GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC LANDMARK OR HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION

New Designation x
Amendment of a previous designation ____
Please summarize any amendment(s) ____

Property name The Ethelhurst
*If any part of the **interior** is being nominated, it must be specifically identified and described in the narrative statements.*

Address 1025 15th Street, N.W.

Square and lot number(s) Square 216 Lot 0026

Affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission ANC 2F

Date of construction 1902 Date of major alteration(s) ____

Architect(s) T. Franklin Schneider Architectural style(s) Beaux Arts

Original use Residence/Multi-Family Present use Commercial/Office

Property owner Honeybee Hospitality LLC

Legal address of property owner 1842 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20009

NAME OF APPLICANT(S) Megan Merrifield, Honeybee Hospitality LLC (owner)

***If the applicant is an organization**, it must submit evidence that among its purposes is the promotion of historic preservation in the District of Columbia. A copy of its charter, articles of incorporation, or by-laws, setting forth such purpose, will satisfy this requirement.*

Address/Telephone of applicant(s) 1842 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20009

(757) 553-7906

Name and title of authorized representative BILL MARZELLA, PRESERVATION PLANNER EHTTRACERIES

Signature of representative [signature] Date APRIL 30, 2014

Name and telephone of author of application Gray O'Dwyer, EHT Traceries (202) 393-1199

Date received 4/30/2014
H.P.O. staff AD

14-13

NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: The Ethelhurst
Other names/site number: Ethel Court
Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

2. Location

Street & number: 1025 Fifteenth Street, N.W.
City or town: Washington State: D.C. County: N/A
Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

___national ___statewide ___local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A ___B ___C ___D

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:	[x]
Public – Local	[ ]
Public – State	[ ]
Public – Federal	[ ]

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	[x]
District	[ ]
Site	[ ]
Structure	[ ]
Object	[ ]

The Ethelhurst
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling (apartment building)

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/professional

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Beaux Arts

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: Brick

Walls: Brick and cast stone

Roof: Metal (cast-iron cornice)

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Ethelhurst is an eight-story building located on the southeast corner of Fifteenth and L Streets, N.W., in downtown Washington, D.C. The Ethelhurst was constructed in 1904, designed and built by real estate speculator and architect T. Franklin Schneider. In addition to its eight stories above ground, the Ethelhurst has a raised basement and sub-basement mechanical cellar, resulting in a total height of 103 feet above grade. The building has three prominent corners towers facing Fifteenth and L Streets and is clad in painted brick with cast stone and cast-iron architectural details. Despite interior alterations, the exterior of the building is largely unaltered, and retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance as an early twentieth century apartment building.

Narrative Description

Site Description

The Ethelhurst occupies a square lot at the northwest corner of Square 216, which faces the northern side of McPherson Square. The street-facing (north and west) elevations of the Ethelhurst feature the most highly ornamented fenestration. The south elevation is separated from a modern high-rise office building by a small airshaft, and the east elevation directly abuts two three-story, nineteenth-century row buildings with first-floor commercial storefronts. The building on the west has been clad in formstone and retains very little historic integrity, while the building on the east retains its terra cotta fenestration panels and a high-relief cornice band.

The north elevation of the Ethelhurst faces L Street, which is dominated by late twentieth century, high-rise, commercial office buildings. The west elevation fronts Fifteenth Street, which is similarly developed with late twentieth century commercial buildings. Most of these buildings have highly regimented facades composed of glass, steel, and concrete elements. An exception is the 1924 Investment Building, which occupies most of the block on the west side of Fifteenth Street between L and K Streets. The Investment Building is noteworthy for its architect Jules Henri de Sibour, a leading Washington designer in the Beaux Arts style, and for its massive size. Both the Ethelhurst and the Investment Building display elements of the Beaux Arts-influenced commercial style popular in the early twentieth century, including prominent belt courses, wide cornices, and projecting bays.

Exterior

The Ethelhurst is located at 1025 Fifteenth Street, N.W. It is a masonry-clad building that stands eight stories tall over a raised basement story and sub-basement mechanical cellar. The building has a square plan, with two highly decorated street-facing sides, and two more utilitarian masonry walls facing south and east. The street-facing elevations are augmented by three projecting corner towers, marked by quoining on the tower edges. The towers project approximately six feet from the face of the building. The building is constructed with a steel frame and clad in painted brick laid in stretcher bond pattern. Large, projecting brick belt courses encircle the building at irregular intervals, and the first story exterior walls are laid in alternating projecting courses to create the impression of ashlar masonry. The building is crowned by a false mansard entablature composed of two running belt courses with dentils, applied cast-iron swags, and cast-iron medallions. The mansard impression is heightened by large entabulated stone window surrounds on the tower windows that connect the two courses, with broken pediments, escalloped niches, heavy modillions, and faux balconettes.[1] The applied decorative exterior elements on the upper levels and the cornice, including swags, modillions, and rosettes, are all painted cast iron pieces affixed to the brick exterior walls. Overall, the building reflects the Beaux Arts style as applied to a commercial structure, marked by classical purity of form with elaborate fenestration.

