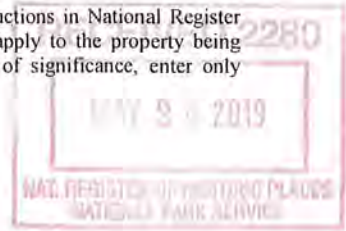


4/23

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.



1. Name of Property

Historic name: The Ethelhurst

Other names/site number: Ethel Court; The Architect Hotel

Name of related multiple property listing: Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C.

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

2. Location

Street & number: 1025 Fifteenth Street, N.W.

City or town: Washington State: D.C. County: N/A

Not For Publication: Vicinity: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>DA</u>	<u>DAVID MALONEY / DC SHPO</u>	<u>5/17/2019</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

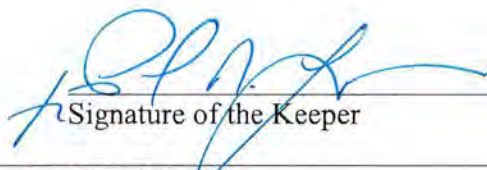
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4. National Park Service Certification

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:)


Signature of the Keeper

6/26/2019
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.)

DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling (apartment building)

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Hotel

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Beaux Arts

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: Brick

Walls: Brick and cast stone

Roof: Metal (cast-iron cornice)

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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

The Ethelhurst is an eight-story former apartment building, now hotel, located on the southeast corner of Fifteenth and L Streets, NW, in downtown Washington, D.C. The building was constructed in 1902-03 in a Beaux Arts manner, designed and built by notable local architect and developer, Thomas Franklin Schneider. The painted brick building is set upon a raised foundation level, is divided horizontally into base, middle and top, and is covered with a flat roof. It rises 103 feet high and features cast stone and cast-iron decorative elements, particularly at the attic level. The building is divided horizontally, but also vertically, with a wide central bay and projecting end pavilions (implied towers) at the corners facing both Fifteenth and L streets. The building is presently painted three different and distinct colors that although not historically accurate, emphasize the horizontal divisions and decorative detailing of the building. Originally built as an apartment building and converted into offices in 1958-60, the building was recently renovated as a hotel in 2016-17. Interior alterations were undertaken during several building campaigns (1958-60, 1990, and 2016-17), leaving little historic fabric on the interior. Also, during the conversion of the building to offices, the original Beaux Arts entryway on the exterior was removed and replaced with a mid-Century modern entryway and all of the windows were replaced. Despite these alterations, the building retains its Beaux Arts character in its massing, materials, and workmanship exhibited on the exterior by intact Classical ornamentation. The building clearly conveys its importance as a surviving, early twentieth century apartment building in the business district of downtown, D.C.

Narrative Description

Site Description

The Ethelhurst occupies a corner lot at the intersection of 15th and L Streets, NW (Lot 26, Square 216) on a commercial area of downtown D.C. north of McPherson Square. The immediate block is characterized by mid-to-late 20th-century, high-rise office buildings that rise above the eight-story Ethelhurst, though a group of smaller 19th and early 20th century buildings abut the Ethelhurst to its east along L Street. The Ethelhurst is the surviving one of what had been four apartment buildings defining the four corners of the intersection, three of them designed and built by T.F. Schneider around the turn-of-the-20th-century. The office buildings that replaced the three apartment buildings along with other adjacent buildings are generally mid and late-20th century steel, glass and/or concrete structures. South of the Ethelhurst, around McPherson Square, a larger concentration of early 20th century office buildings forms part of the northern end of the National Register-listed Financial Historic District.

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Exterior

The Ethelhurst is a brick-clad building that stands eight stories tall over a raised basement and sub-basement mechanical cellar. The building is square in plan, with two highly decorated street-facing facades on the north and west and two less articulated elevations on the south and east. The street-facing elevations are augmented by corner pavilions (implied towers) that project from the main wall surface by approximately six feet and are marked by quoining. The building is constructed with a steel frame and is clad in brick laid in stretcher bond. Wide and multi-rowed brick belt courses divide the building horizontally creating a base, two-part middle, and attic levels. At the base, brick walls are laid in alternating projecting courses to create the impression of ashlar masonry. The building is crowned by a distinctive attic level that reads as a mansard roof. The attic is framed between two projecting cornices decorated with cast iron modillions, egg and dart bed molding, cast-iron swags, and alternating metopes. Stone window surrounds at the attic level of the corner pavilions feature segmental arched pediments broken on-center by scalloped niches and supported by heavy modillions. The windows are framed by lintels with central keystones and faux balconettes forming the sill.¹ The applied decorative exterior elements on this upper level including swags, modillions, and rosettes, are all painted cast iron pieces affixed to the brick exterior walls. Overall, the building reflects the Beaux Arts style, marked by classical purity of form with elaborate fenestration.

The building's window openings are all arranged as singles. On the west elevation, the openings are wide, save for those on the center bays at all floors and on the side walls of the projecting end piers, where the window openings are narrower. On the north elevation, only the windows in the end bays are wide, while all of those in the recessed center wall are narrower (arranged as pairs of two for the length of the building on this elevation), as are those on the side walls of the projecting bays. The original windows were replaced during the 1958-60 renovation of the building with metal framed windows with three horizontally-divided lights.² The window openings on the first story are cut into the rusticated base and sit upon stone balconettes set within the opening. The second- and third-story windows have cast stone surrounds composed of shouldered frames with bead moldings, keystone lintels, and console sills. The fourth-story windows are capped by keystone lintels and have balconettes incorporated into the projecting belt course. Fifth and sixth story windows have only the keystone lintels and plain cast stone sills with no balconettes. The seventh story windows are directly under the lower of the two cornices which frame the eighth floor (attic level), and thus have no lintels, only plain stone sills. The attic level windows have the elaborate frames as described above, while the inner windows have balconettes and single keystones. The first and basement story windows are protected by metal grilles, added after 1960.

