OMB Control No. 1024-0018
expiration date 03/31/2022

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Capitol Power Plant Pump House
Other names/site number: Earth Conservation Corps
Name of related multiple property listing:

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

2. Location

Street & number: 1520 First Street SE
City or town: Washington State: DC County:
Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

___national ___statewide ___local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A ___B ___C ___D

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Capitol Power Plant Pump House | Washington, DC
Name of Property | County and State

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

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:	X
Public – Local	
Public – State	
Public – Federal	

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	X
District	

Capitol Power Plant Pump House | Washington, DC
Name of Property | County and State

Site

Structure ☐

Object ☐

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

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6. Function or Use
Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
INDUSTRY/PROC/EXTR: Waterworks

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
SOCIAL: Clubhouse

Capitol Power Plant Pump House
Name of Property

Washington, DC
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
_LATE 19th/EARLY 20th CEN: Commercial Style__

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: _Piles/Concrete, Brick, Tile_____

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Capitol Power Plant Pump House is a modestly-sized square brick structure whose concrete base sits just off the northeast bank of the Anacostia River at First Street SE. The pump house – which is connected to shore by a pedestrian bridge – has two components: an original (1910) building in beige brick with a red-tiled hipped roof on the water side and a plainer, flat-roofed addition (1935) in red brick facing the land. The building incorporates several non-character altering modifications that postdate the 1935 addition, including a concrete platform that surrounds the building's original foundation.

Narrative Description

The Pump House for the U.S. Capitol Power Plant sits above the waters of the Anacostia River in southeast D.C. on a pier extending into the water at the south end of 1st Street SE. From the pump house pier, there are views up the Anacostia River to the Main D.C. Sewerage Pumping Station and beyond to the Navy Yard; views down the river to the South Capitol Street Bridge to the Pepco Power Plant at Buzzard Point; and across the river to Poplar Point and Anacostia Park. The pump house, which is surrounded by water, is primarily oriented towards the Anacostia channel. The load-bearing brick walls, laid in five-course American bond, are set upon a tall concrete foundation surrounded by a concrete platform which surrounds the building. Before the platform was added in the 1990s, the building's concrete base was fully exposed above the water level. As it appears today, the pump house is one-story brick building, rectangular in plan. It consists of two parts; the 1910 original main block, covered with a hipped roof, and the lower, one-story, 1935 addition, situated on its landside and covered with a flat roof. The low-pitched hipped roof of the main block, which has a short side-oriented ridge, is covered with red terra cotta tiles and features wide eaves, reflecting Mediterranean-style influences representative of the building's period of construction.

The primary (water side) of the building faces the Anacostia River and is visible only from the water, or from the opposite east bank of the river. The façade is divided into three bays, with a large double-height opening occupying the central bay that is flanked by paired windows. Historically, as illustrated in photos, the lower level of the central opening had paired wood and glass doors, while the upper level opening had smaller windows with board shutters. The tall opening provided sufficient space for machinery, equipment, or supplies to pass through, after perhaps being off-loaded from barges. It now has a pair of multi-light French replacement doors with side-lights that open at-grade to the concrete platform. Above the door rises a pair of wide, plate glass replacement windows. This superimposed door and window is framed at the top by a wide concrete lintel. An embedded metal beam projects from this central bay between the lintel and the top of the second-story window. This beam is part of a hoisting apparatus original to the building.

The two side elevations of the main block of the building have three openings clustered together at the center of the brick wall with a single long concrete lintel spanning all three openings. On the west side, there are two 1/1 windows and a wood and glass door with a transom above. On the east side, there are three single windows, two of which have historic 2/2 wood sash, and the third a 1/1 wood replacement.

The landside of the main block historically was similarly arranged with a wide central opening flanked by pairs of 2/2 windows capped by a single concrete lintel. In 1935, a one-story wing was added to the landside of the building, obscuring the landside elevation of the main block. The rear wing, set lower than the main block and covered with a flat roof has a double door on the west end bay of the north (landside) elevation, and sets of three single windows on the side elevations. The entry on the landside has a pair of wood and glass doors with a multi-light

transom above. The windows have original 2/2 wood sash on both the east and west side walls. A mural, painted on boards, showing an image of the building from the east side of the river with a water scene in front and the Capitol building behind is affixed to the landside wall next to the building's entry door.

The interior of the building, entered from the land side, includes a hallway and office partitioned off from it in the 1935 addition and a large open room in the original, main block. The entry hall has the original brick walls exposed on the west side walls, and a non-original partition wall dividing it from the office. The three windows on the west wall provide light to the hallway, while those on the east side provide light into the office.

A pair of double wood and glass doors leads into the original main block. The main block has all four brick walls exposed along with a metal truss ceiling with the historic hoisting mechanism intact. A hole in the center of the hip ridge reveals the base of a vent.

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.)

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

Criteria Considerations
(Mark “x” in all the boxes that apply.)

- [ ] A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- [ ] B. Removed from its original location
- [ ] C. A birthplace or grave
- [ ] D. A cemetery
- [ ] E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- [ ] F. A commemorative property
- [ ] G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Engineering

Period of Significance
1910-61

Significant Dates
1910, 1935

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Capitol Power Plant Pump House was constructed as an essential component of the United States Capitol Power Plant (CPP). Section 107 of the Historic Preservation Act of 1966 [16 U.S.C. 470g] states that "Nothing in this Act shall be construed to be applicable to the White House and its grounds, the Supreme Court building and its grounds, or the United States Capitol and its related buildings and grounds." While this statute would seem to bar the listing of the CPP main site on the National Register, it does not apply to the Pump House, which has been the property of the District of Columbia government since 1961.

For its association with the development of centralized electric power, heating, and air conditioning production and the development of both the Capitol complex and neighboring public buildings as well as the industrial Anacostia Riverfront, the CPP Pump House merits listing on the National Register of Historic Places and the District of Columba Inventory of Historic Sites under DC Inventory Criterion B (history) and similar National Register Criterion A. As the city's earliest surviving example of a river water intake facility associated with a power plant, the CPP Pump House is significant under DC Inventory Criterion D (building type) and similar National Register Criterion C.

