Promoting Preservation in America's Inner Suburbs: Historic Preservation Across a Wider Built Environment

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Table of Contents

Abstract

Travel to many long-developed major American cities and you will notice a contrast between the well-preserved historic downtown neighborhoods and the layer of early twentieth-century inner suburbs surrounding them. In the former, you will see extensive rows of historic buildings retaining highly original facades peppered by mostly compatible infill development. In the latter, you may notice multiple teardowns of historic homes on a short walk or drive through the neighborhood at any given time, as well as oversized or poor-quality infill structures. You may notice that the character of the area has been noticeably degraded by a combination of incompatible replacement materials, loss of tree canopy, and other adverse changes. This is not mere happenstance, but a noticeable pattern across American metropolitan areas. Early-twentieth century suburban neighborhoods are widely appreciated in American culture for their charm, lush landscaping, relative compactness, and other favorable qualities within a culturally and environmentally familiar middle-class suburban context. In my thesis, I seek to understand why inner suburbs have been less likely to benefit from historic preservation strategies such as local historic district designation by investigating examples in Alexandria and Charlottesville, Virginia; and I attempt to forge a way forward for neighborhoods which have rejected the standard neighborhood preservation strategy of local designation. First, I defend the significance of inner suburbs and advocate for their preservation for a variety of reasons. Next, I will introduce the case studies of Alexandria and Charlottesville, Virginia and their inner suburban neighborhoods in question. I delve into recent histories of these neighborhoods and preservation efforts therein. To improve my understanding of neighborhood sentiment on historic value and historic preservation, I conducted four focus groups with residents of inner suburban neighborhoods in Alexandria and Charlottesville developed between 1890 and 1940. Finally, I

analyze the results of these focus groups and discern their significance for preservation efforts in inner suburbs and the wider built environment.

The focus group method has significant precedent as a community engagement tool in planning efforts. I conducted four focus groups with 5-10 individuals from Alexandria's Rosemont and Del Ray neighborhoods and Charlottesville's Martha Jefferson and Fry's Spring neighborhoods over the month of January 2022. The focus group discussions began with a demographic survey in which I asked participants for their names, nearest street intersection, age of their homes and any other homes they have occupied in the neighborhood, and whether or not they would ascribe the terms 'old' and 'historic' to their homes and immediate surroundings. The focus group questioning route could be boiled down to the following questions: are participants satisfied with their neighborhood? What about their neighborhood do they appreciate, and what do they dislike? How has their neighborhood changed over their time living in it, and what of these changes do they like or dislike? Do they view their neighborhood as a historic place, and what kinds of preservation strategies would they support for their neighborhood? This method proved incredibly fruitful. I found that across the focus groups, participants were highly satisfied with their neighborhoods and held a great awareness of and appreciation for the historic homes, open space, tree canopy, and community life therein. Participants widely supported local designation in all neighborhoods except for Del Ray, where participants primarily voiced support for a higher tax incentive for historic rehabilitation over demolition. Participants across all focus groups also supported expanded efforts to increase property owners' awareness of and appreciation for the preservation and the general enhancement of their neighborhoods. I found this method to be extremely productive and I assert that it could be useful for planners, consultants,

and neighborhood organizations seeking to further preservation in inner suburbs and other contexts.

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Introduction

Thompson Mayes of the National Trust for Historic Preservation writes that the preservation movement has achieved great success since the publication of *A Heritage So Rich* in 1966. Urban revitalization programs have transformed many blighted downtowns into charming, safe, and vibrant commercial corridors inviting spending from locals and tourists alike. Localities have designated historic districts to protect both commercial and residential neighborhoods from adverse change in cities across the country. Yet historic architectural resources across cities do not receive equal attention or protection.

In the summer of 2019, I worked at an architecture firm in my hometown of Alexandria, Virginia run by a family friend which specialized in residential renovations and additions. One of the projects to which I was assigned–which was not our firm's own–saddened me. 10 West Alexandria Avenue was an early twentieth-century bungalow with much of its original building fabric left when the current owners bought the property in 2018. The owners were a couple in their late 60s who had just spent the past few decades in what they called 'spec housing' in a new development in the outer suburbs of Washington, D.C. A local builder who specializes in 'custom builds' in the neighborhood--which typically translates to ripping apart or completely tearing down older homes--enlisted the drafting services of our firm to cover for his overworked design team. The original structure was not torn down on paper, but not a trace of pre-2019 building material is visible on the property anymore. In its place stands a larger reincarnation of a Craftsman-era bungalow (figures 1-2). This project is not an isolated incident in Alexandria, in the Washington region, or in other older and fast-gentrifying Virginia cities. Complete teardowns, gut-jobs, and extensive remodeling projects have stripped neighborhoods across the country of significant amounts of interior and exterior historic fabric. These trends are most visible in larger

metropolitan areas such as New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago, where they have been decried for decades, but they continue to sweep across cities large and small nationwide.[1] The past thirty years has seen unprecedented loss of historic buildings, tree canopy, and open space in inner suburbs for little reason other than the desire for increased living space and sale profits after home renovation and redevelopment.

In this paper, I define 'inner suburbs' as suburban residential neighborhoods that comprise the first wave of not exclusively elite, but almost exclusively detached single-family residential developments across the country, typically dating from 1890-1940. These are neighborhoods which in many ways represent a significant shift from earlier attached residential subdivisions, but have by this point in time attained significant patina, aesthetic value, and overall 'charm' often ascribed to earlier periods of American residential architecture. They may feature a combination of a street grid and the winding roads that precede cul de sacs of postwar suburbs.[2] Their close proximity to the city center primes them for the redevelopment pressure that downtowns and residential urban neighborhoods also experience, but are rarely protected as local historic districts as downtowns and their immediate surroundings often are. Occasionally, I will use the term 'streetcar suburb' to define my communities of focus in lieu of 'inner suburb'. R.W. Caves defines the streetcar suburb as a residential community whose growth and development was strongly shaped by the use of streetcar lines as a primary means of transportation, which grew in prevalence beginning in the late nineteenth century as cable cars, electric streetcars, and trams proliferated.[3] Streetcar suburbs can be anywhere from largely working-class to well-to-do

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[1] A.S. Fine and Jim Lindberg, "Protecting America's Historic Neighborhoods: Taming the Teardown Trend" (National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2002); Jean Follett, "Taming the Teardown Trend - St Charles Public Library" (St. Charles Public Library, St. Charles, IL, January 2020), https://scpld.libnet.info/event/2177720.
[2] Lewis, Peirce F. "Axioms for Reading the Landscape: Some Guides to the American Scene." In *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*. Oxford University Press, 1979.
[3] Caves, R.W. "Encyclopedia of the City." Routledge, 2004, 635

neighborhoods, originally and into the present day. I use streetcar suburb in certain instances because it is a more widely used term to describe a common manifestation of this phase of American residential development which I attempt to encapsulate with the term ‘inner suburb’. However, I prioritize the term ‘inner suburb’ as I define it because not all residential areas of the time period and social and environmental qualities discussed in my thesis were developed along streetcar or electric railway lines.

In chapter 1, I demonstrate that inner-ring urban neighborhoods–often those which generate greater tourist revenue and whose architecture is grander, more ornate, and the oldest of a locality’s building stock–have been more likely to accept and benefit from preservation efforts than inner suburbs. I do so by using examples of neighborhoods in Alexandria and Charlottesville, Virginia–which I introduce at this point–and I attempt to pinpoint some of the key reasons for this disparity. I argue that our current approach fails to fully leverage the potential of preservation activity to manage our urban environments in a more environmentally sustainable way; and to preserve for ourselves and future generations a stronger sense of place and a more complete and accurate picture of the diverse landscapes that constitute our heritage. Next, I will discuss instances of resident opposition to local designation and mandatory review of changes to historic properties in inner suburban neighborhoods in Alexandria and Charlottesville–tools which have served to protect historic fabric in downtown neighborhoods for decades. I will defend the importance of engaging community members to build support for local designation or other preservation strategies. I will then lay out alternative preservation strategies that could be effective and more politically palatable in such neighborhoods and which might result from better community engagement. Finally, I will introduce the four neighborhoods in which I chose to host

a focus group, those being Alexandria's Rosemont and Del Ray neighborhoods and Charlottesville's Martha Jefferson and Fry's Spring neighborhoods.

Chapter 2 serves as a discussion of the neighborhood focus groups. First, I will introduce the focus group methodology in the urban planning context. Second, I discuss the arrangement of the Alexandria and Charlottesville focus groups, and their respective recruitment processes. Finally, I will provide an in-depth summary on the general results of each focus group, including the results of the demographic survey, a synopsis of the direction of conversation, and a generalization of common sentiments expressed during the conversation.

In chapter 3, I summarize the end results of the focus groups, comparing and contrasting the discussions. I describe the ways in which the survey results and conversations unfolded in incredibly similar and predictable ways across the neighborhoods, and sometimes differently across age and length of time spent living in the neighborhood. With the successes and shortcomings of my focus group methodology in mind, I will discuss possibilities of replicability for planners and consultants elsewhere.

Chapter 1: Adverse Change In Inner Suburbs: The Proliferation of Teardowns and Other Concerning Losses

In many American metropolitan areas, there exist a great number of older neighborhoods that have enjoyed relative socioeconomic and physical stability since World War II. They did not experience population decline, white flight, and other ravaging effects of suburban sprawl seen in more traditionally urban neighborhoods. With respect to historic preservation, inner suburbs are rarely faced with the same imminent threats of redevelopment as downtown neighborhoods, where entire city blocks could be swallowed up by private investors or razed under the guise of urban renewal. Neighborhoods in suburbs of stable metropolitan regions have not seen great numbers of structures abandoned and deteriorating as seen in their counterparts in stagnant or declining cities such as Detroit, Michigan.[4] Until recently, these stable conditions incurred little change to the constructed landscape and these areas experienced relatively little loss of historic resources through much of the twentieth century.

Much of this began to change with the rebirth of the inner urban rings across the country after 1990. While inner suburbs often remained stable in the face of disinvestment farther into the city center, many have experienced significant gentrification and economic activity since the rapid revitalization of downtowns. New buyers have more capital to transform their properties than the owners before them.[5] Also encouraging the rapid transformation of these neighborhoods are 'home flippers' who purchase older homes to tear them down, significantly expand them, or at the very least remodel smaller historic structures that dot the neighborhoods and render them unrecognizable.

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[4] Alan Mallach, "The Future of America's Middle Neighborhoods: Setting the Stage for Revival" (Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, November 2018).
[5] Alan Mallach, "The Future of America's Middle Neighborhoods: Setting the Stage for Revival"

The teardown trend appears to have been first identified in the National Trust for Historic Preservation's 2002 publication *Taming the Teardown Trend.* Authors Adrian Scott Fine and Jim Lindberg reported on the uptick of the teardown trend in Chicago; Denver; Dallas; Newton, Massachusetts; and Bergen County, New Jersey. The authors demonstrate that great numbers of houses in architecturally significant historic neighborhoods were being demolished to make space for speculative developments, often contextually insensitive construction derisively dubbed 'McMansions'.[6] The trends of tearing down or significantly modifying and expanding historic homes are prolific in the greater Washington, D.C. area (figure 3). While the population of D.C. proper dropped substantially between 1950 and 2000 and many of its neighborhoods fell into blight, the populations of the neighboring Virginia jurisdictions of Arlington County and the City of Alexandria grew substantially.[7] During much of that time period, this occurred with little impact to the jurisdictions' late nineteenth and early twentieth century building fabric. Over the last twenty years, change has shown its face in every neighborhood of Arlington and Alexandria. Teardowns, oversized additions, and improperly scaled new construction often bring significant loss of tree canopy as well. On the 100 block of East Raymond Avenue in Alexandria's Del Ray neighborhood, 2009 Street View imagery from Google Earth reveals 14 pre-war structures largely retaining their historic exteriors. Just ten years later in 2019, three of those historic structures had been fully demolished.[8] Five others lost original windows and/or cladding–some of the most significant and character-defining features of a building. All this left only two historic structures

[6] A.S. Fine and Jim Lindberg, "Protecting America's Historic Neighborhoods: Taming the Teardown Trend" (National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2002).
[7] "Annual Resident Population Estimates for Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas and Their Geographical Components: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019; April 1, 2020; and July 1, 2020 (CBSA-EST2020)" (United States Census Bureau, 2020), https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest/technical-documentation/research/evaluation-estimates/2020-evaluation-estimates/2010s-totals-metro-and-micro-statistical-areas.html.
[8] "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2009; "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2019.

with a largely original exterior standing on the block by 2019.[9] At the same time, tree canopy has declined precipitously in these neighborhoods. The same can be said of Alexandria's nearby North Ridge neighborhood (figures 4-12). In Charlottesville, tree canopy has declined precipitously over the past several decades and continues to do so at an increasing rate. While the Charlottesville Tree Commission attributed part of this decline to the Meadow Creek Restoration and increased development, they acknowledge that the vast majority of this decline stems from the fact that trees–shade trees in particular–are not being replaced at the rate they are being removed. Furthermore, most of the tree planting which the city has carried out in recent years is on parks, schools, and other public property. This likely means that the loss of tree canopy has been even more intense on private property in suburban neighborhoods.[10]

It should be noted that these neighborhoods were not in a bad way before recent waves of gentrification. Adults who rented, owned, or grew up in Alexandria during the 1970s, 1980s, and even 1990s recall that Rosemont and North Ridge were safe, middle-class neighborhoods whose homes were kept in good condition. Del Ray appears to have been the neighborhood that has undergone a more profound change, as focus group members and other interviewees remember perceived a slightly higher risk of crime and an overall sleepier atmosphere–especially along commercial thoroughfare Mount Vernon Avenue–than they do today. Regardless, homes in Del Ray did appear to have been maintained to liveable standards in the past. Schools in these neighborhoods all appeared to be well-performing just as they are today.[11]

This stands in contrast to the story of many downtown neighborhoods which suffered from extreme disinvestment and whose building stock was, on the whole, significantly dilapidated prior

[9] "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2009; "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2019.
[10] "State of the Urban Forest: FY2021 Annual Report of the Charlottesville Tree Commission" (City of Charlottesville, Virginia, 2022).
[11] Kendra Roland Bealor, "Alexandria Questions," April 16, 2022.

to its revitalization. In many of these cities, historic district guidelines were one of many tools explicitly intended to spur investment in older homes, raise property values, and generally improve the condition of the neighborhood as a whole–as they continue to be.[12] Although they have drawn criticism, it is true that historic district designations have helped immensely to preserve the built heritage of these neighborhoods in the face of significant community change.[13] In many cases, it appears much of this gentrification typically blamed on historic districts was destined to happen with or without design guidelines. Compare the examples of Alexandria's Old Town and Rosemont neighborhoods. In a survey of three randomly selected properties in good condition on Rosemont's West Cedar Street, the average appreciation in property values between January 2000 and January 2022 assessments was 206%. Compare this to three similar properties on Old Town's South Fairfax Street–where properties are subject to extensive design review–with a relatively similar appreciation of 220% over the same period.[14] It appears that local designation is largely coincidental with the 'rediscovery', reinvestment, and gentrification in an area rather than its sole cause.

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[12] Richard Moe and Carter Wilkie, *Changing Places: Rebuilding Community in the Age of Sprawl* (Henry Holt and Company, 1999); Donovan Rypkema, "Economics, Sustainability, and Historic Preservation," n.d; Stephanie Ryberg-Webster, "Combatting Decline: Preservation and Community Development in Pittsburgh and Cincinnati," in *Giving Preservation a History: Histories of Historic Preservation in the United States*, 2nd ed. (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2016), 227–48.

[13] Ken H. Johnson, Justin D. Benefield, and Jonathan A. Wiley, "Architectural Review Boards and Their Impact on Property Price and Time-on-Market.," *Journal of Housing Research* 18, no. 1 (January 1, 2009), https://doi.org/10.1080/10835547.2009.12091999.

[14] "Property Details - 11 Cedar Street - City of Alexandria, VA Real Estate Assessment Search," accessed April 16, 2022, https://realestate.alexandriava.gov/detail.php?accountno=12901000; "Property Details - 16 Cedar Street - City of Alexandria, VA Real Estate Assessment Search," accessed April 16, 2022, https://realestate.alexandriava.gov/detail.php?accountno=12873000; "Property Details - 103 Cedar Street - City of Alexandria, VA Real Estate Assessment Search," accessed April 16, 2022, https://realestate.alexandriava.gov/detail.php?accountno=12889000; "Property Details - 414 S Fairfax Street - City of Alexandria, VA Real Estate Assessment Search," accessed April 16, 2022, https://realestate.alexandriava.gov/detail.php?accountno=12587500; "Property Details - 427 S Fairfax Street - City of Alexandria, VA Real Estate Assessment Search," accessed April 16, 2022, https://realestate.alexandriava.gov/detail.php?accountno=12559000; "Property Details - 623 S Fairfax Street - City of Alexandria, VA Real Estate Assessment Search," accessed April 16, 2022, https://realestate.alexandriava.gov/detail.php?accountno=12480000.

Opposition to Local Designation of Historic Districts

In many inner suburbs, it is not only the case that neighborhoods have never sought out regulatory protection in the form of local designation: many have rejected this prospect when conversation was raised. Preservation planners at the City of Alexandria's Department of Planning and Zoning approached leadership of the Rosemont Civic Association and Del Ray Citizens Association to ask for their interest in local designation several times between 2000 and 2010, and were turned down every time.[15] At the time, residents' chief concern was the incompatible scale of new residential construction in their neighborhoods rather than the demolition of existing historic homes. In response to citizens' concerns, Planning and Zoning formed an Infill Task Force to identify "issues of single-family infill in Alexandria and examine various tools that may be appropriate to manage impacts of infill projects."[16] Although the protection of historic resources and teardowns and new construction on substandard lots were cited as key issues for the Infill Task Force, teardowns have only intensified across the neighborhoods represented by task force members since its creation in August 2007. One of their recommendations proposed establishing "historic/conservation/design overlay districts in historic areas experiencing significant pressure", though this recommendation never brought such policy to fruition as citizens' groups rejected the possibility of discussion.[17] Citizens' groups were ultimately satisfied with the zoning policy created by the Infill Task Force, as it prevented incompatible new builds while still allowing for some change to the neighborhood building fabric.[18] In Charlottesville, the Fry's Spring Neighborhood Association requested a historic survey of their neighborhood and agreed to a National Register historic district along the boundaries

[15] Stephen Milone, Interview with Steve Milone, November 15, 2021.
[16] Faroll Hamer, "Memorandum: Infill Task Force" (Alexandria, Virginia: City of Alexandria, Virginia, Department of Planning and Zoning, April 3, 2008).
[17] Faroll Hamer, "Memorandum: Infill Task Force" (Alexandria, Virginia: City of Alexandria, Virginia, Department of Planning and Zoning, April 3, 2008).
[18] Stephen Milone, Interview with Steve Milone, November 15, 2021.

drawn by a consultant, though FSNA repeatedly stressed that they were not interested in a local historic district.[19] Around the same time, City of Charlottesville Neighborhood Development Services approached the North Belmont neighborhood to inquire about support for a survey and a possible National Register historic district. Just as has been the case in Alexandria's Rosemont and Town of Potomac historic districts, they found strong neighborhood support for a National Register district, but weak support for a local historic district due to concerns over regulation of property changes and gentrification.[20]

Of the inner suburbs in Alexandria and Charlottesville, all four which benefit from formal protection are located in Charlottesville: these are the Oakhurst-Gildersleeve Architectural Design Control District; the Martha Jefferson Historic District; the Woolen Mills Historic Conservation District; and the Rugby Road Historic Conservation District. The Historic Conservation District (HCD) is a designation developed by the City of Charlottesville in tandem with community members and is intended to protect the character and scale of more modest historic neighborhoods which are facing increased possibilities of teardowns and increased development without the level of review required in an Architectural Design Control District (ADCD), the City of Charlottesville's most restrictive and protective level of local designation. In an ADCD, review is required of all exterior changes to existing buildings, while only extensive demolition of historic structures in HCDs are reviewed. While the guidelines are simplified and minor changes to individual building components are not typically not reviewed, residents of an HCD are able to play a role in identifying character-defining features to be preserved in their neighborhoods.[21]

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[19] "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Fry's Spring Historic District" (National Park Service, November 19, 2014).
[20] Mary Joy Scala, "Historic District Questions," March 22, 2021.
[21] "Historic Conservation District Design Guidelines" (Charlottesville, Virginia: Charlottesville Department of Neighborhood Development Services, September 5, 2017).

The Oakhurst Circle Architectural Design Control District was established in 2005 along Oakhurst Circle, Valley Road, and Maywood Lane in Charlottesville–a move which preceded the 2008 nomination of the Oakhurst-Gildersleeve Neighborhood Historic District to the Virginia Landmarks Register and its 2009 nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The neighborhood features two distinct circles—Oakhurst Circle (where the Oakhurst House once stood before it burned in 1915) and a smaller Gildersleeve Wood—that constitute expressions of City Beautiful movement designs. The district's residential architecture reflects popular styles of the early 20th century such as Craftsman, Tudor Revival, and Colonial Revival, though the neighborhood features an especially high incidence of stone construction, half-timbering, and other motifs of the Craftsman and Tudor Revival styles unseen in most other Charlottesville neighborhoods (figures 13-14). According to resident Michael Osteen, initial conversation about an architectural design control district began with several "bad renovations" on Valley Road. However, the primary issue was sparked by the University of Virginia sending a letter to every property owner in the neighborhood offering to buy their homes.[22] As the neighborhood is directly adjacent to the University, many residents were aware that the University's sale offer might have constituted a first step in a future effort to redevelop the neighborhood for University functions as has happened directly east of the neighborhood over the past fifteen years.[23] Most owners supported the ADCD designation, with rental owners making up most of the dissenting group.[24]

The City of Charlottesville's first HCD was established in the Martha Jefferson neighborhood in 2012. As will be discussed in greater detail later, the core of the Martha Jefferson neighborhood was developed between 1890 and 1930 and was centered on the historic Martha

[22] Michael Osteen, "Architectural History Graduate Thesis: Oakhurst-Gildersleeve ADCD," January 22, 2022.
[23] Carol Wood, "University of Virginia Breaks Ground on South Lawn Project," UVA Today, September 29, 2006, https://news.virginia.edu/content/university-virginia-breaks-ground-south-lawn-project; Matt Kelly, "Brandon Avenue Student Housing Project Takes Its Next Step," UVA Today, March 5, 2020, https://news.virginia.edu/content/brandon-avenue-student-housing-project-takes-its-next-step.
[24] Michael Osteen, "Architectural History Graduate Thesis: Oakhurst-Gildersleeve ADCD," January 22, 2022.

