

Burleith Explores Historic Designation

With Georgetown University's plan to build more on-campus housing for its students and investors buying up former student-rental properties to redevelop, the Burleith Citizens Association held a town hall meeting June 16 to discuss designating Burleith as a historic district in order to mitigate undesirable development. Such a designation would give the community greater protection from pop-ups, pop-outs and other front-facing development that might detract from the historic character of the neighborhood.

The association's Historic Designation Committee last year looked at using zoning regulations to challenge recent development projects, but found they were all permitted. The association also explored historic designation in 2005, but at the time the total cost of the application process was too high.

"Let me underline that this is an exploration only at this time. We have had two town hall meetings and plan one to two more to allow for all questions to be raised and answered," said the president of the association, Eric Langenbacher. "Many homeowners feel that now is the time to consider ways to manage the evolution of the community and to try to retain the look and feel that attracted them to the neighborhood in the first place," he added. "Property owners could add on to their properties in the back, but the street facade would likely be sacrosanct."