GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

★ ★ ★

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

New Designation _X_
Amendment of a previous designation __
Please summarize any amendment(s) _____
Property name National Geographic Society Headquarters
If any part of the interior is being nominated, it must be specifically identified and described in the narrative statements.

Address 1145 17th Street NW

Square and lot number(s) Square 0183/ Lot 0883

Affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2B

Date of construction 1961-1964 Date of major alteration(s)_____

Architect(s) Edward Durell Stone (architect), Charles H. Tompkins Co. (builder)

Architectural style(s) MODERN MOVEMENT/MID-CENTURY MODERN

Original use OTHER/Non-Profit Organization

Property owner National Geographic Society

Legal address of property owner 1145 17th Street NW

NAME OF APPLICANT(S) DC Preservation League

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

Address/Telephone of applicant(s) 1221 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20036

Name and title of authorized representative Rebecca Miller, Executive Director

Signature of representative _____ Date 3/29/2017

Name and telephone of author of application DC Preservation League, 202.783.5144

Date received _____
H.P.O. staff _____

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name National Geographic Society Headquarters

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 1145 17th Street NW ☐ not for publication

city or town Washington ☐ vicinity

state District of Columbia code DC county code zip code 20036

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property __meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide __local

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

National Geographic Society Headquarters
Name of Property

Washington, DC
County and State

5. Classification

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

x	private
	public - Local
	public - State
	public - Federal

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

x	building(s)
	district
	site
	structure
	object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		**Total**

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER/Non-Profit Organization

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER/Non-Profit Organization

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Mid-Century Modern

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Reinforced concrete
walls: Steel and concrete structure
Marble and granite exterior
roof: Concrete
other: Bronze detailing

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The National Geographic Society headquarters, located at 1145 Seventeenth Street Northwest in Washington, DC, is a ten-story, mid-century modern office building and exhibition space that was designed by architect Edward Durell Stone, and built between 1961 and 1963. Constructed of reinforced concrete, with an exterior of white marble, black granite, and dark glass, the building consists of a single, freestanding, rectangular block that is capped by a flat projecting roof. An exterior covered walkway, elevated several feet above street grade, also extends from the building's first floor on all four sides. The building lot, which slightly decreases in elevation from north to south, is approximately 290 feet in length. Its width ranges from approximately 239 feet on its northern end to 228 feet at its southern termination. The lot is bounded on the north by M Street and on the south by an alley, Sumner Row. On the west, the lot is bounded by Seventeenth Street. The eastern portion of the lot consists of a landscaped plaza, which separates the headquarters from an adjacent National Geographic-owned building.

Narrative Description

Exterior

Each elevation contains a centrally placed, first floor entryway, and from the east and west these are approached via broad granite stairways with bronze handrails. The building's north entrance can be reached from M Street by a similar, but much smaller, stairway. There are no stairs on the building's south end. The east and west elevations each contain two sets of glass double doors, while the north and south elevations each contain a single set of double doors. All of the building's exterior doors feature rectangular bronze handles and sleek, unornamented bronze surrounds. The western entrance also features a box office for purchasing tickets to the exhibits displayed in Explorer's Hall, located on the building's first floor.

On each of the building's four elevations, the first floor curtain wall is constructed of large rectangular tinted glass panels set into a steel framework. Extending fourteen feet outward from the base of this curtain wall is a walkway of white marble, covered by a projecting marble-faced concrete roof. The walkway's roof is supported by thirteen square, unornamented marble columns on the east and west elevations, and by four columns on the north and south elevations. Over the building's east and west entrances, the words "NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY" are engraved in Roman characters into the marble face of the walkway's roof. Located at the southwest corner of the walkway is a bronze sculpture entitled "Two Hunting Lioness," which was created in 2005 by artist Bart Walter.

On floors two through ten, the building's fenestration consists of evenly spaced, narrow, rectangular, tinted glass windowpanes that are set into bronze frames. The east and west elevations are forty-eight bays in width, while the north and south elevations are fourteen bays wide. Above and below each of the windows are rectangular spandrels of black Swedish granite which, when combined with the windows, create the appearance of narrow dark "strips" that run vertically up the sides of the building. Heightening the effect are the projecting vertical fins of white Vermont marble that separate each bay. The fins are continuous, with each extending one hundred six feet from the second to the tenth floor. The only variation in the building's consistent exterior treatment occurs on the ninth and tenth floors of each elevation, where the window panes and spandrels are set back from the façade. The building is crowned by a projecting roof that is pierced by a series of evenly spaced rectangular perforations. The perforations are oriented perpendicular to the building's face, and they serve to lighten the visual impact of the roofline, and to further communicate its projecting quality.

The integrity of the headquarters building remains strong, and the site has retained the "park-like setting" originally envisioned by Stone.[1] The building's exterior has not been significantly altered since its construction, and as a result, all of its stylistic or character defining elements remain intact. The structure has been well maintained by the National Geographic Society, and its marble, granite, and bronze features are in excellent condition.

[1] Edward Durell Stone, *The Evolution of an Architect* (New York: Horizon Press, 1962), 151.

National Geographic Society Headquarters
Name of Property

Washington, DC
County and State

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.)

- [X] 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.
- [X] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE
COMMUNICATIONS

Period of Significance

1961-1964

Significant Dates

1961-1964

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Edward Durell Stone, Architect
Charles H. Tompkins Co., Builder

Period of Significance (justification)

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Statement of Significance

Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The National Geographic Society Headquarters meets National Register Criteria A and C as well as DC Criteria B, D, E, and F, due to the Society's institutional importance and its headquarters' expression of the visually compelling "New Formalism" style by a renowned master architect.

For over forty years, this visually striking building has served as the headquarters for the National Geographic Society – an iconic non-profit organization that has grown to become synonymous in America, and worldwide, with exploration, science, and conservation. The building, which houses the Society's "Explorer's Hall" exhibit space, and its publication offices, represents the Society's expansion throughout the twentieth century in the area between Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and M Streets. A widely followed project at the time of its construction, the building also reflects an upsurge in development activity that occurred in Washington during the early 1960's. In addition, the National Geographic Society headquarters is indicative of Edward Durell Stone's maturation as an architect, representing both a stylistic departure within mid-twentieth century modern design, and an important contribution to the architectural landscape of Washington, DC.[2]

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

The National Geographic Society's headquarters at 1145 Seventeenth Street NW is nationally significant under Criterion C (DC Criteria D, E, and F) in the area of **Architecture**, as it was designed by world-renowned architect Edward Durell Stone and serves as an excellent example of the "New Formalism" that emerged within the modern movement during the 1950's and 60's. Drawing on classical influences, New Formalists, such as Stone, sought to create a more enduring and elegant version of the "curtain-walled box" that dominated modern design during this period. Reflecting this new direction, Stone's National Geographic building conveys a uniform and symmetrical appearance, which, combined with its strong verticality and white marble, suggest a modern reinterpretation of earlier classical forms. The projecting roof and marble fins together create a "temple-like" appearance, which is echoed in the projecting roof and colonnade of the first floor covered walkway.[3]

As the headquarters of the National Geographic Society, the building is also of national significance under Criterion A (DC Criteria B) in the area of **Communications.** From its founding in the late nineteenth century, the Society has been committed to learning, exploration, and the dissemination of knowledge. Known for its use of striking photography, the Society's signature publication, *National Geographic Magazine,* emerged during the twentieth century as an accessible and enjoyable means of learning about the world and its diverse cultures. Over time, the magazine has become a fixture on newsstands and in homes around the world. Likewise, the Society is recognized as a prominent local organization within Washington, DC, and the construction of its new headquarters building in 1961 was a celebrated local event.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

A brief history of the National Geographic Society

[2] Robinson and Associates, Inc., *DC Modern: A Context for Modernism in the District of Columbia, 1945-1976*, historic context study prepared for the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office in 2009, 61.; Alan Colquhoun, *Modern Architecture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 246-47.

[3] Robinson and Associates, Inc., *Modernism in Washington*, brochure prepared for the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office in 2009.; Mark Gelernter, *A History of American Architecture: Buildings in their Cultural and Technological Context* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1999), 266-69.; Claudia D. and George W. Kousoulas, *Contemporary Architecture in Washington,* DC (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1995), 79, 93, 110, 210.

Reflecting a new orientation towards science and intellectual exchange in post-Civil War Washington, the National Geographic Society was founded in January 1888. The Society's members were composed of academics, explorers, scientists, and wealthy elites with an interest in travel and geography. Its first president was prominent lawyer and investor Gardiner Greene Hubbard, whose daughter Mabel was married to Washington-based inventor Alexander Graham Bell. Soon after its founding, the first issue of the Society's journal, *National Geographic Magazine*, was published in October of 1888.[4]

With Hubbard's death in 1898, Bell took over as president, and Gilbert H. Grosvenor, Bell's son-in-law, became the magazine's first full-time editor. Under Bell and Grosvenor, the National Geographic Society's membership expanded, as the magazine's trademark use of photography emerged, and the publication adopted a lighter, less academic tone. In 1903, Grosvenor took over as president, and the Society moved into Hubbard Memorial Hall, its stately Renaissance Revival style headquarters located at the corner of Sixteenth and M Streets.[5]

The National Geographic Society steadily grew as a fixture in American popular culture throughout the twentieth century. Aided by its coverage of Robert E. Peary's expedition to the North Pole, and archeologist Hiram Bingham's exploration of the Inca city of Machu Picchu, the magazine's circulation rapidly grew from 10,000 in 1905 to 107,000 by 1912. With this increase in readers, the Society needed more space, and in 1913 construction began on a southern addition to Hubbard Hall. The magazine's coverage of World War One dramatically expanded its readership to over 750,000 by 1920. *National Geographic* featured its first color photographs in 1926, adding a new and appealing dimension to the publication. Weathering the Great Depression, the Society expanded its Sixteenth Street headquarters again in 1931 with the addition of an administration building designed by architect Arthur B. Heaton. With accessible stories and attractive photographs documenting the expeditions of explorers, and the world's natural and cultural diversity, the magazine's monthly readership soared to over five million by 1935.[6]