Jefferson Hospital (figures 15-16). The Martha Jefferson Hospital owned five homes on Lexington which they proposed to demolish for an expansion, spurring the Martha Jefferson Neighborhood Association to seek some form of regulatory protection for the neighborhood to prevent these demolitions as well as future demolitions of other hospital-owned properties. Ultimately the Great Recession curtailed the hospital's plans and the institution moved several miles away to its current Albemarle County location several years later. Hospital buildings were renovated and converted for commercial use.[25] Regardless, the neighborhood moved forward with discussions around local designation, during which it became clear that residents did not favor an architectural design control district because of "perceptions that review processes may be overly intrusive" in ADCD's. However, a majority of residents supported the Historic Conservation District, with 65.4% of residents voting in favor, 30.8% voting against, and the remaining 3.8% not responding. [26] The neighborhood decided to proceed with the HCD, the highest level of protection politically realistic at the time. Mary Joy Scala, former Historic Preservation Planner for Neighborhood Development Services, relayed that the HCD designation was intended for neighborhoods more architecturally modest than Martha Jefferson–which could have qualified for ADCD status–but that the designation was hailed as "cutting edge" at the time.[27]

All five neighborhoods discussed above–Rosemont, Del Ray, Belmont, Martha Jefferson, and Oakhurst-Gildersleeve–were largely developed in the early twentieth century and have been presented with the prospect of local designation at some point over the past twenty years. Although average home size varies between these neighborhoods, they feature similar levels of architectural complexity in their built fabric and are within a few miles of a city center. I argue

[25] Melanie Miller, Interview with Melanie Miller, September 24, 2021.
[26] Bruce J. Odell, "Letter from Martha Jefferson Neighborhood Association to Planning Commission," April 24, 2010.
[27] Mary Joy Scala, "Historic District Questions," March 22, 2021.

that the difference in support for local historic districts has stemmed from the fact that Martha Jefferson and Oakhurst-Gildersleeve faced a single tangible threat which threatened to damage a significant portion of their community's building fabric in one fell swoop. This stands in contrast to the gradually destructive effect of piecemeal teardowns and damaging renovations seen in Rosemont, Del Ray, and Belmont, which even longtime residents may not notice. This is further substantiated by the example of the Maywood Historic District in Arlington County, a neighborhood developed between 1900 and 1940 with a similar appearance to Martha Jefferson. Maywood residents worked together to formulate one of Arlington County's first Neighborhood Conservation Plans, approved in 1965, after a number of houses along the neighborhood's eastern edge were demolished to make way for I-66 and homes along the southern edge were demolished for newer apartment units. In 1990, a local historic district of the highest level of regulatory protection was established in Maywood–a move likely far more politically palatable in a neighborhood already accustomed to some form of regulatory purview for historic preservation.[28] Just as in Martha Jefferson and Oakhurst-Gildersleeve, local designation of the Maywood neighborhood was motivated by a uniquely alarming and tangible threat to multiple structures at one time which Rosemont, Del Ray, and Belmont have not yet experienced.

Environmental Value of Historic Preservation

One of the most convincing reasons to preserve existing buildings as often and as sensitively as possible– historic and non-historic–are the environmental benefits offered by reusing existing buildings and building material. In a number of his public lectures, economist and preservationist Donovan Rypkema has used a particular example to illustrate that the recycling of buildings is just as important as the recycling of everyday items such as Coke cans:

[28] "Maywood Historic District," Arlington County, VA, accessed March 22, 2022, https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Project-Types/Local-Historic-District/Maywood.

every time an average American downtown building is needlessly torn down (in this case assuming an average of 25 feet by 120 feet), all the environmental benefit from recycling the last 1,344,000 aluminum cans is wiped away.[29] Construction debris, Rypkema says, currently makes up a whole quarter of all debris in solid waste facilities. A 2011 study by the National Trust for Historic Preservation reveals the far-reaching environmental benefits of building reuse in a variety of building types, in this case using the contexts of single-family and multifamily residential, urban village mixed-use, commercial office buildings, and elementary schools. The study was carried out in partnership with a number of firms specializing in green building consulting, construction, and life cycle assessment (LCA). The analysis found that building reuse consistently outperformed new construction in key environmental metrics, including climate impact, human health, ecosystem quality, and resource depletion. In the case of single-family residential, building reuse yielded a 10-30% reduced environmental impact in all categories compared to new construction over a 75-year period.[30] The extraction, production, transportation, demolition, and disposal of original and new material was considered, as was utility consumption during construction. Total environmental impact from both original and replacement materials was significantly lower in building reuse scenarios. A key finding related to greenhouse gas emissions was that building reuse has the potential to significantly reduce short-term impacts on climate change, as it can take up to 80 years even for new construction that is 30% more efficient than the average building to make up for the emissions released in construction with improved energy efficiency. Consider the example of Portland, Oregon and surrounding Multnomah County, which share greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets. In 2011, it was projected that over the next ten years, the two jurisdictions would demolish 1% of their existing building stock. The study found

[29] Donovan Rypkema, "Economics, Sustainability, and Historic Preservation," 2
[30] "The Greenest Building: Quantifying the Environmental Value of Building Reuse" (Seattle, Washington: National Trust for Historic Preservation: Preservation Green Lab, Urban Land Institute, 2011), 64

that reusing just that 1% of the existing building stock instead of demolishing and replacing it would have helped the jurisdictions to meet 15% of their emissions reductions target for the next decade.[31] In other parts of the country, the study points out, existing buildings are being demolished at an even faster rate than in the Portland area.

Furthermore, extensive alterations to historic buildings and the removal of original or other historic material therein is not only impactful in itself. It appears to leave buildings more likely to receive similar treatments in the future, a point that is especially relevant to environmental sustainability even if no historic material remains after a renovation. A first reason for this is the 'timelessness' of historic fabric. Despite the evidence that it is rarely preserved to the extent that it could be, authentic historic architecture is clearly a favorite of the general public. With the exception of those with especially ornate wall coverings and chandeliers, well-preserved historic interiors predating World War II have not been seen as 'dated' for a long time and probably never will be seen as such; rather, they are received as classic and timeless. Numerous studies suggest this, as does the constant appearance of well-preserved historic exteriors and interior spaces in movies and television shows that have become classics in themselves (figures 17-18).[32] Directors, producers, and marketing experts clearly perceive the general population's attraction to historic surroundings. On the other hand, many interior building elements installed in the 1980s are almost bound to be removed in home renovations today. Consider the example of 1209 Prince Street in Old Town, Alexandria, an Italianate Victorian home in which all remaining original material was removed in a 1980s renovation and replaced with faux Colonial siding, windows, floors, doors, and trim. In a 2017 renovation, the house's interior was re-gutted and windows and siding were replaced once again (figures 19-22).

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[31] "The Greenest Building: Quantifying the Environmental Value of Building Reuse", 84
[32] Cecilia Lewis Kausel, Design & Intuition: Structures, Interiors and the Mind (WIT Press, 2012), 12-27

Another reason for this effect is the greater durability of historic wood compared to the wood that makes up modern replacement materials. Woodwork in American buildings predating 1930 consists of old growth wood from old growth forests.[33] The U.S. Forest Service defines old growth forests as those which have attained great age without significant disturbance.[34] Of the extensive old-growth canopy that once dominated the Eastern United States before European colonization, less than 1% remains today. Due to the scarcity and legal protection of extant old growth forests, wood harvested for building construction has consisted solely of new-growth wood since the mid-century. Old growth wood is significantly stronger and more durable than new growth wood. For this reason, replacement wood siding and windows rarely last as long as their original counterparts, which can often be maintained indefinitely and are traditionally protected from the elements by exterior storm windows.[35] Consider the example of 517-519 Duke Street, which still boasts its original Georgian siding undoubtedly made up of old-growth wood (figure 23). Compare this to the example of 613 South Saint Asaph Street, where original nineteenth-century siding was removed and replaced with new growth wood siding in a 1970s renovation. The current owners have fully replaced the siding at least once since they purchased it in 2006, as it "starts turning to mulch…almost as soon as it's put up."[36] In general, much replacement material is not made to last as long as historic or accurately crafted reproductions. Consider the case of window replacement units. Thompson Creek Window Company states that their vinyl windows will typically last "20 years or longer, with some lasting as long as 50

[33] Donovan Rypkema, "Economics, Sustainability, and Historic Preservation," n.d.
[34] David L. White and F. Thomas Lloyd, "Defining Old Growth: Implications For Management," Paper Presented at the Eighth Biennial Southern Silvicultural Research Conference, Auburn, AL, Nov. l-3, 1994., 1994, https://www.fs.usda.gov/treesearch/pubs/741.
[35] Stephen Milone, Interview with Steve Milone, former Staff to the Old and Historic District Board of Architectural Review, August 15, 2020.
[36] Eileen Wallace, "House Questions and Requests," November 9, 2020.

years."[37] Ecoline Windows pride themselves on their high-quality single- and double-hung windows that are guaranteed for 25 years.[38] Rypkema points out that regardless of lifetime warranties, 30% of windows being replaced each year are less than ten years old.[39] Compare this to the many eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and early twentieth-century homes discussed in this thesis whose original windows have remained intact for anywhere from a hundred years to over two centuries. If historic wood windows and siding have decayed, it can often be traced to delayed maintenance or some treatment that compromised the historic material. Otherwise, even exterior historic wood should be able to be preserved indefinitely.[40] By this point, poor-quality building materials of bygone eras have mostly been replaced. Logically, whatever historic material remains from 100 years ago or more should mostly be higher in quality. In short, the replacement of significant portions of historic woodwork cannot be treated as an isolated incident. It will often result in these materials being replaced again within a mere generation of warranty expirations and change in interior and exterior design fads, while true historic material has the potential to remain through the centuries. Maintaining historic material can therefore result in significantly lower renovation costs and environmental impact both in a particular instance of renovation and in the long run.

Finally, the preservation of the urban tree canopy is of great importance to environmental sustainability. Even aside from its great benefit to sustaining native ecosystems and beautifying the neighborhood, a higher population of large, mature shade trees reduces the urban heat island

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[37] Thompson Creek, "How Long Do Vinyl Windows Last?," Thompson Creek, June 29, 2020, https://www.thompsoncreek.com/blog/vinyl-windows-lifespan/.
[38] "Single Hung Windows & Double Hung Windows," Ecoline Windows, accessed December 29, 2020, https://www.ecolinewindows.ca/window-styles/single-double-hung-windows/.
[39] "Donovan Rypkema," Columbia University, accessed December 7, 2020, http://www.columbia.edu/cu/china/Donovan.html.
[40] Anne E. Grimmer et al., "The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings" (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, 2011).

effect, making it easier for residents to get around by foot or bike and generally live physically active lives; preventing deaths by heat strokes; saving residents significant spending on air conditioning; and reducing stormwater runoff. It is also essential in the fight against climate change for additional reasons, as mature urban trees have been shown to be significant carbon sinks.[41] A strong urban forest cannot be maintained unless a sufficient number of young shade trees are routinely planted in anticipation of older trees dying. All its benefits aside, though, you might ask why this discussion is significant in the context of historic preservation. I contend that the answer lies in the patterns of living allowed and engendered by a strong neighborhood tree canopy, such as habits of walkability that might not otherwise be comfortable. This dense planting or extensive preservation of existing forests during development is rarely seen in modern subdivisions, and it is therefore also a unique trait of this period of early suburban subdivisions.[42]

Preservation of Historical Evidence and Cultural Landscapes of Inner Suburbs

It has been demonstrated that historic downtowns are more likely to benefit from preservation efforts because of the tourist revenue they attract to cities.[43] However, the inner suburban landscape is just as historically and culturally informative as city centers and main streets and sheds light on a period of our nation's history which, as discussed earlier, is rarely protected.[44] When significant building and landscape components of these first-generation suburbs are preserved, historians and local residents alike can ascertain much about the history of the neighborhood, locality, and when preserved collectively, the nation as a whole. In the words of

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[41] admin, "Urban Tree Canopy," *Center for Watershed Protection* (blog), July 31, 2015, https://www.cwp.org/urban-tree-canopy/.

[42] Christopher B. Riley and Mary M. Gardiner, "Examining the Distributional Equity of Urban Tree Canopy Cover and Ecosystem Services across United States Cities," *PLOS ONE* 15, no. 2 (February 11, 2020): e0228499, https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0228499.

[43] Aylin Orbaşli, "Is Tourism Governing Conservation in Historic Towns?," *Journal of Architectural Conservation* 6, no. 3 (January 1, 2000): 7–19, https://doi.org/10.1080/13556207.2000.10785276.

[44] Lina Cofresi and Rosetta Radtke, "Local Government Programs: Preservation Where It Counts," in *A Richer Heritage: Historic Preservation in the Twenty-First Century* (Historic Preservation Foundation of North Carolina, 2003).

Peirce Lewis, "the common…landscape has very little to do with the skilled work of landscape architects, but it has a great deal to say about the United States as a country and Americans as a people…Our cultural landscape is our unwitting biography, and all our cultural warts and blemishes, our ordinary day-to-day qualities, are there for anybody who knows how to look for them."[45]

Consider, for example, an American Foursquare located at 215 East Custis Avenue in Del Ray, Alexandria, Virginia. During the Del Ray focus group, the owner of the property discussed his discovery of several artifacts in his attic upon moving in, including a book of receipts from a whiskey bottling business. Later, when repainting his porch columns, an older neighbor and long-time resident walked by and recounted his memory of the establishment selling whiskey out of the back door of that structure. Similarly, consider the example of a Craftsman bungalow which long-time resident Robert Fischman called home as a youth during his father's and grandfather's employment at Potomac Yard (figure 24).[46] When such structures are preserved–and surrounding landscape features maintained–they have the potential to provide valuable evidence of socioeconomic status, family dynamics, and overall ways of life of early twentieth century railyard employees. Such knowledge could powerfully shed light on this period of neighborhood, regional, state, and national history. Analysis of the well-preserved residential fabric of the textile mill town of Woolen Mills Village in Charlottesville yielded significant discoveries about what made this model unique and more successful than other Southern textile mill towns, critical to a social and economic history of these historic landscapes (figure 25).[47] If these structures and

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[45] Peirce F. Lewis, "Axioms for Reading the Landscape: Some Guides to the American Scene," in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes* (Oxford University Press, 1979), 12-13

[46] Barbara Murray, "Interview with Robert and Antoinette Fischman" (Alexandria, Virginia, November 1, 2005), Alexandria Legacies: Oral History Program, https://media.alexandriava.gov/docs-archives/historic/info/history/oralhistoryfischmanrobert.pdf.

[47] Lydia Mattice Brandt, "002-1260 Woolen Mills Village Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (National Park Service, March 2010), https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/002-1260/.

landscapes had been significantly modified rather than largely preserved, such historical narratives could not have been discerned.

To further substantiate this point with an example that is not located within an inner suburb, I look to the Queen Anne Victorian at 907 Prince Street in Alexandria's Old Town. This would have been an especially grand and spacious home when it was built at 3500 square feet by the successful Fannon family in 1899 (figure 26). The original circulation pattern between the rear kitchen, closet, butler's pantry, and dining room where servants worked to provide food service to the Fannon family is still clear.[48] Figures 27-32 show the first-floor plan of the home along with photographs of the existing and blocked original doorways that once connected the original servants' kitchen to a dining room through a short passage under the rear stairs and to a butler's pantry along the other side of the stairway. Even though the original kitchen cabinetry, tables, and other kitchen tools are long gone, the legibility of the layout as indicated by original doors, woodwork, and wall framing would probably prove helpful for anyone studying the lives and careers of paid domestic servants in the Washington, D.C. area at the turn of the twentieth century.

Architectural and landscape historians have been able to learn so much about the livelihoods of various groups of people by observing and interpreting what the general public may dismiss as insignificant architectural and landscape details. These details are often scattered throughout individual structures and a patchwork of historic buildings in a particular landscape. Louis Nelson and Maurie D. McInnis extensively examine the architecture of the Thomas Jefferson-designed Academical Village at the University of Virginia and Jefferson's own home at Monticello to better understand the lives of enslaved laborers in *Educated in Tyranny: Slavery at Thomas Jefferson's University.* Interior layout, circulation, and apparent chronology of alterations are constantly referenced for over fifteen pages of the relevant chapter, as is the layout and use of

[48] Stephen Milone, Interview with Steve Milone, November 15, 2021.

exterior spaces in which enslaved laborers carried out work such as growing produce and maintaining livestock (figures 33-35).[49] Exterior elevations and exterior architectural details–which in the case of the ordinary built environment, are more likely to be intentionally or incidentally documented–are mentioned considerably less and appear to be of much less concern for investigating the landscape of slavery. It is mostly the interior spaces across multiple buildings at both sites which offer clues as to Jefferson's attitude towards slavery, his attempt to conceal it, and the ways enslaved laborers used these spaces.[50] Slavery was not well documented and we frankly know very little about the lives of most enslaved laborers. Analysis of interior spaces in which enslaved laborers lived and worked is one of very few remaining avenues for us to learn about the conditions they endured, their relationships to each other and to their owners, and their roles in transforming and asserting their own control and identities in these spaces and their own lives. Historic buildings have so much to teach us about the little-documented lives of different groups of people, offering clues as to the realities of race and ethnicity, gender roles, socioeconomic conditions, and more, both in certain periods and over time. Their critical details are found across building interiors and exteriors in historic landscapes. Even the best attempts to document before demolition–which rarely happens in the context of the ordinary environment–will often miss details that might seem insignificant at the time. Ordinary inner suburban homes such as Robert and Antoinette Fischman's are often demolished without any understanding of the interior configuration or appearance; typically, a Google Maps Street View image is all that remains to speak to the use and appearance of such a structure before its demolition.

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[49] Louis P. Nelson and Maurie D. McInnis, "Landscape of Slavery," in Educated in Tyranny: Slavery at Thomas Jefferson's University (Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2019), 42–73.
[50] Louis P. Nelson and Maurie D. McInnis, "Landscape of Slavery," 46

Americans of many different backgrounds have produced and inhabited a great variety of urban, suburban, and rural landscapes through the construction and continued use of buildings over our nation's history which today make up a notable portion of our modern communities. Few historic structures have been home to former presidents, but even ordinary inner suburbs have the potential to shed much-needed light on our nation's history and, in turn, on centuries-old issues that we still struggle to remedy. It was not long ago that Victorian residences and worker's housing in places like Del Ray were not considered to be worthy of preservation at all, but scholars have managed to uncover many layers of our nation's diverse and complex history as it is reflected in these instances of our constructed heritage. As much as reasonably possible, then, the preservation of the historic interiors, exteriors, and significant landscape features of a variety of places–even those which we currently might not consider architecturally significant–is of immense importance to educating ourselves and future generations about our nation's diverse and complex history.

Sense of Place in Inner Suburbs

One reason communities often seek to protect their own homes and other significant cultural resources is the importance of places we consider to constitute our own personal and cultural heritage. This is a rarely cited but often implicit reason for our desire to preserve places in which we have spent much of our lives. Psychologist and preservationist Dr. Mindy Fullilove defines 'root shock' as the "traumatic stress reaction to the destruction of all or part of one's emotional ecosystem." She explains that psychologically, the loss of one's own home cultural landscape bears important parallels to the physiological shock of massive blood loss. Consider the example of Carlos Peterson, a native of the Lower Hill in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He describes seeing the wholesale demolition of his neighborhood that took place to make way for Pittsburgh's

Civic stating that the "coupled with the sense of personal loss of friends and neighborhood, this event had quite an influence on my life."[51] Similarly, Richard Chubb of Roanoke, Virginia says of his former neighborhood demolished for urban renewal: "Sometimes I just stand here and the tears come down, thinking about what used to be."[52] At this point in history, generations of Americans of a variety of classes have called inner suburbs home. As original homes in these neighborhoods are demolished and landscaping is lost, both the appearance of the neighborhood and the lifestyles they engendered and attest to are lost. How much of a sense of place in a landscape like Rosemont or Del Ray is preserved when its built and natural fabric have been totally transformed and only its street grid remains? Effectively, the place as it once was is gone even if it has not been removed and reconfigured in one fell swoop as in the case of urban renewal.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, American psychologists were well aware of the decline in mental health across this country and the developed world over the past several decades. In addition to reasons such as information overload from social media and other forms of information technology, mainstream psychologists have come to suspect that the increasing change and complexity of our physical environments are part of the problem. Dr. Gregg Henriques of James Madison University describes that in today's world, we are presented with an "endless array of choices and information that overwhelms and confuses us."[53] Change is stressful in its own right, and redevelopment in inner suburbs constitutes both change and information overload for those who have lived in that area for any significant length of time. Therefore, it

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[51] Mindy Thompson Fullilove, *Root Shock: How Tearing Up City Neighborhoods Hurts America, and What We Can Do About It*, 2nd ed. (New York: New Village Press, 2016), 16

[52] Mindy Thompson Fullilove, *Root Shock,* 23

[53] Gregg Henriques, "What Is Causing the College Student Mental Health Crisis?," *Psychology Today*, February 21, 2014, https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/theory-knowledge/201402/what-is-causing-the-college-student-mental-health-crisis.

follows that when outside contractors or owners new to the neighborhood dramatically transform the built landscape in an inner suburban area lot-by-lot as has happened increasingly over the past several years, those who have grown accustomed to their environment in a certain condition are more likely to experience psychological stress.

The Way Forward for Gentrifying Inner Suburbs

As discussed earlier, the most common approach to neighborhood preservation is local designation of historic districts. Criticized as it may be, it is at this point a strategy that is well-practiced and familiar to preservationists and local planners.[54] Requiring City staff or commission review of proposed alterations within a historic district is an incredibly effective way to protect an entire neighborhood from adverse physical change. Many localities have attempted to appease opposition to local designation by making design review optional. In this case, a move that might appear to be a compromise actually renders local designation wholly ineffective. Property owners intent on defying design guidelines by demolishing historic structures in whole or large part–exactly the kind of action the guidelines seek to largely prevent–meet no obstacles and are free to do so. In 2003, the Newnan, Georgia City Council voted last-minute to set up voluntary design guidelines instead of the proposed historic district with required review and compliance. “Every day is a danger”, one resident says of the looming possibilities of demolition in her town.[55] Residential pattern books and other optional neighborhood design and preservation guidelines attempt to guide neighborhood change more sensitively and essentially serve a similar function to optional design review. In 2015, the City of Alexandria published the Del Ray Neighborhood Residential Pattern Book to raise awareness of neighborhood history, encourage

[54] Lina Cofresi and Rosetta Radtke, “Local Government Programs: Preservation Where It Counts,” in *A Richer Heritage: Historic Preservation in the Twenty-First Century* (Historic Preservation Foundation of North Carolina, 2003).
[55] William E. Schmickle, *The Politics of Historic Districts: A Primer for Grassroots Preservation* (Rowman Altamira, 2006), 8

sensitive historic preservation of historic structures, and encourage contextual infill development. However, teardowns have continued unabated in Del Ray since 2015.[56] During the Del Ray focus group, a neighborhood architect who served on the steering committee for the production of the pattern book explained that builders will simply "slap a couple of rafter tails up on the facades" of their oversized Neo-Craftsman homes after tearing down hundred year-old bungalows and make few other changes. Pattern book or not, builders set on demolition will otherwise go about their business largely as usual.

For this reason, significant advocacy efforts are needed to build support for historic districts from the level of the general public to city council before they are voted on. Former chair of the Historic Preservation Commission in Annapolis, Maryland devoted an entire book to building political support for local historic districts.[57] His recommended advocacy path includes an exhaustive list of civic engagement activities which were never pursued in the context of Rosemont, Del Ray, or Fry's Spring.[58] Ultimately, local leaders may wish to pursue a historic conservation district if they lack the support needed for a design control district, just as was done in Martha Jefferson. Additional zoning strategies such as the limiting of height and setback in new construction may also help to incentivize preservation of existing historic homes by rendering the expansion of residential units by way of teardowns difficult or impossible. Such tools may be used to encourage preservation when a neighborhood is significantly upzoned, as seen recently in Charlottesville. Absent any historic district designations, this may do more to incentivize preservation than the default single-family zoning designation in which–as we have seen–much detrimental change to the inner suburban landscape is still possible. The Future Land Use Map

[56] "Del Ray Residential Pattern Book" (Alexandria, Virginia: City of Alexandria, Virginia; Hill Studio, 2015).
[57] William E. Schmickle, *The Politics of Historic Districts, 1*
[58] Stephen Milone, Interview with Steve Milone, November 15, 2021; Mary Joy Scala, "Historic District Questions," March 22, 2021.

released as part of the City of Charlottesville Comprehensive Plan published in 2021 includes a designation by the name of Sensitive Community Areas, intended to protect long-established communities who face a greater risk of displacement. Policy goals for Sensitive Community Areas include: mitigating displacement; keeping legacy residents in place and supporting greater wealth building; creating a focus area for owner-occupied rehabilitation assistance and other financial tools to subsidize the development and maintenance of affordable housing; and the allowance of limited commercial and business use. The document goes on to discuss that lot subdivision requirements in such areas will likely be revisited such that portions of primary lots can more easily be subdivided into separate lots; maximum lot width will be specified to avoid lot mergers; and parking requirements for affordable units may be reduced, all under the condition that tools should be reevaluated and adjusted over time to ensure their effectiveness.[59] As proposed in the Land Use Category Description, one unit per lot would be allowed by-right, as would existing duplexes and triplexes; up to three units per lot would be allowed if the first unit meets affordability requirements; and up to four units would be allowed if the existing structure is maintained. It is true that this designation has not yet been fully developed and implemented in Charlottesville, and that the upzoning of inner suburban landscapes is a relatively recent policy phenomenon with little time behind us with which to conclusively evaluate its impacts.[60] However, this policy proposes both an incentive for preservation in sensitive neighborhoods which does not currently exist; and provides developers the ability to turn a profit while retaining existing structures, all while helping to alleviate a pressing housing shortage in a largely built-out

[59] "City of Charlottesville, Virginia Comprehensive Plan" (City of Charlottesville, Virginia, November 15, 2021), 27
[60] Hongwei Dong, "Exploring the Impacts of Zoning and Upzoning on Housing Development: A Quasi-Experimental Analysis at the Parcel Level," *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, February 1, 2021, https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X21990728; Yonah Freemark, "Upzoning Chicago: Impacts of a Zoning Reform on Property Values and Housing Construction," *Urban Affairs Review*, January 29, 2019, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1078087418824672.

city.[61] If successful, such policies will constitute an exciting opportunity to accommodate development in historic neighborhoods while preserving communities and their built heritage at least as well as–if not better than–the current single-family zoning system. While the Sensitive Community Designation was conceived with low-income communities of color in mind, there is no reason that parts of its approach to zoning and land use policy could not be borrowed for largely middle-class, low-density suburban neighborhoods facing housing shortages elsewhere elsewhere.

