



OFFICE *of the* UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

A Brief History of the United States Trade Representative Office “Winder Building”

600 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20006



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*Compiled by the American Battlefield Trust Education Department
Updated October 2019
www.battlefields.org*

Dubbed the first “skyscraper” of Washington DC, the headquarters of the Office of the United States Trade Representative, also known as the “Winder Building,” has had a long and storied lifespan.

The concept for the Winder Building came from William H. Winder, who was named for, and was the son of, General William H. Winder.¹ General Winder was a native of Maryland’s Eastern Shore, and served at the Battle of Bladensburg and the defense of Baltimore, during the War of 1812.²

The younger Winder decided to try his hand at building speculation in Washington DC. He was convinced that the United States Government was making a mistake by not undertaking the construction of fireproof buildings. Therefore, Winder decided to take a more roundabout way of forcing the government’s hand.

Knowing that the ever-expanding Federal government would need more office space, he hired renowned South Carolina architect Robert Mills to construct his new building, which Winder would then look to lease or sell outright to the government. If all else failed, Winder would turn the spacious new building into a hotel.

Robert Mills boasted a stellar resume. He served as the “architect of the federal buildings,” and while “architect,” he designed the Department of the Treasury Building, United States Patent Office Building (today the National Portrait Gallery), and the General Post Office. At other points in his career he designed the Library and Science Building for the United States Military Academy at West Point, the library for the University of South Carolina, and oversaw the initial construction phase of the Smithsonian Castle.³ In the end, Mills’ most famous piece of architecture is perhaps his simplest design—the Washington Monument.⁴

Robert Mills’ designs incorporated many classic features from the Greeks, Egyptians, and Romans with more contemporary Georgian and Federal styles of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Towering pillars and impressive arches adorn many of his buildings, while maintaining a symmetrical footprint. Mills was progressive in terms of fireproofing his buildings, while also making accommodations for indoor plumbing and central heating. He was even called upon to help with renovations of the Executive Mansion (more commonly known as the White House), where he supervised the up-grades to the plumbing and heating systems.

While Mills’ resume was impressive, his reputation among Washington’s political circles was somewhat dubious. Many of his prominent projects were lambasted by critics. Some worried about the structural integrity of his designs.⁵ Others complained about the lack of lighting or space in the buildings. While Mills worried about the aesthetic beauty of his buildings, members of Congress and the Senate worried

¹ Some histories of the Winder Building state the William Winder (the younger), was nephew of William H. Winder (the elder). Census records and the grave of the younger Winder state that he is the son of General Winder.

² General Winder’s oldest son, John Winder, served with the Confederacy during the Civil War. John Winder headed the Confederate Bureau of Prison Camps.

³ Mills did not design the Smithsonian Castle, he lost out in the design competition to James Renwick, Jr. See John Bryan, *Robert Mills: America’s First Architect*, (Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 2001), for more information about Robert Mills.

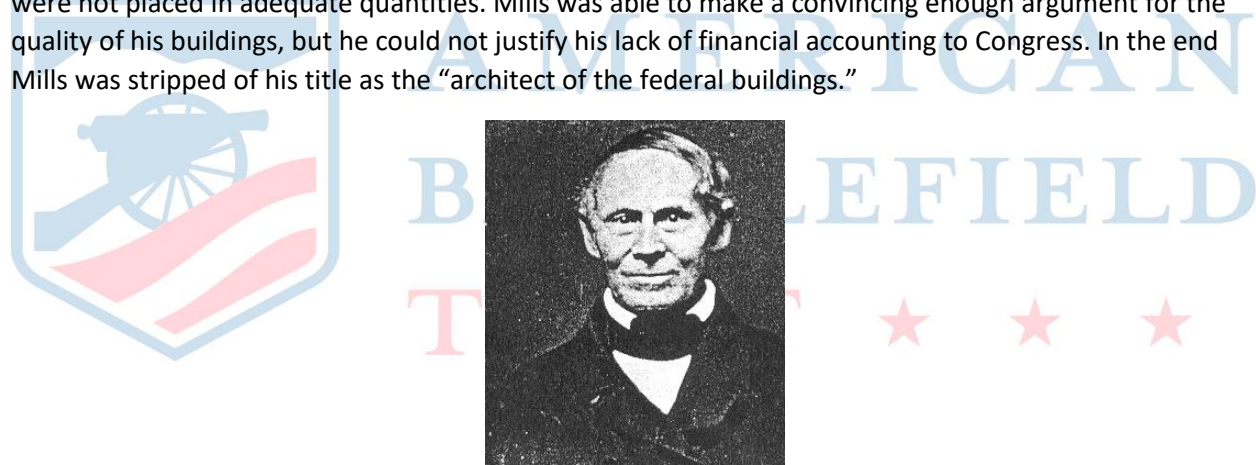
⁴ The Washington Monument was not completed until 1885, 30 years after Mills’ death.

⁵ One of Mills’ most outspoken critics was Philadelphia architect Thomas U. Walter. Walter took issue with almost every project that Robert Mills was attached, too. Walter also took issue with just about every other architect and engineer. It would seem that Walter’s ego was large, and he was unimpressed with most of his peers.

about the functionality of the buildings for the daily operations of the government. They also worried about the construction costs of his projects. Mills would consistently out-distance his allotted budgets. When Mills exceeded a budget, he or his subordinates would issue promissory notes to workers and contractors. These promissory notes had no financial backing and he was not authorized to issue them. Mills worked under the assumption that the government would allocate funds as needed, ex post facto.

The United States Congress launched numerous inquiries into Mills' business practices, as well as his designs. In the case of the Treasury Building, Mills was allotted a budget of \$500,000. Only one-third of the building was completed, because the cost of the project had soared to \$677,470.03.⁶ If two other wings were added to the building, as was initially proposed, the cost was estimated to have reached \$1,208,470.03.⁷

As members of Congress scrutinized Mills' budget, outside architects were called upon to inspect his buildings. The third-party architects found what they believed to be significant flaws in Mills' buildings.⁸ Some worried that the buildings would collapse in on themselves, because arches or support beams were not placed in adequate quantities. Mills was able to make a convincing enough argument for the quality of his buildings, but he could not justify his lack of financial accounting to Congress. In the end Mills was stripped of his title as the "architect of the federal buildings."



Architect Robert Mills

Unfortunately for Robert Mills, he was as poor a bookkeeper with his personal finances as he was with managing the public funds which were allotted to him. His reputation in Washington was tarnished, but not ruined. The congressional inquiries made it difficult for Mills to find work in the public sector. In 1853, the engineer of the United States Capitol, Montgomery C. Meigs, advised Secretary of War Jefferson Davis not to hire Mills, explaining that "as craftsman Mr. Mills was tried in the Engineers office & not found qualified." Ironically, less than 10 years later, Meigs would use one of Robert Mills' buildings as his office.⁹

⁶ Wings were eventually added to the Treasury Building.

⁷ A cost of \$30,705,792 in today's dollars.

⁸ These architects included Thomas U. Walter.

⁹ Office of the United States Trade Representative. "History of the Winder Building, Home to USTR's Washington D.C. Headquarters." [www.ustr.gov](https://ustr.gov/archive/Who_We_Are/History_of_the_Winder_Building_Home_to_USTR's_Washington_DC_Headquarters.html) https://ustr.gov/archive/Who_We_Are/History_of_the_Winder_Building_Home_to_USTR's_Washington_DC_Headquarters.html (accessed October 28, 2017).

Even as many within the government doubted the qualities of Robert Mills, William H. Winder's faith was unshaken. Winder commissioned Mills to design his new building at the intersection of 17th and F Streets, NW, in Washington.

The Winder Building is designed in the shape of an L, with one side facing F Street and the other facing 17th Street. The F Street wing is some 209 feet long and 53 feet deep. The 17th Street wing is the smaller of the two; measuring in at 101 feet long and 53 feet deep. Each wing is 75 feet high.

The interior of the building was fully fireproofed by the standards of the 19th Century, "the floors being carried on brick arches sprung from iron beams about 8 feet apart. The corridors have barrel arches sprung from partition walls." According to one study the Winder Building "is reputed to be the first complete building in Washington to use cast iron beams to carry masonry arches, and this was the system of fireproof construction that would replace masonry vaulting during the second half of the nineteenth century."¹⁰

To reinforce the building, as well as improve the fireproofing, "[a] very great number of girders [were] visible, exceeding a ton each, there are great numbers buried in the walls over the windows. At the corners of the building, and at all the cross-walls of the rooms, at every few rows of bricks are wrought-iron ties, bracing the building strongly together."

A central hot water heating system was installed in the building, which was allegedly the first central heating system in a building of its size, in Washington DC.¹¹ Although the building included the heating system, it never functioned properly, and was later replaced.

The exterior brick of the building was covered with mastic cement, stucco, and sheathed marble—in a similar style to the General Post Office Building, which had been completed nine years earlier.

Construction of the Winder Building was completed in 1848. The building boasted 60,000 square feet of useable space, spread across the 130 rooms, and included 104 windows. Mills estimated the cost of the building at \$2,000 per room.¹²

Some have attributed the design of the building to Richard Gilpin, but the building has most of the Robert Mills trademarks—including the arch system, fireproofing, and overall exterior look. Because William Winder hoped to sell or lease the building to the United States government, it would have been unwise of Winder to show that Mills played such a prominent role in the design and construction of the building.¹³

By 1852, the government held the Winder Building under a three-year lease, at a cost of \$21,875 per year. In that same year, the Senate Committee on Finance proposed to purchase the building outright. A heated debate followed. One of the dissenters stated:

"The building which is known as Winder's building, in my opinion, is not such a one as the government of the United States should own/ It is not one that the government of the United

¹⁰ John Bryan, *Robert Mills: America's First Architect*, (Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 2001), 298.

