

Capitol Hill's One-Block Streets

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Introduction

This report is a starting point for residents to continue researching their own one-block streets.

Residential real estate development in Washington

In the early nineteenth century, businesses and residences developed near the Capitol and the Navy Yard. After the Civil War, Washington expanded rapidly. In the 1870s, the territorial government paved roads, installed water and sewer lines and streetlights. Although most of these infrastructure improvements were made in the northwest section of the city, where development and wealth was largely concentrated, improvements were made city-wide, including on Capitol Hill.¹ The Organic Act of 1878 obligated Congress to fund one-half of the city's expenses, ensuring that Washington would remain the nation's capital. Civil service reform, enacted in 1883, ended the spoils system² and offered stable employment for federal government employees, including Capitol Hill residents.³ During this time, business leaders also accepted that the city would never become a manufacturing center, but instead, its economy would be centered on government and real estate, providing work for government employees and members of the building trades. Between 1880, 1890, and 1900 the number of construction firms rose from 251 to 565 to 744, and employment rose from 1,781 to 7,321 to 7,322. Employment in printing and engraving, private and government rose from 2,654 to 4,593, to 7,419 (of which 5,771 were government employees).⁴

In the 1880s and 1890s, Capitol Hill was one of the few areas in the city with affordable land and amenities (nearby commercial areas and transportation). In the 1890s, streetcar service was available between East Capitol Street, H Street, NE and the Navy Yard to downtown. Car barns were built at 14th and East Capitol streets, 13th and D streets, NE, and near the Navy Yard.⁵ These factors attracted developers and caused Capitol Hill to become a middle-class community of workers in government, the building trades, and small business.⁶ After the new Eastern Market opened in 1873, new brick rowhouses were built, primarily two- and three-story houses, for the middle-class market. Development gradually spread eastward.

¹ Susan H. Myers, "Capitol Hill, 1870-1900: The People and their Homes." *Records of the Columbia Historical Society* 49 (1973-1974): 276-299, 280.

² The term spoils system was derived from the phrase "to the victor belongs the spoils" by New York Senator William L. Marcy (referring to the victory of the Jackson Democrats in the election of 1828). After a political party won an election, government civil service jobs were given to its supporters, and to their friends and relatives as a reward for working toward victory, and as an incentive to keep working for the party—as opposed to a merit system. Demands for reform began in the 1860s, and gained momentum after a disappointed office seeker assassinated President Garfield in 1871. Civil service reform was enacted in 1873. "Spoils System," Wikipedia. www.wikipedia.org. Internet; accessed 31 Dec. 2016.

³ Carroll D. Wright, *The Economic Development of the District of Columbia* (Washington, D.C.: Washington Academy of Sciences, 1899). Constance McLaughlin Green, *Washington, Capital City*: vol. I (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963, 9). Ch 180, An act providing for a permanent form of government for the District of Columbia, 20 Stat., 102, 104 (45th Cong. 2d Sess., 1878). An act to regulate and improve the civil service of the United States, Ch. 27, 22 Stat. 403 (47th Cong., 2d Sess., 1883).

⁴ US Census, Manufactures, 1880, 1890, 1900, quoted in Green, *Washington, Capital City*: vol. II, 27.

⁵ LeRoy O. King, *100 Years of Capital Traction* (Taylor Publishing Co., 1972, 35, 286). The 13th and D streets, NE barn opened in 1895, burned in 1912 and was never rebuilt. DC Inventory of Historic Places (2009), Navy Yard Car Barn (1891), East Capitol Street Car Barn (1896).

⁶ More affluent residents generally clustered on East Capitol Street, and A and B Streets, NE and SE. Myers, "Capitol Hill," 280, 283.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, speculators subdivided squares to create and sell rowhouse lots. Figure 1. New one-block streets, a key element in speculators' plans, created additional circulation within a square, and access to additional new lots, thus maximizing the number of rowhouse lots that could be platted in a square. Most squares are rectangles. Platting a one-block street to bisect the square parallel to the longer sides of the rectangle creates the longest possible street, and maximizes the area for rowhouse lots. California Street, NE in Square 721 was an example. Square 721 is 508 feet long running east to west between 1st and 2nd streets, NE, and 348 feet wide running north to south between E and F streets, NE. California Street ran from east to west and was 508 feet long.⁷ Figures 2 - 3.

When the city was established, there were three primary types of original plats:

(1) the most common, squares with H-shaped or I-shaped alleys and large lots with the alleys and later expanded into one-block streets.

(2) squares originally platted with one-block streets (with large lots), and,

(3) squares platted with one or two lots and without alleys, where a one-block street was created for the first time in a nineteenth-century or early twentieth-century subdivision.

Speculators often based their subdivision and a new one-block street on the original plat, if it allowed creating the most rowhouse lots. However, a square was a blank slate to be subdivided into the maximum number of lots, regardless of its original configuration, as seen in cases where speculators ignored the original plat. (Park Street, NE in Square 987 is an example.) Most one-block streets were created during a residential building boom between 1880 and 1900.⁸ Figure 4.

(1) Typical progression: H-shaped or I-shaped alley widened and extended into a one-block street

Many Capitol Hill squares were originally laid out with a 30-foot wide H-shaped or I-shaped alley, intersecting with narrower alleys connecting to adjacent streets.⁹ One lot generally separated the wider alley from the adjacent streets, as was the case with Square 1029. Figure 5. Subsequent owners transformed some of these squares, extending the line of the alley through to the adjacent streets, creating one-block streets along the alley axis, and wider than the alley.¹⁰ An 1882 act provided that if all the property owners in a square agreed, an alley could be closed if a new alley at least equal in area was created.¹¹ In 1885, all the owners of Square 672, expressly relying on the 1882 law, joined together to create Patterson Street, NE.¹² It may be that the 1882 law merely ratified an existing practice, because owners were subdividing squares to create one-block streets before 1882.¹³ Examples of alleys widened and extended into one-block streets include:

⁷ DC Office of the Surveyor JHK 113 (15 June 1877). The southern half of Square 721 was platted with rowhouse lots in 1890. DCOS 17/101 (5 Apr. 1890).

⁸ Susan H. Myers, "Capitol Hill, 1870-1900: The People and their Homes." *Records of the Columbia Historical Society* 49 (1973-1974): 276-299, 280.

⁹ DC Historic Preservation Office, *The DC Historic Alley Building Survey*, 5 (2014).

¹⁰ Pickford Place, NE in Square 913 is an exception. Thomas H. Pickford subdivided the square with lots for duplexes. DCOS 22/104 (16 June 1897).

¹¹ Ch. 272, An act to authorize the changing of Alley-Ways in the City of Washington, 22 Stat. 151 (47th Cong., 1st Sess., 1882).

¹² DCOS 13/1178, 13/179.

¹³ Examples include Decatur Street, NE, Square 669 (DCOS B.72, 1856). Chicago Street, NE, Square 720 (DCOS JHK 99, 1877). California Street, NE, Square 721 (DCOS JHK 113, 1877). Callan Street, NE, Square 856 (1869 plat changed in 1887 and 1888 to rotate lots to face 6th and 7th streets, DCOS 15/5, 16/16/172, 1869, 1887, 1888). Acker Street, NE Square 861 (DCOS JHK 39, 1877). Abbey Place, NE in Square 773 was created with the consent of all property owners in 1922, under section 1608B of the District of Columbia Code.

