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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 if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

### 1. Name of Property

Signature of the Keeper

historic name Tiber Island

other names/site number Tiber Island Cooperative Homes and Tiber Island Condominiums

2. Location

street & number	er 401-461 N Street, SW; 430-490 M Street, SW; 1201-1265 4th Street,	not for publication
	SW and 1252 6 <sup>th</sup> Street, SW	
city or town	Washington, D.C.	vicinity
state District	of Columbia code DC county code 001	zip code

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

outer cuciar (gene) continuation	
As the designated authority under the National Historic	Preservation Act, as amended,
	or determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards storic Places and meets the procedural and professional
In my opinion, the property <u>x</u> meets does not r be considered significant at the following level(s) of significant	neet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property nificance:
X nationalstatewidelocal	
Signature of certifying official/Title	5 HPO 11/14/2012
DC HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the Nation	nal Register criteria.
Signature of commenting official	Date
Title	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government
4. National Park Service Certification	
I hereby certify that this property is:	
1	developed allocate for the Matterial Devictor
V_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:)	
	1111 012
Pattick Anallis	1/14/2013

Date of Action

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018 (Expires 5/31/2012) Tiber Island Washington, DC Name of Property County and State 5. Classification **Ownership of Property** Category of Property Number of Resources within Property (Check as many boxes as apply.) (Check only one box.) (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.) Contributing Noncontributing private building(s) 90 buildings х X 1 public - Local district sites public - State site 1 structures public - Federal structure objects 92 Total object Name of related multiple property listing Number of contributing resources previously (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing) listed in the National Register N/A 1 6. Function or Use **Historic Functions Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions.) (Enter categories from instructions.) DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling SOCIAL/Clubhouse 7. Description Materials Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.) (Enter categories from instructions.) MODERN MOVEMENT/Mid-Century Modern foundation: Concrete walls: Brick, concrete, glass Gravel and asphalt roof: other:

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National Park Service / National	Register of Historic Places Registration Form
NPS Form 10-900	OMB No. 1024-0018

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Tiber Island	
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#### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a summary paragraph that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

### Summary Paragraph

Tiber Island, a residential complex in Washington, DC's southwest quadrant bounded by M and N streets and 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> streets, SW, was constructed between 1963 and 1965 as part of the urban renewal efforts of the time. The residential complex includes four nine-story towers housing 368 apartments, and 85 two-story, single-family townhouses for a total of 89 contributing buildings. The complex also incorporates the eighteenth-century Thomas Law House, now adaptively re-used as a community center. Its buildings are linked by a network of designed landscaped courts, quadrangles, and walkways, together counted as a contributing site. At the center of the complex is a rectangular plaza paved with concrete blocks, which contains a rectangular pool with a fountain in its northwest quadrant. A "Great Lawn" occupies the west edge of the complex along its boundary with Waterside Park. In addition, the property includes an underground parking garage located beneath the central plaza area and considered a contributing structure.

Tiber Island is bounded on the north by M Street SW and on the south by N Street, which terminates at a traffic circle that continues along a driveway on the same east-west axis. At the end of the driveway, the boundary follows a post and chain fence that delineates the complex's "Great Lawn" from Waterside Park to its intersection with a similar fence that forms the western edge of the property. On the west, the property is bounded by this fence which also separates the lawn from Waterside Park.

### Narrative Description

### The Site

Tiber Island, which covers approximately 8.4 acres, occupies the entire area of Square 502. Square 502 is a "super-block" assembled from the individual blocks which composed the original Square 502 before the redevelopment of Southwest Washington in the 1960s. The site includes the 1963-1965 residential complex of apartment buildings and townhouses, as well as the late eighteenth-century Thomas Law House. The residential complex follows a rigorous site plan whereby the four, nine-story apartment buildings stand endwise to the street with the opposing ends facing a central open space (the plaza) at the center of the complex. Each pair of buildings is offset from the site's midline, a pattern frequently described as a "pinwheel". Rows of attached townhouses arranged in off-set groupings fill in the areas between the towers. These townhouses have either street frontage or frontage on the plaza. The Law House, located on its original site, is at the southwestern corner of the square outside of the rigidly laid out complex. It is reached by a private driveway which continues the axis of N Street SW that terminates at a roundabout at a mid-point along the axis. Immediately to the east of the Law House is a walled enclosure for the Tiber Island swimming pool.

The east boundary of this enclosure is the sidewall of a block of four townhouses. Immediately east of these townhouses is a walkway to the plaza which runs along the west side of the Tiber Island South apartment building. This building is sited just west of the complex's north-south midline. A driveway on the east side of the apartment building connects the N Street traffic circle with the garage beneath the central plaza. The remaining buildings on the site's south perimeter are a block of ten townhouses in two offset rows of five, whose easternmost sidewall faces the entrance courtyards of the block of townhouses on the site's east perimeter.

A block of ten townhouses in three offset rows occupies the southeast corner of the complex's east perimeter. Just north of these townhouses is the access road of the Tiber Island East apartment house, the apartment house, and a walkway accessing the central plaza. The apartment house is situated just south of the complex's east-west midline. The northernmost sidewall of a block of nine townhouses in two offset rows then faces the entrance courtyards of a group of townhouses on the complex's north perimeter.

The northern perimeter of the complex along M Street SW begins with a block of eleven townhouses in three offset rows. It continues west to the Tiber Island North apartment house, its walkway, and access driveway. The apartment house is sited just east of the north-south midline of the block. The westernmost sidewall of a block of

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ten townhouses in three offset rows faces the entrance courtyards of a block of ten townhouses on the complex's west perimeter.

The west perimeter of the complex along Sixth Street begins with a block of ten townhouses in three offset rows, whose northernmost sidewall faces M Street. Immediately south is an access driveway and the Tiber Island West apartment house, its access road, and walkway to the central plaza. The apartment house is sited just north of the complex's east-west midline. South of the apartment house, the west perimeter is the Great Lawn.

Groups of townhouses adjoin each face of the central plaza, as do the side facades of each apartment building. These groups consist of four townhouses on the north, south and west sides, and three townhouses on the east.

#### The Tiber Island High-Rise Buildings

The Tiber Island apartment towers consist of four nine-story buildings which stand endwise to the street on each face of the plaza. Each pair of buildings is offset from the site's midline, a pattern frequently described as a "pinwheel".

The four towers have rectangular footprints and identical exteriors of predominantly beige brick with lighter structural concrete features. Their first stories consist of exposed repeating concrete pilotis and support beams, with a recessed glassed-in lobby level. Above the first story, each façade is divided into two vertically symmetrical sections by a full height recessed alcove. Each section is horizontally segmented by a band of concrete above its top and below its lowest story.

The narrower street and plaza-facing facades are windowless. Each of the other facades is divided into two asymmetrical bays, the wider of which has two banks of protruding precast concrete balconies, each flanked by a three pane window. The balcony railing faces consist of two concrete rectangles with recessed concrete latticework. The narrower bay has a single bank of identical balconies and windows. The apartment towers were advertised as having efficiencies, one, and two bedroom units with 23 different floor plans.

#### Townhouses

Tiber Island offers a variety of townhouse-types, consisting of either two, three, or four floors. The townhouses are arranged in rows of three to five units having the same height and a common setback. Two or more rows of townhouses with different heights may adjoin each other with different setbacks to create a block of offset rows.

Each townhouse has a private front and rear garden courtyard. These courtyards are enclosed by beige brick walls, although a few entrance courtyards have substituted wooden infill sections. Egress is through front and rear wooden gates painted red.

Each townhouse is one bay wide and built of beige brick. Above each story, a band of concrete runs horizontally across the full length of the row. The first level of the front or rear façade is largely concealed by the courtyard wall. It includes an entrance door and a three panel sliding glass door. Each upper story has a precast concrete balcony with an inset rectangle on its front panel. Behind each balcony is a two panel sliding glass door recessed in the façade. These balconies are vertically stacked above the first floor window.

Within each row, the architects avoided repeating identical facades by alternating units with mirror-image floor plans. Rear garden courtyards are oriented to the street, while entrance courtyards face interior courtyards and walkways. Rows of townhouses often face the sidewalls of blocks of townhouses on adjacent perimeters, or have offset front gates on either side of a walkway. No townhouse directly fronts a perimeter street.

The inner townhouse blocks that abut the plaza differ from those on the complex's perimeter. Because the plaza's paved surface is about four feet above ground level, these townhouses are "split level". The two- story townhouses on the east, north and south sides of the plaza have raised rear sections facing the plaza and lower front sections whose entrance courtyards face walkways.

