

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 Washington Railway and Electric Company (WRECO) Garage
If any part of the interior is being nominated, it must be specifically identified and described in the narrative statements.

Address 2112 Georgia Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20001

Square and lot number(s) Square 2877, Lot 0933

Affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission ANC 1B

Date of construction 1930 Date of major alteration(s) _____

Architect(s) Arthur B. Heaton (architect)/ Skinker & Garrett Company (builders)

Architectural style(s) Art Moderne

Original use Transportation Present use Vacant

Property owner Howard University

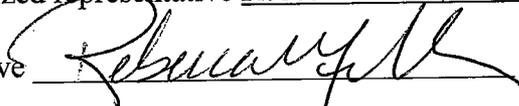
Legal address of property owner 2041 Georgia Avenue, NW, WDC 20060-0001

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) 401 F Street, NW, Room 324, WDC 20001, 202.783.5144

Name and title of authorized representative Rebecca Miller, Executive Director

Signature of representative  Date 2/7/2013

Name and telephone of author of application Peter Sefton 202.783.5144

Date received _____
H.P.O. staff _____

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5. Classification

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

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

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

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Streetcar and Bus Resources of Washington, D.C., 1862-1962

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Transportation / road-related

Maintenance Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Art Moderne

foundation: _____
walls: Brick, steel, limestone

roof: Metal, slag, gravel

other: _____

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Narrative Description

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

Physical Description

Summary Paragraph

The WRECO Bus Garage occupies the southern half of Square 2877 in Washington, DC. The façade containing the primary public entrance to the garage has approximately 240 feet of frontage on the western side of the 2100 block of Georgia Avenue NW. The garage's south wall stretches along V Street NW from Georgia Avenue to Eighth Street. Its west façade runs approximately 240 feet north along Eighth Street NW, terminating at the south wall of the Bond Bread Factory, which occupies the northern section of the square.

The Georgia Avenue Façade

Today the WRECO Garage faces Howard University Hospital across Georgia Avenue NW, but at the time the garage was constructed, the hospital site was occupied by Griffith Stadium, the home of the Washington Senators and Washington Redskins until 1960. (Illustration 1) The garage's front façade reflects this public position by incorporating the structure's most complicated detailing and presenting its most complex elevation (Illustration 2). The front façade presents the symmetrical tri-partite elevation which the Multiple Property Document **Streetcar and Bus Resources of Washington, D.C., 1862-1962** found characteristic of the two bus garages Arthur B. Heaton designed for the Capital Transit Company several years later. This consists of a two story central pavilion with symmetrical single story wings at its northern and southern ends. The central pavilion is in turn divided into a four bay center section whose flat roofline, surmounted by a flagpole, is the highest portion of the front façade. On either side of this tallest portion of the central pavilion, the facade steps down a few feet to each of two single bay extensions, which then more dramatically step down to the single story north and south wings, giving the facade the ziggurat profile often associated with art deco-style commercial structures.

The four bay section of the central pavilion is surmounted by a ridged limestone cornice above a dentiled brick molding. Below the molding is a row of four evenly-spaced limestone spandrels with a limestone tablet at its center. The four bays of the center section are defined by three brick pilasters, whose wedge-shaped limestone caps reach the level of the roof line of the outer bays of the central pavilion. Each of the four bays contains a window aperture which, like the rest of those on the front façade, is now filled with a modern multi-pane metallic sash window. The brickwork surrounding these windows is laid in an elaborate polychromatic basket-weave pattern which contrasts with the horizontal patterns of the piers. (Illustration 3)

The first floor of the center section is taken up by two-bay-wide bus entrances which are separated by a pier beneath the central pilaster of the second story (Illustration 4) Today the north doorway has been blocked by an infill wall with small windows divided by a thin brick column. The south doorway is filled by metal security doors which are not original. Today both doorways are topped by red metal pole and fabric awnings.

The narrow bays on either side of the center section protrude about four inches from the façades on either side. They share a ridged limestone cornice with the outer bays of the central block, but wedge-shaped limestone caps which protrude horizontally raise their roofline almost to that of the center section. Each of these bays has a narrow rectangular window opening. The first floor of these bays is the only original non-symmetrical feature of the front façade. As vintage photographs establish, the south bay has a doorway topped by a limestone tablet, now concealed by an awning. The north bay is a blank brick wall. The outer bays of the central block return to the plane of the center section, which is carried through the north and south wings. Each

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is topped by a ridged cornice and has a limestone sill beneath its second story window aperture. The first story of the south bay has an identical window, which on the north bay has been converted to a doorway.

The north and south wings are each separated into two bays by massive piers topped with limestone caps above the ridged cornice. The caps of the piers bounding the end bay of each wing are connected by a pediment of vertically-laid brick beneath its own limestone cornice; a practice which is followed on the V Street façade as well. The upper section of each pier has an incised vertical slit, lending the suggestion of a castle turret. Each wing has four windows, divided between bays in the ratio of 3:1. Like the rest of the building, the lowest vertical layer of the front façade is a brick water table about three feet high that protrudes about four inches.

