

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 07-34

EXHIBIT NO. 8

Attachment No. 6

Proposed Amendment Area is Located Within Sections of Several Historic Districts

All the blocks included in this application are located in various historic districts as the table following shows:

Streets/Blocks in Zoning Amendment Area	Historic District
North side, S Street, NW, 1400 and 1500 blocks; North and South sides, Swann Street, NW, 1400 and 1500 blocks; South side, T Street, NW, 1400 block; North and South sides, Caroline street, NW, 1500 block; East and West sides, 15 th Street, NW, 1800 block; West side, 15 th Street, NW, 1900 block	Greater U Street Historic District
East and West sides, 16 th Street, NW, 1800 and 1900 blocks	Sixteenth Street Historic District
East and West sides, New Hampshire Avenue, NW, 1900 block; North and South sides, T Street, NW, 1600 block; South side, Swann Street, NW, 1600 block	Strivers' Section Historic District
South side, S Street, NW, 1400 block	Greater Fourteenth Street Historic District

Historic Background

The area covered by this application is located within the confines of, and near the northern edge of, the original Plan for the City of Washington, developed by Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant in 1791. The sole US example of a comprehensive Baroque city plan, it received preliminary listing in the *DC Inventory of Historic Sites* in 1964, with other major plan elements added over the succeeding years. The overall plan was listed on the *National Register of Historic Places* in April 1997.¹

¹ DC Inventory of Historic Sites, October 1999 Update.

Fifteenth, Sixteenth, S and T streets and New Hampshire Avenue, NW, are all original plan elements. L'Enfant's vision saw Sixteenth Street as one of the city's grand avenues in everything but name. What was early on a simple country road through naturally flat terrain that led to the White House has today become the major North/South route from Maryland into the city.

Like many other parts of the city, the neighborhood under review remained relatively undeveloped until the Civil War years (1861-65). By the end of the war, the city's population had doubled and the demand for housing exploded. The modest wood frame houses then occupied by freed African-American slaves along a sparsely developed 16th Street became a target for land speculators and developers.² Also, development was fueled by infrastructure improvements made during the tenure of Alexander R. Shepherd as head of the Board of Public Works at the time that the District of Columbia was being governed by the Territorial Government in the early 1870s. Thus, Sixteenth and Fifteenth streets and the large original L'Enfant blocks adjacent to them became choice locations for extensive new residential building. It was during this time that the land between the original P, Q, R, S, and T streets was replatted and Church, Corcoran, Riggs, Swann, and Caroline streets, with their own lots, were carved in between these lettered streets as a way to help satisfy the demand for housing.

The mix of housing that emerged was varied, with elegant mansions and large, handsome mostly three-story town houses along 16th Street, NW, and more modest two- and three-story town homes along the adjacent side streets. Caroline Street is the one place in the neighborhood with two-story semi-detached houses. Today, housing on the side streets between 14th and 16th streets north from S to U streets remains pretty much intact, albeit not without later additions. Most of the original row houses within the proposed area on 15th, Caroline, Swann, S, and T streets, NW, remain. A few apartment buildings from the 19-teens and 20s are interspersed with two- and three-story row houses on 16th Street and New Hampshire Avenue, NW.

² The Sixteenth Street Planning Context Report, Tracerics, Revised December 1996.