



[2025]

## District of Columbia Historic Preservation Plan

# Celebrating Our Diversity



 GOVERNMENT OF THE  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR









an extraordinary time

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# An extraordinary time

In a year of pandemic and protest, the nation and the District have reckoned with a trying past. People demanded not just accountability from institutions, but simply the right to be heard and respected. They called for an equitable future to overcome a legacy of disparity that has denied opportunity to many while diminishing us all. They are making new history.

Historic preservation, too, is looking toward a better future. The District’s historic preservation program began in the era after World War II, at a time of sustained population loss and mass demolition of its urban landscape. Today the challenges are very different. Since 2000, the District’s population has rebounded by more than a hundred thousand and every neighborhood has reaped the benefits of building renovation and new construction. That growth has occurred alongside preservation, and in some ways because of its remarkable past success.

Each new generation faces a different world, and changes it again for the next. Equity, racial justice, access to an adequate supply of affordable housing, and responsible development in the face of climate change are urgent challenges for the present generation. They are challenges for preservation as well, and require renewed attention to its place in a changing world. Preservationists must think carefully about how to adjust to these new priorities.

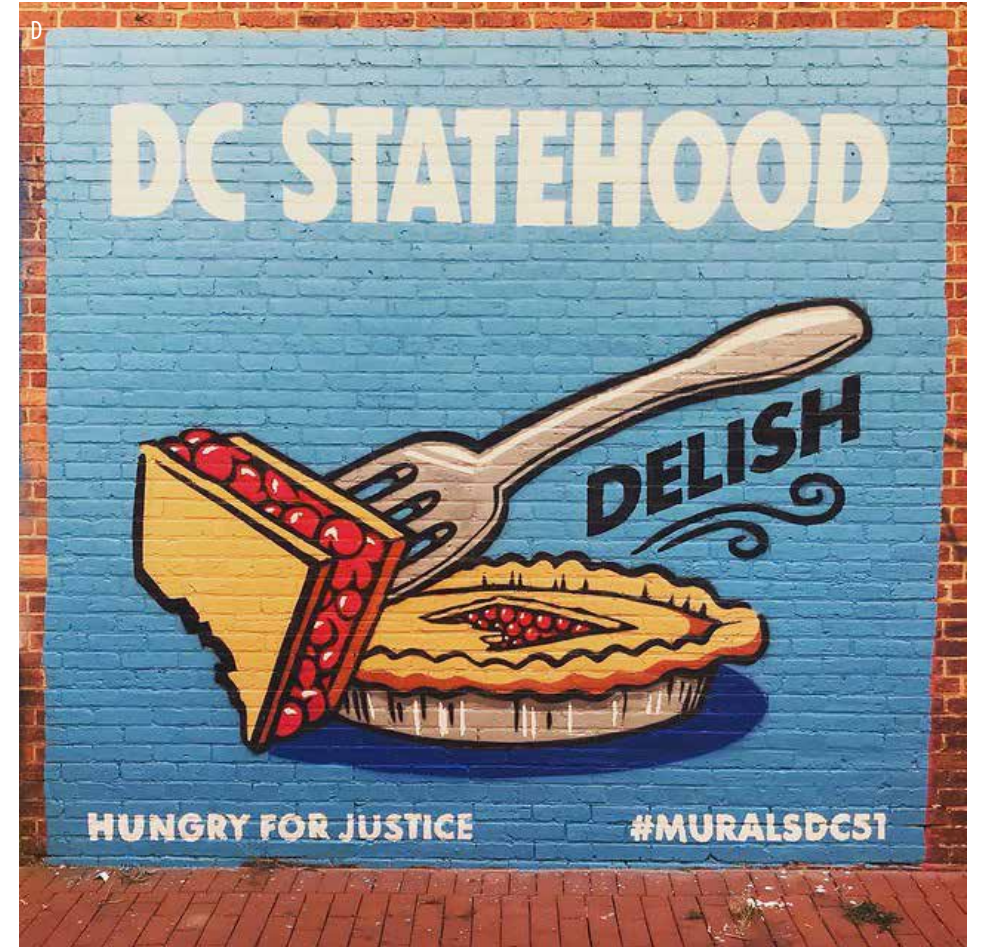
For historic preservation to remain vital in the life of the District, it must embrace these new challenges. It must attend to the places and history that residents value and admire. It must listen to their thoughts and concerns, and adapt its strategies to be more flexible and responsive. It must do a better job of making the case for its relevance in providing affordable homes and ensuring a more resilient and sustainable future.

At a time of unprecedented challenges, historic preservation safeguards our most important and valued places to inspire future generations and to ensure that we neither forget nor ignore the difficult lessons of racism and other inequities in our history. It encourages us to act responsibly by reusing and adapting our built environment as an invaluable renewable asset. It compels us to be thoughtful and deliberate in helping to guide change in ways that lead to a better future.



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# Celebrating our diversity

## Introduction

Now well into its third century, the District of Columbia is fortunate in the exceptional value of its cultural, historical, and architectural heritage. This is a rich and multi-faceted legacy, manifested not just in the city’s majestic museums and monuments, but also in its variety of neighborhoods, places of work and worship, scenic parks, and playgrounds. The District’s layers of history trace the stories of different people, multiple communities, and an array of institutions that have shaped a place whose origins stretch back thousands of years into prehistoric times.

This legacy survives not just by chance. It has been nurtured through the concerted efforts of community activists and civic leaders advocating for the value of the city’s historic resources and social diversity. A half century ago, when a preservation movement arose in the District, the population was declining and traditional urbanism was losing favor. Advocates fought not just the random demolition of “obsolete” structures for parking lots, but also massive and racially discriminatory renewal schemes that destabilized whole communities. They advanced an alternative vision that the physical and social fabric of our communities are irreplaceable assets that should be sustained and renewed rather than devalued and replaced.

During that past half century, preservation of our cultural heritage has become an accepted principle that has helped the District thrive. Tens of thousands of historic buildings have been protected and adapted to meet modern needs. New life has reinvigorated entire neighborhoods. There has not always been full agreement on every project, and the burdens and benefits of renewal have often been shared inequitably, but the general goal of respecting the city’s history and character enjoys widespread solid support.

With a strong economy and surging population, the pressure for new development and new housing, especially affordable housing, has intensified. Land and housing costs

continue to rise. New residents bring vitality, but also their own expectations about the city they now live in. Some may approach historic preservation differently from long-time District residents fearful of being displaced or concerned about the loss of a familiar sense of community.

Along with prosperity and livability, the principles of equity, affordability, sustainability, and resilience now influence our planning. Yet the District can meet these new challenges by improving familiar tools that work well, while also exploring new strategies. This plan aims to follow that path so we can ensure that the cultural heritage of Washington, DC remains a valued and vital part of our daily lives.



Chapter cover photo: DC Water, Bryant Street warehouse  
A 2021 DC Pride Parade  
B Catania Bakery on North Capitol Street  
C Statehood mural in Shaw, by artist Cesar Maxit  
D Streatery in Dupont Circle



## Continuing on a Path Forward

This five-year plan, looking ahead to the year 2025, updates the goals established in the previous plans concluding in 2016 and 2020. This series of plans promotes a continuity of effort that is also responsive to changing needs. It helps measure progress in increments and allows for adjustment of priorities as new challenges arise.

The current plan retains much from the previous documents for the sake of consistency and efficiency. It takes progress into account, considers new issues, and refreshes targets toward long-term goals. It retains what remains valid and changes what needs updating.

The plan sets out an ambitious but manageable agenda. It proposes a range of activities for multiple partners: the District's Historic Preservation Office (HPO), city agencies, federal partners, community organizations, businesses, and civic leaders. It seeks the participation of residents in all parts of the District.



The 2016 and 2020 plans noted five major themes underlying their recommendations. With a few minor adjustments, the themes remain valid today:

- 1 Preservation should focus on the basics.** Preservation should concentrate on what an informed person can understand as valuable.
- 2 We should build from an understanding of history.** Telling the story of our communities will help bring residents together and foster civic pride in the accomplishments of the past.
- 3 Preservationists should work together.** Partnerships are essential to draw on all available talents and resources, communicate effectively, and make progress toward common goals.
- 4 We should celebrate our achievements.** Our historic environment is in remarkable condition overall, and preservationists can take credit for decades of solid accomplishment.
- 5 Preservation should consider new possibilities.** A changing city faces new challenges, but we can adapt our tools to be more effective in response.



## Building on Progress

The District recorded numerous preservation achievements during the span of the 2020 Historic Preservation Plan, *Preserving for Progress*. Among the most notable were:

- spectacular award-winning renovations of two civic landmarks—the Carnegie Library and Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library
- a fully restored Arlington Memorial Bridge
- an inspiring new Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge
- dedication of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial on Maryland Avenue
- new people-oriented public parks at Franklin Square downtown and Eastern Market Metro Park in Capitol Hill
- opening of Planet Word in the Franklin School
- new communities taking shape at Saint Elizabeths East, Walter Reed, and Union Market
- major renovation and new construction in historic Anacostia, reversing decades of disinvestment
- *Save the Tidal Basin* resiliency initiative
- online stories of 20th Century African American Civil Rights—a 110-site heritage trail and story maps on Kingman Park, Barry Farm, and public golf courses
- a context study of LGBTQ history, and launching of studies on Women's Suffrage and the District's Chinese and Korean immigrant communities

- two Ward Heritage Guides, with the final in the series nearly complete
- groundbreaking DC FACES report on commemorative naming of DC properties, giving new insight into the history of racism
- a consolidated center for archaeological collections at MLK Library
- an updated and improved historic preservation element in the DC Comprehensive Plan
- release of the *DC Cultural Plan*
- expanded public access to Historic Preservation Review Board and community meetings, local history sessions, and archives online; and
- 23 new DC historic landmarks, 21 new or amended nominations to the National Register, and one new National Historic Landmark.

Overall, more than half of the 2020 plan's targeted actions were completed, and more than two-thirds of the targets were either fully or partly met.

A detailed retrospective on the 2020 plan records and evaluates specific achievements under each of the plan's goals and objectives. The *Final Accomplishments Report* is available on the HPO website at [planning.dc.gov/page/preservation-planning](https://planning.dc.gov/page/preservation-planning).





# Planning Mandates

This document supports the vision outlined in the District of Columbia Comprehensive Plan, *Growing An Inclusive City: From Vision to Reality*, which guides all local planning efforts. The DC Council adopted the Plan in 2006 and amended it most recently in 2021, after a five-year community review.

That review saw an unprecedented level of participation by civic groups, the preservation community, and the public. The many views expressed during the process, which continued through August 2021, informed this historic preservation plan, as did a new preservation survey.

This plan fulfills the requirement in Section 101 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 for the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to prepare and implement a comprehensive preservation plan (54 U.S.C. § 302303(b)(3)). The plan follows the standards and guidelines of the National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Department of the Interior. Its final draft was submitted to NPS for review and approval in January 2022.

Preparation of the plan has benefited from the annual reports on the preservation program required by the District of Columbia Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act of 1978. These reports describe achievements in implementing the vision of that law. They are posted on the HPO website at [planning.dc.gov/page/preservation-planning](https://planning.dc.gov/page/preservation-planning).

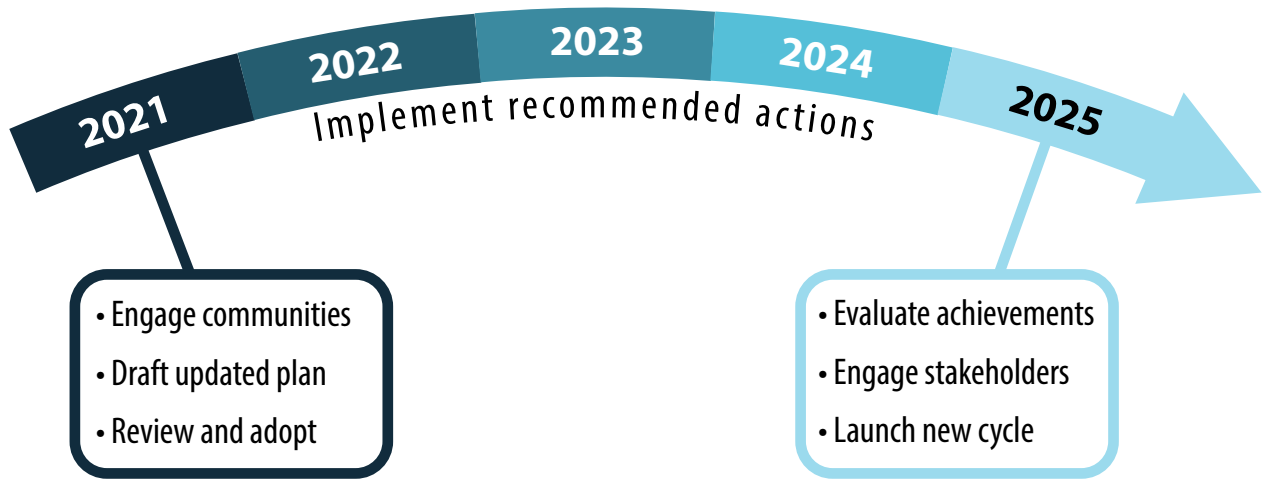
# Theme and Duration

This 2025 DC Historic Preservation Plan, entitled *Celebrating Our Diversity*, completes a series of three plans spanning thirteen years. It follows the 2016 preservation plan, *Enriching Our Heritage*, and the 2020 plan, *Preserving for Progress*.

The theme of diversity is inspired by an extraordinary moment of challenge in our nation's history and a nationwide emphasis on inclusiveness in historic preservation. Achieving racial equity is a District priority, and this plan supports that concern with its focus on understanding the community history of each one of DC's many neighborhoods.

*Celebrating Our Diversity* shifts to a five-year preservation planning cycle more closely aligned with the 20-year cycle for DC comprehensive planning. The extra year allows for a built-in period at the beginning and end of each cycle for plan preparation and evaluation, as shown in the diagram below. These will be long-lasting benefits.

Preparation of the plan in 2021 takes advantage of two milestones: release of data from the 2020 US Census, and adoption of the updated DC Comprehensive Plan, which includes a refreshed vision for historic preservation. The evaluation of achievements in 2025 is well timed to inform the scheduled renewal of the Comprehensive Plan in 2026.





## A Guide for Everyone

Preservation requires collective action. Volunteers help to explore local history, while community groups advocate for the benefits of preservation. Schools, cultural institutions, and a multitude of congregations transfer heritage to the next generation. Everyone enjoys our civic spaces and draws inspiration from the life of the city. And thousands of property owners—homeowners, businesses, institutions, and government stewards—help maintain the District’s historic environment whether or not they think of themselves as engaged in historic preservation.

This plan is not just a guide for the operations of the Historic Preservation Office, Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB), and other government agencies involved in implementing preservation laws. Government officials alone cannot fulfill the purposes and intent of these laws without the participation and support of the community at large. The success of this plan relies on the commitment and contributions of many partners working for the common good of the city. This plan is intended for everyone in the District of Columbia.



## Organization of the Plan

The 2025 plan is organized in seven chapters, following the same format as the 2016 and 2020 plans:

- First, it describes a common vision, and reviews our history and heritage — [Chapters One and Two](#).
- [Chapter Three](#) assesses our strengths and gives the basics on historic preservation laws, key preservation officials, and partner organizations.
- [Chapter Four](#) describes current challenges in preservation, with much new content.
- [Chapter Five](#) establishes revised goals and sets new objectives to reach those goals.
- [Chapter Six](#) charts a more detailed implementation agenda with action targets to help measure progress.
- [Chapter Seven](#) gives resource links, a glossary of terms, and credits. It includes information on how to contact HPO throughout the life of this plan.

## Seeking Your Views

Much of the public communication for this plan took place online. After initial contacts with key stakeholders, outreach kicked off with a public launch at the June 3, 2021 meeting of the Historic Preservation Review Board, held online via WebEx. The kickoff introduced the theme of *Celebrating Our Diversity* and the focus on DC neighborhoods.

The plan’s community survey began at the same time. While the survey was in progress, HPO met with preservation stakeholders to gain perspective on their priorities, challenges, and upcoming plans.

The draft of the plan was released on July 30, 2021, for public review and comment through September 30, 2021. Survey results and public comments were incorporated into the draft for a final submission to the National Park Service (NPS) in January 2022. The submission included a Disaster Management Plan appendix, which serves as a starting point for further public discussion on ensuring a resilient future for historic resources in the upcoming years.

After a thorough review, NPS approved the document on April 11, 2022, which is the plan’s effective date.



## Focusing on Implementation

This plan is task-oriented and partnership-based. The detailed implementation tasks in Chapter Six constitute a forward-looking agenda for the District’s preservation program and stakeholders in the community. Government and institutional partners, property owners, community groups, and the public are encouraged to support and contribute to the accomplishment of this agenda.

Progress toward achieving the agenda will be tracked each year through consultation with preservation partners and reporting to NPS, HPRB, and the DC Council. Annual progress reports will be made available to the general public on the Office of Planning website, through social media, and by distribution to the HPO public announcement list.

Questions and comments about the plan are welcome at any time. Your observations, opinions, suggestions, and participation are always important as we move forward together.

A Dupont Circle Historic District  
B US Capitol Columns, National Arboretum  
C Naylor Court



# A vision for historic preservation

The District of Columbia’s vision for the collective stewardship of our heritage is set forth in the Comprehensive Plan, adopted by the D.C. Council in 2006 and most recently revised in 2021. The vision, stated in the plan and below as a concise historic preservation goal, is supported by a discussion of historical context, principles, and opportunities. The final excerpts on pages 11 and 12 introduce the preservation element’s four sections listing policies and recommended actions.

## Historic Preservation Goal

The overarching goal for historic preservation is to preserve and enhance the unique cultural heritage, beauty, and identity of Washington, DC by respecting the historic physical form of the District and the enduring value of its historic structures and places, sharing responsibility for their protection and stewardship, and perpetuating them for the benefit of the residents of the District and the nation. *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1001.1)*

## One of the World’s Great Planned Cities

Washington, DC is both the nation’s capital and one of the world’s great planned cities. These conditions have profoundly influenced the course of Washington, DC’s development, shaping its culture and physical character. *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1000.3)*

The nation’s founders selected a special place for the federal city. Both northern and southern, the site was a gentle flatland surrounded by a ring of hills interlaced with broad rivers and streams. Native Americans had inhabited this land for thousands of years, and for nearly two centuries it was an agricultural landscape. By the mid-1700s, as the District began developing, both Georgetown and Alexandria were its trading centers. *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1000.4)*

The natural terrain and early trading centers enabled the creation of a brilliant geometric plan whose array of civic buildings would give the capital city its symbolic profile. The 1791 Plan of the City of Washington, drawn up by the French engineer Pierre Charles L’Enfant, envisioned a majestic seat of government embedded in a city of trade, commerce, and thriving communities. This intermixing of national landmarks with commercial buildings and new apartments still gives Washington, DC a distinctive historic character. *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1000.5)*

## From Vision to Reality

How long this experimental District—or nation—would last was unclear. Amid the turmoil of Civil War, as Abraham Lincoln made completion of the new Capitol dome a symbolic goal, disruption laid waste to the District’s greenery and few public adornments. Soldiers and freedmen streaming into Washington, DC burdened its limited resources. It was not until the massive public works program of the Reconstruction era that Washington, DC began to assume a civic dignity befitting its ambitions. As part of the beautification effort, District leaders created a system of privately maintained green space and regulated building projections that would enable sculptural building fronts and a continuous landscape along L’Enfant’s wide thoroughfares. This system is still in effect and continues to shape the design character of the District’s row house neighborhoods. *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1000.6)*

The thirst for civic embellishment and picturesque settings prevailed in the capital through the end of the 19th century. National monuments rose in ornate parks, complementing the sculpted facades and tree-lined lawns along the District avenues. New parkland and a curvilinear tidal basin emerged from the Potomac River mudflats. As metal frame construction and elevators pushed buildings into the skyline, District leaders adopted the first height limits in 1894. In incremental steps, Victorian Washington, DC became a more comfortable, pleasant, and beautiful District. This legacy remains strong in the ring of neighborhoods around downtown. *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1000.7)*

## Beyond the Original Plan

The District began to grow beyond its original boundaries, but after the first few subdivisions were platted in haphazard fashion, District leaders stepped in to ensure that this expansion would be consistent with the District’s planning traditions. Congress set aside the Rock Creek valley for a zoological park and nature preserve, and mandated a plan to extend the spirit of L’Enfant’s geometry into the new suburbs. Realized in 1893 as the Permanent System of Highways, commonly known as the Highway Plan, this network of streets and avenues establishes the fundamental character of the District’s outlying neighborhoods. *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1000.8)*





## An Expanded Vision

As the nation entered a new century with growing global confidence, the McMillan Commission Plan of 1901 envisioned an even greater city and capital. The plan's authors reclaimed the legacy of L'Enfant while reinterpreting his vision on a more magnificent scale. The expanded seat of government became a civic precinct, less intermingled with the daily life of the city. The National Mall gained formal majesty, but with a loss of intimate ambience. This vast rearrangement took more than a half century to bring about, slowly evolving through two world wars and the Great Depression. It created the now-familiar heart of historic monumental Washington, DC. *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1000.9)*

Often less recognized are other enduring urban design legacies of this era. The McMillan Plan converted the Civil War Defenses of Washington, DC to a ring of parks, known as the Fort Circle Parks, linking outlying neighborhoods. New playgrounds improved neighborhoods, and sewage-filled mudflats along the Anacostia were filled in for parkland. The architecture of classicism filtered through Washington, DC in houses of commerce downtown and homes with wide front porches in new neighborhoods. Lavish mansions of the social elite began to define elegant boulevards. Social reformers sought to provide better homes for low-income residents in modest housing. *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1000.10)*

As the Great Depression brought many newcomers into Washington, DC, New Deal housing programs introduced garden city planning and better homes to relieve crowded housing, even as the New Dealers themselves sought the charms of living in old Georgetown. Recollection of the colonial past was meant to inspire a nation in hardship. It dominated the District's civic architecture and home building, even as a heroic Public Works Administration (PWA) modern sensibility began to permeate the new federal buildings framing the National Mall. *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1000.11)*



## Advancing to Home Rule

After World War II, growing suburbs, urban renewal, and modernist design ideas overtook the McMillan Plan as the main influences on Washington, DC's development. Attractive residential neighborhoods spilled out far beyond the District's boundaries, while modernist renewal destroyed most of the old Southwest neighborhood. New highways cut into Washington, DC's fabric with little regard for its architectural beauty or historic plans. Resident activism in response made historic preservation a force in the District's development. *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1000.12)*

Home Rule in 1973 gave District residents more say in their daily lives and turned attention to long-neglected inequities. New civic projects brought an era of hope and opportunity, and more inclusive planning. Civic leaders created a living downtown vision for a mixed-use District center guided by traditional urbanism. They also enacted one of the nation's strongest historic preservation laws. Starting along Pennsylvania Avenue NW, more than three decades of reinvestment have proven the wisdom of those decisions, as revival has spread well beyond the historic downtown, bringing new life to neighborhoods across Washington, DC. With the new century, that District-wide revival has been propelled by widespread renovation of historic landmarks and ambitious modernization of public schools and community facilities in every neighborhood. *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1000.13)*

## New Growth and Opportunity

The District's recent growth by 100,000 residents in a single decade parallels earlier booms during wartime and the Great Depression, when newcomers flocked to Washington, DC seeking jobs and opportunity. Each of these spurts led to innovation and expansion, but also the challenge of providing adequate housing and services for new residents. *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1000.14)*

With these challenges come new opportunities. This is an era of revitalized historic neighborhoods, vibrant new design ideas, and a more sophisticated appreciation of the role that preservation can play in rejuvenating Washington, DC. Reinvestment has built new homes and businesses, and adaptive reuse has put many older buildings back into productive use. Continuing use of historic building stock can advance sustainability goals, while thoughtful design helps new technologies fit within the context of historic communities. Washington's historic districts offer distinctive character that provides context for new development and elevates the quality of public spaces. The policies in this element aim to lead preservation forward as an effective tool in achieving those goals. *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1000.15)*



## Premises of Preservation

The preservation policies in this plan are premised on the following basic assumptions:

- The preservation, protection, enhancement, and enjoyment of historic properties are established benefits to the public welfare. The District's historic character distinguishes it and shapes its cultural heritage and identity.
- Historic properties cannot be replaced if they are destroyed.
- Protections should focus on what merits preservation, as measured by demonstrated significance under official designation criteria.
- Historic properties were built for continued use, and a primary goal of preservation is to support Washington, DC's vitality by adapting historic properties for modern needs.
- Historic preservation can be an effective driver of economic development and growth. Preservation conserves usable resources, stimulates tourism and investment in the local economy, creates jobs, and enhances the value of the civic environment.
- Preservation standards should be reasonable and flexible enough in their application to accommodate different circumstances and community needs.
- With thoughtful planning and development, growth and changing conditions can occur without degrading historic character.
- Preservation benefits and educates everyone, honoring and celebrating history. *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1000.16)*



A Bungalow in Takoma  
B Former Greyhound Bus Terminal  
C Intelsat interior, Van Ness  
D Capital Traction Company, Georgetown



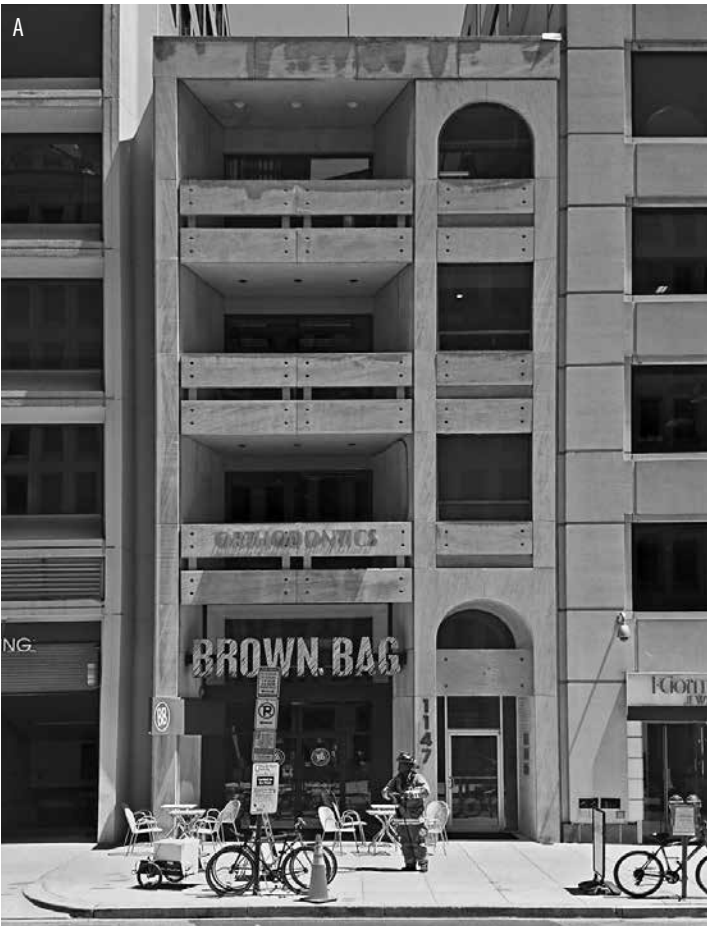
## Planning for Historic Properties

Washington, DC is fortunate in its historic assets and unique planning legacy: a wealth of historic buildings and neighborhoods, rich social history, a protected landscape setting, the national civic center, and a continuous urban fabric with relatively little disruption by freeways and industrial brownfields. These advantages set Washington, DC apart from most other cities in the United States. *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1002.1)*

The District's preservation planning should safeguard this inheritance by providing:

- Vision and guidance through a comprehensive historic preservation plan;
- Continuing surveys and research to identify and evaluate potential historic properties;
- Effective mechanisms to preserve historic properties through recognition, official designation, development review, and enforcement; and
- Public education and engagement that encourages community participation and support. *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1002.2)*

Recent accomplishments have transformed the District's preservation planning efforts. Immediate access to photographs and historical information on most buildings is available on the internet. An explosion of local history programs, websites, and publications boosted public interest. New and more engaging preservation plans and heritage guides have been created. The 2007 requirement for preservation review of District government projects has brought about better stewardship of the District's public facilities. Every neighborhood can now enjoy civic architecture that exhibits high design quality and sensitivity to historic heritage. *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1002.3)*



## Protecting and Enhancing Historic Properties

Protection of historic properties is inherent in the District's community planning, economic development, and construction permitting processes. Preservation protections help to ensure that building renovations and new development respect the architectural character of historic landmarks and districts. Because the District's preservation law specifically encourages enhancement of historic properties and adapting them for current use, preservation review procedures also promote high-quality new construction that improves the condition and setting of historic properties and neighborhoods. *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1009.1)*

Preservation begins with sensitive land use planning and zoning that limits conflict between development rights and preservation policies. More direct protections include controls on building demolition and disturbance of archaeological sites. Standards for renovation and new construction in historic areas preserve historic integrity and character, and policies that encourage adaptation to changing needs preserve historic properties by keeping them in continued use. Fair and effective enforcement applied throughout the District encourages consistent compliance with property maintenance and preservation laws. *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1009.2)*

Historic properties are protected under both District and federal law. Under the Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act of 1978, proposals for exterior alteration to a historic property must be submitted to the Historic Preservation Review Board (or in some cases, notably in Georgetown, to the Commission of Fine Arts) for a review to determine whether the proposed work is compatible with the character of the historic property. Similar reviews are required for demolition or subdivision of historic property and for new construction in historic areas. These reviews are conducted at various levels of complexity, with the most significant projects involving open public meetings, where interested groups and individuals may participate. *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1009.3)*

Protections also apply to government projects. Under District law, projects on District-owned land involve a consultation with the SHPO during the planning phase. Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, federal agencies must consider the effect of their projects on designated or eligible historic properties, in consultation with the SHPO. The same consultation is required for private projects funded or licensed by a federal agency. These reviews are designed to ensure that work is consistent with the historic character of affected historic properties and involves public participation commensurate with the nature of the undertaking. [ . . . ] *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1009.4)*





Expanding Preservation Knowledge

Broad public awareness of historic properties and cultural resources is vital to a vibrant historic preservation program. It promotes understanding and appreciation of the District’s heritage, allowing communities to take pride in their past and residents to value the history of their homes. *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1018.1)*

The District’s cultural heritage should be a source of inspiration that engages residents and communities and supports the cultural economy. Strong partnerships among communities, nonprofit organizations, and the District’s preservation program can help residents appreciate local history and heritage, and use that knowledge to strengthen cultural understanding and a more inclusive community life. Public events, placemaking and educational activities, oral history programs, and creative arts projects in neighborhood cultural spaces can all be used to expand appreciation of the role that heritage can play in drawing diverse communities together. *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1018.2)*

Preservation also needs strong advocates to promote the importance of historic resources and cultural heritage among the host of priorities facing community leaders. Preservation draws strength by forging effective partnerships and developing preservation leaders for the future. *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1018.3)*



Investing in Historic Assets

Historic preservation is fundamental to the growth and development of District neighborhoods. It is a proven catalyst for neighborhood investment and improvement, whose financial impact on Washington, DC is well documented. Preservation has revitalized neighborhoods, increased real estate values, strengthened the District’s tourism industry, and attracted new residents to Washington, DC. Looking to the future, preservation will become even more closely integrated with urban design, neighborhood conservation, housing, sustainability, economic development, tourism, and planning strategies. *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1022.1)*

As growth continues, so does the debate about the course of change in many older neighborhoods that are eligible for but not protected by historic designation. While these communities are benefiting from new development, concerns about preserving their traditional character have been widespread. Similar issues have arisen with anticipated redevelopment of large sites throughout the District that contain historic properties or will affect established communities nearby. Development throughout the District should be guided by respectful stewardship of Washington, DC’s heritage, even where it may not be recognized by official designation. Designers and builders should plan with preservation in mind and actively engage with community leadership and residents to create projects that are economically, architecturally compatible, and welcomed as an enhancement to community life. *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1022.2)*

Preservation of existing affordable housing is among the District’s highest priorities, and many of these units are located in the District’s older housing stock, including historic buildings. Historic preservation can help to retain and enhance this building stock as an important resource for Washington, DC. At the same time, as older neighborhoods become more attractive to new residents and developers, values rise, generating increases in property taxes. Maintenance and upkeep of these older buildings is necessary, and both taxes and repair costs affect lower-income residents most severely. Appropriate flexibility in the application of preservation standards within historic districts can mitigate this problem, but financial assistance programs and incentives are also necessary to keep as much of this building supply as possible affordable. *(Comprehensive Plan, Section 1022.3)*

A Art on Call, Sheridan-Kalorama neighborhood  
B Lutheran Church of the Reformation, Capitol Hill neighborhood  
C Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, new monumental stair













# People and progress

The first step in planning for our heritage is to promote awareness of the past and the legacy we share as a community. Anyone can find it rewarding to reflect upon the lives of distinguished Washingtonians, learn about historical events, or try to understand why the city looks the way it does today. The more we can establish a collective appreciation of our past, the more we can speak a common language about the value it holds in our everyday lives.

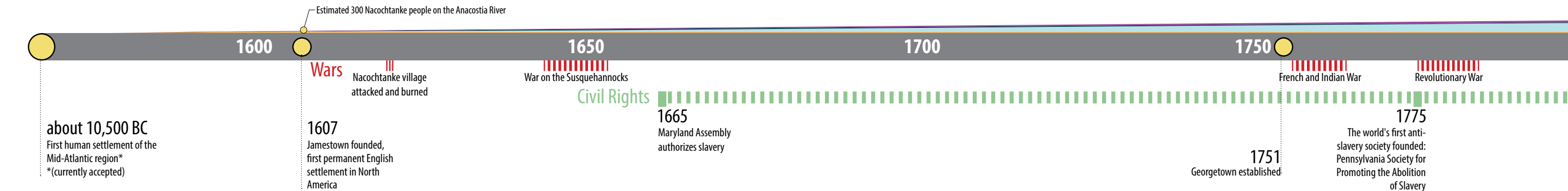
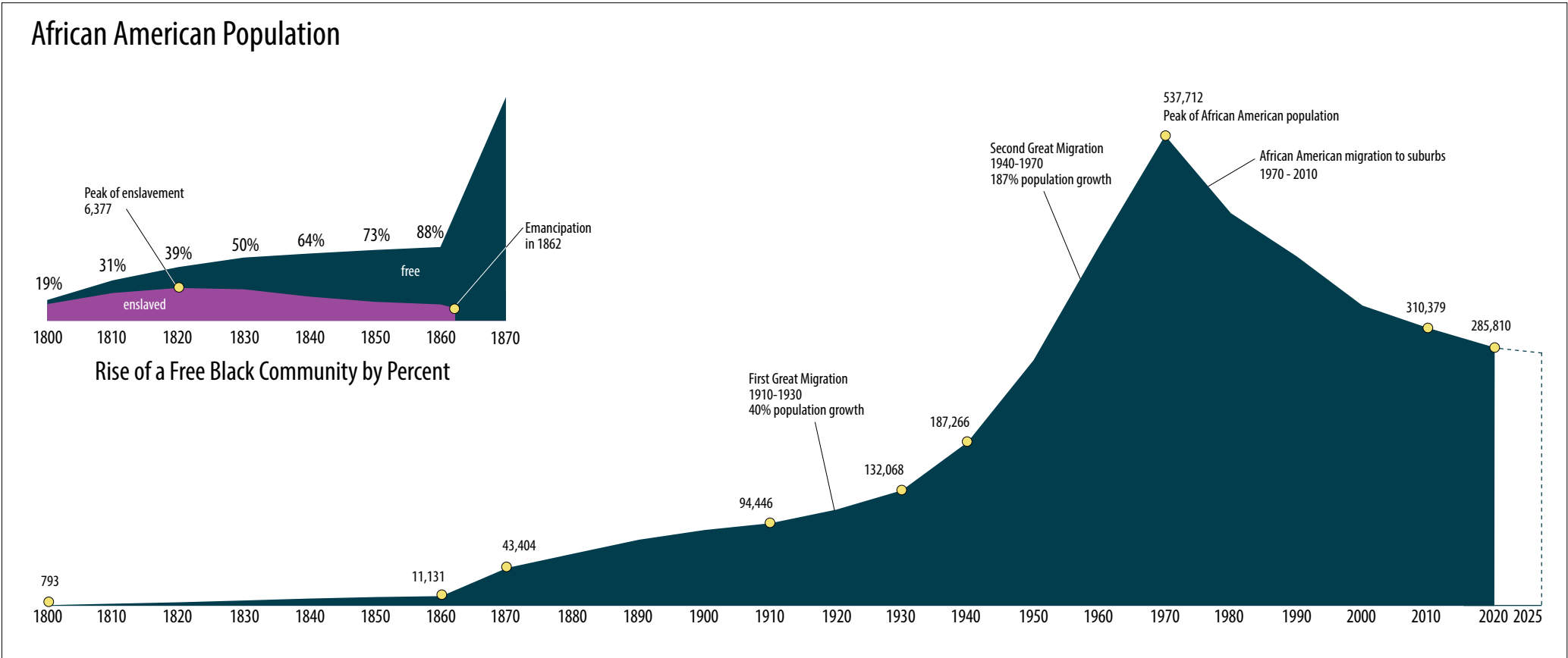
This chapter gives an overview of DC history and the city's development from the colonial era to the present day. It looks at a 400-year timeline in four ways, zooming in from a broad overview to brief essays about shorter time periods.

**1 People and Progress** charts the waves of men, women, and families who shaped the history of our area, whether they arrived in bondage, sought refuge or jobs during wartime, or moved in search of a better life. They tell a story of the quest for liberty and equality.

**2 A Legacy of Visionary Plans** takes a brief look at how four centuries of plans led to the creation of modern Washington. The graphics of these first two timelines are true to scale, showing the actual length of the colonial period relative to our modern era.

**3 Landmarks and Milestones** is a more detailed timeline introducing thematic periods and major accomplishments in DC history. The scale of this timeline stretches twice, after the city's founding and the Civil War, adjusting to a faster pace of change.

**4 A Succession of Eras** discusses historical themes and the major concerns of different periods in the city's development, showing how the patterns of local history relate to major events. These essays align with the periods of the second timeline.





