

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Wire Building

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1000 Vermont Avenue NW ☐ not for publication

city or town Washington ☐ vicinity

state DC code _____ county _____ code 001 zip code _____

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

_____ national _____ statewide X local

Signature of certifying official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

_____ entered in the National Register

_____ determined eligible for the National Register

_____ determined not eligible for the National Register

_____ removed from the National Register

_____ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Wire Building
Name of Property

Washington, DC
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | private |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | public - Local |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | public - State |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | public - Federal |

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | building(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | district |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | object |

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing
1	buildings
	district
	site
	structure
	object
1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/Office Building

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/Office Building

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Mid-Century Modern

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Concrete clad with granite

walls: Concrete frame clad with limestone

roof: Slag

other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

Constructed in 1949 and opened in January 1950, the Wire Building is a striking Mid-Century Modern office building prominently located at the northwest corner of Vermont Avenue and K Street, NW in downtown Washington, D.C. This twelve-story concrete frame building, clad with smooth limestone walls has distinctive and continuous horizontal bands of windows that wrap around a curved corner allowing the south and west elevations to form an uninterrupted and sweeping surface. The first story of the building has entrances on the K Street and Vermont Avenue elevations, both of which are defined by large, double-height doors with heavily grained pink granite surrounds. The K Street entrance leads directly into ground floor retail (historically a restaurant, presently a bank), while the Vermont Avenue entrance leads into the office building lobby. In addition to these principal entries, a row of retail spaces flanking the entry to the office building open along the Vermont Avenue elevation.

With its rounded, wedge-shaped plan, the building essentially fills its corner lot. It abuts the Denrike Office building (1925-1926) on its Vermont Avenue side and is abutted by a contemporary office building on its K Street side.

The interior plan consists of the elevator bank, conference rooms, and restroom facilities located at the center core of the structure and professional offices occupying the outside window wall along Vermont Avenue and K Street, and along the rear wall of the building. A corridor runs between the service core and the private offices. Independent retail shops are located on the first floor along Vermont Avenue and K Street and accessed independently from the exterior of the building. The office building lobby is a modest area with marble flooring leading to the bank of elevators.

The Wire Building has not been added onto or substantially altered on the exterior, though the original windows have been replaced. New storefronts and new glass in the ribbon windows have replaced the original glazing, but the original openings and the surrounds survive intact and thus do not detract from the building's character-defining ribbon windows. The lobby interior has been renovated and the office floors of the building have been fitted out over the years for different tenants, but no structural elements have been altered. The building retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, association and feeling.

Narrative Description

The twelve-story Wire Building was constructed in 1949 in a strikingly modern aesthetic for Washington, D.C. The building is characterized by its continuous banding of ribbon windows that extends from one end of the building to the other, making a sweeping curve at the intersection of Vermont Avenue and K Street. Bands of limestone spandrels run between these windows, resulting in a strong horizontal emphasis that defines the building. The windows are slightly recessed from these alternating bands of limestone, adding to its horizontality and giving the building a sculptural quality.

The building is strategically sited at the intersection of Vermont Avenue and K Street, NW, across from McPherson Square. Rather than having an entry located at this corner, the building instead offers two entrances on each of the long side elevations extending along the streets. The principal retail entrance is located on-center of the K Street elevation and opens into a large first floor space that is currently occupied by a bank, but that was historically a cafeteria. The office building entrance, off-set towards the north end of the Vermont Avenue façade, provides access to the elevator lobby that serves all of the building's upper stories. This entryway consists of paired metal and glass replacement doors with a large single, fixed light sidelight on the north side sheltered by a metal canopy. Both the Vermont Avenue and K Street entrances are surrounded by double-height pink and grey granite surrounds matching the granite foundation that extends along the base of the building. Today, a long, continuous awning extends across the K Street elevation and wraps partially around the Vermont Avenue elevation, advertising the bank in the K Street retail space. The first floor storefronts have large, plate glass replacement display windows set within the original openings.

The upper floors are defined by alternating rows of windows and spandrels, where the spandrels are clad with smooth limestone and the ribbon windows, recessed from the spandrel walls, are filled with replacement sash. The exterior wall curves at the corner of K Street and Vermont Avenue to form a continuous surface. The 12th floor is set back and repeats the use of a ribbon window.

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 patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1949-50

Significant Dates

1949

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Alvin L. Aubinoe, primary architect, builder

Harry Edwards, secondary architect

Period of Significance (justification)

The Period of Significance for the Wire Building is 1949-50, the year in which the building was constructed and then opened.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

Built in 1949-50, the Wire Building or Wire Office Building was designed and constructed by Alvin L. Aubinoe and Harry Edwards for owner and developer Preston Wire, after whom the building was named. The building was constructed on the north side of McPherson Square, following a two-decade-long slowdown in commercial development, and preceding the next major construction boom in the area. During the 1920s, McPherson Square was transformed from a prominent residential neighborhood of 19th century dwellings to a business district of commercial office buildings. While most of the older mansions surrounding the square were replaced during the 1920s, the Lowery House (built 1875-76) stood on the future site of the Wire Building until 1936 when it was demolished for a parking lot. Fourteen years later, the Wire Building was erected on the vacant lot, representing the first of the mid-20th century office buildings to be developed in the area.

