



February 12, 2024 ANC 3/4G Meeting
Proposed Chevy Chase Historic District

www.LivingChevyChase.com

Who is Living Chevy Chase?

We are a group of concerned neighbors who recognize the impact this proposal will have on our freedom to improve our properties. We believe Chevy Chase should remain an architecturally diverse and dynamic community and continue to grow and thrive organically, as it has in the past.

www.LivingChevyChase.com

Presenters

- Greg Schmidt
 - Recovering attorney, software entrepreneur, lives inside the proposed historic district
- Katherine Curley
 - Estate planning attorney, Lafayette parent, lives inside the proposed historic district
- Winston Sale
 - Real estate and banking attorney for Federal government, Lafayette parent, Ward 3 D.C. native, lives inside the proposed historic district



History of Historic Preservation in Chevy Chase

www.LivingChevyChase.com

History of Historic Preservation in Chevy Chase

- 2007-08 Application
 - Applicant: Historic Chevy Chase DC
 - Larger proposed district - 900+ homes
 - Period of significance: 1906-1946
 - Extensive community outreach
 - Many ANC meetings - block by block neighborhood discussions

History of Historic Preservation in Chevy Chase

- 2007-08 Application
 - 2008 ANC vote of affected homeowners
 - 363 (77.1%) opposed
 - 108 (22.9%) in favor
 - 3 no opinion

History of Historic Preservation in Chevy Chase

- November 10, 2008 ANC Resolution Against Historic District
 - By unanimous (8-0) vote, ANC passes resolution against creating a Chevy Chase historic district
 - Historic Chevy Chase withdraws application without HPO consideration

History of Historic Preservation in Chevy Chase

- Historic Preservation Office pledge:
 - "We don't impose [historic districts] on neighborhoods that don't want them." [Washington Post, 11/1/07]
 - David Maloney - Associate Director for Historic Preservation and State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)



History Since 2008

www.LivingChevyChase.com

History Since 2008

- 15 year experiment with no historic district
- Hundreds of home sales
- Only a small handful of teardowns or major redevelopments
- History vs. speculation
 - *“Creating a historic district in Chevy Chase is the only way to protect our buildings from demolition.”* Mary Rowse, Chevy Chase Listserv 10/18/08

History Since 2008

- Neighborhood not destroyed by developers
- Some differences of opinion on aesthetics, but overall it seems clear that:
 - Replacement houses have been largely compatible with neighborhood
 - Altered houses have been largely compatible with neighborhood

History Since 2008

- Example additions/redevelopment: 3722 Livingston



2004



Present

www.LivingChevyChase.com

History Since 2008

- Example additions/redevelopment: 3714 Livingston



2004



Present

www.LivingChevyChase.com

History Since 2008

- Example additions/redevelopment: 3713 Livingston



2004



Present

www.LivingChevyChase.com

History Since 2008

- Affordability?
- Cost has increased astronomically
- 3937 Military - SOLD 2021
- Badly neglected, purchased by a young family and renovated



\$965,000

www.LivingChevyChase.com

History Since 2008

- Affordability
- 3901 Livingston
- SOLD 2023
- Badly neglected, total renovation required



\$1.18M

History Since 2008

- Shell costs \$1.1 million
- \$500 per square foot gut renovation cost
- Add \$100 per square foot in a historic district
- 3,000 square foot renovation = \$1,500,000
- In historic district = \$1,800,000
- \$300,000 in extra cost - could send a child to college



