

3/02

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

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Yale Steam Laundry

Other names/site number: _____

2. Location

Street & Number: 437-443 New York Avenue, NW [] Not for Publication

City or town: District of Columbia [] Vicinity

State: Washington Code: DC County: District of Columbia Code: 001 Zip Code: 20001

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 [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide [] locally. ([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

JAN 26 1999

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
() see continuation sheet

determined eligible for the National Register
() see continuation sheet

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other, (explain:)

3/18/99

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Yale Steam Laundry
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building(s)	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> Buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> Public-Local	<input type="checkbox"/> District	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> Sites
<input type="checkbox"/> Public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> Site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> Structure
<input type="checkbox"/> Public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> Objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> Object	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing
N/A

Number of contributing
Resources previously
listed in the National
Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories
from instructions)
COMMERCE/TRADE: Specialty Store

Current Functions (enter
categories from instructions)
VACANT: Not in Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)
Renaissance Revival
Georgian Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)
foundation: Brick
walls: Brick
roof: Built-up Composite
other: _____

Narrative Description

Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets
 See Continuation Sheet

Yale Steam Laundry
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark x in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

[X] See Continuation Sheet

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Industry

Commerce

Period of Significance

1902-1949

Significant Dates

1902

1919

1924

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Thomas Francis

A.B. Mullett and Co.

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9. Major Bibliographic References

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67)

previously listed in the NR

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of add. data:

State SHPO office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property 47,528 square feet

UTM References

1 1 / 8 3 / 2 / 5 / 0 / 0 / 0 4 / 3 / 0 / 7 / 9 / 2 / 0
Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The Yale Steam Laundry at 437-443 New York Avenue, NW is located in Square 514 on Lots 6 and 87 in Washington, D.C.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The main cleaning facility of the Yale Steam Laundry has been historically associated with Lot 87 since the construction of the building in 1902, and the addition in 1924. The related stable/garage has been historically associated with Lot 6 since its construction in 1919.

See continuation sheet

Yale Steam Laundry
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title Laura V. Trieschmann and Robin J. Weidlich, Architectural Historians
Organization E.H.T. Traceries Inc. Date December 17, 1998
Street & Number 5420 Western Avenue Telephone (301) 656-5283
City or Town Chevy Chase State Maryland Zip code 20815

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name Yale Steam Limited Partnership
street & number 1700 Kalorama Road, NW telephone 202/966-7800
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20009

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. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of the Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Yale Steam Laundry, 437-443 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C.

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DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

Site

The Yale Steam Laundry Building and Stable/Garage is located at 437 and 443 New York Avenue, in the northwest quadrant of Washington, D.C. The property encompasses the main 1902 steam laundry building, the 1919 stable/garage, and the 1924 addition on the east elevation of the main laundry building. Sited on Square 514, the buildings sit at the juncture of a public alley leading north from New York Avenue to Browns Court. Square 514 is bounded by New York Avenue to the south, M Street to the north, and 4th and 5th Streets to the east and west, respectively. As New York Avenue runs on a diagonal, the square is triangular in shape, with the industrial buildings sited along the hypotenuse. Most of the row of late 19th century residential buildings that stood along New York Avenue, flanking the Yale Laundry Building, have been demolished. To the east only the Fletcher Methodist Episcopal Chapel, which stands at the intersection of New York Avenue and 4th Street, and a single residential building remain from the period prior to the construction of the main Yale Laundry Building. To the west of the stable/garage stands a one-story brick building constructed in 1962 as a book bindery, six-unit apartment building, and freestanding commercial store from the late 19th century. Consequently, the Yale Steam Laundry property had a stronger physical image within the residential and commercial neighborhood than historically intended by its owners and architect.

Main Block: Exterior

Designed in a modest interpretation of the Renaissance Revival with Georgian Revival influences, the Yale Steam Laundry Building is an important example of an early 20th century commercial architecture set within downtown Washington, D.C. The three-story building, measuring 60' x 135', is six bays wide at its façade with a rectangular plan. The main block of the building was constructed in 1902 of red brick (presently painted white) with Indiana limestone and metal detailing. The façade is constructed of pressed brick laid in stretcher bond, while the remaining elevations are laid in five-course American bond. The walls are set on a concrete foundation and have a flat membrane roof edged with an ornate metal cornice. An imposing brick chimney with corbeling rises from the northeast corner of the building. The two-story, four-bay wide brick addition, located on the northeast side of the

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main block, measures 78' x 57' x 22'. This 1924 addition is industrial/commercial in design with large openings filled with multi-light metal sashes. Constructed of brick and concrete, the addition is set on a concrete foundation and has a flat slag roof pierced by two imposing skylights. The exterior of the Yale Steam Laundry Building, and its addition, was painted white in the mid-1970s.

The façade (south elevation) of the Yale Laundry Building measures six bays wide with a two story, recessed entry bay. The façade exhibits the architectural detailing of the Renaissance and Georgian Revivals, historic styles revived at the turn of the 20th century, with Classically inspired limestone keystones, semi-circular arched window, stringcourses, and columns. A granite base marks the foundation level of the façade. The two center bays of the façade are dominated by the recessed entry. The first story of this entry bay has doublewide wooden doors, edged with a single light over three recessed panel sidelights and a multi-light transom. Paired Tuscan columns of wood surround the opening. The doors are constructed of wood with single lights over three rectangular panels. Over the entry is a splayed jack-arched lintel of brick. To either side of the entry are massive Doric columns set upon square plinths of limestone. The limestone columns support the molded entablature, marked by the word "YALE" at the center of the frieze. The overhanging limestone caps of the columns, above the frieze, have an ogee-molded cornice that meets the limestone stringcourse of the façade. The second story of the central bay is pierced by a massive triple window, composed of a 20/20 double-hung, wood sash window flanked by 32-light fixed windows. This recessed opening is semi-circular in form and ornamented with recessed panels along the soffit. Almost flush with the façade, the limestone detailing surrounding the second story opening consists of limestone casings with a rounded backbanding, voussoirs, and a centrally placed keystone. Circular medallions with marble insets are set at either corner, while a molded cavetto cornice caps the central bay.

Flanking the two-story entry bay on both the first and second stories are four window openings, two on each side. The large openings, filled with 12/2 double-hung, wood sash windows, are trimmed with splayed jack-arched lintels of brick, limestone keystones, and limestone stringcourses that act as continuous sills. The third story is pierced by six equally spaced window openings; each filled with 12/2 double-hung, wood sash windows. Like the

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lower stories, the ornament surrounding the window openings consists of splayed jack-arched lintels, keystones, and a stringcourse serving as a continuous sill.

Above the third story is the ogee-molded metal architrave, serving as the base of the entablature. Within the unadorned frieze are the words "YALE STEAM LAUNDRY." A feature composed of carved bricks into the face of the building. Below the overhanging cornice is the bed molding, an ogee-molded metal profile that mimics the architrave. The metal cornice itself has heavy modillions on the soffit and an ogee-molded profile. The massive metal cornice, architrave, and stringcourses return slightly on the side elevations.

