

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

AUG 19 2016

683

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

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.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Davidson Building

Other names/site number: Phillips Building, Carry Building; 3 McPherson Square

Name of related multiple property listing:

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

## 2. Location

Street & number: 927 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW

City or town: Washington, D.C. State: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

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

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

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A \_\_\_ B X C \_\_\_ D

|   |                                |                  |
|---|--------------------------------|------------------|
| <u>DM</u>   | <u>DAVID MALONEY / DC SHPO</u> | <u>8/19/2016</u> |
| Signature of certifying official/Title:             |                                | Date             |
| <u>DC HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE</u>              |                                |                  |
| State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government |                                |                  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. |   |
| Signature of commenting official:   | Date  |
| Title :   | State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government |

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

*For Edson H. Beall*  
Signature of the Keeper

*10.4.16*  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

| Contributing      | Noncontributing   |            |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------|
| <u>1</u>          | <u>          </u> | buildings  |
| <u>          </u> | <u>          </u> | sites      |
| <u>          </u> | <u>          </u> | structures |
| <u>          </u> | <u>          </u> | objects    |
| <u>1</u>          | <u>          </u> | Total      |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE/Office Building

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE/Office Building

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN/Renaissance Revival

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick and stone

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

### Summary Paragraph

Begun and completed in 1917, the Davidson Building is a twelve-story office building constructed of steel and concrete and clad with stone, brick and terra cotta. It has a standard early 20<sup>th</sup>-century three-part form with base, shaft and cap, and features Italian Renaissance-style detailing. It is located at the southeast corner of 15th and K Streets, on the east side of McPherson Square, in downtown Washington, D.C. It abuts a contemporary eleven-story office building along K Street and the six-story B.F. Saul Building (1924) on the 15th Street side. The Davidson building is rectangular in plan with its long side extending along 15th Street and the shorter one on K Street, with entrances on both elevations. The 15<sup>th</sup> Street elevation is divided into three principal vertical parts (recessed center and projecting end bays), while the K Street elevation consists of groups of three single windows in each bay. Both the K Street and 15<sup>th</sup> Street elevations are broken horizontally into a tripartite organization of base, shaft, and cap.

The 15<sup>th</sup> Street elevation is divided vertically into a wide recessed pavilion on-center, and projecting bays on either end, with single window openings extending the full length of the façade. The base comprises the first three floors of the building and, is clad with limestone, while the middle seven floors forming the building shaft are clad in red brick. The top two floors composing the cap are made of glazed terra cotta. A stone projecting cornice caps the roofline.

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A stone belt course that wraps around both primary façades visually divides the three horizontal parts of the building. The roof is flat and not visible, but likely clad with bituminous material.

The interiors of the ground floor retain have been altered over the years to accommodate new tenants and retain no historic fabric. The 15<sup>th</sup> Street lobby entrance to the office building has also been renovated, leaving no visible historic fabric.

Despite these interior alterations, the exterior of the building remains in excellent condition and retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

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## Narrative Description

### Exterior

The twelve-story Davidson Building follows a standard 20th-century Commercial style having a three-part division of base, shaft and cap. It is set upon a low granite foundation, is covered with a flat roof, and has a stone base, brick shaft, and terra cotta attic level with stone cornice. The building has two principal elevations: the narrow K Street elevation on the north end of the rectangular building, and the longer 15th Street elevation facing west to McPherson Square. This elevation is divided into three vertical parts with a wide, central recessed pavilion and flanking end wings. The primary entrance to the office building is located on-center of the central recessed pavilion.

The north elevation of the building facing K Street is divided into three bays, and based upon its architectural treatment, appears to have been intended as the primary façade. The base, set upon a low granite foundation and clad with white limestone covers the first three floors of the building. The first floor features a central entrance, currently providing access to the ground floor restaurant, flanked by two large show windows. The central entry has a metal and glass replacement door set within a stone architrave surround. This surround, in both the side pilasters and architrave head, is ornamented with raised roundel panels recalling Mannerist treatment and features a stepped parapet wall atop the architrave head. A wide segmental-arched window rises above this architrave and is surmounted by a bas relief carving of an oversized garland motif with a shield on-center. The garland fills the central part of the entablature separating the second story of the building base from the third story. The ends of the garland dangle down the walls to either side of the window. Large window openings are located to either side of this central one.

The third floor of the base has a tri-partite window on-center and single windows to either side with recessed panels between the window bays and a cornice above. A stepped parapet on-center of the cornice caps this level of the building's base.

The shaft of the building, corresponding with floors 4 through 10, is clad in red brick and divided into three bays with each bay defined by window openings. The central bay, however, is distinguished from the outside bays as it is surrounded by a Giant order segmental arch surround of stone. Each floor of this central bay features a large plate glass window with narrow side lights to either side, separated by metal spandrels between each floor. To either side of the

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central bay are single 1/1 windows recessed into the brick walls offering narrow brick sills. A stone cornice divides the brick shaft of the building from the cap above.