The prominence of Preston Wire and Alvin L. Aubinoe within the Home Builders Association of Washington and the location of the Washington Real Estate Board in the building reflect the continuity of use and development patterns as the area, then-known as "Washington's Wall Street", continued to prosper during the post-WWII period.

The Wire Building is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion C as a good example of mid-century Modernism in Washington, DC and its association with the accomplished local architect Alvin Aubinoe. Designed by Alvin Aubinoe and Harry Edwards and constructed by Alvin L. Aubinoe Inc., the building marked a transition between an earlier period of Streamline Moderne and the period of Corporate International style that dominated commercial office building architecture during the 1950s. Aubinoe and Edwards built their reputations on the Art Deco and streamlined designs of the modern apartment buildings they produced for the Cafritz Construction Company. The Wire Building, as well as the Shapiro Building at 1413 K Street NW (1952) and the building by Edwin Weihe at 1001 Connecticut Avenue NW, share certain characteristics with ribbon windows, curved corners, and stone cladding reminiscent of these earlier designs. The Wire Building, completed in 1949 and opened in January 1950, marked the beginning of a period of overt Modernism in the city where contemporary building forms and materials came to replace the city's predilection for traditional building forms and materials.

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

The Wire Building is significant in the Area of Architecture as an important example of a mid-century Modern office building, erected in the post-World War II era as the Modern design aesthetic slowly emerged in the architecturally conservative city. Based upon other mid-century Modern buildings in D.C., the Wire Building stands out as the earliest and most intact example of its kind. The Wire Building is overtly and unapologetically Modern: its continuous ribbon windows, its curved and undecorated wall surface, its flexible interior space with natural lighting, and the building's use of new and modern materials and technology, make it an excellent expression of its building type, style and period of construction.

The Wire Building also provides an important example of the work in the career of architect Alvin Aubinoe as his design aesthetic evolved with the times. Known primarily for his earlier Art Deco-inspired buildings, Aubinoe boldly embraced the Modern movement after World War II, as exemplified by the Wire Building.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

McPherson Square and its Transformation from Residential Neighborhood to Business District:

The property upon which the Wire Building was constructed at the corner of Vermont Avenue and K Street NW was historically the site of a large detached Second Empire style dwelling constructed in 1875-76 for Archibald H. Lowery, a prominent local real estate developer, and his wife, Mrs. Frances A. Woodbury Lowery. Initially used as a family residence, the home was rented to a succession of prominent Washingtonians, including Hon. Wayne McVeagh, Attorney General for President Garfield and President Arthur then Ambassador to Italy for President Cleveland. The Department of Justice occupied the dwelling along with a row of attached dwellings on K Street after vacating the Freedman's Savings Bank Building on Pennsylvania Avenue in 1899.¹ In 1921, William H. Saunders & Co. moved from the Southern Building,

¹ James W. Goode, *Capital Losses: A Cultural History of Washington's Destroyed Buildings*, 2nd ed. (Smithsonian, 2003), 100.

replacing the Department of Justice and converting the property to use as a real estate office.ⁱⁱ The office was also occupied by H.W. Hilleary, the head of a “firm of real estate operators which deals extensively in Virginia farms and country places,” and was notably responsible for the sale of Monticello by the Levy Estate to the Thomas Jefferson Foundation in 1923.ⁱⁱⁱ After the death of Virginia Woodbury Lowery Brunetti, the Duchess of Arcos, in 1934, the home was razed for parking lot in April 1936.^{iv}

During the 1920s, the neighborhood around McPherson Square experienced a wave of commercial development. The immediate vicinity included construction of the offices of Shannon & Luchs, Inc. and Wardman & Co. on K Street between Vermont Avenue and 15th Street in 1923 and the Denrike Building on Vermont Avenue in 1925. With the onset of the Great Depression in 1929 and the subsequent restrictions on private building during WWII, however, very little new private commercial development proceeded in the area of McPherson Square or the city as a whole.

Design and construction of the Wire Building

Preston Wire, a major local housing developer, applied for a building permit for the Wire Building on December 24, 1948 and construction proceeded throughout the spring of 1949 at an estimated cost of \$450,000.^v The offices include 135 rooms totaling 67,190 square feet of office space. The retail space on the ground floor has a total area of 5,130 square feet. An exuberant account from January 1950 in *Home Building Monthly* touted the building’s “ultramodern” design, featuring Otis “Signal Control” elevators, fluorescent lighting, acoustic ceilings, air-conditioning throughout, and “Thermopane” insulated glass windows. The article favorably compares the building to a series of New York City office buildings featured in “Office Building Bonanza” a *Fortune Magazine* article from January 1950.^{vi}

