

7778

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Arden, Elizabeth Building
other names _____

2. Location

street & number 1147 Connecticut Avenue not for publication
city or town Washington, D.C. vicinity
state District of Columbia code DC county _____ code 001 zip code 20006

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments).

[Signature] 6/27/03
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
DC Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments).

[Signature] 6/27/03
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
DC Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby, certify that this property is:
- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 - determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 - Determined not eligible for the National Register.
 - removed from the National Register.
 - other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper Patrick Andrews Date of Action 8/18/2003

Arden, Elizabeth Building
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

- Private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

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

number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/business/specialty store

COMMERCE/TRADE/business/specialty store

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/
Georgian Revival

foundation Concrete
walls Limestone
roof Slag
other

Narrative Description

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

Arden, Elizabeth Building
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

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 pattern of our history.
- B Property 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)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1929-30

Significant Dates

1929-30

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Schmidt, Mott

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

Previous documentation on files (NPS):

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

- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Arden, Elizabeth Building
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2,019 square feet

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	1 8 Zone	3 2 3 0 1 7 Easting	4 3 0 8 0 0 3 Northing	3			
2				4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Richard Longstreth/Kim Williams (revised)
Organization D.C. Preservation League/D.C. Historic Preservation Office (revised) date June 2003
street & number 1815 Pennsylvania Avenue telephone (202) 955-5456
city or town Washington, D.C. state District of Columbia zip code _____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

Photographs

- X Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO)

name Mark W. Foster, Trustee
street & number 1201 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. telephone _____
city or town Washington, D.C. state _____ zip code _____

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

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Arden, Elizabeth Building

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

Section 7 Page 1

Description Summary:

The building located at 1147 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., known as the Elizabeth Arden building, is a six-story office building with first-floor commercial use. Built in 1929, the building is designed in a Georgian Revival style featuring a four-part vertical division of space. It is of brick construction with a limestone exterior façade characterized by a variety of window sizes and types within each of the four building parts. The first part of the four-part building is the first floor commercial space, characterized by wide arched openings. The second part of the building consists of a second-story colonnade with paired columns flanking large multi-paned double doors opening onto a balcony. The third part of the building includes the third and fourth stories (central “shaft”) and consists of five-bays of symmetrically arranged rectangular window openings. The fourth part of the building, consisting of the 5th and 6th stories, features a large, central, tri-partite “Palladian” window that punctures the wide pediment. The building is attached to the adjacent building on both the north and south sides.

General Description:

The principal façade, facing Connecticut Avenue, is divided into four vertical parts. The first part—the first story commercial space—is three bays wide with a central entrance and flanking show windows. The central entrance is arched and leads into a vestibule. It is flanked on either side by wide, non-projecting, show windows. The arched show windows consist of three large, plate-glass windows surmounted by wide fanlights. The fanlights are embellished with a delicate metal filigree design. The exterior surface at the first floor is rusticated up to the level of the spring line of the show windows' arch and is smooth above this to the second floor level.

The second part of the vertical block consists of the slightly projecting, Tuscan-order colonnade that extends the full width of the second story of the building. The colonnade consists of paired columns and is supported by a heavy projecting cornice with mutules. Fixed-pane windows that reach the height of the colonnade alternate between the paired columns. These windows consist of 20 fixed panes with paired transom lights above. A simple metal railing runs outside of the colonnade. An entablature, also with mutules, runs above these windows.

The third part of the building includes the third and fourth stories. These stories present a planar façade with the smooth, unadorned limestone finish interrupted only by five window openings. The windows consist of seven panes—six smaller panes above a single, double-sized pane. Horizontal bands, including one inscribed with rosettes, mark the division between the fourth and fifth floors.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Arden, Elizabeth Building

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

Section 7 Page 2

The fourth part of the building includes the fifth and sixth-story levels. Here, the three center bays are emphasized with the whole creating an implied temple form. The central bays are recessed and are faced with a lighter color of limestone. On the fifth story, a narrow balcony with a metal railing projects slightly from these bays. The middle window of the three bays features a Classically inspired, stone architrave having a slightly darker shade of limestone. The windows on this floor are of the same size and type as those used on the third and fourth floors.

