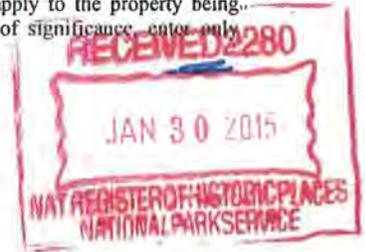


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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



### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Hill Building

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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

### 2. Location

Street & number: 839 17<sup>th</sup> Street or 1636 I Street NW

City or town: Washington, D.C. State: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A \_\_\_ B X C \_\_\_ D

<u>[Signature]</u>	<u>DAND MALONEY</u>	<u>DC SHPO</u>	<u>23 JAN 2015</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:			Date
<u>DC HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE</u>			
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government			

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Hill Building  
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.  
County and State

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

*Jon Edson H. Beall*  
Signature of the Keeper

3-17-15  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

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



Hill Building  
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.  
County and State

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Limestone

### Narrative Description

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

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### Summary Paragraph

The Hill Building is a tall commercial building, originally built as an office building and now a hotel, located in downtown Washington, D.C. at 17th and I Streets, NW on the south end of Farragut Square. Constructed in 1925-26, the smooth limestone building features the standard early 20th century, three-part office building form of base, middle and cap. Although not definitively attributed to any architect thus far, the building has a sophisticated stripped Classical Revival style that points to local architect George N. Ray who was actively engaged in the city at that time designing office and other commercial buildings in that aesthetic. Historically ten stories tall, the Hill Building now rises to eleven stories since a contemporary rooftop addition was built flush with the original building in the 1990s. In addition, the ground story which originally offered six store fronts is now essentially open between structural piers, providing entry to the METRO station located under the building. Despite these rather substantial alterations at the base and top, the building still retains its integrity.

Located at a strategic downtown intersection fronting on the public square, the Hill Building has two principal elevations—a five bay facade facing I Street and Farragut Square, and a longer eight-bay facade facing 17th Street. The building is rectangular in plan, measuring 55' x 100' and was historically capped by a flat roof that featured a pedimented parapet on the I Street façade. The top floor of the building, added in the 1990s, follows the fenestration pattern of the lower floors and is capped by a pediment on the I Street side that has similar proportions to the pediment that ornamented that elevation historically.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It is not entirely clear what the material of the 11th floor addition is, but it is smooth and similar in color to the original limestone walls. Visually, the rooftop addition does not detract from the massing or feeling of the historic office building.

Hill Building  
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.  
County and State

The former office building was converted into a hotel and has been the Club Quarters Hotel for at least the past 10 years.

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## **Narrative Description**

### Exterior Description

The Hill Building has two principal facades, including the narrower five-bay-wide façade facing I Street and Farragut Square, and the longer 17<sup>th</sup> Street elevation that holds the principal entry to the building's offices. The building's south elevation faces a 15-foot alley that separates the Hill Building from the contemporary office building next to it and that leads back to an alley that cuts through the irregular shaped city square.

The north facade facing Farragut Square is divided into three horizontal parts (base, middle and cap), and five vertical bays. The vertical bays are in turn organized into three groupings that include two narrower end bays with single windows, and three wider interior bays with paired windows. Architecturally, the base of the building includes the first and second stories. The first story historically included ground floor stores and storefront windows and doors that have been removed, leaving openings between the structural concrete piers for entry to the underground METRO. Above the METRO entrance and separated by a wide, plain limestone frieze, is the building's second story defined by five bays of windows. Single window openings are located in the two end bays, while wider, tri-partite windows are located in the center three bays. Unlike the bays of windows above that have no surrounds, these second-story windows are highly articulated with Classical detailed architrave surrounds with projecting cornices supported by engaged pilasters resting upon stone sills. The pilasters are painted gold and have applied Adamesque decorative detailing, including raised vegetal ornament and caryatid consoles. Historically, the windows were casements; today slide replacement windows are found throughout the building. Awnings cover the central three windows below the projecting cornice.

Stories 3-7, forming the middle section of the office building, are identically detailed. Two narrow end bays have single window openings, while the three wider central bays feature pairs of windows. Recessed limestone panels decorate the spandrels between the floors on the three center bays only. Elsewhere, the limestone provides a smooth, undecorated finish.

Floors 8-10 (and now 11) form the top of the building and are separated from the stories below by a projecting cornice. This top part is itself divided horizontally into base middle and top where the eighth story serves as a base to the double-height floors 9-10 above. Historically the 10<sup>th</sup> floor was then capped by a pediment, giving this upper section an "implied" temple form with double-story Ionic pilasters set upon a raised base and capped by a pediment. The 8th story base is similar to floors 3-7 below it with single windows in the end bays, and wider window openings in the center three bays. Above these openings is a wide frieze with a raised swag molding extending across the three center bays. The swag includes roundels (shields of sorts) and alternating ram's heads connected by a garland. This decorative garland appears to be cast

Hill Building

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

stone. A plain limestone stringcourse rises above the swag and forms a base upon which rests the double-story pilasters above.

The 9th and 10th stories are treated as a single, double-height floor with giant order pilasters spanning the two floors at the center three bays. The bays between the pilasters have pairs of windows separated by metal spandrels decorated by three roundels within a panel and with corresponding mutules below the panel.

The end bays are similar to those below, fitted with pairs of windows. At this level, both corners of the building are chamfered to form a pedestal upon which sit cast stone eagles. The pedestals offer an applied garland decorative detail that also appears to be cast stone. A projecting cornice extends across the center three bays of the 10th floor, and historically supported a pediment above. An eleventh story addition, proportional to the 8th floor base, and compatible in terms of materials and detailing, was added to the building in the 1990s. A pediment that copied the original in its proportions caps the top of the building.

