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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name General Baking Company Bakery

other names/site number Bond Bread Factory

2. Location

street & number 2146 Georgia Avenue NW

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

not for publication

city or town Washington, D.C.

vicinity

state District of Columbia code DC county _____ code 001 zip code 20001

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

DAVID MALONEY / DC SHPO
Signature of certifying official/Title

OCT 30, 2013
Date

DC HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain): _____

Mr. Eason H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

12.24.13
Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box.)

- building(s)
- District
- 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

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE/Bakery

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Vacant

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Deco

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete
walls: Brick and terra cotta

roof: _____
other: _____

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Narrative Description

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

Physical Description

Summary Paragraph

The General Baking Company Bakery is located at 2146 Georgia Avenue, NW one block north of Florida Avenue and across from the main entrance to Howard University in the Shaw neighborhood of northwest Washington, D.C. The bakery building occupies a sizeable rectangular site that extends a full block deep from Georgia Avenue on the east to 8th Street on the west and is a notable landmark along the street which lies just beyond the original city limits.

Constructed in 1929 to the designs of architect Corry B. Comstock, the General Baking Company's Bond Bread Factory is an impressive and imposing Art Deco industrial building, characterized by its white brick construction, its stepped configuration and its Deco detailing, including channeled pilasters, recessed panels with decorative brick detailing, and terra cotta trimming. The front elevation, facing east onto Georgia Avenue, is the building's most prominent. Here, a three-story central tower with a penthouse is separated by its lower three- and two-story flanking wings by long and narrow piers. These piers rise from the ground level to above the cornice line, accentuating the building's verticality. Despite the overt quality of the Art Deco styling, the building retains some Classical detailing including the principal entry with its terra cotta architrave surround. This entry illustrates the transitional aspect of the Art Deco style of the 1920s, particularly as it pertains to the city's generally modest industrial architecture.

The building's style, quality craftsmanship, and decorative detailing are rare for the city's industrial building stock. The General Baking Company Bakery remains in its original location and setting and has had no major exterior alterations. Although currently vacant, the building survives in good condition and retains its integrity of setting, location, design, materials, craftsmanship, feeling, and association.

Exterior Description:

The General Baking Company Bakery building is attached on its south end, but was built as a free-standing structure with a distinctive and soaring massing still visible from three of its four sides. The building sits upon a low, concrete foundation with walls of white brick. The building is stepped in such a way that the three-story central pavilion and its penthouse rise above the lower building elements and appear taller than the building's actual height. Despite its three-dimensional aspect, the building is frontally oriented with its primary façade facing Georgia Avenue.

The front east façade consists of three parts: a three-story central pavilion and lower flanking side wings. The central pavilion is itself three-bays wide and features a center bay that is topped by a one-story, windowless penthouse. The building's profile thus assumes the stepped, or ziggurat configuration often associated with the Art Deco style.

The central pavilion's center bay is separated from the bays to either side by slightly projecting pilasters which rise from the concrete foundation at the base of the building to the top of the third story of the central pavilion. From here, the strong vertical lines are continued by rectangular terracotta piers culminating with caps forming

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the corners of the penthouse. The pavilion pilasters are decorated with recessed channels which run to the third story cornice, further enhancing the façade's verticality.

The principal entry is located at ground level in the center bay of the central pavilion. The single door entry is modest, but finely articulated by a carved limestone architrave and projecting cornice. Scrolled stone brackets rest atop the architrave at either end to support the projecting cornice with a cyma molding over a recessed bed molding of dentils. The entry was, until recently, flanked by identical light fixtures resembling lanterns, with leaded glass panels and finials.

Above the entry door, the central pavilion offers two floors of symmetrically arranged windows grouped in threes. The second story windows are separated from the first and third floors by recessed brick spandrels ornamented with all-header bricks. The spandrels between the second and third stories are longer than those between the first and the second stories. The three window bays are recessed slightly from the main wall plane, each one within its own frame. All of the window openings in this central pavilion are narrow and feature 1/1 replacement sash.

The penthouse caps this central bay. The solid-walled structure has white brick walls between terracotta corner blocks. The walls of the penthouse are subdivided by three vertical recessed strips of white terracotta block and capped by a rounded cornice line. The corner piers, of terra cotta block, similarly feature recessed panels, also lined with terra cotta blocks. The end piers are capped with gabled blocks.

The side bays of the central pavilion reflect a similar composition scheme. Beneath a parapet wall and a lower cornice, the wings present two vertical bays of openings on the first through third stories. On the second and third stories, these bays are filled with paired window openings, all with replacement sash. On the first story of the south bay, there are two large vents symmetrically arranged beneath the upper floor windows, while the north bay is largely devoted to a vehicle entrance, with a single door next to it. The vehicle entrance is currently covered by a rollup steel security door. Recessed spandrels between the first and second and second and third-story windows feature terracotta squares and, like those of the central bay, provide for a play of light and shadow on the façade.

The north and south wings are each two stories tall and two bays long. Each bay is separated by a brick pilaster and each bay includes two large window openings now filled with paired replacement sash. The pilasters extend from the concrete foundation, past the cornice line, and culminate with angled limestone caps such as those found on the central penthouse. The parapet wall of brick rises above the second-story windows and is capped by limestone.

Although all of the original window openings have been filled with metal replacement sash, the sash configurations appear similar to the single and paired one-over-one windows shown in the architect's rendering of the building at the time of its construction.

The Bond Factory's rear façade is divided into two sections. (Illustration 9) A four bay section to the north shares a common roofline with the building's north façade, but the slope of the grade from Georgia Avenue allows it an extra half-story of height. To its south is a three bay section bordering the WRECO Bus Garage, which is two-and-a half stories tall. Like the upper story of the wings of the Georgia Avenue façade, the second story of this section is only about fifty feet deep. Although the south façade is now hidden by the north wall of the WRECO Garage, it appears that the section between the rear of the south wings of the Georgia Avenue and Eighth Street elevations was an extension of the one story structure revealed by the north façade.

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The Eighth Street façade shares many elements with the Georgia Avenue façade. Its bays are divided by protruding piers with angled limestone caps. Each story other than the first has an aperture capable of holding a pair of single windows, but no spandrels. In the bays of the one-and-a-half story section, many of the apertures are filled with sets of metal louvers, apparently to ventilate the factory's fleet garage. Each of these bays has a pair of small rectangular windows just above the water table.