Completed in 1910, the CPP was a milestone in the development of centralized production of heat, electric power, and air conditioning in the District. As the sample list in the "Resource History" section shows, many of the District's early twentieth century government and educational campuses had dedicated heating or electrical generation plants, some of which were adapted to combine these functions. The CPP was unique among the early plants for its initial construction as a combination heating and electrical generation facility, as well as its early expansion to include air conditioning, The CPP is also associated with the development of the Capitol and other public buildings to which it provided heat and power, which include the Library of Congress, Supreme Court, Botanical Gardens and Union Station.

The CPP Pump House is significant as an early (and likely the city's earliest) surviving example of the river intake facilities associated with a few such plants. The Navy Yard power plant's riverfront intake structure no longer exists, and the neighboring Buzzard Point Power Plant's pump house was built more than twenty years later. It is also significant as one of the Washington waterfront's surviving industrial structures and for its association with the industrial development of the Anacostia River shore between Buzzard Point and the Navy Yard.

The CPP pump house's period of significance begins with its completion in 1910 and ends in 1961, when obsolescence led Congress to declare it a surplus structure and transfer it to the District of Columbia government.

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

The Capitol Power Plant Pump House is a remotely-located satellite building of the Capitol Power Plant (CPP). Connected to the northeastern bank of the Anacostia River by a short bridge, the pump house provided water to the power plant through a mile-long network of mains running beneath city streets. The power plant boilers originally used river water to produce steam to generate electricity and to heat the Capitol complex. Over several decades, an underground network of lines and piping extending these utilities to other public buildings. By the mid-1930s, the pump house was providing water for the Capitol complex's innovative air conditioning system, whose central cooling plant was built at the CPP in 1938. In 1951, the Capitol complex began exclusively using commercially-produced electric power and installed equipment that eliminated the need to use river water for cooling. Although the CPP heating system continued to use river water for several years, in 1961 Congress declared the pump house surplus and transferred it to the District of Columbia government. Since 1993, the pump house has been utilized by the Earth Conservation Corps, a non-profit organization.

Heating, Ventilating, and Powering the U.S. Capitol before the CPP[1]

Until the turn of the 20th century, the United States Capitol building was plagued by inadequate heating and ventilation. During its earliest years, the Capitol was heated only by fireplaces and ventilated through windows. Charles Bulfinch's rotunda design of 1824 installed wood-stoked furnaces in the crypt to pipe hot air into the chamber above.[2] In planning the new House and Senate wings in 1851 Capitol Architect Thomas U. Walter wanted to replace heated air with steam (to avoid the "carbonic acid-gas" of the former). This issue led to a protracted dispute with Supervising Engineer Montgomery Meigs and, finally, to Meigs' dismissal. Steam heating replaced the coal-burning stoves in 1870 in the central building, and separate forced-air systems greatly improved heating in the wings in 1877. [3]

Ventilation had become a problem when both houses moved into their new Walter-designed chambers in 1857 (House) and 1859 (Senate), which nestled within the wings without windows. Air circulated into and out of the rooms through a system of flues and vents forced by steam-powered fans. This arrangement was expanded greatly in 1871.

[1] This section is culled from William C. Allen, *History of the United States Capitol – A chronicle of design, construction, and politics*. GPO, Washington DC. 2001; (heating) 154, 193, 292-93, 260-62; (ventilation) 361-65; (lighting/electricity) 178, 366-67; and AOC, Coordinating Engineer. Wash Post, 23 Feb 1902,11, describes the ventilation and power systems in detail as well as the various uses for electrical power at that time; see also Wash Post, 19 Mar 2017, C3; 26 Mar 2017, C3. Those wishing extensive contemporary testimony on these questions can consult the collection of official studies bound together in 1914 under the title "Heating and Ventilating the U.S. Capitol Building, 1860-1890" kept in the Curator's Office of the AOC.

[2] Leading to a dispute over the cost of the required stoves.

[3] The system, designed by Nason & Dodge of New York City, is described in some detail in Allen, p. 245, and illustrated on p. 291.

Lighting also posed a problem, especially in the windowless chambers. Before the 1850s expansion, illumination was achieved by candles and whale-oil lamps. The enlarged building used a gas-light network.[4] This system employed an advanced method for lighting many outlets simultaneously from only a few switches by an attached electric circuit supplied by voltaic batteries – the first installation of electricity in the U.S. Capitol. These batteries were replaced by dynamos in 1879. (Another early user of electrical power in the Capitol was the elevator, first installed in the 1870s.)

Early experiments with electrical lighting in the 1870s and '80s proved unsuccessful until a satisfactory system was introduced in the Senate wing in 1885. In 1895 Congress purchased four Westinghouse dynamos to replace the earlier machines leased from a local utility which completely replaced gas lights in 1898 (made final by a gas explosion that year). As with the heating mechanism, each wing had its own equipment room.

Central Heating, Power and Chilling Plants in Washington DC[5]

A method for supplying steam heat from a central plant to a collection of nearby buildings (as opposed to each building having its own boiler) originated with the work of New Yorker Birdsill Holly in 1876 and began to spread throughout the country in the late 19th century.[6] In Washington, central heating plants, by their nature not under a unified company structure, appeared one by one as campuses felt the need. This concept, with updated technology, continues in use today. Refrigeration plants came into widespread use several decades into the 20th century.

Electrical power was provided by industrial power plants from the beginning (based on the work of Thomas Edison and George Westinghouse in the 1880s) – either owned by a utility company for supply to the public, or an individual company for its own use. The general trend was for small, separately owned generator stations to gradually coalesce into a few and, ultimately, one dominant regional electric utility.[7] In Washington, commercial and private power plants first came online in the 1880s and amalgamated into the present Potomac Electric Power Company in 1896.

