

# *19th Annual Report*



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## D.C. Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act

MARCH 1998



**NINETEENTH ANNUAL REPORT**

**to the Council of the District of Columbia**

**on Implementation of the**

**HISTORIC LANDMARK AND HISTORIC DISTRICT PROTECTION ACT OF 1978**

March 1998



**Marion Barry, Jr.**

*Mayor*

**James T. Speight, Jr.**

*Chairman, Historic Preservation Review Board*

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*Among its provisions, the D.C. Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act of 1978 (D.C. Law 2-144) provides for an Annual Report on the implementation of the city's preservation program. This Nineteenth Annual Report to the Council of the District of Columbia records the activities and accomplishments of the District's historic preservation program from October 1, 1996 to September 30, 1997. For further information, please call the Historic Preservation Division of the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, at (202) 727-7360.*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Historic preservation in the District of Columbia is a well-managed and cost-effective program that creates economic activity and revenue for the city at many times its cost. Preservation promotes successful business endeavors by joining with property owners to adapt landmark buildings to changing needs. It also plays a critical role in enhancing the historic qualities that both residents and 20 million annual tourists seek in the nation's capital. The city's future economic health is heavily dependent on a continued ability to capitalize on these unique historical assets.

According to building permit data for a recent 18-month period, the private sector invested more than \$164 million in rehabilitating designated historic buildings. This investment enhanced the property tax base, created commercial activity, and supported jobs in the construction trades--in addition to returning \$1.7 million to the District in permit fees. During the same period, the District expended \$629,000 in combined federal and local funds to support the historic preservation program--a ratio of \$1 in public expenditure for more than \$250 in private investment.

In downtown, current preservation projects include the restoration and expansion of the John A. Wilson Building, adaptive re-use of the old Washington Loan & Trust Building as a *Courtyard by Marriott* hotel, and rehabilitation of the long-vacant Old Masonic Temple for shops and offices. The federal preservation tax incentives have been crucial for each of these projects. In Chinatown, more than a dozen commercial buildings are undergoing rehabilitation in accordance with plans approved by the Historic Preservation Review Board. In other historic neighborhoods, preservation projects range from the restoration of historic commercial buildings on U Street NW and Connecticut Avenue, to the construction of new housing at Ellen Wilson Dwellings, on O Street NW, and on Potomac Avenue.

Major accomplishments of the historic preservation program during the past year included:

- The State Historic Preservation Officer and staff participated in the successful conclusion of a Memorandum of Agreement for the proposed Washington Convention Center. Because of the major preservation impacts of this very large structure, and the number of historic landmarks and potential districts involved, there was a serious and comprehensive analysis of the historic preservation issues. The Memorandum provided for significant design revisions to enhance the building's compatibility, a moratorium on demolition in affected neighborhoods, support for designation of eligible historic resources, and a substantial fund for renovation and enhancement of historic buildings in the surrounding area.
- The SHPO and Historic Preservation Review Board successfully completed the landmark designation for the entire L'Enfant Plan. Culminating a five-year survey and planning collaboration with the National Park Service, this effort involved extensive preparation and public hearings. As a result, the physical manifestation of Washington's world-renowned plan--including the streets, circles, squares, public reservations, and vistas within the original city--is now recognized for its supreme importance in defining the physical character of the national capital. This listing is as significant as any made during the history of the city's preservation program.
- To improve service to public clients, the SHPO published a series of twelve individualized design guidelines addressing various aspects of building rehabilitation. These guidelines are intended to assist owners in understanding preservation issues, and to promote consistency in the application of

preservation standards. They present solutions to many of the design issues most commonly confronted in residential and commercial situations. They were developed and printed with federal grant assistance, and are consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*. Heavy demand for the guidelines has been evidence of their value.

- To complement the architectural design guidelines, the SHPO also developed and distributed a publication delineating procedures for conducting archaeological survey and data recovery in the city. These guidelines were also prepared with federal grant assistance. They define accepted archaeological practices--for both prehistoric and historic sites--as applied in the urban context. The guidelines will not only assist professionals in the conduct of research, but also promote a broader understanding and appreciation of archaeological issues among the public at large.