2023 Historic District Application

www.LivingChevyChase.com

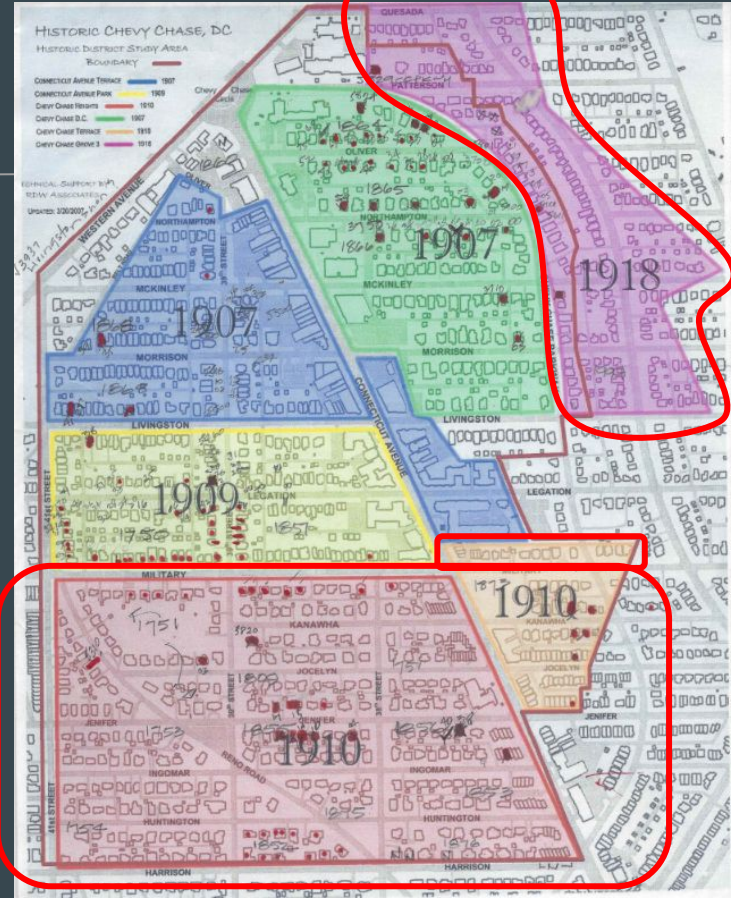
2023 Historic District Application

- Applicant: Chevy Chase DC Conservancy
 - narrow membership
 - created specifically for filing HD application
- Timing - extremely close to Civic Core Redevelopment fight
- District size - 400+ homes
 - No explanation for reducing district size from 2008 despite similar age and history of homes
- Period of significance: 1906-1964
 - Added 20 years to the period of significance

2023 Historic District Application

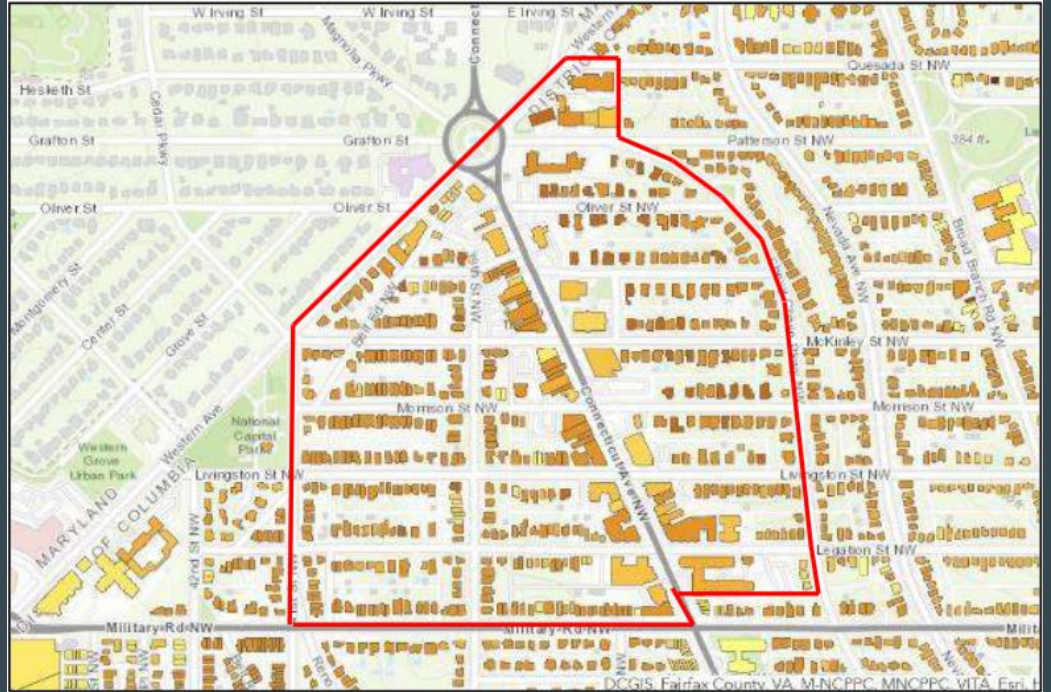
2008 District:

Buildings excluded in
2023 application



2023 Historic District Application

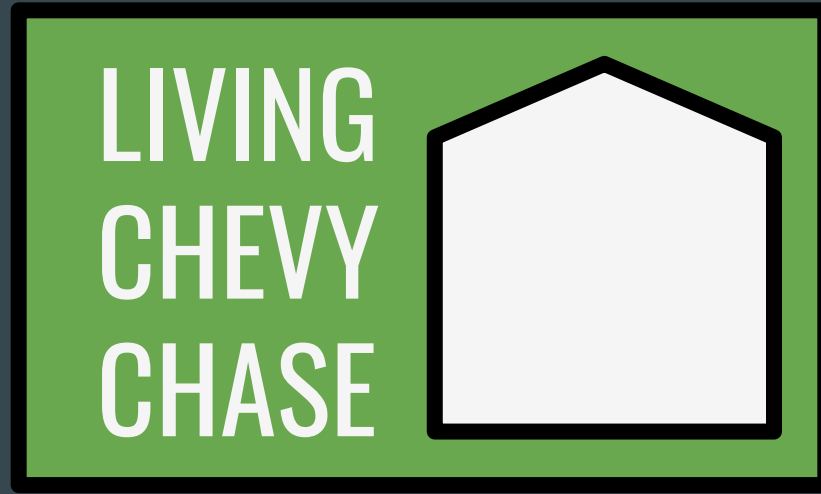
2023 District:



www.LivingChevyChase.com

2023 Historic District Application

- Outreach:
 - Minimal pre-filing outreach
 - 2 virtual education sessions reaching less than 100 people total (majority of whom were already HD supporters)
 - last session was 18 months prior to filing
 - a few listserv posts and a 2-page flyer
 - Post-filing – one virtual education session
 - 2,200 adults in the proposed district
 - 14,000 in the ANC