The building's main entrance facing Fifteenth Street has been altered. Based upon a 1903 photo, the entrance was located on-center of the façade reached by a wide balustraded staircase. The single, entry door featured an engaged arched surround where the arch broke through the belt

¹ The original permit application for the building lists limestone as the material to be used for the window surrounds and other decorative details. On-site investigation strongly suggests that cast stone was used in place of limestone.

² All windows are currently fixed in place, but the central light of each appears to at one time have been a hinged hopper panel.

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course separating the rusticated base from the floors above. The stairs splayed out at before meeting grade at the sidewalk, with balusters that corresponded to those on the window balconettes and large molded stone newels. The entrance doors were protected by gates made of wrought iron and plate glass.³ Single window openings were located to either side of the central entrance door.



Historic 1903 photo showing original Beaux Arts entrance from the *Financial Review*, February 27, 1903 on left, and 2014 photo showing 1958-60 entranceway (EHT Traceries) on right.

This Beaux Arts entrance was modified when the building was converted to offices in 1958-60. At that time, the arched stone surround, entry door, flanking windows, and balustraded stair were removed, and a new (mid-Century Modern) entrance constructed. A pair of metal and glass doors with side lights and transom were located on-center with a polished black stone surround set flush with the glazing. A metal awning above the door's transom cut across the surround.

In 2017, the doors were replaced with new fully glazed double glass doors and transom, leaving the stone surround and metal awning in place. The awning is currently faced with a painted maroon-colored metal flashing with HOTEL written across the center. Lights in the underside of the awning light the entryway. The building has seen other, albeit minor alterations to the

³ "The Ethelhurst," *Financial Review*, February 27, 1903, Vertical Files, Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library.

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building's exterior. A fire escape system was added to the north elevation at some point in the middle of the twentieth century but has since been removed, and a metal safety railing was added to the roof, visible on the north elevation, around 1990. However, the brick, cast stone, and cast-iron decorative elements remain intact and in good condition.

Interior

As completed in 1903, the Ethelhurst contained forty apartments ranging in size from studios to two-bedroom apartments with living room and dining nook. According to period descriptions, interior amenities included a full-service café, an elevator, and elegant finishes, as described by a contemporaneous source:

The first story hall is wainscoted with the finest Italian marble, the lines being relieved with pilasters. The reception room opens off the main hall and is handsomely decorated. The elevator enclosure is heavily forged black iron grille, the whole presenting a very rich effect. The upper halls have tiled floor[s] and the woodwork is quartered oak. The interior finish of the rooms is white enamel. The plumbing is of the latest, the walls of the bath rooms being tiled. In the basement is a finely appointed café. Under the basement there is a sub-cellar in which are the heating apparatus and other necessary machinery-making in reality a ten-story building.⁴

In 1958-60, the interior of The Ethelhurst was significantly altered to accommodate office use leaving little of the historic interiors intact. In 1990, the building was renovated again, and in 2016-17, it was converted into a hotel. In 1990 and 2017, the mid-Century Modern entrance surround was left in place, though in 2017, the 1958-60 doors were replaced with pairs of fully glazed doors. Inside those doors today, broad stairs with brass railings descend to the raised basement level where the elevator lobby is located on-axis with the stairs, and a sitting room and hotel reception are located to either side of it. The walls and floors of the lobby are clad with non-historic white marble. The elevator bank and adjacent stair shaft run through the center core of the building. A small sitting room opens off the lobby with windows at the foundation level facing L Street, while the reception desk is located opposite the elevator bank with a window located at foundation level along 15th Street. The sitting room features wood paneled walls and columns that appear to be remnants of the 1958-60 renovation. The former apartment suites on the building's upper floors have been re-configured into hotel rooms with frame and drywall partitions, carpet, and other finishes.

INTEGRITY

The Multiple Property Document for Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C. states that in order to possess integrity, a conventional apartment building like that of the Ethelhurst must “retain the architectural composition, ornamental details, and materials of their original primary exterior elevation.” The Multiple Property Document recognizes that many apartment buildings have undergone changes; however, “reversible alterations, such as the removal of ornamental

⁴ “The Ethelhurst,” *Financial Review*.

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detailing; replacement of doors, windows, and their enframements; and scarring of first floor architectural elements (while certainly not appropriate) are common and do not necessarily diminish the building's contribution to the historic context.”⁵

The Ethelhurst apartment building retains its original location at the intersection of 15th and L Streets on the northern edge of downtown and is adjacent to the nearby and architecturally intact Financial Historic District. Fifteenth Street remains a heavily traveled corridor and the neighborhood retains an essential commercial character, although many existing buildings date to the mid- and late-twentieth century. The exterior of The Ethelhurst reflects integrity of design, workmanship, and materials. Although the entrance on Fifteenth Street has been altered and the windows replaced, the original massing, fenestration patterns, and architectural and decorative detailing are fully intact as originally constructed. The building communicates its historic feeling and association as an early apartment building because of its elegant Beaux Arts exterior design.

⁵ National Register of Historic Places, Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C., 1880-1945 Multiple Property Documentation Form, Washington, District of Columbia, National Register #64500083, F:5

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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 & Development

Period of Significance

1903-1958

Significant Dates

1903

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Schneider, Thomas Franklin (architect and developer)

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.)

Erected in 1902-1903, the Ethelhurst apartments were designed and developed by Washington architect and speculative developer Thomas Franklin Schneider. Schneider began his architectural career in the mid-1870s, working for the firm of Cluss and Schulze. He set up his own practice in 1883, and by the end of the 1880s he was designing and developing single-family residences, including a collection of rowhouses which occupies an entire city block adjoining Washington Circle and referred to as “Schneider’s Triangle.” Before the end of the 19th century, Schneider had turned to apartment buildings, a relatively new but increasingly popular building type. In the year 1900 alone he built the Albemarle and the Iowa apartments, but his most famous project was the twelve-story Cairo Hotel (1894).

