

**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 Southern Railway Building  
*If any part of the interior is being nominated, it must be specifically identified and described in the narrative statements.*

Address 1500 K Street, NW

Square and lot number(s) Square 199, Lot 0832

Affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission ANC 2B

Date of construction 1928-29 Date of major alteration(s)       

Architect(s) Waddy B. Wood

Architectural style(s) Classical Revival

Original use Commercial Present use Commercial

Property owner 1500 K Street LLC

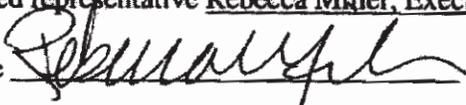
Legal address of property owner C/O Martin Poer and Company, 4 Executive Park West, Suite 100,  
Atlanta, Georgia 30329

NAME OF APPLICANT(S) DC Preservation League

*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) 401 F Street, NW, Room 324, WDC 20001, 202.783.5144

Name and title of authorized representative Rebecca Miller, Executive Director

Signature of representative  Date 8/24/10

Name and telephone of author of application Kim Williams - 202.442.8840

Date received 10/12/10  
H.P.O. staff STB

10-05

**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 Southern Railway Building

other names \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Location**

street & number 1500 K Street, NW  not for publication

city or town Washington, D.C.  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

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Southern Railway Building  
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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	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		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**  
**0**

**6. Function or Use**

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

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

COMMERCE/TRADE/Office Building  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

COMMERCE/TRADE/Office Building  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

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

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY/Commercial Style  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

foundation Granite  
walls Steel frame, limestone-clad  
roof Slag  
other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

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## Description Summary:

The Southern Railway Building, constructed, 1928-29, is an imposing eleven-story office building designed by master architect Waddy B. Wood in a reduced Classical Revival style. The building is located at the southwest corner of 15<sup>th</sup> and K Streets on the west side of McPherson Square in downtown Washington, DC. The L-shaped building measures approximately 217 feet by 179 feet, occupies 30,000 square feet of land, houses 244,550 square feet of office and retail space, and rises 130 feet. The building is a dominant presence along both the K Street and 15<sup>th</sup> Street streetscapes, though its primary façade faces 15<sup>th</sup> Street and the square. The Southern Railway building, together with the Investment Building across K Street, the United Mine Workers building south of it on 15<sup>th</sup> Street, and the Davidson and B.F. Saul buildings across the square, provide visual recognition of the rise of commercial/office building construction in this part of downtown during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Southern Railway Building is a steel and concrete frame structure clad with smooth limestone walls and set upon a low granite base. The building is divided into two parts, including the main block and a distinctive temple-form, roof-top setback. The main block of the building is divided vertically into equal sized bays separated by Giant Order pilasters above the raised base of the building spanning floors 4-7. Simple, punched window openings at the end bays and at the top level of the main block help reduce any dominant sense of verticality. The set-back above the main block of the building features a colonnade with windows between the columns, and on the 15<sup>th</sup> Street elevation, two, di-style *in-antis* pavilions at either end.

Classically inspired, low-relief limestone sculpture is reserved for certain elements of the building, including door surrounds, belt courses and cornice lines. Metal panels and metal doors, similarly decorated with low-relief Classical detailing, ornament the windows and door of the building's main floor level.

The interior of the building is highly ornate with rich detailing found in the public areas, such as the entry lobby, the elevator lobby and corridors.

In 1988 and 1995, the Southern Railway Building underwent restoration of its exterior and interior. The limestone walls were cleaned and re-pointed and the interior had a complete mechanical retrofit. Entry doors were punched into the center three bays of the K Street elevation and a canopy installed to advertise the new entry. An interior corridor was cut from the K Street entrance to connect to the elevator lobby of the 15<sup>th</sup> Street side. A large fountain was built at the intersection of the two corridors, on-axis with the 15<sup>th</sup> Street entrance.

