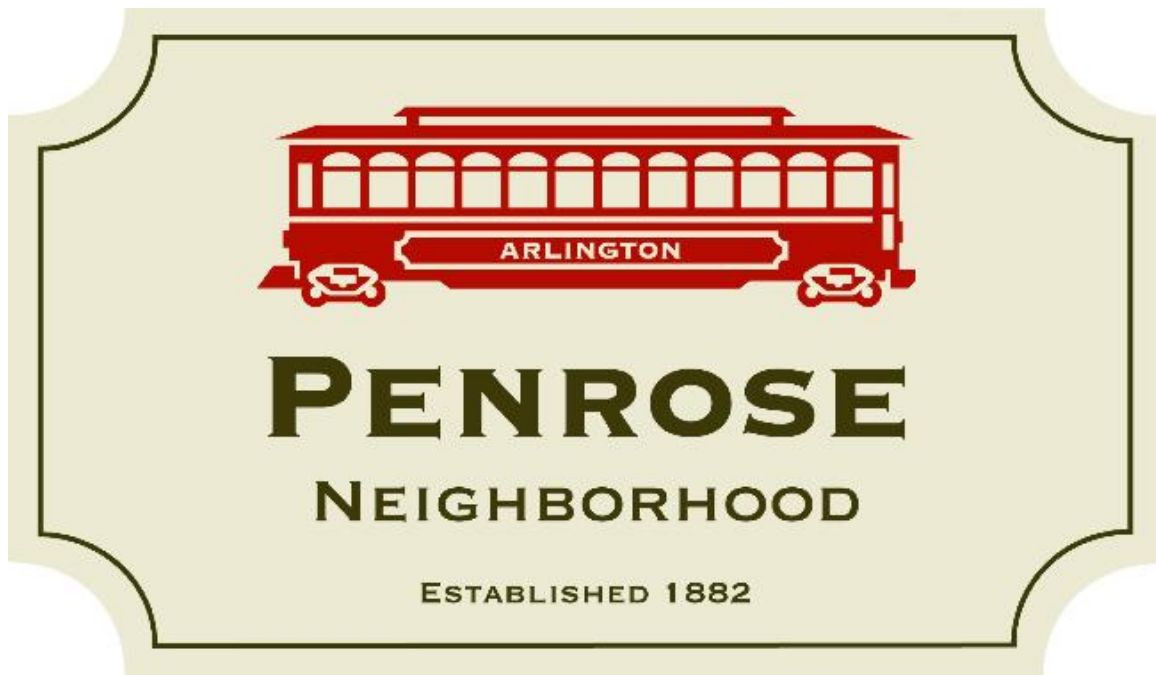

***Penrose Neighborhood
Conservation Plan Final Draft***



November 2003

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A Special Thanks

The Penrose Neighborhood Association is pleased to announce the completion of this revised neighborhood conservation plan.

Penrose neighborhood is honored to have the distinction of filing the first cooperative neighborhood plan in Arlington, the Butler-Holmes Plan, approved by the Arlington County Board in 1959. That plan was revised and turned into a formal neighborhood conservation plan, completed in April of 1967, when our neighborhood was still part of “Central Arlington”.

The need to update the 1967 Plan had been obvious for a great many years, but was only set in motion when then Neighborhood Association President Pat and Secretary Kristine McDevitt conducted a neighborhood survey in 1998. In 2000 and 2001, survey data was compiled under the leadership of Neighborhood Association President Michael Osborne and Vice President Kirsten Deshler. However, there was a lack of volunteers to write an in-depth study for each area of concern, even despite the fact that the intent to rewrite the conservation plan was continually mentioned at our monthly meetings, in newsletters and on the Penrose email list.

In 2002, Janet Dorn left her position as Neighborhood Association Co-President to become coordinator of this plan. Trusting in the power of food and wine, she used the opportunity of the annual Penrose Potluck luncheon to enlist a group of diligent volunteers. Chapters were then assigned and each group set about the tasks of writing, mapping and photographing content. Each chapter was presented at a Penrose Neighborhood Association meeting during spring 2003 and a vote was taken to endorse each and every recommendation. Throughout this public hearing process, current Neighborhood Association Presidents Jackie Cubero and Dave Diamond have shown crucial support for this effort. Last, but never least, our neighbor and graphic designer Judy Morse took all of our chapters, photos and maps and created the document that you hold in your hands today.

For all of this and more, the Penrose Neighborhood Association thanks: Patty Adair, Joseph Alfano, Margaret Alvord-Straubs, Jackie Cubero, Kirsten Deshler, Dave Diamond, Janet Dorn, Cathy Drew, Tom Greenfield, Monika Harris, Harald Keuerleber, Starr Lanman, Bonnie Mangan, Kristine McDevitt, Pat McDevitt, Lauren Mellon, Judy Morse, and Michael Osborne.

For her patience and guidance, we would also like to thank Ms. Shirley Grant of the Arlington County Neighborhood Conservation Office. Most of all, we would like to thank her for giving us a deadline. Without it, we still wouldn't be finished...

Penrose, April 2003

Chapter 1: Penrose History

Penrose Location Map



PENROSE Location Map

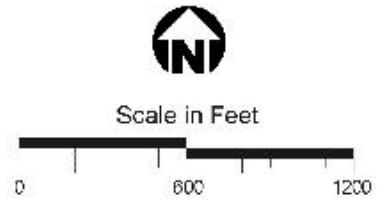


Arlington County, Virginia

Penrose Neighborhood Boundary Area Map



**Penrose Neighborhood
Boundary Area Map**



Summary

Penrose, located approximately three miles from Washington, DC, is a residential neighborhood in central Arlington County. It is bounded by Arlington Boulevard to the north, Columbia Pike to the south, Washington Boulevard to the east, and South Fillmore Street/South Walter Reed Drive to the west. Penrose was first platted and subdivided in 1882 by William H. Butler and Henry Louis Holmes, prominent leaders in the African American community. Because of its close proximity to Freedman's Village and the lack of restrictive covenants, Penrose was initially home to a vast number of African Americans including renowned medical researcher Dr. Charles Drew. Penrose, also once known as Central Arlington, experienced significant growth after the turn of the 20th century with the arrival of the commuter railways, the advent of the automobile and the need for housing to support the burgeoning population flocking to the nation's capital. This population surge overwhelmed the largely rural neighborhood of Penrose, altering the demographic make-up and transforming it into a commuting suburb of Washington, D.C.

Early Local History

Arlington history begins with Native American Indian history and may date back as far as 13,500 years. Various nomadic clans established villages, raised crops and quarried stone along Four Mile Run. More than a dozen village sites have been found within the boundaries of Arlington County; eight along the shore of the Potomac River and three in the upper valley of Four Mile Run. In July 1608, Captain John Smith and fourteen other Englishmen sailed up the Potomac River from James Fort to where the present day railroad bridge and the spans for US Route 1 and Interstate 395 touch Virginia soil. There, just one mile east of Penrose's southeast boundary of Washington Boulevard and Columbia Pike, they found a Native American village of long houses made of grass mats.

English Landgrants

In 1649, England's King Charles II, exiled in Scotland, granted 5,282,000 acres of Virginia land to Thomas, Lord Culpeper. This charter was confirmed after the Restoration, and when Culpeper died in 1689, his daughter Catherine inherited five-sixths of the property. In 1690 Catherine married Thomas, 5th Lord Fairfax. In 1724, Lord Fairfax granted 432 acres to James Robertson. According to a landgrant map of 1669 to 1796, this parcel of land spanned from North Arlington to South 6th Street in Penrose. In 1730, an additional 629 acres was granted to Robertson. This parcel began at South 6th Street and led south through Penrose to south of Columbia Pike.

It is difficult to decipher who owned the various parcels within Penrose once Robertson sold the land. An 1878 map shows land holdings by Ellen Crocker, Maggie Crocker (both sides of Wayne Street), S.E. Corbett, J. Bartlett, Truman Hall (between Walter Reed Drive and South Wayne Street, and William Reed and Henry Austin (east of South Courthouse Road).

Proximity to the District of Columbia

In 1791, President George Washington determined that the ten-mile-square to become the new Federal District should begin at Jones Point, south of Alexandria, and proceed northwestward toward the Falls Church. While the District of Columbia was not organized until 1801, the part of Fairfax County ceded by Virginia to federal jurisdiction was organized as Alexandria County, including Alexandria City. All of present-day Arlington County, including Penrose, was included in the original proposed Ten Mile Square of the District of Columbia.

The Columbia Turnpike

In 1808, the merchants of Washington commissioned the construction of the Long Bridge in the present location of the railroad bridge over the Potomac River. From the Long Bridge, the District of Columbia Turnpike (now Columbia Pike Route 244) was built westward to intercept the Leesburg Turnpike (Route 7) and the Little River Turnpike (Route 236). The Penrose portion of the Columbia Turnpike was completed in 1812 and allowed local farmers to transport their produce to Washington.

In 1802 George Washington Parke Custis began construction of a mansion on the high land located directly east of Penrose. Only a natural dividing line created by Long Branch Creek, which today weaves alongside Washington Boulevard, separated the Custis lands and Penrose. The 1,100-acre site, which he had inherited from his father, overlooked the Potomac River and the city of Washington. When the mansion was completed in 1817 it was named Mount Washington, though it was later renamed Arlington House, after the original Custis estate in Northampton County, Virginia. Arlington County derives its name from the mansion Custis built on this estate.

Arlington's first house of worship was located just east of Penrose's boundaries at Columbia Pike and South Orme Street. It was built around 1825 by Custis for his family, neighbors and servants. Services were conducted by students from the Episcopal Theological Seminary in Alexandria.

By the time Alexandria County was retroceded to Virginia in 1846 by the U.S. Congress because of jurisdictional and payment issues for the Alexandria Canal, the Columbia Turnpike corridor showed signs of increasing development. In 1850, the Columbia Schoolhouse, a one-story wood frame building, was constructed on the corner of South Wayne Street and Columbia Turnpike in Penrose as a private schoolhouse. In 1871, the school was chartered as the first public school (PS 1) in the Arlington School District. The schoolhouse also served as a place of worship for the congregation of Hunter Chapel (later Arlington United Methodist Church on Glebe Road), which was destroyed during the Civil War.



*The 1850 Columbia Schoolhouse, at the corner of South Wayne Street and Columbia Turnpike—modern day site of Trinity Episcopal Church. (Photo from **Images of America: Arlington**, reprinted with permission of the Arlington Historical Society.)*

The Civil War

In May 1861, Arlington was occupied by federal troops and the Arlington Heights were seized. The troops immediately began the construction of what came to be known as the Arlington Line - comprising Fort Runyon, Fort Corcoran, Fort Albany and Fort Scott. In July 1861, after a federal loss at Bull Run, work was also begun on Fort Ethan Allen, Fort Richardson, and a line of breastworks and lunettes. In August 1861, Fort Craig was constructed at the current Penrose location of South Courthouse Road and South 4th Street and became a part of the Arlington Line. It had a perimeter of 324 yards and emplacements for 11 guns. While the Arlington Line was never attacked, it supported a garrison of troops numbering 10,000 (compared to the local residential population of 1,400).

Forests, fields, produce and buildings were confiscated by the troops. By the end of the civil war, timber and wood had become scarce. The Arlington area had lost almost all of its woodland of elms, chestnut, walnut, birch, maple and oak trees. Farms had lost all their animal stock and many barns and outbuildings had been burned or destroyed for military uses. The grounds near the Arlington Mansion became a burial ground for soldiers - the start of Arlington Cemetery. Today, Penrose is separated from Arlington Cemetery only by Fort Myer.

Arlington Chapel, also known as the Chapel of Ease, was burned by Union soldiers at the start of the war. The congregation was reestablished after the war when it met in abandoned Federal barracks in this vicinity (perhaps on the grounds of the Navy Annex). Trinity Episcopal Church, now located at South Wayne Street and Columbia Pike in Penrose, is the successor congregation to Arlington Chapel.

Reconstruction

In the 1860s, the United States Congress and the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands began to establish settlements to ease the transitions from servitude to freedom and from wartime to peace. Beyond the provision of assistance to African Americans, the Bureau maintained a number of settlements throughout the South and bordering states to provide freed people with housing and opportunities for work, training and education. These settlements began under the wartime supervision of the Union Army and were managed by the Quartermaster's Department.

