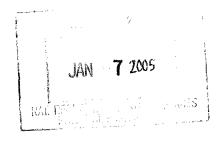
NPS Form 10-900 (Rev. Aug. 2002)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



OMB Approval No. 1024-0018 (Expires Jan. 2005)

architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items. Name of Property Woodward & Lothrop Service Warehouse historic name Square 712, Lot 111 other names/site number \_ 2. Location street & number 131 M Street, NE \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication Washington ☐ vicinity city or town \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_20003 state D.C. 3. State/Federal Agency Certification As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 🔀 nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property 🗵 meets 🗌 does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally 🔀 statewide ☐ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.) Signature of certifying official/Title State or Federal Agency or Tribal government In my opinion, the property  $\square$  meets  $\square$  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( $\square$  See continuation sheet for additional comments.) Signature of commenting official/Title Date State or Federal agency and bureau 4. National Park Service Certification I hereby Lertify that the property is: Øignature of th€ Kegper Date of Action Ventered in the National Register. See continuation sheet. determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet. determined not eligible for the National Register. removed from the National Register. other, (explain:)

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions,

Name of Property		County and State		
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     □ public-Federal     □ object		Contributing Noncontributing  1	sites	
		1		
Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)		Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register		
6. Function or Use				
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)		Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)		
Commerce/Trade: Warehouse		Commerce/Trade: Business		
7. Description				
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)		Materials (Enter categories from instructions)		
Modern Movement: Moderne		foundation <u>Concrete</u>		
		walls <u>Glazed masonry</u> channelled limestone detail		
		roof		
		other <u>Metal windows</u>		
		Management of the Control of the Con		

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

See attached Continuation Sheet

Name of Property	County and State	
8. Statement of Significance		
Applicable National Register Criteria	Areas of Significance	
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)	(Enter categories from instructions)  Architecture	
☑ A Property is associated with events that have made	Commerce	
a significant contribution to the broad patterns of	Industry	
our history.	Indusery	
☐ 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	Period of Significance	
individual distinction.	1937-39	
□ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.		
Criteria Considerations	Significant Dates	
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)	1937-39	
Property is:		
☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for		
religious purposes.	Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)	
☐ <b>B</b> removed from its original location.		
☐ <b>C</b> a birthplace or grave.		
☐ <b>D</b> a cemetery.	Cultural Affiliation	
$\square$ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.		
☐ F a commemorative property.		
☐ <b>G</b> less than 50 years of age or achieved significance	Architect/Builder	
within the past 50 years.	Abbott, Merkt & Company	
Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)		
9. Major Bibliographical References		
Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on on-	e or more continuation sheets.)	
Previous documentation on file (NPS):	Primary location of additional data:	
preliminary determination of individual listing (36	☑ State Historic Preservation Office	
CFR 67) has been requested  previously listed in the National Register	☐ Other State agency ☐ Federal agency	
□ previously determined eligible by the National	☐ Local government	
Register	☐ University	
<ul> <li>☐ designated a National Historic Landmark</li> <li>☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey</li> </ul>	☐ Other  Name of repository:	
#		
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering  Record #		

Name of Property	County and State
10. Geographical Data	
Acreage of Property1.49 acres	
UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)	
1	3
Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)	
Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)	
11. Form Prepared By	
name/title Dennis Hughes	
organization Holland & Knight LLP	dateJuly 1, 2004
street & number 2099 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, #100	telephone <u>202-955-3000</u>
	state D.C. zip code 20006
Additional Documentation Submit the following items with the completed form:	
·	
Continuation Sheets	
Maps	
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the pro	perty's location.
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having	large acreage or numerous resources.
Photographs	
Representative black and white photographs of the pro-	perty.
Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)	
Property Owner	
(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)	
nameUnion Station Associates Limited Partn	ership
street & number 400 Montgomery Street	telephone 415-398-1022
city or town San Francisco	state <u>CA</u> zip code <u>94104</u>

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. 470 et seq.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Keeper, National Register of Historic Places, 1849 "C" Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.

# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

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#### NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

#### **Descriptive Summary:**

The Woodward & Lothrop Service Warehouse is a six-story masonry-clad, reinforced concrete building, constructed in the District of Columbia between 1937 and 1939 to serve the operational needs of the Woodward & Lothrop Company, one of the Washington region's largest and oldest mercantile retail operations. The rectilinear Warehouse was designed by department store architects Abbott, Merkt & Company of New York in the industrial Moderne style. The building facades are composed primarily of buff-colored brick and formed limestone, with a regular grid of metal windows. While vertical and horizontal streamline features of the design express modernity, an undercurrent of stripped classicism is nonetheless present throughout the building, similar to monumental government buildings of the New Deal era. The Warehouse is a near-symmetrical composition, with a footprint measuring approximately 250 feet x 260 feet.

