CHILDREN'S WALKING TOUR

SHAW/BLAGDEN ALLEY NEIGHBORHOOD







Welcome

This tour of **Washington's Shaw/Blagden Alley Neighborhood** focuses on the history and architecture of part of our local environment that is both familiar and surprising. The tour kit includes everything a parent, teacher, Scout troop leader or home schooler would need to walk children through several blocks of buildings and their history to stimulate conversation and activities as they go. Designed for kids in the 8-12 age group, the tour is fun and educational for older kids and adults as well.

THE TOUR MATERIALS INCLUDE...

- · History of the Shaw/Blagden Alley Neighborhood
- Tour Booklet Instructions
- The Shaw Neighborhood Guide
- Architectural Vocabulary
- Conversation Starters
- The Shaw/Blagden Alley Neighborhood Tour Stops
- Children's Edition

This project has been funded in part by a grant from the Dorothea DeSchweinitz Fund for the District of Columbia of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

This version of the Shaw Neighborhood children's architectural tour is the result of a collaboration among Mary Kay Lanzillotta, FAIA, Peter Guttmacher and the creative minds at LookThink, with photos courtesy of EL Studio and Ronald K. O'Rourke.

History of The Shaw/Blagden Alley Neighborhood

IN THE THICK OF IT

If you were 200 years old, standing here at the crossroads that is now the Shaw neighborhood, you would have witnessed a lot in your time. With 7th Street NW, DC's first thoroughfare running next to you, stretching from the waterfront all the way to Maryland farmland, you would have seen a city virtually spring up around you. First there was the development that brought immigrants from Germany, Ireland, Italy, Greece, even Eastern Europe to build and work in shops and markets. There was the Civil War that brought ambitious freedmen and runaway slaves to further enrich this bustling neighborhood that came to be named for Colonel Robert Goulding Shaw, who led the heroic, all-African-American 54th Massachusetts Regiment.

A neighborhood bursting with commerce, culture and people needs places to live. And for many who came here to work, the large homes along Shaw's tree-lined streets were an economic impossibility. So, you would have also seen necessity become the mother of invention. By turning the back ends of those stately homes into rear-facing dwellings and building small houses, shops and stables where backyards had been, homeowners generating rental income also created entire alleyway communities.

Here at the crossroads, you would have witnessed this melting pot of shifting ethnicities and classes eventually solidify into one of the strongest African American communities in the District, with many luminaries and historic places rising from its crowded midst. You would have grieved to see the toll of racial oppression and the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. which caused the community to erupt in fire and riot. And you would have marveled at a community's commitment to rebuild and reclaim its unique identity. In Shaw, architecture expresses both individuality and community -- a place where everyday history has shaped a neighborhood that is unmistakably DC.

Tour Booklet Instructions

Use this page as a friendly guide to help you identify the key components of each stop's page!



TOUR STOP NUMBER

There are 7 tour stops on this tour. You can choose to follow our suggested order.



BUILDING INFORMATION

General facts about the building's date of completion, style, and location.



BUILDING GENERAL INFORMATION

This is your stop name and address.



Find the next stop here.

NEXT STOP

BUILDING ON THE PAST

In the middle of a city, a historic neighborhood can't be frozen in time. Things and styles change. But there is a way to work it so that the present doesn't erase what came before it. Architect Phillip Esocoff's Whitman is a perfect example of that transition. This massive, 185-unit collection of luxury condos erected in 2006 is built to look a lot like those row houses from days gone by that stood before it. And while the "rusticated base" of the bottom story looks old school enough (with concrete made to look like sandstone blocks), the stories above it look increasingly modern as you go up.

With the top's curving, vine-carved comice, not even looking like an actual floor where people live, the Whitman doesn't feel as towering as it otherwise might. The curves are also good at hiding its rooftop gard and pool. There's a playful mix going on here with oval windows peeking out among the rectangles, flowery cast iron balconies on the ends, and stripey brickwork around the sides. It all shows that you don't need to stuffy to honor the past.

BUILDING OVERVIEW

Read about your stop in this section. Look for questions throughout the text.

INTERESTING FACT

Back in 1877, this site was home to Miss Osborne's Boarding and Day School for Young Ladies and Little Girls where "northern teachers" taught in both French and English. Remember, it was just after the Civil War.