In May 1863, a settlement site was selected just south of the Custis Arlington Estate. There, Freedman's Village was built and formally dedicated on December 4, 1863. It would become the most famous of all the settlements. There were over 10 frame houses, 50 two-story duplex houses, two chapels, a school with five teachers, a meeting hall, a hospital and a home for the aged and infirm. At one time the population exceeded 1,000. Though intended to be temporary, Freedman's Village remained functioning until the 1890's after which time its residents moved to other areas of Arlington County; most notably to the Butler Holmes Subdivision (now Penrose), Nauck, Hall's Hill, Johnson's Hill, East Arlington, Queen City and South Washington.

Evolution of a Name:

Butler Holmes Becomes Central Arlington Becomes Penrose

The Butler Holmes Subdivision

In 1879, two farmers and laborers who were community leaders in Freedman's Village, William H. Butler and Henry Louis Holmes, purchased parcels of land west of Fort Myer in what is today Penrose. They built their own homes here, relocating with their families around 1879, and improved the area with substantial construction of freestanding dwellings. In 1882, the neighborhood was ultimately platted as the Butler-Holmes subdivision. This was the first impetus for growth in Penrose from its rural farming setting.

Today's Arlington Boulevard Route 50 bound the Butler Holmes subdivision to the north, Wise Street to the east, South Second Street to the south and South Fillmore Street to the west. Because of its proximity to Freedman's Village and the lack of restrictive covenants, the Butler Holmes subdivision became home to many African Americans. The most famous resident was Dr. Charles Drew, an African American who gained international acclaim for his scientific advances in the field of blood plasma transfusion research. He was the first African American to receive a Doctor of Science in Medicine and he became Head of the Surgery Department at Howard University. His 1910 era home, where he resided until 1939, is located at 2505 South 1st Street. It has been designated a National Historic Landmark and remains occupied by the Drew family today.

*Our home in Arlington.
1920.*



Our first chickens in Arlington



The Charles Drew house in 1920 and in 1977. An old family photo shows that the Drew family raised chickens at their home in Arlington in the 1920s.

Both Butler and Holmes held public office in Arlington County prior to their real estate development ventures. William Butler served as Commissioner of Roads in 1879 and later as Surveyor of Roads throughout the 1880s, as well as Superintendent of the Poor. In 1879, Butler constructed a wood frame Queen-Anne style home at 2407 South 2nd Street that is still owned by the Butler family. Henry Holmes served as commissioner of Revenue between 1876 and 1903 and was one of the first officers of St. John's Baptist church, located at the intersection of Columbia Pike and South Scott Street. An annex to the now demolished Arlington County courthouse was named in his honor. Holmes passed away in 1905 and his widow occupied the second Holmes family house at 2803 S. 2nd St. until her death in the 1960s.



The Butler family home (left) and the Holmes house (right) in 2003.

Arlington County named a public park for Butler and Holmes in recognition of their community services. The park is located within the original subdivision at 101 South Barton Street. The Butler Holmes subdivision was the first of several subdivisions that would together become modern-day Penrose and many descendants of original residents still live here.

Central Arlington

Maps from 1900 show 15 parcels of land, together referred to as The Arlington Heights, roughly located between the Butler Holmes subdivision and Columbia Pike. Occupants included Bertha Bradley (28.94 acres), Emma and Truman Hall (23.17 acres), Sam Potter, Julia Smith (B.M. Smith), P.P. Lewis, J.P. Lewis, Emma McConville, and Emma Cothorn (10.36 acres). In the 1960s the Arlington Heights subdivision and the Butler Holmes subdivision were merged to form a neighborhood called Central Arlington.

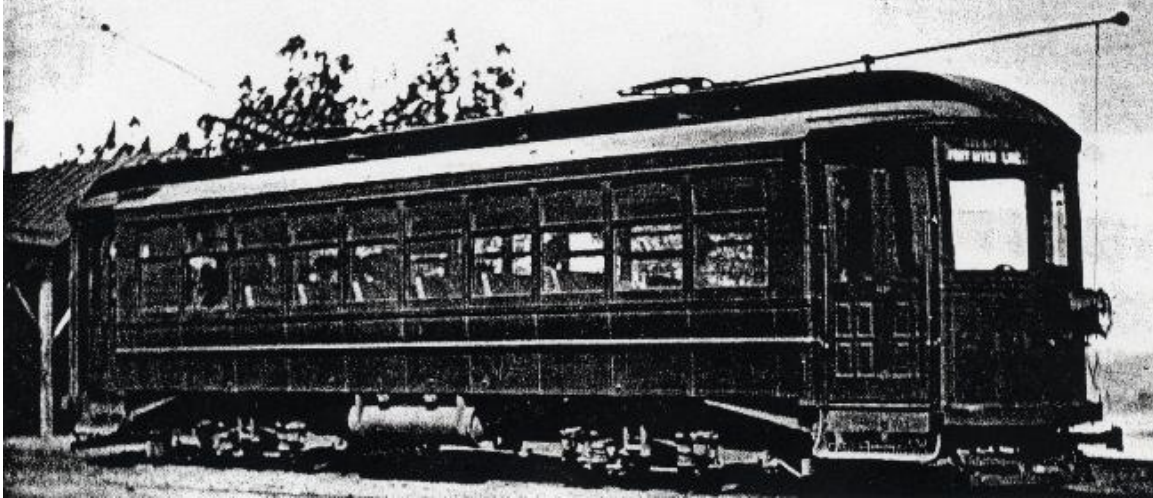
Penrose and the Commuter Rail System

From the 1890s into the first part of the 20th century, this neighborhood saw a substantial population increase as a result of the introduction of the Fort Meyer Branch of the Washington-Alexandria and Falls Church commuter railway that connected the community to Rosslyn, Georgetown and the District of Columbia. The neighborhood grew into a working-class community with laborers and workers who supported North Arlington and Washington, D.C. Trolley cars cut through Penrose along South Fillmore Street and South Second Street and connected with the Washington-Virginia line at Hunter Station (still standing as a private residence) near the intersection of South 2nd Street and South Wayne Street within the Butler Holmes subdivision. This particular station, which gave residents a direct connection to Washington, D.C., was located just south of where the Washington, Arlington and Fairfax Electric Railway lines intersected with the trolley line.

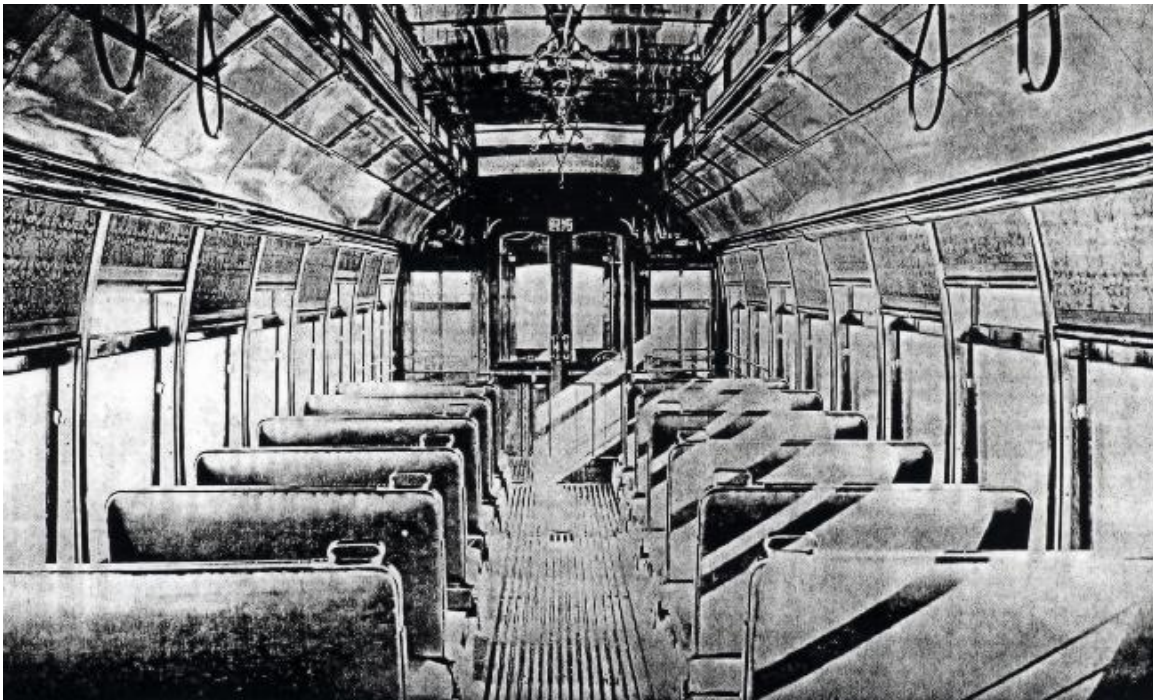


This private residence was formerly the Hunter Station, with an adjacent General Store.

The Columbia Station located at Columbia Pike and Walter Reed Drive was also located in modern day Penrose. Penrose Station was one of the stops on the Nauck Line between Hunter and Columbia. Street name and grid changes, as well as inconclusive maps, have made it difficult to pinpoint the exact location of the stop. It was somewhere within the modern day quadrant of South 2nd Street, South 6th Street, South Barton Street, and South Cleveland Street.



A Washington-Virginia Railway Company trolley on the Nauck Line (circa 1909).



Interior view of a typical Penrose trolley car.

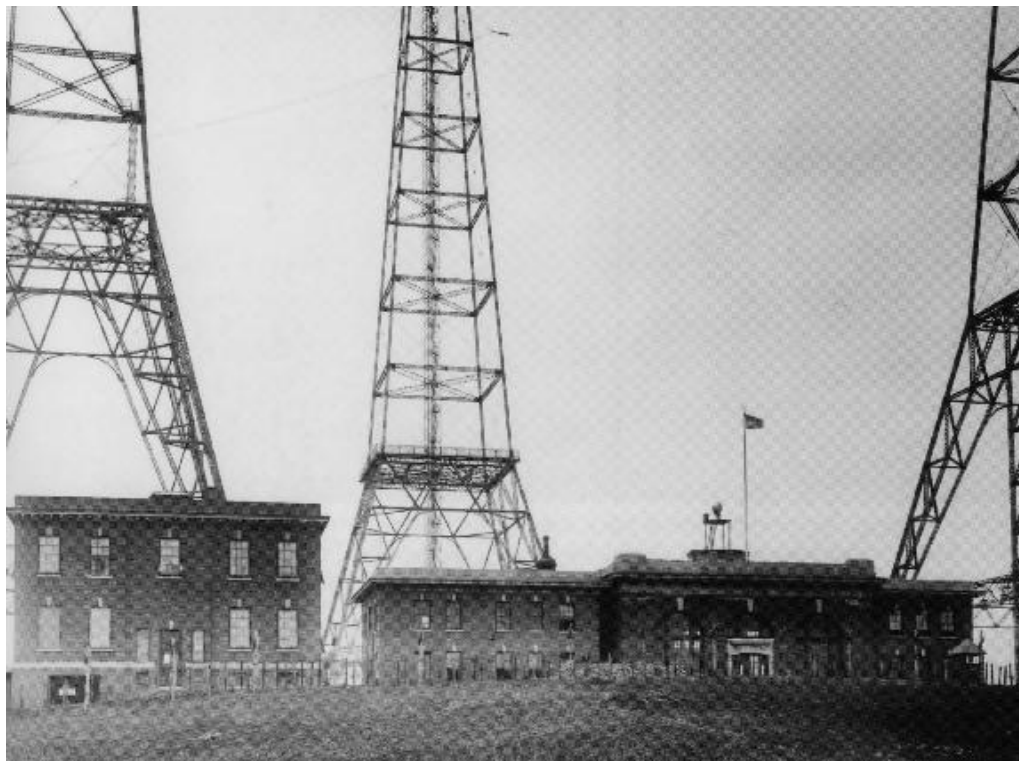
*(Trolley photos from **Old Dominion Trolley Too: A History of the Mount Vernon Line**, by John E. Merriken, used with permission of the National Capital Trolley Museum.)*

In 1995, a citizens' initiative spearheaded the neighborhood name change from Central Arlington to Penrose to both distinguish the community from an oblivious reference on a map and to recall the neighborhood's great history. The name Penrose is derived from one of the historical trolley stops on the old Georgetown-Nauck line. Since the name change, the trolley has become our neighborhood symbol and can be found on our neighborhood identification signs at four gateway locations. As this effort proves, citizen initiative, neighborliness and a sense of history all remain strong in Penrose.

