From: DC Preservation League. historicsites.dcpreservation.org

Erected in 1922, this block-long, temple-inspired structure was designed as one of the first branches of the Riggs National Bank, which foreshadowed the nationwide expansion of the banking industry following deregulatory measures passed in 1927. The new bank became the largest and most important commercial building in the developing Columbia Heights, along with the Tivoli Theatre across the street.

The Riggs-Tompkins Building was designed by George Nicholas Ray, a prominent DC architect of the period, and constructed by Charles Hook Tompkins, a prolific local builder and an innovative engineer. As the earliest banks in the branch system, the building and its contemporary, the Riggs Dupont Circle Branch Bank, were modeled after the earlier Riggs National Bank headquarters.

The favorable site and elevation of the Riggs-Tompkins Building also provided the location for an important technological development in the emerging field of mass communications: radio broadcasting. The studio and transmitters of the Radio Corporation of America's Station WRC, the city's oldest continuously operating radio station, began broadcasting during the summer of 1923. As "the Voice of the Capitol," WRC was DC's second commercial radio station and a pioneer in the field of radio and political journalism.

DC Inventory: June 17, 1985
National Register: January 5, 1987