



P. O. Box 15264 Washington, D.C. 20003

September 28, 2021

David Maloney, State Historic Preservation Officer
Historic Preservation Office.
1100 Fourth Street, SW, Suite E650
Washington, DC 20024

Re: 2025 Preservation Plan

Dear Mr. Maloney:

Please see the comments from the Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS).

Summary

CHRS greatly appreciates the hard work and expertise of HPO staff on HPRB cases, and nominations. They are making the city a better place. We urge HPO to continue its work on planning for flooding, highlighting Black History, expanding Historyquest, and adding Multiple Property Documentation for corner stores.

Planning for flooding

While Capitol Hill is not in a flood plain, several historic districts (e.g., Mayfair Mansions) are in the 100-year or 500-year flood plain. District agencies predict increased risk of flooding from sea level rise and extreme

rain events.¹ Planning needs to begin immediately to protect historic districts and buildings in flood plains. Charleston, South Carolina has developed guidelines on raising buildings above flood plains or using wet- or dry-floodproofing.² We support finding best practices and beginning the planning process as soon as possible, as outlined in Goal D-1.

The National Park Service’s Guidelines on Flood Adaptation for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings (2021) take a case-by-case approach to preventing flood damage.

Black history

We commend HPO for supporting appreciation of Black history (e.g., Barry Farms, Kingman Park). Pp. 6, 43, 65, 85, 86, 90. We urge HPO to continue to document and publish information on Black history resources.

Historyquest

HistoryQuest is a vital resource that helps people research their houses and neighborhoods. We urge HPO to enhance Historyquest by adding post-1950 permits. At a minimum, everyone should be able to research building permits from 1877 to the start of DCRA’s online building permit resource. We strongly support the current goal to expand Historyquest to map data pertinent to neighborhood development, including subdivisions, civic and citizens’ association boundaries, alley buildings, and other information, and documenting the origins of all DC neighborhood names. Documenting the origins of street names should be added to this process. P. 83?We also support the current goal to complete basic research on all of the District’s pre-1865 buildings, both urban and rural, making the information available to the public (by 2025) and to continue basic research on significant buildings from the second half of the 20th century, especially downtown and in neighborhood clusters (through 2025). P. 83.

Multiple property documentation: corner stores

Washington, including Capitol Hill, has many historically significant corner stores. EHT Traceries documented the corner stores on eastern Capitol Hill:

¹ DOEE, *Climate Ready DC*.

² Richard Fausset and Christopher Flavell, “Historic Homes Get a Lift in Flood-Prone Charleston,” *New York Times*, 25 July 2021, 14. Cornelia Dean, “Rising Seas Threaten Historic Houses,” *Architectural Record*, April 2020, 38. [Flood Risk Management | ddoe \(dc.gov\)](#)

About fifty purpose-built corner stores, with commercial space on the ground story and residential above, have been identified in Capitol Hill East. They date from the early 1870s to the mid-twentieth century. Many present all of the essential physical features necessary to read as corner stores, providing residential space on the upper stories, retaining the characteristic storefront windows, and maintaining an association and setting with the residential neighborhood and intersection of streets where located. A number of the corner stores are no longer in operation; some have been rehabilitated to serve as residential space, while others remain vacant. Regardless of their current or original use, this particular building type remains identifiable and is indicative of Capitol Hill East and the residential development occurring in the first half of the twentieth century.

EHT Traceries, *Capitol Hill Historic Context Findings* (2014) [Capitol Hill Restoration Society » Beyond the Boundaries \(chrs.org\)](http://www.chrs.org/)www.chrs.org/

We urge HPO to undertake multiple property documentation of corner stores throughout Washington.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,



Beth Purcell , President

cc:

The Honorable Charles Allen callen@dccouncil.us