

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Greater Fourteenth Street Historic District (boundary increase); Fourteenth Street Historic District (name change)  
other names \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Location

street & number 1400 blocks of P St., Rhode Island Ave., N St., and Massachusetts Ave.  not for publication  
city or town Washington  vicinity  
state District of Columbia Code DC county \_\_\_\_\_ code 001 zip code \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby, certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.  
 determined eligible for the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.  
 Determined not eligible for the National Register.  
 removed from the National Register.  
 other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

14<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District (Boundary Increase)  
Name of Property

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal
- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
24	16	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
24	16	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**  
739

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling/multiple dwelling/  
 Institutional housing  
 COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store/restaurant

DOMESTIC/single dwelling/multiple dwelling  
 COMMERCE/TRADE/business/specialty store/restaurant

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

EARLY REPUBLIC/Federal  
 LATE VICTORIAN/Queen Anne/Romanesque  
 LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS/  
 Classical Revival

foundation Brick/Stone  
 Walls Brick/wood/frame  
 Roof Standing seam metal/asphalt  
 Other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

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## Description Summary:

### Description of areas and resources being added to the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District:

The 14<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District expansion is bounded by the existing 14<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District on the north and east, by 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW on the west and the 1400 block of Massachusetts Avenue and Thomas Circle on the south. These boundaries comprise partial Squares 209, 210, 211, and 212. The expanded area contains a collection of residential and commercial building types that range from modest-sized stores of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century found along the 1400 block of P Street, to the more architecturally sophisticated custom-designed Victorian-era dwellings lining the 1400 block of Rhode Island Avenue—an important diagonal artery of the L’Enfant Plan—as well as several large, mid-20<sup>th</sup> century apartment buildings that dominate the southern end of the expanded area. These large, multi-storied buildings replaced earlier and more modest residential buildings on their sites and represent the second major wave of residential development that ultimately transformed the lower half of 14<sup>th</sup> Street during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although the 14<sup>th</sup> Street corridor north of Thomas Circle was generally spared this transformation, the blocks around and just north of Thomas Circle yielded to the development pressures that pushed north from downtown.

## General Description:

### 1400 Block of P Street:

On its northern edge, the boundary increase to the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District includes both the north and south sides of the 1400 block of P Street, NW. This block consists of a combination of historic commercial buildings interspersed with larger and contemporary, multi-story residential and commercial infill buildings. On the south side of the street, the existing historic district extends from 14<sup>th</sup> Street to a narrow alley. Immediately west of the alley, and included in the proposed expansion area, is a two-story brick store designated 1416 P Street, NW, and constructed in 1894. It features a three-bay-wide flat-fronted façade (with an altered storefront on the first story), characteristic of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial buildings found along 14<sup>th</sup> Street. Abutting this building to the west is the single-story, brick commercial building at 1418-1420 P Street, constructed in the 1910s as a series of four independent stores, but recently renovated as a single commercial space. Although the building at 1418-1420 P Street is considered non-contributing due to the major recent alterations, the rear of the building includes two industrial brick buildings that were historically independent structures, now integrated into the P Street building. These buildings—one originally built in 1914 as a private garage and shown by 1927 on maps as a car wash, the other built in 1919 as a garage with a capacity of 35 cars—are indicative of the industrial nature of this block of P Street and thus contribute to its historic character. Any future alterations to this non-contributing building should therefore take

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this into consideration and respect the industrial vernacular heritage of these alley-facing structures.

Immediately to the west of 1418-1420 P Street is the recently constructed brick Whole Foods store. This non-contributing contemporary (but, compatible) building was constructed on a vacant lot (the site of Riggs Market, demolished after 1965 and the De Soto Automobile dealership) and extends along P Street, where it is buttressed at its western end by the three-story store/dwelling at 1450 P Street. This muscular brick building, constructed in 1892, features an original storefront (altered show windows) with a unique second-story oriel window on center above it. The third floor is enhanced by a row of four single windows, topped by an ornate brick and stone cornice.

The north side of the street is compromised by two large, contemporary condominium buildings that were recently constructed on the site of non-historic buildings. Still standing mid-block between two of these contemporary condominiums is the two-story commercial store building at 1433 P Street. The brick building, which had a variety of commercial uses throughout its existence<sup>1</sup>, is particularly noteworthy for its second-story arched window openings, separated from the first story storefront by a projecting bracketed cornice. Although not built until 1913 when one-story commercial buildings were becoming common, this two-story building, designed by Julius Wenig, continued the 19<sup>th</sup>-century commercial building forms, where residential quarters were incorporated above first floor commercial space.

