

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name George M. Barker Company Warehouse
other names _____

2. Location

street & number 1525 7th Street, NW not for publication
city or town Washington vicinity
state District of Columbia code DC county _____ code 001 zip code 20001

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- Determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-local | <input type="checkbox"/> district |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-State | <input type="checkbox"/> site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal | <input type="checkbox"/> structure |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> object |

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/Warehouse

SOCIAL/Civic

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE

foundation Concrete
walls Brick

roof Slag
other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

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Description Summary:

The George M. Barker Warehouse is a purpose-built lumber warehouse constructed in 1906 on a double lot at 1525 Seventh Street, N.W. Designed by architect Arthur M. Poynton, the two-story, three bay brick structure visually commands the immediate neighborhood, though historically it was part of a dense urban block of row houses, stores, and a theater. Currently serving as headquarters to a non-profit social service agency, the warehouse building still retains its character-defining industrial features such as the large, arched main entranceway and upper story loft door. The flat roof of the building is set behind a stepped and paneled parapet with a curved central section. The building exterior has been appropriately restored and its interior remodeled in 1993-1994. At that time, a two-story, single-bay addition housing a stairwell and elevator was appended to the north end of the building.

General Description:

Site:

The George M. Barker Company Warehouse (Barker Warehouse) was designed as a mid-block row building, spanning the full width of its 45' x 110' rectangular lot. At the time of its construction, there were buildings to the north of the warehouse and a coal yard to the south. Three single-story stores built to the south of the warehouse in 1912 were replaced in 1921 by the Broadway Theater. Designed by New York architects Milburn, Heister and Company, the Broadway was owned by Rufus G. Byars, an African American who operated his theater for African American patrons. When the theater was demolished in the mid-1980s, the Barker Warehouse found itself amid vacant lots and today stands as the most prominent historic building in its immediate vicinity.

Exterior:

The Barker Warehouse is a two-story brick structure whose architectural detailing is limited to the primary façade facing west to 7th Street, N.W. This façade is symmetrically divided into three bays. On center of the first story is a double-width arched entry that was historically wide and tall enough to have accommodated a horse-drawn wagon piled high with lumber. A steel rollup door with a glass entry door and side panels has been substituted for the original doors. Above the entrance is a segmentally arched transom topped by a brick arch.

Above this is a wooden signboard bearing the motto of the building's current occupant and added during the 1993-94 renovation. To either side of this large central entry are large squarish and deep-set window openings, each with a pair of one-over-one replacement windows. Rectangular and deep-set transoms are located above these windows. To either side in the building's end piers are two long and narrow

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sidelight windows. Historically, these windows had diamond-paned sash. The brickwork in the north end bay of the building has been re-pointed.

At the second story level, a double loading door is located above the central entry. Now a pair of windows with a narrow balcony, this was historically a pair of wooden doors used to load materials, via block and tackle, directly into the upper level storage areas. This upper level opening is flanked by a pair of flagpoles (added during the 1993-94 renovation) and is surmounted by a circular green medallion, also added in 1993-94. The medallion has raised circles at the noon, three o'clock, six o'clock, and nine o'clock positions which visually suggest a clock face. To either side of this second-story loading door are large, segmental arched window openings with pairs of 6/6 replacement windows and stone sills. Ornamental brick pilasters, set upon impostes that spring from this second story, are located to either side of the central loading door, while longer ones that spring from the first story level are located at the north and south ends of the building's façade.

A cornice, topped by a wooden parapet, culminates the roofline. The parapet's curved center section is its highest section and bears a circular ornamental medallion identical to the one below it at the second story, again added during the 1993-94 renovation period. From the center section, the parapet steps down to either end of the façade in two levels, each of which is decorated by a raised rectangular panel.

