

PA0001961

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	
COUNTY:	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
715.11.0007	5/6/71

1. NAME	
COMMON: Vigilant Firehouse	
AND/OR HISTORIC:	

2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: 1066 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W. (Georgetown)			
CITY OR TOWN: Washington			
STATE District of Columbia	CODE 11	COUNTY: District of Columbia	CODE 001

3. CLASSIFICATION			
CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" 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	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input 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: Katherine O'Donnell			
STREET AND NUMBER: 4221 Fordham Road, N.W.			
CITY OR TOWN: Washington	STATE: District of Columbia	CODE 11	

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 11	

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS			
TITLE OF SURVEY: Proposed District of Columbia Additions to the National Register of Historic Properties recommended by the Joint Committee on Landmarks			
DATE OF SURVEY: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local			
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: National Capital Planning Commission			
STREET AND NUMBER: 726 Jackson Place, N.W.			
CITY OR TOWN: Washington	STATE: District of Columbia	CODE 11	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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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 type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The original portion of the Vigilant Firehouse, facing east at 1066 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W., approximately 30 feet north of the C&O Canal, is a two-story rectangular brick building which measures 24 feet (three bays) across the principal front by 44 feet (three bays) deep from east to west. The gable end of the building facing toward the street is capped by a small square wooden bell tower. The original structure has been added to on both sides and in the rear so that the building now measures 56 feet by 81 feet, including all of the additions.

On the first floor, the Wisconsin Avenue facade of the 1844 firehouse had two large, double vehicular doors. Three of these wooden doors were two-panelled above and below a six-light window. The fourth vehicular door, the second from the south, although similar in design to the others, had a smaller pedestrian door cut through it. A similar, more modern door now replaces the original southern doors, while the original north vehicular door has been bricked-in at the bottom and replaced by a commercial show window. Between the two doors near the street level, a small rectangular stone is inscribed: "Bush, the Old Fire Dog, Died of Poison, July 5th 1869, R.I.P."

On the second floor, there are three 6/6-light double-hung wooden sash windows with flat lintels. These windows originally carried blinds. Above these windows on the gable is a stone inscribed: "VIGILANT, INSTITUTED, 1817." Centered directly below this stone is a wrought iron "V" which served as a trademark as well as a tension tie rod. Astride the ridge of the roof at the front of the building, the square wooden cupola is set on a low platform and has a convex-curved roof which is supported by brackets and capped by a small ball.

The first addition to the rear of the building was a two-story structure, the upper loft of which appears to have been used for hay storage and must date from the period when the building was used as a firehouse. The south commercial addition is a one-story brick wing 9'1" wide, with a pair of flanking 2/2-light double-hung windows and a decorative brick cornice on the parapet. This south wing runs the entire length of the firehouse and the rear addition. On the north there is a two-story 25'6" wide addition with a projecting three-sided plate glass show window and a door on the ground floor. The three-brick-arched windows across the front of the second floor are 6/6-light double-hung with wooden sash and sills. Above these windows is another decorative brick cornice on the parapet. This wing also extends back the entire length of the building and the rear addition. The most recent addition is attached to the rear of the first addition. All of the additions have gently sloping shed roofs.

The original firehouse contained only two rooms--one on the first floor and another on the second from which a hatch in the ceiling led to the cupola. The interior of the first floor contains no evidence of its original trim or finish. On the second floor the simple wooden trim around the windows appears to be original. There is no trace of fire equipment in the building today. The first floor is of concrete, while the second is wood.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Pre-Columbian

☐ 16th Century

☐ 18th Century

☐ 20th Century

☐ 15th Century

☐ 17th Century

☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1844

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Abor iginal

☐ Education

☐ Political

☐ Urban Planning

☐ Prehistoric

☐ Engineering

☐ Religion/Phi-

☒ Other (Specify)

☐ Historic

☐ Industry

losophy

History of Fire

☐ Agriculture

☐ Invention

☐ Science

Fighting

☒ Architecture

☐ Landscape

☐ Sculpture

☐ Art

Architecture

☐ Social/Human-

☐ Commerce

☐ Literature

itarian

☐ Communications

☐ Military

☐ Theater

☐ Conservation

☐ Music

☐ Transportation

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Joint Committee on Landmarks has designated the Vigilant Firehouse a Category II Landmark of importance which contributes significantly to the cultural heritage and visual beauty of the District of Columbia. Erected in 1844, the present building is the second firehouse on its site and the oldest standing firehouse in the District of Columbia. Architecturally, the building is significant as a now rare example of a typical mid-19th century firehouse. Historically, it is an important link with the development of fire prevention techniques in the District of Columbia.

The Vigilant was formed as a private fire company in 1817. It was the first such company in Georgetown and one of the finest in the District of Columbia. John Kurz was the founding president; James Moore, the Secretary; and James Corcoran, the Treasurer. Membership in a fire company, which was voluntary, was a minor social distinction during this early period, and the competition between different fire companies was sometimes violent. As a form of fire insurance, the houses of subscribers to a volunteer fire brigade such as the Vigilant were marked with the company's insignia on an iron plaque. A number of Georgetown houses still carry these plaques.

During its early years, the Company occupied a small wood-frame structure on the present site. The Company's engine, purchased from John Agnue of Philadelphia, was christened the Vigilant. In 1843, George W. Haller purchased the frame firehouse and moved it across the street to 1079 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W. It was demolished in 1964.

The present building was constructed in 1844 and occupied on the 10th of August. In 1848 the Vigilants were reorganized and became part of the District of Columbia Government. They were renamed Fire Company No. 1 of Georgetown in 1867. A year later they are reported to have acquired the first steam engine in the District. The building has not been used as a firehouse since November 17, 1883, when the Company was merged with Engine Company No. 5 and moved around the corner to a newly-converted engine house at 3210 M Street, N.W. (the old Bank of Columbia).

The old Vigilant Firehouse was subsequently occupied by the Palmer Bottling Works and later by McKittrick, Inc., a bedding factory, which has only recently vacated the property. Both of these commercial establishments made additions to the building and remodeled the interior space. The main block of the original firehouse is still reasonably intact, however, and extant early photographs should facilitate its accurate restoration.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Georgetown Historic Waterfront, U.S. Commission of Fine Arts and Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service, Dept. of the Interior, 1968. Historic American Building Survey, July 1964. Cassidy, Albert J. The Firemen's Record, Day Printing, Baltimore, 1893. Nicholson, Philip W. The History of the Volunteer and Paid Fire Departments of the District of Columbia, Sponsored by the City Fire Fighter Association, 1936.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE				
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	0	'	"	0	'	"	38°	54'	15"
NE	0	'	"	0	'	"	77°	03'	28"
SE	0	'	"	0	'	"			48"
SW	0	'	"	0	'	"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: ca. 1/2

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Nancy C. Taylor, Landmarks Historian

ORGANIZATION: National Capital Planning Commission DATE: November 5, 1970

STREET AND NUMBER: 726 Jackson Place, N.W.

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

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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:

National ☐ State ☒ Local ☐

Name: [Signature]

Title: Deputy Mayor-Commissioner

Date: January 21, 1971

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

[Signature]
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

MAY 6 1971

Date: _____

ATTEST:

[Signature]
Keeper of The National Register

Date: APR 8 1971

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