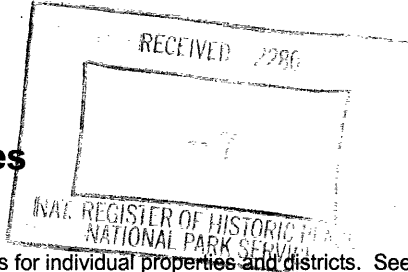


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



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

1. Name of Property

historic name Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District
other names _____

2. Location

street & number Bounded by 400 block Massachusetts Ave., NW on south, 400 block K St., NW on north, Prather's Alley, NW on the east, and 5th Street (west side) on the west not for publication
city or town Washington, D.C. vicinity
state District of Columbia code DC county _____ code 001 zip code _____

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

DAVID MALONEY ACTING SHPD 8-1-06
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that this property is:
- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 - determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 - Determined not eligible for the National Register.
 - removed from the National Register.
 - other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper Patrick Andrews Date of Action 9/19/2006

Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District
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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	
24	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
24	0	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

Historic and Architectural Resources of Mount Vernon Triangle, Washington, D.C.: 1791-1946

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

COMMERCE/TRADE/Specialty Store/restaurant/
Warehouse/trade

TRANSPORTATION/Road-related

DOMESTIC/Dwelling

COMMERCE/TRADE/Specialty Store/Restaurant

TRANSPORTATION/Road-related

VACANT/Not in Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/Second Empire/Italianate/
Romanesque Revival

LATE 19TH & 20TH C REVIVALS/
Mediterranean Revival/Classical Revival

OTHER/Vernacular

foundation Brick/Stone

walls Brick/Stone

roof Slate/Tile/Built-up

other _____

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on files (NPS):

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

Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture, Commerce, Transportation

Period of Significance

1791-1946

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 4.385 acres (191,021 square feet)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	1 8 Zone	3 2 4 8 8 9 Easting	4 3 0 7 8 9 7 Northing	3	1 8 Zone	3 2 5 0 5 7 Easting	4 3 0 7 6 9 4 Northing
2	1 8 Zone	3 2 5 0 5 7 Easting	4 3 0 7 8 9 2 Northing	4	1 8 Zone	3 2 4 9 2 0 Easting	4 3 0 7 7 4 5 Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Peter Sefton and Kim Williams, Architectural Historian

Organization D.C. Preservation League and the D.C. Historic Preservation Office date 9/30/05

street & number telephone

city or town Washington, D.C. state zip code

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- X A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- X A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

- X Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

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

Property Owner

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

name

street & number telephone

city or town state zip code

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

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

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Description Summary:

The Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District consists of a tight-knit group of 24 residential, commercial and light-industrial buildings located in the Mount Vernon Triangle neighborhood in Washington, D.C. Mount Vernon Triangle is a contemporary designation for that triangular area of the city that is located to the east of Mount Vernon Square and that is bounded on the north by New York Avenue, on the south by Massachusetts Avenue, on the east by New Jersey Avenue, and on the west by 7th Street, N.W. This area is part of a larger section of the city commonly referred to as the East End. The area evolved from extremely modest pre-Civil War beginnings of scattered wood frame dwellings occupied by poor residents to a more stable, but still working-class neighborhood of brick, residential, commercial and light-industrial buildings of the late 19th-early 20th-century reflecting a variety of architectural styles, ranging from Italianate to Queen Anne. In the mid-20th century, Mount Vernon Triangle became a more strictly commercial and industrial area of single-story stores, and vernacular industrial automobile-related businesses, including repair facilities and gasoline stations.

The cohesive group of buildings centered around 5th, K and I Streets and forming the Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District survives as a physical remnant and a microcosm of the larger Mount Vernon Triangle neighborhood. The district includes 24 standing structures (all contributing), as well as one known and several potential archaeological sites. Of the standing structures, the district includes buildings representative of all of the major phases of the neighborhood's growth (except the pre-Civil War period for which no standing structures survive), and includes a diversity of building types providing an accurate representation of the variety of building types that were historically found throughout the larger neighborhood.

Buildings in the historic district range in date from the early 1870s to 1946 and represent a variety of architectural styles. The earliest buildings reflect Italianate style influences, while the later 19th-century ones favor the Queen Anne aesthetic. The buildings that date from the early 20th century offer a variety of stylistic influences from the late Romanesque Revival style, to the Colonial and Mediterranean Revival style. In addition to the publicly oriented and more high-style buildings, the historic district also includes alley-fronted buildings lacking any particular stylistic derivation.

General Description:

Site Description:

The Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District consists of a cluster of 24 historic buildings located between Massachusetts Avenue and K Street on the south and north and to either side of 5th Street, including buildings extending along the 400 blocks of I and K Streets, the 900 block of 5th

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Street, and the 400 block of Massachusetts Avenue. These buildings—the sole surviving, intact collection of historic buildings in an area that is under intense re-development with contemporary high-rise condominiums and apartment buildings—stand out for their historic associations, most readily apparent in the buildings' modest size and scale, in their generally vernacular appearance, and in the wide variety and increasingly rare building types they exhibit. Together, these buildings bespeak the historic character of this semi-industrial/commercial and residential working-class neighborhood.

The group of buildings is clearly visible from the major streets and from certain distances from all directions, offering a discernible and palpable expression of a different time and place. In addition to the buildings facing the public right-of-way, elements of the former I-shaped alley in the interior of the square survive, including cobblestone paving and three semi-industrial alley buildings. These increasingly rare building types, and their relationship to the street provide important visual reminders of the city's less well-interpreted historic alley life.

Building Descriptions:

One of the most visually intriguing aspects of the historic district is the layering of history that can be read through the buildings and their relationships to each other. Several distinct periods of growth can be seen in the buildings' architecture, with some of the earliest buildings sandwiched between later, third and fourth-period buildings. In addition, ghosting of steeply pitched gable roofs of earlier first-period frame structures is discernible on at least one, taller brick structure which was built to abut the earlier frame structure that was later demolished. Similarly, a sign painted on one of the alley buildings reveals its original use as a blacksmith shop.

The historic district is buttressed at the corner of 5th and K Streets by some of the neighborhood's oldest standing structures, consisting of four attached, three-story, brick buildings from the 1870s and 1880s. The oldest, a flat-fronted Italianate-style building at 472 K Street and facing K Street, displays fine features, including a broad, bracketed wood cornice and ornate window hoods. It was built between 1874 and 1877 and operated as a saloon with the saloon-keeper's residential quarters above. Although altered, the first floor storefront with its two entrances—one into the store, the other to the upper levels—clearly marks the building's historic commercial/residential use.

