

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 or 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 an 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: Northwest Rectangle

Other names/site number:

2. Location

Street & Number: Constitution Avenue, 17th Street, New York Avenue, E Street, and 23rd Street

☐ Not for Publication

City or town: Washington

☐ Vicinity

State: D.C. Code: DC County: District of Columbia Code: 001 Zip Code: 20006

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ 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:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

☐ 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):

Northwest Rectangle**Washington, D.C.****Name of Property****County and State****5. Classification**

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private	<input type="checkbox"/> Building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public-Local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District	17	3 Buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> Public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> Site	0	0 Sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> Structure	0	0 Structure
	<input type="checkbox"/> Object	5	2 Objects
		22	5 Total

Name of related multiple property listing

N/A

 Number of contributing
 Resources previously
 listed in the National
 Register 12
6. Function or UseHistoric Functions (enter categories
from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Secondary Structure

COMMERCE/TRADE/Organizational

GOVERNMENT/Government Office

LANDSCAPE/Plaza

LANDSCAPE/Object

Current Functions (enter
categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Vacant

COMMERCE/TRADE/Organizational

GOVERNMENT/Government Office

LANDSCAPE/Plaza

LANDSCAPE/Object

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th & 20th Century Revival/Beaux ArtsLate 19th & 20th Century Revival/Classical Revival

Modern Movement/Moderne

Modern Movement/International

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Not Visible

walls: Stone; Limestone, Granite, Marble

roof: Ceramic Tiles; Metal; Aluminum

other:

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ **B** Property is 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.)

☐ **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.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Community Planning &

Development

Landscaped Architecture

Period of Significance

1891-1963

Significant Dates

1931

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation**Architect/Builder**

Underwood and Foster; Paul P. Cret

John Russell Pope; Charles Butler

Bertram G. Goodhue; Waddy B. Wood

Harbeson, Hough, Livingston, & Larson

Eggers & Higgins; Albert Kelsey

Helmuth, Obata, & Kassabaum

Loebl, Scholssman & Bennett

Jules Henri de Sibour

Ernest Flagg; John A. Platt

Trowbridge & Livingston

Northwest Rectangle**Washington, D.C.****Name of Property****County and State****9. Major Bibliographic References**☐ See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67)☒ previously listed in the NR☐ 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 add. data:

☒ State SHPO office☐ Other State agency☒ Federal agency☒ Local government☐ University☐ Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property _____

UTM References

1 1 18 1 13/2/2/20/0/ 14/3/0/6/5/8/5/

Zone Easting Northing

3 1 18 1 13/2/2/4/8/5/ 14/3/0/7/0/0/0/

Zone Easting Northing

5 1 18 1 13/2/2/7/2/5/ 14/3/0/7/0/0/0/

Zone Easting Northing

7 1 18 1 13/2/2/9/1/5/ 14/3/0/7/0/0/0/

Zone Easting Northing

9 1 18 1 13/2/3/1/0/0/ 14/3/0/6/5/8/5/

Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

4 1 18 1 13/2/2/5/6/5/ 14/3/0/7/1/6/0/

Zone Easting Northing

6 1 18 1 13/2/2/8/2/5/ 14/3/0/7/1/6/0/

Zone Easting Northing

8 1 18 1 13/2/3/1/0/0/ 14/3/0/7/0/6/0/

Zone Easting Northing

☐ See continuation sheet**Verbal Boundary Description**

The Northwest Rectangle is bounded by Constitution Avenue to the south, 17th Street facing the Ellipse to the east, New York Avenue and E Street to the north (inclusive of Square 143 and the southern half of Square 104), and 23rd Street to the east.

☐ See continuation sheet**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries for the Northwest Rectangle reflect those defined by the National Capital Parks and Planning Commission in 1931. These boundaries are visually and physically intact.

☐ See continuation sheet

Northwest Rectangle

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title Emily Hotaling Ege and Laura V. Trieschmann, Architectural Historians

Organization E.H.T. Traceries

Date December 7, 1998

Street & Number 5420 Western Avenue

Telephone (301) 656-5283

City or Town Chevy Chase

State Maryland

Zip code 20815

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____

telephone _____

city or town _____

state _____

zip code _____

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

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

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet**

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 7 **Page** 1

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Northwest Rectangle, located in northwest Washington, D.C., is bounded by Constitution Avenue to the south, 17th Street to the east, New York Avenue and E Street to the north, and 23rd Street to the west. The boundaries of the rectangle are visually defined on the north by the residential and commercial development at the edge of the Foggy Bottom neighborhood, on the east and south by the open spaces of the Ellipse and Mall (Potomac Park), and on the west by the walled embankment of the Old Naval Observatory compound. The Northwest Rectangle encompasses fifteen city blocks enhanced by twenty buildings, constructed specifically for the Federal government and/or semi-public institutions. Seventeen of the twenty resources contribute to the period of significance established for the historic district (1891-1963). Of the twenty buildings, twelve properties have been individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places (eleven are listed in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites).¹ The Daughters of the American Revolution Memorial Continental Hall, Constitution Hall, and the American National Red Cross have been deemed National Historic Landmarks (NHL). The General Services Administration has determined that the State Department Complex and the Department of Interior South are both eligible for listing in the National Register.

The majority of the resources in the Northwest Rectangle are freestanding structures occupying a full city block, or forming part of a full-block complex. Extended rows of these buildings, particularly along 17th Street and Constitution Avenue, create impressive monumental boulevards. Architecturally, the buildings range in date from 1897 to 1975, illustrating the classically inspired architectural principles adopted by the Federal government in the 20th century. In addition, many of the buildings utilize elements related to the scope of the occupying organization in the architectural detailing. As the stylistic trends dictated, however, the public and institutional architecture of the nation's capital became reserved, or stripped of the purely decorative or monumental features traditionally associated with government buildings. Yet, a conscience attempt continued to be made to retain the overall classical concept if only in proportion, scale, material, siting, and purity of line.

¹ For a more detailed architectural description and historical statement relating to a specific property, refer to the individual National Register nomination applications.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet**

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 7 **Page** 2

Visual elements essential to the setting of the district are the nine parks or parklets, many of which are augmented by striking fountains, monuments, and sculpture with a Latin-American theme. Approximately seven statues have been placed within the parks, honoring such individuals as Jose Artigas, Simon Bolivar, Bernardo de Galvez, and General Jose de San Martin. Several of the landscaped parks were created by the intersection of tree-lined streets and continuous sidewalks with the wide diagonal avenues. The largest of these is Rawlins Park, located within Reservation 13 of Andrew Ellicott's plan for the nation's capital. Bounded by 18th and 19th Streets at E Street, the elongated park is a two-level terrace augmented by plantings, benches, globed lighting, a fountain (1918), and the statue of General John A. Rawlins (1872/re-erected 1931). Designed by Joseph A. Bailey, the eight-foot high figure of Rawlins is a component of the heroic outdoor statuary commemorating figures of the Civil War, which was listed in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites and the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. Additionally, the park, laid out in 1937 around the statue, was listed in the D.C. Inventory in 1964. Rawlins Park adjoins the remnants of the Little Mall, a circa 1934 village green of sorts that visually linked the Ellipse and the Potomac River. The mall was obliterated by the 1964 construction of the Whitehurst Freeway, its E Street extension, and the 1971 construction of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The smaller parklets found throughout the neighborhood were created by the siting of a single building on a full city block, or by the location of several buildings within a full-block complex. Additionally, the building form of several of the monumental structures incorporates interior courtyards and quadrangles landscaped with seating, reflecting pools, shrubs, and trees.

Northwest Building Area 1790-1930

Officially unnamed until 1931, the area to the northwest of the President's House was owned by David Burnes in 1790. Burnes erected a modest wood frame "cottage" (destroyed by a storm in 1894) at the corner of Constitution Avenue and 17th Street. By 1816, the site also became home to the Van Ness House, an imposing brick dwelling constructed for General John P. Van Ness (son-in-law to Burnes) to the designs of Benjamin Latrobe. Regarded as one of the finest dwelling in the country, the Van Ness House stood until 1907, when institutional development of the surrounding neighborhood began in earnest and the deteriorating building was considered antiquated. The only remnant of 19th century construction in the northwest building area is the

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet**

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 7 Page 3

Van Ness House Stable, which dates from ca. 1816. The square stable, now incorporated into the grounds of the Pan American Union, is constructed of brick clad with stucco. The hipped roof, re-sheathed in standing seam metal, is crowned with a ventilating cupola. With the demolition of the main house and a \$100,000 grant from Andrew Carnegie for the landscaping of the property, the stable was moved from its original location fronting 18th Street at the center of the block. The structure was reconstructed at the northwest corner of 18th and C Streets. Timbers from the foundation of the building, view during the reconstruction, were inscribed with the date "1806." The stable was recognized as a D.C. Landmark in 1968.

The first institutional building in the neighborhood was the **Corcoran Gallery of Art**, constructed during 1894 and 1897 at the intersection of 17th Street and New York Avenue. An excellent example of the French Beaux-Arts style with Neo-Grec details, the Corcoran Gallery of Art was designed by architect Ernest Flagg. Returning to the classical principles of design, and the literal reuse of its forms, the white marble Corcoran Gallery is visually divided by the rusticated rose granite base, shaft or mid-section of white marble, and richly ornamented attic crowned by a cheneau and a copper roof. This clear articulation of story and section through fenestration, stringcourse, and ornament is continued on the U-shaped addition, designed in 1925-1928 by Charles Adams Platt. Thus, despite the alterations that occurred some fifty years later, the Corcoran Gallery of Art reflects the accuracy of historic details and classical inspirations emphasized at the 1893 World's Exposition in Chicago and by the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. The highly imposing building with its additions covers almost the entire lot fronting 17th Street.

Marking the southwestern boundary of the Ellipse is the **Pan American Union** at the intersection of 17th Street and Constitution Avenue. Constructed in 1908-1910, the monumental building was designed by architects Albert Kelsey and Paul P. Cret. The architecture of the building incorporated the classical principles of design, with its white marbled façade and articulated cornices. Demonstrating the building's use, the design blended South American motifs such as bas-reliefs, tile roofing, and arcaded gardens with a reflecting pool. From the beginning, the Pan American Union has served as a focal point for the cultural activities of the American Republics in Washington, D.C., both through its function and architectural presentation. The building is set well back from the street amid ample lawns and gardens. The principle façade of 17th Street consists of a three-arched central portico flanked by high pylons

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 7 Page 4

and two-story end pavilions. Set between the entry arches, Corinthian pilasters are crowned with a paneled frieze on which the building name is inscribed. The sloping corrugated tile roof is surmounted by a balustrade that extends around the pylons and was derived from the Chihuahua Cathedral. Against the simple masses of the flanking pylons, two fountain pedestals support marble sculptures, each depicting a mother instructing a youth. The group on the north, designed by Gutzon Borglum, typifies North America; the southern group representing South America was designed by Isidore Konti. On the pylons above the sculpture is bas-reliefs depicting George Washington's farewell to his generals on the north; and the meeting of San Martin and Bolivar on the south. Over the panels are the North American eagle and the South American condor, both sculpted by Solon Borglum.

Inside the arcaded portico, the vaulted two-story white marble entry hall, which extends the width of the pavilion, leads into the inner patio enclosed by loggias and surrounded with tropical plants. In the center of the tiled mosaic floor, a pink and white marble fountain by Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney carries Aztec, Zapotecan and Mayan motifs. The dominant features of the interior garden are the blue tile mosaic reflecting pool and a sculptural reproduction of an ancient Aztec god. At the rear of the building is the "Blue Aztec" garden, which culminates in a two-story arcaded pavilion on 18th Street. This annex and its surrounding garden were completed in 1912. The Van Ness House Stable is located at the northwest corner of the property.

