A Discussion of Ward Eight Cultural and Heritage Resources
Ward Eight Heritage Guide
Text by Patsy M. Fletcher, DC Historic Preservation Office
Design by Kim Elliott, DC Historic Preservation Office

Unless stated otherwise, photographs and images are from Office of Planning collection.

This project has been funded in part by U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund grant funds, administered by the District of Columbia’s Historic Preservation Office. The contents and opinions contained in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

This program has received Federal financial assistance for the identification, protection, and/or rehabilitation of historic properties and cultural resources in the District of Columbia. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, or disability in its Federally assisted programs. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20240.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Perspective</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward Eight at a Glance</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward Eight Neighborhoods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preservation Framework</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost Resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preservation Challenges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preservation Strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Sites</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designated Historic Sites</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American Heritage Trail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural and Heritage Resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WARD 8
Ward Eight has many descriptors, some more affectionate than others: “a shadow across the river”; “a patchwork of neighborhoods”; and “the village that shaped us.” Although the ward is generally referred to as “Southeast” or “Anacostia”, it is not a monolithic community. In fact, comprised of many communities, the ward is an area with a rich, largely unacknowledged, history.

This heritage guide identifies historic or culturally important places in Ward Eight and provides a framework for developing strategies to promote and protect the historic resources as necessary. A goal of this commemoration of Ward Eight’s heritage is the enhancement of economic development, community sustainability, and quality of life measures.

A cultural or heritage resource is defined as a site, building, structure, object, or ritual of importance to a community or culture. The significance, whether traditional, historic, religious, educational, or other, is one of several factors that illustrates the hallmarks of a community’s way of life or identity.

One such resource for many residents in Ward Eight is the Big Chair on Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue. The Big Chair, recently rebuilt, was first erected in 1959 as a publicity gimmick for a local furniture company. Although the object would not necessarily qualify for formal historic designation in the same way as another Ward Eight icon, the Frederick Douglass house, the Big Chair is nevertheless a visual landmark and significant historically to most Ward Eight residents. Its loss would be deeply felt.

There are a number of other cultural resources in Ward Eight, many of which are not widely acknowledged. Left unrecognized, they become vulnerable to devaluation and even loss as the ward seeks investment, development and/or a new identity. The DC Historic Preservation Office, along with community partners, hopes to promote stewardship of the ward’s heritage by assisting residents in identifying important cultural icons and places, and by facilitating initiatives to promote, preserve, and reuse the ward’s significant historic resources.

This guide presents a brief history of Ward Eight, providing a foundation for understanding the ward’s heritage. It is followed by some broad strategies and suggested actions for achieving shared community goals including recognizing, protecting, and promoting use of historic resources. The intent is to address the needs, desires, and challenges of the wide range of preservation interests that exist in Ward Eight.
Ward Eight occupies the southern corner of the District of Columbia between the Potomac and Anacostia (formerly the Eastern Branch) Rivers and Prince George’s County, Maryland. Characterized by contrasts and often competing interests and resources, the ward boasts million-dollar views and a surfeit of low-income and public housing.

Ward Eight covers more than 4,000 acres and has the smallest percentage of taxable land in the District. Federal and District government holdings include parklands, St. Elizabeths Hospital, Bolling Air Force Base, Blue Plains Wastewater Treatment Plant, and the former DC Village, leaving just 962 acres that are subject to taxation. Yet, the ward has more vacant land than the other quadrants of the city.

Although the ward is the District’s youngest as an urban and civic division, its tradition as a place of human settlement dates back some 2,000 years. The area was initially populated by the Nacochtank Indians who found the natural and diverse topographic resources suitable to a lifestyle of relative ease. They established trading posts, and hunting and fishing camps along the Potomac and Anacostia shorelines. Europeans began settling the area in the 1600s, eventually displacing the native Nacochtank tribe and their settlements. The only traces of the original people live on through the name given to the river and through the artifacts they left behind.

