

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



638

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Railroad Retirement Board Building

other names / site number Mary E. Switzer Building

2. Location

street & number 330 C Street, SW not for publication

city or town Washington vicinity

state District of Columbia code DC county District of Columbia code 001 zip code 20534

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

[Signature] FINA 5.23.2007
Signature of certifying official Date

FEDERAL PRESERVATION OFFICE
CENTRAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
State or Federal Agency or Tribal Government

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

[Signature] DAVID MALONEY, ACTING SHPO 5-15-2007
Signature of commenting official/Title Date

DC HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain): _____

[Signature] 7/6/2007
Signature of the Keeper 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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

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

Cat: Government Sub: Offices

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Government Sub: Offices

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Modernistic: Stripped Classicism

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestone

roof Asphalt

walls Indiana Limestone, Norman Brick

other _____

Narrative Description

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

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Summary:

The Railroad Retirement Board Building is located at 330 C Street, SW on a site bounded by C Street to the north, D Street to the south, 3rd Street east and 4th Street to the west. The building is part of the modern architectural movement of the first half of the 20th century, while harking back to 19th century revivalism in its organization and detailing. Charles Z. Klauder, consulting architect under the supervision of Louis A. Simon, then Supervising Architect of the Treasury, designed the building with block-like massing, planar wall surfaces, and simple geometric forms that are reflective of classically influenced modern styles that dominated the design of public buildings during the 1930s and 40s.

Constructed in 1939-40, the Railroad Retirement Board Building is primarily clad in Indiana limestone and buff colored brick and rises five stories above grade with a sixth floor penthouse/ recreational space. The interior of the building falls more clearly into Art Moderne stylistic characteristics through the use of sharp contrasts between materials, clean geometric forms, and shiny, smooth textured materials. The original interior materials remain intact in the primary public spaces, which contribute to the building's overall architectural integrity. Today the building retains a high degree of integrity and continues to serve as a prominent federal presence in the vicinity of the National Mall.

Narrative Description:

The Railroad Retirement Board Building is a five story structure that is rectangular in plan with a basement and penthouse. Above the first floor, the building changes shape because of four open light courts fronting D Street. The light courts create a "half fishbone" with the spine along C Street and six perpendicular wings facing south. The building is primarily clad in limestone and brick and mirrors the Social Security Administration building across C Street, which was designed and built at the same time. On all of the street elevations, the first floor is sheathed in Rustic Buff Indiana limestone that is laid in a regular ashlar pattern. The limestone has a shot-sawn finish and is laid with the resultant ridges and ripples running both vertically and horizontally to provide variation in texture. The upper walls of the street elevations and light courts are sheathed in Norman pressed brick, which are similar in color to the grey-buff limestone on the first floor.

Most of the fenestration on the Railroad Retirement Building consists of two basic forms; awning type with steel frames and fixed. The windows at the basement and first floor are six feet, eight inches wide and eight feet, six inches high with six rectangular panes equal in size. The windows lighting the second through fifth floors are ganged vertically and set in deep reveals. Most contain forty-four rectangular lights, arranged four across and eleven deep.

The primary (north) elevation of the building is located along C Street. The five-part façade is comprised of three projecting pavilions with two entrance pavilions set in between. The three projecting pavilions are identical except for their width – eight bays in the central pavilion and five bays at either end. The first floor ashlar limestone continues

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across the entire façade, and is broken at each bay by a single six-pane window. Above the first floor, a forty-four-paned ganged window is recessed between brick piers at each bay. The windows are capped by splayed brick jack arches above with bands of Greek fret worked in brick above. The group of ganged windows on each pavilion is framed by colossal battered pilasters that carry a continuous cavetto cornice in an arrangement resembling Egyptian pylons. Above the projecting pavilions, the wall terminates in a continuous brick parapet with limestone coping. When viewed from the street level, the north elevation of the penthouse appears to be a blank wall, but in fact the parapet and setback penthouse conceal a row of metal louvers set along the lower part of the penthouse wall.

As mentioned earlier, two entrance pavilions are situated in between the projecting pavilions. Five Conway pink granite steps lead to a platform at east entrance – only one step at the west entrance due to site slope – and are flanked by parapet walls of the same material. Three doorways are located at each entrance platform with the central doorways framed by a prominent frontispiece of Rustic Buff Indiana limestone in an abstract Egyptian design. The frontispiece rises to the midpoint of the second story and features flush faced battered sides and carry a substantial cavetto cornice. The deep jambs are also of Indiana limestone. The double-leaf doors contain single sheets of plate glass with rails and stiles of architectural bronze, all set in a simple bronze frame. The individual doors are supplied with a “D” handle and push bar consisting of three square architectural bronze rods.