Contemporary to the construction of the Pan American Union was the Daughters of the American Revolution's **Memorial Continental Hall** in 1910 on the adjacent block. This was the first building in the three-part complex occupied by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). Fronting the Ellipse, the Memorial Continental Hall was designed by New York architect Edward Pearce Casey. The DAR termed the building's style colonial "modified only so far as will be necessary to apply modern improvements with classical lines." Thus, the design was to reflect the traditional principles of the era in the nation's capital, while, like the Pan American Union, incorporate elements associated with the mission of the organization. The exterior of the pale gray Vermont marble building exhibits monumental Ionic porticoes on each street façade. To the east, along 17th Street, a great Ionic portico with tripled columns at the corners shelters the triple Georgian Revival style entry surround that is adorned with fanlights and swags. To the south, at C Street, a semi-circular portico projects thirty feet from the main block of the building. Thirteen memorial columns and pilasters symbolizing the original states

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 7 Page 5

form a semicircle beneath a massive roof. From this portico, steps lead into the memorial room and out to the grassy terrace. Along D Street to the north, a ten-foot-deep portico is created by a row of seven Ionic columns. The interior plan designed by Casey included a 2,000-seat auditorium, library, and a memorial room, which together provided a reception hall for 5,000 people. Thirty-three modestly sized period rooms, each sponsored by a state chapter of the organization, formed the building's perimeter. The second floor contains offices, and the third floor, just visible behind the roof balustrade, houses a great dining hall. The auditorium, which serves as a genealogy and local history library, still exhibits its original grand scale and detailing. When membership outgrew the building after two decades, the local firm of Marsh and Peter designed the administration addition facing D Street, completed in 1923.

In 1929, John Russell Pope contributed the adjoining classically inspired **Constitution Hall**, constructed of Alabama limestone. Again, despite construction almost twenty years after Memorial Hall, Constitution Hall reflects the architectural influences adopted by the original building. Notable on the neoclassical building is the Ionic portico and pediment punctuated by a sculpted American eagle. On the interior, the building houses the largest auditorium in the nation's capital. Often collectively referred to as Constitution Hall, the auditorium and Memorial Continental Hall were recognized as National Historic Landmarks in 1985 and 1972, respectively.

Sited on the square to the north of the Memorial Continental Hall is the **American National Red Cross**, designed by A. Breck Trowbridge and Goodhue Livingston of New York. This building, begun in 1915, also reflects the classical traditions with its white Vermont marble facades, gentle terraces, and circular drive. A projecting tetrastyle Corinthian entry portico flanked by engaged columns and a highly detailed pediment stretches across the east façade. Similarly, the remaining facades are monumentally finished with Corinthian porticoes that have no pediments. Within the building, a marble tablet set above the main stair cites the contributions of women who tended the sick and wounded during the Civil War. American sculptor Hiram Powers (1805-1873) designed the busts of Faith, Hope, and Charity that are located on the landing. On the second floor, in the Neoclassical/Federal Revival-styled assembly room, are three colorfully glass windows designed by Louis C. Tiffany (1848-1933).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 7 Page 6

In 1928 and 1931, two freestanding administration buildings were constructed to support the functions of the American Red Cross. The north building was conceived as a memorial to the women of the World War. The three-story structure mimics the headquarters with a colonnade of Ionic columns and balustrated roofline. Two marble torchers flanking the broad steps of the structure honor long-time Red Cross leader Mabel T. Boardman. Fronting 18th Street, the five-story building to the west serves as an office annex. Collectively, the buildings create a framed rectangular park or quadrangle, referred to as Red Cross Square. With the national headquarters as the centerpiece, the site consists of memorial gardens dedicated to volunteer. The sculpture and memorials were designed by Felix de Weldon, and dedicated in 1959.

The last of the early 20th century buildings erected to the immediate west of the Ellipse was the first **Department of Interior** (now the General Services Administration) at F Street between 18th and 19th Streets. Occupying the entire block, the building fronts Rawlins Park to the south. Designed in 1915 by Charles Butler with the Office of the Supervising Architect, the steel-framed structure clad in Indiana limestone presents the Beaux-Arts Classical Revival. Considered more important than the architectural design, the structure's E-shaped plan features interior courtyards designed to provide the necessary light and air to the central offices. Yet, aestheticians were not particularly pleased with the building's shape; thus the open courtyards created by the seven-story wings fronting 18th Street were connected by two-story hyphens to present a solid block plan on the exterior. Following the classical tripartite, the building has horizontal divisions created by a watertable, belt courses, and a modillioned cornice topped by a simple parapet at the roof. Over the cornice is an eagle, carved by Ernest C. Bairstow, a decorative sculptor responsible for the twenty-eight panels on the frieze and ornamental work on the F Street facade. The E Street facade, considered the rear of the building, echoes the basic design seen on F Street.

By the second decade of the 20th century, development to the west of the White House was focussed on framing the Lincoln Memorial (1912-1922), particularly as the blocks fronting the Ellipse had all been improved by 1917. Under the direction of the Commission of Fine Arts, construction began by the early 1920s with the **National Academy of Sciences**. The building is located at the center of a rectangular lot, fronting Constitution Avenue. Originally a stream bed and tidal flat, the site was terraced with the marble building as the centerpiece, a landscape plan suggestive of the Lincoln Memorial grounds. Originally three rectangular reflecting pools

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet**

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 7 Page 7

extended northward from the façade toward C Street; the pools have since been filled with earth to function as planters. To the south, the building is surrounded by wooded terraces landscaped by Charles Downing Lay of New York.

Like its neighbors, the Academy building reflects the classical principles in a neo-classical interpretation, while utilizing sculptural elements related to the scope of the organization as architectural detailing. Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue designed the 1922-1924 building, which consists of a three-story rectangular block with horizontal massing. The design freed the building of the traditional columns seen along 17th Street, while continuing to present the illusion of the classical tripartite. The structure, clad in smooth ashlar Dover marble from New York, is ornamented with sculpture design by Lee Lawrie to symbolize the evolution of man. Lawrie also designed the light fixtures and the low relief scenes in the spandrels that depict the Founders of Sciences. On the interior, the building is enhanced by artistic decorations derived from Byzantine, medieval, and Renaissance architecture with designs by Hildreth Meiere and Albert Herter.

The memorial to Albert Einstein, situated in an elm and holly grove in the southwest corner of the Academy grounds, was unveiled in 1979 in honor of the centennial of the great scientist's birth. Einstein is seated on a three-step bench of Mount Airy white granite that is semi-circular in plan. The bronze figure, designed by sculptor Robert Berks, holds a paper with mathematical equations summarizing three of Einstein's most important scientific contributions.

Northwest Rectangle 1931-1963

Simultaneous to the adoption of the Northwest Rectangle plan in 1931, the architectural styles of the buildings in the area began to be transformed further from the traditions of classical ornamentation. By the 1930s, development of the neighborhood framing the Lincoln Memorial along Constitution Avenue began in earnest with the building of the **United States Public Health Service** (1933) and the **American Institute of Pharmacy** (1933). Critical components of the urban design plan established for Constitution Avenue, the monumental buildings continue to pay tribute to classical principles, while reducing the architecturally ornamentation and direct application of columns that are indicative of this stylistic interpretation. As first established by

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 7 Page 8

the National Academy of Sciences, the buildings restrict ornament; thus, presenting only the proportion, scale, material, and purity of line traditionally present in government buildings.

Designed by John Russell Pope, the American Institute of Pharmacy is perched at the summit of a long sloping lawn, a position that again mimics the siting of Henry Bacon's Lincoln Memorial. Pope's white Vermont marble temple has a windowless projecting pavilion with four pilasters at the center, a design in contrast to the memorial with its open columned facades. The entry is embellished with allegorical bas-reliefs executed by Ulysses Ricci to portray the progress of pharmacy, as well as Light and Hope. The bronze entry doors are topped by a circular gridded transom flanked by bronze lamps. The roof parapet heightens the effect of the building, making it appear proportionally grander than it really is. On either side of the projecting pavilion are two recessed bays, visually attached through the use of massing and the balustrated terrace that surrounds the entire structure.

The contemporary United States Public Health Service (now known as Interior South) was designed by Washington, D.C. architect Jules Henri de Sibour in 1933. The E-shaped building stands three stories in height with a basement set on a terraced platform that visually raises the structure. It is articulated into three sections consisting of a long central pavilion flanked by fifty-foot wide wings at the rear. The façade of the central section is further divided, as the classical style suggested, by fourteen openings marked by Tuscan pilasters. The exterior, intended to be faced in limestone as a cost saving measure, is clad in marble on the facade to be more in keeping with its monumental neighbors. The front plane of the building is set in line with the existing Science Building and the contemporary Pharmacy Building, allowing enough space between the front of the building and the street for the eventual development of a landscaped planting scheme. While de Sibour required the inclusion of proper grading and terracing of the grounds, little if any of the landscaping designed by firm of Wheelwright and Stevenson was accomplished. By 1939, planting had begun with variations to the plan that included expansive lawns and tree-line gravel walkways along Constitution Avenue.

Following the siting and landscaping plans previously initiated along Constitution Avenue, the **Federal Reserve Board** was constructed in 1937 with nearly all stylistic ornament omitted on the exterior. As the current trends dictated, the building is not traditionally classical, but rather "stripped classical" in design. The Federal Reserve Board, designed by Paul H. Cret, is

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet**

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 7 **Page** 9

surrounded on either side by landscaped gardens and broad marble walks that leads to the monumental entry of the white Georgia marble structure. The entry is marked by a simple motif of piers surmounted by a American eagle, the work of Sidney Waugh. In contrast with the plain white surface of the building is the design of the bronze windows, separated with spandrels of polished Swedish granite, on which bronze plaques are mounted. The air-conditioned building is H-shaped in plan, and the east and west courtyards are formally planted in such a manner as to focus attention on the fountains facing the entry gates. The more generally used C Street entry is flanked by pylons with figures in bas-relief designed by John Gregory, symbolizing the United States and the Federal Reserve System.

The Constitution Avenue entry opens onto a lobby walled with Kansas lesina stone; in the marble floor were bronze plaques reproducing the seal of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. The plaster ceiling is decorated with motifs of Greek coins and a relief of Cybele, Anatolian earth-mother. A monumental stair leads to the second floor, notable for its mosaic-bordered marble floors and wrought iron work by Samuel Yelling. The board room, in the Constitution Avenue wing on the second floor, has a fireplace of Tavernelle Fleuri marble with an inlaid bronze relief symbolizing stability and productivity.

The plan of the new **Department of Interior**, constructed in 1935-1936 to the designs of Waddy B. Wood, reflects the design principles incorporated in the former Department of Interior, specifically the plan that allowed light and air to circulate. Dedicated on April 16, 1936, the smooth Indiana limestone exterior, laid in a regular ashlar pattern, reflects the stripped classicism popular in the late 1930s. The fishbone plan of the building – perhaps the most distinctive aspect of the exterior – consists of six wings running east and west between 18th and 19th Streets, with a connecting wing through the center running north and south between C and E Streets. The plan creates narrow courtyards landscaped with shrubs, trees, and benches that visually connect the structure with the adjacent parks. The connecting wing includes the main entry, which also serves as employee entries and the north and south lobbies. The building, sheathed with Indiana limestone above a pink granite base, rises seven stories with an eighth-story setback over the connecting wings. The north and south sides are designed with a two-story base, a three-story superstructure, a heavy cornice above, and a two-story attic with a monumental frieze.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet**

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 7 **Page** 10

As the Interior Building has over three miles of corridors and 2200 rooms, the interior is replete with ornamentation and artwork. Murals, sculptures, bas-reliefs, and ornamental bronze and plasterwork adorn the public and private spaces. The sculpture is not restricted to the building itself, but continued into nearby Rawlins Park and the surrounding parklets. Within Reservation 383 to the south is the bronze equestrian statue honoring Simon Bolivar, liberator of South America. The statue, a gift of the Venezuelan government, was designed by Felix de Weldon on a Swedish granite pedestal with terracing, and dedicated in 1959. The site was designed in 1957 by Cesar Cascelles of Venezuela and William Bergman of the National Park Service. The asymmetrical design includes a central polygonal pool that contains ornamental grasses and a small island with trees. Designed as a small ecosystem, the pond supports fish, turtles, and ducks.

The State Department complex, designed in two separate sections, is located at 23rd and C Streets. The first section, in the northeast corner of the block facing 21st Street, was built to the designs of Underwood and Foster for the **War Department** in 1941. Influenced by industrial designs, the building exhibits influences from the Art Moderne, "Depression Modern," and Streamlined Moderne. The structure is clad in rough limestone and enlivened by polished granite in the spandrels between the metal casement windows. While it exhibits the classical massing and proportions, the building clearly expresses its function as a modern office building. A large portico of four stark piers rising four stories above a two-story base marks the entry. Six-story wings flank the entry pavilion. The original design called for sculptural groups to accent the main elevation, but only five square medallions on the frieze were executed.