#### **General Description:**

The primary façade, oriented north along M Street, NE, is divided into ten bays, or vertical sets, each consisting of three window apertures per floor. Near each end of the façade, the second and ninth bays are given particular emphasis by the surrounding formed limestone demicolumns, which extend from the second floor to just above the roofline. This extension above the roofline creates something of a parapet effect, adding vertical emphasis to the façade. The remaining bays employ a mix of darker and lighter brick in the spandrel panels between floors and masonry pilasters, further emphasizing the verticality of the building.

At the same time, a strong horizontal emphasis is present, via banding which runs across the north façade (and around to the east and west facades) between the first and second floors, and to a lesser degree along the top of the building. This banding consists of alternating rows of light-colored and darker-colored brick. Beneath the lower banding, the above-referenced bay divisions continue to a well-defined ground level, which also includes a recessed central entrance. The base of the façade is highlighted by darker-colored brick. While no longer operable, the easternmost ground level bay and the two westernmost ground level bays are occupied by metal garage doors, as per the original design of the building.

The east and west facades are strikingly similar to the north façade in terms of materials and composition, with the notable exception that each only contains nine, rather than ten, window bays/sets. The south façade, like the north façade, contains ten bays/vertical sets of windows. However, the south façade does not contain any formed limestone detailing such as demi-

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columns or pilasters, nor does the horizontal banding present on the other three facades wrap around to the south. Further, two bays, the third and the eighth, contain only one window, rather than three. Finally, evident at the southwestern corner of the south façade is the ghost of a four-story hyphen which had been added subsequent to the construction of the Warehouse, in an effort to connect the Warehouse to another neighboring warehouse which fronted 1<sup>st</sup> Street, NE. The other warehouse, along with the hyphen, was demolished in the 1990s and the connection sealed.

The original hopper-type metal frame industrial windows have been replaced on all facades with modern metal windows chosen to carefully replicate the appearance and profile of the original windows. This work was begun in 2002 pursuant to design review and approval of the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Review Board. A number of the window openings are occupied with louvers to allow for ventilation for the industrial, technical, and commercial uses of the Warehouse.

The Warehouse fronts the south side of M Street, NE, near the intersection with 1<sup>st</sup> Street, NE. The western face of the building is stepped back approximately 150 feet from 1<sup>st</sup> Street. The open area which is currently utilized as an outdoor parking area was historically used to allow for the loading and unloading of trucks servicing the Warehouse. Still evident adjacent to the south façade is a rail spur, which was utilized for unloading train shipments at the Warehouse. A vertical "Woodward & Lothrop Service Warehouse" sign, measuring approximately three stories in height, hangs at the southeastern corner of the façade, facing the train tracks running to the immediate east of the property. This lighted sign has been restored as part of the renovations recently undertaken to the Warehouse.

#### Integrity:

Today, the Warehouse appearance remains virtually as it was upon its completion in 1939. The east side of the building was excavated in the 1960s in order to expose the basement. A paved slope now leads to a series of loading bays, similar to those found on the west side of the building. Many of these bays have been sealed, however metal garage doors matching the original profile and appearance have been installed as part of an extensive rehabilitation project undertaken between 2000 and 2003. These rehabilitation projects, which involved extensive cleaning of the exterior, window replacement, water tower refurbishment and interior reconfiguration were undertaken in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation* and in close coordination with the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office.

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At the time of the rehabilitation of the building in 2000-2003, the long vacant Warehouse was sought to be utilized as a telecommunications equipment/switching facility. Nonetheless, as a result of somewhat dramatic changes in the economy, the building is now in the process of being adapted for general office use.

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#### NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Woodward & Lothrop Service Warehouse qualifies for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under both Criteria A and C. The Warehouse is among the most ambitious facilities of its type ever constructed in the District of Columbia. It has served as a visual landmark in the warehousing area adjacent to Union Station for almost 80 years and provides an excellent example of New Deal-era stripped classicism and industrial Moderne architecture.

#### **Historical Significance (Criterion A)**

- Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history:

The Warehouse is significant both for its representation of the Woodward and Lothrop Company, a major retailing institution in the District of Columbia for more than 110 years, and for its strong historical associations with warehouse development, spurred by the construction of Union Station. The construction of the Warehouse was a significant event for both the company – it was the first the company actually built itself – and the surrounding District. The Warehouse represents the growth of commerce and industry in the Nation's Capital during the late 1930s.

