

HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD

Historic Designation Case No. 21-10

Anacostia Historic District amendment

Square 5601, Lot 54; Square 5602, Lots 4, 87, 113, 114, 116, 803, 805, 810 and 818; Square 5605, Lots 24, 27, 816, 820-822; Square 5606, Lots 11, 38, 39, 44-50, 57, 58, 60, 812 (Reservation 314C), 814, 819 and 820; Square 5611, Lots 11, 12, 53-58, 62 and 803; Square 5755, Lots 1, 4-9, 13, 14, 119, 120, 819 and 820; Square 5760, Lots 38 and 39; Square 5761, Lots 15, 40, 41, 802 and 803; Square 5764, Lots 36-49, 813 and 814; Square 5765, Lots 885, 892-894, 1015, 1016, 1019 and 1020; Square 5766, Lots 825, 826, 828, 838, 844, 845 and 1016; Square 5767, Lots 311-313, 818, 1019-1021; Square 5768, Lots 304-306, 815, 818, 822-825; Square 5777, Lots 628-630, 711, 805, 806, 809, 810, 827, 829-832, 952 and 1024; Square 5778, Lots 35, 36, 111, 112, 131, 136-139, 144-150, 163-165, 833, 834 and 838; Square 5785, Lots 899-905; Square 5786, Lots 21, 24, 28-36, 39, 800 and 801; Square 5787, Lots 30-44, 808 and 813; Square 5788, Lots 8-15, 69, 70 and 819; Square 5789, Lots 17, 18, 21, 30, 31, 808 and 809; Square 5790, Lots 15, 16, 21-24, 29-47, 818-821; Square 5795, Lots 10, 11, 17, 26, 27, 30-32 and 801; Square 5799, Lots 850 and 976; Square 5800, Lots 810, 903 and 904; Square 5802, Lot 979; Square 5803, Lot 203-205, 208-210, 800, 802, 803, 810, 839, 849, 850, 870, 874, 877, 878, 880, 884, 885, 888, 890, 978-985; Square 5805, Lots 304, 305, 313, 806-808, 810, 816-819, 823, 825-830; Square 5806, Lots 240-245, 274, 275, 286, 287, 289, 296, 297, 301, 302, 313, 314, 809, 812, 813 and 817; Square 5860, Lot 96; and Square 5869, Lots 69, 71, 807, 890 and 1105

Meeting Date: September 23, 2021

Applicants: Historic Anacostia Block Association; Historic Anacostia Preservation Society; D.C. Preservation League

Affected ANC: 8A

Proposal

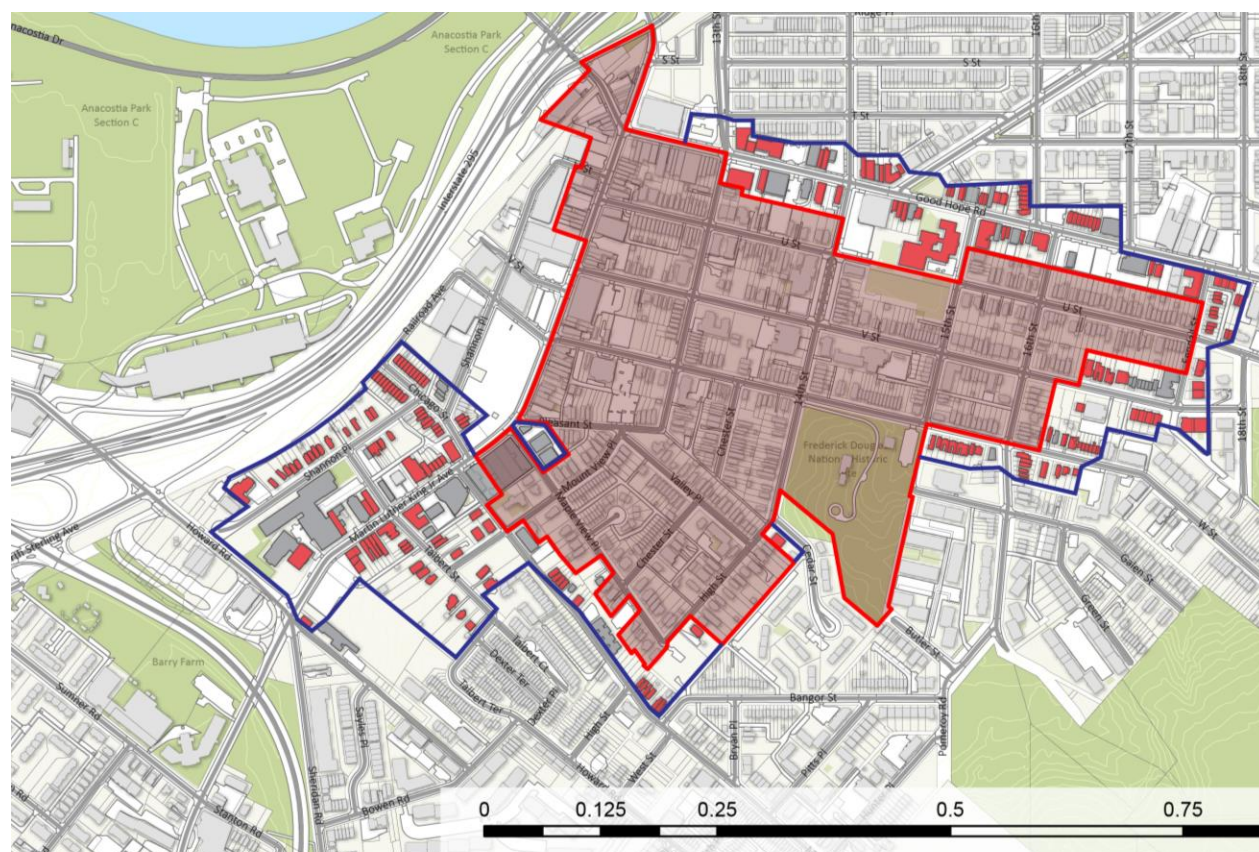
An application to amend the historic district designation of Anacostia proposes the extension of the boundary and the addition to it of approximately 325 properties around the edges of the presently designated area. Because the neighborhood was designated in the 1970s, no period of significance was required, nor were lists of properties contributing to or not contributing to the character of the district. This amendment addresses those issues to a degree and expands upon the history and description of the neighborhood.

