

Square 406
Eighth, Ninth, E and F Streets, NW
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-572

HABS
DC,
WASH,
276-

PHOTOGRAPHS

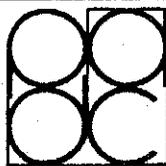
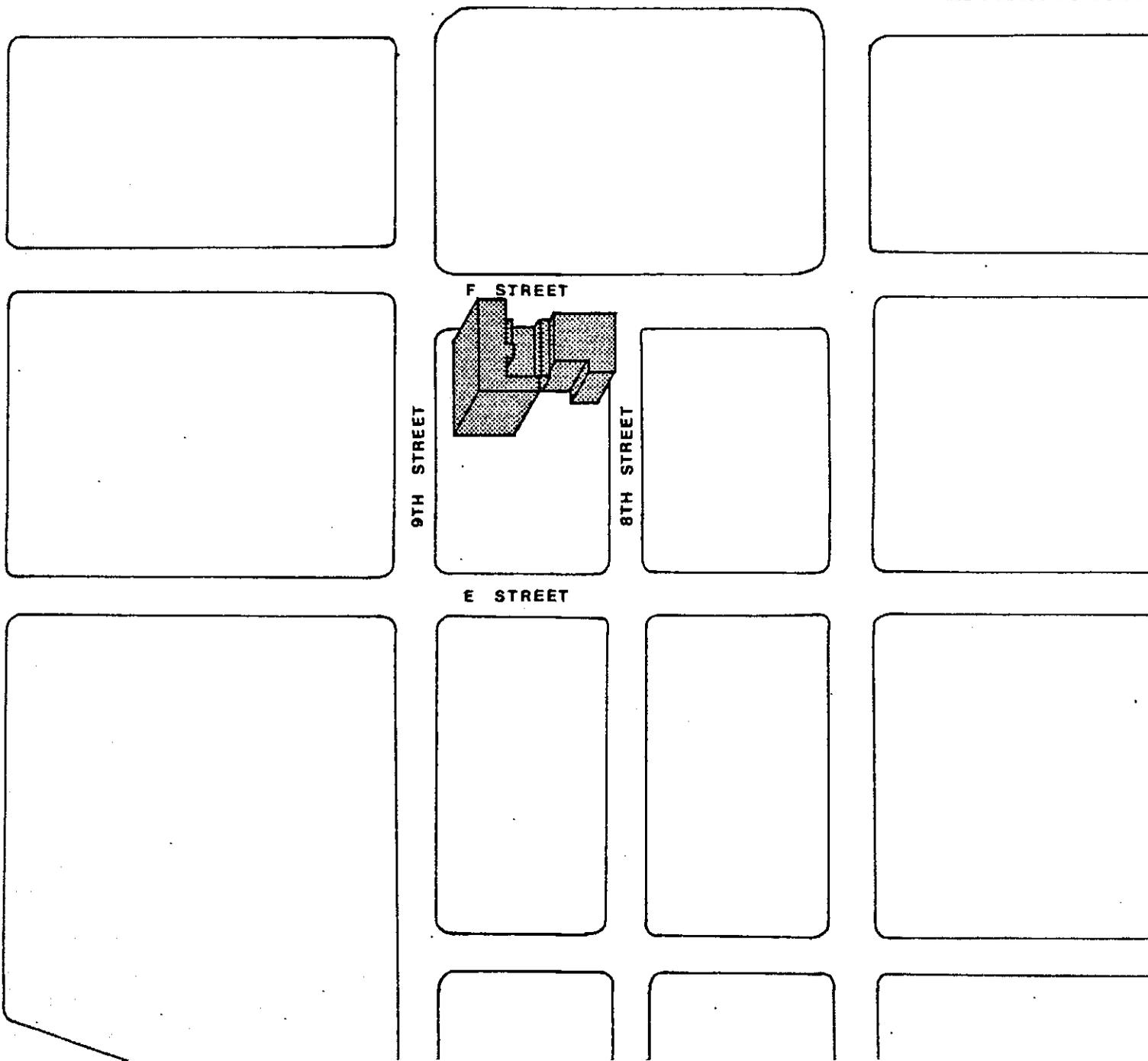
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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

HABS
DC,
WASH,
276-

Historic Preservation Program Task 3.9.1-A
BUILDING DOCUMENTATION

Square
406



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

GENERAL CONSULTANTS

ANDERSON NOTTER/MARIANI
GENERAL PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION CONSULTANT
DEVROUAX & PURNELL
ASSOCIATE ARCHITECTS

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

DAVID MCLAREN HART & ASSOCIATES
PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION CONSULTANT
MONK DUNSTONE ASSOCIATES
COST ESTIMATING CONSULTANT

INTROOUCTION TO SQUARE 406

Square 406 lies on the northern edge of the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation area, bounded by Eighth, Ninth, E and F Streets. The square flanks the Eighth Street axis that visually connects the central portico of the National Portrait Gallery to that of the National Archives. Across Eighth Street to the east lies the Tariff Commission building, while across F Street to the north is the Portrait Gallery. The portions of both F Street and Eighth Street that are adjacent to the square have been landscaped as pedestrian plazas. A densely developed commercial block, including the ten-story Romanesque Revival Riggs Bank, lies across Ninth Street to the west, while a partially undeveloped square lies across E Street to the south.

