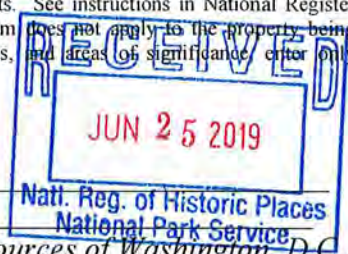


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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: Capital Traction Company Union Station

Other names/site number: Georgetown Car Barn

Name of related multiple property listing: Streetcar and Bus Resources of Washington, D.C., 1862-1962

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

2. Location

Street & number: 3600 M Street NW

City or town: Washington State: DC County: _____

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

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

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 X A B X C D

<p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-family: cursive;">[Signature]</p> <p>Signature of certifying official/Title: <u>DAVID MALONEY/DC SHPO</u></p> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government <u>DC HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE</u></p>	<p><u>6/21/2019</u></p> <p>Date</p>
<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>Signature of commenting official: _____</p>	<p>Date _____</p>
<p>Title : _____</p>	<p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____</p>

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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

8/9/2019
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>2</u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1
(Georgetown Car Barn, listed as contributing building in the Georgetown Historic District)

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION/Streetcar Terminal

LANDSCAPE/Object

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/College-related

LANDSCAPE/Object

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN/Romanesque Revival

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Beaux Arts

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Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, Concrete, Stone (Blue Gneiss)

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

This National Register nomination comprises the Capital Traction Company Union Station, known today as the Georgetown Car Barn (contributing building), the adjacent stone and concrete retaining wall (contributing structure), and the inset stone stairway, known commonly as the *Exorcist* steps or stairs (contributing structure), all located in the Georgetown Historic District in Washington, D.C. The property was developed between 1894 and 1897 to serve as a consolidated streetcar station, storage garage and turn around, uniting services for four independently owned and operated streetcar lines. The station is a monumental example of a streetcar car barn, designed by notable architect Waddy Butler Wood. Built in 1894-97, the building was renovated and enlarged in 1910 to strengthen the floors and widen openings for new rolling stock. The building is a result of the two building campaigns and reflects both its original Romanesque Revival style and the Beaux Arts alterations to it; the building faces south toward M Street, features an engaged central tower, a raised first-story level of honed and rusticated granite and two intermediate stories clad in intricately detailed pressed brick. In 1998, the building converted into commercial offices at which time the interior was renovated and enlarged by a roof addition with dormers, recessed from the façade.

Because of the extreme change in topography between the lower M Street and the elevated Prospect Street (the area that spans the depth of the property), the Prospect Street elevation provided access to the car barn through a modest, yet fanciful hipped roof entrance pavilion on-grade with Prospect Street. This central entrance pavilion has "Car Barn" inscribed in the lintel above the central entrance door, flanked by corner towers with turrets. In order to level the site for construction of the station, a prodigious amount of excavation and shoring was required and a substantial wall, battered and faced in stone, was constructed to the west of the car barn. A steep staircase, built to connect the lower M Street to the higher Prospect Street and provide pedestrian access between them, was constructed concurrently with the wall. The stairs, which figure into the horror film, *The Exorcist*, have gained notoriety in their own right and are commonly referred to as *The Exorcist* steps or stairs.

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Narrative Description

Georgetown Retaining Wall and Inset Stone Stairway

The Georgetown Retaining Wall and inset stone stairway were constructed between 1894 and 1895 as part of the excavation and regrading of the site necessary to support the construction of the Capital Traction Company Union Station (Georgetown Car Barn). The retaining wall, located west of the car barn, consists of two walls that helped shore up the excavated site to prevent M Street from collapsing: a canted stone-faced wall and an adjacent wall of exposed concrete block set to its west.

The two exposed sections of the retaining wall have different depths. The primary south-facing section of the wall facing M Street is brick and concrete faced in stone and, according to section drawings of the wall from 1895 published in the *Street Railway Review* in 1898, spans 60 feet east to west and at least 20 feet north to south. It is at least 74 feet and 4 inches in height.¹ The exposed concrete portion of the retaining wall is located to the west of the 36th Street right-of-way. A stable (no longer extant) was constructed by the Capital Traction Company in front of the concrete retaining wall. Unlike the stone-faced segment of the wall, the concrete portion of the wall was not intended to be in the public view. The drawing for the permit application depicts the concrete retaining wall as 30 feet wide from east to west and about 13 feet deep from north to south. The height of the wall at that time is unknown.²

A flight of narrow stone steps integral to the retaining walls ascend/descend the hillside between the retaining wall and the west wall of the car barn. The stair has two intermediate landings and connects Prospect and M Streets, N.W.³

Capital Traction Company Union Station Building

The four-story building, constructed in 1895-1897, is located at the western end of Georgetown's commercial district and faces south onto M Street, N.W. overlooking the Potomac River. The building, which was constructed to serve as a single station for four independently owned and operated streetcar lines, was altered several times over the course of its existence to accommodate evolving and new uses. Many of these alterations were restricted to the interior of the building. However, changes made to the building in 1910-1911 and in 1998 altered the exterior appearance. The description below outlines the building's original appearance, the appearance following the 1910 renovation, and the current appearance following its 1998 renovation and addition.

Original Appearance (1895-1910)

As originally constructed, the building was a three-part, three-story brick and stone building with a central tower dominating the M Street facade. This façade was divided into a central recessed

¹ *Street Railway Review* 8, no. 7, July 15, 1898.

² DC Build Permit #1094, February 11, 1896, Record Group 351, National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

³ *Report on Cost of Reproduction of the Capital Traction Co. As of July 1st. 1914* (Washington, DC: Public Utilities Commission, 1914).

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pavilion with two end piers buttressing the corners. The first story of the end piers featured wide, round-arched openings trimmed with granite, while that of the central block had smaller arched openings similarly dressed in granite.



Ca. 1900 photo of the Capital Traction Company Union Station (*Library of Congress*)

The central pavilion was 2-1/2-stories tall with large hipped roof dormers on either side of the central tower. On the first story, a projecting bay with a pediment carved with “Capital Traction” was located on center of the south façade with the tower rising above and behind it. This tower, holding an elevator, rose 140 feet in height.

The east and west brick end pavilions had broad arched openings framed in stone. Stone medallions carved with “1895” adorn the southwest and southeast corners of the building where the brick of the end pavilions meets the stone of the arched openings. On the east end pavilion, a single rectangular opening with stone sill and lintel was located directly west of the arched opening; on the west block, a corresponding rectangular opening with stone sill and lintel was located directly east of the arched opening. The second story of both blocks featured round-arched, one-over-one windows. The cornice level featured decorative brickwork with squared, geometric patterning. Two rows of this pattern wrapped around the block to the east elevation, and three rows wrapped around on the west elevation.

The roof over the front portion of the building facing M Street was hipped and clad in red terra cotta tile; the end piers were covered with hipped roofs clad in red terra cotta tiles and were ornamented with corner turrets.

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1910-1911 Alteration

In 1910-1911, the building was significantly altered to accommodate the handling and storage of larger streetcars. Stylistically, these alterations diminished the Romanesque Revival style of the building and gave it a then-stylish Beaux Arts aesthetic. At the first story, the arched openings, used by streetcars to enter and exit the car barn in the end pavilions, were widened and the adjacent rectangular openings were removed. At the upper stories, the dormer level of the central pavilion was replaced with a full story, brought flush with the façade and embedding the lower part of the tower into the building. The hipped roof and dormers of the end pavilions were removed, as were the dormers of the central pavilion, and the entire top floor was covered with a flat roof. The roofline was unified with a continuous cornice that extended across the central pavilion and end wings. The projecting pediment on the lower level in the center bays of the central pavilion was moved to cap those central bays at the third story, while the tower, now embedded, still rose behind and above it. While these alterations retained important aspects of the Romanesque Revival-style building (arched openings and tower), the building was given a more formal and regularized appearance.



Historic photo of the Capital Traction Company Union Station taken after 1910-11 (*Library of Congress*)

1998 Alterations and Current Appearance

In 1998, an addition was built on the roof of the car barn, set back slightly from the 1910 cornice line. This rooftop addition was capped by a hipped roof with dormers having broad arched openings that were loosely based on the original roof and dormers. Hipped roof turrets, also loosely based on the historic ones, were built atop the end pavilions. A classical colonnaded roof-covered terrace was added to the roof deck towards Prospect Street and the interior of the building completely re-fitted with modern appurtenances.

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South Elevation: The south elevation is the primary façade facing M Street. The first story remains almost entirely intact from its 1910 appearance despite wholesale replacement of windows. Individual letters reading “The Car Barn” have been affixed to the frieze in the central pavilion at the first story level. Original brick with common-bond and headers every six courses is visible on the east and west projecting blocks. These blocks feature round-arch openings, which date from the 1911 alterations, that are framed in smooth stone, circumscribed with unelaborate archivolt, which curve into corner turrets. A contemporary garage door fits the eastern opening, while contemporary custom floor-to-ceiling glass windows are fitted in the western opening. Stone medallions carved with “1895” adorn the southwest and southeast corner of the building below the brick portion of the turrets, which extend halfway up the third story, providing reference to the original cornice line of the building. Each turret features a copper downspout. Pairs of contemporary one-over-one window capped with half-circle transoms are fitted into the historic window openings on the first story. Contemporary double multi-light doors are featured in historic door openings, centered on each of the recessed blocks.

The building’s foundation and first story of the central section is faced in granite; iron-spot brick in reddish-purple hues is found elsewhere. The brick is laid in common bond that varies from headers every sixth course to headers every ninth course. Courses of stacked headers are also present. The window openings on these stories date to the 1911 alteration. Windows (replaced circa 1998 to match 1911 configuration) in the projecting east and west blocks are arranged in triplets, while the others are paired. All windows have stone sills; second-floor windows are surmounted by heavy stone lintels. Projecting brick panels decorate the space between the windows of the second and third story. A stone belt course above the upper windows helps, with the stone cornice, a decorative brick frieze that dates to the 1911 alteration. This detail wraps around to the east and west elevation. An elaborate broken pediment atop the projecting central block, carved with “Capital Traction,” has been raised two floors above its original position. A cartouche is located centrally in the parapet on the projecting east and west blocks.

A fourth story built in 1998, recessed from the parapet, was designed to reflect the historic roof line. Six dormers with hipped roofs extend south from the wings added east and west of the clock tower. The east and west projecting block feature turrets on all corners. The roof is clad with terra cotta tile. All windows are contemporary.

West Elevation: As with the south elevation, there are several brick bonds and patterns featured on the west elevation. These discrepancies generally coordinate with alterations made to the building.

On the projecting block (described above as the western block), the first story features two round-arch openings that are framed in smooth stone. Contemporary windows and doors have been fitted into the round arched openings; a contemporary garage is accessed through the eastern opening, while contemporary custom floor-to-ceiling glass windows are fitted in the western opening. Stone medallion carved with “1895” adorn the southwest corner of the building, and a stone medallion carved with “CT CO” adorns the northeast corner of this block, both placed below the brick portion of the turrets, which extend halfway up the third story, providing reference to the original cornice line of the building. Each turret features a copper

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downspout. There are four rounded contemporary one-over-one windows on the second story, and four corresponding rectangular contemporary one-over-one windows are featured on the third story. Openings on the second story have four-course header rowlock round arches. A fifth course visually connects the group of four openings. Third floor windows have flat lintels. Smooth granite sills, like those in the central block of the south elevation, bevel inward.