The two-and-a-half story section shares these elements, as well as taller parapet wall with an upper and lower cornice similar to those on the Georgia Avenue wings. Eighth Street slopes downhill as it proceeds south toward V Street, which allows this section to have a full height door and larger lower story windows. The first story of the southernmost bay is largely devoted to a vehicle entrance for the garage.

The Eighth Street elevation provides the clearest view of the factory's orange terracotta tile smokestack, which rises about five stories from the south side of the central portion of the building. The smokestack has a graceful cylindrical shape, with a flared top capped by a spark arrester. It is a distinctive element of the local skyline.

The north elevation, which faces a parking lot, is composed of several components: the one story in height, as opposed to being the two-story building depicted in the published pre-construction rendering. The two-story section of the north wing extends perhaps fifty feet west from the corner of Georgia Avenue, while the central pavilion's three story section extends roughly one and a half times deeper. The exposed facades of these multi-story sections share the basic elements of the Georgia Avenue façade, with bays, some blank and some with window apertures, separated by piers with limestone caps. The one story section, which otherwise extends the full width of the building, lacks most of these features. A single undifferentiated bay beneath a parapet wall with only an upper block cornice, it is penetrated by a half-dozen pairs of one-over-one windows. It was presumably designed with the expectation that all but its upper stories would be shielded from view by adjacent buildings to the north.

The interior of the building is not accessible. The building is vacant and its owner would not allow access. It is not known if any of the historic bakery ovens or other equipment are still in place on the interior. However, the existence of the interior workings are not considered critical to an understanding or appreciation of the bakery building.

INTEGRITY

The General Baking Company Bakery retains integrity of setting, location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The building is located on its original site along Georgia Avenue, just outside the original city limits. At this point in the city, Georgia Avenue is an extension of 7th Street, and like 7th Street, it was historically and remains today, an important commercial and transportation corridor. The building retains its original design as built, with no substantive alterations or additions. The building retains its original materials. The General Baking Company Baker building retains its feeling and association as an historic Art Deco designed commercial-industrial building. Because it no longer serves as a bakery, the smells associated with it are no longer apparent.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1929-1930

Significant Dates

1929

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Corry B. Comstock

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

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

The General Baking Company Bakery building was constructed at its present site on Georgia Avenue in 1929-1930 by the General Baking Company. The General Baking Company was a large New York City baking conglomerate that was formed in 1911 through the merger of 21 baking companies in 12 states from the mid-Atlantic, northeast and mid-west. One of these 21 companies, the Boston Baking Company, had been operating a bakery in Washington, D.C. at 119 First Street, SW since 1899. Boston Bakery was primarily a producer of bread, and competed with dozens of other such bakeries in the city during the early 20th century.

After the 1911 merger and for the next eight years, the General Baking Company continued to offer the same bread products as the Boston Baking Company. Then, in 1919, General Baking Company introduced its trademark brand—Bond Bread—to Washingtonians. Bond Bread was so-named for the guarantee printed on its wrapping paper affirming that the bread was pure and sanitary, an issue of great concern for the American consumer and the food industry. In 1928, when the federal government sought to take over the land where the bakery in southwest stood, for the U.S. Botanical Gardens, the General Baking Company moved its enterprise and built a new bakery on Georgia Avenue. The site was located near several other bakeries, including the still-extant though altered Corby Bakery at 2301 Georgia Avenue; Dorsch's White Cross Bakery at 641 S Street, NW (listed in the National Register); and Holzberlein's Bakery on Wiltberger Street adjacent to Dorsch's. As both Dorsch's White Cross Bakery and Corby's Bakery were prominently sited and had relatively new and stylish architect-designed bakery buildings advertising their businesses, the General Baking Company clearly felt the need to compete. The Company hired Corry B. Comstock of New York, an experienced bakery architect to design its new plant on Georgia Avenue, and in 1929, began construction of the striking white brick and terra cotta structure that served as the company's Washington bakery for the next forty-two years until it closed in 1971.

The General Baking Company Bakery's Bond Bread Factory meets National Register Criterion C because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, and method of construction. The factory not only survives as a premier example of a purpose-built bakery building, it also provides an excellent example of the use of the Art Deco style for an industrial building. Indeed, the Bond Bread Factory is one of only a handful of the city's industrial buildings executed in the Art Deco style. In these industrial examples, the Art Deco styling is less flamboyant than what is generally found in the city's other Art Deco buildings, but is consistent with the general tendency of industrial design in the city. The Bond Bread Factory provides an excellent illustration of a purpose-built bakery and an Art Deco-style industrial building.

The Period of Significance for the General Baking Company Bakery is 1929-1930, the beginning and end date of construction of the building.

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

The General Baking Company Bakery building is significant in the Area of Architecture. It is an architecturally distinctive industrial building and one of just a few surviving historic bakery buildings in the city. At a time when many new factory buildings were nondescript, the General Baking Company clearly sought a distinguished and dignified look for its Georgia Avenue plant, reflected in its commissioning the nationally

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prominent bakery architect Corry B. Comstock to design it. The building's stepped, three-level façade is in keeping with Art Deco design practices, which favored ziggurat-like shapes.ⁱ Its sleek vertical piers with their pointed stone caps at the roofline signal a touch of the soaring optimism of the Art Deco age, though the building is not actually very tall. The design adheres to the "stripped classical" or "traditionalized Moderne" style typical of Washington's federal offices—the verve of Art Deco checked by the constraints of neoclassicism.ⁱⁱ The overall message, though restrained, is of pride and permanence.

The Bond Bread Factory reflects an important stage in the development of the District of Columbia as the city's outstanding representative of the "sanitary bakery" movement in industrial architecture. It also represents a stage in the city's economic history when modern factories were constructed to manufacture national brands locally. Its construction was a significant event in the development of light industry in a neighborhood that was once one of the city's major transportation hubs.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Bread-making in the early 20th Century

At the beginning of the twentieth century, food sanitation had become a nationwide obsession, culminating in Upton Sinclair's influential *The Jungle*, about the horrors of the meatpacking industry. Bread-making was also a topic of concern.ⁱⁱⁱ An article in the *New York Times* in 1896 excoriated small traditional bakeries in that city ("The walls and floors are covered with vermin, spiders hang from the rafters, and cats, dogs, and chickens are running around in the refuse...") and asserted that "the cause of this trouble is that small bakeries are owned by ignorant persons. The large bakeries are conducted in an exemplary manner."^{iv}

