

Is historic designation right for Burleith?

Come to a Town Hall Meeting

sponsored by the Burleith Citizens Association on Thursday, June 16, 7:00–8:30 pm,
at the new S&R Foundation Studios located at 1801 35th Street NW (former Fillmore/Corcoran School).
Doors open at 6:30 for refreshments.

What — Historic district designation protects and enhances properties significant to the District of Columbia's historic, cultural, and aesthetic heritage. The designation is made by the DC Historic Preservation Review Board if a district meets one or more of these criteria and the community supports the designation. Some 60 neighborhoods in Washington, DC, have already obtained historic status. Burleith, built primarily in the 1920s–1940s with a distinctive row house style and look, may be a candidate for historic designation.

Through community outreach, the Burleith Citizens Association (BCA) is informing the community about the benefits and drawbacks of historic designation. Historic designation preserves the streetscape by requiring any changes to a house's front exterior to be compatible with the original architecture. Historic designation does not affect interior renovations or in most cases rear expansions. (Georgetown is unique in being under a separate Federal designation that requires additional oversight. DC's other historic districts are not subject to the same procedures.)

Why — Burleith is nearly 50% rental housing, with an increasing number of houses being sold to developers who want to build up and out for resale, without necessarily taking into consideration the architectural character of the neighborhood or the effect on neighbors. These expansions affect some residents more than others. People have different opinions about this trend and whether managed growth is desirable.

How — The BCA formed a committee of Burleith residents to explore the pros and cons of historic designation and to gauge the community's wishes. The committee is organizing numerous opportunities for education, dialogue, and input. (The BCA board has not yet voted on historic designation but is following the process closely.) If ultimately the community is in favor of pursuing historic designation, an application will be submitted to the DC Historic Preservation Office. If the office determines that the application meets the criteria, Burleith homeowners will have 60 days to comment. There will also be a final hearing where opinions can be expressed before the Historic Preservation Review Board makes its decision.

How can you get involved and learn more about historic designation?

- Attend the community meetings on June 16 and in September (date TBD).
- Stop by the Historic Designation table at the Burleith summer picnic on June 18.
- Get updates and more information at www.burleith.org and the *Burleith Bell*.
- Join the Burleith listserv (search "BCA Yahoo Groups" to sign up).
- Email hd@burleith.org with your questions, comments, and concerns.
- Make a tax-deductible donation to cover outreach and historical research expenses.
- Become a member of the Burleith Citizens Association at www.burleith.org/join-the-bca.

