



Newsletter

April 2026

Support DCPL's Legal Advocacy Fund

Advocacy Update

Despite Strong Opposition from the Public and a Pending Federal Lawsuit, the Commission of Fine Arts Voted to Support Eisenhower Executive Office Building (EEOB) Concept Proposal



Rendering of the Eisenhower Executive Office Building with a painted exterior.

On April 16th, the [Commission of Fine Arts \(CFA\)](#) voted to support a concept proposal to paint the historic granite exterior of the Eisenhower Executive Office Building (EEOB) bright white. The building is a National Historic Landmark and one of the most significant examples of French Second Empire architecture in the United States. Despite strong public opposition and the DC Preservation League's pending federal lawsuit, CFA voted to advance the plan. Greg Werkheiser and Marion F. Werkheiser of Cultural Heritage Partners — who are representing DCPL on the matter — testified against CFA moving forward on the proposal. Their testimony can be viewed at the below link.

According to CFA Secretary Thomas Luebke, over 900 letters of opposition were received by CFA — with **no letters in support**. The DC Preservation League would like to thank its members and supporters for voicing their concerns!

At the same meeting, CFA voted to support a concept proposal for a monumental arch on Columbia Island, between the Memorial Bridge and Arlington National Cemetery. On the arch case, CFA received 1000 letters from the public **unanimously opposed** to the proposal! At the hearing, DCPL's Zachary Burt voiced the organization's opposition to the arch.

These two cases will return to CFA at a future point. Stay tuned for future updates.

[Testimony on EEOB](#)

[Click Here to Learn More About DCPL's EEOB Lawsuit](#)

[Testimony on Monumental Arch](#)

Join the Fight to Save the Kennedy Center!



Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, 1980. Photo by Carol M. Highsmith, courtesy of Library of Congress.

On March 23rd, [a coalition of eight nonprofit cultural resources and architectural organizations filed suit](#) to stop the Kennedy Center Board of Trustees from altering the Edward Durell Stone-designed landmark and living memorial to John F. Kennedy without public input and congressional approval.

The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is facing proposed changes that threaten its mission, architectural integrity, and cultural legacy. These changes, driven by the current administration, risk diminishing its architecture, the arts, and accessibility.

To combat these proposed changes, we urgently need your support. DCPL is launching a fundraising campaign to establish a dedicated fund to support preservation efforts at the Kennedy Center. Our goal is to ensure that this landmark is protected from ill-advised alterations and continues to thrive for the arts community.

Every contribution, no matter the size, will go into this effort. Please help us mount a robust legal defense of this iconic building. Please join us in this crucial fight to protect the Kennedy Center and to preserve the vital role that it has played as one of the greatest cultural landmarks in our society. Together, we can ensure that our cultural landscape remains strong.

****The DC Preservation League is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.****

DCPL accepts ACH, Credit Cards, and Checks. Gifts of Stock or Mutual Funds are sold upon receipt. Information will be provided upon request.

If you would prefer to speak with a staff member to make a donation, ***please contact [Kelli Knox \(kelli@dcpreservation.org\)](mailto:kelli@dcpreservation.org).***

Donate to the Kennedy Center Advocacy Fund

Landmark Update

Capitol Power Plant Pump House, 1520 First Street SE



View of the Capitol Power Plant Pump House, which sits above the Anacostia River. Photo by D. Peter Sefton.

On March 26th, the DC Historic Preservation Review Board approved a landmark nomination for the Capitol Power Plant Pump House (1520 First Street SE), which sits just

off shore above the Anacostia River. The nomination for the pump house was submitted by the DC Preservation League in November 2020.

The Capitol Power Plant Pump House was completed in 1910 to provide water for the Capitol Power Plant, also completed in 1910, approximately 1 mile north at E Street and New Jersey Avenue SE. The pump house's water was used for the power plant's coal-fired boilers — with coal delivered via the nearby railroad line. This steam power provided electricity and heat for the U.S. Capitol Building, Senate and House office buildings, and Library of Congress (Jefferson Building).

Within a short period of time, new tunnels were constructed, expanding the electricity and heat to additional buildings, including Union Station. Demand for air conditioning in the 1930s led to the construction of an addition to the pump house in 1935, as well as an expansion of the power plant.

Nonetheless, starting in the 1950s, the pump house became obsolete, as the US Capitol Complex opted for electrical power from PEPCO and municipal water. In 1961, the pump house was transferred to the DC Government, where it sat abandoned until the early 1990s.

Since 1993, the former pump house has been used by Earth Conservation Corps (ECC), a non-profit devoted to youth development and protecting the environment, specifically the Anacostia River and other area watersheds. For more than 30 years, ECC has engaged youth through its environmental initiatives and programming, much of which takes place at the former pump house, since renamed the Monique Johnson Anacostia River Center (Johnson was a founding ECC member). DCPL appreciates ECC's support on the nomination!

[Click Here to Learn More](#)

Upcoming Event

Public Meeting: Brookland Public Education Project

Wednesday, April 22nd | 7:00 - 8:15 pm
Online via Zoom



The former Newton Theater, located on Brookland's 12th Street NE. Photo by Zachary Burt.

Please plan to join DCPL for this online event! Historic preservation consultant and architectural historian [Heather McMahon](#) will present her initial findings related to DCPL's Brookland Community Public Education Project. Once completed, this project will provide important documentation of Brookland's historic commercial corridor along 12th Street NE.