In the second section of the wall, which is two bays wide, window openings on the first story have been infilled with common bond brick. A contemporary metal door is located south of a larger opening that features a contemporary garage door. A semi-circle opening, used for ventilation, has three-course row-lock round arches. On the second and third story windows have three-course row-lock round arches.

The third section of the west wall is eight bays wide. The first and second story feature nine-over-nine double-hung windows and segmental arches with four courses of row-locks, while the third story features nine-over-nine double hung windows with three-course row-lock round arches. All windows have stone sills.

A stairway that connects M Street, NW with Prospect Street, NW begins at the fourth bay of the third section. There is an eleven-stone arch over the stairway that joins the stone Retaining Wall with the building between the fourth and fifth bay on the third story.

East Elevation: Most of the east elevation is hidden by an adjacent two-story brick building. On the south side of the east elevation the projecting block is four bays wide. There appears to be some level of brick infill on the first story. As with the first section of the west elevation, openings on the second story have four-course header rowlock round arches. A fifth course visually connects the group of four openings. Third floor windows have flat lintels. Smooth granite sills, like those in the central block of the south elevation, bevel inward. The decorative frieze and cornice extend from the south elevation and extends the length of this section.

The second section of the east elevation is topped by a flat roof. The parapet is lower than that of the first section. Clad in brick, there are no window openings on this section.

North Elevation: The majority of the north elevation is underground due to the significant change in grade between M Street and Prospect Street, NW. The parapet, capped with stone coping, wraps around the entire building, and appears as a half wall on the Prospect Street elevation. In response to the visible change in grade on the western side of the building, the parapet steps up on the west elevation. The wall connects directly to the turret on the northwest corner of the entrance pavilion. On the eastern side, the parapet connects to a higher brick wall, which in turn connects to the northeast turret of the entrance pavilion. The brick wall features a plaque with the Georgetown University crest, and freestanding gold letters reading "Georgetown University | The Graduate School of Arts and Science." A portion of the eastern side of the parapet has been removed to allow for the installation of a contemporary metal gate.

The entrance pavilion is at street level four floors above M Street. The central entrance has been fitted with contemporary double doors and a contemporary transom. The opening appears to be

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original. Flanking either side of the opening are two round-arched window openings with rock-faced granite sills and corbeled lintel headers. Each window opening contains a contemporary single-light window. End turrets project through and above the roof. Near the tops of the turret shafts are three course decorative elements of regularly projecting headers. The hipped roof of the pavilion is clad in terra cotta tiles.

Interior

The four-story carbarn, now used by Georgetown University for office and classroom purposes, has undergone several extensive interior renovations throughout its history to convert the building from use as a streetcar station/car barn and switching station to primarily office use with upgraded mechanical systems, leaving little to no historic fabric. Most recently, a two-year renovation of the first floor, which had been used previously as an automobile parking garage, was completed in January 2017 to allow for graduate student lounges, offices for the university's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences departments, and space for the Georgetown University Press. The eastern portion of the first floor remains a garage. Historic streetcar tracks remain visible in this garage.

INTEGRITY

The Capital Traction Company Union Station, its retaining wall and stairs retain integrity. The carbarn, originally constructed in 1895, was significantly altered in 1910-11, but those changes were made during the period of significance and contribute to an understanding of the changing technological advances in electric streetcar operations, and in architectural fashions of the period. The 1998 exterior alterations, while also substantial, fall outside of the period of significance. The alterations are limited to the building's roofline and do not detract from the character of the building as a streetcar car barn. The building retains design features that convey its historic function as a streetcar terminal, a now-obsolete building type, and more specifically, its association with the Capital Traction Company. The retaining wall still conveys its important structural function, and the stairs remain an important link between M Street and Prospect Street. The potential for archaeology exists, though the site of a two-story brick stable that was part of the Car Barn complex has been paved over.

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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.)

TRANSPORTATION
ARCHITECTURE
ENGINEERING

Period of Significance

1895-1972

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Waddy B. Wood
Manning & Parsons

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

The Capital Traction Company Union Station (known variously as the “Capital Traction Union Station”, “Capital Transit Station”, “Union Station”, “Georgetown Car Barn”), designed by prolific Washington architect Waddy Butler Wood, opened in 1897 as the “only edifice of its kind in the country.”⁴ While the Car Barn has undergone several alterations throughout its history corresponding with changes in streetcar industry, the building’s character-defining features, including but not limited to its overall massing, the elevator tower, large round arch openings on the south elevation, and pediment reading “Capital Traction,” survive intact. The building, representative of the streetcar terminal subtype identified in the *Streetcar and Bus Resources of Washington, DC, 1862-1962* multiple property document, served as Washington’s first union streetcar station with Washington’s only cable loop.

The Capital Traction Company Union Station meets National Register Criteria A and C under the Multiple Property Document, *Streetcar and Bus Resources of Washington, D.C., 1862-1962* at the local level of significance with Architecture, Engineering and Transportation as the Areas of Significance. The property meets Criterion A as the establishment of the station was an early step in the coordination and consolidation of the city’s streetcar system. Consolidation continued as the Capital Transit Company acquired all active streetcar facilities in the city by 1933 and continued to operate streetcars in the city until 1962.

The property meets Criterion C as an excellent example of a Victorian-era streetcar car barn and the work of noted architect Waddy B. Wood. The Georgetown Car Barn was the first large-scale commission for Wood who practiced architecture in Washington from 1892 through 1940. A self-taught practitioner, Wood began his career designing modest residences in Washington, DC, and went on to receive major commissions, including designing the new building for the United States Department of the Interior. After designing the car barn in 1894, Wood was commissioned to design several other car barns for the Capital Traction Company, including the East Capitol Street Car Barn.

The car barn, its retaining wall and stairs are together significant under Criterion C as a “feat of engineering construction.”⁵ Faced with a site of steep grade change – a descent of 60 feet from Prospect Street to M Street, with a 20-degree surface slope—the site required an excavation of more than 80,000 cubic yards in anticipation of the construction of the Capital Traction Union Station on the site. The discovery of “rotten rock” within the excavated soil required the design and construction of a wall of unusual strength.⁶ As the site underwent a tremendous excavation out of which rotten rock was discovered, the site may contain unique artifacts pre-dating and dating to the excavation. Although there are no known archaeological sites, it is possible that the

⁴ “Fine New Union Station,” *Washington Times*, May 28, 1897, p. 2.

⁵ “Where Car Lines Meet: New Union Station Will be in Operation To-Day,” *The Washington Post*, May 27, 1897, p. 10; “Great Hole Was Made,” *The Evening Times*, March 27, 1896, p. 6.

⁶ “Must Build a Better Wall,” *The Washington Post*, November 30, 1894, p. 10.

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site could yield information important to our understanding of the historic development of the site and its transformation into a transportation hub.

The period of significance begins in 1895 with completion of the retaining walls on the site and extends to 1972 when the successor company to Capital Traction (Capital Transit Company) vacated its offices at the former station. By that time, streetcars had already been retired from service for a decade, but Capital Transit continued to use the property for offices until 1972 justifying the 1972 end-date under Criterion Consideration G. The 1972 end date also takes in the filming of parts of the popular film *The Exorcist* at the property, specifically at the public stairway. The movie has made that spot famous and adds to the history of the site.

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

Streetcar Development in Washington

The Capital Traction Company Union Station was constructed between 1895-1897 as one of the first terminals of its kind not only in Washington, DC, but in the country. In 1827, a stagecoach service was introduced in New York City consisting of two horse-drawn omnibuses that ran up and down Broadway. Although named “Accommodation” and “Sociable,” the omnibuses were anything but as passengers were subjected to cramped quarters, no heat, and inadequate ventilation within the cars.⁷ Further, the omnibus was equipped with iron-clad wooden wheels and primitive suspension mechanisms that had difficulty traversing the poor road conditions. These shortcomings meant that the speed and distances of omnibus travel were limited.

In response to these limitations and to the railroad boom that swept through America beginning in the 1820s, John Mason developed a horse-drawn railroad passenger car – the horsecar – in 1831. In contrast to the omnibus, the horsecar rode along embedded iron or steel tracks, thereby offering passengers a smoother ride, albeit limited to routes that were serviced by the rail system. Several cities followed suit: by 1835, New Orleans had followed New York’s lead and opened two horsecar lines. By 1858, horsecar lines were operating in Brooklyn, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and Chicago.⁸

Despite being the Nation’s Capital, by 1860, Washington had only one line of horse drawn omnibuses, running from Georgetown to the Navy Yard via M Street and Pennsylvania Avenue.⁹ Gilbert Vanderwerken established this line in 1852 – twenty years after the introduction of New York City’s horsecar line. The onset of the Civil War, and the increased population in Washington that resulted from it, motivated Congress to refine Washington’s transportation system.

⁷ “New York City Transit – History and Chronology,” *Metropolitan Transportation Authority*, <http://web.mta.info/nyct/facts/ffhist.htm> (accessed January 25, 2019).

⁸ “Trams of North America,” (blog), <http://riid.tripod.com/hippo.html> (accessed January 25, 2019).

⁹ King, Jr., *100 Years of Capital Traction*, 3.

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Nearly thirty years after the establishment of the first horsecar line in New York City, Congress chartered Washington's first horsecar line – the Washington and Georgetown Railroad Company – on May 17, 1862.¹⁰ The charter established three routes: one that followed Vanderwerken's original omnibus route and one that ran north and south along Seventh Street and Fourteenth Street to Boundary Road (now Florida Avenue). Within a year, the Washington and Georgetown Railroad Company had 86 cars and 490 horses.¹¹

Washington and Georgetown's success spurred competition by individual companies operating one or more lines from a specific residential area of the city to downtown. Some of the earliest competing companies were the following:

- Metropolitan Railroad Company: Chartered by Congress in 1864 and connected the Capitol with Washington County via downtown;
- Columbia Line: Incorporated in 1870 and ran in northeast Washington;
- Anacostia and Potomac River Railroad: Incorporated in 1872 and ran through southeast Washington; and
- Capitol, North O Street and South Washington Railroad Company: Incorporated in 1875 and ran through the center of the city to the northern and southern boundaries. By 1893, the company had been rebranded as the Belt Railroad Company.

Despite the success of the horsecar rail system, there was increasing dissatisfaction with the limitations of horsepower, travel conditions, and travel routes. One viable alternative was the cable car, a system that used stationary power sources to operate underground steel cables. First introduced in San Francisco, California in 1872, the cable car was introduced in approximately thirty other American cities during the late 1870s and early 1880s.¹² The United States House of Representative's Committee on the District of Columbia began to investigate the use of a cable car system in the mid-1880s. In 1886, the Committee published a report, describing cable as "the best-known method of passenger transit through city streets, insuring speed, safety, cleanliness, and a uniformly cheap service."¹³

The transition to underground cable cars was boosted by the 1889 Congressional legislation that mandated the phasing out of horse-drawn railway vehicles and prohibited the use of overhead electric wires.¹⁴ The first cable car operation in the city opened on May 12, 1890 along the

¹⁰ Peter C. Kohler, *Capital Transit Washington's Street Cars: The Final Era 1933-1962* (Gaithersburg: Signature Book Printing, 2001), 6.

¹¹ Kohler, *Capital Transit Washington's Street Cars*, 6.

¹² National Register of Historic Places, *Streetcar and Bus Resources of Washington, DC, 1862-1962*, Washington, DC, National Register #645-948, E-51.

¹³ U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee of the District of Columbia, Washington Cable Railway Company, 49th Congress, 1st Sess., Rept. No. 2549 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1886), 1.