The south elevation of the building is a blank brick wall that once abutted the theater next to it. A double window cut into this wall at the second story level provides added light on the interior. The north elevation has had a row of windows at the upper level and an entrance at the first floor level added. The rear of the building, opening onto an alley, is utilitarian in appearance. It is clad with a coating of stucco and many of the original openings have been filled. However, a center entry remains on-axis with the front door, which would have permitted a loaded wagon to be drawn through the building from street to alley without turning around. Original wooden loading doors centered above this rear entrance remain intact. In addition to these center openings, five windows, three louvered panels, and one flush metal door puncture the rear elevation of the former warehouse.

A two-story brick addition, constructed to house an elevator, abuts the north end of the historic building and is built flush with the front facade. The addition features a banded foundation level, and a geometric pattern of small concrete squares and rectangles along the 7th Street elevation of the addition. A curved parapet roof, with an ornamental porthole, covers the addition, integrating it with that of the original building. An entry door is located in the north elevation of this addition.

Interior

The interior of the Barker Warehouse was renovated in 1993-94 to accommodate offices, clinic rooms, and food distribution center of the social non-profit organization, Bread for the City. The interior thus

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consists of a series of partition walls dividing the formerly open warehouse space into offices and clinic waiting rooms. The partition walls, however, do not extend to the ceiling, retaining the open and industrial feeling of the former warehouse. The original exterior brick walls of the warehouse building are exposed, as are the wooden floor and ceiling joists, retaining the industrial character of the building.

A painted advertisement for Rye Whiskey is visible on the north wall of the building at the second floor level. This was the south exterior wall of a now-demolished building constructed in 1890 on the lot immediately north of the Barker Warehouse building. The 1912 warehouse was clearly built using this existing wall as a party wall, encapsulating the advertisement within its own interior.

Despite the loss of neighboring buildings and minor changes to the building itself, the Barker Warehouse retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, association, and feeling.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history.
- B** Property associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Community Planning and Development

Commerce

Industry

Period of Significance

1906

Significant Dates

1906

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

Previous documentation on files (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

District of Columbia Public Library, Washingtoniana
Division. D.C. Preservation League

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Summary Statement of Significance:

Erected in 1906, the George M. Barker Company Warehouse is a unique purpose-built millwork and lumber company warehouse constructed by company founder George M. Barker who first established his business in the city on Massachusetts Avenue just after the Civil War. The warehouse building is a unique survivor among the lumber, coal, and wood distribution facilities that were once located in this northwest section of Washington, D.C. and is significant, under Criterion C of the National Register, as a rare example of this largely vanished industrial building in the city. The Period of Significance for the property is 1906, the year in which the building was constructed.

Resource History and Historic Context:

Built in 1906, the George M. Barker Company Warehouse at 1525 Seventh Street NW served the city's oldest millwork and lumber firm for approximately eighty years. Since 1992, it has housed Bread for the City, an innovative social services organization, as well as other non-profits. The Barker Warehouse is a unique surviving example of a multi-story early twentieth century warehouse situated in an urban neighborhood far from a railroad line.

The George M. Baker Company: "General Depot for Doors, Sashes, Blinds, Windows, Frames, Hardware, Glass &c. &c."

Just after the turn of the twentieth century, the George M. Barker Company advertised itself as the city's oldest millwork and lumber firm.¹ Born in New Hampshire in either 1825 or 1828, George M. Barker was living in Boston with his wife Eliza and working as a carpenter in 1850. By the time their daughter Flora was born in the mid-1850s, the Barker family had moved to New York.² Just after the Civil War, the Barkers came to Washington, where George opened a millwork business near the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Seventh Street NW.³ His business quickly prospered, and by 1872 he was able to erect a brick warehouse and storefront at 649-651 New York Avenue NW that stands today.

George Barker founded his firm at a time conducive to its growth. The city grew enormously in the years between 1870 and 1920, with its population more than tripling during this period.⁴ At the same time, much of the city's older building stock was being replaced by new construction. But an equally

¹ Washington Post. "Geo. M. Barker – A Well-known Name to Builders". February 24, 1907. p. 24.