Of course, preservation is not accomplished with regulation alone. Gail Rothrock has had an extensive career in preservation, having worked over three decades for the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission in Montgomery and Prince George's County, as a consultant for the City of Alexandria and for Washington, D.C. in preservation planning efforts during the 1980s, as a contributing author and editor of the National Trust's 1985 publication All About Old Buildings, and more. She has served on the Historic Alexandria Foundation (HAF) Board of Trustees since 1989, and as Chairman of the HAF Plaque Committee and Co-Chairman of the HAF Advocacy Committee since 2014.[62] She believes that the City of Alexandria would ideally be doing much more than it currently does to promote preservation to local property owners and the general public. She explains that the current Chairman of the Board of Architectural Review has dismissed the possibility of organizing preservation advocacy efforts because the Board is not explicitly charged with that task. There are, of course, other city groups that play a role in local preservation efforts, namely the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission and the Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission, known as the Longname Commission. Rothrock believes that the Longname Commission has never had

[61] Dennis Ting, "Charlottesville Residents Struggle to Find Affordable Housing," *Virginia Public Media*, March 24, 2022, https://vpm.org/news/articles/30734/charlottesville-residents-struggle-to-find-affordable-housing.
[62] Gail Rothrock, Interview with Gail Rothrock, November 27, 2020.

adequate opportunity for outreach or advocacy in part because it has never been fully staffed. This is in part due to the fact that architectural historians and preservationists are generally hard to come by. However, as it currently stands, the commission is funded only by the Commonwealth of Virginia; ideally, Rothrock says, it would receive funding from the City of Alexandria in addition to the state. She explains that with the current level of funding and staffing, in its entire history the Longname Commission has only held two seminars about easements, an important legal mechanism that protects historic properties in perpetuity. By donating an easement to one of a number of preservation foundations or the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, homeowners can ensure that certain portions of their property, interior or exterior, are preserved indefinitely and authentically replicated if needed. Interior easements, many of which have been donated over the past forty years to protect historic interiors in the City of Alexandria, can be directed at specific elements such as flooring, doors, and windows.[63]

By 1980, a total of 5 easements protected historic properties in Alexandria. Between 1980 and 1989, 8 easements were donated. 23 easements were donated in the 1990s and a whopping 40 were donated in the 2000s. However, only three easements were donated between 2010 and 2018.[64] This in itself suggests that Alexandria homeowners are less preservation-minded on the whole compared to past decades. However, it may also be attributed to the fact that it became clear over the last ten years that the Longname Commission was not enforcing easements as it is tasked to do. This is in part because the language of many easements, particularly those written many decades ago, were found to have been written too vaguely to be enforceable. The Longname Commission has recently established standards for enforcement by annually inspecting

[63] "Preservation Easements | #PreservationForum," accessed December 1, 2020, http://forum.savingplaces.org/learn/fundamentals/preservation-law/easements.
[64] "Historic Preservation Easements in Alexandria, VA" (Alexandria, Virginia: Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission, November 14, 2018).

properties where easements are held, and has instituted formal written criteria for consideration of an easement based on nationally accepted templates.[65] As Al Cox stated, it appears that the problems with the easement system have been rectified, at least locally and across the Commonwealth. Preservationists should continue to promote easements as a valuable tool to ensure the preservation of interior and other non-publicly visible historic fabric well into the future. However, easements alone are an insufficient neighborhood preservation strategy due to their piecemeal nature and the fact that easement donations are less financially realistic for low-income and working-class households.

Reflecting on her career at the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Rothrock believes a number of tools used in Montgomery and Prince George's County could further the preservation of the historic built environment in many Virginia cities. In both of these counties, a local preservation and rehabilitation tax credit program exists on top of state and federal programs. Rothrock believes this has proved quite effective in making sensitive rehabilitation projects more common in their historic districts. She explains that in Prince George's County, a state-funded grant program exists which awards up to $50,000 to owners of historic properties who renovate them sensitively and who donate an easement on their property. This, she says, has been the sticking point for increasing the number of easements held on significant features of historic properties in the county. Although such programs would be competing with other local preservation and public history efforts for funding, such additional grant programs might help to significantly incentive the preservation of structures in inner suburbs like Rosemont, Del Ray, and Fry's Spring that are currently National Register and Virginia Landmarks Register historic districts.

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[65] William Allan Cox, "Architectural History/Preservation Thesis," December 2, 2020.

Among other preservation efforts to which Rothrock contributed in Prince George's County is an illustrated inventory of all historic sites and districts in the county. The inventory has a section titled "heritage themes" that discusses different types of historic sites, including often overlooked topics such as industrial heritage and African-American recreation sites during segregation. Historic residential neighborhoods from every commonly recognized style period are included, from the Colonial era to the Modern Movement.[66] Rothrock points out that outsiders do not often think of Prince George's County as having much in the way of historic architecture, but believes that this inventory and other efforts to publicize the county's historic resources have helped to make individual property owners in many historic neighborhoods more aware of the importance of preserving historic places than they are in many older Virginia cities.

Overall, Rothrock believes that the Maryland counties surrounding Washington, D.C. have done a better job at making homeowners aware of the significance of historic architecture from after the Federal period than those jurisdictions across the Potomac River in Virginia. She discusses this in the context of the Historic Alexandria Foundation Plaque Program. The program began in the 1960s when portions of the historic districts faced the threat of urban renewal and has generally had a positive effect at increasing local awareness of historic preservation. However, these plaques are still largely confined to Federal-style buildings and have yet to make it onto many Victorian-era or Craftsman-era structures in any of Alexandria's historic districts.[67] She cites the example of Annapolis, Maryland, where plaques are differently colored based on a building's construction period, and where there is no requirement that a façade must be fully original to receive a plaque as is the case in Alexandria. Rothrock believes that reinvesting in the plaque program and reimagining it to resemble that of Annapolis could help to increase public

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[66] *Illustrated Inventory of Historic Sites and Districts: Prince George's County, Maryland* (Upper Marlboro, Maryland: Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning Commission, 2011), mncppc.org.
[67] Gail Rothrock, Interview with Gail Rothrock, November 27, 2020.

awareness about the significance of many different historic architectural styles and periods. These plaques are typically located in a visually prominent position adjacent to the front door and are very noticeable to passersby. Even in Alexandria's local historic districts, it is probably no coincidence that most of the homes that are gutted and renovated less sensitively are of the later Victorian or Craftsman periods rather than those of the Classically-inspired Georgian, Federal, and Greek Revival styles. As discussed earlier, Alexandria has yet to enact local historic districts in its historic neighborhoods whose building stock was mostly constructed after the nineteenth century, as local historic district boundaries have not expanded since the Parker-Gray District was created in 1984. Rothrock agrees that the weakening of guidelines and the Board's purview in Parker-Gray in 2012 as well as the City's failure to protect Rosemont and Del Ray with regulatory purview go to show that Alexandria has had little success at promoting interest in preservation across the city's older neighborhoods since the 1980s.[68]

Preservation contends with a number of other needs for funding, many of which are probably seen by city officials as more pressing than preservation. Rothrock concedes that Alexandria does not have quite the same state funding that is available to Montgomery and Prince George's County for preservation efforts, and that it would be difficult for Alexandria to expand its preservation activity without greater funding from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

A potentially successful preservation strategy which relies on education and advocacy rather than regulation is the model adopted by the non-profit Preservation Resource Center in New Orleans, Louisiana. The professionally administered, locally grounded organization offers in-person and online classes and programs to community members about properly maintaining and renovating historic buildings; holds easements on 139 structures with their own preservation easements program; provides free home repairs to qualified low- and middle-income residents

[68] Gail Rothrock, Interview with Gail Rothrock, November 27, 2020.

who have been cited for violations by the local landmarks commission; guides the acquisition and renovation of vacant properties; and generally promotes preservation through their renowned Preservation in Print publication, through their online Preservation Digital Newsroom, and on social media. An organization with these activities is a preservationist's dream come true–how much more sensitively and equitably would American cities be preserved if every locality had its own Preservation Resource Center! Several of these activities, however, could be carried out regularly without a dedicated organization. With the help of a consultant or local preservation planning staff–for such an activity would be in their best interest as well–neighborhood associations could offer classes, programs, helpful links and videos, or devote just a short length of time in regular meetings to present helpful information for historic property owners. If neighborhood association leadership notices a particular glaring maintenance mistake on historic property after historic property, perhaps focusing primarily on educating property owners about why that treatment is a mistake for historic homes could go a long way to further preservation in the neighborhood.

Finally, there are numerous ways a locality could seek to stabilize and increase tree canopy in inner suburbs and city- or county-wide. In 2007, Arlington County instituted the Tree Canopy Fund, which allows private property owners to apply for native tree plantings on their property and for grants towards maintaining large mature trees. Since its inception, over 2000 trees have been planted on private property.[69] In Charlottesville, the Tree Commission has established ReLeaf Cville, a public-private partnership to raise funds through the Charlottesville Area Community Foundation to plant and preserve trees on private property and undertake educational efforts on the benefits of a strong tree canopy in the city's low-canopy neighborhoods;

[69] "Tree Canopy Fund," EcoAction Arlington, January 6, 2012, https://www.ecoactionarlington.org/community-programs/trees/.

collaborated with the nonprofit City of Promise and Charlottesville Area Tree Stewards to plant trees in the City's 10th and Page neighborhood beginning in 2022; worked to address neighborhood associations' concerns for trees on private property; and undertook multiple educational events with public school students on the benefits of tree canopy and sustainability, among other steps. Efforts to plant trees on private property in the city certainly constitutes a step forward from the City's 2009 Urban Forestry Management Plan, in which no substantial effort was undertaken to expand tree canopy on private property. The plan states the following: "Private property owners, including homeowners, businesses, and railroads, are responsible for the maintenance of trees on their lands. Outside of a development activity, private landowners can generally plant, prune, or remove trees at will. Regulating tree management on private property is limited in the United States and Virginia, unless that property is undergoing a development or redevelopment large enough to require public reviews or rezoning." As such, the plan elements were generally limited to the expansion and protection of tree canopy on public property and requiring planting as part of large-scale developments reviewed by the Planning Commission and City Council.[70]

City and Neighborhood Profiles

I chose to host focus groups in four neighborhoods: Rosemont and Del Ray in Alexandria, Virginia; and Martha Jefferson and Fry's Spring in Charlottesville, Virginia (figures 36-37). This selection ensures that two metropolitan areas–both growing and gentrifying, one the sixth largest in the nation and the other significantly smaller–are represented in this study.[71] All of these neighborhoods feature a core developed between 1890 and 1940, although the oldest cores of the

[70] "City of Charlottesville, Virginia Urban Forest Management Plan" (City of Charlottesville, Virginia, May 2009), 15-29.
[71] "Annual Resident Population Estimates for Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas and Their Geographical Components: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019; April 1, 2020; and July 1, 2020 (CBSA-EST2020)" (United States Census Bureau, 2020).

Rosemont and Martha Jefferson neighborhoods make up a greater share of their established neighborhoods today than is the case for Del Ray and Fry's Spring. Rosemont and Martha Jefferson were selected as approximate counterparts for Alexandria and Charlottesville, as were Del Ray and Fry's Spring. Rosemont and Martha Jefferson are both located within several blocks of the main downtown and have a core of homes significantly larger than in Del Ray and Fry's Spring (figures 38-39). The oldest sections of Del Ray and Fry's Spring were primarily made up of small- to medium-sized bungalows, and until recently, both neighborhoods were affordable relative to nearby areas closer to the center of the metropolitan areas (figures 40-41). Housing prices in Del Ray have risen significantly since 2010, while they have remained more stable in Fry's Spring. Another key similarity is the fact that despite all of these neighborhoods being listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register, none are protected under the highest level of regulatory purview possible in their jurisdictions. As discussed earlier, only the Martha Jefferson neighborhood in Charlottesville is afforded any protection at all. The other three neighborhoods were all offered the prospect of local designation at some point in the last twenty years but turned it down.[72]

Martha Jefferson Neighborhood Profile

The portion of Charlottesville which now makes up the Martha Jefferson Historic District was part of the Locust Grove plantation in the mid-19th century and is located no more than a few blocks from Charlottesville's downtown. Locally prominent Locust Grove Investment Company developed the neighborhood as a residential subdivision in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1903, the Martha Jefferson Hospital was established in the south end of the district and maintained a strong institutional presence in the area until its move across the Rivanna River into

[72] Mary Joy Scala, "Historic District Questions," March 22, 2021; Stephen Milone, Interview with Steve Milone, November 15, 2021.

Albemarle County just over ten years ago. It has been home to many of Charlottesville's prestigious businessmen and their families over time. Martha Jefferson contains one of only two public burying grounds in the city, Maplewood Cemetery, first established in 1827. Though most homes within the district were constructed by the 1920s, the neighborhood continued modest development through the 1950s. Despite its proximity to downtown, the neighborhood has maintained a suburban character into the present, and retains a high level of integrity.[73] As mentioned in Chapter 1, the City of Charlottesville's first Historic Conservation District (HCD) was established in the Martha Jefferson neighborhood in 2010.[74]

Fortunately, the historic conservation district overlay has prevented significant adverse change from happening in the neighborhood. There have been no full demolitions of historic homes within the boundaries of the conservation district since its establishment, and many renovations carried out in recent years appear to have been sensitive to historic fabric. However, many buildings original to the district have seen their sound historic windows replaced, and several renovations have been carried out which adversely run against the character of the historic district (figures 42-46). The tree canopy of the neighborhood has also suffered a measurable decline over this time frame, as older trees have died and new trees have not been planted to the extent necessary to maintain the canopy since then (figures 47-48).[75] The visual and environmental effects of this decline will become more pronounced over time as it continues.

Rosemont Neighborhood Profile

Located in Alexandria, Virginia no more than several miles from the Potomac River, Rosemont is a well-planted residential area first developed as a streetcar suburb between 1908 and

[73] "104-5144 Martha Jefferson Historic District," Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 2019, https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/104-5144/.
[74] "City Planners Recommend Martha Jefferson Historic District," accessed February 10, 2022, https://www.cvilletomorrow.org/articles/conservation-district.
[75] "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2019 2008.

1914 by a group of Washington, Alexandria, and Philadelphia investors. The neighborhood was bisected by the trolley line of the Washington, Alexandria, and Mount Vernon Electric Railway, which stopped in the neighborhood. The neighborhood continued to see significant development over the following ten years, with the northernmost sections of the neighborhood built out by the 1930s. While the houses constitute the work of many architects and builders, they collectively demonstrate remarkable cohesiveness in scale and building material. Rosemont's more than 450 residences form "a textbook of the era's middle-class architecture." Unlike Martha Jefferson, whose construction date was early enough to have primarily inherited Queen Anne and Stick Victorian styles, house styles in Rosemont are predominantly Arts and Crafts, Craftsman, and Colonial Revival. The intact original street plan reflects suburban planning ideals of the early twentieth century City Beautiful movement (figures 49-50).[76]

The Rosemont Historic District was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in 1991 and formally listed in 1992.[77] Around the same time, a small group of Rosemont citizens created a DVD on the history of the Rosemont neighborhood which has remained popular to this day.[78] Over the twenty-first century, the neighborhood has seen many renovations and expansions of historic homes. Most of these have been very sensitive to the historic fabric, though the degree of sensitivity varies across the district. The majority of homes west of Commonwealth Avenue–an original Rosemont thoroughfare boasting a wide, well-planted median left in the wake of the Washington & Alexandria, and Mount Vernon Electric Railway–still feature original windows, cladding, roofing, and a whole host of character-defining architectural features such as wide eaves and bracketing, largely original porches, and more. East of Commonwealth, homes tend to be

[76] "Rosemont Historic District," Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 2018, https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/100-0137/.
[77] "Rosemont Historic District: National Register of Historic Places Registration Form" (Virginia Department of Historic Resources, December 11, 1991).
[78] "History – Rosemont Citizens Association," Rosemont Citizens Association, accessed February 18, 2022, https://rosemontcitizensassoc.org/history/.

more modest and many have seen their original windows, roofing, and cladding replaced (figures 51-52). Within the past five to ten years, several teardowns have occurred on both sides of Commonwealth. The first teardown which I was able to find out about occurred in 1995 on Sunset Avenue, an isolated street adjacent to the CSX, Amtrak, and Metrorail tracks (figures 53-54). The neighborhood has also seen renovations which transform the appearance of homes inside and out (figures 55-56). Staff of the Historic Preservation Division at the City of Alexandria Department of Planning and Zoning reached out to the Rosemont Citizens Association several times from 2000 to 2010 to ask if the neighborhood was interested in pursuing local designation to protect the neighborhood, but RCA leadership repeatedly assured City of Alexandria staff that members would never support such an effort. Over the past several years, Rosemont and Del Ray have experienced unprecedented flooding during and after ordinary rain storms. This has attracted significant attention in these neighborhoods and spurred residents to call on the City to improve stormwater management systems.[79]

Fry's Spring Neighborhood Profile

Situated in the southwest of Charlottesville, the Fry's Spring Historic District takes its name from the 18th- and 19th-century Fry family, local landowners and proprietors of two abundant natural springs carrying the Fry name. The district grew as a recreational, then later, residential area into the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. S. Price Maury purchased 170 acres of land in 1890 surrounding Fry's Spring and created the Jefferson Park (later Fry's Springs) Hotel and Land Improvement Company centered on the open space of Jefferson Park. In 1890, the landmark Jefferson Park or Fry's Spring Hotel was constructed for guests' easy access to the springs, serviced by a trolley line that connected Fry's Spring to Downtown Charlottesville

[79] Emily Leayman, "3 Major Floods Spur Push For Improvements In Alexandria | Del Ray, VA Patch," Patch, accessed March 7, 2022, https://patch.com/virginia/delray/major-flooding-events-spur-push-improvements-alexandria.

by way of Jefferson Park Avenue. The hotel burned and was demolished in 1913 and the railway line closed in 1935–although, like Commonwealth Avenue, evidence of the streetcar system is retained in the wide median of Jefferson Park Avenue. The Fry's Spring district's rolling topography, winding streets, generous tree cover, and unique architecture made the area a notable landmark neighborhood for residents of Charlottesville. In 1920, investors developed Fry's Spring Clubhouse, still a neighborhood pool, clubhouse, and landmark to this day. At the time of its listing in 2014, the district contained 387 character-defining sites and buildings—including houses, recreational facilities, and churches—that contribute to the district's appearance and character. Prominent residential styles in the neighborhood are Craftsman, Colonial Revival, Queen Anne Victorian, Shingle-style, and American foursquare, with most Victorian and American Foursquare examples being located on the main thoroughfare of Jefferson Park Avenue. Several examples of Tudor Revival, Spanish Eclectic, Gothic Victorian, and other eclectic styles also exist throughout the neighborhood. In accordance with the popular design aesthetic in recreational areas and mountain retreats of the early twentieth century, Craftsman bungalows boasting exterior stone cladding, stucco, and half-timbering figure prominently in the neighborhood (figures 57-58).[80]

Fortunately, the Fry's Spring neighborhood has seen little adverse change and loss of historic fabric. Tree canopy, though, has been in decline in the neighborhood as old white oaks and other large native shade trees have died faster than they have been replanted. Residents have also expressed concern with recently proposed residential developments on riparian slopes with questionable erosion management strategies. Additionally, while they have been rare up to this point, teardowns are likely to become more common across the neighborhood as Charlottesville

[80] "Fry's Spring Historic District: National Register of Historic Places Registration Form" (Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 2014).

and Albemarle are set to continue to quickly gentrify. A group of Fry's Spring residents themselves requested the survey that led to the nomination to state and national registers in 2014, but Fry's Spring Neighborhood Association leadership repeatedly stated that they were not interested in a local historic district.[81]

Del Ray Neighborhood Profile

The Alexandria neighborhood generally known and identified as Del Ray includes most of the former Town of Potomac, Virginia. The district consists of six subdivisions—Del Ray, Del Ray II, St. Elmo, Abingdon, Hume and parts of Mt. Vernon. St. Elmo and Del Ray were platted in 1894 by Ohio developers Wood and Harmon and were incorporated in 1908 to form the Town of Potomac. The area is located directly north/northwest of Rosemont, and as a fellow streetcar suburb owes much of its growth into the mid-twentieth century to the Washington, Alexandria, and Mount Vernon Electric Railway which served the Town of Potomac along the same wide corridor of Commonwealth Avenue. Many of the residents were government employees who regularly commuted to Washington by way of the railroad. Others commuted by foot to Potomac Yards, once the largest rail yard on the eastern seaboard until its closure in 1988 and located along the eastern edge of the neighborhood (figure 59). The town flourished independently until its annexation by the City of Alexandria in 1930, though its original and independent business corridor of Mount Vernon Avenue thrives to this day. There exists in the neighborhood a variety of generally modest residential architecture from the 1890s to 1940, including many mail-order structures. In the original core of the Town of Potomac, many examples of turn-of-the-century Queen Anne and Folk Victorian homes can be found. Foursquares of a variety of styles can be found across the neighborhood. Arguably the most prominent of historic architectural styles in the district, Craftsman bungalows abound. Many Tudor and Colonial Revival homes testify to the

[81] Mary Joy Scala, "Historic District Questions," March 22, 2021.

neighborhood's continued development into the 1930s, and rare examples of styles such as the Mediterranean Revival were also constructed during the early twentieth century in the neighborhood (figures 60-62).[82]

Del Ray has seen a great deal of change since its nomination to the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register in 1992. Residents identify the neighborhood as having been perceived as 'up and coming' since the 1990s, but it took time until socioeconomic changes began to manifest in the built environment. As was the case in Rosemont, the City of Alexandria reached out to Del Ray Citizens Association several times across the 2000's to ask about their interest in local designation, and leadership repeatedly expressed that their members would surely not support such an effort. Although the teardown trend appears to have begun in earnest roughly twenty years ago, Del Ray has seen teardowns at an unprecedented rate over the past ten years as a tide of reinvestment has swept through the neighborhood. Most teardowns have occurred on lots once occupied by smaller, plainer, and simple historic structures, while larger Victorian homes have generally fared better. That being said, many of the homes that have been demolished are far in appearance from the image of the 'shotgun shack' that such descriptions might conjure up (figure 63). As stated earlier, residents of Rosemont and Del Ray did take issue with many of the changes that were first recognized in their neighborhoods in the 2000's. However, their issue was primarily with the form and scale of new homes, not with the demolition of historic structures they replaced. As a result, the Infill Guidelines which the City of Alexandria Planning and Zoning developed during the mid-2000s did not target the demolition of historic structures, only the height and massing of new residences in single-family zones.