The southern two-thirds of the square is currently vacant and used for surface parking. The northern edge (F Street) is lined with a row of late-Nineteenth Century commercial buildings, which have been declared Category II landmarks and placed on the National Register of Historic Places. At the northeast corner of the square is the LeDroit Building, a four-story Italianate structure erected in 1875 that is notable for its two-level storefront. The divisions of its wood and brick facades correspond roughly to those of the Tariff Commission building. The six-story Atlas Building, built in 1892, anchors the northwest corner of the square, with two bays on F Street and twelve on Ninth Street. This building is taller and more massive than its neighbors and features tall piers topped by corbeled arches at the second story. Between these two relatively large structures are three smaller buildings erected in the 1870's and 1880's that display intricately detailed facades. The storefronts at the ground floor level of all five buildings date from the Twentieth Century.

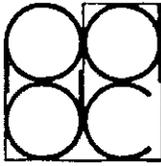
The 1861 Boschke map shows Square 406 with about half of its area and two-thirds of its street frontage built. According to the Hopkins Plat of 1887 most of the street frontage was by then occupied, though several vacant lots remained on Eighth and E Streets. A Methodist Church is indicated as occupying the middle of the Ninth Street frontage. When the Warder (later Atlas) building replaced five smaller structures in 1892, it completed the reconstruction of F Street that had begun with the 1875 LeDroit Building.

A renewed surge of redevelopment and building activity occurred in 1903-1904, according to the Baist and Sanborn maps of those years. The reinforced concrete Gayety Theater was built at that time and was the largest structure on Square 406. The entrance was located

on Ninth Street, while its main volume fronted Eighth Street. At the same time a smaller "moving pictures" theater was built on Ninth Street, two moderately sized structures on E Street at the corner of Ninth replaced several small structures and a vacant lot, and a restaurant on Ninth Street replaced the "Maccabee Temple" (formerly the Methodist Church). The U.S. Civil Service Commission was indicated as the tenant on the corner of Eighth and E Streets, while the adjacent structure on E Street housed the "Harris Ho". Both buildings appeared earlier on the 1887 Hopkins Plat. Subsequent maps indicated very little change in the basic configuration of buildings on the square from this time through 1957; A "tenement" that had been located between the LeDroit Building and the Gayety Theater was demolished prior to 1931. No further change is indicated until 1965, when only two structures remained on the currently vacant portion of the square. These were both located on E Street and were the aforementioned hotel and its contiguous neighbor of similar configuration, both of which were built prior to 1887.

The plat maps suggest that Eighth Street has never been a preferred address in this square. (Perhaps the lack of any significant activity across the street -- along the side of the Old Post Office (now Tariff Commission) -- contributed to this situation.) The lot immediately to the south of the LeDroit Building has remained vacant throughout the square's history. A second lot remained vacant until occupied by part of the Gayety Theater, which, as mentioned earlier, had its public entrance on Ninth Street. Other evidence reinforces these indications that F Street and Ninth Street have been busy commercial streets on Square 406, while Eighth Street shared little of this activity.

September 1979



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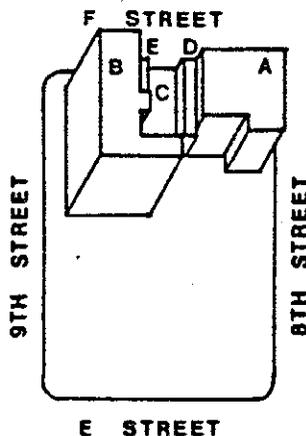
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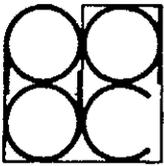
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**BUILDING DOCUMENTATION
CODE IDENTIFICATION MAP
SQUARE 406**

- A LE DROIT BUILDINGHABS No. DC-212
- B ATLAS (WARDER) BUILDINGHABS No. DC-216
- C ADAMS BUILDINGHABS No. DC-214
- D COMMERCIAL BUILDINGHABS No. DC-213
- E COMMERCIAL BUILDING ;.....HABS No. DC-215





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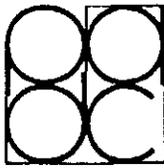
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HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