A 1950 article in the trade magazine *Buildings* commented on the space planning of the office, writing “satisfaction is assured if tenants can move into space physically tailored to their wants... Operating on this modern management principle has assured not only 100% occupancy of the newly opened Wire Building in Washington, D.C., but it is bringing in revenue from every bit of income-producing area. None is wasted.”^{vii} The article continues to note the range of technological and design innovations found in the building, “the three elevators are equally adaptable to either automatic or operator control merely by throwing a switch. Recessed fluorescent lighting is in a continuous line and space equally apart. Individual room control provides for air conditioning.” The ribbon windows attracted particular attention noting, “The building faces the corner of Vermont and K streets in a sweeping curve which enables more natural light to enter in a rectangular-shaped structure... This double glazing pane has the advantage of cutting down condensation, as it does not collect dust as readily as the average window, thus making it easier and more economical to clean as well as reducing heat and air conditioning losses.”^{viii} Further details on interior finish are provided by Charles T. Belbin, the Building Superintendent for the Wire Building in an article in *National Safety News* published by the National Safety Council and the American Society of Safety Engineers, commenting that “Check-slip has been the perfect solution to a tough problem.”^{ix} Advertisements in the same issue note, “New Whiz Check-Slip is different! It gives you positive anti-slip protection—without sacrificing the other important qualities of a high-grade floor finish. Check-slip means long wear, high lustre, better coverage, and no floor discoloration. Check-slip is economical too.”^x

On October 14, 1949, Randall H. Hagner & Company, Inc. placed an advertisement, “Announcing the Wire Building as ‘The Capitol’s Most Distinctive Office Building,’” continuing, “We are now taking reservations for space ranging in area from 2,400 square feet to an entire floor, which contains approximately 5,750 square feet.”^{xi} Tenants began to move in on January 1, 1950.^{xii} A January 1950 article, commented that the first group of tenants, included, “a veritable ‘Blue Book’ of

ⁱⁱ “Real Estate Firm Goes to K Street,” *The Washington Post*, June 5, 1921.

ⁱⁱⁱ Special to The New York Times, “Monticello, the Famous Jefferson Estate, For Sale; Once Sought as National Shrine,” *The New York Times*, July 27, 1921.

^{iv} “Lowery Residence Razing Is Begun,” *The Washington Post*, April 12, 1936.

^v In May 1949, the Wire Building and other local projects, including the Park-at-Your-Desk Building, Enterprise Building, and National Cannery Building, were threatened with a walk-out by over 5000 members of the AFL carpenters and union builders after they failed reach a resolution with the Master Builders Association—see Sam Stavisky, “U.S. Steps In To Prevent Walkout by Carpenters,” *The Washington Post*, May 27, 1949.

^{vi} Paul H. Bolton, “A Finger Pointing to the Sky! Ultramodern Wire Building a Creation of Association Leaders,” *Home Building Monthly*, January 9, 1950.

^{vii} *Buildings* (Stamats Publishing Co., 1950).

^{viii} *Ibid.*

^{ix} National Safety Council and American Society of Safety Engineers, *National Safety News* (National Safety Council., 1951), 53.

^x *Ibid.*, 51.

^{xi} “Display Ad 14 -- No Title,” *The Washington Post*, October 13, 1949.

^{xii} “Our Changing Skyline,” *The Washington Post*, October 30, 1949.

nationally-known companies,” continuing to highlight Price, Waterhouse & Co., Time-Life-Fortune, Inc., and a range of large legal offices, and major insurance and industrial firms. In 1954, the building tenants included lawyers, accountants, insurance firms, manufacturing agents, civic groups, and advocacy organizations. Two notable additions to the initial list included the Veterans of Foreign Wars national headquarters and the Washington Real Estate Board which opened offices in Suite 312 in the Wire Building on May 1, 1950.^{xiii}

The ground floor tenants included a Sholl’s Cafeteria, a real estate agent and an athletic goods store. Regarding Sholl’s Cafeteria, *Home Building Monthly* noted, “This popular food source will offer a further convenience to the occupants of the Wire Building, as well as serving the entire area.” Their Vermont Avenue cafeteria remained for over 30 years, even after the original Sholl’s Colonial Cafeteria at Connecticut Avenue and L Street NW closed in May 1979.^{xiv} Mary Agnes Loh worked as the manager of the Vermont Avenue cafeteria from 1948 up until her death on March 14, 1966.^{xv}

Several notable environmental nonprofit organizations currently maintain offices at the Wire Building including the Wildlife Management Institute, the North American Wildlife Foundation, Inc., the Natural Resources Council of America, the Horticultural Research Institute, and the Society for Environmental Graphic Design. The building is currently owned by 1000 Vermont Avenue SPE LLC headquartered at 1201 New York Ave NW.

Mid-Century Modernism and the Wire Building:

Built in 1949, the Wire Building is one of the first buildings constructed in what would become a major wave of post World War II commercial development in downtown Washington, particularly along K Street. In the post-World War II era, Washington’s economy was strong. The city’s increased capital led to an enormous surge in office building development. The growth in the federal government encouraged this commercial development as federal agencies were often tenants and clients of the private sector. In addition, a wealth of new businesses and professional associations were attracted to the growing capital city. Many national corporations were relocating to the city to be close to government contracts, bringing with them a need for offices and other business venues.^{xvi}

Developers and builders, and the architects they hired, were the driving forces in the development of the “new” Post World War II downtown. Morris Cafritz was the most prominent player in the development of the K Street corridor with his 1948 “Park at Your Desk” building at 1625 I Street. During the 1950s, Cafritz began building along the K Street corridor and had developed over a dozen buildings there before his death in 1964. Cafritz often partnered with local architect and builder Alvin Aubinoe and architect Harry Edwards, both of whom designed the Wire Building. Preston Wire’s development of the Wire Building immediately preceded Cafritz’s role in transforming K Street, and indeed may have helped to encourage it. As noted in the *Home Builder’s Monthly*:

“This ‘baby-skyscraper’ has been attracting a maximum of attention ever since its novel architectural details began to take form, and were proving to be ‘traffic stoppers’ to the pedestrians and motorists who passed that corner. The nature of Washington’s trade and commerce has tended to be attracted towards the Statler-Carlton area, and the strategic location of this new office building promises to make it an important address in the path of that trend.”