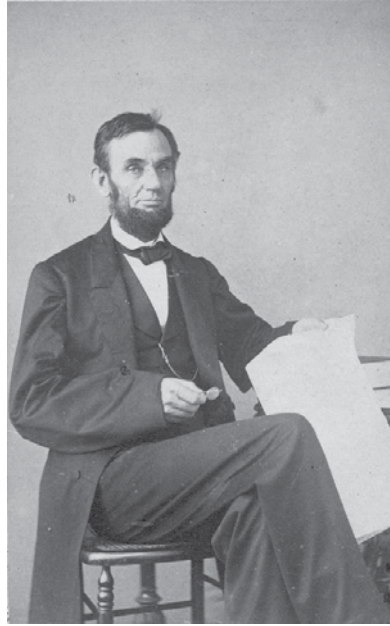
1800

The Federal City



1835

Capital of a Nation Divided



1870

The City Expands



1885

Seeking Country Air

1900

American Empire

1915

Boom and Bust

1930

New Deal

1945

Post War Years

1960

Turbulent Times

1975

Home Rule

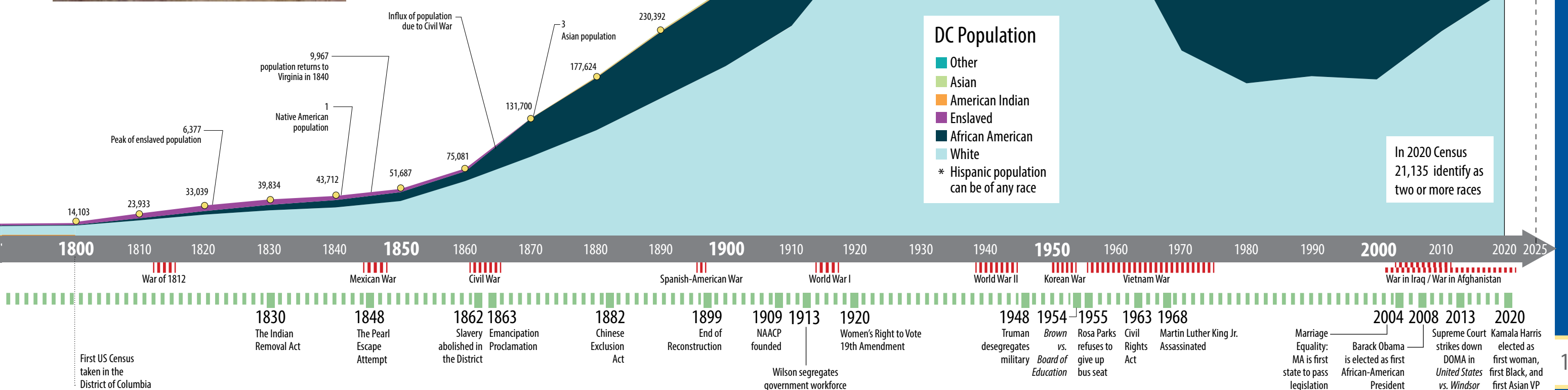
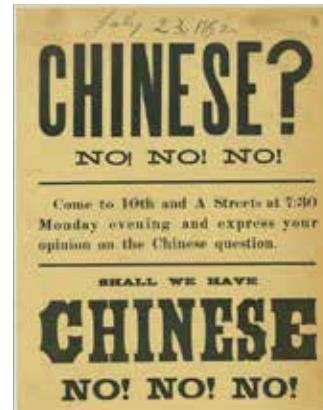
1990

New Confidence

2005

A Growing City

2020 2025





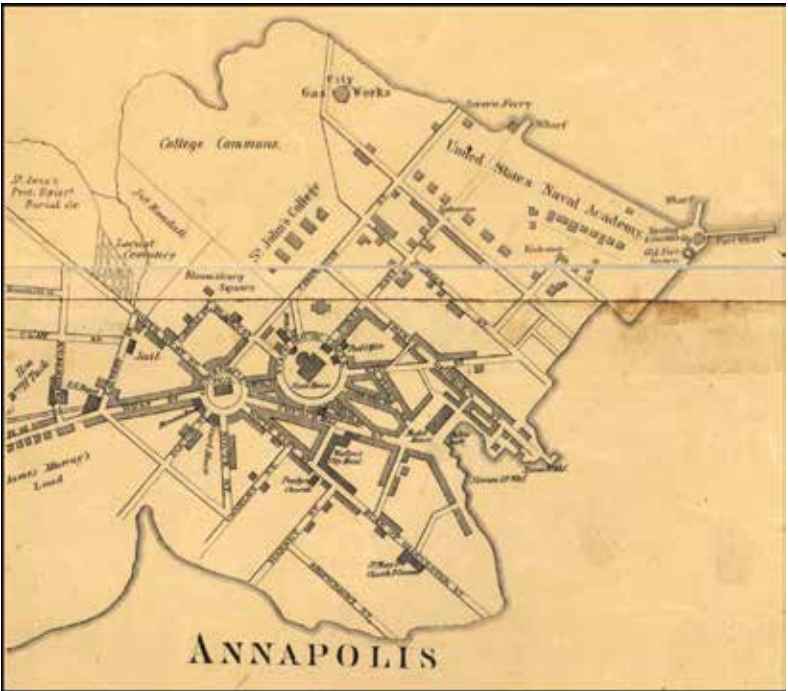
# A legacy of visionary plans

Living on the Native Land

1730

From Farms and Plantations to a City Plan

1800



Annapolis town plan  
an early colonial precedent  
1696



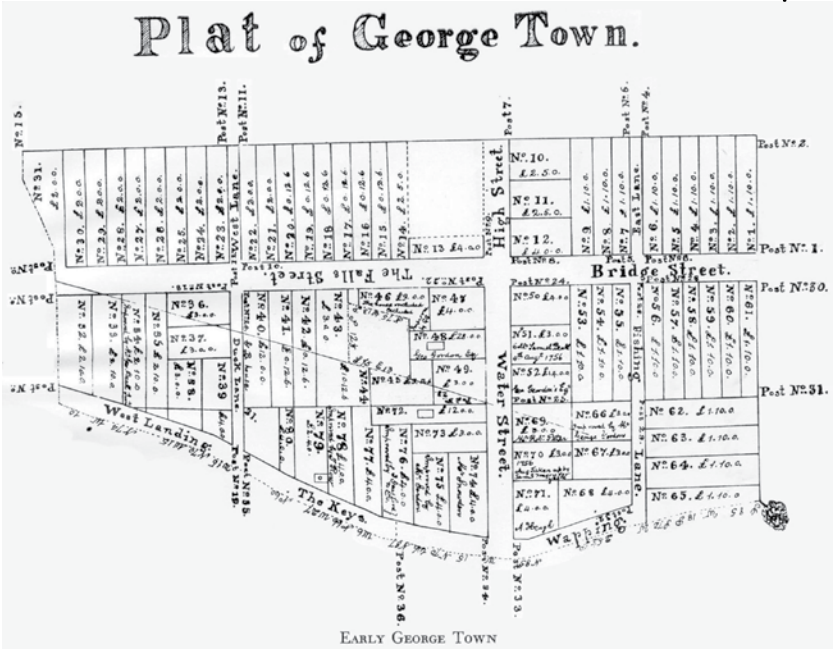
Andrew Ellicott map - first printed  
version of L'Enfant's plan  
1792



1612  
Captain John Smith's map –  
first depiction of the Potomac area



1699  
Williamsburg town plan



1751  
Georgetown established  
and platted

1791  
Pierre Charles L'Enfant designs  
the plan of Washington  
  
Andrew Ellicott and Benjamin  
Banneker survey the District, placing  
boundary stones at every mile

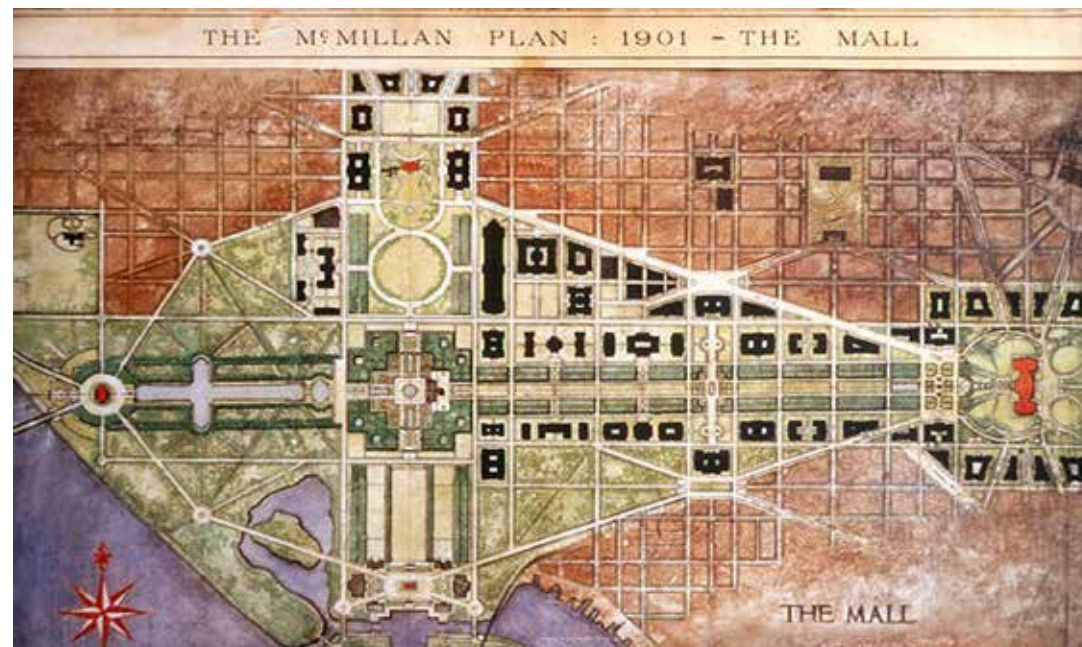






Andrew Jackson Downing's plan for the Mall  
1851

The Boschke Map - first to show every building, public and private  
1857



McMillan Plan provides "City Beautiful" vision for future development of Washington  
1901



The Pennsylvania Avenue Plan  
1974

NCPC Legacy Plan  
1997



1846  
Congress returns Alexandria County to Virginia



1881  
Congress directs the Army Corps of Engineers to control flooding by reshaping the Potomac riverfront

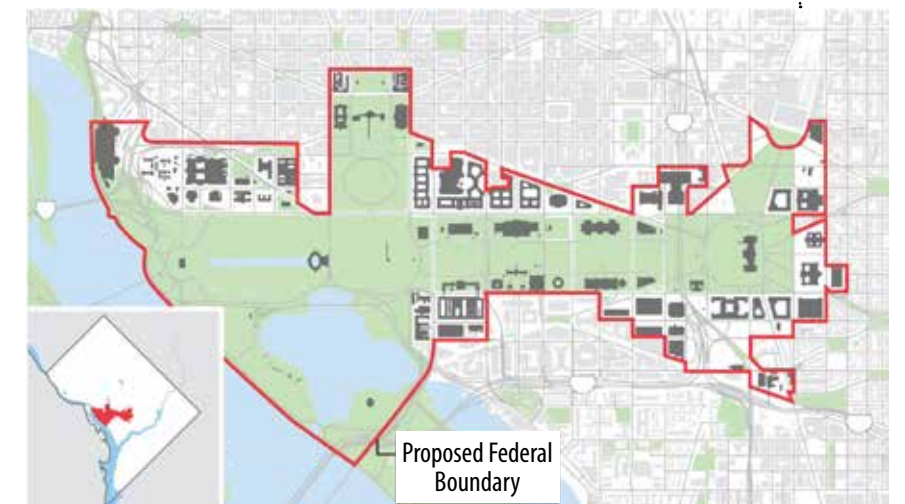


National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) Comprehensive Regional Plan



2009  
NCPC Framework Plan

2021  
Federal District within the proposed Douglass Commonwealth map





# Landmarks and milestones

1590-1700:  
Living on the Native Land  
page 33



English parliament decrees the transportation of sentenced criminals to the colonies  
1597

Captain John Smith sails up the Potomac and finds a native settlement at Nacotchtanke  
1608

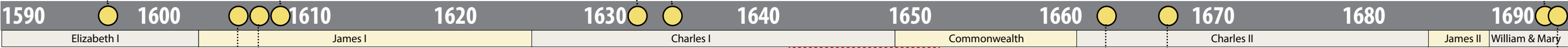
King Charles I grants Cecil Calvert, the second Lord Baltimore, a charter for Maryland  
1632



English Catholic settlers found Saint Mary's City, Maryland  
1634



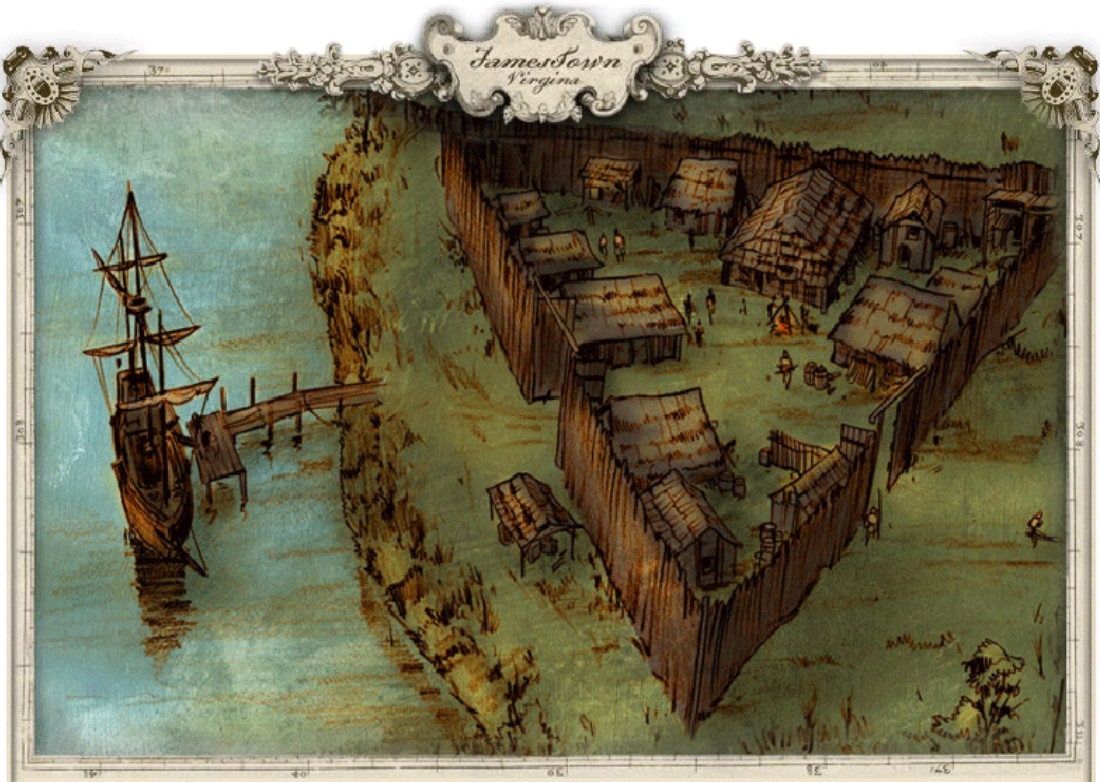
The College of William and Mary is founded - the second-oldest institution of higher education in the US  
1693



1606  
King James grants the Virginia Charter and establishes the Virginia Company for colonial settlement



1607  
Jamestown, the first English settlement in America



War on the Susquehannocks

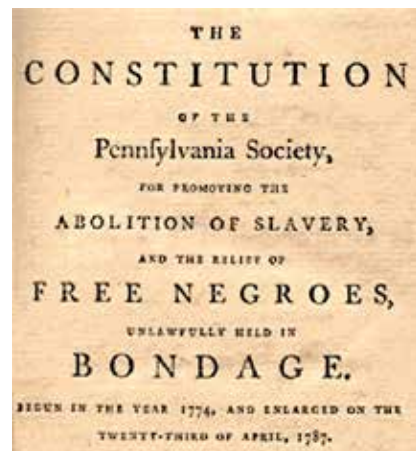
1663  
George Thompson receives land patents for Saint Elizabeths and Duddington on the Anacostia



1667  
Settlers and Native Americans of the Potomac area conclude a peace treaty

1695  
Maryland capital moves to Annapolis





1730-1800  
From Farms to River Towns  
page 34



Prince George's County is established  
1696

Quakers demand the abolition of slavery  
1727

Baltimore founded  
1729

Maryland Tobacco Inspection Act tries to match Virginia's trade advantage  
1747

Frederick County divided from Prince George's County  
1748

Montgomery County divided from Frederick County  
1776

US Constitution permits creation of a federal district "not exceeding ten miles square"  
1788

Major L'Enfant offers to design the capital  
1789

Construction begun on the Capitol  
1793



1699  
Virginia capital moves to Williamsburg

1713  
Virginia requires warehouses to inspect tobacco exports

1730  
Virginia Tobacco Inspection Act improves quality and increases demand

1732  
George Washington born in Westmoreland County, Virginia

1745  
Tobacco inspection house on Potomac at Rock Creek

1751  
Georgetown established

1757  
Construction of Mount Vernon begun

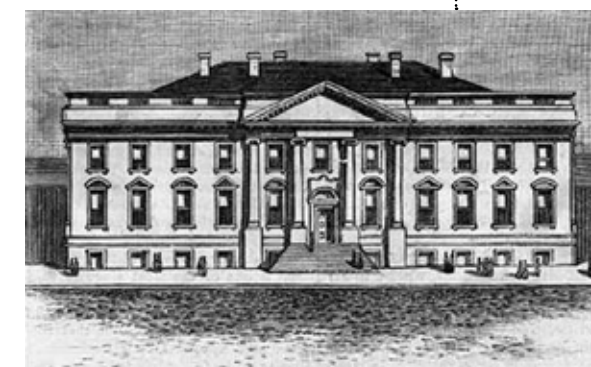
1765  
Stamp Act taxes the colonies  
  
Old Stone House constructed, considered the oldest house in Georgetown

1776  
Declaration of Independence

1790  
District of Columbia established

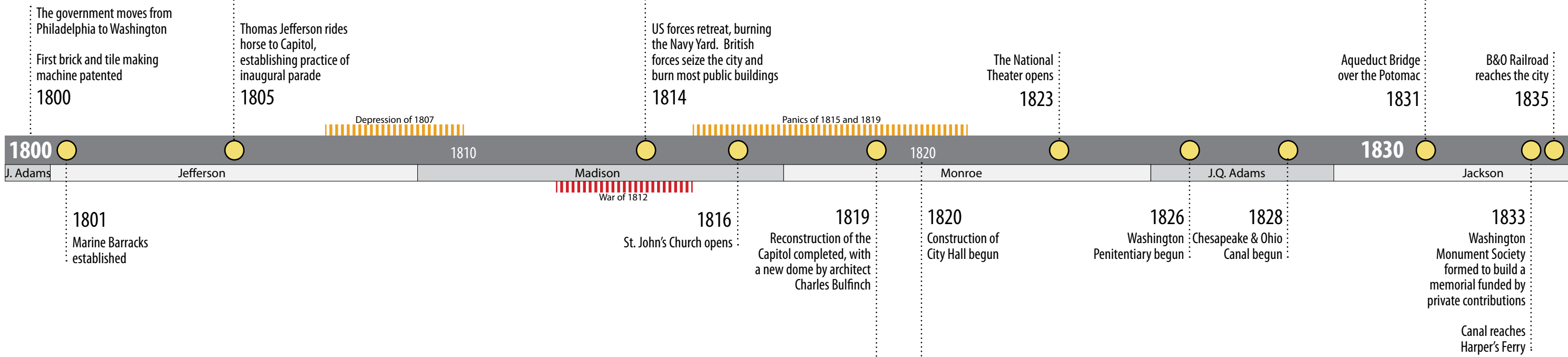
1791  
First sale of lots in the City of Washington

1792  
Construction begun on the White House



1700-1800:  
Vision for a New Capital  
page 35





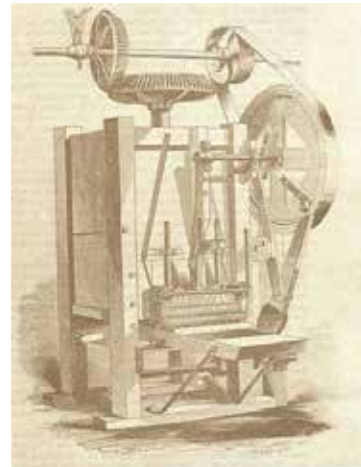
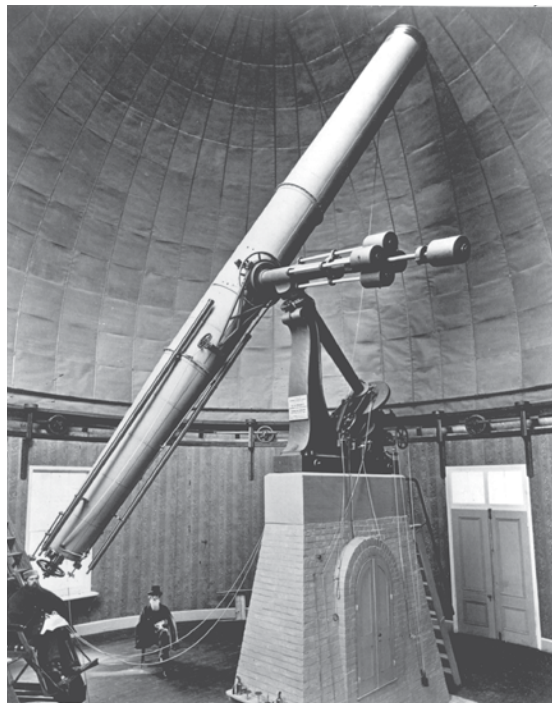
1800-1835:  
The Federal City  
page 36





1835-1870  
Capital of a Nation Divided  
page 37

The Civil War  
and its Aftermath  
page 38



US Naval Observatory  
built in Foggy Bottom  
1842

First public telegraph  
office in the US opens  
in the General Post  
Office on 7th Street  
1845

Reinforced  
concrete  
is invented  
1849

Steam-powered brick  
making machine  
invented by  
Richard Ver Valen  
1852

Mount Vernon Ladies  
Association founded to  
protect Mount Vernon: a  
beginning for historic  
preservation  
1853

Government Hospital  
for the Insane  
(Saint Elizabeths) opens  
1855

Slavery abolished  
in the District  
1862

US Capitol dome  
completed  
1863

Panic of 1837

Depression

Panic of 1857

1840

1850

1860

1870

Van Buren

W.H. Harrison

Tyler

Polk

Mexican-American War

Taylor

Fillmore

Pierce

Buchanan

Lincoln

Civil War

A. Johnson

Reconstruction

Grant

1836  
Treasury Department  
begun; first section  
completed in 1842  
with gas lighting

Patent Office begun;  
first section  
completed in 1840

1839  
General Post Office  
begun; first section  
completed in 1844

1844  
Samuel Morse  
sends first  
telegraph message  
from Washington  
to Baltimore

1847  
Smithsonian  
Institution begun;  
completed 1855

1848  
Washington  
Monument begun

1851  
Extension of the  
Capitol begun, with  
skylit House and  
Senate chambers in  
the new wings

1854  
Uniontown, the  
city's first suburb, is  
incorporated across  
the Anacostia River  
from the Navy Yard

1857  
Gallaudet College  
established as the  
Columbia Institution  
for the Deaf, Dumb,  
and Blind

1862  
DC's first horse-drawn  
streetcar lines built,  
serving both civic and  
military uses

1865  
Howard University chartered  
by Congress  
  
Trial of Lincoln conspirators  
at Washington Penitentiary



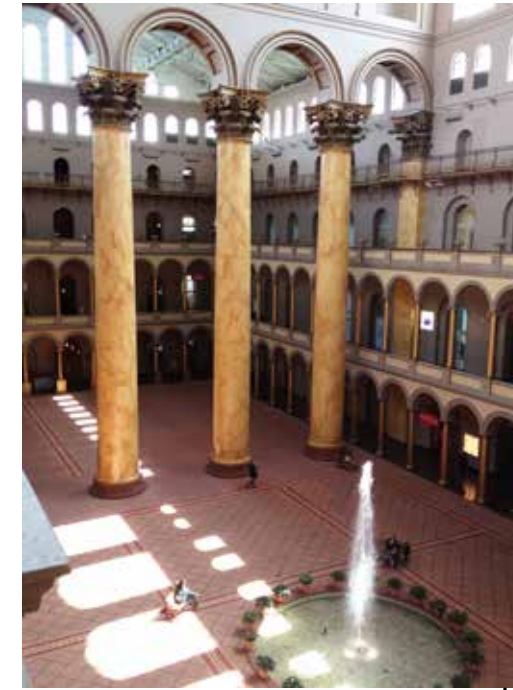




State, War, and Navy Building (now the Eisenhower Executive Office Building) is built  
1871-88



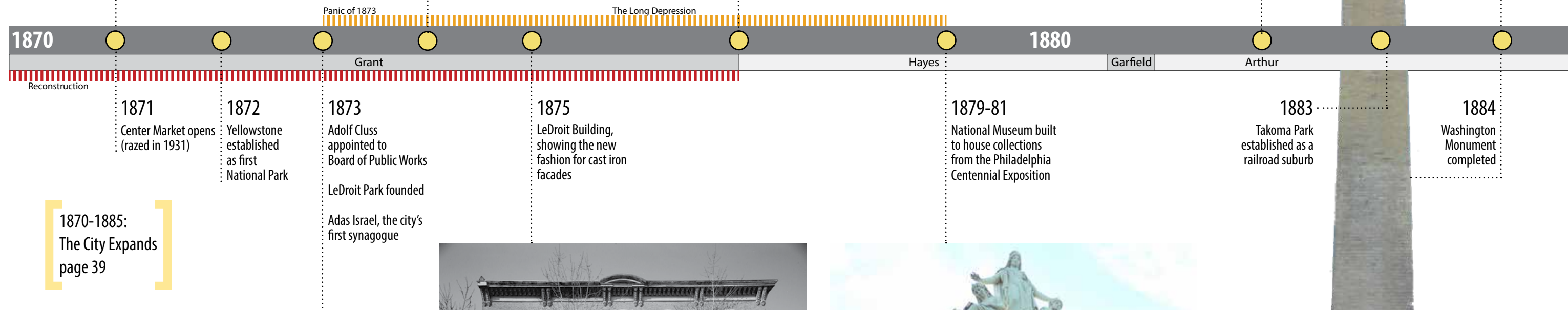
Patent Office fire burns the north and west wings, destroying 114,000 models  
1877



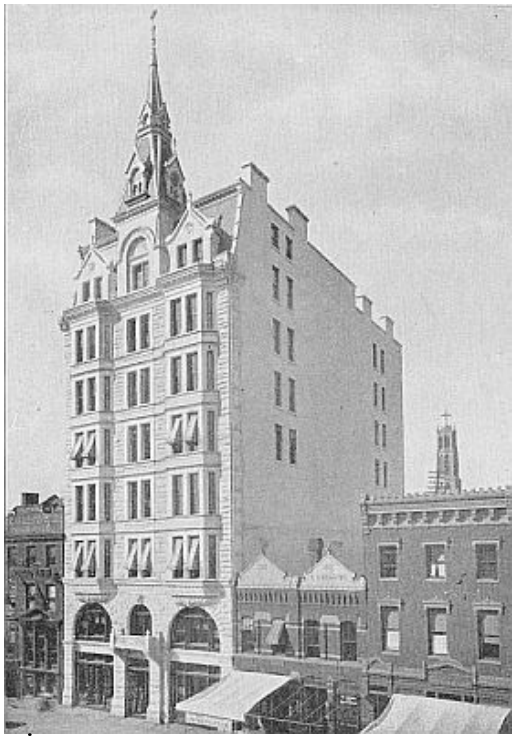
Pension Building begun, using mass-produced materials and innovative light and ventilation  
1882



1st skyscraper built: Home Insurance Office Building, Chicago  
1884







1885-1900:  
Seeking the Country Air  
page 40

Baltimore Sun Building,  
one of the first elevator  
buildings in Washington  
1885

First electric  
streetcar system  
put into service  
1888

Old Post Office begun  
(completed in 1899); first  
steel frame building in DC  
1891

World's Columbian Exposition  
in Chicago  
1893

Massive new Government  
Printing Office Building begun  
(completed 1904)  
1899



1888  
National Geographic  
Society formed

1889  
National Zoo  
founded

Columbia Historical Society  
founded, now Historical Society  
of Washington DC  
Rock Creek Park is established

1894  
DC's first height limit imposed after  
the Cairo Apartments was built to 160'

1898  
The Evening Star newspaper  
building is completed





1900-1915:  
Capital of an American Empire  
page 41



The District Building opened  
(now John A. Wilson Building)  
1906



Howard Theater, the city's  
first for African Americans,  
opens on "Black Broadway"



Women's suffrage  
parade on  
Pennsylvania Avenue  
1913

1900

McKinley

1901

McMillan Plan provides  
"City Beautiful" vision  
for the future  
development of  
Washington

New Willard Hotel  
opens

1903

President Roosevelt  
and Andrew Carnegie  
dedicate the Central  
Public Library



1907

DC requires registration  
for the city's 2,200 autos

Construction of  
Washington Cathedral  
begun



1908

Walter Reed General  
Hospital opens

Union Station is  
completed

1910

Taft

US Commission of  
Fine Arts established



1913

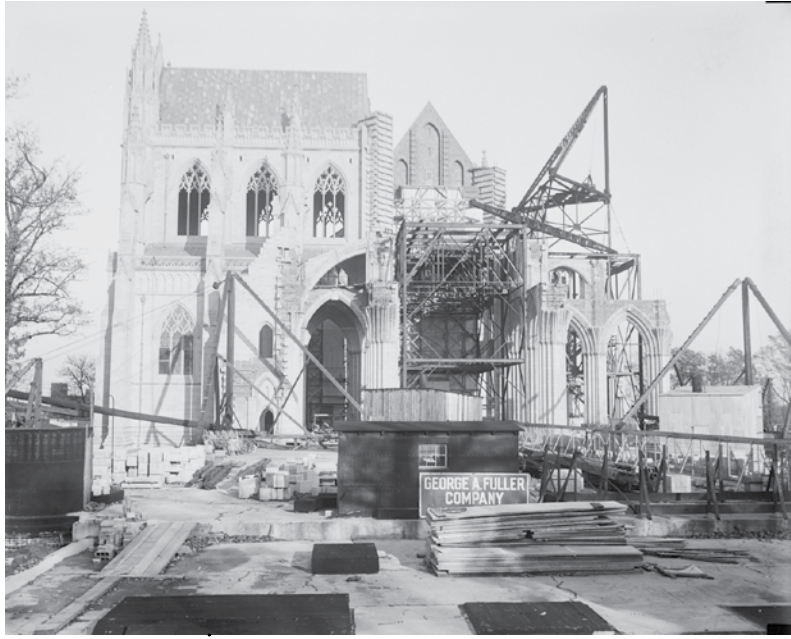
US income tax  
established

World War I

1915

Cornerstone laid  
for the Lincoln  
Memorial





National  
Park Service  
established  
1916

Construction of Washington  
Cathedral suspended during  
the war  
1917

Mayflower Hotel  
opens on  
Connecticut Avenue

National Capital  
Park Commission  
(later NCPC) created  
by Congress

Tivoli Theater begins  
construction on the  
city's main uptown  
streetcar line  
1924

The Strand, first  
movie theater  
built east of the  
Anacostia for  
African American  
patrons  
1928

Stock Market crash,  
beginning the Great  
Depression  
1929

Depression of 1920-21  
1920

The Great Depression  
1930

Wilson  
US enters World War I

Harding

Coolidge

Hoover

1916  
The "national labor temple" built by the  
American Federation of Labor and its head,  
Samuel Gompers

1919  
Beginning of  
Prohibition  
The Whitelaw Hotel -  
the city's first luxury  
hotel for African  
Americans opens

Women gain  
right to vote  
Washington is one  
of the first US cities  
to adopt land use  
zoning

1921  
Lincoln Theater  
opens on U Street

1922  
Lincoln Memorial  
dedicated

1923-1926  
Rock Creek and  
Potomac Parkway  
built

1925  
Construction of  
Foxhall Village  
begins, evoking  
English country  
life

1926  
Congress funds  
construction of the  
Federal Triangle

Congress passes the  
Shipstead-Luce Act, giving  
the Commission of Fine  
Arts authority to review  
private construction in the  
monumental core

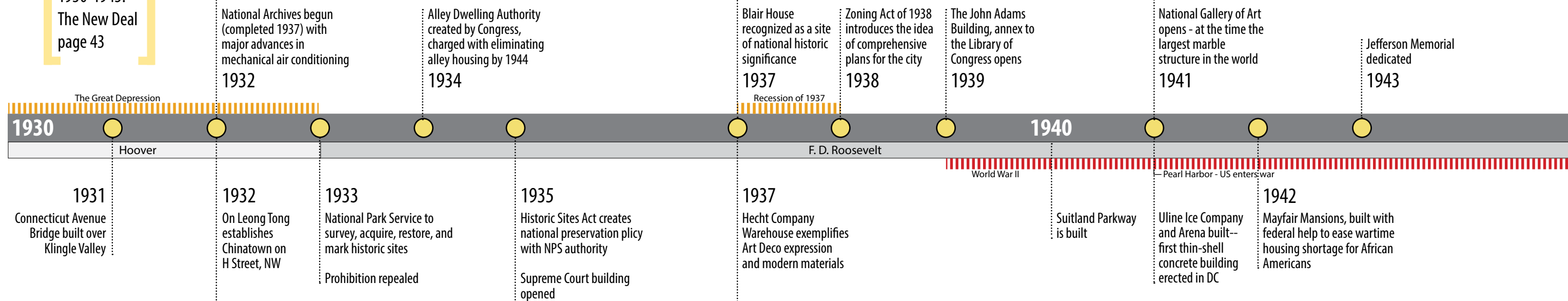


1915-1930:  
Boom and Bust  
page 42





**1930-1945:  
The New Deal  
page 43**







The Wire Building is completed, the first modern office building on K Street  
1949



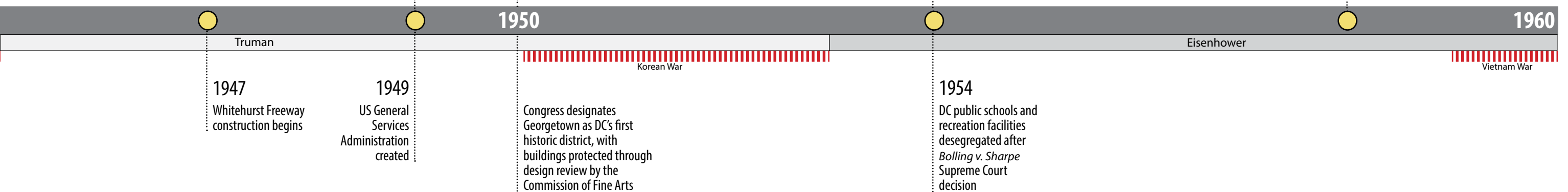
Two Inner Loop freeways proposed to cut through DC neighborhoods

GSA emphasizes economics, simplicity, and comfort in public architecture  
1954



Chloethiel Woodward Smith designs the Capitol Park Apartments as part of the SW urban renewal plan  
1958

1945-1960:  
The Post-War Years  
page 44







March on Washington  
for Jobs and Freedom



Housing and Urban Development  
Building constructed  
1965

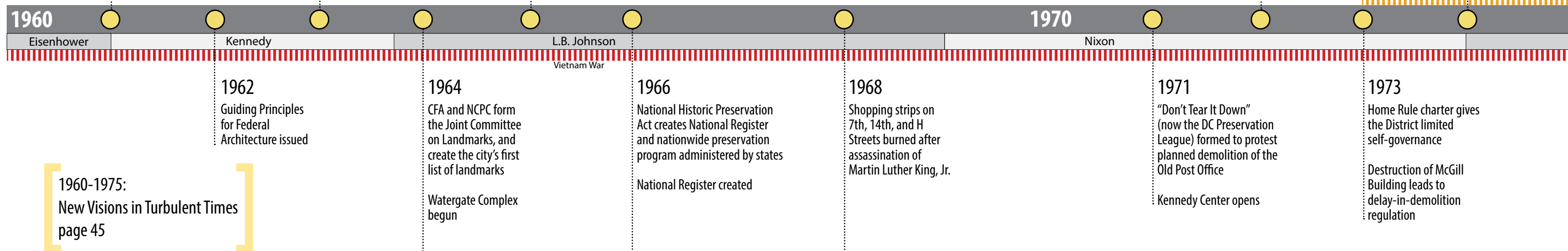


Logan Circle becomes  
first neighborhood  
historic district after  
Georgetown

Hirshhorn  
Museum  
opens  
1974

MLK Library dedicated  
1972

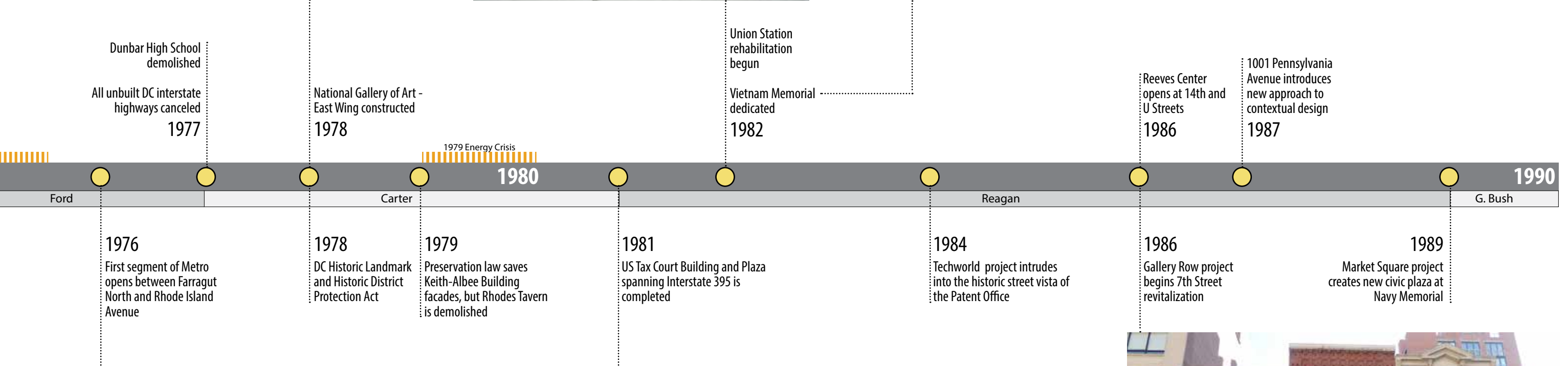
Oil Crisis and Stagflation







1975-1990:  
Home Rule and Downtown Revival  
page 46





1990-2005:  
A New Confidence  
page 47



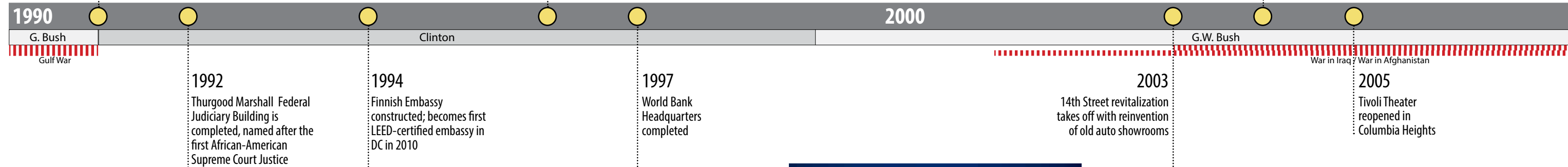
Post-modernism reaches its height with AARP building  
1991



Italian Chancery is completed  
1996



Museum of the American Indian opens on the Mall  
2004



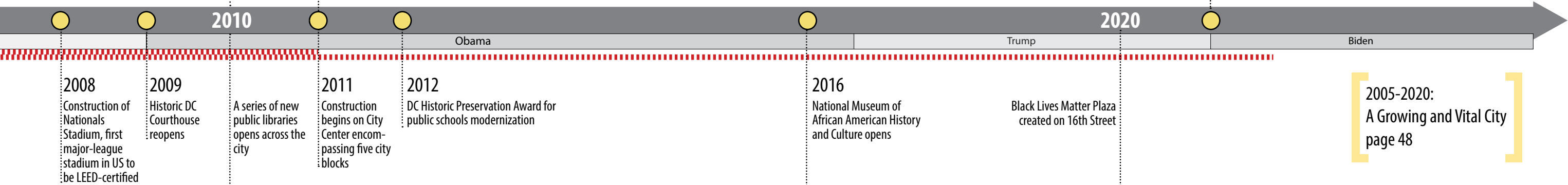




Insurrectionists storm the US Capitol building on January 6th

New Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge unites people across the Anacostia River

Modernized Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library receives top national preservation award 2021





# A succession of eras

## Living on the Native Land

1600 1730

The land that became the District of Columbia lies at the edge of the Atlantic coastal plain, where a rolling topography of uplands and ridges gives way as watercourses descend to tidal estuaries and gentle flatlands. This native landscape remains, not just in our historic parklands and panoramic views, but also in the commanding placement of landmarks, like the Capitol, Washington Cathedral, and Saint Elizabeths Hospital.

