

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 Railway Express Agency Building

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

Address 900 Second Street, Northeast

Square and lot number(s) Square 0717/ Lot 0812

Affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6C

Date of construction 1908 Date of major alteration(s) _____

Architect(s) D.H. Burnham & Company, architects

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

Original use TRANSPORTATION/Rail-related

Property owner Fluorine LCC

Legal address of property owner 1627 K Street, NW #LL

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 10-13-2015

Name and telephone of author of application _____

Date received 10/26/15
H.P.O. staff JW

#16-04

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Railway Express Agency Building

other names _____

2. Location

street & number 900 Second Street, Northeast not for publication

city or town Washington vicinity

state District of Columbia code DC county _____ code 001 zip code 20002

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- Determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

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

N/A

number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/Rail-related

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/Business

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

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

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Brick
Limestone
roof Terra cotta
other Sheet metal platform canopy

Narrative Description

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

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Description Summary

The Railway Express Agency Building, located at 900 Second Street, NE just north of the Capitol Hill Historic District in Washington, DC, was built in 1908 in accordance with plans by the prestigious architectural firm of D.H. Burnham & Company. The building was erected in conjunction with the development of the Union Station train depot, construction of which resulted from the recommendations of the McMillan Commission under the leadership of Daniel H. Burnham.

The Railway Express Agency Building is a rectangular two-story plus attic and basement brick structure that utilizes an elongated symmetrical footprint common to American industrial architecture. Measuring 420' x 60' x 71', the large building was clearly an active office of the Railway Express Agency until its closure in the late 1960's. Prominent ground floor arches encircle the building and express its use as an operational warehouse in need of even sunlight distribution, frequent ventilation, and sizeable openings for the transfer of goods. Along the western elevation, a lengthy train platform covered by a sheet-metal canopy provides a feeling of original purpose and an ongoing association with the extant railway operations of Union Station. Decorative touches such as keystones, impost blocks, and Indiana limestone bands assuming a jack arch configuration above window openings connect the building back to a similar but more flamboyant application on Union Station. A hipped roof layered in terra cotta tile evidences a preference for fire-resistant materials in industrial design at the turn-of-the-century, as does the brick construction.

Changes made during rehabilitation of the Railway Express Agency Building retained significant aspects of the structure's warehouse design. The building remains an excellent example of early twentieth-century industrial architecture in Washington and of the thoughtful design consideration given to even the utilitarian structures associated with Union Station.

General Description

Exterior Description

The Railway Express Agency Building occupies just over one city block along Second Street, NE, with I Street intersecting at the northern corner of the building and Second Street sloping away in either direction. The building abuts the H Street bridge overpass on the south, a parking lot and elevated transformer substation on the north, and the tracks of the Union Station complex on the west. The symmetrical building was set upon a concrete foundation.

An original stone retaining wall extends parallel to the building at the sidewalk's edge on Second Street, interrupted at the gateway entrance and driveway before continuing northward. During rehabilitation of the site, the retaining wall was topped with a low iron fence in front of the Railway Express Agency Building for

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safety. The main entry door on Second Street is reached through a modern arched brick gateway and a small terrace of concrete paving stones, which extends southward to the edge of the building as a plaza for ground-level skylights servicing the basement office space below. A driveway entrance at I Street wraps around the northeast corner of the building and a contemporary patio before reaching the parking lot.

New brick steps lead to the glass entry doors and overhead transom, which are inset into one of the many ground floor arches that line the first floor. An elevated brick walkway extends parallel to the building from the entry, providing access to private office spaces and curving around the northeast corner to meet the patio on the north side. An additional row of ground-level skylights extends northward from the entry along the driveway.

The first floor incorporates evenly spaced round-arched openings in all four walls that are a defining feature of the building and convey its longtime role as an industrial building. Although the original windows have been replaced with new windows, doors and transoms, keystones original to the design remain inset above each opening throughout the entire first floor of the building. A rowlock arch of five concentric rings of radiating brick extends from each keystone and terminates at the understated impost blocks connecting the arches.

A discreet plinth, presumably of concrete, encircles the building at the ground-level, providing a connection to the impost blocks and stone bands above by further breaking up the expanse of the brick. On the western and northern elevations, aged iron strips at the interior and exterior edges of each arch provide protection for the masonry. A comparable treatment on the eastern and southern elevation appears to be a modern application judging by the material and fasteners. Four octagonal medallions of an elongated shape and simple design adorn the northern elevation, the central two of which serve as mountings for light fixtures.

The second floor utilizes rectangular double-hung windows of recent installation, though the openings remain as initially designed and are closely set to provide the maximum amount of window area and light. Two segmented bands of Indiana limestone extend around the building on the second floor, providing a small overhang and a sill for the rectangular window openings between. The upper band assumes a jack arch design above each window, a form also used on the second floor windows of Union Station. Abstracted pilasters of brick between each second-floor window on the Railway Express Building reflect back to the more extravagantly executed classical elements included in the Beaux-Arts main depot.

The western elevation evidences the industrial spirit of the building most fully given its frontage away from the public street and towards the railroad tracks. The loading platform, since re-tiled and adorned with a low iron fence, runs the length of the building. As was common with industrial buildings of the era, a sheet metal awning is suspended from tie rods for shelter from the elements. Although the arched openings on the western and southern elevations do use keystones, they are not connected by the impost blocks present on the eastern and northern elevations. The lower stone band encircling the second floor narrows at the northwestern and southern edges, assuming a more austere application across the western elevation. A concrete walkway along

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the tracks separates the building from passing trains and is reached by a staircase. A small patio sits at the southern edge of the building under the H Street bridge overpass.

The pitched hipped roof of terra cotta tile is also a significant element of the building given the use of this material as a fire-resistant measure in warehouse structures. The roof has been slightly disturbed by a series of balconies to convert the attic to functioning office space, but the balconies are inset into the roof and are generally imperceptible from the ground. Small skylights dot the roof ridge, and a pronounced projecting cornice supports the roof extension at the eaves.

Although rehabilitated for adaptive use, the building retains key aspects of its integrity as an urban warehouse. These include the structure's unchanged location and association with Union Station, the extant setting at the edge of the railroad tracks and resulting feeling of original purpose, and the maintenance of major design considerations, materials, and quality of workmanship that represent both its functional nature and its connection to the architecture of the main passenger depot.

