

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 Potomac Electric Power Company Substation No. 13

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

Address 1001 Harvard Street, NW

Square and lot number(s) Square 2852/ Lot 0033 ^{part of}

Affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1A ⁽¹¹⁾

Date of construction 1907 Date of major alteration(s) _____

Architect(s) Frederick B. Pyle

Architectural style(s) LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/Commercial Style

Original use INDUSTRY/Energy facility

Property owner Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO)

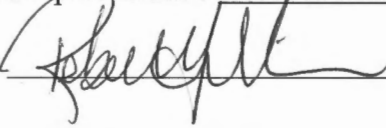
Legal address of property owner 701 9th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001

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 4/14/2016

Name and telephone of author of application _____

Date received 4/23/2016
H.P.O. staff JLD

#16-10

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Potomac Electric Power Company Substation No. 13

Other names/site number: Harvard Substation

Name of related multiple property listing:

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

2. Location

Street & number: 1001 Harvard Street, NW

City or town: Washington State: D.C. County: N/A

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

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

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

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A ___B ___C ___D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY/energy facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY/energy facility

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/Commercial Style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, Concrete, Slate (roof)

Narrative Description

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

Summary Paragraph

The Potomac Electric Power Company Substation No. 13 is part of a half-acre energy distribution site. It is located on the northwest corner of Sherman Avenue and Harvard Street, NW. The site contains a 1-story substation building constructed in 1907 and located on the southeast corner of the property facing Harvard Street. The substation building design is commercial in nature, though evokes a freight depot structure more so than an energy distribution station of the era. The building is constructed of red brick laid in American bond fashion with a hipped roof. It employs concrete quoins, window aprons, and crowns. The site also contains single and double story additions to the 1907 building constructed in 1920, 1921, 1929, 1937, and 1944. These additions were added outside the period of significance and are therefore non-contributory.

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Narrative Description

General Description:

Site:

Potomac Electric Power Company Substation No. 13 is prominently located on the northwest corner of Harvard Street and Sherman Avenue, NW (Lot 33 in Square 2852). The property is bounded on the north and west by apartment buildings.

Rectangular in plan, Substation No. 13 is a 1-story brick building with solid American bond brick walls constructed upon a concrete foundation. The building is covered with a hipped roof with a generous overhang. The roof's rafters extend the length of the roof, with the exposed rafter sections shaped to form decorative corbels. The east and west ends of the roof contain dormers. The entrance is located on the south elevation and multi-paned sash windows are located on the east and south elevations.

Exterior Description

The southern elevation of the 1907 building (contributing) consists of a single-story American bond brick beneath a steeply pitched half-story roof with a generous eave. The rafters supporting the roof are decoratively carved beneath the eaves. The elevation contains a series of six evenly spaced bays. Each bay consists of a triple set of 15-pane sash windows. The bay to the west of center was originally an entrance, since closed in. Each bay is capped by a concrete crown. Below each bay is a concrete apron. Connecting the aprons and running the length of the building is a course of concrete. The corners of the building are faced in concrete quoins. To the west of the 1907 structure is a single-story three bay flat roofed addition constructed in 1920. This addition is non-contributing. To the west of the 1920 addition is a two-story addition constructed in 1929 containing two bays on each story. This addition is non-contributing. To the west of the 1929 addition is a small one-story addition constructed in 1944. The additions, constructed from 1920 to 1944 were constructed outside the period of significance.