General recommendation

The Historic Preservation Office recommends the Board extend the boundaries of the Anacostia Historic District to take in and designate most, but not all, of the areas described by the nomination's boundary map. With the existing district, these areas meet District of Columbia designation Criterion B (history), for their association with the growth, development and institutions of Anacostia. They also merit designation under Criterion D, for significance in the areas of architecture and urbanism, containing building types and architecture typical of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Anacostia—including a couple potential landmarks—

and illustrating the evolution of the neighborhood's architecture in masonry rows, flats and apartments during the prewar automobile age.

HPO further recommends that the nomination be forwarded to the National Register of Historic Places under the similar Criteria A and C, with community planning/development and architecture as the areas of significance and a period of significance of 1854 to 1948. However, the nomination has to be substantially revised before it is forwarded. Because it replaces a 43-year-old nomination, the amendment must serve as a wholly new nomination covering the entire district. It should include not only general historical context, but description, photos, special significance of particular properties and building types, full lists of contributing and noncontributing buildings, and a discussion of archaeological potential relating to the newly and previously designated properties alike.¹



Key

 Contributing Resources	 Historic District Boundary
 Non-Contributing Resources	 Boundary Increase

A map of the boundary and “contributing” buildings proposed by the amendment

¹ Given the location and historic land use, the historic district expansion areas have the potential to contain significant prehistoric and/or historic archaeological resources.

The Anacostia Historic District is one of the city's oldest, having been designated locally in 1973, with the boundaries extended and the whole listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. From that nomination and subsequent studies, the significance of the neighborhood is well established. It is the earliest true suburb of Washington, notwithstanding rural hamlets and the tiny Kendall Green development established two years earlier. A planned grid initially envisioned for villas or cottages, it evolved as a middle- and working-class neighborhood served by its own streetcar lines. Ultimately receiving typical Washington brick rows, flats and apartments, Anacostia remains the best concentration and collection of frame residences in the District of Columbia.

Separated from Washington City by the river from which it takes its name, the suburb developed its own commercial corridors that particularly served the farms and then the suburbs of far Southeast. Perched on an eminence, it has the feeling of a small hill town and whistle stop, not unlike what one might see in western Maryland or Pennsylvania. Anacostia has important historical relationships with the nearby Navy Yard and Saint Elizabeths Hospital, both longtime employment centers. Finally, the neighborhood is significant for African American history. Initially at least, that significance was negative; the suburb was one of the earliest anywhere to exclude Black residents by covenant. Still, within a few decades, its finest and most prominent house was occupied by the family of the country's most prominent African American figure, Frederick Douglass. At the time of the 1880 census, about fifteen percent of residents were African American. From the 1960s, Anacostia became mostly Black, partly reflecting displacement of residents by urban renewal elsewhere.

Extension of the historic district boundaries poses two questions. Do the proposed additional lots participate in the history and significance of Anacostia? And, is there sufficient historic and physical integrity—within each proposed “contributing” property and within each block—to justify their inclusion? A determination of boundaries will reflect an interplay of historical conceptions of the locality with the significance and integrity of the extant resources.

Where is Anacostia anyway?

The neighborhood's name is said to derive from a local Algonkian term “(a)naquash(e)tan(i)k,” meaning “a town of traders.” It originally referred to such a village, home to scores of Native Americans by the turn of the seventeenth century. Likely located at the site of Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, it commanded the mouth of the Potomac tributary later to be named for the village. A map of John Smith's Chesapeake explorations recorded the place as “Nacotchtanck,” and the names Nacotchtanks, Anacostines and Necostins were applied to the local people by White traders, settlers and priests. Perhaps the first reference to an “Anacostine River” is a 1658 deed confirming to John Meekes the 400-acre Chichester grant upon which the historic district now stands. But cartographers dubbed the waterway the “Eastern Branch” of the Potomac by the 1750s, to be perpetuated by a published L'Enfant Plan for a new federal city.