The east side elevation of the main block is three stories in height and sixteen bays deep. Constructed into the grade of the site, the elevation has a round window in the southern-most bay and modest segmentally arched window openings in the remaining bays. The round window has rowlock brickwork and prominent stone voussoirs. The opening is filled with a single light. The segmentally arched, single and double openings to the north of the round window have limestone sills, two-course rowlock lintels, and 1/1 double-hung, wood sash windows. The openings on the second and third stories are similar in size and massing, each finished with limestone sills and two-course rowlock lintels. The elongated openings are filled with the original 4/4 double-hung, wood sash windows. The northern section of the east elevation is dominated by the 1924 addition. Industrial in plan and design, the addition obscures nine bays of the first and second stories of the main block. At the northeast corner of the main block is the brick chimney, rising 52 feet above the building. The octagonal-shaped chimney has brick corbeling and projecting brick moldings at the cap.

The north elevation of the main block front on Browns Court. Due to the slope of the site, the elevation is only two stories in height as it appears on the exterior. The first story of the six bay wide elevation has a single window opening in the western-most bay, a single entry opening, a single window openings, another single entry opening, and two window openings in the eastern-most bay. The elongated window openings have stone sills and two-course rowlock lintels of brick, a feature also found on the entry openings. The windows are 4/4 double-hung, wood sash. The entries have doors of wood with seven recessed rectangular panels. Above the doors are two-light transoms. An awning with a corrugated metal roof

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and thin metal brackets covered the entry openings and single window opening at the center. A loading dock, constructed of concrete, extends from below the entry openings. The second story of the north elevation has six single window openings detailed with limestone sills, rowlock lintels, and 4/4 double-hung, wood sash windows covered with metal screening.

Similar to the east elevation, the west elevation measures sixteen bays in depth and rises three stories over the public alley from New York Avenue. The single and double window openings on the first story are segmentally arched with 1/1 double-hung, wood sash windows, limestone sills, and rowlock lintels. Mirroring the southern-most bay on the east elevation is a round window opening with rowlock brickwork and prominent stone voussoirs. This opening, however, has been infilled with brick. The second and third stories are pierced with elongated 4/4 double-hung, wood sash windows with limestone sills, and rowlock lintels. Unlike the east elevation, the first story of the west elevation had two doublewide entry openings, one entering the stair tower and the other accessing the elevator. Marking the stair tower are elongated window openings, placed between the first and second stories to provide natural light to the stair landings.

Main Block: Interior

The interior of the building, on the first floor specifically, consisted of a series of offices, meeting space, storage rooms, lunchrooms, and the boiler. The interior walls of the first story were constructed of brick to provide additional support for the heavy industrial equipment housed on the upper floors. The main entry space encompassed the width of the building, extending northward 18 feet. Running through the center of the building were two sets of brick piers, creating a narrow central hall that terminated near the rear of the main block. With the removal of all interior walls and the brick piers, only the round metal posts, which extend the height of the building, are extant. The walls of the first floor are exposed red brick, finished with white enamel coating at the rear of the building. The floor is composed of poured concrete and the ceiling is partially composed of vaults interspersed between the metal support joists of the floor above.

The L-shaped stair tower is sited to the west of the main entry, just beyond the entry space. The tower has exposed brick walls, laid in all stretcher bond, with a white enamel finish. The

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hollow-newel stair is constructed of metal with an exposed carriage. The main newel post and landing newels are metal, set upon square plinths with fluted shafts and square caps. The headpiece on the main newel post has recessed panels and a ball on top. The stringer on the stair and walls has recessed beading. The balustrade alternates between thin, straight balusters and wavy balusters. To the north of the stair tower is the elevator shaft, covered by doublewide wooden doors. At the northeast corner of the building is the boiler room, a space that stood two stories in height. Consequently, a square opening was created in the ceiling of the first floor to allow for the massive boiler. Access to the boiler room was provided through doublewide doors at the center of the hall. The walls of the boiler room were exposed brick with a white enamel finish.

The second and third floors of the Yale Steam Laundry Building are largely open spaces with two rows of metal posts to support the structure. One exception to this open plan is the loading dock area in the northwest corner of the second floor. White enamel brick walls encircled this space with a single entry opening on the southern wall. These enamel bricks read "The American Enamel, Brick & Tile Company, NY." Additionally, the two-story space occupied by the boiler is enclosed from the first to the second story with brick walls. Like the interior spaces on the first floor, the walls of the second floor loading dock area have been removed.

The floors on both of the upper floors are composed of narrow wood boards, running the depth of the building. Like the boiler room, the brick walls have a white enamel finish. The elongated window openings have chestnut sashes and slate sills. Ornamentation within these industrial spaces is largely found in the ceiling. Although greatly deteriorated, the ceilings are detailed with pressed metal in a variety of patterns depending on the use of the space. The steel beams that run the width and depth of the building have guilloche and diamond sheets on the width, twill sheets on the drop, and are finished with egg-and-dart molding. Detailing on the ceiling includes square in square metal sheets; quatrefoils in squares edged by crimped sheets; and geometric interpretations of quatrefoils and guilloche. Access to the roof is located on the third floor, via a straight ladder at the southeast corner. Historically, the roof housed two 5800-gallon water tanks of metal. The tanks have since been removed, although the elevated platform on which they stood is extant.

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1924 Addition: Exterior

The 1924 addition was constructed on the northern-most section of the east elevation of the main block. Interior access between the main block and the addition is provided through an original doublewide entry opening. No other openings were created in the now-interior wall of the main block, and all window openings remained intact despite the lack of nature light they provided. The addition is constructed of brick, laid in five-course American bond. The structure is square in plan with a flat roof and concrete foundation. Industrial vernacular in design, the building is marked by loading docks and large window openings with multiple glass panes surrounded by metal. The two-story building is set within the slope of the site, consequently the east and north elevations appear as single stories.

The south elevation is four bays wide with symmetrical massing. In the western-most bay, the first story is pierced by entry opening with a paneled garage door for the service entry, while a symmetrically massed window opening marks the second story. The remaining bays of the south elevation have large industrial window openings. On the first story, the two center bays of the south elevation have paired 20-light fixed metal windows, the centers of which contain awning windows. The eastern-most bay has a narrower opening, holding paired 12-light fixed windows with awnings at the center. The openings on the second story are larger, holding paired 30-light fixed metal windows the awnings at the center. Again, the eastern-most opening holds a narrower paired window with only 18-lights and awnings at the center. A wide stringcourse, flush with the surface of the building, runs across the elevation to serve as lintels for the openings on the first and second stories. Flush with the wall, concrete inboards separate the bays of the south elevation.