[82] "Town of Potomac Historic District: National Register of Historic Places Registration Form" (National Park Service, 1992).

Chapter 2: The Focus Group Method and its use in Alexandria's Rosemont and Del Ray Neighborhoods and Charlottesville's Martha Jefferson and Fry's Spring Neighborhoods

The Focus Group Methodology

The community engagement tool utilized in this thesis is the focus group. Having first gained traction in the marketing industry in the 1950s and 1960s, the focus group is essentially a group interview on a chosen topic. The focus group has become popular in social and applied sciences because it has been shown to be a quick and cost effective method for researchers to obtain data.[83] Silverman and Patterson assert that the ideal focus group should include roughly six to ten participants.[84] Focus groups are intended to be made up of participants who share a common characteristic or attribute–in this case, residing in the same neighborhood. They are traditionally made up of people who have little contact with each other outside of the research setting, though the latter rule is usually breached in community-based research. It should be noted that focus group research does not aim to solely build consensus among participants; rather, the identification of distinctions between individual participants' perspectives is just as much the goal.[85]

The focus group falls under the definition of semi-structured interviewing. As such, the moderator will lead the discussion with a predetermined set of questions known as the *questioning route*. Broadly conceived, questioning routes consist of the following: an introduction and statement of informed consent, including a request that participants maintain open, polite, and respectful dialogue throughout the discussion; a set of primary questions, beginning with an

[83] Silverman and Patterson, "Focus Groups," in *Qualitative Research Methods for Community Development*, 2015, 75.
[84] Silverman and Patterson, "Focus Groups," 76
[85] Silverman and Patterson, "Focus Groups," 77-78

'icebreaker'; closing questions; and a demographic survey. Researchers sometimes make use of pre-focus group questionnaires, either in lieu of or in addition to a closing demographic survey.[86]

The use of focus groups for neighborhood planning is not without precedent. One of the authors of the article referenced above has published a study on the use of the focus group for understanding neighborhood sentiment on a Main Street revitalization plan.[87] Given this history, I deemed the focus group to be a valuable tool for my thesis topic. It is true that few residents have mobilized to stop teardowns and other adverse changes to the built environment in these neighborhoods, and that many residents have not supported historic preservation ordinances in the past. However, it is obvious from informal conversations with residents of Rosemont and Del Ray that these interventions are widely frowned upon by existing residents. I decided that the focus group method would offer multiple community members the opportunity to provide nuanced insight on their perceptions of this topic.

As a University-sponsored graduate research study, this focus group was subject to approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Social and Behavioral Sciences. I elaborate on this process in General Notes of the Appendix. I first pursued recruitment in December 2021 by reaching out to the Fry's Spring Neighborhood Association president, who kindly offered to include a brief description and link to the focus group registration form in a regular newsletter that was to be delivered in a few days' time. I achieved little success through this path, as I received only one response from an individual who ultimately did not attend the focus group. It took until a month and a half later to amass even the minimum of five participants for the focus group, all of whom were either coworkers of mine at University of Virginia Facilities Management or faculty at the University whose contact information my thesis committee member

[86] Silverman and Patterson, "Focus Groups," 88-89
[87] Silverman and Patterson, "Focus Groups," 77

Dr. Barbara Brown Wilson (a Fry's Spring resident and homeowner) provided to me. The recruitment process for the Martha Jefferson neighborhood was similar in that it was organized through the neighborhood association infrastructure, but it was far more successful. Thirteen individuals from Martha Jefferson registered for the survey within two weeks of contacting neighborhood association leadership. I believe there are several reasons for this. First, Martha Jefferson Neighborhood Association President Paul Miller sent a personalized email to the entire membership body which was solely devoted to encouraging members to sign up for the focus group. Rather than using a registration form to obtain respondents' contact information and ask for their availability, MJNA leadership established a meeting date from the outset and passed on to me the contact information of all residents interested in the meeting and available during the times proposed. Second, I had been in contact with the neighborhood association leadership as far back as September 2021, beginning with my interview with Melanie Miller about her leadership in designating the neighborhood a Historic Conservation District roughly ten years ago.[88] She invited me to an MJNA event several days later, where she and Paul spoke at length with me about their neighborhood and the designation process. It was there that I first discussed with them the idea of hosting a neighborhood focus group in Martha Jefferson, a proposition to which they responded enthusiastically. By the time I reached out again several months later, I was already an acquaintance not only to neighborhood association leadership, but several community members as well. In short, establishing a relationship with neighborhood association leadership and participation in their activities months in advance seems to be a more fruitful approach than contacting a neighborhood association president out of the blue (as a student rather than a professional, at that).

[88] Melanie Miller, Interview with Melanie Miller, September 24, 2021.

My recruitment approach for the Alexandria neighborhoods differed significantly from that of the Charlottesville neighborhoods. Rather than using the neighborhood association infrastructure at all, I simply reached out to old friends to build the focus groups. At that point, I had only experienced my failed attempt at engaging residents through the Fry's Spring Neighborhood Association. I decided to bypass this problem by recruiting people I already know, who would be significantly more likely to reply. Several of these old friends are architects and one is a professional preservationist, though this is incidental. I knew all of these individuals through school or other activities totally unrelated to architecture, planning, and historic preservation, which I believe justifies the use of a generally unorthodox approach to recruitment. This difference was factored into my IRB submission, and I received approval to pursue this path. While it was extremely time-consuming, it turned out to be a very fruitful method of recruitment–even if it may have increased the likelihood of familiarity between focus group members. The email template which I used to recruit Alexandrians is included in Appendix C.

Registration for the focus groups involved the completion of a Qualtrics registration form and the signing of an electronic consent form via Adobe Sign prior to the focus groups, both of which are included in the Appendix as D and E. The IRB specifically recommended these two platforms for these tasks. Another especially important component of the focus group methodology was the demographic survey which I sent to respondents at the beginning of the focus group. The questions essentially asked participants for identifying information as it relates to their residence in the neighborhood and their perceptions of the historic value of their place of residence and its immediate surroundings. See Appendix E for a full list of these survey questions, in order. I set aside roughly ten minutes at the beginning of the focus group for respondents to complete the demographic form.

Focus groups are traditionally held in person, though they can be held on virtual platforms as well. I initially planned for respondents to choose whether they preferred in-person or virtual focus groups and for us to move forward with the option which received the most support. However, I ultimately decided to hold all focus groups online, for several reasons. The first would be the difficulty of deciding upon and securing a meeting place and providing seating, refreshments, and whatever else might be expected for such an activity. As a graduate student, I did not have access to the same physical resources for meetings as a planner working in local government, or a private consultant with an office. Additionally, the focus groups occurred during the peak of the Omicron wave of the COVID-19. Under the assumption that many participants may not feel comfortable with an in-person group meeting, I decided to move forward by holding all focus group meetings on Zoom. I distributed all meeting invitations by email several days in advance of the focus group, and I sent participants an email reminder the morning of the focus group. As advised by thesis committee member Dr. Barbara Brown Wilson, I planned the focus group discussions to last an hour and a half. I informed participants that the focus groups would not run any longer than an hour and a half in the electronic consent form and again at the beginning of the meeting.

As mentioned earlier, the focus groups discussion structure largely followed the recommendations of Silverman and Patterson. The focus group discussion questions can be found in Appendix A. In the introduction, I identified myself and the purpose of this project for my thesis. My self-introduction was abridged for the Alexandria focus groups, where I knew all participants before the discussion. I proceeded to the aforementioned demographic survey after the introduction. The discussion questions were separated into two sections, the first relating to general satisfaction with the neighborhood and the second more specifically related to historic

preservation. This first can essentially be distilled to the question of whether or not residents are satisfied with their neighborhood as it is, as it was in the past, and as it may be in the future; and why that is or is not the case. This follows the advice of thesis committee member John Robbins that each discussion should begin with the question of general neighborhood satisfaction before moving into discussions of historic preservation. He charged that if historic preservation is important to a community, then historic buildings, natural features, and any other significant resources will most certainly be brought up. The second set of questions generally asks the following: whether residents see their neighborhood as a place of historic and heritage value; if so, what brings that value to the neighborhood; whether residents see their neighborhood's heritage as well-protected and stable, or vulnerable and slipping away; and whether they would support various preservation strategies for their neighborhood, including local designation and preservation education initiatives.

Martha Jefferson Focus Group Results

The Martha Jefferson focus group was held on January 19, 2022 from 7:00-8:30 PM, using a Zoom link that I had created and sent to Martha Jefferson Neighborhood Association leadership. Although this was the third focus group I hosted, this one involved the most hiccups in scheduling and communication. After spending what I thought had been the first few minutes in casual conversation with participants while waiting for the last two participants to join, one participant expressed frustration with the fact that we had been waiting ten minutes and requested that we begin the discussion. Others agreed and I promptly began. By this meeting time, I had settled on the Zoom Chat feature as the optimal tool for sending the demographic survey to participants and for participants to let me know when they were finished. However, two participants missed this last point despite the fact that I had asked participants to do so twice and

to let me know if they had difficulty doing so, and several additional minutes were ultimately lost before I explicitly confirmed with these participants that they had finished the survey.

The demographic survey for this focus group yielded much valuable information. Of the nine participants, two were in the 75+ age group; three were in the 65-74 age group; one was in the 55-64 age group; two were in the 45-54 age group; and one was in the 35-44 age group. With the exception of one participant who had only lived in the neighborhood for just under three years, all participants had lived in their homes anywhere from 14 to 27 years. All participants owned their homes. Most participants were of the opinion that their homes and immediate surroundings were of historic significance. The three participants whose homes were constructed during the 1890s and lived in the core of the original development ascribed the terms old and historic to both their homes and their surroundings. Another three participants lived in homes constructed during the 1930s or 1940s. While their responses were generally similar to participants in homes older than theirs, they did appear less likely to identify their homes and immediate surroundings as historic. One of these participants lived along the historic core of Locust Avenue, and she identified her 1930s home as both old and historic, attributing this in part to the fact that her home was of a Dutch Colonial form rare in Charlottesville. As stated earlier, she described her surroundings as both old and historic as “there is a distinct narrative to the development of the neighborhood and while the types of houses are quite diverse there is a pleasing unity to the neighborhood”. Another participant lives along the northern edge of the historic district, and cited his 1930s home as old and historic because it was within the bounds of the original development planned by the Locust Grove Development Company. He did not seem to perceive his surroundings as historic because of his home’s immediate adjacency to the modern Route 250 bypass and the fact that most homes in the vicinity of his residence were built after

World War II. Finally, a third participant lived in a 1940s home likely adjacent to the eastern boundary of the Historic Conservation District. This participant described her home as old but not historic, adding that it has been altered; and she identified her immediate surroundings as old and historic, citing their location within the district. The only two participants who did not consider their homes to be old or historic lived in a home constructed during the 1950s. The first stated that her home was “sort of a mid-century rancher” and stated the following of her surroundings: "the section of Lexington Avenue we live on is not particularly historic, though other blocks are more so." Based on her architectural description, it is likely that she lives either barely within or barely outside of the historic district. The second participant lives several blocks east of the historic district, and stated that his home is “pretty average as far as age goes”. He did not explain why he did not perceive his surroundings as old and historic. Based on this participant’s reported nearest intersection, a majority of the buildings surrounding his home were constructed after World War II and only a minority were constructed in the 1930s or earlier.

As with all focus groups, I began by asking participants if they were happy with their neighborhood. All participants agreed that they were very happy with the neighborhood, and they raised several points of satisfaction. First, residents expressed their appreciation of the walkability of the neighborhood. Many residents stated that they enjoyed the fact that the neighborhood was walkable, relatively compact–in the words of one, participant, “not ‘high urban’ if that’s the right term”--and within a mile of Downtown Charlottesville, while simultaneously boasting spacious lawns and a strong tree canopy not always seen in urban neighborhoods in such close proximity to the city center. For participants who had relocated to Charlottesville from such places as New York City and the Northern Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C., these were particularly special traits. Arguably the next most commonly mentioned characteristic of the community was the

diversity in socioeconomic status in the neighborhood. Participants appreciate the fact that newer upper middle-class residents live in renovated and expanded homes next to elderly, longtime residents of smaller and more affordable homes. Participants acknowledged the relative lack of racial diversity in the neighborhood, but noted that the youth of the neighborhood are afforded the opportunity to attend more racially diverse public schools. Participants certainly did not fail to mention their appreciation for the historic styles, diversity of historic architecture, and diversity of home and lot sizes throughout the neighborhood. Finally, many participants were pleased that–in their view–more children are living in the neighborhood, playing in yards, walking to school, and generally present in the neighborhood than at any other point over the past thirty years.

Multiple participants also held in common several reservations about Martha Jefferson. For one, participants expressed concern with gentrification in the neighborhood. Many participants, most of whom were between the ages of 45 and 64, stated that they could not afford the homes they bought many years ago in today's market. The youngest participant in the focus group was of the 35-44 age group, and he candidly explained that the only reason he was able to afford the home and neighborhood he so appreciates was the fact that he inherited a large sum of money from his father at his passing. Many participants acknowledged that the socioeconomic diversity they discussed early in the conversation was partially the result of some gentrification and that this diversity would likely decline with continued gentrification. All in all, residents expressed serious concern with the fact that the neighborhood appears to be becoming incredibly unaffordable.

Eleven out of twelve participants were supportive of the historic conservation district, with only one participant–an older gentleman who has lived in the neighborhood for upwards of thirty years–unsupportive of the measures. This gentleman was, however, greatly supportive of historic

preservation overall, and described the process of restoring his own historic windows and teaching a neighbor to do the same. Those who spoke in support of historic district regulations stated that they appreciated the conservation districts for preventing the total demolition of historic homes, as none have occurred since their establishment. Participants also praised the guidelines for the way they embrace adaptation by allowing well-designed modern structures. The stylistically modern home of a retired UVA architecture professor on Kelly Avenue was spoken of favorably in this instance. Yet, participants cautioned, they appreciated that new construction of any style is pushed towards greater compatibility with the neighborhood under the guidelines. The Future Land Use Map released as part of the 2021 Comprehensive Plan also came up, with participants expressing concern over the Medium Intensity Residential designation for High Street, Sycamore Street, and Lexington Avenue.[89] Participants explained that they were fully willing to allow some densification in their neighborhood, but that "twelve-story towers" and the like were a step too far. Several participants did voice their support for the General Residential designation, which is the lowest intensity designation and proposes a slightly denser replacement for single-family zoning in the city. For reference, the Medium-Intensity designation proposes the allowance of up to four stories; small 'house-sized' dwellings up to twelve unit dwellings; accessory dwelling units; cottage courts; and townhouses, with the potential for additional units and height as a bonus for the provision of affordable units. The General Residential use proposes significantly less density, with only one unit allowed by-right per lot; up to three or four units allowed if the first meets affordability requirements and if the structure is maintained; and the possibility of additional units and height with greater provision of affordable housing.[90]

[89] "City of Charlottesville, Virginia Comprehensive Plan" (City of Charlottesville, Virginia, November 15, 2021), 28.
[90] City of Charlottesville, Virginia Comprehensive Plan", 29

Lastly, I asked participants for their thoughts on preservation education efforts. All participants supported the idea of a preservation education newsletter for property owners that would circulate within the Martha Jefferson Neighborhood Association infrastructure. However, one participant proposed an additional strategy that prompted nods from most other participants as well; that is, for the City of Charlottesville and/or the Martha Jefferson Neighborhood Association to develop a list of preservation contractors and contractors who are knowledgeable and experienced in working with historic buildings in ways that the average contractor is not. This is a known preservation strategy in other cities, including Alexandria, though it is often only presented to applicants during meetings with staff or the Board of Architectural Review after they have selected their contractors.[91] Participants also expressed interest in guidelines for the sustainable retrofitting of historic homes, from the installation of storm windows to solar panels on historic roofs. They discussed the possibility of partnering with Charlottesville-based LEAP (Local Energy Alliance Program) to create such resources, to assist with neighborhood grant programs for retrofitting homes for improved environmental performance, and more.[92]

Rosemont Focus Group Results

The Rosemont focus group discussion was successful and robust. This focus group featured the greatest diversity in age seen among the focus groups. From my end, the primary administrative difficulty was managing the sheer number of participants. Within the four days leading up to the focus group meeting, an additional four participants responded to my recruitment email and asked to participate. This brought the total number of participants in the focus group from eight to twelve. One participant shared after the focus group that she found it difficult to jump into the conversation with so many others speaking. I believe this serves to

[91] Milone, Stephen. Interview with Steve Milone, November 15, 2021.
[92]

affirm the maximum of ten participants which Silverman and Patterson set out in their publication. One participant was in the 75+ age group; one was in the 65-74 age group; five were in the 55-64 age group; one was in the 45-54 age group; two were in the 22-24 age group; and one was in the 18-21 age group.

The demographic survey yielded an interesting mix of opinions on the neighborhood. Generally, most participants ascribed the labels ‘old’ and ‘historic’ to their homes and neighborhoods. Five participants labeled both their homes and their immediate surroundings as historic and old. All of these participants lived in homes constructed between 1910 and 1915 on blocks largely made up of contemporaneous homes. It should be noted that three of these participants lived together in the same home and two of them lived in another. Multiple participants defended their opinions by stating that their homes and many homes around them are over 100 years old; that they are part of a National Register Historic District; and that their homes and neighborhood as a whole retain high historic and architectural integrity. Two participants identified their neighborhood as part of the ‘first generation’ of Washington suburbs. One participant mentioned the evidence of the streetcar line in the wide median on Commonwealth Avenue, as well as the neighborhood’s proximity to the even older Old and Historic Alexandria District. Two of these participants have lived in their home for 23 years, and the others for 13 years.

Many participants identified their homes as old but not historic. The construction dates for these homes all ranged from 1929-1938, with the exception of two participants. One lives in a 1950s home which she described as ‘vintage’. Another is a 20-year old resident living with her parents in the aforementioned 1915 home. One gentleman who has lived in his home for 22 years characterized his home in the following way: “Old. Not sure if 1938 is historic by definition.” His

daughter, a 22-year old living in the same home followed a similar line of thinking: “I don't think I would call my home historic because the inside does not have a historic feel, [and] I believe there has been an addition added to it. I would label my home as old because it has an old feel and some of the designs, like the kitchen floor, are old.” Still another gentleman who described his 1930s home this way said that “at 90 years, the home is traditional within the character of the neighborhood, but was a late arrival on the scene so is also somewhat modern in design and appeal.” Finally, the resident of the 1929 home labeled her home as old but not historic because it is not considered so in the Secretary of Interior's standards. With the exception of the residents of the 1915 and 1950s homes, these participants all live in areas of Rosemont which either postdate the initial development of the neighborhood or consist in large part of architecturally simpler postwar homes.

The most fascinating revelation point in this conversation stemmed from the fact that a 20 year-old participant did not perceive her 1915 home to be historic as her parents did. This may be in part due to the fact that she has little memory of the home before 1998, when her parents significantly altered the exterior by replacing the original windows, covering older asbestos siding with vinyl siding, and erected a rear addition. Also contrary to her parents, she stated that her surrounding area was neither old nor historic, as it “has become quite gentrified, and there are much more modern homes than there were a decade ago.” This is consistent with the mindset of the 22-year old living one block away, who refrained from calling her surroundings historic because “the roads were just replaced and some of the houses are new”, in contrast with her father who labeled his immediate surroundings as historic because the buildings are primarily over 100 years old. Of this group, the only participant to unequivocally call her surroundings both old and historic was the resident of the 1950s home. Although her home is newer, it is situated within the

oldest portion of Rosemont. She explained that the surrounding homes "are as old as any homes are in our neighborhood (I think) and I would therefore call [them] historic".

As with all focus groups, I began the conversation by asking residents if they were satisfied with their neighborhood. The answer I received was a resounding 'yes'. Broadly, participants cited the walkability, 'bikeability', and ease of running in the neighborhood; easy access to the waterfront and commercial areas of Old Town and Del Ray; the quality and diversity of historic housing in the neighborhood; mature tree canopy; and strong local community. Residents stated that they appreciated being able to reach groceries and urban amenities elsewhere in the city safely without a car. Many commented that they appreciated living in a place that is physically unique, compact, and that features a variety of historic apartments, townhouses, and detached homes large and small–as one participant put it, "very few houses are the same". As was the case in Martha Jefferson, several participants mentioned an appreciation for the diversity in age range across the neighborhood. A strongly appreciated theme which I discerned in the focus group was an appreciation for the community that makes up Rosemont. Participants painted a picture of a neighborly community with a strong sense of pride and a devotion to taking care of properties and helping others out, which they attributed in part to the beauty, liveability, and uniqueness of the neighborhood. Many pointed to the compactness of the neighborhood and the abundance of front porches as factors which have contributed to greater neighborhood sociability. One participant called Rosemont a place of "small town appeal with major city attributes and amenities." As a native Alexandrian, I have heard this explanation used many times to describe the neighborhoods of Rosemont and Del Ray as well as the entire city. Even the City of Alexandria website describes the city that way.[93]

[93] "City of Alexandria, VA: About Alexandria," AlexandriaVA.Gov, accessed March 4, 2022, https://www.alexandriava.gov/.

Residents delved into the subject of historic preservation quickly. One participant stated her appreciation of the fact that Rosemont has largely avoided 'McMansionization', unlike much of neighboring Arlington County. However, another participant–a preservation professional–immediately countered, pointing out that many Rosemont houses have been demolished and continue to be demolished, particularly east of Commonwealth Avenue. When I proceeded to the question of positive and negative changes participants have perceived in their time living in the neighborhood, this conversation continued. Several residents cited specific examples of recent demolition and renovations that removed or obscured significant characteristics. One participant viewed some of these new builds and renovations to be a trend towards stereotypically suburban homogeneity. She attributed rising house prices to the treatment of Rosemont as "more of a commodity than a place". Another participant echoed this point and discussed the decline in affordability of the homes in the neighborhood since he and his wife purchased their home as newly-weds, which he believes they could not have done today. However, participants held a positive perception of most of the prominent changes that have occurred in the neighborhood over the past two decades. Many expressed appreciation of the resurgence of local business, particularly on Mount Vernon Avenue in Del Ray, but also in Old Town. A popular topic of conversation around business was the recent transformation of the intersection of Braddock Road and Mount Vernon Avenue. In 2014, a local businessman demolished a parking lot, 1970s shopping strip, and an abandoned warehouse on the site and constructed several new two-story buildings which now house a popular local pizzeria and a dry cleaning establishment, a change participants widely appreciated. One resident brought up that many Rosemont homes which have been demolished over the last twenty years are, in his words, "gross 60's houses [which] do not fit in, and I'm glad some are gone". Another participant living

east of Commonwealth Avenue appreciated the extensive rehabilitation that many houses in his neighborhood have seen since they moved in, explaining that all the houses surrounding his were "in sorry shape" when he and his family purchased their home in 1998. Another resident stated that she appreciates the direction of enhanced walkability, bikeability, and the establishment of free trolley and bus lines in the community, as well as the recent closure of two blocks of King Street in Old Town to become a pedestrian zone. Finally, a participant spoke highly of the no-mow zone the City installed near the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue and Braddock Road, and voiced support for its expansion and repetition across the neighborhood.

