

TIRANA, ALBANIA U.S EMBASSY



Built in 1929, U.S. Embassy Tirana is reported to be one of the first American Legations constructed under the 1926 Porter Legislation. This legislation established the State Department's ability to provide U.S. Government buildings, embassies, and consular buildings in foreign countries. Originally the U.S. Ambassador also resided here, conducting business in a domestic setting.

Architects Wyeth and Sullivan were well-respected Washington, D.C. architects known for their stately Connecticut Avenue townhouses built for wealthy clients. Nathan Wyeth (1870-1963) had been trained in Paris, receiving a diploma from the École des Beaux-Arts at the turn of the century. Wyeth also designed the first Oval Office in the White House, for William Howard Taft in 1909. Inspiration for the Tirana residence was drawn from eighteenth century Virginia Tidewater plantation homes such as Mount Vernon.

Following World War II, Albania focused inward and, during the Cold War, the house and quiet landscaped gardens were rented to the Italian Ambassador. Diplomatic relations between the United States and Albania were reestablished on March 15, 1991, after a break of fifty-two years. The U.S. Embassy in Tirana was opened on October 1, 1991. At the 1991 historic ceremonial signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the two countries, then Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs Raymond G.H. Seitz said, "The relationship between our countries dates back to the early years of this century, when President [Woodrow] Wilson extended American support for the young Albanian state. The relationship was never forgotten by the many thousands of Americans of Albanian origin . . . who kept contact with their homeland over all these years."

After recent remodeling and new additions aimed at preserving the property's historical character, the once simple home is fitted out as an efficient and unique office space. Specially designed furniture and other antiques have been refurbished and reused, creating understated yet pragmatic elegance.