¹⁴ While most cities were converting to electric power by this time, street railway electrification in the Federal City was delayed due to opposition to overhead electric wires. Theodore W. Noyes, editor of *The Evening Star*, lobbied ceaselessly against the proliferation of wires (traction, telegraph, and telephone) that he believed blighted other American cities. Although overhead trolley lines were less expensive than underground wire or steam powered cables and were considered a reliable and versatile form of electric power, Congress ultimately enacted legislation prohibiting overhead lines in south of Boundary Street and called for a study of underground systems as alternatives.

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Washington and Georgetown Railroad Company's Seventh Street Line. Following the success of the Seventh Street Line, the Washington and Georgetown Railroad Company converted its two other lines – along Pennsylvania Avenue and Fourteenth Street – to cable operations. In contrast to horsecars lines, cable transport was a faster and more efficient mode of transportation within the city that allowed for an unprecedented number of passengers.¹⁵

With the successful conversion to cable traction, the Washington and Georgetown company undertook a massive building campaign that included the erection of new car barns, powerhouse complexes, and the installation of miles of cable. The Capital Traction Union Station was the keystone of this building campaign, emphasizing "the growing importance of [Washington]" and its transportation system at the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁶

Site Selection, Engineering Challenges and Construction of the Capital Traction Company Union Station

In 1894, the Commissioners of the District of Columbia requested Congressional legislation to grant an extension of the Washington and Georgetown Railroad Company's tracks (which initially terminated at M and 32nd Streets, NW), and to authorize the construction of a 'union' station and terminal to serve the District, Maryland, and Virginia.¹⁷

The site identified as most available and appropriate for the union station terminal was Square 1203 (Georgetown Square 33). Anticipating the construction of what would be the Francis Scott Key Bridge, the Commissioners believed Square 1203 would provide an optimum location for street cars entering Georgetown from both Maryland and Virginia. Specifically, it would allow for the Washington and Georgetown Lines to occupy the first floor, the Washington, Arlington, Falls Church, and projected Great Falls and Old Dominion railways to occupy the second and third floors, and the Metropolitan Railway to occupy the roof.

On August 23, 1894, Congress approved an amendment to "An Act to incorporate the Washington and Great Falls Electric Railway," initially approved in July 1892, to specify Square 1203 as the location for the proposed union station, and to provide details of construction and operations.¹⁸ In the late-nineteenth century, Squares 1202 and 1203 (formerly Georgetown Squares 32 and 33, respectively) remained largely unimproved. The principal structure on Square 1203 was the Prospect House, occupied by Mary Steele Morris, widow of Commodore George

The result was a myriad of unsuccessful experiments which in turn led to the continued use of cable and horse-propelled lines within the Washington. (National Register of Historic Places, *Streetcar and Bus Resources of Washington, DC, 1862-1962*, Washington, DC, National Register #645-948, E-36.)

¹⁵ The Washington and Georgetown lines provided seventeen stops per direction per hour, with a capacity for 100-150 riders per two or three cars, allowing more than 3,500 passengers to be served per hour. (National Register of Historic Places, *Streetcar and Bus Resources of Washington, DC, 1862-1962*, Washington, DC, National Register #645-948, E-54.)

¹⁶ "The New Cable Road," *Evening Star*, July 2, 1892, 12.

¹⁷ "Licenses are Denied," *The Washington Post*, May 2, 1894, p 8.

¹⁸ *An Act to amend an Act entitled "An Act to incorporate the Washington and Great Falls Electric Railway*, 53rd Cong., 2d sess., (August 23, 1894), 492-494.

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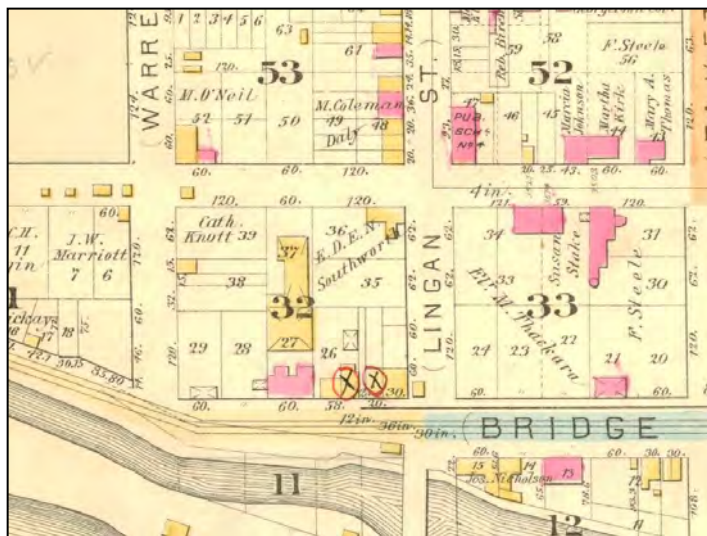
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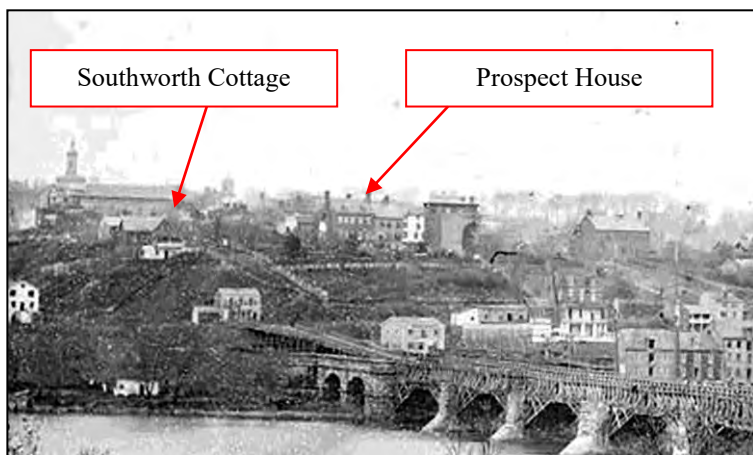
Upham Morris. Mrs. Morris was the daughter of the Georgetown merchant Franklin Steele who had purchased the eastern portion of Square 1203 in 1868.

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In the late-nineteenth century, Squares 1202 and 1203 (formerly Georgetown Squares 32 and 33, respectively) remained largely unimproved. The principal structure on Square 1203 was the Prospect House, occupied by Mary Steele Morris, widow of Commodore George Upham Morris. Mrs. Morris was the daughter of the Georgetown merchant Franklin Steele who had purchased the



1887 Hopkins Map showing frame structures along M Street on Square 1202 (Georgetown Square 32). Despite showing the Lingan (now Thirty-Sixth Street) right-of-way, the square was unimproved. Additionally, the “x’s” over the two frame buildings were added at a later date; the buildings were extant at the time that this map was published.



Cropped image showing Steep grade of selected site, Squares 1202 and 1203 visible.

William Morris Smith, Photographer, “Washington, DC: The Aqueduct bridge and Georgetown from the Virginia Bank,” 1860 c., Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

¹⁹ An Act to amend an Act entitled “An Act to incorporate the Washington and Great Falls Electric Railway, 53rd Cong., 2d sess., (August 23, 1894), 492-494.

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eastern portion of Square 1203 in 1868. The northeast portion of square 1202 was owned by Emma D.E.N. Southworth, a popular novelist who occupied a wood frame dwelling on the property, known both as Prospect Cottage and as Southworth Cottage, from 1853 until her death in 1899. Wood frame structures fronting on M Street stood on Lots 25 and 26 in the southeast section of Square 1202.



*Residence of Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth, circa 1893.
Library of Congress LOT 7077-RE.*

Although Thirty-Sixth (then Lingan) Street ran from the waterfront to a point north of P Street, N.W., it remained unimproved between M and Prospect Streets.²⁰ The land designated as Thirty-Sixth Street was 60' wide

from building line to building line along this stretch. Thirty-Seventh Street and Prospect Street west of Thirty-Sixth Street also remained unimproved due to the steep grade of the site. Primitive steps of wood planks, described by *The Evening Star* as “long [and] heavy,” provided pedestrian access from Prospect to M Street.²¹ This unimproved condition and the steps that existed for pedestrians prior to construction of the extant Retaining Wall and steps are shown in a circa 1893 photograph of Southworth Cottage.

By October 1894, with the legislation in place, the Washington and Georgetown Railroad awarded contracts for the initial phase of construction of the new station. Andrew Gleason was selected to excavate the site, and contractors Manning & Parsons, were selected to construct the Retaining Wall.²²

A permit was issued to the Washington and Georgetown Railroad for the construction of the Retaining Wall with a width of four feet on November 1894; however, on November 30, *The Washington Post* reported that building inspector John B. Brady had issued an order revoking the permit because he found “that the vertical sides of the excavation or embankment are rotten rock, interspersed with sand and clay... [and] therefore, exert a pressure against a Retaining Wall equal to that of ordinary clay.”²³ Brady’s ruling established that the proposed 4 foot walls were insufficient to support the vertical slides of the excavation.

²⁰ U.S. Commission of Fine Arts., *Georgetown Architecture – Northwest*. Historic American Buildings Survey Selections, Number 6. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970), iii.

²¹ “Affairs in Georgetown: Notes,” *Washington Star*, February 26, 1895, 7.

²² “Awards for the Union Station,” *The Washington Post*, October 24, 1894, p. 5.

²³ “Must Build a Better Wall,” *The Washington Post*, November 30, 1894, p. 10. Previous research efforts have indicated no reference to a permit for the construction of the wall was found in the microfilmed building permit indexes. Much of the surviving documentation on the requirements relating to the construction of the wall is preserved in Equity Case File #16006.

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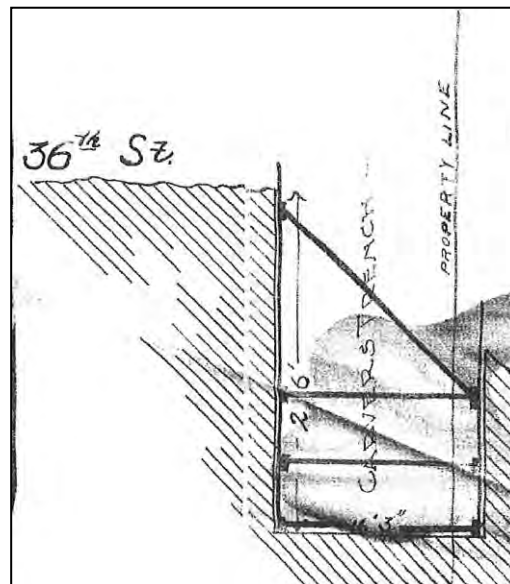
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This conclusion caused several months of delay for Manning & Parsons as the building inspector determined the appropriate thickness of the Retaining Wall. In April 1895, the District Commissioners finally granted permission to the Washington and Georgetown Railroad to construct the wall with the caveat that it was to be built according to the specifications of experts Captains Edward Burr and Lansing H. Beach of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.²⁴

Additional delays in construction resulted from a suit filed on November 19, 1894 by Mrs. Morris to halt blasting at the construction site.²⁵ She claimed that the blasting was damaging her residence, the Prospect House, and submitted affidavits from noted architects Adolf Cluss and Robert I. Fleming, as well as from the closest affected neighbor Mrs. Southworth, to support her claim. Equity Court Case #16006 resulted in various restraining orders and decrees issued between November and the following May and court-ordered supervision of the blasting.²⁶ Excavation and wall construction resumed in May and continued through the spring of 1895.



