

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
MULTIPLE PROPERTY DOCUMENTATION FORM



This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instruction in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

☒ New Submission ☐ Amended Submission

**A. Name of Multiple Property Listing**

Telecommunications Resources of Washington, D.C., 1877-1954

**B. Associated Historic Contexts**

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

Early History of the Telephone in Washington, D.C., 1877-1883

The Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company in Washington, D.C., 1883-1900

The Growth of the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company in Washington, D.C., 1900-1930

Changes in Telephone Technology: the Dial Telephone System, 1930-1954

**C. Form Prepared by**

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state DC

6/2006

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**D. Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing and related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (See continuation sheets for additional comments.)

David Maloney DAVID MALONEY, ACTING SHPO, DC

Signature and title of certifying official

11-8-2006

date

State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Patrick Andrews

Signature of the Keeper

12/21/2006

Date of Action

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**Table of Contents for Written Narrative**

Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

	Page Numbers
<b>E. Statement of Historic Contexts</b> (If more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.)	E-1 through E-17
<b>F. Associated Property Types</b> (Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)	F-18 through F-23
<b>G. Geographical Data</b>	G-24 through G-26
<b>H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods</b> (Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.)	H-27
<b>I. Major Bibliographical References</b> (List major written works and primary location of additional documentation: State Historic Preservation Office, other State Agencies, Federal agency, local government, University, or other, specifying repository.)	I-28 through I-30

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**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 Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**A. MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING NAME**

Telecommunications Resources in Washington, D.C., 1877-1954

**B. ASSOCIATED HISTORIC CONTEXTS**

Early History of the Telephone in Washington, D.C., 1877-1883

The Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company, 1883-1900

The Growth of the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company, 1900-1930

Changing Telephone Technology: Dial Telephone System: 1930-1954

**C. ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES**

A. Telephone Company Office Buildings

B. Telephone Exchanges

C. Telephone Warehouses/Repair Shops

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Early History of the Telephone in Washington, D.C., 1877-1883

In 1877, just over one year after the invention<sup>1</sup> of the telephone by Alexander Graham Bell<sup>2</sup>, an embryonic telephone system was begun in Washington, D.C. by an entrepreneurial electrician named George Maynard. Maynard, owner of an electrical supply store located at 1423 6<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W. was quick to see the potential of Bell's "harmonic telegraph" and the possibilities of this new form of communication. During 1877-1878, Maynard installed several telephone lines in the city, running from his office to various points, including the U.S. Capitol building, the *Evening Star* offices, and the White House.<sup>3</sup>

In the spring of 1878, Maynard secured from Gardiner G. Hubbard, a Washington, D.C. resident, a trustee of the Bell patents, and Alexander Graham Bell's father-in-law<sup>4</sup>, an exclusive license to use, and to lease to others for use, Bell telephones in the District of Columbia and adjacent Maryland jurisdictions.<sup>5</sup> Once the license was secured, Maynard focused his creative efforts on convincing the skeptical public of the benefits of telephone, and on establishing telephone lines

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Graham Bell invented the first telephone in 1875, and received his first telephone patent, U.S. Patent No. 174,465 on March 7, 1876. Bell received the first public acknowledgement of the invention and its use as a means of communication in June 1876 at the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia.

<sup>2</sup> Although Bell's scientific breakthrough with the telephone occurred in Boston, MA, Washington, D.C. has strong associations with the inventor. Born in Edinburgh, Scotland, Bell moved to Canada with his family in 1870, then moved the following year to Boston where he became a renowned educator training teachers of deaf students at Boston University. During this time, he also invented the phonograph, the multiple telegraph and the telephone. In 1878, Bell and his wife Mabel S. Hubbard, who had been deaf since early childhood, moved to Washington, D.C. In 1880, Bell was awarded the Volta Prize by the French government for his invention of the telephone. Using his award funds, Bell established the Volta Bureau in Georgetown, ultimately building the Volta Laboratory (1893-94) at 34<sup>th</sup> and Volta Place, NW for the "increase and diffusion of knowledge relating to the deaf." In 1883, Bell opened the Bell Experimental School at 1234 16<sup>th</sup> Street, NW for Visual Speech. The school was not far from his own Dupont Circle house at 1331 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. where he lived with his wife until his death in 1922.

<sup>3</sup> The first telephone line that Maynard installed, in October 1877, was connected between the office of the Chief Signal Officer of the Army and Fort Myer in Virginia. This line was connected so that the signal officer could talk to officers and their aids at the fort across the Potomac. See Oliver Martin, *The Chesapeake and Potomac Country* (The Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company), 1928, p. 295 and "First Telephone Exchange in Capital of Nation Set up 50 Years Ago: Phones Now Total 150,000," *The Washington Post*, December 16, 1928, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Alexander Graham Bell married Mabel Hubbard, daughter of Gardiner Hubbard, in July 1877. Immediately following his marriage, Bell and his bride traveled to England to introduce the telephone abroad.

<sup>5</sup> Oliver Martin, p. 295.

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as a means of communication. Maynard announced that if fifty subscribers could be obtained, he would open a telephone exchange in the city. One marketing ploy Maynard used to attract customers was to provide free telephones. Within a matter of months, Maynard and his first employed salesman managed to enlist the set number of subscribers and, on December 1, 1878, Maynard opened the city's first central telephone exchange. The National Telephone Exchange Company was incorporated with Maynard as general manager and a W.H. Barnard as treasurer. The original list of subscribers contained, among others, *The Evening Star* offices, Professor Alexander Graham Bell, Gardiner G. Hubbard, the White House, State Department and the Treasury Department, together with the Willard Hotel and the Washington Gas Light Company.<sup>6</sup>

Maynard leased the telephones from the American Bell Telephone Company and installed the actual exchange in a first floor room in the building at 1413 G Street.<sup>7</sup> The exchange consisted of a 24-wire peg switch with six wires connected to it. Once established, Maynard continued his marketing efforts, including getting written recommendations from subscribers and offering to install telephones on a trial basis. One testimonial Maynard used to lure others to embrace the telephone was penned by W.K. Rogers, private secretary at the White House who wrote, "At all times, regardless of weather, it has given entire satisfaction." The first advertisement of the exchange noted, "You can talk directly with your friend and no one can overhear your conversation." Despite Maynard's creative sales pitches, the telephone was not initially welcomed by the public. Many people simply did not see any use for the "contraption" and certainly weren't going to pay for it.

A letter from Maynard dated February 18, 1879, however, reads, "The exchange is now marching on. We have over 50 subscribers and adding more everyday."<sup>8</sup> By July 1879, Maynard had installed more than 119 telephones. In 1879, the National Telephone Exchange Company issued its first telephone directory with 187 listings.<sup>9</sup> Within his first year of business, Maynard had garnered enough business to cause some concern among other communication companies that

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<sup>6</sup> Joseph H. Cromwell, *The C & P Story: Service in Action, Washington, D.C.* (Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company), 1981, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Although the company's first address is often given as 1423 G Street in published sources, 1413 is the address noted on the company's first directory. City directory research should clarify this discrepancy.