¹¹ The heating system alone cost \$8,000 to install.

¹² The Treasury Building came in at \$4,923 per room and the General Post Office came in at \$5,844. The total construction cost of the Winder can be estimated at \$260,000—\$7,835,370 in today's dollars.

¹³ The Winder Building illustrates features that are tell tale of a Robert Mills building.

States should hold as a permanent building of its public offices. This government should have its own public offices, built under its own direction, and devoted to its own uses.”

After positive testimony from a number of the building’s occupants, which included the testimony of an engineer officer in the United States Army, the Committee on Finance voted against the purchase of the building by a vote of 17 – 27.

In 1854, the government was not interested in a long-term lease on the Winder building. The annual rent was high, and Winder looked to raise the rent for the building by at least 30%. The current cost of rent, combined with the proposed increase, and the fact that the building was already being used by the government, convinced many that the time had come to purchase the Winder Building outright. Secretary of War Jefferson Davis was the driving force behind the acquisition of the building. His War Department held the majority of the offices within the building. The War Department itself sat across 17th Street, in a building that no longer stands. Congress appropriated \$200,000 for the purchase of “the substantial, [and] well-built house.”¹⁴

At the outbreak of the American Civil War, the Winder Building housed offices for the War Department and United States Navy. By 1865, it was one of 11 buildings that the War Department was utilizing in Washington for the Union war effort.



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Winder Building

At the beginning of the war, the Winder Building was the main headquarters for the Quartermaster General of the Army, a post that was held by Joseph Johnston. Johnston, though, chose to side with the Confederacy during the Civil War. After some debate in the political circles of Washington, General Montgomery Meigs was assigned to the position.

Montgomery Meigs was a Georgia native, though he spent his formative years in Philadelphia. The Georgian had a brilliant mind, (which would be considered photographic by modern standards). After attending the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, he went on to West Point, where he graduated near the top of the class of 1836.

¹⁴ Bryan, *Robert Mills: America’s First Architect*, 299.

Meigs was a career officer. He spent much of his antebellum career in and around Washington.¹⁵ As a member of the elite engineer corps, he oversaw the construction of the Washington Aqueduct, the Union Arch Bridge, and the building and renovation of the dome and wings of the United States Capitol Building.

As Quartermaster General, Meigs was a master of logistics and bookkeeping. He kept the Union war effort supplied from 16 different supply bases and supposedly was able to account for every cent that he and his department were accountable for throughout the war. While he is largely overlooked today, the haughty and supercilious Meigs was in his glory as Quartermaster General. He wrote to his father about his seemingly bureaucratic position:

“A Major-General commands a Corps; a Lieutenant-General commands the whole army; but the Quartermaster-General supplies the means of moving that army and his command extends from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the Lakes to the Gulf, and, in doing so, was in “second place not in the military rank but in actual real influence over the war.”¹⁶

Montgomery Meigs was a powerful force. He was a no-nonsense type of officer and was blunt to a fault. He could rub many folks the wrong way. Yet, he was a man that could get things done.

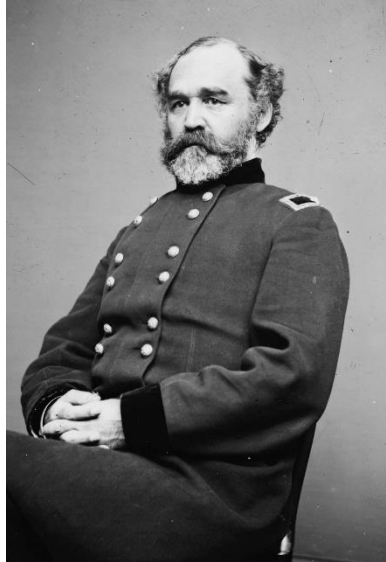
While at the head of the Quartermaster Department, Meigs instituted the bidding process for potential government contractors. His department was responsible for feeding, transporting, clothing all of the men under arms in the United States Army. The creation of gunboats and a brown water navy also fell under the purview of Meigs' department.

Never before had so many American soldiers fallen in combat. The hundreds-of-thousands of bodies had to be dealt with in a respectful and efficient manner. Thus, Meigs also oversaw the creation of the National Cemetery system, which originally fell under the purview of the Quartermaster Department. Numerous cemeteries dotted the landscape. The most famous of all would be Arlington National Cemetery. Meigs authorized the seizure of much of the land that encompasses Arlington. During the Civil War the home was owned by Robert E. Lee's wife. For failure to pay their taxes, Meigs seized the home and grounds. It was a vengeful move, for Montgomery Meigs loathed both Robert E. Lee and the Southern Confederacy. The general blamed Confederates for what he perceived as the murder of his son, John Rodgers Meigs, in October of 1864. To his dying day, the elder Meigs thought that Confederate forces murdered his son, after he surrendered and was a prisoner of war.¹⁷

¹⁵ Meigs also served under Robert E. Lee. Lee was the chief engineer of a project in St. Louis, that was attempting to change the course of the Mississippi River, which was threatening to flow away from the city.

¹⁶ William J. Miller, *The Peninsula Campaign of 1862: Yorktown to the Seven Days*, Vol. 2, (DaCapo Press, New York, 1996), 79-80

¹⁷ John Rodgers Meigs was initially buried in Oak Hill Cemetery, Washington DC. The funeral was attended by President Lincoln, Secretary of State William H. Seward, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, and Army Chief-of-Staff Henry Halleck. Later, Montgomery had his son's body removed from Oak Hill and reinterred in Arlington.



Quartermaster General Montgomery Meigs

The Winder Building was also home to a signal station for the United States Signal Corps as well as the Bureau of Military Justice, and the 5th Chief of Ordnance for the U.S. Army, Brigadier General James Wolfe Ripley, during the Civil War.¹⁸ Joseph Holt, the Judge Advocate General of the United States Army and chief prosecutor of the Lincoln assassins, had his office in the Winder Building. The Chief Engineer of the United States Army, Joseph Totten used the Winder Building for his office until his death in 1864.¹⁹ The evidence collected during the investigation into the assassination of President Lincoln was also housed in the structure.²⁰

¹⁸ Ripley was the first officer in the Civil War to use the offices of the Winder Building as a headquarters. Ripley was relieved of duty after he refused to integrate repeating firearms into the United States Army. He felt that the use of repeating arms would be a waste of ammunition and therefore a waste of the taxpayers' dollars.

¹⁹ Totten was the longest tenured Chief Engineer in the history of the United States Army.

²⁰ See the Army and Navy Journal of 1863 for office building verification.

https://books.google.com/books?id=CG1FAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA46&lpg=PA46&dq=john+Lenthall+winder+building+dc&source=bl&ots=9xwOsfffPz&sig=ACfU3U0yXHXFhiQlpHi-sNWndpsBe3LVgw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiegKiMu7_IAhWCwFkKHZ6PAPAQ6AEwA3oECAkQAQ#v=onepage&q=john%20Lenthall%20winder%20building%20dc&f=false



Brigadier General James Wolfe Ripley



Montgomery Meigs was not the only famous Civil War general to use the Winder Building as an office. Near the end of the Civil War, the hero of Gettysburg, Major General Winfield Scott Hancock also used the Winder Building as his headquarters while he commanded the Middle Military Divisions.²¹

The Army and Navy used the Winder Building for fourteen or so years after the Civil War. They even setup an ordinance museum in the building, which included Civil War relics and flags.²²

With the completion of what we now know as the Eisenhower Executive Building (EEOB), the War and Navy Departments turned the Winder Building over to the Treasury Department.²³ The Second Auditor of the Treasury and his staff were then housed in the Winder Building.

²¹ Some fanciful stories place Lincoln's telegraph office in the Winder Building; it was not in the Winder Building, rather it was in the old War Department Building, which stood where the EEOB stands today. The building was not used for a jail. It was also not used as headquarters for Henry Halleck, George McClellan, Ulysses S. Grant, Philip Sheridan, or William T. Sherman. Their offices were either in the old War Department Building, or a home that sat across F Street from the Winder Building, and no longer stands.

²² These artifacts, which included the famed "Stump of Spotsylvania," are now housed in the Smithsonian Institution.

²³ It took some 17 years to complete the EEOB.

The Army moved back into the building during World War I, though they did not have full use of the structure as they had during the Civil War. ***See newspaper clip at side; excerpt from May 14, 1923 issue of the *Evening Star*, Washington, DC.**

In 1936, with the State Department outgrowing its allotted office space, the Treaty Division, the Visa Division, and the Translating Bureau were temporarily transferred into the Winder Building.

In 1949, the United States General Services Administration (GSA) took over the care and administration of the building. Around 1960 the Office of Emergency Planning moved into the building.²⁴ In 1969, the building was added to the National Register of Historic Places. It was dubbed “one of the few remaining pre-Civil War office buildings in Washington, probably the earliest and least altered one in existence.”