The new settlers formalized their claims to the land of Ward Eight beginning in the 1660s. Many held large tracts for investment. Eventually, plantations for tobacco cultivation and smaller farms for fruits and vegetables were established. Enslaved Africans and their descendants provided much of the labor for these enterprises, though by the early 1800s, there were a number of free families of color who were residents, workers, and land owners.
When the national capital was established in the region in 1790, it was speculated that the city would grow in the direction of this southeastern quadrant of Washington because of its location at the juncture of the Potomac and the Eastern Branch Rivers. This prospective growth did not happen for many decades. Instead the ward was dotted with small settlements well into the 1870s, especially along the roads to and from Maryland, such as Hamilton (Alabama Avenue), and to the Alexandria ferry at the river’s edge. Some of the early settlements were Good Hope, the Ridge, and Giesboro.

The establishment of institutional uses in the area began with the building of the Government Hospital for the Insane (later named St. Elizabeths Hospital) in 1853. The site was selected because of the panoramic views and bucolic setting that were considered soothing and healing to the hospital’s patients.

A private attempt at increasing settlement in Ward Eight was the 1850s development of a planned community for white government and other middle-class workers desiring suburban living. This subdivision was called Uniontown, located at the foot of the Navy Yard Bridge (11th Street). However, it was several more years before this effort met with success. That community is now Historic Anacostia, a historic district.
After the start of the Civil War, Ward Eight with its high vistas and lengthy river front became part of the federal government’s war defenses to protect the nation's capital. Several fortifications, such as Forts Carroll and Greble, were erected at strategic points along the ward’s share of the District boundary. Ward Eight was also home to the largest cavalry depot in the country, at Giesboro, now part of Bolling Air Force Base.

These Union forts and batteries attracted people fleeing enslavement in Maryland, Virginia, and beyond, especially after 1862 when the District emancipated enslaved people within its boundaries. This led to the next and more successful settlement effort – the post-Civil War establishment of a village for newly freed people on farmland purchased from the Barry family. The Freedmen’s Bureau was responsible for the nation’s first planned community for African Americans with the establishment of Barry Farm (later called Hillsdale) located on the Anacostia River at the northern border of St. Elizabeths. Streets were laid out and named for prominent white abolitionists, and one-acre lots were platted. The lots and building materials were offered for sale to African Americans for two or three hundred dollars payable in installments.

After the Civil War, various industrial uses began to locate along the river shorelines on landfill created by efforts to make the river more navigable and to eliminate marshlands thought to harbor disease. Most of these were later displaced by additional military and other governmental concerns that began to consume much of the available land. Some of the post-Civil War government facilities included the technologically advanced Bellevue Magazine, which lent its name to a later Ward Eight neighborhood; the Anacostia Naval
Air Station and Naval Research Laboratory; Camp Simms, a National Guard camp; and Washington's almshouse and a potter's field. Supporting enterprises sprang up employing many of the local residents. The largest of these was the Firth Stirling Steel Company, later known as Washington Steel and Ordnance Company.

Until the 1940s, residential development in the ward remained sparse, and clustered along major roads. An example is Congress Heights developed in the 1880s as a streetcar suburb at the end of the line along Nichols (Martin Luther King, Jr.) Avenue at its juncture with Hamilton Road (Alabama Avenue) and Portland (Malcolm X) Avenue.
In 1940, the ward’s population totaled only a small percentage of the city’s total. More than one third of these were residents of St. Elizabeths, which had become the federal government’s largest psychiatric treatment facility.

With the onset of World War II and the rapid expansion of federal agencies and employment, residential development boomed in Ward Eight. A new bridge across the Anacostia River enhanced the development of new neighborhoods and economic opportunity in the ward. With these came attendant churches, schools, other social and cultural institutions, as well as businesses, and places of leisure.

The 1950s in Ward Eight also saw changes in demographics. With legal rulings that prohibited racial discrimination, white residents began to leave sections of the ward. Urban renewal activity in other parts of the city, combined with the systematic construction of moderate-cost housing east of the Anacostia River led thousands of low- to middle-income black households to relocate to the ward in search of affordable housing.
Tension between the races in the ward almost came to a head several times during this period but never resulted in the kind of disturbances that other parts of Washington saw. At the same time, issues grew along class lines as the number of apartment buildings and multi-family dwellings assigned to renters began to outnumber single family, detached housing and home ownership.

The ward became the location of many government funded and subsidized housing developments. Some communities within the ward such as the previously cohesive nineteenth century Hillsdale were divided and isolated by the construction of the Suitland Parkway and Interstate 295. As a result, Ward Eight became known as a lower-income, black community characterized by mid-twentieth century buildings and government facilities. This depiction ignores the ward’s surviving historic character.

