

primarily of former African American slaves. The Italianate Gothic brick building, designed by an unknown architect, experienced two additions: a plain brick rear in 1930, and a gabled, brick-faced front in 1952. The African American architect Howard D. Woodson designed the second addition.⁴²⁹ Although originally slated for demolition, the church's pastor, Reverend Benjamin H. Whiting, argued that the church was a bedrock neighborhood institution and succeeded in 1952 in removing the building from the urban renewal area. Nine years after a new church was built for the church's congregation in 1965, they sold the old building to Miracle Temple of Faith Baptist Church. In 1982, it was sold to the Redeemed Temple of Jesus Christ. In 2001, due to deterioration, the building closed.⁴³⁰ Today, a new developer, Steve Tanner, is in the process of converting the site to condominium units, while maintaining much of the old, white, dilapidated structure.⁴³¹

The new Friendship Baptist Church is located at 900 Delaware Avenue at the corner of Delaware Avenue and Eye Street. With a seating capacity of 1,500, it is the largest church in the Southwest urban renewal area. Vaughn, Ferguson and Woodson designed the building. Construction began in 1964,⁴³² and the church was dedicated in September 1965. Some of the church's modern features include its aluminum cross and front tower crown.⁴³³

CHRIST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Christ United Methodist Church is located at 900 Fourth Street, at the corner of Fourth and Eye streets. A firehouse formerly occupied the site.⁴³⁴ Architect A. Hensel Fink of Philadelphia, PA, designed it. Construction began on May 13 1962⁴³⁵ – the first groundbreaking for a church in the new Southwest – and completed in 1963. It was dedicated on Palm Sunday 1963.⁴³⁶ The church formed in 1961 due to the merger of Gorsuch Methodist Church, formerly located at Fourth and L streets in Southwest, and Lewis Memorial Church, formerly of Northwest Washington, D.C.⁴³⁷

The building itself, along with a minister's house next door, sits on a three-quarter acre lot. The sanctuary, which has a V-shaped roofline and doorway overhang, with a large glass front façade, can seat 300 individuals. The rear chancel wall is decorated with a glass tile mosaic designed by Odell Prather and executed by New York's Venetian art Mosaics Studio using Italian materials. The original marble façade was replaced with limestone in 1983, and other renovations took place in the interior in 1994 and 1997.

⁴²⁹ Patricia Sullivan, "Condominiums Proposed Around Historic Church," *Washington Post*, 3 June 2004, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A9461-2004Jun2.html>, accessed 5 August 2004.

⁴³⁰ Historic Preservation Review Board, "Friendship Baptist Church," 27 May 2004, D.C. HPO.

⁴³¹ Sullivan.

⁴³² "Friendship Baptist Structure Started," *Washington Post*, 6 June 1964.

⁴³³ Wolf von Eckardt, "Acrobatic Churches Lack Meaning," *Washington Post*, 3 June 1966.

⁴³⁴ *Insurance Maps of Washington, D.C.*, 247.

⁴³⁵ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1962, 12; *Christ United Methodist Church Home Page*, http://www.cumcdc.org/about_christ, accessed 8 July 2004.

⁴³⁶ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1963, 9, 15.

⁴³⁷ *Christ United Methodist Church Home Page*.

BETHEL PENTECOSTAL TABERNACLE

Bethel Pentecostal Tabernacle is located at 60 Eye Street, at the corner of Half and Eye streets. Architect Eimer Cappelman designed the building.⁴³⁸ Construction began in spring 1962⁴³⁹ and was completed in 1963.⁴⁴⁰ It was dedicated on March 31, 1963.

The Assembly of God congregation dates back to 1921. Its 230 Twelfth Street building in the old Southwest, to which it moved in 1948, was demolished in 1960. Its replacement urban renewal brick building can seat 300 in its sanctuary. At one point, its space was also leased out to the Southwest Jewish community, in search of a place to worship.⁴⁴¹ The building itself consists of a simple brick structure with a black roof and a center side entryway looking out on Eye Street. A rectangular tower rises in the middle of the northern side, with a simple cross on top. Elongated windows punctuate the walls.

ST. MATTHEW'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church is located at 222 M Street, at the corner of M Street and Delaware Avenue. Architect Milton Prassas designed the building. Construction began in spring 1962⁴⁴² and finished in 1964.⁴⁴³

The church can seat 400 people, and its fellowship hall can accommodate 200-300. The entrance of this Modernist church faces west, with a steep triangular roof overhanging a glass façade. The shape supposedly symbolizes "folded hands reaching into the sky."⁴⁴⁴ White, triangular roof arches line the sides, and arches of more obtuse angles provide a covered overhang to the entrance walkway. A tall spire rises in the back.

Currently, the fellowship hall also serves as the location for community meetings, such as those of the Southwest Neighborhood Association. The overall building is currently in severe disrepair, and the congregation is considering replacing it.

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Westminster Presbyterian Church is located at 400 Eye Street, at the corner of Fourth and Eye streets. The church was formerly located in the old Southwest at 437 Seventh Street.⁴⁴⁵ The

⁴³⁸ D.C. RLA, "The Architecture of the Southwest Urban Renewal Area."

⁴³⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1962, 12.

⁴⁴⁰ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1963, 9.

⁴⁴¹ SCC and SWNA, 29.

⁴⁴² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1962, 12.

⁴⁴³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1963, 15.

⁴⁴⁴ John B. Willmann, "A Walk in Southwest Will Refresh Tired Eyes," *Washington Post*, 16 February 1963, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

⁴⁴⁵ SCC and SWNA, 29.

architect of the new building was Harry E. Wagoner, of Philadelphia, PA.⁴⁴⁶ Construction began in 1964⁴⁴⁷ and finished in 1965. It was dedicated in October 1965.

The Southwest congregation itself dates back to 1853.⁴⁴⁸ The group has typically been progressive, opposing Vietnam and supporting women's rights and the inclusion of gays and lesbians. Its new building's Modernist physical design – one of two such Modernist designs in the new Southwest – is similarly progressive.

The building has rusticated concrete walls, with a precast concrete cross in front of a concrete screen entrance. The originally exposed concrete aggregate interior floor has been replaced by ceramic tile in a Hopi Indian pattern. In addition to hosting religious services, the building is also the site of "Jazz Night in Southwest," held every Friday.

ST. AUGUSTINE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

St. Augustine's Episcopal Church is located at 600 M Street, at the corner of Sixth and M streets. Construction began in 1964 and completed in fiscal 1966. Prior to the completion of the building, the congregation met at Hogate's Restaurant, on the Waterfront. St. Augustine's is unique in that it was not one of the church buildings originally planned for the Southwest, but its development was the result of a poll by James L. Hudson, the parish visitor, of the new Southwest's residents' religious affiliations.⁴⁴⁹ Once their new building was completed, the congregation also shared the space with the Jewish community of Temple Micah, which lacked space of its own.⁴⁵⁰

The building itself is a simple, small box with a modestly peaked concrete roof. It has a brick lower façade, topped by a row of continuous windowpanes stretching from side to side. The panes increase in height as they approach the center, meeting flush against the peaked roof. Tall, but modest wooden doors are centered at the front entrance. A tall, thin, metal cross rises from the building's roof. The grounds surrounding the church are simple as well, covered with trees and grass. Given the church's proximity to the waterfront, the building is potentially at risk of alteration or removal during upcoming waterfront redevelopment.

RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

Riverside Baptist Church is located at 680 Eye Street, at the corner of Seventh and Eye streets. Ward and Hall, of Springfield, VA, designed the building. Construction began in April 1967 and finished in February 1968.

⁴⁴⁶ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1963, 19.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁸ *Westminster Presbyterian Church Home Page*, <http://www.westminsterdc.org/location.htm>, accessed 8 July 2004.

⁴⁴⁹ "Religious Poll Leads to New Church in SW," *Washington Post*, 7 March 1964, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

⁴⁵⁰ "Sharing at St. Augustine's Leads to More Ecumenity," *Washington Post*, 30 January 1971, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

The congregation, established in 1856 as the Fifth Baptist Church, is one of Washington, D.C.'s three oldest Baptist churches. It was originally located at 609 E Street in the old Southwest. Its former congregation was largely white, but today it is a mixture of black and white members, many of whom live in Virginia and Maryland.

The church building has a steep gabled roof, with stained glass windows at the front and back facades' peaked ends. These allow light to enter the tall interior space. The front and back A-frame gables are virtually identical to those of St. Matthew's, although the building lacks the side arches incorporated at its more Modernist neighbor. The façade is faced in stone. The front doorway is recessed into a cove of steps, walls, and ceiling.

Library

Former Conditions

The original Southwest Branch Library was part of Jefferson Junior High School. Washington, D.C., architect Nathan Corwith Wyeth designed the Georgian Revival Thomas Jefferson Junior High School and Library, the library of which was dedicated on January 3, 1941. The two-story, brick library wing served the community until urban renewal presented an opportunity for the construction of a new facility.

Building of the New Southwest

In 1955, the library's Board of Trustees requested that the RLA incorporate a new library into their redevelopment plans. In 1962, a site was selected at 900 Wesley Place, at the corner of Third and K streets.⁴⁵¹ S.J. Bowen Public School formerly occupied the site.⁴⁵² This location was on the same large block of property as the Town Center commercial shops, churches, and parks. The architectural firm Clas & Riggs, of the D.C. metropolitan area, designed the building that was eventually erected there. Construction began in 1964⁴⁵³ and finished in 1965.⁴⁵⁴ It was dedicated on October 22, 1965.⁴⁵⁵

The two-story Southwest Public Library building was constructed of reinforced concrete, layered with a red brick façade on top. It has vertical strip windows, as opposed to the originally proposed horizontal ones. In total, the library offers 20,000 square feet of space in its air-conditioned interior. The adult collection of books is housed on the first floor, while children's books were originally found on the second level. The basement includes a community meeting room.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵¹ "Southwest Branch Library History."

⁴⁵² *Insurance Maps of Washington, D.C.*, 247.

⁴⁵³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1964, 11.

⁴⁵⁴ SCC and SWNA, 29.

⁴⁵⁵ "Southwest Branch Library History."

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

Commercial Buildings and Sites

Former Conditions and Buildings Saved

The original total commercial land area in the old Southwest was distributed as follows:

	Original 427-acre urban renewal area ⁴⁸²	Later 600-acre urban renewal area ⁴⁸³
First Commercial	21	29
Second Commercial	41	70
Total	61 acres	99 acres

Within that land area, commercial shops geared toward local residents were concentrated on Fourth and Seventh streets, while the Waterfront’s commercial establishments catered to the broader District population,⁴⁸⁴ incorporating a lumberyard and other commercial buildings. Beyond these clusters, most blocks within the neighborhood were characterized by the type of dense urbanism – with corner grocery stores catering to local clientele – that typified many older American urban communities of the day.⁴⁸⁵

Only a few commercial buildings were saved from demolition. These included the District Grocery Stores (no longer in existence), the Miller-Dudley Building (located just west of South Capitol Street), a refrigeration plant west of Tenth Street (no longer in existence), and the Fish Market.

Early Proposals

While the Peets Plan largely would have kept many of Southwest’s existing first commercial establishments, it proposed concentrating industrial, or second commercial, facilities along the waterfront. In addition, it advocated placing additional second commercial north of F Street, as well as north of G Street on the eastern side of Delaware Avenue.⁴⁸⁶ In total, it would roughly maintain the existing amount of first commercial acreage in the 427-acre urban renewal area at nineteen acres and increase second commercial up to 53.1 acres.⁴⁸⁷

On a completely different line of thinking, the Justement-Smith Plan proposed acquisition of most of the existing commercial areas,⁴⁸⁸ including the commercial activities along much of the waterfront, while concentrating future uses in major commercial centers, such as one north of the freeway, between Ninth and Seventh streets, and another south of Eye Street, between

⁴⁸² Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 22.
⁴⁸³ U.S. NCP. *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Area C*, 9.
⁴⁸⁴ Wrigley, 190.
⁴⁸⁵ Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 4.
⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 35.
⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.
⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

Delaware Avenue and South Capitol Street⁴⁸⁹ In addition, the plan proposed to maintain “corner grocery” type stores and public buildings along residential streets to provide “welcome breaks in the design and scale of residential buildings.”⁴⁹⁰ The plan also advocated use of the area north of the Expressway (even north of G) and west of South Capitol Street for second commercial usage. In total, it increased first commercial acreage in the 427-acre urban renewal area up to 24 acres, and second commercial up to 36 acres.⁴⁹¹

The Bartholomew Compromise Plan called for a higher caliber of commercial stores in the new Southwest, with acreage in line with the recommendations of the Justement-Smith Plan. In terms of the location of that acreage, it recommended, “first commercial uses should be continued generally along Fourth Street from F to L streets, part of Seventh Street, and along Maine Avenue to M Street”⁴⁹² It also advocated locating second commercial “in the area between the expressway and the railroad, in the area west of Tenth Street and in certain locations along South Capitol Street.” This location and space could house existing establishments as well as significant new additions.⁴⁹³

Primary Buildings/Sites of the New Southwest

Consistent with the Justement-Smith Plan, and the Zeckendorf Plan that followed it, most of the first commercial activity in the new Southwest was concentrated in a major commercial center – what would become Town Center. Inconsistent with the Justement-Smith Plan, however, virtually all other “corner store” outlets were eliminated from the plan. The net effect, then, is of single-use residential areas, arranged around a commercial core.

In addition to the Town Center, the Zeckendorf Plan named two other primary commercial areas for the new Southwest: The Tenth Street Mall/L’Enfant Plaza and the waterfront. There is generally wide agreement that none of these three elements met the aspirations of their designers or the needs of their users. Thus, all three are the subject of current redevelopment proposals and efforts.

L’Enfant Promenade/Tenth Street Mall and L’Enfant Plaza

L’Enfant Promenade and L’Enfant Plaza were cornerstones of the Zeckendorf Plan. The Justement-Smith Plan initiated the idea of the Tenth Street Mall as a grand parkway entrance connecting the Southwest with the rest of Washington, D.C. In their plan, the parkway was lined with high-end apartment buildings. In the Zeckendorf Plan, however, the mall combined with a grand plaza to serve as a major cultural center for the Southwest. During planning stages, this cultural core was even compared to Paris’ Champs Elysees and Venice’s Piazza San Marco.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁸⁹ Wrigley, 196.

⁴⁹⁰ Quoted in U.S. NCPC and Gutheim, 316.

⁴⁹¹ Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 26.

⁴⁹² U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 18.

⁴⁹³ Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 19.

⁴⁹⁴ *Washington Post*, 17 Feb 1954, quoted in Design Research, 35.

The lofty goals for the site were widely discussed. The RLA's 1954 annual report listed several elements of the proposed plaza, including "theater, opera, symphony and convention facilities and a 900 foot pedestrian way with an ice skating rink."⁴⁹⁵ Its 1958 report also mentioned a planetarium, which would include the world's largest sundial.⁴⁹⁶ In its urban renewal plan for Project Area C, the NCPC wrote in reference to the planned complex:

A cultural complex of theatres, restaurants, and the like will allow [the tourist] to savor the best of America's cultural flavor and entertainment talent. Such a center will also provide a place for other nations to display their cultural wares. National learned and scientific societies may find the Plaza a convenient place to locate. In short, the Plaza is envisioned as a cultural center for Washington, the Nation, and perhaps even the World.⁴⁹⁷

Beyond cultural enrichment alone, this new complex would also perform several other key functions. It would link the Southwest to Washington, D.C., obliterating its island status through the strategic bridging of the promenade over the old Pennsylvania Railroad tracks and the new Southwest Expressway. In addition, it would link with the existing monuments and museums of the Mall, tapping into the tourist potential there and leading visitors into Southwest. Finally, it would offer significant commercial space, in the form of retail shopping and office buildings, which would keep the area busy during the day, while cultural uses dominated at night.

Several issues delayed progress on the promenade and plaza. The principle hurdles were a disagreement over the location of the grand promenade and a battle with the Smithsonian over the location of its proposed Air and Space Museum.

The Smithsonian had long been planning to build a museum to house its airplane collection, and it intended to locate it along the Washington Mall, in the area bounded by Twelfth, Ninth, and C streets, and Independence Avenue.⁴⁹⁸ When Webb & Knapp proposed redevelopment plans for Southwest, the Smithsonian even contacted Zeckendorf in February 1954 to suggest that the museum serve as one of the axial portal sites for the planned promenade.⁴⁹⁹ The Smithsonian plan was virtually approved by the NCPC in September 1954 until John Remon, Chairman of the RLA, held up the process. Remon opposed the location, as it would effectively block the promenade's entrance to the Southwest.⁵⁰⁰ Thus, their plans were put on hold and a battle ensued.

⁴⁹⁵ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1954, 19.

⁴⁹⁶ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1958, 10.

⁴⁹⁷ U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Area C*, 16-17.

⁴⁹⁸ "Smithsonian's Plane Plan Gets Another Setback," *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), 22 September 1954.

⁴⁹⁹ Robert C. Albrook, "Fabulous Southwest Planner Has a Coaxial Mind," *Washington Post*, [November 1954].

⁵⁰⁰ "Smithsonian's Plane Plan Gets Another Setback."

When Webb & Knapp signed its MOU for Project Area C with the RLA in 1954, it stipulated two prerequisites to its participation. The first of these concerned the firm's responsibility for studies related to land use. The second was the provision that there would be agreement to a Tenth Street esplanade.

