

123-44

VLR-6/17/80 NRHP-11/24/80

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN: **HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS**  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Washington Street Methodist Episcopal Church South

AND/OR COMMON

Washington Street Methodist Church (Preferred)

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

14-24 E. Washington Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Petersburg

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
Fourth (Robert I Daniel)

STATE

Virginia

CODE

51

COUNTY

(in city)

CODE

730

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> +NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Board of Trustees, Washington Street Methodist Church,

C/o Patrick Henry Booth, Jr.

STREET & NUMBER

1614 Westover Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Petersburg

VICINITY OF

STATE

Virginia

23803

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Petersburg City Hall

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Petersburg

STATE

Virginia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (2) (See Continuation sheet #1)

TITLE

(1) Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1940; Inventory 1959

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D. C.

# DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Washington Street Methodist Church is located at the corner of Washington and Adams streets in the city of Petersburg. Built in 1842 the building was substantially enlarged by the addition of the present wings in 1922-3. Both the original building and the wings are executed in stretcher-bond brick with Greek Revival detailing.

The main (north) elevation has undergone a number of alterations. Originally the facade was composed of a distyle-in-antis Greek Doric pedimented portico consisting of two fluted columns and paired pilasters supporting a pediment. The main entrance was located in the podium and had double doors flanked by auxiliary entrances. In 1890 a more massive Greek Doric pedimented tetrastyle portico with the main entrance relocated on the porch level was superimposed over the original. At this time steps were added flanking the podium and turning at right angles to form a double stair. The stair has an elaborate cast-iron balustrade with two cast-iron lamp standards. A more ornamental cast-iron rail is set between the columns. Until 1907 the building was topped by a large belfry and steeple that were removed at that time. In 1922-3 the wings were added, connected to the main building by columned hyphens. The additions created interior courtyards between the main building and the wings.

Original fenestration consisted of 12/12 hung-sash windows. The windows on the east and west walls were replaced by stained-glass windows added at different dates through the first half of the 20th century. The memorial windows represent the work of a number of different makers and include the Harrison Memorial Window by Tiffany of New York. The windows on the facade consist of clear-glass, triangular-paned casement windows installed during the early 20th century. Remaining fenestration consists of clear-glass, hung-sash windows. The rear (south) elevation was modified by the additions of 1906-7 and 1922-3. The additions are stylistically undistinguished. The west hyphen contains the church bell cast by the Menceley Foundry of West Troy, New York. The roof is covered by standing-seam sheet metal.

Like the exterior, the interior has undergone considerable alterations. The basement contains the community meeting rooms and church kitchen. The main floor has the sanctuary and lobby. The lobby has paired open-well stairs that lead to the gallery. The stairs feature a turned newel, turned balusters, and a molded handrail. Paneled wainscoting embellishes the walls. Most of the early 20th-century ceiling was recently covered by acoustical tile and the floor with linoleum. The sanctuary originally had four Corinthian columns behind which were located the organ show pipes, installed in the early 20th century. The central columns and organ were removed in 1956, at which time the present altar and choir area were built. The pulpit was relocated, and a stained-glass window with a Colonial Revival frame was installed behind the altar. Sections of an earlier communion rail remain in place. The present pews date to an early 20th-century renovation. The gallery appears to be original and is handsomely embellished with a Greek fret.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES      1842      BUILDER/ARCHITECT      Unknown

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Washington Street Methodist Church is significant both as an expression of Petersburg's antebellum period architectural taste and as a monument to the growth of Methodism in Southside Virginia. With its three monumental porticos, the church is an important visual element in the city's commercial area. At the time the church was constructed, in 1842, the Greek Revival was the most fashionable architectural mode in Petersburg. The style was chosen for the city's courthouse, erected in 1833-40, as well as for the Exchange Building, completed in 1841. Conforming to the lead of these two prominent public buildings, the Methodist congregation elected to build in the Classical Revival. Unfortunately, the church's architect has not been identified. Methodism was in its ascendancy in the 1840s, and during that time several other Methodist churches were built in the area. It was from the Washington Street congregation that most of the leadership for these new churches came.

Methodism in Petersburg began in 1773 when two local citizens, Cressett Davis and Nathaniel Young, hired a theatre building and "bound ourselves to invite any and every sect and party, who, we thought, preached the truth of the gospel...to come and preach in said house..."<sup>1</sup> As a result, Robert Williams, an Irishman licensed to preach by John Wesley, visited Petersburg soon thereafter. Following his visit and warm reception, Williams was assigned to Petersburg by the 1773 Methodist Conference in Philadelphia. It must be understood that Methodism at this time was a reform movement within the established Anglican Church, not a separatist organization. It has been said that Methodism was more warmly received in the South than in the North where many other denominations provided "churching" for the population. John Wesley wanted through Methodism to return to a simpler and more direct method of worship. Since this method tended to be more evangelical in nature, Williams worked closely with Virginia Evangelicals such as Deveraux Jarrett of Dinwiddie County. Methodism continued to thrive in Petersburg and the surrounding southside area, and their first meeting house was erected in Petersburg in 1774-75 on Harrison Street. This building was burned by the British in 1781.