The eight-story, 40-unit Ethelhurst was an early luxury apartment building, catering to the upper echelon of the management class in Washington’s downtown, before suburbanization dispersed more affluent city dwellers. The building was equipped with an elevator and elaborately decorated in the fashionable Beaux Arts classicism of the period, with a rusticated base and quoins, tower-like corners, and a flamboyant attic story. The vocabulary provides a contrast to Schneider’s earlier Victorian work.

The Ethelhurst occupied one corner of an intersection that historically hosted three apartment buildings designed by Schneider and a later fourth one designed by Jules Henri de Sibour (the

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Lee House, 1922). Schneider built The Sherman (1901), The Ethelhurst (1903), and Florence Court (1903) at the intersection before retiring from public life due to advancing blindness. A highly regarded businessman and designer known as the “Young Napoleon of F Street,” Schneider was prolific, designing over 2,000 homes, businesses, and apartment buildings in an eclectic mixture of styles.⁶

In 1958-60, after a half-century of use as an apartment building, the interior of the building was extensively modified and converted into offices; over the next several decades, it was occupied by numerous tenants and was renovated again in 1990. In 2016-17, the building was converted from offices to a hotel, and named The Architect Hotel in reference to Schneider.

The Ethelhurst apartment building meets National Register of Historic Places Criteria A and C at the local level of significance with Community Planning and Development and Architecture as the Areas of Significance. The building has been evaluated under the Multiple Property Document, *Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C. 1880-1945* and is classified as the **Conventional High-Rise Apartment Building** sub-type as described in the Multiple Property Document, having been built with forty individual apartments of varying sizes, rising eight stories in height with a single articulated public entrance, an elevator, and a high degree of exterior. Although constructed in 1902-3, before the sub-type gained popularity (generally 1922-1945), the Ethelhurst is recognizable as a prototype building whose success created incentive to build others of the same form. The Ethelhurst meets the following registration criteria established in the Multiple Property Document:

- A-2: Buildings that illustrate the initial development of the apartment movement as it relates to the need for housing, including the introduction of the building type and the specific forms seen in this early period throughout the city;
- A-3: Buildings that are part of cluster, corridors, or districts that illustrate the patterns of development of the city;
- C-5: Buildings that illustrate expressions of architectural styles, either rare, notable, or influential to the aesthetic development of the apartment building or architecture in general; and
- C-10: Buildings that are the work of skilled architects, landscape architects, urban planners, engineers, builders, or developers.⁷

The stylistic detailing of The Ethelhurst is illustrative of Beaux Arts influenced architecture, particularly common for apartment and commercial office buildings in the first decades of the 20th century. The Ethelhurst is of particular note for its proximity to an increasingly commercialized downtown area as older Victorian-era dwellings were being re-purposed or replaced by commercial buildings and apartment buildings. The Ethelhurst was designed to attract wealthy clients, specifically those who worked in high-income downtown jobs,

⁶ Candace Reed, “T.F. Schneider (1858-1938): The Young Napoleon of F Street,” *Design Action* 2, no. 2 (March/April 1983): 8.

⁷ National Register of Historic Places, *Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C., 1880-1945 Multiple Property Documentation Form*, Washington, District of Columbia, National Register #64500083, F:3-F:4.

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illustrating the demographic forces that affected the development of downtown at the turn of the century before outward suburbanization.

The period of significance for The Ethelhurst extends from 1903, the year construction was completed to 1958, when the building's conversion from apartment to office building was undertaken.

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

SIGNIFICANCE AND EVALUATION

The Ethelhurst is significant in the area of **Architecture** as a Beaux Arts-style multi-family apartment building and is illustrative of the work of noted local architect and developer Thomas Franklin Schneider. Schneider, an architect, also ranked among Washington's most prolific developers in the early twentieth century and was a pioneer of high-rise luxury apartment buildings. Schneider's choice of architectural vocabulary for the Ethelhurst was a direct response to the City Beautiful Movement and the effort of D.C.'s local business community to encourage high architectural standards for the city to not be overshadowed by federal Washington as it implemented the 1901 McMillan Plan. Further, the building's up-to-date style communicated the social standing of its wealthy residents and was critical in giving apartment and downtown living caché. Schneider recognized the success of similar high-rise apartment buildings in European cities such as Paris and Vienna and purposely used traditional French elements such as an implied mansard roof and corner towers in its Beaux Arts exterior. Most new-style European apartment buildings were between six and eight stories with amenities on the first floor, replicated in the height, function, and overall appearance of the Ethelhurst.

Situated at the corner of Fifteenth and L Streets, N.W., the Ethelhurst stood out as one of the tallest when it was completed, and shortly thereafter formed part of a notable intersection framed by four apartment buildings. Currently, it stands as one of the few remaining Beaux Arts apartment buildings in downtown.

The Ethelhurst is also significant in the area of **Community Planning and Development**. The eight-story luxury apartment building illustrates innovation in residential development in the District and trends in multi-family living. The building demonstrates the integration of multi-family housing on all social levels into the District of Columbia's commercial district during the first decades of the twentieth century, prior to the movement of wealthy downtown workers to affluent suburbs. The Ethelhurst was constructed during an era when many preferred to live in close proximity to their workplace, and specifically catered to the wealthy financiers and others who worked in the Fifteenth Street corridor and near the White House. The Ethelhurst was constructed during a boom period of construction in the city, and Schneider's success as a real estate speculator building row houses, private homes, and apartment buildings allowed him to experiment with new types of multi-unit housing.

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As a new type of housing that specifically catered to wealthy downtown professionals, the Ethelhurst represents a brief period of downtown residential growth before these wealthy District residents left for the suburbs. The Ethelhurst apartment building is a significant representative of the economic and demographic forces that characterized downtown at the turn of the twentieth century.