During World War Two, the Society supplied the U.S. government and military with maps and photographs, including an elaborate map cabinet that was custom-made for President Franklin Roosevelt. After the war, increased car ownership, and the development of the interstate highway system led to greater mobility for Americans. Under Melville B. Grosvenor's leadership, the magazine responded with numerous features that presented the splendor of the country's National Parks. As the Society's membership continued to grow, so too did its Washington presence, and in 1948, the Society expanded its headquarters once again when an editorial wing was added behind the 1931 addition. In 1961, construction began on the Seventeenth Street building designed by Edward Durell Stone. The final addition to the Society's headquarters occurred in 1981 with a structure designed by Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill, which along with a landscaped plaza, served to visually connect the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Street buildings.[7]

Today, the National Geographic Society claims to be "one of the largest non-profit scientific and educational organizations" in the world. It sees its primary mission to be raising public awareness regarding environmental issues and conservation through research, exploration, and education. Over the years, the Society has sponsored more than 9,600 research and exploration projects around the world. Past recipients of the Hubbard Medal, the Society's highest honor, have included Robert Peary, Richard Byrd, Charles Lindbergh, Louis Leakey, John Glenn, the Apollo 11 astronauts, and Jane Goodall. Through its publications, films, television channels, and website, the Society reportedly "reaches more than 400 million people a month."[8]

Property History and Construction

The Edward Durell Stone-designed headquarters building, located at Seventeenth and M Streets, was constructed on property that the National Geographic Society had acquired over a forty-year period. The property, situated within the northwest corner of Square 183, encompassed multiple lots, which over the years contained a variety of different

[4] Howard S. Abramson, *National Geographic: Behind America's Lens on the World* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1987), 20-38.
[5] Ibid., 40-46.; Sue A. Kohler and Jeffrey R. Carson, *Sixteenth Street Architecture*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC: The Commission of Fine Arts, 1988), 177-80.
[6] Abramson, 108-20, 135, 140-58.; Kohler and Carson, 183-85.
[7] Abramson, 175-81, 193-96.; Kohler and Carson, 185-86.
[8] National Geographic Society, "National Geographic Society Mission," http://press.nationalgeographic.com/pressroom/index.jsp?pageID=factSheets_detail&siteID=1&cid=1225283738357 (accessed June 8, 2012).

structures. In 1919, an assortment of brick and frame buildings extended south along the 1100 block of Seventeenth Street, and east along the 1600 block of M Street. The Emerson and Orme garage, located at 1620 M Street, was the largest of these. Built in 1916, the garage was home to one of Washington, DC's earliest automobile dealerships. An undated photograph of the building, taken by the National Photo Company, shows a handsome three story structure with large glass display windows at street level, which were framed on either end by drive-in entrances. The front façade also featured decorative, patterned brickwork, and a roofline accentuated by a graceful shaped parapet. In 1926, Emerson and Orme constructed a four-story addition onto the building, which extended the structure westward to Seventeenth Street. The new facility contained a filling station and repair shop, and expanded the dealership's showroom capacity to two hundred cars.[9]

The National Geographic Society began their land acquisition efforts with several lots located to the south of the Emerson and Orme property. In 1919 the Society purchased lots 7, 8, 97, 98, 99, and 100 from Edward L. Brady. These lots were located at 1131 through 1139 Seventeenth Street NW, and contained several brick structures, which, over the years, the Society leased to various individuals. Located to the north of this parcel were lots 9 and 55, which the Society purchased in 1925 through a trustees deed from Richard Claughton and the National Savings and Trust Company. Lot 9 contained no improvements at the time of the sale, while lot 55, located at 1145 Seventeenth Street NW, contained a frame structure and a small brick garage.[10]

In April of 1959, the National Geographic Society purchased the parcel at the corner of Seventeenth and M Streets from members of the Emerson and Orme families. The parcel consisted of lots 17, 52, 53, 54, P, and Q, and included the four-story 1926 addition to the Emerson and Orme garage building. The deal was the culmination of a twenty-year effort to acquire the property, and fortuitously coincided with planning for the Society's new headquarters building.[11]

During 1960, the project continued to take shape. On June 21, Melville B. Grosvenor officially announced the Society's plan to construct an eleven-story, five-million-dollar headquarters building on the Seventeenth and M property. In addition to disclosing the Society's choice of Edward Durell Stone as architect, Grosvenor also announced that builder Charles H. Tompkins Co. had been selected for the project. An established construction firm, Charles H. Tompkins Co. began business in Washington in 1911. The firm played a role in many prominent Washington construction projects, including the White House executive offices, Reflecting Pool, District Court, Children's and Providence Hospitals, Tower and Wyatt Buildings, National Guard Armory, American Red Cross War Memorial, Scottish Rite Temple, New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, Dalecarlia Filtration Plant, White Oak Naval Ordinance Lab, and the George Washington University School of Engineering. In 1960 Tompkins ranked "in the top 50 of world construction outfits." In a *Washington Post* article, Tompkins Vice President J. Slater Davidson stated that the new National Geographic building represented a "monumental project" for the company, as well as a "truly monumental contribution to the Nation's Capital."[12]

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[9] G. W. Baist, *Baist's Real Estate Atlas of Surveys of Washington, District Of Columbia: Complete in Four Volumes*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: G. W. Baist, 1919), plate 14.; National Photo Company, "Emerson and Orme," photographic negative, c. 1910-1926, National Photo Company Collection, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, DC, http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/npco/item/npc2008012833/ (accessed June 26, 2012).; Sanborn Map Company, *Insurance Maps of Washington,* DC, vol. 1 (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1928), sheet 50a, Digital Sanborn Maps, 1867-1970, http://sanborn.umi.com/ (accessed June 26, 2012).; "Planning an Addition: Emerson and Orme to Add Four-Story Building to Present Quarters," *Washington Post*, January 27, 1918.

[10] District of Columbia, Office of Tax and Revenue, Recorder of Deeds, Deed No. 145, recorded March 5, 1919, Liber 4145, Folio 401, District of Columbia Archives, Washington, DC.; District of Columbia, Office of Tax and Revenue, Recorder of Deeds, Deed No. 179, recorded January 15, 1925, Liber 5446, Folio 162, District of Columbia Archives, Washington, DC.; *Baist's Real Estate Atlas*, 1919.; G. W. Baist, *Baist's Real Estate Atlas of Surveys of Washington, District Of Columbia: Complete in Four Volumes*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia, G. W. Baist, 1924), plate 14, Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, Washington, DC.

[11] Carole Bowie, "Geographic Buys Site for Addition," *Washington Post*, March 16, 1960.; District of Columbia, Office of Tax and Revenue, Recorder of Deeds, Deed No. 1109, recorded April 14, 1959, Liber 11221, Folio 276, District of Columbia Archives, Washington, DC.; Kohler and Carson, 185-86.

[12] "Tompkins Building Firm Bought by Bigger Outfit: Worked Together," *Washington Post,* April 6, 1961.; John B. Willmann, "New Headquarters for Geographic Society called 'Monumental'," *Washington Post*, September 1, 1962.

Grosvenor's announcement in 1960 coincided with the demolition of the recently acquired 1926 Emerson and Orme addition, and two brick garages located to the south of it, as the site was prepared for construction.[13] By September of 1960, the Society had acquired lot number 102 from the Orme family, which included the original three-story Emerson and Orme facility located at 1620 M Street. At the time, the building was being leased to the U.S. government, and housed the State Department's retired records section. Upon acquiring the property, the Society demolished the building and replaced it with a parking lot, to be used by employees and visitors to the new headquarters. In the 1980's, this parking lot would become the landscaped plaza that is today located to the east of the headquarters building.[14]

The new building's construction coincided with an increase in development activity that occurred in Washington during the 1960's. This activity was concentrated in the area south of Dupont Circle, which became known as the city's "new downtown." At the time, the National Geographic Society's headquarters building complemented other recently constructed office buildings in the vicinity, including the National Coal Association Building, located at Seventeenth and DeSales Streets, and the International Brotherhood of Operating Engineers building, located at 1125 Seventeenth Street.[15]

In March of 1961, the Society submitted an application for a building permit, which was issued in August of that year. By September of 1962, the *Washington Post* described the new headquarters building as a "fairly completed exterior shell." National Geographic employees gradually began to move into the building beginning in November of 1963, and the building was dedicated in January of 1964 in a ceremony led by President Lyndon Johnson. In attendance were Chief Justice Earl Warren, members of Congress, and various diplomats, government officials, and scientists. Since its construction, the building has housed the Society's executive offices, and *National Geographic's* editorial staff. "One of the largest and most modern photographic laboratories in the world" is located on the building's second floor. The first floor contains the "Explorer's Hall," an exhibit space, which in 1964 featured an enormous globe that measured eleven feet in diameter, and was suspended over a black granite reflecting pool.[16] In order to further enhance the building's dramatic presence, exterior lights were installed which illuminated each of the building's white marble fins. In a January 1964 letter, Melville Grosvenor's wife, Anne, described her view of the new headquarters building during a return flight into Washington, DC:

> It was a velvety smooth ride and the great climax was circling Washington city at night to see the new NGS building all lit up…It was spectacular.[17]

The completed building received favorable reviews in the press. In 1963, *New York Times* architectural critic Ada Louise Huxtable noted that Stone's design for the National Geographic Society headquarters served as a bridge between Washington's "tradition of classic marble monumentality" and the functional requirements of a modern office building. Huxtable also praised the building as a "straightforward, first-class piece of contemporary architectural design." In 1965, *Interior Design* referred to the building as a "new Washington landmark," and to Edward Durell Stone as "one of America's top architects."[18]

Edward Durell Stone

[13] "Geographic Plans New 11-Story Home," *Washington Post*, June 22, 1960.
[14] John B. Willmann, "National Geographic, in 3-Way Deal, to State Annex on M Street," *Washington Post*, September 14, 1960.; District of Columbia, Office of Tax and Revenue, Recorder of Deeds, Deed No. 24898, recorded September 7, 1960, Liber 11478, Folio 353, District of Columbia Archives, Washington, DC.
[15] *DC Modern*, 60-61.; Jean M. White, "National Geographic Will Look At World Through Walls of Glass," *Washington Post*, September 17, 1960.
[16] District of Columbia, Department of Licenses and Inspections, Building Permit No. B78189, issued August 30, 1961, District of Columbia Archives, Building Permits, 1958-1978, accession number 85-0050, aisle 17, box 159.; John B. Willmann, "New Headquarters for Geographic Society called 'Monumental'," *Washington Post*, September 1, 1962.; Phil Casey, "Johnson to Dedicate New Building: Designed by Stone World's Largest Globe," *Washington Post*, January 17, 1964.
[17] Aylesa Forsee, *Giants in Glass, Steel and Stone: Men of Modern Architecture* (Philadelphia: Macrae Smith Company, 1966), 186.; Anne Grosvenor to Gilbert H. and Elsie Bell Grosvenor, January 13, 1964, Grosvenor Family Papers, Part II Family Papers, 1827-1965, box II: 1, folder 18, Special Collections, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.
[18] Ada Louise Huxtable, "National Geographic Society's Building Sets a Standard for Washington," *New York Times*, December 11, 1963.; "National Geographic: A New Washington Landmark," *Interior Design* 36 (May 1965): 130-33.