### 1400 Block of Rhode Island Avenue:

The boundary increase to the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District includes both the north and south sides of the 1400 block of Rhode Island Avenue. This block of Rhode Island Avenue includes the stretch of the avenue itself—an important element of the L’Enfant Plan—and its collection of mid-to late 19<sup>th</sup>-century Victorian dwellings, combined with mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and later, large-scale apartment buildings. Seven of the eight buildings on the north side of the street are already listed in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites as the Rhode Island Avenue Residential buildings. The Victorian-era dwellings are ornate examples of the period and are characterized by robust and asymmetrical massing, replete with projecting bays, oriels, dormers and chimneys. A couple of examples feature rusticated stone facades and bases, carved brick and stone entryways, and ornate iron work.

One exception to the exuberant styles reflected in these Victorian houses is the modest and deteriorating frame house mid-block at 1427 Rhode Island Avenue. Construction of this two-

<sup>1</sup> According to city directories, the building served as a dairy in 1915, a hardware store in 1920, and a grocery store from at least 1925 until at least 1935.

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story, two-bay house, built 1871-73, preceded that of its neighbors and reflects earlier domestic building forms that were common in still emerging residential neighborhoods. Also, historically, a small dwelling stood at the back of this lot, facing the alley. This open space at the rear of 1427 Rhode Island Avenue, in addition to the undisturbed vacant areas behind the adjacent lots (1429-1431 Rhode Island Avenue) offers archaeological opportunity to discover more about the former occupants and their lifestyles.

The two apartment buildings at 1425 and 1433 Rhode Island Avenue are also listed as part of the Rhode Island Avenue Residential Buildings D.C. Landmark. Both were designed by architect William Harris in 1929 and 1930, and both illustrate the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Classical Revival-style as interpreted in apartment building construction. In particular, both buildings feature three-part building façades of base, shaft and capital. The bases are articulated in smooth ashlar limestone with bays separated by pilasters and central entries marked by Classical pediments. The upper stories are laid in brick, with unarticulated planar facades pierced with symmetrical bays of window openings, punctuated by a slightly differentiated attic level and projecting cornice. This grouping of seven buildings is recognized particularly for the relationship of the historic resources—both grand row houses and apartment buildings—to the street and for the sense of historical development that this relationship conveys.

While the non-contributing Newport West Apartments at 1415 Rhode Island Avenue has been included in the historic district in order to avoid a “donut hole” effect, the apartment building (built 1980) at the corner of Rhode Island Avenue and 15<sup>th</sup> Street (1325 15<sup>th</sup> Street) is at an edge of the historic district and has thus not been drawn into the district.

On the south side of the 1400 block of Rhode Island Avenue, the expanded district includes an eclectic combination of late 19<sup>th</sup>-century Victorian row houses, early 20<sup>th</sup> century town houses, a transitional, mansion-type apartment building and two non-contributing apartment buildings. The Victorian-era dwellings include 1416 Rhode Island Avenue (circa 1890) with its fanciful corbelled brickwork and the stylistically transitional brick town house at 1442 Rhode Island Avenue (1886). This townhouse features Queen Anne massing paired with emerging Classical Revival-style detailing, such as an engaged brick pedimented entry. The early 20<sup>th</sup>-century buildings include the four-story buff brick apartment building at 1440 Rhode Island Avenue (1912) and the single house at 1460 Rhode Island Avenue (1913). The apartment building at 1440 Rhode Island Avenue, designed by the locally prominent architecture firm of Hunter and Bell, has been recognized both for its Renaissance Revival style of architecture and as a good illustration of a “mansion-type” apartment house (see D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites nomination form on 1440 Rhode Island Avenue) that played an important role in the successful introduction of apartment buildings into the city.

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The 3-1/2-story, two-bay, freestanding brick dwelling at 1460 Rhode Island Avenue, designed by the architecture firm of Speiden & Speiden, embodies the form and features of an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century, Georgian Revival-style town house. This includes Flemish bond brickwork with glazed headers, arched entry surround, multi-sash double-hung windows with keystone lintels, pedimented dormers in the attic level, and a false mansard roof with an end chimney projecting above the roofline.

Generally, the residential buildings found on this block of Rhode Island Avenue exemplify the upper-class housing stock in the historic district, and the 19<sup>th</sup> century examples, in particular, are stylistically consistent with those dwellings gracing Logan Circle and the district's avenues, such as the 1300 block of Vermont Avenue. These custom-designed and built dwellings that catered to a more affluent demographic stand out from the more ubiquitous and uninterrupted ranges of row houses found on the district's side streets and built speculatively for the city's growing middle-class population.

The post-World War II buildings along this block are interspersed among the historic ones and, although not contributing to the district, are integral to the avenue and cannot be easily drawn out. The street's mature tree canopy and the existing historic fabric mitigate the adverse character of these buildings.