Interior Description

Just as many other warehouse structures have been adaptively reused for residential or commercial purposes in recent decades, the Railway Express Agency Building was rehabilitated for use as an office building during the late 1980's by Potomac Development Corporation. Pre-existing basement space and attic space were used for offices. Partial interior walls of brick construction are still visible on the first level, suggesting original division of the large workspace into roughly three areas. These spaces have since been retrofitted through division into smaller spaces and the addition of stairwells. A main lobby that extends through the building was created offset due north from the center of the eastern side of the building, and an additional subsidiary lobby was positioned due south on the east side. The building's interior was not a character-defining element during the structure's use as an express building, and changes to the interior thusly do not affect significance.

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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 pattern of our history.
- B** Property associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1908-c. 1969

Significant Dates

1908

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

D.H. Burnham & Company, architects
James Stewart & Company, builders

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

Previous documentation on files (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

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Statement of Significance

The Railway Express Agency Building in the District of Columbia is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The building meets Criterion A in the area of transportation considering the necessity of rail express service to the delivery of modern goods across Washington and the important role that construction of Union Station played in executing the vision of the McMillan Commission. The Railway Express Agency Building also meets Criterion C as a premier example of an urban warehouse and for its design by the influential firm of D.H. Burnham & Company.

The Railway Express Agency Building is a fine example of urban warehouse design techniques employed both locally and nationally in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. The express building was included in development of the Union Station complex, an essential linchpin of the McMillan Commission plan for city improvements, and includes simple ornamental touches reminiscent of the main depot. Retaining many aspects of its integrity, the structure is also a superb example of planning techniques employed by D.H. Burnham & Company to accommodate a hierarchy of building uses on the Union Station site. For sixty years, the Railway Express Agency Building housed express shipping operations integral to governmental operations in Washington and also enabled the provision of a variety of shipments to private residents and stores across the city with prudence and speed. As such, the building is significant to patterns of rail development in Washington and to the long company history of the Railway Express Agency.

The period of significance spans from the building's construction in 1908 to its closure as an express facility in the late 1960's (exact year unknown). In the mid-1980's, after an extended period of vacancy, the building was rehabilitated for use as an office building.

Historic Context

The McMillan (Senate Park) Commission and Union Station

This section draws on the work of Bill Wright (*Now Arriving Washington: Union Station and Life in the Nation's Capital*), Thomas Hines (*Burnham of Chicago: Architect and Planner*), and Kristen Schaffer (*Daniel H. Burnham: Visionary Architect and Planner*).

During the second half of the nineteenth century, Washingtonians grew increasingly displeased with rail service in their city. Railroads had arrived in Washington in 1835, and routes across the city expanded during and after the Civil War to accommodate Washington's population boom. The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad (B&O) moved its depot to the corner of New Jersey Avenue and C Streets, NW in the middle of the nineteenth century, and the Baltimore & Potomac Railroad (B&P) depot sat at the eastern edge of the National Mall at Sixth Street and B Street, NW beginning in 1873. B&P was owned by principal shareholder the Pennsylvania Railroad, and the company competed with B&O for customers.

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Envisioned as a broad promenade on Pierre L'Enfant's plan for the city of Washington in 1791, the park-like Mall had become cluttered and disjointed with the arrival of the B&P depot and train tracks that served both B&P and B&O. Residents complained about noise and pollution from coal-fired trains, dangerous and inconvenient grade crossings where roads and tracks met, and depots that were too small to handle the flood of passengers to a bustling city whose population doubled in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century.

The World's Columbian Exposition was held in Chicago in 1893, and the fair's classical architecture and logical urban planning spoke to American values such as patriotism, refinement and progressive reform. After an economic depression in the late 1890's, cities embraced ideals from the fair in the City Beautiful Movement, in part as a response to the country's prominence as commanding nation-state following the conclusion of the Spanish-American War in 1898. Accordingly, Washington celebrated its centennial anniversary as the Nation's Capital in 1900 by focusing on city renewal as a tool to promote civic pride.

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) discussed Washington's revitalization at their convention in the city during the centennial year, and the organization consequently provided recommendations regarding park improvements and new public buildings to the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia. At the turn of the century, Committee Chairman James McMillan had proposed the construction of an even larger terminal for B&P on the Mall with some limited safety improvements to existing crossings. Facing criticism for his plan, McMillan agreed to appoint a commission of architects to elaborate upon the AIA proposal for public enhancements in exchange for AIA support of the McMillan rail bill. Commission architects Daniel H. Burnham and Charles McKim requested the participation of landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and later sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens. All four had served together on the design team of the World's Columbian Exposition (Olmsted, Jr. had assisted his father on the fair's landscaping), with Burnham as Chief of Construction. As a graduate of the École des Beaux-Arts, McKim convinced Burnham to adopt the classical elements of the Beaux-Arts style at the fair, which remained Burnham's trademark style during the remainder of his career.

Shortly after joining the McMillan Commission (also known as the Senate Park Commission), Burnham accepted a contract from the Pennsylvania Railroad to provide design services for the McMillan-crafted plan for the B&P replacement depot on the Mall. Burnham convinced Pennsylvania Railroad president Alexander Cassatt to relocate the depot to the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Delaware Avenue and to include tracks for its newly-acquired interest - former competitor B&O - under a new partnership later named the Washington Terminal Company. The new location allowed Burnham to fulfill his contract with the railroad while also honoring the objectives of the McMillan Commission to restore L'Enfant's picturesque vision for the National Mall.

The full project received approval on February 28, 1903 as the Union Station Act. Development of the Union Station complex displaced close to two thousand residents, demolished warehouses and stores, and filled open

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land previously occupied by railroad tracks that had to be rerouted across the city. It was a massive undertaking in organization, acquisition of land, and expense. The project cost would reach \$125 million before completion, and the station covered more ground than any other building in the country - 200 acres and 75 miles of railroad tracks.¹

Burnham was joined in the design phase most notably by Pierce Anderson, lead designer at Burnham's firm, D.H. Burnham & Company, and a graduate of the École des Beaux-Arts. The Beaux-Arts depot design, inspired by the Roman Baths of Diocletian in Burnham's post-fair classical penchant, features a white marble and granite façade with chiseled inscriptions, three triumphal arches at the station entrance on Massachusetts Avenue and in smaller representation on the bracketing east and west pavilions, and a prominent Roman barrel-vaulted roof. Gilded ceilings in the main concourse rise above colossal statues designed by Louis Saint-Gaudens (brother of Augustus), and sculptor Lorado Taft's later addition of the Columbus Statue on the front plaza reflects back to the fair of 1893.