INTERESTING FACTS

Gain new knowledge about the history of the building.



CONVERSATION STARTERS

Use these conversation starters to engage your kids.



LEARN MORE

Look up these terms and names that are found throughout the text.

Shaw/Blagden Alley Neighborhood Guide

Check out our suggested route for your tour! Refer to this map to guide you from stop to stop.

Tour Stops

ESTIMATED TOTAL WALKING TIME: 1 ½ HOURS



Some of the places to go have public restrooms available.



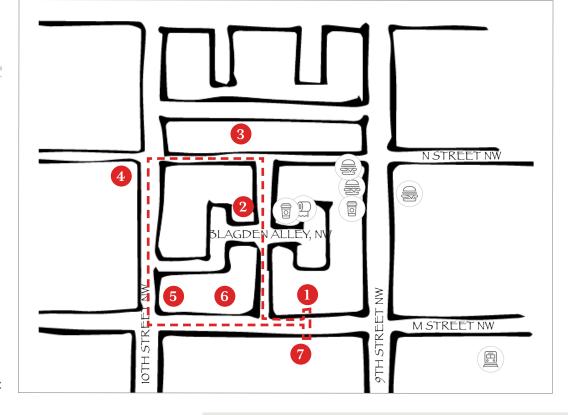
BLANCHE K. BRUCE HOUSE

909 M Street Northwest



BLAGDEN ALLEY WAREHOUSE

926 N Street Rear Northwest





THE HENRIETTA

933 N Street Northwest



927 M STREET NW



1000 N STREET NW



THE WHITMAN

910 M Street Northwest



943 M STREET NW

Places to Go (Kid friendly too!)

While you are in the area, check out these cool locations!



METRO STATION

MT. VERNON SQ/7TH ST-CONVENTION CENTER STATION 700 M Street Northwest Public Transportation



GRAB A CUP OF COFFEE

LA COLOMBE COFFEE ROASTERS
924 Blagden Alley Northwest
Coffee Shop

BUTTERCREAM
1250 9th Street Northwest
Coffee Shop



PLACES TO STOP AND EAT

ALL-PURPOSE PIZZERIA 1250 9th Street Northwest

Pizza

SMOKED & STACKED 1239 9th Street Northwest Sandwich Shop

ESPITA MEZCALERIA
1250 9th Street
Northwest
Mexican Restaurant

Architectural Vocabulary

ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

Arch a curved or pointed structural element that is supported at its sides.

Belt Course a continuous row or layer of stones or brick set in a wall. Set in line with windowsills, it helps to make the horizontal line of the sills visually more prominent.

Brackets applied ornamental elements often used at a cornice or to flank windows and doors.

Cornice a horizontal molded projection or shelf crowning a building or structure. A *Corbeled Cornice* is supported by a decorative piece of stone, wood or metal jutting from a wall that helps keep it up.

Curtain Wall a wall that encloses the space within a building but does not support the roof.

Dormer a small structure that projects from a sloping roof, with a window in the façade face.

Eaves the projecting overhang at the lower edge of a roof.

Fan Light a window, semicircular or semi-elliptical in shape, with glazing bars or tracery sets radiating out like an open fan, placed over another window or a doorway.

Jack Arch an often flat arch (yes, arches can be flat) in the masonry just above a door or window.

Lintel a horizontal support of timber, stone, concrete, or steel across the top of a door or window. It can be load bearing or ornamental.

Pilaster used to give the appearance of a supporting column and to articulate an extent of wall, with only an ornamental function. In other words, a fake column on an interior wall or outside a building.

Rectangular Bay a section of a building distinguished by vertical elements such as columns or pillars. Often, a bay will protrude from the surface of the wall in which it is situated, thus creating a small, nook-like interior space.

Rusticated Base a stonework wall where the parts facing out are carved to look rugged. In other words, stone blocks that fit smoothly together but are nobbly on the outside.

Symmetrical made up of exactly similar parts facing each other or around an axis. Asymmetrical facades are made up of dissimilar parts.

Turret a small tower at the corner of a building.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE



Contemporary buildings which are designed in the present.