With a Latinate ending suggesting “river through the land of the Necostins,” the name persisted in common, if not official, use. It appears to have experienced a revival largely due to the construction of what later came to be known as Benning's Bridge by Thomas Ewell's Anacostia Bridge Company after 1814. To speculators, “Eastern Branch” likely seemed no place at all. Whether thought of as the valley of the Nacotchtanks or as that spanned by Benning's Bridge,

the moniker acquired a sense of a trans-Anacostia region, with an Anacostia Library Company and an Anacostia Fire Company established west of the river, in Washington City, by the 1820s. The ancient name was ascendant at midcentury, however, and in 1859, a steam tug was rechristened the warship *U.S.S. Anacostia*, honoring the waters that lapped the piers of Washington's Navy Yard.

Not until 1849 did Anacostia emerge as a specific locality. It was then that a post office was closed at Good Hope Tavern and relocated westward to John Lloyd's place "at the foot of Anacostia bridge near the Navy Yard." But this Anacostia post office arrived just as speculators laid out their Uniontown suburb around it, and in 1865 it was officially redesignated the "Uniontown" post office. The name stuck less than four years. The neighborhood was slowly expanding beyond Uniontown's boundaries, and its post office served a still-broader area. Perhaps some natives no longer liked the ring of "Uniontown" after the Civil War.

Relabeling the post office solidified the neighborhood's identity. From then on, one can find references to Anacostia in real estate and retail advertisements and to the "Anacostia school." From 1876, *The Evening Star* would publish "Anacostia Items," including mentions of adjacent Hillside. The Anacostia and Potomac River Railway was established in 1875, running over the newly replaced Navy Yard Bridge. Uniontown was still used as a location descriptor in the census of 1880, but it disappeared thereafter. Congress settled things in 1886, declaring that "that portion of the District of Columbia heretofore known and designated as Uniontown... [shall] be known and designated as Anacostia." At least one twentieth-century article stated that "Anacostia" had been closely associated with the Uniontown subdivision(s) from even before this time. But the appellation had also been applied to a broader area than these subdivisions: "[A] large section is called Anacostia which was not built up when the name of the Uniontown post office was changed..." If we inquire as to the outlines of Anacostia, we must acknowledge that it has changed over time. The notion of an east-of-the-river Anacostia region lingered into the early 2000s, to the annoyance of residents of the historic district and of adjacent neighborhoods alike. Yet, it still persists, at least in the title and mission of the Smithsonian's Anacostia Community Museum, now located in the Fort Stanton neighborhood.

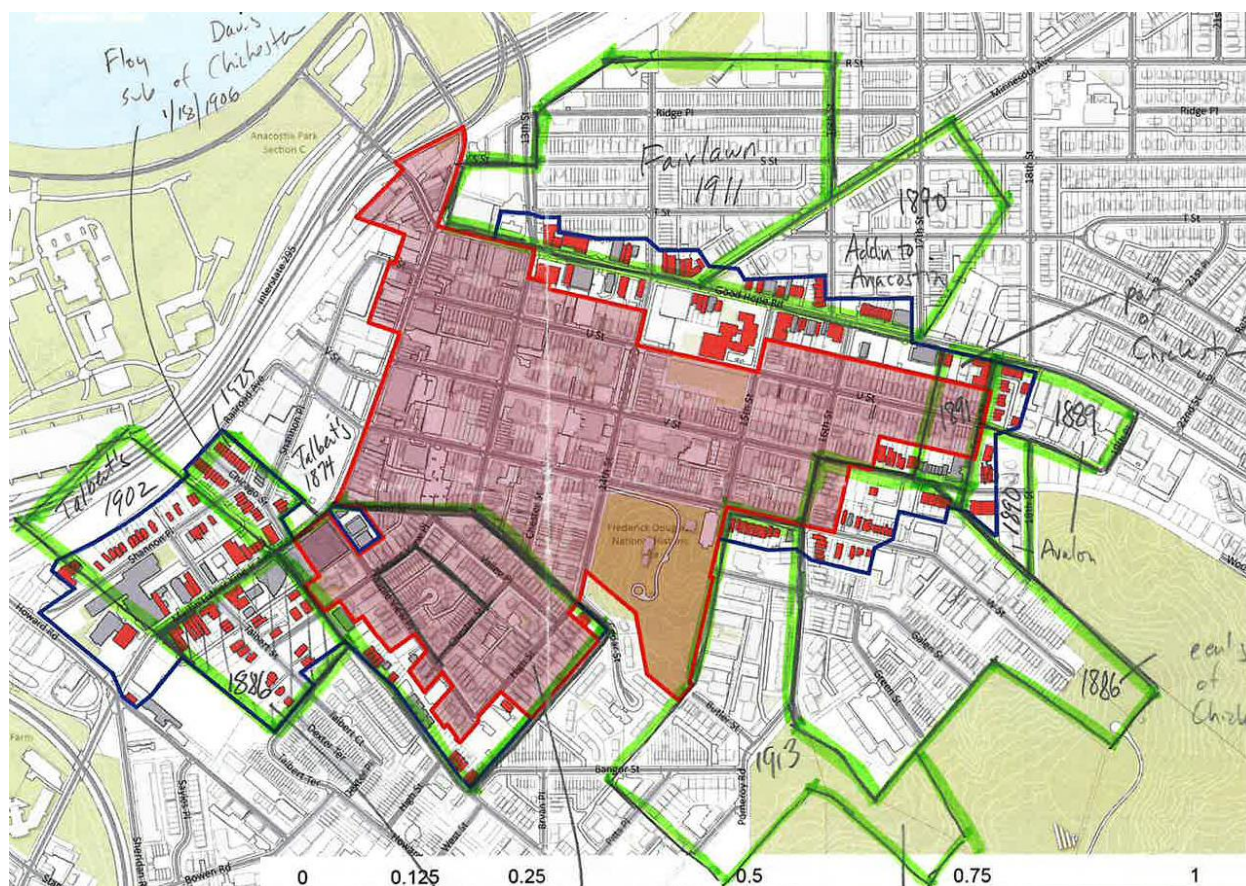
The 1970s historic district designations played their own role in shaping an understanding of the extent of the neighborhood, but they were never meant to be definitive as circumscribing the entire neighborhood. Rather, they were an attempt to capture a concentration of the most important properties associated with Uniontown and Griswold's Addition. The 1978 historic district boundaries were reportedly gerrymandered somewhat, with some reluctant property owners excluded on the margins. Time marches on, and it is well to reconsider boundaries after a half century and to otherwise modernize a nomination.