- Square 669 (North Capitol/1st/O/P/Boundary streets, NE), had a 30-foot wide alley running east to west as surveyed in 1796. William B. Todd and Benjamin W. Warner created Decatur Street in 1856 and 1871.¹⁴
- In 1796, Square 672 (North Capitol/1st/M/N streets, NE), was originally platted with an H-shaped alley running east to west, but not connecting to adjacent streets because lots 32 and 15 blocked access. In 1886, Walter S. Cox, Francis Winslow, and Augustus Jay, trustees, subdivided the square, creating Patterson Street, NE, running east to west intersecting with North Capitol and 1st streets, NE, closing the other alley legs, and assigning the alley space to adjacent lots.¹⁵
- Square 674 (K/L/1st/North Capitol streets, NE), as surveyed in 1800, had a 30-foot wide alley running east-west. John W. Star created Fenton Street, 45.10 feet wide, by extending the alley.¹⁶
- Square 675 (I/K/1st/North Capitol streets, NE), was originally platted with a 30-foot wide alley running east to west. In 1871, B.F. Gilbert extended the alley, widening it to 40.2 feet, creating Myrtle Street, NE and altering a previous subdivision of lots.¹⁷
- Square 720 (F/G/1st/2nd streets/Delaware Avenue, NE) was originally laid out with a 30-foot wide alley running east to west. In 1877, John H. Sherman created Chicago Street, NE, 60-foot wide, running east to west, with parallel alleys 15-foot wide, and multiple building lots.¹⁸
- Square 721 (E/F/1st/2nd streets/ Massachusetts Avenue, NE) was originally laid out a 30-foot wide alley running east to west. In 1877, Walter H. Smith and M. M. Rohrer created California Street, NE, 48-foot wide, running east to west, and subdividing the northern half of the square into building lots. Figure 3. In 1890, B. H. Warder and William H. Barnes subdivided the southern half of the square.¹⁹
- Square 743 (M/N/1st streets/New Jersey Avenue, SE) originally had a 25-foot wide alley running north to south. In 1811, Thomas Law and Daniel Carroll of Duddington completely changed the square, creating two east to west streets, 40-foot wide.²⁰
- Square 750 (I/K/2nd/3rd streets, NE) was originally laid out with a 15-foot wide north to south alley. In 1882, Robert H. Ward, trustee, completely changed the square by creating Parker Street, a 40-foot wide street running east to west, with parallel 10-foot wide alleys and multiple building lots. In 1892, M.M. Warner re-subdivided to add lots facing 2nd and 3rd streets.²¹ Figures 6 - 8.
- Square 773 (L/M/3rd/4th streets, NE) was originally laid out with a 30-foot alley running north to south. In 1922, owners Robert L. McKeever and Earl E. Goss, and trustees James R. Ellerson, Jr. and Alexander M. Gorman extended and widened the alley to 60 feet, to create Abbey Place, NE.²²
- Square 856 (K/L/6th/7th streets, NE) was originally laid out with a 30-foot wide alley running east to west.

¹⁴ DCOS 3/669 (2 Aug. 1796). B.72 (1 Feb. 1856, William B. Todd). HDC 216 (13 July 1892, Benjamin W. Warner).

¹⁵ Square 672, DCOS 3/672 (18 Aug. 1798). 13/178, 13/179 (5 Oct. 1886).

¹⁶ DCOS 3/674 (14 May 1800).

¹⁷ DCOS 3/675 (15 May 1800). CHB 319 (25 June 1871).

¹⁸ DCOS 3/720 (30 Sept. 1796). JHK 99 (5 June 1877). Chicago Street was closed by 1972. 158/27 (30 June 1972).

¹⁹ DCOS 3/721 30 Sept. 1796). JHK 113 (15 June 1877). 17/101 (5 Apr. 1890).

²⁰ DCOS 3/743 (10 May 1796). In 1943, M Place and Quander Street, SE were closed and incorporated into the Washington Navy Yard. 119/195.

²¹ DCOS 3/750 (2 Mar. 1798). 11/67 (24 Oct. 1882).

²² DCOS 3/773 (18 Aug. 1796). 67/127 (27 Nov. 1922).

In 1869, James N. Callan laid out Callan Street, NE as a 36.83-foot wide street running east to west, with one parallel 12-foot wide alley to the north, and multiple building lots. In 1887 and 1888, the National Capital Investment Co. added a 10-foot wide alley south of Callan Street and additional lots.²³

- Square 860 (F/G/6th/7th streets, NE) was originally laid out with a 30-foot wide alley running east to west. In 1879, Harriet B. Coolidge and other owners created Morris Place, NE, 60-foot wide, running east to west, retaining the original 15-foot alley with F and G streets, NE and adding 15-foot alleys parallel to Morris Place, and additional lots.²⁴
- Square 861 (E/F/6th/7th streets, NE) was originally laid out with a 30-foot alley running east to west. In 1877, Nicholas Acker created Acker Street, 40 feet wide, running east to west, 10-foot parallel alleys and multiple building lots.²⁵
- Square 913 (F/G/8th/9th streets, NE) was originally laid out with a 30-foot alley running north to south. In 1881, the original 20 lots were re-subdivided into 14 new lots, divided among the heirs of William Gunton, the alley was extended to intersect with F and G streets, and was widened to 40.17 feet in 1896. In 1897, Thomas H. Pickford created Pickford Place, NE, with parallel six-foot alleys and multiple lots 29.50 feet wide fronting on Pickford Place, where duplexes were later built.²⁶
- Square 987 (B/C/11th/12th streets, NE) was originally laid out with a 30-foot alley running north to south. In 1875, George F. Gulick completely changed the square's configuration, creating Park Street, NE, 55-foot wide, running east to west, intersecting with 11th and 12th streets, NE with parallel alleys and multiple building lots.²⁷
- Square 1003 (12th/13th/ H/I streets, NE) was originally laid out with at 30-foot alley running east to west. In 1885, the Washington Brick Machine Co. created Wylie Street, NE 44-foot wide, running east to west with parallel 10-foot alleys and multiple building lots.²⁸
- Square 1004 (G/H/12th/13th streets, NE) was originally laid out with an H-shaped 30-foot alley, bisected by a 15-foot alley running north to south. In 1880, Bernarat Geir resubdivided the square, creating James Street, NE, 47 feet wide, intersecting with 12th and 13th streets on the northern one-third of the square. In 1886, Ida Geir created an entirely new subdivision with Linden Street, NE, a 50-foot street running east to west bisecting the square, with narrower parallel alleys, and multiple building lots. James Street disappeared.²⁹
- Square 1008 (D/E/12th/13th streets, NE) was originally laid out with a 30-foot H-shaped alley. In 1891, James M. Stockett and Joseph Batchelder, trustee, created Duncan Place, NE, 60-foot wide, by extending the east to west area of the original alley, creating 10-foot wide parallel alleys, and rowhouse lots.³⁰
- Square 1051 (G/F/14th/15th streets, NE) was originally laid out with a 30-foot H-shaped alley. In 1890, the alley was closed, pursuant to the 1882 act, and a 40-foot wide street, Florence Court (later 14th Place,

²³ DCOS 3/856 (18 Aug. 1796). 15/5 (30 Oct. 1869). 15/5 (31 Mar. 1887). 16/11 (24 July 1888). 16/162 (23 Nov. 1888). 18/46 (6 Feb. 1891, Jacob S. Rosenthal). Callan Street was closed in 1956.