Italianate is based on Italian country villas. Pattern books with examples of this style made the Italianate style very popular with Americans. By the end of the 19th century, the Italianate style became the dominant style of urban row houses.



Queen Anne the most elaborate style of Victorian architecture developed in the late 1800s during the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, which saw the invention of many new technologies. For the first time factorymade architectural parts could be shipped across the country by train. These pre-made pieces were used to design creative and elaborately decorated homes.



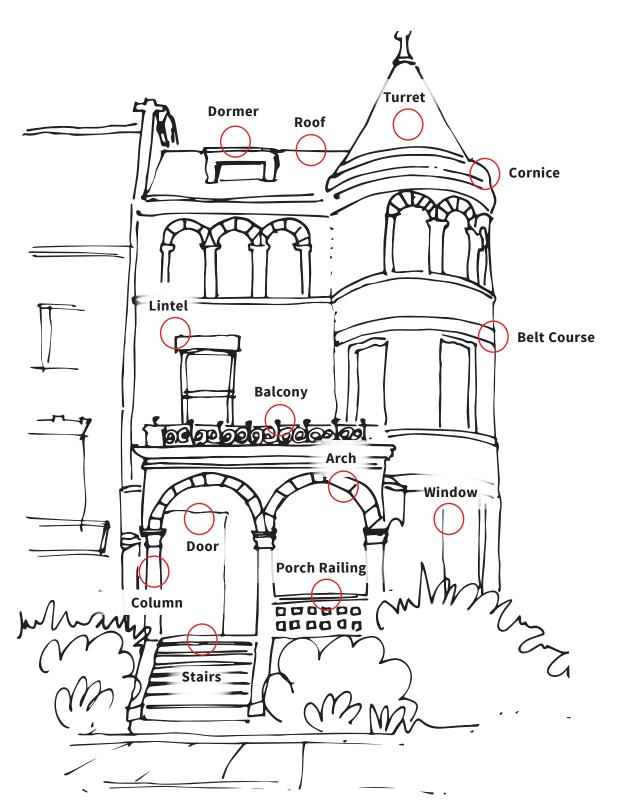
Second Empire originated in France and was commonly used in the United States in the mid to late 1800s. The style was also known as the "General Grant style" because of the many public buildings constructed during his presidency from 1869 to 1877.



Vernacular developed out of local tradition to serve basic needs.

Architectural Vocabulary

Want to speak like an architect? Try to find a few of these building elements at each tour stop you visit!



Conversation Starters (Sample Answers)

Strike up a conversation with your group! At the end of each tour stop page you will find discussion questions that you can use as conversation starters.

BLANCHE K. BRUCE HOUSE

Q: Who can you think of who rose from tough and terrible circumstances to achieve great success?

A: Think of presidents and celebrities.

2 BLAGDEN ALLEY WAREHOUSE

Q: What's the best place you have to store the things you want to keep safe? What makes it good?

A: Sometimes small spaces make the safest storage.

3 THE HENRIETTA

Q: What kinds of things are known by a person's first name?

A: Ships. An entire state (Virginia). A fancy French dessert (Crepes Suzette) or a not-so-fancy cookie (Madeleine). A piece of money (a Bill or a Penny). Even a toilet (a John).

4 1000 N STRFFT NW

Q: If you could incorporate some part of a castle into your home, what would it be? How would it be useful?

A: Drawbridge? Moat? Dungeon?

5 943 M STREET NW

Q: What makes you most automatically think of Italy?

A: A gondola. The leaning tower of Pisa. A slice of pepperoni pizza. Bocce. A Vespa. O Solo Mio. A red and white checked tablecloth.

6 927 M STREET NW

Q: When is it good to be a little shorter than those around you?

A: In a cramped car. In a lightning storm. Crawling under a fence.

7 THF WHITMAN

Q: Have you ever added something new to something that's old or traditional?

A: A new holiday tradition. A modified piece of clothing. A variation on a classic food.

Blanche K. Bruce House

909 M Street Northwest, Washington, DC 20001

POWER COUPLF

haw attracted achievers. Mr. Blanche Kelso Bruce, a former slave from Virginia, became the first African-American to serve a full term in the United States Senate (1875-1881). While representing Mississippi, he introduced a bill to desegregate the Army and fought to end discrimination against Chinese immigrants and American Indians.