The building's window openings vary in size, wider on the corner bays and narrower in the recessed interior sections and on the bay edges. The original windows were replaced during a 1958 renovation of building. The windows have metal frames with three horizontally-divided lights.[2] The first story windows are ornamented with cast stone balconettes. The second and third story windows have full cast stone surrounds composed of shouldered frames with bead moldings, keystone lintels, and console sills. The fourth story windows are capped by keystone lintels and have balconettes incorporated into the projecting belt course. Fifth and sixth story windows have only the keystone lintels and plain cast stone sills. The seventh story windows are directly under the lower of the two cornice courses and have no ornamentation, only plain stone sills. The eighth story corner windows have the elaborate frames described above, while the inner windows have balconettes and single keystones. The first and basement story windows are protected by metal grilles, added after 1960.

Facing Fifteenth Street, the building's main entrance was originally designed to be located at the level of the first story, corresponding with the sill height of the first story windows and above the level of the raised basement. A 1903 drawing of the building shows an elevated double-leaf front entrance with a wide balustraded staircase leading to ground level. Over the doors is an arched lintel integrated into the belt course that crowns the first story. The stairs fan out at ground level,

[1] The original permit application for the building lists limestone as the material to be used for the window surrounds and other decorative details. On-site investigation strongly suggests that cast stone was used in place of limestone.
[2] All windows are currently fixed in place, but the central light of each appears to at one time have been a hinged hopper panel.

with balusters that correspond to those on the window balconettes and large molded stone newels. The entrance doors were protected by gates made of wrought iron and plate glass.[3]

The entrance was modified when the building was converted to offices in 1958, at which time the entrance was lowered to street level and the original staircase removed. The entrance was again modified circa 1990. Today, pigmented structural glass surrounds steel, double-leaf doors with a large plate-glass transom and four sidelights on either side. Also in 1958, the arched stone lintel over the original entrance was removed and replaced with new brick and stone trim to match the surrounding belt course; the difference in color between the new material and the 1902 material is still visible. An eight-panel transom of pigmented structural glass is located below the belt course and above a projecting awning. The awning may originally have been clad in pale-colored structural glass, based on historic photos, but currently is clad in brown-painted metal flashing. Lights in the underside of the awning light the entryway. Where the 1902 steps were removed, the sidewalk has been repaved with scored concrete.

With the exception of the Fifteenth Street entrance, the exterior of the building has remained nearly unchanged since 1902. A fire escape system was added to the north elevation at some point in the middle of the twentieth century but has since been removed. A metal safety railing was added on the roof between the northwest and northeast towers, circa 1990. The brick, cast stone, and cast-iron exterior elements are generally in good condition with no evidence of instability or significant weathering.

Interior

The interior of The Ethelhurst reflects its use and character as a late twentieth century office building. The principal lobby is located on the basement level, accessed via a wide staircase that descends from the street level. The interior organization is defined by a centrally positioned elevator and stair shaft that provides vertical circulation throughout the building. The elevator shaft is encircled by two enclosed egress stairs. The easternmost stair is original to the building and has retained its original cast-iron treads and risers. The office (former apartment) suites on the building's upper floors have been reconfigured and feature contemporary frame and drywall partitions, carpet, and other finishes. However, the building has retained its general configuration of a central corridor providing access to peripheral suites, and all the suites retain their historic exterior window arrangements and associated views.

[3] "The Ethelhurst," *Financial Review*, February 27, 1903, Vertical Files, Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library.

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 patterns of our history.
- [x] B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [x] 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.)

- [ ] 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Architecture
Community Planning & Development

Period of Significance
1902-1958

Significant Dates
1902 (construction)

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
Schneider, T. Franklin

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Schneider, T. Franklin (architect and builder)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Ethelhurst illustrates the pattern of residential development in the downtown commercial areas of Washington, D.C. at the turn of the twentieth century, including changing trends in housing that led to multi-family living. The Ethelhurst was one of the earliest multi-story apartment buildings in Washington, and was notable as a product of T. Franklin Schneider, an architect and entrepreneur who pioneered luxury multi-story apartment buildings in the area. It was among the tallest of its kind at 103 feet in height and eight stories above ground, and occupied one corner of an intersection that originally hosted three T. Franklin Schneider apartment buildings. Schneider built The Sherman, The Ethelhurst, and Florence Court apartment buildings between 1896 and 1906, before retiring from public life due to advancing blindness. A highly regarded businessman and designer, known as the "Young Napoleon of F Street," Schneider was prolific, designing over 2,000 homes, businesses, and apartment buildings in an eclectic mixture of styles.[4] The stylistic detailing of The Ethelhurst was in keeping with Beaux Arts influenced architecture that was endemic to the architecture of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries in Washington, D.C., especially the architecture of the downtown and financial districts. The Ethelhurst was of particular note because of its height, fireproof construction, luxurious interior appointments, and proximity to downtown, which promoted a live-work lifestyle in an increasingly commercialized area. The Ethelhurst was designed to