Much of this land has been preserved for public enjoyment. The beauty of the Potomac gorge was recognized from the city's beginnings and remains protected in its natural state. The valleys of Rock Creek and other Potomac tributaries were set aside as wooded park landscapes beginning in 1890. The banks of the meandering Anacostia were molded by engineers, as were some streams like Oxon Run, but these also have been reserved as parkland.

Our native landscape supported long prehistoric American Indian occupation. As early as 14,000 years ago, this area was an important economic location for Native Americans. Hunting, fishing, and gathering sustained the population. Native people preserved vast quantities of fish during annual shad runs. Upland ridges became transportation routes, and stream valleys provided the raw materials for

stone tool manufacture. Ancient quarries remain along Piney Branch, and the presence of inhabitants in the Rock Creek valley has been shown at many locations. Recently, a major ceremonial site was unearthed near the mouth of the creek.

Native American occupation is documented all along the Potomac and Anacostia rivers. The first inhabitants recorded by history were the Nacotchtanke or Nacostan Indians, whose ancestors established trading sites and hunting and fishing settlements on the shorelines as much as 2,000 years ago. English explorer John Smith encountered these people in 1608, when they were settled in a large village on river flats. The Anacostia was named for this settlement, and the Potomac was similarly named after another Algonkian group, the Patawomeke.

Scores of prehistoric archaeological sites have been identified in the District, mainly on the banks and bluffs along rivers and streams. But sites are present throughout the city, discovered by archaeologists knowledgeable about the ways of survival centuries ago. There are remnants of houses, fire pits, and hearths. Recovered artifacts—cooking pots, fishing gear, tools—reveal the culture and life patterns of early people. They also show how they made use of natural objects: cobblestones from streambeds were fashioned into tools, and soapstone quarried near Rock Creek was carved to make bowls.



## England Creates Colonies

The arrival of Europeans and Africans in the region after 1600 set off a century of contact and conflict between two incompatible cultures, one gradually displacing the other. In 1622, a group of Jamestown settlers and their Native American allies plundered and burned the settlement at Nacotchtanke. Retaliation against European trading parties soon followed, and it was not until the 1670s that a peace treaty was concluded between the settlers and the natives. By the end of the century the native population had almost completely disappeared, as the effects of war, disease, and displacement destroyed their way of life.

Today's District of Columbia was carved out of the English colony of Maryland, which was itself severed from the domain of the Virginia Company, under a 1632 charter granted by King Charles I to Cecil Calvert, the second Lord Baltimore. Settlers began arriving immediately along the Potomac estuary, and by the 1660s, land as far upriver as the Anacostia was being divided into land patents for farm



A Algonkian Native Americans, 1585  
B East Branch of Potomac River, Washington August Kollner, 1839

homesteads and tobacco plantations. Initially, indentured servants provided most of the labor to work these plantations, which were the mainstay of the economy for the next 200 years. But tobacco production came at a great human cost: in 1663, the Maryland Assembly officially authorized race-based chattel slavery, and it became widespread by 1700.

Before 1750, the area of the present District was still the frontier of Maryland, although the Maryland proprietor had fully disposed of the area in grants to landholders by the 1720s. The area was largely open countryside, forest, meadows, marsh and fields. Native American footpaths evolved into a network of primitive country lanes across the farmland. Many of these became rolling roads for transporting hogsheads of tobacco to the rivers for export. Former country lanes now known as Good Hope Road, Alabama Avenue, Foxhall Road, Rock Creek Church Road, Blair Road and Wisconsin Avenue still serve their transportation purpose.

Archaeological evidence of colonial life is scattered across the District, but few buildings or even fragments survive from the time. One rare example is the Rock Creek parish church, where parts of the early Saint Paul's from about 1719 remain in the structure rebuilt about 1768-1775 and 1921-22. Another colonial survivor is Rosedale in Cleveland Park, which grew from a rubble-stone cottage built about 1740.

Even where structures no longer stand, the sites of farms, plantations, and taverns can still tell us much about colonial life. Of particular value are artifacts that add to what little we know about the undocumented lives of enslaved African Americans who constituted as much as 90% of the settler population.



# From Farms and Plantations to River Towns

1730 1800

By the mid-18th century, towns were established to meet the needs of commerce: Bladensburg in 1742, Alexandria in 1749, and Georgetown in 1751, each serving as a tobacco inspection port. These trade centers were flourishing when the Federal City was created, but Hamburg and Carrollburg, platted in the 1770s, never materialized.

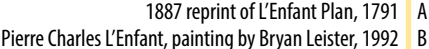
Like Alexandria, Georgetown originated as a tobacco trading station in the 1730s. It became the site of an official tobacco inspection warehouse in 1745, before receiving a town charter from the Maryland colony. The two Potomac River towns were ultimately incorporated into the District of Columbia, the permanent seat of the national government of the United States. For a time, both exceeded the population and productivity of the new Washington City.



Construction of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal reinvigorated Georgetown as a flour-milling center and a transshipment point for Maryland coal and lumber, but its growth as a commercial and manufacturing center slowed after the Civil War. The municipal corporation was dissolved in 1871, and its responsibilities folded into a unified government for the entire District. These pre-Revolutionary towns still reflect their early beginnings, although they are much changed today. Georgetown's and Alexandria's grid plans and narrow streets seem quaint beside the grandeur of L'Enfant's capital. Georgetown's 18th-century buildings impart an antique character, and remind us of a hardscrabble way of life. The Old Stone House from 1765, for example, is built of blue granite from a local quarry, mixed with native fieldstone and perhaps ballast from merchant ships. Much more evidence of daily life awaits discovery in Georgetown and elsewhere.

A Andrew Ellicott's Ten Mile Square Map showing the City of Washington and the topography of Alexandria and Washington counties, 1794  
B Aqueduct Bridge and Georgetown, 1855  
C Old Stone House, 1765  
D Wisconsin Avenue bridge over Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, 1829





In the quest for a national capital, the lands around Georgetown and Alexandria held several advantages. Situated at the head of ship navigation, the area offered waterpower from the Potomac falls, tributaries leading to fertile hinterlands, and access to the world's oceans. The location was a compromise between North and South, and was only a few miles upriver from Mount Vernon, George Washington's beloved home.

President Washington proclaimed the site of the federal district in 1791. Only three months after arriving to survey the ground, Pierre Charles (Peter) L'Enfant sited the major public buildings and sketched out the new federal city around them. Like the prehistoric villages before it, the new city occupied the easily settled flat land of the coastal plain. It was fitted to the terrain and surrounded by ridges of woodland and farms that gradually became the uptown neighborhoods and suburbs we know today.

L'Enfant's grand civic spaces, roundabouts, and broad, radial avenues came from European urbanism of the Baroque era. These he superimposed on a grid of streets that was the form favored by Thomas Jefferson. Brilliant in its conception, the Plan of the City of Washington expressed the aspiration and structure of the new republic in its civic spaces, and made provision for a thriving commercial and social life in its everyday fabric.





# The Federal City

1800 1835

Although Pierre L'Enfant envisioned a majestic rival to the capitals of Europe, for decades the Federal City was just a struggling town or, more accurately, a series of hamlets. In 1800, the government arrived to occupy a handful of incomplete government buildings. Clusters of houses and commercial establishments fronted unpaved streets, although hotels and boarding houses made something more of Pennsylvania Avenue. Well-established Georgetown was prosperous in comparison. But as Washington grew, streets filled up around the public buildings and markets. Communities arose around the Navy Yard and the along the arteries of commerce—the roads, canals, and later, railroads—bringing goods and travelers. By 1860, the city's more than 60,000 residents far exceeded the fewer than 9,000 in Georgetown, and about 5,000 in the farmlands of Washington County.

The White House (begun 1792) and Capitol (begun 1793) are the city's oldest public buildings, built largely by immigrant masons and enslaved African American laborers. Navy Yard and Marine Barracks buildings date from as early as 1800, and the City Hall from 1820. Reconstruction of the White House, Capitol, Treasury and other public and private buildings followed the British invasion of 1814. A new Treasury, Patent Office, and General Post Office were begun in 1830s.

Impressive stone construction gave most of the federal government buildings a feeling of permanence, but for the rest of the city, unassuming brick and frame structures were the norm. Initial regulations requiring masonry construction of private buildings were soon abandoned.

Although outnumbered by detached residences, the row house form was adopted very early—as at Wheat Row on 4th Street SW—and would predominate in inner-city neighborhoods. Houses evolved into a typical side-hall plan, often taking on the characteristics of the successive Federal, Greek Revival, and Italianate styles, and with roof pitches flattening as new technology produced better materials. Many pre-Civil War houses and commercial buildings survive in Georgetown and on Capitol Hill, but most of the early city, especially its more modest architecture, has virtually disappeared. Scattered remnants can be found downtown, mostly near Judiciary Square and the White House, but early buildings also remain in Southwest, the Mount Vernon Square neighborhood, and Shaw.

Across the Potomac and beyond the city boundary at today's Florida Avenue, agriculture continued to dominate Alexandria and Washington counties. Farmsteads and houses sat on country lanes, mills operated creek-side,

ferries crossed the rivers, and ports handled goods.

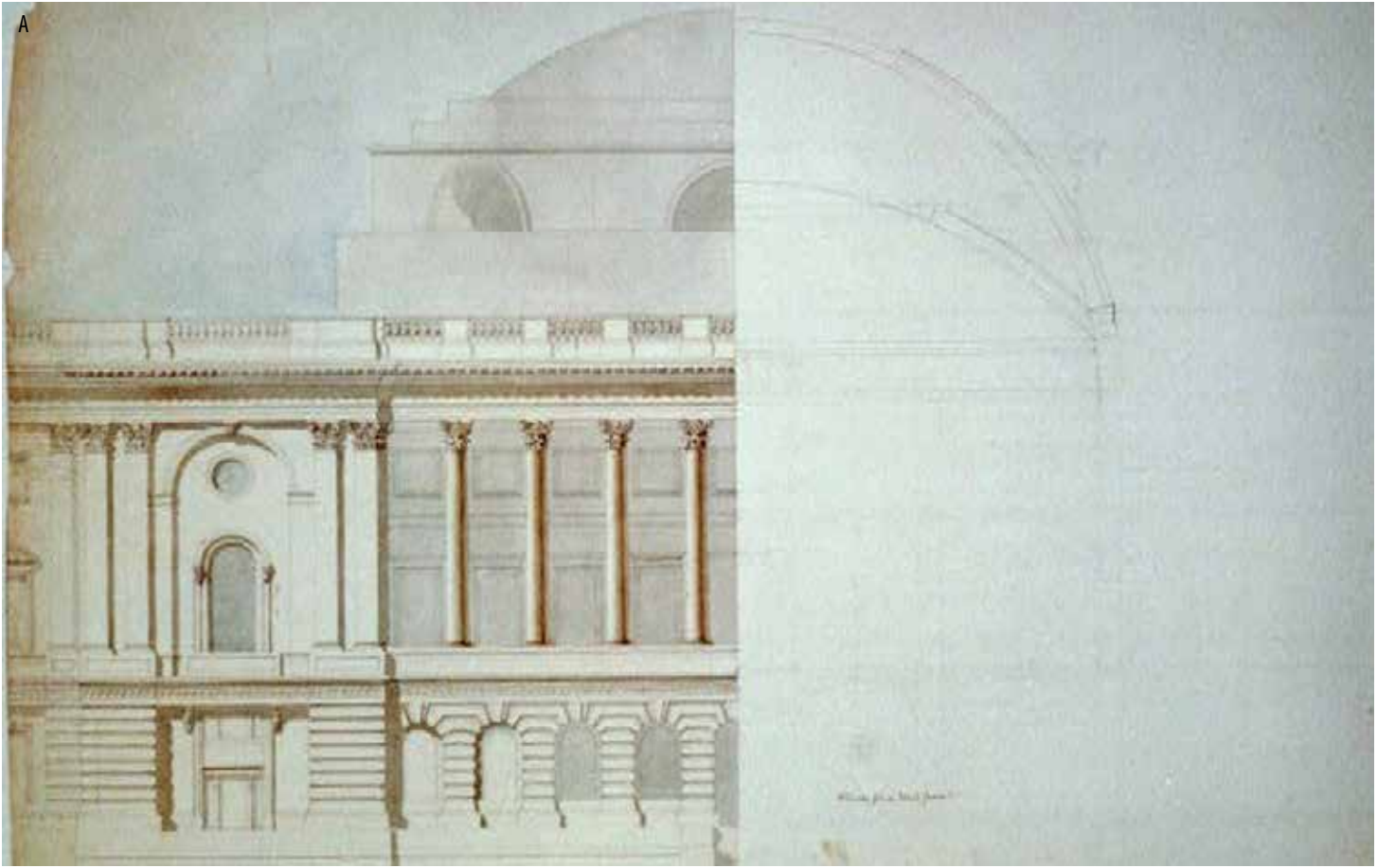
Established routes like Bladensburg Road and Georgetown Pike (now Wisconsin Avenue) led travelers to towns beyond. Today, only traces of that life remain. The District's farm and country houses and outbuildings are extremely rare, and many of these are now recognized as landmarks. Among them are Rosedale (about 1793), Woodley (about 1805), and Peirce Mill (1820).

As new turnpikes opened to serve the city, their toll stations and crossroads were the seeds of country settlements. Tenleytown originated about 1790 when John Tennally opened his tavern by the toll house at Georgetown Pike and River Road. Brightwood arose after 1819, where the turnpike to Rockville (now Georgia Avenue) crossed the ford road to Rock Creek. Across the Anacostia, Good Hope developed in the 1820s at the hilltop intersection of today's Naylor Road and Alabama Avenue. Another settlement and later railroad station was Benning, named for the landowner who helped finance the 1797 wooden bridge where Benning Road crosses the Anacostia today.

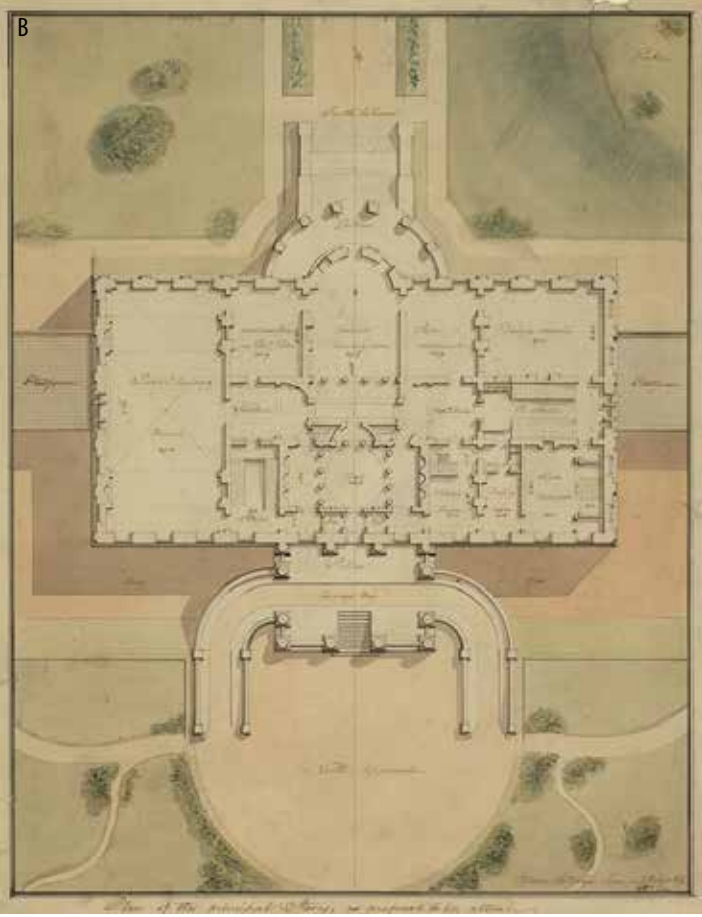
Congress's unwillingness to fund improvements on the Virginia side of the Potomac and the possibility of gaining pro-slavery representation in the House of Representatives led the people of Alexandria and Alexandria County to seek the retrocession of their portion from the District, which was accepted by Virginia in 1847. As a result, the District lost about 10,000 residents, about a third of them African American.

Turnpikes were important for travel and communications, and for the transport of local farm goods into the city, but they could not handle long-distance transportation or the high volumes of bulky cargo that would be needed for the nation's westward expansion. Canals were the first solution, as George Washington had realized when his Potowmack Company made canal improvements along the Potomac as early as 1785. But it was New Yorkers who first achieved success with the Erie Canal, built from 1817 to 1825. The Erie dramatically cut the cost of transporting goods to and from the new western states and helped make New York City the nation's major port.

Not wanting to miss an opportunity, Washington entrepreneurs converted the Potowmack Company into a larger venture to reach the Ohio River. The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal handled products like coal and grain, stimulating industry in Georgetown and along Rock Creek. It began construction in 1828, and reached Harper's Ferry in 1833, but before reaching Cumberland it was rendered obsolete by the arrival of a newer technology. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, first chartered in 1827, gave Baltimore the edge in commerce and western trade. By 1835, Washington was connected by a branch line to the B & O, with a terminal at New Jersey Avenue and D Street NW, just blocks from the Capitol.



A US Capitol west façade, 1803  
B White House plan





# Capital of a Nation Divided

1835 1870

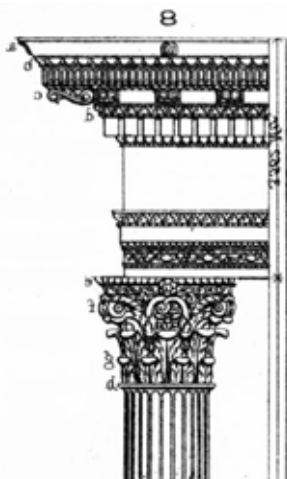
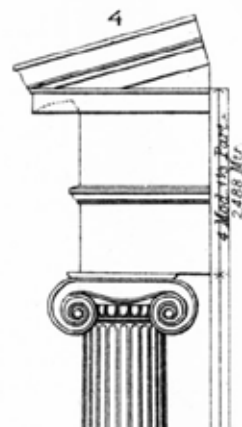
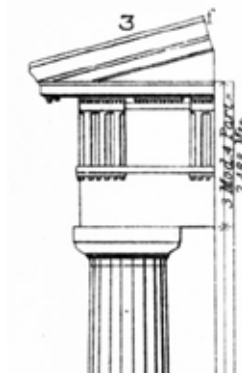
## The Antebellum Era

By mid-century, Washington County was an important locale for institutions seeking respite from the city. In 1851, the United States Military Asylum (to be renamed the Soldier's Home) began to care for aged veterans in a healthful country setting off Rock Creek Church Road. In 1855, the Government Hospital for the Insane (now Saint Elizabeths Hospital) opened on the Anacostia heights to provide "the most humane care and enlightened curative treatment." In 1857, the Columbia Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb and Blind, now Gallaudet University, began on land donated by Postmaster General Amos Kendall.

Across the river federal neglect of Alexandria led to its retrocession to Virginia in the 1840s, and the silting of the Potomac River at Georgetown diminished its role as a seaport.

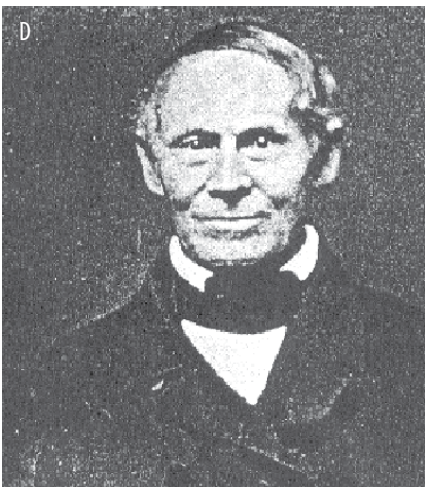
Country suburbs arose at the same time. William Holmead subdivided the former racetrack parcel on Meridian Hill in 1845, and Amos Kendall's donation of the Gallaudet land began as a modestly successful development of two-acre "villa" sites. But Uniontown (now the Anacostia Historic District) was the first large and permanent suburb, platted by the Union Land Company in 1854. It was connected to the city by a wooden bridge across the Anacostia River, making its narrow and affordable lots an attractive home for Navy Yard shipwrights and tradesmen. Still, the development only came into its own in the 1880s, with most of the modest frame dwellings dating to the turn of the century.

New cemeteries, now being designed in a picturesque landscape style, were required to locate beyond the city limits. The same Romantic landscape ethic was applied to the National Mall by Andrew Jackson Downing.



## robert mills

Most famous for designing the Washington Monument, Robert Mills had a greater initial impact on the character of Washington when engaged as the architect of public buildings. After fires devastated the US Treasury, Patent Office and General Post Office, Mills was to design and simultaneously superintend the construction of their grander replacements. Planned in the most up-to-date Greek Revival style, the beautiful edifices are illustrative exercises in the classical orders: the Patent Office (1836-1840) is Doric, the Treasury's (1836-1842) Ionic columns, and the slender Corinthian colonnade of the General Post Office (1839-1842).



Buildings by Robert Mills:  
Patent Office, 1867 (Doric) A  
Treasury, 1842 (Ionic) B  
General Post Office, 1842 (Corinthian) C  
Robert Mills, Architect D  
Slave house of J.W. Neal & Co., 1836 E



# The Civil War and its Aftermath

With the outbreak of the Civil War, Washington stood on the frontier of rebellion and still within slave-holding territory. Suddenly vulnerable, the government set the Union army to the task of constructing a ring of defenses to protect the capital. This huge undertaking brought devastation to the lands around the city as vast areas of woodland were cut to clear sightlines and fields of fire, and scores of buildings and fences were pulled down to deprive attackers of potential cover. But the traumatic years of the war transformed even more dramatically the urbanized areas of the city and its culture.

Washington more than doubled its population during the course of the war. As the conflict intensified, government expansion brought newcomers from the North, and many Southern sympathizers departed. Thousands of soldiers encamped in the city, supporting hundreds of new bars, brothels, and gambling houses. Government workers and entrepreneurs filled boarding houses.

Also arriving by war's end were an estimated 40,000 self-emancipated refugees from enslavement—termed “contraband” by the government—seeking both freedom and employment. These freedpeople crowded into alley dwellings and hastily built frame structures. They set up camps near the forts, sometimes expanding established free-black communities, as in Brightwood or “the Ridge”. These were settlements in the countryside, but much later they grew into neighborhoods and subdivisions at places like DePriest Village (Capital View), Chain Bridge Road, Burrville, Bloomingdale, and Lincoln. At times the toll of battle could swell the city by as many as 20,000 wounded, brought in by train, wagon, or ship for treatment in makeshift hospitals across town, or in tent camps thrown up on suburban estates.

The war accelerated modernization of the city and its infrastructure. In 1862, horse-drawn streetcars replaced the old omnibus services along the main business streets—from Georgetown along Pennsylvania Avenue to the Navy Yard, and from the wharves on the Potomac northward up 7th and 14th Streets. Aside from easing daily commerce, these conveyances helped deploy troops within the capital. Less benevolently, they also presented some of the first instances of racial segregation of public accommodations.

City sanitation was still primitive, but by 1864, the aqueduct begun twelve years earlier by the Army Corps of Engineers finally flowed into Georgetown and Washington. Advances in public health and medicine would be realized in years to come, but largely because the demands that war placed on the office of the Surgeon General and pioneers like Clara Barton, known as the Angel of the Battlefield.

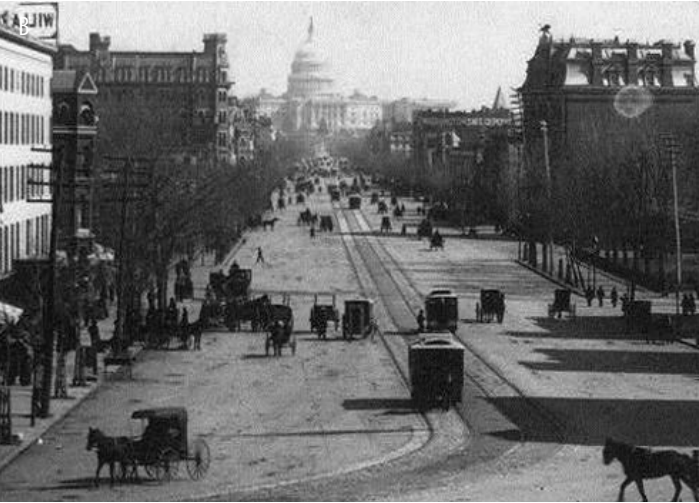
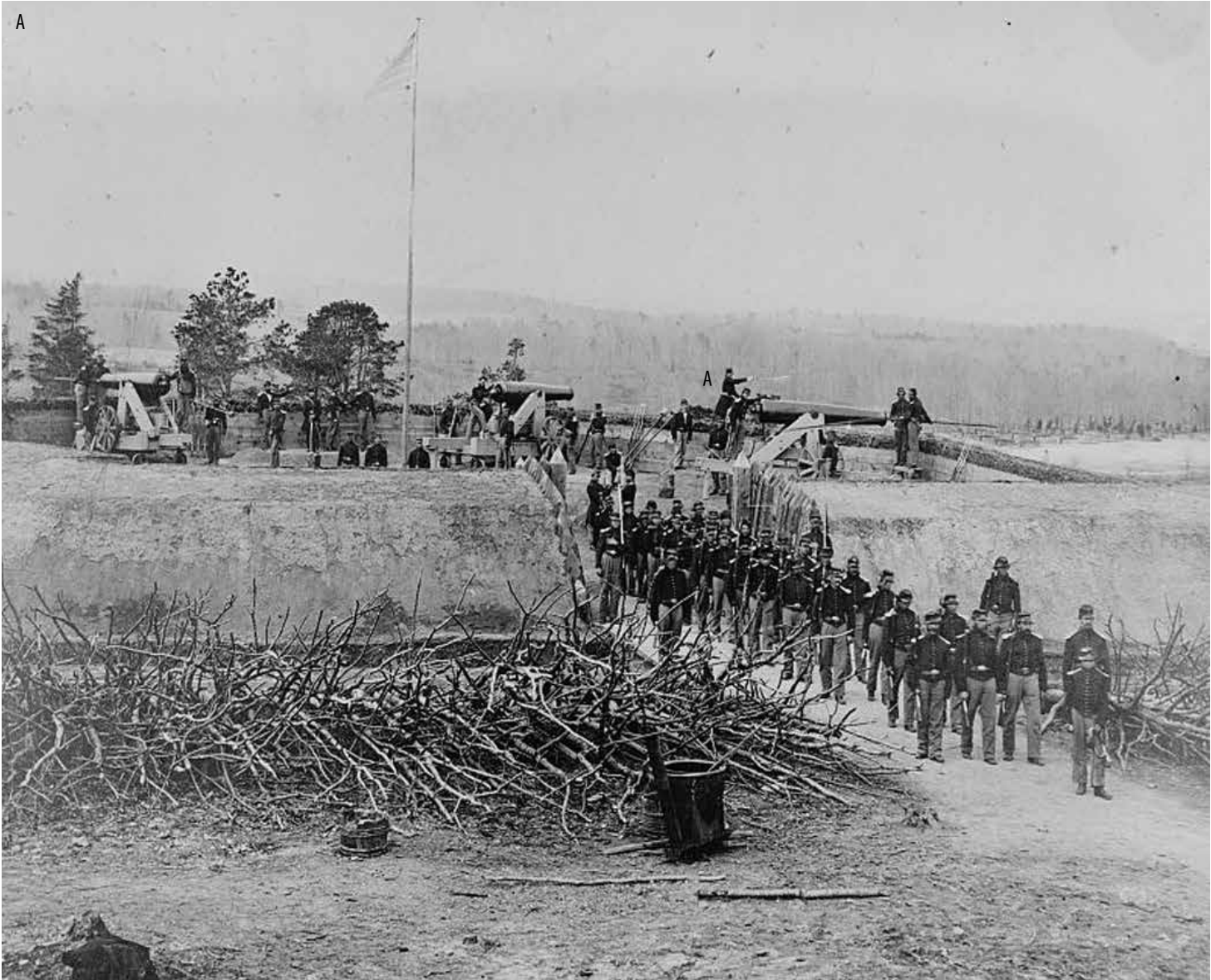
In contrast to the upheaval of society, the war years left relatively little direct imprint on Washington's architecture. Much of what was built was temporary, and dismantled at war's end. The overall effects included higher rents and a denser development pattern; in Georgetown, for instance, many of the front yards disappeared as properties were redeveloped or even received front additions. One innovation was a major residential subdivision of modest homes created by and for African American refugees of the war. In 1867, the Freedmen's Bureau purchased the 375-acre Barry Farm as an experiment in resettlement of former slaves on their own one-acre plots bought on time. Renamed Potomac City and then Hillside, it later became a thriving neighborhood with its own churches, schools and businesses.

Even as the nation's resources were devoted to the conflict, President Lincoln decreed that one symbolic effort would continue: the completion of the Capitol's cast-iron dome. In the winter of 1863, this task was accomplished as the statue of Freedom was hoisted to its crown. A sadder tribute to that ideal can be found in the rows of gravestones at the city's military cemeteries, the largest of which lies across the Potomac at Arlington.

Washington did inherit a lasting historic legacy in the sites that witnessed the national ordeal. President Lincoln finished the Emancipation Proclamation while in summer residence at the Gothic Revival cottage now restored on the grounds of the Soldier's Home. Clara Barton organized aid from 7th Street rooms unused since her departure; Walt Whitman nursed the wounded at the Patent Office;

Matthew Brady's skylit studio still remains on Pennsylvania Avenue. Ford's Theatre and the house where Lincoln died will always be places of national pilgrimage.

As the war ended, Washington was the most heavily fortified city in the world. Its defensive ring included 68 forts, nearly 100 detached batteries, and miles of rifle trenches and military roads. Once their purpose was served, their more lasting effect lay in the communities of refugees who settled near the forts, making new lives and changing the city's cultural landscape for decades to come. The Civil War set Washington's course for the rest of the century. Newly confident and reordered around an expanded federal bureaucracy, the city was destined to prosper under President Grant as the government set out to ensure that it would remain a permanent and fitting symbol of the nation's unity.



A Detachment of Company K, Fort Stevens, 1865  
B Streetcars on Pennsylvania Avenue, 1862  
C Lincoln Cottage, 1842



The City Expands

1870 1885

After the Civil War, a booming population, real estate speculation, and lavish public works spurred widespread development of new neighborhoods in the confident capital. Indeed, much of the old city's housing stock dates from this period, when speculative developers built rows of brick houses for the middle and working classes.

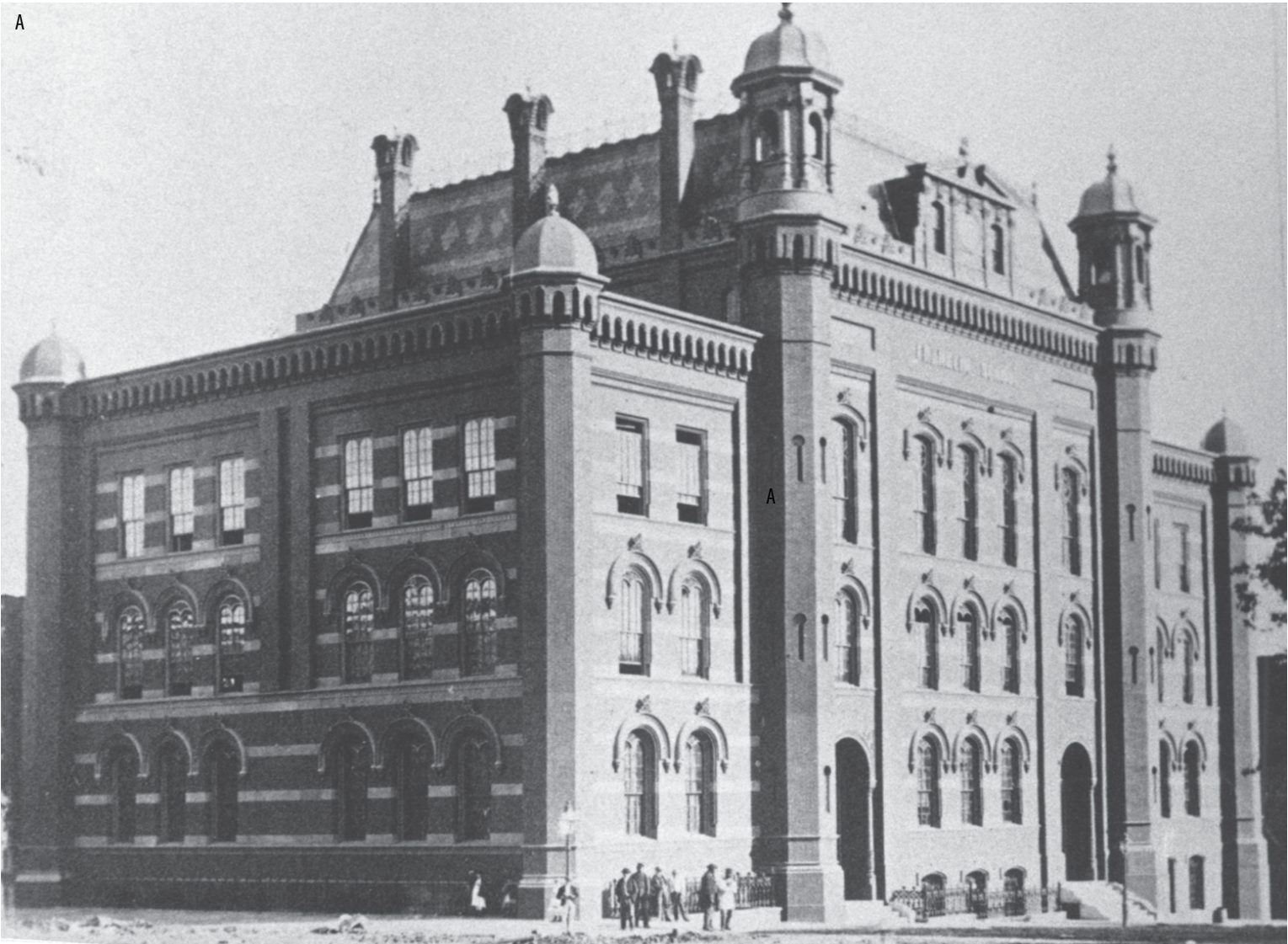
Gradually the city repaired the destructive wear and tear from the war years. Commercial corridors emerged along the streetcar lines reaching north along 7th and 14th Streets, and outward from Capitol Hill. The fetid Washington Canal was removed from the Mall, making way for a new Center Market and a Pennsylvania Railroad terminal at 6th Street.

Finally released from doubt about whether Washington would survive as a capital, the government set about the task of making the city worthy of its status. Frederick Law Olmsted gave the Capitol its majestic terraces, and planned the magnificent landscaping of the grounds over a period of 15 years. Erection of the Washington Monument resumed, topping out in 1884. Beside the White House, the flamboyant State, War, and Navy Building began to rise in the fashionable French style, taking 17 years to construct and becoming the nation's largest building when completed in 1888.

Congress sought to make District government more efficient by revoking the charters of Washington City and Georgetown, discarding the outmoded Levy Court of Washington County, and instituting a unified territorial government under an appointed governor. The Organic Act of 1871 set the precedent for appointed government which persisted for a century.

The new system's most immediate effect was felt through its Board of Public Works. Board member and then governor Alexander Robey Shepherd, a real estate speculator himself, expended huge sums in a frenzy of public works. Very rapidly, paved streets, sewers, ornamental parks, and modern schools appeared, concentrated in the northwest quadrant where well-connected investors were developing land. These improvements made possible much of the Victorian city, best exemplified by Logan Circle and the neighborhoods around 14th Street. Credited for modernizing Washington, the Board's campaign also plunged the city into insolvency and led Congress to abolish the new government.

Efficient to construct and relatively affordable, row houses quickly became the city's predominant building type. To adapt to this greater density, the District enacted its first



substantial building code and a requirement for building permits in 1877. New fire limits restricted frame buildings to the suburbs beyond the original city and Georgetown. Just as the streetcars spurred growth within the city, they also promoted the creation of suburbs. At the terminus of the 7th Street line, LeDroit Park was established in 1873 as an architecturally unified suburb of picturesque villas and cottages. Deanwood originated in 1871 from the carving up of the Sheriff farm into subdivisions that coalesced after a streetcar connection.

Suburbs also popped up along the railroad branches of the Baltimore & Ohio, some springing from industrial operations. Ivy City, for instance, was platted in 1872 and thrived as a brick manufacturing center supporting the city's construction boom. Others were pure suburbs, promising rural beauty and quiet and with speedy access to the city. When Benjamin Gilbert founded Takoma Park in 1883, it became clear that the suburbs would grow as far out as the District boundary.



Benjamin Franklin School, by Adolf Cluss, 1869  
Architect Adolf Cluss  
Center Market, by Adolf Cluss, 1871, razed 1931



# Seeking the Country Air

1885 1900

The end of the 19th century was a time of continuing prosperity in Washington, with the city growing at a steady pace slackened only by the economic recession of 1893. Soon the character of the entire District began to change, as a denser city spilled beyond its original boundaries and developers platted subdivisions far out into what was once countryside. Tall buildings appeared in the downtown business district, made possible by reliable elevators and improved construction using wrought iron and steel. Apartment houses appeared and gradually became an accepted alternative to row house living.

The government continued to build on a grand scale. The Pension Building took five years to build, the Library of Congress eleven, and the Post Office eight—long enough for it to be considered old-fashioned when completed. But an increasingly sooty coal-heated city forced the Navy to escape its Foggy Bottom location for a gleaming new observatory in the clear air of the hills north of Georgetown.

