
HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD

Frederick Douglass National Historic Site Historic District (Additional Documentation and Boundary Increase Technical Amendment) 1411 W Street, SE

Meeting Date: July 23, 2020
Applicant: National Park Service, National Capital Parks--East
Affected ANC: 8A

The Historic Preservation Office recommends that the Board approve the additional documentation and boundary increase for the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site Historic District. The nomination will be submitted to the National Register by the owner-applicant, the National Park Service-National Capital Parks—East.

Background

The Frederick Douglass National Historic Site (Frederick Douglass NHS) was administratively listed in the National Register in 1966 with the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act. In 1969, the National Capital Planning Commission completed a National Register Nomination form for the site and in 1978, it was also included within the boundaries of the Anacostia Historic District.

This nomination is a technical amendment to the 1969 nomination; it generally updates the nomination to current standards; it provides more extensive historical background and context; it expands the period of significance; and it proposes a boundary increase consistent with the current legal boundaries of the property. The nomination provides a complete description of the existing conditions of the site, its surrounding landscape, and all buildings on the property. The update was prepared by NPS, National Capital Parks-East along with a Cultural Landscape Report and Historic Structures Report for the property.

Designation Criteria and Period of Significance

The site was originally listed in the National Register under Criterion B for its association with the life of Frederick Douglass. The period of significance, from 1877 to 1895 represent the years that Douglass lived on the property until his death. This amended nomination finds the site is also significant under Criterion A for its association with the 19th-century movement to preserve African American sites and thus expands the period of significance through 1964. The nomination provides excellent supporting documentation and justification for both.

Boundaries

When the Frederick Douglass Memorial and Historical Association (FDMHA) transferred the property to the Department of the Interior in 1964, the transfer included 8.08 acres of land. The 1969 National Register nomination erroneously stated that the property was 8.07 acres. Further, in 1988, the FDMHA donated an additional parcel of land to the National Park Service (Square

5813, Lot 806) containing .45 acres, making the Frederick Douglass NHS a total of 8.53 acres. This National Register nomination updates the boundaries and acreage of the designated site accordingly.

Recommendation

HPO recommends that the Board approve the amended nomination and that the nomination be signed and returned to NPS for its submission to the National Register.