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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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a).

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name U.S. Civil Service Commission Building

Other names/site number U.S. Trade Representatives Annex, 1724 F Street NW

### 2. Location

street & number 1724 F Street, NW  not for publication

city of town Washington, D.C.  vicinity

State District of Columbia code DC county District of Columbia code 001 zip code 20505

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this  nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

[Signature] \_\_\_\_\_ Date 8/1/13  
 Signature of certifying official  
Federal Preservation Officer, U.S. General Services Administration  
 Title State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

[Signature] DAVID MALONEY \_\_\_\_\_ Date 23 JULY 2013  
 Signature of commenting official  
DC STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER DC HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE  
 Title State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain:)

[Signature] \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action 9.18.13  
 Signature of the Keeper

**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.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal
<input type="checkbox"/>	private

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		Objects
		buildings
1	0	<b>Total</b>

**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

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT: Government Office  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT: Government Office  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS:  
Italian Renaissance  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: BRICK  
walls: BRICK; STONE: Limestone  
roof: STONE; METAL  
other: STONE: Limestone  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Narrative Description**

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**Summary Paragraph**

The U.S. Civil Service Commission Building at 1724 F Street, NW occupies a 0.3-acre lot on the south side of F Street, NW in Washington, D.C. The lot is bounded by F Street to the north, a narrow, limited access service road to the south, the office building at 1718 F Street, NW to the east, and the office building at 1730 F Street, NW to the west. The six story building was constructed in 1911 to house the U.S. Civil Service Commission and underwent various interior renovations in the late twentieth century. Currently, the building houses annex offices for the U.S. Trade Representatives, as well as offices for the U.S. Secret Service and the Executive Office of President, Office of Administration.

The U.S. Civil Service Commission Building exhibits elements of the Italian Renaissance Revival style applied to the basic commercial office building form of the early twentieth century. The Italian Renaissance Revival influence can be seen in the tripartite division into base, shaft and crown, the deeply projecting bracketed cornice, the engaged pilasters separating the central bays of the front and sides and the classically elaborated door surround. These ornamental details are sparingly applied to the standard office building form derived from the Commercial style: flat front, flat roof, little ornament, highly regular fenestration with triple-ganged windows and a balance between horizontal and vertical lines. Due to its simple but high-quality building materials, including brick and limestone, the building remains in generally good condition with few alterations to its 1911 exterior appearance and configuration.

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**Narrative Description**

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**See Continuation Sheets 7.1 through 7.4.**

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1911-1932

**Significant Dates**

1911

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

Unknown

**Architect/Builder**

Appleton P. Clark, Jr., Architect

James Knox Taylor, Supervising Architect

Samuel J. Prescott Company, Inc., Builder

- 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 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**

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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Period of Significance**

The U.S. Civil Service Commission Building is significant in the areas of Politics/Government and Architecture as headquarters of the U.S. Civil Service Commission for two decades; as an example of a federal building that was privately designed and developed under a construct-to-lease agreement; and as an expression of the Italian Renaissance Revival style applied to a commercial type office building, as designed by prominent Washington, D.C. architect Appleton P. Clark, Jr. The building is significant from 1911, the date of its completion, until 1932, when the U.S. Civil Service Commission relocated.

### Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph and Criteria Consideratons

The U.S. Civil Service Commission Building is emblematic of the growth and status attained by the important Progressive Era agency in the three decades following its establishment in 1883. During its two decades at the 1724 F Street, NW headquarters, the Commission was instrumental in the enactment of laws and policies protecting the rights of federal employees and in rationalizing federal administrative structure and procedures. The U.S. Civil Service Commission Building is significant as a rare example of a federal building designed and constructed outside of the Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury and the provisions of the Tarsney Act (1893-1912) during a major early twentieth-century federal building campaign. Moreover, the building is significant as an early and unusual example of a federal building erected through a construct-to-lease arrangement with a private developer. The U.S. Civil Service Commission Building is a notable example of the Italian Renaissance Revival architectural style applied to a commercial office building form as designed by prominent Washington, D.C. architect Appleton P. Clark, Jr. The federal building's significance falls under both National Register Criterion A (properties that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history) and Criterion C (properties that embody a distinctive characteristic of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master).<sup>1</sup>

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### Narrative Statement of Significance

#### *Politics/Government*

The building at 1724 F Street, NW is significant for its original use, as the headquarters of the U.S. Civil Service Commission from 1911 to 1932. The Commission was responsible for the reform and administration of a rapidly expanding federal employment system. The U.S. Civil Service Commission played a major role in setting the conditions of employment for the federal bureaucracy, replacing the old spoils system with one based on merit, and increasingly ensuring fair and equitable treatment of all federal employees. Just before the building was erected, the civil service rules had come to apply to a majority of federal executive branch positions. In the two decades that the Commission was headquartered in the building, the size of the civil service and percentage of employees under its jurisdiction continued to expand while the Commission addressed major concerns such as retirement, job classification, salaries, and the enormous employment demands created by World War I and the onset of the Great Depression. The Commission has had a national impact and has been an institution that has contributed significantly especially to Washington, as the seat of government and a "government town."

The U.S. Civil Service Commission Building is significant as a federal office building designed and constructed outside the normal federal building design and construction practices of the period, which is closely associated with the Tarsney Act (1893–1912) and with the tenure of James Knox Taylor as Supervising Architect of the Treasury (1897-1912). From 1893 until its repeal in 1912, the Tarsney Act authorized the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Treasury to use private architects, selected through architectural competitions, to design federal buildings. The U.S. Civil Service Commission Building was one of only a handful of buildings designed outside the provisions of the Tarsney Act by private architects chosen directly instead of through competition<sup>2</sup> Designed by local architect Appleton P. Clark, Jr., the U.S. Civil Service Commission Building nonetheless reflects the prevailing taste of the Supervising Architect's office for classical revival styles.

The U.S. Civil Service Commission Building is an unusual example of an early twentieth-century building constructed with private funds expressly for the sole use of the federal government. A reaction to the inability

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1 The U.S. Civil Service Commission Building was determined eligible by the D.C. Historic Preservation Office on October 15, 1992.

2 Antoinette Lee, *Architects to the Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 208.

to fund the construction of all necessary offices for the rapidly expanding bureaucracy during the Progressive Era, the construct-to-lease mechanism allowed the federal government to secure the construction of a building without having to appropriate a large sum of money up front to fund the land acquisition and building construction. The U.S. Civil Service Commission Building was designed to meet the Commission's requirements and the Commission was its sole tenant until 1932.

#### *Architecture*

The U.S. Civil Service Commission Building is significant as an example of the Italian Renaissance Revival style applied to a commercial office building form as designed by noted local architect, Appleton P. Clark, Jr. The building has a rectangular footprint, symmetrical facade, double-hung-sash windows, accentuated main entry and strongly projecting cornice.

Appleton P. Clark, Jr. was one of Washington, D.C.'s most prominent and prolific early twentieth century architects. Clark was responsible for the design of a number of residences, commercial, office, and religious buildings throughout Washington, D.C. His more notable projects include the Washington Post Building (1893, now demolished), the Foundry Methodist Church (1903), the Embassy of the Union of Myanmar (1903), the Jewish Community Center (1910), the Roosevelt Hotel (1919), and the Presidential Apartments (1923). Clark also designed several banks, including the National Register-listed Riggs National Bank (1924), and numerous private residences throughout Washington, D.C. The U.S. Civil Service Commission Building is the only known federal building designed by Appleton P. Clark, Jr.

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#### **Developmental history/additional historic context information**

**See Continuation Sheets 8.1 through 8.10.**

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

U.S. General Services Administration and State  
Historic Preservation Office for the District of  
Columbia; See Continuation Sheets 9.1 through

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Name of repository: **9.3.**

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):   N/A  

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property**   0.3  

**UTM References**

1	<u>  18  </u> Zone	<u>  323018  </u> Easting	<u>  4307135  </u> Northing	3	<u>          </u> Zone	<u>          </u> Easting	<u>          </u> Northing
2	<u>          </u> Zone	<u>          </u> Easting	<u>          </u> Northing	4	<u>          </u> Zone	<u>          </u> Easting	<u>          </u> Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary surrounds the approximately 0.3-acre tax parcel upon which the U.S. Civil Service Commission Building is located. F Street, NW forms the northern boundary of the property. The southern boundary is delineated by a narrow limited-access service road that runs parallel to the building. The eastern boundary is delineated by the service road running between the U.S. Civil Service Commission Building and the office building at 1718 F Street, NW, and the western boundary is delineated by the narrow service road between the federal building and the office building at 1730 F Street, NW to the west.