A sample of principal campuses in the District and the dates of their first Heating (H), Power (P), or Refrigeration plants ® are: ; Washington Monument (boiler house for steam-powered elevator: 1886); Georgetown University (H: 1898, replaced 1925); St. Elizabeths Hospital (P: 1902; R: 1952); Navy Yard (H: 1903, replacing an earlier plant; R added: 1998; P: 1905);

[4] A showy gas jet had been installed atop the Capitol dome briefly in 1847 but failed to sell members on its new technology.
[5] The information in this section is taken from Heritage US, *Historic Utility System Study*, Washington, D.C., ms, 1998 and the pending National Register nominations for the Buzzard Point Power Plan; (both on file at the DC Historic Preservation Office), as well as and information supplied by the named institutions and from their respective NR nominations. I thank Mr. Michael Evans, Chief Engineer at the Catholic University, Mr. David Faris, Utility Plant Supervisor at the Washington Navy Yard, and Mr. Vincent Morris, Manager of External Affairs for WASA for their generous advice.
[6] This applies to larger buildings; houses and smaller structures had coal or other types of private systems.
[7] The same process is seen in the move from regional to national telephone companies.

Gallaudet University (H: 1905); Soldiers Home (H, P: 1907); Catholic University (H: 1910); Ft. McNair (H: 1914); Walter Reed Army Hospital (H, electrical switching: 1918); American University (P: 1925); McKinley Technical High School (H: 1926); the Franciscan Monastery (H: 1928); Howard University (P: 1934); U.S. Government Central Heating Plant (H: 1934; R added: 1959); National Zoo (H: 1936); US Govt West-Central Heating Plant (H: 1948); National Training School for Boys (P or H: before 1933).[8] Later residential projects (e.g., Westchester, 1931; Langston Terrace,1935; Fairfax Village, 1941; McLean Gardens,(including R, 1942) also incorporated central heating plants into their plans.

Pump houses[9] (as distinct from pumping stations, which are larger, central facilities such as the WASA Main Pumping Station and the Bryant Street Pumping Station) referred at one time to sheds that protected manual pumps (as a spring house protected a natural spring). The Navy Yard heating plant took on water from a riverside pump house, now gone. Existing facilities in the District include a pump house for intake of oil along the western bank of the Anacostia and the art deco water in-take building attached to the Buzzard Point Power Plant also on the Anacostia at 1st Street SW (1933).[10]

The New Capitol Power Plant[11]

During the first years of the 20th century, the plants in the Capitol wings and new Library building were considered adequate. The 1904 *Annual Report* of the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) noted that "In all respects the heating, lighting, and ventilating of the building [Capitol] has been all that could be desired." However, as Congress planned massive new office buildings for the House and Senate, the need for additional capacity and the advantages of centralization became plain.[12] Congress authorized the funds for a power plant on 28 April 1904, later making various additions and modifications.[13] Under the heading "Senate and House Office Buildings," the AOC's *Annual Report* for 1905, reported these plans were practically complete.

[8] Several of these are distinctly described as power plants (P) but one wonders if they in fact provided heat. The Navy Yard's first heating plant was in place by at least 1889 but of limited capacity. The late date for Howard's begs the question whether such a large and old campus had an earlier facility.
[9] The term seems to be colloquial and perhaps outdated. J. Paul Guyer ("An Introduction to Pumping Stations for Water Supply Systems". Continuing Education and Development, Inc., Stony Point NY. c. 2012.) does not use the term and makes no such distinction.
[10] Navy Yard house per Mr. David Faris. The several small brick buildings along both sides of the Anacostia are simply housing for discharge conduits and do not contain pumping equipment; the two structures within the McMillan Reservoir allow access to the springs that feed the basin and so are in that sense very nice spring houses.
[11] In early references it was the" Congressional Heating, Lighting, and Power Plant".Information on the construction and specifics of the plant, from which this section is sourced, are: AOC, Coordinating Engineer; Wash Post, 29 Nov 1908, p. R1 (with photos); 10 Oct 1909, p. E1. The AOC Annual Reports are remarkably laconic regarding the project.
[12] "Capitol Power Plant Beginnings," https://www.capitol.gov/html/VGN_2010061483651.html
[13] Wash Post, 2 Mar 1894, p. 5, reported the idea of a dedicated Congressional power plant made in a study of the building's electrical use and needs completed in that year. The study recommended a hydroelectric plant at nearby Great Falls which could possibly also provide power for all the District. Plans for the current CPP led to suggestions of "another large power plant south of the White House," which two would then also supply the whole District (Evening Star, 18 Dec 1905, p. 15; Heritage US, p. 136). The Library and Cannon Office Building took their power from PEPCO until the new plant came on-line (Heritage US, ibid.) The contemporary Navy Yard power plant could also be called upon if needed, per Mr. David Faris.

Design of the plant and its out-buildings, other appendages, and all equipment was performed by the respected engineering firm Westinghouse, Church, Kerr, Inc. of New York.[14] Its site was the northwest corner of Garfield Park at the confluence of New Jersey Avenue and E Street SE. This land, already owned by the government, was close to the Capitol, railroad lines for coal delivery, and the Anacostia River for water. The park was restored to some approximation of its former size by annexing land to its south. After considerable and frustrating time in planning, designing and contracting the building, work commenced in 1908 and finished in 1910, at a total cost of $1,500,000.

The AOC's account of this important project (in his annual reports of 1909 and 1910) convey little information and none of the excitement found in contemporary press articles. The *Evening Star* and *Post* trumpeted that "the new heating and lighting plant . . . is the most remarkable plant of its kind in the world. It can furnish 8,000 kilograms of electric power"; "It is understood that the plant will be the largest one of its kind in the United States . . . There is said to be no plant which furnished [sic] both power and heat in size"; "Christian P. Gliem, chief electrical engineer, . . . is enthusiastic over the possibilities."[15]

The designers also gave thought to at least mitigating the plant's effect on the landscape. A House report of 1910 noted "the resulting building is of simple design, constructed of red brick, intended in the future to be stuccoed and otherwise treated by planting . . . so that when the development of the park is completed the building will not be objectionable." [16] "Every attempt will be made to have the power station add to the beauty of the neighborhood," reported the *Post*.[17] Famously, the plant's cornerstone had earlier served as the base for Horatio Greenough's controversial toga-clad statue of George Washington, at that time removed to the Smithsonian. Over forty years later *The WPA Guide to Washington, D.C* noted that "the Capitol Power Plant . . . is a large red-brick building with a red-tile roof, arched windows, and a white flagpole, its entrance façade looking more like a conventional YMCA building than a power and heating plant."

