

425 Seventh Street, NW  
(Douglas Records)  
Washington  
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-605

HABS  
DC,  
WASH  
345-

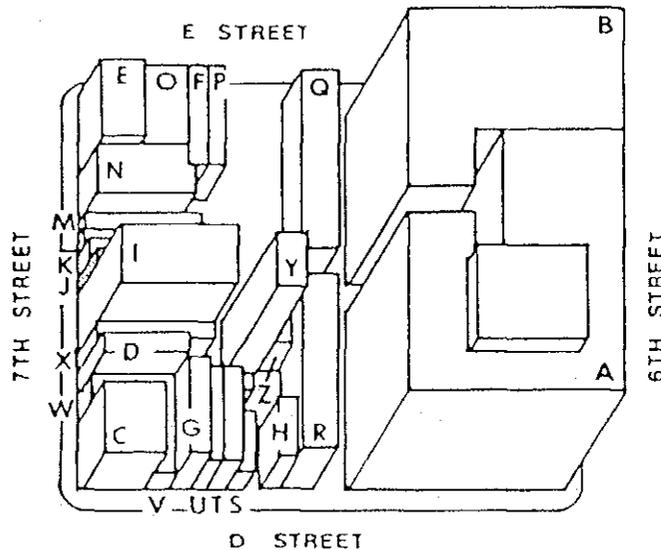
PHOTOGRAPH

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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

HABS  
 DC,  
 WASH,  
 345-

425 Seventh Street, NW  
 (Douglas Records)  
 Lot 822



This documentation was produced for mitigation purposes by the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation. Additional documentation exists for Square 457, within which this structure stands. For photographs, historical, and descriptive data on Square 457, see HABS No. DC-597.

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

This three-story stone-faced commercial building occupies a twenty-one foot wide by one hundred-twenty foot deep lot on the east side of Seventh Street. Its contiguous neighbors are the similarly sized George & Co. and the much larger seven-story IOOF Temple. The Seventh Street (west) elevation, which is expressed as a single structural bay, is clad with ashlar limestone facing with subdued Art Deco details. An aluminum and glass storefront extends the full width of the ground floor facade. Inside the building, each floor features a large open space to the front (west) and small service rooms, stair and freight elevator at the rear (east).

## ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Designed by Joseph Bonmer, this commercial structure was constructed in 1927 by the Wardman Construction Company (Permit no. 3643, 10/28/1927). Its size and scale-lending details help continue the rhythmic progression of older commercial structures along Seventh Street. In spite of its modern features (Art Deco details, horizontal window groupings), it is closer in character to the Nineteenth Century buildings on the street than to the contiguous, much larger IOOF Temple, which was built ten years earlier. The centrally organized limestone facade is enhanced by its finely carved ornaments. Less successful are the metal spandrel (perhaps a later addition) and the awkward relationship of the raised central portion of the "cornice" to the adjacent ornamental "capitals".

## SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

Facade: The Seventh Street (west) facade is organized centrally as a single bay. An aluminum and glass storefront with a central entry flanked by two show windows spans the width of the first floor. Three double-hung windows are located above, on each of the second and third floors, separated by a metal spandrel, and are grouped within a single large opening in the ashlar limestone surface. At the sill of this large opening a narrow carved floral band is located, while above is a wider carved lintel with a palmette motif. Further relief is added to the otherwise flat stone surface at its top, where two shallow carved rectangular foliage panels, aligned above the implied piers that flank the window opening, suggest capitals. Between the piers and above the window opening, is a narrower band that is raised higher on the facade. Its lower third is carved in a repetitive floral pattern and carries a flush coping course.

September 1979



SEVENTH STREET (WEST)  
FACADE



WEST FACADE: DETAIL OF  
CARVED ORNAMENT ON LINTEL,  
IMPLIED CAPITAL, AND  
"CORNICE" AT NORTH END



WEST FACADE: DETAIL OF  
CARVED LINTEL AND  
CORNICE AT CENTRAL BAY

Lot 12 (Sublots 822 and 823)  
425, 427-429 Seventh Street

Lot 12 measures approximately 50 feet on the Seventh Street side and 120 feet along its east-west axis. Lot 12 subdivided into two smaller sublots. The southern one, subplot 822, corresponds to 425 Seventh Street. The northern half, or subplot 823, corresponds to 427-429 Seventh Street.

1819.....The Washington Tax Records indicate that lot 12 was assessed in the name of Alexander Kerr.

1824.....Alexander Kerr was assessed \$1406.00 for lot 12.

1829/33..Kerr's assessment rose to \$2445.00 for lot 12.

Lot 12 (Sublot 822)  
425 Seventh Street

1844.....The District of Columbia tax records indicate that lot 12 subdivided into two sublots about this time. The southern half, or sublot 822 was assessed \$1006.00 to Louis and Louisa Brunet.

1859.....The city directories list John Markriter as the tenant of 425 Seventh Street.

1859.....Sublot 822 was assessed \$4780.00 in the name of Louis S. Brunet.

1860  
to

1870.....During this decade 425 Seventh Street housed a variety of tenants. Among these were L. Durall, a dressmaker, Topham and Company, harness, saddles and trunks, John B. Wheeler and Company, a real estate agent; and A. Grant and Company, architects.

1864  
to

1880.....James S. Topham, the harness, saddle and trunk dealer, occupied the building for a period of sixteen years.

1868  
to

1896.....The city directories list Alfred Schuling, a counselor agent and lawyer, as long-term tenant of the building.

1870.....The lot was reassessed to L.S. Brunet for \$7,000.00.

1877  
to

1883.....Edward Hammersley, a confectioner, was listed in the city directories as a tenant of the building.

1878/79..Sublot 822 was assessed \$11,322.00 in the name of Louis L. Brunet.

1883/84..Louis Brunet's assessment remained at \$11,322.00 for subplot 822.

1884

to

1927.....K. Kneese and Son operated a harness, saddle and trunk store at 425 Seventh Street.

1893/94..Louis S. Brunet's assessment rose to 13,838.00 for the ground and was assessed \$6000.00 for the improvements to the property.

1899/

1900.....John L. Brunett, trustee, was assessed 13,838 for the ground and \$5000.00 for the improvements to the property.

1927.....A building permit was issued on October 4th to raze the existing building (Permit No. 2889).

An October 28 building permit was issued to 425 Seventh Street which authorized permission to erect a five story building with a stone facade (Permit No. 3643; Architect: Joseph Bonmer; Builder; Wardman Construction Company; Cost; \$50,000.00).

1930.....A building permit was issued on November 25th to extend the store window back to the store room (Permit No. 138, 123; Architect; John H. Cobb; Builder; G.W. Gosinell; Cost; \$300.00).

1936.....A March 15 building permit authorized permission to erect one standard fire escape to large windows at the rear of the three-story office building (Permit No. 189,256).

1942.....A building permit issued on December 29th authorized the removal of the glass from the show windows (Permit No. 257,984).

1943.....On May 21, a permit granted permission to steam and clean the front elevation (Permit No. 260,856).

1947.....A May 13 permit authorized the installation of the duct work for the air conditioner (Permit No. 294,899).

1948

to

1967.....425 Seventh Street was used to house several furniture dealerships during this time span. Among these were the Brentley's Furniture Inc., Mayer and Company Furniture, and Castro's Convertibles, Furniture.

1981.....The building now houses the Douglas Records Store.

## 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