

FIGURE 48: George William Baist. *Real Estate Atlas of Surveys of Washington, D.C.*, Vol. 4, Plate 1, 1913. (Courtesy of Geography and Maps, Library of Congress)



FIGURE 49: *Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Depot, Razed, 1907.* (Courtesy of Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress)

### 3. CAPITOL HILL EAST BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS

Within the first two decades of the twentieth century, Washington, D.C. was faced with an acute housing shortage as the nation geared for war, an effort that began in earnest about 1916. With materials and labor diverted to the war effort, housing construction had been sharply curtailed and the supply fell far below the demand created by the military buildup. In 1918, only 250 building permits for a total of 555 buildings had been issued citywide, a mere one quarter of the number granted in 1912 and one third of the number issued in 1914.<sup>60</sup>

The lack of development during this period was clearly visible in Capitol Hill East, which was finally experiencing steady residential construction. Between 1912 and 1916, nearly 600 buildings had been constructed on the subdivided lots to the east of 15th Street. Yet, the effects of World War I curtailed new development, with just 77 additional buildings erected by the war's end in 1918. The vast majority of the construction taking place during the second decade of the twentieth century was single-family housing in the form of row houses, supported by the occasional store and church.

The presence of the Navy Yard, both immediately prior to and during the war, placed great pressure on housing on Capitol Hill and nearby Anacostia, which was now easily accessible by streetcar. After German submarines began attacking British ships in the Atlantic Ocean, Congress passed the Naval Act of 1916, appropriating \$500 million to construct what was popularly called a "Navy Second to None." The Naval Gun Factory at the Navy Yard was charged with producing the guns and rifles for use on the new naval vessels. Over the next two years, the Navy Yard purchased additional land and expanded to both the east and west. By April 1917, the gun factory workforce numbered 6,000, with employees working around the clock in three shifts. By the end of 1918, the number of workers had reached 10,000.<sup>61</sup> This resulted in the construction of more than 85 dwellings in the southeast quadrant of Capitol Hill East nearest to the Navy

Yard, while just 65 new buildings were erected in the northeast quadrant—the majority of which were located within close proximity to Union Station and H Street north of F Street, N.E.

In April 1919, just months after the November 11, 1918 Armistice, the *Washington Post* reported that Washington, D.C. faced a housing shortage of 2,000 units that builders were not yet prepared to address. The newspaper wrote that, “an army of homeseekers is daily traveling the length and breadth of the city in a vain effort to find a place to lay its head.”<sup>62</sup> With the World War I expansion, the city’s population had grown to 438,000 by 1920, an increase of 32% over a decade, compared to a 19% increase in the previous decade.<sup>63</sup>

The high demand for housing, and particularly for moderately priced, conveniently located housing for the expanded federal workforce, stimulated an unprecedented construction boom in the 1920s that reached its citywide peak in 1925. The District of Columbia issued 482 building permits for a total of 921 buildings in 1920. By 1925, the number of permits issued had risen to 1,814 for a total of 5,205 buildings citywide. In that era of booming speculative building, the vacant lots east of Lincoln Park and the largely undeveloped areas east of 15th Street in Capitol Hill East attracted builders and developers. Although almost no streets east of 15th Street were paved by 1921, commitments had been made for public investment in the area and change was imminent. New construction in Capitol Hill East was slow, with 102 new single- and multi-family buildings added between 1919 and 1921. Yet, during the next five years, developers and builders were actively working throughout the area, resulting in the addition of more than 1,000 new houses to the east of 15th Street.

The pace of construction in Washington began slowing down in 1926 but development on the Capitol Hill plateau continued to march steadily eastward. By the end of the 1920s, the Capitol Hill East area was almost fully developed with an additional 243 new buildings added to the urban landscape. The principal

exception was Square 1112, adjacent to northwest corner of Reservation 13, which was largely vacant except on the 1800 block of Independence Avenue and the north side of Bay Street. Although the October 1929 stock market crash and ensuing Great Depression brought construction to a virtual standstill over the next several years citywide, Capitol Hill East continued to develop. Between 1930 and 1940, new construction included another 632 buildings, the majority of those located in Rosedale.

For the Capitol Hill neighborhood, the expansion of the Navy Yard contributed significantly to the demand for housing. Shortly after Franklin D. Roosevelt, a former Secretary of the Navy, became president in 1933, he began pressing Congress for authorization to increase the construction of warships and the necessary armaments, many of which were designed, manufactured, and refurbished at the Navy Yard's Gun Factory. In the late 1930s, as post-World War I naval treaties expired and Germany, Italy, and Japan became more militarized, Congress authorized additional construction to develop a two-ocean navy, including a 20% increase in the warship strength of the Navy. The Navy Yard workforce, which numbered 4,000 in 1929, almost doubled to nearly 8,000 by 1934 and had added another 2,000 workers by 1940.<sup>64</sup> This was reflected once again in an increase to the housing stock in the southeast quadrant of Capitol Hill East.

### *Anacostia Flats*

One of the very last deterrents to residential development in Capitol Hill East was the Anacostia Flats. Work on the Anacostia Flats, suspended during World War I, resumed shortly afterwards by building on the 1916 plan for the creation of a large recreational area to be known as Anacostia Park. The plan included converting the western channel of the Anacostia River into a six-foot-deep lake extending on both sides of the Benning Bridge. Dredging of the river, building sea walls, and filling in the flats behind continued throughout the inter-war period.

In 1927, the project was described as 50% completed at a cost of \$2.2 million with work on Kingman Lake underway.<sup>65</sup> It was reported that “the new park when completed will have an area of 640 acres, 500 of which will be reclaimed marsh and 140 fast land which had to be purchased to give the government full rights in the project. Of the acreage, 180 will be water-covered, 40 acres in the channel proper, 45 in Lake Kingman on the western bank, and 65 in East Lake on the east bank.”<sup>66</sup> The sections of the Flats intended for recreational use were turned over to the Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital for development while other areas were designated for other government uses including a District government tree nursery.<sup>67</sup>

In 1934, the Army Engineer for the District announced that the Anacostia Flats reclamation project was 79.2% completed.<sup>68</sup> As dredging and filling progressed in the 1930s, thereby creating additional public land, Kingman Lake, and a more attractive waterfront, planners viewed the area’s potential for new development and infrastructure that would most certainly enhance both the immediate neighborhood, Capitol Hill, and the city as a whole.

With the reclamation of the Anacostia Flats, almost complete by the end of the 1930s, the National Capital Park and Planning Commission (NCPPEC, now the National Capital Planning Commission, or NCPC) developed plans for extensive sports facilities on the public land south of Benning Road. The plans called for construction of a complex with a National Guard armory, a stadium seating 60,000 fans, and a vast recreation area that included a drill field, swimming pool and tennis courts, each with stands for 10,000 spectators, a boathouse, and 60 acres of parking.<sup>69</sup> These were all to occupy an area between Benning Road and Independence Avenue. This plan assumed a new bridge would be constructed across the Anacostia River at Massachusetts Avenue rather than at East Capitol Street. The NCPPEC also discussed a longer-range proposal to create an East Mall, which would have involved taking all property along East Capitol Street between Constitution and Independence Avenues for the construction of monumental

buildings including museums, a library, and federal office buildings.<sup>70</sup> The outbreak of World War II in Europe put all these plans on hold except for the National Guard Armory, which was constructed in 1940-2.

### *Capitol Hill East Housing*

The intense need for housing in the years between the World Wars increased construction, resulting in nearly 2,000 new buildings in Capitol Hill East. The vast majority of these were single-family dwellings in the form of row houses that created a rhythmic urban landscape of two-story brick structures reflecting the fashionable Colonial Revival and Craftsman styles of architecture. The greatest period of development occurred prior to the Great Depression between 1923 and 1925, with 743 new buildings; the majority of these were located in the southeast quadrant to the east of 15th Street.

By far the most active architect in Capitol Hill East was George T. Santmyers, who practiced architecture in Washington, D.C., for 50 years. His office was more prolific than that of any other architect in the Washington metropolitan area. Santmyers designed 15,689 buildings by 1949, while only a handful of other architects designed more than 1,000 buildings and no other architect listed in the permit database designed more than 1,600. Although Santmyers is credited with the design of commercial buildings, banks, churches, public garages, and thousands of private residences, he is most celebrated for his contribution to apartment building architecture in the nation's capital. Yet, in Capitol Hill East, his work favored the single-family row house or multi-family duplex, showing his devotion and skills in the design of modest yet fashionable residences specifically for middle-income residents. The majority of his work in Capitol Hill East is found today in the Rosedale neighborhood and along the streets to the west of 15th Street and north of East Capitol Street.<sup>71</sup>

In Capitol Hill East, Santmyers, more than any other architect, shaped the urban

landscape and physical character which is still present today. His work along Gales Street, N.E. in 1924 is reminiscent in form of the flat-fronted wood-frame structures that continued to be constructed until the early 1930s in Rosedale. The flat-fronted row of three dwellings on Gales Street is crowned by sloping roofs obscured by stepped parapets. Each house is two bays wide, pierced by a single-leaf entry and paired window openings on the first story and a triple window symmetrically placed on the second story. The buildings are modestly dressed, save for the semicircular-arched entries that are finished with impost, keystones, rowlock arches, and blind fanlights with gargoyle-like faces. Variations on this design are located in the 1700 block of Massachusetts Avenue, S.E. (1925/1927) and at 260-264 16th Street, S.E. (1929). More commonly, however, Santmyers's buildings were a long, single structure divided by low firewalls such as the row houses designed in 1926-7 on 16th Street, N.E. The individual dwellings are two bays each, delineated by the varying rooflines, window fenestration, and one-story porches. Strikingly similar rows of brick-veneered buildings can be found on 17th Place, 19th Street, and C Street in the northeast quadrant and D Street, Potomac Avenue, 18th Street, and Bay Street in the southeast quadrant. The repetition suggests Santmyers merely adapted a basic housing design rather than producing new sketches for each location.