His wife, Josephine Beall Willson Bruce was also a real doer. The first African-American public school teacher in Cleveland, she was a founder of the National Federation of Afro-American Women, DC's first YMCA for African-Americans and later became the dean of women at Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute.

THE EYE OF THE HOUSE

Windows allow us to see out into the world we live in. They also, if we're honest, look a little like eyes when viewed from outside. Eyes give any face expression. Shaw is famous for its variety of expressive houses. What kind of expression do the different kinds of windows on this house give?

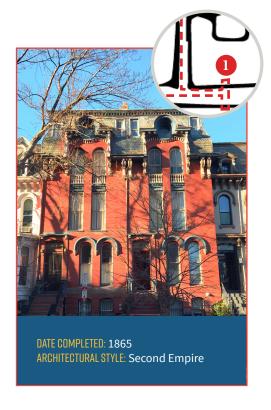
ULYSSES S. GRANT - TREND SETTER

This architecture is called "Second Empire" because it first made its appearance in France during Napoleon the III's empire. In the United States, it became so popular for public buildings during President Grant's administration the he got the credit when it was renamed "General Grant Style." When you become President, what kind of thing do you want to leave your mark on to carry your style name?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Sometimes people have a big impact on the neighborhood where they live. Can you think of anyone who has had a big impact on the neighborhood where you live?

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INTERESTING FACT

As busy as Blanche K. Bruce seems to have been in his life, he was even busier. After attending Oberlin College in Ohio, his rise included working as a steamboat porter, tax collector, sheriff, plantation owner, supervisor of education, newspaper editor, District of Columbia recorder of deeds, and Register of Treasury where he even got his signature on the two dollar bill.

For more information when you get home, Google: "Blanche K. Bruce," "Josephine Beall Willson Bruce," "General Grant Style."

Blagden Alley Warehouse

926 N Street Rear Northwest, Washington DC 20001

STORING YOUR STUFF

Tarehouses house wares – all kinds of wares. They can keep them safe, dry, cold, clean, warm, however you want them to be before you get ready to sell them. Food, furniture, beer, tires, wires, paper, almost anything can be stored there. These days they are often built in faraway industrial areas. But having a warehouse tucked away off the main drag but still in the thick of things was a wonderful convenience.

While homes and stables took up space in this back-alley-world, warehouses were also essential. What closer place to stock the items that local homes and businesses needed? This practical business use for Blagden Alley space paved the way for many businesses to come.

FORT KNOX BOX

Warehouses are supposed to be safe and sturdy. What kind of features do you see on this building that might have helped make it a fortress for frying pans or a castle for keeping couches?

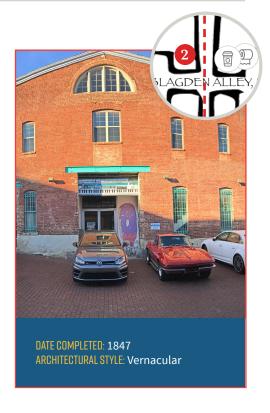
BEYOND THE BOX

Things have really branched out here in Blagden Alley. Storing carriage parts may have been well and good in the 1800s but innovation leads to all kinds of other uses for back-alley bricks and mortar. How many different kinds of businesses do you see making a home here now?



CONVERSATION STARTERS

What's the biggest warehouse you've ever been in?



INTERESTING FACT

Abandoned warehouses get used for all kinds of things. One Blagden Alley warehouse became Fight Club, an underground hot-spot for skateboarding, rock and roll and art.

For more information when you get home, Google: "Warehouses," "The D.C. Alley Museum," "Blagden Alley."

The Henrietta

933 N Street Northwest, Washington, DC 20001

SENSIBLE WITH STYLE

his is what a classically classy apartment building should look like. More refined in its details than rectangular Romanesque row houses, this tall, brick beauty gives the feeling of columns without actually having any. Accents like the more rustic stones on the bottom level, round arched windows at the top, the scallop shells adorning the brick friezes, and of course that beautifully carved name above the door, all give an extra touch of class.