The west (17th Street) elevation is similar in architectural treatment as the I Street elevation at all levels of the building. The first two stories form the base of the building, while floors 3-7 form the middle and 8-10, the top. This longer elevation, however, extends eight bays long whereby the two end bays are narrower than the center six bays. The main entrance to the former office building and now hotel is located in its original location, in the fifth bay from the front corner. A restaurant at the southern end of the building is reached from inside the building's lobby.

Like on the I Street elevation, the middle part of the office building on 17th Street features two narrower end bays with wider center bays between. Here, the end bays are the same width and accommodate single windows, but the center bays are wider and feature larger window openings. The spandrels between the floors similarly features recessed limestone panels. At the building's top, seven Ionic pilasters separate the six central bays and support the centrally projecting cornice above. Historically, no pediment stood on this side elevation. The 11th floor addition thus rises above the cornice and sits atop the original slag roof. At the southwestern corner of the building, a third cast stone eagle sits atop a pedestal in the niche formed by the building's chamfered edge.

The south elevation of the building faces an alleyway. The limestone façade turns the corner of the south side, but the remainder of the wall is buff brick with recessed and projecting brick courses giving the wall a rusticated appearance. The wall features a regular arrangement of single windows with those on the end bay being narrower than the rest of the building. The rooftop addition is clad in a stucco or imitation stucco finish, distinguishing it from the historic block.

Interior Description

The interior of the Hill building consists of a small hotel lobby and adjacent restaurant on the ground floor, a business center and hotel rooms on the second floor, and hotel rooms on the upper floors. The 17<sup>th</sup> Street entry offers a pair of non-historic metal and glass doors recessed

Hill Building  
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.  
County and State

into the limestone walls and protected by a non-historic awning. These doors open into a small vestibule where another pair of replacement doors opens directly into the building's modest lobby with the elevators against the rear wall. A door to the right, past the reception desk, leads directly into the hotel restaurant. No historic fabric survives on the interior. The marble floors and walnut wall paneling likely date from the building's 1990s renovation.

## INTEGRITY

Despite substantive alterations at the base and top of the building, the Hill Building retains integrity. The building is located at an important downtown intersection on the south side of Farragut Square, providing a visual reminder of the historic character of downtown D.C. from the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The building's setting—a business district in downtown—remains what it was transitioning to at the time of construction of the Hill Building. The building has integrity of design and materials; it is an excellent illustration of 1920s Stripped Classicism and retains its limestone walls and decorative detailing. The addition at the roof, the opening up on the first floor store fronts for Metro access, and the replacement windows do not detract from the massing and character of the building. The building retains high integrity of association, being an excellent and important remnant of a 1920s office building in downtown, D.C.

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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.

Hill Building  
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.  
County and State

**Criteria Considerations**

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

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1925-1926  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1925; 1926  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Hill Building  
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.  
County and State

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

The Hill Building, named for developer William A. Hill, is a multi-story commercial office building located on the southeast corner of 17<sup>th</sup> and I Streets, N.W., on the south side of Farragut Square. Constructed in 1925-26, the smooth-faced limestone building features the standard early 20<sup>th</sup>-century, three-part office building form of base, middle and cap. The building was historically ten stories tall, but now rises to eleven stories since a contemporary rooftop addition was built flush with the original building in the 1990s.

At the time of the Hill building's construction in 1925-1926, commercial real estate development in downtown D.C. was highly active as the city's business and retail industry expanded, replacing Victorian and pre-Victorian residential buildings. These former residences, many of which then housed private and governmental business offices, no longer provided adequate space and, more importantly, did not embody the physical characteristics of a 20<sup>th</sup>-century city. The tall Hill Building office building, designed in a "modern" stripped Classical style, was, like others rising around downtown, the product of a deliberate effort by the city's real estate industry to create a more physically elegant city that was commensurate with the nation's capital. The Hill Building (1925-26) and the Barr Building at 914 17<sup>th</sup> Street (1926-28) were the first office buildings on Farragut Square to follow the trend. Later, especially during the late 1950s and 1960s, many of these 1920s office buildings were in turn demolished. The Hill Building survives as an important representation of the transition from residential to business district in the city's downtown.

The Hill Building meets National Register Criterion C and is significant in the Area of Architecture as an excellent surviving example of a 1920s office building designed in a Stripped Classical style. It further provides evidence of the second major phase of the development of downtown, much of which was later demolished in the 1950s-60s, and later 20th century. The Period of Significance is 1925-1926, the beginning and end dates of construction of the building. Despite alterations at the base and top, the building retains integrity.

Hill Building  
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.  
County and State

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

The Hill Building was constructed in 1925-26 on the southwest corner of 17th and I Streets, N.W., on the south side of Farragut Square. The office building, which replaced a mid-19th-century dwelling on the site, is indicative of the early 20th-century wave of commercial building activity in downtown D.C. During this period, historically residential areas in the city's downtown, including Farragut Square, were transformed into business districts. As businesses moved into these formerly residential streets and city dwellers left the downtown area for residential neighborhoods further north and west, the large Victorian and pre-Victorian dwellings were generally replaced with multi-storied office buildings. The Hill Building (1925-26) along with the Barr Building at 914 17th Street (1926-28) were the first office buildings on Farragut Square to follow the trend. Later, especially during the late 1950s and 1960s, many of these earlier 20th century office buildings were in turn demolished. The Hill Building thus survives as an important representation of the second phase of development in downtown.

Architecturally, the Hill Building provides an excellent local example of the building type and style. During the 1920s, office buildings in D.C. continued to respect the precepts of the Chicago School style of architecture for skyscrapers whereby buildings were divided into the three horizontal parts of base, middle and capital. Stylistically, the building's Stripped Classical Revival style provides an excellent illustration of a rare use of the style: although the style was a fashionable for commercial buildings in the city during the 1920s, it was not commonly used for the larger multi-storied office buildings.