The cap or attic level of this north elevation, consisting of floors 11-12, is clad with mottled terra cotta tile, and sits upon the stone cornice of the shaft. It offers a central arched opening recessed from the façade and framed by three-quarter engaged columns *in-antis*. Square windows in both floors and superimposed upon themselves are located to either side of the double-height arched opening. This Classically composed portion of the building is capped by a broad cornice with oversized modillions. As is typical for the building's 20th-century commercial style, these top floors stand almost like an independent building atop the shaft.

The west elevation, facing the square, is organized into its three horizontal parts—base, shaft and cap—as well as three vertical parts. Vertically, the building consists of a central recessed block and two end piers. The central recessed block is three bays wide, while each end pier is two bays wide. An additional bay of windows extends the building one bay further south, making for a slightly asymmetrical façade. This elevation extends eight window bays wide, with three occupying the central recessed pavilion, two defining the north end bay, and three in the south end bay (the final window bay of this end bay is actually recessed to the same plane of the central pavilion). The base covers the first three floors of the building and spans the recessed pavilion and end bays. This base level offers numerous entrances, including those to ground floor retail and to the office building lobby and offices above. The historic entrance to the office building is located in the southernmost end bay of the south end pier. No longer actively used, this entrance door features a pair of doors with a wood transom bar and transom light above, all set within an engaged stone architrave surround featuring a decorative shield on-center of the architrave head. Presently, the entrance to the offices is located in the central recessed pavilion defined by a pair of contemporary steel and glass doors and metal canopy above. In the spandrel between the door and window above, contemporary metal letters identify the entrance with the address written: Three McPherson Square. Two other entrances on this 15<sup>th</sup> Street elevation provide access to the ground floor retail (food establishments, presently). The center bay of the recessed pavilion features a wide

The second floor of the base consists of wide window openings with replacement sash having a central pane, side lights and transom, equally arranged above the ground floor openings and punched into the limestone walls. A broad cornice extends above these windows separating the second and third stories of the building's base. The third story consists of an arrangement of windows having an AABCBA rhythm, with A being large, single openings; B being narrow single openings grouped as pairs; and C being a tri-partite grouping of larger window on-center with flanking narrow windows.

The building shaft, including floors 4-10, has a repeating series of windows—three bays of windows in the central block, two bays in the north end pier, and three bays in the south end pier. The windows in the shaft follow the same rhythm of those in the third floor of the base level. All of the windows, including the display windows on the first floor, are replacements.

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The attic level, consisting of floors 11-12, rises above a stone cornice and sits upon the building's shaft. Like the shaft below, it features a recessed central pavilion and two projecting wings, all clad with vermiculated terra cotta. Each of these bays is articulated by superimposed windows between implied columns, and separated by narrow spandrel panels. The roof of the building culminates with a projecting stone cornice with a parapet wall above.

The south elevation, exposed and visible only above the B.F. Saul building which was built to abut the Davidson Building has four bays of single window openings in the western front of the building. Many of these windows have been bricked in, while the others remain open with replacement windows. This elevation is brick up to the 10<sup>th</sup> floor (end of the building's shaft) is red brick and above this point, is painted to match the buff-colored terra cotta glazed brick and terra cotta of the attic level.

### Interior

The interiors of the Davidson Building retain no historic features or fabric. The interior retail areas have been altered on numerous occasions for new tenants—primarily fast food-type cafes and restaurants—and the lobby area to the office building has been recently updated leaving no evidence of historic materials.

## **INTEGRITY**

Despite the removal of historic fabric on the interior, the exterior of the Davidson Building retains good integrity. It is the oldest office building on McPherson Square. Upon its completion in 1917, it stood out among the diverse mix of smaller-scale residential and commercial structures surrounding the square. As the neighborhood developed as a financial and real estate center in the 1920s and experienced further commercial development throughout the post-WWII period, the building became one of many larger buildings on the square. Although it is no longer the tallest office building, its existence along with that of the other early 20th-century commercial buildings on the square preserves the area's integrity of setting, feeling and association.

The building has replacement windows and doors throughout; however, these replacements do not significantly detract from the quality of design, materials and craftsmanship of the building. The Davidson Building retains its original massing and its character-defining features such as the use of the classical order to divide up the building form, an exterior wall cladding of red brick and stone, a wide overhanging eave, and details such as columns, brackets, cartouches, and garlands. These features ensure the continued integrity of design, materials, and workmanship that contribute to an overall integrity of association.

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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.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years



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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE  
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1917  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1917  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

B. Stanley Simmons  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Davidson Building, a twelve-story commercial office building constructed in 1917 at the southeast corner of 15th and K Street NW, was designed by B. Stanley Simmons, and built by the local development firm, Davidson & Davidson. The firm intended to use the building for its own offices and to lease it to the recently formed Federal Trade Commission. This arrangement came at a time when federal government office space was scarce and thus the renting of space in private buildings, the norm. However, that rental agreement lasted just one year as criticism surrounding the taxpayer cost of renting office space prompted the federal government to build more purpose-built federal government office buildings and move its workers out of rented space. Davidson & Davidson remained in the building and rented out the remaining space until selling it in 1923. At that time, William S. Phillips purchased the building, re-naming it the Phillips Building; in 1930, the building was sold to the Albert Carry Properties, then becoming the Carry Building. The building continued to be called the Carry Building until Joseph C. Carry's death in 1965. Today, it is generally known by its original name, the Davidson Building.