There are some obvious outer bounds to Anacostia. A federal government attempt at a Fort Circle Parkway prevented the rural land of the Fort Stanton area from being completely developed. The railroads, highways and made land west of the historic district provide similar constraints, and federal ownership effectively alienated those tracts. Toward Howard Road and south stands Barry Farm/Hillside, a subdivision nearly as old as Uniontown which, from its Freedmen's Bureau origin, was distinct from segregated Uniontown by the race of its residents.

The two neighborhoods were effectively segregated, possessing their own institutions and civic groups.

These ultimate boundaries leave a lot of space outside the present historic district. The conclusion is that almost the entire area proposed for designation could reasonably be considered *historically part of Anacostia*, at least at some point. We now have to tease out what should be considered *part of historic Anacostia*.

If we consider the major subdivisions adjacent to the original Uniontown (see sketch map below), they date to the period after developer H.A. Griswold laid the first streetcar tracks across the river to serve the speculative lots in his “Griswold’s Addition.” They largely predate suburban subdivisions elsewhere in far Southeast. Griswold’s parcel was just a portion of the former Talburtt tract, itself split off the old Chichester grant. The ancient Talburtt house, near the river on an extension of Morris Road, was long considered a landmark of Anacostia. That now-demolished home and its surrounding land are recalled in descendants’ “Talbert’s” subdivisions of 1874 and 1902, west of Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue. Even large portions of slow-developing (re)subdivisions abutting the southeast of the original Uniontown were once considered part of Uniontown, if we can put faith in an 1863 surveyor’s plat, and the concentration of their oldest buildings around W and 16th Streets testify to the relationship of these properties to the historic core of the village.



One area that can largely be excluded is Fairlawn. Today, the Fairlawn neighborhood is considered to be immediately north of Good Hope Road, and for good reason. It takes its name from the Christie estate, which once fronted Good Hope, roughly opposite today's Nos. 1235 through 1357. Before redevelopment, the Christie land was said to be in or at Anacostia, but Fairlawn acquired its own distinct identity, character and feeling, consisting predominantly of brick rowhouses erected within a narrow period of time. Subdivided in 1911, it was not intensively developed until the mid-1920s, supporting the commercial uses along the corridor. Anacostia has only a slightly better claim on the Good Hope stores because of its earlier date, but most of the buildings are contemporaneous with Fairlawn.

The largest area proposed to be added is southwest of the historic district, around Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue and Morris Road. Perhaps for a lack of an alternative, the early-twentieth-century federal population censuses characterized much of the gap between Hillside and the former Uniontown as a portion of Anacostia. This has a historical basis, given the area's associations with the Talburts/Talberts, but the line between Anacostia and Hillside became more porous than it originally appeared, as we shall see below.

Another issue is that Uniontown was a crossroads, and detached frame buildings similar to those within the settlement strung out for miles along the unpaved predecessors of Good Hope Road, Morris Road, MLK Avenue and Minnesota Avenue. Only the nearest may be considered part of the neighborhood.

Significance

The standout properties within the proposed addition areas are public and private institutions, a couple of which were oddly excluded from the historic district in the first place. The public buildings were partly products of the long agitation of the Anacostia Citizens' Association, founded in the 1880s. The handsome Renaissance-Revival John H. Ketcham School at 1919 15th Street was completed in early 1908, relieving overcrowding in Anacostia's old elementary schools. It was built with an assembly hall and was one of the D.C. first schools provided with a lawn for a play area. The Spanish "mission-style" station house by Wood, Donn & Deming at 2301 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue was completed in 1910. It was the first police station east of the river, headquarters for a new Eleventh Precinct covering an extensive exurb that had been served by temporary substations since the mid 1870s.

There is another striking Renaissance-Revival school at 2427 MLK, the second (1901) of three incarnations of the Birney School for African American children. This building should be landmarked for its architectural significance and its association with the Hillside neighborhood. The construction of the Suitland Parkway and the Anacostia Metro Station visually separated it from its service area and destroyed a corner of Hillside that surrounded the old building. Similarly, the 1937 Episcopal Chapel of St. Philip the Evangelist at 2431 Shannon Place (today's Revival Temple Full Gospel Church) had an African American congregation and was also customarily identified as being in Hillside.