In February 1955, however, the NCPC gave tentative approval to a report that advocated locating the promenade at Ninth Street. Under this plan, Tenth Street would feed into the new Southwest Expressway from a proposed new bridge over the Potomac; the railroad tracks would be moved and lowered to permit an overpass by the promenade at Ninth Street; and Twelfth Street would serve as a local road serving the existing produce market, rather than as a feeder to the Expressway, as proposed by Zeckendorf. Advocates of this plan noted this proposals many advantages, including its removal of the railroad tracks as a barrier between the neighborhood and the central business district; its enabling of the extension of Maryland Avenue to Twelfth Street, to the advantage of local traffic; its protection of the produce market at its current site; and its facilitation of the fulfillment of the Smithsonian's plan to build its proposed museum along Independence Avenue between Ninth and Twelfth streets.⁵⁰¹

Zeckendorf, with the support of the RLA, opposed this new plan. He claimed that his planners had studied all possible overpass routes between Fifth and Twelfth streets and had deemed Tenth Street "the only practical, economical way of doing the job." The two parties opposed the plan because they believed that moving the railroad would be too expensive,⁵⁰² that the size of the plaza would have to be reduced by 50 percent, and that the space for the flanking government office buildings would be reduced by one third.⁵⁰³

The two groups eventually reached agreement to move forward with the original Tenth Street promenade location, as well as to abandon the proposed location of the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum – moving it to its current site on the National Mall, between Fourth and Seventh streets, and requiring the design of a whole new building.⁵⁰⁴ With this obstacle removed, two other significant issues arose which did not delay – but, rather, hindered the effective execution of – the plan.

One hindrance came from the Navy Department, when it decided that, instead of building two buildings on either side of Tenth Street and then connecting them underground as originally planned, it would build one building straddling the new promenade.⁵⁰⁵ To this day, the building blocks the intended view of the now obstructed Smithsonian Castle.

The second hindrance was the decision not to locate the National Cultural Center (later the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts) at L'Enfant Plaza, but to settle elsewhere.

⁵⁰¹ Robert C. Albrook, "By Shifting Zeckendorf Site NCPC Group Maps Mall Plan Change," *Washington Post*, 4 February 1955.

⁵⁰² Albrook, "NCPC Has New Road Plan for Southwest."

⁵⁰³ "Mall Solution Seen by Aide of Zeckendorf," *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), 16 February 1955.

⁵⁰⁴ Robert J. Orr, "Air & Space in the Southwest: The Debate over a Tenth Street Mall," *Smithsonian Preservation Quarterly* (Winter 1995), <http://www.si.edu/oahp/spq/spq95w6.htm>, accessed 12 July 2004.

⁵⁰⁵ Greer, 15.

A national theater, or other major cultural center, had been in the discussion stage for decades before the District Auditorium Commission began making tangible progress in late 1955. During that year, T.W. Wilson submitted a report to John R. Searles, laying out a comprehensive case in favor of locating a “mass communications center” in Southwest. The report defined “mass communications” as “the equipment, the techniques and the arts of presentation for purposes of enlightenment, understanding, and entertainment.”⁵⁰⁶ A potential site of this sort in Southwest was envisioned to include a grand hall accommodating up to 4,000 people, a theater accommodating up to 2,000 people, a concert hall, a chamber music hall, an exhibit area, meeting rooms to accommodate groups of from 40 to 1,000 people, television studios, radio studios, film studios, reception areas, a communications library, and administrative offices.⁵⁰⁷ The report concluded that the Southwest site was “admirably suited as a location,” given the opportunities for impressive approaches, transportation and parking, proximity to Capitol Hill (especially given the Congressmen and Senators who might appear on talk radio shows), and the planned nearby office buildings.⁵⁰⁸

During summer 1956, a Southwest location – east of Tenth Street, between D and E streets – was one of eight potential sites that the commission considered. At that same time, Southwest was also being considered as the site for a new Washington Nationals baseball stadium.⁵⁰⁹ By late 1956, the Auditorium Commission seemed to favor a Foggy Bottom site, although numerous groups opposed this location, in part due to changes it would require to the Inner Loop Beltway and other planned development, as well as due to the losses to the Southwest Urban Renewal Area.⁵¹⁰

A January 31, 1957, report from the Commission ultimately recommended three possible sites, one in Foggy Bottom and two in Southwest – on the site bounded by Sixth, Tenth, D, and E streets and the Southwest Freeway, and the site bounded by Ninth, Twelfth, and D streets and the Southwest Freeway. While the RLA and others continued to oppose the Foggy Bottom site, Leon Chatelain, Jr., President of the American Institute of Architects, said of it, “the area happens to be the only remaining beautiful site along the Potomac River. This location automatically will give the proposed cultural center the proper and most attractive setting.”⁵¹¹ On February 15, 1957, the District Auditorium Commission’s Executive Committee voted unanimously in favor of the Foggy Bottom site. Although, on August 8, 1957, the House of Representatives defeated a bill to locate the Center at that particular site, others renewed the charge, selecting the alternate Foggy Bottom site on which the Kennedy Center was eventually

⁵⁰⁶ T.W. Wilson, *Preliminary Report: A Proposed New Land Use for the Plaza in the Southwest Washington Redevelopment Area*; Submitted to: John R. Searles, Jr. ([Washington, D.C.]: n.p: [Received 26 October 1955]), 9.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 16, 20.

⁵⁰⁹ In 1956, the team was renamed the Senators.

⁵¹⁰ Roger Meersman, “History of the Kennedy Center,” *John F. Kennedy Library and Museum Home Page*, http://www.cs.umb.edu/jfklibrary/arts_meersman.html, accessed 12 July 2004.

⁵¹¹ *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), 8 February 1957, quoted in Meersman.

built. As for Southwest, it never did find a substitute to fulfill L'Enfant Plaza's intended cultural role.⁵¹²

These difficulties aside, and after the 1965 transfer of redevelopment rights to the L'Enfant Plaza Center Corporation,⁵¹³ L'Enfant Promenade and L'Enfant Plaza were eventually planned by I.M. Pei & Partners as a merged design, with the mall running along the western side of the plaza. Portions of the overall complex were completed between 1960 and 1973.⁵¹⁴

L'ENFANT PROMENADE/TENTH STREET MALL

The L'Enfant Promenade turned a formerly unimportant and undistinguished Southwest street into a 200-foot wide divided roadway that provided a major entryway to the quadrant. Pei's plan was designed by the engineering, architectural, planning, and environmental consulting firm David Volkert & Associates. Construction began in fiscal year 1965.⁵¹⁵ In 1969, the Metropolitan Washington Board of Trade recognized the Mall with an award for excellence in architecture,⁵¹⁶ noting its superior design and construction.⁵¹⁷

Although design sketches of the promenade showed a tree-lined roadway that terminated at the waterfront, the actual mall today is dominated by concrete, with inconspicuous trees along the sides, and ends at a concrete overlook. Specially designed light poles, over 22 feet high and topped with four glass globes, punctuate the roadway.⁵¹⁸ There is one lane of traffic – moving in opposite directions – on either side of a concrete island in the middle of the promenade. Parallel-parked cars line the curbs of the roadways, with entrances to underground parking garages lying off to the sides.

BANNEKER OVERLOOK

Although the promenade was intended to terminate at the Waterfront, engineering difficulties made realization of that plan infeasible. Thus, after the promenade overpasses the Southwest Expressway, it ends with an automobile ramp that descends to the lower roadways of Southwest, as well as with the pedestrian park now known as Benjamin Banneker Overlook Park. The park is elliptical, with a fountain in the middle and trees and benches around the outside.⁵¹⁹ Designed by landscape architect, Daniel Urban Kiley, it is raised 40 feet above Maine Avenue below.⁵²⁰ Originally it was to house parking facilities underneath, in part to service the proposed national aquarium to be located across the Potomac. However, no investor was willing

⁵¹² Meersman.

⁵¹³ "From Module to Mall," *Progressive Architecture* (November 1968): 98.

⁵¹⁴ Scott & Lee, 236.

⁵¹⁵ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1966, 4.

⁵¹⁶ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1969, 27.

⁵¹⁷ *Volkert & Associates, Inc. Home Page*, [http://www.volkert.com/Awards/Volkert percent20Awards.htm](http://www.volkert.com/Awards/Volkert%20Awards.htm), accessed 12 July 2004.

⁵¹⁸ Greer, 17.

⁵¹⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1968, 5.

⁵²⁰ Greer, 18.

to fund the project without assurance that a pedestrian bridge would be built between the park and the aquarium.⁵²¹ In the end, neither the aquarium nor the pedestrian bridge was built.

The park's namesake, Benjamin Banneker, was "America's First Black Man of Science," and a plaque in the park provides a brief history of this significant figure. The location has also been designated as a possible site for a future monument or memorial – likely to commemorate African Americans. In 1998, Congress authorized a non-profit group, Washington Interdependence Council, to investigate this prospect. By 2006, the group hopes to construct a commemorative statue and visitor center at the Overlook site, or elsewhere on L'Enfant Plaza.⁵²² If this project is completed, the underground parking garage, along with a transportation center, might also be realized as well. Additional discussions are also in progress, however, regarding other possible uses of the site, such as for the construction of a Major League baseball stadium.

L'ENFANT PLAZA

The 6.5-acre L'Enfant Plaza is located at the east side of the Tenth Street Mall. I.M. Pei designed the site's master plan, which includes buildings on three sides of the plaza, an opening to the promenade on the fourth (west) side, and another building across the promenade from the plaza. Construction began in 1963.⁵²³ The plaza itself is outlined with roadways and contains a green public plaza and a glass pyramid skylight, in its center. Prior to the 1999 construction of the skylight, a fountain stood in the plaza's center.⁵²⁴ Underground, it includes a shopping arcade, parking, and the later addition of a Metro rail station. While the plaza was intended to be the magnet to draw visitors onto L'Enfant Promenade and into the Southwest,⁵²⁵ the absence of the full menu of planned cultural and entertainment venues has led to only partial fulfillment of that intended role. Two of the buildings that were built were geared toward use by space-related agencies, such as NASA, and the other two had more general office uses.

An article on the plaza and mall for *Progressive Architecture* credits the Pei firm's years of work in bringing the complex to fruition. At the same time, however, it criticizes the area for being out of step with the latest city planning processes when it was finally realized. It closes by questioning the logic of its style of planning:

"If we are to judge it in terms of current planning priorities, then we must question the validity of basing an urban renewal solution on the creation of rentable office space for

⁵²¹ "From Module to Mall," 98.

⁵²² Washington Interdependence Council, "Cultural Tourism D.C. Home Page," http://www.culturaltourismdc.org/dch_tourism2608/dch_tourism_show.htm?doc_id=43957, accessed 5 August 2004.

⁵²³ John B. Willmann, "A Walk in Southwest Will Refresh Tired Eyes."

⁵²⁴ "JBG to Rejigger L'Enfant," *Washington Business Journal*, 7 November 2003, <http://washington.bizjournals.com/washington/stories/2003/11/10/story1.html>, accessed August 5, 2004.

⁵²⁵ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 12.

an industry devoted to getting us to the moon when we here on earth stagnate in cities that are quietly dying for lack of adequate planning.”⁵²⁶

Most recently, JBG Cos., which owns the buildings on the north and east of the plaza, began working with architects Hickok Warner Cole in pursuing redevelopment of the overall site.⁵²⁷

NORTH (ASTRAL) AND SOUTH (COMSAT) BUILDINGS

Architect Araldo A. Cossutta, a partner with I.M. Pei and Partners, designed the North and South buildings, or the Astral and Comsat buildings. The Astral building is located at 955 L’Enfant Plaza, on the northern side, while the Comsat building is located across the plaza, at 950 L’Enfant Plaza. The Comsat building is located on the former site of the Desmore Alley residential community and Isaac Fairbrother Public School.⁵²⁸ Both buildings were dedicated in November 1967⁵²⁹ and completed in 1968 as part of phase I of L’Enfant Plaza, which included the additional construction of the public plaza, an underground shopping arcade, a theater, a service station, and a parking garage.⁵³⁰ The twin eight-story above-ground portions of the rectangular concrete buildings have concrete columns and spandrel beams encasing large recessed glass windows, 24’-6” long. The recessing was intended to eliminate the need for window coverings.⁵³¹ The projected cornices at the top serve to “counteract the monumental scale of Washington and help establish the intimacy typical of the European square.” The prestressed building corners provide wind bracing and house air-conditioning risers.⁵³² While the front and back facades emphasize both the columns and spandrels, the side façades emphasize the wide spandrels and only the corner columns.

On their interiors, the buildings incorporated technological innovation into the ceilings, integrating mechanical and electrical systems, and thereby decreasing the space requirements for those systems in the structures.⁵³³ Saphier, Lerner, Schindler, Inc. used columns on the interior space to break up offices into 3’-1” x 6’-2” modular units. A partition system facilitates further customization.⁵³⁴ The original office tenants included Boeing, NASA and the Apollo space program, while Comsat occupied the south building.⁵³⁵ In addition to these, the ground and mezzanine floors accommodate small commercial establishments.

Today, the General Services Administration (GSA) leases the entire 85,061 square feet of the Astral building from JBG Cos., which bought the building in 2003. The GSA leases the

⁵²⁶ “From Module to Mall,” 100.

⁵²⁷ “JBG to Rejigger L’Enfant.”

⁵²⁸ *Insurance Maps of Washington*, 232.

⁵²⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1968, 5.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁵³¹ “From Module to Mall,” 98.

⁵³² *Ibid.*, 97.

⁵³³ Christopher Weeks, *ALA Guide to the Architecture of Washington, D.C.*, Third Edition (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 276.

⁵³⁴ Design Research, 40; “From Module to Mall,” 98.

⁵³⁵ Greer, 18; DC RLA, *Annual Report*, 1968, 5.

entire 260,910 square feet Comsat building from Heyman Properties, which bought the building in 2001.⁵³⁶

EAST (LOEW'S L'ENFANT PLAZA HOTEL) AND WEST (USPS) BUILDINGS

The East and West buildings were part of the second phase of L'Enfant Plaza construction. Architect Vlastimil Koubek designed both, and they are not twin structures.

The East building is located at 470-490 L'Enfant Plaza, constructed above Ninth Street. Construction began in fiscal year 1971 and finished in summer 1973. The building, with twelve above-ground stories and several below, is located on the east side of the plaza, between the North and South twin buildings. It functions as part office building and part hotel, with the hotel's 372 rooms occupying the top four floors, including a swimming pool on the ninth floor.⁵³⁷ The hotel, managed by the New York-based Loews Hotel Corporation, opened as the Loews L'Enfant Plaza Hotel in 1973.⁵³⁸ In 2003, JBG Cos. purchased the building. The rectangular plan building itself has less elongated windows and less pronounced columns and spandrels than the Astral and Comsat buildings. Instead, it has strong columns on the exterior ends and a heavy three-story overhanging roof level, with a grid of simple recessed windows on the eight stories underneath. The corners are indented in, accentuating the overhanging.

The West building, located at 475 L'Enfant Plaza, is separated from the rest of the plaza by the promenade. Construction workers broke ground for the building on February 18, 1969,⁵³⁹ and construction finished in 1971. In 1972, it was purchased by the U.S. Postal Service,⁵⁴⁰ which still maintains its headquarters there today. Above ground, like the hotel across the plaza, it includes twelve stories of office and commercial space. In total, it has sixteen stories, including underground parking for cars.⁵⁴¹ The massive rectangular building shares stylistic traits with each of its L'Enfant Plaza neighbors. Like the Comsat and Astral buildings, it employs a grid of columns and spandrels encasing a sea of wide recessed window bays. Unlike the Comsat and Astral, however, these bays are broken up into separated windowpanes, rather than a single, long stretch of glass. Like the East building, the West building has a massive, multi-story, flat overhanging concrete roof. This overhang is less pronounced than on its eastern neighbor, however.

Town Center/Waterside Mall

While Zeckendorf envisioned L'Enfant Plaza as a center for the city, nation, and the world, he saw Town Center as a commercial and civic locus of a more local sort. Its fourteen

⁵³⁶ "General Services Administration (GSA) Inventory of Owned and Leased Properties," *General Services Administration Home Page*, <http://www.iolp.gsa.gov/iolp/BuildingsList.asp?sID=11>, accessed August 5, 2004; "JBG to Rejigger L'Enfant."

⁵³⁷ DC RLA, *Annual Report*, 1972, 13; DC RLA, *Annual Report* 1969, 25.

⁵³⁸ Greer, 18.

⁵³⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1969, 25.

⁵⁴⁰ DC RLA, *Annual Report*, 1972, 13.

⁵⁴¹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1969, ii, 24.

acres of land include facilities for community shopping, community activities, recreation, and housing (as discussed previously). The center's regional nature was emphasized by the NCPC in its plan for Project Area C:

The market area for the commercial core of the Town Center and the size of shopping area needed to serve the Southwest has been studied in detail. Such a shopping center is designed as a community shopping center. It is not intended to serve an area larger than the Southwest; it is not a regional shopping center; it will not compete with downtown Washington . . . [The Southwest's boundaries] are major ones. They form a definitive perimeter and discourage travel outside the area for neighborhood shopping. At the same time, these boundaries discourage shopping from other areas, except for some business that might result from through traffic.⁵⁴²

In addition to shopping alone, the center was also intended to encourage neighborhood cohesiveness, serving the needs of all of its residents. The community facilities include the center's four churches, three parks, and library. Planners envisioned that these would encourage daytime and evening activity, as the library and churches incorporate space for neighborhood meeting rooms in addition to their primary facilities.⁵⁴³

Third, Sixth, Eye and M streets bound the area of the completed project. Its centerpiece, the Town Center shopping center, later transformed into the Waterside Mall, and now called Waterfront, occupies the central portion. It is located at 401 M Street.