NARRATIVE HISTORY

Construction History

Owner, architect, and builder T. Franklin Schneider was issued a permit to build The Ethelhurst on March 7, 1902, which was reissued on May 23, 1902. According to the building permit application, the eight-story apartment building (with a raised basement and below ground mechanical stories) was to be constructed of “buff brick, Indiana limestone, and galvanized iron.”⁸ The building, completed in 1903, contained forty apartments ranging in size from a studio with en suite bath to a two-bedroom apartment with living room and dining nook. The rectangular footprint of the building occupied nearly two full lots on the street corner, leaving a small rear access alley off L Street. Interior amenities included a full-service café, an elevator, and elegant finishes.

A contemporary source described the interior fittings as follows:

The first story hall is wainscoted with the finest Italian marble, the lines being relieved with pilasters. The reception room opens off the main hall and is handsomely decorated. The elevator enclosure is heavily forged black iron grille, the whole presenting a very rich effect. The upper halls have tiled floor[s] and the woodwork is quartered oak. The interior finish of the rooms is white enamel. The plumbing is of the latest, the walls of the bath rooms being tiled. In the basement is a finely appointed café. Under the basement there is a sub-cellar in which are the heating apparatus and other necessary machinery- making in reality a ten-story building.⁹

Notably, the interior was fitted with early electric elevators of the “double-decker type,” in which two cabs were joined together, one for freight and the other for passengers.¹⁰ The elevator operator was stationed in the passenger cab and could monitor passenger safety; however, according to a violation issued to The Ethelhurst in 1909, there was no mechanism to prevent passengers from entering or exiting the freight cabin without the operator’s knowledge or while the cabs were in motion.

⁸ District of Columbia building permits on record in the Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library.

⁹ “The Ethelhurst,” *Financial Review*.

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Downtown Washington, D.C.

Downtown D.C. roughly encompasses the area from the White House east to Sixth Street, north of the Mall and south of Massachusetts Avenue.¹¹ The Ethelhurst apartment building is located near the northern limit of the neighborhood, approximately a half mile from the President's Park and the White House. At the time it was constructed, the building's proximity to the White House and the commercial and financial districts was a major appeal for residents.

Before major development in the early nineteenth century, the most significant building in the downtown area in addition to the U.S. Treasury was Rhodes Tavern, located at the corner of what would become 15th and F streets. The tavern along with a farmers market held at the intersection of Pennsylvania Avenue and 15th Street served to immediately identify the area with commerce.¹² Nearby, at the corner of 15th and F Streets, the Bank of the Metropolis opened in 1814.¹³ F Street remained a major thoroughfare through much of the nineteenth century, but most major buildings constructed prior to 1840 were public and commercial buildings rather than residential developments including the Treasury, the Post Office, several hotels and boarding houses, and churches. The Center Market, which opened at Eighth Street and Pennsylvania Avenue in 1801, was another major commercial structure that helped to bring commerce west of the Capitol, despite Pierre L'Enfant's evident plan to direct commercial development along East Capitol Street.¹⁴

Between 1840 and 1890, the population of the city of Washington rose dramatically. Civil War hostilities resulted in an enormous influx of free blacks, fugitive slaves, and other "contraband" blacks seeking protection from Union forces.¹⁵ Military mobilization also encouraged large numbers of working-class whites to move to the area, drawn by manufacturing and munitions jobs in the capital; the population of the city was estimated at 140,000 in 1864, much of it confined within the historic L'Enfant City and representing a nearly sixty percent increase since 1860.¹⁶ Expansion of government agencies to include the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Justice added federal jobs, so that by 1870 over 6,000 residents of the District were federal employees.¹⁷ The existing commercial district along F Street expanded north along the numbered streets between Fifteenth and Ninth Streets, prompted by a series of floods (1852 and 1877) that severely damaged buildings along low-lying Pennsylvania Avenue. Boarding houses and hotels were an especially popular enterprise, since Congress and its associated aides, support staff, and lobbying interests were seasonal residents of the District and would pay handsomely for temporary accommodation.¹⁸

¹¹ Descriptions vary widely between sources, both historic and modern.

¹² Joseph Passoneau, *Washington Through Two Centuries* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 2004), 33.

¹³ Benjamin Ruhe and Ross Chapple, "Little Wall Street," *Washington Star*, January 31, 1965.

¹⁴ Passoneau, *Washington Through Two Centuries*, 52.

¹⁵ Constance McLaughlin Green, *Washington: A History of the Capital 1800-1950* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 272-273.

¹⁶ McLaughlin Green, *Washington: A History of the Capital 1800-1950*, 295.

¹⁷ Fredric M. Miller and Howard Gillette, Jr., *Washington Seen: A Photographic History, 1875-1965* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 3.

¹⁸ Passoneau, *Washington Through Two Centuries*, 52.

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In the 1870s, Washington's "Little Wall Street" on Fifteenth began to take off, largely due to the influence of the existing Treasury Building, the National Metropolitan Bank of Washington (formerly the Bank of the Metropolis, 1814-1865) and the Riggs Bank (later Riggs National Bank) as well as environmental influences that fostered business growth.¹⁹ With the increase in the number of banks in the area came development of office space for businesses related to the banking industry, including the six-story Corcoran Building in 1875 (replacing an earlier 1837 building) at Fifteenth between Pennsylvania Avenue and F Street, and hotels such as the Arlington Hotel (1868, Vermont Avenue and Eye Street) and Shoreham Hotel (1887, Fifteenth and H Streets).²⁰

Though the buildings along the Fifteenth Street corridor initially had little architectural unity other than a monumental scale and rectangular massing, the McMillan Plan significantly influenced building constructed after 1900 and created a visually integrated as well as industry-integrated district. The use of color in building materials, such as the brownstone and terra cotta used in the National Savings and Trust Building (1888, New York Avenue and Fifteenth Street), was abandoned in favor of more uniform, pale gray and white facades. Indiana limestone, granite, and glazed terra cotta were popular materials.²¹ The financial district also embraced stylistic ideas recommended by the Plan, incorporating Beaux Arts and Classical Revival elements that visually connected newer buildings with the Treasury and communicated a sense of solidity and venerability.