²⁴ DCOS 3/860 (2 Jan. 1796). 10/67 (28 July 1879).

²⁵ DCOS 3/861 (2 Jan. 1796). JHK 39 (24 Apr. 1877).

²⁶ DCOS 3/913 (2 Jan. 1796). 11/77 (16 Nov. 1881). 22/2 (7 May 1896, John H. Walter).

²⁷ DCOS 4/987 (27 May 1800). RLH 44 (17 Sept. 1875). B Street, NE was renamed Constitution Avenue and B Street, SE was renamed Independence Avenue.

²⁸ DCOS 4/1003 (4 Mar. 1798). 13/107 (13 June 1885).

²⁹ DCOS 4/1004 (12 Mar. 1798). 10/154 (3 Sept. 1880). 14/131 (30 Sept. 1886).

³⁰ DCOS 4/1008 (12 Mar. 1798). 18/82 (20 Apr. 1891).

NE) was created running north to south between F and G Streets, NE, together with rowhouse lots.³¹

- Square 1098 (B Street/Massachusetts Avenue/17th/18th streets, SE), was originally laid out with an I-shaped alley running north to south between B Street and Massachusetts Avenue. In 1920, the Acting US Secretary of Labor, for the US Housing Corporation, created Bay Street, SE, running between 17th and 18th streets, SE.³²
- Square 1112 (B/C/18th/19th, SE), was originally laid out with an I-shaped alley. Bay Street, SE running between 18th and 19th streets, SE, was created in 1924 by Louis S. Asher, trustee's agent. In 1935, Stewart Bros., Inc. and National Savings and Trust Co. created Burke Street, SE, running between 18th and 19th streets, SE, over original lots 8 and 24, in the southern part of the square.³³
- 17th Place, NE and 18th Place, NE in adjacent Squares 1093 (7th/18th/B/C streets, NE) and 1107 (18th/19th/ B/C streets, NE) were re-subdivided with building lots in 1927. The squares originally had 30-foot wide alleys.³⁴

(2) Squares laid out with one-block streets at the founding of the city

Some of the larger squares were laid out with one-block streets and large lots from the beginning, and were later subdivided to add rowhouse lots along the one-block streets. Street names were added later. Examples include:

- Square 673 (North Capitol/1st/L/M streets, NE), as surveyed in 1800, had a 60-foot wide street, later named Pierce Street, running east to west, intersecting with North Capitol and 1st streets, NE.³⁵
- Square 693 (South Capitol Street/New Jersey Avenue/Canal/D/E streets, SE), as surveyed in 1795, had 60-foot wide street (later named Ivy Street, SE), running east to west intersecting with South Capitol Street and New Jersey Avenue, SE.³⁶
- Square 732 (1st/2nd/B/C streets, SE) as surveyed in 1795, had a street 50 feet wide running east to west intersecting with 1st and 2nd streets, SE, later named Carroll Street, SE.³⁷
- Square 1010 (B/C/12th/13th streets/Tennessee Avenue, NE), as surveyed in 1801, had a 49.5-foot wide street, later named 12th Place, NE, running north to south intersecting with B and C streets, NE.³⁸

³¹ DCOS 4/1051 (12 Mar. 1798). An act to authorize the changing of Alley-Ways in the City of Washington, 22 Stat. 151 (47th Cong., 1st Sess., 1882). 17/131 (24 June 1890). 114/126 (10 July 1940). In 1965, Florence Court was renamed 14th Place, NE. 147/63 (18 Feb. 1965).

³² DCOS 4/1098 (24 Feb. 1801). 64/29 (30 Oct. 1920). 63/13 (18 Oct. 1920).

³³ DCOS 4/1112 (24 Feb. 1801). DCOS 74/28 (25 Mar. 1924). 101/49 (28 May 1935).

³⁴ DCOS 4/1093 (21 Nov. 1796). 4/1107 (21 Nov. 1796). 86/45 (12 Jan. 1927), 86/48 (8 Apr. 1927).

³⁵ DCOS 3/673 (27 May 1800).

³⁶ DCOS 3/693 (27 Nov. 1795). Manor Real Estate and Trust Co. changed the direction of Ivy Street, SE in 1907, pursuant to the realignment of rail lines and streets in the planning for Union Station. Public Law No. 122, An Act to provide for a union railroad station in the District of Columbia, and for other purposes. *Acts of Congress Affecting the District of Columbia*, 57th Cong., 2nd Sess. (1902-1903). DCOS 32/099 (7 May 1907).

³⁷ DCOS 3/732 (8 June 1795). Carroll Street was closed when the entire square was taken to build the Library of Congress Madison Building. 150/175 (12 Sept. 1966), Map No. 8993 (10 Mar. 1967).

³⁸ DCOS 4/1010 (12 Jan. 1801). Square 1010, originally 18 lots, was subdivided five times between 1892 and 1905; 12th Place, NE remained. DCOS 24/45, William Mayse (15 Nov. 1892). 24/6 John Cook, trustee (16 Feb. 1900). 25/45 Richard Knight (13 Apr. 1901). 27/98 Marion C. Davis (7 Oct. 1902). 30/114 G.W. Barkman (26 Apr. 1905). Most of the alley was closed in 1960. 140/106 (6 May 1960).

- Square 1015 (B/C/12th/13th streets/Kentucky Avenue, SE), as surveyed in 1796 had a 60-foot wide street, later named Walter Street, SE, running east to west intersecting with 12th and 13th streets, SE.³⁹
- Square 1033 (B/C/14th streets/Tennessee Avenue, NE) as surveyed in 1800, had a 50 foot wide street later named Warren Street, NE, running north to south, intersecting with B and C streets, NE.⁴⁰

(3) Squares platted without alleys and later subdivided to create one-block streets

Some squares which originally lacked alleys were later subdivided to create one-block streets with narrow parallel alleys and rowhouse lots. Examples include:

