

**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 Dupont Circle Historic District (Amendment and Boundary Increase)

other names _____

2. Location

street & number See Boundary Description not for publication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

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	
70	48	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
70	48	118 Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Over 3,000

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single dwelling/multiple dwelling/hotel/
 Institutional housing/secondary structure
 COMMERCE/TRADE/business/professional/financial
 Institution/specialty store/restaurant
 TRANSPORTATION/road-related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single dwelling/multiple dwelling/hotel/
 Institutional housing/secondary structure
 COMMERCE/TRADE/business/professional/financial
 Institution/specialty store/restaurant
 TRANSPORTATION/road-related

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/Second Empire/Queen Anne/
 LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/
 Beaux Arts/Colonial/Classical Revival/Renaissance
 LATE 19TH AND 20TH C. AMERICAN MVMT/
 Commercial style/Chicago
 MODERN MOVEMENT/Moderne/Art Deco

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation _____
 walls _____
 roof _____
 other _____

Narrative Description

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

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Description Summary:

This amendment to the Dupont Circle Historic District is two-fold and addresses 1) the period of significance for the historic district and 2) increased boundaries to the historic district. The period of significance is addressed exclusively in Section 8 of this nomination. The discussion of increased boundaries is included in Sections 7 and 8.

Boundary Increase:

The proposed expansion to the Dupont Circle Historic District seeks to establish historic district boundaries that more accurately reflect the boundaries of what was historically considered the Dupont Circle neighborhood, and that incorporate buildings that provide a more thorough understanding of the neighborhood's history and evolution. The current boundaries of the historic district (listed in the National Register in 1978, amended in 1985) include an area of approximately 40 city squares extending in all directions around Dupont Circle. These boundaries were drawn to include the largest concentrations of buildings that are reflective of Dupont Circle's principally late 19th-early 20th century residential character. The boundaries were drawn to exclude "intrusions"—that is buildings generally less than 50 years old that do not share the same distinguishing qualities of architecture as the historic buildings. In addition, the boundaries did not include many of the more modest and less architecturally distinctive buildings in the area. The current proposed boundaries incorporate all of the buildings in the area historically considered Dupont Circle, including both contributing and non-contributing resources.

The new proposed boundaries include three areas of expansion on the western, eastern, and southern edges of the present district. The expanded area adds 118 buildings to the historic district, including 70 contributing and 48 non-contributing buildings (see Appendix: Contributing/Non-Contributing Resource List).

Following is a general description of the three areas of expansion.

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General Description:

Western Area:

The Western area includes all properties in Squares 48, 49 and all of those properties in Squares 67 and 68 that are not already included within the historic district. By including this western area, the boundary of the historic district extends to the eastern edge of Rock Creek Park, an obvious and distinct natural boundary separating Dupont Circle and Georgetown.

Together the four squares contain 31 buildings¹ (24 contributing, 7 non-contributing) not already located within the historic district and representing a variety of building types. Several of these buildings are service-oriented structures, including three stables/carriage houses that were associated with the large mansions of Dupont Circle, and that provide physical reminders of the way-of-life of the wealthy 19th- and early 20th-century residents of Dupont Circle. Others are residential, including 20th-century apartment buildings, and modest-scaled row houses that catered to the less affluent, working-class resident of Dupont Circle. Many of these row houses, generally smaller than the typical Dupont Circle row house and found most notably along 22nd Street in the proposed expanded area and along Newport Place in the existing historic district, were historically associated with a sizable African-American population that lived in the area as early as 1880. Finally, the proposed expanded area includes a number of early to mid-20th century commercial buildings, particularly along the 2100 block of P Street that illustrate the commercialization of Dupont Circle during this period.

Squares 48 and 49, forming the western edge of the expansion area, include a number of architecturally distinctive buildings, as well as others that contribute to a broader understanding of the history of Dupont Circle. The 1300 block of 22nd Street consists of a row of two-story row houses that are architecturally consistent with the more modest late 19th-century residential development along the side streets of Dupont Circle. Two of these, 1332-1334 22nd Street, designed by notable architect A.B. Mullett and built in 1892, exhibit Queen Anne-style detailing, including a semi-circular corner tower clad with ornamental slate.

A group of three (originally four), Colonial Revival-style, two-story row houses at 1326-1330 22nd Street, and built in 1926, is not architecturally characteristic of the neighborhood, but is notable as 20th-century residences of members of the long-established African American community (see Section 8). The Embassy Gulf Station, which sits on the site of an earlier riding academy building, provides an excellent example of a stripped classical limestone service station, built in 1936 at a time when Dupont Circle had evolved from a predominantly wealthy residential neighborhood, to a more mixed use one.

¹ Five of the buildings in this western area are listed in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites as individual landmarks: Walsh Stables, Codman Carriage House, Embassy Gulf Station, Spencer Stables and the apartment building at 2225 N Street, N.W.

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Squares 67 and 68 include numerous buildings representing Dupont Circle’s architectural evolution, including small-scale residential and commercial buildings on P Street and larger, late 19th and early 20th century apartment buildings on 22nd Street. The building at 2147-2149 P Street was constructed in 1894 as a pair of three-story, brick dwellings, designed by A.B. Mullett, stylistically compatible with other dwellings along Dupont Circle’s side streets. The 2100 block of P Street consists of a row of commercial buildings, including several one-story stores. Stylistically, these store buildings are not unique to Dupont Circle, but are typical of commercial buildings of the period that can be found throughout the city.