TOWN CENTER

Architect I.M. Pei, who also designed the four apartment towers that are located on the site, designed the first phase of the Town Center shopping center. Webb & Knapp was the developer. This first phase was completed to serve the needs of the first residents of the new Southwest, while the second was delayed until there was sufficient demand to warrant expansion. The original shopping center included eight stores in a low-rise suburban-type commercial strip. It included the following establishments: Peoples Drug Store, Safeway, Harry's Liquors, Tower Dry Cleaners, Town Center Bowling, American Security and Trust and a U.S. Post Office. Only the bowling alley had not been a resident of the old Southwest.⁵⁴⁴

In proposing the Town Center, developer William Zeckendorf required the abandonment of plans for an additional commercial center in Project Area B. He instead preferred that all Southwest residents congregate at the commercial center on his development parcel. A series of delays in his plans, however, left the early residents without any commercial infrastructure until Town Center opened. Construction on the first phase of Town Center began on January 15, 1960, almost six months after Capitol Park Apartments' completion,⁵⁴⁵ and finished in 1961.

⁵⁴² U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area C*, 21-22.

⁵⁴³ *Ibid.*, 22-23.

⁵⁴⁴ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1961, 20.

⁵⁴⁵ Federal City Council, *Urban Renewal Program in the District of Columbia*, 32.

WATERSIDE MALL/WATERSIDE

Waterside Mall was the second phase of the Town Center commercial development. It was designed by architect Chloethiel Woodard Smith, in cooperation with the NCPC, as part of a new master plan for the Town Center complex.⁵⁴⁶ Charles S. Bresler and Burton J. Reiner, the individuals who bought out the bulk of Webb & Knapp's Southwest property in 1964, developed the expanded complex.⁵⁴⁷

The mall is located to the left of the original commercial strip. Its design required the closing of Fourth Street, a primary commercial roadway in the old Southwest. The mall originally consisted of two floors of retail shopping space below one floor of office space, although today that mixture is reversed. While originally envisioned as a complex of 100 shops, only twenty-six were realized.⁵⁴⁸ The roof was originally intended to provide terraces for outdoor restaurants, although those never materialized.⁵⁴⁹ In addition, twin ten-story office towers flank the two sides. The overall building complex forms a U-shape around a surface parking lot, which today provides a Metro rail entrance at its center. There is also an underground parking garage. The one-story office space bridge connects the office towers. Originally, the towers of this second phase were intended to include residential space as well, but they were instead converted to office space.⁵⁵⁰ The primary construction material in the towers is concrete, similar in color to that used at L'Enfant Plaza, surrounding brown reflective glass windows. The façade of the shopping center is mainly covered in beige brick.⁵⁵¹

Construction on phase two began in 1968 and finished in 1972.⁵⁵² Later construction of a four-story office tower on Fourth Street was completed in October 1981, to officially mark the completion of the mall.⁵⁵³

Architecture critic Wolf von Eckardt heralded the coming of this new development, forecasting, "It will not only physically replace Pei's suburban shopping center but also remove its unsightly curse, the surrounding parking lots. Strongly enclosed by the massive apt slabs it promises to be not another row of roadside stands but a truly urban outdoor living room."⁵⁵⁴ However, the realized complex has been much less successful. It has never been the thriving center that was envisioned, and many of the stores in the expanded indoor mall space are now closed, with the first ones having left before construction was even complete. Residents have long complained about the inadequacy of the shopping facilities, including the original small size of the Safeway grocery store, the lack of a major draw like a department store (as prohibited by

⁵⁴⁶ SCC and SWNA, 14.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁸ Barbara Bright-Saguier and Claudia Levy, "Aid Sought for Waterside Mall," *Washington Post*, 3 March 1974, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

⁵⁴⁹ SCC and SWNA, 14.

⁵⁵⁰ Protopappas and Brown, 53.

⁵⁵¹ Scott and Lee, 244.

⁵⁵² Ibid., 243.

⁵⁵³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1981, 18.

⁵⁵⁴ Quoted in Design Research, 41.

the plan), and the general absence of resident-focused retail; the inconvenience of having to pay for underground parking; and the disruptions of building construction for over a decade, and Metro construction that blocked the main entrance from December 1973 through 1978,⁵⁵⁵ and the conditions of vandalism in the complex. Merchant occupants, equally dissatisfied with the level of customers and profit, have expressed similar discontent. Current occupants in this mostly-empty facility include a Safeway supermarket, a CVS pharmacy, space for the Southwest Neighborhood Association, an indoor café, a liquor store and several other shops.

Beginning with the completion of the first office space in mid-1971, the Environmental Protection Agency occupied much of the buildings.⁵⁵⁶ However, it has since moved out. In 2001, a new set of developers – Kaempfer Company and Forest City Enterprises – took up the task of revitalizing this center, including the task of finding a new tenant. The latest indications are that Fannie Mae will take over much of this space. Working in partnership with the city, they also plan to revitalize the mall (which they have renamed Waterside) by reintroducing Fourth Street to the site; this is but one part of plans described as the broader Anacostia Waterfront Initiative.

Waterfront

FORMER CONDITIONS

Despite the old Southwest's blighted condition, its approximately one mile long waterfront was still an active maritime center for Washington, D.C., with numerous boats, seafood restaurants, and its old fish market. Perhaps the greatest impediment to revival of the waterfront was the sewer system of the old Southwest, which directly deposited both rainwater and sewage into the Washington Channel.⁵⁵⁷

As its functions as a commercial port began to diminish over time, the U.S. Corps of Engineers led early waterfront redevelopment. Its redevelopment plan, approved by Congress in 1945, included the installation of a new bulkhead, the rebuilding of small boat and yacht facilities, and the construction of four new piers – for the D.C. fire-boat, the Wilson sightseeing line, cruise ships, and the Washington-Norfolk boat. Almost a decade and a half later, only approximately one-third of the plan had come to fruition, including the construction of two of the piers, several hundred feet of the bulkhead, and some small boat docks.⁵⁵⁸

Waterfront renewal under the Southwest Urban Renewal Plan, then, offered several opportunities. First, it was a chance to complete the previously unfinished redevelopment effort. Second, it could improve a feature of Washington, D.C., that many believed should be an asset,

⁵⁵⁵ William H. Jones, "Waterside Mall Impasse Broken," *Washington Post*, 20 June 1978, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

⁵⁵⁶ "Environmental Unit to Move to SW Mall," *Washington Post*, 10 March 1971, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

⁵⁵⁷ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 8.

⁵⁵⁸ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 21.

rather than an eyesore. As such, the RLA held out Copenhagen's Tivoli Gardens as an example of the sort of showplace that the waterfront could be for the city.⁵⁵⁹

REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

While the plan for Project Area C included waterfront redevelopment, in July 1960, the Federal City Council hired Chloethiel Woodard Smith to develop a separate waterfront master plan for the 27.5-acre area.⁵⁶⁰ An amended version of this plan, developed in 1965, was eventually enacted. The plan called for the development of an "urban edge" along the river, with a twenty-foot wide public walkway lying between the water and nearby waterfront development.⁵⁶¹ Waterfront land use would mix marina facilities, restaurants, tourist attractions, and community facilities, such as a church, public parks, and police and fire fighting facilities.⁵⁶² The public would maintain ownership of the overall waterfront, with the National Park Service maintaining the parks, and commercial properties being leased by the RLA through ninety-nine-year leases.⁵⁶³

WATERFRONT ELEMENTS

Several basic infrastructure improvements paved the way for expansive waterfront redevelopment. Foremost among these was the upgrading of the Southwest's sewage system. As part of urban renewal, the District of Columbia Department of Sanitary Engineering built a separate sewer system and sanitary treatment plan for sewage. The RLA called this "the most important step possible to clean up the Washington Channel."⁵⁶⁴ Construction of a new bulkhead also began very early on in the process. Between March and approximately December 1962, the bulkhead was extended out into the channel to add 4.5 acres to the waterfront.⁵⁶⁵ The curving of Maine Avenue further inland additionally expanded waterfront land area. This relocation, which was completed in June 1963, increased the area available for the development of parks and commercial facilities.⁵⁶⁶ Finally, flood protection decks were constructed between 1968 and 1970 in order to make way for the waterfront parks and commercial development.⁵⁶⁷

Commercial development was a key element necessary to further revive the waterfront, as well as to restore former businesses of the old waterfront. Such activity began in fiscal year 1967, when the RLA offered its first site on the Southwest waterfront for redevelopment. RLA

⁵⁵⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1961, 22.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶¹ Anderson Notter Finegold, et. al., 8.

⁵⁶² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 21.

⁵⁶³ Anderson Notter Finegold, et. al., 8-9.

⁵⁶⁴ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 21.

⁵⁶⁵ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1962, 19.

⁵⁶⁶ U.S. NCP, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Area C*, 17; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1962, 19; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1963, 11.

⁵⁶⁷ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1967, 4; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1969, 27.

reported, "the site, designated for boat sales and marine related activities, has been offered on a priority basis to displaced businessmen in accordance with a special act of Congress."⁵⁶⁸

HOGATE'S/H₂O

Hogate's Seafood Restaurant was the first restaurant to be built on the Southwest Waterfront. A long-time resident of the waterfront, its new building was built at 800 Water Street, near the intersection of Maine Avenue and Ninth Street. On May 19, 1971, a "waterbreaking" was held to mark the start of construction of the \$3 million single-story building with seating capacity for 900 patrons. The restaurant opened for business in March 1972⁵⁶⁹ and closed its doors in October 2001. Today, it operates as H₂O, a combined restaurant and nightclub.

PHILLIPS FLAGSHIP

The Flagship Restaurant was the second of the former waterfront restaurants to experience a rebirth in the new Southwest. Another single-story structure, this \$1.2 million building had seating capacity for 700 patrons, along with a banquet room and cocktail lounge. It is located at 900 Water Street, across one of the waterfront parks from H₂O. Construction began in 1971 and finished in October 1972.⁵⁷⁰ In December 1985, it was taken over by Phillips Foods, Inc.,⁵⁷¹ and it is now called Phillips Flagship.

ZANZIBAR ON THE WATERFRONT

Several other former Southwest restaurants and seafood stores were also relocated to the waterfront. These included Glasgow's Seafood Store, Cannon Seafood, and Ellis Raw Bar,⁵⁷² all of which took up residence at 700 Water Street. This space is now occupied by Zanzibar on the Waterfront, a combined restaurant and nightclub.

CAPITAL YACHT CLUB

The Capital Yacht Club was another of the old Southwest tenants to receive a new home through urban renewal. The club, which was founded in 1892, built its first clubhouse in Southwest in 1923. In September 1972, construction started on a new building, which was completed in 1973, dedicated in 1974, and renovated in 1992. The building, as constructed in 1973, includes a clubhouse, as well as a dining area and bar, lockers, showers, and 100 boat slips.⁵⁷³ It is located at 1000 Water Street, at the northern end of the waterfront, between Philip's

⁵⁶⁸ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1967, 3.

⁵⁶⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1968, 9; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1971, 20; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1972, 15.

⁵⁷⁰ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1972, 15; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1971, iii.

⁵⁷¹ "Legend of Phillips Seafood Restaurants," *Phillips Seafood Homepage*, <http://www.phillipsfoods.com/html/legend.html>, accessed 13 July 2004.

⁵⁷² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1970, 26.

⁵⁷³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1972, 15; "Facilities Available at the Capital Yacht Club," *The Capital Yacht Club Home Page*, <http://www.capitalyachtclub.net/facilities/facility.htm>, accessed 13 July 2004.

Flagship Restaurant and the fish market. Today, Jenny's Asian Fusion restaurant occupies the second floor.

CHANNEL INN HOTEL

The Channel Motor Inn was the only hotel to be built on the waterfront, and it currently bills itself as the Channel Inn Hotel, "Washington D.C.'s only waterfront hotel."⁵⁷⁴ The 100-room hotel, which also includes a promenade-side restaurant, is located at 650 Water Street, at the corner of Maine Avenue and Seventh Street. Construction on the building began in 1972 and finished in 1973.⁵⁷⁵

GANGPLANK MARINA

The Gangplank Marina is a 309-slip marina located at 600 Water Street. It occupies an area of approximately 13.47 acres, including riparian rights, which includes the slips, a marina sales facility, a tower, and several docks, among other structures. There is also adjacent parking. The marina currently serves as a permanent home to many live-aboards and several commercial boats, as well as a temporary home for transient and recreational boaters.⁵⁷⁶ The USS Sequoia Presidential Yacht is included among its current residents. Construction on the facility began in 1972.⁵⁷⁷ The facility is likely to be significantly impacted by the current Anacostia Waterfront Initiative.

Secondary Buildings/Sites of the New Southwest

In addition to these three major commercial areas, the redeveloped Southwest also included many other secondary sites, encompassing both first and secondary commercial usage. Generally speaking, these sites were located in two main areas: on the property north of the Southwest Expressway and south of the railroad tracks, or in Project Area C-1, just west of South Capitol Street. These sites included a wholesale food center, a hotel, office buildings, and a handful of small commercial centers that were placed near government office buildings and South Capitol Street's Automotive Center. Some of the more significant of these commercial buildings and sites are discussed below.

Commercial Facilities Between Seventh, the Railroad, and the Expressway

SOUTHWEST MARKET CENTER

One of the points of disagreement during the urban renewal planning stage concerned how to deal with second commercial facilities in the new plan. The most significant of these

⁵⁷⁴ *Capital Inn Hotel Home Page*, <http://www.channelinn.com/>, accessed 13 July 2004.

⁵⁷⁵ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1972, 15.

⁵⁷⁶ U.S. National Capital Revitalization Corporation, "RFP for Management Services, Gangplank Marina, Washington, D.C.," August 2001, http://www.ncrcdc.com/docs/rfp/MarinaRFP_082801.pdf, accessed 13 July 2004: 4.

⁵⁷⁷ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1971, 20.

facilities was the old Southwest's wholesale food market, one of Washington, D.C.'s principle food market centers⁵⁷⁸ and a major supplier of meat and produce to the city's restaurants. The market was located in the northern portion of the quadrant, with a major cluster of buildings at Twelfth Street and a minor grouping at Fourth Street, between the railroad tracks and the proposed expressway. In most early plans, such as the Justement-Smith Plan, these facilities, including the Twelfth Street location, were retained, with office buildings strategically erected as necessary to shield views of the center. The NCPC's 1956 Ninth Street Mall proposal was also driven in large part by a desire to maintain the market at its original location.⁵⁷⁹ In the end, however, the RLA decided only to retain two major Fourth Street buildings (the District Grocery Store warehouse and the Terminal Refrigeration plant – the second of which was converted in 1983 by Keyes Condon Florance into the Washington Design Center⁵⁸⁰), to add additional facilities there as part of Project Area B development, and to level the Twelfth Street location to make way for the Southwest Expressway.⁵⁸¹

The RLA's plan involved moving some of the former Twelfth Street tenants to new facilities just north of the Southwest Expressway, between Fourth and Second streets. Thus, upon the recommendation of the RLA, a group of eight of the displaced food dealers and one displaced restaurant organized itself into the Southwest Market Center, Inc., with Morris Kraft at the helm. The group obtained financing assistance from the Small Business Administration and the Riggs National Bank, and in April 1959 executed a lease for a parcel on which would be built a new, shared warehouse and distribution facility,⁵⁸² designed by architects Edmund W. Dreyfus and Associates.⁵⁸³ Ground was broken on June 12, 1959, and construction finished later that same year. When the Market Center opened on November 1, 1959, it was the first new business in operation in the new Southwest. The RLA reported, "After eight months of operation . . . business is at least 20 percent better than in the old location and every day the potential increases as redevelopment moves ahead in Southwest Washington."⁵⁸⁴

The Independence Square office complex, whose tenants include the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency and NASA, has since replaced the Southwest Market Center building.

AMERICAN ROAD BUILDERS BUILDING

The American Road Builders Building is located at 525 School Street, at the corner of Sixth and School streets. The five-story, 40,000 square foot building was designed by the architectural firm Mills, Petticord & Mills. It was completed in fiscal year 1965⁵⁸⁵ and dedicated

⁵⁷⁸ U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 4.

⁵⁷⁹ Albrook, "By Shifting Zeckendorf Site NCPC Group Maps Mall Plan Change."

⁵⁸⁰ Scott & Lee, 235.

⁵⁸¹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 23.

⁵⁸² Federal City Council, *Urban Renewal Program in the District of Columbia*, 29.

⁵⁸³ Design Research, 27.

⁵⁸⁴ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1960, 22.