Although the Winder Building was on the National Register of Historic Places, the GSA sought to tear it, and three other adjacent buildings, down in 1974.²⁵ A citizens group called *Don't Tear It Down, Inc.* (later renamed the DC Preservation League) attempted to intervene in court by filing suit to prevent the razing of the Winder building. Going against a promise not to tear down the structures, and before the court could rule on the case, the GSA tore down the other three buildings. Luckily for the Winder, the GSA had delayed their decision to tear it down and facing the backlash from tearing down the other historic structures, agreed to keep the Winder standing, and renovate the existing building.

In 1981, the Winder Building became the home of the Office of the United States Trade Representative, a position which was created in 1962. Ambassador William Emerson Brock, III was the first USTR to use the Winder Building for his office.²⁶

Today the building houses the 18th United States Trade Representative, Ambassador Robert Emmet Lighthizer.

ACCOUNTING OFFICE BRANCHES UNITED

McCarl Orders Fusion of Army and Navy Sections at Once.

To consolidate accounts and avoid duplication of work at the general accounting office, Controller General McCarl has established the military division of his office, into which are fused the War Department and Navy Department divisions, effective tomorrow.

The new division will be located at the Walker-Johnson building, 1734 New York avenue, and will be in charge of W. H. Barksdale, formerly chief of the War Department division.

The consolidation is part of a move of centralizing the work of the office which employs more than two thousand, scattered in five buildings.

With Mr. Barksdale as chief, the other officials, as announced today by Controller McCarl, will be: Byron Richards, administrative assistant; George McInturff, assistant chief of division, in charge of the claims sections; James May, assistant chief of division, in charge of the auditing sections; Fred A. Seaman, chief of section, in charge of the accounting section; Charles K. Leffel, chief of section, in charge of the receiving and computing section; H. D. Kizer, chief of section, in charge of the records section.

To accomplish the new consolidation, the Navy Department division was moved from the Winder building, 17th and F streets, to the Walker Johnson building, and transfer the transportation and bookkeeping division from the Walker Johnson to the Winder building.

²⁴ The department was also called Civil Defense Mobilization.

²⁵ The three other buildings were the Nicholas Café, Winder Annex, and Riggs National Bank.

²⁶ General Services Administration. www.gsa.gov. <https://www.gsa.gov/historic-buildings/winder-building-washington-dc> (Accessed November 1, 2017).

Appendix A: The Winder Building Through the Years



Circa 1870's



1975



2016

Appendix B: Winfield Scott Hancock



Major General Winfield Scott Hancock

ARMY DIRECTORY.

SECRETARY OF WAR.
Hon. Edwin M. Stanton—Office, second floor War Department.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR.
Hon. C. A. Dana—Office, third floor War Department.

GENERAL-IN-CHIEF.
Office—In charge of Captain G. K. Leet, Assistant Adjutant General, No. 29 Winder's Building, second floor.

CHIEF OF STAFF.
Major General H. W. Halleck—Office, corner F and Seventeenth streets.

ADJUTANT GENERAL.
Brigadier General L. Thomas—Office, War Department.

BUREAU OF MILITARY JUSTICE.
Brigadier General Joseph Holt, Judge Advocate General—Office, Winder's Building, corner of F and Seventeenth streets.

JUDGES ADVOCATE.
Major L. C. Turner, Judge Advocate, Department of Washington, &c.—Office, 539 Seventeenth street.

Theophilus Gaines, Major and Judge Advocate, Twenty-second Army Corps—Office, 534 Fourteenth street.

SOLICITOR OF THE WAR DEPARTMENT.
Hon. William Whiting—Office, Room No. 31, War Department.

MIDDLE MILITARY DIVISIONS.
Major General Winfield S. Hancock, commanding—Office, Room 29, Winder's Building.

Excerpt from July 26, 1865 issue of *The Daily National Republican*, Washington, DC.

Born: February 14, 1824, Montgomeryville, Montgomery Township, Pennsylvania

Died: February 9, 1886, New York City

Title: Major General

Education: West Point, graduated in 1844, 18th of 25 cadets

Mexican American War: Hancock was honored for his bravery at the Battle of Churubusco during the Mexican American War.

Civil War: During the Civil War, Winfield Scott Hancock commanded troops at the Battle of Williamsburg, the battle of Antietam, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg, where he received an injury to the thigh. After his recovery, Hancock again commanded troops in the Battle of the Wilderness, at Spotsylvania Courthouse, First and Second Deep Bottom, and Reams Station.

Post-War: Following the war, Hancock commanded the Fifth Military District during Reconstruction, served as commander of the Division of the Atlantic, and ran for President as a Democratic candidate in 1880, although he was defeated by James A. Garfield.

Known for: Though Hancock was often criticized during his post-war careers, he was widely regarded as handsome, dignified, and brave during his service in the Civil War.



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Appendix C: Various Newspaper Articles Pertaining to the Winder Building

QUAINT AND HISTORICAL**Strange Memories Cluster About
the Old Winder Building.****INTENDED FOR A HOTEL**

Purchase Recommended by Jefferson Davis—Its Use in Peace and War. Amusing Quarrels and Bickerings of Clerks and Officials—Story of a Hole in the Wall.

Buildings are, in certain respects, like men. Some offices are the scenes of historic or tragic events, and are as intimately connected with and mixed up in the affairs of men as a bailiff, while others pursue the even tenor of their ways and their lives are as free of excitement as that of a seventy-year-old clerk who has been sitting since early manhood on the same stool in the same counting room.

To the latter class belongs that old structure situated on the northwest corner of Seventeenth and F streets, and which is known to every Washingtonian as the Winder building. Built originally for a hotel, it has figured in the stirring times of the thirteen years preceding the war as a Government Department office building, and since that time has had the same kind of life. There are few great statesmen of the past fifty years who have not at some time or other entered its doors. Few great financial or military plans and projects that have been put into execution in the last half century of our country's history that were not first thoroughly discussed and debated in one of the little brick-walled rooms of the old Winder building.

Men have entered the employ of the Government while young and have lived and died, having no other place for working than this old gray structure. Nothing is left to tell that they have ever lived except the great mass of finely written files that are stored in the vaults of the Winder building.

THE BEGINNING OF IT.

In 1848 W. H. Winder built on the corner of Seventeenth and F streets northwest a large six-storied structure, which it was intended should be used as a hotel.

The foundation was dug deep, and huge stone abutments as strong and as solidly cemented as the walls of a feudal castle or sacred shrine built to stand forever and aye were laid on a bed of rock. The six floors were erected almost entirely of brick and the floors made of the same material. With the exception of the roof the building was entirely fireproof. In 1881 a fine iron roof was put on at a cost of \$25,000.

Each floor is honeycombed with little rooms admirably suited to the keeping of records and files, to which use the majority of them are put. In case an office is wanted the dividing partition is removed and the two made into one good-sized room. There are now 130 rooms in the building proper, while twenty vaults for storage purposes are to be found in the basement.

The life of the building as a hotel was short, although it always will have the appearance of a hostelry because of the large portico which runs along the entire outside and the spacious doorway with its broad steps and upright lamps. The Government obtained the building soon after its completion and has used it ever since.

GOVERNMENT PURCHASE.

Until 1854 a yearly rent of \$21,875 was paid to W. A. Winder. Then it was recommended by Jefferson Davis, the then Secretary of War, that the Government buy the property. This was done, but only after some delay, which was occasioned by reports which had been circulated to the effect that it could not be properly heated. A board of Army officers who were detailed to inspect the building reported unfavorably. James Eveleth, who was for many years the superintendent, had, however, prepared a plan by which he thought the building could be heated, and when this came to the ears of Jefferson Davis he was invited to state his plan.

It appeared feasible to the Secretary and was put into execution at a cost of only \$8,000. The method has been in use ever since. The price paid for the building was \$200,000.

The troublesome periods of the history of the country can be traced in the clerical force employed in this building. It was until about eight years ago under the control of the War Department. The ordnance office and the quarters of the Judge Advocate General, the Engineer Bureau, and the Army Museum were in this establishment. The Second Auditor, or Auditor for the War Department, who comes under the Treasury Department, had the three upper floors and as this department was compelled to obtain additional space elsewhere, it continually sought to increase the part of the Winder Building, which was allotted to them. Various expedients were used.

At one time a man was sent into a room used by a War Department official, and the occupant was informed that a new carpet was to be laid and new furniture put in. Of course he acquiesced and left for the night. In the morning he found his desk and papers in the hall while a Treasury Department clerk's feet were reposing on a new desk in the room where he was accustomed to work. The Second Auditor's man refused to be dislodged, and was not.

There was continual war between the two departments, although the warriors had the best of the fight for room until they moved into the handsome State, War, and Navy building about eight or nine years ago. This left the Winder Building in control of the Second Auditor, and to it were moved all of the files and records of the office. In times of peace the Second Auditor's office has only a medium amount

of work to do, and employs not a very large force of clerks. The origin of the office was in 1817, and from that time up to the present day the clerical force has fluctuated in numbers. At first only eleven men were employed. Then came the Indian outbreaks and wars, and as they rose and fell the business of the War Department did likewise. Thus the number of men employed at the Winder Building in the Second Auditor's office is always an index to the degree of peace enjoyed at the time. During the civil war the amount of business was enormous, and consequently a large force was needed. From 1861 up to the end of the reconstruction period about 500 men were employed under the Second Auditor. This has gradually been decreased, and to-day the clerical force numbers about 264.