The sixth-floor, slightly taller than the third, fourth, and fifth floors, has roundels on both of the outside bays and a Palladian window in the center recessed bays. The central arched window in the Palladian motif rises into the building's crowning pediment. A small, steeply set back, seventh-story (slightly higher than the top of the building's pediment) tops only the center section of the building. The east (rear) facade of the building is accessible only through an alley and is of a utilitarian design without ornamentation.

The only major alteration to the exterior of the building took place in the late 1970s or early 1980s. At that time, the building's windows were replaced, as were the railings on the second- and fifth-floor balconies. Based on earlier photographs, the design of the windows appears to be an approximation of those originally used on the building. In the interior of the building, many changes have been made over the building's history. The south wall of the building has been opened on the first three floors to communicate with the neighboring building at 1145 Connecticut Avenue. The property remains in good condition and has a high degree of architectural integrity. +

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Arden, Elizabeth Building

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

Section 8 Page 1

Summary Statement of Significance:

The Elizabeth Arden building, located at 1147 Connecticut Avenue, N. W., is the work of Mott Schmidt, one of the leading 20th-century architects working in the Colonial Revival/Georgian Revival style. It is a unique example of his work and the only known multi-story office building designed by him, and his only known original design in Washington, D.C. The building's style (an unusual Georgian Revival translation of the tall office form), the building's original architect, and the building's tenants—long-term exclusive tenants—exemplifies a unique coordinated effort on the part of developers, architects, and merchants to transform Connecticut Avenue into an exclusive shopping area deliberately modeled after Fifth Avenue in New York City.

The building is significant for its Georgian Revival-style architecture that came to be associated with the Connecticut Avenue shopping district, and as an important work of architect Mott Schmidt. As such, the Elizabeth Arden building meets National Register Criterion C. The period of significance for the building is 1929-30 when the building was constructed.

Resource History and Historic Context:

Although Connecticut Avenue appeared on L'Enfant's plan of Washington, extending from Lafayette Park to the city's boundaries at what is now Florida Avenue, the area remained rural and largely undeveloped until the post-Civil War period. Development in the area awaited the improvements of Alexander ("Boss") Shepherd's reign as the head of the Board of Public Works from 1871-73, and then as territorial governor of Washington in 1874. In the wake of the improvements, large mansions flourished in the area that was convenient to the downtown and White House. By the 1880s, the area was known as the fashionable residential district of Washington. It was a place for Sunday strolls—a place for the rich and famous "to see and be seen." Distributed among the large mansions were smaller, though still commodious, rowhouses and the frame houses of servants, trades people, and laborers. As development spread northward along Connecticut, property values rose, and commercial uses gradually began to replace residential ones. The new commercial uses occupied both the converted ground floors of row houses and new commercial buildings. The change, which was eventually to incorporate Connecticut Avenue from Lafayette Square to Florida Avenue, took place in three steps: from Lafayette Square to M Street, from M Street to Dupont Circle, and from Dupont Circle to Florida Avenue.¹

¹ See "Shopping Section Spreads," *Washington Post*, January 5, 1908; "Growth of Business Houses Along Connecticut Avenue," *Washington Post*, January 22, 1910; "Growth Continues on Connecticut Avenue," *Evening Star*, June 29, 1912. The transformation, at least south of Dupont Circle was complete by 1926. See "Famous Connecticut Avenue Residential Buildings."

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Arden, Elizabeth Building

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

Section 8 Page 2

The first steps towards commercialization came in the 1890s when stores catering to the needs of the residents of Connecticut Avenue opened. In the first decades of the 20th century, shops catering to wealthy customers gradually appeared along Connecticut Avenue and thrived. The merchants who settled into Connecticut Avenue were distinctive; they aimed at developing a small but devoted clientele who cared more about service, quality, and “correctness in style” than about price. For these shoppers, Connecticut Avenue came to be a place for “one stop shopping.”²

In addition to the changes in use that took place on Connecticut Avenue, there were also changes in the appearance of the Avenue. As shops replaced houses, what had been a street of red brick and brownstone rowhouses in eclectic Late Victorian styles changed to one lined with small commercial buildings in the refined Classical Revival style. At the time Connecticut Avenue was evolving into a commercial area, the classical vocabulary, and in particular the Neo-classical strain of the broader Colonial Revival movement, was gaining favor among the well to do. Throughout the country, Colonial Revival styles were favored for the houses, clubs, and businesses of those who wanted to emphasize their American heritage.³ The systematic aesthetic conversion of Connecticut Avenue was accomplished both by refacing existing residential structures and by replacing them with newer commercial buildings. In either case the aim was the same, to achieve a classical styling consistent with the Avenue's new image.