The first train pulled in on October 27, 1907, and construction was completed in 1908. In 1908, the *Washington Post* ran an article entitled, "Washington's Union Station a World in Itself" touting that one could live inside Union Station with all necessary comforts should Washington be flooded.² Among the amenities that greeted patrons were the roomy concourse (described as the largest room under one roof in the world), a private waiting room for the President, a Y.M.C.A. department with billiards and beds for rent, a vault for receiving corpses, a lunchroom with marble counters, a telephone exchange serving only the station, and a staff of 1,700 workers.

The complex included several auxiliary structures designed by D.H. Burnham & Company, including train platforms, a signal tower, a powerhouse, and a large express building that dominates the eastern edge of the complex. Union Station, the Union Station plaza, and the Columbus Fountain are listed on the DC Inventory of Historic Sites and the National Register of Historic Places.

In addition to the anticipated new train depot, the McMillan Commission Plan of 1902 recommended the construction of government buildings near the Capitol and the White House, along with the betterment of the Mall through the addition of numerous museums and galleries.³ Although the construction of Union Station and Congressional office buildings began almost immediately, implementation of other proposals was gradual after the McMillan Commission disbanded in 1902 due to lack of funding and the sudden death of Senator McMillan.

Burnham also provided design services for a new central post office for Washington (now the Smithsonian Institution National Postal Museum) to be located directly west of Union Station on Massachusetts Avenue.

¹ History of Union Station. www.unionstationdc.com/history.asp.

² "Washington's Union Station a World in Itself." *Washington Post*, September 20, 1908.

³ See U. S. Senate Committee on the District of Columbia. Senate Report No. 166, 57th Congress, 1st Session. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1902.

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Also a highly decorative representation of the Beaux-Arts style and listed both locally and on the National Register of Historic Places, the building was completed in 1914, two years after Burnham's death.

Express Service in the United States

Express service can be loosely defined as the commercial transfer of goods and valuables to a destination with haste and care. The early history of express service in the United States is peppered with frequent name changes, revolving partnerships, and subsidiary companies.⁴ In brief, the arrival of organized express service came to America in 1839 when William Harnden formed the First Express Company. First Express kept a regular schedule, provided damages for lost packages, and ensured conveyance through messenger if routes were impassable. Former First Express agent Henry Wells expanded the initial routes in New York and Massachusetts by partnering with George E. Pomeroy and Crawford Livingston and then with William Fargo in 1844. Harnden's company later rolled into Adams Express.

In 1850, the express companies consolidated their services as the American Express Company with both Wells and Fargo in leadership positions. However, in 1852, Wells and Fargo left American Express to form their own company, Wells, Fargo & Company, to serve the booming West out of San Francisco. American Express remained the stronghold for services east of the Mississippi River. Wells, Fargo & Company, specializing in banking and express at its inception, would go on to divide these services in 1905 and to be known predominantly as a major banking institution in the West.

American Express, utilizing both rail and a fleet of wagons pulled by horses, provided additional customer benefits such as C.O.D. transfer to allow payment on the receiving end, American Express Travelers Cheques for use in foreign countries, and ticket sales for overseas passenger travel. The turn-of-the-century express world was dominated by the Adams Express Company and the Southern Express Company, which claimed 93% of the business.⁵ Other major express companies included American Express Company, Wells, Fargo and Company, Great Northern Express, Northern Express Company, Western Express Company, and US Express Company.

Express services in small towns were frequently handled by the ticketing agent who also sold passenger seats. In medium-sized cities, express offices were generally incorporated into the main terminal with an adjoining holding area for packages. In large cities or those that were hubs for railroad intersections, a separate express building might be built on the tracks. The Railway Express Agency Building in Washington was quite visible in its location along H Street, NE when constructed in 1908 to house operations for U.S. Express, Southern Express and Adams Express. At 420' long, the building fronted houses for two blocks to the east on Second Street rather than being hidden from view. Given the considerable size of the Railway Express Agency

⁴ For a thorough accounting of express service organization, management, and regulations, see *Study of REA Express* (Staff Liaison Group) and *Railway Express Agency* (Roseman).

⁵ Garrett, Klink. *Ten Turtles to Tucumcari*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2003. p. 20.

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Building in Washington, it is apparent that the city was a major shipper and receiver of goods to support the private, commercial, and governmental needs of its citizens and workers.

In 1913, Congress authorized the United States Postal Service to offer parcel post, designed to move shipments to and from farmers in rural areas with weight and size limits of 70 pounds and no more than 100" in length and girth.⁶ Though meant for a small market, parcel post was soon in competition with express service as the Postal Service increased weight and height restrictions. In contrast to the Postal Service, the express companies offered door-to-door pickup and delivery as well as specialized handling of delicate and live freight. US Express did fold, but the remaining companies survived the rivalry.

By the onset of World War I, express companies operated 30,000 offices in the United States and employed over 150,000 workers.⁷ In 1918, the companies merged under a revenue-sharing partnership with the government in order to better accommodate the rules and regulations of the Interstate Commerce Commission during wartime. The newly combined American Railway Express Company (ARE) functioned under the administration of the United States Railway Administration (as did the railroads themselves), whose directives promptly created delays in delivery and a loss of millions in revenue.

The Transportation Act of 1920 allowed ARE and the railroads to return to private ownership. ARE entered contracts for carriage with the railroads but began chipping away at how much profit was turned over. In 1929, 86 dissatisfied railroads joined together to buy major shares in ARE, reorganizing as the Railway Express Agency (REA). Owner railroads divided 1,000 shares of stock based on the revenue generated by each line, and railroad owners from the NY Central Railroad, Pennsylvania Railroad, Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe, and Southern Pacific controlled principal shares. The company was headquartered in New York City, home of principal shareholder the NY Central Railroad. The 1929 REA contract was set to run until 1954, and REA obtained the exclusive right to operate all express services by rail until that time.