Constructed facing McPherson Square, the Davidson Building is a representative example of a large-scale private office development. In addition, the building fits within a category of private development designed and built for the federal government shortly before the Public Buildings Commission initiated policies to discourage the future practice of this trend. After the Federal Trade Commission left the building in 1918, subsequent tenants reflected the development of the 15th Street NW corridor as Washington's "Wall Street."

The Davidson Building meets National Register of Historic Places Criteria A and C with Architecture and Community Planning as its Areas of Significance. Built in 1917, the Davidson Building was one of the early private office buildings to be constructed around McPherson Square and not only provides an excellent illustration of the northerly growth of the city's financial district from 15th and H Streets to McPherson Square in the 1920s, but also the transformation of McPherson Square from a residential area to a business one. The building also contributes to an understanding of the federal government's reliance upon private office buildings to house its workforce, especially during World War 1, as the number of federal workers expanded significantly.

Architecturally, the building provides an excellent example of a multi-story, early 20th-century office building reflecting a commercial building form with Italian Renaissance-style detailing, and designed by local and notable architect, B. Stanley Simmons.

The Period of Significance for the Davidson Building is 1917, its year of construction.

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

### McPherson Square: From Residential to Commercial/Office Building

The Davidson Building, constructed by the local development company, Davidson and Davidson, was one of the first buildings erected on McPherson Square during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and one of the first that contributed to the square's transition from 19<sup>th</sup>-century residential to offices. Before the construction of the Davidson building, the southeast corner of 15th Street & K Street NW was the site of a "fine old residence," a three-story brick dwelling, built in 1888 by Charles Edmonston for General Andrew A. Humphreys. The home was used by Maryland Senator Arthur P. Gorman and later by Associate Justice Samuel Blatchford. In 1908, the Congressional Club, a women's organization established to provide a non-partisan setting for friendships among the spouses of members of Congress and the Supreme Court, used the residence for their programs until it erected its own purpose-built club building at 16th Street, New Hampshire Avenue, and U Street NW.

Included within the 1791 L'Enfant Plan, McPherson Square was developed in its first decades with a scattering of buildings and was home to a mixed-race working-class community. The most notable of the buildings on the square were a "Colored Presbyterian Church" facing the square from the east and the home of Jonah Hoover, D.C. Marshall and later chief usher at the White House on the south side of the square.

In 1867, when responsibility for the city's reservations came under control of the Army Corps of Engineer's Office of Buildings and Grounds, the square itself saw its first improvements when two triangular open spaces were joined to form a square. In 1873, the square was graded and planted, and the following year was named in honor of General Winfield Scott. In 1871, Congress authorized the construction and erection of a statue to honor Scott for the square. However, by 1872, new plans dedicated the circle at 16th Street and Massachusetts Avenue for the Scott equestrian statue. The following year, Congress approved the erection of a statue of Brig. General James McPherson for what had been dubbed "Scott Square." Upon erection of the statue in 1876 the name of the square was appropriately changed to McPherson Square.

By the time the statue was erected, the square was already becoming a fashionable residential neighborhood. Ulysses S. Grant's Secretary of State, Hamilton Fish occupied the Hoover House on the south end of the park, while the luxurious Arlington Hotel, built in 1868, occupied the southwest side of the square. At the north end of the square at Vermont Avenue and K Street, in 1875, real estate developer Archibald Lowery erected an opulent Second Empire-style mansion whose principal entrance faced Vermont Avenue. Over the next two decades, the prestige of the square continued to grow. In 1884, Michigan Senator Thomas Palmer built a grand Romanesque Revival-style residence adjoining the Lowery House and moved in, and in 1888, the Humphrey's House was erected thereby adding to the already distinguished list of occupants on the square (Mrs. Phoebe Hearst and the Cornelius Vanderbilt family both lived in the Lowery House at different times). In 1907, millionaire John McLean and his wife who had been living in the 1860

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Hoover-Fish House, hired architect John Russell Pope to design a block-long Renaissance-inspired palace that incorporated the walls of the older house into the new construction. The McLean House featured ornate and excessive interiors designed for lavish entertaining and was the epitome of the late 19th century residence of the city's socially and financially elite.

By the first decade of the 20th century, however, the neighborhood was beginning the gradual shift from residential to office building. Initially, business offices moved into the square's large residences. In 1899, for instance, the Justice Department moved its headquarters from Pennsylvania Avenue into the 19<sup>th</sup> century Lowery House on the north end of the square, later expanding into the adjacent Palmer House. However, as the city's financial district centered along 15th Street and the U.S. Treasury Building began to expand north during the 1910s and 1920s, the need for dedicated office buildings grew and the residential buildings fronting McPherson Square became prime candidates for replacement.

