

HABS
DC,
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280-

Simon Oppenheimer & Brother (Herman's World
of Sporting Goods)
800 E Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

HABS No. DC-519

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

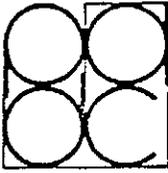
Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

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

HABS
 DC,
 NPS
 280-

ARCHITECTURAL DATA FORM

STATE Washington, D.C.		COUNTY	TOWN OR VICINITY
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) Simon Oppenheimer & Brother (DON'T TEAR IT DOWN SURVEY)			HABS NO. DC-519
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE Herman's World of Sporting Goods			
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) 800 E Street, N.W.			
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) 1911 (Building permit)		ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE) A. S. J. Atkinson (building permit)	
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE) With its flat pilasters and stylized details such as the capitals, the facade is suggestive of the stripped classicism popular in the early 20th century and best seen in the work of Paul Gret.			
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE) stripped classicism or commercial style (Marcus Whiffen's term for commercial style)			
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) bldgs with three part windows). Brick building subsequently faced in stone. D. Hart assumes concrete piers and slabs.			
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE) Rectangular. Ninety-seven feet by fifty feet.			
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE second and third floor treatment with pilasters with capitals supporting entablature. Panelled spandrels between three part (Chicago) windows.			
INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED) undistinguished mid-twentieth century retail interior			
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES In 1921, a third story was added, the upper floors were faced in stone and store windows were changed on the first floor. Frank Pearson was the architect. The first floor exterior has subsequently been changed, but date is unknown.			
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE vacant			
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE (I assume that the first floor exterior dates to when Herman's became the tenant in the early 1960s).			
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDING LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.) PADC SURVEY (Nov. 1980) by Anderson Notter/Mariani and David McLaren Hart & Associates DON'T TEAR IT DDWN SURVEY (May 1980) by Barbara Fallin			
COMPILER, AFFILIATION Bill Lebovich, consultant for Square 407 Limited Partnership			DATE May 31, 1989



PENNSYLVANIA
AVENUE
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION
425 13TH STREET N.W.
WASHINGTON DC 20004

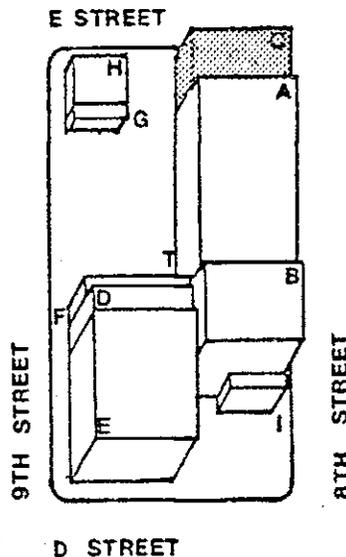
GENERAL CONSULTANTS

ANDERSON NOTTER/MARIAMI
GENERAL PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION CONSULTANT
DEVROUX & PURNELL
ASSOCIATE ARCHITECTS
DAVID McLAREN HART & ASSOCIATES
PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION CONSULTANT
MONK DUNSTONE ASSOCIATES
COST ESTIMATING CONSULTANT

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

BUILDING DOCUMENTATION

Simon Oppenheimer & Brother Building
(Herman's World of Sporting Goods)
800 E Street, NW
Lot 807



This documentation was produced for mitigation purposes by the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation. Additional documentation exists for Square 407, within which this structure stands. For photographs, historical, and descriptive data on Square 407, see HABS No. DC-516.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Herman's World of Sporting Goods is situated on the northeast corner of Square 407. This neo-classical building is three stories high and has a rectangular plan measuring one hundred feet (east-west) by fifty feet. The building covers the entire lot area. The structure consists of a simple grid which runs six bays parallel to E Street, and three bays along Seventh. The present structural framing, though not visible, is assumed to consist of concrete piers with flat concrete slabs. Some structural consolidation appears to have been undertaken in 1950, when a permit was granted to erect new columns and beams in the basement, (Building Permit No. A51119, 2-8-1954).