The V Street Façade

Today the 800 and 900 blocks of V Street NW remain a popular short cut between Georgia and Florida Avenues and a passageway to the entrance driveway of Howard University Hospital. At the time the WRECO Bus Garage was built, the street led directly to Griffith Stadium. The V Street façade is divided by protruding limestone-capped piers into ten bays. The three bays on the building's single story south wing closest to the intersection with Georgia Avenue are similar in configuration, detailing, and fenestration to those on the front façade. (Illustrations 5 and 6)

The two story "Bus Barn," which is the tallest section of the garage occupies the center of the V Street façade. The downward slope of V Street as it approaches Eighth Street allows each of the Bus Barn's five bays to have a pair of rectangular lower level window. The each bay has a very large rectangular window on the barn's first floor level. While all the windows on the garage's V and Eighth Street façades are covered with painted plywood, gaps in these shields frequently reveal what appears to be the original industrial steel sash frames in place. The upper story of the bus barn is topped by a gable roof, which is in turn topped by a setback, gabled clerestory section now sheathed in steel panels. The second story of the bus barn's gable end wall is enlivened by the rough-textured masonry-work bricks of randomly-mixed hues, some with shiny highlights suggesting the presence of mica. The upper five feet of the wall, which includes the "point" beneath the gable's roofline, is laid in courses of vertically-aligned bricks. Below it is a band of bricks laid in a checkerboard pattern. At the midpoint of this band, aligned with the pinnacle of the gable, is a circle of bricks laid end-outward, which is filled with checker-boarded brick and visually suggestions the window above the altar in the end gable of a church. The contrasting American bond courses in the lower wall section accents these patterns. (Illustration 7)

The two bays between the bus barn and the southwest corner of the garage are similar to the three at its southeast corner, with the addition of lower level rectangular windows. A tall square brick chimney rises near the interior gable wall of the bus barn.

The Eighth Street Façade

Eighth Street NW is a less traveled route than either George Avenue or the adjacent blocks of V Street. Before the 1960s, the block behind was lined with modest brick row houses, only one of which still stands amid parking lots and small utility buildings today. While the WRECO Garage presents its least detailed façade to this street, it is not devoid of architectural interest. (Illustration 8)

The downhill slope from Georgia Avenue allows the garage to maintain a common roofline with the bays on V Street with a full height lower story along much of its Eighth Street exposure. As the grade rises along Eighth Street, the doors and windows on this level diminish in scale. The Eighth Street façade has a narrow central bay, flanked by wings which lack the piers and pilasters which subdivide the more publically-exposed and formal Georgia Avenue façade. This central bay is demarcated from the wings by pilasters topped with limestone caps and spanned by a brick pediment topped with its own limestone cornice. The pediment brick is

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laid vertically, creating a contrast to the American bond masonry beneath the limestone cornice and brick dentil band which span the entire façade. (Illustration 9) The center bay's upper story has a large window in portrait orientation, now covered by plywood. Its lower story is a single-width entrance for a bus-sized vehicle.

The Eighth Street façade's fenestration pattern is organized into groups, but is less symmetrical than the Georgia Avenue façade's. Beside the limestone-capped pilaster at the V Street end of the southern bay are three entrance openings which probably accommodated cars and trucks rather than buses. The entrance furthest from the corner is filled-in with brick which perfectly matches that of the façade, suggesting that it was created for future use. Above these entrances are three large nearly square windows, now covered in plywood. The section of the south bay that borders the central bay is occupied by a row of three narrow windows on each story, with the lower story window sills perhaps a foot above the sidewalk. Gaps in the plywood covering of a number of the window apertures on this façade reveal the presence of original steel sash industrial windows.

The northern bay, on the gradually ascending slope of Eighth Street, has a fenestration pattern which differs somewhat from the south bay's. The center bay pier is flanked by a door centered beneath a small rectangular window, followed by a row of four large portrait-oriented rectangular windows with blank brick wall beneath them. The remaining section of the façade before it meets the Bond Bread Factory is occupied by four square windows, whose diminished height allows room for a door and window beneath, as well as a small upper window in the brick corner pilaster. There is a small upper story brick structure above this northern most section of the façade with a pair of rectangle window apertures.

Although its brickwork is less complex, the Eighth Street façade's brick is of comparable quality, texture, and variegated color patterns to that of the garage's more public facades.