[4] Candace Reed, "T.F. Schneider (1858-1938): The Young Napoleon of F Street," *Design Action* 2, no. 2 (March/April 1983): 8.

attract wealthy clients, specifically those who worked in high-income downtown jobs, which makes it a significant representative of the demographic forces that affected the development of dowtown at the turn of the century prior to outward suburbanization trends of the twentieth century. It is also representative of turn-of-the-century architectural trends related to the McMillan Plan and exhibits close stylistic ties to nearby landmark buildings such as the Riggs National Bank Building (1899-1902) and the Willard Hotel (1915). The period of significance for the Ethelhurst Building is 1902-1958, encompassing the time during which the building retained in its original form and use.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

SIGNIFICANCE AND EVALUATION

The Ethelhurst apartment building is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C and is significant in the areas of **Architecture** and **Community Planning and Development**. The property is being nominated under the *Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C. 1880-1945* Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPD), which was recognized by the National Register of Historic Places in 1994. The Ethelhurst satisfies the following MPD Criteria:

> A-2: Buildings that illustrate the initial development of the apartment movement as it relates to the need for housing, including the introduction of the building type and the specific forms seen in this early period throughout the city;
> A-3: Buildings that are part of cluster, corridors, or districts that illustrate the patterns of development of the city;
> C-5: Buildings that illustrate expressions of architectural styles, either rare, notable, or influential to the aesthetic development of the apartment building or architecture in general; and
> C-10: Buildings that are the work of skilled architects, landscape architects, urban planners, engineers, builders, or developers.[5]

In addition to satisfying the National Register and Multiple Property Document Criteria, The Ethelhurst meets the D.C. Landmark Criteria **(b) History** and **(d) Architecture and Urbanism** based on its historical and architectural significance.

The Ethelhurst is significant in the area of **Architecture**—and **(d) Architecture and Urbanism**—as a Beaux Arts-style multi-family apartment building. The Ethelhurst is illustrative of the later work of noted local architect and developer T. Franklin Schneider. Schneider ranked among Washington's most prolific developers in the early twentieth century and was a pioneer of high-rise luxury apartment buildings. Schneider's choice of architectural vocabulary for the

[5] National Register of Historic Places, Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C., 1880-1945 Multiple Property Documentation Form, Washington, District of Columbia, National Register #64500083, F:3-F:4.

Ethelhurst capitalized on the proximity of the site to the downtown commercial district and formed a visual link with the financial strip on Fifteenth Street between I Street and Pennsylvania Avenue (now the Fifteenth Street Financial Historic District). The building's elegant design and striking appearance communicated the social standing of its many upper-class residents and was important in creating demand for high-rise downtown apartments. Schneider recognized the success of similar high-rise apartment buildings in European cities such as Paris and Vienna and purposely used traditional French elements such as a mansard roof and corner towers in the expression of an overall Beaux Arts exterior. Most new-style European apartment buildings were between six and eight stories with amenities on the first floor, replicated in the height, function, and overall appearance of the Ethelhurst. Situated at the corner of Fifteenth and L Streets, N.W., the Ethelhurst was prominently located and stood out as one of the tallest buildings in the area when it was completed. It was one of the first high-rise apartment buildings in the District, and the first of its kind in that area of downtown. Currently, it stands as one of the few remaining Beaux Arts buildings in the neighborhood and the only one that was originally designed as a multi-family dwelling.

The Ethelhurst is also significant in the area of **Community Planning and Development**—and **(b) History**. The eight-story luxury apartment building illustrates innovation in residential development in the District and trends in multi-family living. The building demonstrates the integration of multi-family housing on all social levels into the District of Columbia's commercial district during the first decades of the twentieth century, prior to the movement of wealthy downtown workers to affluent suburbs. The Ethelhurst was constructed during an era when many preferred to live in close proximity to their workplace, and specifically catered to the wealthy financiers and others who worked in the Fifteenth Street corridor and near the White House. The Ethelhurst was constructed during a boom period of construction in the city, and T. Franklin Schneider's success as a real estate speculator building row houses, private homes, and apartment buildings allowed him to experiment with new types of multi-unit housing.

As a new type of housing that specifically catered to wealthy downtown workers, the Ethelhurst was integrally connected to late-nineteenth century ideas of community and place but simultaneously explored a new form that would eventually develop into the dominant condominium and co-op models of the late twentieth century. The building represents a brief period of downtown residential growth that catered to the upper class, prior to the movement of many of the District's wealthy to the suburbs. Thus, the Ethelhurst apartment building is a significant representative of the economic and demographic forces that characterized downtown at the turn of the twentieth century. It specifically relates to the sub-type of **Conventional High-Rise Apartment Building** as described in the MPD, having forty individual apartments of varying sizes, rising eight stories in height with a single articulated public entrance on Fifteenth Street, an elevator, and a high degree of exterior architectural integrity, particularly the Beaux Arts style façade. Though constructed in 1902-3, prior to most buildings of its type (generally 1922-1945), the Ethelhurst is recognizable as a prototype building whose success created incentive to build others of the same form.