The CPP Pump House

An inconspicuous but very necessary adjunct to the impressive new power plant was the pump house built on piles over the Anacostia River almost a mile due south. This small building provided the water that the plant boiled to produce steam for its generators through a conduit under First Street SE.[18]

[14] The company had first been brought in to advise on construction of railroad bridges needed for the supply of the proposed plant. It was the engineering arm of Westinghouse Electric & Mftr. Co., which served as the general contractor. (AOC Archives, RG 104 "Capitol Power Plant", Series 104.1 "Projects, Equipment & Maintenance 1911-1960"; Box 1, Folder 1; Box 22, Folder 1. All subsequent citations to archival material refer to this Record Group and Series unless noted otherwise.) x

[15] Evening Star, 1 Dec 1910, p. 14; Wash Post, 29 Nov 1908, p. R1; 10 Oct 1909, p. E1.

[16] Quoted in AOC, Coordinating Engineer.

[17] Op. cit., 29 Nov 1908, p. R1.

[18] See the accompanying plan for the precise route of the conduit. Existing water mains could not supply the required amount. It was the only such facility in the District taking its water directly from the river (AOC Annual Report, 1924). For an admiring comment on the savings of filtered water over the years, see Wash. Post, 24 Sept 1922, p. 20.

Before construction of the pump house could commence several preliminaries had to be resolved.[19] Capitol Superintendent of the Building and Grounds Elliott Woods needed permission from the authority that controlled this portion of the Anacostia for the structure to stand over the waterway. The War Department informed Woods in 1909 that the specified area out to the pierhead line lay under District government control (as a federal lease) – the Department would only become involved if the building extended into navigable waters. When consulted, the District's Engineer Commissioner noted that that there was virtually no building or business along the Anacostia west of First Street SE and that eastward the shore was taken with scrap and lumber yards. However, permission would be granted only if the pump house's operations would not interfere with the boating business of Capt. Henry Raum,[20] who had a District lease on the adjoining shore property, and it did not extend eastward into an area planned for leasing. The Commissioner noted discussion of a Navy Yard-Poplar Point bridge and wondered if the pump house could be moved in that case. The District Commissioners approved the Pump house plan, as well as construction of the two 36-inch underground waterways and a discharge flue run under First Street SE to the CPP, with the AOC being responsible for any damage to water mains along the way. Permission was also given to connect the waterway to a nearby sewer line ("the so-called Tiber Creek sewer") to discharge wastewater.

As construction of the main plant progressed, the *Evening Star* reported that "the pumping station is constructed on a pile foundation over the water, but a cement foundation is to be constructed about the piles, giving the new building a firm base for the heavy engines, boilers and pumps to be placed in it."[21] This heavy equipment included two large water pumps to be powered by the CPP and three large valves purchased from the Coffin Valve Company of Boston for $450.[22] Although the building was to be of modest size and utilitarian purpose, some effort was obviously expended to make it presentable; expenses included $421 for Interlocking Spanish tiles from the Detroit Roofing Tile Company.[23] .

Later History of the CPP and the Pump House

The CPP proved its value immediately. The AOC declared in his 1914 *Annual Report* "referring to the Capitol power plant, I will state that the construction, operation, and final results have fully justified Congress in its efforts to combine for the Capitol, the two office buildings and the Library of Congress a central source of supply for all heat, light, and power." Two years late, he noted that "this plant has continued in successful and efficient operation and without interruption during the past fiscal year . . . Unobtrusive in one sense, it is in another the very vitals of the domestic operation of the Capitol."

During the next several decades, the CPP's facilities and its role expanded. New tunnels carried the plant's heat and power to the (old) Department of Interior building in 1917, Union Station (1918), the Coast and Geodetic Survey building (1922), old City Post Office and Government

[19] AOC Archives, Box 23, Folder 16.
[20] A local waterman; see, inter alia, Evening Star, 7 Mar 1914, p. 15.
[21] Evening Star, 21 Nov 1909, p. 31.
[22] AOC, Coordinating Engineer ;All winning and losing bids are filed in AOC Archives, Box 22, various folders),
[23] Both in Box 2, Folder 41.

Printing Office (1923), as well as the later House and Senate buildings, the Botanical Gardens, and (as a paying customer) the Folger Shakespeare Library. The Architect's 1920 Annual Report boasted that the plant heated 45,613,550 cubic feet of space, and powered 49,750 electric lights, 1,217 electric fans, 49 elevators, and various motors totaling 1,466 horsepower. The AOC added a second building and a back-up connection to the city water system in 1930. The Pump House was also periodically repaired and upgraded.[24] In 1911 the Cranford Paving Company made repairs related to the pumps which emptied water from the pump pits. Extensive improvements to the mains running to the power plant were made in 1920 and 1927; The Columbia Granite and Dredging Company and Soot Sand and Gravel Companies repaired the bulkhead after their scows damaged the pilings.