In fact, the expanding Black neighborhood filled something of a vacuum at the south end of Anacostia. In 1916, the Anacostia commercial corridor ended about where the Salvation Army now stands; it was nearly two blocks distant to Birney School. By 1948 a 500-seat Moderne

theater for Black patrons was built by John Zink at 2405 MLK. In 1967, it became the first home to the Anacostia Community Museum. Unfortunately, the theater lost integrity through long neglect followed by renovation.² Likely the earliest (1897) purpose-built apartments in the area, 2500 MLK became a White-owned funeral home in 1911 (through 1973), then briefly the Anacostia museum's Center for Anacostia Studies. But this building is inside the northern boundary of the 1867 Barry Farm subdivision.

The remainder of the proposed addition areas are made up of a variety of commercial and residential architecture—some plain, some interesting—that reflects local and even regional development trends, principally during the first half of the twentieth century. It illustrates the evolution of the commercial corridor and the adoption of new residential types: extensive rows, apartment buildings and flats of the automobile age, bringing Anacostia up to the war era, while largely excluding the proliferation of cost-conscious multi-family buildings following postwar zoning changes. They are more important as a collection, relating to each other and the rest of the historic district, even if many buildings lack individual distinction. But without revising the amendment as a replacement for the thin 1978 document, to address the many important properties in the heart of the district, it is the tail wagging the dog.

Period of significance and contributing structures

In most matters relating to designation, the Board follows the National Register guidelines, because they are coherent and broadly accepted, and because the Board acts as the state review board for the purpose of recommending designations to the Register (and reviewing the occasional federal project). The District of Columbia's own designation criteria are based upon the Register's, whose application requirements have grown more robust over time, in response to the challenges of the review of federal-agency projects and federal tax-credit projects. As a practical matter, implementation of the District of Columbia's preservation law similarly required a definitive accounting of what is "historic"—and what may be considered "noncontributing" and treated less strictly. Instrumental to such distinctions has been the establishment of a period of significance for each historic district and landmark—admittedly somewhat arbitrary—that identifies which buildings fall within a "historic" era and which fall outside.

No period of significance was required at the time of the 1978 National Register nomination. There was settlement in the area well before 1854, of course, but the standing resources postdate the subdivision of Uniontown, which provides the logical initial date for the historic period. As for a terminal date, HPO has used the 1940s, the date of the latest historic commercial buildings highlighted in the nomination. The amendment therefore proposes a period of significance from 1854 to 1940, but this does not accord with the list of proposed contributing properties, which date as late as 1954. A terminal date even as late as 1942 would bring in plain, modernist semidetached houses by African American architect Lewis Giles at 2202-2204 16th Street, as well as a very nice Deco/Moderne apartment building at 2025 Fendall Street, plus two 1941 semidetached houses at 1638-1640 V Street that are not easily distinguished from neighbors completed a year earlier.

Many historic districts are assigned an arbitrary terminal date of fifty years before the present,

² As one can see from the November 2007 Google Streetview imagery.

tacitly acknowledging that history does not stop, while meeting the National Register's fifty-year significance rule of thumb. Within the present historic district, there was a decline in development at the middle of the twentieth century, and around its periphery, there was an increase of development that largely reflects zoning changes and provides a logical end date. HPO's practical concern is that the period be established to capture and protect the 1948 late-Deco 2022 Martin Luther King (pictured below), one of the best commercial buildings now in the historic district. To preserve it alone is worth setting the end of the period at 1948. This could draw in three more buildings in the addition areas as "contributing to the character of the historic district" by their date alone, but all three are debatable as to contributing status because of their level of integrity or their location. The biggest consequence would be to make contributing the 1946 rowhouses in Square 5801 within the present district, on Maple View Place, Mount View Place and Chester Street. Admittedly, few residences of the war era or later are architecturally significant.



2022 Martin Luther King

Before forwarding to the National Register, the amendment will have to be revised to include full lists of contributing and noncontributing resources throughout the district. The following are HPO's recommended revisions to the list of properties in the proposed addition areas:

- 1406 Good Hope should be classified as noncontributing because of its late date (1954), undistinguished architecture and high degree of alteration.
- 1345 Good Hope should be classified as noncontributing because of the degree of alteration

to its façade. The exterior walls are mostly there, but its late date (1946) is another factor. For similar reasons, the 1946 commercial building at 1431-1433 Good Hope—which appears to be painted precast, rather than limestone—should remain noncontributing.

- 2311 and 2315 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue will be removed from the contributing list, because permits have been issued to raze them, and they are expected to be demolished at any moment.
- Given the HPO-proposed period of significance, 1638-1640 V Street and 2025 Fendall Street should be shifted to the contributing list, as they retain sufficient physical and historic integrity.

Boundaries

The Board cannot designate any areas beyond what are proposed, because only those have been legally noticed to the owners and public.³ The Board may designate all, some, portions of, or none of the areas proposed.