The east elevation of the addition, set into the slope of the property, has three large industrial window openings on the second story. Identical in size, the openings contain paired 18-light fixed windows with awnings at the center. As seen on the façade, above the three large window openings is the wide stringcourse, acting as a continuous lintel. A narrow window opening, set at the approximate center of the elevation, holds nine fixed lights over three awning lights and a metal vent. In the northern-most bay, the single entry opening is obscured with plywood. All of the window openings have metal sills and no visible casings.

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The irregular planes of the rear elevation denote the location of the service elevator and stair tower to the west and the loading docks to the east. A flat metal awning shelters the centrally located loading dock, which has been covered with plywood. The rise of the north elevation is terminated by a corbelled brick cornice, set just below the start of the low parapet wall that encircles the façade and east elevation of the building. Visible on the roof are two skylights, one with a gable roof and the other with a saw-tooth shape. The skylights have multiple panes within metal sashes.

1924 Addition: Interior

Rectangular in plan, the first floor of the 1924 addition includes a vehicular service entry set between the main block and the addition. Doublewide openings pierce the interior wall of the addition to provide easy access to the service area. The openings contain 12-light metal doors and 12-light windows with awnings at the center. Within the service area, the floor is composed of poured concrete, the walls are exposed brick, and the ceiling exhibits the structural system of the building. Along the original exterior wall of the main block, the portion of the foundation historically below grade was excavated to create the loading area. Reinforcement was provided to the now-exposed foundation by the application of concrete along the wall.

The first floor of the addition is open in plan with large concrete posts supporting the massive concrete and hollow terra cotta structural system utilized on the second floor. The floor is poured concrete and the walls are exposed brick. As seen in the service area, the ceiling is exposed with reinforced concrete joists running the width of the addition. Between the joists is a system of metal pipes used to drain the water from the washing machines located on the second floor.

The second floor of the addition is similarly finished with square supporting posts, exposed brick walls and reinforced concrete joists. An office space is located in the northwest corner of the space. Access to the office is through a single entry opening with a paneled wood door and transom on the south wall. Multi-paned window openings have fixed metal sashes and rowlock brick sills. The floor of the addition is constructed, rising 6 feet above the floor of the main block. The floor is composed of concrete and hollow terra cotta tiles with gutters

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running the width and depth of the space. Historically, large industrial-size washing machines were placed in the room, with water draining from the machines into the gutters. The machines have since been removed and the flooring partially razed to be flush with that of the main block.

1919 Stable/Garage: Exterior

The stable/garage was constructed on the southeast corner of Lot 6 of Square 514, fronting on New York Avenue. Industrial vernacular in design, the brick and concrete building had a rectangular plan. The façade and side elevations present two stories, while the north elevation reads from Browns Court as a single story because of the slope of the site. The building, measuring 58'3" by 33,' historically contained a stable on the first floor and garage on the second floor. It is constructed of brick, laid in five-course American bond. The three courses of bricks on the façade have been laid in a soldier-course, servicing as stringcourses above the concrete lintels. This ornament, contrasting to the brick, mimics the limestone detailing of the 1902 main cleaning plant. The concrete detailing encircles the side and rear elevations of the building as a wide stringcourse set above the second story openings. The two-bay wide façade is further detailed with brick pilasters created within the face of the elevation that are finished just below the cornice by triangular medallions of concrete. The flat roof of the building is augmented by a parapet and applied metal cornice on the facade. Like the Yale Steam Laundry Building, the exterior of the stable/garage building, originally displaying its red brick construction, was painted white in the mid-1970s.

The façade has two bays, slightly recessed within the pilasters. To the west, the doublewide opening contains a roll-up garage door. The modern door replaces the paired wood doors that historically filled the opening. The wide opening to the east, on the first story, has a single entry opening and two replacement window openings, all of which are capped by transoms. The replacement door is composed of wood and glass, while the paired windows has three vertical lights with metal mullions and muntins. The three sets of wood-framed transoms include three-lights with metal mullions. The entry opening has a metal security door and the window openings have fixed metal screens. The second story of the façade is symmetrically marked by triple openings, each filled with 12-light windows in metal frames. The one central pane of each window have casement frames winging inward to allow for

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ventilation. All of the window openings have metal surrounds, concrete lintels under soldier-course stringcourses, and concrete sills clad in galvanized metal.

Historically, the façade had no pedestrian entry opening, only the doublewide opening used by the horses. With the building's change in use by the middle part of the 20th century, the original entry on the east elevation was enclosed with brick and the present opening on the façade created. The east elevation, facing the public alley, presently consists of three expansive openings on the third story. Each opening has 16-lights, with casements in the center 4-lights. The edge of the slag roof is finished by the galvanized iron gutter, set at the top edge of the concrete stringcourse.

The ghosting of the single entry openings, transom, and window openings on the first story of the east elevation are visible, although infilled with brick. Based on the original drawings of the building, it has been documented that the entry contained a five-panel wood door with an 8-light transom. Moving northward on the elevation, under the concrete lintel, was a paired opening with 9-lights each. The top six lights of the windows had casement frames. The remaining two bays of the side elevation has triple window openings, each filled with 12-lights. The central panes had casement frames, and the lintels were composed of concrete.

The north elevation, largely appearing as a single story, was reached by a brick-clad ramp. Flanking the ramp, on the first story, were single openings that have since been infilled with brick on the exterior (the wood frames and glass are present on the interior). The opening to the east provided access to the manure pits, with the western opening let into a storage area. The second story of the north elevation is recessed at the center by a triangular opening. Historically filled with doublewide entry doors, the expansive opening has been infilled with concrete block, pierced by a single plywood door. The concrete lintel partially visible on the first story and the continuous stringcourse of the second story creates the only detailing of the north elevation.

The west elevation, presently fronting on a vacant lot, has no openings. When the stable/garage was constructed in 1919, the adjacent lot contained a wood frame rowhouse; thus, the building was erected flush to the existing structure and no openings created.

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1919 Stable/Garage: Interior

The interior of the stable/garage has been significantly altered by the removal of the original horse stalls, wagon room, feed room, and partition walls. Presently, the space consists of two rooms on the first floor and one room on the second floor. The walls are composed of exposed brick, painted in areas and clad in late 20th century paneling in other areas. The floors and ceilings expose the reinforced concrete structural system, with beams running the depth of the building. The stable/garage is presently used for storage.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Yale Steam Laundry Building at 437-443 New York Avenue, NW, is one of the city's largest and most significant privately-constructed industrial service facilities. Designed and built in 1902, the main building is a notable example of the Italian Renaissance Revival and Georgian Revival styles applied to an industrial structure. The building and its additions illustrate the expansion and evolution of the business between 1902-1920s, during its most profitable decades of operation.