THE ARMY MUSEUM

One of the attractions of the building for many years was the Army Museum, which was situated on an upper floor. Thousands of visitors came each year to see the war relics which had been collected and placed on exhibition there. Few people came to the city without visiting this museum, and through this means the public is generally more intimately acquainted with the Winder building than it would otherwise be.

This collection was removed some years ago to the National Museum building, yet almost daily persons call at the Winder building and ask to see the collection which was there at the time of a former visit.

During the late war the chief of ordnance occupied a room on the second floor in the southeast corner. The assistant chief had a room next to this, and then came a room used by the chief clerk of the bureau. In the course of their official association the assistant chief and the chief clerk became bitterly estranged, and had no communication outside of the usual routine. Indeed, so intense was the feeling between the two that the assistant chief had a box let into the wall between the two rooms and the door communicating was locked and bolted. In this box the assistant deposited all communications for the chief clerk through a chute similar to those used in depositing mail at a postoffice. This receptacle remains to-day as it was thirty odd years ago. A hole was cut through the solid brick wall, and a strong box made of heavy wood is placed in the aperture thus

made. The chute is still there, the box is still there, but many years have passed since it was used for its original purpose.

MILES OF SHELVING.

In the Winder building there are six miles of shelving, and according to computation made six or seven years ago, there were over 50,000,000 vouchers, which show how \$2,100,000,000 has been disbursed. The number of vouchers and the sum of money for the payment of which they account, is now much larger.

The aggregate weight of the paper stored in the building is over 350 tons. In all of this mass of documents there is a system and arrangement which is invariably followed in filing. If any particular voucher is wanted by the chief he can obtain it in five minutes, even though the date be as far back as July 1, 1815. The Adjutant General some years ago estimated that there were 402,918 separate rolls of the army during the late war, and that the total number of men furnished was 2,778,304, being composed of 2,647 regiments of ten companies each. All of these facts are to be gleaned from the files in the Winder building, and some idea of the importance and usefulness of these documents may thus be obtained.

The Winder Building has now come to be regarded as one of the veteran buildings in the Government service. Many of the men and women who are now employed there have been in the same building the greater part of their lives. It has grown to be considered almost sacred.

The old-fashioned, queer little rooms, the many little nooks and corners, each having its story, where a great Secretary once stood or where an old departed clerk had his desk, are pointed out to every new comer, to be retold again and again to the next generation of employees. Thus the building has gradually assumed a sort of dignity, and impresses one with a feeling of reverence and awe much as an old gray-haired veteran who has done his utmost for his country.

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The building may need repair, the window sills may sag, the paint and kalsomining come off, and the old brick floors become so worn that they begin to crumble, yet the clerks who have labored so long and well in the rooms of the old building will continue to love the place and prefer its long, prison-like corridors and ancient rooms to the most modern and the most elegantly furnished office building in the Departmental service.

The Morning Times. Washington, DC. August 25, 1895.

The above article from the August 25th, 1895 edition of *The Morning Times in Washington, DC* gives an interesting history of the Winder building. Contrary to some accounts, this article states that Winder originally intended the building be used as a hotel but that soon the government became interested in the building and rented out space. Jefferson Davis, as then Secretary of War, recommended the buying of the Winder Building. And so, the building was bought for \$200,000. Not long after, a heating system was installed for \$8,000.

The ordnance office, quarters of the Judge Advocate General, the Engineer Bureau, and the Army Museum were located in the building with the War Department while the Auditor for the War Department (Second Auditor) under the Treasury Department was also located in the building.

Apparently the two were always feuding for space! When the War Department offices moved out of the Winder building, the building was left in the hands of the Second Auditor. The office's employees fluctuated with the amount of conflict that was apparent in the country – the office was especially busy during the days of the Civil War.

The article also mentions that of an “Army Museum” once occupying an upper floor of the Winder building, of which that collection had been moved to the National Museum (Smithsonian institution predating the National Museum of American History) by the time of the article's publication in 1895.

*** Ordnance Museum** (on the 2d floor of Winder's Building, cor. F and 17th Sts.) has an interesting collection of flags and trophies, specimens of all kinds of arms and ammunition, uniforms and military equipments. The U. S. Pension Office is on Pennsylvania Ave. at the cor.

Excerpt from *Appleton's General Guide to the United States and Canada*, 1879.

Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of Ethnology—803 G st, cor 8th n. w.
 Providence Hospital—Cor of 2d and D sts s e.
 Columbian Institution for the Deaf and Dumb—Kendall Green.
 Board of Indian Commissioners—Cor of New York ave and 15th st.
 Freedman's Hospital—Corner 7th and Boundary sts n w.
 Navy Department—17th st, opp F st n w.
 War Department—Cor 17th st and Pennsylvania ave n w.
 United States Geographical Surveys West of the 100th Meridian—1813 F st n w.
 Ordnance Museum—Winder's Building, cor 17th and F sts.
 Arsenal—Southern extremity of 4½ st.
 Military Asylum—Situated about three miles north of the city.
 Post Office Department — In square bounded by E and F sts and 7th and 8th sts n w.
 Agricultural Department — In square bounded by 12th and 14th sts w, and B sts n and s.
 Department of Justice—Office in Freedman's Savings Bank building, Pennsylvania ave, near 15th st n w.
 Government Printing Office—cor of N. Capitol and H sts n w.

Excerpt from June 7, 1881 issue of the *Daily Critic*, Washington, DC.

TORN BATTLE FLAGS.

WRECKS AND RELICS OF THE WAR.

The Ordnance Bureau, which occupies a portion of the second floor of the Winder building, on Seventeenth street, opposite the new structure for the accommodation of the State, War, and Navy Departments, has attached to it a museum worthy of visitation.

Besides a large amount of warlike material, models of arms, accoutrements, Gatling and other repeating guns, and relics of the olden times, it contains the historic stump of the oak tree cut down by bullets at Spottsylvania, and several hundreds of captured Confederate flags. In an annex a few doors north, and upon the same side of the street, are stored yet more of these reminders of the late “unpleasantness,” together with quite a collection of National ensigns, captured from the “Boys in Blue” by their no less gallant foemen who wore the gray.

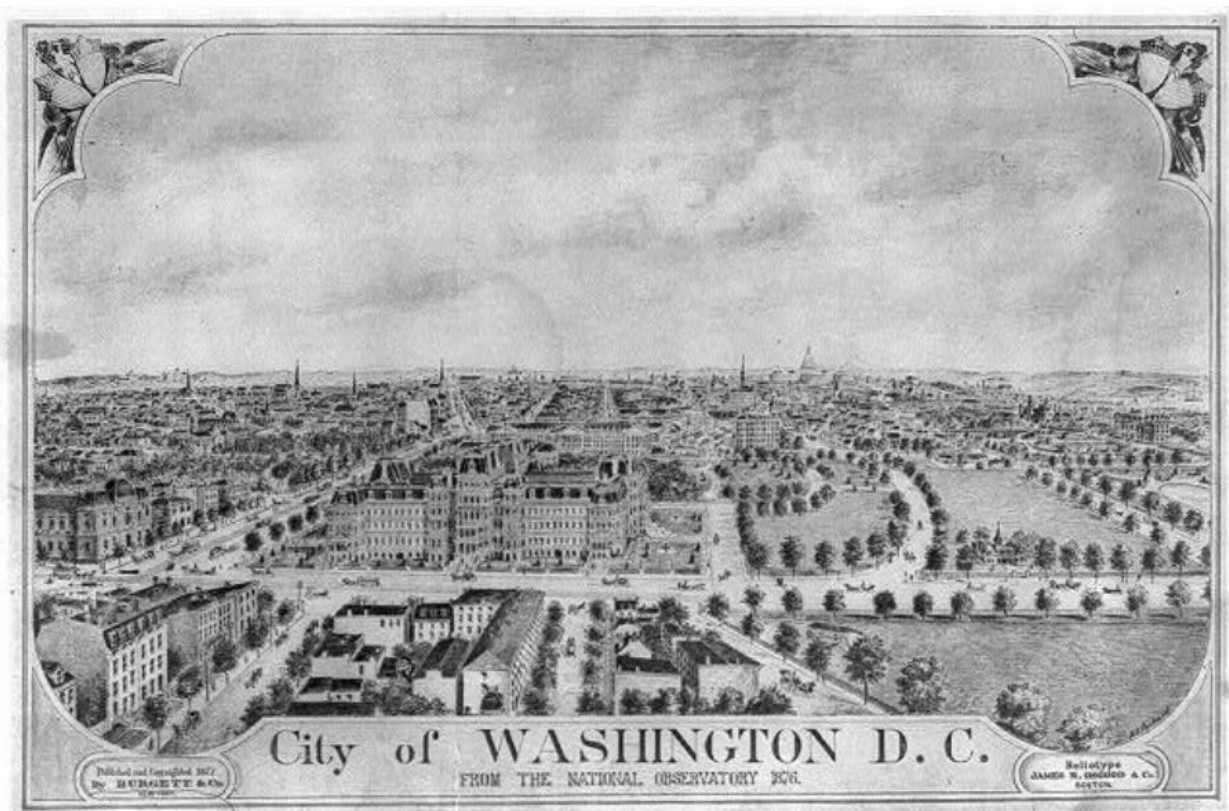
Excerpt from October 1, 1881 issue of *The National Tribune*, Washington, DC.