BUILDING PERMIT
SUMMARY

- F STREET: BETWEEN 8TH AND 9TH STREETS, NW
- 800-810 LeOroit Building (406-A)
.Built 1875 (pediment)
.No major alterations or repairs
- 812 Commercial Building (406-0)
.2/10/1880, #943: Build one story rear brick addition as an "eating house".
.12/6/1880, #672: Build a show window with doors on each side.
.6/15/1892, #2715: Build show window. Builder: Richardson & Burges. Cost: \$900.
.6/20/190B, #4092: Alter show window and insert new doors and transom in 3 story brick building.
- 814-816 Adams Building (406-C)
.3/28/187B, #414: Build one 2 story brick office and store building with flat roof. Architect: James H. McGill; builder William B. Downnie & Brothers. Cost: \$5,000.
.12/28/1882, #762: Alter one brick building by adding one accessory back brick building. Cost: \$113.
.2/5/1908, #2313: Permit to reconstruct; erect new show windows; close cellar door in sidewalk. Cost: \$500.
.9/6/1923, #2050: Permit to repair one brick 2 story building by enlarging the door; 2 projecting windows. Architect: Julius Bing; builder G. Koloch. Cost: \$200.
.12/21/25, #5477: Install 2 show windows in 2 story building. Builder: Cladney. Cost: \$900.
- 818 Commercial Building (406-E)
.6/7/1905, #54005: Replace one show window.
.2/8/1912, #3475: Rebuild two show windows, new stairs and minor repairs to a 3 story brick and iron building to be a store when construction is completed. Value: \$1000.



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BUILDING PERMIT
SUMMARY

NINTH STREET: BETWEEN E AND F STREETS, NW

527

Atlas (Warder) Building

- .4/27/1892, #2171: Build one 4 story store and office building of brick and stone; hipped tin roof. Architect: N. J. Haller; builder Geo. E. Simmons. Cost: \$35,000.
- .5/15/1897, #1338: Put up 2 show windows. Present building is brick six stories with tin roof.
- .4/25/1899, #1479: Install new show window, cut present cellar doors at window line.
- .10/13/1910, #1851: Install new show windows in halls of 2-5th floors. Builder: Frank Wickline. Cost: \$80.
- .1/4/1904, #1025: Install Otis electric passenger and freight elevators. Cost: \$4,650.
- .11/1/21, #3470: Transpose 2 show windows to move entrance door from outside to center. Cost: \$600.
- .5/14/1925, #10438: Remove present brick columns and install three 15" I-beams and new front. Architect: L. E. Denslow. Cost: \$1,500.