Developers and builders like Herman Howenstein and Thomas Jameson continued to work extensively in Capitol Hill East in the 1920s, developing squares east of 15th Street. Howenstein built rows of 11 dwellings on E Street and Potomac Avenue in 1923 in Square 1091 and two rows of 11 houses in 1924 at 212-232 15th Street, N.E., and 813-833 Kentucky Avenue, S.E. More typically, he constructed rows of six or fewer houses in a number of different squares. The rows of dwellings Howenstein erected on Gales Street in Rosedale in 1924 exemplify the developer's actions. Acting as owner, builder, and designer, Howenstein created 23 attached single-family dwellings clad in beige brick with molded metal cornices. Panels of concrete ornately framed by rowlock bricks accent the alternating gabled and stepped parapets. The engaging front porches extend

only two bays wide, exposing a single window opening to visually separate the row of houses. Costing an estimated \$4,350 each to complete, the houses cost comparatively much less than many of those he built to the south. The houses he owned and constructed in the 1600 block of A Street, N.E. were similar in form, massing, and style, with two-bay porches on the facades. Yet, these 1925 buildings were more ornate, with corbeled firewalls rising to either side of the false mansard roofs. Exposed rafter ends project from the overhanging eaves of the roof and shed dormers.

Thomas A. Jameson started out as a carpenter's apprentice in 1905. He began his career as a builder in Washington, D.C., with the construction of eight row houses at 611-625 4th Street, N.E., in 1913.<sup>72</sup> Over the next 15 years Jameson constructed almost 900 buildings, initially serving as the architect for his own development projects. In 1923, he founded his own real estate company which, in addition to construction and sales, offered general real estate loans and insurance for moderate-income buyers and renters like those moving to Capitol Hill East. Thereafter, Jameson relied exclusively on architect George T. Santmyers, although he did on occasion design some buildings himself. Santmyers' designs were primarily for row houses, but included several two-story apartment buildings and 21 flats on Bay Street, S.E. Between 1925 and 1928 Jameson developed most of Squares 1113 and 1114, adjacent to Reservation 13, with row houses fronting along Massachusetts Avenue, Potomac Avenue, and D Street, S.E. He was one of the first to build south of E Street in Rosedale, applying in 1927 for permits to construct row houses on both sides of the 1500 block of D Street, N.E. Before his death in 1932, Jameson constructed about 50 houses on D and Isherwood Streets. In all, he constructed about 350 dwellings in the Capitol Hill East area.

Although the single-family house dominated, the need for housing prompted construction of multi-family buildings in the form of apartments and flats. Between 1920 and 1940, 227 multi-family dwellings were constructed to the east of 15th Street. Of those, 51% were located in the Rosedale neighborhood in the

northeasternmost corner of Capitol Hill East and 31% had been constructed in the southeast quadrant between the expanding Navy Yard and the evolving Reservation 13. The fewest number of apartments and flats were located in the squares north of D Street, S.E. and south of G Street, N.E., at the center of Capitol Hill East where row houses dominated the landscape.

Unlike Northwest Washington, where large luxury apartment buildings were constructed in developing areas, sometimes serving to anchor newly developing neighborhoods, most of the relatively few apartments and flats constructed in Capitol Hill East prior to World War II were designed to blend into the predominantly two-story, single-family landscape developing contemporaneously. These multi-family buildings were intended for moderate-income renters. Harry Kite built a row of two-story apartment buildings at 1705-1729 East Capitol Street in 1921 and Thomas Jameson built four two-story apartment buildings in the 300 block of 13th Street, S.E. in 1928. The improvements undertaken by Steuart Brothers, Inc. in Square 1112, abutting Reservation 13, were almost entirely two-story flats designed for multiple families. The modestly designed buildings were reminiscent of the garden apartment, with setbacks that created open space on C Street and deep rear yards along the alley. Completed in 1935 under the direction of architect S.V. Wells, the buildings have high-style Colonial Revival entries with pilasters, enclosed pediments, and narrow multi-light fanlights, which are in striking contrast to the unadorned single and paired windows holding 6/6 sash. The minimal ornamentation exhibited by these eleven buildings was typical of the period, allowing builders to provide good, yet fashionable housing at a minimal cost.

A few large apartment buildings were constructed in Capitol Hill East, notably in the area of 12th and F Streets, N.E. Charles D. Sager, a developer who constructed apartment buildings and row houses in both Northwest and Northeast Washington, D.C., and was later active in developing nearby Kingman Park, constructed three apartment buildings designed by George Santmyers

between 1925 and 1927. In design and massing, the multi-story buildings at 501 and 636 12th Street, N.E. and 1114 F Street, N.E., were similar to ones being constructed in Northwest Washington, where the large multi-story apartment building dominated along primary transportation corridors. The two-story apartment at 636 12th Street, set on a raised basement thereby providing three floors of apartments, is stylistically in concert with the neighboring row houses. The façade of the brick-veneered building is defined by projecting bays crowned with stepped parapets. The main entry, constructed of wood frame to read like a vestibule, has Tuscan pilasters with paneled shafts, molded cornice, and double-leaf doors set under a fanlight. Applied ornamentation is minimal to keep construction costs down, restricted to rosettes between the first and second stories and a keystone-like emblem framed by swags at the building's roofline.

As builders emerged from the bleakest years of the Great Depression, a few continued to undertake the construction of apartment buildings and flats in Capitol Hill East. Although the single- and two-family buildings dominated, the construction of multi-family and apartment buildings was unrelenting, with the greatest number erected in the late 1930s as the nation braced for another World War. Again, the vast majority were located in Rosedale and the southeast quadrant. However, overall, the number of multi-family dwellings constructed in Capitol Hill East before World War II was small in proportion to the number of single-family dwellings, many of which also served as rental housing. Moreover, the number of apartments in Capitol Hill East was notably fewer than apartment construction in Northwest Washington.

These apartment buildings tended to be modest in scale and massing, marrying well with the existing row house landscape of Capitol Hill East. The larger buildings were set on corners and irregularly shaped lots that were commonly at the intersection of diagonal streets and parks. One such example was the triangular parcels created at the confluence of Pennsylvania Avenue with Potomac Avenue at 14th Street, S.E. Located on the west side of the intersection, the property also

included an assembly hall and corner store, the latter mirrored on the east side of the intersection by two corner stores. With the bisecting of squares to eliminate alley communities, new roads with sizeable lots became available, such as Elliott Street, N.E. where three two-story apartment buildings were constructed at the center of Square 1028. This also occurred on 14½ Street, N.E. in Square 1054, where three two-story apartment flats were constructed alongside two-story row houses. Rows of apartment flats also were set along prominent streets such as East Capitol Street, S.E., where seven two-story buildings were built in the 1700 block between 17th and 18th Streets.

In the years between the two world wars, many of the new row houses, and even some apartment flats, were designed to include freestanding garages accessed by alleys at the rear of the properties. The 1928 Sanborn maps also show that numerous individual homeowners had constructed garages within the alleys behind their dwellings. Virtually all squares in Capitol Hill East, except for small triangular squares along the diagonal avenues, had interior alleys ideal for garages and off-street parking. The lack of buildable space, however, prompted some builders to offer houses with built-in garages. Thirteen of the 22 row houses that Thomas Jameson constructed at 1801-1847 Massachusetts Avenue, S.E., in 1927 housed automobiles in basement garages; the remaining nine were provided with freestanding garages. George T. Santmyers designed the buildings with inspiration from the Craftsman style, incorporating paired and triple window openings, knee brackets, exposed rafter ends, and multi-light casement windows in the shed-roofed dormers. The obscure garages were located on the ground level of the unadorned rear elevations, underneath two-story frame porches that provided private outdoor space. Many of the garages have since been rehabilitated to furnish additional living space and the porches removed or enclosed.

### ***Residents of Capitol Hill East***

A sampling of census records suggests that the *Washington Post's* 1901 description

of East Washington as an area that attracted buyers looking for modestly priced houses with modern conveniences applied to the newly developing areas of Capitol Hill East throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Skilled blue-collar workers were heavily represented in census statistics for the area but there were also numerous government clerks and people who worked in retail businesses. For example, the dwellings Herman Howenstein constructed in 1916 at 518-522 14th Street, S.E., are shown in the 1920 census as occupied by an insurance agent, a Navy Yard machinist, a newspaper agent, and a machinist who worked in a shop.<sup>73</sup> In neighboring blocks of G Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, there were toolmakers, carpenters, and machinists who worked at the Navy Yard, employees of the Bureau of Printing and Engraving, Marine Band musicians, pressmen, railroad and street railway employees, and various clerks who worked in government departments or in businesses.

