

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 _____
other names Square 1500

2. Location

street & number 4820, 4860, 4866, 4872, 4874 Massachusetts Ave. & 4301 49th Street, N.W. not for publication
city or town Washington, D.C. vicinity
state _____ code _____ county _____ code _____ 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).

[Signature] / DC SHPO 6/4/03
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

DC State Historic Preservation Office
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] / DC SHPO 6/4/03
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

DC Historic Preservation Office
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

Date of Action

Patrick Andrews

8/7/2003

Square 1500
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
5		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
5		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

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/Department Store/Financial Institution/Specialty Store

TRANSPORTATION/Automobile Service Station

COMMERCE/TRADE/Department Store/Restaurant/Specialty Store/Financial Institution

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

foundation Concrete and brick

walls Red brick

roof Slate

other _____

Narrative Description

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

Square 1500
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

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)

Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

Period of Significance

1939-1950

Significant Dates

1939, 1942, 1947, 1950

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Gordon MacNeil, architect
W. C. and A. N. Miller Company, developer

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Square 1500
Name of Property _____

Washington, D.C.
County and State _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property _____

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	1 8 Zone	3 1 8 2 6 7 Easting	4 3 1 2 5 9 0 Northing	3	1 8 Zone	3 1 8 2 5 7 Easting	4 3 1 2 4 5 3 Northing
2	1 8 Zone	3 1 8 4 1 9 Easting	4 3 1 2 4 4 8 Northing	4	 Zone	 Easting	 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 Antoinette Lee (updated in May 2003 by Kim Williams)
Organization _____ date 1989; May 2003
street & number 1717 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. telephone _____
city or town _____ 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.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1

Square 1500
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

Description Summary:

+

The five commercial buildings on Square 1500 are a unified grouping of freestanding structures that all share common architectural vocabulary, building materials, scale, and design motifs. Developed and managed by a single real estate firm between 1939 and 1950, these red brick commercial buildings were designed in a consistent Colonial Revival style to complement the surrounding residential neighborhood. The buildings are tied together by the provision of parking space in between and to the rear of the buildings. Four of the five buildings range along and face Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., while one of the structures—the two-and-one-half story building at 4301 49th Street, N.W.—faces the residential neighborhood.

General Description:

4820 Massachusetts Avenue:

The largest and most significant building in Square 1500 is the Garfinckel department store (now Crate & Barrel), located on the prominent corner of 48th and Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. The five-part, red-brick, two-story structure, built in 1942, is designed with a central pavilion flanked by hyphens and wings. The central block is covered with a side-facing gable roof, while the end wings have front gable roofs. The hyphens have flat roofs with a brick parapet wall capped by a limestone cornice. A limestone stringcourse divides the first and second stories of the hyphens and end wings, while a limestone-clad façade in the main block gives the central pavilion a distinct verticality.

The central, gable-roofed pavilion is itself divided into three parts. The center section is articulated by limestone cladding and features the principal entrance on center of the first story and a Palladian window under a broken pediment at the second story. A contemporary, non-original marquee carrying the Crate and Barrel name projects above the central entry. Flanking this limestone-clad section, but still part of the central pavilion are large, plate glass, fixed show windows at the first story and simple 8/8-light double-hung windows at the second story. The hyphens, slightly recessed from the main block and end wings, consist of three bays. The bays are defined by large shop windows topped by a segmental arch decorated with a limestone panel carved in a sunburst pattern on the first story and large symmetrically aligned window openings on the second story. The segmental arch design motif is carried throughout the remaining buildings facing Massachusetts Avenue. The three large multi-light windows on the second story are replacement windows, built at the time the Garfinckels store was converted into the Crate & Barrel. The original windows had a tri-partite design with 6/6 light sash flanked by 2/2 light sash.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 2

Square 1500

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

The two gable-fronted end wings are marked by two unequal-sized, plate glass, fixed show windows on the first story and 8/8 light sash windows at the second story. A single bull's eye windows is located on center of the gable ends of these end wings.

The end wings are tied to the hyphens by a limestone stringcourse between the first and the second stories. The hyphens are tied to the central pavilion by a limestone stringcourse at the frieze line. On the sides and rear of the building are doors with elaborate limestone surrounds and scrolled pediment and shop windows with flared copper awnings. The entrance door design is repeated in other buildings facing Massachusetts Avenue.

4860 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.:

The building at 4860 Massachusetts Avenue, located to the west of Garfinckel's, is small one-story commercial red brick structure. It was completed, along with the adjacent service station at 4866 Massachusetts Avenue, in 1939. The façade—the only elevation that has any architectural articulation—is trimmed with limestone and features a slightly recessed entry with limestone reveals, and a bowed shop window with limestone base. A flared copper awning surmounts the entrance and shop window, while a brick parapet with a “blind” balustrade crowns the roofline.

4866 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.