The townhouses which abut the west side of the plaza are unique within the complex. These townhouses have two-story front sections whose entrance courtyards face the plaza, and three story rear sections whose rear garden courtyards face the "Great Lawn."

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### The Thomas Law House

Built circa 1794, the federal-style Thomas Law House is listed in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites and the National Register of Historic Places. It is a substantial, three-story, five-bay brick structure set upon a raised foundation and covered with a hipped roof with prominent chimneys on the east and north elevations. Its brick walls are divided by stone belt courses above and below the raised first story. Its main entrance faces west to the Potomac River and is reached by double-flight iron replacement stair that curves up to a landing at the main entrance.

The principal west façade of the Law House is the most rigidly symmetrical and formal. It is divided into five equal bays defined by round arched openings on the first story, long and narrow rectangular windows on the second story, and smaller and nearly square windows in the third story. On the first story, the door is located on center, with an arch surround that is slightly wider and flatter than the flanking window arch surrounds. All of the arches are of stone, with stone impost bands running between and connecting the openings. The second and third story windows all feature stone lintels with central keystones and stone sills.

The south elevation, facing the street is articulated like that of the principal west elevation with stone lintels and keystones defining the windows. The north elevation, in contrast, is only two bays wide and offers segmental arched openings of brick rather than stone. Only the upper stories of the original block are exposed on this elevation, however, as a six-bay, one- and one-half story, gable-roofed, brick addition connects to the house by a one story passageway to the north. A single-story brick wing with flat roof extends east from the north end of this addition. These additions are first visible on Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps from the first half of the twentieth century.

The unfenestrated east elevation of the house consists of a double-stack chimney, which at the cornice line come together by a semi-circular arch to form a single massive chimney stack that rises above the roofline. This and the interior end chimney on the north elevation are the Law House's dominant roofline feature.

The interior of the Law House presents a central-passage plan with a stair in the central hall and rooms to either side. The interior was altered during its use as a hotel during the nineteenth century and a medical clinic during the early twentieth. It was further altered during its renovation as a community center during the 1960s, when its exterior was painted beige to harmonize with the complex's new structures. Changes to its historic exterior are documented on the National Register of Historic Places nomination form for the property dated August 14, 1973.

#### Landscape

Landscape architect Eric Paepcke prepared a complex landscaping design for Tiber Island's multiple walkways, quadrangles, public courtyards, plaza, Great Lawn, and other green space areas. Plantings included 113 trees representing 10 species, 700 shrubs of assorted varieties, and more than 18,000 bedding plants. While it is not possible to match all present-day plantings to Paepcke's plan, the present treatment of green spaces follows its outlines and many of the larger plantings may be original specimens. Illustrations 3A and 3B are digital images of Paepcke's final plan.

### Plaza and Parking Garage

The center of the complex features a plaza paved with rectangular concrete blocks. Its northwest quadrant contains a reflecting pool with fountains. Its southwest quadrant originally included a gazebo, while its northeast and southeast quadrants had a symmetrical group of trees in concrete planters called the "Hornbeam Grove".

A garage with parking marked out for 286 cars under the original plan is located beneath the plaza. It is accessed by a driveway on the east side of the Tiber Island South building that connects to N Street SW.

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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.	Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions.) ARCHITECTURE COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.	
x 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.	Period of Significance 1961-1964
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.	Significant Dates 1961; 1964
Criteria Considerations (Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.) Property is:	Significant Person (Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
<ul> <li>A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.</li> <li>B removed from its original location.</li> <li>C a birthplace or grave.</li> </ul>	Cultural Affiliation
D a cemetery. E a reconstructed building, object, or structure. F a commemorative property.	Architect/Builder Keyes, Lethbridge & Condon (Arthur H. Keyes, Jr. Francis D. Lethrbridge, David H. Condon)
X G less than 50 years old or achieving significance	

### Period of Significance (justification)

within the past 50 years.

The Period of Significance for Tiber Island extends from 1961-1965—a period that marks the beginning and end dates of construction. Although located within the boundaries of the property, the circa 1794 Thomas Law House is not included within this period of significance as it is listed separately in the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, portions of the Tiber Island property appear to retain both prehistoric and historic archaeological potential, notably around the Thomas

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Law House. If present, archaeological resources have the potential to contain significant information on history and/or prehistory of the region.

#### Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Tiber Island meets Criterion Consideration G as a property of "exceptional importance" that is less than fifty years old. Sufficient historical perspective exists to examine Tiber Island within the context of Southwest development and to weigh the property's significance. Tiber Island meets the threshold for its seminal role as part of the nation's first Urban Renewal project. Its architecture and planning were touted as model for other Urban Renewal projects to follow and the importance of its design was immediately recognized. Its plan, architectural materials, and overall character are virtually untouched, maintaining its integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, location, feeling and association.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Designed by Keyes, Lethbridge and Condon, Tiber Island (built 1961-64) features modernist brick and concrete edifices carefully arranged in a landscape designed by Eric Paepcke. A total of 368 apartments, distributed among four eight-story towers, form a pinwheel centered on a large open plaza. Eighty-five townhouses of two and three stories face into the complex. On both townhouses and towers, tan brick with concrete bands forms a consistent exterior wall treatment. Stacked concrete balconies repeat on all buildings and provide articulated surfaces where balconies project and doors are inset. The modernist practice of supporting the apartment buildings on shaped concrete *pilotis* makes them seem to float over their glassy lobbies.

Praise was heaped on the project and its architects at the time of construction, culminating with an AIA Honor Award in 1966, when Tiber Island was one of three national recipients, the other two being Eero Saarinen's Dulles airport and his CBS Headquarters in New York. That same year, *Fortune Magazine* listed the project as one of the ten best buildings in the United States. *Architectural Forum* touted Tiber Island as "a new standard of architectural quality for U.S. urban renewal."

Tiber Island's acclaimed role in the redevelopment of Washington's southwestern quadrant is significant to the architectural, planning, and social history of the District of Columbia and the nation. In particular, it is significant for its role in redeveloping Southwest as part of the nation's first Urban Renewal project, a program that had a profound effect on cities and how we have come to regard planning and housing nationwide. To this end, Tiber Island was considered a model for the rest of the country. It is also a very early example of condominiums, a now ubiquitous housing type, and one of the first in Washington, and it helped push for fair housing at a time when discriminatory real estate practices were rampant.

Tiber Island is an outstanding example of urban planning and modernist architecture on the national level. The planning, landscaping, and architecture of Tiber Island speaks to an ideal for urban living through its mixture of high and low rise units, integration of open landscapes and private gardens, and an acceptance of the automobile as a necessity for modern living while keeping it out of sight. Keyes, Lethbridge and Condon constructed a number of award-winning projects in the District of Columbia, with its Urban Renewal projects Tiber Island and Columbia Plaza receiving the most notoriety.

Tiber Island is significant under National Register Criterion A because:

- Its construction was a significant step in the redevelopment of Southwest Washington in accordance with the
  principles of modern urban planning, including effective use of green space and mixed housing types. It was the
  first such redevelopment project to be created by an entirely local design and development team, and marks the
  beginning of Washington's recognition as an incubator of first-rate architectural talent in the face of previous
  disrespect and skepticism.
- It was the first condominium project built in the District of Columbia and the "proof of concept" for a type of
  ownership which has become common today.

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 It was the focus of a pioneering effort to expand and enforce the concept of open housing prior to the passage of the 1965 Fair Housing bill

These are contributions to patterns of growth and change that contributed significantly to the heritage, culture and development of the District of Columbia and the nation.

Tiber Island is also significant under National Register Criterion C because Tiber Island:

- Provides an outstanding example of modernist architecture and urbanism. It represents a unique fusion of
  architecture, modern construction technology, landscape architecture, and community planning. It was an
  outstanding model for the appearance and development of the District of Columbia and the nation, and has been
  cited as such by architectural critics and commentators since it was built.
- Possesses high artistic or aesthetic values, as illustrated by the accolades and awards it has received. Of
  particular significance is the AIA "First Award" received in 1966, with such masterpieces as Eero Saarinen
  Associates' Dulles Airport Terminal and CBS Headquarters cited as peers.
- Is a notable work by Keyes, Lethbridge, and Condon, a firm with deep influence on the development of
  architecture in both the District of Columbia and the nation. The stature of Keyes, Lethbridge, and Condon as a
  firm of master architects is evidenced by its impressive roster of award-winning projects and notable buildings
  within the city.

### Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Architecture: Tiber Island is significant in the Area of Architecture as an example of Modernist principles in housing. Tiber Island's architectural and design value has been acknowledged by the architectural community, as well as the popular press. Tiber Island has won numerous awards, capped by the American Institute of Architects' highest national award in 1966. It was designated an outstanding building by a national magazine and favorably reviewed in a number of articles in the architectural press. Its excellence has been acknowledged by the eminent architectural historian Sir Nikolas Pevsner, in an often dismissive analysis of the city's twentieth century architecture. During the past sixty years, the nationally-noted architecture and urban design critics associated with Washington's newspapers include Frederick Gutheim, Sarah Booth Conroy, Wolf von Eckardt, and Benjamin Forgey. Each has published an in-depth appreciation of either Tiber Island itself or the overall portfolio of Keyes, Lethbridge, & Condon, with Tiber Island listed as a key work.

**Community Planning and Development**: Tiber Island is significant in the Area of Community Planning and Development as an example of 20<sup>th</sup>-century urban renewal, more particularly that of the redevelopment of Southwest, D.C. The redevelopment of Southwest was part of the nation's first Urban Renewal project, a program that had a profound effect on cities and how we have come to regard planning and housing nationwide. To this end, Tiber Island was considered a model for the rest of the country. It is also a very early example of condominiums, a now ubiquitous housing type, and one of the first in Washington, and it helped push for fair housing at a time when discriminatory real estate practices were rampant.

### Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

### To a "New Southwest"

Although the Southwest redevelopment project of the 1950s and 1960s has been strongly criticized as destructive of communities, historians have noted its importance as a re-focusing on the urban life, with an emphasis on unique designs for new residential communities that employed modern architecture and planning principles. Southwest redevelopment

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was a nationally-visible test case for these principles, and the development of communities like Tiber Island had far more than local importance.<sup>1</sup>

During the early 1950s, political resolve to redevelop Washington's Southwest quadrant reached critical mass. The drive to clear Southwest of "substandard" housing could be traced to the citywide alley housing movement of the 1930s, while mass rebuilding proposals began with an unrealized 1942 plan to create housing for war-workers.<sup>II</sup> During the postwar years, pressures for redevelopment of "blighted areas" citywide spurred such legislation as the DC Redevelopment Act of 1945 and Housing Act of 1949, which created the Redevelopment Land Agency (RLA) and facilitated the partnerships between government and private firms to carry out "urban renewal" projects on the large scale deemed necessary.

Although early attention focused elsewhere, the National Capital Park and Planning Commission (NCPC)'s December 1950 *Comprehensive Plan for Washington, DC* contained a "broad hint" that Southwest would be selected as Washington's pilot urban renewal area, in part because the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks, the Fort McNair campus, and the waterfront provided pre-existing boundaries for the redevelopment zone.<sup>III</sup> In the eyes of planners, civic leaders, and politicians, 1950 Census data, which showed the quadrant's population declining even as the city's population reached its historic peak, and surveys that showed a high proportion of dilapidated housing with high residential densities mandated redeveloping Southwest, as did the area's close proximity and immediate visual tie to Capitol Hill.<sup>V</sup>

During the early 1950s, iterative redevelopment plans were formulated. The Peets Plan (1951) sought to preserve a substantial portion of Southwest's existing buildings, proposing that gradual waves of renovation mingled with new construction would maintain a high proportion of the area as low-income housing. The Justement-Smith Plan (1952) sought to maximize economic return, link Southwest to downtown, and build mixed income housing, with higher income development concentrated on the waterfront and the area closest to a proposed cultural center. The Justement-Smith Plan differed from the Peets Plan in that it placed a much higher percentage of housing units in high rise buildings and small apartment houses and a much lower percentage in row houses. It did not propose any low income housing and made no reference to preservation of existing structures.

In 1952, the NCPC issued a "final" plan which synthesized recommendations from the Peets and Justement-Smith Plans, as well as from a report by Bartholomew and Associates. Although each previous plan had proposed slightly different boundaries, the NCPC plan defined the redevelopment area's bounds as the planned Southwest Expressway on the north, Maine Avenue on the west, South Capitol Street and Delaware Avenue on the east, and P Street on the south. Low income housing, whether public or private, was to be concentrated east of Fourth Street, although the NCPC Plan did not set a target number for such units.

A follow-up to the NCPC plan defined two high-priority redevelopment areas within the urban renewal area. Area A, between Seventh and Eleventh Streets SW, was earmarked for office construction. Area B, bounded by the railroad tracks and E Street to the north, I Street to the south, Maine Avenue to the west, and South Capitol Street and Delaware Avenue to the east, contained the highest proportion of substandard housing in the quadrant. It was designated for new housing.<sup>v</sup>

In 1953, William Zeckendorf's New York-based Webb & Knapp real estate development firm submitted an unsuccessful proposal for Area B, but ended up with a contract to formulate a plan for the entire redevelopment effort.<sup>vi</sup> In September of that year, Zeckendorf successfully proposed that a re-delineated Area C include the entire redevelopment area other than the existing Area B. (In 1955, Area C-1, a 30 acre tract along South Capitol Street largely devoted to commercial and municipal uses that subsumed the original Area A, was subtracted from Area C and developed separately).

The Zeckendorf Plan, devised under the direction of future architectural icon I.M. Pei, who headed Webb & Knapp's inhouse design team, was deeply influenced by the Justement-Smith Plan. In March 1954, the RLA granted Webb & Knapp

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Richard Longstreth, "Brave New World: Southwest and the Promise of Urban Renewal," in Richard Longstreth, ed. *Housing in Washington*. (Chicago: Center for American Places, 2010), 255-257.

<sup>&</sup>quot;National Park Service. Southwest Washington, DC Urban Renewal Area (Historic American Building Survey HABS-DC-856, 2004), 9-10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> "Southwest Slums May be First to be Cleared," Washington Post, December 11, 1950, B1.

<sup>&</sup>quot;HABS-856, 16-18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>v</sup>Ibid. See 29-40 for discussions of plans and boundary delineation.

<sup>&</sup>quot;" "Concern to Make Its First Bid to Land Agency Here Monday," Washington Post, March 15, 1953, M1.

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a one year exclusive agreement to develop Area C.<sup>vii</sup> Southwest redevelopment was a project of such stature that on July 9, 1954 Zeckendorf and Pei briefed President Dwight D. Eisenhower on their comprehensive plan.<sup>viii</sup> It treated New Southwest as an "Ideal City" that combined green space and cultural amenities with high-style row houses and low and high-rise apartment buildings arranged around landscaped courts.<sup>ix</sup>

In 1956, the *Washington Post* published initial plans for Town Center, an I.M. Pei designed mixed use project which covered a newly-created "superblock" bounded by Third, Sixth, L, and M Streets SW. Besides consolidating the redevelopment area's retail businesses in a central pavilion, Pei's design provided 512 housing units in high-rise towers, with green courtyards and a fountain court linked by pedestrian walks and arcades. In essence, his design created a mall with multiple interior courtyards, which could be walked from end to end. Public response was favorable, with the *Washington Post* terming Town Center's retail centerpiece a "tree-shaded suburban style shopping center" with over 1,000 parking spaces.<sup>x</sup>

But Pei's plan proved the victim of delays from wrangling between Zeckendorf, the RLA, and rival developers, higher than anticipated payments for ground leases,<sup>xi</sup> the national recession of 1957-1958, and even a ban on department stores at Town Center engineered by Washington's major downtown retailers. By late 1957, Webb & Knapp, which had continued to take on enormous debt through land purchases and hotel investments, was having cash-flow problems that hampered covering its loan payments, let alone funding development projects.<sup>xii</sup> In 1959, the firm finally signed 99 year ground leases for Area C.<sup>xiii</sup> However, in 1960, Zeckendorf decided to prioritize resources by foregoing the opportunity to develop the portion of Area C south of M Street.<sup>xiv</sup>

Instead of the planned shopping pavilion, Zeckendorf built a small strip of stores at the core of Town Center, which did not open until the fall of 1960. The first pair of Pei's apartment towers was completed in 1961, but the last pair was not completed until 1963. In 1964, Webb& Knapp sold its interest in Town Center to a local developer, and shortly afterwards liquidated the remainder of its Southwest holdings.<sup>3V</sup> Ultimately, the firm went bankrupt.