Conversation on local designation was uniquely robust as well. First, one participant–an architect–lamented that Rosemont does not benefit from formal protection as a local historic district. Citing the recent demolition of a plain 1960s home near his residence, he acknowledged that some neighborhood change is good and that guidelines should not be too controlling of change; but he also pointed to the recent loss of several 1920's bungalows and expressed his fear that this trend is beginning to intensify. Another resident agreed, noting that the large new builds and spacious additions negatively impact surrounding residents with noise and the loss of sunlight, views, open space, and water permeability and stormwater drainage. He pointed to the recent replacement of a small bungalow in Del Ray with a large black house he facetiously termed the "Del Ray Death Star" to illustrate this point (figures 64-65). Another participant also raised that construction in the form of additions and new builds has been happening on their street for a significant length of time, and that this appears to have gradually worsened stormwater drainage over time. However, several participants also raised that additions can be carried out sensitively in the neighborhood and that guidelines should still allow for them. Several participants discussed the sensitive retrofitting and expansion of older homes that has been ongoing in Rosemont for

over forty years. One participant purchased her home in the neighborhood in 1969 and testified to the fact that many new additions are not only compatible with their main structures, but blend in so well that one needs to pay attention to see them. Participants working as architects and preservationists raised that most homeowners are likely to sensitively maintain and renovate their homes, and mostly hire 'good architects' for any renovations and additions; rather, it is primarily contractors who flip or demolish homes in the neighborhood.

Participants unanimously supported the implementation of some level of preservation and design guidelines for Rosemont, although they cautioned that the level of strictness would need to be negotiated among residents. One participant pointed to the City of Carmel-by-the-Sea, California, where design guidelines preserve neighborhood beauty and character, and questioned why such policy could not be implemented in Rosemont.[94] Much like in Martha Jefferson, several participants identified mitigation and adaptation to climate change as high priorities for design guidelines, with much of this conversation revealing participants' support for guidelines that would allow and encourage rooftop solar panels. One participant brought up the Del Ray Residential Pattern Book discussed earlier, advocating for the creation of such a document for Rosemont as a first step for supporting preservation in Rosemont. This conversation of preservation education ushered in a discussion of the well-received 1992 DVD documenting Rosemont's history and its nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. While all participants were aware of this DVD, they noted that it was now thirty years old and that Rosemont would benefit from revamping such education efforts every so often for the passing on of this information to new residents. One participant declared that realtors should be providing a copy of the Rosemont DVD to every new Rosemont property owner. Also mentioned in the

[94] "Historic Preservation: How Properties Are Deemed Historic," City of Carmel-by-the-Sea, California, accessed March 7, 2022, https://ci.carmel.ca.us/post/historic-preservation.

preservation education conversation was the importance of increasing interpretive signage and walking historical tours of Rosemont.

Fry's Spring Focus Group Results

The Fry's Spring focus group was the most difficult with respect to recruitment. Without established contacts in the neighborhood–or a neighborhood association leadership to assist me in a unique way as in Martha Jefferson– it took longer than all other focus groups to assemble a sufficient group size for the Fry's Spring focus group. Ultimately, five individuals participated in the discussion. Excluding the single oldest and two youngest age groups, the Fry's Spring focus group offered the greatest variation and balance in age group compared to other focus groups, with one participant in the 65-74 age group; one in the 55-64 age group; one in the 45-54 age group; one in the 35-44 age group; and one in the 25-29 age group. The oldest participant had lived in the neighborhood for 38 years, with the youngest only having lived in the neighborhood for one year. Four out of five participants live within the boundaries of the Fry's Spring Historic District, though the fifth lives within a quarter of a mile of the boundary in a structure contemporaneous to the original development. It should be noted that every participant was an employee of the University of Virginia.

Construction dates for participants' residences were spread between 1900 and 1936. The participant who lived in the home constructed between 1900 and 1910 characterized her home as old and 'possibly historic'. She leaned toward describing her home as historic because it was an early arrival in the neighborhood (she believes it is the farmhouse of an old apple orchard) but remained hesitant to call her property historic because she was unsure of the prominence and importance of the farm, or of any ties to important historical figures. She did, though, describe her neighborhood as historic, because of its difference in function and appearance from the rest of the

City of Charlottesville as a retreat area. One participant lived in a home first constructed in 1917, though it had been gutted in 1955. He abstained from calling either his home or his surroundings historic, describing them as “almost old” and “getting old” respectively. Three participants lived in homes constructed in the 1930s. The two whose homes were located within the boundaries of the district described both their homes and their immediate surroundings as historic, while the third abstained from calling his home historic. The first defended her home as such by pointing to its stone construction, cottage appearance, and an overall highly original state. She substantiated her characterization of her immediate surroundings by pointing out that most homes predate World War II, though she would not describe all of Fry’s Spring as historic because of their significantly higher ratio of postwar houses. The second pointed to the fact that his home was constructed within the first two decades of planned development in the Fry’s Spring neighborhood, implicitly affirming this era of development in Fry’s Spring as historic in doing so. He called his surroundings old and historic because many houses date from the 1920s and 1930s. The third described his home–which is located outside the historic district–as old but not historic. He explained that it is not associated with any significant person or event, but is in keeping with surrounding houses in the neighborhood. He asserted that Fry’s Spring as a whole deserves to be called historic because of the distinct predominance of styles such as the bungalow and others that speak to its early development as a retreat, characteristics which other Charlottesville neighborhoods do not feature and making the neighborhood historically significant in its own right and for the City of Charlottesville.

Participants were unanimously satisfied with their neighborhood. One participant stated her appreciation for her neighborhood’s proximity to UVA; its walkability and bikeability, and the inherent opportunity to live more sustainably without a vehicle; the diversity of age across the

community; its strong tree canopy; its old houses; and the generally pleasant ambiance of the neighborhood. A second participant agreed with all of those points, offering that she appreciated the variety of shapes and styles of old houses as well as lot sizes across the neighborhood. A third participant once again agreed with all previously made comments, and volunteered that the Fry's Spring Beach Club was an especially convenient amenity when his children were swimmers. He did assert that the neighborhood is still socially detached for those without children at home as any characteristically, alleging that Fry's Spring is in line with other most American suburbs in this way. A third brought up walkability and convenience to the Beach Club, Jackson-Via Elementary School, and Azalea Park; the family-friendly nature of the neighborhood; and the sharply reduced commute time he has enjoyed since moving into Fry's Spring, as well as the proximity to I-64, US-29, and the 5th Street corridor, a point seconded by other participants. He also raised that he grew up in an Arts and Crafts home in Richmond, Virginia similar to the one he owns now, adding to his appreciation of his home and neighborhood. He mentioned the great benefit of being able to take walks and safely socialize with neighbors during the time of the COVID-19 lockdowns. Another participant chimed in to discuss the benefits of the neighborhood for her kids during their youth, as they could roam the neighborhood more safely than they might have been able to do elsewhere.

Unlike the other three neighborhoods chosen for focus groups, participants felt that their neighborhood has changed little since they first moved to Fry's Spring–including those who have lived in the neighborhood for the greatest length of time. The only tangible change to neighborhood fabric discussed was the replacement of the bridge over the railroad tracks which connects Fry's Spring to the University and its environs. One participant expressed her disappointment with the new bridge, particularly with its width that encourages drivers to speed

into the neighborhood more than the old bridge did; and the severing of the former connection to Todd Avenue, which dismayed her and other neighbors on the street. Two participants discussed the decline in affordability of the neighborhood over time, but noted that Fry's Spring remains one of the more affordable neighborhoods in the City of Charlottesville. One participant raised that this may be in part due to the high incidence of duplexes in the neighborhood, which comprise virtually none of the new developments cropping up at its fringes. Another participant indicated that in spite of increases in home values, the neighborhood appears to have experienced only one teardown over the past twenty years despite the divergent fates of other nearby neighborhoods such as Lewis Mountain. One participant discussed the increasing prevalence of "UVA folks" in Fry's Spring since he bought his home in 1983, and the fact that the Beach Club enjoyed a less tasteful reputation then compared to today. One resident expressed her wish that the neighborhood had more shops or walkable commercial establishments–particularly a grocery store– a point which others agreed with. Another participant pointed out that the restaurants along Fontaine Avenue might serve as a commercial nexus for the neighborhood–although it is incomplete in providing a full range of essential services to Fry's Spring residents. At this point, participants raised the conversion of the 1931 Fry's Spring Service Station to a popular restaurant serving higher-end bar food. One participant labeled it "both diminishing and attractive", as it involved the loss of a long-time, locally owned service station where employees knew their customers in a unique way not always seen in newer establishments today.

Next, a conversation began on potential future changes in the neighborhood. This discussion was dominated almost exclusively by the subject of suburban development along streams and slopes in the wooded areas that remain in Fry's Spring. One participant stated that she is "not convinced" by riparian strategies on relatively steep topography, with another adding that

she “believe[s] in density and cities, but many steep slopes should not be built on!” She defended this by pointing out that there is much more empty and level land elsewhere within the City of Charlottesville that is better suited for development. The same participant noted that she would much rather see the construction of granny flats and accessory dwelling units on existing lots than the construction of more single-family suburbs in the neighborhood, which another participant seconded. That participant relayed that he and several of his neighbors recently banded together to stall a development in forested land behind their homes, but it was ultimately approved. One participant criticized the City for approving extensive development at the end of Stribling Avenue without requiring the developer to preserve trees within their development and invest more in streetscape improvements on the already busy and underdeveloped street, concluding with her perception that such new development patterns will only make Charlottesville less walkable. One participant shared the story of a neighbor looking into collective neighborhood ownership of the wooded, ravine-backed lots on Monte Vista Avenue in the early 1980s, a plan which ultimately did not earn the support needed among lending institutions.

In response to the question on what brings historic value to Fry’s Spring, participants named neighborhood sites such as the Beach Club–significant for their long-standing cultural and architectural contributions to the neighborhood–and stylistically complex and unique homes on key streets such as Jefferson Park Circle and Woodland Terrace. Arts and Crafts styles and the architectural mix unique to the area came up repeatedly. Participants also mentioned the proximity to the Charlottesville and Albemarle Railway Company line and remnants of old trails and fences across properties and wooded areas in the neighborhood, and expressed support for increasing awareness of these histories in the neighborhood. One participant brought up her curiosity about

the local economy that was in the neighborhood when her home was built in 1900 as the farmhouse for an orchard.

All participants expressed support for the protection of Fry's Spring through a local design overlay district. Most stated that they are not deeply involved in the Fry's Spring Neighborhood Association and were not present for FSNA's repeated statement that the neighborhood was not interested in local designation. A participant who serves on the Board of Architectural Review made the point that the fear of regulation behind much of this sentiment brings to light the need to educate the public on local designation and its potential benefits for Fry's Spring. This resident also expressed his concern with the aging of Fry's Spring's white oak canopy and the fact that young large shade trees have not been planted at the rate that will likely be needed to maintain tree canopy into the future. One resident cited recent demolition and other adverse change in the Lewis Mountain neighborhood in defense of her support of local designation. One participant discussed what he viewed as a positive redevelopment of properties with "ugly, poorly-kept houses" on Fontaine Avenue just outside the neighborhood since he first moved in, and expressed his support for guidelines that would primarily serve to guide future development rather than preservation. Another participant pointed out that any local design control district would certainly line up with the boundaries of the Fry's Spring Historic District as drawn for the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register–which is restricted to the oldest sections of the neighborhood–and that not every building needs to be a contributing structure worthy of the same level of protection as the oldest buildings in the historic district. Several participants also mentioned their support for raising awareness for historic rehabilitation tax credits, which they felt is a little-known tool in the neighborhood. One participant who works as an architect and has used tax credits for historic rehabilitations in past projects explained that it

didn't even occur to her that she could have applied for historic rehabilitation tax credits several years ago when undertaking repairs on her own home.

Del Ray Focus Group Results

When distributed to the Del Ray focus group participants, the demographic form revealed a unique data set when compared to the other focus groups. First, six out of eight participants ascribed the labels 'old' and 'historic' to both their homes and their surroundings. Two related participants abstained from labeling their self-described simple 1920s residence as historic, but otherwise responded similarly to the other six. The lack of participants' reluctance to use these terms to describe their homes and surroundings as seen in other neighborhoods may be in part due to a difference in Del Ray's historic development patterns. The other three neighborhoods all feature a developed core almost exclusively dating from 1890-1940, with a distinctive edge beyond which buildings are primarily postwar and more architecturally monotonous. While this variation is not absent from Del Ray as some streets are home to a higher proportion of the pre-World War II building stock than others, it is far more evenly dispersed across most of the neighborhood than seen in Rosemont, Martha Jefferson, and Fry's Spring. The Del Ray focus group saw significantly less variation in the construction dates of participants' homes when compared to other focus groups, with the earliest of their homes having been constructed in 1919 and the most recent having been completed in 1939. In terms of east-west locational diversity, participants were primarily concentrated in the central and western portions of Rosemont, roughly bound by Russell Road to the west and Dewitt Avenue to the east. North-south locational diversity was minimal, as all participants generally lived within Custis Avenue to the north and Bellefonte Avenue to the south. Five participants were in the 55-64 age group; one was in the 45-54 age group; and two were in the 22-24 age group.

The Del Ray focus group was the first of the four I conducted and turned out to be an incredibly productive and engaging endeavor, despite initial difficulties with demographic survey distribution. Answering my first question about neighborhood satisfaction, participants responded affirmatively and cited many reasons for their love of their neighborhood, though they did not hesitate to name several of their concerns as well. First, one participant stated his appreciation for Del Ray's walkability and community atmosphere, which many participants restated throughout the conversation. One participant connected Del Ray's sociability and 'community feel' to its compactness and the predominance of front porches and sidewalks. Several participants stated that they valued the neighborhood's unique racial, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity, and one expressed concern over its evident decline in the years she has lived in the neighborhood. The relationship between this change and the rise in home values and gentrification of the neighborhood over the past two decades was not lost on participants, as several mentioned these trends. Participants stated their appreciation for the variety of historic styles present in the neighborhood, pointing out that many of Del Ray's streets contain a mix of Queen Anne Victorian and Colonial Revival homes, Craftsman bungalows, and midcentury ranchers. It should be noted that these homes come large and small and for a traditionally single-family neighborhood, Del Ray features a high incidence of duplexes and apartment complexes. Participants painted a picture of a Del Ray that has transformed from an affordable but somewhat run-down neighborhood with a sleepy, seedy commercial core to a vibrant, renovated, and well-kept neighborhood with a robust main street and an active, connected community in the twenty-first century. Residents pointed to the renovation of existing homes; the establishment of new community activities such as the weekly farmer's market and the annual art festival known as Art on the Avenue; the replacement of shady, sleepy businesses on Mount Vernon Avenue with popular, 'trendy'

establishments; and even the gradual disappearance of once-common features in the built environment such as chain-link fences as significant changes in the community. One participant described these changes as having been ‘very good aesthetically and socially’. Participants pointed to specific upgrades to support their claims, such as: the replacement of a gas station and surface parking lot on Mount Vernon Avenue with a new two-story commercial building housing the restaurants Holy Cow and Pork Barrel BBQ, among other establishments; and the transformative renovation of the YMCA on Monroe Avenue. Participants painted a picture of a neighborhood that is safer and boasts a younger and more vibrant community than when they first moved in. One resident pointed to an old American Foursquare on Mount Vernon Avenue now home to Vital Body and Mind, recalling a murder that took place at the property when it served as a boarding house in the early 1990s. Just as in the Martha Jefferson neighborhood, several Del Ray participants appreciated the presence of children across the neighborhood. Two participants volunteered that when they purchased their home on West Bellefonte Avenue, they were among only a few young couples on their street, whereas today many families with children much younger than their own have moved in to take the place of older residents who have either passed on or moved away. Another participant described the exodus of many of her first friends from Del Ray because of their claims that their homes and lots were too small and that the local schools were not good. Within a few years, she said, new friends moved in with an appreciation for the neighborhood’s unique characteristics and plans to renovate their homes.

As stated earlier, the first complaint about the neighborhood which I discerned in conversation was the fact that Del Ray has gentrified significantly since many participants first moved in, causing displacement and a loss of cultural and socioeconomic diversity. As participants in the Martha Jefferson and Rosemont focus groups stated, many Del Ray participants

claimed that they couldn't afford to buy their homes today. One participant questioned whether her own children and their peers could afford to return to the neighborhood they grew up in as adults, and another noted his frustration with the fact that many of Del Ray's essential workers cannot afford to live in their neighborhood of employment. Another participant who works as a local residential architect explained that many of his clients become 'house-poor' after moving to Del Ray; that is, finding themselves without money to renovate their homes after having spent so much to purchase them. As much as participants loved what distinguishes their neighborhood from the average suburb, they did mention the inconvenience of limited green space for young children to play in and the difficulty of teaching older children to drive on Del Ray's narrow streets. However, one participant in the 22-24 age group did mention his appreciation for recent traffic reconfigurations on Commonwealth Avenue as it made driving easier than before.

The topic of concern which came up first and dominated conversation for the greatest length of time, however, was the subject of teardowns and new builds in the neighborhood. First, one participant expressed her concern with the scale of new homes compared to surrounding historic homes. Another expressed his dissatisfaction with the poor quality of design and construction of new builds in Del Ray, especially compared to many of their well-built historic counterparts. The same participant proposed this as a dilemma of purchasing homes in places like Del Ray: residents want to live in a nice home in a unique place, but the economic forces have stripped the neighborhood of much of its 'quirkiness' as these neighborhoods have become popular once again. A participant stated her disapproval with the effect of teardowns in making the community more homogenous. A majority of participants spoke up to express their opposition to rampant teardowns and many of the new builds being left in their wake, and not a single participant expressed indifference in regard to this subject. Another important subject of

conversation was the loss of neighborhood green space. One participant brought up the long-empty lot on the 2200 block of Mount Vernon Avenue, which has served the neighborhood functionally and aesthetically as an informal park; another expressed her worries over increased future development spurred by the upcoming completion of Amazon's HQ2 just a few miles north in Arlington County. Finally, in spite of positive developments in the neighborhood's community and social life, several participants expressed a sentiment that the neighborhood has become less community-like in some ways as it has become a tourist and cultural destination. Street parking has become difficult with residents pouring in to shop along Mount Vernon Avenue from outside the neighborhood. While they may be local, new businesses on Mount Vernon Avenue appeal almost exclusively to an upper-middle class cliente. A majority of these establishments offer only expensive products and services, with yoga studios and other 'mindfulness' establishments far outnumbering bakeries, diners, and pizzerias. That being said, however, participants appreciated the fact that businesses were all at least local and that Mount Vernon Avenue has avoided fast food and department stores–a move that several participants indicated was intentional on the part of the Del Ray Business Association.

Upon asking participants for their views on historic preservation strategies, a clear consensus emerged. It was clear that all participants value their neighborhood's historic buildings, though several expressed reservations about local designation. When I asked the focus group about guidelines intended to *prevent* certain changes in the neighborhood, one participant began his response with "I don't like 'prevent'...". Another referred to the experience of friends living in Alexandria's Old and Historic District who feel that they have insufficient freedom to make changes to their property under design guidelines. A third discussed her belief that design guidelines would result in an undesirable loss of homeowners' freedom to work with their

property as they wish.When I proposed a simpler historic conservation district in which only full-scale demolition of structures constructed before a certain date would be reviewed, one participant felt strongly that her home and some others across the neighborhood might not be worthy of design protection or even preservation incentives as structures which are old, but lack architectural significance. Other participants shared this concern, conveying that their chief desire is for the more attractive and well-built historic houses to be saved and that the redevelopment of some houses need not detract from the neighborhood. Participants did, however, support greater incentivization of historic preservation so that preserving older homes would be easier and more beneficial to builders and homeowners–even if it is not yet clear exactly which incentive mechanism would be most desirable and how it would be best employed. Participants mentioned both grants and tax incentives. One participant raised the Del Ray Community Handbook, which he was involved in producing as a local architect. As stated in Chapter 1, his review of the handbook was mixed, as he believes many builders have used the resource to do little more than add rafter tails, wide eaves, and just a few other character-defining features of the neighborhood to new construction that is otherwise just as incompatible with its surroundings as it would have been prior to the guidelines.

Participants were widely supportive of efforts to document and publicize community history. Many shared fascinating histories of their own homes and those of neighbors, and the subject of knowledgeable long-time residents emerged several times. Participants raised that many of these neighbors have passed away and will continue to do so, and thus stated their support for conducting interviews and oral histories as soon as possible. Other education strategies participants mentioned included a book on historic homes and trees in the neighborhood; increased neighborhood signage; and publicity events such as neighborhood tours.

Chapter 3: Analysis and Interpretation of Focus Groups and Replicability of the Methodology

Outcome and Comparison of Focus Groups

Overall, I found the focus groups and the methodology I used to be incredibly fruitful. The process rarely caused confusion and did not galvanize opposition from participants. The questioning route proved successful, with participants not only responding clearly to my questions but in many cases beginning to answer them prior to my asking. This tells me that the questioning route was logical and intuitive as applied in a real setting. The discussions themselves revealed what participants valued most about their neighborhood, and we see that the themes of walkability; proximity to urban amenities amidst a strong urban forest and a suburban setting; cultural and architectural diversity and beauty, as well as an appreciation for neighborhood history; and concern over loss of neighborhood character and affordability were present in nearly every discussion. The neighborhoods of Martha Jefferson, Fry's Spring, Rosemont, and Del Ray share many characteristics, and it is clear that many residents have chosen to live in these neighborhoods because of their appreciation for these characteristics. Not one participant objected to the expansion of preservation education efforts and preservation incentives for their neighborhood. Participants in Martha Jefferson, Fry's Spring, and Rosemont overwhelmingly supported some level of local designation, while Del Ray residents opted only for expanding or raising awareness of preservation tax incentives. That being said, however, participants welcomed additions to historic homes, some level of densification, and sustainability upgrades in their neighborhood. I perceived across all focus groups that participants did not totally oppose reasonable neighborhood change, but rather honed in on several negative changes such as teardowns, overwhelming and incompatible additions and new builds, and loss of tree canopy and open space.

Residents largely viewed their homes, immediate surroundings, and neighborhoods as old and historic places. Of note is how often participants referred to the numerical age of their homes and neighborhoods and their place on the National Register of Historic Places to substantiate the qualifying descriptor of 'historic.' In total, ten participants made reference to the numerical age or dates of their homes and neighborhoods in their response, and a total of eight made reference to nominations to the National Register of Historic Places; or, in the case of Del Ray residents, their homes being registered with a local historic plaque program. As much as honorific designations do not carry any regulatory teeth, these results indicate that they do make a difference in shaping perceptions of historic value. It was interesting–and to me, predictable–that almost all participants living in homes built prior to 1930 in areas largely dominated by homes predating 1930 viewed them as both historic and old; some participants living in homes constructed in the 1930s called their homes historic, while others abstained from using this term; and the few participants living in homes and blocks largely dating to the 1950s or later did not label them historic (or even old). Of the participants living on blocks developed in the 1930s, those who described their environs as historic lived in areas with significant variety in architectural design (figure 66). In this way, they more closely resembled the pre-1930 sections of their cities. On the other hand, all participants living in 1930s structures and blocks who did not describe them as historic (three participants, all in Rosemont) live among uniform rows of houses (figure 67). This suggests that architectural variety may play as significant a role as age in forming perceptions of historic value.

A comparative study of the demographic survey responses reveals interesting differences between residents of various age groups. The oldest residents and youngest residents in the focus groups were generally less likely to call their homes and immediate surroundings old and historic than middle-aged adults. In the Fry's Spring and Rosemont focus groups, participants in the oldest

and youngest two age groups were most hesitant to call their homes and immediate surroundings historic. As stated earlier, participants who lived in homes built prior to 1930 in largely pre-1930 sections of their neighborhood overwhelmingly labeled their homes and immediate surroundings as historic. The only ones who did not were the older participants who had owned their homes for at least 35 years; and three younger participants aged 18-24 who had grown up in their Alexandria neighborhoods. In fact, not one participant who has lived in these neighborhoods longer than 35 years ascribed the terms old and historic to their homes or immediate surroundings–even though they all live in pre-1930 homes in the oldest and most architecturally diverse sections of their neighborhoods. Of the five participants in the 18-21 and 22-24 age groups, two of them considered both their homes and immediate surroundings to be only old but not historic, citing high rates of remodeling and new construction in their immediate surroundings over the past decade. These three responses revealed that in their view, this has resulted in a loss of historic value.