Above the central doorway are panels of relief sculpture, and is the only artwork commissioned for the Railroad Retirement Board Building. Both panels are dark Carnelian granite and measure eight feet wide and nine feet high. The incised figures include “Railroad Retirement” above the central doorway at the east entrance and show figures planting sunflowers with a train in the background. Above the west entrance is “Railroad Employment,” depicting two men in the cab of a steam locomotive with the engineer’s hand on the throttle, and a fireman shoveling coal into the boiler furnace. The treatment of the two side doors on each entrance is much simpler. Also deeply set, the doors have unadorned limestone jambs and are topped by plain panels of Carnelian granite. The double-leaf doors are identical to those at the central doorway with flush rectangular light fixtures centered in the soffit above all three doorways.

Behind the frontispiece at each central doorway, the ashlar sheathing of the first floor is stepped up to the level of the third floor. Above the limestone ashlar, the wall of pressed brick rises sheer to the parapet and is capped by Rustic Buff limestone coping at the fifth floor. Two narrow sixteen-pane ganged windows are recessed in the wall over each central doorway and a twenty-two-pane ganged window over each side doorway. At the heads of the windows are soldier courses of Norman brick, laid to give the effect of splayed jack arches.

On the D Street (south) elevation, as on the C Street façade, the first floor ashlar cladding creates a continuous base for the building. Above the first floor, the design of the elevation is governed by the wing and light courts that give the Switzer building its “half fishbone” shape. Together, the perpendicular wings with recessed ganged windows and open courts create a strong alternating rhythm of solids and voids across the entire elevation. On the relatively narrow end facades of the wings are pylon-like compositions of colossal battered pilasters and cavetto cornices similar to those used on the C Street elevation. Within each of these frames is a single forty-four-pane ganged window topped by a splayed jack arch and band of Greek fret. Entrances to the building on the south side are centrally located on

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each wing. In front of each entrance is a small rectangular Conway Pink granite platform with parapet walls at either side. Because of the site's slope, the platforms vary in levels in relationship to the sidewalk – there are four steps at the first (eastern most) entrance, three steps at the second, one step at the third, no steps at the fourth, two steps down at the fifth, and three steps down at the sixth. One doorway is located at each entrance and is set in a plain square-headed recess with jambs and soffits of Rustic Buff Indiana limestone. The double-leaf doors were originally painted metal with three square solid panels and capped by a three-light transom – the existing doors are not original.

The light courts on the south side are each uniformly two bays wide and five bays deep, with each containing identical ganged windows set in pylon-like frames. A continuous coping crowns the walls on the ends of the wings and in the light courts. Skylights are set in the first floors of courts (from east to west) one, two, four, five and most of three. A precast concrete slab sheathed in copper covers the first floor in court six. The south side of the penthouse is visible through the light courts, and at the center of the penthouse wall is a pair of six-light awning windows. To either side are pairs of twelve-light windows and single six-light windows. The penthouse wall is also broken by doorways set on the center line of each of the six wings.

The 3rd Street (east) and 4th Street (west) elevations, with one exception, are identical. Both are eight bays wide and sheathed in Rustic Buff limestone ashlar and Norman brick. The east and west elevations are composed of the same design features as the central bay pavilion of the C Street façade. Each bay on 3rd and 4th Streets contains a six-pane window at the first floor level and above it a forty-four-pane ganged window with a splayed jack arch and decorative band of Greek fret. Here, again, the larger windows are grouped within pylon-like frames of colossal battered pilasters carrying a continuous cavetto cornice. The single difference between the two elevations is the entrance on the 4th Street elevation in the second bay south of C Street – there is no entrance on 3rd Street. Three steps lead down from the sidewalk to a small rectangular paved area with parapet walls at either side. Like the other entrances to the building, the steps and walls are Conway Pink granite. The entrance is simple in character and contains double-leaf doors and a transom set with in a simple square-headed recess. The deep jambs and soffits are sheathed in Rustic Buff limestone. The narrow penthouse end walls are similar to those on C Street, shielding a set of triple metal louvers.

Interior

Circulation at the first floor consists of a main east-west corridor that runs along the C Street (north) spine and perpendicular north-south corridors running with the perpendicular wings above. The main corridor connects two north lobbies and extends east and west to a private elevator lobby and west vestibule. Materials and finishes are typical in the corridors and consist of a grey-green field with a dark green border. The walls are plaster with a marble base and enameled metal chair rail.

The greater part of each of the first through fifth floors is used as standard offices and large, open work/file areas. Except where they abut exterior walls, or the principle east-west corridor, the configuration of the interior is

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determined by the arrangement of movable metal partitions that are not part of the original design.¹ In terms of major finishes, the main east-west corridor was treated as an extension of the adjacent elevator lobbies.