Summer breezes also attracted suburban development to the highlands around the city. Estates and summer homes were at first common here, but streetcar extensions soon led to more concentrated development as subdivisions just beyond the original city boundary followed in rapid succession. Brookland was platted in 1887 on the old Jehiel Brooks estate; the 1889 streetcar line along the Seventh Street Turnpike prompted the subdivisions of Petworth and Brightwood; and in 1890, Senators William Stewart and Francis Newlands founded the Chevy Chase Land Company to extend Connecticut Avenue and a trolley to their suburban venture. Educational campuses also claimed tracts of suburban land—Columbian College (now GWU) in Columbia Heights, Catholic University of America (1887) in Brookland, and American University (1893) in Wesley Heights.

In the rush to develop new suburbs, there was at first no plan like the one that guided Washington City from its beginning. Residential subdivisions were haphazard in location and often ill-connected to each other. The Highway Act of 1893 directed the Commissioners to plan a suburban street network that conformed to the original city. Thus the Highway Plan—really multiple plans—extended the broad, radial avenues as well as the grid of secondary streets, with a few adjustments for topography. Preparation of the plan delayed further subdivision for a few years, but ultimately removed much uncertainty for landholders and developers.

Though land was plentiful, early conservationists feared that the city's most beautiful spots might soon be occupied by private homes. They sought to establish a huge public park, along the lines of New York's Central Park, in the valley of Rock Creek, then still in agricultural and industrial use. Congress responded by establishing the National Zoo in 1889 and the park in 1890, forever preserving the land for recreation. Similarly, Congress created Potomac Park in 1897, ensuring that the land reclaimed from the Potomac flats would be used for park purposes.

The city's height limit is another legacy of this era. It was first adopted in 1894 in response to construction of the 156-foot, steel-framed Cairo apartments in a neighborhood of row houses. Its architect, Thomas Franklin Schneider, had just returned from a trip to the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, where he had been inspired by that city's new skyscraper office buildings. But it was the imperial planning of the temporary fair, and not the innovative office buildings that would capture the city's imagination. Another Washington architect, Glenn Brown, had long been inspired by the US Capitol and L'Enfant's vision for the federal city. As secretary of the American Institute of Architects, he was about to make the AIA's 1900 convention in Washington an opportunity to celebrate the city's centennial by renewing its founder's vision.



A Streetcar map, Rand McNally & Co., 1904  
B Entrance hall, Library of Congress, 1897  
C Rock Creek Park  
D Eckington streetcar



# Capital of an American Empire

1900 1915

With the turn of the twentieth century came the triumph of the City Beautiful movement, a reform philosophy meant to transform the disordered industrial city into a place of beauty and order, inspiring harmony and civic virtue among the populace. Inspired by the “White City” fairgrounds of the 1893 Chicago exposition, cities across America embraced the grandeur of classical architecture, formal civic centers, and majestic systems of boulevards and parks.

Once presented at the 1900 AIA convention, these ideals persuaded the US Senate to establish what came to be known as the McMillan Commission—led by the renowned architects Daniel Burnham and Charles McKim, landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens—and no city embraced the movement more fervently than the nation’s capital.

The commissioners’ plan for Washington was completed in 1901 after inspirational visits to European capitals. It sought to revitalize and expand Washington’s government center to suit a prosperous and mature country with imperial ambitions fueled by victory in the Spanish-American War. While reaffirming L’Enfant’s original conception, it also magnified its monumentality by ringing the Capitol, White House, and National Mall with a vast classical unity of government buildings and memorials. The Mall was extended out into the parkland reclaimed from the Potomac in the 1880s and 1890s, new memorials were placed astride L’Enfant’s open vistas, and the city fabric receded from discrete government precincts.



A Union Station, by architect Daniel Burnham, 1908  
B Meridian Hill mansions at 15th Street  
C Daniel Burnham  
D Mary Foote Henderson

The McMillan Plan looked beyond the original city to encompass the entire District of Columbia. An interlocking system of greenways and parks linked riverfronts to the hilltop sites of Civil War fortifications, and new facilities for sanitation and health: a huge modern water purification plant at the City Reservoir, greenswards reclaimed from the Anacostia’s malarial flats, and recreation centers across the city.

So that fulfillment of the McMillan Plan would not be left to the vagaries of politics or commerce, Congress established in 1910 the US Commission of Fine Arts, to advise on the siting and design of public buildings and guide the city’s architectural development. Members of the McMillan Commission were among its first appointees. Two years

later, the position of Municipal Architect was created for the District of Columbia, so that local facilities would also be developed in sympathy with the plan.

Washington’s business elite responded in kind, with lavish commercial buildings in classical dress. Mary Foote Henderson, the influential wife of a wealthy Missouri senator, guided the creation of Meridian Hill Park and began developing 16th Street as the “Avenue of the Presidents,” lined with mansions and embassies. Massachusetts Avenue became a fashionable address for the wealthy. Apartment buildings became grander, with more resident services. New suburban communities like Mount Pleasant, Park View, and Petworth cast off the bay-fronted red brick model of the old city in favor of a new fashion for classically proportioned buff brick houses with open front porches.

In an era full of optimism for some, racial struggle and discrimination also influenced the cityscape. “Jim Crow” laws and customs led to an increasingly segregated city. New housing developments were usually intended for whites, leaving African Americans to purchase or rent old housing stock. A son of the South, Woodrow Wilson increased segregation in the federal government.

In reaction to these exclusionary practices, U Street began to develop as a commercial and social center for black Washington. The True Reformer Building, Howard Theatre, Anthony Bowen YMCA, and Industrial Savings Bank all date from this era. Alley housing was still the only option for many, but the first attempts to produce decent affordable housing began with Washington Sanitary Housing Commission projects on Bates Street NW and Carrollsburg Place SW.



# Boom and Bust

1915 1930

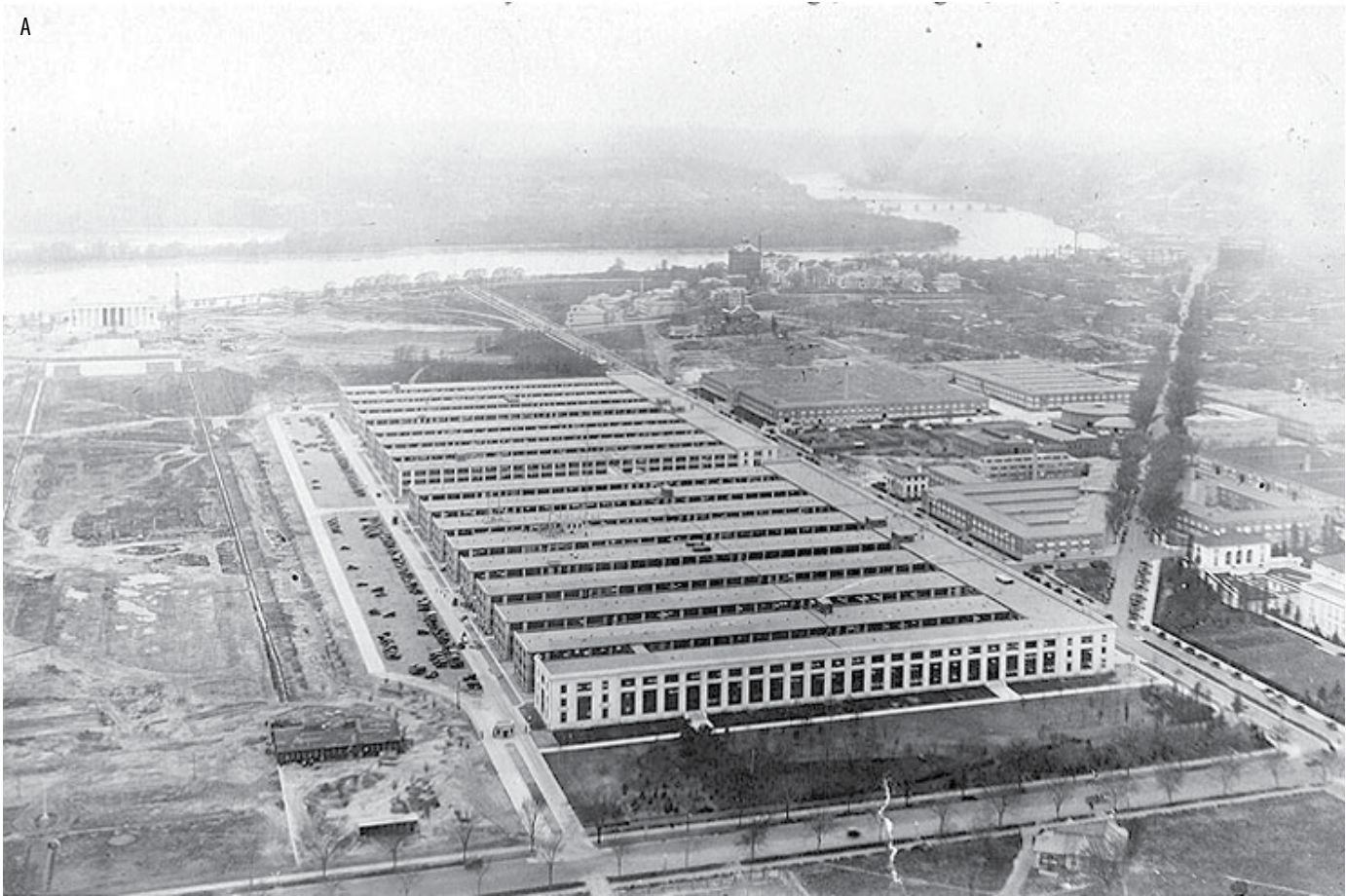
A more sober era followed the heady enthusiasm during the peak of the City Beautiful Movement after the turn of the century. Industrial abuses, war in Europe, and the repercussions of economic crisis—including the establishment of income tax in 1913—led to an era focused more on progressive reforms than urban ostentation.

The federal government had expanded greatly since 1900, but without keeping pace in building new offices. With America’s entry into World War I, the shortage became a crisis as wartime workers flocked to the city. Sprawling temporary buildings were erected, many on the National Mall, as the Navy Yard, airfields, and defense plants expanded along the river.

The war’s end released a pent-up demand for more housing. Apartment construction boomed in the 1920s, outpacing single-family homes, and giving the city a proportion of apartment dwellers comparable to that in New York and Chicago. Rising automobile ownership and lower land costs promoted subdivisions of bungalows and middle-class homes in Brightwood, Tenleytown, Congress Heights, Good Hope, Deanwood, and other once-distant hamlets and villages.

The city’s social and geographic segregation continued, but if there was any positive consequence, it was the self-sufficiency of a flourishing African American community. Outstanding black teachers led black schools. Black entrepreneurs founded businesses, financial institutions and fraternal organizations. Black artists headed bands, troupes, and art schools. Next-door to Howard University, LeDroit Park thrived as the home of the black intelligentsia and civic leadership. The U Street corridor attracted banks, fraternal organizations, and stores run by and for African Americans. These were among the most important and well-known black neighborhoods in the country, celebrated today for cultural achievements including the theaters and clubs that attracted the greatest African American musical and stage talents—and racially and culturally diverse audiences to appreciate them.

Prosperity favored ambitious plans for Washington. In 1927, the government broke ground for the Federal Triangle, the lavish ensemble that finally addressed the need to house an expanded federal workforce. The Triangle was a magnificent realization of the McMillan Plan. The work went ahead even as the stock market crashed, but it could not escape the changing times that would ultimately prevent its completion.



A Temporary war buildings on the Mall, 1918  
B Pennsylvania Avenue, Federal Triangle, and the Mall  
C Howard Theater, T Street NW near 6th, 1910  
D Woodward Building, 15th and H Streets NW, 1911  
E Model T car showroom, 14th Street NW, 1919



# The New Deal

1930 1945

In many ways the 1930s were contradictory times for Washington. Private construction slowed dramatically, but building after building arose in the Federal Triangle. Banks failed, but government agencies grew by leaps and bounds. Even In the midst of the Depression, the city prospered as workers flocked to the capital in search of government jobs. Luxuries still existed, but times were bleak for the city's neediest residents, particularly African Americans, until New Deal housing programs provided some relief.

A suddenly larger bureaucracy generated great demand for housing. Federal workers filled homes and apartments and entire suburbs within the District, wiping out agricultural land. Even the surrounding counties began changing from villages and farms to bedroom communities. Modernism arrived, although it was slow to catch on in architecturally conservative Washington. Government housing programs helped introduce the new style, as President Roosevelt and his advisers sought new ideas to lift the nation from its despair. Indeed, the International Style apartment complex Langston Terrace (1935-38), by African American architect Hilyard Robinson, may be the District's first example of truly modern architecture.

Far more common in Washington was Stripped Classicism, traditional in aura and outline but pared down and flattened in detail. After such early examples as Garfinckel's (1930),

the Pepco headquarters (1930), and Folger Library (1932), the style flourished in government buildings from the Justice Department (1931-35) to the Federal Reserve (1937) and Social Security Administration (1939-40), the latter buildings forming part of two more massive civic complexes modeled on the Federal Triangle.

As the population grew toward its wartime peak, it continued to be divided by race and class. Restrictive covenants, most targeting African Americans and Jews, were common in new developments. There were exceptions, like the row house neighborhood of Kingman Park, which encouraged African American ownership, and Eastland Gardens, which was largely designed, built, and occupied by African Americans. But most of the neighborhoods that were rapidly filling out the city were restricted to whites. Even the earliest public housing projects, like Langston Terrace Dwellings, were racially segregated. This practice continued in wartime housing projects: the garden-apartment complexes of Fairfax Village and Naylor Gardens were for whites, while Mayfair Mansions and Parklands Apartments were for blacks.

Private construction in the city came to a virtual halt in 1941 as materials rationing began in preparation for World War The government embarked on another huge building campaign, best symbolized by the wartime construction of the Pentagon, the largest office building in the world, to house the Department of Defense.



A Garfinckel's Department Store, 14th and F NW, 1929  
B Folger Library, Capitol Hill, 1929  
C Langston Terrace Dwellings, 1937  
D War Department, by architects Gilbert Stanley Underwood and William Dewey Foster, 1941



# The Post War Years

1945 1960

The years after World War II have long been defined by the great mass migration to the suburbs. By the tens of thousands, urban dwellers left congested cities for a new lifestyle made possible by affordable automobiles, highway subsidies, lower land costs, and cheaper mortgages. In Washington as elsewhere, there was also a racial impetus, as prejudice or fear of desegregation led many to abandon the city centers they saw as dominated by African Americans who were unable to live anywhere else.

The erosion of Washington’s traditional fabric could be measured in a myriad of ways: roadways widened, gas stations and repair garages built, buildings demolished for parking, shopping districts dispersed, and entire neighborhoods threatened by highway and urban renewal plans. Civic leaders embraced the new future as swaths of the city were sacrificed and the streetcar system met its demise. Greater speed of travel even influenced the way that buildings were designed and perceived, with streamlining and simplified details and larger, lighted signage.

The most momentous redevelopment project of the time arose from a campaign against alley dwellings and neighborhoods characterized as “slums” by planners, reformers, politicians, and developers. On this debatable premise, much of Southwest was leveled wholesale for new superblocks of high-rise apartments and townhouses. Most of the largely African American residents were displaced, with many families moving to apartments east of the Anacostia River, where poorly planned overbuilding led to a concentration of poverty. Workers were separated from jobs, consumers from shopping, and thousands of residents from the social network of their previous communities.

The postwar years were a time of transition in Washington architecture. Recognition of Georgetown as the city’s first historic district in 1950 probably perpetuated the popularity of Colonial Revival traditions. Residential construction remained largely conservative, as did the design of many churches built in mostly outlying neighborhoods. In contrast, synagogues were almost uniformly modern in style, and commercial facades became opportunities for flashy advertising using the latest graphics.

Classicism continued to reverberate through attempts at modernism, especially in government buildings of the late 1940s and early 1950s. But aside from style, massive buildings like the General Accounting Office (1949-51) and US Courthouse (1949-52) were more influenced by changes in building technology, as air conditioning and reliance on artificial lighting freed designers from constraints that had long determined building size and shape. By the end of the decade, new building materials and techniques—in metal, glass, and concrete—finally brought about a clear break with tradition.



Georgetown row houses along the canal A  
Adas Israel Synagogue, Cleveland Park, 1951 B  
General Accounting Office, 1949 C  
Southwest Urban Renewal, 1960 D



# New Visions in Turbulent Times

1960 1975

The 1960s began with a spirit of optimism about the future. The youthful enthusiasm of the Kennedy administration brought progressive ideas for tackling urban problems and new attention to the arts. The growing need for federal facilities and the shabby condition of Pennsylvania Avenue motivated the new president to seek expert advice in two areas that would greatly influence Washington's future: improving the quality of federal architecture and rejuvenating the nation's Main Street.

The commission on federal office space tendered its report in 1962, proposing three basic tenets for federal architecture: government buildings should embody the finest contemporary American architectural thought, the government should not dictate an official style, and buildings should be appropriately sited with careful relation to their urban context. The President's Council on Pennsylvania Avenue unveiled its vision in 1963: lining the avenue's north side with a phalanx of government offices, and carving out a gigantic National Square at its western end. While neither report brought immediate change, both had a profound influence on federal government building and planning in the city.

Largely in reaction to the destruction wrought by such urban plans, the 1960s also witnessed the rise of the historic preservation movement. In 1961, Jacqueline Kennedy stepped in to rescue the 19th-century houses on Lafayette Square, showing how redevelopment could benefit by keeping older buildings. The National Capital Planning Commission and Commission of Fine Arts established a Joint Committee on Landmarks in 1963, to create the first list of District buildings significant for their history and architecture. And in 1966, the National Historic Preservation Act placed the federal government squarely in the forefront of historic preservation, proclaiming that the "spirit and direction of the Nation" are embodied in its historic heritage.

But federal preservation law did not establish local protections. Washington's historic fabric continued to disappear as a new office precinct arose northwest of the White House and apartments encroached into Victorian neighborhoods. Modern construction methods and rising labor costs often cheapened building materials and details, in stark departure from the handcrafted charm of older buildings. Residents began mobilizing against these assaults, and also in the grassroots fight against freeway proposals for the city.



Aftermath of Martin Luther King assassination, 1968 A  
"Don't Tear It Down" rally at the Old Post Office B  
Model of proposed cross-Mall sculpture garden from the  
Report of the President's Temporary Commission on Pennsylvania Avenue, 1968 C  
Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1968 D  
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, 1974 E

Among an increasingly African American community lacking self-government, these tensions would only worsen, and explode after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King. The destruction of neighborhood commercial centers along the old streetcar routes on 7th, 14th, and H Streets was a tragic result that would not be repaired for decades.

The first visible product of the new federal architectural standards was the HUD building (1965-68), a dramatic modernist statement located symbolically in the Southwest urban renewal area. The plan for Pennsylvania Avenue led to the gargantuan and controversial FBI building (1974), followed by the establishment of the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation. But it was the proposed demolition of the Old Post Office that may have had the greatest impact, by galvanizing local preservation efforts through a newly formed activist group known as Don't Tear It Down, which would evolve into the DC Preservation League and become the city's leading advocate for preservation in the coming decades.

Indeed times had changed. Rising from despair, the city opened its memorial library to Martin Luther King in 1972, housed in a building by Mies van der Rohe, one of the international giants of Modernism. Home Rule arrived in 1973, Metro opened in 1975, and there was renewed optimism that the residents of Washington could chart a better future for their city.





# Home Rule and Downtown Revival

1975 1990

With local self-government, the District’s priorities began slowly to change, with an emphasis on jobs, community development, and the social and housing needs of the city’s most disadvantaged residents. In its public projects, the local government sought to establish a new image for the city, progressive in outlook, and for the first time with African American architects and civic leaders guiding its formulation.

The role of historic preservation was also among the first policy questions addressed by the Home Rule government. DC agencies supported the creation of historic districts in Anacostia and LeDroit Park, both to honor African American cultural sites and to generate support for their renewal. But with continued white flight to the suburbs, the downtown business district declined and older buildings were left to decay or be demolished in efforts at revitalization.

Under pressure from activists, the city adopted a delay-in-demolition regulation in 1976 that established for the first time at least some protection for historic buildings. One of the cases considered was the demolition of Dunbar High School to make room for an athletic field for the new modern high-rise Dunbar. The emotional debate about legacy and progress pitted alumni of the illustrious school against younger leadership in the African American community.

Motivated by the loss of Dunbar, the McGill Building, and other architectural treasures, Don’t Tear It Down joined with DC Councilmember John A. Wilson to push for greater protections in DC law. Enacted in 1978, the Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act gave the District one of the nation’s strongest municipal preservation laws. At the same time, preservation activists redoubled their efforts to identify and designate historic landmarks and districts. Successful campaigns protected not just Dupont Circle, Downtown, and the Financial District, but

also Takoma Park, Strivers’ Section, and the landmarks of African American culture on U Street.

Even as grassroots preservation was emerging as a stronger force, the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation was charged by Congress with implementing the grand plans for the nation’s Main Street. Competing visions for downtown brought conflict between PADC and preservationists, but ultimately both sides of the debate achieved some of their goals. PADC’s parks and public improvements, and its coordinated assembly of key sites for development, made reinvestment in the old downtown possible at a time when it had been virtually written off. As confidence in the area revived, civic and business leaders turned their attention to creating a “living downtown” with apartments, an arts community, and a vibrant street scene. Saving downtown’s architectural legacy became part of that vision.

Another landmark of the era, completed in 1978, helped downtown return to favor: I.M. Pei’s East Building for the National Gallery of Art. A stunning addition to the Mall, it was the perfect foil to John Russell Pope’s 1941 masterpiece of late classicism—fully its equal in elegant materials, craftsmanship, and finesse, and just as uncompromising in its stylistic conviction. Though cutting-edge, it avoided the rough concrete Brutalism of some earlier 1970s buildings. The East Wing’s accessible refinement helped Washingtonians understand how high-style Modernism could coexist with the city’s architectural traditions.

In experiments with façadism and historicism, architects struggled to find a balance between preservation and late 20th-century building realities. Results were not always successful, but the best became lessons in how to adjust huge buildings to the scale of 19th century streetscapes. Some community revitalization efforts, like the construction of the Reeves Center (1986) at 14th and U Streets, challenged conventional assumptions about what was possible, but it would take many years to realize the full potential of these brave beginnings.

By the end of the 1980s, the goal of a living downtown did move closer to reality as civic leaders, the business community, and preservationists worked together on the Joint Project to Preserve Small Downtown Buildings (1988). This cooperative effort established a strategy to build housing, promote retail, and accommodate both preservation and new development as the old downtown revitalized. It led to the adoption of zoning protections and incentives for preservation, retail, arts, and housing in the Downtown Development Zone (1991), and ultimately helped set the stage for the impressive results to come.



A Metrorail Station, Green Line  
B National Gallery of Art, West Wing, 1941  
C National Gallery of Art, East Wing, 1978  
D F Street historic buildings with new construction



## A New Confidence

1990 2005

The downtown revival begun in the 1970s continued to strengthen with the approaching millennium, and the reviving fortunes of downtown helped to burnish the city's image overall. Toward the end of the century, rising property costs in the suburbs, a lack of nearby amenities, and disillusionment with commuting began to make Washington comparatively attractive for some. New immigrants from Latin America, Asia, and Africa also arrived, and began establishing community ties in relatively affordable DC neighborhoods. At the same time many African Americans, too, sought the dream of the suburbs and better educational choices for their children.

The District's changing demographics registered strongly in the 1990 US Census. For the first time in 40 years, the white population rose by a modest amount, and although still relatively small, both the Asian and Latino populations nearly doubled. In contrast, 50,000 African American residents, more than 10 percent of their number, had moved to the suburbs in the 1980s, and that was in addition to the 90,000 who had relocated in the 1970s.

Gentrification was both a cause and a result of these demographic trends. It had begun as far back as the 1930s when professionals moving to Washington with Roosevelt's New Deal administration rediscovered the charm of historic Georgetown. It continued in Foggy Bottom in the 1960s, in Dupont Circle and Capitol Hill in the 1970s, Mount Pleasant in the 1980s, and many more neighborhoods at the turn of the century.

With a declining population, the building fabric in many DC neighborhoods had not changed much since the city's peak in the 1950s, although in-town communities saw more demolition and rebuilding as downtown and the Capitol complex expanded. Certainly nothing approached the scale of urban renewal in Southwest. Elsewhere, new architectural ideas were mostly on display at a modest scale: glassy Modernist houses scattered along the fringes of Rock Creek Park, warehouse adaptations in Georgetown, and a handful of innovative office buildings near Dupont Circle.

By the 1990s, creative infill projects responding to Capitol Hill's exuberant Victorian architecture caught the public eye. The exciting cultural mix of Adams Morgan drew weekend crowds from across the region, Eastern Market was no longer just a neighborhood gem, and new galleries lured art patrons to 7th Street downtown. In 1991, a downtown neighborhood began to take root as the first apartment buildings in PADC's housing program opened, at Lansburgh's and Market Square. The Warner Theatre reopened in 1993, and the Lincoln Theatre in 1994. Each of

these milestones showed the kind of accomplishments that would be needed to revive other city neighborhoods.

The architectural trend known as Post-Modernism flourished in these years. In part a backlash against Modernism for its association with the destruction of urban character and human scale, it also helped architects confront the question of how to place new buildings within a historic context. Market Square (1990) is perhaps the most prominent example, with its colossal columns of solid limestone responding to the National Archives, and embracing facades creating a plaza for the Navy Memorial. Massive classical columns appeared on other buildings as well, as did picturesque towers, decorated facades, and other more conscious efforts to evoke historic architecture. The best of these projects could display a lively architectural wit, but the worst could descend into hollow pastiche.

The experiment with Post-Modernism was not long lived, but it did help bring about a more self-assured contextual architecture reflecting the particular challenges of building in Washington. For many years, the city's height limits, development pressures, and conservative traditions had been a recipe for humdrum buildings. But a new, more inventive, architecture was now being created—more adept at blending into historic streetscapes and less concerned about rigid rules of traditional or modern design. The turn of the millennium brought a proliferation of fresh ideas to the cityscape—cadenced bays on Massachusetts Avenue apartments, buildings as glass sculptures on improbable sites, and invigorating internationalism in a spate of new embassies.



United States Storage Company (1909) with 1001 Pennsylvania Avenue, 1987 Eastern Market A B



# A Growing and Vital City

2005 2025

In the new century, Washington has returned to sustained growth after a half century of population decline. Its first two decades saw a twenty percent increase in residents and renewed vitality all across the city. This new energy is reflected in the dense urban apartment neighborhoods that have arisen around downtown—in Mount Vernon Triangle and NoMa, and along the waterfronts of Southeast and Southwest. In each case, interspersed historic buildings weave these new centers into the older fabric of the city.

At a smaller scale, rehabilitation and infill construction have transformed neighborhood centers as well—from Georgia Avenue in Petworth to 14th Street in Columbia Heights, and from H Street NE to Historic Anacostia. New commercial centers now serve Fort Lincoln, Brookland, and Skyland; new homes are under construction west of the park, east of the park, and east of the river. A visit to almost any DC neighborhood shows a spate of home remodeling in progress.



With many new residents and a faster pace of development have come major challenges. The surge in population has caused a severe shortage of housing and a crisis in housing affordability. In response, new inclusionary zoning requirements compel developers to make a portion of their units affordable to low- and moderate income residents. The District’s housing production trust fund, supported by at least \$100 million annually, has produced thousands of affordable units. Federal preservation and low-income tax credits have made rehabilitation of historic buildings for affordable housing more common, particularly for large sites such as Clifton Terrace and Mayfair Mansions. The availability of these credits has led affordable housing developers to seek historic designation for suitable large apartment buildings, especially in Columbia Heights, Adams Morgan, and Brightwood

Much of the needed housing is being produced in new mixed-use communities at former federal lands conveyed to the District: parts of the Navy Yard, McMillan Reservoir, and Armed Forces Retirement Home, and the hospital campuses at Saint Elizabeths, DC General, and Walter Reed. Historic resources on each of these sites are being rehabilitated, as new construction benefits from superior architecture achieved through design review. Similarly, the Capitol Crossing project over the Center Leg Freeway and the redevelopments of public housing at Northwest One and Barry Farm are reconnecting historic street patterns with improved connectivity to public space amenities.

In the private market, high land prices have squeezed construction budgets and increased development costs. Now more common are the design-build and stick-built construction techniques that can lower the architectural quality of new buildings. Over-scaled and poorly designed projects, including tear-downs and cheap pop-ups by small speculative builders, have received much of the community criticism about buildings that are insensitive to their surroundings. These concerns helped motivate the creation of new historic districts in Kingman Park and Bloomingdale, and expansion of the Anacostia Historic District to include its commercial main streets.

Along with physical change, the 21st century has brought new priorities and methods of engagement to the practice of historic preservation. Cultural heritage trails have educated both long-time and new residents. Grassroots education projects have allowed community residents to tell their own stories about local history and culture. The internet revolution has opened vast archives of historical documents and changed the way people get information and communicate with others. Public health restrictions during the Covid pandemic have accelerated these trends and raised new questions about how technology may reshape cities.

At the same time, an increasingly multi-cultural society has brought new perspectives on our history and compelled a broader exploration, recognition, and honoring of its full story. Renewed calls for racial equity and the Black Lives Matter movement have even created new history, as has the unprecedented attempt to overturn a presidential election through a violent attack on the United States Capitol and American democracy. These are the interesting times we now live in.



A The Residences at Saint Elizabeths East  
B Eaton Elementary School addition and renovation  
C Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, main stair











# What makes preservation work

Historic preservation continues to thrive in the District of Columbia. As its population grows, the District continues to look to its historic and cultural assets as a valuable legacy for its future. Washington, DC is a confident community finding renewed inspiration in its unique physical character and multi-cultural heritage. This has not occurred by accident, but through the sustained efforts of civic leaders and active residents over many decades. This section looks at ten factors that make preservation work well in DC.

## 1 A rich and diverse legacy

Washington, DC's national heritage and impressive civic environment are treasured by the residents of the District just as much as by Americans across the country. There is a sustained sense of local pride in the unique texture of a welcoming and culturally diverse city: its historic downtown, thriving neighborhoods, majestic monuments, and visible reminders of history.



A Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial

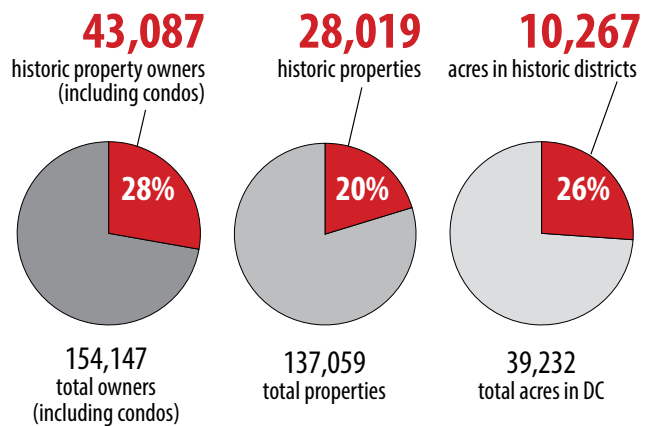
## 2 Protected historic properties

Washington benefits from a wealth of historic landmarks and districts. Since the creation of the Georgetown Historic District in 1950, the city's inventory of has grown steadily to encompass thousands of properties representing all aspects of the city's history and culture.

Under the District's preservation law, applications for historic designation may be made by property owners, government agencies, Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, and community historic preservation organizations. This encourages broad public participation in the process of recognizing all parts of our heritage, as is reflected in the variety of listings in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites.

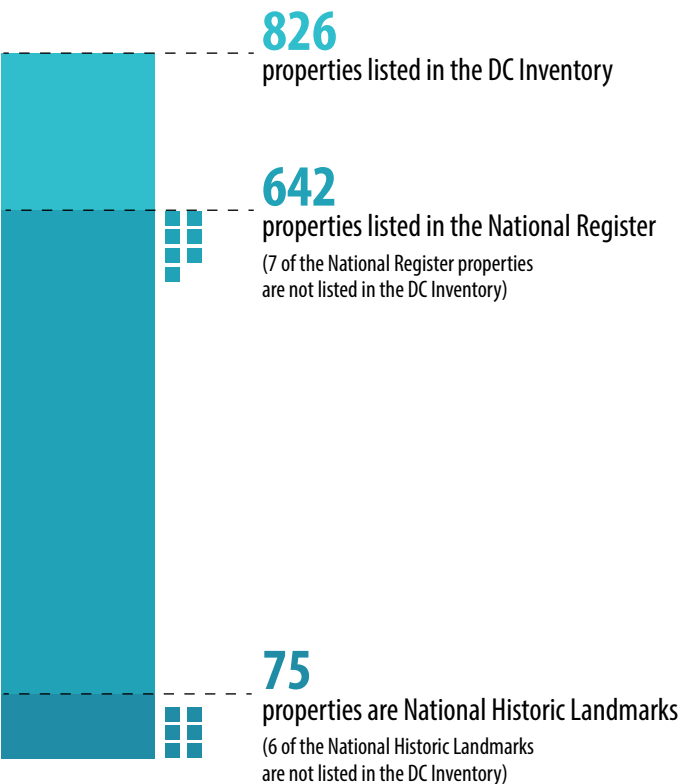
### DC Inventory of Historic Sites

The DC Inventory is the city's official list of historic landmarks and districts. With more than 750 historic landmarks and 27,000 contributing buildings in historic districts, Washington has one of the nation's largest inventories of protected historic properties.



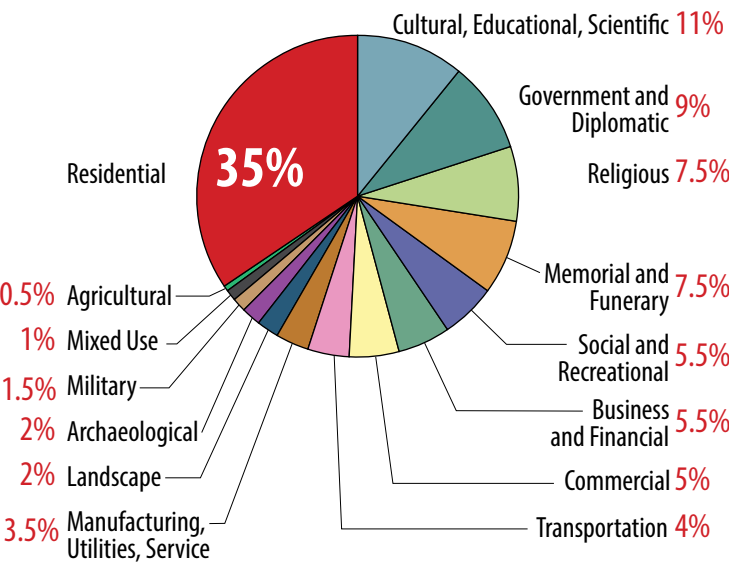
### National Register of Historic Places

Three-fourths of the properties in the DC Inventory are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Nearly 10% are National Historic Landmarks (NHLs), all of which are listed in the National Register. The District has more NHLs than all but seven states.

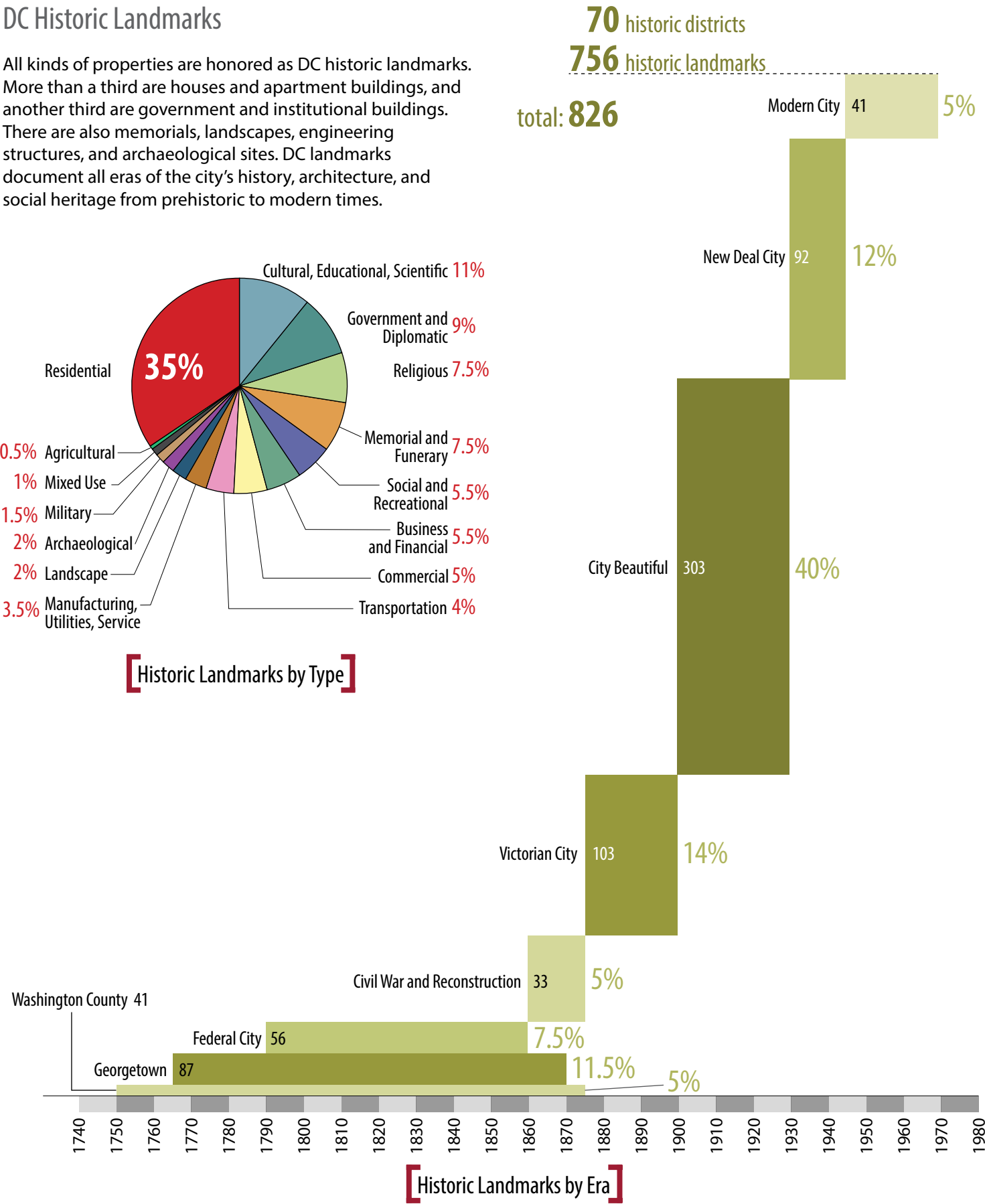


### DC Historic Landmarks

All kinds of properties are honored as DC historic landmarks. More than a third are houses and apartment buildings, and another third are government and institutional buildings. There are also memorials, landscapes, engineering structures, and archaeological sites. DC landmarks document all eras of the city's history, architecture, and social heritage from prehistoric to modern times.