In the mid-1950s, the **State Department Extension** expanded the complex to the west and south, with entries on C, 23rd and E Streets. This smooth-limestone-sheathed structure is designed in the modern style of the 1950s by continuing the Art Moderne characteristics of the War Department to some degree, while simplifying and combining them with elements commonly utilized by the International style. Thus, there is a greater stress on horizontality, and more emphasis on a balance of unlike parts rather than axial symmetry. Evenly punctuated with two-paned casement windows, the building presents a new and modern architectural style to the area, although the building's function remained in keeping with its neighboring predecessors.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 7 Page 11

In particular, through plan and siting, the combined buildings of the State Department complex mimic their neighbors with open interior courtyards and landscaping that visually extends into the adjacent parklets. To the north, in Reservation 105, is a bronze reproduction of the Discus Thrower. Cast in Florence, Italy, the statue rests on a marble column excavated from the ancient ruins in the city of Rome. The figure was a gift of appreciation to the United States for our efforts in returning the original ancient Greek sculpture to Italy after World War II. The sculpture and its surrounding gardens were dedicated in 1956. The reservation in which the statue stands, known as Edward J. Kelly Park, was officially identified in 1884, and vastly enlarged on May 14, 1969.

While the stylistic designs emerging at the State Department were becoming a national tradition, the **Pan American Union Annex** (1949) and the **District of Columbia Chapter House of the American Red Cross** (1953) referred back to the classical styles so embraced in government architecture. Each building incorporated many of the design elements and applied ornaments displayed in their adjacent headquarters, the Organization of American States and the American Red Cross, respectively. Although smaller in scale and fulfilling a more contemporary aesthetic than other public buildings in the immediate area, both the Pan American Annex and the District Red Cross fit into the NCPHC's vision of the Northwest Rectangle. The buildings' design were described as "modern classic," a term that was commonly used by the press and government architects during the period to describe the new public architecture.

Paul Cret, who designed the Organization Headquarters, was called in to plan in the designs for the Pan American Union Annex, although the work was carried out by Harbeson, Hough, Livingston & Larson. The style of the white marble-faced building is largely dictated by its prominent locating fronting Constitution Avenue. It is classical in form and proportion, but like its headquarters, incorporated the motifs and emblems of the American Republics. The landscaped site is augmented by the freestanding statue of Jose Artigas, father of Uruguayan independence. The figure faces the Mall from its formal setting on a granite square in a semi-circular flagstone terrace. A granite bench faces the statue on the opposite side of flagstone path that runs through the park parallel to Constitution Avenue. The portrait of the Uruguayan revolutionary hero was designed by sculptor Jan M. Blanes, and erected in 1950. A replica of a statue in Uruguay, the bronze figure was cast with funds collected by school children and the Chamber of Deputies. The granite pedestal is inscribed "From the people of Uruguay to the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 7 Page 12

people of the United States. Liberty of America is my dream, and its attainment is my only hope."

Eggers and Higgins, the successor firm to the architectural monarchy of John Russell Pope, gained the commission for the American Red Cross' District Chapter building by May 1947. The rendering of the building, first published in the *Evening Star* on July 1, 1947, depicts a formal composition of white stone in a stripped classical style, with an elaborate stepped approach to the main entrance. This design is closely based on the architect's earlier scheme for the Army Medical Museum and Library that was approved by the Commission of Fine Arts in September 1941. The rendering of the Chapter House presented the fenestration as a series of bold vertical bays set between abstracted pilasters with a central monumental entrance bay. The building is approached from a "bold sculptured stairway entrance much like the one executed on the south facade of Pierson and Wilson's 1939 Art Deco Library of Congress Annex." The resulting effect is an austere abstracted temple placed on a slightly raised plinth, a format that is in keeping with the federal architecture of the time.

In contrast, the **Office of Personnel Management** (1963) and the **Federal Reserve Board Annex** (1975, also known as the Martin Building) reflected the modern architectural interpretations presented by the State Department extension with their lack of ornament. The Management Building is a product of the combined designs of the architectural firms of Jelmoth, Obata and Kassabaum, Inc. and Loeb, Schollman and Bennett. With an irregular H-shape, the building looks to its neighbors in plan with open courtyards. Additionally, the building's siting imitates the landscape plans unofficially adopted by the area in the early 20th century with plantings.

Presenting the International style, the Federal Reserve Board Annex disregards the traditional classical forms exhibited throughout the neighborhood. Yet, in an attempt to integrate with the community, the building is clad with white marble and the tripartite ideals of the classical style are seen with the supportive base, the structural skeleton of marble and glass on the upper stories, and the overhanging flat roof. The building is symmetrical with full-block massing, a form not practiced in the area since the early part of the 20th century. The site on which the building stands was dedicated in 1976 as Robert Latham Owen Park, honoring the Oklahoma Senator who was a member of the Cherokee Nation and a principle advocate of the Federal Reserve Act.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet**

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 7 **Page** 13

The landscaping design was modified in the late 1970s by Oehme Van Sweden and Associates Inc when the southern magnolias were replaced with ornamental grasses, trees, a tennis court, seating, and open lawns used for temporary sculpture exhibits.

Although non-contributing, the **United Union Building** of 1972-1973 continues the stylistic statement and landscaping plan of the Annex. The nine-story structure is constructed with a steel structural system clad in granite. The raised base, consisting of structural supports, creates a landscaped courtyard that extends to the terraced plaza fronting 18th Street.

Landscaping in the adjacent parks are augmented by the equestrian statues of Bernardo de Galvez in Reservation 720 and General Jose de San Martin in Reservation 106. The bronze figure of Galvez was authorized by an Act of Congress in May 1976, and designed by Juan de Avalos. The statue was a gift from the King of Spain in recognition of our nation's bicentennial. Galvez was Military Governor of Louisiana by royal decree in 1776, and aided the colonies in their battle against the British with the conquest of Pensacola in 1781. The statue, surrounded by greenery and benches, was dedicated on June 3, 1976 by His Majesty King Juan Carlos of Spain. The parklet, now maintained by the National Park Service, is directly atop the E Street underpass.

The equestrian statue of San Martin, mounted on stone set on a foundation of brick and sand from San Lorenzo, is cast in Argentine copper. The figure was a gift from the citizens of Argentina to the United States, honoring San Martin as the founder of Argentine independence who led the liberating army across the Andes to give Chile and Peru freedom. An Act of Congress approved in 1924 authorized the erection of the statue, a copy of the original by Dumont exhibited in Buenos Aires. It was dedicated in 1925 in Judiciary Square, only to be relocated to the Northwest Rectangle in 1976. The reservation in which the statue currently stands was officially identified in 1884 and enlarged in 1969 following the closure of a segment of New York Avenue. The park was redesigned in 1971 by National Park Service landscape architects Frank Neubauer and Darwina Neal together with the firm of Donovan and Associates.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet**

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 7 Page 14

INVENTORY OF NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Buildings

American Institute of Pharmacy 1933; Early Stripped Classicism	2215 Constitution Avenue NW (Lot 62 Sq. 0817) Contributing
War Department 1941; Modern Movement	21st & E Streets NW (Lot 84 Sq. 0001) Contributing
Federal Reserve Board Annex 1975; Modern Movement	21st & C Streets NW (Lot 87E Sq. 0001) Non-Contributing
National Academy of Sciences 1924; Early Stripped Classicism	2101 Constitution Avenue NW (Lot 88 Sq. 0001) Contributing
Federal Reserve Board 1937; Stripped Classicism	Constitution Avenue & 20th Street (Lot 88E Sq. 0001) Contributing
District of Columbia Chapter, American Red Cross 1953; Stripped Classicism	2025 E Street NW (Lot 104 Sq. 0834) Contributing
Civil Service Commission 1963; Modern Movement	19th & E Streets NW (Lot 124 Sq. 0001) Contributing
US Public Health Service 1933; Early Stripped Classicism	1951 Constitution Avenue NW (Lot 128 Sq. 0001) Contributing
Department of Interior 1915-1917; Stripped Classicism	18th & F Streets NW (Lot 0143 Sq. 0001) Contributing
New Department of the Interior 1935-1936; Stripped Classicism	1849 C Street NW (Lot 144 Sq. 0001) Contributing
Corcoran Gallery of Art 1897; Roman Revival	17th Street & New York Avenue (Lot 0171 Sq. 0001) Contributing

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 7 Page 15

United Unions Building 1972-1973; Modern Movement	18th & E Streets NW (Lot 0171 Sq. 0002) Non-Contributing
Red Cross, American National Headquarters 1915; Academic Classicism	17th & D Streets NW (Lot 172 Sq. 0001) Contributing
American Red Cross Administration 1928; Academic Classicism	17th & E Streets (SW corner) NW (Lot 172 Sq. 0002) Contributing
American Red Cross Office 1931; Stripped Classicism	18th & E Streets NW (Lot 172 Sq. 0003) Contributing
Memorial Continental Hall 1910, 1923; Academic Classicism	1776 D Street NW (Lot 173 Sq. 0001) Contributing
Constitution Hall 1928-1930; Academic Classicism	331 18 th Street NW (Lot 173 Sq. 0002) Contributing
Organization of American States 1908; Academic Classicism	17th & Constitution Ave NW (Lot 173S Sq. 0001) Contributing
Van Ness House Stables Ca. 1816; Greek Revival	18th & C Streets NW (Lot 173S Sq. 0002) Non-Contributing
Pan American Union Annex 1949; Early Stripped Classicism	19th & Constitution Avenue NW (Lot 174 Sq. 0001) Contributing
<u>Park Statues</u> Statue of Jose Artigas Dedicated 1948	Reservation 110 Contributing
Statue of Simon Bolivar Dedicated 1959	Reservation 383 Contributing

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet**

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 7 **Page** 16

Reproduction of the Discus Thrower
Dedicated 1956

Reservation 105, Edward J. Kelly Park
Contributing

Statue of Bernardo de Galvez
Dedicated 1976

Reservation 720
Non-Contributing

Statue of General John A. Rawlins
Dedicated 1872/re-erected 1931

Rawlins Park
Contributing

Statue of General Jose de San Martin
Dedicated 1925/placed 1976

Reservation 106
Contributing

Statue of Albert Einstein
Dedicated 1979

Constitution Avenue at National Academy of Sciences
Non-Contributing

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet**

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 17

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Northwest Rectangle, denoted by L'Enfant as the future site of an undefined grouping of buildings, was officially addressed for the first time in 1931. The area was defined by Potomac Park (The Mall) and Constitution Avenue (formerly B Street) to the south, E Street and New York Avenue on the north, 17th Street and the Ellipse to the east, and 23rd Street excluding the Naval Hospital grounds to the west. Unofficial development of the rectangle began as early as 1891 with the construction of the original portion of the Corcoran Gallery of Art, and officially terminated with the Federal Reserve Annex in 1975. Between this eighty-year period, the Northwest Rectangle developed as a monumental core with semi-public and institutional buildings framing the Ellipse. By the mid-1920s, with the acceptance of the McMillan Plan and the City Beautiful Movement, the neighborhood developed along Constitution Avenue, intentionally framing Potomac Park and the Lincoln Memorial. Today, the Northwest Rectangle, whether formally planned or not, represents a portion of L'Enfant's comprehensive baroque plan with a coordinated system of radiating avenues, parks, and vistas essential to the historic plan of Washington, D.C.

In this context, the Northwest Rectangle should be listed in the National Register of Historic Places with architecture, community planning, and landscape architecture as the areas of significance within the 1891-1963 period of significance. The Northwest Rectangle is a cohesive district consisting of buildings landscaped by numerous parks and parklets filled with plantings, memorials, sculptures, fountains, and reflecting pools. The architecture includes stylistic examples of late 19th and early 20th century classical revival, and its transformation to stripped classicism and the modern movements. Of the twenty buildings, twelve properties have been individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places (eleven are listed in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites). Additionally, the Daughters of the American Revolution Memorial Continental Hall, Constitution Hall, and the American National Red Cross have been deemed National Historic Landmarks (NHL). Visual elements essential to the setting of the district are the nine landscaped parks or parklets, the fountains and reflecting pools, and many statues honoring individuals famous in the history of the Americas.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 18

Planning in the Northwest Building Area

The historic plan of Washington, District of Columbia, designed by Pierre L'Enfant in 1791 as the site of the Federal City, represents an excellent example of a comprehensive baroque city plan. The area to the northwest of the President's House reflects L'Enfant's ideals with a coordinated system of radiating avenues, parks, and vistas laid over an orthogonal system. Yet, with the departure of L'Enfant in 1792, the area was to remain undefined for almost one hundred and fifty years.

