



## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

National Register Documentation:  
*Significant Sites Designed by Black Architects  
in Washington, DC*

DC Preservation League | July 2024



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**National Park Service - Multiple Property Document**

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**Background:** In 2024, the DC Preservation League (DCPL) received a grant from the National Park Services' Underrepresented Communities Grant Program to underwrite and develop a Multiple Property Document and an Associated Nomination related to properties in the District of Columbia designed by Black Architects.

DCPL is Washington's citywide nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving, protecting, and enhancing the historic resources of our nation's capital. DCPL's mission is carried out through education, community outreach, research and documentation, and advocacy. This project will catalyze nominations to the DC Inventory of Historic Sites (DC Inventory) and the National Register of Historic Places (National Register).

Since before the establishment of the federal city in 1791, African Americans have played a significant role in shaping the built environment of Washington, DC. Free Black astronomer Benjamin Banneker (1731-1806) worked with surveyor Andrew Ellicott (1754-1820) to survey the boundaries of the ten-mile-square area that would become the District of Columbia, just as hundreds of skilled and unskilled enslaved persons were hired out by their enslavers to help build the US Capitol and the White House. After the Civil War, freed Blacks with carpentry, masonry, metalworking, and other building skills entered the building trades in significant numbers in the city. The increased population led to a major building boom. While many Blacks entered the design field through the building trades, they also approached the design world through various avenues, known and unknown.

According to the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards, just 2% of licensed architects in the United States today are Black. That number amounts to approximately 2,600 out of 122,000 total. The profession has long been white-male-dominated, leaving the work of countless women, Blacks, and other racial minorities widely unrecognized. The roots of the Black architectural community are grounded within the District of Columbia, as Howard University was one of the first Historically Black Colleges and Universities to offer a four-year degree in architecture at a time when the country was still widely segregated. This program ultimately attracted students from across the country and established Howard as the principal training ground for Black architects in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Despite this connection, the works of Black architects in the city remain underrepresented in both the DC Inventory and the National Register.

This project will establish a historic context statement and also identify, and establish a list of, Black architects that had a significant impact on the built environment of Washington, DC. The project will also formally identify/document properties that are representative of the impact Black architects have had on the built environment of DC. The MPD will include one new nomination to the National Register and set the stage for nominating more properties to the DC Inventory and the National Register.

**Purpose:** DCPL seeks proposals from qualified Consultants (Consultant) interested in undertaking research to identify, and establish a list of, Black architects that had a significant impact on the built environment of Washington, DC. As part of the project, the consultant will establish an inventory of extant properties in the District of Columbia associated with those identified Black architects.

The selected Consultant will: (1) produce a historic context statement that details the history of the professionalization of Blacks in design and their influence on DC's built environment through time. (2) prepare a National Register Multiple Property Document, including identification of extant properties that are representative of the Black architects identified as significant to the built environment of DC, thus setting the stage for future nominations to both the DC Inventory and the National Register of Historic Places. (3) produce one new individual landmark nomination related to the topic for submission to the DC Inventory and the National Register; (4) present the Multiple

Property Document and nomination to the public and the DC Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB).

**Scope of Work:** Consultant is expected to complete outlined research and documentation tasks in a 15-month period. The project is expected to take 24 months, with the remaining time reserved for community engagement and presentations before the HPRB.

### **Tasks for Consultant Include:**

#### **Task 1: Project Management**

The Consultant will coordinate project activities and is responsible for carrying out project tasks while ensuring that tasks are completed within scope, budget, and schedule. Project kick-off, schedule, and coordination of tasks and deliverables must be completed in consultation with DCPL.