Both facades of the building make a full expression of the structural system through a stylized but accurate classical vocabulary. The upper two stories are treated as a unified giant order which rests on the first floor. The original treatment of this latter floor as a classical Renaissance base, perhaps rusticated, is probable, but impossible to determine due to the stripping of all original cladding and the addition of a modern anodized aluminum storefront that spans almost the full length of both facades.

The original interiors on all levels may have consisted of a large open space modulated exclusively by the columns at each bay. Because of the disappearance of most original finishes, such a layout is impossible to assert definitely; nevertheless, this continues to be the spatial configuration on the first, second and third levels. In the basement numerous partitions have been erected, fragmenting the large area into random, smaller rooms.

Noteworthy are a few extant interior finishes. An undetermined area of pressed metal ceilings with a square pattern is partially visible through gaps left by missing elements of the hung acoustical ceiling on the third floor. On the west end of the building, servicing all floor levels, is a straight-run wood staircase with enclosed stringers and simple, block newel-posts and balusters.

The exact date of construction has been difficult to establish. In 1911 a permit was granted to build a two-story brick building, for a cost of \$120.00 (sic). Yet the 1919 Baiste Plat shows the building as having stone-clad facades. The 1911 construction was done by A.S.J. Atkinson, Builder, with no architect being named. The actual configuration and facade of the building appears to date from 1921, when the owner, S. Oppenheimer, was granted a permit to "add one additional store (sic), entire new storefront, change first floor level and add new show windows...to make the building up to

date". The architect for this work was Frank Pearson, and the builder was Whitty & Company. The total cost of the work was \$70,000.00.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The rapid advances in the late Nineteenth Century of steel construction techniques opened new and flexible possibilities for architectural expression. Among other features, the new technology allowed longer spans and, like High Gothic, permitted a considerable reduction in the area of exterior walls. Lending itself to any of the Revival Styles popular at the turn of the Century, the new skeletal structure found a close affinity to those earlier of structural expressionisms, the classical Greco-Roman styles. Herman's Sporting Goods building is a small but fine example of late classical Revival.

The design for Herman's clearly portrays the ambivalence of transitional architectural periods. The building is a positive adherent of what Whiffen calls "the Commercial Style", with its large window areas, recessed spandrels, etc. But tempering these features is a wavering commitment to the Beaux Arts canons that govern correctness of detail and proportion. Thus, the architect recurses to the classical Composite Order temple for expression, which he playfully interprets in two ways: First, he achieves a refined stylization of certain selected classical motifs; and then he forces the building into meeting certain proportional laws in spite of the fact that the working dimensions will accommodate such proportions. For instance he forces the Eighth Street and D Street facades into correct systyle and eustyle respective rhythms, even though in doing so he must create paired pilasters at each of the internal structural piers. This latter solution, however, is forsaken at the corners to achieve a more static solidity for the entire building mass.

The treatment of the plasters is particularly ingenious, especially in the modelling of the capitals which feature the two prescribed icons for the composite order: lateral volutes and acanthus leaves. However, the orthodox intertwined relation of the two items is humorously segregated into two independent images, reducing them, as it were, to an absolute minimalism that nevertheless is semantically correct. The geometric severity of the composition of the capitals is definitely modern and relates vaguely to Art Deco trends. These elements establish a strong contrast with the absolute correctness of the denticulated Ionic entablature that they support.

Like its original model, Herman's achieves a stately balance derived from a careful equilibrium between vertical and horizontal elements.

Though not an extraordinary building, it certainly typifies the later manifestations of traditionally-inspired architecture. Its facade materials, careful detailing, and siting impact give this building a value that positively contributes to the visual and historic richness of the Pennsylvania Avenue Development District.

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

Facades: The original first floor of both facades has been thoroughly altered and at present features a predominantly horizontal storefront that projects from the building line. Both base and fascia of this element are clad in bronze-anodized aluminum. On the Eighth Street side, the storefront stops one full bay short of the south end of the lot, exposing the building wall, whose outer surface has been covered in a smooth pebble finish on an epoxy base, totally flush with no joints.