A sampling of the 1930 and 1940 census records for a row of single-family dwellings Thomas Jameson constructed in 1927 in the 1500 block of D Street in Rosedale shows that these two-story dwellings, which included fashionable basement garages, were almost all owner occupied. In 1930, the residents were white- and blue-collar workers in mid-level jobs. Although these row houses were designed for a traditional single family, they often housed a number of working adults including wives, grown children, extended family, and sometimes lodgers. A few houses were occupied by two unrelated families, which during the years of the Great Depression was becoming a common occurrence throughout the District of Columbia. The employment listed for men included Post Office clerk, radio salesman, policeman, bricklayer, city government inspector, newspaper pressman, grocery store manager, streetcar motorman, and U.S. government watchman. The women's occupations included dry goods clerk, telephone operator, lunch room waitress, department store clerk, and cashier.<sup>74</sup>

Census information also indicates that these new blocks of residential housing were quite stable, whether owner occupied or rental property. The 1940 census

shows that about half the Jameson dwellings in Rosedale were still occupied by the same owners. Most of the turnover probably took place early in the decade in the depth of the Great Depression because almost all the owners said that they had occupied the same house in 1935. However, the census reveals that virtually every building had become a multi-family house, with two heads of household listed—one listed as owner and the other as renter. All occupants were white. Some residents had changed jobs but the kinds of work were similar to those noted in the 1930 census. Men's employment included bus operator for the Capital Transit Company, medical attendant, Navy Yard machinists, station manager for a motor company, milk truck driver and long distance truck driver, carpenter, and bricklayer. Women worked as bookkeepers, stenographers, and waitresses; one was a pearl stringer for a department store. The highest paid was the bricklayer who earned \$2,450 when most annual incomes were just above \$1,000.<sup>75</sup>

A notable number of the rows of single-family dwellings constructed in the inter-war period were built specifically as rental units to house the working-class residents of Capitol Hill East. Rental properties built by Thomas Jameson at 1700-1742 Massachusetts Avenue, S.E., in 1925 were occupied in 1930 by federal and District government employees and business employees. The government employees included a federal agent, an electrical engineer, several clerks, and a naval officer. A police officer worked for the District government. The private sector employees included a hotel waitress and a bell boy, a house painter, a printer and a binder, a grocery store clerk, an electrician, and two automobile mechanics.<sup>76</sup> In 1940, the occupants of these rental dwellings included three Navy Yard machinists and a clerk, a Government Printing Office printer and a private printer, a retail furniture salesman, a saleswoman, and a government electrical engineer.<sup>77</sup> Of these, only the electrical engineer had been listed at the same address in the 1930 census, but most residents indicated in the 1940 census that they had been at the same address in 1935.

In rows that were not constructed solely as rental units by investors, only about half the dwellings in the sampling were owner occupied, which suggests that a significant number of owners bought dwellings for use as rental income properties. A 1914 *Washington Post* article on recent sales specifically noted that Herman Howenstein had transferred two of the nine houses in his recently constructed row on East Capitol Street, east of Lincoln Park, to local investors.<sup>78</sup> The 1930 census shows that the row of houses that Thomas Jameson constructed at 1700-1742 Massachusetts Avenue, S.E. was occupied by renters while the row he built at 1801-1847 Massachusetts Avenue was almost entirely owner occupied. Architecturally, whether purpose-built as income property or intended to be owner occupied, the buildings were strikingly similar in design, scale, massing, fenestration, and materials.

An examination of the 1930 census for Square 983, bounded by 11th, 12th, F, and G Streets, N.E., shows that most of the residents of the single-family row houses were renters, like the neighboring apartment dwellers. The square was racially mixed with both white and African Americans occupying the single-family dwellings. Although the majority of white row house residents were on 11th Street (600 block) and the majority of row house residents on 12th Street and G Street (1100 block) were African American, the lines were not absolute. The residents of the apartment buildings and flats were white with the exception of one African American family at 636 12th Street. The occupations of the apartment dwellers were very similar to those of their white row house neighbors, including clerks, sales staff, a few managers and supervisors, and skilled workers such as electricians, printers, drivers, and painters, the large majority of whom worked in the private sector. In families without children, the wives often worked, as was becoming the custom nationwide. The African American residents included a minister and teachers along with truck drivers, construction workers, laborers, and domestic employees, most of whom worked in the private sector.

### *Commercial Development*

Small nodes of commercial development along Pennsylvania Avenue and along 15th Street expanded in the period between the two World Wars to serve the growing population. These establishments principally provided local services including confectionaries, baked goods, drugs, shoe repair, laundry, and dry cleaning. Some larger, exclusively commercial buildings, typically chain grocery stores, were constructed at the intersection of primary streets.

The standard-sized rectangular lot at 732 15th Street, S.E., just north of Pennsylvania Avenue, proved an ideal location for a locally established grocery chain. Warren Spencer designed and constructed the one-story building specifically for the Sanitary Grocery Company, Inc. in 1926 for the mere cost of \$4,700.<sup>79</sup> Surrounded by residential housing, the building is constructed of brick with a classically inspired façade, replete with string coursing that frames a frieze designed for signage, recessed commercial entry and show windows (since altered), and pedimented parapet with stone coping and medallion. Enlarged to the rear by 1960, as commercial needs of the neighborhood increased, the building has continued to function as a store.

Filling stations, required as American's love of the automobile increased, were located on largely undeveloped squares like those associated with the streetcar barns. Within the developing residential areas, filling stations were sited on irregularly shaped lots created by the diagonally laid streets. One such station, with ten underground tanks and two curbside gasoline pumps, was located at the confluence of Maryland Avenue and G Street, N.E., just half a block southwest of Florida Avenue. Two other stations anchor Square 1077 along Pennsylvania Avenue between 15th and 16th Streets, S.E. Both of these fashionable stations included buildings with pumps set on the property rather than at the curb which had been the earlier fashion. The filling station at 1500 Pennsylvania Avenue had an all-weather canopy extending from the building to cover pumps and patrons.

Commercial development also included industrial ventures beyond the ice cream plant and ice company by this time. The National Auto Painting Company and the Hoffman Company's cleaning and dyeing plant fronted the 1500 block of Pennsylvania Avenue, S.E. in Square 1077. The United Provision Company, specializing in meat packing, was located in Square 1060 along 14½ and 15th Streets, S.E. The H.L. Ryan Lumber Company and the Chesapeake & Potomac Telephone Company wagon shop shared a building located adjacent to the Washington Railway and Electric Company car barn on Benning Road, N.E. The greenhouses of Robert Bowdler, a local florist who lived on the property, continued to improve the largely undeveloped square in Rosedale north of Gales Street and east of 17th Street, N.E. A greenhouse was also located at 723 17th Street, S.E. on Square 1092, across from Congressional Cemetery. This building, measuring 16 feet wide and 50 feet deep, was frame and glass. Charles P. Grose & Son Florist was in operation from 1907 until 1926.<sup>80</sup> Grose also worked as an assistant gardener at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.<sup>81</sup> Flanking the greenhouse of Charles Grose were the monument showrooms of Frank S. Byron and Joseph Elmon Shelton. Byron's 1906 showroom consisted of a one-story wood building with metal roof at the southwest corner of 17th and G Streets, S.E.<sup>82</sup> Shelton's monument company was located at 729 17th Street, S.E., with the stone yard facing the cemetery. The one-story building, with multiple additions along H Street, was taken over by the Virginia A. Sheehy Company in 1940.<sup>83</sup>

Many of these properties had street frontage and occupied small portions of squares developed with residential housing dating from the inter-war years. These more industrial businesses in large part served to support residents and other businesses of Capitol Hill, rather than impede development as some of the nineteenth-century activities like those at Reservation 13 had done. One rather uninviting industrial business created during this inter-war period was the District of Columbia's Refuse Department, which was located at the center of Square 1043. Bounded by 13th and 14th Streets, north of G Street, S.E. where

it intersects with Pennsylvania Avenue, the refuse facility was surrounded on all sides by residential housing, including freestanding dwellings and row houses. The property included a machine shop, blacksmith shop with forge, auto repair building, paints facility, stables with hay storage, lumber shed, and garage. Although many of the structures and buildings remain extant, the facility was rehabilitated to serve as the city's street lighting department by the mid-twentieth century.

Additionally, located in Square 1025 between 12th and 13th Streets south of M Street, S.E., was Washington Gas-Light Company's East Station. Use of this property, subdivided for residential development, had begun in 1887 with the construction of a brick pump house and engine room building. Steel-and-iron gas storage tanks were added to the property in 1895, with a workshop and engine house completed by 1911. Although it had existed on this site since 1887, the greatest period of expansion took place between 1927 and 1945, resulting in extremely large gas and oil tanks, several generator houses, a boiler room, numerous engine houses, and quite a few filter beds. Ultimately, the gas manufacturing facility expanded southward closing N Street to capture Square 1025S and crossing Water Street to include part of Square 1001S.

### *Schools and Social Activities of Capitol Hill East*

In the second decade of the twentieth century, an acute citywide shortage of classrooms developed. Congressional appropriations for school construction had not been keeping up with population growth and the problem was exacerbated during the World War I period when, as described by the Board of Education, "Washington experienced an unprecedented increase in population" and "schoolhouse construction was largely at a standstill due to war conditions."<sup>84</sup> By 1922, the city's elementary schools (grades 1-8) were short 186 classrooms based on the accepted standard of 40 students per classroom. Elementary school enrollment had been increasing by an average of 1,045 students a year for the

previous eight years. Many classrooms were occupied by well over 40 students; some schools resorted to double shifts, and some classes were held in temporary classrooms known as portables.

In the early 1920s, Congress increased the funding for school construction although not enough to erase the backlog of unmet needs. Fortunately, in Capitol Hill East, the shortage of classrooms was addressed. Buchanan, the white school, and Lovejoy, the African American school, both received eight-room additions in the early 1920s. The eight-room Kingsman School was built at 14th and E Streets, N.E., in 1921-2 to accommodate white students in the Lincoln Park area and relieve the overcrowding at both Maury and Edmonds schools. Designed for future expansion, Kingsman School was enlarged by the addition of the central and west wings in 1938.

At the end of World War I, Eastern High School at 7th and C Streets, S.E., was operating on double shifts and plans were in place for a new building at 1700 East Capitol Street, which was completed in 1923. At the time the new high school was planned, there was virtually no development east of 17th Street. This enabled the new building and its athletic grounds to occupy all of Squares 1094, 1095, 1108, and 1109, which up to this time were essentially vacant. In anticipation of future residential development, Square 1094 had been subdivided to create a minor street and a total of 100 buildable lots but nothing had yet been built. Squares 1095 and 1108 were each improved with a few wood-frame dwellings while Square 1109 was vacant, an indication that the site was on the frontier of development.<sup>85</sup> Anticipating the area's future growth, the imposing new high school was described as possessing "novel attractions" and "undreamed of glories...a veritable embarrassment of riches."<sup>86</sup>

More schools were constructed to serve the growing population in the 1930s. The Northeastern Construction Company began construction on Eliot Junior High School (now Eliot-Hine Middle School) for white students at 1830 Constitution

Avenue, N.E., which opened in 1932; an addition was completed in 1937. Four rooms were added in 1931 to the Buchanan School at 1316 E Street, S.E., which served white elementary school children. The overcrowded Logan School at 301 G Street, N.E., was replaced with a new nine-room elementary school building for African American children that opened in 1935 at 215 G Street, N.E. The school grounds included a playground at the northwest corner of Square 753, which was created at the urging of the black community.

The growing population of African American students in Capitol Hill East and the neighborhoods to the north was served by three new schools that were constructed in the 1930s on open public land immediately north of Benning Road. The Young Elementary School opened in 1932 at Benning Road and 24th Street, N.E. and was almost doubled in size by a 1938 addition. The adjacent Browne Junior High School was also built in 1932 and was enlarged in 1936. The Phelps Vocational School, with capacity for 560 students, opened in 1934.<sup>87</sup> However, the planned school for African American students, known as Spingarn High School, was not constructed until 1950-2.

Additionally, in the 1930s, there was increasing recognition of the need for vocational education. Child labor laws had increased the minimum working age, thus keeping more teenagers within the school system. Further, the depressed economy in the years of the Great Depression made it more difficult for untrained young people to find employment. Nevertheless, the city's vocational schools were not equipped to fill the void. In 1934, the *Washington Post* wrote that, "vocational schools, so far as building and equipment are concerned are the stepchildren of the local school system" in part because Congress failed to act on school officials' requests for funding.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, vocational schools had the status equivalent to that of elementary schools until 1936 when they were raised to the status of junior high schools. Vocational school enrollment was increasing steadily and Southeast Washington was regarded by school officials as "particularly in need of a vocational school."<sup>89</sup> At the urging of the Southeast Citizens Association,

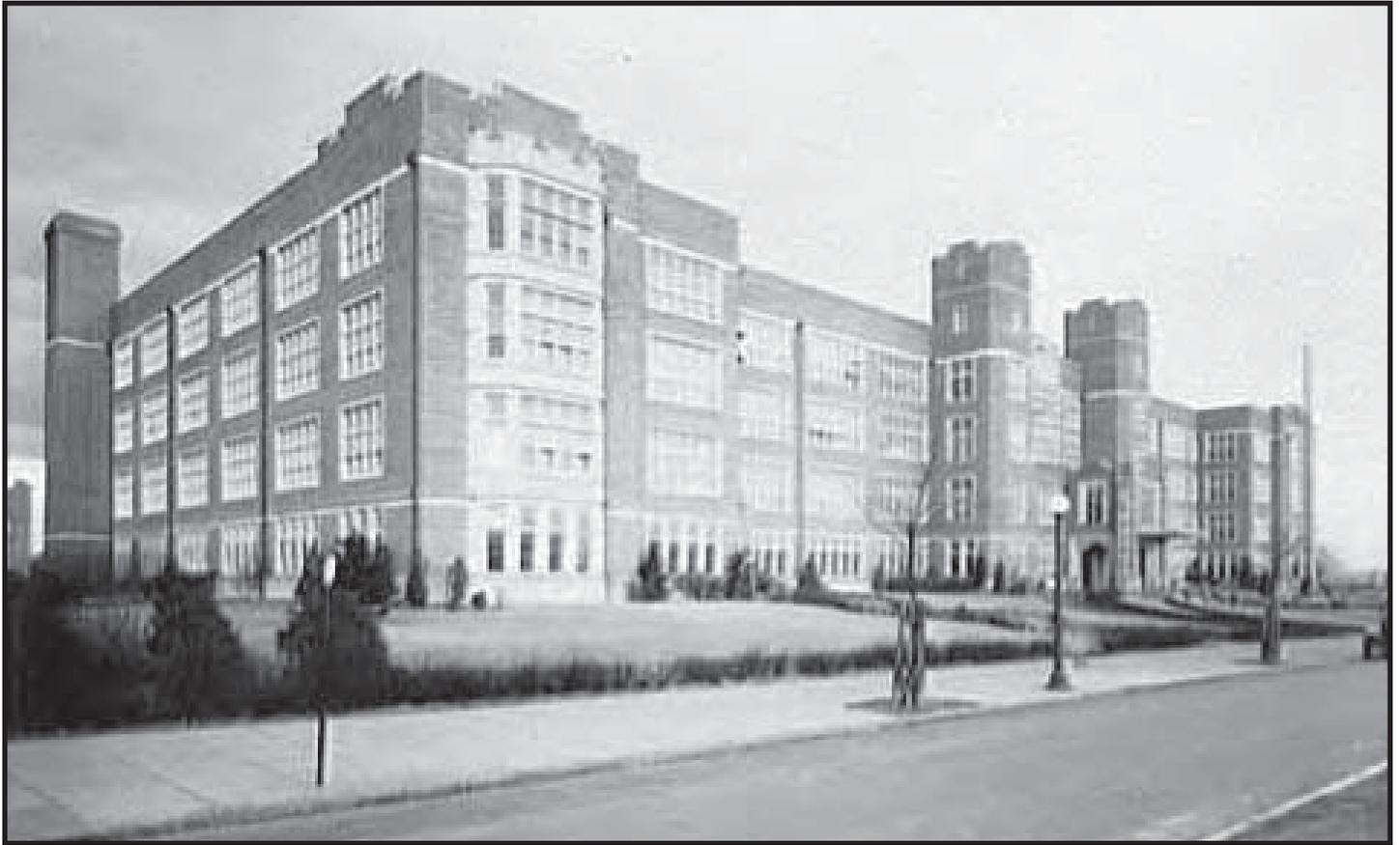


FIGURE 50: *Eastern High School, ca. 1930.* (Courtesy of Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress)

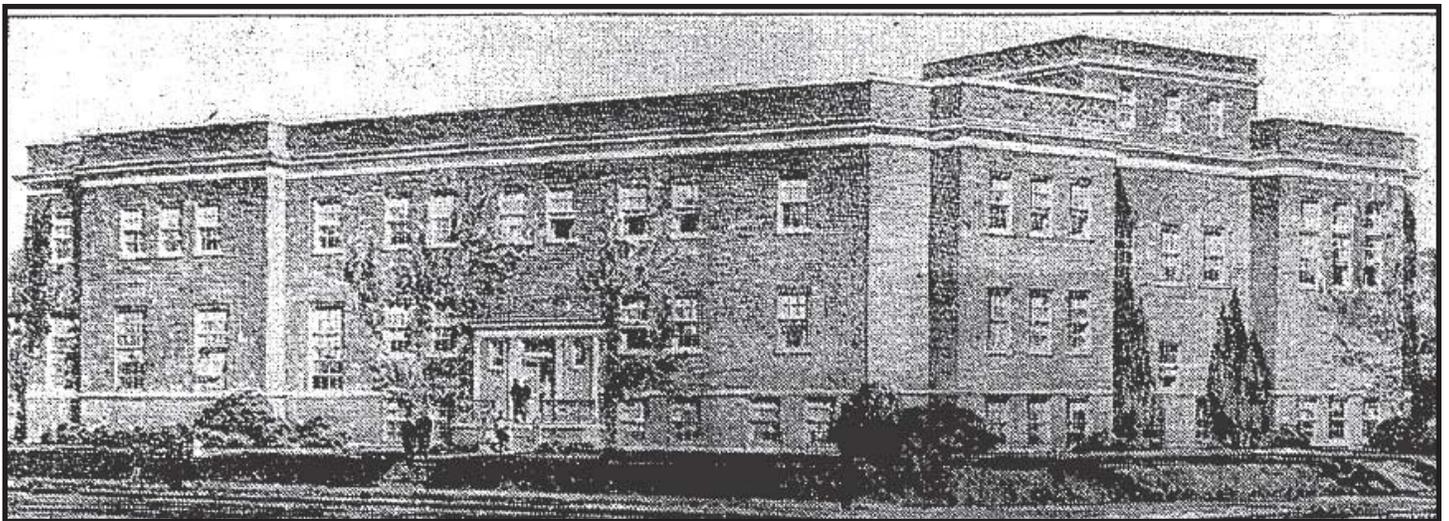


FIGURE 51: *Boys Club of Washington, 261 17th Street, S.E.* (*Washington Post*, 11 July 1937, 8)

which had long been calling for the construction of an area vocational school, the District had purchased land on Potomac Avenue, S.E., between 13th and 14th Streets, for that purpose prior to World War I but construction was deferred because of the war.<sup>90</sup> Instead, in the 1930s, a vocational program for boys was established in the abandoned Lenox Elementary School at 5th and G Streets, S.E. Not until 1938 did construction begin on the Potomac Avenue site. The Chamberlain Vocational School opened at 1345 Potomac Avenue, S.E. in 1939 as the city's only coeducational vocational school for white students.<sup>91</sup>

