

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE



HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC LANDMARK OR HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION

New Designation X

Amendment of a previous designation

Please summarize any amendment(s) _____

Property name Municipal Center

If any part of the interior is being nominated, it must be specifically identified and described in the narrative statements.

Address 300 Indiana Avenue NW and 301 C Street NW

Square and lot number(s) Square 0533 Lot 0831

Affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission ANC 2C

Date of construction 1938-1941 Date of major alteration(s) _____

Architect(s) Nathan C. Wyeth and Albert Harris, Municipal Architects

Architectural style(s) Modern Movement/ Moderne

Original use Government/ Government Office/ Landscape/ Plaza Present use Government/ Government Office/ Landscape/ Plaza

Property owner District of Columbia

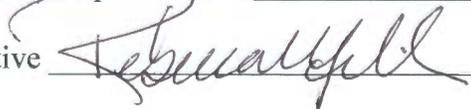
Legal address of property owner 1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 307, Washington, DC 20004

NAME OF APPLICANT(S) DC Preservation League

If the applicant is an organization, it must submit evidence that among its purposes is the promotion of historic preservation in the District of Columbia. A copy of its charter, articles of incorporation, or by-laws, setting forth such purpose, will satisfy this requirement.

Address/Telephone of applicant(s) 1221 Connecticut Ave., NW, WDC 20036, 202.783.5144

Name and title of authorized representative Rebecca Miller, Executive Director

Signature of representative  Date 11/01/2013

Name and telephone of author of application Douglas Peter Sefton 703.836.2015

Date received 11/06/13
H.P.O. staff T20
#14-02

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Municipal Center

Other names/site number: Henry P. Daly Building / Metropolitan Police Center

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 300 Indiana Avenue NW and 301 C Street NW

City or town: Washington State: DC County: _____

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D

<p>_____ Signature of certifying official/Title:</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
<p>_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	

<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____ Signature of commenting official:</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
<p>_____ Title : State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	

Municipal Center
Name of Property

Washington, DC
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Municipal Center
Name of Property

Washington, DC
County and State

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Government/ Government Office

Landscape/ Plaza

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Government/ Government Office

Landscape/ Plaza

7. Description

Municipal Center
Name of Property

Washington, DC
County and State

Architectural Classification

Modern Movement/ Moderne

Materials

Principal exterior materials of the property: Limestone, granite, steel, aluminum

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Known as the Henry P. Daly Building since 1995, the District of Columbia Municipal Center is an office building which houses the headquarters of the Metropolitan Police Department, the District of Columbia Department of Motor Vehicles, and a number of other city offices. During the early stages of planning in the 1920s and early 1930s, the term “Municipal Center” referred to a planned assemblage of judicial and administrative buildings that would occupy Judiciary Square as well as the squares to its south on the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue. By the late 1930s, the name became synonymous with the administrative building, which is the central element among the campus buildings constructed in the New Deal era. Today, the term “Municipal Center” is popularly applied to this building and the “Municipal Center Campus” is used to refer to the complex and its component buildings.

Located between C Street and Indiana Avenue NW, the Municipal Center and its plaza are central elements in the DC Municipal Center campus, an assemblage of judicial and administrative buildings planned as a municipal version of the Federal Triangle, located immediately to its southwest. Its plaza extends across the axis of John Marshall Place NW to the immediate west of the building and occupies portions of Squares 490 and 533.

Constructed between 1938 and 1941 with the aid of Public Works Administration funds, the Municipal Center is an outstanding example of the Classical Moderne style often associated with New Deal civic buildings. Significant additional features include a program of architectural art, which is comprised of bas reliefs flanking the plaza staircase by Lee Lawrie and John Gregory, ceramic tile murals by Hildreth Meiere and Wayland Gregory in the building’s landscaped interior courtyards, a tile mosaic map of the District of Columbia by Eric Menke on the floor of the C Street lobby, and the Police Memorial Fountain by John J. Earley on the Indiana Avenue side of the building near its northwest corner. Significant interior spaces include the Indiana Avenue and C Street lobbies, the east interior court, which contains the Meiere mural, and the west interior lobby, which includes the Gregory mural.

Municipal Center
Name of Property

Washington, DC
County and State

The Municipal Center and its plaza possess a high degree of integrity and present an important expression of the civic identity of Washington, DC.

Images 1A-1K illustrate architectural elements of the Municipal Center and its plaza. Image Group 2 (forthcoming) depicts the Municipal Center's program of architectural art.

Architectural Description

The Municipal Center and its plaza occupy the west portion of Square 533 as well as the extreme eastern portion of Square 490. The building site is bounded by C Street NW to the south and Indiana Avenue to the north. On the east, it is separated from the Frances Perkins Building by a lawn that includes a statue of Albert Pike that is among the "Civil War Monuments" included on the DC Inventory of Historic Sites.

On the west, the building is bounded by the plaza, which covers the broad axis of John Marshall Place NW and stretches toward the Moultrie Courthouse, erected in 1978. The plaza provides a vista between the mall and the 1820-1849 Hadfield Courthouse in Judiciary Square. It mediates between the elevation of C Street and Indiana Avenue, which is approximately thirty feet higher, with two flights of steps. The taller flight, which provides access to Indiana Avenue, is flanked by slabs of pink granite, which bear bas reliefs by Lee Lawrie and John Gregory.

The Municipal Center is a rectangular six story office building, with a windowless upper story devoted to mechanical purposes. The first floor of the building is clad in purplish, smooth-finished granite blocks, its upper stories in white limestone. The building has a highly symmetrical plan, with its longer axis running in parallel with C Street NW. Each façade has a central entrance, with the main lobbies accessed from C Street and Indiana Avenue. The C Street entrance accesses the building's ground floor via a short flight of steps. The Indiana Avenue entrance is accessed by a taller flight of granite steps that leads to a lobby on the second floor of the building. Each of these main entrances has three sets of paired aluminum-framed glass-paneled doors. The floor of the C Street lobby contains a mosaic tile map of the District of Columbia, which is largely concealed by a security desk, x-ray machine, and floor mats at present. However, the Indiana Avenue entrance is generally considered the building's main entrance. Here, the foot of the staircase is marked by a pair of aluminum eagles mounted on columns. The entrances on the building's east and west façade are a single pair of aluminum framed doors at ground level.

The south, and east facades of the building have wide, slightly extruded center sections that suggest a highly-stylized version of a central portico, although they do not project nearly as radically as the portico of the Hadfield Courthouse across Indiana Avenue. On the west façade, a small, porch-like portico with four square columns fronts on the plaza near the northwest corner of the building. It was intended to match an identical portico on a west Municipal Center building on the opposite side of the John Marshall Place right-of-way which was never constructed. The north façade presents three planes, with the bay nearest its northwest corner protruding and that at its northeast corner recessed from the center section.

Municipal Center

Name of Property

Washington, DC

County and State

The aluminum framing of the entrance doors are defining elements of the building's Art Moderne style. On the Indiana Avenue façade, the vertical polished aluminum framework around each pair of doors provides a seamless link to the continuous framing of the window ribbon above. Above each pair of doors is a polished aluminum grill with parallel slotted horizontal ribs, the lower portion of which bow outward and the upper section of which are straight. Each window on the third and fourth floors of the Indiana Avenue façade, (the lobby is on the second floor of the building) is divided vertically into a decorative panel and an upper glazed section. Each decorative panel is separated into three sections by vertical polished aluminum moldings. In the window ribbons above the doors, the central panels are ornamented with a stylized floral design. In the building's other window ribbons, the central panels are ornamented by a geometric design featuring two tiers of stacked semi-circles. The aluminum strips between the panel sections split the glazed areas above into two tiers of three panes each, with the larger panes in the bottom row.

A cornice with a protruding center band with inscribed geometric designs runs continuously around the building above the fourth floor. The central sections of the Indiana Avenue and C Street facades have the legend "District of Columbia" inscribed beneath the cornice. On all facades, the inset window ribbons terminate with the fourth floor. The fifth floor fenestration consists of rectangular single windows divided into three panes by vertical aluminum strips that are aligned with the window ribbons below. Above a second cornice divided into three sections by extruded horizontal bands is the sixth floor, whose rectangular windows are aligned with those below and separated into four panes by polished aluminum framing. Above the sixth floor is the building's main cornice, which is rounded at the top and ornamented with a well-defined incised geometric pattern. The windowless seventh floor is more deeply set-back than the fifth and sixth floors.

The south, east, and west facades are similar to the north façade except that their entrances are inset into the granite cladding of the lower story and do not connect to the framing of the window ribbons above.

The floor plan of the building is essentially symmetrical, with an open-roofed, rectangular landscaped courtyard surrounded by office corridors situated in both its east and west wings. Hildreth Meiere's ceramic tile mural "Health and Welfare" is mounted above the first floor windows on the west wall of the east courtyard. Wayland Gregory's "Public Safety" ceramic tile mural is similarly mounted on the east wall of the west courtyard. The C Street and Indiana Avenue entrances give egress to formal lobbies with ornamental plaster ceilings, polished aluminum fixtures, and highly-polished tinted terrazzo floors.

John J. Earley's Police Memorial (1940-41) is an ornamental concrete fountain with a circular basin located on a small plaza near the northwest corner of the building. The outer surface of the basin is ornamented with a mosaic of strings of white laurel leaves against a terracotta-colored background with blue stripes as its upper and lower bounds.

Among the defining Classical Moderne features of the building are its ziggurat configuration achieved through the progressive setback of its upper stories and its use of abstracted classical

Municipal Center
Name of Property

Washington, DC
County and State

forms. These include nearly flat facades with slightly-protruding central sections that evoke porticos but are much less extruded and the small, side porch-like portico which faces John Marshall Place, which seems a sort of quotation that reinforces the refinement and abstraction of the classical elements in the Hadfield Courthouse. Individual aluminum-framed windows in vertical ribbons incised between strips of façade create the appearance of columns, whose inscribed patterns evoke capitals and perhaps even suggest Corinthian acanthus leaves. Complex repeating geometric patterns which suggest a stratum of seashells and humanoid forms trace its cornice lines. Other Moderne motifs included floral-patterned spandrels and extensive use of such machine age materials as polished aluminum in the cylindrical light fixtures between the entrance doors and in water fountains and public telephone stands inside the building. With the sensation of verticality from its window-ribbons, its sharp angles, as well as its abstract classical elements, the Municipal Center building is an outstanding civic application of “Classical Moderne.”

Narrative Description

The New Deal provided new faces as well as new roles for government. Breaking with traditional neo-classical architectural forms, New Deal public buildings expressed progressive civic identities and symbolized ideological modernity.

In limestone, concrete, and steel, the District of Columbia Municipal Center (1938-41) charts the evolutionary architectural path from the Beaux Arts neoclassicism of the neighboring Federal Triangle, whose “grand design” was established under the Coolidge Administration, to the “Classical Moderne” style characteristic of New Deal civic buildings. Its construction likewise bridged the great divide between the laissez-faire urban policies of the Coolidge and Hoover administrations and the federal-city relationship created by the “activist and interventionist approach” of the New Deal.¹ It remains an important expression of the civic identity of Washington, DC.

The Evolution of the Municipal Center Concept

Although it has sometimes been eclipsed by other plans, the concept of a District of Columbia governmental campus is almost as old as the city itself. In 1840, Judiciary Square, the reservation designated for the federal judiciary by the L’Enfant Plan, instead held such municipal buildings as the city hall-courthouse, a jail, a school, and a public hospital. However, as the nineteenth century progressed, the square became increasingly devoted to federal facilities and the Old City Hall became exclusively a courthouse. City offices dispersed to leased commercial buildings on nearby streets, including the Smith Building at First and C Streets NW and the Walker Building at 462 Louisiana Avenue NW.

As the District’s population grew, its government expanded in size and complexity. Although many municipal offices relocated to the new District Building at Thirteenth Street and

¹ Ibid, 9.

Municipal Center

Washington, DC

Name of Property

County and State

Pennsylvania Avenue NW in 1908, the city government soon overflowed even this “handsomest municipal building in North America.”² It took decades of political struggle before a new building program sought to consolidate its scattered municipal accommodations. Although its construction is closely associated with Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, the District of Columbia Municipal Center had its origins in the urban planning projects of the Coolidge and Hoover Administrations and its trigger in the building of the Federal Triangle.

The Growth of the Federal City and the Federal Triangle Plan.

During the early twentieth century, while the United States became both an imperial power and an urban nation, the federal workforce expanded almost continuously. Federal agencies were scattered about the city in inadequately-sized, obsolescent buildings, and, when the government mobilized for World War I, its so-called “tempo” office buildings spilled onto the mall. Within ten years, the number of federal employees doubled to 60,000 and the Commerce Department workforce labored at twenty different locations.³

During the Coolidge Administration, the movement to create a unified federal office district achieved critical mass. In 1926, Congress appropriated \$50,000,000 to create the “Federal Triangle,” a set of massive office buildings to replace the eclectic mix of commercial, residential, and municipal structures on either side of Pennsylvania Avenue between Seventh and Fifteenth Streets NW.⁴

Each of the Triangle’s seven monumentally-scaled buildings was designed by a different “architectural consultant” to the Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury. However, the buildings, as well as their designers, shared essential similarities. Except for one federal architect, all the consultants were principals in prominent firms in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, or San Francisco.⁵ Five were graduates of the Ecole des Beaux Arts, and all seven, in the words of art historian George Gurney, “had worked in . . . the architectural firms that had determined the classical Beaux Arts style of buildings in Washington as envisioned by the McMillan Commission.”⁶ Their buildings differed in classical orders, from John Russell Pope’s Corinthian National Archives, to the mixed Roman Ionic-Doric of William Delano’s Post Office Department, to the Doric of York and Sawyer’s Department of Commerce, but all were neoclassical in style. The choice of Beaux Arts neoclassicism for the “grand design” of the Triangle symbolically conveyed the proper mix of gravitas, authority, and traditionalism. It communicated that the buildings’ purpose was more than utility, for, as President Herbert Hoover would note at a 1929 conference that promoted the construction of the Triangle:

² “Splendor Marks Baptism Of Home: Municipal Building Is Dedicated,” *Washington Post*; Jul 5, 1908; 1

³ James Goode, “Introduction” in Volkmar Wentzel. *Washington by Night*. (Washington, DC: Starwood Press, 1992) 13.

⁴ “\$165,000,000 Public Building Measure Signed By Coolidge,” *The Washington Post*, May 26, 1926, 5.

⁵ George Gurney. *The Sculpture of the Federal Triangle*. (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1979), 51-54.

⁶ *Ibid*, 54.

Municipal Center

Name of Property

Washington, DC

County and State

Washington is not only the nation's capitol. By its dignity and architectural inspiration we stimulate pride in our country; we encourage the elevation of thought and character which comes from great architecture.⁷

Although seven years had passed since the initial appropriation, just two of the Triangle buildings had been completed when Franklin D. Roosevelt took office in March, 1933. It became the new president's responsibility to construct the five remaining buildings to their previously-approved designs.

Governing the Federal City

As the 1920s began, the District of Columbia's long-restive relationship with the federal government grew increasingly tense. Residents of the federal enclave had no representatives in the congresses which determined the municipal budget and no voice in electing the nation's president, who appointed the board of commissioners which governed the city. Key municipal offices were patronage plums, handed out to the favorites of powerful national politicians for services rendered far from the District of Columbia residents they served. The early decades of the twentieth century bought an increasing volume of cries for "home rule" from local political and civic groups.

While the federal government struggled to consolidate its ever-expanding functions, the District of Columbia government confronted problems wrought by urbanization. Driven in part by the expansion of the federal workforce, the District's population had grown 63% between 1900 and 1920.⁸ The demands of governing a city of this expanding scale overwhelmed the District Building and dispersed key offices across downtown. However, the District government's building program was limited by its finances. From the mid-1920s, Congress contributed an ever-lower percentage of the city's operating costs, leaving the shortfall to local taxpayers. Appeals for appropriations to fund municipal construction proposals were regarded with a bleak eye by a coalition of what the *Washington Post* called "lawmakers from the wide open spaces" and other influential fiscal conservatives.⁹

The city's judicial system was staggering under its workload by the mid-1920s. District motor vehicle registrations rose risen twenty-fold between 1913 and 1924, and, with the institution of Prohibition in 1919, the city Police Court became "clogged with bootleggers and drunks," in the words of its clerk.¹⁰ As the chief magistrate would later complain, its Victorian era building was so crowded that prisoners, attorneys, and witnesses were forced to stand for hours before

⁷ Ibid, 44.

⁸ Campbell Gibson. *Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States: 1790 To 1990: Population Division Working Paper 27 (Washington, DC: US Census Bureau, 1998)* Tables 13-15.

⁹ "The District Goat," *The Washington Post*; Dec 18, 1925; 6.

¹⁰ U.S. Bureau of the Census. "Table 418, Motor Vehicle Registrations By State," in *Statistical Abstract of the United States for 1930*: (Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1930), 387 and "Crimes Jam Court, Clerk Tells House," *The Washington Post*, Nov. 19, 1926, 20.

Municipal Center

Name of Property

Washington, DC

County and State

parading through other trials on their way to their assigned courtroom. Because it had been built before women could serve on juries, the courthouse lacked women's restrooms.

By the mid-1920s, proposals to unify District courts at Judiciary Square, as suggested by the 1901 McMillan Plan, had been approved by the federal government's Commission on Fine Arts (CFA).¹¹ In 1926, the year that it funded the Federal Triangle project, Congress endorsed the new courthouse plan.

The Triangle project created a crisis in municipal services. Among the hundreds of buildings in the area to be cleared were two fire houses, a police precinct station, the municipal "lodging house" for transients, and the District Building itself.¹² In late 1926, after their request for a parcel of land for replacement structures was soundly rebuffed by Treasury Department officials, the District Commissioners complained that police and fire stations might have to move to tents.¹³ Proposals were advanced for a new central police headquarters at some other site which could house additional municipal functions.¹⁴ Within a short time, these plans focused on Judiciary Square, which had been proposed as the site for a consolidated municipal building as long ago as 1886, and its environs to the south.¹⁵

Siting the Municipal Center

In 1926, Judiciary Square still resembled the original "Reservation 7" on L'Enfant's Plan; a three-by-two block rectangle of green space amid the urban grid. The small municipal and federal buildings of the Civil War era had long been cleared, and the expansive open square was now bounded on the north by Montgomery Meigs' fortress-sized red brick Pension Building of 1887 and on the south by George Hadfield's District Courthouse and City Hall of 1820. (Illustration 1) Hadfield's "Old Courthouse" had lent its "Grecian revival" lines to Architect of the Capitol Elliott Woods' white limestone Court of Appeals, built to its north and west in 1910. In 1916, Woods had returned the favor, remodeling the Old Courthouse and re-cladding its stucco-over-brick walls in limestone. (Image 3A)

Before the Civil War, the neighborhood around Judiciary Square had been home to figures as prominent as Daniel Webster. However, residential fashion had long since moved north and west, and, although some impressive antebellum structures survived, the area was now a mix of late nineteenth century row houses and office buildings, commercial garages, aging hotels, and light industry. South of Judiciary Square lay a tract of four L'Enfant Plan squares, cut into irregular shapes by the inverted cup traced by Louisiana Avenue, D Street, and Indiana Avenue on the north and the sharp diagonal of Pennsylvania Avenue on the south. This tract, composed of Squares 490, 491, 533, and Reservation 10, was bisected north-from-south by C Street NW

¹¹ "Arts Commission For Court Building In Judiciary Square," *Washington Post*; Jun 15, 1926; 7.

¹² "Dougherty Plans Housing Of Police And Fire Companies," *The Washington Post*; Dec 4, 1926; 24.

¹³ Carlisle Bargeron. "Fight For District Improvement Plan Goes To Congress," *The Washington Post*; Dec 8, 1926; 1.

¹⁴ "Central Police Station Called Pressing Need," *The Washington Post*; Dec 14, 1926; 2.

¹⁵ "A New District Building: Plans Of A Proposed Handsome Edifice," *Washington Post*; Apr 10, 1886; 2 and "Decision to Congress On Building of Police Court," *Washington Post*; Dec 12, 1926; M4.

Municipal Center

Name of Property

Washington, DC

County and State

and east-from-west by John Marshall Place, the northernmost segment of Four and a Half Street, which ran from Southwest Washington across the mall to the steps of the Hadfield Courthouse. Although the city owned only a small portion of its land, the tract included the Municipal Court on John Marshall Place and several aging office buildings that had been intermittently leased by the District Government. It soon became the proposed site for a municipal center campus. (Image 3B)

Although they shared the nondescript character of their neighbors, the squares in the municipal center tract occupied an extremely strategic location for federal city planners. Even as land was purchased and cleared for the Federal Triangle, the federal government had embarked on an ambitious effort to enlarge and beautify the Capitol Grounds and National Mall. Besides demolishing “Uncle Sam’s Hotels,” the ranks of brick dormitories built for female war workers in the Union Station Plaza, the project would clear several fully-developed squares and eradicate several streets between the Mall and the south side of Pennsylvania Avenue. This would leave the proposed Municipal Center tract as the civic campus linking Judiciary Square to the newly-expanded Mall, as well as to the developing Federal Triangle to its southwest. In addition to Congress’ usual budgetary concerns, this made the city’s plans of immense interest to the federal government.

Armed with CFA and congressional approvals, Municipal Architect Albert I. Harris began preparing plans for new municipal buildings in late 1926. However, in February 1927, the Anti-Deficiency Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee denied funding for a new Police Court building in Judiciary Square, ostensibly because its proposed site at the corner of Fourth and E Streets NW lacked space for expansion.¹⁶ In April, the subcommittee chair, notably tight-fisted Representative Louis Cramton (R-MI), shared his feelings with the CFA.¹⁷ His letter advised that he was “unalterably opposed” to disturbing the square’s trees and parkland and suggested that expanding and giving a face-lift to the existing Police Court Building just west of the square would offer greater economies than “any monumental structure in Judiciary Square.”¹⁸

Cramton was not the only critic of siting municipal buildings in Judiciary Square. His proposal paralleled a turf battle among the judges of the city’s courts that was playing out in the newspapers. The Police Court was considered the city’s “lowest” court for the nature of the offenses it tried, as well as the social status of many of its defendants. At times, some had questioned whether it would be appropriate to locate it with the Municipal Court, which tried civil cases and more serious offenses. During the winter of 1926-27, the acerbic Gus Schuldt, chief judge of the Police Court, publically rebelled at the idea of consolidated courthouses,

¹⁶ “\$1,250,000 for City in Deficiency Bill Passed,” *The Washington Post*; Feb 27, 1927; 2.

¹⁷ Moderate Republican Representative Frederick Zihlman of Maryland, chair of the House District Committee, criticized Cramton (sometimes spelled “Crampton”) for being the architect of the policy of appropriating a flat annual sum which represented an ever-declining fraction of the District’s operating costs. See Frederick N. Zihlman. “The Federal District,” *The Washington Post*; May 22, 1926, 6.

¹⁸ Letter from Representative Louis Cramton to the Commission on Fine Arts, April 1, 1927, (Unpublished), National Archives, Records Group 66, Box 47. See “City Heads Accused Of Move To Block Police Court Home,” *Washington Post*; Feb 1, 1927; 1.

Municipal Center

Name of Property

Washington, DC

County and State

charging that it was a plot by the District Commissioners to expropriate his court and demanding the construction of a new Police Court on the site of the existing courthouse west of the square. The *Washington Post* also reported opposition from unnamed local sources, who had proposed transforming the Pension Building into a National Guard Armory with Judiciary Square as its parade ground and placing the new Police Court on Indiana Avenue.¹⁹

Perhaps interpreting Cramton's letter as a signal that Congress might actually fund a project adjacent to Judiciary Square, Harris revised his plan. On May 28, 1927 he presented the CFA with a "Civic Center" site plan that had been approved by the District Commissioners. As described in the CFA minutes, this preliminary design showed the campus south of Judiciary Square, extending along Pennsylvania Avenue from Third to Sixth Streets NW, with John Marshall Place as its central axis. In the center of John Marshall Place, which had an exceptionally wide 90 foot right-of-way, was a tree-shaded parking court extending south from the Hadfield Courthouse at D Street to Pennsylvania Avenue. Although the plan did not label individual buildings, the CFA minutes enumerated Police, Municipal, and Juvenile Courts, a Recorder of Deeds Building, an Administration Building, and a Fire Department Headquarters as the structures intended for the campus. The CFA was so favorably impressed by Harris' plan that it recommended adding triangular Squares 459 and 460, between Six and Seventh Streets NW, as parkland to balance the design and provide a more appropriate vista for the Department of Justice Building planned for construction diagonally across Pennsylvania Avenue.²⁰

On September 15, 1927, the CFA met with a delegation that included the District Commissioners, Municipal Architect Harris, and Public Buildings Commission chair U.S. Grant III to further refine this plan. The District Commissioners now proposed constructing three buildings; a Police and Fire Department Headquarters Building at Louisiana Avenue and John Marshall Place, a municipal administration building fronting on Pennsylvania Avenue east of John Marshall Place, and a combination courthouse and Recorder of Deeds Building along Pennsylvania Avenue west of John Marshall Place.²¹ Square 533, in the northeast corner of the tract, would be held for future expansion.