The CPP and its Pump House's roles were expanded when "a new and wondrous improvement in the science of ventilation called 'air conditioning'" was installed in the two insufferably stuffy legislative chambers and their cloakrooms by the Carrier Corp. of Connecticut in 1929. [25] (This ended talk of relocating the interior chambers to rooms with windows.) Over the next few years, air conditioning was extended throughout the Capitol and office buildings and, in 1938 the largest central chilled water refrigeration plant in the country was added to the CPP. The Pump House provided the plant's condensing water, which was chilled and circulated to air cooling equipment situated in the buildings served by the power plant.[26]

Increasing demands for heat, power, and air conditioning required the improvement and expansion of the Pump House in the mid-1930s. Its bulkhead wall and approaches were improved in 1934, the same year in which the Virginia firm of H. Herfurth, Jr., Inc. won a contract to build an addition to the shore side of the structure at a cost of $8,664. Herfurth's Washington resume included construction on the Bruce Elementary School, Bureau of Standards, the GPO, St. Elizabeths Hospital, and experience working with industrial equipment (such as removal of boilers at the Navy Yard, and renovations to the power plant at St. Elizabeths Hospital). George A. Weschler served as consulting engineer and possibly designed the boxy brick extension.

The experience was unhappy for both parties. Work started by December 1934 but was not completed – as had been specified – by the following spring, and so the company received an extension to the end of the year. The AOC's files became stuffed with accusatory letters and memos: the architect's office complained that the contractor was late completing work, and the contractor that late disbursements were causing delays in paying subcontractors and keeping them on the job. When the addition was finally completed in June 1935, Herfurth was in the midst of a lawsuit with one of his suppliers.[27] Equipment upgrades in 1936, also overseen by Weschler, were briefly interrupted by a walk-out of the contractor steamfitters.[28]

[24] This and the next paragraph are sourced from the relevant AOC Annual Reports. The buildings listed, including the Library building, all originally had their own heating and generating capabilities.
[25] Allen, 402.
[26] Allen, pp. 402-03; AOC, Coordinating Engineer.
[27] AOC Annual Report, 1934; AOC Archives, Box 24, Folders 6, 7. The contract with Herfurth lies in Folder 6.
[28] AOC Archives, Box 24, Folder 16; Evening Star, 13 Oct 1937, p. 2.

Along with the CPP and most government installations, the Pump House was under guard during World War II.[29] Ironically, rising demand for power and cooling soon rendered it obsolete. Even with modernized equipment, the CPP was too small to meet the Capitol complex's postwar electrical needs, and in 1950-51, the Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds arranged to procure power from PEPCO, the local utility. Power generation at the CPP ceased, drastically cutting demand for river water. A new cooling tower at the CPP limited the need to replenish the air conditioning system, and, with the decision to use municipal water for the heating system, the pump house ceased operation.[30] Copper conductors in its ducts were sold to a scrap dealer. Later official concern for the facility dealt only with the need or lack of need for the underground flumes and their disposition. For a time, the planned Southeast Freeway threatened the little building, but in the end its route ran elsewhere.[31]

In 1961 Tom Miller Towing and Salvage, Inc. sent the AOC a proposal to lease "the abandoned river pump house," retaining the structure but removing all equipment and fittings. This led to discussion between the AOC and the District of Columbia Commissioners to determine who controlled the site. That same year Congress formally transferred the "pumping station and pier, with appurtenances" to the District. It seems to have been unused when the current tenant, the Earth Conservation Corps (ECC), made initial inquiries to the AOC about leasing it in 1993.[32] Formed in 1989, the Corps works with local youth on environmental projects, particularly those related to the Anacostia River. It renovated the pump house with the help of the Navy Seabees and is believed to have added the concrete platform at around the time it moved in in 1993. Today, it uses the building for classes and meetings, and docks its three boats nearby.[33] The ECC also leases the 1933 art deco water in-take building of the now unused Buzzard Point Power Plant, which is located on the east shore of Buzzard Point.

Without the involvement of the Pump House, the CPP continues to heat and cool the Capitol, Visitor's Center, House and Senate Office Buildings, Supreme Court, Botanical Gardens, and Library of Congress buildings. In 2011, it provided a capacity of 620,000 pounds of steam/hour and 40,200 tons of refrigeration.

[29] Evening Star, 20 Dec 1941, p. 2.
[30] Official Congressional Directory, 1979 (GPO, Washington, DC), 435.
[31] Information on the end of the pump house is scarce, but a summary can be found in the AOC archives finding aid for "Project, Equipment and Maintenance" and in three letters in AOC Archives, RG 104 "Capitol Power Plant", Series 104.1 "Project-Subject Files 1956-1982"; Box 2.
[32] AOC, Coordinating Engineer; AOC files, Curator's Office.
[33] Information supplied by the ECC, and Wash Post, 19 June 2008.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Allen, William C., History of the United States Capitol – A chronicle of design, construction, and politics. GPO, Washington DC. 2001.

Architect of the Capitol, Annual Reports (in AOC, Curator's Office)

Architect of the Capitol, Coordinating Engineer, "Capitol Power Plant Origins, Functions and Expansions". Ms, 19 Apr 1967. (in AOC, Curator's Office files)

Heritage US, "Historic Utility System Study – Washington, D.C." (ms). Washington, DC. 1998.

Works Progress Administration (Kennedy, Roger G., ed), The WPA Guide to Washington, D.C. – The Federal Writers' Project Guide to 1930s Washington. Pantheon Books, New York. c. 1983.

Architect of the Capitol, Curator's Office files

Architect of the Capitol Archives (all boxes from Record Group 104 "Capitol Power Plant", Series 104.1 "Projects, Equipment & Maintenance 1911-1960" and "Project-Subject Files 1956-1982")
Earth Conservation Corps

Washington Evening Star
Washington Post

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
____ previously listed in the National Register
_____previously determined eligible by the National Register
_____designated a National Historic Landmark
____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
_____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Capitol Power Plant Pump House | Washington, DC
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Primary location of additional data:

____ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.16

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 38.871067 Longitude: -77.005859
2. Latitude: 38.871172 Longitude: -77.005713
3. Latitude: 38.870973 Longitude: -77.005443
4. Latitude: 38.870860 Longitude: -77.005581

Or
UTM References
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

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Name of Property | County and State

1. Zone: Easting: Northing:
2. Zone: Easting: Northing:
3. Zone: Easting: Northing:
4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