A relative latecomer, the "Henrietta" was designed in 1900 by B. Stanley Simmons, who studied architecture at MIT. Though he also designed row houses, fraternity clubs, schools, and big commercial buildings (like the National Metropolitan Bank on 15th and G streets NW), he loved designing apartment buildings. He believed that even though it was modern to build places for a lot of people to live, those places should still make a city beautiful.

WHAT'S THE RIGHT HEIGHT?

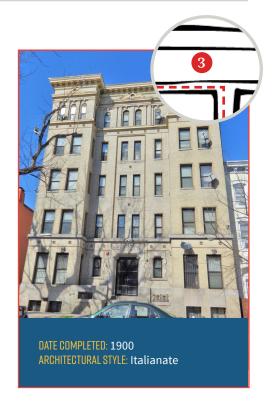
The stately Henrietta has five floors. How many fewer floors could it have and still keep its classy looks? How many more floors could it have before it got too big for its britches?

WHY ARE COLUMNS SO CLASSICAL?

The Henrietta has a front that hints at columns. But DC can be a column crazy city – so many buildings and monuments use them. What makes us feel like columns add something special to a building? What other buildings have you seen that use columns?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

If you were going to name a building after someone, who would it be? Would they need to have a pretty name like "Henrietta"? If you were going to carve their name above the door, how would you improve on the kind of lettering you see here?



INTERESTING FACT

As reasonable as the rents might have been when the "Henrietta" was built at the turn of the 20th century, prices are a little higher now. Condominiums there now sell for as much as \$280,000

For more information when you get home, Google: "B. Stanley Simmons," "Columns," "Condominiums."

1000 N Street NW

1000 N Street Northwest, Washington, DC 20001

A BIT OF BRITAIN IN DC

uring the turn of the 20th century the Queen Anne Revival style was popular. When Queen Anne actually ruled Britannia back in the early 1700s, manor houses were the residences of minor nobility. Not quite castles or palaces, they still had the feel of something elegantly imposing.

Corner towers (also know as turrets) were often a hallmark. That tall, noble, rounded feature almost makes it seem like a damsel's long lovely hair should be hanging down from an upper window. And if you look down at the bottom...could that space below double as a moat?

I COME IN PIECE(S)

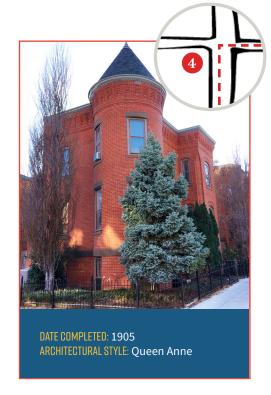
With the industrial revolution, all houses didn't have to be built from scratch. Thanks to factories and railroads, big chunks of fancy architecture could arrive assembled. Take those big, beautiful, incredibly heavy cast iron front steps. That's the kind of thing it's handy to have delivered. What other parts of this building do you think could have arrived assembled?

A "ROUND" OF APPLAUSE

1000 N Street isn't the only house that caught "tower fever." All kinds of buildings, even smaller row houses, boast the flourish of projecting towers, turrets and spindles. Keep track of how many of these stylish cylinders you see on today's tour.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

When people want their buildings to look classy what are some ways they can dress up the outsides?



INTERESTING FACT

Famous American architect Frank Lloyd Wright may have become famous for his "prairie style" homes, but he got his start designing Queen Anne style houses.

For more information when you get home, Google: "Turrets," "Queen Anne style houses," "Cast iron front steps."

943 M Street NW

943 M Street Northwest, Washington, DC 20001

ROW HOUSES ITALIAN STYLE

nglish style is "smashing" but if you want a flavor with a little more flair, go Italian. This immense, 3,836 square-foot house has many of the hallmarks of Renaissance inspired Italian architecture. It may be brick instead of stucco, but look at the majestic eaves that line the roof, or the peaked, projecting rectangular bay. A little like the "belvedere" from an Italian villa where you would go to see a "beautiful view."

It also shows you how much you can do with simple brick. Notice the six recessed layers of it framing the roof's gable – or the swirling circle just below – or its decorative shingling just above the arched upper windows. Brick shingles? How creative can you get?