Multi-unit dwellings, including the 1905 Beaux Arts apartment at 1523 22nd Street and the 1916 apartment at 1511 22nd Street define 22nd Street above P Street. Until the late 19th-century/early 20th-century when these buildings were erected, this stretch of 22nd Street stood relatively undeveloped, though the notable Walsh Stable building located in the alleyway would have been visible from the public right-of-way. The Walsh Stable—associated with the Massachusetts Avenue residence of Thomas Walsh, owner of the world’s largest gold mines—is an excellent example of a high-style, private stable/carriage house. The building is a two-story brick structure with Flemish stylistic influences, including Dutch gables, wide, overhanging roof with terra cotta tiles. Three non-contributing, out-of-period multi-family residential buildings (The State House Apartments, Barcello Hotel and Dupont West Apartments) rise above the contributing resources in the block.

On the south side of P Street, Square 68 includes two local landmarks—the Codman Carriage House and the Spencer Stables—which, like the Walsh Stable, survive as good examples of a now-obsolete building type and provide illustrations of the 19th-century lifestyle of the wealthy Dupont Circle resident. The Second Empire-style Codman Carriage House served the residence of New England heiress, Martha Codman, at 2145 Decatur Place and was designed by architect Ogden Codman, Martha’s cousin and well-known society architect. The more utilitarian-looking, but still impressively sized, Spencer Stables in Twining Court served as the private stables to Samuel Spencer’s Massachusetts Avenue mansion. All of these stable buildings provide premier examples of private stables/carriage houses built in the last years of the American upper class’s dependence on personally owned horse-drawn conveyance.

Eastern Area:

The eastern expansion area includes all of the those buildings south of R Street and north of Scott Circle, between 17th Street on the west and the 16th Street Historic District on the east. This includes those properties on Squares 179 and 180 not already included in either the Dupont Circle Historic District or the 16th Street Historic District and those properties in Squares 181, S181 and N182, not included in the 16th Street Historic District. Squares 179 and 180 contain some of Dupont Circle’s oldest buildings, constructed in the early 1870s, that preceded the area’s development as a wealthy residential neighborhood, along with early 20th century commercial buildings along 17th Street. The increased

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boundary also includes the Cairo Apartments, one of the neighborhood's most significant buildings from an architectural and urban planning perspective.

The oldest buildings in this eastern area are found along the 1600 blocks of Corcoran and Q Streets. Both of these blocks include a row of two-story Italianate-style dwellings with bracketed wood cornices. These groups, built in the 1870s, are stylistically typical of the speculative residential development of the post-Civil War period in Washington. Constructed just 2-1/2 blocks west of the 14th Street streetcar line, these early dwellings were clearly built with the expectation that northwest Washington would develop along the streetcar routes. Several other two-story, Italianate-style brick dwellings found in this eastern expansion area were also constructed in the 1870s, including 1623 and 1625 17th Street (1878). These two were altered during the 1920s to accommodate first floor storefronts when 17th Street became a commercial node. The two-story Italianate building at 1633 P Street is the oldest documented building in the expanded area. This building stood as early as 1873-74 and, according to the 1873-74 Fahetz and Pratt Assessment records, was one of just a few brick buildings surrounded by less substantial frame ones. Several other buildings in this eastern area, such as the pair of brick dwellings at 1608-1610 Q Street (1881, 1882), were constructed somewhat later, but still preceded the major building boom of the last decade of the 19th century.

The buildings along 17th Street characterize the commercialization of 17th Street and its transformation from a residential area to a commercial one. During the late 19th century, 17th Street was lined with architect-designed and builder-built two- and three-story brick dwellings, such as the robust 3-1/2-story building at the corner of 17th and Corcoran (1613-1617 17th Street) designed by George B. Phelps in 1888. This dwelling, along with lesser examples, is similar in character to the buildings on surrounding neighborhood streets within the historic district. Beginning in the 1900s, many of these dwellings began to accommodate stores on the first story with living quarters in the floors above. Eventually, purpose-built stores were erected along 17th Street, in some cases engendering the demolition of earlier 19th-century buildings, such as at 17th and Q Street, when in 1924-26, the present commercial building on the site was constructed on the site of earlier structures. The varied streetscape of 17th Street with its combination of 19th and 20th century buildings clearly illustrates the commercialization of 17th Street.

The expansion of the boundaries to include this eastern area would also appropriately bring the Cairo Apartments into the historic district. The 12-story Cairo, a luxury apartment building at 1615 Q Street, was constructed in 1894 to the innovative designs of owner-architect T.F. Schneider. Public outrage over its height prompted the development of city zoning laws that limited building heights within the city.

The non-contributing buildings within the proposed expanded boundaries are two-fold: low-scale residential infill built during the 1960s and 70s, and large-scale multi-story office buildings. The low-scale infill buildings are generally located along the side streets, including the 1600 blocks of Corcoran

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and Q Streets, and the 2100 block of O Street. These infill buildings typically consist of two and three-story brick townhouse dwellings that are sympathetic to the massing of the existing 19th century row houses. The larger, multi-story residential and commercial buildings tend to be located towards the southern end of the eastern expansion area, at 17th and Massachusetts Avenues, and around Connecticut and N Streets, within the heart of historic Dupont Circle. Despite the out-of-period date and incompatible scale of these contemporary buildings, the area was historically part of Dupont Circle and still forms an important gateway into the historic district. In addition, several contributing resources, such as the large residence at 1617 Massachusetts Avenue, survive in juxtaposition to these new buildings; an expansion of the historic district would appropriately capture these important buildings and more accurately reflect the historic reaches of the neighborhood.

