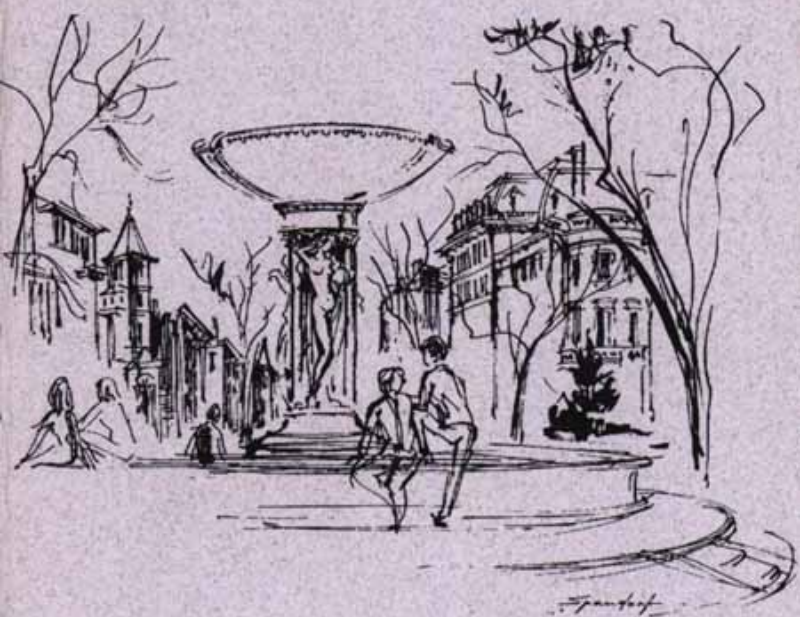


DUPONT
CIRCLE
HISTORIC
DISTRICT



WASHINGTON, D.C.

DUPONT CIRCLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Roughly bounded by Rhode Island Avenue, M, and N Streets on the south, Florida Avenue on the west, Swann Street on the north, and the 16th Street HD on the east. Includes approximately 3100 buildings c. 1875-1940. DC listing 11/3/64 (preliminary identification), designated 6/17/77, NR listing 7/21/78; expanded DC designation 6/30/83 (effective 1/4/85), NR listing 2/6/85.

- Among the city's most elegant historic residential neighborhoods.
- Notable for superior examples of Victorian rowhouse architecture in Queen Anne and Richardsonian styles, as well as some of the city's finest turn-of-the-century mansions in Beaux Arts, Chateausque, Renaissance, and Georgian Revival styles.
- Has served as the home of many prominent and affluent Washingtonians, as well as foreign legations.
- Prominent local and national architects are represented.
- Unusually rich and varied streetscapes, many along the diagonal L'Enfant avenues, with centerpiece at Dupont Circle.
- Fine examples of early apartments, 1920s commercial buildings along Connecticut Avenue.

Restoring or renovating your Dupont Circle property? Call the D.C. Historic Preservation Division. An historic preservation professional is assigned to assist you with technical information.
202-442-4570

SUGGESTED READING:

Goode, James M. *Best Addresses*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988.

Goode, James M. *Capital Losses: A Cultural History of Washington's Destroyed Buildings*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1979.

Griffen, Mark G. & McCloskey, Ellen M. *Lily Spandorf's Washington Never More*. Washington, D.C.: Grew Publishing Co., 1988.

Massachusetts Avenue Architecture. Vols. 1 & 2. Washington, D.C.: Commission of Fine Arts, 1973, 1975.

Maury, William M. *Alexander "Boss" Shepherd and the Board of Public Works*. Washington, D.C.: The George Washington University, 1975.

Records. The Columbia Historical Society.

Cover: Dupont Circle looking E. toward P Street. Drawing by Lily Spandorf. Top opposite page: John Fraser, architect of the British Legation, 1300 Connecticut Avenue (1873, demolished), also designed this residence at 2000 Massachusetts Avenue at Dupont Circle for Senator James G. Blaine of Maine, one of the founders of the Republican Party in 1856, Secretary of State under Garfield, and Republican candidate for president in 1884. The house was leased by Chicago millionaire Levi Leiter from 1883 to 1894, and purchased in 1901 by George Westinghouse, inventor and founder of the Westinghouse Electric Company. *Picturesque Washington*, 1884.



THE JAMES G. BLAINE MANSION

On this spacious plain, a few years ago an almost valueless area of swamps, those palatial mansions, the pride and boast of the capital, are erected. Here are the residences of the wealthiest citizens, and those of the millionaires from different sections of the United States who make Washington their winter home.... Here are the foreign legation buildings, and here the leaders of society have congregated under splendid roof-trees. On every side is a dazzling spectacle of luxury and grandeur. Joseph West Moore, *Picturesque Washington*, 1884.