**Boundary Justification**

The National Register boundary for the U.S. Civil Service Commission Building includes the entire extent of the lot that is historically associated with the building during its period of significance (1911-1932). The boundary encompasses all of the significant resources and features that comprise the property.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title Emma Young/ Architectural Historian  
organization A.D. Marble & Company, prepared for the U.S. General Services Administration date September 2010, rev. April 2011 and June 2013  
street & number 3913 Hartzdale Drive, Suite 1302 telephone 717-731-9588  
city or town Camp Hill state PA zip code 17011  
Email eyoung@admarble.com

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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**Photographs:**

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Submit clear and descriptive black and white photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

**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.460 et seq.).  
**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO 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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### Exterior Description

The 1911 U.S. Civil Service Commission Building measures six stories in height with a symmetrical facade measuring five bays wide. A smaller four-story, *circa* 1911, rectilinear block is appended to the south (rear) elevation. An enclosed six-story stairwell, added *circa* 1980, protrudes from the southernmost bay of the main block on the west elevation. The building is situated on a small hill that slopes downward from north to south so that the basement level of the building is fully visible on the south (rear) elevation of the building.

The building sits atop a full, elevated basement. Pale tan brick, laid in a running bond, completely covers the exterior walls of the building. A brick water table marks the basement level, interrupted by basement windows topped with jack arches. The north, east, and west elevations feature a brick belt course that divides the first story from the upper stories of the building. The belt course on the north elevation also contains a limestone overhang underlined with bead-and-reel limestone molding. Four-story, brick pilasters, supporting a simple frieze, separate the three centermost bays of the north and south elevations and the four centermost bays on the east and west elevations. A flat, metal- and gravel-covered roof caps the building and features wide, overhanging eaves. A metal flagpole protrudes from the northern end of the roof. A formed metal cornice with large, decorative brackets dominates the roofline on all elevations of the front block.

One-over-one-light, double-hung-sash, wood windows hung singly, in pairs, or as triple-ganged groupings comprise the fenestration of the building. Each window sits atop a smooth limestone sill, and the windows in the first story are topped by jack arches. Simple rectangular, spandrel panels are located underneath the three centermost bays in the second through fifth stories of the north and south elevations and the four centermost bays of the east and west elevations. Simple, rectangular spandrel panels are located between each sixth-story window on each elevation. Boxy metal exterior light fixtures, installed *circa* 2000, extend from the lintels of various windows at the fifth story of each elevation.

The north (front) elevation of the building contains five evenly spaced bays. A stone leadwalk, installed *circa* 2012, runs to the main entry. A bronze awning with glazed roof and supported by cables attached to the front façade shelters the entrance of the building. The awning, installed *circa* 2012, replaced an unsympathetic modern canvas and aluminum awning. The doorway, consisting of a pair of double-leaf, full-light, wood doors flanked by multi-light sidelights and surmounted by a tall, multi-light transom, is located in the centermost bay of the facade. This doorway, installed *circa* 2012, replaced a non-historic doorway and is similar in material and design to the original doorway. Original to the building, the Classical Revival-style door surround is comprised of limestone pilasters supporting a simple frieze. A decorative concrete, bas-relief, rosette adorns the top of each pilaster. A contemporary bronze sign reading "1724 F Street" hangs to the west of the entry.

The east elevation measures six bays wide on the main block. The northernmost and southernmost bays of the elevation contain the original metal shutter hinges. The rear block, which is recessed approximately one foot back from the face of the main block, measures one bay deep on the east and west elevations.

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The south (rear) elevation measures five bays wide and is dominated by the smaller, four-story, *circa* 1911, rear block. A set of double-leaf, steel doors, sheltered by a flat, aluminum awning, is centrally located in the south elevation and provides a secondary, private entry into the building. The former window openings to the east and west of the entry and the five openings located above have been bricked over. The original shutter hinges and jack arches remain. Two of the former window openings to the east are inlaid with metal louvered air vents. A small, rectangular, four-light, wooden opening for ventilation is located in the westernmost former window bay of the basement level.

The west elevation measures six bays wide on the main block, but the *circa* 1980 enclosed, six-story stairwell conceals the southernmost bay. The two windows on the first story immediately to the north of the stairwell have been filled in with brick. The northernmost bays of the elevation contain the original metal shutter hinges. The rear block, which is recessed approximately one foot back from the face of the front block, measures one bay wide on the west elevation.

Interior Description

The interior of the U.S. Civil Service Commission Building underwent extensive renovations throughout the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries to accommodate the tenants who presently occupy the building.<sup>1</sup>

The primary entry, in the north elevation, provides access into the building's main lobby. The plan of each floor consists principally of small offices and the necessary circulation. The basement contains additional office and storage space. With the exception of the first story, each floor of the building is of the same basic configuration. Office space surrounds a centrally located elevator/stairway lobby. The centrally located stairway, which accesses each of the six floors as well as the basement level, retains more original detail than any other accessible interior space or feature.

Nearly all of the original interior doors have been replaced with steel fire doors. The majority of the original terrazzo floors have been covered with industrial carpeting. The marble wainscoting that once adorned the walls of the main lobby has been removed.<sup>2</sup> A minor project completed in 2012 sought to improve the building's appearance and reverse or mitigate some of these alterations with a series of alterations focused on the front of the building and the main and elevator lobbies.

*First Floor*

Four steps lead from the main entry into the main lobby. This long, rectangular space dominates the central portion of the first floor. It retains its original dentiled cornice and plaster ceiling. The walls are comprised of plaster and the floors of terrazzo. Replacement pendant fixtures light the room. A wood paneled security station is centrally located in the lobby. Two elevators are situated on the east wall beyond the security station.

<sup>1</sup> George Kanellos, U.S. General Services Administration, Historic Preservation Specialist, 13 September 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Kanellos.

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A restroom area, added *circa* 1998, is situated to the east of the lobby behind the elevators. An open archway located in the south wall of the lobby provides access to the rest of the first-floor interior.<sup>3</sup>

The *circa* 2012 project restored the original terrazzo floors, installed period appropriate door surrounds, consolidated and improved signage and redesigned security features to be less obtrusive.

### *Stairway*

The original stairway is located in the southeast corner of the lobby. The original brown-colored terrazzo floor, inlaid with a red terrazzo border, surrounds the base of the stairway on the first floor. The stairway provides access to each floor of the building, including the basement, and contains the same features and details at each floor. The stairway, splayed on the first floor, consists of marble treads set upon cast-iron risers. The balustrade consists of decorative cast-iron scrollwork and the newel post is comprised of cast iron. The handrail is polished oak. The stairway contains original light fixtures on the second, fourth, and sixth floors. The original skylight over the stairway was recently restored.

### *Elevator Lobby*

The second through sixth floors have the same configuration, as does the basement, with some modification for utility spaces. Each of the two elevators opens into a central elevator/stairway lobby. The stairway is located to the south of the elevators. Each elevator lobby contains the original brown terrazzo floor inlaid with a red terrazzo border. *Circa* 2012 improvements to the elevator lobbies, intended to reverse the effects of decades of inappropriate alterations and loss of original fabric, included the installation of period appropriate woodwork and doors in these areas and the restoration of the original terrazzo floors.

### Exterior Setting and Landscape Features

The U.S. Civil Service Commission Building is located to the southwest of the Winder Building (1848) and a block west of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building (originally State, War, and Navy Department Building, 1871-1888), both significant federal buildings. A late-twentieth-century office building with parking garage is located immediately to the north of the building, across F Street. Mid- to late-twentieth-century, high-rise, office buildings comprise the greater area to the east, west, and south of the building.