Detail of Thirty-Sixth Street trench. The property line shown is that of the Capital Traction Co. on Square 1203. Equity Case File #16006, June 15, 1895, RG 21, NAB.

The Retaining Wall on the northern boundary of what is now Lot 840 and the adjoining steps were built as an integral part of the car barn construction, which took place on Square 1203. A drawing presenting a section detail of the excavation site, dated May 8, 1895 and filed with the Equity Court Case, shows that the Thirty-Sixth Street trench for the wall was 16' 3" wide and 26' deep and that only a small fraction of it was within the car barn property line.²⁷

Upon its completion in 1897, the features of the Retaining Walls were described in an article in *Street Railway Review* published July 15, 1898. The description of the building and accompanying illustrations provided in this article likely reflects the actual specifications of the building, which were updated from the equity case drawings during construction.

²⁴ "Doing of the District: Ordering Concerning Retaining Walls at Union Street R.R. Station," *Washington Times*, April 4, 1895, p. 6.

²⁵ Sections of this documentation have been excerpted from *Square 1202: Development Chronology for Modern Lots 64, 840 and Adjoining Properties*, completed for EastBanc, Inc. by EHT Tracerics, Inc. in December 2010.

²⁶ Equity No. 16006, Mary S. Morris vs. Washington and Georgetown R. R. Co. et al., June 15, 1895, Records of the District Courts of the United States, 1685-2009, Record Group 21, National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

²⁷ The section references a Plan that was not located in the Equity Court case file so the exact location of this east-west section is not known.

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After some discussion between the company's architect and the city Building Department as to dimensions it was decided to build the Retaining Walls of concrete, 13 ft. thick at the base, with brick pilasters 4 ft. x 4 ft. at intervals of from 13 to 20 ft. As an additional precaution, box girders were used on the second and third floors abutting the east and west walls, thus bracing them against each other. Girders and I-beams were built into the pilasters parallel to the walls upon which the curtain walls were built to form the exterior of the buildings. In this way "areas" were left between the curtain and Retaining Walls which serve the double function of ventilating shafts and light wells. The inclined wall forming the foot of 36th street, and that portion along the stairway were built of squared rubble (Blue Gneiss) for appearance sake. With the exception of this street wall the walls were all built in trenches; that is, the proper location of the walls being staked out three trenches, intersecting at right angles, were started and carried down to about 3 ft. below the level of the finished first floor. The rock in the trenches was solid and almost without seams and had to be loosened by blasting...²⁸

The horizontal section of these drawings shows the wall extending across Thirty-Sixth Street to the building line on the west side of Thirty-Sixth street. This was the extent of the wall faced in blue gneiss. However, an 1898 illustration of the terminal construction shows that an additional Retaining Wall had been built along the south side of the Southworth property, likely at the same time of the stone-faced canted Retaining Wall. This wall of concrete blocks, set back slightly from the finished Thirty-Sixth Street wall, occupied the northernmost part of original Lot 25 of Square 1202 (now the western half of Lot 804).²⁹

Formal construction of the building itself began in 1895. The official building permit describes the "union passenger station" as three stories in height and measuring 180 feet wide by 242 feet deep. The building proposed was to be clad in brick and granite on a brick, stone and concrete foundation, with a mansard roof clad in tile and asphalt. This massive edifice was estimated to cost \$150,000, approximately \$4 million today.³⁰ The architect was Waddy Butler Wood, and the contractor awarded the project was F. N. Carver. The choice of Wood is significant, as it marked the first Washington and Georgetown Railroad Company terminal designed by a Washington architect.³¹

²⁸ "Union Street Railway Station in Washington," *Street Railway Review* 8, No. 7 (July 15, 1898): 440.

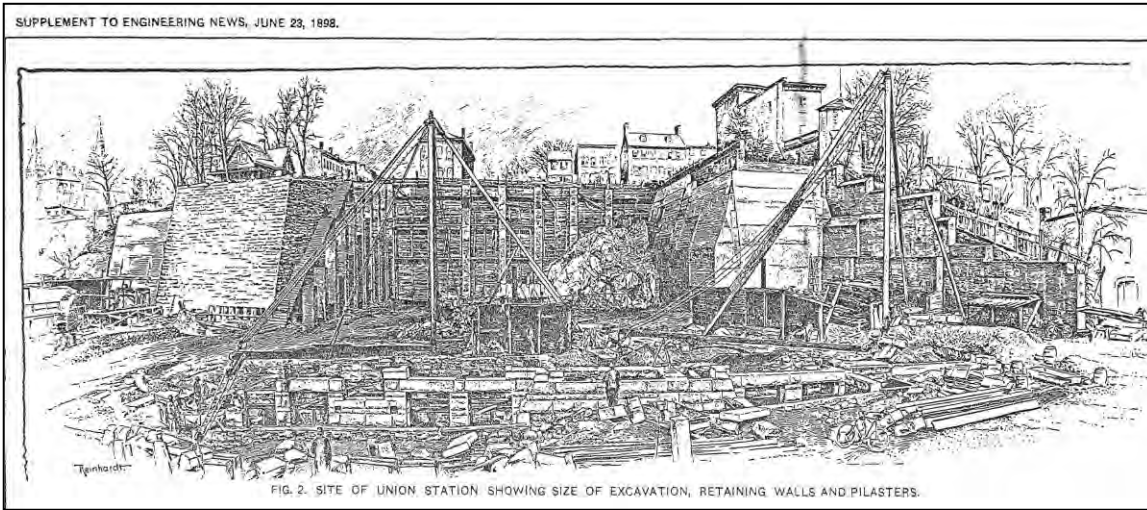
²⁹ In January 2019, the DC Historic Preservation Board approved the subdivision to consolidate Lots 64 and 840.

³⁰ Building Permit #0213, August 7, 1895, District of Columbia Building Permits, 1877-1949, Record Group 351, National Archives and Records Administration.

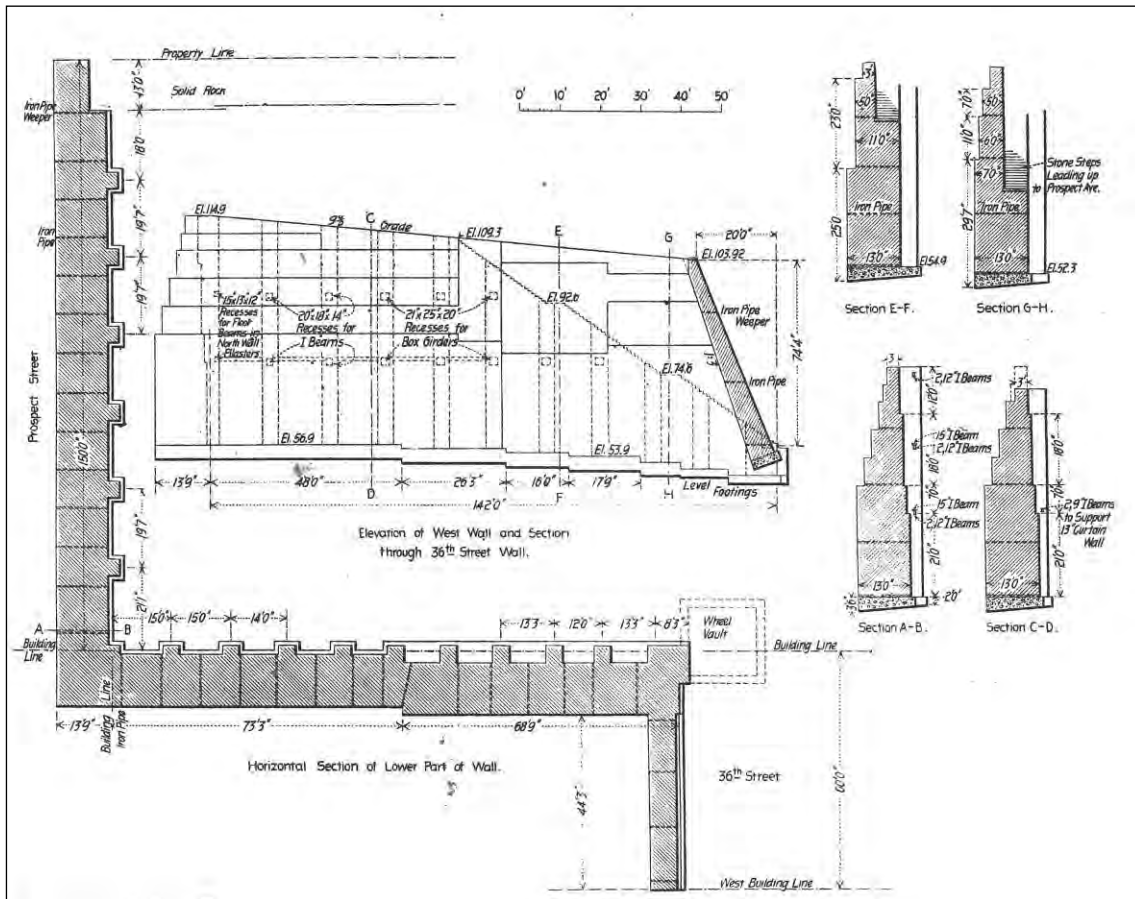
³¹ National Register of Historic Places, Streetcar and Bus Resources of Washington, DC, 1862-1962, Washington, DC, National Register #645-948, E-53.

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Car barn excavation, mid-1895. "Union Street Railway Station in Washington," Street Railway Review 8, no. 7, (July 15, 1898)



Horizontal section of the Retaining Wall, including the portion of the wall on the north side of Lot 840 and provide both an elevation and a section of the Thirty-Sixth Street wall.
 "Union Street Railway Station in Washington," Street Railway Review 8, no. 7, (July 1898): 441.

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Architect: Waddy Butler Wood

The Georgetown Car Barn was Waddy Wood's first large-scale commissions. Wood practiced architecture in Washington from 1892 through 1940, during a period of great expansion and development.³² Self-taught, Wood began by designing modest residences, mostly located in northwest Washington. Following his Georgetown Car Barn commission, he received several other commissions from the Capital Traction Company.

In 1902, Wood formed a partnership with Edmund Donn, Jr. and William I. Deming. Donn, a skilled architect educated at the Boston Institute of Technology (now M.I.T.) and Deming, a construction engineer and graduate of Columbian College (later The George Washington University) complemented the creative Wood. The firm was known for its outstanding and imaginative design while maintaining reasonable and affordable costs through the honest use of materials. Wood, Donn and Deming are credited with several prominent houses in Kalorama including the General Charles Fitzhugh Residence located at 2253 R Street, NW (1904) and the residence located at 2320 S Street, NW (1908), owned most recently by founder and CEO of Amazon Jeff Bezos. The firm also received notable commissions for civic buildings, including an extensive renovation of Providence Hospital (1904), the Fourteenth Street Car Barn (1906), the Masonic Temple at Thirteenth and H Streets, NW (1906-1908), and the Union Trust Bank (1910).

In 1912, the partnership was amicably dissolved. As an independent architect, Wood continued to capture prestigious commissions. He focused his attention on commercial and government work, accepting commissions for residential work only for mansions of Washington's elite. During this period, he designed buildings for large corporations such as the Potomac Electric Company, designing 999 E Street, N.W., the Union Trust Company Building at 738-740 15th Street, NW, the Southern Railway Building at 1500 K Street, NW, the Commercial National Bank at 1405 G Street, NW, and the Department of the Interior Building. His commissions for private interests and large residential structures included the remodeling of the old Holton Arms School, the remodeling of the Chevy Chase Club, and the design for homes of Frederick Delano, George Cabot Lodge, Dr. Cary Grayson, and Henry Fairbanks, whose house at 2340 S Street he later remodeled for Woodrow Wilson. Wood designed All Saints Episcopal Church on Chevy Chase Circle in collaboration with Arthur Heaton.