NARRATIVE HISTORY

Construction History

Owner, architect, and builder T. Franklin Schneider was issued a permit to build The Ethelhurst on March 7, 1902, which was reissued on May 23, 1902. According to the building permit application, the eight-story apartment building (with a raised basement and below ground mechanical stories) was to be constructed of "buff brick, Indiana limestone, and galvanized iron."[6] The building, completed in 1903, contained forty apartments ranging in size from a studio with en suite bath to a two-bedroom apartment with living room and dining nook. The rectangular footprint of the building occupied nearly two full lots on the street corner, leaving a small rear access alley off L Street. Interior amenities included a full-service café, an elevator, and elegant finishes.

A contemporary source described the interior fittings as follows:

> The first story hall is wainscoted with the finest Italian marble, the lines being relieved with pilasters. The reception room opens off the main hall and is handsomely decorated. The elevator enclosure is heavily forged black iron grille, the whole presenting a very rich effect. The upper halls have tiled floor[s] and the woodwork is quartered oak. The interior finish of the rooms is white enamel. The plumbing is of the latest, the walls of the bath rooms being tiled. In the basement is a finely appointed café. Under the basement there is a sub-cellar in which are the heating apparatus and other necessary machinery-making in reality a ten-story building.[7]

Notably, the interior was fitted with early electric elevators of the "double-decker type," in which two cabs were joined together, one for freight and the other for passengers.[8] The elevator operator was stationed in the passenger cab and could monitor passenger safety; however, according to a violation issued to The Ethelhurst in 1909, there were was no mechanism to prevent passengers from entering or exiting the freight cabin without the operator's knowledge or while the cabs were in motion.

Downtown Washington, D.C.

The Downtown Washington, D.C., neighborhood roughly encompasses the area from the White House east to Sixth Street, north of the Mall and south of Massachusetts Avenue.[9] The Ethelhurst apartment building is located near the northern limit of the neighborhood, approximately a half mile from the President's Park and the White House. At the time it was constructed, the

[6] District of Columbia building permits on record in the Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library.
[7] "The Ethelhurst," *Financial Review*.

[9] Descriptions vary widely between sources, both historic and modern.

building's proximity to the White House and the commercial and financial districts was a major appeal for residents.

Prior to major development in the early nineteenth century, the most significant building in the downtown area was the Rhodes Tavern at the corner of what would become F and Fifteenth Streets. The tavern, later operated as the first location of the Riggs Bank in 1837, and a farmers market held at the intersection of Pennsylvania Avenue and Fifteenth Street served to immediately identify the area with commerce.[10] Nearby, at the corner of Fifteenth and F Streets, the Bank of the Metropolis opened in 1814.[11] F Street remained a major thoroughfare through much of the nineteenth century, but most major buildings constructed prior to 1840 were public and commercial buildings rather than residential developments including the Treasury, the Post Office, several hotels and boarding houses, and churches. The Center Market, which opened at Eighth Street and Pennsylvania Avenue in 1801, was another major commercial structure that helped to bring commerce west of the Capitol, despite Pierre L'Enfant's evident plan to direct commercial development along East Capitol Street.[12]

Between 1840 and 1890, the population of the city of Washington rose dramatically. Civil War hostilities resulted in an enormous influx of free blacks, fugitive slaves, and other "contraband" blacks seeking protection from Union forces.[13] Military mobilization also encouraged large numbers of working-class whites to move to the area, drawn by manufacturing and munitions jobs in the capital; the population of the city was estimated at 140,000 in 1864, much of it confined within the historic L'Enfant City and representing a nearly sixty percent increase since 1860.[14] Expansion of government agencies to include the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Justice added federal jobs, so that by 1870 over 6,000 residents of the District were federal employees.[15] The existing commercial district along F Street expanded north along the numbered streets between Fifteenth and Ninth Streets, prompted by a series of floods (1852 and 1877) that severely damaged buildings along low-lying Pennsylvania Avenue. Boarding houses and hotels were an especially popular enterprise, since Congress and its associated aides, support staff, and lobbying interests were seasonal residents of the District and would pay handsomely for temporary accommodation.[16]

In the 1870s, Washington's "Little Wall Street" on Fifteenth began to take off, largely due to the influence of the existing Treasury Building, the National Metropolitan Bank of Washington (formerly the Bank of the Metropolis, 1814-1865) and the Riggs Bank (later Riggs National Bank) as well as environmental influences that fostered business growth.[17] With the increase in

[10] Joseph Passoneau, *Washington Through Two Centuries* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 2004), 33.
[11] Benjamin Ruhe and Ross Chapple, "Little Wall Street," *Washington Star*, January 31, 1965.
[12] Passoneau, *Washington Through Two Centuries*, 52.
[13] Constance McLaughlin Green, *Washington: A History of the Capital 1800-1950* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 272-273.
[14] McLaughlin Green, *Washington: A History of the Capital 1800-1950*, 295.
[15] Fredric M. Miller and Howard Gillette, Jr., *Washington Seen: A Photographic History, 1875-1965* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 3.
[16] Passoneau, *Washington Through Two Centuries*, 52.
[17] Ruhe and Chapple, "Little Wall Street."