#### Farragut Square and the Hill Building:

The Hill Building is located on and faces the south end of Farragut Square. Farragut Square was improved as a park beginning in 1871 when Congress selected the site to receive a monument to Navy hero David Glasgow Farragut. The actual statue was put in place in 1883. At that time, Connecticut Avenue which had bisected the square was re-routed, converting the former pair of triangular open-spaces into a true square. As the park was improved during the 1870s and 1880s, the neighborhood surrounding it became a social and diplomatic hub, architecturally grounded by a stately Italianate house built in 1858 by George W. Riggs in the 1600 block of I Street, between 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Farragut Square. During the 1870s, British Minister Sir Edward Thornton rented the Riggs mansion where he apparently entertained lavishly until moving to the British Embassy at Dupont Circle. Prominent local architect, Adolph Cluss, and the head of the D.C. Board of Public Works (1871-1873), Alexander Robey "Boss" Shepherd also lived on the square in two of the three Cluss-designed stone dwellings lining the north end of the square on K Street, known as "Shepherd's Row."<sup>2</sup> During this same time, two military leaders, Brig. Gen. Albert Myer, and Capt. Nathan Sargent also lived on the square. In 1883, Sargent commissioned

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<sup>2</sup> James Goode, *Capital Losses: a Cultural History of Washington's Destroyed Buildings*, Second Edition, Smithsonian Books: Washington, D.C., 2003, p. 183-185.

Hill Building

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

noted architect Joseph Hornblower to design a Romanesque Revival-style/Queen Anne brick house that faced the square from the east side.<sup>3</sup>

At the southeast corner of the square and the future site of the Hill Building stood a large three-story, Second Empire-style dwelling known as the Cox Residence for its occupant Judge Walter Cox. By 1888, all sides of the square were framed by large, attached three-story dwellings while even more substantial freestanding ones occupied the corner lots.

In 1891, the Army and Navy Club built its headquarters at Connecticut Avenue and I Street south of the square, making Farragut Square an unofficial gathering place for Washington's military men.<sup>4</sup> Two decades later, the Army Navy Club expanded its headquarters to accommodate a growing membership, and moved north of I Street to the east side of the square. In erecting its building in 1911-1912, the club razed a substantial dwelling at the southeast corner, signaling the beginning of the neighborhood's gradual shift from residential to commercial.<sup>5</sup>

### Development of the Hill Building

In 1924, local developer Harry Wardman, along with real estate investors William A. Hill and Edmund B. Rheem, negotiated a long-term, 99-year-lease on the property at 17<sup>th</sup> and I Streets that included the former Cox dwelling.<sup>6</sup> Under the terms of the lease, the team of developers was able to demolish the house and build the 10-story office building in its place. The Hill Building was ostensibly named after developer William A. Hill. In May 1924, the local press reported on the lease of the site of the Cox dwelling and noted the former dwelling's impending demise.<sup>7</sup> Almost one year later, in May 1925, Wardman Construction Company applied for a Permit to Build the office building and by January 1926 the Hill Building was completed and available for lease.

Following construction of the building, Moore & Hill<sup>8</sup> served as the real estate agents for the building, advertising the building's shops and offices for lease. One early advertisement for the building includes a perspective rendering of the building and notes the lease of shops and offices in the "New Hill Building" with ground floor shops going for \$125 per month and offices divided in any size suites going from \$1.57 to \$2.16 per square foot.<sup>9</sup> According to city directories in the building's first years, the ground floor shops were occupied by the Sunbeam Gift Shop, a tailor, a barber, a jeweler, real estate agents, a dentist, and the Hickman School of

<sup>3</sup> Goode, p. 111.

<sup>4</sup> "Farragut Square (Reservation Number 12)," The Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS No. DC-671).

<sup>5</sup> The Army and Navy Club building is a DC Landmark listed in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites in 1974. In 1985-1986, the building was essentially re-built with the façade being incorporated into a new building.

<sup>6</sup> See "Business to Displace Residence," *The Washington Post*, May 25, 1924, p. R5 and "Cox Property Site for Office Building," *The Washington Post*, May 25, 1924, p. R1.

<sup>7</sup> The Cox dwelling was not actually demolished until at least February 1925, though, when Wardman & Hill applied for a demolition permit (see Raze Permit #6724, 2/3/1925).

<sup>8</sup> The firm, Moore & Hill was a real estate business owned at that time by William A. Hill, who had earlier bought out his partner, David Moore's interest in the business.

<sup>9</sup> Advertisement for the Hill Building, *The Evening Star*, October 1, 1925, p.3

Hill Building

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

Speech and Expression. The office spaces were rented by a variety of businesses, including bankers, doctors, lawyers, dentists, architects, several trade associations, and of particular note the United Lodge of Theosophists which occupied the entire seventh floor of the building.