This museum is also referred to as the “Ordnance Museum” by many other newspapers and sources.

One story that was just too quirky not to love was that of the relationship between the assistant chief of ordnance and the chief clerk. It states that during “the late war” these two had become estranged and did not talk beyond that of a normal routine – but even this is doubtful as they communicated in the strangest of ways. The two had offices next to each other on the second floor in the southeast corner of the building and the assistant chief actually created a hole in the wall that allowed a box to be passed between him and the chief clerk – this box was how they communicated! At the time of the article's publication in 1895, the author claims that the hole and box were still there. Today, however, the Winder building has experienced many renovation projects and it would be miraculous to see if that hole is still in existence.

The article also speaks on the volume of and value of paper held there. The building is described as having 6 miles of shelving in order to store this mass of paper. The mass of paper is said to include 50,000,000 vouchers in 1895; these vouchers show how \$2,100,000,000.00 had been dispersed. These vouchers went back as far as 1815 and were organized in a filing system for efficiency—and were part of the storage for the Pension Office.²⁷

The building's employees are described as having a loyalty to the old, quirky building in comparison to the new office buildings coming into use.



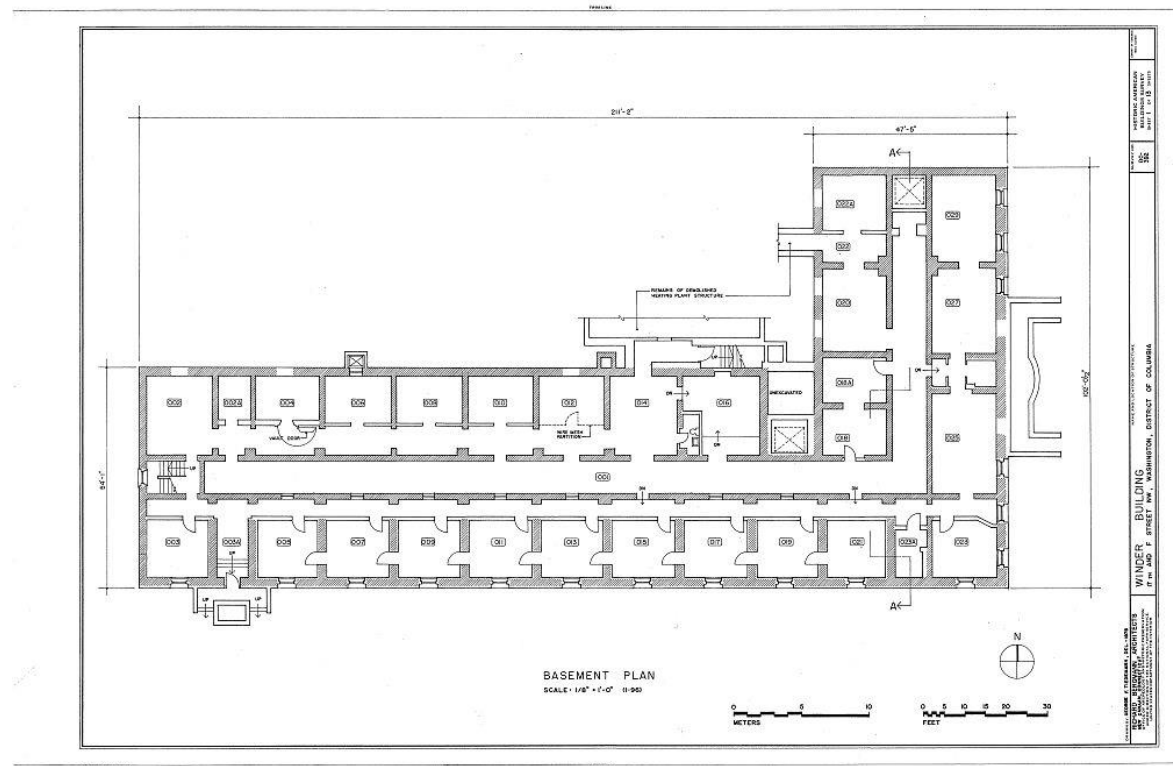
In the 1876 drawing above, you can see the Winder building, in its L-shaped glory, across from the EEOB as depicted from the view of the National Observatory.

²⁷https://books.google.com/books?id=nPYBAAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA261&lpg=PA261&dq=Navy+Bureau+of+Construction,+Equipment+and+Repair+winder+building&source=bl&ots=nXR4USPJ9n&sig=ACfU3U0D6bL4cLxLK7N0DhW06TY92kPnQ&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjHjNfgvb_IAhUo2FkKHW52AOYQ6AEwAXoECAkQAQ#v=onepage&q=Navy%20Bureau%20of%20Construction%2C%20Equipment%20and%20Repair%20winder%20building&f=false

Appendix D: Historic American Buildings Survey

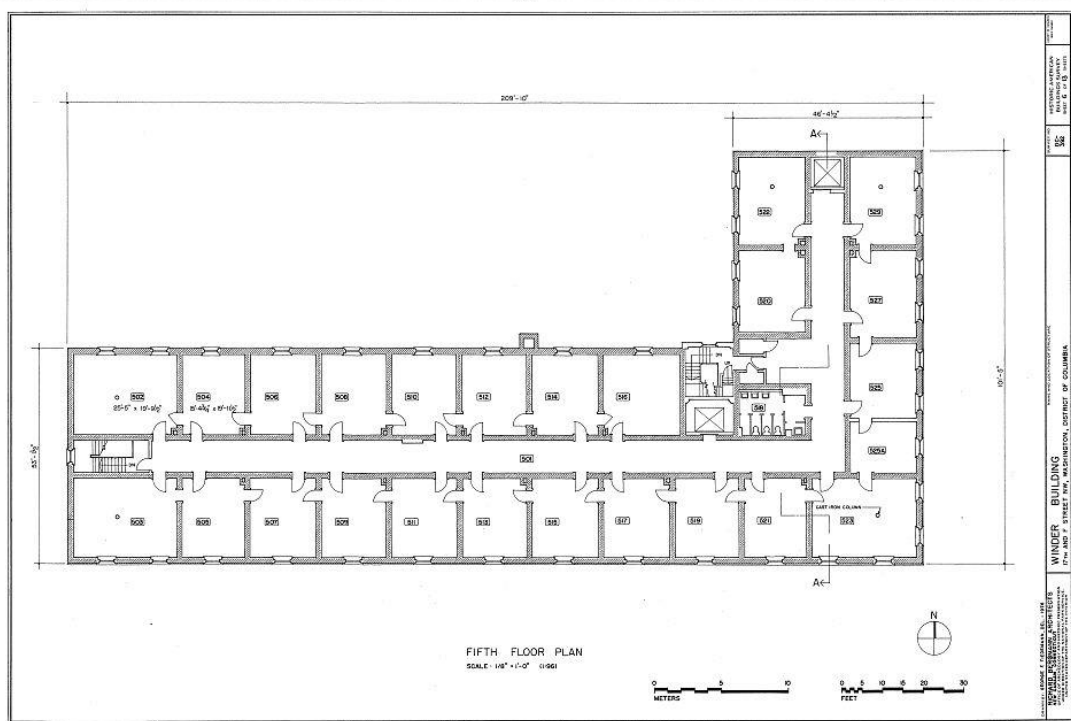
Documentation compiled after 1933

Note: One of few pre-Civil War office buildings in Washington and certainly the least altered, the Winder Building was built for William H. Winder who leased most of the space to the U.S. government, and sold the building to them in 1854. With an unusual construction of cast-iron beams and brick bearing walls, along with brick flooring, this building was as strong and as fireproof as any of its time.²⁸

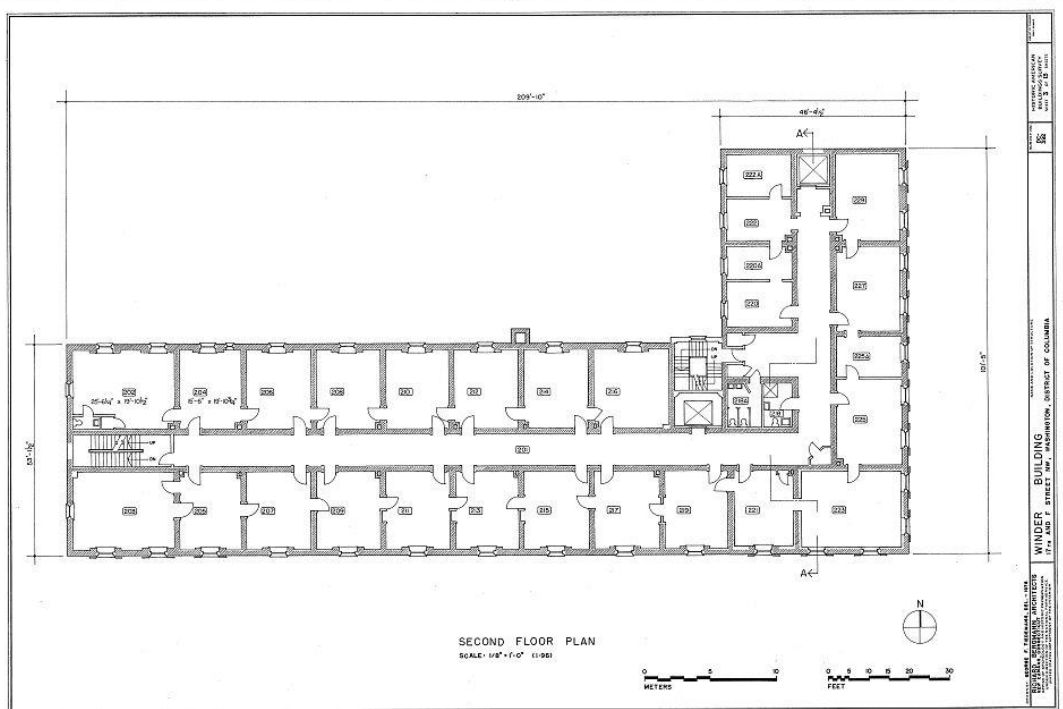


HABS DC, WASH,543- (sheet 1 of 13) - Winder Building, Seventeenth & F Streets, Northwest, Washington, District of Columbia, DC