- Square 736 (1st/2nd/E/public space, SE) was originally a single lot. In 1890, Archimedes Heckman subdivided the square, creating Heckman Street, 60-foot wide, and lots 1 through 148.⁴¹
- Square 744 (N/Alley/1st/Canal streets, SE) was originally laid out as two lots without an alley. In 1890, Charles Gessford created a 25-foot alley, later named Francis Place, SE.⁴²
- Congress Street, NE in Square 748 (L/M/2nd/3rd streets/ Delaware Avenue, NE), was created by Nathan W. Fitzgerald's subdivision in 1880.⁴³
- Square 931 (9th/10th/K/L streets, NE) was originally a single lot. In 1909, George S. Cooper subdivided the square to create Kent Street, NE, 48 feet wide, and 50 lots.⁴⁴
- Elliott Street, NE in Square 1028 (13th/14th/ F/G streets/Maryland Avenue, NE), 60-foot wide running north to south between F Street and Maryland Avenue NE, was created in created in 1889.⁴⁵
- Corbin Place, NE, a 71.65-foot wide street running east to west in Square 1031 (C/D/13th streets/Tennessee Avenue, NE), two parallel alleys and 68 new 16-foot wide lots were created in 1911 by the subdivision of Louis Coblens and Martin Lauer, trustees. In 1913 and 1914, Joseph B. Bolling and Harry A. Kite re-subdivided to increase the lot width to 17 feet and 18 feet.⁴⁶
- Ives Street, SE in adjacent Squares 1046 and 1065 was created in 1887 and 1900. Square 1046 (13th/14th/ K streets/Georgia Avenue, SE) was subdivided by W. H. Talmadge in 1887, creating Ives Place and building lots generally 20-foot wide.⁴⁷ Talmadge also subdivided a portion of Square 1065 (14th/15th/K streets/Pennsylvania Avenue, SE) in 1887, but created no street. Robert Stead's 1900 subdivision created a 40-foot wide alley, later named Ives Place, SE and 16-foot wide lots . In 1902, Jesse Rank subdivided other portions of the square, creating lots 15-and 16.67-foot wide.⁴⁸

³⁹ DCOS 4/1015 (5 May 1796).

⁴⁰ DCOS 4/1033 (3 Jan. 1800).

⁴¹ DCOS 3/736. Heckman subdivision 17/167 (2 Sept. 1890). Heckman Street was renamed Duddington Place in 1961. 141/12 (9 Feb. 1961).

⁴² DCOS 3/744 (11 Apr. 1797). 17/80 (27 Feb. 1890). In 1943, Francis Place, SE was closed and incorporated into the Washington Navy Yard. 119/195.

⁴³ DCOS 3/748/(23 Aug. 1797). 10/149 (30 Aug. 1880). Portions of Congress Street were closed in 1932 and 1939. 112/136 (15 Dec. 1932). 112/136 (1 Nov. 1939).

⁴⁴ DCOS 3/931 (18 Aug. 1796). 37/18 (2 June 1909).

⁴⁵ DCOS 4/1028 (12 Mar. 1798). 17/44 (20 Nov. 1889). The lots on Elliott Street were reduced from 18 feet wide in 1889 to 16 feet wide in 1896. 18/33 (8 Dec. 1896).

⁴⁶ DCOS 4/1031 (3 Jan. 1800). 44/44 (22 July 1911). 50/26 (20 Aug. 1913) (Bolling). 50/93 (20 Oct. 1913) (Kite). 51/94 (12 June 1914) (Bolling).

⁴⁷ DCOS 4/1046 (27 May 1800). 15/60 (9 July 1887).

⁴⁸ DCOS 4/1065 (undated). 15/61 (9 July 1887). 24/167 (31 Oct. 1900). 27/45 (22 July 1902).

- Duncan Street, NE, 60-feet wide, in Square 1053 (D/E/14th/15th streets/Tennessee Avenue, NE) was created by William L. Barnes and John L. Weaver, trustees, who subdivided all the original lots in the square (except lots 10 through 12 in the square's northeast corner). In 1900 and 1903, others again subdivided the square, creating additional lots.⁴⁹
- 14th Place, NE in adjacent Squares 1054 (C/D/14th/15th streets, NE) and 1055 (14th/15th/B/C streets/ North Carolina Avenue, NE) was created in 1871 and 1890.⁵⁰
- In 1907 and 1908, Kennedy and Davis Co. created Ames Place, NE and 92 rowhouse lots in Square 1056 (14th/15th/ A/B streets/North Carolina Avenue, NE).⁵¹

General pattern to maximize the number and square footage of lots fronting on major streets

Lots fronting on major streets were generally larger and had higher per-square foot values than lots fronting on one-block streets, and for this reason, lots at each end of the square that could have fronted on the one-block street were rotated 90 degrees to front on the major street instead. Emerald Street in Square 1029 is typical of this pattern. Figure 9. Other examples include Squares 669, 672, 675, 721, 736, 743, 744, 748, 750, 855, 856, 861, 862, 913, 931, 860, 1003,1004, 1008, 1010, 1028, 1029, 1031, 1046, 1098, 1051, 1053, 1054, 1055, 1056, 1065, 1093, and 1107. The visual result is a continuous line of house-fronts lining every side of the square.

There is one square on Capitol Hill platted in the nineteenth century where all the lots touching the one-block street front on that street, and not on the adjacent major streets. Park Place, NE, in Square 987 was created in 1875, 55-feet wide, plus parallel alleys 14.10- and 15-feet wide and multiple rowhouse lots, 100-feet deep. Figure 10. Rowhouses were first built in 1878 and continued to be built into the 1880s.⁵² Although Square 987 was an outlier in the nineteenth century, it presaged twentieth century subdivisions. Squares platted in the 1920s have large deep lots suitable for garages, 15-foot wide alleys, and are platted like Park Street, for example, Squares 773 (Abbey Place, NE), 1098 (Bay Street, SE), and 1112 (Bay and Burke streets, SE). Figure 11.

Names of one-block streets

The names of most one-block streets relate to the names of adjacent streets, in alphabetical order. For example, Ames Place, NE in Square 1056 is north of A Street, NE, and Corbin Street, NE is north of C Street, NE. Emerald Street (originally Emerson Street), north of E Street, NE, follows this pattern. But some speculators named streets for themselves: Callan Street, NE (James N. Callan, 1869), Acker Place, NE (Nicholas Acker, 1877), Pickford Place, NE (Thomas W. Pickford, 1897), and Heckman Place (Archimedes Heckman, 1890). Acker Place and Pickford Place have survived, but Callan Street was closed and Heckman Street was renamed Duddington Place in 1961.⁵³

⁴⁹ DCOS 4/1053 (12 Mar. 1798). J.T. Moxley and Augusta M. Weaver, 24/28 (30 Mar. 1900) and 24/150 (15 Sept. 1900). George S. Cooper 27/196 (12 Mar. 1903).

⁵⁰ DCOS 4/1054 (12 Mar. 1798). 18/27 (5 Nov. 1890, William Mayse and Allen C. Clark, trustees). DCOS 4/1055 (3 Jan. 1800). CHB 399 (1 July 1871, O.O. Howard (for Howard University, John A. Cole)).⁵¹ DCOS 4/1056 (3 Jan. 1800). 32/88 (29 May 1907). 33/139 (17 Aug. 1908).

⁵² DCOS 4/987 (27 May 1800). RLH 44 (17 Sept. 1875). DC Building permit # 678 (21 May 1878).

⁵³ DCOS 32/88 (29 May 1907), 44/44 (22 July 1911), 15/5 (30 Oct. 1869), JHK 39 (24 Apr. 1877), 22/104 (16 June 1897). 41/12 (9 Feb. 1961).