At the time of the Hill Building's construction, commercial real estate development in the city was highly active as the city's business and retail industry expanded. Former residences, many of which housed private and governmental business offices, no longer provided adequate space and, more importantly, did not embody the physical characteristics of a 20<sup>th</sup>-century city. The multi-story Hill Building, designed in a "modern" stripped Classical style, was, like others rising around downtown, the product of a deliberate effort by the city's real estate industry to create a more physically elegant city that was commensurate with the nation's capital.<sup>10</sup>

#### The Developers and Architect:

The Hill Building was the result of a team effort. Although the DC Permit to Build identifies Harry Wardman as the owner, builder and architect of the Hill Building, period newspaper accounts indicate that the development team consisted of Wardman, Rheem and Hill, referring to Harry Wardman, developer and builder; Edmund Rheem, director of the mortgage banking firm of Swartzell, Rheem and Hensey; and William A. Hill, developer and real estate agent. Based upon the name of the building, it would seem that William A. Hill played a larger development role in the erection of the building. No architect has yet been identified as the designer of the building, though the building's style and treatment point to George N. Ray as likely architect of the building.<sup>11</sup>

#### **Harry Wardman**

Harry Wardman (1872-1938) is largely known as the man responsible for introducing mass-produced residential development to Washington, D.C. in the early twentieth century. He converted large tracts of vacant land outside the old city into blocks of row houses, flats, and apartments, while at the same time he demolished existing building stock within the city and developed it with larger apartment buildings, hotels and office buildings. An immigrant from England, Wardman had become by the time of his death a prominent developer and prolific builder in the District of Columbia. A flamboyant and innovative developer, he erected over 400 apartment buildings and 5,000 houses. It is estimated that when he died, 10% of Washington's population lived in buildings that he had constructed. Wardman maintained his own lumber mills, full-time carpenters and an office of architects. Financing for Wardman's projects often came from the prominent mortgage banking firm of Swartzell, Rheem and Hensey. Wardman's daughter, Alice, was married to Edmund Rheem, closely uniting the two large companies.

In addition to his rows of middle and low-income housing, he is noted for a number of other buildings, including the Chastleton Apartments, the Highlands and Woodward Apartments, the British Embassy, the Wardman Park Hotel (now the Sheraton Park), the Hay-Adams Hotel and

<sup>10</sup> Richard Longstreth, "The Unusual Transformation of Downtown Washington in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century," *Washington History*, Fall/Winter 2001-2002, p.56-57.

<sup>11</sup> Although no architect has been identified, architectural evidence suggests that it might be the hand of George N. Ray, or architect Eugene Waggaman.

Hill Building

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

the Carlton Hotel. In his quest for land to build his new buildings, Wardman razed many significant historic buildings, such as the Warder House and the Anderson House, both designed by H.H. Richardson, acts that at the time were criticized by members of the architectural community. Construction of the Hill Building, itself, necessitated the demolition of the Cox House on the site.

### **William A. Hill**

William A. Hill was a developer, builder and real estate agent active in real estate in the city during the 1910s and 1920s. He was considered a prominent member of the community and is credited with influencing the city's growth. An entry on Hill in Proctor's *Washington—Past and Present* notes that Hill's "extensive operations have been of genuine value to the city of Washington." William A. Hill, born in Prince George's County, MD in 1875, was the son of Samuel Childs Hill, a prominent real estate man in the city. At the age of 16 in 1891, William Hill began work as a clerk in the accounting offices of Woodward and Lothrop. Four years later, Hill became a clerk in the real estate offices of David D. Stone (later Stone and Fairfax), where he remained until 1900. In January 1900, William Hill and David Moore became real estate partners, and in 1902 the partnership incorporated as Moore & Hill. In 1905, Hill bought out his partner, becoming sole owner, president and treasurer of the company, though he retained the name of Moore & Hill. Moore & Hill became one of the leading real estate organizations in the city. The business consisted of four main branches—sales, rentals, loans and insurance. Perusal of the real estate ads of the period indicate that Moore & Hill were actively engaged as sales agents for residential and commercial development projects throughout the city.<sup>12</sup>

At the same time that he ran Moore & Hill, it appears from building permits that William A. Hill also operated independently as a developer. During the 1910s and 1920s, he built over 30 buildings, including single-family dwellings, apartment buildings, stores and at least two office buildings. In 1923, William A. Hill built Moore & Hill's own office building at 730 17<sup>th</sup> Street, just one block south of the future Hill Building. At the time of its construction, the local press noted that the "new building was erected especially for the firm which will occupy the entire ground floor."<sup>13</sup>

### **Architect George N. Ray**

To-date, research has not been able to definitively attribute the Hill Building to a particular architect or designer. Historic building permits indicate that William Hill worked with and/or was associated with a number of different architects, including Matthew Lepley, Frank Russell White, Claude Norton, and notably George N. Ray.<sup>14</sup> George N. Ray, who designed Moore & Hill's building at 730 17<sup>th</sup> Street, was actively engaged at the time of the construction of the Hill Building in designing other buildings for Hill. Ray, whose extensive body of work includes a number of commercial buildings in downtown, is particularly known for his Stripped Classical commercial buildings along Connecticut Avenue, both south and north of Dupont Circle. In

<sup>12</sup> See also *History of the City of Washington: Its Men and Institutions*.

<sup>13</sup> "Moore & Hill in New Home, *The Washington Post*, December 23, 1923, p. 39.

<sup>14</sup> The George N. Ray Architectural Drawing collection at the Prints and Photographs Collections at the Library of Congress identifies seventeen buildings designed by George N. Ray for William A. Hill. Many of these are residences in the Sheridan/Kalorama and Dupont Circle neighborhoods.

Hill Building

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

particular, several of Ray's buildings feature Giant order pilasters spanning two stories similar to the Hill Building. While this is most compelling, other scholarship speculates that Eugene Waggaman did the preliminary designs for the Hill Building when working as in-house architect for Harry Wardman, under the firm name Wardman & Waggaman, but left the firm without being given full credit.<sup>15</sup>

George N. Ray was both an architect and a prominent realtor. Born in 1886 in Washington, D.C., Ray studied architecture at the University of Pennsylvania. Upon returning to the District, he designed several large houses, including the Georgian Revival-style 2415 California Street, N.W. in 1916, now home to the Brazilian Delegation to the Organization of American States. In 1917, Ray established the firm of Waggaman & Ray with local architect Clarke Waggaman. Like Ray, Waggaman was a native Washingtonian, born in 1877 to a wealthy and respected family. Unlike his partner, however, Waggaman lacked a formal training in architecture. He spent his early life traveling in Europe and subsequently attended law school. But when he inherited a substantial fortune from his grandfather in 1906, Waggaman turned to architecture. He was soon receiving commissions from wealthy clients for elegant, classically inspired houses. Much of his work is located in the Dupont Circle and Sheridan-Kalorama neighborhoods, and in Woodley Park, which he helped to develop.