the number of banks in the area came development of office space for businesses related to the banking industry, including the six-story Corcoran Building in 1875 (replacing an earlier 1837 building) at Fifteenth between Pennsylvania Avenue and F Street, and hotels such as the Arlington Hotel (1868, Vermont Avenue and Eye Street) and Shoreham Hotel (1887, Fifteenth and H Streets).[18]

Though the buildings along the Fifteenth Street corridor initially had little architectural unity other than a monumental scale and rectangular massing, the McMillan Plan significantly influenced buildings constructed after 1900 and created a visually integrated as well as industry-integrated district. The use of color in building materials, such as the brownstone and terra cotta used in the National Savings and Trust Building (1888, New York Avenue and Fifteenth Street), was abandoned in favor of more uniform, pale gray and white facades. Indiana limestone, granite, and glazed terra cotta were popular materials.[19] The financial district also embraced stylistic ideas recommended by the Plan, incorporating Beaux Arts and Classical Revival elements that visually connected newer buildings with the Treasury and communicated a sense of solidity and venerability.

It was also in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that apartment buildings became fashionable, and were often constructed to appeal to a wealthy clientele. The earliest apartments in the District were built in response to housing shortages during and immediately after the Civil War and often involved converting large existing buildings.[20] In the 1890s, luxury apartment buildings appeared in New York City and emulated European flats buildings in cities such as Paris, Vienna, and London. Reception was initially mixed, but with the growing density of downtown development, real estate speculators saw apartment buildings as a profitable venture; a 1911 article remarks that "architects of the highest ability and training are beginning to give their time to the design of apartment buildings that meet the requirements of cultured people."[21]

Architect/Builder/Owner: T. Franklin Schneider

Among those who saw the potential in upscale apartment buildings was local Washington architect and developer T. Franklin Schneider. T. Franklin Schneider was a prolific architect in the Washington, D.C., area at the turn of the twentieth century, and as a real estate speculator he helped to steer trends in building design that would have far-reaching impacts on the architectural character of the city.

Schneider was the son of a German immigrant to Washington, D.C., and grew up working in his father's printing business. He apprenticed in the architectural practice of Adolf (or Adolph) Cluss

[18] National Register of Historic Places, Fifteenth Street Financial Historic District, Washington, District of Columbia, National Register #84003900, 8:2-3.
[19] National Register of Historic Places, Fifteenth Street Financial Historic District, Washington, District of Columbia, National Register #84003900, 7:2.
[20] National Register of Historic Places, Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C., 1880-1945 Multiple Property Documentation Form, Washington, District of Columbia, National Register #64500083, E:6-E:8.
[21] "Apartment Houses." *The American Architect* 100, no. 1876 (1911): 229-230.

circa 1875 and trained under Cluss for eight years. In 1883, Schneider became a member of the American Institute of Architects and opened his own practice.[22] Schneider embraced Cluss's design principles in his early work, which was known for its use of red brick and brownstone. In 1888, Schneider paid approximately $250,000 (contemporary reports vary) to build thirty-four three-story row houses in the 1700 block of Q Street, N.W. This immediately caused District residents and officials to take notice because it was the largest speculative real estate transaction in District history.[23] Other important residential developments included Schneider's Triangle (1889) at Washington Circle, twenty-three brick row houses on Corcoran Street between Seventeenth Street and New Hampshire Avenue (1888), and seventeen three-story brick row houses on G Street, N.E. (1897).[24] During this time, Schneider completed numerous commissions for single private dwellings as well. Schneider's design vocabulary included such diverse influences as Classical Revival, Richardsonian Romanesque, Gothic Revival, Mediterranean Revival, Beaux Arts, and even some early expressions of the commercial style (Chicago School) that would come to be associated with high-rise buildings. In all of his work, Schneider appeared to give consideration to existing architectural context and make efforts to blend massing, scale, and stylistic elements of new construction with existing neighbors.

In 1894, Schneider shocked Washington by building the remarkable Cairo Hotel at 1621 Q Street, N.W. "Schneider's Folly," as the Cairo was termed, was Washington's first steel-frame "skyscraper," its first twelve-story building, and one of its first purpose-built luxury apartment buildings.[25] Other architects wrote scathing reviews of the building and swore that it would never be profitable: "It is a box full of holes…the architects play that these envelopes of masonry are real buildings, and they ask the spectators the same thing."[26] The Cairo's height prompted a massive outcry and calls for restrictions on building heights, which resulted in the passage of the Height of Buildings Act of 1899 (and its successor, the Height of Buildings Act of 1910). The Height Act has influenced architecture in Washington since its passage, and it is not an exaggeration to state that the Cairo Hotel is one of the major reasons that the city has a profile free of skyscrapers, in direct contrast to other major cities such as New York and Chicago.