### Massachusetts Avenue, 15th and N Streets:

Both the 1400 blocks of N Street and Massachusetts Avenues have experienced significant development within the last decade; however, two groups of late 19<sup>th</sup>-century row houses at 1449-1451 N Street (1887) and 1225-1227-1229 15<sup>th</sup> Street (1885) survive as vestiges of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century past, while two mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century apartment buildings illustrate the physical transition that the southern part of the 14<sup>th</sup> street corridor began to undergo during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The boundaries have been drawn to include those 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>-century buildings that contribute to our understanding of the evolution of the area, and to exclude, as best as possible, the later intrusions.

The pair of buildings at 1449-1451 N Street were built in 1887 as a speculative venture by owner/builder P.C. Asserson. Like much of the Victorian-era solidly middle-class dwelling forms, these houses are three-story structures set upon raised foundations and feature quintessential Queen Anne detailing, including three-story projecting bays, brick string coursing, recessed panels between building floors, segmental arched window openings with molded brick lintels, corbelled brick cornices and other intricate brick detailing. The pair of dwellings is sandwiched between two larger mid-20<sup>th</sup> century apartment buildings (the Miramar and 1435 N Street), clearly illustrating the architectural evolution of the street.

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The group of three dwellings at 1225-1227-1229 15<sup>th</sup> Street occupies a strategic location at the corner of 15<sup>th</sup> and N Streets, and despite the looming building behind them and to either side, the trio manages to dominate the streetscape. Set upon raised foundations, these very robust, 3-1/2-story dwellings, designed by local architect Clement A. Didden feature three-story projecting bays, that together with steeply pitched mansard roofs appear more like towers, arched window and door openings on the raised first stories and the third floors, and decorative brickwork including extensive corbelling and stringcourses.

The Miramar, the large, 8-story, red brick apartment building at the corner of 15<sup>th</sup> and N Streets, was constructed in 1929 to the designs of Harvey Warwick at a time when the city’s population was still on the rise. The Miramar replaced a collection of 19<sup>th</sup>-century, single-family row houses, as the growing population was amplifying the city’s need for middle-class housing. The Miramar, developed by the Cafritz Construction Company, was apparently named for a beautiful castle in the mountains of Northern Italy, which had been visited by Mr. Cafritz. At the time of its construction, the location of the Miramar was touted in the press as being “extremely attractive and marks the trend of downtown apartments in this section. Close to Scott Circle and convenient to both Connecticut Avenue and 16<sup>th</sup> Street, it is within easy walking distance of shops, offices and Government departments.”<sup>2</sup>

Like the Miramar, the Eddystone, built two blocks east at Vermont Avenue and N Street (1301 Vermont Avenue, NW), is a mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century apartment building constructed in the place of older row houses. The eight-story apartment, designed by Robert O. Scholz for the Vermont Company is constructed of buff brick with a regular arrangement of tri-partite windows defining the buildings’ exterior walls. Ornamentation is reserved for the roofline, where Gothic-inspired buttressing de-emphasizes the building’s mass, and at the base, where Art Deco detailing articulates the entryway.

According to period press reports, these new apartments with modern equipment and appointments were highly sought after by home buyers: “Popularity of new downtown apartment buildings is reflected in the rapid occupancy of their units. Modernity of appointment and equipment as well as convenience to the business and office districts also increase their desirability which results in speedy rental of their suites.”<sup>3</sup> According to the article, the Eddystone was one-third rented before completion of the building.

While this type of large-scale residential (as well as commercial and institutional) development overtook the southern end of 14<sup>th</sup> Street, depleting the corridor south of Thomas Circle of its 19<sup>th</sup>

<sup>2</sup> “Cafritz to Build Apartment Hotel, To be Called Miramar.” *The Washington Post*, October 13, 1929, p. R4

<sup>3</sup> “The Eddystone,” *The Washington Post*, October 17, 1937.

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century roots, the Miramar, the Eddystone and the mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century apartment buildings along the 1400 block of Rhode Island Avenue represent the northern edge of this mid-20<sup>th</sup> century trend. For the most part, and represented by the historic district, the greater 14<sup>th</sup> Street area north of Rhode Island Avenue is principally intact to its 19<sup>th</sup> century/early 20<sup>th</sup> century period of growth.

### **Thomas Circle:**

The expansion to the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District includes the northwest quadrant of Thomas Circle, including National City Christian Church and the Heatherington Apartments. The neo-Classical National City Christian Church (1929) designed by John Russell Pope and listed in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites, is a prominent landmark that together with Luther Place Memorial Church frames the northern gateway to the 14<sup>th</sup> Street corridor. Although the National City Christian Church is a second generation building on Thomas Circle, the building is nonetheless an important architectural landmark and integral to the 14<sup>th</sup> Street corridor, and thus should be included within the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District.