Above, the upper two stories are expressed as a giant composite order carrying an Ionic denticulated entablature and an attic parapet. The limestone-clad piers on both facades constitute the structural bay arrangement. All intermediate piers are decorated to represent paired composite pilasters, while the equidimensional corner piers are represented as single, squat pilasters. Inside each facade bay lies a recessed metal spandrel panel featuring egg-and-dart moulding that establishes an internal triple panel motif. Above and below are wood-framed Chicago windows with transom lites over each of their three sash. The mullions feature a recessed panel decoration.

Historic photographs show that the lower story maintained the structural bay division through the use of rusticated piers. Atop the trabeated opening on each bay were operable transoms similar to those on the upper floors. Below this clerestory band on E Street, on the first bay from the east, a show window projected onto the sidewalk. On the third and fourth bay, a large two-bay wide similar projection occurred, but was given emphatic importance with a marquee roof suspended by chains from the facade piers. This marquee had an ornate fascia of glass panes and a molded cornice, (Columbia Historical Society, Wymer Collection No. 1797).

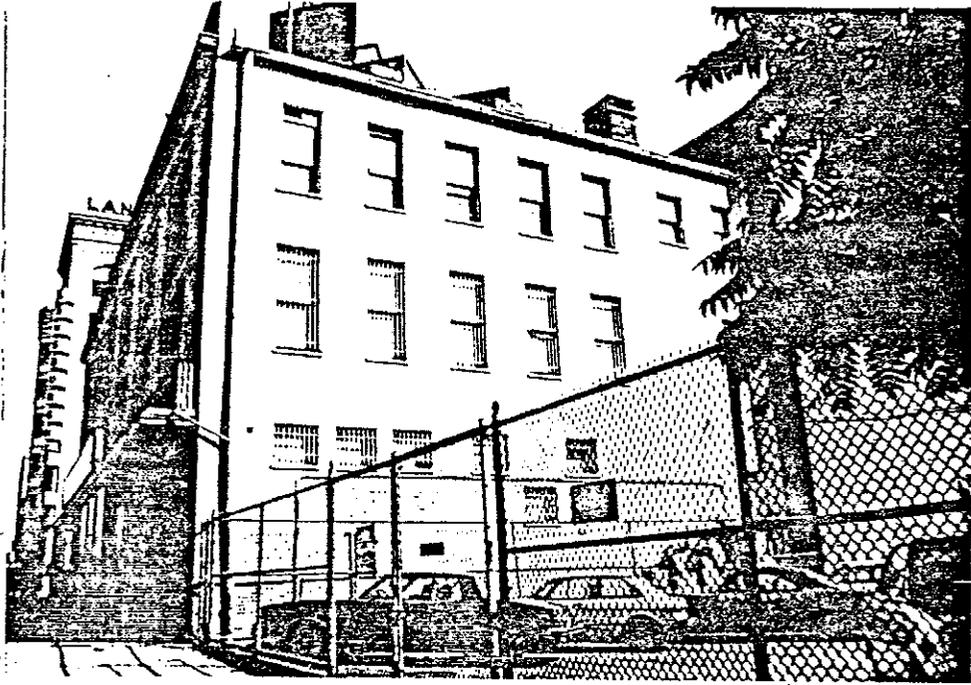
November 1980



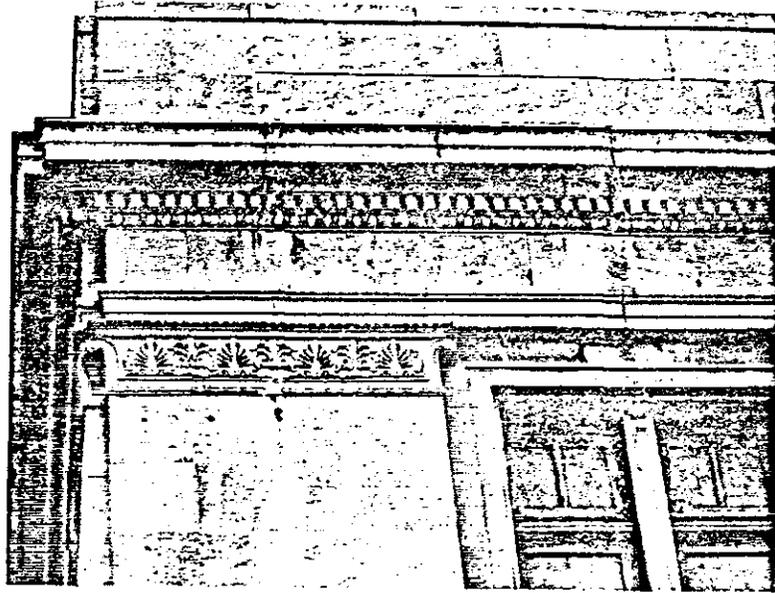
E STREET FACADE (NORTH)