The Southeast Branch of the Boys Club of Washington, D.C., which was erected at 261 17th Street, S.E. in 1937, was intended to address the social health of young boys living in Capitol Hill East. Designed by architect Clarence L. Harding, this imposing Classical Revival-style building stands two stories in height. The club house, designed to serve the 3,000 boys in the area, included a 75-foot swimming pool, large gymnasium, game rooms, library, Boy Scout room, Senior club rooms, woodwork shop, print shop, art class room, projection room, an exhibit hall, and administrative offices. A playground was located on the roof, and a penthouse provided space for the health clinic. The site was "selected on the basis of a scientific study made by the Field Department of the Boys' Clubs of America, of which the Washington association is a member."<sup>92</sup> Eleanor "Cissy" Patterson, owner of the Washington Times-Herald, and Boys Club president Frank R. Jelleff were responsible for donating the funding for the construction of the building, which was described in newspaper articles as costing \$200,000.

Construction of this building was touted in the local newspapers on a regular basis. The articles recounted that the "the new building will be the largest and most complete club for boys in the city" and "the most modern south of New York."<sup>93</sup> The laying of the cornerstone in November 1937 was attended by "more than 1,500 youngsters..." The cornerstone held "copies of Washington's newspapers, a copy of the by-laws of the club and the minutes of the first meeting of the board of trustees in 1920."<sup>94</sup> Three local boys, who assisted with the ceremonies, also

placed items into the cornerstone, including a top, three marbles and a toy truck. The building opened to much fanfare in March 1938; its success was celebrated on the front page of the *Washington Post*. Membership was exclusively available to boys—with no mention of race—from ages 7 to 17, “living in Southeast Washington or within the northeast boundaries as far north as H street and as far west as Twelfth.”<sup>95</sup> Over 1,200 applications were received within days of the clubs opening. The slogan of the club was, “Join the Boys Club of Washington—keep out of the dangers of traffic—be safe where you can play safe.”<sup>96</sup>

Having expanded its services to include girls, the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Washington closed the eastern branch at 17th Street and Massachusetts Avenue in 2007. The District of Columbia government purchased the vacant building in 2010.

### *Churches, Convents, and Congregations*

Church congregations grew in number and size as Capitol Hill’s population expanded eastward. Some built new edifices on the site of earlier structures while others moved to different locations, leaving buildings to become home to other congregations. Between 1920 and 1940, seven new church facilities, including a convent, were added to the growing landscape of Capitol Hill East. Congregations like the Israel Baptist Church, originally located at 632 11th Street, N.E. (1924), and the Second Baptist Church at 1622-1636 East Capitol Street (1934) later sold their buildings in search of larger, more modern facilities. Typically, smaller congregations such as the Full Gospel Tabernacle Church and Mount Moriah Baptist Church purchased the buildings in these instances.

Expansion of congregations also prompted the Haven Methodist Episcopal Church to commission John A. Lankford, a renowned African American architect, to design a new church in 1925. The Gothic Revival-style building at

1401 Independence Avenue, S.E. was located on the site of an earlier building in which services had been held since 1906.<sup>97</sup> With the ultimate relocation of the congregation, the 1925 building would be occupied by the East Calvary Methodist Episcopal Church and later the Thankful Baptist Church.



FIGURE 52: "First 100 Youngsters Enjoy New Southeast Boys Club, (*Washington Post*, 16 July 1938, 17)

The Fifteenth Street Christian Church, founded by the Disciples Christian Endeavor Union of the District in 1890, also needed to expand their church in the 1920s as Capitol Hill East became more heavily populated. The congregation's first church was located at 15th and D Streets, S.E., with a second, larger building erected in 1922 at 526 15th Street, S.E. Designed by Walter R. Metz, this latter building was sold to the Providence Baptist Church, which was founded in 1891, in the mid-1960s.<sup>98</sup>

St. Matthew's Lutheran Evangelical Church outgrew the church it had built in 1900 in the 1000 block of D Street, N.E., and moved into a newly constructed facility at 527 Kentucky Avenue, S.E., in 1930, having doubled the size of its congregation in 30 years. The design of the new church was reported to have been inspired by the 1788 Moravian Bethabara Church in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.<sup>99</sup> Notable similarities between the two buildings include the semicircular-arched window openings, the spired lanterns at the center of the gable roofs, and the location of the semicircular-arched entry openings on the side elevations. The architectural team of Delos Hamilton Smith and Thomas Rivas Edwards designed the new church. Both men were accomplished architects, recognized as leaders for their ecclesiastical designs. Smith and Edwards were both graduates of George Washington University, studying architecture there together between 1914 and 1916. While Smith was training in the Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury and with several of the city's most prominent architectural firms, Edwards was serving as a draftsman for the Department of the Navy, where he later worked as an architect. It is through Delos Smith's extensive surveying and photographing of historic buildings, many from the colonial era, that much of the firm's designs were born. He conducted the first survey of historic buildings in Annapolis, Maryland, and published articles and monographs on the colonial architecture of Maryland, in *American Architect* and in *The Monograph Series: Recording the Architecture of the American Colonies and the Early Republic*, better known as the *White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs*. Between 1918 and 1930,

Smith studied, measured, and photographed about 250 colonial churches, including the Bethabara Moravian Church in North Carolina.<sup>100</sup> In 1963, the congregation of St. Matthew's Lutheran Evangelical Church moved to a new building at 222 M Street, S.W., one of the five sites reserved for churches in the Southwest Urban Renewal Area.<sup>101</sup> The Liberty Baptist Church, which had been located in Northwest Washington for over 50 years, purchased the St. Matthew's Kentucky Avenue building and, as of 2012, continues to occupy it.

The Church of the Holy Comforter, a Roman Catholic congregation, which had provided religious guidance for residents of Capitol Hill East since 1904, chose to expand rather than relocate. Enlargement of their facilities at East Capitol and 14th Streets, S.E. under the direction of Father Clarence E. Wheeler included encapsulating an earlier building within a new Spanish Mission Revival-style façade, and construction in 1921 along 15th Street of a parochial school and a convent for the Sisters of St. Joseph, who relocated from Philadelphia to teach the 600 students enrolled. African American Roman Catholics worshipped at St. Cyprian's at 13th and C Streets, S.E., founded in 1893. The parish supported St. Ann's Academy and St Ann's Convent at 310 8th Street, S.E. The Holy Comforter and St. Cyprian's parishes were merged in the 1960s and St. Cyprian's church building, as well as St. Ann's Academy and Convent, were sold and ultimately demolished.

#### **4. CAPITOL HILL EAST, WORLD WAR II AND POST-WAR PERIOD**

The Second World War increased demand for housing throughout the city and especially on Capitol Hill East where the relatively low rents made the area affordable for workers at the lower end of the pay scale. A Federal Housing Administration (FHA) demographic map showed most of Capitol Hill as a low-rent residential district except for the area closest to the Capitol between Constitution and Independence Avenues. This area was described as a median-rent residential district with a relatively middle-class population.<sup>102</sup>

The buildup of the Navy Yard, begun in President Franklin D. Roosevelt's first term, intensified with the outbreak of World War II, thus placing still greater pressure on housing within easy commuting distance. As described by Navy Yard historian Edward J. Marolda, when war broke out in Europe, the Bureau of Ordnance "took steps to increase ordnance design, testing, and production by the gun factory" and, while recognizing that private industry would have to produce much of the ordnance, it determined that the Naval Gun Factory would "continue to be the 'nerve center' of the Navy's ordnance design and testing program."<sup>103</sup> During World War II, employment at the Navy Yard reached a peak of 26,000 in 1944; the majority of the employees were women. This workforce contributed to the swelling population of Capitol Hill. Although the pressure on housing eased somewhat after the war ended in 1945, the 1950 census showed that Capitol Hill's population was greater than it had ever been.