HISTORY OF THE YALE STEAM LAUNDRY COMPANY

The Yale Steam Laundry was a retail and commercial "power" laundry that serviced hotels, restaurants, schools, government facilities, and other large businesses in downtown Washington, D.C., as well as private households. Frank H. Walker and Frank E. Smith established the Yale Steam Laundry Company in 1885. Prior to forming their laundry company, the two men worked as postal clerks, a venture Smith continued to participate in until the middle part of the 1890s. Frank Walker, born in 1856, lived with his wife nearby at 519 3rd Street, N.W. while he was employed as a postal worker in the 1880s. By 1905, with the profitable growth of the business, Walker moved to the Farragut Apartment Building at 907 17th Street, N.W. Partner Frank E. Smith was born in Ohio in 1859. Smith continued to work in the postal business, serving as a partner in the mail contracting firm, F. S. Smith & Co. Smith. By the turn of the 20th century, Smith also had a business interest in the construction industry, with offices at 1217 F Street, N.W.

Walker appears to have been the primary force behind the development of the business, and came to be recognized as a prominent laundryman in the District of the Columbia, as well as nationally. An active member of the Laundryman's National Association (L.N.A.), Walker was present at the L.N.A. convention held October 13-15, 1902 at the Hotel Raleigh in Washington, D.C. The convention notes state that, "Doc Frazee, F. H. Walker and Bro Broadbent, of Washington, were untiring in their efforts to entertain everyone present." At this convention, Walker was elected first vice-president of the Laundryman's National Association, a post he held from October 1902 to September 1903.¹

¹"Convention Notes." *National Laundry Journal*, Vol. XLVIII, No. 8, October 15, 1902.

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In 1885, when the Yale Steam Laundry Company was founded, Washington was home to approximately 49 laundry companies in 54 locations throughout the city. Most (83%) were located in northwest Washington, concentrated primarily along the major transportation corridors of 7th Street, 9th Street, and Pennsylvania Avenue. Operated by individuals or small companies, the laundries initially serviced both the retail “housewife” and professional businesses of the neighborhood. Most of the smaller laundries were owned and/or operated by men of Chinese decent, some maintaining several commercial locations throughout the city. Only four had commercial names rather than that of the main individual providing the service. These included H.M. Dexter and Company at 499 C Street, N.W., Elite Steam Laundry at 208 B Street, N.W., the Perfect Steam Laundry from Baltimore with offices at 1223 F Street, N.W., and the Yale Steam Laundry at 522 10th Street, N.W.

The first office/cleaning facility of the Yale Steam Laundry was located directly across the street from Ford’s Theater and adjacent to the Peterson House (1849) where President Lincoln died. Although not originally constructed as a commercial building, the three-and-a-half-story structure at 522 10th Street, N.W. (later identified as 518 10th Street) was renovated by Walker and Smith to provide cleaning and storefront facilities. The building was constructed in the late 19th century with Italianate style detailing adorning the façade. The first story of the three bay wide building was dominated by a projecting storefront with large plate glass windows. Atop the overhanging eave was the Yale Steam Laundry signboard. By 1896, the company maintained a second store at 1104 14th Street, N.W. The expansion of the business prompted F.H. Walker and Company to have a laundry plant constructed at 43 G Street, N.W., directly behind the United States Government Printing Office at 708 North Capitol Street. The new building, standing two stories in height, was designed in 1892 by local architect Thomas Francis, Jr. In 1897, the structure was extensively renovated on the interior and a second story was constructed on the rear ell housing the laundry facilities.

Large industrial cleaning plants were typically located just outside the developed edges of the city, and employed vast numbers of horse-drawn trucks to pick-up and drop-off the laundry. Only a few of the companies maintained smaller satellite “offices” (as they were noted in the city directory) throughout the city in order to more conveniently serve their clientele. The Yale Steam Laundry Company was one such company with a central cleaning plant located

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at 43 G Street, N.W., as well as offices at 518 10th Street, N.W., and 1104 14th Street, N.W. by 1899. While the majority of work taken in by the Yale Steam Laundry was always commercial and institutional, the company did maintain regular street routes and satellite offices throughout portions of the city to service household or “housewife” laundry (as it was called in the period).

On April 15, 1902, F.H. Walker and Company was granted a building permit for the construction of a new cleaning plant at 437 New York Avenue, N.W. (Square 514, Lot 5). The company located the building on a prominent site along New York Avenue. The surrounding neighborhood was largely residential, consisting of rowhouses dating from the 1870s, and smaller commercial ventures sited along the major transportation corridors of 7th Street and New York Avenue. The Yale Steam Laundry placed an announcement in the trade notes of the *National Laundry Journal* to promote the expansion of their cleaning facilities, “The Yale Laundry Company have purchased a piece of property on New York Avenue and will erect a new building on same for laundry purposes.”² Architect Thomas Francis, Jr. was again employed by F.H. Walker and Company to design the New York Avenue plant for the laundry, planning a three story brick structure with Italian Renaissance Revival and Georgian Revival style styling in Indiana limestone and dark red brick. The building housed the company’s washing and dry cleaning equipment, flat work pressing irons, and offices, while providing extensive space and a more striking public image. Despite its disparate size and function, the architectural styling of the exterior of the building achieved a degree of compatibility unusual for an industrial facility.

Architect Thomas Francis, Jr.’s design for the building is an eclectic Edwardian-era mix of the Italian Renaissance Revival and Georgian Revival elements. Both styles were immensely popular at the turn-of-the-century, and were often used for large public buildings, such as schools and civic buildings, as well as apartment buildings, hotels and mansions. The styles were popularized by the work of McKim, Mead & White whose buildings were frequently featured in professional and main-stream periodicals. The styles remained fashionable until after World War I. The Yale Steam Laundry building is unusual in Washington in its ambition of its design for an industrial facility in this period. Most of the other large power

²“Trade Notes.” *National Laundry Journal*. Vol. XLVII, No. 12, June 15, 1902, p. 13.

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laundries and smaller retail laundries in the period were located either in buildings which had been converted from another use, or in relatively non-descript buildings with more common Victorian era embellishment. Francis' elegant design for the building was no doubt intended to give the business a level of prestige which the other power laundries' buildings did not offer.

With the growth of commercial business in downtown Washington by the turn of the 20th century, the laundry industry expanded to meet the needs. The city directory for 1905 lists thirty-one laundry companies throughout the city, most of which were small retail laundries. Chinese laundries were listed separately, a format that did not necessarily relate to the services provided, but rather to the racial consciousness of the period.

New technologies regulated the competitive nature of the laundry industry, forcing individuals and small companies to cater more exclusively to the housewife or close their businesses completely. This allowed the larger power laundry companies, like Yale Steam Laundry, to focus on the growing number of professional businesses in the nation's capital, specifically the hotels, schools, restaurants, and government facilities. The Bureau of the Census noted in 1909 that the District of Columbia was home to 17 power laundries; most were owned by individuals rather than corporations. By 1914, there were 18 power laundries, but most were now owned by corporations.