Profits realized by REA would first be used to pay for bills and salaries associated with express operations, and the remainder would be allocated to the owner railroads based on the volume of shipments carried.⁸ Under the new operation of owner railroads, REA flourished, achieving tremendous profits during the late 1930's and into the 1940's despite the Depression. REA guaranteed a five-day delivery of most any item, which the United States Postal Service could never equal. In 1927, REA began offering air express by renting space in airplanes and then partnered with Pan Am to provide international air express service in 1934. With express cars linked into most every passenger train and an expansive fleet of trucks, REA could use mode-to-mode transport to

⁶ Johnston, C.E. *Railway and Air Express – Parcel Post*. Scranton, PA: International Textbook Company, 1941. p. 43.

⁷ Roseman, V.S. *Railway Express Agency*. Denver, CO: Rocky Mountain Publishing, 1992. p. 7.

⁸ Staff Liaison Group V-C Research Collaboration: A Joint Project of the Civil Aeronautics Board, Federal Maritime Commission and Interstate Commerce Commission. "Study of REA Express," August 1965. p. 7.

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combine road, rail, and air service to transfer packages even to remote locations from the 1930's through the early 1970's.

Beginning in the 1880's, Americans were eager to purchase modern goods via mail order catalog. Department store J.C. Penney and catalog giant Montgomery Ward & Company relied heavily on REA to ship purchases such as furniture and clothing from the factory to the store and from the store to the buyer. Highlighting speedy delivery of packages, Sears, Roebuck & Company chose the image of a train for their fall/winter 1924/1925 catalog cover, positioned above the caption, "In Less than a Day, Your Order is on its Way." Sears also shipped their house kits across the country through REA, enabling everyday Americans to live in affordable and quality homes.

It was, however, REA's wide scope of acceptable shipments that set them apart from competitors such as the Postal Service and United Parcel Service. The company's promise of speedy delivery and their willingness to provide specialized handling of delicate and valuable freight made them most well-known for moving perishables such as fresh flowers and food in refrigerated cars. Rate charts show prices for shipping goldfish, camels, and even elephants, and employee circulars from the 1940's-1960's offer tips on handling live bees, feeding laboratory animals, and carrying furniture, film, and electronics with care and safety.⁹ REA was often utilized to transport bodies and coffins for funeral homes given the large size of railway cars and airplane cargo holds, and REA helped its owner railroads by picking up baggage at travelers' homes and transferring mail.

An REA promotional brochure from 1938 touted:

"Anything that is shippable may be sent by Railway Express. Fluffy baby chicks, or smart costumes for Hollywood stars; a basket of apples for a homemade pie, a refrigerator carload of new-picked strawberries; fish and oysters fresh from the sea; cats and dogs and polo ponies; bread and butter; cream and milk; baggage and laundry for a college boy; a diamond ring for a fiancée."¹⁰

The deterioration of REA, which culminated in a 1975 declaration of bankruptcy, was gradual but directly in response to the decline of rail usage. Railroad business fell beginning in the 1930's as passengers used other modes of transport such as buses, automobiles, and airplanes. REA launched a substantial self-promotional campaign from the 1940's through the 1950's, and they received authorization from the Interstate Commerce Commission to increase rates several times. Just after World War II, REA owned more trucks than any other company, employed over 80,000 workers, and had service agreements for deliveries to and from 112 countries.¹¹ However, shipment proceeds tumbled dramatically from \$234 million in 1946 to \$82 million in

⁹ Railway Express Agency Records, 1872-1969, #260, Smithsonian Institution Museum of American History, Washington, DC.

¹⁰ Warsaw Collection of Business Americana, 1724-1965, #60, Smithsonian Institution Museum of American History, Washington, DC.

¹¹ Garrett, p. 2.

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1951.¹² When REA's contract with the railroads expired in 1954, only 60 railroads renewed their option to carry express shipments.

The Interstate Highway System, authorized in 1956, further redirected profit to other carriers utilizing road transport such as United Parcel Service. Chief stockholder NY Central Railroad subsequently dropped its shares in REA in 1960 and itself went bankrupt in the 1970's after merging with the Pennsylvania Railroad. REA was renamed as REA Express in 1960, and in 1969, they cut their workforce by several thousand and closed or consolidated hundreds of offices. The air express contracts of REA Express were terminated by the Civil Aeronautics Board in 1974, and the company began liquidation in 1975 among court proceedings for several officers on charges of fraud and embezzlement.

Many freestanding REA depots have been demolished around the country, though others have been converted into passenger terminals or adapted for other uses. The National Register of Historic Places currently includes only a handful of freestanding or depot-incorporated Railway Express Agency buildings and office spaces, located principally in the Midwest.¹³

Architect Daniel H. Burnham

Daniel Hudson Burnham (1846-1912) was born in Henderson, New York and raised in Chicago, Illinois, where he trained as an apprentice draftsman under William LeBaron Jenney before working for Carter, Drake, and Wright. Burnham formed his own firm, Burnham and Root, with fellow Carter, Drake, and Wright colleague John Wellborn Root in 1873. The partners became leaders of the Chicago School of skyscraper design along with Jenney and the firm of Louis Sullivan and Dankmar Adler. The Chicago School architects pioneered steel-frame construction and the division of structures into the three components of a column with the first floor as a base, the middle stories as the understated vertical shaft, and the top as a capital with ornamental flourishes and a finishing cornice.

Following Root's death in 1891, Burnham moved forward on their contract to oversee construction of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, slated to open in 1893 in celebration of the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's voyage to America (the debut was delayed by one year). To execute the vision of a planned city dominated by majestic boulevards, intricate gardens, and more than two hundred buildings, Burnham recruited landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead, fellow Chicagoan Sullivan, painter Francis Davis Millet, and sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens. Team architects Charles McKim and Richard Morris Hunt, both trained in classical models at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, turned Burnham away from Root's early preference for Richardsonian Romanesque overtones. They instead implemented a grandiose Beaux-Arts

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 150.

¹³ Some examples of Railway Express Agency buildings or incorporated offices listed on the National Register of Historic Places include the Wabash Railroad Station and Railway Express Agency in Decatur, Illinois; the Railway Express Agency Building in Mattoon, Illinois; the Railway Express Lofts in Baltimore, Maryland; and the Southern Terminal and Railway Express Agency in Knoxville, Tennessee.