The first residential displacement occurred in 1912 when the University Club, conceived to cater to downtown businessmen, was built on the west side of McPherson Square, replacing several residential row houses. The University Club was followed by other, smaller office buildings around the square that were built on the site of former dwellings, but the Davidson Building, constructed in 1917, was the first major office building to break ground on the site of former residences.<sup>1</sup>

During the 1920s, the square's residential properties were replaced one-by-one by office buildings (principally real estate-related) and financial institutions. During the mid-1920s, the local press focused much attention on this change from residential to commercial, often lamenting the loss of the "old" residences, but also recognizing the "march of progress." McPherson Square was recognized in particular as being "the center of investment houses and real estate organizations" and the northern edge of the city's financial district. In 1939, following a building hiatus during the Depression era, the McLean House at the south end of the square was demolished to make way for the Import Export Bank, thus marking the end of an era.

### Construction of the Davidson Building

After the Congressional Club vacated the Humphrey's House, Charles H. Davidson purchased the property with a \$32,000 trust and began demolition of the old residence on December 7, 1916. Designed by B. Stanley Simmons and constructed by Michael I. Weller, the plans for the new building called for a ten-story concrete frame commercial building divided into a standard tri-partite organization.

At the time of its construction, the building was described as "one of the handsomest office buildings in the city." The concrete frame building is clad in brick with white stone detailing and entrances on both 15th Street and K Street. The upper stories are built from poured concrete, and

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<sup>1</sup> The Davidson Building was preceded in 1912 by a small two-story office building by Harry Wardman at 1430 K Street NW and by a three-story office designed by A.B. Mullett & Co. at 900 14th Street NW. However, the Davidson Building was the tallest, and the first to face McPherson Square.

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windows sashes, doors and floors have a monolithic finish rendering the building fire-proof. The address of the building was 921 15th Street NW until new construction on the block in 1923 forced a change in the address to 927 15th Street NW. At the time of construction, the building was heated with a vapor vacuum system and was expected to cost \$200,000. At 130 feet tall the Davidson building exceeded the subsequent 1920 height limit by twenty feet, along with 22 other structures, including the Southern building, the Westory, and the Interstate building. Davidson & Davidson had been permitted to exceed the height limitation because the Federal Trade Commission, a public agency, was the building's primary tenant.

Upon its completion, the Davidson Building was exceptionally tall for the period of its construction, remaining the tallest building in Washington, D.C. until the completion of the National Press Building. Upon its completion, the building housed the Davidson & Davidson Company on the first story and the Federal Trade Commission on the other eleven floors. At the time, many federal government agencies leased office space in privately constructed buildings. The Davidson Building was particularly convenient for the FTC, as the location provided close proximity to some of the major financial institutions that the FTC was tasked with regulating.

#### Federal Trade Commission and the Davidson Building

Created on September 26, 1914, the Federal Trade Commission succeeded the Bureau of Corporations within the Department of Commerce inheriting that Bureau's responsibilities and its employees. For the first two years, the FTC occupied 14,704 square feet of office space in the Commerce Building at 19th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue NW and rented space in the Southern Building for employees engaged in special investigations. The FTC moved to the Davidson building on August 11, 1917 retaining some space in the Southern Building for emergency operations. In addition to their offices in Washington, DC, by 1918 the FTC maintained regional offices in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco.

The FTC's move to the Davidson Building, was short-lived, however, as it coincided with public concern over the financial costs and disorganization caused by the practice of government agencies leasing space in private buildings. In a 1917 report, the Public Buildings Commission observed that the FTC "occupies 33,000 square feet on 11 floors of the Davidson Building at Fifteenth and K Streets NW., at an annual rental of \$19,000, and 6,584 square feet of floor in the Southern Building, at \$9,060 per annum." To reduce taxpayers' expense, the Commission proposed to house both the FTC and the U.S. Board of Mediation and Conciliation in the Department of Justice Main Office at the northeast corner of Vermont Avenue & K Street. A 1919 report by the Public Buildings Commission moved the FTC again to "Fuel Building, No. 8." By 1930, the FTC offices had moved to the No. 4 temporary government building or "tempo" at 2000 D Street. A major fire at this building on August 30, 1930 destroyed many records of the organization and prompted the construction of the Apex Building in 1930.

#### Davidson Building to Carry Building

Following the unexpected departure by the FTC from its building, Davidson & Davidson had no problems filling it with new tenants. In 1919, the first women's real estate exchange in

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Washington, DC rented office space in the building. The exchange went beyond interior residential remodeling and furnishing to offer broader support to women's business and financial interests. Their slogan, "The Women of Washington Own Half of Its Homes," appeared in their several advertisements during the late 1910s and early 1920s. By 1921, the building had been completely filled with tenants including industrial firms, newspaper offices, real estate agents, architects, contractors, lawyers, physicians, and twenty-five separate dental offices. Notable tenants included the Japanese Military Attaché, the DC Council for the Boy Scouts of America, and the ground floor office of Charles D. Sager, a local real estate agent who established offices at 612 14th Street NW temporarily before moving into his ground floor office in the Davidson Building. The other floor spaces accommodated tenants including an optician, a banking office, and the Percy H. Russell Co. real estate office.

