

The West End Flyer

Serving the West End Neighborhood of Washington, D.C.

April 2021

Second Chance Arrives for Mullett's Row

Two of the West End's oldest buildings could finally be restored as condominium residences, developer Patrick Bloomfield tells the *Flyer*.

A similar plan in 1989 was blocked by the near

one had four bathrooms added to make it a rooming house. The others were divided into apartments. By the 1960s, one of them had six.

When a developer tried to bring them back closer

to their original appearance 32 years ago, residents objected to the displacement of the commercial tenants and the disruption the project might cause. The tenants at the time were Marshall's West End Bar; One Step Down, a jazz club; and Brazil Tropical, a restaurant.

Most recently, the tenants have been Papa John's Pizza; the Bayou, a New Orleans-style restaurant with music; and a Subway sandwich shop.

The townhouse furthest east, at 2517 Pennsylvania Avenue, is not part of the project, but is in a better state of restoration than the two under contract



Rendering by Jeff Goins, PGN Architects, of 2519 and 2525 Pennsylvania Avenue project.

neighbors and associations of that era. The one hitch in the plan today is that the third building in the set of three is not included in the project.

When Mullett's Rowhouses—at 2517, 2519, and 2525 Pennsylvania Avenue—were put on the National Register of Historic Places in 1994, the description noted: “The three rowhouses were designed to give the impression of one large mansion.”

Alfred B. Mullett, the architect, knew what he was doing when he had them built in 1889. The dormers, projecting bays, and central tower were stately elements, and appropriate for homes fronting on Pennsylvania Avenue in the nation's capital.

Earlier in his career Mullett had designed the building next door to the White House, the majestic *State, War, and Navy Building* (1871-1888) that is now called the Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

By the 1920s, Mullett's single-family rowhouses were altered for ground-floor commercial space, and

by Bloomfield—who says he's proposing 15 units and a four-story “carriage house” addition in the rear.

The District's Historic Preservation Review Board may review the project at its April 22 meeting.

Stepping on Francis Field

Dogs busted the Zoom! The March 17 meeting of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A had 99 people in its waiting room, a limit the software could not exceed, and one that had not been reached in any previous meeting. People interested in items further down on the agenda were asked to get off to make way for the “Francis Field and Francis Dog Park” discussion.

During the process, Commissioner Joel Causey, from the district where the field is located—on 25th Street NW between M and N—said that dogs off leash were a problem all over the District, and advised that Francis Field “at this point is unusable.” He informed owners who continued to break rules that the enforcement was “about to get ramped up” with ticketing.

There is also an official Francis Dog Park for off-leash dog exercise that is not—we are told—as attrac-



Mullett's Row, March 20, 2021.

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The Post-Covid Spring on Francis Field

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tive to many of the dogs as the dirt and grass field is.

Philip Tavares, the athletic director at the Francis-Stevens School in the next block explained that his teams and those at the School Without Walls high school have requested permits from the Department of Parks and Recreation to use the fields for sports and



Spring on Francis Field, March 30, 2021.

outdoor recreation this spring, as students return in larger numbers. Permitting began again on March 15.

The dog issue was referred to the ANC's new Strategic Planning Committee. Its chair, Commissioner Donna Barbisch of the Watergate district, held a one-hour "listening session" on March 24 to allow more people to be heard, and more were.

The *Flyer*, published by the Friends of Francis Field, supports the committee's approach, as we believe the field needs some fact-based rethinking. We think the committee will quickly figure out that the field's minimum maintenance and heavy usage are way out of balance. Barbisch's military background and leadership record should make the process instructive.

While the playing field issue gets straightened out, FFF has three other projects underway this spring, all of which have an educational element to them. Each deals with the small "passive rest and relaxation" areas rather than the extensive, multi-use central field:

Francis Tree Lab. With our associates at the Casey Tree Foundation and the Urban Forestry division of the D.C. Department of Transportation we are seeing what we can learn from our 50-some trees, and we may be trying to clone or graft one of them.

Rear-Field Landscaping. We are implementing an approved landscape plan there with volunteer gardeners and professional landscape contractors.

Rebecca Coder Park. This is the small area be-

tween 25th Street and the playing field, and includes the circular sidewalk area. It is the special focus of our current agreement to improve the field with private funding. It is one of the most visited areas of the park, where dogs on-leash are frequent—and welcome—visitors.

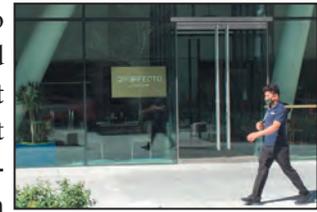
Note: For details on these projects, see the FFF website: FriendsofFrancisField.org. For the April 21 meeting agenda of ANC-2A, see website: anc2a.org.

Coffee on Fire with Anthony

There's a squash facility with eight courts above the West End fire station at 22nd and M Streets called "Squash on Fire," and a restaurant there called the **Upper West Side Café** that sounds like it's in New York.

We had a coffee there the other day with the owner, Anthony Lanier, the Georgetown real estate mogul who is also a long-time developer of the West End.

His EastBanc firm was involved in the Ritz-Carlton Residences, where the restaurant **Ris** rents space, and he now rents to two other high-end West End restaurants: **Rasika West End** below the 22 West condominium; and **Imperfecto**, the Mediterranean restaurant that just opened



Imperfecto, 1124 23rd Street NW

its sleek digs on March 19 below the Westlight condo and apartments on 23rd Street.

Anthony, as everyone calls him, said he wants all the neighborhood's restaurants to succeed and that he supports the kind of "Main Street" business development program now being discussed. He called the West End "the hottest neighborhood in the city" now, and the "urban equivalent" of what Georgetown used to be.

He also told the *Flyer* that Georgetown would come back with a new kind of retailer—not by luring back the type that closed during the pandemic. "We're not fishing in yesterday's waters," he stressed.

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Board of Directors:
Jim O'Connell, Patricia Tith, Gary Griffith,
Laura Belt, Tom Firestone

Editor: Gary Griffith, email: gary@fffdc.org

Web: FriendsofFrancisField.org