

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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NATIONAL HISTORIC REGISTER

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Foggy Bottom Historic District

other names/site number N/A

### 2. Location

street & number Bounded by New Hampshire Avenue, 24th, 26th, H, and  not for publication N/A  
city, town Washington K Streets, N.W.  vicinity N/A  
state District of Columbia code DC county N/A code 001 zip code 20037

### 3. Classification

#### Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

#### Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

#### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>135</u>	<u>91</u> buildings
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
<u>135</u>	<u>91</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. 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.  See continuation sheet.

see below

Signature of certifying official \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Carol B. Thompson  
Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_

18 June 1987  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

State Historic Preservation Officer \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. 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): \_\_\_\_\_

Patrick Andrews  
Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

10/14/87  
Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single dwelling

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/ Single dwelling

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

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walls Brick

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roof Metal

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other Stone lintels,

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Metal cornices

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Foggy Bottom Historic District contains over 200 buildings on approximately three acres in the heart of the Capital. The district's boundaries are K Street on the north, New Hampshire Avenue on the southeast, 24th Street on the east and 26th Street on the west; they define a primarily residential area. Where portions of nineteenth century Foggy Bottom remain, the buildings reflect their origins in the working class residential community that existed at that time. Except for a single alley warehouse and a few structures built as corner stores, only rowhouses survive. They form a cohesive neighborhood of modest dwellings, built in a limited range of materials and styles. Primarily flat-fronted brick structures, the rowhouses are generally two, but occasionally three, stories in height. The modest styling and ornamentation reflects the limited circumstances of their nineteenth century occupants.

The buildings in the district date primarily from the late 1870's to the first decade of the twentieth century and they reflect the stages of the neighborhood's development. The earliest residences are individually constructed rowhouses that were built for their original owner. Notable among these is a group of four brick buildings along 25th Street and the adjacent frame house at the corner of 25th and Eye which may have been associated with the underground railroad. The brick buildings are distinguished by their flat facades and side entries.

The individual rowhouses were later joined by small groups of two or three attached houses, built by area residents on speculation. They are good examples of urban vernacular architecture, erected by successful members of the community. Several residences within the district were built by Peter McCartney, a carpenter whose craftsman's skill in handling unpretentious designs and materials is seen in his work at 2530-2532 Eye Street.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Ethnic Heritage/ European

Period of Significance

1870-1911

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Significant Person N/A

Architect/Builder

Grimm, Norman

McCartney, Peter

Beers, A.H.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The District of Columbia Historic Preservation Review Board has recommended that the Foggy Bottom Historic District be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. The district meets Criterion C and is significant because it:

- 1) is a distinguishable residential neighborhood whose growth illustrates an important aspect of the social history and economic development of the Nation's Capital from the mid-nineteenth century until World War I;
- 2) retains representative examples of each period of its development, including a variety of vernacular row housing types characteristic of Washington's working class neighborhoods;
- 3) possesses sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to convey the values for which it is judged significant.

The Foggy Bottom Historic District is a primarily residential district comprised of four squares within the larger Foggy Bottom neighborhood. The district was developed in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century. The predominant building type is the rowhouse, extant from the years when this area housed the immigrant labor that worked in nearby industries. In addition to the primary sources (which include census records and city directories), two important secondary sources shed light on the history of Foggy Bottom. They are Suzanne Sherwood's Foggy Bottom 1800-1975 and Elmer Kayser's history of George Washington University, Bricks Without Straw.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Borchert, James. Alley Life in Washington: Family, Community, Religion, and Folklife in the City, 1850-1970. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1980.

Bryan, Wilhemus Bogart. A History of the Nation's Capital. New York: Macmillan Company, 1916.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: District of Columbia Office of

Historic Preservation

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property Approximately 3 acres

UTM References

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the intersection of K and 25th Streets, proceed east along the centerline of K Street, turning south along the eastern edge of lot 19 to the northern edge of the alley; proceed eastward and southward along the

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

North Boundary: The northern boundary of the historic district is the centerline of K Street, N.W. This wide avenue forms a strong and distinct boundary separating part of the historic district from the area to the north.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title	<u>Lois Snyderman, Executive Director</u>	date	<u>21 May 1987</u>
organization	<u>Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A</u>	telephone	<u>(202) 659-0011</u>
street & number	<u>1920 G Street, N.W.</u>	state	<u>D.C.</u>
city or town	<u>Washington,</u>	zip code	<u>20006</u>

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The long blocks of similar flat-fronted, two-story rowhouses, generally built after 1885, represent the culmination of the vernacular tradition in Foggy Bottom. They were built as speculative ventures by such firms as Dannenhower and Sons and B. H. Warner & Co. Within a relatively small area there are a dozen groups of such rowhouses, on both streets and alleys, built in blocks of four, six, or as many as sixteen units. Although some are attributed to Washington architects such as Albert Beers and Norman Grimm, they are generally simple and repetitive interpretations of a stock vocabulary of architectural forms.

Two groups of residences that were designed and built by the Burden family appear to reflect the strong ethnic character of the community at the turn of the century. These houses are characterized by European vernacular design elements such as bellcast roofs, lancet windows, Flemish gables, and peaked lintels. Their picturesque quality and medieval details strongly contrast with the sophisticated bay-fronted Victorian townhouses that were far more typical of the residences in Washington during this period.