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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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Period of Significance

1930-1958

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Arthur B. Heaton (architect)
Skinker & Garrett Company (builders)

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Period of Significance (justification)

The Central Bus Garage was constructed in 1930 to house and maintain the bus fleet of the Washington Railway and Electric Company. It continued in this usage through the incorporation of WRECO into the newly-formed Capital Transit Company in 1933 and that company's reorganization into the DC Transit Company in 1949. In 1958, the garage became the service facility and gasoline depot for a United States Post Office truck fleet that had been displaced from the Main City Post Office at North Capitol Street and Massachusetts Avenue NE.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

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

The WRECO Bus Garage at 2112 Georgia Avenue NW is Washington, DC's first purpose-built garage for servicing and storing transit buses. It is significant under National Register Criterion A because it is associated with events that have contributed to the broad patterns of our history, which include the development of mass transit systems in Washington, DC and the transportation-oriented commercial development of the area around the intersections of Seventh Street, U Street, Georgia Avenue, and Florida Avenue NW.

The WRECO Bus Garage is significant under National Register Criterion C because represents the work of a master and it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a building type. The WRECO Bus Garage was designed by Arthur B. Heaton, whose wide-ranging works include influential transportation-related structures of the early automotive era, as well as numerous distinguished residences and apartment houses. A number of Heaton's works are listed on the DC Inventory of Historic Sites and the National Register of Historic Places.

The Multiple Property Document **Streetcar and Bus Resources of Washington, D.C., 1862-1962** states that, like the street car power house, "the bus garage is a significant property type for its role in the continuing evolution of public transportation in Washington, D.C." In specific;

Bus garages are eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A and C. In order to be eligible, bus garages must retain integrity of setting, location, design, workmanship, and association. The resource should display original massing and elements that denote the building's use.ⁱ

These elements include:

large door openings to accommodate buses and character-defining industrial steel windows. The buildings have three-part elevations with a central pavilion and end wings. The central pavilion is equipped with large bus doors and the end wings with industrial window sash lighting the interior of the repair shops.ⁱⁱ

The WRECO Bus Garage displays the massing and elements associated with its original use, as well as possessing integrity of design, setting, and workmanship.

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

The WRECO Garage and Mass Transit in Washington

ⁱ *Streetcar and Bus Resources of Washington, D.C., 1862-1962*, E64

ⁱⁱ *Ibid*, E86.

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The development of mass transit in Washington, DC is an oft-told tale, related at length in **Streetcar and Bus Resources of Washington, D.C., 1862-1962**. It begins with the Civil War era horse cars whose routes connected Georgetown with the Navy Yard through downtown, succeeded in the 1890s by electric street cars. Boom times saw car lines extend into outlying districts, frequently financed by speculators seeking to promote their real estate developments. These small companies often became financially over-extended and merged with larger car lines. Early street car companies usually generated their own electric power, which they also sold to residents of the new developments as well as other customers along their routes.

During the early 1900s, the pace of mergers in the streetcar industry increased, and the consolidated companies invested in larger car barns and other facilities. The Washington Railroad and Electric Company (WRECO) grew out of the Washington Traction and Electric Company (WTEC), a holding company formed in 1896 by Oscar Crosby, who over the next several years merged almost two dozen small lines in an attempt to control both the city's street car and electrical generation services. In 1902, the WTEC collapsed from accumulated debt, and its stock was purchased by the Washington and Great Falls Railway Company, forming a consolidated firm called the Washington Railway and Electric Company (WRECO) ⁱⁱⁱ The car lines' electrical generation facilities were merged with other holdings to become a subsidiary called the Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO).

For the next twenty years, WRECO expanded its routes and continued to acquire smaller lines, rivaled only by the Capital Traction Company as the city's dominant transit provider. Its major shops, originally constructed by the Metropolitan Street Railroad, stood at 24th and P Streets NW. Another legacy of the Metropolitan Street Railroad was WRECO's wooden car barn and stable at the intersection of Seventh and Pomeroy (now W) Streets NW, adjacent to the Howard University campus.^{iv}

Washington adopted buses for mass transit more slowly than it embraced other forms of automotive transportation. The city's first taxicabs appeared in 1900. Although buses also appeared on city streets in the early twentieth century, they were chiefly used for sightseeing or excursions. By 1912, motor trucks had largely replaced horses for commercial purposes. Jitneys, a hybrid of bus and taxi services in which an automobile drove pre-established routes through downtown, picking up pedestrians who hailed it, were commonplace before World War I. Like taxicabs before them, acceptance of transit buses occurred in fits and starts. Such early efforts as an electric bus line down 16th Street and the Semmes Autobus line between the Treasury Building and the community of Brandywine, Maryland in 1912 or the Metropolitan Bus Company's pioneering bus-only line in 1913 either never took the street or quickly failed.