Born in Fayetteville, Arkansas in 1902, Edward Durell Stone was an internationally acclaimed architect in his own lifetime and is regarded today as an important figure in the evolution of modern architectural design during the mid twentieth century. As a young man, Stone began to develop his talent as an artist and draftsman and in 1921 moved to Boston, where he was hired as an assistant at a local architecture firm. Stone attended night classes at the Boston Architectural Club, and was eventually awarded a scholarship to study architecture at Harvard. He later transferred to MIT to pursue his interest in modernism under faculty member and French architect Jacques Carlu. While traveling in Europe as a student during the late 1920's, Stone was influenced by European avant-garde design, in particular the work of Mies van der Rohe.[19]

In 1929, Stone moved to New York, and his work there helped establish his reputation as a gifted young architect. While employed at the firm of Schultze and Weaver, he designed the lobby and grand ballroom for the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. A breakthrough in his career came in the early 1930's when he was appointed as lead architect for the design of Radio City Music Hall and the Center Theater at Rockefeller Center. As his reputation grew, Stone began to design houses for wealthy clients. A notable example of his residential work is the Richard H. Mandel House, which Stone designed in 1933. Located in Westchester County New York, the house is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and is recognized as an important example of the International Style in America. In 1936, Stone established his own architectural firm, Edward Durell Stone and Associates. Three years later, he partnered with Philip L. Goodwin in designing a new building for the Museum of Modern Art in New York on West Fifty-Third Street. At the time, the museum's simple exterior of white marble and glass dramatically stood out from the ornate rowhouses that surrounded it.[20]

Stone's architectural philosophy continued to evolve during the 1940's and 50's. On a cross-country trip with his wife in 1940, Stone met Frank Lloyd Wright, beginning a long friendship that contributed to Stone's ideas regarding design. Stone was particularly influenced by Wright's use of decorative motifs, which paralleled his own lifelong interest in classical art and architecture. Along with architects such as Philip Johnson, Eero Saarinen, and Minoru Yamasaki, Stone began, in the 1950's, to diverge from the austere functionality of rationalist modernism typified by the spare, box-like forms of Mies van der Rohe and Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill. Instead, Stone and his colleagues focused on reinterpreting elements found within classical architecture. Known as "New Formalism," their resulting work is characterized by symmetrical elevations, columns, arches, overhanging roofs, the use of marble, and a return to exterior ornamentation, such as metal grilles and patterned masonry screens.[21]

Rejecting the orthodoxy of functionalism that had defined modern architecture during the first half of the twentieth century, Stone sought to create designs that were monumental and timeless, yet responsive to his client's needs. In a 1958 magazine article Stone declared, "What we need is to put pure beauty into our buildings. Let's strike the bell for beauty."[22] Stone was particularly influenced by the aesthetic qualities of Byzantine and ancient Greek architecture, and in 1962 he wrote that:

> The inspiration for a building should be in the accumulation of history. A knowledge of great historical buildings enables the architect to remain in the mainstream rather than be diverted by passing enthusiasms which can lead him to dead ends.[23]

This return to classicism is reflected in Stone's designs for the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi (1954), the Bruno Graf House in Dallas (1956), and the U.S. Pavilion for the Brussels World's Fair (1958). The New Delhi Embassy design was widely praised; Wright referred to it as "one of the finest buildings in the last hundred years."[24]

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[19] Forsee, 161-64.
[20] Ibid., 164-65.; The Museum of Modern Art, "Architectural Chronology," http://www.moma.org/about/architecture (accessed June 5, 2012).; Paul Goldberger, "Outside the Box: Yoshio Taniguchi's Elegant Expansion of the Modern," *New Yorker*, November 15, 2004, http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2004/11/15/041115crsk_skyline?currentPage=all (accessed June 18, 2012).
[21] Forsee, 167.; Gelernter, 266-69.; Robert Twombly, *Power and Style: A Critique of Twentieth-Century Architecture in the United States* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), 97.
[22] "Art: More than Modern," *Time*, March 31, 1958.
[23] Stone, *The Evolution of an Architect*, 143-44.
[24] Forsee, 172-78.

In 1959, the National Geographic Society's President, Melville Grosvenor, and its Vice Chairman of the Board, Dr. Thomas McKnew, offered Stone the commission to design the organization's new headquarters building. For Stone, the project presented the challenge of designing a modern office building that fit in with the classicism of Washington's built environment. In his book, *The Evolution of an Architect*, published in 1962, Stone discusses his design for the building:

> Since the Society is a national institution, it was felt that the building should reflect the dignity of official Washington. This to me meant a white building in a park-like setting. The climate again afforded an opportunity to design a building effectively lighted yet shielded from the sun by vertical fins of white marble. Owing to Washington's height restrictions, a building of this size is horizontal in proportion. To provide some visual termination at the top, I extended the roof some ten feet beyond the line of the wall, forming a visually satisfying projecting visor. The colonnaded ground floor will be devoted to the "Explorer's Hall" to house exhibits of photographs, artifacts and other data from explorations sponsored by the Society. It was a pleasure to gratify the Society's wish for an enduring building employing a palette of white marble, Swedish granite and bronze—all ageless materials."[25]

Stone's design incorporates several "temple-like" elements that reflect both the architectural conservatism of "official" Washington, and the classicism inherent in New Formalism. For example, the structure rests on a "podium" that elevates it above street level. Other visual references to the classical temple include the building's white marble exterior, and its colonnaded first floor walkway, vertical marble fins, and projecting roof. These elements also combine to create the sense of elegance and permanence that Stone sought to achieve in his work. In *Recent and Future Architecture*, published in 1966, Stone discusses this aspect of his design philosophy, stating that architecture, "should be timeless and convey by its very fiber the assurance of permanence; stone, bricks, and concrete all have this characteristic."[26]

Many of the architectural elements that contribute to the National Geographic building's classically inspired modernism can also be found in other examples of Stone's work from the 1950's and 60's. The first two floors of the International Trade Mart in New Orleans, Louisiana (1959) serves as a "pedestal" from which the thirty-three story tower rises. Like the National Geographic building, the Trade Mart's design also features a similar system of windows, spandrels, and vertical piers, as well as an overhanging roof. A similar ensemble of architectural elements can be found in the federal building (1963) which Stone designed as part of a project known as Prince George's Center, located in Hyattsville, Maryland. An exterior colonnaded walkway encircles the building, which is capped by a projecting roof. This projecting, or overhanging, roof line is a Stone "trademark," and it can also be found, perhaps most famously, in Stone's John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (1971), probably his best known work in the District of Columbia. As seen in the National Geographic building, the projecting roof is often perforated, and this feature appears in Stone's designs for the Edward T. Foley building at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles (1962), the Levitt Corporation's headquarters in Lake Success, New York (1963), and the Von Kleinsmid Center at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles (1965). In addition, the east and west elevations of the three-story Von Kleinsmid Center feature a rhythmic series of narrow rectangular windows, spandrels, and vertical brick piers that recall the similarly narrow vertical bays of the National Geographic building. In Washington, Stone's Van Ness Centre office building (1967), Department of Transportation building (1969), and Georgetown University Law Center (1971) also exhibit this architectural vocabulary of strong verticality, narrow windows, and projecting roofs.[27]

This combination of architectural traits, seen extensively in Stone's work, arose not only from classical influences, but also from Stone's understanding of the stylistic development of the American skyscraper. In *The Evolution of an Architect*, Stone points to Louis Sullivan's work in Chicago, in which the building's steel frame was "honestly" expressed in its "exterior treatment." In addition, Stone regarded Raymond Hood's New York *Daily News* building (1929), in which Hood carried a series of white vertical piers and dark windows and spandrels from the ground to the roof, as a turning point in modern office building design. While Stone acknowledged the "crystalline beauty" of glass buildings such as Mies van der Rohe's Seagram Building, he was mindful of the higher heating and cooling costs, and problems with glare, that accompanied glass buildings in the 1960's. Given the use of fluorescent lighting and central cooling systems in modern high rise office buildings, Stone argued that the window's primary purpose was to provide an outside view. As a result, he

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[25] Stone, *The Evolution of an Architect*, 151.
[26] Edward Durell Stone, *Edward Durell Stone: Recent and Future Architecture* (New York: Horizon Press, 1966), 8.
[27] Stone, *Recent and Future Architecture*, 34-35, 43, 54-57, 64-65, 88-89, 103, 120-21.; Edward Durell Stone Architect, "Work," http://www.edwarddurellstone.org/ (accessed July 16, 2012).; Kousoulas, 79, 92-93, 210.

reduced the ratio of wall-to-window area in his designs, incorporating "vision panels" rather than large windows, reducing glass, and increasing energy efficiency.[28]

Over the course of his long career, Stone was associated with some of the United States' most prestigious architecture schools. From 1927 to 1942, Stone taught at New York University, and was an associate professor of architecture at Yale University between 1946 and 1952. Stone also served on advisory committees for the MIT and Columbia Schools of Architecture, and was a visiting design critic at Yale, Princeton, Cornell, MIT, and the University of Arkansas.[29]

Stone received numerous professional awards and honors for his work. He was a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the British Royal Society of Arts. Stone was also a trustee of the National Urban League and the American Federation of Arts. He received two gold medals in 1950 from the New York Architectural League for his work on the Museum of Modern Art and the El Panama Hotel. Stone also received a Medal of Honor in 1955 from the New York chapter of the AIA. The architect also appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine in March 1958. The article referred to Stone as "one of the profession's freest spirits and by general consensus the most versatile designer and draftsman of his generation." In 1964, the Building Stone Institute named him Architect of the Year. Throughout the 1960's, Stone received numerous awards from the AIA for his many projects, located both in the United States and abroad.[30]

[28] Stone, *The Evolution of an Architect*, 155-57.
[29] Nancy A. Williams and Jeannie M. Whayne, *Arkansas Biography: A Collection of Notable Lives* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2000), 279.; Robert B. Harmon, *Architectural Versatility and the Work of Edward Durell Stone: A Selected Bibliography* (Monticello, IL: Vance Bibliographies, 1980), 2-3.
[30] Harmon, 2-3.; "Art: More than Modern," *Time*, March 31, 1958.; Edward Durell Stone Architect, "Awards," http://www.edwarddurellstone.org/ (accessed July 18, 2012).