NORTHEAST CORNER OF SQUARE 406 WITH VIEW SOUTH ON EIGHTH STREET



NORTHEAST CORNER OF SQUARE 406 WITH VIEW WEST ON F STREET



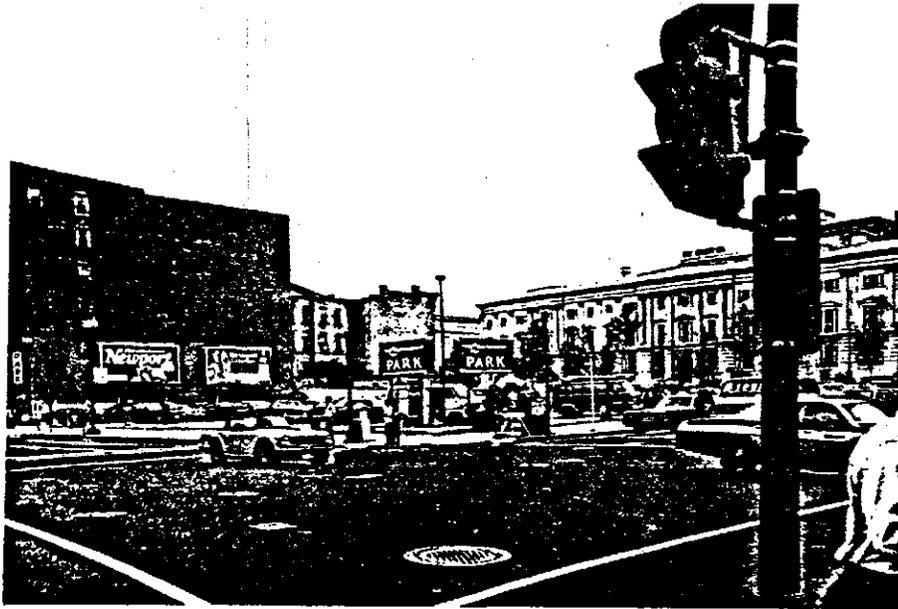
NORTHWEST CORNER OF SQUARE 406 WITH VIEW EAST ON F STREET



NORTHWEST CORNER OF SQUARE 406 WITH VIEW SOUTH ON NINTH STREET



WEST SIDE OF SQUARE 406 WITH VIEW NORTH ON NINTH STREET

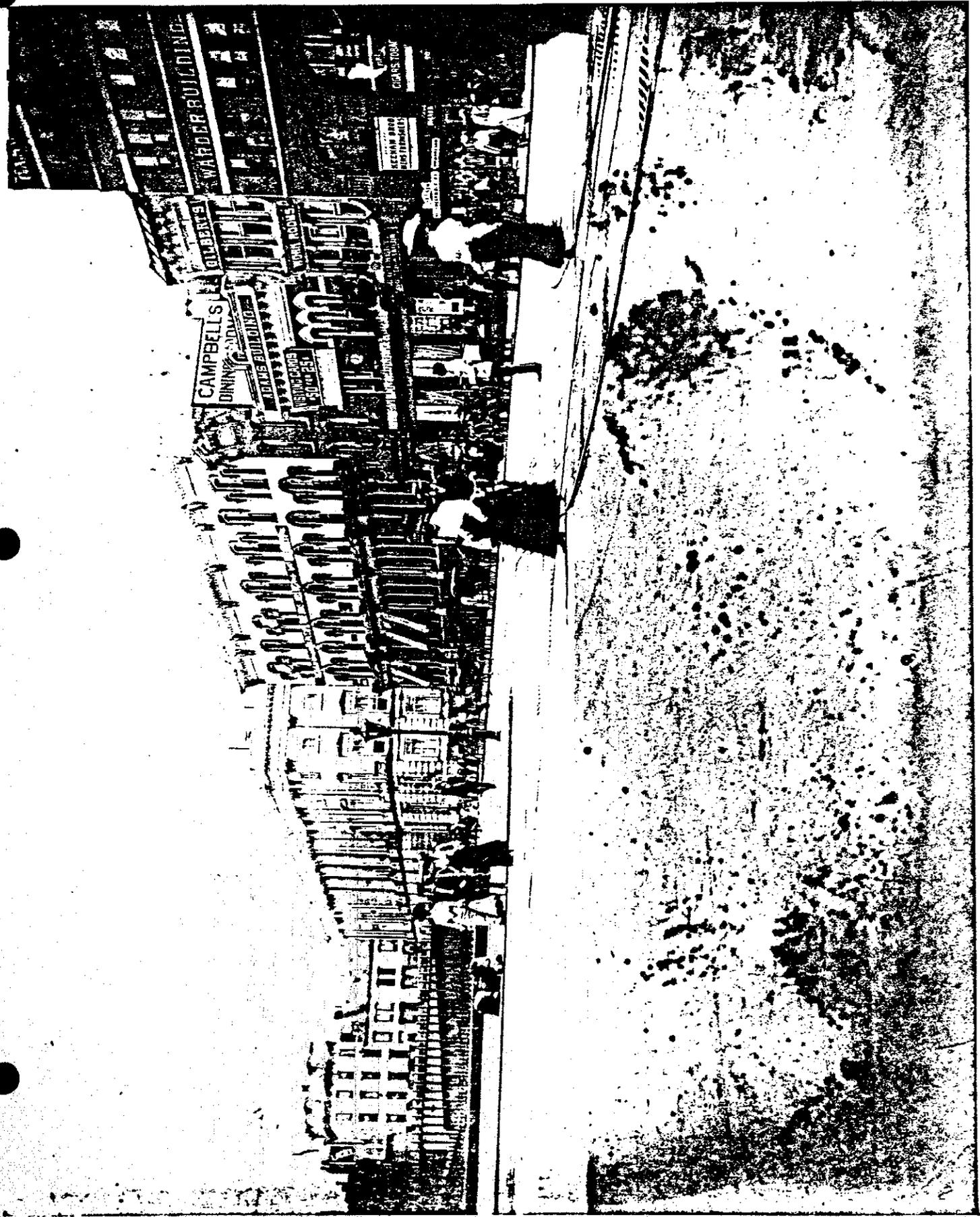


VIEW FROM SOUTHWEST OF SOUTHERN SECTION OF SQUARE 406



SOUTHEAST CORNER OF SQUARE 406 WITH VIEW NORTH OF EIGHTH STREET

RELATED HISTORIC DOCUMENTS AND PHDTOGRAPHS:



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

F STREET EAST SHOWING NORTH SIDE OF SQUARE 406

SUMMARY OF PAST LAND USES AND TENANTS FOR EACH LOT

INTRODUCTION TO SQUARE 406

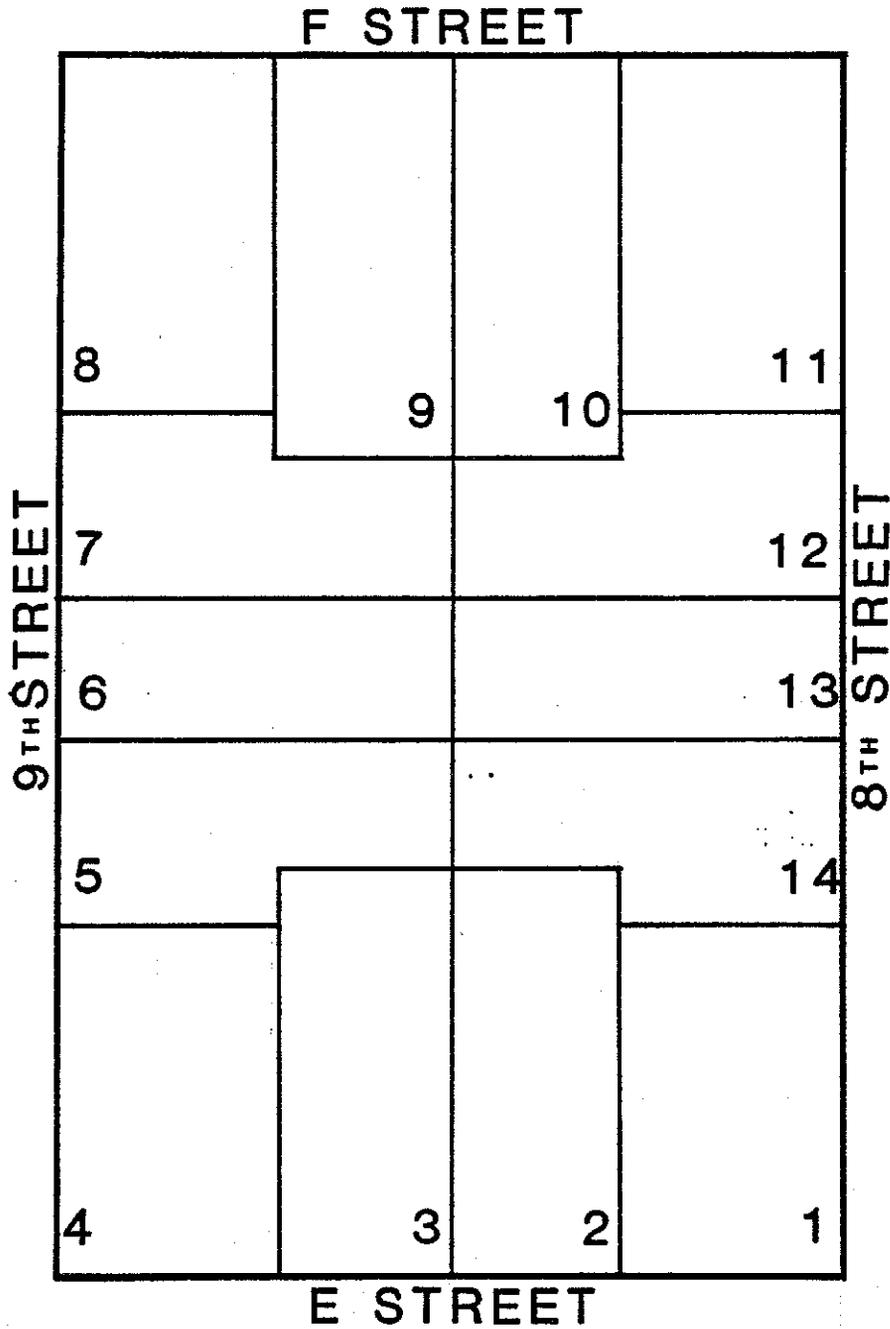
Square 406 lies in the northern edge of the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation Area, bounded by Eighth, Ninth, E and F Streets. Across Eighth Street to the east lies the massive Tariff Commission building, and to the north is the National Portrait Gallery. The portions of F and Eighth Streets which are adjacent to the square have been landscaped as pedestrian plazas. The square flanks the Eighth Street axis which connects visually the central portico of the National Portrait Gallery to that of the National Archives. A densely developed commercial block, including the ten-story Romanesque Revival Riggs Bank, which lies across Ninth Street to the west, while a partially undeveloped square lies across E Street to the south.

The square originally consisted of fourteen lots, four each facing north and south, and three each on the east and west sides. Subsequent plat maps show alterations to the lot numbering and configuration. According to the Hopkin's 1887 Plat Maps most of the street frontage on the square was occupied except for a few vacant lots on Eighth and E Streets. A methodist church was indicated as occupying the middle of the Ninth Street frontage. With the construction of the Le Droit building in 1875 and the Atlas building in 1892 F Street established itself as the business and commercial center of the square. A wide variety of professionals occupied the Le Droit building. Before the turn of the century, the building was predominately occupied by patent attorneys, real estate brokers, insurance agents and lawyers, according to the city directories. After the turn of the century the building still contained several lawyers and real estate brokers, however, the tenant make-up diversified over the years. Other occupants included tailors, jewelers and dentists. By the mid Twentieth Century, the Le Droit building housed a barber, lawyers, jewelers, artists and various other merchants.