The eastern elevation of the original 1907 building (contributing) consists of a single-story American bond brick beneath a steeply pitched half-story roof with a generous eave. The roof contains a dormer with a 10-pane fixed sash window. The rafters supporting the roof are decoratively carved beneath the eaves. The elevation contains two evenly spaced bays. Each bay consists of a triple set of 15-pane sash windows. Each bay is capped by a concrete crown. Below each bay is a concrete apron. Connecting the aprons and running the length of the building is a course of concrete. The corners of the building are faced in concrete quoins. To the north of the 1907 structure is a one-story red brick addition built in 1921 containing one large bay. This addition is non-contributing. A second story, one bay addition was constructed above the 1921

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addition in 1937. This addition is non-contributing. To the north of the 1921/1937 addition, and set back from Sherman Avenue, is a 1 ½-story addition constructed in 1944. This addition is unadorned and contains no bays. The additions, constructed from 1921 to 1944 were constructed outside the period of significance.

The northern elevation consists of a two-story American bond brick. The wall consists of the 1944 addition prominently located in front of the 1921/1937 additions which are exposed for the eastern third of the elevation. These elevations were constructed outside the period of significance.

The western elevation consists of a two story American bond brick structure constructed in 1929. This elevation is unadorned and contains no bays. The addition was constructed outside the period of significance.

Interior Description

The interior floor plans generally consist of a large, open space in which electrical equipment is placed for the transforming and distribution of electricity to the surrounding community.

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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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Engineering

Period of Significance

1907

Significant Dates

1907

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Frederick B. Pyle (architect)

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

The Potomac Electric Power Company Substation No. 13, constructed in 1907, is the first purpose-built electrical substation built outside the boundaries of the original city of Washington. While its construction was opposed by residents in the Columbia Heights suburb of Washington, D.C., the selection of the site was in response to the need to supply electricity to the growing population northwest of the city. The 1907 building was designed by Washington architect Frederick B. Pyle, with later additions designed by Arthur B. Heaton and others.

The Potomac Electric Power Company Substation No. 13 is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the **local level of significance under Criterion A** as it is closely associated with the growing need to provide reliable electric service to the residents in the District of Columbia, particularly those who resided in the vicinity of Columbia Heights, Mount Pleasant, Park View, and other near northwest neighborhoods. In 1902 Pepco became the sole electric utility company providing electrical service to Washington, D.C. and nearby suburbs in Maryland and Virginia. Beginning with the centralization of generating electric power at the Bennings power plant in late 1906, Pepco substations became the critical link in distributing electricity for the various classes of services for which it was needed throughout the city. Substation No. 13, constructed in 1907, was the first purpose-built substation constructed outside the original city of Washington with the sole purpose of supplying electricity to residential customers. This is markedly different than earlier suburban substations which were collocated with street car carbarns with the primary goal of servicing streetlights.

Potomac Electric Power Company Substation No. 13 is also eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the **local level of significance under Criterion A** as opposition to its construction by residents of Columbia Heights played a significant role in Pepco adopting a philosophy of designing substations they considered to be architecturally compatible with the buildings in the surrounding community. Pepco's Substation No. 13 was the first of their projects to receive significant community opposition, owing to the residential character of the neighborhood near the building site. While Pepco overcame this opposition, the resulting structure is the most architecturally significant of Pepco's early substation designs constructed before 1928 and the first to consider aesthetics as an important element of the overall design.

For these reasons, Substation No. 13 also meets **DC Criteria A (Events) and B (History)**.

Potomac Electric Power Company Substation No. 13 also meets **Criterion C** as an outstanding example of a Pepco substation designed by local architect Frederick B. Pyle, an architect in private practice during the beginning of the 20th century. Substation No. 13 is significant to the work of Pyle due to both its building type and its style. Pyle's commissions primarily consisted

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of residences and, beginning in the early 20th century, commercial buildings in central Washington. Pyle's storefronts were some of the most highly decorated in downtown Washington and featured ornamental lion's heads, eagles, plant forms, and classical motifs. Pyle's work for Pepco included designs for four substations dating to 1906 and 1907 as part of Pepco's centralization of power generation and distribution made possible with the construction of the Benning Power Plant. Of these design's, Substation No. 13 is a unique example of Pyle's work, being his only substation to be treated architecturally – include architectural ornamentation – rather than as an unadorned building to house electrical equipment.