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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history.
- B** Property associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

### Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

### Period of Significance

1855-1940

### Significant Dates

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

### Cultural Affiliation

### Architect/Builder

See list of buildings showing architects/builders

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

#### Previous documentation on files (NPS):

- Preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- Designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey  
# \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record  
# \_\_\_\_\_

#### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Barracks Row Mainstreet

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## Summary Statement of Significance:

### Introduction:

The Greater Fourteenth Street Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1994. At the time of its designation, the boundaries of the historic district did not include the 1400 blocks of streets ranging from Massachusetts Avenue on the south to P Street on the north. Although immediately adjacent to the existing historic district and integral to the 14<sup>th</sup> Street corridor, these streets were not included at the time of designation, primarily because it was thought that the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century apartment building construction found along those blocks did not relate to the historical patterns of development for which Fourteenth Street was deemed historically significant.<sup>4</sup> Based upon a recent study, it has been determined that the boundary increase, which includes a combination of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century building types, enhances our understanding of the evolution of this part of the city, contributes to its physical beauty, and should be included as part of the historic district.

In addition, although the historic district, when designated, was named the Greater Fourteenth Street Historic District (since it takes in more than just those buildings fronting 14<sup>th</sup> Street), it is commonly referred to as the Fourteenth Street Historic District. This amendment thus also officially changes the name from the Greater Fourteenth Street Historic District to the Fourteenth Street Historic District.

This amended nomination form expands the district's present boundaries to the south/southwest and south/southeast. The new boundaries would be the 1400 block of Massachusetts Avenue (north side) on the southwest and the 1300 block of N Street on the southeast. The expanded southern boundary would take in several DC Landmarks, including the Rhode Island Avenue Residential buildings (1400 block of Rhode Island Avenue, north side), the Hotel Braxton at 1440 Rhode Island Avenue, and the National City Christian Church at Thomas Circle. The proposed expansion area includes 40 buildings (24 contributing, 16 non-contributing), making a total of 779 buildings in the historic district (657 contributing, 106 non-contributing).

### Boundary Increase Rationale:

By abutting Thomas Circle on the south, the boundary increase more accurately delineates boundaries of the historic corridor. Fourteenth Street was an important street that ran north-south through the city, providing direct access across the Potomac River to Virginia via Long

<sup>4</sup> "Greater Fourteenth Street Historic District Decision," District of Columbia Historic Preservation Review Board, May 26, 1994. The decision document, however, notes that "the southern boundary is conservative and does exclude some isolated buildings which may merit preservation."

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Bridge (14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge), and was the route of the city’s first streetcar line. Thomas Circle, a reservation on the L’Enfant Plan, historically marked a dividing line between pre- and post-Civil War Washington. Prior to the Civil War, most of the city’s development occurred south of Massachusetts Avenue; following the Civil War, development began to spread progressively north of the Avenue. Thomas Circle was itself graded and planted in 1871, and in 1879 received its statue of Major General George Thomas. Despite the loss of most of the first-generation 19<sup>th</sup>-century buildings and the residential scale of Thomas Circle, the circle serves as a gateway to Fourteenth Street and its surviving historic buildings to the north. Luther Place Memorial Church at 1226 Vermont Avenue, NW (within the current historic district boundaries) and National City Christian Church (within the expansion area) serve as gateposts to 14<sup>th</sup> Street north of the circle. Extending the boundaries to include the National City Christian Church would more accurately reflect this “gateway.” (Because several large out-of-period apartment buildings, located on the 1400 block of N Street detract from this southern boundary, they have been drawn out of proposed expansion area.)

The boundary increase includes buildings that are consistent with the patterns of development of the historic district as drawn in 1994. Many of these buildings, in particular the custom-designed dwellings for the neighborhood’s wealthier residents along Rhode Island Avenue and the small-scale 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>-century commercial buildings on P Street, are architecturally compatible with their counterparts within the boundaries and further help to bolster our understanding of the physical evolution of the 14<sup>th</sup> Street corridor.

The 1994 boundaries exclude many of the area’s mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century apartment buildings and thus limit our appreciation of the rise of the multi-story apartment as a building type along with an understanding of the socio-economic forces that shaped that development trend. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century the area south of Thomas Circle was dramatically transformed from a small-scale residential and commercial corridor to a much larger-scale one dominated by the city’s business district. While the area north of Rhode Island Avenue remained largely intact as a Victorian-era residential neighborhood throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the blocks between Massachusetts Avenue and Rhode Island Avenue became a transitional area between this Victorian neighborhood to the north and the modern business district to the south. Within these blocks included in the expansion area, several layers of history co-exist, illustrated by 19<sup>th</sup> century town houses and speculative row houses, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial buildings, and 20<sup>th</sup> century apartment buildings.