The building at 4866 Massachusetts Avenue, located to the west of 4860 Massachusetts Avenue was originally constructed as a service station, but has been converted into a restaurant. The one-story brick structure extends four bays long and is covered with a gable roof. Three of the four bays are articulated by wide, segmental-arched garage door openings (now obscured behind a glass enclosed seating area), separated by brick pilasters. The fourth bay features an engaged stone pediment reflective of those found on the other commercial buildings in the complex. This door leads to the office of the service center. The pumping station is located in front of the building. Although the pumps themselves have been removed, the gable-roofed shelter over the pumps survives intact. Although the original garage bays survive, they are obscured from the exterior by a glass-enclosed addition that provides seating to the restaurant now occupying the former gas station.

4872-4874 Massachusetts Avenue:

The building at 4872-4874 Massachusetts Avenue was constructed in 1947 at the corner of 49th and Massachusetts Avenue and consists of two independent stores. The two-story structure is constructed of red brick with limestone trim and exhibits design motifs from the Garfinckel's store, including broken pediment door surrounds, tri-partite double-hung windows and arched windows with sunburst patterns

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 3

Square 1500

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

in the tympanums. Stringcourses between the first and second stories and above the second story tie the two separate stores together.

The eastern section, 4872 Massachusetts Avenue, features a single entry door and two large show windows at the first story and three, tri-partite windows symmetrically aligned at the second story. The entry door features a bold limestone surround with pilasters supporting an unadorned frieze and broken pediment with a pineapple bas relief set within. The large, plateglass, fixed show windows fit into wide, brick segmental arches with limestone tympanums ornamented with sunburst patterns.

The tri-partite windows at the second story replicate those originally found in the hyphens of the Garfinckel's store building (replaced and no longer intact).

The western section, 4874 Massachusetts Avenue, is located on the corner and is marked by a flared copper awning similar to that at 4860 Massachusetts Avenue that stretches around the corner and serves as the roof of an extended shop window. The 49th Street side of the building similarly features a single entry with a broken pediment door surround in limestone and two segmental arched windows with sunburst limestone tympanums.

4301 49th Street, N.W.

The building at 4301 49th Street, N.W., constructed in mid-1950 as the last in the group of six commercial buildings on the square to be constructed, exhibits several of the design motifs of the earlier buildings. It is a large 2-1/2-story, three-part brick structure covered with intersecting gable roofs. The principal elevation, facing Fordham Road, consists of a central two-story block flanked by 2-1/2-story, front gable end wings, reminiscent of the end wings of the Garfinckel's store. The central block features three arched window openings on the first story and three symmetrically aligned 6/6 windows on the second story. The three first-story round-arched windows have limestone keystones and imposts. The central window is obscured by an automatic teller machine (ATM). A copper awning similar to that at 4860 and 4874 Massachusetts Avenue and at the Garfinckel's store shelters the first-story openings.

The east end wing features a single entry with a broken pediment surround and a large, plateglass show window on the first story and two, single 8/8 windows, with limestone keystones, on the second story. The west wing has two single, 8/8 windows on both stories. Bulls eye windows identical to those at Garfinckel's are located on center of the gable ends. The steep gable roof of these end wings provides for a full third story on the interior. Brick quoins with wood caps (cornice returns in gable ends) articulate the corners of the building.

+

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Square 1500
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

Section 8 Page 1

Summary Statement of Significance:

Square 1500 was developed by the firm of W.C. & A.N. Miller between 1939 and 1950 with six commercial buildings that complemented the prevailing design character of the affluent residential neighborhoods of Wesley Heights and Spring Valley. In design and scale, the buildings in Square 1500 are also in harmony with the Massachusetts Avenue Parking Shops and the American University Park neighborhood across Massachusetts Avenue. The stores that occupied the buildings in Square 1500 served the needs of the local community and reinforced its high prestige image.

The six buildings located in Square 1500 represent a significant cluster of commercial buildings in the District of Columbia, all designed in a consistent Colonial Revival-style architectural mode, all sited in the block to accommodate parking, and all developed and managed by a single real estate firm to complement the surrounding residential neighborhood. Unlike the Massachusetts Avenue Parking Shops across the street, the six buildings were sited at the building line, with parking provided within the interior of the block.

The major building in the square, the Garfinckel's Store, built in 1942, is an early local example of a major department store branch constructed in an outlying area. The W. C. & A. N. Miller Company, an important developer in the District of Columbia and environs, developed the group of buildings. Gordon MacNeil, a longtime designer in the Miller firm served as the architect of three of the buildings. MacNeil's designs served as models for the remaining three buildings constructed after his death.

The buildings in Square 1500 qualify for designation under criterion A: They exemplify the economic (retail) heritage of the national capital or the nation. They also qualify under criterion C: They embody the distinguishing characteristics of architectural styles, building types or methods of construction, landscape architecture, urban design or other architectural, aesthetic or engineering expressions significant to the appearance and development of the national capital or the nation. The period of significance for the six buildings ranges from 1939 through 1950.

Resource History and Historic Context:

The commercial buildings in Square 1500 were constructed within an eleven-year span by the same developers who created the planned communities of Wesley Heights and Spring Valley. Because of their location along and close to Massachusetts Avenue, they also served the residents of American University Park on the other side of Massachusetts Avenue and other nearby residential areas.