Contemporary newspaper articles suggest a campaign to get people to buy their bread from large factories. An 1893 article in the *Evening Star* observed that "Home-made bread is a back number. Machine-made bread takes the cake. The twentieth century bakery is a thing of beauty and the up-to-date baker is a joy forever."^v At the popular Pure Food Show at the Washington Convention Hall in 1909, D.C. bakeries put on a massive exhibit that filled the K Street end of the hall. Visitors could observe machines doing the work in a modern factory setting; dirty human hands never touched the bread.^{vi} In that same vein, a 1919 advertisement for Dorsch's White Cross Bakery in *The Washington Times* urged consumers to give up their old-fashioned reliance on the corner store: "Why buy bread at the grocer's, fresh for each meal, when it is possible to get *good, wholesome, and fresh* bread that tastes as good at the *last bite* as it did when you first cut into the warm loaf?"^{vii}

History of the General Baking Company in Washington

The General Baking Company's predecessor in Washington D.C., was the Boston Baking Company, which operated its plant at 119 First Street SW, a site at the foot of Capitol Hill that is now occupied by the U.S. Botanical Garden building. The company was primarily a commercial producer of bread, competing with

ⁱ Hans Wirz and Richard Striner, *Washington Deco: Art Deco Design in the Nation's Capital*, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1984), 35.

ⁱⁱ Wirz and Striner, 89ff.

ⁱⁱⁱ See, for example, "Clean Bread," full-page advertisement in *The Washington Times*, Jul. 26, 1908, 10 and "Bond Bread and pure milk—both are safe foods for him," advertisement in *The Washington Post*, Dec. 15, 1919, 11.

^{iv} "War on Filthy Bakeries" in *The New York Times*, Apr. 8, 1896.

^v "The Staff Of Life: How Bread Is Made in a Big Bakery" in *The Evening Star*, Jul. 15, 1893.

^{vi} "Pure Food For All" in *The Washington Post*, Nov. 14, 1909, ES10.

^{vii} Advertisement in *The Washington Times*, Feb. 27, 1919, p. 15.

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several other local bakeries for the market in bread sold at grocery stores for 5 cents a loaf. The Boston Baking Company's brands included "Butter Krust Bread," "Grandma's Bread," and "Pan Dandy Bread," which it advertised in 1908 as being "better for you than the ordinary fluffy 'baker's' bread," having "all the flavor and substance of the finest home-made bread."^{viii} "There is no finer and sweeter bread baked than the bread bearing the BOSTON LABELS," a 1911 advertisement proclaimed.^{ix} The Boston Baking Company was one of several companies that worked hard to publicize the idea for Washingtonians that factory-made bread could be every bit as good as homemade bread but more sanitary. It contributed to the "Model and Modern Bakery" at the 1909 D.C. Pure Food Show. Other participants at the time included Corby Brothers, Behrens & Sons, the Havenner Baking Company, and Michael Holzbeirlein.

Early in 1911, rumors started circulating that a giant new "bread trust" was to be formed in New York City. A group of independent bakeries were planning to pool their resources to combat the powerful Ward Baking Company, headed by Robert B. and George S. Ward. Originally to be called the National Bread Company, the trust combined 21 baking companies in 12 northeastern and midwestern cities, with assets worth some \$25 million. When the merger was completed in June, the name had been changed to the General Baking Company. Aware of the sensitivities at the time to the formation of commercial monopolies, which were being fought by Theodore Roosevelt's Justice Department, the new company issued a statement about its intentions:

There is no purpose or thought of the establishment of a monopoly in the manufacture and sale of bread; such a monopoly would be impossible, as in most localities, with few exceptions, only one baking company has been acquired, leaving competition open to hundreds of others.

The real purpose of the company is progressive through the advantage of wise buying of materials, the employment of economic, scientific, and up-to-date methods of manufacturing, and by its extensive advertising system it proposes to educate the public to a higher standard of quality in bread.^x

Boston Baking Company's Richard J. Earnshaw had stated in March, perhaps disingenuously, that it wasn't planning to join the new conglomerate. "We never have received an offer for our plant. If enough money is offered us we, of course, will sell out.... The talk of a 'bread trust' however, is ridiculous."^{xi} Nevertheless, three months later the Boston Baking Company was one of the companies that formed the new organization.^{xii} Key to the merger was Harry B. Leary, Sr. (1864-1938), who had made his fortune in the commercial boating business in Baltimore before coming to Washington to represent several western flourmills. Along with Earnshaw, Leary controlled Boston Baking and engineered its merger into the General Baking Company.^{xiii}

At first, the bakery continued to produce the same bread products as the Boston Baking Company had previously sold. Then in 1919, General Baking Company introduced its Bond Bread line, its trademark brand, to Washingtonians. As the company extensively advertised, it held a special competition in November 1919 at the local YWCA, attended by 2,210 Washington housewives, who all brought their best homemade bread to the event. A "committee of impartial judges" selected the best 121 loaves from the lot, and "from these best home-made loaves Bond Bread has been patterned—in order that the children and grown-ups of Washington and vicinity may have better bread—more delicious bread, than they have ever had before."^{xiv}

^{viii} Advertisement in *The Washington Post*, Nov. 16, 1908, p. 12.

^{ix} Advertisement in *The Washington Post*, Jul. 4, 1911, p.3.

^x "Bakers In Merger" in *The Washington Post*, Jun. 15, 1911, p. 1.

^{xi} "Bread Trust in Deadlock" in *The Washington Post*, Mar. 15, 1911, p. 12.

^{xii} *Baist's Real Estate Atlas of Washington, District of Columbia*. (Philadelphia: G. Wm. Baist, 1913), Vol. II, Plate 5.

^{xiii} "H.B. Leary Sr. Dies; Business Man, 74" in *The New York Times*, May 13, 1938.

^{xiv} Advertisement in *The Washington Post*, Dec. 15, 1919, p. 11.

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The new product was called Bond Bread because each loaf had General Baking Company's guarantee printed on its wrapper, warranting that "the loaf of bread contained within this germ and dust proof wrapper is made from the following pure food materials, and no other ingredients of any kind: best spring wheat flour, compressed yeast, pure filtered water, best fine salt, pure lard, cane sugar, and condensed milk."