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## General Description:

The primary façade of the Southern Building faces 15<sup>th</sup> Street and McPherson Square. This façade is longer than the K Street elevation and offers a prominent and original three-bay entry. The façade extends thirteen bays long and is divided into three horizontal parts consisting of the base, the shaft, and the rooftop set-back or penthouse level. The base of the building generally corresponds with three interior floor levels, including the ground floor stores, and two floors of offices above. However, in the case of the three center bays where the main lobby is, there is only one floor of offices above, since the lobby features a double-height interior space. The shaft consists of office floors 4-8, all within the main body of the building. The rooftop set-back consists of floors 9 and 10-11, whereby the 9<sup>th</sup> floor serves as a base for the colonnaded, temple above formed by floors 10-11.

The principal entry to the Southern Railway Building is located in the center three bays in the base of the building. These three bays are recessed into the limestone walls and framed by large, double-height surrounds with Greek bas-relief detailing in the cornice, capped by a central acroterion. Small roundel bas-relief sculpture ornaments the frieze below the cornice, while a beaded molding frames the actual opening. Double bronze doors, framed by bronze surrounds and large bronze grilles above them are set within the monumental openings. The building's name, "SOUTHERN RAILWAY" is decoratively incorporated in the frieze above the transom of the double doors. The four storefront openings to either side of the central entries are framed in bronze and span a double-height space, including the ground-level stores and offices above. The frame around the openings is decorated with bronze roundels and continuous Greek motif, while a central spandrel offers a decorative motif on-center with larger roundels flanking it.

Flagpole standards are located at the top of and to either side of the central of the three entry doors.

The third story of the building, above the tall openings of the lower level, is defined by 13 bays of squarish window openings, fitted with two-light replacement windows. These openings are cleanly punched into the wall and relatively flush with it. A beltcourse with an alternating rhythm of repeating garland, rosette and shell motifs separates the base of the building from the "shaft" of the building above.

Floors 4-8, which rises to 110 feet, constitute the "shaft" or middle part of the building. Within this middle section, floors 4-7 are joined together by giant Order pilasters, while the eighth story offers a row of equally spaced punched window openings that visually serves as a cornice above the colonnade of giant Order pilasters. On the fourth floor, pairs of fixed windows are separated from the windows above by stone spandrels. On floors 5-7, tri-partite replacement windows with

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metal, rather than stone, spandrels separate the floors and fill in the space between the pilasters. The pilasters are made of smooth limestone and feature Doric capitals with guttae. A wide frieze is decorated with incised metope carvings, centrally aligned above each pilaster. A slightly projecting box cornice caps the giant Order colonnade of the wall. The eighth floor of the building consists of a row of single, punched window openings (two per bay) that extends the full length of the building and serves as a final attic story or cap to the main body of the building. Similarly, the two end bays of the building, not framed by the giant Order pilasters, include single, punched windows that provide an exterior frame to the colonnade.

The “top” of the building, the rooftop setback or penthouse, consists of floors 9-11. It is set back from the middle section and is separated from it by an elegantly carved cornice characterized primarily by its repeating lions’ heads. The rooftop setback reaches 130 feet and the height of the city’s height limit. Visually distinct from the body of the building below it, the setback appears as a temple raised upon a base. The base, being Floor 9, strictly consists of a row of equally arranged square window openings aligned above those of Floor 8, but of course, set back from it. The temple itself features a long central wing of 16 bays and two end pavilions with two columns arranged *in antis*. The 16-bay colonnade of this recessed penthouse features double-story Doric pilasters with superimposed windows separated by metal spandrels. The end pavilions, which provide open balcony areas, project slightly from the colonnade with fluted Doric columns framed by engaged pilasters and visually supporting the architrave above.

The north elevation facing K Street is somewhat shorter, spanning 11 instead of 13 bays, with the inside 9 bays articulated by Giant Order pilasters spanning floors 4-7 as on the 15<sup>th</sup> Street façade. Like on 15<sup>th</sup> Street, the two end bays are not included within the colonnade, but form end piers to it. The first story of this elevation is similarly defined by tall, ground floor openings, including three on-center entry doors cut into the building as part of the 1995 renovation. Sympathetically done, these new entrances were expanded from the original window openings. The entrances are simply cut into the wall, providing openings that lead to a recessed entry. The recessed entry doors are modern, but the original bronze window frames and spandrels have been retrofitted to the new recessed entry. Three contemporary metal canopies project from the three wall exterior openings, clearly identifying them as an entrance. As on the 15<sup>th</sup> Street side, there are tall storefront openings to either side of the new entrances.