Noting that the Municipal Center would occupy a strategic location in federal plans, as well as aid in the redevelopment of lower Pennsylvania Avenue, the CFA expressed strong support for most of Harris' plan. Although its members approved the scale and height of Harris' proposed buildings, some muted dissatisfaction arose regarding their arrangement. The CFA advised the commissioners that the Municipal Center Administration Building should be the central building in the tract, and occupy a position comparable to that of the Hadfield Courthouse in Judiciary Square. Longtime CFA Chair Charles Moore suggested that Harris review the alignment of the Civic Center in the Plan of Chicago.

¹⁹ "Arts Board View On Square Unknown: Commission to Take Up Plans for Judiciary Block."

Washington Post; Aug 27, 1926; 18.

²⁰ "Municipal Center, 1927-1933" Extracts from the Minutes of the Commission on Fine Arts, National Archives, RG 66, Box 47

²¹ *Ibid*,

Municipal Center

Name of Property

Washington, DC

County and State

The September meeting was an occasion of rare concord between the two sets of commissioners, and, at the October CFA meeting, tensions seemed more pronounced. Harris reported that there were problems with situating the Municipal Building as the CFA had suggested and that he had no funds to do more than a preliminary revision of plans. CFA Chairman Moore then backpedaled slightly, stating that the CFA had not intended to prescribe a specific design and suggesting that the District seek a special appropriation to develop the project.

On December 8, 1927, Harris and Assistant to the Engineer Commissioner William Atkins presented a complete set of plans and renderings to the CFA. The project now included a new avenue-width street connecting the intersection of Third Street and Pennsylvania Avenue with Union Station Plaza, a feature acclaimed by the CFA. John Marshall Place had become “a great open court” with a central fountain, accessible to pedestrians through an arched gate at Pennsylvania Avenue and by a double-tiered flight of steps from Louisiana Avenue. Acting as the campus’ north-south axis, this court divided interlocking the structures for the city courts, Recorder of Deeds Office, and Police Headquarters to its west from the administrative building to its east. (Image 4A)

It had always been intended that the new buildings would be of simple lines, harmonizing with the “Greek Revival” style of the Old District Courthouse and Court of Appeals, and Harris’ stylistic vision was appropriately conservative.²² His “monumental buildings... of the classical order,”²³ whose unbroken main facades stretched along either side of John Marshall Place, were essentially a series of modular wings surrounding multiple interior courts. Along the C Street axis, a formal gateway gave access to the central courtyard of each building. On the west side of Sixth Street, which passed beneath an arch at Pennsylvania Avenue, triangular Squares 459 and 460 were occupied by a separate three-segmented building that straddled the axis of C Street. (Image 4B)

Harris’ plan included two alternative schemes. The most flamboyant added a tower of eight stories to the northern module of the judicial structure. (Image 4C) The other created a circular court by curving the John Marshall Place façade of each building inward, anticipating Delano & Aldrich’s design for the Post Office Building in the Federal Triangle. This scheme treated Squares 459 and 460 as parkland, so, to compensate for lost space, the gates on the C Street axis were replaced by office wings which sealed off the central courtyards from the street. (Image 4D) Neither of these more dramatic schemes won approval from the CFA. On December 14, 1927, the commission approved Harris’ preliminary layout, observing that it would “provide for the ultimate reclamation of what is now the least desirable portion of the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue.”²⁴ Under Harris, plans continued to evolve. (Image 4E) In 1928, the National Capital Park and Planning Commission (NCPC) agreed that the proposed tract should be the location for the Municipal Center.²⁵

²² “The Police Court Site,” *Washington Post*; Dec 9, 1926; 6.

²³ “Municipal Center, 1927-1933,” 8.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 9.

²⁵ “District Site Approved By Planners,” *The Washington Post*; Feb 15, 1928; 20.

Municipal Center

Washington, DC

Name of Property

County and State

1929 saw the first actual efforts to construct the Municipal Center. In February, the *Washington Post* and other city newspapers published the Municipal Architect's drawing of the approved plan below headlines announcing that a bill to fund the project was before Congress. Although Representative Fiorello LaGuardia worried that the District would create an architectural hodgepodge that detracted from the neoclassical splendor of the Federal Triangle, in mid-June 1929 Congress authorized the expenditure of \$3,000,000 to acquire land in the Municipal Center tract.²⁶ House District Committee chair R. G. Simmons, a fiscally-conservative Republican from Scotts Bluff, Nebraska with "a reputation for pugnacity," noted that these funds came from the District's surplus deposited with the Treasury Department, and that purchasing the land would not cause the nation's taxpayers any added expense.²⁷

By the end of the 1929 fiscal year, the District Commissioners had expended most of this initial appropriation and acquired a number of key properties. Although the CFA maintained that urban renewal was an important fringe benefit of the project, the loss of such civic landmarks as the frame 1827 First Presbyterian Church and 1855 Metropolitan Memorial Methodist Church on John Marshall Place would be occasions for nostalgic reveries in the press.²⁸ The District Government redeployed some of these doomed structures to temporarily relieve conditions in its overcrowded offices. The Walker Building at 462 Louisiana Avenue, which had housed many city offices before the construction of the District Building, became the new home of Police Headquarters, as well as the Playgrounds and Refuse Departments. The Employment Bureau moved into the First Presbyterian Church, and the 1827 National Hotel, where Charles Dickens slept and Henry Clay died, became the armory of the District National Guard.²⁹

In 1929, Allied Architects, a local firm whose principals included Nathan C. Wyeth, Edward Donn, Fred Murphy, and landscape architect George Burnap, submitted an unsolicited design proposal for a "civic center." Congress appropriated an additional \$10,000 for design services and, just weeks after the September 1929 stock market crash, Albert L. Harris retained Allied Architects as design consultants for the Municipal Center.³⁰ (Image 4F)

During the year that followed the crash, the Municipal Center project remained extremely active. During the summer of 1930, Congress provided an additional \$3,000,000 for land acquisition, as

²⁶ "House Passes Fund For Public Center," *The Washington Post*; Jun 8, 1929; 20.

²⁷ "Selling of District Building May Aid Municipal Center," Apr 25, 1929; 1 and "Municipal Center Funds To Be Asked," *Washington Post*; Jan 4, 1931; M15.

²⁸ David Rankin Barbee. "Famous Presbyterian Church Soon to Pass," *The Washington Post*; Dec 22, 1929; M17, David Rankin Barbee. "Historic Edifices, Dear to the Hearts of Antiquarians," *Washington Post*; Sep 13, 1931; MF1, and "Historic Church Passes for Municipal Center: Metropolitan Memorial." *Washington Post*; Jan 4, 1930; 1. Metropolitan Memorial Methodist's parishioners had included Presidents U.S. Grant and William McKinley.

²⁹ "Bureau Officials To Start Moving During This Week," *Washington Post*; Jul 27, 1930; M9 and Edward T. Folliard. "Old National Hotel To "Die" As Armory," *Washington Post*; Jan 12, 1930; 1.

³⁰ *Report of the Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia for 1930*. (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1930), 57. See also "Individual Architects Employed on Center," *The Washington Post*; Oct 31, 1929; 10 and "Five Experts Begin Civic Center Plans," *The Washington Post*; Jan 5, 1930; 1.

Municipal Center

Washington, DC

Name of Property

County and State

well as an additional \$63,000 for architectural services, designs, and models.³¹ By the end of the fiscal year, 92% of these funds had been spent and 82% of the land acquired. In June 1930, the District Commissioners requested congressional permission to hire specialized architects and technicians to work on the Municipal Center plans without regard to Civil Service classification or salary requirements.³² By late 1930, a project architectural staff of twenty-five was shoe-horned into a room in the Municipal Architect's offices on the third floor of the District Building. In March 1931, the project staff, as well as Harris, moved to the newly-acquired Ford Motor Company Building, an Albert Kahn-designed showroom, service center, and warehouse at 451-455 Pennsylvania Avenue NW.³³ Although there was turnover during the near-dozen years it took to construct the Municipal Center, most of the key contributors to its design became involved at this time or shortly afterwards. (Images 4G through 4I)

Nathan C. Wyeth and the Office of the Municipal Architect's Municipal Center Staff

As a key advisor to Albert I. Harris beginning in 1925, a principal partner in Allied Architects beginning in 1929, and Municipal Architect beginning in 1934, Nathan Corwith Wyeth was the key influence in shaping the Municipal Center Campus

Wyeth was born April 20, 1870 in Chicago. His father, Charles J. Wyeth, a prosperous member of the Chicago Board of Trade, was a principal in the firm of Wyeth and Vandervoort, which sold malt to the brewing industry. Late in life, Nathan Wyeth would repeat a story about being carried from the path of the Chicago fire as a babe in arms.³⁴ Charles Wyeth died in 1873, and, in 1881, Wyeth's mother married General Orlando Bolivar Willcox, a Detroit attorney turned soldier awarded the Medal of Honor for leading multiple charges at the Battle of Bull Run.³⁵ After spending the remainder of the Civil War in Confederate prison camps, General Willcox had been assigned to the southwestern territories, where he spent much of the 1870s and 1880s battling Apache Indians. It is not known whether his step-children accompanied him to his post or whether they were placed in boarding school. After retiring from active duty in 1887, General Willcox became Director of the United States Soldiers Home and the Willcox-Wyeth family settled at 2022 R Street NW in Washington, DC, near Dupont Circle.³⁶

³¹ *Report of the Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia for 1931*, (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1931), 66.

³² "City's Heads Seek Right to Hire Men: Civic Center Technicians Without Salary Limit Requested," *Washington Post*; Jun 25, 1930; 20.

³³ "Architect's Office Moves Tomorrow," *Washington Post*; Mar 1, 1931; M16, See also "Ford Motor Company Building, HABS-DC-375," online at <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/pnp/habshaer/dc/dc0100/dc0110/data/dc0110data.pdf>, and "Ford Building – Washington, DC," at http://www.fordmotorhistory.com/factories/washingtondc/site_details.php

³⁴ National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. —Sixteenth Street Historic District (Boundary Expansion).2006. Washington, DC: National Park Service

³⁵ "Medals for Two Brave Men", *Washington Post*, February 27, 1895, 3. General Willcox's medal was awarded many years after the Civil War.

³⁶ "Gen. O.B. Willcox Buried", *Washington Post*, May 15, 1907, 11.

Municipal Center

Washington, DC

Name of Property

County and State

Nathan Wyeth's architectural career could well have been derailed before it began. Charles Wyeth's will had provided his widow and two sons with an income based upon a principal of \$100,000 (the equivalent of several million dollars today) placed in trust with the friend for whom Nathan had been named. However, in 1888 the sudden failure of N. Corwith and Company sent ripples through the major New York City banks. It was later revealed Nathan Corwith, a merchant, banker, and speculator referred to as the "Lead King", had comingled the Wyeth brothers' trust with the funds for his failed business. Litigation outlived Corwith, dragging on into the mid-1890s, and eventually reached the Illinois Supreme Court.³⁷ Although it is unclear that the suit recovered any assets, the family was still able to fund both brothers' educations.

Nathan Wyeth spent part of 1888 painting watercolors in Switzerland, returning to the United States to attend the Michigan Military Academy through 1889. Afterwards, he studied at the School of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, receiving an \$80 prize for best work in the architecture class in April 1890.³⁸ Afterwards he likely returned to the family home, since, when he applied for a passport in June 1890, he provided Washington, DC as his place of residence.

Nothing is known of Nathan Wyeth's subsequent whereabouts until 1899, when he graduated from the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris after studying in the Atelier of Pascal. He returned to the United States that year and began working for the Supervisory Architect of the Treasury. On June 4, 1900, a census enumerator listed him as boarding with the family of John Pairo at 2127 Florida Avenue NW, just a few blocks from the Willcox home, and recorded his profession as "architect."³⁹ On December 23, 1900, the Washington Post reported that "Mr. Nathan Wyeth, who has spent the last five years studying architecture in Paris, will be spending the winter with his mother at 2022 R Street NW."⁴⁰ In 1901, Wyeth's work attracted its first attention in Washington when a review of the Washington Architecture Club Show at the Corcoran Gallery commented on the "beautifully rendered designs characteristic of the Friend School" offered by N.C. Wyeth.⁴¹

While Wyeth was serving his architectural apprenticeship, he quickly launched himself into the whirl of the capital's high society. Possibly through the prestige of General Willcox, his connections far exceeded those of almost any beginning architect. In December, 1902, he was a guest at the White House debut of Alice Roosevelt, which he followed with attendance at a series of balls and receptions.⁴² Although Wyeth was in his early thirties and probably past his athletic prime, he was an enthusiastic member of the Washington Fencing Club and played competitive tennis at the club level.

³⁷ "Street v. French," *The Northeastern Reporter, Volume 35* (Chicago: West Publishing Company, 1894) 816. Pages 814-820 describe the case in detail.

³⁸ "Prizes for Art Students," *New York Times*, May 1, 1890, 8.

³⁹ Twelfth Census of the United States. Washington, DC. Enumeration 145, Sheet 4A.

⁴⁰ "Social and Personal," *Washington Post*, December 23, 1900, 18.

⁴¹ "Art Topics," *Washington Post*, April 7, 1901, E9.

⁴² "Miss Alice Roosevelt Introduced to Society," *Washington Post*, January 4, 1902. 1.

Municipal Center

Name of Property

Washington, DC

County and State

However, the chronology of this period of Wyeth's career is as contradictory as that of his student years is vague. Many accounts state that he continued to work at the Treasury Department until 1903 or 1904, when he transferred to the Office of the Architect of the Capitol for approximately two years.⁴³ However, Wyeth's entry in Wyatt's American Architects cites government employment only prior to 1900.⁴⁴

During his early years as an architect, Wyeth also worked with the noted New York firm of Carrere & Hastings, whose principals were fellow graduates of the Ecole.⁴⁵ Many biographers hypothesize that this was a brief alliance immediately after he returned from Paris in 1899.⁴⁶ However, Wyatt's American Architects states that Wyeth worked for the firm from 1900 through 1903, a period when he resided in Washington. This is not impossible, as Carrere & Hastings had been involved in the capital's architectural affairs from the mid-1890s, when John M. Carrere mounted an unsuccessful campaign to be named Supervising Architect of the Treasury. In 1899, the firm began constructing the Townsend House (later the Cosmos Club), and in 1901 it refurbished and modernized important areas within the Capitol building. In April 1904, Carrere & Hastings was retained to design the original House and Senate Office buildings, with plans to be drawn within the Office of the Architect of the Capitol.⁴⁷ Wyatt's American Architects entry cites these buildings as Wyeth's first "principal work."⁴⁸ The most likely explanation for this conflicting chronology is that he shifted employment between Carrere & Hastings and the Architect of the Capitol while working on various phases of these projects.

In early 1904, apparently while still working on federal projects, Wyeth formed a partnership with fellow Ecole graduate William Penn Cresson (1873-1932), later a diplomat, distinguished biographer of James Monroe, and husband of Daniel Chester French's daughter. Wyeth & Cresson, whose offices were at 1517 H Street NW, received its first building permit in March 1904, and executed seven other commissions during its three years of activity. Most of these were fashionable residences with a minimum construction cost of \$25,000, in an era when Harry Wardman built row houses for about \$2,000 each.⁴⁹

⁴³ Antoinette J. Lee. *Architects to the Nation: The Rise and Decline of the Supervising Architect's Office*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) 212 is an authoritative source that cites this information. *The Official Register of the United States for 1903* also lists Wyeth as a designer at the Officer of the Supervisory Architect.

⁴⁴ George S. Koyl. *Wyatt's American Architects* (R.S. Bowker, 1962), 784, accessed at <http://www.archive.org/details/americanarchitec001309mbp>, May 1, 2011

⁴⁵ National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. Sixteenth Street Historic District (Boundary Expansion). 2006. Washington, DC: National Park Service

⁴⁶ Lee, 212.

⁴⁷ "Architect of Office Building," *Washington Post*, April 12, 1904, 4.

⁴⁸ Koyl, 784.

⁴⁹ All permit information from DC Historic Preservation Office. "DC Building Permit Database" on Compact Disc.(2009). Also see "Design Handsome Houses," *Washington Post*, October 6, 1907, R7. One 1905-06 Wyeth & Cresson commission became a notorious address in Washington political history. 1509 H Street NW, in the same block as the Wyeth & Cresson office, was built for John R. McLean, banker, streetcar magnate, and political kingmaker, publisher of the Cincinnati Enquirer and owner of the Washington Post. After passing into the hands of McLean's son Ned, it became a sort of

Municipal Center
Name of Property

Washington, DC
County and State

Beginning independent practice in 1907, Wyeth continued to design Beaux Arts mansions, including the Gibson Fahnestock House and other residences in the 2300 and 2400 blocks of Massachusetts Avenue, the Pullman Mansion and assorted houses in the 16th Street corridor, and residences in the 2100 and 2200 blocks of R Street NW.⁵⁰ In 1908-1909, Wyeth expanded his practice beyond society residences and executed two major federal commissions. As part of a partial reconstruction of the Tidal Basin, Wyeth designed the graceful, classically-accented Tidal Reservoir Inlet Bridge (1908-09) with Army Corps of Engineers Colonel Spencer Cosby.⁵¹ His second federal project was the most noted commission of his early career. Almost immediately after his inauguration in March 1909, President William Howard Taft ordered a competition to enlarge and make permanent the White House's west wing offices.⁵² Wyeth's winning design included a curved windowed wall and oval presidential office, patterned after the White House's Blue Room. Construction of this original Oval Office began while the Taft family was summering at Malden, Massachusetts and was completed in the fall of 1909. The finished office attracted considerable mention in the press.⁵³

Besides his busy practice, Wyeth found time to act as patron to the Architectural Club of Washington, critiquing members' solutions to problems posed by the Beaux Arts Society of New York.⁵⁴ During the summer of 1911, he married Dorothy Lawson, the daughter of a wealthy Cincinnati manufacturer of tin plate who had spent several seasons in Washington with an aunt who was an intimate friend of First Lady Helen Taft.⁵⁵ After his marriage, Wyeth moved in Washington's most elite social circles.

After 1910, Wyeth designed increasingly more prominent buildings. He directed extensive remodeling of the British Embassy in 1910,⁵⁶ and remodeled the Mrs. George Pullman House at 1125 Sixteenth Street into a chancery for the Russian ambassador in 1914.⁵⁷ In 1913, Wyeth designed the Columbia Hospital for Women in the Italian Renaissance style⁵⁸ and, in 1915, the

clubhouse for the "Ohio Gang" that surrounded President Warren G. Harding and was nicknamed "The Love Nest" for the notorious bacchanals that Harding's cronies staged there. Wyeth & Cresson's final commission in 1907 was a four story \$45,000 house for Mrs. Norman Williams at 1227 Sixteenth Street NW. Described as being in the French Renaissance style, the house featured an Indiana Limestone façade and a dramatic winding staircase with ornamental wrought iron railings designed by Wyeth.

⁵⁰ "New Residence Planned," *Washington Post*, May 2, 1909, CA7.

⁵¹ "Nathan Wyeth Will Become City Architect," *Washington Post*, January 12, 1934, 15.

⁵² In 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt had commissioned the firm of McKim, Mead, and White to add west wing offices to the White House. McKim envisioned this space to be temporary, as he had endorsed Daniel Burnham's proposal for a permanent federal office campus in Lafayette Square centered on new presidential offices.

⁵³ "More Room for President," *Washington Post*, May 20, 1909, 3.

⁵⁴ "Prizes for Atelier Work," *Washington Post*, September 28, 1908. 6.

⁵⁵ "Miss Lawson Will Wed Mr. Wyeth," *Washington Post*, September 9, 1911, 7.

⁵⁶ "Improve British Embassy," *Washington Post*, July 13, 1910. 12.

⁵⁷ "New Chancery Ready November 1," *Washington Post*, September 13, 1914, R3.

⁵⁸ "Hospital Fund Ready," *Washington Post*, December 7, 1913, R3.

Municipal Center

Washington, DC

Name of Property

County and State

city's nine story Emergency Hospital, which stood within two blocks of the White House.⁵⁹ In 1916, Wyeth began plans for his most impressive commission to date, the Key Bridge.⁶⁰ Connecting the high bluffs of Georgetown above the C&O Canal to Roslyn, Virginia, the new bridge with high, repeating arches replaced the early nineteenth century Aqueduct Bridge as the major Potomac River crossing. During World War I, Wyeth served as a major in the Army Sanitary Corps, and spent several years in Switzerland after the war, possibly recovering from exhaustion from overwork.⁶¹

During the 1920s, Wyeth rebuilt his practice in Washington, designing elite residences and embassy buildings, but also seeking other types of commissions. In 1925, he was among a dozen architects named to assist Municipal Architect Albert Harris with a backlog of school design projects and he co-founded Allied Architects to undertake other public commissions.⁶² In 1926, he began a successful architectural partnership with Francis P. Sullivan.

Wyeth's career reached a peak of prosperity with the 1920s. In 1929, he designed a complex of magnificent Georgian-themed houses which adjoined Sir Edwin Lutyens' new British Embassy,⁶³ one of which became the home of arts patron Paul Mellon. That spring, Allied Architects was selected to design the new Longworth House Office Building, with Wyeth as principal partner.⁶⁴ When Allied Architects' unsolicited proposal for a Municipal Complex was accepted by the District Government in 1929, Wyeth was retained as chief design consultant.⁶⁵ At the same time, Wyeth and Sullivan were serving as consulting architects for a new wing for the Russell Senate Office Building, which was completed in 1933.⁶⁶

Wyeth might have retired after these commissions, but he lost a considerable portion of his wealth in the stock market crash and so continued to practice, now with a focus on public buildings.⁶⁷ In 1933, he became an employee of the Office of the Municipal Architect, and, in 1934, aged 64, he assumed its direction following the death of incumbent Albert Harris.⁶⁸ During his twelve year tenure from 1934 until 1946, he supervised the design of numerous schools and libraries, and a new National Guard Armory, as well as the Municipal Center Campus. Although he spoke of continuing to design public buildings, Wyeth enjoyed a long retirement after leaving

⁵⁹ "Rush New Hospital," *Washington Post*, November 23, 1913, R3. Also "Where the Sick and Injured Are Soon To Find Help," *Washington Post*, November 13, 1913, 14.

⁶⁰ Historic American Buildings Survey. "Gibson Fahnestock House, DC-259" (1978), 5.

⁶¹ "Busy Nathan C. Wyeth Designs the Capital's Buildings," *Washington Post*, January 7, 1940. E1.

⁶² "12 Named to Aid Harris," *Washington Post*, March 18, 1925, 2.

⁶³ "Small Group Plans Homes," *Washington Post*, October 8, 1929, 7.

⁶⁴ "New House Office Plans Completed," *Washington Post*, April 21, 1929. 9.

⁶⁵ "Allied Architects to Aid Center Plan," *Washington Post*, July 24, 1929. 5. See also "Individual Architects Employed on Center Plan," *Washington Post*, October 31, 1929. 10.

⁶⁶ "Russell Senate Office Building," Architect of the Capitol Website at <http://www.aoc.gov/cc/cobs/rsob.cfm>, accessed May 20, 2011.

⁶⁷ National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. —Sixteenth Street Historic District (Boundary Expansion)

⁶⁸ "Nathan Wyeth Will Become City Architect," *Washington Post*, January 12, 1934, 15.

Municipal Center

Washington, DC

Name of Property

County and State

the Office of the Municipal Architect in 1946. He died in Washington at age 93 in 1963. (Image 4L)

It is impossible to identify any architect's personal design contributions to the Municipal Center. Virtually all known plans, drawings, and blueprints that show the evolution of the campus are attributed to "the Office of the Municipal Architect," rather than to any individual designer. While Wyeth, after succeeding Harris as Municipal Architect, assumed responsibility for the overall design, the success of the project depended on the work of key partners and staff members.⁶⁹

While Wyeth's partners in Allied Architects appear in early photographs of the Municipal Center design staff at work, it is unclear that they played a large role in the project after 1929-30. Of them, Frederick V. (Fred) Murphy (1879-1958) had the deepest connection to Wyeth. In 1903, Murphy and Wyeth had worked as designers for the Office of the Supervisory Architect of the Capitol. In 1905, Murphy won the annual fellowship for study in France bestowed by the Washington Architecture Club, whose competitions committee included Nathan Wyeth. During his Paris sojourn, Murphy was admitted to the Ecole des Beaux Arts. After his graduation and return to the United States, he became an outstanding Catholic ecclesiastical architect, the founder and longtime dean of the architecture department at the Catholic University of America, holder of the Chevalier of the French Legion of Honor, and a member of the Commission on Fine Art from 1945 until 1950.

Edward W. Donn (1868-1953) was employed by the Office of the Architect of the Capitol before serving as chief designer for the Supervisory Architect of the Treasury from 1900 through 1902, a period which overlapped Frederick Murphy's employment and possibly Nathan Wyeth's.⁷⁰ After leaving the Office of the Supervisory Architect, Donn founded the firm of Wood, Donn & Deming with Waddy Wood, which endured until 1912. He was later quite active in professional affairs and designed upscale residences in a number of cities, but is most noted as a restoration architect specializing in Colonial American buildings.

George Burnap (1886-1938) was an influential landscape architect whose sudden death robbed him of the opportunity to have an impact on the Municipal Center campus' design. Burnap designed municipal park systems for numerous mid-size cities, as well as Meridian Hill Park in Washington and a major expansion of Riverside Park in Manhattan.