As a whole, the district presents a low scale harmony of rhythmic rowhouses which are occasionally adorned with whimsical ornament. Many of the area's newer residences closely follow the established scale and fenestration patterns of the district's historic structures and compliment the design cohesion of the older buildings. A number of the newer apartment buildings continue the physical rhythm of the surrounding streetscape, if not the scale. Where contemporary large scale buildings do intrude, the rhythm of the street is compromised, but not broken. Despite the varying forms of architecture, the large number of rowhouses clearly dominate the ambience and character of the district.

The following are descriptions of key buildings within the Foggy Bottom Historic District. Organized by square, they are representative of the structures that contribute to the district.

Square 17

The oldest structure in Square 17 is the corner building at 2500 Eye Street. The house is one of only a handful of frame structures in the Foggy Bottom area. It is cubic in form with a flat roof. The original weatherboard has been concealed by aluminum siding.

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The four buildings on 25th Street, numbers 822, 824, 826 and 828, are brick with a flat facade and a side entry. All are representative of the urban vernacular style buildings built in the district between 1874 and 1884, when single family homes in the city became affordable for the working class.

Number 822 is two stories high and three bays wide. Its wooden cornice is accentuated by four decorated brackets set between dentil work. This building is the most stylistically ambitious of the group, with its windows and door capped with brick lintels which reference the Second Empire style.

Number 824, which was built in 1878, is a brick building that has been stuccoed. The modest building is two bays wide and three stories high. All original ornamentation has been removed except for a row of modillions beneath the eaves.

Number 826 was constructed simultaneously with 824 and built by its original owner, Michael Clancey. It is a modest, plain building, devoid of any distinguishing decoration.

Number 828 was built in 1884 by John Scanlan, a prosperous local saloon keeper who was responsible for erecting several other houses in Foggy Bottom. This house is the smallest of the group, having only two stories and two bays. Its decoratively detailed brick cornice is typical of the district.

The residences on the 2500 block of Eye Street exhibit features typical of modest urban dwellings in the district. A series of nine closely abutting rowhouses of modest scale and decoration are flanked by larger houses at each end. These rowhouses, dating to 1911, are all similar in style and proportion and are sited to follow recessed lot lines.

Number 2506 Eye Street is a simple brick dwelling with a flat facade; it is distinguished by a decorated cornice and three brackets supporting corbelled eaves. Two bays wide and two stories high, plus a basement, its entrance has been raised to allow access on the main level. The structure is compatible both in scale and proportion with its neighbors at 2508 and 2504 Eye Street.

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Peter McCartney, Foggy Bottom's best known builder, designed and constructed the house at 2508 Eye Street for Thomas Cahill in 1887. It is a simple, freestanding building two stories high and two bays wide with a flat facade. McCartney's skill with brick and wood is evident in the restrained, corbelled brick cornice and delicate jigsaw work above the windows as well as in the delicate attenuated columns that flank the entry.

Numbers 2506 and 2508 form the east flank of a row of modest two-story houses. The first group in the row, 2512-2518 Eye Street, was developed by owner/builder Harry Kite to the design of architect A. H. Beers. They are modest brick structures, two stories high and two bays wide, with a flat facade. Their wider proportions and their simplicity of design identify them as dating from the first years of the twentieth century. They were speculative buildings erected for the working class market of Foggy Bottom. 2414-18 have non-original ornamented doors and a bay window has been added to the front of 2516.

A second group of speculative houses, 2520-2528 Eye Street, is composed of five rowhouses designed by Washington architect Norman Grimm. They are one meter wider than a similar row to the east and are also slightly more ornate. The additional width allows for two windows and a door on the first floor and two windows on the upper story. The bracketed cornice, two string cornices, and plain stone lintels are details which create a distinctive facade.

The streetscape is completed by the two attached houses at 2530-2532 Eye Street, designed and constructed by Peter McCartney. Two stories high and two bays wide, they achieve an imposing appearance with their intricate brick cornice work. There is an unusual ground level arched opening in the connecting party wall that provides access to rear yards; McCartney's skill with brick is seen in the arch and cornice.

### Square 16

The six buildings at 900-910 25th Street illustrate the use of decorative brickwork to add visual interest to modestly-scaled buildings. The brick cornice has a distinctive corbel motif at its eaves; the same motif is used to accentuate the segmental arched windows. These small houses are two stories high and two bays wide, with alternating entry position.

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The dwellings at 2503-05-07 Eye Street form a unique group within the district. Designed in 1892 by Thomas Francis, Jr. for T. B. Harrison, they boast large projecting square bays. These buildings present a forthright appearance with their massive bays and strong vertically set brick cornices. The original windows have been replaced.

The row of dwellings along 25th Street is typical of the district. Numbers 912, 912½, 914, and 914½ are distinguished by the varied placement of entrance doors. All four buildings are two stories high and three bays wide. Designed in 1887 as a speculative project by B. H. Warner and Company, they were originally used as single family residences. Number 912 is particularly notable because it retains the original door location and has fine proportions. An intricate stepped brick cornice crowns the group and segmental arches over the windows are accentuated by pressed brick detailing.