In 1791 L'Enfant had planned this northwestern-most residential area for the new Federal City around a major circular element intersected by three grand avenues named after three of the original thirteen states—Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire. Although Boundary Street, now Florida Avenue, had earlier been one of the most traveled approaches from Southern Maryland plantations to the Port of Georgetown, the future Dupont Circle neighborhood was still largely rural in 1871 when the Board of Public Works, under the leadership of Alexander Shepherd, began its massive city-wide infrastructure improvements. An area of fields,



2120-2128 Florida Avenue (ca. 1868). Courtesy Kiplinger Washington Collection, W. E. Barrett photograph (1967).

woods, and marsh, it was infamous for Slash Run, a stream that meandered through on its way to Rock Creek, serving as a dumping ground for night soil and other refuse from the populated area of the city. Some scattered small frame houses existed near Florida Avenue and Rock Creek. Residential construction was concentrated in the triangular area south of the Circle between New Hampshire and Connecticut Avenues north of the K Street market. The entire L'Enfant city west of 15th Street and north of Pennsylvania Avenue was known as the West End.

The improvements of the Board of Public Works made large-scale development of the Dupont Circle neighborhood possible. Speculators, privy to the Board's plans, bought up large tracts of undeveloped land at prices well below market value. The "California Syndicate" or "Honest Miners Group," led by powerful Nevada Senator William Morris Stewart and others whose fortunes came from western mining, predominated. The tone of the new neighborhood was set when Stewart erected his own luxurious residence in 1872-73 in the fields on the north side of the Circle between Massachusetts and Connecticut Avenues. The house was called 'Stewart's Folly' and 'Stewart's Castle' because of its isolated location. When construction of the British Legation was completed in 1874 at the northwest corner of Connecticut and N Streets, the elite and luxurious Dupont Circle neighborhood was on its way.

Today Stewart's Castle, the British Legation, and many of the fashionable residences which followed are gone. Some were replaced almost immediately as the demand for more palatial and fashionable residences on or near Dupont Circle grew. Unprecedented

fortunes were made American-style in industry, mining, railroads, and other fields after the Civil War. Many of those who made these fortunes came to Washington when, like Stewart, they were elected to Congress. Others simply came for the 'winter season' in a city which was at last coming into its own as a national capital. Their presence influenced many affluent and prominent Washington families to build their homes here. By the late 1880s the growing Dupont Circle neighborhood, with a vibrant and distinct character of its own, had become the center of life in the West End.

CREATION OF THE DUPONT CIRCLE INFRASTRUCTURE

The Corps of Engineers began construction of Dupont Circle itself in 1871 when the remnants of an earlier brickyard were removed, the circle was graded and fenced, and a landscaping plan prepared. A number of trees were transplanted from the White House grounds, asphalt walks laid, benches installed, and grass seeded. After Senator Stewart built his residence there in 1873 it was called Pacific Circle for the western investors in the area. By 1877 two drinking fountains with double-burner gas lamps had been installed, plans for a central fountain sixty feet in diameter were underway, and preliminary plumbing was in place.

The fountain concept was abandoned in 1882 when Congress authorized erection of a memorial statue of Rear Admiral Samuel Francis du Pont (1803-65) in recognition of his Civil War service to the Union. The granite pedestal was constructed immediately, but Congress appropriated sufficient funds to complete the project only in 1884. The standing bronze

portrait statue by sculptor Launt Thompson of the New York Academy of Design was officially dedicated on December 20, 1884. Now called Dupont Circle, the reservation was landscaped lavishly with new walks, lamps, water fountains, benches, lawns, flower beds, and 850 ornamental trees and flowering shrubs. In 1921 the statue of



Connecticut Avenue looking northwest toward Stewart's Castle on Dupont Circle. British Embassy and Phillip's Row at left. Courtesy Historical Society of Washington, D.C.



Statue of Admiral Dupont. *Washington Album* (ca. 1892).

Dupont was replaced by a double-tiered white marble fountain, the work of sculptor Daniel Chester French and architect Henry Bacon, designers of the Lincoln Memorial. Three classical figures, symbolizing the Sea, the Stars, and the Wind, are carved on the fountain's central shaft. Its broad, 35'-10"-diameter lower basin is an inviting neighborhood social amenity.

Alexander Robey Shepherd and his wife receiving President Grant in their recently completed home at Connecticut & K Streets, February 1876. Guests included members of the cabinet



and diplomatic corps. The presidentially-appointed Board of Public Works (1871-4), under Shepherd's leadership, modernized the city's infrastructure, undertak-

ing desperately needed improvements costing more than \$20,000,000. Appointed by Grant as Governor of the Territory of Columbia in 1873, Shepherd and the Board came under Congressional scrutiny. On June 20, 1874 the bankrupt territorial government was abolished in favor of a Congressionally-controlled commission form of government which persisted until 1973 when home rule was granted. Shepherd is credited with directing the future course of residential development away from downtown toward the northwest. Courtesy Library of Congress.

The Board of Public Works projects in the Dupont Circle area included laying out and improving the L'Enfant streets, channeling and covering Slash Run, providing a modern water and sewer system, building a bridge connecting the L'Enfant city to Georgetown at P Street, and linking the neighborhood to other parts of the city through public transportation routes. Dupont Circle was a transportation hub from the time it was first laid

out as Pacific Circle. By 1873 a track for a horse-drawn trolley line went up Connecticut Avenue from H Street to Florida Avenue. Another track ran from the west side of the Circle across the new P Street bridge into Georgetown. Public transportation opened the residential Dupont Circle area to less affluent citizens, allowing the richly diversified development which characterizes the area even now.