Rather than his partners in Allied Architects, Wyeth's most significant collaborators were members of the Municipal Center design staff. A 1930 photograph in the *Washington Evening Star* shows the project architectural team as Wyeth, Harris, Donn, and Murphy, along with

⁶⁹ While the Allied Architects partners and Municipal Architect Albert I. Harris are credited with the design of Wilson High School (1932-1935), it is also impossible to distinguish individual contributions to that project as well. See National Capital Planning Commission, Woodrow Wilson Senior High School Modernization Project, NCPC file 6971, online at http://www.ncpc.gov/DocumentDepot/Actions_Recommendations/2010May/Wilson_High_School_Modernization_Delegated_6971_May2010_.pdf, accessed September 1, 2013.

⁷⁰ Lee, 212.

Municipal Center

Washington, DC

Name of Property

County and State

William B. Harris and Arved I. Kundzin. In the accompanying photograph of the drafting staff, Kundzin and Harris have removed their suitcoats and unbuttoned their vests to stand with the draftsmen they supervised. While Harris' tenure on the staff was apparently short, Kundzin's contributions may have been outweighed only by Wyeth's.

Arved Kundzin (1891-1950) was a native of Dorpat, Estonia, who worked as an architect in Finland, Russia, and the Baltic States after attending the University of Riga in Latvia. He came to the United States in 1922 as Secretary to Latvian representative Charles Louis Seya, who was seeking diplomatic recognition for his newly-independent country.⁷¹ By 1923, he had settled in Washington, where *Boyd's District of Columbia Directory* listed him as a draftsman living in the Sheridan Circle area.

Before joining the District Government in 1927, Kundzin had numerous employers, including George Oakley Totten and the Baltimore firm of Archer and Allen. In 1924, he became partners with Gilbert Rodier (1890-1971) in a firm that produced drawings for the restoration of Arlington House.⁷² In 1926, Rodier & Kundzin's design for a Spanish-style bungalow was published in *American Architect and Architecture*. The firm was credited with the design for the Bulletin Building at 717 Sixth Street NW in 1928, although the primary designer was likely Rodier, whose brother was the client.⁷³

Kundzin's first known credited work with the Office of the Municipal Architect was a 1928 rendering of the John Marshall Place NW court in the Harris plan. (See Image 4E) Although he was periodically laid off from his District Government job, Kundzin continued to work on the Municipal Center through the 1930s. During one furlough in 1932, he may have worked directly for Allied Architects, as did his former partner Rodier.⁷⁴ In 1934, Kundzin was placed in charge of the Municipal Center design staff, a position which he held through the completion of construction in 1941. According to his long-time friend, the noted Washington photographer Volkmar Wetzel, Kundzin had overall responsibility for maintaining the aesthetic coherence of the Municipal Center and worked on the design of all the other Municipal Center buildings. During the war, he consulted on the design and construction of air raid shelters and was serving as chief of the design section for Municipal Architect Merrill Coe when he died of a sudden stroke in 1950.

Two other European émigrés who played major roles in designing the Municipal Center were Eric Menke (1901-1979), and Victor T. Givotovsky. Menke, an eccentric architect and muralist from Mannheim, Germany, was an architecture graduate of Yale University who later studied

⁷¹ *Current History*, Volume 15, (New York: The New York Times Company, 1922), 178.

⁷² http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/26646

⁷³ *American Architect and Architecture*, May 20, 1926, plate 116, 566-567. Referenced in National Register Nomination: The Bulletin Building, online at http://dchistoricsites.us/sites/default/files/Bulletin%20Building01072013_0000.pdf, accessed August 1, 2013.

⁷⁴ Rodier, Wyeth, Frank Upman, and Louis Justement are credited as primary designers of the Longworth House Office Building. See <http://www.aoc.gov/capitol-buildings/longworth-house-office-building>, accessed August 1, 2013

Municipal Center

Name of Property

Washington, DC

County and State

urban planning at MIT and engineering at George Washington University. He began his architectural career with the Philadelphia firm of Price & Walton, whose specialty was the restoration of Quaker meetinghouses.⁷⁵ A project at the Washington Friends Meetinghouse bought him to Washington in the late 1920s, and he joined the Municipal Center design staff shortly after its formation in 1930. Menke designed the center's plaza as well as a beautiful mosaic map of the District in the Municipal Center administration building's main lobby. After the Office of the Municipal Architect, he worked for the Zoning Commission until 1940, when he joined the Army Corps of Engineers. After retirement in the 1960s, he served as a member of the National Capital Planning Commission and was active in planning and preservation circles. At his death, he left his notable collection of thousands of books, maps, and prints to the Georgetown University library.⁷⁶

Victor T. Givotovsky (1893-1956) was a civil engineering graduate of MIT who had fled Russia via Siberia after the 1918 revolution. An expert in reinforced concrete construction, he had become chief of the structural engineering section of the Municipal Center design team by 1932.⁷⁷ At the time of his death, he was deputy director of the DC Department of Buildings and Grounds.

Other members of the Municipal Architect's staff who played important roles in the construction of the Municipal Center included Archie G. Hutson (1899-1957), a former draftsman who supervised the construction of all the Municipal Center buildings.⁷⁸ Jesse Ivey Cuthriell (1897-1978), an architect from Portsmouth, Virginia who joined the Office in the early 1930s, became noted for his renderings of the campus buildings, which were widely reproduced in the newspapers.

Stalemate and Beyond, 1930-1936

Through early 1931, the Municipal Center project appeared to be gathering critical mass, although Allied Architects' early proposals had been received negatively. The first, presented by Harris, Wyeth, Donn, and Murphy at the January 16, 1930 CFA meeting, was a revision and embellishment of the approved plan which moved the intersection of the unnamed avenue communicating with the Union Station Plaza and Pennsylvania Avenue to Four and a Half Street from Third Street NW. Its most notable attribute was a huge plaza with a fountain at its center, which extended almost 2000 feet from the south side of Pennsylvania Avenue opposite the Municipal Center tract through the present site of the National Gallery of Art. (Image 4J) Harris contended that orienting the Municipal Center to Pennsylvania Avenue and the plaza would provide "a more symmetrical plan and better frontage." However, CFA Chair Charles Moore chided Harris for abandoning the project's orientation toward Louisiana and Indiana Avenues

⁷⁵ "Price & Walton," online at http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/26646, accessed September 15, 2013.

⁷⁶ "Eric Menke, Architect and Planning Consultant," *Washington Post*; Aug 30, 1979; B14.

⁷⁷ "Economy May Halt City Center Work: Indefinite Postponement Is Foreseen." *Washington Post*; Mar 1, 1932; 19.

⁷⁸ "Archie Hutson Is Dead at 57." *Washington Post*; Aug 2, 1956; 16.

Municipal Center

Name of Property

Washington, DC

County and State

and Judiciary Square. Other members of the CFA and NCPC, as well as the Architect of the Capitol, termed the plaza out of scale and not compatible with existing plans for the Mall, and complained that implementing the plan would inevitably create delay. The proposal was immediately abandoned.⁷⁹

In October, 1930, the same team returned to the CFA with a revision that aligned the Municipal Center buildings with the axis of Pennsylvania Avenue, rather than B Street (now Constitution Avenue NW). The CFA again disapproved with the proposal, which it felt conflicted with the alignment of the Federal Triangle, and the Municipal Architect again reverted to the approved plan.⁸⁰ (Image 4K) The District Commissioners then commissioned a \$6,200 cardboard model by Ricci Studio of New York, which was to be on the same scale as the models for the Federal Triangle for comparative purposes.⁸¹

In early 1931, the District Commissioners appointed a working group composed of the Engineer-Commissioner, his assistants, the Municipal Architect, and his consultants to expedite and coordinate construction.⁸² A month later, newspapers hailed the Municipal Center architectural team's move to the Ford Building as "the formal beginning of the gigantic ... project," and announced plans to conduct test borings even before the District had acquired its full tract.⁸³

However, the remainder of the Hoover Administration bought the Municipal Center project more pitfalls than progress. As the depression took hold in 1931, tax receipts fell, the city's relief-related expenses soared, and funding evaporated. The District's accumulated surplus on deposit with the Treasury was exhausted by early 1932. In the District budgets for 1932-33, Congress had authorized the expenditure of approximately \$1,300,000 for grading, utility relocation, and the acquisition of the remaining land, which had been stalled for nearly a year.⁸⁴ However, President Hoover soon began diverting substantial portions of these funds to relief of the city's unemployed.⁸⁵

For a time, it seemed that an unwitting municipal real estate investment might provide the necessary construction funds. In the suddenly distant days of 1929, Republican Representative Simmons had proposed that the city commissioners sell the District Building to the federal

⁷⁹ "Municipal Center, 1927-1933" Extracts from the Minutes of the Commission on Fine Arts, 10-12.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 14.

⁸¹ "City Center Model Contract Let," *Washington Post*; Oct 29, 1930; 5. Unfortunately, the cardboard model was not delivered in the specified time, and the Municipal Center architectural team was forced to work all night to deliver a clay model for a key legislative hearing. See "Costly Cardboard Models, Delayed, Are Now Useless," *Washington Post*; Jan 24, 1931; 1.

⁸² "City Heads Approve Center Committee," *Washington Post*; Feb 4, 1931; 5.

⁸³ "Architect's Office Moves Tomorrow," *Washington Post*; Mar 1, 1931; M16, and "First Municipal Center Contract to Be Awarded," *Washington Post*; Mar 27, 1931; 4.

⁸⁴ Robert C. Albright. "President's Estimate of Fund to Run Capital Is \$47,880,228," *The Washington Post*; Dec 5, 1929; 1, and "Municipal Center Must Wait Years: Postponement Revealed by Donovan," *The Washington Post*, Mar 31, 1932; 1

⁸⁵ "\$600,000 Relief Here, Taken From Budget," *The Washington Post*; Mar 18, 1932; 1.

Municipal Center

Name of Property

Washington, DC

County and State

government to raise funds for the project.⁸⁶ However, when the commissioners held out for a high price, they were first advised that the federal government was entitled to recoup the proceeds as reimbursement for its contribution to construction costs during the Taft Administration, and later that they had no right to sell a building in which the federal government held equity.⁸⁷ Despite this discouraging response, proposals for the city to finance the Municipal Center by selling the District Building continued to be made by both city and federal officials for the rest of the Depression.⁸⁸

On April 30, 1932, the Office of the Municipal Architect announced that the drawings for Unit 1” of the Municipal Center Complex were complete. Any celebration was tempered by the rest of the announcement, which stated that:

Due to the fact that the commissioners... decided to abandon work temporarily on the construction of Unit No. 1 and the preparation of drawings for Unit #2, the office was closed ... and 28 employees were released from their position.⁸⁹

“Municipal Center Must Wait Years,” proclaimed news articles, which called the idea of a modern governmental complex “a fleeting mirage.”⁹⁰ The project received another blow just weeks before Franklin D. Roosevelt’s inauguration in March 1933, when Albert I. Harris, who had overseen the project since its inception, died of a heart attack.⁹¹ He was succeeded by Nathan C. Wyeth, who had become an employee of the Office of the Municipal Architect the previous year.

During 1933-1934, the years of the so-called “First New Deal,” the Municipal Center remained unfunded. The city’s repeated requests for construction money were refused by Congress, while the Public Works Administration, which was said to feel that Washington had already received its share of relief money, proved deaf to the contention that the project should be funded as a stimulus package for the industries of other states.⁹² Even when the city scaled back plans to an

⁸⁶ “Selling of District Building May Aid Municipal Center: Simmons,” *Washington Post*; Apr 25, 1929; 1.

⁸⁷ “Building Deal Off, District Is Loser: \$6,500,000 Out Of Pocket As Result Of Ruling,” *Washington Post*; Feb 3, 1933; 18.

⁸⁸ “Senator King Asks District Sell Building,” *Washington Post*; Nov 28, 1933; 13. Also “Editorial: Unwarranted Delay,” *Washington Post*; Dec 1, 1933; 6 discusses Senator King (D-Utah)’s proposal that the federal government buy the District Building to fund Municipal Center construction. “Plan to Sell City Building Is Revived,” *Washington Post*; Jan 18, 1934; 11 and “D.C. Building Again Offered For Sale to U.S.,” *Washington Post*; Nov 29, 1936; M16 describe similar plans from the District Commissioners.

⁸⁹ *Report of the Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia for 1932*, (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1932), 36.

⁹⁰ “City May Get It if Public Works Fund Is Ample,” *Washington Post*; Sep 10, 1933; 5.

⁹¹ “Albert Harris Dies of Heart Ailment,” *Washington Post*; Feb 25, 1933; 3.

⁹² See “Ickes Denies Funds for New City Buildings: Not Persuaded ... on Municipal Center,” *Washington Post*; Oct 8, 1933; 20, “Washington Has More Than Share Already, View of Chiefs,” *Washington Post*; Oct 10, 1933; 1, “District Work Shown as Aid to 28 States,” *Washington Post*; Nov 20, 1933; 13, “Civic

Municipal Center

Washington, DC

Name of Property

County and State

initial building to accommodate only the Police Court and again proposed selling the District Building to the federal government, no money was forthcoming.⁹⁴

Despite being mothballed, the Municipal Center project still clung to life in spirit. Arved Kundzin had constructed several studio-cabins at the Youghiogheny Forest Colony, a small artists' retreat on property owned by geologist Frank Reeves and his wife Lotte in Aurora, West Virginia. During his long layoffs from the Office of the Municipal Architect, Kundzin retreated to the colony, often with collaborators Eric Menke and Victor Givotovsky. Here, Volkmar Wetzel, then the colony's teenage caretaker, recalled, the colleagues conjured designs for the Municipal Center in the company of such kindred spirits as WPA muralist Robert Gates and sculptor Joe Goethe while eating communal meals at the Reeves' log cabin tavern.⁹⁵

At the same time, the dormant project retained the interest of key New Deal legislators. During the bleak early years of the Depression, the District began to discover an eventual champion in Democratic Representative "Battling Mary" Norton, a product of Frank Hague's Jersey City political machine who had become House District Committee chair in 1931. (Image 4L) In 1933, she expressed support for the District's application for federal funds for the Municipal Center courthouse, calling the existing buildings "deplorable" and "a disgrace to our government."⁹⁶ Nicknamed "the lady mayor of Washington," she later would become instrumental in funding many critical municipal projects, including schools and a children's tuberculosis hospital.

Although Norton's concerns did not translate into immediate funding, the Municipal Center was frequently evoked as a high priority by city officials and business leaders, in part because it promised economic stimulus in the Depression's bleakest days. In September, 1933, Arved Kundzin was recalled to duty for three months to review the existing plans and specifications.⁹⁷ With authorization from Secretary Ickes, Kundzin returned to work on a more open-ended basis to revise these plans in the fall of 1934.⁹⁸ The stimulus for this revival seemed to be the formation of a Municipal Center Committee during the fall of 1934 at the behest of the District Board of Commissioners President Melvin C. Hazen. Under the direction of the Engineer

Center Appeal to U.S. Again Likely: Commissioners Expected to Renew Request for Money," *Washington Post*; Nov 26, 1933; 13, and "Lump Sum Rise for City Fades; Center Doomed," *Washington Post*; Dec 12, 1934; 1 for examples of the many articles on this theme.

⁹³ James D. Secrest. "Congress Gives D.C. Financial New Deal, Makes Grant Without Fight," *Washington Post*. Aug. 22. 1937, 13.

⁹⁴ "Center 'Fragment' Work Is Suggested To Cost \$2,000,000." *Washington Post*; Feb 5, 1933; 18 and "A Home For The Courts," *Washington Post*; Dec 25, 1935; 6.

⁹⁵ "Scientists Gather at Forest Lodge," *Washington Post*, Aug 20, 1933; S2. See also <http://theintermountain.com/page/content.detail/id/557835/Driving-a-hot-geese-down-on-Christmas-Eve.html?nav=5286> <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/WPcap/2000-02/05/055r-020500-idx.html>

⁹⁶ "District Court Building," *The Washington Post*; September 23, 1933; 6.

⁹⁷ *Report of the Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia for 1936*, (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1936), 59.

⁹⁸ "Early Work On Municipal Center Seen: Ickes Approves Drafting of Plans," *Washington Post*; Apr 1, 1934; 11

Municipal Center

Name of Property

Washington, DC

County and State

Commissioner, this working group was to evaluate scaling down the project and simplifying its architecture. Hazen contended that the requirement that the Municipal Center harmonize with the Federal Triangle was essentially an unfunded federal mandate, and that, with a “less ornate design,” its construction could be financed by selling the southern squares in the tract to the federal government, which could then construct its own monumental structures to screen the district civic core from view.⁹⁹

However, these activities took place against a complicated backdrop. Earlier in 1934, the original Harris-era plan for twin monoliths sited in parallel with John Marshall Place had fallen under attack from another quarter. In March, Frederic A. Delano, chair of the National Park and Planning Commission and uncle of the president, had sent the District Commissioners and CFA Chair Charles Moore a lengthy memorandum protesting the acceptance of Harris’ original plan. By Delano’s account, the NCPC had agreed to this plan only because the CFA already had endorsed it, and Hoover Administration Engineer Commissioner John Gotwals had insisted that it be approved. In reality, the NCPC had been deeply concerned that the Harris plan blocked off traffic from both John Marshall Place and C Street NW, which might limit citizens’ access to government and isolate a six square block area from the cityscape. The NCPC also had considered Harris’ method for resolving the thirty foot difference in grade between D Street and Pennsylvania Avenue NW – a staircase at either end of a plaza – artificial and inconvenient, and the colonnaded building arcades on either side of John Marshall Place pretentious.

Delano announced that Harris, now one year dead, had failed to keep a commitment to reroute the C Street streetcar line, and the unwritten deal on which the NCPC’s approval was based was now null and void. Delano argued that the Municipal Center buildings should be of a “dignified but simple design of the late colonial or early American period,” that C Street should remain open to through traffic as the site’s most important axis and that John Marshall Place must provide vehicular access to the complex and a vista to the Hadfield Courthouse. To achieve these goals, Delano recommended dividing the Municipal Center into an individual building in each of the four squares that composed its site.¹⁰⁰

It is unclear what influence Delano’s memorandum had on the District Commissioners’ decision to review and revise Harris’ design. In a matter of weeks, Kundzin sent a set of nine schemes for the complex to the Engineer Commissioner. In November, 1934, the District Commissioners charged the Municipal Center Committee with surveying all department heads and reducing their original space requirements to the bare minimum to make construction affordable. In December, the Committee selected four schemes and forwarded them to the Engineer Commissioner with the survey results and a recommendation that “Scheme D represented the best possibilities for good architecture and for good functional planning.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ “Hazen Asks Less Ornate City Center: Recommends Simpler Buildings.” *Washington Post*; Nov 7, 1934; 18.

¹⁰⁰ Letter from Frederic A. Delano to Charles Moore, March 26, 1934. (Unpublished, memorandum attached), National Archives, RG 66, Box 48.

¹⁰¹ *Report of the Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia for 1936*, 59.

Municipal Center

Name of Property

Washington, DC

County and State

Scheme D represented a radical alteration of the Harris plan and corresponded with several elements in Delano's memorandum. Rather than distributing court buildings among the site's squares as Delano had implicitly suggested, Scheme D placed individual courthouses for the police, municipal, and juvenile courts in Judiciary Square. Scheme D retained D Street and a segment of Indiana Avenue as an east-west axis which separated the Municipal Center's judicial buildings from its administrative sector. It preserved the judicial sector's symmetry by situating the new courthouses on the square's boundaries and leaving a central visual axis terminated by Hadfield's Old District courthouse. By placing the longer axes of the block-long Police and Municipal Courthouses along Third and Fifth Streets, the scheme visually acknowledged the superior status of Hadfield's Courthouse and avoided diminishing Woods' handsome Court of Appeals. (Image 4M)

Scheme D's most radical departure eschewed the Harris plan's massive twin buildings facing each other across a courtyard-like John Marshall Place. Instead, it maintained C Street as a thoroughfare by placing a single monolithic Administration Building across John Marshall Place on the access of Indiana Avenue. (Image 4N) To make up for the deduction of John Marshall Place from the traffic pattern, Fourth and Fifth Streets NW were extended through the site to provide access to the Administration Building from all four sides.¹⁰² Although this scheme violated Delano's provision that the vista from the Mall to the Hadfield Courthouse be preserved, it addressed his requirement that the administration building be easily accessed by the public and tightly woven into the cityscape. (Image 4O)

With the District Commissioners' endorsement, echoed by the city's Board of Trade, and the NCPC's acceptance of the Scheme D plan, the Municipal Center project sputtered back into half-life.¹⁰³ In May 1935, the commissioners applied for Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works loans in excess of \$13 million dollars to construct public buildings, including the courthouses and a Recorder of Deeds Building. The Commissioners also authorized Municipal Architect Wyeth to hire a small staff of architects and engineers to design the courthouses, using the small balance of finds remaining from the 1929-1932 appropriations. In June, Wyeth consulted with the Architect of the Treasury on salary and staffing recommendations, and the Commissioners authorized a contract for soil test borings. In August, the CFA assigned all land in Judiciary Square south of F Street to the project and advised the Treasury Department, which was modifying the Pension Building, that F Street NW must be reconfigured to cross the square on a straight line.¹⁰⁴

When the "Roosevelt recession" of 1936 plunged the country back toward the depths of 1933, some members of the press and congress resentfully labeled the District a "boom town" which deserved no further aid than its burgeoning federal payroll.¹⁰⁵ However, this proved to be the

¹⁰² Ibid, 60.

¹⁰³ "Approval Given To Two Plans For City Center: Board of Trade Rejects Two Other Proposals," *Washington Post*, Feb 9, 1935; 5.

¹⁰⁴ *Report of the Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia for 1936*, 60.

¹⁰⁵ Federal employment undoubtedly helped fuel a one-third increase in the city's population during the 1930s. See Wentzel, 11-12.

Municipal Center

Name of Property

Washington, DC

County and State

year that federal funding made the first elements of the Municipal Center a reality. In early 1936, both the NCPC and CFA approved the proposed design and locations of the Judiciary Square courthouses.¹⁰⁶ In April, Congress passed a bill authorizing the District Government to purchase steam for the Municipal Center from the Central Heating Plant.

In June 1936, Congress appropriated \$1,000,000 of the \$1,500,000 estimated cost for the new Police Court, with the city to contribute the remainder.¹⁰⁷ That same month, the first renderings of the courthouse, which was anticipated to meet the District's needs for the next hundred years, appeared in the press.¹⁰⁸ The building, which was described as being of "early federal style" to harmonize with the Hadfield Courthouse had plaster walls, with oak paneling in the courtrooms and judges' chambers and black marble baseboards with cork floors throughout its public areas. Its plan was fully modern, with air conditioning, and separate banks of elevators for the public, prisoners, and judges. Its first floor was occupied by offices for legal staff and marshals, with a press room and banks of public telephones. Its second story was devoted to soundproof courtrooms, each with separate cell blocks for male and female prisoners, while similar courtrooms, judges' chambers, and a law library occupied its third floor.¹⁰⁹ It was not completed until early 1938 because of frequent strikes, some in sympathy with workers at other sites.¹¹⁰

Federal funds continued to flow to the Municipal Center even after Representative Norton was promoted to the chair of the House Labor Committee in 1937. In 1938, the city received \$2.2 million in appropriations and PWA loans to build Juvenile and Municipal Courthouses.¹¹¹ This news was soon dwarfed by front page articles announcing that a series of PWA grants and loans would fund the main Municipal Center building, once "relegated to the realm of myth by the depression."¹¹² The initial module to be constructed was the wing which would house the Metropolitan Police Headquarters.

Building the Municipal Center

1938 was the year in which the so-called "Administration Building," later known simply as the Municipal Center, became more than plans and sketches. However, despite a dozen years of deliberation, the project would pass through several wrenching transformations before the first pier was sunk or form set.

The first transformation, which had been hovering in the background for more than a year, involved yet another power struggle among federal and District commissioners. Since 1935,

¹⁰⁶ *Report of the Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia for 1936*, 69-72.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 72.

¹⁰⁸ "Police Court Building Plan Is Approved," *Washington Post*; Jul 8, 1936; X13.

¹⁰⁹ "Court Building Will Have Most Modern Features," *Washington Evening Star*, November 30, 1936. 1.

¹¹⁰ "Garnett Wins Suite in New Police Building: U.S. Attorney to Have Only One Courtroom Under Compromise," *Washington Post*; Nov 21, 1937; 12.

¹¹¹ "D.C. Building Projects Win \$2,800,000: Money Is Allotted for Courts," *The Washington Post*; Jul 14, 1938; 1.

¹¹² James D. Secret. "District's Municipal Center Now Raised From Realm of Myth," *The Washington Post*; Sep 4, 1938; B7.

Municipal Center

Name of Property

Washington, DC

County and State

Nathan Wyeth and his architectural team had been developing the so-called Scheme D endorsed by the District Commissioners, which included a single administrative building spanning John Marshall Place south of Indiana Avenue. A June 1938 memorandum prepared for Wyeth's signature by Kundzin enumerated the practical reasons for this decision, which echoed many of the concerns voiced in Frederic A. Delano's 1934 letter. The original Harris plan that required closing C Street as well as removing vehicles from John Marshall Place threatened devastating traffic tie-ups. Bridging C Street or dividing the Municipal Center into separate buildings on each of the four squares, as Frederic A. Delano had recommended, was deemed impractical. When, in the depths of the depression, the commissioners considered selling the tract's southernmost squares to the federal government, the Municipal Architect had determined that moving the courthouses to Judiciary Square and constructing a single administrative building in the two squares north of C Street could both accommodate the space needs of the city government and provide parking for 600 cars in lots at either end of the site.