It was also in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that apartment buildings became fashionable, and were often constructed to appeal to a wealthy clientele. The earliest apartments in the District were built in response to housing shortages during and immediately after the Civil War and often involved converting large existing buildings.²² In the 1890s, luxury apartment buildings appeared in New York City and emulated European flats buildings in cities such as Paris, Vienna, and London. Reception was initially mixed, but with the growing density of downtown development, real estate speculators saw apartment buildings as a profitable venture; a 1911 article remarks that "architects of the highest ability and training are beginning to give their time to the design of apartment buildings that meet the requirements of cultured people."²³

Architect/Builder/Owner: T. Franklin Schneider

Among those who saw the potential in upscale apartment buildings was local Washington architect and developer Thomas Franklin Schneider. Schneider was the son of a German immigrant to Washington, D.C., and grew up working in his father's printing business. He

¹⁹ Ruhe and Chapple, "Little Wall Street."

²⁰ National Register of Historic Places, Fifteenth Street Financial Historic District, Washington, District of Columbia, National Register #84003900, 8:2-3.

²¹ National Register of Historic Places, Fifteenth Street Financial Historic District, Washington, District of Columbia, National Register #84003900, 7:2.

²² National Register of Historic Places, Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C., 1880-1945 Multiple Property Documentation Form, Washington, District of Columbia, National Register #64500083, E:6-E:8.

²³ "Apartment Houses." *The American Architect* 100, no. 1876 (1911): 229-230.

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apprenticed in the architectural practice of Adolf (or Adolph) Cluss circa 1875 and trained under Cluss for eight years. In 1883, Schneider became a member of the American Institute of Architects and opened his own practice.²⁴ Schneider embraced Cluss's design principles in his early work, which was known for its use of red brick and brownstone. In 1888, Schneider paid approximately \$250,000 (contemporary reports vary) to build thirty-four three-story row houses in the 1700 block of Q Street, N.W. This immediately caused District residents and officials to take notice because it was the largest speculative real estate transaction in District history.²⁵ Other important residential developments included Schneider's Triangle (1889) at Washington Circle, twenty-three brick row houses on Corcoran Street between Seventeenth Street and New Hampshire Avenue (1888), and seventeen three-story brick row houses on G Street, N.E. (1897).²⁶ During this time, Schneider completed numerous commissions for single private dwellings as well. Schneider's design vocabulary included such diverse influences as Classical Revival, Richardsonian Romanesque, Gothic Revival, Mediterranean Revival, Beaux Arts, and even some early expressions of the commercial style (Chicago School) that would come to be associated with high-rise buildings. In all of his work, Schneider appeared to give consideration to existing architectural context and make efforts to blend massing, scale, and stylistic elements of new construction with existing neighbors.

In 1894, Schneider shocked Washington by building the remarkable Cairo Hotel at 1621 Q Street, N.W. "Schneider's Folly," as the Cairo was termed, was Washington's first steel-frame "skyscraper," its first twelve-story building, and one of its first purpose-built luxury apartment buildings.²⁷ Other architects wrote scathing reviews of the building and swore that it would never be profitable: "It is a box full of holes...the architects play that these envelopes of masonry are real buildings, and they ask the spectators the same thing."²⁸ The Cairo's height prompted a massive outcry and calls for restrictions on building heights, which resulted in the passage of the Height of Buildings Act of 1899 (and its successor, the Height of Buildings Act of 1910). The Height Act has influenced architecture in Washington since its passage, and it is not an exaggeration to state that the Cairo Hotel is one of the major reasons that the city has a profile free of skyscrapers, in direct contrast to other major cities such as New York and Chicago.

Despite the outcry, the Cairo became both an extremely profitable and fashionable address. It featured elevators, electric lighting, a massive ballroom, drug store, bowling alley, billiard room, elegant public parlor, and rooftop café.²⁹ Schneider invested his success in constructing several

²⁴ In the period after the Civil War, Cluss's office had designed a large number of public buildings in Washington, including many public schools. Known in modern times as the "Red Architect" of Washington (a reference to both Cluss's Marxist views and his favorite building material, red brick), Cluss's designs were innovative for the period. His design principles ran to "multi-story buildings with high ceilings, clear circulation routes, abundant natural light, built-in heating and ventilation systems...and sturdy fireproof construction." Benjamin Forgey, "'Red Architect' Adolf Cluss: A Study in Sturdy," *Washington Post*, September 17, 2005; and Reed, "T.F. Schneider," 8.

²⁵ Reed, "T.F. Schneider," 8.

²⁶ District of Columbia building permits on record in the Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library.

²⁷ Reed, "T.F. Schneider," 8.

²⁸ "Architectural Aberrations No. XIII: the Cairo," *Architectural Record* 4, no. 4 (1894): 473.

²⁹ Reed, "T.F. Schneider," 8.