Historic Landmarks by Type



Historic Landmarks by Era



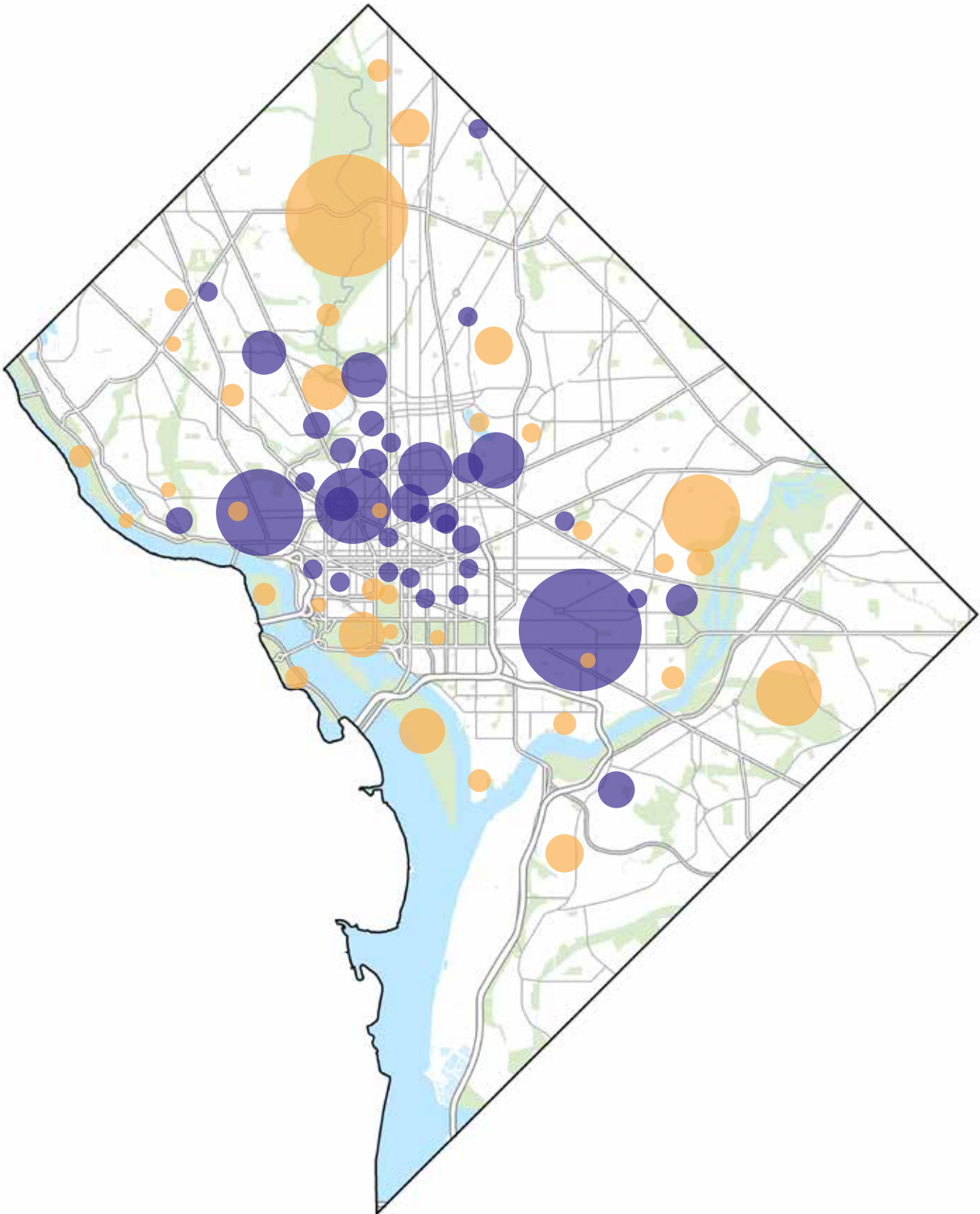
DC Historic Districts

Washington, DC is a city of neighborhoods as well as grand plans, and both are reflected in its many historic districts.

The Old Georgetown Act established the city’s first historic district in 1950, long before home rule or a preservation program. During the 1960s, the city’s most iconic public spaces and building groups were recognized. Most were included in the original list of landmarks prepared by the National Capital Planning Commission and U.S. Commission of Fine Arts in 1964

Designation of neighborhood historic districts began in earnest in the 1970s, before home rule and passage of the District’s historic preservation law. Twenty-six neighborhood historic districts have been created since the law became effective in 1979.

Designations declined after 2000, but have risen again as community interest in protection continues. More recent designations recognize a wider variety of neighborhoods as well as historic campuses scattered across the city.



70

Historic Districts

37

Neighborhood Historic Districts

33

Parks, Campuses, Military Districts

Date Created		Contributing Buildings	Date Created	
1950	Georgetown	4,000	1964	The Potomac Gorge
1966	Pennsylvania Avenue		1964	Roosevelt Island
	National Historic Site	160	1964	National Mall
1972	Logan Circle	135	1964	Potomac Park, East & West
1973	Capitol Hill	8,000	1964	Rock Creek Park
1933	Lafayette Square	30	1964	Washington Navy Yard
1973	Anacostia	460	1964	Marine Barracks
1973	LeDroit Park	474	1964	Congressional Cemetery
1973	Massachusetts Avenue	150	1964	Fort McNair
1977	Sixteenth Street	147	1964	Federal Triangle
1977	Dupont Circle	3,100	1964	National Zoological Park
1980	Takoma Park	160	1964	Mount Vernon
1981	Financial	20		Memorial Highway
1982	Downtown	200	1968	Seventeenth Street
1983	Strivers' Section	450	1968	National Arboretum
1986	Mount Pleasant	1,100	1968	Washington Cathedral
1986	Foggy Bottom	135	1973	C&O Canal
1986	Kalorama Triangle	350	1973	Fort Circle Parks
1986	Cleveland Park	1,000	1973	Rock Creek and
1989	Sheridan Kalorama	610		Potomac Parkway
1990	Woodley Park	395	1973	Gallaudet College
1990	Blagden Alley/Naylor Court	150	1990	Georgetown Visitation Convent
1994	Fourteenth Street	765	1991	McMillan Park Reservoir
1998	U Street	1,580	2005	Saint Elizabeths Hospital
1999	Mount Vernon Square	429	2008	Armed Forces Retirement Home
1999	Shaw	450	2011	Majorie Webster Junior College
2002	Grant Road	13	2011	Immaculata Seminary
2005	Mount Vernon Triangle	24	2014	Walter Reed Army Medical Center
2006	Washington Heights	347	2015	Young/Browne/Phelps/
2007	Foxhall Village	388		Spingarn Schools
2014	Meridian Hill	46	2016	Mount Vernon Seminary
2014	GWU/Old West End	116	2016	Glenwood Cemetery
2015	Grant Circle	24	2016	Observatory Hill
2016	Union Market	70	2016	Washington Monument Grounds
2017	Emerald Street	75	2017	Smithsonian Quadrangle
2018	Kingman Park	536	2018	Langston Golf Course
2018	Bloomingdale	1,688		
2021	Colony Hill	37		



# What makes preservation work

## 3 Strong preservation laws

Strong national and local historic preservation laws protect Washington, DC’s heritage and guide both preservation planning and the designation and treatment of historic properties. Each year, thousands of preservation reviews protect DC historic properties from inappropriate alteration or outright demolition, encouraging high standards of design and construction throughout the District.

### National Historic Preservation Act

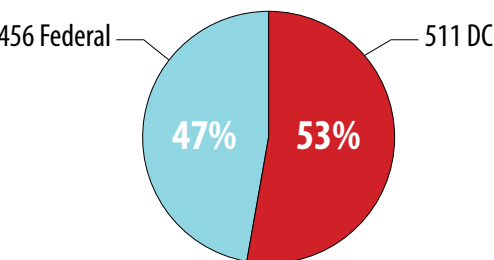
The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 commits the federal government to protecting the nation’s irreplaceable cultural heritage. It established the National Register of Historic Places, State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), and national preservation standards. These rules promote exemplary treatment of federal buildings in Washington and encourage comparably high standards for local buildings.

### DC Landmark and Historic District Protection Act

The DC Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act of 1978 is widely recognized as one of the strongest local preservation laws in the nation. Since its enactment, the law has been expanded to include property maintenance standards, enforcement authority, archaeological protection, targeted homeowner grants, and preservation review of District government projects.

#### federal section 106 review

Before undertaking, approving, or licensing a construction project, the sponsoring federal agency must take into account its effect on listed or potential historic properties, and afford the SHPO a reasonable opportunity to comment.



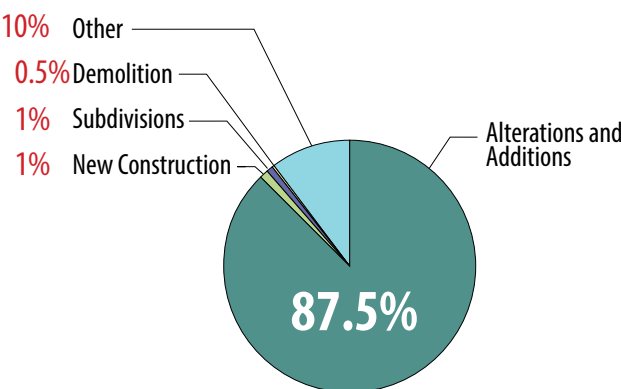
967 DC and Federal projects

#### dc government project review

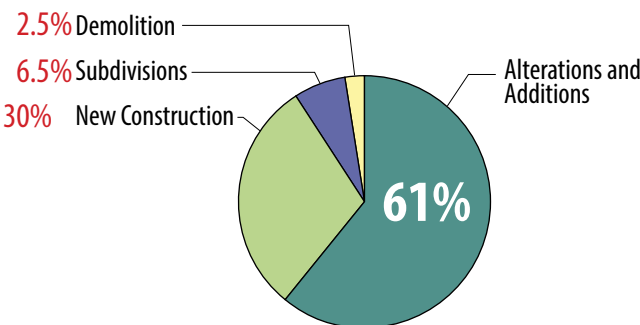
Before undertaking construction on District government land, the sponsoring agency must take into account its effect on listed or potential historic properties, and afford the SHPO a reasonable opportunity to comment. The process is modeled on Section 106 review.

#### private project review

Before the city permits work on a historic landmark or property in a historic district, the Historic Preservation Review Board must advise on whether it is compatible with the historic character of the property and its adaptive use. New development undergoes similar review.



1673 Permit Reviews by HPO



123 Concept Reviews by HPRB

## 4 Responsible civic leadership

The federal and District governments set a high standard of responsible preservation stewardship in Washington. Local civic leaders and the business community consistently support protection of historic heritage as important for the District’s economic growth. Foreign governments and international institutions also contribute as stewards of prominent historic properties in the city. The excellent condition of much of the city’s historic environment is due in large part to this shared commitment by civic leadership.

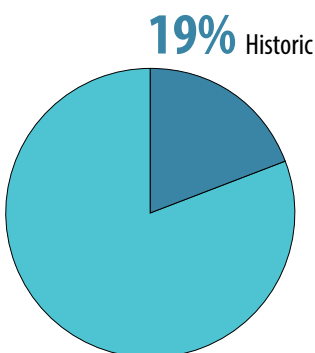


A Lincoln Theater, U Street  
B Administration Building, US National Arboretum  
C Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library

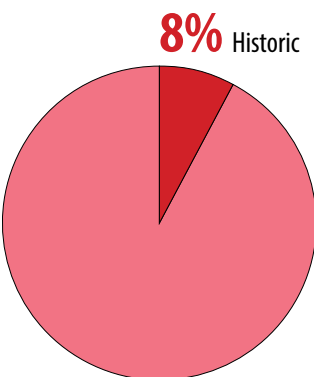
## Government Properties

The federal and District governments are major landowners in the District of Columbia. The US government owns more than one fifth of the city’s area, including large areas of historic parkland, monuments, memorials, and historic sites managed by the National Capital Region of the National Park Service.

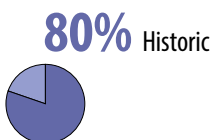
The District government owns more than 3,000 properties, several hundred of which are historic. Foreign governments are also important owners of DC historic property, including many historic mansions along Massachusetts Avenue’s Embassy Row.



Federal Government:  
2793 properties



DC Government:  
3358 properties



Embassies and International Organizations:  
209 properties

### Government Properties by Type



Federal Government Stewardship

Federal agencies are required to establish preservation programs and treat historic preservation as an integral part of their mission. They must identify and nominate eligible properties under their jurisdiction to the National Register, and preserve these properties according to standards adopted by the Secretary of the Interior.

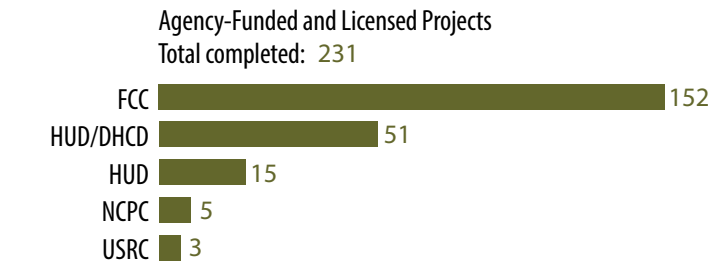
Federal projects in the District are reviewed by the National Capital Planning Commission and US Commission of Fine Arts. These aesthetic and planning reviews are coordinated with historic preservation review. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and public consulting parties also participate routinely in such meetings, especially with high-profile proposals by the National Park Service, General Services Administration, and Smithsonian Institution.



Major Federal Agencies Undertaking Construction



Major Federal Licensing Agencies



Note: HUD/DCHD reviews are tabulated as District projects



District Government Stewardship

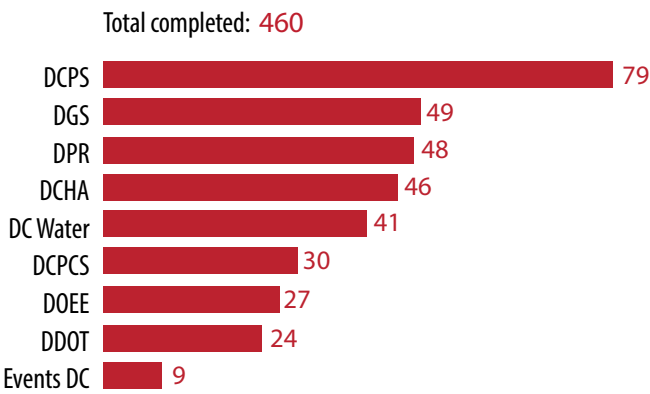
District agencies routinely plan for historic properties at the beginning of project development, when preservation concerns can be addressed most effectively. As with federal projects, these preservation reviews are coordinated with simultaneous review by the Commission of Fine Arts and, as applicable, the National Capital Planning Commission.

The Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) and District Department of Transportation (DDOT) play a key role in ensuring that government permits and licenses are issued in accordance with preservation laws. DCRA's role is particularly important in managing permit applications and addressing vacant and blighted properties.

Strong working relationships among the DC agencies are essential in these systems. Regular coordination among the SHPO, Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development, DDOT, Department of General Services, DC Public Schools, and others ensures that historic preservation concerns are routinely factored into project planning.



Major DC Agencies Undertaking Construction



Major Sponsoring DC Agencies



Note: DHCD reviews of federally licensed projects are shown on page 22.



- A Hirshhorn Museum recladding
- B World War I Memorial, Pershing Park
- C Restored interior of the Department of the Interior
- D Carnegie Library restoration
- E Eastern Market Metro Park
- F Oyster Shucking Shed, Southwest Waterfront



# What makes preservation work

## 5 Effective preservation programs

Preservation laws would not be effective without dedicated government workers who implement public mandates. These civil servants are guided by the panels of distinguished appointees who represent their respective professions and the public at large. Through careful deliberation and collective wisdom, expert advisers chart the course of preservation programs and move projects forward in a way that meets the public interest. The District’s review boards and agency staff consistently earn high marks for their professionalism and achievement.

Supportive partnerships with other national and regional agencies and organizations are critical to the success of DC preservation programs. These partners include both government and non-profit entities engaged in historic preservation through project reviews, advocacy, funding, and peer group coordination.

### DC Historic Preservation Office

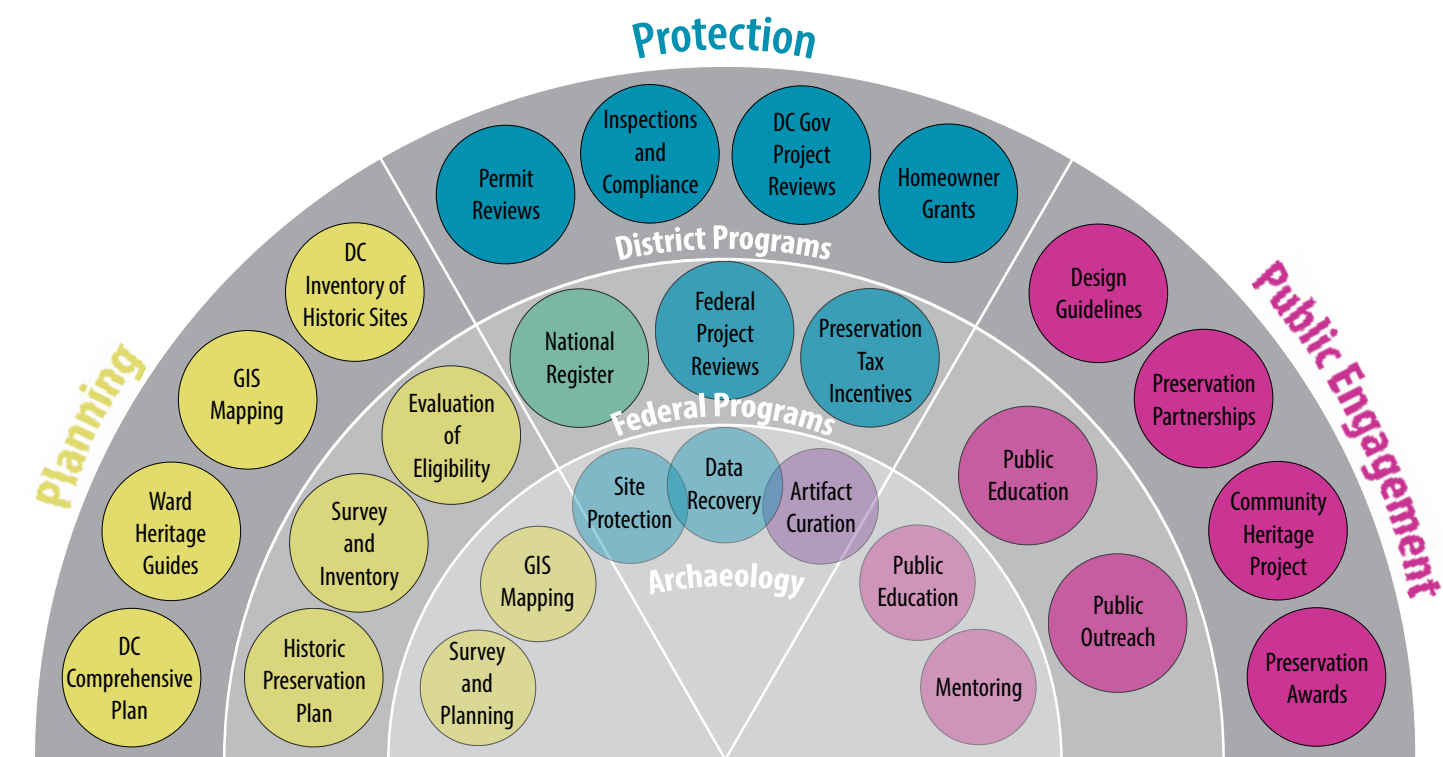
The District’s Historic Preservation Office (HPO) promotes stewardship of historic and cultural resources through planning, protection, and public education. As part of the Office of Planning, it serves as the staff for the mayor’s preservation agent and the Historic Preservation Review Board. As the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), it implements federal preservation programs in the District.

ESTABLISHED: 1971

### Historic Preservation Review Board

The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB), appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council, advises the government and public on preservation matters. As the State Review Board, HPRB helps to implement federal programs and review federal projects in the District.

ESTABLISHED: 1984



### state historic preservation office

The District’s local and federal historic programs are combined to offer a full spectrum of services

### National and Regional Partners

#### US Commission of Fine Arts



Gives expert advice to the President, Congress, and agencies of the federal and DC governments on matters of design and aesthetics, as they affect the federal interest and preserve the dignity of the nation's capital. CFA reviews both government and private projects affecting historic property.

ESTABLISHED: 1910

#### National Park Service



Develops historic preservation policy, standards, and guidance; maintains the National Register; administers federal tax incentives; and funds heritage education and state preservation programs.

ESTABLISHED: 1916

#### National Capital Planning Commission



Acts as the central planning agency for federal land and buildings in the National Capital Region, with an advisory role to the District for certain land use decisions.

ESTABLISHED: 1924

#### National Trust for Historic Preservation



Takes direct, on-the ground action to preserve historic buildings and sites, and advocates nationwide for legislation that protects historic properties.

ESTABLISHED: 1949

#### Old Georgetown Board



Appointed by the Commission of Fine Arts, the board of three architects reviews and advises it on most exterior construction in Georgetown.

ESTABLISHED: 1950

#### Advisory Council on Historic Preservation



Promotes preservation, enhancement, and productive use of our nation’s historic resources; advises the President and Congress on national historic preservation policy.

ESTABLISHED: 1966

#### National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers



Coordinates state government officials who carry out the national historic preservation program as delegates of the Secretary of the Interior pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

ESTABLISHED: 1969

#### Preservation Action



Serves as the national non-profit grassroots lobby for historic preservation.

ESTABLISHED: 1974

#### National Association of Preservation Commissions



As the only such dedicated organization, supports local historic preservation commissions and the historic resources they help protect.

ESTABLISHED: 1983



# 6 Non-profits and volunteers

Government programs alone cannot accomplish the work of preservation. Preservation agencies rely on partnerships with non-profit and volunteer organizations, and the support and advice of elected community representatives.

These community groups sponsor educational programs, run social media sites, research landmark applications, monitor development projects, and engage residents. Their energy and imagination builds appreciation of neighborhood history and inspires DC residents to participate in community life. Listed here is a sampling of District community groups active in preservation.

Other preservation allies in the community include the Main Street programs in every ward. These twenty-six groups support revitalization by sponsoring streetscape and facade improvements that attract businesses and customers. There are also eleven business and community improvement districts (BIDs and CIDs), which use special taxing authority to enhance community vitality with increased services, event programming, and marketing.



A Front stoop, Shaw neighborhood

## Citywide Partnership Organizations

### DC History Center



Deepens understanding of our past to connect, empower, and inspire, reaching into all eight wards to preserve and elevate stories of diverse people, neighborhoods, and institutions

ESTABLISHED: 1894

### Committee of 100 on the Federal City



Advocates for sound planning city-wide in land use, zoning, transportation, historic preservation, and conservation of parks and open space.

ESTABLISHED: 1923

### DC Preservation League



Preserves, protects, and enhances the historic built environment of DC through advocacy and education.

ESTABLISHED: 1971

### Humanities DC



Provides grant support for community programs that enrich the lives of DC residents through the humanities disciplines.

ESTABLISHED: 1980

### District Architecture Center



Educates and engages the greater DC community, focusing on students, teachers, professionals, and the public to demonstrate the transformative power of architecture.

ESTABLISHED: 1989

### Cultural Tourism DC



Delivers memorable experiences and learning opportunities in heritage, international exchange, and the humanities.

ESTABLISHED: 1996

## Professional and Non-Profit Organizations

- American Institute of Architects, DC Chapter
- American Society of Landscape Architects, DC Chapter
- Archaeology in the Community
- Art Deco Society of Washington
- Association for Preservation Technology, Washington Chapter
- Association of the Oldest Inhabitants of DC
- Citizens Planning Coalition
- Cultural Landscape Foundation
- Docomomo DC
- Greater Greater Washington
- Groundwork DC
- Historic Districts Coalition
- Historic Washington Architecture
- Society of Architectural Historians, Latrobe Chapter
- Washington Architectural Foundation
- Washington Society, Archaeological Institute of America

## Preservation Easement Holders

- American Easement Foundation
- Capitol Historic Trust
- Foundation for Historic Georgetown
- L'Enfant Trust
- National Trust for Historic Preservation

## Conservation Organizations

- Alliance to Preserve the Civil War Defenses of Washington
- Dumbarton Oaks Conservancy
- Restore Massachusetts Avenue
- Rock Creek Conservancy
- Rosedale Conservancy
- Tregaron Conservancy
- Trust for the National Mall

## Advisory Neighborhood Commissions

Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs) advise the District government on matters of public policy, including decisions on planning, streets, recreation, social services education, health, and safety in their respective areas.

ANC Commissioners are volunteers elected to two-year terms. Each represents approximately 2,000 residents. There are from two to twelve single-district commissioners in each of the forty ANCs across the city, for a total of 301 commissioners in the District as a whole.

## Neighborhood Organizations

- Bloomingdale Civic Association
- Capitol Hill Restoration Society
- Citizens Association of Georgetown
- Cleveland Park Historical Society
- Dupont Circle Citizens Association
- Dupont Circle Conservancy
- Foggy Bottom Historic District Conservancy
- Foxhall Village Community Citizens Association
- Friends of Kingman Park
- Historic Anacostia Block Association
- Historic Anacostia Preservation Society
- Historic Chevy Chase DC
- Historic Mount Pleasant
- Historic Takoma
- Kalorama Citizens Association
- Kingman Park Civic Association
- LeDroit Park Civic Association
- Logan Circle Community Association
- Sheridan-Kalorama Historical Association
- Southwest Neighborhood Assembly
- Takoma DC Neighborhood Association
- Tenleytown Historical Society
- Woodley Park Historical Society

### partnership projects by the numbers

- DC Preservation League 146 Designations sponsored
- Humanities Council 155 Community Heritage Projects
- Cultural Tourism DC 17 Neighborhood Heritage Trails
- Cultural Tourism DC 200+ African American Trail sites



# What makes preservation work

## 7 Preservation advocates

The efforts of past preservation advocates are recognized in the National Historic Preservation Act, and committed individuals continue in this tradition. Today's advocates are most effective when they serve as leaders of collaborative efforts to forge consensus. They also play a vital role in helping to convey community views to the HPRB and Advisory Neighborhood Commissions.

## 8 New and old residents

Young and old, people are coming to Washington—more than 100,000 in recent years. Whether empty nesters from the suburbs, seekers of a local job, or immigrants from abroad, these residents add new dynamism to our neighborhoods. They come just as other generations did before them, seeking to benefit from what the nation's capital has to offer, and ready to join with longtime residents in contributing their talents and energies to the civic life of the District of Columbia.

## 9 Committed owners and workers

No matter how effective preservation programs or organizations may be, the actual work of preservation is accomplished by property owners and their many agents: the architects, architectural historians, researchers, landscape architects, archaeologists, attorneys, engineers, developers, financial backers, contractors, builders, and construction workers whose expertise brings projects to fruition and whose craftsmanship restores and enhances the physical fabric of our historic environment.

Washington is extremely fortunate that thousands of property owners are passionate about preserving their properties, dozens of developers embrace the challenge of preservation, and hundreds of professionals commit their talents and energies to the cause.



Greta Fuller, Lifetime Historic Preservation Achievement Award  
Window restoration on a house in Anacostia  
Bob Sonderman, Lifetime Historic Preservation Achievement Award  
Brick repointing  
Restored facade in Mount Vernon Square neighborhood  
Fleur de lys reproduction  
Mold for fleur de lys casting  
Stretery



# 10 Financial incentives

Federal historic preservation tax credits have been a key factor in making many District historic preservation projects possible. Since 2001, there have been 71 historic building renovation projects benefiting from a total of \$214 million in federal tax credits. These credits leveraged \$1.32 billion in real estate development, including \$500 million in housing rehabilitation. Of the 45 housing projects, nearly two thirds were for affordable housing. These yielded 2,400 affordable apartments—1,300 renovated and 1,100 new—in historic buildings, created with a \$52 million federal subsidy.

The District’s Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF) provides grants and loans to both for-profit and nonprofit developers to support a range of affordable housing development activities, including historic building rehabilitation. The HPTF can be used for either rental or homeownership housing. For FY 2021 and FY 2022, the mayor’s budgets added a record-setting \$400 million investment into the fund.

The District’s targeted historic homeowner grant program also provides crucial support for low- and moderate-income residents in sixteen historic districts and landmark areas. Since 2007, these non-taxable grants up to \$35,000 have assisted 164 homeowners with exterior and structural repairs to their historic homes.

# 11 Results on the street

The results of Washington’s commitment to preservation can be seen throughout the city in renovated homes, restored monuments and rejuvenated landscapes. They are also seen in creative new architecture that brings another layer of interest and vitality to historic neighborhoods. Most importantly, they are seen in the lives of people who value the quality of life in their communities and treasure the civic spaces and attractions that make the nation’s capital unique.

Historic preservation in Washington DC is a system that keeps our shared heritage alive and achieves positive results to the lasting benefit of all District residents.



The Residences at Saint Elizabeths  
Franklin School, now Planet Word, and 1200 K Street NW  
Chapman Stables, Truxton Circle neighborhood  
Row house infill, 1312-1314 Vermont Avenue NW

A  
B  
C  
D







# preservation challenges [4]





# Gathering public views

The views of community stakeholders and constituents helped shape the goals of this plan. It was prepared as revisions to the Comprehensive Plan were being considered for final adoption by the DC Council in 2021. Public comments during that process were informative, as were those from informal contacts and HPO stakeholder meetings held during the year. A fresh perspective came from the 2021 historic preservation survey and from ongoing dialogue about preservation in both traditional and social media.

## Public engagement cycle

Due to the public health restrictions in place during 2020 and 2021, the public engagement for this plan took place mostly in virtual meetings online and through written communication. Stakeholder meetings and updating of the plan began in January and continued into November 2021.

The launch of general public engagement occurred with a presentation on the purpose and goals for the plan at the June 3, 2021, meeting of the Historic Preservation Review Board. The draft plan was released on July 30 for an official public review and comment period through September 30, 2021. The preservation survey ran concurrently, from the beginning of June to the end of September.

## Ongoing dialogue

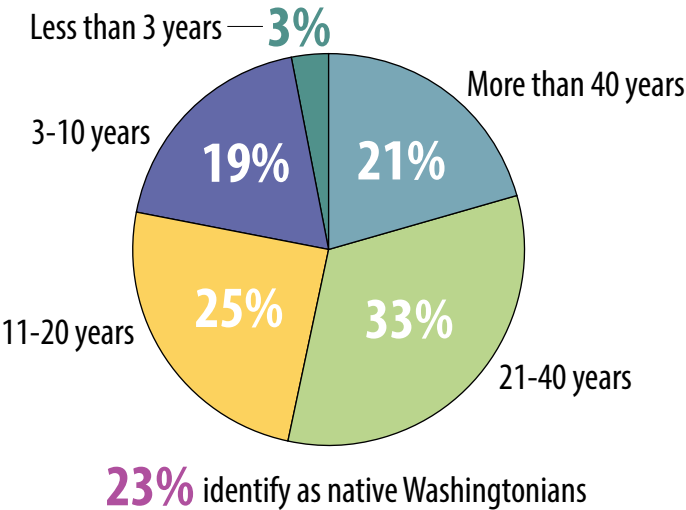
Public conversation about preservation is a daily event in Washington DC, so that public comment and engagement is in a sense continual. The HPO staff reads and listens to much of the discussion in traditional and social media about preservation, planning, and community development. It speaks regularly with constituents seeking services from the government. It participates in annual agency oversight and budget hearings at the DC Council, where issues are raised by the community and councilmembers follow up with questioning of agency officials. Many of the issues from this more continuous informal public dialogue are reflected in this plan, and many of the views discussed in the 2020 Historic Preservation Plan also remain relevant today.

## Response to written comments

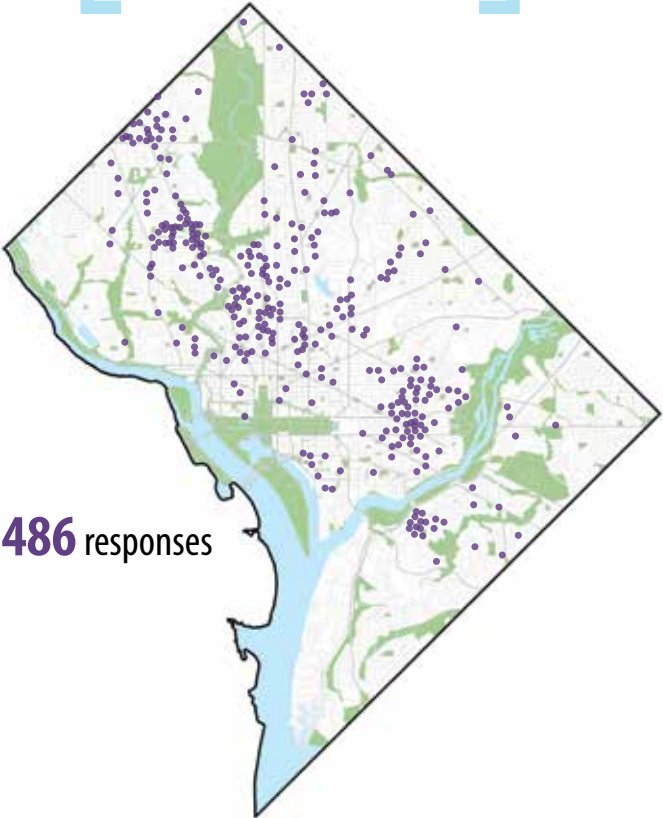
In addition to the survey results presented in this chapter, a compilation of written comments received in the preservation survey, along with brief responses, is posted on the HPO website at [planning.dc.gov/page/preservation-planning](https://planning.dc.gov/page/preservation-planning).

665 participants / 2885 comments

How long have you lived in DC?



Where do you live in DC?

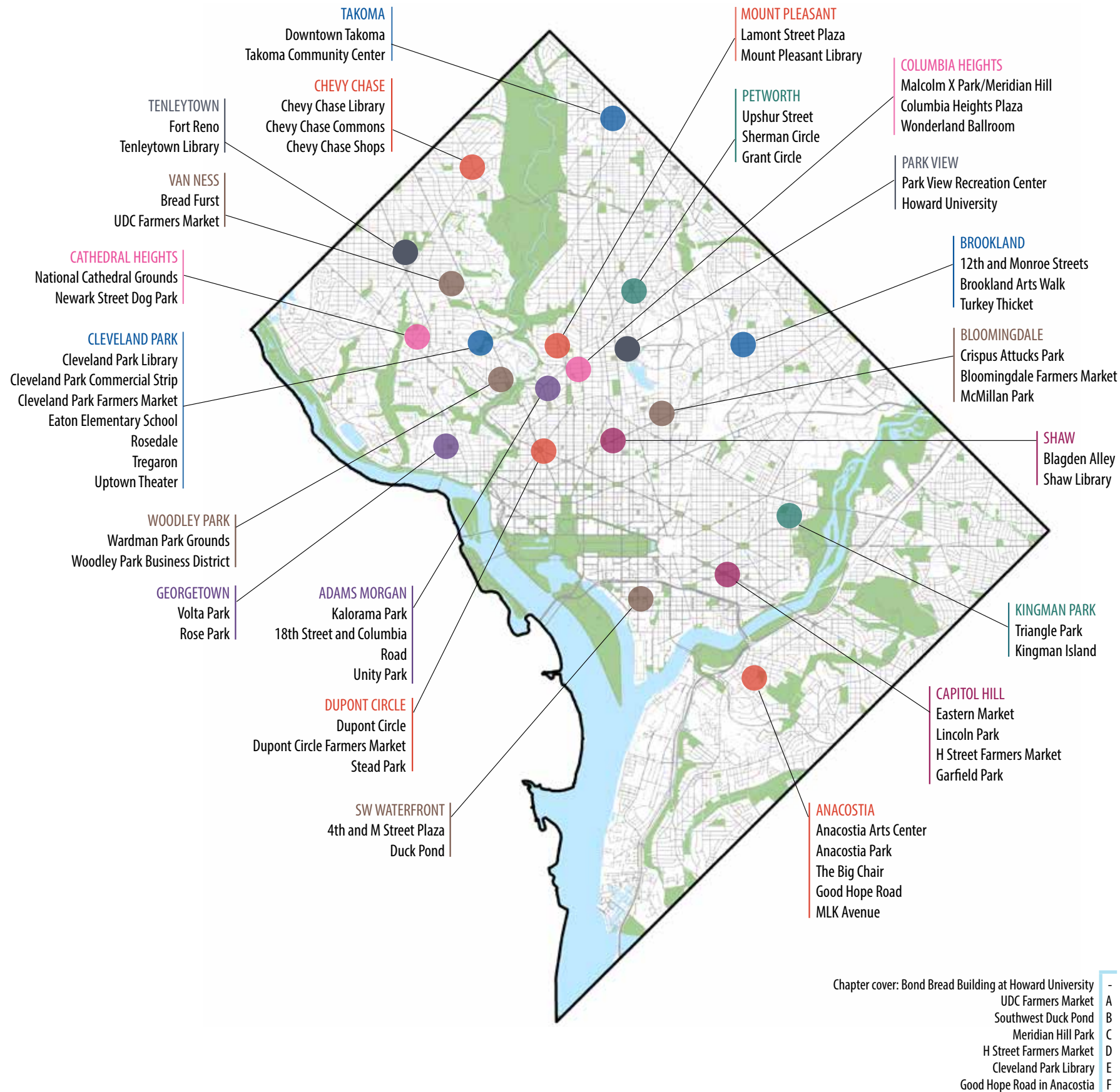


What places in DC did you miss the most this past year because of the pandemic?





What place do you consider as the center or public gathering place of your community?



What are the top items that have a positive / negative impact on your neighborhood?

## positive

1. Walkability
2. Nearby parks and recreation
3. Access to public transportation
4. Tree canopy and landscape quality
5. People/sense of community
6. Historic character
7. Historic district/landmark protection
8. Renovation and new development
9. Streateries
10. Farmers markets
11. Adaptive reuse of underutilized buildings
12. Sustainable design features

## negative

1. Vacant storefronts
2. Lack of housing affordability
3. Poor quality of renovations/construction
4. Displacement and gentrification
5. Blighted buildings
6. Historic preservation restrictions
7. Lack of walkability
8. Lack of tree canopy of landscape quality
9. Lack of access to public transportation
10. Neighborhood flooding
11. Climate-related changes
12. Visual impact of sustainable features





# Looking ahead

This plan encourages a celebration of the District’s cultural diversity by engaging residents and promoting learning about our culture and history. Listening to voices from the community is an essential part of this effort.

The survey question about people or places worthy of recognition produced a wealth of ideas—individuals, communities, buildings, and events that residents would like the District to recognize in some way. This can occur through commemorative signage, walking tours, statues, historical studies, landmark nominations, living memorials, or other means.

The list here compiles the suggestions made by 178 survey respondents. About half relate to aspects of District history that traditionally have not been well recognized or honored. Most frequently mentioned was the history of Native American peoples, but collectively, individuals and events associated with African American history far outnumbered any other category. Also recommended was greater recognition of other underrepresented groups, including the LGBTQ and Latino communities, as well as the history of women, immigrant groups, and old ethnic neighborhoods.