The Metropolitan Railroad's horse-drawn trolley crossing Rock Creek on P Street, leaving Dupont Circle for Georgetown. Courtesy LeRoy O. King, Jr. Photo by Handy Studios (1880's).

THE "SPLENDID ROOF-TREES" OF DUPONT CIRCLE

The Dupont Circle area offered a *tabula rasa* on which residential design could maximize the L'Enfant aesthetic. The "parking system," instituted by the Board to reduce the cost of paving the wide L'Enfant streets, allowed owners to create gardens and build projections such as entrance stairs, towers, and bays in the twenty-foot public space in front of their houses. Sidewalks and rows of forest trees were placed along the street next to the private gardens.



N.W. side of 1400 block of New Hampshire Avenue looking toward Dupont Circle showing street improvements, porch, bay and tower projections on detached mansions.

The house at left is thought to have been the first Colonial Revival house in Washington. Designed by Robert I. Fleming for Philadelphia merchant John W. Field in 1883, it was drastically remodeled in the Romanesque style by Harvey L. Page for mining millionaire Senator George Hearst in 1889. Razed 1964.

Courtesy Library of Congress, Frances B. Johnston photo.

Mature street plantings on New Hampshire Avenue looking N.E. from Dupont Circle.

Courtesy Historical Society of Washington, D.C. (1935).



Some of the nation's finest architects rose to the challenge, fulfilling the L'Enfant plan in Dupont Circle. The architectural grandeur admired by Moore in 1884 included houses which were increasingly luxurious and eclectic in style. The Second Empire style of the '70s was followed in the '80s and '90s by Queen Anne, Richardsonian Romanesque, Arts and Crafts, Colonial Revival, Moorish, Italian Renaissance and other



Residence of Wisconsin Senator Philetus Sawyer, Connecticut Avenue and R Street, looking north (1887). Razed 1924. Courtesy Historical Society of Washington, D.C. (ca. 1890).

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Residence of Wisconsin Senator Philetus Sawyer, Connecticut Avenue and R Street, looking north (1887). Razed 1924. Courtesy Historical Society of Washington, D.C. (ca. 1890).

Fraser Mansion,
1701 20th St. (1890).
Designed by
Hornblower &
Marshall, this is a
stylistically transi-
tional building
combining elements
of both Colonial
Revival and
Richardsonian
Romanesque design.

Courtesy Kiplinger
Washington Collection, W. E. Barrett photograph (1965).



fashionable styles. Regardless of stylistic vocabulary, design was architectonic in approach. Skillful massing and use of masonry construction detail, light, texture, and color expressed an American architecture of great design integrity and originality which was very different from anything which had gone before. Its towers, bays, and irregular footprints complemented L'Enfant's street design. Washington architects Hornblower & Marshall, T. F. Schneider, and Harvey L. Page were masters of the new design. In the 1880s and '90s the Dupont Circle neighborhood was also enriched by the work of architects from other cities, including J. Cleveland Cady and McKim, Mead, and White of New York.

With the development of a nationwide network of railroads and the advent of the steamship and ocean liner, long-distance travel became commonplace and increasingly luxurious. Guests could be easily brought



The
Whittemore/
Weeks House,
(Woman's
National
Democratic
Club) 1526
New Hamp-
shire Avenue
(1892-4), was
designed by
Harvey L.

Page. This innovative masterpiece of American residential architecture, with its abstract geometric forms, fine brickwork and lack of applied decoration, is kin to the American Shingle and English Arts and Crafts styles of architecture. Courtesy Woman's National Democratic Club, Frances B. Johnston photo.

St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 18th and Church Streets (1893), was designed in the Perpendicular Gothic style by Philadelphia architect Theophilus P. Chandler. Burned by arsonists in 1970, it is preserved as a ruin today. Courtesy Kiplinger Washington Collection, W. E. Barrett photograph (1967).



with their servants, household goods and even horses from New York, Newport and other fashionable locations for an opulent party or event. Dupont Circle became the setting for a brilliant 'winter season,' and the sites on the L'Enfant avenues were much in demand. The mansions built to showcase the new society were designed for entertaining, with grand entrance halls and richly furnished drawing rooms, music rooms, ball rooms, and conservatories. Interior design was often imaginatively eclectic, varying from room to room. Moore noted:

There are receptions, dinners, balls, Germans, afternoon teas, kettle-drums, and all sorts of entertainments almost without number, from the beginning of winter until late in the spring...there are numerous literary, musical, and art societies, which have frequent entertainments. It is said that Washington society people, during the winter, lunch in one place, dine in another, dance in several houses of an evening, and are never at home, except on their reception-days.

Ballroom of the British Legation,
1300 Connecticut Avenue. The
first foreign-owned legation in
Washington, the British Legation
was a catalyst in developing the
Dupont Circle area as a center of
social and diplomatic activity.
Courtesy Huntington Library, Francis B.
Johnston photograph (1901-05).