Number 2534 K Street was designed and constructed in 1889 by local master builder Peter McCartney. It is a three-story brick building that was originally intended for use as both a store and a residence. It was built for Peter McIntyre who operated his grocery store there until the first decade of the twentieth century and also used it as his home. McCartney, a carpenter by trade, practiced extensively in Foggy Bottom both as a designer and a builder. His work with brick exhibits a masterful control of vernacular building techniques, demonstrated by both the skill and the originality that he brought to his projects. The building is situated on an angular corner lot and features strong massing. Decoration is limited to simply detailed pressed and molded brick. String coursing, an ornate corbelled cornice of brick, and limestone segmental arched lintels in a beaded design are used across the three elevations of this freestanding building. A three-story square bay which is crowned by an arched pediment that emphasizes its corner position provides visual relief from the repetitive rowhouse streetscape.

Numbers 949-955 26th Street are larger rowhouses which retain their original simple appearance. Built in 1892, two stories high on a raised basement, the buildings are three bays wide. Their ornamentation is restricted to the brickwork used for the high cornice and as an accent on the segmental arches.



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Number 947 26th Street is a McCartney building with a full scale octagonal bay. Very similar in ornamentation to the adjacent buildings at 949-955 built in 1892, it was constructed in 1886 and appears to have served as the model for its neighbors.

The residence at 901-907 26th Street represents both the new and the old Foggy Bottom. It is composed of two brick buildings that were renovated for residential use in the late 1970's to the design of the Washington architectural firm of Swaney Kerns. While only the front brick wall of one building and the facades of the other remain, the original scale, material, and fenestration has been maintained. The design is innovative, responding to the neighborhood's basic design elements. Iron work by the well-known craftsman Albert Paley in abstract and stylized motifs adorns the building and a large gate at the entry area on 26th Street.

### Square 28

The structures at 2421-2427 Eye Street exhibit the picturesque quality of Foggy Bottom's small scale rowhouses. These four buildings were constructed in 1889 by Joseph Burden to the designs of B. Burden. They offer simple interpretations of the English vernacular designs that gained popularity with the emergence of the English Arts and Crafts style. This early use is unusual and indicates a level of stylistic awareness that was not typical of Foggy Bottom. Two stories high and two bays wide, two of the houses feature a variation of a bellcast roof, another is parapeted, and the fourth has a front gable. The recessed entries and individually proportioned fenestration add to the charming character of this row.

Numbers 2407, 2409, and 2411 Eye Street were designed in 1909 by A. H. Beers for builder Simon Oppenheimer. The structures are two stories high and three bays wide and are constructed of brick set in Flemish bond. They are simple, flat-fronted buildings that display careful attention to proportion. Wide rusticated lintels accent the windows and corbelled brick decorates the cornice.

In 1881, Peter McCartney worked on the building at 2431 Eye Street in Square 28, which was being constructed for John Casey. Two bays wide, it features a one-story polygonal bay. The cornice is a deeply set, triangulated corbel that is very similar to the cornice on the residence at 828 26th Street, built in 1884 by Joseph Scanlan.

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Square 29

Square 29, one of the more intact squares in Foggy Bottom, illustrates the charming character attained in the district by buildings of modest price and scale. Here, the juxtaposition of buildings with flat facades next to those featuring refined articulation creates a successful visual interplay. This picturesque square illustrates the ethnicity of Foggy Bottom and establishes a very intimate street scale.

The first large group of buildings to be built in the historic district, at 828-38, 842-44 New Hampshire and 2400-2416 Eye Street, were designed and built in 1886 by James H. Grant for speculator Samuel Norments. With the exception of 842-44 New Hampshire, these buildings are stylistically similar. Two bays wide and two stories high, they feature a decorated cornice and segmental arches with beaded moldings over the openings. They are simple buildings, but pleasant in scale and proportion. Situated in two groups, one facing Eye Street and the other New Hampshire Avenue, they are joined at the corner by a large building which was originally a store and a dwelling. Using the same motifs seen in the adjacent rowhouses, this building presents a grander image through its massing. A central door flanked by large bays gives it the appearance of a substantial residence.

Numbers 2426-2438 Eye Street are distinct from the rest of the buildings on the square and from each other. Number 2426 boasts a brownstone facade and an elegantly curved bay, while number 2428 has been covered with clapboard and features a bold cornice and lintels.

Using a flat facade, 812-818 New Hampshire Avenue illustrates a pleasing, commonplace approach to the urban dwelling. Each building is two bays wide, the first floor accented by a double window. Segmented arches support the openings and are highlighted by beading in pressed brick.

The sixteen brick rowhouses at 801-821 25th Street and 800-810 New Hampshire Avenue are well proportioned and exhibit a variety of designs. Constructed in 1890 as a single group, two basic designs are skillfully articulated to create a rich streetscape. Designed by Charles Burden, they clearly show a stylistic relationship to the buildings

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constructed by the Burdens at 2421-27 Eye Street in 1889. A variety of materials (red brick facades, brick and iron cornices, roofs of slate and tin) are used to create a picturesque ensemble of buildings. Their references to European vernacular architecture place them in a distinct category of Foggy Bottom buildings. Both their composition and their design are evidence of the architect's talent and academic leanings. Simple flat-fronted buildings at each end of the group give it closure and provide a transition to adjacent buildings.