The historic preservation program remains diligent in pursuing the policies established by the Historic Protection Act, while remaining sensitive to the missions of other planning and development agencies. A continual process of communication and consensus-building affords preservation the opportunity to make meaningful economic and cultural contributions to a diverse and dynamic city.

### **FEDERAL FUNDING COMMITMENT**

All State Historic Preservation Offices must satisfy uniform national performance standards in order to maintain certification as "approved state programs." This status is a prerequisite for participating in the national historic preservation program, and receiving grant assistance from the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service.

During the current fiscal year, the National Park Service has awarded \$3 13,5 10 in federal funds to the District of Columbia to advance historic preservation programs citywide. These funds are used primarily to conduct community-based surveys, to document properties eligible for historic protection, to increase public awareness, and to encourage economic development through investment in historic buildings. The District of Columbia receives these funds only upon satisfying stringent federal performance standards, subject to periodic review and verification.

After the most recent review by the National Park Service, the District's historic preservation program received full certification, with five commendations of special merit:

- the HPD makes extraordinary efforts to ensure public access and participation in developing and building the entire program, including the setting of goals and priorities;
- HPD administers a program which encourages and reflects the District's diverse population. Thematic surveys of minority history "make them leaders in the field nationally";
- the Division and Review Board are dedicated to meeting federal and D.C. program requirements in all areas of service;
- the HPD produces highly professional historic resource surveys and produces especially high quality reports and data; and,
- the review team noted substantial improvement in all program areas since the previous review in 1990.

In conclusion, the federal review determined that the District of Columbia is managing a "generally well-organized, professionally maintained program. This program is one in which the City of Washington, D.C. should find particular pride."

## **PROGRAM GOALS**

The District's historic preservation program targets three long-term goals essential to implementation of the Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act and the D.C. Historic Preservation Plan. These are:

- **to complete the cultural resources survey of the city;**
- **to expand historic preservation programs to engage new users; and,**
- **to ensure effective protection of historic properties.**

These goals influence all aspects of the preservation program, including planning, survey and designation, resource protection, and public education.

## **PRESERVATION PLANNING**

The Historic Preservation Division conducts preservation planning activities to implement the goals of the D.C. Historic Preservation Plan. This program conforms to National Park Service planning requirements for state preservation offices, including broad public involvement in the establishment of preservation priorities. Preservation planning also involves data management and the development of "historic contexts." These contexts facilitate the evaluation of potentially significant properties in relation to broad historical themes. Major preservation planning efforts during the past year included:

### **D.C. Historic Preservation Plan**

Final adoption of the first comprehensive historic preservation plan for the District of Columbia, consistent with the provisions of the D.C. Comprehensive Plan

### **African-American Architects Study**

Oral history transcription for this study of African-American architects and builders

### **Public Utilities Historic Context**

Development of a historic context documenting the historical development of public utility systems in the District

### **Inventory Computerization**

Implementation and management of the DC. Integrated Preservation Software (IPS) system to store and manage historic survey information on more than 30,000 documented resources

## **SURVEY AND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

The Historic Preservation Division uses federal grant assistance to facilitate survey and inventory of historic resources in all parts of the city. Community sponsors and participants include Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, non-profit organizations, preservation professionals, and educational institutions. Historic resource survey projects undertaken during the past year included:

### **D.C. Building Permit Archives**

Acquisition of microfilm records for the archive of D.C. Building Permits (1877-1945), to be managed in conjunction with the DC. Public Library, Washingtoniana Division

### **D.C. Public Libraries Survey**

Building-by-building documentation and research on development of the city's public library system

## HISTORIC LANDMARK AND HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATIONS

The Historic Preservation Review Board evaluates and designates properties worthy of preservation for their contribution to the city's cultural heritage. During the past year, the Board designated five landmarks for inclusion in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites. These properties are:

### **American Red Cross, D.C. Chapter House**

2025 E Street, NW

The second headquarters built for the local chapter of the Red Cross, this was a pivotal component of the Northwest Rectangle complex of government and institutional buildings; it is among the last works of City Beautiful classicism in the nation's capital, and exemplifies the modern classical style; it is a major work of noted architects Eggers & Higgins; the building is a four-story sculptural block situated on an expanse of lawn; facades are of limestone and bronze; the monolithic portal displays kneeling figural reliefs of Red Cross nurses, by sculptor Edmond Amateis; built 1950-52; DC designation 10/24/96

### **L'Enfant Plan of Washington (Squares, Circles, Streets, Vistas, and Other Delineated Elements Created by the Plan of the Federal City)**

The plan for Washington is the sole American example of a comprehensive Baroque city plan with a coordinated system of radiating avenues, parks, and vistas overlaid upon an orthogonal grid of streets; it defines the physical character of the national capital, through a symbolic and commemorative arrangement of buildings, monuments, and views; the plan is intimately related to the establishment of the United States and the creation of a symbolic and innovative capital **city** for the Federal republic; it was embellished through 19th century public works and building regulations; it was further magnified and expanded through the urban improvements of the Senate Park Commission of 1901 (the McMillan Commission), resulting in the most elegant example of City Beautiful tenets in the nation; the plan is the acknowledged masterpiece of architect-engineer Pierre L'Enfant and the McMillan Commission; it is also significant to the work of numerous other persons and groups important to the landscape architecture, urban design civil engineering, and planning of the city; it has served continuously as the setting for national political expression and nationally significant events; it has also influenced subsequent American city planning and other planned national capitals; DC listing 11/8/64 (preliminary identification), major elements designated 1/19/71; DC designation expanded 1/23/97 to include virtually all extant components of the historic city plan; incorporates former separate listings of the Eighth Street Vista (DC listing 3/7/68), Franklin Square (DC listing 3/7/68), Rawlins Park (DC listing 11/8/64), and East Capitol Street (DC listing 11/8/64, extended 6/19/73), but excludes L'Enfant Reservations 10, 11, and 12 (intended as Bank and Exchange Squares; returned to private ownership by 1822; now occupied by the U.S. Court House and Department of Labor); NR listing 4/24/97

**Major Elements** include the U.S. Capitol Grounds, White House Grounds, The Mall, The Ellipse (President's Park South; NR listing 5/6/80), Washington Monument Grounds, Judiciary Square, Fort McNair, Old Navy Yard (M Street, SE between 7th and 11th Streets), Reservation 4 (Old Naval Observatory Grounds), Reservation 13 (Hospital Square)

**Squares and Circles** include Barney Circle, Columbus Plaza, DuPont Circle, Eastern Market Square, Farragut Square, Folger Square, Franklin Square, Freedom Plaza, Garfield Park, Gompers-Burke Park, Lafayette Square, Lincoln Park, Logan Circle, Marion Park, Market Square, John Marshall Park, McPherson Square, Mt. Vernon Square, Old Patent Office Square, Rawlins Park, Reservations 28 & 29 (James Monroe Park, Pennsylvania Avenue between 20th & 21st Streets NW), Reservations 30 & 31

(Edward R. Murrow Park, Pennsylvania Avenue between 18th & 19th Streets NW), Scott Circle, Seward Square, Stanton Square, Thomas Circle, Virginia Avenue Playground (Reservation 126), and Washington Circle

**Streets** include Connecticut, Constitution, Delaware, Florida, Independence, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Potomac, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington Avenues; North, South, and East Capitol Streets; K Street, 8th Street NW, 16th Street NW, Canal Street, and Water Street; Jackson and Madison Places; and the remaining numbered and lettered streets of the original plan

**Vistas** include the primary intersecting vistas (from the Capitol along the Mall to the western horizon and from the White House across the Ellipse to the southern horizon); vistas along radiating and orthogonal avenues (many providing either oblique or frontal views of landmark buildings and monuments), vistas along the major cross-axes at 4th and 8th Streets NW (providing frontal views of landmark buildings), tangential vistas along E, F, and G Streets NW (providing views of the landmarks marking these cross-axes), other frontal vistas of landmark buildings, and other axial street vistas connecting circles, squares, and parks