By 1917, F.H. Walker and Company, no longer operated the Yale Steam Laundry. The trade notes for the *National Laundry Journal* of December 1917 announced the sale, "the Yale Laundry, operated by F.H. Walker & Company, has been sold to the Liberty Laundry Company, which will continue to operate it under its former name. All the departments operated by the Yale Laundry will be continued by the new owners, and all employed will be retained. The Yale Laundry was operated by the former owners for about thirty years."³ Ownership of the Liberty Laundry Company included many stockholders worldwide, two of which resided in China. Consequently, the 1918 city directory listed only the name of laundry manager, William E. Thompson, a former postal employee. Frank Walker and Frank Smith, members of the local laundry organization known as the Flat Iron Club of

³ "Trade Notes, District of Columbia," *National Laundry Journal*. Vol. 78, No. 12, December 15, 1917, p. 66.

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Washington, D.C., were honored in December 1917 for their contributions to the laundry industry. The men were toasted for "...blazing away for many years back, in the laundry business, setting a rapid pace. Now they blaze a new way by selling out. The laundry fraternity will miss them..."⁴

Despite the changes in the ownership of the company, the Yale Steam Laundry continued to prosper with main office and cleaning facilities at 437 New York Avenue, N.W. and branch offices at 1114 14th Street, N.W. and 43 G Street, N.W., the latter of which was briefly leased to the Elite Laundry. Additionally, in order to provide efficient service between the offices and the central plant, the company constructed a stable/garage in 1919. The two-story brick building, designed by the firm of A.B. Mullett and Company, housed eight sleeper stables, a wagon room, and feed room on the first floor. Accepting motor haulage, the second story contained additional wagon rooms and garage space accessible by a ramp on the north elevation. The building permit was signed by Edward L. Hillyer, who served as secretary and treasurer of the Liberty Laundry Company of the District of Columbia.⁵ The stable/garage was located 443 New York Avenue, N.W., across a narrow public alley from the central plant. The design for the stable/garage was not as architecturally ambitious as the main building. While its façade is organized along general classical principles, its concrete frame, red brick cladding, and multi-pane metal windows are typical of utilitarian industrial buildings from the period.

With the growing acceptance of motor vehicles for commercial use, the construction of a stable in the late 1910s would seem unpractical. However, as noted in the *National Laundry Journal* in 1917, "the vast greater volume of laundry work is handled by wagons only, and that many laundryowners are convinced that this is about the only practical way to handle it."⁶ As the article further states, it would be hardly accurate to say that "motor haulage is unknown in the laundry business....Here and there are laundryowners who have dispensed

⁴ "Washington Laundryowners Honored," *National Laundry Journal*. January 15, 1918, p. 38.

⁵ Edward L. Hillyer is listed in the city directory as the Vice President and Assistant Trust Officer for the Union Trust Company of Washington, D.C.

⁶ K.C. Cardwell, "The Power Vehicle in Laundry Service," *National Laundry Journal*. Vol. 77, No. 12, June 15, 1917, p. 30.

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with horses entirely in their delivery service, and others who have found profitable use for one or more motor trucks, while still using wagons for the greater part of their work.”⁷ Initially, one of the most common augments for the use of motor haulage was efficiency, with the many stops in laundry delivery not economically or physically beneficial to the motors. Motor haulage over horse-drawn equipment eventually became universally recognized, as the motor quickly reached more locations, weather did not play as significant a role, and the cost per packages delivered was less.⁸ Consequently, in less than ten years, the Yale Steam Laundry’s new stable would become partially obsolete as motor haulage began to dominate the industry. By 1927, there were 331 automotive vehicles utilized by seventeen power laundries in Washington, D.C. and only six horse-drawn vehicles.⁹

The manufacturing census of 1919 noted that the District of Columbia maintained 21 power laundries with 1,805 workers, ranking Washington thirty-eighth nationwide. Most of the workers, an estimated 1,000, were employed in the city’s seven largest power laundries. By 1924, five power laundry companies dominated the industry in Washington: Arcade Laundry and Sunshine Dry Cleaning and Dyeing Company, Inc. at 713-731 Lamont Street, N.W., Manhattan Laundry Service Corporation (established 1902) at 1326-1346 Florida Avenue, N.W., Star Laundry at 1315-1317 14th Street, N.W. (established 1904), Franklin Laundry (established 1900) at 504-508 13th Street, N.W., and the Yale Steam Laundry. To compete in this competitive environment, the Yale Steam Laundry opened a total of six branch offices throughout the city: 43 G Street, N.W., 1772 Columbia Road, N.W., 2605 14th Street, N.W., 2915 14th Street, N.W., 1633 17th Street, N.W., and 2137 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

As noted in the *National Laundry Journal*, “in competition with modern machinery, improved methods and better ideas generally in plant management and operations, it is absolutely necessary for the laundryowner to keep up with the times, and increase the efficiency of his plant, in order to turn out the same class of work, and at as low a cost, as his fellow tradesman. Of course every laundryowner will argue that he does better work than

⁷ Cardwell, “The Power Vehicle in Laundry Service,” p. 30.

⁸ Cardwell, “The Power Vehicle in Laundry Service,” p. 30.

⁹ “Power Laundries and Dyeing and Cleaning Establishments,” United States Department of Commerce, Census of Manufactures: 1927. Table 3, p. 7.

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anyone else his city, but when the matter is sifted down it is generally found that, regardless of the number of plants in a city, they are divided up into three general classifications. The first class is efficient, well-equipped, modern plant which has the facilities to turn out the best possible work. The second division includes the medium-sized plants, with a sprinkling of good and poor machinery, and the same general caliber of workers. The third class takes in old, run-down plants, in which are assembled a lot of old has-been machinery which dates back too far for the up-to-date plant manager to remember. These latter plants hurt the entire industry.”¹⁰

As the competitive industry demanded and technological advances dictated, the Yale Steam Laundry introduced massive washing machines with revolving cylinders. The size and drainage requirements of the new machines necessitated enlargement of the central plant; thus, in 1924, a two-story addition was constructed at the rear of the east elevation. A system of gutters and pipes were constructed in the hollow tile floor of the building to allow the machines to more efficiently expel the rinsing water and suds. The addition, also designed by A.B. Mullett and Company, was intended to stylistically mimic the stable/garage and support the architectural embellishments of the central plant. However, because the alteration was sited behind three brick rowhouses (circa 1880) which fronted New York Avenue, the addition was more industrial in character with a vehicular service entrance and wide metal awning windows. In terms of competitive demands, the construction of the addition allowed for the installation of more flat work irons and equipment for housewife laundry in the original 1902 building.