Early Telecommunications Born in Penrose

In 1913, three towers were erected by the U.S. Navy on South Courthouse Road and South 8th Street in Penrose as part of an effort to establish a worldwide communication network. The official name of the facility was the Arlington Radio Station, introducing the use of the word “radio” to describe the new wireless communication. The three towers, also known as the three sisters, stood on a site with an elevation of 300 feet and were constructed at heights of 600 feet and 450 feet. In 1915, engineers from American Telephone & Telegraph (AT&T) used the Arlington radio towers to complete the first successful trans-oceanic voice communication. They used 300 vacuum tubes to generate and modify the high frequency current in a wireless transmission spanning three thousand miles from Penrose, Arlington to the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France.

During the same tests, a voice message was carried all the way to Pearl Harbor, in the Hawaiian Islands for a distance of almost five thousand miles. The U.S. public once set its clocks by the Arlington Radio time signal and listened for its broadcast weather reports. The towers were dismantled in 1941 because they were considered a menace to aircraft approaching the new Washington National Airport. An AT&T Central Office is still located nearby at Walter Reed Drive and South 9th Street. The Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) currently occupies the Penrose site where the towers stood.



*Radio Station Arlington, in 1913, on South Courthouse Road and South 8th Street.
(Photo from **Images of America: Arlington**, used with permission of the
Arlington Historical Society.)*

Mid-20th Century Growth

In 1926, there were approximately 70 houses in Penrose. Following the opening of Arlington Boulevard Route 50 in the 1930s and the growth of federal government agencies in Washington and nearby military establishments, the neighborhood grew to 175 buildings and several churches. During the early part of the community's development, homes included a number of vernacular, Queen Anne and Italianate-style dwellings constructed primarily of wood frame. During the 1910s and 1920s, homes consisted of mainly wood-frame bungalows and vernacular dwellings. A common practice at this time in Arlington County was the kit house or mail-order house. The rail line facilitated the building of many kit homes in Penrose since it allowed for easy shipping of materials.

With the birth of the Pentagon in the 1940s, expansion of local housing became a primary concern. Several garden style apartment communities were built to accommodate the influx of federal workers. Fillmore Gardens and Fort Craig Apartments (now the Executive Suites Hotel) are primary examples. Fillmore Gardens, which received an award for architectural merit in 1943 from the Washington Board of Trade, was built on a twenty-acre tract of land, but also led to the demolition of the Sewell Corbett/Bradbury House and the Arlington M.E. Church.

Many commercial buildings lie along the southern edge of the neighborhood along or just north of Columbia Pike. These were primarily constructed during the mid-to-late 20th century, fueled by the increased population growth between the wars. The main commercial corridor stretches along the southern boundary and beyond and includes restaurants, grocery stores and other retail establishments that serve Penrose and automobile traffic along Columbia Pike. Several of the original storefront buildings remain standing today, including the building historically associated with Fillmore Garden on the north side of Columbia Pike at South Walter Reed Drive.

Between the 1950s and 1990s vacant residential lots were sold and developed with single-family homes or townhomes throughout the neighborhood. The large apartment complexes of Dorchester Towers and Dorchester Gardens were built by the Reinsch family in 1960 and are still owned and operated by the family. The lands of Julia and B.M. Smith have been developed into single-family homes, apartment buildings along Columbia Pike, shopping centers (Adams Square) and smaller retail buildings along South 9th Street. The Adams Court townhomes on South 9th Street and South Adams Street were built on land belonging to the Hall family.

Today, the community of Penrose includes an amalgamation of historic residential enclaves that became united by their shared transportation-related growth patterns and boundaries. It is unfortunate that increased property values have caused older Penrose homes with historic merit to be bought and razed to make room for much larger residences or multi-family residences. (See photos of typical Penrose homes in Chapter 6, Land Use and Zoning.)

- **Recommendation 1:** To protect historic Penrose properties, we recommend that the preliminary information request application recommending the designation of Penrose neighborhood as a National

Historic District (drafted by the Arlington County Historic Preservation Office) be expanded to include a more extensive list of homes 50 years or older and information regarding the Arlington Radio Towers.

- **Recommendation 2:** Existing historic site markers for the Arlington Radio Towers and Fort Craig are very difficult to see. We would like new, double-sided, site markers positioned so that they may be read from both a sidewalk approach and a drive-by approach. Also, given the historic merit of the Penrose neighborhood, we would like to recommend the placement of several addition historic markers. Candidate sites include the following:
 - Residence of Dr. Charles E. Drew (existing small plaque is only visible when standing on the front porch of the home)
 - Residences of William H. Butler and Henry Louis Holmes
 - Hunter streetcar station at South 2nd Street and South Wayne Street
 - Columbia streetcar station at South Walter Reed and Columbia Pike
 - Columbia Schoolhouse site at South Wayne Street and Columbia Pike
 - Location of the first Arlington Post Office as noted on 1860s maps of the Virginia Room of Arlington Central Library (exact site still to be determined)
- **Recommendation 3:** Penrose is in favor of the creation of an Arlington County database (compiled of texts/articles/books) on the historic architectural styles of the bungalow and other period style or kit homes. This would include information and photographs of renovations of similar homes elsewhere and would be a valuable resource to those interested in restoring or preserving historic properties.
- **Recommendation 4:** Because Penrose encapsules so much local, national and international history, it deserves special note in any historical venture that Arlington County may undertake. Therefore, we request that Penrose receive display space within the planned Arlington County History Museum or at least in a community museum (see chapter 5 recommendation 32 for Penrose Community Center).

Preserving Penrose History for Future Generations

Finally, Penrose would like to request the support and cooperation of Arlington County on a whole new level. Based upon the historical significance of Penrose, we believe that our neighborhood is an ideal location for the County to introduce a public history showcase program, which could later be expanded to other neighborhoods.

Dr. Margaret Mulrooney, Public Historian, Associate Professor at Arlington's Marymount University and a Penrose resident, has encouraged us to work toward the creation of public art projects within our neighborhood. In doing so, we would follow the examples of Urban

Historian Dr. Dolores Hayden's *The Power of Place* studies. We would aim to combine public history and public art to commemorate and to help evoke what she refers to as a "community spirit of claiming a place".

Based upon her conversations with Angela Adams of the County's Cultural Affairs Office, Dr. Mulrooney has informed us that Arlington County plans a public art master plan including an artist in residence who will be responsible for the overall look and design of the re-developed Columbia Pike. We understand that guidelines for community issued projects will be forthcoming, but in the meantime we would like to begin realizing our vision for Penrose.

We suggest that, if supported by Arlington County, a Penrose Public History Showcase could be achieved with matching funds from private grant foundations. Dr. Mulrooney has pledged her time and effort pro bono to make this idea a reality for Penrose. She suggests the establishment of an advisory board made up of Arlington County officials, historians and representatives of the Neighborhood Association. This board would create a synopsis of the symbolic pieces of local history for which a competition could be launched to solicit design proposals.

Ideally, the Penrose Public History Showcase would consist of a multi-tiered public art project anchored by a gateway piece preferably located at the new Penrose Square along the re-developed Columbia Pike. This location is ideal to introduce a general history of our neighborhood to a significant number of individuals. For example, a mural depicting a trolley from the Georgetown-Nauck line would tie in perfectly with our both our neighborhood's symbol and the history of Arlington (see recommendation #48 for creation of Penrose Square).

We would also encourage additional smaller pieces such as sculptures, benches or panels to be placed elsewhere in the community, most likely in our public parks. Ideas include a sculpture to commemorate The Three Towers or panels to showcase the lives and contributions of William H. Butler and Henry Louis Holmes or Dr. Charles Drew.

According to Dr. Hayden, "Every American city and town contains traces of historic landscapes intertwined with its current spatial configuration. These parts of older landscapes can be interpreted to strengthen people's understanding of how their city has developed over time. The power of place to nurture social memory - to encompass shared time in the form of shared territory - remains untapped for most working people's neighborhoods in most American cities. The sense of civic identity that shared history can convey is lost or repressed. New public art or open space designs might be possible to commemorate the sites' social importance."

- **Recommendation 5:** We request the full support of Arlington County in the creation of a Penrose Public History Showcase to highlight history made in Penrose that is of local, national and international interest. This could be a pilot project to be expanded upon throughout Arlington.

Sources used to compile this chapter:

- The Arlington Historical Society website
- *Images of America, Arlington*, by the Arlington Historical Society, 2000
- *The Preliminary Information Form: Penrose, Arlington County, Virginia* as submitted by the Arlington County Office of Historic Preservation and prepared by Jennifer Bunting of E.H.T. Tracerics, Inc.
- The Defense Intelligence Systems Agency website
- The Bluemont Neighborhood Conservation Plan
- The Virginia Room at Arlington Central Library
- Dolores Hayden's *The Power of Place* published in *The Journal of Urban History*, Volume 20, Number 4, 4 August 1994, pages 466-485

Chapter 2: Neighborhood Survey Results and Demographic Profile

Neighborhood Survey Information

In 1998, the Penrose Neighborhood Association conducted a community survey in preparation for this update of our neighborhood conservation plan.

The responses to that survey voiced both praise for the neighborhood and grave concern about persistent problems. Nearly forty percent of respondents have lived in the neighborhood for more than twenty years. Another twenty-five percent have lived in Penrose for between ten and twenty years.

When asked to describe Penrose, residents were overwhelmingly positive:

- Affordable, centrally located, clean, convenient, cultured
- Culturally diverse, decent schools, good neighbors,
- Low crime, quiet, quaint, safe, small town atmosphere, stable, tranquil

When asked to list specific reasons for choosing to reside in Penrose, residents mentioned the following:

- Appearance of the area, childhood memories (place of birth),
- Good people, location in relation to D.C., jobs, government offices,
- Stores, restaurants, public transportation and the airport

At the same time, four main concerns were cited by a majority of respondents. In each case, specific complaints were listed, all of which have been on-going problems for the neighborhood and have been reported to the authorities for years without proper resulting action. The four concerns were

Crime

- Lack of regular police patrols,
- Criminal front businesses,
- Drug dealings and prostitution,
- Graffiti (some gang related),
- Stolen or vandalized vehicles,
- Park loitering,
- Lack of police patrols in parks,

- Slow response to 911 calls,
- Violation of leash laws

Lack of Code Enforcement

- Dilapidated vehicles littering lawns and yards, rundown yards,
- Home maintenance issues, overcrowding in homes and apartments,
- Apartments not maintained, abuse of zoning codes, loose cats and dogs,
- Early morning construction, parking of commercial or oversized vehicles on residential streets, parking in designated turn-around spots on dead-end streets

Pest Control

- Rodents in summer and fall,
- Hornet nests in the sand floors of our public parks,
- Wandering possums

Sanitation

- Clean-up after pets, littering and trash problems from the 7/11 store on South Second Street,
- Inferior trash bins in parks and lack of trash bins at bus stops,
- Irregular trash removal from parks,
- Piles of trash along Washington Boulevard between Walter Reed Drive and Columbia Pike

These and more issues will be discussed in the chapters that follow. Where relevant, more statistics from the survey will be imbedded in the text ahead.

Finally, although the pages ahead will point to many problems and will request many improvements to our neighborhood, it should be noted that a full ninety percent of respondents categorized their emotions about Penrose as “positive”.

Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 Census of Population and Housing taken by the U.S. Census Bureau, Penrose is made up of the following:

Demographic Profile: Penrose Neighborhood Association						
	1990		2000		Change 1990- 2000	% Change 1990-2000
	Number	% of Total Population	Number	% of Total Population		
TOTAL POPULATION	4,015	100.00%	4,826	100.00%	811	20.20%
TOTAL NON-HISPANIC OR LATINO	3,456	86.10%	3,924	81.30%	468	13.50%
Population of One Race	n/a	n/a	3,761	77.90%	n/a	n/a
White alone	2,630	65.50%	2,487	51.50%	-143	-5.40%
Black or African-American alone	517	12.90%	752	15.60%	235	45.50%
American Indian or Alaska Native alone	6	0.10%	9	0.20%	3	50.00%
Asian or Other Pacific Islander alone	296	7.40%	489	10.10%	193	65.20%
Some Other Race alone	7	0.20%	24	0.50%	17	242.90 %
Population of Two or More Races	n/a	n/a	163	3.40%	n/a	n/a
TOTAL HISPANIC OR LATINO	559	13.90%	902	18.70%	343	61.40%
AGE DISTRIBUTION						
Under 5 years old	227	5.70%	249	5.20%	22	9.70%
5-17 years old	298	7.40%	455	9.40%	157	52.70%
18-24 years old	418	10.40%	525	10.90%	107	25.60%
25-34 years old	1,106	27.50%	1,451	30.10%	345	31.20%
35-44 years old	713	17.80%	893	18.50%	180	25.20%
45-54 years old	401	10.00%	596	12.30%	195	48.60%
55-64 years old	243	6.10%	291	6.00%	48	19.80%
65-74 years old	343	8.50%	168	3.50%	-175	- 51.00%
75-84 years old	193	4.80%	136	2.80%	-57	- 29.50%
85 years and older	73	1.80%	62	1.30%	-11	- 15.10%
SEX						
Male	1,785	44.50%	2,401	49.80%	616	34.50%
Female	2,230	55.50%	2,425	50.20%	195	8.70%
HOUSEHOLDS						
	1990		2000		Change 1990- 2000	% Change 1990-2000
	Number	% of Total Households	Number	% of Total Households		
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	2,055	100.00%	2,361	100.00%	306	14.90%
Family Households	796	38.70%	895	37.90%	99	12.40%
Married Couples with Children	227	11.00%	263	11.10%	36	15.90%
Married Couples without Children	378	18.40%	353	15.00%	-25	-6.60%
Female Single Parent Households	61	3.00%	99	4.20%	38	62.30%
Other Family Households	130	6.30%	180	7.60%	50	38.50%
Non-Family Households	1,259	61.30%	1,466	62.10%	207	16.40%

	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total Households</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total Households</u>	<u>Change 1990-2000</u>	<u>% Change 1990-2000</u>
HOUSEHOLD SIZE*						
1-Person Households	1,019	48.00%	1,047	44.30%	28	2.70%
2-Person Households	614	28.90%	754	31.90%	140	22.80%
3-Person Households	259	12.20%	284	12.00%	25	9.70%
4+ Person Households	232	10.90%	276	11.70%	44	19.00%

	1990		2000		Change 1990-2000	% Change 1990-2000
	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total Housing Units</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total Housing Units</u>		
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS*	2,240	100.00%	2,417	100.00%	177	7.90%
Occupied Housing Units	2,124	94.80%	2,361	97.70%	237	11.20%
Owner-Occupied	535	23.90%	581	24.00%	46	8.60%
Renter-Occupied	1,589	70.90%	1,780	73.60%	191	12.00%
Vacant Housing Units	116	5.20%	56	2.30%	-60	-51.70%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 Census of Population and Housing (SF1). Tabulated by Lisa Fowler, Arlington County CPHD - Planning Research and Analysis Team and Shirley Grant, Arlington County CPHD - Neighborhood Services. * 1990 household data are from the 1990 sample data (SF3).
n/a indicates data are not available for 1990.

Chapter 3:

Community Services and Schools

Penrose residents enjoy the benefits of a wide range of public facilities and County services.

Three elementary schools, Hoffman Boston, Long Branch, and Patrick Henry, serve Penrose, as do Thomas Jefferson Middle School and Wakefield High School. Students may also choose to attend a focus school, which accept students by lottery, or receive an instructional transfer to the Arlington County public school of their choice.

There are two churches in Penrose. They are St. John's Baptist Church and Trinity Episcopal Church. These religious institutions make their facilities available for community use and provide other kinds of community support.

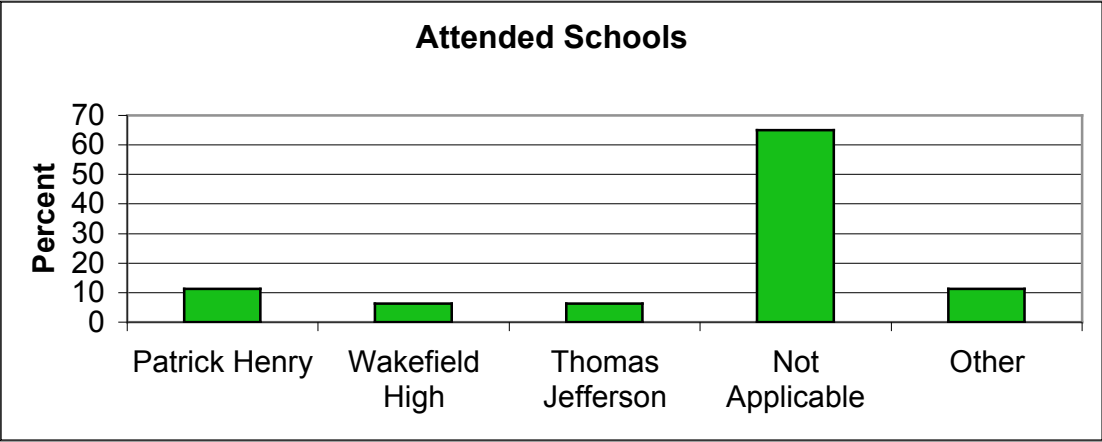
According to the 2000 census, Penrose demonstrated the most significant change in population in the 5-17 age category, growing 52.7%. At the same time, the age category of 65-74 declined by 51%. In addition, our population of those less than 5 years of age has increased by 9.7% in the last 10 years. Clearly, Penrose is in the midst of a generation turnover. Penrose is increasingly in need of services, programs and facilities for children. All residents, but especially children, are in need of features such as traffic calming measures including well marked crosswalks and sidewalks, and parks that meet current safety requirements.

The most requested service in the Penrose neighborhood is day care service. It is often difficult to find daycare centers for children and quite expensive as well. The school systems generally have an extended day service for school age children attending the school in which the service is offered.

Currently, the only daycare facility operating within the Penrose community is Trinity Episcopal Children's Center, a non-profit organization residing in the Trinity Episcopal Church. Additionally, there are three licensed at home daycare providers within our neighborhood at this time.

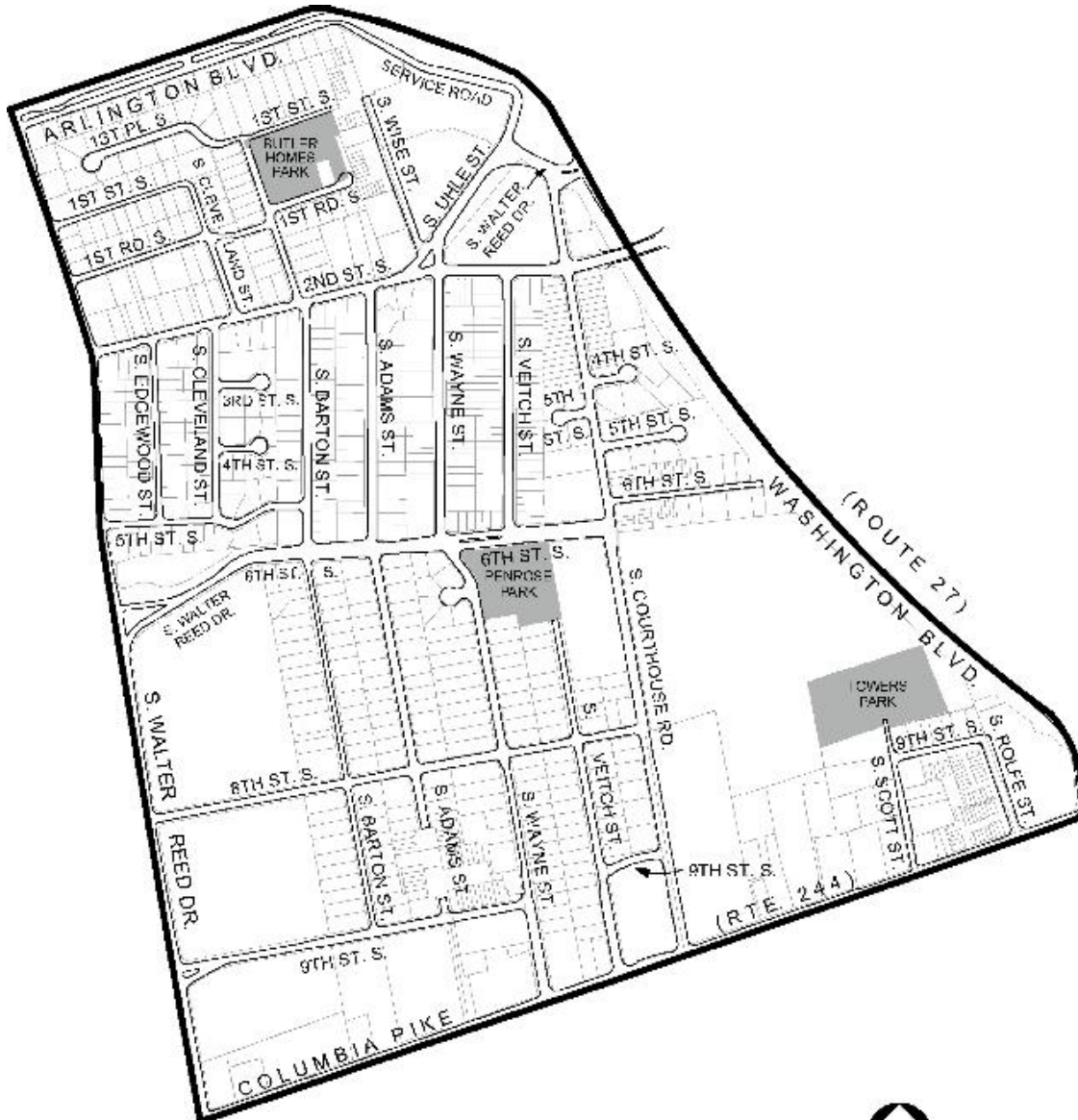
The community is in favor of after school programs and pre-school programs. Penrose supports additional resources for school buildings and schoolyards as the schools, which serve our neighborhood, impact public perception. The community feels there is also a need to advertise youth services and educate youth on the benefits of a healthy body and mind. However, the Penrose community is also very adamant about not hosting additional social service programs, but recognizes the obligation of Arlington County to address the problems of individuals in need of such programs.

*At the time of the neighborhood survey, Patrick Henry served all of Penrose Community. Boundaries were redrawn in 2001.

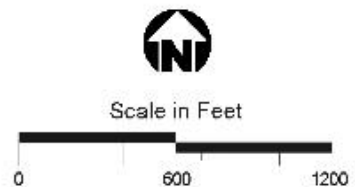


Chapter 4: Parks, Beautification, and Recreation

Penrose Neighborhood Public Parks Map



Penrose Neighborhood
Public Parks Map



Parks

The Penrose neighborhood has three public parks:

- Butler Holmes Park, located at South Barton Street and South 1st Road
- Penrose Park, located at South Wayne Street and South 6th Street
- Towers Park, located at South Scott Street and South 9th Street

Butler Holmes Park

Butler Holmes Park, created as a result of the Central Arlington Neighborhood Conservation Plan of 1968, serves the northern portion of the neighborhood. Butler Holmes Park is a quiet neighborhood park, flanked on three sides by dead-end streets and on the fourth side by the back of a row of townhomes. Because there is relatively little traffic and a good deal of shade, this park has great potential. However, in the past, this park has suffered a great deal of neglect in terms of maintenance and upgrades. The park has a basketball court, a pavilion and a small, older playground. It also has a large expanse of grass with a good number of maturing trees.

The play equipment is basic and dated. There are two slides connected by a bridge and two balance beams. It would be wonderful to update the equipment and add new items such as swings and a tot area. At present, the equipment is best suited for children aged 6 and above only. Another concern is that the play structures are in the deepest portion of the park, next to a wire fence with substantial overgrowth. From the opposite end of the park, it is impossible to watch children play and protect against strangers. Ideally, any future play equipment would be positioned in such a way as to bring the play area closer to the center of the park and to a safer area. Finally, there is an open concrete sewer in the center of park, between the playground and the basketball court. It is located at the lowest elevation in the park and as such, children are often running downhill chasing basketballs going headfirst in the direction of the concrete sewer.

When Butler Holmes Park was created, several private lots with homes existed on the same city block. Over time, Arlington County has purchased all but one of those lots and has incorporated the land into the park. At present, the existence of the one remaining private home adjacent to the play area has caused Arlington County to refuse to put Butler Holmes Park on the list for full park renewals. The Penrose Neighborhood Association argues that since the park was created despite the existence of adjacent private lots, it should certainly be maintained and upgraded despite the continued existence of one such private lot.

There have been drug and alcohol problems in the park, especially after dusk. Often, dog owners do not escort their animals in the park but instead let them run free. Also, not all dog owners pick up after their dogs. In the summer time, there have been issues with teenagers racing motorbikes inside the park boundaries. In general, the neighborhood would welcome increased police patrols and attention to the park and surrounding areas.

Finally, Butler Holmes Park is at the heart of the Penrose Historic District as mapped in the Arlington County nomination form to the Department of Historic Resources in Richmond,

Virginia. To further this end, a historical marker at the entrance to the park would help explain the significance of the two namesakes.