Now, in the summer of 1938, with millions of dollars in PWA funds contingent on starting construction by January 1, 1939, the CFA and the tentatively-allied NCPC and District Commissioners were at loggerheads and progress had stalled. The Kundzin-Wyeth memorandum implied that this was the product of innocent bureaucratic confusion. The Office of the Municipal Architect had believed that both the CFA and NCPC at least informally had approved the Wyeth-Kundzin plan in 1936 and continued to refine it. However, when presented with the Municipal Architect's drawings in April 1937, CFA Chair Charles Moore had protested the closing of John Marshall Place because the administration building would block the view of the Hadfield Courthouse from the Mall. (Image 4P) However, the CFA apparently had neither advised the NCPC that it had approved only the Judiciary Square courthouse plan in 1936, nor that it had rejected the Wyeth-Kundzin administration building scheme in 1937. Apparently innocent of this conflict, the NCPC had endorsed the Wyeth-Kundzin plan formally in the spring of 1938.

Charles Moore had retired, but, when he learned of the NCPC's decision, current CFA Chair Gilmore D. Clarke became equally adamant about preserving the visual corridor between mall and courthouse. The result was a three-cornered district-federal controversy, couched in the polite but pointed formal language of the time, which raged all summer as the clock ticked toward the PWA's deadline for starting construction. The Office of the Municipal Architect stuck to its guns, contending that a divided Municipal Center would be impractical and uneconomical. The Wyeth-Kundzin Memorandum opined that "the scale of the Old Court Building is such that it demands a more intimate scale than the grand vista opening on the mall" envisioned by the CFA, and Hadfield's courthouse was already appropriately framed by the trees and new court houses on Judiciary Square. The memorandum belittled Moore's passionate belief that the vista from Pennsylvania Avenue was of any practical benefit. For anyone who sought to view the courthouse from the south, "the heavy automobile traffic on Constitution and Pennsylvania Avenues makes the enjoyment of this vista a very hazardous undertaking, even if the old elms, now blocking it, were sacrificed."¹¹³

¹¹³ Nathan Wyeth and Arved I. Kundzin. "Memorandum Explaining the Development of the Plans for Municipal Center," (June, 1938?), (undated and unpublished) National Archives, RG 66, Box 47, 2.

Municipal Center
Name of Property

Washington, DC
County and State

A memorandum of July 12, 1938 from CFA Secretary H.P. Caemmerer summarized the commission's position, quoting Charles Moore's 1937 letter to Wyeth, which had included the charge that "the blocking of John Marshall Place would be nothing short of an act of vandalism that would bring continued reprobation on its originators."¹¹⁴ Caemmerer enumerated the Commission's objections to the Wyeth-Kundzin plan, stating that blocking John Marshall Place would be a "serious and unnecessary mutilation of the L'Enfant Plan, convey disrespect to the memory of the great chief justice, obscure an architectural touchstone which had inspired the style of the Federal Triangle, and prevent the Municipal Center from linking the Union Station Plaza and the Capitol Grounds as intended."¹¹⁵

Gilmore Clarke spent July orchestrating a correspondence barrage with present and former CFA members. From his retirement home in Washington State, the still-influential Charles Moore wrote that a Municipal building that straddled John Marshall Place was "a serious menace to the orderly development of Washington." In a cover letter for Caemmerer's July 12th memorandum to the commission's members, Clarke suggested that each architect member write Frederic A. Delano to express opposition the Municipal Architect's plan. He also noted that he had discussed the issue with William A. Delano, a partner in the New York firm of Delano & Aldrich who had played a prominent role in designing the Federal Triangle. He reported that William Delano, who was Franklin D. Roosevelt's nephew as well as Frederic Delano's grand-nephew, would not endorse the old plan placing a monolithic building in parallel with John Marshall Place because of its gradient, but had agreed with Clarke's proposal that the administrative building be split into two buildings separated by that street.¹¹⁶ This plan was essentially a subset of Frederic Delano's 1934 proposal that the Municipal Center be divided into individual buildings set in each of the site's four squares. Meanwhile, CFA Secretary Caemmerer requested counts of traffic from the DC Department of Highways, and implied that the commission would re-evaluate its approval of the closing of John Marshall Place to vehicles, as he believed that, because the building of the National Gallery had now blocked Sixth Street NW at the Mall, more traffic was diverted to it.¹¹⁷

Despite the pressure exerted by Clarke, Nathan Wyeth, with the backing of the District Commissioners, continued to advocate for a single administration building spanning John Marshall Place. He found an ally in Frederic Delano, who, after receiving the Wyeth-Kundzin memorandum at the June 17th NCPC meeting, had written to Caemmerer promising to send him the meeting minutes, which:

¹¹⁴ H.P. Caemmerer. "Memorandum Regarding the Municipal Center," (July 12, 1938) (Unpublished). National Archives, RG 66, Box 47, 1.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 2.

¹¹⁶ Clarke's handwritten draft of this letter underlines the insular, clubby world of high echelon public architecture, with its reference to meeting "Billy Delano" at the grounds New York World's Fair, where Clarke served as chief landscape architect.

¹¹⁷ H.P. Caemmerer to Henry Shepley, (Unpublished letter), July 23, 1938, National Archives, RG 66, Box 47

Municipal Center

Name of Property

Washington, DC

County and State

We are hoping [might contain] reasons, which may not have been fully presented to your commission, your commission might be inclined to agree with the wisdom of such course from a planning standpoint.¹¹⁸

On July 23rd, Delano responded to letters from several CFA architects by stating that the NCPC had endorsed the Wyeth plan after “long debate” because “we though the closing of C Street was very inadvisable” and “the great difference in grade between Pennsylvania Avenue and D Street made the treatment that was originally proposed almost impossible.” However, Delano left Clarke an opening by stating that the NCPC would restudy the plan “in the light of any new data that may be bought up.”¹¹⁹

After an all day joint CFA-NCPC meeting in Washington examined the issue on July 29th, Delano telegrammed Clarke with the news that, while the NCPC had sustained its original endorsement of the Wyeth-Kundzin plan, District Engineer Commissioner Colonel Dan I. Sultan had agreed to have Wyeth prepare a “restudy” of the problem. William A. Delano was also named a member of the working group of CFA architects and Office of the Municipal Architect staff charged with the new study. Apparently Nathan Wyeth continued to advocate for his plan.¹²⁰

Clarke then advised Delano that, on August 10th, the CFA would hold a special meeting in Manhattan, to which Wyeth would be invited “so that he may present his new studies.”¹²¹ The week-and-a-half before this meeting saw frenzied activity by both the Municipal Architect and the District leadership. Engineer Commissioner Sultan advised Clarke that he was concerned not only about the cost of the CFA-favored plan but the threat to the project’s PWA appropriation if the disagreement delayed construction beyond January 1, 1939. With his letter, he enclosed a copy of a memorandum addressed to Wyeth, advising him that “the matter of the location, general layout, and appearance of the Municipal Center is, as you know, in a bad tangle.” Sultan’s memorandum instructed Wyeth to prepare renderings showing the Municipal Center as two separate buildings connected by tunnels in the northern squares and a flight of steps on John Marshall Place between C and D Streets NW. At the same time, Wyeth was to prepare a full cost-benefit analysis comparing the two schemes that also incorporated the costs of further delay.

On August 5th, Presiding District Commissioner Hazen wrote to Clarke, urging that “the views of the citizens who pay taxes for municipal improvements and expenses should be considered in matters of this kind,” and complaining that, as “rough” plans for the Wyeth-Kundzin scheme had been in circulation for years, the District’s attempts to implement it should hardly be a surprise to anyone. Clarke’s exact reaction to this populist plea is not recorded, but it might be surmised

¹¹⁸ Frederic A. Delano to H.P. Caemmerer (Unpublished memorandum), June 18, 1938, RG 66, Box 47

¹¹⁹ Frederic A. Delano to William Lamb and Frederic A. Delano to Henry A. Shepley (Unpublished letters), July 23, 1938, National Archives, RG 66, Box 47,

¹²⁰ H.P. Caemmerer to Henry A. Shepley (Unpublished letter) , July 23, 1938, National Archives, RG 66, Box 47,

¹²¹ Gilmore D. Clarke to Frederic A. Delano, (Unpublished letter), July 30, 1938, National Archives, RG 66, Box 47,

Municipal Center

Name of Property

Washington, DC

County and State

from a handwritten note that he attached to a clipped *Washington Evening Star* article that same day. The brief and noncommittal announcement of the agenda for the planned Manhattan meeting had quoted Caemmerer, and Clarke irately informed the commission's secretary that:

I don't like this statement. It is the kind of thing that creates controversies among people who are totally unqualified to discuss the matter intelligently. We must keep out of the press...¹²²

The outcome of the Manhattan meeting was predictable, with the District was represented only by Sultan's two assistants and Wyeth. The District Government representatives estimated the costs of abandoning existing plans as over \$400,000, with a \$10,000 greater annual operating cost for two buildings, and an increased risk of losing the PWA funds from planning delays and repeated the points made in the Wyeth-Kundzin Memorandum.¹²³ On August 12th, Clarke advised Hazen that the CFA had endorsed Wyeth's restudy, which split the Administration Building into two structures separated by a 250 foot vista across John Marshall Place, and urged the commissioners to implement this plan. If it was intended to persuade, Clarke's letter was a strange blend of condescension and near-insult. It mingled reassurances that the CFA's architect members were "men of large experience in their profession covering many years" who believed that the new plan "was more pleasing" than the "uninteresting" plan favored by the Municipal Architect and commissioners. Fortunately these "men of large experience" were divorced from petty and ephemeral local concerns, for:

If practical and economic considerations, as stated by the Assistant Engineer Commissioners, had been the governing factors, Washington would not be the beautiful National Capital that it is today... We must not let future generations blame us for deliberately making mistakes and in the opinion of this Commission, it is never too late to change an architectural plan if a lasting good will be accomplished.¹²⁴

However, the CFA's distrust of local capabilities did not originate with Clarke. As former Chair Charles Moore had confided in his July letter to Clarke:

Some day before very long, the District will be managed as a function of the general government. It has long outgrown the District Commissioners. There's not a man in the District eligible for a commissioner whose mind is big enough for the job. It was bad in my day. It is worse now – much worse.¹²⁵

¹²² Gilmore D. Clarke to H.P. Caemmerer. Handwritten note of August 5, 1938 attached to undated *Washington Evening Star* article "Municipal Center on Arts Agenda," National Archives, RG 66, Box 47

¹²³ District of Columbia Government. "Relative to Change in Plans Resulting in the Opening of John Marshall Place from C Street to Indiana Avenue," (Unpublished memorandum), August 1938. RG 66, Box 47

¹²⁴ Gilmore D. Clarke to Melvin C. Hazen, (Unpublished letter), August 12, 1938, RG 66, Box 48

¹²⁵ Charles Moore to Gilmore D. Clarke, (Unpublished letter), July 23, 1938, National Archives, RG 66, Box 47

Municipal Center

Name of Property

Washington, DC

County and State

At this point, the project was stalemated, with the CFA and NCPC in conflict, and the District Commissioners requiring approval to spend their appropriation. However, on August 17th, Wyeth advised Caemmerer that he had learned that President Roosevelt had sided with his nephew rather than his uncle and upheld the CFA, thus closing the discussion.¹²⁶ This development was not announced publically, and discussion of the issue continued in the press, until September 14th, when Interior Secretary and PWA Administrator Harold Ickes announced that he had personally resolved the dispute by backing the CFA plan.¹²⁷ Wyeth had meanwhile won what seemed a minor consolation prize when the CFA agreed to reduce the width of the John Marshall Place vista from 250 to 230 feet to accommodate twin buildings. This became the site of Eric Menke's plaza with its staircase flanked by splendid bas reliefs. Significantly, the PWA simultaneously increased its construction grant to \$5,700,000.¹²⁸ (Images 4Q and 4R)

Ostensibly the CFA won the Battle of John Marshall Place. But, when Nathan Wyeth published the final site plan for the Municipal Center in the September 1939 issue of *Pencil Points*, it became clear that the real victor was Frederic A. Delano. Delano (1863-1953), a successful railroad president who had played an important role in the city planning of Chicago and New York, had proved to be the antithesis of the stereotypically ineffectual gentleman dilettante planner. Wyeth's final scheme showed a building in each square of the tract, with C Street open to traffic.¹²⁹ Virtually the only provision from Delano's 1934 letter not realized was keeping John Marshall Place open to traffic, a position he had apparently abandoned by the time the NCPC approved the Wyeth-Kundzin Plan in 1938. Although Delano and Wyeth had differed sharply on the question of the single administration building, there was enough overlap and seeming linkage in the timing of their efforts to suggest some sort of long-term alliance.

From that point on, the Municipal Center project moved forward rapidly. (Images 4S and 4T) Front page stories, feature articles, and construction photographs became staples in each of the city's five daily newspapers. The District Commissioners determined that the East Building would be erected first, selecting the DMW Company of Brooklyn as general contractor.¹³⁰ In addition to the Police Department headquarters, it was to house elements of the Recorder of Deeds and Welfare Agency Offices, the Vehicle and Traffic, Fire, Playground and Insurance Departments, the Weights, Measures, and Markets, Minimum Wage Divisions, Parole, Alcoholic Beverage Control, and the Barber and Beautician Boards. The West Building was to be devoted to the Commissioners' offices, the municipal engineering and surveyor's offices, the Health Department, and a variety of fiscal and legal functions.¹³¹

¹²⁶ H.P. Caemmerer to Henry A. Shepley, (Unpublished Memorandum). August 18, 1938, National Archives, RG 66, Box 47

¹²⁷ Ickes Orders Twin-Building D.C. Center: Structure to Be Split, "*The Washington Post*; Sep 15, 1938; X13.

¹²⁸ "DC Given Millions to Build 'City Hall,'" *Washington Daily News*. August 30, 1938.

¹²⁹ By this time, the Municipal Center Campus plan included a Central Library in Square 491 and a Municipal Auditorium in Reservation 10, which was never built.

¹³⁰ "Municipal Center Contract Let," *Washington Evening Star*, August 14, 1938.

¹³¹ "Municipal Center Garages Planned for 432 Autos," *Washington Evening Star*, October 1938.

Municipal Center

Name of Property

Washington, DC

County and State

In 1939, Wyeth, in collaboration with the CFA, began the process of selecting art for the building and its adjacent plaza. Ultimately the staircase ascending from the plaza to Indiana Avenue was flanked by bas reliefs by Lee Lawrie and John Gregory. Ceramic tile murals for the building's twin interior courts were selected by a jury, which selected Hildreth Meiere's "Health and Welfare" for the east court and Wayland Gregory's "Public Safety" for the west. A spectacular tile mosaic map of the District of Columbia was created for the floor of the main C Street lobby by Eric Menke.

Construction of the Municipal Center took almost two years, with the first office staffs moving into the building on May 19, 1941. By then, events had far outstripped planners' expectations. Half the building was to be occupied by War Department employees from the Quartermasters' Corps, and the only District agencies to be accommodated were the Police, Traffic, Refuse, and Fire Departments, along with the Department of Health Laboratory.¹³²

Two other Municipal Center buildings had been funded by the PWA in 1940, but their construction was delayed as materials were diverted to defense projects. The Recorder of Deeds Building, which replaced the old Police Court at the corner of Sixth and D Streets NW was completed according to its original plan in 1943. The Central Library at 499 Pennsylvania Avenue NW in Square 491 was less fortunate. (Image 4U) Only one of the library's six modules was to be built initially, and, after Pearl Harbor, this fragment was allocated a low construction priority. Although ground had been broken at approximately the same time as the Recorder of Deeds Building, construction of the library began only after the District Commissioners agreed to lend it to the War Emergency Board to be used as office space for the war's duration.

Epilogue

During the late 1940s, the city budget was strained by responding to needs unmet in wartime and, during the 1950s, by suburban flight and de-urbanization. The result was that the Municipal Center construction remained incomplete, and Squares 491 and Reservation 10 eventually passed out of the District Government's hands. However, rather than returning to strictly commercial use, this land was remained destined for a variety of governmental and cultural purposes.

Reservation 10, slated for a Municipal Auditorium in Wyeth's 1939 plan, was purchased by the federal government and utilized for Louis Justement's Court of Appeals (1950), a building which takes its lines from the Municipal Center administration building.

The remaining modules of the Central Library were never constructed in Square 491. Known as the "Library Annex", the existing building was retrofitted as awkward office space for the Library Board and other city agencies, including the Redevelopment Land Agency. In 1971, the Mies van der Rohe-designed Martin Luther King Library opened in midtown, and the Library Annex became surplus space. With the neighboring Ford Building, which survived until 1979, it was demolished to make way for the Canadian Embassy, erected in the mid-1980s.

¹³² "3 Agencies Move to New D.C. Center," *Washington Post*; May 8, 1941; 5. The article referred to furniture being moved into the building, Office staffs followed a week later.

Municipal Center

Name of Property

Washington, DC

County and State

In 1961-1963, the Employment Security Building, which was not a component of the original Municipal Center plan, was erected at Sixth Street and Pennsylvania Avenue NW on land donated to the federal government by the District. The building, which housed both federal and municipal employment services, was designed by the firm of Class and Riggs in a rather stripped International style.¹³³ It was demolished without fanfare in 2003 and its site became the location of the Newseum, a mixed use project that centers on a privately-operated museum whose presence on the site was regarded as a civic amenity by the District Government.

Although the District continued to request construction funds as late as 1956, the West Building of the Municipal Center was never built. In 1976-78, the DC Superior (now Moultrie) Courthouse was constructed on its site.¹³⁴

The East Building, long simply known as the Municipal Center, has continued in service as city office space since its dedication in 1941. In recent years, it has served the administrative and investigative divisions of the Metropolitan Police Department as well as the Department of Motor Vehicles. On November 22, 1994, a suspect in a triple murder case entered the building and fatally shot FBI agents Martha Dixon Martinez and Michael J. Miller, as well as Metropolitan Police Sergeant Henry J. Daly in the Cold Case Squad Room. The building was renamed in Sergeant Daly's honor in 1995.

Architectural Style and the Municipal Center

From its earliest plans, Municipal Center was to “compliment” the “Greek Revival” Hadfield Courthouse, as well as the neoclassical Federal Triangle to its Southwest.¹³⁵ However, the meaning of this aesthetic edict evolved considerably during the fifteen years between its initial design and final construction. In the late 1920s, its basic premise was questioned by some District residents, who recommended that municipal buildings be colonial revival in style to differentiate them from the prevailing federal neoclassicism.¹³⁶ However, Albert Harris, who advocated the colonial revival style for schools and libraries, oversaw the design of a Municipal Center with protruding porticos, classical columns, and triangular pediments that evoked the Federal Triangle buildings under construction a few blocks away.¹³⁷ (Image 4V)

The Allied Architect designs that followed Harris' plans of 1926-1928 were also neoclassical, incorporating a long colonnade of classical columns in finished stone above a rusticated story of repeating columns along John Marshall Place and classically-columned porticos as signature features. The 1935-1938 Scheme D renderings eliminate these plans' fussiest elements, such as

¹³³ “Employment Office Is Dedicated Here,” *Washington Post*; Oct 24, 1963; B2.

¹³⁴ Eugene L. Meyer, “D.C. Courthouse Is Built To Foil Bombers, Killers: Courthouse Plans Stress Top Security,” *Washington Post*; Aug 25, 1976; B1.

¹³⁵ “Five Experts Begin Civic Center Plans,” *The Washington Post*; Jan 5, 1930; 1.

¹³⁶ Groves W Ayers. “Let Municipal Center Buildings Be of Colonial Design,” *The Washington Post*; Nov 27, 1929; 6.

¹³⁷ Volkmar Wentzel. “Washington Landmark,” *The Washington Post*, February 5, 2000, A18. Accessed at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/WPcap/2000-02/05/055r-020500-idx.html>, October 1, 2012.

Municipal Center

Washington, DC

Name of Property

County and State

the classical columns, but retain such neoclassical features as the pronounced central porticos.
(Image 4W)

Nathan Wyeth's June 1938 memorandum to the CFA perhaps overstates the case when it suggests that the original Harris design scheme was "abandoned" in 1932 when the project was mothballed. However, the architectural style of the Municipal Center underwent a tremendous transformation between Kundzin's 1931 rendering and the Municipal Center, as built in 1938-41. The Municipal Center, along with the Recorder of Deeds and Central Library buildings, exemplifies the Classical Moderne style, which mixed stylized art deco ornamentation with abstract versions of classical elements as prominent, patterned cornices, and the sharp-edged, vertical rectilinear massing that architectural historian David Gebhard dubbed "Zigzag Moderne."¹³⁸ (Images 4X and 4Y) As Gebhard and Thomas Martinson have noted, the Classical Moderne could offer a "near-perfect compromise between the dignity and reserve of the classical and the desire for modernness."¹³⁹

The Municipal Center's evolution to Classical Moderne can be traced from a memorandum Kundzin wrote in June 1935 describing a decision to "simplify" the facades of the Police and Municipal Courts through Wyeth's feature article about the Municipal Center project in the September 1939 issue of *Pencil Points*, the magazine of the American Institute of Architects. The original plans for the three Municipal Center courthouses echoed the classically-columned porticos of the Hadfield and Court of Appeals Courthouses. Kundzin's memorandum, written less than a month after Wyeth received permission to re-staff the project, stated that, for the Police and Municipal Courthouses' main facades, "the central projecting motive has been abandoned in favor of a flat wall treatment, which makes for greater simplicity, and helps to accentuate the end pavilions." Because these buildings' longer axes ran parallel with the east and west boundaries of Judiciary Square, it was felt that protruding porticos on their main facades would create "a strongly emphasized cross-axis [that] might be disturbing." In addition, flat walls would allow a distribution of windows would preserve visual symmetry between the Police Court, whose courtrooms were to have four windows each, and the Municipal Court, whose courtrooms would each have three windows. Kundzin also indicated that studies had been prepared to show the courthouses with and without arches, a prominent feature of buildings in the earlier Harris design.¹⁴⁰

In his 1939 *Pencil Points* article, Wyeth admitted that the first Municipal Center building, the Police Court of 1936-1938, "departed to some from the established style" of Hadfield's and Woods' courthouses, although "it carries the lines throughout and is harmonious in treatment."¹⁴¹ The Police Court, whose main façade faces Judiciary Square, eschews both arches and protruding central porticos. It presents such elements of the earlier courthouses as massive Doric

¹³⁸ David Gebhard. "The Moderne in the U.S., 1920-1941" in *Architectural Association Quarterly*. (July, 1970) (London: The Architectural Association), 9-13

¹³⁹ David Gebhard and Thomas Martinson. *A Guide to the Architecture of Minnesota* (Minneapolis; University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 31.

¹⁴⁰ Arved Kundzin. Memorandum of June 17, 1935, (Unpublished), National Archives, RG 66, Box 47

¹⁴¹ Nathan C. Wyeth. "Notes on the New Municipal Center," *Pencil Points*, (New York: American Institute of Architects, September 1939) 580.

Municipal Center

Name of Property

Washington, DC

County and State

columns, end porticos, and a row of Palladian windows on the main courtroom level. Yet, on its rear Fifth Street façade, a level of abstraction has crept in. Here the Doric columns have become inset, square pilasters, with stylized capitals and bases.

Wyeth described the 1938 Juvenile and Municipal Court buildings as “companion buildings” balancing the 1936 Police Court and 1910 Court of Appeals across the square.¹⁴² Situated just east of the Court of Appeals on E Street NW, the front facade of the Juvenile Court necessarily echoes the Court of Appeals’ Ionic portico beneath a triangular pediment. The Municipal Court, however, corresponds closely to the Police Court, lacking a central portico and other neoclassical detail.

The courthouses’ abstraction of classical forms echoes that of the Apex Building, the final Federal Triangle structure, built during the same period. Designed in neoclassic style by Edward Bennett, almost all its “typical Beaux-Arts affinity for decorative detailing” was stripped before construction by order of Federal Emergency Administrator of Public Works Harold Ickes in 1935.¹⁴³ Like Wyeth’s courthouses, the Doric columns of its portico, which forms the point of the Triangle, are abstractly echoed by the square columns of its Constitution and Pennsylvania Avenues facades.

However, it is the Municipal Center building itself that fully illustrates the adoption of the Classical Moderne style, starting with its refine ziggurat profile. Wyeth’s 1939 *Pencil Points* article had included a rendering of the 1935-1938 design discarded after Franklin D. Roosevelt sided with the CFA on the matter of blocking John Marshall Place. Although considerable streamlining had taken place since the Kundzin rendering of 1931, the monolithic Municipal Center administration building’s design had repeated the Hadfield-Woods courthouse plan of a protruding center portico flanked by wings terminating in smaller protruding porticos. In contrast, the twin structures in the final design from late 1938 eschewed this dominant portico plan in favor of facades with varying planes on their north and west elevations and much less conspicuously extruded central sections on their south and east facades. Their purest classical elements were small side porch-like porticos which faced each other across John Marshall Place, which seem a sort of quotation that reinforced the refinement and abstraction of these classical forms elsewhere. Complex repeating geometric patterns which suggest a stratum of seashells and humanoid forms traced their cornice lines. Individual windows in vertical ribbons incised between strips of façade create the appearance of columns, whose inscribed patterns evoke capitals, perhaps even suggesting Corinthian acanthus leaves. Other Moderne motifs included floral-patterned spandrels and extensive use of such machine age materials as polished aluminum. With the sensation of verticality from its window-ribbons, its sharp angles, as well as its abstract residual porticos, the Municipal Center building is an outstanding civic application of “Classical Moderne.”