When the participants of over thirty-five years of residence first moved into their neighborhoods, not only were they significantly younger–their neighborhoods were too. At the time, their neighborhoods may have been seen as commonplace American suburbs produced only one or two generations ago and they may have largely been inhabited by their first- and second-generation residents. None of these places were listed on the National Register of Historic Places or the Virginia Landmarks Register 35 years ago. The Rosemont DVD discussed earlier may shed light on this perception. It relayed that at the time of the Rosemont nomination in 1991, many residents were surprised to hear that Rosemont was awarded the title of 'historic.' The narrator relayed that one weekend morning leading up to the listing, she was studying her elderly neighbor's home for a historic survey. After the old man stepped out onto his porch to greet her

and asked why she was standing in front of his home, she began to explain the survey to him. He appeared surprised and told her incredulously, “there’s nothing historic about Rosemont!” She later reflected in *Rosemont: An Historic Neighborhood* that it would make sense for such a man who is older than his own home to have found the idea strange. Today’s older residents are certainly a generation or two younger than the older residents of the 1980s and 1990s, though they are closer in age to them and their perceptions may align more closely with their predecessors than participants in Generation X. It is difficult to establish a correlation between this perception and decreased support for historic district guidelines, though those in this group did appear less likely to speak in favor of design guidelines than those who were ten to twenty years younger than them.

There are a few possible explanations for two participants in the two youngest age groups being less likely to label their surroundings as historic. A parent of both of those two participants viewed their surroundings as historic, citing age (“over 100 years” and “part of the first generation of Washington suburbs”). The difference may be due to a greater awareness of and appreciation for history on the part of adults; and their memory of a neighborhood that once boasted higher architectural integrity. However, these participants were not totally dismissive of the neighborhood’s age, and it is true that there is far more new building material in their immediate surroundings than there was a decade ago as one of them noted. I interpret this to mean that historic integrity matters to perceptions of historic value; that is, as the integrity of a historic neighborhood declines, so does community perception of historic value over time. This is furthered by the difficulty of nominating sites and districts of a compromised nature to the

National Register of Historic Places.[95] Generally, those in the 45-54 and 55-64 age groups appeared most likely to view their surroundings as old and historic and support historic preservation guidelines. There were only three participants in the 35-44 age group across all focus groups. One labeled his surroundings as old and historic; one labeled his surroundings as historic, but not his home; and one labeled neither as old and historic. The latter two, though, lived along the periphery in their neighborhood, in areas largely newer than the historic core. There were no participants in the 25-34 age group.

Replicability of the Focus Group Methodology to Other Contexts

The focus group method proved to be extremely productive and worthwhile, and this method is readily applicable for use in other places. In professional practice, this method could serve as a useful starting point for moving forward with a variety of preservation strategies. Rather than leaving neighborhoods alone entirely or doing no more than asking neighborhood association leadership if residents would support a predetermined preservation strategy of which they likely lack understanding, focus group discussion could determine the future direction of preservation strategies on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis. This method might also indicate to preservation professionals where education and outreach might make a significant difference in preservation outcomes, or make residents more receptive to local designation or other preservation strategies in the future. For example, Del Ray residents carried on a lengthy conversation in support of preservation tax incentives for the neighborhood. Although I should have realized immediately, it did not hit me until after our discussion that there already exists a preservation tax incentive for the neighborhood–as there has for many years–through the Virginia

[95] Thompson Mayes, "Preservation Law and Public Policy: Balancing Priorities and Building an Ethic," in *A Richer Heritage: Historic Preservation in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Robert E. Stipe (Historic Preservation Foundation of North Carolina, 2003).

Department of Historic Resource's Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit program. Although the participant who raised this does live outside of the National Register district and is therefore ineligible for tax credits, others who live in the district seconded his idea.[96] Perhaps there was an assumption among participants who raised it that the existing tax credits are not sufficient for their context, but it also may be possible that they were simply not aware of the tax credit program–as participants discussed in the Fry's Spring focus group. A preservation practitioner might take from this discussion an awareness that the local or state preservation bodies are not effectively advertising these programs, and may begin an effort to remedy this. A practitioner may also take from these discussions an awareness that residents might not properly understand what would be allowed under historic district guidelines; in such cases, an educational campaign might go a long way in a community already appreciative of their neighborhood's historic value. As much time as this process may take to coordinate and execute, I believe it is a worthwhile investment for any locality interested in pursuing preservation in often overlooked inner suburbs.

Several limitations may hamper the usefulness of this methodology. First, this would compete with many other priorities keeping preservation planners and local governments busy. As Mary Joy Scala, former preservation planner at the City of Charlottesville stated in reference to the 2014 nomination of Fry's Spring to the National Register of Historic Places, staff was busy and had little time to undertake efforts to build community support for a local historic district.[97] Perhaps focus groups could be led by outside contractors who specialize in formulating a general set of questions and outreach strategies and establishing the time and mode of meeting to lighten the load of the public sector. However, given the difficulty I experienced in recruiting participants in places where I had few acquaintances, any meetings would likely need to be coordinated by

[96] "Rehabilitation Tax Credits," Virginia Department of Historic Resources, accessed April 21, 2022, https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/tax-credits/.
[97] Mary Joy Scala, "Historic District Questions," March 22, 2021.

practitioners more familiar with the community. The questioning route would ideally be reviewed by local practitioners more familiar with the community, and they would likely need to participate in data analysis and the moderation of discussion to some extent. The process may move more seamlessly, though, if the outside contractors are local residents as well. As I did in Martha Jefferson, establishing relationships with local neighborhood association leadership or other prominent community members well in advance might also yield great advantage to practitioners or consultants. Finally, this method might need to be tweaked in communities that are simply less 'neighborly' than those I surveyed. The methodology was designed for the tight-knit, traditionally family-friendly suburban context more so than for dispersed, quiet rural areas and transient urban neighborhoods.

Conclusion

Chapter 1 of this thesis serves to present and delve into the challenges of preservation in inner suburbs. Extensive scholarship is devoted to these issues, but little scholarship proposes ways forward for inner suburbs. I discovered that correspondence and sentiment on cases of local designation is difficult to come across for those outside of the neighborhood in question and local preservation circles. I first investigated examples of inner suburbs which have successfully introduced some level of mandatory design control into their neighborhoods. To bridge my gap in understanding, I contacted and interviewed local preservation planners and members of the public who were involved in both successful and unsuccessful attempts to designate local historic districts. Even more importantly, I recruited members of the case study neighborhoods to participate in a demographic survey and focus group discussion about their sentiments on their level of satisfaction with their neighborhood and the extent to which they see it as a historic place worth protecting. Finally, I analyzed the focus groups with the following questions in mind: what are common or disparate themes which emerged across the focus groups? To what extent do residents of inner suburbs view their own homes and immediate surroundings as 'historic'? How is that impacted by factors such as the age and appearance of homes and their immediate surroundings, the age of participants, and the duration of time across which they have lived in the neighborhood? What have been the successes and shortcomings of the focus group methodology which I used. How applicable is this method to other contexts, both those that meet my definition of 'inner suburban' and those that do not?

As time progresses and the footprint of human settlement expands, our inheritance of historic and culturally significant and informative landscapes grows. My thesis began with the understanding that over the past thirty years, neighborhood preservation has largely failed to

expand into the frontier of the territories I define as inner suburbs, now landscapes which residents and outsiders widely perceive as old, historically significant, and beautiful. Aside from better engaging inner suburban residents in advocacy for local historic districts, however, my primary practical conclusion from my thesis is that simply engaging with inner suburban residents about their neighborhoods through methods such as the focus group is an incredibly valuable step from which to start.

Appendix

A. General Notes

a. Number of Participants: The presence of multiple participants brings advantages and disadvantages. At the same time that the focus group method is mutually generative and reflective of how participants would act in a public setting, it also prevents especially knowledgeable or interested individuals from being able to speak on the topic in greater detail.[98] For this thesis, though, the sentiments of neighbors with no connection to the fields of architecture, historic preservation, and urban planning were deemed just as valuable as their counterparts, and this method was chosen in part for that reason.

b. Discussion Planning: The focus group is typically led by a moderator, with one or more members of the research team aiding in taking more detailed field notes, managing the recording process, and keeping track of the time allotted to discussion. Researchers themselves should be considerate and maintain respect when discussing sensitive topics (85-86). Silverman and Patterson recommend a conference room setting for the focus group discussion, though virtual interviewing has recently come into use as well (93).

c. Study Approval and Recruitment Notes: As a University study, I began the process by submitting the focus group methodology as a *protocol* to the UVA Institutional Review Board for Social & Behavioral Sciences, for which I received approval before conducting any of the focus groups. Otherwise, the focus group process did not deviate significantly from the textbook method proposed by Silverman and Patterson. Focus group participants are typically recruited with a letter roughly

[98] Silverman and Patterson, "Focus Groups," 77

three weeks in advance of the focus group discussion, with follow-up and scheduling occurring in the interim (89-91). The four focus groups which I conducted for this thesis followed a similar timeline, although the recruitment method was adjusted for the situation. Initially, my goal was to coordinate all recruitment through the neighborhood or civic association infrastructure.

B. Below is a detailed version of the focus group questioning route detailed in Silvermann's and Patterson's "Focus Groups" chapter in *Quantitative Research Methods for Community Development.*

	Element	*Definition*
I	Introductions	A description by the moderator of the topics to be covered in a focus group and brief introductions by research team members and participants.
II	Informed Consent Statement	A verbal or written statement about a study that identifies: its purpose, the risks and benefits of participating, steps taken to protect participants' confidentiality, and the voluntary nature of participation. In a focus group the informed consent process would include an explicit statement requesting that each member of the group respect the confidentiality of other members of the group.
III	Statement of Rules/ Guidelines for Discussion	Statements about the rules and guidelines for focus group discussion that include: • instructions to participants about maintaining an open, polite, orderly environment where everyone is encouraged to participate • comments emphasizing the identification of the full range of opinions held in relation to specific topics, and downplaying consensus building in focus group research • the description of the moderator's role as a neutral facilitator.
IV	Questions Used to Generate Discussion	An initial ice-breaker question is a general, non-threatening question asked of all participants at the beginning of a focus group. Grand-tour questions ask an interviewee to provide an overview of major themes of interest to a researcher. Probes are used to flesh out details of a theme covered in a grand-tour question.
V	Closing Question	Questions asked to collect data on demographic characteristics of an interviewee and relevant dimensions of a research setting. A question that asks an interviewee whether there are any other issues he or she would like to discuss or elaborate upon.

Figure 5.2 Elements of a Questioning Route.

C. Below is the email template which I used to recruit focus group participants in Alexandria:

   a. *Hi ____, I hope you all have been doing well since *last time we saw each other or common activity we participated in together*. *Insert additional personalized comment if applicable* I'm not sure if you might have heard about this from my parents, but [alternative: As you know,…] I'm still at UVA for a fifth year Masters in Architectural History and Historic Preservation. [I graduated with my bachelor's degree in the spring, but I decided to remain at the UVA School of Architecture to take advantage of the 4+1 program.] As I will be graduating again in May, I will need to produce a complete thesis in the next three months. My thesis focuses on perceptions of historic value and historic preservation in older suburban neighborhoods in Charlottesville and Alexandria, and the two Alexandria neighborhoods I will be considering are Rosemont and Del Ray. I will be conducting a virtual focus group centered on this topic for both neighborhoods sometime by January 31, and I was wondering if you would be willing to participate in the *insert neighborhood name* focus group? [For residents in the gray area between Rosemont and Del Ray:* Despite having lived in Alexandria my entire life, I'm not totally sure where Rosemont turns into Del Ray, and vice versa. Given that you live in what I perceive to be this gray area, I would leave it up to you to select your preferred focus group.] The focus group will be held on Zoom, will last an hour and a half, and will include six to ten participants. All participants must be 18 years or older. The focus groups have been approved as a study by the UVA Institutional Review Board for Social & Behavioral Sciences under Protocol #4833. If you have any interest in the focus group, please fill out

*the attached sign-up form *to be hyperlinked* which will ask for your availability for the focus group. [For residents between Rosemont and Del Ray: contact information, availability for the focus group, and whether you identify as a resident of Rosemont or Del Ray.] I would really appreciate your help with this important part of my academic career! Thanks so much and I hope to see you soon.Happy Holidays and Happy New Year, Will*

D. Electronic Consent Form

Historic Preservation Focus Groups, Protocol #4833

Electronic Informed Consent Agreement

Study Title: Historic Preservation Focus Groups
Protocol #: 4833.

Please read this consent agreement carefully before you decide to participate in the study.

Consent Form Key Information:

Participate in a one-and-a-half-hour virtual focus group about perceptions of historic value and historic preservation in an older suburban neighborhood in Charlottesville or Alexandria, Virginia.

- Before participation in the focus group, respondents will complete a registration survey which will ask for their contact information and availability.
- At the start of the focus group, participants will complete a brief demographic survey which will ask the following:
    - First and last name
    - Nearest street crossing/intersection
    - Whether you rent or own your property of residence.
    - Length of time you have lived in this neighborhood
    - Age range as derived from U.S. Census categories
    - The decade your home was initially constructed, and whether you would ascribe the labels 'historic' and 'old' to your home and your immediate vicinity
- No information collected will connect identity with responses.

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of the study is to understand community sentiment on historic preservation where the prospect of a locally designated historic district has been rejected. My thesis proposes that improved community outreach would result in more thorough and successful identification and protection of the historic or other resources of significance, as well as more effective communication and generative thought with community members about potential threats to those resources where a standard historic district might not otherwise be supported or enacted under current conditions. This focus group among community members will prove instrumental in developing my understanding of this topic for my thesis.

What you will do in the study: You will complete a brief registration survey, fill out the electronic consent form, and participate in the focus group discussion. The demographic survey will be sent to all participants at the start of the focus group for completion during the first ten minutes. Including the demographic survey, the focus group interviews will last an hour and a half. I have prepared a list of discussion questions for you all to respond to. The focus group will be held on Zoom and will be recorded, as I will not be able to simultaneously lead the discussion and take adequate notes.

Time required: The study will take no more than an hour and a half of your time.

Risks:

Historic Preservation Focus Groups, Protocol #4833

There are no anticipated risks to you participating in this research study. The only potential risk is the chance of some participants offending others by stating that they do not like features or aspects of the community that other participants have caused (e.g., long-time residents stating that they do not like the way the neighborhood character or appearance has changed since more recent owners have moved in). The focus group methodology includes a set of rules of conduct which asks that participants maintain respect and civil discourse throughout the discussion.

Benefits: There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this research study. The study will help me understand general sentiment on historic value and historic preservation in neighborhoods not locally designated as historic districts. My hope is that this conversation will be enlightening, generative, and enjoyable for participants.

Confidentiality: I will not disclose the information revealed in the survey at any point, and any direct statements from the focus groups discussed in my thesis will be anonymized. The information that you provide in the survey responses will be anonymous. Your name and other information that could be used to identify you will not be linked to other data. Because of the collective nature of the focus groups, it may be possible for other participants to deduce your identity by reading the thesis and happening upon statements of yours. However, your data will be reported in a way that will not identify you.

All information will be privately stored on the principal researcher's computer files. Only the principal researcher will have access to this information, as it will be secure and password-protected. The focus group meetings will be recorded using the Record Meeting function and will be stored exclusively in the principal researcher's computer files. All information gathered for this thesis will be destroyed after it is turned in and published.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary.

Right to withdraw from the study: You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. At that point, your individual survey responses will be destroyed, and your verbal statements will be excluded from all data analysis and from the text of the thesis.

How to withdraw from the study:

If you want to withdraw from the study, please email the principal researcher at any point (wam9sp@virginia.edu) or tell the principal researcher during the focus group. There is no penalty for withdrawing.

Payment: You will receive no payment for participating in the study.

Using data beyond this study: No data will be used after this thesis has been completed. All data will be destroyed in May 2022 after the principal researcher has graduated.

If you have questions about the study, contact:
Will Milone
School of Architecture, 110 Bayly Drive

Historic Preservation Focus Groups, Protocol #4833

University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA 22903. P.O. Box 401106
Telephone: (703)-863-0714
Email address: wam9sp@virginia.edu

Barbara Brown Wilson
Peyton House 105, 164 Rugby Road
University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA 22903.
Telephone: (434)-924-4779
Email address: bbw5w@virginia.edu

To obtain more information about the study, ask questions about the research procedures, express concerns about your participation, or report illness, injury or other problems, please contact:
Tonya R. Moon, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Social and Behavioral Sciences
One Morton Dr Suite 500
University of Virginia, P.O. Box 800392
Charlottesville, VA 22908-0392
Telephone: (434) 924-5999
Email: irbsbshelp@virginia.edu
Website: https://research.virginia.edu/irb-sbs
Website for Research Participants: https://research.virginia.edu/research-participants

UVA IRB-SBS # 4833

Electronic Signature Agreement:
I am 18 or older, I have read the above information and have been offered a copy of this form, and I am willing to take part in the study.

_____

_____

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Historic Preservation Focus Groups, Protocol #4833

Study Agreement:
I am 18 or older, I have read the above information and have been offered a copy of this form, and I am willing to take part in the study.

_____

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_____

_____

You may print a copy of this consent for your records.

E. Focus Group Demographic Form

Questions to be included in a Qualtrics Form. All questions to be short answer, except the multiple-choice question on age range. Statement to be included in the email to which this survey will be attached.

Thank you so much for your willingness to participate in this focus group. None of this information will be disclosed at any point during my thesis. Demographic data provided will only be discussed generally, and no individual participant's name, age, address, duration of residence in the area, or other identifying information will be stated in my thesis. If any direct statements from focus groups are included, they will be anonymized (names changed). To obtain more information about the study, ask questions about the research procedures, express concerns about your participation, or report illness, injury or other problems, please contact:

Tonya R. Moon, Ph.D. Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Social and Behavioral Sciences

One Morton Dr. Suite 500, University of Virginia, P.O. Box 800392, Charlottesville, VA 2290-0392

Telephone: (434)-924-5999

Email: irbsbshelp@virginia.edu

Website: www.virginia.edu/vpr/irb/sbs

Protocol #4833

1. Please write your first and last name.
2. Please write your nearest street crossing or smaller intersection.
3. Please state whether you rent or own your property of residence.
4. In what decade was the home in which you are currently residing constructed? To the best of your knowledge, has the exterior or interior of the structure--not including any recent additions--been substantially modified since its construction?
5. Would you ascribe the labels 'historic' and 'old' to your home? Why or why not?
6. Would you ascribe the labels 'historic' and 'old' to your home's immediate surroundings? Why or why not? Here, immediate surroundings is generally defined as the area within a two-block radius of your home.
7. Please state the length of time, in years, during which you have resided in this neighborhood as a renter or property owner.
8. If you have spent a significant length of time living in a different home in the neighborhood as well, please write the nearest intersection to that structure, its decade of initial construction, and the number of years you lived there.
9. Please select your age range from the following:
    a. 18-21
    b. 22-24
    c. 25-29
    d. 30-34
    e. 35-44
    f. 45-54
    g. 55-64
    h. 65-74
    i. 75+

F. Focus Group Discussion Guide

- My name is William Milone and I am a graduate student at the University of Virginia. [Charlottesville: I am from not too far away in Alexandria, Virginia, and I have spent the greater part of the past four years in Charlottesville since first arriving here as an undergraduate. I've run and biked through your beautiful neighborhood many times since then.] [Alexandria: Other than the past four years I've spent in Charlottesville, I have lived my entire life in Alexandria. I attended Lyles-Crouch Traditional Academy, George Washington Middle School, and then T.C. Williams High School before coming to UVA.] You all were selected as a representative sample of residents within this neighborhood. My thesis seeks to best support historic neighborhoods in the face of past, current, or potential future changes that may prove detrimental to the community. More specifically, the goal of this focus group is to better understand sentiment on historic value and historic preservation in the neighborhood. This focus group is an integral part of my Master of Architectural History thesis, and I am deeply appreciative of your support.

- This focus group will last no more than an hour and a half. First, I will set aside ten minutes for your completion of a demographic survey. After this, we will begin the discussion in which I will ask a series of questions about your neighborhood and your experience therein. All the responses given during this interview are voluntary, and I will record this interview to ensure accuracy in the reporting of your responses as I develop my thesis. I will destroy the recording after I have submitted the final copy of my thesis.
- None of your answers will be disclosed in my thesis without stripping the data of your name and other key identifiers. All information will be stored exclusively on my computer files until it is destroyed in May. You may refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the focus group at any point. If you choose to withdraw from the focus group, I will

immediately destroy your registration and demographic survey responses and I will not disclose any of the information you revealed in the focus group before destroying the recording in May.

- Does anyone have questions about this focus group or its purpose?
- I sent the demographic survey to you all just before the focus group began. At this point, I will ask that you please fill out the survey, to be found in an email with the subject line "*insert neighborhood name* Focus Group Demographic Survey." As stated in the general statement body of the email, demographic data provided will only be discussed generally, and no individual participant's name, age, address, duration of residence in the area, or other identifying information will be stated in my thesis. If any direct statements from the focus groups are included, they will be anonymized (names changed).
- At this point, I will allow ten minutes for you all to complete the demographic survey. We will certainly allow for more time if anyone needs it.
- Now that everyone has submitted the demographic form, I would like to establish the following ground rules before beginning the interview:
    - During this focus group, the interviewer [myself] and participants shall engage only in open, respectful, and orderly dialogue.
    - All participants are encouraged to share honest opinions about the neighborhood, as long as the rules of conduct are maintained.
    - My thesis will suggest ideal courses of action for the conservation of neighborhood resources but will not directly engage in their implementation.
    - The purpose of the survey questions is to determine whether certain comments or opinions are more common among residents of certain streets, living near

particular sites, long-time or older residents, younger residents with children, etc. (for example, if most of the people concerned about the fate of an open lot are those who live on the same street as that open lot). If I discuss these sorts of correlations in my thesis in reference to an individual participants' opinion, I will anonymize demographic information and related statements by omitting names of residents who made those points. I will discuss data in aggregate whenever possible.

- I will do my absolute best to ensure confidentiality in my discussion of this focus group. However, given the neighborhood-oriented focus of this thesis--and the fact that the focus group itself includes multiple participants--I cannot ensure total confidentiality of opinions shared within the focus group.

Introductory Questions: (I will prioritize the numbered questions so that the first section does not take up too much of the discussion. If discussion of the introductory questions takes significantly less than the 25 minutes I plan to allow for it, I will return to the indented questions before proceeding to the second set of questions which relate more directly to historic preservation.)

1. I'd like to start the conversation with this question: Are you happy with your neighborhood, and has that changed over your time living here?
2. What are some things you like about your neighborhood? These can be related to the local community, places or physical attributes, or anything else.
    1. How many of these favorable qualities or resources have remained constant over the time you've lived here? Which positive qualities have come into being over your time living here?

2. Are there any valuable qualities you've seen slip away since you first moved to this neighborhood?

3. What are some issues that trouble you in your neighborhood? Have these issues been present throughout the time you've lived here, or have they only sprung up or intensified recently?

1. Are there any issues that have lessened or ceased to be a problem over the time you've lived here?

4. Is there anything on the horizon for this neighborhood that you are looking forward to, or are optimistic about? Is there anything in your neighborhood's future that you worry about?

5. How well do you think the [City of Charlottesville or City of Alexandria] has served your neighborhood during your time here? Has it been responsive to your concerns?

1. In general, do you feel that the City or private interests have been active in your neighborhood in recent years, or that it has largely been left alone?

