basement levels. The garage retains its original form, design, and materials, although one of the vehicle entry doors is missing.

The Flynn-Steck House retains a high degree of integrity of location, feeling, and setting and a moderately high degree of integrity of design and materials. The Flynn-Steck House was owned by the Flynn family until 1997 and by the Steck family until 2023; the house appears largely as it did during the two families' ownership of the property and thus retains a high degree of integrity of association. Overall, the Flynn-Steck House retains a high degree of integrity.

0. 0.9				
Period	Areas of Significance	Check and ju	ustify below	
1600-1699 1700-1799 1800-1899 1900-1999 2000-	agriculture archeology X architecture art commerce communications community planning conservation	economics education engineering X entertainment/     recreation ethnic heritage exploration/     settlement	health/medicine industry invention landscape architecte law literature maritime history military	performing arts philosophy politics/government ure religion science X social history transportation other:
Specific dates			Architect/Builder u	nknown
Construction d	lates c.1905			
Evaluation for:				
	_ National Register	Marylar	nd Register	Xnot evaluated

Inventory No PG:68-74-4

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

8. Significance

The Flynn-Steck House is significant as a substantially intact example of early twentieth-century residential architecture from the early period of development in the City of Mount Rainier. The property also embodies the heritage theme of streetcar suburb development in Prince George's County in the early twentieth century. The resource is also significant for its association with the Flynn family, who owned the property for almost 80 years and included the prolific author Thomas T. Flynn, Jr., and for its association with Dorothy and Charles Steck, prominent figures in the local arts, music, and culinary communities during the 20 years they owned the house.

### HISTORIC CONTEXT

The Flynn-Steck House is located on the eastern edge of the original Mount Rainier subdivision, which was platted by Ira J. Baker, Sigmund A. Czarra, and Wallace A. Bartlett in June 1903 on approximately 100 acres of "Chillum Castle Manor" that had been owned since 1891 by the Sawyer family and previously by Thomas Green Clemson of South Carolina. Clemson was the son-in-law of John C. Calhoun, Vice President of the United States from 1825 to 1832 under Presidents John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson. Clemson served as U.S. Charge d'affaires to Belgium from 1844 to 1852 and was a large landowner in South Carolina, but after returning to the United States he settled on property he purchased in 1856 outside Washington D.C. He built a residence, "The Home," on the property and lived there until the onset of Civil War caused him to relocate with his family to South Carolina. He owned his Maryland property until his death in 1888. His will provided funds for the establishment of what would become Clemson University.

### **CLYDE AND ESTHER FOWLER**

Clyde and Esther Fowler purchased Lot 11 of Block 1 from Wallace A. Bartlett, Sigmund A. Czarra, and Ira J. Baker in April 1905.<sup>3</sup> In June of that year, they executed a mortgage with the Laurel Building Association in exchange for an "advance" of \$1,800, which they likely used to construct the dwelling on the property.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Land Records of Prince George's County, Liber JWB15:207; JWB19:769; 13:350.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Berger, Howard S., Mount Rainier Historic District, National Register of Historic Places nomination form, June 1990, 8.5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Land Records, Liber 25:47.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Land Records, Liber 25:48.

Flynn-Steck House Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 1

Originally from Sharon, Pennsylvania, Clyde Fowler was born in 1876 and came to Washington, D.C. in 1896.<sup>5</sup> In 1901, he married the former Esther Swann, daughter of George and Catherine Swann. The 1910 Census records Clyde and Esther Fowler, aged 32 and 25 respectively, living in the subject house with their seven-year-old daughter, Catherine. Clyde Fowler's 1947 obituary states that he worked at the Naval Gun Factory during the time he resided in Mount Rainier. Fowler was a member of the Mount Hermon Masonic Lodge in Hyattsville. The Fowlers sold the property in 1918 and moved to Muskegon, Michigan, where Clyde was employed as superintendent of Linderman Steel and Machinery Company. The Fowlers moved back to Washington, D.C. in 1919, where Clyde entered into the homebuilding business. During World War II, Clyde worked as superintendent at the Engineering and Research Corporation plant in Riverdale (PG:68-22). He died in 1947 at his farm in Prince Frederick from injuries sustained when a tractor overturned on him.<sup>6</sup>

