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**FROM THE GROUND UP**  
**A Landmark Readies for Change**

By [Allan Lengel](#)  
Washington Post Staff Writer  
Monday, June 18, 2007; Page D03

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Louis' Restaurant & Carry Out, a worn diner with a yellow-brick facade and bright red door, could use a face-lift. So could the industrial neighborhood it sits in around New York Avenue NE.

That could be aided by the acquisition of the 775,000-square-foot Hecht's distribution center across the street, which shut down last month.

"I'm very anxious to see what they're going to do with it," Jose L. Guzman, the restaurant owner, said last week as the deep fryer crackled and the lunch crowd trickled in. "It's going to dictate everything in this neighborhood. Business is good, and I think it's going to get better."



The Hecht's warehouse in Northeast D.C. is being sold to a real estate investment firm. (Hecht's)

Patriot Equities, a suburban Philadelphia company specializing in transforming industrial and office spaces, said it plans this summer to complete its purchase of the six-story Art Deco building, which sits on 15.5 acres at 1401 New York Ave. NE on a stretch of road lined with gas stations and motels.

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Erik Kolar, the company's chief executive, said he has been exploring the right combination of uses for the building and "the focus has been on industrial, office and retail."

"It's one of the largest contiguous parcels of ground in the District," Kolar said. He declined to disclose the purchase price.

Federated Department Stores, now Macy's, acquired Hecht's in 2005 as part of its purchase of May Department Stores. As it consolidated operations, it put the warehouse up for sale.

The warehouse, built in 1937, is on the National Register of Historic Places and is two blocks west of Arbor Place, a \$1.1 billion residential and commercial project in the making.

Guzman, 33, who has worked at the restaurant for 14 years, the last three as owner, says he's prepared to respond to changes.

"I would remodel, no question about it, to keep up with the neighborhood," he said.

Allan Lengel covers commercial real estate. His e-mail address is [slengela@washpost.com](mailto:slengela@washpost.com).

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