

# Historic Preservation In Washington DC



# Purpose of the D.C. Preservation Law:

- To retain and enhance landmarks and those properties which contribute to the character of the historic district
- To encourage adaptation for current use
- To assure that alterations of existing structures, new construction, and subdivision of lots are compatible with the character of the historic district



F Street looking west from Ninth Street, 1900, photo by Henry Arthur Taft, Washingtoniana Division, D.C. Public Library



Commercial buildings on the west side of the 700 block of 7th Street NW, 1949.



Google

Commercial buildings on the west side of the 700 block of 7th Street NW, 1949.



Google

U Street NW east of 14th Street. North side, 1949.



Google

U Street NW east of 14th Street. North side, 1949.



Google

# The Historic Preservation Office (HPO) and Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB)

The Historic Preservation Office (HPO) and Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) are charged with identifying, evaluating, protecting, and enhancing the historic properties and archaeological resources that are significant to local communities, the District of Columbia and the Nation.

## IDENTIFY AND EVALUATE

Survey and document potential historic and archaeological resources

## PROTECT

Designate landmarks and districts

Review alterations, new construction, demolitions and subdivisions to ensure compatible treatments

## ENHANCE AND PROMOTE

Encourage reuse, rehabilitation and adaptation

Provide direction through Standards, Guidelines, and Regulations

Administer Incentives

Neighborhood outreach

# Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB)

- 9 members (currently 8), all residents appointed by the Mayor, subject to approval by the Council of the District of Columbia.
- HPRB typically reviews concept applications (as opposed to building permits). Once approved at the concept level, final construction approval is delegated to HPO staff for clearance of the DCRA permit.
- Applicants are required to notify neighbors, recent out to neighborhood organizations, and present their proposal to their ANC prior to presenting to HPRB
- New construction, substantial additions, significant alterations that are not consistent with regulations and razes are reviewed by HPRB.
- Reviews Proposed Landmark and Historic District nominations and Design Guidelines
- Meets monthly 11 months out of the year. Meetings open to the public, and anyone is welcome to submit written comments on a case and participate at a meeting without signing up in advance. HPRB actions and video recordings of HPRB meetings are available to the public on the Office of Planning's website: [www.planning.dc.gov](http://www.planning.dc.gov)



# Historic Preservation Office

- HPO is part of the Office of Planning and serves as the staff to the Historic Preservation Review Board and Mayor's Agent for historic preservation.
- Design professionals with expertise in architectural history, historic preservation, and archeology
- HPO guides property owners through the HPRB review process and writes evaluative reports with recommendations to HPRB. Reports are available to the public and posted online prior to the HPRB meetings.
- If consistent with preservation guidelines and standards, HPO can approve permits for repair, in-kind replacement, alterations, and small additions without referral to HPRB.



# Types of Designations: D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites

- Official list of historic landmarks and historic districts in the District of Columbia
- List of properties designated for protection by the under the local preservation law.
- Properties designated to the Inventory are typically also nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.
- There are more than 70 historic districts in DC, including monumental civic complexes. Local neighborhoods account for more than 30 districts, and there are more than 12 military and campus districts. Cemeteries, parks and parkways make up the remainder.
- <https://planning.dc.gov/page/historic-preservation-office>



## American Theater (Sylvan Theater): 104-108 Rhode Island Avenue NW

- Opened as the American Theatre in 1913, this early movie palace designed by architect Nicholas Haller has a long history in Bloomingdale.
- Originally for whites only, it was renovated and rebranded as the Sylvan Theatre in 1930, and opened to African Americans in 1950.
- After decades as a neighborhood movie house, it served as home to the influential Black American Theater (BAT) from 1969 to 1972, Washington's first African-American company to control a commercial theatre venue.
- The rare early theater illustrates the transition from storefront nickelodeons to full-scale neighborhood motion picture theaters to incubators of local live theater performance.



Nominated by the DC Preservation League; designated on April 25, 2019

# Types of Designations: National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of resources worthy of preservation and commemoration.

Listing in the National Register confers recognition and ensures review of federal government undertakings that might affect the character or setting of listed properties.