While the Register rules contemplate discontinuous districts for some types of resources, especially rural ones, the expectation for urban neighborhoods is that the resources are contiguous. The Register guidance relevant to historic districts states:

- Carefully select boundaries to encompass, but not to exceed, the full extent of the significant resources and land area making up the property.
- The area to be registered should be large enough to include all historic features of the property, but should not include “buffer zones” or acreage not directly contributing to the significance of the property.
- Leave out peripheral areas of the property that no longer retain integrity, due to subdivision, development, or other changes.
- “Donut holes” are not allowed. No area or resources within a set of boundaries may be excluded from listing in the National Register. Identify nonhistoric resources within the boundaries as noncontributing....
- Select boundaries to encompass the single area of land containing the significant concentration of buildings, sites, structures, or objects making up the district. The district's significance and historic integrity should help determine the boundaries. Consider the following factors:
 1. Visual barriers that mark a change in the historic character of the area or that break the continuity of the district, such as new construction, highways, or development of a different character.
 2. Visual changes in the character of the area due to different architectural styles, types or periods, or to a decline in the concentration of contributing resources.
 3. Boundaries at a specific time in history, such as the original city limits or the legally recorded boundaries of a housing subdivision, estate, or ranch.
 4. Clearly differentiated patterns of historical development, such as commercial versus residential or industrial....

³ It is not clear, for instance, why 2212-2224 16th Street were not included, when 2224 is as old and at least as interesting architecturally as any other on this block, and the others are 1920s bungalows. Perhaps it is because D.C. History Quest contains a permit date of 1950 for 2224, maybe reflecting the date of additions and renovation.

[E]xclude additional, peripheral areas that do not directly contribute to the property's significance as buffer or as open space to separate the property from surrounding areas. Areas that have lost integrity because of changes in cultural features or setting should be excluded when they are at the periphery of the eligible resources. When such areas are small and surrounded by eligible resources, they may not be excluded, but are included as noncontributing resources of the property. That is, do not select boundaries which exclude a small noncontributing island surrounded by contributing resources; simply identify the noncontributing resources and include them within the boundaries of the property....

Recommendation

The map on page 14 depicts the historic district boundary recommended by HPO, following lot lines and center lines of streets and alleys.⁴ The yellow-shaded areas outside the boundary are those where the HPO recommendation deviates from the proposal, depicting parcels recommended for exclusion as peripheral, as buffer zones, or as insufficiently related to historic Anacostia. The orange-shaded areas inside the boundary are recommended for inclusion but are areas that may be excluded for similar reasons, including lesser significance and loss of integrity. Each area is numbered on the map and thus keyed to the discussion of each below.

The areas recommended to remain outside the Anacostia Historic District Boundary:

1. There are several substantial areas of vacant property whose only value for inclusion would be design control over new construction. Located on the edges of the district, they would serve as buffers and can be excluded for lack of a concentration of contributing buildings. The most obvious of these is 1234 Good Hope Road, which is vacant land next to the recent Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs headquarters and separated from any potential contributing buildings by a street.
2. The south side of Good Hope between 16th and Fendall Streets scarcely contains potential contributing buildings. One might include the 1930s house and flats at 1639 and 1655, but they feel like they relate more to the Good Hope corridor than to the historic district. (The 1936 apartment building at 1667 Good Hope at least faces potential historic buildings on two sides, reinforcing one corner of the district.) The only buildings of interest on the north side of this block are the brick rowhouses at 1614-1628, but these are isolated, as well as being contemporaneous with and similar to the Fairlawn rows.
3. There is no good reason to include most of the lots on the south side of the 1600 block of V Street. In addition to being the site of a 1965 apartment building, most of the land is open. There is one nondescript 1940 house on the summit of the hill that is largely obscured from public view by buildings and vegetation and thus disconnected from the streetscape. Designating this empty street face does not protect the character of the block or the district; it just sets up an unnecessary procedural quarrel over potential redevelopment of 1625 V (with its superlative views) or the land in front of it.

⁴ At this scale, it is difficult to draw or to read exact correspondence with lot lines, but any final map will be entered into the city's GIS maps using the lot data for those properties legally noticed and ultimately included.

4. There is even less of an argument for the inclusion of 1342-1382 Morris Road, a “buffer” area with long frontage.⁵ It encompasses no above-ground historic resources and consists of a modern apartment building and parking lot and several vacant lots.

5. This large area contains about an equal number of potential contributing and noncontributing buildings. The largest of the noncontributing, Alfred Kiger Savoy Elementary School, dominates its square. Of the possible contributing buildings, one is a plain, 1927 Pepco substation. The others have been discussed in the “Significance” section on page 6: a former apartment house/funeral home, a 1930s church, and the old Birney School/Nichols Avenue School. Although there is clear significance here, the historical significance is in relation to the African American Hillside neighborhood, rather than to Anacostia. Despite being side by side, the two neighborhoods have quite different histories, demographics and development patterns through the mid twentieth century, because of the story of racial segregation.