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more apartment buildings of a similar, if somewhat shorter, type within the city of Washington. These included the Albemarle (1900, 1700 T Street, N.W.), the Iowa (1900, 1325 Thirteenth Street), the Sherman (1903, 1101 Fifteenth Street), and Florence Court (1905, 2153 California Street), among many others. There are 234 permits in the Washington city archives listing Schneider as architect, and often also owner, representing hundreds of buildings constructed between 1883 and 1906.³⁰

Between 1901 and 1904, Schneider designed and built three seven- and eight-story apartment buildings at the intersection. In 1902, he was issued the permit to build the apartment building at 1025 Fifteenth Street, NW which he named after his daughter, Ethel.³¹ Schneider initially called the building Ethel Court (similar to the Florence Court at the southwest corner named for elder daughter Florence).³² The name was changed to The Ethelhurst sometime in 1903 before its opening.³³ Schneider's design for the Ethelhurst represented his attention to architectural trends, visually referencing the new "White City" fashion for pale, uniform architecture, Beaux Arts classicism, and successful late-nineteenth century "flats" buildings in European cities such as Paris. The false mansard roof made the building look slightly smaller than its eight stories, and thereby less intimidating in a period when few structures were higher than five stories, and also evoked Paris' elegant Second Empire apartment buildings. In order to make apartment buildings attractive to the upper class, Schneider needed to rebrand the apartment building not as a solution to overcrowding, but instead as a cosmopolitan enclave of the wealthy. Sumptuous interior finishes, an elevator, a full-service cafe, and the latest in interior comforts such as en suite baths and electric lighting contributed to the Ethelhurst's impression of luxury. The Ethelhurst was more refined in taste than earlier Schneider buildings such as the ostentatious Cairo and resonated well with the restrained elegance of nearby banking houses.

Subsequent Alterations

In 1906, just three years after completion of The Ethelhurst, Schneider retired from practicing architecture due to failing eyesight. In 1955, Ethel and Florence Schneider sold nine of their father's apartment buildings, including The Ethelhurst and the Cairo, for three million dollars.³⁴ By 1955, the downtown apartment building was no longer a desirable living arrangement for upper-class finance industry workers and federal workers, many of whom moved out to Washington's suburbs in the years after World War II.

In 1955, the building was sold as part of a multi-property real estate transaction from the T. F. Schneider Corporation to the syndicate Realty Fund of America, composed of Norman Bernstein

³⁰ District of Columbia building permits on record in the Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library.

³¹ Originally issued March 7, 1902, re-issued May 23, 1902. Possibly reissued because of a controversy over which side was the primary façade, and therefore which street width and height regulation applied. The building was within the 1899 height restrictions for Fifteenth Street (110 feet) but not L Street (ninety feet). It was also possibly due to height limits for fireproof construction; non-fireproof buildings could not exceed five stories.

³² Jan Jennings, *Cheap and Tasteful Dwellings* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2005), 115.

³³ Based on contemporary newspaper accounts and classified advertisements for the building, 1902-1903.

³⁴ Jennings, *Cheap and Tasteful Dwellings*, 115.

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Syndicates and Leo M. Bernstein and Co. At the time it was reported that the Ethelhurst contained “38 apartments and four stores.”³⁵ From 1958-1960, the interior of the building was extensively modified and converted into offices and was leased to the federal government during that time.³⁶ It was occupied by numerous tenants between 1961 and 1990, notably two collegiate institutions, the Juliet Gibson Career College and a campus of Strayer College, and the law offices of former Washington mayor Walter E. Washington.³⁷ The building’s interior was renovated in 1990, and in 2016-17 was converted into a hotel, called The Architect Hotel.

³⁵ Paul Herron, "\$3 Million Property Sale Told," *Washington Post*, May 4, 1955, Proquest Historic Newspapers.

³⁶ "The State of Real Estate," *Washington Post*.

³⁷ Peter Osnos, "Career Hopes of 'Gibson Girls' Dashed in Bankruptcy Court," *Washington Post*, March 19, 1970; Peter Behr, "High Tech Takes Washington," *Washington Post*, April 28, 1997; and Donald P. Baker, "Washington Joins New York Law Firm," *Washington Post*, February 10, 1979, Proquest Historic Newspapers.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

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Newspapers

The American Architect and Architectural Record, Traceries Archives.

Washington Evening Star. Accessed through NewsBank, Inc.

Washington Post. Accessed through Proquest Historical Newspapers and vertical files, Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library.

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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: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .07 acres

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: 38.90353 | Longitude: -77.03428 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

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

The Ethelhurst occupies Lot 26 in Square 216 in Washington, D.C. The lot is bounded by L Street on the north and Fifteenth Street to the west and by adjacent buildings on the east and south sides. The building fills its lot.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The Ethelhurst has occupied this lot since completion of the building in 1903.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Gray O'Dwyer, Architectural Historian
organization: EHT Tracerics, Inc.
street & number: 1121 5th Street, N.W.
city or town: Washington state: DC zip code: 20001
e-mail: gray.odwyer@tracerics.com
telephone: (202) 393-1199
date: April 29, 2014; Revised May 2019 (Kim Williams, HPO)