L'Enfant had overlaid a straightforward grid street pattern like that of Philadelphia with broad, intersecting diagonal avenues. In the Dupont Circle area especially, this device created many intimate residential enclaves. Stylistically, the design of the houses along the grid streets emulated that of the mansions and was often the work of the same architects. Some speculative housing, like the Second Empire north side of the 2000 block of N Street and T. F. Schneider's bold



The Presbyterian Church of the Covenant, S. E. corner 18th & N Streets (1887, razed 1966), was designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style by New York architect J. Cleveland Cady in 1887. The statue of Francis Asbury remains in the small triangular reservation between the Church and Connecticut Avenue. Note the dome of St. Matthew's Cathedral, right rear. Courtesy Kiplinger Washington Collection, W. E. Barrett photograph, (1963).

Richardsonian Romanesque south side of the 1800 block of Q Street, was designed as coordinated rows. Other streets, with houses built by individuals, developed as microcosms of architectural design along the avenues.

The Church of the Covenant set the style for the architecturally distinguished 1700 block of N Street. 1750-56 N Street pictured. Courtesy Kiplinger Washington Collection, W. E. Barrett photograph (1967).



The World's Columbian Exposition, held in Chicago in 1893, had a profound effect on the development of Washington and popularized the ideal of a monumental capital city built in white marble and limestone in the mode of Beaux Arts classicism. In the Dupont Circle area, many of the original brownstone and brick mansions were demolished to make way for the palatial designs of Jules Henri de Sibour, Carrere & Hastings, and others. More modest row houses also were built with neo-classic detail and less exuberant massing. Limestone and buff brick replaced brownstone and dark-red pressed brick.



The Perry Belmont House (International Eastern Star Temple), 1614 New Hampshire Avenue, was designed by Sanson & Trumbauer in 1909. Courtesy Historical Society of Washington, D. C. (1918)

A HETEROGENEOUS RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD

By 1884 tourists were riding the trolley up Connecticut Avenue to view the mansions concentrated along the wide diagonal avenues intersecting Dupont Circle. The majority of residences within the developing neighborhood were, however, rowhouses of somewhat less grand pretensions. Doctors, lawyers, teachers, government clerks, craftsmen, servants, laborers and

others lived side by side with high government officials, diplomats, and the socially elite. Public transportation allowed easy access to downtown employment. Senators and Supreme Court justices often used the trolleys for the trek to Capitol Hill. The Georgetown waterfront was an easy walk for skilled and unskilled workers. Services such as carpentry, dressmaking, and plumbing were furnished by skilled workers living in the neighborhood. Neighborhood needs were also met by corner grocery stores and local dairies.



Christian Heurich Brewery, 1229 20th St. (1881).

"The excellence and purity of Heurich's beer is universally known. In its manufacture nothing of a deleterious character is used, while the best malts of Canada, Wisconsin, and Ohio are manipulated in its production. The increased use of Heurich's lager beer in hospitals and private families is a sufficient guarantee of its purity and healthfulness." Courtesy Historical Society of Washington, D.C.

Households were often large, including extended family, boarders, and servants. The custom of unmarried adult children continuing to live in the parental home persisted well into the twentieth century. Boarders were not unusual in a city with a long tradition of boarding houses. Many servants were required in the large houses, and even less affluent households, lacking modern conveniences, relied heavily upon full-time domestic help. Servants often

lived in. This was especially true for those who had emigrated from England, Ireland and Sweden or who were