A one-way, paved-asphalt service road leads from the northeast corner of the building to the south (rear) side. A one-story, poured-concrete retaining wall, topped with a spearpoint-finial, cast-iron railing, lines the east and south sides of the service road. A brick sidewalk frames an ivy-covered grassy area containing maple and locust trees that extends along the north and west sides of the building. Evenly spaced brick piers, measuring approximately four feet in height and connected by the same cast-iron railing, line the sidewalk on the north side of the building and enclose landscaped areas on either side of the entry walk. These areas were renovated in 2011 to include small seating areas with concrete benches and planting urns.

<sup>3</sup> Only the public lobby, elevator lobby, and stairway were accessible for review on the first floor.

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Alterations

The building exterior retains a high degree of integrity with minor alterations only to the entryway on the prominent F Street elevation and to the rear of the west elevation with the addition of a stair tower. The interior of the building is in relatively good condition, but the space has been extensively altered and contains minimal evidence of its *circa* 1911 appearance. Interior alterations have been ongoing since the building's erection, and many of the spaces have new interior finishes that included the removal of original marble wainscoting and light fixtures and the addition of industrial carpeting, movable wall partitions, and the application of wallpaper to the original plaster walls.

More recently, the U.S. General Services Administration undertook a series of coordinated minor alterations at the front of the building and in the interior at the main lobby and elevator lobbies intended to improve the building's first impression on visitors and tenants. Coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Office and completed in 2012, the improvements were sympathetic to the historic character of the building and avoided or minimized impacts to historic fabric, focusing on areas that previously been subject to inappropriate alterations. The work included replacing the non-historic entrance awning with a new metal and glass awning based historic examples, installing a new wood entrance based on an original drawing for the entrance, repositioning security equipment and adding sympathetic architectural details on non-historic fabric in the main lobby and elevator lobbies and restoring the original terrazzo floors on all levels.

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Historical Narrative:

Central Washington, D.C. History<sup>4</sup>

Prior to 1791, central Washington consisted of open fields and pastureland interspersed with groves of trees and creeks. This landscape was reshaped as work began on the new national capital in the 1790s. Grand municipal buildings eventually rose along the avenues, a canal was constructed on what would later become Constitution Avenue, and homes and businesses were erected along the side streets. During the early 1800s, the government built the White House, the U.S. Capitol, City Hall, and other monumental public buildings.

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the area extending from the Capitol to the White House and from Pennsylvania Avenue north served as the commercial heart of a growing urban area. In the mid 1860s, the city's first streetcar line opened between the Capitol and the Willard hotel at 14<sup>th</sup> Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. A streetcar line was later constructed along F Street which eventually became the city's primary shopping corridor.

As the federal government expanded through the late nineteenth century, government buildings and related offices slowly displaced the residences and small businesses that originally established the downtown area. By 1891, there were nearly 21,000 federal employees in the central city, and federal bureaus spilled into many buildings originally designed for other functions. Residential growth shifted to new neighborhoods to the north, east, and south.

To the west of the White House and south of Pennsylvania Avenue, the area along the 1700 block of F Street NW originally developed as a residential neighborhood interspersed with commercial and federal buildings, such as the mid-nineteenth century Winder Building. According to the 1903 Sanborn fire insurance atlas, the site and immediate vicinity of the U.S. Civil Service Commission Building included multistory dwellings, mostly rowhouses.<sup>5</sup>

History of the U.S. Civil Service Commission, 1820-1978

The U.S. Civil Service Commission was created in 1883 to establish a merit system upon which to hire government workers, to replace the "spoils system" that had previously characterized government appointments. The civil service is a name generally applied to paid nonmilitary service in federal non-elective offices of the executive branch. Until 1883, elected government officials regarded appointive posts under their jurisdiction as political prizes to be awarded to influential or faithful supporters.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The following is taken from the District of Columbia Office of Documents and Administrative Issuances, *The Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: District Elements*, Sections 10 and 16, October 2007, except where noted.

<sup>5</sup> Sanborn Map Company, *Washington, D.C. Insurance Maps*, Vol. I (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1903).

<sup>6</sup> John Clark Ridpath, *History of the United States from Aboriginal Times to Taft's Administration* (New York: American Book Company, 1911), 571.

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The Tenure of Office Act of 1820 was passed during the term of President James Monroe, marking the beginning of the spoils system. Under the Act, the terms of many officials were limited to four years to correspond to that of the President. The act necessitated the removal of all incumbents, whether satisfactory or not, with each incoming President of the United States. Therefore, many incoming Presidents awarded government positions based on political party loyalty and friendships instead of on ability or merit to do the job.<sup>7</sup>

By the time President Andrew Jackson took office in 1829, merit figured only secondarily in executive department appointments. During Jackson's administration, the policy of political patronage in federal employment was intensified, partly because of Jackson's belief that rotation of government jobs was an essentially democratic practice. For many years thereafter, virtually all appointed positions in the executive branch were "political plunder," belonging to the party in power.<sup>8</sup>

By the mid nineteenth century, the effects of the spoils system became increasingly apparent so that, in 1851, Congress passed a resolution requesting Cabinet officers to formulate a plan of classifying clerks in several departments; for apportioning their salaries according to their services; for an impartial examination of their qualifications; and for promoting them as their qualifications and service merited. This resolution was the first federal attempt to secure the appointment of qualified employees in a systematic method. The major federal departments were required to establish examining boards to hold examinations for applicants to the four clerical grades in the federal service. These examinations often consisted of one supervising "grader," allowing continued partiality and favoritism. The examinations thus were not an effective means of reform, and corruption and scandal within the federal government continued at the cost of taxpayers.<sup>9</sup>

In March 1871, Congress passed a bill that empowered the President to prescribe rules to promote the efficiency of the civil service and ascertain the "fitness" of candidates. In that year, President Ulysses S. Grant appointed the U.S. Civil Service Commission and assigned it the task of drafting a code of hiring procedures for federal employment within the executive branch. The following Congress withdrew its financial support in 1873, however, before the U.S. Civil Service Commission could draw up a program. Consequently, the spoils system continued for the next decade in the face of public opposition and outcry.<sup>10</sup>

At the height of the spoils system, each change in administration was marked by massive removals of officials working for the departing administration. It became routine for the incoming President, his Cabinet, and the heads of agencies to put aside all other business in order to concentrate on settling the aggressive claims of office seekers who came to the nation's capital in search of appointment. Political party sympathies and partisan activity became required conditions of appointment. The ability to perform the specified job became a minor consideration, to the detriment of the public good. The spoils system placed men with little or no experience in specialized positions, creating inefficiency and corruption.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Office of Personnel Management Website, "Our History," ([http://www.opm.gov/about\\_opm/tr/history.asp](http://www.opm.gov/about_opm/tr/history.asp)) accessed 1 February 2008.

<sup>8</sup> Charles H. Peck, *The Jacksonian Epoch* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1899), 142-147.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Office of Personnel Management Website, "Our History".

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Office of Personnel Management Website, "Our History".