Located on the former Tunlaw Farm, Wesley Heights was developed beginning in 1923 by Washington realtors W.C. and A. N. Miller. In this work, the Miller brothers established a practice of subdividing

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 2

Square 1500
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

and constructing all the buildings. No lots were for sale to outside developers or potential home builders. In order to carry out the practice, the Miller firm maintained an architectural department to plan and supervise each building. As a result, the Millers were able to control the standards of construction and design for the houses in the neighborhood. The purchaser enjoyed the advantage of knowing “exactly what his home will look like, what the completed community will look like, and how the neighboring homes will look.”¹ While this approach to residential development was by no means unique, it was more the exception than the rule in Washington and elsewhere during the 1920s. The Millers applied the same principle to the Spring Valley area where houses for the affluent were built along curvilinear streets starting in 1929.

Wesley Heights and Spring Valley were significant in the history of the District for their planning aspects. They were constructed in response to the automobile rather than the streetcar. In cooperation with the National Capital Park and Planning Commission (NCPC), many of the natural land contours were retained through revised street plans. Although the street plan of Wesley Heights’ followed a grid pattern, it contained fewer cross streets than in earlier subdivisions.² In promotional literature, the Miller firm described Wesley Heights as picturesque for the many preserved trees and the natural land forms as well as for its “meritorious buildings.”³ In conceptualizing the appearance of Spring Valley, the Miller firm studied several well-known suburban subdivisions in the nation, including Shaker Heights in Cleveland, the Country Club District in Kansas City, and Roland Park in Baltimore. As developed, Spring Valley was the first curvilinear development of any magnitude in the District. Here the street plan called for the creation of super blocks, winding roads, the retention of trees, valleys and streams, with a significant amount of “elbow room” between the residences.⁴

Both Wesley Heights and Spring Valley were publicized in planning periodicals such as the *American Civic Annual* and *The National Real Estate Journal*. By contrast, American University Park was developed starting in the 1920s by a variety of developers and home builders. In order to develop a sense of community awareness in these new areas, the Millers began to publish the *Leaves of Wesley Heights* (later the *Leaves*) in 1927.

With residential development along both sides of Massachusetts Avenue proceeding at a rapid rate from the 1920s through the 1940s, the provision of convenient neighborhood shopping assumed an important role. Rather than allowing an uncontrolled array of competing establishments to be located along the major thoroughfare, as could be found along Wisconsin Avenue, commercial development was limited to the blocks on both sides of Massachusetts Avenue, between 48th and 49th streets.

¹ “A Subdivision: But No Lots for Sale,” *National Real Estate Journal*, July 9, 1928, p.52.

² Frederick Gutheim, *Worthy of a Nation*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Press, 1977, p. 189.

³ *Ibid*, p. 190.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 190.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 3

Square 1500
Name of Property
Washington, D.C.
County and State

The evolution of the Massachusetts Avenue commercial node occurred during the 1920s. The original 1920 D.C. Zoning Commission map delineated a commercial strip to run from Verplanck Place to the District line. By the 1928 zoning use map, the commercial strip had been reduced to a square on both sides of Massachusetts Avenue, from Warren to Yuma streets. This condensed zoning of commercial space to a node was akin to the model neighborhood scheme advanced by urban planners in the 1920s such as Clarence Perry of the Russell Sage Foundation. Perry wrote extensively on the advantages of the "planned neighborhood unit" in which community and retail facilities were located at the core of a neighborhood and formed village-like complexes. As he stated in *Housing for the Machine Age*, "stores should be bunched rather than strung along a street."⁵

The north side of the street was located in city Square 1499, while the south side was located in Square 1500. The 1925 Baist Real Estate Survey of Washington shows that Reginald R. Walker owned both squares. By the late 1930s, Square 1499 had been acquired by F. S. Kogod and M. Burka, who developed several establishments including a movie theatre, and the Alton Realty Company, that owned the Massachusetts Avenue Parking Shops site. W. C. & A. N. Miller acquired Square 1500.

The Developer and Architect:

The developers of the commercial buildings on Square 1500, brothers William Cammack Miller and Allison N. Miller, began their business collaboration in 1912 with two lots on the 700 block of Kenyon Street, N.W. Subsequently, they moved to projects in Cleveland Park and the Soldiers' Home area. In 1920, the Miller brothers developed two blocks on Woodley Road where they varied the exterior appearance of the previously conventional row house, yet maintained "a harmonious blend with adjoining buildings."⁶

In 1922, the Millers purchased portions of the old estate owned by Thomas E. Waggaman who had originally subdivided and inaugurated the Wesley Heights development. In 1927, the firm incorporated as W. C. & A. N. Miller. From 1924 to 1929, the Millers purchased land in the Spring Valley area and developed it during the 1930s and 1940s, although a final portion was developed in the 1980s. After World War II, the firm developed the Maryland suburbs of Sumner, Spring Hill, Potomac Falls, and Spring Meadows. After the deaths of the firm's principals in 1939 and 1951, the founders' sons and grandsons carried on the work of the firm.