Upon its completion, the Wire Building was acclaimed, and is so recognized today, as one of the earliest, truly Modern office buildings in Washington. Articles in trade magazines at the time assert that the continuous banding of windows was “a very recent architectural motif” and that the building itself was “setting many advanced targets for modern structures to follow.” Indeed, a 2009 survey of the city’s Modern-era buildings conducted for the D.C. Historic Preservation Office, confirms this assertion. In the early decades of the twentieth century, Washington was a decidedly conservative city, slow to embrace a Modern design aesthetic. While “Stripped Classicism” provided a popular modern-classical hybrid in the pre-World War II years, more overtly Modern buildings (aside from some private residences) had not yet emerged on the scene. Indeed, the Longfellow Building at 1741 Rhode Island Avenue, constructed in 1940 and generally cited as the city’s *first* modern office, was somewhat of an aberration, preceding other Modern office building designs by almost a decade.

^{xiii} “This Week in Real Estate,” *The Washington Post (1877-1954)*, April 30, 1950, <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=225654102&Fmt=7&clientId=57002&RQT=309&VName=HNP>.

^{xiv} Kathy Sawyer, “Sholl’s Last Supper,” *The Washington Post (1974-Current file)*, May 30, 1979.

^{xv} “Mary A. Loh,” *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, March 16, 1966.

^{xvi} Robinson & Associates, *DC Modern: A Context for Modernism in the District of Columbia, 1945-1976* (2009), p.38.

Designed by William Lescaze—one of the earliest practitioners of Modern architecture in America—this building featured horizontal bands of windows and balconies for the first time in D.C. In the years immediately following the war, the architecture of the city typically expressed advancements in spatial planning and the application of emerging building technologies, which taken together, resulted in a Modern design aesthetic. This aesthetic is characterized on exteriors by horizontality, bands of windows, and absence of ornamentation. On the interior, the Modern aesthetic in office design typically meant open, “flexible” space that could be adapted to individual and changing needs, made possible by free-standing structural columns. In the case of the Wire Building, these structural supports are round-section, concrete columns set inside the outer wall of the building.

An examination of some of the most notable of these identified early Modern commercial buildings, including Hotel Dupont Circle (1948), the General Accounting Office building (1949-1951), the World Center building (1950), the Crestview apartment building (1951) and the office building at 1001 Connecticut Avenue (1952), reveals a latent conservatism *not* evident in the Wire Building (1949). For instance, the GAO and the World Center both held onto the traditional punched-window affect rather than employing avant-garde ribbon windows. The windows at 1001 Connecticut Avenue are interrupted by vertical piers at the rounded corner, implying a corner tower and giving the building a sense of verticality that is fully expunged in the Wire Building. While the corners of the Hotel Dupont Circle are glazed and more fully dematerialized, the window banding occurs in groups, rather than continuously, as does the banding in the Crestview apartments. Among the city’s early commercial buildings, the Wire Building was the first to introduce the ultra-modern feature of uninterrupted ribbon windows, validating the claim made in the January 1950 *Home Building Monthly* article that such window treatment is “a very recent architectural motif”, and relinquishing any pretense that the façade is, or need be, structural.

The Washington Post building (1951), constructed one year after the Wire Building, most closely follows the Wire in its use of continuous ribbon windows—a treatment that gives both buildings their strong sense of horizontality. In the Wire Building, this horizontality is further strengthened by the fact that the ribbon windows are notably recessed from the limestone facing, giving the building an almost sculptural quality.

Developer Preston Wire and architect Alvin Aubinoe had not worked together prior to construction of the Wire Building. Yet, Wire and Aubinoe were both active members of the Home Builders Association and prominent players in the city’s development community. Aubinoe and Edwards had been working with developer Morris Cafritz for years, and Alvin Aubinoe had, during this time, earned a reputation as one of the foremost Washington architects designing in the Art Deco style. Wire’s collaboration with Aubinoe and Edwards on the Wire Building thus generated significant interest. By all accounts, the collaboration was a success as the building received unmitigated praise for its sleek Modern aesthetic, its flexible floor space, and its use of new materials and modern technology, including automatic elevators, acoustic and asphalt tiles, and fluorescent lights.