The unique aspect of the changes in use and style that occurred on Connecticut Avenue appears to have been at least partially due to the conscious decisions of individuals and groups who identified the potential demand for an exclusive shopping area and then set about to supply that demand.⁴ Three types of groups were involved in selecting, and then perpetuating for over 30

² See *Mayflower Log*, March 1934, p. 6.

³ William Rhodes has argued that the style was employed by the upper class to contrast their ethnic roots with those of the arriving immigrants. One illustration of the strong association between the Colonial Revival style and Connecticut Avenue is an unexecuted project—the George Washington Hotel and Auditorium—planned for the site of the Mayflower Hotel. According to a 1910 article describing the proposed design, “The architect [Goldwin, Starrett & Van Vleck of New York] has chosen, with the approval of the owners, to carry out every design in the purest colonial style...Not only Mount Vernon and the White House, but every other source of inspiration for the true expression of colonial architecture will be sought.” The interior was to include murals showing “events which made this country and gave to the world one of its greatest characters—George Washington.” The hotel aimed at a clientele of “cultured” Americans and “distinguished” foreigners.

⁴ Economic and demographic factors—for instance the rising rents of downtown locations and the tendency for retail businesses to “follow the routes of greatest traffic into the higher class residential sections” --also played a role. See “Cites Transformation of Connecticut Avenue,” *Washington Evening Star*, September 21, 1929.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Arden, Elizabeth Building

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

Section 8 Page 3

years, the image of New York's Fifth Avenue for Connecticut Avenue.⁵ The first of these were real estate promoters. Two real estate firms, the Allen E. Walker & Co., Inc. and the Randall H. Hagner Company were particularly involved in the process.⁶ Both companies focused almost exclusively on Connecticut Avenue real estate. The Walker Company, the guiding spirit behind the Mayflower Hotel, promoted the entire Connecticut Avenue area through advertisements.⁷

The second type of group involved in the change was the Connecticut Avenue Association, an organization patterned after the famous Fifth Avenue Association and aimed at promoting the reputation of the thoroughfare through advertising. The Association, in an effort to further distinguish Connecticut Avenue shops, adopted an insignia which members placed in the windows of their stores, "as a mark of quality in merchandise and courtesy in service."⁸ The Connecticut Avenue Association was also the sponsor of the semiannual fashion shows/exhibits that were a showcase for their members' wares.

The Mayflower Hotel, the site of the Connecticut Avenue Association's fashion shows, was the third force in bolstering the image of Connecticut Avenue as an exclusive enclave.⁹ Soon after its opening in 1925, the Mayflower became one of Washington's preeminent hotels and the location of many of the city's largest social functions—which drew many potential clients for Connecticut Avenue businesses. The hotel also published *The Mayflower Log*, a magazine that, among other things, included advertisements for Connecticut Avenue businesses. A reading of the magazine would convince one that there was little need to venture far from the neighborhood of the

⁵ One of the early references to the commercial development along Connecticut Avenue, a 1908 *Washington Post* article quotes a local real estate dealer as saying, "Connecticut Avenue in a few years will be the Fifth Avenue of Washington." From that time on, the image of Connecticut Avenue as being the equivalent of New York's Fifth Avenue was continually promoted. For instance, in a 1925 article by the founder of the Connecticut Avenue Association, the comparison to New York's Fifth Avenue is made six times. See "Mayflower Booms Anew D.C. 'Fifth Avenue,' Says Rubel," *Washington Post*, February 28, 1925.