The floor levels on the K Street side are similarly arranged as on the 15<sup>th</sup> Street side, with an elaborate garlanded cornice separating the building’s base from its middle and a secondary cornice with lions’ heads separating the building’s middle from its top. The setback is similarly articulated, but here, the colonnade lacks the end pavilions with its *in antis* columns and consists instead of unadorned walls acting as end piers.

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The western end of the K Street elevation abuts the smaller Peyser building, revealing the U-shaped footprint of the Southern building and the light-well facing the west.

### Interior:

The interior of the Southern Railway Building consists, on the ground level, of individual storefronts that open directly onto 15<sup>th</sup> Street, and a grand entrance lobby to the office building on 15<sup>th</sup> Street, with a newer retrofitted secondary entrance on K Street. The entrance lobbies lead to central corridors that in turn lead to a bank of elevators that provide access to the offices in the upper floors. All of the public spaces are elegantly appointed. The 15<sup>th</sup> Street lobby area spans the width of the three exterior entrance bays and rises a full two stories in height. The floors are laid in a gleaming white marble, with black marble framing the edge and symmetrically placed black marble squares forming a grid pattern. The walls are similarly of marble, but offer a warm and contrasting beige hue with noticeable striations. The marble extends from the black marble baseboards to the ornate crown molding, while a coffered ceiling spans the full width of the lobby. The marble walls are not unadorned, but feature recessed panels, double-height pilasters and a frieze separating the double-height lobby from a mezzanine space above it. From this lobby, a tall central opening leads into the elevator lobby where banks of elevators are located on either side of a central corridor. Beyond the banks of elevators, this central corridor intersects at a fountain to the perpendicular corridor that provides access to the K Street entrance of the building.

None of the individual offices were inspected. However, a conference room in the penthouse level, which originally served as the office of Southern Railway Company president, still retains its original fireplace and stone mantel. Historic photographs of the building under construction and of the president's office are hanging on the walls in the building manager's office off of the K Street lobby.

+

### 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

#### Period of Significance

1928-1929

#### Significant Dates

1928-1929

#### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

#### Cultural Affiliation

#### Architect/Builder

Waddy Butler Wood

### 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:

\_\_\_\_\_

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## Summary Statement of Significance:

The highly visible and well-designed Southern Railway Building was constructed in 1928-29 as the executive headquarters building for the Southern Railway Company. The company, which at that time operated a system of over 125 merged southern railroads, was considered one of the country's most successful railroad conglomerates at a time when the railroads were some of the most powerful companies in the country. Like the well-appointed train cars that were built at the height of the railroad era, the Southern Railway Building stands as a monument to the railroad industry, in general, and to the Southern Railway Company, in specific. The Southern Railway Building meets Criterion A for its important associations with the railroad industry.

The Southern Railway Building, designed by master architect Waddy Butler Wood stands as one of the city's most elegant and refined office buildings in Washington, D.C. of the 1920s. The building is designed in a reduced Classical Revival style consistent with other substantial buildings in the city from its period. However, it also provides an early expression of the Art Deco Movement in its ornamentation and even features some proto-Modern elements (such as punched window openings) that mark the building as an early example of the city's architectural transition away from purely Classical building forms and traditions. The eleven-story Southern Railway Building with its giant Order colonnade and distinctive rooftop setback designed to meet the city's specialized zoning code is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C. The Southern Railway Building is an excellent example of its building type and style, and is an excellent representation of the work of master architect Waddy B. Wood.

The Period of Significance for the Southern Railway Building is 1929, the year in which the building was completed and dedicated.

