

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic

and/or common      Downtown Historic District

**2. Location**

street & number      Generally along F Street between 11th and 7th and along 7th Street between Pennsylvania and Mount Vernon Square      NA not for publication

city, town      Washington      NA vicinity of

state      D.C.      code      11      county      District of Columbia      code      001

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	NA being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name      Multiple Ownership; public and private

street & number

city, town      NA vicinity of      state

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.      Recorder of Deeds

street & number      6th and D Streets

city, town      Washington      state      District of Columbia

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title      D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites      has this property been determined eligible?      yes  no

date      July 26, 1982      federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records      Historic Preservation Division

Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs

city, town      Washington      state      D.C.

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
		<input type="checkbox"/> moved      date _____

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

#### Location of the District:

The Downtown Historic District is located in the northwest sector of the District of Columbia and is centered generally along F Street between Eleventh and Seventh Streets, and between Pennsylvania Avenue and Mount Vernon Square. It also includes buildings fronting on Market Square, a portion of Indiana Avenue between Market Square and Sixth Street, a portion of D Street between Seventh and Sixth Streets, a portion of E Street between Eighth and Seventh Streets, portions of G Street between Eleventh and Seventh Streets, portions of H Street between Eighth and Fourth Streets, portions of I Street between Eighth and Fifth Streets, portions of Eleventh Street between F and H Streets, portions of Eighth Street between Pennsylvania Avenue and I Street, portions of Sixth Street between G and I Streets, and portions of Fifth Street between G and I Streets, as well as the buildings associated with St. Mary's Catholic Church in Square 518. The Downtown Historic District overlaps the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site in the Market Square area and along portions of Seventh and F Streets.

The architectural fabric of the Downtown Historic District is exceptionally lively and coherent, contributing greatly to the striking cohesiveness of the district. A full range of nineteenth century vernacular styles is successfully and congenially mingled with buildings of great distinction designed by architects of both local and national importance.

The Old Patent Office Building and the group of buildings facing it on the south side of F Street establish the visual ambiance of the Downtown Historic District. One of the finest works of American Greek Revival architecture, the Old Patent Office Building (1836-67) was designed by William Elliot, Robert Mills and Thomas Ustick Walter. Across F Street facing the Old Patent Office's great south portico stands the General Post Office Building (U.S. Tariff Commission) (1836-69) designed by Mills and Walter. This finely detailed and proportioned Greek Revival building has a major design presence on Seventh Street and on the Eighth Street vista as well as on the grouping of buildings immediately surrounding the Old Patent Office. The Post Office building appears to have inspired the design of the neighboring Italianate speculative LeDroit Building (1875-76) by Washington architect-developer James H. McGill. The LeDroit building is the earliest and the dominant building in the group of late nineteenth century commercial buildings known as the South Side of the 800 Block of F Street, N.W. Three small Italianate vernacular buildings erected between 1875 and 1881 connect the LeDroit Building with the Richardsonian Romanesque Warder Building (1892) by Washington architect Nicholas Haller. These buildings are distinguished by fine and imaginative brickwork, by the exuberance of their cornice lines and by the rhythmic liveliness of their predominantly tripartite fenestration. Although the facade of 818 has been covered with a twentieth century metal screen and extensive twentieth century storefront alteration has occurred, these F Street buildings are remarkably well preserved.

(Continued on NPS Form 10-900-a)

## **8. Significance**

<b>Period</b>	<b>Areas of Significance—Check and justify below</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
Social, Ethnic, Local				
<b>Specific dates</b>	<b>Builder/Architect</b>	Various	History	

## **Specific dates**

## **Builder/Architect**

Various

### Social, Ethnic, Local

### **Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Joint Committee on Landmarks of the National Capital has designated the Downtown Historic District a Category II Landmark of importance which contributes significantly to the cultural heritage and visual beauty of the District of Columbia.

Centered on the Old Patent Office Building and framed by elements of the L'Enfant Plan, the Downtown Historic District uniquely illustrates the successful intermingling of the monumental Federal with the commercial and residential elements of the city. Within this monumental frame, the district is strongly delineated architecturally, an exceptionally well-integrated cohesive fabric encompassing a full range of nineteenth century commercial and residential vernacular styles complementing larger buildings of great architectural distinction. A connected series of essentially linear elements including portions of the principal downtown shopping streets together with portions of some associated residential streets, the district presents an intensive microcosmic view of downtown development in the National Capital throughout its history. There is represented within the district a fine sense of the growth of an architectural tradition embracing both vernacular and architect-designed buildings which is uniquely Washington in character.

The Downtown Historic District uniquely conveys the essence of downtown Washington City visually and historically, as it developed from the early Federal period to the present within the larger context of the National Capital. It is representative of a once extraordinarily well-integrated downtown urban area in which commercial, residential and governmental elements were successfully combined. Here a full range of nineteenth century vernacular styles is successfully and congenially mingled with buildings of great distinction designed by architects of both local and national importance creating an exceptionally lively and coherent architectural fabric. Centered on the Old Patent Office building, framed and enhanced by major elements of the L'Enfant Plan with vistas to such architecturally distinguished buildings as the U.S. Treasury, the National Archives, the Old Central Public Library, the Old Post Office building, the Pension building and the National Gallery of Art, the Downtown Historic District possesses an extraordinary sense of place and historic continuity in downtown Washington. It includes significant examples of major commercial building types and styles constructed from the 1830's to the 1930's along the streets--Seventh, F, and G--which have the strongest historical identity with the general commercial development of downtown from a collection of buildings around a city market to a metropolitan commercial and entertainment center.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached sheets

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property approximately 50 acres

Quadrangle name Washington, West-D.C.-MD-VA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	1   8	3   2   5   0   0   0   0	4   3   0   7   6   0   0	
Zone	Easting	Northing		
C	1   8	3   2   4   1   4   0	4   3   0   6   6   4   0	
E				
G				

B	1   8	3   2   4   9   8   0	4   3   0   6   6   2   0	
Zone	Easting	Northing		
D	1   8	3   2   4   1   5   0	4   3   0   7   6   2   0	
F				
H				

### Verbal boundary description and justification

See attached map and description

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Tanya Edwards Beauchamp, Architectural Historian

Historic Preservation Division

organization Dept. of Consumer & Regulatory Affairs date June 1983

street & number 614 H Street, N.W. telephone (202) 727-7360

city or town Washington state District of Columbia

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Carol B. Thompson*

Director

title Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs

date January 25, 1984

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Eligible

DOE/OWNER OBJECTION

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

*Patrick Andrus*

date *10/15/84*

(initials) Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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The western side of the Old Patent Office Square is strongly defined by two architecturally notable buildings of exceptional interest--the Washington Loan and Trust Company Building (1891) at the southwest corner of Ninth and F Streets and the Old Masonic Temple (1868-70) at the northwest corner of Ninth and F Streets. The latter was designed by Cluss and Kammerhueber, a firm which was responsible for the design of a very high percentage of the public buildings erected by both the District of Columbia and Federal governments during the Civil War and Reconstruction periods as well as a substantial proportion of the private construction undertaken during these years. In scale and dignity the Old Masonic Temple complements the Old Patent Office Building and symbolizes awakening civic consciousness in Washington City during the nationalistic period following the Civil War. Characterized in the press as "Modern renaissance of the 19th Century," the design of this monumental stone fraternal-commercial building is distinguished by its rich yet subtle facade articulation. The building also relates well to the more vernacular South Side of the 800 Block of F Street and particularly to the LeDroit Building. Both of these structures make a positive and highly successful response to the unique qualities of their urban context. The Washington Loan and Trust Company, the work of prominent Washington architect, James G. Hill, is particularly fine and clear cut example of the Richardsonian Romanesque approach to a new building type--the elevator office building. The architectonic qualities of its strongly rhythmic rusticated granite facades effectively complement the other buildings in the Old Patent Office Square area. Its height, mass, and presence are balanced by Jarvis Hunt's 1924 terra cotta and granite Hecht Company department store at the southeast corner of Seventh and F Streets.

The architectural strength and complexity of the Old Patent Office Square area is echoed by a second grouping of buildings at the western terminus of the Downtown Historic District. Here the Woodward and Lothrop department store moved in 1887 from its original location at 705 Market Place. The G Street portion of the present building was erected in 1902, designed in a Beaux Arts Renaissance style by architect Henry Ives Cobb. The F Street portion was erected in 1912, designed by architect Frederick Pyle in a simplified complementary version of the same style utilizing terra cotta rather than cast iron for detail. The F Street building was extended to its present form through subsequent additions in 1913, 1925, and 1926. Occupying all of Square 346 with the exception of a substantial monumental presence in the F and G Street commercial corridors. The massive stone Norman Gothic St. Patrick's Church complements the east side of the Woodward and Lothrop Building.

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Additional architectural interest is created along Tenth Street by the presence of an architecturally distinctive small pressed brick commercial building by James G. Hill at the southeast corner of the Woodward and Lothrop Building. Three small commercial buildings of related architectural design which are located at the northwest corner of Eleventh and F Streets make a strong contribution to the Woodward and Lothrop grouping. The Berry and Whitemore Building (1891) at 1101 F Street is a carefully proportioned, meticulously designed pressed brick commercial building which carries its important corner site with distinction. The work of W. Bruce Gray, its decorative use of pressed brick, metal, and stone is of unusual interest. Adjacent to this building at 604 Eleventh Street stands the Corcoran Fire Insurance Company Building (1892) by architect James G. Hill. The design of the strong, heavily rusticated stone facade of this small building is notable. The Philipsborn & Company Building (1919) at 606-12 Eleventh Street was designed by Frederick B. Pyle. The central bay of this linear Beaux Arts classicist commercial building dominates the facade composition and is heavily ornamented.

Although the portions of F and G Streets linking the Old Patent Office area and the Woodward and Lothrop grouping are not long, the architectural fabric is strongly cohesive and concisely representative of late nineteenth century, early twentieth century commercial architecture in the old downtown. The Richardsonian Romanesque Warder and Washington Loan and Trust buildings at 9th and F Streets are joined by two additional superbly designed Romanesque commercial buildings on the south side of the 900 block of F Street--the Atlantic Building (1887-88) by James G. Hill and the National Union Insurance Building (1890) by Glenn Brown. Complemented by a coherent row of vernacular, low-scale, commercial structures dating largely from the second half of the nineteenth century, these buildings extend the ambiance of the South Side of the 800 Block of F Street and create a strong link between the Old Patent Office Square and the Woodward and Lothrop grouping. The visual presence of four additional small commercial buildings of unusual architectural interest along F Street in the Woodward and Lothrop grouping--one at the corner of Tenth and F Streets by James G. Hill and a row of three by W. Bruce Gray, James G. Hill, and Frederick Pyle at the northwest corner of 11th and F Streets--strengthens this visual relationship.

A third significant grouping of buildings occurs in the Market Square area at Seventh Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. Despite the recent loss by fire of the historically and architecturally rich S. Kann & Sons department store on Market Space between Seventh and Eighth Streets, this grouping maintains its integrity and cohesiveness. Along the east of Market Square the architecturally distinctive Central National Bank, National Bank of Washington and Firemen's Insurance Company buildings again typify the kind of fine late nineteenth century contextual small commercial building architecture found in the F Street area of the Downtown Historic District. The Central National Bank is an 1858 federal style building completely remodelled in 1888 in the Romanesque style by Alfred B. Mullet, architect of the State, War, and Navy Building. The National Bank of Washington

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is a monumental, low scale, rusticated marble Romanesque building designed by James G. Hill and erected in 1888-89. The Firemen's Insurance Company was designed in 1882 by architect P.J. Lauritzen in a Romanesque commercial style. Its striking polygonal tower was once surmounted by a gold-colored dome and cupola.

Adjacent to these buildings designed by prominent late nineteenth century architects are several vernacular buildings of considerable interest. Surviving from the earliest development of the Market Square area, 639 and 641 Indiana Avenue are simple, three-story, three-bay, gable-roofed, brick masonry federal style buildings erected between 1812 and 1824. Of similar style, 637 Indiana Avenue (c.1825) is distinguished by a unique heavy granite cornice supported by pilasters which frame the entrance door. On Pennsylvania Avenue two identical small-scale vernacular buildings of the early 1850's occur near the Central National Bank. These are especially noteworthy for their association with Gillman's drug store, founded c.1822, and the studios of Matthew Brady as well as other illustrious early photographers. The group of small mid-nineteenth century vernacular commercial buildings on the north side of Market Square between Eighth and Ninth Streets relates through the Square and the Eighth Street vista both to the Old Patent Office Building and to the buildings on the east side of the square.

Seventh Street is the longest linear element in the Downtown Historic District. Almost nine blocks in length, it runs north from Market Square to Mount Vernon Square passing along the east side of the Old Patent Office Square and intersecting F and G Streets at that point. The architectural fabric of Seventh Street is exceptionally cohesive. It is composed predominantly of two- to five-story vernacular commercial buildings punctuated at the Old Patent Office Square by the Hecht Company, General Post Office and Old Patent Office buildings. Its visual continuity is substantially unbroken, interrupted only occasionally by demolition and intrusive alteration and new construction. The towers of the Central National Bank and Fireman's Insurance Company buildings at the southern terminus of the Seventh Street element of the district are echoed by the tower of the 1895 building at the intersection of Seventh and I Streets, N.W., the northern terminus of the district, now occupied by Marlo's Furniture store. These echoing towers give strong definition to the linear extent of the district here. There is a consistency of quality of composition throughout this length of Seventh Street which decisively contributes to the coherence and cohesiveness of its fabric. Although there is great diversity of style, a concern for human scale and a visual unity achieved through use of related materials, vocabulary and rhythmic patterns prevails.

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On the east side of the 500 block of Seventh Street, a well-preserved interrelated group of compatible commercial buildings dating from 1868 to 1912 visually balances the larger 1924 Hecht Company building. The finely articulated, rhythmic facades of all these buildings, including the Hecht Company building, complement each other though designed in a variety of styles. The group is an effective neighbor to the monumental Greek Revival General Post Office Building (Tariff Commission) whose long east side runs the full length of the 500 block of the west side of Seventh Street. The Hecht Company building itself, located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Seventh and F Streets, has a visual impact westward toward the Washington Loan and Trust Building at the southwest corner of the intersection of Ninth and F Streets and the Woodward and Lothrop grouping beyond, relating the Seventh and F Street elements of the Downtown Historic District.

Naïve contrasts engendered through the interrelationship of buildings of great architectural distinction with buildings of simple vernacular origin account for much of the unique ambiance and complex rhythmic vitality of the district. The Italianate exuberance of the west side of the 700 block of Seventh Street is an admirable foil to the grand Greek Revival monumentality of the Old Patent Office Building. As this superb row turns the corner at G Street, it becomes quietly classical in direct response to its prestigious neighbor across the street. This theme is developed in the Italian Renaissance Revival Ouray Building (1905) by architect Ralph S. Townsend on the north side of G Street between Eighth and Ninth Streets, with visual reference west past the Mather Building (1917-18) by Clarence D. Harding on the south side of G Street between Ninth and Tenth Streets toward the Woodward and Lothrop grouping.

A fourth grouping of buildings of special importance to the Downtown Historic District encompasses a large number of the remaining residential buildings associated with the old downtown, located primarily on H and I between Eighth and Fifth Streets. More loosely organized than the three groupings discussed earlier, it is comprised of a series of linear elements containing strong, sometimes unique examples of related vernacular nineteenth century residential architecture. Only strong cohesive, concisely representative architectural fabric is included. Stylistically the Federal, Italianate, Queen Anne and Romanesque modes predominate. These are given context not only by adjacent commercial streets, monumental government buildings and major elements of the L'Enfant Plan but by church buildings of unusual architectural distinction which are historically related to the neighborhood.

Calvary Baptist Church (1864-66) is located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Eighth and H Streets. Designed by Cluss and Kammerhueber, architects of the nearby Old Masonic Temple, this church with its three major additions occupies almost the entire length of the east side of Eighth Street in the first block north of the Old Patent Office building. Even after the loss of its soaring openwork tower and much significant cast iron ornament, this massive

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pressed brick Gothic building has a commanding presence along the Eighth Street Vista between the Old Patent Office Building and Mount Vernon Square. Visually, it forms an architectonic unit with the fine row of vernacular commercial buildings on the west side of the 700 block of Seventh Street and with the exceptionally rich and cohesive row of vernacular residential buildings dating from the 1840's on the north side of H Street between Eighth and Seventh Streets. The latter is defined at either end by late nineteenth century buildings of unusual interest which incorporate strong vertical elements in their design--a turreted tower on Eighth Street and a pair of three-story bays complemented by oriel s on Seventh Street. These features reiterate the strong vertical rhythms established on the south side of the 700 Block of H Street by the tower base and buttresses of Calvary Baptist Church and the four-story bays of the excellent W.S. Jenks and Sons building. Fine brickwork, a variety of arched window openings, the presence of gabled as well as flat roofs, and an almost sculptural facade plane distinguish the buildings in the 700 block of H Street, N.W.

One block to the north, east of Seventh Street, the 500 and 600 blocks of I Street present a quieter, more conventionally residential appearance. Assembly's Presbyterian Church (1852) stands at the southwest corner of Fifth and I Streets and the Adas Israel Synagogue (1906-08), now the Turner Memorial AME Church, stands at the southwest corner of Sixth and I Streets. As in the 700 block of H Street, the vertical rhythms and sculptural facade qualities of these places of worship extend to adjacent residential structures, creating an unusual and exceptionally lively architectural fabric. Here also, gable-roofed federal buildings enliven a late nineteenth century row. The Peter M. Dubant House, 510 I Street, is particularly notable with twin pyramidal roofed towerlike four-story bay projections joined by balustrades at each story and metal cladding resembling rusticated stone.

One block to the south the northeast and southwest corner of Sixth and H Streets are strongly defined by extraordinarily cohesive ensembles of vernacular residential buildings. At the northeast corner, 803 Sixth Street and 521 H Street, a double house built between 1879 and 1885, is complemented by 511-517 H Street, a coordinated four house row built in 1885. The former is two and one half stores high with gambrel roofs, contrasting chimneys and a variety of arched and rectangular window openings. The latter is three stories high with flat roof and well-developed corbelled cornice with gabled parapet wall projections, two-story bays, iron cresting, and a variety of roof shapes and window openings. Diagonally opposite, at 742-758 Sixth Street is a similar ensemble of late federal houses. It is a unique long row of five small two and onehalf story, two-bay gable-roofed with gable dormer 1844 houses. A low two-story, flat-roofed addition along H Street exposes the rear of the gable roof and dormers to view and acts as a connector with the Mary Surratt House at 604 H Street. The Surratt House, though larger, was also built in 1844 in a similar style. The juxtaposition of its double chimney gable end wall and roof planes perpendicular to 742-750 Sixth Street is particularly notable.

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The soaring central steeple of the St. Mary Mother of God Church (1890) near the southeast corner of Fifth and H Streets provides an effective terminus at the easternmost point in the Downtown Historic District. Together with its accessory buildings, this massive granite and fieldstone Norman Gothic structure by E. Francis Baldwin complements the houses at the intersection of Sixth and H Streets, reinforcing their architectonic qualities and referring westward to the buildings in the 700 block of H Street.

The areas of the Downtown Historic District north of G Street, N.W., are located in Washington's Chinatown area. While the building stock, as previously described, is similar in style and type to the rest of the historic district, distinct signs of the area's current cultural and ethnic character are clearly visible. Signs, symbols, and ornamentation of Chinese derivation appear on many of the commercial establishments in the area. Although a number of structures have undergone major renovations which have obscured the original character of the building behind pagoda-like facades, most of the Chinese elements are minor elements that do not destroy the character of the buildings on which they appear. Such elements, as long as they are reversible and do not significantly obscure the facade of a building, should not be discouraged. Suitable Chinese design elements express the current cultural and community context of the buildings in this portion of the Downtown Historic District and should be allowed in the context of historic preservation reviews in this district.

The integrity of the architectural fabric of the area designated as the Downtown Historic District is consistently excellent. There is, represented within it, a fine sense of the growth of an architectural tradition embracing both vernacular and architect-designed buildings which is uniquely Washingtonian in character. Cohesiveness of scale, rhythm, texture, and materials define this character as well as a sense of place, of context within the historical and architectural presence of the Federal City.

The commercial decline of the old downtown area in the mid-twentieth century is discussed in its historical context in Section 8. The effect of this decline on the actual building fabric of the Downtown Historic District is fortunately superficial. Neglect has proved an effective preservation tool. The substantial survival of storefront and interior detail at the LeDroit Building, 800 F Street, N.W., is a case in point. Although in bad repair and although obscured by commercial alteration, this architecturally significant mid-nineteenth century commercial building has survived a multitude of indignities and will soon be restored and rehabilitated as part of the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation's master plan for the area. The continuing commercial history of the Downtown Historic District is one of the most important aspects of its significance. Throughout the commercial areas, storefronts and signage have been continuously updated and changed in response to market conditions. In these past the alterations have rarely responded to the architectural integrity of either the

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individual buildings or the district as a whole. Their nature is, however, temporary and easily reversible. More extensive alteration by covering facades with sheet metal, tile, permastone and other materials is less frequent and also generally temporary and reversible. Alterations of this kind have been noted on the accompanying map.

The effects of redevelopment in the historic district have been more serious than those of neglect. There has been some demolition since the Downtown Historic District was designated in 1982. Vacant parcels are noted on the accompanying map as well as one partially demolished building which still retains enough of its integrity to contribute to the district. Several building in the 400 block of Seventh Street have also been seriously affected by the redevelopment of downtown and are noted on the map. The tunneling of the subway under Seventh Street has caused severe structural damage to these buildings. This condition has been compounded by the existence of Tiber Creek underground in the area. It has been necessary to disassemble and reconstruct these buildings in order to correct these problems. This work is being done with extreme care by restoration professionals of exemplary reputation and, it is expected, will restore the architectural integrity of the buildings.

Non-contributing buildings are noted on the map and generally include buildings which are not consistent in scale, proportion, rhythm, texture, and other architectural qualities with the designated Downtown Historic District. As noted earlier, there are very few non-contributing buildings in the district. The boundary has also been extended, as requested by the National Register, to include interconnecting but non-contributing portions of the Hecht Company at Seventh and F Streets, N.W. This has been noted on the map.

The Downtown Historic District is largely commercial in character, with residential areas closely related to commercial development. It is an evolving district, extending in its period of significance from the earliest history of the area to the present time. No one period of development and no one architectural style predominates or is more significant than the others. A complete inventory of all buildings in the district and of the adjacent areas surveyed in preparation for the designation of the district and its nomination to the National Register of Historic Places is available to the public in the State Historic Preservation Office of the District of Columbia. This inventory is comprised of separate survey sheets on each building noting dates of construction, architect, builder, owner, and the factual information, together with architectural descriptions, historical sketches, and brief statements of significance. A small photo is attached to each sheet.

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The City's principal public market was erected in 1802 at Market Square on Pennsylvania Avenue between Seventh and Ninth Streets--a point midway between the White House and the Capitol. Seventh Street, passing along the east side of the Old Patent Office Building, was the principal route by which produce was brought to this market from Washington County and the Maryland farmlands beyond. Seventh Street became the earliest commercial street of downtown Washington. Residential neighborhoods with churches, schools, and other amenities grew up on either side, mingling with new Federal and private office construction. Toward the end of the nineteenth century F Street, complemented by G Street, supplanted Seventh Street as the City's principal commercial street.