The stylistic evolution of the Municipal Center from neoclassicism to Classical Moderne was undoubtedly product of many factors. Certainly the stripping of ornament dovetailed with the

¹⁴² Ibid, 580.

¹⁴³ Gurney, 340.

Municipal Center

Washington, DC

Name of Property

County and State

District Commissioners' 1934 mandate to produce a less ornate and more economical design, and Frederic Delano's disparagement of the early plans' colonnade. In a sense, Classical Moderne styling allowed the Municipal Center to echo the neoclassical detailing of the Hadfield Courthouse on a budget through abstraction. However, this shift in architectural style also suggests a revolutionary shift in political relationships.

Although the Roosevelt Administration built or contributed financially to the construction of 125,000 public buildings in a wide variety of styles,¹⁴⁴ its signature architecture style is fittingly nicknamed for its major public works agency.¹⁴⁵ The Classical Moderne architectural style was sometimes dubbed "PWA Moderne" because it became so closely associated with New Deal civic buildings. Certainly "Moderne" itself was an architectural vessel that could hold contradictory symbolic content; given its employment by both the New Deal and Mussolini. However, American "Classical Moderne" civic architecture has been described as an evocation of tradition through its incorporation of classical forms, modernity through these forms' abstraction, and the power of the state through its monumental scale. The balance between these elements made it an apt visual metaphor for the New Deal, whose "liberal reforms... conserved and protected capitalism"¹⁴⁶ and its traditional values, while it sought to "create a modern administrative state that could manage the social and economic consequences of an urbanized, industrial economy."¹⁴⁷

Political historian Richard M. Flanagan has noted that the New Deal, whose coalition depended on urban blue-collar whites and African-Americans, sought to work in direct partnership with city governments, avoiding obstructionist state legislatures by putting centralized planning services and financial resources directly in their hands. Although its citizens could not vote and it lacked an intervening state legislative layer, the District of Columbia presented a special showcase for this active and interventionist relationship through its tremendous symbolic significance as the national capital. The Municipal Center campus and its main Municipal Center Building are direct products of this partnership, but they also present a deeper symbolic statement about the New Deal and the city.

A New Deal civic building that likely exerted influence on the Municipal Center was Paul Cret's Federal Reserve Building, erected on Constitution Avenue in 1937. Cret, who attended the Ecole des Beaux Arts at the same time as Wyeth, designed a building that utilized the classical

¹⁴⁴ Michael Hiltzik. "What the New Deal Accomplished," online at http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/history_lesson/2011/10/new_deal_accomplishments_do_conservatives_who_attack_the_new_dea.html, accessed March 11, 2013.

¹⁴⁵ For example, Elizabeth Grossman. "Paul Cret and The Federal Reserve Board Building: A Case Study in Architectural Politics during the New Deal," *Revue française d'études américaines*, 2004/4 no 102, 15 makes the case that the "modern classical" became the signature style for the Office of the Supervisory Architect of the Treasury during the New Deal.

¹⁴⁶ For example, Barton J. Bernstein. "The New Deal: The Conservative Accomplishments of Liberal Reform," in Barton J. Bernstein, editor. *Towards A New Path: Dissenting Views in American History*, (New York: Vantage, 1967) 39.

¹⁴⁷ Richard M. Flanagan. "Roosevelt, Mayors and the New Deal Regime: The Origins of Intergovernmental Lobbying and Administration." *Polity*, Volume XXXI, Number 3, (Spring 1999), 417.

Municipal Center

Name of Property

Washington, DC

County and State

grammar of “line, proportion, and scale” while eschewing the classical vocabulary of triangular pediments and conventional orders.¹⁴⁸ His design featured a center portico with squared Attic piers, whose incised, vertical ribbon-windows cut its highly-symmetrical façade into piers suggesting a colonnade. As Elizabeth Grossman notes, this Moderne architectural aesthetic symbolically expressed the revised political and relationships proposed by the New Deal.¹⁴⁹ Cret’s building expressed the New Deal aspiration for the Federal Reserve to be independent of the Treasury Department, housed in a neoclassical building. The District of Columbia Municipal Complex expresses the importance of the city to the New Deal, and a break with the traditional political relationships symbolized by the neoclassicism of the Federal Triangle. Though no one suggested at the time that the choice of “Classical Moderne” for the Municipal Center Building was intended as a deliberate ideological message, it would have been difficult to stand near the corner of 6th and D Streets NW and looked west to the Federal Triangle and east to the Municipal Center and not sense the contrast suggested by Grossman.

Attribution of the Municipal Center’s stylistic evolution to any particular individual is difficult, particularly because records were largely dissipated when the Office of the Municipal Architect was disestablished in 1952. Albert L. Harris indisputably played a major role as the original overseer of the project and its initial design. Nathan Wyeth’s influence may in fact predate his formal involvement in the project, as he was advising Harris on other design matters as early as 1925. Wyeth was also a master of the sort of governmental neoclassicism that characterized the Municipal Center design prior to 1935, as evidenced by his work on the House office buildings. While Wyeth oversaw the project through radical redesigns to its eventual completion, Arved Kundzin seems to have been deeply involved in its design for an equally long period. It is tempting to speculate whether Wyeth’s nearly fifteen years’ residence in Europe may have made him more appreciative of the talents of such emigre architects as Kundzin and Eric Menke. In the end, Harris and Wyeth should be credited as essentially senior partners who, with an extraordinary contribution from Kundzin, maintained clarity and coherence over what appears to have been a team of municipal architects that was among the finest in the country.

The Municipal Center’s Art Program

A common criticism of the Classical Moderne is that its spare and austere detailing minimizes a building’s individuality and that buildings in this style are “wearing a uniform” that obscures their specific functions. However, like numerous other Classical Moderne civic buildings, the Municipal Center was individualized through a thematic program of fine art by some of the most prominent architectural sculptors and muralists of the time.

Forthcoming

¹⁴⁸ Grossman, 10.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 15.

Municipal Center
Name of Property

Washington, DC
County and State

Municipal Center
Name of Property

Washington, DC
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Municipal Center
Name of Property

Washington, DC
County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Art

Community Planning and Development

Politics/Government

Social History

Period of Significance

1926-1941

Significant Dates

1941

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Nathan C. Wyeth and Albert Harris, Municipal Architects

Arved Kundzin (staff architect)

Eric Menke (staff architect)

Victor T. Givotovsky (civil engineer)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Municipal Center and its plaza are significant under National Register Criteria A and C, as well as District of Columbia Criteria A, B, D, and E. Its period of significance begins with the initial planning for the Center in 1926, in response to the potential impact of the Federal Triangle project on municipal functions, and ends with its completion of the eponymous during the late spring of 1941.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

For multiple reasons, the Municipal Center meets District of Columbia Criterion A, as “the site of events that contributed significantly to the heritage, culture or development of the District of

Municipal Center

Name of Property

Washington, DC

County and State

Columbia or the nation,” and B, as it is “associated with historical periods ... groups, institutions, [or] achievements... that contributed significantly to the... development of the District of Columbia or the nation.” For the same reasons, it also meets the similar National Register of Historic Places Criterion A. The themes it represents include urbanization and the expanding role of government, especially in the areas of public safety and social welfare services, as well as the development of modern municipal administration for the District.

The construction of the Municipal Center also represents the response of both local government and Roosevelt Administration to the Great Depression. Its construction with Public Works Administration grants and loans, after years of congressional delay and insufficient funding, is emblematic of the active engagement that the New Deal sought to develop with urban governments.

The Municipal Center is particularly significant to the development of an independent identity for the District of Columbia, and the struggle to perform its municipal functions autonomously, which culminated in the successful Home Rule movement of the 1970s. This process must be traced through a forest of complications and seeming contradictions that reflected the political, social, and economic realities of its times. The Municipal Center plan changed greatly in the fifteen years that separated its inception and actual construction, because it evolved in response to some of the most tumultuous events of the twentieth century, the Great Depression and the coming of World War II. Its development reflected constant political tensions among fiscally-conservative members of Congress, the city’s New Deal supporters, the federal Commission of Fine Arts, whose chair pronounced fiscal and practical concerns to be less important than aesthetic considerations, the National Capital Parks and Planning Commission, which sought to adhere to urban planning principles, and the Municipal Architect and District Commissioners. On the surface, the District Government lost some important design battles, such as the struggle over obstructing John Marshall Place NW with the building, although their outcome ultimately accomplished municipal goals by a more circuitous route. As with virtually every other large-scale urban plan, the full design of the Municipal Center campus was never fully realized, here because the forces of suburban flight and de-urbanization became pronounced shortly after the war which disrupted its construction. However, its most essential element, the Municipal Center building, was built and, along with the municipal courthouses and Recorder of Deeds Building, became the expression of a modern identity for the District.

The Municipal Center and its plaza also meet DC Criterion D by reflecting “the distinguishing characteristics of architectural styles [and] building types ... or ... expressions of landscape architecture... or urban planning, siting, or design significant to the appearance and development of the District of Columbia or the nation,” as well as similar National Register Criterion C. The development of the Municipal Center and its plaza were an important influence in the cityscape of Washington, DC. Envisioned as the central element in a link between Judiciary Square, the Mall, and the Federal Triangle, the Municipal Center is emblematic of the struggle to reconcile urban development with the L’Enfant Plan. Its construction reflects the re-conceptualizing of lower Pennsylvania Avenue as a ceremonial street of civic buildings framing the Capitol from a nondescript strip of local businesses. Moreover, as reflected in the conflict between the NCPC,

Municipal Center
Name of Property

Washington, DC
County and State

CFA, and District Commissioners, the Municipal Center and its siting exerted a considerable physical effect on the traffic flow and development of the surrounding cityscape.

The Municipal Center and its adjacent plaza are an outstanding example of the Classical Moderne architectural style, which is symbolically associated with New Deal-era civic buildings. The use of this elevated style represents the elevation of municipal government architecture to make its buildings compatible with the finest federal structures and to integrate them into the landscape plan for national monuments like the Mall and Capitol Grounds. Moreover, the Classical Moderne style conveys the political symbolism of the Roosevelt Administration's "activist and interventionist approach" to federal-urban government relations. At the same time, the style's use of abstract classical elements creates a link to the Hadfield Courthouse, the city's original city hall in Judiciary Square.

The Municipal Center represents the work of master architects Albert Harris and Nathan C. Wyeth, as well as the ensemble work of an outstanding Office of the Municipal Architect staff. It incorporates a program of architectural art that includes important work by such widely-acknowledged masters as Lee Lawrie, John Gregory, John J. Earley, Hildreth Meiere, and Wayland Gregory, as well as an outstanding individual work by the lesser-known municipal employee-artist Eric Menke. For these reasons, it also meets DC Criterion E, as it possesses high artistic or aesthetic values that contribute significantly to the heritage and appearance of the District of Columbia or the nation.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Bernstein, Barton J.. "The New Deal: The Conservative Accomplishments of Liberal Reform," in Barton J. Bernstein, editor. *Towards A New Path: Dissenting Views in American History*, (New York: Vantage, 1967)

Current History, Volume 15, (New York: The New York Times Company, 1922)

Flanagan, Richard M.. "Roosevelt, Mayors and the New Deal Regime: The Origins of Intergovernmental Lobbying and Administration." *Polity*, Volume XXXI, Number 3, (Spring 1999)

Gebhard, David. "The Moderne in the U.S., 1920-1941" in *Architectural Association Quarterly*. (July 1970) (London: The Architectural Association)

Gebhard, David and Thomas Martinson. *A Guide to the Architecture of Minnesota* (Minneapolis; University of Minnesota Press, 1977)

Municipal Center

Washington, DC

Name of Property

County and State

Gibson, Campbell. *Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States: 1790 To 1990: Population Division Working Paper 27 (Washington, DC: US Census Bureau, 1998)*

Grossman, Elizabeth. "Paul Cret and The Federal Reserve Board Building: A Case Study in Architectural Politics during the New Deal," *Revue française d'études américaines*, 2004/4 no 102

Gurney, George. *The Sculpture of the Federal Triangle*. (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1979)

Hiltzik, Michael. "What the New Deal Accomplished," online at http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/history_lesson/2011/10/new_deal_accomplishments_do_conservatives_who_attack_the_new_dea.html, accessed March 11, 2013

Koyl, George S.. *Wyatt's American Architects* (R.S. Bowker, 1962), 784, accessed at <http://www.archive.org/details/americanarchitec001309mbp>, May 1, 2011

Lee, Antoinette J.. *Architects to the Nation: The Rise and Decline of the Supervising Architect's Office*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000)

Mohl, Raymond A. "Shifting Patterns of American Urban Policy Since 1900, Arnold Richard Hirsch, ed. *Urban Policy in 20th Century America*; (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1993)

National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. Sixteenth Street Historic District (Boundary Expansion). 2006. Washington, DC: National Park Service

Report of the Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia Annual Volumes, 1926-1942 (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office)

Wentzel, Volkmar. *Washington by Night*. (Washington, DC: Starwood Press, 1992)

Wyeth, Nathan C.. "Notes on the New Municipal Center, "Pencil Points", (New York: American Institute of Architects, September 1939)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

___ previously listed in the National Register

___ previously determined eligible by the National Register

___ designated a National Historic Landmark

Municipal Center
Name of Property _____

Washington, DC
County and State _____

____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

____ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property _____

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 38-53'39" N Longitude: 077-01'00" W

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

1. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting :	Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Municipal Center
Name of Property

Washington, DC
County and State

The Municipal Center occupies the majority of Square 533. Its site is bounded by Indiana Avenue NW on the north, the Frances Perkins Building on the east, C Street NW to the south, and the former roadbed of John Marshall Place NW to the west. Its plaza covers the former roadbed of John Marshall Place NW between C Street NW on the south and D Street and Indiana Avenue NW on the north. It is bounded on the east by the Municipal Center and on the west by the Moultre Courthouse in Square 490.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the Municipal Center building and plaza.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Douglas Peter Sefton
organization: DC Preservation League
street & number: 1221 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 5A
city or town: Washington state: DC zip code: _____
e-mail: psefton@comcast.net
telephone: 703-836-2015
date: _____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

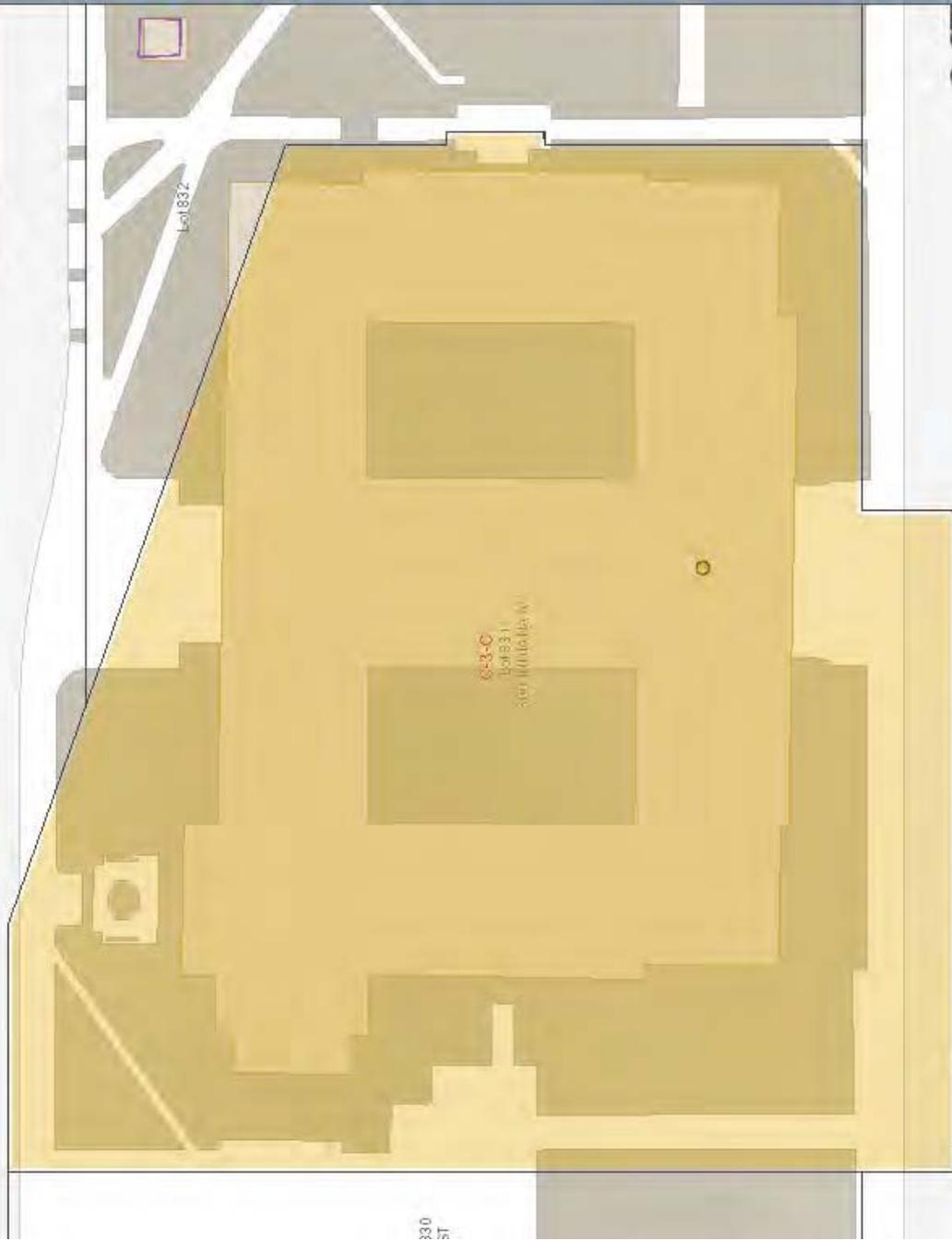
- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs: Photo log attached

Base Map Air Photo

SP-2

INDIANA AVE



Lot 832

0-3-C
Lot 831
300 100 100 100 W

330 ST

CST

40 m
100 ft

Lot 800
333 CO NSITT UT ION AV

APPENDIX 1: Images List

District of Columbia Municipal Center Washington, DC

Number	Subject	Source/Photographer	Date
Group A	Photo Documentation		
1A	Historical View of the Municipal Center looking SE from Indiana Avenue NW, in front of the Hadfield Courthouse	Unknown	1941
1B	Municipal Center, looking NW from intersection of Third and C Streets NW	Peter Sefton	11/30/2012
1C	Municipal Center, east façade, looking SW from near intersection of Third Streets and Indiana Avenue NW	Peter Sefton	11/04/2012
1D	Municipal Center, north façade, looking south from Judiciary Square	Peter Sefton	11/4/2012
1E	Details of north façade from Indiana Avenue	Peter Sefton	11/04/2012
1F	Details of window ribbons and façade, north façade	Peter Sefton	11/04/2012
1G	Detail of entrance, north facade	Peter Sefton	11/04/2012
1H	Municipal Center, west facade portico, looking SE from Indiana Avenue NW	Peter Sefton	08/24/2013
1I	Detail of west façade, looking SE from John Marshall Place NW Plaza	Peter Sefton	08/24/2013
1K	Municipal Center, south façade, looking NE from C Street	Peter Sefton	11/04/2012
Group 2	Architectural Art		
2A	Police Memorial – John J. Earley, looking south from Indiana Avenue NW	Peter Sefton	11/30/2012
Group 3	Historical Maps		
3A	Judiciary Square – 1919 Baist Real Estate Atlas (V1, Sheet 36)	Library of Congress	
3B	Municipal Center Site South of Judiciary Square – 1919 Baist Real Estate Atlas (V1, Sheet 37)	Library of Congress	

Group 3	Historical Images		
4A	1927 Harris Plan, rendering of approved version.	National Archives, RG 66	
4B	1927 Harris Plan, site plan for approved version.	National Archives, RG 66	
4C	1927 Harris Plan, site plan with tower alternative.	National Archives, RG 66	
4D	1927 Harris Plan, site plan with circular court alternative.	National Archives, RG 66	
4E	1928 Harris Plan, plaza rendering, Arved L. Kundzin, delineator.	National Archives, RG 66	
4F	Allied Architects rendering showing colonnade facing John Marshall Place NW and vista of Hadfield Courthouse, circa 1929-1932, William B. Harris, delineator	National Archives, RG 66	
4G	Group portrait of Office of the Municipal Architect, Municipal Center architects in September 1930.	<i>Washington Evening Star</i> , September 28, 1930, page 1	
4H	Group portrait of Office of the Municipal Architect, Municipal Center draftsmen in September 1930.	<i>Washington Evening Star</i> , September 28, 1930, page 1	
4I	Office of the Municipal Architect workspace with plaster models, date unknown.	National Archives, RG 66	
4J	Allied Architects plaza on mall proposal, 1930.	National Archives, RG 66	
4K	Office of the Municipal Architect rendering, May 17, 1931.	National Archives, RG 66	
4L	Nathan C. Wyeth, <i>Washington Herald</i> caricature, 1939, and Representative Mary T. Norton (D-NJ), circa 1940.	<i>Washington Herald</i> , nd and http://www.nwhm.org/online-exhibits/legislators/New_Jersey.html	
4M	Rendering of Kundzin-Wyeth "Scheme D" for Judiciary Square, A. Kundzin, delineator (Plan 1935, rendering circa 1938)	National Archives, RG 66	
4N	Office of the Municipal Architect rendering of Kundzin-Wyeth Scheme D single	<i>Pencil Points</i> , September 1939, 583	

	building spanning John Marshall Place NW, 1935-1938.		
4O	Office of the Municipal Architect site plan of Kundzin-Wyeth Scheme D of single building spanning John Marshall Place NW, 1935-1938. A.L. Kundzin likely delineator	<i>Pencil Points</i> , September 1939, 583	
4P	John Marshall Place NW, looking north to Hadfield Courthouse, (circa 1936-1938)	National Archives, RG 66	
4Q	Municipal Center, final plan, A.L. Kundin, delineator, 1938.	<i>Pencil Points</i> , September 1939, 581	
4R	Municipal Center Campus, final plan, model, 1938.	<i>Pencil Points</i> , September 1939, 582	
4S	Aerial view of Municipal Center Site	<i>Washington Evening Star</i> , August 11, 1938	
4T	Municipal Center under construction, 1939	<i>Washington Post</i>	
4U	Central Library Building at 499 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, demolished circa 1982.	<i>HABS DC 372-1</i>	
4V	Rendering of neoclassical Municipal Center facades, believed Harris Plan, pre-1932.	National Archives, RG 66	
4W	Scheme D, close-up showing modified façade renderings, 1935-1938.	<i>Pencil Points</i> , September 1939, 580-581	
4X	Municipal Center, East module, final plan façade renderings, 1938	<i>Pencil Points</i> , September 1939, 580	
4Y	Municipal Center, west module unbuilt	National Archives, RG 66	



Image 1K: Municipal Center Plaza, looking north toward Hadfield Courthouse along axis of John Marshall Place NW (8/24/2013).



Image 1A: Historical View of the Municipal Center looking SE from Indiana Avenue NW, in front of the Hadfield Courthouse (circa 1941)



Image 1B: Municipal Center, looking NW from intersection of Third and C Streets NW, (11/30/2012)

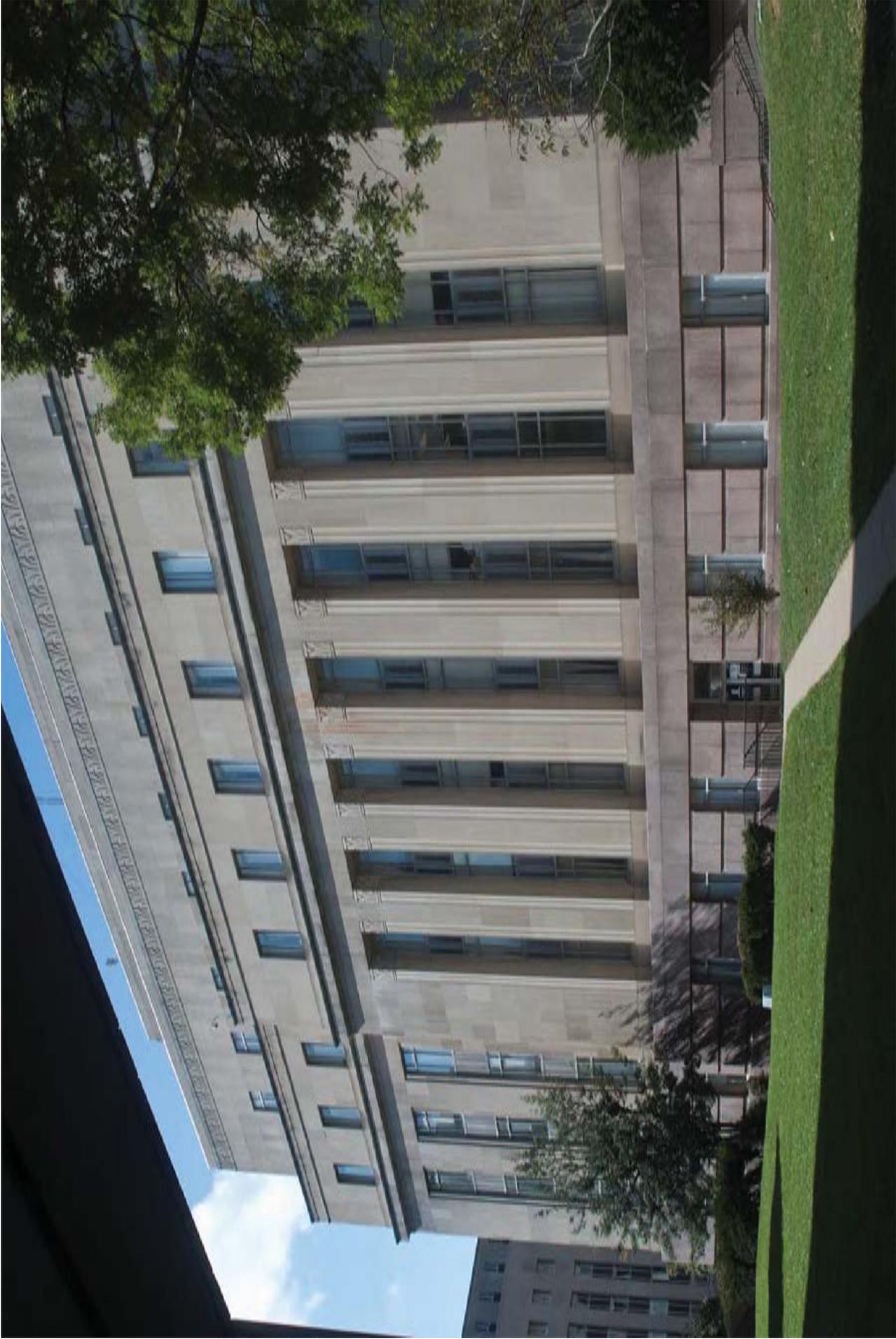


Image 1C: Municipal Center, east façade, looking SW from Indiana Avenue near Third Street NW, (11/4/2012)



Image 1D: Municipal Center, north façade and entrance, looking south from Judiciary Square, (11/4/2012)



Image 1E: Municipal Center, north façade, detail from Indiana Avenue NW, (11/4/2012)



Image 1F: Details of window ribbons and facade, north facade. (11/04/12).