The adjacent structures at 815-821 25th Street possess a style typical of Foggy Bottom. With flat facades and flat roofs, their simple two bay wide and two-story high composition is relieved by brick arches and cornices. The cornice extends the length of the four buildings and its corbelling is broken only between 817 and 819, where the grade requires it.

Numbers 801-813 have a very different appearance from the preceding group. Designed as a unit, these six buildings are defined by sloping roofs set between stylized Flemish gables. Peaked lintels, dormer windows and a pleasing scale give these houses a European charm. The building at 801 25th Street dominates the corner with its two-story turreted tower. A sloping slate roof accentuates the building's mass.

Beginning with the design of 800 New Hampshire, this row is stylistically the most unusual in Foggy Bottom, with a vernacular interpretation of forms common to medieval Europe. Number 800 New Hampshire employs a sophisticated use of massing to turn an obtuse corner angle. By intersecting two flat planes and varying the roof and fenestration, the building takes on an unusual character while connecting the rows on both streets.

Number 802 is distinguished by a first story with pointed arch windows and door. Its second story features a simple rectangular window with peaked lintels. The cornice is articulated in projecting vertical rows of brick. At number 804, an exaggerated pitched roof is punctured by two gabled dormer windows decorated with half timber. A recessed doorway and peaked lintels complete the facade.

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A corbelled gable, complete with a pseudo-chimney set into the mansard roof, gives 806 a unique appearance. The fenestration contributes to the picturesque design, with a diminutive window set between the door and a more typical-size window on the first floor. Two narrow windows, placed closely together, define the second story. The fishscale tile of the roof completes the design.

On number 808 the mansard roof projects over the first story and, like 804, is punctured by two gabled dormer windows. A fir tree motif, routed in half timber, decorates these gables. The first story is like that of 804 in organization and detailing. Keeping with the massing of 802, this building completes the group.

The final structure, 810, is a tiny rowhouse ornamented with a romantic castle motif. The flat facade is broadened at the second story by an oriel window and the window cornice is crenellated. The first floor has an arch over the windows and door. This shape is accented by molding in a contrasting color. The cross motif created in recessed brick completes the medieval castle theme.

#### ALLEY DWELLINGS

The significance of Foggy Bottom's vernacular architecture is further enhanced by the nineteenth century alley dwellings that are located in Snow's Court and Hughes Mews. An alley dwelling is one which faces onto the alley, as distinguished from the sheds and stables which often face toward houses. Historically, alley buildings had some architectural diversity, but most followed the same plan. The standard dimensions for alley dwellings were 12' x 30', with a rear yard 10' x 15'. Most were two stories high and had two to four rooms. The upstairs contained the bedrooms, while downstairs, depending on the needs of the occupants, there was additional sleeping or living space. The kitchen, also downstairs, served as the center of household activity. Some of the later brick alley dwellings had basements, but they were uncommon. Other standard features included rain barrels and water hydrants for catching water; stoves or fireplaces; and outhouses.

In his fine study, Alley Life in Washington, James Borchert divides alley houses into four categories which illustrate the evolution of alley construction. The first category, as mentioned above, consisted of small

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shanties and sheds erected in the 1850's, most of which have long since been removed. Following the Civil War more permanent structures began to appear. These "second category" buildings were erected by property owners and, along with existing sheds, rented out to migrants. They usually had fireplaces and chimneys, but little else.

The third category, the frame houses of the 1870's and 1880's, were built in large numbers in response to the local housing shortage. These wooden rowhouses were sturdy, with fireplaces and gutters. Though very simple, some had shutters and decorated cornice lines. Many had small steps and porches and several windows.

The fourth category, the brick dwellings of the 1880's, are those which survive in the district today; they were probably built by established contractors. Approximately the same size as the frame dwellings, these well built houses were set on low brick bases and were slightly raised. They had flat tin roofs and more ornamentation. Although the bricks were usually laid in common bond, their decorative facades rivalled those of the street houses. The finer versions of these houses attracted more affluent tenants as well.

Snow's Court, one of Washington's most famous inhabited alleys, is within Square 28. The alley dwellings here date from the early 1880's and are simple brick structures. They are two stories high on raised basements. Each unit is two bays wide. The only original ornaments are corbelled cornices and the segmental arched windows.

The brick alley dwellings in Hughes Mews are two stories high and two bays wide; only portions of the original rows survive. They feature brick corbelled cornices which are more intricate than those on many similar buildings in the district.

In conclusion, the brick rowhouses in the Foggy Bottom Historic District are artifacts of a different era in Washington. Their owners and residents were rarely people of means, but they developed an architecture with ornament and charm. The small scale of their buildings and their limited resources challenged their architectural skills. The clever manipulation of brick to create a range of decoration, their effective use of good proportion, and their recognition of the value of well-placed ornament produced a cohesive built environment. Each building, modest though it may be, survives as an important element in this neighborhood and stands as evidence of the working class residents who created it.

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### NONCONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS IN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT

The number of noncontributing buildings in the district is 91, they are identified on continuation sheets 3 and 4 of the "Maps" section.

Noncontributing buildings are those which do not date from the district's period of significance (1870-1911) or which have been so substantially altered that they have lost their original architectural character. Most of the noncontributing buildings fall into the first category. Within this category, there are substantial differences in the degree of incompatibility exhibited.