### **MacArthur Theater (and Lobby)**

4859 MacArthur Boulevard, NW

This large neighborhood movie house is characteristic of the theaters that were once prominent in the city's outlying commercial centers; such places of popular entertainment, convenient by car and removed from downtown congestion, help document the city's social history and suburban expansion; built at the close of World War II, the MacArthur typifies the moderne style of architecture; it is the work of John J. Zink, noted for his technical innovations and the design of more than 200 motion picture theaters throughout the Mid-Atlantic states; it reflects the influence of modernism in both design and materials; the building is one story, irregular in shape, of red brick with a limestone frontispiece and streamlines, a curved aluminum marquee, and frameless glass doors allowing an open flow from sidewalk to lobby (which features marble paneling, a ramped terrazzo floor, aluminum trim, and cove lighting); built 1945; DC designation 6/26/97

### **Old French Embassy**

2460 16th Street, NW

This former embassy is among the finest of nearly a dozen Meridian Hill mansions built by the formidable Mary Foote Henderson (1841-1931), in collaboration with her preferred architect, George Oakley Totten; her great ambition for 16th Street was to create an "Avenue of Presidents" lined with lavish embassies and memorials, and this was her first successful enticement of a foreign mission; it is a superb example of Beaux-Arts residential architecture, ranking among Totten's finest work; the embassy was planned and built under French ambassador Jean Jules Jusserand, who served from 1902-25 as one of the most influential and admired foreign diplomats ever assigned to the Washington corps; it was the site of critical political conferences during and after World War I, and served as Jusserand's residence until his retirement; the building is four stories with domed corner pavilion, loggias, and mansard roofs; facades are of limestone and terra cotta in the Parisian high style of Louis XVI and the Second Empire; built 1906-07; DC designation 8/28/97

### **Wesley Heights Community Club**

3301-05 45th Street, NW

For many years the social and commercial focus of Wesley Heights, this modest picturesque structure is



typical of early-20th century neighborhood community centers; such amenities, often a part of exclusive planned residential communities, influenced progressive suburban planning; built by the noted Washington real estate developers W.C. & A.N. Miller, the clubhouse illustrates the superior design, construction, and craftsmanship that distinguishes their work in Wesley Heights; it originally housed club rooms, a grocery, pharmacy with postal substation, and the Miller Company real estate office; its “English” design by Miller company architect Gordon E. MacNeil reflects the popularity of evocative revival styles; two stories, red brick and stucco with multiple gables, random limestone quoins, Chippendale balcony and shopfronts; built 1927; DC designation 3/27/97

## **NOMINATIONS TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

In addition to its local designation authority, the Historic Preservation Review Board recommends properties for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The responsibility for nomination rests with the State Historic Preservation Officer. The HPRB and SHPO also comment on federal agency nominations of U.S. government property, and National Historic Landmark designations by the Secretary of the Interior. During the past year, the following properties were nominated to and listed in the National Register:

**D.C. Boundary Stones** NR listing 11/8/96  
**Woodlawn Cemetery** NR listing 12/20/96  
**L’Enfant Plan** NR listing 4/24/97  
**Fletcher Chapel** NR listing 8/14/97  
**All Hallows Guild Traveling Carousel** NR listing 9/11/97

The Secretary of the Interior made no designations of National Historic Landmarks in the District of Columbia during the past year..