At the east entrance from C Street, three outer doorways open into a narrow rectangular vestibule with an east-west axis. The floor is covered in green-gray terrazzo with a dark green border and is divided in a checkerboard pattern by brass strips. The east, north and west walls of the vestibule are clad in Granox Golden Veined Travermelle marble and have a narrow architectural bronze crown molding. The south wall consists of a bronze and glass screen wall. The plain plaster ceiling contains four rectangular recessed light fixtures with architectural bronze frames and glass diffusers. Doorways on the east and west walls lead to a guard room and office, both of which contain doors of plate glass surrounded by architectural bronze decorated with triple flutes. Leading to the east lobby is the south screen wall, which contains a centrally located double-leaf plate glass door that is surrounded by fluted architectural bronze.

The east lobby, like the vestibule, is rectangular in plan with an east-west axis and is finished similarly to the vestibule. The floor and wall materials are carried over from the vestibule with the same architectural bronze crown moldings. Two rectangular piers are located just north of the main axis of the lobby and are sheathed in Vermont Verde Antique marble with reeding on the north and south faces. Both have simple bases with architectural bronze cove moldings at the top. The ceiling is plain plaster and contains rectangular coves across the north-south axis that shield indirect lighting. At the south side of the lobby is a bank of four elevators that are recessed in a niche clad in Vermont Verde Antique marble. The major elements of the doors are executed in architectural bronze with fluted surrounds and horizontal Greek fret panels on the doors. Floor indicators and call button plates are all integral parts of the elevators and contribute to the overall Art Moderne style of the lobby.

On the east and west lobby walls are openings to small foyer areas, which serve as transition spaces between the main lobbies and the main corridor. Double-leaf doors lead to the main corridor and are set in fluted architectural bronze surrounds. The doors consist of four rectangular panels of plate glass with rails, stiles and dividing strips of baked enamel finish in dark green. The doors have architectural bronze kickplates and pushbars, like the doors in the vestibule screen. All finishes in the east and west foyers are similar to those in the main lobby. The east foyer contains a bronze mailbox with Art Deco-style features, such as stepped detailing along the vertical edges, stylized knuckle hinges, and three recessed panels containing raised lettering reading "Letters", "U.S. Mail," and "Letter Box." The west foyer contains a telephone room with a projecting illuminated sign that reads "TELEPHONE." Both of the foyer areas retain their original finishes and high historic integrity. The west entry vestibule and lobby on the C Street side of the building are designed in a mirror image of the east lobby, vestibule and foyers. The finishes and detailing are identical in each of the spaces.

As mentioned in the exterior description, the 4th Street elevation contains an entrance, which is composed of a vestibule and lobby that are much smaller and simpler than the entry areas on the north side of the building. Major finishes in the north vestibules and 4th Street lobby are identical. The floors are terrazzo with a dark green border and light gray-green field. The walls are covered in polished Granox Golden Veined Travermelle with plain plaster

¹ Short & Ford Architects, *Historic Structure Report and Preservation Manual: Wilbur J. Cohen Building* (Washington, DC: U.S. General Services Administration, 1991), 319-322.

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ceilings. The outer doors of the vestibule are set in the west wall and architectural bronze registers are mounted on the north and south walls. Set into the north and south walls are double-leaf doors leading to the east-west corridor and a group of offices. The doors match those used at the outer sides of the north lobby foyers.

Each of the six entrances on the D Street (south) side of the building open into a small rectangular lobby, which also contain the first floor run of a fire stairway. Because the entrances are secondary, the lobbies are very simple with concrete floors, metal bases with enamel finish, and plaster walls and ceilings. Each lobby contains a single six-light window with plaster jambs and enameled metal trim. The inner doors (from east to west) at the third and sixth entrance lobby open into a north-south corridor. The first, second, fourth and fifth lobbies open into work areas.

Centrally located on the south side of the building is the former private dining room, which originally served as a dining facility for the executive offices. The rectangular space has been completely refurbished and is now used as office space. None of the original features remain intact. Similarly, the former Public Health Dispensary on the first floor has also been completely altered. Located at the southwest corner of the first floor, the large complex of rectangular rooms is accessed through the 4th Street lobby entrance as described earlier. The space has been completely reconfigured and serves now as typical office spaces.

The second, third and fourth floors consist primarily of typical office space with significant public spaces limited to the elevator lobbies along the main (east-west) corridor. On these floors, the two elevator lobbies are slightly wider than the main corridor and are consistent with the primary floor, wall, and ceiling finishes of the corridor areas. The floors are asphalt tile and the plaster walls have an enamel base with a narrow metal chair rail. The passenger elevator banks are recessed in niches and are sheathed in polished Vermont Verde Antique marble with curved jambs, plain soffits, and a half-round column between each elevator door. The individual openings have narrow fluted architectural bronze surrounds. Directory boards are mounted on the walls opposite the elevator doors and rows of three telephone booths are located a short distance west of the elevator doors at the east lobby. The west elevator lobbies are mirror images. Office doors are set at regular intervals along the lobby areas.