There are those (relatively few in number) which are clearly incompatible because of their scale and design (photograph #16). The larger, out-of-scale buildings that comprise a segment of noncontributing resources are from the post World War II era. They intrude on the district with styles, materials and massing unlike the historic core, but are small in number. Others (by far the more numerous) are compatible in scale and materials (the new rowhouses on Queen Anne's Lane, photograph #15, for instance) but are distinguished from the district's historic structures. Most of the noncontributing buildings in the Historic District fall within the latter category, and, therefore, they contribute to the strong "sense of place" that is evident in the district.

Numbers 2531 and 2529 Eye Street, N.W. (Square 16) are recent buildings which are more compatible in scale and materials, but not in design. The older structures at 913 and 915 26th Street, N.W. (Square 16) have been substantially altered and are, therefore, listed as noncontributing.

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INTEGRITY OF THE DISTRICT

The Historic District contains 226 buildings, <sup>91</sup> of which are noncontributing. Despite the sizeable proportion of noncontributing buildings, the Historic District retains a significant core of historic and contributing buildings. Furthermore, many of the district's noncontributing buildings are partially compatible, for either their scale, materials, or overall appearance. They help to create a sense of visual coherence which belies the large number of noncontributing buildings.

Foggy Bottom remains an unusual element in present-day Washington. The late 19th century working-class neighborhood is still clearly discernable from the immediate surroundings which have changed from single-family residential to institutional, multi-family, and business purposes. Foggy Bottom serves as a visual reminder of Washington's little-known industrial heritage.

As the Statement of Significance concludes, the Foggy Bottom Historic District:

"possesses sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, materials . . . to convey the values for which it is judged significant."

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The area popularly called Foggy Bottom is generally considered to fall between 17th Street on the east, Georgetown on the west, the Potomac River on the south, and Pennsylvania Avenue on the north. Historically, this area was divided into two sections, with 23rd Street separating an upper-income neighborhood to the east from the working class/industrial neighborhood to the west. According to Elmer Kayser, historian of George Washington University, writing in Bricks Without Straw, "The name was never an official one, indicating fixed metes and bounds. For decades it was one of those popular terms of denigration which traditionally fix themselves to an area, like Swampoodle, Frog Island, Herring Hill. . . Its great landmarks were two breweries, a large coal yard, extensive stables, the gas works, and a famous saloon. Time works a strange legerdemain. The development of a parkway along the Potomac, the contemporary craze for restoration of old dwellings, and the construction of great memorials, monumental government structures, high-rise office buildings, and luxurious apartments have given Foggy Bottom a distinct éclat and its name a place in the literature of politics, society and the arts." (p. 216-17)

Specifically, this district is significant for: 1) its association with Washington's early working class; 2) its geographic and sociological relationship with one of Washington's early industrial areas; 3) the fact that it remains one of the few neighborhoods associated with European immigrants in a city noted for its relative absence of European-American communities; and 4) the value of its architecture as a guide to the lives of its residents.

1. Association with Washington's Early Working Class: Those responsible for building the district's houses included well-known architects such as A.H. Beers and Norman Grimm and prominent developers such as Harry Kite and James Grant. But the men and women who gave Foggy Bottom its distinctive character were the carpenters, the bricklayers, the builders, and the nineteenth and early twentieth century residents who helped shape Foggy Bottom with their dreams for a better life in America. They were men like Peter McCartney, an Irish immigrant who began as a carpenter and soon established his own successful contracting business. McCartney's name is associated with more buildings in Foggy Bottom than any other person. It is people like Pleasant Hough, a widow who built her own home, a modest house, but one that reflected her economic self-sufficiency. Or James Scanlan, another Irish immigrant, who rose from a job as bartender to the ownership of his own saloon, and who went on to build houses in Foggy Bottom. The people who lived in Foggy Bottom, whether in rowhouses along the main streets or in alley dwellings, spent most of their lives here, developing a "sleepy backwater" into the neighborhood that survives today.



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2. The Geographic and Sociological Relationship With One of Washington's Early Industrial Areas: This neighborhood housed the workers from such nearby industries as Godey's lime kilns, the Washington Gas and Light Company, the glass works, the Abner/Drury and the Christian Heurich breweries, and Cranford's Paving Company. The growth of industrial activity in the area and an expanding ethnic population kept Foggy Bottom from sharing in the benefits of Governor Alexander ("Boss") Shepherd's late nineteenth century public works program, which was directed primarily within Northwest Washington. As improved public transportation encouraged those who could afford it to move from the sleepy backwater that was Foggy Bottom, the population of the area came to consist primarily of the poor immigrants who lived close to their work. These people, mostly of German and Irish extraction, formed cohesive communities within Foggy Bottom. The Germans generally worked in the breweries, while the Irish tended to work for the Washington Gas and Light Company.

Hired as laborers, they worked long and hard under unpleasant conditions that were made worse by the soot, steam and odor of the industries in the area. Foggy Bottom was described by historian Kayser in the following words: "In the old days, there had been an appropriateness to the name, though Foggy Bottom has no official place in geographical nomenclature. It was bottom land and much of its lower fringe was swampy. The fogs which settled over the river bank were amplified by the smog from the gas works which emitted dirt-laden and malodorous clouds of smoke, day and night, touched up with violent spurts of flame that lit up the vicinity with an eerie glow." (Bricks Without Straw, p. 217).