Although Zeckendorf promised far more than he delivered, his legacy in Southwest Washington far exceeds Pei's awardwinning Town Center Towers. First, reaction to his 1956 plan was evidence that the public would accept a modern project which eschewed the traditional Washington model of rows of buildings fronting streets and featured high-style modernist residences and super-blocks with courtyard green spaces.

Second, controversy about the exclusivity of Zeckendorf's agreement shaped future development. A General Accounting Office report questioned whether a non-competitively awarded agreement with a single developer was likely to provide best value to the government.<sup>XVI</sup> Under a plan devised by Chloethiel Woodard Smith, co-author of the Justement-Smith Plan, the portion of Area C south of M Street relinquished by Zeckendorf was re-divided into two superblocks. Each superblock was subdivided into three parcels for separate development. The central axis of this newly defined "south section" of Area C was Fourth Street SW, the central axis of the Town Center site and the location of its proposed retail core.<sup>XVII</sup>

Third, Zeckendorf's phased withdrawal from the Southwest project provided opportunities for some of Washington's finest modernist architects. Had development proceeded on the planned schedule, the buildings in Area C would presumably have been designed by Webb & Knapp's New York-based design team headed by I.M. Pei. However, by 1958, Pei had

xiii HABS DC-856, 50.

vil"ZeckendorfActs on Capital Slums," New York Times, March 15, 1954, 14.

viii "Zeckendorf Tells President About Big SW Development," Washington Post, July 9, 1954, 2.

<sup>\*</sup> Zeckendorf 'Ideal City' Is Described to Officials," Washington Post, February 17, 1954, 19.

<sup>\*&</sup>quot;RLA Favors Proposal for Shopping Center," Washington Post, December 5, 1956, B1, and "Shopping Center Set in SW," Washington Post, December 17, 1957, 1.

Xin Cafritz Loses As Zeckendorf Gets SW Site," Washington Post, May 19, 1959, B1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>xii</sup>See "Zeckendorf's Saga," Wall Street Journal, February 9, 1959, 1, and "Webb & Knapp Calls Financing Problems the Toughest It's Faced Yet," Wall Street Journal, March 9, 1960, 23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>xiv</sup>Ibid, 49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>xv</sup>"Webb & Knapp to Drop Another Development Plan,"Wall Street Journal, November 3, 1964, 3, and "Webb & Knapp Sells Last SW Parcel,"Washington Post, November 3, 1964, A1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>xvi</sup>Quoted in HABS DC-856, 49.

xviilbid, 49.

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begun the design team's transition to a firm-within-a-firm, and by 1960, the fission into separate firms was complete.<sup>xviii</sup> Although Pei's firm was retained to design two buildings by the purchasers of Zeckendorf's L'Enfant Plaza project, Area C developed according to the visions of many architects, most of them local, instead of having the imprint of a master designer from outside the city.

### Early Projects as a Context for Tiber Island

The earliest Southwest redevelopment projects featured architecture and site planning which were not only unique for Washington, but provided each project with a distinct identity.

The first Southwest project to have a completed structure became its largest. Capitol Park, designed by Chloethiel Woodard Smith, initially as a partner in Satterlee & Smith. The project, which began in 1957-59 and was completed in 1963, mixed 1,500 apartments and 380 townhouses in a superblock within the northeast portion of Area B. Smith's plan was innovative, providing views of a park-like central courtyard from apartments, and grouping townhouses "in an unfolding series of inward-oriented walkways and courtyards, each distinct."<sup>xix</sup> Smith also set a trend for Southwest by retaining landscape architect Daniel U. Kiley to plan Capitol Park's open spaces.

Capitol Park and Town Center, whose first pair of towers opened in 1961, was followed by River Park (1960-1963), a Charles M. Goodman design, which counterpointed apartment houses on the eastern boundary of the site with clustered townhouses. Built as a cooperative, River Park was especially noted for its barrel-roofed houses, as well as exterior use of aluminum and glass panels. It is located in the central section of the eastern superblock of "south" Area C, with Third and Fourth Streets SW as its east and west boundary streets.

Harbor Square, begun in 1960 and fully completed in 1966, was an upper-income 450 unit complex designed by Chloethiel Woodard Smith, with landscape planning by Daniel Kiley. It incorporated six eighteenth century dwellings into a group of historically-referential attached houses and five apartment blocks. It was noted for its integration with a riverfront park, and innovative use of interior spaces for courtyards, two of which were situated atop an underground parking garage. It is located in the central section of the western superblock of "south" Area C.

### Constructing Tiber Island

Tiber Island, constructed between 1961 and 1965, took elements present in these initial developments in new directions and to new heights of refinement and sophistication. Located in the north parcel of the west superblock in "south" Area C, the site was directly across M Street SW from Town Center, and was separated from the Potomac on its southwest border by the buildings of original Square 473, destined to be removed for parkland.

"Tiber Island" was originally a nickname for the Southwest quadrant, which lay between the now-encased Tiber Creek and the marshy banks of the Potomac. Original Square 502, the site on which the Tiber Island complex was built, had developed in the extremely mixed pattern characteristic of Section C. The original Square 502 consisted of two square blocks separated by Union (Fifth) Street SW, with Fourth, M, N, and Sixth Streets SW as its outer periphery. Both blocks that comprised the square were subdivided by linked alleys in the shape of a capital letter "I". The last edition of the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps before demolition show Square 502 packed with as many as 160 small brick dwellings, almost all built in the late nineteenth century. About one-quarter fronted on alleys.<sup>xx</sup>1930 census results showed Square 502 as about 60% African-American and 40% white, with many African-American families living in alley houses or in units in the rear yards of houses occupied by whites.<sup>xxi</sup>

Square 502's largest structures included a Potomac Electric substation on Union Street, as well as the Greenleaf School, which adjoined a small commercial strip with a half dozen small stores, a car wash, and an undertaking parlor, on Fourth Street. Starting in the 1930s, the eighteenth century Thomas Law House on the corner of Sixth and N Streets SW was occupied by the Hadley Clinic, which served poor patients from the neighborhood.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>xviii</sup>Carter Wiseman. *I.M. Pei, A Profile in American Architecture*. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. 1990) 70 <sup>xix</sup>Longstreth. 266.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, for Washington, DC, 1927-1960, Volume 2, Sheets 261 and 262.

xii United States Census Bureau, Fifteenth Decennial Census of the United States (1930), Enumeration District 102, multiple sheets.

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By 1961, the RLA had cleared all the buildings in Square 502, save the Thomas Law House and its annex, to prepare for redevelopment. To expand the pool of potential developers, the RLA awarded the right to develop Square 502, officially known as Parcel 110A, through its first design competition. The blue-ribbon jury which judged the anonymously-presented entries included Jacob L. Crane, Karl Koch, G. Holmes Perkins, Louis Justement, and Hideo Sasaki, each of whom had achieved national prominence in modernist design, community planning, or landscape architecture.<sup>3001</sup>

Jacob L. Crane (1892-1988) was a Chicago-based planner long associated with Clarence Stein, proponent of "garden cities" and co-designer of the Sunnyside, Queens and Radburn, New Jersey planned communities. Crane is noted for his plan for Chicago's River Park District, experience well-tailored to a site in close proximity to the Potomac.<sup>xxiii</sup> Carl Koch (1912-1998), an innovative Bauhaus-influenced, Harvard-trained architect who developed the "Tech-Built" concrete pre-fabrication system, was an expert in concrete panel construction.<sup>xxiii</sup> G. Holmes Perkins (1904-2004) was a regional planner, modernist architect, and educator instrumental in bringing Walter Gropius to Harvard in 1937. Perkins was both dean of the University of Pennsylvania School of Fine Arts and Chair of the Philadelphia Planning Commission at the time he served on the Tiber Island jury.<sup>xxv</sup>

The jury members with the closest connections to Washington were Louis Justement and Hideo Sasaki. Justement (1891-1968), who had a long career as one of Washington's most prominent architects, was the author of several books on urban-planning, as well as co-creator of the Justement-Smith Plan of 1952. Sasaki (1919-1999) was perhaps the most prominent American landscape architect since Frederick Law Olmstead. At the time of the Tiber Island competition, he chaired the Harvard University Graduate School of Design's Department of Landscape Architecture and had recently been appointed to the Commission on Fine Arts by President John F. Kennedy. Subsequently, he would design Waterside Park, which lies between the Tiber Island and the Potomac River bank.<sup>xxvi</sup>