<sup>8</sup> Cromwell, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> A photocopy of the single-sheet directory can be found in Cromwell, p. 75a.



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also clearly realized the value of the telephone. By September 1879, Western Union Telegraph Company had established a small competing exchange in the city, at the same time that the National Capital Telephone Company—a joint stock company, with Gardiner Hubbard as president—was formed. In December 1879, one year after establishing the city's first telephone exchange, Maynard transferred his National Telephone Exchange to the National Capital Telephone Company. At the same time, the National Capital Telephone Company assumed ownership of the competing Western Union Exchange Company, thus becoming the sole exchange in Washington and the adjacent vicinity.<sup>10</sup> At that point, the number of telephones in Washington had increased to about 400, and there were four switchboards in operation. Maynard had moved his expanded exchange to the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of the Evans building at 1420 New York Avenue, N.W. earlier in the year 1879.

**The Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company, 1883-1900:**

In June of 1881, the National Capital Telephone Company was incorporated, superseding the old joint stock company. In July of that year, and for \$50,000, the company bought from George C. Maynard, the original license, along with all private lines that he had constructed. In June 1883, the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company (C&P), operating under the Bell Telephone system<sup>11</sup>, was incorporated under the laws of New York by consolidating the National Capital Telephone Company and the Telephone Exchange Company of Maryland. In July 1883, shortly after the organization of C & P, telephone communication was established between Washington and Baltimore. In May 1887, the company's central office moved from the Evans building at 1420 New York Avenue to the Small Building located at the southeast corner of 14<sup>th</sup> and G Streets, N.W.<sup>12</sup> The central offices of the C&P Company remained at the Small Building until

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<sup>10</sup> Western Union was actually bought by Bell interests and turned over to the new company.

<sup>11</sup> Following Bell's invention of the telephone, a group of foreign businessmen associated themselves with Alexander Graham Bell to place the invention on the market. The first companies to render telephone service on a large scale were organized—one in New England and the other in Canada. In 1879, these two companies merged to become the National Bell Company. In 1880, the American Bell Telephone Company was organized and absorbed the National Bell Company. In 1899, the American Bell Company transferred its business to the American Telephone and Telegraph Exchange. The C&P Company was formed as an operating company for the Bell system in Washington, D.C. and vicinity. Other operating companies existed in other jurisdictions.

<sup>12</sup> The Small Building was constructed in 1886 and demolished in 1924 for the Federal American National Bank building that stands today. According to the C&P Company annual report for 1887, the company signed a 22-year lease for the Small

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September 1904.

When C&P took over the National Capital Telephone Company and the Telephone Exchange Company of Maryland, there were 2,354 telephones in the entire area, of which 896 were in D.C. As the system expanded, the distribution of overhead wires from the Evans building became a major city concern. New poles, growing taller and taller, were erected to carry the increasing numbers of subscribers. The tallest pole, erected at today's 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Constitution Avenue, N.W. rose 88 feet high. Like the overhead trolley wires, these overhead telephone lines were considered unsightly and a city blight, as frequently noted in the *Washington Post*.<sup>13</sup> In response to public outcry and opposition to overhead lines, C&P began to develop an underground wire system, and commenced laying underground wires in the city in 1884. Although the company had laid 100 miles of underground telephone wires within the city by 1885, it still continued its use of aerial lines as it expanded its service within the city and to the outlying suburbs.

In 1890, in an effort to ensure the beautification of the city and safety of its citizens, Congress introduced legislation to have all conduit lines placed underground within the city. The legislation, known unofficially as the Telephone Act and which eventually passed in 1902, barred all overhead lines within the city limits. According to a January 1902 newspaper article, "Bar to Aerial Cables,"<sup>14</sup> the District Commissioners office responded to the new legislation and rejected some thirty pending applications by the C&P Company to extend aerial service into Columbia Heights, Dupont and Thomas Circles, North Capitol Street, and in the Tenallytown neighborhood. In response to the Congressional mandate, C&P Company established a multi-year plan to comply, in which all new lines laid would, of course, be underground, and all overhead lines would be progressively replaced with underground ones.

Passage of the Telephone Act corresponded with significant technological improvements in the telephone system, namely the common battery switchboard. Instead of individual batteries—one at each telephone—a large common battery was installed in the central office providing

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building, excluding the first floor which was reserved for a store. In 1887, the C&P Company occupied the basement and 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> floors, while it rented out the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors. See C&P Company Annual Report, 1887.

<sup>13</sup> As one example, see "War Over the Poles," *The Washington Post*, June 20, 1887, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> *The Washington Post*, January 1, 1902, p. 12.

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improved and dependable service. Introduction of the common battery and other technological achievements resulted in the rapid growth of the C&P Company and the growing acceptance of the telephone as a means of communication.

The Growth of the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company in Washington, D.C., 1900-1930:

By the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the telephone had become an essential instrument of the "modern" world. By 1905, the number of C&P subscribers had reached 40,000 and long distance service extended from Washington, D.C. to Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York and other cities. In order to accommodate the expanding clientele, C&P entered into an extensive building campaign. Between 1900 and 1908, the company built six new central offices (branch exchanges) and a warehouse building.<sup>15</sup> The first of these buildings<sup>16</sup>—the company's first purpose-built branch exchange building—known as "East" and located near the Capitol at 23 B Street, N.W. (demolished), was placed in service on December 12, 1900.<sup>17</sup> To begin with, this office served about 900 telephones out of 4,426.

Shortly afterwards, in March 1901, the "West" central office was opened at 1232 31<sup>st</sup> Street, N.W. in Georgetown with 300 telephones. All subscribers east of 7<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W. were connected to the Capitol Hill branch, and all of those subscribers west of Washington Circle were connected to the Georgetown branch.<sup>18</sup> As reported in the newspaper at that time, the benefit of the branches comes from "improved service, and from the fact that mileage will be measured from the branch exchanges, as well as from the central exchange, thus cheapening the cost of telephonic service to subscribers in the eastern and western portions of the city."

In 1901, the company built its first warehouse in Foundry Alley, between 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Streets,

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<sup>15</sup> The actual first documented C&P Company-built building was a storeroom erected in 1887. According to D.C. Permits to Build, this building (no longer extant) was a two-story brick structure located on Square 290, in the alley between 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> and E and F Streets, N.W.

<sup>16</sup> As new exchanges were built and named, the original central office at 619 14<sup>th</sup> Street (SE corner of 14<sup>th</sup> and G Streets) was dubbed "Main."