During the 1920s, William B. Ward formed a holding company called United Bakeries to operate more than 35 plants controlled by his family, which was a dominant force in the New York City market. In 1925, he set up Continental Bakeries, which absorbed other companies, including Taggart Bakeries, the creators of Wonder Bread, and soon controlled over 100 plants. Then, in 1926, Ward acquired General Baking, which controlled 42 plants, and attempted to consolidate all three firms into a colossus called the Ward Food Products Corporation. However, the Justice Department filed an anti-trust suit and in 1927 obtained a consent decree requiring that connections between the three firms be dissolved. Within 18 months, William B. Ward died suddenly at his desk at age 44, complicating the decoupling of the firms, which took years.^{xv}

By 1928, government plans to relocate the U.S. Botanical Garden to General Baking Company's site at the foot of Capitol Hill forced General Baking to look for a new location. Company officials chose the site of a neighborhood swimming pool, formerly operated by the District of Columbia Sports and Amusement Club, on Georgia Avenue in Shaw.^{xvi}

The site was about a block and a half south of another large bakery complex, the Corby Baking Company, at 2301 Georgia Avenue NW. The Corby Baking Company had been founded by Charles I. Corby (1871-1926) and his brother William (1867-1935). Their bakery, which at one point was Washington's largest, was constructed in 1902 with subsequent additions in 1912 and later that filled the block.

Opposite the new General Baking site on the east side of Georgia Avenue was Griffith Stadium, where a number of Washington baseball and football teams played. For years to come, attendees at ball games would be treated to the sweet smells of the Bond Bread factory wafting over them as they sat in the stadium's bleachers.^{xvii}

Excavation work at the bakery site, by the Charles L. Stockhausen Company of Baltimore, began in 1929. General Baking awarded \$650,000 in contracts for construction of the state-of-the-art building, made of white-glazed brick and reinforced concrete. Corry B. Comstock of New York, an experienced bakery architect, designed the stately new structure. An article in the *Evening Star* noted that the building would be one of the largest and most modernly equipped in Washington. "Particular attention will be paid to sanitary measures, the bread being touched by human hands only twice in the baking and once in the wrapping."^{xviii} It was completed in 1930.^{xix} By that time the General Baking Company owned 50 plants serving cities in 18 states.

The 1930s and 1940s saw a shift in bread marketing. Sanitation fears were no longer as prominent in the mind of the public, which was growing used to "clean" packaged foods. As a result marketing shifted toward stressing the nutritional benefits of eating bread on a daily basis. General Baking was competing head to head with Continental Baking, which had taken over the Corby Company. Bond Bread squared off on grocery store shelves with Continental's Wonder Bread. General Baking upped the ante in 1931 when it licensed patents from

^{xv} *Handbook of American Business History: Manufacturing*, edited by David O. Whitten, Bessie Emrick Whitten (Greenwood, 1997), 47, and *Combination in the American Bread-baking Industry*, 127-128.

^{xvi} "Bakers To Locate on Georgia Avenue" in *The Evening Star*, Jun. 12, 1928.

^{xvii} There are several reminiscences on the Web, such as <http://washingtondcmemories.com/mem12.html> In many cases, the individual who remembers the aroma of bread mistakenly thinks it came from the Wonder Bread factory. The Wonder Bread factory was better known but was not as close as the Bond factory, which was the much more likely source.

^{xviii} "\$650,000 Bakery Work Is Awarded" in *The Evening Star*, Jul. 24, 1929.

^{xix} "New General Baking Co. Plant Nearly Completed" in *The Evening Star*, Mar. 16, 1930.

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the Paediatric Research Foundation for fortifying its Bond Bread with vitamin D. Research in the 1920s at Johns Hopkins University and elsewhere had demonstrated the health benefits of vitamin D, known as the sunshine vitamin because it is absorbed through the skin directly from the sun. In September 1931, the manager of the Georgia Avenue bakery had an army of messenger boys hand-deliver thousands of loaves of Bond Bread to “doctors, dentists, nurses, and matrons of schools and hospitals in Washington and adjacent territory” to publicize its newly enriched bread.^{xx} Continental Baking Company soon responded by adding more nutrients to Wonder Bread, eventually culminating in the famous “Builds Strong Bodies 12 Ways” advertising slogan. Other nutrition-oriented marketing campaigns from both companies focused on the use of unbleached flour as well as larger amounts of milk to increase the vitamins, minerals, and protein content of the bread.

Consumption of plain white bread—the primary product of the General Baking Company’s Georgia Avenue plant—peaked in the early 1950s, declining after that largely due to the introduction of competing types of breads and bread products. The company at that point was producing bread under the Bond and Blossom brands. The *Washington Times-Herald* reported in 1953 that baking was the largest processing industry in Washington, with 17 major bakeries scattered about the city. The industry employed 3,000 people who worked around the clock to produce breads, cakes, and rolls of every description. Further, according to “industry spokesmen,” residents of the greater Washington metropolitan area spent \$23 million per year on bakery products, eating about 300,000 pounds of bread every day.^{xxi}

In the late 1950s the General Baking Company began a campaign of expansion and diversification, purchasing Van de Kamp's Holland Dutch Bakers, Inc., of Los Angeles, which represented its first break into the west coast market. The following year it acquired Eddy Bakeries, Inc., of Helena, Montana, to gain a foothold in the mountain states. However, by the early 1960s, General Baking Company’s profit margins on bread making had slimmed to less than 1 percent. The company was facing stiff competition not only from dominant Continental Baking Company but also from in-store bakeries at local supermarkets, which often were able to offer fresher, cheaper bread. In addition, the interest of corporate managers had shifted to tourism. The company purchased tourist facilities at Yellowstone National Park and Everglades National Park, among others, and in 1967 changed its name to General Host in 1967 to reflect its diversification. In the early 1970s it began selling off its bakeries to concentrate on other forms of retail.^{xxii}

By 1971, the Georgia Avenue plant had shut down, and the D.C. government purchased the building for use as a community services center. The D.C. government had received federal funds to renovate the bakery building and run the community services center in it jointly with the People’s Involvement Corporation (PIC), a federally-financed anti-poverty group that was given a 30-year tenancy.^{xxiii} In 2001, when PIC’s lease expired, the D.C. government proposed exchanging the property with Howard University for a parcel of land at Florida and Sherman Avenues NW. The university planned to build a new development on the bakery site called Howard Town Center, a mix of housing and retail businesses. A separate project of offices, retail and housing was likewise to be developed on the parcel of land obtained by the city. The D.C. City Council ratified the arrangement in 2006, and the exchange of properties was completed in 2008.

^{xx} “Doctors Make Test of Vitamin D Bread” in *The Washington Post*, Sep. 27, 1931, p. M12.

^{xxi} “Bakery Output in Washington Hits High Mark” in *The Washington Times-Herald*, Aug. 9, 1953.

^{xxii} General Host Corporation company history, at <http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/General-Host-Corporation-Company-History.html>

^{xxiii} “2 Little City Halls Set in NW” in *The Washington Post*, Jul. 27, 1971, C1.

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The Architect: Corry B. Comstock

The Bond Bakery was designed by New York architect-engineer Corry B. Comstock (1874-1932), an extremely significant figure in the branch of industrial architecture concerned with baking, as well as a designer of sports arenas and other athletic venues. Born in Pittston, Pennsylvania on October 15, 1874, Comstock worked as a carpenter as a young man. By 1900, he had migrated to Pittsburgh, where he continued in this trade and apparently completed his education. By 1905, he was advertising his services as an architect and refrigeration engineer with offices in the Union Stockyard on Herra Island. It is likely that Comstock began his lifelong association with the Ward Baking Company during these early years in Pittsburgh.^{xxiv}

The Ward family's first bakeries were small shops in Manhattan. Just before the Civil War, Hugh Ward relocated his business to Pittsburgh, where his sons Robert B. and George S. Ward's bread-baking firm erected what was billed as the city's first "scientific" and "sanitary" bakery in 1903. During the next several years, the Ward brothers expanded their operations to Chicago, then to Providence, Cleveland, and Boston.^{xxv} In 1908, they decided to re-enter the New York City market, this time on a large scale.^{xxvi} As Robert B. Ward recalled;

Having selected a suitable location for the establishment of a plant in Brooklyn and in the Bronx section I took the architects with me and embarked for Europe. We were gone some thirty days and when we returned the plans were completed. They were made literally in mid-Atlantic. I took this novel course so as to be entirely free from the usual interruptions of business in an office.^{xxvii}

Ward's party, which included Comstock, landed in New York in October 1909, just three months before the *New York Times* reported that the firm would erect a six story plant covering much of a block along Southern Boulevard in the Bronx and a similarly large plant on Pacific Street in Brooklyn. Comstock was the architect for both plants, with bakeries in East Orange, New Jersey and Manhattan soon to follow.^{xxviii}

By 1911, New York's established bakeries had organized their "Bread Trust," the General Baking Company, to combat the Wards, and both sides battled for market share by such tactics as distributing wagonloads of free loaves house-to-house.^{xxix} Comstock's factories became propaganda weapons in this trade war. The Ward Baking Company promoted itself as technologically advanced, endowing nutritional research at universities, and its "Tip-Top Bread" as hygienic and healthful. A 1911 *Architects' and Builders' Magazine* feature on the new plants observed that "No place can be too clean for the production of food, and with an apparent full recognition of the advertising value of this fact" the Wards "have made their buildings within and without as clean and as

^{xxiv} Comstock's birth date is referenced in numerous Ships' Passenger Manifests, see, for example,

http://search.ancestry.com/iexec?htx=View&r=an&dbid=7488&iid=NYT715_13520020&fn=Corry+B&ln=Comstock&st=r&ssrc=&pid=4005265975 accessed February 1, 2013. His residence was captured in the 1896 City Directory for Pittston, PA, 208, the 1900 U.S. Census, 2nd Ward, ED 257, Sheet 13B, and the 1902 Pittsburgh City Directory, 354, and 1906 Pittsburgh City Directory, 2079. All accessed online at <http://www.ancestry.com> January 20, 2013.

^{xxv} *Bread Facts*, (New York: Research Products Division, Ward Baking Company, 1920)106-109, and "Sudden Death of Robert B. Ward," *Bakers' Review*, November, 1915, 76.

^{xxvi} "Bread Trust has a Rival," *New York Times*, March 3, 1910

^{xxvii} F.C. Lane. "Famous Magnates of the Federal League," in *Baseball Magazine*, July 3, 1915, 25-29, online at www.la84foundation.org/SportsLibrary/BBM/1915/bbm3g.pdf, accessed January 20, 2013. New York Passenger Lists, 1820-1957 establish that a party including Ward and Comstock landed in New York on October 10, 1909 after embarking from Cherbourg See http://search.ancestry.com/iexec?htx=View&r=an&dbid=7488&iid=NYT715_13520020&fn=Corry+B&ln=Comstock&st=r&ssrc=&pid=4005265975 accessed February 1, 2013.

^{xxviii} "In the Real Estate Field", *New York Times*, February 2, 1910 and February 19, 1910., accessed at <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F60612F73C5417738DDDA0894D405B808DF1D3>, January 22, 2013.

^{xxix} "Bread Trust Begins War in Brownsville," *New York Times*, January 3, 1911, <http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F50D11F83C5517738DDDA0894D9405B818DF1D3>

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sanitary, both in fact and in appearance, as it is possible to make them.”^{xxx} Comstock’s terracotta-clad Bronx plant was called “a beautiful structure of white tile, with graceful Grecian outlines,” which produced bread safe from human contact..., literally baked from start to finish untouched by the human hand.”^{xxxi} This imagery of “spotless cleanliness” was enhanced by the plants’ underground loading docks and garages, which eliminated “horses, harness, and stables” and enabled delivery of “every loaf” in electric trucks, “driven by clean-cut healthy salesman uniformed and gloved in white.”^{xxxii}

Comstock’s work for the Wards soon moved beyond the baking business. In addition to his keen promotional instincts, Robert B. Ward was a passionate baseball fan. After allegedly being unable to close a deal for the New York Yankees, the Ward brothers became prominent backers of the “outlaw” Federal League, which challenged the American and National League during the early nineteen-teens. Comstock designed the steel and concrete grandstands at Washington Park,^{xxxiii} the home of the Wards’ Brooklyn Tip-Tops, who changed their name to the “Federals” after New York’s newspaper publishers that they would eschew reporting the games before advertising the Wards’ bread for free. In 1914, Comstock designed Harrison Field, the home of the Newark Peppers, and when the Federal League threatened to construct a stadium with innovative post less grandstands near the Giants’ Polo Grounds in Manhattan, Comstock was announced as its architect.^{xxxiv}

When Pittsburgh’s Federal League team appeared financially shaky, Ward arranged for Comstock to become its co-owner, as well as the rebuilders of its Exhibition Park grandstand, completing his improbable fifteen-year journey from carpenter to major league franchise owner.^{xxxv} The Pittsburgh Rebels, who took their nickname from playing manager Ennis “Rebel” Oakes, prospered under Comstock’s co-ownership, going from a losing record in 1914 to finishing a half-game behind the league champions the following season. Comstock was highly active in league affairs, and, after interference by the more established leagues, internal conflicts, and the sudden death of Robert B. Ward caused the demise of the Federal League after the 1915 season, Pittsburgh and Brooklyn were among the four franchises for which compensation was successfully negotiated.^{xxxvi}

By 1916, Comstock had established an office for his engineering and architectural practice on Manhattan’s Park Avenue.^{xxxvii} The Raymond Concrete Pile Company used photographs of a Ward plant in its advertising and listed Comstock among the prominent architects who used their products.^{xxxviii} He invented a commercial oven, which the *New York Times* reported was still widely used during the 1930s, and became an executive in a steel products firm and a director of the Ward Baking Company, while continuing to design bakeries and other industrial structures. In 1922, he designed Iceland, a mammoth 200-foot long skating rink behind a glazed terracotta façade on 53rd Street at Broadway. Iceland, for years the only large indoor rink in the city, had

^{xxx} “Ward Bread Company Bakeries in the Boroughs of Brooklyn and the Bronx,” *Architects and Builders Magazine* June, 1911) Volume 43, Number 9, 485

^{xxxi} *Lane*. 106-108.

^{xxxii} *Bread Facts*, 110.

^{xxxiii} “Federal League Park and Postless Stand,” *The World of Baseball*, December 11, 1915, 11

^{xxxiv} “Break Ground For Park; Newark Federal Ground Will Be Ready April 20-- To Seat 20,000” *New York Times*, March 2, 1915. Also, David Pietrusza and Lee McPhail. *Major Leagues* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co, 1991), 245 and “Federal League Park and Postless Stand,” *The World of Baseball*, December 11, 1915, 11

^{xxxv} David R. Leavitt, *The Battle That Forged Modern Baseball: The Federal League Challenge* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), 99 and “Pittsburgh Feds Reorganize,” *New York Times*, March 10, 1914,

^{xxxvi} See Leavitt for a detailed account of Comstock’s involvements in the higher councils of the league, including winning approval from the New York City Board of Alderman to close Manhattan streets for the proposed ballpark (228), as well as the settlement discussions and protracted lawsuit.

^{xxxvii} *Manhattan City Directory, 1916*, online at <http://www.ancestry.com>

^{xxxviii} “Better Foundations,” *The American Architect*, May 14, 1913, 17, was illustrated with Comstock’s Schorsch Building in the Bronx and contained a testimonial from the architect.

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financial backing from the famous disappearing Judge John F. Crater, but Comstock apparently held some equity, as he remained president of the company for the final decade of his life.^{xxxix}

Through the tumultuous growth and restructuring of the Ward empire in the mid-1920s, Comstock served as a director of both the Ward and Continental Baking Companies and remained active as an engineer-architect. He designed large bakeries, including simultaneously constructed plants for both the Ward and General Baking companies in Baltimore, where he had designed large packinghouse facilities since the nineteen-teens, as well a large factory for the Gottfried Baking Company on 51st Street in Manhattan.^{xi}

The Bond Factory and the Gottfried Bakery commission in Manhattan were probably codas to Comstock's architectural career. When the Bond Factory produced its first loaves on June 2, 1930, the Great Depression was casting a pall over the construction industry. By 1932, it was estimated that two-thirds of the construction workers in New York City were out of work, and the team fortunate enough to be employed designing Rockefeller Center voted to tithe themselves an hour's pay each week for the relief of destitute architects.^{xii} Corry Comstock still had his corporate directorships, and presidency of the Iceland Company. He spent much of 1930-31 in a successful proxy battle to replace the chair and most of the board of the Ward Bakery Company, but by the following year his health was failing and Iceland was in foreclosure.^{xiii} On October 24, 1932, after spending two weeks at home with severe heart problems, he left his house in the prosperous suburb of Pelham for his midtown Manhattan office. At about 6:00 PM, he asked his bookkeeper to pick up a newspaper downstairs. When the bookkeeper returned a few minutes later, he found Comstock dead on the floor, with a bullet in his head and a pistol in his hand. Documents on his desk showed that he was several months behind in the office rent and that he wished his ashes to be scattered from the new George Washington Bridge, an engineering feat he greatly admired.^{xiiii}

The Bond Bread Factory as Architecture

The construction of the Bond Bread Factory bridged the divide from the boom times of the summer of 1929 to the lengthening shadows of the Great Depression in the summer of 1930. It was designed by at a time of intense competition in the baking industry both locally and nationally, which only grew more acute as the public's purchasing power declined. Bond Bread was a national brand which depended on more than the Washington, DC market, but the fact that the Bond Bread Factory in use through the depression and for thirty years beyond suggests that it was a highly efficient industrial building. However, its architectural qualities extended beyond the merely functional.

The Bond Bread Factory represent the apogee of the values represented in Comstock's bakery designs since the Ward plants of 1910. The building's expansive planes of white surface suggested the cleanliness and sanitary conditions the customer would hope to find within. Its symmetrical yet dramatic massing, ziggurat-style roofline, and central tower projected its era's conception of modernity; they suggest that it employs the latest

^{xxxix} "Skating Rink for West 53rd," *New York Times*, April 22, 1922 and Christopher Grey, "An Old-Fashioned Dance to the Music of Time," Real Estate Section, *New York Times*, October 13, 1996, at <http://www.nytimes.com/1996/10/13/realestate/an-old-fashioned-dance-to-the-music-of-time.html>, accessed Jan. 22, 2013

^{xi} See New York City Office of Metropolitan History, Building Permits Database 19001986, 1930 OB 53, online at <http://www.metrohistory.com/searchfront.htm> accessed January 19, 2013, "Real Estate." *The Baltimore Sun*, Jul 20, 1919; C57, "Real Estate Deals And Building News: Bids Asked For Erection Of New Structure" *The Baltimore Sun*; Oct 1, 1926; 21

^{xii} Daniel Okrent. *Great Fortune: The Epic of Rockefeller Center* (New York: Viking, 2003) 188-192.

^{xiii} "New Ward Baking Row; Rival Factions Set Different Dates for Directors' Meeting," *New York Times*, January 28, 1931 and "Ward Baking Ousts Kent And Evans; Comstock-Gwinner Faction Wins In All-Night Meeting Of Stockholders," *New York Times*, January 28, 1931, 31.

^{xiiii} "Engineer Ends Life In 42d St. Office," *New York Times*, October 25, 1932 and "Comstock Funeral Today," *New York Times*, October 27, 1932, 19.