### *Capitol Hill East Housing*

To house the area's expanded population, beginning in the 1940s, duplexes, flats, and larger apartment buildings, designed for moderate-income renters, were constructed in Capitol Hill East in much greater numbers than previously. Although a few builders constructed modest single-family row houses, such as the 1940 row at 1401-1413 K Street, S.E., most new housing constructed throughout the 1940s and into the 1950s was designed to house multiple families. Many of the new dwellings were two-story flats or duplexes constructed in squares where early-twentieth-century dwellings predominated. These multi-family buildings conformed to the scale of the existing building stock but typically differed in style, and sometimes materials. For example, the five four-family flats designed by George T. Santmyers and constructed in 1940 at 608-612 and 619-623 14th Place, S.E., reflect the influences of Modern Movement architecture, while the Italianate and Colonial Revival styles of the late Victorian era and early twentieth century are illustrated on neighboring buildings. All buildings, regardless of

their construction dates, stand two stories in height with a common setback. The Italianate-style buildings have projecting brick bays with segmentally arched windows and the Colonial Revival-style houses have one-story front porch of wood frame and flat-arched single windows. In contrast, the mid-century multi-family housing has a flat front, with limited applied ornamentation, as was common for the period. The flat-arched window openings are paired, in keeping with the picture window ideal popular for suburban housing in the twentieth century.

New construction in Capitol Hill East was active immediately prior to the war, but was reduced during the World War II years when building materials were restricted. New construction in Capitol Hill East consisted of just 35 buildings, including 11 single-family houses and 24 multi-family buildings. That there was any new construction of multi-family dwellings in Capitol Hill East during the war years suggests that it was intended to meet the needs of war workers, and indicates that there was property available to accommodate such structures. The three three-story apartment buildings at 1361 to 1367 K Street, S.E., built in 1944 and 1945 to house nine to ten families each, are one example of this housing. Constructed for the Colonial Investment Company to the work of architect Edwin Weihe, the three-story apartment building, with raised basement for additional apartments, is emblematic of mid-century architecture. The brick-veneered structure, covered by a flat roof, is fenestrated with single and paired window openings set within continuous bands of slightly projecting brick, which acted as the sills, surrounds, and lintels. Colonial Revival-inspired surrounds with Tuscan pilasters frame the entry openings. The fenestration pattern reveals the interior plan with vertically aligned windows illuminating the stair leading to each apartment.

Over the course of developing the outer sections of Capitol Hill, both to the north along F and G Streets and east beyond Lincoln Park, the architects involved in the designing of buildings in Capitol Hill East were also associated with the

development of other areas of Washington, D.C. Thus, they were proficient in recognizing the potential clientele, stylistic fashions and trends, and post-war construction material availability/restrictions. These included a number of the city's well-known architects, including Albert H. Beers, John C. Deichmann, Lewis W. Giles, Nicholas R. Grimm, Marcus Hallett, Herman R. Howenstein, Hunter & Bell, Albert E. Landvoigt, William S. Plager, George T. Santmyers, B. Stanley Simmons, Speiden & Speiden, Edward O. Volland, Julius Wenig, and L.T. Williams, to name a few.<sup>104</sup>

Numerous builders invested in development of Capitol Hill East in the 1940s and 1950s but, unlike the early twentieth century, none can be described as predominant in the area. Most of the builders issued permits during this period oversaw the construction of just one to three projects in the Capitol Hill East area, suggesting their interests were more personal than that of professional speculative developers like those working elsewhere in the city. Few were recognized as major builders in the city.<sup>105</sup> All but a few of their projects were either apartment buildings or two-story multi-family dwellings described as flats or duplexes.

### *Population Shifts for Capitol Hill*

The racial composition of Capitol Hill's population changed dramatically in the years from 1940 to 1960, as it did throughout much of the federal city. District of Columbia statistical compilations provide a broad illustration of this change. The figures for statistical areas X and XV include the area bounded by Florida Avenue and Benning Road on the north, the Anacostia River on the east and south, and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad tracks and South Capitol Street on the west except for the immediate vicinity of the U.S. Capitol.<sup>106</sup> East Capitol Street divides the two areas. Statistical area X, lying north of East Capitol Street, had a population of 39,704 in 1940, which rose to 40,429 by 1950 and then declined to 37,488 by 1960. The percentage of the population that was white went from 71.9% in 1940 to 55.8% in 1950, and 22.2% in 1960. In statistical area XV, to the

south of East Capitol Street, the 1940 population of 52,694 rose to 55,675 by 1950 and then dropped to 51,874 by 1960. The white population was 73.9% in 1940 and 47.3% in 1950, dropping to 10.5% in 1960.<sup>107</sup>

School figures also illustrate the changing demographics. By 1952, Madison, Maury, and Webb schools, all originally designated for white pupils, had become schools for African American children. Nevertheless, the *Washington Post* reported in 1952 that community statistics showed “a 432-seat shortage in five neighborhood Negro schools and a 900-seat surplus in four nearby white buildings.”<sup>108</sup>

The World War II expansion of the city’s population placed additional pressure on the District’s schools. Congress commissioned an extensive review of the D.C. school system and the resulting 1949 report, known as the Strayer Report, recommended a major investment in new school buildings for both races, measures to improve teaching quality, and numerous administrative reforms.<sup>109</sup> Noting the inadequacy of school facilities and overcrowding of the schools for African American children, the report called for the construction of new buildings and the transfer of underutilized white schools to serve the growing African American student population. Although civil rights organizations and some church leaders had been advocating integration of the schools to create equality in education, integration did not take place until mandated by the Supreme Court in 1954.

In the 1950s, the whole of Capitol Hill experienced an exodus of middle-class families, who were moving to the suburbs. Although this directly affected development and growth of Capitol Hill East and the larger District of Columbia, it was a national trend stimulated by a confluence of conditions that favored suburban development. FHA and Veterans Administration programs favored the construction of suburban single-family dwellings for returning servicemen who were expected to start families. Building materials had become available

after years of wartime restrictions, and buyers wanted affordable housing with modern conveniences rather than the aging urban housing stock. The deficiencies in the District's school system, as outlined in the 1949 Strayer Report, may also have been an element in the decisions of families with children to move to the suburbs. Integration of the schools, beginning in 1954, contributed to the continuing exodus of Capitol Hill's white population in the mid-to-late 1950s but the declining number of Capitol Hill white middle-class residents reflects a national trend toward suburbanization, not solely a response to local conditions.

The tragic assassination of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., the renowned Civil Rights Movement leader, in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 4, 1968 began a chain reaction of violence and destruction of which repercussions continue to the present day. Following King's death, five days of riots erupted throughout Washington, D.C. As the news spread, crowds started gathering at the intersection of 14th and U Streets, N.W., and began requesting that business owners close their operations out of respect for the slain leader, as had occurred following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963. Led by Stokely Carmichael, the crowd, at first peaceful, soon grew restless before ultimately becoming violent. The rioters threw bricks, set fires, and looted stores, quickly overwhelming the local police force. The riots rapidly spread to other sections of the city, including 7th Street, N.W., and finally the commercial strip of H Street, N.E. on Capitol Hill. Looting was so prevalent that Mayor Walter Washington instituted a citywide curfew, and banned the sale of liquor and firearms.<sup>110</sup>

The effects were devastating to the infrastructure of H Street and residents of Capitol Hill. Although not as extensively damaged as the two other riot corridors where consecutive squares were lost in their entirety, H Street's economy was completely overwhelmed. Many of the smaller, independently owned shops were not as readily able to absorb the cost of rebuilding as the chain businesses. Consequently, numerous local businesses moved to the suburbs or closed altogether.

The neighborhood's population dropped precipitously after the riots as both white and African American residents left Capitol Hill for the suburbs. More than half of the already dwindling white population left between 1960 and 1970.<sup>111</sup> In the same period, the area's total population dropped from 24,523 to 20,359 and, by 1980 it was down to 13,498—a decline of 45 percent over 20 years.<sup>112</sup> By 1980, the census tracts north of H Street were more than 95 percent African American, while the tract south of H Street closest to the Capitol was about one-third white.<sup>113</sup>

### ***Public Improvements***

As the city was expanding in all directions and automobile traffic was increasing, there was a recognized need for more bridges across the Anacostia River. At Benning Road, the 1890s bridge had been replaced in 1934 with a structure suitable for motor and streetcar traffic. The Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge, designed in horse-and-wagon days, had long been regarded as inadequate in the automobile era. After years of planning, its replacement, the John Philip Sousa Bridge, was completed in 1940. A new crossing at South Capitol Street was designed in 1942 but the activities of World War II delayed its construction. It opened in 1950 as the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge.

There was general agreement on the need for an additional river crossing between the Benning Road and Pennsylvania Avenue bridges but as federal and District governments began planning for its construction in the immediate post-war years, its location became a contentious issue. Both East Capitol Street and Massachusetts Avenue were under consideration for extension across the river. The NCPPC and the National Park Service advocated the Massachusetts Avenue extension in order to retain open land for the proposed Anacostia Park sports center and recreational area east of the Armory and Eastern High School.

The District Highway Department and the District Commissioners favored the East Capitol Street location, arguing that much of the anticipated traffic from east of the river originated from the north of Fort Dupont Park and that the route would connect with more major arteries on each side of the river.<sup>114</sup> A compromise was worked out in 1950 and the bridge was designed at East Capitol Street with Y-shaped approaches along Independence Avenue, S.E., and C Street, N.E., leaving the parkland between them available. At the time, this design was also seen as accommodating plans for the East Capitol Mall, discussed earlier.<sup>115</sup> The bridge, now known as the Whitney Young Memorial Bridge, opened in 1955.