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Public indignation over the spoils system continued to grow throughout the country, leading to the establishment in 1877 of the New York Civil Service Reform Association and to the founding of similar organizations in other cities. The assassination of President James Garfield in 1881 by an unsuccessful candidate for a federal job transformed the question of civil service reform into a national political issue.<sup>11</sup>

In 1883, Congress passed the Civil Service Reform Act, sometimes referred to as the Pendleton Act, which laid the foundations of the American civil service system. The act established a merit-based system for filling certain classes of federal jobs. Instead of being awarded as political favors, these would be filled through competitive examinations open to all citizens. The act also protected such employees from arbitrary dismissal, demotion, or coercion for political reasons.<sup>12</sup> The act did not apply to any officials outside the executive branch of government, persons employed as laborers or workmen, and those appointed with the advice and consent of Senate. Although the act only applied to federal workers, many states enacted their own merit-based civil service reform, inspired by the 1883 act's success.<sup>13</sup>

Administration of the Pendleton Act was assigned to an appointed board of three commissioners called the U.S. Civil Service Commission (Commission), which was empowered to frame the necessary rules and regulations. The President of the United States was authorized to determine, by executive order, the classes of positions subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission. In 1883, upon passage of the act, only 13,900 positions—or slightly more than ten percent of federal civilian jobs—were placed in the competitive civil service system. The range of federal jobs covered by the act was gradually extended by both executive and legislative acts.<sup>14</sup>

The early twentieth century witnessed a period of major government expansion under the new U.S. Civil Service Commission. The administration of President Theodore Roosevelt expanded existing federal departments and created new ones, such as the Department of Commerce and Labor, which, in turn, necessitated a more efficient organization and administration of the functions of the executive branch. A former U.S. Civil Service Commissioner and a staunch supporter of the agency and its cause, Roosevelt greatly expanded the categories of positions in competitive service. By the close of Roosevelt's administration in 1909, with the addition of new government positions and the transformation of large numbers of previously excepted positions to competitive service, the merit system finally surpassed the spoils system in numbers of jobs in the executive branch.<sup>15</sup>

All those applying for a competitive service position took an exam specific to the position; by 1908 there were 350 different kinds of examinations. In addition to composing, administering and grading exams, the Commission rated applicants, established policies, disseminated materials, held hearings and meetings, and responded to inquiries, receiving 3,000 letters daily in 1908.<sup>16</sup> The growth of the work of the Commission

<sup>11</sup> Andrew C. McLaughlin, *A History of the American Nation* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1904), 506-507.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Office of Personnel Management Website, "Our History" ..

<sup>13</sup> Frederick A. Cleveland, *The Growth of Democracy in the United States* (Chicago: The Quadrangle Press, 1898), 307-310.

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Office of Personnel Management Website, "Our History". By 2002, 75 percent of all federal civilian jobs were in the competitive system.

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Office of Personnel Management Website, "Our History".

<sup>16</sup> Seeing Washington With the Times Guide: No. LXIII.--Civil Service Commission," *Washington Times*, 31 July 1908.

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inevitably led to the need for more office space and ultimately, in 1911, to the construction of the building at 1724 F Street, NW.

Prior to 1911, the new agency had rented space in at least five different buildings in the vicinity of 8<sup>th</sup> and E streets, NW, an early governmental center, leading a 1908 *Washington Times* article to quip that the U.S. Civil Service “has had as many homes as the ordinary New York apartment dweller.”<sup>17</sup> By all reports, these buildings were inadequate in size, inefficiently organized and unbefitting an important governmental agency. As early as 1904, the Commission’s annual report begged to “call attention to the necessity for better accommodations” and noted that the Commission’s cramped quarters meant that the examination section was scattered over five floors and examinations often had to be held outside the building.<sup>18</sup> In an address to Congress prior to leaving office, President Roosevelt requested \$300,000 for a new building for the agency.<sup>19</sup>

Following the move to the new headquarters building in 1911, the Commission continued to actively shape terms and conditions of federal employment. The Commission’s investigations into injustices to postal service employees resulted in the Lloyd-LaFollette Act. Enacted on August 24, 1912, this act gave civilian federal employees the right to petition Congress, forbade their removal or demotion for joining unions, and prescribed procedures for their discharge. The law not only protected employees, but helped ensure that Congress could obtain honest testimony from federal employees, who no longer needed to fear retribution from superiors. It was thus the first law offering protection to federal whistle-blowers.<sup>20</sup>

The Commission studied many areas not formerly addressed, such as salary levels; the problems of retirement; and the need for a position classification system. After two decades of urging by the Commission, Congress enacted the first civil service retirement law on May 22, 1920. Funded by deductions from employee salaries, the retirement plan enabled aged or infirm employees to leave service with a sense of security. As an immediate consequence of the Act, thousands of employees, some more than 90 years old, retired, thereby opening their positions to other more able candidates. Another measure long urged by the Commission, the Classification Act of 1923 established the principle of equal pay for equal work. On May 29, 1930, the Retirement Act was substantially improved and revised to include now familiar features such as the “high 5-year average salary” concept and optional early retirement, further enhancing the appeal of federal employment.<sup>21</sup>

The Commission responded to major events of the period including World War I, the Women’s Suffrage Movement, and the Great Depression. During World War I, the Commission struggled to fill positions in a time of unprecedented federal government expansion and huge losses of manpower to the armed services and private industry. The increased workforce requirements were met without relaxing the qualification standards through an intensive recruitment campaign emphasizing the patriotic nature of government service and by holding nearly continuous examinations. More than 950,000 applicants were examined during the World War I; many of these

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> U.S. Civil Service Commission, *Twentieth Annual Report* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1904), 22.

<sup>19</sup> “New Building Urged,” *Washington Herald*, 1 February 1910.

<sup>20</sup> U.S. Office of Personnel Management website, “Biography of an Ideal” ([http://www.opm.gov/Biography\\_of\\_an\\_Ideal/](http://www.opm.gov/Biography_of_an_Ideal/) [pdf version, 217]) accessed August 25, 2011.

<sup>21</sup> U.S. Office of Personnel Management website, “Biography of an Ideal,” 222-223.



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applied and took their examinations at 1724 F Street NW.<sup>22</sup> The wartime employment shortage opened up opportunities for women to work and eroded traditional attitudes about women's capabilities and rights. Shortly before the 1920 passage of the Women's Suffrage Act, the Commission opened all examinations to women in 1919 and President Wilson appointed Helen H. Gardener, U.S. Civil Service Commissioner, making her one of the first women to hold a major federal office. The Great Depression brought further challenges as the Commission sought to administer a wide range of austerity measures without unduly harming the federal workforce.<sup>23</sup>

In 1932 the Commission again moved to a larger building; however this time, reflecting the straightened economic conditions of the day, it did not move into new, custom built offices. In fact, as early as 1917, the Commission, with a staff of 487 permanent and temporary employees, had outgrown its building at 1724 F Street NW, and was seeking larger quarters. Plans published in 1918 showed the agency moving to a new federal building on Constitution Avenue in the area that would eventually be redeveloped as the massive governmental complex known as the Federal Triangle.<sup>24</sup> However, World War I and then the Great Depression intervened. Thus, when in early 1932 the Patent Office moved to the newly constructed Commerce Building located in the west end of the Federal Triangle, the U.S. Civil Service Commission moved into the Patent Office's former home, a venerable old government building located in the same aging neighborhood that the Commission had moved from in 1911. Although nearly a century old at the time, the Patent Office Building provided the Commission with a more commodious and monumental home.

Following its move from the building at 1724 F Street, NW, the Commission continued its work until the abolition of the agency by executive order in 1978. Its functions were divided among the Office of Personnel Management, the Merit Systems Protection Board, and the Office of Special Counsel.

The Office of the Supervising Architect of the U.S. Department of the Treasury 1852-1939

The Office of the Supervising Architect of the U.S. Department of the Treasury was responsible for the design of federal buildings from 1852 until the late 1930s. In July 1939, the public buildings program was removed from the Treasury Department and merged into the Federal Works Agency.<sup>25</sup> The most significant change affecting federal building design during this time was a shift from a policy of individual designs for federal buildings to increased utilization of standardization of design.

*The Tarsney Act*

Prior to 1893, the design of federal buildings fell solely to the Office of the Supervising Architect, keeping costs below those typical of private commissions. But with the support of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), Congress passed the Tarsney Act on February 20, 1893. The act authorized the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Treasury to use private architects, selected through architectural competitions, to design federal

<sup>22</sup> U.S. Office of Personnel Management website, "Biography of an Ideal," 218-219.

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Office of Personnel Management website, "Biography of an Ideal," 224.

<sup>24</sup> U.S. Public Buildings Commission, Public Buildings in the District of Columbia, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1918), 415, 419-425.

<sup>25</sup> Louis A. Craig, et al., *The Federal Presence* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1978), 327.

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buildings. The law demonstrated the growing demand for higher architectural standards for public buildings.<sup>26</sup> Private-sector architects tended to design a wide range of building types for a greater variety of clients and for a larger number of functions. It was hoped that this breadth of experience would enliven and improve the designs of federal buildings.<sup>27</sup> Still, the act placed the matter of implementation in the hands of the Supervising Architect.