Makes certain properties eligible for federal preservation tax incentives and preferential consideration in federal leasing

<https://www.nps.gov/nr>

FY 19 National Register Listings

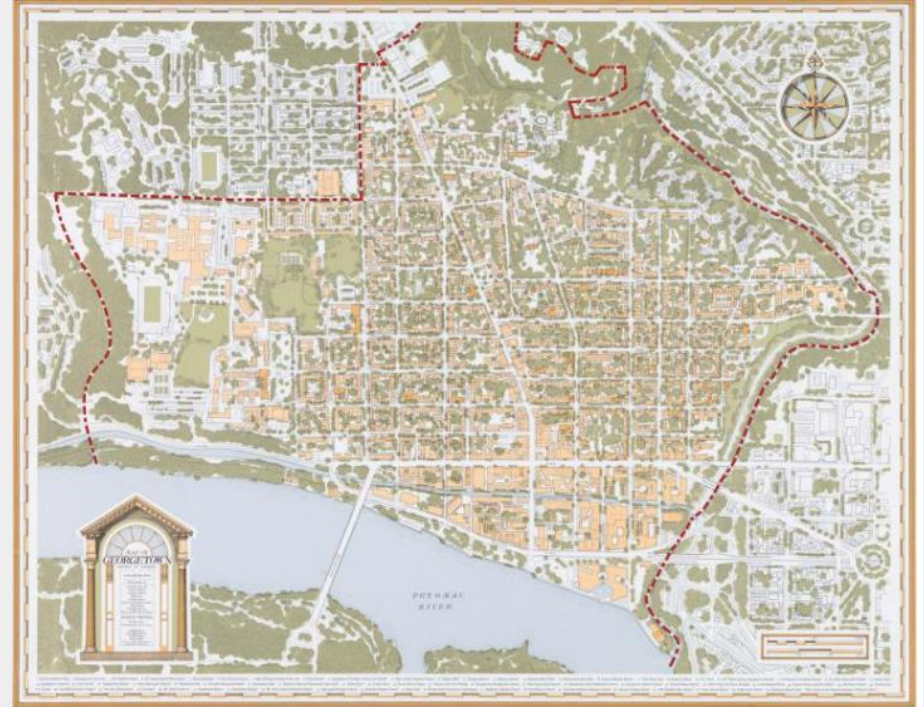
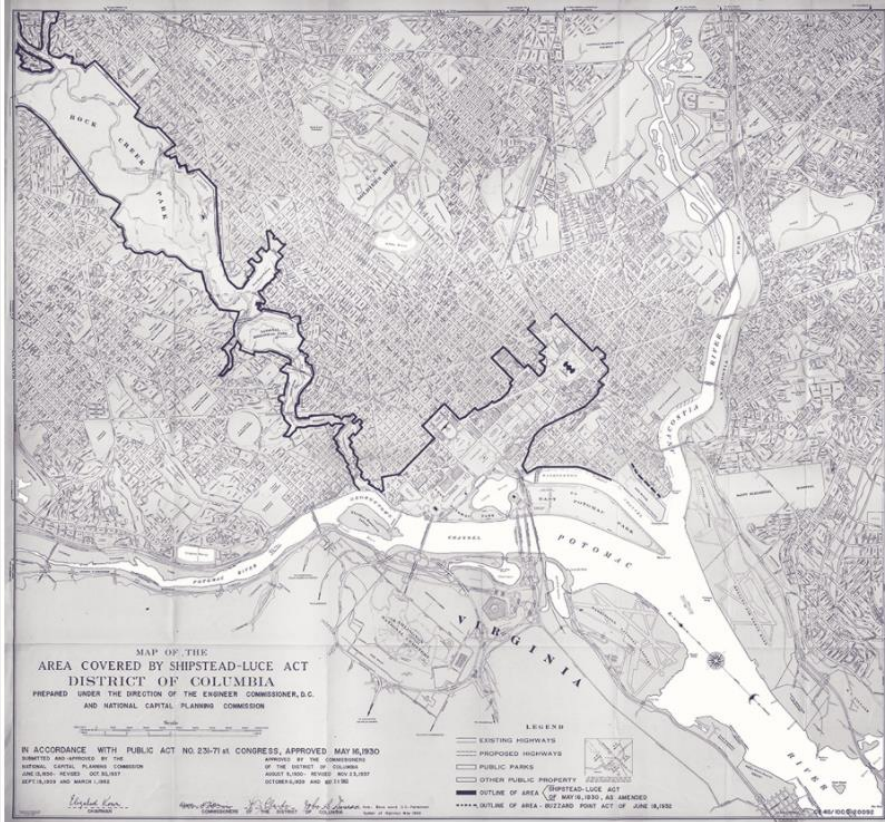
Ward	Property	Address
1	PEPCO Substation No. 13	1001 Howard Street NW
	PEPCO Substation No. 25	2119 Champlain Street NW
2	Capital Traction Company Union Station	3601 M Street NW
	DC Municipal Center & Plaza	300 Indiana Avenue NW
	The Ethelhurst	1025 15th Street NW
3	Equitable Life Insurance Company	3900 Wisconsin Avenue NW
	Rose Lees Hardy School	1550 Foxhall Road NW
	Wardman Park Annex (additional documentation)	2600 Woodley Road NW
5	Brookland Bowling Alley	3726 10th Street NE
	Harewood Lodge	3600 Harewood Road NE
	Holy Redeemer College	3112 7th Street NE
6	Folger Shakespeare Library (additional documentation)	201 East Capitol Street SE