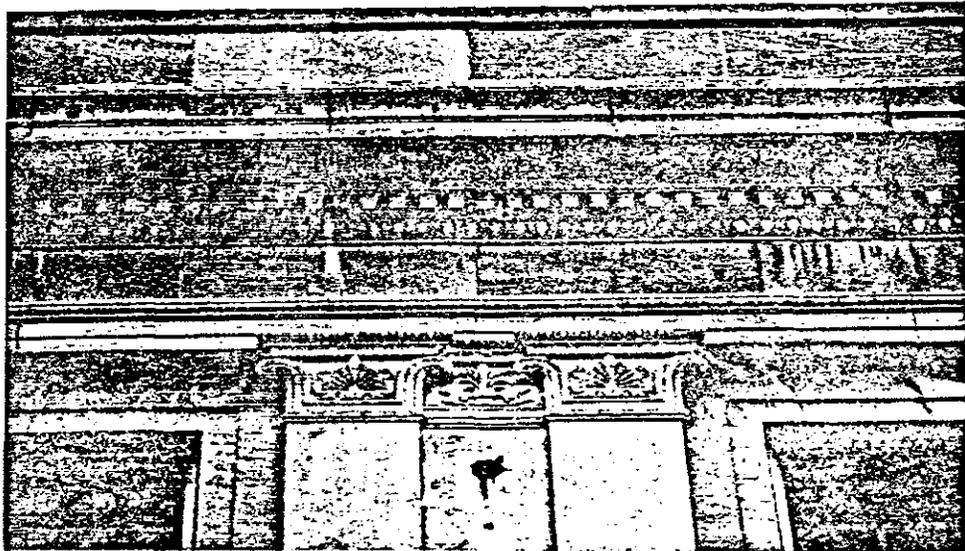
EIGHTH STREET FACADE (EAST)