#### **Task 2: Background Research**

In consultation with DCPL, the Consultant will conduct the research and survey work necessary to prepare a historic context statement that details the history of the professionalization of Blacks in design and their influence on DC's built environment through time. With that established context, Consultant will prepare a National Register Multiple Property Document, including the identification of associated property types. (15 months)

#### **Task 3: Survey Documentation**

Create an Excel spreadsheet of resources associated with the Black architects identified as part of the context in order to facilitate the evaluation of other properties associated with Black architects in Washington, DC. The list of resources will identify previously recorded and National Register-listed or newly identified properties that may be eligible for designation. This spreadsheet will include an entry for each property that contains its address, owner, designation status, and associated theme(s).

#### **Task 4: Complete Multiple Property Documentation**

The Consultant will complete the Multiple Property Documentation based on guidance set forth in [NPS White Paper: The Components of a Historic Context](#) and [Section III.E. of How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Document](#). This document will establish a historic context for the professionalization of Blacks in design and their influence on DC's built environment through time. The project will also formally identify/document properties that are representative of the impact Black architects have had on the built environment of DC. It will facilitate the evaluation of individual properties by comparing them with resources with similar physical characteristics and historical associations. The document will discuss associated property types and identify previously recorded and National Register-listed or newly identified eligible properties.

As noted in Task 3, a list of identified resources should be completed in a separate Excel spreadsheet that can be sorted by architect. The spreadsheet should include, at minimum, the resource name, address, ownership, designation status, and associated theme(s).

#### **Task 5: Preparation of one new nomination for submission to the DC Inventory of Historic Sites and the National Register of Historic Places.**

In consultation with DCPL, the Consultant will identify one new property eligible for listing under the MPD cover document and conduct the necessary research to prepare the National Register nomination for that property. In advance of preparing the National Register documentation for the new nominations, DCPL will coordinate with the property owner identified for National Register documentation regarding owner consent and access for interior photography. If DCPL

cannot secure owner support, the Consultant in coordination with DCPL, will identify other properties for documentation. (10 months)

### **Task 6 – Public Presentation**

The Consultant will present the 50% draft results of the research and documentation project at one public meeting to receive feedback on the draft report. The date, time, and location of the public forum will be determined in consultation with DCPL.

### **Task 7 – Consultation and Historic Preservation Review Board Presentation**

To ensure final acceptance of the Multiple Property Document, the Consultant must conduct ongoing consultations with DCPL and HPO (with a mutually agreeable schedule to be determined) to solicit feedback on the research and documentation to be delivered. Consultant must also agree to present, with visuals, the completed Multiple Property Document and associated nomination to the DC Historic Preservation Review Board for approval.

**Timeline:** The estimated start date for the project is September 1, 2024. Research and documentation must be complete by November 30, 2025.

**Proposal Requirements:** Experience preparing Multiple Property Documents, Historic Context Statements, and other National Register documentation forms is desired. All Consultant responses must include resumes of all staff assigned to the project and demonstrate that the project manager and applicable staff meet 36CFR61 Appendix A *Historic Preservation Professional Qualifications Standards*.

The budget proposal should not exceed \$55,000, including expenses related to photo permissions or other services required to complete the project. Please include the proposed timeline with start/end dates for each task and at least one example of a Historic Context Statement, Multiple Property Document, National Register Landmark Nomination, or other related documents the Consultant has produced in the past five years.

**Deadline to Submit Proposals:** Please submit electronically to Kelli Knox ([kelli@dcpreservation.org](mailto:kelli@dcpreservation.org)) by 11:59 pm EST, August 9, 2024. The subject line should read "Proposal in Response to Black Architects Multiple Property Document."

### **Acknowledgements:**

This project is supported in part by an Underrepresented Communities Grant (URC) from the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. The HPF has funded more than \$2 billion since its inception in 1977 towards historic preservation grants. For more information about the URC grant program, please visit [go.nps.gov/urc](http://go.nps.gov/urc).

This project has received Federal financial assistance for the identification, protection, and/or rehabilitation of historic properties and cultural resources in the District of Columbia. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the US Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, or disability in its Federally assisted programs. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, US Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20240.

### **Cover Photos:**

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