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National Geographic Society Headquarters | Washington, DC
Name of Property | County and State

Willmann, John B. "New Headquarters for Geographic Society called 'Monumental'." *Washington Post*, September 1, 1962.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
____previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
____recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

____State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
____Local government
____University
____Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .80
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1				3			
2				4			

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

The proposed boundary is the building line associated with Square 0183, lot 0883.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

11. Form Prepared By

National Geographic Society Headquarters | Washington, DC
Name of Property | County and State

name/title

organization D.C. Preservation League date October 26, 2015

street & number 1221 Connecticut Ave., N.W. Suite 5 telephone 202-783-5144

city or town Washington state D.C. zip code 20036

e-mail info@dcpreservation.org

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

National Geographic Society Headquarters | Washington, DC
Name of Property | County and State

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: National Geographic Society Headquarters

City or Vicinity: Washington

County: DC State: DC

Photographer: John Gentry

Date Photographed: June 27, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View from the northeast.

1 of 3

National Geographic Society Headquarters
Name of Property

Washington, DC
County and State

Name of Property: National Geographic Society Headquarters

City or Vicinity: Washington

County: DC State: DC

Photographer: John Gentry

Date Photographed: June 27, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View from the northwest.

2 of 3

National Geographic Society Headquarters
Name of Property

Washington, DC
County and State

Name of Property: National Geographic Society Headquarters

City or Vicinity: Washington

County: DC State: DC

Photographer: John Gentry

Date Photographed: June 27, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View from the southwest.

3 of 3

National Geographic Society Headquarters
Name of Property

Washington, DC
County and State

Property Owner:

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

name National Geographic Society

street & number 1145 17th Street NW telephone

city or town Washington state DC zip code 20036

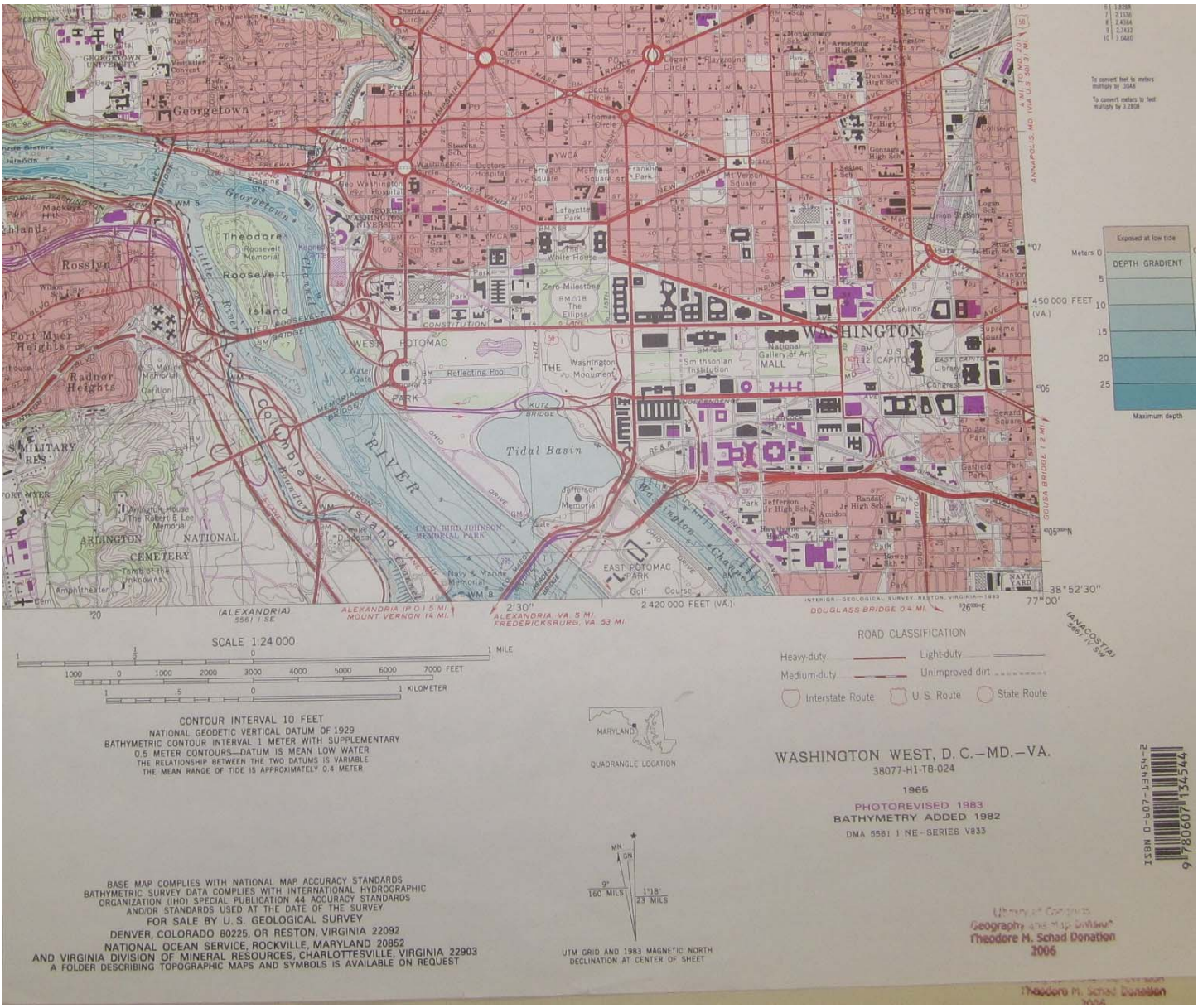

Figure 1. 2006 USGS Quadrangle showing National Geographic Society headquarters

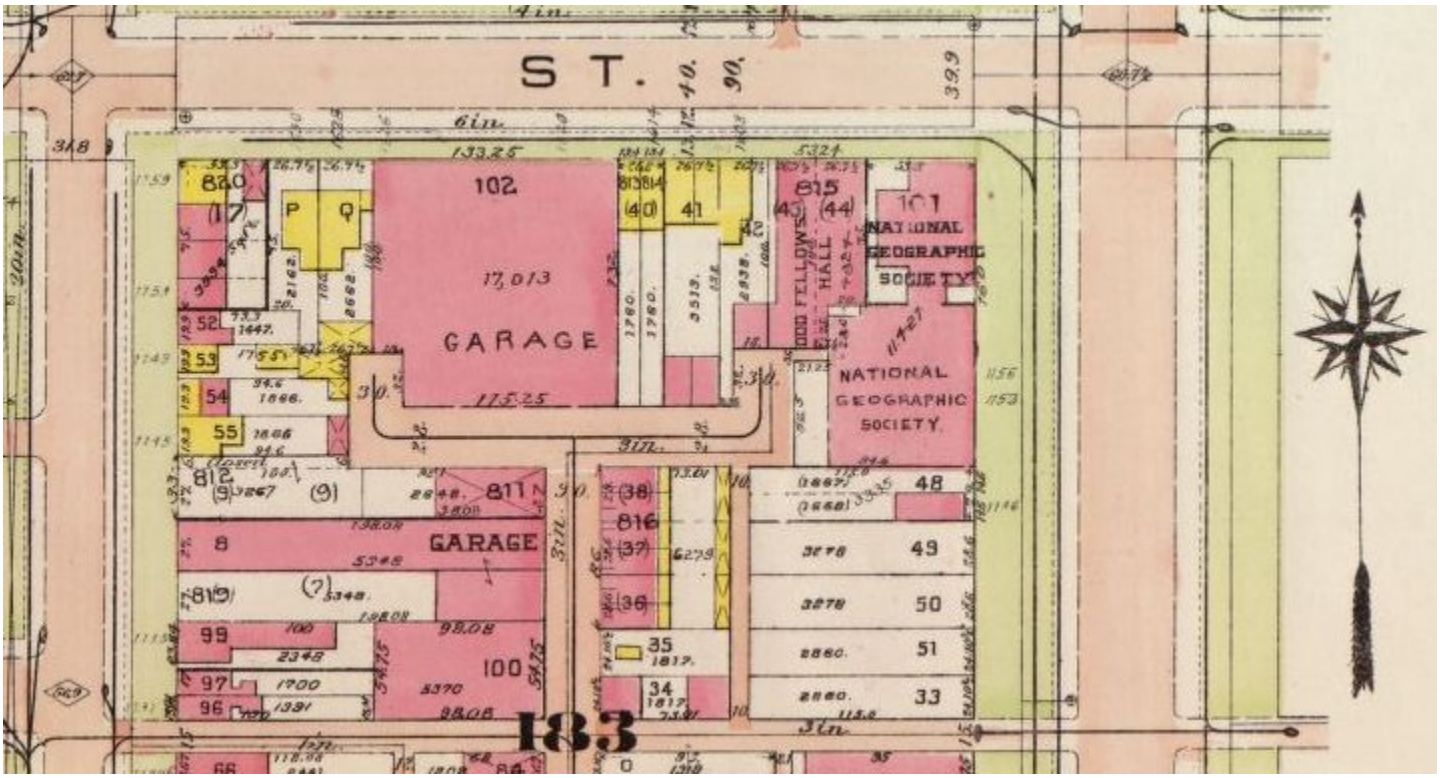

Figure 2. Detailed view of Square 183 from 1919 Baist Real Estate map

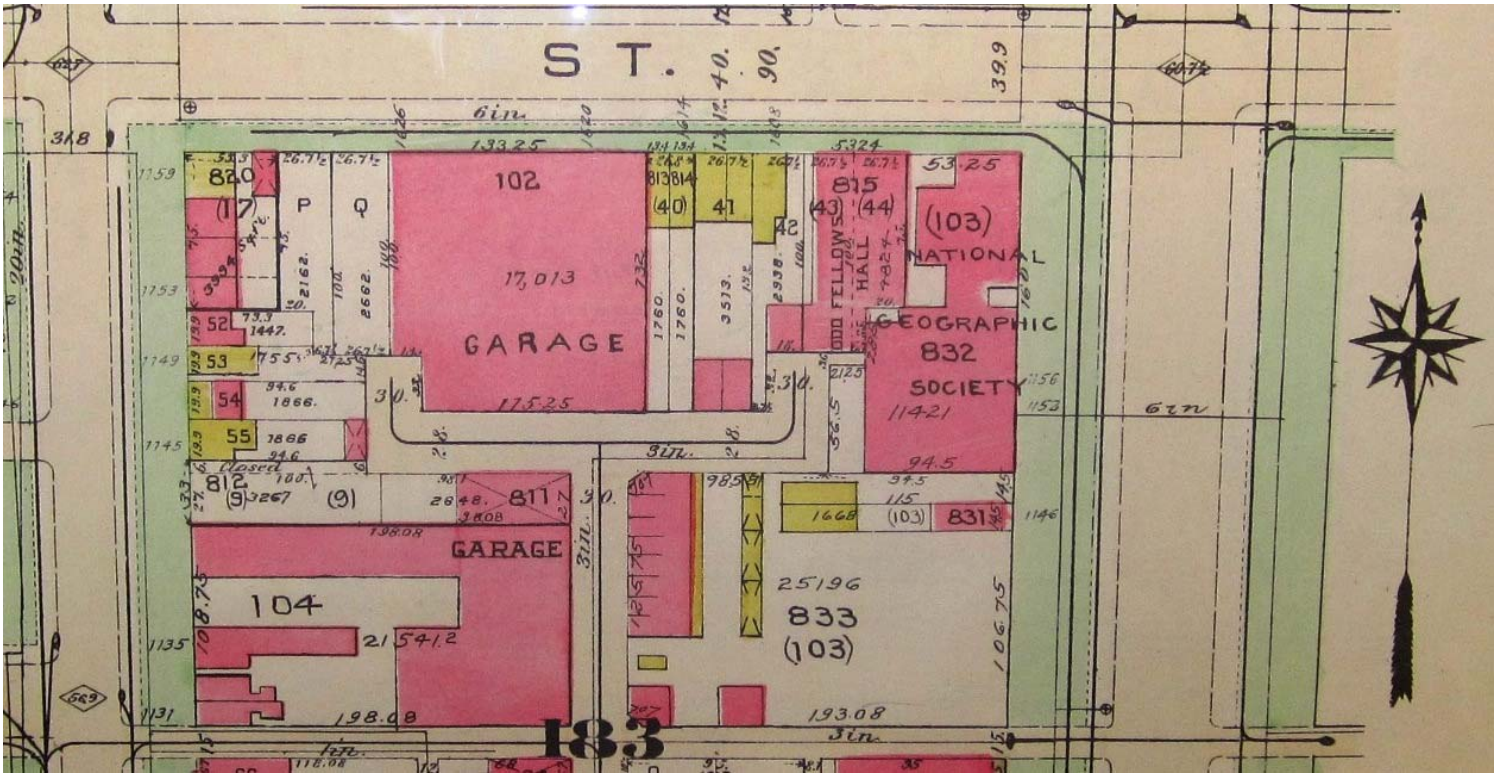

Figure 3. Detailed view of Square 183 from 1924 Baist Real Estate map

National Geographic Society Headquarters
Name of Property

Washington, DC
County and State

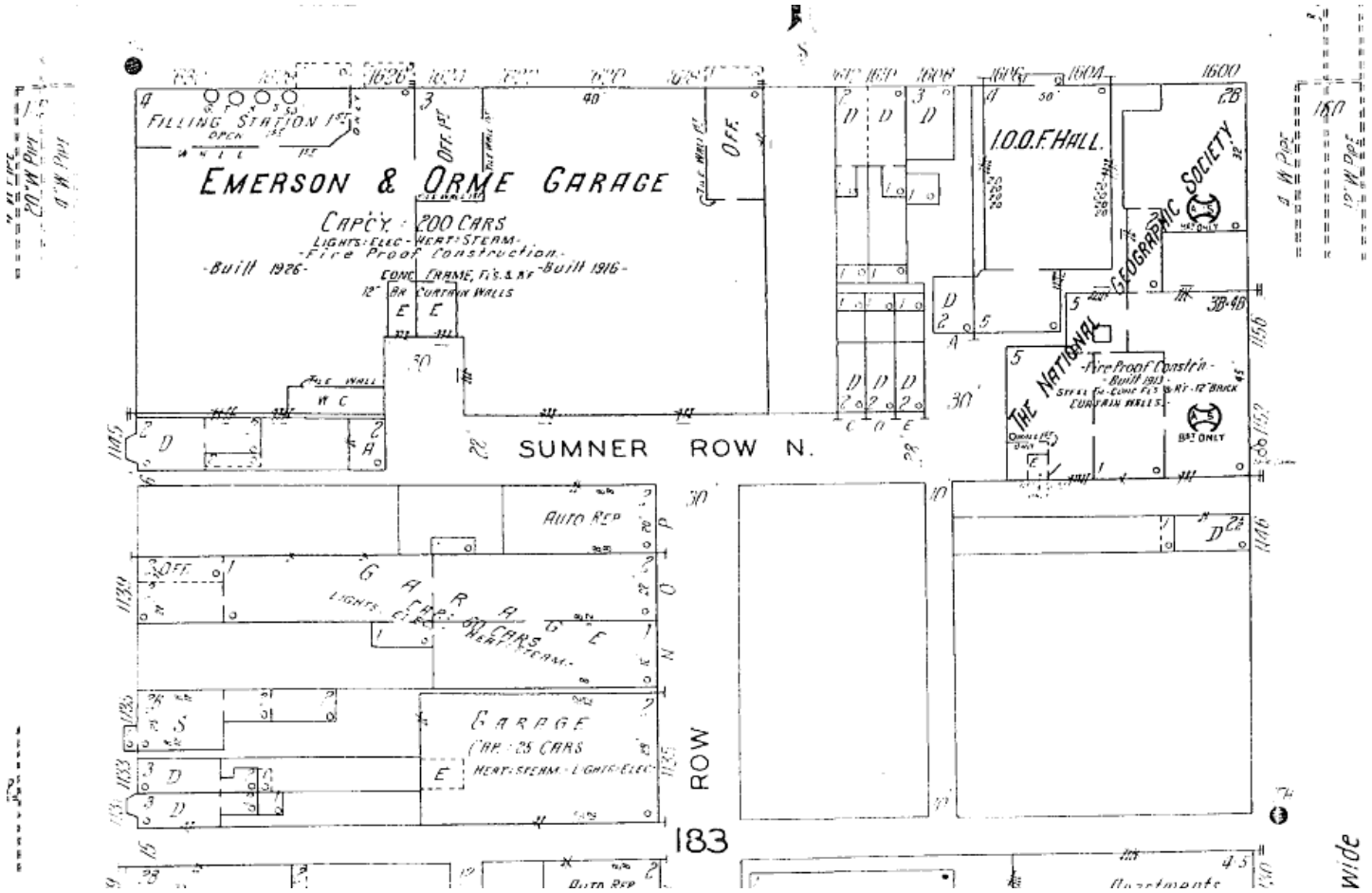

Figure 4. Detailed view of Square 183 from 1928 Sanborn map

National Geographic Society Headquarters | Washington, DC
Name of Property | County and State