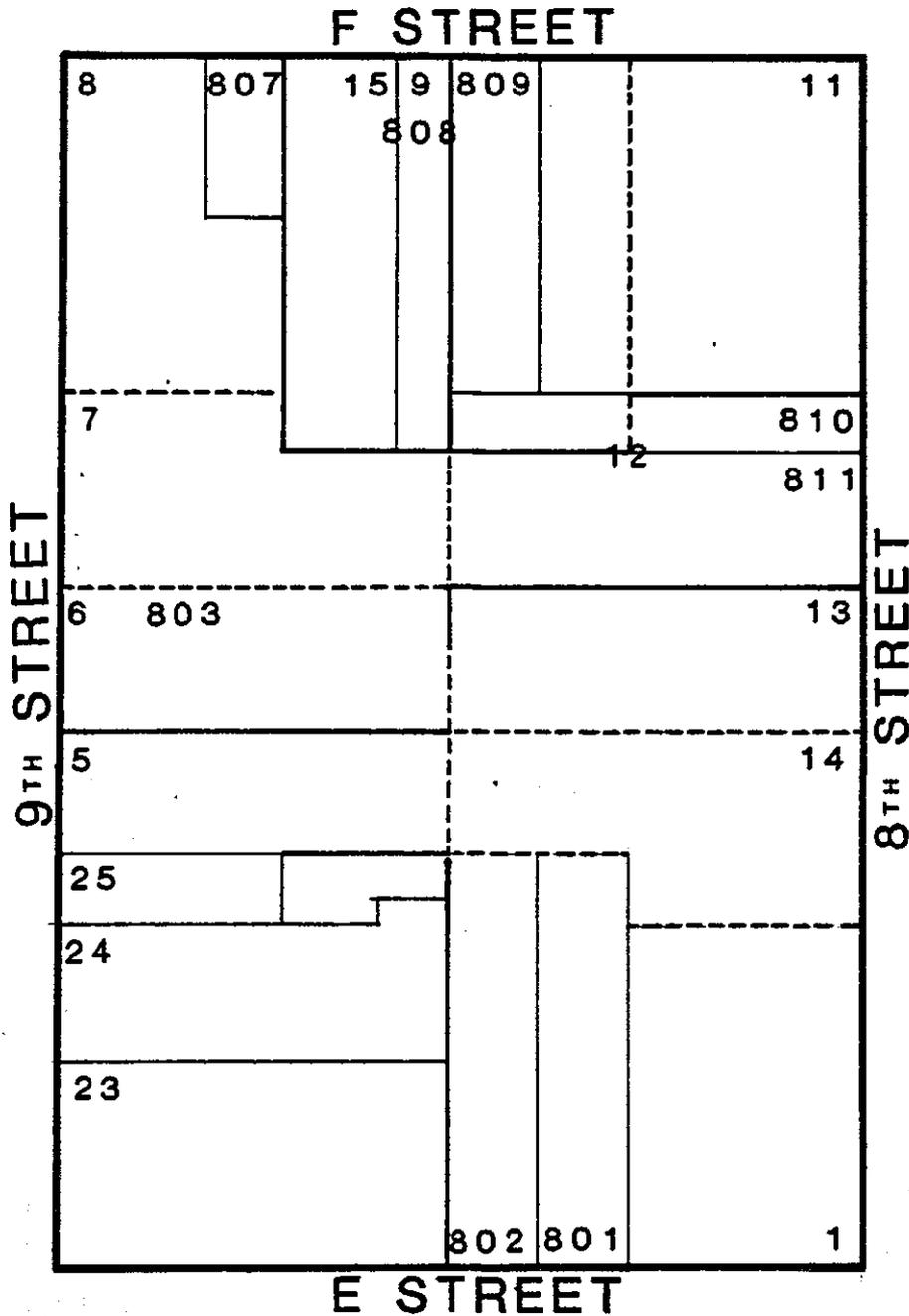
Eighth Street was the least populated of the four on the square. Two of the lots on the street were never developed.

A surge of development and building activity did occur at about the turn of the century. The Gayety Theater was built about this time, and became the largest structure on the square. The city directories indicate that the methodist church was replaced by the Maccabee Temple in about 1900, and then by a restaurant in about 1915. The U. S. Civil Service Commission was indicated as an occupant on the corner of Eighth and E Streets.