The construction of federal and institutional buildings in the northwest building area began in the latter part of the 19th century. Not officially recognized as part of the monumental core, or as a convenient location for government activity, the northwest building area did attract institutional organizations. Siting of the earliest resources was not formally planned, yet, the buildings emanated along 17th Street with vistas to the Ellipse and White House. Also not intentionally planned, the architectural styles, siting, and landscaping of the earliest buildings presented a monumental aesthetic commonly associated with the contemporary City Beautiful Movement with designed plantings and sculptured gardens. Each of the freestanding resources was prominently set upon a single block, fronting the Ellipse to the east, with terraced gardens and formal plantings surrounding.

The first of the several institutional buildings constructed was the **Corcoran Gallery of Art**, the original portion of which was erected between 1894 and 1897 at the intersection of 17th Street and New York Avenue. Washington, D.C. philanthropist William Wilson Corcoran founded the Corcoran Gallery in 1869 for the purpose of encouraging American genius in the arts. The first gallery Corcoran had constructed to house his collection was located at the corner of 17th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue (the present home of the Renwick Museum of Smithsonian Institution). The growth of the gallery was spurred in 1870, when Congress approved established a charter and trustees, thus making the Corcoran Gallery of Art a semi-public institution. In addition to the federal funding, William Corcoran personally gave an endowment of \$900,000 for the perpetual establishment and maintenance of the gallery, stipulating that the building be opened without admission charge to visitors. Corcoran bequeathed an additional sum of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 19

\$100,000 as an endowment for the creation of the Corcoran School of Art, the only truly professional art school in the District of Columbia.

An increase in acquisitions prompted the need for additional exhibit and storage space; thus, the present site at the corner of 17th Street and New York Avenue was purchased in 1891. Trained at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris in the 1880s, architect Ernest Flagg gave Washington, D.C. its first Beaux-Arts styled building in the designing of the second Corcoran Gallery of Art. Construction of the building began in 1894 and was completed three years later for a total cost of \$700,000. The brick structure with hollow tile and steel framing faced in white Georgia marble measured 263 feet on 17th Street and 113 feet on E Street. A U-shaped addition was constructed to the designs of Charles Adams Platt, opening in 1928. The addition extended the original E Street façade 167 feet to the west. The resulting structure was L-shaped in plan, creating a continuous façade on E Street. Amplifying the building's location on the hexagonal-shaped square is the dramatic hemicycle, which connects the gallery and the art school with auditorium and exhibition space. Designed by Flagg as a double-height room, the interior of the projecting hemicycle was redesigned by architect Waddy B. Wood as a two-story space in 1915.²

Just over one hundred years after L'Enfant's plan, the layout of the area to the northwest of the President's House was officially scrutinized for the first time. The Senate Park Commission Plan (also known as the McMillan Plan) of 1901 embraced the reclaimed Potomac flats, a process that was envisioned in the 1870s and implemented between the 1880s and 1900. The Senate plan enlarged the Mall to the west and presented a landscaped platform on which to erect a terminal monument, specifically the Lincoln Memorial. The monument was to cascade eastward toward the Washington Monument with a reflecting pool, radiating avenues, and tree-lined walks. Within the public park L'Enfant had envisioned for the northwest building area, the 1901 Plan directed the placement of a "rond point" or circle. The circle was to mark the intersection of Virginia and New York Avenues and a newly created road (now known as Henry Bacon Drive) that would extend to the Lincoln Memorial. This layout was to be mirrored to the south of the

² National Register of Historic Places - Nomination Form, "Corcoran Gallery of Art." Prepared by Suzanne Ganschinietz, National Capital Planning Commission. (January 1971); Patricia Scott & Antoinette J. Lee, *Buildings of the District of Columbia*. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 207.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet**

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 **Page** 20

reflecting pool, thus reinterpreting L'Enfant's baroque plan with its radiating avenues and intersecting circles.

To the northeast, the proposed rond point would be landscaped by the park later known as Rawlins Park, created in 1874 by the connection of two triangular blocks on New York Avenue that proved too small for improvements. To the southeast, the Senate Park Commission indicated "...for the most part, this area from New York Avenue to the river should be treated as a wood, planted informally, but marked by formal roads and paths, much as the Bois de Boulogne at Paris is treated." The development of the area to the west of the proposed circle was not addressed at all.

To protect the goals introduced by the McMillan study, Congress established the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) in 1910. CFA was created as a consulting organization to the government on the design of bridges, sculpture, parks, paintings, and other artistic matters; an executive order later that year added the responsibility of design review for all public buildings. Although authorized to deal with such endeavors nationwide if requested, CFA focused on the development of Washington, D.C., guiding the interpretation of public spaces and approving federal building projects, statuary for the parks, and even park landscaping programs. At the onset, CFA concentrated on the development of the capital's monumental core, particularly the design and construction of the Lincoln Memorial and the landscape of West Potomac Park.

The implementation of the Senate Park Commission Plan of 1901 was not expeditious, however, and many of the plans for the northwest neighborhood never materialized. The circle with its radiating drive was never constructed, nor were the woods planted. Plans for Potomac Park and the terminal memorial proceeded in 1912, and captured A Street into its landscape. Therefore, the southern boundary of the northwest building area became Constitution Gardens along B Street (renamed Constitution Avenue). Despite this prominent location directly on the Mall, future development of the area was still not addressed as a residential, commercial, or governmental neighborhood. Consequently, the community evolved slowly from within as a residential neighborhood subdivided with numerous narrow lots improved, or intended to be improved, by rowhouses. Yet, forthcoming development was slowly becoming apparent by 1915

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 21

as several monumental federal and institutional buildings began to mark the edges of the area: Pan-American Union (1908-1910); Daughters of the American Revolution Continental Memorial Hall (1910); the American Red Cross National Headquarters (1915-1917); and the Department of the Interior (1915-1917).

Fronting the Ellipse, the white marble **Continental Memorial Hall** (1910) was conceived as a monument to the founders of the republic, as an inspiration for patriotic sentiment, and as a headquarters for the organization. The design of the building was termed by the Daughters of the American Revolution as "the Colonial style modified only so far as will be necessary to apply modern improvements with classical lines."³ Architectural schemes for the building were solicited twice, with no single design accepted. Subsequently, Edward Pearce Casey of New York presented a plan that incorporated many of the proposed designs, including a 2,000-seat auditorium, a library, and a memorial room, which together provided a reception hall for 5,000 people. By the 1920s, when the organization outgrew the original building, the local firm of Marsh and Peter was retained to design the administration building facing D Street (completed in 1923).

In 1929, John Russell Pope contributed the adjoining classically styled **Constitution Hall**. Constructed of Alabama limestone, the 4,000-seat auditorium was embellished with Ionic columns and American eagle sculptures. At the laying of Constitution Hall's cornerstone on October 30, 1928, the Honorable Charles Moore (chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts) praised Continental Memorial Hall, the administration building, and Constitution Hall as "...part of the National Capital plan." Moore went on further to note the lack of planning instituted in the nation's capital in the late 1920s and the civic contribution of the extant resources in the northwest building area, "...if there be a lack in Washington of today, it is our lack of consideration for those things that make for the highest civilization. Towards filling that need this building will be a necessary physical contribution."⁴

³ Scott and Lee, pp. 208-209.

⁴ National Register of Historic Places - Nomination Form, "Constitution Hall." Prepared by the National Capital Planning Commission. (1985); Scott and Lee, pp. 208-209.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 22

Following that same ideal was the **Organization of American States**, constructed between 1908-1910 on 17th Street between Constitution Avenue and C Street. The building, also known as the Pan American Union, was set on property that originally was the site of the Van Ness Mansion, an imposing dwelling erected in 1816 for General John P. Van Ness (who eventually served as Mayor of Washington) to the designs of Benjamin Latrobe. With the demolition of the mansion in 1907, construction of the Organization of American States Building began. Said to be one of the most exotic of all the monumental buildings in Washington, D.C.'s central core, the Organizational of American States was the work of architects Albert Kelsey and Paul P. Cret. The design of the white marble building was the result of an architectural competition, with the architects drawing from the classical traditions. As published in *Architectural Record*, "the site chosen for the building, at the corner of 17th Street N.W., and Potomac Park, is a splendid one for a monumental building, and the Pan American Building has been skillfully kept in conformity with the two other important buildings on 17th Street, as well as the generally monumental character of public buildings in Washington...." The article further states that the building expresses "...an unusual degree of individuality in itself. And all three of these buildings, while representing interests and activities of marked public importance, are distinctly apart, officially from the national government. The Corcoran Art Gallery, the headquarters of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Pan American Union constitute an interesting group, or rather sequence, of monumental buildings in white marble."⁵

The Pan American Building was to be home to the world's oldest international association uniting the twenty-one republics of the Western Hemisphere in a "community of nations" dedicated to the achievement of peace, security, and prosperity for all Americans.⁶ Therefore, it was determined that the building would be designed more like a residence "than an impersonal public building, although as dignified as the subject demands."⁷ This design concept, expressed by the Union and the architects, was to present the representatives of the various countries with

⁵ C. Matlack Price, "The Pan American Union and its Annex: Washington, D.C. A Study in Plan & Detail," *The Architectural Record*, Volume XXXIV, No. 5, (November 1913), pp. 386-387.

⁶ National Register of Historic Places - Nomination Form, "Pan American Union," Prepared by Nancy C. Taylor, National Capital Planning Commission. (April 1965).

⁷ Price, p. 387.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 23

the "impression of entering their own house...[and] of receiving guests in their own residence, and not, in a commonplace meeting room."⁸ To this end, while of a distinctively monumental character in keeping with "its noble environments," the architects infused the Pan American Building with a sense of "stately domesticity."⁹ Funding for the construction of the building, which totaled \$1,000,000, was largely provided by Andrew Carnegie and the various republics the Union represented.

The final component of the group along 17th Street was the headquarters for the American Red Cross, a quasi-governmental organization chartered by Congress in 1905.¹⁰ In fulfillment of its obligations, the American Red Cross (ARC) provides health services, emergency relief, and safety instruction in the United States and abroad. The special relationship between the ARC and the federal government was first demonstrated in 1915 when a Joint Resolution of Congress authorized the construction of the **National American Red Cross Headquarters**, as a monument to commemorate the women of the Civil War.¹¹ As written into the legislation, the title of the site (on Square 172) and the building itself were the property of the United States; the American Red Cross was responsible for the general upkeep and care of the new headquarters facility and grounds. Furthermore, the construction of the building was to be paid from matching funds provided from the ARC and the federal government.

The headquarters has been termed unique "in its attempt at symbolic reconciliation by recognizing the sacrifices of both the North and the South" during the Civil War.¹² Designed by architects Breck Trowbridge and Goodhue Livingston of New York, the symbolic building illustrates the Beaux-Arts style with traditional classical ornamentation. Hiram Powers designed the "Faith, Hope, and Charity" sculptures, while the stained glass windows of Louis C. Tiffany show wounded warriors and the patron saint of the sick with roses. The Red Cross complex

⁸ Price, pp. 387-388.

⁹ Price, p. 388.

¹⁰ U.S. Congress, Senate Res. 5704 (Public Res. No. 4), Chapter 23, 58th Congress, 1st Session, January 5, 1905.

¹¹ U.S. Congress, House Res. 7898 (Public Res. 32), Chapter 32, 63rd Congress, 1st Session, October 22, 1913.

¹² Scott and Lee, p. 207.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 24

includes two freestanding administration buildings (erected 1928 and 1931) that visually connect to create a landscaped courtyard in the center of the property known as Red Cross Square.