Foggy Bottom was home to some of the very poorest residents of the city, but it was also a place where, for many, the modest dream of owning a simple home was realized. The very unpleasantness which left Foggy Bottom a forgotten corner of the city enabled it to become a source of opportunity for its working class immigrant residents. The area's poor environment and its lack of popularity kept land values low and made home ownership a possibility for them.

3. A Rare Example of a Washington Ethnic Neighborhood: Historically, Washington was not a city with a multiplicity of strong ethnic communities. Many reasons have been put forward for this phenomenon. The most likely is that the absence of an underlying industrial economy altered the more typical

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patterns of sociological development found in other American cities. Foggy Bottom's proximity to Washington's small industrial area provides the basis for its ethnic associations. The residents of the area maintained strong internal ties and formed separate religious and social institutions, many of which still exist today. The Irish community had both a baseball team and a football team, the former called the Emerald A.C. and the latter the Irish Eleven, and the West End Hibernian Society had been established by the 1880's. Susan Sherwood, in her study, Foggy Bottom 1800-1975, relates a conversation with an older resident who remembered that "the neighborhood was entirely German and Irish and the Germans only traded with the Germans and the Irish with the Irish." (Foggy Bottom, p.12)

4. The Architecture as Representative of the Lifestyle of the Residents: The buildings that comprise this historic district are the legacy of the German and Irish communities that coexisted in Foggy Bottom for many years. The extant residential architecture illustrates the physical development of a working class community in its architectural vocabulary, its craftsmanship, and its building types. The houses, which are modest in scale and size, form a pleasing neighborhood of varied types, forms, and styles. Such urban vernacular housing represents the ethnic background, traditions, and skills of its residents. The area's developers, builders and architects were often successful members of the community, responding to their neighbors' housing needs through their work.

The houses were primarily constructed in the period from the late 1870's through the 1910's. The extant buildings represent stages of the area's development that correspond to the changing economic situation in Foggy Bottom. From individually constructed houses built for their owners, to two or three attached houses built by speculators, to low cost rowhouses erected by professional developers to meet housing demands, this area maintained a cohesiveness of scale and building type. The neighborhood retained an ethnic base as buildings were erected to suit the needs of its residents and their ability to pay.

The alley dwellings of the District of Columbia were a form of workers' housing prevalent throughout the city. Unique to Washington, these substandard dwellings were a major source of housing from the late 19th century to the 1930's. James Borchert's in-depth study, Alley Life in Washington, presents substantial evidence that these alleys were pockets of rural folk culture within the heart of the city. As such, a rich subculture developed with significant historical and sociological implications.

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The emergence of alleys as dwelling areas was due to the urban housing shortage in the middle of the nineteenth century. The first documented alley structures in Washington date back to approximately 1850. This initial phase of alley building consisted primarily of flimsy shanties and sheds, offering the barest protection. The great influx of ex-slaves, soldiers and vagrants following the Civil War further exacerbated the housing problem and provided a strong stimulus for alley development. In the period from 1870-1892, substantial frame and brick rowhouses began to appear in large numbers and close-knit alley communities comprised of unskilled workers and vagrants came into being.

Within the bounds of the historic district are two such alleys: Snow's Court (Square 28) and Hughes Mews (Square 16). Little is known of Hughes Mews. Snow's Court, one of the first alleys in Washington, was named for C.A. Snow, publisher of the National Intelligencer. Snow, who owned property on Square 28, built a greenhouse and four frame dwellings during the 1850's in the square's interior. The frame dwellings were among the first of their kind to appear in an alley and served as forerunners for the frame rowhouses of the 1870s. During the Civil War, Snow's houses were used as army barracks; following the war, Snow's alley developed at the same rapid rate as other alleys. A 1938 study indicated a very high rate of resident stability, with more than half having lived in the alley for over five years.

In 1892, a prohibition on the construction of alley dwellings checked their growth. The concern with the sociological and health-related problems posed by the alley dwellings led to a wave of demolitions during the first two decades of the 20th century. A second wave of demolitions occurred in the 1930's and 1940's. The movement to remove these "mini-ghettos" from the more affluent neighborhoods of Washington was largely successful and they remain in only a few areas of the city.

The Foggy Bottom Historic District is, as an area, representative of an important part of Washington's development. It is significant for its association with Washington's industrial history and the immigrant lifestyle; for its important collection of late nineteenth century worker housing; and for the information it yields on the development of urban vernacular architecture.

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Columbia Historical Society Library.

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MAPS

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## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION (continued)

alley to the northern boundary of lot 92, then eastward to the centerline of 24th Street; proceed south along the centerline of 24th Street to New Hampshire Avenue to H Street; continue west along the centerline of H Street to 25th Street; proceed north along the centerline of 25th Street to the southern edge of lot 42 in Square 17; proceed west along said lot line to the alley in square 17; continue through the alley and proceed north along the western line of lot 848 (encompassing lots 812 through 820, 28 through 35, and 834, 848 and 849) to the centerline of Eye Street; proceed west along the centerline of Eye Street to the centerline of 26th Street; proceed north on 26th Street to the northern edge of lot 73; proceed east along the northern edge of lot 73 to the easternmost corner of Hughes Mews and proceed south along the eastern edge of Hughes Mews to the northern edge of lots 883, 858, and 856; proceed east along said lots to the centerline of 25th Street; proceed north along the centerline of 25th Street to the origination point at the centerline of K Street.

## BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION (continued)

East Boundary: The eastern boundary is formed by the distinct visual difference in the urban fabric to the east of 24th Street and New Hampshire Avenue. In contrast to the low scale, late 19th/early 20th century residential buildings in the historic district, the area directly to the east features a series of privately owned high rise structures and the contemporary, large scale buildings which comprise the George Washington University Medical School.

South Boundary: The highway system and the visual difference between the buildings in the Historic District and that of the contemporary, large scale buildings to the south define this boundary.

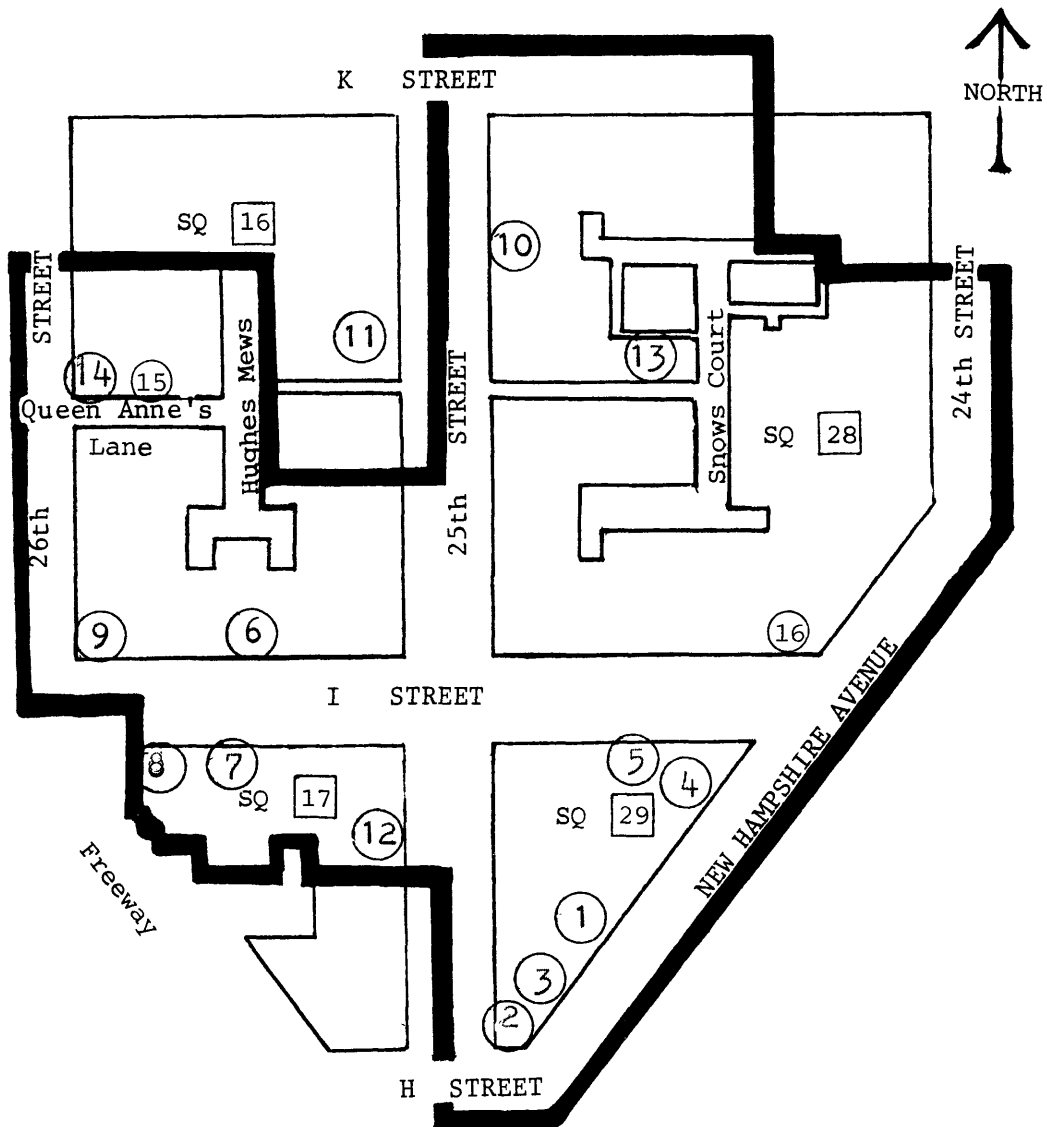
West Boundary: The west boundary is formed by the steep grade caused by the development of Interstate 66. The open space of parkland along the west side of 26th Street and low scale buildings along the east side of this street contrast with the high rise urban fabric directly to the west.