After the Revolution Petersburg Methodists met in private homes until 1788, when a frame meeting house was built on Market Street on a lot purchased from Abram Bishop and conveyed to Francis Asbury, bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church. By this time the American Methodist Church Conference had been formed in Philadelphia, establishing the church as a separate entity from the Anglican Church of England. Petersburg was the site for a number of Virginia Conferences from 1788 to 1817. A deed to the church lot was formally conveyed to the Trustees in 1806.

# MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Bennett, W. W. Memorials of Methodism in Virginia. 1871.  
 Drewry, P. H. The Story of a Church, A History of Washington Street Church, 1773-1923.  
 Petersburg, Va., 1923.  
 Sweet, William Warren. Methodism in American History. New York, 1933.  
 . Virginia Methodism: A History. Richmond, Va., 1955.  
 Washington Street United Methodist Church. Booklet. Petersburg, Va., 1973.

# GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1/2 acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Petersburg, Va.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 18 2816 820 4122 620  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B                 
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C               

D               

E               

F               

G               

H               

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION Located on S side of Washington Street between Adams and Sycamore Streets on a lot comprising 14-24 E. Washington Street and measuring approximately 100' x 178.3', with the 178.3' fronting on Washington Street.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

June 1980

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

221 Governor Street

(804) 786-3144

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Richmond

Virginia

23219

# STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE X

LOCAL   

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Tucker Hill, Executive Director  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE JUN 17 1980

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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DATE ENTERED

Washington Street Methodist Church, Petersburg, Va.

CONTINUATION SHEET

# 1

ITEM NUMBER 6, 7, 8 PAGE

1

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey  
1967, 1980 State  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission  
221 Governor Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

7. DESCRIPTION

The east and west wings contain church offices, the museum, and conference rooms. Some of the earliest church furnishings are preserved in the church museum. These include a painted and grained chair that is believed to have come from the earlier Union Street Church.

RCC

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The Washington Street Methodist Church occupies 14-24 E. Washington Street in the City of Petersburg. The nominated property of 1/2 acre (approximately) includes only the church building. The dimensions of the property include a frontage of 178.3 ft. The sides measure 110 ft. x 90 ft. with the rear 178.3 ft.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

By 1818 the need had arisen for a new and more permanent structure. A lot was purchased from Pleasant Aiken on Union Street, and by 1820 a new brick edifice had been erected at a cost of \$3,600. The first Thanksgiving service in Petersburg was held at the Union Street Church in 1832. It was in this church building that the first General Conference of the Methodist Church South met and organized in 1846. After the construction of the new church in 1842, the Union Street Church was given to the black members of the congregation.

The present Washington Street Church building was the site of the worship services accompanying the 1846 General Conference of the Methodist Church South. The schism within the Methodist Church resulted from growing dissent over the abolition of slavery and more particularly from the northern opposition to slaves being held by a Methodist bishop. The first bishops of the Methodist Church South were consecrated in the sanctuary of the Washington Street building.

During the Civil War the church building was used as a Confederate hospital. While the steeple survived the siege of Petersburg, the original bell was given to the Confederacy to make cannons. It was replaced in 1865 by a new bell

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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CONTINUATION SHEET #2 ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

8. SIGNIFICANCE

manufactured by Meneely's of West Troy, New York. The growth of the congregation during Reconstruction led to the addition in 1890 of a more monumental Greek Doric pedimented tetrastyle portico. The base of the steeple was enlarged at the same time. The steeple was removed altogether in 1906.

The largest single renovation and change occurred in 1922-23 under the ministry of Reverend John B. Winn. Dr. Winn served Washington Street Church from 1906-1909 and 1917-1923. Reverend Winn worked closely with architect Fred A. Bishop in planning the east and west wings. Initially a dome was planned for the central portion, which was never executed possibly because of the reassignment of Dr. Winn to another church in 1923. Winn later returned to serve the Washington Street congregation from 1931-1937. Relocation of the organ in 1956 led to substantial renovations to the interior of the church.

Washington Street Methodist Church was the leading Methodist Church in the Commonwealth for many years. From its early roots, Virginia Methodism grew and prospered, and, though occupying four different buildings, the congregation has enjoyed an uninterrupted history of ministry to the Petersburg, Southside, and Virginia faithful.