The 14<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District expansion area contributes to our understanding of the evolutionary cycle of this prime streetcar neighborhood from its mid-19<sup>th</sup> century origins to its demise a century later. In particular, the expansion area serves, along with the existing historic district, as an excellent illustration of the complex forces responsible for 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century

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development patterns in the city. For instance, the 19<sup>th</sup> century residential architecture is indicative of both post-Civil War speculative development to house an expanding middle-class in the city, and the type of custom-designed residences commissioned and built by the city’s more wealthy residents. Similarly, the commercial development in the expansion area provides a good illustration of the type of 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial development that occurred along the city’s streetcar routes, within a predominantly residential area. The 20<sup>th</sup> century apartment buildings in the expanded area provide an important illustration of the residential change experienced along 14<sup>th</sup> Street during this period and highlight the growing acceptance in the 20<sup>th</sup> century of apartment building living among middle-class residents. The expanded area is characterized by the work of notable architects, including those with established local and national reputations.

The proposed expansion to the Fourteenth Street Historic District meets Criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places with Architecture as the Area of Significance. The expanded area possesses sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association to convey the values and qualities for which it is judged significant, and sufficient time has elapsed to permit a professional evaluation in its historical context.

## Resource History and Historic Context:

The existing 14<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District National Register nomination form contains a comprehensive history of the neighborhood. The following is simply addendum information.

### Thomas Circle:

Thomas Circle, recently reconfigured to its original circular shape, is an important element along the linear 14<sup>th</sup> Street. It is also an informal gateway into and out of the city’s business district, or “downtown” area. The circle is named for Civil War hero Major General George H. Thomas whose equestrian statue, erected in 1879 and facing south, stands atop a pedestal at the center of the circle.<sup>5</sup> Historically, the circle represented the edge of the pre-Civil War city. Prior to 1871 when the circle was first graded and planted, the city’s oldest housing stock stood south of the circle, while the Victorian neighborhoods to the north had yet to be developed in earnest. Exceptionally, the imposing, three-story Greek Revival Wiley mansion, built circa 1843 between Vermont Avenue and M Street, NW stood without neighbors facing the unimproved circle. A quarter century later and just prior to more systematic development, the Wylie house was joined by the Montgomery Meigs house at 1239 Vermont Avenue (1869), along with the soaring red

<sup>5</sup> For a detailed description of the equestrian statue that includes an artist’s rendering of it, see “The Thomas Equestrian Statue,” *The Washington Post*, May 20, 1879, p.1.

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sandstone Luther Place Memorial Church, completed in 1874 as a memorial of Thanksgiving for the end of the Civil War (**See Continuation Sheet: Historic Photos**).

As the surrounding streets were paved and city services were introduced in the 1870s, Thomas Circle (like neighboring Scott and Dupont circles) became attractive to prominent and wealthy residents. In 1879, the Portland Flats—one of the city’s first luxury apartment buildings—was built in the southeast segment of the circle formed by Vermont Avenue and 14<sup>th</sup> Street. By the late 1880s, an important collection of exuberant Victorian residences had been built around the circle and lined the major streets and avenues on all sides. A particularly elegant collection of Victorian houses along Highland Terrace, so-called for the raised terracing above the avenue, stood along the 1400 block of Massachusetts Avenue just west of Thomas Circle before being demolished in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

As the city’s population spread further and further out from its pre-Civil War downtown core, the 14<sup>th</sup> Street streetcar line, first established in 1862, encouraged commercial growth along its route. City directories<sup>6</sup> and historic maps reveal that beginning in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and intensifying after the turn-of-the-century, many of the buildings originally constructed as single-family dwellings were being converted to office, embassy and institutional uses, while others were demolished altogether and replaced by larger scale buildings. The palatial Montgomery Meigs’ residence on Vermont Avenue became home to St. John’s College, while a large Victorian residence along the 1400 block of Massachusetts Avenue was selected by Germany as its embassy headquarters.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, a group of former dwellings in the first block north of Thomas Circle facing 14<sup>th</sup> Street opened in 1895 as a girls’ school known as the “Gunston Institute.”<sup>8</sup> Several apartment buildings, including the Thomas (built 1900) on the south side of Thomas Circle joined the Portland Flats as apartment building living became increasingly acceptable to middle-class residents of the city.