However, on March 1, 1921, the Washington Rapid Transit Company (WRTC) began service on two routes running from 14th and Buchanan Streets NW through the downtown shopping and government office districts, soon extended to Haines Point. Within its first six months, the WRTC had carried 750,000 passengers and added several new routes.^v The street car companies immediately realized that the motor bus represented formidable competition. By 1921, the president of WRECO was testifying against the chartering of more bus lines before the Public Utilities Commissioner.^{vi} Although the commissioners limited the licensing of jitneys, they continued to approve new bus routes. WRECO responded by filing formal complaints to the PUC about "unfair competition." By April 1922, the *Washington Post* editorialized against the "unseemly squabble" between the companies, which it blamed on "the apparent belief of the railroad companies that they own the streets and have the right to control basic transportation thereon."^{vii}

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid*, E64

^{iv} *Ibid*, E19.

^v "Buses In Capital Will Be Increased," *Washington Post*; Sep 25, 1921; 49

^{vi} "Oppose More Busses," *Washington Post*, Nov 17, 1921;13

^{vii} "Protests New Bus Lines.: W. R. & E. Co. Declares Competition Is Unfair." *Washington Post*; Mar 18, 1922; 1

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The bus lines had powerful allies beyond the *Post*. One was the Federation of Civic Associations, which heavily represented outlying neighborhoods whose residents frequently complained about high fares and infrequent service from the carlines that essentially held a monopoly on public transportation to downtown. Another was a large segment of the public which saw streetcars as “road hogs” whose track beds caused congestion on downtown streets and considered them slow, uncomfortable, and inefficient when compared with buses that maneuvered through traffic on rubber tired wheels. Streetcars were considered less safe because their tracks typically ran down the center lanes of a street, and passengers were forced to step into traffic lanes when boarding or disembarking.

By December 1922, WRECO itself was running a bus line that connected that connected Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenue car lines via Woodley Road, and in January, 1923, it replaced streetcars with buses on at least one segment of its lines.^{viii} Street car ridership continued to drop,^{ix} and, by 1925, WRECO was operating numerous bus lines, covering such routes as Dupont Circle to 45th and Fessenden Streets NW. ^x During this period, bus fleets grew as well. They were apparently serviced and garaged at street car barns and other traction facilities. In 1926, the buses-only WRTC made application to adapt the subbasement of the CTC’s 14th and Decatur Streets NW car barn for use as a garage.^{xi}

The building of the WRECO Garage in 1930 is an outgrowth of the rapid transition to bus transportation. In 1925, the company operated 44 buses accommodating an estimated 999 passengers at full capacity.^{xii} By 1929, the company ran 97 buses, capable of carrying 2,418 persons.^{xiii} However, other economic trends also influenced the construction of the garage. Despite increasing fleets and expanding routes, overall transit ridership was declining during the late 1920s. For 1928, WRECO blamed a 2 percent loss in revenue passengers to competition from automobiles, whose registration increased 18% that year.^{xiv} The Great Depression had an even more dramatic effect on ridership. For 1930, WRECO reported a revenue passenger decline of about 8%. The company blamed increased competition from taxis, noting that the city’s cab and limousine fleet had grown 41% during the previous year, which likely reflected the newly-unemployed turning to hacking.^{xv} An unmentioned cause was that the unemployed no longer commuted to work and those fortunate enough to have jobs watched even their trolley tokens closely.

After litigating for a fare increase from eight to ten cents in 1930, WRECO remained profitable, principally from its PEPCO subsidiary. While the company reported a slight loss on bus operations in 1930, it increased its fleet by over 20%, to 119 buses with a capacity of 2,973 passengers.^{xvi} In 1931, the year that the garage opened, it had 122 buses accommodating 3,172 passengers.^{xvii} The portrait that emerges of these years is that the company struggled to expand just to stay in place. As ridership declined, it formulated “liberal plans... for extension... of bus service” and sought to maximize efficiency by increasing its annual investment in its buildings by about 7% in 1930. This prompted implicit praise from the *Washington Post*, which noted that “the company has fallen into line with President Hoover’s plan to stimulate business recovery.”^{xviii}

^{viii} “Through Car Service To Potomac Park Ends,” *Washington Post*; Jan 31, 1923, 12

^{ix} “New Bus Line In Operation,” *Washington Post*; Dec 15, 1922; 16 and “W.R. & E. To Request Additional One-Man Cars, Ham Admits,” *Washington Post*; Oct 16, 1924, 2.

^x “W.R. & E. To Get Permit For Dupont Bus Line,” *Washington Post*; May 2, 1925m 9.

^{xi} “Bus Company Seeks Garage at Gar Barn,” *Washington Post*; Oct 13, 1926; 20.

^{xii} *Annual Report of the Public Utilities Commissioners for 1925*, (Washington, DC Government, 1926), 116.

^{xiii} *Annual Report of the Public Utilities Commissioners for 1929*, (Washington, DC Government, 1930), 149.