# Types of Designation: CFA and OGB

The Commission of Fine Arts is an independent federal agency charged with giving expert advice to the President, the Congress and the federal and District of Columbia governments on matters of design and aesthetics, as they affect the federal interest and preserve the dignity of the nation's capital.

- The Commission reviews designs proposed for memorials, coins, medals, and new or renovated government buildings, as well as privately owned properties in certain areas of Washington under the Shipstead-Luce Act and Old Georgetown Act.
- The Old Georgetown Board reviews projects within the Georgetown Historic District and forwards its recommendation to the Commission of Fine Arts for formal action.
- Due to the coronavirus (Covid-19) public health emergency, the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts is continuing to review projects via virtual meeting, with staff remaining on duty through telework and intermittent office hours.
- For general inquiries, please email [cfastaff@cfa.gov](mailto:cfastaff@cfa.gov) or call (202) 504-2200. (Updated: 4/9/21)
- Check this website for updates on submission portal and requirements: <https://www.cfa.gov>

# Types of Designation: CFA and OGB



Map of Georgetown with dashed lines added to indicate the boundaries of the Old Georgetown historic district as established by Congress in 1950. (Image credit: Map provided courtesy of the Georgetown Map Project, © 1993 - Outerbridge Horsey, Florence Stone, Merle Thorpe. All rights reserved. Old Georgetown boundary line added with permission.)

# Landmark, Historic District, CFA, OGB??

How do you know which designation applies to your property?

<https://propertyquest.dc.gov/#>

PQ   Map Options ▾ Print Help

### Highlights

- Portions in both the 100- and 500-year floodplains*
- In these Historic Districts:*
  - Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park*
  - Georgetown Historic District*
  - Glover-Archbold Park (Res 450 & 351)*
  - Potomac Gorge, The (Potomac Palisades)*
  - Rock Creek & Potomac Parkway (Res 360)*
- There is a historic easement at this location*
- Historic Landmarks on this site:*
  - Chesapeake and Ohio Canal*
  - Conduit Road School*
  - Key Bridge*
  - Potomac Aqueduct Bridge Abutment and Pier*
  - Potomac Boat Club*
  - Washington Aqueduct, Georgetown Reservoir*
  - Washington Canoe Club*
  - West Heating Plant*
- In the Commission of Fine Arts jurisdiction area*

Campus: Georgetown University

### Basic Information

### Interactive Map

The interactive map displays a detailed view of a property area in Washington, D.C. The map is overlaid with various designations: a yellow shaded area indicates floodplains; purple and blue hatched areas represent historic districts and landmarks; and different colored polygons (yellow, purple, blue) denote zoning districts such as MU-13, RA-2, RA-5, and UNZONED. A red circle on the map marks a specific location. The map includes street names like Thomas Jefferson St NW, Potomac Ave NW, and Rock Creek & Potomac Parkway NW. A legend in the bottom right corner identifies the DC GIS symbols.