The buildings designed under the Tarsney Act reflected the classical tastes of prominent architects involved in the City Beautiful Movement. Early buildings include the U.S. Post Office and Courthouse in Norfolk, Virginia (1898-1900), the U.S. Custom House in New York City (1899-1907), the U.S. Federal Building in Indianapolis, Indiana (1901-1905), and the U.S. Custom House in Baltimore, Maryland (1908).<sup>28</sup> Although repealed in 1912, the Tarsney Act established a precedent for competitions for federal building designs, a practice renewed by the Works Progress Administration and the Public Works Administration during the Great Depression.<sup>29</sup>

Supervising Architect James Knox Taylor

The implementation of the Tarsney Act coincides with the tenure of Supervising Architect James Knox Taylor (1897-1912). Nearly all of the federal buildings designed under Taylor can be classified as Classical or Colonial Revival. In 1897, James Knox Taylor replaced Acting Supervising Architect Charles E. Kemper as a result of a competitive civil service exam. A trained architect, Taylor directed the federal architecture program for more than fifteen years as the first civil service supervising architect.<sup>30</sup>

Influenced by the events of the Columbian Exposition, Taylor directed a return to classicism by the federal government. The classicism of the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century federal buildings was based on knowledge of classical styles as revived during the Italian Renaissance and developed further by European countries. Taylor agreed with the proponents of the City Beautiful movement that public architecture should be monumental and beautiful, thereby creating a powerful image of the federal government in local communities. As part of this philosophy, he believed that federal buildings should be built to stand the test of time, and therefore, high quality materials were emphasized, as was the use of skilled craftsmen.<sup>31</sup>

In 1893, Congress passed the Tarsney Act, which authorized the use of private architects to design federal government buildings. For various reasons, the act was not implemented until Taylor's appointment as Supervising Architect in 1897. But Taylor resisted the extensive use of private architects. During his tenure, a small number of major federal buildings in larger cities were designed by private architects, and a larger number of modest government buildings located in small communities, usually post offices, were designed by the Supervising Architect's staff.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Lee, *Architects to the Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 156-158.

<sup>27</sup> Lee, 163.

<sup>28</sup> Lee, 209-210.

<sup>29</sup> Leland M. Roth, *American Architecture: A History* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2001), 267.

<sup>30</sup> Lee, 199.

<sup>31</sup> Lee, 197-216.

<sup>32</sup> Lee, 201.

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During Taylor's tenure, only 31 of more than 400 federal buildings were designed by private architects selected under the auspices of the Tarsney Act. Even fewer were those buildings designed by private architects selected directly, rather than through a competition. The architect or firm selected to design these buildings was typically named in the appropriation for the project. The U.S. Civil Service Commission Building appears to be one of only a handful of federal buildings from this fifteen-year period for which the architect was selected directly. Another was the U.S. Post Office (1911) adjacent to Union Station in Washington, D.C.<sup>33</sup> Daniel H. Burnham was selected to design this monumental Beaux-Arts-style building to complement his earlier train station. The unusual method of procuring the design for the U.S. Civil Service Commission Building is undoubtedly linked to its unusual method of development, as a private venture, rather than to the prominence of the project.

In addition to the U.S. Civil Service Commission Building, Taylor influenced the design of numerous federal buildings throughout the United States during the course of his tenure, including the U.S. Custom House in Portland, Oregon (1897-1901), U.S. Courthouse in Portland, Maine (1911), Federal Building in Missoula, Montana (1911-1913), and the Federal Building in Minneapolis, Minnesota (1915).<sup>34</sup>

Architect Appleton Prentiss Clark, Jr.<sup>35</sup>

Appleton P. Clark, Jr., the private architect chosen for the design of the U.S. Civil Service Commission Building, is regarded as one of the most important early-twentieth-century architects in Washington, D.C. Clark was born on November 13, 1865 in Washington, D.C. The son of a lawyer, Clark graduated from Central High School in 1883. Like many of the architects of the period, he was self-educated through apprenticeship and self-study. From 1883 to 1885, Clark worked in the office of Alfred B. Mullet (who served as Supervising Architect from 1866 to 1874), after which he undertook a European tour to supplement his experience. In 1886, Clark returned to Washington, D.C. and opened his own architectural practice, one he would continue over the next 60 years.

Shortly after establishing his practice, Clark was chosen to design the Slater School in 1891 and the Washington Post Building in 1893. Other projects soon followed, including the Hermann and House Furniture Store (1895), the Langston School (1902), Strathmore Hall (1902), Foundry Methodist Church (1903), and the Sterling Apartment Building (1905). Later projects included the 1919 Roosevelt Hotel and the 1923 Presidential Apartments. In 1909, Clark was employed to design the new office headquarters for the patent attorney Victor J. Evans at 724 9<sup>th</sup> Street, NW. Evans owned the land upon which the U.S. Civil Service Commission Building was built, and his previous work with Clark likely contributed to the selection of Clark as the architect to design the new office building for the U.S. Civil Service Commission.

<sup>33</sup> Lee, 208.

<sup>34</sup> U.S. General Services Administration, Historic Buildings Website (<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21010>), accessed 1 September 2010.

<sup>35</sup> The following is taken from Kelsey and Associates, *Historic Survey of Shaw East*, for the Washington, D.C. Historic Preservation Office and Washington, D.C. Department of Planning and the Historical Society of Washington, 2001-2002 ([www.washingtonhistory.com/surveys/shawreportfinal.pdf](http://www.washingtonhistory.com/surveys/shawreportfinal.pdf)), accessed 12 September 2008.

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Clark was particularly interested in children's institutions, designing three children's homes in the Washington, D.C. area. In 1945, he published *Institutional Homes for Children*, which advocated cottage-type residences instead of cold, massive, block buildings. He was also active in business and professional affairs throughout his 60-year career. A member of the Washington Board of Trade, Clark served a number of years as chairman of its architecture committee. He was a member of the board of directors of the Equitable Life Insurance Company, the Terminal Refrigerating and Warehousing Company, the Washington Hotel Company, and the Washington Sanitary Housing Company. He was active in the American Institute of Architects on both the local and national levels, serving on several national committees and as president of the local chapter in 1919. In addition, Clark was considered a pioneer in low-cost housing in Washington, D.C. Through his long association with the Washington Sanitary Housing and Washington Sanitary Improvement Companies, he helped create more than 1,400 units of low and moderate-income rental housing.

Particularly knowledgeable about local architecture, Clark chaired various committees created to revise the city's building codes. His 1930 essay "History of Architecture in Washington" for John Clagett Proctor's *Washington: Past and Present*, revealed his concern with the quality of architecture in the District of Columbia. Clark and his colleagues were eager to see buildings worthy of the nation's capital. He remarked favorably about the classical foundations of the architecture found in Washington, D.C. but lamented what he perceived as a gradual decline in quality.

Although his commissions varied, Clark favored the Colonial and Classical Revival styles that he deemed worthy and appropriate for Washington, D.C. architecture. The U.S. Civil Service Commission Building exhibits elements of the Italian Renaissance Revival style of architecture with its the tripartite division into base, shaft and crown, the deeply projecting bracketed cornice, the engaged pilasters separating the central bays of the front and side façades and the classically detailed door surround. The U.S. Civil Service Commission Building is the only known federal building designed by Clark.

Toward the end of his career, Clark resided in Washington, D.C. with his wife and two children, but maintained a winter home in St. Petersburg, Florida. He retired from practice in 1945. In March 1955, Appleton P. Clark, Jr. died at the age of 89 years old after being hospitalized for a broken hip.

Italian Renaissance Revival Architectural Style

The U.S. Civil Service Commission Building exhibits elements of the Italian Renaissance Revival architectural style. Inspired by a range of classical Italian models, this mode arose from a desire to return to simplicity and order in reaction to the perceived excesses of High Victorian design. It aimed for a deeper academic understanding of its classical sources and projected restrained elegance and balance. The Villard Houses in New York, designed by McKim, Mead and White in 1888, are generally considered to be the first in the style, while the Boston Public Library, designed by the same firm and completed in 1895, is generally considered the finest example of the style.