⁶ It was likely a representative of one of these two real estate firms who was the "prominent real estate dealer" that asserted, in 1908, that the reason behind the rise in property values was the demand for an "exclusive" shopping area.

⁷ A full-page newspaper advertisement dating to 1919 and showing a large map of Connecticut Avenue with stores, clubs, and apartments individually identified illustrates the Walker Company's promotion of Connecticut Avenue through advertisement. The advertisement includes drawings of Connecticut Avenue in 1885 and in 1919 with the caption "A story of Progress --Further developments can be visualized by visiting CONNECTICUT AVENUE."

⁸ "Shops Adopt Connecticut Avenue Insignia," *Washington Herald*, June 15, 1937.

⁹ It was no doubt partially attributable to the presence of the Mayflower that in 1929 the 1100 block of Connecticut had the highest assessed values of any block of Connecticut. Prominent in this block were the Mayflower, the Elizabeth Arden Building, Waggaman and Ray Commercial Row, and the Demonet Building.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Arden, Elizabeth Building

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

Section 8 Page 4

Mayflower.¹⁰ Many of the businesses were located in the Elizabeth Arden building (as well as in the residential structure that stood on the site prior to its construction and advertised in the magazine.)

The Elizabeth Arden Building:

Commercial Uses:

The Elizabeth Arden building at 1147 Connecticut Avenue was, like the rest of the east side of the 1100 block, originally the site of a residential structure. The earlier building, a three-story brick structure, came into commercial use around 1913. After serving briefly as the site of a New York interior decorator's studio, in 1916 two long-term tenants moved into the building. These were the Brown Tea Pot, a restaurant and later a gift shop, and Elizabeth Arden, listed in city directories at this time as a "dermatologist." Both of these tenants not only stayed for many years in the converted residential building, but also they also moved into the present building, completed in 1930 by a realty company affiliated with Elizabeth Arden. The Brown Tea Pot moved out of the present building in 1940; Elizabeth Arden, moved out in 1990, after nearly 75 years on the same site.

One of the prevailing types of commercial uses found along Connecticut Avenue during its heyday was the provision of personal services. These services generally could only be afforded by the upper class. In addition to tailors, milliners, and interior decorators, there were many personal services related to beauty such as manicurists, hairdressers, and barbers. The best known of these Connecticut Avenue establishments, one that would become a Washington institution, was the Elizabeth Arden salon.¹¹ The Elizabeth Arden salon fit the profile exactly of a Connecticut Avenue business. Not only was it the type of service which catered exclusively to the upper class, it architecturally presented the New York City image that Connecticut Avenue was striving to achieve.

The Elizabeth Arden organization was founded by Florence Nightingale Graham (Elizabeth Arden's given name) in 1910. She opened a New York City beauty shop that sold beauty

¹⁰ The theme of Connecticut Avenue as Washington's Fifth Avenue was further developed in the pages of the *Log*. In addition to the advertisements for New York City shops, and articles relating to New York themes, for awhile in the 1920s, the *Log* adopted the layout style of the *New Yorker* magazine. During this period the title of the magazine was changed to *The Washingtonian*.

¹¹ City directories do not show an Elizabeth Arden shop on the site until 1916, though certain other sources suggest that she opened her Washington store in 1914.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Arden, Elizabeth Building

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

Section 8 Page 5

products (most notably a new “light” face cream) and provided various beauty treatments such as massage. The company's success, in both the salon and the beauty products, was almost immediate. The company soon moved into a larger salon at 673 Fifth Avenue. In 1916, it opened its first branch, the salon at 1147 Connecticut in Washington, and, in 1922, opened a Paris salon. By 1925, Elizabeth Arden had developed a \$2 million wholesale business. The firm moved into a new Fifth Avenue location in 1930, the design of which was altered by architect Mott B. Schmidt—the same architect who designed the Connecticut Avenue Elizabeth Arden building—to suit the salon's requirements. The business continued to thrive, and the firm's products were soon marketed internationally. The firm also expanded the scope of its business to include a health resort and, in 1944, a full line of clothing. In addition to clothing, the Elizabeth Arden “beauty program” included diet, exercise, skin care, and grooming. The Elizabeth Arden credo could be summed up as “every woman can be beautiful and look the age she wants...”¹² Elizabeth Arden and Helena Rubenstein are credited with being the founders of the United States cosmetics industry.¹³