## Resource History and Historic Context:

### The Southern Railway Company in Washington: Its Beginnings

The Southern Railway Company, a system of almost 150 merged railroad companies at its height, was organized in 1894 by financier J.P. Morgan with the consolidation of the *Richmond and Danville Railroad* (formed in 1847) and the *East Tennessee, Virginia and Georgia Railroad* (formed in 1887). The *South Carolina Canal and Railroad Company* originally chartered in 1827 and eventually one of the Southern Railway Company's subsidiaries operated the country's first regularly scheduled passenger train. Throughout much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Southern Railway Company acquired railroads throughout the southern states; by the 1970s, it served all

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of the states south of the Ohio and Potomac rivers and east of the Mississippi, except West Virginia. In 1982 the Southern was merged with the *Norfolk and Western Railway Company* and thereafter was operated by Norfolk Southern Corporation, a holding company.

Upon its founding, the Southern Railway Company established its headquarters in Washington, D.C., with its main offices located at 13<sup>th</sup> Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. The 13<sup>th</sup> Street headquarters, no longer standing, was originally constructed in 1871 in a grand Second Empire style for the *National Republican* newspaper offices and was purchased by the *Richmond and Danville Railroad* for its offices in 1887. When the *Richmond and Danville* was incorporated into the *Southern* at its founding, the building at 13<sup>th</sup> and Pennsylvania Avenue became the new company's headquarters. In 1899, the Southern Railway Company enlarged the building, creating an imposing seven-story structure with a prominent central tower that vied with its nearby neighbor, now known as the Old Post Office Pavilion. The building, long a landmark on Pennsylvania Avenue, suffered a major fire in 1916, resulting in its demolition a few weeks later.<sup>1</sup> A new, not very distinctive building was erected on the site.

In 1926, the federal government began negotiations to acquire certain properties along Pennsylvania Avenue for the construction of federal office buildings (the Federal Triangle). At that time, the Southern Railway Company office housed 2,200 employees with an annual payroll of over \$4,000,000. With the prospect of having to move its offices where it had been headquartered for 40 years, the Southern Railway Company, already at the cusp of decentralizing the company, considered the option of leaving Washington altogether. In December 1926, Southern Railway President Fairfax Harrison succinctly noted:

“No decision has been reached as to where our operating headquarters are to be in the future. Such a decision can not be made until we know certainly that we must move from the location where we have been established for 40 years. If and when Congress shall authorize the expropriation of our Washington office building, our decision as to the future will be made promptly, and that decision will be solely on the merits of the company's own problem of efficient administration.”

Concerned about the loss of a major employer in the city, local trade associations and business leaders began lobbying the Southern Railway Company to keep its headquarters in the city. According to the local press, the head of the Chamber of Commerce, the president of the Board of Trade and the president of the Merchants and Manufacturers Association held a conference with the company emphasizing its importance to the city in

<sup>1</sup> James Goode, *Capital Losses*, p. 383.

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an effort to convince it to retain its headquarters in Washington.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, of course, other cities including Atlanta, GA; Alexandria and Richmond, VA; and Charlotte, NC were also vying to attract the company to their cities. The Southern Railway Company deferred any formal commitment to this city or others until the federal government confirmed its “taking” of its building.

Over one year later, in February 1928, Congress passed legislation authorizing the appropriation of \$2,680,000 for the purchase of the Southern Railway building at 13<sup>th</sup> and Pennsylvania Avenue. By March, the Company had purchased a site at 15<sup>th</sup> and K Streets for construction of its new headquarters building, effectively announcing its decision to remain in the city. However, although the Southern Railway Company kept its executive headquarters in the city, it also transferred the accounting department to Atlanta thereby reducing the company’s workforce in D.C. from 2,200 employees to 1,000.<sup>3</sup> The Company’s Atlanta offices were enlarged to accommodate this influx of new workers.