Wood was also active in and did extensive work with the Washington Architectural Club and the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects, serving as president in 1917 and 1918. Wood retired in 1940 to his country home in Warrenton, Virginia.

³² Sections of this documentation have been excerpted from "Waddy B. Wood," *District of Columbia Architects Directory*, V. 3, completed for the DC Historic Preservation Office by EHT Tracerics, Inc. in October 2010.

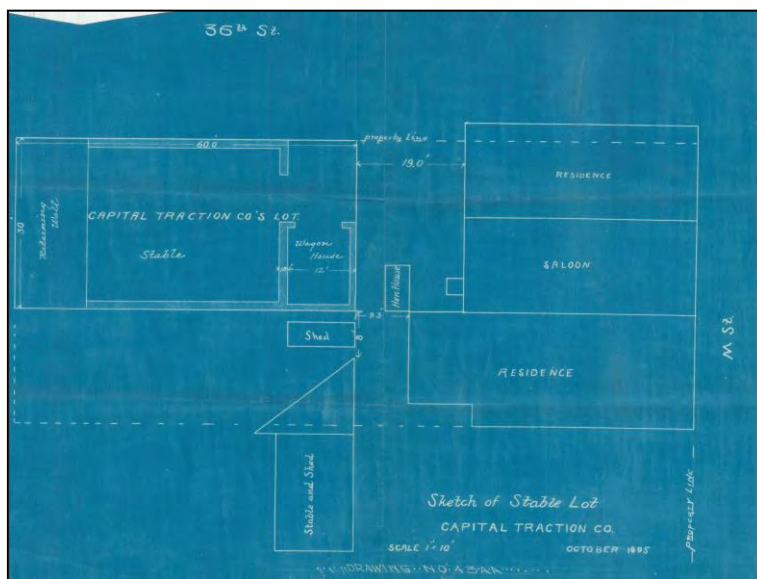
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Throughout his career, Wood was known for using an eclectic range of styles, ranging from classical to Spanish Colonial, that reflected the fashions of the day. The Georgetown Car Barn was no exception, designed in the Romanesque style prevalent in the late 19th century. The façade of the car barn closely resembles buildings designed by other devotees of H. H. Richardson, such as the Minneapolis City Hall (Long and Kees), Washington's Old Post Office (Edbrooke), and Richmond, Virginia's Old City Hall (Myers); this particular expression of the style, with its blocky central massing and tall clock tower was



once mocked as “a cross between a cathedral and a cotton mill.”³³

DC Permit #1094, February 2, 1896, RG 328, NARA II.

Shortly after receiving a permit for the main Union Station, the Capital Traction Company applied for a permit in February 1896 to build a two-story brick stable across the Thirty-Sixth Street right-of-way. As with the Station, the stable was designed by Waddy Wood.³⁴ A drawing that accompanied the stable building permit shows that the stable abutted the concrete retaining wall, which extended about 13 feet into Lot 25. With plans to construct a stable behind extant buildings, it is likely that the Capital Traction Company never intended to have the concrete Retaining Wall visible. The stable was razed in 1955. Since this time, the concrete-faced Retaining Wall, the stone-faced Retaining Wall, and the steps have all remained visible from Virginia, and acts as a gateway from Virginia to Georgetown.

The Capital Traction Company and the Opening of the Union Station

In 1895, the W&G CO merged with the Rock Creek Railway Company to create the Capital Traction Company. That same year, the Capital Traction Company acquired Lot 25 of Square 1202 from Charles C. Glover, head of Riggs & Company (later Riggs Bank). Shortly after receiving a permit for the main Union Station, the Capital Traction Company applied for a permit to build a two-story brick stable associated with the Union Station in February 1896. As with the station, the stable was designed by Waddy Wood.³⁵ A drawing that accompanied the stable building permit shows that the stable abutted the concrete retaining wall indicating that the Capital Traction Company never intended the concrete retaining wall to be visible. However, the

³³ “Congress and the Questions of Expansion and Increased Armaments Confronting It”. *New York Times*, November 8, 1898.

³⁴ DC Build Permit #1094, February 11, 1896, District of Columbia Building Permits, 1877-1949, Record Group 351, National Archives and Records Administration.

³⁵ DC Build Permit #1094, February 11, 1896, District of Columbia Building Permits, 1877-1949, Record Group 351, National Archives and Records Administration.

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stable was razed in 1955, leaving the concrete-faced retaining wall, the stone-faced retaining wall, and the steps all visible.

The Capital Traction Company Union Station opened on May 27, 1897 as the “first edifice of its kind in the country.”³⁶ It also provided Washington with its only cable loop. The building was well-received, described as “undoubtedly the finest structure in historic Georgetown” and as “an architectural triumph [that] combines the qualities of strength and grace.”³⁷

The lower section of the exterior wall was clad in pink granite brought from Massachusetts quarries, while the upper stories were built of “Ohio mottle brown brick,” with white cast stone details around the doors and windows.³⁸ The roof sported half-round barrel tiles. The massive central elevator tower rose 140 feet from ground level at M Street, and was immediately visible from most of Georgetown and across the river in Rosslyn.³⁹ A decorative stone pediment was centrally located above the first story in front of the elevator tower, featuring the words “Capital Traction.”



Historic American Buildings Survey Copy of c. 1900 Photograph
(from Private Collection of Leroy O. King).
*Historic American Building Survey (HABS No. DC-125), “Capital
Traction Union Station,” Library of Congress, Prints and
Photographs Division.*

³⁶ “Fine New Union Station,” *Washington Times*, May 28, 1897.

³⁷ “Fine New Union Station”; “Where Car Lines Meet: New Union Station Will Be in Operation To-Day,” *The Washington Post*, May 27, 1897.

³⁸ “Fine New Union Station.”

³⁹ Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS No. DC-125), “Capital Traction Company Union Station,” (Arlington: National Park Service, 1966).

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The original interior spaces, including the waiting rooms, offices, and conductors' lounges, were elegantly fitted with oak trim, ornate plasterwork with gilded detailing, fashionable "Nile green" painted walls, and "granata" tile floors.⁴⁰ Wrought ironwork stairs with oak balusters connected the floors and an elegant brass-fitted elevator was installed in the tower. At the rear of the building were the 'car storage rooms', floored in "Virginia cement" with 10-13 rows of tracks 140 feet long and storage for 225 cars on three floors. Because of the cars' metal wheels which occasionally created sparks when in contact with the metal rail lines, the entire building was designed to be fireproof; no wooden beams were used, only steel girders, and the walls were entirely built of brick and stone.⁴¹

Later Alterations to the Capital Traction Company Union Station

The evolution of streetcar traction, in addition to the consolidation of the railroad companies, prompted several changes in use and a series of interior and exterior alterations to the Georgetown Car Barn. In 1906 and again in 1908, portions of the second floor were converted into office space because the terminal was not being used to the extent originally envisioned.

In 1910, the Capital Traction Company applied for a permit to "move out and change front [of building] from first story up. Install new transfer table and install passenger and freight elevators, strengthen floors and roof, change tracks, change arches in 1st story front, change offices, install new plumbing."⁴² This work was necessary to accommodate larger street cars. In addition to the changes described above, the roof was redesigned from a series of hipped roofs to a flat roof. The decorative stone pediment was moved to the third story of the central projecting bay.

Over the next decade, the Capital Traction Company applied for several permits for interior alterations on the second and third floor. In 1921 and 1922, part of the car storage area on the second and third floors along the west side of the building was converted to office space. In December 1933, the Washington Railway and Electric Company and the Capital Traction Company merged to form the Capital Transit Company.⁴³ Headquarters for this new company were housed in the Georgetown Car Barn. To accommodate the influx of workers, the interior of the building was again retrofitted, and resulted in the conversion of the entire third floor from car barn to office. The closed passageway from Prospect Street to M Street across the roof was removed, and the roof in the central portion of the building was removed to form a large light well on the third floor.⁴⁴

In the 1950s, the last streetcars were removed from the building and all of the former open car storage was converted entirely to office use. New systems, including central air-conditioning, were installed at that time. Additionally, ceilings that had been built to clear street cars were

⁴⁰ "First Edifice of Its Kind in the Country Opened for Business". *Washington Times*, May 28, 1897.

⁴¹ "Georgetown Union Depot is rapidly Nearing Completion", *The Morning Times*, September 6, 1896.

⁴² DC Alteration Permit #6311, May 10, 1910, District of Columbia Building Permits, 1877-1949, Record Group 351, National Archives and Records Administration.

⁴³ LeRoy O. King, Jr., *100 Years of Capital Traction: The Story of Streetcars in the Nation's Capital* (Taylor Publishing Company, 1972), 130.

⁴⁴ Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS No. DC-125).

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lowered to normal height and acoustically treated to reduce noise, fluorescent lighting was installed, walls were papered, and carpets were installed on nearly all floor surfaces. These improvements made it possible to consolidate all of the general office functions for the Capital Traction Company into the Car Barn.⁴⁵

*The Fall of the Capital Transit Company*⁴⁶

In January of 1955, Capitol Transit Company was operating deeply in the red. The company repeatedly sought a fare increase from the Public Utilities Commission, only to be rebuffed because of massive public protest against the added financial burden and the widespread knowledge that the company's financial problems were directly related to the enormous dividends paid out by the four Wolfson brothers, who had purchased a controlling interest in the company in 1949.⁴⁷

When transit workers launched a strike for higher wages in July 1955, management refused to negotiate without a commitment from the Public Utilities Commission for a fair increase. By putting the Public Utilities Commission in this position, the Wolfson group angered Congress, who enacted Public Law 389, which gave the Commissioners of the District of Columbia the right to settle the strike and revoke the company's franchise.⁴⁸

After several months of searching, the Capital Transit franchise was purchased by O. Roy Chalk, a New York financier who also owned controlling interest in Trans Caribbean Airways.⁴⁹ The charter of his new company, DC Transit Systems, Inc., specified the elimination of streetcars from Washington's streets by 1963, despite the fact that Chalk had initially proposed retaining some rail lines. Ultimately, the lines were phased out over a five-year period, with the last day of service occurring on January 28, 1962. The incremental closure of streetcar lines or conversion of streetcar lines into bus routes was coordinated with other major public works projects in the city and suburbs. Such public works projects included the redevelopment of the southwest quadrant of the city and the widening and re-decking of the Key Bridge.

Washington was among the last major cities to retain a high degree of streetcar services. As the streetcar was rendered obsolete, Chalk renovated the Car Barn as headquarters for the Capital Transit Company and quietly turned the building into an income-producing private real-estate venture. Chalk installed new electrical, plumbing, and climate-control systems, dropped ceilings, installed new fluorescent lighting, and laid carpeting.⁵⁰ The building's interior appeared identical to any other 1960s' office space and nearly all the 1895 interior finishes were removed, if any had remained after the renovations of 1911 and 1933.

⁴⁵ Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS No. DC-125).

⁴⁶ Sections of this documentation have been excerpted from *Georgetown Car Barn: Development Chronology*, completed for Douglas Development by EHT Tracerics, Inc. in 2016.

⁴⁷ Zachery M Schrag, *The Great Society Subway: A History of the Washington Metro* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 27-31.

⁴⁸ King, Jr., *100 Years of Capital Traction*, 171.