A Ginkgo tree-lined street

## What are some people or places that you would like to see recognized in DC?

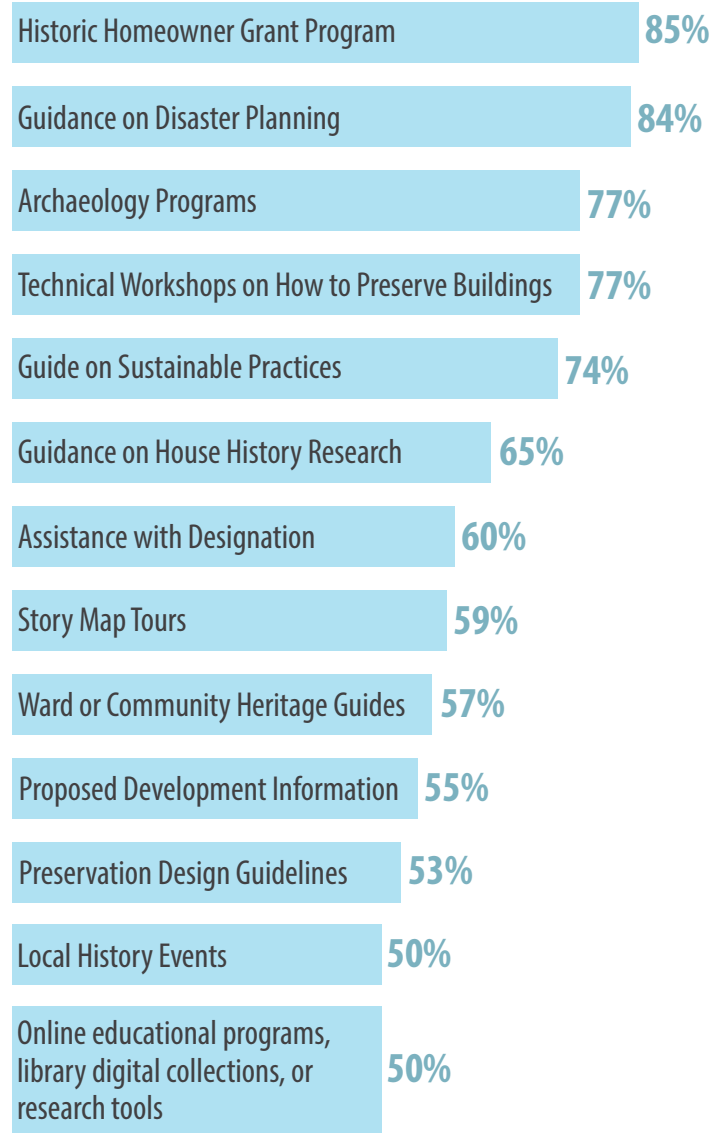
● Individuals ● Communities ● Buildings/Places ● Events  
Bolded and larger text indicates quantity of recommendations for that person, community, building, or event.

- DC Heritage Trail System
- Native Peoples**
- Go-Go Music
- Frederick Douglass**
- Public Housing
- Early Inhabitants
- Red-Lining History
- Hill East
- President Grover Cleveland
- Diverse Architecture
- Frederick Law Olmsted**
- Jewish Community
- MLK Riots
- Old Ethnic Neighborhoods**
- Vera White
- Local Washingtonians
- Bank Buildings
- Cemetery Tours
- Newlands Fountain
- Walter Pierce Park Archaeology
- Barry Farm
- Neighborhood Activists
- DC Punk
- African-American History**
- Rosedale Pool
- 3703 Bangor St SE (Denman House)
- Murals**
- Ann Hargrove
- Brookland’s Round House

- Women Leaders in DC
- Howard Deli
- Enslaved People Who Built the Capitol
- Harry Wardman
- Oak Hill Cemetery
- Pearl Slave Escape**
- Legacy Business Owners
- Alma Thomas
- 9:30 Club
- Negro League Baseball Sites
- Thomas Schneider Row Houses
- Black Broadway
- LGBTQ Neighborhoods**
- Freedmens Village
- Streetcar History
- Griffith Field
- Women’s Clubs
- Latina/o/x History**
- Eleanor Holmes Norton
- Sherwood Farmhouse
- Cosmos Club
- Anacostia**
- Ginkgo Tree-Lined Blocks
- Mt. Zion Cemetery
- Tompkins Hall of Engineering at GWU
- Senator Margaret Chase Smith
- Affordable Housing
- SW Pre-Redevelopment**
- Art Organizations
- George Pointer

- Industrial History
- Howard Divinity School
- Alley Buildings and Living
- Slavery / Slave Markets**
- Eleanor Roosevelt
- Walt Whitman**
- Unbuilt Part of the McMillan Plan
- Herdic Phaeton Company Stables
- Immigrant Communities
- What Buildings/Streets are Named for
- Nannie Helen Burroughs
- Shrimp Boat
- Naylor Court
- Women’s Suffrage
- Sherwood Farmhouse
- Brian Kraft
- Langston Golf Course
- Presidents’ Houses in DC
- Southwest**
- Chuck Brown
- Fort Reno
- Uptown Theater**
- Swampoodle
- Patsy Mose Fletcher
- Literary History**
- Stop the Interstates Movement
- Rosa Parks
- Banneker Ballroom
- Activists
- Kingman Park**

## What historic preservation resources would you like to see more of in the future?



Not surprisingly given the widespread concern about housing affordability, Historic Homeowner Grants topped the list of programs and tools that residents would like to see more of in the future. Eligibility for this program has recently expanded to several new historic districts.

More guidance on disaster planning will be forthcoming, as described in the Disaster Management Plan included as an appendix to this plan. Archaeology programs will receive a boost with the opening of an artifact curation facility in the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, and other workshops and technical guides are also proposed under the implementation plan in Chapter 6.



# Seeking a balance

The 2021 preservation survey sought comments from residents on anything they wished to share about preservation. The 171 responses gave a vivid snapshot of differing points of view on the challenges facing historic preservation in the District.

Most responses addressed preservation in the context of the District’s most pressing planning needs. There were strong views on current priorities for housing affordability, more new housing construction, and development that is equitable and sustainable in the face of climate change. There was also strong disagreement about how historic neighborhoods should adapt to the challenges of the future, most clearly seen in a large number of responses from Cleveland Park.

The Cleveland Park discussion centers around the new recommendation in the Comprehensive Plan’s Future Land Use Map for greater development density in the Connecticut Avenue commercial area within the Cleveland Park Historic District. Similar recommendations affect Woodley Park, Chevy Chase, and other places on commercial arteries across the city. These changes reflect District-wide priorities for equitable development, the construction of new housing, and an increase in affordable housing.

Other comments reflected frustration with NIMBYism and use of litigation to challenge the results of a fully participatory administrative process. Energy for historic preservation is sometimes consumed over protracted battles on particular properties, distracting attention from consensus projects. Long delays in consultation during the preservation review process can also slow down important projects.

The comments we received serve as a reminder that historic preservation operates within the context of broader comprehensive planning, and must be balanced with other important public goals, especially those shown in this diagram.

The importance of seeking this balance is a recurrent theme discussed in both the 2016 and 2020 Historic Preservation Plans. It remains even more important for the upcoming years, especially with the heightened awareness of the urgency in addressing issues of equitable development, affordable housing, and environmentally responsible growth.





# Planning for the future

Cities and their communities must pursue a wide range of goals and recognize a wide diversity of views. This requires thoughtful planning and active public engagement. Both comprehensive planning and preservation planning provide opportunities to seek out and consider how to reconcile often stark differences of opinion on how the community at large should respond to challenges, set priorities, and secure a better future.

The District’s Comprehensive Plan gives important guidance on how to reconcile real and perceived conflicts between historic preservation and the goals of equitable growth, affordable housing, livable communities, and resilient urbanism for the District and all of its residents. The plan’s recently updated text is the product of several years of engagement and deliberation. It carries the force of law in establishing the direction for public policy.

The District’s overall vision for historic preservation, set out in Chapter 1, is drawn directly from the updated Comprehensive Plan. Additional guidance can be found in the updated plan’s discussion of current challenges facing the District, overarching values, and the interaction among multiple policy goals. These sections provide a useful perspective on how to balance the many concerns expressed in the 2021 preservation survey.

In the introductory framework element that provides a foundation for the entire Comprehensive Plan, there are five sets of guiding principles. They address how multiple policy goals can be achieved within the context of the plan’s eight identified DC values. The two most pertinent of those guiding principles are presented here, with portions of the text that deal specifically with historic character and cultural assets highlighted for emphasis.



dc values

DC Comprehensive Plan, Secs. 107.17-107.23

## the challenge facing neighborhoods

Washington, DC is changing. At this moment, more housing is planned and under construction in the District than was built during the entire decade of the 2000s. Federal properties—some larger in land area than all of Georgetown or Anacostia—are being studied for new uses. These changes generate excitement and tension at the same time. Issues of race, class, and equity rise to the surface as the District grows. The effort to be a more inclusive city never stops—to make economic opportunities equitable and available to all residents, and to enhance the most valuable things about the District’s communities. The effort to make Washington, DC more resilient in response to changing conditions that bring new stressors and new opportunities alike is also ceaseless.

As one thinks about the future, other issues arise. How will people get around Washington, DC in 20 years? Where will children go to school? Will police and fire services be adequate? Will the rivers be clean? Will the air be healthy? How to address housing affordability and ensure that current and longtime residents have a place in the future of the District? How to ensure the Washington, DC continues to produce jobs and that District residents have the supports they need to take these jobs and find pathways to success? **How will the best parts of neighborhoods be preserved and the challenging parts be improved?**

DC Comprehensive Plan, Secs. 100.3, 100.4

## housing permits issued

Housing units in 2019: **5945**  
Housing units in 2020: **7370**  
Housing units in 2021: **4646**  
  
Forecast for 2020-2025: **4475**/units per year

source: DC Office of Planning

## key dc guiding principles on managing growth and change

The District seeks to create and support an equitable and inclusive city. Growth must be managed equitably to support all District residents, including vulnerable communities and District protected classes. We must recognize that managing growth and change includes addressing the historic, structural, and systemic racial inequities and disenfranchisement of many District residents. And, we must recognize the importance of longtime businesses, as well as educational and cultural institutions. An equitable and inclusive city includes access to housing that is healthy, safe, and affordable for a range of household types, sizes, and incomes in all neighborhoods. A citywide problem requires citywide solutions — ones that overcome the legacy of segregation, avoid concentrating poverty, and afford the opportunity to stay in one’s home and not be displaced.

**Change in the District of Columbia is both inevitable and desirable. The key is to manage change in ways that protect the positive aspects of life in the city, such as local cultural heritage, and reduce negatives such as poverty, crime, food deserts, displacement, and homelessness.**

A city must be diverse to thrive, and the District cannot sustain itself by only attracting small, affluent households. To retain residents and attract a diverse population, the city should provide services that support families. A priority must be placed on sustaining and

promoting safe neighborhoods offering health care, quality education, transportation, childcare, parks, libraries, arts and cultural facilities, and housing for families.

Diversity also means maintaining and enhancing the District’s mix of housing types. Housing should be developed for households of different sizes, including growing families as well as singles and couples, and for all income levels,

**Redevelopment and infill opportunities along corridors and near transit stations will be an important component of reinvigorating and enhancing our neighborhoods. Development on such sites must be designed to respect the integrity of stable neighborhoods and the broader community context, and encourage housing and amenities for low-income households, who rely more on transit. Adequate infrastructure capacity should be ensured as growth occurs.**

Growth in the District benefits not only District residents, but the region as well. By accommodating a larger number of jobs and residents, we can create the critical mass needed to support new services, sustain public transit, and improve regional environmental quality,

DC Comprehensive Plan, Sec. 219





# Planning for communities

Much of the Comprehensive Plan, especially in its ten area elements, is devoted to the District’s neighborhoods and the challenges they face. This reflects both the centrality of community life for the city’s residents, and the urgency of providing adequate and affordable housing of all types in the effort to shape a more equitable and inclusive city.

In this context, it is not surprising that most of the opinions volunteered in the preservation survey relate to District neighborhoods, and especially historic districts. It also reflects a shift in preservation attention away from downtown development, which has dominated in the past.

The Comprehensive Plan’s guiding principles on creating successful neighborhoods show how preservation concerns fit in with other public goals for communities (including those for public safety, neighborhood services, and public input in decisions about land use and development, not shown in the major section excerpted here). These guiding principles also underpin the goals of this preservation plan and its recommendations for local communities.

Given the urgency of housing among the District’s current challenges, community dialogue about historic preservation will likely continue to revolve around neighborhoods throughout the city. This suggests that developing a baseline understanding of the history and development of all District neighborhoods—both as physical places and communities of people—should be a sustained focus of the historic preservation program in the upcoming years.

To set the stage for this effort, the following pages give a broad overview of the development of communities first in the original city of Washington and later beyond its boundaries into the entire District of Columbia.



A The Macklin redevelopment on Connecticut Avenue in Cleveland Park  
B Restored homes in Anacostia  
C Walter Reed town center

## key dc guiding principles on creating successful neighborhoods

The District prioritizes equitable participation that enfranchises everyone and builds people’s long-term capacity to organize to improve their lives and neighborhoods. Residents and communities should have meaningful opportunities to participate in all stages of planning, policy, public investment, and development decision-making. The District has a special responsibility to identify, engage, and build capacity for greater participation among traditionally underrepresented communities, and will make additional, targeted efforts to improve services for these communities and promote their ability to participate on an equal basis with other communities.

To participate effectively and represent community interests in public processes, the District should support and build the capacity of civic organizations, Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, residents, businesses and other stakeholders. We should encourage collaborative, community-led processes that bring together diverse perspectives. These processes should be clear, open and transparent. Notification procedures should be timely, provide appropriate information, and allow adequate, but not unnecessarily prolonged, time to respond.

The residential character of neighborhoods must be protected, maintained and improved. Many District neighborhoods possess social, economic, historic, and physical qualities that make them unique and desirable places in which to live. As the District continues to grow, more residents, and those of varied socio-economic backgrounds, should be accommodated, including the production and preservation of affordable housing, while using zoning, design, and other means to retain the qualities that physically characterize these neighborhoods and make them attractive. Zoning and other means should be used to attract neighborhood serving retail that, in turn, enhances the surrounding residential neighborhood.

Many neighborhoods include commercial and institutional uses that contribute to their character. Neighborhood businesses, retail districts, schools, parks, recreational facilities, houses of worship and other public facilities all make our communities more livable. These uses provide

strong centers that reinforce neighborhood identity and provide destinations and services for residents. They too must be protected and stabilized.

The recent population boom has triggered a crisis of affordability in the city, creating a hardship for many District residents and changing the character of neighborhoods. The preservation of existing affordable housing and the production of new affordable housing, especially for low-income and workforce households, are essential to avoid a deepening of racial and economic divides in the city, and must occur city-wide to achieve fair housing objectives. Affordable renter- and owner-occupied housing production and preservation is central to the idea of growing more inclusively, as is the utilization of tools such as public housing, community land trusts, and limited equity cooperatives that help keep the costs of land affordable, particularly in areas with low homeownership rates and those at risk of cost increases due to housing speculation.

The District of Columbia contains many buildings and sites that contribute to its identity. Protecting historic resources through preservation laws and other programs is essential to retain the heritage that defines and distinguishes the city. Special efforts should be made to conserve row houses as the defining element of many District neighborhoods, and to restore neighborhood “main streets” through sensitive renovation and updating. The District’s music, art, narratives, institutions, and other cultural assets are also integral to create a community’s identity and sense of place. Efforts should also be made to support, enhance, and protect these cultural assets.

Each neighborhood is an integral part of a diverse larger community that contributes to the District’s identity. Growing an inclusive city means that all neighborhoods should share in the overall social responsibilities of the community, including accommodating the overall growth in new residents, housing the homeless, feeding the hungry, and accommodating the disabled.

DC Comprehensive Plan, Secs. 220.1-220.7



# Exploring community history

The District of Columbia has more than 300 neighborhoods, and many more are long forgotten. Like the people who inhabit them, neighborhoods come and go but leave a lasting impact. Each one has a story to tell. They tell us how the District developed, why buildings look the way they do, and why streets go where they go. They tell us about the different people who have passed through the city.

People who live in the same neighborhood have shared experiences. They walk the same streets, shop at the same stores, go to the same parks, and see the same familiar landmarks. Each person's unique experiences are combined to form a diverse, shared community. We learn the stories of those people, past and present, through the neighborhoods they shaped. By looking at what makes each neighborhood unique, we can track the history of the District and its residents from all walks of life.

## Early Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods form for a reason. They start next to something worth living near. Georgetown formed in the mid-1700s as a port city for geographic and economic reasons. Around the 1780s, John Tennally opened a tavern along the road to Frederick to host travelers heading to and from the Georgetown port. A small village called Tenleytown eventually formed around the tavern. A few decades later, the village of Good Hope sprouted in a similar fashion around a tavern set up on the road to Upper Marlboro.

The land for a new national capital was reserved and laid out in a different way. In 1791, Pierre L'Enfant crafted a street plan of grand avenues radiating from circles and squares. Within a decade, new government structures like the White House and Capitol were built. New neighborhoods formed organically around those places. The City of Washington became clustered with villages that slowly connected.

Construction of the city required many workers, both free and enslaved. Waterside docks for offloading building materials attracted clusters of sheds and shanties, places of work and shelter soon to be improved with more permanent structures. From these beginnings, working-class neighborhoods began to grow along the riverfronts.

Around the rising White House, wealthier residents wishing to live near the President slowly formed a neighborhood at Lafayette Square. Another settlement emerged around the site of the Capitol. Between the two, Center Market opened on Pennsylvania Avenue, attracting businesses and the beginnings of a downtown. When City Hall arose on nearby Judiciary Square, the community expanded in that area.

The appearance of these neighborhoods quickly reflected the differences among their residents. Houses around the shipyards and warehouses of the Navy Yard or Foggy Bottom were generally more modest and unadorned, compared to the mansions around Lafayette Square. Construction was done piecemeal, as speculators failed to attract sufficient investment for large-scale development. Neighborhoods expanded bit by bit, sometimes one building or cluster at a time, as structures were needed.

Early plantations in the area tell a less-recognized and more painful story. The enslaved workers on these plantations were tied for decades to the places where they led their lives and that became home. Once their bondage was broken, many remained nearby to begin free lives and start new communities.

During the Civil War, the government built camps to house soldiers, and forts to create a protective ring around the city. Villages of new freedpeople formed alongside these places. One of the largest settlements was around Camp Barker, where thousands lived and shaped a cultural community that, after the war, spread into the emerging neighborhoods of Logan Circle, Shaw, and U Street.

## Outlying Subdivisions

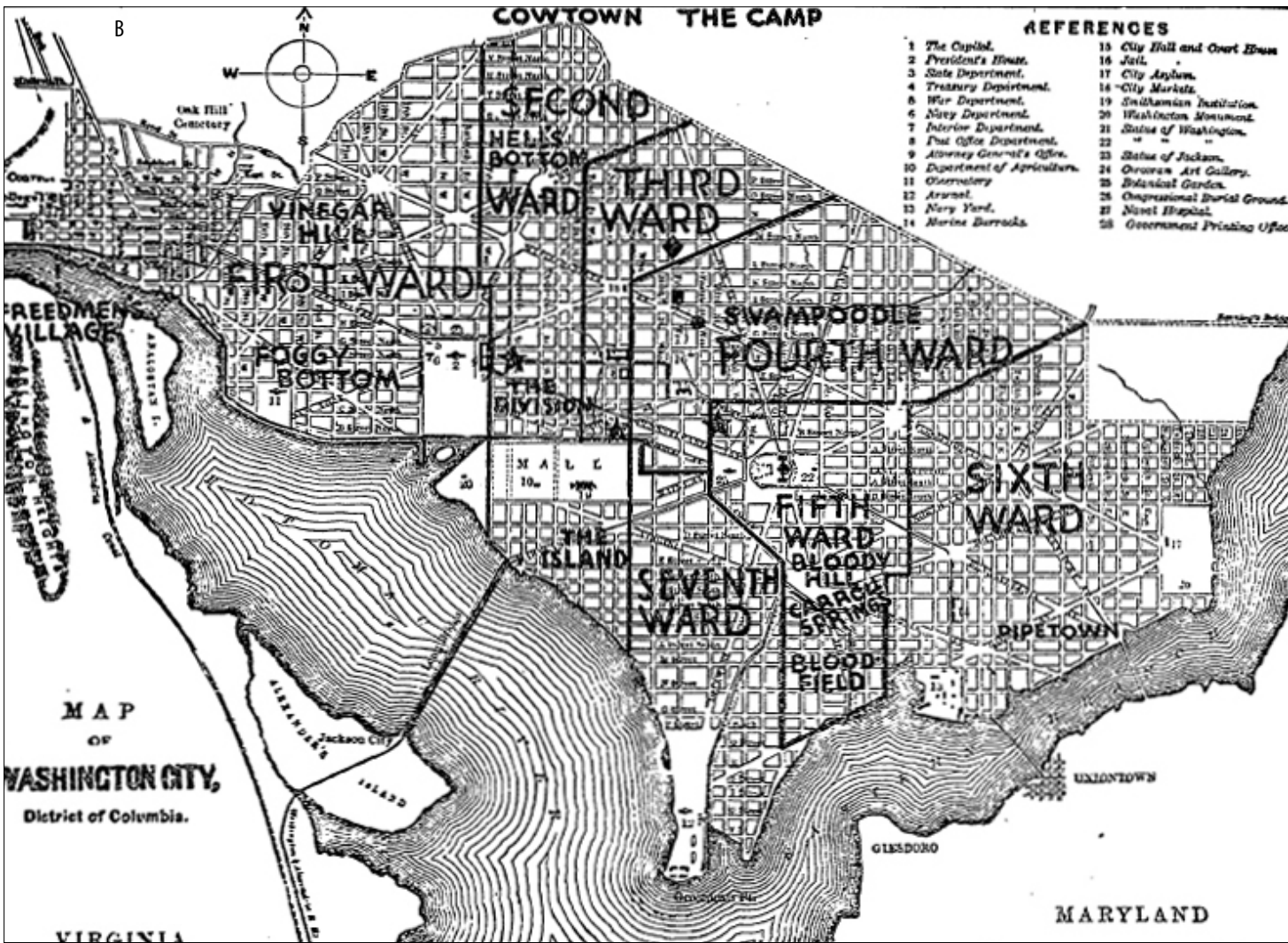
For decades, urban neighborhoods had grown within walking distance of the places people needed to be near, like jobs, churches, or markets. But as new types of transportation were invented and made affordable, people could commute farther from these essentials. The city's first streetcar lines were installed with a strategic purpose with the onset of the Civil War, but they also made housing marketable in the undeveloped land out to the city limits.

These streetcar suburbs were built on a larger scale. Unlike in the past, when homes were mostly made one at a time, whole city blocks could be planned and divided into lots, with new streets cut through to fit in more houses. Wealthy real estate investors had ample funds to invest in designing and building architecturally unified rows, sometimes filling an entire streetfront at a time. In the decades after the war, they also began to experiment with apartment houses in the most desirable neighborhoods.

As the city grew, streetcar lines pushed past its old boundary and out into the countryside beyond. Developers created their own community layouts outside L'Enfant's grid, each according to a different vision. Successful subdivisions often looked more defined and coherent compared to the earlier neighborhoods that grew organically.

Developers typically managed who could live in their subdivisions, either by controlling the cost of houses to exclude those who could not afford them, or more overtly by restrictive rules. Many developers forbade certain ethnicities and races, notably African Americans, from buying in the subdivision. These restrictive practices were later reinforced by government policies before being banned in the mid-twentieth century.

As a developer's motivation was profit, subdivisions were specifically designed for the expected buyer. Developments intended to attract the middle class, like Park View or Edgewood, might feature nearly identical row houses or modestly sized detached homes with basic ornamentation. A development that sought wealthier buyers, like LeDroit Park or Cleveland Park, might feature unique, detached homes or wider townhouses in a fashionable style with more ornamentation.



A Eckington streetcar  
B Old 1877 wards and common neighborhood names, some racist and derogatory, on a 1927 map



## neighborhood history resources

People often moved to the subdivisions to escape the overcrowded central city and to live on higher, open ground in a park-like setting. To cater to that desire, developers sometimes planned their communities like a park, with curved streets and names like Mount Pleasant, Takoma Park, and Congress Heights. The words “park” and “heights” were especially common in the names, as were natural-sounding words like wood, ridge, ivy, lawn, view, and hill.

## A New Century

Automobiles became playthings of the well-to-do soon after 1900, and with the introduction of inexpensive ones like the Model T Ford in 1908, ownership in Washington skyrocketed. By the 1920s, this meant neighborhoods could be placed even farther from job centers and transit lines. Car-oriented neighborhoods looked much different from their predecessors built around walking. They tended to have wider streets and fewer or no sidewalks. Alleys were lined with garages, and driveways were sometimes put in between homes. Typical automobile subdivisions include Colony Hill, Crestwood, and Hillcrest.

Two world wars in the first half of the twentieth century brought thousands of new residents, both Black and White, to Washington. They were seeking jobs and opportunity, and needed places to live. As the District's population nearly tripled in fifty years, development of new subdivisions continued almost unabated. Even during the hard times of the Great Depression and the shortages of the Second World War, new neighborhoods were being built.

Some of these developments were planned communities made up entirely of apartment buildings, often with their own shops and services. They introduced the city's first public housing, and many were built for the influx of wartime workers. Langston Terrace, Mayfair Mansions, Fairfax Village, Naylor Gardens, Barry Farm Dwellings, and McLean Gardens are examples from this era.

After the war, DC's population decreased as many residents saw distant, mostly White suburbs as more desirable. To compete with the suburbs, planners sought to "renew" older neighborhoods, like Southwest, with modern buildings served by a network of highways. Horrified by the loss of irreplaceable communities, residents fought removal and revived appreciation for historic preservation. By the 1970s, Metro shifted planning back to transit and walking. New mixed-use neighborhoods, like NoMa, grew around transit, and retired campuses, like Saint Elizabeths and Walter Reed, are now being reinvigorated rather than torn down. Preservation remains a vital tool for District communities.

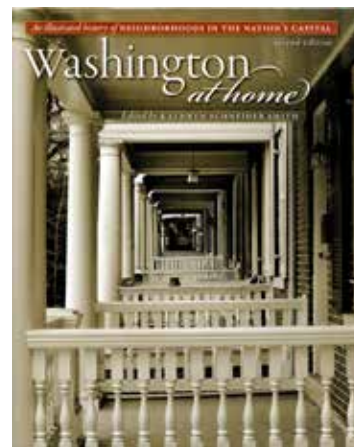
## ● Community History Websites



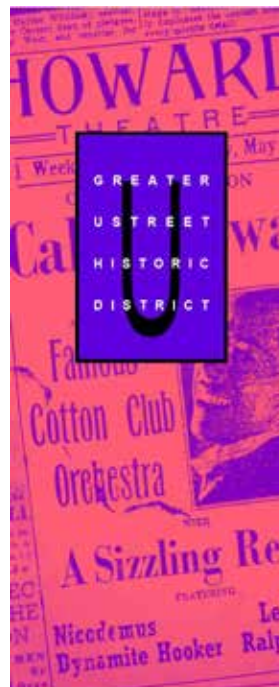
● History Press Books



● Washington at Home



● HPO Brochures



● University Websites



● HPO Surveys

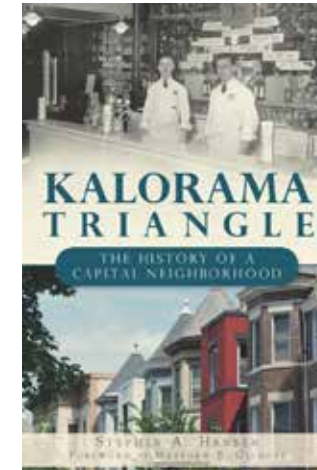


**BLAGDEN ALLEY/NAYLOR COURT**  
**Neighborhood Survey**

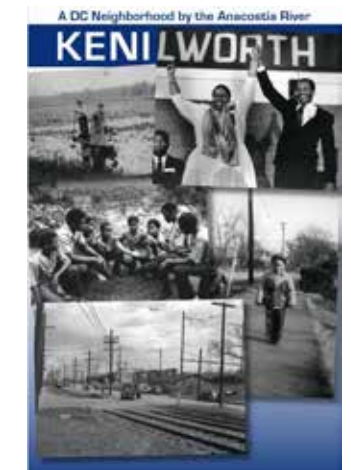
● Neighborhood Heritage Trails



● Community Books



DCCHP Histories





# Evolving communities

In cycles of growth and change, the District has lost some of its most distinctive communities. The old Irish Swampoodle community was decimated by construction of Union Station. Construction of the Federal Triangle relocated the District's first Chinatown. Largely African American Reno City was replaced by a reservoir, park, and new school campuses that excluded Black students.

In more recent times, urban renewal and interstate highway extension destroyed most of the old Southwest. Downtown revitalization and construction of the MCI Center (now Capital One Arena) displaced many residents of Chinatown, this time from its second location.

Now in the twenty-first century, new communities continue to take shape. Areas that past residents called Swampoodle and Northern Liberties are now NoMa and Mount Vernon Triangle. Former hospital campuses at Saint Elizabeths and Walter Reed are becoming new neighborhoods that will develop their own history. Even as communities come and go, their memories and history add to the cultural tapestry that defines the District of Columbia and its unique legacy.

## citizens' and civic associations

When the City of Washington was founded in 1802, it had a local government with a mayor, council, and system of wards to handle neighborhood matters. In 1874, though, Congress abolished local rule in favor of three commissioners appointed by the President. Lacking a voice in government, District residents formed neighborhood-based citizens' associations to organize on behalf of their communities.

By 1910, these groups combined to create a federation of citizens' associations which petitioned Congress and the federal commissioners. It held great influence in setting local priorities. However, in an age of racism and segregation, citizen's groups denied entry to Black Washingtonians. African Americans instead formed civic associations, which also federated and sent petitions. Until home rule, the citizens' and civic associations helped give residents at least some say in a government in which they had no official voice.

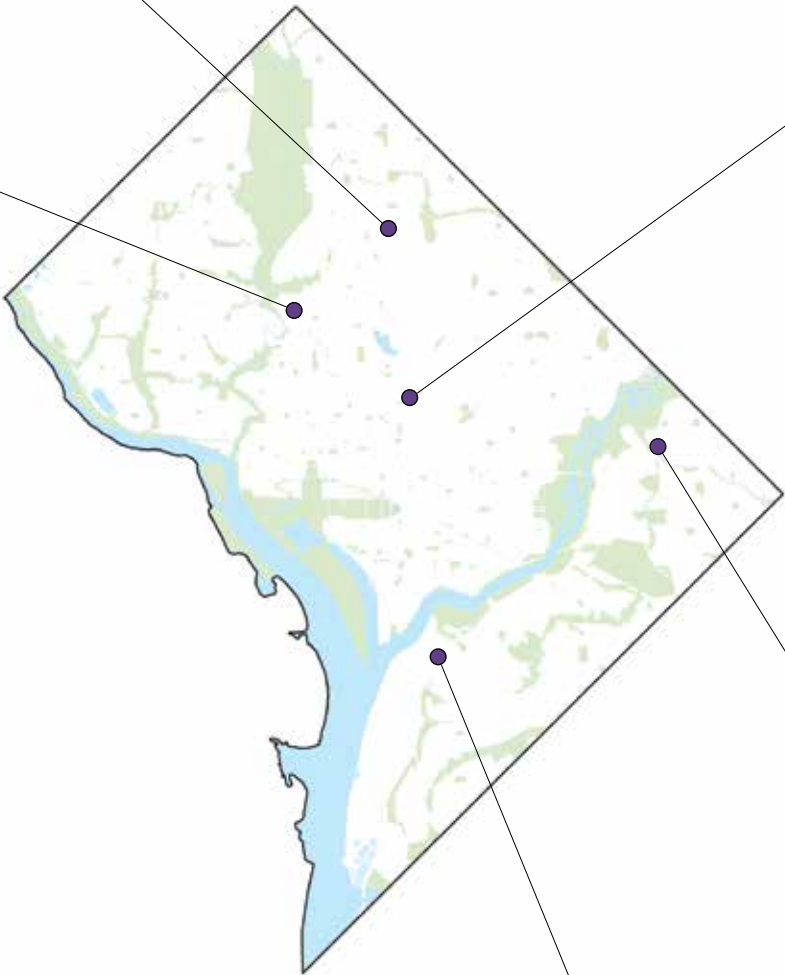
### Harry Wardman

Harry Wardman was one of Washington's most prolific developers. By the time of his death in 1938, he had built more than 5,000 dwellings in the District, including many front-porch row houses, which became one of the styles most associated with him. An immigrant from England, Wardman arrived in the District in the 1890s, working as a carpenter before beginning his own construction business. He built row houses, apartment buildings, and hotels, including the Wardman Park and Hay-Adams. Wardman homes can be found today across the city, including in Bloomingdale, Petworth, Columbia Heights, Lanier Heights, and his Fort Stevens Terrace project in Manor Park.



### Mount Pleasant

Mount Pleasant, situated atop the District's ring of hills, emerged in the mid-1800s as a small village surrounded by farms and country estates. The village had stores, churches, a school, and a post office. As streetcar lines were built, row house developments sprouted up around this alluring village among the trees. From the start, Mount Pleasant was a haven—first for people escaping DC's summer heat, then for European immigrants driven from war, then for African Americans seeking a home outside segregated redlines, and then for Hispanic and Latino immigrants fleeing persecution and poverty. Those diverse peoples, from the original Nacotchtank inhabitants to the most recent immigrants, have created a neighborhood unlike any other in the District.



### Barry Farm

During the Civil War, thousands of newly freed African Americans moved to DC. In 1867, the Freedmen's Bureau purchased a farm from the Barry family in Southeast to build a community for some of those African Americans. At Barry Farm both free-born and previously enslaved African Americans could buy a one-acre plot of land and build their own house atop it. Subdivisions, railroads, and highways eventually surrounded or replaced much of the original homestead site, though some original remnants remain. In 1943, the federal government built a large public housing project at Barry Farm. The neighborhood has one of the most compelling histories of any community in DC.

### Bloomingdale

In the early twentieth century, Bloomingdale was the District's epicenter of legal resistance against restrictive covenants. For decades, many deeds featured clauses that restricted the sale of a home to certain races, religions, and ethnicities. African Americans in Bloomingdale launched multiple lawsuits to challenge that practice. In 1948, the US Supreme Court sided with James and Mary Hurd, who had purchased a home at 116 Bryant Street with a racial covenant attached. Prominent legal scholar Charles Hamilton Houston, who had taught at nearby Howard University, helped the African American couple forever defeat restrictive covenants for all DC residents.



### Froe Properties

From the 1930s to 1970s, Froe Properties made a small but important mark on the District as it worked with local Black architects to offer both custom-design and speculatively built homes. Founded by Ulysses W. Froe and his sons Anthony and Reginald, the African American firm built about 100 houses, largely in South Brookland, Eastland Gardens, and Hillbrook. With Robert P. Madison, a young Harvard-trained architect and professor at Howard University's School of Architecture, the firm built a group of homes in Eastland Gardens in the innovative new style known today as midcentury modern. Madison went on to create a hugely successful architecture practice in his home state of Ohio.

- A Mount Pleasant Street
- B Barry Farm Dwellings
- C Manor Park duplexes
- D Bloomingdale
- E Eastland Gardens house



# Resources for preservation

The success of this plan depends on adequate resources for both government and non-government partners. Since the District’s preservation program will lead many of the targeted activities, there has been careful attention to the resources available to both the Historic Preservation Office and Historic Preservation Review Board.

Financial support for the District’s preservation activities is expected to remain steady and adequate over the next five years. Federal government funds are also expected to be sufficient for projected federal agency programs, and grant funding is also anticipated to support the activities of non-profit organizations and partnership initiatives outlined in the plan.

## Annual federal funding

For the past several years, federal budgets have maintained consistent state preservation program support from the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF), with annual increases of about one to three percent. The latest federal budget, for fiscal year 2021, increased assistance to the DC SHPO by \$19,000, or about three percent. This plan anticipates a similar trend through 2025.

The SHPO uses about 85 percent of its annual HPF funding for staff salaries. Despite a hold on salary increases during the public health crisis of 2020-21, these costs are expected to rise gradually with labor union agreements concluded through 2025. If the current trend of annual increases in HPF allocations does not keep pace with personnel costs, the SHPO would need to offset this decline through additional monies from other sources to support key HPO projects.

## Annual local funding

The majority of HPO personnel costs are paid from Office of Planning (OP) operating funds. District funds also enable HPO to sustain internships for its archaeological programs and special projects such as GIS work to document the L’Enfant Plan and maintain the *HistoryQuest DC* online application.

The Office of Planning sustains some preservation activities using the special-purpose Historic Landmark-District Protection (HLP) Fund established by the DC preservation law. Expenses for the Historic Preservation Review Board and Mayor’s Agent—videocasts of meetings, transcripts, and stipends—are regularly drawn from the HLP Fund. The fund can also be used for other program activities, such as archaeological support and educational initiatives.

Revenues for the HLP fund come primarily from payments to the District for penalties assessed for preservation law violations. Several factors in Fiscal Year 2021 led to a significant decline in revenue that is likely to continue, but OP expects to identify other sources to fund essential activities.

Other District agencies assist the SHPO with program activities under special agreements. The SHPO and District Department of Transportation (DDOT) continue to fund one historic preservation specialist through an interagency agreement. The SHPO position is supported by federal highway funds and expedites historic preservation review of District transportation projects.

A one-time agreement with the Department of General Services allocates \$30,000 to the SHPO for contracted archaeological services to upload data and catalogs from site investigations at DC recreation centers and other properties into the HPO archaeological resources database for online availability.

## Other federal grants

The SHPO has already obtained grants from the National Park Service for several special projects. In 2019, the SHPO received \$40,000 from the Underrepresented Communities program to explore the history of the District’s Chinese-American and Korean-American communities, with a \$5,000 match from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The work now underway is being undertaken by partners DC Preservation League and the 1882 Foundation. In 2020, the SHPO received \$50,000 from the same program for a study of Women’s History and Suffrage, with partners DC Preservation League and Quinn Evans. This work began in 2021, and both projects will be completed before 2025.

Other District organizations have received similar NPS awards. In 2020, the DC Preservation League received a \$50,000 grant from the NPS African American 20th Century Civil Rights program for a context study on *Black Power in 20th Century Washington, DC*. Local preservation and history groups are expected to continue seeking significant support from these and other federal grant programs.

## Targeted historic homeowner grants

Historic homeowner grants are funded by annual budget authorizations in the OP budget. These grants assist low- and moderate-income homeowners with the cost of repairing their historic homes. They are available in sixteen of the city’s historic landmarks and districts.

Annual appropriations for homeowner grants average \$250,000 per fiscal year. In 2021, a special emergency expansion of the program authorized the use of funds to assist facade restoration at a multi-unit building with many income-qualified homeowners in the Mount Pleasant and Meridian Hill historic districts.

## Non-profits and property owners

Non-profit organizations lead many of the advocacy, education, and outreach efforts outlined in this plan. Private property owners maintain thousands of historic properties through voluntary action using their own resources, with the aid of federal tax credits and other government programs when available. Federal and District agencies are also primary stewards of historic properties, accomplishing preservation projects through regular or special agency funding.