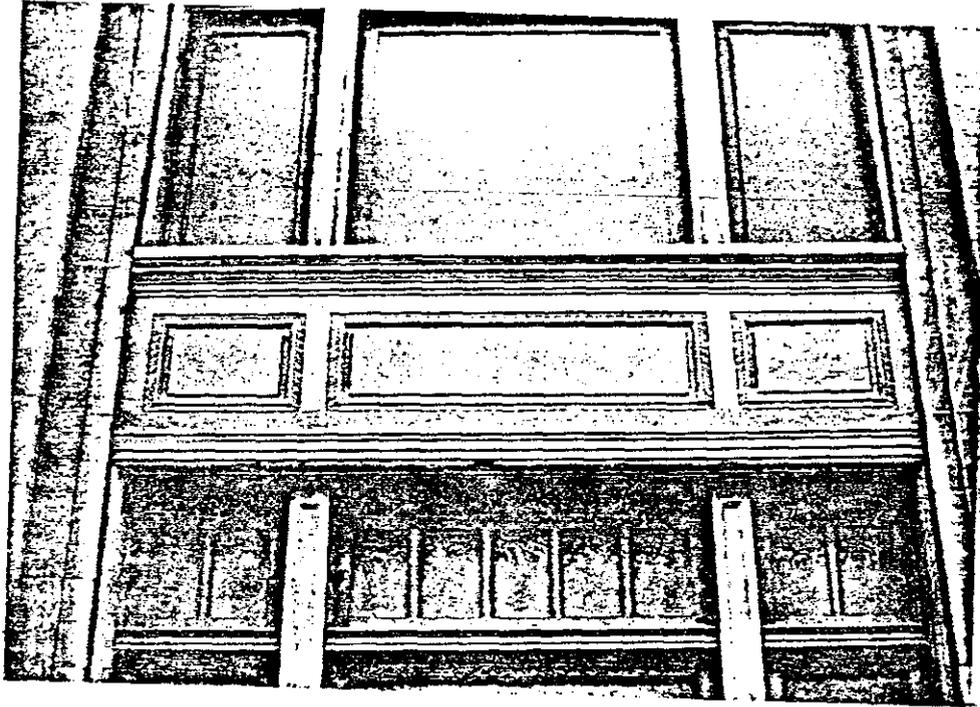
WEST ELEVATION



NORTH FACADE: DETAIL OF ROOF CORNICE AND CAPITAL OF
TYPICAL END PILASTER AT NORTHEAST CORNER



DETAIL OF CAPITAL AT TYPICAL INTERMEDIATE COUPLED PILASTER



TYPICAL SPANDREL PANEL AT THIRD FLOOR

Lot 13 (Sublots 807, 808)
430-432 8th Street, 800-804 E Street

The Bastert 1872 map indicated Lot 13's position in a northeast section of the square, measuring 50' x 75'. By 1887 Lots 12 and 13 were united, and their original north-south orientations changed to east-west ones. There were three interior subdivisions (Hopkins map). By 1904 one building was extant at 432 8th Street, no. 807, and one structure at 430 8th Street, no. 808.

1819.....The lot was owned by George May.

1824.....Now titled to G.C. Grammer, the lot was assessed \$745.00 with \$1,500.00 of improvements.

1829/33...The owner and improvement value remained stable. The lot value increased to \$931.00.

1840/43...The improvement value to Grammer was \$938.00. After the 1859 records, the lot had been subdivided into north and south properties. After 1870, a central area was included in the assessment records.

Lots 12 and 13 (Sublot B07)
432 Bth Street, 800-B10 E Street

The 1904 Baist plat map indicated the removal of the east-west partition wall: Part of Lots 12 and 13 became no. 807. The total area measured approximately 100' (E Street) x 50' (Bth Street).

1911.....Building Permit #2359, January 23: To build a two-story brick store.
Cost: \$150.00.

Building Permit #2545, November 15: Permission to erect two wood signs, 8' x 4', flat against building, "Repairing, Renting". Owner: S. Oppenheimer.

1912.....Building Permit #211, July 12: Permission to erect one galvanized iron sign, "Oppenheimer, New Home Sewing Machines". Size: 2' x 16'-2". Projection: 3'-6".

1915.....Building Permit #3045, February 9, to S. Oppenheimer: Permission to change two single doors, change window, take out two partitions, and make minor internal repair. Put windows on E Street facade. Cost: \$400.00.

Building Permit #3347, March 1, to S. Oppenheimer: Permission to erect marquees. Projection: 9'-6" x 15'-6".

1917.....Building Permit #230, July 21: Permission to change door to connect window, enlarging window and raising floor level 10". Cost: \$300.00.

1921.....Building Permit #3B20, January 4: Addition of an entirely new storefront, change first floor level, add new show windows, and make other interior alterations. Additions: \$55,000.00. Repairs: \$15,000.00. Owner: S. Oppenheimer.

1946.....Building Permit #291,375, December 31: To make alterations on first, second and third floors. Cost: \$8,000.00.

1948
to

1954.....Lacy's Inc., an electric appliance store, had occupied the structure.

1950.....Building Permit #A6572, April 24: Erect new columns and beams in basement. Estimated cost: \$12,000.00. Assessed to Ruby & Krucoff.

1954.....Building Permit #A51119, February 8: Install new show windows, new stairs from first floor to basement. Estimated cost: \$10,000.00.
Owner: Ruby G. Krucoff.

1960
to

1962.....The E Street building was occupied by the U.S. Civil Service Commission.
(City Directories)

1964.....The structure was listed as "vacant" (City Directories).

1967.....Atlas Sports Store was listed in the City Directories.

1981.....The building is used by Herman's World of Sporting Goods.

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