The Downtown Historic District includes representative portions of each phase of this development. It includes Market Square and the surviving commercial buildings fronting on Seventh Street between Market Square and Mount Vernon Square as well as significant surviving residential development associated with commercial Seventh Street. This residential development, including visually and historically related churches and synagogues, occurs between Eighth and Fifth Streets, principally on H and I Streets. The Downtown Historic District includes the Old Patent Office Building together with the particularly fine and representative group of nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial buildings surrounding it. It extends west on F and G Streets to Eleventh Street where the historically and architecturally significant Woodward and Lothrop department store was constructed.

Washington's old downtown developed within one of the most intensively symbolic areas of the grand Baroque plan envisioned by L'Enfant for the Federal City. Enframed by diagonal Pennsylvania, New York, Massachusetts and Indiana Avenues intersecting approximately at Market Square, the White House and Treasury, Mount Vernon Square and Judiciary Square, this was an area where Federal and local interests were destined to merge both historically and visually. Near the center of these enframing elements, the Old Patent Office (National Portrait Gallery/National Museum of American Art) occupies a square which is one of the major elements of the L'Enfant Plan and which is also located at the heart of the old downtown. This square and the Old Patent Office Building itself are given special visual prominence by their projection into F and G Streets and by their location at the midpoint of the important Eighth Street Vista between Market Square and Mount Vernon Square.

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Centered upon the Old Patent Office, the Downtown Historic District consists of a connected series of essentially linear elements which are visually and historically related to this central point and which include portions of the principal downtown shopping streets as well as portions of associated residential streets. The architectural fabric of the Downtown Historic District is exceptionally lively and coherent, contributing greatly to the striking cohesiveness of the district. A full range of nineteenth century vernacular styles is successfully and congenially mingled with buildings of great distinction designed by architects of both local and national importance. A full discussion of the architectural significance of the district is included in Section 7.

The following history of Washington's old downtown area is excerpted from the designation applications prepared by Don't Tear It Down in 1981 and provides the historical background for the designation of the Downtown Historic District and its nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

In preindustrial Washington, prior to 1862 and the introduction of Washington's first extended streetcar system, today's downtown was Washington's central neighborhood, presenting a mix of residential, social, and commercial activities. In just three decades, the area framed by Pennsylvania Avenue, 7th and F Streets was transformed from a wilderness to a small town. Christian Hines, a Washington resident who published his reminiscences of the city's earliest years in 1866, remembered that in 1796, due to the obstinacy of landowner David Burnes, Pennsylvania Avenue was still not cut. There was a path from the White House to 11th Street along F. Serving as the main east-west artery, F Street attracted early settlement. By 1800, Hines recalled that "the only place that had anything like the appearance of a town or village was F Street, between Fifteenth Street and St. Patrick's Church." The first tavern in his memory was Mr. Betz's establishment near F between 13th and 14th Streets (Hines, pp. 6,9,19). Later in 1801, Rhodes Tavern opened for business at 15th and F Streets.

The construction of the Treasury Department Building on 15th Street next to the White House (1800), of Blodgett's Hotel at 8th and E Streets (1793), and the Market House at 7th and Pennsylvania Avenue (1802) during this earliest period provided anchors for private development. Boardinghouses and small businesses sprouted along the western end of F Street to serve the government clerks employed by the Treasury Department across 15th Street. Blodgett's Hotel, an early speculative venture endorsed by the federal government to encourage development, was used as the Post Office and Patent Office beginning in 1810 until it burned in 1836. It anchored the eastern end of F Street and also provided employment opportunities.

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But the most influential construction in the first decade of the city's history was that of the Market House in 1802, on the site designated by the District Commissioners in 1797 at the southwest corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and 7th Street. Pennsylvania Avenue was the city's first major commercial street and market Space—the rectangular area at the intersection of Pennsylvania and of Indiana Avenue (formerly Louisiana) was its principal focus. This space with its views of Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House and Capitol and its major vista up 8th Street were an important element of the L'Enfant Plan. Its commercial importance came from the location of the Market House on its south side. Although the market is long gone and the buildings on the north side flanking 8th Street have been removed, there still clusters around Market Space a number of older buildings. They constitute the only concentration of nineteenth-century commercial buildings which remain along Pennsylvania Avenue and give some indication of the once busy commercial character of the street. Seventh Street was also one of the principal transportation routes of early Washington. It was first extended into the County in 1809 and then to Rockville ten years later. It linked the deep water port along the Anacostia River, the termination of the Washington City Canal near the market, and the farms in and beyond the County of Washington. Many of the goods which entered the city--whether imported items from seagoing vessels or local produce from Maryland farms--moved along 7th Street. In 1845, 7th Street was paved with cobble-stone between H Street, N.W. and Virginia Avenue, S.W. It was the first street to be paved by the city government (McCardle, p. 565).

The intersection of 7th and Pennsylvania quickly emerged as the city's commercial center. In the 1820s, Georgetown and Baltimore stagelines terminated near 7th and Pennsylvania at Brown's Hotel. The importance of the area was confirmed by the National Intelligencer on June 11, 1838: "The business center of the city was Pennsylvania Avenue between John Marshall Place and Eighth Street" (Topham's paraphrase, p. 26). The area included market-related businesses such as grocers and commission merchants, many housed in the buildings along Indiana Avenue (remaining examples include 637-39 Indiana (ca. 1812-24) and 641 Indiana (ca. 1826), as well as booksellers, theatres, assembly rooms, saloons, hotels, and boardinghouses.

Additional publicly funded construction at the three major intersections in the downtown area—15th and F, 7th and F, and 7th and Pennsylvania—continued to act as a magnet during this antebellum period. The erection of the General Post Office in 1839-44, enlarged in 1855-66 to cover the entire block between 7th, 8th, E, and F Streets (on the site on Blodgett's Hotel) and the Patent Office (1836-67) at the northwest corner of 7th and F encouraged development to extend farther up 7th and along F Street. The Patent Office in particular attracted a host of lawyers around 7th and F Streets well into the turn-of-the-century. At the other end of F, the construction of the new Treasury Building led to more boardinghouses as well as one of the city's earliest office buildings, the Corcoran Building at F and 15th. This structure was built in 1848 "to accommodate some of the offices attached to the Treasury" (Sessford, p. 336).

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The pressures brought to bear on the central city during the Civil War by the influx of population revealed the inadequacy of the city's public services. An era of improvements began during the War with the establishment of two horsedrawn streetcar systems: the Washington and Georgetown Railroad Company (1862) and the Metropolitan Railroad Company (1864). The former connected Georgetown and the Navy Yard, running along Pennsylvania Avenue with spurs along 7th and 14th Streets. The latter travelled across F Street, connecting 14th and 9th Streets, before continuing past the Capitol grounds. The location of these first streetcar lines reinforced the importance of 7th and F Streets, linking the growing business district with expanding residential areas.

New private construction, including the Masonic Temple at 9th and F (1868-70) and the LeDroit Building at 8th and F (1875) helped lift Washington out of its post-war economic depression. Publicly funded construction also boosted the city's development. The program of physical improvements initiated during the late 1860s by Mayors Bowen and Emery was ambitiously expanded during the Alexander R. "Boss" Shepherd administration (1871-74). Paving of streets, laying of water, sewer, and gas lines, and building of sidewalks under the supervision of the Territorial Government's board of Public Works encouraged a new sense of optimism in the future of commercial Washington.

The last quarter of the nineteenth century saw new, increasingly diverse, and larger commercial enterprises arise in Washington. A new and more modern Center Market constructed in 1871-82 on the site of the original market helped the area around 7th and Pennsylvania Avenue to continue to flourish. The maturity of development around the Market and the prestige of the location are seen especially in the construction of the Firemen's Insurance and National Union Insurance Buildings (1882), the National Bank of Washington (1888-1889) and the towered facade of the Central National Bank (1888). Several banks were also located in the 500 block of Seventh Street.

Seventh Street continued to serve as a link with the agricultural area to the north while the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad Station, recently located nearby at Sixth and B Streets, N.W., transported goods in and out of the city. The large number of commission merchants and wholesalers along Louisiana Avenue continued to process bulk orders of food and other provisions from suppliers while serving local distributors.

Dry goods businesses, the commercial mainstay in any town, sold clothing fabric, an important item before the emergence of the ready-made clothing industry in the early 20th century. But unlike fabric stores today, dry goods stores also sold fancy goods, sheeting, and other cloth goods. Several dry goods stores expanded the range of goods sold beyond cloth and blossomed into sophisticated department stores: Lansburgh's (Gustave and Max Lansburgh began their business in 1860 in Washington, expanding in 1882 to a department store), Woodward & Lothrop (began in Washington in 1881, expansion in 1886), Abraham Lisner's Palais Royale (1880), I.Saks (clothing store established 1867, expansion in 1884), and the Hecht Company (located in Washington from Baltimore in 1896).

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Washington residents thronged to downtown not just to patronize these larger establishments, but also to buy confections (Henry C. Ewald, 719, later 714 7th), cigars at F.W. Sellhausen's store, 732 7th (also his residence), shoes, hats, jewelry and watches (Schmedtie Brother, 704 7th), stationery and books (J. Bradley Adams, 814 F), and wallpapers (John B. Henderson, 933-35 F) at a host of more specialized businesses sprouting up in the city. Saloons and nicer restaurants offered daily respite, such as Louis Schmidt's establishment at 702 7th and Fred W. Evans Dining Rooms at 933-24 (later 919) F Street.

The area framed by Pennsylvania Avenue, 7th, and F Streets became the hub of commercial vitality in the prospering city. Picturesque Washington (pp. 57-58) noted in 1887, that "Seventh, Ninth, and F Streets are thriving business sections, filled with fine buildings," and Pennsylvania Avenue contained "the finest business section." Kolb Pharmacy, which rented space in the May Building (501-07 7th) was described in 1884 as being located in a "thriving and animated business center, upon one of the leading thoroughfares of the national capital." (Barton, p. 70.)

The rapid commercial development during this period altered the balance of residential and commercial use which had prevailed at mid-century. This is illustrated by the debates in the 1870s over the location of a new St. Patrick's Church. One faction pointed to the already dwindling number of parishioners and forecast that the rapidly commercializing area south of F Street would soon have few residents. It was in this area that a "downtown"--a neighborhood which served as the commercial hub for the entire city--developed.

By 1880, there was an intense mix of residential and retail along Seventh Street. The street served as the transfer point for several streetcar lines. Development started below Center Market and continued through the 1200 block making Seventh Street the longest commercial strip in the downtown.

Shopkeepers and workers usually chose to live near their stores, forming a residential area adjacent to the commercial blocks. This residential area fostered important community institutions, providing religious and social services. It was also not uncommon for shopowners and even employees to live on the site of their store. The 1880 Census shows that Christian Ruppert, for example, had a fancy goods store at 403 7th, where he also resided. His two boarders worked as clerks in his store.

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The increased pace of commercial development after the Civil War broke up what few large estates remained in the central business district. The Stone family, descendants of the well-known engraver, W.J. Stone, sold the last of their estate in 1905. The site of the Westory Building, the land sold for \$75 per square foot, the highest price paid to that date for Washington real estate. Earlier, St. Patrick's Church had leased vacant land along the north side of F between 9th and 10th Street to finish its new church at 10th and G. The buildings built here housed many of the architects and real estate firms which sprang up in response to the city's construction boom.

The trends toward increased diversity and sophistication for shoppers continued unabated during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Washington garnered new national and international attention which was reflected in the development of downtown. The majority of the growing population continued to rely on public transportation for work as well as shopping and entertainment. Streetcars and, by the 1920s, bus lines converged on key intersections: 7th and Pennsylvania, 7th and F, 9th and F, 14th and G.

The rich diversity of goods and services was reflected in the emergence of concentrations of businesses within downtown. Vaudeville and burlesque theaters were located generally along 9th Street with movie palaces such as Loew's Columbia and Loew's Palace along F Street. The Mather Building (916-918 G) contained offices for these entertainment businesses. Jewelers, opticians, and watchmakers frequently appeared near the Patent Office Building, continuing a pattern established when skilled craftsmen were needed to make patent models (Central Building at 8th and G and the 700 block of 7th). Furniture stores were grouped in the 800 and 900 blocks of 7th, a pattern continuing to the present. News-related establishments, seen in the construction earlier of the Baltimore Sun Building and later the monumental National Press Building, continued 14th Street's tradition as Newspaper Row. Fifteenth Street hosted Washington's Wall Street.

This specialization was also reflected in the continuing differences between 7th and F Streets. Seventh Street continued its small-scale retail activity, small shops punctuated occasionally by larger department stores. During the 1920s, Lansburgh's and Hecht's built prominent additions overshadowing their original buildings. But economy was also stressed in the introduction of five-and-dime stores along 7th: F.W. Grand (400-04), F.W. Woolworth (406-10, 900), McCrory's (414-16, 820-30), and S.S. Kresge (438), and G.C. Murphy (810-18).

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Ethnic groups, most notably Germans, contributed to the social and economic development of Washington's downtown. Department store owners Max and Gustave Lansburgh were perhaps the most successful of the German shopowners during this period. Many merchants who also lived in the area were active in important German community institutions. Christian Lederer, confectioner and restauranteur in the late 1860s and early 1870s at 805 7th, served as treasurer of the German American Fire Insurance Company, at 511 7th, in 1885.

F and G Streets, whose character would be dramatically transformed in the next twenty-five years, were more residential through the 1870s. The 600 block of F Street on both sides still retains many residential structures built in the 1850s. Although much altered, these buildings illustrate the residential type once common on F Street. A customer in 1915 reminisced when Woodward and Lothrop announced plans to open their expanded dry goods store at 11th and F Streets in 1887: "Shop at F Street! The wilds of Anacostia, the last paved street of Mt. Pleasant, do not seem further from the shopping district of today than 11th and F did to the housekeeper of 1887." (Guilford, p. 51.)

Merchants of F Street organized early to encourage commercial development. In 1882, they contracted for outdoor electric lighting, still in its experimental stages. "'It will not take much of prophet,' said the Post, 'to foresee that F Street will soon become an important evening promenade, with the certainty of a largely increased trade and increased values of real estate.'" (Proctor, p. 737.)

In confirmation, a number of businesses relocated to F Street--especially from Pennsylvania Avenue. Pennsylvania Avenue was subject to periodic flooding during the 19th century and one particular severe flood in 1881, no doubt, provided an impetus to relocate to the higher ground along F Street. W.B. Moses, furniture, moved from 7th and Pennsylvania to 1100 F in 1885, while Woodward and Lothrop moved to their current location on F in 1886. Adjacent blocks of G Street similarly attracted new businesses. Palais Royale moved from Pennsylvania Avenue to G Street in 1893. In 1890, the Board of Trade noted that the extension of the Eckington Railway along G to 15th Street "has already converted residence property into business property." (Board of Trade, 1890, p. 8.)

As the federal government and banking and real estate industries grew, this area between the Patent Office and Treasury Building was the most popular location for offices. Preceded by the Corcoran Building, new buildings were constructed specifically to house offices, and appeared more often along F Street: Pacific Building, LeDroit Building, Warder/Atlas Building, National Union Building, Hooe Iron Building (razed 1926), Baltimore Sun Building, and the Westory Building. In these new buildings, retail, the most important element along 7th Street, was usually limited to the first floor.