Waggaman & Ray's first commission was a large house at 1904-1906 R Street, N.W. for developer Harry A. Kite in 1917. Together, the architects designed a number of buildings in the Dupont Circle and Kalorama neighborhoods. Their designs were rooted in the aesthetics and philosophies of the Ecole des Beaux Arts and the City Beautiful Movement, producing handsome Beaux Arts and Classical Revival-style dwellings for upper-middle-class professionals. The untimely death of Waggaman in 1919 from the influenza pandemic ended the two-year partnership.

After Waggaman's death, Ray continued to design residences—he is credited with more than fifty houses, primarily located in fashionable neighborhoods along Connecticut Avenue, N.W. His houses exhibit elements of the Classical, Georgian, Tudor Revival, and French Urban Vernacular styles. Ray also expanded his practice into apartment, commercial, and office work. He designed many important buildings in the city including several branches of the Riggs Bank. His remodeling of many of the facades along Connecticut Avenue between K Street and Florida Avenue transformed the street from an architecturally eclectic residential thoroughfare to a major shopping strip. Through his work, Ray formed close relationships with real estate business owners such as Barnard Francis Saul and William Hill. In 1921, Saul hired Ray to design the B. F. Saul Building on McPherson Square. The five-story temple front building demonstrates Ray's skill in applying the Classical Revival style to tall office buildings, such as at the Hill Building. Ray later designed Saul's personal residence at 23rd Street and Wyoming Avenue, N.W.

At the beginning of the Great Depression, Ray turned his attention to real estate. In 1931, Ray began as a sales manager for Randall H. Hagner & Company; six years later, with the death of

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<sup>15</sup> Kohler, Sue and Jeffrey R. Carson, *Sixteenth Street Architecture*, Volume 2, Washington, D.C.: The Commission of Fine Arts, 1988, p. 26.

Hill Building  
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.  
County and State

Mr. Hagner, Ray became the company's president. To a limited degree, he appears to have maintained his architectural practice during these years. In 1953, ill health forced him to resign as head of the company, though he was elected Chairman of the Board. He died in 1959.

Hill Building  
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.  
County and State

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

“Business to Displace Residence,” *The Washington Post*, May 25, 1924, p. R5.

“Cox Property Site for Office Building,” *The Washington Post*, May 25, 1924, p. R1.

“Demand for Realty Exceeds Supply, is Shown by Reports,” *The Washington Post*, August 24, 1924, p. W5.

Design Forum Architects, “DC Downtown Office Building Survey Phase II, Final Report to the D.C. Historic Preservation Office,” September 1992.

“Farragut Square (Reservation Number 12),” Historic American Buildings Survey, DC-671.

“For Lease Shops and Offices New Hill Building (advertisement), *The Washington Post*, January 3, 1926.

Goode, James. *Capital Losses: A Cultural History of Washington’s Destroyed Buildings* (second edition). Washington and London, Smithsonian Books, 2003.

Kohler, Sue and Jeffrey R. Carson, *Sixteenth Street Architecture*, Volume 2, Washington, D.C.: The Commission of Fine Arts, 1988.

Longstreth, Richard. “The Unusual Transformation of Downtown Washington in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Washington History*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Fall/Winter 2001/2002), p. 50-71.

“Moore and Hill Enter New Home Tomorrow,” *The Washington Post*, December 23, 1923, p. 39.

Proctor, John Clagett. *Washington Past and Present: A History*. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1930, p.464-465.

“Wardman to Erect 10-story Building,” *The Washington Post*, December 24, 1924, p. 9.

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### 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

Hill Building  
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.  
County and State

**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):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** Less than one acre/5,475 square feet

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- 1. Latitude: 38.901073                      Longitude: -77.039169
- 2. Latitude:                                      Longitude:
- 3. Latitude:                                      Longitude:
- 4. Latitude:                                      Longitude:

**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927    or     NAD 1983

- 1. Zone:                                      Easting:                                      Northing:
- 2. Zone:                                      Easting:                                      Northing:

Hill Building  
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.  
County and State

3. Zone: Easting: Northing:

4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

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

The Hill Building at 839 17<sup>th</sup> Street occupies Lot 29 in Square 165 in downtown Washington, D.C.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The Hill Building has occupied this since its construction in 1925-26.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Kim Williams  
organization: D.C. Historic Preservation Office  
street & number: 1000 4<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
city or town: Washington, D.C. state: \_\_\_\_\_ zip code: \_\_\_\_\_  
e-mail kim.williams@dc.gov  
telephone: 202 442-8840  
date: January 15, 2015

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

Hill Building  
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.  
County and State

### Photographs

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

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Hill Building  
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.  
County: State:  
Photographer: Kim Williams  
Date Photographed: January 2015

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

View looking west showing south elevation of Hill Building  
1 of 15

View looking south at north elevation of Hill Building  
2 of 15

View looking southeast showing north (I Street) and west (17<sup>th</sup> Street) elevations  
3 of 15

View looking northeast showing west elevation and part of alley elevation  
4 of 15

View looking east showing west elevation  
5 of 15

View looking skyward at top of Hill Building's north elevation showing rooftop addition  
6 of 15