Today, Ward Eight is enjoying a rediscovery of its rich and varied history, and its contribution to Washington in the midst of the development occurring in the ward. More importantly, residents are recognizing the need for the protection of its resources.
Ward Eight Development

1861

1861 A. Boschke map

1878

1879 G.M. Hopkins map
Maps adapted by Brian Kraft
Community Stakeholders

Anacostia Coordinating Committee
Anacostia Economic Development Council
Advisory Neighborhood Commissions 8A-E
Congress Heights Community Association
Frederick Douglass Garden Club
Frederick Douglass National Historic Site
Historic Anacostia Block Association
Oxon Run Community Association
River East Emerging Leadership Council
Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum
Ward Eight Business Council
Ward Eight Civic Associations
Ward Eight Councilmember
Ward Eight History / Heritage Council
Ward Eight Ministerial Alliance
Attractions

African American Heritage Trail (AAHT)
Anacostia Park, Anacostia River
The Big Chair
Civil War forts sites:
   Baker, Carroll, Greble, Ricketts, Snyder, Stanton and Wagner
District Boundary Stones
The Frederick Douglass National Historic Site
Historic Anacostia Heritage Trail
Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling (JBAB)
Oxon Run Park
The Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum
Southwest Tennis and Learning Center
Town Hall Education Arts Recreation Campus (THE ARC)
Views from Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church

The Big Chair, Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue and V Street, 1959, rebuilt in 2006
Photo by Lois Raimundo, The Washington Post

The Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum

Panel from The African American Heritage Trail
Lost Resources

A Sample of Demolished Buildings
Places and structures that have survived over time help tell the story of a community. They provide a setting and context for events, patterns, and mark the degree of change that has taken place.

When they remain, they provide a tangible connection to the history of a neighborhood. When they are gone, a beat in the rhythm of a neighborhood is missed and a sense of what was is forever lost to new generations.
Preservation Challenges

Protecting City Views
The most commonly agreed upon preservation challenge in Ward Eight is the protection of the views and vistas of the city, the monumental core, the Potomac River and Virginia from vantage points in Ward Eight. Development plans for parts of the ward threaten the heretofore unobstructed views enjoyed by residents. St. Elizabeths which enjoys the best views will be closed to the public except on special occasions due to the pending relocation of Department of Homeland Security headquarters, including the US Coast Guard and major security measures.

Other developments include the pending construction of a giant water tower, also at St. Elizabeths. Several apartment/retail complexes are proposed for various areas such as along Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, just outside the historic district, that will obstruct the views normally enjoyed by residents of the lower section of Hillsdale. Similarly, there is tremendous concern that views from Our Lady of Perpetual Help, a traditional fireworks-watching site and tourist vista will be obscured by new development.

Conversely, residents were particularly proud of the approaching views of Ward Eight from the western side of the Anacostia River. Until recently, the hillside greeted river crossers with a relatively uninterrupted lush and verdant expanse. Prospective projects for the historic Elvans Road, below Our Lady, St. Elizabeths, and other sites could alter forever the views for which Ward Eight is known.
Other Preservation Concerns
Beyond viewsheds, there are few preservation issues that enjoy wide interest or consensus in the community.

- Smaller groups are advocating for expansion of the Anacostia Historic District and designation of Congress Heights as a historic district.

- Preservation of Congress Heights School and the former Metropolitan Police Department 11th Precinct has wide support.

- Some congregants of historic churches would like to see the protection historic landmark status would bring; however, they face opposition from within.

- Some residents see the planned streetcar and, particularly, the overhead lines for Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue as detrimental to the character of the Anacostia Historic District, while others see streetcars as a revival of the past.

- On the other hand, the reconstruction of the 11th Street Bridge was welcome by many residents as it would reduce obtrusive commuter traffic in the affected neighborhoods.

- Alarm has been raised about plans to demolish the Barry Farm Recreation Center and amphitheater, and to change historic street names in the Barry Farm housing development.

Development Needs
Balancing preservation goals with development plans presents Ward Eight residents with a familiar dilemma, grown more acute because of the history of neglect of the ward.