Figure 1. Squares with one-block streets

Square	Street name	Original configuration Alley shape/no. lots	Year one- block street created	Rowhouse lots created?	Comments
669	Decatur St., NE	H-shaped alley/26 lots	1856	yes	
672	Patterson St., NE	I-shaped alley/34 lots	1886	yes	
673	Pierce St., NE	one-block street/24 lots	1800	no	
674	Fenton St., NE	H-shaped alley/24 lots	1882	yes	
675	Myrtle St., NE	H-shaped alley/28 lots	1871	yes	
693	Ivy St., SE	one-block street/30 lots	1795	yes	
720	Chicago St., NE	H-shaped alley/22 lots	1877	yes	closed by 1972
721	California St., NE	H-shaped alley/22 lots	1877	yes	
732	Carroll St., SE	one-block street/41 lots	1795	no	closed by 1966 (LOC)
736	Heckman St., SE	no alley/1 lot	1890	yes	renamed Duddington Pl., SE
743	Quander St., SE	H-shaped alley/23 lots	1811	no	1932: part of Navy Yard
743	M Place, SE	H-shaped alley/23 lots	1811	no	1932: part of Navy Yard
744	Francis Pl., SE	no alley/2 lots	1890	yes	1932: part of Navy Yard
748	Congress St., NE	no alley/16 lots	1880	yes	
750	Parker St., NE	T-shaped alley/12 lots	1882	yes	
773	Abbey Pl., NE	t-shaped alley/20 lots	1922	yes	
855	Morton Pl., NE	one-block street/35 lots	1796	no	2 one-block streets,
855	Orleans Pl., NE	one-block street/25 lots	1796	no	rowhouse lots in 1889
856	Callan St., NE	t-shaped alley/20 lots	1869	yes	closed by 1956
860	Morris Pl., NE	T-shaped alley/30 lots	1879	yes	
861	Acker Pl., NE	I-shaped alley/20 lots	1877	yes	
862	Lexington Pl., NE		1909	yes	
913	Pickford Pl., NE	I-shaped alley/20 lots	1897	no	platted for duplexes
931	Kent Pl., NE	no alley/1 lot	1909	yes	
987	Park St., NE	I-shaped alley/22	1875	yes	
1003	Wylie St., NE	t-shaped alley/16 lots	1885	yes	
1004	Linden Pl., NE	H-shaped alley/18 lots	1886	yes	originally James Pl.
1008	Duncan Pl., NE	H-shaped alley/20 lots	1891		
1010	12th Pl., NE	one-block street/18 lots	1801	no	one-block street, row- house lots added in 1892
1015	Walter St., SE	one-block street/34 lots	1796	no	rowhouse lots added in 1892
1015					
1028	Elliott St., NE	no alley/1 lot	1889	yes	
1029	Emerson St., NE	H-shaped alley/26 lots	1892	yes	1950: name changed to Emerald Street
1029			1892		

Capitol Hill's One-Block Streets

1031	Corbin Pl., NE	no alley/10 lots	1913	yes	
1033	Warren St., NE	one-block street/13 lots	1800	no	
1046	Ives Pl., SE	no alley/18 lots	1887	yes	
1051	14th Pl., NE	H-shaped alley/19 lots	1890	yes	original name: Florence Court
1053	Duncan St., NE	no alley/14 lots	1890	yes	
1054	14th Pl., NE	no alley/16 lots	1890	yes	
1055	14th Pl., NE	no alley/13 lots	1891	yes	
1056	Ames Pl., NE	no alley/1 lot	1907	yes	
1065	Ives Pl, SE	no alley/4 lots	1900	yes	
1093	17th Pl., NE	H-shaped alley/24 lots	1927	yes	
1098	Bay St., SE	I-shaped/20/ lots	1920	yes	
1107	18th Pl., NE	H-shaped alley/24 lots	1927	yes	
1112	Bay St., SE	I-shaped/16 lots	1924	yes	
1112	Burke St., SE	H-shaped alley/26 lots	1935	yes	

Figure 2. Original plat of Square 721. DCOS 3/721 (30 Sept. 1796) from John Sessford's building records, Library of Congress Manuscripts Division.

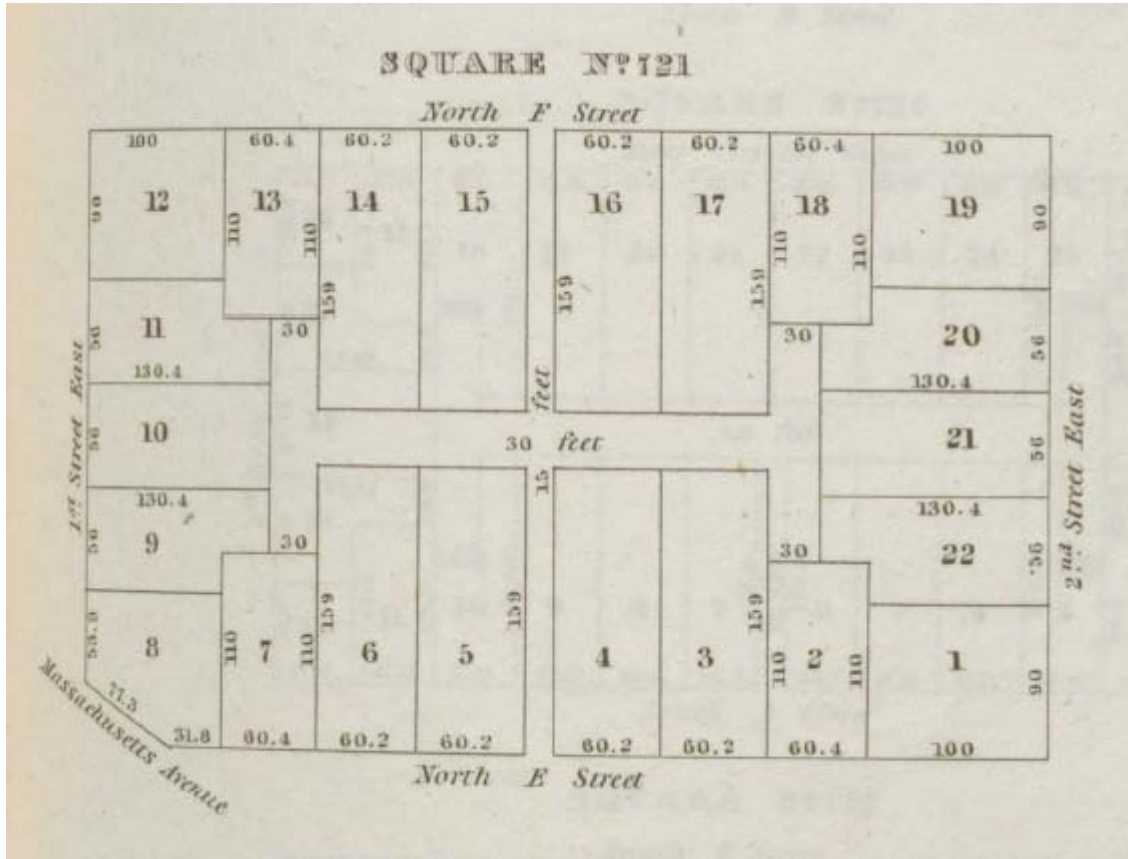


Figure 3. California Street in Square 721, running east to west, created by Walter H. Smith and William M. Rohrer in 1877. DCOS JHK 113 (15 June 1877).

