

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Suter Properties

other names _____

2. Location

street & number 511, 521 G Street NW not for publication

city or town Washington vicinity

state DC code _____ county _____ code _____ zip code 20001

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

Determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Comment [LP1]: DO NOT DELETE! THIS IS A SECTION BREAK.

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2		Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

NA

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

511 G - DOMESTIC/single-dwelling

521 G - COMMERCIAL/TRADE/business

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

511 G - COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

521 G - COMMERCIAL/TRADE/business

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

511 G - Early Republic/Federal/Vernacular

521 G - Mid-19th Century/Federal/Commercial

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

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Description Summary:

521 G Street NW is a three-story three-bay stuccoed building at the corner of 6th and G Streets NW. A two-story two-bay structure facing G Street is attached to the east elevation of this corner building; its front elevation is recessed slightly back from the building line of 521 G Street.

511 G Street NW is a two-story three-bay structure covered with permastone, a fake stone cladding, on the façade and with stucco on the east elevation, the only visible side elevation.

The original first story of both of the three-bay structures has been removed, replaced with a modern storefront that extends out a foot or so from the building line. On G Street, this storefront connects the first story of 521 G Street with the corner of 511 G Street, extending across the space between the two buildings, and in front of the two-story structure attached to 521 G Street, as a separate one-story block. This storefront extension, which required the removal of the original first floors, comprises a continuous horizontal band of aluminum-framed shop windows above a low brick half-wall. The first floor of 511 G Street has also been replaced by a modern storefront extension of a different design.

General Description:

521 G Street NW

The three-story corner block has three-bay elevations facing both 6th and G Streets. The original material of this building is not visible beneath the stucco; presumably it is brick. The brick half-wall of the storefront extension is laid in six-course bond, with six stretcher courses separated by rows of headers. There are two entrances into the original structure, as well as one entrance into the storefront in front of the two-story structure attached at the east. Two curved brick steps led to an entrance at the corner of 6th and G Streets. A modern wood door has a large leaded-glass window, and is set in an arched wood surround with sidelights. A modern wood canopy and cornice extend over the steps. Another modern wood door is set in the left-hand bay of the first story on the 6th Street elevation.

Running above the shop window is a faded yellow awning, printed with advertisements and business information. Above the awning is a wood cornice painted in blue and yellow. The first floor storefront, the awning, and the awning cornice are later additions.

Both street facades have flat-headed over-over-one wooden sash windows in the second and third stories. Some contain window unit air conditioners. On the 6th Street side, the windows are evenly spaced on both stories, while on the G Street side, the windows in the left and center bays are set more closely together than the windows in the right or east bay. On all visible elevations, an extended roof overhang is covered with a wood box cornice bearing a pierced simple scrollwork pattern. This box cornice is probably an added feature from the late 19th or early 20th century. Projecting from the roof is a cupola or monitor.

The shopfront extension also extends across the first story of the 6th Street façade. On the two floors above are tall one-over-one wood sash windows, three with air-conditioning units. They have simple wood surrounds. Boards have been placed behind the glass. As stated above, an entrance door in the lefthand bay of this façade has a modern wood door. The decorative wooden box cornice is used on this side as well.

Two-Story Addition to 521 Street

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The two-story two-bay structure is attached to the east side elevation of 521 G Street, with its flat roof meeting the corner building midway between the second and third floors. A pair of flat-headed one-over-one windows are set to the right of the second story, and another flat-headed window opening is to the left, near the rear of the corner block. All these windows have metal security grills. This two-story structure also has the wood box cornice with decorative scroll pattern. The modern shopfront extends in front of this building also, and contains a third entrance to 521 G Street.