The success of the company's first branch paralleled the overall success of the company. After renting space in the converted residential building at 1147 Connecticut for 13 years, the Graham Realty Company (apparently set up by Elizabeth Arden to oversee real estate interests) constructed a new six-story building at 1147 Connecticut Avenue with salon space on the first floor for the company.¹⁴ The realty company had purchased the site in 1929, and construction began on the new building soon afterwards. In addition to being the site of the company's first branch, the new building at 1147 Connecticut Avenue was also the company's first purpose-built salon. This fact comes through in an April 1930 *Mayflower Log* advertisement after the building was completed.¹⁵ The advertisement includes a drawing of the new building with the accompanying text, “Elizabeth Arden's new salon is as beautiful as you would expect it to be ... Miss Arden has identified herself so completely with the creation of loveliness according to her own high standards. The new Elizabeth Arden Salon at 1147 Connecticut Avenue is the satisfying expression of this ideal.” The store remained in the location long enough to be

¹² See listing for Elizabeth Arden in *Current Biography*, 1957.

¹³ *Wall Street Journal*, March 28, 1989. It should be noted that others were responsible for the development of the black cosmetic industry.

¹⁴ Deeds for the property indicate that the president of the Graham Realty Company was Florence N. Lewis. This was Elizabeth Arden's legal name after she married Thomas Jenkins Lewis in 1915. The corporate headquarters for the Graham organization is the same as that used by the Elizabeth Arden organization.

¹⁵ At the time that this advertisement was published, the magazine was called “The Washingtonian.”

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Arden, Elizabeth Building

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

Section 8 Page 6

considered a Washington institution. In the 1970s, the salon expanded into the neighboring building at 1145 Connecticut Avenue.

In addition to the Elizabeth Arden salon, both the original and the current buildings at 1147 Connecticut Avenue were the site of a number of other businesses, though shorter-term, including music and acting schools, and architect's, engineers, and real estate offices. There were, however, other long-term tenants such as the Brown Tea Pot, a popular restaurant that later became a successful "gift" shop.¹⁶ During this period, Connecticut Avenue was becoming the site of an increasing number of stores that were listed in city directories as "gift" and "art" shops.¹⁷

Design Factors:

In selecting an architect for the new 1147 Connecticut building, the owners could have looked to Washington architects, but they instead chose a New York architect, and in particular, one who was associated with Fifth Avenue. Mott Schmidt was a logical choice for the new Elizabeth Arden building in Washington, as he had just completed a storefront alteration for the Elizabeth Arden Salon at 669 Fifth Avenue in New York City.¹⁸ Schmidt's design work not only clearly suited Connecticut Avenue, but he brought with him the cachet of being one of the prominent architects of New York's high society.

Mott Schmidt (1889-1977) was a fourth-generation American (a native New Yorker), from a privileged upper-class background.¹⁹ Schmidt knew early in his life --reportedly from age nine -- that he wanted to be an architect. Pursuing his interest, he studied architecture for two years at the Pratt Institute where he developed an interest in the Beaux Arts method. Upon graduating at age 17, he left for the requisite Grand Tour; in this case, he spent two years traveling and sketching Europe's monuments. He returned to New York to work as a draftsman in a New York firm (which he later refused to identify) and four years later, in 1912, he opened his own firm. His practice was apparently slowed, but not stopped, by his stint in the Army in 1917 and 1918. While in the Army, he supervised construction at Edgewood Arsenal in Maryland and at Hastings-On-Hudson in New York.

¹⁶ See the *Mayflower Log*, February 1926, p. 29.

¹⁷ The idea of a "gift shop" appears to be for the most part a 20th-century concept. The 1916 Washington city directories, for instance, do not have a category for gift shops. By 1929, however, there were 26 gift shops listed in Washington, more than a quarter of which were located along Connecticut Avenue.

¹⁸ See, Hewitt, *The Architecture of Mott B. Schmidt*. Schmidt was also associated with Alice Swift, the former tenant on the site and a New York City decorator and one of Schmidt's first clients. According to city directories, Swift occupied the building in 1914. In 1915, Mott Schmidt designed a shop for Swift on East 55th Street.