Biographical summary of Preston E. Wire

Preston E. Wire, born in Washington, DC in 1903, began work in local real estate during the early 1930s. Wire later served as a director of the Home Builders Association and the Security Bank of Washington. His father, Charles E. Wire, worked as a builder and contractor in Washington, DC with offices at 1413 H Street NW, from 1913 through 1922, except for 1917 when his offices were located at 1-2 Galt Building NW. Charles E. Wire and his wife resided at 308 Madison Street NW. Preston Wire began work as a builder and designer in the 1920s and continued through his death in 1952. He was notably remembered as a “pioneer in housing development” for African-Americans, building over 2000 units for African-American residents from 1938 to 1946.

In 1944, Preston Wire organized Wire Properties, Inc. which planned the development of the Wire Building, completed in 1950. In the 1940s, prior to moving into his newly constructed building, Wire maintained offices at 1526 K Street NW. Preston Wire had not worked with Alvin Aubinoe or Harry Edwards prior to the construction of the Wire Building, but likely knew Aubinoe through their mutual involvement with the Home Builders Association of Washington. Wire died suddenly at the age of 49 in October 1952, only two years after the construction of the new office, in Miami Beach Florida at his summer home. Before his death, Wire lived at 4925 Loughboro Road NW.^{xvii}

^{xvii} “Preston Wire, D.C. Builder, Dies in Miami,” *The Washington Post*, October 24, 1952.

Biographical summary of Alvin L. Aubinoe

Alvin Aubinoe's father Stephen Aubinoe and his grandfather Samuel Aubinoe all worked in construction in Washington, DC and Virginia. Samuel Nelson Aubinoe, born in 1843 in Virginia, worked as a builder in Alexandria before his death on January 15, 1888 in Charleston, South Carolina. Stephen Aubinoe was born in 1878 in Philadelphia and moved to Washington, DC as a young man to work with his father, Samuel. He later started a sheet metal firm, which he operated until his retirement in 1934. At the time of his death on September 30, 1954, Stephen Aubinoe lived at 1138 Florida Avenue NE.

Alvin Love Aubinoe was born in Washington, DC on February 12, 1903. Aubinoe graduated from Tech High School, then studied at the University of Maryland from 1922 to 1924 and continued on to Carnegie Tech from 1924 to 1925. From 1923 through 1926, the Rust Engineering Company employed Aubinoe as an engineer, assigning him to a dam, filtration, and waterworks in Patton, Pennsylvania and then to the Ford Assembly Plant in Norfolk, Virginia. After a brief period with the Washington Railway & Electric Co., Aubinoe started with the Cafritz Construction Co. as a draftsman in 1926. He continued to work with the Cafritz Company as a draftsman, civil engineer, architect, and construction manager, through 1935 when he became a Department manager at their offices at 6007 34th Place NW. Although his association with the Cafritz Company continued for several more years, September 1935 is the first year when Alvin L. Aubinoe and Harry L. Edwards are jointly named as architects on the building permit for a Cafritz Company project. Aubinoe's work with the Cafritz Company brought him a reputation of being among the foremost Washington architects working in an Art Deco style.

By 1946, Aubinoe had incorporated Alvin L. Aubinoe Inc. as a construction company to build larger projects, including the Flood Motor Company dealership at 5130 Wisconsin Avenue and the Congressional Hotel at 300 New Jersey Avenue SE in 1946, and the Dupont Plaza Hotel at 1500 New Hampshire Avenue in 1948. During the 1940s, Aubinoe is listed in local directories as a building contractor and then an architect with offices at 1610 K Street NW from 1940 to 1943 and 1907 Pennsylvania Avenue NW from 1947 to 1949. Aubinoe formed Aubinoe Apartments, Inc. in 1949 to own and build at least two apartment buildings. Aubinoe won an award from the Washington Board of Trade biennial architectural competition in 1942, for a residence at 130 Brookside Drive, constructed for Thomas Somerville III.^{xviii} He won again in 1951 for the 1948 Hotel Dupont Plaza at 1500 New Hampshire Avenue NW designed by Aubinoe, Edwards & Berry, with the jury citing "a frank exterior expression" of the "contemporary style structure."^{xix} In 1950, following the construction of the Wire Building, Aubinoe was nominated as the first vice president for the Home Builders Association of Metropolitan Washington on a slate with W. Clarke Daniel, a "40-year-old builder and vehement opponent of subsidized Government housing" as president and Russell Martin as the second vice president.^{xx} Then in 1951, Aubinoe was elected President of the organization.^{xxi}

By 1955, his business involved \$10 million per year in transactions and Aubinoe served as the chairman of the DC Building Code Advisory Committee, the chairman of the Washington Real Estate Board's Zoning Committee, and as a member of the Commissioners' Zoning Advisory Committee. By 1961, reflecting the movement of private construction towards the Maryland and Virginia suburbs, Aubinoe had moved his office closer to home to 10215 Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda, MD.^{xxii} In addition to his professional work, Aubinoe served as a member of the Civil War Centennial Commission. At the time of his death on June 20, 1974, Alvin Aubinoe lived at 8000 Overhill Road, Bethesda, MD.

Biographical summary of Harry L. Edwards

Harry L. Edwards joined the architectural department of the Cafritz Company in 1935, initially "devoting special attention to the planning of homes in Greenwich Forest, the smart restricted suburban community of this organization at Wilson and

^{xviii} "Architectural Awards Made By Trade Body," *The Washington Post* (1877-1954), March 29, 1942, <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=217108622&Fmt=7&clientId=57002&RQT=309&VName=HNP>.