The Tiber Island competition drew eleven entries, with results announced on September 7, 1961 after final approval by the RLA and other agencies.<sup>xxvii</sup> News articles noted that Tiber Island was the first Southwest Washington project which involved an entirely local development team. The overall developer, Tiber Island Corporation, was a partnership between the W.C. and A. N. Miller Company and the Frederick W. Berens Companies.<sup>xxviii</sup>

The involvement of the Miller firm generated immediate controversy because it had a history of employing covenants which forbade sale to African-Americans or "any person of the Semitic race, blood, or origin." The Miller Company had affirmed that it would follow RLA requirements that forbade discrimination on grounds of race, color, or creed at Tiber Island. However, anti-discrimination organizations contended that the winning proposal still did not conform to competition rules because the firm utilized restrictive covenants elsewhere.<sup>xxix</sup> After twenty groups testified against the award at an October 25<sup>th</sup> RLA hearing, the Miller Company withdrew from the Tiber Island development team.<sup>xxx</sup> On December 8, 1961, the Department of Justice closed an RLA-requested investigation that had been into whether restrictive covenants violated anti-trust laws, and the development contract was signed.<sup>xxxil</sup> The Berens firms took on the Charles H. Tompkins Company as their new partner. The RLA reexamined the adequacy of its anti-discrimination regulations.

<sup>xxv</sup>See G. Holmes Perkins: A Finding Aid for Papers and Architectural Records In the Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania, viewed online at http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/faids/aaup/Perkins.pdf, accessed June 9, 2011.

xxvii-Winning Building Design in SW Unveiled by RLA," Washington Post, September 7, 1961, 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>xiii</sup> "Winning Building Design in SW Unveiled by RLA," Washington Post, September 7, 1961, 1.

xxiii See "Jacob L. Crane Archives" viewed online at http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=h-

urban&month=9404&week=a&msg=BpMBE3Ciz7M8qdbhVBxzXA&user=&pw=, accessed June 9, 2011.

xiv See "Modern Homes Survey: Karl Koch", viewed online at http://www.preservationnation.org/travel-and-sites/sites/northeastregion/new-canaan-ct/architects/carl-koch.html, accessed June 9, 2011.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>xxvi</sup> "Hideo Sasaki, 80, Influential Landscape Architect, Dies," New York Times, September 25, 2000 and "The Cultural Landscape Foundation: Hideo Sasaki," viewed online athttp://tclf.org/content/hideo-sasaki, accessed June 9, 2011.

xxvill#Local Blood Flows into SW," Washington Post, September 23, 1961, B1 and "Southwest Design Wins on Merit – And Then Comes Big Question," Washington Post, October 22, 1961, E2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>xxb</sup>See Ibid, and also "Winning Building Design, "Washington Post, September 7, 1961, 1, "Setting Land Prices Too High Called RLA's Biggest Mistake," Washington Post, October 1, 1961, B1, "Hearing Set on Tiber Island Project," Washington Post, October 12, 1961, B3.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Miller Firm Withdraws From SW Project," Washington Post, November 3, 1961, A1

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>xxxi</sup>"Discrimination Safeguards Urged in Renewal Project," Washington Post, November 16, 1961, B8, and "Restrictive Covenants Probe Ending," Washington Post, December 9, 1961, B10.

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This episode was an important chapter in the struggle for open housing both in the District and nationwide. The Southwest project had high visibility, and the dispute was extensively reported in the newspapers. Concerns appear to have resonated within the Kennedy Administration even beyond the Department of Justice investigation of covenants. Historian Richard Longstreth has bluntly stated that:

This episode led to a Civil Rights Commission hearing, which, in turn, influenced President Kennedy's executive order banning such discrimination in federally-assisted housing, signed in November 1962. \*\*\*\*

Despite widespread dissatisfaction with the RLA, there was near-complete unanimity about the jury's selection. The jury's report stated that the winning design by the architectural firm of Keyes, Lethbridge, and Condon (KLC) "was the only one of the submissions that would be wholeheartedly accepted by a majority of the panel."<sup>xxxiii</sup> Its specific strengths were its relationships to the new developments to the east, Town Center to the north, and the riverfront to the west. Soon afterwards, the Commission on Fine Arts approved the design, pronouncing it "excellent."<sup>xxxii</sup> Models of the winning design and all the other entries were placed on exhibit at the National Housing Center.<sup>xxxv</sup>

The Tiber Island design won such favor that in December 1961 a very similar KLC entry won the second RLA design contest. Carrollsburg Square, which is located on the opposite side of Fourth Street SW from Tiber Island, was completed in 1966.

### Tiber Island Design Team: Keyes, Lethbridge and Condon and Eric Paepcke

KLC had deep roots in the Southwest redevelopment effort. The firm had grown out of a partnership between architects Nicolas Satterlee (1915-1974) and Francis Donald Lethbridge (1920-2007), which had begun in 1950. In 1951, Satterlee and Lethbridge formed Keyes, Smith, Satterlee, & Lethbridge with fellow Navy veteran and Berla and Abel alumnus Arthur H. Keyes, Jr., as well as Chloethiel Woodard Smith. Among other projects, Keyes, Smith, Satterlee, & Lethbridge was involved in redevelopment planning. In 1955, Satterlee and Smith left to form a partnership, which designed the first phases of Capitol Park. Keyes and Lethbridge also established a partnership, joining with David H. Condon (1916-1996) in 1957 to become Keyes, Lethbridge, and Condon.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

KLC's early projects included suburban subdivisions of modernist homes that eschewed both Colonial revival clichés and the manufactured look considered "high tech" in the 1950s. In planning these subdivisions, the architects considered the terrain of their sites and other environmental factors in a manner uncommon for the day.<sup>xxxvii</sup> After the success of the firm's first subdivisions, Pine Springs and Holmes Run in Virginia, other modernist subdivisions followed in Montgomery County, Maryland.

KLC was noted for recognizing the talents of young associates, as well as its collective approach to design, reflected in Francis Lethbridge's admission that "I have a horror of being quoted individually."<sup>xxxviii</sup> However, the KLC partner generally credited as the key designer of Tiber Island is David Condon.<sup>xxxix</sup> A University of California graduate, Condon came to Washington after World War II naval service and worked in the office of Charles M. Goodman. Before becoming Keyes' and Lethbridge's partner, he had collaborated with modernist master Pietro Belluschi on the Cedar Lane Unitarian Church in Maryland (1956). His notable works at the time of the Tiber Island competition included the office building for the Lethbridge-designed U.S. Embassy in Lima, Peru, (1959), as well as such prize-winning KLC projects as the National Institute of Health Administration Building in Bethesda (1960-61, with Collins and Associates), and the Forest Industries Building in Washington, DC (1960-61).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>socil</sup>Longstreth, *Housing in Washington*, 276. Although Longstreth mentions Harbor Square in connection with this episode, the connection with Tiber Island is well-documented.

xxxiii-Winning Building Design in SW Unveiled by RLA," Washington Post, September 7, 1961, 1.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Council Asks DC to Insure Against SW Housing Bias," Washington Post, September 21, 1961, B3.

<sup>\*\*\*\*\*\*11</sup> Development Models to Go on Display,"Washington Post, September 17, 1961, B3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>koovi</sup> "The State of Real Estate," Washington Post, March 25, 1956, G3 and "From the Folks Who Bought Us Contemporary Architecture." Washington Post, December 8, 1974, H1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>xoxvii</sup> "From the Folks Who Bought Us Contemporary Architecture," Washington Post, December 8, 1974, H1.

xxxxxuTiber Island Adds Newest Chapter to SW Saga," Washington Post, June 13, 1964, E1.

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The final member of the Tiber Island design team was landscape architect Eric Paepcke (1906-81). A student of estate management at the University of Gottingen, Paepcke immigrated to the United States in 1929 and worked on farms in the Charlotte, Vermont area. By 1934, he had relocated to New York City, and moved to Washington in the mid-1950s. Like Daniel Kiley, he worked with Charles M. Goodman, David Condon's first Washington employer, on landscape plans for residences in the Hollin Hills subdivision. He also designed gardens for the U.S. Naval Academy and a number of embassies, including the Lima, Peru complex for which Condon and Lethbridge designed buildings. He later collaborated with Condon on a number of residential projects.<sup>xil</sup> The Landscape Cultural Heritage Foundation recognizes Eric Paepcke as a noteworthy pioneer landscape architect, and the DC Historic Preservation Office's lists him as a significant contributor to Washington's modernist architecture.<sup>xil</sup>

Although the RLA forecast completion of Tiber Island by February 1963, virtually every Southwest redevelopment project encountered delays. Ground was not broken until May 17, 1963.<sup>xlii</sup> In October 1963, as construction continued, the Behrens firm obtained authorization to sell some Tiber Island townhouses as condominiums.<sup>xliii</sup> Ultimately the 64 perimeter town houses became the District's first condominium units, while the 21 inner town houses and apartment buildings remained rental.