Although not located on 17th Street overlooking the Ellipse and White House, the first **Department of Interior** at 18th and F Streets contributes to the monumental aesthetic developing along the eastern boundary of the Northwest Rectangle in the early part of the 20th century. Completed in 1917, the building served as headquarters for the Department of the Interior during its most significant years, 1917-1937.¹³ The building is said to be "the federal government's first...modern office building where function predominates over style."¹⁴ It was intended to house the scientific and technical staff of the Interior Department, as well as the Geological Survey, General Land Office, Bureau of Mines, and Reclamation Service, while the Secretary and his immediate deputies remained ensconced in the old Patent Office at 7th and G Streets. Charles Butler designed the Department of Interior Building in conjunction with the Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury in 1915. C.P.S. Garwood of the New York office of James Gamble Rogers supervised construction. The location and design of the building were the focus of considerable Congressional and official interest, and were frequently discussed in the press, both nationally and locally. Congressional legislation passed in 1910 directed that the intended structure had to be a "fireproof building of a modern office-building type," although no further directives were provided. Many government officials expressed opinions about the intended character of the new building, stating "that too much federal money was lavished on useless ornamentation, which drained the Federal Treasury."

The location then believed to be "far from the corridor of the Capitol and the White House" was viewed as another reason for designing a purely practical structure. As the *Evening Star* reported, "the new building will be a workshop, not a show place.... The site was chosen because it is, in a measure, 'out of the way'." However, as the project evolved and the secretary increased his interest as well as his determination to occupy it, the building began to take on

¹³ National Register of Historic Places - Nomination Form, "Interior Department Offices," Prepared by Andrea Rebeck of Velsey Architects. (January 1986).

¹⁴ Scott and Lee, p. 216.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 25

monumental aspects.¹⁵ A significant feature of the building is its E-shaped floor plan, with the back along F Street and arms stretching south to form two open courtyards. This arrangement provided for an abundance of natural light to reach the offices located on the interior of the structure. On F Street, then a major streetcar route, three entrances were located, each corresponding to a wing of the building. Workers occupying offices in a particular wing were supposed to use their respective entrance in order to sort themselves out efficiently and to increase the ability of each bureau to supervise their movements. When construction bids proved lower than the appropriations, Secretary Lane persuaded the Office of the Supervising Architect to substitute limestone for the intended gray brick on the building's exterior. Thus, the structure took on the monumental appearance commonly exhibited in federal buildings of the period, an appearance presented along 17th Street as well.

The Interior Department made its headquarters in the 18th and F Streets building until 1936, when a new building was constructed to the south on C Street. Thereafter, the original building served as Interior North, housing the Federal Works Agency in 1939, and the General Services Administration (GSA) beginning in 1949. Today, it is commonly referred to as the GSA Building. The first Department of Interior not only instigated new stylistic designs and efficient space planning for future government structures, but contributed greatly to the forthcoming designation of the Northwest Rectangle as part of the monumental federal core.

With the squares framing on the Ellipse improved by 1917, building projects began to focus on the northern side of Constitution Avenue between 17th and 23rd Streets. The Commission of Fine Arts considered these five unimproved squares as ideal framing for the Lincoln Memorial, which was dedicated on Memorial Day in 1922. The first building constructed specifically to "frame" the memorial was the **National Academy of Sciences** at 2101 Constitution Avenue. The National Academy of Sciences was incorporated by an act of Congress on March 3, 1863, to advise the government on scientific matters. For more than fifty years, the Academy resided as tenants in the Smithsonian, until need for enlarged quarters to house the Academy and the newly created National Research Council (NRC) became urgent at the close of World War I. The NRC,

¹⁵ Scott and Lee, p. 216.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 26

formed in 1916 as an entity of the Academy, broadened the role of the institution as adviser to the government and in the war-preparedness effort. It provided a framework within which governmental, educational, industrial, and other research organizations could cooperate to attack scientific problems. With the rising need for such study and advisement, the Academy was encouraged to secure a building site in 1919 when the Carnegie Corporation agreed to contribute the funds for construction of the building, plus an endowment. The site cost \$185,000 and measured 531 feet by 422 feet. Bounded on the north by C Street and 21st and 22nd Streets to the east and west respectively, the site was cut diagonally at its southern boundary by Upper Water Street. Subsequently, Congress closed Upper Water Street, creating a square building site. The groundbreaking ceremony was held the first week of July 1922; the cornerstone was laid in October of the same year.

Architect Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue's design was a free adaptation of the Neo-Classical style, presenting "a central pavilion in a small but heavily wooded park."¹⁶ Goodhue initially applauded the location away from the city's monumental central core, believing he would not be forced to produce a rigidly symmetrical Neo-Classical design. Yet, the site and building design were instrumental to the framing landscape plan of the heavily columned Lincoln Memorial. Therefore, Goodhue presented an interpretation of the style, one he deemed "God-knows-what-kind-of-Classic."¹⁷ Goodhue, however, recognized that while the monumental building he designed was to complement the Lincoln Memorial, it also had to be unpretentious in that act so as not to detract from the monument itself.

Recognizing John Ruskin's criteria that architects were not sculptors or painters, Goodhue wrote:

I should like to be merely one of the three people to produce a building, i.e. architect, painter, sculptor...I should like to do the plan and the massing of the building; then...turn the ornament (whether sculpture or not makes no difference) over to a perfectly qualified

¹⁶ Fredrica W. Wechsler, editor, "National Academy of Sciences, National Research Council...A Temple of Science." (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1984), p.11.

¹⁷ National Register of Historic Places - Nomination Form, "National Academy of Science," Prepared by T. Robins Brown, National Capital Planning Commission. (August 1973).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 27

sculptor, and the color and surface direction (mural pictures or not as the case may be) to an equally qualified painter...¹⁸

The division of artistic labor as outlined by Goodhue was followed in the design and construction of the Academy Building, which is ornamented by the sculpture of Lee Lawrie, and the paintings of Albert Herter, and muralist Hildreth Meiere. Charles Downing Lay, a landscape architect, drew the original plans for the Academy grounds in 1924. The overall plan, which has been altered by the growth of variety of new plantings, complimented the topography of the site. Like that seen at the Lincoln Memorial, Goodhue and Lay designed three rectangular reflecting pools with stepped walkways leading to the building's main entry. Lined with eight-inch-square turquoise-hued tiles, the pools were stocked by the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries with successive generations of exotic fish. The cost of repairing the pools eventually proved prohibitive; in 1951, the tile was removed, and the pools adapted for use as planters. As envisioned by Goodhue in 1922, the National Academy of Sciences stood alone within a heavily wooded park along Potomac Park.

The major federal commitment behind the planning of the monumental core and the city's ever-expanding edges prompted several congressional acts in response to City Beautiful ideals. The elements of this abstract conception of the City Beautiful included carefully landscaped, architecturally designed approaches to the city by both land and water; an administrative or "civic" center; business districts whose visibility and access were reinforced by cutting of great diagonal boulevards; residential developments planned around focal points spinning out from the center of the city in a spider web configuration; open spaces emphasizing hills, waterfronts, and topography; and winding parkways connecting the city's open spaces and residential areas. Promoters of the planning legislation saw these ideals – as translated and enunciated in 1902 by the Senate Park Commission – imperiled by the relentless process of haphazard, piecemeal development. Thus, in 1926, the National Capital Park and Planning Commission (NCPPC) was established and the greatest Public Buildings Act to date was passed, authorizing construction of

¹⁸ Wechsler, p. 7.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet**

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 28

the Beaux-Arts styled government buildings in the Federal Triangle.¹⁹

The Federal Triangle, a slice of land bounded by Pennsylvania Avenue, Constitution Avenue, and 15th Street, represented this City Beautiful arrangement with low-rise monumental structures that unified federal agencies in government-owned buildings. In 1926, at the time the project was initiated, it found universal support among architects, planners, and politicians. By the time it was completed in 1937, however, the nation was in the throes of the Great Depression and attitudes toward planning and architecture had changed. Within a year, the Federal Triangle was viewed as out of touch with the realities of the living city in which it stood.²⁰ The larger perspectives of city planning showed the environmental shortcomings of the Federal Triangle plan, especially its parking deficiencies and the congestion associated with the daily ebb and flow of governmental workers who did not generate business activities. Yet, the massive complex undeniably offered an architectural quality to a decaying mid-19th century business district.

The aesthetic and functional successes of the Federal Triangle greatly influenced future planning, and the location of public buildings in nation's capital was acknowledged as a fundamental force on the shape, and function of the central urban core. Alternatives to the governmental concentration exhibited at the Federal Triangle were either modest decentralization to the edges of the downtown federal core, or more drastic dispersal to the urban fringe. To those who saw the center of the Federal City as the Capitol, it was an attractive possibility that federal establishments could be encouraged to locate east and north of that point. To those who saw the center of the city as the White House, development had to be west and north. Between these two keys points lay the Federal Triangle and the congestion it had produced. For these reasons the struggle between opposing viewpoints on the future location of federal buildings focused on the areas west of the White House and east of the Capitol.²¹

¹⁹ Frederick Gulheim, consultant and the National Capital Planning Commission, *Worthy of the Nation: The History of Planning for the National Capital*. (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977), p. 159.

²⁰ Gulheim, p. 159; Scott & Lee, pp. 166-169.

²¹ Gulheim, p. 201.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet**

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 **Page** 29

NCPPC's *Annual Report* for 1928 had stressed the McMillan Commission's call for the Mall and the White House to become the foci of future public buildings. In 1931, the congressionally authorized Public Buildings Commission released a plan for the Mall entitled *The Mall and Vicinity, Washington, Proposed Development*. Although a few squares were shaded gray to denote federally owned property, no specific plan was indicated for the northwest building area as it was considered to be outside the monumental core despite its frontage on the Mall and close proximity to the White House. Yet, the northwest building area to the opposite side of the Ellipse was unofficially viewed as a natural balance for the Federal Triangle.

Official Establishment of the Northwest Rectangle

Eventually, the NCPPC was faced with the housing needs of the Navy and War Departments, both of which desired property west of the White House. Formally investigating the area, NCPPC altered its earlier emphasis by agreeing with the Navy Department and recommending the northwest building area as the permanent site of the rapidly growing departments. With existing offices in the old State, War, and Navy Building at 17th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, the War and Navy Departments had previously occupied rental space in the Walker-Johnson Building (1913, now the site of the United Union Building) and the Ordnance Building (1917) at 1800 E Street. The break with the past reflected the commission's claim that it was "looking many years into the future" in planning for buildings of a permanent character that eventually might house different agencies or departments. Mimicking the concepts of the Federal Triangle, the Planning Commission, in its *Annual Report* for 1931, recommended that "all the permanent buildings existing and proposed in the northwest building area should be regarded as part of a single related group insofar as the varied character of the existing buildings to be retained will permit." These extant buildings included institutional buildings facing the Mall: the original Pan-American (1908-1910) and the privately owned National Academy of Sciences (1924). The first and only federal building in the northwest area constructed before 1931 was the Department of Interior (1915-1917) at 18th and F Streets. The siting of the Interior Building outside of the monumental core prompted protests that "...it [was] not at all in harmony with the plan for the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 30

improvement of the city of Washington and [was] utterly inappropriate for this department."²² The proposal for the Northwest Rectangle, as outlined by the Planning Commission, thereby vindicated the "mistaken" siting of the Interior Department (now the General Services Administration).²³

The Planning Commission's 1931 strategy for the Northwest Rectangle was the first time the area was officially addressed and proposed as the site of federal and institutional buildings. Although by 1915, the northwest building area had been slowly developing without intentional planning by NCPPC or any other government agency, as a semi-governmental district with institutional buildings fronting the Ellipse to the of the White House. The area had been informally referred to as the "Northwest Triangle," yet; it was not until the 1931 plan that the area was officially designated as "Northwest Building Area"; later becoming known as the "Northwest Rectangle."

