



DC Inventory Landmarks and Historic Districts Nomination Process

DC Preservation League (DCPL) is a non-profit, member supported organization dedicated to historic preservation advocacy and education. It is not part of the DC Government, Historic Preservation Office (HPO), or Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB).

DCPL regularly nominates sites to the DC Inventory of Historic Sites. Listing on the DC Inventory as an individual landmark or contributing building to a historic district protects a building against demolition. **Additions or major exterior alterations to a listed building must be proposed to and approved by the HPRB.**

Listing on the DC Inventory does **NOT** mean that a building can never be changed. Rather, proposed changes undergo design review to ensure that changes are compatible with the historic fabric of the site (or neighborhood, for historic districts), while allowing the site to be usable in the present. **Routine maintenance and painting of most buildings in DC are not subjected to HPRB review and do not require special permits.**

The typical process DCPL follows when nominating historic resources (i.e., properties) to the DC Inventory of Historic Sites is:

- **A nomination that describes the building or historic district's architecture and historic significance is written and submitted by DCPL's Landmarks Committee to DCPL's Board of Trustees.** The Board votes on whether or not to proceed in filing the nomination with the city. **If the Board votes in favor, the DCPL staff moves forward.**
- **DCPL sends a letter to the building's owner, as well as HPO, the ANC, and the ANC Single Member District in which the building is located.** In the case of a historic district, all business owners and relevant ANC commissioners are notified. This letter explains DCPL's intent to file the nomination and the site's significance. DCPL provides time for the owner to respond and discuss the proposed nomination.
- **DCPL submits the nomination to the HPO.** Staff at HPO review the nomination for completeness. If the nomination is satisfactory, HPO adds it to the list of pending nominations and notifies DCPL and the building's owner of the building's status. Individual landmarks are now protected like a listed site - pending an HPRB hearing. Buildings in a proposed historic district are not protected pending an HPRB hearing. A list of the pending nominations is on HPO's website.

- **HPRB typically meets twice a month.** The city determines when to schedule cases for review. Once the building or historic district is noticed for HPRB review, this information appears on HPO's website. The time and place (including, virtual or in-person) of the hearing are included on the publicly available agenda.
- **The case goes before the HPRB.** DCPL presents the case for designation at this public meeting. The meeting is also broadcast live on HPO's website. **Anyone can watch or attend.** HPO, building owners, the ANC, and members of the community can speak at the hearing in support of or opposition to the nomination. Those who cannot attend in person may submit letters supporting or opposing designation.
- **HPRB determines whether or not to list the building on the DC Inventory by majority vote.** There are nine members of the HPRB, all mayoral appointees. They are a mix of architects, architectural historians, historians, archaeologists, and citizen members.
- If HPRB votes in favor of listing the site, it is added to the **DC Inventory of Historic Sites** and protected against demolition and major alteration without review. It is also forwarded for review for inclusion in the **National Register of Historic Places** - a largely honorary designation. If HPRB votes against listing the site, it does not become a designated historic landmark and is not protected against demolition or alteration.