511 G Street

511 G Street NW has a projecting first-story storefront section, of a different design than the first-floor extension of 521 G Street. In building the extension, the bottom half of the original façade was removed. The storefront has two large, square, aluminum-framed windows above the very low walls; the windows flank a central entrance. Like the rest of the façade, the low walls are covered with permastone. The two large windows are divided by aluminum muntins into four sections, two above and two below. The lower openings are filled with solid plastic panels, and the upper openings with plate glass. The central entrance is covered by a metal roller security door. Extending above this door and the two windows on either side is a metal industrial cornice; above this, the tops of the two original window openings are visible, flanking the central entrance. In the second story of the original façade are three evenly spaced window openings with two-over-two double-hung sash windows with horizontal panes. Metal grilles have been placed over the windows.

The east side of the building is two bays under a pitched roof, with a two-story one-bay addition at the rear. The permastone covering of the façade extends around the corner of the building, covering about a foot of the side elevation; the rest of the wall is stuccoed, painted in red and pink. The main block has a single window in the second story set just to the right of center, with a modern one-over-one metal sash window with a grille. A Wooden frame has been added around the exterior of the window.

The view of the buildings' rear elevation is partially impeded by a high cast-iron fence. The one-bay block has a pitched roof facing the rear. The rear elevation is covered with stucco for about three-bays; the rest of the visible elevation, extending behind 521 G Street to the three-story building at 6th and G. No openings are visible in the rear elevations.

Comment [LP2]: DO NOT DELETE! THIS IS A SECTION BREAK.

Name of Property _____

County and State _____

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history.
- B** Property associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce _____

Social history _____

Period of Significance

1830-1930 _____

Significant Dates

1830, 1878 _____

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

511 G Gabriel Suter _____

521 G - unknown _____

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

Previous documentation on files (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

DC Preservation League, ML King Library

Washingtoniana Div, Historical Society of Washington _____

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Summary Statement of Significance

The small house at 511 G Street NW and its larger squarish neighbor at 521 S are two vestiges of Washington's working-class from virtually the city's earliest days, and are perhaps unique in their age and social significance in the old downtown area of the city. 511 G was constructed in 1830 as the residence of the family of Gabriel Suter – an ordinary carpenter. It is one of the oldest privately-built structures still standing in the old downtown area. His children – also carpenters – built 521 G in 1878. The family owned and occupied these properties until at least 1906. During their history the buildings housed Suter family members and their businesses, and also a succession of other working-class and immigrant tenants, as they still do. Although this was the essential nature of the surrounding neighborhood in the 19th and early 20th centuries almost all vestiges of that community have disappeared except for this, the earliest house and its adjacent store/apartment building.

Both structures continue to show much of their original appearance.

These buildings are significant to the built history of Washington DC because:

- (Criterion A) Both give visible evidence of a working-class, and largely immigrant neighborhood, both in its residential and commercial use, that has disappeared in the rest of the city from such an early date; and
- (Criterion C) These structures, and especially 511 G, typify the form of a modest, very early residential building once common throughout the city but now almost entirely lost.

Resource History and Historic Context:

Buildings history

The Suter Properties comprise two buildings currently numbered 511 G Street and 521 G Street NW (also known as 701 6th Street NW/Square 486, lot 2), although both buildings have been listed under other street numbers in earlier years. 511 G was constructed originally as a residence and shop, while 521 G was built as a shop with apartments above. Both buildings were constructed and owned by members of the Suter family, and so the name given here.

511 G Street NW: The southwest corner lot 2 of square 486 (the northeast corner of the intersection of 6th and G Streets NW) was publicly owned until 1830; a note in the city's 1824 tax records states: "This square belongs partly to the Public, partly to Burns' hrs, partly to Benj. Aden and has never yet been divided." The lot was first marked as "2" in the 1829 assessment records, and in the 1829-33 volume the name Gabriel Suter is written beside this lot, with a further notation in the righthand column: "26 I. P. Vanness" (Jonathan P. Van Ness, a major landowner of the time). The lot was assessed at \$127 with no improvements. The 1830 assessment book shows an improvement (building) assessed at \$400 – a fairly small amount compared to other buildings for that year in the vicinity. Thereafter assessment of the lot and building remain fairly consistent, although rising with inflation, through the 1860s. The 1857 Boschke map of Washington shows a small building on this lot, though on the corner rather than its actual position somewhat toward the middle of the block.