On March 20, 1931, NCPPC voted to adopt recommendations proposed for the development of the "Northwest Building Area."²⁴ As the result of this meeting, NCPPC planner Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. prepared formal recommendations regarding the area for a subsequent NCPPC meeting held on April 17-18, 1931. The plan was made public at the April meeting, calling for a sophisticated grouping of government office buildings that was similar in concept to the Federal Triangle authorized in 1926. In addition, the Northwest Building Area would specifically accommodate the new headquarters for the Navy and War Departments. The recommendations discussed the preliminary allocation of space, vehicular circulation (including road relocations), and aesthetic considerations. Intended for public and institutional use, five buildings were specified for "early construction" within the area: the Public Health Office, the Heating Plant, the Pan-American Annex, Naval Hospital, and the Pharmaceutical Building. Although these

²² National Register of Historic Places, Nomination Application, "Interior Department Offices." Prepared by Andrea Rebeck of Velzey Architects. (January 1986), Section 8, p. 5.

²³ Gutheim, pp. 182 and 205.

²⁴ Frederick Law Olmsted, *National Capital Park and Planning Commission: Northwest Building Area*, Appendix A. Meeting held on April 17-18, 1931. NARS, Record Group 66, Box 139 "Commission of Fine Arts, Records Relating Primarily to Projects, Project Files, 1910-1952," Folder "Northwest Rectangle."

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 31

recommendations highlighted certain special planning and aesthetic concerns for the area, no specific plan existed for the proposed complex of buildings at this early stage. The NCPPC minutes from the April 1931 meeting stated that: "...to proceed immediately to construction of any of these buildings, prior to construction of a group plan, would be a great mistake in policy and extremely dangerous as to its results."²⁵

An initial plan for the area, drawn as early as 1932 and known as the Corbett Plan, would have extended the federal building area north of New York Avenue to E Street, with new buildings for the War and Navy Departments on either side of the intersection of New York and Virginia Avenues between 18th and 19th Streets. The desire of Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes to locate a new building for his department across E Street from the old Interior Building led to further studies and a new plan for the area. In June 1934, the NCPPC finally published a second site plan to support their 1931 recommendations. Entitled *Site Plan for Public Building Group; Northwest Area; Study A*, this very symmetrical plan orchestrated the locations of many "future" buildings, including proposed pairs of building specifically constructed for the War Department and the Department of Interior. The new structures were to flank a central square, while creating a direct relationship with the Mall. It was also proposed that New York Avenue be laid diagonally to create an X intersect with Virginia Avenue. In 1937, the 1934 site plan for the Northwest Building Area was incorporated into a broader plan for the Mall by NCPPC entitled *The Mall, Central Area, Study for Development, 1937*. The elaborate plan never actually came to fruition, although the area's designation as a "defense center" resulted in the siting of the Interior and War Department buildings.

By the late 1930s, the envisioned Northwest Rectangle incorporated several federal and institutional buildings. The newest additions to the neighborhood, erected as a result of NCPPC's interest in the area, were the new Department of the Interior (1935-1936); the Public Health Service (now the Interior Department South, 1933); the Pharmaceutical Building (1933); the Federal Reserve Board (1937); the War Department (encompassed within the State

²⁵ Letter, From John Nolen, Jr., to John Ihlder, March 5, 1943. NARS, Record Group 328, Box 55, Folder 5.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet**

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 **Page** 32

Department complex, 1939-1941). The new Department of Interior was very clearly a product of the 1934 plans for the Northwest Rectangle, whereas the War Department was not erected as suggested in the design.

Ten years after the construction of the National Academy of Sciences on Constitution Avenue, in 1933, the flanking squares were addressed as the future site of the Public Health Service and the American Pharmaceutical Association. Construction of the buildings was prompted by government overcrowding and a series of legislative acts creating and funding a National Building Program in the late 1920s. The origins of the **United States Public Health Service** (PHS) date back to the 1798 establishment of the Marine Hospital Service (MHS), which provided medical facilities for sick or disabled merchant seamen. During the late 19th century, the purview of the Service expanded beyond the administration of Marine Hospitals and included the development of a national quarantine system. Congress, granting the MHS more responsibilities, changed its name to the United States Public Health and Marine Service in 1902. In 1912, Congress again renamed the Service, which became known simply as the United States Public Health Service (PHS). The name change reflected a shift in the agencies' focus away from providing care for merchant seamen to the exploration and investigation of diseases both in the lab and the field.

The PHS continued to grow and expand during the 1920s and, by 1927, its administrative officers were housed in five buildings scattered across Washington, D.C. Lobbying by the Surgeon General for a central headquarters began in 1926, resulting in the 1928 approval by the Commission of Fine Arts for a site adjacent to the Hygienic Laboratory at 25th and E Streets. However, construction of the facility did not occur. By May 1933, the PHS attained a significant milestone with the opening of their new administration office building at 19th Street and Constitution Avenue. Yet, it had been the opinion of both the Commission of Fine Arts and the NCPPC that construction of the building at this location would "seriously and unwarrantably injure the dignity and beauty of the setting of the Lincoln Memorial and that part of the Mall system which enframes it."²⁶ The commission unanimously agreed:

²⁶ Historic Structures Report, "Department of Interior South, 1951 Constitution Avenue." Prepared by the National

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet**

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 33

...That the park area which forms a portion of the frame for the Lincoln Memorial north of B Street and west of 23rd Street, should not be invaded by any building.

...That there is not room enough on the combined site of the Naval Hospital and the Public Health Service for the probable future needs of both these uses, and that in the future one or the other must move.

...If it is decided to build a new office building for the Public Health Service in this area, it is believed that a site is available on ground now allocated to the Public Health Service, preferably along E or 25th Streets.²⁷

The joint committee's final recommendation failed to consider the recently passed legislation authorizing establishment of the National Institute of Health, which was to occupy all the space previously allocated to the PIIS at the Hygienic Laboratory site. Thus, the Secretary of the Treasury proposed constructing the PHS Building on either Square 62 or Square 128. Square 62 was bounded by Constitution Avenue, C, 22nd, and 23rd Streets, while Square 128 was bounded by Constitution Avenue, C, 19th and 20th Streets. The NCPPC responded by passing a resolution that addressed the use of these squares, stating that:

The Commission sees no objection to the construction of a building on Square 128, if it conforms in scale and finish and in architectural character to the type of buildings along 17th Street and B Street, west of 17th Street; but the Commission recommends consideration of the possibility of locating the building for the Public Health Service in the north part of Square 62. Should a building be built on Square 128, the Commission recommends that its face be in line with that of the Academy of Sciences Building.²⁸

Capital Planning Commission. (no date), p. II-5.

²⁷ Frederic A. Delano to Secretary of the Treasury, June 2, 1930. Records of the Public Building Service, RG 121, Box 460, Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland.

²⁸ U.S. Grant, III to Secretary of the Treasury, June 20, 1930. Records of the National Capital Parks and Planning Commission, RG 328, Box 44, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet**

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 34

The Commission's preference for Square 62 stemmed from concern expressed by Ulysses S. Grant, III, the Executive and Disbursing Officer for the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, that a privately owned apartment house was recommended for construction on this site. The rear facade of such a building, it was feared, would face the Lincoln Memorial, thereby destroying the controlled landscape and view corridors that the Commission desired.²⁹ Therefore, construction of the PHS Building on the square would prevent the prospect of an apartment building. Additionally, Grant wrote the Secretary of the Treasury in June 1930, arguing that if the Treasury Department decided to construct the PHS Building on Square 128, the plans should include a central heating plant, as the present heating plant was scheduled for demolition. Grant argued that Square 128 would be the "most convenient and economical" location for a new heating plant because of the layout of the existing steam lines. He also pointed out the need to relocate the White House garages, which were then located on Square 128. Grant concluded by stating that he was not objecting to the use of Square 128, but merely desired to inform the Secretary and the Surgeon General of the problems that would be encountered if construction did occur on Square 128. Despite these obstacles, in July 3, 1930, the Secretary of the Treasury requested the Public Buildings Commission to give its consent to the construction of the new PHS Building on Square 128.³⁰

Designed by local architect Jules Henri de Sibour, the new marble and limestone Public Health Service building had an E-shaped plan that covered the width of Square 128 along Constitution Avenue. Following the same restrictions placed upon Goodhue ten years before, de Sibour presented a refined interpretation of the classical style with pilasters rather than columns to divide the elevations. Landscaping, a complimentary feature insisted upon by de Sibour, was suggested by the firm of Wheelwright and Stevenson of Philadelphia. Divided into four stages, the plan included permanent steps and platforms at the main entry; permanent steps leading to Constitution Avenue on axis with the main entry; permanent and temporary grading with walks and parking; and permanent roadways, curbs, and grading at the rear. The landscape plan as

²⁹ Department of Interior South Historic Structures Report, p. II-7.

³⁰ Department of Interior South Historic Structures Report, p. II-7.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 35

outlined by Wheelwright and Stevenson was never carried out; however, an interpretation of the firm's plan was implemented by 1940.³¹

The 1933 Public Health Service at 1951 Constitution Avenue was the first structure dedicated exclusively to the administrative activities of the PHS. Yet, following an unofficial tradition, the new building proved temporary as well, with the Service occupying the site for less than ten years before moving in early 1942 in order to provide space for the Combined Chiefs of Staff and the newly created Joint Chiefs of Staff. A number of other governmental agencies, including the Atomic Energy Commission and the National Science Foundation, subsequently occupied the building before it became known as the Interior South, an annex for the adjacent Department of Interior.

With the construction of the Public Health Service on Square 128, the Commission of Fine Arts viewed Square 62 as unprotected from non-federal construction, thereby a threat to the framing of the Lincoln Memorial. Consequently, when the **American Institute of Pharmacy** required a headquarters in 1932, the prominent site was quickly made available. Though the construction was financed entirely by subscription of the members of the American Pharmaceutical Association, architect John Russell Pope and the Association worked in close consultation with the Commission of Fine Arts and the NCPPC throughout the design process. The Association was required 1) to purchase the entire northern frontage of Upper Water Street between 22nd and 23rd Streets to create an appropriate setting for their building and thereby to enhance the setting of the Lincoln Memorial; 2) to transfer land to the United States for the proposed widening of 23rd Street as an axial approach to the Lincoln Memorial in exchange for most of the bed of Upper Water Street as an addition to their site; 3) to build of white marble in conformance with the memorial and surrounding federal buildings along Constitution Avenue; and 4) to maintain Reservation No. 332B between Upper Water Street and Constitution Avenue as part of the ground of the American Pharmaceutical Institute.³²

³¹ Department of Interior South Historic Structures Report, pp. II-18-21.

³² National Register of Historic Places - Nomination Form, "The American Institute of Pharmacy Building," Prepared by Tanya Beauchamp, National Capital Planning Commission. (October 1976).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 36

John Russell Pope designed the building in a sparse interpretation of the late Beaux-Arts Classical style similar to that he used for the National Gallery of Art at the eastern end of Constitution Avenue. Conceived as a monumental "temple to pharmacy," the white marble building possessed a formal Palladian pavilion-like quality that effectively complemented the Lincoln Memorial and related positively to the adjacent parkland. The building, sited well above Constitution Avenue, was landscaped with monumental stairs that descended rhythmically and ceremoniously in stepped terraces, a scheme like that to the Lincoln Memorial. The building was dedicated on May 9, 1934. The American Pharmaceutical Association, established in 1852, was the first national pharmaceutical association in the United States, with interest of public health and legislation concerned with its promotion. Largely unaltered, save the 1959 rear addition by Eggers and Higgins, the American Institute of Pharmacy at 2215 Constitution Avenue continues to serve as the headquarters for the association.