THE LUXURY OF LIGHT

Row houses are built shoulder-toshoulder. If you want light, you're going to have to maximize your fenestration (windows in architect talk) and mostly up front. This home is window rich, not just in front but all over. How many different shapes and sizes of windows can you find here?

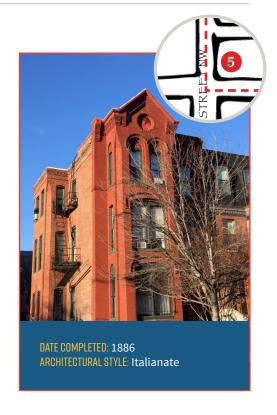
MAKING THE MOST OF WINDOWS

Windows aren't just practical – they're also decorative. There are always things you can do on or around them that accent their functional beauty. What are some of the ways that have been used with this house?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Early real estate taxes were based on the number of windows in the building. How many windows are enough? Can there be too many windows on a house or apartment?

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INTERESTING FACT

Back in 1877, this site was home to Miss Osborne's Boarding and Day School for Young Ladies and Little Girls where "northern teachers" taught in both French and English. Remember, it was just after the Civil War.

For more information when you get home, Google: "Miss Osborne's Boarding and Day School for Young Ladies and Little Girls," "Decorative shingling."

927 M Street NW

927 M Street Northwest, Washington, DC 20001

TUCKED AWAY

¬ he buildings in the Blagden Alley area of Shaw are nothing if not diverse. Sometimes a house wants to keep a low profile – and hide away a little among its larger neighbors. A building like this is cozier. It's easier to heat. And it stands out by standing back.

Built around 1841 and older than many of the homes around it, 927 M Street is subtly stunning in its symmetry. It's three petite stories tall. Each story is three window bays wide. Each stack of window bays is separated by the four modillions extending down from the roof's overhanging wood cornice. Each modillion is separated by four toothy dentils. It almost makes you want to get out the graph paper.

BRICK DON'T BURN

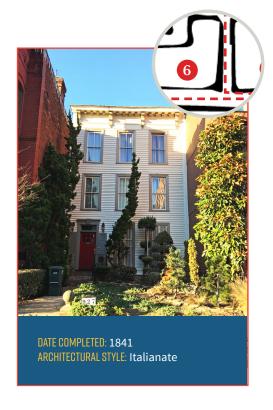
Unlike many of the buildings on our tour, this one was originally covered in wood clapboard (now vinyl siding). A little less solid looking but cozier than brickand also more flammable. And that was not a great feature for a crowded neighborhood like Shaw's Blagden Alley. Just before the Civil War the city was already rethinking wood construction and by 1877 it had outlawed new construction of wood homes. What's the ratio of brick-to-wood homes that you see around you today?

HOUSE VS. YARD

One of the other advantages of having a smaller house is having more space for a front yard. Packing in DC's row houses usually meant sacrificing green space, with most buildings almost fronting right up to the sidewalk. Here we get a little buffer of nature between a house and the rest of the world. What do you think of what they've done with their green space? What do you like about it? Would you rather have a bigger house or a bigger yard?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Why does symmetry make us feel good? What other things in your life have that nice symmetrical feel?



INTERESTING FACT

The overcrowding in Blagden Alley created so much concern about crime and disease that First Lady Ellen Wilson (wife to President Woodrow Wilson) made a deathbed request that the alley dwellings all be torn down.

For more information when you get home, Google: "Modillions," "Window bays," "Dentils."

The Whitman

910 M Street Northwest, Washington, DC 20001

BIJII DING ON THE PAST

rn the middle of a city, a historic neighborhood can't be frozen in time. Things and styles change. But there is a way to work it so that the present doesn't erase what came before it. Architect Phillip Esocoff's Whitman is a perfect example of that transition. This massive, 185-unit collection of luxury condos erected in 2006 is built to look a lot like those row houses from days gone by that stood before it. And while the "rusticated base" of the bottom story looks old school enough (with concrete made to look like sandstone blocks), the stories above it look increasingly modern as you go up.

With the top's curving, vine-carved cornice, not even looking like an actual floor where people live, the Whitman doesn't feel as towering as it otherwise might. The curves are also good at hiding its rooftop garden and pool. There's a playful mix going on here with oval windows peeking out among the rectangles, flowery cast iron balconies on the ends, and stripey brickwork around the sides. It all shows that you don't need to be stuffy to honor the past.

