

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

AUG 18 1994

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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 Mullett Rowhouses

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Location**

street & number 2517, 2519, and 2525 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
city or town Washington state District of Columbia code DC zip code 20037  
county N/A code N/A vicinity X not for publication N/A

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination     request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets     does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant     nationally X statewide     locally.

(     See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Robert L. Mallett 8/9/94  
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 for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register (See continuation sheet). determined eligible for the National Register (See continuation sheet).
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Patrick Andrew 9/30/94

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>3</u>	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
_____	_____ Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

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

Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C. 1880-1945

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	<u>DOMESTIC</u>	Sub:	<u>single dwelling</u>
	<u>COMMERCIAL</u>		<u>specialty store</u>

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	<u>DOMESTIC</u>	Sub:	<u>multiple dwelling</u>
	<u>COMMERCIAL</u>		<u>restaurant</u>

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	<u>BRICK</u>
roof	<u>SLATE</u>
walls	<u>BRICK</u>
other	<u>DECORATIVE DETAILS: SANDSTONE</u>

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

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

**8. Statement of Significance**

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

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction 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.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a 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.

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance** 1889

**Significant Dates** 1920

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Alfred B. Mullett

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Mullett, Alfred Bult

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

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 file (NPS)

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

Primary Location of Additional Data

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

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre.

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>18</u>	<u>321850</u>	<u>4307950</u>	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
	<u>See continuation sheet.</u>					

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.) Square 14, Lots 27, 28, 29.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.) The boundary includes the Mullett rowhouses.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Eve Lydia Barsoum / Architectural Historian  
organization D.C. Historic Preservation Division date August 1, 1994  
street & number 614 H Street, N.W. telephone (202) 727-7360  
city or town Washington state D.C. zip code 20001

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

Photographs

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

SQUARE 14, Lot 27:

name Bernie's Tavern, Incorporated  
street & number 2517 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Washington state D.C. zip code 20037

SQUARE 14, Lot 28:

name Triangle Communications, Incorporated  
street & number 1335 11th Street, N.W. telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Washington state D.C. zip code 20001

SQUARE 14, Lot 29:

name M.W. Datch and E. Pedas  
street & number 521 Potteridge Lane, N.W. telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Washington state D.C. zip code 20016

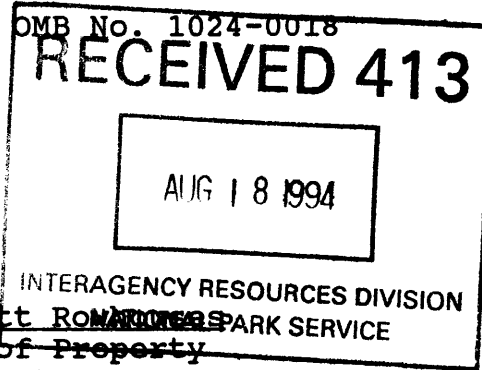
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain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

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

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~~Mullett Rowhouses~~  
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2517, 2519, 2525 Pennsylvania, NW, now known as the Mullett rowhouses, were constructed in 1889 in the Foggy Bottom neighborhood of Washington, D.C. This row of late-Victorian residences was built of brick with sandstone trim. The rowhouses have four stories and an attic on the Avenue and three stories at the rear. Each building has large projecting bays, round-arch windows, dormers, and a mansard roof. 2519 Pennsylvania Avenue presents a polygonal tower with a pyramidal roof. Thus, the reference is made that this is one mansion as opposed to three dwellings. Although the residences exhibit the architectural features characteristic of rowhouses of the period, they also reflect the strength of architect Alfred B. Mullett's talent. They are taller and wider than neighboring, contemporary rowhouses and the dormers and tower are bold elements. It is obvious that the architect's penchant for grandness influenced the design of Mullet Row.