⁵⁸⁵ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1965, 4; D.C. RLA, "The Architecture of the Southwest Urban Renewal

in June 1965.⁵⁸⁶ The ground floor, encased predominantly in glass, contains commercial use, and the office space on the floors above is raised on pilotis. The exterior consists of light-colored concrete, with recessed windows, encased by concrete that angles in from both the top and the bottom. The top floor is also recessed, with a continuous balcony surrounding it, and the structural columns continuing up to support the overhanging slab roof. A later building occupied by Northrup Grumman two doors down to its east, at 475 School Street, mimics the character of the façade in a more contemporary style. The building is currently fully leased by the GSA,⁵⁸⁷ with occupants including the Institute of Transportation Engineers. It is one of the two commercial structures built in this portion of Southwest during urban renewal that still remain.

COFFEY-SMITH ASSOCIATES BUILDING

The Coffey-Smith Associates Building is located at 400 Sixth Street, at the corner of Sixth and D streets, immediately behind the American Road Builders Building. This was the former site of the D.C. Department of Education building.⁵⁸⁸ It was constructed during the 1960s, but the exact date is unknown. The structure is five stories in height, with a glassed in first floor, the entirety of which is raised up on a concrete porch that surrounds the building. The façade is covered in light tan brick. The windows are arranged in vertical strips, alternating with a brown plastic-like material. The structural columns are made of off-white aggregate. Washington, D.C.'s Child and Family Services Bureau currently occupies the building.

BUILDINGS THAT NO LONGER EXIST

The remaining office buildings constructed in the triangle bounded by the railroad tracks, Seventh Street, and the Expressway have all been replaced. These include a Gulf Service Station at Fourth and F Streets (now a parking lot), the Army Times Building on School Street, and other structures. The undeveloped plot on E Street between Third and Fourth streets is also now being developed with office and residential high-rise buildings.

SMITH-CORONA MARCHANT, INC. OFFICE BUILDING

The Smith-Corona Marchant, Inc. Office Building was located at the southeast corner of E and Sixth streets. It was designed as general corporate offices by architect Wendell B. Hallett and developed by Donohoe, Bord & Earnest.⁵⁸⁹ Today the building, and that of Capital Film Laboratories to its east, has been replaced by a new building located at 500 E Street. The U.S. Social Security Administration and U.S. International Trade Commission occupy the new building.

⁵⁸⁶ Tom Kuennen, "ARBTA Broadens Scope as 'Golden Age' of Roadbuilding Unfolds," *Transportation Builder* (July 2001), 31, http://www.expresswaysonline.com/pdf/July2001_100th.pdf, accessed 5 August 2004.

⁵⁸⁷ "General Services Administration (GSA) Inventory of Owned and Leased Properties."

⁵⁸⁸ *Insurance Maps of Washington*, 235.

⁵⁸⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1964, 9; D.C. RLA, "The Architecture of the Southwest Urban Renewal Area."

FOB No. 8 (FDA)

Federal Office Building No. 8 is located at 200 C Street, on the area bounded by Second, Third, C, and D streets. The architecture firm Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johanson designed the building.⁶²² Construction began in 1961 and finished in 1965.⁶²³ The building's 545,500 square feet of space originally housed laboratories of the Food and Drug Administration. With the FDA's September 2001 move to new Federal space in Maryland, various possibilities were considered for the space, including having it continue to serve as a Federal office building, incorporating it into the Capitol Complex, and redevelopment of the site as a National Health Museum.⁶²⁴ Following hearings and debate, in September 2001, the General Services Administration announced the selection of Boggs & Partners Architects with GHT Ltd. Consulting Engineers for modernization of the building into Class A office space.⁶²⁵ Today it is still occupied by the FDA.

The building has seven stories, with the top floor recessed from the building line. The façade consists of wide tan concrete columns, without any spandrels, interrupted by vertical strips of small, near-square portal windows. These windows are arranged in vertical columns, alternating with panels of brown synthetic material. The side facades consist of solid concrete. The exterior of the building lacks a plaza, and the structure sits near the sidewalk, with streets and parking spots close nearby. The absence any grand entrance makes entry confusing.

James Forrestal Building (FOB No. 5)

Among the four Federal office buildings first authorized by Congress for construction in the redeveloped Southwest, the James Forrestal Building, originally known simply as Federal Office Building No. 5, was the last to be constructed. Located at 1000 Independence Avenue, it was completed in 1969.⁶²⁶ The architectural firm Curtis & Davis designed the building. The building's original occupant was the Department of Defense. In order to improve circulation, plans were scrapped to house the department in two separate buildings lining the northernmost portion of the Tenth Street Promenade. Thus, this apparently singular structure – although technically three separate north, south, and west buildings – was built to straddle the promenade. Although this solution likely improved upon employee circulation as planned, it placed a veritable road block at the northern end of the promenade, once again barricading the Southwest from the rest of D.C. – this time, along the very entryway that was supposed to rectify that historical situation. Instead of the planned vista of the Smithsonian Castle, visitors to the

⁶²² D.C. RLA, "The Architecture of the Southwest Urban Renewal Area."

⁶²³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1965, 4.

⁶²⁴ Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, & Emergency Management, "Hearing on The National Health Museum and the Future Use of Federal Office Building 8," 10 May 2001, <http://www.house.gov/transportation/pbed/05-10-01/05-10-01memo.html>, accessed 15 July 2004.

⁶²⁵ "GSA Selects Architect for \$70M D.C. Project," News Release, 17 October 2001, *GSA Home Page*, http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?pageTypeId=8199&channelId=13259&P=XAE&contentId=9427&contentType=GSA_BASIC, accessed 15 July 2004.

⁶²⁶ Scott & Lee, 236.

promenade now catch only a glimpse of that building above and below the concrete barrier located on Independence Avenue, between Ninth and Eleventh streets.

The building's façade consists of concrete panels with double windows covering four stories of office space. These four stories are raised on thirty-six concrete pilotis, through which automobile and pedestrian traffic can pass in the middle. When it opened, the building's 1.63 million square feet of space (of which 1.3 million square feet make up office space and corridors)⁶²⁷ housed approximately 6,500 employees.⁶²⁸ The configuration of this interior space was also notable, as its "imaginative floor plan" was "a manifestation of President John F. Kennedy's effort to improve the quality of federal government architecture."⁶²⁹ The identity of its occupants led to its nickname, "Little Pentagon." In 1977, however, the Department of Energy moved into the space and made it its headquarters.⁶³⁰

As part of the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative, the District Department of Transportation conducted an urban planning study of L'Enfant Promenade. One of the study's guiding principles is to "realize the monumental potential of the Promenade and its relationships to the City." In order to achieve that goal, one of the steps proposed is the removal of the obstruction to views of the Smithsonian Castle by the Forrestal Building. The study also calls the building a security concern.⁶³¹ Thus, the building may be at risk of either loss or significant alteration in the future.

Robert C. Weaver Federal Building/FOB No. 5 (HUD)

The Robert C. Weaver Federal Building, or the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Building, or FOB No. 5, is located at 451 Seventh Street, at the southwest corner of Seventh and D streets. This was the former site of a bank and the Hammersly Alley and residential community.⁶³² Architects Marcel Breuer and Herbert Beckhard, with Nolen Swinburne Associates, designed the building.⁶³³ Small recessed horizontal glass windows punctuate the 10-story precast concrete building – the first Federal office building to be constructed of this material. Its bold, curvilinear "X" shape is a form highly reminiscent of Breuer's design for the UNESCO Headquarters and IBM Research Center, both in France. This shape was a sharp contrast to the typical boxy form employed in most existing Federal buildings – a symbolic statement about the responsibilities of the newly created HUD. Its design also

⁶²⁷ Results Center, *EUA Cogenex - U.S. DOE, Forrestal Building Lighting Retrofit Profile #100* ([Washington, D.C.]: The Results Center, 1995?), <http://sol.crest.org/efficiency/irt/100.pdf>, accessed 14 July 2004: 6.

⁶²⁸ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1969, 25.

⁶²⁹ Scott & Lee, 236.

⁶³⁰ Results Center, 6.

⁶³¹ Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc. and HNTB Architects Engineers Planners, *Urban Planning Study: L'Enfant Promenade, for Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division, District Department of Transportation* (N.p.: January 2003), <http://ddot.dc.gov/ddot/frames.asp?doc=/ddot/lib/ddot/information/studies/lenfant/guidingprinciples.pdf&open=|32399|>, accessed 14 July 2004.

⁶³² *Insurance Maps of Washington*, 204.

⁶³³ "Robert C. Weaver Federal Building," *U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Home Page*, <http://www.hud.gov/about/hqbuilding.cfm>, accessed 15 July 2004.

responded to President John F. Kennedy's efforts to improve public building design. Structurally, "the building's frame was made of a cast-in-place concrete "tree" that rested the bulk of the building on a series of stubby pilotis, or piers."⁶³⁴

As with the building, concrete also dominates the landscaping of the complex's six-acre plaza, which is built above an underground garage and once severed as an additional parking location itself. Breuer's original design lacked any trees, shade, or public amenities. In 1990, the landscape architecture firm Martha Schwartz, Inc., began redesigning the space to express HUD's mission of creating habitable spaces for people. It added thirty-foot diameter, grass-filled concrete planters (which double as seating) and white "Lifesaver-shaped" plastic canopies (which double as lighting), raised on fourteen-foot steel poles. A backlit mural is also planned.⁶³⁵ The cold, stark character of the space still remains, however.

Building construction began in November 1966 and finished in 1968. It was formally opened and dedicated on September 9, 1968. On July 11, 2000, it was renamed in honor of Secretary Robert C. Weaver, who originally dedicated the building and served as the first HUD secretary and the first African American Cabinet member.⁶³⁶

David Nassif Building (U.S. Dept. of Transportation Building)

The David Nassif Building is located at 400 Seventh Street, at the corner of Seventh and D streets. This was the former site of the Westminster Memorial Church (Presbyterian), the Fifth Baptist Church, a private garage, and various housing.⁶³⁷ Architect Edward Durrell Stone designed the building, which was developed by the David Nassif Corporation.⁶³⁸ Since the building's completion in 1969, the GSA has leased it for occupancy by the U.S. Department of Transportation. Unlike the previously discussed Federal structures, the Nassif Building is an example of a private, speculative office development whose design was tailored for a specific Federal agency, but could also function as private office space.⁶³⁹

The tall, rectangular building is hollowed out at the middle, where it contains a courtyard plaza that is accessible from the sides. This plaza contains a rectangular plot of trees and other vegetative landscaping, surrounded by a fountain and water moat. Later, an escalator entrance was added to the L'Enfant Plaza Metro station. The building's façade consists of alternating ribbons of glass windows and marble veneer, creating a striated pattern. The marble comes from the same Carrara quarry in Italy that was the source of the material that Stone used at the

⁶³⁴ Scott & Lee, 239.

⁶³⁵ "Hall of Shame: HUD Plaza," *Project for Public Spaces Home Page*, http://www.pps.org/gps/one?public_place_id=146#, accessed 15 July 2004; "Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)," *Martha Schwartz, Inc. Home Page*, <http://www.marthaschwartz.com/prjts/civic/HUD/hud.html>, accessed 15 July 2004.

⁶³⁶ "HUD Headquarters Building Renamed to Honor Robert C. Weaver – First HUD Secretary and First African American Cabinet Member," Press Release, 11 July 2000, *U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Home Page*, <http://www.hud.gov/library/bookshelf18/pressrel/pr00-161.html>, accessed 15 July 2004.

⁶³⁷ *Insurance Maps of Washington*, 204.

⁶³⁸ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1967, 3, 5.

⁶³⁹ Scott & Lee, 240.

Kennedy Center. Both buildings also share broad overhanging eaves.⁶⁴⁰ Inside, the building contains more than 1.7 million square feet of space.⁶⁴¹ In its 1967 annual report, the RLA called the Nassif Building the “largest private office building in the Washington Metropolitan Area.”⁶⁴²

In February 2004, construction began on a new Department of Transportation headquarters building in Southeast Washington, D.C. Employees are expected to move from the Nassif Building to this new site in 2006.⁶⁴³

Reporters Building (USDA)

The Reporters Building is located at 300 Seventh Street, on the northwest corner of Seventh and D streets. Architect Vosbeck, Ward and Associates, of Alexandria, Virginia, designed the building, which was developed by Robert Associates, of Washington, D.C. Construction began on the 141,000 square foot building in summer 1964.⁶⁴⁴ Having once served as an expansion site for NASA administration, today it is fully leased to the GSA and includes offices for Coastal America and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Office of Procurement and Property Management.

The concrete building combines two rectangular forms in a T-shaped plan. It is nine stories high, with the ninth floor being a recessed utility level. The façade is covered in rough, tan, stone aggregate, while the bottom floor is encased in glass and contains some commercial space. Pilotis lift the upper floors above the ground level. Rectangular windows punctuate a grid of wide, aggregate-covered concrete spandrels and columns. Vertical dividers break up the entire façade, including the window spans, in an even cadence. Brick covers the majority of the backside of the building – a likely renovation.

Hubert H. Humphrey Building (Health and Human Services)

In 1976, construction completed on the Hubert H. Humphrey Building for the Department of Health and Human Services, located at 200 Independence Avenue. This plot had been ear-marked during redevelopment as a site for the construction of a Federal office building. Marcel Breuer and Herbert Beckhard were the architects.⁶⁴⁵ In materials, façade treatment (including the small, recessed windows), and landscaping, it resembles Breuer’s other Southwest structure, the HUD building.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁴¹ “Nassif Building,” *Smith Commercial Realty Home Page*, http://www.smithcommercialrealty.com/smith_tenants/property_details.cfm?location=2&building_number=321&pgst=1, accessed 23 July 2004.

⁶⁴² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1967, 3.

⁶⁴³ “Contractors Move Forward on Transportation Building,” *Washington Business Journal*, 13 February 2004, <http://washington.bizjournals.com/washington/stories/2004/02/16/focus9.html>, accessed 23 July 2004.

⁶⁴⁴ “300 7th St SW,” *Charles E. Smith Commercial Realty Home Page*, <http://costarconnect.com/costarconnect/GenericFrame.asp?CostarPage=Main.asp&SiteID=20482&Checksum=12883&Demo=0&RtnURL=www.smithcommercialrealty.com/available/>, accessed 15 July 2004.

⁶⁴⁵ Scott & Lee, 234.

Transportation

Former Conditions

The old Southwest contained a grid of numerous residential streets, as well as several major thoroughfares. These major streets, noted for their wide pavement widths, included South Capitol, Fourth, Seventh, Tenth, Eleventh, and M streets, and Maine Avenue. Several modes of transportation traversed these routes, including the streetcar line on Seventh Street and the southern portion of Maine Avenue; and the Eleventh, Fourth, and M Street bus routes. In reference to public transit accessibility, the NCPC wrote of the old Southwest, "All parts of the Survey Area are within walking distance of a transit route."⁶⁴⁶

Although not a transportation route in and out of Southwest, The Pennsylvania Railroad tracks arched through the area and acted as a northern border. The tracks run northeast along Maryland Avenue up to C Street and then southeast from C Street along Virginia Avenue.

Structures of the New Southwest

As already discussed, urban renewal replaced much of the old Southwest's street grid pattern with superblocks. However, many of the old major routes – such as Seventh Street, M Street, and Maine Avenue – remained. While others also continued to exist, they were sometimes altered. For example, Fourth Street was interrupted by Town Center, and Maine Avenue was truncated at Sixth Street, rather than continuing further south. In addition, although there was wide support for a bill to place the railroad tracks in a tunnel between Union Station and Virginia, that plan died due to its high \$75 million price tag.⁶⁴⁷ Thus, urban renewal built around the railroad tracks and tried as much as possible to eliminate their influence as a barrier. Of the new construction, one major roadway, the Southwest Expressway, was the key element in Southwest urban renewal's impact on the area's transportation network.

Southwest Expressway

As far as shaping the future of Southwest, the area's own existing internal transportation routes were less significant than the perceived future transportation needs of the greater Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. As many American cities at that time were experiencing decentralization, highways were viewed as a means for returning the population to the cities – to work, shop, and live. In addition, a 1950 report by the Washington Metropolitan Chapter of the American Institute of Architects further endorsed the use of highways as borders between varied land use patterns, diverting high-speed traffic from pedestrian-oriented areas and separating residential from second commercial without relegating either to areas outside the city.⁶⁴⁸

A 1955 highway proposal by the Virginia, Maryland, and D.C. highway departments describes a 450-mile expressway system for the region, including a 17.6-mile inner loop

⁶⁴⁶ U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Area B*, 5.

⁶⁴⁷ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 10.

⁶⁴⁸ Gillette, 157.

roadway that was to circulate within the center of Washington, D.C. This proposal built upon the suggestion for such a roadway in the 1950 Comprehensive Plan, which itself was preceded by Harland Bartholomew's introduction of an inner loop highway into a January 1944 Interregional Highway Committee report.⁶⁴⁹ As public outcry against the displacement of highway construction halted completion of the inner roadway, only the first two of its original five segments were actually built – the Southwest and Southeast legs. Today these form the Southwest/Southeast Freeway.⁶⁵⁰ Construction began on the expressway in fiscal year 1958.⁶⁵¹

Urban renewal in Southwest responded to the proposal for the Southwest Expressway, adapting its own plans to appropriately assimilate the expressway with the aims of redevelopment. The finished roadway would permit high-speed traffic to bypass the Southwest and also enable Southwest residents to access the rest of the city and metropolitan area. In addition, it serves as a visual barrier between the commercial and residential areas of the neighborhood, without acting as an impenetrable barrier to further isolate the quadrant as previous transportation routes had done.⁶⁵²

From end to end, the multi-lane expressway links the Fourteenth Street Bridge and South Capitol Street. On the east, at Maine Avenue, a tunnel diverts local traffic under the Expressway. Near the Tenth Street Promenade, it runs closer to grade and is crossed via overpasses. At its eastern end, it is a raised roadway, permitting local traffic to cross into Southwest through underpasses. In a broader context, the expressway was originally intended to serve as part of Interstate 95. When it was decided that I-95 would not pass through the city, it was designated as part of the spur Interstate 395.