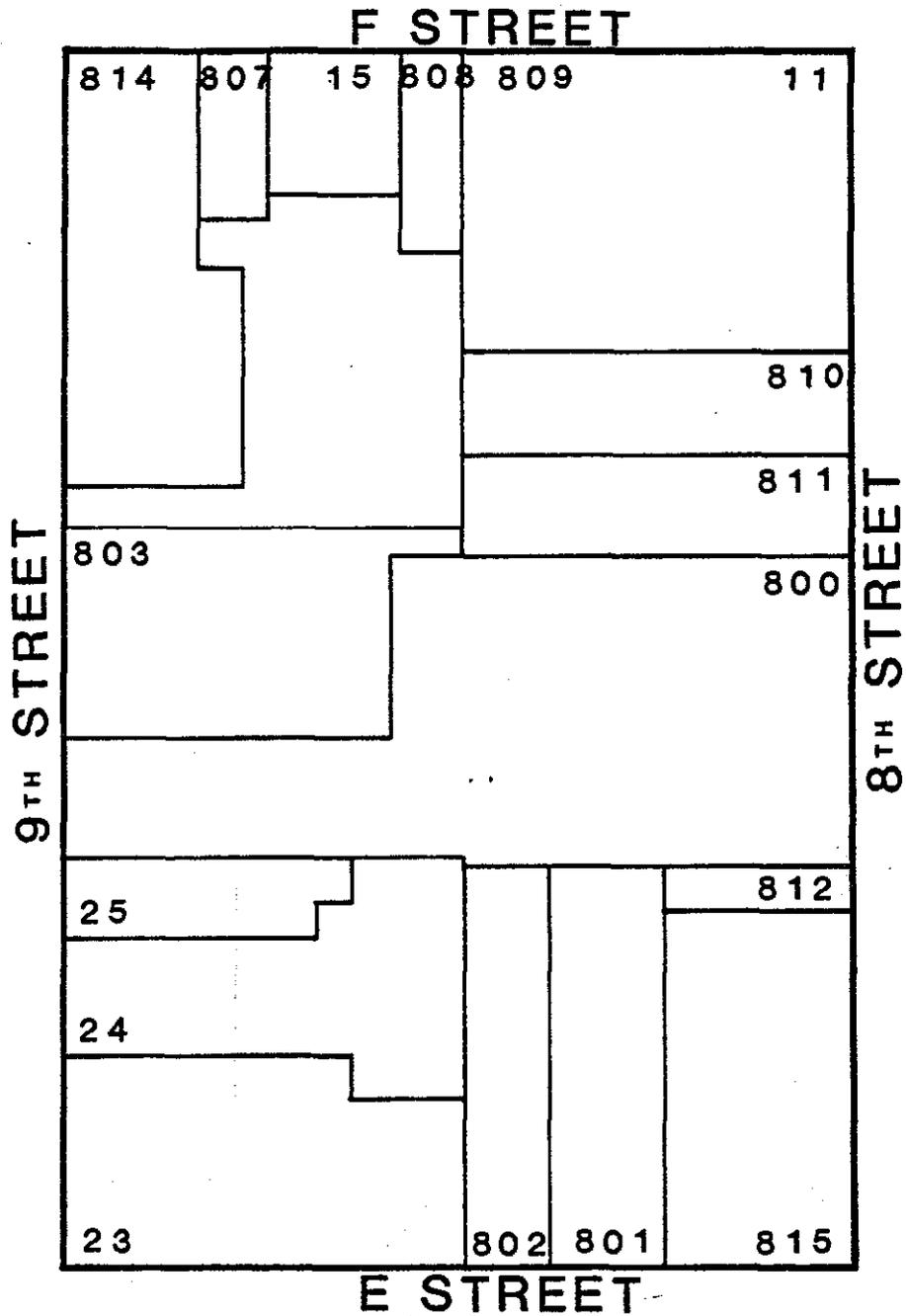
Today F Street remains the only active sector of the square. Both the Le Droit and the Warder (now called the Atlas) buildings remain, as do three smaller buildings between them. All have been designated Category II Landmarks and placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The southern two-thirds are currently vacant and used for surface parking.