Stylistically, Potomac Electric Power Company Substation No. 13 is significant in the work of Frederick B. Pyle. While he created designs for four substations for Pepco from 1906 to 1907, Pyle's designs were largely utilitarian in nature with little of note architecturally. This is markedly different than Pyle's treatment of Substation No. 13, which employs concrete quoins and architectural decoration in addition to a hipped roof with dormers. The property retains a high level of integrity, conveying the original design. The period of significance is 1907 taking in the original construction of the building. The substation is still in use today. While later additions constructed to the north and west have altered the buildings appearance, there are no notable alterations on its primary elevations facing Sherman Avenue and Harvard Street. For these reasons, Substation No. 13 also meets **DC Criteria D (Architecture and Urbanism), E (Artistry), and F (Creative Masters).**

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

Summary Paragraph;

Potomac Electric Power Company's Substation No. 13, located at 1001 Harvard Street, NW, on the northwest corner of Sherman Avenue and Harvard Street, NW, was built in 1907 as part of Pepco's construction campaign which replaced and centralized electrical power generation in Washington, D.C., at a new power plant on Benning Road. The centralization of power generation required a network of power substations to distribute electricity throughout Washington, including the substation at Harvard Street. Community opposition to building the Harvard Street substation resulted in the construction of a building more architecturally compatible with the surrounding residential area, and helped established Pepco's long-standing commitment to design substations that were architecturally compatible with the neighborhoods in which they were constructed.

Substation No. 13 was designed by architect Frederick B. Pyle in an early 20th Century commercial style and is significant in the area of architecture. It is among Pyle's earliest commercial designs and, unlike Pyle's design for Pepco Substation No. 10 (1906), incorporates architectural embellishments not included in earlier substation designs.

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Brief History of the Potomac Electric Power Company

The Potomac Electric Company organized in 1891 with capital stock of \$25,000 and a generating station located on the Virginia side of Chain Bridge. This company went into receivership on July 17, 1893. A reorganization brought about the Potomac Light and Power Company under the same management. Another reorganization brought about the Potomac Light and Power of Virginia. The company put in a bid for street lights in competition with the United States Electric Light Company, which was accepted by the District Commissioners. The United States Electric Light Company took the case to court leading to several years of bitter competition between the two companies.

By 1898, the Potomac Company secured contracts for power to the independent railway lines in the District of Columbia and installed feeders to Brightwood, the Washington Street substation, Eckington and Riverdale, and Montrose Junction on the Tonnallytown Rockville Line. This same year, the United States Electric Lighting Company erected a new plan at 14th and B streets, NW.

The following year, in 1899, the United States Electric Light Company and the Potomac Power and Light Company joined forces in a more cooperative arrangement, and when the Washington Railway and Electric Company (WRECo) was formed in 1902, it combined the several independent railways in Washington into one unified system and formally combined the two lighting companies as a subsidiary of WRECo known as the Potomac Electric Power Company (Pepco).

One of the earliest initiatives of Pepco was to establish a new central power plant. Of the possible locations near Washington, the site at Benning on the Anacostia River was ideally located for the generation of electrical energy. Work began at Benning in April 1906 with operations beginning by December of the same year. By 1907, it was possible for Pepco to shut down all of the older generating stations with the exception of the Edison equipment at 14th and B streets. The centralization of electric generation in Washington gave rise to the need for a power substation distribution system to supply the various types of energy needed throughout the city.

During the fifteen year period from 1907 to 1922, there was no notable change to Pepco's method of generating or electric distribution system. Following 1922, demand for electrical power experienced a rapid increase leading Pepco to install generators capable of supplying more power and the addition of new substations.