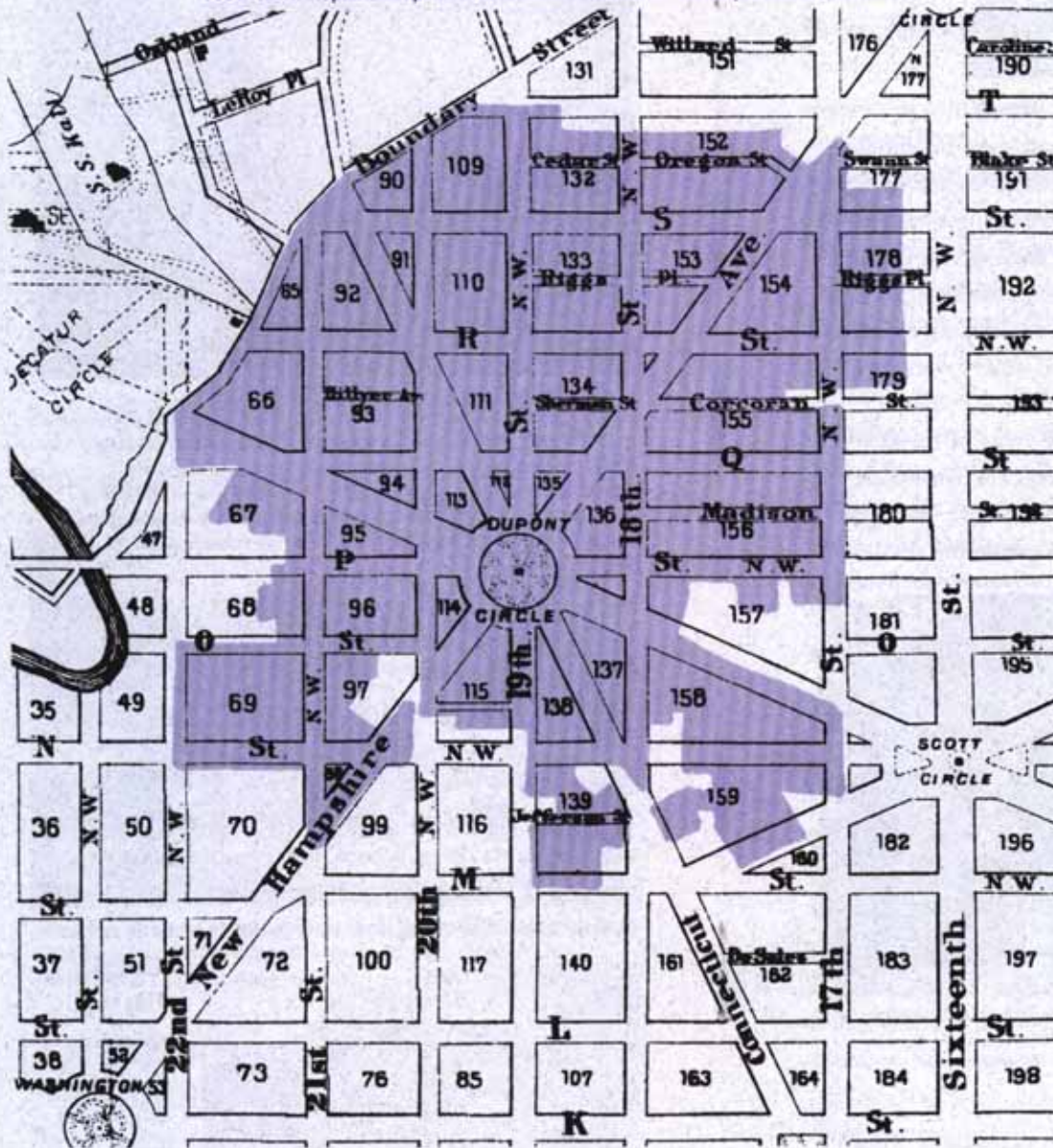
A. Grass cabinetmaker, 1209 New Hampshire Avenue. Demolished. Courtesy Historical Society of Washington, D.C.



North side of Q Street between 17th & 18th Streets. Courtesy Historical Society of Washington, D.C.. Illustration, *Selections From the Work of T. F. Schneider, Architect* (1894).

DUPONT CIRCLE HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARY MAP

1887 G. M. Hopkins Map of the District of Columbia. Courtesy National Archives.



1608-1614 20th Street (1965)



1721-17 P Street (1967)



21st & N Streets (1962)



1800 New Hampshire Avenue



The architectural heritage of the Dupont Circle Historic District is rich and diverse, including a full range of fine residential architecture. Some notable examples of smaller houses and both speculatively and privately built rows are shown here. Photos courtesy Kiplinger Washington Collection, W. E. Barrett photos (1963-67).



1207-1205 19th Street (1963)

2013 Hillyer Place (demolished)

attached to diplomatic staffs. However, many of those supplying such essential services as laundry, cooking, and cleaning lived in their own homes within the future historic district. The 1910 census shows families of laborers and domestics living together in extremely over-crowded conditions in modest houses on Newport Place constructed in the first decade of the century. This was in stark contrast with those whom they served.



Analostan apartment building, 1718 Corcoran St. (1893). Courtesy Kiplinger Washington Collection, W. E. Barrett Collection, (1967).

APARTMENT LIVING COMES TO DUPONT CIRCLE

By the 1880s, luxurious apartment buildings with hotel-like features were being constructed in the Dupont Circle area, answering the needs of Congressmen and others who could

not afford or did not wish to maintain a private residence for only part of the year. One of the city's oldest surviving apartment buildings, the Analostan, was built in 1893 at 1718 Corcoran Street. Designed by George S. Cooper, the five-story building re-

sembled the Queen Anne mansions of its Dupont Circle neighbors.

The steel frame and hydraulic elevator allowed building heights never before possible. The construction in 1894 of T. F. Schneider's luxury 12-story, 160-foot-high Cairo at 1615 Q Street raised new concerns

for light and air, fire safety, and the protection of the symbolic dominance of the monumental core of the L'Enfant city. Congress immediately enacted legislation limiting the height of residential buildings to 90 feet and commercial buildings to 110 feet, maintaining the visual integrity of L'Enfant's brilliant design of a "grand city for a great nation."



The Cairo Apartment Building, 1615 Q Street (1894). Courtesy Historical Society of Washington, D.C. (ca. 1902).

Apartment house construction in the Dupont Circle area boomed during the early years of the century, and Washingtonians increasingly sought the convenience and prestige of apartment house living in this unique urban neighborhood. Sixteen apartment houses were built between 1900 and 1910, twenty-one between 1910 and 1920, thirty-two between 1920 and 1930, and ten between 1930 and 1945. As in the Analostan, the design of these apartment houses was often

influenced by the prevailing residential design, and was imaginatively conceived to



Cordova Apartments, 20th St. & Florida Ave. (1905). Courtesy James Goode.

accommodate an expanding transient, often single, clientele. Rapid growth of the federal government after the Spanish-American and World Wars brought many to Washington whose ties to the city were through their work. The 40-unit three-story Cordova, designed in 1905 by Washington architect Waddy B. Wood in the Spanish Mission Revival style, utilized a T-shaped plan to accommodate an irregular site at 20th Street and Florida Avenue. It innovatively provided for family living with the city's first duplex units, roof pavilions, tennis courts and gardens. In contrast, the seven-story Toronto (1908), at 2004 P Street west of Dupont Circle, was designed by Albert H. Beers for a middle-income market. With Beaux Arts masonry detail and a series of six-story oriel bays, Beers adapted the prevailing neighborhood residential style to a high-rise envelope.