Gordon E. MacNeil served as the architect of all the buildings in Square 1500, with the exception of those at 4872-74 Massachusetts Avenue and at 4301 49th Street, N.W. A native of the Oklahoma territory, MacNeil had been associated with the Miller brothers since 1914. He studied architecture at

⁵ Clarence Arthur Perry, *Housing for the Machine Age*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1939, p. 72

⁶ "W. C. and A. N. Miller Company, Seventy-Five Years of Service," undated flyer.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 4

Square 1500
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

George Washington University and art at the Corcoran School of Art. MacNeil was a draftsman in the office of B. Frank Myers when the latter was commissioned to design the Millers' houses in Cleveland Park. In 1919, MacNeil became head of the architectural office of the Millers' firm and designed many of the houses they developed including the Wesley Heights Community Club. In the houses in Wesley Heights and Spring Valley, he conceived of each block as a unit, a harmonious whole, aiming for an overall compatibility rather than as a group of unrelated single houses. He died in 1945.⁷

The Buildings in Square 1500:

The buildings in Square 1500 were developed by W. C. & A. N. Miller over an eleven-year period. As compared with the shopping center configuration of the Massachusetts Avenue Parking Shops across Massachusetts Avenue, the buildings in Square 1500 were arranged to front onto the major thoroughfare. Parking was provided in between and to the rear of the buildings. Although the Garfinckel's store was the third building on the block to be constructed, its prominent location leads one to believe that its siting was a major consideration from the start. The other buildings on the west end of the block are separated from Garfinckel's by a parking lot and are arranged to provide a fairly continuous street frontage. The building at 4301 49th Street was separated from the cluster along Massachusetts Avenue by parking access.

The importance of the Garfinckel's store as the lead commercial establishment on the block is also evident from its architectural style, design motifs, massing, and building materials, which were repeated throughout this block. Its architect, Gordon MacNeil, was noted for his commitment to designing a residential block as a harmonious unit. This approach is evident in the block of commercial buildings in Square 1500 as well. Special care was accorded the rears of the buildings so that they would be compatible in style and materials with future residential development. This aspect of commercial building design was addressed by urban planner Clarence Perry who urged that "special consideration should be given to the business structure at the point where stores stop and dwellings begin."⁸

The first building to be constructed was the small, one-story building at 4860 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., originally occupied by the Spring Valley D.G. S. Market, and the adjoining gasoline station at 4866 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., both of which were completed in 1939. In 1943, the store was leased to Magruder's store that set up a branch of the main store then located at 1138 Connecticut Avenue. At its new location, Magruder's offered quality meats, produce, teas, spices, connoisseur cheeses, imported cigars, and brandied fruit--all the upscale selections available at the central store. Magruder's also promised "full and above average service."⁹

⁷ "Gordon E. MacNeil," Obituary, *Leaves of Wesley Heights*, October 17, 1943, p. 16.

⁸ Clarence Arthur Perry, p. 72.

⁹ "An Old Institution Comes to Spring Valley," *Leaves of Wesley Heights*, October 17, 1943, p. 16.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 5

Square 1500
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

The service station was leased by Arthur G. Dezendorf for an Esso station. Although it was located across Massachusetts Avenue from the Gulf station at the Massachusetts Avenue Parking Shops, the Millers argued the advantages of proximity to the community “without the necessity for going where traffic is heavy.” In addition, the Esso station claimed to offer superior and personal service, suggesting a competitive climate characteristic of commercial centers.¹⁰

The next building erected in the block was the Julius Garfinckel store located at 4820 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. As early as 1940, the Millers initiated discussions with the Garfinckel’s organization concerning the idea of a store adjacent to the communities they developed. Advertisements for the downtown Garfinckel’s store appeared in the *The Leaves of Wesley Heights* as if a harbinger of the branch store. The Miller firm described the Garfinckel store as following a “trend toward suburban expansion by our finer shops [which] has been very marked for the past five years.”¹¹ The location of the Garfinckel store close to many potential patrons during World War II abetted efforts to conserve time and gasoline and offered the area’s affluent residents convenient access to Washington’s premier department store.

MacNeil designed the Garfinckel store building that the firm described as “a happy fusing of Miller quality and Garfinckel quality in merchandise and service.”¹² The developers, store executives, and architects looked to Williamsburg for inspiration “where sketches were made up of lovely doorways, and architecturally perfect shop windows along the town’s old streets.”¹³ The New York firm of William & Harrell designed the interior fixtures and furniture. The Miller firm stated the Spring Valley store was no mere branch store, but was a replica “on a smaller scale” with the added advantage of a large adjacent parking area.

The second floor of the Garfinckel’s store building served as the temporary administrative center for the Mount Vernon Seminary (now Mount Vernon College) during World War. Founded in 1875, the Mount Vernon Seminary occupied a 33-acre site on Nebraska Avenue east of Ward Circle since 1917. In late 1942, in response to wartime demands, the Navy Department condemned the school’s property. As an interim measure, the school found space on the second floor of Garfinckel’s where it reopened its doors to students in February 1943. In addition to the Academic Headquarters at 4340 Fordham Road, the school used a nearby building for a science laboratory and several Miller-built residences as dormitories. After the war, in 1946, the school moved to its present site on Foxhall Road.

¹⁰ “To Serve the Community,” *Leaves of Wesley Heights*, October 13, 1939, p. 17.

¹¹ “Miller-Built for the People of Washington,” *Leaves of Wesley Heights*, August 16, 1942, p. 15.