## **PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

The D.C. preservation law is the primary tool for protection of the city’s privately owned historic resources. It ensures review of demolition, alteration, new construction, and land subdivision affecting designated properties. During the past year, the Historic Preservation Division and Historic Preservation Review Board acted on 1,278 construction permit applications affecting historic properties. Most of these involved alteration to residential and commercial buildings in the city’s two dozen historic districts. Major cases entailed extensive staff review and significant citizen participation. Among these projects were:

**Alban Towers** (3700 Massachusetts Avenue, NW)

Rehabilitation of a 200-unit apartment building near Washington Cathedral

**Anacostia Gateway** ( 1901- 13 Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave, SE)

Conceptual design of a new office and retail structure incorporating four historic commercial facades

**Army-Navy Club** (1625 I Street, NW)

Conceptual review of a new office building adjacent to the historic landmark on Farragut Square

**Ellen Wilson Dwellings** (Capitol Hill Historic District)

Continuing review of construction plans for a new community with market-rate and affordable housing

**12th & F Streets, NW**

Conceptual review of a proposed 12-story office building connecting to the landmark Homer Building

**Habitat for Humanity Housing** (1220 Potomac Avenue, NW)

Construction of a demonstration affordable “green home” on a vacant lot in the Capitol Hill Historic District

**Lauriol Plaza Restaurant** (18th & T Streets, NW)

Demolition of a non-contributing building and construction of a new restaurant building in the Strivers’ Section Historic District

**MacArthur Theater** (4859 MacArthur Boulevard, NW)

Conversion of the former theater to a CVS Pharmacy

**1520 O Street, NW** (Greater 14th Street Historic District)

Conceptual review of a new condominium on a vacant lot near Scott Circle, including archaeological investigation prior to construction

**Old Masonic Temple** (901 F Street, NW)

Review of design development plans for rehabilitation and addition to the downtown landmark

**On Leong Merchants Association** (618 H Street, NW)

Restoration of Chinatown’s first Chinese-style facade, and conversion of the building to restaurant use

**700 Block of Seventh Street, NW** (Downtown Historic District)

Rehabilitation of a row of eight Chinatown commercial buildings dating from the 1860s to 1880s

**Riggs National Bank, DuPont Circle Branch** (1514-28 Connecticut Avenue, NW)

Bank expansion, including restoration of seven Connecticut Avenue commercial facades

**Rock Creek Church and Cemetery** (120 Allison Street, NW)

Construction of a multi-purpose wing adjoining the parish church hall

**True Reformer Building** (1200 U Street, NW)

Restoration and rehabilitation of the U Street landmark which was the first major building designed by early-20th century African-American architect John Lankford

**Washington International School** (3 100 Macomb Street, NW)

Construction of a performing arts center and gymnasium at the school’s campus on the historic Tregaron estate

**Washington Loan & Trust Building** (900 F Street, NW)

Adaptive re-use of the former Riggs Bank branch for a *Courtyard by Marriott* hotel

The State Historic Preservation Officer also reviews Federal agency projects affecting historic resources under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. During the past year, there were 89 such projects involving housing rehabilitation, alterations to Federal buildings, memorials construction, and transportation improvements. Nine of the most extensive projects were concluded with negotiated Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs) addressing effects on historic properties. Major Section 106 projects included:

**Agriculture Department, South Building**

Review of master plans for phased rehabilitation of the massive Agriculture Department Annex

**American Red Cross, D.C. Chapter House**

Mitigation of adverse effects resulting from dismantling and reconstruction in a new office project

**Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Bridges**

Review of plans for a new bridge at Fletcher’s Boathouse, and rehabilitation of five historic bridges in Georgetown

**F Street, NW**

Reconstruction and reopening of the historic street configuration in front of the Old Patent Office

**Georgetown Postal Station**

Restoration and rehabilitation of the 1858 Custom House and Post Office

**Georgetown University Boathouse**

Memorandum of Agreement governing a land exchange between the university and National Park Service, allowing for construction of a new boathouse on the Potomac River

**National Gallery Sculpture Garden**

Memorandum of Agreement addressing the construction of a new National Gallery of Art sculpture garden on the Mall

**Neighborhood Housing Rehabilitations**

Consultation with HUD and DHCD on rehabilitation of housing units throughout the city, including review of historic properties and clearance of non-historic properties

**Old Patent Office**

Complete roof replacement for this National Historic Landmark, including reinstallation of historic skylights and a historically appropriate copper roof