Most frequent use of Butler Holmes Park includes the following:

- School age children on the play equipment after school
- An informal neighborhood men’s soccer club which plays in the park every Wednesday and Sunday afternoon all year long
- Soldiers from nearby Fort Myer who jog to the park to play basketball in the early mornings
- Workers from offices at nearby Sequoia Plaza enjoying their lunch break in the park
- Some dog-walking activity; not all of it as required with leashes and pick-up of messes
- Random picnic or grill parties
- The annual Penrose Neighborhood Association picnic



2002 Penrose Neighborhood Association Picnic in Butler Holmes Park.

Recommendations for Butler Holmes Park:

- **Recommendation 6:** Butler Holmes Park must receive regular *maintenance attention* from County staff. This includes trash collection and tree trimming. Furthermore, trash cans should receive lids to guard against a continuation of the summer 2001 and 2002 rodent problems in

the neighborhood. A safe solution must be found to the concrete sewer located in the center of the park. It is an accident waiting to happen.

- **Recommendation 7:** Butler Holmes Park should be eligible for placement on the waiting list for *full park renewals*. When it becomes eligible, the Penrose Neighborhood Association must be consulted regarding designs.
- **Recommendation 8:** Butler Holmes Park should, in the interim, *receive play equipment upgrades and additions such as swings and a tot area*. This would make the park more attractive to the many young families in the area and help forge a sense of community amongst the many stay-at-home caregivers. At present, this population avoids the park because of its inappropriateness for toddlers.
- **Recommendation 9:** Butler Holmes Park should enjoy *more frequent police patrols* and neighborhood watch attention. This includes addressing issues such as drug and alcohol use, violation of leash laws and homeless individuals sleeping in the park.
- **Recommendation 10:** Butler Holmes Park should receive a *historic marker* to remember the respected African American community leaders Henry Louis Holmes and William H. Butler, who in 1882, purchased this and surrounding land to create what would become one of the first African American subdivisions in the United States.

Penrose Park

Penrose Park serves the central portion of the neighborhood and is located three blocks north of Columbia Pike at the intersection of South Wayne and South 6th Streets in the heart of Penrose Neighborhood. Penrose Park was formerly known as Arlington Heights Park.

Penrose Park is 1.84 acres in size and features a school-age playground, a small tot lot, a basketball court and a wooded picnic area with 3 picnic tables, 2 grills and a water fountain. The wooded picnic area is largely covered with mulch. However, in the far back of the park, bordering the single-family homes, there is an area covered completely with weeds and possibly poison ivy. The park is surrounded by a wooden split-rail fence to the West and the North. The fence is vandalized approximately once every two months. The park also contains 5 benches situated around the playground and near the basketball court and 5 trash receptacles, only 2 of which are located in the picnic area. Furthermore, there is a large grass field to the north and numerous shrubs and mature trees throughout the park. In 2003, an Arlington County Small Parks Grant provided for the installation of an information kiosk, a new tot lot and a new playhouse.

Because Penrose Park sits in the center of Penrose Neighborhood, it is extensively used by a population that is quite dense in scope. According to the 1998 Neighborhood Conservation Survey, Penrose Park is the most frequented park in the Penrose Neighborhood (over 60% of the respondents visit Penrose Park, compared to 20% park activity at Butler Holmes Park and 10% at Towers Park). Butler Holmes Park suffers from neglect and lacks good play

equipment and Towers Park is inaccessible to most residents. Penrose Park thus serves as our community's main park.

Within a two-block radius of Penrose Park, there are four multi-unit apartment buildings and many single-family homes. The Shawnee high-rise building parking lot borders the park to the East. To the North there are several multi-unit apartment buildings, high-rises, townhomes and duplex homes. To the West and South side of the park there are single-family homes. The park serves a broad crosscurrent of the neighborhood population. Most frequent use of Penrose Park includes the following:

- Parents and caregivers with children who visit the park throughout the day
- Teenagers and adults playing basketball.
- People with their dogs, groups of soccer or football players or children flying kites or riding their bicycles.
- Once a month, Trinity Episcopal Church Children's Program (located two blocks south of the park at Columbia Pike and South Wayne Street) brings the 60 daycare children, aged 2-5, to the playground at Penrose Park.
- Employees of the Department of Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) frequent the park during their lunch hour. DISA is located one block east of the park.
- The Penrose Neighborhood Egg Hunt takes place in Penrose Park and is very popular with neighborhood children and adults.



2003 Penrose Neighborhood Egg Hunt in Penrose Park.

During the summer months, many Penrose residents use the picnic facilities at the park. At any one time, up to three groups of people can be found barbecuing, having birthday parties or get-togethers in the picnic area. This often leads to an overflow of trash. Typically, there are not enough receptacles to hold the trash from an entire weekend.

The Penrose Neighborhood Association organizes two community clean-up days each year. This is not enough to control the weeds that often cover the sanded area of the playground. The weeds attract bees during the summer months and pose a hazard to children playing. In

the past, Penrose residents often have had to press the park manager to send park maintenance crews for weeding.

Furthermore, the playground has a severe and on-going drainage problem during rainy and snowy seasons. Big puddles and large areas of muddy sand remain in the playground area for weeks following inclement weather and make many structures, especially the swings, inaccessible. It is impossible for the children to play without getting wet and dirty, which is particularly troublesome for small children who fall down often or sit on the ground to play. During late summer months, the sand also provides shelter for hornet nests, which have had to be removed by park maintenance crews.

Due to these problems, many parents and caregivers have recently switched to other, newer playgrounds that are not a part of the Penrose neighborhood. Often these other playgrounds can only be reached by car from Penrose. Thus the Penrose community loses opportunities to gather informally in what had been our most frequented park.

Recommendations for Penrose Park:

- **Recommendation 11:** The playground equipment at Penrose Park needs to be renovated. (Penrose Park is eligible for placement on the waiting list for *full park renewals* and expects to receive a renewal in 2004).
- **Recommendation 12:** The *playground floor* is currently sand and should be replaced by fibar.
- **Recommendation 13: *Improved Maintenance and Landscaping:*** The weeds and the ivy should be removed, cleaned up and properly covered with mulch, since a lot of children play and run in the wooded area, especially in summer when groups are grilling nearby. The playground should be subject to monthly clean-up and weeding by County maintenance crews. There is also erosion occurring along the steps at the entrance to the park off of South Wayne Street. This erosion should be addressed before the steps are compromised. Even better, the steps should be replaced by a ramp.
- **Recommendation 14:** There is currently no *shade* on the playground. It is recommended that several mature trees be planted in the center of the play equipment. The playground needs more shade to keep the structures cool and to make play during the day possible, especially during summer.
- **Recommendation 15:** There is a *water fountain* in the park that should be relocated between the basketball court and the picnic area (and thus away from the playground). The present location near the playground invites children to pour sand from the playground into the fountain. For this reason the fountain almost never functions and is in disrepair and useless as such.
- **Recommendation 16:** Park Boundaries: Penrose Park should receive a *new boundary fence* with sturdy, metal, horizontal poles. For safety reasons, a gate should be installed at the North East exit since this exit is

close to both the playground and busy South 6th Street, thus posing a hazard to playing children. At present, this exit can be reached easily by small children who enjoy running down the slightly sloped path leading to the street.

- **Recommendation 17: *Trash Receptacles*:** There should be new trash bins installed around the picnic area. The new bins should have lids to protect against rodents, squirrels, ravens, and possibly bees.
- **Recommendation 18: *Police Attention*:** Penrose Park would benefit from more frequent police patrols to prevent vandalism and gang activity. Also, frequent patrols would be useful on school holidays and in the summertime as there has been gang activity at the park in the past. For example, the playhouse in the playground area was removed in 2002 due to graffiti and unwelcome nighttime activities. The basketball court and Penrose Park sign have both been sprayed with gang related graffiti several times in the past years.

Towers Park

Towers Park serves the south-eastern portion of the Penrose neighborhood and is located at the dead-end of South Scott Street at South Ninth Street to the north of Columbia Pike.

Towers Park has the best, newest and most varied facilities of any Penrose neighborhood park. The park has a small but relatively new playground, a basketball court, four tennis courts, one volleyball court, a picnic area and a dog run. The basketball court and tennis courts enjoy lighting for nighttime activities. Towers Park also has several parking spaces solely for park users.

The irony of these great facilities, however, is that the location of the park adjacent to the United States Defense Information Agency (resulting in a cordoning off of much of the park's border by tall barbed-wire fencing) makes it accessible to neighborhood residents only via busy Columbia Pike. According to the 1998 Neighborhood Conservation Survey only 10% of Penrose residents frequent this - our newest and best cared for park. This is not a park that school age children can attend on their own on bicycles after school because it does not offer a safe route of travel. Children would need to venture out onto Columbia Pike to access the park. The majority of Penrose residents live to the northwest of Towers Park and would all greatly benefit from a more direct pedestrian pathway to the park from somewhere along South Courthouse Road.

Most frequent use of Towers Park includes the following:

- Defense Department (DISA) employees, who enjoy a private, revolving security gate entrance to the park
- Residents of the adjacent condominium complexes
- Tennis and basketball players who enjoy the new facilities and night lighting
- Dog owners who often drive to the park to walk their pets in the dog run

Recommendations for Towers Park

- **Recommendation 19:** The main priority for Towers Park, as viewed by the Penrose Neighborhood Association, is to bring the park back to the neighborhood. We request that Arlington officials begin prompt negotiations with the Defense Department to open *a pedestrian pathway* along the outer edge of the DISA complex (between DISA and the adjacent condominium parking lots).
- **Recommendation 20:** There is a streambed that runs alongside the playground and ends in a sewer at Scott Street. Although the Towers Park playground has a low fence to the street side, it has no fence to the streamside. The stream varies in depth but does reach 15 or more inches at points and our children should be more protected from it. We request that *the low street side fence extended another 30 feet along the stream side* - at which point the stream disappears into the brush.
- **Recommendation 21:** Towers Park would benefit from additional and *updated picnic facilities* (benches, grills and waste receptacles). These could be placed in the same general area as the current facilities.
- **Recommendation 22:** The dog run does not have any *lighting* and as such is not necessarily a safe place for people to go in the fall and winter evenings after work when it gets dark relatively early. As there is already lighting elsewhere in the park (tennis and basketball courts), we request that Arlington County Parks Staff consider adding two streetlights to the dog run area as well.

Beautification

Penrose is a historic neighborhood and, as such, is the focus of an Arlington County application to the United States Historic Preservation Corps. There are many historic homes and most new homes are built to suit the character of the existing neighborhood. Throughout, however, the existence of utility poles and wires detracts from the beauty of the neighborhood.

Penrose residents are pleased with the traffic-calming project, which was done on South 6th Street.

The Penrose Neighborhood Association holds twice annual neighborhood clean-up days to enlist the services of residents to clean up our public parks and other public spaces such as nubs. This activity, though valuable, is not enough to have a continual well-groomed effect throughout the neighborhood.



2002 Penrose Neighborhood Cleanup Day.

Public areas of concern include:

- Bus stops cluttered with newspaper boxes and lacking trash receptacles.
- Overgrown nub areas, which cannot be properly maintained (particularly along South Second Street).
- The South 6th Street median, which has been planted with trees but does not seem to receive regular mowings from County staff.
- The green strip of overgrown grass and weeds extending the length of Route 50/Arlington Boulevard (south-east side).
- The trash and debris continually scattered along Washington Boulevard between South 2nd Street and Columbia Pike. This often includes entire sets of full trash bags.
- Electrical and utility poles scattered throughout the neighborhood, with loops of wires taking away from the aesthetic character of this historic area. Wherever possible, we request that utilities be moved underground.

Recommendations for beautification:

- **Recommendation 23:** All three Penrose Parks must have their *trash receptacles brought up to code*. They should be placed on poles and have covers. Only then can we avoid the continual problem of tipped trashcans spilling garbage and debris in our parks. Also, we hope to combat the recent rodent problems experienced in the neighborhood.