The corner structure, facing 5th Street, and extending along the south side of K Street to abut 472 K Street, actually consists of three separate buildings, originally constructed in 1883 and 1885, by the same owner, but rebuilt around the turn of the 20th-century following a fire. The three substantial, three-story brick buildings share a unified appearance, along with a continuous

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corbelled brick cornice and similarly styled brick hood moldings over the segmentally arched windows. These buildings were all originally built with stores on the first floor and residences above. The corner two buildings (933-935 5th Street) ultimately served a primarily commercial purpose, operating as a “feed” store into the 20th century, while 931 5th Street operated first as a stove store, and later became a residence and bicycle dealership. Although the first floor of these three buildings has been altered by the addition of an incompatible storefront, the upper floors remain intact.

South of this important corner, several attached buildings from various phases of the neighborhood’s growth extend along the east side of the 900 block of 5th Street. Single-story commercial buildings from the early to mid-20th-century vie with two and three-story dwellings from the area’s earlier periods of growth. Of particular note is the small, two-story, two-bay Italianate-style brick dwelling at 921 5th Street (1878) which rises above its later single-story neighbors, bestowing it with a certain visual prominence. Built as a residence and shop for a German-immigrant tailor, this modest remnant almost single-handedly tells the neighborhood’s post-Civil War story. Similarly, the three-story dwelling at 915 5th Street, built in 1892, offers a glimpse into the history of the area’s late 19th-century growth. The tall and narrow, three-story brick residence with limited ornamentation was built on the site of an older frame house by speculative builder Charles Edmonston. Rather than build a long row of dwellings as was common for speculative builders in the city at that time, Edmonston stuck with a single building, perhaps an indication of the uncertainty of such an investment in this decidedly working-class neighborhood. Ghosting on the south side of this building reveals evidence of the pre-Civil War gable roofed dwelling that this building once abutted—a dwelling form that was once a common phenomenon in the neighborhood and that no longer survives.

The single-story store buildings between these older structures along 5th Street are all mid-20th century structures built as stores and illustrating the growing commercial character of the neighborhood and the beginning of its residential demise. Architecturally, these buildings represent a fairly standard city-wide commercial building form, characterized by central show windows and parapet roofs. The originally storefronts and glazed show windows have all been altered and filled in, though the original massing of the buildings generally remains intact.

Across the street at the southwest corner of 5th and K Streets and within the historic district, is the neighborhood’s most ornate, 20th-century commercial building. Known as the Wittlin-Deckelbaum building, this Mediterranean-style brick building was constructed in 1931 and consists of five independent stores within. The building was constructed across the street from the Northern Liberties Market following the demolition of Center Market downtown, and elicits a certain promise merchants had for the continuing viability of the market at 5th and K Streets.

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The Wittlin-Deckelbaum building abuts an 1870s Italianate-style residence, characterized by a flat-fronted, three-bay façade and a broad, projecting cornice.

Unlike the very eclectic 900 block of 5th Street, the 400 block of K Street is more stylistically uniform. At either end of the block are the two oldest groupings—the Italianate-style former saloon at 472 K Street and a pair of circa 1873-74 Italianate-style brick dwellings at 444-446 K Street. Both of these survive from the area's second major phase of development, prompted by the construction of the Northern Liberties Market at the northwest corner of 5th and K Streets, and both are excellent local examples of the Italianate style of architecture.

Between these two older buildings, however, is a range of independently built buildings that date entirely from the late 19th/early 20th century and that served almost exclusively residential functions. Of particular note is the building at 460 K Street. Designed in a late Romanesque Revival style, this building was built in 1904 as a store and multi-family dwelling constructed by J.J. Bowles to house the workers in his dairy bottling plant located in Prather's Alley. Architect Julius Germuiller designed the building, articulating it with details such as round-arched windows, rusticated stone stringcourses, and carved impostes that were executed with quality craftsmanship. Bowles who lived next door at 458 K Street, now a vacant lot, clearly cared about the appearance of his block. In 1906, Bowles again hired Germuiller to design the flats at 462 K Street. Here, Germuiller stuck with his Romanesque Revival idiom, designing a three-story brick building featuring a robust, semi-circular projecting bay and rusticated stringcourses. The formstone first floor is a later alteration.

A vacant corner lot separating the 900 block of 5th Street from the 400 block of I Street is a known and partially excavated archaeological site. Archival findings and physical evidence uncovered at the site both indicate that many of the early occupants of this area were tradespersons, including skilled craftsmen involved in the building trade. The archaeology provided evidence of the life and occupation of Thomas Dant, a tailor who lived on the west side of 5th Street, between I and K Streets, NW. Artifacts retrieved from the site included a number of sewing implements.

Next to this vacant corner lot along the 400 block of I Street are several buildings that again illustrate the multi-layered history of the neighborhood. Two Second Empire-style dwellings at 453 and 455 I Street and standing vacant and in deteriorating condition form the western edge of the block, while a 20th-century automobile repair facility, itself constructed in a series of phases, forms the eastern edge. The two dwellings, built almost a decade apart from one another, are excellent examples of their style, with ornate hood moldings articulating 453 I Street--the older of the two houses. This house was constructed between 1874 and 1878 by a John E. Wyess, who included his initial "W" in the incised ornamentation found in the pediment of the dormer

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window. The other house, 455 I Street, was built in 1883 by a local architect who effectively copied the Second Empire style of the neighboring house, instead of looking towards the more fashionable Queen Anne-style buildings of the period. Despite the similar massing and roof shape and form, several details indicate the separation of time between the buildings. In particular, the windows of 455 I are surmounted by simple lintels as opposed to the segmental arched hood moldings found on 453 I, and 455 I has a projecting bay which by the 1880s had become a standard feature of most residential buildings in the city.

Central Autoworks, an automobile repair facility at 443-451 I Street, was built in three phases beginning in 1918-1919 and culminating in 1930 with an addition and new façade. The 20th-century industrial building, characterized principally by its steel sash windows, is perhaps more intriguing for having incorporated three earlier brick buildings on the site into the new structure, while keeping them architecturally distinct on the exterior. All three of these buildings were built to face Prather Alley and originally served semi-industrial purposes. The oldest of the three buildings was constructed in 1912 as a blacksmith shop and was sited behind a frame residence that stood at 445 I Street. It was built by entrepreneur William Beuchert who owned a stable in the alley and had begun dabbling in real estate in the area. In 1915, Beuchert constructed the adjacent warehouse. In 1918 another industrial building was built next to this warehouse. All three of these buildings are unadorned, two-story brick structures with segmental-arched window openings.