Brookland’s 12th Street NE commercial corridor largely developed in the second quarter of the 20th century, and the two-block study area between Otis and Monroe streets is lined with small-scale, vernacular commercial buildings and rowhouses. Since 2019, several older buildings have been lost to mid-rise, residential, infill development, and the entire corridor is prime for redevelopment. This documentation, which highlights small and legacy businesses along Brookland's 12th Street, is partly informed by oral histories, and will highlight the important overlap between historic preservation and public history. Once the project is completed during summer 2026, this information, including oral histories, will be available to the public via an ArcGIS Story Map.

Following the presentation, Heather will answer questions and ask for feedback on the project. This project is part of a Section 106 review process and a resulting memorandum of agreement from December 2024. If you have questions related to the Section 106 process, please contact [Zachary Burt \(zach@dcpreservation.org\)](mailto:zach@dcpreservation.org).

This event is free and open to the public!

Upcoming Event

Walking Tour: Legacy Businesses of DC's Chinatown

Saturday, April 25th | 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm
In-Person, Chinatown



Map of Chinatown's restaurants, retail/services, and community spaces. Photo courtesy of the Save Chinatown Solidarity Network.

Let's talk about landmarks and family-owned legacy businesses! Join the DC Preservation League and [Save Chinatown Solidarity Network](#) for a tour of DC's Chinatown.

This tour will visit small businesses, serving the District with fresh noodles, authentic traditional Chinese medicine, and staple produce and goods. Hear directly from the community, learn their history, and find ways to support the neighborhood's preservation in this guided tour.

This tour is \$15 for anyone who would like to attend.

Additional Tour Date Just Announced

Guided Tour: New Deal Murals at the Wilbur J. Cohen Building

Monday, May 4th | 11:30 am - 12:30 pm
In-Person, Cohen Building, C Street SW (between 3rd and 4th streets)



New Deal Mural in Wilbur J. Cohen Building. Photo by Carol M. Highsmith, courtesy of Library of Congress.

The [Wilbur J. Cohen Building](#) features massive mural cycles by three celebrated artists of the 20th century: Philip Guston, Ben Shahn, and Seymour Fogel. Each mural vividly illustrates life in 1930s America, and highlights the government's role in caring for its citizens through the Social Security Administration.

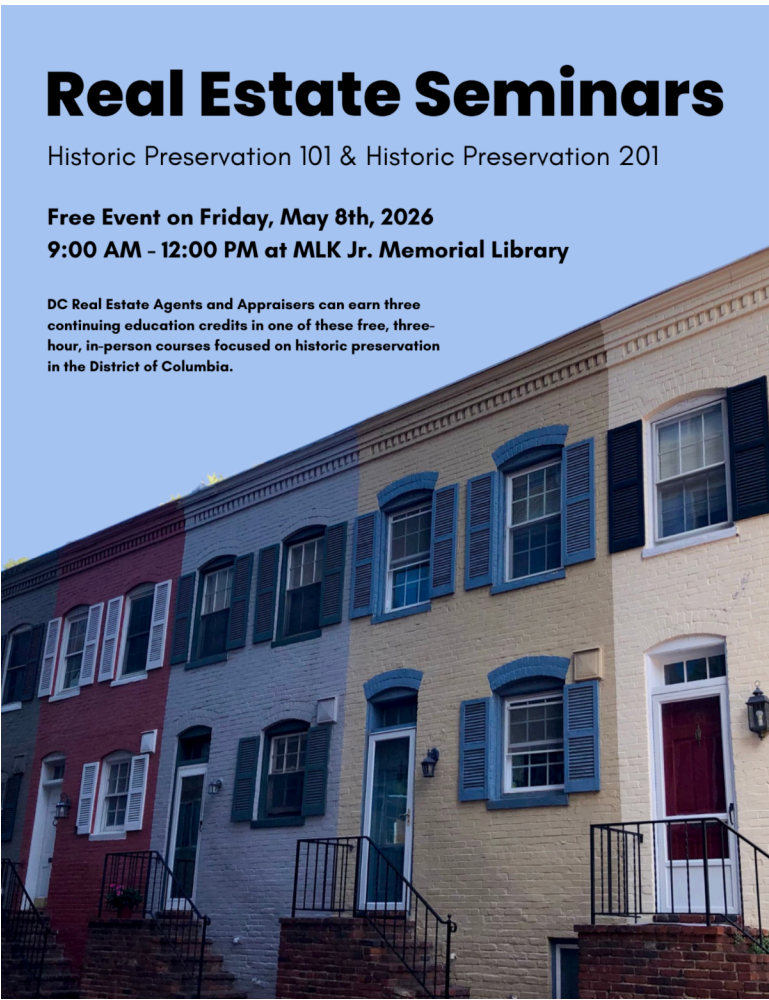
The Cohen Building is considered under serious threat of sale and potential demolition. Congress authorized the sale of the building, and the General Services Administration (GSA) has included it in an expedited disposal program.

This tour is free but has limited space and will fill up quickly; register today! If you are unable to make it this time, don't worry! We are hoping to offer one more tour in May.

Upcoming Event

2026 Historic Preservation 101 & 201 for Realtors and Appraisers

Friday, May 8th | 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
In-Person, Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, 901 G Street NW



Join the DC Preservation League at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library (901 G Street NW) on Friday, May 8th from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm for the 2026 Real Estate Seminars. DC Real Estate Agents and Appraisers can earn three continuing education credits in one of these free, three-hour, in-person courses focused on historic preservation in the District of Columbia.

Please note these courses run at the same time and you may only register for one.

HP 101 will provide an overview of historic preservation and architectural styles in the District. HP 201 will explore related topics, like the benefits of designating a property and how to do so. Please note all participants are required to take 101 before 201.

Free to all!

If you have any questions, please contact [Kelli Knox \(kelli@dcpreservation.org\)](mailto:kelli@dcpreservation.org).

Register Here

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