¹² “We Welcome Julius Garfinckel to Their Spring Valley Store,” *Leaves of Wesley Heights*, August 16, 1942, p. 15.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 15.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 6

Square 1500
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

In 1947, the Miller firm constructed two adjoining two-story brick buildings at 4872-74 Massachusetts Avenue on the lot closest to the corner of 49th and Massachusetts Avenue. Early occupants of the stores included Blackistone Florists and Valley Beverage Liquors.

The last building to be constructed on Square 1500 was the large two-and-one-half story building at the rear, close to the corner of 49th and Fordham Road. It was completed in mid-1950 and occupied by the National Metropolitan Bank of Washington and the furniture store, Mayer & Co. Like the Garfinckel's store, Mayer & Co. maintained a downtown store for many decades and placed its new branch store close to potential patrons where ample parking was provided. With the completion of the last building, the Miller firm stated that its style was "in harmony with the other buildings which comprise this shopping area, also of Miller design and construction."¹⁴

The Development of Store Architecture:

The buildings in Square 1500 reflect national trends in the development of architecture for small-scale stores and shops from the 1920s through the 1940s. During this period, as the affluent moved farther away from the traditional central business district, new kinds of commercial establishments were designed to serve as compatible neighbors to the residential structures. These buildings also responded to the greater appreciation of America's colonial past brought about by publications, tourism, and most importantly, the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg.

Many real estate developers, architects, and retailers of this period were inclined to provide customers with more than utilitarian structures for shopping facilities. Architectural design, well-appointed interiors, and artistic displays of goods were viewed as integral elements in an establishment's ability to compete with other stores and shops. A high-quality design appealed to the subconscious of customers and lured them into shops. This was especially the case with stores offering quality merchandise. "In a word, the store itself suggests the quality of the merchandise on sale. This new impulse of maintaining the high quality of their wares on sale in the architectural treatment of the more exclusive shops is proof that shrewd businessmen... appreciate the value as a commercial asset of good architecture and decorations."¹⁵

Of particular concern was the shop front itself. By the 1930s, the shop front was the subject of intensive study by retailers. Elements in the study included the public's buying habits, the surrounding community's purchasing power, and effective window display and merchandizing. Retailers

¹⁴ "A New Community Enterprise," *Leaves of Wesley Heights*, November 24, 1950, p. 14.

¹⁵ R. W. Sexton, *American Commercial Buildings of Today*. New York: Architectural Book Publishing Company, Inc., 1928, p. 155.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 7

Square 1500
Name of Property
Washington, D.C.
County and State

studied the location of display windows, architectural styles, and the effects of sloping and vertical lines. "The psychological effect of the displays and architectural treatment leads the passerby to the entrance and on into the store."¹⁶

By the 1930s, the Colonial Revival style was embraced as a fashionable image for public buildings, residences, and commercial buildings, particularly those associated with the middle and upper middle classes in the United States. The restoration of Colonial Williamsburg, starting in 1926 and reaching a state of completion sufficient to attract large numbers of tourists by the 1930s, further solidified the popularity of the style. The Colonial Revival style appealed to the general public for a variety of reasons, including nationalism, practicality, and aesthetic inclination. A great number of the residences the Miller firm built in Wesley Heights and Spring Valley were variations on the Colonial Revival style. The use of the Colonial Revival in single commercial buildings or in whole groups of them provided an attractive advertisement to potential customers¹⁷. It was logical that Gordon MacNeil of the Miller firm selected the Williamsburg model for the commercial buildings in Square 1500.

In announcing the opening of the Garfinckel's store, the Miller firm spoke to the importance of an aesthetically pleasing shopping environment and of the importance of the Williamsburg inspiration in creating that environment. The announcement in the August 1942 *Leaves of Wesley Heights* described the store as "a little bit of old Williamsburg in a garden setting, with a backdrop of dark cool forest."¹⁸ The illustrations accompanying the announcement were captioned with: "this lovely window beckons you with all its charm."¹⁹ The announcement noted the artistic qualities of the interior, such as the color scheme, the spacious floors, the comfortable and tasteful furniture, and the placement of sitting areas near windows so that shoppers could contemplate the beauty of the surroundings. In the eyes of the Miller firm, the careful design of the store was a "living tribute to a confident group of men who know that beauty can well be a part of service and that there is sound worth in such an ideal."²⁰

In announcing the opening of the Garfinckel's store, the *Evening Star* echoed the Miller firm's claims for the building. The *Evening Star* noted that the building exterior employed the "Colonial motif," while the interior design exhibited "soft, indirect lighting and skillful use of color." It further praised the adequate parking facilities, with entrances on Massachusetts Avenue and Fordham Road. In addition, it remarked, "Designed for convenience, the new store combines all the features of the downtown store and adds a number of individual touches of its own. Actually, it is not designated as a 'branch' but rather

¹⁶ W. A. Edwards, "Sales Appeal in Store Fronts," *Chain Store Review*, July 3, 1930, p. 39.

¹⁷ For a comprehensive discussion of the Colonial Revival style in the 1930s, see David Gebhard, "The American Colonial Revival in the 1930s," *Winterthur Portfolio*, 22, Summer/Autumn 1987, pp. 109-148.