During the 1930s, Pepco experienced a building boom largely caused by the displacement of its headquarters, generating facilities, and distributing operations at 14th and B streets due to the U.S. Government's plans to develop the Federal Triangle area. This led to the construction in 1930 of a new headquarters building at 999 E Street, NW, a new service station at 10th and Florida Avenue, NW, and a new substation on Champlain Street. The decade also witnessed the construction of the Buzzard Point Generating Station which began in October 1932 and was

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completed within the year. During World War II, Buzzard Point would become Pepco's base load generating plant.

Today Pepco continues as Washington's sole supplier of electricity, though the company no longer generates electricity. On June 7, 2000, Pepco sold generating plants with a total capacity of 5,154 megawatts to the Mirant Corporation, including four generating stations located in Maryland and Virginia. From this time, Pepco has operated primarily as an energy supplier distributing electricity through its system of substations.

Substations of the Potomac Electric Power Company

The addition of the 6600 volt, 25 cycle, three phase turbo-generators in Pepco's Station B (14th and B streets, NW) prior to 1905 is considered the beginning of electric substations as they are known today – this being that high tension energy was delivered to the substation by means of high tension feeders from the generating station. Upon delivery, the energy is transformed, converted, and redelivered for the various classes of services for which it is needed.

With the completion of the Benning power generating plant in December 1906, it was possible for Pepco to shut down all of their older generating stations with the exception of the Edison equipment at 14th and B streets. It was then necessary to rely almost exclusively on substations to form the connecting link between the generating station and the consumer as it was impractical to generate all classes of energy at one location to reach all consumers.¹

Four new substations were immediately added to the system with the opening of Bennings – nos. 2, 10, 11, and 12. The new substation no. 2 adjoined the old substation no. 2 at 450 Washington Street, NW. Substation no. 10 was a purpose built brick structure designed by architect Frederick B. Pyle and located in the alley between H, I, 14th, and 15th streets, NW. Substation no. 11 was located in a remodeled office building abutting the streetcar car barn at 13th and D streets, NE, and substation no. 12 was located in the old steam power station at 33rd and K streets, NW, in Georgetown.

Power That Flows Freely to YOUR SERVICE



ACTING as sentries for the great army of horsepower Pepco Service brings to your instant disposal, substations are important. They occupy sites which are selected after exhaustive engineering surveys and enable your electrical source of supply to keep in close touch with demands for service in the sections they serve.

Substations are constructed to conform to the zoning laws of the section they occupy and to harmonize, as much as possible, with the types of buildings prevailing in their neighborhoods. Here again Pepco's spirit of co-operation with civic beautifying projects is evident

Electricity cannot be stored. It must be used as it is generated—or there will be waste. As generated at the Power Plant it must be at high tension, to meet every possible demand. Further than that, transmission at high voltage reduces losses over the wires considerably. Substations take high tension current and, with the least possible waste, reduce it to the voltage you require for instant response to your "push" on the button.

The Sub-Station OPERATOR

*One of a Series
"Personalities of Pepco"*

JUST like the heart pumps blood to the arteries of the body, the flow of Pepco Power is guided to your service through Sub-Stations. Night and day vigilant operators at these places are on duty to keep in close touch with demand and attend to its supply.

The POTOMAC ELECTRIC POWER CO.
—Matchless Service—
MAIN TEN THOUSAND

¹ Santamaria, Cesar, *History and Evolution of the Potomac Electric Power Company* (Ad from the *Washington Post*, 1927.)

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In 1907, Pepco's proposal to construct a new substation at Harvard Street and Sherman Avenue was met with opposition from the surrounding Columbia Heights community which attempted to prevent its construction through court action. After a two month delay, construction of Substation no. 13 proceeded. The Harvard substation (no. 13), designed by Frederick B. Pyle, is notable for being the first purpose built substation built outside of Washington's central core in one of the city's growing suburbs (Columbia Heights). It is also the most architecturally significant of Pepco's early substation designs prior to 1928. Prior to construction of the Harvard substation, the small number of Washington suburban substations that existed were co-located with streetcar carbarns.