² United States Federal Census (1850). Boston Ward 11, Suffolk, Massachusetts; Roll: M432_338; Page: 69; Image: 139.

³ Washington Post. February 24, 1907. p. 24.

⁴ Gibson, Campbell and Jung, Kay. Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals By Race, 1790 to 1990, and By Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, For The United States, Regions, Divisions, and States. Washington, DC tables. United States Census Bureau. Washington, DC. 2003.

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telling change occurred in taste, driven by technology. After the Civil War, water and steam-powered woodworking machinery had made intricate and complicated millwork affordable components for middle class homes. As Herbert Gottfried has written:

The 1870s were characterized by economies of scale; by expansion of the means of production, including the invention of new and more efficient machinery...An integrated building industry emerged that separated the design and construction of structures into component parts. These parts, which served as both functional building materials and as design elements, were sold in wholesale and retail markets.⁵

Plan books, mass-produced house plans, and illustrated catalogs of architectural elements presented ornate compositions in scrollwork and gingerbread for interior and exterior designs. These sources shaped consumer taste and preferences as well as educating the trades, and, once builders throughout the country were familiar with “the various vocabularies of late-century architectural styles,” these millwork elements found their way into even vernacular designs and working class homes. Susan Swiatosz has described a dizzying number of variations on the basic window sash that appeared in the market at the same time.⁶ Rooms with different functions often required different styles of windows, such as “pantry”, “gable sash”, or conservatory”.⁷ As the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth, a revolt grew against ornate detailing, but even the relatively uncluttered Craftsman, Mission, and various revival styles of architecture required a glossary of complicated shapes and specialized design elements. As Herbert Gottfried has tellingly stated:

“...the totality of portrayed design is linked by the millwork, bounded and integrated, wall to wall, floor to ceiling, each design pattern reinforcing the others. Yet the millwork is subsumed into a larger image. It is the image that is being sold to the customer. The products play a subtle role...the millwork...is the design element consumers should rely on for sustaining the quality of the interior design.”⁸

Mass produced, machine-made millwork had become an essential building material.

The Barker Company was well positioned to take advantage of the fortunes of the times, selling millwork from manufacturers as well as of its own making and promoting the low price and high quality of its goods through small display advertisements in the *Washington Post*.⁹ Its location at the corner of

⁵ Herbert Gottfried. “Building the Picture: Trading on the Imagery of Production and Design”. *Winterthur Portfolio*. Volume 27, Number 4. The University of Chicago Press .1992. p. 235.

⁶ For example, nineteenth century windows might be clestory, “cottage front”, “bow-faced”, or even casement.

⁷ Susan Swiatosz. “A Technical History of Late Nineteenth Century Windows in the United States”. *Bulletin of the Association for Preservation Technology*. Vol. 17, No. 1 (1985), pp. 31-37.

⁸ *Gottfried*. p. 243.

⁹ See, for example, *Washington Post*. “Building Materials”. March 9, 1879. p. 4.

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New York Avenue and 7th Street NW was at the intersection of two development corridors and adjacent to the central business district. A number of nearby establishments like Gustav Hartig's large hardware store at 1001 Seventh Street and Willetts' Lumber Yard at 6th Street and New York Avenue gave this area critical marketing mass for the building trades.

Despite George Barker's early success, he apparently suffered a personal and professional setback in the late 1870s. A Barker advertisement in the June 28, 1879 *Washington Post* soberly advised carpenters and builders that "I would respectfully call your attention to the fact that I am again in a condition to carry on the Door, Sash, and Blind business at my old stand."¹⁰

However, Barker recovered his fortunes, and during the late 1880s was prominent enough for the *Washington Post* to feature his endorsement in subscription advertisements.¹¹ His stature can be roughly measured by the prominence of the business leaders whose testimonials accompanied his. They included the brewer Christian Heurich, the hotelier C.C. Willard, the grocer John H. Magruder, and School Trustee-hotelier James T. Wormley.

In 1888, Barker purchased an expensive lot in the 1300 block of Massachusetts Avenue, NW.¹² In April 1889, Robert I. Fleming had designed a major addition to the Barker residence at 1313 Massachusetts Avenue, NW. Seven new rooms would have expanded the existing three-story house to the back of its lot and provided a second façade on M Street, NW. The new façade would be brownstone-clad to the first floor windows, while the Massachusetts Avenue façade was to be re-clad in similar style and have new stone steps built. The interior was to be refurbished in hardwood with hot air heat added.¹³ The total cost of the new lot and addition was approximately \$23,000, a large sum by the standards of the day.

Unfortunately George Barker did not survive long enough to reap the benefits of living in a mansion. On May 11, 1889, he died at home after an illness of just a few days. Obituaries noted that he was survived by his wife Eliza, as well as a daughter, and two sons.¹⁴ A month after Barker's death, Eliza Barker took out advertisements in the *Washington Post* announcing that she would continue his business "in the

¹⁰ "To Carpenters and Builders," *The Washington Post*, June 28, 1879. p. 4. The crisis also may have affected Barker's marriage. Although his wife Eliza outlived him, the 1880 Census listed him as single and living as a boarder at 900 Massachusetts Avenue NW with his twenty-five year old daughter Flora. See U.S. Federal Census. 1880; Census Place: Washington, Washington, District of Columbia, District of Columbia; Roll: T9_122; Family History Film: 1254122; Page: 380.1000; Enumeration District: 40; Image: 0763.

¹¹ "The Leading Newspaper at the Capitol," *The Washington Post*, Apr 23, 1888. p. 2. Barker was quoted as saying "I have always regarded the Post as the best paper published in Washington. In its new form it leaves nothing to be desired".

¹² "Real Estate," *The Washington Post*, June 15, 1888. p. 8.

¹³ "Are Rents Going Down?" *The Washington Post*, April 28, 1889. p.10. The Barker House had a number of illustrious later owners, but by the 1930s it was a rooming house. It stood into the 1960s, when it was demolished to clear an apartment house site.

¹⁴ "Death of a Well-Known Businessman," *The Washington Post*, May 12, 1889. p. 2.

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name and style” of George M. Barker under the management of William P. Tulloch,¹⁵ who had been with the firm since 1877.¹⁶

Even without its founder, the Barker Company continued to prosper, attracting such prestigious jobs as the fabrication of the president’s booth for William McKinley’s 1897 inauguration. This was a modular glass enclosure placed in the center of the reviewing stand and warmed by gas heaters against the March chill. Large enough for twenty persons, it was designed to allow an unimpeded 360 degree view of the new president.¹⁷

Building the Seventh Street Warehouse:

Barker’s sons died in the early 1890s; following Eliza Barker’s own death after the turn of the 20th century, control of the company passed to the Barkers’ daughter, Flora, married to dentist George B. Welch.¹⁸ It was Flora B. Welch who on March 31, 1906 applied for the building permit to erect a two-story brick warehouse at 1517 7th Street, NW¹⁹. The building of a warehouse at this location appeared to take shrewd advantage of the development patterns of the city.²⁰ The new building was just a block and a half south of Rhode Island Avenue, NW and within four blocks of Florida Avenue. Seventh Street remained a major commercial street in its own right and led into Georgia Avenue just above its intersection with Florida Avenue. These major arterial streets both facilitated customer’s access to the warehouse and provided ready access to developing areas in the city and suburbs. The last point was especially important because neither Barker Company warehouse was on a rail line. Raw materials and finished goods were transported to them by horse and wagon, and were re-distributed to customers by the same method.

Unlike many rail-front warehouses with relatively long platforms to unload multiple freight cars simultaneously, Barker’s new warehouse was a two-story structure built to the sidewalk line that completely filled the forty-five foot width of its double lot. The building left only a ten-foot strip of uncovered lot between its rear door and the alley. It included stable space for the company’s delivery teams.

¹⁵ “Special Notices,” *The Washington Post*, June 19, 1889. p. 5. William Perry Tulloch (1860-1924) was vice president of the Barker Company at the time of his death, some 47 years after he joined the firm. See *Washington Post*. “William Perry Tulloch Dies,” April 4, 1924. p. 9.

¹⁶ “Geo. M. Barker – A Well-known Name to Builders,” *The Washington Post*, February 24, 1907. p. 24”

¹⁷ “Work Well Underway,” *The Washington Post*, March 1, 1897. p. 3.

¹⁸ “Church and Home Bridals,” *The Washington Post*, November 17, 1892. p. 5.

¹⁹ District of Columbia Building Permit #2510. March 31, 1906.

²⁰ The Sanborn Map Series for 1904-1916 shows a Barker Company warehouse in a now-demolished building at 1708-1710 7th Street, NW prior to the building of 1517 7th Street. This may have been a temporary situation or a facility that was used strictly for storage, as the company listed its only business location as 649-651 New York Avenue NW in the city directories of the time.

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The warehouse's architect was Arthur M. Poynton (1870-1940), a longtime member of the Washington building community who was then close to the beginning of his career. A native Washingtonian, Poynton had graduated from the original Central High School in 1886. In July 1901 he had been hired by the Office of the Inspector of Buildings to supervise the construction of the manual training high school on P Street, a stone's throw from the future site of the warehouse. In 1902, Poynton became principal superintendent of municipal building construction. Under the supervision of Inspector of Buildings Snowden Ashford, Poynton functioned as a supervising architect, reviewing all drawings for school buildings, firehouses, jails, hospitals, and other public buildings.²¹

In addition to his city work, Poynton was involved with private projects in 1906-08. Besides the Barker Company warehouse, Poynton is credited with the design of an apartment building in 1906,²² a row of six houses at 13th and T Streets, NW in 1907,²³ and seven Capitol Hill houses in 1908.²⁴ Apparently his commissions were less lucrative than his \$1,800 annual civil service salary,²⁵ for he worked in the Inspector of Buildings office until 1909, when he resigned as Deputy Inspector of Buildings.²⁶ Poynton then re-entered private business as a principal in the Gormley-Poynton construction firm. He later undertook building projects as both the A.M. Poynton Company and A.M. Poynton and Son, working with such well-known architects as Appleton P. Clark. Among the larger projects he worked on were the construction of the original McKinley High School (Shaw Junior High), the National Printing Company plant on H Street NW, the Emerson and Orme Electric Car Showroom at Connecticut and M Street NW, and the Eastern Star and Masonic Homes. He built actively through 1938.²⁷

Construction of the Seventh Street warehouse began almost immediately upon issuance of the building permit. On April 5, 1906, excavation had begun. By April 21st, masons were working on the first story, and on April 30, the second floor joists were being placed. By May 19th, the date of the final inspection notes, construction was 85% complete. On May 28, 1906, a second permit was issued for a ten-by-ten foot hand-powered "elevator in stable".²⁸

"Two Peas in the Lumber Pod"

The Barker Company introduced its new location with a large display advertisement in the February 24, 1907 *Washington Post*. It described the new building as a "well-equipped branch warehouse," which,

²¹ "Inspection of Banks," *The Washington Post*, March 23, 1902. p. 12.

²² "Building Permits," *The Washington Post*, September 29, 1906. p. 14.

²³ "Building Permits," *The Washington Post*, April 23, 1907. p. 16.

²⁴ "Two Dwellings Planned," *The Washington Post*, December 20, 1908. p. R1. and "Building Permits". January 9, 1908. p. 11.

²⁵ "Big Building Increase," *The Washington Post*, September 11, 1907. p. 14.

²⁶ "A. M. Poynton Resigns," *The Washington Post*, February 9, 1909. p. 4.

²⁷ "Masonic Rites Planned Today for Poynton," *The Washington Post*. April 8, 1940 p. 12.

²⁸ District of Columbia Building Permit #3254. May 28, 1906. See Inspector's Notes filed with Permit 2510 for construction chronology.

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like its New York Avenue site, was “filled with a large and varied stock of millwork and lumber, so that all orders can be promptly handled to the best advantage of customers.” The only functional difference between the two sites was that the New York Avenue location was equipped with milling machinery to execute rush orders.²⁹

The Barker Company’s warehouse locations gave the company ready access to transportation corridors. The firm soon took advantage of new technology to leverage this competitive advantage. In 1912, the *Washington Post* opined that “the time is not far off when the horse-drawn vehicle will be as great a curiosity as the cross-town streetcar of New York” and hailed the truck as “the surer, cheaper, better means of conducting business.”³⁰ Despite the horse stable accommodations on Seventh Street, the Barker Company was already shifting to truck delivery. The firm’s mobile displays, such as a bungalow built on a truck bed, won prizes in the “truck parades” the city’s four major daily newspapers organized as promotions for their advertisers.³¹

During the World War I era, the Barker Company won its share of large contracts and obtained large orders through its relationship with master builder Harry Wardman. In a June 1, 1919 display advertisement, the Barker Company announced that it had supplied the millwork for over sixty apartment buildings and twelve hundred houses built by Wardman. It had just completed its largest Wardman project, supplying the 3,600 interior doors, 2,300 windows, 1,000 pairs of blinds, and other millwork for the newly opened Wardman Park Hotel.

The large display advertisement for the Wardman Park project equally promoted the Barker Company’s New York Avenue and Seventh Street locations. The same was true of the small display advertisements that the company ran periodically in the *Washington Post*. Beginning in the 1870s, Barker Company advertisements aimed at contractors had simply asserted its superiority in price and selection of high quality millwork. In 1916, these advertisements appeared with a more sophisticated appeal, stressing the firm’s timeliness (“Depend on us to keep your full crew busy!”)³² and technical expertise (“We’re equipped to give you quick service on MILLWORK called for by unusual specifications”)³³.

During the World War I era, the Barker Company’s advertisements began to reference lumber as well as millwork. Between 1916 and 1919 it opened an open-air lumber lot in the 600 block of P Street NW on the former site of a stable and fuel lot. The lumber lot had five one story sheds of varying sizes, the

²⁹ “Geo. M. Barker – A Well-known Name to Builders,” *The Washington Post*, February 24, 1907. p. 24

³⁰ *The Washington Post*, December 22, 1912

³¹ “Praise Post Parade,” *The Washington Post*, September 8, 1912. p. 13 and “Types of Trucks Entered”. September 3, 1912. p. 5. Mr. Tulloch, in his thirty-fifth year on the job, received the second place award.

³² “Everything in Millwork,” *The Washington Post*, June 23, 1916. p. 2.

³³ “Special Notices,” *The Washington Post*, August 16, 1916. p.2.

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largest of which walled off the eastern edge of the lot from Marion Street. The lot, which was not advertised as a separate location, was connected to the rear of the warehouse by the Marion Court alley.

As the 1920s continued, lumber became an increasingly important line of business for the company. In 1926, a display advertisement cited the George M. Barker Company for supplying all lumber and millwork for the interior remodeling of the Convention Center Market at Fifth and K Streets NW.³⁴ During the Depression, Barker Company advertisements came to emphasize lumber more than millwork. From approximately 1936 through 1938, the firm ran a series of small display advertisements probably produced by professional copywriters that referred to the two locations as “two peas in the lumber pod” and tabbed National 1348, the firm’s telephone extension “the lumber number”.³⁵ Another advertisement, apparently inspired by Canada’s Dionne quintuplets, who were often featured in newsreels of the day, referred to the “quintuplets of the Barker success; quality, low price, complete stock, courtesy, and promptness”.³⁶ Other advertisements promoted the firm’s ability to supply new manufactured building products like plywood and Cellotex.

Flora B. Welch died in the mid-1930s, but the Barker Company survived for decades. By 1970, it was the only millwork firm listed in the 1895-96 city directories that was still in business at a location in the District of Columbia.³⁷ Although it eventually faded from prominence, the Barker Company remained at its New York Avenue location into the 1990s. In 1984, the firm’s original building at 649-651 New York Avenue was added to the National Register of Historic Places under the Multiple Property Nomination for Buildings in the 1000 block of Seventh Street NW. It is in use today as a nightclub.

Eventually the buildings on either side of the Barker Warehouse were demolished and the building stood isolated between vacant lots. The warehouse was vacant for some time before becoming the home of the non-profit social service agencies Bread for the City and the Zacchaeus Free Clinic, which eventually merged under the Bread for the City name. Bread for the City had begun in the mid-1970s as a joint project of five downtown churches in response “to the Biblical injunction to feed the hungry and clothe the naked”. In 1993, the group bought the Barker Warehouse and restored its exterior while remodeling its interior. The groups moved into the renovated warehouse in 1994 and now use it for office space and an operations center.³⁸ The site of the Barker Lumber lot on P Street has become a used car lot.

³⁴ “Grand Opening of the New Convention Hall Market,” *The Washington Post*, February 26, 1926. p. 9.

³⁵ “Established 1865,” *The Washington Post*, November 2, 1936. p. X3.

³⁶ “Established 1865,” *The Washington Post*, November 6, 1936. p X9.

³⁷ The Barber and Ross Millwork Company, founded in 1876, moved to Virginia in the 1960s and continues in business as a major regional manufacturer.

³⁸ See history of Bread for the City online at <http://www.breadforthecity.org/ourmission.html>.

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The Barker Warehouse and the Development of Shaw East:

At the time the Barker Warehouse was built, the neighborhood later named Shaw East was mixed-use. Two-story row houses and one- and two-story stores constructed in the 1880s and 1890s lined many streets, while scattered tenements, stables, and back-buildings faced the alleys, as indicated on historic maps. A diminishing number of large lots were devoted to storage and retail distribution of goods like lumber, coal, and firewood. At 6th Street and Rhode Island Avenue, the first McKinley (later Shaw Junior) High School was erected in 1902 on what had been the site of the Wheatley Brothers lumber yard.³⁹ At the corner of 7th and P Streets, the Thyson Hotel was surrounded on its east and north sides by the Denty and Simms Coal and Wood Yard, which fronted on both streets as well as on Marion Court, the alley that paralleled Seventh and Marion Streets NW. Immediately north of Denty and Simms' 7th Street frontage, a "Sale Stable," apparently a sort of used car lot for horses, wound back from Seventh Street to follow the twists and turns of Marion Court. Immediately north of the stable was Johnson Brothers' Coal and Wood Yard. The next parcel north was a large livery stable complex back-built to Marion Court.⁴⁰ In 1906, the Barker Warehouse was built on the sections of the livery stable site and coal yard.

By 1915, the Barker Warehouse remained the largest building in the 1500 block and space-intensive uses like the coal yards and stables were replaced by buildings. The block had become a retail and recreational district that included grocery stores, dry good stores, barber shops, five pool halls, and a shooting gallery. Storage and express companies at 1510-12 and 1540 7th Street, NW apparently took advantage of the nearby transportation corridors. In 1916-1919, when the Barker Company opened its lumber lot in the 600 block of P Street, it replaced a stable that had occupied part of the former Denty and Simms Coal and Wood Yard site.

In 1921, the Broadway Theatre, the largest building in the block, was built abutting the south side of the Barker Warehouse, whose address shifted to 1523 Seventh Street as the result of re-subdivisions. Although the block had other substantial commercial establishments as Leventhal's Department Store at 1522-28 Seventh and the Federal Lithographic Company at 1527-35 Seventh, Sanborn Maps suggest that these were housed in adjacent existing structures rather than in large purpose-built buildings. The neighborhood remained retail, although a few workshops such as printing companies, a cylinder grinder, an auto repair shop, and a storage battery manufacturer operated during the twenties. By this time the neighborhood's residents had become predominantly African-American.

By 1936, the Barker Company was listing its location as 1523-25 Seventh Street, converting the address to 1525 Seventh sometime after 1960. From the 1940s through the 1960s, the block remained mixed

³⁹ See Kelsey & Associates. Historic Survey of Shaw East - Washington, DC. Online at <http://www.washingtonhistory.com/Surveys/shawreportfinal.pdf>

⁴⁰ See Sanborn Map Series covering dates referenced.

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retail, with restaurants, dry goods, and clothing stores predominating. The Broadway Theatre and the Barker Warehouse remained the largest buildings on the block. However, by the late 1950s, economic conditions in the neighborhood had deteriorated significantly, and the area was being proposed for urban renewal similar to that which was underway in Southwest Washington. A particular problem existed in the square bounded by Seventh, Sixth, O, and P Streets, which had been the site of a public school complex beginning in the nineteenth century. By the early 1950s the school buildings had been demolished as obsolete, and the campus had become a gigantic impound lot for abandoned cars.⁴¹ Illustration 4 provides copies of Sanborn Map sheets that contrast Square 445's development pattern in 1903 to 1959.

In April 1968, the entire west side of the 1500 block and the Thyson Hotel were destroyed by fire during the rioting that followed the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King. The Broadway Theatre was demolished in the 1980s, as has the former wholesale grocery and other buildings on the north side of the Barker Warehouse.

The Historic Architectural and Cultural Survey of Shaw East (1993-94) included an enumeration of the factories and commercial buildings in the neighborhood around the Barker Warehouse. The survey found no surviving purpose-built warehouses or material distribution facilities. While several historic bakery buildings in the area include warehouse and shipping components, none of these is a standalone structure like the Barker Warehouse. The Barker Warehouse is a unique example of its building type and survivor of this stage of Shaw East's development.

Bread for the City:

Started in 1974, Bread for the City is a front line agency serving Washington's poor. The agency began as two organizations; Zacchaeus Free Clinic began in 1974 as a volunteer-run free medical clinic, and Bread for the City was created in 1976 by a coalition of downtown churches to feed and clothe the poor. The two entities merged in 1995. Today, Bread for the City operates two Centers in the District of Columbia, including the former Barker Warehouse. The non-profit provides direct services to low-income residents of Washington, DC. All of the services are free and include food, clothing, medical care, legal and social services to low-income Washington, DC residents in an atmosphere of dignity and respect. Following the renovation of the Barker Warehouse, Bread for the City moved into its 7th Street location in April 1994.

⁴¹ "Renewal Plan Criticized," *The Washington Post*, December 11, 1957. p. B5.

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The Washington Post Newspaper, 1877-Present.

United States Federal Census (1850) and (1880). US Bureau of the Census. Washington, DC.

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2,522 square feet

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	1 8	0 3 2 4 6 8	4 3 0 8 5 3 2	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Peter Sefton

Organization D.C. Preservation League date August 2007

street & number 401 F Street, NW, Room 324 telephone 202.783.5144

city or town Washington state DC zip code 20001

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- X A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- X A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

- X Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO)

name Bread for the City

street & number 1525 7th Street, N.W. telephone _____

city or town Washington state DC zip code 20001

Paperwork Reduction Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et. seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Verbal Boundary Description:

The George M. Barker Warehouse property at 1525 7th Street occupies Lot 199 on Square 445 in Washington, D.C.

Boundary Justification:

The Warehouse building has stood on the site since its construction in 1906. The boundaries of the property remain unchanged since that time.