# Design Guidelines and Rules

- The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) and Historic Preservation Office (HPO) use written design standards and guidelines to review construction affecting historic properties in the District of Columbia.
- In some cases, HPRB and HPO also use the nationwide historic preservation standards and guidelines issued by the National Park Service  
[https://planning.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/op/page\\_content/attachments/DCMR%2010A%20Chapter%2020.pdf](https://planning.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/op/page_content/attachments/DCMR%2010A%20Chapter%2020.pdf)
- Certain types of work can receive an HPO staff sign off on a DCRA permit without going before the HPRB if it conforms to the DC Preservation Law and HPO's Design Guidelines
- Topical design guidelines provide essential guidance on many commonly encountered preservation issues. There are separate guidelines for building additions, new construction, commercial buildings, alteration of various building components, certain Historic Districts, and site work.
- Full text of the DC Preservation Law and all Design Guidelines are available on the Office of Planning website
- Referring to the guidelines prior to filing with DCRA can expedite the permit process and ensure a staff level approval





## SUSTAINABILITY GUIDE FOR OLDER AND HISTORIC BUILDINGS



DC HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD



## KINGMAN PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES



DC HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD



# Enforcement and Violations

- Inspectors and Project Reviewers inspect properties to ensure consistency with approved plans and standards
- Inspectors can halt work and issue Notices of Infractions (fines) as appropriate when projects are not properly permitted or implemented.
- The property owner is responsible
- Unaddressed violations run with the property
- Notices of violations, infractions and stop-work orders must be corrected or disclosed to, and accepted by, purchasers (DCMR 12G, 107.6)
- Properties may also be cited for deterioration because of neglect

Government of the District of Columbia  
Department of Consumer & Regulatory Affairs  
Inspections & Compliance Administration  
1100 4th Street SW, Washington, DC 20004

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

## STOP WORK ORDER

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

You are hereby ordered to **IMMEDIATELY STOP** all work at this building or structure.

You are performing work that violates the following Construction Code:  
 You are performing the following work in an unsafe and dangerous manner:

Code Section(s)	Violation(s)	What You Must Do to Correct the Violation(s)

**Do NOT work at this address until you:**

- Correct the violation(s)
- Pay the potential fine
- Obtain and post the required permit(s)
- Building  Electrical  Plumbing  Raze  Boiler  Elevator  Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Receive approval from the Compliance Official to remove the Stop Work Order

**WARNING**

Unauthorized removal of a posted Stop Work Order is a Construction Code violation, subject to penalties and injunctive relief under DC Official Code §6-1406 and §6-1407 and 12A DCMR §114.3.

A Stop Work Order for illegal construction under 12A DCMR §113.7 and §114.6 requires you to stop all work at the building or structure, whether or not the work requires building permits.

It is a Stop Work Order violation for an owner or agent to enter the site for any reason without the Code Official's approval. (The Building Official may allow temporary access to ensure the property's security and safety, under 12A DCMR §114.6.1.)

Anyone who continues any work in or around a structure posted with a Stop Work Order – except to do work that the Building Official approves to remove a violation or unsafe condition – is subject to penalties and injunctive relief under DC Official Code §6-1406 and 12A DCMR §105.8 and 12A DCMR §114.10.

**RIGHT TO APPEAL**

You have the right to appeal this Order to the DCRA's Compliance Official within 15 days of its posting, under 12A DCMR §114.11.1. You may call the SWO Compliance Office at (202) 462-7887. You may obtain a Stop Work Order Appeal/Compliance Meeting Request Form at the address above or at [dcra.dc.gov](http://dcra.dc.gov). If the Compliance Official denies your appeal or takes no action within 10 working days of receiving it, you may file your appeal with the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) using the SWO Appeal/Compliance Meeting Request Form in person or by mail to the Clerk, Office of Administrative Hearings, One Judiciary Square, 441 4<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001-2714. Alternatively, you may fax the document(s) to OAH at (202) 462-4789 or file electronically at [cah.filing@dc.gov](mailto:cah.filing@dc.gov).

Signature of Issuing Official: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Badge Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

# Preservation Resources: ANCs and Neighborhood Preservation Groups

Several neighborhoods have preservation groups that can provide guidance to homeowners. Some ANCs have preservation and zoning committees for projects that qualify.

ANCs submit letters to HPRB and Preservation groups can come and testify to HPRB on projects located in their neighborhood.