Image 1G: Detail of entrance, north facade (11/4/2012)



Image 1H: Detail of portico, west façade, looking SE from Indiana Avenue NW (8/24/2013).



Image 1I: Detail west façade, looking SE from John Marshall Place NW Plaza NW (8/24/2013).



Image 1J: Municipal Center, south façade, looking NE from C Street NW.



Image 2A: Police Memorial – John J. Earley, from Indiana Avenue NW (11/30/2012)

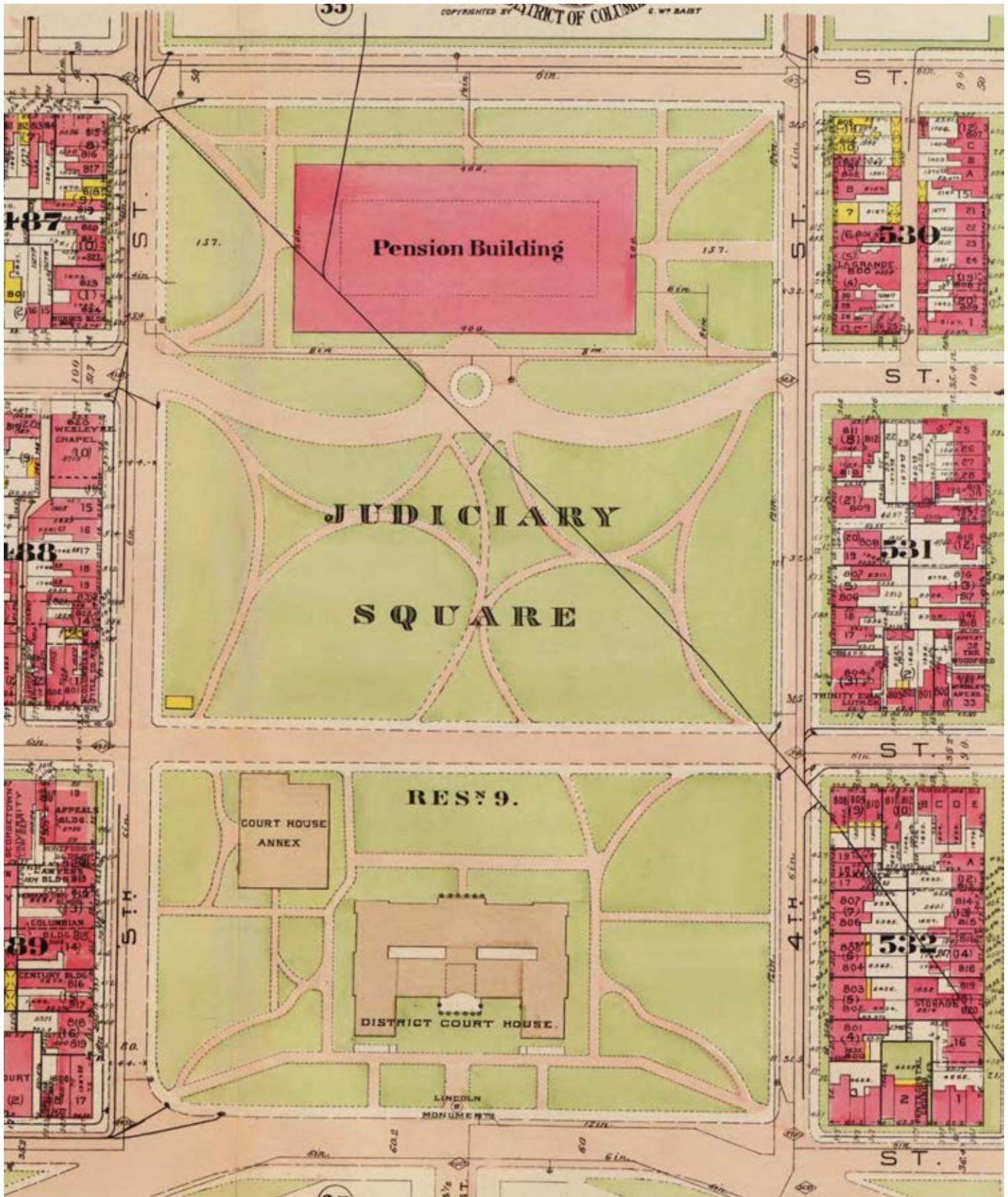


Image 3A: Judiciary Square – 1919 Baist Real Estate Atlas

produced at the National Archives

PROPOSED
MUNICIPAL CENT.
WASHINGTON D.C.
A.L. HARRIS, MUNICIPAL ARCHT.

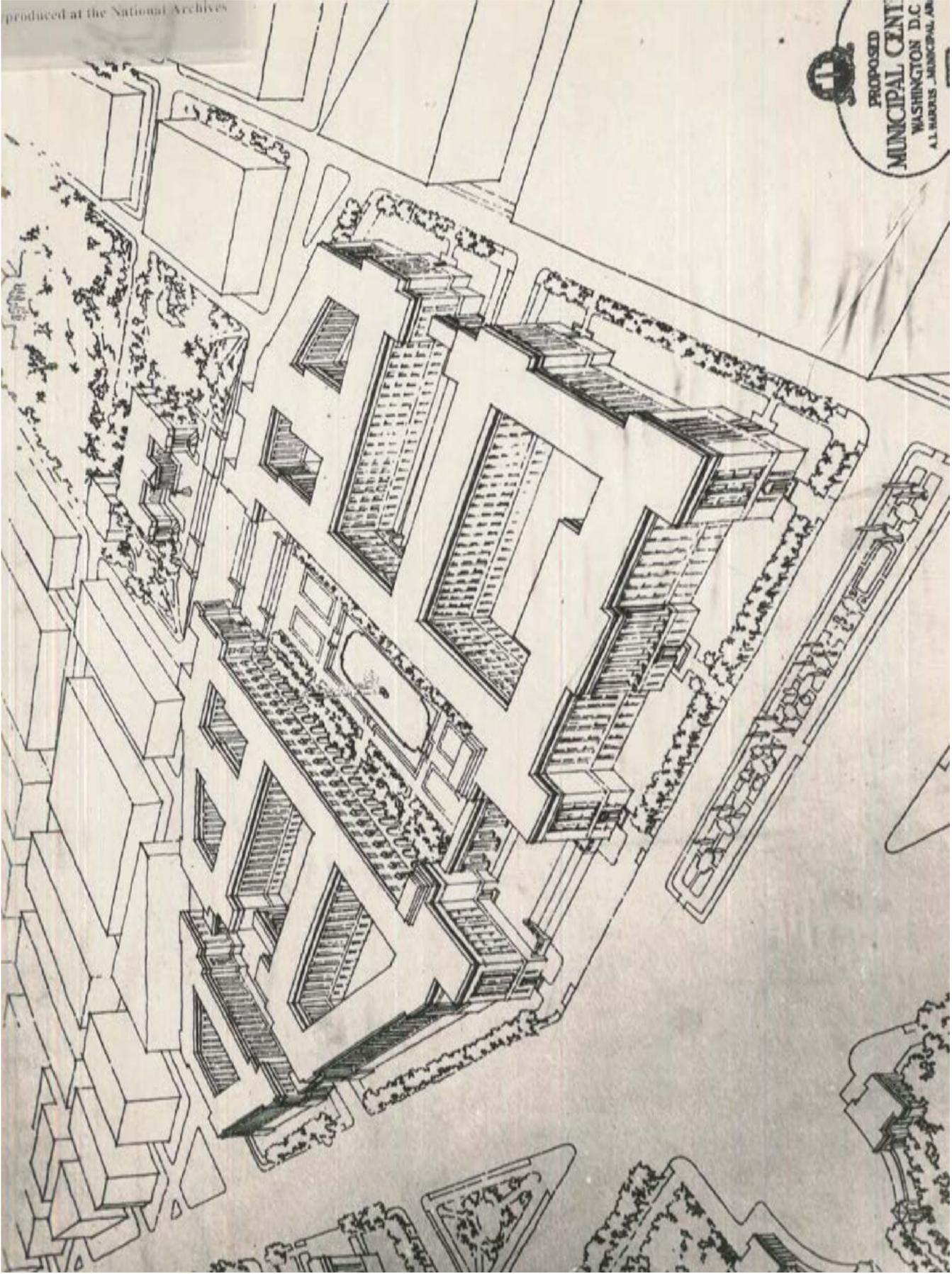


Image 4A: 1927 Harris Plan, rendering of approved version.

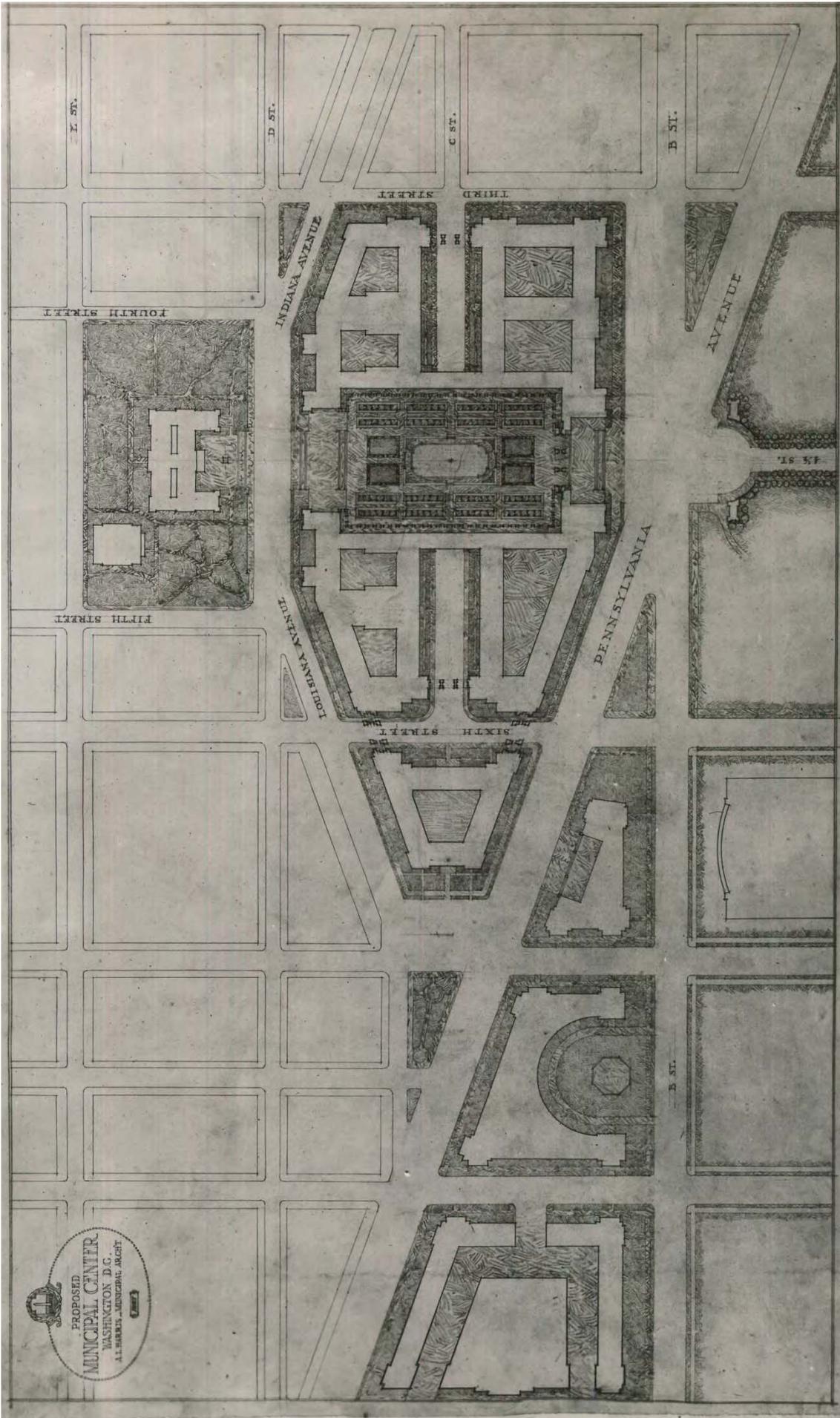


Image 4B: 1927 Harris Plan, site plan for approved version.

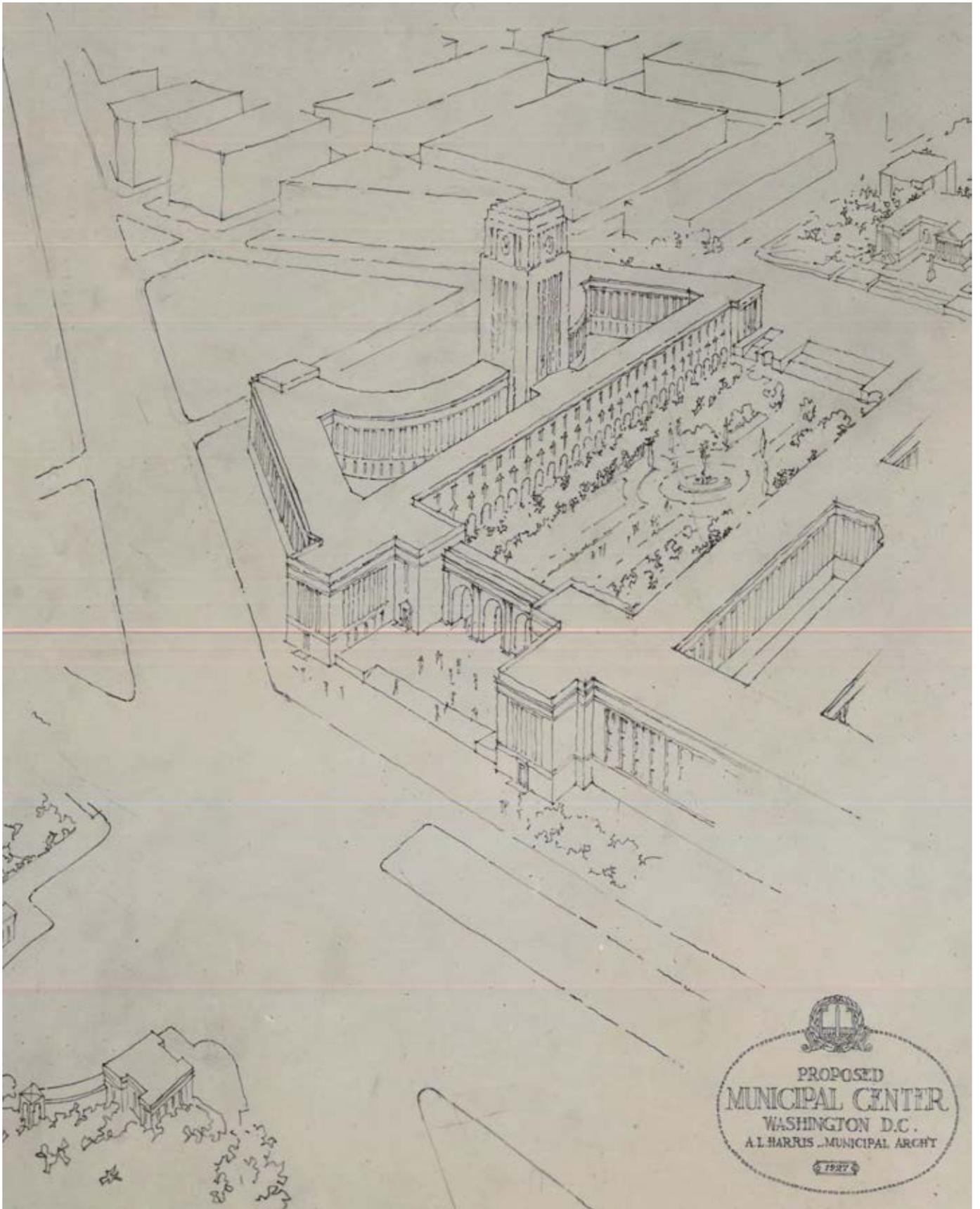


Image 4C: 1927 Harris Plan, tower alternative.

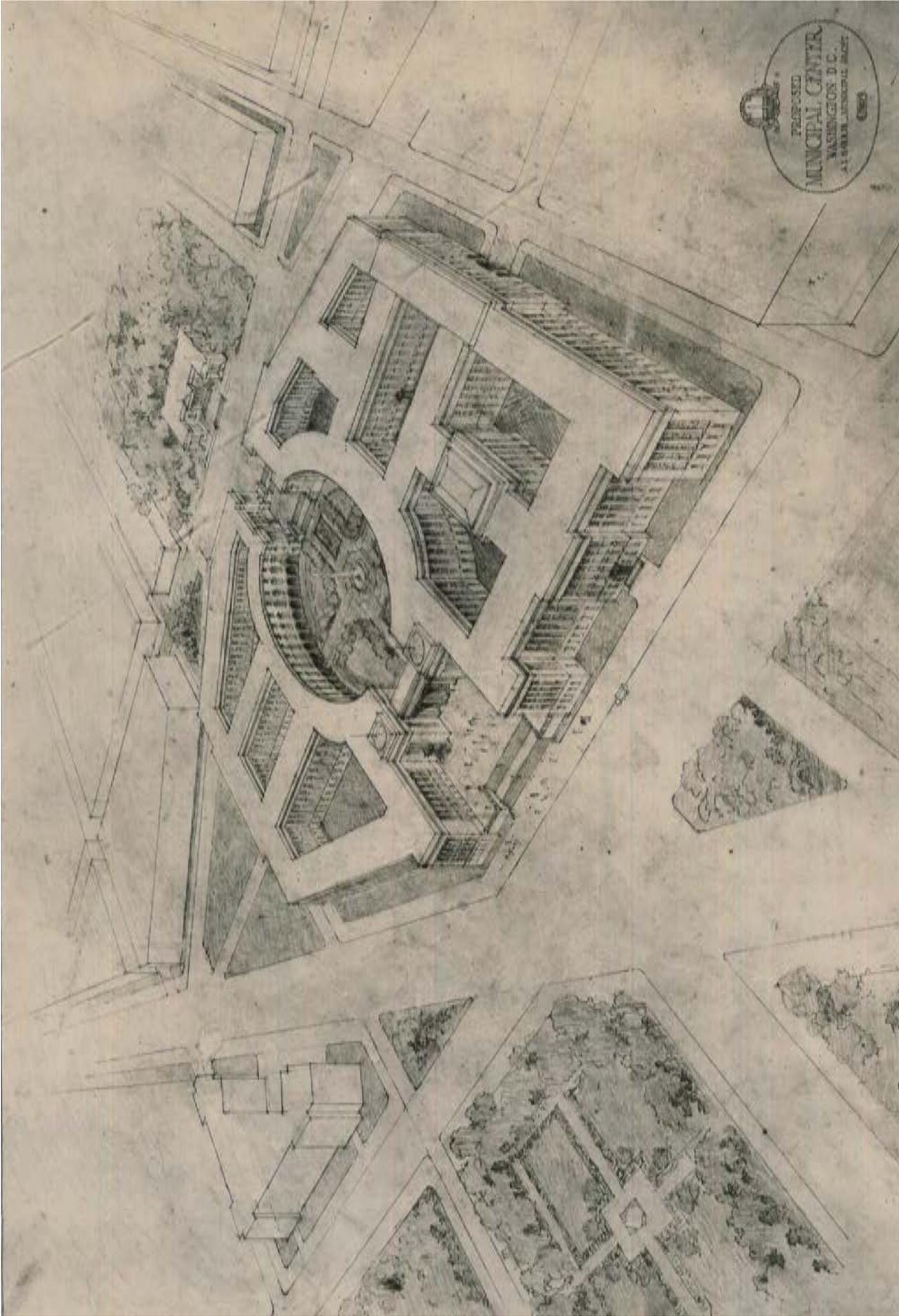
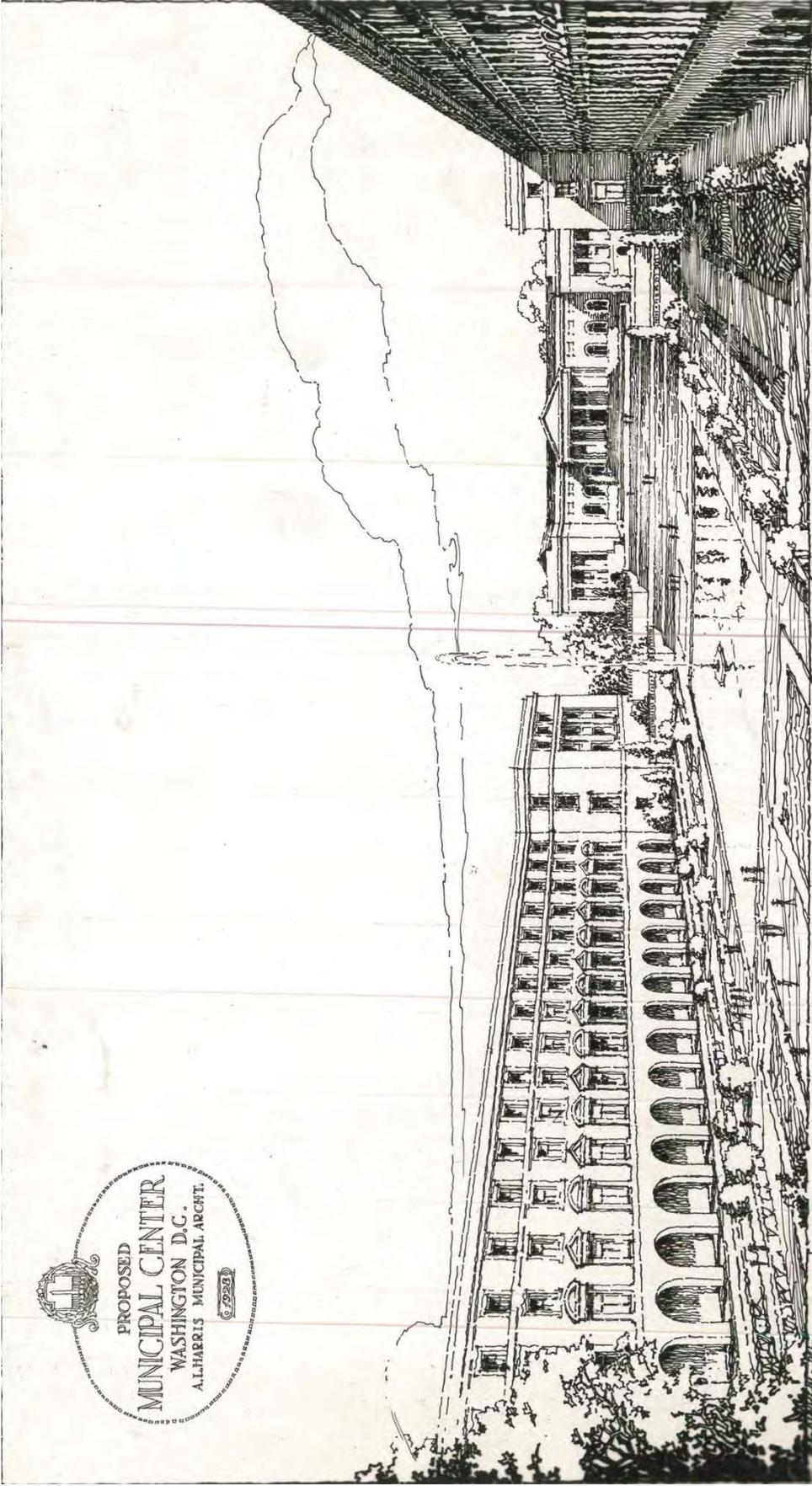


Image 4D: 1927 Harris Plan, circular court alternative.