In 1923, for unknown reasons, Davidson & Davidson sold the building to William S. Phillips in a transaction negotiated by Harry R. Loveless. Phillips removed interior building partitions to turn the four ground floor offices into a single space for his own firm's offices and renamed the property the Phillips Building. At the time of this acquisition, Phillips was involved with residential development in Columbia Heights, Bloomingdale, Chevy Chase, Mount Pleasant, and Takoma Park. Phillips began as a salesman with Shannon & Luchs in 1906 and incorporated Phillips & Sager, Inc. in 1912. Phillips served as president of the company located at 715 14th Street NW before moving to 1409 New York Avenue NW. In 1919, Phillips bought out Charles S. Sager and renamed the business William S. Phillips & Company. By the time he purchased the Davidson Building in 1923 his firm had grown to forty employees in eight departments. After selling the Davidson Building to Albert Carry Properties in 1929, Phillips moved to 1516 K Street NW, a building later demolished for the Southern Railway Building, then in 1928 to the Investment Building. In 1930, the company moved into Valley Vista Apartments and shifted its focus to construction and real estate management before Phillips' retirement in 1932.

Following the sale of the building to Albert Carry Properties, the new owners announced on October 20, 1929 a second name change with an advertisement by the H.L. Rust Company, rental agents, "Announcing The Carry Building... entirely renovated and re-decorated" at a "central location, convenient to financial and realty district." The sale came hardly more than a week before the stock market crash on October 29, 1929 and the onset of the Great Depression. Vacancy in the building increased substantially and remained high through the mid-1930s. By 1937, tenants had returned and among the building's new occupants was the legal division of the Resettlement Administration with offices on the 3rd floor and 8th through 12th floors. Although the Resettlement Administration left by 1939, they were replaced by the National Labor Relations Board and the Railroad Retirement Board. The NLRB remained in the building through 1943.

Throughout this period the ground floor spaces had a range of tenants including a barber shop, real estate firms, and opticians. The ground floor remained vacant for a period in the 1950s even as Albert Carry Properties advertised a "Corner Store for Rent in Carry Building," describing the space as "Very desirable for drug store, real estate office, etc. Approximately 1,200 sq. feet floor space with additional storeroom in basement." Joseph C. Carry continued to own the Carry building until his death in 1965.

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The building, now designated Three McPherson Square, is currently owned by BVT Equity Holdings, Inc., an international real estate investment firm with United States headquarters in Atlanta Georgia. Ground floor tenants include food service and retail, while the upper floors continue to be maintained as office for a range of organizations.

#### Biographical Summary of B. Stanley Simmons

Born in Charles County, Maryland on March 10, 1872, B. Stanley Simmons moved to Washington, DC as a child and remained in the city to establish his career in architecture. Simmons received a degree in architecture from the University of Maryland then graduated from the Boston Institute of Technology in 1895. From 1890 through the 1930, Simmons designed over 700 buildings in Washington, DC working closely with every major developer. In addition, Simmons was a versatile designer, working on row houses, fraternal clubs, commercial and institutional buildings, and apartment buildings. Particularly significant projects include the National Metropolitan Bank at 15th Street and G Street NW completed in 1905, the Elks Club at 919 H Street NW in 1908, demolished in 1979, and the Fairfax Hotel now the Ritz-Carlton at 21st Street and Massachusetts Avenue NW in 1921. By 1902, Simmons had attracted significant recognition, as “an architect who has added to the beauty and growth of this city.”

Simmons was elected to the Washington Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1920 and by 1923 he was a member of the Board of Trade, Chamber of Commerce, Sacred Heart Church, and a range of social and civic organizations. Although he never studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, B. Stanley Simmons became a student of the Beaux Arts tradition and the City Beautiful Movement. While earlier designs for speculative rowhouses reflect Victorian styles, by the early 20th-century Simmons’ designs for more monumental structures reflect a variety of academic styles inspired by the City Beautiful movement. For instance, the now-demolished Elks Club at 919 H Street NW, the Fairfax Hotel now known as the Ritz at 2100 Massachusetts Avenue NW, the Northwest Savings Bank, at 1789 Columbia Road, all executed in a Classical Revival style, or the Charlesfred Apartment building at 1705 P Street NW, designed in the Renaissance Revival vein, are all indicative of the influences of the Beaux Arts tradition. Simmons died on September 8, 1931.

#### Biographical Summary of Davidson & Davidson

Founded in 1883, by H. Bradley Davidson, John C. Davidson and Luther S. Fristoe, the Davidson & Davidson Company established its first office at 4 1/2 and D Streets NW facing Judiciary Square. The company moved to the Le Droit Building at 8th and F Streets NW then to 1338 F Street NW. In 1885, the firm constructed the Smithfield—a building they would later claim was the first apartment building in Washington, DC, even though the Portland Flats, built 1880, preceded its construction and is universally held as the first apartment building to have been constructed in the city. This project was followed by the Analostan Apartments at 1718 Corcoran Street NW, the Gladstone and Hawarden at 14th Street and R Street NW, and the Llewellen at 23rd Street & F Street NW. By the early 1930s, the firm had built or financed

Davidson Building

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

approximately 100 apartment buildings. In 1901, the firm constructed the Bond Building in which it had its own offices.