^{xiv} “Potomac Electric To Spend \$5,176,250 For Improvements,” *Washington Post*, Jan 20, 1929;M22

^{xv} “Unregulated Taxi Competition Hit By Traction Line,” *Washington Post*. Jan 18, 1931;M22

^{xvi} *Annual Report of the Public Utilities Commissioners for 1930*, (Washington, DC Government, 1931), 103.

^{xvii} *Annual Report of the Public Utilities Commissioners for 1931*, (Washington, DC Government, 1932), 86

^{xviii} “Unregulated Taxi Competition,” *Washington Post*, Jan 18, 1931;M22

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The building of the WRECO Bus Garage is significant to the development of the area around the intersections of 7th, 9th, and U Streets as well as Georgia and Florida Avenues NW during this period. This area, whose north-south axis is Georgia Avenue, offers quick access to the city's government and retail districts via Seventh Street NW, downtown's earliest "Main Street." Florida Avenue provides arterial connections to the northwest and northeast quadrants, as well as to the New York and Rhode Island Avenue corridors. While Howard University has long been the chief development force in this area, the building of Griffith Stadium both evidenced the accessibility of this area to population centers along these major corridors and spurred further transit development. During the nineteenth century, numerous coal yards, lumberyards, and similar businesses located along the northern end of the Seventh Street corridor. Fresh-baked bread had to be distributed to homes and grocery stores across the city each day, and bakery locations needed to be at transportation hubs. The Reuth Bakery on Wiltberger Street, the Dortsch Bakery in the 600 block of S Street, and the Corby Bakery in the 2300 block of Georgia Avenue testify to the area's prominence as a transportation hub. The building of the Bond Bread Factory in 1929 and the WRECO Bus Garage next door in 1930 represent the continuance of this function into the automotive era.

By 1933, financial strains compelled Congress to permit the long-proposed merger of the city's transit lines.^{xix} The new Capital Transit Company included WRECO, Capital Traction, and eventually the independent bus lines of the Washington Rapid Transit Company. The merger bought about the construction of two larger bus garages designed by Heaton in 1934; the Western Bus Garage (Wisconsin Avenue, pending nomination to the DC Inventory) and the Southeast Garage (Half and M Streets SE, demolished in 2006). The WRECO Garage, which included the offices of the Central Division,^{xx} continued in use as The Central Bus Garage through the transformation of Capital Transit into DC Transit in 1956. By 1958, the garage was leased as a depot for the trucks serving the Post Office at North Capitol and Massachusetts Avenue^{xxi} Although Capital Transit was purchased by what was to become Metro in 1972, the garage and other real estate remained the property of Capital Transit proprietor O. Roy Chalk. Eventually, it was acquired by Howard University for use as a maintenance facility.

Arthur B. Heaton and Auto-Age Architecture

Born in 1875, Arthur B. Heaton was a native Washingtonian and graduate of Central High School. He began architectural training in 1894 as an apprentice to Frederick B. Pyle, and worked for Paul Pelz from 1895 to 1896, for William J. Marsh from 1896 to 1899, and for Marsh & Peter from 1899 to 1900. His earliest credits included row houses in Foggy Bottom and small multi-unit "sanitary houses" on Bates Street NW.^{xxii} In 1900, Heaton opened his own office and in 1902 joined the American Institute of Architects, with endorsements from Robert Head, William J. Peter, and Glenn Brown. In this year he won a breakthrough commission, the five story Washington Heights Apartments at 1910 Connecticut Avenue NW. Numerous commissions for upscale dwellings and apartment houses followed. During his enormously prolific career, Heaton also came to design stores, churches, schools, offices, banks, a swimming pool, and a cancer hospital, as well as such industrial facilities as laundries, printing plants, and equipment garages.

^{xix}While this merger undoubtedly allowed consolidation of functions, it also illuminates the labyrinthine nature of the city's regulated public utilities in the twenties and thirties. Since 1922, WRECO's largest shareholder was a New York-based holding company called the North American Company. By 1925, NAU was also the majority shareholder in WRECO's erstwhile competitor, the Washington Rapid Transit Company.

^{xx} Display Ad, *Washington Post*; May 11, 1947;M2

^{xxi} "City Post Office Gasoline Moved," *Washington Post*; Nov 10, 1958; A22

^{xxii} Biographical information for Heaton is derived from Stephen Calcott, National Register Form, *Babcock-Macomb House*, (1994), Section 8, 6-7, American Institute of Architects Registration Form: Arthur B. Heaton (1901), and "A.B. Heaton Dies: Noted Architect." *Washington Post*, December 7, 1951, B2. Information about his building portfolio comes from the DC Historic Preservation Office Building Permits Database.

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Heaton's first work for WRECO came in 1920, when he began to design or modify its PEPCO subsidiary's substations, including one designed by his mentor, Frederick B. Pye. As the twenties progressed, he was commissioned to design service and administrative buildings, and he is generally credited with the design of the major PEPCO electrical generation plant on Benning Road NE.

