

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
 INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

| | |
|--------------------------------|------|
| STATE: District of Columbia | |
| COUNTY: | |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| ENTRY NUMBER | DATE |

1. NAME

COMMON:
 District of Columbia Courthouse

AND/OR HISTORIC:
 District of Columbia City Hall

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
 451 Indiana Avenue, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN:
 Washington

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|------|---------|------|
| STATE District of Columbia | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
|-------------------------------|------|---------|------|

3. CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY (Check One) | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both | Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered |
| PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate) | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress | Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____ |

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
 United States Government

STREET AND NUMBER:
 451 Indiana Avenue, N.W.

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------|
| CITY OR TOWN: Washington | STATE: District of Columbia | CODE |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------|

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
 Recorder of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:
 6th and D Streets

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------|
| CITY OR TOWN: Washington | STATE: District of Columbia | CODE |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------|

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
 Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1935 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
 Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------|
| CITY OR TOWN: Washington | STATE: District of Columbia | CODE |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------|

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|--|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| CONDITION | (Check One) | | | | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed |
| | (Check One) | | | (Check One) | | |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered | <input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered | <input type="checkbox"/> Moved | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The old District of Columbia City Hall was reconstructed in 1916 along exterior lines closely resembling those of the original building. Approximately 25% of the original fabric was retained, however the interior of the building was completely redesigned. Originally a masonry structure of brick covered with stucco, it was rebuilt of brick, reinforced concrete, and steel faced with stone. The building is E shaped in plan with the wings facing South. The central projection is an imposing hexastyle pedimented Ionic portico 55' wide. The columns are of limestone three feet in diameter and 27' high. The East and West wings are further advanced from the main facade than the central portico and are terminated with monumental two story distyle-in-antis elevations with parapets. The building is 240' wide, 176' deep and 60' high. The basement story is 11'-8" high, the principal story 21'-0" high and the attic story is 9'-6" high. The building covers 42,420 square feet of ground area and accomodates 69,902 square feet of floor space. The interior of the building contains eight court rooms and extensive office space. The impressive entrance hall is trimmed with marble decoration and contains an imposing stairway with an elaborate cast iron railing with classical motifs.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The old District of Columbia City Hall at 451 Indiana Avenue, N.W., was designed by George Hadfield and commenced in 1820. Because of a series of financial difficulties, the building remained unfinished for an extended period of time and was not completed until 1849. The design of the South front of the building was much admired for the dignified grace of the central Ionic portico and the flanking advanced wings with their monumental distyle-in-antis elevations. Serving originally as a city hall and then as a courthouse the structure's past is rich in historical associations. The old District of Columbia City Hall was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1960 under the theme, Political and Military Affairs. However, the virtual reconstruction of the building in 1916 and the resulting change in building material from stucco to stone on the exterior has irretrievably compromised the building's integrity as an example of 19th century architecture.

History:

The old District of Columbia City Hall has had a turbulent history akin to the old story about the man who prided himself on the use of his grandfather's axe even though it had had two new blades and three new handles. In 1820 the District of Columbia city government announced the winner of a competition for the design of a new city hall. The man was George Hadfield, who had come to Washington in 1795 from England and whose career in the new Federal city never quite realized the expectations of its early promise. Hadfield had drafted a preliminary set of plans for the city hall in 1818 but they had been too elaborate for the budget. It was a scaled down version of these plans that won the competition. The building was begun in August of 1820 but because of a chronic lack of funds and general mismanagement it was not finished until 1849 and remained without its stucco finish and central portico for many years. In addition to its function as a city hall, space was rented out for a variety of purposes in order to raise needed construction funds. In 1863 the Federal Government occupied the building, and shortly thereafter purchased it for use as the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia. In 1881 the North portion was added. Finally in 1916 the building was reconstructed at a cost of \$842,525.86. It was further altered in 1935, and again in 1966 when the building, once again the property of the District of Columbia, became the Court of General Sessions.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Architecture, Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Baltimore, 1963), 167; Wayne Andrews, Architecture, Ambition, and Americans (New York, 1955), 13; James G. VanDerpool, "Historical Development of Architecture in the U.S.A., 1632-1912," (N.P.S. Ms., 1966), ; Hugh N. Jackson, ed., A Guide to the Architecture of Washington, D.C., (New York, Washington, and London, 1965), 52; Washington, D.C., A Guide to the Nation's Capitol (American Guide Series) (New York, 1937), 299-300; F. Regis Noel, The Court-House of the District of Columbia, (Washington, 1939).

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY | | | OR | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES | | |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------|---|-----------|--|
| CORNER | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | |
| | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees | Minutes | Seconds | |
| NW | ° ' " | ° ' " | 38° | 53' | 43" | |
| NE | ° ' " | ° ' " | 77° | 01' | 04" | |
| SE | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |
| SW | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|--------|------|---------|------|
| | | | |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| | | | |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| | | | |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| | | | |

11. FORM PREPARED BY:

NAME AND TITLE:
W. Brown Morton III

ORGANIZATION **Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service** DATE **2/8/71**

STREET AND NUMBER:
801 19th Street, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington** STATE **District of Columbia** CODE

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS