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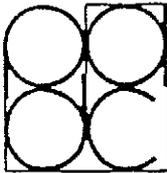
Polkinhorn Building (Hub Annex)
638 D Street Northwest (Square 458)
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-568

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013-7127



PENNSYLVANIA
AVENUE
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION
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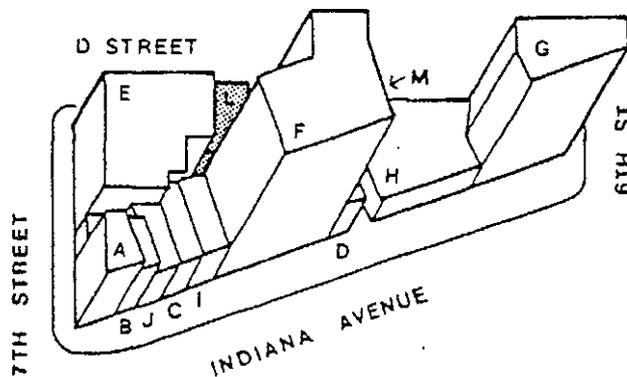
HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

BUILDING DOCUMENTATION

HABS No DC-568

HABS
DC,
WASH,
311-

Polkinhorn Building
(Hub Furniture)
638 D Street, N.W.
Lot 812



This documentation was produced for mitigation purposes by the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation. Additional documentation exists for Square 458, within which this structure stands. For photographs, historical, and descriptive data on Square 458, see HABS No. DC-618.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Standing on Lot 812 is the Polkinhorn Building, a commercial structure that is now a storage annex to Hub Furniture, its neighbor to the west. In the early 1930s the two were incorporated and in 1938, a three-story bridge was built over the alley which separated the two buildings (Permit #214446, 7/6/1938). This four-story brick Italianate structure was built in the second half of the Nineteenth Century. Originally a five-story building, the top floor of the building was burned in 1881 and never rebuilt (Washington Star, 7/30/61 and Building Permit #583, 12/20/1881). The demolition of a three-story adjacent structure to the east has left a 20' wide service alley along this side of the building.

The interior structure is wood-framed. Two east-west structural bays are established by the side masonry bearing walls and a row of three cast-iron columns that run north-south along the center line of the building. At the basement level these columns rest on reinforced concrete piers, apparently an undocumented alteration to the original foundations.

The facade of the building, which has a width of approximately forty feet, is of brick. The first floor has been extensively altered. The storefront or show windows, whose existence building permits confirm, have been removed. In their place, random service openings occur on the bricked-in wall. Spanning these entrances above are overhead door and awning mechanisms.

The facade detailing of the three upper floors is mostly extant. At each end of the wall plane, unadorned brick pilasters rise to a richly decorated metal roof cornice. Above each pilaster are tall, fluted brackets. Between these the entablature consists of a fascia divided into five panels with a projecting cornice of brackets directly above it. A classical urn, in metal, terminates each end of the cornice. The facade consists of six equal bays of round-arched windows. Molded metal hoods resting on scrolled ancons follow the outline of each arch. Molded metal sills on brackets project slightly from below each window. All the fenestration has been closed; the two window bays to the east have been bricked in; the four to the west have plywood panels. There is a fire escape attached to this main facade. The irregular rear facade has a recessed eastern portion with jack-arched windows, some of which have been filled in.

The interior layout on all floors consists basically of an open plan. Straight-run stairs along the west party wall connect all

floors. A freight elevator dating from 1955 is situated on the building's northwest corner (Permit #63560, 3/3/55).

Extant early materials in the interior are few. The most significant are the cast-iron columns, which have very slender fluted shafts with Egyptian palm-leaf capitals, but no base. On the third and fourth floors the furred beam they support is significantly inclined down toward the south, so that columns are noticeably shorter in the rear.

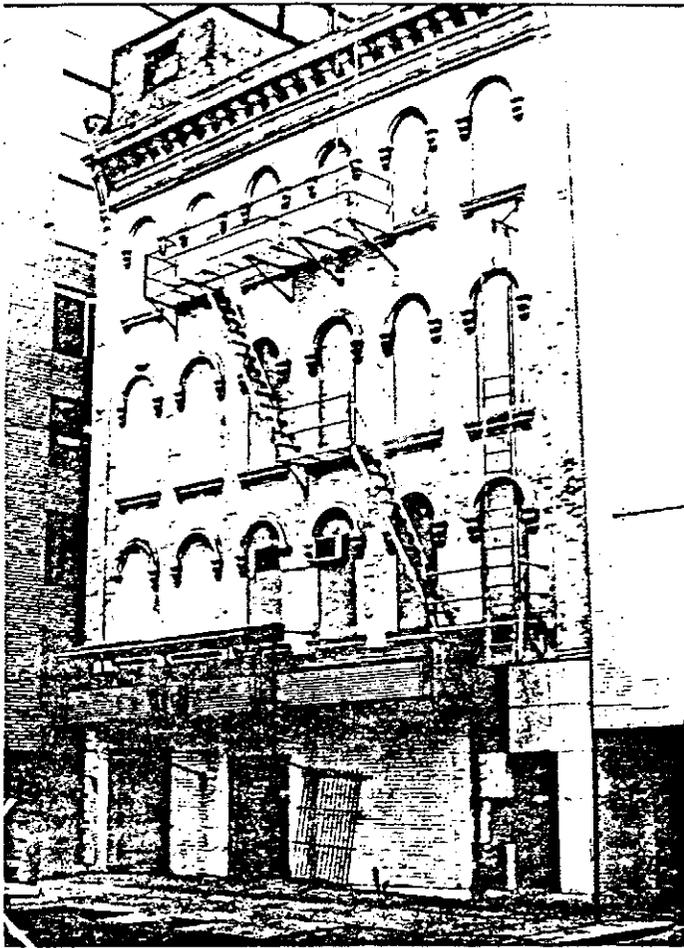
Large areas of beaded board ceilings occur, but are mostly obscured behind dropped acoustical tiles.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

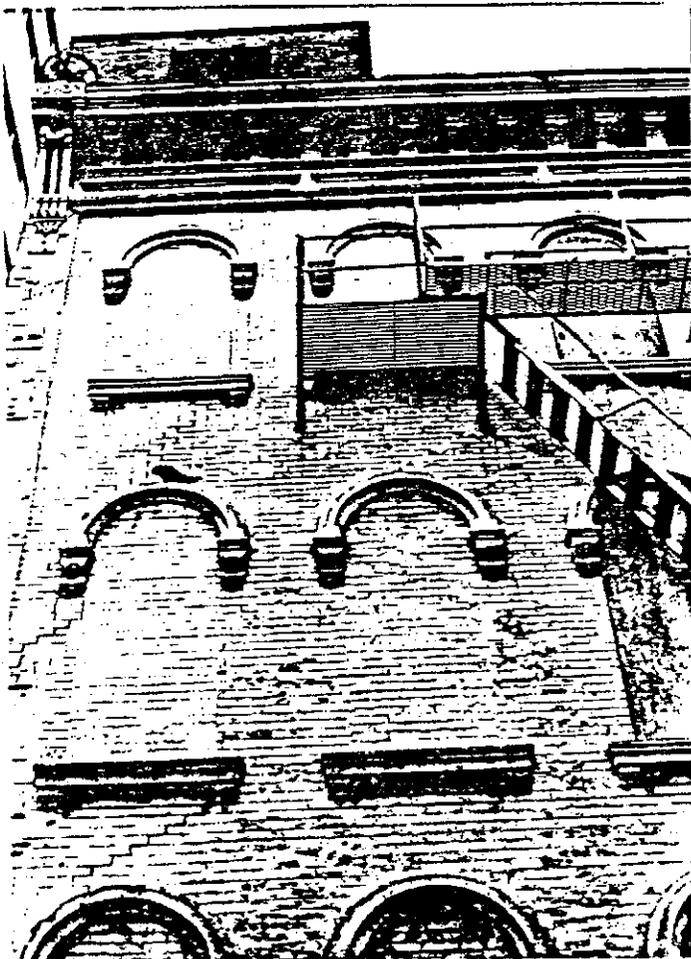
The exact date of construction for this structure has been difficult to determine, but indirect information suggests that construction was prior to 1875, when a printing shop operated at this address. The Hub Furniture Company has occupied the building since 1942.

The Polkinhorn Building typifies commercial architecture of the second half of the Nineteenth Century. Unlike most other Italianate buildings in the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation area, this building occupies two lots and presents a broader facade than the rest. As a result, the facade has twice as many bays as is more usual. By its size and rich articulation, it is perhaps, the best example of Italianate commercial architecture in the PADC District.

In spite of the damage done to its lower level on the main elevation and the closing of all fenestration, the Polkinhorn Building retains its original architectural character. Being a fairly large building it does not rely heavily on urban context to establish its presence and importance, and relieves the visual tedium along its portion of the street.



D Street Facade (North)



Facade Detail of Sills and Hoods

Lot 5 (Sublots 812, 805, 806)
638-640 D Street, 633-635 Louisiana Avenue

Lot 5, as originally platted was 70 ft. on its Louisiana Avenue side and approximately 50 ft. on the D Street side. Lot 5 was subdivided into three lots designated 805, 806 and 812. Lots 805 and 806 had frontage on the Louisiana Avenue side, and Lot 812 on the D Street side.

1796.....In August of this year a surveyor subdivided the Square into seven lots. The District Commissioners took control of Lot 5 along with Lots 1, 2 and 3 (Records of the Surveyor of the District of Columbia, N.K. 139).

Lot 5 (Sublot 812)
638-640 D Street

The south side of D Street on Square 458 reflected a variation in the numbering system in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. It seems apparent, however, that prior to about 1905, Lot 812 was designated by 632-634 D Street, and post 1905 was designated by 638-640 D Street.

1819.....Taxes for this lot were assessed to Anthony Van Mannerick.

1829/33...Anthony Van Mannerick was assessed \$2,323.00 for the lot and \$100.00 for the improvements.

1844.....The assessment of Lot 5 was divided into 5 parts and was as follows: Jonathan Cattlett at \$1,094.00, Jonathan T. Ryan at \$2,298.00, Charles Miller at \$135.00, Jonathan A. Oonohoo at \$135.00 and William S. Kibby at \$502.00.

1855.....The City Directory lists John H. Cook, a painter as the occupant of 634 D Street.

1858.....This year E. Towers was listed in the Directory as the tenant of 632 D Street, a paper warehouse.

1862
to

1876.....Henry Polkinhorn, a printer, appeared in the City Directories, located at 634 D Street.

1870.....The lot was assessed to Henry Polkinhorn at \$4,500.00.

1872/73...Henry Polkinhorn was assessed \$5,495.00 for the lot.

1878.....Richard O. Polkinhorn, a printer, was listed in the City Directory under 632-634 D Street.

1881/93...R.O. Polkinhorn and son are listed as printers in the City Directories.

1881.....On December 20th, Henry Polkinhorn was issued a permit to reconstruct and repair damages caused by a fire. The building is described as a four story brick structure with a flat tin roof (Permit #683, cost: \$5,000.00).

1883/84...The lot was assessed to Henry Polkinhorn for \$3,297.00.

1888.....On October 5th, Washington B. Williams was issued a permit to put in two show windows projecting 3 ft. from the building line. (Permit #709, cost: \$400.00).

1897

to

1904.....Joseph S. Justh was listed under 632 D Street as operating a dryer and scourer shop.

1899/

1900.....The assessment, still in Henry Polkinhorn's name, was \$5,715.00 for the land and \$3,500.00 for the improvements.

1905/15...The Bedell Manufacturing Company, a bedding store, was listed as the occupant of 638-640 D Street.

1910.....The Polkinhorn Estate, described as a four-story brick building with a tin-roof, was issued a permit to rebuild two show windows On August 17th of this year. The property is listed as 638-640 D Street (Permit #853, cost: \$200.00).

1921

to

1925.....The building remained vacant.

1925.....On May 22nd, Walsh and Petty were issued a permit to change the interior partitions (Permit #10628, cost: \$400.00).

1927/31...The City Directory lists the Welfare Cafeteria as located at 638 D Street.

1931.....Michael Walsh was granted a permit on July 26th that extended authority to replace an existing wood beam supporting the third floor, to close up the existing light shaft and to remove the non-bearing partition. The permit described the building as a four story brick store located on Lot 812 (Permit #215076, cost: \$200.00).

1938.....On July 5th Michael Walsh was issued a permit to construct a three story alley bridge between 638 D Street and premises of the southeast corner of Seventh and D Street (Permit #214446, cost: \$1,000.00).

1942/81...In 1942 the City Directory lists the building as being used by the HUB Furniture Company. This company still occupies the building today.

Lot 6 (Sublot 7)
609 Seventh Street, N. W.

1792.....David Burnes owned the lot (Liber A, Folio 1).

1799.....David Burnes died and William Whetcroft bought Lot 6.

1809.....William Whetcroft's son and daughter-in-law Frances and Thomas Whetcroft inherited Sublot 7.

1829

to

1833.....The lot was assessed to Edmund Rice at \$400.00 for the ground, and \$1,800.00 for the improvements.

1844.....The property was assessed to John Boyle for \$1,133.00.

1859.....The assessment is listed in the name of John Riley at \$3,399.00.

1870.....John Riley's assessment dropped to \$3,000.00.

1872/73...John Riley's assessment rose to \$6,798.00.

1875

to

1876.....E. Burtt, a tobacco and cigar dealer was listed in the City Directory.

1878

to

1890.....John Ross operated a restaurant in the building for twelve years.

1883/84...John Riley's assessment remained at \$6,798.00.

1899/

1900.....The assessment rose to \$8,498.00 for the ground and \$4,000.00 for the improvements still in the name of John Riley.

1902.....Ignatius Bonadonna, a musician was listed as an occupant of the building.

1905
to
1916.....A dentist, Charles Cuthbertson, was a tenant of the building.

1922
to
1948.....Bernard Harding, a cigar and tobacco dealer was listed as a tenant of this building for twenty-six years.

1925
to
1931.....Peter J. Chaconas was listed in the City Directory as a tenant of this building.

1925
to
1937.....The dentist Mechling Floyd was listed at this address for twelve years.

1958.....On June 17, a permit was applied for the portion of the building covering Lots 7, 8, 9 and 12 of the original Lot 6 and 7, to build a four story brick addition. At this time the existing facade of the buildings situated on Lots 10 and 11 were completely removed as a new brick screen was added to the buildings to unite it into one (Permit #B 36545).

1981.....The building is now integrated into the HUB Furniture Company building, and is used as a furniture display showroom, owned by S. M. Barnett.

SOURCES

Baist Real Estate Atlas

Bastert and Enthoffer Plat Maps

Boyd's City Directories

District of Columbia Building Permits

District of Columbia General Assessment Records

District of Columbia Recorder of Deeds

District of Columbia Surveyor's Office Records

District of Columbia Tax Records

Hopkins Real Estate Atlas

Polk's City Directories

Property Map for Downtown Urban Renewal Area for District of Columbia Redevelopment
Land Agency

Sanborn Insurance Map

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--------------------------------|
| STATE District of Columbia | | COUNTY | TOWN OR VICINITY Washington |
| STORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) Polkinhorn Building Source: City Directories | | | HABS NO. DC-568 |
| SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE Annex to HUB Furniture Store | | | |
| COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) 628 D Street, N. W., Square 458, Lot 812 | | | |
| DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) Circa 1875 - City Directory Information. Verified by 1887 (see next page) | | ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE) Unknown | |
| SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE) A printing shop operated at this address in 1875 according to the D.C. City Directories. The HUB furniture store has occupied the building since 1942. The building occupies two lots. It therefore acquires a majestic scale through repetition of Renaissance-derived ornamentation. | | | |
| STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE) Italianate | | | |
| MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) Load bearing brick perimeter walls, interior cast iron columns. Interior of building is wood framed, reinforced concrete piers, stone window hoods and sills. | | | |
| SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE) Rectangular - approximately 40' x 48'. Height approximately 45'. Basement plus four stories. | | | |
| EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE 6 window bay organization, round arched windows with molded metal hoods and sills, all fenestration is now bricked up; entablature consists of a fascia modulated into five panels and a heavy decorative metal cornice. Rear facade irregular, with recessed eastern portion. | | | |
| INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED) All floors are open plan, straight run stairs run along the west party wall, a row of three cast iron columns run along the center line of building, columns have slender fluted shafts with Egyptian palm leaf capitals. Freight elevator is situated on the north or front of the building. | | | |
| MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES To rebuild show windows (Permit #853, 8/17/1910). Remove present rafters and sheathing and replace with new, put in new tin roof, replace all window frames and sash, doors and jambs, and flooring caused by fire, and other repairs (Permit #3410, 2/21/1914). (see next page) | | | |
| PRESENT CONOITION AND USE Good - warehouse for HUB furniture store. | | | |
| OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE This building lies within the boundaries of the Pennsylvania Avenue Historic Site. It is scheduled for redevelopment as part of the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation's Historic Preservation Plan, 1977. | | | |
| SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDE LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.) Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King Memorial Library - Plat Map Information, Records National Archives - Building Permit Information Columbia Historical Society - City Directory Information. | | | |
| COMPILER, AFFILIATION Christina A. Allen, Anderson Notter/Mariani for the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation. | | | DATE 9/15/1981 |

Polkinhorn Estate
Annex to HUB Furniture Store
628 D Street, N.W., Square 458, Lot 812
Washington, D. C.

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (cont'd.)

Baist Plat Map. Not necessarily the same building.

MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES (cont'd.)

To connect the Polkinhorn Building to 315 7th Street via an iron bridge 4 feet wide (Permit #B05, 2/24/1882). To construct a three story alley bridge between 638 D Street and premises at southeast corner of Seventh and D Streets (Permit #21446, 7/6/1938, Cost: \$1000.00). Reportedly, there was a fifth floor that was removed after the fire of 1914 (Washington Star,).

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

POLKINHORN BUILDING
 HABS No. DC-568
 (Page 14)

ARCHITECTURAL DATA FORM

| | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------|
| STATE DC | COUNTY -- | TOWN OR VICINITY Washington |
| HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) Polkinhorn Building (J.C. Proctor, "Washington's Pioneer Printers," in the <u>Evening Star</u> , November 28, 1943, p. C-4.) | | HABS NO. DC-568 |
| SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE HUB Annex | | |
| COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) 638 D Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. (Lot 812, Square 458) | | |
| DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) (Assessment records cited in Don't Tear It 1872 Down Survey Form.) | ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE) not known | |
| SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE) 638 D Street, N.W. displays a much-altered 19th century Italianate commercial facade. Now missing its original top story, the building once housed the Polkinhorn family printing business, a concern that printed the <u>National Intelligencer</u> . | | |
| STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE) Italianate | | |
| MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) Masonry construction with wood joists supported by cast iron colonettes. | | |
| SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE) Trapezoidal. Approx. 40 ft. along D Street (north) and 49 ft. along alley (east). | | |
| EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE Metal (possibly cast iron) hood molds, entablature, cornice, and urns above cornice. | | |
| INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED) Open plan, recent freight elevator in NE corner of building; building opens into HUB Furniture Store at west. Because the structure of the building has been extensively reworked, the fluted cast iron colonettes with lotus capitals may not be original to the building. | | |
| MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES 1881 - 5th story destroyed by fire (Permit #683); 1914 - removal of rafters & sheathing, installation of new joists, sash, floors & ceiling (Permit #3410); 1915 - rebuild west wall (Permit #3600); 1938 - removal of non-bearing partitions (Permit #215076); 1946 - storefront alteration (Permit #286644); (cont. below) | | |
| PRESENT CONDITION AND USE Fair condition; vacant, formerly furniture warehouse and display. | | |
| OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE ALTERATIONS (cont.) 1955 - installation of fire escape and elevator (Permit #A-63458, A-63560). Permits indicate that fire damage was involved in 1881, 1914, and 1915 alterations. Photograph of 5 story building can be found in <u>Star Magazine</u> , July 30, 1961. | | |
| SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDING LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.) Located within Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site and locally designated Downtown Historic District. Sources not previously cited include D.C. Building Permits for Square 458 and survey material in the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation's files. | | |
| COMPILER, AFFILIATION Betty Bird, Architectural Historian, Consultant to Owner | DATE March 1987 | |