¹⁸ "We Welcome Julius Garfinckel to Their Spring Valley Store," *Leaves of Wesley Heights*, August 16, 1942, p. 14.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 15.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 20.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 8

Square 1500
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

as a complete unit in itself and an important contribution to the development of the Spring Valley community.”²¹

The Miller firm made similar claims for its other buildings in Square 1500. The building at 4301 49th Street, also of the “Colonial Williamsburg design,” was described in promotional literature as a large and beautiful store as well as a community endeavor on the part of the Miller firm.²² It was an appropriate and artistic setting for displaying the fine furniture wares of Mayer & Co. The commercial building at 4860 Massachusetts Avenue was described as offering a “beautiful and modern setting,” a fitting site for Magruder’s luxury food.²³

Retail History Represented by Square 1500:

The commercial buildings in Square 1500 represent an important theme in the evolution of retail in the District of Columbia: the development of branch stores away from the traditional central business district. The phenomenon of department store branches began elsewhere in the country in the 1920s and arrived in Washington in 1942 with the establishment of the branch of Garfinckel’s store in Spring Valley. In Square 1500, the trend toward retail decentralization continued in 1943 with the location of a branch of Magruder’s and in 1950 with the placement of a branch of Mayer & Co. in the 4301 49th Street building. Unlike their downtown stores, the branches offered the vital ingredient of parking facilities.

The forerunner of the phenomenon of branch department stores, Garfinckel’s, was noted by the *Evening Star* upon the opening of the branch store. “...the shop is a complete and tastefully designed pioneer in the fast growing movement to make adequate shopping facilities available to Washingtonians in suburban areas.”²⁴

It is appropriate that Garfinckel’s would have been the Miller firm’s first choice for a department store to complement its prestige residential areas. Julius Garfinckel established his downtown store in 1905 at 1226 F Street, N.W. and built the store’s reputation as “the pre-eminent vendor of high fashion, exclusive clothing.”²⁵ In 1930, he moved his operation to the new department store at the northwest corner of 14th & F Streets in a building designed and planned to offer shoppers an environment of luxury and comfort.

²¹ “New Garfinckel Store in Spring Valley to Open Monday,” *Evening Star*, August 14, 1942.

²² “A New Community Enterprise,” *Leaves of Wesley Heights*, November 24, 1950, p. 14.

²³ “An Old Institution Comes to Spring Valley,” *Leaves of Wesley Heights*, October 17, 1943, p. 16.

²⁴ “New Garfinckel Store in Spring Valley to Open Monday,” *Evening Star*, August 14, 1942.

²⁵ D.C. Landmark Nomination Form, Garfinckel’s Department Store, 1988, p. 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Square 1500
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

Section 8 Page 9

In its announcement of the opening of Garfinckel’s store in Spring Valley, the Miller firm praised the store for its position as one of the nation’s outstanding businesses which shared the Miller’s tradition of “service, quality and beauty.” The Miller firm also singled out Garfinckel’s “scrupulous regard for business ethics” and “sterling reputation.” The marriage of Garfinckel’s establishment and the Miller firm bequeathed the area with “the ultimate in fine shopkeeping that has been the hallmark of Garfinckel’s since its founding.”²⁶

The Garfinckel’s branch store represented a pioneering effort on the part of major downtown department stores in the District of Columbia to serve residents in outlying areas. Primarily a clothing store, Jeleff’s opened its “Little Bethesda Shop” at 6936 Wisconsin Avenue in 1943. It was followed by Woodward & Lothrop which opened its streamlined Colonial Revival store designed by Raymond Lowey Associates at the intersection of Wisconsin and Western avenues in 1950. Also in the early 1950s, Hecht’s department store and Kann’s established branches in Silver Spring, Maryland, and Arlington, Virginia.

For several decades following its opening, the Garfinckel’s branch store thrived. Beginning in the 1980s, however, competition from suburban shopping malls resulted in a marked decline in neighborhood patronage. In 1990, Garfinckel’s closed its doors, along with Spring Valley Liquors, Blackistone Florists, and the gasoline service station. In addition, the physical deterioration of the service station fuel tanks and underground leaking of the fuel storage tanks resulted in the removal of the station tanks entirely. Following the removal of the tanks, Exxon Corporation undertook an on-going environmental remediation program at the site.

In 1994, Crate & Barrel, a nationwide housewares and furniture store purchased the old Garfinckel building and began a major renovation and addition that inspired the rejuvenation of the adjacent buildings. In 1995, the gas station was converted into a family-style restaurant. Presently, all of the six commercial buildings are occupied and contribute to the commercial vitality of the neighborhood.

Uniqueness of Cluster of Buildings in Square 1500:

The buildings in Square 1500 are unique in the District of Columbia. Developed by one firm and designed or inspired by one architectural vision, the buildings comprise a cluster that reflects national trends in architecture, merchandizing, planning, and retail expansion. The design of the buildings was guided by the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg, a project that had a profound effect on the way in which Americans viewed their past and the way in which they aspired to build their future. The Miller firm aimed to make the buildings appealing to the customers’ eyes, thereby underscoring the high quality of the goods sold in the stores. The buildings were clustered together on a single block and form a commercial village-like environment, an appropriate image for the upper and middle-class residential

²⁶ “We Welcome Julius Garfinckel to Their Spring Valley Store,” *Leaves of Wesley Heights*, August 16, 1942, p. 14.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 10

Square 1500
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

areas nearby. The buildings in Square 1500 represent the pioneering branch expansion of several major downtown establishments, particularly Garfinckel's department store.