The fifth floor of the Railroad Retirement Board Building is the location of principal executive offices and is largely still used for its original purposes. The executive suites are situated at the northeast corner of the building and consist of the Board Member's suite, which is a series of executive offices, ante rooms, and a conference room. While the series of executive offices have retained their original configuration, many of the original, character defining features have been removed – many of the original doors have been replaced, original plaster ceilings in some areas have been removed, and much of the original cork tile floor is covered in carpet.

The sixth floor of the building is a high penthouse over the east-west spine on the C Street (north) spine. With the exception of the original lounge space, much of the area is devoted to mechanical systems and utilitarian spaces. The long rectangular lounge/recreation room is centrally located between the third and fourth perpendicular wings. Originally serving as a social space for employees with a promenade deck, the space has now been subdivided into offices. Many original features, such as flooring and wall covering are still intact; however the promenade has been removed.

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Despite interior alterations to accommodate changing needs of the occupying governmental agencies, the Railroad Retirement Board Building retains a high level of historic character and significance. Through its location, materials and monumental massing, the Switzer Building remains a prominent federal presence in the vicinity of the National Mall.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Government: Railroad Retirement Board and the Social Security Administration
 Architecture: Charles Z. Klauder and the Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department

Period of Significance

1935-1941

Significant Dates

1939-41

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Charles Z. Klauder;
 Louis A. Simon, Supervising Architect of the Treasury Dept.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on files (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

U.S. General Services Administration

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Summary Statement of Significance:

The Railroad Retirement Board Building was constructed as part of a major building campaign to accommodate growing numbers of federal employees in the District of Columbia during the 1930s. The building is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places for Criterion A on a national level for its association with the Railroad Retirement Board later Social Security Administration, and 1930s coordinated efforts to effectively plan and construct government buildings in the District of Columbia. The building is also eligible under Criterion C as an example of Stripped Classical architecture that embodies distinctive characteristics of federal architecture during the first half of the 20th century. The building also represents the last work of prominent Philadelphian architect, Charles Z. Klauder.

Resource History and Historic Context:

In response to federal government's expanding workforce, Congress passed the Public Buildings Act of 1926. The Act established the National Capital Parks and Planning Commission (NCPPC) to implement and carry fourth the proposals of the 1901 McMillan Plan for the District of Columbia, which prompted development of public areas flanking the National Mall. The first of the projects, carried out under the Hoover administration, was the Federal Triangle development in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Following the completion of the Federal Triangle buildings, the city's attention turned to other areas of the city – the Northwest Rectangle, where the Department of the Interior and War Department buildings are located, and the southwest quadrant of Washington, D.C., where the Railroad Retirement Board Building is located.

During the early years of the Roosevelt administration very few construction projects were started or completed, with the exception of the Federal Triangle (1926-1935), and the new Department of the Interior Building (1936). However, in 1937 Franklin D. Roosevelt initiated five and ten year plans for new government buildings to house new workers serving under New Deal programs and the expanding services of existing agencies.² The Railroad Retirement Board building was only one of a few buildings that were constructed under this program before World War II intervened – the others being the Social Security Administration Building (1939-40), the Department of the Interior Building (1936), and the War Department Building (1941).

The construction of the Railroad Retirement Board building was linked closely with the construction of the Social Security Board building located across the street on Independence Avenue, SW. Records show that the building was originally intended to eventually house offices for the Railroad Retirement Board as well as the Social Security Administration.³ The Railroad Retirement Board, established in 1934, was the first wave in pension plans that provided old-age benefits to its workers. Before the Great Depression, the United States showed very little interest in

² "Planning Federal Building." *Washington Post* 10 Feb 1937, 8.

³ Short and Ford, 47.

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government-funded retirement assistance and generally relied on personal savings and family for old-age care. In providing old-age assistance to retired railroad workers, the Railroad Retirement Board was thought to be a predecessor to the Social Security Act of 1935.⁴ Social Security has been one of the most enduring, and also one of the most popular of the programs initiated under the New Deal. Although generally associated with old-age benefits, Social Security was actually conceived as a family assistance program. After the depression, a realization that personal savings, in many cases, were inadequate for retirement prompted the creation of pension plan programs in the 1930s.⁵

The Social Security Act was signed into law in August 1935 and established the Social Security Board (SSB). The SSB consisted of three presidentially appointed members to provide public information on Social Security benefits as well as establish field offices and train new employees. The task faced by the SSB and new field employees was to register employers and workers before the January 1, 1937 deadline, when workers would begin accruing credits for Social Security retirement benefits.⁶ Following the Social Security Act, proposals to house the new agency in Washington, D.C. began almost immediately. In early 1938, the Railroad Retirement Board requested that its needs be included in planning for the Social Security Administration building, shortly thereafter the Public Health Service also requested space.⁷ With the growing number of workers needed to run the Social Security Administration, along with requests for a new building to house the Railroad Retirement Board, and Public Health Service, the government was prompted to construct two new buildings to accommodate the agencies' functions.