PROPOSED
MUNICIPAL CENTER
WASHINGTON D.C.
AL. HARRIS MUNICIPAL ARCHT.
© 1928

Image 4E: 1928 Harris Plan, plaza rendering. Arved L. Kundzin, delineator.

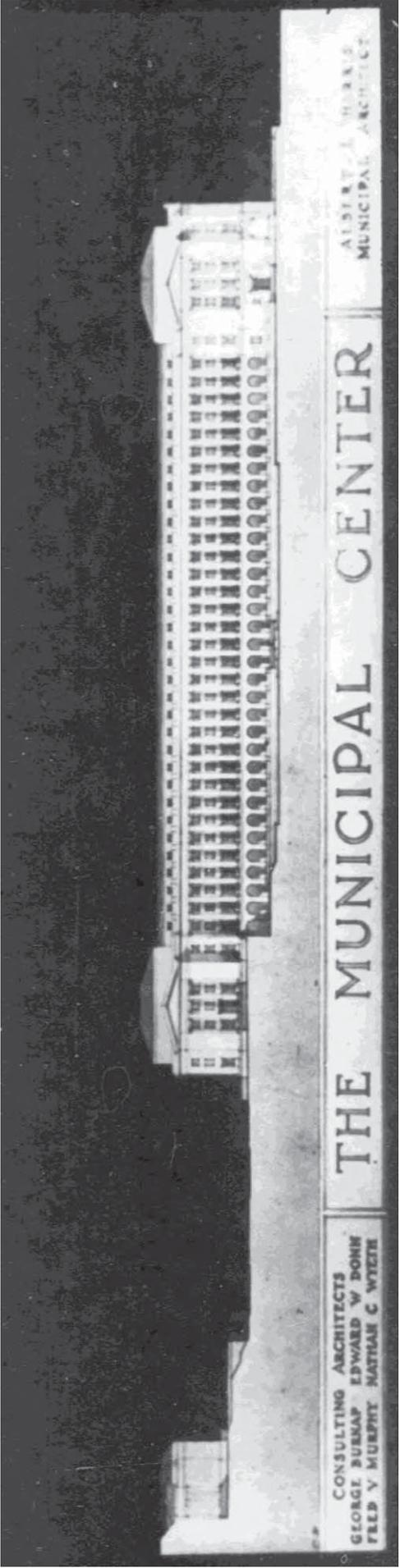
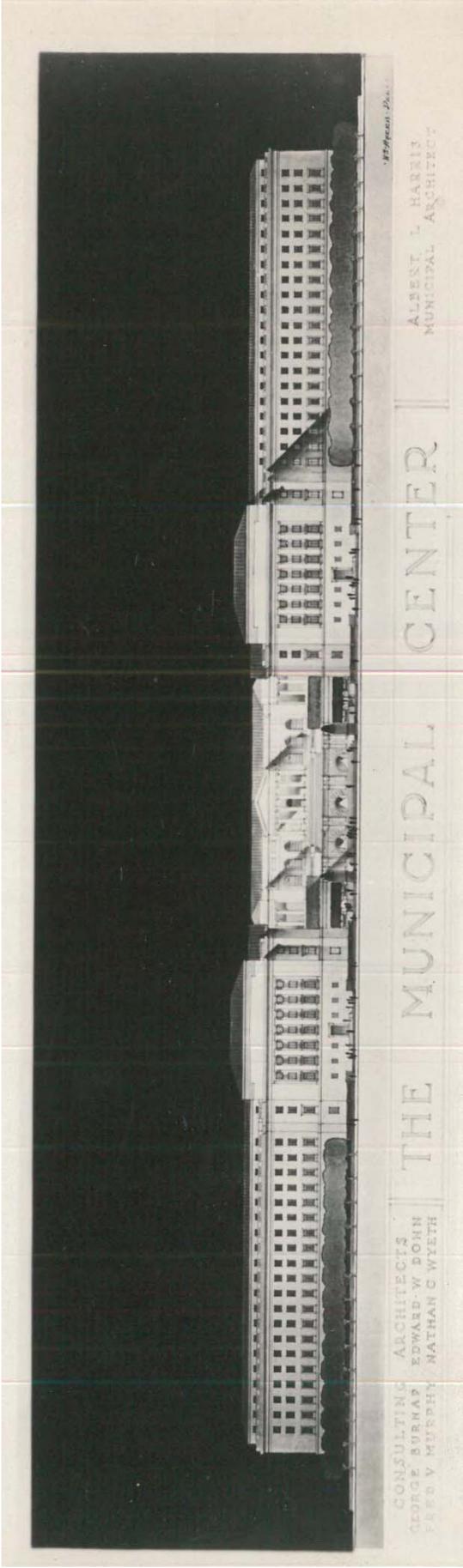


Image 4F: Allied Architects rendering showing colonnade facing John Marshall Place NW and vista of Hadfield Courthouse, circa 1929-1932, William B. Harris, delineator



Image 4G: Office of the Municipal Architect, Municipal Center Architects in September 1930. From left: Arved L. Kundzin, in vest, Albert Harris, William B. Harris, Edward Donn, Nathan C. Wyeth, and Fred Murphy. (*Washington Evening Star*, September 28, 1930)

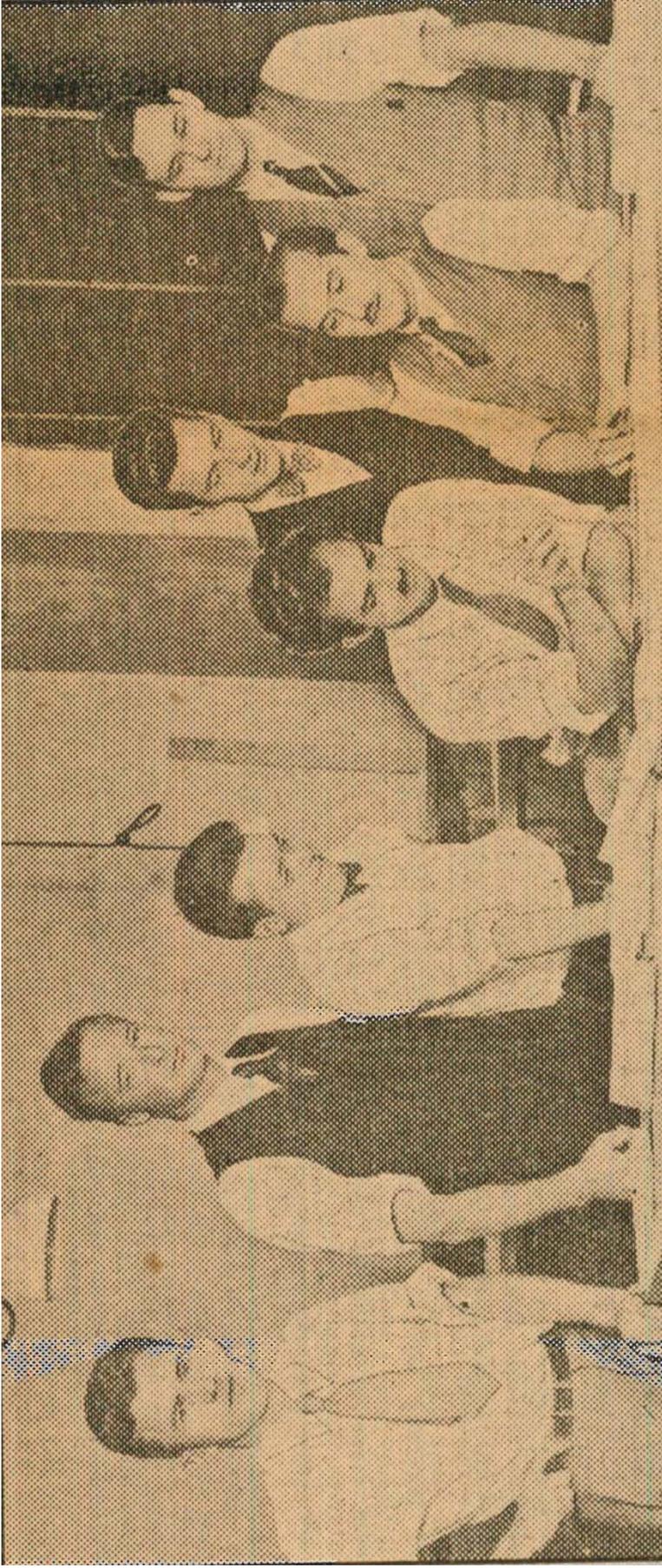


Image 4H: Office of the Municipal Architect, Municipal Center Draftsmen in September 1930. Left to right, J.P. Crowgey, Arved L. Kundzin (in vest), Louis H. Mollenkoph, C. Wepley (seated), E. Schreier (standing), William B. Harris (seated), and Edwin T. Pairo (standing).

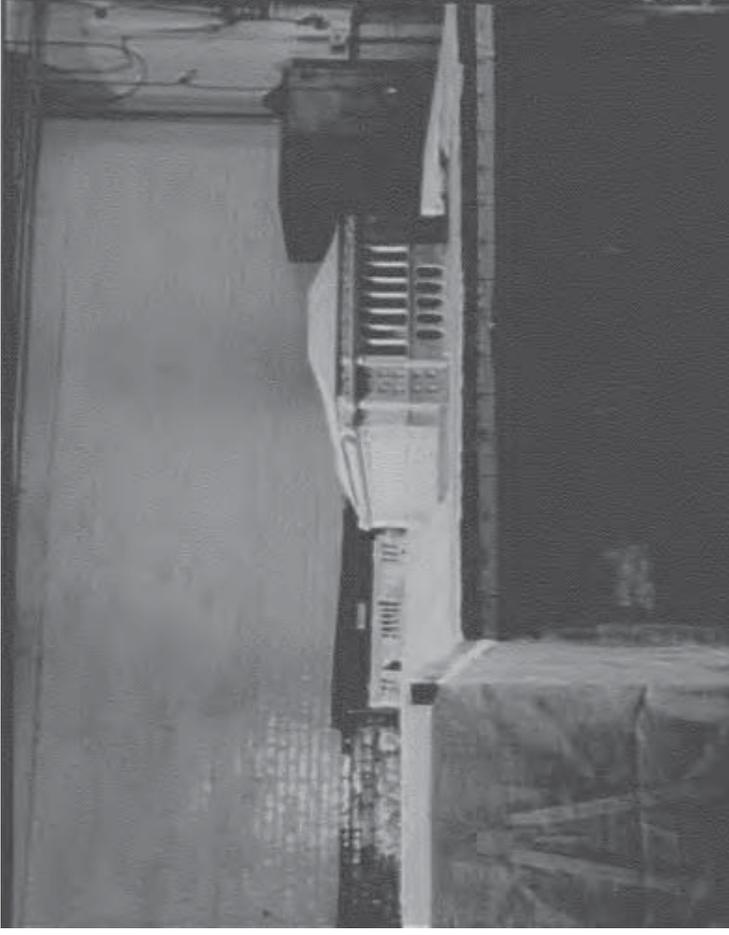
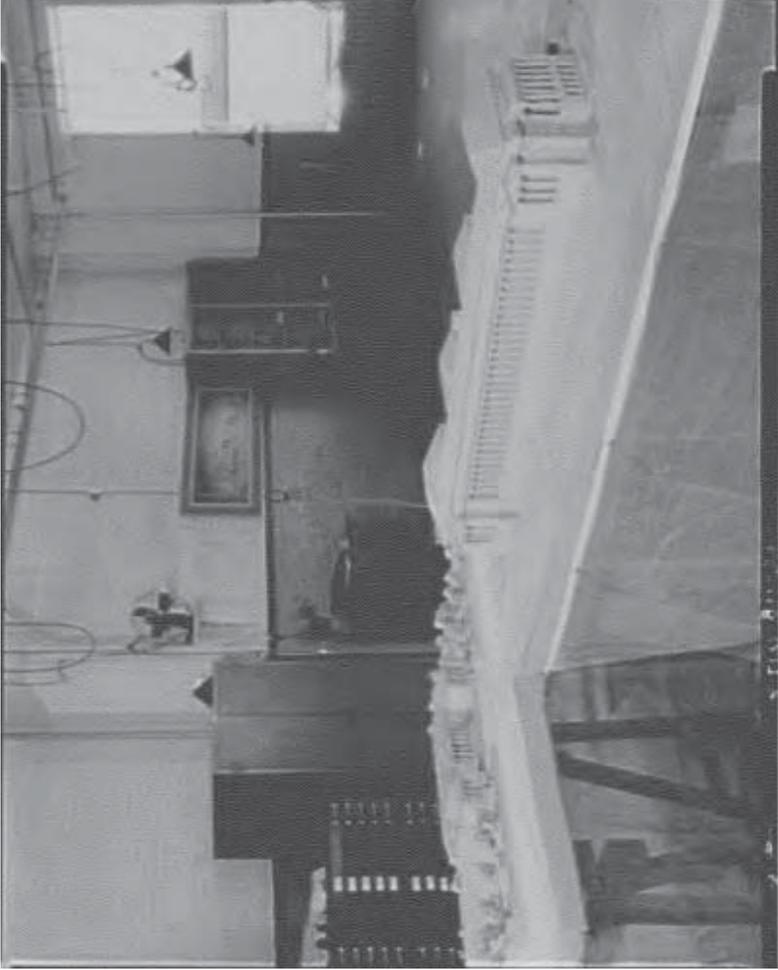


Image 4I: Office of the Municipal Architect workspace with plaster models, date unknown.

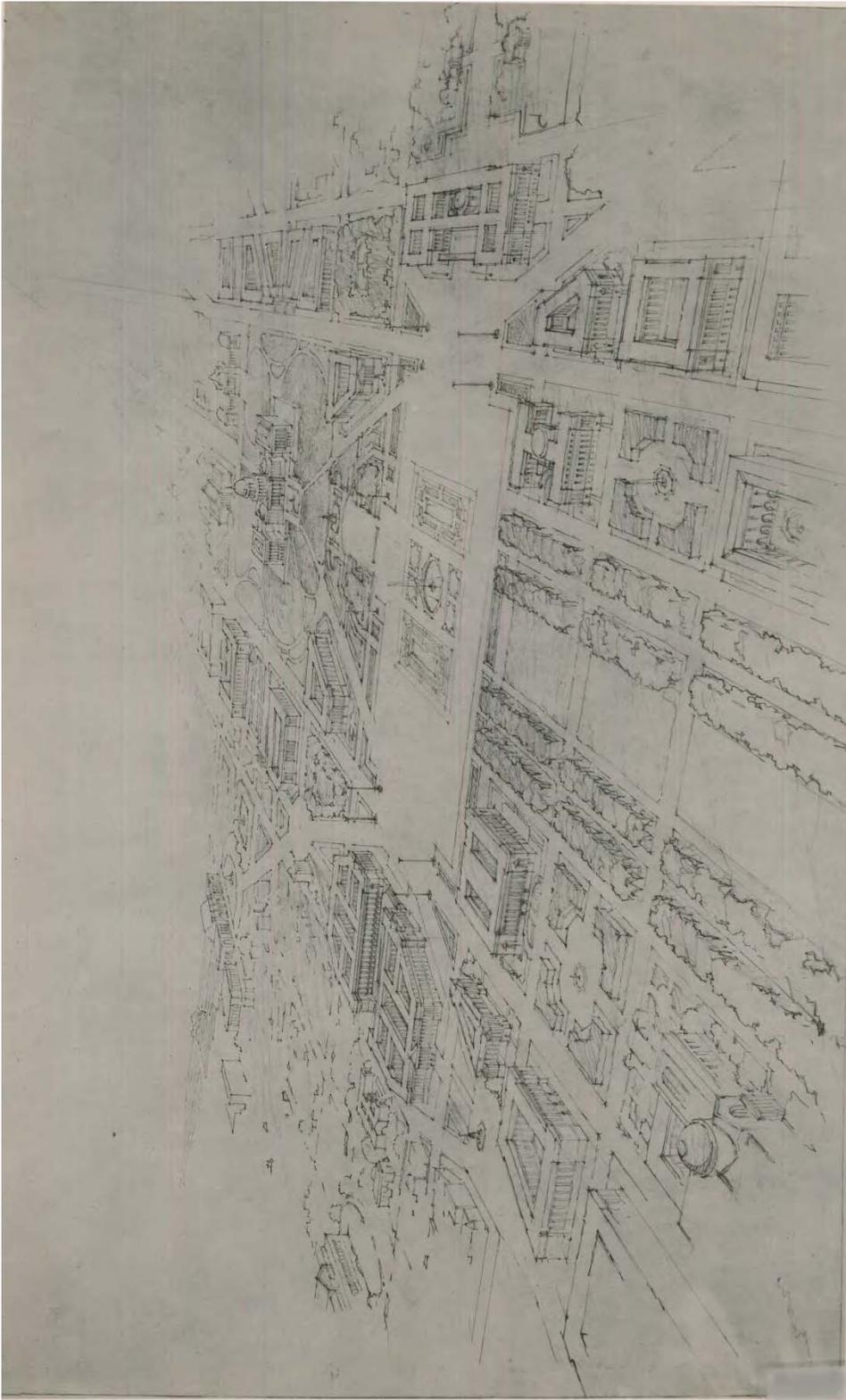


Image 4J: Allied Architects plaza on mall proposal, 1930.



Image 4K: Office of the Municipal Architect rendering, May 17, 1931.

**WHO'S WHO . . .
. . . in Washington**

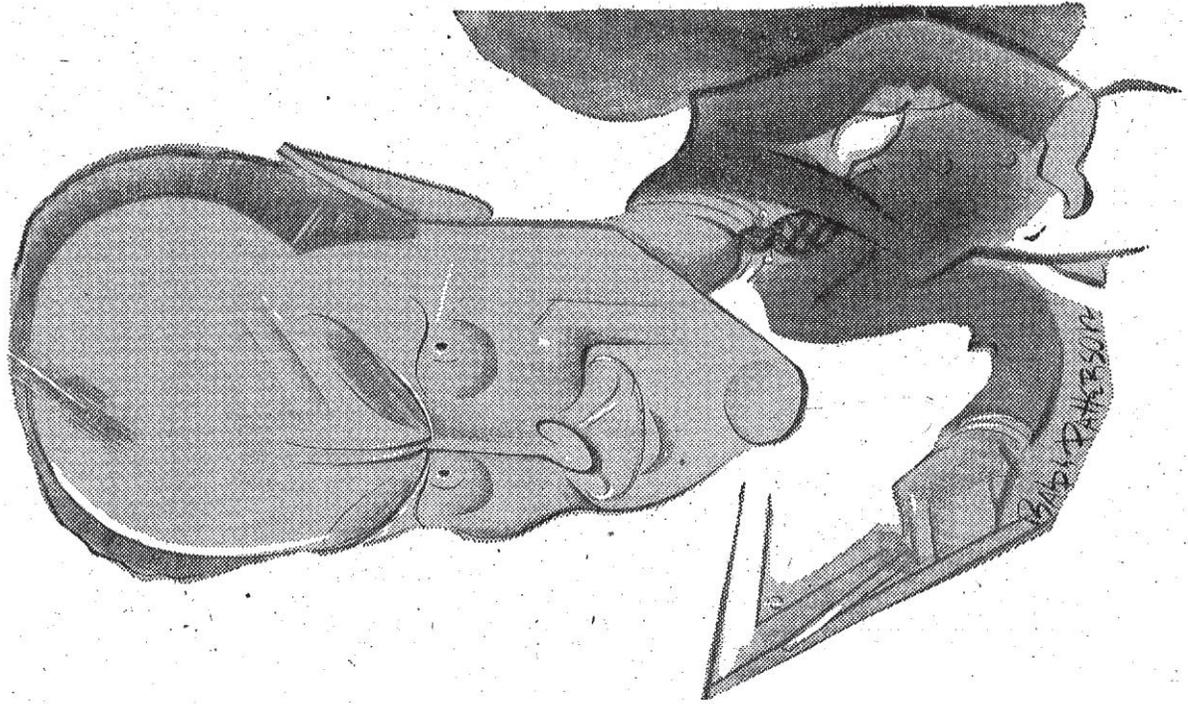


Image 4L: Nathan C. Wyeth, *Washington Herald* caricature, 1939, and Representative Mary T. Norton (D-NJ), circa 1940.



Image 4M: Rendering of Kundzin-Wyeth "Scheme D" for Judiciary Square, A. Kundzin, delineator (Plan 1935,

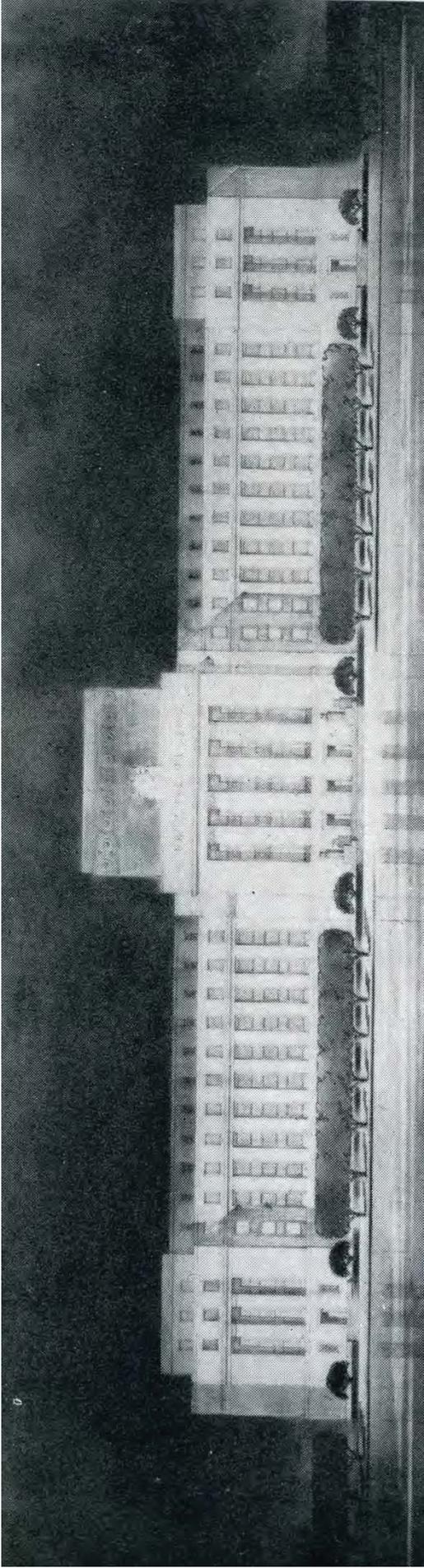


Image 4N: Office of the Municipal Architect rendering of Kundzin-Wyeth Scheme D single building spanning John Marshall Place NW, 1935-1938.



Image 40: Office of the Municipal Architect site plan of Kundzin-Wyeth Scheme D of single building spanning John Marshall Place NW, 1935-1938. A.L. Kundzin likely delineator



Image 4P: John Marshall Place NW, looking north to Hadfield Courthouse, (circa 1936-1938)



Image 4Q: Municipal Center, final plan, A.L. Kundin, delineator, 1938.