Gabriel Suter (1798-1840) was a "house carpenter" born in Havre de Grace, Maryland, as was his wife **Elizabeth** (1808-1892).ⁱ The 1830 census shows the Suters with a family of two boys and one girl. Of his life we know very little – [The National Intelligencer](#) carried an official announcement on 11 May 1832 that "in virtue of a distrain from C. Smith . . . I sell all the right, title . . . of Gabriel Suter & Chas. Lewis, in a frame bldg or carpenter's shop on lot 2, reserve 11, on B St . . . T. Burch, blf." Suter's death was reported in the [Intelligencer](#) on 4 April 1840, and his monument at Glenwood Cemetery includes a sign of the International Order of Odd Fellows over his name.

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After Gabriel's death his family continued at the address, and his sons carried on the family trade. Widow Elizabeth lived at 511 G Street straight through to her death in 1892, surrounded by family ("A very pleasant surprise party was given last night . . . by her children and grandchildren [on] the occasion [of] the lady's seventieth birthday." *Wash. Post* 15 Oct. 1879). Son **John T.** (1829-1907), carpenter, lived in the house with his brother **George J.**, cabinet-maker, and their respective families at least to 1870, and Mary A. Walter (1836-1915), a widowed sister,ⁱⁱ continued in the house with her son and Elizabeth "at home" in 1880 while Mary kept a drug store in the corner building. John and George also resided in nearby locations.ⁱⁱⁱ

John T. Sr.'s gravestone includes both Masonic and Odd Fellows symbols. Neither of the younger Suters appear in late 19th century building trade publications or in Washington Post items relating to construction, and presumably remained modest craftsmen. Interestingly, however, the Suter graves at Glenwood Cemetery are fairly substantial for this generation, and speak of surprising prosperity.

521 G Street NW: In 1878 the Suters built an adjoining structure on the corner lot:^{iv} one brick building, \$3,500, "purpose: store & dwelling, . . . two stories brick, flat roof, tin roof" – the somewhat larger building still standing on the corner of 6th and G Streets. The application was signed by George J. Suter, of 463 F Street NW. No Suter ever lived in this building. Instead it saw a succession of tenants above and store uses below. The 1880 census, for example, shows five households resident: a physician, clerk, printer, government clerk, and retail grocer, totaling nine persons. Later census records and City Directories carry on the same story: a real estate agent living at 521 G and a cabinet-maker at 511 G in 1900; a language teacher at 511 G and a "canvasser" at 513 with a wallpaper store on the ground floor; and so forth. 701 6th Street is listed as vacant in City Directories after 1929, although other addresses in the same building (515, 517, 521 G) housed barbers, confectioners, restaurants, tailors, and painters. Building permits from this period are numerous but always for minor alterations ("Remove present window on G Street side of premises and put in doorway") and installation of awnings and signs ("Hats Cleaned" "Drink Coca Cola").^v The 1900 census also shows no Suters (or Walters) at 511 G, but rather a cabinet maker and his family. The old Suter house then began a succession of varied uses similar to its larger neighbor: restaurants, locksmith, baker, bird seller, pawnbroker, and grocer. In 1901 three Suter children (John, George, Mary) sold the property for \$10 to the fourth surviving child, Prudence E. Frazier,^{vi} and a building permit of 1906 was signed by "Chas. B. Caywood for estate of Elizabeth Suter."^{vii} Later records indicate non-family owners, and a continuous change of ownership of both properties after 1938. At some later time commercial display windows were installed to the front of the building and (in the 1940s) formstone attached to the entire façade. Otherwise both buildings remain in their original footprints and outer condition.