Finally, the buildings in Square 1500 are unique for their development as an integral part of the Miller firm's Wesley Heights and Spring Valley residential areas. Clearly, the firm envisioned the communities as more than suburban bedroom enclaves. The residents crossed paths at the Miller-built Wesley Heights Community Club, at the Miller-built shopping establishments on Square 1500, and at Miller-sponsored events. Through the Miller-published *Leaves of Wesley Heights*, the residents came to view themselves as living in a special community. By providing these facilities and services, the Miller firm established itself as the District's premier community builder.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 1

Square 1500
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

Major Bibliographical References:

"A New Community Enterprise," *Leaves of Wesley Heights*, November 24, 1950, pp. 14-15.

"A Subdivison: But No Lots for Sale," *National Real Estate Journal*, July 9, 1928, pp. 51-54.

"An Old Institution Comes to Spring Valley," *Leaves of Wesley Heights*, October 17, 1943, p. 16.

Edwards, W. A., "Sales Appeal in Store Fronts," *Chain Store Review*, July 3, 1930, p. 39.

Garfinckel's Department Store, D.C. Historic Preservation Division, D.C. Landmark Nomination Form, 1988.

Gebhard, David, "The American Colonial Revival," *Winterthur Portfolio*, 22, Summer/Autumn 1987, pp. 109-148.

"Gordon E. MacNeil," *Leaves of Wesley Heights*, April 19, 1945, p. 5.

Gutheim, Frederick, *Worthy of a Nation*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977.

Miller, W. C., "Wesley Heights and Spring Valley," *American Civic Annual* (1931), pp. 266-268.

"Miller-Built for the People of Washington," *Leaves of Wesley Heights*, August 16, 1942, p. 5.

"New Garfinckel Store in Spring Valley to Open Monday," *Evening Star*, August 14, 1942.

Perry, Clarence Arthur, *Housing for the Machine Age*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1939.

Rhoads, William B., "Roadside Colonial: Early American Design for the Automobile Age, 1900-1940" *Winterthur Porfolio*, 21, Summer/Autumn 1966, pp. 133-152.

Sexton, R. W., *American Commercial Buildings of Today*. New Architectural Book Publishing Company, Inc., 1928.

"To Serve the Community," *Leaves of Wesley Heights*, October 13, 1939, p. 17.

"W.C. and A. N. Miller Company, Seventy-Five Years of Service," undated flyer.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Square 1500
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

Section 9 Page 2

“We Welcome Julius Garfinckel to Their Spring Valley Store,” *Leaves of Wesley Heights*, August 16, 1942, p. 15.

“William Cammack Miller,” *Leaves of Wesley Heights*, July 13, 1939, p. 5.

+

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 1

Square 1500
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

Major Bibliographical References:

"A New Community Enterprise," *Leaves of Wesley Heights*, November 24, 1950, pp. 14-15.

"A Subdivison: But No Lots for Sale," *National Real Estate Journal*, July 9, 1928, pp. 51-54.

"An Old Institution Comes to Spring Valley," *Leaves of Wesley Heights*, October 17, 1943, p. 16.

Edwards, W. A., "Sales Appeal in Store Fronts," *Chain Store Review*, July 3, 1930, p. 39.

Garfinckel's Department Store, D.C. Historic Preservation Division, D.C. Landmark Nomination Form, 1988.

Gebhard, David, "The American Colonial Revival," *Winterthur Portfolio*, 22, Summer/Autumn 1987, pp. 109-148.

"Gordon E. MacNeil," *Leaves of Wesley Heights*, April 19, 1945, p. 5.

Gutheim, Frederick, *Worthy of a Nation*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977.

Miller, W. C., "Wesley Heights and Spring Valley," *American Civic Annual* (1931), pp. 266-268.

"Miller-Built for the People of Washington," *Leaves of Wesley Heights*, August 16, 1942, p. 5.

"New Garfinckel Store in Spring Valley to Open Monday," *Evening Star*, August 14, 1942.

Perry, Clarence Arthur, *Housing for the Machine Age*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1939.

Rhoads, William B., "Roadside Colonial: Early American Design for the Automobile Age, 1900-1940" *Winterthur Porfolio*, 21, Summer/Autumn 1966, pp. 133-152.

Sexton, R. W., *American Commercial Buildings of Today*. New Architectural Book Publishing Company, Inc., 1928.

"To Serve the Community," *Leaves of Wesley Heights*, October 13, 1939, p. 17.

"W.C. and A. N. Miller Company, Seventy-Five Years of Service," undated flyer.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Square 1500
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

Section 9 Page 2

“We Welcome Julius Garfinckel to Their Spring Valley Store,” *Leaves of Wesley Heights*, August 16, 1942, p. 15.

“William Cammack Miller,” *Leaves of Wesley Heights*, July 13, 1939, p. 5.

