

# Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI

FROM: GUY HOTTEL, SAC, Washington Field

SUBJECT: WAHAM

DATE: June 16, 1949

SPECIAL DELIVERY

Reference is made to the testimony of ESTHER CHAMBERS on June 13, 1949 concerning description of a stone porch at the 3415 Volta Place, residence of ALGER HISS, and defense attorney STRYKER'S statement that the porch she referred to was not built until 1943.

The records of the Building Permit Branch, Building Inspection Division, District of Columbia, were checked for building permits issued for repairs, additions, etc. on the premises of 3415 Volta Place. The following permits were noted by S.A. JOHN J. MASSE on June 14, 1949.

Permit 181259 for repair issued June 10, 1935. PEARL H. EDWARDS given permission to repair roof, floors, walls - rebuild portions of the foundation and repair windows as per plans. Job completed October 3, 1935.

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Permit 195206 issued September 11, 1936. Mrs. P. R. FLANAGAN given permission to erect 7 foot brick wall on own property. Completed September 26, 1936.

Permit 269426 for repair issued May 22, 1944. Col. R. ALEXANDER has permission to cut window in West wall. Job complete July 5, 1944.

~~DEFERRED RECORDING~~

Permit 290916 for an addition issued December 5, 1946. General E. H. LEAVEY permission to erect a one story brick addition to existing dwelling consisting of one room as per plans.

Permit 307901 issued June 11, 1948. General E. H. LEAVEY, has permission to waterproof brick foundations of wall.

Permit 32912 issued July 12, 1948 to E. H. LEAVEY. Plumbing and gasfitting permit to cut water line for Bendix washer.

TEUNIS F. COLLIER was the building contractor for the addition made under permit 290916 issued December 5, 1946. He was interviewed by S.A. JOHN B. VAN ETTEN on June 15, 1949 who with T. F. COLLIER inspected the premises at 3415 Volta Place.

cc: New York (Encls.)

*John B. Van ETTEN*

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COLLIER advised that on June 13, 1949 JOHN F. DAVIS of the firm Schoene, Freehill, Kramer and Davis, 1625 K St., N.W., Washington, D.C. obtained from COLLIER'S office a copy of the permit 290916 on behalf of the defense for ALGER HISS. The construction under this permit, according to COLLIER, involved the excavation of earth from behind the retaining wall facing on the sidewalk and making a one story room the roof of which was laid with flagstone making an additional front porch or terrace. The old retaining wall was used and windows were placed therein.

Referring to the photographs enclosed, the two windows to the left of the gate locate the old retaining wall which forms one side of the room. The iron railing shown in photograph 5-B encloses two sides of the new flagstone terrace.

This structure was completed in 1947 according to COLLIER.

Prior to building this room the retaining wall was supporting soil which was as high as the wall and approximately level with the front door landing.

Referring to the rough sketch enclosed it is noted that a brick stairway and landing lead from the entrance to the front door. COLLIER advised that this stairway was not changed basically at the time the room was constructed.

Still making reference to the sketch, it is noted that a large flagstone terrace is located directly outside the living room. It was COLLIER'S opinion that this terrace has been in existence for a number of years.

JACK H. GILLIAT, realtor and former rental agent for the 3415 Volta Place premises advised that he believes that the present terrace at the rear of the house has been enlarged but that the terrace did exist prior to the time the house was rented to ALGER HISS. He stated he could not swear to that as a fact, but such was his recollection.

GILLIAT advised that one of ALGER HISS' attorneys had contacted him on Sunday, June 12 concerning the various terraces at this residence.

T. F. COLLIER expressed willingness to testify in the event it was necessary. He would testify that the retaining wall was not replaced, that the brick steps are basically the same and that there was earth behind the retaining wall at a level somewhere near that of the brick porch. COLLIER has had three different contracting jobs on the Volta Place house and is very familiar with it. It is believed he

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would be a good witness if his testimony should be desired.

Washington Field Office will continue its investigation to establish when the stone terrace at the rear was built and determine whether it was in existence at the time the HISSSES resided there.

The enclosed photographs are borrowed from the Bureau and it is requested that the New York Office return them to the Washington Field Office.