^{xix} By Robert P. Jordan Post Reporter, "Article 2 -- No Title," *The Washington Post* (1877-1954), April 11, 1951, <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=226024672&Fmt=7&clientId=57002&RQT=309&VName=HNP>; "Article 8 -- No Title," *The Washington Post* (1877-1954), April 15, 1951, <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=228042522&Fmt=7&clientId=57002&RQT=309&VName=HNP>.

^{xx} "Daniel Heads Slate For Home Builders," *The Washington Post* (1877-1954), January 8, 1950, <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=119314547&Fmt=7&clientId=57002&RQT=309&VName=HNP>.

^{xxi} "Aubinoe Heads Home Builders in '51," *The Washington Post*, January 14, 1951.

^{xxii} Leo Sullivan, "Builder Aubinoe Helped Give New Look to District," *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, November 27, 1955.

Hampden lanes.”^{xxiii} Born January 15, 1902 in Aaron, Florida, Edwards arrived in Washington, DC at age 18 with his mother. He grew up in Alabama and attended the Baptist Collegiate Institute. He studied architecture at the George Washington University Evening School from 1921 to 1922 then continued his education at Atelier Cunningham from 1923 to 1924. He also participated in the International Correspondence School from 1921 to 1924. He began work in Washington, DC as an architect in 1932 at 803-810 18th Street NW. Working with Aubinoe, Edwards helped to design the Wire Building, the National Home Builders Building, the Tilden Gardens Apartments, the Dupont Plaza Hotel, the Kennedy-Warren, and the Pentagon. Edwards died of cancer on January 15, 1958. At the time of his death he and his wife, Mary Jane Tate lived at 2406 St. Andrews Way, Silver Spring, MD.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form)

“Aubinoe Heads Home Builders in '51,” *The Washington Post*, January 14, 1951, o. 55.

Bolton, Paul, “Finger Pointing to the Sky: Ultramodern Wire Building a Creation of Association Leaders,” *Home Builder's Monthly*, January 1950.

“Builder Aubinoe Helped Give New Look to District,” *The Washington Post*, Nov. 22, 1955, p. C9

“D.C. Modern: A Context for Modernism in the District of Columbia, 1945-1976, Historic Context Study (Robinson & Associates), 2009.

“Morris Cafritz's Washington,” *The Washington Post*, February 25, 1990, M20.

“Our Changing Skyline,” *The Washington Post*, Oct. 30, 1949, p. R1.

“Preston Wire, D.C. Builder Dies in Miami,” *The Washington Post*, October 24, 1952, p. 28.

“Renting a New Building,” *Buildings, The Magazine of Building Management*, November 1950.

“Sholl's Last Supper,” *The Washington Post*, May 30, 1979, C-1.

Previous documentation on file (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: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre (7,591 square feet)
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

^{xxiii} “Harry L. Edwards Now With Cafritz,” *The Washington Post (1877-1954)*, June 16, 1935,
<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=251421552&Fmt=7&clientId=57002&RQT=309&VName=HNP>.

Wire Building
Name of Property

Washington, DC
County and State

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>43 07 732</u> Easting	<u>3 23 609</u> Northing	3	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing
2	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing	4	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The Wire Building at 1000 Vermont Avenue occupies Square 216, Lot 800 at the intersection of Vermont Avenue and K Street in Washington, D.C.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The Wire Building has been associated with that lot and square since it was constructed on the site in 1949.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Eli Pousson; Kim Williams (editor)
organization D.C. Historic Preservation Office date October 2012
street & number 1000 Vermont Avenue, NW telephone 202 442-8800
city or town Washington, D.C. state zip code 20024
e-mail Kim.williams@dc.gov

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Wire Building
Name of Property

Washington, DC
County and State

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Wire Building
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
Photographer: Kim Williams
Date Photographed: October 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

View looking north from McPherson Square to Wire Building at intersection of Vermont Avenue and K Street, NW
1 of 10

View looking north showing south and east elevations of Wire Building
2 of 10

View looking southwest showing east elevation of Wire Building
3 of 10

View looking north showing south top elevation of Wire Building
4 of 10

View looking north showing south and east top elevations of Wire Building
5 of 10

View from east looking up showing east elevation of Wire Building
6 of 10

View looking northwest showing K Street entry door
7 of 10

Interior view of lobby showing elevator wall
8 of 10

Interior view from upper floor corner office looking southeast
9 of 10

Interior view of office floor
10 of 10

Property Owner:

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

name 1000 Vermont Avenue SPE LLC
street & number 1201 New York Ave NW, Suite 100 telephone _____
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20005-6192

Paperwork Reduction Act 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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

