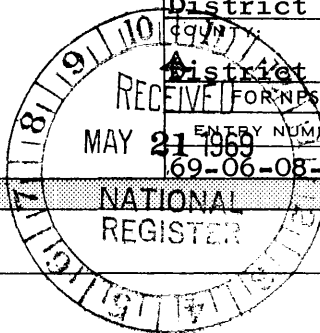


PH0001716

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: District of Col.
District of Col.
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY NUMBER: 69-06-08-0016
DATE: 6/23/69



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON:
Freer Gallery of Art
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
12th Street and Jefferson Drive, S. W.
CITY OR TOWN:
Washington
STATE: **District of Columbia** CODE: **08** COUNTY: **District of Columbia** CODE: **001**

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>
Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/>	Private <input type="checkbox"/>	Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/>	Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Object <input type="checkbox"/>	Both <input type="checkbox"/>	Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/>	Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/>
	Public Acquisition: In Process <input type="checkbox"/>		No: <input type="checkbox"/>
	Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/>		

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/>	Government <input type="checkbox"/>	Park <input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input type="checkbox"/>	Comments <input type="checkbox"/>
Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	Industrial <input type="checkbox"/>	Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/>	
Educational <input type="checkbox"/>	Military <input type="checkbox"/>	Religious <input type="checkbox"/>		
Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/>	Museum <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Scientific <input type="checkbox"/>		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNERS NAME:
United States of America, Smithsonian
STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Recorder of Deeds
STREET AND NUMBER:
6th and D Streets, N. W.
CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:
Washington **District of Columbia** **08**

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **approximately 41,180 sq. ft.**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (building only)

TITLE OF SURVEY: **Proposed District of Columbia Additions to the National Register of Historic Properties recommended by Joint Committee on Landmarks**
DATE OF SURVEY: **March 7, 1968** Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
National Capital Planning Commission
STREET AND NUMBER:
726 Jackson Place, N. W.

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:
Washington **District of Columbia** **08**

STATE: DIST. OF COL. COUNTY: ENTRY NUMBER: DATE: FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Fair <input type="checkbox"/>	Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/>	Ruins <input type="checkbox"/>	Unexposed <input type="checkbox"/>
INTEGRITY	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	Altered <input type="checkbox"/>	Unaltered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Moved <input type="checkbox"/>	Original Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Freer Gallery of Art is situated on part of the Smithsonian Grounds on the south side of the Mall between the Agriculture Building and the Smithsonian Institution at 12th Street and Jefferson Drive, S. W. The site was located according to the building line established by the McMillan Commission's plan to restore L'Enfant's original plan of the Mall. The isolated, rectangular building designed by architect Charles A. Platt in the style of a Florentine Renaissance fortress palace is 228' long and 185' wide with an open interior court about 65' square exclusive of the loggias on the east and west. The exterior of heavily rusticated gray Massachusetts granite consists of a basement story separated from a high main story by a wave motif string course. A classical entablature and balustrade crown the building on all four sides.

The principal north Mall entrance facade is composed of a three-arched central pavilion flanked by side wings. A circular drive and a low flight of steps lead up to the three-arched entrance portico and the single door to the gallery. Doric pilasters, two on each end and one in front of each arch supporting pier, rise to the entablature with its decorated Doric frieze. On either side of the entrances arches there is a single round-headed arched niche with strongly marked, rusticated splayed voussoirs. Beneath each of the niches is a single square grilled basement window set in a smooth stone panel. The rusticated side wings are broken only by three rectangular grilled basement windows, the wave motif string course and the undecorated frieze and balustrade.

The rusticated east and west facades of the building are simple and severe in design. On the south Independence Avenue facade a single-arched central pavilion is flanked by side wings. The great central entrance archway, approached by a flight of steps, is flanked by two smaller doors. Each of the side wings has three sets of paired grilled basement windows.

In the interior on the main floor, nineteen exhibition rooms surround an arcaded corridor and central court. The exhibition space in the galleries is kept low and the vaulted ceilings have skylights equipped with diffusing glass and adjustable curtains to meet the special lighting requirements of the objects on exhibition. The floors of the galleries and corridors are of marble and terrazzo and the walls are of sand-finished plaster.

In the southeast corner gallery, Whistler's Peacock Room appears exactly as it once existed in the London home of Frederick R. Leyland. Whistler re-decorated the entire room to harmonize with his painting, The Princess from the Land of Porcelain. Freer purchased the room in 1904, reerected it in his own home in Detroit, and bequeathed it to the Freer.)

The five round-headed arched windows of the north and south corridors look into the square interior court. On the east and west this court is bounded by an exterior five-arched vaulted loggia. Doric pilasters between the arched windows and the loggia arches rise to support an entablature and balustrade similar in design to those of the exterior. The low planting, brick walkways, and central fountain of this open Tennessee marble court provide relief from the severe galleries and austere exterior.