They were served by their own civic organizations. The Hillside Citizens’ Association (and the later Barry Farm Citizens’ Association) had to shift for itself, benefiting little from cooperative efforts with their Anacostia counterparts. They had their own institutions. The Chapel of St. Philip the Evangelist had a Black congregation and was routinely described as being part of Hillside, a late addition to the Baptist and A.M.E. churches built by the freedpeople after the Civil War. The old Birney School was segregated and served Hillside, not Anacostia, as did its predecessor of the same name on the same lot. It was the meeting place for the Hillside association. Its replacement was erected down MLK, farther into Hillside, in 1948-1950. During the period of significance—the period of racial segregation—everyone would have understood the distinction between the neighborhoods, and to elide it now does a disservice both to the uniqueness of Hillside and to the presentation of the history of racial apartheid. The building deserves to be, and could easily be, landmarked for its architecture, its historic function, and its relationship to the Hillside neighborhood. Admittedly, it is difficult to resist reaching out to grab another nearby property of importance and thus designate it in the least challenging manner. But it is ahistorical. As discussed in the introduction, historical boundaries for Anacostia were not boldly delineated, but they were as ragged on the south end as anywhere. The old Sanborn insurance maps took a stab at the question of the line of division, with one of the 1916 plates indicating that Anacostia started beyond a saloon that stood immediately north of Birney; even insurance mapmakers were cognizant of the line, whether of color or development pattern. The Anacostia plates in the 1937 and 1960 Baist real estate atlases reached to Talbert Street. The construction of the Suitland Parkway in the 1940s and the Green Line and the Anacostia Metro Station before 1992 contributed to the destruction of the section of the Hillside community immediately around the school and visually isolated it. Perhaps the location of the station—necessarily outside of built-up Anacostia—stretched people’s cognitive maps of the neighborhood, but it is an anachronism in reference to the period of significance. And old Birney School merits a higher distinction than being another structure merely contributing to the neighborhood next door.

⁵ Ideally, the vacant lots at 2352-2356 High Street would be excluded for similar reasons, but that would leave 1384-1398 Morris connected to the rest of the district by one the point where a rear corner of the 1384 Morris lot meets that of 1357 Maple View. The High Street parcel is more hemmed in by historic structures, and as a city-owned parcel, it is already subject to preservation review.

Admittedly, one can find plenty of newspaper items that put Birney in Anacostia in the old, regional sense. After all, the whole area was still using the same post office; Hillsdalers did not get their own. And the handful of Black pupils living in Anacostia would have to walk to this school in Hillsdale. But the scores of mentions of Birney in relation to Hillsdale or Barry Farms are convincing. During the period of significance, Hillsdale was understood to have expanded a bit beyond the 1867 residential subdivision of the Barry Farm, a result of the slow breakup of the Talburtt lands. The north line of the Barry Farm plat was at the rear of one-acre lots on the north side of Howard Road, but the Birney school, the chapel and many houses occupied by African American families were built still north of this. Before World War I, the Anacostia commercial district petered out in the north half of the 2300 block of MLK. It was likely no accident that the police station was located here, roughly between the two neighborhoods. Most of the earliest houses on Shannon place were erected by Hillsdale-resident carpenter (and florist) Samuel Howard Lucas for Black clients. By the 1930s, the 2400 block of Shannon Place was nearly all African American, while the businesses in the 2400 block of MLK were principally White-owned, but mixed, and presumably serving an integrated clientele, as Hillsdale lacked its own commercial strip, having only scattered businesses. It was here, where they were interdependent, that the two communities can be said to have met.

of the people of the neighborhood.

The Birney school is now the main school building in the Hillsdale section. It is an eight-room structure, accommodates over 500 pupils in thirteen schools, comprising the grades from the first to the eighth, inclusive. The teachers at the Birney build-

1901

Hillsdale Citizens' Plea Due to Accidents on Nichols Avenue.

The Hillsdale Citizens' Association made a plea for better lights along Nichols avenue at a meeting held Monday night in the Birney School. Nichols avenue and Howard road, noting the recent number of traffic accidents there.

1927

Revival at Barry Farms

An old-fashioned revival meeting is to be held Monday in the Birney School, Nichols avenue between Talbert and Howard streets S.E., under the auspices of the Barry Farms Citizens' Association and the Barry Farm Civilian Defense group.

1942

The Rev. William O. Rooma, Jr., rector of Emmanuel Episcopal Church, conducted a special service yesterday afternoon at St. Phillip's Chapel, in Hillsdale, assisted in this service by the choir of his church.

1914

On the opposite side of MLK, the isolated former apartments/funeral home at No. 2500 stands within the Freedmen's Bureau's 1867 Barry Farm subdivision, and it is just too far away from the rest of the avenue commercial buildings to justify stretching the boundary so far across the intervening vacant parcels.

6. This area between Pleasant Street and Maple View Place was excluded from the original designation because it contains late, undistinguished buildings that do not contribute to the historic character of the neighborhood. The amendment characterizes this as "almost a donut hole" because of the acute angle of the streets, and yet, it is not a donut hole. The justification for adding it now would be based upon taking review of redevelopment. The argument for adding it is weakened by the adjacency of many noncontributing resources to its south (see #9 below).