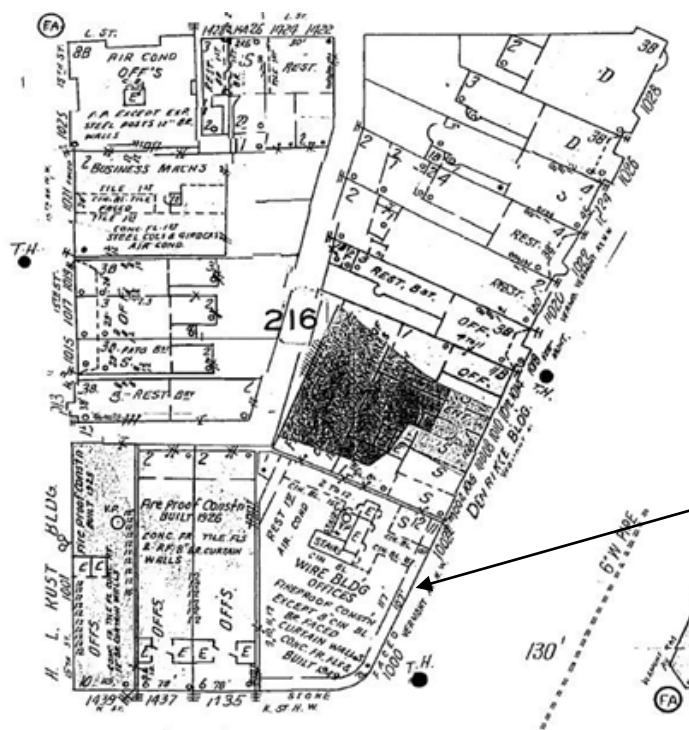
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Wire Building
Name of Property
Washington, DC
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Maps and ImagesPage 1

Wire Building
1000 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C.

Site Plan (DC Office of Planning, 2012)



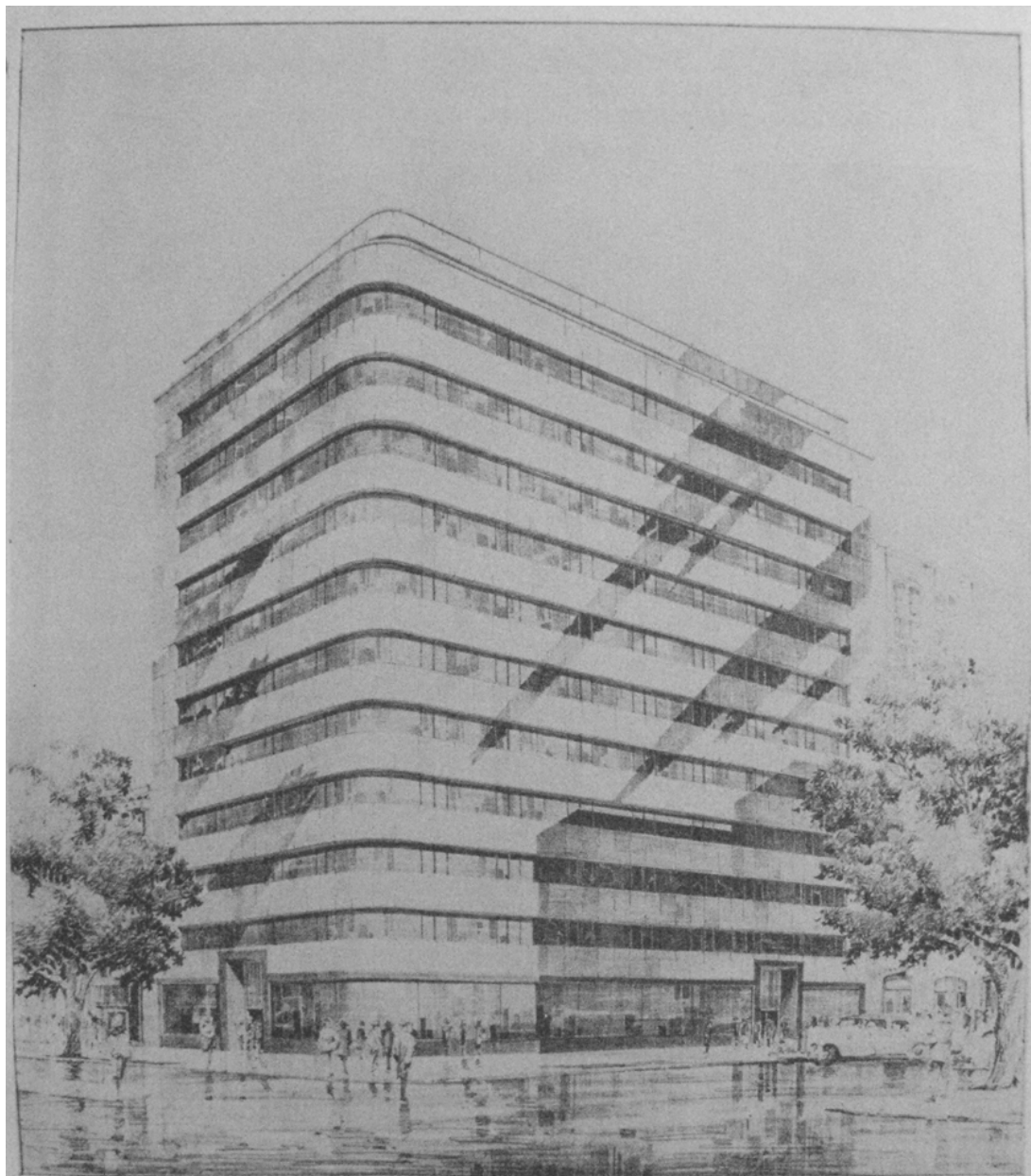
Wire Building

Map showing the Wire Building
(From Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1959 update)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Wire Building
Name of Property
Washington, DC
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Maps and ImagesPage 2

THE WIRE BUILDING — 1000 VERMONT AVENUE, NORTHWEST, WASHINGTON, D. C.