Advertisements in the 1920s indicate changes in the laundry industry. The larger laundry companies that had traditionally catered solely to business and professional industries like hotels and restaurants began to branch out, now providing more washing and dry cleaning services for the housewife. The Yale Steam Laundry was among them, opening all of their facilities including the central cleaning plant on New York Avenue for retail dry cleaning business. This forced many of the smaller laundry companies to close or merge with larger companies, which provided faster, cheaper, and more efficient service because of the

¹⁰ G.D. Crain, Jr., “A New Plant, Built for Efficiency,” *National Laundry Journal*. Vol. 76, No. 4, August 15, 1916, p. 22.

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equipment they maintained. The Liberty Laundry Company, which owned and ran the Yale Steam Laundry, benefited from this by purchasing competing businesses, including the Franklin Laundry in 1950.

An article in the *Washington Post* documented the procedure of the laundry business, typically dependent on delivery wagons and trucks. Drivers, who worked their routes on commission, picked up the laundry from the customers and auxiliary offices. The bundles of laundry were weighed, tagged with a set of brass identification pins, and sent to the sorting room in forty bundle lots. Skilled sorters broke open each bundle, listing each piece with a typewriter-like machine, marking them with indelible ink visible only in infra-red light, and separating them into three groups – whites, colored, and “fugitives” whose colors ran. In the net bags, the laundry was sent to the huge, power-driven washing machines, commonly referred to as “wheels.” A battery of wheels would constantly spin, turning over twenty times a minute. The wheels stopped only to receive a new batch of laundry. Once in the wheels, the laundry was thrown over and over, through several changes of soapsuds and a half dozen rinses. Mechanical controls regulated the intake of suds and outflow of rinsing water, according to a careful formula. The formula for shirts called for four sudsings and six rinses, in forty-three minutes. After the baths, the laundry was transferred to dryers that consisted of large sieve-like cylinders, which spin at 600 revolutions a minute, and forced out all but a few traces of dampness. The laundry was then run through various kinds of irons and presses. With the aid of the ink markings, which stood out brightly in infrared lighting, the original bundle was reassembled, packaged, and sent with the bill to the delivery trucks.¹¹

With the Depression and wartime activities, the delivery service was curtailed in 1918 and again in the 1930s and 1940s, to a single collection and delivery per week, rather than daily.

At the Yale Steam Laundry, the marking room, office space, lunch and changing rooms, engineer’s shop and office, and the water softener room were located on the first floor of the main building. The boiler room, set in the northeast corner of the building, contained a single 1928 Keeler boiler from Philadelphia. By the 1950s, a second boiler was installed. The second floor held three flat work irons, sales rooms, and the “drivers room” where retail dry cleaning waited to be placed in the delivery trucks. Between the irons and the drivers room

¹¹ Edward F. Ryan, “Washington Industries: Your Laundry, Sir!” *Washington Post*, March 8, 1940.

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were two 200-pound hydraulic gas-fired dryers. Two additional dryers were placed across the aisle; adjacent to the conditions used to partially dry sheets before pressing. The third floor space was devoted to retail trade or the housewife laundry. The equipment consisted of one flat work iron, shirt units, sock dryers, hand irons, and a series of handkerchief and napkin dryers. Numerous body presses were set up throughout the space to iron underwear, blouses, and the like. Additionally, special fabrics requiring handwork were washed and ironed by hand on the third floor. In the first floor of the 1924 addition were all dry cleaning facilities, including 35 pound machines, four flat irons, and several small washers. The bulk of the regular cleaning was done in the massive washers set on the second floor of the addition. The outdated machines of the 1920s were replaced in the 1950s with eight front loading, 100-pound washing machines.

The 1931 Census of Manufactures for Power Laundries showed that Liberty Laundry, trading as Yale Laundry, engaged on average 100 persons to operate 312 days of the year. The census reported that the Yale Laundry conducted \$164,557 worth of work that year, with bundle work (starch work, list-price bundles, and bachelor bundles) providing the greatest profits. When compared to the other power laundries operating in Washington, D.C. in 1931, Yale Steam Laundry ranked lowest in terms of profits. By 1933, the profits of the Yale Steam Laundry were reduced to \$130,165, still the lowest of the sixteen power laundries rated that year.¹²

In 1939, the Conger family purchased the Liberty Laundry Company/Yale Steam Laundry. Harry M. Conger, Clyde W. Conger, and Clarence H. Conger had established Conger's Laundry in Washington, D.C. as early as 1903. The central cleaning facilities were located at the intersection of New York Avenue and 23rd Street, N.W., with branch offices maintained at 2707 14th Street, N.W. and 1741 G Street, N.W. Despite the change in ownership, the Yale Steam Laundry continued to operate under the same name, as did the family's Conger's Laundry. The two companies appeared joined by ownership only, each maintaining its own central cleaning facilities and branch offices. The family members varied their roles as board of directors for the two companies. Clarence H. Conger served as president of the Liberty

¹² U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "Census of Manufactures: Power Laundries, 1931 and 1933. National Archives, Industry Classification 1676.

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Laundry Company/Yale Steam Laundry with Clyde W. Conger as vice president and Jay P. Conger as secretary/treasurer. Clyde Conger acted as president for the Conger's Laundry with Jay Conger as vice president and Clarence H. Conger, Jr. serving as secretary/treasurer. Jay P. Conger, who later became manager and president of the Yale Steam Laundry, served as the president of the Laundry Owner's Association in the 1940s.

By the early 1940s, the population of Washington, D.C. was spending about \$7,000,000 on laundry services annually. The number of hand laundries, which captured about \$500,000 of the yearly trade, far exceeded the number "power" laundries. Of the twenty-nine power laundries listed in the city directory during this period, the Yale Steam Laundry was the third largest in the nation's capital, following the Manhattan Laundry and Bergmann's Laundry (established 1919). The Yale Steam Laundry increased its commercial business, while promoting its housewife laundry facilities. One of the many specialties furnished by the Yale Steam Laundry included one-day service for traveling businessman staying at one of the many hotels for which the laundry company provided professional service. Additionally, with distant cousin Clement E. Conger serving as Deputy Chief of Protocol at the White House during the Kennedy administration and Curator of the State Department, the Yale Steam Laundry took advantage of its position, providing laundry service to the White House, Congress, Senate and State Department.

By the latter part of the 20th century, the larger laundry companies that had dominated the industry for over one hundred years were quickly becoming functionally obsolete with the availability and convenience of washers and dryers in the home or business, and the wider variety of fabrics that did not require special cleaning. At the same time, several large laundry companies from outside Washington, D.C. moved into the area, particularly in the suburban neighborhoods, and reduced business substantially. The price of cleaning was also inflated in Washington, D.C., as the workers earned 40 cents more an hour than their counterparts in Richmond and Baltimore. Many hotels and other large institutions began sending their laundry to facilities farther outside the city's central core, where it could be processed cheaper. Often the laundry businesses were family owned, inherited from one generation to another, which had no interest in the industry. Many of the leading companies in Washington, D.C. closed, sold, or reorganized in the 1970s, including the Manhattan

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Laundry Service Corporation, the Arcade Laundry and Sunshine Dry Cleaning and Dyeing Company, Inc., the Louise Hand Laundry, and the Yale Steam Laundry; thereby ending a service that had played a dominate retail and commercial role since the first steam laundry had opened in the United States in 1854.

