

Fields Building  
614 Indiana Avenue, NW  
Washington  
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-510

HABS  
DC,  
WASH,  
316-

PHOTOGRAPH

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

This small two-story (plus basement) commercial building is located on Lot 16. Approximate plan dimensions are 25' by 50'. It is dwarfed by the large seven-story Central Union Mission Building to the west. Immediately to the east of 614 Indiana Avenue is a three-story commercial structure.

The flat-roofed building has a simple structure of wooden joists bearing on lateral brick walls. The front facade, also in brick, shows significant alteration to the original design; documents of the 1907 permit show three-jack-arched openings on the ground floor with projecting storefronts at each end bay and a door in the central one. On the second floor two bays were established by a central brick pier above the doorway. Each bay had coupled windows separated by a wide galvanized iron paneled mullion. Windows on the second floor were unified by one continuous sill and a straight hood on classical brackets, all in metal. At present, the two projecting storefronts have been removed, and the arched openings made shorter and filled with plate glass windows. On the second floor, the galvanized mullions were also taken out and the resulting, larger openings filled with Chicago-style windows. The original paneled roof parapet and denticulated cornice remain. Both are metal.

The rear elevation is of brick, laid in running bond, with header courses every fourth. Two square-headed openings occur on each floor.

The interior space has been modified and contemporary finishes appear throughout: Carpet, drywall partitions and dropped ceilings of acoustical tiles; concrete flooring on the basement. Office partitions are random, with restrooms located on the rear or south. A half-turn stair adjacent to the east wall communicated the first and second level. Stacked under it, a straight run staircase descends to the basement. At this level, on the rear, there is a narrow areaway the full width of the building. On the front, or north, there is a vault that extends under the sidewalk.

The building is currently used by law offices. The first and second floors are subdivided into work stations. In the basement there is a library on the front end, to the east.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Architect Julium Wenig designed this small commercial structure in 1907. The decorative elements applied to the facade wall were eclectically selected and are stylistically unrelated. There is an awkward lack of correspondence between the first and second floor fenestration but in spite of this, the design of the latter is interesting and vivacious.

Unfortunately, the diminutive dimensions of this building in relation to the surrounding architecture single out this building, disengaging it from the urban context established by the three buildings to the east. Nevertheless, the heterogeneity that exists along Indiana Avenue lessens the seriousness of this problem.