The outlook for financial and human resources available for preservation projects has improved with the passage of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. The economic stimulus to small businesses, local governments, housing programs, public transit, and individuals will ultimately boost many preservation activities. Additional federal stimulus is also under consideration.

Resource limitations continue to challenge non-profit and volunteer organizations, though there is recent progress. Implementation of the DC Cultural Plan has increased local funding for the arts and humanities groups, including Humanities DC and the DC History Center.

Philanthropic grants have also been important for the stewards of important historic sites. In 2020, Howard University received a \$40 million bequest in private philanthropy, and in 2021, Asbury United Methodist Church, the District’s oldest African American congregation, received an award from the National Trust’s African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund for facade restoration. The DC Preservation League also continues to provide some preservation grants. Such programs are likely to remain highly significant in supporting preservation efforts in the next five years.



A Asbury Methodist Church







# goals and objectives [5]





# Setting shared goals

This chapter describes the goals of *Celebrating Our Diversity*, showing how they advance the historic preservation policies in the District’s Comprehensive Plan.

The twelve goals are grouped into four thematic sections:

- Recognizing Historic Resources
- Engaging Communities
- Improving the Process
- Protecting Our Heritage

Many of the goals represent long-term efforts and carry over from previous plans, as shown in the tables on this page. Some goals are reordered and several new ones reflect emerging priorities.

The next page shows how progress in completing key actions under the goals allows for the establishment of new targeted actions toward the same overall goal. This sustains momentum until, in some cases, the goal is accomplished, allowing a new one to be set. Other goals relate to the continued operation of permanent programs and will always remain valid.

## goals and objectives

Each goal is described further on the following pages, with a corresponding objective and targeted actions, in this format:

### A1 Statement of the goal

A brief description explains the planning context and reason for setting the goal

**OBJECTIVE**

The objective states the outcome to be accomplished toward meeting the goal

**TARGETED ACTIONS**

To achieve the objective, identified lead groups should pursue:

- Priority activities marked by orange dots
- Other activities also listed
- Up to four targeted courses of action

## 2016 preservation plan goals

### Recognizing Historic Resources

- A1 Complete the city survey
- A2 Make local history more accessible
- A3 Map what’s important

### Appreciating Our History

- B1 Tell community stories across the city
- B2 Speak out about preservation
- B3 Make archaeology visible

### Protecting Historic Properties

- C1 Designate significant properties
- C2 Communicate more clearly
- C3 Act before it’s too late

### Planning for Our Heritage

- D1 Practice sustainable urbanism
- D2 Improve DC’s review procedures
- D3 Enhance campuses and landscapes
- D4 Invest in affordable housing

## 2020 preservation plan goals

### Recognizing Historic Resources

- A1 Complete the city survey
- A2 Explore new perspectives
- A3 Designate significant properties

### Engaging Communities

- B1 Tell community stories
- B2 Speak out for preservation
- B3 Keep archaeology visible

### Improving Protections

- C1 Communicate more clearly
- C2 Improve review procedures
- C3 Conserve neighborhood character

### Maintaining Our Heritage

- D1 Practice sustainable urbanism
- D2 Reuse, adapt and enhance
- D3 Preserve campuses and landscapes

## 2025 preservation plan goals

### Recognizing Historic Resources

- A1 Explore new perspectives
- A2 Evaluate resources in context
- A3 Designate significant properties

### Engaging Communities

- B1 Tell community stories
- B2 Speak out for preservation
- B3 Advance archaeology

### Improving Protections

- C1 Conserve neighborhoods
- C2 Improve preservation systems
- C3 Diversify preservation strategies

### Maintaining Our Heritage

- D1 Practice sustainable urbanism
- D2 Reuse, adapt and enhance
- D3 Preserve campuses and landscapes





- Chapter cover: Franciscan Monastery
- A Restored house in Takoma neighborhood
- B John Eaton Elementary School addition
- C Arlington Bridge rehabilitation
- D Easement plaque on the Hightowers apartments
- E Southeast Neighborhood Library
- F Foundry United Methodist Church



# Recognizing historic resources

How do this plan's goals address the District's preservation challenges and seize opportunities? Here is more detail. For each goal, there is a primary objective followed by targeted actions that will help to achieve the objective. Of the 46 targeted actions, seventeen are marked as priorities with a green dot.

## A1 Explore new perspectives

Preservation programs face the extraordinary times now upon us. We should use this moment to pursue fresh explorations and a more inclusive understanding of our history. This work can help renew pride in a shared heritage and deepen awareness of yet untold stories and unrecognized landmarks close to home.

More than ever, it is important to understand the history of every District community and to make this local heritage accessible to all persons. This foundation of knowledge is essential for ensure respect for the full story of the District's heritage and equitable access to the benefits of preservation.

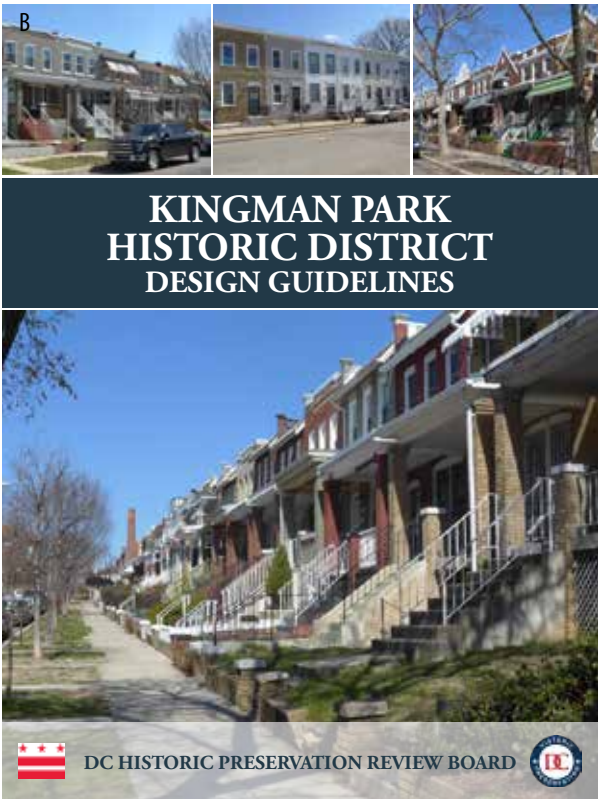
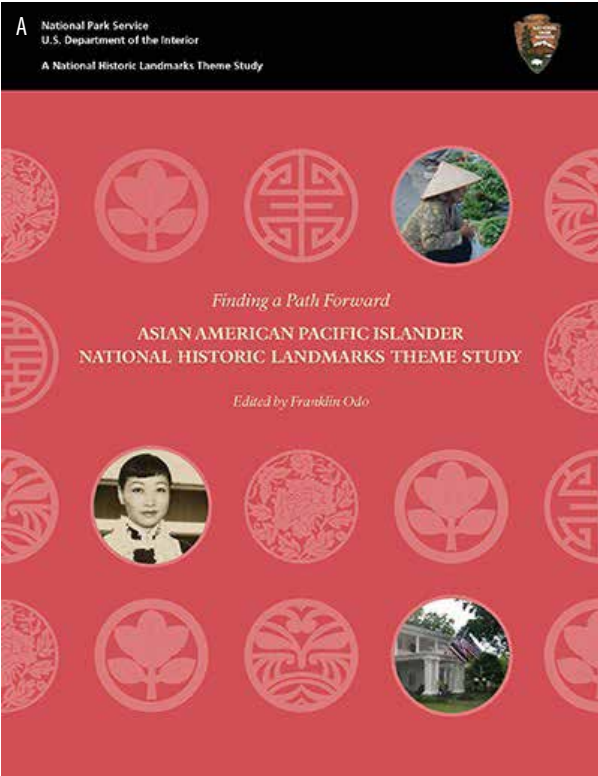
**OBJECTIVE**

**Broaden public awareness of DC historic sites, including new perspectives on DC history and culture.**

**TARGETED ACTIONS**

HPO and preservation partners, including independent scholars and volunteers, should:

- Exploring Diversity**  
Expand thematic studies of neglected or underrepresented aspects of the District's social heritage and multiple ethnicities.
- Exploring Neighborhoods**  
Gather, research, and document histories of DC neighborhoods to create a uniform basis for understanding how all DC communities began and evolved.
- DC's Oldest and Newest**  
Expand knowledge and increase appreciation of DC's oldest and newest buildings of historic, architectural, or cultural significance.



## A2 Evaluate resources in context

More than fifty years of historic resource surveys have produced extensive information on the District's historic resources. Online platforms give ready access to photographs of almost any structure in Washington DC. With this massive archive of data, preservation planners can now turn their primary attention to data analysis and exploration of undocumented community history.

Evaluation of properties by type or thematic context is the core principle of historic preservation planning. Such studies should expand and continue to be the primary method for identifying properties eligible for historic designation.

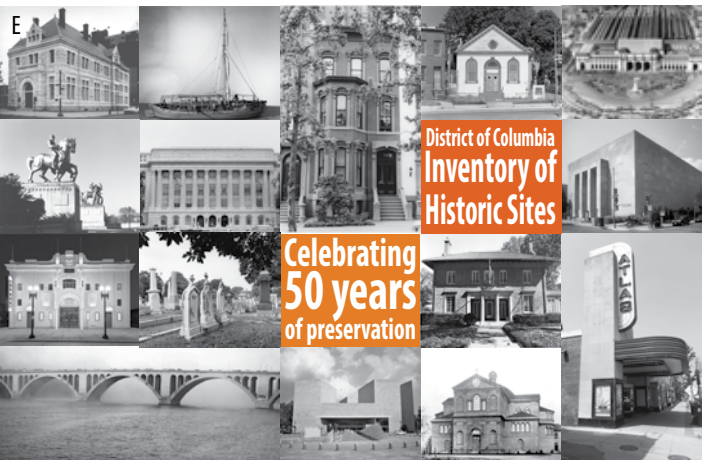
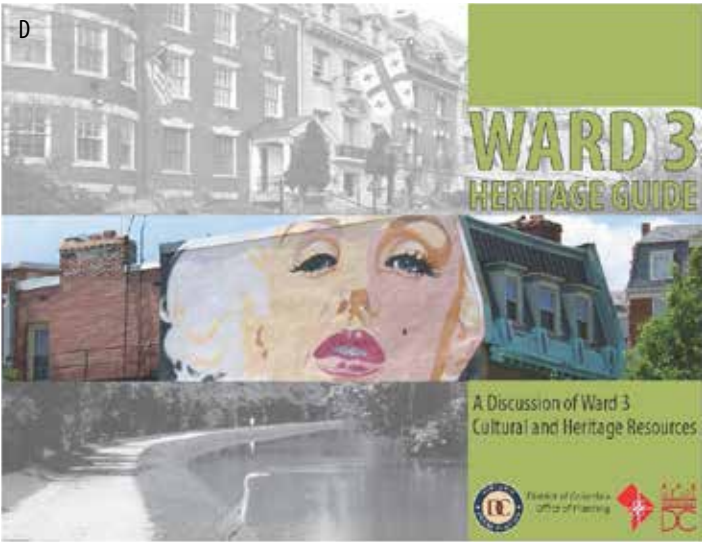
**OBJECTIVE**

**Identify historic resources by comparative evaluation and analysis, using survey data, historic context studies, and new research**

**TARGETED ACTIONS**

HPO and preservation partners, including researchers and scholars, should:

- Eligible Properties**  
Increase public awareness of noteworthy properties that may be eligible for designation, especially those that tell stories of underrepresented communities.
- Community Heritage Guides**  
Complete the series of ward heritage guides identifying historic resources and preservation issues, and update the guides by ward or planning area.
- DC Inventory of Historic Sites**  
Present a more vivid story of DC's historic resources in a 50th anniversary edition of the DC Inventory of Historic Sites, making it more useful as a planning document.



A Asian American Pacific Islander Context Study  
B Kingman Park Historic District Design Guidelines  
C Lansburgh Park  
D Ward 3 Heritage Guide  
E DC Inventory of Historic Sites



### A3 Designate significant properties

Washington’s heritage is protected through the public process of designating historic landmarks and districts. This system must be fair to the interests of property owners and preservation advocates, while also reflecting the public interest in safeguarding the District’s heritage for the future.

Designation priorities should reflect stated planning goals, while recognizing that the process was also intended to allow for immediate consideration of properties at risk. All designations should be based on sufficient understanding of nominated sites within their historical context, and considered judgment in an open public process.

**OBJECTIVE**

Conduct an understandable designation process with clear priorities that promote predictability for owners and communities.

**TARGETED ACTIONS**

HPO, HPRB, government and private property owners, Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, and preservation partners should:

- Underrepresented Communities**  
Diversify listings in the DC Inventory to better reflect the full story of the District’s culture and heritage.
- Community Landmarks**  
Identify significant public and private properties in DC neighborhoods, and pursue priority designations with community involvement.
- Downtown**  
Complete historic landmark and historic district designations in the old downtown.
- Federal Properties**  
Nominate eligible federal buildings, parks, and districts to the National Register, with concurrent nominations to the DC Inventory.



A Slowe-Burrill House Historic Landmark  
B Lucy Slowe and Mary Burrill  
C Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library  
D Washington Yacht Club



# Engaging communities

## B1 Tell community stories

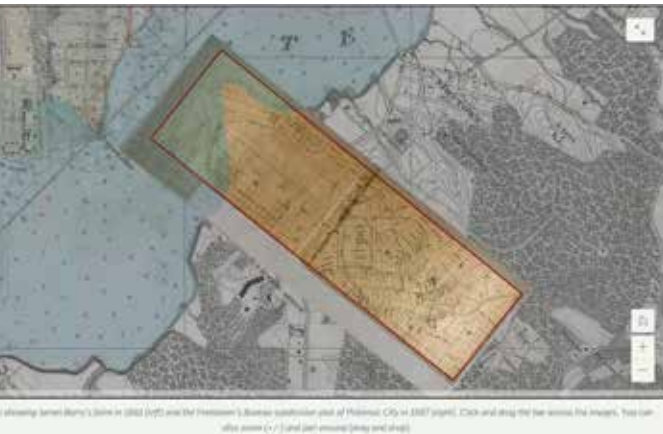
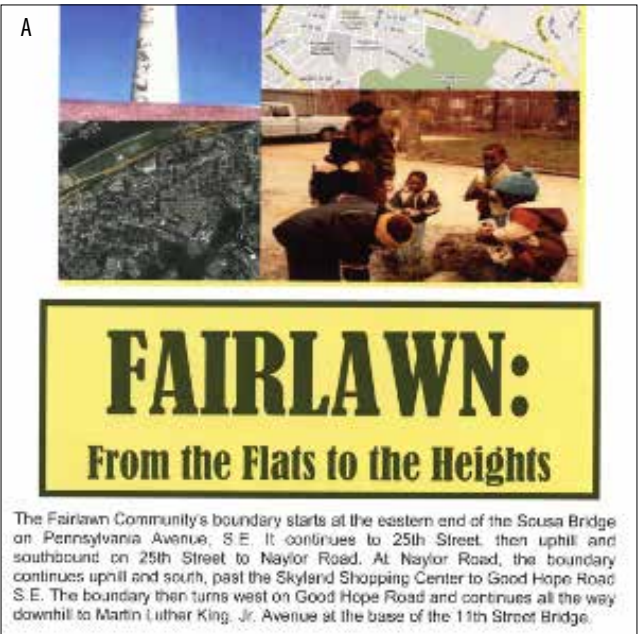
Storytellers bring history to life and give us new ways of understanding the past. These perspectives should inform our understanding of the people and places that DC residents find significant to their lives.

Preservationists should forge partnerships with local organizations and volunteers to seek out and record community and personal stories. Heritage trails, walking tours, history blogs, archaeological site investigations, and special events are just a few of the ways to celebrate these stories and keep them part of DC's living heritage.

- OBJECTIVE**
- Strengthen programs and partnerships that engage the public in exploring community history and places of significance.**

- TARGETED ACTIONS**
- Community leaders, non-profits, funding organizations, preservation advocates, and individuals should:

  - DC History Programs**  
Sustain programs that engage the public through exhibits, conferences, journals, preservation of personal histories, heritage trails, tours, and other activities.
  - Heritage Partnerships**  
Strengthen collaborative partnerships among the SHPO and non-profit organizations.
  - History Online**  
Expand access to internet information on DC history through improved websites and mobile phone applications.
  - Learning Centers**  
Reshape modernized libraries and archives as active centers for learning about DC history.



A DC Community Heritage Project, Humanities DC  
B Barry Farm Story Map  
C Archaeological artifact curation, MLK Library  
D 2021 historic preservation survey  
E Sustainability Guide for Older and Historic Buildings

## B2 Speak out for preservation

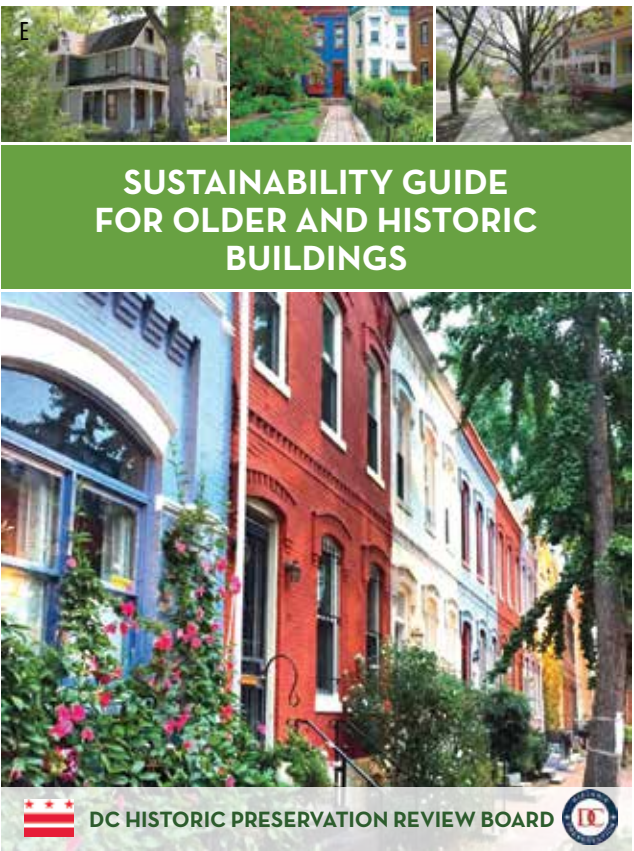
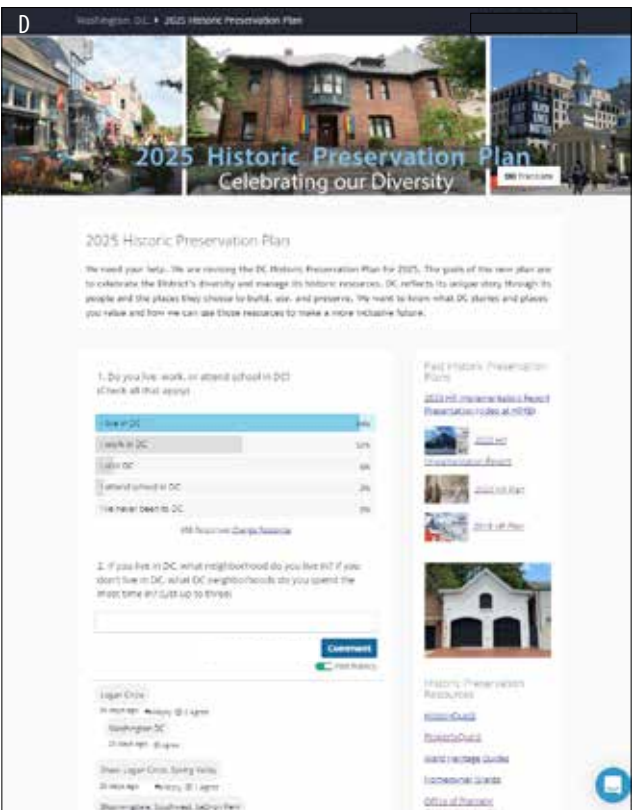
Preservation works best when it engages community support. Many local organizations actively pursue outreach programs aimed at raising public awareness and appreciation of Washington's cultural heritage. Public response to these activities has been strong, but more coordinated efforts could have a greater impact on a wider audience.

Preservation advocates and neighborhood preservation organizations also play a vital role in helping communities to retain a sense of place and identity. There is widespread interest in protecting the character of DC neighborhoods, and preservationists can help make the case for the values of preservation in this community dialogue.

- OBJECTIVE**
- Increase public advocacy for historic preservation and cultural heritage programs.**

- TARGETED ACTIONS**
- Preservation advocates and individuals, with the support of professionals and non-profit organizations, should:

  - Public Dialogue**  
Engage in constructive debate about preservation values and ideas for innovation, through public programs and multiple media.
  - Preservation Networks**  
Strengthen advocacy networks that promote the civic benefits of historic preservation and community heritage programs.
  - The Greenest Building**  
Make the case for preservation as a climate crisis strategy for retaining embodied energy and reducing carbon footprint.
  - Community Action**  
Recognize and protect significant community heritage by preparing and sponsoring applications to designate historic landmarks and districts.





B3 Advance archaeology

Archaeology lets people see and touch history. Washington’s landscape has been a place of human occupation for thousands of years, and the physical evidence of this history recaptures the past. Recent public archaeology projects have proven the widespread interest in exploring this elusive heritage, especially the history of people poorly documented in the written record.

The District has reached a long-sought milestone in stewardship of its archaeological inheritance, with the creation of a central artifact curation facility at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library. The next five years provide an opportunity to imagine how this resource will shape the mission of DC archaeology for years to come.

OBJECTIVE

Advance the benefits of archaeology as a civic responsibility and source of knowledge and inspiration about DC history and culture.

TARGETED ACTIONS

The SHPO, DC government, archaeological community, and institutional partners should:

- **Public Archaeology**  
Increase awareness and appreciation of archaeology and its essential role in a more inclusive understanding of our diverse history and culture.
- **Artifact Curation**  
Prepare and transfer DC archaeological collections for curation according to federally mandated standards at the new consolidated facility in MLK Library.
- **Services and Information**  
Increase public access to archaeological information, and support DC agencies with technical advice and archaeological review of government projects.
- **Discovery Center**  
Envision and shape the future accessibility of the DC artifact center in ways that advance the community-oriented mission of the new MLK Library.



A Archaeological investigation, Q Street NW  
B AAAS Family Science Day  
C Test pit at Hill East Park  
D Artifact cleaning and labeling



# Improving protections

## C1 Conserve neighborhoods

A variety of neighborhoods defines Washington DC’s historic character as much as its monuments. Planning for these neighborhoods needs to be equitable and inclusive, with a balance of conservation and revitalization efforts as suitable to each community.

Neighborhood conservation emphasizes preservation of historic resources, adaptation rather than replacement of usable existing buildings, and compatible infill development. It also recognizes the need for equitable location of public facilities and more housing in all parts of the District, including affordable units.

**OBJECTIVE**

Conserve and enhance the character of DC neighborhoods while discouraging incompatible development.

**TARGETED ACTIONS**

HPO, HPRB, and planners, with involvement by communities and the public, should:

- **Planning for Neighborhoods**  
Develop neighborhood-based preservation strategies advancing the neighborhood conservation policies of the Comprehensive Plan.
- **Managing Growth**  
Encourage compatible development that recognizes the critical need for compromise as expressed in the DC guiding principles for successful neighborhoods.
- **Affordable Housing**  
Expand appreciation of existing affordable housing as a sustainable asset whose history can inform new affordable initiatives.
- **Main Streets**  
Attract compatible new development to neighborhood main streets to strengthen vibrancy and enhance historic features.



## C2 Improve preservation systems

The District government is both a major steward of historic property and the monitor of private construction that affects the city’s historic resources. The preservation systems that implement these resource protection policies need to work effectively for both property owners and communities.

Recent pandemic conditions tested the adaptability of these systems to new realities, and provide an opportunity to make valuable innovations permanent. Stronger enforcement needs to be a continuing goal so we can treat all owners fairly and protect the community environment that DC residents value.

**OBJECTIVE**

Maintain an open and effective public review process for private and government projects affecting historic properties.

**TARGETED ACTIONS**

HPO, HPRB, and District agencies, working with community partners, should:

- **Private Property Reviews**  
Enhance online submission and review mechanisms developed during the pandemic to ensure a permanently sustainable review system.
- **Preservation Law Compliance**  
Improve programs that combat blight and neglect, stop illegal construction, and ensure compliance with issued permits.
- **DC Government Stewardship**  
Increase appreciation of the District government’s historic resources and use exemplary civic architecture as a model for community development.
- **Government Project Reviews**  
Improve mechanisms to deliver timely and effective reviews of government projects.



A 14th Street neighborhood  
B Saint Elizabeths affordable housing  
C Tilden Gardens, Cleveland Park/Van Ness neighborhood  
D 1825 Kilbourne Place NW before  
E 1825 Kilbourne Place NW after



C3 Diversify preservation strategies

The Comprehensive Plan’s guiding principles for successful neighborhoods recommend using zoning and preservation laws, as well as other means to ensure that neighborhood character is preserved and enhanced. Multiple tools should be explored in efforts to protect all communities equitably.

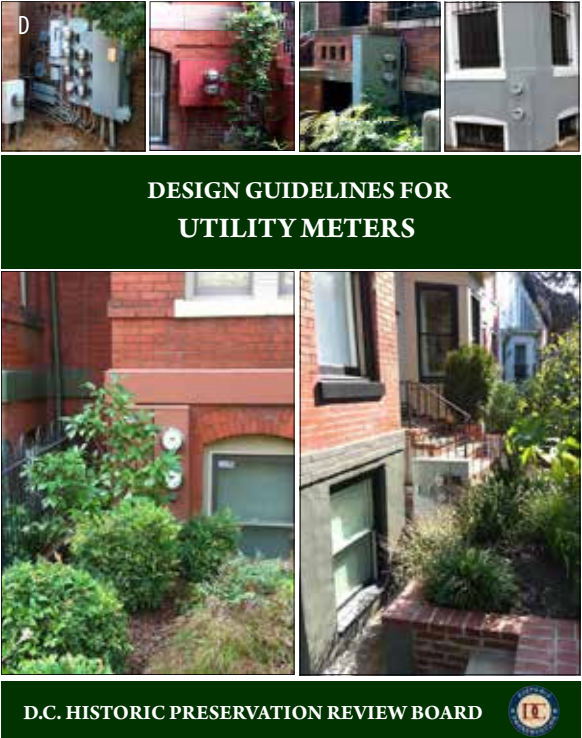
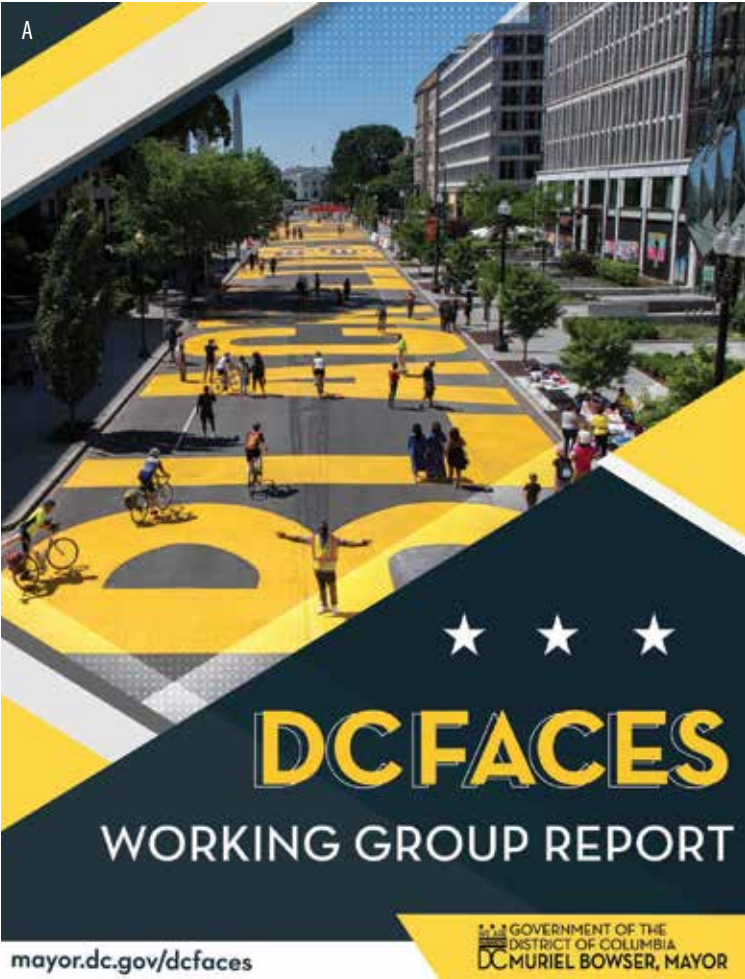
Whether deliberate or the result of neglect, unplanned demolition erodes the fabric of neighborhoods. Crude “pop-ups” and overscaled intrusions disrupt once harmonious streets. Construction violations and unpermitted work undermine property values and community stability. Conservation policies should protect neighborhoods equitably, whether designated as historic or not.

OBJECTIVE

Encourage preservation through multiple strategies suitable to current challenges and flexible enough to anticipate future opportunities.

TARGETED ACTIONS

- Public officials, preservationists, ANC’s, developers, and communities should:
- **Heritage Awareness**  
Expand appreciation of historic resources in all DC communities, including those not protected by designation.
  - **Voluntary Preservation**  
Strengthen and diversify incentives to preserve older buildings and historic resources not protected by designation.
  - **Design Guidelines**  
Maintain and expand design guidelines to shape compatible development in historic districts and targeted planning areas.
  - **Envisioning the Future**  
Prepare for renewal of the planning documents that establish preservation policies and strategies for the future.



A DCFACES Report  
B Pop-up, U Street neighborhood  
C The Ame at Meridian Hill, certified tax credit rehabilitation  
D Design Guidelines for Utility Meters  
E Cultural Heritage Trail signage



# Maintaining our heritage

## D1 Practice sustainable urbanism

Preservation embodies the principles of environmentally responsible urbanism. Reinvestment in the city’s existing building stock, transit systems, and neighborhood Main Streets helps to conserve both renewable historic resources and the fabric of strong and resilient DC communities.

Already a leader in green building practices, the District aims to become the healthiest, greenest, and most livable city by enhancing its economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Increased walkability and public transit use are important aspects of the Sustainable DC Plan. So is improving the performance of older buildings through green retrofits.

### OBJECTIVE

Reinforce the goals of preservation through policies and programs that support resilience and sustainable growth.

### TARGETED ACTIONS

DC agencies, planners, preservationists, developers, and property owners should:

- **Resilience Planning**  
Incorporate historic resource protection into preparedness planning for emergencies, disasters, and climate change.
- **Climate Action**  
Ensure that preservation policies support green practices, and advance preservation of usable building stock as a climate action strategy.
- **Walkable DC**  
Expand walkability and bikeability by reconnecting historic streets, enhancing Main Streets, revitalizing alleys, and other strategies.
- **Historic Transit**  
Invest in the restoration, revitalization, and enhancement of Union Station, Metro, and other historic public transportation facilities.



## D2 Reuse, adapt and enhance

Washingtonians benefit from a city fabric that is mostly well-maintained with little blight and neglect. The quality of redevelopment downtown and in city neighborhoods is generally respectful of the city’s historic context and building traditions. Fine examples of innovative modern architecture have brought visual energy and a fresh feel to many neighborhoods and even the National Mall.

At the same time, too many communities complain that reusable buildings are being replaced by poorly designed, out-of-scale, or incompatible projects that seem intended merely for profit. The city’s planners and its building community should collaborate to promote both the reuse of existing buildings and sensitive new development.

### OBJECTIVE

Preserve historic properties through sensitive rehabilitation and adaptation for current use.

### TARGETED ACTIONS

District agencies, together with the SHPO, CFA, ANCs and the public should:

- **National Treasures**  
Complete key improvements to national landmarks in preparation for the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.
- **Major Opportunity Sites**  
Implement master plans for redevelopment of large underutilized historic sites to provide new housing, jobs, and amenities.
- **Affordable Housing**  
Increase rehabilitation of historic and older buildings for affordable housing.
- **Civic Places**  
Rehabilitate, restore, and adapt the legacy of DC civic places as landmarks in revitalized communities.



A Roof terrace, Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library  
B Open Streets, Georgia Avenue NW  
C Rain garden on 19th Street, Golden Triangle neighborhood  
D Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, 2021 National Preservation Award winner  
E Anacostia Waterfront park at The Yards  
F Planet Word at the Franklin School



### D3 Preserve campuses and landscapes

The District’s historic green space ranges from majestic national parks to landscaped front yards in the public space on city streets and avenues. These environmental assets should be recognized, maintained and protected as the city grows.

The District is also fortunate to have numerous institutional campuses, both government and private. The historic features of these campuses should be respected through careful management and well-planned infill development as emerging community centers. High-quality contemporary architecture and refreshed public spaces can protect significant cultural assets while supporting both institutional and community goals.

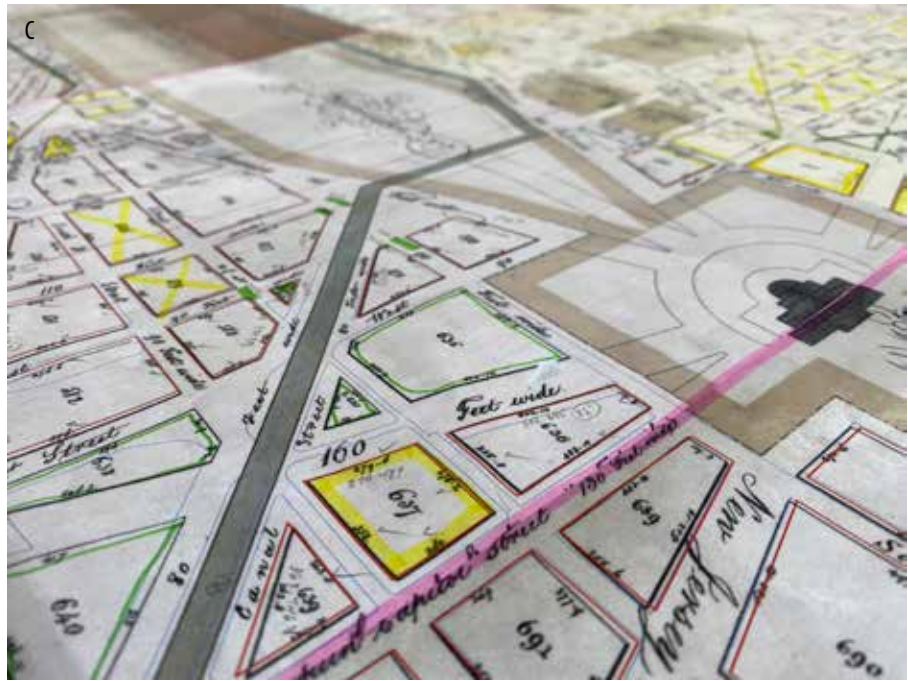
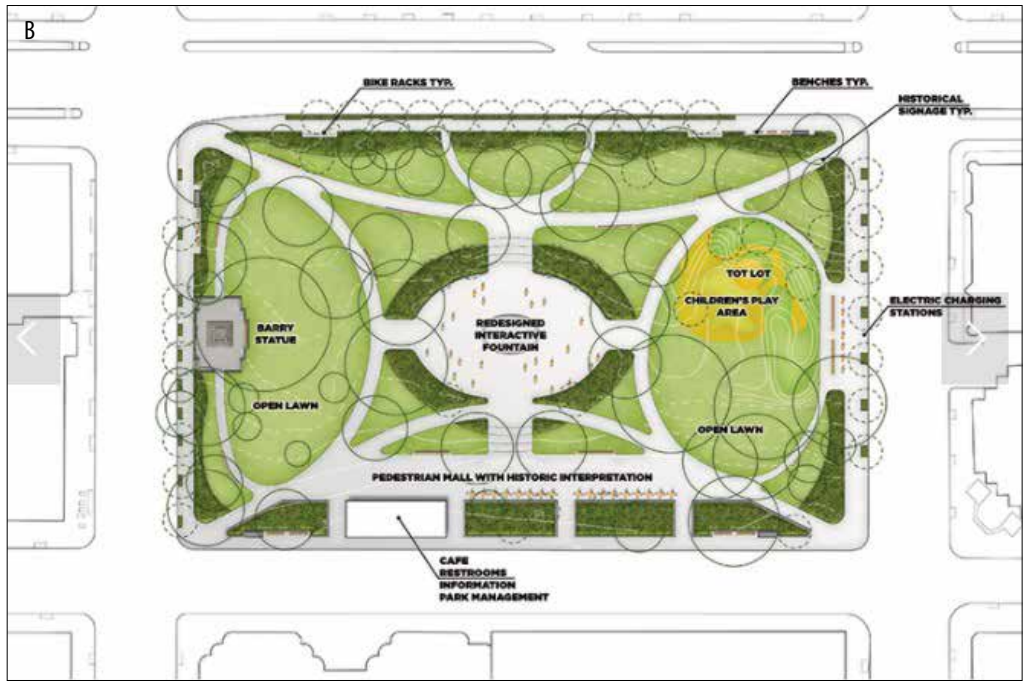
#### OBJECTIVE

**Protect and sustain historic and cultural landscapes through sensitive management, planning, and development.**

#### TARGETED ACTIONS

Institutional and government campus owners, along with planners, preservationists and technical advisers, should:

- **Campus Planning**  
Increase the identification and preservation of historic resources in campus master plans and on institutional sites with significant open landscape.
- **Parks and Landscape**  
Preserve and enhance significant DC parks, landscapes and green areas in public space.
- **L’Enfant Plan**  
Increase understanding and ensure full protection of L’Enfant’s 1791 *Plan of the City of Washington*.
- **Cemeteries**  
Increase recognition and protection of significant DC cemeteries.



A Walter Reed town center  
B Franklin Park plan  
C L’Enfant Plan study











# Achieving our goals

How will the preservation plan succeed? This chapter proposes a coordination course of action to achieve the plan’s goals and objectives as set forth in Chapter Five. Some of these targeted actions are already planned, or reflect ongoing programs, while others are new recommendations for the next five years.

## Who’s involved?

Many organizations and individuals will be responsible for taking these actions. The implementation tables in this chapter flesh out these expectations in more detail.

Lead agents are shown for the various objectives in the tables. Sometimes agencies or organizations may act alone on tasks that advance their missions. Other tasks may be accomplished by property owners or businesses as part of their routine activities. In many cases, formal or informal partnerships will be necessary for success. Annual check-ins with partner organizations will help gauge progress.

## Recognizing Historic Resources

Preservation planning begins with the identification and formal recognition of historic properties. These tasks rank among the key duties of the DC SHPO, Historic Preservation Review Board, and federal agencies, making them the lead actors in pursuing Goals A1, A2, and A3.

Meeting these goals will require a substantial work effort using currently available resources. Existing cooperative agreements among government, non-profits, and contractors will continue, while new ones may be needed. Equally important is complementary work by independent scholars to broaden historic understanding from different perspectives (see Goals B1 and B3).