Heaton's first major automobile-oriented building was the ten story Capital Garage of 1926, at 1314 New York Avenue NW (demolished 1974). Designed to accommodate 1,200 cars, the Capital Garage was Washington's first large public parking structure. Designed in a "modified Gothic Style" incorporating auto-themed medallions, lion-gargoyles, and long vertical stripes of window, the garage included a gasoline station, a waiting room for chauffeurs, a ladies room, and two stores in its lower stories.

The Capital Garage was followed three years later by the WRECO Bus Garage. One week after the garage was permitted, Heaton obtained a permit for one of his most noteworthy automobile-oriented projects, The Park n' Shop development at 3501 Connecticut Avenue NW. This project, to which Heaton added an auto laundry and gasoline station (both now demolished), is a contributing element of the Cleveland Park Historic District. It has been called:

a nationally significant work in the evolution of the shopping center which was widely publicized and praised during the 1930's, a prototype for a number of other complexes in the metropolitan area and elsewhere in the U.S. during the 1930's and 1940's is among the most architecturally significant commercial properties in the National Capital^{xxiii}

In November 1934, Heaton was commissioned by the newly-formed Capital Transit Company to design a slightly-larger bus garage at 44th Street NW, now known as the Western Bus Garage. In 1936, he designed the much smaller, single-story Eastern Garage for Capital Transit at 17 M Street SE. Capital Transit subsequently erected several other bus garages and shops in the city and suburbs for which Heaton provided designs, although no architect was credited on building permits. These garages, located in less-visible industrial areas, were utilitarian in character and lacked the visual flair of his early effort.

In addition to several Lord Baltimore service stations, Heaton's commissions included several restaurants for Blue Bell chain, one of which became the famous Waffle Shop at 1404 Park Road NW. His final credited project in the District of Columbia was an Alley Dwelling Authority housing project at 7th and I Streets NW in 1940. During World War II, Heaton designed garden apartment complexes and the Hillside Defense Worker Housing Development in Virginia. He died in 1951 at age 76.

The WRECO Bus Garage as a Work of Architecture

The WRECO Bus Garage commission presented Arthur Heaton with a set of contradictory challenges. Perhaps the least of these was that his design options were limited by the building site, a roughly square plot bounded on three sides by city streets and on the fourth by the newly-constructed Bond Bread Factory. The building was to be erected for a client whose business was declining with the nation's economy. Plainly, the financial need was acute for the project to be moving forward in such a bleak economic climate, and Heaton plainly needed to achieve maximum economy and efficiency for this first structure of its type in Washington. The times dictated that its design be austere for an additional reason. WRECO's fares and capital expenditures were regulated by the District's Public Utilities Commission, and a structure with any trace of ostentation would have fanned public resentment and opposition to future fare increases. Although these circumstances ordinarily might have dictated a merely utilitarian building, WRECO's garage would occupy a highly-visible location, projecting an image of a company vigorous in the face of adversity and symbolizing corporate permanence. Heaton was forced to juggle these competing priorities to create a structure that was

^{xxiii} National Register Form, *Cleveland Park Historic District*, E5.

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functional, economical, and appealing. Although he was among the city's most prominent architects, Heaton undoubtedly realized that, in the current state of the building industry, his client could have its pick of practitioners if he proved unequal to the task.

Although Heaton employed many styles, he specialized in applying elements of the art moderne style to his larger buildings at this point in his career. This accent on massing, geometric patterns, abstracted classical forms, and contrasting material textures without the necessity of applied ornament or elaborate detailing, allowed Heaton to compose a massive structure which was both economical and visually attractive. Heaton split his long horizontal facades into bays with pilasters, and created smaller visual planes with protrusions and setbacks of the bays within their elevations, avoiding flat, broad expanses of brick that might suggest fortress or penitentiary walls. Many of Heaton's effects depend on opposing contrasting elements. The garage is linked into a horizontal composition by its continuous smooth-finished limestone cornice, above a dentiled molding of protruding dark bricks against a red brick background. He avoided dead expanses of wall by mixing rough-textured brick with varied color accents and degrees of sheen in random combinations. Within a facade, he mingled basket-weave or checkerboard patterns with American bond brickwork, counterpointing brick courses in vertical and horizontal alignment. The blank south gable-end wall of the bus barn is perhaps the best example of Heaton's artistic use of brick. Here, the uppermost five feet of the wall, which includes the "point" beneath the gable's roofline, is laid in courses of vertically-aligned bricks, with a band of bricks laid in a checkerboard pattern below it. At the midpoint of this band, beneath the wall's pinnacle, a circle about five feet in diameter composed of bricks laid end-outward and filled with checker-board brick, suggests the oriel window above the altar in the end gable of a church. The contrasting American bond courses in the wall's lower section further accents these patterns. These elements lend a vibrant quality of motion to these large planes of brick.