By the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, 14<sup>th</sup> Street had evolved into a major automobile route into and out of the city. During the 1920s and 1930s, numerous automobile showrooms were built along 14<sup>th</sup> Street, north of Thomas Circle, elevating the import of the corridor. The increased visibility of 14<sup>th</sup> Street, as well as Thomas Circle’s presence as a “portal” along “automobile row” played a role in the site selection in 1929 for the highly visible National City Christian

<sup>6</sup> This is based upon research findings highlighted in “Reservation Number 66 (Thomas Circle),” Historic American Buildings Survey, HABS No. DC-687, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> The German Embassy purchased the house at 1435 Massachusetts Avenue in 1893, adding a grand ballroom to it that same year. A Washington Post article covering a reception at the German Embassy notes that the “grand ballroom was ablaze with electric lights showing to splendid advantage the handsome gilt furniture recently imported from Germany.” “At the German Embassy,” *The Washington Post*, 1/28/1894, p.3.

<sup>8</sup> See notice in *The Washington Post*, 9/28/1895, p.3.

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Church (the mother church of the Church of the Disciples of Christ). Designed by John Russell Pope, the strategically sited National City Christian Church facing Thomas Circle at 14<sup>th</sup> Street is an imposing, neo-classical-style, temple-front edifice. The building was hailed at the time as a “striking addition to the capital” and as add[ing] much to the architectural beauty of that section” of the city.<sup>9</sup>

As the number of automobile commuters in the city increased during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Thomas Circle became a bottleneck for motorists moving north-south on 14<sup>th</sup> Street and east-west along Massachusetts Avenue. In 1941, despite years of opposition, the District Highway Department tunneled Massachusetts Avenue under the circle in an effort to relieve the congestion.<sup>10</sup> With the underpass, the park’s configuration was changed to an ellipse flanked by crescents—a shape it maintained until recent renovations by the Department of Transportation returned the circle to its original circular shape. Together with development pressures pushing north of downtown, these changes to the circle and surrounding streets gradually stripped Thomas Circle of its 19<sup>th</sup>–century character. All of the circle’s original buildings, save for Luther Place Memorial Church, were replaced by modern buildings. The Wylie House was demolished in 1947, and its site now occupied by a large hotel; the Portland Flats was razed in 1962 for an office building; and the houses known as the Highland Terrace houses were progressively demolished between 1950 and 1965. The modern 1929 National City Christian Church building was spared.

## Riggs Market

As indicated in the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District National Register Nomination (1994) form, the existence of the 14<sup>th</sup> Street streetcar line stimulated both residential and commercial development. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, small commercial concerns emerged along the corridor from the street’s southern extremes downtown, to its northern border at Boundary Street (Florida Avenue). The 1994 nomination form notes that as the stability of the neighborhood increased in the 1870s and 1880s, the number and variety of businesses also multiplied. Grocers, dry goods dealers, fancy goods dealers, coal dealers, carpenters, druggists, confectioners, retailers, undertakers, tinsmiths, and boot and shoe dealers, to name a few, competed for business along the 14<sup>th</sup> Street corridor.

In 1877, the neighborhood’s first open market—Riggs Market—was built on the south side of the 1400 block of P Street (**See Continuation Sheet: Historic Photos**). The private market

<sup>9</sup> See “New Circle Church is Asset to Capital,” *The Washington Post*, 12/7/1929, p. 5; “New National Church Soon to be Dedicated,” *The Washington Post*, 7/12/1930, p.5

<sup>10</sup> Opponents Take Underpass Fight to White House: Protest on Proposal for Thomas Circle is Given to Roosevelt, *The Washington Star*, 8/13/1898, A-16.

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building, designed by James H. McGill,<sup>11</sup> was constructed just west of the 14<sup>th</sup> Street commercial corridor and in the heart of the growing residential neighborhood. It was originally built in July of that year as an open structure, but was enclosed for the winter months and in 1887, appears to have been replaced by an entirely new building.<sup>12</sup> According to city directories, there were 78 market stalls with merchants offering produce, butter, meats, fish and other specialty items.

Immediately following construction of the market, numerous stores arose along the 1400 block of P Street, next to and across from the market building and even within the alley behind the market. Like those along 14<sup>th</sup> Street, the myriad businesses facing P Street ranged from harnessmaker to optician to barber to purveyors of oysters and cigars. Within the alley behind the market there was a livery stable and a carpenter shop; after the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, these buildings were replaced with automobile garages and other automobile service facilities.