The luxury five-story Avondale, 1734 P Street, was built by Harry Wardman near Dupont Circle in 1913. Its transitional Craftsman/Beaux Arts style reflected that of nearby mansions. In 1915, Jules H. de Sibour designed the ultimate luxury apartment building for millionaire Cyrus McCormick at 1785 Massachusetts Avenue. The five-story Beaux Arts style building contained only six luxuriously detailed 11,000 square-foot apartments. After the World War, the Dupont Circle Building (1926-31), 1332-1366 Connecticut Avenue, reflected the changing social scene in the neighborhood. The design of this monolithic eleven-story building by Mirhan Mesrobian made no apologies to the mansion it replaced, but looked forward to the developing urban context.

AN EDUCATIONAL CENTER

A vigorous free African American community, established in the Dupont Circle area before the Civil War, became a national center of abolitionist activity and educational reform. In 1851 Miss Myrtilla Miner (1815-1864), an idealistic white teacher, had abolitionist support for the School for Colored Girls, which she opened in 1851. This was to be a national model for the education of African American teachers. In 1853 she paid \$4000 for a three-acre site at 20th and N Streets. Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, contributed \$1000. Another African American school was housed at the old Quaker Meeting House at 17th and N Streets, and in 1862 an evening school was opened by the American Tract Society in the basement of the Union Bethel Church on M Street between 15th and 16th Street.

Dupont Circle continued to be a center for African American education after the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia in 1862. In 1863 the Miner School

became the Institution for the Education of Colored Youth in the District of Columbia, with Frederick Douglass serving on the Board of Trustees. In 1872 the Miner Fund was created with \$40,000 received for the sale of the three acre lot which Miss Miner had acquired for \$4000 in 1853. The school first rented a building at 1613 P Street, and then was located at the Charles Sumner School at 17th & M Streets. In 1877 a new 3-story 12-room brick building, housing a normal school, high school and elementary school, was constructed on 17th Street between P and Q Streets with \$37,000 from the Miner Fund. In 1887 the Miner School was made an integral part of the public school system, becoming one of the earliest publicly supported teacher training institutions in the nation for African Americans. The Washington Colored High School, known nationally as one of the finest college preparatory schools for African Americans, was located first in the Miner School. This was the predecessor of the prestigious M Street and Dunbar High Schools.



The Miner Building, 17th St. between P & Q Streets (1877). Demolished.
Courtesy William N. Brickner, Jr.

As the community grew, Dupont Circle continued its role as a center for educational reform in the city. Phoebe Apperson Hearst (1842-1919) was a founder of the National Congress of Mothers which became the Parent-Teacher Association. A teacher before she married mining millionaire George Hearst, she established the first kindergartens here in the 1880s, and, championing the education of women, funded construction of the National Cathedral School for girls.



Phoebe Apperson Hearst (1842-1919).
Courtesy Library of Congress, Francis B. Johnston photograph (1901-05).

In 1906, Vassar-educated Lucy Madeira Wing opened Miss Madeira's School for Girls in a townhouse on 19th Street where Miss Miner's school had been located. Not a finishing school, it fostered an education for young girls which stressed the dignity of the individual and equaled in rigor that provided for boys. The Dupont Circle area has been the birthplace of many of Washington's fine private schools including the Holton Arms School (1901), 2025 Hillyer Place; the Potomac School (1904), 6 Dupont Circle; and the Misses Maret French School for Children (1916), 1724 Connecticut Avenue. The Emerson Institute for Boys and Young Men was founded in 1852 as a preparatory school for Harvard College. It moved from its original 14th Street location to 1740 P Street ca. 1916, and to its present location at 1324 18th Street in 1932. Today it is the only one of these early schools to remain in the Dupont Circle Historic District.



Members of the Madeira School class of 1914 photographed on Nineteenth Street in front of the school buildings and, below, on the school roof looking out over a still bucolic Dupont Circle.
Courtesy Archives of the Madeira School, Kathleen Galvin Johnson '53 Collection (ca. 1914).



AN EXCLUSIVE SHOPPING STREET

By the turn of the century, the transformation of Connecticut Avenue in the Dupont Circle area from residential to commercial use had begun. The first shops typically were opened in the street level of former single-family residences and addressed the needs of the neighborhood. Specialty shops catering to upper-class patrons soon followed in profusion, enhancing the neighborhood and attracting wealthy customers from other locations. Style, quality, service, and convenience rather than competitive pricing characterized these establishments. As early as 1908 Connecticut Avenue was vigorously promoted as an exclusive shopping street equivalent to Fifth Avenue in New York and the Rue de la Paix in Paris. Shopping on Connecticut Avenue became a social event where friends could meet and see and be seen as they shopped in preparation for a special occasion. Retainers with carriages, and, later, automobiles trailed behind to carry packages.