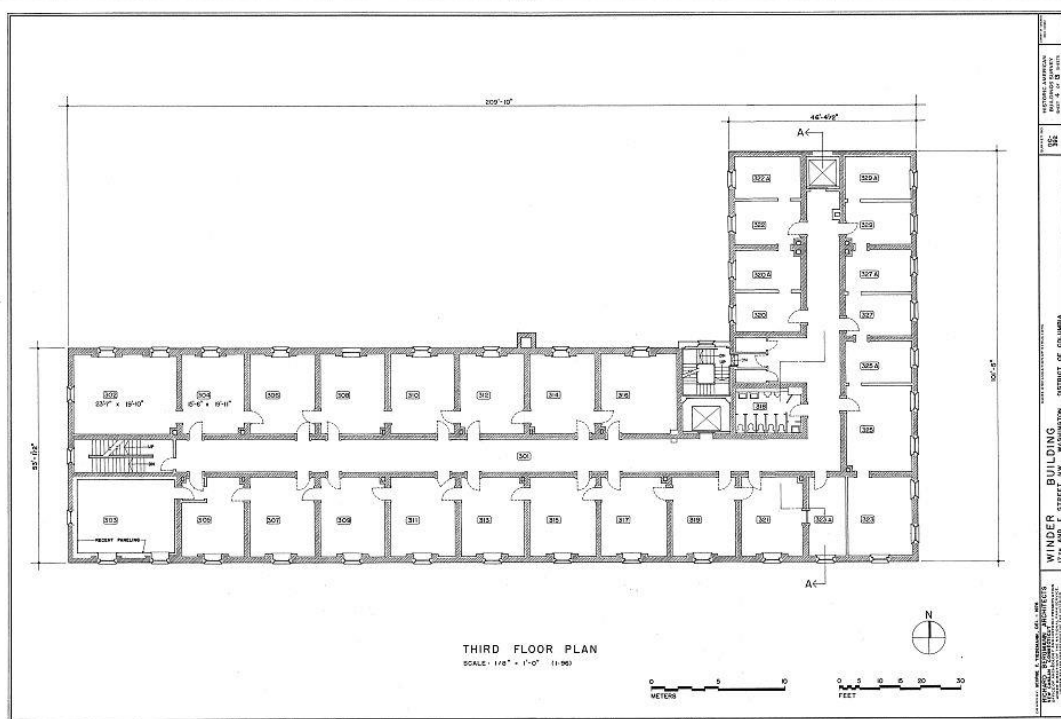
²⁸ Library of Congress. www.loc.gov. Search of site. <https://www.loc.gov/item/dc0388/> (Accessed October 19, 2017). Photos and sketches are from the Library of Congress and General Services Administration files.