Occupying one of the central squares in the framing plan was the **Federal Reserve Board**, constructed in 1937 between 20th and 21st Streets. The four-story, white Georgia marble building, within a formally landscaped plot, was intentionally set back 200 feet from Constitution Avenue in order to be on axis with the extant Pharmaceutical Building, Public Health Service Building, and the National Academy of Sciences. Designed by architect Paul P. Cret, the building was completed for a cost of \$3,484,000. Sculptor Sidney Waugh designed the white marble eagle sitting on the cornice at the center of the building. Stylistically, the design of the Federal Reserve Board was not traditionally classical, rather it advanced the refined and spare ornamentation begun at its flanking counterparts by omitting classical detailing from the exterior. In plan, however, the building followed the traditional elements of the style with its symmetrical arrangement, white marble facade, scale, and placement on a large block. The compliance of the traditional forms and materials was dictated in part by the building's supervisors who agreed that the Federal Reserve Board should rely on "conception, proportion, scale and purity of line" rather than "purely decorative or monumental features."³³ The appearance was so progressive that the American Institute of Architect's *Journal* reported, "this would appear to indicate that

³³ Scott and Lee, p. 210.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet**

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 **Page** 37

the reign of the column and the pediment is nearing its close, even in Washington.”³⁴

Breaking further with the typical classically styled architectural precedents of the nation's capital was the new **Department of Interior** at C Street between 18th and 19th Streets. Constructed during 1935-1936, and dedicated on April 16, 1936, the Interior Building was the first building in Washington, D.C. to be authorized, designed, and built by the Roosevelt administration. Like its counterpart, the new Interior Building did not directly frame the Ellipse or the Lincoln Memorial. Rather, the building occupied an entire square to the west of 18th Street and the north of C Street, while enjoying a vista to Mall across Virginia and Constitution Avenues. The new building was visually separated from its predecessor by Rawlins Park, a landscaped square at E Street and New York Avenue between 18th and 19th streets. The concept for a park began in 1874, when the statue of Major General John A. Rawlins (Ulysses S. Grant's close military and personal adviser) was placed at the site. Designed by sculptor Joseph A. Bailey, the statue was removed from its original site when the area was deemed less desirable. The statue was eventually returned, and in 1938, the surrounding park was developed by landscape architect John Kirkpatrick of the National Park Service. Referred to as one of the most thoughtfully designed urban parks in Washington, D.C., Rawlins Park stands over the underground tunnel that physically connects the two Interior Buildings.

The massive Department of Interior building purposely avoided the conventional styles and motifs, reflecting the stripped classicism popular in the 1930s. President Roosevelt and the Interior Secretary Harold I. Ickes regarded the building as symbolic of “a new day” for government in the management of natural and historic resources. Ickes was very critical of the buildings in the Federal Triangle with their closed light courts, wasted space, and columned facades, which he felt, were extravagant. He observed that the open courtyards in the old Interior Building, a design much criticized at the time of construction, actually provided more light and circulation of air. Consequently, architect Waddy B. Wood looked to the original building for inspiration, designing double-loaded corridors so that each office would have daylight and direct access to a corridor. Wood incorporated the latest technological advances in building

³⁴ Scott and Lee, p. 210.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 38

construction both to enhance the working environment of the employee and to provide efficient maintenance and protection of the building itself. Special features included movable steel office partitions, acoustically treated ceilings, central air conditioning, an automatic sprinkler and fire detection system, a special floor to house mechanical equipment, a central vacuum system, and the use of escalators. As a result of centering the building's design and features around the employees' comfort and needs at every level, the new Interior Building was one of the most functional and innovative office structures in Washington, D.C. during the 1930s.³⁵

While utilitarian in nature, the Department of Interior Building represented the Roosevelt Administration's commitment to the largest art program ever undertaken by the Federal government, the most famous of which was the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project (WPA/FAP). An integral part of the building's interior design, specifically the large-scale murals and sculptural works, stemmed from commissions made as part of this program. Consequently, the Interior Building houses the largest collection of New Deal art in any Federal government office building.

The largest federal structure, consisting of two separate buildings, in the Northwest Rectangle was the State Department Complex. These buildings are the **War Department** of 1939-1941 and the **State Department Extension** of 1957-1960. While the construction and architectural styles of both buildings were not widely addressed, the location of the War Department was generated from the 1935 development plan that official named the Northwest Rectangle. The War Department, occupying the northeast quadrant of the site at the corner of E and 21st Streets, was constructed to the designs of Gilbert S. Underwood and William D. Foster. However, the Public Buildings Administration and its successor agency, the Public Buildings Service, produced the architectural drawings and Supervising Architect Louis A. Simon played a key role in the design decisions, presenting schematic designs of his own. The square building, clad in rough-cut limestone enlivened by polished granite spandrels, exhibited classical massing and proportions. The structure had no applied stylistic detailing, as the architectural trends of the

³⁵ National Register of Historic Places – Nomination Form, "U.S. Department of the Interior: Building." Prepared by Kay D. Weeks, National Park Service. (July 1986); Scott and Lee, p. 216.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 39

period began to dictate, but expressed its function as a modern office building. Influenced by industrial design, the building exhibits influences from the Art Moderne, "Depression Modern," and Streamlined Moderne.

As predicted by the Secretary, the War Department was rendered obsolete before it was even completed. In May 1941, Secretary of War Henry Stimson announced that he would not be moving into the new building, being directly influenced by the administrations' decision to erect another building to house the department's activities. Far larger than anything that could have been accommodated on the Northwest Rectangle site, the new building was constructed across the Potomac River in Arlington County, Virginia. An \$8 billion supplemental appropriation bill passed in July 1941 included \$35 million for the new building, which would house 20,000 workers. The Pentagon, as it became known, was completed in 1942. Although units of the War Department, including the Adjutant General, did occupy the building on 21st Street upon its completion in the summer of 1941, by 1944, all War Department activities were removed to the Pentagon, leaving one of the major buildings significant to the proposed plan of the Northwest Rectangle vacant.

With the completion of the War Department in 1941, the majority of the squares in the Northwest Rectangle were improved by federal and institutional buildings exhibiting the architectural trends and functional needs of the government. The squares too small for large-scale improvements and those bisected by Virginia Avenue remain unaddressed. The most controversial of the squares was the future home of the **Pan American Union Annex**, completed in 1949 after twenty years of debate. The proposed annex was originally intended to be erected within the existing grounds of the Pan American Union, at the intersection of Constitution Avenue and 17th Street. The director general Dr. Leo S. Rowe realized that such an edifice would disturb the landscaping of the environs of the main building and the supplementary building on 18th Street. Consequently, the Union applied to additional funding and requested an alternate building site.

As a result, the Carnegie Corporation provided \$800,000, while Union officials appeared before the House Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds to ask allocation of the "parcel of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 40

Government land lying between 18th Street, C Street, and Virginia Avenue.”³⁶ The House Committee agreed on April 19, 1928. However, the Commission of Fine Arts was not satisfied this site would aid in the furtherance of the scheme to make Constitution Avenue “the great monumental and ceremonial avenue in the Capital.”³⁷ Architect Paul P. Cret was engaged to design the annex despite not knowing where it was to be erected. Eventually Congress, yielding to Commission of Fine Arts Chairman Charles Moore, authorized the annex to be relocated from “18th and C Streets to the other corner, 18th and Constitution Avenue.”³⁸ The intended site was relieved of the central heating plant and the other temporary buildings in 1930. Staking their claim on the site, the Pan American Union constructed a 436’ tunnel between the basement of its original building the projected annex.

Simultaneously, the new Department of Interior was being erected under the watch of Secretary Ickes. The Secretary opposed the construction of the Pan American Union Annex “because it would interfere with the view of his new \$10,000,000....building from Constitution Avenue.”³⁹ While the Commission of Fine Arts rejected his objections, the Secretary was able to stall construction of the annex by enlisting the aid of President Roosevelt. Subsequent proposals, one of which was provided by the President himself, recommended closing part of Virginia Avenue, thus enlarging the square where the main Union Building stood. With no apparent compromise in the foreseeable future, a special committee was appointed to hold closed-door sessions in an attempt to solve the situation. The proposed plans, often leaked to the public, were concluded in 1946 following the resignation of Secretary Ickes. The incoming Secretary was initially unprepared to argue the Constitution Avenue vista problem and construction of the annex began. Classically designed, the marble-clad Pan American Union Annex (also known as the Administration Building) is the work of the architectural firm of Harbeson, Hough, Livingston, and Larson.

³⁶ James Walden Fawcett, “Two Decades Of Confusion, Long Controversy Over Pan American Union Annex Site Renewed After Work Has Been Started,” *Evening Star*. February 9, 1948.

³⁷ Fawcett, *Evening Star*. February 9, 1948.

³⁸ Fawcett, *Evening Star*. February 9, 1948.

³⁹ Fawcett, *Evening Star*. February 9, 1948.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 41

Post-War Northwest Rectangle

As early as 1935, the Alley Dwelling Authority (ADA--later known as the National Capital Housing Authority) had obtained ownership of the southern half of Square 104. Long associated with the African-American community, the site contained approximately fifty houses considered substandard housing. As individual titles were cleared, the housing was demolished. Unable to tolerate the delay, the ADA sought condemnation in 1943 for the final parcels of the southern half of Square 104, basing its rights on the March 31, 1938 amendment to the Public Buildings Act of 1926. Immediately upon the condemnation, temporary war housing (known as "O'Brien's Court") was constructed for African-American war veterans. After gaining approval from NCPPC for the construction of such housing in Square 104, John Ihlder (ADA executive officer) received a letter from John J. Nolen, Jr. (NCPPC's Director of Planning). Nolen clarified NCPPC's intent for Square 104 in the letter, dated March 5, 1943, just days before the condemnation proceedings. He summarized the NCPPC plan for acquisition:

Square 104 and other squares between E and F, 19th and 25th Streets were authorized for acquisition as sites for public buildings by the Act of March 31, 1938 amending the Public Buildings Act of 1926. The National Capital Park and Planning Commission originally recommended that this square be included in the Northwest Rectangle development as early as May 1935, and you will recall that it [NCPPC] has repeatedly urged the Public Buildings Administration to secure the funds for its acquisition.⁴⁰

Although acknowledging that the full attainment of the plan was not likely, he specifically described Square 104 as crucial to the basic concept of the Northwest Rectangle:

Due to substantial construction now existing in some of the squares, it is not

⁴⁰ Letter, From John Nolen, Jr., to John Ihlder, March 5, 1943. NARS, Record Group 328, Box 55, Folder 5.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 42

likely that the whole area will be acquired, nor is it necessary to carry out the plan. But, Square 104, being on the axis of the plaza to the south, and facing the Federal Reserve Board Building, occupies such a key position in the whole plan that the southern half of it at least must be developed with some appropriate public building that will harmonize with the plans for the Northwest Rectangle.⁴¹

With renewed interest in the city's development, the plan for the Northwest Rectangle was revised by NCPPC and renamed *Washington, A Plan for Civic Improvements* (1947). The 1941 map was updated in 1946 and included in the 1947 publication. The plan identified the southern portion of Square 104 as "Site for Future Building."

Of particular note on planning map is a strip of landscaped parkland – much like a wide boulevard – that was planned on E Street, separating the street into North E and South E Streets. Although not officially named on the map, this park was informally referred to as "the Little Mall" or "the Submall," an extension of Rawlins Park. Parallel to the Mall to the south, this park was anchored by the Ellipse and the Corcoran Gallery of Art at the east end, and the old Naval Observatory and the Potomac River to the west. The Little Mall parkland provided the major east-west axis for the public buildings of the Northwest Rectangle. J.C. Folger addressed the park, stating that "It would seem to me as a layman you couldn't have commercial apartments there or anything like that. The site is part of the over-all scheme for Government buildings."⁴²

At the May 1947, hearings before the Subcommittee on Public Buildings and Grounds, General U.S. Grant, III, representing the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, addressed the issues of locating the **District of Columbia Chapter House of the American Red Cross** on the land owned by the National Capital Housing Authority on Square 104:

It [the building] is going in a very important place, as far as the general Federal

⁴¹Letter, From John Noler, Jr., to John Ihlder, March 5, 1943. NARS, Record Group 328, Box 55, Folder 5.

⁴²"Hearings," May 5, 1947, p. 30. Stated by J.C. Folger.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet**

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 43

development is concerned, and the Federal Government is going to get the building. The building becomes the property of the Federal Government under the law. So that you are interested in having the proper kind of building and one that will fit in with the surrounding developments that are proposed.... The new Red Cross Building will form a part of that central square [the proposed Little Mall]. So it is important that the building be at least very dignified and harmonious with the Federal Buildings. I happened to have been here as Director of Public Buildings and Parks when two of the other Red Cross Buildings were built and I had charge of building them under a law very similar to this . . . The precedent for this was established when the first Red Cross Building was built, and then, when the second one, the present chapter building, was built, the Federal Government gave the land and some funds, but retained title to the land and the Red Cross put up most of the money.⁴³

The rest of the land intended for the Northwest Rectangle was not easily or successfully obtained. NCPPC minutes from April 29, 1949 recorded problems that were surfacing concerning the remaining land necessary to create the Northwest Rectangle. Mr. Nolen noted that the PBA "has not been on its toes in seeking money to finish out this Northwest Rectangle Plan and that the property needed is going up in value all the time."⁴⁴ At the NCPPC's April 29th meeting, a motion was carried to formally advise the PBA:

There have been several instances brought to its attention of encroachments on the Commission's plan for the development of the Northwest Rectangle and that the only solution is acquisition by the United States of the remainder of the properties essential to the plan.⁴⁵

⁴³ "Hearings," May 5, 1947, p. 9. Stated by Ulysses S. Grant, III.