Upon the building's completion, the United States had entered World War II, and the burgeoning War Department was in need of office space. Subsequently, the Railroad Retirement Board never occupied the building, which was instead turned over to the War Department for expansion. After World War II, the building was occupied by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and later became known as "HEW-South." The building was renamed for Mary Elizabeth Switzer after her retirement in 1970, at which time she was believed to be the highest ranking woman in the federal government.⁸

Design and Construction (1935-1940)

Design and construction of the Railroad Retirement Board Building resulted from extensive petitioning and collaboration of the Railroad Retirement Board and the Social Security Administration. As early as November of

⁴ Ibid, 3.

⁵ United States. Social Security Administration. *Social Security Programs in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: SSA, 1997) <http://www.ssa.gov/history/pdf/histdev.pdf>, 2-3.

⁶ DeWitt, Larry. *A Brief History of Social Security*. (Washington, D.C.: SSA, 2003) <<http://www.ssa.gov/history/briefhistory3.html>>, 22-23.

⁷ Short and Ford, 3-4.

⁸ Ibid, 45-46.

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1935, plans and sites for the new building were being considered with a recommended location in the Southwest quadrant of the District of Columbia – an area of the city that had been targeted for future development by the NCPPC. In the fall of 1937 the Space Control Division of the National Park Service informed John Nolen of NCPPC that the Railroad Retirement Board had advertised for space and received bids to construct a new building. At the same time, the Social Security Administration was also looking for substantial amounts of office space and in December 1937 a decision was made to combine the two office projects. Government officials at the time assumed that the Social Security Administration would quickly be a regionalized program, and the central headquarters would eventually become obsolete.⁹

While plans for the new building developed, the Railroad Retirement Board was forced to separate their functions into four different buildings throughout various parts of the city.¹⁰ The Social Security Administration was also forced to separate their functions into six different privately owned office buildings in D.C. and Baltimore, as well as other federally owned spaces throughout the city. Social Security Administration Chairman, A.J. Altmeyer, stressed in a letter that the separation of workers was seriously impeding the progress of the organization, and that a new building was necessary for the success of the agency.¹¹ As the new Social Security Administration building plans came closer to reality, other agencies began requesting space in the proposed structure. Both the Public Health Service and Railroad Retirement Board were searching for more adequate facilities to accommodate the growing number of workers.¹²

In 1938, the Railroad Retirement Board initiated proposals to secure the construction of a facility that would serve as headquarters for its operations and records. Proposals for the building stipulated that it was to be constructed with private funds and leased annually to the federal government. At the time, all of the prospective sites for the Railroad Retirement Board building were in the northwest quadrant of the city. When asked to comment in October 1937 on how the proposed sites for new buildings would affect planning for future federal properties in the city, the NCPPC advised against any further development in Northwest Washington, D.C. The NCPPC stated that locating any new federal buildings in areas of the city already experiencing traffic congestion would be a mistake and would worsen already overcrowded conditions.¹³ As a result, the NCPPC proposed that the Railroad Retirement Board consider sites on East Capitol Street, a site bordering Union Station Plaza, or a site in Southwest D.C. – all were areas outside of the congested central business district.

⁹ Short and Ford, 11-12.

¹⁰ Ibid, 19.

¹¹ Ibid, 12-13.

¹² Ibid, 20-21.

¹³ Short & Ford, 18-19.

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By March 1938, the Social Security Administration and Railroad Retirement Board were officially acting in conjunction to appropriate funds and land for buildings that would house the functions of both agencies. The site Southwest Washington, D.C. was deemed most appropriate because the area was removed from the most congested areas of the city and worker housing was far lower than in the more expensive Northwest quadrant.¹⁴

Charles Z. Klauder was hired as consulting architect, and all designs were overseen Louis A. Simon, then Supervising Architect of the Treasury. Originally, Klauder chose a “fishboned” design for both the Social Security Administration and Railroad Retirement Board buildings, as it was the most efficient use of space. This fishbone design ultimately was not accepted for the Social Security Administration Building, but was implemented partially in the Railroad Retirement Board building’s design. The concept of the fishbone building would consist of a series of open courts on the north and south elevations with a central corridor connecting as series of perpendicular wings. Klauder modified his final design to resemble the building that exists, a “half fishbone” design with the monumental façade facing C Street. Klauder’s final submissions indicated a monumental structure with a low base and a massing of central projections to give the appearance of Egyptian pylons.¹⁵