The Italian Renaissance Revival style employs symmetrical elevations crowned with bold cornices. The facades are nearly flat-fronted without prominent projections or recessions and the walls are smooth and plain, serving

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as a neutral background for windows and doorways. A massive cornice typically conceals the roof from view. Such detailing is drawn from classical Italian architectural examples and is used in a restrained manner.

The U.S. Civil Service Commission Building exhibits the Italian Renaissance Revival influence in the tripartite division into base, shaft and crown, the deeply projecting bracketed cornice, the engaged pilasters separating the central bays of the front and side façades and the door surround elaborated with classical motifs. These ornamental details are sparingly applied to the standard early-twentieth-century office building form: flat front, flat roof, little ornament and highly regular fenestration.

The modest size and character of the U.S. Civil Service Commission Building sets it apart from many federal buildings constructed in Washington in the first two decades of the twentieth century, a period in which the federal government sought to elevate the appearance of its buildings and the capital city. Moreover, the building does not exhibit any of the national or departmental iconography that was often employed on the exterior facades and interior public spaces of federal buildings. However, the lack of pretentiousness and specific federal references makes sense for a building that was a speculative venture.

### U.S. Civil Service Commission Building, 1911 to the Present

In 1909, the United States government entered into a lease agreement with prominent Washington, D.C. patent attorney Victor Justice Evans (1865-1931) in which Evans would erect an office building at 1724 F Street, NW and lease the building to the U.S. Civil Service Commission.<sup>36</sup> Evans was founder of Victor J. Evans & Co., a highly successful patent law practice headquartered in the Victor Building, adjacent to the Patent Office, with branches in a number of other major American cities.

The construct-to-lease arrangement was unusual for the federal government at the time. Few examples are known prior to the mid twentieth century and it appears to have been utilized only in special circumstances. Typically, the federal government constructed buildings for its own use, or leased existing buildings when appropriations for construction were not available or when flexibility was desired. The Winder Building, located at 600 17<sup>th</sup> Street NW, is an early example of a building constructed by a private developer specifically for the federal government. Erected in 1848 by William Winder as offices for the U.S. Army and Navy, the building was first leased on a trial basis for five years and then purchased by the federal government in 1854. A later example is the Lafayette Building, located at 811 Vermont Avenue NW, constructed in 1940 by the Lafayette Building Corporation for lease to the federal government, which purchased the building in 1947.<sup>37</sup> After World War II, the extensive construction backlog resulting from wartime materiel shortages, led the federal government to adopt a lease-to-purchase program of limited scope, from 1954 to 1959.<sup>38</sup> The construct-to-lease and lease-to-purchase mechanisms, allowing the federal government to secure the construction of a

<sup>36</sup> Records Relating to Construction, Engineering, Land, and Transportation, 1791-1968, Record Group 351, Records of the District of Columbia Government, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

<sup>37</sup> U.S. General Services Administration, Historic Buildings Website.

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federal building without having to appropriate a large sum of money up front, continue to find favor in lean economic times and periods of political paralysis.

The U.S. Civil Service Commission Building's location was among other government buildings, including a Government Printing Office facility at 1723 F Street, NW, and U.S. Treasury Department offices in the Winder Building at F and 17<sup>th</sup> streets. The lot was bounded on the north by F Street, on the east by a dwelling at 1722 F Street, NW, on the south by a vacant lot, and on the west by a dwelling at 1730 F Street, NW.<sup>39</sup> Evans purchased the land for \$35,000 in November 1910.<sup>40</sup>

The design and construction commenced following an appropriation of \$11,750, to be paid annually for ten years as a lease to Victor J. Evans. The total cost of the building was estimated at \$158,000, and Samuel J. Prescott Company, a Washington, D.C. contractor, carried out the construction. Construction began in the fall of 1910 and by July 1911, a six-story, fire-proof, steel-frame building, featuring two elevators, was erected on the site of a former dwelling.<sup>41</sup>

On Thursday, July 27, 1911, President William Howard Taft dedicated the Commission's new headquarters in a simple flag-raising ceremony for the Commission's employees. General John M. Black, Chairman of the Commission and whose office would now be housed in the new building, escorted President Taft on a tour.<sup>42</sup> A *Washington Times* article described the arrangement of the building: "Top floor, commissioners, secretaries and chief examiners offices, and the board room where meetings are to be held; fifth floor, application division; fourth floor, examining division; third floor, division of appointments; second floor, forms and supplies; first floor, bureau of information and examination room."<sup>43</sup> The *Washington Post* proclaimed it "an ideal office building."<sup>44</sup> After President Taft's dedication, 163 employees relocated from the Commission's former office building at 8<sup>th</sup> Street to this new headquarters.<sup>45</sup>

After the departure of the Commission in 1932, the building was listed as an annex for the Department of Labor.<sup>46</sup> Although it continued to house a variety of federal agency tenants, the building at 1724 F Street, NW was not purchased by the federal government until 1960.<sup>47</sup> By 1990 the building was vacant.<sup>48</sup>

In 1998, the entire building was extensively rehabilitated, including complete interior renovation and the installation of new mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and fire protection systems.<sup>49</sup> Two years later, the building

<sup>39</sup> Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, 1903-1916.

<sup>40</sup> "Plans Being Drawn for Office Building," *Washington Times*, 5 November 1910.

<sup>41</sup> Records Relating to Construction, Engineering, Land, and Transportation.

<sup>42</sup> "Taft Opens Building," *Washington Post*, 28 July 1911.

<sup>43</sup> "New Civil Service Board Building Is Now in Use," *Washington Times*, 28 July 1911.

<sup>44</sup> *Washington Post*, 28 July 1911.

<sup>45</sup> U.S. Public Buildings Commission, 422.

<sup>46</sup> Boyd's District of Columbia Directory (Washington, DC: R.L. Polk & Company, 1933).

<sup>47</sup> U.S. General Services Administration, *Real Property Owned by the United States as of June 30, 1968: Civil Agencies (Washington, DC, 1968), 207.*

<sup>48</sup> Washington, D.C. City Directories, 1911-1998, available from the Kiplinger Library, Historical Society of Washington, Washington, D.C.

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assumed its current function as the annex for the U.S. Trade Representatives and as additional office space for the U.S. Secret Service and the Executive Office of President, Office of Administration.

Significance Evaluation<sup>50</sup>

The U.S. Civil Service Commission Building is significant under Criterion A at the local level in the area of Politics/Government as the headquarters of the U.S. Civil Service Commission from 1911 to 1932. The Commission was responsible for the reform and administration of a rapidly expanding federal employment system. The U.S. Civil Service Commission played a major role in setting the conditions of employment for the federal bureaucracy, replacing the old spoils system, and increasingly protecting federal employees. In the period when the building was erected, the civil service rules had come to apply to a majority of federal civilian positions. The Commission has had a national impact and has been an institution that has contributed significantly especially to Washington, as the seat of government and a "government town."

The building is also significant under Criterion A as an unusual example of an early-twentieth century federal building designed by a private architect, rather than by the Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury or by an architect selected under the auspices of the Tarsney Act (1893-1912). Moreover, the building is significant as an early and unusual example of a federal building constructed through a construct-to-lease arrangement with a private developer. As the bureaucracy expanded during the activist Progressive Era, this mechanism was used to quickly provide office space for the U.S. Civil Service Commission without having to obtain large, special appropriations.

The U.S. Civil Service Commission Building is also significant under Criterion C at the local level in the area of Architecture. Despite its unusual genesis, the building embodies the architectural ideals of the federal building campaign carried out in the early twentieth century. It is significant as a local example of the Italian Renaissance Revival architectural style which was frequently used for monumental governmental buildings of the early twentieth century, but was applied here to a modest commercial office building form. The building is also significant as part of the body of work of architect Appleton P. Clark, Jr., a notable master of early twentieth century architecture in Washington, D.C.

The period of significance for the federal building extends from 1911, the date of its construction, to 1932, when it was vacated by the U.S. Civil Service Commission.

*Integrity*

The U.S. Civil Service Commission Building retains exterior integrity from the period of construction (1911). The building has undergone few exterior alterations, particularly to the prominent north elevation (facade). The

<sup>49</sup> Grunley Construction Website, "1724 F Street NW Federal Building-Renovation," (<http://www.grunley.com/portfolio/federal/1724fst.asp>), accessed 1 February 2008.