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Circled numbers show  
photo location.  
(refer to photo-  
graph inventory)

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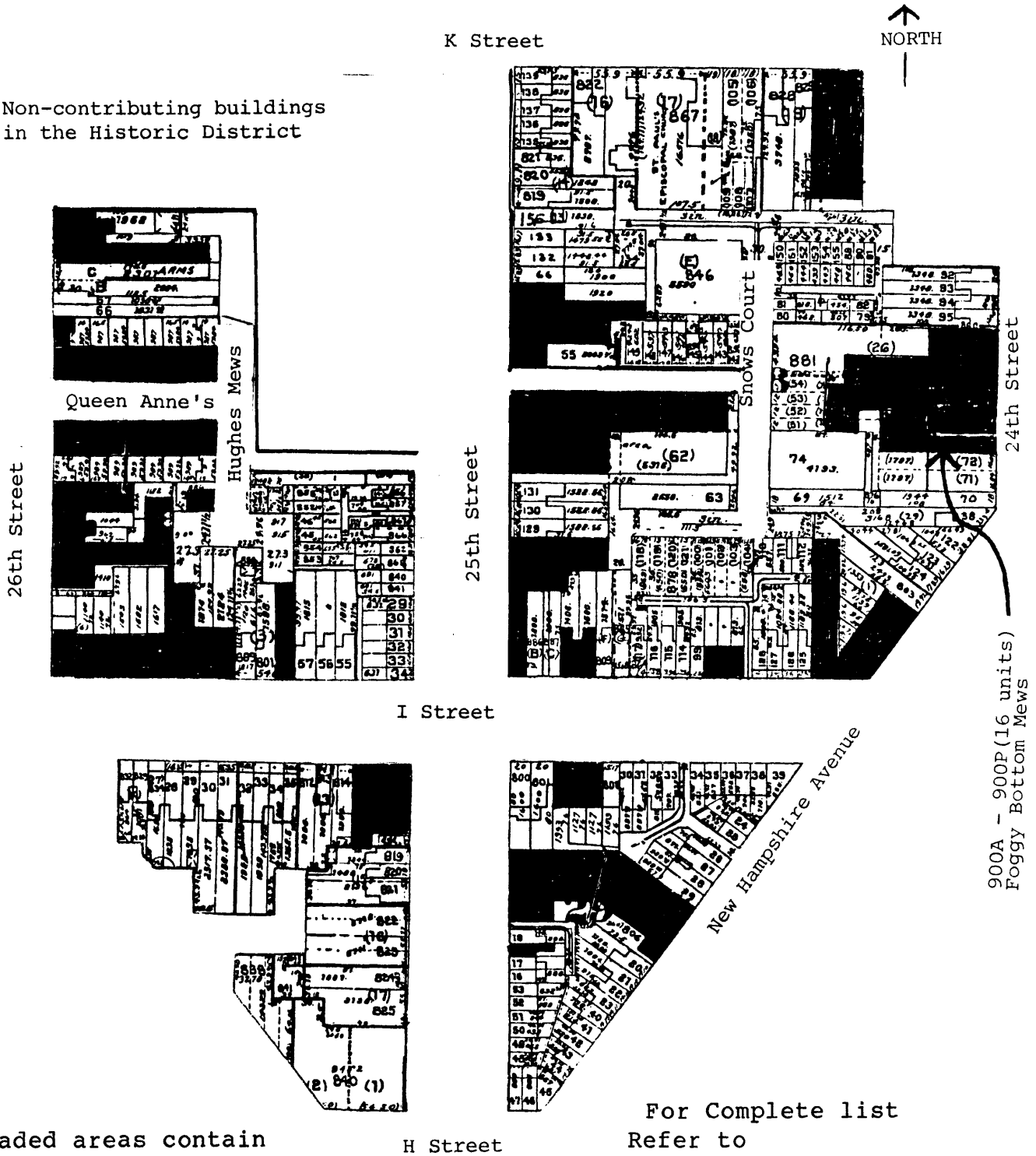
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Washington, D.C.

Non-contributing buildings  
in the Historic District



NOTE: shaded areas contain  
more than one building.  
Total number is 91.

For Complete list  
Refer to  
Inventory  
(Maps, pp.3&4)



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NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDING ADDRESSES

SQUARE 16				
Eye Street	25th Street	26th Street	Queen Anne's Lane	
2509	none	909	2521	2531
2515		911	2522	2532
2517	Hughes Mews	913	2523	2533
2519	900	915	2524	2534
2521	902	917	2525	2535
2523	904	925	2526	2536
2525		935	2527	2537
2527		939	2528	2538
2529		901-7	2529	
2531			2530	

SQUARE 17	
Eye Street	25th Street
2502	830
2504	

SQUARE 28				
Eye Street	25th Street		K Street	New Hampshire Avenue
2403	903	933	2416	
2405	905	935		900
2413	907	937	24th Street	902
2415	911	939A	922	906
2417	913	941A		908
2433	925	943A	Snow's Court	
2435	931	945A	none	

Foggy Bottom Mews (off 24th St.)  
900A-900P (16 Units)

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NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDING ADDRESSES

SQUARE 29

New Hampshire	Eye Street
Avenue	2418
824	2422
	2424
25th Street	
825	

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DETAIL OF USGS MAP OF DISTRICT

UTM Coordinates :

- a. 18 321800 4307750
- b. 18 322050 4307750
- c. 18 322050 4307300
- d. 18 321800 4307300