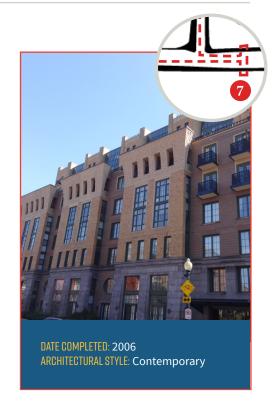
WHAT HAPPENED TO BRICK RED?

We think of bricks as red, right? But that's another tweak on tradition that the Whitman gives us. How many other shades of brick and stone work can you find decorating this building?



CONVERSATION STARTERS

Have you ever seen something that looks sort of old-fashioned and sort of new at the same time?



INTERESTING FACT

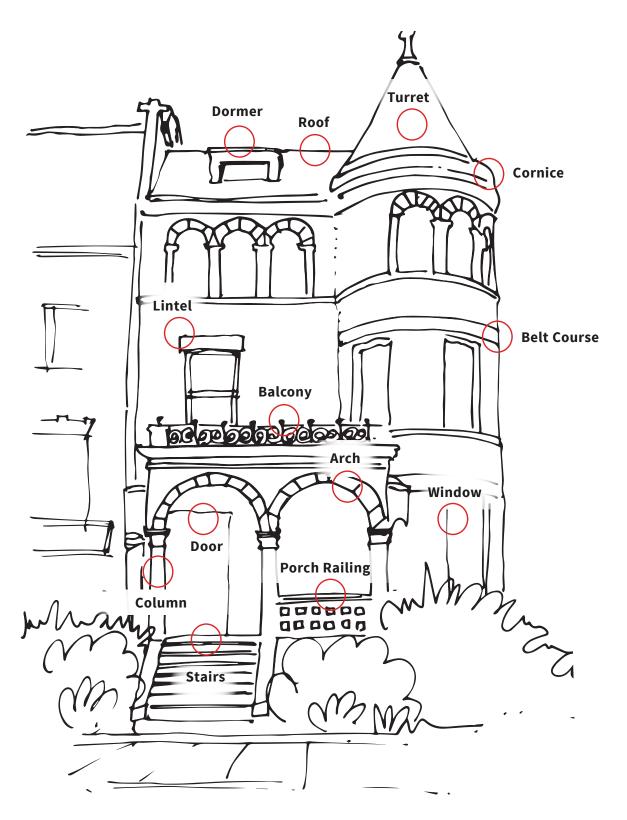
Architect Philip Esocoff once compared his mixing of old and new styles to a cooking strategy. Why just use imported ingredients when you can start with a nice base of local produce?

For more information when you get home, Google: "Phillip Esocoff," "Cornice," "Cast iron balconies."



Architectural Vocabulary

Want to speak like an architect? Try to find a few of these building elements at each tour stop you visit!



Blanche K. Bruce House

Date building was completed:

Architectural Style (ex. Victorian):

VOCABULARY

ARCHITECTURAL FLEMENTS

Arched Windows a window opening with a curved or pointed top.

Corbeled Cornice a cornice that is supported by a decorative piece of stone, wood or metal jutting from a wall that helps keep it up. In other words, a shelf that sticks out from a building doesn't always stay up all by itself. It needs a little something under it that it can rest on. And if that something looks as fancy as it does, even better.

Double Brackets applied ornamental elements often used at a cornice or to flank windows and doors

Steep Roofs a roof in which the slope descends at a steep angle



WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT THIS BUILDING?





IDENTIFY AND CIRCLE

Find the architectural elements from the list on the left and circle them in the picture below.





INTERESTING FACT:

Which dollar bill had the signature of Blanche K. Bruce?



Blagden Alley Warehouse

As you look around the alley you will notice all kinds of murals. Murals are paintings or other types of art commonly made directly on the walls of buildings.

SPOT THE MURAL

See if you can find the real life versions of the murals below as you walk through the alley!