Schneider's vision was borne out, and the Cairo became both an extremely profitable and fashionable address. It featured elevators, electric lighting, a massive ballroom, drug store, bowling alley, billiard room, elegant public parlor, and rooftop café.[27] Schneider invested his success in constructing several more apartment buildings of a similar, if somewhat shorter, type

[22] In the period after the Civil War, Cluss's office had designed a large number of public buildings in Washington, including many public schools. Known in modern times as the "Red Architect" of Washington (a reference to both Cluss's Marxist views and his favorite building material, red brick), Cluss's designs were innovative for the period. His design principles ran to "multi-story buildings with high ceilings, clear circulation routes, abundant natural light, built-in heating and ventilation systems…and sturdy fireproof construction." Benjamin Forgey, "'Red Architect' Adolf Cluss: A Study in Sturdy," *Washington Post*, September 17, 2005; and Reed, "T.F. Schneider," 8.
[23] Reed, "T.F. Schneider," 8.
[24] District of Columbia building permits on record in the Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library.
[25] Reed, "T.F. Schneider," 8.
[26] "Architectural Aberrations No. XIII: the Cairo," *Architectural Record* 4, no. 4 (1894): 473.
[27] Reed, "T.F. Schneider," 8.

within the city of Washington. These included the Albemarle (1900, 1700 T Street, N.W.), the Iowa (1900, 1325 Thirteenth Street), the Sherman (1903, 1101 Fifteenth Street), and Florence Court (1905, 2153 California Street), among many others. There are 234 permits in the Washington city archives listing Schneider as architect, and often also owner, representing hundreds of buildings constructed between 1883 and 1906.[28]

In 1902, Schneider was issued a permit to build an eight-story apartment building at 1025 Fifteenth Street, N.W.[29] Schneider named the building for his daughter Ethel, initially calling it Ethel Court (similar to the Florence Court, named for elder daughter Florence).[30] The name was changed to The Ethelhurst sometime in 1903 prior to opening.[31] The building occupied a prime corner lot just at the northern edge of the financial district, in close proximity to the White House, the Treasury Building, major commercial interests, transportation services, and the park at McPherson Square; in all, it was an excellent location to accommodate residential needs within a commercial area. In particular, the building was intended to cater to those who worked in the Fifteenth Street commercial district and nearby federal agencies because they tended to be a higher-income demographic that wanted a fashionable address with built-in amenities. Also, in 1902 many workers continued to prefer living close to their place of work. Later, attitudes would change as automobiles entered the national scope and the suburbs would be more popular with those who could afford a car, but at the turn of the twentieth century many still walked to work. In fact, the maximum distance an average person could feasibly walk to work was a major factor in city development until the late 1920s, contributing to the densification of cities prior to the development of transportation infrastructure.

Schnieder's design for the Ethelhurst represented his attention to architectural trends, visually referencing the new "White City" fashion for pale, uniform architecture, Beaux Arts classicism, and successful late-nineteenth century "flats" buildings in European cities such as Paris. The false mansard roof made the building look slightly smaller than its eight stories, and thereby less intimidating in a period when few structures were higher than five stories, and also evoked Paris' elegant Second Empire apartment buildings. In order to make apartment buildings attractive to the upper class, Schneider needed to rebrand the apartment building not as a solution to overcrowding, but instead as a cosmopolitan enclave of the wealthy. Sumptuous interior finishes, an elevator, a full-service cafe, and the latest in interior comforts such as en suite baths and electric lighting contributed to the Ethelhurst's impression of luxury. The Ethelhurst was more refined in taste than earlier Schneider buildings such as the ostentatious Cairo and resonated well with the restrained elegance of nearby banking houses.

[28] District of Columbia building permits on record in the Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library.
[29] Originally issued March 7, 1902, re-issued May 23, 1902. Possibly reissued because of a controversy over which side was the primary façade, and therefore which street width and height regulation applied. The building was within the 1899 height restrictions for Fifteenth Street (110 feet) but not L Street (ninety feet). It was also possibly due to height limits for fireproof construction; non-fireproof buildings could not exceed five stories.
[30] Jan Jennings, *Cheap and Tasteful Dwellings* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2005), 115.
[31] Based on contemporary newspaper accounts and classified advertisements for the building, 1902-1903.