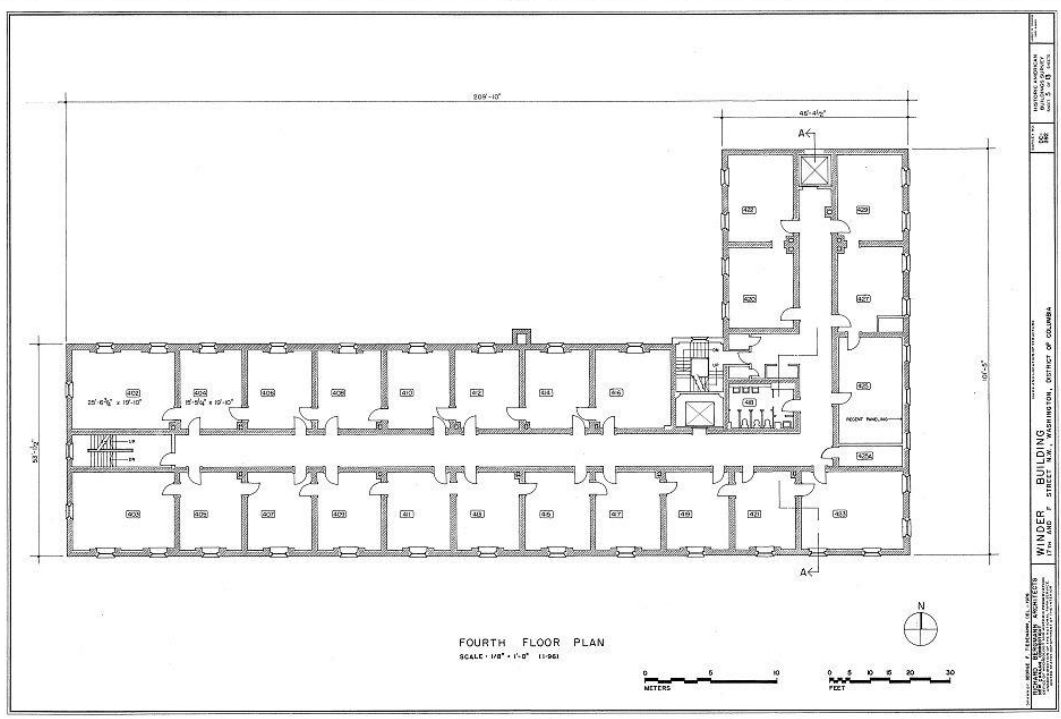
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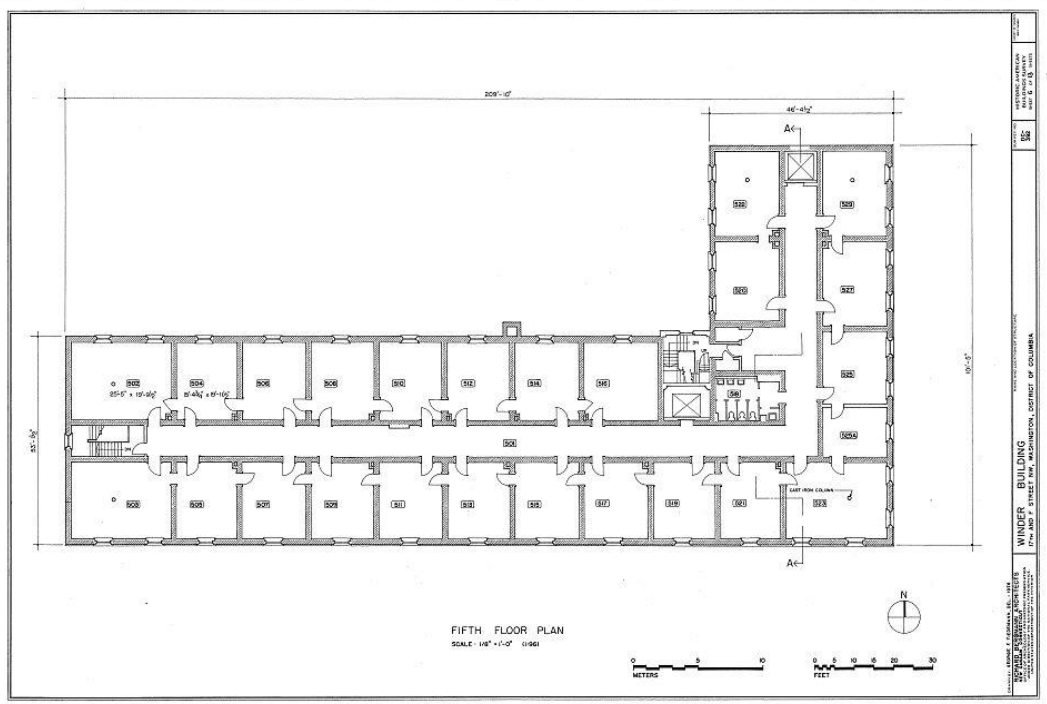
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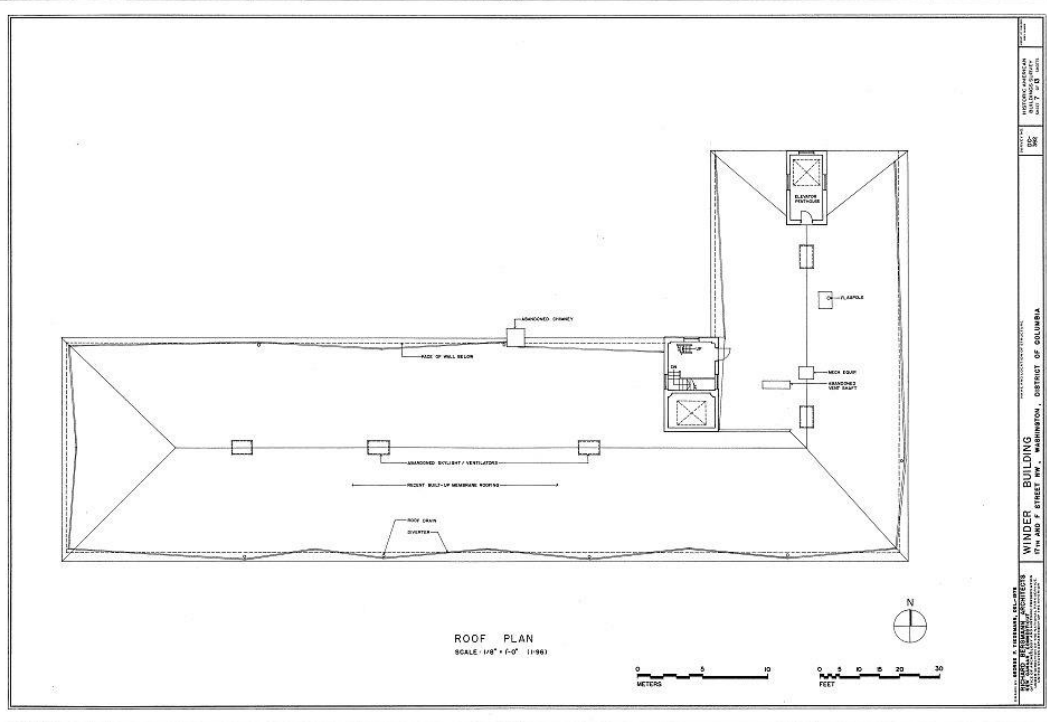
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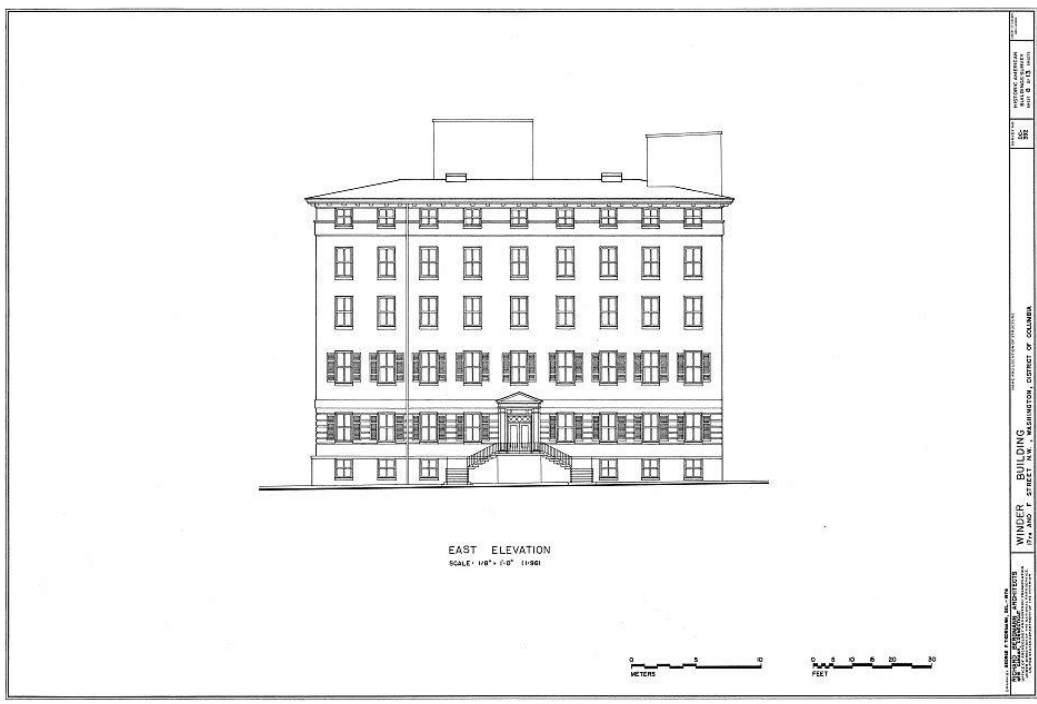
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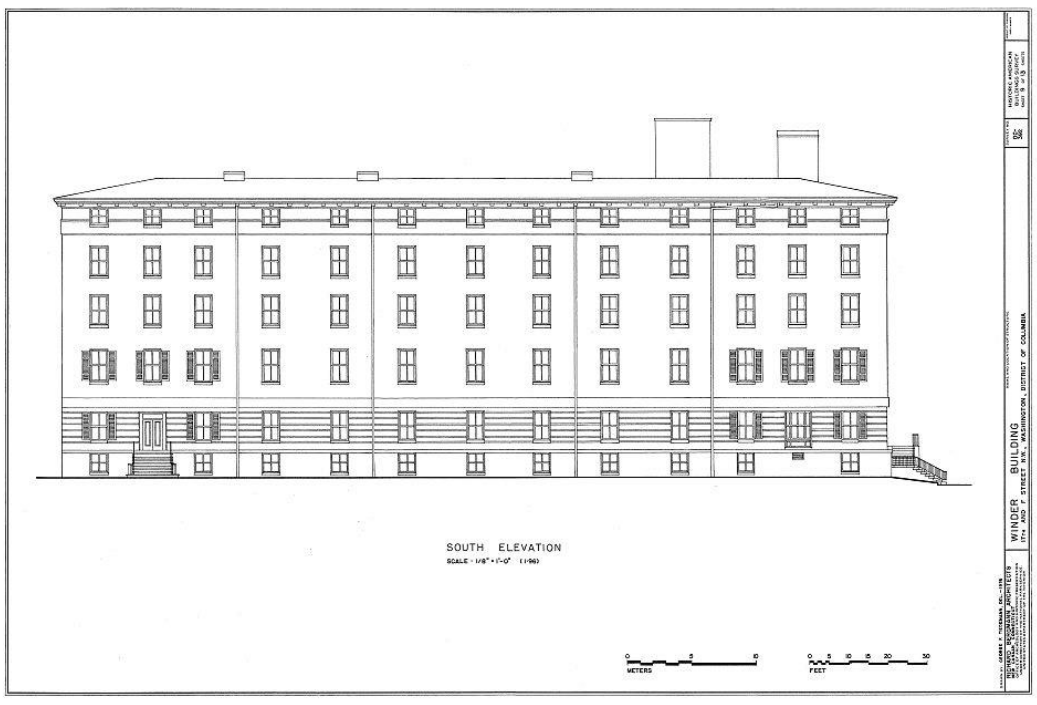
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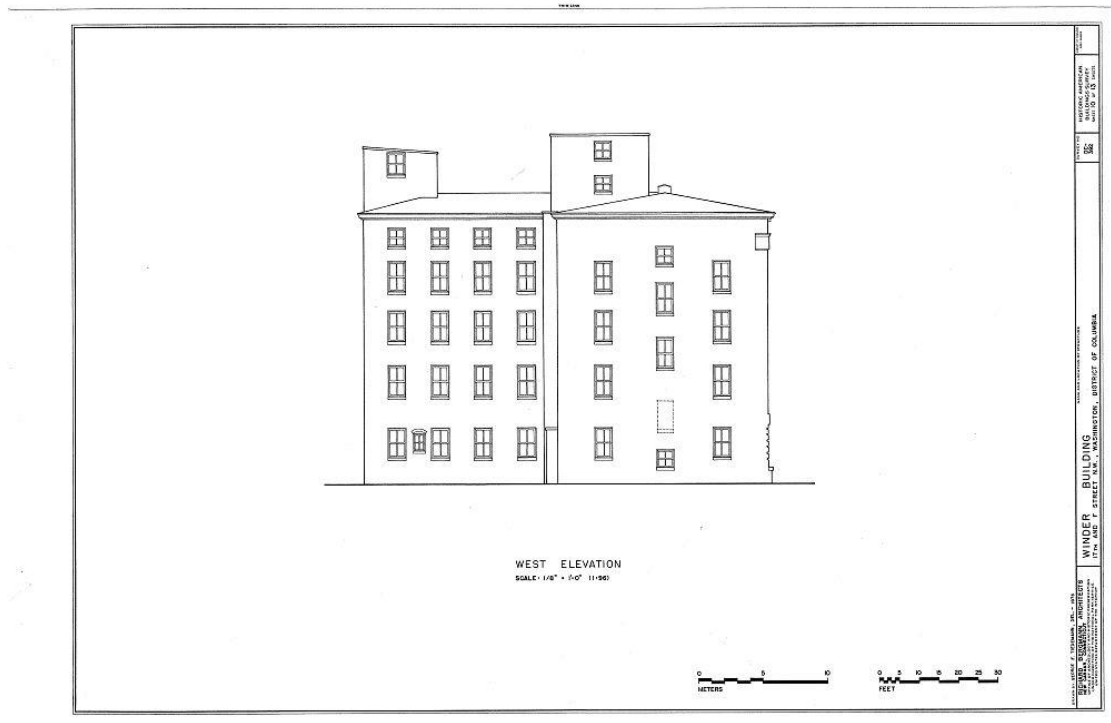
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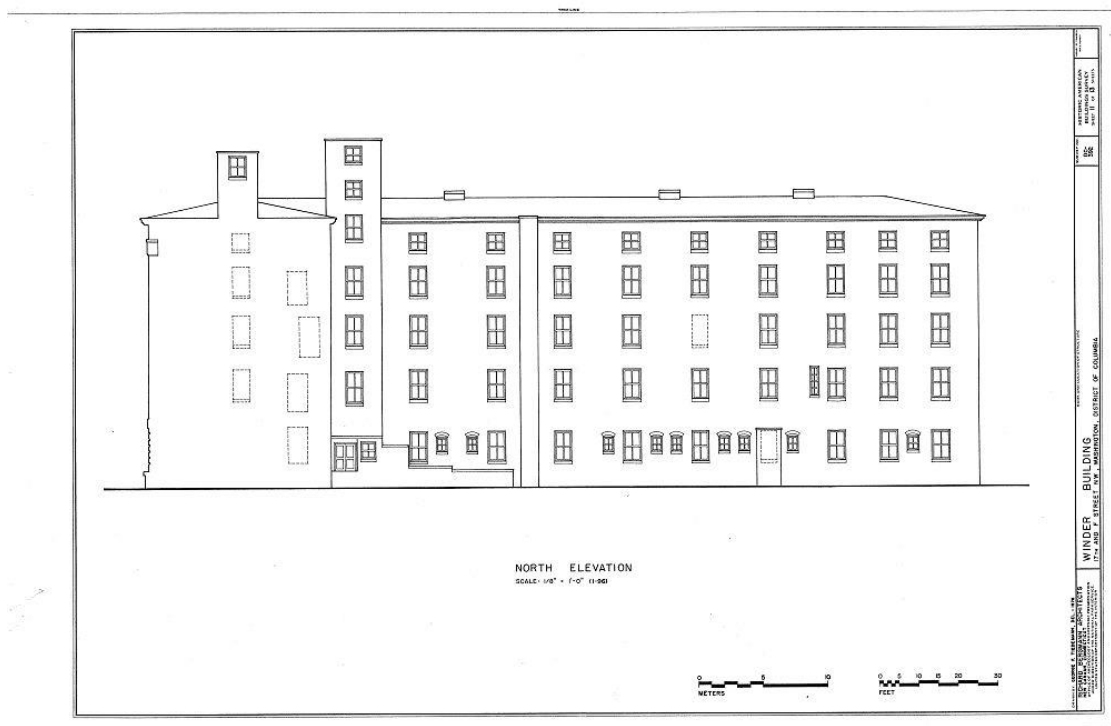
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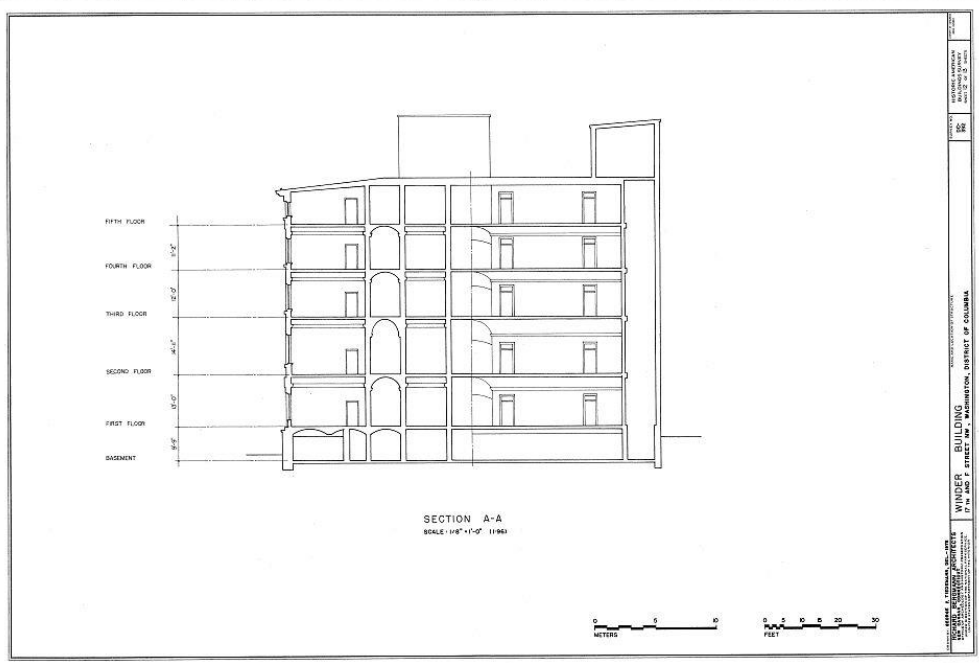
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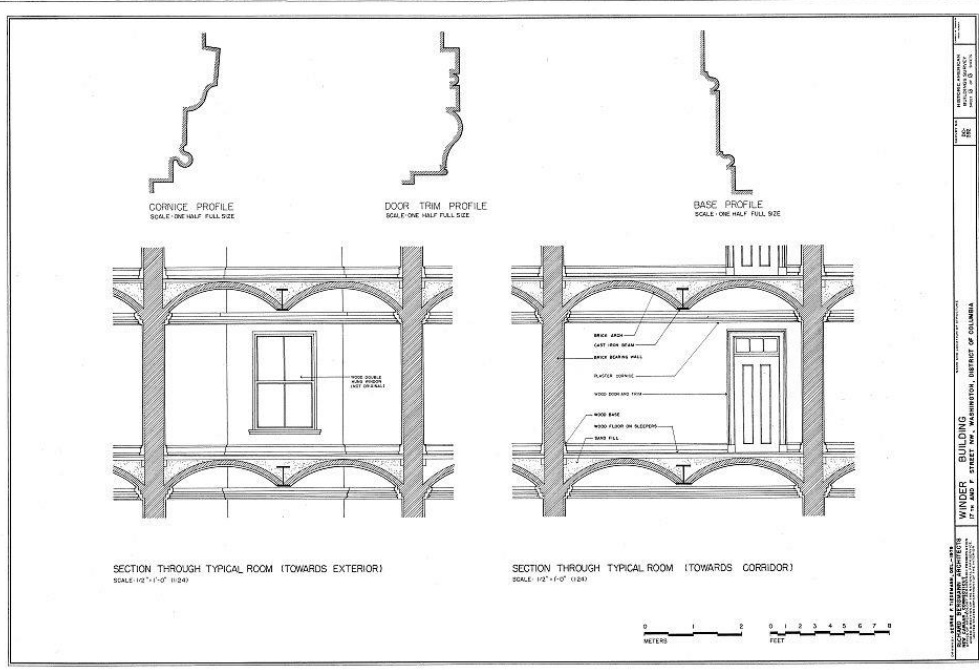
HABS DC, WASH,543- (sheet 10 of 13) - Winder Building, Seventeenth & F Streets, Northwest, Washington, District of Columbia, DC



HABS DC, WASH,543- (sheet 11 of 13) - Winder Building, Seventeenth & F Streets, Northwest, Washington, District of Columbia, DC



HABS DC, WASH,543- (sheet 12 of 13) - Winder Building, Seventeenth & F Streets, Northwest, Washington, District of Columbia, DC



HABS DC, WASH,543- (sheet 13 of 13) - Winder Building, Seventeenth & F Streets, Northwest, Washington, District of Columbia, DC



EAST FRONT - Winder Building, Seventeenth & F Streets, Northwest, Washington, District of Columbia, DC



SOUTH SIDE AND EAST FRONT - Winder Building, Seventeenth & F Streets, Northwest, Washington, District of Columbia, DC



SOUTH SIDE - Winder Building, Seventeenth & F Streets, Northwest, Washington, District of Columbia, DC



WEST SIDE - Winder Building, Seventeenth & F Streets, Northwest, Washington, District of Columbia, DC



WEST SIDE FROM NORTHWEST - Winder Building, Seventeenth & F Streets, Northwest, Washington, District of Columbia, DC



NORTH SIDE - Winder Building, Seventeenth & F Streets, Northwest, Washington, District of Columbia, DC



INTERIOR, 17TH ST. ENTRANCE - Winder Building, Seventeenth & F Streets, Northwest, Washington, District of Columbia, DC



INTERIOR, FIRST-FLOOR CORRIDOR, 17TH ST. SIDE - Winder Building, Seventeenth & F Streets, Northwest, Washington, District of Columbia, DC



INTERIOR, FIRST-FLOOR CORRIDOR, F ST. SIDE - Winder Building, Seventeenth & F Streets, Northwest, Washington, District of Columbia, DC



INTERIOR, F ST. ENTRANCE - Winder Building, Seventeenth & F Streets, Northwest, Washington, District of Columbia, DC



INTERIOR, SECOND-FLOOR CORRIDOR, F ST. SIDE - Winder Building, Seventeenth & F Streets, Northwest, Washington, District of Columbia, DC



INTERIOR DETAIL, CAST-IRON STAIRWAY - Winder Building, Seventeenth & F Streets, Northwest, Washington, District of Columbia, DC



INTERIOR, SECOND-FLOOR MAIN OFFICE - Winder Building, Seventeenth & F Streets, Northwest, Washington, District of Columbia, DC



INTERIOR, TYPICAL OFFICE - Winder Building, Seventeenth & F Streets, Northwest, Washington, District of Columbia, DC



INTERIOR, BASEMENT - Winder Building, Seventeenth & F Streets, Northwest, Washington, District of Columbia, DC



AMERICAN
BATTLEFIELD
TRUST ★ ★ ★