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, Social History

Period of Significance

1791-1931

Significant Dates

1920; 1931

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

A.B. Mullett; Julius Wenig; George B. Phelps; Nicholas T. Haller; Victor Mindeleff; Albert Beers; Stern & Tomlinson

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:

This Statement of Significance is an amendment to the Dupont Circle Historic District National Register nomination form (1978, as amended 1985). This amendment is two-fold and addresses 1) the historic district's Period of Significance, and 2) a proposed boundary increase.

Period of Significance:

The nomination form for the Dupont Circle Historic District, listed in the National Register in 1978 (amended, 1985) does not specify a period of significance for the historic district. The original application and the 1985 amendment recognize the principally residential, 19th and early 20th-century development of Dupont Circle. In general, the documentation addresses Dupont Circle's heyday as a wealthy residential neighborhood of elaborate mansions built along the avenues, with more middle-class row houses lining the area's side streets. The current amendment presents a broader understanding of the history of Dupont Circle that addresses other socio-economic forces that helped shape Dupont Circle, before, during and after its heyday. In particular, this amended nomination examines the commercialization of Dupont Circle during the early 20th century and its effect on the community. Beginning in the 1900s, but becoming more pronounced in the 1920s, Dupont Circle began to undergo a change that ultimately transformed it from an exclusively residential neighborhood of wealthy residents to a more mixed-use residential and commercial one. Connecticut Avenue, 17th Street and P Street, all principal arteries within the historic district saw a spate of new commercial uses, and along with that, new buildings and new building types. This commercialization trend is not only important in defining Dupont Circle's historical growth, but the buildings that this evolution inspired are important contributors to the architectural character of the Dupont Circle Historic District.

This amendment also addresses the early development of Dupont Circle that pre-dated the area's rise as a wealthy enclave, and the existence of a sizeable population of working-class residents, many of whom were African American, and many of whom lived in the less architecturally prominent, but equally important buildings in the neighborhood.

The period of significance proposed for the Dupont Circle Historic District extends from 1791 to 1931, as discussed below. Any prehistoric or historic archaeological resources falling within or outside the period of significance would be considered contributing to the historic district.

Boundary Increase:

When the Dupont Circle Historic District was listed in the National Register in 1978, the district was bounded to the northwest by Florida Avenue, to the east by 17th Street, to the south by

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Rhode Island Avenue, and to the west by 21st Street. A later boundary increase to the historic district (amended 1985) expanded the boundaries in three directions to the south, southwest, and northeast. As discussed in the 1985 nomination, these additions were contiguous with the 1978 boundaries, contemporary in style and construction dates, and generally reflected the same social forces that affected the development of the rest of the neighborhood. One notable exception to the 1985 boundary increase justification involved the expansion of the historic district to include Newport Place, identified in the 1985 nomination as “a unique block-long enclave of modest old townhouses [that] would have been home to some of the domestic workers in the larger houses of the historic district.”² In this respect, the 1985 amendment opened itself up to a more comprehensive picture of the history of Dupont Circle. The current proposed boundary increase seeks to provide an even more complete and comprehensive understanding of the history of Dupont Circle and to more accurately reflect the boundaries of what was historically considered Dupont Circle.

The proposed boundaries presented in this amendment generally follow the jurisdiction boundaries established by the Dupont Circle Citizens Association in 1922³ and more accurately reflect the physical and socio-economic realities of historic Dupont Circle. Many of the more modest buildings, in particular along P, Q and Corcoran Streets, currently excluded from the historic district, represent the area’s earliest building stock, while others were home to the less prominent, working-class members of Dupont Circle, including a well-established enclave of African Americans who lived along and around Newport Place, N.W., including 21st, 22nd and N Streets. Similarly, the early 20th-century commercial buildings, in particular along P Street and 17th Street, provide important information on the commercial growth of Dupont Circle during the 1920s and later. The out-of-period, large-scale office buildings and apartment buildings excluded from the current boundaries would be considered non-contributing resources within the proposed historic district.

Resource History and Historic Context:

Period of Significance:

As proposed, the Period of Significance for the Dupont Circle Historic District extends from 1791 to 1931. In 1931, two seminal events occurred that marked a major turning point in the district’s history from an exclusively residential neighborhood of prominent and wealthy residents, to a mixed-use residential/commercial area and burgeoning business district. The two

² National Register of Historic Places, Dupont Circle Historic District Boundary Increase, 1985, p.7-1.

³ “Dupont Circle: In Commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Dupont Circle Citizens’ Association,” Casillas Press: Washington, D.C., 1972, p.9.

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events were: 1) the demolition of the British Embassy building south of Dupont Circle at Connecticut Avenue and N Street, signaling the demise of the elite social character of Dupont Circle, and 2) the construction of the 12-story Dupont Circle Building on the south side of the Circle, marking the beginning of large-scale development trends in the increasingly commercial neighborhood.