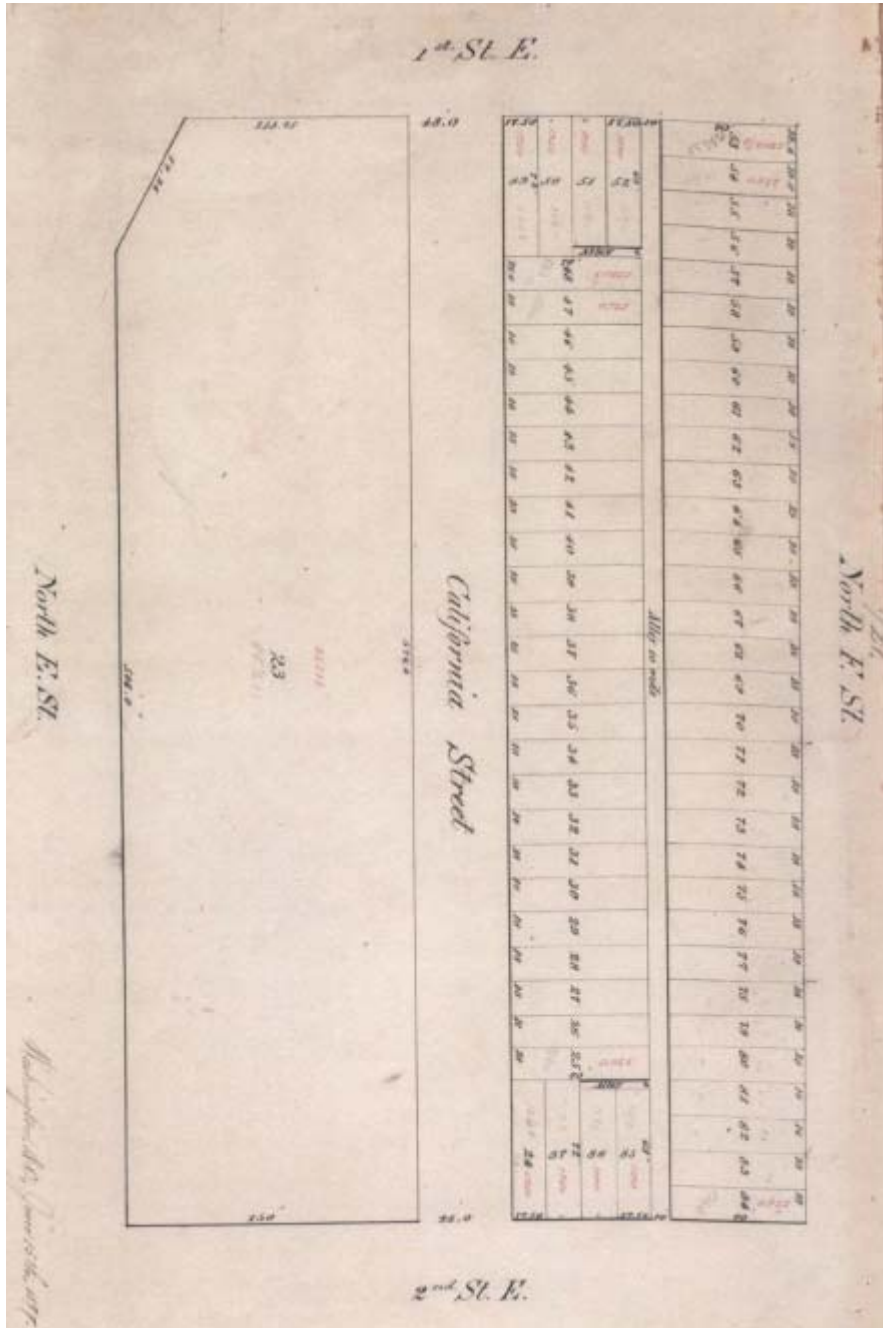


Figure 4. One-block streets on Capitol Hill, by year created.

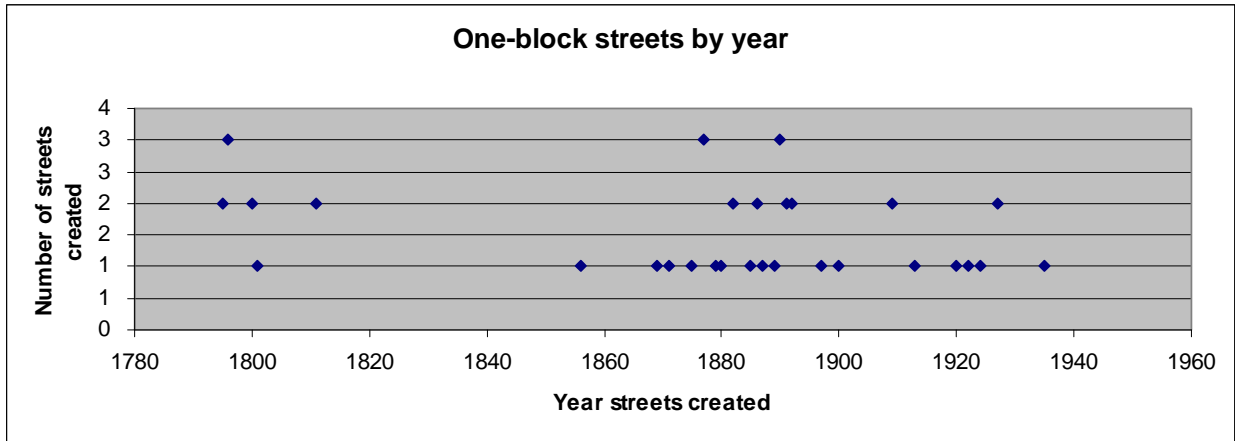


Figure 6. Original plat of Square 750. DCOS 3/750 (12 Mar. 1798) from John Sessford's building records, Library of Congress Manuscripts Division.