#### THE WOODWARD & LOTHROP DEPARTMENT STORE

The Woodward & Lothrop Department Store was founded in 1880 by Samuel Walter Woodward and Alvin Mason Lothrop, who moved to Washington together from Chelsea, Massachusetts to further their interests in the dry goods business. As young clerks, the partners had decided ideas of what a dry goods store could offer its customers. Chelsea proved too small for their ambitious schemes, and a search through Baltimore and Omaha, Nebraska, finally lead them to Washington, which was experiencing a period of dramatic growth following the Civil War.

Woodward and Lothrop opened their first Washington store with partner Charles E. Cochran on February 24, 1880. Known as the Boston House, the new store occupied 705 Market Place, located on Pennsylvania Avenue between Seventh and Eighth Streets, NW. As Washington's first department store, the enterprise proved popular. Almost immediately, a second store was opened only two doors away. However, this situation proved unsatisfactory, prompting another move and consolidation at 921 Pennsylvania Avenue in January 1881.

Woodward and Lothrop's successful merchandising technique, unusual for the time, included the establishment of one set price for goods, which replaced the bartering method commonly used by their competitors. Their reputation and expanded patronage prompted them to look for new

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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quarters in 1887. Their move to the Carlisle Building at Eleventh and F Streets, NW, opening April 2, 1887, demonstrated the partners' desire to test unchartered waters. At the time, F Street was first making the transition from a residential to a commercial neighborhood. This move prompted other retail stores to open in the vicinity, forming the heart of Washington's commercial center for the next 75 years. The first store on F Street was located in a pre-existing building. By 1901, Woodward & Lothrop had grown to such an extent that the partners could commission the construction of a new, highly ornate building on G Street.

Family successors continued the business' policy of expansion. The store expanded from the northeast corner of Eleventh and F Streets to encompass almost the entire block by 1925. Under the direction of Samuel's son Donald Woodward, the department store grew not only in size but in services offered. By the 1930s, Woodward & Lothrop offered a variety of services for its customers and staff, including a jewelry department and repair section, an engraving shop, an optical department, cold storage vaults for furs, the "Walnut Room" for upscale women's fashions, the "French Room" for women's hats, the "English Shop" for men's fashions, the "Evening Room" for men's evening clothes, victrola and radio galleries, furniture galleries, a tea room, ice cream parlour, a power generating plant, and its own food services and employees' cafeteria. This increasing specialization required more storage space and support facilities than the downtown site could accommodate. Consequently, Woodward & Lothrop's fiftieth anniversary (1930) was marked by the purchase of an existing warehouse facility at First, M and Pierce Streets, NE, to handle repairs and package deliveries. Donald guided the store through the Depression years, priming the business for another expansion in 1937 – the construction of the six-story service Warehouse at 131 M Street, NE.

The expansion of the downtown Woodward & Lothrop store during the early 20th century was an attempt to create not only more retail floor space, but office and storage space required for the rapidly growing commercial enterprise. The purchase of a small, existing warehouse in 1930, and the construction of the custom-designed warehouse in 1937, allowed the more valuable space in the downtown store to be devoted to the sale of goods. While clearly constructed with economy in mind, the utilitarian service Warehouse's strong proportions and use of Moderne detailing were clearly intended to impress the corporate image of the Woodward & Lothrop enterprise.

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#### THE WOODWARD & LOTHROP SERVICE WAREHOUSE

The construction of the Warehouse represented a new trend in the retail industry. In the early years of department store development, goods, services and storage were usually contained within the store or in a separate storage building located nearby. However, the increasing size and services offered by department stores, and increasing cost of land in downtown areas, created a need for off-site storage space. Greater storage potential also allowed merchandisers to buy greater quantities of goods at lower prices, and therefore offer them to consumers at the most competitive prices. This arrangement also freed up more retail space at the downtown store, which had previously been required for the storage of bulky items and other related activities which produced no income for the business. Consolidation of these non-income producing activities at a single location on lower-priced property nearer to transportation routes was cost effective. This idea was fully realized in 1937 with the construction of the Warehouse.

Compared to the pre-designed two-story warehouse purchased by Woodies in 1930, the 1937 custom-designed warehouse illustrates the full-blown ideal of the remote delivery station, simultaneously able to take advantage of both rail and road transportation. Not coincidentally, the construction of the Woodward & Lothrop warehouse corresponds directly with the construction of the Hecht Company's warehouse in 1938 on New York Avenue. Both remain excellent examples of the remote delivery station which was first developed in this period.