Washington Channel Bridge

In addition to the Expressway, the Washington Channel Bridge (located just outside the renewal area boundaries, but intricately connected with it) was another significant transportation project completed during Southwest's urban renewal. The bridge was designed by the engineers Sverdrup and Parcel, Inc. and Gannett, Fleming, Corddry, and Carpenter, Inc., as well as by the D.C. Department of Highways and Traffic.⁶⁵³ Completed in 1963, with opening ceremonies held on July 31, 1962,⁶⁵⁴ today it carries I-395 traffic between East Potomac Park and the Southwest Expressway.

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁰ District of Columbia. Department of Transportation, *The South Capitol Gateway and Corridor Improvement Study; Final Report* (N.p.: 4 November 2003), <http://ddot.dc.gov/ddot/cwp/view.a.1247.q.560731.asp>, accessed 16 July 2004; "Inner Loop," *Takoma Park Highway Design Studio Home Page*, http://www.highwaysandcommunities.com/1955-77_Inner_Loop.html, accessed 16 July 2004.

⁶⁵¹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1958, 2.

⁶⁵² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 24.

⁶⁵³ "Program for the Opening Ceremonies of the Washington Channel Bridge & Twelfth Street Expressway, Washington, D.C.," pamphlet, 31 July 1962, Albert J. Headley, Jr. Papers.

⁶⁵⁴ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1962, 19.

While the constructed bridge is a major automobile route, it was originally envisioned in Chloethiel Woodard Smith's waterfront plan as a more commercial and pedestrian-oriented element. In her plan, an 874'-40' bridge would connect the Southwest with East Potomac Park, and its length would be lined with 90,000 square feet of restaurants and shops.⁶⁵⁵ She evoked the imagery of Florence's Ponte Vecchio as a standard-setter.⁶⁵⁶ Although the NCPC approved the concept of a pedestrian bridge linking the Tenth Street Mall, waterfront, and East Potomac Park (with its proposed National Aquarium) in December 1954,⁶⁵⁷ and Congress approved it in 1966,⁶⁵⁸ the realization of that vision never materialized.

IV. Relocation

Although the early planners of Southwest's urban renewal had intended for many of the area's former residents to be able to return once the slums had been eradicated and more sanitary structures and sites built in their place, this aspiration went largely unfulfilled. Thus, the second responsibility of the RLA – relocation of families and businesses – took on very significant long-term ramifications.

Relocating Residents

Process

Before the D.C. Commissioners would approve a redevelopment plan, they required an understanding that adequate facilities existed for the rehousing of the current inhabitants of the redevelopment area. Thus, relocation was a key step for the RLA. On a more personal level, it was even more significant for the approximately 23,000 former residents of Southwest. Many had lived their entire lives in the area – growing up in the neighborhood, and possibly working there, or somewhere nearby, as well. Thanks to urban renewal, many would be separated from friends and sent to corners of the city that they may not have ever previously visited. Thus, the emotional and social scars were significant. On the flip side, however, in finding suitable housing for the relocated families, the RLA oftentimes provided the residents with a significant improvement over their former physical conditions.

The process of relocating families proceeded in several specific steps. Once the bounds of the urban renewal area were set, the relocation staff began its work by conducting a door-to-door survey. Through the survey, the interviewer, or relocation technician, estimated the relocation needs of each resident family, explained the purpose of urban renewal, estimated and communicated key relocation dates for the family, and left each family with an informational

⁶⁵⁵ *Two on Two at the Octagon*, 7.

⁶⁵⁶ DC RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 21.

⁶⁵⁷ U.S. NCPC, *The Urban River; A Staff Proposal for Waterfront Development in the District of Columbia* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office (for sale by the Supt. of Docs.), 1972), 42.

⁶⁵⁸ *Two on Two at the Octagon*, 8.

pamphlet. Community meetings held by other staff members further supplemented the information provided in these pamphlets.

The second official contact occurred once a property had been acquired, at which point the relocation technician sent the family notification by mail and referred them to the field office, where family counselors were available to assist them. The family counselors provided public housing applications and private housing listings, depending upon a family's income, and served as a concerned real estate agent to the family.⁶⁵⁹

After property acquisition, but before relocation, the resident was a tenant to the RLA. During this period, relocation technicians showed the family potential dwellings. Although they were only required to show each family one viable option, technicians were often said to have exceeded that minimum.⁶⁶⁰ Once a new home was selected, the RLA inspected the prospective residence to ensure that it was suitable for the family. The factors contributing to suitability included its being structurally sound, large enough for the family's size, and equipped with basic amenities (hot and cold running water, electricity, an inside bathroom, a kitchen sink, and central heating).⁶⁶¹ In addition, two other requirements that were assessed included whether or not it was conveniently distanced from the bread-winner's place of work, and whether its price was within the family's ability to pay.⁶⁶² Once the dwelling passed its inspection, the family received \$200 to cover moving expenses.⁶⁶³

The RLA described its ultimate goal as much more than just the completion of relocated families' moves. Rather, it sought "to effect successful relocation, to imbue families with the desire to improve by providing every aid possible, in effect, to approach relocation as a human problem as well as a problem of shelter."⁶⁶⁴ Toward this larger end, family counselors were known to assist in obtaining inexpensive or free furnishings for families' new homes, discounted medical services for ailing family members, and even hasty marriage licenses for couples who had been living together for a long time, but would not be recognized in their new home as having a civil union.⁶⁶⁵

Throughout the various stages of this process, eviction was always viewed as a last resort – reserved for cases when a family "refused to pay rent for quarters used or to accept suitable alternate accommodations." In the end, the RLA prided itself on the fact that not a single Southwest family was evicted its their home.⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁵⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1960, 14.

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 13.

⁶⁶³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1960, 15.

⁶⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶⁶⁵ James Banks, Group Interview by author, River Park, SW, Washington, D.C., June 24, 2004.

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

Project Area B

In January 1953, the RLA opened its first relocation field office. Situated on Fourth Street, the location demonstrated the RLA's desire to provide residents with easy access to their services.⁶⁶⁷ In the course of their first assignment – Project Area B – the RLA relocated 1,041 families. When the RLA conducted a door-to-door survey of the area prior to commencing relocation, however, they counted 1260 families. Moreover, original estimates of the area's population at the start of urban renewal planning identified 1,345 families in what would become Project Area B. This total decrease of 304 families was due to individual families' decisions to move out on their own when they heard about the upcoming relocation, despite the recommendation by the RLA that they await assistance before leaving the area.⁶⁶⁸

Relocation actually commenced in December 1953.⁶⁶⁹ Upon completion, the 1,041 families had been distributed as follows: 441 in public housing, 515 in private housing, 47 in substandard private housing – to which the families had voluntarily moved – and 38 unaccounted for. This issue of “lost” families would recur in other project areas, leading many to recommend that the various organizations involved in the relocation process pool their efforts in order to work more effectively and comprehensively for all families' benefits.

Project Areas C and C-1

Project Area C, with 4,114 families, was a much more sizeable undertaking. By the start of the area's relocation activities, several advances had been made in order to somewhat ease the process. First, in fiscal year 1958, the NCHA instituted a new policy whereby displaced Southwest families were given priority in dwindling public housing facilities.⁶⁷⁰ In addition, new public housing was in development at that time in near Southeast and eastern Southwest.⁶⁷¹ Second, more than 100 Washington real estate agencies began listing private housing vacancies with the RLA, supplementing the other side of the housing supply.⁶⁷²

When the inhabitants of Project Area C were relocated, approximately 50 percent were slated for public housing and 50 percent for private housing. The same was true for Project Area C-1.⁶⁷³

Project Area C also became the site of “Southwest Center”, a 2-year experimental ‘pilot’ study in ‘human renewal’ designed to define and test the best procedures and techniques that could be used in solving relocation problems in urban renewal areas.”⁶⁷⁴ The staff of the demonstration project, which was undertaken under Section 314 of the Housing Act of 1954,

⁶⁶⁷ D.C. RLA, *This is RLA*, 4.

⁶⁶⁸ U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Area C*, Appendix D-1.

⁶⁶⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1955, 14.

⁶⁷⁰ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1958, 10.

⁶⁷¹ U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Area C*, Appendix D-3.

⁶⁷² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1958, 10.

⁶⁷³ U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Area C*, Appendix D-2 - D-3.

⁶⁷⁴ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1958, 10.

began its work in 1958.⁶⁷⁵ Through group education and coordinated social services, the staff hoped to teach families how to adjust to new communities as well as how to perform basic self-help tasks, such as housekeeping, sewing, and home decoration.⁶⁷⁶ The test group for this study included 198 "demonstration" families and another 198 control group families.⁶⁷⁷

At the conclusion of the project, shortly after the completion of relocation, it was very difficult to measure the success or failure of the effort. Staff members felt that the demonstration project "was of very definite though modest value to most of the families participating,"⁶⁷⁸ but interviews of control and demonstration families showed little difference between the two groups. Some degree of success could perhaps be inferred from the fact that more demonstration families (61 percent versus 49 percent) voluntarily opted for public housing over private housing – the former being considered by staff members as a more safe and sanitary option.⁶⁷⁹ Otherwise, however, differences were hard to measure.

Following the demonstration project, the RLA established a similar program of community education and organization in a Northeast renewal area.⁶⁸⁰ Without concrete results either way, they were willing to at least try the program again in the event that it proved useful. More statistically concrete learnings from Southwest relocation experiences would not be illuminated, however, until another study was conducted by Daniel Thursz and the HEW five years later.

Where They Went

By mid-1960, of the 4,664 families that resided in Southwest when acquisition began, 98 percent had been relocated. Their new residences were distributed as follows:⁶⁸¹

Northwest:	14.9%
Northeast:	21.4%
Southeast:	42.7%
Southwest:	13.2%
Outside Washington, D.C.:	6.0%
Unknown:	1.8%

The ninety-five families that had yet to be relocated typically had social or economic "handicaps" that made relocation particularly difficult. Three such handicapped groups included those who were economically eligible for public housing, but whose families were too large for the ten-person maximum public housing units; families that earned too much money to be

⁶⁷⁵ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1957, 6; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1960, 24.

⁶⁷⁶ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1960, 24.

⁶⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁶⁷⁸ D.C. RLA, *Community Services and Family Relocation; The Report of a Demonstration Project Carried Out Under the Provisions of the Housing Act of 1954* ([Washington, D.C.]: n.p., 1964), 13-14.

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 134-135.

⁶⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁶⁸¹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1960, 16.

eligible for public housing, but were too poor to be able to afford private housing; and, low-income elderly people, for whom public housing was in short supply.⁶⁸²

In 1966, the Health and Welfare Council (HWC), Washington, D.C.'s social welfare planning and coordinating body, published a follow-up study on a portion of the families in Project Area C that were relocated through the demonstration project. One of the topics the study tracked was the current location of ninety-six of these families, five years after displacement. Although this group was not entirely representative of the entire relocated population of the old Southwest, the study is still instructive.

Like the earlier figures, this study found that the families were not clustered in several locations outside, but near, Southwest. Rather, it compared the displaced families to "leaves on an autumn day," living in a total of thirty-seven different census tracts.⁶⁸³ Approximately 25 percent were living in the Southwest, predominantly in public housing; 42 percent resided in disparate portions of Southeast; 19 percent lived in 11 census tracts in Northeast, and 8 percent resided in non-adjointing census tracts in Northwest. Among these families, 64 percent were still living in their original relocation residence, and 21 percent had moved once since then.⁶⁸⁴

Assessments

There have been several formal and informal evaluations of Southwest's urban renewal resident relocation process. The newspapers at the time were full of articles voicing both support and opposition to the urban renewal process and procedures. Ezekia Cunningham, an 84-year old black owner and proprietor of a small grocery store located at Third and G streets aptly described the mixture of emotions being felt at the time when he commented, "Well, it seems like they're handin' out a passel o' joy and a passel o' sorrow."⁶⁸⁵

A notable thread among many of the evaluations of relocation was a common approval for the work and intentions of James Banks and his RLA relocation staff. They were inexperienced in this area and would set the standards for many future relocation staffs around the country. However, despite the best of intentions, their inexperience did result in some grievances and difficulties.

For example, when Mary Cavanaugh, Director of Southwest's Vincent House, testified at an urban renewal hearing in 1960, she began her comments by absolving Banks and his staff of blame:

I wish to make it clear that I feel that no blame should be attached to Mr. James Banks, of RLA, or to most of those under him as far as I know them, for any part of this tragic situation. I believe that most of the injustice and misery has been caused by defects and

⁶⁸² Ibid.

⁶⁸³ Thursz, 25-26

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid., 26-27.

⁶⁸⁵ George Beveridge, "Southwest Area Takes on Ghost Town Look," *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), 21 November 1954.

inadequacies of the original law which failed to make proper provision for or provide adequate compensation for the various types or classes of persons to be displaced and for their proper relocation.⁶⁸⁶

She then went on to enumerate numerous proposed improvements to the relocation process, including recommendations to “handle cases in a more humane way;” provide appropriate rehousing for the elderly, middle class, and single women; and permit pets to accompany residents moving to row or walk-up public housing projects.⁶⁸⁷

In addition to ad hoc civic group input, several individuals conducted and published detailed studies of the relocation in Southwest. One of the earliest among these was Robert G. Howes’ 1959 report *Crisis Downtown: A Church Eye-view of Urban Renewal*. Published several years later, and much more widely known, was Daniel Thursz’ 1966 study *Where Are They Now?* The methods and findings of both are described briefly below.

Crisis Downtown

In 1959, firmly in the midst of Southwest’s urban renewal process, Robert G. Howe published *Crisis Downtown: A Church Eye-view of Urban Renewal*, a brief history of the Southwest’s redevelopment to-date that focused in detail on its relocation policies. Howe’s perspectives were fueled by his dual positions as a Worcester, MA, Roman Catholic priest, as well as a graduate student studying city planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Between November 1958 and August 1959, Howe interviewed 202 families that had formerly resided in Project Area C. His subjects volunteered to participate, and they were disproportionately skewed toward public housing residents.⁶⁸⁸

Based on his research, Howe concluded that urban renewal was an excellent idea for the area and that the RLA’s relocation procedures were generally successful. Interviewees often described relocation as expeditious and gentle,⁶⁸⁹ and many families “bettered their lot physically.” In addition, a large majority viewed their new residential location as a better place in which to bring up children than the Southwest.⁶⁹⁰

On the flip side, however, Howes concluded that bureaucratic double-talk and an overabundance of “cooks in the broth” may have contributed to a variety of human inconveniences and their resultant gripes. These grievances surrounded the “dictatorial” land condemnation and assessment practices, the misrepresentation of residents’ possibility of

⁶⁸⁶ “Hearing on HR 8697,” 12 May 1960, Albert J. Headley, Jr. Papers, 1.

⁶⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸⁸ Howes, 26.

⁶⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁶⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 27.

returning to the area, the “losing” of families in the bookkeeping, and the absence of a central relocation agency.⁶⁹¹

Where Are They Now?

Daniel Thursz’ study, *Where Are They Now? A Study of the Impact of Relocation on Former Residents of Southwest Washington, Who Were Served in an HWC Demonstration Project*, was somewhat larger and better known than that of Howes. With the help of the HWC, Thursz attempted to follow up with the 198 demonstration families, five years after relocation, in order to reassess their conditions and opinions from a more distanced perspective. Thursz and his staff were successful in interviewing a representative sample of ninety-eight of the original families. Their findings, as a result of these interviews, were both encouraging and surprising.

In terms of physical housing alone, the study debunked the hypothesis that relocated former slum residents either seek out or recreate slum conditions in their new location. On the contrary, Thursz’s findings led him to the conclusion that, “If one measures the impact of relocation solely in terms of physical rehabilitation, the urban renewal program is a huge success.” Prior to relocation, only 22.2 percent of families lived in “good” conditions, and 26.4 percent lived in accommodations that needed only minor repairs. In contrast, five years later, 85.7 percent of families lived in “good” accommodations, and the entire remainder only needed minor repairs.⁶⁹² In addition, conditions were significantly more orderly and clean in the new accommodations.⁶⁹³

The numbers behind these improvements are even more telling. At the time of the survey, 96.9 percent of the families now had flush toilets in their dwellings (versus 43 percent in 1950), 93.7 percent had central heating (versus more than 70 percent in 1950), and nearly 96 percent had bathrooms with running water (versus more than 44 percent in 1950). Perhaps the greatest improvement, however, was seen in the area of electricity. In 1950, only 20% of these families enjoyed this utility. By the time of the survey, though, 100 percent had electricity, and 82 percent even owned televisions!⁶⁹⁴

As Thursz then went on to note, “It would be an error, however, to assume that the improvement in housing creates automatically the conditions by which other problems associated with slum living disappear.”⁶⁹⁵ Thus, while housing had improved, residents’ social and attitudinal health had often stagnated or even declined.