This property does not occupy a square or lot and is currently unzoned. It sits on 2010 census block 2061. The property is bounded on all sides by the Anacostia River and accessed on the north end by the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail. The property boundaries include the concrete platform that surrounds the building's original foundations, but not those piers which have been attached to the concrete platform.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The concrete platform, while added in the 1990s and not character-defining to the structure, supports the original concrete foundation and creates the natural boundary for the site within the Anacostia River.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Hayden M. Wetzel
organization: DC Preservation League
street & number: 1221 Connecticut Avenue NW #5A
city or town: Washington state: DC zip code: 20036
e-mail info@dcpreservation.org
telephone: 202-783-5144
date: 9/23/2020

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

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

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Detail from a 2016 USGS Alexandra, VA-DC-MD quadrangle, showing the location of 1520 First Street SE

Capitol Power Plant Pump House | Washington, DC
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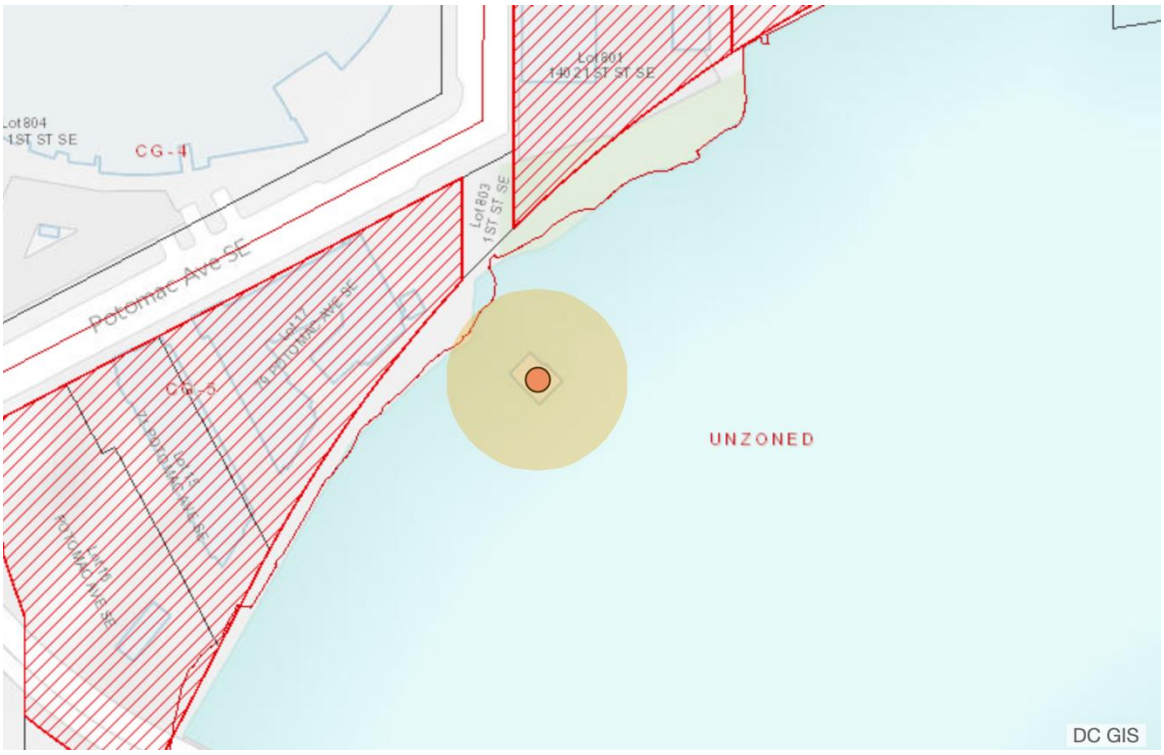
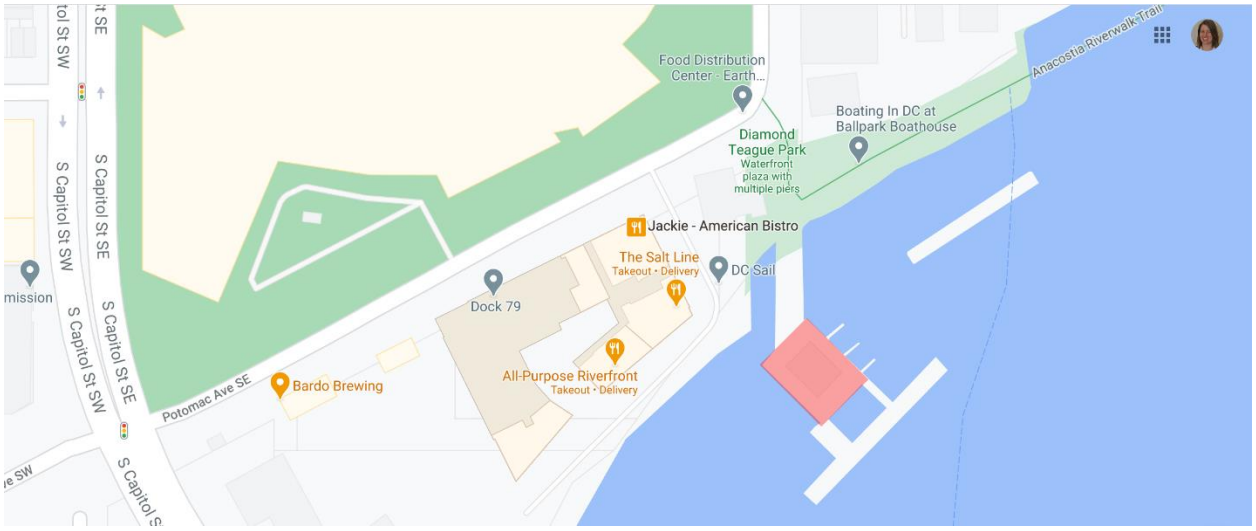


Above: Map showing location of 1520 First Street SE, yellow highlight. Courtesy of propertyquest.dc.gov, 2020.

Below: Proposed landmark boundary map.



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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property:

City or Vicinity:

County: State:

Photographer:

Date Photographed:

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of ___.