### FLYNN FAMILY OWNERSHIP (1918–1997)

In August 1918, Clyde and Esther Fowler sold the property to Thomas and Adelaide Flynn. Thomas Theodore Flynn, Sr. was born in Dexter, Michigan in 1879 to parents of Canadian birth. In 1900, he married the former Adelaide E. Jones, who was born in Indiana in 1875. Before moving to Maryland, the Flynns lived in Indiana, where Thomas was employed as a salesman. At the time the Flynns purchased the property in Mount Rainier, Thomas was employed as a carpenter at the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Harford County. The 1920 Census records Thomas and Adelaide Flynn living at the subject property with their son Thomas (18), son Ralph (15), daughter Eileen (12), and boarders Mary and Mary DePrene (47 and 22, respectively).

The 1930 Census lists the household as including Thomas, employed as secretary of the local Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA); Adelaide, employed as a government secretary; Ralph, employed as a streetcar driver; Eileen, employed as a stationery store saleswoman; and her husband, George R. Lee, Jr., employed as a truck driver. Also living in the house at the time were Adelaide's sister, Etta Jones, and her husband, Lyman. <sup>12</sup> By the time of the 1940 Census, the household consisted of Thomas, Adelaide (then working as a clerk in the War Department), Eileen, and George Lee, Jr. Ralph Flynn and his wife, Mary, lived elsewhere in Mount Rainier at that time. Ralph worked for the Bureau of Public Roads and was active in the Mount Rainier Volunteer Fire Department. <sup>13,14</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> "Clyde L. Fowler Dies of Injuries Received in Farm Accident," *The Evening Star*, May 11, 1947, A-2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Land Records, Liber 137:56.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Ancestry.com, U.S. WWII Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947 (database on-line) (Lehi, UT: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Ancestry.com, 1900/1910 United States Federal Census (database on-line) (Provo, UT: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Ancestry.com, U.S. World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918 (database online) (Provo, UT: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Ancestry.com, 1920 United States Federal Census (database on-line).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Ancestry.com, 1930 United States Federal Census (database on-line).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Ancestry.com, 1940 United States Federal Census (database on-line).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> "Firemen Listed in First Aid Tests," *The Evening Star*, August 2, 1928, p. 30.

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Thomas Flynn was still working as secretary for the YMCA in 1950, when he was 70 years old; Adelaide, age 75, and Thomas's aunt, Eulalie Zook, age 91, were also living in the house at that time. Eileen and George Lee lived in Hyattsville in 1950. Thomas retired from the YMCA in 1953 after over 30 years of employment. House at that time is the second second

Thomas and Adelaide Flynn's eldest son, Thomas T. Flynn, Jr., (1902-1979) was a prolific author of short stories from the 1920s through the late 1960s, writing under the name "T.T. Flynn." In 1923, he married Mary Cecilia Derene, who appears to have been the younger "Mary DePrene" listed as a boarder in the Mount Rainier house in the 1920 Census. The couple moved to New Mexico in 1928 in search of relief for Mary's tuberculosis, but she nevertheless succumbed to the disease the following year. Flynn is recorded as living in Miami, Florida, in 1930. <sup>17</sup> He married a second time to a woman who could not be identified; their brief marriage ended in divorce and produced one daughter, Mary Cecilia (apparently named in honor Flynn's first wife). Flynn married a third time in 1934, to Helen Brown, and they would remain married until Flynns's death in 1979. They lived in Tennessee and had two sons, Thomas B. and Michael, by the time of the 1940 Census. The family may have moved back to New Mexico at some point in the 1950s.

T.T. Flynn had contributed numerous stories to magazines including *Clues, Mystery Stories*, and *Flynn's* by the time he and his first wife moved to New Mexico. <sup>18</sup> He later worked mostly in the Western genre and was a member of Western Writers of America. <sup>19</sup> Thomas achieved his greatest commercial success with the publication of *The Man from Laramie* as a serial novel in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1954; the story was made into a film starring Jimmy Stewart in 1955. Flynn also wrote scripts for two episodes of the television series *Tales of Wells Fargo* in 1959. <sup>20</sup> Thomas and Helen later moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where he died in 1979.