<sup>50</sup> The federal building at 1724 F Street, NW was determined eligible by the D.C. Historic Preservation Office on October 15, 1992 for its significance as a privately developed federal office building designed in the Italian Renaissance Revival style by prominent Washington, D.C. architect Appleton P. Clark, Jr.

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building has undergone extensive interior alterations, including the removal of marble wainscoting and original light fixtures and the application of new interior finishes such as industrial carpeting, wall partitions, and replacement wall coverings. A more recent program of improvements undertaken in 2011 sought to address the inappropriate changes in the most publicly prominent areas of the building. The U.S. Civil Service Commission Building retains its original location in an urban setting. The area around the building has been redeveloped and now contains large multi-story, mid- to late-twentieth-century commercial and government edifices, somewhat detracting from integrity of setting. The exterior of the building retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Despite the extensive interior renovations, the federal building retains its overall appearance as a federal office building, all of which contribute to integrity of association. The building's retention of integrity of design, materials, workmanship, location, and association results in the building's retention of feeling as an early-twentieth century federal building erected in the Italian Renaissance Revival architectural style.



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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Commission Building

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Name of Property:	U.S. Civil Service Commission Building
City or Vicinity:	Washington, D.C.
County:	Washington, D.C.
State:	DC
Location of Original Digital Files:	GSA Headquarters, Office of the Chief Architect

Photo # 1 (DC\_DC\_1724 F Street NW\_0001)  
North elevation, view to south  
Name of Photographer: A. Bywater, GSA  
Date of Photograph: June 2013

Photo # 2 (DC\_DC\_1724 F Street NW\_0002)  
North elevation, entrance, view to southwest  
Name of Photographer: A. Bywater, GSA  
Date of Photograph: June 2013

Photo # 3 (DC\_DC\_1724 F Street NW\_\_0003)  
East elevation, view to southwest  
Name of Photographer: E. Young, A.D. Marble & Co.  
Date of Photograph: September 2007

Photo # 4 (DC\_DC\_1724 F Street NW\_0004)  
South elevation, view to west  
Name of Photographer: E. Young, A.D. Marble & Co.  
Date of Photograph: September 2007

Photo # 5 (DC\_DC\_1724 F Street NW\_0005)  
North and west elevations, view to southeast  
Name of Photographer: E. Young, A.D. Marble & Co.  
Date of Photograph: September 2007

Photo # 6 (DC\_DC\_1724 F Street NW\_0006)  
Interior, public lobby, looking north  
Name of Photographer: A. Bywater, GSA  
Date of Photograph: June 2013

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

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

U.S. Civil Service  
Commission Building

Washington, D.C.

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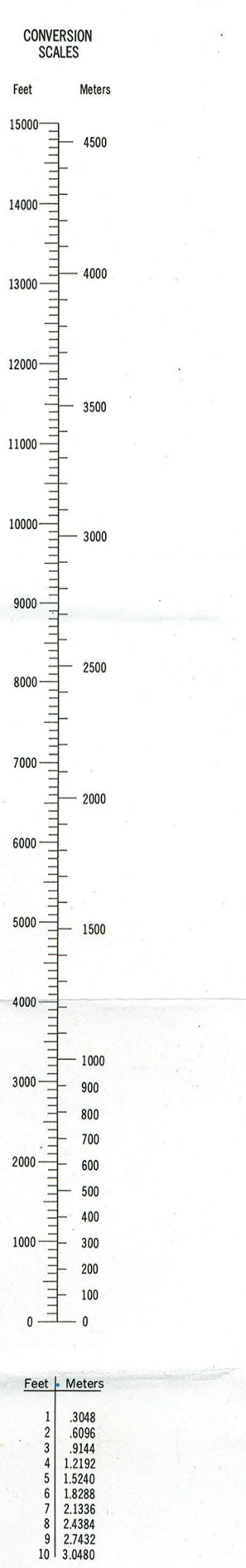
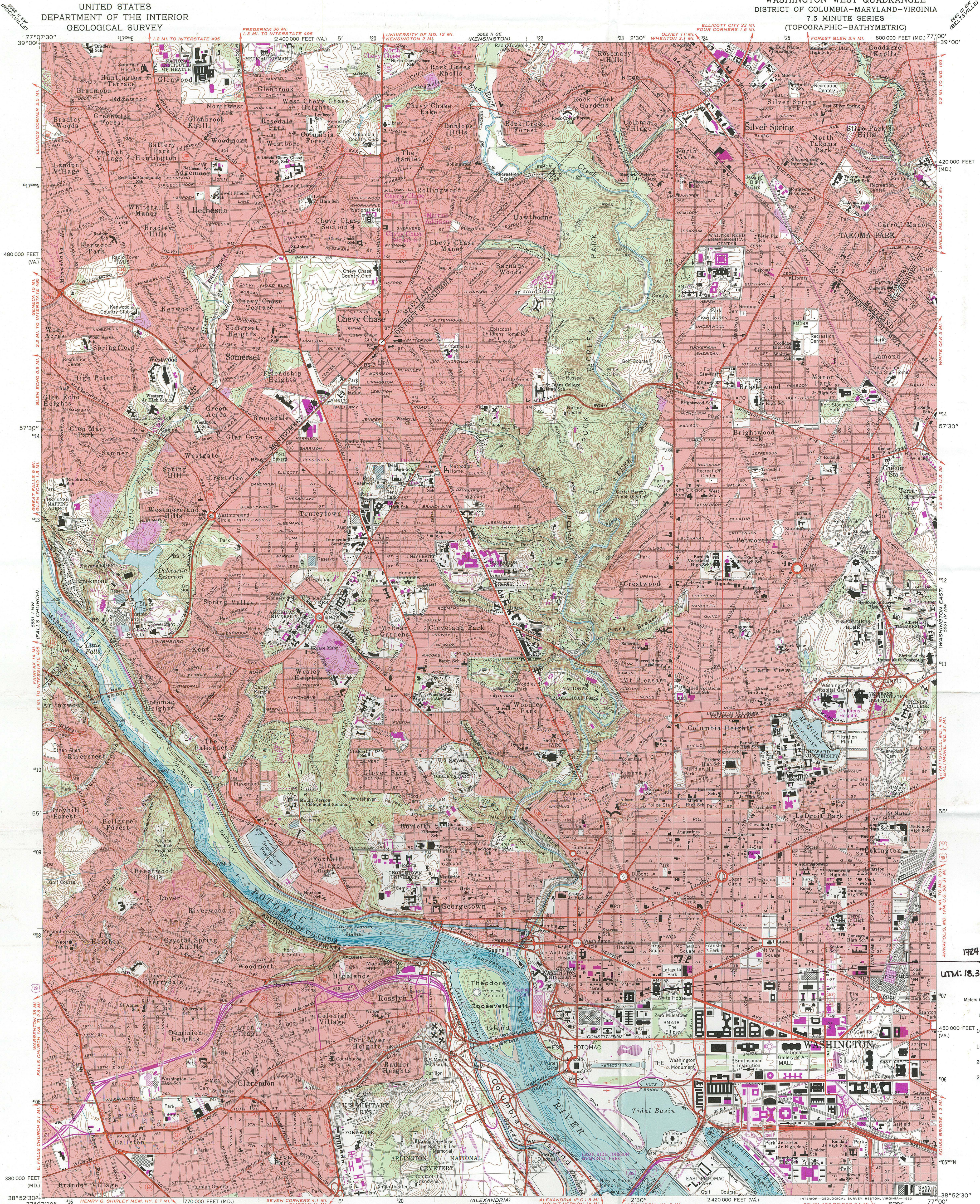
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Photo # 7 (DC\_DC\_1724 F Street NW \_0007)  
Interior, public lobby, detail of stairway, view to east  
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Date of Photograph: September 2007