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approach for the fair's immense Court of Honor, and the "White City" was accordingly dominated by extravagant white stucco buildings, symmetrical layouts, profuse ornamentation and a hierarchy of building uses ranging from the lavish to the utilitarian.

Positive response to the heavily attended and photographed fair, the adoption of classical design elements for public buildings in the years that followed, and the successful execution of a multi-building project spurred Burnham to adopt the Beaux-Arts style and to undertake further city planning when his post-fair firm, D.H. Burnham & Company, organized in 1894. Oftentimes referred to as "Burnham Baroque," his building designs were more traditionally classical rather than Neoclassical but also exhibited shades of the structural component accentuation common in the Chicago School skyscrapers. The Greek and Roman revival roots of the Beaux-Arts style also gave Burnham, who lacked formal academic training in architecture, precedents that he could emulate and the ability to draw from multiple paradigms.¹⁴

Inspired by the fair and the progressive City Beautiful movement of the 1890's and 1900's that it had invigorated, Burnham spearheaded urban improvement plans for Washington (1902), Cleveland (1903), San Francisco (1905), colonial cities in the Philippines (1905) and Chicago (1909).¹⁵ Post-fair building designs of note by Burnham include the Illinois Trust and Savings Bank (1897) and the Railway Exchange (1903) in Chicago, the Flatiron Building (1903) in New York City (1910), the Schmidlapp Memorial Library in Cincinnati (1905), and the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago (completed in 1920, after Burnham's death).¹⁶

Flush with cash, turn-of-the-century railroad companies around the country chose to proudly display their wealth with elaborate depots, and prosperous urban cities were eager to impress arriving and departing patrons. Burnham and his firm designed several train stations that incorporated classical elements such as monumental design, high ornamentation, symmetry, and gateway columns and arches. The third evolution of Union Station in Columbus, Ohio (1897) utilized arched entryways and columns at two access towers and a comprehensive plan for the site that included offices, shops, and an inventive road viaduct over the tracks to alleviate traffic. Pittsburgh's Union Station (1902) integrated a soaring office building reminiscent of Burnham's skyscraper designs and prominent ground floor arches as openings to the entrance concourse for carriages. The Pennsylvania Railroad Station in Richmond, Indiana (1902) featured a center gable supported by rounded columns with Ionic capitals, arched windows on the ground floor, and an intricate front entry surround that included a transom and sidelights. As discussed, Burnham's use of the Beaux-Arts style in train station design was most fully developed and opulently displayed in his plan for Union Station in Washington, DC, completed in 1908.

¹⁴ Hines, Thomas S. *Burnham of Chicago: Architect and Planner*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1974. p. 81.

¹⁵ The plan for San Francisco never materialized due to the earthquake of 1906, which destroyed most of Burnham's related plans and models along with much of the city.

¹⁶ For exhaustive information on Burnham's career, see the two-volume *Daniel H. Burnham: Architect and Planner of Cities* (Moore).

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Burham's legacy as an architect and city planner faced criticism after his death as attitudes towards monumental architecture and derivative historicism shifted in the wake of Modernism's focus on individuality and simplicity. However, Burnham's influence has carried forward even to present times in three key areas: the influence of the Chicago School on the design of skyscrapers nationwide; the adoption of classical models and imposing scale for public and private urban buildings across the country following the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago; and the theory of comprehensive city planning. Both Burnham's preference for the Beaux-Arts style following the fair and his knowledge of site and city planning prepared him for development of the grand Union Station passenger depot and its auxiliary structures.

Warehouse Design

As defined by the Getty Art & Architecture Thesaurus, warehouses are, "Structures designed or used for the storage of commodities or merchandise." A 1991 survey of warehouses in the District of Columbia found consistencies in general warehouse design in Washington that also typify the Railway Express Agency Building.¹⁷ Those warehouses using "mill construction" as opposed to reinforced concrete or structural steel were characterized by brick walls on the interior and exterior to reduce the threat of fire. Along with pressed brick, the use of ornamental terra cotta facing became popular in industrial design across the country during the late nineteenth century for additional fire protection at a minimal cost.¹⁸ The Railway Express Agency Building includes this material application of terra cotta tile on the roof and utilizes brick walls common to mill construction for all four walls, the coupling of which would have offered substantial protection for the building in the event of a fire.

Like the Railway Express Agency Building, the majority (89%) of those buildings surveyed in Washington were one to three stories and located on secondary streets behind railroad tracks. American industrial buildings often employed loading platforms parallel to railroad tracks for transfer of shipments to rail cars, along with overhanging awnings of sheet metal supported by utilitarian brackets to protect packages and workers from the elements.¹⁹

In turn-of-the-century industrial buildings both locally and nationally, a symmetrical rectangular footprint and large first-floor windows or doors articulating regularity of size and placement responded to the need for ventilation and the even dispersal of daylight throughout the workspace. Arched window and door openings could transfer the weight of heavy brick walls to the area between the arches, allowing substantial ground floor openings to be employed for the movement of equipment and parcels. The corners of arched openings were frequently edged with metal strips or abutted by bollards to protect masonry from loading and unloading vehicles and handcarts.

¹⁷ EHT Traceris. "DC Warehouse Survey Project Final Report," March 1991.

¹⁸ Bradley, Betsy Hunter. *The Works: The Industrial Architecture of the United States*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999. p. 135.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

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American industrial design of this period was typified by expressions of function with subtle ornamentation only to interrupt monotony, rarely turning to extensive decoration or the overt emulation of a particular architectural style.²⁰ The building's materials, footprint and siting all reflected strength, endurance and utility, while design elements adapted recognized styles for a vernacular expression of the locality and era of construction and expressed structural qualities required for function.