### Construction of the Southern Railway Building:

Through its agent Harry Wardman, The Southern Railway Company obtained the site at 15<sup>th</sup> and K Streets for \$1,600,000 having failed to acquire another site at 13<sup>th</sup> and I Streets, NW. At the time of purchase, the site consisted of a series of eleven lots between the University Club (United Mine Workers Building) on 15<sup>th</sup> Street and the Peysner Building (Security Savings and Commercial Bank) on K Street, improved with three-and four-story residential and commercial buildings. The Southern Railway Company lost little time in having the site re-zoned from its 90-foot height limit to that of 110 feet.<sup>4</sup> As constructed, the Southern Railway Building rose 130 feet high, with a setback at the 110-foot height limit.

In July 1928, demolition crews began clearing the site of its predecessor buildings (many of the displaced businesses moved across the street to the Investment Building and to other neighboring office buildings) in preparation for construction of the present building on the site. Designed by Waddy Butler Wood in the architect’s personal expression of a Classical Revival style with emerging Modern features, the Southern Railway Building began construction in December 1928 with an official cornerstone laying ceremony with

<sup>2</sup> “Southern Railway Parley Tomorrow, Business Leaders Arrange Conference on Offices with Harrison,” *The Washington Post*, December 16, 1926, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> “Southern Obtains New Building Site for Offices here,” *The Washington Post*, March 7, 1928, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> “Railroad Structure Will be 110 Feet High: Zoning Commission Changes 90-Foot Regulation for K Street Corner,” *The Washington Post*, March 29, 1928. See also, “Plans for New Railway Building Being Drawn,” *The Washington Post*, April 1, 1928, p. R1.

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Masonic rituals. Grand Master James T. Gibbs of the Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia officiated using the same trowel and gavel that George Washington used in the laying of the cornerstone of the U.S. Capitol. Within the cornerstone, the Southern Railway Company placed a copper box, filled with a variety of historic artifacts relevant to the history of the railway company and the country, including a printed list of the names of approximately 10,000 Masons in the employ of the Southern Railway Company.<sup>5</sup> Based upon the building plans, local accounts noted that “when completed the new building will rank, if not exceed in attractiveness of design other buildings abutting or adjacent to McPherson Square.”

Indeed, the eleven-story building remains a dominant physical presence on McPherson Square and is architecturally one of the most significant office buildings in downtown, DC. The building, constructed in one year, opened to the public in August 1929. The next day, a large photograph hailing the building appeared in the *Washington Post*. Perhaps recalling the luxurious private railroad cars of the past, the executive offices of the company, housed in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> floors of the buildings, were serviced by a private elevator in a separate lobby alcove.

### The End of the Railroad Era:

In 1953, signaling the end of the steam engine, the Southern had become the first railroad company to pull all of its trains by diesel engines. Sensitive to the historical significance of the steam engine, the Southern Railway Company then donated to the Smithsonian Institution its locomotive 1401—one of its most famous heavy Pacific Class engines. This “thoroughbred” so named by enthusiasts due to its ability to cruise easily at 80 miles per hour pulling as many as 14 cars, had logged two million miles during 25 years of service from 1926 to 1951. Engine 1401, after being restored and painted green and gold based on the company’s original color scheme, was, in 1961, brought through the streets of D.C. to its new home in the Smithsonian’s Science and Technology building. Since then, the steam engine has become the most viewed engine in the country, keeping alive the romance of the rails in the Era of Steam.<sup>6</sup>

In 1983, the Southern Railway Company merged with the Norfolk & Western, whose headquarters were in Norfolk, Virginia. The Southern Railway Building on McPherson Square was vacated. It was renovated in 1988, including a mechanical retrofit, and again

<sup>5</sup> “Southern to Lay Its Cornerstone,” *The Washington Post*, December 20, 1928, p. 20. For a list of the artifacts included within the cornerstone, see “Southern Railroad Corner Stone Laid,” *The Washington Post*, December 21, 1928, p. 20.

<sup>6</sup> See the never-submitted National Register Nomination for the “Southern Railway Executive Office Building” dated May 1995 (Vertical Files, DC Historic Preservation Office).

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in 1995. The Southern Railway Office Building presently serves as a private office building with a number of tenants.