After 1907, Pepco not only designed and built substations to conform with the zoning laws in the section of the city they occupied, but also adopted a philosophy of designing the buildings to harmonize, as much as possible, with the types of buildings prevailing in the surrounding neighborhood. A review of known Pepco substation design from 1899 to present reveals that Pepco's philosophy of creating substations that architecturally harmonize with their surroundings has evolved over time.

Pepco's substation design in Washington D.C. falls into four major categories that correspond to the era in which they were constructed. These are:

- Early substations (built prior to 1928): The substations are largely utilitarian or industrial in character. Several were built as extensions of streetcar carbarn facilities, as alley structures, or in preexisting buildings converted for substation use. Two notable substations from this era are substation no. 13, located at Harvard Street and Sherman Avenue (1907), and substation no. 8 (1927), located at 2415 Martin Luther King Jr., Avenue. Substations nos. 13 and 8 exemplify Pepco's best efforts to harmonize substation design with their surrounding communities during this era.
- Substations constructed from 1929 to 1939: The design of substations during this period was dominated by architect Arthur B. Heaton, who not only elevated the architecture of Pepco substations but created an Art Deco aesthetic that unified both the service buildings of Pepco and its parent company, the Washington Railway and Electric Company. Heaton was concerned with promulgating high standards of design beyond the monumental core of Washington and his work was recognized on several occasions by the Washington Board of Trade for elevating architectural design in private development.
- Substations constructed from 1939 to 1960: During this era, Pepco architects designed substations that were camouflaged with their surroundings. Beginning in September 1939, small substations constructed in Washington neighborhoods were designed to resemble Colonial revival residential properties or, when on a commercial corridor, as a storefront. While this policy led to some of Pepco's most architecturally harmonious designs in residential sections of Washington, they also had the dual purpose of decreasing public awareness of substation locations which, in turn, helped address concerns related to keeping Washington's electrical system safe and secure in the years leading up to and during World War II and afterward during the Cold War era.
- The Modern Era: Contemporary substation design follows no singular design aesthetic, although Pepco continues to consider location, the character of the neighboring buildings,

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and the technical requirements of delivering reliable electrical service as they design new substation buildings. Today, substations tend to be larger than substations of earlier eras, and a number of unique design solutions have been used to continue the practice of employing creativity to both achieve buildings that harmonize with their surroundings and a low level of public awareness.

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Potomac Electric Power Company Substation No. 13 was designed by Frederick B. Pyle and constructed in 1907 as part of Pepco's construction campaign which replaced and centralized electrical power generation in Washington, D.C., at a new power plant on Benning Road. The centralization of power generation required a network of power substations to distribute electricity throughout Washington, including the substation at Harvard Street. Pepco Substation No. 13 is closely associated with the growing need to provide reliable electric service to the residents in the District of Columbia, particularly those who resided in the neighborhoods of Columbia Heights, Mount Pleasant, Park View, and other growing population centers in Washington's near northwest during the first half of the 20th century. The rise of residential demand for electricity, beginning with electric lights and increasing with electrical appliances and other goods resulted in a series of additions to Substation No. 13 to increase the substations capacity and meet residential demand. These additions include a one story addition to the west of the original building in 1920, a one story addition to the north of the original substation in 1921, a two story addition to the west of the substation in 1929, a second story addition on the north of the substation in 1937, and a one and one-half story addition to the north and west in 1944.

