

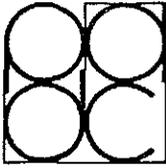
D.C. Employment Security Building
201 Sixth Street, NW
(NE Corner of 6th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue)
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-822

HABS
DC
WASH
592-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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



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

GENERAL CONSULTANTS

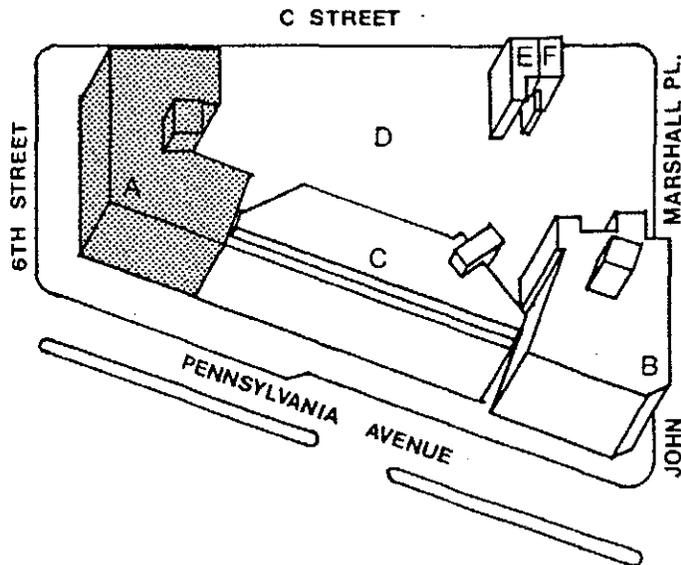
ANDERSON NOTTER/MARIANI
GENERAL PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION CONSULTANT
DEVROUX & PURNELL
ASSOCIATE ARCHITECTS
DAVID MCLAREN HART & ASSOCIATES
PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION CONSULTANT
MONK DUNSTONE ASSOCIATES
COST ESTIMATING CONSULTANT

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

BUILDING DOCUMENTATION

HABS
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DC EMPLOYMENT SECURITY BUILDING
201 SIXTH STREET, NW
(NE CORNER OF 6th. ST. & PENNA. AVE)
LOT 826
Part of Square 491 (HABS No. DC-619)



GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The building occupies an irregular, roughly pentagonal lot on the western end of Square 491, with frontage on Pennsylvania Avenue, 6th & C Streets. Respective building dimensions for these three facades are 178', 159' and 140'. The building is bounded on the east by an empty lot, and on Pennsylvania Avenue by the D.C. Library Building. The building volume is set back from the sidewalks by means of raised terraces with planting. The six-story (plus basement) steel skeleton structure has exterior limestone cladding on the three facades, while the rear walls (east) are clad in yellow brick. All elevations have square-headed window openings arranged one per bay per floor. The main entrance is on C Street (north), with a similar secondary access on 6th Street (west). A service ramp sloping down to the basement loading dock is reached from C Street, to the east of the building. A seven-story tower at the east end of the facade on Pennsylvania Avenue ties this building in with the adjacent D.C. Library. Its detailing on the uppermost floor is a direct copy of the latter's topmost level. When viewed from the exterior the tower appears to form part of the D.C. Library.

The cladding of the first floor on all three facades projects slightly, is delineated by a belt course, and acts as a base for the upper floors. The fenestration is organized in a simple fashion: windows on the top and bottom floor consist of an individual opening while those from the second through the fifth share a single vertical opening. These latter groupings are recessed into the opening and feature double, side-by-side aluminum casements, with fluted aluminum transom panels underneath. All window sashes are glazed with a single pane of smoked glass.

Facade widths in terms of structural bays are ten on Pennsylvania Avenue, ten on 6th Street, and eight on C Street. The two bay-wide main entrance on the latter facade is centered on the wall and is marked by a polished brownish granite surround that carries emblems of the District of Columbia on either side of the opening. The similarly-sized 6th Street entrance also has a surround in the same material, but is less ornamented.

Inside, the typical floors are organized into peripheral office spaces serviced by a double-loaded corridor that springs from the central core, which features a pair of elevators. On the ground level, a large L-shaped corridor opens on both of the building's entryways. The walls as well as the free-standing columns are clad in white marble, strongly contrasting with the more inexpensive finishes and furnishings in this space. The vestibules

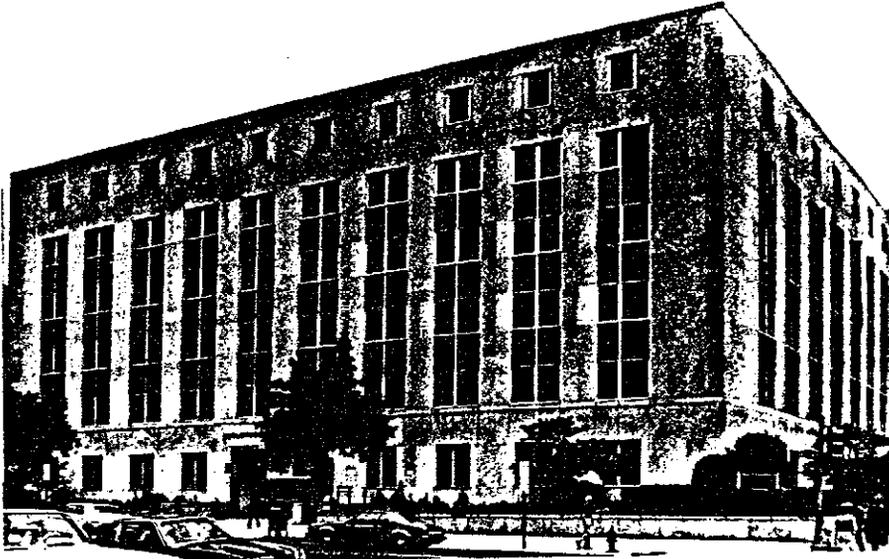
between doors at each entry are clad in reddish-brown marble, marking a transition to the exterior surround of the doorway openings.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