The Yale Steam Laundry, which merged with Conger's Laundry in 1956, was sold in 1976 by the Congers family when majority stockholder Jay P. Conger (1902-1991) retired at the age of 74. New owner Don Gibbons soon defaulted on the sale, and the property was turned over to the bankruptcy courts. The Yale Steam Laundry was closed, the leases on the branch offices terminated, and the central plant locked with all the cleaning equipment stored within. In August 1984, the property, which included the central plant and addition and the stable/garage were sold by the courts to present owner, the Yale Steam Limited Partnership.

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HISTORY OF THE SITE

Historically, the lots on which the Yale Steam Laundry Building at 437 New York Avenue (Square 514, Lot 5) are presently sited were relatively unimproved prior to the construction of the industrial structure. Faetz and Pratt's 1874 Real Estate Directory records no improvements on the lot, on which a one-story wood frame stable owned by T.B. Jones stood by 1887.¹³ According to historic maps and tax assessments, no other improvements or alterations occurred on Lot 5 until 1902, when the Yale Steam Laundry Building was constructed. Noted for the first time on the 1903 Baist map, the Yale Steam Laundry Building covered Lot 5 in its entirety.

In 1919, as documented by the building permit, the stable/garage was constructed on Lot 6 of Square 514, fronting on New York Avenue. The modest building was sited adjacent to the Yale Steam Laundry Building, structurally separated by a public alley that extended from New York Avenue to Browns Court. Historically, Lot 6 was improved prior to 1874 by three wood frame buildings, two valued at \$1,600 and one at \$100. The modest buildings, which consisted of two dwellings and a rear stable, were not sited on the portion of land where the garage was later built, but on the two narrow parcels at the western border of the property. The L-shaped rowhouses abutted the stable/garage until they were razed sometime between 1960 and 1985.

Lot 4, where the 1924 addition to the main industrial laundry building now stands, contained one brick and three wood frame buildings, valued at \$800 and \$600 for each, respectively. The single brick dwelling was the western unit of eleven brick rowhouses that fronted New York Avenue, with numerous stables along Browns Court. The three frame dwellings, two of which fronted New York Avenue directly, abutted the brick rowhouse and incorporated the same plan. The rear of Lot 4 had one square stable of brick and one rectangular stable of wood frame. The narrow plan of the rowhouses allowed for a very narrow strip of unimproved land along the western border of the lot. This strip of land would later serve the Yale Steam Laundry as a driveway for delivery trucks entering the 1924 addition. The two-story addition was set along Browns Court, replacing the wood frame stable (razed by 1921)

¹³ Hopkin's map 1887.

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at the rear of the lot. The four rowhouses, specifically the three wood frame dwellings, largely obscured the industrial-looking addition from New York Avenue. According to historic maps, the wood frame rowhouses were razed by 1937, leaving only the brick rowhouse and the 1924 addition on Lot 4. By 1960, the brick dwelling and its stable were demolished, followed by the razing of the remaining brick rowhouses, save one, by 1985. The now-vacant property was utilized by the laundry for the parking of the many delivery trucks.

Today, the eastern side of Square 514, along New York Avenue, is relatively devoid of buildings. One brick rowhouse stands at the end of the block, next to the Fletcher Methodist Episcopal Chapel at 401 New York Avenue, N.W. (1854-1857). Aside from the Yale Laundry, these two buildings are all that remain east of the public alley. To the west of the stable/garage stands a one-story building constructed in 1962 of concrete block and two late 19th century brick rowhouses. Both of these rowhouses are vacant, while the concrete building is used as storage. As intended by architect Thomas Francis in 1902, the Yale Steam Laundry with its imposing façade is the focal point of Square 514 along New York Avenue.

ORIGINAL CONSTRUCTION AND ALTERATIONS

Yale Steam Laundry Building at 437 New York Avenue, N.W.

The District of Columbia issued a permit to build to F. H. Walker and Company on April 15, 1902 (D.C. Permit to Build #1576) to construct a steam laundry at 437 New York Avenue, NW. The permit lists Thomas Francis as the architect and Frank L. Harvey as the builder. The building was to be constructed of brick and Indiana limestone with a flat slag roof. The three-story building was to be 60 x 135 feet on a lot measuring 66.83 x 150.33 feet. The estimated cost of construction for the steam laundry was \$40,000.

F.H. Walker and Company also applied for a "Permit to Build Ovens, Furnaces and Ranges and to Set Boilers and Engines." The 100 horsepower steam boiler was to be placed on the first floor of the laundry. The horizontal boiler was approximately 12' in height and was to be placed in a brick boiler room, with a 100' tall chimney.

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Also filed with the permit to build are two permits dating from April 1902 and January 1903 (D.C. Permit #1576-A). The first of these permits, dated April 26, 1902, was for the construction of an ash pit in the public alley. According to the permit, the 4' x 5' ash pit was to be placed in the alley in order to receive ashes from the boiler room of the new building. "The pit will project 4'0" in the alley and will be covered with extra heavy wrought iron doors with [a] wrought iron frame set in granite." The projected cost of the ash pit was \$150.00. The second permit, dated January 9, 1903, is for the installation of a freight elevator. The electric elevator, manufactured by Morse, Williams and Company, was to travel between the first and third floors and hold a maximum weight of 2,000 pounds. The projected cost of the freight elevator was \$3,200.

1919 Stable/Garage at 443 New York Avenue, N.W.

On August 18, 1919, the Liberty Laundry Company applied for a "Permit to Construct a Private Garage" (D.C. Permit # 871). Located at 443 New York Avenue, NW, the two-story brick stable/garage with a slag roof was to measure 58'4" x 33'5" x 27'. The permit specified that the new building was to be wired for electric light with a final cost of \$13,869. The first floor of the building was to be used for a stable and the second story to be used as a garage. The contractor for the building was W. E. Mooney and A. B. Mullett and Company furnished the outline survey. The stable garage was constructed on the southern portion of Lots 804 and 805 in Square 514.

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1924 Addition

On April 29, 1924, the Liberty Laundry Company once again applied for a "Permit to Build" (D.C. Permit # 9061). The two-story brick and concrete building with a flat slag roof was constructed on the rear Lot 4, which was improved by three brick rowhouses designated as 429, 431, and 433 New York Avenue, NW. Measuring 56' by 69', the laundry building addition was situated on a 56.66' x 71' rear lot. The architect for the Liberty Laundry Company was again the A.B. Mullett and Company, with M.S. Rich as engineer and Frank L. Wagner as the builder. Projected costs for the addition were \$25,700.00. The structure consisted of both skeleton and load bearing walls, and was considered by the permit office as a single laundry building rather than an addition or alteration.