In reviewing photographs of existing and demolished express buildings nationwide, it is clear that their architecture reflected the period of construction and the prevalent style of their location rather than a design specific to the express companies. Express buildings do, however, consistently represent warehouse qualities such as situation alongside the railroad tracks, nominal ornamentation, ground-floor entry bays for freight loading, fire-resistant material selection, and open interior space for easy maneuvering of shipments. For example, the Railway Express Agency Building in Mattoon, Illinois, is located at the intersection of two railroads and is constructed of concrete and brick in the Commercial style. The building is minimally ornamented with bands of decorative terra cotta tile and is accented by large bays for sliding freight doors.²¹

Development of the Railway Express Agency Building, District of Columbia

Although part of the Union Station complex, the Express Building was not formally considered in early plans such as the 1903 permit for the station's construction and was likely designed in or after 1904. A permit was initially submitted on January 13, 1906 by the Washington Terminal Company for the construction of an express building, powerhouse and signal tower at an estimated cost of \$600,000. It is not clear in records who at the firm of D.H. Burnham & Company worked most closely on plans for the Express Building. However, multiple sources indicate that Burnham himself was a constant overseer of plans for the entire facility and was frequently asked for design approval. The permit application for the three structures was apparently resubmitted and approved in early 1907. By June of that year, the Express Building was 86% completed according to building inspection records, and it was put into service in 1908.

At 13' wide x 150' deep x 32' tall, the signal tower was the smallest of the three structures listed on the permit and still stands. Located in the middle of the tracks, just north of the Express Building, it is a strictly utilitarian one-story brick structure with a small additional half-story in the center beneath a viewing tower for the train director. The brick and stone powerhouse, which was removed in the mid-1970's for the Red Line tracks of the Metro system to head north from Union Station, sat at the western edge of the tracks and was of a comparable size to the Railway Express Agency Building. The powerhouse provided power needed for the Union Station's electricity, steam and hot water.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

²¹ Listed on the National Register of Historic Places (August 16, 1994).

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With D.H. Burnham & Company as architects, the builder for the Express Building, signal tower, and powerhouse was James Stewart & Company. A longstanding construction firm that operated between 1845 and 1953, the company was founded by Canadian immigrant James Stewart. The firm was initially involved in railroad construction west of the Mississippi but expanded to construct banks, hotels, residences, and department stores across the country after Stewart's death in 1902. In Washington, James Stewart & Company served as builders on such prestigious projects as the Embassy of the Royal Italian Government, the chancellery of the Imperial Japanese Embassy, an office, gas station, and pump house for Standard Oil Company, and the Foxhall Road estate of socialite Elinor Ryan Brady.

According to Sanborn fire insurance maps from 1909 and information included on the building permit, the Express Building was designed to provide space for U.S. Express in the southern third of the building, Southern Express in the middle third, and Adams Express in the northern third. Each third of the building was serviced by its own elevator shaft covered with an ornamental iron gate. Southern Express was a subsidiary of Adams Express, and the two remained linked in some aspects of business. In addition to their main office at the Express Building, Adams and Southern jointly occupied smaller express offices at 1425 F Street, NW, Second Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, 1300 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, and Ninth and D Streets, NW. Given the size of the Railway Express Agency Building and the locations of these branch offices in busy commercial areas, it seems likely that the Railway Express Agency Building served more as a clearinghouse and warehouse for operations than as a central customer service facility for the drop-off of packages.

The original floors, replaced during rehabilitation of the building, were terra cotta tile to allow dollies carrying packages to circulate easily. In addition to relatively open workspaces on the first floor, the building included a basement, a second story office, and an attic. The building was electrified and was heated by steam heat. A massive vault measuring 14'10" x 10'10" was located in each of the three work spaces on the first floor, and a watchman stood guard in the driveway area near H Street 24 hours a day.

A long platform with a canopy of sheet metal ran across the entire western stretch of the building (the platform and canopy remain), and plats show three covered platforms noted as "freight loading sheds" extending out into the train yard with tracks running down each side (the platforms have since been removed). This presumably allowed six tracks to service the Express Building directly from the train yard, with each shed filtering freight in the express company office that it abutted through large entry doors. Express cars were placed behind the engine (along with mail cars) and before passenger cars. Train directors in the signal tower controlled the redirection of express cars from arriving trains, likely using a terminal switching locomotive.

A multi-level motor vehicle access plan permitted wagons and later trucks to service the building from a variety of access points. A wide aboveground driveway approach covered the length of the eastern side where walkways and skylights for the basement office space are now located. Although the current entrance to the Railway Express Agency Building is located off-center on the long eastern side of the building, it is likely that the entry for truck deliveries and dispatches was originally located on the shorter northern side. This is assumed

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because the permit application for construction notes the width of the *front* as only 60' while the *depth* of the building was 420'.

An underground driveway was located on the northern side (now covered over for a patio), making it likely that this side of the building was used both aboveground and belowground by trucks which had approached the building from the lengthy driveway fronting Second Street. The underground driveway on the north side then turned the corner and continued the full length of the west side of the building under the rear platform. At the southwest corner of the building, a tunnel began that continued underground westward below the tracks.

Running directly alongside the tracks to the north of the Express Building was a lengthy milk platform where insulated full milk cans coming from dairy-producing farms to the city could be unloaded from trains by morning and returned to the platform empty in the evening. A stone retaining wall extended across the front of the Express Building and the milk platform next to the sidewalk and continued northward to the end of the block. The milk platform and the land occupied by several tracks that abutted it were absorbed by an elevated transformer substation and a parking lot, though the retaining wall remains intact.

US Express (and later REA) handled the repair and storage of wagons and trucks at a nearby garage obtained when the Express Building opened. Located between Third and Fourth and G and H Streets, NE, the brick garage with iron roof trusses occupied nearly the full interior of a city block. The structure included a battery room, coal shed, auto shed and storage area with four men assigned to night duty to protect the contents. The garage was demolished circa 1970.

Business at the Express Building was booming as soon as it was placed in service. Adams and Southern put their new building to good use during Christmas of 1909 as 26 overflowing wagons lined up in front of the Express Building on the evening of December 23rd to prepare for deliveries of gifts the next morning. 22 extra wagons and 135 extra men worked on the days before that Christmas to handle the 10,000 packages sent through the carriers into and out of Washington by rail.²²

Business was thriving by the early 1930's with REA handling 90,000 express shipments in Washington during November of 1933.²³ REA advertised frequently in the *Washington Post* newspaper for express handlers at the Union Station site during the 1930's and 1940's, offering \$36.46 for 44 hours of work in 1944. In Christmas of 1950, Washington broke records for mail volume and postal revenue. REA reported that year that they still had deliveries to make by Christmas Eve and would be out in trucks on Christmas Day to complete the work.²⁴

²² "Flood of Xmas Tokens: Post Office and Express Companies are Swamped with Mail and Packages." *Washington Post*, December 24, 1909.

