

PH0011673

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:
COUNTY:
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE
MAY 8 1974

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Julius Lansburgh Furniture Co. Inc.

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Old Masonic Temple

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
909 F Street, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN:  
Washington

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Congressman  
Walter E. Fauntroy, D.C.

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"/> Object	<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 type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	Comments
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
Aaron and Lillie Straus Foundation

STREET AND NUMBER:  
3002 Druid Park Drive

CITY OR TOWN:  
Baltimore

STATE:  
Maryland

CODE:  
24

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

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

STREET AND NUMBER:  
6th & 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 Places recommended by the Joint Committee on Landmarks

DATE OF SURVEY: 1968 (revised 1973)  Federal  State  County  Local

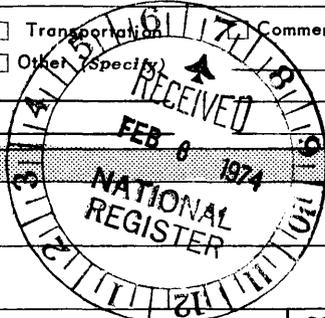
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
National Capital Planning Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:  
1325 G Street, 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 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 old Masonic Temple, known now as Julius Lansburgh Furniture Store, was erected in 1867-1869 in a modified French Renaissance style. At the time of its construction, the highly fashionable Patent Office neighborhood in which it is located contained fine residential as well as commercial and governmental buildings. Today the area is primarily commercial, in the heart of the downtown shopping district.

Facing south at the N.W. corner of 9th and F Sts. N.W., and occupying the entire area of its lot, the old Masonic Temple is a monumental 4 story building, rectangular in shape with rear ell. It fronts 131' 5" on F Street and 51' 6" on 9th Street. The ell measures 31' 5" x 41' 4". Construction is of masonry, largely of brick with stone foundations and stone facing on the street facades. There is a full basement. The roof is flat with a deeply projecting cornice supported by brackets.

The composition of the street facades is symmetrical with 8 regularly-spaced bays on the F Street elevation and 3 on the 9th Street elevation. The 2 central bays of the F Street elevation are brought forward slightly, suggesting a pavilion. Pilaster strips of an equal projection finish the three visible corners of the building, originally terminating at the cornice line in modified Corinthian capitals.

The entrance story, now completely altered, was modern in concept with large sheets of French plate glass set in columniated cast iron frames between piers of ashlar granite. Twin entrances, located in the bays second from the end on either side of the F Street facade, were arched and flanked by engaged Doric columns. That on the left was the main entrance by which the Masonic hall and lodge rooms above were reached.

The 3 upper stories, set off from the entrance story by a plain frieze and a simply moulded cornice, are faced with Connecticut brownstone. Wrought work, including window surrounds, bands and pilaster strips, is of green Nova Scotia freestone. All surfaces were painted white in 1922, obliterating the polychromatic subtleties of the facade. The second or principal story predominates, its tall, proportionately narrow rectangular windows rising directly from the cornice below. A wide band incised with geometrical design passes around all facade elements between the second and third stories, effectively separating the 2 upper stories from that below. The fourth story window surrounds rest on a string course and through aprons extend to the pediments of those below thus linking the band vertically with the crowning cornice at the roof line. A secondary string course and band at the heads of the third story windows provide additional horizontal elements, organizing the 2 upper stories into an almost grid-like pattern. A secondary band and string course are also present at the heads of the second story windows.

Treatment of window surrounds is most elaborate at the second story level. Alternating triangular and segmental pediments are supported by scrolled consoles. The frieze below each pediment carries a female head in high relief, each one flanked by garlands. Architraves are panelled and

(Continued on Form 10-300a)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**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) 1867-69

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Local History</u> |
| <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 Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____  |
| <input 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 Joint Committee on Landmarks has designated the old Masonic Temple a Category II Landmark of importance which contributes significantly to the cultural heritage and visual beauty of the District of Columbia. Designed by Cluss and Kammerhueber and erected in 1867-9, this fraternal-commercial building of rare architectural merit is located importantly across 9th St. from the old U.S. Patent Office. In scale and dignity it complements its prestigious neighbor, a symbol of awakening civic consciousness in Washington City during the nationalistic period following the Civil War.