The Case Against Creating A Historic District

www.LivingChevyChase.com

The Case Against Creating A Historic District

- HPRB: “Compatibility” - Statutory Straight-jacket
- Cannot consider other values such as accessibility, energy efficiency, economic hardship, commercial vitality
- Cannot consider what community wants -
 - We don't have a seat at the table
 - HPRB has a seat at all of our tables

The Case Against Creating A Historic District

- Bad for homeowners
- Bad for small businesses
- Perpetuates a legacy of exclusion

The Case Against Creating A Historic District

- Bad For Homeowners
 - Higher cost and hassle of regular home maintenance
 - Permits required for everything
 - Changing porch light fixture
 - Even lawn signs!
 - 10A DCMR 2501.3 “signs bearing non-commercial statements of fact, belief, or personal or political opinion that are posted on privately owned historic property shall be issued permits if the proposed method of installation would not destroy or irreparably damage the historic property”
 - Extra time and expense for permitting, architect and lawyer fees, HPRB hearings, the list goes on . . .

The Case Against Creating A Historic District

- Bad For Homeowners
 - Expensive historically-accurate windows, siding, roofing and other fixtures required
 - Low-maintenance composite materials like Azek decking and aluminum siding are not allowed
 - No new stone front steps - only concrete if your house originally had concrete steps (most in district)

The Case Against Creating A Historic District

- Bad For Homeowners - Especially Young Families
 - Chevy Chase is an extremely expensive market to buy into
 - Many young families want to improve and expand their older homes, but construction costs have skyrocketed
 - Supporters have enjoyed decades without extra historic regulation cost, appear to be pulling up ladder behind them

The Case Against Creating A Historic District

- Bad For Homeowners - Aging In Place
 - Accessibility subordinate to preservation
 - Notorious Mt. Pleasant case - 90 year old homeowners wanted a wheelchair ramp and HPO said “NO.”
 - Accessibility design guidelines
 - Accessibility improvements should not be placed on front of home
 - Limited mobility? HPO would prefer you use the back door

The Case Against Creating A Historic District

- Bad for Homeowners - Energy Efficiency
 - Energy efficiency subordinate to preservation
 - Solar panels must be hidden and wired inside house
 - Windows must look historic, even if less energy-efficient

The Case Against Creating A Historic District

- Bad for Homeowners
 - Young families buying into neighborhood
 - Older families on fixed incomes
 - Owners of smaller homes
 - Additions must be “subordinate”
 - Visibility from street “discouraged”

The Case Against Creating A Historic District

- Downzoning R-2
 - Entire west side of Connecticut zoned R-2 - Duplexes
 - HPRB: No exceptions tear down rule
 - Smaller homes on larger lots - can be replaced with duplexes
 - Effectively downzoned to R-1
 - Potential tax of hundreds of thousands of dollars
 - Rare occurrence - two in last 35 years
 - But “duplex insurance” could be critical for family with a financial crisis

The Case Against Creating A Historic District

- Bad for Apartments/Condos
 - Increased cost of maintenance
 - Restrictions on alterations/improvements
 - Benefits non-existent

The Case Against Creating A Historic District

- Bad for Local Businesses
 - Increased cost of maintenance
 - Restrictions on alterations/improvements
 - Clear intent to undermine current initiative to upzone commercial strip to foster creation of more affordable housing
 - Outdoor eating spaces limited or curtailed
 - Little Beast, Bread and Chocolate, The Avenue, Opal, Parthenon
 - Cleveland Park - Medium Rare exterior pergola design
 - Signage permits required - even inside window

The Case Against Creating A Historic District

- Medium Rare case



“Waiters get wet all over the world.”

- HPRB Board Member

The Case Against Creating A Historic District

- Perpetuating Exclusionary History
 - CC DC founded in desire to exclude the lower classes including people of color
 - “Designed to be insulated from the cultural and economic diversity of the city” - Application at Section 7, page 5
 - Exclusionary tactics of minimum house cost, restrictive covenants and red-lining, eviction/destruction of black enclaves to make way for segregated whites-only schools

The Case Against Creating A Historic District

- Perpetuating Exclusionary History
 - Core of proposed HD remains among the least diverse neighborhoods in DC (<20% POC - 2020 Census)
 - HD designation will increase costs of/barriers to ownership and prevent even modest increases in supply
 - Sending signal to the city that we still want to be insulated from the cultural and economic diversity of the city

The Case Against Creating A Historic District

- Deficiencies of the Current Application
 - Period of significance too large
 - Boundaries are arbitrary
 - Survey is incomplete and outdated
 - Eligibility rationale would apply to all of D.C.
 - History
 - Art/Architecture



Going Forward

www.LivingChevyChase.com

Going Forward

- Process
 - Additional Community Education/Outreach
 - Block and apartment/condo building meetings
 - Vote/Survey
 - Identify location and status (owner/renter)

Going Forward

- Application
 - Chevy Chase DC Conservancy must withdraw their application if the community expresses strong support against creating a historic district
 - Same action as Historic Chevy Chase in 2008