<sup>17</sup> The site is now vacant and part of the Capitol Grounds.

<sup>18</sup> "Branch Phone Exchanges," *The Washington Post*, 4/15/1900, p.5.



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N.W. and just north of the company's central offices in the Small Building at 14<sup>th</sup> and G Streets, N.W. This now-demolished four-story warehouse structure was built to store telephone equipment, and the lines and cables necessary for the maintenance and expansion of service.

Both of these two early exchanges ("East" and "West") and the Company warehouse were designed by local architect Appleton P. Clark, Jr. The "West" branch, the oldest surviving telephone exchange building<sup>19</sup> in the city and a contributing resource in the Georgetown Historic District, is a substantial, two-story brick structure with three bays of arched openings across the façade (*Figure 1*). A bas-relief decorated with a large bell on center of the façade between the first and second stories identifies the building's original use as a telephone exchange.

In November 1903, the "North" exchange opened at 14<sup>th</sup> and R Streets, N.W., serving 1,973 telephones north of L Street, including the Washington Heights, Columbia Heights, Eckington and Brookland neighborhoods. In addition to the exchange and related offices, the North exchange housed the company's telephone school for switchboard operators, commonly referred to as "Hello Girls." This four-story Classical Revival style brick and concrete building, along with two later additions abutting it, is located at 1400 14<sup>th</sup> Street in the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District.

In 1903-04, the C&P Company constructed a new "Main" building at 722 12<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W. in a key downtown location to accommodate the increasing numbers of businesses beginning to rely on the telephone. The new building housed a complex new common battery switchboard, touted at the time as the largest in the United States.<sup>20</sup> This new switchboard initially served 6,000 telephones. In September 1904, the original "Main" office at 14<sup>th</sup> and G Streets was shut down as service was transferred to the new, purpose-built structure, with practically "no interruption of service," as noted in newspaper articles at the time.<sup>21</sup> The new exchange offered a number of benefits, in particular the elimination of rings on party lines. Under the new system, only the designated subscriber was called, making party lines more desirable.<sup>22</sup> In addition, the

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<sup>19</sup> The building is no longer being used as a telephone exchange, but has been converted into offices.

<sup>20</sup> "Better Telephone Service," *The Washington Post*, November 6, 1902, p.10.

<sup>21</sup> "New Quarters Ready," *The Washington Post*, September 17, 1904, p.10.

<sup>22</sup> Prior to that, subscribers of party lines could ascertain if a call were for them by the number of times the operator would ring—once, twice, three times or more.

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introduction of modern lamps, working automatically, informed the operator of the exact position of the subscriber's receiver, thereby eliminating the need for the operator to interrupt the line to determine whether the subscriber was finished with the call, or whether the subscriber intended to receive phone calls. Another feature of the new central office was the ability for a manager to connect up with any of the boards to oversee the "Hello Girls"<sup>23</sup>. The *Washington Post* noted at the time that this "improvement" came with a regrettable loss as there would be "no more flirtations" between subscribers and the telephone girls.<sup>24</sup> The 1904 construction of the central exchange at 722 12<sup>th</sup> Street on Square 288 was the first in what would be a complex of C&P Company buildings located on the square. (The others were 725 13<sup>th</sup> Street (1918), N.W.; 726-730 12<sup>th</sup> Street (1927), N.W.; and 1200 H Street, N.W. (1954)). The buildings at 722 and 726-730 12<sup>th</sup> Street are both listed in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites and in the National Register of Historic Places.

In July 1907, service at the original "East" office at 23 B Street, N.W., was transferred to a new exchange dubbed the "Lincoln" Exchange and located at 629 B Street (Constitution Avenue), N.E. The "Lincoln" Exchange served about 3,200 telephones, and had a capacity for 10,200 subscribers. The area served was roughly all of the southeast and all of northeast, south of New York Avenue. Lack of room and a desire to provide for future growth were the reasons given by the company to abandon the "East" exchange and build the "Lincoln" exchange. In addition, the "East" exchange was located on land that was correctly expected to be condemned by the federal government. The "Lincoln" exchange still stands and is located in the Capitol Hill Historic District, while the site of the "East" exchange is now part of the Capitol Park grounds.

In 1908, both the "Columbia" exchange at 1420 Columbia Road and the "Cleveland" exchange at 4268 Wisconsin Avenue opened. The "Columbia" and "Cleveland" exchanges were designed to relieve the telephone congestion at the North exchange, which despite its state-of-the-art construction, was already overtaxed by the burgeoning residential development north of the

<sup>23</sup> Several articles on the "Hello Girls" indicates a sort of period fascination with the telephone operators and their lifestyles. The article, "Happy Hello Girls: Pleasant Life is Theirs in the Washington Exchanges, Short Hours and Good Pay" (*The Washington Post*, April 9, 1905, p. 2), notes that "though our girls are at the building nine hours each day they work only seven; they are given an hour for luncheon and also two thirty minute recreation periods during the day."

<sup>24</sup> "New Quarters Ready," *The Washington Post*, September 17, 1904, p.10.

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city.<sup>25</sup> The Cleveland exchange was named for President Grover Cleveland who, during his presidency lived nearby at Oak View, while commuting to work at the White House. The "Columbia" exchange was named for its location on Columbia Road in Columbia Heights.

Unlike the earlier exchanges that were designed by local architect Appleton P. Clark, Jr., the "Main," "North," "Lincoln," "Cleveland" and "Columbia" exchanges, as well as later exchanges, were designed either by Cyrus Eidlitz, the firm of Eidlitz & McKenzie, or the successor firm of McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin, a New York firm that was responsible for a number of the C&P Telephone Company's buildings in New York. Stylistically, these exchanges share a common Classical Revival style building tradition. They are all large three and four-story brick and concrete structures divided into three horizontal parts—base, shaft and capital—and organized around symmetrical bays of window openings with classical ornamentation, including rusticated bases, splayed concrete lintels and heavy cornice moldings. Only the now-demolished "Cleveland" exchange seems to have deviated from the norm; according to the D.C. Permit to Build, this exchange was a two-story concrete and terra cotta structure.<sup>26</sup> In 1927, the building was enlarged, and later, replaced with the present building on the site.

After 1908, following this major building campaign, and until World War I, telephone-related building activity in the city settled down. Although new lines were being continuously laid and expanded, the company's exchanges were designed to accommodate the large increase in the number of lines and subscribers. By World War I, however, as Washington became the center of wartime activity, demand for telephone service increased dramatically, both for local and international calling. In order to adequately handle the number of calls, C&P Company had to both build a new building and borrow telephone operators from other Bell system companies. The company took over the partially completed apartment house at 15<sup>th</sup> and M Streets, N.W. to house the new recruits and embarked on the construction of a new exchange building. The nine-story structure at 723-25 13<sup>th</sup> Street, dubbed the 13<sup>th</sup> Street building, was erected in 1918 "in record time" to alleviate service demands. After the War, the first floor of the building was converted into the company's business office.

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<sup>25</sup> "Build New Exchanges, Lincoln and Columbia Nearing Completion," *The Washington Post*, June 9, 1907, R3.

<sup>26</sup> Although no historic photograph of this now-demolished building has been located, the lower two-story height implies the absence of the standard commercial building form of base, shaft, and cap of the other exchange buildings.

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Although the immediate wartime needs diminished after Armistice Day, the demand for telephone service continued to grow enormously during the 1920s. According to a 1928 publication by C&P, the 1920s saw a 70% increase in telephone use over wartime use. In addition, several technological achievements augmented interest in the telephone, which in 1926 had reached its fifty-year mark. In March 1921, the inauguration of Warren Harding was broadcast over a public address system (based upon the telephone) for the first time in history; in April 1921, a telephone line connecting the United States and Cuba by submarine cable was officially opened; in 1926, a new and speedier method of handling long-distance toll calls was developed, called Combined Line and Recording (CLR); and in 1927, transatlantic service opened.

During the 1920s, in response to achievements in the telephone industry, as well as to an expanding city and clientele, the C&P Company again entered into a major building period. In addition to enlarging existing buildings, such as the "North"<sup>27</sup> exchange building at 14<sup>th</sup> and R Streets and the "Cleveland" exchange building to accommodate new exchanges, the company built new offices in new and emerging residential areas outside of the city limits. The "Georgia" exchange at Georgia Avenue and Gallatin Streets was constructed in 1927 to service sections of Takoma Park, Brightwood, Shepherd Park, Manor Park, Fort Stevens Ridge, and Luzon Heights. The company also constructed exchanges over the District line in Bethesda and Silver Spring in suburban Montgomery County, MD.

In addition to the exchanges, the C&P Company also built a major new warehouse building at 1111-1115 North Capitol Street. When it opened in 1927, the 160,800 square foot concrete building was noted in newspaper accounts as the company's largest building.<sup>28</sup> The fire-resistant building was constructed to house a number of different company departments: the first floor consisted of a garage designed to accommodate a large fleet of trucks and "motor vehicles" used in the construction and maintenance of the telephone plant (i.e. wires and cable lines), a complete machine shop, blacksmith's shop and forge and finishing shop where cars were painted. The second floor housed repair shops where the company telephone apparatus was overhauled. Some

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<sup>27</sup> An addition to the "North" exchange accommodated a new exchange dubbed the "Decatur" exchange. The Decatur Exchange was named after Admiral Stephen Decatur.

<sup>28</sup> "New Phone Building Will House Shops, Chesapeake and Potomac Co. Departmental Offices in its Largest Local Structure," *The Washington Post*, June 12, 1927.



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storage space on the second floor was also allotted to the Western Electric supply department. The third floor accommodated offices and shops of the Western Electric Company, and the fourth floor was occupied by the general plant superintendent and allied departments. The fourth floor also contained a cafeteria and restrooms for the women employees. The basement, second and fourth floors held lunch and smoking rooms for the men.<sup>29</sup>

Changes in Telephone Technology: Dial Telephone System:

Since the invention of the telephone in 1875, major technological advancements in the communications industry have regularly affected and improved telephone service. One revolutionary change came in the 1920s with the introduction of the dial telephone system which enabled mechanical and electrical mechanisms to replace manual operators. Beginning in the late 1920s, the C&P Company began to convert the city's manual telephone system to the dial system. It began, in 1927-28, with the construction of its new office building at 726-730 12<sup>th</sup> Street, specifically designed to house new dial switching equipment not able to fit in the company's existing two downtown offices. The new office, immediately adjacent to the company's "Main" exchange at 722 12<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W., was designed "to meet the growing demands for service and to provide office space for a number of departments" then occupying rented quarters. The soaring seven-story building, designed by the architectural firm of Voorhees, Gmelin and Walker (a successor firm to McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin), was executed with Art Deco detailing and ornamentation. This building is listed in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites and the National Register of Historic Places.

On May 3, 1930, the Company began its first conversion to dial when 60,000 telephones in downtown D.C. were switched over from the manual to dial system. At the end of 1931, there were 671,721 telephones in service in the C&P region (including D.C., Virginia and Maryland). Of these, 488,092 were manual and 183,629 were dial. In July 1932, the manual "Cleveland" exchange was converted to dial and "Emerson," a new dial exchange opened. Both of these exchanges were housed in a new, Art Deco building constructed on Wisconsin Avenue in Tenleytown, immediately adjacent to the original 1907-08 "Cleveland" exchange building. The new building apparently incorporated the 1927 addition into its structure, while the original

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<sup>29</sup> "Newest Telephone Building Occupied," *The Evening Star*, June 11, 1927, p. 19.



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1907-08 building was eventually demolished. With construction of this new building in Tenleytown, C&P Company had increased the number of dial offices to five. In 1933, the company was operating seven dial exchanges and eight manual offices within the city, to which were connected 177,000 telephones.<sup>30</sup>

At the same time that new technology necessitated new buildings to accommodate new systems, improved technology also eliminated the need for existing structures. For instance, improved transmission service over longer cables enabled the C&P Company to locate its central offices at a greater distance from customers than historically was required. So, as transmission service improved, many of the smaller exchange buildings erected for a discrete geographic area were no longer needed. In 1938, and marking the end of an era, the "West" exchange in Georgetown closed, becoming the first C&P Company exchange to do so. The building, now private offices, still stands as the city's oldest surviving purpose-built exchange building. Eleven years later, in 1949, the company's last manual office at 629 B Street, NE, originally called "East" when it opened in 1907, but then dubbed "Ludlow," was cut out of service and entirely replaced by the "Lincoln" Dial Center, constructed in 1940 at 114 7<sup>th</sup> Street, NE. Closure of this manual exchange culminated the company's dial conversion program which had begun in 1930, and is considered an historic milestone in the company's history.<sup>31</sup> An open house for all of those who had served in the office was held on the last day of the exchange's operation.

As the city and the world's population grew in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, its relative size, due to expanding telephone service diminished. Local telephone service was commonplace, and long distance dial calling became available to residents of most major cities, including Washington, D.C. During the 1940s, both during the War and following it, growth of the company reached record levels. New buildings and new equipment were constructed and installed throughout the city. According to the 1949 Annual Report of the company, construction projects in 1949 alone included a new building addition and downtown toll center at the company offices at 725 13<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.; a new building for Brookland Dial Center in northeast, D.C.; new switching office at the "Columbia" exchange; and new dial central offices in Congress Heights and Brookland.

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<sup>30</sup> By 1933, the "Cleveland-Emerson" exchange at 4268 Wisconsin Avenue had been built as a dial office and the "Georgia" exchange had been converted from manual to dial. See "C&P Telephone Company 50 Years Old This Week," *The Washington Post*, June 25, 1933, p. 11.

<sup>31</sup> Cromwell, p. 76.

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During this period and beyond, C&P and its parent company, AT&T, saw their roles in history and began to mark expansions and milestones with public ceremonies. For instance, in 1951, when the 500,000<sup>th</sup> phone in Washington, D.C. was installed in a house on Belt Road, the event was marked by C&P with a small ceremony.<sup>32</sup> Two years later, on November 18, 1953, AT&T marked the 50 millionth telephone to be manufactured in the United States by presenting it to President Dwight D. Eisenhower in a ceremony at the White House. In 1955 and 1957, Washington's 1,000<sup>th</sup> phone booth and the metropolitan area's one millionth phone installation were marked by events.<sup>33</sup>

In addition, C&P marked the opening of its new infrastructure—primarily dial centers in Washington's new residential neighborhoods and in the expanding suburbs—with public ground breaking ceremonies. New buildings included the Congress Heights dial center at 3726 Nichols Avenue, NE (1949) and the Brookland central office at 1039 Lawrence Street, NE (1949), as well as a major new dial center in Georgetown (1954), and the opening of a new central headquarters in an already existing building at 930 H Street in 1954.<sup>34</sup>

Chesapeake and Potomac Company Buildings: Architects

The first buildings constructed by the Chesapeake and Potomac Company—the “East” and “West” exchanges and a company warehouse building—were designed by local architect Appleton P. Clark, Jr.

**Appleton P. Clark, Jr.** (1865-1955) had no formal training in architecture beyond a course in high school, yet he developed a successful and prolific architectural career in Washington, D.C. that spanned more than 60 years. As he stated in his application to the American Institute of Architects in 1916, Clark had neither graduated from an architecture school, held a scholarship in architecture, nor completed qualifying examinations of the Royal Institute of British Architects or

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<sup>32</sup> Cromwell, p. 81.

<sup>33</sup> For a discussion of the events and milestones marked by the company, see Cromwell, p. 81-91.

<sup>34</sup> Known as the Printcraft Building, the building at 930 H Street was originally built in 1927 as a printing office. It was purchased by C&P from the Red Cross which had been occupying the building since World War II. This building is no longer standing.

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the Ecole des Beaux Arts.<sup>35</sup> Clark did apprentice in the office of Albert B. Mullett in the mid-1880s, before establishing his own office in 1886. Clark is credited with the design of a variety of buildings, including dozens of apartment buildings, multiple bank buildings, several stores, and a number of religious and institutional buildings, in addition to the random private residence. Clark's "West" exchange in Georgetown is a small-scale Classically-inspired commercial structure that befits its streetscape both in terms of its stylistic relationship to the Greek Revival Custom House and Post Office across the street, and in terms of scale to the more modest residential building forms of the neighborhood.

Beginning in 1902, with construction of the "North" exchange, the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company turned to the New York firm of Eidlitz & MacKenzie; and the successor firms of McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin; and Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker, company architects for the Bell Telephone system. (See attached List of C&P Buildings and their architects.)<sup>36</sup> The Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company relied upon these firms for the design of all of its D.C. buildings between 1902 and 1928. After 1928, the firm turned to several other local architects, including Waddy Butler Wood and Leon Chatelain, Jr.

**Eidlitz and McKenzie:** Formed in 1902, Eidlitz and McKenzie was the partnership of Cyrus L.W. Eidlitz and Andrew C. McKenzie (McKenzie was also associated with Eidlitz before the actual formation of the partnership). When the partnership was formed, Eidlitz had already established himself as the corporate architect for the Bell telephone system (of which C&P was an associated operating partner), and had already designed several buildings for the company. Although Eidlitz's name alone appears as architect on the D.C. Permits to Build of the company's two earliest buildings—the "old" Main building (1902) and the "North" exchange building (1903)—Company records indicate that McKenzie actually designed, and was in charge of, the Main building project. The firm was the architect of many well-known New York buildings in addition to their telephone company commissions. Their designs were frequently

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<sup>35</sup> National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation: Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C., 1880-1945, prepared by Tracerries, 1993, p. E-33.

<sup>36</sup> This section on the architects has been taken from the National Register Nomination form on the C&P Telephone building (old Main Building) at 722 12<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W. prepared by Judith Helm Robinson and Julie Mueller and listed on 6/13/88, as well as the National Register Nomination form on the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company Building at 726-730 12<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W., also prepared by Judith Helm Robinson and Julie Mueller and listed in the National Register on 8/5/1988.

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published in national architectural journals. Their partnership lasted until 1910, when Eidlitz retired from active practice.

Cyrus Eidlitz (1853-1921), the son of noted New York architect Leopold Eidlitz, was sent to Switzerland and later to Germany to receive his formal architectural education. Upon his return to the United States in 1871, he entered his father's office where he served as a draftsman for four years. In 1878, he received his first commission—the reconstruction of the fire-damaged, Westchester St. Peter's church, a building originally designed by his father in 1851.

In ca. 1881, Eidlitz won a competition for the design of the Buffalo Public Library. His name was suddenly catapulted into the limelight because one of the other competitors was Henry Hobson Richardson, one of the contemporary deans of American architecture. Eidlitz's major works are in New York and include mostly commercial structures, many of which were designed for the Bell system. Among his works are the New York Telephone Company Building, the Western Electric Company Building (1889), and the 10-story Fidelity & Casualty Office building (1893), his first tall building. With McKenzie, Eidlitz designed the New York Times Building, the design for which both are perhaps most well known.

Little is known of the career and personal life of Andrew McKenzie (1861-1926), as published materials devoted to him are scarce. An obituary indicates that he was a native of New York state. He was educated in Buffalo before moving to New York City in 1884 where he joined the firm of Babb, Cook and Willard. He later went to work for Eidlitz and was the project architect on the C&P Main building at 722 12<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W. He was responsible for many New York City buildings, as well as many Bell Telephone Company-related buildings in other cities.

**McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin:** Upon Eidlitz's retirement in 1910, McKenzie formed a partnership with Stephen Voorhees and Paul Gmelin. That firm continued as the corporate architects of the Bell system and went on to design the buildings of the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company in D.C.

Paul Gmelin (1859-1937), a native of Germany, was a graduate of the University of Stuttgart. He began his professional training in New York City as a draftsman for an architectural periodical. His skill came to light after he completed a rendering of the Boston Public Library for Charles



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McKim. He later worked for several noted New York City architectural firms, where he assisted with the designs of many of the city's first skyscrapers.

Stephen Voorhees (1879-1965) was educated as a civil engineer at Princeton University. Upon graduating in 1900, he worked for two years as an engineer before joining Eidlitz and McKenzie as a construction superintendent. Upon Eidlitz's retirement in 1910, McKenzie asked Voorhees and Gmelin to join him in partnership. A man of great ambition, Voorhees was responsible for enlarging and organizing the office into a large and successful architectural practice. Aside from the office, he was very active in the architectural community. He was the founder and president of the New York Building Congress, head of the committee to reorganize the New York City Board of Standards and Appeals, head of the Building-Industry Division of the Employment Emergency Committee, and chairman of the Construction Code Authority of the National Recovery Administration. On the national level, he served to terms as president of the American Institute of Architects. From 1936 to 1940, he was the chairman of the Board of Design for the New York World's Fair. Between 1930 and 1949, he served as the supervising architect for his alma mater, Princeton. During his lifetime, he received many honors including degrees from prestigious universities and honorary memberships in the professional institutions, including the Royal Institute of British Architects. Voorhees retired from his firm in 1959, but continued to serve as a consultant until his death in 1965.

**Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker:** Upon the death of senior partner Andrew McKenzie in 1926, Voorhees and Gmelin joined with company associate Ralph Walker to form the new company and successor firm, Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker (VGW).

Ralph Walker (1889-1973), a 1911 graduate of M.I.T. joined the firm in 1919. He is considered to have been VGW's head designer and as such was responsible for many of the firm's noted projects. In addition to his active architectural practice, Ralph Walker was a prolific writer. He followed a public and professional service career much like Voorhees, but was perhaps better known. Walker served as president, trustee or chairman of many organizations, including the American Institute of Architects. In Washington, D.C., he served on the commission of Fine Arts during the Eisenhower administration. In 1957, close to his retirement, he won the AIA's Centennial Gold Medal Award. This award, in the AIA's opinion is given to a person who "has made the most significant contribution of any living American architect to humanity and the



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planning of the human environment.”

During the mid-1920s, the work of VGW and its predecessor firm became well known, mostly for its work centered in New York City and environs. The building which brought the firm national recognition (actually designed by McKenzie, Voorhees and Gmelin) is the Barclay-Vesey Building, constructed for the New York Telephone Company in 1923-1926 in New York City. When constructed, the Barclay-Vesey building was the largest telephone company in the world, and is considered to be the first significant Art Deco structure erected in the New York City. The Art Deco-inspired Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone building at 726-730 12<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W. in Washington, D.C. designed by VGW in 1928 is often compared to the Barclay-Vesey Building.

The firm of VGW, its predecessor and successor firms were extremely prolific. At the time of Voorhees' death in 1965, the firm had designed 385 buildings for the New York Telephone Company alone and another 155 for the New Jersey Telephone Company. All of the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company buildings constructed between 1902 and 1928 were also designed by VGW, or its predecessor firms. Their work was not solely devoted to telephone company buildings, however, but also included a variety of office and institutional structures, including the Walter Lisenard Building in New York City, the Brooklyn Municipal Building, the Prudential Insurance Company Headquarters in Newark; educational buildings at Harvard University; Princeton University; and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In addition to the C&P Company buildings in Washington, D.C., VGW is responsible for the design of the AFL-CIO Headquarters at 16<sup>th</sup> and H Streets, N.W. and the Belgian Chancery at 3330 Garfield Street, N.W.

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### *F. ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES*

*Name of Property Type:* Telephone Company Office

#### Description:

The telephone company office is a commercial office building constructed by the telephone company to house personnel and business offices, as well as, but not necessarily including, switching equipment that historically provided for telephone service. When telephone service was first established in this city in 1877, telephone company offices occupied rented quarters, first at 1423 G Street, then at 1420 New York Avenue, and finally at the Small building at 14<sup>th</sup> and G Streets, NW. In 1903-04, the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company (established in 1883), built its first purpose-built company office at 722 12<sup>th</sup> Street, NW. The building was constructed during a major period of growth and expansion by the company as the initially wary public began to embrace the telephone as a form of communication. As the numbers of subscribers increased dramatically, the company was required to build the infrastructure to provide telephone service to them.

Eventually, as the telephone became a necessity and the demands on the telephone company continued to increase, the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company built and/or acquired new and larger offices. In 1918, due to war-time demands, the Company built a new office/exchange at 723 13<sup>th</sup> Street to handle the huge volume of phone calls. In 1926, in response to the introduction of the dial system of calling and the necessity for greater space to house new dial switching equipment, a new avant-garde Art Deco company office and switching building was built at 726-730 12<sup>th</sup> Street. In 1954, the company purchased the Printcraft Building (constructed in 1927, demolished after 1980) at 930 H Street where it established its company headquarters.

#### Significance:

Telephone company office buildings are significant for their association with the early history of the telephone and the rise of communications technology. As built, the company office buildings were designed as expressions of the company's corporate image, through distinctive commercial architecture of the time. All of the surviving telephone company offices were designed by either the architecture firm of McKenzie, Voorhees, & Gmelin, its predecessor firm, or its successor firm—a New York firm that effectively served as the corporate architects for the Bell Telephone

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systems.

Three historic telephone company office buildings still stand in Washington, D.C.: The C&P Central Office at 722 12<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W. (1903-04) designed by Eidlitz & McKenzie; 723 13<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W. (1918), designed by McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin; and 726-730 12<sup>th</sup> Street (1928) designed by Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker. Two of these—722 12<sup>th</sup> Street and 726-730 12<sup>th</sup> Street, NW—are listed in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites and the National Register of Historic Places.

### Registration Requirements:

For the period between 1900 and 1954, telephone company offices are eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A and C. The eligible property must exhibit its original building form and massing and must retain integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship and association. Reversible alterations, such as the replacement of original windows and doors, and the replacement of original roof materials would not disqualify a property for consideration. However, major alterations and additions that obscure the original building form may disqualify the property for consideration.

*Name of Property Type:*

*Telephone Branch Exchange*

### Description:

Telephone branch exchange buildings do not necessarily follow a standard form. They are buildings constructed to house the equipment necessary for telephone communication within a given jurisdiction. In Washington, D.C., when telephone service was first introduced in the city in 1878, there was a single telephone exchange containing a single switchboard located in rented quarters, first at 1423 G Street, then at 1420 New York Avenue, then at the Small Building at 14<sup>th</sup> and G Streets, N.W. Beginning in 1900 as telephone service expanded in the city, branch exchanges were constructed to accommodate the growing numbers of subscribers located at a distance from the central exchange. At that time and for the next two decades, limitations in telephone technology and the cost involved in providing service at greater distances encouraged the construction of branch exchanges that were built to serve relatively small geographic areas. As cable technology improved and the dial system was introduced beginning in 1930, telephone exchanges could provide telephone service to greater distances at lower costs, resulting in fewer, but larger buildings serving the same jurisdiction.

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In the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the city, telephone exchanges were generally two to six-story brick structures that were built in established and expanding neighborhoods to accommodate telephone service. At a minimum, these buildings had to contain switchboards of varying capacities—capacities that were determined by the telephone company based upon population projections—and the power plant that contained the storage battery and distribution frames and other apparatus necessary to provide telephone service. As the number of telephone subscribers increased, the number of telephone operators needed to handle the calls also necessarily increased, and the size of the exchanges grew accordingly. In addition to having to house more operators and more and larger switchboards, exchanges began to offer special amenities, including operators' quarters for the operators' personal belongings, recreation and reading rooms for the operators to use during their breaks, and lunch and tea rooms for eating. A description of the 1907 "Lincoln" exchange notes that the first floor contained the power plant, main and intermediate distributing frames, relay and coil racks, and other apparatus. The second floor consisted of the operating room with two rows of switchboard stations and 49 operator stations. The third floor was entirely given up to "quarters" for the operators, including a dining room, a sitting room, an infirmary, lavatory, etc. The "North" exchange also accommodated a "telephone school" for the training of telephone operators.

Beginning with the dial system, new exchanges were designed primarily for the dial switchboards, power plant and other equipment. Service offices and offices for company managers may be included in the buildings, but as manual exchanges were phased out, there was no longer a need for operators' facilities.

Telephone exchange buildings were generally deliberately designed to impart the telephone company's corporate image through distinctive design, and in some cases, were also specifically designed to fit into the neighborhood in which the exchange was being constructed. For instance, the oldest surviving exchange, the "West" exchange in Georgetown at 1232 31<sup>st</sup> Street, NW is a wide, two-story brick Classical Revival style building with arched doors and windows decorated with a bas-relief of a bell on center of the building between the first and second stories. The building form is clearly commercial/institutional and the building use clearly indicated by the decorative bell, but its two-story height is compatible with the small-scale commercial and residential character of the street. Similarly, the 1927 red brick Colonial Revival-style "Georgia" exchange at Gallatin Street and Georgia Avenue was designed to be compatible with the red brick Colonial Revival-style residences of the surrounding suburban neighborhoods. Newspaper accounts at the time described the new "Georgia" exchange as being "outstanding in appearance



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not only for that section but for Washington generally.”<sup>37</sup>

For the most part, though, and based upon the extant buildings, it appears that more attention was paid to corporate image than to compatibility. Beginning in 1902, the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company hired either the New York firm of Eidlitz & McKenzie, or its successor firms of McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin, and Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker to design the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company's buildings. During the 1910s, and despite the location of the exchanges within the city, all of the buildings shared a common commercial form executed in the Classical Revival style building form. They are all large three and four-story brick and concrete structures divided into three horizontal parts—base, shaft and capital—and organized around symmetrical bays of window openings with classical ornamentation, including rusticated bases, splayed concrete lintels and heavy cornice moldings. Generally, the company name was inscribed on the building, either incised into a stone or concrete beltcourse, or above a door lintel.

### Significance:

Historic telephone exchange buildings are significant for their association with the early history of the telephone. Exchange buildings survive as physical manifestations of the development of the telephone and provide a visual illustration of the evolution of communications technology in the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century from manual to dial center operations.

There are nine known branch exchanges still standing in Washington, D.C. that date within the period of significance (1900-1954). Several of these, no longer being used as exchanges, have been adapted to new uses, while others are still used by the telephone company. In general, the exchanges do not survive in their original form. As population and thus the number of subscribers increased, so too did the need for space. As a result, additions were made to existing exchanges and new exchanges opened in them. However, there are some cases where entirely new, more modern buildings did replace existing ones and thus survive intact to their original form.

The oldest of the exchanges, opened in 1901, is located in Georgetown and is one of the first purpose-built telephone-related resources in the city.

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<sup>37</sup> “Shepherd Central of Phone Company to Cost \$600,000, Plans for Building at Gallatin Street and Georgia Avenue Are Approved,” *The Washington Post*, February 6, 1927.



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The following is a list of the known exchanges in Washington, D.C.:

Name of Exchange	Address	Date of Construction	Name of Architect
West Exchange	1232 31 <sup>st</sup> Street, NW	1900-1901	Appleton P. Clark
North Exchange	1700 14 <sup>th</sup> Street, NW	1902-03	Cyrus Eidlitz/Eidlitz & McKenzie
Lincoln Exchange	629 B Street, NE	1906-07	Eidlitz & McKenzie
Columbia Exchange	1420 Columbia Road	1907-1908	Eidlitz & McKenzie
Georgia Exchange	926 Gallatin Street	1926	McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin
Emerson Exchange Building	4346 Wisconsin Avenue, NW	1932	
Lincoln Dial Center	114 7 <sup>th</sup> Street, NE	1940	Leon Chatelain, Jr.
Congress Heights Dial Center	3726 Nichols Avenue, SE	1949	
Brookland Dial Center	1039 Lawrence Street, NE	1949	

Registration Requirements:

For the period between 1900 and 1954, telephone exchange buildings are eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria and C. Under both criteria, the building must retain integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship and association. Although major additions should not disqualify the building from designation, the massing of the original building should be legible (i.e. distinct stories in 3-part commercial blocks), and character-defining features should be intact (i.e. company name engraved on building, if relevant). Reversible alterations, such as the replacement of original windows and doors, and the replacement of original roof materials would not disqualify a property for consideration.

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*Name of Property Type: Telephone Warehouses/Repair Facilities*

### Description:

Three warehouse/repair facilities are known to have been built in D.C. However, only one survives and there are no known images of the demolished ones, so there is no known established form. The surviving example at 1111 North Capitol Street, NE, however, designed by the C&P Company's corporate architects reflects a vernacular expression of the Art Deco style and, as such, is an expression of the telephone company's efforts to present a national corporate image.

In addition, the warehouse building's concrete frame and steel sash windows illustrate the character-defining features of Washington's 20<sup>th</sup>-century warehouse design. Similarly, the building's diluted use of an academic style is consistent with industrial design on a national scale that deliberately sought to emphasize the utilitarian nature of industrial buildings.

### Significance:

When the C&P plant building opened in 1927, it was hailed as the company's largest structure and was recognized for its important role in the construction and maintenance of the telephone systems and infrastructure in the city. The building included a garage for the fleet of company repair trucks, a machine shop, a supply shop for telephone cables and equipment, repair shops where telephone apparatus was repaired, and offices for the plant superintendent department. The warehouse building is a visible reminder of the complexities in building and expanding the city's telephone system.