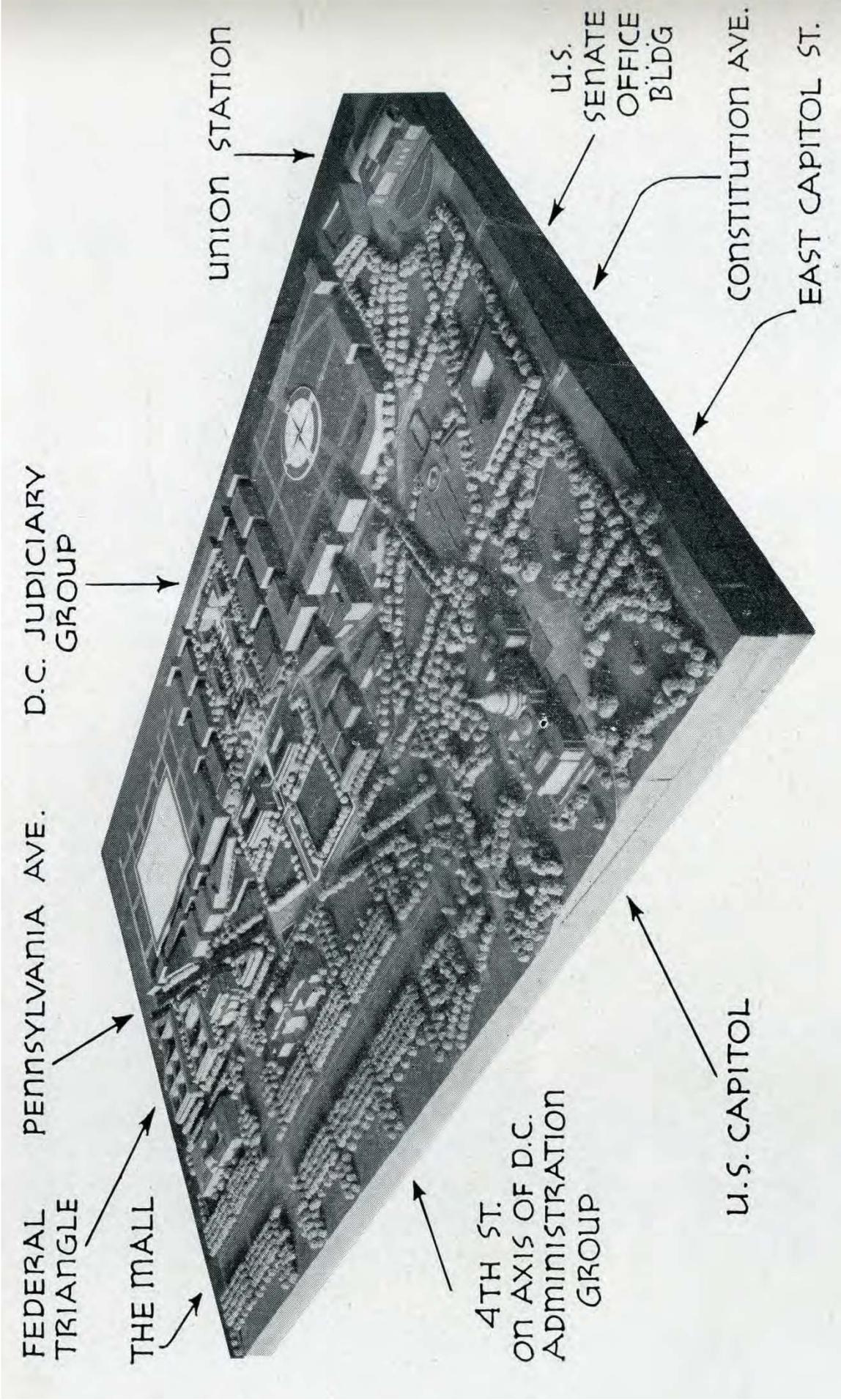
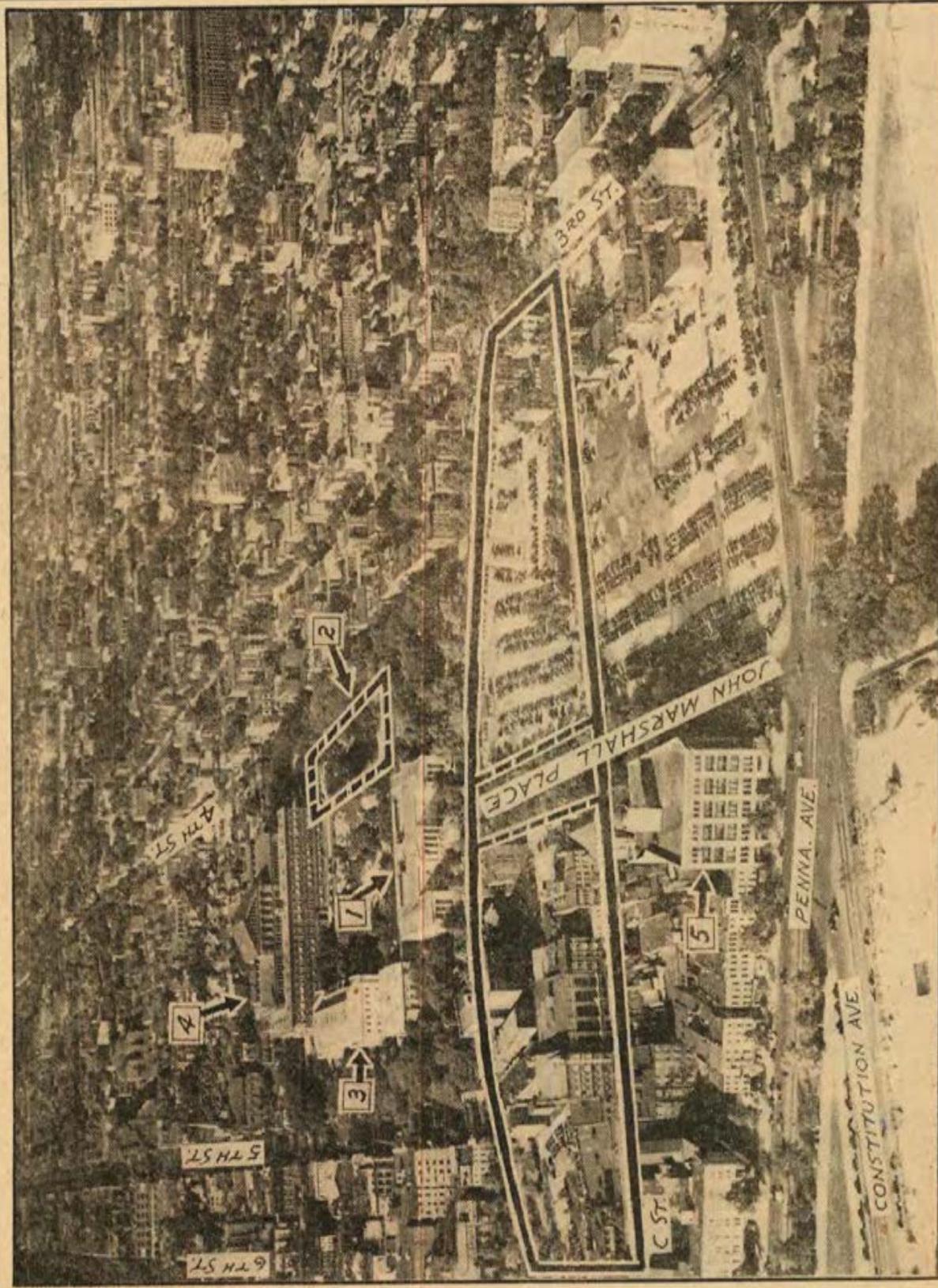


Image 4R: Municipal Center Campus, final plan, model, 1938.

Aerial View of Site for New Municipal Center Development



A Star photographer obtained this view of the new Municipal Center site from an airplane. The imposing new home for the city government, to be expedited under a \$3,700,000 allotment by the Public Works Administration, will be built in the area between Third and Sixth streets and Indiana avenue and C street N.W., outlined in the central portion of

the picture. The dotted lines, approximately bisecting the site, indicate John Marshall place, closing of which is opposed by the Fine Arts Commission. The commission favors preservation of the vista of the District Court Building (No. 1) obtained from Pennsylvania avenue. This view could be saved by eliminating the "city hall" into two main wings, on opposite sides

of John Marshall place. Shown in the photograph also are (2) site of the proposed new Municipal and Juvenile Courts, (3) Court of Appeals and the new Police Court Building, (4) the old Pension Office Building, now occupied by the General Accounting Office, (5) Ford Building, headquarters of the traffic director.

—Star Staff Photo.

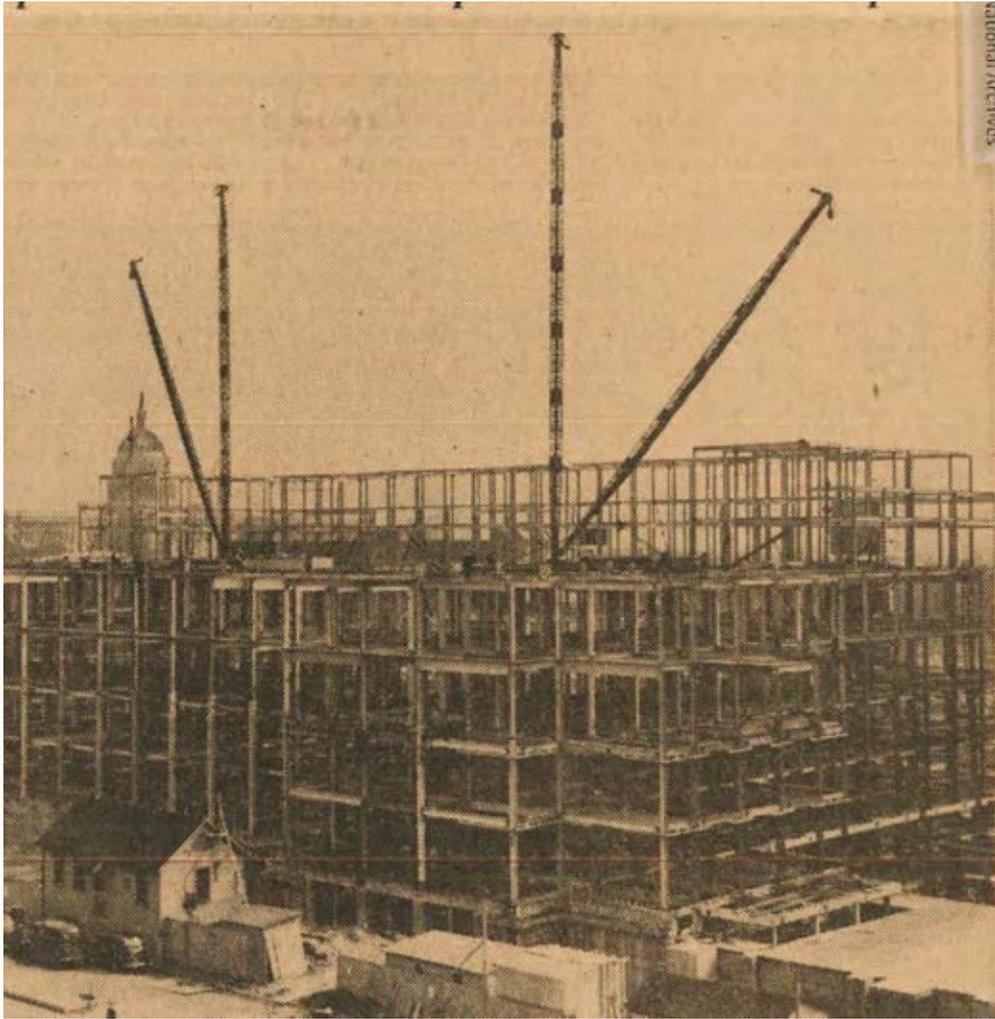
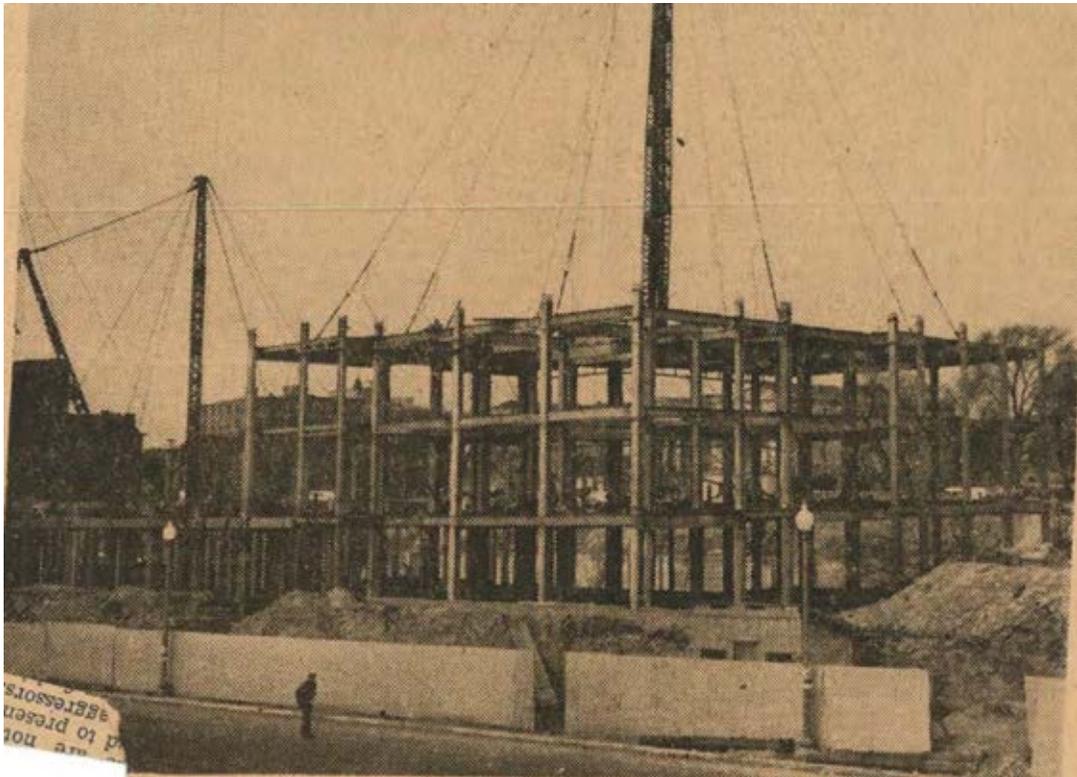


Image 4T: Municipal Center under construction, 1939.



DC-372-1



Image 4U: Central Library Building at 499 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, demolished circa 1982.



Image 4V: Rendering of neoclassical Municipal Center facades, believed Harris Plan, pre-1932.



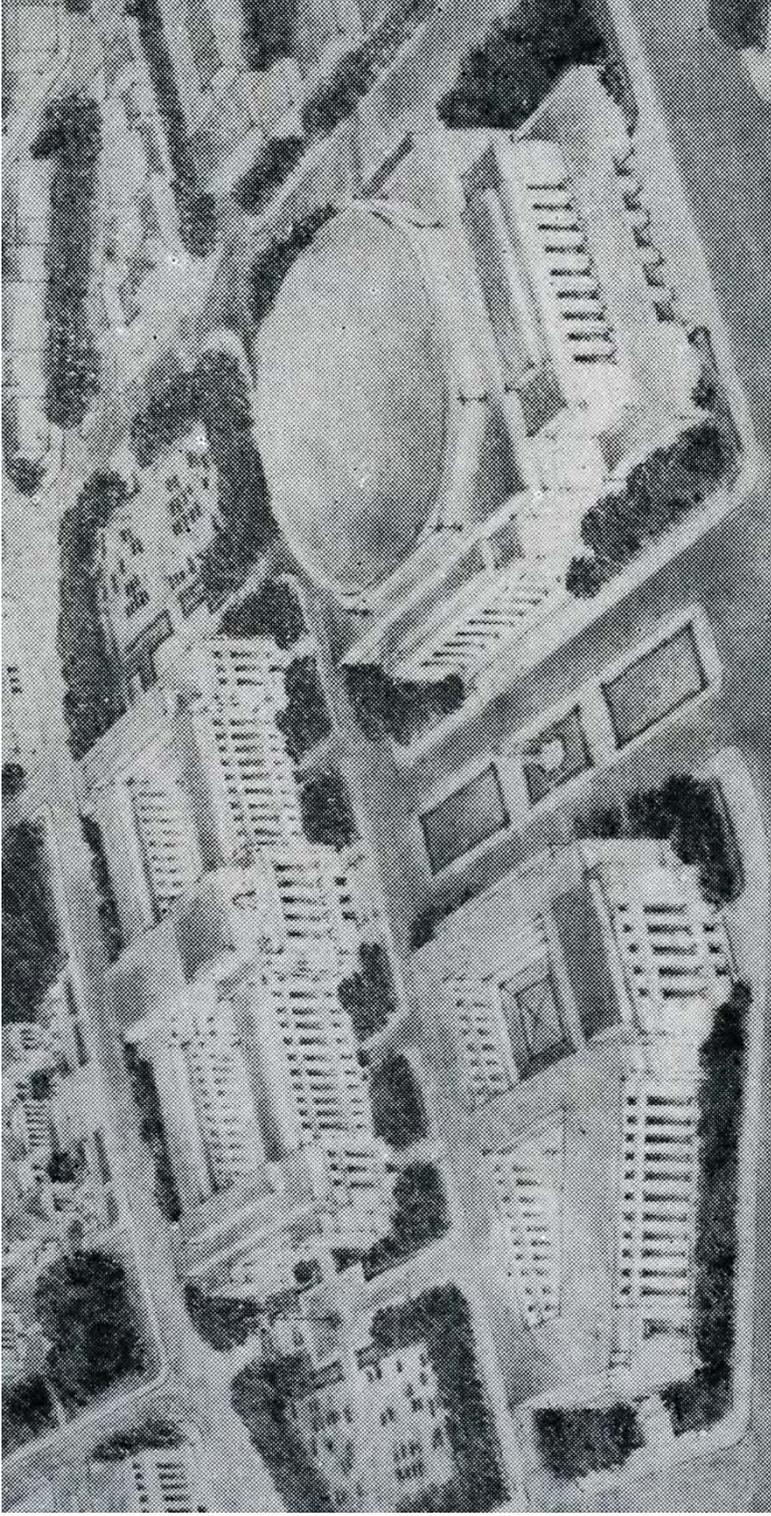


Image 4W: Scheme D, closeup showing modified façade renderings, 1935-1938.

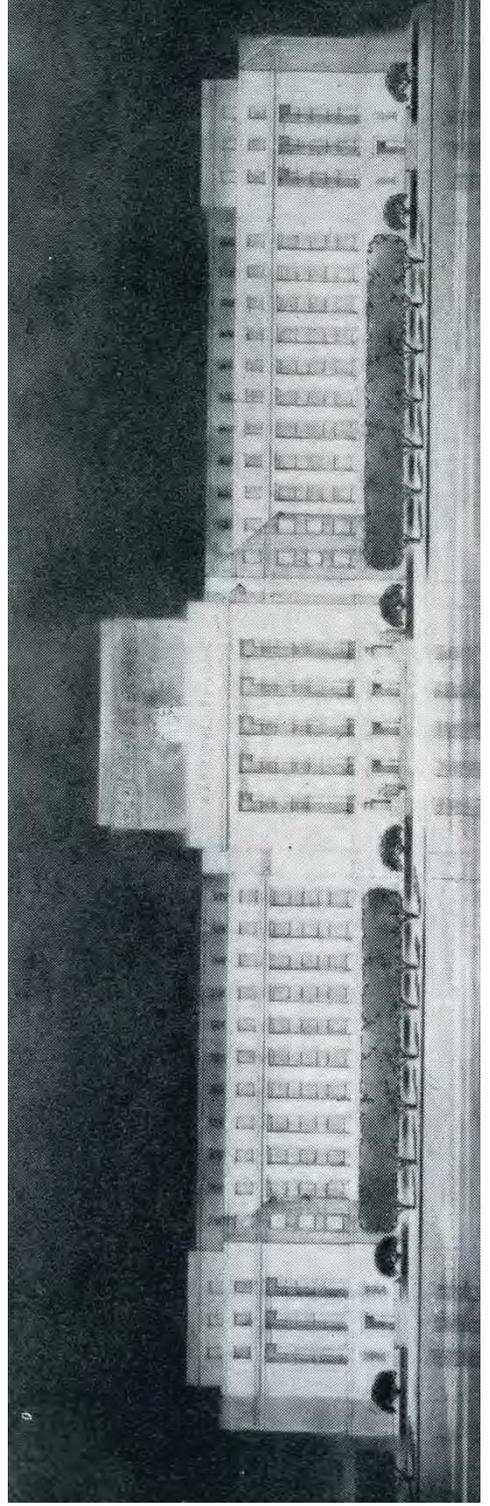
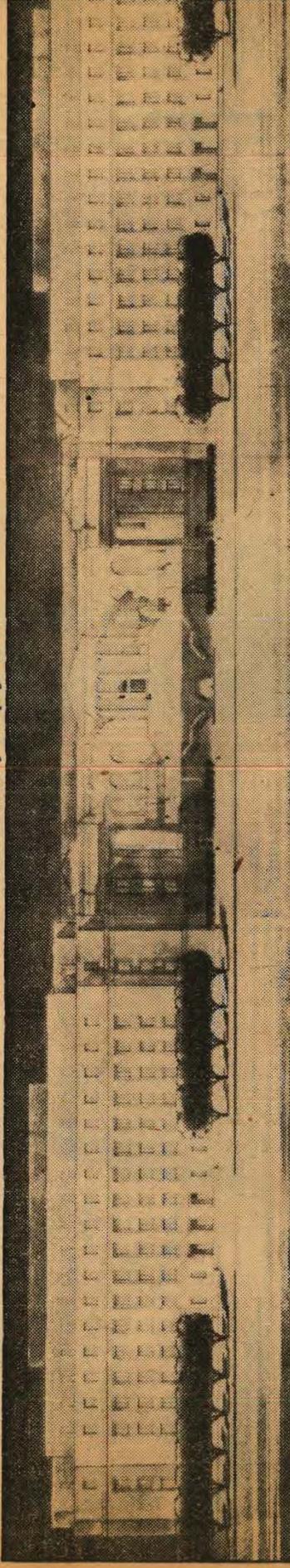




Image 4X: Municipal Center, East module, final plan façade renderings

Building Municipal Center Plan Given Final Approval by P. W. A.

(Story on page A-1.)



Reproduced at the National Archives

An artist's drawing of the plan for the new Municipal Center which would divide the structure into two separate buildings, keeping a vista open through John Marshall place to the old District Court House. P. W. A. Administrator Ickes notified the Commissioners today that final approval of the plan. Work must be started before January

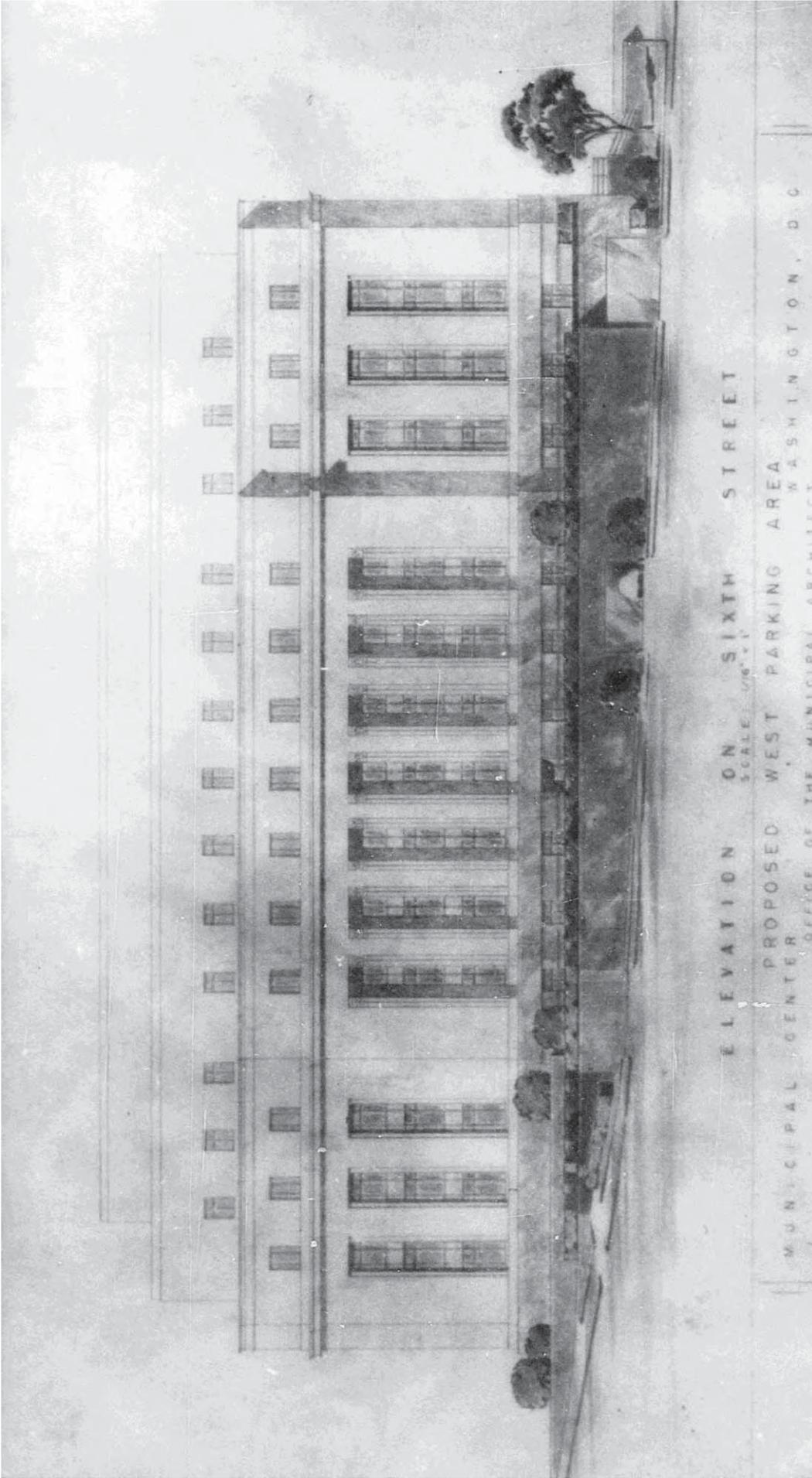


Image 4Y: Municipal Center, west module (unbuilt) .

APPENDIX 2: Photo List

Number of 12	Subject	Source/Photographer
001	Historical View of the Municipal Center looking SE from Indiana Avenue NW, in front of the Hadfield Courthouse (circa 1941)	National Archives, RG 66
002	Municipal Center, looking NW from intersection of Third and C Streets NW, (11/30/2012)	Peter Sefton
003	Municipal Center, east façade, looking SW from near intersection of Third Streets and Indiana Avenue NW, (11/4/2012)	Peter Sefton
004	Municipal Center, north façade, looking south from Judiciary Square, (11/4/2012)	Peter Sefton
005	Details of north façade from Indiana Avenue, (11/04/2012)	Peter Sefton
006	Details of window ribbons and façade, north façade, (11/04/12)	Peter Sefton
007	Detail of entrance, north façade (11/04/2012)	Peter Sefton
008	Municipal Center, west facade portico, looking SE from Indiana Avenue NW 11/04/2012)	Peter Sefton
009	Detail of west façade, looking SE from John Marshall Place NW Plaza (11/04/2012)	Peter Sefton
010	Municipal Center, south façade, looking NE from C Street (8/24/2013)	Peter Sefton
011	Municipal Center Plaza, looking north toward Hadfield Courthouse along axis of John Marshall Place NW (8/24/2013)	Peter Sefton
012	Police Memorial, facing south from Indiana Avenue NW (11/04/2012)	Peter Sefton