¹⁹ His father served in the Civil War, but otherwise apparently lived on the family inheritance and did not work. For biographical information on Schmidt, see Hewitt, *The Architecture of Mott Schmidt*, p. 2-5.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Arden, Elizabeth Building

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

Section 8 Page 7

In his private practice, Schmidt started off with commissions remodeling townhouses and other small residential jobs, and soon acquired a group of wealthy clients who were attracted to his Georgian Revival compositions.²⁰ Mark Hewitt, author of a monograph on Schmidt summed up the attraction of Schmidt's style for this group as follows:

During the 1920s, domestic architecture for the wealthy took a turn toward classic simplicity—clients with money wished to show less, without betraying a lack of taste or desire for elegance. Privacy, restraint and graceful domestic comfort replaced the ostentatiousness associated with the turn-of-the-century house of the plutocracy. The Georgian style, with its emphasis on planarity enlivened the slightest detail, was a perfect vehicle for this.²¹

Schmidt became a favorite architect of the New York interior designer Elsie de Wolfe, who was at the time the city's most famous interior designer.²² Through her, Schmidt gained clients who were members of New York's wealthiest families, including the Morgans and the Vanderbilts. He went on to design many country houses, as well as townhouses, all in a restrained, historically correct, Georgian Revival style. The well-planned houses accommodated modern functions (including, most prominently, those relating to entertaining) into a simple, but correct, exterior envelope. Schmidt's work looked to the early and influential Georgian work of Charles Platt and John Russell Pope. In his city work, he occasionally referred to English precedents such as Robert Adam and William Chambers. However, his strongest design sources were extant American colonial buildings.

Schmidt was part of the group of architects, including most notably, the firm of McKim, Meade and White, who were interested in achieving historically accurate "academic" reproductions of early American design. He subscribed to the Architect's Emergency Committee Series that documented colonial houses, and likely also relied heavily on the *White Pine* series that also documented historic American buildings.

Although his work consisted overwhelmingly of single-family residences, he did complete a few other types of commissions, usually for clients for whom he had designed residences. These include a handful of apartments, a few storefront alterations, and a municipal building in Mount Kisco, New York. He apparently did no commercial office buildings aside from the Connecticut

²⁰ Mark Hewitt, *The Architecture of Mott B. Schmidt*.

²¹ Mark Hewitt, *The Architecture of Mott B. Schmidt*.

²² De Wolf was noted for her use of antiques, indoor garden trellises, and light colors. Her work was influential throughout the country and, according to one source, she "virtually created the profession of interior design in the United States" (Hewitt, p. 5). Schmidt and de Wolf collaborated on what was to become one of Schmidt's best-known work, Sutton Place.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Arden, Elizabeth Building

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

Section 8 Page 8

Avenue building. Most of his work was located in New York, but again, he completed a few commissions for existing clients outside of the New York area. Although purposely avoiding publicity, his works were extensively published. He never embraced modernism, and in the years following the World War II, he was one of the few remaining high-style architects committed to traditional principals. He continued to practice into the 1960s when he completed a new wing for Gracie Mansion. Because his practice lasted so long, it was particularly influential to later generations of architects who had turned back to the classical, including Robert A. M. Stern and Allan Greenberg. Schmidt's buildings have been described as "civilized, ordered, handsome, knowledgeable, serene places, buildings designed to contain lives that bespoke similar qualities." His best known works include the Sutton Place townhouses and the Junior League Building in New York City. A number of his buildings are New York City historic landmarks.

Schmidt's design for the 1147 Connecticut Avenue building was an unusual one. Although the building utilized Schmidt's signature Georgian Revival style, it was translated into what was an unusual medium for Schmidt—the tall office form. For inspiration, Schmidt appears to have looked back to Renaissance-era and 18th century English precedent. The grouping of design elements, for instance, has the feel of a British church steeple. The building also borrows specific design motifs from a number of sources—the Palladian motif penetrating the pediment, for instance can be seen in Christopher Wren's additions to the Greenwich Hospital. The delicate fanlights above the first floor show-windows show a clear connection to the work of Robert Adam.