Thursz found that the families he surveyed experienced a serious drop in their use of community services,⁶⁹⁶ and almost 40 percent (versus 52 percent prior) were out of work.⁶⁹⁷ One

⁶⁹¹ Ibid., 12-14.

⁶⁹² Thursz, 28.

⁶⁹³ Ibid., 32.

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid., 32-34.

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid., 40.

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid., 46.

⁶⁹⁷ Ibid., 48.

of the most surprising findings of all was the fact that, after five years in their new homes, more than a quarter of the residents had not made a single friend in that neighborhood.⁶⁹⁸ As a result of – or perhaps even as a cause of – these conditions, these families also experienced a high degree of hopelessness and social dysfunction.⁶⁹⁹ Moreover, although half of the families preferred their new homes to their old ones, fewer than 30 percent were happy that they had to move.⁷⁰⁰

Based on this information, Thursz concluded that there was still significant room for improvement in urban renewal relocation programs. Thus, he made several recommendations. First, he argued that residents should be more deeply involved in the relocation process and, if possible, they should move into new homes on the site of their former residences. Second, he argued that relocation activities should extend to the post-relocation phase as well, during which social agencies and community agents must play a larger role in integrating the newly relocated families. Third, he recommended additional research on relocation, including studies specifically focused on the role of community identification in either helping or hindering the overall process.⁷⁰¹

Relocating Businesses

Process

Given the unique needs of each firm, the process for relocating businesses was much less standardized than that employed with residents. In fact, most businesses worked directly with the private real estate market to resolve their individual situations. For its part, the RLA served as a middleman, funneling questionnaires between the displaced businesses and the Washington Real Estate Board.⁷⁰² In addition, the RLA administered a financial aid program that offered funds to cover financial property losses and moving expenses. The limit for these funds was originally set by the Housing Act of 1956 at \$2,000 per business, although that amount increased to \$3,000 in 1959.⁷⁰³

Where They Went

By mid-1960, of Southwest's 768 businesses, 453 (59 percent) were relocated, 115 (15 percent) remained, and 200 (26 percent) went out of business. Of the relocated businesses, approximately 75 percent filed financial claims with the RLA that were within the allowable range.⁷⁰⁴

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid., 54.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid., 71-72.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid., 57.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid., 105-107.

⁷⁰² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1960, 21.

⁷⁰³ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid.

More than 95 percent of the relocated businesses were originally based in Project Areas C or C-1. Of that group, the following table summarizes their post-renewal location:⁷⁰⁵

Northwest:	27.7%
Northeast:	23.8%
Southeast:	16.9%
Southwest:	10.8%
Outside Washington, D.C.:	20.8%

Assessments

In his broad study of urban renewal in the United States, Martin Anderson concludes, "Extremely few relocated firms ever move back into the urban renewal areas." He notes that, even though displaced businesses typically receive priority in relocating in the renewed areas, high post-renewal costs, in contrast to previously depressed rents, serve as a key impediment to taking advantage of that opportunity. As the livelihood of many businesses depended upon a local customer base, either relocation or the process of moving back into the old area could also be very risky. Statistically, Anderson found that 25 percent of displaced businesses went out of businesses, and only 4 percent (of a very small sample of four cities) moved back into the urban renewal area.⁷⁰⁶

In Southwest, the story was fairly consistent with these trends, with very few businesses returning to the area after redevelopment had occurred.⁷⁰⁷ The major exceptions to this trend were the members of the wholesale market, who organized themselves into the Southwest Market Center, Inc.; the Bernsteins, who opened a small shopping center near South Capitol Street; and some seafood restaurants and vendors, who received new facilities on a renewed waterfront.

Southwest's liquor store owners faced a particularly unique and dismal plight. The old Southwest was home to twenty-two liquor stores, and the law required that they turn in their liquor license if they ever closed down operations. Upon reopening, the license could subsequently be picked up. However, if this was not done by the end of the license year (Feb 1) when the license had been surrendered, the license would be lost. This situation was further aggravated by the fact that, in 1936, the District had limited liquor licenses to 300, grandfathering in the one hundred licenses that then existed in excess of the limit. At the time of urban renewal, there were still more than eighty licenses in excess of the limit, thus making it impossible for displaced owners to obtain a new license if they wished to reopen in Southwest, or if it took them more than a few months to reestablish their business in a new location.⁷⁰⁸

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁶ Anderson, 69-70.

⁷⁰⁷ Melder, *City of Magnificent Intentions*, 524.

⁷⁰⁸ Hector McLean, "Liquor Dealers, Though Blameless, Face Loss of License in Southwest," *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), 6 March 1955.

In contrast to this unusual legal situation, the difficulties of the former businesses of the waterfront were more representative of the typical difficulties facing businesses wishing to return to urban renewal areas. In 1964, several prospective commercial tenants brought to the attention of the House of Representatives their concerns that there was a near-conspiracy by the RLA to keep them from relocating on the waterfront.⁷⁰⁹ The D.C. Redevelopment Act stipulated that former tenants of the waterfront would be given a priority six-month period in which to negotiate for relocation.⁷¹⁰ However, most tenants felt unable to take advantage of this opportunity given the high rent prices – which were based upon unverified land valuations – and the RLA's requirement that they build significant and expensive covered parking facilities for non-individual use.⁷¹¹ Negotiations on this front kept some former waterfront tenants out of business for more than five years until agreeable compromise conditions were reached.

V. Post-Urban Renewal Buildings and Plans

Construction and planning did not cease with the completion of Southwest's urban renewal. The redevelopment plan was in effect for forty years, after which time its restrictions no longer influenced construction in the area. Both before and after that time, and continuing through the present, numerous plans and projects have been envisioned and, at times, realized.

New Buildings

Some of the buildings that have been completed or are still in progress have filled in the land that remained undeveloped by the end of the bulk of the urban renewal development, and other projects redeveloped or renovated previously completed urban renewal buildings and sites. This section of the report will briefly identify some of the most significant of these buildings.

Aerospace Building

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Aerospace Building was completed at 370 L'Enfant Promenade/901 D Street in 1987. Jacquelin T. Robertson was the architect in charge of this Cooper, Robertson + Partners project.⁷¹² The Southwest Bus Terminal was previously constructed on this site during urban renewal. The GSA leases this entire ten-story, 205,102 square foot building today.⁷¹³ Occupants include NASA and the Department of Health and Human Services.

⁷⁰⁹ John R. Immer, "Statement of John R. Immer, President of the Federation of Citizens Associations of the District of Columbia," in United States. Congress. House. Committee on the District of Columbia, 2292.

⁷¹⁰ "Washington Channel Waterfront," in United States. Congress. House. Committee on the District of Columbia, 2427.

⁷¹¹ *Ibid.*, 2452, 2458.

⁷¹² Weeks, 276.

⁷¹³ "General Services Administration (GSA) Inventory of Owned and Leased Properties."

The Portals

The Portals is an ongoing mixed-use project located on a site in the northeast corner of the Southwest urban renewal area, between Fourteenth, Twelfth, and D streets and Maine Avenue. Encompassing six buildings, built over multiple phases, project completion is expected in 2010. To date, four buildings have been completed, including three office towers by architect Arthur Cotton Moore and the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, designed by Brennan Beer Gorman Monk Architects.⁷¹⁴ Occupants of the office buildings include both government and private groups. The project's developer, Republic Properties Corporation, calls the Portals "the last major urban renewal project to be constructed on sites in southwest Washington, D.C." Other groups involved in this public-private partnership include The Commission of Fine Arts, the NCPC, and the D.C. City Council.⁷¹⁵

This site was termed the Portal Site during redevelopment because it offers the first close-up glimpse of Washington as a visitor approaches from the south.⁷¹⁶ Its large area and prominent location made it particularly important to redevelopment planning. Although proposals were received in 1981 for mixed-use development of the site, construction stalled during the 1990s. When the site is completed, it will mark the completion of the largest parcel that remained from Southwest's urban renewal.⁷¹⁷

Capital Square Townhomes

Capital Square Townhomes, located at Ninth and G streets, is the most recently completed residential development in Southwest. Although the three-four story structures are somewhat similar in scale to their easterly neighbors, the townhouses of Town Square, their suburban appearance represents a stark contrast to the aesthetics of its neighbors. Also unlike its neighbors, the complex lacks any high-rise component, and it substitutes parking spaces for central, shared residential squares.

The site on which the townhouses are located – Parcel seventy-six – was originally intended as the location for a rebuilt parish school for nearby St. Dominic's R.C. Church. In 1972, when the church determined that its parish demographics could no longer support a school, it relinquished the site, and the RLA recommended that it be used instead for the construction of low-income housing.⁷¹⁸ Although the City Council approved this modification, nearby residents opposed this new construction and pursued legal action that stalled progress for years. During this time, the site served as a parking lot for employees of the nearby Federal buildings. When

⁷¹⁴ Benjamin Forgey, "Mandarin Hotel Steps Into the Past," *Washington Post*, 15 May 2004, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A28440-2004May14.html>.

⁷¹⁵ "The Portals," *Republic Properties Corporation Home Page*, http://www.republicpropertiescorp.com/the_portals.htm, accessed 27 July 2004.

⁷¹⁶ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 24.

⁷¹⁷ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1981, 20.

⁷¹⁸ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1972, 10.

the urban renewal plan's time frame finally ended, in 2000, plans were made to pursue these luxury townhomes instead.⁷¹⁹

The Residences at Potomac Place

The Residences at Potomac Place is a major ongoing residential construction project. These two high-rise buildings, to be located at 350 G Street and 355 Eye Street, are infill development to the Capitol Park complex.⁷²⁰ Considerable resident opposition erupted in response to developers' plans to erect these buildings in place of the previously existing landscaped open space between Potomac Place (Capitol Park Apartments) and the townhouses. This space had been a key feature of architect Chloethiel Woodard Smith's and landscape architect Dan Urban Kiley's designs for the community. Although local activists succeeded in landmarking Potomac Place, this designation did not halt the new construction that was already in progress.

Other New Buildings

Potomac Center is another project under development west of L'Enfant Plaza. This two-building office complex is located at 500 and 550 Twelfth Street. The south building has already been completed, and HUD and the Department of Education occupy it. This complex replaced the 500 Twelfth Street Building that was built there during urban renewal.

In the central area of Southwest, north of the railroad tracks, several commercial buildings have gone up. The Capitol Gallery Complex, at 600 Maryland Avenue, today houses the American Nurses Association, among other organizations. This site was formerly a transportation square. Federal Center Plaza, located at 500 C Street, and Federal Center II, located at 400 C Street, today house the U.S. Department of Homeland Security offices as well as the Holiday Inn Capitol. The pre-renewal District Grocery Stores formerly occupied this spot.⁷²¹

The Washington Design Center is located further south along the railroad tracks, at 300 D Street. Built in 1919 as a refrigerated warehouse, it was converted in 1983 by Keyes Condon Florance into space for an interior furnishings marketplace. In addition to the original brick structure, the architects appended a glass-sheathed addition.⁷²²

Patriot's Plaza is located across the train tracks from the Washington Design Center, at 395 E Street. This commercial office building is currently under construction, with an opening planned for early 2005. Another high-rise building is also under construction to the east of

⁷¹⁹ Moran, 53.

⁷²⁰ *The Residences at Potomac Place Home Page*, <http://www.potomacplacecondo.com>, accessed 6 August 2004.

⁷²¹ *Insurance Maps of Washington*, 205.

⁷²² Weeks, 277; *Washington Design Center Home Page*, <http://www.mmart.com/dcdesigncenter/overview.html>, accessed 27 July 2004.

Patriot's Plaza. These two buildings, plus any construction in between will fill the previously vacant plot bounded by Fourth, Third, and E streets and the railroad tracks.

As previously discussed, much of the commercial construction that was erected during urban renewal in the triangle between Seventh Avenue, F Street and the railroad tracks has now been replaced. Some of the major new construction includes the office of the U.S. Social Security Administration and U.S. International Trade Commission at 500 E Street, One and Two Independence Square on E Street, and the office building at 400 Virginia Avenue.

South of the railroad tracks, the U.S. Department of Agriculture occupies the Waterfront Center, which was completed in 1986 at 800 Ninth Street, on the corner of Ninth Street and Maine Avenue.⁷²³ This site was vacant prior to the building's construction. The GSA currently leases this building from Guardian Realty Investors.

New Plans

Most of the current plans for Southwest aim to correct the unsuccessful aspects of South West urban renewal, which generally encompasses the three major commercial project's in the Zeckendorf Plan: the waterfront, the Town Center/Waterside Mall, and L'Enfant Plaza and Promenade. The fourth of the current plans for Southwest focuses on a largely ignored portion of the urban renewal area – South Capitol Street. Between these four potential projects, the District and private developers have visions of yet another grand redesign of Southwest.

Waterfront

Anacostia Waterfront Initiative

The Anacostia Waterfront Initiative is a massive development plan focused on revitalizing the coastal and near-coastal areas of Southwest, Southeast, and Northeast Washington, D.C., bordering on the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers. In 1999, the Southwest was identified as one of the target areas of the initiative.⁷²⁴ In October 2002, with the help of the National Capital Revitalization Corporation (NCRC) and the D.C. Office of Planning, a development plan was approved,⁷²⁵ and implementation is on-going.

In the Southwest, the RLA Revitalization Corporation, the NCRC, and the District own most of the waterfront property, creating a unique opportunity for enabling this redevelopment.

⁷²³ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1986, 10.

⁷²⁴ Hamilton, Rabinovitz & Alschuler, Inc., Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners LLP, Greenberg Consultants, Inc., *Development Plan & AWI Vision for The Southwest Waterfront: Draft. Prepared for National Capital Revitalization Corporation, District of Columbia Office of Planning, Anthony A. Williams, Mayor* ([Washington, D.C.]: n.p., 6 February 2003), http://www.ncrcdc.com/docs/sw_waterfront_planning_report/report-chpt2.pdf, accessed 27 July 2004, 1-1.

⁷²⁵ *Ibid.*, 2-7.

Planners have identified several issues along the Southwest waterfront. First, despite the efforts of urban renewal, the area is still cut off from the rest of the city by the Southwest Expressway, and Water Street and the lack of a connection with L'Enfant Plaza further separate it from the rest of the quadrant. Second, the abundance of pavement and hard surfaces currently in the area creates adverse environmental conditions, such as a lack of drainage, shade, and vegetation. Finally, the abundance of traffic along Maine Avenue and Water Street creates a congested, polluted, and potentially dangerous environment along the waterfront.⁷²⁶

The AWI seeks to remedy these issues and create a new "face on the water" in Southwest for the use of tourists and residents alike through the pursuit of five themes: a clean and active river, eliminating barriers and gaining access, a great urban riverfront park system, cultural destinations of distinct character, and building strong waterfront neighborhoods.⁷²⁷

The plan suggests that meeting these themes will require several key physical changes to the waterfront, significantly altering the character established there by urban renewal several decades ago. In terms of alterations to the urban renewal plan, the most significant of these proposed changes include the following: eliminate Water Street; make Maine Avenue more pedestrian-friendly; widen the Waterfront Promenade as a pedestrian route; create two key squares along the promenade – an urban and commercial Market Square at the north, and a green Civic Park at the south; develop six 6-12 story mixed used structures along the waterfront, incorporating 770-825 residential units, a hotel, 317,000 square feet of retail and office space, and 200,000 square feet for cultural/community functions; and, move parking inside and below the proposed buildings.⁷²⁸

If realized, this plan would dramatically alter the waterfront's current sleepy character. It would likely result in the loss of several of the existing waterfront parks, the modification or demolition of the existing low-rise structures, the re-organization and reconstruction of existing piers, and the elimination of unimpeded channel views from nearby housing.

Earlier Proposals

This dramatic plan is just one in a progression of post-renewal proposals for revitalizing the waterfront. In 1982, for example, the Waterfront Task Force of the private, non-profit organization, the Federal City Council, developed its own recommendations for taking better advantage of Washington, D.C.'s waterfront. Like those that would follow it, the FCC's report criticized the barrier-like Water Street and Maine Avenue, the lack of a cohesive connection between waterfront sites, and the absence of public activity around the area.⁷²⁹ Its proposal to remedy this situation revolved primarily around the construction of an International Center – complete with housing, community sites, and offices – in the area of the Tenth Street Overlook, Water Street, and Jefferson Junior High School in order to increase density and levels of activity

⁷²⁶ Ibid., 3-7.

⁷²⁷ Ibid., 1-3.

⁷²⁸ Ibid., 2-3 - 2-4.