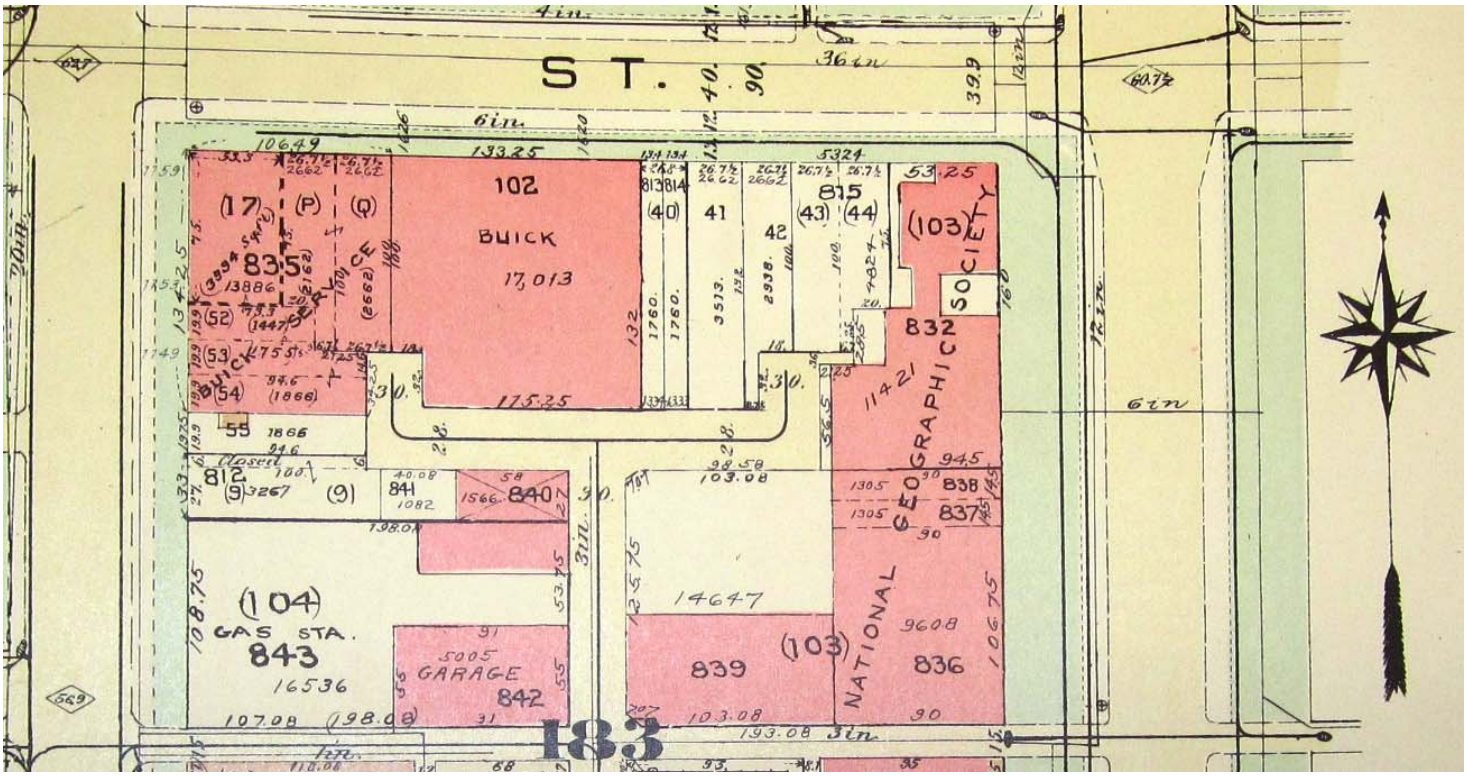

Figure 5. Detail view of Square 183 from 1957 Baist Real Estate map

National Geographic Society Headquarters
Name of Property

Washington, DC
County and State

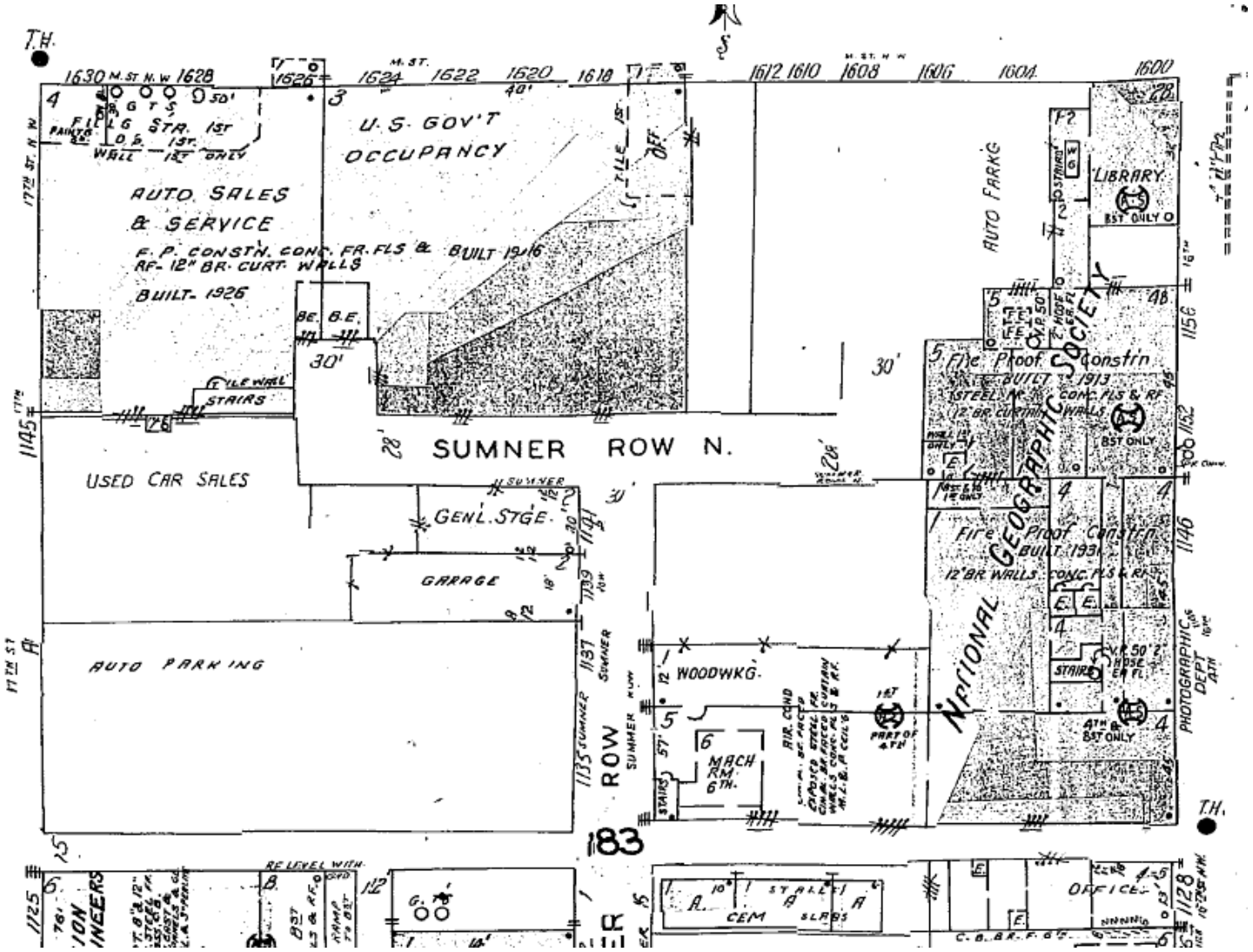

Figure 6. Detailed view of Square 183 from 1959 Sanborn map

Figure 7. Google overlay using 1919 Baist map

Figure 8. Looking east along the 1600 Block of M Street, Washington, DC, c. 1920-1925 (Library of Congress)

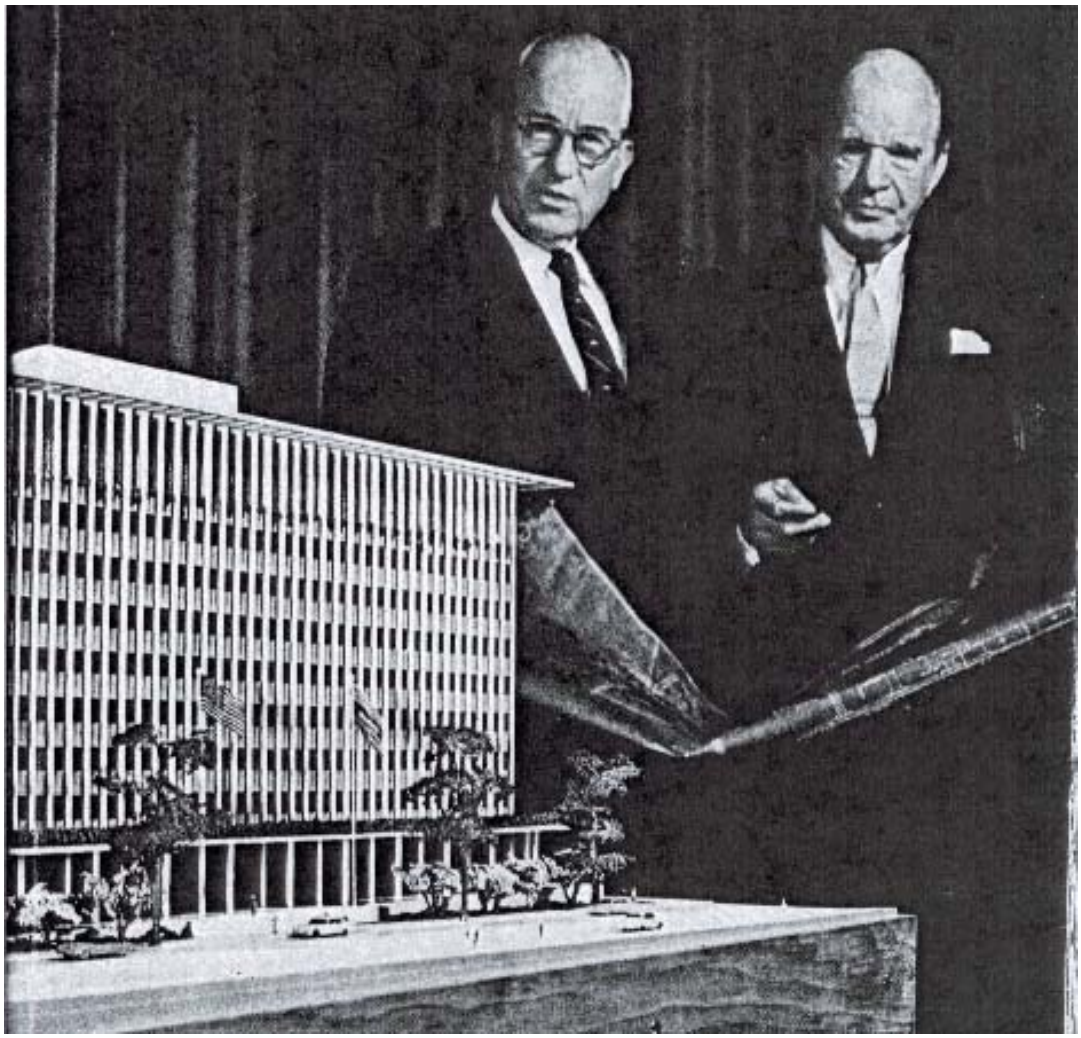

Figure 9. NGS Vice Chairman Thomas McKnew and Edward Durell Stone (*National Geographic*, December 1961)