Conclusion:

The Elizabeth Arden building is both a strong and a unique example of the work of Mott Schmidt. The building is his only tall office building, and so far as it is known, Schmidt's only original design in Washington. In addition, the building exemplifies an unusual coordinated effort on the part of developers, architects, and merchants to transform Connecticut Avenue into an exclusive shopping area deliberately modeled after Fifth Avenue in New York City. Together these factors make the Elizabeth Arden building a singular Washington office building.+

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Arden, Elizabeth Building

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

Section 9 Page 1

Major Bibliographical References:

Newspaper Articles

The Evening Star:

- "Business Moves Northward Along Connecticut Avenue," *The Evening Star*, January 20, 1912.
- "Business Spreading Out and Finding New Centers," *The Evening Star*, October 29, 1910.
- "Chauffeurs Used to Line Up," *The Evening Star*, September 24, 1969.
- "Cites Transformation of Connecticut Avenue," *The Evening Star*, September 21, 1929.
- "Connecticut Avenue Parade," *The Evening Star*, December 13, 1941.
- "Famous Connecticut Avenue Residential Buildings Sold," *The Evening Star*, February 27, 1926.
- "Growth of Business Houses Along Connecticut Avenue," *The Evening Star*, January 22, 1910.
- "Growth Continues on Connecticut Avenue," *The Evening Star*, June 29, 1912.
- "New Connecticut Avenue Hotel and Auditorium," *The Evening Star*, February 22, 1910.
- "Two Washington Social Leaders to Open Exclusive Import Shop on Connecticut Avenue," *The Evening Star* " n.d.

The Mayflower's Log:

- "The Avenue...then and now," *Mayflower's Log*, January 1942.
- "Connecticut Avenue Fashion Show," *Mayflower's Log*, April 1935.
- "Evolution of 'The Avenue,'" *Mayflower's Log*, February 1935.
- "Looking Backward," *Mayflower's Log*, February 1935.

The Washington Herald

- "Capital Proud of its Own Great Street," *The Washington Herald*, October 24, 1934.
- "Shops Adopt Connecticut Avenue Insignia," *The Washington Herald*, June 15, 1937.
- "Merchants to Hold Brilliant Fete Today," *The Washington Herald*, October 24, (year illegible).
- "Growth of Business Houses Along Connecticut Avenue," *The Washington Herald*, January 22, 1910.
- "The Transformation of Connecticut Avenue" (Advertisement), *The Washington Herald*, September 14, 1919.
- "Plans to Construct Three Large Buildings," *The Washington Herald*, February 22, 1920.
- "Business Crowding into Dupont Circle; Flatiron Building," *The Washington Herald*, September 2, 1923.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Arden, Elizabeth Building

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

Section 9 Page 2

"Mayflower Booms Anew D.C. 'Fifth Avenue,' Says Rubel," *The Washington Herald*, February 28, 1925.

"Smart Shops Replace Homes of Ultra-Rich," *The Washington Herald*, October 23, 1934.

"Connecticut Avenue Rivals Smartest Shopping Districts," *The Washington Herald*, March 20, 1935.

"Connecticut Avenue Merchants Exhibit Spring Styles at Mayflower Tomorrow," *The Washington Herald*, March 20, 1935.

"Development of Connecticut Avenue Capital's Epic of Building Progress," *The Washington Herald*, October 17, 1935.

"Smart Shopping Center Has a Brilliant 'Past,'" *The Washington Herald*, October 17, 1935.

"Easter Promenade" (Advertisement), *The Washington Herald*, March 25, 1951.

"World's Gifts March Down 'The Avenue,'" *The Washington Herald*, November 9, 1958.

The Washington Star

"Business Partners Well Known Here," *The Washington Star*, April 13, 1930.

"G.N. Ray Elected Realty Firm Head," *The Washington Star*, August 1, 1937.

"George Nicholas Ray, Architect, Realtor Dies," *The Washington Star*, August 6, 1959.

Washington Times-Herald

"Change Needed to Win Trade, Conn. Ave. Told," *Washington Times-Herald*, November 11, 1953.