Architectural Significance:

The Railroad Retirement Board Building, along with the Social Security Administration building, is the last example of prominent Philadelphia-based architect, Charles Z. Klauder. Klauder made his name mainly in building educational buildings, particularly in the Gothic Revival style. One of his best known works is the Cathedral of Learning at the University of Pittsburgh (1928), which consisted of an Art Deco skyscraper in Gothic clothing. His other prominent works included campus buildings at Princeton and Yale.¹⁶ While much of Klauder’s work appears to be derived in more historical styles, he frequently integrated modernistic design into his work. The Railroad Retirement Board Building appears to be somewhat of an anomaly when compared to building constructed by the federal government during this time period. However, the building distinctively embodies Klauder’s honed skill of integrating historical references into modern building design.

¹⁴ Ibid, 22-23.

¹⁵ Ibid, 27-30.

¹⁶ Short & Ford, 62.

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Stylistically, the Railroad Retirement Board Building is part of the modern architectural movement of the first half of the twentieth century, while harking back to revivalism of the nineteenth century. The building is an example of Stripped Classicism, which is alternately referred to as PWA Moderne. "Stripped classicism" is the result of classical elements combined with modern ideas of architecture. Influenced greatly by industrial design, the style is characterized by block-like massing, simple geometric forms, planar wall surfaces, sharp setbacks and stylized detailing.¹⁷ In its government manifestation, symmetry was frequently stressed and classical detailing was often employed. The arrangement of the Railroad Retirement Building's façade is symmetrical and the building is defined by its bold and simple massing, but articulated in a classical manner. The appearance of pilasters is implied by the deeply recessed, ganged vertical windows that repeat across each of the building's elevations. The overt reference to Egyptian architecture on the exterior of the building was somewhat an anomaly in the stripped classical style, and speaks more to the Charles Klauder's stylistic preferences. The building's interior is clearly more Art Moderne with the use of sleek geometric forms, and sharp contrasts in color and smooth, shiny surfaces. This is especially evident when entering the main lobbies on the C Street (north) side of the building with hard, clean edges, stylized ornamentation and Art Moderne detailing such as the telephone booths, bulletin boards and signage.

¹⁷ Kostof, Spiro. *History of Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 716.

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National Park Service

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Railroad Retirement Board Building

Name of Property

District of Columbia

County and State

Section 9 Page 1

Major Bibliographical References:

DeWitt, Larry. *A Brief History of Social Security*. (Washington, D.C.: SSA, 2003)
<<http://www.ssa.gov/history/briefhistory3.html>>.

Kostof, Spiro. *History of Architecture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

“Planning Federal Building.” *Washington Post* 10 Feb 1937: 8.

Short & Ford Architects. *Historic Structure Report and Preservation Manual: Mary E. Switzer Building*.
Washington, DC: General Services Administration, 1991, 319-322.

United States. Social Security Administration. *Social Security Programs in the United States*. 1997
<<http://www.ssa.gov/history/pdf/histdev.pdf>>.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 3 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	1 8 Zone	3 2 5 0 8 0 Easting	4 3 0 5 8 1 0 Northing	3			
2				4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Erin E. Brasell, Architectural Historian
 organization Earth Tech, Inc. date May 12, 2006
 street & number 7 St. Paul Street, Suite 900 telephone 410.637.1600
 city or town Baltimore state MD zip code 21202

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 SHPO or FPO)

name U.S. General Services Administration, National Capital Region
 street & number 7th & D Streets, SW telephone 202.708.5891
 city or town Washington state DC zip code 20407

Paperwork Reduction Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et. seq.*). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to range from approximately 18 hours to 36 hours depending on several factors including, but not limited to, how much documentation may already exist on the type of property being nominated and whether the property is being nominated as part of a Multiple Property Documentation Form. In most cases, it is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form to meet minimum National Register documentation requirements. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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National Park Service

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Verbal Boundary Description:

The Railroad Retirement Board Building and its grounds at 330 C Street, NW occupy the block bounded C Street on the north, D Street on the south, 3rd Street on the east and 4th Street on the west, in Washington, D.C., which comprises Square 535.

Boundary Justification:

All property lines are as they existed at the time of the building's construction. The nomination includes all property historically associated with the building.