Architecturally and culturally removed from the alley are the three substantial Queen Anne-style brick dwellings located at the southern edge of the district at the apex intersection of 5th and I Streets and Massachusetts Avenue. These three dwellings, built in 1887, were constructed by prolific builder Charles W. King for his own personal use and as a speculative venture. By erecting a tall central tower on the center of the three dwellings, King designed the row to address not only Massachusetts Avenue, but the small reservation (park) forming the apex of the lot. King and his family occupied the central house with tower with his family, while renting the others out. The houses, raised upon a sturdy rusticated stone base and culminating with a delicate corbelled corner, truly stand as a focal feature in the surrounding area.

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Summary Statement of Significance:

The Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District is historically and architecturally significant as a physical remnant of a unique 19th and early 20th century working-class neighborhood in Washington, D.C. that was largely dependent upon the commercial activity of the 7th Street corridor and the Northern Liberties Market. The historic district—a tight collection of 24 historic buildings amid vacant lots and recently constructed high-rises—provides a microcosm of what was formerly a larger and more densely developed area east of Mount Vernon Square. The buildings of the historic district provide visual reminders of the types and scale of buildings that were erected by members of this community—working-class entrepreneurs of mixed races, including a sizeable German and Italian immigrant population, many with ties to the local merchant community. Initially the district developed as a residential area dependent upon the important 7th Street commercial corridor, but evolved to become a more complex, mixed-use neighborhood comprised of residential and dual purpose residential/commercial buildings, as well as light industrial buildings all sharing the same streets and alleyways.

Prior to the Civil War, the Mount Vernon Triangle area consisted of scattered wood frame dwellings generally occupied by residents involved in a variety of manual trades. After 1874, when the Northern Liberties Market moved from Mount Vernon Square to 5th and K Streets, NW, Mount Vernon Triangle became a more stable neighborhood as merchants and entrepreneurs began to invest in the community, new and varied businesses were established, and older frame structures were replaced with more permanent brick ones. During the early to mid-20th century, as automobile suburbs began to emerge to the north and east of the city, Mount Vernon Triangle became a heavily trafficked automobile commuter route, and the former residential area became increasingly commercial and industrial as residents moved out and automobile-related businesses, including repair facilities and gasoline stations, moved in. In more recent decades (1960s and 70s), the area became the focus of urban renewal efforts, and many of the historic buildings were demolished to make way for I-395 through the city, or were simply cleared. The buildings of Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District which survived this 20th-century clearance illustrate several phases of the area's physical growth and remain as a clear and palpable expression of a by-gone era.

The Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District is significant under Criterion A of the National Register of Historic Places for the following reasons:

Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District is a unique remnant of a primarily working-class neighborhood in the Eastend section of Washington, D.C. replete with the combination residential, commercial/residential, and light industrial buildings that historically characterized this section of the city. The district has important historical associations with the city's German and Italian immigrants

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who established themselves here and who, through entrepreneurial efforts, contributed significantly to the building of the community, including residences and businesses. As the sole surviving collection of buildings in what was historically a larger neighborhood, the historic district offers a rare glimpse into the lifestyles of the residents of this mercantile community composed largely of craftsmen and tradespersons.

The Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District meets Criterion C of the National Register of Historic Places for the following reasons:

The Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District contains a sizeable and cohesive collection of resources that represent a variety of historic building types and that illustrate several of the phases of the 19th- and 20th-century growth of Mount Vernon Triangle. The buildings provide good examples of modest-scaled, 19th century dwelling types designed specifically for the area's working-class residents; dual-purpose, 19th and early 20th-century residential/commercial buildings unique to this kind of mercantile neighborhood; and exclusively commercial and light industrial buildings representative of the changing patterns of the area's development from a primarily residential neighborhood to a commercial/industrial one. Together, these buildings provide a visible contrast to the subsequent and surrounding late 20th/early 21st-century, high-end, high-rise residential development of the Eastend, and serve as important visual reminders of the area's more modest past.

Mount Vernon Triangle meets Criterion D of the National Register of Historic Places for the following reasons:

A partially excavated archaeological site located within the historic district at the northwest corner of 5th and I Streets yielded a high concentration of artifacts likely associated with the former resident—a tailor by trade. Remnants of that site are known to still be in place. In addition, an historic study of the site indicates that there is still the potential for archaeological resources to be present along 5th Street and along I Street.

Based upon documentary research conducted on the historic district, there is a strong potential for archaeological resources to be present which would reveal significant information on the former residents of the historic district and on early commercial enterprises that operated in Mount Vernon Triangle. There has been no new construction on several of the district's vacant lots since the relatively recent demolition of the 19th-century buildings on the sites—including an 1880s-era "workshop" and an early 20th-

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century dairy bottling plant—thereby yielding high potential for archaeological remains to be present under the current ground cover.

In addition to providing a greater understanding of the business element of the area, archaeological evidence could yield important information on 19th and early 20th-century alley life. Near the turn of the century, eleven African-American families lived in dwellings located in Prather's Alley in the historic district. Archaeological resources, which most likely remain beneath the present-day parking lot in the alley, could provide new and useful information on the living conditions of the poor and under-employed African Americans of the alley as compared to the working-class white immigrants who occupied the dwellings facing the public streets. Although various ethnic groups represent were well-represented in Washington and in Mount Vernon Triangle during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, this aspect of the city's history is not well known.

The Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District is tied to the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Document: *Historic and Architectural Resources of Mount Vernon Triangle, Washington, D.C.* The period of significance for the historic district extends from 1873 when the oldest standing building within the district was constructed to 1946, when major demographic shifts altered the socio-economic and architectural character of the larger neighborhood.

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Resource History and Historic Context:

The Northern Liberties Market and the Rise of the Mount Vernon Triangle Neighborhood:

As discussed in the Multiple Property listing: *Historic and Architectural Resources of Mount Vernon Triangle in Washington, D.C.*, the history of the larger Mount Vernon Triangle area began in the mid-19th century as the 7th Street corridor developed into an important transportation artery and commercial corridor. As development spread out from the Northern Liberties Market at Mount Vernon Square, the vacant lots east of the Square slowly began to develop. By the 1850s, many of the first occupants of the Mount Vernon Triangle area were merchants and tradespersons, including skilled craftsmen involved in the building trades. These early residents lived in modest frame and brick dwellings, above-ground evidence for which exists only in the rear wall of the rebuilt dwelling at 919 6th Street and as ghosting on the wall of later buildings (i.e. 915 5th Street).¹ However, several relatively undisturbed vacant lots in the district have a

¹ The dwelling at 919 6th Street is located one block outside of the historic district, but consists of a frame building whose front and side walls were rebuilt in brick in 1885, but whose original frame rear wall is still standing and visible from the alley. The south

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high potential of revealing underground resources from this first period of construction in the neighborhood, just as an already excavated site at 5th and I Streets provided evidence of pre-Civil War life.