⁴⁹ Zachery M Schrag, *The Great Society Subway: A History of the Washington Metro* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 27-31.

⁵⁰ Penney, O.E. Valuation Engineer for D.C. Transit Company, Statement December 18, 1961.

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Soon Chalk began repeating the Wolfson brothers' strategy of using public transit for private gain, just less ostentatiously. In FY 1966, the M Street trolley car building operated at a substantial \$90,207 profit- all of it going directly to Chalk.⁵¹ In 1967, Chalk was ordered by the WMATC to return \$500,000 to the District that he received from the sale of the Trinidad Car Barn, and four other buildings named in the case as public property that Chalk had sold to private holding companies and leased back to the District.⁵²

In 1972, the WMATA Metro Subway authority was authorized by Congress to take over the Washington, DC-area bus lines as part of a cooperative transportation system. Chalk negotiated a sale of DC Transit's assets that greatly benefited the company's stockholders including Chalk and his wife who retained significant company real estate. The real estate included horse farms in Middleburg and Annandale, trolley rights-of-way on DC and Maryland streets, a defunct power station, and six former streetcar barns.⁵³ A small photo that accompanies a 1972 article about the sale identifies the Georgetown Car Barn as the "D.C. Transit Headquarters." In 1985, the Old Georgetown Board approved a plan to allow for a partial fourth story addition. The rooftop addition, designed by Arthur Cotton Moore, recalls the historic roof line. Six dormers with hipped roofs extend south from the wings added east and west of the clock tower. The east and west projecting block feature turrets on all corners. The concept also included the addition of accessory parking and an addition of an atrium.⁵⁴

The car barn continued as an office building, owned and leased by Chalk, until his holdings were dissolved in the early 1990's. The fraternal benefit organization The Lutheran Brotherhood (now Thrivent Financial) purchased the building at foreclosure in 1992, and in 1997, sold the property to DC development company Douglas Development. Douglas Jemal, president of the company, called it a "phenomenal building" and planned major renovations to the building for use as offices and classroom space.⁵⁵ In 1999, Douglas Development completed several renovations to the building, including the addition of an open-air pavilion on the roof terrace.⁵⁶

Since then, the building has seen other renovations; in 2016 the large wooden doors enclosing the arched openings in the west end wing were converted to fully glazed windows. The building is currently leased to Georgetown University and is used as classroom, office space and library space for a wide range of University graduate departments.⁵⁷

⁵¹ "Chalk Ordered to Put Back \$500,000."

⁵² "Chalk Ordered to Put Back \$500,000," *Washington Post*, July 7, 1967.

⁵³ "Chalk to Maintain Control of Properties After Switch", *The Washington Post: Metro*, December 3, 1972.

⁵⁴ OG 85-222, July 31, 1985; Old Georgetown Act Numbered Case Files, 1950-1991; Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Record Group 66; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁵⁵ Douglas Fruehling, "Jemal to Buy Georgetown's Car Barn," *Washington Business Journal*, April 4, 1997.

⁵⁶ OG 99-81, January 6, 1999; Old Georgetown Act Numbered Case Files, 1950-1991; Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Record Group 66; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

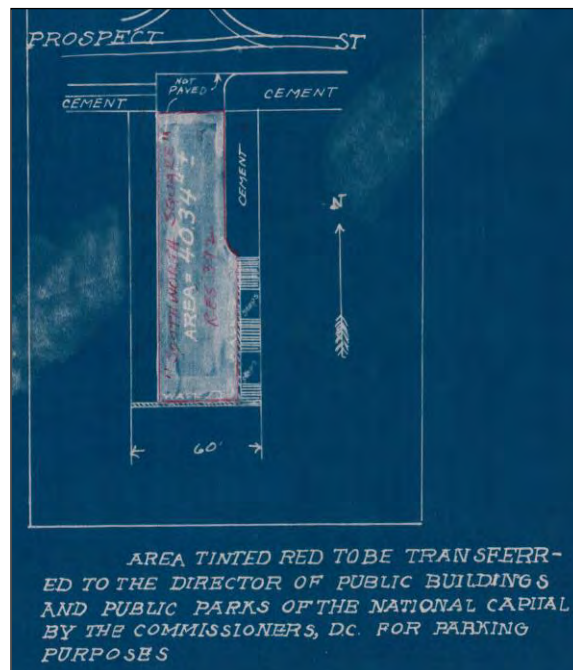
⁵⁷ "The Car Barn," Douglas Development Corporation Property Management, accessed November 2018, <http://douglasdevelopment.com/properties/the-car-barn/>.

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Evolution of Thirty-Sixth Street, NW and Establishment of Lot 840⁵⁸

In 1926, at the request of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia, the Federal Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital assumed jurisdiction over the center section of the Thirty-Sixth Street right-of-way north of the Retaining Wall. It became Reservation 392. It is unclear whether this conveyance includes the top (upper portion) of the canted Retaining Wall. A map in the D.C. Office of the Surveyor file for Reservation 392 appears to indicate that the south side of the property conveyed to the federal government for park purposes, referred to as “Southworth Square,” was bounded to the south by, but did not include, the top of the Retaining Wall. However, a plat of the property at the time it was conveyed back to the District in 1958 shows the conveyed property as being 125’ north to south – a length that would probably include the top of the wall.⁵⁹ The District retained ownership of what would have been the sidewalk area on each side of the center section of the roadway. The east area included the stone stairway and concrete sidewalk leading from Prospect Street to the stairway that provided a pedestrian connection between Prospect and M Streets.



36th Street right-of-way showing center portion, tinted white and bounded in red, transferred to federal government as parkland.
D.C. Office of the Surveyor, Reservation No. 392 file.

In 1949, a dwelling had been constructed on the site of the previously razed Southworth Cottage.⁶⁰ Subsequently, in 1950, the District Commissioners conveyed the west 15 feet of the Thirty-Sixth Street right-of-way north of the Retaining Wall to the owner of the abutting property, Lot 832 (3600 Prospect Street, N.W., subsequently Lot 837). In addition to the 15 foot-wide strip conveyed outright to the owner of 3600 Prospect Street, N.W. by the District, the owner obtained a permit from the National Park Service to use the federally owned center portion of the roadway as part of the garden of the dwelling at 3600 Prospect Street.⁶¹ The permit expired in 1954, and in October 1958, the federal government transferred ownership of

⁵⁸ Sections of this documentation have been excerpted from *Square 1202: Development Chronology for Modern Lots 64, 840 and Adjoining Properties*, completed for EastBanc, Inc. by EHT Tracerics, Inc. in December 2010.

⁵⁹ D.C. Office of the Surveyor, Reservation 392 file.

⁶⁰ The Southworth Cottage was demolished between 1937 and 1945. DC Build Permit #321179, August 1, 1949, District of Columbia Building Permits, 1877-1949, Record Group 351, National Archives and Records Administration.

⁶¹ D.C. Office of the Surveyor, Subdivision Book 131/59.

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Reservation 392 to the District.⁶² Despite public objections at various times, the District-owned property continues to be fenced and maintained by the owners of 3600 Prospect Street as their private garden.

The southern half of Thirty-Sixth Street remained open until 1951. The D.C. Commissioners, in an order effective February 15, 1951, closed a 3,060-square foot portion of the street including the Retaining Wall and part of the street south of it.⁶³ On the west, the line of the closed portion ran 60 feet south along the line of the property where the 1896 stable had been constructed by Capital Traction. From there the line ran 51 feet east, then north 60 feet, then west 51 feet. The easternmost part of the Thirty-Sixth Street right-of-way, 9 feet by 60 feet, beginning at the base of the steps, remained open, providing access from the steps to Thirty-Sixth Street and M Street. The southernmost part of Thirty-Sixth Street, 60 feet long from north to south and 60 feet wide from east to west, remained in the public domain. The ownership of the closed portion reverted to the abutting owner, the owner of Lot 800 which had previously been part of Lot 25. The following month, Assessment and Taxation Lot 840 was established from the combined plots.⁶⁴

The Exorcist

William Peter Blatty (1928-2017) was born in New York. Following high school, he received a scholarship to Georgetown University. It was at Georgetown where he first heard the story of a 14-year-old boy from Mount Rainier, Maryland who was freed by a Catholic priest of possession of the devil. This story served as the inspiration for Blatty's 1971 horror novel, *The Exorcist*. Following the extraordinary success of the book, which had been on the bestseller lists for over a year and had sold more than 13 million copies in the United States alone, Blatty sold film rights to Warner Brothers. Blatty served as the movie's screenwriter. William Friedkin, who had just completed directed the 1971 Academy Award winning film *The French Connection*, was selected to direct *The Exorcist*.

In 1972, *The Exorcist*, starring Linda Blair, was filmed on location in Georgetown. The climax of the film – the exorcism – took place on the stone steps adjacent to the Capital Traction Union Station. The film was released in 1973. It was an immediate success. The film broke box office records and was nominated for ten Academy awards, winning two: best adapted screenplay and best sound. The film was also awarded a Golden Scroll statuette for best horror film of the year from the Academy of Fantasy and Horror Films. Considered an iconic film, in 2000, it was re-released with additional footage. The re-release grossed \$40 million in the US alone.

Commemorative Plaque. *EHT Traceries*, 2018.

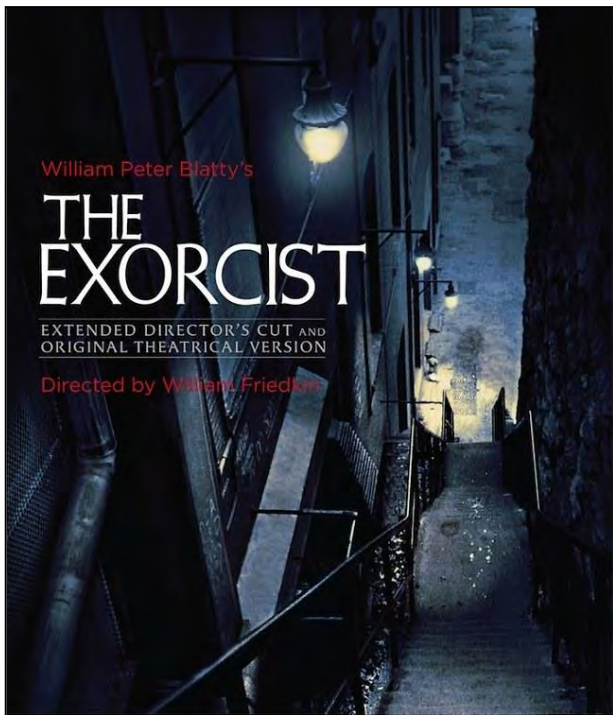
⁶² D.C. Office of the Surveyor, Subdivision Book 138/165.

⁶³ D.C. Office of the Surveyor, Subdivision Book 131/187.

⁶⁴ D.C. Office of the Surveyor, Assessment and Taxation Plat Book 12_3322_J_3332_Z.

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The Exorcist film jacket. Google Images.

The movie's popularity has brought thousands of tourists to the steps over the last forty years. Due to the notoriety of the film, the stairway have become known as the *Exorcist Steps*. On October 30, 2015, DC Mayor Muriel Bowser, along with Ward 2 Councilmember Jack Evans, Councilmember At-Large Vincent Orange, Ward 4 Councilmember Brandon Todd, Georgetown University President Jack DeGioia, were joined by William Friedkin and William Blatty, the Academy Award-winning director and screenwriter duo behind the 1973 classic horror film *The Exorcist* to officially commemorate the famed steps. In a statement produced by the DC Office of Cable Television, Film, Music and Entertainment, Mayor Bowser said, "The famed Exorcist Steps not only pay tribute to an iconic film but have also become part of the District's rich film history. This recognition is more than deserving and I am confident this landmark will continue to be a favorite destination for residents, tourists, and students for decades to come."⁶⁵ A plaque, located at the foot of the stairs, was revealed during this ceremony.