- **Recommendation 24:** All *bus stop areas* in Penrose should have a trash receptacle.
- **Recommendation 25:** The abundance of free employment/real estate *newspaper boxes* along both Fillmore/Walter Reed and Columbia Pike should be scaled down, if not taken down all together. They are eyesores.
- **Recommendation 26:** Regularly scheduled *mowing* of public green areas along South 6th Street and along Route 50/Arlington Boulevard.
- **Recommendation 27:** Regular *trash and debris collection* along Washington Boulevard between South Second Street and Columbia Pike.
- **Recommendation 28:** We encourage input from County landscaping staff as to how to best deal with our *nub areas*. Particularly along South Second Street, it is impossible to keep these nubs well maintained and they are most often a detriment to the neighborhood's esthetics. Although paving them over is our last intention, we long for a cleaner approach than what we have now.
- **Recommendation 29:** What most residents view to be a *key Penrose intersection* – as indicated by the vote to place our largest and only two-sided neighborhood identification sign there – at the triangle of South 2nd Street, Wise Street and Wayne Street, is an eyesore. The Penrose sign sits on a small green space with an unsightly utility pole and is partially obscured by a lone bike path sign. Traffic also does not flow well at this intersection. We would welcome any improvements County landscapers and traffic planners could provide here.
- **Recommendation 30:** The Penrose Neighborhood would be interested in having *art placed in public spaces*. Any of our three parks could benefit from public art. Also, the planned Penrose Square – which is to be developed with the renewal of Columbia Pike - would be an ideal location to showcase public art (see Recommendation #5).

Recreation

With the Columbia Pike Revitalization Plan, Penrose is due to receive new bike paths. Although the community at large welcomes the addition of these bike paths, the Penrose Neighborhood Association still wishes to be consulted on the exact location of these paths and the signs designating the paths.

Aside from the three public parks, there are no recreation facilities in Penrose.

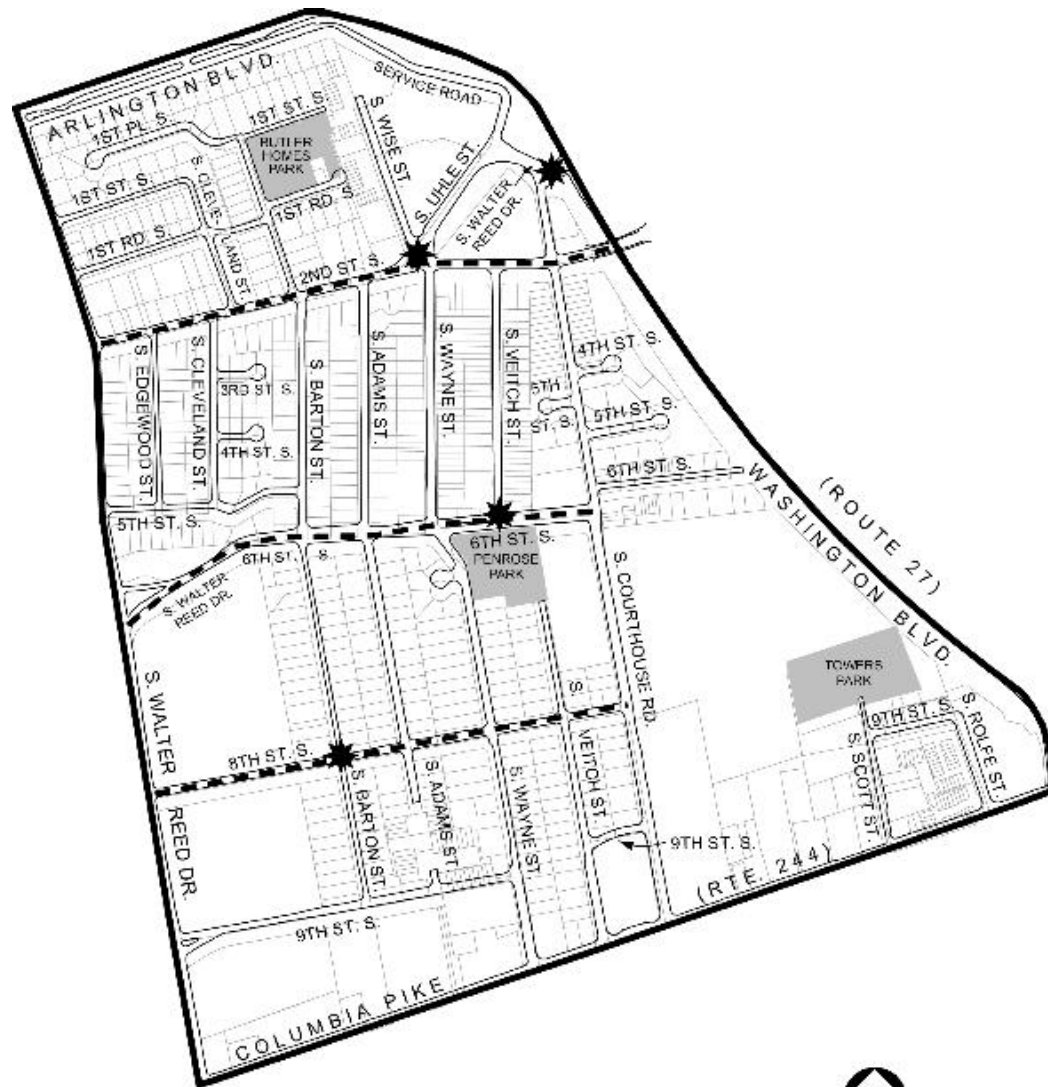
In the 1968 Central Arlington Neighborhood Conservation Plan, the Penrose Neighborhood Association requested that Arlington County consider the creation of a community center. That remains a strong wish within the neighborhood.

Recommendations for recreation:

- **Recommendation 31:** Penrose Neighborhood Association must be consulted prior to the creation of bike paths through the neighborhood.
- **Recommendation 32:** The Penrose Neighborhood Association remains steadfast in our goal to have a community center. We see two possible options in the future:
 - a. Should the last existing home within Butler Holmes Park ever be purchased by Arlington County, Penrose Neighborhood Association would like the opportunity to discuss with County officials the option of keeping the home as a community center (similar to the situation in Lyon Park).
 - b. Should U.S. government's program of Base Alignment and Closings affect the DISA complex located on South Courthouse Road in such a way that the property falls into possession of Arlington County, Penrose neighborhood requests that the two historic 1913 buildings be allocated for use by the Penrose Neighborhood Association. One building would make an ideal community center and neighborhood gathering place. The other would be appropriate as a museum to showcase local history.

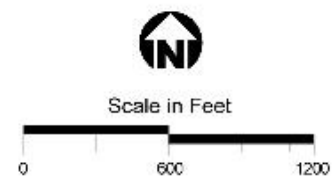
Chapter 5: Neighborhood Transportation, Traffic and Capital Improvements

Penrose Problem Intersections Map



**Penrose Neighborhood
Locations of Traffic Issues**

- ★ Problem Intersection
- Speeding



Penrose Streetlight, Curb and Gutter Map

(This map will be provided before publication.)

General Discussion

Arlington County classifies most of the streets in Penrose as “neighborhood streets” that are designed for local traffic. Penrose is bordered or adjacent to a number of heavily traveled roads, including Arlington Boulevard (U.S. Route 50), Washington Boulevard, Columbia Pike, and Walter Reed Drive. While these arteries provide Penrose residents with excellent access to surrounding communities, they also present the potential for significant cut-through traffic, with the related problems of speeding and aggressive driving.

Penrose neighborhood desires to limit cut-through traffic in the neighborhood to the streets best able to handle the volume. For North-South traffic in between Columbia Pike and Arlington Boulevard, these streets include Washington Boulevard, South Courthouse Road, and South Walter Reed Drive. For East-West travel, these streets include Arlington Boulevard, Columbia Pike, with South 2nd Street and South 6th Street as the best substitutes. It is crucial for the county to avoid building street extensions that will create any other continuous North-South connections between Columbia Pike and Arlington Boulevard. The best means of limiting traffic volume and speed on smaller streets is through traffic calming measures such as stop signs and speed bumps on local neighborhood streets. While the volume of traffic through the neighborhood on the main cut-through streets listed above, the neighborhood still desires traffic-calming studies and measures to control the speed. Suggested traffic calming measures include the use of traffic nubs, warning signs, and aggressive enforcement of existing speed limits.

Another major concern is the impact of the Columbia Pike Revitalization Initiative on neighborhood traffic and parking. Penrose includes the portion of the revitalization area bounded by Columbia Pike, South 9th Street, Walter Reed Drive and South Wayne Street. The neighborhood supports the revitalization effort, but is concerned that development under the Form Based Code will bring increased traffic and place a premium on neighborhood parking. Penrose encourages Arlington County to carefully study the effect of any development projects on the neighborhood before construction begins, and to take pre-emptive steps to control traffic and ensure that neighborhood parking remains available for Penrose residents. Available measures include speed bumps, zoned parking, do-not-enter signs, and aggressive enforcement of traffic laws.

Penrose also desires to promote increased pedestrian and bicycle access to and through the neighborhood. Although Penrose is close to the Clarendon, Rosslyn, and Pentagon City, pedestrian and bicycle access to these areas is difficult because it requires crossing busy intersections or using streets that have no dedicated bicycle lanes. Within Penrose, there are no clearly marked bicycle lanes. Care should also be given to ensuring safe bicycle access when installing any additional traffic control and traffic calming measures. Penrose strongly supports the redesign of the overpass of Arlington Blvd. at Washington Blvd., and the designation of new bike trails on both the east and west sides of Washington Blvd. connecting Arlington Blvd. and Columbia Pike.

Penrose supports Arlington County’s Pedestrian Walkability Master Plan, which calls for installing sidewalks at least one side of every street in the neighborhood.

Streets and Intersections of Concern: Projects already proposed

- **S. Wayne St. from S. 6th St. to S. 8th Rd.:** Install additional streetlights.
- **S. Adams St. from S. 2nd St. to S. 6th St.:** Street improvements.
- **S. 8th St. from S. Courthouse to S. Wayne Sts:** Street improvements.
- **S. Wayne St. from Columbia Pike to S. 8th St.:** Street improvements.
- **Complete neighborhood:** Inspect and repair street signs.

New Project Recommendations

33. **Intersection of S. 2nd St., S. Wayne St. and S. Uhle St.:** Explore additional traffic calming and traffic control measures.
Justification: 2nd Street is one of the major entrances into Ft. Myer and generates a large volume of daily traffic. The section of street between S. Courthouse Rd. and S. Adams St. also has several dips and hills that obstruct the view of crossing and turning traffic. The intersection in question has no marked crosswalks and the geometry of the cross streets makes it very difficult to see oncoming traffic on S. 2nd St.
34. **S. Barton St. between 8th and 9th Sts:** Examine street light illumination and install additional lights, particularly closer to S. 8th St.
Justification: current spacing of streetlights is insufficient to illuminate the entire block. Increased lamp spacing would be in keeping with surrounding areas.
35. **S. 6th St. between S. Veitch St. and S. Wayne St.:** Install additional stop signs.
Justification: These intersections are adjacent to Penrose Park and serve as major crosswalks for children entering the park. It is also very difficult for traffic on S. Veitch and S. Wayne Sts to see oncoming traffic on S. 6th St.
36. **Arlington Blvd. and S. Walter Reed Dr.:** Explore additional pedestrian/bicycle overpasses over Arlington Blvd. in Penrose Neighborhood to connect Penrose to the bicycle trail on the north side of Arlington Blvd.
Justification: Currently, access to the trail from Penrose is only available by crossing Arlington Blvd. at the Fillmore St. crosswalk or by the sidewalk on the West side of Washington Blvd. where it crosses under Arlington Blvd. Both of these access routes require entering into heavy vehicular traffic schemes and discourage pedestrian and bicycle crossing. The relatively short crosswalk cycle at Walter Reed Dr. makes this crossing particularly hazardous. Additionally, some students from Penrose attend Long Branch Elementary and must cross Arlington Blvd. to reach the school.

37. **Inspect and repair street signs throughout the neighborhood.**
Justification: Several street signs are severely damaged and require either repairs or complete replacement.
38. **Arlington Blvd. from S. Walter Reed Drive to Washington Blvd.:**
Replace existing streetlights with Carlyle Street Lights as the opportunity arises.
Justification: Arlington Heights also desires this improvement along their stretch of Arlington Blvd. Carlyle Lighting would significantly improve esthetics along Arlington Blvd.
39. **S. Barton St. and S. 8th St.:** Explore additional traffic calming and traffic control measures.
Justification: This intersection has poor line of sight, and experiences significant morning and afternoon traffic going towards the Defense Information Security Agency (DISA).
40. **S. Walter Reed Drive and S. 8th St.:** Install a clearly marked crosswalk.
Justification: This intersection is a frequent crossing point for pedestrians traveling from Penrose to the adjacent school and career center.
41. **S. Walter Reed Drive between Arlington Blvd. and S. 6th St.:**
Expand sidewalks where they are blocked by telephone poles.
Justification: Many of the telephone poles on S. Walter Reed Dr. are in the middle of the sidewalk, making it difficult for pedestrians to pass. This problem is more pronounced for people with strollers or baby carriages.
42. **S. Cleveland St. between S. 1st St. and S. 1st Rd.:** Install sidewalks.
Justification: A center for disabled individuals is located in this area, making it subject to frequent wheelchair traffic. Although Penrose still desires sidewalks on at least one side of all neighborhood streets, a sidewalk in this particular area is crucial for safety.
43. **S. Barton St. between S. 1st Pl. and S. 2nd St.:** Explore traffic calming and traffic control measures.
Justification: Although S. Barton St. is a no-outlet street here; there is significant speeding along the parameters of Butler Holmes Park. The stop sign at S. Barton St. and S. 1st Pl. is routinely ignored. This situation is dangerous for adjacent residents and also for anyone visiting Butler Holmes Park and playground.
44. **Courthouse Rd. at the entrance to Washington Blvd.:** Explore traffic calming and traffic control measures.
Justification: The current yield sign configurations make it difficult to determine which traffic has the right-of-way. Traffic on Courthouse Rd. routinely fails to yield to cars exiting Washington Blvd., creating a dangerous situation.

