

BLOOMINGDALE

Historic District

A QUICK LOOK



Photograph Courtesy of DCPL

OVERVIEW

Place

- Bloomingdale is a residential neighborhood in NW DC bounded by Florida Ave. to the south, North Capitol St. to the east, 2nd St. to the west, and Channing St. NW to the north.

Designation

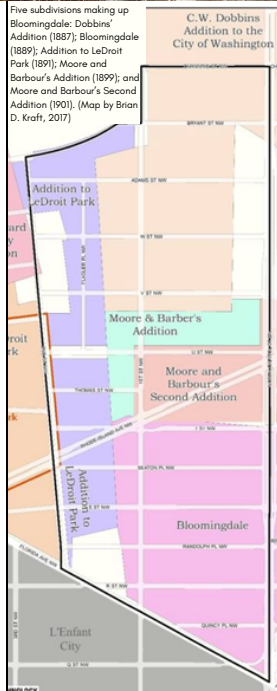
- The Bloomingdale Historic District and its 1,678 contributing buildings were designated by the HPRB in 2018 through the efforts of DCPL and The Bloomingdale Historic Designation Coalition.
- Added to National Register of Historic Places in 2018.

Period of Significance

- 1891–1948

HISTORY

- By the late 1800s, the city began to expand beyond its northern boundary at Florida Avenue into previously rural lands. The Beale Estate, named "Bloomingdale," from Florida Ave north to T Street was first subdivided for development in 1889.
- The construction of streetcar tracks along North Capitol in 1888 opened the area to residential development. Where, in 1891, George N. Beale, built the first rowhomes in Bloomingdale on the 1700 block of First Street NW.
- By 1907, developers and white residents of Bloomingdale began to incorporate racially restrictive covenants into deeds, effectively making First Street a racial dividing line.
- In the first half of the 1900s, numerous Black families moved into homes with covenants, challenging DC and federal law, and establishing Bloomingdale as a center of civil rights efforts. Of DC's 43 legal challenges to restrictive covenants, nearly half originated in Bloomingdale.
- In 1948 the US Supreme Court ruled against these covenants in *Shelley V. Kramer*. The case was heard alongside two companion cases originating from Bloomingdale, *Uricolo V. Hodge* and *Hurd V. Hodge*.



IMPORTANT FIGURES

Several figures important to DC and the nation's history have called Bloomingdale home, including:

- Senator Edward Brooke of Massachusetts, the first African American elected to the Senate in a popular election: 1730 First St. NW.
- Actress, Singer, and Dancer Chita Rivera: 2134 Flagler Pl. NW | Photo Below
- Though he never lived in Bloomingdale, the NAACP Attorney Charles Hamilton Houston was instrumental in fighting racial covenants, defending the Hurd Family living at 116 Bryant St. NW.



Photograph Courtesy of DCPL



DC Public Library: Ross Postcard Collection
View Looking West Along Channing St, NW, ca. 1910

DEVELOPMENT AND ARCHITECTURE

Development

- Originally, Bloomingdale was a collection of rural estates, but beginning in 1888, after the signing of the Subdivision Act, these estates were subdivided by their owners for development as one of the city's first streetcar suburbs. By 1900 a streetcar line ran up North Capitol Street as far as Adams Street.
- Between 1896 and 1908, the formidable developers Middaugh & Shannon led the residential development in Bloomingdale, building over 300 homes, most of which were rowhomes designed by architect Thomas Haislip in a Late Victorian style.

Architecture

- By 1910, the three-story highly decorative Victorian rowhouses that dominated the Bloomingdale neighborhood were falling out of fashion. In their place, developers began to build modest two-story rowhomes, ditching the high turrets, decorative rooflines, and projecting bays. The new homes were setback from the street to make room for a large front porch and garden. Nowhere in Bloomingdale is this better illustrated than along V Street. The homes on the south side of the street are all typical Victorian rowhomes built in 1899, while the north side of V Street was not developed until 1914-1922 and shows the new, modest tastes of builders and families.

HISTORIC LANDMARKS WITHIN THE BLOOMINGDALE HISTORIC DISTRICT

- Old Engine Company No. 12: 1626 North Capitol St. NW | Seen at right
- American (Sylvan) Theater: 104-108 Rhode Island Ave. NW
- Nathaniel Parker Gage School: 2035 2nd St. NW
- Samuel Gompers House: 2122 First St. NW (National Historic Landmark)



DC Public Library: Ross Postcard Collection