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National Park Service

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Photographs:

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Railroad Retirement Board Building
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, District of Columbia

DATE RECEIVED: 5/25/07 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 6/08/07
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/23/07 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 7/08/07
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 07000638

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 7/6/07 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A&C
REVIEWER Patricia Andrews DISCIPLINE Historian
TELEPHONE _____ DATE 7/6/2007

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

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



Mary E. Switzer

330 C Street, SW

Washington, DC 20230

Helen Hunsen, photographer -

5/2006

Negative resides at GSA

7th + D Sts, SW

WDC 20407

View looking Southwest

DC003222-1



Mary E. Switzer
330 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20230

Helen Hanssen, photographer

5/2006

Negative resides at GSA
7th + D Sts, SW
WDC 20407

View looking northwest

DC003222-2



Mary E. Switzer
330 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20230

Helen Hanssen, photographer
5/2006

Negative resides at 6 SA
7th + D Sts, SW
WDC 20407

View looking northeast

DC003222-3



Mary E. Switzer

330 C. Street, SW

Washington, DC 20230

Helen Hanssen, photographer

5/2006

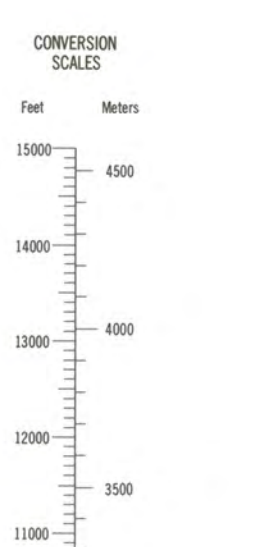
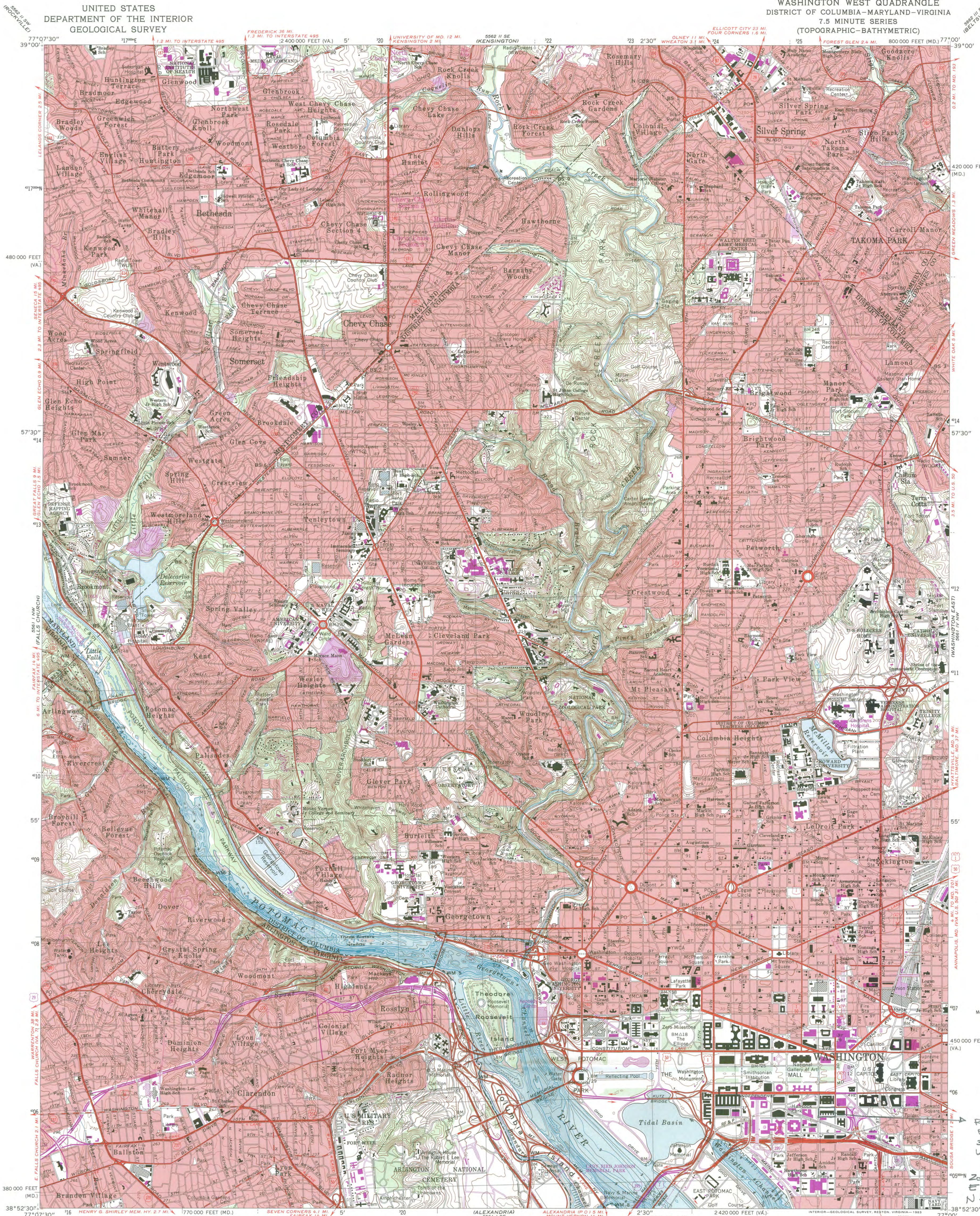
Negative resides at GSA