Capitol Power Plant Pump House | Washington, DC
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Capitol Power Plant Pump House, photo taken 1910

Capitol Power Plant Pump House
Name of Property

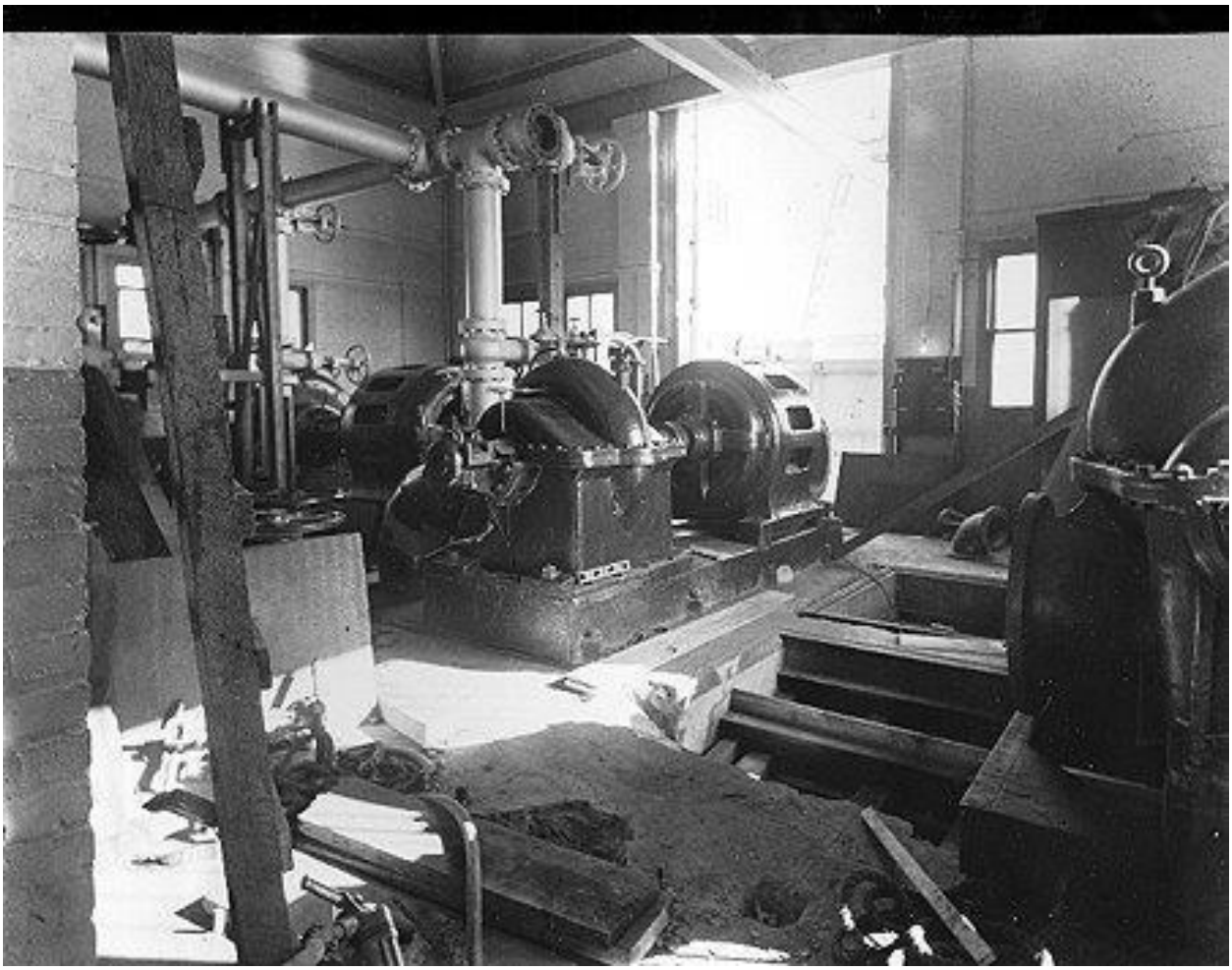
Washington, DC
County and State

Photo taken 1934

Capitol Power Plant Pump House
Name of Property

Washington, DC