Thomas Flynn, Sr. died in Albuquerque, New Mexico in July 1957 while he and Adelaide were visiting Thomas, Jr. His remains were returned to Maryland, and he was buried at Fort Lincoln Cemetery in Brentwood (PG:68-15). Adelaide Flynn continued to live at the subject property until her death in April 1966; she is also buried at Fort Lincoln Cemetery. The property was conveyed in 1967 to Thomas and Adelaide's daughter, Eileen E. Lee, and her husband, George. R. Lee. It is uncertain whether Eileen and George lived in the house at that time; they did not own any other property in Prince George's County or at any point before George died in 1975; however, public records indicate that Eileen did live there at the time of her death in April 1997. The subject property was sold in November 1997 by Eileen's son, Robert D. Lee, to Remilekun Ayodeji, who conveyed it immediately to Waleola Duyile.

### STECK FAMILY OWNERSHIP (2003–2023)

In 2003, Waleola Duyile sold the property to Charles F. Steck IV and his wife, Dorothy (Dot) Steck.<sup>22</sup> Charles Steck (1956-2023) was a highly prolific photographer in the Washington, D.C., area, working primarily for the *Washington* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> National Archives and Records Administration, *1950 United States Federal Census* (database on-line) (College Park, MD: National Archives and Records Administration, 2022).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> "3 YMCA Workers Retired," *The Evening Star*, April 9, 1953, p. A-8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Ancestry.com, 1930 United States Federal Census (database on-line).

<sup>18 &</sup>quot;Flynn, T. T.," Crime, Mystery, & Gangster Fiction Magazine Index, http://www.philsp.com/homeville/cfi/n00272.htm#A33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> "Western Writers Elect Officers," *Brewery Gulch Gazette* (Bisbee, Ariz.), May 1, 1958, p. 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> "Thomas T. Flynn," *Internet Movie Database*, https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0283638.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> "Body of Visitor to be Sent East," *Albuquerque Journal*, August 3, 1957, p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Land Records, Liber 18072:504.

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City Paper but contributing also to the Washington Post and other publications. Over the course of his career, Charles assembled a portfolio that ranged from posed portraits of politicians to candid shots of street youth at play. He was particularly known for his black and white photography, which featured artistic use of darkness and shadows. Charles photographed numerous musical artists and bands, both in live performance and for promotional purposes. He served as unofficial photographer at d.c. space, a music venue where Dot worked as a cook and bartender. Charles also worked for many years as a professional musician, playing bass for the Washington, D.C.-area punk bands Velvet Monkeys and High Back Chairs in the 1980s and 1990s; he also collaborated with numerous other artists, including vocalist Lida Husik and the band Rambling Shadows. Charles brought his photographic skills to bear on his musical work, shooting album covers and chronicling the backstage life of the bands of which he was a member.<sup>23</sup>

Charles met Dorothy (Dot) Brown while both were students at Winston Churchill High School in Potomac. They married in 1982 and moved thereafter to the Dupont Circle area of Washington, D.C. Dot was employed as a cook at Fannie Mae headquarters in Washington, D.C. at the time they purchased the property in Mount Rainier. She worked as head chef at several restaurants in the District, including El Camino, Taqueria Nacional, Zest Bistro, and Hawthorne. <sup>24,25,26</sup> She later took a position as chef at Mundo Verde Public Charter School in Washington, playing a key role in transforming the school's lunch program and kitchen to support healthier and more fresh food options. <sup>27</sup>

Dot Steck was also an artist for many years before moving to the subject house and became a fixture in the artistic community in and around Mount Rainier after the family moved there. She became affiliated with Red Dirt Studio, which occupies the former fire station on the adjacent property; photos from events hosted by the studio show the north wall of the garage on the subject property being used as a display area.<sup>28</sup>

Dot states that part of the reason they purchased the house in Mount Rainier was because the basement provided space for Charles to operate a darkroom. His photography would come to occupy other areas of the house, however; Dot recalls frequently coming home from work to find the living room converted to a studio. The attic became the repository for a large number of boxes containing negatives, which were moved to a rented storage unit after Charles died.<sup>29</sup>

Charles and Dot Steck lived in the house with their sons Avery and Brody and daughter Chloe, all three of whom have pursued music as either a profession or avocation.