**Ariel Rios Building**

Phase II modernization of the former U.S. Post Office headquarters in the Federal Triangle

**Roosevelt Hall, Fort McNair**

Memorandum of Agreement regarding the interior rehabilitation of the former Army War College, a National Historic Landmark

**John A. Wilson Building (District Building)**

Memorandum of Agreement covering restoration and rehabilitation plans related to the proposed Federal tenancy

**Washington Convention Center**

Archaeological testing, public review, and a Memorandum of Agreement addressing impacts on designated and potential historic properties at the Mount Vernon Square site

**Phyllis Wheatley YWCA**

Memorandum of Agreement covering rehabilitation as a single-room-occupancy residential facility

**PRESERVATION TAX INCENTIVES**

The State Historic Preservation Officer reviews projects seeking to use the federal tax incentives for preservation and rehabilitation of historic properties. During the past year, the SHPO reviewed and forwarded to the National Park Service the following applications for preliminary or final certification under this program. Projects for final certification represented a total investment of \$9.1 million in rehabilitation and related construction costs.

**Historic Landmarks**

- Sears, Roebuck & Company Building, 4500 Wisconsin Avenue, NW
- Tower Building, 140 1 K Street, NW
- True Reformer Building, 1200 U Street, NW
- John A. Wilson (District) Building

**Georgetown Historic District**

3026 P Street NW

**Sixteenth Street Historic District**

Hightowers Apartments, 1530 16th Street-NW

## **DEVELOPMENT GRANTS AND COVENANTS**

The SHPO monitors preservation covenants on historic landmarks rehabilitated in prior years with federal historic preservation grant funds. The seven affected properties are:

### **Covenanted Properties**

- Carnegie Library (Mount Vernon Square)
- Eastern Market
- Mount Zion United Methodist Church (1334 29th Street NW)
- O Street Market
- Old City Hall
- Old Gym, Gallaudet College
- Washington Club (15 DuPont Circle NW)

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND OUTREACH**

Public involvement is an integral part of the historic preservation process. There is extensive public participation by Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, preservation groups, and private citizens in meetings of the Historic Preservation Review Board. The Historic Preservation Division also maintains regular direct contact with community organizations in historic neighborhoods, and sponsors public education and information efforts aimed at encouraging citizen awareness of preservation programs. Major public outreach activities during the past year included:

### **Design Guidelines**

- New technical assistance guidelines for property owners, architects, and businesses, to promote compatible alterations and additions to historic properties

### **Archaeology Guidelines**

- Final development of technical assistance guidelines for construction affecting archaeological resources

### **Historic District Brochures**

- New informational brochure for the Georgetown Historic District (fifth in a series of brochures for each of the city's historic districts)

### **Historic Inventory Map**

- Updating, revision, and reprinting of the map showing historic landmarks and districts in the District

### **Student Intern Program**

- Internship for an area college student in the HPD office

## APPENDIX

### Permit Applications Reviewed under the D.C. Historic Protection Act

From October 1, 1996 to September 30, 1997, the Mayor's Agent, Historic Preservation Review Board, and Historic Preservation Division reviewed the following construction permit applications affecting historic properties:

	<u>ALTERATION</u>	<u>NEW CONSTRUCTION</u>	<u>DEMOLITION</u>	<u>SUBDIVISION</u>	<u>CONCEPT REVIEW</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
<b>Historic Landmarks</b>	<b>58</b>	-	1	1	7	67
<b>Historic Districts</b>						
Anacostia	7	-	-	-	1	6
Blagden Alley	5	-	-	-	-	5
Capitol Hill	210	-	-	1	8	219
Cleveland Park	80	1	-	1	13	95
Downtown	74	-	-	-	7	81
DuPont Circle	113	-	-	1	6	120
Fifteenth Street	8	-	1	-	-	9
Foggy Bottom	4	-	-	-	1	5
Fourteenth Street	43	-	3	1	3	50
Georgetown	242	-	1	4	50	297
Kalorama Triangle	45	-	-	-	3	48
Lafayette Square	4	-	-	-	1	5
LeDroit Park	21	-	-	-	-	21
Logan Circle	2	-	-	-	-	2
Massachusetts Avenue	16	-	-	-	1	14
Mount Pleasant	66	-	-	-	3	69
Pennsylvania Avenue	24	-	1	-	1	26
Sheridan-Kalorama	37	-	-	-	1	38
Sixteenth Street	39	-	-	-	3	42
Strivers' Section	18	-	-	-	4	22
Takoma Park	11	-	-	-	-	11
Woodley Park	24	-	-	-	2	26
<b>Total</b>						<b>1278</b>