Capitol Hill  
Restoration  
Society



The Historic Anacostia Preservation Society

#PreserveAnacostia

Home

About HAPS

Projects

Useful Resources

Architecture in Anacostia

The Anacostia Historic District

When in doubt, ask HPO: [historic.preservation@dc.gov](mailto:historic.preservation@dc.gov)

HPO staff are assigned historic districts. You can call and/or email them with specific questions.

If you are unsure if something requires a permit or not, ok to ask HPO staff (better than receiving a violation).

If you want to know if a building has an active violation open you can reach out to HPO staff.



# Historic Homeowner Grant Program

Homeowner grants are available for exterior and structural work on historic buildings in fifteen DC historic districts and landmarks.

The grant program is administered by the DC Historic Preservation Office (HPO).

Grants are available to low- and moderate-income households living in specific historic districts. Grants may be up to a maximum of \$25,000, except the Anacostia Historic District where the maximum is \$35,000.

Questions regarding the program should be directed to Brendan Meyer at (202) 741-5248 or [brendan.meyer@dc.gov](mailto:brendan.meyer@dc.gov)



2018 Homeowner Grant Project Before and After

# Historic Homeowner Grant Program

Grants are available to homeowners of historic houses in the following historic districts and landmarks:

Anacostia | Emerald Street | Mount Pleasant | Strivers' Section | Blagden Alley/Naylor Court | Fourteenth Street | Mount Vernon Square | Takoma Park | Bloomingdale | Kingman Park | Mount Vernon Triangle | U Street | Capitol Hill | LeDroit Park | Shaw | Wardman Flats

Grants are available to DC residents registered as currently receiving the Homestead Deduction for property taxes on their home. To qualify, the taxpayer must have a household income of 120% or less of the area median income (AMI) and be currently receiving the homestead deduction for property taxes.

Depending on income, a grant recipient may also be required to match the grant by contributing to the cost of rehabilitation.

A grant recipient must meet application requirements and enter a preservation covenant ensuring the funded improvements are maintained in good repair for at least five years.

# Historic Homeowner Grant Program

Grants are awarded on a competitive basis with preference given to major structural repairs and work that restores important and prominently visible architectural features, such as:

- Repair of original front wood windows and doors
- Replacement of non-original windows and doors
- Repair and painting of wood siding and trim
- Repair or reconstruction of front porches and stairs
- Roof repair and replacement

Grants cannot be provided for heating and air conditioning systems, plumbing, interior work, or additions.

Grants are not available for houses that do not contribute to the character of the historic district. Grant funding is not retroactive and cannot be awarded for work that has already been started or completed.

## Preservation Resources: [www.planning.dc.gov](http://www.planning.dc.gov)

Additional Preservation Grants: District of Columbia community groups, organizations, and nonprofits are eligible to apply for preservation grants from several grant-making entities—HumanitiesDC, the DC Preservation League, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

<http://www.wdchumanities.org/humanities-project-funding/dcchp-grant/>

<http://www.dcpreservation.org/grants/>

<https://savingplaces.org/grants#.V2wLPooUVaR>



## Preservation Resources: [www.planning.dc.gov](http://www.planning.dc.gov)

**HistoryQuest DC:** HistoryQuest DC, is an interactive GIS map that provides historical data on approximately 127,000 extant buildings in Washington, DC. The map offers several operational layers of information for the user including historic data on individual buildings, original dates of construction, architects, owners and builders of the city's historic buildings.

<https://dcgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=2ab24bc3b6da4314b9f2c74b69190333>

**Ward Heritage Guides:** The Historic Preservation Office (HPO) has been working with local communities to prepare a series of heritage guides for the District's eight wards. Each illustrated guide describes the ward's historical development, shows recognized historic properties, and identifies other sites that may be significant to local culture or valued by neighborhood residents.

<https://planning.dc.gov/node/1184536>

# Questions/Comments

## Connect With Us

1100 4th Street, SW, Suite 650 East, Washington, DC 20024

Phone: (202) 442-7600

Fax: (202) 442-7638

Best Contact Info Email: [imania.price@dc.gov](mailto:imania.price@dc.gov)

Office Email: [historic.preservation@dc.gov](mailto:historic.preservation@dc.gov)