⁶⁵ "Ahead of Halloween, Mayor Bowser to Commemorate 'Exorcist Steps,'" *Office of Cable Television, Film, Music and Entertainment*, October 26, 2015, accessed January 30, 2018, <https://film.dc.gov/release/ahead-halloween-mayor-bowser-commemorate-%E2%80%9Cexorcist-steps%E2%80%9D>.

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Conclusion

The Capital Traction Company Union Station, retaining wall, and stairway, constructed in 1895-1897, are already considered contributing resources to the Georgetown Historic District; however, their significance goes beyond their contribution to the Georgetown Historic District. The Car Barn, the first station of its kind in the country, represents a significant and dramatic shift from independent streetcar operations to a new paradigm of cooperation among private owners of public transportation concerns. The retaining wall was integral for providing as much room as possible to store the rail cars that operated throughout the District, Maryland, and Virginia. The stairway remains an important pedestrian link in Georgetown. Further, the acclaimed 1973 film *The Exorcist* captured the site as the location of the dramatic climax of the film. The site's ongoing importance to tourism and the film industry in the District was solidified in 2015 with the presentation of a plaque on the site by DC Mayor Muriel Bowser.



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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

District of Columbia Office of Cable Television, Film, Music and Entertainment.

<https://film.dc.gov/release/ahead-halloween-mayor-bowser-commemorate-%E2%80%9Cexorcist-steps%E2%80%9D> (Accessed January 30, 2018).

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The Evening Star. Newsbank. www.newsbank.com (accessed December 5, 2016).

Fruehling, Douglas, "Jemal to Buy Georgetown's Car Barn." *Washington Business Journal*, April 4-10, 1997.

Hahn, Gilbert. *Notebook of a Native Washingtonian*. Washington, DC: University Press of America, 2004.

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"Union Street Station in Washington." *Street Railway Review* 8, no. 7 (July 15, 1898).

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U.S. Commission of Fine Arts. *Georgetown Architecture – Northwest*. Historic American Buildings Survey Selections, Number 6. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970.

“The Car Barn”, Douglas Development Corporation Property Management. Available <http://douglasdevelopment.com/properties/the-car-barn/> (Accessed November 2018).

The Washington Post. Proquest Historical Newspapers. www.proquest.com (accessed December 5, 2016).

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 # DC-125
- 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): _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 1.2 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 38.90545 | Longitude: -77.06985 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

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

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

The Georgetown Car Barn is located on Lot 47 in Square 1203. The Georgetown Retaining Wall is located in Square 1202 on a portion of Assessment and Tax Lot 840. Lot 840 is bound to the north by US Reservation 392, to the east and south by Thirty-Sixth Street, and to the west by Tax and Assessment Lot 64. The steps are located to the east of US Reservation 392 and to the west of Square 1203. The stairs are considered a sidewalk by the District of Columbia and are in public space.

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Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The selected boundary encompasses the area within which the Car Barn, Retaining Wall, and stairs are located. The boundaries are consistent with the property's legal description, as delineated in the land records of the District of Columbia.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Alyssa Stein/Historian
organization: EHT Traceries, Inc.
street & number: 440 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
city or town: Washington state: DC zip code: 20001
e-mail alyssa.stein@traceries.com
telephone: 202.393.1199
date: November 9, 2018

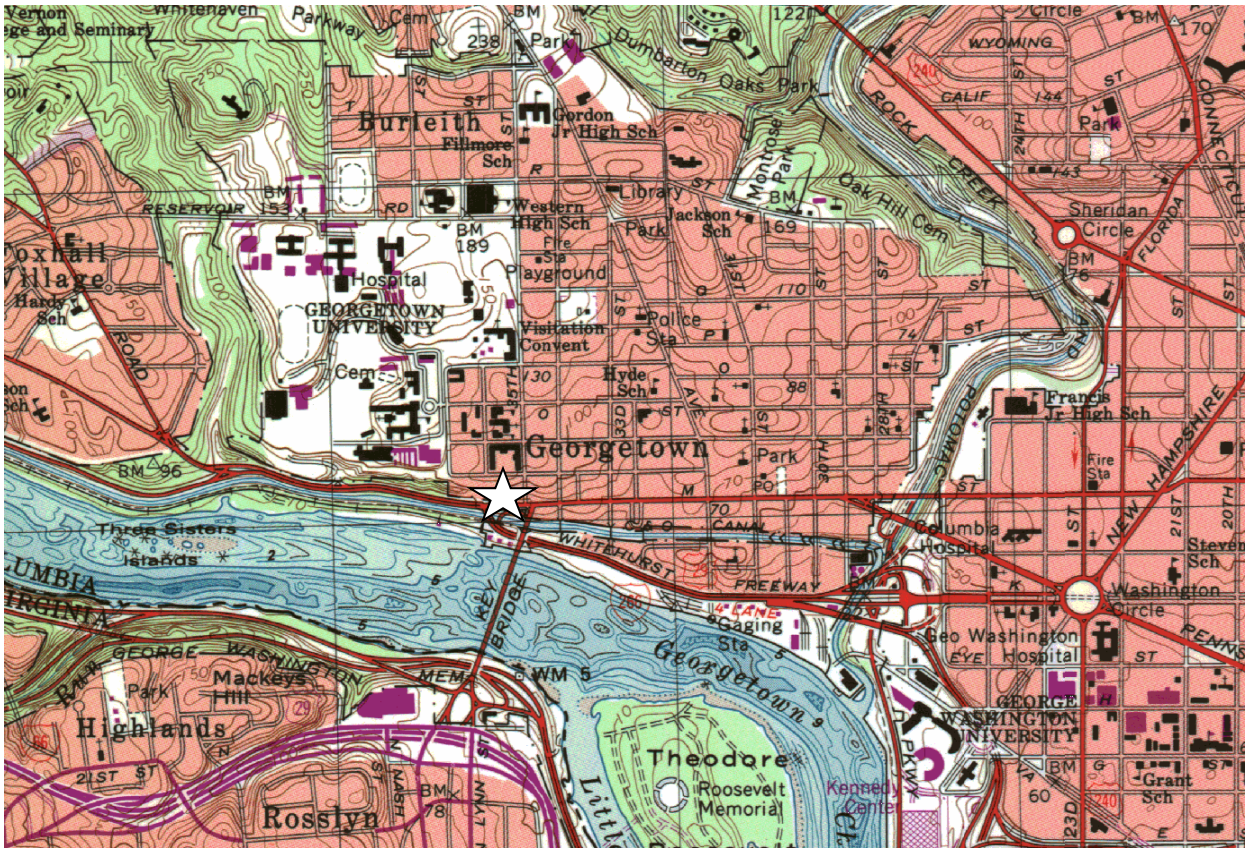
Additional Documentation

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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USGS Washington West Quad

Site of Capital Traction Company Union Station (Georgetown Car Barn)