Another component of the pre-World War II planning for the Anacostia Flats area that was not realized until many years later was the construction of a stadium. Stadium bills languished in Congress for many years before one was finally enacted in 1959. In the interim, rows of temporary federal government office buildings, rather than permanent housing, were constructed to the east of Eastern High School on public land between East Capitol Street and Constitution Avenue, near the planned stadium site. The office buildings continued to be used through the 1950s before ultimately being demolished to make way for stadium parking. Ground was eventually broken in July 1960 for a 50,000-seat stadium between the two western approaches to the East Capitol Street Bridge.<sup>116</sup> The stadium was opened in October 1961, serving the entire city with sports events as well as cultural, religious, and civic gatherings. It was initially known as the District of Columbia Stadium, but was renamed Robert F. Kennedy (RFK) Memorial Stadium in January 1969. The stadium and its 12,500-automobile parking lots occupied most of the area that earlier plans had envisioned as recreational parkland and thus had not been improved with housing despite mid-century needs.

As part of the new Interstate System of Highways initially approved by Congress in 1956, development plans for Washington, D.C. called for the construction of interstate highways.<sup>117</sup> Three segments of the planned route, known as the

Inner Loop, ran through parts of Capitol Hill: the Southeast Freeway connecting with the Southwest Freeway and running along the route of Virginia Avenue with access roads to the 11th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue bridges; an eastern leg running north through the squares between 10th and 11th Streets from the Southeast Expressway to Florida Avenue; and a northern segment running along Florida Avenue and Benning Road to the Benning Road bridge. It was envisioned that part of the roadway would be depressed or tunneled, some would be at grade level, and some would be above grade.<sup>118</sup> The first segment of the Inner Loop to be constructed was the Southwest Freeway, which was part of the Southwest Urban Renewal Project.

The first six blocks of the Southeast Freeway, running from South Capitol Street to 6th Street, S.E., opened in 1965.<sup>119</sup> However, the first stage of its construction, the eviction of residents in the expressway's path, helped spark the civic opposition that doomed the eastern and northern legs of the Inner Loop. Unlike the Southwest Freeway, where relocation was part of an overall urban renewal project, there was no required provision for the government-aided relocation of residents evicted for the construction of the Southeast Freeway. Most of those affected were low-income African Americans and there were few viable options for them in a housing market that had become generally tight and, additionally, excluded non-whites from a significant proportion of available housing. As the *Washington Post* wrote in February 1962 in describing the plight, "The problems facing the Southeast families are a harbinger of things to come. The Expressway is a part of the Inner Loop and Interstate system, which will eventually push an estimated 8,630 families—about 28,000 persons—out of its right-of-way."<sup>120</sup>

The plan for the "East Leg" called for the demolition of all the buildings between 10th and 11th Streets, S.E. The *Post* reported that, "Housing along the 11th st. [sic] route is now predominantly of a low-income, rental character, but the new impact of Capitol Hill restoration is increasingly apparent" with expensively restored houses next to overcrowded tenements.<sup>121</sup> Opponents of the highway



FIGURE 53: *View west from stadium site, ca. 1955-1959*(Courtesy of the Historical Society of Washington, D.C.)

were concerned that a roadway dividing the neighborhood would limit restoration to the area west of 11th Street, “sharpening the polarization in the Southeast of upper middle class whites and lower income Negro families.”<sup>122</sup>

The *Washington Post* reported that, “the sudden build-up of civic opposition to the highway program has left the technicians gasping” and that local politicians of both parties had come out in opposition to the program. One was quoted as saying “We are under the gun in both parties as the highway program unfolds. We cannot escape the fact that the majority of the 28,000 people who would be displaced by the program are Negro residents of the District who probably had to pay more than fair market value for their homes. When you knock down private homes and put half or a third of the occupants in public housing—assuming it’s there—there is an enormous expansion in public housing.”<sup>123</sup> Most citizen and civic associations and the local Democratic Party leadership opposed construction of the Inner Loop while business organizations, welcoming passing consumers, supported it.<sup>124</sup>

In May 1962, two of the District’s three commissioners withdrew their support for the “East Leg,” advocating a route along the Anacostia River, which would have gone through the National Arboretum, as an alternative. The National Park Service and the Department of Agriculture opposed that alternative. Ultimately, although the Southeast Freeway was completed, neither the “East Leg” of the Inner Loop nor the northern section along Florida Avenue and Benning Road surmounted local opposition.

At the same time that the freeway plans were drawing increasing scrutiny, plans for a subway system were moving from a planner’s dream into reality. In 1965, Congress approved a modest plan that concentrated mostly on the District, but after transferring authority for the system from a single government agency to a regional authority (WMATA), a 98-mile regional system was approved in 1968. The first subway station opened in 1976, and Capitol Hill residents now enjoy

car-free connections throughout the city, Maryland, and Virginia.<sup>125</sup>

### ***Preservation and Restoration***

In spite of the population shifts of the 1950s and 1960s, a good number of Capitol Hill residents, both black and white, remained in their neighborhood. At the same time that many residents were leaving for the suburbs, some new buyers began to see the restoration potential of Capitol Hill's historic housing stock. Initial interest was sparked by Elizabeth Kohl Draper who, as president of the Progressive Citizens Association of Georgetown, had been involved in restoration efforts in Georgetown, beginning in the 1930s. Appointed assistant principal of Hine Junior High School in 1945, she became aware of the potential of Capitol Hill's housing stock, and, as a matter of civic pride, she wanted the entrances to the nation's capital from the east to be as attractive as those from the west.<sup>126</sup> Draper began working with the Southeast Business Men's Association. The first restoration project was sponsored by McCall's Magazine in 1949, followed the next year by the Southeast Business Men's Association's summer-long campaign to restore or improve the facades of 150 houses. Several Georgetown real estate agents became interested in promoting Capitol Hill properties and some prominent public officials, including Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, purchased houses in the area.<sup>127</sup> Initially, the target area was the southeast section of Capitol Hill between South Capitol Street and 11th Street, S.E. Emerging from this interest, and concerned about the possibility that Congress would initiate a southwest-style urban renewal project on Capitol Hill, the Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS) was founded in 1955.

Over the next decade, in an effort to protect the historic buildings, CHRS joined in an effort by the Joint Committee on Landmarks of the National Capitol to recognize the unique character of Capitol Hill. In 1964, Capitol Hill to the west of 13th and 14th Streets was named a Landmark of the National Capital, designated a historic district in 1973, and listed in the National Register of Historic Places

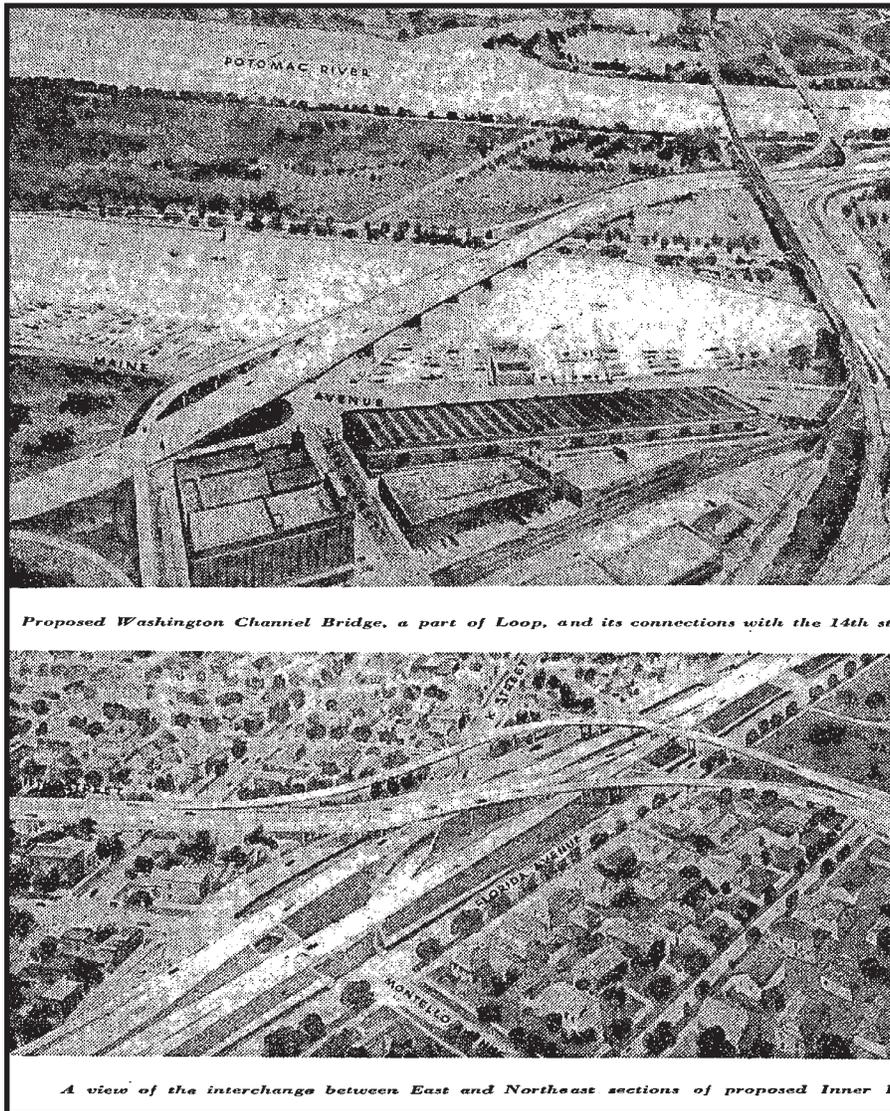


FIGURE 54: 50 mph Traffic Loop Would 'Feed' Central D.C.: Cash on Hand Would Start New Freeway (Washington Post, 4 December 1955 E1)

in 1976.<sup>128</sup> The historic district, designated locally and nationally, was honored for its significance as one of the oldest and most architecturally diverse areas of the city, and for its associations with the early development of the U.S. Capitol. The buildings reflect the social diversity and economic growth of Capitol Hill to house the political elite, government clerks, and Navy Yard wage earners. It has notable institutional buildings, elaborate residences in various popular nineteenth-century styles, extensive rows of late-nineteenth-century middle-class housing, and unadorned wood-frame and brick dwellings once occupied by laborers and laundresses. The original 1976 boundaries of the historic district were roughly defined by F Street, N.E. on the north, 13th and 14th Streets on the east, the Southeast Freeway on the south, and the grounds of the U.S. Capitol on the west. Approximately 8,000 contributing buildings were included in the historic district.