The Mullett rowhouses are located in Square 14, defined by Pennsylvania Avenue and 25th, 26th, and M Streets, on lots 27, 28, and 29. The lots are on the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue midway between 25th and 26th Streets and are bordered by alleys to the north and west. The site has a change in grade such that the north alley is approximately four feet below the rear yards. There is a vacant lot to the east of 2517 Pennsylvania Avenue.

The Mullett rowhouses were constructed of red brick with sandstone trim. The buildings have four floors plus a basement and attic story. Each rowhouse has a large, four-story projecting bay; its lower two stories are rectangular in shape and the upper two stories are polygonal in shape. The three rowhouses were designed to give the impression of one large mansion. This was accomplished by adding a tower above the central projecting bay and downplaying the prominence of the entrances, which were located to the left of each projecting bay at the second story.

The vertical emphasis of the facades are achieved through the large projecting bays. The verticality is reinforced at the attic story which is defined by a mansard roof and accented by steep, gable dormers and a polygonal tower with a large pyramidal roof. The mansard roof is slate with a molded galvanized iron ridge cap. The pyramidal roof is slate and is crowned by an iron finial. The dormers, which are of two sizes, also have slate roofs and finials. There are twelve brick chimneys, three rise above the attic and are visible from Pennsylvania Avenue.

The fenestration module incorporated one double-hung window set beneath a fixed, round-arch window in each plane of the facade on the second through fourth stories. The projecting rectangular bay had one large, square window at the ground level. All of the windows have continuous, rock-face, sandstone sills and lintels. Most of the double hung windows have been replaced single pane windows. Originally, each basement could be entered from Pennsylvania Avenue through a door located beneath the straight flight of stairs which led to each unit's main entrance at the second story.

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Pronounced horizontal lines are created with cornices above the second- and fourth-stories. The principal cornice is galvanized iron and incorporates dentils. Minor horizontal lines exist in the form of a rock-face, sandstone beltcourse above the ground floor, as well as the rock-face continuous window sills and a course of rock-face sandstone which extends between the springlines of the round-arch windows; a wood transom continues this horizontal line across the window.

The two types of dormers have different window patterns. The small dormers have one double-hung window which aligns with the recessed entry bays. The large dormers have two double-hung windows and are located above the polygonal bays of 2525 and 2517 Pennsylvania Avenue. All dormers have one-over-one windows with sandstone lintels. The three double-hung windows in the central tower are wider than those in the dormers and their sandstone lintels also act as sills for round-arch windows. The north facades of the attics have a shed dormer. These contain two-over-two, double-hung, wood sash windows.

The original design of the south facade has been significantly altered at the basement and first floor levels. The exterior stairs which lead to the main entrance have been removed. 2525 has a one-story, wood, rectangular-shape bay added to the original brick rectangular-shape bay. 2519 has received brick infill in the left bay which aligned with the face of the rectangular-shape projecting bay. 2517 has received a brick addition which infilled the left bay to align it with the face of the rectangular-shape projecting bay at the first and second stories. It also received a one-story, four-foot deep, brick addition to the rectangular-shape projecting bay. 2519 and 2517 have large canvas canopies mounted to the structure which extend over sidewalk seating areas. The original ground floor doors and windows have been replaced and some window openings have been enlarged to accomodate doors.

The eastern wall was built as a party wall. (The building that was eventually built on the adjacent lot to the east was two stories. This building was recently demolished.) The western party wall was covered with stucco.

The rears of the buildings are three stories tall. They have shallow, polygonal bays which rise from grade to the third story roof. The end walls of the projecting bays incorporate chimneys. At the first floor, each bay contains a window in the chimney wall. Some windows on the rear elevations have been infilled with plywood or brick. Fire escapes and ductwork have been mounted to the facades.

A one-story rear addition to 2525 Pennsylvania Avenue occupies its entire back yard. The rear yard of 2519 Pennsylvania Avenue has been replaced by a concrete parking pad which abuts the original stone steps which lead to the basement. A one-story concrete block structure occupies most of the rear yard of 2517 Pennsylvania Avenue, the stairs and cast iron railing which lead to the basement remain.