+

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 1

Square 1500
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

Verbal Boundary Description:

The five commercial buildings included in this nomination are located at 4820, 4860, 4866, and 4872-74 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. and 4301 49th Street, N.W. and occupy Square 1500. The boundary of the property includes the entire city square, inclusive of the buildings. The square is triangular in shape. The boundary begins at the southeast intersection of 49th Street and Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. then moves southeasterly along Massachusetts Avenue to its intersection with Fordham Road, then moves west along Fordham Road to the intersection with 49th Street, then north on 49th Street to the beginning. +

Boundary Justification:

The five buildings on Square 1500 in Washington, D.C. were built between 1939 and 1950 by the same owner/builder/architect team and were an integral part of the company's planned residential subdivisions of Wesley Heights and Spring Valley. The five buildings represent a unified grouping of commercial structures centered around common parking areas, built as an amenity to the suburban communities. The commercial cluster architecturally complements the surrounding neighborhood that it serves.

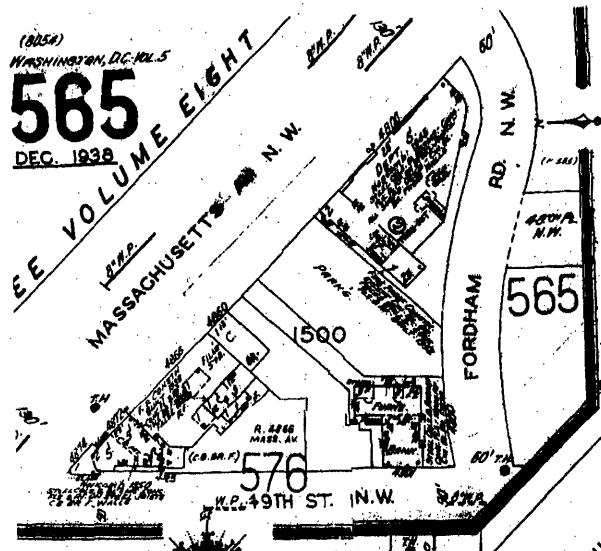
+

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

SITE MAP

Square 1500
Name of Property
Washington, D.C.
County and State



Square 1500
Washington, D.C.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Square 1500
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

PHOTOGRAPHS

- 1) Square 1500
Washington, DC
Kimberly Prothro Williams
March 2003
DCHPO
View looking southeast at 4820 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
1/14

- 2) Square 1500
Washington, DC
Kimberly Prothro Williams
March 2003
DCHPO
View looking west at 4820 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
2/14

- 3) Square 1500
Washington, D.C.
Kimberly Prothro Williams
March 2003
DCHPO
Door detail of 4820 Massachusetts Avenue, southeast elevation
3/14

- 4) Square 1500
Washington, D.C.
Kimberly Prothro Williams
March 2003
DCHPO
Southwest elevation of 4820 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.; view looking northeast
4/14

- 5) Square 1500
Washington, D.C.
Kimberly Prothro Williams
March 2003
DCHPO
Door detail of 4820 Massachusetts Avenue, southwest elevation
5/14

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Square 1500
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

PHOTOGRAPHS

- 6) Square 1500
Washington, D.C.
Kimberly Prothro Williams
June 2003
DCHPO
View looking southeast showing 4860 and 4866 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
6/14
- 7) Square 1500
Washington, D.C.
Kimberly Prothro Williams
June 2003
DCHPO
View looking southwest at 4860 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
7/14
- 8) Square 1500
Washington, D.C.
Kimberly Prothro Williams
June 2003
DCHPO
View looking southeast at 4860 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
8/14
- 9) Square 1500
Washington, D.C.
Kimberly Prothro Williams
June 2003
DCHPO
View looking southeast at 4866 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
9/14
- 10) Square 1500
Washington, D.C.
Kimberly Prothro Williams
June 2003
DCHPO
View looking southeast at 4872-74 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
10/14

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Square 1500
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

PHOTOGRAPHS

-
- 11) Square 1500
Washington, D.C.
Kimberly Prothro Williams
June 2003
DCHPO
View looking southeast showing entrance to 4872 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
11/14

 - 12) Square 1500
Washington, D.C.
Kimberly Prothro Williams
June 2003
DCHPO
View looking east showing 49th Street elevation of 4872-4874 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., and entrance to 4874 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
12/14

 - 13) Square 1500
Washington, D.C.
Kimberly Prothro Williams
March 2003
DCHPO
View looking northwest at 4301 49th Street, N.W.
13/14

 - 14) Square 1500
Washington, D.C.
Kimberly Prothro Williams
March 2003
DCHPO
View looking east at 4301 49th Street, N.W.
14/14

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 03000731 Date Listed: 8/7/2003

Property Name: Square 1500 County: State: DC

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Patricia Andrews
Signature of the Keeper

8/7/2003
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

This SLR makes two technical corrections to the form. The form does not include an acreage figure for the nominated property. The SHPO confirmed that it include 2 acres. The property is nominated under National Register Criterion C, but no Area of Significance is indicated in section 8 of the form. The form is amended to add Architecture as an Area of Significance and add the acreage figure.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file**
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**