The Architect's rendering graphically dramatizes the ultra-modern lines of Washington's newest office building, to be occupied this month, strategically situated at the Northwest corner of K Street and Vermont Avenue. The continuous window lines give this structure a horizontal rather than vertical linear appearance. Newest Otis "Signal Control" Elevators, recessed fluorescent lighting, acoustic ceilings — 100 per cent air-conditioning and "Thermopane" Insulated Glass windows — are features that serve to make the WIRE Building stand out among buildings of ultra-modern design.

Architectural Rendering of the Wire Building
(From *Home Builders Monthly*, January 1950)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Wire Building
Name of Property
Washington, DC
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

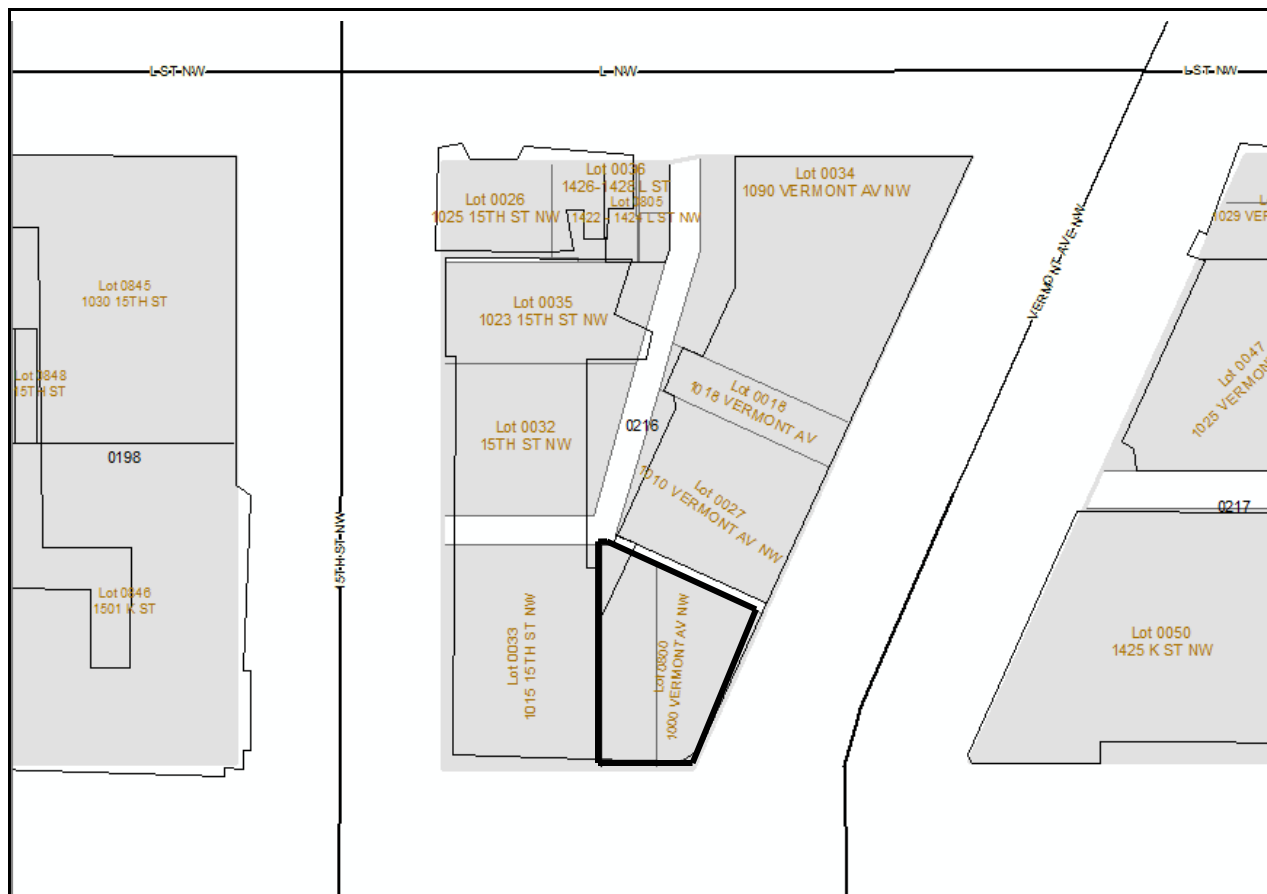
Section number Maps and ImagesPage 3

Historic photograph of the Wire Building
(From *Buildings: The Magazine of Building Management*, 1950)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property	Wire Building
County and State	Washington, DC
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)	N/A

Section number Maps and Images Page 4

Map showing National Register boundaries for the Wire building
1000 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C.
(From D.C. Office of Planning, GIS Base Map, 2012)



North