⁴⁴ NCPPC Minutes, April 29, 1949. NARS, Record Group 328, Box 55, Folder 5.

⁴⁵ NCPPC Minutes, April 29, 1949. NARS, Record Group 328, Box 55, Folder 5.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet**

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 44

In June 1949, A.E. Demaray, Vice Chairman and Acting Executive Officer for NCPPC, wrote to W.E. Reynolds, the Commissioner of the Public Buildings Administration, citing the many problems associated with acquiring the land for the Northwest Rectangle:

The owners are contemplating substantial construction which would greatly increase the cost of acquisition and impose physical barriers to carry out the plan to which the Government is already committed.⁴⁶

Mr. Demaray requested that the Public Buildings Administration consider requesting immediate funding of the plan. Mr. Reynolds' specific response is not known, but the problem was not alleviated. At the August NCPPC meeting, Mr. Nolen explained to the Commissioners:

...private owners are building in this neighborhood and thus preventing the extension of E Street as proposed in the plan to carry out the Little Mall scheme.⁴⁷

After serious consideration of the lack of sufficient funding to "do the whole job," NCPPC unanimously carried the following motion: "the Commission approves withdrawal from authorized purchase status of the area north of North 'E' Street and west of 19th Street to Virginia Avenue."⁴⁸ This decision formally recognized the obvious failure of the "Little Mall" scheme, a plan that is only partially visible today.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Letter, From A.E. Demaray to W.E. Reynolds, Commissioner of the Public Buildings Administration, June 16, 1949. NARS, Record Group 328, Box 55, Folder 5.

⁴⁷ NCPPC Minutes, August 1949. NARS, Record Group 328, Box 55, Folder 5.

⁴⁸ NCPPC Minutes, August, 1949. NARS, RG 328, Box 55, Folder 5.

⁴⁹ National Capital Park and Planning Commission, *People and Land, A Portion of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital and its Environs*, Monograph No. 2 (Washington, D.C.: June 1950), pp. 36-37.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 45

Eggers and Higgins, the successor firm to the architectural monarchy of John Russell Pope, gained the commission for the District of Columbia Chapter House of the American Red Cross by May 1947. A design concept was developed by the firm prior to the May hearings, resulting in a rendering of the proposed building that was unveiled by Chairman Folger to House Subcommittee on Public Buildings and Grounds on May 2nd.⁵⁰ On June 24th, in his statement to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Folger assured the Senators that the proposed building "represents very careful planning, and its architecture fits in with that area."⁵¹ After receiving support from both the House and the Senate, the bill was passed authorizing the erection of the District Chapter House on Square 104. President Truman signed the bill on July 1, 1947.⁵²

The rendering of the building, first published in the *Evening Star* on July 1, 1947, depicted a formal composition of white stone in a stripped classical style, with an elaborate stepped approach to the main entrance. This design was closely based on the architect's earlier scheme for the Army Medical Museum and Library that was approved by the Commission of Fine Arts in September 1941.⁵³ The rendering of the Chapter House presented the fenestration as a series of bold vertical bays set between abstracted pilasters with a central monumental entrance bay. The building was approached from a "bold sculptured stairway entrance much like the one executed on the south facade of Pierson and Wilson's 1939 Art Deco Library of Congress Annex."⁵⁴ The resulting effect was an austere abstracted temple placed on a slightly raised

⁵⁰ "Hearings," May 2, 1947, p. 5. Stated by J.C. Folger.

⁵¹ "United States Senate Committee Hearings," Commission for Foreign Relations. Discussion of H. J. Res. 193, June 24, 1947, p. 5. Stated by J.C. Folger.

⁵² "Truman Signs Bill for District Chapter's Red Cross Workshop," *Evening Star*, July 1, 1947.

⁵³ This project, intended to be sited facing East Capitol Street on the square to the immediate east of the Folger Shakespeare Library (Paul Cret, 1932), was delayed by the World War II and later abandoned.

⁵⁴ "D.C. Landmark Application for the American Red Cross, District of Columbia Chapter Building," stamped as "Received" by the D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board, November 13, 1988. Although uncredited, William Bushong is acknowledged author of the application.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet**

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 46

plinth, a format that was in keeping with the federal architecture of the time. The ARC District Chapter took occupancy of the building on February 1, 1953. Later that year, on October 1st, President Dwight D. Eisenhower formally dedicated the building. The *Evening Star* hailed the building as "the most modern Red Cross workshop in the world."⁵⁵

The Comprehensive Plan

In 1950, President Truman's newly appointed NCPPC Chairman William Wurster introduced the "all-important Comprehensive Plan, the expected foundation for all future planning"⁵⁶ for public comment. The five-volume *1950 Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital and Its Environs* advocated the re-invention of the Northwest Rectangle and the "Little Mall" concept. As proposed, the area was to include a large park running north-south between 18th and 23rd Streets and creating a cross axis with the east-west corridor running along E Street from the White House to Potomac Park. The southern boundary of the new park was to be marked by the Federal Reserve Board; the northern boundary by the proposed District Chapter of the American Red Cross Chapter. The 1950 plan broke considerable new ground and gained strength from the city plans that had preceded it. But such a stance did not guarantee its ability to generate action and compliance; in fact, timing weakened the reception to the plan as it was issued during a transition in chairmanship and the restructure of NCPPC. Eventually, the 1950 Comprehensive Plan was tabled.

The State Department, having shared space with the War and Navy Departments since 1888 in the old Executive Office Building, was sorely in need of additional space and reinforced the siting of federal departments to the Northwest Rectangle. Consequently, part of the State Department's functions were relocated to the former War Department in the Northwest Rectangle. Plans to enlarge the department's main headquarters on Pennsylvania Avenue were

⁵⁵ "President to Attend Red Cross Building Dedication Thursday," *Evening Star*, September 28, 1953.

⁵⁶ NCPC/Gutheim, p. 243.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 47

discussed by the 1950s, although never implemented. Rather, the former War Department, intended to be enlarged when designed, proved more appropriate to accommodate the State Department. In 1958, the architectural firm of Graham, Anderson, Probst, and White, with local designer A.R. Clas as associate architect, were chosen to design the extension. The **State Department Extension** continued the Art Moderne characteristics of the War Department to some degree, while simplifying and combining them with elements of the International style. Thus, there is a greater stress on horizontality, and more emphasis on a balance of unlike parts rather than axial symmetry. The building, while a credible example of 1950s architecture, was said to "suggest the dreariness of bureaucracy more than the dignity of diplomacy."⁵⁷ The designs for the State Department extension, like that of the War Department, incorporated central air conditioning, fluorescent lighting, and acoustical plaster. By the time the extension was completed, however, these features no longer represented innovative technology, but instead had become standard elements of large-scale office buildings.

In 1960, the ARC District Chapter House was included in a study of Columbia Plaza, a high-end residential complex generally located between 23rd and 25th Streets, E and G Streets and Virginia Avenue. The Columbia Plaza Study by NCPC (April 1960) incorporated another variation of the Little Mall scheme, indicating an extension of the Plaza's landscape treatment beyond its site. The north-south spine of 23rd Street was tied into the east-west boulevard of E Street, extending east from 20th Street to 23rd Street, with North E and South E Streets still intact.⁵⁸ The then-existing reciprocal vista between the Chapter House and the Federal Reserve Board would be interrupted by a future building, indicated by an E-shaped footprint on the square directly to the north of the Federal Reserve Board; however, a reciprocity, or at least a north-south axis, between the Chapter House and the future building would be maintained through formal landscaping. Although Columbia Plaza was constructed, the extensive landscaping and plazas proposed for E Street were not implemented.

⁵⁷ Historic Structures Report, "State Department." Prepared by the National Capital Planning Commission. (no date), p. 51.

⁵⁸ "Columbia Plaza Study Area," National Capital Planning Commission, April 1960. From the microfiche library of NCPC.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 48

The relationship between the District Chapter House and the Federal Reserve Board, however, was soon set asunder with the introduction of the E Street Expressway, created in 1964. The Expressway extends from the Kennedy Center (1971) east to 20th Street, and consists partially of an underground tunnel. It was conceived as part of the major re-planning necessitated by the proposed construction of a national performing arts center. According to "Special Street Plan for Virginia Avenue, NW No. 1" by the National Capital Planning Commission (1964), the E Street area north of the Expressway was to be shielded from the noise with heavy plantings.

In Square 104 a tree-shaded walk parallel to E Street will serve to lead the eye along the E Street mall. This little park in Square 104 is also planned to provide an axial view northward over the Expressway to the entrance to the Red Cross Building. The rest of the area would be an open lawn in order to set off the densely tree-shaded lawn of Kelly Park.⁵⁹

However, as completed, the expressway and its landscaping contradicted the classical ideals that were behind the conception of the Northwest Rectangle. Rather than the formal grid, the diagonal impact of Virginia Avenue was emphasized. The introduction of the E Street Expressway in place of the "little mall" interrupted the comprehension of the building as a northern pivot for the Northwest Rectangle. The expressway complicated the integrity of the Northwest Rectangle as an east-west linear park, and further interfered with the intended relationship of the ARC District Chapter House to the other buildings.

In addition to the E Street Expressway, in 1963, the Office of Personnel Management was constructed along E Street. Originally known as the Civil Service Commission, the **Office of Personnel Management** (OPM) is sited at 19th and E Streets. The building brought all 1,900-commission employees together under one roof for the first time since World War II. Construction began in August 1960 to the combined designs of architectural firms, Helmuth,

⁵⁹ National Capital Planning Commission, *Special Streets, Plan for Virginia Avenue, No. 1* (Washington, D.C.: NCPC, 1964), p. 48.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 8 Page 49

Obata and Kassabaum, Inc. and Loeb, Schollman and Bennett. Civil Service Commissioner John W. Macy, Jr. stated at the building's dedication that there "was nothing elaborate about the H-shaped building, which was erected for austerity and work," a concept adopted in the Northwest Rectangle with the construction of the first Department of Interior in 1915-1917.⁶⁰

Architecturally similar to OPM was the **United Union Building** (1972-1973) on 18th Street between E Street and New York Avenue. The imposing International-styled building obstructed the vista enjoyed by the Corcoran Gallery of Art through Rawlins Park to the Potomac River. By the same token, the **Federal Reserve Board Annex** (also known as the Martin Building) eliminated any visual reading between the ARC District Chapter House and Cret's Federal Reserve building. Yet, the 1975 annex did maintain the north-south axis with the buildings to either direction as planned in 1960.

Inherent to the design plan of the Northwest Rectangle is the landscaped parks, ornamented with reflecting pools, fountains, seating, and formal plantings. With the intersection of the diagonal avenues and the grided streets, irregular-shaped parcels of land or "reservations" are formed that prove too small for development. Recognized as significant elements in L'Enfant's 1791 plan, the reservations were intended for use as public parks, an ideal reiterated in the middle part of the 19th century. Over the years, this park concept has greatly impacted the siting of the monumental buildings, formal parks, and grided street plan. Along the diagonal of Virginia Avenue, in particular, are several monuments and sculptures honoring individuals famous in the history of the Americas, a theme representative of the governmental and institutional occupants in the neighborhood. Although the Northwest Rectangle did not fully succeed as an appropriate site for federal office buildings, planning for the neighborhood continues. And, despite the failure of the many planning schemes addressing the area and the minor contextual alterations, the Northwest Rectangle is perceived today as a significant grouping of government office buildings that were similar in concept to the Federal Triangle.

⁶⁰ "Civil Service Dedicates New Home," *Washington Star*, November 12, 1963.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet**

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 9 Page 50

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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet**

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 9 **Page** 51

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Continuation Sheet

NORTHWEST RECTANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Section number 9 Page 52

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