Initially, the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century commercial buildings facing the public street were two-story structures with stores on the first story and domestic quarters above. As merchants gained spending power in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and were able to move away from their place of business, the standard two-story commercial building models eventually gave way to one-story structures. The two-story building at 1416 P Street (1894) that served as a grocery store throughout its prime, and the much-altered one-story structure abutting it at 1418 P Street (1910) illustrate this architectural evolution.<sup>13</sup>

As 14<sup>th</sup> Street evolved into “automobile row” the 1400 block of P Street followed suit. An examination of city directories reveals that many of the commercial buildings that were previously restaurants, barber shops, cigar shops and more, all housed, by 1925, automobile-related businesses. In 1931, Steuart Motor Company built an extensive two-story automobile sales and service center on the site of a livery stable. The extensive new structure abutted the Riggs Market building and extended from P Street back to the rear alley. Unlike the high-style limestone-clad automobile showrooms on 14<sup>th</sup> Street, however, this building was a concrete frame brick structure with no architectural pretensions. This trend is typical elsewhere in the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District, where side thoroughfares perpendicular to the elegantly lined 14<sup>th</sup> Street developed into service districts for the automobile, with brick structures that were “unabashedly

<sup>11</sup> James H. McGill was also architect of the Northern Liberties Market, another privately financed market building constructed 1874-75 at 5<sup>th</sup> and K Streets, NW.  
<sup>12</sup> See D.C. Permit to Build No. 623, July 12, 1877, D.C. Repair Permit No. 24, November 9, 1877, and D.C. Permit to Build No. 106, 6/28/1887. This 1887 permit documents that the owner, Riggs Market Co., was applying to build a one-story market house “on the present site of the Riggs Market.”  
<sup>13</sup> Originally four separate buildings designated 1418-1424 P Street, the consolidated building now designated 1418 P Street was historically housed a variety of commercial concerns throughout its history.



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plain.<sup>14</sup> Although the Steuart Motor Company building is no longer standing, a smaller garage building constructed in 1919 to house 35 cars (now incorporated into 1418 P Street) still exists and is evident from the alley behind P Street.

By 1940, the majority of the stalls at Riggs Market stood vacant and by 1948, the market building had been taken over by the Steuart Motor Company.

### Apartment Buildings:

The Portland Flats, one of the city’s first “purpose-built” apartment buildings was constructed in 1879-80 as a large luxury building on Vermont Avenue, just south of Thomas Circle (**See Continuation Sheet: Historic Photos**). The exuberant six-story brick building with elaborate interiors was intended to match the splendor already associated with New York’s finest examples of the type. The apartment building was built to face Thomas Circle located along Massachusetts Avenue, a newly emerging favorite residential street of the city’s elite. The building immediately attracted prominent and wealthy residents, ultimately becoming a model for future luxury apartment buildings throughout the city.

The earliest luxury apartment buildings to follow were primarily located close to lower Connecticut Avenue, extending through the heart of the “downtown” residential area. However, the existence and the opening of new streetcar lines attracted apartment building investors eager to capitalize on less expensive land. According to the apartment building multiple property document, Fourteenth Street—with its streetcar line—provides a prime illustration of this growth pattern: as stated in the report, by the end of World War I, 150 apartment buildings were located on 14<sup>th</sup> Street between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Streets corridor.<sup>15</sup>

Within the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District, north of Thomas Circle, the first apartment buildings to be constructed were not of the luxury apartment building type. They were generally smaller three- and four-story buildings erected upon the area’s vacant lots and designed to fit into the Victorian streetscapes. Even the larger Iowa Apartment building (1900) at the corner of 13<sup>th</sup> and O Streets and the 4-1/2-story Westchester at 1332 15<sup>th</sup> Street (1909) were built on vacant lots. After 1910, when vacant lots were no longer available, apartment building construction effectively ceased in the 14<sup>th</sup> Street corridor north of Thomas Circle, leaving the area a primarily 19<sup>th</sup>-century residential neighborhood punctuated with examples of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century architecture.

<sup>14</sup> The 14<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District Nomination form notes that repair and service facilities arose on Church Street, Johnson Avenue and P Street.

<sup>15</sup> Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C., National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, p. E-40.

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South of the Circle, however, development continued unabated throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Multi-story apartment buildings, hotels and office buildings replaced rows of 19<sup>th</sup>-century residences. This trend pushed northward, affecting the blocks immediately north of Thomas Circle. In 1929, the Miramar Apartment hotel at 15<sup>th</sup> and N Streets was built by the Cafritz Construction Company on the site of “a large number of old residences.” The building’s location was noted as “extremely attractive and marks the trend of downtown apartments in this section.”<sup>16</sup> In 1937, an article on the newly erected Eddystone Apartments at Vermont Avenue and N Street on the site of a row of older residences noted that the “popularity of new downtown buildings is reflected in the rapid occupancy of their units.”

Emblematic of its time, the eight-story brick Heatherington Apartment building at 1421 Massachusetts Avenue, when constructed in 1937, replaced the last remaining array of 19<sup>th</sup>-century residences that had served, until then, as the German Embassy.