Secondary Questions:

1. For this next set of questions, I'd like to move into a more specifically historic preservation-related discussion. Do you believe that your neighborhood is a place of historic and heritage value? Why or why not?

2. For those who do believe that this neighborhood has historic or heritage value, what brings that value to the neighborhood? More specifically, what elements of the neighborhood constitute heritage resources?

3. To what extent do you believe that the neighborhood's physical resources have historic and heritage value? If so, what are those physical characteristics of the neighborhood?

4. Do you believe these resources or qualities have been preserved and maintained well over your time living among them?

5. For anyone who does not believe that this neighborhood has historic or heritage value, what would make a neighborhood valuable from the standpoint of history or heritage? (To be skipped if none believe the neighborhood has no heritage value.)

6. Would you support the implementation of any mandatory preservation ordinances or optional preservation strategies in your neighborhood [Martha Jefferson: beyond the Historic Conservation District already in place]?

7. As some time has passed since neighborhood planners inquired about this in your neighborhood, how many of you would support the designation of a full-scale regulatory district like [Alexandria: The Old and Historic District in Old Town?] [Charlottesville: the Downtown and North Downtown Historic Districts?]

8. How many of you would support an ordinance simply preventing full demolition or demolitions of significant features of buildings in your neighborhood?

    1. What if such a rule only applied to buildings, say, predating the Second World War?

9. Would you support preservation education strategies that aim to improve property owners' awareness of how to best manage their historic properties? Such educational campaigns would seek to simultaneously support historic preservation and make the maintenance and renovation of existing properties easier on owners. Such initiatives might come in the form of a newsletter that is regularly circulated or consistently available from the [insert neighborhood association name] or [City of Charlottesville or City of Alexandria] websites. You as a property owner or [insert neighborhood association]

member would never be required to attend such programs or read any such publication. These resources would simply be available for you to consult with the goals of promoting historic preservation in your neighborhood and making historic home management easier for you. For reference, the Preservation Resource Center is a nonprofit dedicated to promoting the preservation of New Orleans' historic neighborhoods. As an example, I will play a thirty-second sample of the Preservation Resource Center's "Maintain Right" video series made for owners of historic properties in New Orleans neighborhoods.

Closing Questions:

I've now finished all the questions I have prepared for you all. Does anyone have any other thoughts they'd like to share before we conclude?

Concluding Statement:

Thank you all so much for participating in this focus group. I really appreciate your contribution and I've really enjoyed meeting you all [or seeing some of you again]. I hope you all have found this discussion enjoyable, and I will certainly share my thesis with you all once it's published in May. In the meantime, I wish you all a great few months until we speak again!

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Images

Figure 1: The former home at 10 West Alexandria Avenue in Alexandria, Virginia sat at the end of a row of contemporaneous bungalows across the street from two modest Vernacular Victorian dwellings. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps show that this home was constructed between 1921 and 1941.[99] Though the exterior was Formstone-clad and interior floors carpeted, it was revealed during demolition that sound original wood siding and flooring lay beneath these features. All in all, the home was highly original and could easily have been renovated.[100]

[99] *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map* (Alexandria, Virginia: Sanborn Map Company, August 1921), Library of Congress Geography and Map Division Washington, D.C; *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map* (Alexandria, Virginia: Sanborn Map Company, 1941), Library of Congress Geography and Map Division Washington, D.C.
[100] "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2019.

Figure 2: On paper, the home at 10 W Alexandria Avenue was renovated. In actuality, not a single fragment of pre-2019 building fabric is visible in the new main structure seen above. The contractor and owners more than doubled the home's size and cut down all existing trees on the property. Photo courtesy of Steve Milone.

Figure 3: Many homes such as these are called 'McMansions' for their architecturally improper solid to void ratio, extensive use of synthetic or composite building products, a generally cheap quality of construction, and more.[101] This home is located on Commonwealth Avenue in the Del Ray neighborhood of Alexandria, Virginia, and was constructed in 2018 after the owners demolished an earlier midcentury Colonial Revival home on the property.[102]

[101] Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 2nd ed. (New York, New York: Alfred A, Knopf, 2013).
[102] "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2019.

Figure 4: A bungalow on High Street in Alexandria's North Ridge neighborhood (directly west of Del Ray) as pictured in 2009. While relatively modest in design, the home features characteristic Craftsman bracketing, wide eaves, a front porch, gabled dormer, three-over-one windows, stone or synthetic stone porch pillars, a bay window, and original thin-reveal wood siding, all visible in this image.[103] It seems that the home was in sound condition at the time of this photo.[104]

[103] Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 2nd ed. (New York, New York: Alfred A, Knopf, 2013), xv-xxv.
[104] "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2009.

Figure 5: The same High Street address in Alexandria depicted in Figure 4 is shown here with a new home under construction in 2014.[105]

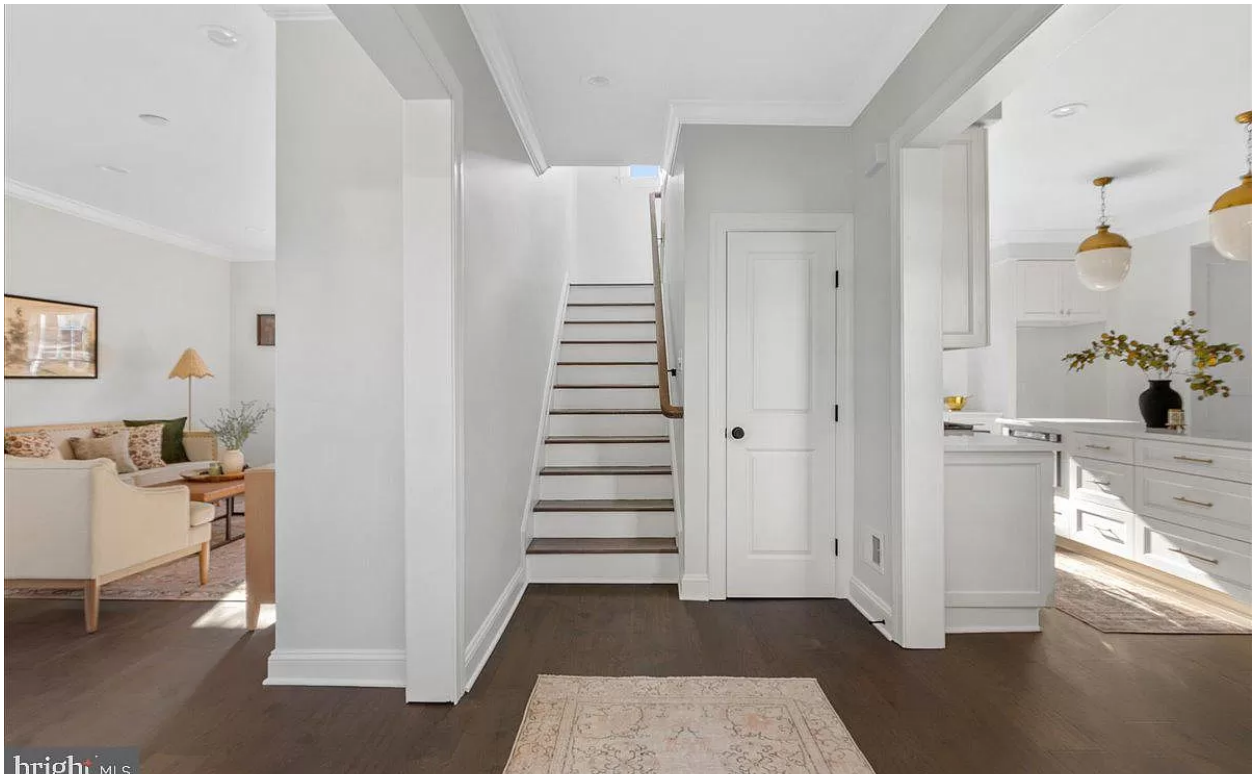
[105] "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2014.

Figures 6-7: Note the discernible loss in tree canopy seen between these 2009 (above) and 2019 (below) images of Raymond Avenue in Alexandria's Del Ray neighborhood. The entire easternmost flank of trees seen in the top image (at left) was lost to a teardown. As is often the case in suburban neighborhoods today, the younger trees visible in this photo–redbuds, crape myrtles, and river birches–are unlikely to grow significantly larger than they are in this image,

meaning that the urban forest will only decline into the future at this rate.[106]

Figure 8: This early twentieth century residence sits at the corner of Russell Road and West Monroe Avenue in Alexandria's North Ridge neighborhood. Here it is pictured in 2009.[107]

[106] "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2009; "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2019.
[107] "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2009; "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2009.



Figures 9-10: The same largely original home was totally transformed in a renovation between 2020 and 2021. All original windows were replaced, as was all original siding, and no interior fabric predating that renovation is visible (note the new doors, new flooring, new trim, and new can lighting). Driving or walking by through the latter half of 2020, only plywood sheathing could be seen over an empty shell. A description calls the renovation of the 1910 home a "meticulous restoration."[108]

[108] "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2009; "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2014; Zillow Inc, "200 W Monroe Ave, Alexandria, VA 22301 | MLS #VAAX2002352," Zillow, accessed March 23, 2022, https://www.zillow.com/homes/200-W-Monroe-Ave-Alexandria,-VA-22301_rb/.

Figure 11: This bungalow was located at 1407 Russell Road in Alexandria, within a block of the structure included above.[109]

[109] "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2009; "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2014.

Figure 12: The structure at 1407 Russell Road was demolished in 2017, as often befalls small older houses located centrally on large lots such as this one.[110]

[110] "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2009; "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2019.

Figure 13: This 1915 bungalow at 112 Oakhurst Circle in Charlottesville, Virginia features exterior stone, stucco, and shingles, all materials uniquely prolific in this neighborhood. Note the strong forest canopy still evident across the neighborhood.[111] Photo by author.

[111] Maral Kalbian and Margaret Peters, "Historical Significance: Oakhurst-Gildersleeve Neighborhood" (City of Charlottesville, July 26, 2004), https://www.charlottesville.org/home/showdocument?id=1970.

Figure 14: These Dutch Colonial and Tudor Revival homes are located on Gildersleeve Wood and also embody the neighborhood's unique architectural makeup. Photo by author.

Figure 15: The Martha Jefferson neighborhood was largely constructed between 1890 and 1930. The homes above are located on Locust Avenue.[112]

Figure 16: Pictured above is a turn-of-the-twentieth century home on Lexington Avenue, another thoroughfare of the Martha Jefferson neighborhood.[113]

[112] "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2019.
[113] "104-5144 Martha Jefferson Historic District," Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 2019, https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/104-5144/.

Figure 17: This 1920 Colonial Revival home at 671 Lincoln Avenue, Winnetka, Illinois was featured as the McAlester family home in Home Alone (1990). Kausen writes that popular revival styles such as the Colonial Revival reflect designers' and the general public's desire to "resort to the visual authority of a well-established, much older design."[114] Director Chris Columbus told the Chicago Tribune that he chose this house because it was "exactly how I imagined the house…visually appealing and, if this makes sense, warm and menacing at the same time."[115] The Lincoln Avenue streetscape is almost exclusively made up of Victorian, Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, and Craftsman homes from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Marley, the bearded old man who first scares and later befriends Kevin, lives in a turreted Victorian mansion just across the street from 671.[116]

[114] Cecilia Lewis Kausel, Design & Intuition: Structures, Interiors and the Mind (WIT Press, 2012), 26.
[115] Tracy Swartz, "'Home Alone' Director: We Chose Winnetka Home Because It Was Warm, Menacing," chicagotribune.com, accessed December 4, 2020, https://www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/ct-home-alonehouse-winnetka-20151106-story.html
[116] Sara Freund, "What's Changed at the Iconic 'Home Alone' House 30 Years Later," Curbed Chicago, December 24, 2014, https://chicago.curbed.com/2014/12/24/10008328/home-alone-house-chicago-location-sale.

Figure 18: The many scenes depicting young Kevin running around the house to escape crooks Harry and Marv reveals a highly original interior with charming historic floors, doors, trim work, and a well-sized staircase. Prospective home buyers in 2020 may find the more recent wallpaper, carpeting, lighting, and curtains dated, but the architectural essence of 671 Lincoln Avenue's interior as pictured here in 1990 is timeless. Many of the traditional design elements visible in this image had been used in domestic interiors for centuries prior to this home's construction and continue to be used in residential architecture today, albeit reflecting current fads to some extent as well.[117] As Kausen noted in 2012, "the attraction of ancient aesthetics is alive today…images from the past make contact with the contemporary psyche."[118] It seems Chris Columbus roughly understood this when selecting the film location for Home Alone 22 years prior.

[117] mybios.me and mybios.me, "Home Alone House Interior," Bios Pics, accessed December 4, 2020, https://mybios.me/home-alone-house-interior/.
[118] Cecilia Lewis Kausel, Design & Intuition: Structures, Interiors and the Mind (WIT Press, 2012), 27

Figure 19: The exterior of the 1870 home at 1209 Prince Street pictured before the ongoing renovation that began in 2017. The six-over-six windows, siding, and six-panel front door were installed in a 1980s renovation and are stylistically incorrect for this Italianate structure.[119]

[119] "1209 Prince St, Alexandria, VA 22314 - 3 Beds/2 Baths," Redfin, accessed December 4, 2020, https://www.redfin.com/VA/Alexandria/1209-Prince-St-22314/home/11840022.

Figure 20: At this point, the 1980s interior at 1209 Prince Street is dated and lacks the rich character of historic interiors that are more likely to be treated sensitively in twenty-first century renovations.[120]

[120] "1209 Prince St, Alexandria, VA 22314 - 3 Beds/2 Baths," Redfin, accessed December 4, 2020, https://www.redfin.com/VA/Alexandria/1209-Prince-St-22314/home/11840022.

Figure 21: The exterior of 1209 Prince Street in 2020. The siding, windows, front door and transom, shutters, and front steps and railings have been re-replaced to better reflect the home's original style. The only visible exterior building elements that were not removed in the ongoing renovation are the brick foundation and the modillion—everything in between has been replaced once more. As the siding most likely consists of new growth wood and the windows are modern simulated divided light units with a limited warranty, they will probably be fully replaced once again in another thirty years' time. Photo by author.

Figure 22: In 2017, one could look from the sidewalk straight through the interior of this house to the backyard. As is visible in this 2020 photo of the interior space at 1209 Prince Street, the floors, baseboards, and wall plaster have been fully replaced. Some or all of the wall framing behind that plaster may have been replaced as well. The fireplace surround has been removed and will likely be replaced soon. The floors clearly differ from those installed in the 1980s in color and grain, and the baseboards appear taller than those in earlier photos reflecting the 1980s renovation. Is the house due to be fully gutted once again in another thirty-five years? Photo by author.

Figure 23: Georgian-era siding remains at 517-519 Duke Street, constructed in 1790. This old growth siding has withstood 230 years of precipitation and significant seasonal change in temperature and humidity.[121]

[121] "Style Guide: Old and Historic Alexandria District" (City of Alexandria, Virginia, n.d.), https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/planning/info/Historic_Preservation/OHAD%20Style%20Guide.pdf.

Figure 24: Robert Fischman was the son of a railyard employee at Potomac Yards and grew up in this modest house on East Windsor Avenue in Del Ray.[122] Significant knowledge about the lives of rail yard workers, the associated economy, and nearby residential areas could be gleaned through the study of structures like these. Located on a corner lot with significant width between this structure and the property line, this unprotected structure is at an especially high risk of demolition and replacement with a larger structure.[123]

[122] Barbara Murray, "Interview with Robert and Antoinette Fischman".
[123] "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2014.

Figure 25: Twenty-first century historians have attributed the social and economic success of Charlottesville's own textile mill town of Woolen Mills Village in part to the spacious rear yards that allowed rural newcomers to continue to grow their own food as most of them were accustomed to doing before their move to southern textile mill towns. Other mill towns featured tightly packed housing and rarely included deep lots as seen in Woolen Mills. Many of them failed and saw much higher rates of employee turnover year over year.[124] If the homes and landscape features had not been so well preserved in Woolen Mills as they have been, such realities would not have been legible and their implications would have gone undiscerned.

[124] Lydia Mattice Brandt, "002-1260 Woolen Mills Village Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (National Park Service, March 2010), https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/002-1260/.

Figure 26: The structure at 907 Prince Street was completed in 1899 and features a unique beige brick on the façade and the same Roman brick on secondary elevations that well-known architect Frank Lloyd Wright used in many contemporaneous works. With a well-articulated facade and an original footprint of over 2,000 square feet, this home would have been a relatively spacious and well-to-do home for its time. Photo by author.

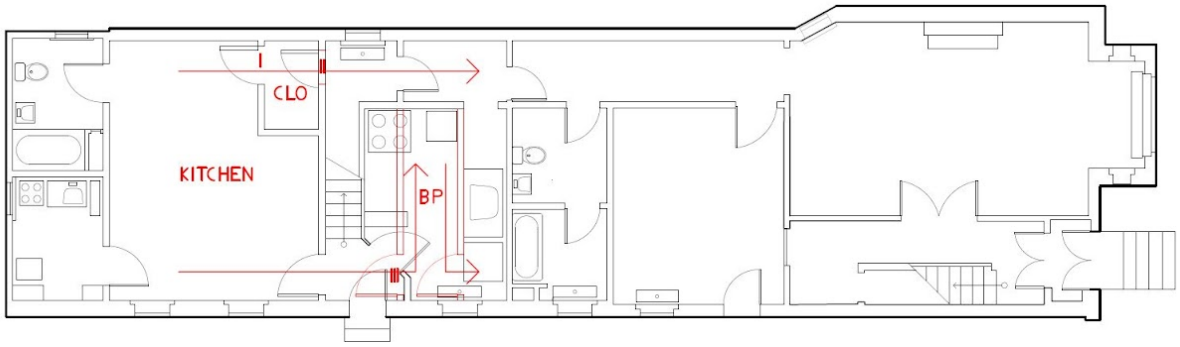


Figure 27: First floor plan of 907 Prince Street, Alexandria, Virginia as it existed in 1998, when it was separated into front and rear apartment units. Original walls, doors, circulation patterns, and room functions are drawn and written in red, with CLO as the abbreviation for the closet and BP for the former butler's pantry. Servants employed by the Fannons would cook in the kitchen and would access the once spacious dining room through either the closet or the butler's pantry. Doorways are numbered. Plan by author.

Figure 28: Original closet door of the former servant's kitchen at 907 Prince Street, whose location in the plan is numbered I. Photo by author.

Figure 29: Door I at 907 Prince Street again, this time from the other side. It is one of two original five-panel doors found in the home and the original surrounds, jamb, and hinges indicate that this is its original location. Photo by author.

Figure 30: Door II as seen from Door I. Original surrounds indicate the location of a former doorway that has been filled in. Original beadboard on all four inside walls of the closet mark this layout as original as well. Photo by author.

Figure 31: Door II's original casing is visible on the opposite side of the filled-in opening as well. Photo by author.

Figure 32: Note the evidence of former wall framing just to the right of the light fixture above. When the plaster was removed to move this original wall in 2002, the location of a former doorway was indicated by the absence of wall framing in the shape of a door just to the right of the remaining studs, labeled on the plan as doorway III. Photo by author.

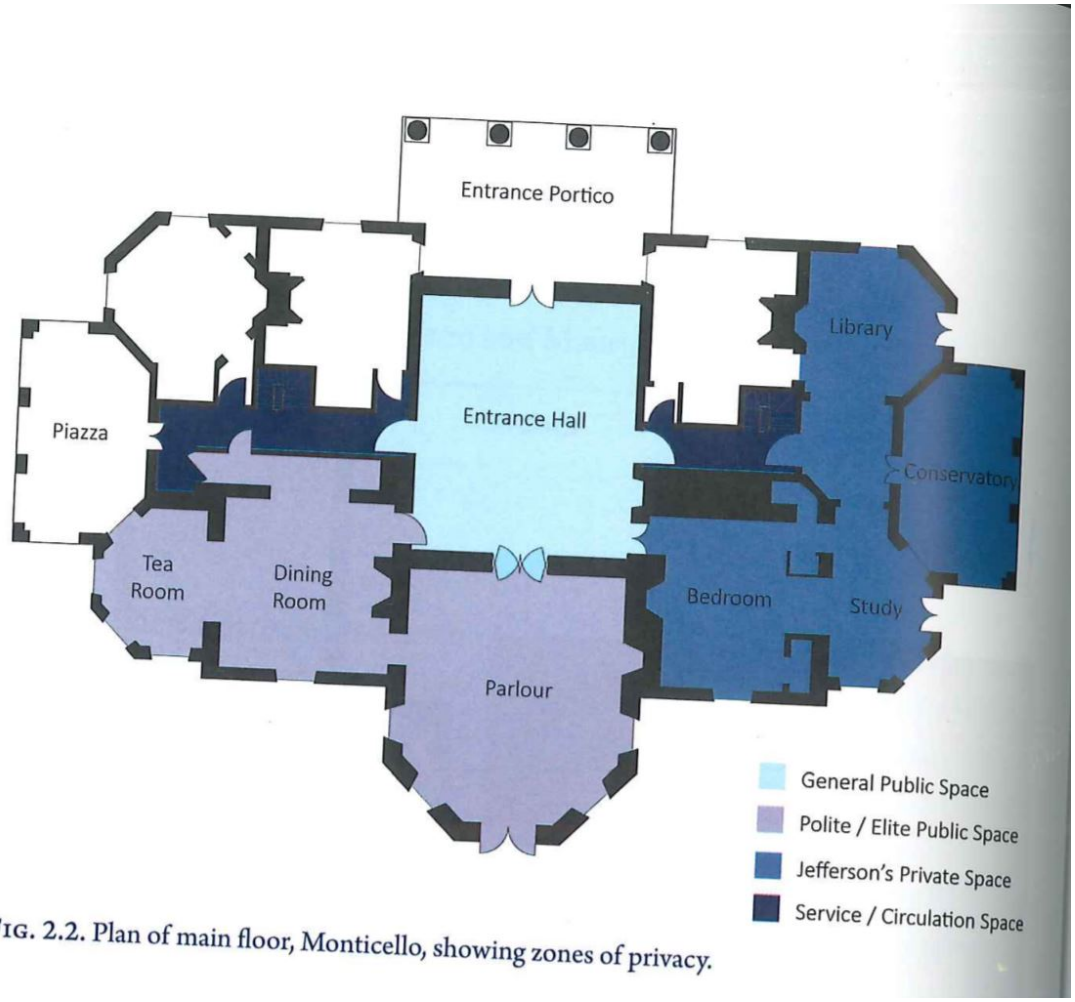


FIG. 2.2. Plan of main floor, Monticello, showing zones of privacy.

Figure 33: As a house museum, Monticello's interior is preserved nearly exactly as it was in Jefferson's lifetime. Therefore, these sorts of diagrams are easily made, allowing us to better understand the use of the space.[125]

[125] Louis P. Nelson and Maurie D. McInnis, "Landscape of Slavery," in Educated in Tyranny: Slavery at Thomas Jefferson's University (Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2019), 42–73.