### Waddy Butler Wood: Architect of the Southern Railway Building

Waddy Butler Wood (1869-1944) was a talented local architect who practiced architecture in the city for 48 years, from 1892 to 1940, during a period of great development in the city. His talent, enthusiasm, and family background served him well and he became a much sought after architect. Wood grew up in Ivy, Virginia, and studied engineering at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute for two years. He left school at the age of 18 to join a C&O Railroad Engineer Corps survey. He moved to Washington in 1891, determined to fulfill his dream of becoming an architect. He was hired as a draftsman, but through self-education and determination, Wood began his own practice in 1892. His early projects included modest residences in northeast Washington. His first major commission came in 1895, when he was retained by the Capitol Traction Company to design the company's new car barn on M Street in Georgetown. A year later Wood designed the East Capitol Street Car Barn. Soon, Wood's charisma and upper class status allowed him access into Washington society and he was soon designing houses for some of the city's most distinguished residents.

In 1902, Wood formed a partnership with Edward Donn, Jr. and William I. Deming. The popularity of the firm grew with Wood serving as the principal designer. The firm was known for its outstanding and imaginative designs. In 1912, the partnership was amicably dissolved. As an independent architect, Wood continued to capture prestigious commissions. He focused his attention on commercial and government work, undertaking residential work only for mansions of Washington's elite. During this period, Wood designed buildings for large corporations such as the Potomac and Electric Power Company (999 E Street, NW), the Union Trust Company (738-740 15<sup>th</sup> Street), the Masonic Temple (801 13<sup>th</sup> Street, NW), the Southern Railway Company (1500 K Street), the Commercial National Bank (1405 G Street, NW) and the Department of the Interior.

His commissions for private interests and large residences included the remodeling of the Chevy Chase Club and the old Holton Arms School, several houses in Chevy Chase, the residence of Henry Fairbanks (later remodeled for Woodrow Wilson), the estate of Dr. Cary Grayson and his own house, Leeton Forest both in Fauquier County, Virginia.

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### Major Bibliographical References:

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“Fairfax Harrison, Ex-President of Southern Railroad Is Dead,” *The Washington Post*, February 3, 1938, p. XI.

“Fund to Purchase Southern Railway Building Provided,” *The Washington Post*, February 8, 1928, p. 20.

“Plans for New Railway Building Being Drawn,” *The Washington Post*, April 1, 1928, p. R1.

“President Urges \$2,680,000 to Buy Railway Building,” *The Washington Post*, January 31, 1928.

“Public Views Railway Offices,” *The Washington Post*, August 27, 1929, p. 20.

“Railroad Structure Will be 110 Feet High,” *The Washington Post*, March 29, 1928, p. 20.

“Southern is Undecided Over its Future Home,” *The Washington Post*, December 14, 1926, p. 8.

“Southern Awaits Loss of Building to Consider Move,” *The Washington Post*, December 18, 1926.

“Southern Railway Decides to Retain Head Offices Here,” *The Washington Post*, December 24, 1927, p. 1.

“Southern Obtains New Building Site for Offices Here,” *The Washington Post*, March 7, 1928, p. 18.

“Southern Railway Site Being Cleared,” *The Washington Post*, July 15, 1928, p. R1.

“Southern to Lay It[s] Corner Stone: Railway will Have Rites by Masons at 15<sup>th</sup> and K Streets Site Today,” *The Washington Post*, December 20, 1928, p. 20.

Southern Railway Building  
Name of Property

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## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 32,673 square feet

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	3	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	4	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

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 Prothro Williams

Organization D.C. Historic Preservation Office date November 2009

street & number 2000 14<sup>th</sup> Street, NW telephone 202 442-8840

city or town Washington, D.C. state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code 20009

## 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.

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 15<sup>th</sup> and K Associates

street & number 1700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW 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.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Southern Railway Building

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

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## Verbal Boundary Description:

The Southern Railway Building at 1500 K Street, NW occupies Lot 832 of Square 199.

## Boundary Justification:

The Southern Railway Building has been associated with this lot since the building's construction in 1928-29

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