

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION (YWCA), RICHMOND, VA

Continuation sheet #5

Item number 7

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7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis

The most formal and public room is the library, which is to the south (or left) of the lobby. All casework and flooring is oak, and the plastered ceiling has a series of three recessed panels with enriched classical decoration. The fireplace mantel has paired, fluted Doric columns (on both sides), set on a single pedestal. An enriched entablature is above. The firebox surround and hearth are white marble with black veining. The mantelpiece above the fireplace is decorative with enriched egg and dart molding and a three-panel frieze, composed of fluting on either side of a raised panel centerpiece.

Paneled wainscoting is on the east and south walls, capped by a chair rail which continues the line of the bookcase cornice. The window architraves are shouldered. Interior window sills are of the same marble as that which surrounds the fireplace. Electric illumination of the library is provided by nine double-fixture, metal wall sconces, in foliated design, located just above the wainscot. Plastered walls terminate at the top in an elaborate plaster entablature and ceiling. The entablature is enriched with egg and dart and acanthus leaf decoration, and foliated, scrolled modillion blocks. Decoration on the (shallow) paneled ceiling includes acanthus, bead and reel, and egg and dart moldings. Round, flowered paterae are found at each of the four corners of the ceiling.

In the stair hall beyond the lobby, the main stair has cast-iron newel posts and balustrades, with marble treads. A rear stair of one flight connects the exercise room and poolroom with the gymnasium in the rear block. The elevator commutes to all four floor levels.

The gymnasium, located in the rear block of the building, fills the entire two-story space. A balcony around the entire room is nine feet wide and, although once open all around, now has a partition wall placed at each end of the gym behind the basketball goals. The ceiling structure is exposed steel trusses with riveted fasteners. The balcony is suspended from the truss work on round steel rods. A gabled skylight, mounted along the ridge of the hipped roof, is approximately eighteen feet wide by twenty-two feet long, and was originally designed to have operable awning windows at its base for ventilation. The gym has a wood floor and is equipped for basketball, as well as for true gymnastic exercises.

The primary spaces on the second floor include a large multipurpose room in the front of the main block, which was originally used for a dining area at a time when the YWCA maintained lodging houses and operated "Rest Rooms" (places to rest and eat lunch) for working women. The room was equipped with a built-in, raised stage in the 1969 renovation, and it is now used for meetings, aerobic classes, and special functions. This room has access to the front porch roof through bi-valve doors in the central bay.

Other spaces on the second floor include a commercial kitchen and a small dining room, which are leased by the YWCA to a private proprietor. Over the years, several programs have operated out of this space to provide low-cost meals for patrons of the YWCA and the public alike. Other rooms on this floor are utilitarian and have a variety of uses (e.g., classrooms, food storage, toilets, etc.).

(See Continuation Sheet #6)

