

Atlantic Building
930 F Street, NW
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-569-A

HABS
DC,
WASH,
585-A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
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Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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ATLANTIC BUILDING

- Location: 928-930 F Street, Northwest, Washington, D.C.
USGS Washington West, DC-MD-VA
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:
324.365/4307.075/18
- Significance: When the Atlantic Building was completed in 1888, it was the largest commercial structure in the city and one of the first with a passenger elevator. The speculative office building was designed by James Hill Green, who had served as supervising architect of the U.S. Treasury and was the designer, as well, of numerous fine private buildings in Washington. The eight-story Atlantic is noted as one of the last "skyscraper" buildings to be constructed with load-bearing masonry walls. The eighth story features two large assembly rooms, the location of numerous important public meetings, including one at which the National Zoo was founded. In 1890, this top floor served as headquarters for President Benjamin Harrison's inaugural committee.
- Description: The Atlantic, one of the finest examples of Romanesque Revival style in Washington, features two passenger elevators paired with a substantial wooden staircase wrapped around a skylit stairwell, and commodious office spaces on all eight floors. The first floor designed for retail space has projecting show windows. The facade of the upper floors features brick arched window openings, granite trim, decorated spandrels and terra cotta cartouches. The floor structure throughout the building consists of wood framing, except for limited areas of the first floor and second floors where brick vaults resting on iron beams were used in an attempt to provide fireproofing and security. Fireplaces with wood mantels, decorative tiles, firebox screens and firebox tiles were typically located in the primary offices on floors two through six, and in the large assembly rooms on the eighth floor.
- History: The Atlantic Building was built by a group of Washington businessmen including lawyers, real estate agents, the editor of the Evening Star, a banker and an auctioneer. Alexander Thompson Britton, founder of the noted law firm of Britton & Gray, was the first president of the Atlantic Building Company. Its 142 offices were rented mostly by attorneys who needed to be near the Patent Office and the Pension Building and by real estate agents offering suburban land to downtown investors. The United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service spent its formative years in the Atlantic Building from 1905 to 1940 when the Forest Service occupied the entire building. During the past 40 years, jewelers, clothing merchants, photographers and lawyers used this building.
- Source: Washingtoniana Division, Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, National Archives
- Historian: Laura Harris/Elizabeth Jiranek
Traceries, 702 H Street, NW Washington, DC
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