View looking skyward at 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> floors of Hill Building's west elevation  
7 of 15

View looking skyward at southwest corner of Hill building showing building ornamentation including carved eagle  
8 of 15

Hill Building  
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.  
County and State

View of window spandrels, north elevation  
9 of 15

View looking southeast showing northwest corner of building and carved eagle  
10 of 15

View of 2<sup>nd</sup> floor window  
11 of 15

Detail of caryatid on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor window pilaster  
12 of 15

View of entry doors on west (17<sup>th</sup> Street) elevation  
13 of 15

View looking southwest through Metro station at base of Hill Building  
14 of 15

View of interior lobby of Hill Building looking from entry on west side to east wall of elevators  
15 of 15

Hill Building  
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.  
County and State

# For Rent Office Rooms and Shops



## The Hill Building

S.E. Corner Seventeenth and Eye Streets—  
*Overlooking Farragut Square and Adjoining the Transportation Building*

This handsome new building, located in one of the most thriving business sections of Washington, is up-to-date in every particular, and the appointments throughout are of the best. EVERY ROOM AN OUTSIDE ONE, thereby affording an unusual amount of light and air.

### Rentals Most Reasonable

An investigation will show the rentals to be far below those in any other modern building in Washington—for example—single office rooms \$50 per month and a ground floor shop on 17th Street side as low as \$125 per month.

Spaces to be subdivided to suit the needs of tenants, and suites are being especially arranged for the various professions—physicians, dentists, lawyers, etc., etc.

It will be to your advantage to inspect this building and arrange for a space to meet your requirements.