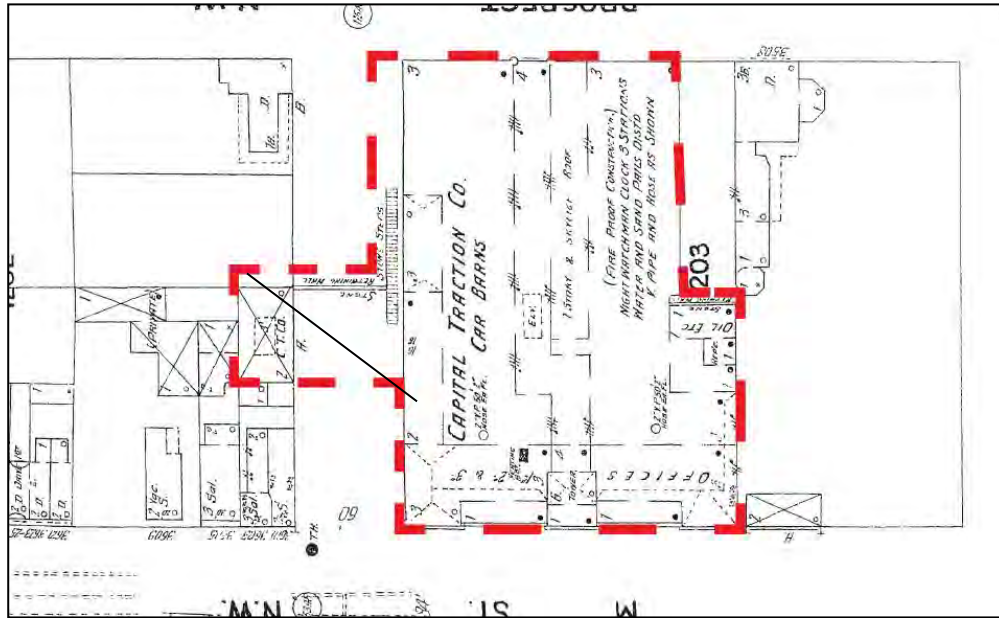
3600 M Street NW

Latitude 38.90545

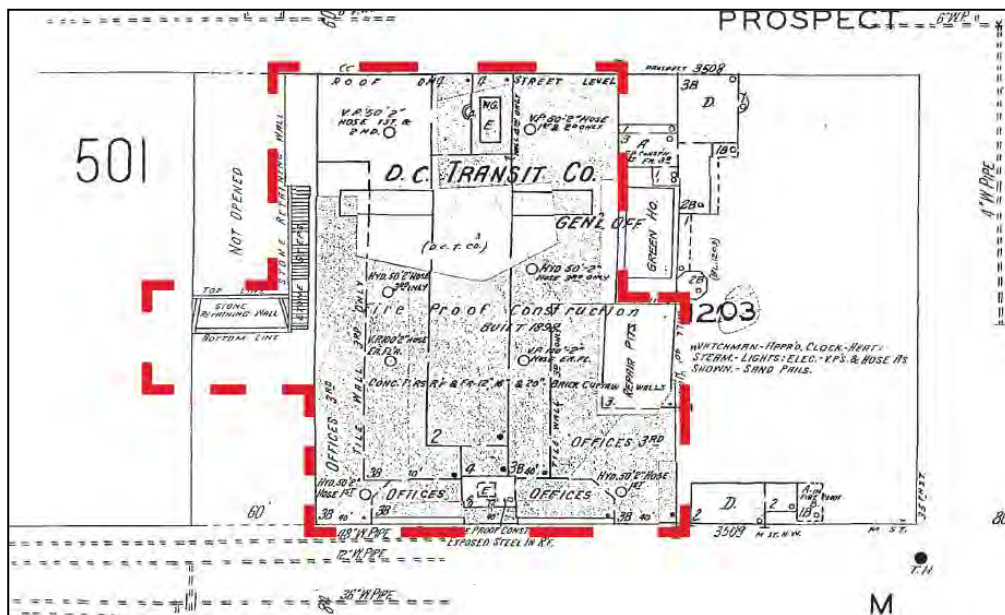
Longitude: -77.06985

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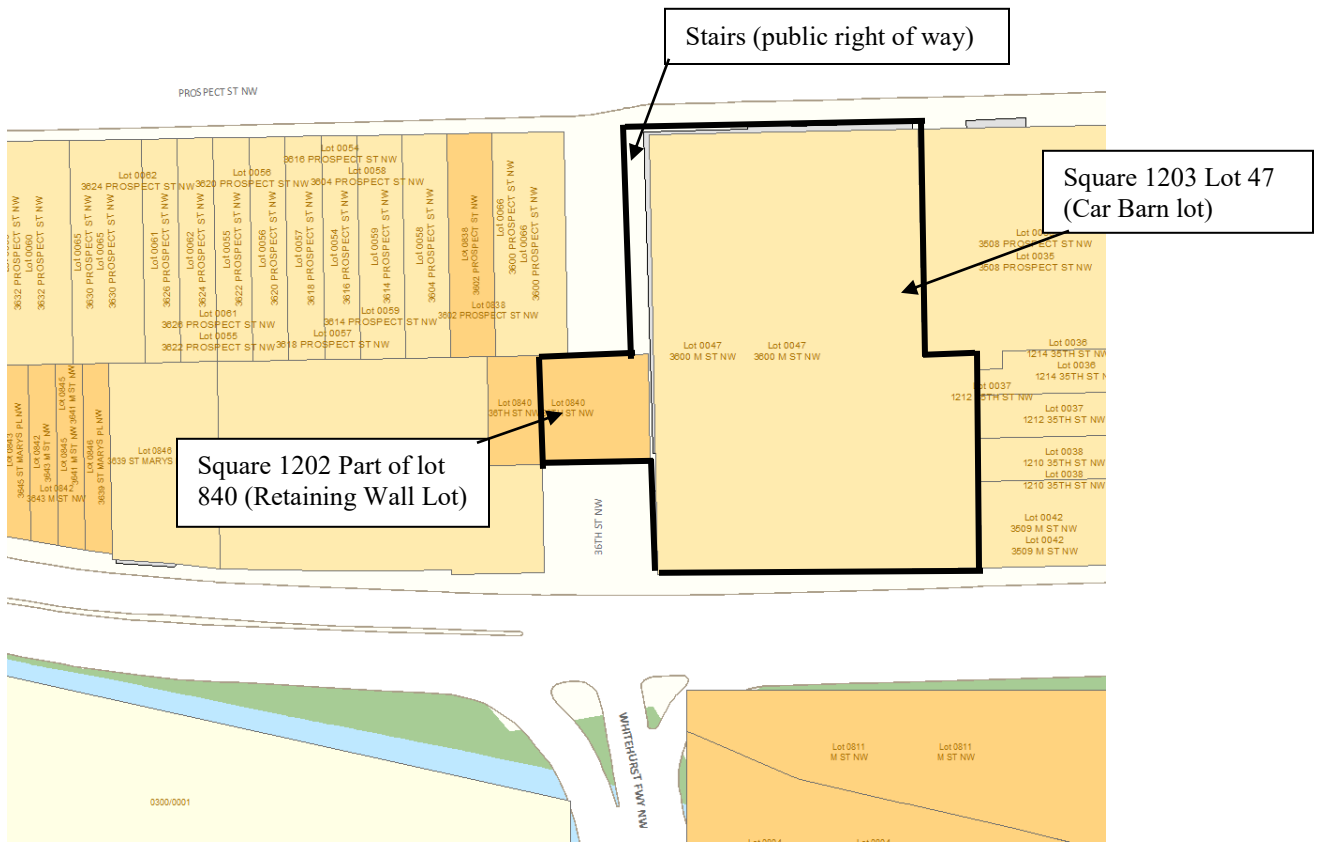
1903 Sanborn Map, sheet 61.
National Register boundaries outlined in red.



1960 Sanborn Map.
National Register boundaries outlined in red.

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Site Plan showing National Register boundaries with Square and Lot numbers identified

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Photographs

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

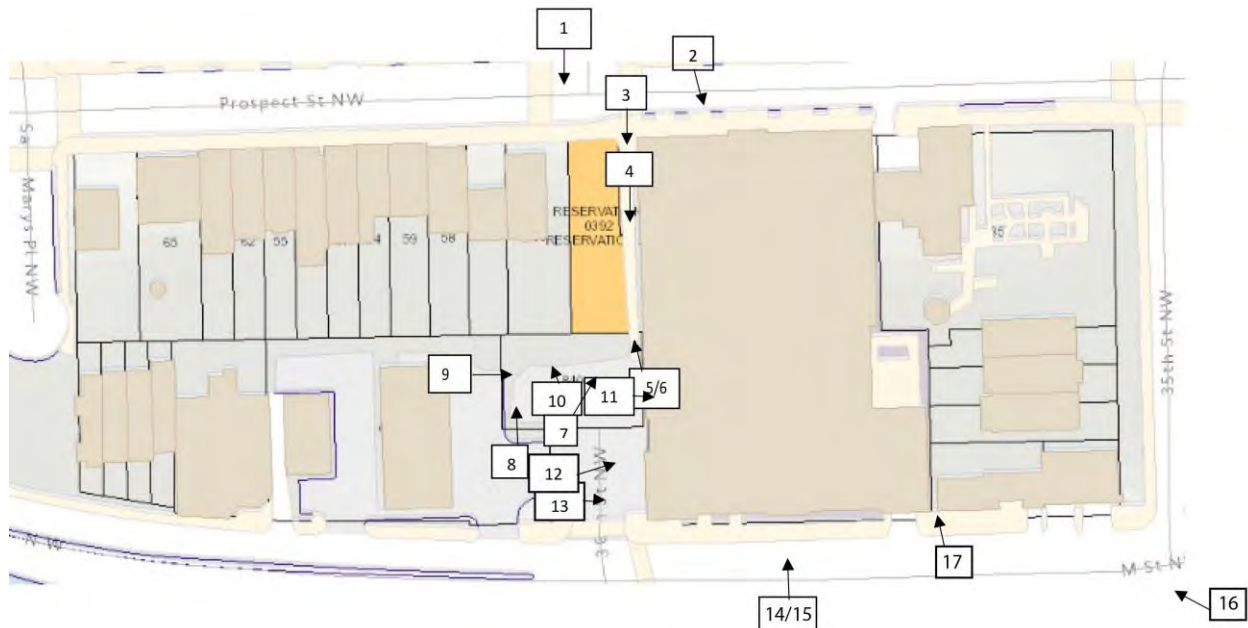


Photo Log

Name of Property: Georgetown Retaining Wall, Exorcist Steps
City or Vicinity: Washington
County: State: District of Columbia
Photographer: Alyssa Stein
Date Photographed: January 31, 2017

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

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Photo 1 of 19
View from Prospect Street looking south to car barn and stairs from above



Photo 2 of 19
View looking south from Prospect Street to entrance of car barn



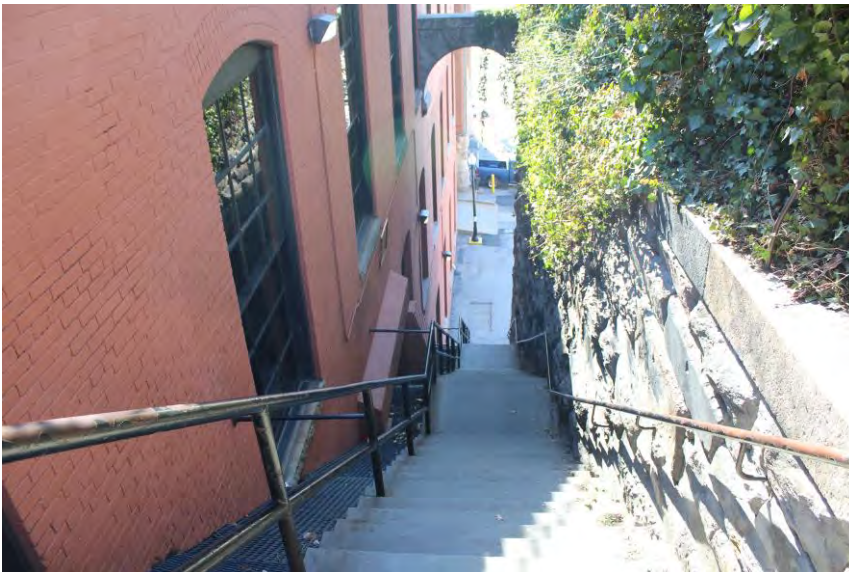
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Photo 3 of 19
View from Prospect Street looking south at top of stairs



Image 4 of 19.
Top of stairway looking south to M Street NW with carbarn on left and retaining wall on right



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Image 5 of 19

Foot of stairway at base near M Street, looking up in a northern direction.



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Image 6 of 19

Base of Stairs and Retaining wall on left looking northwest.



Image 7 of 19

View looking northeast showing Retaining Wall and west side wall of car barn



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Image 8 of 19

View looking north showing two sections of Retaining Wall (concrete and stone-faced)



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Image 9 of 19

View looking east showing exposed cant of stone-faced Retaining Wall, looking east.



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Image 10 of 19

Commemorative plaque, located on west elevation of Georgetown Car Barn, looking east.



Image 11 of 19

View looking northwest showing south and east elevations



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Image 12 of 19

View looking northeast at west end wall, showing detail of glazed openings



Image 13 of 19

View looking northeast showing detail of roofline at southwest corner of building



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Image 14 of 19
View looking skyward at central block, south elevation



Image 15 of 19
"Capital Traction" pediment, south elevation.



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Image 16 of 19
View looking northwest showing south and east elevations



Image 17 of 19.
Detail of corner medallion, southeast corner of building, looking northwest



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Image 18 of 19

Interior conference room in southwest corner of first floor.



Image 19 of 19

Interior of garage showing extant streetcar rails



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.



3500
PROSPECT ST

3600



CAR BARN

3520

















THE EXORCIST STEPS

These iconic steps were featured in William Friedkin's 1973 Warner Bros. classic motion picture, based on the novel and screenplay by William Peter Blatty, *The Exorcist*.

In the film's climactic ending,
Father Karras (actor Jason Miller)
plummets the seventy-five steps to his death.

Commemorated on this day, October 30, 2015.

Muriel Bowser
Mayor

Jack Evans
Ward 2 Councilmember



12th




THE OLD BANK

WV
00







THE CAR BARN



III
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CAPITAL TRACTION

C
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Capital Traction Company Union Station

Multiple Name: Streetcar and Bus Resources of Washington, DC MPS

State & County: DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, District of Columbia

Date Received: 6/25/2019 Date of Pending List: 7/19/2019 Date of 16th Day: 8/5/2019 Date of 45th Day: 8/9/2019 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number: MP100004248

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 type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject 8/9/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: The Capital Traction Company Union Station is locally significant under National Register Criteria A and C in the areas of Architecture, Engineering, and Transportation. Opened in 1897, the building was constructed to serve as a single large station for several independent streetcar operations. The imposing building, the work of architect Waddy B. Wood, was a major component of the city's expanding turn of the century private/public transit system. The building's 1895-1897 original design and its significant 1910-1911 redesign represent fine local examples of early twentieth century design and engineering. The challenging construction process necessary to complete the project, resulting in not only the substantial fireproof station but also the adjoining stone and concrete retaining walls and unique staircase, reflected a significant engineering undertaking.

Recommendation/ Criteria: Accept NR Criteria A and C

Reviewer Paul Lusignan Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2229 Date 8/9/2019

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

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE



MEMO

DATE: June 24, 2019

TO: Paul Lusignan

FROM: Kim Williams *KW*

RE: Transmittal Letter for Capital Traction Company Union Station (Georgetown Car Barn)

Please find enclosed ^{two}~~three~~ disks for the Capital Traction Company Union Station 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.