In addition to apartment buildings and office buildings, Davidson & Davidson developed residential areas city-wide, including the entire square, between 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and S Streets and Florida Avenue, as well as houses in West Eckington in northeast, Randle Highlands in southeast, and Mount Pleasant in northwest.

By 1914, Davidson & Davidson had moved to the Southern Building at 15th Street and H Street NW, but within three years began construction of the Davidson Building for its own offices and those of the Federal Trade Commission. Following the sale of the Davidson Building in 1923, the firm maintained offices at 1013 15th Street NW. A laudatory account on the firm's 50th anniversary in 1933, noted how the firm—one of “only one or two other realty concerns established in Washington at that early date” still in business—continued in the family under the management of Roy G. Fristoe, John H. Davidson, and Charles H. Davidson. The firm continued to advertise properties and appear in local accounts on real estate transactions through the late 1930s.



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Name of Property

Washington, D.C.  
County and State

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

“11-Story Davidson Building Sold,” *The Washington Post*, January 28, 1923.

“23 D.C. Buildings 110 Feet or More,” *The Washington Post*, July 28, 1920, p. 9.

Design Forum Architects, “DC Downtown Office Building Survey, Phase II,” September 1992, D.C. Historic Preservation Office.

Fifteenth Street Financial Historic District, National Register Nomination, 2006.

Goode, James. *Capital Losses: A Cultural History of Washington’s Destroyed Buildings*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2003.

“New Site of W.S. Phillips’ Offices,” *The Washington Post* (illustration), January 28, 1923.

“W.S. Philips Goes Into New Location,” *The Washington Post*, April 8, 1923, p. 43.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1888, 1903, 1927, 1959.

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### 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:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

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

Davidson Building  
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.  
County and State

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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### 10. Geographical Data

**Acreeage of Property** Less than 1 acre (3,107 square feet)

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

#### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                       |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 38.90218 | Longitude: -77.03339 |
| 2. Latitude:          | Longitude:           |
| 3. Latitude:          | Longitude:           |
| 4. Latitude:          | Longitude:           |

**Or**

#### UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |          |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Davidson Building  
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**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Davidson Building at 927 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW occupies lot 67 in Square 218.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The Davidson Building has been associated with Lot 67 in Square 218 since its construction in 1917.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Eli Pousson and Kim Williams  
organization: D.C. Preservation League and D.C. Historic Preservation Office  
street & number: 1100 4<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
city or town: Washington, D.C. state: \_\_\_\_\_ zip code: 20024  
e-mail kim.williams@dc.gov  
telephone: 202 442-8840  
date: July 2016

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Davidson Building  
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### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Davidson Building  
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.  
County: State: District of Columbia  
Photographer: Kim Prothro Williams  
Date Photographed: August 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

View looking southeast from north side of K Street showing north and west elevations  
1 of 8

View looking east from McPherson Square showing west elevation  
2 of 8

View looking northeast from McPherson Square showing west elevation  
3 of 8

View looking south from north side of K Street showing north elevation  
4 of 8

View looking northeast (skyward) showing south elevation above B.F. Saul Building  
5 of 8