The first major impetus for growth in the Mount Vernon Triangle neighborhood came in the 1870s and early 1880s, following the 1872 demolition of the Northern Liberties Market at Mount Vernon Square. Many of the vendors who opposed demolition of this market formed the Northern Liberty Market Company and began construction of the new Northern Liberty Market building at the northeast corner of 5th and K Streets. This market, designed by architect James H. McGill and opened in 1875, was a soaring architectural and technological achievement of iron and steel with 284 interior vending stalls (Figure 1). Construction of the market not only served as a major catalyst for growth in the area, it also promoted the unique combination of residential/commercial/industrial buildings immediately around it that characterizes the district today.

An 1875 Water Department Survey included in the 1875 Commissioners Report of the District of Columbia shows that the majority of buildings constructed in the overall area were primarily residential; however, those constructed immediately adjacent to the market were noted as "stores." Clearly in an effort to attract market-goers, local entrepreneurs, rising merchants, and tradespersons, many of them recent immigrants, moved into the area, and built new, more substantial buildings, and opened businesses to complement those of the market as well as those found along the nearby 7th Street commercial corridor. The evolution of the area from its extremely modest pre-Civil War beginnings of frame houses to a more promising working-class community of brick buildings can be seen in the histories of the still-extant and earliest buildings in the district, namely the duplex at 444-446 K Street, the saloon at 472 K Street, the feed and stove store 931-935 5th Street, the tailor shop/residence at 921 5th Street, the residence at 924 5th Street, and the residences at 453-455 I Street.

Market-Inspired Development and the Growth of a Working Class Mercantile Community

472 K Street: One of the first buildings to be constructed in response to the promise of the new market and illustrating the cultural diversity of the neighborhood is the three-story brick Italianate building at 472 K Street. Although its earliest history is not known, the building (constructed between 1873 and 1877) was a "saloon" in 1890, kept by a William Rupertus, then by Irishman Joseph Lane in 1900, and the McCarthery family (also Irish) in 1910. Living with these resident-managers and their families were a revolving cast of Irish and German boarders—including laborers, a butcher, paperhangers, and a horseshoer.

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444-446 K Street: The pair of residences at 444-446 K Street (built ca. 1873-74) was home to numerous immigrants, including English, Irish, Russian, Austrian and German-born persons. The residents of these dwellings all held a variety of working-class jobs and, given the number of persons living in the houses at any given time, also appear to have been economically on the edge.

McDermott Shops (931-933-935 5th Street): John McDermott, an established carriage builder in the city and speculator in city real estate, saw the potential for profit in the area afforded by the new market. In 1883, McDermott, whose manufactory was located at 310 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, applied for a permit to build two substantial three-story brick dwellings/stores at the corner of 5th and K Streets strategically located immediately across from the new market. The new brick buildings were to replace earlier frame dwellings on the site that were home to a basketmaker, a huckster, and a blacksmith. In 1888, five years after they were completed, the new buildings at 933-935 5th Street are shown on the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps as a produce store. By 1890, the combined buildings operated exclusively as a flour and feed store. In 1885, McDermott built the adjoining three-story brick building at 931 5th Street to accommodate a "stove" store. These three corner buildings are, today, the most visually prominent buildings in the historic district.

Kiefer House (921 5th Street): The small Italianate building at 921 5th Street reflects the neighborhood's working-class history and its ties to Washington's German-American community. The building was constructed in 1878 for Conrad Kiefer (1828-1909), a self-employed tailor and naturalized citizen who had emigrated from Germany in 1858. Fellow German Henry Klinge, a longtime builder and contractor in Washington, likely constructed the building, which was designed to accommodate a store or business on the first story and a residence above.² Although Kiefer initially rented out both spaces, he eventually moved into the house, operating the first floor as his tailor shop, while living above it with his family.³

Wyess-Herman House (453-455 I Street): Other, more well-established members of the German-American community did not seek to live in the neighborhood, but like other speculators, clearly saw potential profit that the promise of the market and the rising Mount Vernon neighborhood could offer. John E. Wyess, a prominent military surveyor and artist who was active in German-American affairs in the city, purchased a lot near the corner of 5th and I Streets and constructed the brick Second Empire dwelling at 453 I Street between 1876 and

² Although no builder is listed on the D.C. Permit to Build (11/11/1878 #1566), Henry Klinge signed the application, indicating his role as builder of the property.

³ In 1904, Kiefer, who was then 75 years old, applied for a permit to remove the storefront door and display window, partially brick up the door opening and install a three-sash, non-protruding bay window. This conversion from store/residence to residence was completed in early 1905. See D.C. Building Permit (10/31/1904) 989½ and (5/4/1905) 2326.

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1878. Wyess, who had his initial “W” incised into the window hoods of the building, rented the house to a fellow German, Charles Hermann and his family. At that time, Charles Hermann was an architect employed by the Architect of the Capitol. After living there for several years, Charles Hermann was able to purchase the adjoining lot, and proceeded to build his own house on the site. Upon completion of the house in 1883, Hermann moved into the house with his family. Charles Herman’s entrepreneurial vision, and his rise from renter to owner characterize the development trends of the Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District.

City-Wide Infrastructure Improvements and Mount Vernon Triangle:

Like the larger area and as detailed in the Multiple Property Document, the Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District benefited enormously from the massive, city-wide improvements implemented by Alexander R. “Boss” Shepherd and his Board of Public Works, as well as by the extension of the city’s streetcar network. By 1884, a streetcar line ran east-west along Massachusetts Avenue and another one ran north-south along 4th Street. In 1888, New York Avenue was the selected route of the city’s first electric streetcar line that ran from the east side of Mount Vernon Square along New York Avenue to Eckington at Boundary Street. While the accessibility of the area to a variety of streetcar lines and the area’s proximity to both Capitol Hill and downtown fueled some residential speculative development geared to the city’s middle-class, the decidedly working-class nature of the existing neighborhood and the commercial/light industrial uses of the existing buildings clearly discouraged heavy speculation in the area. Unlike other northwest Washington neighborhoods that were developed with long rows of middle-class residences by the city’s most well-known architect/builder teams, the development of the Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District tended to be much more modest and small-scale, with single houses or pairs of dwellings characterizing new construction. Furthermore, much of the development was the result of local efforts by residents who lived and worked in Mount Vernon Triangle.