SQUARE 406
BASTERT 1872 PLAT MAP

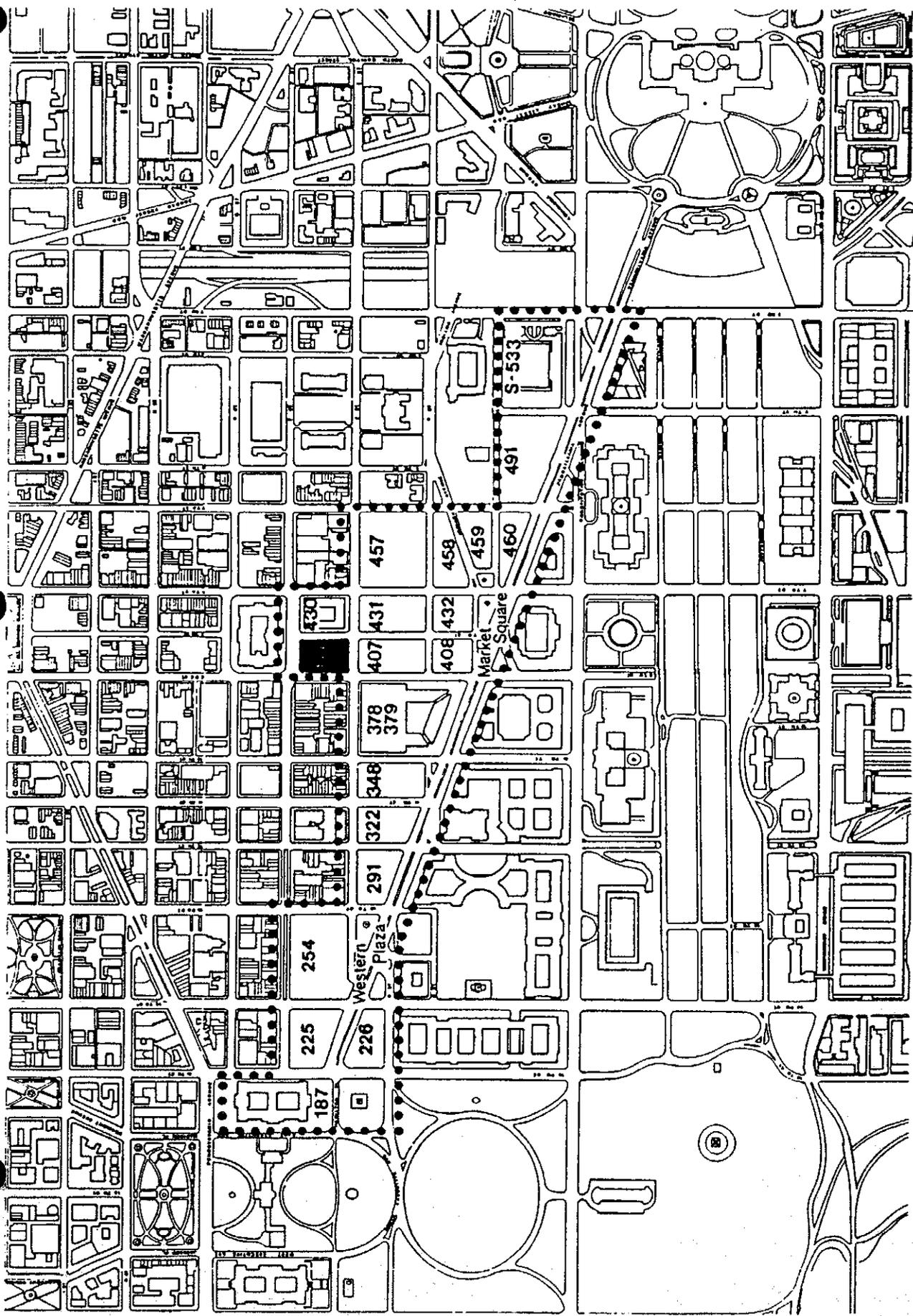


SQUARE 406
BAIST 1919 PLAT MAP



SQUARE 406
PADC 1974 PROPERTY MAP

Square Identification Plan



CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF PUBLIC DOCUMENTS

1792	(October 5) Washington first platted
1813	First TAX ASSESSMENT record
1819	Tax Assessment
1822	First CITY DIRECTORY
1824	Tax Assessment
1829	Tax Assessment
1834	City Directory
1839	Tax Assessment
1840	Tax Assessment
1843	City Directory
1844	Tax Assessment
1846	City Directory
1850	City Directory
1853	City Directory
1855	City Directory - first time house numbers were used as part of addresses
1858	First MAP of DC - Baschke
1858	City Directory
1859	Tax Assessment
1862	City Directory - Directories published annually hereafter
1864	Tax Assessment
1869-1871	Tax Assessment
1870	New street numbering system instituted; many early addresses in PADC site changed
1872	Plat Map (Bastert)
1878	First recorded building permit
1878-1879	Tax Assessment
1883-1884	Tax Assessment
1887	Plat Map (Hopkins)
1892	Plat Map (Hopkins)
1893-1894	Tax Assessment
1899-1900	Tax Assessment
1903	Plat Map (Baist)
1919	Plat Map (Baist)
1920	Plat Map (Baist)
1923	Plat Map (Baist)
1924	Plat Map (Baist)
1939	Plat Map (Baist)
1948	Plat Map (Baist)
1957	Plat Map (Baist)

SOURCES

Baist Real Estate Atlas
Bastert and Enthoffer Plat Maps
Boyd's City Directories
District of Columbia Building Permits
District of Columbia General Assessment Records
District of Columbia Recorder of Deeds
District of Columbia Surveyor's Office Records
District of Columbia Tax Records
Hopkins Real Estate Atlas
Polk's City Directories
Property Map for Downtown Urban Renewal Area for District of Columbia Redevelopment Land Agency
Sanborn Insurance Map