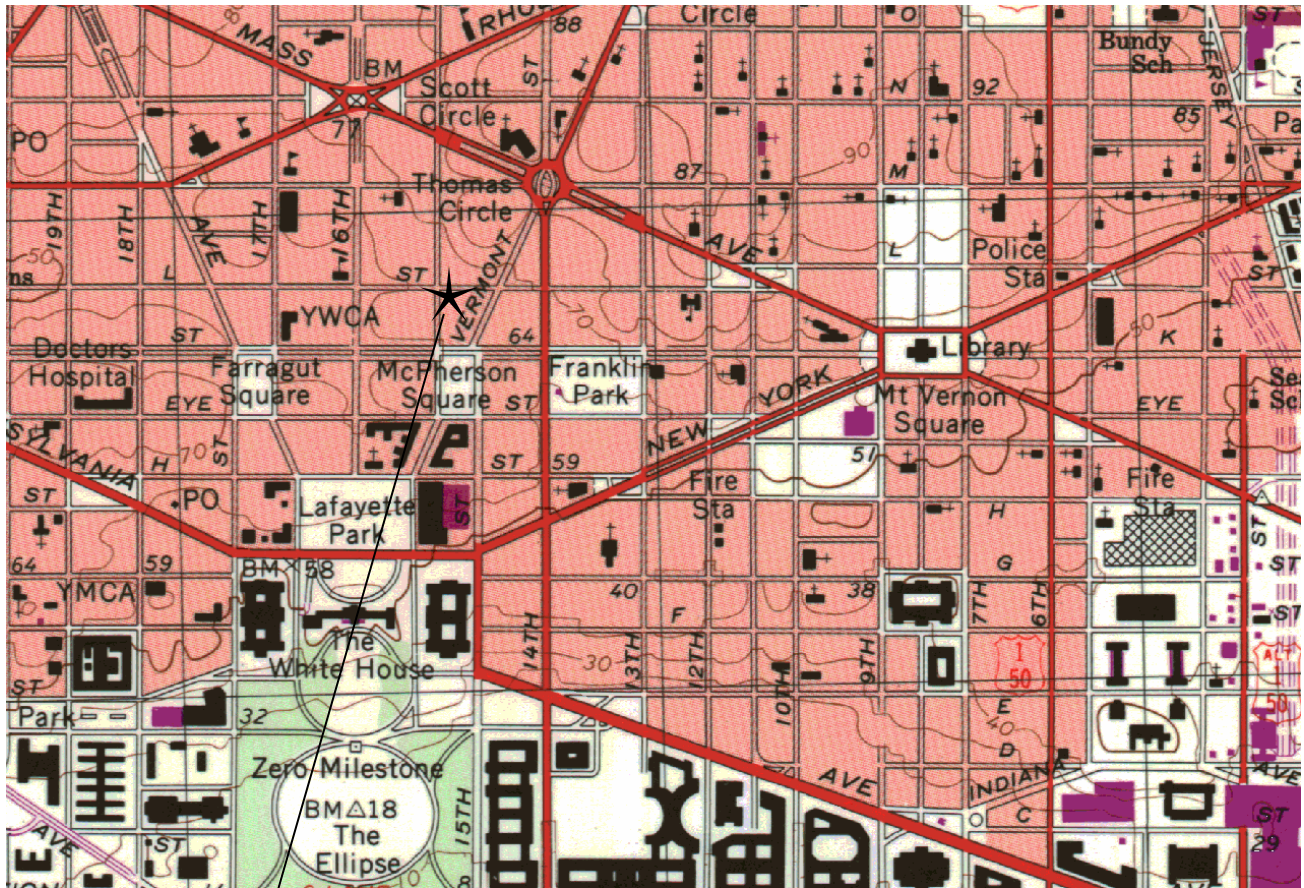
Additional Documentation

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.)

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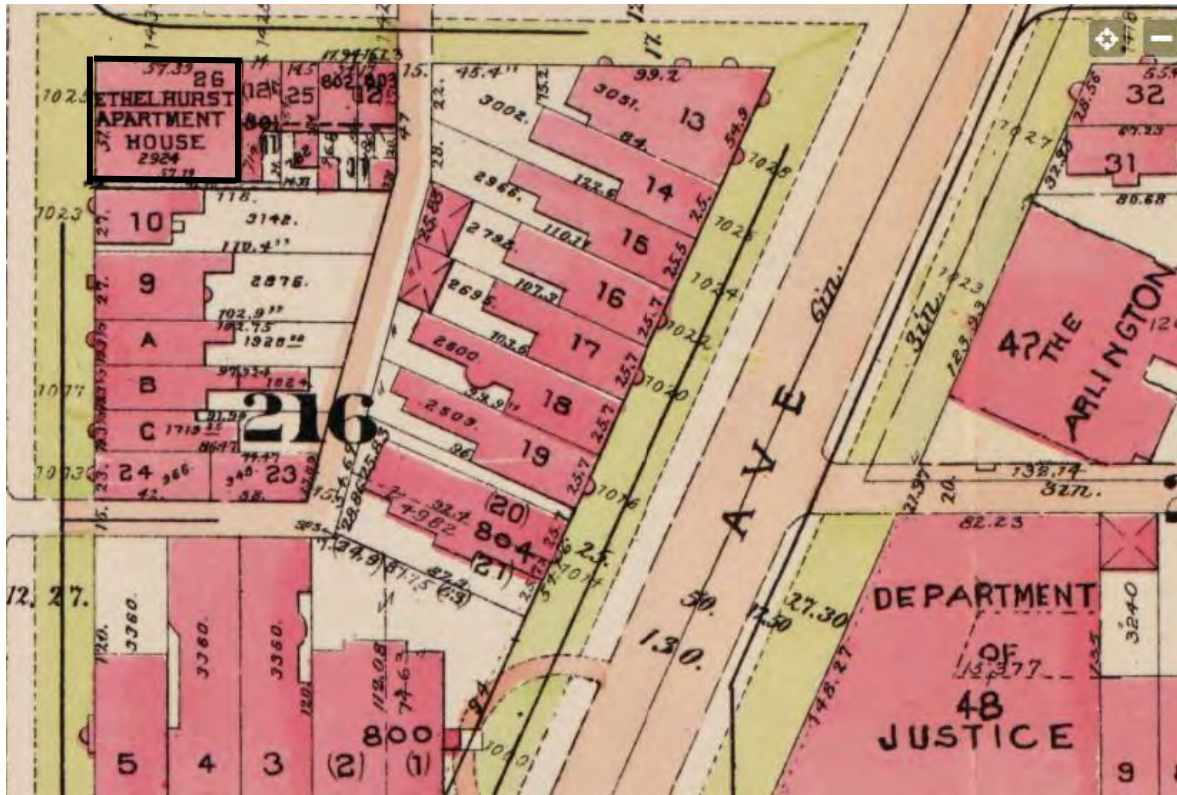
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Site of The Ethelhurst, 1025 15th Street NW
(USGS Washington West Quad)
(Latitude 38.90353 Longitude: -77.03428)

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Site Map showing National Register Boundaries of The Ethelhurst, 1025 15th Street NW
(Square 216, Lot 26)
(Baist Real Estate Atlas, Plate 22, 1919)

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Key to Photographs

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Photograph Log

Name of Property: The Ethelhurst
City or Vicinity: Washington
State: District of Columbia
Photographer: Kim Williams
Date Photographed: May 2019
Location of Original Digital Files: DC HPO
Number of Photographs: 17