John J. Bowles Dairy Bottling Plant and Associated Buildings (460 and 462 K Street): The collection of buildings constructed by resident dairyman and entrepreneur John J. Bowles in the first decade of the 20th century along K Street and in Prather’s Alley clearly illustrates this trend. John J. Bowles, born in Amherst, Virginia in 1867, moved to Washington, D.C. with his father before the turn of the century. As early as the late 1890s, Bowles operated a dairy business, originally at 111 H Street, NW. Bowles also owned a dairy farm in Rockville, Maryland. Milk from his Jersey herd was brought into the city to be bottled and delivered to customers by a squadron of horse-drawn wagons. By 1904, Bowles had moved to Mount Vernon Triangle and began growing his already prosperous business. In November of 1904, Bowles began construction of a two-story brick dairy bottling plant on Prather’s Alley in Mount Vernon Triangle. Since the mid-1880s, Prather’s Alley contained a combination of residential,

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commercial and light-industrial buildings, including a bakery, a tinner's shop, numerous private stable buildings, and a number of alley dwellings, occupied by poor African Americans.

"Bowles' Jersey Dairy" bottling plant was designed by architect Julius Germuiller and contained 5,000 square feet of space. At the time of the building's completion, Bowles had moved to the neighborhood, living in the now-demolished house at 458 K Street that stood next door to and in front of his alley enterprise. One month after applying for the permit for the bottling plant, Bowles applied to build the current building at 460 K Street immediately in front of the plant. Also designed by Germuiller, it is a three-story brick building that was designed as lodging for Bowles' dairy workers. In 1910, the building housed twelve male employees, all Virginians, including two laborers, five drivers, a route manager, a bookkeeper, and the dairy engineer. Although the dairy suffered substantial loss by fire in 1911, Bowles maintained his business, remodeling the dairy several times thereafter. During this time, Bowles became a leader in Washington dairy industry affairs. In both 1907 and 1917, sharp increases in feed and labor costs prompted the Maryland and Virginia Milk Producers' Association to press for an increase on wholesale milk prices. In 1907, Bowles was appointed by his peers to serve on a committee of six Washington milk dealers that had been established to negotiate with the Association.⁴

Bowles' success in the dairy industry enabled him to continue to build in Mount Vernon Triangle. In 1906, he demolished an existing frame house at 462 K Street—home of fifteen members of three African American families—and replaced it with the present three-story, three-unit, brick apartment building on the site, completed in January 1907. Despite its location in front of the bottling plant, Bowles' investment property was a luxurious building in comparison to its working-class neighbors, and appears to have had rising middle-class residents in its early years. In 1910, the building was home to three families, including that of Benjamin Sanham, a druggist; that of William Millburn, a café owner; and that of the John Patterson.

John Bowles continued to operate his dairy until 1925, when the buildings were sold to become a "milk bottle exchange." Here, milk bottles, which were expensive to manufacture, were washed out for re-use. Publicity for periodic drives to recover the 20,000 milk bottles in Washington used each day, urged consumers to return them to the exchange in an early form of recycling.⁵

468 and 470 K Street: These buildings located next door to Bowles' residential and commercial enterprise were built by members of the local merchant community. The dwelling at 468 K Street was built by Joseph A. Baur who operated the stove store at 931 5th Street, and 470 K Street was built by William H. Schluter, a neighborhood saloon-keeper. Joseph Baur lived in

⁴ *The Washington Post*, September 15, 1907.

⁵ *The Washington Post*, November 11, 1926 and October 17, 1928.

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his house with his extended family until the 1930s when they moved out and the single-family dwelling became an overcrowded boarding house.

915 5th Street: Despite a preponderance of home-grown development, some outside speculation also came to Mount Vernon Triangle. The tall and narrow 915 5th Street was a speculative venture, constructed in 1892 by Charles Edmonston. Edmonston, identified as “the well known contractor and builder” by the *Washington Post*, had a 65-year construction career. Alone or in collaboration with his nephew, Edmonston erected numerous mansions on 16th Street, NW including the John Hay and Henry Adams houses across from Lafayette Square, the Chandler and Anderson houses near 16th and K Streets, and the Charles Sherman house at 1401 16th Street. Based upon his building resume, the small-scale apartment house in a working-class neighborhood was a sort of aberration for this builder; however, its occupation by members of the mercantile and trade community throughout the building’s history is consistent with the neighborhood’s socio-economic demographics.

King’s Row (457-459 Massachusetts Avenue): Other outside speculation more consistent with the city-wide trend of building groups or rows of residences for the expanding middle-class, government workforce was focused on Massachusetts Avenue. One such early effort by an outside developer is seen in King’s Row (or, House of Ruth) property—a group of three substantial, 3-1/2-story brick Queen Anne-style dwellings constructed in 1887 at 457 Massachusetts Avenue, 459 Massachusetts Avenue and 833 5th Street, N.W.⁶ The three buildings, constructed by speculative builder Charles W. King were strategically sited along the tonier Massachusetts Avenue, and immediately adjacent to Reservation 74—a small parklet located at the apex of Massachusetts Avenue, 5th Street, and I Street, N.W. and were meant for single-family residency. Builder Charles W. King actually lived in the center of the three houses, notable for its corner tower, while either selling or renting out the other two. King lived at the house until at least 1895.

Although intended for single-family residency, it appears that all three of the houses became boarding houses by 1900, as recorded in the 1900 census. Interestingly, the house facing 5th Street and closer to the mercantile activity of the market was occupied throughout the 1900s and 1920s by a preponderance of first-generation Americans—mostly German and Irish—while the larger boarding house at 459 Massachusetts Avenue attracted more skilled and white-collar workers. In 1910, the house was home to a Government Printing Office proofreader, a printer, an insurance agent, government clerks, and an engineer living at the house, and in 1920, there was a GPO printer, a music professor, a railroad clerk, a lawyer and a pianist. Clearly the Massachusetts Avenue address and the directional emphasis of the building towards

⁶ 459 Massachusetts Avenue and 833 5th Street were consolidated into a single residence after 1930 and today hold the single address of 459 Massachusetts Avenue.

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Massachusetts Avenue and away from the market area appealed to a slightly more affluent and educated resident.