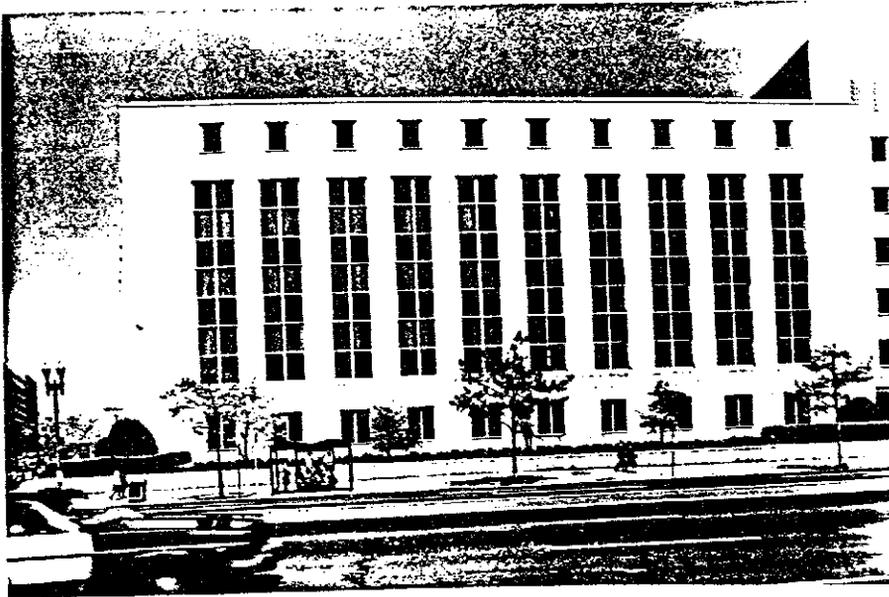
Built in 1961 (no permit available), the D.C. Employment Security Building is a straightforward structure that uses an institutional vocabulary common to modern architecture. It derives its facade concept from its older neighbor to the east, the D.C. Central Public Library. Basically the building is expressed as a large, monolithic mass whose surfaces are articulated into repetitive bays that try to pick up the arcade-like rhythm of the adjacent library facade. In several ways, however, it is considerably less successful than its undistinguished model. For one, the inter-columniation panels are not sufficiently recessed from the flush facade plane to provide an acceptable solid-void alternation, which ultimately should be the facade's correct expression. This condition is aggravated by the brightness of the aluminum frames and transom panels, and by the busy texture of the latter which, instead of allowing a visual receding of the panels into a neutral background, projects them to the forefront, forcing them to become the foci of attraction. The juxtaposition of the staid limestone piers with this glazing method disrupts the cadence characteristic of the Federal Triangle Buildings.

However, its large volume, its height and the impersonal large scale are in keeping with other Pennsylvania Avenue governmental buildings.

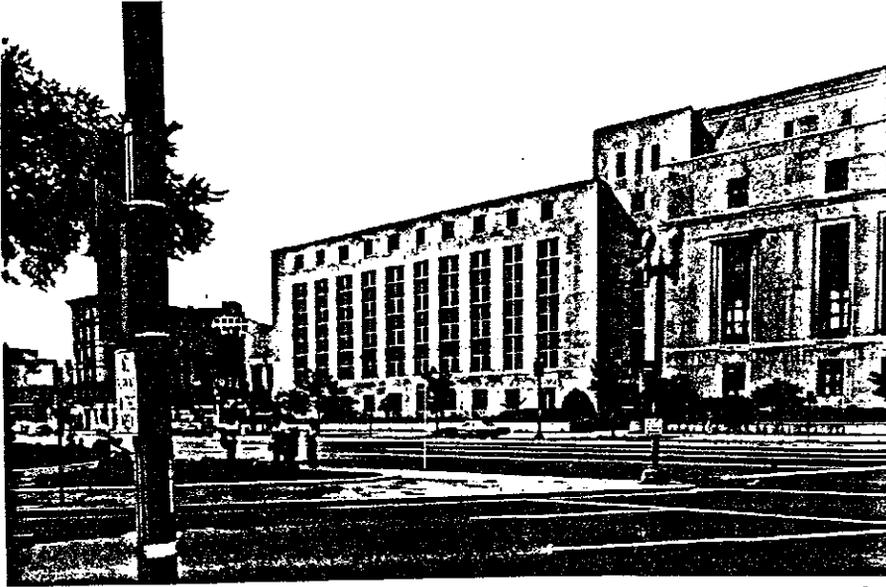
August 1979



FACADE AT 6 STREET (WEST)



FACADE AT PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE (SOUTH)



OBLIQUE VIEW OF PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE FACADE
SHOWING ADJACENT D.C. PUBLIC LIBRARY BUILDING



CORNER VIEW SHOWING MAIN ENTRANCE ON C STREET