Ward Eight residents are anxious for quality retail and housing. They want to enjoy amenities found in other parts of the city. Retail development along Alabama Avenue in Hillcrest and in Douglass/Shipley Terrace appears to be tremendously successful.

Housing development in various sections of the ward has also been seen as positive in spite of the fact that some of it to date has obscured views. The new housing provides decent, though not quite affordable, places to live and in some instances has replaced blighted multi-family complexes that have plagued the ward since the 1950s.
Attitudes Toward Preservation

No discussion of the challenges of preservation in Ward Eight would be complete without acknowledging the wariness or skepticism from many quarters in the ward toward historic preservation. With the influx of new residents and looming development plans, this dissonance seems to have become more acute despite the fact that many residents, both recent and long term, would say that they value the culture and history of their communities and those resources. Misinformation, fear of change, mistrust, and past experiences often taint communication efforts among the various stakeholders. Discussions, for instance, around the St. Elizabeths redevelopment plans and the proposed streetcar line have revealed divisions in preservation priorities. However, the key is to continue to identify common paths toward a shared vision of historical and cultural heritage preservation and to build partnerships to achieve that goal.

Some initiatives such as the Historic Homeowner’s Grant program, have garnered positive preservation gains. Through this program, funding is provided to qualified property owners in Historic Anacostia to make historically compatible repairs and modifications to their buildings.

Other small initiatives, such as the discussions around specific community history presented through the Ward Eight History/Heritage Council, and the fostering of neighborhood historians through the DC Community Heritage Project, have promoted participation in preservation efforts toward popular goals. Advocacy for the protection of Ward Eight’s heritage is an outcome that will ultimately serve the residents and the city alike.
Preservation Strategies

In consideration of the many challenges, the following strategies are offered to further preservation education and advocacy:

- Conduct informal inquiries into the preservation goals/issues of stakeholders.
- Continue research to accurately document significant historic sites.
- Help support preservation efforts such as the development of Cultural Tourism’s heritage trail for Anacostia and cultural initiatives sponsored by the Anacostia Community Museum.
- Recruit community groups to participate in the DC Community Heritage Project and engage residents in researching and identifying neighborhood cultural resources.
- Provide outreach and assistance to community-based explorations of preservation issues and goals.
- Fund cultural resource surveys of discrete areas of the ward. (There was a 1987 survey of Congress Heights and a 1978 survey of old Anacostia.)
- Develop a progressive landmarking program for eligible sites supported by owners and residents.
- Ensure that preservation and community conservation are fully considered and integrated into neighborhood planning efforts.
Historic Homeowner Grant Program
In 2008, the Historic Preservation Office began implementing a grant program to help qualified homeowners in 12 historic districts pay for certified rehabilitation work on their historic homes. Owners in the Anacostia Historic District were the first recipients of this preservation initiative.

1317 U Street SE,
1977

Before Rehabilitation

After Rehabilitation
Historic Landmarks in Ward Eight

Ward Eight has seven designated historic landmarks and districts. A “designated” landmark means the property is listed on the DC Inventory of Historic Sites and on the National Register of Historic Places. The Historic Preservation Review Board is the mayoral-appointed commission that designates DC landmarks and historic districts, while the National Register is administered by the National Park Service and lends a federal level of protection to historic sites.

**Anacostia Historic District**
Roughly bounded by Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, Good Hope Road, U Street SE, 16th Street SE and Maple View Place SE

**Boundary Stones (6)**
Southern Avenue, SE from Naylor Road to Oxon Cove

**Congress Heights Firehouse**
(Chemical Engine No. 5
Engine Company No. 25)
3203 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, SE

**Civil War Fort Sites**
Greble, Carroll, Snyder, Stanton, Ricketts, Wagner, Baker

**Significance:**
One of the city’s first suburbs, incorporated in 1854 as Uniontown; initially for working class whites; Frederick Douglass purchased a home here in 1877.

**Significance:**
Six of 40 stones located and installed from 1791-1792 to mark the boundaries of the District based upon Benjamin Banneker’s astronomical calculations.

**Significance:**
Constructed in 1902, it was the city’s largest, most innovative, and most expensive firehouse; the Italianate revival style resembles buildings on nearby St. Elizabeths campus.