The Commercial and Industrialization of Mount Vernon Triangle

Prather Alley: During the second and third decades of the 20th century, Mount Vernon Triangle began to see an increase in commercial development. Several new businesses joined existing ones on Prather Alley (such as Bowles' Dairy Bottling plant), just as others—namely, The Charles Schneider Bakery—expanded beyond the confines of the alley to the public streets.⁷ In 1912, William Beuchert contributed to the neighborhood's commercial growth by building a new blacksmith shop on Prather Alley, along with an associated warehouse building. William Beuchert, born in Germany and naturalized in 1885, was related to the Beuchert family who founded Beuchert's Tavern at 8th and H Streets, NE before the Civil War. Like many members of his family, William, originally a baker, was an entrepreneur who became a notable member of the city's retail community. In 1906, William Beuchert owned a stable in Prather's Alley and by 1909, Beuchert was buying and selling lots on the alley.⁸ By 1910, he had settled his family of eleven children in a now-demolished house at 430 K Street. In 1912, Beuchert filed an application to build a two-story brick blacksmith shop at the rear of 443 I Street, on the site of an existing farrier. According to the permit, architect B.F. Snelling designed a new building for the site. This building, constructed with a 20-foot frontage on Prather's Alley, stretched 60-feet along the blind alley leading back to the principal alley. Painted signs on the building advertised carriage and wagon repair work. George Ridgeway, the first tenant of the blacksmith shop, had operated blacksmith and wagon repair businesses in the District since the 1890s.⁹

Within a month of completion of the blacksmith shop, the *Washington Post* opined that "the time is not far off when the horse-drawn vehicle will be as great a curiosity as the cross-town streetcar of New York" and hailed the truck as the "surer, cheaper, better means of conducting business."¹⁰ Beuchert's investment was not hopelessly out-of-date however, as a 1913 permit reveals that he had applied for a hand-powered carriage lift built by the Otis Elevator Company.¹¹ In 1915, Beuchert continued to expand his business, building the two-story brick warehouse to abut the blacksmith shop. The warehouse follows a similar utilitarian form as the blacksmith shop, but

⁷ Between 1904 and 1927, the Charles Schneider Bakery expanded to encompass the entire southeastern quadrant of Square 516, eliminating a large number of dwellings that ranged along both along 4th Street and I Street.

⁸ *The Washington Post*, July 13, 1909.

⁹ Washington, D.C. City Directories.

¹⁰ *The Washington Post*, December 22, 1912.

¹¹ Washington, D.C. Permit to Build 2368 (November 25, 1913).

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enjoys twice the alley frontage of the blacksmith shop--the warehouse has an almost 40-foot width fronting Prather's Alley.¹²

William Beuchert continued to expand his local operations. In 1917, he traded land with J.J. Bowles, the dairy bottling man, in an effort to assemble a larger parcel adjacent to his existing business.¹³ In 1918, Beuchert clearly saw the future of the automobile that *The Post* had presaged six years earlier, and in an attempt to capitalize on it, had erected an automotive repair garage to face I Street. The building replaced a house at 451 I Street and was built adjacent to and in front of Beuchert's alley-facing blacksmith shop and warehouse. The new Central Auto Works, a two-story brick building with a repair bay on the first floor, opened on April 1, 1919.

Central Auto Works (443-451 I Street): Central Auto Works was a full-service shop that performed mechanical repairs as well as paint and bodywork and even constructed custom bodies. Throughout the early 1920s, William Beuchert added equipment and left a trail of permits for such items as a freight elevator, motors, and woodworking equipment. The latter was required because most automobile bodies of the day had wooden framing with sheet metal panels stretched across it. Like many a nineteenth-century tradesman, Beuchert continued to live close to his place of business. In 1929, his daughter Ruth, Central Auto Works' bookkeeper, narrowly escaped being robbed by an ex-policeman when she walked across the alley from the family home with a payroll.¹⁴

The Central Auto Works building is one of the first manifestations of change brought to Mount Vernon Triangle by the automobile. As noted in the Multiple Property document, suburbs began to emerge to the north and east of the city, turning the historically residential New York Avenue into a busy automobile commuter route. Entrepreneurs like William Beuchert responded to the growth of the new mode of transportation by building automobile-related resources, including garages and gas stations along the broad New York Avenue commuter route, as well as along the smaller side streets. Many of these new businesses replaced residential buildings. Then, as less-desirable businesses moved in, the remaining residents moved out, leaving room for more industrial development. Although Central Auto Works is the only automobile-related business within the historic district, several other automobile-related businesses survive in the larger Mount Vernon Triangle, such as the former Lord Baltimore Gas Station at 6th and K Streets, NW and the Hartig Motor Company building at 627 K Street, NW.

¹² In 1918, another building fronting the alley was built to abut this warehouse. Although no D.C. Permit to Build could be located for this building, it is likely that Beuchert built it as an addition to his warehouse.

¹³ *The Washington Post*, May 10, 1917.

¹⁴ *The Washington Post*, November 17, 1929

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In 1928, with the influence of the automobile fully entrenched in the neighborhood, Beuchert undertook another major expansion to his auto repair facility. In October of that year, Beuchert was granted a permit to “take down, piece-by-piece” existing frame buildings at 443-445 I Street,¹⁵ and in August 1929, he began construction of a major addition to the 1919 Central Auto Works facility.¹⁶ This new building, completed by mid-1930 and which utilized an estimated 20,000 bricks, was designed by Peter Remsen, an engineer with the Fred Drew Construction Company. This new brick and concrete building filled the remainder of the lot to the line of Prather Alley. The façade of the 1919 building and this building were unified to appear contemporaneous. The 1912 blacksmith shop, the 1918 warehouse and adjoining building were all incorporated into the large Central Auto Works. The various lots were consolidated and today the series of buildings are treated as one, bearing the single address of 453-455 I Street.

William Beuchert died in September 1931 at age 67.¹⁷ His widow Lena served as president until her death at age 77 in 1939.¹⁸ In the World War II-era, Central Auto Works was succeeded by a BF Goodrich Tire outlet store, which continued at that location into the 1960s. Today, the building remains in commercial use, divided between automotive repair establishments and a gold leaf studio.

Second Wave of Commercial Development Comes to Mount Vernon Triangle

The neighborhood around the Northern Liberties Market at Fifth and K Streets had long been home to food purveyors. So, when the demolition of the Center Market in 1931 displaced many meat and poultry dealers downtown and raised demand for suitable commercial space for these firms, many of them naturally moved north to be near the still-extant Northern Liberties Market. Four commercial buildings from this post-1931 period were constructed in the historic district, including 917-919, 923, and 925-929 5th Street and the more architecturally notable Wittlin-Deckelbaum building at 500-506 K Street.

The one-story brick commercial buildings at 917-919 and 923 Fifth Street NW flanking the 1878 Conrad Kiefer House at 921 5th Street were built as investment properties for J. Edward Fowler (1873-1948). Fowler, a second-generation Washington real estate dealer, allied himself with local architect Thomas M. Medford (1870-1942) to design the two buildings in 1936.

In 1935, at the age of 65 and after a federal government career as an engineer and architect, Thomas Medford began his most prolific period of design. Although probably best known for

¹⁵ Washington DC Building (Raze) Permit 117956, October 9, 1928

¹⁶ Washington DC Building Permit 127123 and associated documentation, August 31, 1929

¹⁷ *The Washington Post*, September 3, 1931

¹⁸ *The Washington Post*, August 22, 1939

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his design of the Plaza Hotel on North Capitol Street, Medford designed dozens of smaller dwellings and apartment houses in neighborhoods as far-flung as the 2700 block of Sixth Street NE and the 2300 block of 40th Street, NW. He is credited with just a few stores, including those on 5th Street.

