

Form 10-300  
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: District of Columbia	
COUNTY:	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
United States Department of the Treasury

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN:  
Washington

STATE: District of Columbia      CODE:      COUNTY:      CODE:

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
United States Government, Department of the Treasury

STREET AND NUMBER:  
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington      STATE: District of Columbia      CODE:

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Recorder of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:  
6th and D Streets, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington      STATE: District of Columbia      CODE:

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:       Federal       State       County       Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:      STATE:      CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Treasury Building, located immediately East of the White House at the intersection of Pennsylvania Avenue and 15th Street, N.W., is a rectangular building 260 feet wide from East to West and 466 feet from North to South. It was erected in four stages. The East side and central wing was built between 1836 and 1842 by Robert Mills. Dictated by a parsimonious Congress he was forced to use on the exterior Aquia Creek sandstone from the government quarry rather than the granite he preferred. Mills sought to construct a large, dignified, fireproof building worthy of its prominent location and function. The result was a brilliant display of structural innovation and dramatic design. Mills adopted the Greek Revival style for his building and on the 15th Street facade constructed a monumental ionic colonnade three stories high over a raised basement and carrying a full entablature unbroken by a pediment. This colonnade was shown in his preliminary plans as having 40 columns; however, it was reduced in the actual building to 30. The T-shaped building had a simple plan, two flanking corridors on either side of a double oval flight of cantilevered stone stairs. At right angles to this main axis is the corridor of the central wing with access between the two flights of stairs. On either side of the corridors are simple rectangular offices, each two bays wide. The structural heart of Mills' scheme is the continuous masonry barrel vaults of the main corridors flanked by groin vaults in each office. The whole interior being vaulted and carrying a minimum of decoration has produced spatial experience of spare, controlled beauty.

The South Wing of the building constructed from 1855 to 1861 by Ammi B. Young and Alexander H. Bowman carried out the basic Mills scheme for such a wing. It was, however, somewhat larger than the Mills proposal and therefore cut off the view from the White House to the Capitol. This South Wing has an advanced, pedimented octastyle ionic entrance portico flanked by symmetrical wings. These wings have engaged pilasters alternating with seven window bays on each side. Unfortunately the window sash has been replaced throughout the building and is not of the same design or scale as the original. The structure of the South Wing is completely different from that of the Mills section. Young adopted a system of iron I beams supporting shallow segmental brick vaults closely spaced. This has produced a much less sculptural appearance to the interior spaces than the Mills scheme. Young also departed from the first section of the Treasury Building by constructing the exterior of the South Wing in granite.

The West Wing by Isaiah Rogers, built between 1862 and 1864, and the North Wing by Alfred B. Mullett, built between 1867 and 1869, completed the building essentially in harmony with the South Wing. The interiors of these three sides of the Treasury rely much more on interior decoration than does the Mills portion. Boyh Young, Rogers, and Mullett made extensive and imaginative use of cast plaster and cast iron decoration. In the Banking Room of the North Wing, Mullett created the most elaborate room in the building. He used seven varieties of marble for the walls and bronze railings for the balcony. The demand for modern services, overcrowding, and rigid safety standards has produced countless small

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**SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                      |   |  |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry    | <input type="checkbox"/> Science              | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture            | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape   | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature  | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater              | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce     | <input type="checkbox"/> Military    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation       | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music       |   | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |                                      |   | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The United States Department of the Treasury building, erected in Washington, D.C., between 1836 and 1869, is the work of Robert Mills, Thomas U. Walter, Ammi B. Young, Isaiah Rogers, and Alfred B. Mullett. Conceived and built in the Greek Revival style which so captured the spirit of the young republic, this building, and the old Patent Office, undertaken at the same time, are the most outstanding examples of Greek Revival civil architecture in the country. Not only were they the largest non-military buildings undertaken by the Federal Government in their own time, but they also influenced countless examples of civil architecture built across the face of expanding America. The Treasury Building's great architectural merit is, somehow, not easily perceived by the passer-by. This is largely because of its cramped location immediately adjacent to 15th Street, with no set-back, and also because the large scale of the building when viewed from close quarters has a curious dulling effect on the senses.

History:

In the 33 years that the Treasury Building was under construction next door to the White House, the talents of five major American architects were utilized in four principal phases of construction.

The Treasury Department moved from Philadelphia to Washington in 1800 and was housed in the East Executive Office Building (on the site of the present North Wing). This brick building had been constructed in 1799 and then caught fire in 1801, 1814, and 1833. After the third conflagration it was not reconstructed and so from 1833 to 1836 The Department of the Treasury was housed in temporary quarters.

Robert Mills, who had been in the Capital since 1830, was asked in 1833 to make a report on the Treasury Fire. Later in 1836, his plans for a new Treasury Building were accepted by President Jackson who also appointed him to supervise the construction of the building. Undoubtedly, a major reason for the selection of Robert Mills for the Treasury Building commission was his demonstrated interest in fireproof construction. Mills has pioneered in this field with the construction of his Fireproof Building in Charleston, South Carolina, from 1822 to 1827. In addition Mills had studied with both Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Henry Latrobe.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Architecture, Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Baltimore, 1963), 80 ; Fiske Kimball, American Architecture (Indianapolis, 1928), 100, 178; Thomas E. Tallmadge, The Story of Architecture in America (London, 1928), 112-113; Wayne Andrews, Architecture, Ambition, and Americans (New York, 1955), 87; James G. VanDerpool, "Historical Development of Architecture in the U.S.A., 1632-1912," (N.P.S. Ms., 1966), 131 ; Talbot F. Hamlin, Greek Revival Architecture in America (New York, 1944), 49-51 ;

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		38°	53'	21"
NE	° ' "	° ' "		77°	02'	05"
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**W. Brown Morton III**

ORGANIZATION **Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service** DATE **2/3/71**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**801 19th Street, N.W.**

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington** STATE **District of Columbia** CODE

**12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

<p>As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National: <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Title _____</p> <p>Date _____</p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p>_____ <i>Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</i></p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p>_____ <i>Keeper of The National Register</i></p> <p>Date _____</p>
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7. Description (1)

alterations which have partially eroded much of the 19th-century ambiance. However, these alterations do not preclude the possibility of a sympathetic restoration.

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United States Department of the Treasury

8. Significance (1)

Mills design for the new Treasury called for an E-shaped building opening West towards the White House, and with a long classical East facade along 15th Street. The East front and the central wing were actually constructed between 1836 and 1842. The North and South Wings planned by Mills were not constructed. The resulting building was T-shaped with a continuous Ionic colonnade facing 15th Street.

The unusual structural system adopted for the building and the monumental scale of its design aroused suspicion and fear within the Congressional Committees and some sharp professional jealousies among rival architects. In 1838 a bill was introduced into Congress to authorize the demolition of the half completed structure. The Bill was defeated by a vote of ninety-four to ninety-one. Oddly enough, the architect who presented the case for demolition was Thomas U. Walter, who in 1851 was appointed Architect to the Capitol, and whose plans for extending the Treasury Building were authorized by Congress in 1855.

The Walter contribution to the future of the Treasury Building, however, does not seem to extend beyond a small scale plan and two elevations setting out the general goals of the final scheme.

The extension of the Treasury Building began in July 1855 with the construction of the South Wing. The design was the work of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury, Ammi B. Young, appointed in 1852, and Alexander H. Bowman, Engineer in Charge of the Bureau of Construction. Mills had been forced by Congress to use sandstone, but the extension was carried out in granite. The columns were monoliths whereas Mills' columns had been built up in drums. Young reported the South Wing completed in September 1861. In July 1862, Young was abruptly dismissed from his office by Secretary Chase and replaced by Isaiah Rogers. Rogers remained in this job until 1865 and supervised the construction of the West Wing and the preliminary planning of the North Wing. Rogers also designed a proposal to remodel the East Front and to replace Mills' original work. Happily this remained a proposal.

Upon Rogers' resignation, he was replaced by Alfred B. Mullett who had been a former student of his and also a subordinate on the Treasury staff. Mullett, who went on to design the State, War, and Navy Building on the other side of the White House from the Treasury, was responsible for the completion of the North Wing of the building from 1867 and 1869. This wing contains the elaborately decorated marble Banking Room which was the setting for President Grant's first inaugural ball in 1869.

Major changes since that time have included the rebuilding of the Mills facade in granite in 1908, and the addition of an attic story in 1910. Over the years the two enclosed inner courtyards have been gradually

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8. Significance (2)

filled in on the lower levels and have now become light wells rather than gardens. Even with these changes to gain more space, today the building houses less than 10% of the Washington staff of the Department of the Treasury.

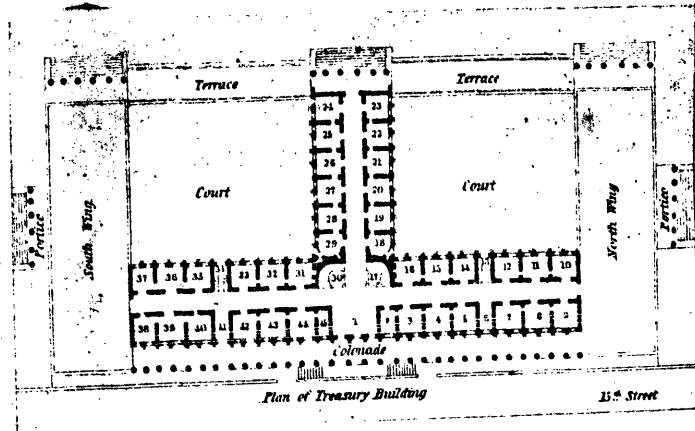
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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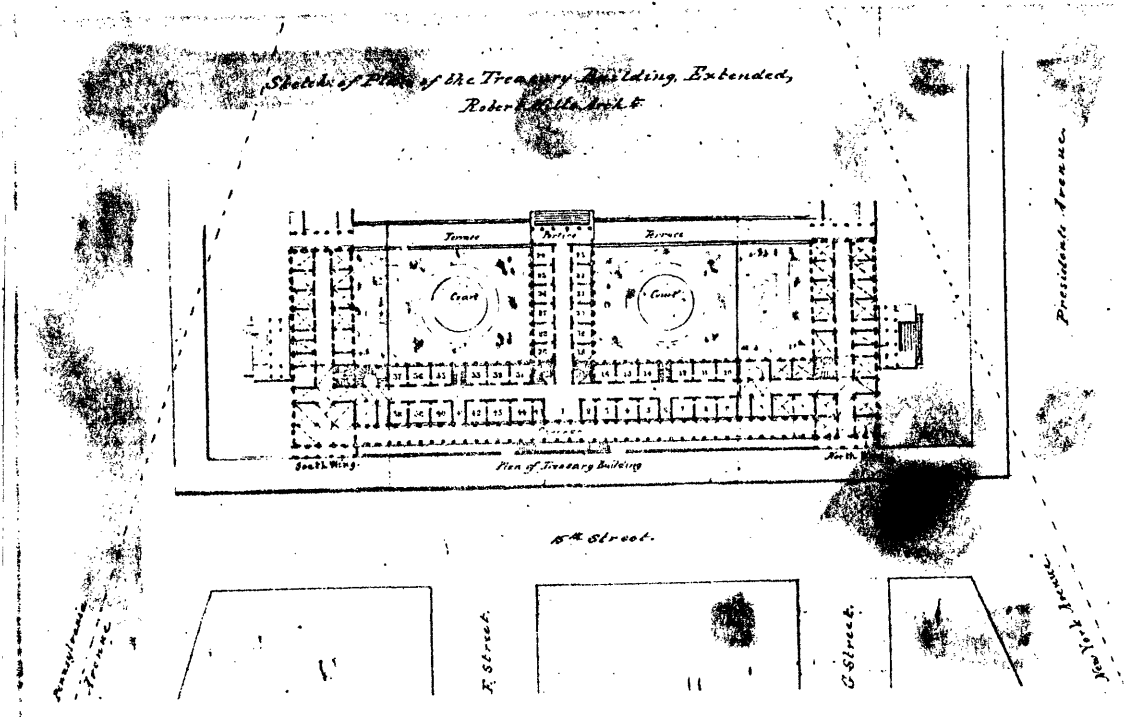
STATE <b>District of Columbia</b>	
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United States Department of the Treasury



Plan of the Mills section 1836-1842 as constructed



Sketch Plan by Robert Mills of the Treasury Building including the North and South Wings which were never constructed.