By June 1964, newspaper articles began to proclaim that the complex was almost ready, accompanied by an advertising campaign which called Tiber Island "Washington's first true waterfront community" and featured sketches of smiling couples enjoying river views. The complex's official opening during the week of September 26, 1964 was marked by a reception attended by more than 300 local leaders.<sup>xliv</sup>

The ultimate number of units was slightly smaller than the varying totals reported in advance newspaper publicity. The final tally of 368 apartments included 160 efficiency, 128 one bedroom, and 80 two bedroom units. These units were not evenly divided among the four apartment towers. Tiber Island North and South each had 48 efficiencies and 40 two-bedroom units, while Tiber Island East and West each had 32 efficiencies and 64 one bedroom apartments. There were also 61 two bedroom and 24 four bedroom townhouses.<sup>xiv</sup>

The initial publicity campaign for Tiber Island stressed its luxurious features and many amenities, including an in-ground swimming pool. Residents received a gold key embossed with the Tiber Island insignia.<sup>xlvi</sup> The complex featured such advanced 1960s technology as air-conditioning that could be adjusted for each room, closed-circuit television monitors for security purposes, and the "Interphone", an intercom system that connected residents with the front entrance as well as the front desk.<sup>xlvii</sup>

### Early Life at Tiber Island

The early residents of Tiber Island inhabited a neighborhood very much in transition. To the east, Carrollsburg Square was still under construction, while to the west, a few warehouses and waterfront restaurants just outside the redevelopment area screened ground-level view of the river. Rather than the planned shopping complex, Town Center was a short strip of stores selling staple items. Residents seeking more than basic necessities often crossed the Fourteenth Street Bridge to shop in Virginia.<sup>x/Viii</sup> The Tiber Island Company sought to dispel any resulting sense of isolation by a program of activities and cultural events. During the late 1960s, the central plaza was the stage for evening concerts by groups ranging from a

<sup>\*&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> "Eric Paepcke, 75, Dies," Washington Post, February 17, 1981, C5 and "Eric Paepcke Dies in Washington," New York Times, February 17, 1981, 16. Also, personal communications with Paepcke's family, June 2011.

x<sup>lia</sup>The Cultural Landscape Foundation: Pioneers of American Landscape Design," viewed online at http://tclf.org/pioneer/eric-paepcke, accessed June 12, 2011 and DC Historic Preservation Office, Modernism in Washington, (2009).

xilla Ground Broken for Tiber Island," Washington Post, May 18, 1963, C6.

<sup>\*\*\*\* &</sup>quot;Berens First Again," Washington Post, October 3, 1964, E1.

<sup>\*</sup>iv "Tiber Island Open in SW," Washington Post, September 26, 1964, C11.

xiv See Plan Sheet S-3, Tiber Island, on file at Tiber Island Cooperative Homes Office.

xivin Gold Keys Given to Tenants at Tiber," Washington Post, February 6, 1965, E2.

xivite Tiber Island Adds Newest Chapter to SW Saga," Washington Post, June 13, 1964, E1.And "Answering the Doorbell the Easy Way," Washington Post, April 3, 1965, E8.

xiviii Personal conversations with long-term residents, June 2011.

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fife and drum corps in Revolutionary War dress to a woodwind quintet.<sup>xlix</sup> The complex was also the scene of fashion shows and dance exhibitions "including a Go-Go girl."

Tiber Island utilized one of the few Old Southwest buildings to escape the bulldozer as a gathering place. The 1794 Thomas Law House at the west end of the reconstructed N Street SW had been the home of an eccentric speculator associated with the Greenleaf Syndicate, which controlled approximately 7,000 building lots and developed the nearby wharves on the Potomac River. After Thomas Law died in 1826, his house was owned by members of the Lee Family, then became a hotel, and later was the site of a Seventh Day Adventist "mission hospital." Joined to a neighboring twentieth century house, it became both the clinic of Doctor Henry Hadley and home of the Hadley family from the 1930s until the RLA took possession by eminent domain in the 1960s. The Tiber Island developers repaired the house's exterior and modified its interior to serve as a sales office, with a plaza of salvaged alley cobblestones at its front door.<sup>II</sup> Beginning in the 1960s, it was also used as a community center, with a professionally-organized bridge league and exhibits of art by residents.

Although the decision to save the Law House had been made by the RLA before the clearing of Square 502, the building undoubtedly found a champion in Francis Lethbridge. Despite his modernist leanings, Lethbridge was a pioneering historic preservationist and the first chair of the city's Joint Committee on Historic Preservation. The committee's list of essential Washington Landmarks, issued on November 8, 1964, listed the Thomas Law House as a culturally significant landmark on a par with many Georgetown buildings.<sup>III</sup> In 1973, it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>IIII</sup>

Tiber Island was an immediate success. By October 1965, it was more than 90% rented.<sup>IV</sup> In February, 1966, it was reported that 55 of the 64 condominium townhouses had been sold, while 19 of the 21 rental town houses and 95% of the apartments had tenants.<sup>IV</sup> While no definitive statistics exist to chart the effectiveness of the RLA's open housing initiative, the owners reported in 1965 that about 12% of its tenants were non-white.<sup>IVI</sup>

The complex escaped the 1968 riots without damage, although some residents recall the unnerving sight of tanks parked at Town Center, apparently to safeguard Vice President Hubert Humphrey's residence at Harbor Square.<sup>Ivii</sup> The promised retail development at Town Center, designed by Smith rather than Pei, finally opened in 1973 and substantially failed with two years, leaving the area without convenient shopping for more than three decades. However, despite this setback, Tiber Island has remained a prestigious address and a premier example of Washington's best modernist architecture. In 1981, the rental apartments and townhouses converted to cooperative ownership, while the perimeter townhouses retained their condominium status.

### Awards and Accolades

At the time of the Tiber Island competition, the design talents of KLC were first beginning to achieve recognition. The National Lumber Manufacturer's Association offices in the KLC-designed Forest Products Industry Building received a 1961 "Office of the Year" award from Administrative Management Magazine.<sup>Nill</sup> That fall, Francis Lethbridge received a "Building Better Communities" award from the National Association of Home Builders.<sup>lix</sup>

In June 1962, a jury which included Pietro Belluschi and Brunner Memorial Prize winner Ulrich Franzen presented KLC with the Potomac Valley Chapter of the American Institute of Architects' annual "First Awards" for the custom cottage, public building, and commercial building categories. The firm also received "Awards of Merit" in the development house and commercial building categories.

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> Examples include "Concerts Given at Tiber Island," Washington Post, October 24, 1964, C8, and "Today's Events," Washington Post, February 14, 1965, G8.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Go-Go Fashions Set for SW," Washington Post, May 21, 1966, F3.

<sup>&</sup>quot;See National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for the Thomas Law House, listed August 1973.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Group Asks Saving of Landmarks," Washington Post, November 8, 1964, A1.

See National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for the Thomas Law House, entered August 17, 1973.

<sup>&</sup>quot; "Carrollsburg Adjacent to Tiber Island," Washington Post, October 24, 1965, K11.

W "Well Received in SW," Washington Post, February 20, 1966, L3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>M</sup> "New SW Gently Appraised," Washington Post, December 11, 1965, B1.

MPersonal conversation, June 2011.

Mille Lumber Offices Win Award," Washington Post, March 24 11, 1962, D5.

<sup>&</sup>quot;x "Lethbridge, Bennett Honored," Washington Post, February 4, 1961, B12.