917-919 5th Street: 917-919 Fifth Street, the larger of the two commercial buildings, was built in 1936 on the site of a pair of two-story frame dwellings owned by the Fowler family. The new commercial building opened as the poultry market of James A. Beasley, Jr., a business which remained for 25 years. The building was later the scene of several early animal rights protests against its tenant—the Arrow Live Poultry Company. The June 1980 picketing of the store by representatives of several groups, including the newly-formed People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), was the first local “animal rights” protest reported in *The Washington Post*.¹⁹ Arrow Live Poultry was succeeded by a florist in the mid-1980s.

923 5th Street: The narrow building at 923 5th Street, also constructed in 1936, was originally occupied by tenant Horace Lloyd, a fish dealer. However, by 1938, it had become the clothes cleaning establishment of Daniel Baldomino. By 1951, Baldomino’s shop had given way to the National Egg Company, a wholesale distributor that remained at the location into the 1960s.

925-929 5th Street: The building at 925-929 5th Street, constructed in 1946, was designed by Silver Spring architect W. Ellis Groben and built by the J. Zawatsky Company for the Union Distributing Company, which was then occupying a storefront in the Wittlin-Deckelbaum building across the street. The new building was designed as a meat market and distribution center with its own refrigeration plant. Perhaps to celebrate the opening of its own building, the Union Provision soon changed its name to the Director Company, after the surname of its owners. Directors Distributing was one of Washington’s leading purveyor’s of kosher meat, and occupied the building for many years.

Wittlin-Deckelbaum Building: In 1930, with the impending demolition of Center Market, the Northern Liberties Market Association made every effort to attract Center Market vendors. In November of 1930, 100 Center Market dealers had already leased space at Northern Liberties Market at 5th and K Streets, and according to the president of the association, the facility had enough remaining space to accommodate others.²⁰ In May 1931, following the December 31, 1930 demolition of Center Market, the *Washington Post* contained a display ad announcing “the new locations of the Louisiana Avenue Market [Center Market] Merchants.” These advertisers’ new stores were scattered across the city—some at the O Street and Arcade Markets, others on Water Street SW or at the new Washington Terminal Market in northeast. As noted above, some had moved to the Northern Liberties Market, which soon

¹⁹ *The Washington Post*, June 26, 1980.

²⁰ *Washington Post*, October 20, 1956, p. B2.

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renamed itself the “New Center Market,” while others relocated in proximity to existing markets, such as Louis’ Meat and Fish Market which moved to 5th and I Streets, NW and the Harry Harris Meat Market which relocated to 931 5th Street, NW.

While Wittlin’s Meat Market continued to give “courteous service” at 606 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, within a block of the old Center Market, Morris Wittlin and Samuel Deckelbaum owners of the Washington Supply Market and business partners, understood the investment opportunity in creating a new business in proximity to a market center. (Both Morris Wittlin and Samuel Deckelbaum were born in Russia and immigrated to the United States in 1903-1904. Wittlin, born in 1880, had become active in the Washington wholesale-retail meat business in 1909.²¹ Deckelbaum, who was about ten years younger than Wittlin, had settled in Baltimore as a 15-year-old immigrant. He moved to Washington in 1918 to become secretary-treasurer of the Washington Supply Market.²² Deckelbaum’s family was active in several other Washington retail businesses, including a delicatessen and a liquor store.) So, in the summer of 1931 the firm planned construction of a new brick-clad concrete and limestone building containing five storefronts and an office loft catty-corner to the old Northern Liberties Market building. The building, which was estimated to cost \$50,000—an enormous sum, especially during the Depression—was designed by architect A.J.S. Atkinson²³ and constructed under the direction of consulting engineer Morris Gumenick.

The Washington Post would not use the words “super market” to describe a Washington, DC store until 1933, when the Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company opened a store at 710-712 Eleventh Street NW. However, the concept of “a self-service retail market that sells foods, convenience goods, and household merchandise arranged in open mass display” was becoming known in 1931, after the establishment of such chains as the Piggly-Wiggly Stores in the south and the King Cullen Market in New York City.

There were many reasons why the supermarkets displaced the corner groceries and municipal markets that went before them, not the least of which were the economies of such large-scale vertically-integrated businesses that controlled their own centralized distribution services. But an early marketing advantage of the supermarket was its emphasis upon being “scientific” and “hygienic”. Supermarkets were brightly lit, especially in comparison to the dim and often dingy corner grocery, airy and spacious, and made such modern marvels as cellophane-wrapped produce lying on beds of clean fresh ice part of the shopping experience. Atkinson’s building partook of this supermarket aesthetic with its clean lines,

²¹ *Washington Post*, December 28, 1934, p.7

²² *Washington Post*, May 8, 1931. p.9

²³ Atkinson had begun his architectural career in Washington shortly before World War I, designing a handful of stores and dwellings. However, his marriage in 1925 to the daughter of the Municipal Architect appears to have benefited his career as the quality of his design commissions, including this high-profile new store, were enhanced.

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bright colors, and large windows. Wittlin and Deckelbaum apparently believed that this modern look coupled with the latest technology would appeal to wholesale clients as well as retail customers.

On April 29, 1932, most of page 9 of *The Washington Post* was occupied by a display ad proclaiming the opening of "A Modern Food Center" at the southwest corner of Fifth and K Streets NW. Below a photograph of the new building and the announcement of a \$25.00 prize for the best building name, the ad listed the special bargains offered by both the Wittlin Beef and Provision Company and the Washington Supply Market. The lower section of the ad offered boxed congratulatory messages from firms who had participated in the building's construction, including Frank Heinze and Son of Florida Avenue, who had installed the refrigerator boxes and cork insulation, and the Washington Refrigeration Company of 918 New York Avenue, which had provided the central electric refrigeration plant.

The ad concluded a testimonial from builder-engineer Morris Gumenick, who extolled the buildings "ultra-modern" features, which included central electric refrigeration, a glass-enclosed, temperature controlled meat cutting sector, and the "total elimination of vermin". Even traditional features such as the farmer's market shed were given a modernistic twist by being hailed as "sanitary". Gumenick further evoked the supermarket aesthetic by remarking "we have seen to it that there shall be plenty of light and fresh air. This is a primary consideration wherever food is handled." He somewhat immodestly concluded "I have created a job well-done. The plant is made so as to be scientifically perfect."²⁴

No one was ever announced to have won the \$25.00 prize and Wittlin and Deckelbaum's building never had an official name. However, as 1933, the worst year of the depression, turned to 1934, the building was near full occupancy. Although Albert M. Briggs died on April 5, 1934²⁵, his firm continued to do business at 506 K Street under new management. Then on May 5, 1934, Samuel Deckelbaum died at age 45 after a long illness, leaving a widow and three young children.²⁶ His widow Mary continued to operate the Washington Supply Market for years, and in time invested in other real estate projects around the city.²⁷

By 1936, the building was fully occupied, with the office space on the second story rented out to a number of labor unions and a restaurant. Despite a seemingly successful business, by 1938, Louis Wittlin's firm had become bankrupt.²⁸ The building then entered receivership and was not sold until 1948. Wittlin then operated an interior design business from his home until his death at age 76 in 1956.