⁷²⁹ Federal City Council, Washington, D.C. *Report of the Waterfront Task Force of the Federal City Council* ([Washington, D.C.]: Waterfront Task Force, 22 February 1982), 2, 7-9.

in the area.⁷³⁰ In addition, it advocated incorporating Banneker Overlook into a new complex and constructing a bridge between the Overlook and the waterfront, minimizing the width of Water Street, redeveloping the Jefferson Junior High School site if and when it becomes available, and adding additional restaurants along the waterfront.⁷³¹

One year later, in 1983, the Federal City Council commissioned an external study of design concepts for the waterfront. The impetus for this study was to prepare for the impending arrival of the International Cultural and Trade Center, which many believed would bring new life to Southwest.⁷³² The issues raised in this study echoed those of the previous year's FCC report. In response, it offered several solutions. These included building a pedestrian bridge across the channel, moving and expanding the Fish Market to a location underneath the bridge, developing a public park on the former site of the Fish Market and Waterfront Park No. 1 to link the International Center to the waterfront, widening and reconfiguring the waterfront promenade, creating gateway parks at the water's edge, adding commercial development, narrowing Water Street, and creating a community, water-level pier at the southern end of the promenade.⁷³³

Later, in 1998, at the request of the Southwest Neighborhood Association upon the impending departure of the Environmental Protection Agency from its offices at Waterside Mall, the Urban Land Institute (ULI) published its own waterfront proposal. Like the AWI, the ULI recommendations similarly advocated adding restaurant and retail space along the waterfront, increasing the pedestrian nature of the area, reorganizing the piers in order to better cluster recreational and commercial use, and adding community boating facilities at the southern end. Although it recommended the addition of new housing throughout the neighborhood, it did not propose placing it along the waterfront specifically. In addition, the proposal envisioned a staircase from Banneker Overlook to the waterfront and a pedestrian bridge between the northern end of the waterfront and East Potomac Park.⁷³⁴

L'Enfant Promenade

Although the AWI is focused on the waterfront, it also encompasses virtually all other major initiatives going on in Southwest – essentially a waterfront neighborhood – as well. Thus, in coordination with the initiative, the District Department of Transportation, along with the Federal Highway Administration, the National Park Service, and the Washington Interdependence Council, recently completed an urban planning study of the L'Enfant Promenade site. Its purpose was to investigate rehabilitation options and ways to improve

⁷³⁰ Ibid., 12.

⁷³¹ Ibid., 12-14.

⁷³² Anderson Notter Finegold, et. al., i.

⁷³³ Ibid., iii – iv.

⁷³⁴ Urban Land Institute, Advisory Services Panel, *Southwest Washington, D.C.: A Strategy for Revitalizing Waterside Mall and the Waterfront* (Washington, D.C.: ULI – The Urban Land Institute, 1998), 16-17, 42-43.

connections with the waterfront and the rest of the Southwest. The study's five guiding principles suggest numerous possibilities for achieving those goals.⁷³⁵

First, the plan advocates improving the pedestrian experience of the promenade through the addition of greenery, such as trees, and infill development. Second, it seeks to realize the promenade's monumental potential for the city, possibly through the addition of monuments or memorials at the Overlook site and at the axial crossing of Maryland Avenue, as well as by eliminating the obstruction of the Forrestal Building. Third, it proposes improved connectivity by possibly bridging I-395, extending Maryland Avenue east, and introducing uses to the Federal building area that would stimulate evening activity. Fourth, the plan envisions the Overlook as a Southwest and Washington, D.C., gateway, potentially through the development of an activity center there, the integration of transportation at the site, and connection of the site with the waterfront. Finally, it seeks to achieve a more urban, rather than Modernist, scale through 'human scale' infill development and active street uses.⁷³⁶

Thus, the plans for L'Enfant Promenade attempt to revitalize the promenade and plaza complex, in part through realization of some of the original, but unaffected elements of the original plan. The elimination of the obstruction of the Forrestal Building, the incorporation of more cultural after-hours and weekend attractions, and the connection of the promenade with the waterfront, are just three such elements that are virtual repetitions of plans articulated during urban renewal days. This time, however, the plans are already taking more concrete shape. For example, Congress has already authorized the Washington Independence Council to build an African American monument or museum on the site. In addition, the Children's Museum, currently located elsewhere in the city, has committed as well to establish its new home in the complex.⁷³⁷ Finally, the momentum of the AWI will likely propel change as well.

Waterside Mall

Waterside Mall has been plagued by troubles ever since it started. It never lived up to the original plans to house about 100 shops, with residential towers flanking its sides, and the site was the subject of redevelopment discussions from before construction even completed. In May 1976, for example, local residents formed the coalition Save Our Mall to pressure the mayor to investigate and solve the mall's difficulties.⁷³⁸ In 1978, Metro announced that it would clean up its construction equipment on the site, Safeway announced expansion plans, and the developer announced plans to finish planned building construction, which had previously been under

⁷³⁵ "L'Enfant Promenade Urban Planning Study," *District Department of Transportation Home Page*, <http://ddot.dc.gov/ddot/cwp/view.a.1249.q.561648.asp>, accessed 27 July 2004.

⁷³⁶ Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc.

⁷³⁷ Debbi Wilgoren and Dana Hedgpeth, "Children's Museum Moving," *Washington Post*, 18 May 2001, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A34539-2004May17?language=printer>, accessed 18 May 2004.

⁷³⁸ Walterene Swanston, "At Waterside Mall, Businesses Are Struggling," *Washington Post*, 30 December 1976, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

question. Despite these gains, however, the complex has never been a thriving community shopping center.⁷³⁹

The most fervent – and likely effectual – activities began once the EPA announced plans to vacate the office space at Waterside Mall. Following that stimulus, the SWNA requested that the Urban Land Institute (ULI) assemble an advisory panel to address possibilities for both the mall and the overall waterfront. Their recommendations significantly influenced Forest City Washington, Kaempfer Company, and Bresler and Reiner, Inc.'s current Waterfront (the trio's new name for Waterside Mall) redevelopment plans.

Having surveyed current usage of Waterside Mall, ULI learned that several businesses were thriving at the time, although others were struggling (a Roy Rogers fast-food restaurant recently closed). The lack of customers was due to several factors, most of which have characterized the mall since it originally opened in the 1970s: an unwillingness to park in the underground garage, a lack of useful services for residents, and the complex's rundown and unattractive appearance. Still, residents found the merchandise to be reasonably priced and of good quality, they appreciated the center's convenience, and there were not many other local options available.⁷⁴⁰

In response to its findings, ULI reached several conclusions. First, it recommended "a plan that will reintroduce the traditional street grid to the neighborhood by reconnecting Fourth Street."⁷⁴¹ The Institute argued that a new Main Street-oriented center would actually increase leasable space, encourage neighborhood-scale tenants, and improve both pedestrian and vehicular circulation. Second, ULI recommended reconfiguring the office tower for leasing by multiple tenants, rather than one single agency or firm. These tenants might include high-tech businesses or an assisted living facility, among others.⁷⁴²

In October 2001, D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams announced plans to redevelop Waterside Mall – in conjunction with developers Forest City Enterprises, Kaempfer Co., and Bresler and Reiner – by reopening Fourth Street to pedestrian and vehicular traffic and turning the mall structure into "smaller, more attractive components."⁷⁴³ The project received significant support when, in March 2003, the D.C. Department of Transportation issued a transportation study of the site which concluded that, "because of improved levels of service, reduced delay and queue lengths, and reduced traffic on local residential streets, the Study Team recommends that 4th

⁷³⁹ William H. Jones, "Safeway to Expand Here," *Washington Post*, 20 June 1978, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; William H. Jones, "Waterside Mall Impasse Broken," *Washington Post*, 20 June 1978, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

⁷⁴⁰ Urban Land Institute, *Southwest Washington, D.C.*, 23.

⁷⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁷⁴² *Ibid.*, 15.

⁷⁴³ Debbi Wilgoren, "District Plans to Redevelop Mall in SW," *Washington Post*, 25 October 2001, ProQuest.

Street be connected between I and M Streets and that this connection be made available to vehicles.”⁷⁴⁴

The planned Waterfront adaptive reuse project will realize this infrastructural objective and create 2 million square feet of office space, 100,000 square feet of retail space, and 400,000 square feet of residential space, where today only 1,150,000 square feet of office and retail space exist. The developers intend for the tenants of this new space to include restaurants and other community- and business-oriented retailers.⁷⁴⁵ Most significantly, with the agreement by Fannie Mae to move to the now-vacant office space, the developers have already secured a major tenant for the project.⁷⁴⁶

South Capitol Street

The Anacostia Waterfront Initiative also includes proposals for improvement to South Capitol Street, the eastern border of the Southwest Urban Renewal Area and a major thoroughfare leading from the Southeast and Southwest quadrants to the city center.

In November 2003, the D.C. Department of Transportation published the *South Capitol Street Gateway and Improvement Study*, outlining potential proposals for improving the area. In establishing the context for why such improvement was necessary, the report reiterates many of the same points that were given when rationalizing the symbolic need for Southwest’s urban renewal half a century ago. Next to a photograph of the Capitol dome, obscured by elevated roadways, the authors of the report wrote:

Washington, D.C. represents the physical manifestation of America’s democratic ideals. The Capitol, the White House, the Washington Monument, and the city’s memorials connected by a tree-lined network of streets and parks present iconic images of the nation’s political aspirations. These magnificent symbols are particularly powerful when perceived from a distance, as they dominate the skyline and the city surrounding them.

There are vistas in the nation’s capital that present a very different image. The current view up South Capitol Street shows the Capitol dome obscured by a tangle of freeway and railroad overpasses. The street itself is a ragged thoroughfare lined intermittently with gas stations, fast-food restaurants, and vacant lots. A few distressed trees along the corridor are the only hints of green along narrow sidewalks. The state of South Capitol

⁷⁴⁴ D.C. Department of Transportation, “Fourth Street Transportation Study,” <http://www.ddot.dc.gov/ddot/cwp/view,a.1249,q.561151.asp>, accessed 9 August 2004.

⁷⁴⁵ *Waterfront Web Site*, <http://waterfrontdc.com/project.htm>, accessed 9 August 2004.

⁷⁴⁶ Dana Hedgpeth, “Fannie to Lease on Waterfront,” *Washington Post*, 28 April 2004, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A48142-2004Apr27.html>, accessed 26 May 2004.

Street eclipses the U.S. Capitol's significance as Washington's most prominent building and undercuts its symbolic importance to the nation.⁷⁴⁷

The redevelopment efforts at South Capitol Street seek to accomplish several goals. These include creating a grand and ceremonial gateway that connects the area physically and aesthetically with Washington's Monumental Core; developing a transportation system that encourages growth in retail, housing, and employment in the area; linking South Capitol Street to the waterfront; and, ensuring the street's ability to serve the nation's homeland and national security needs as an evacuation route.⁷⁴⁸

The major implications of the overall South Capitol Street initiatives for the Southwest portion of the site are that much of the vacant and underutilized properties west of South Capitol Street would likely be filled and or redeveloped with more functional, mixed use development. Moreover, pedestrian-oriented establishments might replace the automobile-oriented fast-food restaurants and gas stations that currently line the roadway, and more residential and community-oriented uses might replace warehouses and industrial facilities further inland. In addition, the South Capitol Street roadway may be widened to incorporate park space and/or wider walkways along its length. Finally, M Street might be rebranded to take on a more significant role as an east-west connector, perhaps incorporating a light-rail circulator between Waterside Mall and Southeast.⁷⁴⁹

VI. Successes and Failures

Impacts of Urban Renewal

Southwest's urban renewal has been the subject of numerous appraisals on various dimensions of the process – ranging from architectural style to administration and relocation procedures. While some herald the pioneering accomplishments of urban renewal in Southwest, particularly in light of limited experiences to date in that field, others lament the destruction of the previous poor, but vibrant, community. In reality, however, there have been both successes and failures along just about every one of the dimensions that the project can be assessed.

Architectural/Urban Design Impact

From an architectural perspective, the project achieved numerous accolades. In December 1965, for example, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) awarded the Southwest

⁷⁴⁷ District of Columbia. Department of Transportation, *The South Capitol Gateway and Corridor Improvement Study; Final Report* ([Washington, D.C.]: n.p., 4 November 2003), <http://ddot.dc.gov/ddot/cwp/view.a.1247.q.560731.asp>, accessed 8 August 2004, 3.

⁷⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷⁴⁹ U.S. NCPC, *South Capitol Street Urban Design Study* ([Washington, D.C.]: n.p., January 2003), http://www.ncpc.gov/planning_init/s_capitol/s_capitol_st.html, accessed 9 August 2004; Urban Land Institute, *South Capitol Street Corridor, Washington, D.C.* (Washington, D.C.: ULI – the Urban Land Institute, 2004), 15, 28.

Urban Renewal Area the first Citation for Excellence in Community Architecture.⁷⁵⁰ Individual residential and community projects also garnered awards as well.

These awards were not purely accidental, as the RLA hired nationally renowned architects for many of the plans and projects and employed several additional tactics in order to actively pursue high quality architectural design. Three specific tactics the RLA cited include: developing site plans for portions of the area, with the aim of visualizing building massing, separations, and the flow of air and light; selling or leasing particular building sites through design competitions (which only occurred later in the process); and engaging an Architectural Advisory Panel to assist architects and developers in coordinating materials, scale, and building orientation between projects.⁷⁵¹ In terms of architectural landscaping, the RLA also noted that it tried to save as many of the old trees as possible and planned to plant many new ones as well.⁷⁵²

Federal Urban Renewal Commissioner William Slayton best expressed the urban design philosophy in Southwest when he stated in a speech, "We ought not to continue to build the same thing we have been building over and over again. We ought to try some new ideas, some new relationships between buildings, some other types of units – all sorts of different ideas for urban living."⁷⁵³ The Southwest urban renewal area was certainly an extreme example of one such trial.

Individuals have also offered criticism of the individual components of the project. Where appropriate in this document, such critiques have been included alongside specific building and site descriptions. In addition, however, more general appraisals were also made. Some of these appraisals came from Wolf von Eckardt, who critiqued the renewal of Southwest Washington, D.C., in numerous columns in the *Washington Post*, as well as in a chapter in his book, *A Place to Live*. Von Eckardt lauded several features of the project, including the "remarkably handsome new housing projects" that were "honestly modern without touting their modernity to the detriment of popular appeal" and the "happy mixture of low town houses and tall apartment buildings," in contrast to what previous designers might have turned into "vast, useless, and dull space."⁷⁵⁴

At the same time, however, von Eckardt noted numerous architectural failings as well. He called the Southwest's haphazard mixture of architectural styles "incoherent," and he particularly criticized the churches and schools as exhibiting architecture ranging "from the merely undistinguished to the outright bad." He also noted the failure of planning to provide the facilities and structure necessary to make Southwest either part of the city or a self-contained neighborhood of its own. Despite all of its successes, then, von Eckardt lamented the fact that "with a little more insight and political daring, [Southwest] might so easily have become a

⁷⁵⁰ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1966, 3.

⁷⁵¹ D.C. RLA, "The Architecture of the Southwest Urban Renewal Area."

⁷⁵² D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1961, 26.

⁷⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵⁴ Von Eckardt, *A Place to Live*, 301-306.

sophisticated new district to help make Washington the cosmopolitan world capital it deserves to be.”⁷⁵⁵

Based on the number of redevelopment projects currently planned for Southwest, today’s planners and developers would seem to agree with some of these last of von Eckardt’s criticisms. The city and private developers are planning redevelopment for all of the major commercial areas designed under Zeckendorf’s plan for Project Area C – including L’Enfant Plaza, Waterside Mall, and the waterfront. As if in direct response to the sentiments of von Eckardt, these projects seek to address the neighborhood’s disconnection from the rest of the city, as well as the lack of basic community services for those who live there. The need to redesign these intended monumental sites only decades after their costly completion seems to confirm the inadequacy of their execution, if not their design. It should be noted, however, that most of the plans were not executed as envisioned (particularly at L’Enfant Plaza), making it impossible to determine whether or not the architects’ full-scale plans could have yielded better results.

Although Von Eckardt does not specifically mention the second commercial areas, these too could be added to his list of “undistinguished” structures. Already, much of the property north of the expressway and south of the railroad tracks has been significantly altered – to the extent that it is almost as difficult to discover urban renewal era development in that tract as it is to find the old southwest in the midst of urban renewal residential development. In the second major second commercial area – the property west of South Capitol Street and east of Delaware Avenue – redevelopment has been less significant, but the structures remaining there look underutilized and dilapidated. Thus, the South Capitol Street redevelopment initiatives target revitalization of this area as well.

The residential complexes, then, seem to be some of the only developments to continue to function well today. Although several building owners have diminished living conditions in individual housing complexes, on the whole, these buildings remain popular and functional because of the very attributes that supported their development during urban renewal – their locational desirability (with easy access to the central city and waterfront) and their well-designed spaces. These structures were the subject of some of the most creative of urban renewal era design. Most importantly, however, unlike the equally carefully designed commercial sites, economic cost-cutting and bureaucratic alterations generally did not impede these structures from realizing their architects’ grand visions.

Economic Impact

The economic costs of this dramatic redevelopment project were very high, with the total endeavor costing more than half of a billion dollars. This expenditure was only feasible, however, given two factors – the support of the Federal government, and the partnership with the private sector.

⁷⁵⁵ Ibid., 304-306.

According to urban renewal legislation, the Federal government was to provide two dollars for every one spent by the local municipality. Moreover, the local government's payments could be made with in-kind grants, rather than cash. Examples of such grants in-kind in the Southwest included improvements in and construction of schools, fire stations, a police precinct, highways, water mains, and sewers.⁷⁵⁶ The in-kind grants were so substantial that, by mid-1958, only one small cash payment had been necessary in Southwest.⁷⁵⁷

The other key economic enabler of urban renewal was the significant role of the private sector. The public-private partnership was so substantial that the total costs were split almost fifty-fifty between the two groups. By mid-1972, at the tale end of Southwest's urban renewal, approximately \$41 million in redevelopment projects were still underway and projects worth roughly \$495 million had already been completed. Of the completed construction, \$230 million had come from the government, and private sponsors had provided the remaining \$265 million.⁷⁵⁸

Thus, urban renewal resulted in significant economic drain. Consistent with the economic impetus for renewal, however, these costs were an investment in significant long-term economic gains in increased taxes. For example, by 1971, taxes from the area were almost seven times as high as their \$592,016 intake level of 1953,⁷⁵⁹ and levels only continued to grow from there as further construction was completed. One of the key drivers of increased taxes was the project's ability to lure former suburban residents back to the city. As Von Eckardt has noted, the endeavor succeeded in doing just that,⁷⁶⁰ finding homes for high-priced residential communities on the site of a former slum.