THE ARCHITECTS: THOMAS FRANCIS and A. B. MULLETT and COMPANY

Thomas Francis, Jr., The Yale Steam Laundry Building

Thomas Francis, Jr., the architect for the Yale Steam Laundry, was an architect in Washington, D.C. at the turn of the century. He is listed in the city directory from 1891 to 1901 as "architect." Aside from the three-year period between 1895 to 1898, Francis was not registered with any particular firm, choosing to practice on his own. However, from 1895 to 1898, he was a partner with Ferdinand T. Schneider, a Washington architect. The offices of Francis and Schneider were located in rooms 43 and 45 in the Metzert Building at 1110 F Street, N.W. In 1896, the partners expanded their offices to include room 47. During this period, Francis lived at 1322 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.

The association between Francis and Schneider ended in 1899, the year each are listed individually in the city directory. Francis moved his offices to 625 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., while Schneider continued to occupy the space in the Metzert Building. From 1899 until 1910, Francis worked as an independent architect, and it was during this time that he designed the Yale Steam Laundry at 437 New York Avenue, N.W. Prior to his partnership with Schneider, Francis had become familiar with the steam laundry, having designed the company's first purpose-built plant at 43 G Street, N.W. in 1892. After working in the District of Columbia as an architect for nearly twenty years, Francis became the Assistant Inspector of Buildings in 1910. According to the city directories, he served in this post for

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nine years.

A.B. Mullett and Company, 1919 Stable/Garage and 1924 Addition

A.B. Mullett and Company served as the architects for both the 1919 brick stable/garage and the 1924 brick addition to the Yale Steam Laundry Building. The architectural firm was started in 1885 by Supervising Architect Alfred B. Mullett (1834-1890), who had designed numerous government buildings including the State, War and Navy Building (better known as the Old Executive Building) in 1871-1888, and his two eldest sons. Well-respected architects and draftsmen in their own right, Thomas A. Mullett (1868-1935) and Frederick W. Mullett (1870-1924) apprenticed under their father, learning architectural design through practical experience. Despite the death of their father, the brothers continued to practice architecture under the firm name of the A. B. Mullett and Company, although they never achieved the artistic skill and renowned recognition granted to their illustrious father. The company served as architect for the American Bank Building (1886) at 1315-1317 F Street, N.W., the Mount Vernon theater (1910) at 918 9th Street, N.W., the Visitation Monastery at Alta Vista, Maryland and numerous other buildings in Washington, D.C. and Charles Town, West Virginia. In 1919, and again in 1924, the company was employed by the Liberty Laundry Company to design the stable/garage and addition, respectively. Frederick Mullett signed the original drawings for the buildings. The two were members of the American Institute for Architects, the Washington Board of Trade, and participated on the Municipal Arts Committee. Frederick W. Mullett, who worked as the draftsman, died in 1924 at the age of 54. Thomas A. Mullett, who served as the architect, died in January 1935 at the age of 66 and is buried in the Glenwood Cemetery.

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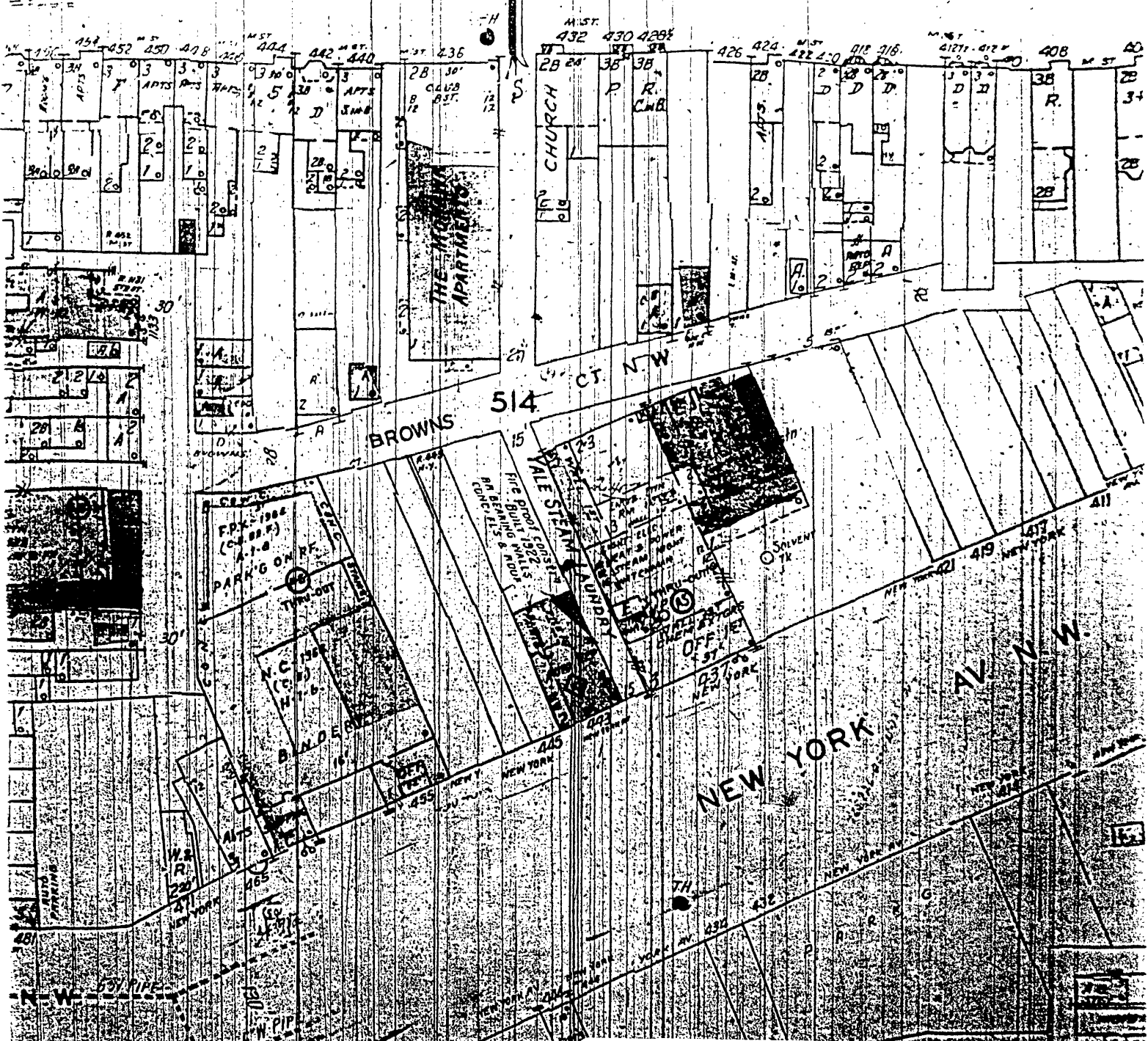
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