Pasternak's, 1219 Connecticut Avenue, offered 'Quality Apparel for Women and Misses, Ready to wear and Made to Order, Furs, Custom Tailoring, Riding Habits.'

These photos courtesy Archives of the Madeira School, Kathleen Galvin Johnson '53 Collection (1930).



By 1930, when this photo was taken, Dupont Circle's small, independent neighborhood groceries and dairies had been replaced with corporate-owned chain outlets like the Sanitary Grocery shown here at 1926 N St.



Nunnally's Tea Room was a favorite stopping place for Connecticut Avenue shoppers.

Automobiles themselves became one of the specialty items sold. From 1910 to 1930, Connecticut Avenue was one of the city's most important locations for automobile showrooms. By 1917, TVT Motors Corp. was located at 1501 Connecticut Avenue. In 1923 the Dodge Bros. Motor Cars moved from 1132-34 Connecticut to a more prominent location at 8 Dupont Circle — earlier the site of Stewart's Castle. In 1924 the Rolls Royce Co. located in the remodeled first floor of 1636 Connecticut Avenue. The first traffic light in the city was installed at the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and 18th Street in 1925.

COMMUNITY ACTIVISM

The income tax, World War I, Prohibition, the Great Depression, changing demographics, the death of long-time residents, and other factors brought lasting change to Dupont Circle. The mansions built here by the nation's wealthy were increasingly used as rooming houses, subdivided into apartments, or demolished to make way for undistinguished high-rise office and apartment buildings which, unlike their earlier counterparts, no longer respected the defining character of the neighborhood. Residential development continued to move westward and Dupont Circle itself became an urban center of mixed uses.



Arnold & Porter Corner, 19th & N Sts. Lily Spandorf has lived in the Dupont Circle neighborhood for 20 years, recording its lost historic fabric. The tortured boundaries of the historic district have in large part been determined by demolition and the advance of the high rise zoning envelop. Courtesy Historical Society of Washington, D.C. Illustration, Lily Spandorf's Washington Never More. (1988).

Founded on the first Monday in May, 1922, the Dupont Circle Citizens Association was the brainchild of several prominent D.C. citizens of the time, including Major General U.S. Grant III and Eleanor Patterson, owner of the *Washington Times-Herald*. Originally concerned with broad city-wide issues such as "housing conditions, school betterment, traffic regulations and fair and equitable rates for public service corporations, especially street car fares and electric light rates," the group expanded its attention to new threats to the neighborhood in the '30s. In 1936 the DCCA's president, Demarest Lloyd, stated that the association would "fight to the best of our ability against any further commercialization in our area," referring to a proposal to re-zone major sections of Massachusetts, 19th and 20th Streets for commercial use. Re-zoning efforts, traffic safety, parking problems, and the proposed construction of the Dupont Circle underpass were major issues, along with noise and smoke pollution. Eventually, the DCCA would become involved in crime and safety issues, environmental protection of parks, and the betterment of neighborhood schools.

Hitt House, 1511 New Hampshire Avenue (1908-09. Razed 1970), was designed by Beaux Arts architect John Russell Pope. Courtesy Commission of Fine Arts, Jack Boucher photo (1970).



HISTORIC PRESERVATION

In the years following World War II the DCCA faced a continuous onslaught of attempts by developers to re-zone their residential community piece-meal for high-density use. Many architecturally significant buildings—including the Hitt, Leiter, and Schneider Houses—were demolished and replaced by monolithic high-rise office buildings. These early losses, however, only strengthened the resolve of neighborhood activists to protect the remaining historic buildings. In 1956 the DCCA supported the Columbia Historical Society in its efforts to occupy the Christian Heurich mansion, and during the 1960s, individuals interested in historic preservation began restoration and rehabilitation activities. The DCCA advocated listing the Dupont Circle area in the National Register of Historic Places as early as 1967. That same year the

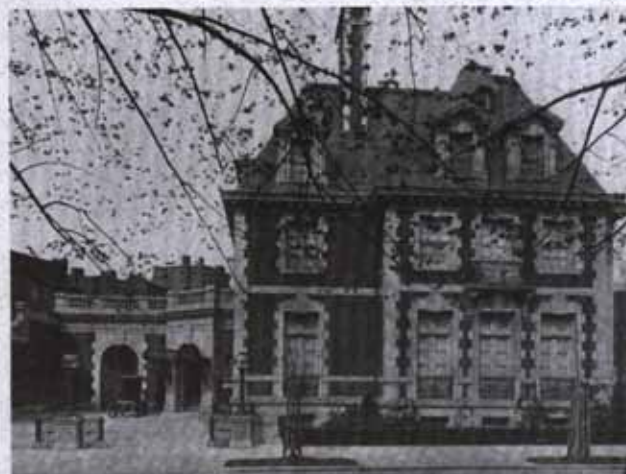


The Woman's National Democratic Club was founded in 1922, shortly after passage of the 19th Amendment giving women the vote. Members on the steps of their new Dupont Circle home in the historic Whittemore/Weeks House, 1526 New Hampshire Ave. Courtesy Woman's National Democratic Club. Wide World Photos, Washington Bureau (ca. 1927).