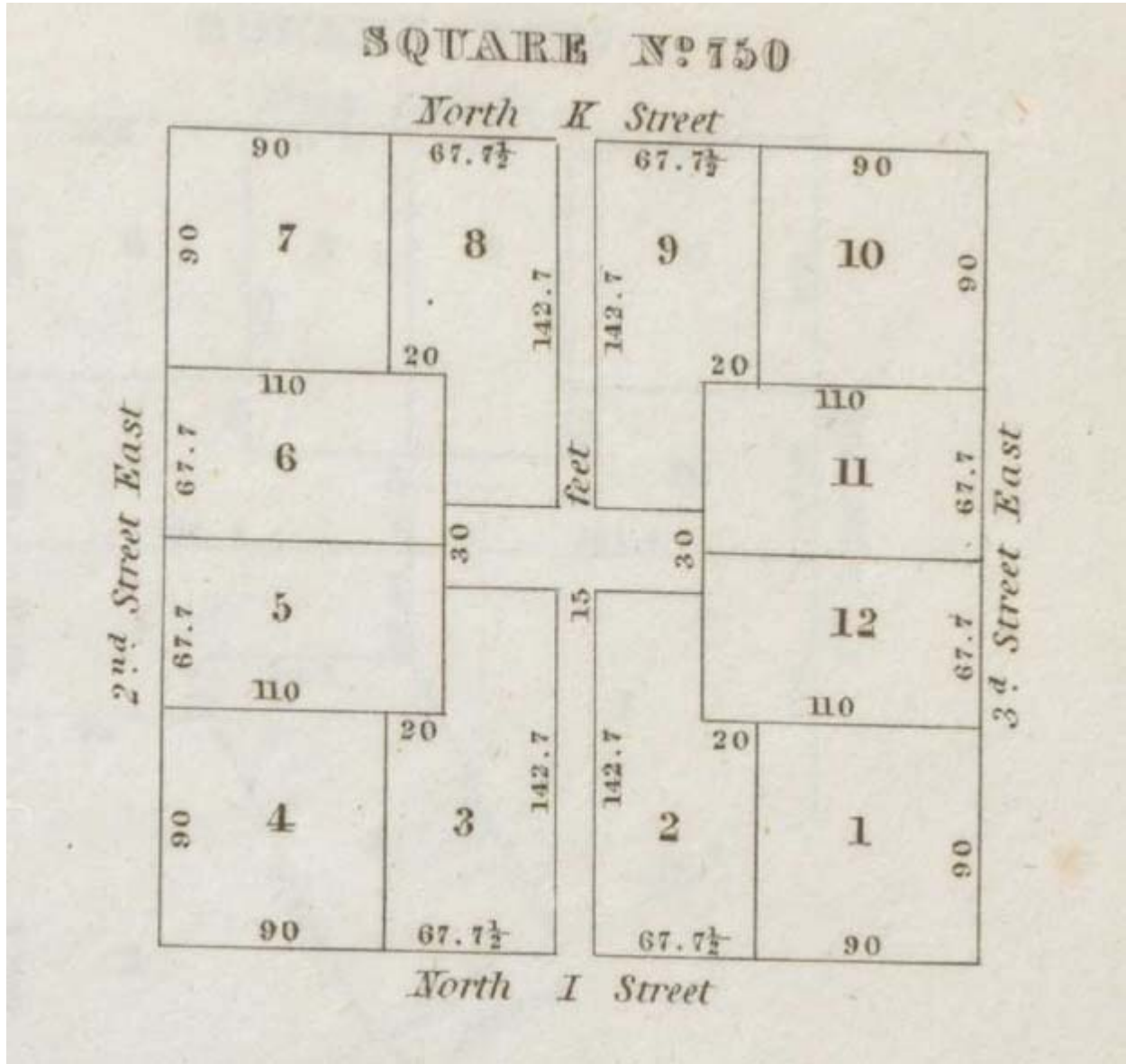


Figure 7. Parker Street in Square 750, running east to west between 2nd and 3rd streets, NE, created by Robert H. Ward, trustee in 1882. DCOS 11/67 (24 Oct. 1882).

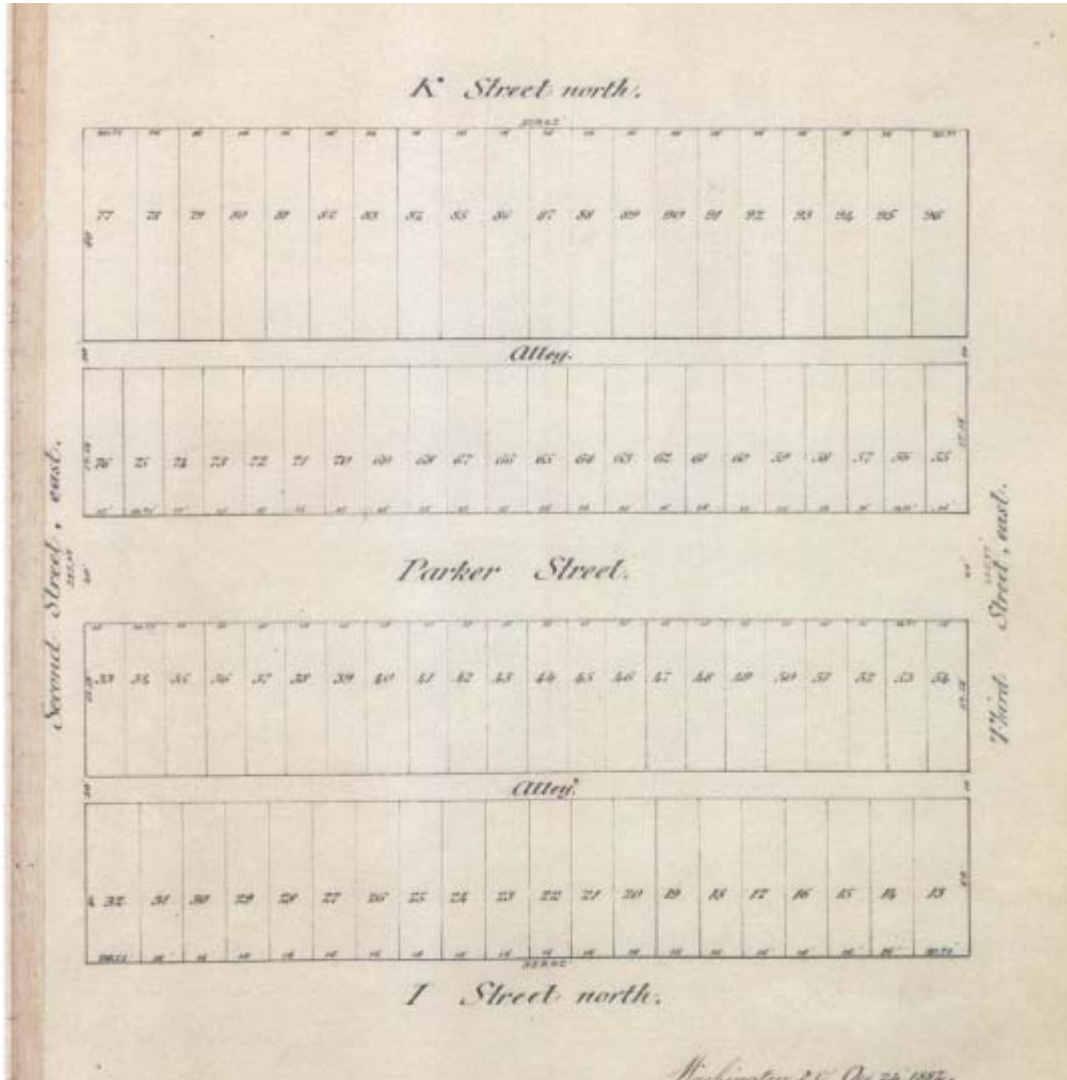


Figure 8. Parker Street, NE in Square 750, DCOS 19/74 (15 Apr. 1892) created by M. M. Warner.