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While construction was underway in 1963, *The Architectural Record*'s "Building Case Studies" featured an article by Arthur Keyes which summarized the architectural goals for Tiber Island. Curiously, he wrote that "the design centers on an underground garage – the roof of which forms a pedestrian plaza and creates thus a clean horizontal separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic." The principal spaces, delineated by the apartment towers, were "subdivided into smaller courts" by the low-rise townhouses and courtyard walls, so that the "interrelated high and low rise elements create interesting and useable outdoor space." The garden courtyards and balconies "extend... interior spaces outward," while "detailing and landscaping is varied from one court to another so that each exterior space will have its own special character."<sup>1X</sup> Keyes noted that the ultimate goal was that each area "have a sense of 'place,' a quality of being set apart yet joined – and a scale both residential and urban."<sup>IXII</sup>

Keyes traced the theoretical lineage of the Tiber Island design to Camillo Sitte and Eero Saarinen. He noted that Sitte's seemingly paradoxical espousal of "the intimate and irregular enclosure of limited space" as the key to the city plan had been endorsed by Saarinen as greatly preferable to the "pseudo-classic concept of axial and symmetrical arrangements." He observed:

It is interesting to note that, in considering the great outdoor spaces in history, that the shape of the space itself – its urban quality, scale, and means of entrance and exit – all assume greater importance in setting character than the style of the surrounding architecture.<sup>Ixii</sup>

The immediate reaction to these principles, even prior to their realization in concrete was accolades. Writing only a week after the competition winner had been announced, prominent urbanist and architecture critic Frederick Gutheim called the KLC plan "a long step toward the goal of combining urban in-town living with many amenities that families have hitherto only sought in the suburbs." KLC's design avoided "elongated slab-like buildings" with excessively long corridors and took advantage of the site's vistas by including functional balconies. Gutheim also commended Tiber Island's intimacy and integration of elements. The clearest superiority of the KLC plan was how it made the waterfront park accessible to all areas within the complex, while the common weakness of the ten competing designs had been that they clustered apartment blocks at the waterfront end of the site. Gutheim hailed KLC for the environment its design created; a "walk-to-work neighborhood looking out over the unequaled open spaces of the Channel...but still close to the conveniences of Town Center and to the commercial and cultural heart of the National Capitol itself."

A few days after Gutheim's article appeared, a *Washington Post* editorial called Tiber Island "a glimpse of what may be the city of tomorrow" and the "kind of ingenious planning" that creates an alternative to "suburban sprawl." Like modernist developments in European cities, the Area C development was felt to "gratify the yearning of city dwellers for breathing space, for flowers and touches of natural beauty, with protection from the pounding of traffic." By prompting "encouragement of walk to work movements and development of better rapid transit systems" the Post suggested that it would have "a profound effect on the future of Washington." <sup>Ixiv</sup>

In 1963, *Washington Post* architectural critic Wolf von Eckardt approvingly quoted Arthur Keyes' statement that "a systematically arranged superblock of apartments becomes an exceedingly boring place to live." He noted that Tiber Island avoided this fate by its complex composition. The four apartment buildings slightly offset from the east-west and north-south axes divided into unique spaces, which were then further subdivided with townhouses and garden walls, and linked by covered walkways and greenways that created varied paths through the site.<sup>IW</sup> Von Eckardt remained an admirer in later years. In a 1970 analysis of Washington architecture, which dismissed such icons of modernism as the Watergate, Madison Hotel, and National Geographic Building as overrated, he commented that Tiber Island remained "a pleasant urban living environment, inspired and ennobled by good, restrained architectural design.<sup>IIXVI</sup>

Praise for the actual complex was at least as vocal as that for its plan. In the summer of 1965, James Bailey reviewed the complex for Architectural Forum. Bailey commented that the opposed masses of apartment towers and townhouses "work

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1×</sup> Arthur Keyes, Jr., "An Architect Talks about the Spaces between Buildings" in *The Architectural Record*, (September 1963), 196.

Ixil Ibid. 195.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1xiii</sup> "Looking at Architecture: Big Step Toward In-Town Urban Living," Washington Post, September 7, 1961, D1.

<sup>&</sup>quot;City of Tomorrow," Washington Post, September 8, 1961, A12.

w "Space Age Affecting Apartment Planning," Washington Post, October 13, 1963, G8.

Invi "Rating Washington's Architecture" Washington Post, January 6, 1974, 220.

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with comfortable ease" and have a "tranquil, unruffled, yet powerful quality."<sup>IXVII</sup> He concluded, after describing what he considered regulatory and zoning constraints on the architects;

KLC's commanding design and their determination to keep it from being whittled away has paid off handsomely. They have created not only the best addition yet to Washington's Southwest, but a new standard of architectural quality for U.S. urban renewal.<sup>Ixviii</sup>

Admiration for Tiber Island's design extended to academic architectural historians. In 1966, author and University of London professor Sir Nikolas Pevsner, one of the most influential art historians of the twentieth century, dismissively commented that "Washington's architecture has been desperately reactionary since 1900", particularly when designed by local architects. One exception was:

Of the indigenous work, first and foremost, F.D. Lethbridge's Tiber Island apartments, to the best of my knowledge, the only such estate in the United States which has the great value of intricacy, an English architectural tradition, seen at its best in the Oxford and Cambridge colleges and taken up by Saarinen in his Yale colleges... Wide and narrow and high and low are beautifully interwoven.<sup>IXIX</sup>

1966 proved a year of triumph for Keyes, Lethbridge, and Condon.

In 1966, the Honor Awards jury of the American Institute of Architects distilled 380 nominees down to three equal "First Honor Awards" and nine equal "Awards of Merit." Eero Saarinen Associates received "First Honor Awards" for the Columbia Broadcasting System Headquarters in Manhattan and Dulles Airport Terminal in Reston, Virginia. These buildings are internationally-famous as masterpieces of modernism.

The third "First Honor Award" went to Tiber Island. In the words of jury chair David N. Yerkes and jurors Robert G. Cerny, O'Neil Ford, George T. Rockrise, and Benjamin Thompson:

Tiber Island represents a solution to a problem of increasing importance: the creation of a handsome and livable complex of varied urban dwelling units. The challenge has seldom been met with better understanding or greater success. The relationship of high and low buildings and of large and small spaces is eminently satisfactory. From every angle, the parts of the whole composition fall into place with unostentatious rightness. Without ever having to work at it, the architects have created freshness and variety. They have achieved monumentality and warmth by honest structure and knowledgeable use of materials.

The jury concluded that "Tiber Island must be considered an outstanding example of a successful urban renewal project and one which should inspire other architects and developers."<sup>Ixx</sup>

In December 1966, Fortune Magazine included Tiber Island as one of the ten best buildings of the year, putting KLC in the company of Philip Johnson and I.M. Pei. Douglas Haskell, longtime editor of the Architectural Forum, noted that KLC "carried a unity of shapes and details through a whole redevelopment block in Washington [with buildings] charmingly placed around ever varying and privacy-protecting courtyards."<sup>boxi</sup>

Keyes, Lethbridge, and Condon's other significant commissions during the next twenty-five years include the Columbia Plaza complex in Foggy Bottom, the Washington Metropolitan Transportation Authority Headquarters, and many of the city's premier office buildings. The firm and its partners went on to receive many professional honors and awards. Among them was a Federal Public Housing Administration award for the design of the Park Morton Public Housing complex.

Francis Lethbridge was the lead designer of the River Road Unitarian Church in Bethesda, which received one of the nine 1966 "Awards of Merit." He became president of the American Architectural Foundation, an AIA fellow, president of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>lavii</sup> James Bailey, "In Washington, the Power of Persuasion Helps Overcome a Maze of Controls" in Architectural Forum, Vol. 123, no. 1 (July-August, 1965), 49.

Ibid, 51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>kixe</sup> Cityscape: Only East Germany Rivals in Paralysis of Architecture," Washington Post, January 16, 1966, G9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>100</sup>"The 1966 A.I.A. Honor Awards" in The American Institute of Architecture Journal, Vol. 46, no. 1 (July 1966), 25-31.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>ixxi</sup>Douglas Haskell, "Ten Buildings That Climax an Era" in Fortune, v. 74, no. 7 (December 1966) 162

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Tiber Island Name of Property Washington, DC County and State

local AIA chapter, and national vice president, as well as the first recipient of the Columbia Historical Society's Renchard Prize for contributions to historic preservation.

David Condon likewise became an AIA fellow, the highest honor the AIA bestowed other than its gold medal. He designed numerous campus buildings as well as adapting a southwest refrigeration plant to become the Washington Center, and was the architect of well-regarded modernist residences including his own house.

By 1974, the year before Francis Lethbridge departed for solo practice, KLC had received fully one-quarter of the honor and merit awards given by the Potomac Valley AIA chapter.<sup>Ixxii</sup> Over the next eighteen years it took in several new partners. Keyes and Condon retired in 1992 and the firm later merged into the Smith Group.