## Moore & Hill (Inc.)

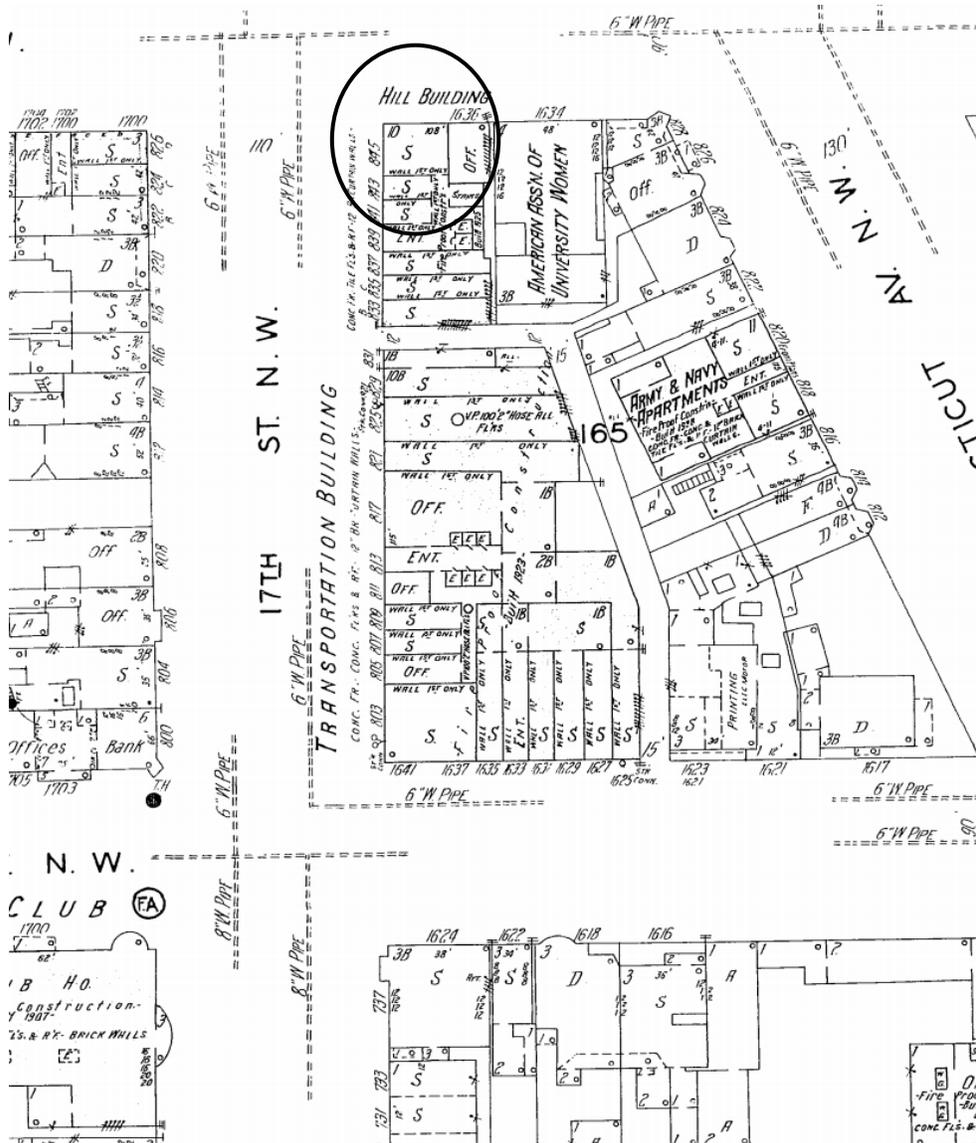
AGENT

730 Seventeenth Street

Advertisement for the Hill Building in the *Evening Star*, October 1, 1925

Hill Building  
Name of Property

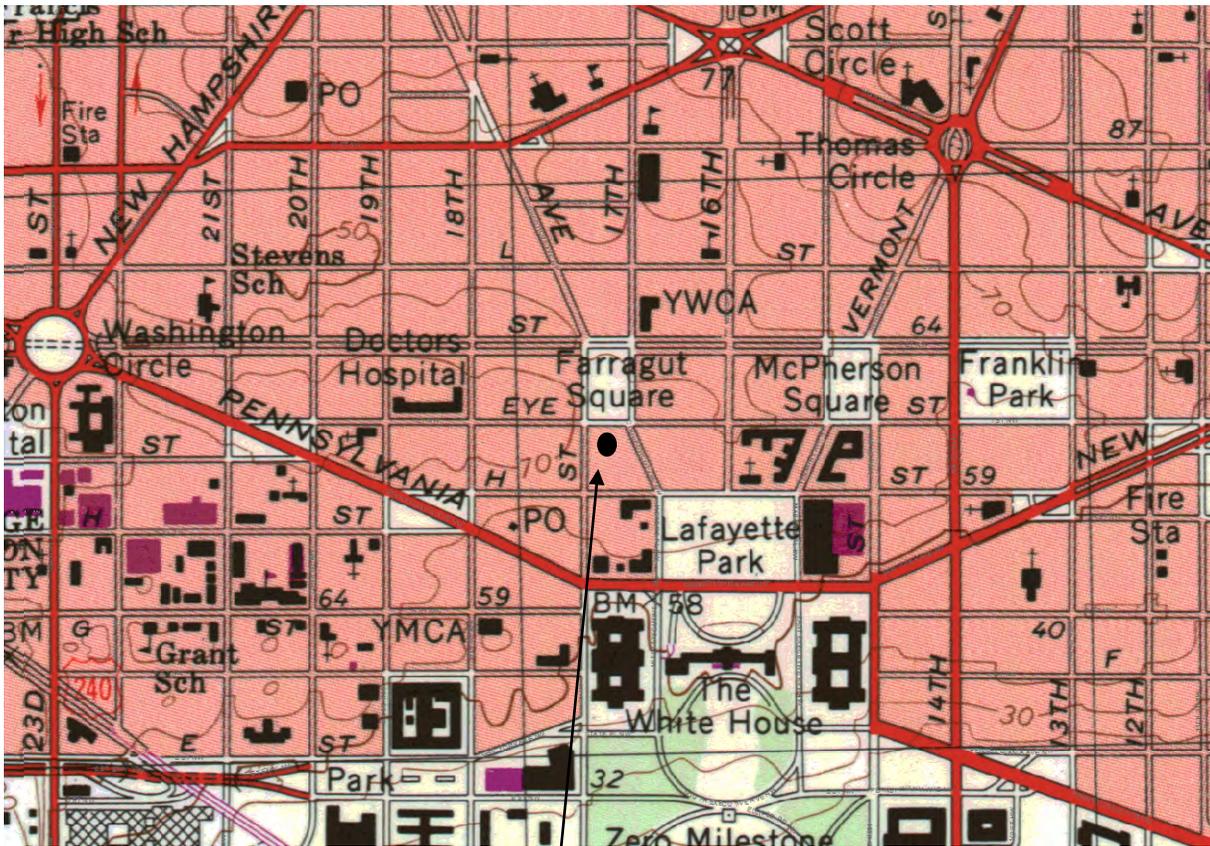
Washington, D.C.  
County and State



Historic Map showing the Hill Building (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1927-28)

Hill Building  
Name of Property

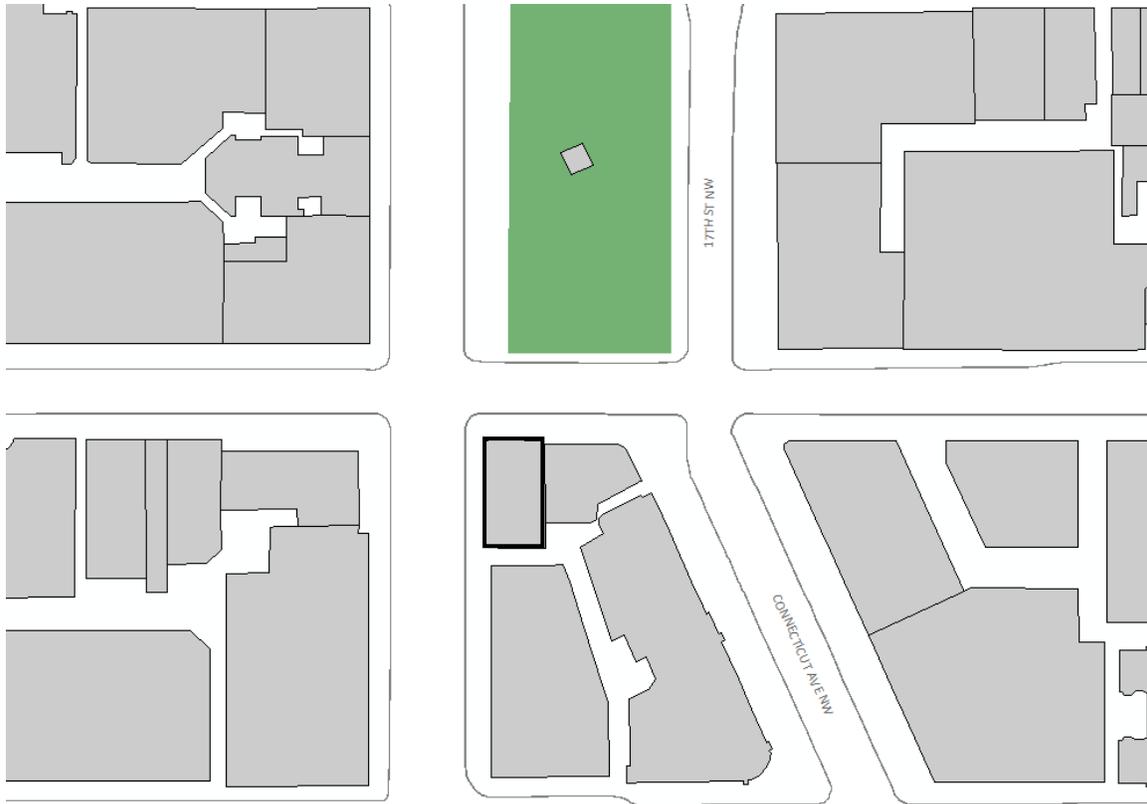
Washington, D.C.  
County and State



Site Map Showing the Hill Building at 839 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, D.C.  
(USGS Washington West Quad)