²³ "Express Official Sees Trade Gains." *Washington Post*, December 15, 1933.

²⁴ "City Breaks Mail Record." *Washington Post*, December 24, 1950.

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The Express Building reflected name changes of the company on plats, noted as occupied by the American Railway Express Company and as the Railway Express Agency as the company reorganized nationally. The building also reflected the times as the politics of Washington and the nation changed. During January and February of 1951, the unionized Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen organized a "sick strike" that spread across the country to 44 major rail corridors. A mail embargo was enforced in ten major cities, including Washington and Baltimore, as hundreds of switching crew operators at Union Station called in sick. The slowdown led REA to send home about 100 of its 500 employees in Washington and to lay off 60 more. REA ultimately clamped an embargo on its shipments in certain affected states before court proceedings began to alleviate the strike by mid-February.²⁵

Mid-century, REA management in Washington developed contracts with the Department of Defense, the Atomic Energy Commission, and all branches of the military to carry classified materials by rail with special handling for "confidential," "secret" and "top secret" papers and parcels. For the Atomic Energy Commission, lead-lined train cars were manned by armed guards. REA also offered special handling of delicate items for private citizens in Washington, shipping an antique statue from the Mayflower Hotel to Italy via mode-to-mode transport for antiques dealer John DeLizza.

REA in Washington also worked frequently with the White House, preparing for transport the horses and caissons associated with the funeral of any president or former president. Any gift sent to the White House via REA first went to a special REA warehouse for sensitive handling and then on to the warehouse of the Federal Bureau of Investigations. During the Kennedy Administration, REA handled bunnies for Caroline Kennedy and an apple pie for Nikita Khrushchev during a visit to the White House. The Railway Express Agency Building also handled some very distinctive freight for the United States Department of Health, which operated several experimental labs in the Washington area. Containers of monkeys arrived to the express depot regularly, though the cages would occasionally break open and scatter monkeys through the building.

By 1969, the fortunes of REA were dire. The national REA workforce was cut by 3,000 that year, and facilities were rapidly closing.²⁶ A 1968 list of REA's salaried offices shows closings or consolidations in 24 states. The Railway Express Agency Building in Washington closed in the late 1960's and remained vacant for nearly twenty years. In 1984, it was purchased by REA Express Associates, a limited partnership, and rehabilitated into office space by Potomac Development Corporation over the next few years in accordance with designs by architect Michael Oxman.

²⁵ For more details, see numerous articles in the *Washington Post* during January and February of 1951.

²⁶ Garrett, p. 157.

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Summary of Significance

Historical Significance

The Railway Express Agency Building is historically significant for its inclusion in the development of the Union Station complex and the building's long association with the services of the Railway Express Agency and its predecessor express companies. Construction of the Union Station complex was a central component of the McMillan Commission's plan for public building projects and the beautification of Washington's green spaces. Upon its completion, Union Station covered more ground than any other building in the country, served as a ceremonial gateway to Washington, and allowed the railroad track-laden National Mall to be restored to Pierre L'Enfant's scenic vision. As an integral facet of the Union Station complex, the Railway Express Agency Building provided a central warehouse in the city for the speedy transfer of shipments to and from Washingtonians by rail. The Railway Express Agency and its various precursor companies dominated express shipping in this country for nearly 150 years, beginning with the arrival of express service in America in 1839 and concluding with the bankruptcy of REA Express in 1975. The willingness of express companies to transport valuable, live, and even hazardous freight with care and speed provided modern goods to residents and the commercial sector. Located in the Nation's Capital, the Railway Express Agency Building also served governmental functions and handled freight of importance to numerous Federal agencies and the White House. These services have since been unmatched in flexibility even by today's express carriers and contributed greatly to patterns of transportation and commerce across the country during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Architectural Significance

The Railway Express Agency Building is architecturally significant for its design as a utilitarian turn-of-the-century urban warehouse with subtle decorative touches that reflect back to the Beaux-Arts style of Union Station. The design of the Railway Express Agency Building displays typical warehouse elements such as symmetrical layout, siting near railroad tracks, the use of fire-resistant materials, large arched windows on the ground floor for light, access and ventilation, and the designation of upper floors for office and attic space. Designed by the influential firm of D.H. Burnham & Company, the Railway Express Agency Building is one of Burnham & Company's few projects in Washington. Union Station was constructed during the height of Burnham's career as an architect and urban planner in the City Beautiful Movement. Although minimal, design elements on the Railway Express Agency Building such as stone banding, keystones embedded in ground floor arches, impost blocks linking arches, and jack arches over second-floor window openings are also utilized in the design of Union Station and represent a thoughtful visual connection between a lavish depot and a utilitarian warehouse.

For these reasons, the Railway Express Agency Building meets both Criterion A and Criterion C of the National Register of Historic Places and also merits local designation on the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites for the building's significance to rail development in Washington and its design by D.H. Burnham & Company using elements that are distinguishing characteristics of industrial architecture.

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 63,006 square feet

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	1 8	3 2 6 2 0 3	4 3 0 7 4 8 8	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing	3	Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Amanda Molson

Organization DC Historic Preservation Office (Previous Employee) date October 2007

street & number 1100 4th Street, SW telephone _____

city or town Washington state DC zip code 20024

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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