Adolph Cluss characterized the style of the Masonic Temple as French Renaissance; the press, as "Modern renaissance of the 19th century." Lacking its projected mansard roof--omitted at no great loss for lack of funds--it is reminiscent of those antebellum urban club buildings which were based on the astylar palace design of the Italian 17th century. In the 1850's Cluss worked at the Treasury Dept. with Ammi B. Young on that architect's fine Italianate U.S. Customs Houses and Post Offices. The Masonic Temple represents a development of this mode in a period when function and pure design were gaining precedence over historical considerations in architecture.

Adolph Cluss and Joseph Wildrich von Kammerhueber achieved a national and international reputation for their innovative designs for Wallach (1862) and Franklin (1865) Schools in the District of Columbia. Concurrently with their work on the Masonic Temple they were engaged on the reconstruction of the Smithsonian Institution after the fire of 1865 and on the design and construction of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. Cluss was further associated with the transformation which took place in the city at this time through the design of markets and more schools and through his duties as engineer-member of the Board of Public Works. He was later architect of the U.S. National Museum and redesigned the interiors of the U.S. Patent Office after the fire of 1877. Cluss and Kammerhueber had offices in the Patent Office neighborhood at the S.E. corner of 7th and F Sts. N.W.

Masonic activity in the District of Columbia dates from about 1795. The Grand Lodge of Masons was first organized here in January 1811. In the early years of the city the cornerstones of important buildings--notably the White House (1792), the Capitol (1793), Blodgett's Hotel (1793), the City Hall (1820), and the Washington Monument (1848)--were laid Masonically, as was the cornerstone of the Federal District off Jones Point in Alexandria

(Continued on Form 10-300a)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Beauchamp, Tanya. "Adolph Cluss--an Architect in Washington During Civil War and Reconstruction." Records of the Columbia Historical Society. Ed. by Francis Coleman Rosenberger. Vol. 71-72. Charlottesville, Va.: University of Virginia Press, 1973.

Cluss, Adolph. "Architecture and Architects at the Capital of the United States from its Foundation until 1875." Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Convention of the A.I.A.: held in Phila. Oct. 11-12, 1876. Boston: published by the Institute, 1877. pp. 38-44.

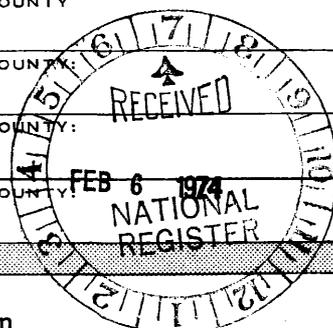
**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

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	0' 0" 0"	0' 0" 0"		38°	53'	51"
NE	0' 0" 0"	0' 0" 0"		77°	01'	28"
SE	0' 0" 0"	0' 0" 0"				
SW	0' 0" 0"	0' 0" 0"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **8059 sq. ft.** .185 + acre

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Tanya Beauchamp, Architectural Historian**

ORGANIZATION: **National Capital Planning Commission** DATE: **October, 1973**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**1325 G Street, N.W.**

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington** STATE: **District of Columbia** CODE: **11**

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

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: *James G. Park*  
Title: Assistant to the Mayor for Housing Programs

Date: FEB 6 1974

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

*A. R. Moulton*  
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

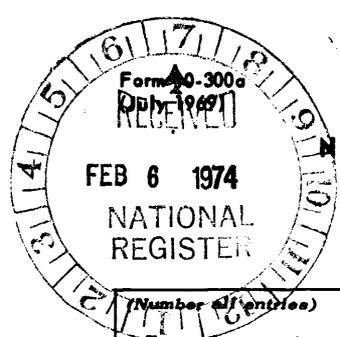
Date: 5/8/74

ATTEST:

*Wm. J. ...*  
Keeper of The National Register

Date: 5.7.74

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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7. Description (cont'd)

embellished with regularly spaced rosettes. Windows are 2/4 light double-hung sash at the second floor; 2/6 light double-hung sash at the third and fourth floors. The windows of the third floor are crowned with segmental pediments; those of the fourth floor, with triangular pediments. Here pediments, consoles and architraves are modified and more clearly of the period. Cast iron acroteria bearing Masonic symbols are now lost. Cast iron tympana ornament in all pediments has been covered over. A moulded panel at fourth story center once carried Masonic ornament in high relief while, below, the band separating the second and third stories bore the inscription "Masonic Temple".

The console brackets of the crowning cornice once terminated in finely carved animal heads. Panels between paired brackets were alternately moulded and garlanded. Some Masonic symbolism is present. The rear wall, of brick, is embellished only by a substantial corbel table in continuation of the crowning cornice of the street facades.

A contemporary newspaper account gives a full description of the original disposition of the interior spaces. The basement contained ". . . a first-class dining hall and restaurant like the magnificent St. George's under the Masonic Temple at Boston, where the aristocracy get their confectionery, ice-creams, and refreshments." In addition there was a modern and commodious kitchen which served the entire building and was connected by speaking tubes and dumb-waiters to all the upper stories. There was also a modern low-pressure steam-heating apparatus zoned to provide independent and separate heating power for each room in the building. The street floor contained stores and janitor's quarters.

The second story housed a large and elegant public hall, 49' x 95' x 25', with music galleries, cloak rooms, retiring and reception rooms for ladies and gentlemen. This hall was connected with a dining hall, 30' x 50' x 25'. Careful attention was given to the acoustics and ventilation of these rooms. The hall, seating 1000 persons, was thought to be the largest in the city at the time of its construction. The third and fourth floors were set aside for exclusively Masonic use and contained a variety of club accommodations. The cost of the Masonic Temple was \$180,000--almost \$200,000 with the furnishings and fittings. The latter were reputed to be "of superior quality. . .unsurpassed in any similar place in the country."

In 1922 the interior partitions of the building were removed, the windows painted over and sealed from within, and a new floor added between the second and third floors. Of the original interior detail only a vigorously moulded window surround near the stairway on the second floor remains. The exterior of the building was painted white at this time and the first story totally altered to provide the modern show windows required by the new tenant. In the 1960's, in order to further modernize the appearance of the building and

(Continued on Form 10-300a)

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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

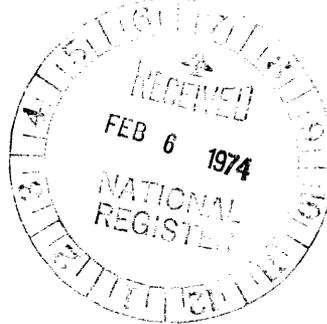
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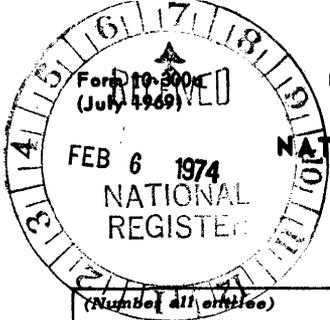
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(Number all entries)

7. Description (cont'd)

to reduce maintenance costs, most of the cast iron and other ornament of the building was either removed or covered over. In spite of these mutilations the old Masonic Temple, with its fine proportions and complex facade rhythms, remains one of the most exciting buildings in the downtown area.





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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(Number all entries)

8. Significance (cont'd)

(1791). Fifteen Presidents of the United States have been Masons. President James A. Garfield, while a member of the U.S. Senate, was active in the Pentalpha Lodge which met in the old Masonic temple at 9th and F Sts. N.W.