²⁴ *The Washington Post*, April 29, 1932, p. 9.

²⁵ *The Washington Post*, February 11, 1934, p.6.

²⁶ *The Washington Post*, December 28, 1934.

²⁷ *The Washington Post*, April 17, 1934, R.

²⁸ *The Washington Post*, April 16, 1938 X22.

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With population shifts, the rise of supermarket chains after World War II and the disastrous New Center Market fire of 1946, the importance of the Fifth and K Street food markets and economic health of the neighborhood declined. Although the Wittlin-Deckelbaum Building was generally fully-occupied, the types of businesses it housed changed.

After World War II, the Washington Supply Market had gradually transitioned from selling groceries to liquor under the proprietorship of other members of the Deckelbaum family. By 1948, the Atomic Bug Company extermination firm had begun a long-term tenancy at 926 Fifth Street. As late as 1960, the building was still home to two meat distribution firms, one of which, the Albert Briggs Company was still occupying 506 K Street in the 1980s.

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Verbal Boundary Description:

The Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District begins at the northwestern corner of K Street, NW, mid-block between 5th and 6th Streets, NW then extends due east along the southern curbline of K Street to mid-block between 4th and 5th Street, NW to its intersection with Prather Alley, then extends south along the eastern curbline of the Prather's Alley to I Street, NW, then extends west along the northern curbline of I Street to the eastern edge of the lot lines of the property designated 457-459 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, then south along the lot line to Massachusetts Avenue, NW, then westerly along the northern edge of Massachusetts Avenue, NW to 5th Street, NW, then north along the eastern curbline of 5th Street to the southern edge of the lot line upon which the building at 924 5th Street, NW sits, then west to the rear lot of 924 5th Street, then north, following the rear lot lines of the buildings at 924 5th Street and 500-506 K Street, to K Street and back to the beginning. +

Boundary Justification:

The Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District includes a section of the larger area referred to as Mount Vernon Triangle. The proposed boundaries retain the greatest concentration of historic buildings and potential archaeological sites that accurately represent a microcosm of the larger area. The boundaries have been drawn around the collection of historic resources, including vacant lots that are potential archaeological sites. The boundaries capture a variety of building types and forms that represent the various phases of development of the historic district.

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

PHOTOGRAPHS

- 1) Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District
Washington, DC
Kimberly Prothro Williams
October 2005
DCHPO
400 block of K Street, looking west
1/8

- 2) Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District
Washington, DC
Kimberly Prothro Williams
October 2005
DCHPO
400 block of K Street, NW looking east
2/8

- 3) Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District
Washington, DC
Kimberly Prothro Williams
October 2005
DCHPO
444-446 K Street, NW view looking southwest
3/8

- 4) Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District
Washington, DC
Kimberly Prothro Williams
October 2005
DCHPO
502-506 K Street, NW at southwest corner of 5th and K Streets, NW
4/8

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

PHOTOGRAPHS

- 5) Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District
Washington, DC
Kimberly Prothro Williams
October 2005
DCHPO
900 block of 5th Street, view looking south
5/8

- 6) Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District
Washington, DC
Kimberly Prothro Williams
October 2005
DCHPO
453-455 I Street, NW, view looking north
6/8

- 7) Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District
Washington, DC
Kimberly Prothro Williams
October 2005
DCHPO
Rear of 443 I Street, NW showing Prather's Alley and alley buildings
7/8

- 8) Mount Vernon Triangle Historic District
Washington, DC
Kimberly Prothro Williams
October 2005
DCHPO
Prather's Alley, view looking north from I Street to K Street
502-506 K Street, NW
8/8

MOUNT VERNON TRIANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS LIST

Page No. 1

DC IPS DATABASE 02/03/2006

ID-ADDRESS-DATE-CONSTRUCTION EVENTS-ARCHITECTS--Contributing

ID Number	Address	Date	Construction Event	Architect
0484 -0024-	502-06 K Street NW	1931 -32	Orig Construction	Atkinson, A.L.J.
0484 -0818-	924 5th Street NW	1877 ca		
0516 -0007-A	449Rear I Street NW	1915		
0516 -0008-	451Rear I Street NW	1918		
0516 -0008-A	453Rear I Street NW	1915	Orig Construction	Wenig, Julius
0516 -0044-	470 K Street NW	1902	Orig Construction	Ettsinger, F.J.
0516 -0052-53	444-446 K Street NW	1873 pre		
0516 -0812-	453 I Street NW	1878-1879		
0516 -0813-	455 I Street NW	1883		
0516 -0824-	915 5th Street NW	1890	Orig Construction	Edmonston, Charles
0516 -0825-	917-919 5th Street NW	1936	Orig Construction	Medford, Thomas M.
0516 -0826-	921 5th Street NW	1878		
0516 -0827-	923 5th Street NW	1936	Orig Construction	Medford, Thomas M.
0516 -0828-	927-929 5th Street NW	1946	Orig Construction	Groben, W. Ellis
0516 -0830-	931 5th Street NW	1885	Orig Construction	Beers, Isaac
0516 -0831-		1883	Orig Construction	Beha, John
0516 -0834-	468 K Street NW	1898		
0516 -0839-	444 K Street NW	1873-1874		
0516 -0876-	443-51 I Street NW	1919-1930		
0516 -0876-A	443Rear I Street NW	1912	Orig Construction	Sneeling, B.F.
0516 -0879-	460 K Street NW	1904	Orig Construction	Germuiller, Julius J.
0516 -0881-	462 K Street NW	1906	Orig Construction	Germuiller, Julius J.
0516S-0026-	457 Massachusetts Avenue NW	1887		
0527 -0801-	902 3rd Street NW	1869 ca		

24 RECORDS IN THIS REPORT

MOUNT VERNON TRIANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT-Non-Contributing Buildings List

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DC IPS DATABASE 02/03/2006

ID-ADDRESS-DATE-CONSTRUCTION EVENTS-ARCHITECTS--Non Contribu

ID Number	Address	Date	Construction Event	Architect
0516 -0815-	459 I Street NW	1949		

1 RECORD IN THIS REPORT