Today, Keyes, Lethbridge, and Condon ranks as one of the most influential, honored, and important Washington architectural firms of the latter half of the twentieth century. One testimonial to this ranking is provided by the nationallynoted architecture and urban design critics associated with Washington's newspapers over the past sixty years; Frederick Gutheim, Sarah Booth Conroy, Wolf von Eckardt, and Benjamin Forgey. Each has published an in-depth appreciation of either Tiber Island itself or the overall portfolio of Keyes, Lethbridge, & Condon, with Tiber Island listed among the firm's key works. The most recent of these, Benjamin Forgey's "The Men Who Made Theirs Modern", was a retrospective that appeared on the occasion of Keyes' and Condon's retirements in 1992.<sup>txxiii</sup>

The Tiber Island complex itself remains perhaps Washington's most acclaimed modernist work of architecture, with the exception of a building with a very different purpose, I.M. Pei's National Gallery East building.

<sup>booil</sup> From the Folks Who Bought Us Contemporary Architecture," Washington Post, December 8, 1974, H1. <sup>booil</sup> From the Men Who Made Theirs Modern," Washington Post, June 6, 1992, C1.

Tiber Island Name of Property (Expires 5/31/2012)

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#### 9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Keyes, Jr., Arthur. "An Architect Talks about the Spaces between Buildings" in *The Architectural Record*, v. 134 (September 1963), 193-213.

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Wiseman, Carter. I.M. Pei, A Profile in American Architecture. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. 1990)

Web Sites

"Jacob L. Crane Archives" viewed online at H-NET DC (Michigan State University), accessed June 9, 2011.

"Modern Homes Survey: Karl Koch", viewed online at http://www.preservationnation.org/, accessed June 9, 2011.

G. Holmes Perkins: A Finding Aid for Papers and Architectural Records In the Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania, viewed online at http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org, accessed June 9, 2011.

"Hideo Sasaki", "Daniel U. Kiley", and Eric Paepcke" viewed online at the "The Cultural Landscape Foundation" (http://www.tclf.org), accessed June 9, 2011.

#### 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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #\_

Primary location of additional data:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University Other
- Name of repository

Name of repository.

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Tiber Island Name of Property

<u>\_\_\_\_\_</u>

Washington, DC County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

## Acreage of Property 8.12 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

#### **UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18	324894E	4304908	3				
	Zone	Easting	Northing	2	Zone	Easting	Northing	
2				4				
1	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing	

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Tiber Island occupies the entirety of Square 502 in Southwest Washington, D.C.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

By 1961, as part of the Southwest Urban Renewal project, all of Square 502 was demolished save for the circa 1794 Thomas Law house. Between 1961 and 1964, the square was developed with the Tiber Island complex of buildings, including the renovated Thomas Law house.

11. Form Prepared By	
name/title Peter Sefton, Architectural Historian	
organization Southwest Neighborhood Assembly	date <u>9/2012</u>
street & number P.O. Box 70792	telephone 202 554-8560
city or town Washington, D.C.	state zip code
e-mail	

## Additional Documentation

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.)

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Tiber I	Island	
Name of	Property	

Washington, DC County and State

#### Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive 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.

#### Name of Property: Tiber Island

City or Vicinity: Washington D.C.

County:

State: District of Columbia

Photographer: Kim Williams

Date Photographed: September 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking northwest across central plaza to West Tower 1 of 14

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking north across plaza to North and West Towers 2 of 14

Description of Photograph(s) and number: South end wall of North Tower; view looking north 3 of 14

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking east across plaza to East Tower with North Tower on left 4 of 14

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking east across Great Lawn with South Tower behind townhouses 5 of 14

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking northeast to east elevation of South Tower 6 of 14

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View from west looking east to East Tower entry. 7 of 14.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Detail of East Tower entry 8 of 14

Description of Photograph(s) and number: South Tower Interior 9 of 14.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking north to townhouse in northeast quadrant of Tiber Island complex 10 of 14

(Expires 5/31/2012)

Tiber Island Name of Property

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Townhouse at 1223-1227 4<sup>th</sup> Street, SW 11 of 14

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Outdoor plaza furniture 12 of 14

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking east of west façade of Thomas Law house 13 of 14

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Interior of Thomas Law house showing stair in front stair hall 14 of 14

Property Owner:	
(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)	
name Tiber Island Cooperative Homes	
street & number 429 N Street, SW	telephone
city or town Washington, D.C.	state zip code_20024

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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Washington, DC County and State

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Tiber Island	
Name of Property	
Washington, D.C.	
County and State	
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)	)

Section number Maps Page 2



Photo Key

NPS Form 10-900-a (Rev. 8/2002)

OMB No. 1024-0018

(Expires 5-31-2012)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

number Mans Page 1

Name of Property	
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Section number <u>Maps</u> Page <u>1</u>



Tiber Island, bounded by 4th and 6th Streets and M and N Streets, SW in Washington, D.C.



NPS Form 10-900-a (Rev. 8/2002)

OMB No. 1024-0018

(Expires 5-31-2012)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Section number Maps Page 1



Map showing National Register boundaries for Tiber Island Bounded by 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, and M and N Streets, SW, Washington, D.C. (From D.C. Office of Planning, GIS Base Map, 2012)

North

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Tiber Island Name of Property Washington, D.C. County and State Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Maps Page 2 R-3 11 ST 3 1 10 4 5 R-Lot 18 481. 0 13 N \$T 6 R-5-D R-5-B Lot 116 SOF NO E.5.5

Key to Photograps

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number <u>Maps</u> Page <u>3</u>



Illustration 2A

Section number Maps Page

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Tiber Island	
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County and State	

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

4

Illustration 2B

NPS Form 10-900-a (Rev. 8/2002)

OMB No. 1024-0018

(Expires 5-31-2012)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Name of F	Property	
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Maps Page 5



Illustration 3A

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet



Section number <u>Maps</u> Page <u>6</u>





### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Tiber Island NAME:

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, District of Columbia

DATE RECEIVED: 11/28/12 DATE OF PENDING LIST: DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/14/13 DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 12001166

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL:NDATAPROBLEM:NLANDSCAPE:NLESSTHAN 50 YEARS:YOTHER:NPDIL:NPERIOD:NPROGRAM UNAPPROVED:NREQUEST:NSAMPLE:NSLRDRAFT:NNATIONAL:Y

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITE	7 100	y cris	-	de la
REVIEWER	lotvik	Andres	DISCIPLINE	fistorian
TELEPHONE			DATE	. buleriz

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.



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Tiber Island Washington, DC EMBASSY CAMERA Williams 08/24/12

View Iroking NW across central plaga to West Tower 1 of 14



0184575 IMG\_1228\_002

Tiber Island Washington, DC View Ivoking north across plaza to North and West Towers 2 of 14


Tiber Esland Wushington, DC North Tower, Sonth end wall, looking north

CAMERA

3 of 14

0184575 IMG\_1235\_00



## 0184575 IMG\_1263\_014

Tiber Island Washington, DC EMBASSY CAMERA Williams 08-24-12 View looking east across plaza to east Tower with North Tower on left A of 14



## 0184575 ING\_1261\_013 Tiber Island Washington, DC View Iroking Castsaccases great Lawn with South Tower Lehind Founhouses

5 of 14



Tiber Island Washing the DC East elevation of South Tower, View looking northeast 6 of 14



## Tiber Esland Wushington, DC East Tower entropy chierer withing west looking east. 7 of 14



ams Tiber Island Washington, DC Defail of East Tower enty 8 of 14

CAMERA

3184575 IMG\_1243\_000



0184575 IMG\_1225\_001 Tiber Foland Washington, DC South Tower Professio CAMERA WILLIAMS 08/24/12 9 of 14



Tiber Island @184575 IMG\_1242\_007 Washington, DC Townhouse in nortreast quadrant of complex View Inok: 5MEROSTAMERA WILLIAMS 08/24/12 10 of 14



0184575 IMG\_1255\_010

Tiber Island Washington, DC Townhouse at El223 - 1227 William Sta SaW2 11 of 14



## 0184575 IMG\_1231\_003

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Tiber Esland<sup>0184575</sup> IMG\_1270\_016 Thomas Law House Washington, Re View Insking Cast af West etc. 88/24/12 13 of 14



Tiber Tstand Thomas baw House Washington, DC Interior showing shir hall 140f14











UTM GRID AND 1983 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET