

PH0024287

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	
COUNTY:	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
ANG 14 1973	

1. NAME

COMMON:
Main Gate, Washington Navy Yard

AND/OR HISTORIC:
The Latrobe Gate

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
8th and M Streets, S.E.

CITY OR TOWN:
Washington (Congressman Walter E. Fauntroy, District of Columbia)

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
District of Columbia	11	District of Columbia	001

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<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
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input checked="" 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 of America (Jurisdiction, United States Navy)

STREET AND NUMBER:
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

CITY OR TOWN: STATE:

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

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

STREET AND NUMBER:
6th and D Streets, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE

Washington District of Columbia 11

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Proposed District of Columbia additions to the National Register of Historic Properties recommended by the Joint Committee on Landmarks

DATE OF SURVEY: March 7, 1968 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
National Capital Planning Commission

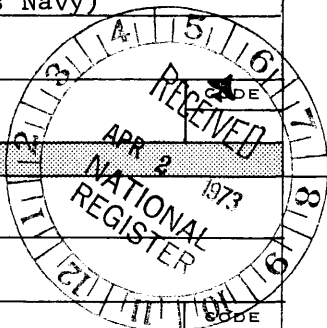
STREET AND NUMBER:
1325 G Street, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE

Washington District of Columbia 11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

HABS



STATE:

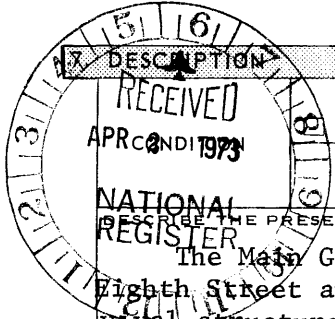
COUNTY:

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

ANG 14 1973



DESCRIPTION		(Check One)					
<input checked="" 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 Main Gate into the Washington Navy Yard lies at the juncture of the Eighth Street axis and M Street in Southeast Washington. It is a Greek Revival structure which has been incorporated into the ground story of a three-story late Victorian building. The gate was designed by Benjamin Latrobe in 1804 and was one of the first structures built at the Washington Navy Yard. It is a Flemish bond brick structure which has been heavily stuccoed. The Victorian building which incorporates it is also of brick which is painted white. It was completed in 1881. The architect is unknown.

Although the original Latrobe drawings for the Main Gate have not been located, we have a fairly good idea of its appearance from contemporary descriptions and from measured drawings made before the Victorian addition. It was conceived as a double gateway with north and south facades built 40' apart, connected by a double colonnade, and covered by a hipped roof. Vehicular traffic passed through the center of the gate and pedestrian traffic through either side.

The north facade was composed of two Greek Doric columns (set 10' apart) and two flanking pylons across the top of which ran an architrave frieze and parapet wall. The parapet wall was raised slightly higher in the area spanning the two columns to support the crowning feature of the design, an eagle displayed "close sinister," grasping an anchor in talon. This sculpture was carved by Giuseppi Franzoni of Pisa, Italy, and mounted on the gate in 1806. Inset in each pylon was a rectangular panel with an anchor design carved in bas-relief. Separate iron gates opened between each column and its neighboring pylon to regulate pedestrian traffic.

Much of the southern facade was taken up by a single large semi-circular arch rising almost from ground level to a height of 12' and spanning a 20' roadway beneath. The arch was buttressed by two flanking pylons pierced by arched pedestrian entrances. Across the entire facade ran an architrave, frieze and parapet wall.

Connecting the north and south facades was a double colonnade. These Doric columns bordered either side of the roadway and shared a common border with each pedestrian walkway. Covering the structure was a low-pitched hipped roof which leveled at its sides for drainage. To the east and west of the gate were one-story brick guard lodges. These opened onto the passage between the north and south facades but were visible only from the south.

The first major alteration of the guard lodges occurred in 1823 when an additional story was added to provide more space for the Marine officers stationed there. This addition, however, is said to have "spoiled the classic proportions of the gateway." The resulting contrast in the color of the newer bricks with the older first story disturbed a later Commandant of the Yard, and in 1830 some white paint which was "no longer suitable for painting ships" was used to create a uniform facade.

In 1880 and 1881 the gate lodges were demolished and a large building was constructed around the gate, again, to provide more space for the Marines. It extended across the top of the gate for two stories and on either side of it for three stories. This new structure left most of the old gate intact, with the exception of the eagle, the old roof and the parapet wall. Stylistically it was basically a Victorian melange of Classical and Italianate

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

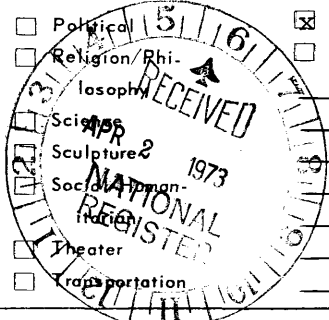
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1805-06 Constructed

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input checked="" 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 | <input type="checkbox"/> Social History | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Joint Committee on Landmarks has designated the Main Gate of the Washington Navy Yard a Category II Landmark which contributes significantly to the cultural heritage and visual beauty of the District of Columbia. Designed by Benjamin Latrobe, one of America's foremost early architects, and built in 1805-06, the Main Gate is one of the oldest extant examples of Greek Revival architecture in the country. It was one of the first structures built at the Washington Navy Yard and has been in continuous use as the principal entrance to the Yard since 1806. The Main Gate is a noteworthy architectural design, displaying both an imaginative use of Greek forms and a well-conceived plan. In spite of substantial alterations to the structure which occurred in 1880 and 1881 when a large, three-story, late Victorian building was constructed around and over it, the Main Gate merits listing in the National Register.

The Washington Navy Yard was this country's most important early naval yard. Land for the installation was acquired in 1799 and 1800, and in 1802 President Jefferson asked Benjamin Latrobe to draw up plans for a dry dock and repair facility at the Yard. Congress rejected Latrobe's plans, but Jefferson persuaded Latrobe to take the post of Surveyor of the Public Buildings of the United States in 1803, although Latrobe did not establish a permanent residence in Washington until 1807.

In 1804, after disputes with the Tripoli pirates and the European powers provided new impetus for naval construction, Latrobe was designated "Engineer of the Navy Department" and asked to draw up a master plan for the sparsely developed Washington Navy Yard. The plan was completed in 1804, and construction was begun in 1805.

Work on the Main Gate was started in 1805 and completed in 1806. It was one of the first Latrobe structures completed at the Navy Yard and the only extant Yard structure definitely attributable to Latrobe. Writing to Secretary of the Navy Robert Smith in 1804, Latrobe stated:

"The design of the main gate of the entrance to the navy yard has been made with a view to the greatest economy compatible with permanence and appearance worthy of the situation. This gate will fall exactly into the range of the Georgia Avenue (now Potomac Avenue) as well as of the Eighth Street east of the Capitol, one of the principal streets of this part of the city."

Not everyone agreed that the Main Gate presented an appearance "worthy of the situation" for this Latrobe design was ahead of its time. With his

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy. 1880 and 1881.
 Eberlein, Harold D., and Hubbard, C.V.D. Historic Houses of George-Town and Washington, City. Richmond, Virginia. 1958.
 Federal Writers' Project, Works Progress Administration. Washington, City and Capital. Washington. 1937.
 Hamlin, Talbot. Benjamin Henry Latrobe. New York. 1955.
 Hibben, Henry. Navy Yard, Washington, 1799 to Present Date. Washington. 1890.
 Peck, Taylor. Round-Shot to Rockets, A History of the Washington Navy Yard. Annapolis, Maryland. 1949. pp. 82 and 95.

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	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		38° 52' 35"	76° 59' 43"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one acre

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: Leonard Gerson, Urban Historian
Alfred Branam, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION: National Capital Planning Commission DATE: June 30, 1972

STREET AND NUMBER: 1325 G Street, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: District of Columbia CODE: 11

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 X James H. Parks

Title Assistant to the Mayor for Housing Programs

Date MAR 30 1973

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

Robert H. Utley
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 8/14/73

ATTEST:

W. S. [Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register

Date 8/2/73

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
COUNTY	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	AUG 14 1973

(Number all entries)

7. Description - Main Gate, Washington Navy Yard

motifs. The north facade of this brick building has a rusticated ground story and is divided on the upper stories by pilasters of the colossal order. Above the pilasters run an architrave and a frieze ornamented by a modified triglyph and metope design. There is one large pediment atop the central block which is flanked by two projecting square Italianate towers. Also projecting from the front facade are two smaller pedimented end pavilions. The facade follows much the same pattern on the south as it does on the north, but lacks the central pediment and flanking towers. In recent times enclosed clapboard porches have been attached to either side of the south facade, masking much of the detail on each of the three stories.

8. Significance

daring use of an arch rising directly from the ground and a simple architrave and frieze without a pediment, Latrobe showed his independence of archeological precedent, and this was criticized by traditionalists like William Thornton who saw the Gate as a "monument to bad taste and design." In a well-publicized attack Thornton maintained that the eagle atop the Latrobe gate was "more like a fat goose" and that the anchors were "fitter for a cock boat than a gun boat." He then went on to say that "not until extinction of time will such an arch ever be made again."

The Greek character of the Main Gate foreshadowed the coming of a whole movement in American architectural thinking, which adopted the character of Greek design as symbolic of our American Republic's kinship with the ideals of that ancient democratic state.

The Main Gate has been involved in the historic events of the Navy Yard from its earliest days. It is one of the few structures to have escaped the fire in 1814 when the British invaded Washington. Many famous visitors to the Yard have passed through this entrance, including King George VI and Queen Elizabeth when they visited Washington in 1939, and among the many notables to receive honors at the gate was President Warren Harding.