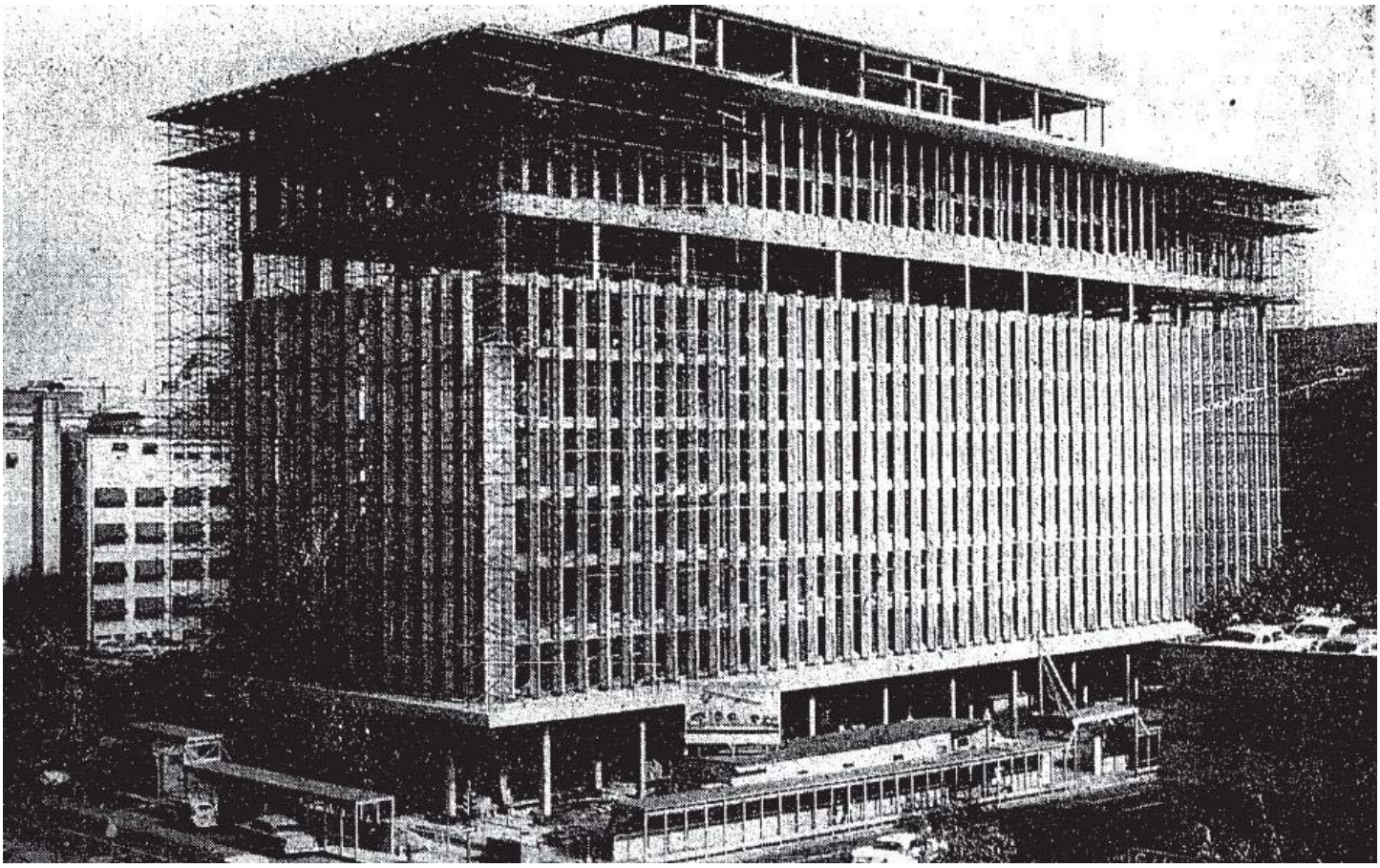

Figure 10. National Geographic building under construction (*Washington Post,* September 1, 1962)

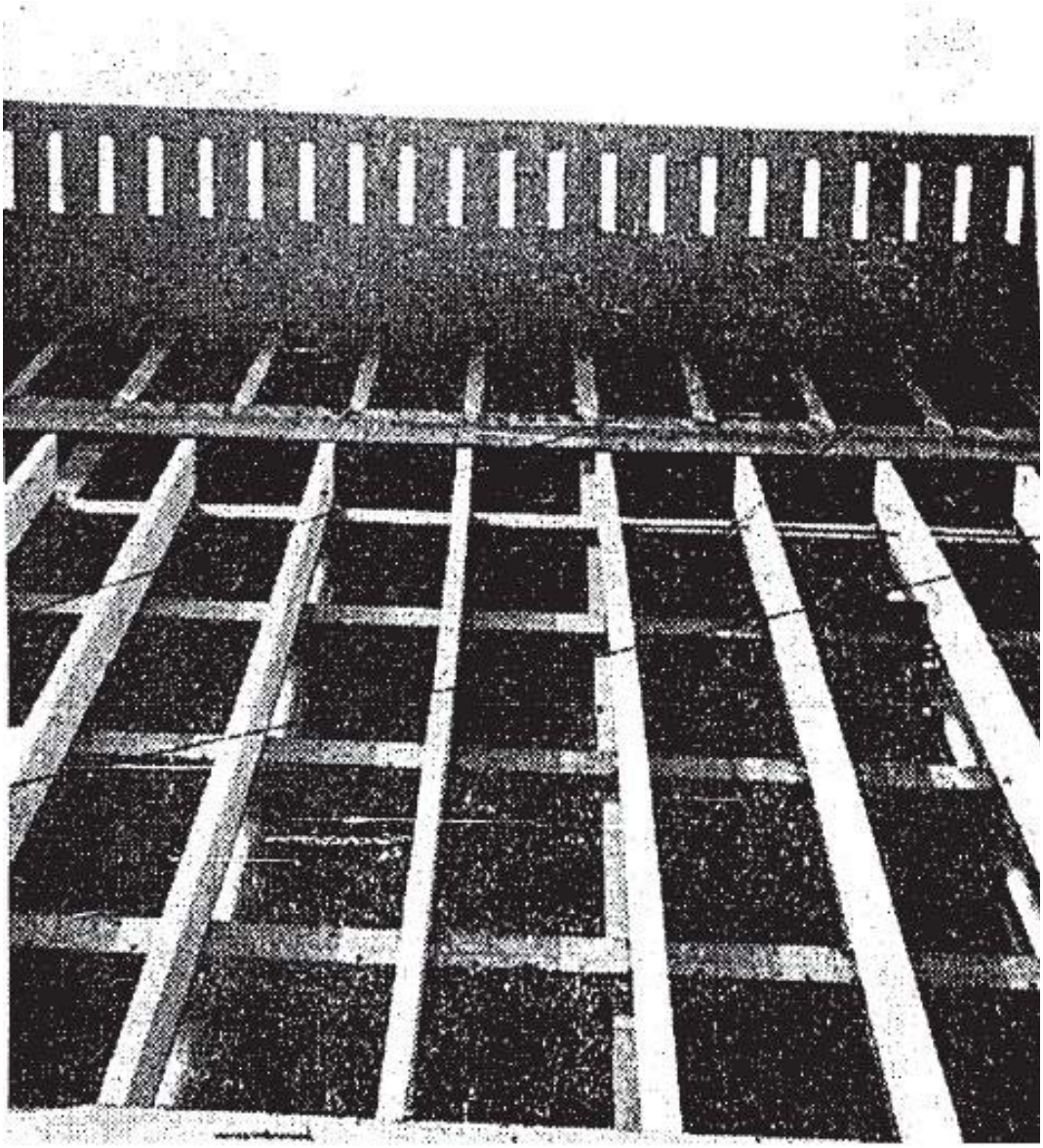

Figure 11. Detailed view of facade under construction (*Washington Post*, September 1, 1962)