7th + D Sts, SW

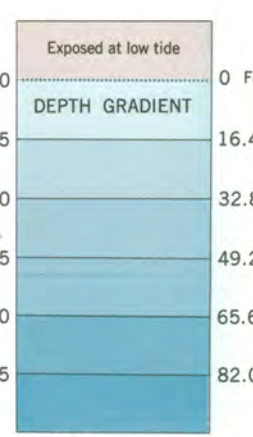
WDC 20407

View looking southeast

DC003222-4



To convert feet to meters multiply by 3048
To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808



RAILROAD RETIREMENT BOARD
320 C Street, SW
Washington, DC
20534

Zone 18
E 32508
N 420510

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey and the National Ocean Service
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, NCPS, and WSSC
Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1955. Field checked 1956. Revised 1965.
Bathymetry compiled by the National Ocean Service from tide-coordinated hydrographic surveys. This information is not intended for navigational purposes.
Mean low water (dotted) line and mean high water (heavy solid) line compiled by NOS from tide-coordinated aerial photographs. Apparent shoreline (outer edge of vegetation) shown by light solid line.
Polyconic projection. 10,000-foot grid ticks based on Maryland coordinate system, and Virginia coordinate system, north zone 1800-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 18 1927 North American Datum.
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 8 meters south and 26 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks.
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown. There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map.
Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled in cooperation with Commonwealth of Virginia agencies from aerial photographs taken 1981 and other sources. This information not field checked.
Map dated 1983.
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas.

NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE
HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY INDEX

Survey Number	Survey Date	Survey Scale	Survey Line spacing (Naut. Miles)
H-9478	1977	1:5,000	01-08
H-9488	1976	1:5,000	01-05

SCALE 1:24 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
BATHYMETRIC CONTOUR INTERVAL 1 METER WITH SUPPLEMENTARY 0.5 METER CONTOURS-DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 0.4 METER

BASE MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
BATHYMETRIC SURVEY DATA COMPLIES WITH INTERNATIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC ORGANIZATION (IHO) SPECIAL PUBLICATION 44 ACCURACY STANDARDS AND/OR STANDARDS USED AT THE DATE OF THE SURVEY
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE, ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20852
AND VIRGINIA DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES, CHARLOTTEVILLE, VIRGINIA 22903
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt - - - - -
Interstate Route ——— U.S. Route ——— State Route ———

WASHINGTON WEST, D. C.—MD.—VA.
38077-H1-T8-024
1985
PHOTOREVISED 1983
BATHYMETRY ADDED 1982
DMA 5561 I NE—SERIES V833

UTM GRID AND 1983 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

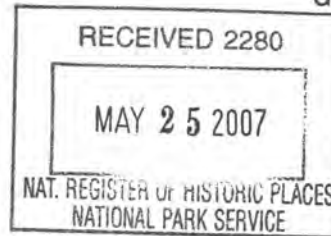




GSA Public Buildings Service

May 23, 2007

Janet Snyder Matthews, Ph.D.
Keeper, National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service 2280
1201 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005



Dear Dr. Matthews:

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is pleased to nominate the following properties, under the authority of GSA, for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. GSA is recommending that these buildings be listed at the local level of significance with the exception of the Central Heating Plant which we recommend for listing at a level of state significance.

- U.S. Department of Agriculture, South Building - 14th St. & Independence Ave., SW
- Federal Home Loan Bank Board Building - 320 First St., NW
- U.S. Public Health Service Building (Dept. of Interior South) - 1951 Constitution Ave., NW
- U.S. Courthouse (Prettyman) - 333 Constitution Ave., NW
- Social Security Administration Building (Cohen) - 330 Independence Avenue, SW
- Railroad Retirement Board Building (Switzer) - 330 C Street, SW
- Central Heating Plant - 325 13th St., SW

For each property, the following documents are enclosed for your review:

- Signed original National Register of Historic Places Registration;
- U.S.G.S. Map; and
- Original labeled black and white photographs.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the nomination, please contact Claire Hosker, Assoc. AIA, at (202) 501-1578.

Sincerely,

Rolando Rivas-Camp, FAIA
Federal Preservation Officer
Director, Center for Historic Buildings

Enclosures

U.S. General Services Administration
1800 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20405-0002
www.gsa.gov