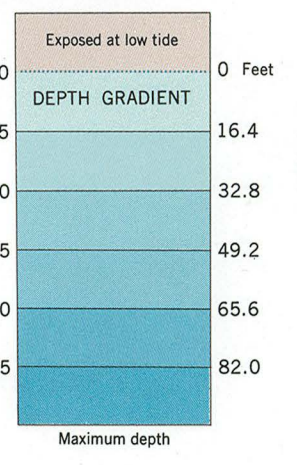
Photo # 8 (DC\_DC\_1724 F Street NW \_0008)  
Interior, second floor, detail of stairway, view to southeast  
Name of Photographer: E. Young, A.D. Marble & Co.  
Date of Photograph: September 2007

Photo # 9 (DC\_DC\_1724 F Street NW \_0009)  
Interior, detail of stairway  
Name of Photographer: E. Young, A.D. Marble & Co.  
Date of Photograph: September 2007

Photo # 10 (DC\_DC\_1724 F Street NW \_0010)  
Interior, second floor, elevator lobby  
Name of Photographer: A. Bywater, GSA  
Date of Photograph: June 2013



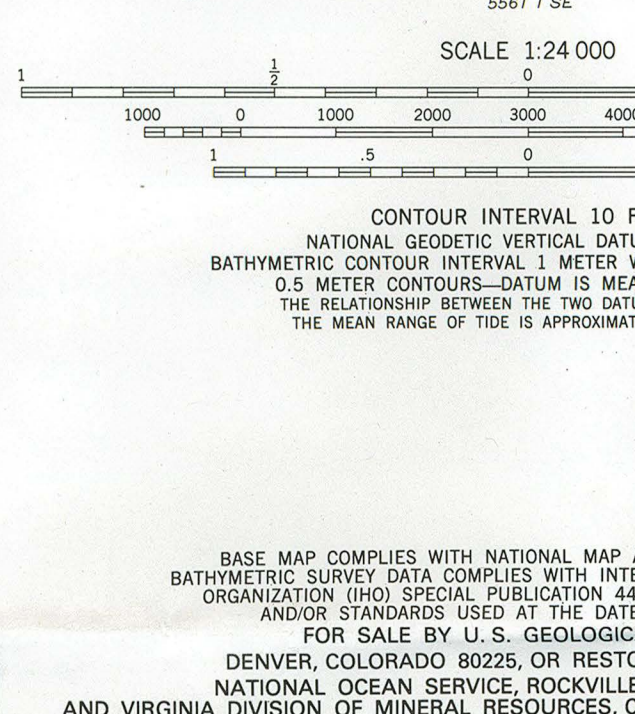
1724 F Street NW,  
WASHINGTON, D.C.  
UTM: 18.323018.430735



Maped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey and the National Ocean Service  
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, NCPs, and WSSC  
Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1965. Field checked 1966. Revised 1983.  
Bathymetry compiled by the National Ocean Service from tide-coordinated hydrographic surveys. This information is not intended for navigational purposes.  
Mean low water (dotted) line and mean high water (heavy solid) line compiled by NOS from tide-coordinated aerial photographs. Apparent shoreline (outer edge of vegetation) shown by light solid line.  
Polyconic projection. 10,000-foot grid ticks based on Maryland coordinate system, and Virginia coordinate system, north zone. 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 18, 1927 North American Datum.  
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 6 meters south and 26 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks.  
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown. There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map.  
Revisions shown in purple and woodcock compiled in cooperation with Commonwealth of Virginia agencies from aerial photographs taken 1981 and other sources. This information not field checked.  
Map edited 1983.  
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas.

NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE  
HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY INDEX

Survey Number	Survey Date	Survey Scale	Survey Line spacing (Naut. Miles)
H-9478	1976	1:5,000	.01-.08
H-9488	1976	1:5,000	.01-.05



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

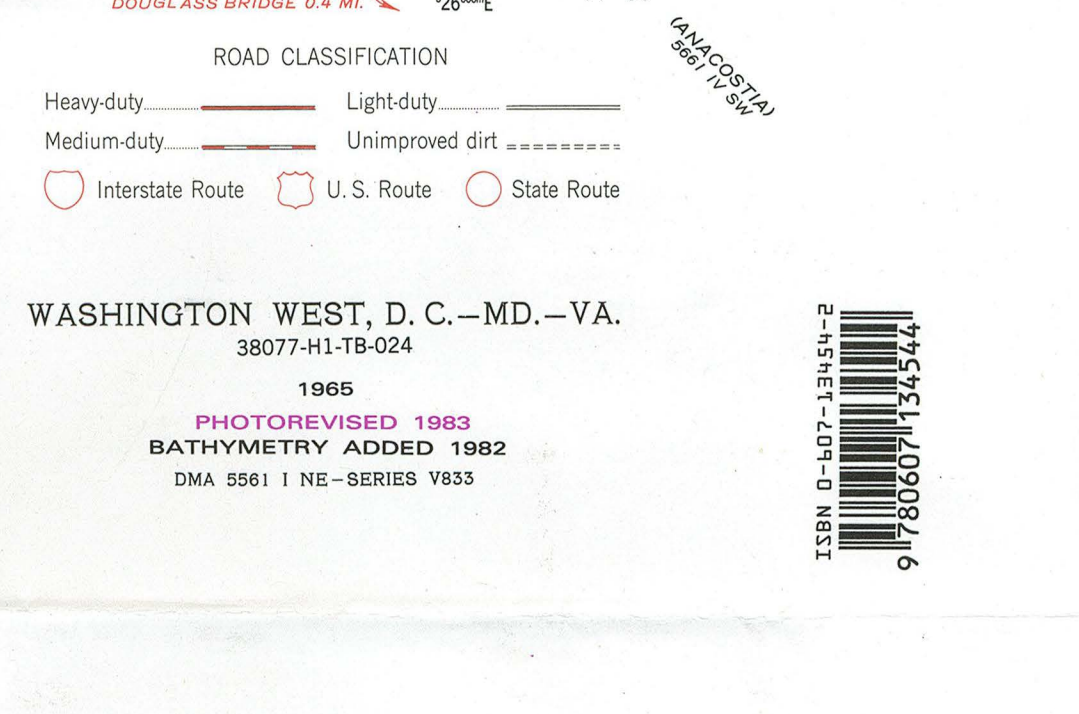
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———  
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———  
Interstate Route — U.S. Route — State Route —

WASHINGTON WEST, D.C.—MD.—VA.  
38077-11-TB-024

1985  
PHOTOREVISED 1983  
BATHYMETRY ADDED 1982  
DMA 5561 I NE—SERIES V833

BASE MAP COMPLES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
BATHYMETRIC SURVEY DATA COMPLES WITH INTERNATIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC ORGANIZATION (IHO) SPECIAL PUBLICATION 44 ACCURACY STANDARDS AND/OR STANDARDS USED AT THE DATE OF THE SURVEY  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE, ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20852  
AND VIRGINIA DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA 22903  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

UTM GRID AND 1983 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET







1724  
F  
STREET









17th St SE



2 HOUR  
PARKING







STAIR 1  
ADJ. ACES  
LEVEL 2  
EXIT LEVEL 1  
FLOOR 2





NORTH

2

2



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY U.S. Civil Service Commission Building  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, District of Columbia

DATE RECEIVED: 8/02/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/26/13  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/10/13 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/18/13  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13000713

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 9.18.13 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



August 1, 2013

Ms. Carol Shull  
Interim Keeper, National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
1849 C Street, NW (2280)  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Shull:

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is pleased to nominate the U.S. Civil Service Commission Building (current name 1724 F Street, NW) located at 1724 F Street, NW, Washington, DC, for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

The following documents are enclosed:

- Signed original National Register of Historic Places Registration form;
- U.S.G.S. Map; and,
- Original labeled black and white photographs along with a disk of TIFF images.

If for any reason any nomination package that GSA submits needs to be returned, please do so by a delivery service as items returned to our offices via regular mail are irradiated and the materials severely damaged. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this nomination package, please contact Elizabeth Hannold at (202) 501-2863 or [elizabeth.hannold@gsa.gov](mailto:elizabeth.hannold@gsa.gov).

Sincerely,

Beth L. Savage  
Federal Preservation Officer  
Director, Center for Historic Buildings

Enclosures

cc: Nancy Witherell, Regional Historic Preservation Officer