

1216 E Street NW (Commercial Building and Garage)
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-354

HABS,
DC,
WASH,
227-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. DC-354

1216 E STREET NW (Commercial Building and Garage)

Location: 1216 E Street NW, Washington D.C.

USGS Washington West Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 18.324040.4306970.

Present Owner: Cabot, Cabot and Forbes Co.
60 State Street
Boston, Massachusetts

Present Occupant: Donald H. Swagert Estate d/b/a Washington Garage Co.

Present Use: First and second floors: parking garage; third and fourth floors: vacant; to be demolished 1979.

Significance: The structure is located within the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site. It was built to house a variety of industrial, wholesale and retail establishments. The building was converted for use as a garage in 1926 to meet the changing needs of the downtown area. The facade on E Street still retains much of its original masonry detail.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: circa 1899. Because the original building permit could not be located, this date was established indirectly as follows: the 1889-1890 General Assessment records list old lot 8 as divided into a west half owned by Elias Travers, and an east half owned by James Travers. On this assessment, for equal areas, the west half was valued at \$2,500 and the east at \$300. In 1893-1894 these assessments did not change, but in the records for 1899-1900, the assessment on the east jumped to \$6,000. This value, which is in line with the valuation for a 4 story brick building at the time, makes it probable that the structure presently known as 1216 E Street, NW was erected on the east half of lot 8 circa 1899. Indirect confirmation of this date was obtained from plats prepared for Square 291 in 1887 and 1903. At some point between these two dates, the maps indicate that a structure having the present dimension, was built on/lot 33.
2. Architect: None known.

3. Original and subsequent owners: The General Assessment Records show that in the 1890's the lot on which the 1216 building now stands (old lot "E 1/2 of lot 8", new lot 33) was owned by James Travers, who, along with Elias Travers, also owned other lots in Square 291. According to the Building Permit Records the Travers family may have owned the lot as early as 1877; they continued to hold it until 1900-1901 when the property changed hands a number of times (see Land Records, District of Columbia). In 1911, by deed recorded April 8, 1911 (liber 3,413, folio 164, inst. 60), Arthur Herbert et ux. et al. transferred title of lots 33 and 25 in Square 291 to Louis P. Keyser. In 1912 Louis P. Keyser deeded the property to Christian Heurich (recorded March 22, 1912, liber 3,514, folio 164, inst. 76). Under the will of Christian Heurich this property, along with all other property owned by Christian Heurich at death in the District of Columbia and not previously transferred, was granted in fee simple to Christian Heurich, Jr., Anita Heurich Eckles, and Karla Heurich King, (recorded May 13, 1965, liber 12,410, folio 116, inst. 16,198).

4. Alterations and additions: The building was extensively altered in 1926 for use as a parking garage. At this time all of the original floor and roof framing was removed and replaced with reinforced concrete. An elevator with penthouse was installed at this time in order to transport cars from ground level to the upper three floors. The architect for the 1926 work was A. P. Clark, Jr. and the contractor was the Arthur L. Smith Co.

The following is a list of permits pertaining to alterations of the building.

1. Motor Permit No. 5,255 dated May 11, 1912: owner Christian Heurich received permission to install motors on the 1st floor to run the printing presses of a printing business then leasing the premises.

2. Sign Permit No. 4,717 dated May 9, 1914: owner Christian Heurich received permission to install a 10' x 2' sign flat on the 1216 building 15' above the sidewalk reading:
"Carroll Electric Co."

3. Motor Permit No. 1,680 dated December 1, 1918: The R. T. Warwick Paper Box Factory obtained a permit to install motors costing \$200 in the center of the 2nd floor to operate paper box making machinery.

4. On June 23, 1926 owner Christian Heurich obtained a repair Permit, No. 11,229, from the District of Columbia Building Department for extensive remodeling of the 1216 building. At a cost of \$10,000 architect A. P. Clark, Jr. and contractor Arthur L. Smith Co., 2525 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, DC proposed "to take out all wood joists and floors and roof and replace with concrete floors as per drawings filed." These drawings have been destroyed, but observation of the building reveals that concrete pillars were poured against the interior face of the building's brick sidewalls to carry prestressed concrete beams running the width of the structure; these beams support the coffered concrete floors and roof. At the same time (see following permit) an elevator well of ribbed blocks and mortar was constructed inside the northwest front corner of the building. This remodeling reinforced the structure and enabled it to carry the weight of the vehicles which, as the permit shows, were to be stored or parked in it.

5. On October 13, 1926 Permit to Erect Freight Elevator No. 3,565 was issued to owner Christian Heurich. The application lists the following data for the direct current elevator to be installed in the garage:

power: 220 V, d.c., 28 amps

capacity: 4,000 lbs

speed: 60 ft/min

car: 18'-0" x 9'-4 1/2", steel, 4,500 lbs, grill door

weight of counterweight: 5,100 lbs

control: switch inside car

equipment: roll safeties, centrifugal governor, magnetic controller. The motor, governor, and controller were housed in a penthouse constructed atop the 4 story building.

cost: \$4,150.00

manufacturer: Otis Elevator Co.

B. Historical Events and Persons connected with the Structure:

The repair permits indicate that the building was used for light manufacturing until 1926 when it was converted for use as a garage.

In an interview, Mr. Washabaugh, Manager of the Washington Garage Co., and Mrs. Everett, Secretary of the Donald H. Swagert Estate recalled that the 1216 building was one of the first lift garages in the Washington area and had been used for horse-drawn carriages. The building records cited, however, do not support this.

Mr. Washabaugh and Mrs. Everett also recalled that when the elevator was in use the space on the first floor behind it was used to wash cars. Mr. Washabaugh and Mr. Sherwood of the Washington Wine and Liquor Co, 1201 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW stated that at one time an auto repair shop occupied the 4th floor of the 1216 building.

C. Sources of Information:

Interview with Mr. Washabaugh and Mrs. Everett, Spring 1979.

Land Records, District of Columbia.

National Archives Record Group 351, District of Columbia General Assessment Records; Building Permits.

Prepared by Bill Noble
Cabot, Cabot and Forbes Co.
Boston, Massachusetts
Summer 1979.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. General Statement: The structure was built in a simplified Queen Anne commercial style. The first floor and interiors were entirely altered when the building was converted for use as a garage in 1926.
- B. Description of Exterior:
1. Overall dimensions: The structure measures approximately 25' x 100'. It is four stories and measures approximately 56' from sidewalk to parapet.
 2. Foundation: Assumed to be a combination of brick and reinforced concrete.
 3. Wall construction: The shell of the building is of load-bearing brick masonry construction. Reinforced concrete piers and beams have been placed against the inside face of the brick walls to support the new concrete floor and framing system.

4. Structural system: the original wood floor and roof framing systems were removed in 1926 and replaced with a stronger reinforced concrete and structural clay tile system to support the weight of stored cars. The joist pockets which are still visible beneath the concrete and structural clay tile indicate that the original floors probably served as the frame for the new system.
 5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways: Two large entrances at the ground floor level on the E Street facade are framed with reinforced concrete lintels and jambs. Large doorways in the southeast corner of the east wall allow circulation of cars from the abutting structure, 1208-1214 E Street, into the first and second floor level of 1216 E Street.
 - b. Windows: All of the original window openings are framed with segmental masonry arches, except for the fourth floor arches of the E Street facade, which are round-arched. All windows are one-over-one light double-hung wooden sash. Openings which were probably cashiers windows for paying parking charges are still visible in the 1st floor west wall of the building.
 6. Roof: The roof is flat and slopes downward at a shallow pitch from a parapet wall on the E Street facade. The roof deck is of reinforced concrete and structural clay tile covered with a built-up roofing system.
- C. Description of Interior:
1. Analysis of floor plans: All four floors are basically similar. A large freight elevator at the northwest corner of the E Street facade connects each of the four floors vertically. The north end of the first floor contains two large doorways for entry of cars; the west doorway for access to the elevator, the east doorway for access to the first floor. Rising from the second floor level to the roof is a concrete staircase located in the northeast corner, directly above the first floor east doorway. The second floor is accessible from the second floor of 1208-1214 E Street (HABS No. DC-351) by way of a wide opening cut in the southeast corner of the four bays on the north and south sides of the building. Irregularly spaced windows occur on the west side of the building.

2. Stairways: A concrete staircase located in the northeast corner of the E Street facade (directly above the first floor east doorway) provides access from the second floor level to all floors above and to the roof surface.
3. Flooring: All floors are exposed concrete.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: All wall and ceiling finishes are either brick masonry or structural clay tile and concrete.
5. Doorways and doors: Horizontally folding garage doors are used on the two doorways on the E Street facade and at the southwest corner of the west side wall.
6. Mechanical and electrical equipment: There is a large d. c. freight elevator installed in 1926 to move cars to and from the upper floors from ground level.

D. Site and Surroundings:

In 1913 1208-14 Pennsylvania Avenue (HABS No. DC-351), a 2 story garage, was constructed as an abutting structure to the east, and a doorway was opened at the back of the 2nd floor east wall of the 1216 building to allow cars to pass between the two buildings. A door on the 3rd level provides access to the roof of the 1208-1214 garage. The building formerly occupying the 806 lot, adjacent to the west, has been razed, and the space is now an alley which is used to park cars between the 1216 building and the Pennsylvania Building.

Prepared by John Hecker
David McLaren Hart and
Associates
Boston, Massachusetts
for the
Pennsylvania Avenue
Development Corporation

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation (PADC) in compliance with Executive Order 11593 and a Memorandum of Agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as a mitigative effort in the demolition of buildings in Square 291. John A. Burns, AIA, was the HABS project coordinator. The historical information was prepared by Bill Noble of Cabot, Cabot and Forbes for PADC, and the architectural description was prepared by John Hecker of David McLaren Hart and Associates for PADC. The data was edited and prepared for transmittal by Emily J. Harris, an architectural historian in the HABS office in October, 1979. Photographs were taken by Barry Brooks in April 1979.