Heaton's use of art moderne massing and accents lent the Bus Garage a note of grace and modernity not usually associated with industrial buildings. Many of the larger street car companies built imposing castle-like powerhouses and car barns in the late nineteenth century. Heaton lampoons this Victorian ponderousness with the rectangular voids in the garage's corner piers, which resemble the slit windows in castle turrets.

Streetcar and Bus Resources of Washington notes that the selection of a prominent architect like Arthur B. Heaton evidences the importance they placed on these early bus garages, and states that his employment of such devices as "pilasters and brick stringcourses to break the large massing of the building and ornamental brickwork to relieve the monotony of the long facades elevating these bus stations from industrial structure to public building."^{xxiv} These stylistic characteristics are present in the WRECO Bus Garage, along with other defining elements such as a three-part elevation, which includes a central pavilion with large bus doors and the end wings, and steel sash windows. This earliest of Heaton's bus garages stands with his finest buildings of any type.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Annual Report of the Public Utilities Commissioners for 1928, (Washington, DC Government, 1929)
Annual Report of the Public Utilities Commissioners for 1930, (Washington, DC Government, 1931)
Annual Report of the Public Utilities Commissioners for 1931, (Washington, DC Government, 1932)

^{xxiv} *Streetcar and Bus Resources of Washington*, E87.

WRECO Bus Garage
Name of Property

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Calcott, Stephen. National Register Form, *Babcock-Macomb House*, (1994)
Waldman, J.C. National Register Form: *Western Bus Garage*, (2005)
Trieschmann, Laura V., Weidlich, Robin J., Bunting, Jennifer J., Didden, Amanda, and Williams, Kim, National Register Form: *Streetcar and Bus Resources of Washington, D.C., 1862-1962 (1998, 2005)*
Wood, Kathleen Sinclair. National Register Form: *Cleveland Park Historic District*, (1987)
King, LeRoy O., Jr. *100 Years of Capital Traction: The Story of Streetcars in the Nation's Capital*. Dallas: Taylor Publishing Co., 1972.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

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

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 _____
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

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

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Peter Sefton
organization D.C. Preservation League date _____
street & number 401 F Street, NW, Room 324 telephone (202) 783-5144
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20001
e-mail info@dcpreservation.org

WRECO Bus Garage
Name of Property

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

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

Name of Property:

City or Vicinity:

County:

State:

Photographer:

Date Photographed:

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of ____.

Property Owner:

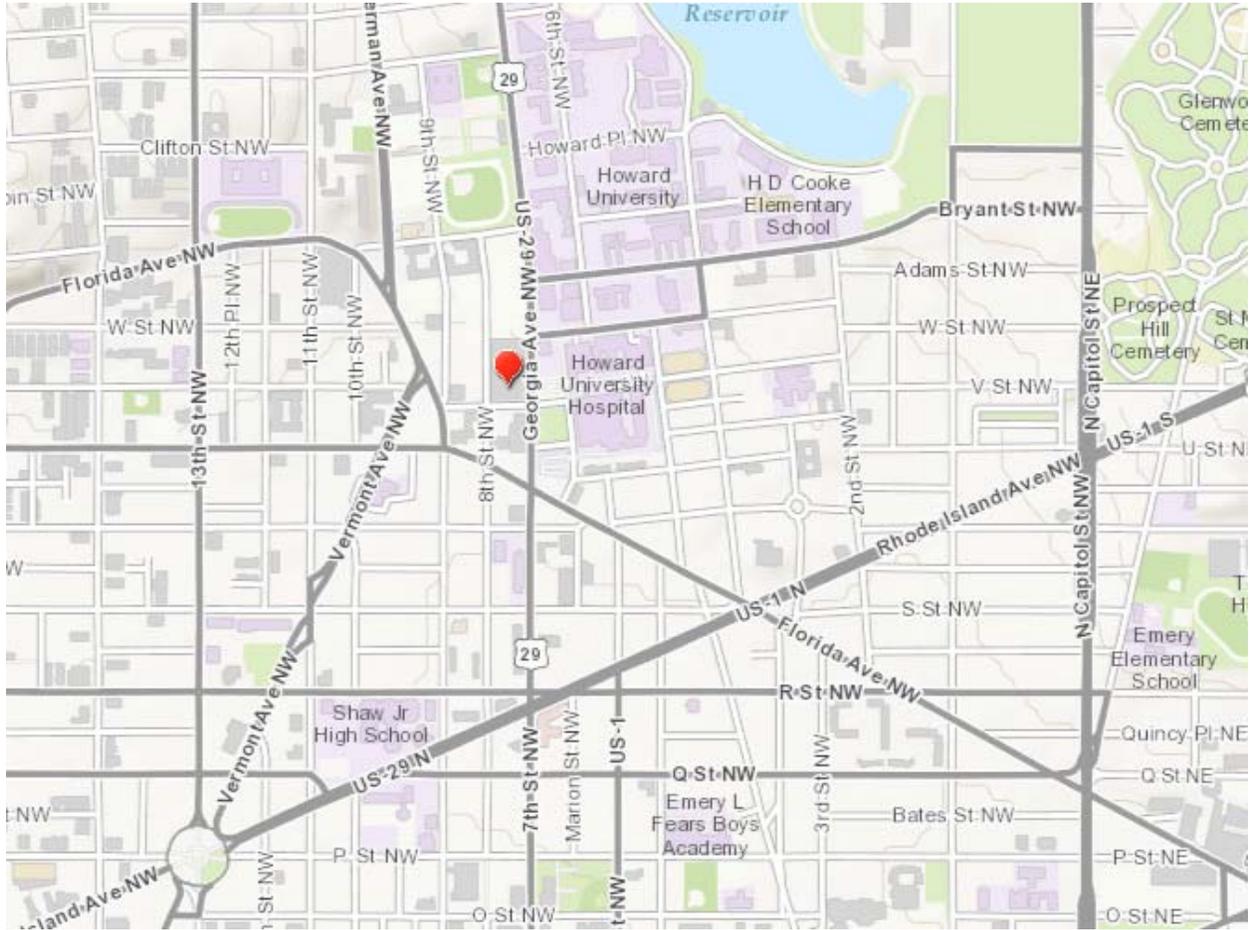
(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Howard University
street & number 2041 Georgia Avenue NW telephone _____
city or town Washington state DC zip code _____