#### SUBSEQUENT OWNERSHIP

Following the death of Charles Steck in June 2023, Dorothy Steck sold the property to its current owner, 4049 34<sup>th</sup> Street LLC, in July 2023. Kayleigh Kulp, managing member of the corporation, is undertaking a comprehensive rehabilitation of the house as of the time of this documentation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Wartofsky, Alana And Steve Kiviat, "Low-Key, Steady, and Deeply Talented: Remembering Charles Steck," *Washington City Paper*, July 20, 2023.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Bethune, Meredith, "Hawthorne, Tail Up Goat Now Open," Eater Washington DC (website), February 10, 2016.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> "Agua 301, From Owners of Zest Bistro, Coming to Navy Yard," *POPville* (website), December 6, 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Spiegel, Anna, "Take a First Look at El Camino's Menu," Washingtonian (website), November 4, 2014.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Pipkin, Whitney, "Rethinking School Lunch," EdibleDC (website), September 25, 2018.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Photos of "Inside OUT studio" event, November 14, 2020, Red Dirt Studio website.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Interview with Dorothy Steck, February 28, 2024.

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Washington Evening Star, various dates.

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 0.149 acres

Acreage of historical setting 0.149 acres

Quadrangle name Washington East

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 11 in Block 1 of "Mount Rainier," as per plat thereof recorded in Plat Book JWB 5 at Plat 658 among the Land Records of Prince George's County, Maryland.

11. Form Prepared by			
name/title	Thomas W. Gross, Planning Supervisor		
organization	The Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission		
	Historic Preservation Section, Countywide Plannin	g Devision	
	Prince George's County Planning Department	date	March 2024
street & number	1616 McCormick Drive	telephone	301-952-3681
city or town	Largo	state	MD

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

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

return to: Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Department of Planning 100 Community Place

Crownsville, MD 21032-2023

410-697-9591

### **FIGURES**



Figure 1. 1894 Hopkins Map of Vicinity of Washington, D.C. (property location circled in red).



Figure 2. 1920 aerial view of Mount Rainier (property location circled in red).



Figure 3. Photo of Esther Fowler (right), Washington Times, June 26, 1931.

### 3 YMCA Workers Retired; Service Totaled 63 Years Three YMCA employes with a total of 63 years' service were

total of 63 years' service were retired last night in ceremonies at the Central YMCA, 1736 G street N.W.

They are:

Thomas T. Flynn, 75, of 4049 Thirty-fourth street, Mount Rainier, night supervisor; Franklin B. McKillip, 67, of 1900 Pennsylvania avenue N.W.; central branch receptionist, and John C. Creed, 71, who worked as night switchboard operator and security officer while living at the central branch. Mr. Flynn is a veteran of more than 30 years service, Mr. McKillip has been an employe for 22 years and Mr. Creed has worked at the YMCA for 11 years.

The three were guests of honor at a banquet last night. Randolph E. Myers, general secretary of the Metropolitan YMCA, and Philip W. Breux, executive director of the Central YMCA, were the speakers.

Figure 4. Article noting Thomas T. Flynn's retirement from the YMCA, The Evening Star, April 9, 1953.

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Figure 5. Cover of *The Man from Laramie* by Thomas Theodore (T.T.) Flynn, Jr. Source: https://brickpicklemedia.com/2020/08/08/t-t-flynn-1902-1979/



Figure 6. Concert poster for Velvet Monkeys, January 14, 1982. Source: University of Maryland Digital Collections, https://hdl.handle.net/1903.1/49073





Figures 7&8. Photographs by Charles Steck. Source: *Charles Steck Photography*, https://steckphotography.com/