Existing Residential Uses

Penrose is an old neighborhood that been changing over a course of more than 120 years. As a result, Penrose offers one of the widest varieties of housing found in Arlington County. There are single-family homes, semi-detached homes, townhouses, condominium units and apartment units (ranging from garden style apartments to mid and high-rise units). The 2000 Census reported a total of 2,417 housing units in Penrose.

The majority of people living in Penrose rent. The 2000 Census reported that 73.6% of the housing units in the neighborhood were renter-occupied, 24.0% were owner occupied and 2.3% were vacant. Besides the 1,416 rental apartment units, which represent 58.5% of our residences, a portion of the single-family residences and condominium units are also rented. With the present make up of Penrose's housing stock, the maximum achievable home ownership rate is 41.5%. The home ownership rate is limited by the percentage of "ownable" or "for-sale" housing units in the neighborhood.

The residents of Penrose understand the need for diversity in housing options, which our community offers. However, it is a well-established principle that home ownership is the foundation of a stable and secure community. Penrose seeks to build a strong community through the careful balancing of owned and rented properties.

- **Recommendation 45:** The County should take no action that would increase the percentage of Penrose residences that are rented.
- **Recommendation 46:** The County should ensure that any redevelopment of multi-family housing in Penrose would significantly increase opportunities for home ownership.

The residents of Penrose have expressed support for maintaining and enhancing the single-family character of the interior of the neighborhood. Residents oppose the redevelopment of single-family properties into multi-family dwellings, either as duplexes or townhouses.

- **Recommendation 47:** The County should commit to the preservation of existing single-family homes in Penrose, recognizing that, traditionally, residents of single-family homes have formed the core of active civic life in Arlington neighborhoods.

Existing Commercial Uses

Commercial properties within Penrose include the three building Sequoia office complex in the northeast corner of the neighborhood along with the Executive Quarters Hotel, a 7-11 convenience store and a Verizon field support facility. Along Columbia Pike there are the two story Elkin building, the Fillmore and Adams Square shopping centers, a Safeway grocery store, and the nine story B.M. Smith office building on S. 9th Street. The County has recently adopted a vision for the redevelopment of the commercial areas of Penrose along Columbia Pike. This vision is captured in the Form Based Code (FBC) that was approved by the Arlington County Board on 25 February 2003. The FBC calls for the creation of a civic square in Penrose through the redevelopment of the Adams Square Shopping Center and a

portion of the parking lot serving the Fillmore Shopping Center. Residents strongly support the creation of a civic square for Penrose.

- **Recommendation 48:** As Columbia Pike is redeveloped, require streetscape improvements to maximize pedestrian use and sidewalk-facing businesses, as outlined in the Columbia Pike Special Revitalization District Form Based Code (CP-FBC). In particular increased pedestrian and bike access from the adjoining residential area is desired.
- **Recommendation 49:** The County should make an active commitment to the creation of the Penrose Square called for in the Form Based Code adopted on 25 February 2003.

The FBC does not talk about specific retail uses that would be encouraged to locate in new commercial development within Penrose. A long-standing desire of residents has been to see the creation of a new modern full sized grocery store in Penrose to replace the small and outdated grocery facilities currently in the neighborhood.

- **Recommendation 50:** The County should make an active commitment to encouraging the construction of a new modern full sized grocery store in Penrose.

Another recurring concern of Penrose residents has been a desire to ensure that the redevelopment of commercial areas along Columbia Pike still provide a large number of spaces for locally owned and independent businesses to thrive.

- **Recommendation 51:** The County should make an active commitment to creating an environment in the Penrose portion of Columbia Pike where locally owned and independent businesses can thrive.

No analysis has ever been done by Arlington County of whether the 7-11 convenience store and Verizon field support facility are appropriate uses for the interior of the Penrose neighborhood. The 7-11 convenience store in particular places several burdens on adjacent residents including litter scattered on the property, frequent car traffic at late hours, and light spillover from the brightly lit store.

- **Recommendation 52:** The County should work with residents of Penrose to explore options for minimizing or eliminating the impacts of the 7-11 convenience store and Verizon operations.

Current Zoning

The Penrose neighborhood is comprised of seventeen zoning districts as shown in Map #J. Penrose is a patchwork of many land uses but the largest contiguous land use area is classified as “R-6” which is defined as a single-family dwelling district, 1 unit per lot with a minimum of 6,000 square feet per lot. The remaining land is zoned for residential apartments of various density (“R-10T”, “RA6-15”, “RA8-18”, “RA 14-26”), for commercial use (“C-O”, “C-1”, “C-2”) and for special use (“S-3A”). “C-0” is defined as office, “C-1” is defined as local commercial and “C-2” is defined as service commercial. The areas known as Butler-

Holmes Park, Penrose Park, Towers Park and the DoD property at 701 S. Courthouse Road are designated as “S-3A”.

Penrose has two areas where the current Arlington zoning ordinance is not serving the neighborhood well. In the northeast portion of the neighborhood is a large district zoned as RA8-18. This district includes the 300 – 500 blocks of S. Wayne Street, S. Veitch Street, the 200 – 600 blocks of S. Courthouse Road, and dead end sections of S. 4th Street, S. 5th Street, and S. 6th Street branching off S. Courthouse Road. Because such a varied set of building types, townhouse, apartment buildings, semi-detached and single family detached, the evolution of these blocks and redevelopment is happening in an incoherent fashion. The 300 – 500 block of S. Wayne Street is a jarring example of this dilemma. In one short section of the street there is an apartment building, with a single-family home adjacent to it, followed by four tall front-loading townhouses, facing semi-detached housing units on the opposite side of the street. The current RA8-18 zoning, and the jumbled set of building types it allows, is not contributing to the evolution of streetspaces with any order in their form.

- **Recommendation 53:** The County should work with residents in this RA8-18 section of Penrose to modify the zoning regulations and create development strategies that better control the evolution of the streets within this district.

The second major shortfall of the current Arlington Zoning Ordinance is how it addresses the issues of building placement and the location of garage doors in the residential sections of Penrose zoned R-6. As an older neighborhood, many of the single-family homes in Penrose were constructed prior to WWII. One defining feature of the single family detached blocks in the neighborhood are the common street wall that is formed by the forward faces of the houses being in the same plane. What this means is that the faces of the houses on a block are the same distance from the centerline of the street. The distance of these street walls is unique for each block as in the oldest blocks the homes are set up close to the street whereas in blocks developed later the faces of houses are set at varying distances back from the street. The Arlington Zoning Ordinance does not recognize the unique characteristics of where each blocks building lines are and does not require new development to align with the existing building line.

- **Recommendation 54:** For each single family block in Penrose the Zoning Ordinance should establish Required Build Lines (RBLs) for either side of the street to control the placement of new development.

Another defining characteristic of Penrose is the predominant absence of garage doors on the fronts of properties in the residential areas of the neighborhood. When one walks down the residential streets of Penrose it is the doorways and front porches of homes that are the most prominent features. This presents a more human environment with less focus on the car. Where garages were constructed for the older homes, they were placed at the rear of properties or accessible from the sides of lots. This absence of garage doors on building fronts is a key feature of pre-WWII neighborhoods and is a fundamental principle of New Urbanism or Neo-traditional neighborhood design. Some new developments in Penrose have honored the traditions on garage door placements by positioning garages at the rear of properties.

Some other new developments, though, have ignored this basic feature of the neighborhood and taken a harsh suburban building approach by making glaring doublewide garage doors the most visible features of new construction. Over time these new developments are eroding the traditional feel of Penrose streets that residents treasure. The current Arlington Zoning Ordinance is not preserving the traditional feel of Penrose streets because it does not address the key decision of garage door placement.



New construction at S. 2nd St and S. Barton Street with highly visible garage door detracts from the historic feel of the neighborhood.

- **Recommendation 55:** For each single family block in Penrose the Zoning Ordinance should establish Garage-door Placement Lines (GPLs) for either side of the street which would be at least 15 feet further from the street than the RBLs.

A further feature of new infill construction that has been disconcerting to neighbors is the use of one material on the face of a house (such as brick) and mismatched materials (such as siding) on the sides of the structure. This is another aspect of new construction that is completely out of character with standard Penrose homes built from the late 1800's through the 1970's. The neighborhoods desire is to have structures in which the materials on the face of buildings are matched by that on the side.

- **Recommendation 56:** For each single family block in Penrose the Zoning Ordinance should require that in newly constructed homes the materials used on the sides of structures match that which is used on the front face of the building.

Historic Preservation

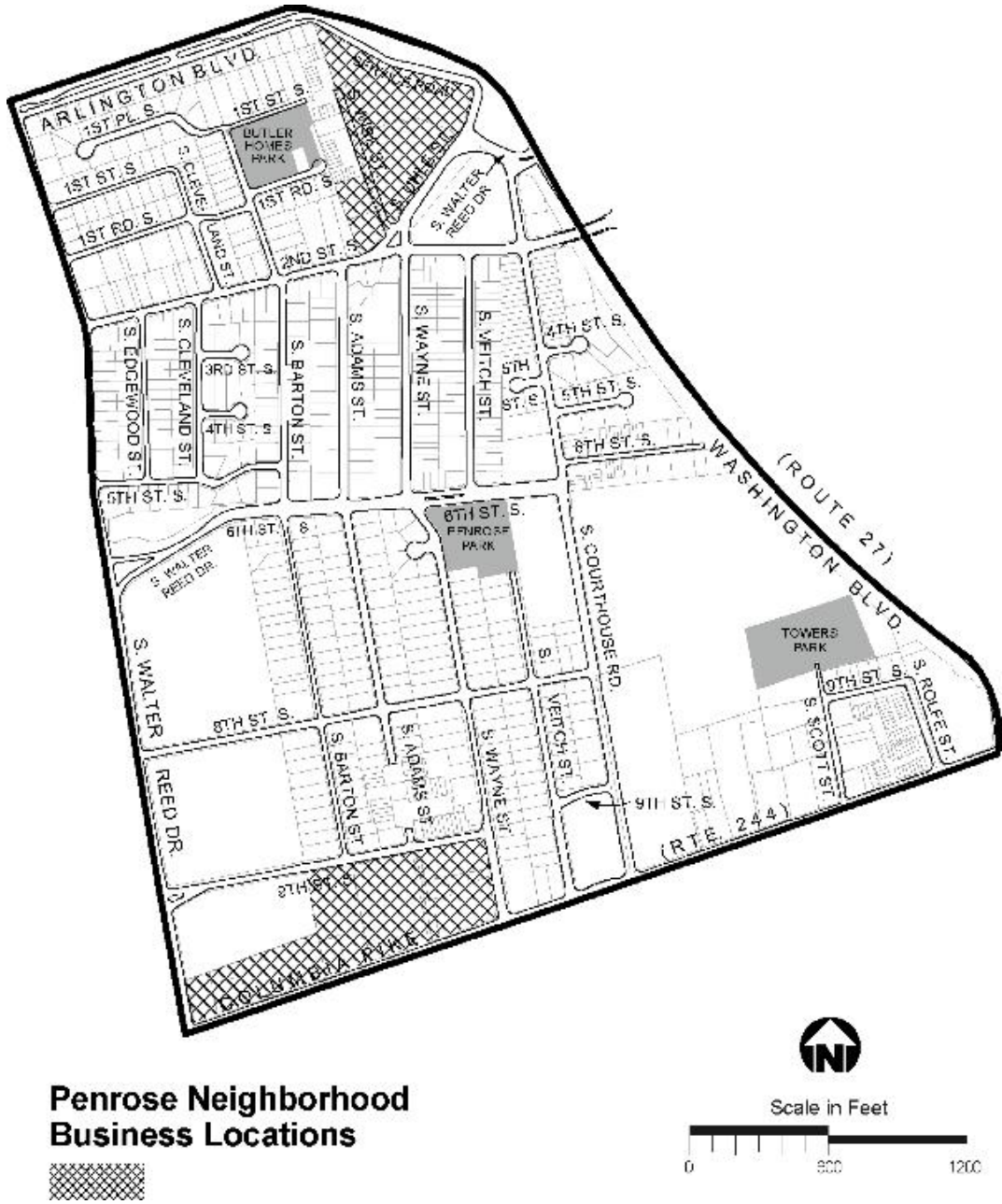
Penrose is one of the neighborhoods in Arlington County that is being nominated by county staff to the National Register of Historic Places. Placement on the register will enable property owners who renovate their properties in a historic sensitive manner certified by National Park Service standards to obtain state and federal tax credits. Another form of historic preservation that would give residents even stronger control over the shape, form and

style of new development in Penrose is the designation by the Arlington County Board of an area as a local historic district. It is not clear under the County's current policy, what percentage of property owners needs to support the creation of a local historic district in order to be designated as such by the Arlington County Board.