### Public Hearings by the Mayor's Agent

Under the D.C. Historic Protection Act, the Mayor's Agent is required to hold a public hearing on a permit application in the following instances:

- for demolition of a historic landmark or building contributing to the character of a historic district;
- for subdivision of a historic landmark property (including division or assembly of land);
- in cases where the applicant claims unreasonable economic hardship or proposes to construct a "project of special merit;"

- upon request of an applicant having received a recommendation for denial from the Historic Preservation Review Board or Commission of Fine Arts; and,
- in any other case deemed appropriate by the Mayor.

For a permit to be issued after the public hearing, the Mayor’s Agent must find that failure to issue the permit would result in unreasonable economic hardship to the owner, or that issuance of the permit is necessary in the public interest. “Necessary in the public interest” is defined to mean consistent with the purposes of the preservation law, or necessary to allow the construction of a project of special merit. A “project of special merit” means “a plan or building having significant benefits to the District of Columbia or to the community by virtue of exemplary architecture, specific features of land planning, or social or other benefits having a high priority for community services.”

During the reporting period, the Mayor’s Agent issued orders or held hearings on the following cases:

**555 11th Street, NW (Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site, 14 buildings)**

Hearing date:	11/1/96
Nature of permit request:	Partial demolition and facade preservation
Reason for hearing:	Status hearing on emergency raze permits
Claim of economic hardship?	No
Status:	Permits approved; project of special merit

**1301 Wisconsin Avenue, NW (Georgetown Historic District)**

Hearing date:	12/10/96
Nature of permit request:	Signage and window replacement
Reason for hearing:	Denial recommended by CFA
Claim of economic hardship?	No
Status:	Permit approved

**Greystone (2900 Block of Porter Street, NW)**

Hearing date:	11/4/97; 1/27/97; 2/4/97
Nature of permit request:	Subdivision into several lots
Reason for hearing:	Required for landmarks
Claim of economic hardship?	No
Status:	Subdivision denied

**Victor Building (724-26 9th Street, NW)**

Hearing date:	2/6/97
Nature of permit request:	Subdivision to reconfigure lot
Reason for hearing:	Required for historic landmarks
Claim of economic hardship?	No
Status:	Subdivision approved

**Mount Pleasant Church, 215 Rhode Island Avenue, NW (LeDroit Park Historic District)**

Hearing date:	2/6/97
Nature of permit request:	Demolition of garage (completed without permit)
Reason for hearing:	Denial recommended by HPRB
Claim of economic hardship?	No
Status:	Permit approved

**312 5th Street, SE (Capitol Hill Historic District)**

Hearing date: 2/26/97  
Nature of permit request: Curb cut and driveway (reconsideration)  
Reason for hearing: Denial recommended by HPRB  
Claim of economic hardship? No  
Status: Permit approved

**3251 Q Street, NW (Georgetown Historic District)**

Hearing date: 3/3/97  
Nature of permit request: Curb cut and driveway  
Reason for hearing: Denial recommended by CFA  
Claim of economic hardship? No  
Status: Permit denied

**3245 O Street, NW (Georgetown Historic District)**

Hearing date: 3/24/97  
Nature of permit request: Demolition  
Reason for hearing: Denial recommended by CFA  
Claim of economic hardship? No  
Status: No ruling issued; demolition ordered by Building Inspector