**Significance:**
Part of the 1860s defense system of Washington now called the Civil War Fort Sites and Fort Circle Park System.
**Frederick Douglass National Historic Site**

**Cedar Hill**

14th & W Street SE

**Significance:**
Built in 1855-59 by John Van Hook, a partner in the company that developed Uniontown, now Historic Anacostia, it was final home (1877-1895) to Frederick Douglass, an escaped slave who became a renowned abolitionist, statesman, civil rights activist.

---

**St. Elizabeths Hospital Historic District**

2700 & 2701 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE

**Significance:**
US Government’s first mental health hospital, 1853; served as a Civil War hospital; became pioneer and model for humane mental health treatment.

---

**Suitland Parkway**

From Anacostia River, DC to Pennsylvania Avenue, Prince George’s County, MD

**Significance:**
Built in 1943-44 as a defense highway linking DC with Andrews Airforce Base, it embodied a new type of road designed for high speed but with contours and plantings for camouflage. It is used as a presidential and diplomatic processional route.
African American Heritage Trail

Sites in Ward Eight
A project funded by the DC Historic Preservation Office and developed and designed by Cultural Tourism DC, this heritage trail project introduces over two hundred African American historic and cultural sites in Washington. Several sites in Ward Eight are marked with signs.
Congress Heights School

3100 Martin Luther King, Jr., Avenue, SE

The eight-room, brick Congress Heights Elementary School opened in 1897 to serve the new, whites-only Congress Heights development. The iconic tower and clock were added in 1913. After public schools desegregated in 1954, Congress Heights became primarily African American. The city closed the deteriorated school in 1970, but neighborhood activists, determined to save it from demolition, found new uses for the building. Thus it continued to serve the community, over time housing Ward 8 offices, a Head Start program, and DC Habitat for Humanity, and offering outdoor space to a neighborhood festival and a farmers market. A charter school moved into the renovated building in 2011.
Cultural and Heritage Resources

What follows is a listing of some of the places that are important to the heritage of the ward or represent important points of history. These sites have been identified from many sources, including historic resource surveys, publications, historic archives, planning documents and community residents. Some have been identified as important places on the African American Heritage Trail (AAHT). These are marked with ♻. Individual sites that are protected as contributing structures within the Anacostia Historic District, but that have not been individually recognized as historic landmarks, are marked with ⚖.

Houses of Worship

Allen Chapel AME
2498 Alabama Avenue SE
Importance: Religion/Spirituality, Social Movements - Site of Ward Eight's oldest African American congregation (1850); founded officially in 1860 in a community known as the Ridge

Bethlehem Baptist Church
2458 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE
Importance: Religion/Spirituality, Social Movements - Prominent in Barry Farm/Hillsdale; active in 1960 civil rights and political rights

Campbell AME Church ♻
2562 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE
Importance: Religion/Spirituality, Social Movements, Architecture - Prominent in Barry Farm/Hillsdale community activism; architect Albert Cassell (1917)

Church of the Assumption
3409 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE
Importance: Religion/Spirituality, Social Movements, Architecture - Only Catholic church in Far SE; architect Donald S. Johnson, 1932

Church of the Holy Communion / Bishop John T. Walker School for Boys
3640 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE
Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church
1718 Minnesota Avenue SE
**Importance:** Religion/Spirituality, Social Movements – First church to be organized in Fairlawn and has occupied same site since 1892; architect Arthur A. Weidner, 1952

Guiding Light Church (Old Matthews Memorial Church)
2627 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE
**Importance:** Religion/Spirituality, Social Movements - the first home of Matthews Memorial Baptist Church; architect J.L. Turner, 1932

Macedonia Baptist Church
2625 Stanton Road SE
**Importance:** Religion/Spirituality, Social Movements – First African-American congregation (1867) in Barry Farm freedmen's community; current location architect R. C. Archer, Jr., 1947

Matthew Memorial Baptist Church
2616 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE
**Importance:** Religion/Spirituality, Social Movements - Second building of historic and socially active congregation; architect McKissack & McKissack, 1960

St. Teresa of Avila Catholic Church
13th & V Streets SE
**Importance:** Religion/Spirituality, Social Movements, Architecture - first Catholic church east of river; architect E. Francis Baldwin, 1878