The construction of the service warehouse also positioned Woodward & Lothrop for its ambitious suburban expansion in the 1940s and 1950s. Located close to rail and trucking lines, the service warehouse served not only the downtown store, but the stores in Bethesda (1946), the Pentagon (1946), at the first purpose-built suburban store in Chevy Chase (1950), and others which were constructed throughout the metropolitan region in the ensuring decades. The Service Warehouse served as the primary service and storage center for the Woodward & Lothrop chain until the construction of their Shirlington warehouse in the early 1970s.

When construction was completed in the summer of 1939, the warehouse was hailed by the Woodward & Lothrop Company as "one of the most distinctive buildings to be devoted entirely to the service functions of any store." Rail siding ran in at the second floor level on the south and east elevations, thus permitting unloading of merchandise from trains into the warehouse, and ultimately onto trucks for delivery. The first floor of the building was devoted to the wrapping and delivery of customers' packages. In addition to the receiving and marketing operations of the store, the warehouse contained stock rooms; dry cleaning services; the manufacturing divisions, such as woodworking, upholstery, engraving, watch and jewelry repair; and rooms for the department store's clerical, typing and accounting staff. The warehouse

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complex was enlarged in 1946 when Woodward & Lothrop bought the holdings of the Palais Royal Department store for \$5.7 million, which included the adjacent Palais Royal warehouse. The warehouses were connected at this time by a four-story hyphen.

#### WAREHOUSE DEVELOPMENT IN WASHINGTON

While some warehouses were located along the waterfront in Georgetown and around the Navy Yards, the development of the warehouse storage facility in Washington is most closely related to the history of the rail industry. While serving as a port city in its first century, Washington never developed into a major shipping hub. However, early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Washington was linked to the rest of the country by rail. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was constructed from Baltimore to the Federal city to facilitate the delivery of goods often hindered by poor road conditions. The first passenger line entered the city in 1835, arriving at the 'Old Original Depot' constructed on the northern edge of the Mall. Seven lines subsequently were laid to service the city, each with their own station.

The McMillan Commission's plan of 1901 for the consolidation of the train stations into one "union" station, set the stage for the near northeast quadrant of the city to develop into an area of industrial uses. Prior to the 1907 construction of Union Station, this area was sparsely developed. Primarily residential, only a few industrial buildings existed along the Metropolitan Branch of the B & O Railroad which ran north from the Mall along Delaware Avenue to First Street, N.E. With the construction of Union Station, rail expansion occurred north of the station, dramatically increasing the number of industrial and warehouse buildings in this area. This growth demonstrates the shifting patterns of transportation in Washington. While earlier, shipping related warehouses were located in Georgetown and along the waterfront around the Navy Yards, the construction of the new Union Station opened up the near northeast quadrant for development related to the rail industry. As the railroad established itself as the primary transporter of goods in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, this trend continued. In the 1920s, when the city first enacted zoning legislation, this area was zoned for industrial uses, further encouraging the construction of warehouse buildings.

#### **Architectural Significance (Criterion C)**

-Embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values

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The Warehouse was designed in the industrial Moderne style by Abbott, Merkt and Company of New York, noted industrial and warehouse design firm. The architectural treatment and monumental scale of the Warehouse was exceptional among similar uses in the District. The Warehouse displays a high level of architectural refinement and is an important and unusual example of the industrial Moderne style that draws from major inter-war architectural trends.

Abbott, Merkt and Company was founded in 1921 and was headed by Hunley Abbott and Oswald L. Merkt, both of whom were engineers. The company's work and reputation were far reaching, and spanned several decades. Nationally, Abbott and Merkt's work includes the New York Port Authority Building, heralded as one of the largest in the country upon its completion; the United Parcel Delivery Station in Los Angeles; and the J.L. Hudson Company warehouse in Detroit, Michigan.

Washington, long associated with traditional, classical styles, was slower to accept the Art Deco and Art Moderne styles than other major cities, such as New York where the style was used readily to express modernistic ideals. Art Moderne, typified by the use of streamlined forms, gained popularity in Washington during the New Deal, when it was often mixed with classical elements (the result has been labeled "Greco-Deco", "1930s classicism", and "stripped classicism"). Abbott, Merkt and Company's design for the Woodward & Lothrop warehouse is a fine example of the Art Moderne style applied to the warehouse building type. The use of limestone trim, brick detailing, and neon signage all work to give the Woodward & Lothrop warehouse a streamlined appearance, while still maintaining stripped classical elements. By mixing both the classical and the Moderne, the design seems particularly appropriate for a Washington warehouse building.