### **CHAIN OF TITLE**

Liber 49137:413	Deed: Dorothy T. Steck to 4049 34th Street LLC
July 26, 2023	Lot 11 of Block 1, "Mount Rainier"
Liber 18072:504	Deed: Waleola M. Duyile to Dorothy T. Steck and Charles F. Steck IV
July 31, 2003	Lot 11 of Block 1, "Mount Rainier"
Liber 11774:55	Deed: Remilekun Ayodeji to Waleola Duyile
November 4, 1997	Lot 11 of Block 1, "Mount Rainier"
Liber 11774:53 November 4, 1997	Deed: Robert D. Lee, Personal Representative for the Estate of Eileen Elizabeth Lee, who was surviving tenant by the entirety of George R. Lee, who died on
, , , , , , ,	May 4, 1975, to Remilekun Ayodeji
	Lot 11 of Block 1, "Mount Rainier"
Liber 3512:291 August 2, 1967	Deed: C. Jefferson Dotson, trustee for the purpose of conveying, to George R. Lee and Eileen E. Lee, his wife
August 2, 1907	Lot 11 of Block 1, "Mount Rainier"
Liber 3512:289	Eileen E. Lee, daughter and heir at law of Adelaide E. Flynn, deceased, and
July 31, 1967	George R. Lee, her husband, to C. Jefferson Dotson, trustee for the purpose of conveying
	Lot 11 of Block 1, "Mount Rainier"
Administration No.	Estate of Adelaide E. Flynn to Eileen E. Lee
17,000	Lot 11 of Block 1, "Mount Rainier"
Liber 137:56 August 10, 1918	Deed: Clyde L. Fowler and Esther L. Fowler to Thomas T. Flynn and Adelaide E. Flynn, his wife
August 10, 1916	Lot 11 of Block 1, "Mount Rainier"
Liber 25:48	Mortgage: Clyde L. Fowler and Esther L. Fowler, his wife, to The Laurel
June 30, 1905	Building Association Lot 11 of Block 1, "Mount Rainier"
	Grantor received an "advance" of \$1800
Liber 25:47	Deed: Wallace A. Bartlett, Sigmund A. Czarra, and Ira J. Baker, joint tenants, to
April 3, 1905	Clyde L. Fowler Lot 11 of Block 1, "Mount Rainier"
	Consideration of \$300
Plat JWB5:658 June 30, 1903	Plat: "Mount Rainier," recorded by Ira J. Baker, Sigmund A. Czarra, and Wallace A. Bartlett
Julie 50, 1905	Wallace A. Daltiett
Liber 13:357 June 26, 1903	Mortgage: Charles A. Wells; Sigmund A. Czarra; Nancy N. Bigelow; Wallace A. Bartlett; and Ira J. Baker, to Bernard P. Mimmack

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Liber 13:356 June 26, 1903	Deed: James C. Rogers and Blanche A. Rogers, his wife, to Ira J. Baker, Wallace A. Bartlett, and Sigmund A. Czarra "Clemson," containing 100 acres more or less, situated on the north side of Bunker Hill Road
Liber 13:355	Deed: Charles A. Wells; Sigmund A. Czarra; Nancy N. Bigelow; Wallace A.
June 26, 1903	Bartlett; and Ira J. Baker, joint tenants, to James C. Rogers
	"Clemson," containing 100 acres more or less, situated on the north side of Bunker Hill Road
Liber 13:350	Deed: Arthur E. Sawyer, attorney; Elizabeth C. Sawyer, wife of J. Estcourt
March 25, 1903	Sawyer of the United States Army; George A. Sawyer; and Florence H. Sawyer,
	his wife, to Charles A. Wells; Sigmund A. Czarra; Nancy N. Bigelow; Wallace
	A. Bartlett; and Ira J. Baker, as joint tenants
	"Chillum Castle Manor," containing 100¾ acres more or less
Liber JWB19:769	Deed: Thomas H. Carter, et ux., to J. Estcourt Sawyer
December 1, 1891	"Chillum Castle Manor," containing 100¾ acres more or less
Liber JWB15:319	Deed: John M. Henderson to Edward T. Keller
July 11, 1890	"Chillum Castle Manor," containing 100¾ acres more or less
Liber JWB15:207	Deed: Richard W. Simpson, executor of the last will and testament of Thomas
June 18, 1890	G. Clemson, to John M. Henderson
	"Chillum Castle Manor," containing 100¾ acres more or less