View looking northeast showing west elevation
Photo 1 of 17

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View looking east showing west elevation
Photo 2 of 17

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View looking southeast showing north and west elevations
Photo 3 of 17

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View looking south showing north and east elevations
Photo 4 of 17



Exterior detail of attic level, west elevation
Photo 5 of 17

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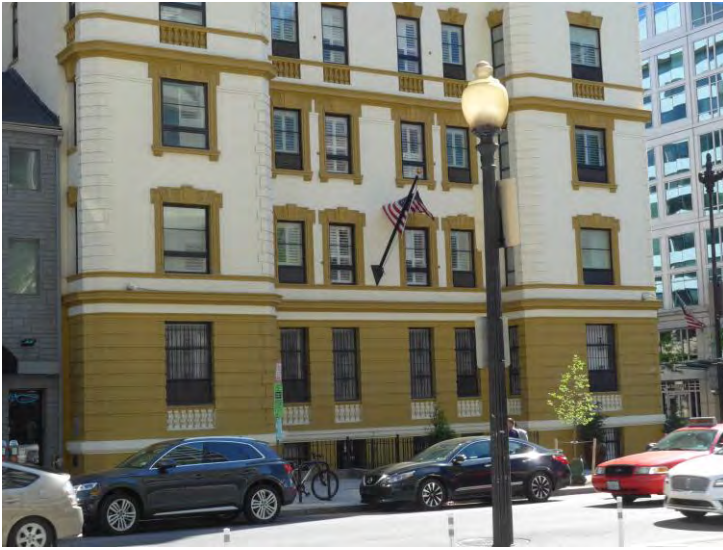
Exterior detail of entrance, west elevation
Photo 6 of 17



Exterior detail of south end of west elevation at attic level
Photo 7 of 17

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Exterior detail of building base, north elevation
Photo 8 of 17



View looking south showing oblique view of east elevation and part of north elevation
Photo 9 of 17

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View looking west (skyward) showing east elevation at upper level
Photo 10 of 17



View looking southeast at base of building showing northwest corner
Photo 11 of 17

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Exterior detail showing window on first story of north elevation and window east side of west end pavilion/tower on north elevation
Photo 12 of 17

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Exterior detail showing entry to basement level on north elevation
Photo 13 of 17



General view looking northeast showing The Ethelhurst and buildings north of it along 15th Street
Photo 14 of 17

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Interior view from 15th Street entrance looking down stairs to elevator lobby
Photo 15 of 17



Interior view from hotel reception area looking northerly across elevator lobby to sitting room at north side of building
Photo 16 of 17

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Interior view from sitting room looking south towards elevator lobby
Photo 17 of 17

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.



HOTEL

1025

SHOW
BUSINESS
ROUTE
NO PARKING
EXCEPT
FOR
DELIVERIES
OR
LOADING
UNLOADING

NO TURN
ON RED

E2451



HOTEL

NO TURN
ON RED

1025



The central building is a multi-story structure with a white facade and a gold-painted ground floor. It features a prominent corner with ornate blue and gold architectural details, including decorative window frames and cornices. The building is surrounded by modern glass-walled buildings. In the foreground, there are traffic lights, a street sign that reads "NO TURN ON RED", and a "Bike" symbol on the pavement. Pedestrians and a cyclist are visible on the sidewalk.

NO TURN ON RED

Bike



1424

Post

McJannet's

PSYCHIC





HOTEL

EXIT

1025



THE ARCHITECT
HOTEL
WASHINGTON, DC

FDC

THE ARCHITECT
HOTEL
WASHINGTON, DC





NATURALIST



1424

PSYCHIC
Handwriting
100% accurate
100% guaranteed

NO PARKING
TOW AWAY ZONE





NO TURN
ON RED

HOTEL

1025

Bicycle







E STREET 1000
MONTGOMERY COUNTY 208-281-2023

metro
WALKER & WALKER

HOTEL



STAIRS
FIRE DOOR
KEEP CLOSED



EXIT

EXIT
EXIT





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination
Property Name: Ethelhurst, The
Multiple Name: Apartment Buildings in Washington, DC, MPS
State & County: DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, District of Columbia

Date Received: 5/23/2019 Date of Pending List: 6/11/2019 Date of 16th Day: 6/26/2019 Date of 45th Day: 7/8/2019 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number: MP100004123

Nominator: SHPO

Reason For Review:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject 6/26/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: The Ethelhurst is locally significant under National Register Criteria A and C in the areas of Architecture and Community Planning & Development. Designed and built by prominent local architect and developer Thomas Franklin Schneider, the eight-story, steel-frame high-rise building is a fine local example of Beaux Arts-inspired apartment house design. Completed in 1902-03, the building featured highly articulated street facades with cast stone and cast iron detailing, keystone lintels and bold cornices. One of three comparable luxury apartment houses constricted by Schneider on adjacent street corners, The Ethelhurst helped establish the building type as a viable residential option for in town living by affluent businessmen and government workers. The building meets the *Apartment Buildings in Washington* MPS registration requirements for the Conventional High-Rise Apartment Building property type. (Despite interior alterations, the building's overall form and high ornamented exterior sufficiently conveys important character defining elements of the property type.)

Recommendation/ Criteria: Accept NR Criteria A and C

Reviewer: Paul Lusignan Discipline: Historian

Telephone: (202)354-2229 Date: 6/26/2019

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE



MEMO

DATE: May 20, 2019

TO: Paul Lusignan

FROM: Kim Williams *KW*

RE: Transmittal Letter for The Ethelhurst

Please find enclosed two disks for The Ethelhurst National Register nomination. The enclosed disk, Disk 1 of 2 contains the true and correct copy of the nomination. The enclosed Disk 2 of 2 contains photographs as per the NR photo requirements.