While formal recognition and documentation of Capitol Hill's historic resources, along with those in other parts of the city, were being implemented through the work of the Joint Committee on Landmarks, popular interest in restoration gained momentum. Beginning in the 1970s, Washington, D.C.'s white population started to increase after a 25-year decline, although the city's overall population continued to shrink because of a decline in the African American population.<sup>129</sup> Civil rights legislation enacted in the 1960s had opened up suburban housing to the city's African Americans and immigration from the rural South came to a virtual halt.<sup>130</sup> Similarly, Capitol Hill's population declined from 1970 to 1980, although the area's white population increased.

The early steps in stimulating the renovation and appreciation of Capitol Hill's housing stock were harbingers of a national trend of young professionals moving back to the residential areas of central cities. By the 1970s, this trend was evident in both local and national statistics. An Urban Land Institute study in 1975 noted signs of resurgence of residential areas in central cities with proportionate increases in the number of professional and clerical workers and adults-only

households. Capitol Hill was cited in the study as an example of this trend in Washington, D.C., along with the neighborhoods of Adams Morgan, and around Dupont and Logan circles.<sup>131</sup>

Based on 1970 and 1980 census statistics, a Census Bureau demographer found that, “The renovation of inner-city neighborhoods, usually by young white professionals fixing up old homes, moved faster in Washington during the 1970s than in any other major American city.” She described almost all of Capitol Hill—south of H Street, N.E., north of the Southeast Freeway and west of 19th Street—as a “renovation area.” Factors contributing to the population decline in this area were a reduction in household size with one- or two-person households renovating space once occupied by large families and the abandonment and destruction of deteriorated buildings.<sup>132</sup>

CHRS has continued to build on its earlier work helping to establish the Capitol Hill Historic District. With the gathering of additional documentation, modifications have been made to the original National Register listing to better address the development patterns of the historic district and the larger Capitol Hill neighborhood. Most significantly this has included establishing a clear and definitive period of significance of 1791 to 1945 (2003 amendment) and extending the boundaries to include Navy Yard Hill (2002 expansion). This expansion captured the area to the south of the freeway, initially considered a visual barrier separating Capitol Hill from the Navy Yard, to M Street, S.E., between 7th and 10th Streets. The eight-block expansion area is particularly significant in highlighting the connection between the Navy Yard and residential Capitol Hill.

Although protecting buildings from demolition was an early goal of neighborhood and city preservationists, many of Capitol Hill’s earliest buildings still were lost due to the expansion of the Capitol buildings and its grounds, the desire of developers to build new housing, and the construction of the Southeast Freeway. Further damage to Capitol Hill was averted when the other freeway

plans were abandoned due to community pressure. Instead, Capitol Hill is served by five Metro stations—Union Station in northeast and Capitol South, Eastern Market, Potomac Avenue, and Stadium Armory in southeast—that provide at least some link between the eastern and western sections of Capitol Hill. In recent years, adaptive use projects have helped retain historic buildings while introducing new uses into the community. Corner stores, when no longer economically viable, have become residences; churches no longer occupied by their congregations have become condominiums; and interiors of squares that no longer had alley dwellings sprouted community gardens. After desegregation eliminated the duplication of school facilities in each neighborhood and family sizes became smaller, new uses have been found for excess public school buildings. While some school buildings have been used for different educational purposes, including charter schools, others have become sought-after residences.

In addition to its stewardship of the historic fabric of the Capitol Hill Historic District, CHRS has continued its commitment to the larger Capitol Hill neighborhood. Between 2008 and 2011, the organization oversaw the architectural documentation of all properties just outside the historic district, which served as the western boundary. This survey effort engaged residents, property owners, volunteers, and paid professionals, resulting in the architectural documentation of 6,402 properties and four survey reports. The boundary extended as far north as H Street, N.E., documenting those properties between 2nd and 15th Streets to the north of the Capitol Hill Historic District. The southern border extended to the Anacostia River at Barney Circle and Congressional Cemetery, the latter excluded because it is a National Historic Landmark. Nineteenth Street served as the eastern boundary, including the Rosedale and Isherwood subdivisions, which were not originally included in the federal city boundaries but are now considered as part of Capitol Hill East. The documentation efforts undertaken by CHRS have continued with the preparation of this historic context report, which addresses the development of Capitol Hill from the 1791 survey of Pierre L'Enfant to the development and growth of Capitol Hill East in the twentieth century.

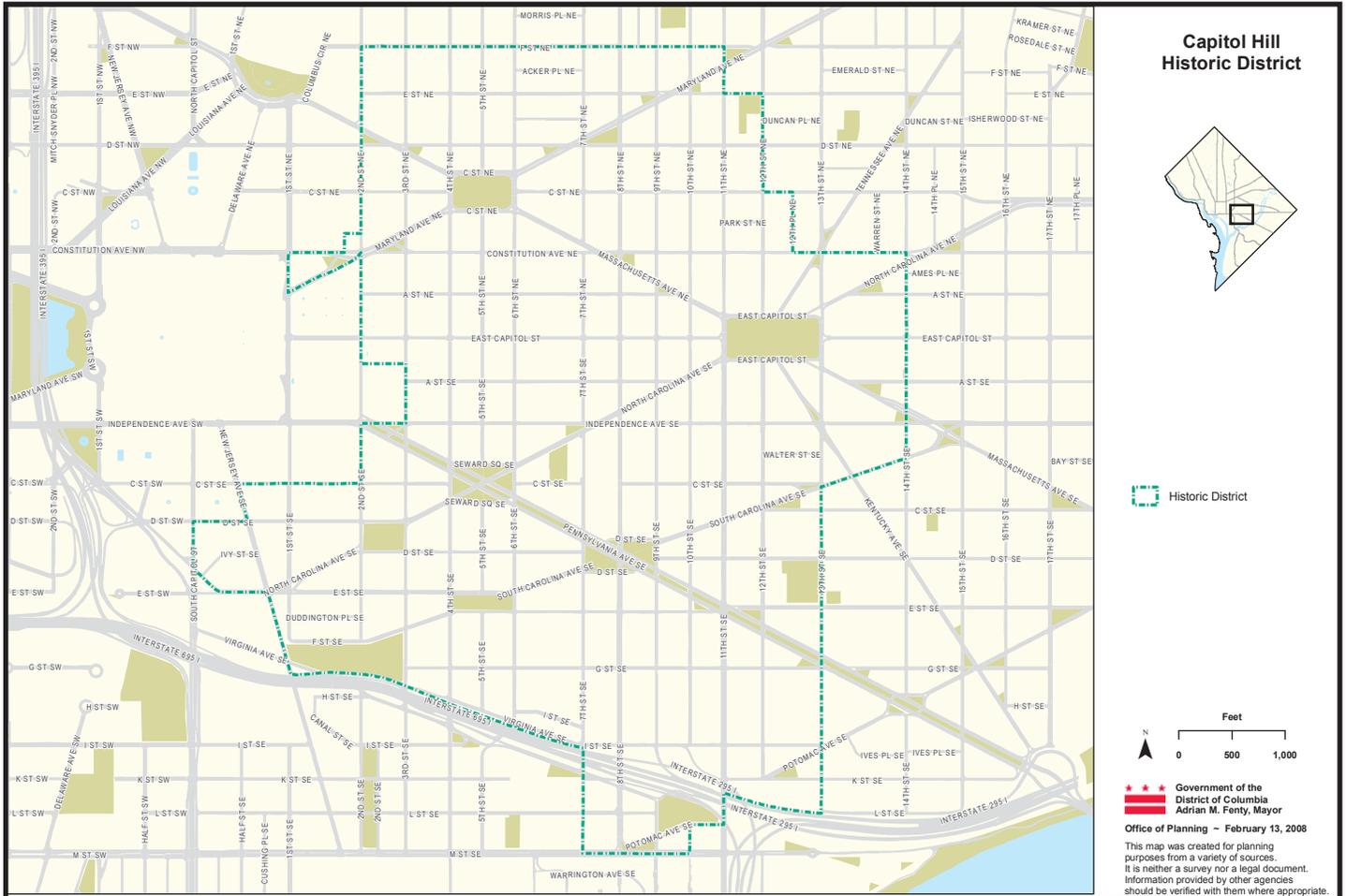


FIGURE 55: Capitol Hill Historic District. (Courtesy of DC Historic Preservation Office)