Hill Building  
Name of Property

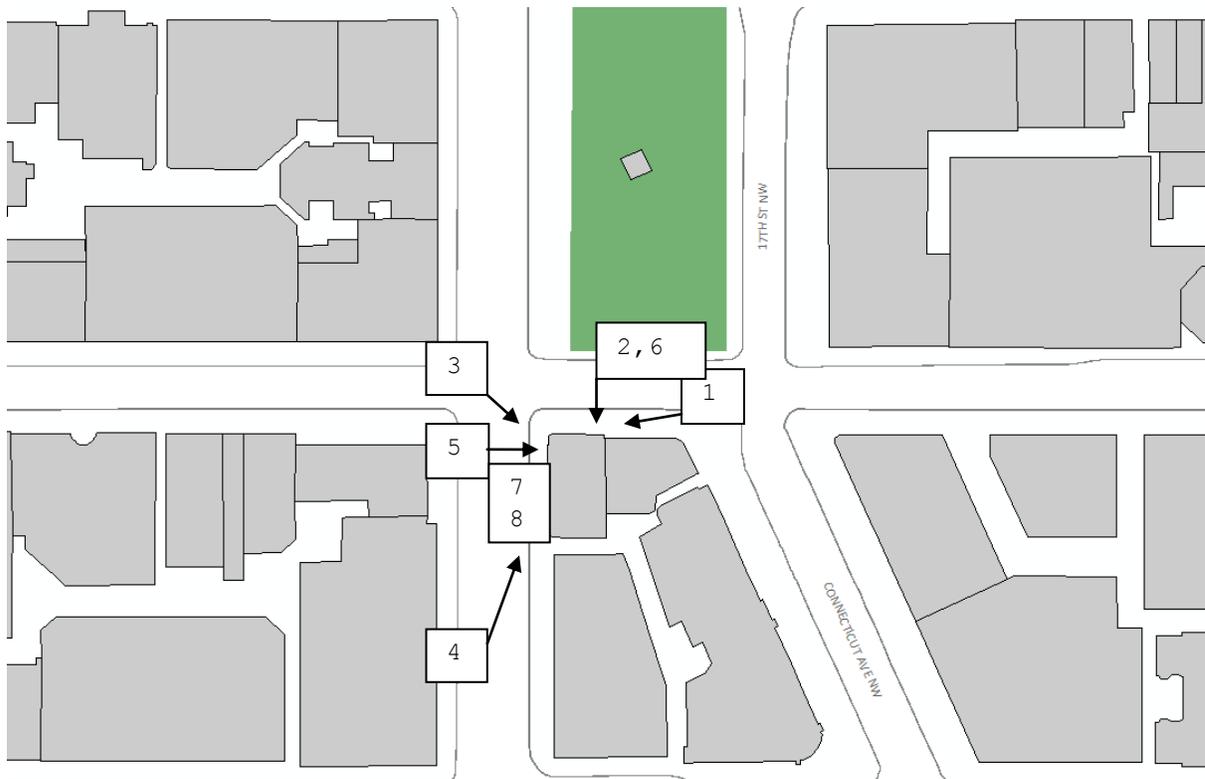
Washington, D.C.  
County and State



Site Plan showing National Register Boundaries for the Hill Building  
(From D.C. Office of Planning, Geographic Information System Maps, 2014)

Hill Building  
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.  
County and State



Key to photographs

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

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



PLAY  
ART PARK & MARKET PLACE

OURMET

ADC Map & Travel Cent

FedEx  
Express

C.R.W.  
MECHANICAL, INC.  
A/C Service  
Mechanical Contractor  
Plumbing  
301/918-0056

NEED DRIVERS?  
NEED PARKING?  
A.S.D. PARKING SYSTEM  
RENTALS

ONLY



PARK PLACE GOLF

frozenyo

UPS  
Worldwide Services

POLICE

MI



1710 ST  
NO STOPPING  
TRUCKS  
EXC  
1710 ST

M  
Farragut West Station

Washington's  
Natchikar

7TH STREET





17 ST NW  
800

→ University Square  
→ Downtown Gallery  
→ The Water House  
→ National Gallery of Art  
→ Cooper House Museum  
→ King Station (D.C.)  
→ National Square

MM  
Metropolitan West Station

RECYCLE  
GOLDEN

the washington ballet  
THE Nutcracker

Various candy and snack items on the cart.

















839



839







UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Hill Building  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, District of Columbia

DATE RECEIVED: 1/30/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 3/05/15  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 3/20/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/17/15  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000073

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 3.17.15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

NATIONAL REGISTER  
of  
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE



MEMO

DATE: January 23, 2015

TO: Patrick Andrus

FROM: Kim Williams *KW*

RE: Transmittal Letter for The Editors Building and the Hill Building National Register nominations

The enclosed disk, Disk 1 (of 2) contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for The Editors Building to the National Register of Historic Places. The enclosed Disk 2 (of 2) contains photographs as per the NR photo requirements of The Editors Building.

The enclosed disk, Disk 1 (of 2) contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Hill Building to the National Register of Historic Places. The enclosed Disk 2 (of 2) contains the Hill Building photos as per the NR photo requirements.