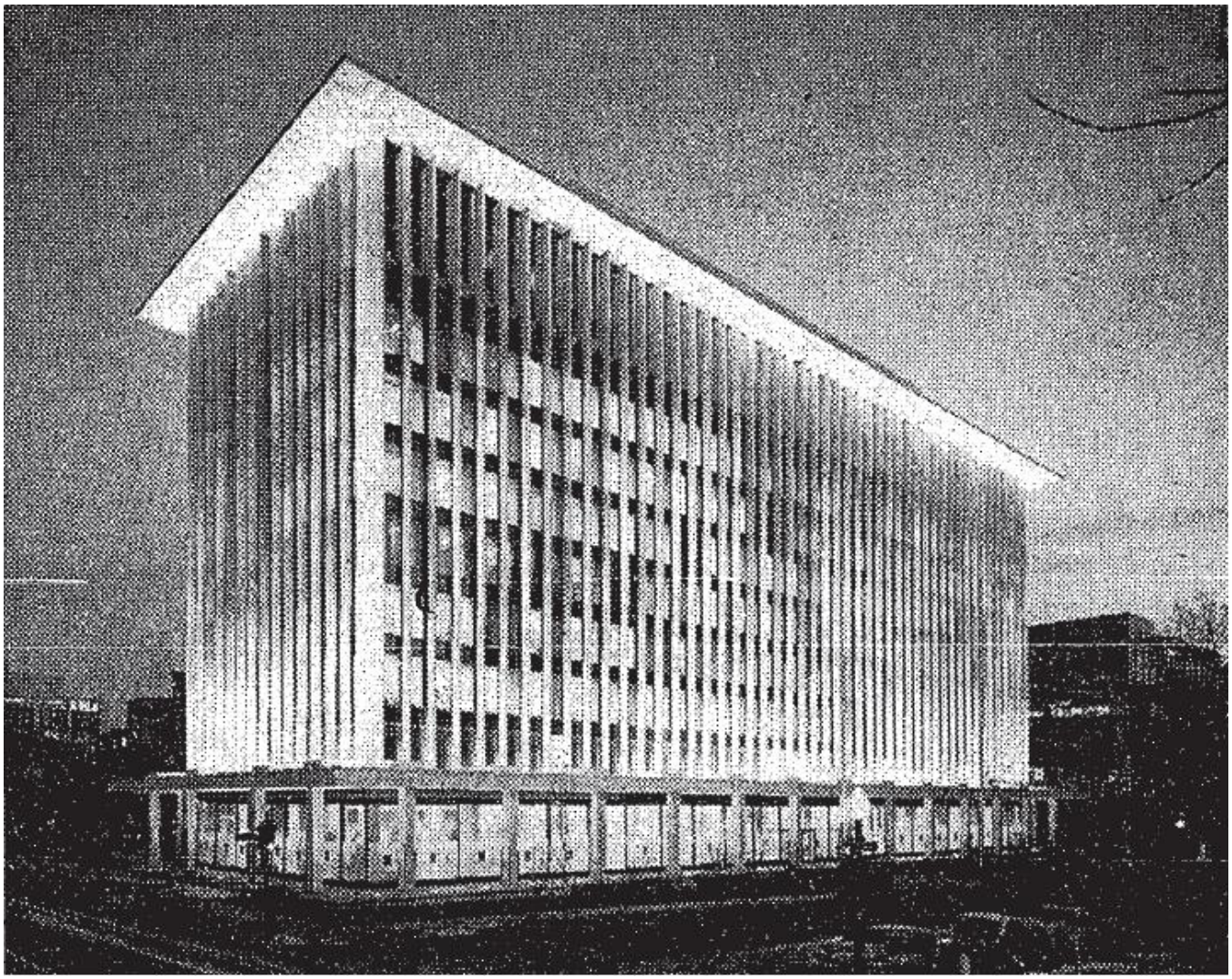

Figure 12. Night view of the National Geographic building (*Washington Post*, January 17, 1964)

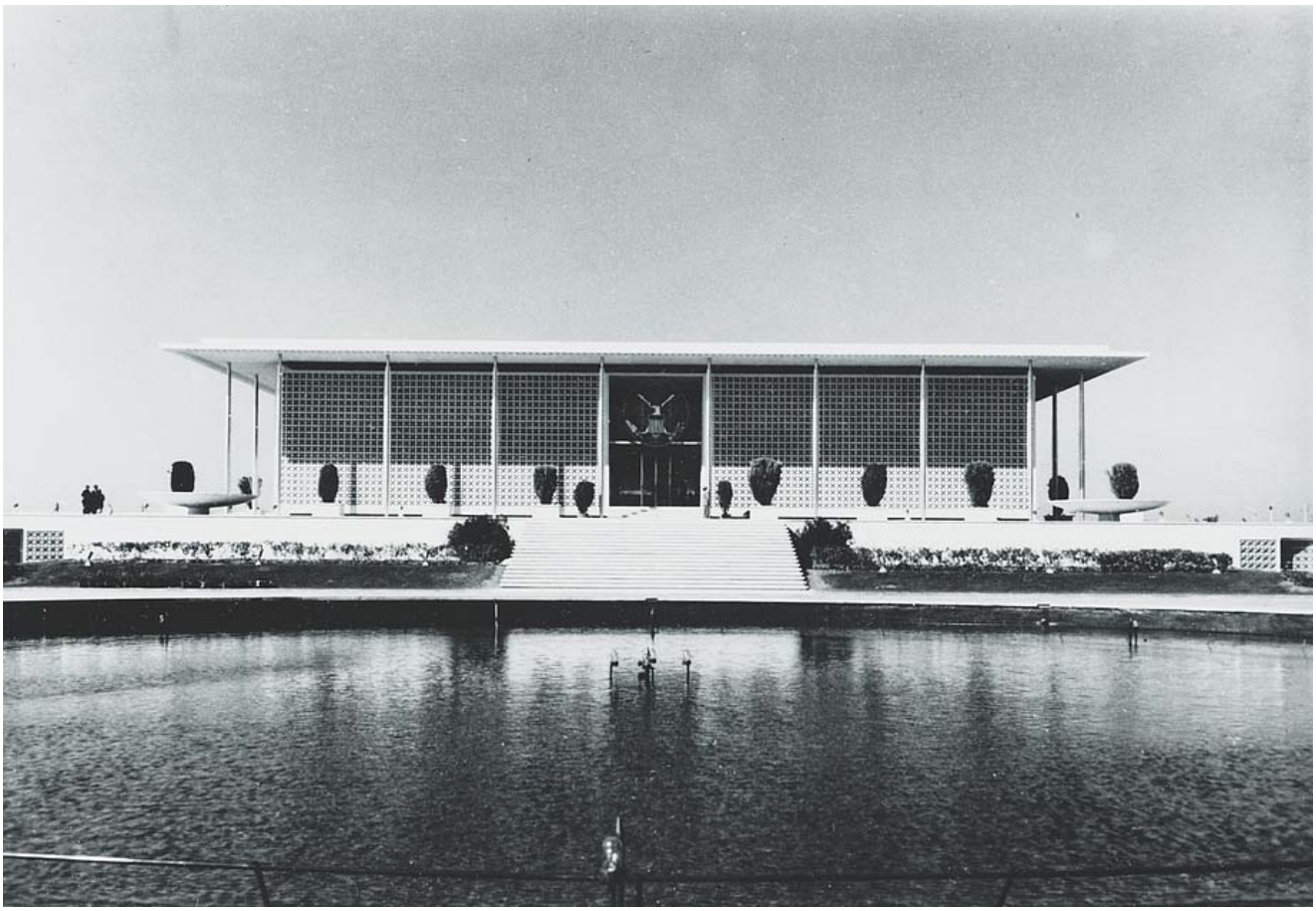

Figure 13. US Embassy, New Delhi, India (Library of Congress)

Figure 14. Bruno Graf House, Dallas, Texas (*Men of Modern Architecture*)

Figure 15. US Pavilion, 1958 World's Fair, Brussels, Belgium (Men of Modern Architecture)

Figure 16. International Trade Mart, New Orleans, Louisiana (*Recent and Future Architecture*)

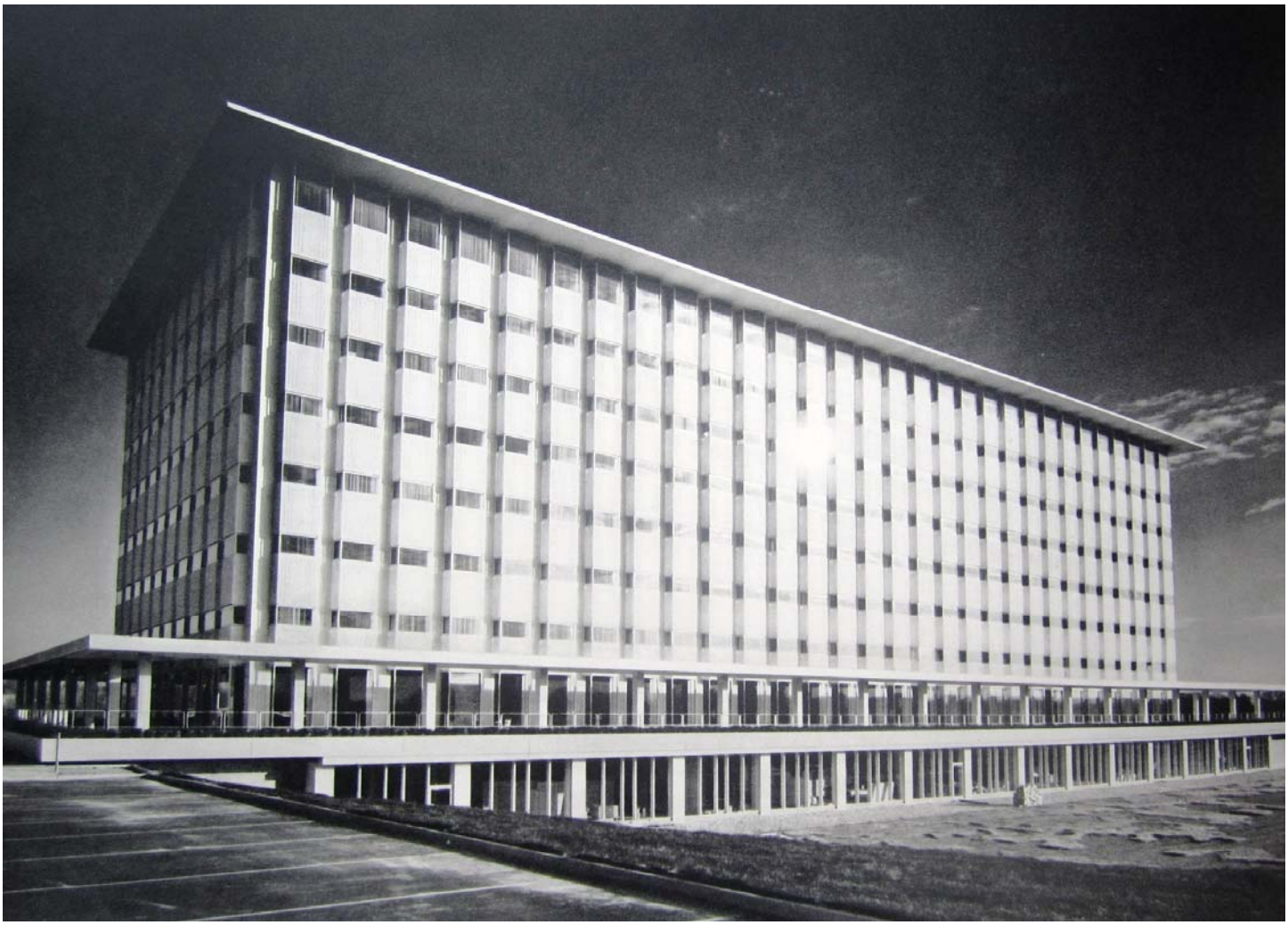

Figure 17. Federal building, Hyattsville, Maryland (*Recent and Future Architecture*)