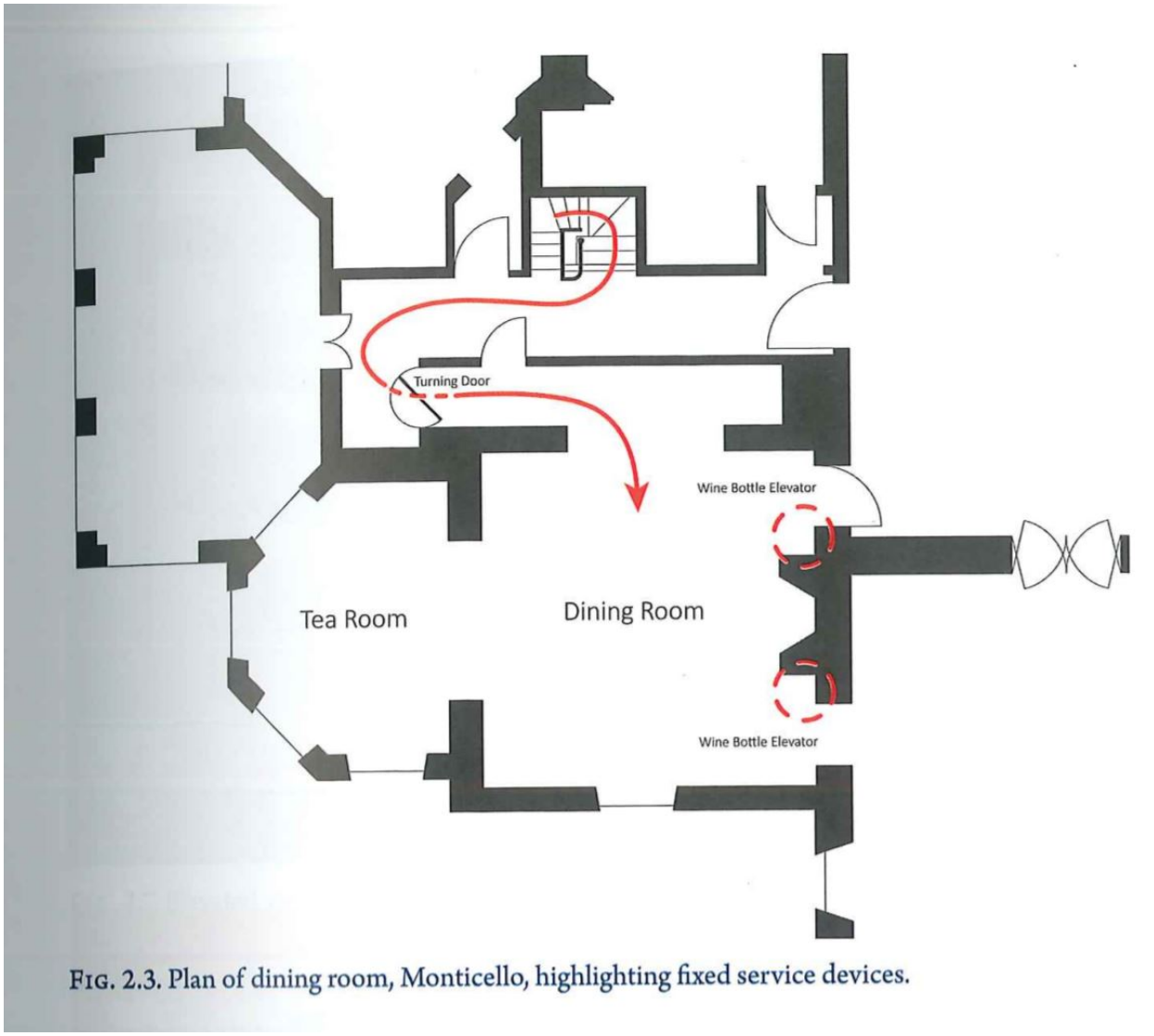


FIG. 2.3. Plan of dining room, Monticello, highlighting fixed service devices.

Figure 34: This diagram shows the patterns of circulation used by enslaved laborers at Monticello when serving Jefferson and guests for a meal. Service devices such as turning doors and wine bottle elevators were part of Jefferson's attempt to conceal the role of slave labor in his operations.[126]

[126] Louis P. Nelson and Maurie D. McInnis, "Landscape of Slavery," in Educated in Tyranny: Slavery at Thomas Jefferson's University (Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2019), 42–73.

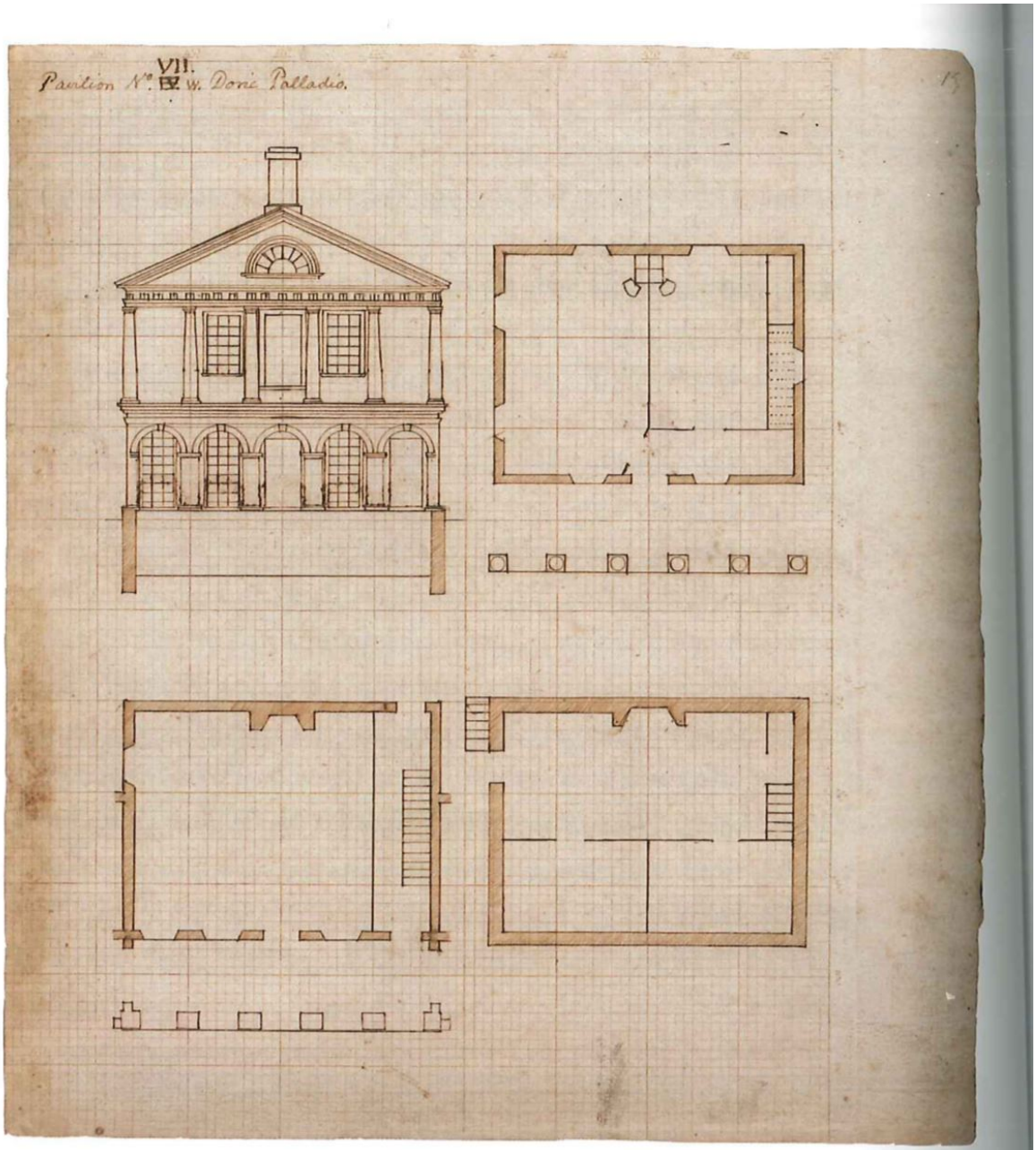


FIG. 2.17. Thomas Jefferson plan for Pavilion VII, 1817. The cellar is the plan in the lower right. In this plan the kitchen (with fireplace) is the largest chamber.

Figure 35: Floor plans for one of the pavilions at the University of Virginia, early nineteenth century faculty housing designed by Thomas Jefferson. Enslaved laborers lived and worked in the basement levels. Census records confirm that over 25 people regularly slept in these basement levels. It is also clear from a combination of the building fabric and written records that enslaved laborers were often forced to work and live in completely unlit rooms.[127]

[127] Louis P. Nelson and Maurie D. McInnis, "Landscape of Slavery," in Educated in Tyranny: Slavery at Thomas Jefferson's University (Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2019), 42–73.

Figure 36: Alexandria, Virginia in aerial view. The City of Alexandria directly borders the District of Columbia, to which the Potomac River directly east of Alexandria belongs. The Rosemont Historic District is the lower of the bodies traced in blue, although the Rosemont neighborhood as perceived by Alexandrians includes blocks to the east and north of the historic district. The Town of Potomac Historic District is the upper up the two bodies, though Del Ray is generally understood by Alexandrians as including land to the west and south of the historic district.[128] Note the denser and older downtown of Old Town to the east/southeast of Rosemont and Del Ray, which these early inner suburbs lie immediately outside of. Also note that they form part of the last wave of development to utilize a grid system.

[128] "Google Earth Pro." Google, 2021.

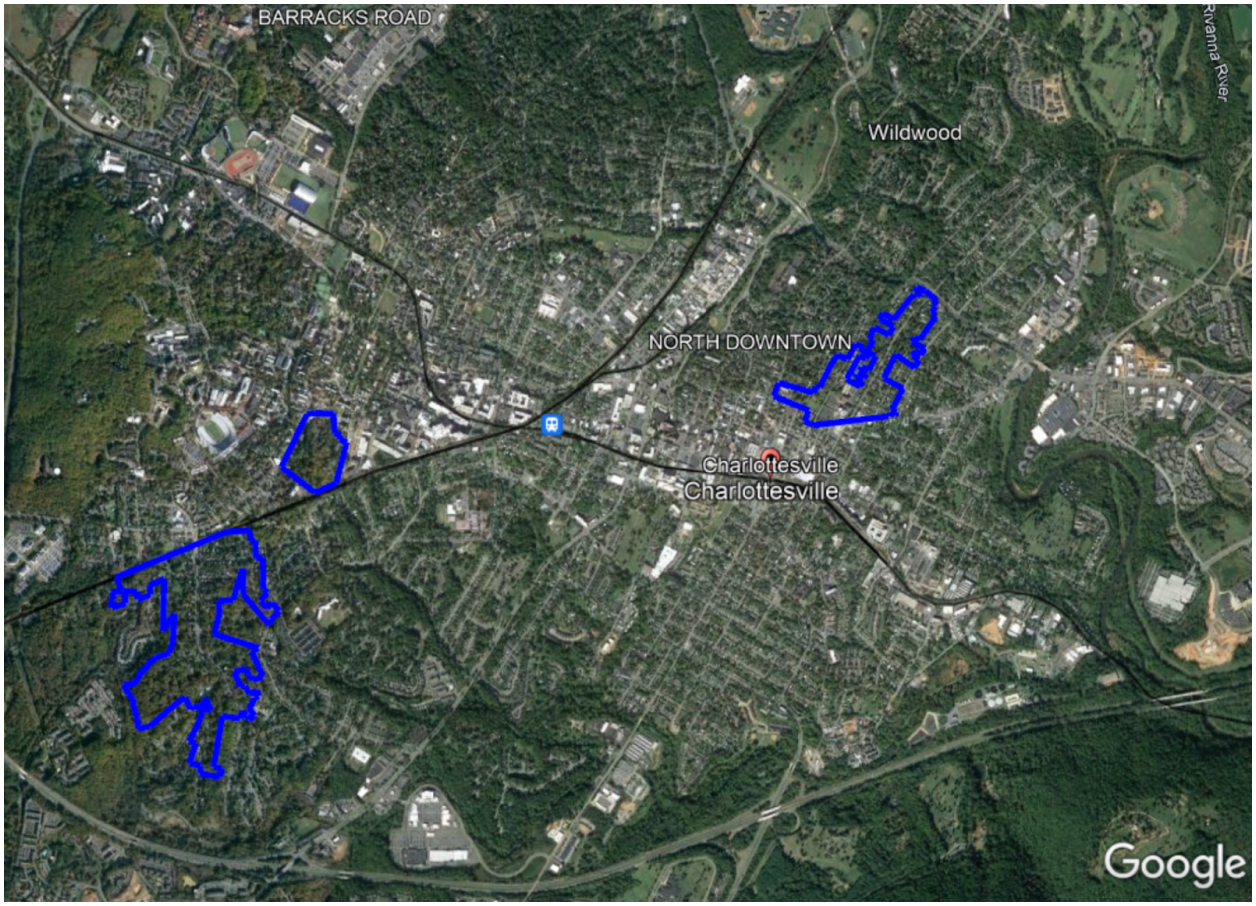


Figure 37: Charlottesville, Virginia aerial view, with the Martha Jefferson Historic District traced at the upper right immediately north/northeast of the downtown; the Fry's Spring Historic District at the lower left; and the Oakhurst-Gildersleeve Historic District at middle left. Note that Martha Jefferson was developed with a continued street grid, while pioneering Fry's Spring made use of winding roads and traffic circles with views obscured by dense foliage. Also note the University of Virginia immediately west of the CSX line running northeast/southwest. Finally, note that the Oakhurst-Gildersleeve neighborhood is entirely hemmed in by University property and student housing.[129]

[129] "Google Earth Pro." Google, 2021.

Figures 38-39: The Rosemont and Martha Jefferson homes feature a higher incidence of historic residences which are both spacious and architecturally grand as a proportion of their historic building stock than the Del Ray and Fry's Springs neighborhood. A Rosemont home is seen at top and a Martha Jefferson home is seen below.[130]

[130] Farragutful, "File:Rosemont Historic District (Alexandria, Virginia) 01.JPG," September 5, 2013, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rosemont_Historic_District_(Alexandria,_Virginia)_01.JPG; "604 Grove Ave, Charlottesville, VA 22902," Zillow, accessed April 18, 2022, https://www.zillow.com/homes/Martha-Jefferson,-Charlottesville,-VA_rb/

Figures 40-41: The Craftsman bungalow is arguably the most common historic typology found across the Town of Potomac Historic District in Alexandria, pictured above. Although many Craftsman and Victorian-era homes in the neighborhood are larger than the structure above, they are typically smaller than the Rosemont and Martha Jefferson structures pictured above. The same can be said of Fry's Spring, pictured below, where most of the neighborhood's Victorian heritage is relegated to the main thoroughfare of Jefferson Park Avenue. Even on Jefferson Park Avenue, a variety of styles and home sizes dominate the landscape as seen here.[131]

[131] "Look Inside: Charming Del Ray Bungalow With Wrap-Around Porch," Del Ray, VA Patch, August 23, 2019, https://patch.com/virginia/delray/look-inside-charming-del-ray-bungalow-wrap-around-porch; "104-5084 Fry's Spring Historic District," accessed April 18, 2022, https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/104-5084/.

Figures 42-43: These two structures on Locust Drive in Martha Jefferson both saw their historic windows fully replaced with vinyl windows between the 2012 image above and the 2018 image below. This change is allowed under HCD guidelines and has been common across the neighborhood over the past several decades. While it may seem insignificant–and in this case, partly obscured by foliage–the loss of one major distinguishing element of a historic structure does go a long way to change its appearance as seen above.[132]

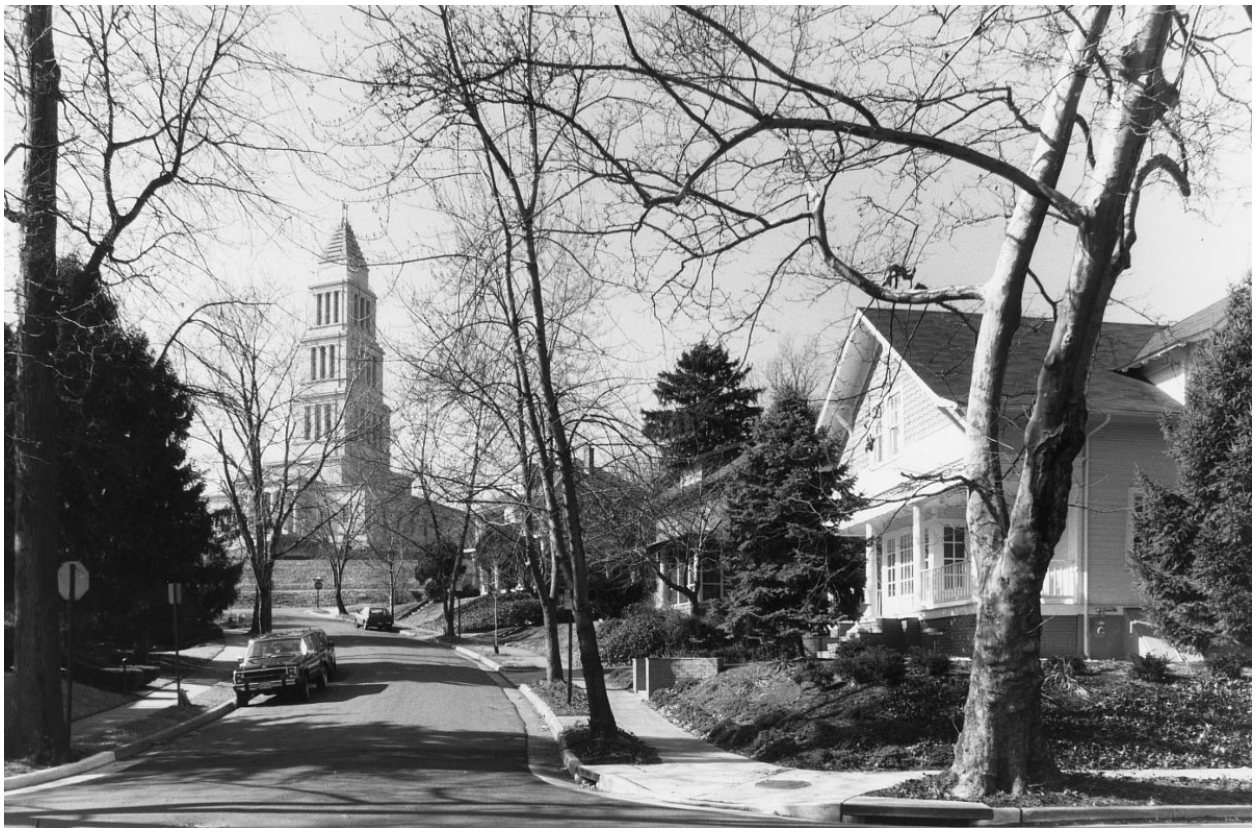
[132] "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2012; "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2018.

Figures 44-46: This home on Lexington Avenue was preserved only nominally in the last several years when it was gutted, re-clad, and saw its historic windows replaced. It is difficult to know just how original the interior would have been before its recent renovation, but the exterior has gone from largely original (wood siding often remains under asbestos cladding seen at top left) to an exterior whose design has not been altered, but is largely clad in modern materials of vinyl or fiberglass windows and fiber cement siding.[133] No new shade trees appear to have been planted as part of this project.

[133] Ethelyn Cox, *Historic Alexandria, Virginia Street by Street: A Survey of Existing Early Buildings* (Mclean, Virginia: Historic Alexandria Foundation, EPM Publications, 1976); "502 Lexington Ave, Charlottesville, VA 22902," Zillow, accessed April 19, 2022, https://www.zillow.com/homes/Charlottesville,-VA_rb/.

Figures 47-48: Note the extensive decline in tree canopy across these three Locust Avenue plots in Martha Jefferson between the 2008 image above and the 2019 image below. While the decline is especially dramatic at this location, it is generally emblematic of a change occurring across the neighborhood. Note that no young shade trees have been planted to take the place of the larger ones. This has occurred despite the neighborhood tree planting program and the HCD guidelines' stated goal to maintain and increase neighborhood tree canopy.[134]

[134] "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2009; "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2019; "Historic Conservation District Design Guidelines" (Charlottesville, Virginia: Charlottesville Department of Neighborhood Development Services, September 5, 2017).



Figures 49-50: Above, we see the curved westernmost block of Rosemont's West Cedar Street photographed in the early 1990s with largely mature plantings. Behind the homes on the opposite side of main thoroughfare King Street stands the George Washington Masonic National Memorial, a local landmark dedicated to Washington and constructed between 1923 and 1932 on Shuter's Hill directly south of Rosemont. Below is a 1910 bungalow on West Rosemont Avenue.[135]

[135] "100-0137 Rosemont Historic District," accessed April 19, 2022, https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/100-0137/.

Figures 51-52: These images typical blocks of Rosemont east of Commonwealth Avenue, where homes tend to be more modest than their counterparts west of Commonwealth. Also note the World War II era brick homes seen at the right-hand side of both images, attached rows of which are common in this part of Rosemont and across Del Ray. Greater architectural simplicity notwithstanding, homes on this side of Rosemont still vary widely in form and appearance. The upper photo depicts the 100 block of East Walnut Street and the lower photo the 100 block of East Maple Street.[136]

[136] "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2019.

Figures 53-54: Above, an early twentieth century frame structure is visible at left from the sidewalk on Sunset Drive, looking south at the Alexandria Union Station at the time of the district's nomination in 1991. The frame structure was torn down and replaced by the duplex seen below in 1995.[137]

[137] "100-0137 Rosemont Historic District," accessed April 19, 2022, https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/100-0137/; "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2019.

Figures 55-56: A home on Rosemont's Elm Street, seen above in 2014, was all but demolished between 2017 and 2019 by a local builder who specializes in this work (the same builder from 10 West Alexandria Avenue). The masonry was painted, windows replaced, stone veneer added, and the interior was gutted. Not only is the appearance of the home starkly different from its historic appearance; it is no longer clear that any part of the home predates 2017.[138] Second photo by author.

[138] "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2014.

Figures 57-58. The abundance of wood shingle cladding, exterior stone masonry, and other unique features in the context of both the typical bungalow above and the eclectic octagonal home below is indicative of Fry's Spring historic origins as a forested retreat site, as does its tree canopy. Note the winding stone path of the home in the lower photo. Second photo by author.[139]

[139] "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2019.

Figure 59: An aerial view of Alexandria's sprawling Potomac Yard looking north in 1972. Homes in the Del Ray and Arlandria neighborhoods are visible at left and upper left respectively. Arlington County is visible at the top of the image north of Four Mile Run. Since its closure, the former rail yard has been one of Alexandria's redevelopment hotspots, but it was once an important center of employment for Del Ray, Rosemont, and other Alexandria neighborhoods.[140]

[140] Michael Lee Pope, "Alexandria Leaders Engage in Risky Business at Potomac Yard," *Connectionnewspapers.Com* (blog), April 18, 2013, http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2013/apr/18/alexandria-risky-business-potomac-yard/.

Figures 60-62: The above images depict the typical architectural mix that make up Del Ray streets. The most prominent form is the Craftsman bungalow as seen above on the 100 block of East Randolph Avenue, followed closely by American Foursquares and postwar attached or duplex units as seen at middle and below on the 0-100 and 200 blocks of East Howell Avenue.

Figure 63: On November 1, 2021, 217 East Custis Avenue was purchased by a Paxmar, LLC, a subsidiary of new home developer LGI homes. The oversized, vinyl-clad homes shown on the company's website will prove a stark contrast to this bungalow and its surroundings.[141]

[141] "Property Details - 217 East Custis Ave - City of Alexandria, VA Real Estate Assessment Search," accessed April 19, 2022, https://realestate.alexandriava.gov/detail.php?accountno=13620500; "Affordable New Homes for Sale, Move-In Ready | LGI Homes®," LGI Homes, accessed April 19, 2022, https://www.lgihomes.com/.

Figures 64-65: This block of Luray Avenue in Del Ray recently saw the demolition of a traditional bungalow and its replacement with a large modern structure one focus group participant called the 'Del Ray Death Star'. Second photo by author.[142]

[142] "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2009.

Figure 66: Architectural richness on this block of Del Ray's West Bellefonte Avenue may play a role in participants' appraisal of this largely 1930s environment as historic.[143]

Figure 67: Compare the homes on West Bellefonte above to the largely simpler row of 1930s homes on Commonwealth Avenue in Rosemont. These blocks appear less likely to be labeled historic than blocks like the one on West Bellefonte depicted above.[144]

[143] "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2019.
[144] "Google Maps," Google Maps, 2019.