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technology and produces products that reflect more finely-wrought tastes than the typical utilitarian loaf of bread.

The General Baking Company Factory creates an interesting contrast with the nearby Dorsch's White Cross Bakery, which was constructed section-by-section earlier in the twentieth century. The Dorsch Bakery reflects the anxieties of its era by essentially keeping a foot in both past and present. It symbolically evokes the conception of industrial baking as healthy and sanitary with the famous white crosses; yet the arts and crafts styling of its façade also evokes something homey and artisanal: Rather than the impersonal and tasteless sterility associated with a mass-produced product, our bread is as tasty and wholesome as mother's homemade loaf but far safer than the neighborhood baker's! The Bond Factory's message contains no such equivocation. Its era placed its faith in science and its industrial applications, symbolized by the plant's crisp horizontal symmetry of its facade, reflecting the orderly production line within, and its smooth white surfaces, so unlike the unmatched brick textures and irregular projections of the Dorsch Bakery. One feature of the Bond Factory was as remarkable in 1929 as it had been in 1910, when it appeared in Comstock's original Ward bakeries. This was an auditorium, intended primarily for employee meetings, but also loaned out for community events. Letting the cleanliness and order of the production process sell bread through word of mouth was further advanced by factory facilities for hosting tours for school children and tea parties for women's groups.

Corry B. Comstock was an industrial architect who nonetheless designed bakeries that are aesthetically-pleasing as well as highly-functional. Despite the austere factory construction budgets of its time, the Bond Bread Factory is a distinguished and dignified structure. By splitting the face of the main façade into multiple visual planes through protrusions and setbacks, Comstock avoided presenting passers-by and neighbors with blank expanses of white wall. While the factory could have presented a squat profile to the street, Comstock enhanced its verticality with the protruding piers which sweep from sidewalk height to the top of the façade and are accentuated with dramatically-angled contrasting capstones. The integration of the penthouse on the center bay of the central pavilion suggests a tower which further contributes to this effect. Comstock's use of the moderne style removes it from the utilitarian category and raises it to the level of a public building, in much the same way that Arthur B. Heaton's design elevated the neighboring WRECO Bus Garage.^{xliv} This style is associated with such prominent skyscraper projects of the time and would soon become a staple style for federal construction. Its employment helped integrate this factory building into the landscape of a community far different than that of "smokestack cities" like Detroit or Pittsburgh. This recognition of the stately architectural quality of the Bond Bread Factory is not merely a matter of individual taste. Rather, it was validated by the 1970s project to repurpose it as a "little city hall" and community center in the 1970s.

^{xliv} See *Streetcar and Bus Resources of Washington, D.C., 1862-1962*, E87.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

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- Wirz, Hans and Richard Striner, *Washington Deco: Art Deco Design in the Nation’s Capital*, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1984)

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 39,072 square feet

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 3 24 664 43 09 472
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

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

The General Baking Company Bakery at 2146 Georgia Avenue, NW occupies Lot 0930 in Square 2877 in Washington, D.C.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The square and lot have been associated with the building since its construction on the site in 1929-1930.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Peter Sefton and John DeFerrari, Trustees
organization D.C. Preservation League date 1/30/2013
street & number 401 F Street, NW, Room 324 telephone (202) 783-5144
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20001
e-mail info@dcpreservation.org

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

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

Name of Property: General Baking Company Bakery
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: State: DC
Photographer: Kim Williams
Date Photographed: October 2013

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

East elevation; view looking northwest
1 of 9.

East elevation
2 of 9

General Baking Company/Bond Bread Factory
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Washington, D.C.
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East elevation; view looking northwest
3 of 9

East elevation tower detail
4 of 9

East elevation; entry detail
5 of 9

North elevation; view looking south
6 of 9

North elevation; view looking southeast
7 of 9

North and west elevations; view looking southeast
8 of 9

West elevation; view looking north
9 of 9.

Property Owner:

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

name Howard University
street & number 2041 Georgia Avenue, NW telephone _____
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20060-0001

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

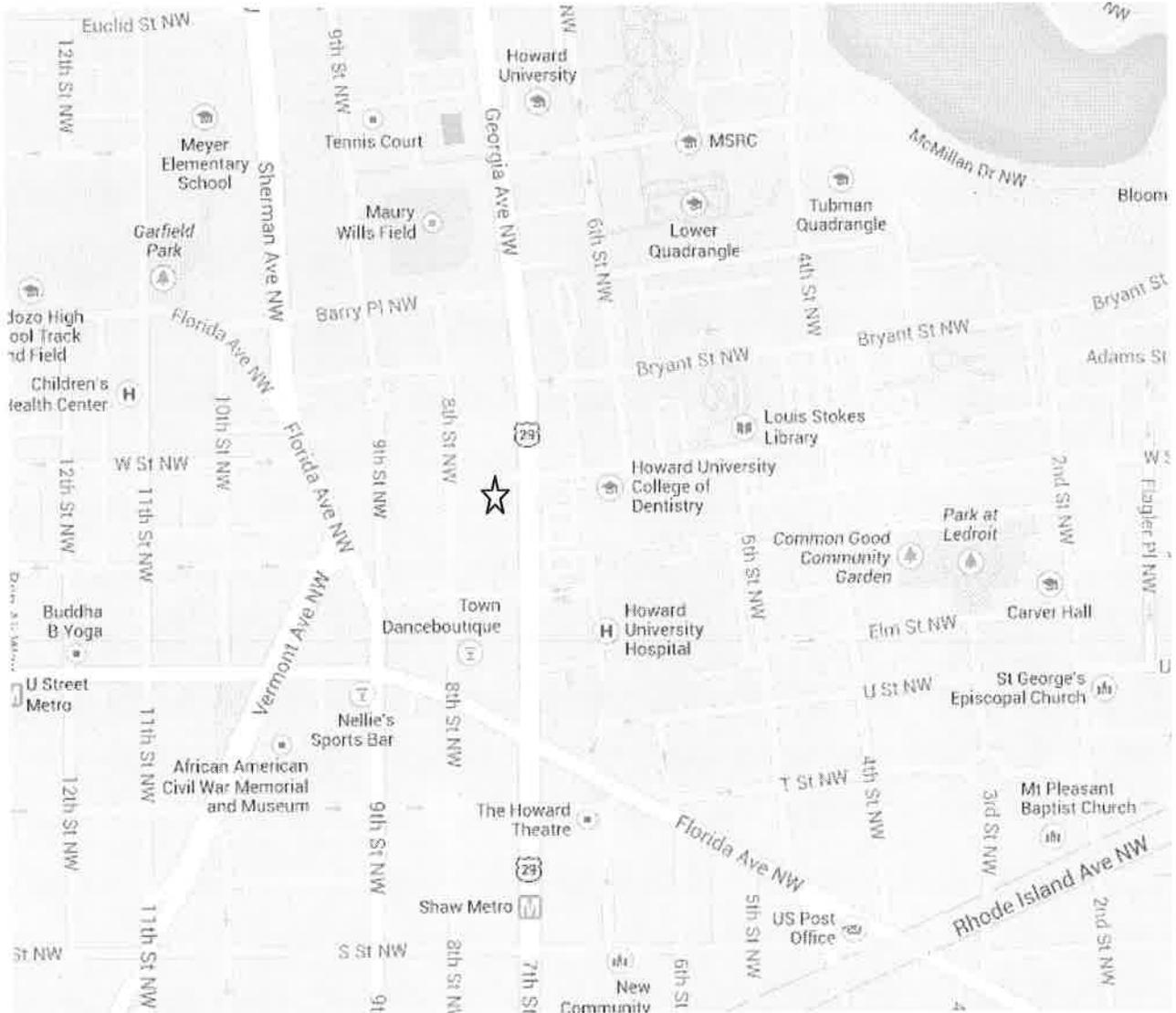
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United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places
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Name of Property
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 1