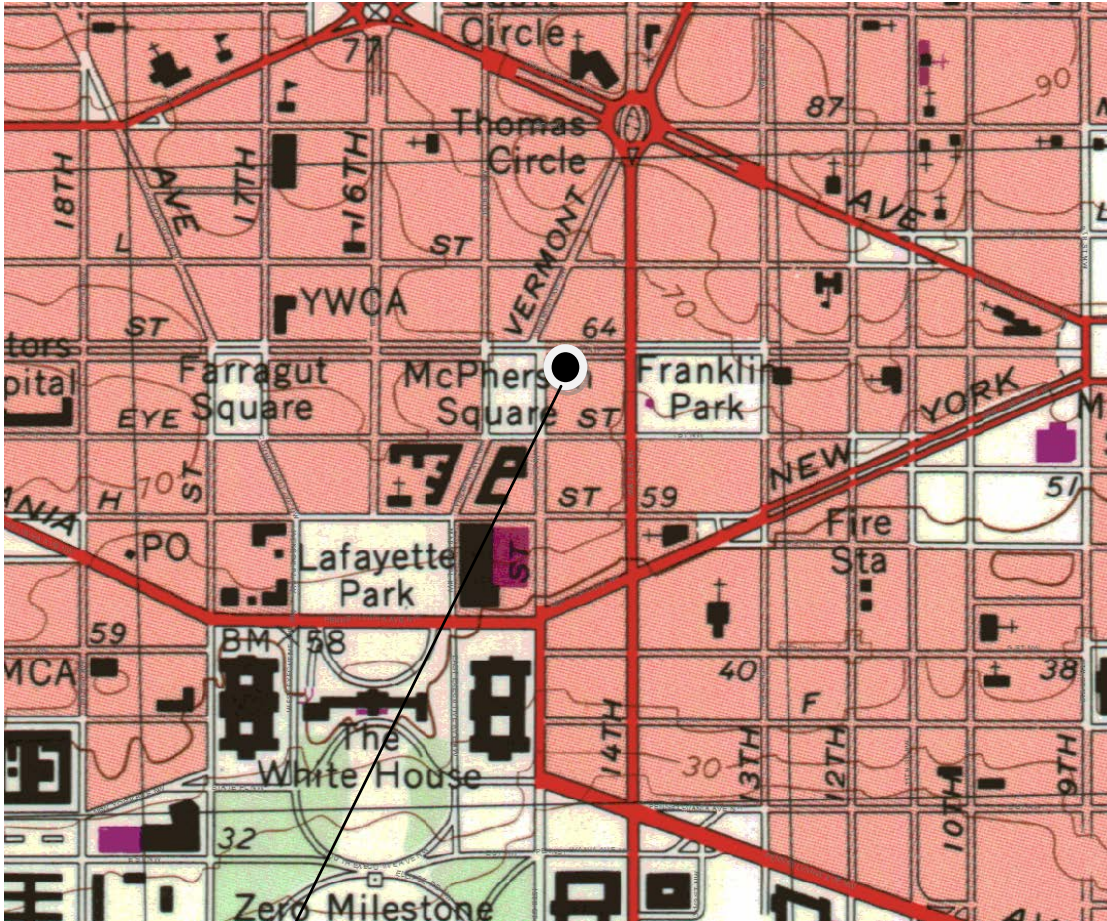
View looking east (skyward) showing attic level of west elevation  
6 of 8

Detail of entry door on north elevation  
7 of 8

Interior of lobby to office building  
8 of 8

Davidson Building  
Name of Property

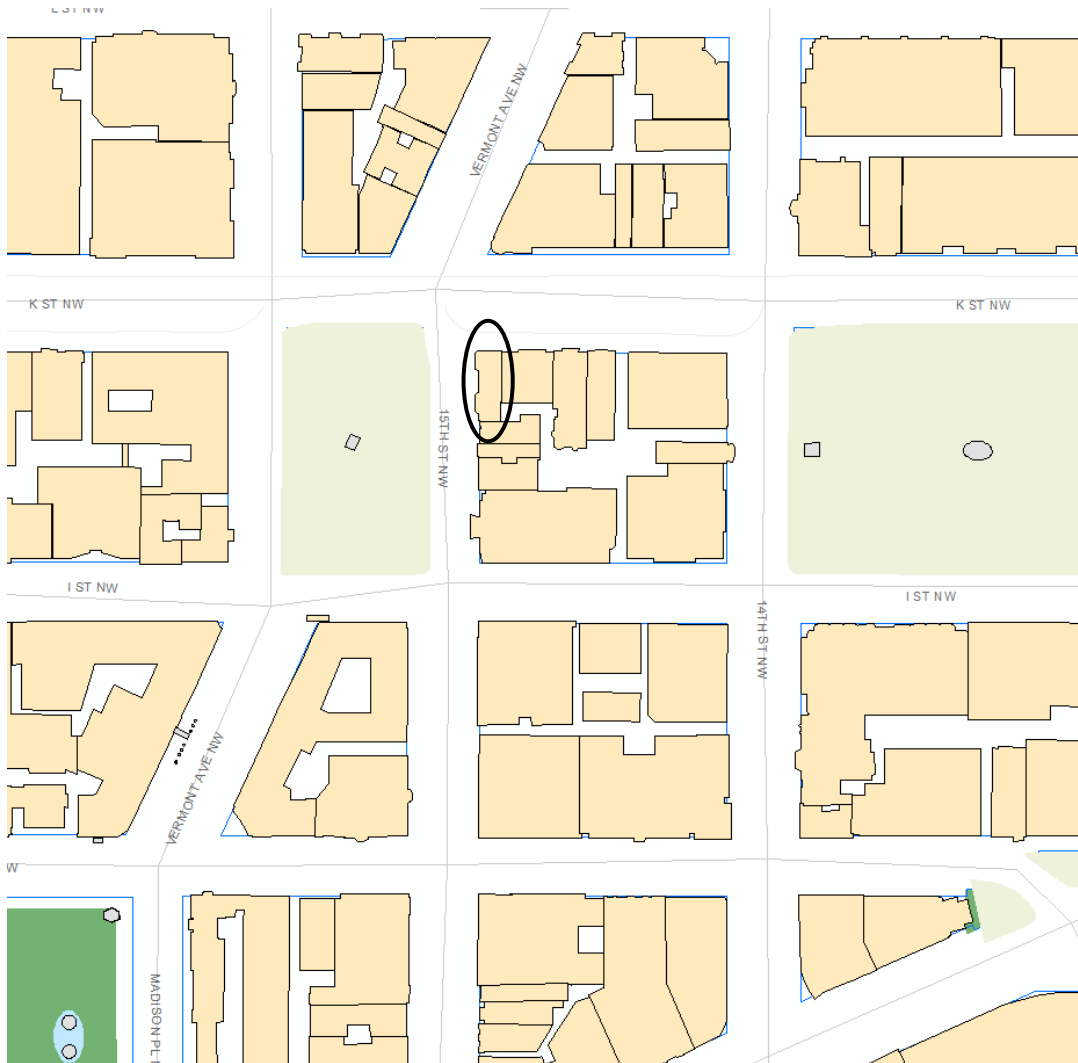
Washington, D.C.  
County and State



Site of Davidson Building, 927 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
(USGS Washington West Quad)