Washington Highlands Synagogue / Righteous Branch Commandment Church
2nd & Xenia Streets SW
**Importance:** Religion/Spirituality, Archaeology – Remnant of formerly Jewish neighborhood in Bellevue community; architect Earl Von Reichenbach, 1944
**Schools**

**Anacostia High School**
1601 16th Street SE  
*Importance:* Education, Social Movements – Only public high school east of Anacostia River built for white students; students organized against desegregation; Municipal Architect Nathan C. Wyatt, 1935

**Birney Elementary School**
2501 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE  

**Birney School / Nichols Avenue School / Thurgood Marshall Academy**
Howard Road & Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE  
*Importance:* Education, Architecture – Replaced Hillsdale School, first school for Barry Farm community; architect Clarence Harding, 1901

**Congress Heights School**
3100 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE  
*Importance:* Education, Architecture – Role in founding of community; Inspector of Buildings, Snowden Ashford, 1897, redesigned 1913

**Garfield Elementary School**
2435 Alabama Avenue SE  
*Importance:* Education, Architecture – Public school for African Americans (1910) and first DC public school designed by early African American architect W. Sidney Pittman, 1909

**Ketcham Elementary School**
1919 15th Street SE  
*Importance:* Education, Architecture – Originally designed as a model for city schools; Municipal Architect Snowden Ashford, 1908

**Kramer Junior High School**
1700 Q Street SE  
*Importance:* Education, Social Movements – First public junior high school built east of river; Municipal Architect Nathan C. Wyatt, 1943
Parks and Places of Recreation

**Anacostia Park**
Section from Howard Road SE to Pennsylvania Avenue SE
*Importance:* Social Movements, Military/Maritime, Environment/Horticultural, Archaeology – Site of Bonus Army camp, 1940s-1950s civil rights activities; home of nurseries and botanical gardens

**Barry Farm Recreation Center**
1230 Stevens Road SE
*Importance:* Recreation/Sports, Social Movements – Site of early recreational activity for African Americans in segregated Ward Eight including Eureka and Green Willow Parks; first city playground for African Americans; debut of GoGo music

**Carver Theater**
2405 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE
*Importance:* Entertainment/Performing Arts, Social Movements, Education – Site of only African American theater in Ward Eight and first site of Anacostia Community Museum, first of its theme in US

**100 Block of Xenia Street**
1st & Xenia Streets SE
*Importance:* Entertainment/Performing Arts – Alleged birthplace of GoGo music

**Oxon Run Park**
Along Mississippi Avenue and South Capitol Street SE
*Importance:* Recreation/Sports, Environment, Archaeology - Rough boundary of the Southeast section of the District, site of recreational activities for residents
Places of Commerce

Anderson Tire Manufacturing Company / Carroll Laundry
1701 14th Street SE
**Importance:** Commerce/Business – Smokestack for former tire plant (1918) that became a laundry is landmark of ward; example of modular factory construction

The Big Chair
Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue at V Street SE
**Importance:** Commerce/Business – Unofficial landmark of the ward first built for Curtis Brothers Furniture, 1958

Liff’s Market Building
600 Alabama Avenue SE
**Importance:** Commerce/Business – Since 1912, site of Congress Heights’ longest running business; operating as Liff’s since 1914

Loeffler’s Hotel/“The Myrtle”
3109 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE
**Importance:** Commerce/Business – Area’s first hotel (1915); later, converted to the neighborhood’s first apartments

Schmid House (Columbian Iron Works)
1409 22nd Street SE
**Importance:** Architecture, Commerce/Business – Factory owner’s house located adjacent to company; owner-architect Emil Schmid, 1917
Government Buildings

**DC Water and Sewer Authority (DC Water)**
1801 Minnesota Avenue SE
**Importance:** Architecture – Example of industrial architecture; Municipal Architect Nathan C. Wyeth, 1945

**Eleventh Precinct Building**
2301 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE
**Importance:** Architecture, Social Movements – First police precinct east of river; first African American police captain appointed in 1968.