Although Dupont Circle had been experiencing progressive commercialization of its principal corridors during the first decades of the 20th century, the building changes were compatible, in terms of scale and massing, with the existing residential building stock of the district. Following the construction of the Dupont Circle building in 1931, however, a dramatic change in the nature of new construction began to notably alter the historic architectural character of the district. Impressive Victorian and Beaux-Arts mansions that defined Dupont Circle in its heyday were increasingly being lost to large, multi-storied residential and commercial blocks and parking lots, a trend that continued apace well into the 1960s and early 1970s.

Historical Background:

As detailed in the Dupont Circle Historic District National Register Nomination (1978, as amended 1985), Dupont Circle developed into a fashionable residential area beginning in the last quarter of the 19th century. Construction of Stewart’s Castle on the newly improved Circle⁴ in 1873-74, and the British Legation at Connecticut Avenue and N Street in 1875 heralded this trend. Wealthy, socially prominent families, and later, other foreign legations began to move into the area, building grand, architect-designed mansions on the formerly undeveloped land. The wide, tree-lined avenues provided a grand setting for these stylish Victorian and Beaux Arts residences that were being commissioned by the nation’s elite. Behind the large avenues and strategic corner lots, long rows of exuberant brick Queen Anne and Richardsonian Romanesque-style row houses occupied by middle-class professional and official Washingtonians, began to fill in the grid streets.

Early 20th Century Commercialization of Dupont Circle Area:

Around the turn-of-the-century, changing demographics and economics began to progressively alter the exclusively residential character of the neighborhood to that of a more mixed-use residential/commercial one. The first steps towards commercialization came when stores, catering to the needs of the residents of Dupont Circle, opened their doors along Connecticut Avenue. Three of the earliest commercial ventures were the Maison Rauscher, a catering firm which opened in 1896 at the corner of Connecticut Avenue and L Street, Demonet’s Confectioner’s, at Connecticut Avenue and M Street, and Magruder’s Grocery Store at the corner of Connecticut Avenue and K Street. At the same time that there arose a

⁴ Dupont Circle was originally called Pacific Circle.

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need for commerce around Dupont Circle, rents in “old” downtown increased, forcing small businesses out.⁵ Retailers who were forced to leave the downtown area established new stores elsewhere within the city. According to a 1929 article on the subject, these retailers sought new locations along the “routes of greatest traffic into the higher-class residential sections of the city.”⁶

Connecticut Avenue—well served by the streetcar and inhabited by upper-class residents—offered an ideal retail environment. Businesses began flocking to the Avenue in a northward migration starting south of K Street, then moving north to Dupont Circle and eventually beyond to Florida Avenue. A 1910 article notes this northerly migration in its sub-headline, “Signs that the Present Boundary of Commercial Houses at M Street Will be Shifted Farther North—Several Important Deals Indicate Coming of New Firms.”⁷ According to a 1912 article, this northerly migration caused the replacement of residential with commercial uses as property values increased and “residences...were no longer able to earn an adequate income. As places of business, stores and offices earnings in rentals were higher and so the transformation continued practically all along that section of Connecticut Avenue...”⁸

A study on the commercialization of Dupont Circle, published in 1929, further re-iterated this northerly trend, noting that the migration of businesses began to repeat itself on Connecticut Avenue—as rents on the lower part of the avenue increased, many lines of business found it desirable to move further north. The growth of retail along Connecticut Avenue and its adjacent streets from Lafayette Square to Florida Avenue, took place in three progressive steps: from Lafayette Square to M Street, from M Street to Dupont Circle, and from Dupont Circle to Florida Avenue.⁹

Although smaller businesses least able to afford the high downtown rents were the first to make the move to Connecticut Avenue in the late 19th century, upscale specialty stores and shops more in tune with the desires of the upper-class neighborhood patrons followed. Apparel shops, shoe stores, beauty salons, interior decorators, hat shops, antique stores, bookstores, automobile showrooms, and florists appeared and thrived along the avenue. Style, quality, service, and convenience rather than competitive pricing eventually characterized these establishments. As early as 1908 the *Washington Post* noted, “Connecticut Avenue in a few years will be the Fifth Avenue of Washington.”¹⁰ Shopping on Connecticut Avenue became a major social event. Retainers with carriages, and later automobiles, trailed behind to carry packages. A milliner who operated a shop on Connecticut Avenue during the 1940s explained, “Women would come in their chauffeur-driven cars and go from one shop to the next

⁵ “Cites Transformation of Connecticut Avenue,” *The Evening Star*, September 21, 1929.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ “Growth of Business Houses along Connecticut Avenue,” *The Evening Star*, September 22, 1910.

⁸ Business Moves Northward Along Connecticut Avenue, *The Evening Star*, January 20, 1912.

⁹ By 1926, the commercial transformation at least south of Dupont Circle was complete, see “Famous Connecticut Avenue Residential Buildings Sold,” *The Evening Star*, February 20, 1926.

¹⁰ “Shopping Section Spreads,” *Washington Post*, January 5, 1908.