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Built as single-family residences, the Mullett rowhouses were altered in the twentieth century for apartment use on the upper floors and commercial use at street level. A building permit was issued in 1920 for 2511 Pennsylvania Avenue (now 2525) for the installation of four bathrooms, to allow for use of the building as a rooming house." At the same time, showroom windows were added at the ground floor. A 1921 sign permit for the property indicates that the first occupant of the commercial space was "Davis Luhaney & Co., Decorators, New York and Washington." In 1930, a grocery store is listed at 2509 (now 2519) and a tailor at 2511 (now 2525). By 1939, the city directory lists eight apartments at 2507 Pennsylvania (now 2517). This building had ground floor commercial space by 1950. Photographs taken of the block in 1950 show a cleaning establishment, restaurant, and an appliance shop occupying the ground floors of the rowhouses. In the early 1960s, 2511 was renovated to accomodate six apartments. Since the 1980s, the ground floor commercial spaces have been renovated to accomodate restaurants and bars. Although the upper floors were converted into apartments, only a few major changes were necessary. The original floor plans are largely intact and nineteenth century details remian, including paneled doors with architrave trim, bullseye corner blocks, staircases with turned basulsters, and decorative fireplace mantels and surrounds.

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The Washingtonian Alfred B. Mullett, architect of the rowhouses at 2517-2525 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW was recognized for his talents at the the national and local levels at the end of the nineteenth century. Appointed Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury Department in 1866, Mullett's tenure coincided with the post-Civil War expansion of the federal government throughout the country and in the contemporaneous growth of the District of Columbia. As Supervising Architect during this period, Mullett contributed to the architectural character of the nation and in Washington, D.C.

Alfred Bult Mullett (1834-1890) was born in Taunton in Somerset County, England. His family emigrated to the United States when he was ten and settled near Cincinnati in Glendale, Ohio. He studied mathematics and mechanical drawing at Farmer's College in Cincinnati and thereafter joined the prominent local office of Isaiah Rogers and Son as a draftsman in 1856. He became a partner in the firm in 1859. In 1860, he went to Europe for three months. His travels included England, the Low Countries, Munich, and three weeks in France. In 1861, he moved to Washington, D.C. and held a minor position with the federal government before he was transferred to the Bureau of Construction. In 1862, Rogers and Mullett competed for the position of Supervising Architect of the Treasury. The post was offered to Rogers. In early 1863, Mullett joined the staff and in June he became the Assisstant Supervising Architect. By the end of the year, a quarrel began between Rogers and Mullett which centered around Rogers' inability to handle the position due to the aging process. Rogers resigned in 1865 and Mullett officially began his career as Supervising Architect of the Treasury on June 1, 1866 with an annual salary of \$3,000. Mullett was the third individual to hold the office. As the federal government's chief architect, Mullett began responsible for the post-war building program with construction costs which would total almost 60 million dollars over the next decade.

Of the sixteen men who served as Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department, Mullett is by far the best known... [he] personified the Supervising Architect's near total control over public building design... the nature of the times... propriety and government growth... provided a springboard for Mullett's remarkable career.<sup>2</sup>

During his tenure as Supervising Architect of the Treasury (1866-1874) Mullett was responsible for the design and construction of a wide range of federal buildings, from modest two-story post offices in small towns to massive, elaborately-detailed courthouses and customhouses in large cities. Thus, he gained national

<sup>1</sup> The position was established in 1852. It was located within the Treasury Department because the executive office needed federal buildings built throughout the country.

<sup>2</sup> Antoinette J. Lee, "Architects of the Treasury," 12.