The basement of the building, a half-story below ground, receives natural light from the large grilled windows. This story contains administration offices, storage space, a lecture hall with a separate entrance on the Independence Avenue side of the building, and rooms for studying works of art not on exhibition.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

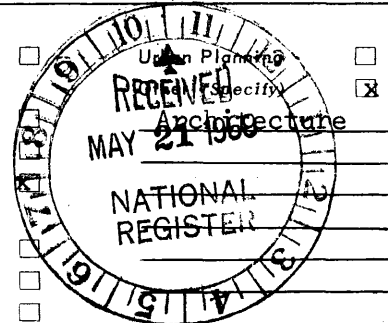
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century
 15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1923**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/> | Education <input type="checkbox"/> | Political <input type="checkbox"/> | Urban Planning <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Prehistoric <input type="checkbox"/> | Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> | Religion/Philosophy <input type="checkbox"/> | Specify <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Historic <input type="checkbox"/> | Industry <input type="checkbox"/> | Science <input type="checkbox"/> | Architecture <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> | Invention <input type="checkbox"/> | Sculpture <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Art <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Landscape <input type="checkbox"/> | Social/Humanitarian <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Commerce <input type="checkbox"/> | Architecture <input type="checkbox"/> | Theater <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Communications <input type="checkbox"/> | Literature <input type="checkbox"/> | Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Conservation <input type="checkbox"/> | Military <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| | Music <input type="checkbox"/> | | |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

The Joint Committee on Landmarks has designated the Freer Gallery of Art a Category II Landmark of importance which contributes significantly to the cultural heritage and visual beauty of the District of Columbia. This distinguished building was specifically designed to house Charles L. Freer's personal collection of American and Oriental art, which at the time it was received was the largest gift ever made by an individual to the U. S. Government. Both the building and its collection represent the highest standards of art. The Oriental collection, in particular, is one of the foremost in the world.

Charles Lang Freer, a wealthy Detroit manufacturer of freight cars, retired from business in 1904 to devote the last fifteen years of his life almost exclusively to the development of his art collection. In the same year, he offered his collection to the United States, with a provision for a suitable building to house it. In 1906, largely through the urging of President Roosevelt, Freer's offer was accepted and the proposed gallery placed under the trusteeship of the Smithsonian Institution.

Plans for the building designed by Charles A. Platt were accepted by the Government in 1915. The Freer Gallery of Art was officially opened to the public on May 2, 1923. Freer's gift included not only the collection and the building constructed at a cost of approximately \$1,250,000, but also an endowment amounting to \$2,600,000 for increasing the collection, for salaries, and for other specific items. In a codicil to his will, Mr. Freer required that the Commission of Fine Arts be consulted as to all future purchases, which were restricted to articles of Far Eastern art.

When the executors of Freer's estate delivered the collection to the Smithsonian Institution in November 1920, there were over 1,300 objects of American art, about 8,000 from Asia and Egypt, and a small but important group of Byzantine and early Christian relics. The American portion of the collection, which is fixed, consists of the [world's largest collection of the paintings, prints, and drawings of James McNeill Whistler,] two bronze statues by Augustus St. Gaudens, and a number of works by Dewing, Thayer, Tryon and other American artists. Perhaps the major interest of the Oriental collection, which is constantly growing, lies in the field of Chinese art on which Freer concentrated during his last years. Early jades and bronzes, Buddhist paintings and sculpture, and pottery from the Han and Sun periods formed the nucleus of the Chinese collection. There was also a notable group of Japanese painting, sculpture and pottery, Korean pottery, Persian paintings and pottery, and Indian paintings and sculpture, and a small but important group of Byzantine and early Christian relics.

(Continued on Form 10-300a)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The National Commission of Fine Arts, Ninth Report, July 1, 1919-June 30, 1921, Washington, D. C.: U. S. GPO, 1921, p. 17. The National Commission of Fine Arts, Tenth Report, July 1, 1921-December 31, 1925, Washington, D. C.: U. S. GPO, 1926, pp. 111-113. The National Commission of Fine Arts, Twelfth Report, July 1, 1929-December 31, 1934, Washington, D. C.: U. S. GPO, 1936, Washington City and Capital, Federal Writers; Project, WPA, American Guide Series, Washington, D. C.: U. S. GPO, 1937, pp. 375-379. Caemmerer, H. P., Washington, The National Capital, Washington, D. C.: U. S. GPO, 1932, pp. 469-475.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN ONE ACRE		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		38° 53' 17"	77° 01' 39"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Nancy C. Taylor, Landmarks Historian

ORGANIZATION: National Capital Planning Commission DATE: April 9, 1969

STREET AND NUMBER:
726 Jackson Place, N. W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: District of Columbia CODE: 08

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name *Wm F. L...*

Title Deputy Mayor-Commissioner

Date May 12, 1969

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Arant Allen Comstock
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date JUN 23 1969

ATTEST:

William J. ...
Keeper of The National Register

Date ~~JUN 23 1969~~ JUN 20 1969

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1/20/69 10:30 AM

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Dist. of Columbia	
COUNTY	
Dist. of Columbia	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
69-06-08-0016	6/23/69

(Number all entries)

8. Significance--Freer Gallery of Art

Under the leadership of a distinguished group of curators and its three directors, John E. Lodge, Archibold G. Wenley, and John A. Pope, the Freer collection of Near and Far Eastern art has been increased to 10,012 articles, all of the highest quality.