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while cars lined up along the street. It was a social affair going from here to get shoes, a dress or flowers for a dinner party.”¹¹

The transformation of Dupont Circle from residential to commercial, brought on by economic forces, was further encouraged by the implementation in 1920 of the city’s first zoning laws. The Zoning Regulations established Height, Area, and Use Districts throughout the city. From Lafayette Square north to Florida Avenue, the entire Connecticut Avenue corridor was designated as “first commercial district,” as were several of the blocks along 17th Street from P Street north to Riggs Street, and along P Street from Dupont Circle west to Rock Creek Park. Although first commercial districts legally allowed for a variety of commercial uses, many of them light industrial, a conscious effort on the part of the Connecticut Avenue merchants and real estate agents sought to maintain and promote the exclusive nature of the Connecticut Avenue shopping district. Two real estate firms, Randall H. Hagner & Company and the Allen E. Walker & Co. (the guiding spirit behind the Mayflower Hotel) focused their real estate efforts almost entirely on Connecticut Avenue, promoting the shopping district through advertisements.¹² The Connecticut Avenue Association, one of the first of its kind in Washington, was established in 1921 in an effort to promote “high-class business.” The association was modeled after the famous Fifth Avenue Association in New York: in addition to promoting the reputation of the Connecticut Avenue thoroughfare through advertisements, it adopted an insignia that members could place in the windows of their stores “as a mark of quality in merchandise and courtesy in service.”¹³ The insignia was designed “to express the transition of Connecticut Avenue from a street of dignified homes and cultured residences to one of attractive stores and interesting merchants.”¹⁴ The Association also sponsored semi-annual fashion shows and exhibits that showcased their members’ goods.¹⁵

Commercial Buildings:

With the changes in use that took place on Connecticut Avenue, came changes in the appearance of the Avenue. The first shops typically were housed in re-designed first floors of existing single-family residences, such as at 1503 Connecticut Avenue (built as dwelling in 1907, storefront added in 1920), and 1741-1743 Connecticut Avenue (built as dwelling in 1909, storefront added in 1928).¹⁶ Another approach involved substantially modifying existing buildings with entirely new facades and newly arranged interior layouts. For instance, the two buildings at 1712 and 1714 Connecticut Avenue,

¹¹ “Chauffers Used to Line Up,” *Evening Star*, September 24, 1969.

¹² Robinson & Associates, Waggaman/Ray Commercial Row, National Register of Historic Places Nomination form, February 1993.

¹³ “Shops Adopt Connecticut Avenue Insignia,” *Washington Herald*, June 15, 1937.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Robinson & Associates, Elizabeth Arden Building, National Register of Historic Places Nomination form, June 2003.

¹⁶ In 1920, the four-story dwelling at 1503 Connecticut Avenue designed by Hornblower and Marshall in 1907, was appointed with a new storefront designed by George N. Ray. Similarly, the 1909 dwelling by Clarke Waggaman at 1741-1743 Connecticut Avenue, was altered in 1928 by a new storefront designed by William J. Deming.

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originally constructed in 1886, both received entirely new, limestone-clad facades in 1926. Finally, a third alternative consisted of constructing entirely new purpose-built stores in place of existing buildings. The building at 1369 Connecticut Avenue, located at Connecticut Avenue on the south side of the Circle, is one of the earliest examples of replacement building in Dupont Circle. In 1912, the present building on the site—a new Italian Renaissance-style bank building—replaced an 1880 Queen Anne brick residence (the Hopkins-Miller House). Other later examples abound. Several automobile showrooms, such as the one at 1700-1708 Connecticut Avenue (built 1925) replaced large, Victorian-era dwellings.

As commercial buildings replaced residential ones, what had been a street of red brick and brownstone row houses in eclectic Late Victorian styles changed to one lined with limestone-clad, Classical Revival-style commercial buildings. The commercialization of Connecticut Avenue coincided with the popularity of the Neo-classical aesthetic, which was gaining particular favor with the well-to-do. (Architectural historians claim that the American Colonial Revival style was employed by the upper classes to contrast their ethnic roots with those of the arriving immigrants.)¹⁷ Many of the altered 19th-century buildings and new commercial buildings constructed along Connecticut Avenue both south and north of the Circle were designed by architect George N. Ray, who had a predilection for this neo-classical aesthetic. As a general rule, George N. Ray’s commercial buildings are two-story, limestone-clad buildings featuring engaged pilasters framing expansive glazed show windows and engaged pediments at the roofline recalling temple-form buildings of antiquity, along with bas relief frieze motifs and other ornamentation. Ray’s buildings use a variety of other classical motifs, including rusticated bases, tri-partite openings, bas-relief ornamentation niches, and roundels.

Despite the systematic aesthetic conversion of Connecticut Avenue, the commercial buildings of the 1920s, unlike the later, post-1931 periods of development, did not alter the residential scale and feel of the neighborhood. The re-design of the older buildings that converted ground floor spaces to commercial uses and upper floors into flats, maintained the same height and footprint of existing buildings. Even the purpose-built commercial buildings respected the residential scale of the neighborhood. New store buildings were generally one and two-stories in height, as opposed to three and four, thereby even decreasing the existing size and scale of the buildings.

According to the city directories, the high-end retail businesses along Connecticut Avenue at Dupont Circle included such establishments as antique stores, jewelry stores, florists, haberdasheries, interior decorators, ladies’ tailors, furriers and the like. In addition, the Avenue on either side of the Circle became one of the city’s most important locations for automobile showrooms. Semmes Motor Company at 8 Dupont Circle, the remodeled first floor of 1636, 1700, 1727 and 1749 Connecticut Avenue were all automobile showrooms. According to the 1929 article citing the commercial

¹⁷ Ibid.

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transformation of Connecticut Avenue, there were four automobile showrooms below the Circle and five above.

Commercialization of 17th and P Streets:

Based upon historic maps, 17th Street remained a predominantly residential area well into the 1920s, although the street did begin to see some commercial use in the early 1900s. According to permit research conducted as part of this survey, the first identified purpose-built commercial building along 17th Street was constructed in 1904 at 1609 17th Street as a drugstore. However, it was not until implementation of the city's first zoning laws in 1920 that 17th Street began to emerge as a commercial corridor. According to city directories, more intensive commercial use of the buildings along 17th Street began in the 1920s. At the same time a spate of construction activity ensued that involved the construction of purpose-built commercial buildings on the site of residential ones. In 1923, a one-story store, occupied by the Sanitary Grocery Company store, was built at 1527 17th Street to replace a two-story residence on the site. In 1924, a one-story store building was constructed next door at 1529-31 17th Street, later raised to two stories. Two years later, the same owner built a two-story apartment/store building at 17th and Q to abut the smaller stores next it, unifying the two structures architecturally to become the two-story buff brick building that it is today. According to the 1928 city directories, in addition to the second floor apartments, the building housed a butchery, a tailor, a barber, and a delicatessen on the first story.

Along P Street, the commercial trend appears to have begun more intensively as two groups of one-story stores were constructed in 1910 along the 2100 block of P Street.¹⁸ By the 1920s, both the north and south sides of this block of P Street were almost exclusively commercial. (The south side is now occupied by a non-contributing apartment building.) Unlike the high-style Neo-classical commercial buildings built along Connecticut Avenue in the 1920s, the surviving commercial development along P Street is more vernacular, and characteristic of commercial building design throughout the city. Small, one-story brick structures with glazed show window storefronts and brick parapet roofs above predominate along the street.

Demise of the Elite Residential Character:

World War I, implementation of the federal income tax (1915), the emergence of Florida as a fashionable winter resort, the death of longtime wealthy residents, and finally, the Great Depression are all cited as reasons for the demise of the extravagant Dupont Circle social scene. By 1926, with the

¹⁸ In 1910, Isaac Krikstein built two groups of one-story stores at present-day 2153-2155 P Street and 2157-2159-2161 P Street to designs completed by architect Julius Wenig (D.C. Permit to Build #4894 3/11/1910 and #6703 5/27/1910). The two corner buildings at 2159 and 2161 were later raised to two stories.

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elimination of the Bradley House on Dupont Circle, not a single large residence still stood on Connecticut Avenue south of the Circle. A February 1926 *Evening Star* article noted,

“Instead of the quiet avenue where once strolled the elite of the Nation’s Capital and high personages of foreign lands, for their afternoon and Sunday promenades, with their high stepping horses, there is today a bustling crowd of business people and shoppers and others engaged in commerce who arrive on the street cars, in fast moving automobiles and commercial trucks.”¹⁹

Simultaneous with the commercialization of Connecticut Avenue, Massachusetts Avenue developed as an important artery to the northwest. Dupont Circle, located at the intersection of Connecticut and Massachusetts Avenues, became a gateway to downtown and a transportation hub.²⁰ During the 1920s, newer residential-only neighborhoods further north of the congested Dupont Circle began to catch the eye of the Circle’s longtime elite population. Many Dupont Circle residents moved north and west into Sheridan-Kalorama, Spring Valley, and beyond to Chevy Chase.

Recognizing this shift and in an effort to combat it, the Dupont Circle Citizen’s Association formed in 1922 and has fought for decades to maintain the residential quality of the neighborhood. The association initially took for its territory the area bounded on the east by 16th Street, on the north by Florida Avenue, on the west by Rock Creek Park, and on the south by N Street. The southern boundary was later extended to K Street.²¹ These boundaries serve as a justification for the currently proposed expansion to the Dupont Circle Historic District.

In 1931, after several years of planning, the British Legation left their headquarters at Connecticut and N Street for a new building further out Massachusetts Avenue. The British Legation, built 1875, was one of the first buildings constructed in Dupont Circle, and is often cited as the impetus for Dupont Circle’s rise as a fashionable area. The legation and the elegant activities that took place there greatly increased the prestige of the undeveloped area, and served to draw in persons of fashion and wealth. Symbolic of the Circle’s gradual demise, the abandoned 1878 British Legation building was purchased and a large development scheme planned for its site. It is often noted that the British legation ushered international fame in and out of the Circle.

Simultaneous to the move of the British Legation out of Dupont Circle that marks 1931 as a significant date in the history of Dupont Circle, was the construction of the Circle’s first major, large-scale, multi-story residential/commercial building that forever changed the nature of building in and around the

¹⁹ “Famous Connecticut Avenue Residential Buildings Sold,” *The Evening Star*, 2/20/1926.

²⁰ Dupont Circle (Reservation No. 60) (Pacific Circle), Historic American Buildings Survey, National Park Service, 1993.

²¹ “Dupont Circle: 100 Years of History,” written in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Dupont Circle Citizen’s Association, Washington, D.C.: Casillas Press, 1972, p. 9.

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Circle itself. The Dupont Circle building, located on the site of the Bradley House (wealthy resident of Washington and Newport, R.I.), was originally constructed in 1926 as a one-story commercial structure fronting the circle. In 1931, the building was enlarged by an 11-story, 500-room hotel addition, designed by Mihran Mesrobian.

Post 1931 Development:

The high-class residential life-style of Dupont Circle residents could not survive the dual pressures of the Great Depression and World War II. Following the Depression, many of the Circle's great houses were sold to non-profit groups (Sulgrave Club, the Washington Club, Woman's National Democratic Club), as well as to foreign governments as embassies or chanceries. Then, during the war, as the need for housing intensified, the Circle's mansions built by the nation's wealthy were subdivided and converted into apartments, or were demolished altogether. The large rowhouses along the side streets were also converted into rooming houses. As a case in point, the Circle's Leiter mansion, built in 1891 by Chicago department store real estate magnate Levi P. Leiter and the site of lavish parties throughout the 1920s, was rented out at the beginning of the World War II by the Leiter family to the federal government for offices. In 1947, the Leiter House was sold and later demolished. Similarly, the Hearst House, built in 1883 at 1400 New Hampshire Avenue became a hotel during the Depression and an officers' club in the 1940s. In 1964, the house was demolished for a high-rise apartment building.

In 1947, construction of the Dupont Circle underpass was also underway in an effort to relieve a drastic increase in traffic. During its several years of construction, the Circle became "a morass of mud and clay," and also led to the loss of numerous trees and the temporary relocation of the Dupont Fountain. At the same time, Dupont Circle was rezoned to allow for greater commercial development (along 19th and 20th Streets between R and S Streets), and to allow for higher height limitations (increased from 90 feet to 110 feet). With such a height increase, developers could, as a matter of right, replace historic building fabric with new, large-scale, multi-story buildings that no longer respected the historic scale or feeling of Dupont Circle. The Tax Act of 1969, which offered tax breaks to developers who demolished pre-1950-built buildings, further contributed to Dupont Circle's loss of historic fabric.

By the 1950s, residential Dupont Circle had become home to transients and students; in the 1960s, the Circle itself became a gathering place for the counter culture and its demonstrations. A September 1966 article described the Dupont Circle scene as "a simmering bouillabaisse of classes, colors, and types; a ferment of beatniks, genteel matrons, foreign students, thrill-seekers and curiosity hunters."²² During the last years of the Vietnam War, anti-war demonstrations were almost a daily occurrence at Dupont Circle. In 1966, the Dupont Circle Citizens' Association

²² As quoted in "A Short History of a Very Round Place," *The Washington Post Magazine*, September 2, 1990.

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called on the police department to oust the “misfits, hoodlums, vagrants and perverts which...gather in large numbers” in the park.²³

During the late 1960s, recognition of and concern for the indiscriminate demolition of historic Dupont Circle took root. In 1967, the Dupont Circle Citizens Association formed a preservation committee and owners and builders began the renovation and revitalization of a number of important buildings and blocks. Formation of the committee was sparked by the demolition of the National Presbyterian Church to make way for an office building. In response, individuals and developers began to buy up historic building stock and renovate it for residences and businesses. Jon Gerstenfeld and Charlotte Levine, a local developer team, bought six houses along the 1700 block of Corcoran Street and converted them (gutted them) into 35 apartments. The 1700 block of Riggs Street similarly underwent renovation with two of the townhouses being remodeled by national known local architect Hugh Jacobsen.

Several period articles addressing the preservation of Dupont Circle attributed the efforts not only to nostalgia and appreciation of past styles,²⁴ but to the high cost of building materials. In “Marvelous Old Mansions Saved by the Economy,” journalist Sarah Booth Conroy noted that the high cost of materials had outdistanced the cost of labor, “making remodeling more economical than demolition and rebuilding.”²⁵ Conroy also remarked that renovation was not limited to residential properties, as businesses were beginning to appreciate the sense of status and stability associated with “offices with fireplaces.” The law firm of Arnold & Porter having remodeled a series of row houses on either side of 19th Street for its firm’s headquarters, is often credited with inspiring a trend towards the renovation of historic dwellings for office space.

Despite its residential demise, Connecticut Avenue remained an exclusive commercial corridor throughout the 1930s.²⁶ Several newspaper articles during this period touted Connecticut Avenue’s

²³ Wheeler, Linda, “Dupont Circle”: Fashionable In-Town Address,” in *Washington At Home*, ed. Kathryn Schneider Smith, Washington, D.C. (1988), p. 117.

²⁴ “Near Washington’s Dupont Circle, Victorian Houses are in Fashion Again,” *The New York Times*, October 5, 1969.

²⁵ “Marvelous Old Mansions Saved by the Economy,” *The Washington Post*, October 6, 1974.

²⁶ A 1935 article in the *Washington Post* noted, “one of the finest shopping districts in the world today is Washington’s Connecticut Avenue...” *The Washington Post*, March 20, 1935.

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commerce and again compared the street to New York's Fifth Avenue, Paris' Avenue de la Paix, and London's Piccadilly Circus.