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prominence. Mullett's earliest design for a new building was for the San Francisco Mint, 1869-1874, in the Greek Revival style. His choice of style may have had to do with time. Mullett began working on the Mint while he was finishing the north portico of the United States Treasury Building, the massive Greek Revival structure begun by Robert Mills in 1836. Mullett's penchant for the Second Empire is seen in the five immense, richly-decorated federal buildings, which incorporated a post office, courthouse, and customhouse, in St. Louis, Boston, Cincinnati, New York, and Philadelphia; only the St. Louis building remains standing. Mullett is best known for his design for the State, War, and Navy Building, 1871-1888 (now the Old Executive Office Building) in Washington, D.C. which cost ten million dollars. In its day, it was known as "Mullett's Masterpiece." It had ten acres of floor area, 550 rooms, and 900 columns. The edifice attested to Mullett's mastery of the Second Empire style. In November 1874, Mullett became the subject of an altercation, which concerned his mental stability, from the newly appointed Secretary of the Treasury, Benjamin H. Bristow. Mullett resigned the following month.

His career in private practice was in flux for the next decade. He tried to regain his position as Supervising Architect of the Treasury two, or perhaps three, times. For a short time in the early 1880s, Mullett was in partnership with the New York architect William G. Steinmetz, although he maintained his residence in Washington. He also was on several U.S. Navy study commissions.

Mullett had a considerable impact on the architectural character of Washington. As Supervising Architect, Mullett played a key role in the public works programs begun in the 1870s and headed by Alexander "Boss" Shepherd. During his private practice in Washington he designed approximately forty buildings. The eminent character of his clientele ranked him among the foremost local architects. He designed the D.C. Jail in 1876 (demolished) and a memorial chapel for a Civil War general. His private practice allowed him to contribute to the progressive investigation of metal frame construction. He designed the nine-story Baltimore Sun Building, 1885-1887, (now the American Bank Building) located at 1317 F Street, NW. It is a very early example of a tripartite facade and was the tallest office building in the city and may be the oldest surviving commercial "elevator" building. Thereafter, he designed the furniture retail establishment, the Moses Great Store, 1886-1887, a seven-story structure located on F Street, NW. In 1887, he remodeled the St. Marc Hotel into the Central National Bank at 7th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. (The building is popularly known as the Apex Building because it housed the Apex liquor store for years. The renovated structure became the Washington headquarters for Sears, Roebuck, and Company in 1983. The building is currently for sale.) Mullett added the brownstone facade, the twin towers, a penthouse, and an elevator, and conducted an extensive interior renovation. Mullett designed several residences with an average cost of \$12,000 and was retained to design a \$100,000 mansion for Dr. William A. Hammond.

In 1872, Pacific Pearl (Myrick) Mullett, the wife of Alfred B., inherited a large tract of land in Square 14 near the intersection of 25th and M Streets and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. In the 1880s, Mrs. Mullett subdivided the land and

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created three lots which totaled approximately 6/10 of one acre. A.B. Mullett designed three rowhouses for the lots located at 2509, 2511, and 2513 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. (They were located next to the family residence at 2501 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW; the site is now occupied by the Luzon Apartment Building--listed on the National Register of Historic Places.) The residences were erected with D.C. Permit to Build #899 which was issued on October 21, 1889, the buildings are now known as the Mullett rowhouses with the addresses of 2517, 2519, and 2525 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. Mullett designed these residences as investment properties during an era of extensive speculative development in the nation's capital. The Mullett rowhouses are now the oldest buildings on the block; the other early structures date from 1892 and 1911.

The Mullett rowhouses were built in the Foggy Bottom neighborhood. This area was settled in 1765, however, little development occurred before the formation of the District of Columbia in 1791. The area south of Pennsylvania Avenue developed during the first half of the nineteenth century and was comprised of wharves and warehouses along the Potomac River and Rock Creek. Industrial development flourished there with the completion of the C & O Canal in 1850 and its connecting canal along the Potomac. Glass factories, breweries, lime kilns, and other light-manufacturing businesses relocated to the area, including the Heurich Brewery and the Washington Gas Light Company.