Social Impact

While the economic burdens were carried by a variety of parties – most of whom received substantial return on their investment – the area's poor former residents disproportionately bore the social impacts of urban renewal. When British planner Percy Johnson-Marshall offered his perspective on the project in 1966, he offered three major lessons; the first of these concerned relocation. He noted most emphatically that former residents had not all been justly served by relocation, and they must be.⁷⁶¹ Robert Howes also echoed Johnson-Marshall's criticism in his separate study of the people who had been left behind during relocation.

⁷⁵⁶ District of Columbia Board of Commissioners, *State of the Nation's Capital: A Report to the Congress from The Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia* ([Washington, D.C.], n.p., 1959), Albert J. Headley, Jr. Papers, 7-7.

⁷⁵⁷ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1958, 14.

⁷⁵⁸ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1972, 14.

⁷⁵⁹ D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1970, 27; D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1971, 20.

⁷⁶⁰ Von Eckardt, *A Place to Live*, 301-306; Wolf von Eckardt, "New Southwest a Bundle of Boons," *Washington Post*, 30 October 1962.

⁷⁶¹ Percy Johnson-Marshall, "The Shapes of the New Southwest," *Architectural Forum* 125 (July - August 1966), 66.

Even if all of the Southwest's former residents had been adequately rehoused (and it should be noted that the vast majority of residents who took advantage of relocation services most definitely did receive adequate rehousing), however, the executioners of Southwest's urban renewal would not have achieved complete success from a social perspective. Regardless of the poor physical conditions of the old Southwest, there is little disagreement that the area had a vibrant and close-knit community. When the residents were wrenched out of their neighborhood and scattered in disparate homes all around the District, that community largely disappeared. As Daniel Thursz has noted, the emotional and social impacts of this wrenching were significant, leading him to recommend that relocation be avoided as much as possible in all future urban renewal efforts. What makes this story all the worse, however, is that the residents were originally told that they would be able to return to Southwest; by and large, that promise was not fulfilled.

The flip side of this story of broken community is the equally strong sense of community that has developed in the new Southwest. Von Eckardt called this the "encouraging community spirit" that renewal and the return of the middle class brought to the area.⁷⁶² This sense of community is evident in the activism of many of the Southwest's residents, in the annual festivals that are held there, and just the friendly hellos of passersby on the street. More formally, it is also evident in the community's institutions. One of the major such institutions that formed in this new neighborhood was the Southwest Neighborhood Assembly (SWNA). Formed in spring 1963, the assembly replaced the previously racially divided neighborhood organizations in order to join residents in a single grass-roots citizens' group. Since its founding, the SWNA continues to play an active role in representing the voice of the Southwest community.⁷⁶³

While the SWNA seeks to unite all of Southwest's residents – from public housing to luxury high rises – these disparate groups have never, and still do not, live together in perfect harmony. Thus, the extreme socioeconomic range of this small geographic area seems to be another of the social errors committed in the planning of Southwest's urban renewal. This error continues to plague the area today as housing developments debate whether to fence themselves off in order to prevent vandalism, or to continue to attempt to create an open community where citizens of all socioeconomic levels can coexist side-by-side. As in the case of the world-class community centers planned for Southwest, the idealism under which planners and government officials operated in locating the extreme haves and the extreme have-nots side by side in this tiny District quadrant did not play out as neatly in practice as it sounded in design.

What Will Be Lost

Just as twenty-first century redevelopment offers the opportunity to correct some of the failings of Southwest's urban renewal, it also brings with it the risk of destroying the physical fabric and history of much that was built during the momentous period of the late 1950s through

⁷⁶² Von Eckardt, *A Place to Live*, 301-306.

⁷⁶³ SCC and SWNA, 22.

early 1970s. Even with those impending potential losses, however, the scale of urban renewal development was such that the area will still continue to serve as a living museum of Modernism in Washington, D.C., even when the latest construction equipment is silenced. Moreover, as wholesale demolition is no longer the policy of urban redevelopment, it is safe to assume that a vast portion of the development and sense of the area will remain.

In light of the pending plans – both private and public – this document closes with a consolidated list of the buildings and sites that currently appear as though they may potentially be eliminated, changed, or added in the former Southwest Urban Renewal Area in the near future. While change marks the end of one planning era, this redevelopment is ultimately consistent with the history of the area, which, perhaps more than any other area in Washington, D.C., has been characterized by a lengthy and continuous cycle of destruction and rebuilding during the Southwest's entire lifetime.

Initiatives / Sites	Eliminate	Change	Add
Waterfront (SW Waterfront Plan component of Anacostia Waterfront Initiative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waterfront promenade • Waterfront parks • St. Augustine's Church • Locations of marinas and piers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hi-rise mixed use structures along waterfront, including 750 units of housing • Two plazas • Museum / Memorial
Waterside Mall / Fourth Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Center parks • Town Center churches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut Waterside Mall in two • Reopen Fourth Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller scale, mixed-use structures on Fourth Street • New office buildings?
L'Enfant Promenade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forrestal Building obstruction (cut in two) • Banneker Overlook Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrianize • Connect Maryland Avenue • Connect Overlook to waterfront 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air rights development over I-395 • Memorials • Museum (Children's, African American) • ML Baseball stadium • Visitor/Parking center
South Capitol Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underutilized facilities between South Capitol Street and Delaware Avenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn M Street into a major throughway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light rail along M Street • Park and public space, potentially housing • Monument or memorial
Potomac Place (Capitol Park)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban park / open space • Pavilion • Reflecting pool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocate mural to H Street corridor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two new high-rises (the Residences at Potomac Place)
Friendship Baptist Church (former)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convert to office space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condominiums

VII. Sources of Information

Architectural Drawings:

Given the large scale of the project, no architectural drawings for the individual buildings have been used. However, many drawings do exist. Some are held at the Library of Congress, and others are in archives related to the specific architects. The urban renewal plans included many land use and other planning drawings. These have been heavily used in preparing this report. As these are part of the overall plan, rather than separate individual drawings, they have been included in the primary source information.

Early Views:

The *Joseph Owen Curtis Photograph Collection, 1910-1989*, contained in the archives of the Washingtoniana Division of the Martin Luther King branch of the D.C. Public Library, includes many photographs of Southwest before, during, and after urban renewal. These have been surveyed in brief, but none have been included in this report.

Interviews:

Francesca Ammon, Group interview with Jim Banks (former relocation officer and former post-renewal resident of Southwest), Margaret Feldman (current River Park resident and former president of the SWNA), Fred Jordan (Former board member of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City and current River Park resident), Ron McBee (current Capitol Park resident), Keith Melder (historian), and Richard Westbrook (Southwest photographer, former Southwest ANC representative, current Town Square resident), River Park, 1301 Delaware Avenue SW, Washington, D.C., 24 June 2004.

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The bibliography identifies the appropriate repository for many of the primary and secondary sources. The following is a key to the abbreviations:

AIA = Library of the American Institute of Architects, Washington, D.C.

City Museum = Kiplinger Research Library at the City Museum, Washington, D.C.

D.C. HPO = D.C. Historic Preservation Office, Washington, D.C.

LC = Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

MLK = Martin Luther King Memorial Library, Washington, D.C.

SW = Southwest Branch Library, Washington, D.C.

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Supplemental Material

Summary

Summary of New Buildings and Sites of Southwest's Urban Renewal

Context

Redevelopment Survey and Project Areas in Relation to Principal Problem Areas (1952)
Source: U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Project Area B*, Plate 6.

District of Columbia, Location of Southwest Area (1952)
Source: Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Plate 1.

Conditions in the Old Southwest

Existing Land Use (1950)
Source: U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Project Area B*, Plate 7.

Conditions of Dwellings (1950)

Source: U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Project Area C*, Plate 10.

Assessed values of Land and Improvements (1950)

Source: U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Project Area B*, Plate 17.

Quality of Housing (1952)

Source: U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Project Area B*, Plate 15.

Existing Community Facilities (1956)

Source: U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Project Area C*, Plate 13.

Redevelopment Proposals

Peets Proposal: Redevelopment Plan for the Southwest Survey Area: Land Use Plan (1952)

Source: U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Project Area C*, Plate 1.

Justement-Smith Plan: Site Plan Illustrating an Application of the survey Area Plan of the Southwest Redevelopment Area (1952)

Source: U.S. NCPC, *Redevelopment Plan . . . Project Area B*, Plate 18.

Goodwillie War Housing Proposal: Proposed Redevelopment in Southwest Washington (1942)

Source: Goodwillie.

Project Areas

Land Use Plan for Redevelopment of Project Area B (1959 Update to 1952 Plan)

Source: U.S. NCPC, "Specifications," *Redevelopment Plan for Southwest Redevelopment Project Area B* (Washington, D.C.: n.p., May 1959), Albert J. Headley, Jr. Papers.

Land Use Plan for Project Area C (1956)

Source: U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Project Area C*, Plate 3.

Land Use Plan, Southwest Urban Renewal Project Area C-1 (1956)

Source: U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Project Area C*, Plate 7.

Entire Project Area Land Use Plans

Land Use Plan for Southwest Urban Renewal Area (1956)

Source: U.S. NCPC, *Urban Renewal Plan . . . Project Area C*, Plate 2.

Southwest Project Areas (1957)

Source: D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1957, 5.

Proposed Zeckendorf Plan (1959)

Source: D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1959, 11.

Southwest Urban Renewal Area Boundaries and Major Roadways (1968)

Source: D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1968, 4.

Southwest Development Maps

Guide to the New Southwest (1962)

Source: D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1962, 16-17.

The New Southwest (1963)

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The New Southwest (1969)

Source: D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1969, 20-21.

The New Southwest (1970)

Source: D.C. RLA, *Annual Report*, 1970, 20-21.

Summary of New Buildings and Sites of Southwest's Urban Renewal

	<u>Location</u>	<u>Architect</u>	<u>Completed</u>
Residential			
Capitol Park			
Potomac Place (Capitol Park Apartments)	800 Fourth St.	Satterlee & Smith	1959
Capitol Park Towers	301 G St.	Chloethiel Woodard Smith & Ass.	1962
Capitol Park Twin Towers	101 and 103 G St.	Chloethiel Woodard Smith & Ass.	1963
Capitol Park Plaza	201 Eye St.	Chloethiel Woodard Smith & Ass.	1965
Capitol Park II (townhouses)	Third St., between G and I streets	Chloethiel Woodard Smith & Ass.	1960-61
Capitol Park IV (townhouses)	741 Delaware Ave.	Chloethiel Woodard Smith & Ass.	1963?
Town Center Plaza		I.M. Pei & Partners	
Town Center Plaza East	1001 - 1101 Third St.	I.M. Pei & Partners	1961
Marina View Towers (T.C.P. West)	1000 - 1100 Sixth St.	I.M. Pei & Partners	1962
River Park	1301 Delaware Ave.	Charles M. Goodman Architects	1963
Tiber Island	429 N St.	Keyes, Lethbridge & Condon	1965
Carrollsborg Square	1250 Fourth St.	Keyes, Lethbridge & Condon	1965
Harbour Square	500 N St.	Chloethiel Woodard Smith & Ass.	1966
Chalk House West (former name)		Lapidus, Harle & Liebman	1966
Riverside (J. Finley House)	1425 Fourth St.		
Edgewater	410 O St.		
1401-1415 Fourth St.	1401-1415 Fourth St.		
Town Square	700 Seventh St. (tower) 610 H St. (townhouses)	Cohen-Haft Associates Macomber and Peter	1967 1965+
Waterside Towers (Trilon Plaza)	907 Sixth St.	Chloethiel Woodard Smith & Ass.	1970
Channel Square	325 P St.	Harry Weese & Associates	1968-69
St. James Mutual Homes (rehabilitated)	210 O St.	Albert I. Cassell (orig. architect)	1967

Location

Architect

Completed

Community

<u>Schools</u>			
Amidon Elementary School	401 Eye St.	Lublin, McGaughy and Assoc.	1960
Hawthorne School/SEU	501 Eye St.	Charles M. Goodman Associates	1964
<u>Churches</u>			
St. Dominic's R.C. Church Priory	630 E St.	Thomas H. Locraft and Associates	1962
Christ Methodist Church	900 Fourth St.	A. Hensel Fink	1963
Bethel Pentecostal Tabernacle	60 Eye St.	Eimer Cappelman	1963
St. Matthews Lutheran Church	222 M St.	Milton Prassas	1964
Westminster United Presbyterian Church	400 Eye St.	Harry E. Wagoner	1965
Friendship Baptist Church (new)	900 Delaware Ave.	Vaughn, Ferguson and Woodson	1965
St. Augustine's Episcopal Church	600 M St.		1965-66
Riverside Baptist Church	680 Eye St.	Ward and Hall	1968
Southwest Public Library	900 Wesley Place	Clas & Riggs	1965
<u>Parks and Recreation Areas</u>			
Randall Recreation Center	S. Capitol and Eye streets		
Town Center Parks	Sixth and Eye streets Fourth and Eye streets Third and Eye streets	Wallace, McHarg, Roberts & Todd	1972
Waterside Parks	Waterfront	Sasaki, Dawson & DeMay	1972
Lansburgh Neighborhood Park	Delaware Avenue, L Street		
Arena Stage/Kreeger Theater	1101 Sixth St.	Harry Weese & Associates	1961/1970

	<u>Location</u>	<u>Architect</u>	<u>Completed</u>
Commercial			
Tenth St. Mall		I.M. Pei and Partners (plan)	1960-73
Banneker Overlook		Dan Urban Kiley	1968?
L'Enfant Plaza		I.M. Pei and Partners (plan)	1960-73
Astral Building (north)	955 L'Enfant Plaza	Araldo A. Cossutta (I.M. Pei & Ptn)	1968
Comsat Building (south)	950 L'Enfant Plaza	Araldo A. Cossutta (I.M. Pei & Ptn)	1968
Loew's L'Enfant Plaza Hotel	470-490 L'Enfant Plaza	Vlastimil Koubek	1973
L'Enfant Plaza West (USPS)	475 L'Enfant Plaza	Vlastimil Koubek	1971
Town Center	401 M St.	I.M. Pei & Partners	1961
Waterside Mall		Chloethiel Woodard Smith & Associates	1972
Waterfront			
Zanzibar on the Waterfront	700 Water St.		early 1970s
Hogate's/H ₂ O	800 Water St.		1972
Phillips Flagship	900 Water St.		1972
Gangplank Marina	600 Water St.		ca. 1973
Channel Inn Hotel	650 Water St.		1973
Capital Yacht Club	1000 Water St.		1973
North of Expressway, South of Railroad			
Southwest Market Center (gone)	E St., between Fourth and Second streets	Edmund W. Dreyfus and Associates	1959
American Road Builders Building	525 School St.	Mills, Petticord & Mills	1965
Coffey-Smith Associates Building / Child and Family Services Bureau	400 Sixth St.		1960s
Smith-Corona Marchant, Inc. Office Bldg. (gone)		Wendell B. Hallett	1960s
Capital Film Laboratories (gone)	470 E St.	Wendell B. Hallett	1960s

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Otis Elevator Building (gone)	465 School St		1960s
	<u>Location</u>	<u>Architect</u>	<u>Completed</u>

Commercial (continued)

West of South Capitol Street			
Bernstein Neighborhood Center / Virginia Williams Family Resource Center	25 M St.		1965
Best Western Capitol Skyline Hotel	10 Eye St.	Lapidus, Harle & Liebman	1962-63
Health & Welfare Council Building / United Way of the National Capital Area	95 M St.		
West of Tenth Street			
500 Twelfth St. Associates Building (gone)	500 Twelfth St.		1967-68

Government

Federal Office Building (FOB) No. 6 (NASA and HEW, now Department of Education)	400 Maryland Ave.	Chatelaine, Gauger & Nolen Faulkner, Kinsbury & Stenhouse	1961
FOB No. 10a (FAA)	800 Independence Ave.	Holabird and Root Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen	1963
FOB No. 10b (NASA, now FAA)	600 Independence Ave.	Holabird and Root Carroll, Grisdale & Van Alen	ca. 1963
FOB No. 8 (FDA)	200 C St.	Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johanson	1965
Reporters Building (private)	300 Seventh St.	Vosbeck, Ward and Associates	ca. 1965
Robert C. Weaver Federal Building (HUD)	451 Seventh St.	Marcel Breuer	1968
FOB No. 5/James Forrestal Building (DOE)	1000 Independence Ave.	Curtis & Davis	1969
David Nassif Building (private) (U.S. Dept. of Transportation Building)	400 Seventh St.	Edward Durrell Stone	1969
Hubert H. Humphrey Building (HHS)	200 Independence Avenue	Marcel Breuer, Herbert Beckhard	1976