**Poplar Point Pump Station**
2390 So. Capitol Street SE
**Importance:** Architecture, Archaeology – Example of industrial architecture and built at Anacostia River’s edge in 1915
Communities

**Anacostia Historic District Expansion**

*Importance:* Architecture, Social Movements, Community Planning/Development - To include historic structures from the same period

**Elvans Road**

2500 Block of Elvans Road SE

*Importance:* Social Movements, Community Planning/Development – Site of once vibrant Reconstruction-era African American community; some of the earliest extant buildings of Barry Farm/Hillsdale

**Farmhouses / Rural Dwellings**

*Importance:* Architecture, Agriculture, Community Planning/Development - A few remaining structures related to the agricultural past of the ward

**Selected Apartment Complexes**

*Importance:* Architecture, Community Planning/Development - Demonstrate architectural and social planning to house dense population
Other Resources

Call Boxes

**Importance:** Government, Science/Technology – Several surviving stands originally used for direct line calling for fire and police emergencies before advent of two-way radios, walkie-talkies, and personal telephones, 1860s–1970s

Barry Farm Dwellings Public Housing Street Names

Eaton, Howard, Stevens, Sumner, Wade Roads SE

**Importance:** Community Planning/Development, Social Movements – Streets named for abolitionists and legislators active in the emancipation movement.
Map of Cultural and Heritage Resources

Map Key

- **Historic Landmarks:**
  1. Anacostia Historic District
  2. Boundary Stones
  3. Congress Heights Firehouse
  4. Civil War Fort Sites
  5. Frederick Douglass National Historic Site
  6. St. Elizabeths Hospital Historic District
  7. Suitland Parkway

- **Churches:**
  8. Allen Chapel AME Church
  9. Bethlehem Baptist Church
  10. Campbell AME Church
  11. Church of the Assumption
  12. Church of the Holy Communion
  13. Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church
  14. Guiding Light Church (Old Matthews Memorial Church)
  15. Macedonia Baptist Church
  16. Matthews Memorial Baptist Church
  17. St. Teresa of Avila Catholic Church
  18. Washington Highlands Synagogue
  19. Righteous Branch Commandment Church

- **Schools:**
  19. Anacostia High School
  20. Birney Elementary School (New)
  22. Congress Heights School
  23. Garfield Elementary School
  24. Ketcham Junior High School
  25. Kramer Junior High School

- **Parks and Places of Recreation:**
  26. 100 Block of Xenia Street
  27. Anacostia Park
  28. Barry Farm Recreation Center
  29. Carver Recreation Center
  30. Oxon Run

- **Places of Commerce:**
  31. Anderson Tire Manufacturing Company / Carroll Laundry
  32. The Big Chair
  33. Liff's Market Building
  34. Loeffler's Hotel / The Myrtle
  35. Schmid House (Columbian Iron Works)

- **Government Buildings:**
  36. 11th Street Precinct Building
  37. DC Water and Sewer Authority (DC Water)
  38. Poplar Point Pump Station

- **Communities:**
  39. Anacostia Historic District Expansion
  40. Apartment Complexes - Halley House
  41. Elvans Road
  42. Farm Houses

- **Other:**
  43. Barry Farm Dwellings Street Names
  44. Call Boxes
Depiction of Proposed Development of the Anacostia River: Planning initiatives for the Anacostia waterfront over the past decade have focused on improving the river’s water quality and restoring its natural habitat, while also improving its shoreline parks and making it a centerpiece for new and revitalized communities. As the area is redeveloped, we must ensure that consideration is given to Ward Eight’s important historic, cultural and natural resources.
Preservation and Planning Documents
“Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act of 1978” (DC Law 2-144, as amended), District of Columbia Municipal Regulations, Historic Preservation Regulations, Title 10A.

Neighborhood Preservation and Planning
Anacostia Transit Area Strategic Investment Plan
Barry Farm/Park Chester / Wade Road Redevelopment Plan
Bellevue Small Area Plan
East of the River Project
Pennsylvania Avenue SE Great Streets Project

Historic Resource Surveys
DC HPO Historic Resource Surveys:
Anacostia (1996; conditions assessment)
Congress Heights (1987-88, including archaeological resources)
Firehouses (1988; 1992)
Northeast Archaeological Survey (1993)
Public Schools (1989; 1998)
Saint Elizabeths Hospital West Campus (1993; including archaeological resources)

Ward Eight and DC History
For questions and further assistance, please contact the Historic Preservation Office:

Historic Preservation Office (HPO)
1100 4th Street SW, Washington, DC 20024
phone: 202.442.8800
email: historic.preservation@dc.gov
website: www.preservation.dc.gov