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

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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.

Washington Railway and Electric Company (WRECO) Garage
2112 Georgia Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20001



Washington Railway and Electric Company (WRECO) Garage Nomination Photograph Log

Illustration 1: (WDC_1958_arial)

Arial view of Griffith Stadium during the 1958 football season caught the WRECO Garage, showing its V Street NW façade in especial detail.

Illustration 2: (WDC_WRECO_002)

The Georgia Avenue NW façade of the WRECO Bus Garage, looking north on Georgia Avenue from the corner of V Street, NW.

Illustration 3: (WDC_WRECO_003)

Contrasting brickwork patterns and limestone on the Georgia Avenue NW façade of the WRECO Bus Garage.

Illustration 4: (WDC_1941_arial)

1941 Arial photo of Griffith Stadium during baseball season shows the Georgia Avenue NW façade of the WRECO bus garage.

Illustration 5: (WDC_WRECO_005)

The V Street NW façade of the WRECO Bus Garage looking west towards Eighth Street, showing the gable-end wall of the “bus barn.”

Illustration 6: (WDC_WRECO_006)

The V Street NW façade of the WRECO Bus Garage looking east toward Georgia Avenue, showing polychrome brickwork.

Illustration 7: (WDC_WRECO_007)

The upper section of the gable-end wall of the “bus barn,” showing contrasting brickwork pattern.

Illustration 8: (WDC_WRECO_008)

Eighth Street NW façade of the WRECO garage, looking north from V Street NW, with Bond Bread Factory in background.

Illustration 9: (WDC_WRECO_009)

Detailed view of pediment and cornice above the central entrance of the Eighth Street NW façade of the WRECO Garage, showing contrasting textures of limestone cornice and brick dentil molding beneath.

Photographer of illustrations 1 and 4 are unknown.

Photograph of all other illustrations: Peter Sefton

Originals located: DC Preservation League, 401 F Street, NW, Room 324, Washington, DC 20001



Illustration 1: An aerial view of Griffith Stadium during the 1958 football season caught the WRECO Garage (X), showing its V Street NW façade in especial detail.



Illustration 2: The Georgia Avenue NW façade of the WRECO Bus Garage, looking north on Georgia Avenue from the corner of V Street NW.



Illustration 3: Contrasting brickwork patterns and limestone on the Georgia Avenue NW façade of the WRECO Bus Garage.



Illustration 4: A 1941 aerial photo of Griffith Stadium during baseball season shows the Georgia Avenue NW façade of the WRECO bus garage.



Illustration 5: The V Street NW façade of the WRECO Bus Garage looking west toward Eighth Street, showing the gable-end wall of the “bus barn.”



Illustration 6: The V Street NW façade of the WRECO Bus Garage looking east toward Georgia Avenue, showing polychrome brickwork.



Illustration 7: The upper section of the gable-end wall of the "bus barn," showing contrasting brickwork patterns.



Illustration 8: Eighth Street NW façade of the WRECO garage, looking north from V Street NW, with Bond Bread Factory in background.



Illustration 11: Detailed view of pediment and cornice above the central entrance of the Eighth Street NW façade of the WRECO Garage, showing contrasting textures of limestone cornice and brick dentil molding beneath.