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

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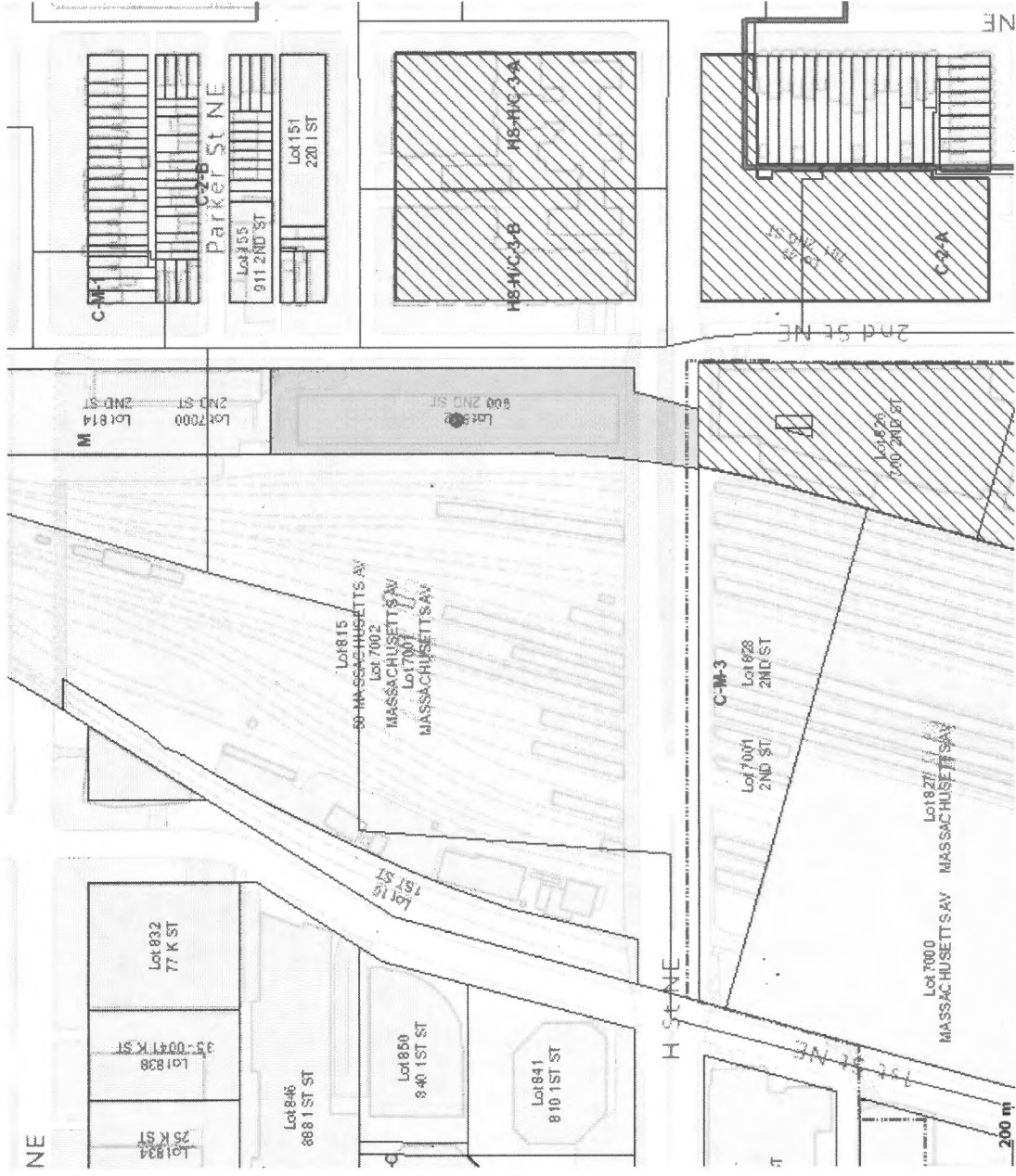
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Verbal Boundary Description

For tax purposes, the Railway Express Agency Building occupies Lot 812 of Square 717 in the District of Columbia. The building is located west of the intersection of Second Street and I Street, NE. The significant features of the Railway Express Agency Building site are neatly bordered by H Street to the south, the sidewalk along Second Street to the east, the parking lot to the north, and a concrete walkway abutting the railroad tracks to the west.

Boundary Justification

The building has occupied this land area since its completion in 1908.



Map showing location of Railway Express Agency Building, yellow highlight, 900 Second Street, NE, Courtesy of propertyquest.dc.gov, 2015

Railway Express Agency Building, District of Columbia
Photos by Amanda Molson
October 2007



East elevation (looking south) – View 1



East elevation (looking south) – View 2



East elevation (looking north)



West elevation (looking north)



North elevation (looking south)



Detail of arch opening, showing keystone and impost blocks



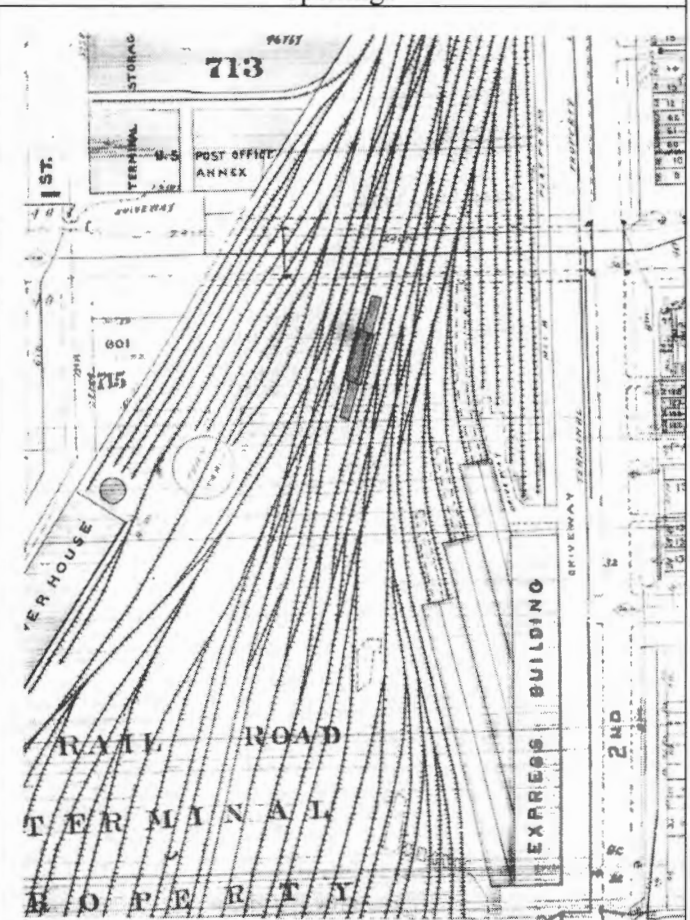
Detail of limestone banding beneath second-story windows



Detail of metal stripping on ground-floor arch openings



Railway Express Agency Building (TerraServer). Note Railway Express Agency Building by terra cotta tile roof. Union Station at foreground.



Washington, DC Real Estate Atlas. Philadelphia, PA: G.W. Baist Surveyor and Map Publisher, 1913



Railway Express Agency Building (TerraServer)