Property owners may fund some of this work, while non-profits and volunteers also contribute their efforts to survey work, documentation, and applications for historic designation. The public will also be involved, either as individuals or through community groups and Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs).



Goal	Action Agent	Objective	Targeted Actions
A1	Explore New Perspectives		
	Broaden public knowledge of DC historic sites, including new perspectives on DC history and culture.		
	HPO, NPS, non-profit partners, and contractors	<b>Exploring Diversity</b> Expand thematic studies of neglected or underrepresented aspects of the District’s social heritage and multiple ethnicities. (Comp Plan HP-1.4.A, 1.5.D)	Complete historic context studies of the Chinese-American and Korean-American communities in DC (by 2022).  Complete a historic context study of the Women’s Suffrage movement in DC (by 2024).  Seek funding for historic context studies of the Latino and Filipino-American communities in DC (by 2023; if funded, complete by 2025).  Use the 2017 NHL theme study <i>The Era of Reconstruction: 1861-1900</i> to explore related DC history (through 2025).
	HPO, community groups, and preservation partners	<b>Exploring Neighborhoods</b> Gather, research, and document histories of DC neighborhoods to understand how all DC communities began and evolved. (Comp Plan HP-1.5.D, 3.1.A)	Complete the research needed to tell a basic story of each DC neighborhood (through 2025).  Expand <i>HistoryQuest DC</i> to map data pertinent to neighborhood development, including subdivisions, civic and citizens’ association boundaries, alley buildings, and other information (by 2022).  Expand 2020 DCFACES research to document the origins of all DC neighborhood names (by 2024).
	HPO, preservation groups, scholars, and community partners	<b>DC’s Oldest and Newest</b> Expand knowledge and increase appreciation of DC’s oldest and newest buildings of historic, architectural, or cultural significance. (Comp Plan HP-1.3.A)	Complete basic research on all of the District’s pre-1865 buildings, both urban and rural, making the information available to the public (by 2025).  Continue basic research on significant buildings from the second half of the 20th century, especially downtown and in neighborhood clusters (through 2025).  Expand data in <i>HistoryQuest DC</i> on pre-1865 and modern buildings (through 2025).
A2	Evaluate Resources in Context		
	Identify historic resources by comparative evaluation and analysis, using survey data, historic context studies, and new research.		
	HPO and preservation partners	<b>Eligible Properties</b> Increase public awareness of noteworthy properties that may be eligible for designation, especially those that tell stories of underrepresented communities. (Comp Plan HP-3.1.C)	Use Ward and Community Heritage Guides, eligibility surveys, and other research to identify significant properties that may be eligible for designation (through 2025).  Complete evaluations of all DC government properties for eligibility and make the information available to DC agencies and the public (see Goal C2; by 2023).  Make the information accessible to the public as it becomes available, through <i>HistoryQuest DC</i> , <i>PropertyQuest DC</i> , and other means (through 2025).



Goal	Action Agent	Objective	Targeted Actions
●	HPO and community partners	<b>Community Heritage Guides</b> Complete the series of ward heritage guides identifying historic resources and preservation issues, and update the guides by ward or planning area. (Comp Plan HP-3.1.C)	Complete the series of eight Ward Heritage Guides begun in 2012 (by 2021).  Launch an updated series of community heritage guides reflecting historical development patterns, new ward boundaries, and the planning areas in the Comprehensive Plan, with a separate downtown guide (through 2025).  Include a full evaluation of recognized and potential historic resources in each community heritage guide, and add this information to <i>HistoryQuest DC</i> (through 2025).
	HPO	<b>DC Inventory of Historic Sites</b> Present a more vivid story of DC's historic resources in a 50th anniversary edition of the DC Inventory of Historic Sites, making it more useful as a planning document. (Comp Plan HP-3.1.B)	Complete a new version of the DC Inventory, organized by theme, with each theme including supporting historical context and a listing of designated and related properties (by 2025).  Make the DC Inventory available in printed and website versions, and implement a system for updates to keep the documents current (by 2025).
<b>A3 Designate Significant Properties</b>			
	<b>Conduct an understandable designation process with clear priorities that promote predictability for owners and communities.</b>		
●	Community and owner sponsors, HPO, and HPRB	<b>Underrepresented Communities</b> Diversify listings in the DC Inventory to better reflect the full story of the District's culture and heritage. (Comp Plan HP-1.1.B, 1.4.A/B/D)	Evaluate the DC Inventory for how well it reflects the history of underrepresented communities. Identify listings that could be updated to recognize such history in their designations (by 2022).  Designate two new historic landmarks resulting from the context study of DC's Chinese and Korean communities, and expand documentation of the Downtown and Union Market historic districts to recognize the role of Asian-American merchants (by 2023).  Increase designation of properties identified through thematic studies of underrepresented communities and other means (through 2025).  Nominate NHL listings of Nannie Helen Burroughs School, Frances Perkins House, and Federation of Women's Clubs to the DC Inventory (by 2024).  Consider nomination of the Hurd House at 116 Bryant Street NW for NHL designation per recommendations of the NHL theme study on <i>Racial Discrimination in Housing</i> (by 2025).

Goal	Action Agent	Objective	Targeted Actions
	ANC and community sponsors, HPO, and HPRB	<b>Community Landmarks</b> Identify significant public and private properties in DC neighborhoods, and pursue priority designations with community involvement. (Comp Plan HP-1.4.A, 1.5.A/D)	Identify priorities for designation based on completed Ward Heritage Guides, survey data, risk factors, and community priorities (through 2025).  Complete landmark designation of DC high schools with the listings of Coolidge (by 2021), Eastern (by 2023), Anacostia, Banneker, and McKinley (by 2025).  Consider landmark designation of other DC schools, libraries, and recreation centers as they are modernized (through 2025).
	Owner and preservation group sponsors, HPO, and HPRB	<b>Downtown</b> Complete historic landmark and historic district designations in the old downtown. (Comp Plan HP-1.2.C)	Identify downtown properties that may be eligible for historic designation, and make the information available to the public (by 2022).  Act on pending designation applications for the Judiciary Square Historic District and Chinatown expansion of the Downtown Historic District (by 2023).  Complete the nomination and designation of eligible properties in the old downtown (by 2025).
	Federal agencies, HPRB, and SHPO	<b>Federal Properties</b> Nominate eligible federal buildings, parks, and districts to the National Register, with concurrent nominations to the DC Inventory. (Comp Plan HP-1.5.C)	List or update documentation for these federal properties:  <i>National Park Service:</i> National Capital Region/US Park Police headquarters and Mission 66 MPD (by 2022); Lafayette Square Historic District, Civil War Defenses/Fort Circle Parks, World War I Memorial, and Anacostia Park (by 2025); consider NHL nomination for Arlington Bridge.  <i>Smithsonian:</i> Bulfinch gatehouses and gateposts, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (by 2021), Museum of Natural History (by 2022), and Smithsonian Quadrangle (by 2025); HABS documentation and DOE for Air and Space Museum (by 2021).  <i>Air Force:</i> Anacostia Naval Air Station HABS/HAER documentation, historic context, and narrative history (by 2023).  <i>Federal Reserve:</i> National Register-level documentation for the Federal Reserve building (by 2024).  <i>Army:</i> National Register-level documentation for Fort McNair (by 2025).  <i>Navy:</i> Naval Observatory (by 2022), Navy Yard East Annex, and NAS Anacostia (by 2025).



# Engaging Communities

Community participation helps define historic preservation. There is widespread public interest in cultural heritage and an eager audience for local history. A strong sense of shared stewardship sustains many community groups committed to preserving the District’s character and heritage. A wide range of community organizations will take the lead in pursuing goals B1, B2 and B3.

Public education, engagement, and advocacy shape the mission of many non-profit community organizations. Libraries, museums, and cultural entities expand knowledge through events and programs exploring DC heritage. Funding supporters make many of these educational programs possible. Independent researchers teach lessons of history through presentations and publications. Online moderators sustain access to archives of digital information.

Community engagement programs reach out to residents eager to participate in activities. They let people contribute to history projects, tell their stories, and serve as volunteers. Special events increase public awareness of the District’s history and nurture respect for cultural heritage. Multiple sponsors ensure a variety of programs for different interests and age groups, whether exploring intangible heritage, architectural traditions, the recent past, or the record of ancient cultures revealed through archaeology.

Community advocates mobilize public support for the benefits of historic preservation. Through coordinated programs and partnerships, they can create a network of connections expanding the benefits of preservation into communities across the District.



A Carter G. Woodson Memorial, DC Commemorative Works

Goal	Action Agent	Objective	Targeted Actions
B1	Tell Community Stories		
	Strengthen programs and partnerships that engage the public in exploring community history and places of significance.		
	Historical and preservation groups, non-profits, and individuals	<b>DC History Programs</b> Sustain programs that engage the public through exhibits, conferences, journals, oral histories, heritage trails, markers, tours, and other educational activities. (Comp Plan HP-3.2.A/B/C/D/E/F/G/H)	Relaunch the DC History Conference as an annual free spring event at the renovated Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library (by 2022).  Complete an African American 20th Century Civil Rights multiple property documentation study for the National Register (by 202x).  Product a historic context report on the Black Power movement from 1961 to the 1990s (by 2022).  Explore and document local history from the grassroots in the DC Community Heritage Project sponsored by HumanitiesDC with DCAH funding (through 2025).
	Non-profits, HPO, and partners	<b>Heritage Partnerships</b> Strengthen collaborative partnerships among the SHPO and non-profit organizations. (Comp Plan HP-3.3.A)	Pursue DC Cultural Plan recommendations on supporting cultural identity and traditions (creator 4), increasing cultural awareness through a permanent oral history program (consumer 5), creating a cultural facilities fund (investment 3), and other strategies (through 2025).  Reimagine the DC History Center to focus on proactive community engagement in all eight wards, supported by consistent and reliable funding (through 2025).  Expand the DC Public Library’s oral history collections using community grants under the Oral History Collaborative with HumanitiesDC and other partners (through 2025).  Sustain existing and future partnerships between HPO and the DC History Center, with contractors for projects including <i>HistoryQuest DC</i> , research, digitization, archaeology programs, and others (through 2025).
	Non-profits, historical groups, and HPO	<b>History Online</b> Expand access to internet information on DC history through improved websites and mobile phone applications. (Comp Plan HP-2.2.A, 3.1.A)	Develop strategic plans for creating robust infrastructure to serve large-scale digital collections (through 2025).  Launch an online guide to DC’s modernist landscape architecture (in 2021).  Improve and relaunch the <i>DC African American Heritage Trail</i> , linking to existing story maps and the trail on 20th century Civil Rights history (by 2023).  Digitize DCPL’s photographic archives, and expand its <i>DC Historic Sites</i> app with more tours on history and architecture themes (through 2025).  Expand <i>Mapping Segregation DC</i> to inform understanding of the structural effects of racially restrictive covenants in all wards (through 2025).  Expand the <i>DC Digital Museum</i> , <i>Dig DC</i> , and other history collection websites (through 2025).



Goal	Action Agent	Objective	Targeted Actions
	Public and private libraries and archives	<b>Learning Centers</b> Reshape modernized libraries and archives as active centers for learning about DC history.	Reopen the People’s Archive at the DC History Center after pandemic closure (in 2021). Expand the DC History Center by reaching into all eight wards to elevate the stories of DC’s diverse people, neighborhoods, and institutions (by 2022). Modernize Founders Library at Howard University and expand the reach of the Moorland-Spingarn collection (by 2025). Continue house history workshops, realtor training in preservation, and other public education programs (through 2025). Sustain active programming on DC’s historic built environment at the District Architecture Center and National Building Museum (through 2025). Develop plans to rehouse the DC Archives in a new facility at UDC, in coordination with the Office of Public Records, DC Archives, and Advocacy Group (by 2025).
<b>B2 Speak Out for Preservation</b>			
	<b>Increase public advocacy for historic preservation and cultural heritage programs.</b>		
●	Individuals, preservation and community groups, and media participants	<b>Public Dialogue</b> Engage in constructive debate about preservation values and ideas for innovation, through public programs and multiple media. (Comp Plan HP-3.3.B)	Celebrate the 50th anniversary of the DC Preservation league with events and programming to engage new audiences (in 2021). Draw on research for the DCFACES project to explore ways to address equity concerns in the public environment (by 2025).
●	Community preservation groups	<b>Preservation Networks</b> Strengthen advocacy networks that promote the civic benefits of historic preservation and community heritage programs. (Comp Plan HP-3.3.A)	Reinvest in the Historic Districts Coalition with semi-annual meetings (through 2025). Engage the public in an annual Historic Preservation Community Day (through 2025).
	Preservation groups, non-profits, and agency planners	<b>The Greenest Building</b> Make the case for preservation as a climate crisis strategy for retaining embodied energy and reducing carbon footprint. (Comp Plan HP-1.2.A)	Join with environmental advocates, DOEE, and other allies to advance the idea that “the greenest building is the one that’s already built” (see also goal D1; through 2025). Engage actively in the development and implementation of a DC climate action plan (see also goal D1; through 2025).
	Preservation groups, ANCs, and community non-profits	<b>Community Action</b> Recognize and protect significant community heritage by preparing and sponsoring applications to designate historic landmarks and districts. (Comp Plan HP-1.5.A/D)	Nominate a historic district in Park View and an expansion of the Anacostia Historic District. (in 2021). Nominate two properties associated with DC’s Chinese-American or Korean-American communities (by 2023), two with the Black Power movement (by 2023), and two with the Women’s Suffrage movement (by 2024).

Goal	Action Agent	Objective	Targeted Actions
<b>B3 Advance Archaeology</b>			
	<b>Advance the benefits of archaeology as a civic responsibility and source of knowledge and inspiration about DC history and culture.</b>		
●	HPO and preservation partners	<b>Public Archaeology</b> Increase awareness and appreciation of archaeology and its essential role in a more inclusive understanding of our diverse history and culture. (Comp Plan HP-3.2.A/B)	Update and adopt new DC archaeology guidelines to guide site investigations (by 2025). Re-engage the public with in-person programs and events once as health restrictions are lifted (from 2022). Provide internships and other opportunities to mentor young professionals and volunteers (through 2025). Continue partnerships with the Urban Archaeology Corps and other organizations for public events, youth programs, site investigations, and other educational activities, especially in underserved communities (through 2025).
●	HPO, archaeologists, volunteers, and community partners	<b>Artifact Curation</b> Prepare and transfer DC archaeological collections for curation according to federally mandated standards at the new consolidated facility in MLK Library. (Comp Plan HP-2.6.A/B)	Assemble and transfer archaeological collections to the curation facility at MLK Library (through 2025). Organize the collections facility and establish protocols to ensure federally-compliant curation (by 2022). Expand the HPO catalog of 500,000 artifacts by preparing and converting older records to the PastPerfect database (through 2025).
	HPO and contractors	<b>Services and Information</b> Increase public access to archaeological information, and support DC agencies with technical advice and archaeological review of government projects. (Comp Plan HP-2.6.B/C)	Sustain timely and effective reviews of government projects for potential effects on archaeological resources, ensuring prompt completion of site reports by qualified professionals according to adopted DC guidelines (through 2025). Collaborate with government agencies in developing GIS elevation change models for key areas (through 2025). Expand information on archaeological resources in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites (by 2025). Establish an online version of the PastPerfect artifact catalog for public use, with standard protocols to protect sensitive archaeological sites (by 2025).
	HPO, DC Public Library, and stakeholders	<b>Discovery Center</b> Envision and shape the future accessibility of the DC artifact center in ways that advance the community-oriented mission of the new MLK Library. (Comp Plan HP-2.6.A)	Collaborate to establish a vision plan to address accessibility to collections for research, exhibit design, and volunteer opportunities (by 2023). Seek guidance on securing funding for curation at the discovery center through the federal government’s Institute of Museum and Library Services (by 2025).



# Improving Protections

Well-established historic preservation programs provide a solid foundation for protecting the District’s heritage. To remain productive, they need to be kept up-to-date and responsive to changing needs and new technologies. Preservation planners working with their government and community partners will lead progress toward goals C1, C2, and C3.

For preservation programs to be successful, their policies need to balance public, private, and community interests. Public procedures also need to work openly, fairly, and efficiently so that all of those affected can participate freely. Feedback from property owners and communities can draw attention to a need for improved procedures or tools.

To be most effective, preservation programs should address not only designated properties, but also those eligible for designation. For government projects, this is a requirement, but in many other cases, properties can sometimes be protected through voluntary consultation and agreement. Such consensus-building can be encouraged by making systematic identification of eligible resources more readily available to property owners before development is planned.



A MLK Gateway project, Historic Anacostia

Goal	Action Agent	Objective	Targeted Actions
C1	Conserve Neighborhoods		
	Conserve and enhance the character of DC neighborhoods while discouraging incompatible development.		
	HPO, planners, and community partners	<b>Planning for Neighborhoods</b> Develop neighborhood-based preservation strategies by applying the neighborhood conservation policies in the updated Comprehensive Plan. (Comp Plan HP-1.1.A/4.1.A, MC-2.7.F)	Apply Comprehensive Plan policies for neighborhood conservation in small area planning efforts (through 2025).  Complete plans for Congress Heights and Ivy City, with preservation recommendations (by 2022).  Establish framework plans for Chevy Chase, Friendship Heights, and Tenleytown to improve urban design, enhance quality of life, and provide equitable housing opportunities (by 2022).  Include a full evaluation of recognized and potential historic resources in each community heritage guide (see Goal A2; through 2025).  Work with neighborhoods seeking protection, such as Anacostia and Park View, by considering community-based proposals for creating or expanding historic districts (through 2025).  Implement recommendations of the <i>Ideas for Adams Morgan (I AM)</i> vision framework (through 2025).
	HPO, planners, and community partners	<b>Managing Growth</b> Encourage compatible development that recognizes the critical need for compromise as expressed in the DC guiding principles for successful neighborhoods. (Comp Plan LU-2.1.A, HP-2.4.A)	Participate in studies of future planning analysis areas to develop strategies for encouraging compatible development in neighborhoods (through 2025).  Consider modification to raze application requirements to reduce the substantial demolition of existing homes without public notice to Advisory Neighborhood Commissions and communities (by 2025).
	HPO and preservation partners	<b>Affordable Housing</b> Expand appreciation of existing affordable housing as a sustainable asset whose history can inform new affordable initiatives. (Comp Plan HP-1.1.A, 4.1.A/C, 4.2.C)	Document the history and context of affordable and workforce housing as a framework for evaluating significant historic resources (by 2023).  Use GIS analysis to identify historic and older buildings suitable as potential affordable housing projects (through 2025).
	Planners, developers, and community partners	<b>Main Streets</b> Attract compatible new development to neighborhood main streets to strengthen vibrancy and enhance historic features. (Comp Plan HP-1.1.A, 4.1.A)	Incorporate historic resources analysis and preservation guidance for both built and archaeological resources in planning studies for Pennsylvania Avenue SE, New York Avenue NE, Connecticut Avenue NW, Wisconsin Avenue NW, and other transportation arteries (by 2022).  Prepare development design guidelines for Woodley Park and Cleveland Park to explore how to accommodate greater density and public space improvements along the commercial main streets in these historic districts (see goal C3; by 2023).



Goal	Action Agent	Objective	Targeted Actions
<b>C2</b>	<b>Improve Preservation Systems</b>		
	<b>Maintain an open and effective public review process for private and government projects affecting historic properties.</b>		
●	HPO, DCRA, and agency partners with ANCs and community groups	<b>Private Property Reviews</b> Enhance online submission and review mechanisms developed during the pandemic to ensure a permanently sustainable review system. (Comp Plan HP-2.5.A)	Evaluate options for sustaining the advantages of online access to meetings of the Historic Preservation Review Board, with modifications to improve the public experience of a fully interactive and understandable presentation of information and deliberations (through 2025)
●	HPO and HPRB	<b>Preservation Law Compliance</b> Improve programs that combat blight and neglect, stop illegal construction, and ensure compliance with issued permits. (Comp Plan HP-2.7.A/B)	Reduce time delays in enforcement, adjudication, and abatement actions (through 2025). Strengthen coordination among DC agencies, ANCs, and community groups about bringing violations into compliance (through 2025). Launch a DCRA rating system to inform residents about contractors with a proven track record, and explore a resident inspector program for basic work (by 2022). Expedite disposal of vacant DC-owned properties for rehabilitation (through 2025).
	HPO and DC agencies	<b>DC Government Stewardship</b> Increase appreciation of the District government's historic resources and use exemplary civic architecture as a model for community development. (Comp Plan HP-2.3.A/B)	Maintain historic resource evaluation tables of public and charter schools, libraries, parks and recreation facilities, and public safety facilities, keeping them-to-date and readily available to DC agencies and the public (through 2025). Complete evaluation tables for DDOT, DC Water, DHCD/ DCHA and remaining agency properties (by 2022). Make information on designated and eligible properties available in PropertyQuest (by 2023). Present a cohesive story of DC's civic heritage in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites (by 2024). Apply standards for District government construction comparable to federal standards for historic properties, making effective use of HPO, HPRB, and CFA design reviews, and sustaining the tradition of high-quality municipal design (through 2025).
	HPO, CFA, and agency partners	<b>Government Project Reviews</b> Improve mechanisms to deliver timely and effective reviews of government projects. (Comp Plan HP-1.2.A/C)	Update the DDOT-SHPO programmatic agreement on review of transportation improvements (by 2021). Develop and implement protocols for graffiti removal from historic bridges and other structures (by 2022). Expand resources available to support the archaeological review process (through 2025). Continue regular coordination with DC Public Schools on advance planning for SHPO review of modernizations and historic recognition of schools as modernization occurs (through 2025).

Goal	Action Agent	Objective	Targeted Actions
<b>C3</b>	<b>Diversify Preservation Strategies</b>		
	<b>Encourage preservation through multiple strategies suitable to current challenges and flexible enough to anticipate future opportunities.</b>		
●	DC agencies, civic leaders, and partners	<b>Heritage Awareness</b> Expand appreciation of historic resources in all DC communities, including those not protected by designation. (Comp Plan HP-3.2.C/G)	Implement DC Cultural Plan recommendations on affirming civic identity and community heritage through space (space 1), using innovative tools to daylight cultural heritage (space 2), nurturing the link between culture and equitable development (convergence 3), and other strategies (through 2025).  Reactivate the DC Commemorative Works Committee as the sponsor of an active process to recognize and honor significant individuals and aspects of DC heritage with tangible and living memorials (through 2025).  Install street signs identifying the Bloomingdale and other new historic districts (by 2022).  Create a new website for the African American heritage trail (by 2022); expand existing trails with commemorative markers (through 2025).  Revive the Art on Call program to refashion police and fire call boxes as cultural markers (by 202x).
	Civic leaders, planners, DC agencies, and non-profits	<b>Voluntary Preservation</b> Strengthen and diversify incentives to preserve older buildings and historic resources not protected by designation. (Comp Plan HP-4.1.A/C/D)	Support the L'Enfant Trust in completing affordable rehabilitations of 1518 W Street, 1326 Valley Place, and 1648 U Street SE in Anacostia (by 2021). Stabilize 1225 and 1227 Maple View Place SE as a partnership-led demonstration workshop (in 2021). Rehabilitate these and 1220 Maple View Place (by 2025).  Assist owners seeking rehabilitation tax credits, especially for affordable housing (through 2025).  Support initiatives for workforce development in artisan trades and traditional construction crafts to support renovation of older structures, in partnership with local educational institutions (through 2025).
	HPO, HPRB, urban designers, and planners	<b>Design Guidelines</b> Maintain and expand design guidelines to shape compatible development in historic districts and targeted planning areas. (Comp Plan HP-2.5.B/2.3.C)	Prepare guidelines for compatible development in the Connecticut Avenue corridor (by 2023).  Prepare guidelines for additions and alterations to alley buildings in historic districts (by 2022).  Update or replace HPRB's older design guidelines in its 1997 series (by 2025).  Adopt design guidelines for any new historic districts as they are designated (through 2025).
	HPO, OP, and community stakeholders	<b>Envisioning the Future</b> Prepare for renewal of the planning documents that establish preservation policies and strategies for the future.	Monitor and evaluate the effects of the 2021 updates to the Comprehensive Plan; explore the nexus between preservation and climate change to develop pertinent planning policies (through 2025).  Document preservation successes and challenges to inform goals for a new preservation plan and Comprehensive Plan (in 2025).



# Maintaining Our Heritage

Progressive government leadership and voluntary action by property owners are the twin drivers accomplishing the physical work of preservation. Government professionals working with civic leaders envision and implement the policies that guide community growth, yet it takes the coordinated efforts, expertise, and investment of both government and private owners to realize those policies through successful preservation and development. These interdependent partners share lead responsibility for goals D1, D2, and D3.

Sound government planning nurtures public and private commitment to the policies and rules designed to ensure an equitable distribution of the costs needed for sustainable development and community benefits such as preservation and enhancement of civic heritage. Coordinated action by federal and local agencies is essential for these tasks.

In contrast, it is individual action by government agencies, private institutions, commercial builders, or homeowners, acting as property owners in their own interest and sense of responsibility, that accomplishes the ends of established public policies.

Agencies and institutions plan ahead as good stewards of major civic buildings and places. Architects and developers envision how to adapt historic structures and build the new places the city needs in order to thrive. Property owners and businesses work to maintain and enhance the city's historic assets. Residents add solar panels and plant trees to improve energy performance and help assure the long-term viability of historic properties as the climate changes. Their separate but collective actions preserve our heritage.



A Reflecting Pool, National Mall

Goal	Action Agent	Objective	Targeted Actions
D1	Practice Sustainable Urbanism		
	Reinforce the goals of preservation through policies and programs that support resilience and sustainable growth.		
	HSEMA, FEMA, HPO, and property owners	<b>Resilience Planning</b> Incorporate historic resource protection into preparedness planning for emergencies, disasters, and climate change. (Comp Plan HP-2.8.A/B/C)	Complete a Disaster Management Plan for historic properties (by 2021).  Identify vulnerable historic resources in flood zones and other areas; evaluate preparedness and identify disaster planning needs and alternatives (by 2021).  Update the 2019 programmatic agreement with FEMA to cover all current grant programs to allow streamlined processing (by 2021).  Assess possible site changes at the 23rd Street levee and historic seawall in Anacostia Park (by 2022).
	Non-profits, DOEE, HPO and planners	<b>Climate Action</b> Ensure that preservation policies support green practices, and advance preservation of usable building stock as a climate action strategy. (Comp Plan HP-3.3.A, E-7.1.C, E-7.2.A/B)	Explore ways to optimize existing buildings and neighborhoods by purposeful action, through DCPL's Stewardship for Climate Action program (2021-22).  Educate the public about the green benefits of historic preservation, and address the embodied energy in existing buildings in an updated DC climate action plan reflecting recent initiatives and innovation (through 2025).
	Planners, developers and HPO	<b>Walkable DC</b> Expand walkability and bikeability by reconnecting historic streets, enhancing Main Streets, revitalizing alleys, and other strategies. (Comp Plan LU-1.2.D/E, HP-2.1.D, 2.2.C/D)	Complete the Pennsylvania Avenue Initiative, creating a new vision for the purpose, design, and functioning of the historic avenue at the heart of downtown (by 2025).  Reclaim street space for public use with periodic public realm activation events, through the Streets for People and Open Streets projects (through 2025)  Reconnect G Street across I-395 (by 2021) and L Street west of North Capitol Street in the Northwest One redevelopment (by 2024).  Complete Dupont Crown Park as an active new public space above the Connecticut Avenue underpass (by 2025).  Plan for reintegration of federal superblocks into local context, reconnecting the L'Enfant grid and encouraging vibrant new buildings on smaller parcels (through 2025).
	Transportation agencies, HPO, planners, and developers	<b>Historic Transit</b> Invest in the restoration, revitalization, and enhancement of Union Station, Metro, and other historic public transportation facilities. (Comp Plan CW-1.1.C, 2.8.7, 2.8.D/E)	Continue multi-party consultation on the modernization and expansion of Union Station as an intermodal facility with coordinated and air rights construction (through 2025).  Conclude consultation on historic resources survey and multiple property documentation of the Metrorail system, making results available to the public (by 2025).  Develop a programmatic agreement to cover Metrorail modernization projects (by 2025).



Goal	Action Agent	Objective	Targeted Actions
<b>D2</b>	<b>Reuse, Adapt and Enhance</b>		
	<b>Preserve historic properties through sensitive rehabilitation and adaptation for current use.</b>		
●	Government owners, review agencies, and non-profit partners	<b>National Treasures</b> Complete key improvements to national landmarks in preparation for the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. (Comp Plan PROS-3.1.C)	<p><i>National Mall:</i> Complete Lincoln Memorial accessibility improvements and new visitor center (by 2025).</p> <p><i>National Parks:</i> Restore the C&amp;O Canal in Georgetown, with a mule-drawn boat (by 2022); complete the World War I Memorial with the main sculptural panel (by 2023).</p> <p><i>Smithsonian Museums:</i> Complete the rehabilitations of Air and Space (by 2025), the Hirshhorn (by 2023), and Smithsonian Castle (after 2025). Select sites and plan for new Latino and Women's museums (through 2025).</p> <p><i>White House:</i> Continue the White House and President's Park South comprehensive design plan (through 2025).</p> <p><i>Black Landmarks:</i> Restore the Asbury United Methodist Church facade with funds from the NTHP's African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund (by 2025).</p>
●	Property owners, developers, and review agencies	<b>Major Opportunity Sites</b> Implement master plans for redevelopment of large underutilized historic sites to provide new housing, jobs, and amenities. (Comp Plan HP-2.2.A/B)	<p>Ensure compatible development respecting historic resources, topography and important visits at:</p> <p><i>McMillan Reservoir:</i> resolution of legal disputes, construction of community center and park</p> <p><i>Saint Elizabeths East:</i> affordable apartment rehabs, new townhouses, offices, farmer's market, retail pavilion, parking, and a full-service hospital (through 2025).</p> <p><i>Saint Elizabeths West:</i> cemetery stabilization (in 2021), new federal offices (through 2025).</p> <p><i>Union Market:</i> building rehabilitations, new housing, restaurants, and food-oriented retail (through 2025).</p> <p><i>Walter Reed:</i> new and renovated buildings for housing, retail, arts, and hospital use; landscape restoration, new parks, playgrounds, and public spaces (through 2025).</p>
	Housing providers, DC agencies, and HPO	<b>Affordable Housing</b> Increase rehabilitation of historic and older buildings for affordable housing. (Comp Plan HP-4.1.B/C, 4.2.B/C)	<p>Improve the targeted historic homeowner grant program by expanding eligibility, and possible inflation adjustment for grant amounts (by 2022).</p> <p>Sustain vigorous use of the Housing Trust Fund (HPTF) as a critical support for rehabilitation of existing buildings as affordable housing (through 2025).</p> <p>Expand use of low-income and historic preservation tax credits for affordable housing, and support providers seeking designations for eligibility (through 2025).</p> <p>Improve affordable housing programs to encourage use for historic buildings; allow predevelopment loans to help providers with applications (through 2025).</p>
	Owners, review agencies, and community partners	<b>Civic Places</b> Rehabilitate, restore, and adapt the civic landmarks for revitalized communities. (Comp Plan HP-2.3.B)	Launch rehabilitations of historic Randall School at the center of new housing (in 2021), Slater and Langston Schools for affordable housing, and Crummell School as an Ivy City community anchor (by 2025).

Goal	Action Agent	Objective	Targeted Actions
<b>D3</b>	<b>Preserve Campuses and Landscapes</b>		
	<b>Protect and sustain historic and cultural landscapes through sensitive management, planning, and development.</b>		
●	Universities, federal owners, and review agencies with HPO and OP	<b>Campus Planning</b> Increase the identification and preservation of historic resources in campus master plans and on institutional sites with significant open landscape. (Comp Plan HP-2.2.A)	<p>Adopt new preservation elements of the American and Howard university plans (by 2021), and Catholic University plan (by 2022).</p> <p>Expand <i>HistoryQuest DC</i> data to include coverage of all campus buildings (by 2022).</p> <p><i>Georgetown University:</i> Implement the GU 20-year consensus plan, including hospital addition, improved campus circulation and green space (through 2025); construct a Law Center residence hall on the Gonzaga campus (by 2025).</p> <p><i>Howard University:</i> Complete the Town Center and Freedmen's Hospital projects, and a modernization plan for Founders Library (by 2025).</p> <p><i>Fort McNair:</i> Finish an updated master plan (by 2023).</p>
	Property owners and preservation partners	<b>Parks and Landscape</b> Preserve and enhance significant DC parks, landscapes and green areas in public space. (Comp Plan PROS-1.1.A/B, 3.1.D/E, 3.2.A)	<p><i>Anacostia Park:</i> Reimagine the park and create a new NPS development concept plan (by 2022); work collaboratively on open space improvements of the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (through 2025).</p> <p><i>Fort Circle Parks:</i> Expand trails and enhance the parks through public-private partnerships (through 2025).</p> <p><i>Rock Creek Park:</i> Complete restoration plans and secure funding for Carter Barron Amphitheater (by 2025).</p> <p>Document and classify park reservations outside the L'Enfant Plan, and implement the Parks Master Plan for the DC park system (through 2025).</p>
	HPO, OP, and NPS	<b>L'Enfant Plan</b> Increase understanding and ensure full protection of L'Enfant's 1791 <i>Plan of the City of Washington</i> . (Comp Plan HP-2.1.A)	<p>Complete GIS mapping to identifies all plan elements and features, evolution over time, current intrusions, and gaps in protection (by 2023).</p> <p>Document the plan as a cultural landscape and update the L'Enfant Plan designation with documentation to National Register and NHL standards (by 2025).</p>
	Cemetery owners, advocates, and review agencies	<b>Cemeteries</b> Increase recognition and protection of significant DC cemeteries.	<p>Merge eligibility and historical data for cemeteries into <i>PropertyQuest</i> and <i>HistoryQuest</i> (by 2022).</p> <p>Explore, document, and increase public awareness of the legacy of DC's historic African American cemeteries (through 2025).</p> <p>Document the history and significance of historic Jewish cemeteries in Southeast (by 2025).</p> <p>.</p>











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*Old Georgetown Act of 1950*, Pub. L. 81-808; DC Official Code § 6-1201 *et seq.*, 64 Stat. 903 (Creates the Georgetown historic district, subject to advisory CFA review with the assistance of the Old Georgetown Board; and directs a survey of the area)

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## Glossary of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAAS	American Association for the Advancement of Science
AIA	American Institute of Architects
ANC	Advisory Neighborhood Commission
CFA	Commission of Fine Arts
DCMR	DC Municipal Regulations
DCRA	Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs
DOEE	Department of Energy and Environment
DHCD	Department of Housing and Community Development
DDOT	District Department of Transportation
DGS	Department of General Services
DMPED	Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development
DPR	Department of Parks and Recreation
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GSA	General Services Administration
GWU	George Washington University
HPO	Historic Preservation Office
HPRB	Historic Preservation Review Board
NCPC	National Capital Planning Commission
NHL	National Historic Landmark
NPS	National Park Service
NR	National Register of Historic Places
NTHP	National Trust for Historic Preservation
OP	Office of Planning
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office

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Cover: *Row house pair in Dupont Circle neighborhood*



A First African New Church and new construction in U Street neighborhood  
B Restored house in Anacostia neighborhood  
C Columns at Supreme Court





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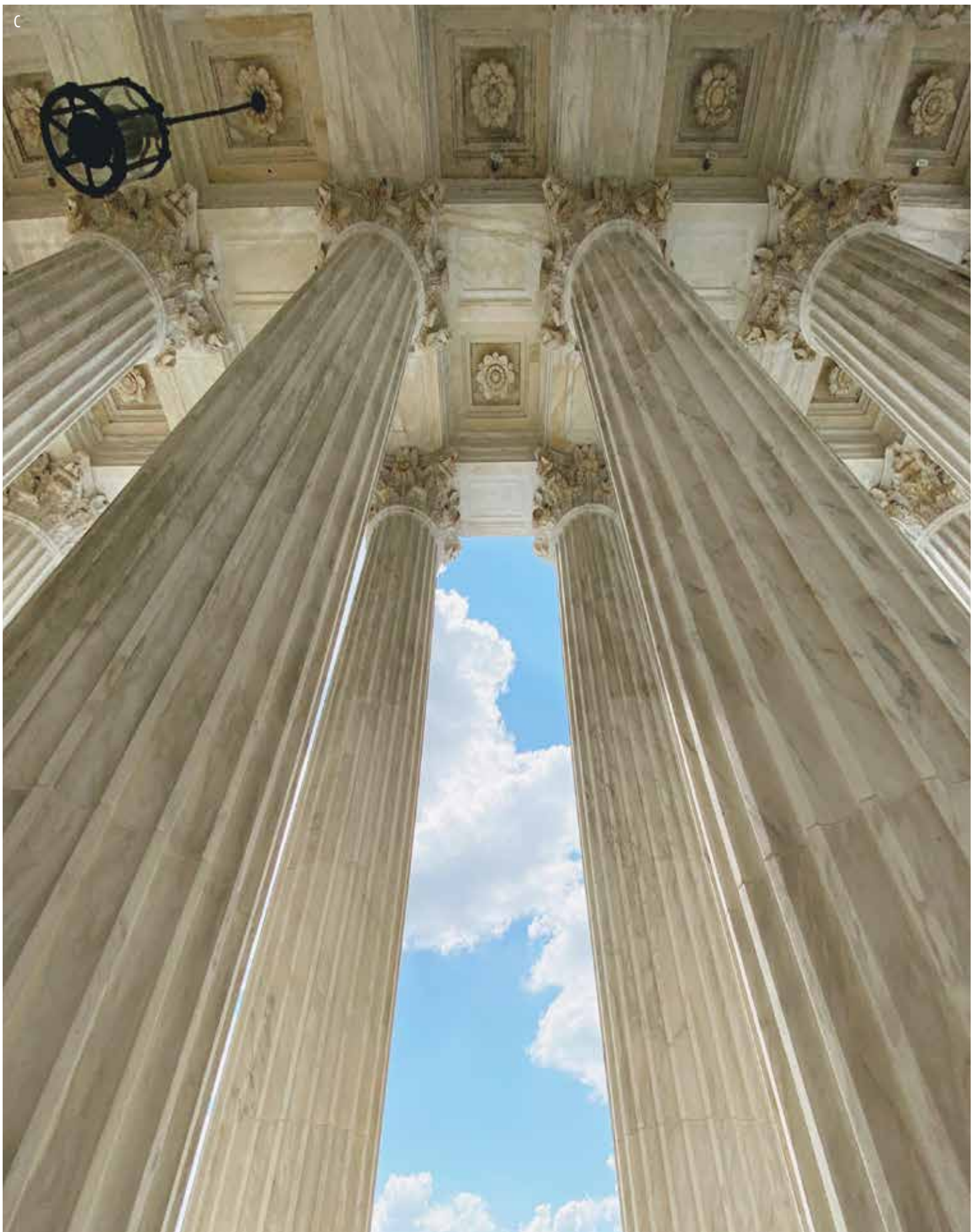


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### 2025 dc historic preservation plan

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