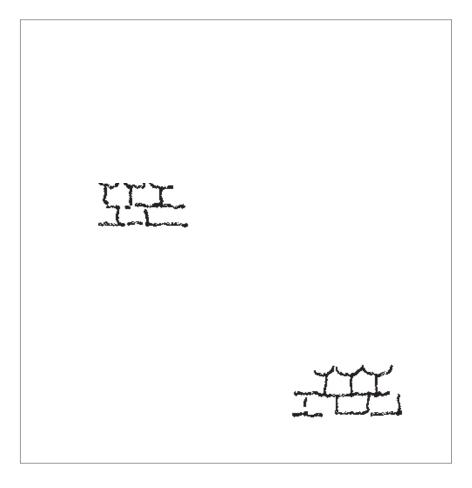






IMAGINE IT. DRAW IT!

Draw a sketch of a mural you would like to create!





The Henrietta

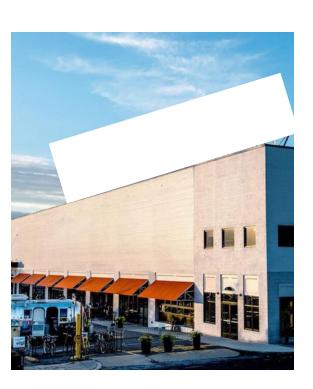
Typography is the style and appearance of written words. While most buildings use typography to display their building number or street address, some places like grocery stores and public buildings use typography to display their name. Below are three examples of local architecture that use typography to add character. See if you can identify the names of these buildings based on the architectural elements.

TYPOGRAPHY IN ARCHITECTURE



A.

В.



.



C.

CHILDREN'S EDITION

1000 N Street NW

Turrets and towers are not only synonymous with fancy castles. These towers are very popular in the Washington, D.C. area and can be spotted in a number of different residential houses. List below some of the similarities and differences that you notice between castles and residential homes.

CHÂTEAU DE CHAMBORD

Loir-et-Cher, France



1000 N STREET NW

Washington, D.C.



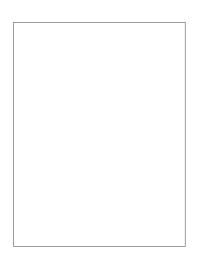
DIFFERENCES			

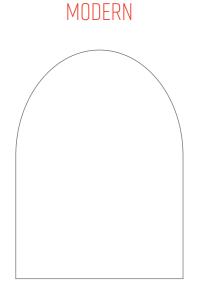
DIFFERENCES			

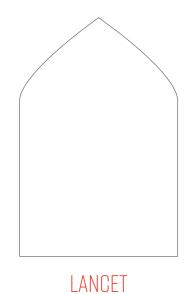
943 M Street NW

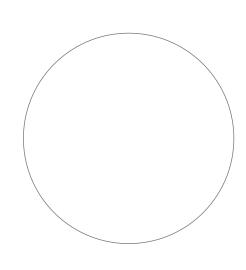
Windows come in all kinds of sizes and shapes. The windows on the building at this stop are lined with intricate decorative artwork to accentuate their beauty. Use the blank window shapes below to draw how you would decorate them.











ARCHED

FULL CIRCLE

927 M Street NW

Imagine you are buying a new house. People use a lot of different factors to help determine what house is best for them besides cost. Big yard and small house? Or a smaller yard and a bigger house? Write your top 5 requirements for buying a house below.

TOP 5 HOUSE MUST HAVES

IMAGINE IT. DRAW IT!

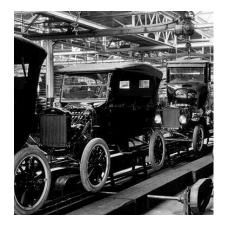
Draw an example of how this house could look.



The Whitman

Like architecture, the tools we use every day evolve and adapt to the world around us. The Whitman is an example of a building inspired by row houses of the past. Look at the images below and think about what other items have changed over time.

A FORD MODEL-T TO A TESLA





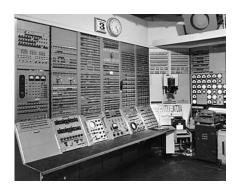
PHONE BOOTHS AND TELEPHONES TO CELLPHONES







THE WHIRLWIND COMPUTER TO PORTABLE LAPTOPS





HARDCOVER AND PAPERBACK BOOKS TO THE NOOK, KINDLE, AND OTHER E-READERS