Davidson Building  
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.  
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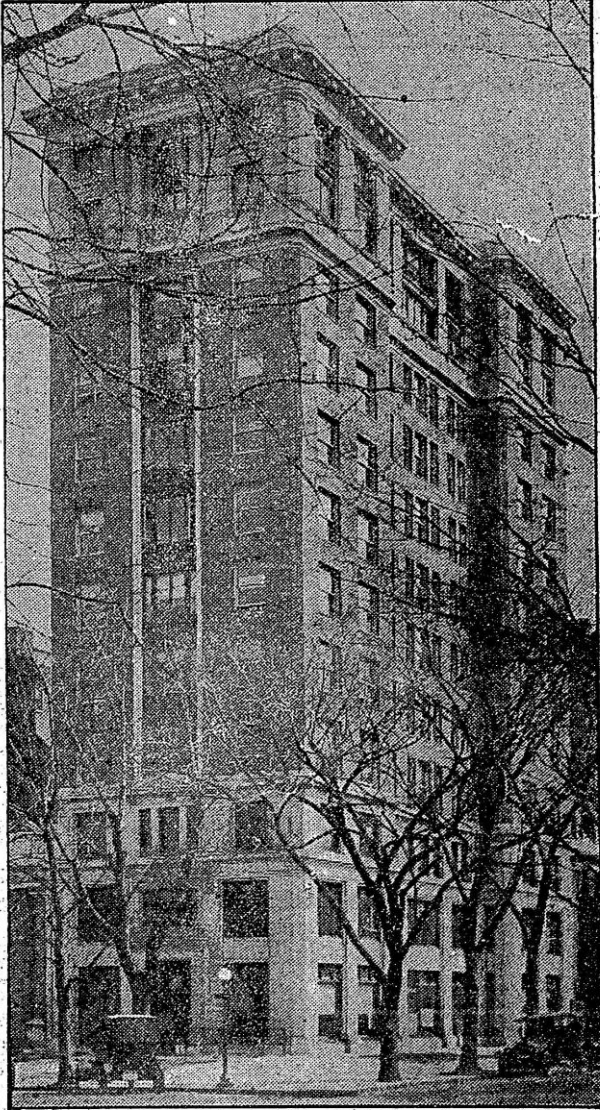
Site Map of Davidson Building, 927 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW

Davidson Building  
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.  
County and State

**Offices For Rent**

In This Modern Fireproof Building  
S. E. Cor. 15th & K Sts. N. W., Fronting on McPherson Square



Will arrange any floor to suit tenant—rooms especially adapted to professional men.

No Restriction for Parking Cars  
Possession About May 15

**L. S. FRISTOE, 1432 K ST. N. W.**  
Phone Main 1512



Davidson Building  
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.  
County and State

## NEW SITE OF W. S. PHILLIPS' OFFICES



Phillips building, southeast corner of Fifteenth and K streets north-west. William S. Phillips recently purchased this property (formerly known as the Davidson building) from Davidson and Davidson, and has located his real estate offices here, occupying the entire first floor. The new offices will be formally opened tomorrow.

**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 100 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.









★ PRET A MANGER ★

★ PRET

ONE WAY

200

PRET A MANGER

PRET A MANGER

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**FedEx**  
Express

Smoothies • Gourmet Pastries  
Super Premium Ice Cream

THE  
WATERGATE  
HOTEL





NO PARKING  
ANYTIME

NO STOPPING  
ANYTIME





Capital One  
Bank







ER ★

★ PRET

PRET

Organic Eggfruits  
SERVED OVER ICE

★ FRES  
★ O







UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Davidson Building

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, District of Columbia

DATE RECEIVED: 8/19/16 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 9/19/16  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 10/04/16 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 10/04/16  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000683

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 10.4.16 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

The National Register  
of  
Historic Places

Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places

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

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

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

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

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

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE



RECEIVED 2280

AUG 19 2016

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

MEMO

DATE: August 19, 2016  
TO: Patrick Andrus  
FROM: Kim Williams *KW*  
RE: Transmittal Letter for the Davidson Building

Please find enclosed two disks for the Davidson Building National Register nomination

The enclosed disk, Disk 1 (of 2) contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Davidson Building and the enclosed Disk 2 (of 2) contains photographs as per the NR photo requirements of the Davidson Building.