## Conclusion

The expanded boundaries of the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District provide a more comprehensive illustration of the architectural evolution of the greater 14<sup>th</sup> Street area. The expanded area includes a host of late 19<sup>th</sup>-century residences from the district’s principal period of growth as a Victorian-era residential neighborhood that are consistent with the already contributing resources from that period and within the district. The expanded area also includes several 19<sup>th</sup>-century and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century commercial buildings on the 1400 block of P Street that are consistent with those found along 14<sup>th</sup> Street, within the district. These buildings illustrate the influence of the historic Riggs Market as well as that of the automobile industry. Finally, the expanded district includes several large-scale, mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century apartment buildings that are not heavily represented in the existing boundaries, but provide important visual references to the residential development trends affecting the greater 14<sup>th</sup> Street corridor. The boundaries have been drawn to include these contributing resources, while excluding any non-contributing edge buildings.

<sup>16</sup> “Cafritz to Build Apartment Hotel,” *The Washington Post*, 10/13/1929, R4.

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## Major Bibliographical References:

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“New National Church Soon to Be Dedicated,” *The Washington Post*, 7/12/1930, p.5.

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“The Thomas Equestrian Statue,” *The Washington Post*, 5/20/1879, p. 1.

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### 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 18.22 acres

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	8	3	2	3	9	3	9	4	3	0	8	2	5	9	3	1	8	3	2	3	6	9	9	4	3	0	8	1	2	2	
Zone		Easting				Northing				Zone		Easting				Northing															
2	1	8	3	2	3	7	4	1	4	3	0	8	0	7	1	4	1	8	3	2	3	7	1	0	4	3	0	8	2	1	3
Zone		Easting				Northing				Zone		Easting				Northing															

See continuation sheet

#### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

#### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kim Williams  
Organization D.C. Office of Historic Preservation date February 2007  
street & number 801 North Capitol Street, NE telephone 202 442-8800  
city or town Washington, D.C. state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code 20002

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

- X A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- X A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

- X Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et. seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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## UTM References (Continued)

- 5) 18 323568 E 4308193 N
- 6) 18 323593 E 4308381 N

## Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at a point along the southern boundary line of the existing 14<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District between 13<sup>th</sup> Street and Vermont Avenue on the east and west and north of N Street, at a point that is mid-block of Square 243, then due south to the north side of N Street, then due west to the eastern side of Vermont Avenue, such that the properties designated 1301 Vermont Avenue and 1313 Vermont Avenue are included within the boundaries, then follow the existing boundaries along the eastern side of Vermont Avenue in a southerly direction to Thomas Circle, then around the northwestern arc of the Circle to Massachusetts Avenue, then westerly along the north side of Massachusetts Avenue to the western edge of the property designated 1421 Massachusetts Avenue, then northerly along the western edge of this lot line to the alley between Massachusetts Avenue and N Street, then east along the alley to the connecting alley, then north along that connecting alley to its intersection with N Street on the north, then west along the south side of N Street to the eastern edge of Lots 115, 116 and 117 of Square 212, then south along the eastern edge of the lot lines to the southern edge of Lot 115, then due west to 15<sup>th</sup> Street, then north along the eastern edge of 15<sup>th</sup> Street to Rhode Island Avenue, then easterly along the north side of Rhode Island Avenue to the eastern edge of Lot 822 on Square 211, due north along the eastern edge of the lot line to the alley between Rhode Island Avenue and P Street where it intersects the existing boundary line of the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District.

## Boundary Justification:

The boundary increase to the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District discussed in this amendment includes the blocks immediately north of Thomas Circle between Massachusetts Avenue and P Street. These blocks represent a transitional area between the intact Victorian neighborhood to the north and the modern business district to the south and are an important illustration of the evolution of this section of the city. As the city's growing population created a demand for more middle-class housing, this predominantly residential mid-city neighborhood proved attractive to developers who recognized its convenience to downtown as well as to the upscale shops of Connecticut Avenue. Furthermore, Thomas Circle, a significant element on the L'Enfant Plan, provides an appropriate gateway to the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District, whereby Luther Place

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Memorial Church at 1226 Vermont Avenue, NW and the National City Christian Church  
visually frame the entrance to the corridor from the south.

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### HISTORIC PHOTOS



Thomas Circle looking north showing Luther Place Memorial Church at center top, ca. 1900  
(From Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library, Washingtoniana Division)



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### HISTORIC PHOTOS



Portland Flats on south side of Thomas Circle between Vermont Avenue and 14<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W. (1924)  
(From Historical Society of Washington)



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### HISTORIC PHOTOS



Riggs Market (built 1877, re-built 1887) on 1400 block of P Street (south side)  
(From Historical Society of Washington)

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### HISTORIC PHOTOS



Highland Terrace above the 1400 block of Massachusetts Avenue  
(From Historical Society of Washington)