MTP/RCC

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<sup>1</sup> P. H. Drewry, The Story of a Church, A History of Washington Street Church, 1773-1923 (Petersburg, Va., 1923), pp. 42-43.

PETERSBURG QUADRANGLE  
VIRGINIA  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

5588 IV SE  
(HOPEWELL)

SW  
ER)

285

25'

286

RICHMOND 21 MI

287

2 320 000 FEET

RICHMOND 21 MI  
2.4 MI. TO INTERCHANGE 4

289

77° 22' 30"

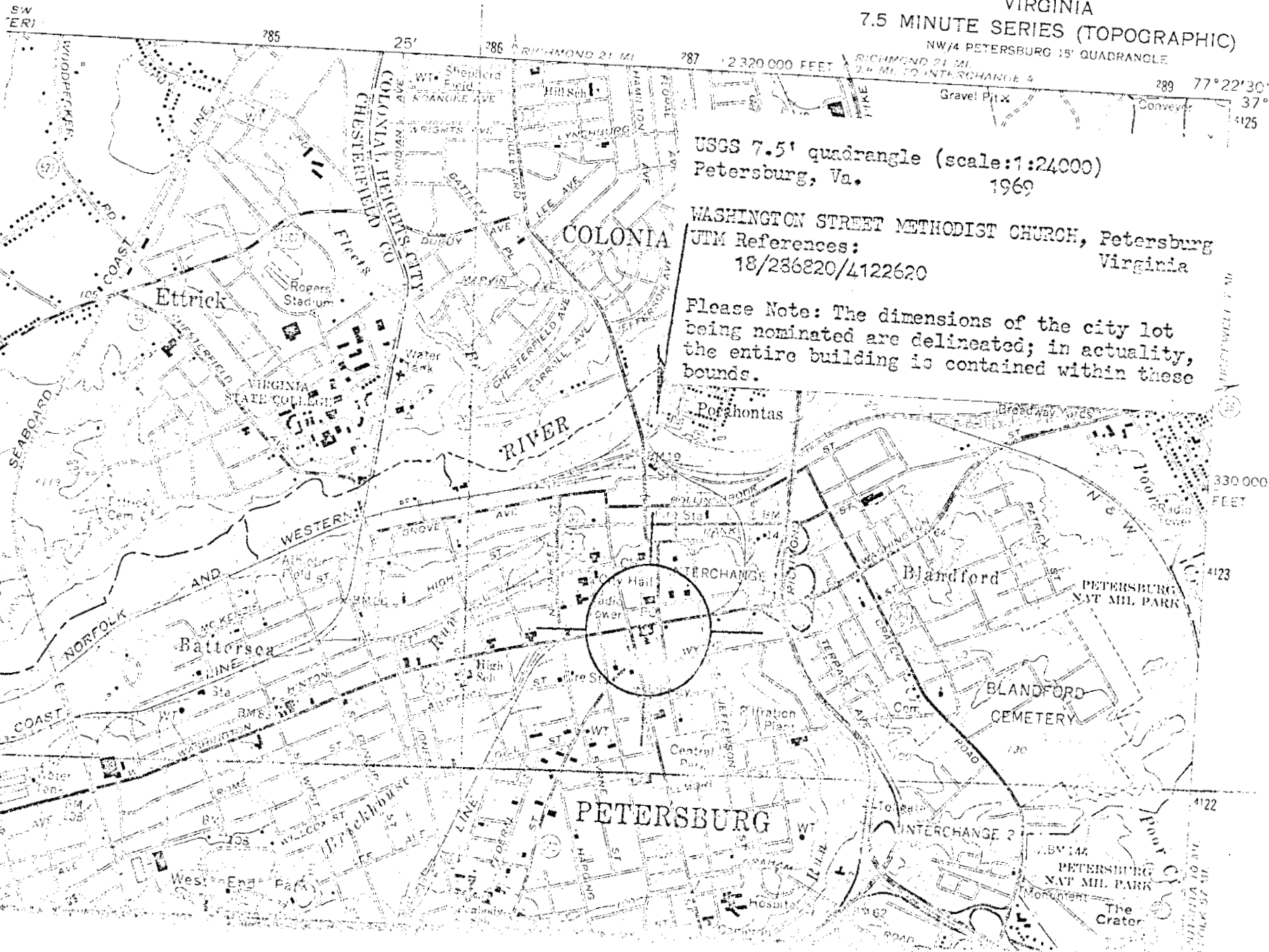
37° 15'

4125

USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)  
Petersburg, Va. 1969

WASHINGTON STREET METHODIST CHURCH, Petersburg  
Virginia  
JTM References:  
18/286820/4122620

Please Note: The dimensions of the city lot  
being nominated are delineated; in actuality,  
the entire building is contained within these  
bounds.



330 000  
FEET

4123

4122

4121