According to a Woodward & Lothrop publication, Roger Garland oversaw the construction and served as the project's associate architect. The building was erected by several construction companies at a cost of \$1 million. Work commenced on the site in February 1938 when excavation began for the basement and foundations. Footings were poured in two stages by the George A. Fuller Company of Washington, preparing the site for the walls by June. The Turner Construction Company took over construction of the superstructure. Several Washington businesses helped with the finishing details.

On July 22, 2004, the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Review Board listed the Warehouse on the District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites, both: (1) because it is an important part of the local economic heritage and major historic element of the surrounding light-industrial zone; and (2) because the Warehouse displays a high level of architectural

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refinement and is an important and locally rare example of period Modernism which draws from major inter-war architectural trends. The Warehouse is comparable to other examples of interwar industrial buildings which convey aspects of the machine-age aesthetic.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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#### **BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

District of Columbia Historic Preservation Review Board, Historic Landmark Application Form and supporting materials filed by D.C. Preservation League September 1991 (copy on file with D.C. Historic Preservation Office)

District of Columbia Historic Preservation Review Board Decision, Case No. 92-1, issued January 27, 1993 (copy on file with D. C. Historic Preservation Office)

District of Columbia Warehouse Survey Project. Traceries. Washington, D.C.: March 1991

Wirz, Hans and Richard Striner. <u>Washington Deco: Art Deco in the Nation's Capital</u>. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1984.

# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

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#### **GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

#### **Verbal Boundary Description:**

The Warehouse is located in Square 712, Lot 111, in the District of Columbia.(Please see attached.)

#### **Boundary Justification:**

The footprint of the building occupies the entirety of Lot 111. Lot 111 is one of two lots (the other being Lot 112) to created through record lot subdivision of former Lot 110. The subdivision plat creating Lot 110 was recorded with the Office of the District of Columbia Surveyor on September 25, 2002.

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Woodward & Lothrop Warehouse

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

**PHOTOGRAPHS** 

1) Woodward & Lothrop Warehouse 131 M Street, N.E.

Washington, DC

Jill Cooper

November 2004

**DCHPO** 

North and western elevations, view looking SE

1/4

2) Woodward & Lothrop Warehouse

131 M Street, N.E.

Washington, DC

Jill Cooper

November 2004

**DCHPO** 

North elevation, view looking west

2/4

3) Woodward & Lothrop Warehouse

131 M Street, N.E.

Washington, DC

Jill Cooper

November 2004

**DCHPO** 

North elevation, view looking south

3/4

4) Woodward & Lothrop Warehouse

131 M Street, N.E.

Washington, DC

Jill Cooper

November 2004

**DCHPO** 

East elevation, view looking west

4/4

SITE MAP

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

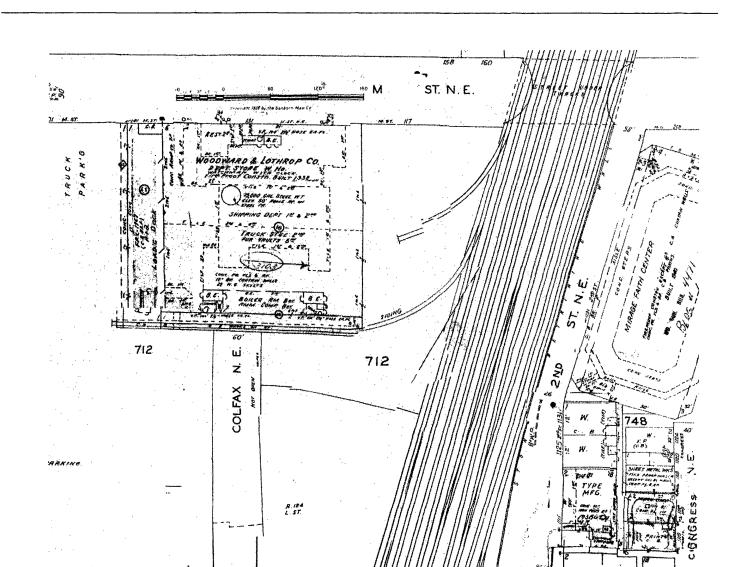
# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Woodward & Lothrop Service Warehouse

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State



Woodward & Lothrop Service Warehouse

131 M Street, N.E.

Washington, D.C.

Base Map from Sanborn Building and Property Atlas, Washington, D.C.,1997