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“Famous Connecticut Avenue Residential Buildings Sold,” *The Evening Star*, February 27, 1926.
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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 46.8 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

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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 1/2005

street & number 801 North Capitol Street, N.W. Suite 300 telephone 202 442-8840

city or town Washington, D.C. state District of Columbia 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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Verbal Boundary Description:

As expanded, the Dupont Circle Historic District begins at its southwestern edge at the intersection of 23rd and N Street, extends east along the centerline of N Street, including all of the properties on the north side of N Street, to 21st Street, then heads south on 21st Street to its intersection with New Hampshire Avenue, then northeasterly along New Hampshire Avenue to its intersection with N Street, then east along N Street to 20th Street, then north along the centerline of 20th Street to Sunderland Place, then east along the centerline of Sunderland Place to the west lot line of 1944 Sunderland Place, then south to the alley between N Street and Sunderland Place, then east along the centerline of the alley to 19th Street, the south along the centerline of 19th Street to M Street, then continues along M Street to its intersection at Rhode Island Avenue, then heads northeasterly along Rhode Island Avenue to the western edge of Scott Circle along the centerline of Bataan Street, and including all of the properties on the north side of Rhode Island Avenue, then north on Bataan Street, to Massachusetts Avenue, then jogs east on Massachusetts Avenue to Hutchinson's Court (the alley on the north side of Massachusetts Avenue), then north along the east side of Hutchinson's Court to the rear lot line of the First Baptist Church facing 16th Street, then across O Street where the boundary continues north to the alley between S and Swann Streets, where the rear lot lines of the buildings facing 16th Street and included within the National Register-listed 16th Street Historic District form the district's eastern edge, then along the center line of the alley between S and Swann Streets, west to 17th Street, then north on 17th Street, N.W. to New Hampshire Avenue, then across New Hampshire Avenue along the northern lot line of Lot 186 in Square 152 to the north side of the alley between Swann and T Streets, then west along the north side of the alley (the alley and the properties on the north and south side of Swann Street being included within the Dupont Circle Historic District, and the properties on the south side of T Street being included within the Strivers' Section Historic District), then continues west along the centerline of the alley across 18th Street to the centerline of the alley abutting the rear lot lines of the properties facing 19th Street, N.W., then north to T Street to include those properties facing 19th Street, between S and T Streets, then west along the centerline of T Street to the intersection at Florida Avenue, then southwesterly along Florida Avenue, across Massachusetts Avenue to 23rd Street, then south along 23rd Street and the eastern edge of Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway and back to the beginning at 23rd and N Streets, N.W.

The expanded area includes the following properties: 1401, 1413, 1414, 1415, 1417, 1425, 1509, 1511, 1513, 1515, 1517, 1519, 1521, 1523, 1525, 1527, 1529, 1531, 1533, 1609, 1611, 1613, 1615, 1617, 1619, 1621, 1623, 1625 and 1627 17th Street, NW; 1200 18th Street, NW; 1225 19th

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Street, NW; 1318, 1326, 1328, 1330, 1332, 1334, 1336, 1338, 1413, 1414, 1415, 1505, 1507, 1509, 1511 and 1523 22nd Street, NW; 1775 and 2225 N Street, NW; 2109-2125, 2131 and 2147 O Street, NW; 1616, 1623, 1624, 1626, 1633, 1635, 1641, 1718, 1750, 2116, 2118, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2124, 2126, 2128, 2130, 2145, 2147, 2149, 2153, 2155, 2157, 2159, 2161 and 2200 P Street, NW; 1600, 1604, 1608, 1610, 1612, 1614, 1616, 1618, 1620, 1621, 1622, 1624, 1625 and 1633 Q Street, NW; 1225 and 1250 Connecticut Avenue, NW; 1601, 1603, 1605, 1607, 1608, 1609, 1610, 1611, 1612, 1613, 1614, 1615, 1616, 1617, 1618, 1619, 1620, 1621, 1623, 1624, 1625, 1627, 1628, 1629 and 1630 Corcoran Street, NW; 1617, 1619, 1621, 1623, 1625, 1627, 1629, 1630, 1631, 1633 and 2122 Massachusetts Avenue, NW; 1308, 1310, 1316, 1330, and 1816 New Hampshire Avenue, NW; 1615, 1700 and 1741 Rhode Island Avenue, NW; and 2123 Twining Court, NW. Also designated as the following lots:

Square 48, Lots 805 and 806;
 Square 49, Lots 4, 31, 32, 33, 37, 38, 39, 40 and 44;
 Square 67, Lots 34, 35, 36, 46, 47, 48, 56, 58, 62, 809, 810, 830, 835 and 836;
 Square 68, Lots 76, 86, 88, 95, 801, 807, 818, and 2014-2028;
 Square 97, Lots 816, 2045 and 2341-2365;
 Square 139, Lots 810, 816, 817;
 Square 152, Lot 816
 Square 157, Lots 865, 867 and 2001;
 Square 158, Lot 76;
 Square 159, Lots 82, 87 and 855;
 Square 179, Lots 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 64, 65, 66, 67, 71, 72, 73, 73A, 74, 75, 78, 78A, 79, 80, 92, 93, 94, 95, 109, 110, 111, 112A, 112B, 113, 800, 806, 807 and 808;
 Square 180, Lots 12, 13, 18, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 88, 89, 810, 813, 814, 814A and 815; and
 Square 181, Lots 147, 148, 149, 161, 167, 168, 169, 170, 801, 809, 850, 869 and 871;
 Square 181S, Lot 7; and
 Square 182N, Lot 1615.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary increase is justified for the following reasons: The boundaries 1) reflect the boundaries of what was historically considered Dupont Circle; 2) reflect natural and political conditions and promote preservation planning efforts; and 3) include properties that contribute to a broad understanding of the architectural and historical evolution of Dupont Circle. +