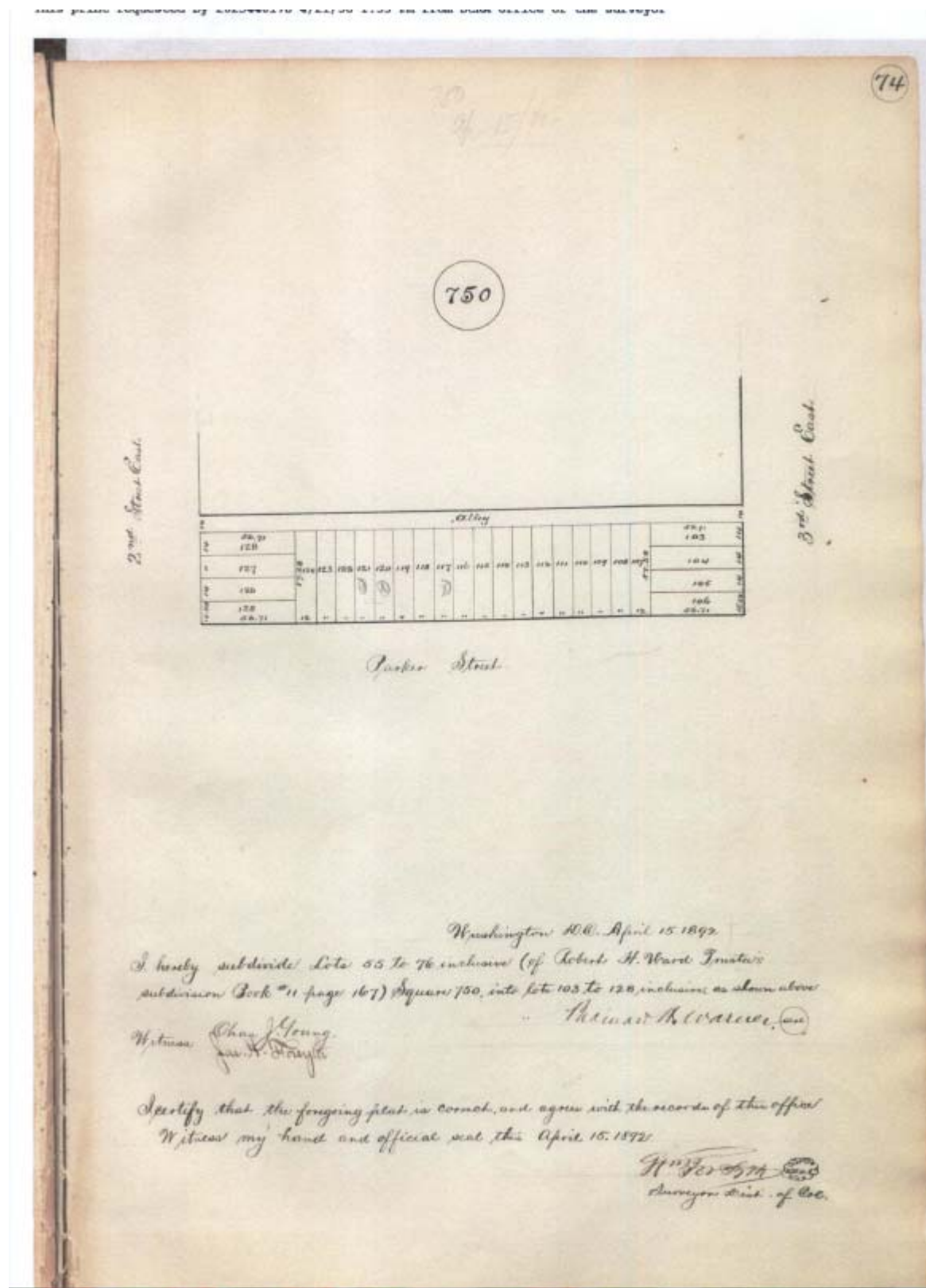


Figure 9. District of Columbia Office of the Surveyor. Square 1029, subdivision filed by William Mayse and Louis D. Wine, 2 Apr. 1892. 19/63.

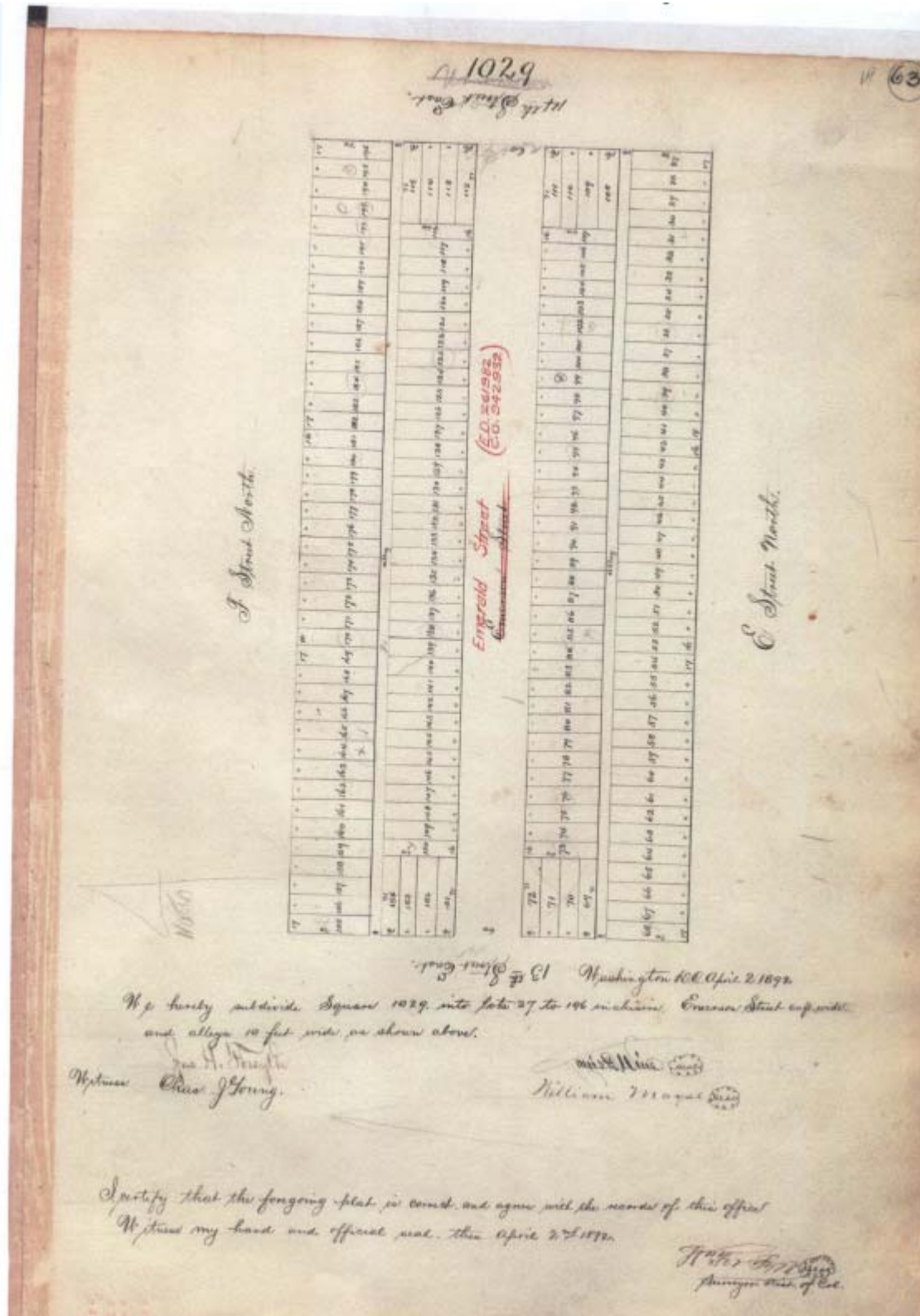


Figure 11. Square 1112, platted by Louis S. Asher, DCOS 74/28 (25 Mar. 1924)