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F Street, particularly west of 10th Street, contained a mixture of office buildings and shops aimed at a more exclusive clientele. Construction of the Willard and Washington Hotels helped to attract fashionable stores to the western end of F. Harris & Ewing, noted photographers of the famous, conducted business at 1311-13 F from 1905 to 1945. Garfinckel's, which located in Washington in 1905, at 1226 F, built a more modern store at its current location at 14th and F in 1929-30. Exclusive clothing stores for both men and women, such as the Model Shop (1303 F), Meyer's Men Furnishings (1331 F), and Saltz Brothers (1341 F), flourished along F Street. The new construction and remodelling of older commercial structures along F was more likely than that along 7th to have been designed by notable architects: A.B. Mullet Co., W. Bruce Gray, Hornblower & Marshall, Leon Dessex, Jules H. deSibour, Appleton P. Clark, Arthur Heaton, Holabird & Root, Milburn & Heister.

Rider's Guide to Washington, published in 1924, was clearly aimed at the well-heeled tourist. It proclaimed the pre-eminence of F Street, dubbing the section between 6th and 15th "The Modern Shopping District," and noted, "until the removal of the shopping centre of to F Street, the north side of Market Space contained many of the leading stores." Merchants unable to locate along F Street often chose to establish shops to the north, between G and I, which "bids fair to rival F Street in the quality of its shops." Seventh Street was dismissed since it was "fairly well lined with small shops of the cheaper sort." (Rider, pp. 101, 141, 149, 151.)

The 1930s saw major changes in the downtown area with the demolition of Center Market and all the commercial buildings on the south side of Pennsylvania Avenue for construction of the Federal Triangle. Seventh Street was beginning to show its age. What had been "Washington's most elite business thoroughfare half a century ago," was somewhat inaccurately described in 1932 by a proponent of the Federal Triangle as a "motley collection of old residences camouflaged by business fronts." (Gatchell, pp. 39, 44.) However, most businesses continued to thrive and stores like Hecht's and Lansburgh's had major remodellings or additions in the 1940s.

The emergence of the automobile as the primary form of transportation and the rapid development of suburban areas following World War II led to the decentralization of commercial facilities. Downtown Washington, like the downtowns of many large American cities, experienced a decline in clientele, earnings, upkeep, and reputation. New suburban shopping malls attracted both business and customers.

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Federally mandated desegregation in the 1950s allowed blacks to shop, often for the first time, in some of Washington's finest stores. Racial policies developed since the end of the 19th century had prohibited blacks from using restrooms and lunch counters and from trying on merchandise in most of the downtown stores. Blacks were compelled to develop a separate commercial area around 14th and U Streets, N.W., though there were a few financial and social institutions located downtown. The Capital Savings Bank, founded in 1888, at 609 F followed the tradition established by the Freedmen's Savings Bank in providing financial services primarily for the black community. In the twentieth century, the National Benefit Association, which provided life insurance, was in the same location. The Supreme Order of Helpers and the Democratic National Committee's Colored Division was at 615 F.

As the demography of the city changed and competition from suburban malls grew, downtown began to serve a more local and more predominantly black clientele, much of which remained dependent on the city's public transportation system. This trend was accelerated in the late 1960s when civil disturbances destroyed many of the more traditional black shopping areas. The drop in patronage which immediately followed the riots of 1968 brought about the closing of a number of important and long-lived businesses in the downtown area, including Lansburgh's, Kann's, and the Willard Hotel. Night life virtually ceased and all the grand old movie theaters eventually closed. All the grand old vaudeville and movie theaters within the commercial district eventually closed and only one, the rejuvenated Warner, has escaped demolition.

These massive changes took a physical toll on downtown, subjecting the area to neglect, inappropriate and shoddy alterations, and demolition. However, the area has retained much of its pre-World War II flavor. Each of the three areas included in the proposed commercial district illustrates the gradual development of the downtown shopping area: Pennsylvania Avenue was the principal shopping street of the early and mid-nineteenth century with the most important development around Market Space at 7th Street; 7th Street, the main transportation route connecting the markets and the wharves of Washington with the rural areas to the north, became the city's new downtown thoroughfare after the Civil War; F Street became the city's principal shopping street around the turn-of-the-century. It is the physical evidence of this development which is preserved within the commercial district despite recent neglect and demolition.

In the 1970s, public transportation continued to be a crucial factor in shaping the central commercial area. The popularity of the new Metro subway system is making downtown into a regional shopping center once again. Metro has changed the way many residents use downtown, bringing shoppers from suburban areas, as well as office commuters, into the original central business district. It has also contributed, however, to recent demolition of significant portions of the proposed district and to renewed pressures for new development, threatening the eradicate what remains of Washington's rich and unique commercial history.

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The northern area of the Downtown Historic District, centering on H and I Streets between 5th and 8th Streets, N.W., derives its significance from its residential nature, unusual in the downtown area. As the buildings show, this has always been a residential area, and it contains the largest concentration of pre-Civil War buildings between Capitol Hill and Georgetown. These residential buildings form a virtual textbook of the Washington vernacular rowhouse, from gable-roofed two-bay houses to three-bay flat-roofed flat-fronted houses to pressed-brick bay-fronted houses. Furthermore, the neighborhood was home to a large number of German and German-Jewish immigrants, and it still retains a large proportion of the buildings built by them. The three synagogues and one German-speaking church stand as evidence of this population. Lastly, this neighborhood is today known as Chinatown, reflecting only the most recent ethnic group, but one that has brought cohesiveness and vitality to the area.

About one-third of the original owners of extant pre-Civil War houses were also the original occupants of those structures. Although these owner-occupants provide a skewed sample--as landholders they are obviously better off than their neighbors--they are still revealing in terms of their occupations. About one-third are merchants, including a grocer, a baker, and the Senate stationer; about one-third are clerks for a bank, the post office, and the Indian office; and the remaining third are in the building trades, such as a bricklayer, a carpenter, and a "measurer of carpenter's and builder's work in general." This supports the thesis of Gibbs Myers (see bibliography) who found that the tradesmen and government clerks were the substantial householders in this city before the Civil War. Unfortunately, there is no efficient way to determine who occupied the rest of the dwellings in this district; the structures that were built for rental use were probably occupied by the same class of people, merchants and clerks, as well as laborers, who formed the typical renting class. Frequently, these householders built a house for themselves and one to rent; that they would live next door to their tenants would seem to indicate a lack of class differences.

Another indication of the character of the neighborhood is found in the churches that were established there. While churches generally follow a population, arising out of a proven need for a certain denomination in a certain area, in this early period in Washington's history it appears that churches were often established to attract certain people to an area and thereby encourage its development. In 1844, John P. Van Ness, one of the largest landholders in Washington, donated the land at the corner of 5th and H Streets for St. Mary's German Catholic Church, presumably to attract Germans, who had a reputation of being industrious and enterprising, to this neighborhood. The church was built by 1846 and was soon accompanied on its site by a school and a rectory. As German-language church, the whole of the District of Columbia comprised its parish. The German community was not large; according to the 1850 census, only 11 percent of D.C.'s population was foreign-born, and of these about one-quarter, or 1246 persons, were born in Germany (Myers, p. 129). Nor was the

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German community concentrated in a single neighborhood; the earliest Germany church, Concordia Lutheran, was established in 1832 at 20th and G Streets, N.W. The German immigrants were craftsmen and merchants, who often established family businesses to be passed on. As merchants, they naturally congregated near 7th Street, the busiest commercial strip.

In 1845, Van Ness donated land on 8th Street between H and I to the Trustees for the Central Presbyterian Church. The church building was built by 1851, but it apparently was not a great success for it was soon sold to the Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. This was a Methodist denomination which in 1844 had separated from the Methodist Episcopal Church proper, and which presumably espoused a southern viewpoint. The congregation was small and during the Civil War they sold their building to the Washington Hebrew Congregation.

A third church in the neighborhood was Assembly's Presbyterian, located at 5th and I Streets. The cornerstone was laid in 1852 and the church was established with 20 members in 1853. The square that contained the church was not even subdivided into lots until 1854. After attending a service at the church in 1856, a visitor noted, "The Church edifice... is a neat and ample structure, and furnishes a most valuable addition to the appearance of the more new and growing part of the city where it is located" (Johnson, p. 109). The congregation occupied this church throughout the nineteenth century, until 1906.

In 1862, about one-third of the active members of the E Street Baptist Church withdrew to form the Calvary congregation. Amos Kendall, a former member of Andrew Jackson's Kitchen Cabinet and an investor in Samuel F.B. Morse's telegraph, donated the land and offered \$60,000 toward the erection of a church if the congregation could raise \$40,000. The building was dedicated in 1866. Calvary Baptist Church had many prominent members and seems to have drawn city-wide for its congregation. Its re-erection in 1869 after a fire and generous additions in 1894, 1929, and 1960 demonstrate the continued active support of its members.

The appearance after 1860 of Jewish synagogues in the area indicates a new immigrant group that settled in the neighborhood. In 1860, there were less than 200 Jews in a total population of 75,000 in Washington, but 88 percent of them were in the mercantile field (Shostek, unpaginated). As merchants, it was natural that they would settle near the 7th Street commercial area. Also, the majority were German-born, and became part of the German community. In 1860, of 56 employed Jews, 41 were German-born and 9 were born in the U.S. (Shostek).

This small Jewish community formed the Washington Hebrew Congregation in 1852 and met in members' homes. In 1863, they bought the church building of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, on 8th between H and I, and immediately renovated it for their own use. In 1897, they built a new building on the same site, which they occupied until the early 1950s.

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A second Jewish congregation formed in 1869 when the Washington Hebrew Congregation undertook certain liturgical reforms. The new congregation, Adas Israel, completed construction of its synagogue at the southwest corner of 6th and G in 1876. President Grant attended the dedication ceremony. Like the Washington Hebrew Congregation, Adas Israel served its neighborhood for the rest of the nineteenth century, and even defined it. Albert Small, who was born at 724 5th Street in 1902 and lived there until the First World War, recalled the importance of Adas Israel to his childhood in the early twentieth century:

The neighborhood was our whole lives in those days. The synagogue was the focal point. We went to school at Seaton, and we took music lessons in St. Mary's, across the street from our house. We used to help in the family stores two blocks away. I did belong to a Herzl Club in the YMHA at 11th and Pennsylvania but that was about the only time we left the neighborhood... (Junior League, p. 319).

In 1906, Adas Israel Congregation began construction of a new synagogue, significantly located just two blocks away, at 6th and I Streets.

A map of Jewish settlement patterns in Washington in 1880 shows that an overwhelming proportion of Jews worked on Seventh Street, and that the majority lived within two blocks of where they worked (Bradford, map 1). Yet Jews at this time were a minority citywide, forming less than one percent of the population. Jews were an integral part of the German community. One historian noted that the German Jews:

Lived together with the Christian Germans who at that time were probably the most liberal and progressive element in the community. Together, they organized German clubs, German societies, German savings banks and German building and loan association...Simon Wolf, a prominent Washington Jewish lawyer...participated in the activities of a number of German societies in Washington, and he also frequently addressed Germany fraternal associations. He served on several Board of German societies...(Aberbach, p. 17).

The Washington Hebrew Congregation formed a school as early as 1861 which taught the German language as well as Jewish customs. Likewise, St. Mary's Catholic Church had a school which taught German by 1853. The German culture provided a connecting link with the past as well as a bond for the community of the present.

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By the end of the nineteenth century, non-German immigrant Jews were an important minority. A congregation of Eastern European Jews formed the Chai Adom Congregation in 1886. Once located at 607 H, in 1906 they purchased Assembly's Presbyterian Church at 5th and I Streets. Then known as Ohev Sholom Congregation, they stayed there for the next fifty years. The Orthodox congregation had to live within walking distance, as vehicular travel was prohibited on the Sabbath.

Ethnic groups other than Germans and Jews occupied the neighborhood from the very beginning, but these two groups, being cohesive, literate, and well-organized, left better records. They also appeared to be slightly better off; of the 55 houses still extant that were built between 1865 and 1900, nearly one-third were built by people with Germanic surnames. No other ethnic group is apparent in such numbers. Yet this statistic, if it is representative, shows that even this group was a minority. Germans were known to have settled in such numbers in other parts of the city, such as Southwest and Foggy Bottom, and there were undoubtedly other neighborhoods that had as interesting an immigrant mix as this one. What is significant about this district is that the fabric that remains is still representative of this period of development; a large number of the residences built and lived in by these immigrant groups exist in a fairly unaltered state.

As the residents of this neighborhood grew more prosperous, they moved farther away from their 7th Street businesses, reflecting a pattern that was seen citywide. The construction of new church and synagogue buildings by St. Mary's Catholic Church in 1890, by the Washington Hebrew Congregation in 1897, and by Adas Israel Congregation in 1906 demonstrates that the neighborhood ties were still strong at this time. Yet the appearance of commercial and semi-industrial buildings on previously residential streets after 1900 and the predominance of renters indicate some dissolution of the old neighborhood after the turn-of-the-century. A further blow was the rise of anti-German sentiment during the first World War, which resulted in Congress banning all Germans from Washington, including the German-born pastor of St. Mary's Church. Sunday announcements in German were discontinued at that time, although confessions were heard in German as late as 1961.

As the Germans and German-Jews moved away from this neighborhood, other ethnic and minority groups came in to replace them. While no thorough studies have been done of these groups, the conversion of the 1876 Adas Israel synagogue to a Greek Orthodox church in 1905 indicates the appearance of Greeks by this time. The Irish were an important immigrant group in the nineteenth century; although there is nothing to show that they occupied this neighborhood per se, they were found in the wards of which this neighborhood was a part, and in Swampoodle, north of the Capitol. While Blacks were represented in this neighborhood by 1894, other Black institutions were clearly concentrated northeast of this area at New York and New Jersey Avenues, and north of the White House on M Street.

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(Bradford, map 4). This would indicate that Blacks settled in these areas. In the last 25 or 30 years, however, Blacks have become one of the predominant groups residing in this neighborhood. When the three Jewish congregations sold their synagogues, they were purchased by Black churches: the Washington Hebrew Congregation's synagogue became the Greater New Hope Baptist Church in 1955, the Ohev Sholom synagogue became the Corinthian Baptist Church in 1957, and the Adas Israel synagogue became the Turner Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1967.

The predominant ethnic group in the neighborhood today, and the one that gives it its name, is the Chinese. The Chinese did not arrive in this neighborhood until 1932, having been displaced from their original Chinatown at Pennsylvania Avenue and 4½ Street, N.W. Chinatown first developed in the 1880s, and was comprised of men who had immigrated to the western United States but met cruel treatment there and migrated east. Finding intense prejudice in the U.S., the Chinese were relegated to the lower ranks of society and became laundrymen and ragpickers. The Chinese Exclusion Act, which was passed in 1882 and renewed periodically until 1943, prohibited even wives from joining their husbands in this country. At the turn-of-the-century, the Chinese community numbered about 100, but only two or three were women. By 1927, there were fewer than fifteen Chinese women.

The first Chinese grocery store opened in 1892 in Chinatown. While restaurants and laundries were scattered all over the city, Chinatown was the only area that had Chinese stores. In 1927, it was estimated that over 25 percent of the Chinese, then numbering probably 500, owned restaurants. The Chinese formed tongs, which served as social groups and merchant associations, the first one appearing in 1894. While tong wars were over-publicized, the importance of the tongs to a community of men who found overt racism in this country and who were deprived of their families cannot be over-rated.

By 1927, it was clear that Chinatown would have to move due to redevelopment plans for its neighborhood. At that time, there were two active tongs: On Leong Tong, formed in 1912, had about 200 members, and Hip Sing Tong, formed in 1925, had 50 members. On Leong Tong appointed a committee to look for new quarters. As late as August 1931, they said they had not found any, but two months later they announced that they had acquired the necessary land on H Street between 6th and 7th. In that block, they bought a double building and leased additional space to accommodate the eleven businesses that were members of their tong. This was done through an intermediary and with great secrecy. Predictably, property holders in the area protested and circulated a petition. "It is not that we object to their coming because they are Chinese," said one businessman, "It is just that we don't feel they will bring any business here." (Post 10/10/31.) The Hip Sing Tong, which at one point threatened to move away from their rival tong, eventually moved with them to H Street. The tongs dropped their controversial name and became merchant associations once they

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moved to the new Chinatown. Chinatown soon spread from 2nd to 8th along H, although it is more condensed now.

As an anchor for the new Chinatown, the On Leong Tong immediately renovated the buildings it purchased at 618-20 H, remodeling two buildings into one, adding a pent tile roof over the first floor, a balcony at the second level, and a tile roof above the third floor. Similar Chinese-ization of existing buildings has occurred throughout Chinatown, giving the area a distinctive appearance and character. Attempts to preserve Chinese culture have centered on the Chinese School, which was established in 1931 to teach Chinese language and customs, and the Chinese Community Church, founded in 1935. Both of these institutions were originally housed in the Mt. Vernon Place Methodist Episcopal Church, but in 1940 moved to 1011 L Street. Calvary Baptist Church had a Chinese Sunday School as early as 1889; this was a missionary effort aimed at teaching English, and the Bible, to the Chinese. Today, the Chinese form an important minority in the Church. St. Mary's Catholic Church also reflected their changing neighborhood; in the early 1950s they hired a Chinese priest who heard confessions in Chinese. Rev. Victor Wong was at St. Mary's until 1971.

In summary, this neighborhood has been a wide variety of residents. Before the Civil War, artisans, clerks, and tradesmen built their homes here. Reflecting the growth of the 7th Street commercial strip, this neighborhood provided the homes for many who worked there, particularly after the Civil War. Immigrant groups such as Germans and German-Jews who arrived in this post-war period and whose livelihoods depended on 7th Street found homes here. Other immigrant groups came to replace them, and in 1932 Chinatown moved to this site. Although this historic district is basically conceived as a residential neighborhood, its group from commerce on 7th, and the 7th Street commercial buildings form an integral part of this district. The buildings in this district reflect the development of Washington in its downtown commercial area and in dependent residential neighborhoods.

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On July 26, 1982, the Joint Committee on Landmarks of the National Capital, the professional review board which advises the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer in National Register matters, designated the Downtown Historic District an historic district, placed it in Category II in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites, and recommended that the State Historic Preservation Officer issue a written determination to nominate the Downtown Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places. This decision concluded an intensive extended hearing process which had begun more than a year earlier with the submission by Don't Tear It Down of applications for designation of a Downtown Residential Historic District (March 25, 1981) and a Downtown Commercial Historic District (May 4, 1981).

The Joint Committee's written decision on July 26, 1982, found that the designation of a single comprehensive Downtown Historic District more appropriately addresses the unique qualities of significance present in Washington's old downtown than does the designation of two separate districts differentiated from each other primarily by the predominant patterns of use in each. Residential and commercial areas overlap and share a common historic and architectural cohesiveness. The interdependence of the two is an important aspect of the significance of the area as is the interrelationship of Federal and local interests here. The unique character of Washington's old downtown has its origin in the identity of the area as the downtown of the National Capital. Historically, its development was shaped by the day-to-day needs of the Federal City. Visually, Washington's downtown occurs within the monumental context of the L'Enfant Plan.

The Downtown Historic District presents an intensive microcosmic view of downtown development in the National Capital throughout its history. Centered upon the Old Patent Office, the district consists of a connected series of essentially linear elements which are visually and historically related to this central point and which include portions of the principal downtown shopping streets as well as portions of associated residential streets. Wherever possible, non-cohesive elements have been eliminated. The district is conceived as a core of great architectural and historical integrity and significance around which the new downtown may develop creatively, yet still maintain the sense of continuity with the past which distinguishes the area today. Because of these concerns the Downtown Historic District, though unusual and concise in configuration, is relatively free of the problems of large scale demolition, extensive alteration and the often intrusive rebuilding which are so common in the overall downtown area. In determining the boundaries of the Downtown Historic District, the Joint Committee found that the following portions of the old downtown area originally proposed for designation lacked this integrity and therefore omitted them from the district.

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1. The buildings on the south side of the 1000 block of F Street, though compatible in scale, have been omitted because of extensive alterations which have radically changed their appearance and prevent any positive visual relationship between these buildings, the Woodward and Lothrop building across F Street or the buildings in the 900 block of F Street.
2. The buildings in the 1100 block of F Street with the exception of 1101 F Street have been omitted because the overwhelming presence of extensive alterations and intrusive new construction completely disassociate these buildings visually from those in the Woodward and Lothrop-Palais Royal grouping to the east. The south side of the 1100 block of F Street is dominated by a large parking garage structure. It is further disassociated from its historic neighbors by the presence of a retail store at 1110 F Street which was once a Safeway store and would be more appropriate in a suburban shopping mall. Low-scale commercial structures on the north side of the 1100 block of F Street have entirely lost their character through extensive remodeling.
3. All buildings proposed for designation as part of the Downtown Historic District on F Street west of the 1100 block have been omitted because the visual break in the cohesiveness of the district in this block is so complete that it cannot be bridged. The finality of this interruption is further emphasized by extensive demolition and new construction now in progress on the south side of F Street in the remaining length of the proposed district. The loss of the three grand movie negative impact on the cohesiveness of the proposed district. Although there are several architecturally distinctive buildings on the north side of the street--notably the Western Building, the American Building and the Homer Building--and although the destruction of the architectural fabric is less devastating here than in the areas described above, the consistency and cohesiveness of the district has been irretrievably lost. The historical sense of F Street as one of the major shopping streets of Washington's old downtown is not sufficient, under these conditions, to warrant inclusion of the area west of Eleventh Street and roughly east of Fifteenth Street in the historic district.
4. Although part of the Hecht Company complex, 614-624 F Street have been excluded from the district because of extensive and irreparable alteration of the facades of the buildings.
5. The north side of the 600 block of F Street has been excluded from the district because of its great visual separation from the district by extensive demolition on the east side of Seventh Street between G and H Streets and because of its clear identification with the greater Judiciary Square grid neighborhood rather than with the Downtown Historic District.

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6. The east side of Seventh Street between G and H Streets has been excluded from the district because of the total demolition of all buildings on the site.
7. The buildings in the 800 block of H Street and on the west side of Eighth Street between H and I Streets have been excluded because they are visually separated from the district by areas of demolition.
8. The buildings on the north side of the 600 block of H Street and on the south side of this block between Seventh Street and the Mary Surratt House have been excluded because they are visually separated from the designated areas of the district by extensive demolition, and the presence of large scale intrusive buildings--the Wah Luck House and the Potomac Building.
9. The buildings in Square 486, bounded by H, G, Fifth, and Sixth Streets haveen excluded because of the almost total demolition of buildings in the southern half of the square.

In addition, the State Historic Preservation Officer for the District of Columbia, in forwarding the nomination of the Downtown Historic District to the National Register with a written determination to nominate, has excluded two additional areas from the district as designed by the Joint Committee. The buildings located at the northwest corner of 7th and Eye Streets, N.W., have been eliminated because it was felt that the integrity of these buildings is too peripheral to the significance of the Downtown Historic District to merit inclusion. The buildings in the second area, the north side of G Street between 10th and 11th Streets, N.W., include the Palais Royale (Woodward and Lothrop's North Building) a Category III Landmark of the National Capital and the McLachlen Building for which a Landmark designation application is currently pending. These buildings have been excluded because of their location at the northern edge of the district and their great significance as individual landmarks which surpasses their contribution to the district and sets them apart from the district itself.

One further boundary change is being made at the recommendation of the National Register staff including non-contributing portions of the functionally interconnected buildings in the Hecht Company complex.