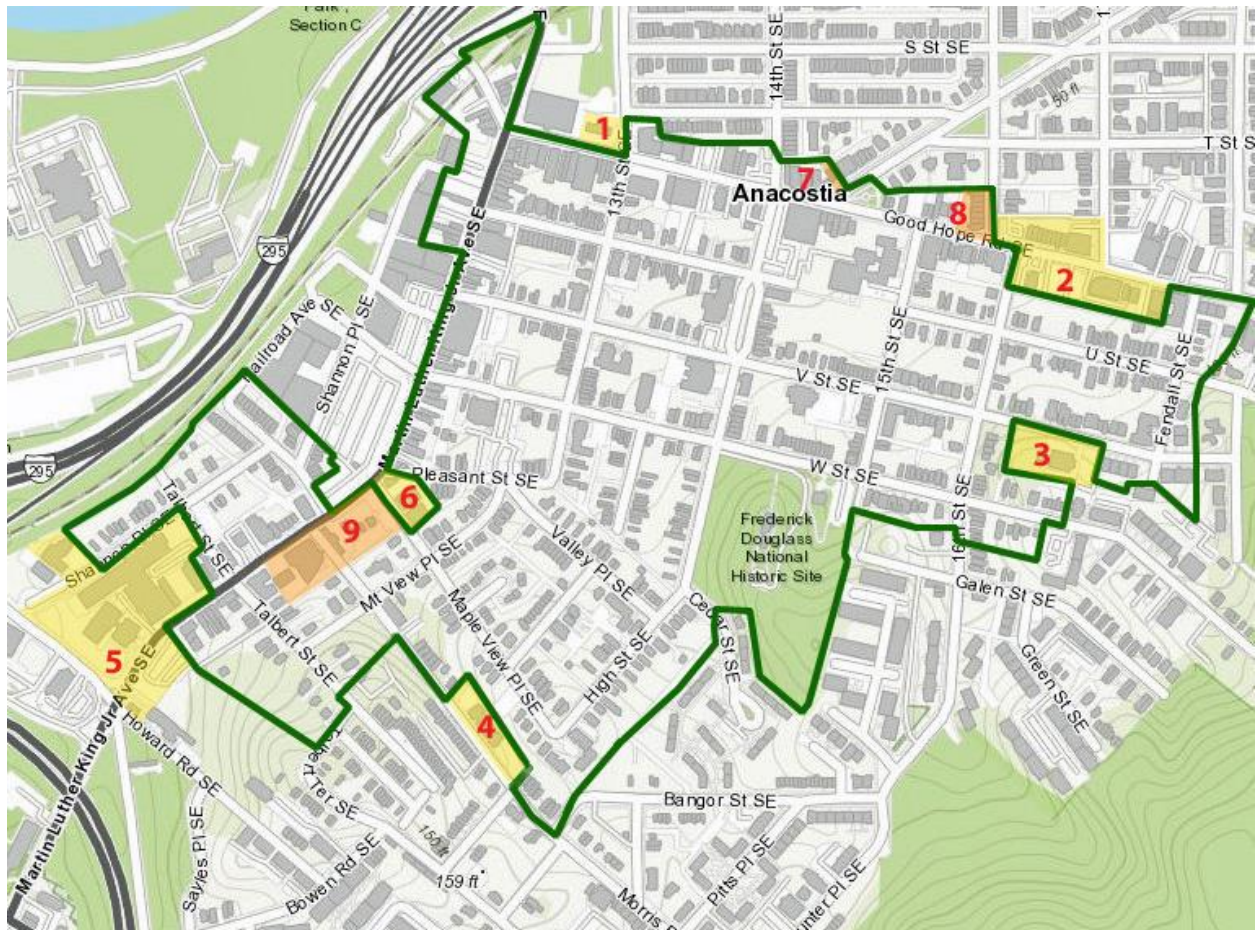
Additional areas inside the HPO-proposed boundary that the Board may want to consider removing:

7. The lot at 1408 Minnesota Avenue contains a 1912 frame, former dwelling. It abuts the corner property that fronts Good Hope and is contemporaneous with and not dissimilar to much of the detached, frame residential construction of the Anacostia Historic District. On the other hand, similar architecture appears in Hillsdale and along the old country roads, well down MLK (Asylum Road), up Morris Road, off Good Hope east of Anacostia—and on Minnesota, the former Anacostia Road, i.e., the road *to* Anacostia. While it abuts another probable contributing property, setting a northern boundary at the rear of the lots fronting Good Hope it is a straightforward and worthy alternative approach. This building has also suffered from some incompatible alterations, and it happens to be one of the few whose owner has indicated opposition to designation.

8. While it completes the block along Good Hope, the row at 1915-1927 16th Street could also be excluded, because it fronts a cross street and turns away from the historic district, reducing its visual connection. It does stand on a subdivision styled as an 1890 “Addition to Anacostia,” but so do all its northern neighbors that have been excluded from the applicants’ proposed boundaries. Built in 1919, the row predates the brick Fairlawn rows by a few years, but it can be seen as a prototype.

9. This is a remarkably large area lacking a single contributing building, and is it contiguous with area #6, also without historic buildings. It has been included within the boundary only because the new Maple View Flats, 2228 MLK, already stands within the current historic district. If we follow the National Register guidelines, then the whole section should be left out. But Maple View Flats would have to be removed from the district, so that the exclusion of 2300 and 2320 MLK alone does not create a donut hole.

There are some relatively weak areas in the 1300 and 1400 blocks of Good Hope Road, but they are difficult to exclude without creating a donut hole or eliminating buildings that genuinely contribute to the neighborhood’s historic character.



HPO-proposed boundary for the Anacostia Historic District, including a comparison to the nomination