Neighborhood history

The neighborhood around the 500 block of G Street NW was not built when Gabriel Suter constructed his house. The area was fairly heavily built by 1857, when Albert Boschke mapped the city's buildings, although the Suter house is the only structure on the south side of that particular block. When the whole block was built out in the 1880s it was with about half frame and half brick structures, most of fairly modest dimensions. Temple Adas Israel stood across the street from the Suters. The neighborhood stayed much the same up to the 1910s, when the parking (public space: front yards and sidewalks) were compressed, resulting in the present condition of buildings directly fronting on the sidewalk. A review of census records shows that the Suter property was typical of the blue-collar residents. One "professional" appears among all the households on the 700 block of 6th Street, for example (a patent attorney); this man's neighbors included shoemakers, furniture dealers, paper hangers, peddlers, tobacconists, and a minister. No servants appear on the lists. He would have had to walk to the 400 block of G to find a cluster of other professionals resident. In 1900 the same conditions prevailed – almost all families white, blue-collar, no servants and few boarders. Many were immigrants and the houses averaged 6-8 inhabitants.^{viii}

In the 1920s light industrial uses began to intrude on the residential/retail/craft neighborhood: print and storage special-built structures, and by the 1930s warehouses and a power plant were replacing the houses also. Most of the frame buildings were gone, replaced by

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brick structures (or perhaps formstone as at 511 G). Erosion of the neighborhood continued when other streets lost their parking space, and the destruction of the adjacent block for the new General Accounting Office brought great injury to the residential community. By the 1965 Baist map only this one block still contained any amount of housing, and before the recent construction of apartment buildings only Hockmeyer Hall at 719 6th Street and the Suter properties remained of this once-thriving if modest working-class community.

Comment [LP3]: DO NOT DELETE! THIS IS
A SECTION BREAK.

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Major Bibliographical References:

Platt maps (Boschke, Hopkins, Baist)
DC Building Permits
DC Tax Records
City Directories
Census Records
"Builders' Exchange of the District of Columbia" (1891)
"Washington Architects, Contractors and Builders Directory" (1892-93)
Washington Post, National Intelligencer (in Dixon, Joan M., National Intelligencer Newspaper Abstracts. Heritage Books, Inc.,
Bowie MD. C 2000.).
DC Marriage Licenses (Pippinger, Wesley E., District of Columbia Marriage Records Index, 1802-1928. Privately published, c 1997.)
DC Recorder of Deeds records
Library of Congress, Manuscript Division,
Glenwood Cemetery
Library of Congress Manuscript Division, "Washington DC – Students Register"

Comment [LP4]: DO NOT DELETE! THIS IS
A SECTION BREAK.

1007-1017 K St NW
Name of Property

Washington DC
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property _____

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	Zone	Easting	Northing	3	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	Zone	Easting	Northing	4	Zone	Easting	Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

The boundary includes all the nominated property.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Hayden M. Wetzel
Organization DC Preservation League date 27 November 2006
street & number 401 F St NW #324 telephone (202) 783-5144
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20001

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name SSS Corporation
street & number 521 G Street NW telephone _____
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20001-2615

Paperwork Reduction Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et. seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Verbal Boundary Description:

The two properties of 511 and 521 G Street NW occupy Square 486, lot 2 on the northeast corner of the intersection of 6th and G Streets NW.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes all the nominated property.

ⁱ 1834 City Dir

ⁱⁱ Wash Post 7 May 1915

ⁱⁱⁱ City Dir, census

^{iv} Permit 914 of 16 July 1878

^v 1990 ½ 30 Jan 1906, 3840 15 May 1916, 4380 21 Feb 1920, 9769 28 Apr 1923, 4699 27 Nov 1923, et al.

^{vi} Liber 2605/folio 3, 9 Aug 1901

^{vii} Permit 1990 ½ 30 Jan 1906

^{viii} Platt maps, census