DCCA held its first tour of historic homes and gardens, led by Dr. Richard H. Howland, Assistant to the Secretary of the Smithsonian, who described the area's architecture as "an outdoor museum."

In 1978 the Dupont Conservancy was formed by a group of citizens, including some from the DCCA, who were concerned solely with historic preservation issues. Expansion of the historic district's boundaries and strict preservation of its integrity have been foremost among their concerns. Members of the Conservancy continue to serve as a voluntary citizen advisory panel to the Historic Preservation Review Board on changes within the historic district.

Dupont Circle has been historically a center of intellectual, artistic, scientific, educational, diplomatic,



1520 20th Street (1904-06) was designed in the Chateausque style by Beaux Arts architect J. H. de Sibour for industrialist Thomas T. Goff. Embassy of Columbia since 1938. Courtesy Commission of Fine Arts, J. H. de Sibour office book (1905).

and political life in the city and the nation. Its enduring institutions include the Phillips Collection, the Historical Society of Washington, D.C., the Charles Sumner School Museum & Archives, the Society of the Cincinnati, the National Headquarters of the Colonial Dames of America—17th Century, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Women's Democratic Club, the Cosmos Club, the Washington Club, and the Sulgrave Club. These groups have enriched the city through lectures, exhibitions, concerts, archives, and libraries. They have joined with more recent 'urban pioneers' to preserve the unique architectural heritage of the area. Dupont Circle is known for its diversity and social activism.

Artists and counter-culture young people added a new chapter to Dupont Circle in the 1960s, enriching the cosmopolitan and artistic flavor of the district. More recently, a growing gay community continues to support arts and cultural events in Dupont Circle and helps to preserve architecture. Fine specialty shops, restaurants, alternative life style bookshops, and art galleries have flourished here, creating a vibrant, urbane environment. Metro, far from disrupting the community, has opened its cultural resources to the larger city, and enhanced its visibility as a model urban neighborhood.



Artist Lily Spandorf captured the urbane charm and vitality of commercial Connecticut Avenue in this painting which included the Caravel Apartments (demolished) at the N.E. corner of Connecticut Ave. and Q St. The famous Pierre's Restaurant, a neighborhood landmark, was located here. Courtesy Historical Society of Washington, D.C.



The Christian Henrich Mansion (1891-94), 1307 New Hampshire Avenue, was designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style by architect John Granville Meyers. It has been the home of the Historical Society of Washington, D.C. since 1956. The Society, founded in 1894, operates a library, offers educational programs, presents changing exhibits, and publishes new research in *Washington History*, a scholarly magazine devoted to local history. Courtesy Historical Society of Washington, D.C. (ca. 1900).

THE DUPONT CIRCLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

by

TANYA EDWARDS BEAUCHAMP

Sponsored by

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON, D.C.

With Special Thanks To

THE DUPONT CIRCLE CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

Dupont Circle Community Organizations concerned with preservation and revitalization of Historic Dupont Circle:
The Dupont Circle Citizens Association, founded 1922.

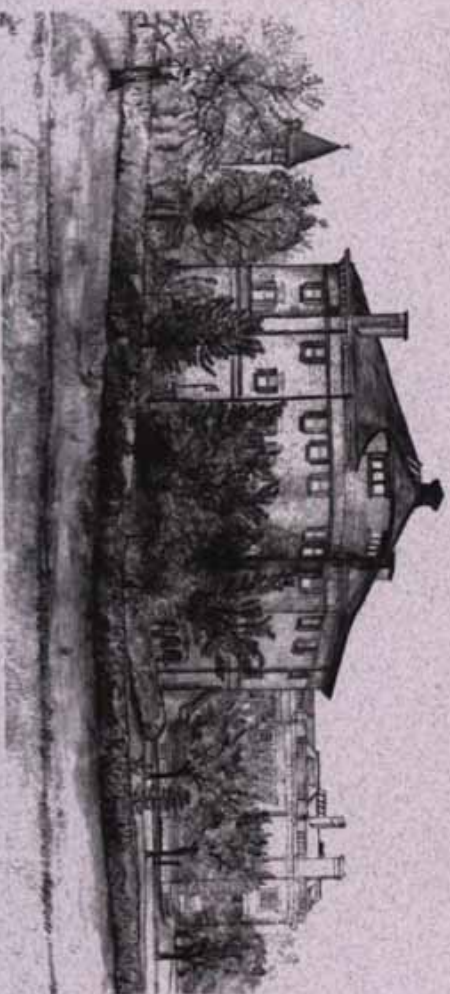
The Dupont Circle Conservancy, founded 1978.

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At the turn of the century the Dupont Circle neighborhood was still suburban in character. This view of Hornblower & Marshall's Boardman House (Chancery of Iraq, 1801 P St., (1890), was painted by J. Braendle in 1905 before the foreground open space and the Belden Noble House, left rear, were replaced by the palatial Beaux Arts Hitt House and McCormick Apartments. Wadsworth House (Sulgrave Club) at right rear. Courtesy Kipfinger Washington Collection.