### Registration Requirements:

For the period between 1900 and 1954, the telephone company warehouse-type building is eligible for listing under Criteria A and C. Under both criteria, the building must retain integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship and association. Major additions do not disqualify the building from designation; however, the concrete-frame industrial massing of the building and character-defining elements, such as steel sash windows and diluted expressions of academic styles should remain intact and legible.

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**G. Geographical Data**

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NAME	ADDRESS	DATE	ARCHITECT	NOTES
East Exchange	23 B Street, NW	1900	Appleton P. Clark	Demolished. Now part of the Capitol Park Grounds
West Exchange	1232 31 <sup>st</sup> Street, NW	1900-1901	Appleton P. Clark	Within Georgetown Historic District; currently private office
C&P Company Warehouse	Foundry Alley between 13 <sup>th</sup> and 14 <sup>th</sup> Streets and G Street and New York Avenue, NW	1901	Appleton P. Clark	Demolished
North Exchange	1700 14 <sup>th</sup> Street, NW	1902-03	Cyrus Eidlitz/Eidlitz & McKenzie	Within 14 <sup>th</sup> Street Historic District
C&P Central Office	722 12 <sup>th</sup> St, NW	1903-04	Eidlitz & McKenzie	Verizon Offices. Designated Landmark
Lincoln Exchange	629 B Street, NE	1906-07	Eidlitz & McKenzie	Co-op Apartment. Within Capitol Hill Historic District
Columbia Exchange	1420 Columbia Rd	1907-1908	Eidlitz & McKenzie	Calvary Bilingual Multi-cultural Learning Center
Cleveland Exchange	4268 Wisconsin Avenue, NW	1907-1908	Eidlitz & McKenzie	Demolished in 1932, replaced by Emerson exchange
C&P Company Warehouse	Square 3117 in Alley between U and V Sts and N. Capitol and 1 <sup>st</sup> Streets, N.W.	1909	None. John McGregor, builder	Demolished

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13 <sup>th</sup> Street Building	723 13 <sup>th</sup> Street, NW	1918	McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin	War-time exchange, later became Company business offices
Decatur Exchange (Addition to North Exchange Building)	1700 14 <sup>th</sup> Street	1920	McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin	Addition built along west side on alley
C&P Company Warehouse	1115 North Capitol Street, NE	1926	McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin	Warehouse and garage
Addition to Cleveland Exchange	4346 Wisconsin Avenue	1926-27	McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin	This addition was later incorporated into the 1932 Art Deco exchange building constructed on the site.
Georgia Exchange	926 Gallatin Street	1926	McKenzie, Voorhees & Gmelin	C&P owned
C&P Central Exchange	726-730 12 <sup>th</sup> Street	1928	Voorhees, Gmelin & Walker	Abuts 1903-04 C&P office. Individual landmark
Emerson Exchange Building	4346 Wisconsin Avenue, NW	1932		Verizon owned
Addition to North Exchange Building	1700 14 <sup>th</sup> Street, NW	1937	Waddy B. Wood and Leon Chatelain, Jr.	Within 14 <sup>th</sup> Street Historic District
Lincoln Dial Center	114 7 <sup>th</sup> Street, NE	1940	Leon Chatelain, Jr.	Built to replace the Lincoln (manual) exchange. Within Capitol Hill Historic District. C&P owned.
Congress Heights Dial Center	3726 Nichols Avenue, SE	1949		

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Brookland Dial Center	1039 Lawrence Street, NE	1949		
C&P Company Headquarters	930 H Street	1954		Building purchased by C&P in 1954 from the American Red Cross
Georgetown Wire Center	1045 Wisconsin Avenue, NW	1954-55		



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**H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods**

The multiple property listing of telecommunications resources in Washington, D.C. is based upon a 2005 study of the history of the telephone in the city and a survey and evaluation of the extant resources associated with the telephone. The goal of the study was to identify, document, and protect significant resources related to the city's telecommunications history. The study was intended to provide a context by which to evaluate these resources and to officially acknowledge and protect them through the city's preservation law. The survey identified 22 historic resources, including 18 extant resources and four demolished ones.

The properties are grouped under four historic context themes: 1) Early History of the Telephone in Washington, D.C. (1877-1883); 2) The Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company (1883-1900); 3) The Growth of the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company (1900-1930); 4) Changes in Technology: the Dial Telephone System (1930-1954). The introduction of a telephone system in the city in 1877 and the opening of a new central headquarters building in 1954 to accommodate new technology determined the Period of Significance for the historic context. All telephone-related resources within the boundaries of the District of Columbia are relevant to this study. The property types are organized by building type.

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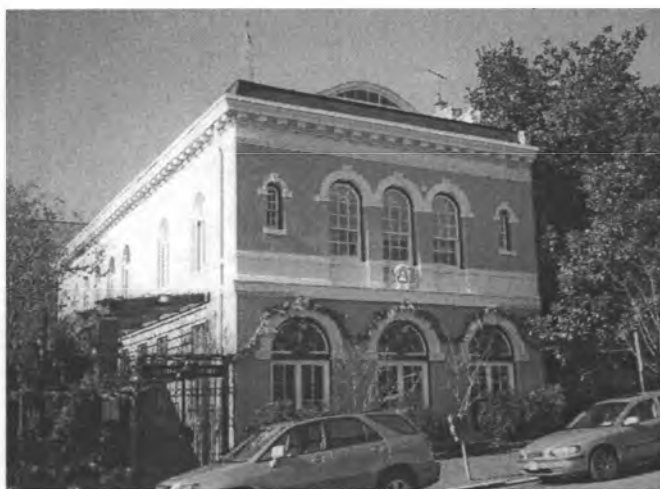
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West Exchange (1900-01), 1232 31<sup>st</sup> Street, N.W.



Main Exchange (1903-04)  
724 12<sup>th</sup> Street, NW

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Columbia Exchange (1908)  
1420 Columbia Road, NW



C&P Company Warehouse (1927)  
1111 North Capitol Street, NE

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C&P Headquarters Building (1928-29)  
726-730 12<sup>th</sup> Street, NW



Emerson Exchange (1932)  
4268 Wisconsin Avenue, NW

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EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: COVER DOCUMENTATION

MULTIPLE NAME: Telecommunications Resources of Washington DC MPS

STATE & COUNTY: District of Columbia

DATE RECEIVED: 11/13/06 DATE OF PENDING LIST:  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/28/06  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 64500969

NOMINATOR: STATE

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 12/21/06 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Cover form details the history of telephone service in D.C.  
in four historic contexts and three property types.

RECOM./CRITERIA accept cover  
REVIEWER Patrick Andrus DISCIPLINE Historian  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Date 12/21/2006

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