Subsequent Alterations

Shortly after construction of The Ethelhurst, in 1906, Schneider retired from practicing architecture due to failing eyesight. In 1955, Ethel and Florence Schneider sold nine of their father's apartment buildings, including The Ethelhurst and the Cairo, for three million dollars.[32] By 1955, the downtown apartment building was no longer a desirable living arrangement for upper-class finance industry workers and federal workers, many of whom moved out to Washington's suburbs in the years after World War II. The new owners of the building, brothers Leo and Norman Bernstein, redeveloped the interior into offices and transformed the monumental entrance onto Fifteenth Street.[33]

In 1955, the building was sold as part of a multi-property real estate transaction from the T. F. Schneider Corporation to the syndicate Realty Fund of America, composed of Norman Bernstein Syndicates and Leo M. Bernstein and Co. At the time it was reported that the Ethelhurst contained "38 apartments and four stores."[34] From 1958-1960, the interior of the building was extensively modified and converted into offices. It was sold twice between 1955 and 1961, to Philip Klutznik of Chicago and Milton E. Canter of D.C., respectively, and was leased to the federal government during that time.[35] It was occupied by numerous tenants between 1961 and 1990, notably two collegiate institutions, the Juliet Gibson Career College and a campus of Strayer College, and the law offices of former Washington mayor Walter E. Washington.[36] The building's interior was again renovated in 1990. The interior of the building retains little historic integrity, with very limited evidence of the 1902 finishes. Most interior finishes date to the 1990 renovation.

Assessment of Integrity

In order to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites, a property must retain sufficient integrity, or the ability to convey its significance. The National Register identifies seven aspects of integrity: Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling, and Association. The Multiple Property Document, *Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C., 1880-1945,* provides additional guidance to assess the integrity of apartment buildings in the District of Columbia. The Multiple Property Document states that in order to possess integrity, a conventional apartment building like those of the Ethelhurst must "retain the architectural composition, ornamental details, and materials of their original primary exterior elevation." The Multiple Property Document recognizes that many building have undergone changes, however, "reversible alterations, such as the removal of ornamental detailing; replacement of doors, windows, and their enframements; and scarring of first floor

[32] Jennings, *Cheap and Tasteful Dwellings*, 115.
[33] Paul Herron, "$3 Million Property Sale Told," *Washington Post*, May 4, 1955, Proquest Historic Newspapers.
[34] Herron, "$3 Million Property Sale Told."
[35] "The State of Real Estate," *Washington Post*.
[36] Peter Osnos, "Career Hopes of 'Gibson Girls' Dashed in Bankruptcy Court," *Washington Post*, March 19, 1970; Peter Behr, "High Tech Takes Washington," *Washington Post*, April 28, 1997; and Donald P. Baker, "Washington Joins New York Law Firm," *Washington Post,* February 10, 1979, Proquest Historic Newspapers.

architectural elements (while certainly not appropriate) are common and do not necessarily diminish the building's contribution to the historic context."[37]

The Ethelhurst sufficiently maintains all seven aspects of integrity. The apartment building retains its original location at the intersection of Fifteenth and L Streets on the northern edge of downtown. The nearby Fifteenth Street Financial Historic District remains significantly intact, as do major nearby landmarks such as the Treasury Building. Fifteenth Street remains a highly traveled corridor and the neighborhood retains an essential commercial character, although many existing buildings date to the mid- and late-twentieth century. The exterior of The Ethelhurst reflects integrity of design, workmanship, and materials as envisioned by architect and owner T. Franklin Schneider. Although the entrance onto Fifteenth Street has been altered, the changes are partially reversible (excluding the historic staircase) and the entrance maintains the historic orientation of the building onto Fifteenth Street. The fenestration patterns, surrounds, lintels, sills, window sashes and frames on the exterior are fully intact as originally constructed. The building communicates its historic feeling and association with early twentieth century apartment buildings because of its intact exterior, diminutive size relative to surrounding modern commercial and office blocks, and elegant Beaux Arts design that recalls nineteenth-century European apartment buildings.

[37] National Register of Historic Places, Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C., 1880-1945 Multiple Property Documentation Form, Washington, District of Columbia, National Register #64500083, F:5

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Green, Constance McLaughlin. *Washington: A History of the Capital 1800-1950*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962.

Jennings, Jan. *Cheap and Tasteful Dwellings: Design Competitions and the Convenient Interior, 1879-1909*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2005.

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Passoneau, Joseph. *Washington Through Two Centuries*. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2004.

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The American Architect and *Architectural* Record, Traceries Archives.

Washington Evening Star. Accessed through NewsBank, Inc.

Washington Post. Accessed through Proquest Historical Newspapers and vertical files, Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library.

Previous documentation on file (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 # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

____ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .07 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 38.903466° Longitude: -77.034371°

2. Latitude: 38.903600° Longitude: -77.034389°

3. Latitude: 38.903621° Longitude: -77.034136°

4. Latitude: 38.903473° Longitude: -77.034094°

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Ethelhurst property is located at 1025 Fifteenth Street, N.W., at the intersection of L Street. It occupies a Lot 26 of Square 216. The parcel is bounded by L Street on the north and Fifteenth Street to the west and by adjacent buildings on the east and south sides.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The Ethelhurst has been historically known as 1025 Fifteenth Street, N.W., since its construction in 1902-1903.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Gray O'Dwyer, Architectural Historian
organization: EHT Traceries, Inc.
street & number: 1121 5th Street, N.W.
city or town: Washington state: DC zip code: 20001
e-mail: gray.odwyer@traceries.com
telephone: (202) 393-1199
date: April 29, 2014

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photograph Log

Name of Property: The Ethelhurst
City or Vicinity: Washington
State: District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Traceries, Inc.
Date Photographed: December 2013

Location of Original Digital Files: 1121 5th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001
Number of Photographs: 11

Photo #0001: DC_The Ethelhurst_0001.tif
Exterior; north (left) and west (right) elevations, camera facing southeast

Photo #0002: DC_The Ethelhurst_0002.tif
Exterior; west elevation, camera facing northeast

Photo #0003: DC_The Ethelhurst_0003.tif
Exterior; north elevation, camera facing south

Photo #0004: DC_The Ethelhurst_0004.tif
Exterior; northwest corner detail, camera facing southeast

Photo #0005: DC_The Ethelhurst_0005.tif
Exterior; west entrance oblique, camera facing southeast

Photo #0006: DC_The Ethelhurst_0006.tif
Exterior; detail of west entrance, camera facing east

Photo #0007: DC_The Ethelhurst_0007.tif
Exterior; detail of west windows, camera facing southeast

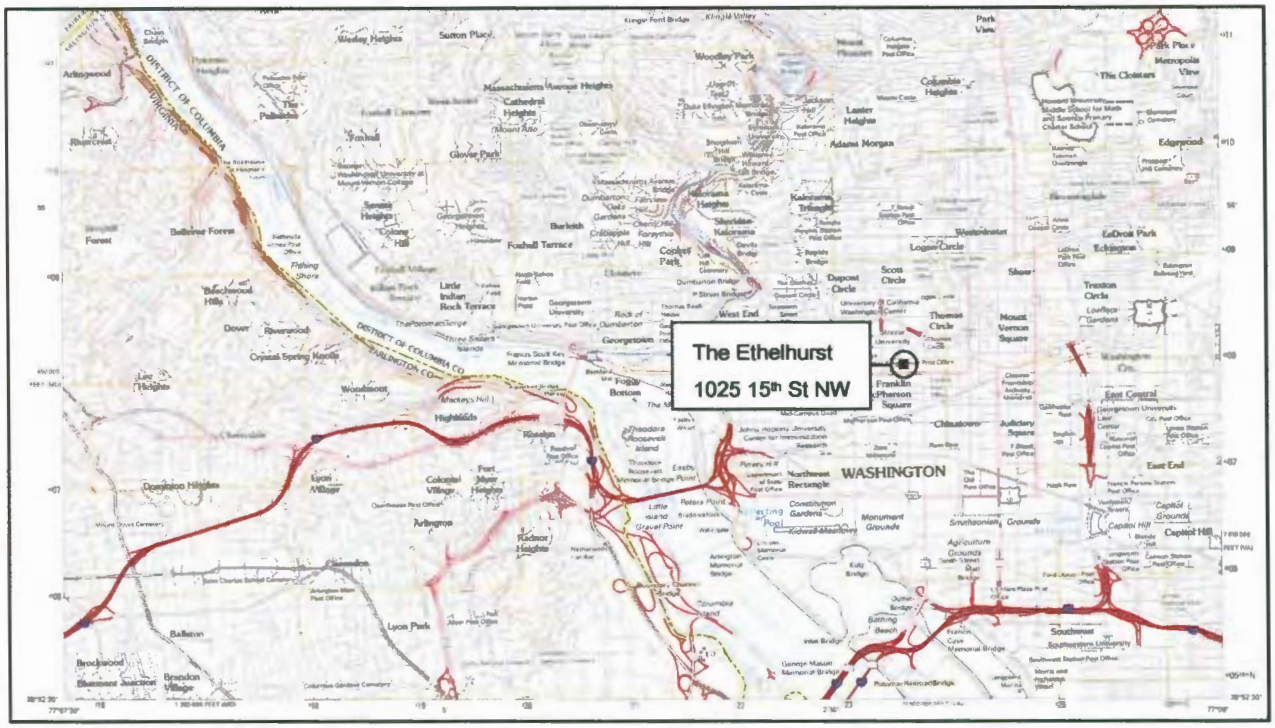
Photo #0008: DC_The Ethelhurst_0008.tif
Exterior; detail of northwest tower, camera facing southeast

Photo #0009: DC_The Ethelhurst_0009.tif
Exterior; detail of west upper windows, camera facing east

Photo #0010: DC_The Ethelhurst_0010.tif
Exterior; detail of north cornice, camera facing south

Photo #0011: DC_The Ethelhurst_0011.tif
Exterior; detail of north ground floor window, camera facing south

Paperwork Reduction Act 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.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



USGS Topographic Map
Washington West, 7.5 Minute Scale, 2011

Photo #0001: DC_The Ethelhurst_0001.tif
Exterior; north (left) and west (right) elevations, camera facing southeast

Photo #0002: DC_The Ethelhurst_0002.tif
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Exterior; detail of north cornice, camera facing south

Photo #0011: DC_The Ethelhurst_0011.tif
Exterior; detail of north ground floor window, camera facing south

Lot 26
1025 15TH ST
C-4
Lot 36
1426-1428 L ST
Lot 805
1422-1424 L ST
Lot 35
1023 15TH ST