



History of the Lafayette Building

The Lafayette Building, the headquarters of the Export-Import Bank, is situated in an important location in Washington, D.C. Just steps away from the White House, this iconic location has seen many changes over the years. This exhibit highlights not only the history of the Lafayette Building, but it also explores what existed before the Lafayette Building. So while you travel through this exhibit, hopefully you will gain a greater sense of place for the Lafayette Building and gain a greater appreciation for its history.

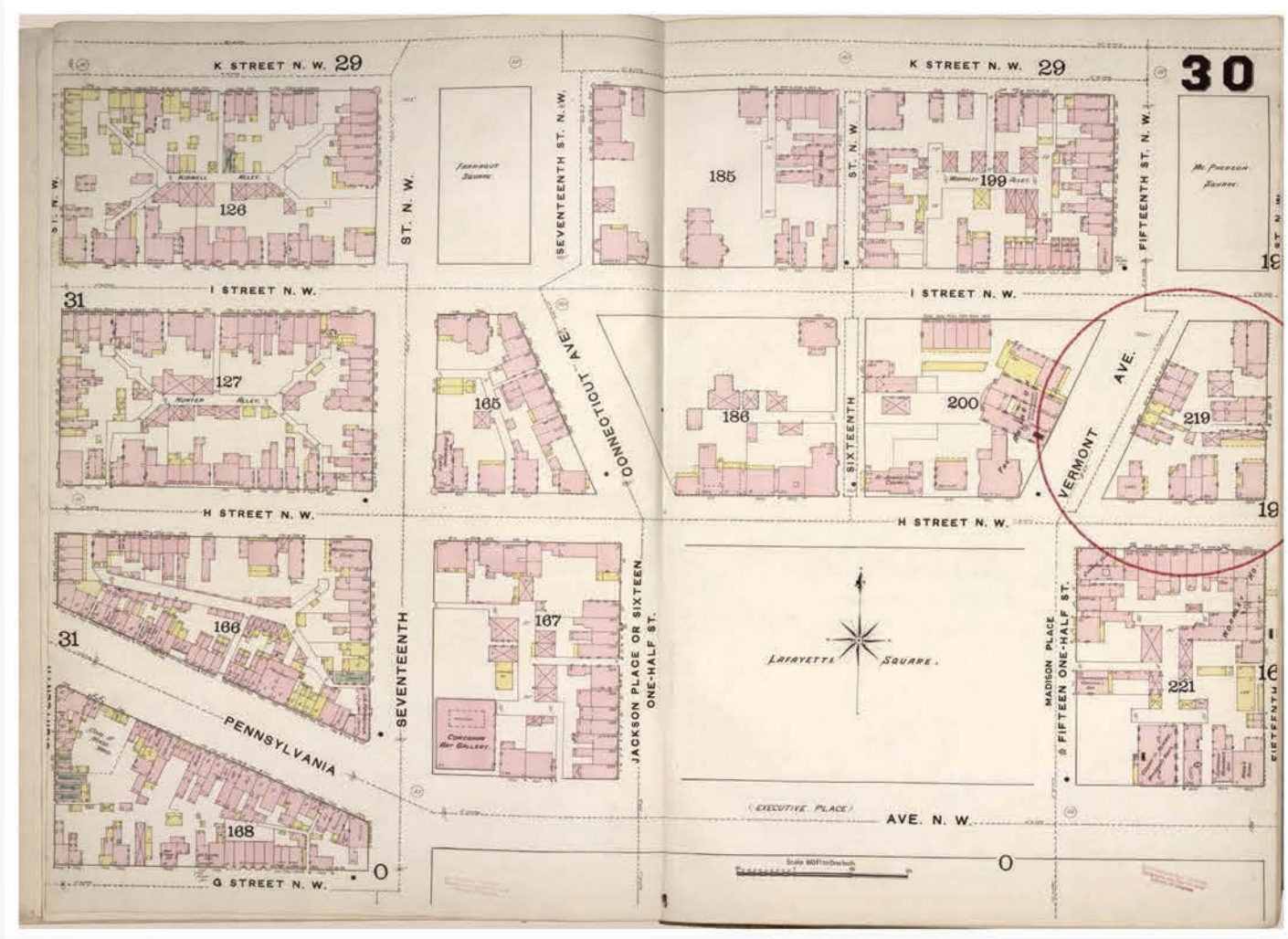
Historic American Buildings Survey Sketch, 1822



Historic American Buildings Survey Sketch, July 1822 by Baroness Hyde de Neuville. St. John's Church, Sixteenth & H Streets Northwest, Washington, District of Columbia, DC (Source: Library of Congress).

The Lafayette Building will be built in 1939 to the left of the Cutts-Madison House seen in this sketch.

Map of Future Site of the Lafayette Building, 1888



The McLeans, the Hope Diamond, and Ex-Im Bank



The McLean House once stood on the current site of the Export-Import Bank. The house was owned by John McLean, owner of the *Washington Post*, and then later passed down to his son Edward McLean in 1916. Due to financial troubles later in life, Evalyn Walsh McLean, Edward's wife, leased the house to the federal government in 1935. It was eventually sold for \$2 million in 1939 and demolished to build the Lafayette Building. For more information, read: **Lost Washington: The McLean House.**

Lafayette Building



The Lafayette Building, 1976

The cornerstone of the Lafayette Building was laid in 1939 and the building was completed in 1940. It was designed by the Chicago architectural firm Holabird & Root and the Washington architect A.R. Clas. It was built in the Stripped Classical style and was recognized as a good example of "an observance of the classic formula with the elimination of accompanying detail. [GSA]" In 2005 the Lafayette Building was designated as a National Historic Landmark. To learn more about the history and architecture of this building, take a look at the U.S. General Services Administration's (GSA) Building Overview of the Lafayette Building.



FOR MORE FACTS
through VPN, go to:

<https://research.exim.gov/archives/lafayettebuilding>

Honoring Legacy, Charting Tomorrow