County and State

Photo taken 1935



Pump House interior, taken 1937

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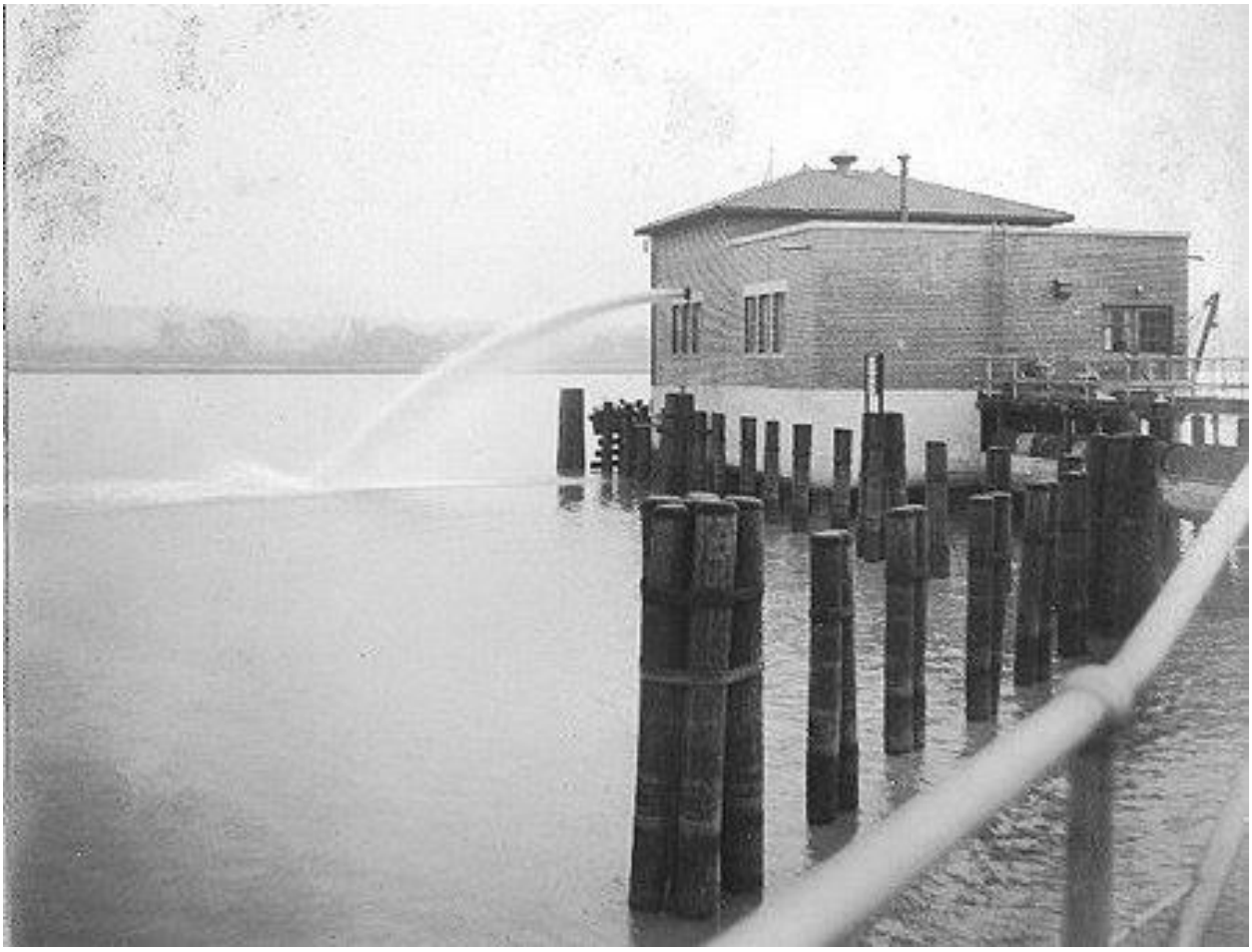
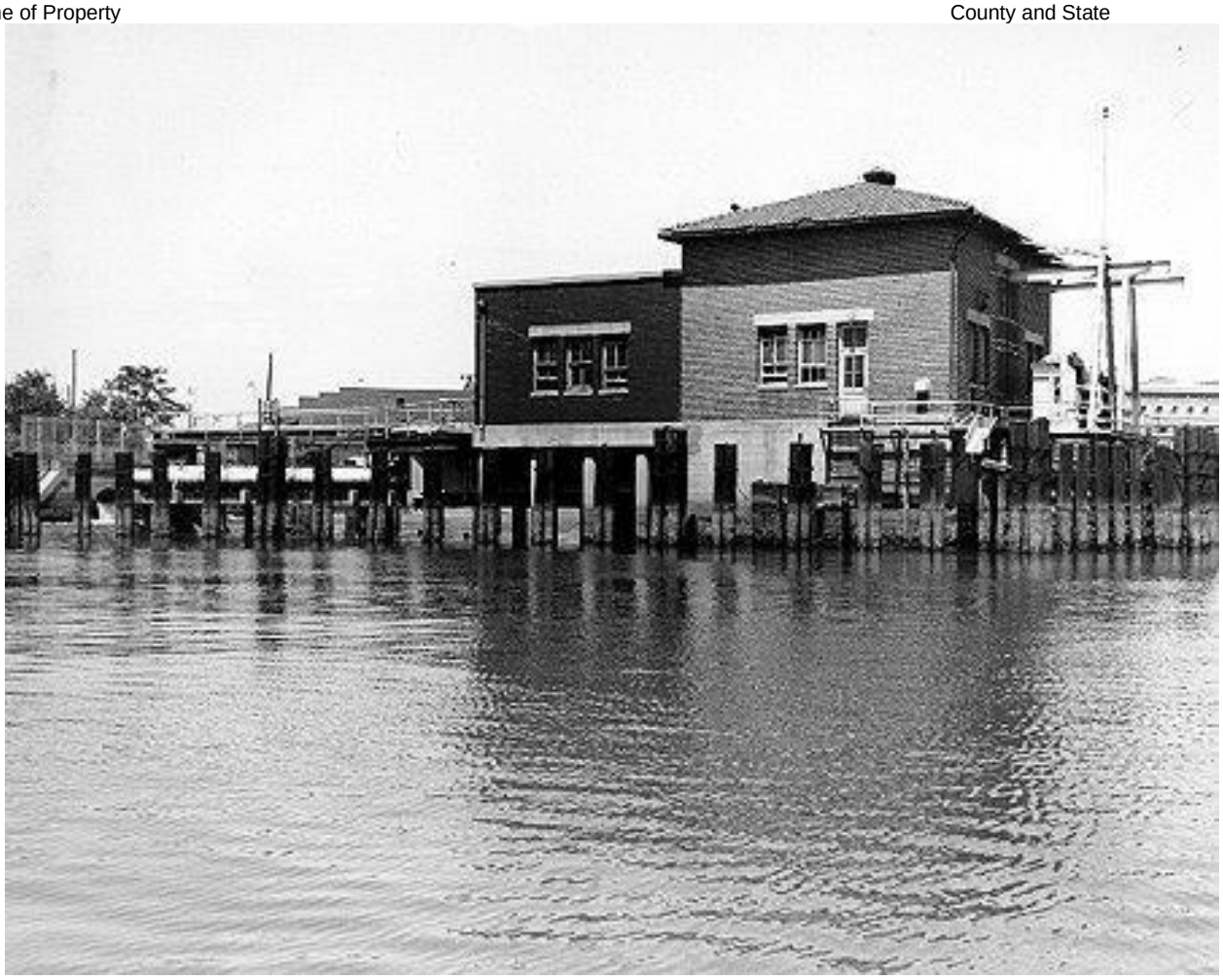


Photo taken 1938

Capitol Power Plant Pump House | Washington, DC
Name of Property | County and State



Later additions; photo taken 1954