The earliest known public announcement of Pepco's intent to construct a new substation at Sherman Avenue and Harvard Street occurred in the *Washington Times* on July 28, 1907². Concerned residents immediately filed a protest with the District Commissioners objecting to the construction of the substation. According to the protest, the residents and property owners considered the substation a nuisance, and expressed concern that it would ruin property values in the immediate vicinity which, until that time was primarily residential in nature. Despite the community protest, the District Commissioners decided to approve the permit for the Potomac Electric Power Company's substation on July 30, 1907. Supporting this position, Pepco stated that it had received the necessary two-thirds consent of the property owners holding property within ninety feet of the proposed substation site.³

Residents in opposition to the substation, led by attorney A.T. Stewart, appeared before the District Commissioners on August 5, 1907, and argued that the Commissioners did not have the authority to grant the permit due to a section in the regulations that prohibited the erection of such a building on a square occupied exclusively for residential purposes.⁴ Mr. Stewart also argued that the necessary consent of two-thirds of the property owners within 90 feet of the

² "New Electric Substation at Sherman Street, N.W." *The Washington Times*, July 28, 1907, p. 7.

³ "Residents' Protest in Vain." *The Washington Post*, August 1, 1907, p. 14.

⁴ "Oppose Substation." *The Evening Star*, August 5, 1907, p. 8.

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proposed building had been secured by subdividing the substation site and deeding a portion of it to Pepco Secretary Whitehead, who naturally gave his consent to erect the substation.⁵ In response, Pepco vice president George H. Harries argued that the regulation was not intended to apply in cases where there were only two dwellings on the square.⁶ At the time the permit was issued, the entire square was unimproved with the exception of two rowhouses located on Sherman Avenue to the north of the proposed substation.

A permit for the substation was filed on August 23, 1907, and issued the following day, for a substation designed by architect Frederick B. Pyle at an estimated cost of \$6,500. The design was more sympathetic to the surrounding community and more architecturally significant than earlier substations designed by Pyle, presumably in partial response to community opposition.

Resulting from the August protest, the District Supreme Court determined on September 6, 1907, that Pepco could proceed with their plans, but directed that the parties opposed to the substation had 30 days to complete the taking of proof to the charges contained in their bill of complaint. Pepco continued to deny the allegations and declared that the neighborhood was rapidly changing, with new stores and business uses occurring in the community even beyond the location of the substation. Furthermore, Pepco stated that there was no merit to the concern that the substation would be a noise nuisance and collected affidavits from residents living near their substations at Washington Street and 13th & D streets supporting that view.⁷ In the end, the permit was upheld and the substation was constructed.

While community opposition eventually ceased, residents remained distrustful of the substation in its earliest years. On the morning of June 18, 1908, the *Washington Times* reported that the operator at Substation No. 13 had been electrocuted. A passerby, noticing a lack of activity, looked in the window of the substation to find operator J.H. Davidson with his head buried in his arms. Without attempting to enter the building, the man called Pepco's main office and reported that the operator had been electrocuted. Power was quickly cut off to the substation, disabling the Brightwood line for a few seconds. Pepco Superintendent Folsom, in charge of substations, hurried to the substation to investigate only to find Mr. Davidson at the door ready to greet them. Davidson had apparently been resting and, when the power was cut off, thought there was trouble at some other point in the system.⁸

Substation No. 13 is a superior example of a Pepco substation designed during the period before 1928. It is significant both as a building type and due to its impact on Pepco's decision to design substations that were architecturally compatible, as much as possible, with the structures in surrounding them. Stylistically, Substation No. 13 is unique in the work of Frederick B. Pyle. While he designed four substations for Pepco in 1906 and 1907, his other designs were

⁵ "Hearing on Power Plant." *The Washington Post*, August 6, 1907, p. 14.

⁶ "Oppose Power Sub-Station.," *The Washington Herald*, August 6, 1907, p. 10.

⁷ "Court Discharges Rule." *The Evening Star*, September 6, 1907, p. 3.

⁸ "Man Sits Rigid at Switchboard, Tragedy Saddens Whole Force." *The Washington Times*, June 18 1908, p. 8; "Davidson Not Electrocuted." *The Evening Star*, June 18, 1908, p. 3.

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architecturally unadorned and utilitarian in nature. In Substation No. 13, Pyle incorporates concrete and employs an architectural vocabulary that adds beauty to the building – making this the first electrical substation in Washington to consider aesthetics as an important component to the structure.