The need for affordable housing in Foggy Bottom continued throughout the end of the nineteenth century as new industries continued to arrive and existing ones expanded. Development pushed northward to the sparsely populated areas along Pennsylvania Avenue. Large tracts of land, some with single family houses such as the Rinegold estate, were subdivided to accommodate several blocks of two-story rowhouses, one room wide and two rooms deep, along the streets and alleys. These buildings joined several institutions constructed immediately after the Civil War such as Columbia Hospital for Women and St. Stephen's Catholic Church. By 1892, approximately 1500 residents occupied alley dwellings in the neighborhood. Foggy Bottom became a working-class neighborhood with a large population of German and Irish immigrants.

In 1889, the year the Mullett rowhouses were constructed, Alfred B. Mullett established A.B. Mullett and Company with his sons, Frederick and Thomas, both of whom were architects. The firm remained active well into the 1930s.

In 1890, Mullett was forced to contend with four unfortunate situations. He sued Dr. Hammond for \$29,000 for unpaid services. He could not sell his speculative investment, the Mullett rowhouses. His wife became ill. And finally, he lost *A.B. Mullett vs. the United States*, a claims case in which he sought \$158,450.91 in professional fees for designing and superintending the State, War, and Navy Building. Mullett's counsel, George S. Boutwell, had been the Secretary of the Treasury when he accepted the job and took the project following the advice of Boutwell. Mullett did not receive any payment for his work. Mullett won his case in the lower courts but lost it in an upper court; the government appealed, based on technicalities, and argued that the project fell outside of the Supervising

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Architect of the Treasury's sphere of work. The unfavorable events coupled with his poor health led Mullett to shoot himself on October 20.

In an obituary in the Cincinnati Tribune, Mullett was credited as the, "author of the best features of the plan of public improvements which were adopted under the Shepherd regime... in various ways he has done much for the development of the National Capital."<sup>3</sup> Moreover, Mullett trained many young architects in his public and private careers which became important local architects, for example, John Rush Marshall and Appleton P. Clark.

Eighteen of Mullett's public buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places and four are National Historic Landmarks.

In 1896, Mrs. Mullett sold the family residence at 2501 Pennsylvania Avenue and moved with her two sons to the rowhouse at 2507 (now 2517) Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. The family occupied the house for about a year before moving to 1731 R Street, NW. The Pennsylvania Avenue rowhouse was sold to the Catholic Archdiocese of Baltimore in 1897. From the start, the Archdiocese leased the property to the prominent Washington Architect James Rush Marshall and his brother, Dr. Collins Marshall.

James Rush Marshall had worked for Mullett when the latter was Supervising Architect of the Treasury. Marshall thereafter became a principal in the architectural firm of Hornblower and Marshall, one of the city's most prestigious offices during the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century. Marshall lived at 2507 (now 2517) Pennsylvania Avenue, NW until his death in 1927; the Archdiocese retained ownership until 1919.

Friends of the Mulletts, the George P. Montague family, lived at 2511 for a time and Charles Jacobson, the manager of the local bottling plant, owned 2509 from 1901 to 1945.

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<sup>3</sup> A.J. Lee, "Architects of the Teasury," 37.

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**National Register of Historic Places  
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**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

NRIS Reference Number: 94001149 Date Listed: 9/30/94

Mullett Rowhouses DC  
Property Name: County: State:

Multiple Name

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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.

Patrick Andrews  
Signature of the Keeper

10/12/94  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

In consultation with Eve Barsoum of the DC SHPO the nomination is amended to drop Criterion A and B (and delete Alfred B. Mullett as a Significant Person); neither criterion is justified in the nomination form. The property is listed under Criterion C only. Also, the Period of Significance is extended to 1920 to include the Significant Date marked on the form. The form is officially amended to make these changes.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

National Register property file  
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)