Prior to the erection of the Masonic Temple at 9th and F Sts. in 1867-9, the group had occupied a variety of quarters. In 1858 committees were appointed by the Grand Lodge and subordinate bodies to implement construction of a Masonic Temple which would serve as a permanent home for the rapidly expanding organization. On April 26, 1864, the Masonic Hall Association of the District of Columbia was incorporated by Congress. On May 15, 1865, this group purchased from Gonzaga College for \$20,000 lots 1&2 in Sq. 376--an L-shaped property at the N.W. corner of 9th and F Sts. N.W. with a frontage of 51' 5" on 9th St. and 131' 5" on F St. This site was then occupied by a tavern-hostelry of fine repute known as the Model House.

Construction of the Temple was financed by sales of stock. Ground was broken in the fall of 1867 and the cornerstone laid May 20, 1868 amid public fanfare. Masons employed by the government were released by executive order to participate in the ceremonies. Virtually the entire membership marched in a procession from the old Hall at the corner of 9th and D Sts. N.W., down Pennsylvania Avenue, up past the Treasury building and around by a route some 20 blocks long to the new Temple. President Andrew Johnson, in his character as a Master Mason, marched the entire length of the route, as did the architects and master-builders.

Grand Master B.B. French in laying the stone expressed the hope that the building would "add new lustre to our honored city," and "endure for many ages, a monument to the liberality and benevolence of its founders." On December 17, 1868, the Grand Lodge first met in the completed Temple. The building was dedicated and permanently occupied on May 20, 1870. Even before the dedication the Masonic Hall, located in one of the most fashionable areas of the city, was becoming a popular place for concerts and balls. By 1876 it was known as "the scene of some of the most brilliant balls and State socials given at the capital." Some of the more notable occasions included a banquet given by the British Minister for the Prince of Wales, a memorable ball and supper given by the Illinois Association and attended by President Grant, and a debutante party given by silver magnate Sen. Wm. Stewart. At the latter, attended by 500 persons, "the dressing was the most gorgeous and extravagant ever seen in this city. . . A magnificent supper was spread; the music was the best that could be afforded; so much nakedness was probably never revealed in Washington."

By the 1890's the masons were beginning to outgrow the Temple. In 1908 they moved to their present quarters at 13th and N.Y. Ave. The old building was rented out, its tenants including Strayer's Business College and, reputedly, a dance hall. Earlier reports that Negro masonic groups occupied the premises

(Continued on Form 10-300a)

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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

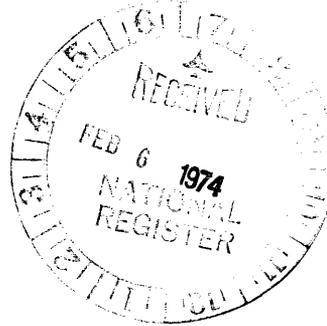
(Continuation Sheet)

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(Number all entries)

8. Significance (cont'd)

at this time have not been borne out by the present research. In 1921 the old Masonic Hall was leased to the Julius Lansburgh Furniture Co., Inc., and converted to use as a large retail store. This firm purchased the Temple from the Masonic Hall Association in 1926. It has occupied the premises continuously since that time.



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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(Number all entries)

Bibliography

D.C. Public Library Washington Collection. City Directories, newspaper clipping files.

Harper, W. Bro. Kenton N. History of the Grand Lodge and of Freemasonry in the District of Columbia with Biographical Appendix. Washington, D.C.: published by order of the Grand Lodge (R. Beresford, printer), 1911.

Harris, Ray Baker. Sesqui-Centennial History of the Grand Lodge Free and Accepted Masons District of Columbia, 1811-1961. Washington, D.C.: Grand Lodge F.A.A.M., District of Columbia, 1962.

Kein, De B. Randolph. Kein's Illustrated Hand-Book of Washington and its Environs, 1876. Washington City: for the Compiler, 1876.

McKee, Harley J. "Masonic Temple, HABS No. DC-218." Washington D.C. Architecture--Market Square. Washington: HABS, 1969. pp. 75-80.

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Townsend, Geo. Alfred. Washington, Outside and Inside. Hartford, Conn: Jas. Betts & Co., 1874.

Washington Star. May 20, 1868; May 21, 1870.