Architect of Substation No. 13

Frederick Bennet Pyle (1867-1934)

The son of Robert L. and Elizabeth (Walton) Pyle, Frederick B. Pyle was born in London Grove, Pennsylvania on September 7, 1867. Following his graduation from Swarthmore College with a Bachelor of Science degree, Pyle moved to Washington around 1891 and established an individual practice. Early in his career, may have worked under Glenn Brown and Arthur Heaton. Apt at designing in a wide range of styles, Pyle made a name for himself designing single-family dwellings, including numerous residences in Cleveland Park, Mount Pleasant, and Kalorama around the turn of the century. He worked as an architect for the Cleveland Park Company in 1896, during which time he designed three houses, all of which share similar curvilinear shapes and Federal-style details. He returned to work in Cleveland Park in 1905, designing a house for himself as well as a number of other houses in the Tudor and Shingle styles. In 1905, he also provided plans for Samuel Woodward, the founder of the Woodward & Lothrop Department Store, for a series of rowhouses on Bancroft Place in the Shaw neighborhood.

In the twentieth century, Pyle expanded into downtown commercial buildings, which were typically of steel frame construction. Pyle's storefronts were some of the most highly decorated in downtown Washington and featured ornamental lions' heads, eagles, plant forms, and classical motifs. His most notable works include the Equitable Savings and Loan Building (1911-12), which he designed in conjunction with Arthur B. Heaton, the F Street portion of the Woodward and Lothrop department store (1912), the Philsborn & Company Building (1919), the City Club (1921), and the Evans Building (1924).

Among Pyle's earliest non-residential designs are four substations designed for the Potomac Electric Power Company in 1906-1907. These included an addition to Substation No. 2 (1906, since razed) at 422 Washington, Street, NW; a design for Substation No. 10 (1906), an unadorned two story alley structure located between 14th, 15th, L, and I streets NW; a power house on Shariff Road, NE (1907, since razed); and a design for Substation No. 13 (1907) at 1001 Harvard Street, NW. Of these designs, the one for Substation No. 13 is the most architecturally interesting and significant.

Pyle resided in the large gambrel-roofed house he designed in Cleveland Park from 1906 to 1918, after which he lived in the Wardman Inn. In 1926, he moved to Wesley Heights where, according to his obituary, he "won the admiration of the entire community." Pyle died in 1934 following a prolonged illness.

Potomac Electric Power Company Substation
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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Books & Manuscripts

Beck, William O. *100 Years of Matchless Service: Potomac Electric Power Company 1896-1996*. Washington, DC: Potomac Electric Power Company, 1996.

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"Ask Light Plant Enjoined." *The Washington Post*, August 31, 1907, p. 10.

"Building Permit Issued." *The Evening Star*, August 24, 1907, p. 2.

"Building Permits Show Increase." *The Evening Star*, May 29, 1920, pt. 2, p. 4.

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"For Electric Substation." *The Evening Star*, August 1, 1907, p. 17.

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“New Electric Substation at Sherman Street N.W.” *Washington Times*, July 28, 1907, p. 7.

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“Oppose Power Sub-station.” *Washington Herald*, August 6, 1907, p. 10.

“Oppose Substation.” *The Evening Star*, August 5, 1907, p. 8.

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“Residents’ Protest in Vain.” *The Washington Post*, August 1, 1907, p. 14.

“Story to Be Added.” *The Washington Post*, February 7, 1937, p. R1.

“Substation Barred.” *Washington Herald*, August 8, 1907, p. 10.

“War on Electric Station.” *The Washington Post*, August 30, 1907, p. 11.

“Week’s Building Operations in District Total \$1,363,850.” *The Evening Star*, March 16, 1929, p. 16.

“Would Bar Substation.” *The Washington Post*, July 31, 1907, p. 14.