Site plan showing general vicinity of General Baking Company Bakery at 2146 Georgia Avenue, NW

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

.....
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.....
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.....
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 2



Aerial photo showing General Baking Company Bakery at 2146 Georgia Avenue, NW

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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Site plan showing National Register boundaries of General Baking Company Bakery at 2146 Georgia Avenue, NW (alternatively 2114 Georgia Avenue as shown on map)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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Section number 8 Page 4



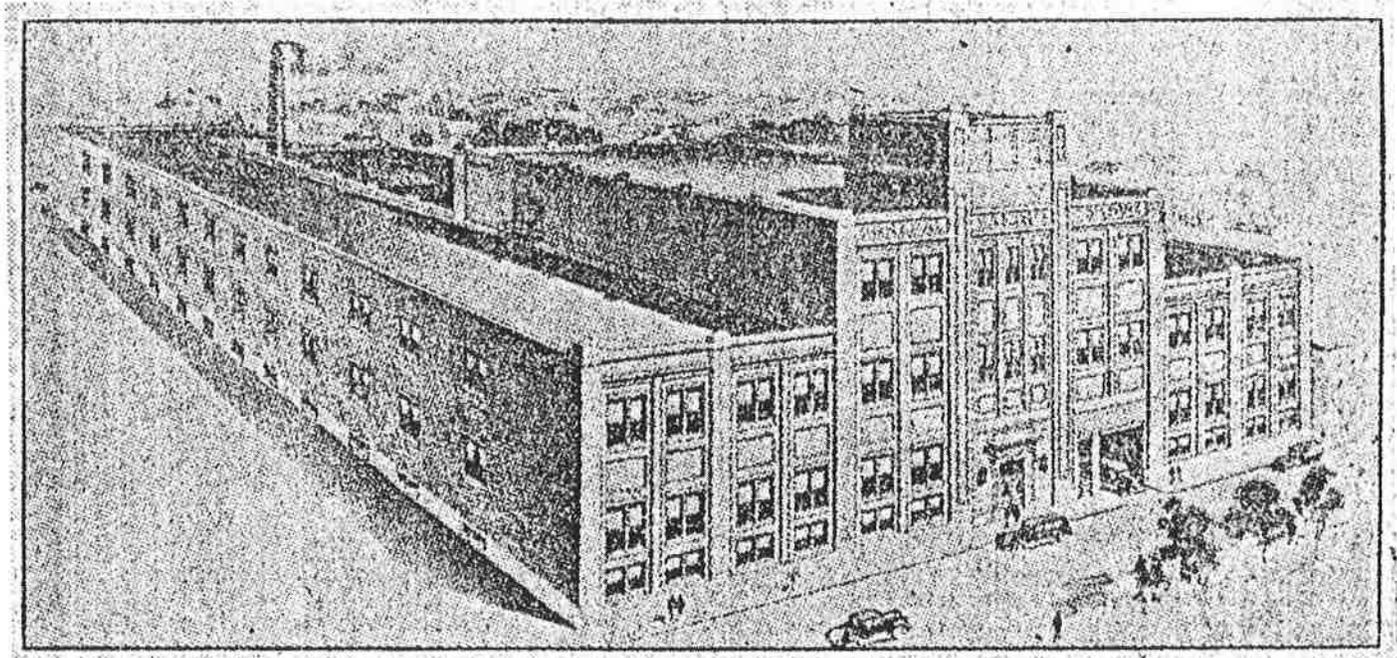
The General Baking Company Bakery; view looking north during the football season of 1958.
(<http://www.mearsonlineauctions.com>)

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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Section number 8 Page 5



The General Baking Company Bakery, architect's rendering, 1929. The bakery was not built to the full depth shown on the drawing (Courtesy: John De Ferrari).

General Baking Company Bakery
Washington, DC



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

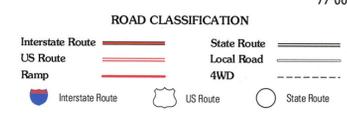
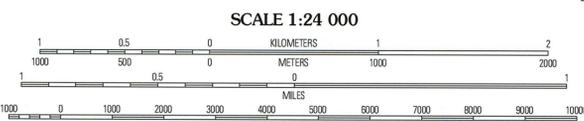
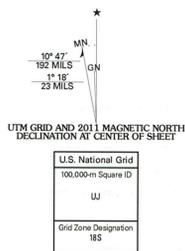


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1 000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, Zone 18S
10 000-foot ticks: Maryland Coordinate System of 1983,
Virginia Coordinate System of 1983 (north zone)



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Roads.....©2006-2010 Tele Atlas
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Contours.....National Elevation Dataset, 2008
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CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NORTH AMERICAN VERTICAL DATUM OF 1988

This map was produced to conform with version 0.5.10
of the USGS US Topo Product Standard.
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Rockville	Kenston	Beltville
Falls Church	Washington West	Washington East
Annandale	Alexandria	Anacostia

WASHINGTON WEST, DC-MD-VA
2011

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DEATH

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