Secondary Sources

Boyer, M. Christine, *Manhattan Manners*. New York: Rizzoli, 1985, p. 43 et seq, "Ladies Mile."

Hewitt, Mark, *The Architecture of Mott B. Schmidt*. New York: Rizzoli, 1991.

Longstreth, Richard, "The Neighborhood Shopping Center in Washington, D.C., 1930-41." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. LI: 5-34 (March 1992).

Rhodes, William, "The Colonial Revival and American Nationalism," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 35 (1976), p. 239-54.

Rhodes, William, *The Colonial Revival*. Dissertation, Princeton University, 1974.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Arden, Elizabeth Building

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

Section 9 Page 3

Vertical Files

“Connecticut Avenue South of Dupont Circle.” Washington Historical Society.

“Connecticut Avenue.” Washingtoniana Room, Martin Luther King, Jr. Library.

Other

D.C. Landmark Nomination Forms: Demonet Building; Dupont Circle Historic District (as amended).

U.S. Department of the Interior. National Park Service, “Mayflower Hotel,” National Register Nomination.

+

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Arden, Elizabeth Building

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

Section 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description:

The Elizabeth Arden Building at 1147 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. occupies Lot 102 in Square 162 in Washington, D.C. It is located on the east side of Connecticut Avenue just south of M Street and north of L Street. +

Boundary Justification:

This lot of land has been associated with the building since its construction in 1929-30.

+

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

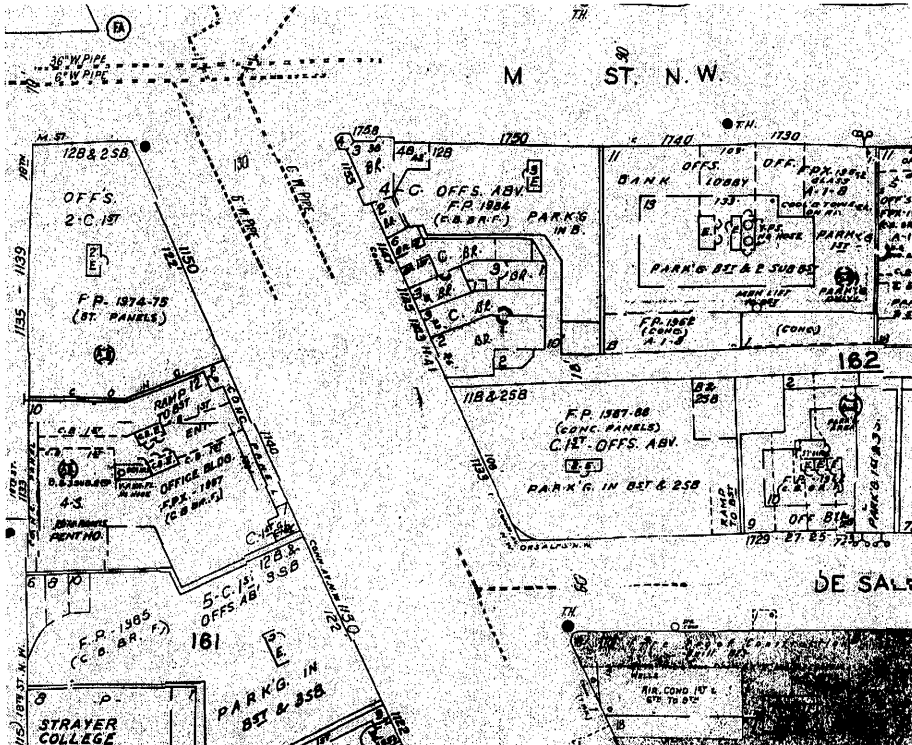
Arden, Elizabeth Building

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

SITE MAP



Elizabeth Arden Building
1147 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Arden, Elizabeth Building

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

PHOTOGRAPHS

- 1) Arden, Elizabeth Building
1147 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC
Kimberly Prothro Williams
May 2003
DCHPO
View looking east
1/2

- 2) Arden, Elizabeth Building
1147 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC
Kimberly Prothro Williams
May 2003
DCHPO
View looking northeast
2/2