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

Potomac Electric Power Company Substation
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Name of Property

County and State

- Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.10 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 38.926942 | Longitude: -77.026320 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

Potomac Electric Power Company Substation
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- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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

Potomac Electric Power Company Substation No. 13 occupies the southeastern corner of Lot 0033 in Square 2852 in the Columbia Heights neighborhood of the District of Columbia.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Potomac Electric Power Company Substation No. 13 is on its original site and encompasses the boundaries of the original substation constructed in 1907.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Kent C. Boese

organization: DC Preservation League

street & number: 1221 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 5A

city or town: Washington state: DC zip code: 20036

e-mail info@dcpreservation.org

telephone: 202.783.5144

date: April 14, 2016

Additional Documentation

Potomac Electric Power Company Substation
No. 13

Washington, D.C.

Name of Property

County and State

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Pepco Substation No. 13

City or Vicinity: Washington

County: N/A

State: D.C.

Photographer: Kent C. Boese

Date Photographed: December 27, 2015

Potomac Electric Power Company Substation
No. 13

Washington, D.C.

Name of Property

County and State

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1) General View looking west northwest from the intersection of Sherman Avenue and Harvard Street, NW
1 of 7.
- 2) General View of 1907 building looking west from Sherman Avenue, NW
2 of 7.
- 3) General View looking west from Sherman Avenue, NW, showing original 1907 substation and 1921, 1937, and 1944 additions
3 of 7.
- 4) General View looking north of Harvard Street, NW, elevation
4 of 7.
- 5) Detail view of Harvard Street, NW, elevations showing 1920 and 1929 additions
5 of 7.
- 6) General view of north elevation looking southwest from Sherman Avenue, NW
6 of 7.
- 7) General view north northeast from Harvard Street, NW, of west elevation
7 of 7.

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Pepco Substation No. 13

Washington, DC

December 27, 2015

Kent Boese

General View looking west northwest from the intersection of Sherman Avenue and Harvard Street, NW

1/7

Potomac Electric Power Company Substation
No. 13

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State



Pepco Substation No. 13

Washington, DC

December 27, 2015

Kent Boese

General View of 1907 building looking west from Sherman Avenue, NW

2/7

Potomac Electric Power Company Substation
No. 13

Washington, D.C.

Name of Property

County and State



Pepco Substation No. 13

Washington, DC

December 27, 2015

Kent Boese

General View looking west from Sherman Avenue, NW, showing original 1907 substation and 1921, 1937, and 1944 additions.

3/7

Potomac Electric Power Company Substation
No. 13

Washington, D.C.

Name of Property

County and State



Pepco Substation No. 13

Washington, DC

December 27, 2015

Kent Boese

General View looking north of Harvard Street, NW, elevation

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Potomac Electric Power Company Substation
No. 13

Washington, D.C.

Name of Property

County and State



Pepco Substation No. 13

Washington, DC

December 27, 2015

Kent Boese

Detail view of Harvard Street, NW, elevations showing 1920 and 1929 additions.

5/7

Potomac Electric Power Company Substation
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Washington, D.C.

Name of Property

County and State



Pepco Substation No. 13

Washington, DC

December 27, 2015

Kent Boese

General view of north elevation looking southwest from Sherman Avenue, NW.

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Potomac Electric Power Company Substation
No. 13

Washington, D.C.

Name of Property

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Pepco Substation No. 13

Washington, DC

December 27, 2015

Kent Boese

General view north northeast from Harvard Street, NW, of west elevation.

7/7

Potomac Electric Power Company Substation
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Site Plan:



Site Plan from ArcGIS (viewed December 22, 2015)

Potomac Electric Power Company Substation
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County and State

Historic Images:



Potomac Electric Power Company Substation No. 13, view toward the northwest from the intersection of Sherman Avenue and Harvard Street, NW, ca. 1950s. (Photo from Pepco)

Potomac Electric Power Company Substation
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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.