- **Recommendation 57:** The County should make clear the community support necessary for the County Board to recognize an area as local historic district. The County should support Penrose or sections of the neighborhood if they make a request to the Arlington County Board to be designated as local historic districts and demonstrate sufficient support.

Chapter 7: Business Conservation

Penrose Neighborhood Business Locations Map



Penrose Businesses

Businesses in Penrose are located primarily along Columbia Pike and in Sequoia Plaza situated behind Washington Boulevard (*please see the Business Appendix for a select listing of area businesses*). As these arteries form two of the four boundaries of Penrose, businesses in these areas and their impact on the community are of great concern. Sustaining a vibrant and varied business district without adversely impacting the surrounding residential area is of prime significance to the neighborhood.

Residents welcome future re-development along Columbia Pike but are concerned about the impact of increased parking needs, increased cut-through traffic and traffic congestion, and loss of small business. Rappahannock Coffee on Columbia Pike is a fine example of the type of business Penrose hopes to attract: inviting and appealing from the street, an active part of the neighborhood, and an independent small business both catering to residents' needs and adding neighborhood character.



Looking east on Columbia Pike from Walter Reed Drive

Penrose hopes to work with adjoining neighborhoods to represent common goals to the County, Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization (CPRO) and future developers of Columbia Pike.

Traffic at the intersection of 2nd Street South, South Uhle and South Wayne Streets is a problem and is exacerbated by 7-11 delivery trucks cutting through Penrose's residential streets and by heavy traffic approaching from Fort Myer. Although utilized by many residents because of its convenience, the 7-11 located in Penrose is the source of litter

surrounding the property, loitering and increased cut-through traffic. Residents would like to see a continued police presence at the 7-11, as well as more of an effort by property owners to discourage loitering and to improve the appearance of the facility.

Although Sequoia Plaza is located within the boundaries of Penrose, it functions more as an office park housing corporate businesses, rather than as a group of stores or services used by residents. Residents would like to see better dialogue between Sequoia Plaza management and the neighborhood association, especially regarding association requests for involvement during neighborhood events, such as neighborhood cleanup days.

Recommendations for Business Conservation

- **Recommendation 58:** Promote and encourage the creation of a dynamic commercial “Main Street” along Columbia Pike while working with future developers and the County to limit impact on residential neighborhood. Encourage businesses along Columbia Pike to develop and revitalize through the County Commercial Revitalization program (Columbia Pike is a “First Priority” area).
- **Recommendation 59:** Engage managements of commercial hubs to educate their businesses to be sensitive to the surrounding neighborhood and to the effects of cut-through traffic.
- **Recommendation 60:** Because the CP-FBC does not specifically address parking requirements, the County and future developers must work with the surrounding neighborhoods to plan adequate parking before development begins. The neighborhood strongly opposes any effort to relax current County standards for required parking and would wish to protect residential parking as development increases.

Business Appendix

Sequoia Office Park



- Sequoia Office Park (managed by USAA Properties) – Multi-company office complex anchored by Northrop Grumman, Canon, and Lucent Technologies.
Operates Sequoia Shuttle and multi-level parking garage

2300 S. 9th St.



- 2300 9th Street South (managed by B.M. Smith and Associates) – Anchored by United Bank, multi-storey building houses various law offices, associations and small businesses.
Small two level parking for bank customers to rear of building

Safeway



- Safeway, Columbia Pike at S. Wayne St.
Parking to the west side of building

Adams Square Mall



- Adams Square Mall – Bi-level mini-mall with shared parking for Giant Foods supporting multiple small businesses anchored by Lady Hancock Formalwear at the street level and including AA Locksmith, Frank’s Engraving, Hyde Park Jewelry and Asian Artifacts, Spring Photography, Samata Yoga Studio

Giant Foods Complex

- Giant Foods Complex – Strip-mall building format with parking in front of stores anchored by Giant Foods and Pharmacy and including Cowboy Café, Dollar Shop, Crystal Beauty Shop, Izalca Barber Shop, Adams Square Dry Cleaners, Le Touche Beauty Salon, Packaging Center, Michael’s Restaurant [located in parking lot]

Fillmore Center



Fillmore Center

- Fillmore Center (managed by William J. Reap Company) – Primarily street level businesses with various small companies, particularly insurance, on second level; anchored by CVS, Art and Framing Club, Cecilia’s Bar & Grill and including Pizza Boli’s; BC Comics; Atilla’s Restaurant, Carryout and Grocery; H & R Block seasonal tax office; Expert Nail; Virginia Beauty Academy; Lucky Hair Salon; Domenick’s Shoe Repair; Pizza Pantry; The Eye Site; Arlington Therapeutic Massage; Carballo Express; Papillon Cycles; Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization offices
Parking on sides of business clusters and to the rear
- 7-11 convenience store
- Executive Club – Residence-style corporate hotel
Operates Executive Club Shuttle

Penrose Neighborhood Special Concerns

The Special Concerns Committee has initially identified three major concerns, but these carry with them attendant issues. The issues are increased density in Penrose, security issues surrounding the Defense Information Security Agency (DISA) facility and Fort Meyer located within the community, and a significant increase of flights over the neighborhood from Reagan National Airport. All of these can be characterized as quality of life issues.

Relatively affordable housing and location has led to increased density of population in Penrose over the last few years. Houses and apartments are often home to many more people than they were intended for. This growth in density has led to issues of increased traffic through the area, less availability of neighborhood parking, more trash accumulation and noise. Though responsive, the Arlington County Code Enforcement Office is limited in what it can do. The Code Enforcement Office has been instrumental in getting owners to better maintain their property. But controlling the number of people residing in houses and apartments is a far greater challenge for the County. Clearly the issue of overcrowding in residences leads to more traffic, trash and noise, and less readily available parking. How to address this with the County will take cooperation and education. New residents must learn that they have a stake in the appearance of the community. Civic organizations can help, but the County can also play a role, especially when programs such as AHC, Inc. assists people in purchasing homes. As one long time resident proffered, people need to understand what it takes to be part of a neighborhood.

- **Recommendation 61:** Work with the County, including the Code Enforcement Office, to help mitigate issues due to overcrowding and increased density in Penrose. Through education, outreach, and if necessary citations, home owners should maintain their property consistent with the County code. Traffic calming and parking restrictions may be necessary to preserve the quality of life.

Soon after the September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks, rather unattractive barriers (including concrete barriers) were placed around the DISA facility on South Courthouse Road and traffic was restricted near the facility. Since that time the shipping container barriers have been removed and regular traffic patterns have been restored. Residents accept that heightened security around federal installations is necessary but are concerned about the impact on the neighborhood. Tall metal fences with razorblade wires strung along the top can be a disheartening sight in the middle of a residential neighborhood. Security needs could necessitate the return of barriers and diversion of traffic around DISA leading to increased traffic on the residential streets around Courthouse Road. At the south Second Street entrance to Fort Myer, security procedures have led to traffic backing up to, and even beyond, Courthouse Road. Many of the streets in Penrose are 30 or 32 feet wide (not 36 feet) and increased traffic due to detours and security demands places an added burden on the community. The County must be proactive in posting traffic pattern changes, i.e. detours and alerting Penrose residents of security plans that impact the community because of its proximity to Fort Myer, the Pentagon and the Navy Annex. Similarly, low-flying helicopter maneuvers and special military flyovers are of concern to residents. The community would like to establish points of contact that would be notified by authorities prior to special flyovers and low-flying maneuvers.

- **Recommendation 62:** Make Penrose Neighborhood Association officers the points of contact within our community for notification when increased security measures are instituted in the neighborhood. Installation of barriers around facilities like DISA changes to and restrictions on traffic patterns, or increased military maneuvers such as low flying helicopters have a direct impact on Penrose.

Since May 2002, the number of flights over Penrose from Reagan National Airport has greatly increased. According to officials at the Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority (MWAA) flights have returned to near pre-9/11 patterns with over 700 flights a day. After 9/11 there were no flights for three weeks, then the number of flights were restricted. In May 2002, a diagonal runway was reopened and flights were increased. Long time residents of Penrose notice a greater number of flights and attendant noise over our neighborhood since that time. Under the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' Part 150 Study Advisory Committee the community can have input into the Noise Compatibility Study for the Airport by MWAA. Penrose should have representation and input on the Part 150 Study Advisory Committee because it lies directly under some flight patterns from Reagan National. As yet, promised copies of quarterly noise reports from MWAA requested by the community have not been received.

- **Recommendation 63:** Because of increased flights over the neighborhood and attendant aircraft noise, Penrose wants representation on the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's Part 150 Study Advisory Committee that has input into the Noise Compatibility Study for Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority.

Addendum:

The Pieces Come Together In Penrose

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Penrose residents call their flowery, funky Arlington neighborhood “Northern Virginia’s version of Takoma Park,” a place with some of the variety and attitude of the better-known Maryland town.

The streets are lined with mature trees and a mix of bungalows, farmhouses and colonial-revival style homes. Early-20th- and 21st-century designs flow together, often within the same house, as clever renovations flourish. Front yards proudly display orchestrated wildness next to neatly manicured lawns. The scent of lavender competes with the aroma of international cooking.

Latin music rings out from a worn bungalow, mingling with the giggles of Korean children across the street. A nearby artist paints to jazz, vacuums to Beethoven. Casually clad young adults gather on the porch of a small frame cottage to mourn the passing of their treasured 84-year-old neighbor.

The neighborhood has officially been known as Penrose for just five years, but the name has a local history. Decades ago, that was the name of a trolley station in the neighborhood, on the line that led into Georgetown. In 1926, an earlier Penrose Association, located in the northwest corner of today’s community, cast 19 votes to give Arlington County its own public water supply.

Since the late 1800s, different pieces of the neighborhood have borne names including Central Arlington, Butler-Holmes, Hatfield and Arlington Heights. Tom Greenfield, who spearheaded the adoption of the Penrose name, said, “It will give us a more distinct identity.”

The neighborhood has played a role in national and world history. From its rise overlooking the nation’s capital, the first transatlantic radio conversation was transmitted. The Drew house, named after Charles Drew, who pioneered the storage of blood plasma and started the Red Cross Blood Bank, is still in the family.

Morris Butler’s white frame house, where he was delivered by a midwife in 1928, sits on 32,000 square feet of land—a smidgen of the acreage originally purchased by his great grandfather, William H. Butler, in 1882.

William H. Butler, who was a superintendent of roads for Arlington in 1879, and his partner, H.L. Holmes, both African Americans, are credited with spurring the community’s transition from farming to residential.

Morris Butler recalls early mornings spent tending the family's extensive garden when he was 6 years old. "We didn't get breakfast until the sun warmed the day," he said.

In segregated Virginia, he and his four siblings attended school, "walking by two white schools to get there."

"We could have taken the trolley, but the fare was 5 cents, so if we did, we wouldn't have money for food," he said.

Before he was 7, he was selling homegrown produce around the neighborhood.

Butler, now retired after 37 years with the Veterans Administration, still tends his garden, his nectarine and peach trees, and his compost pile. "I was the only one who wanted to keep dirtying his hands," he said.

Regaling a listener with tales of nature, Butler marvels at the antics of mockingbirds and crows, and even had a mother fox and three kits under his shed recently. "She kicked them out, but then showed them where to go."

Others in the neighborhood also have wildlife stories. Anne Marie Zerega, who uses her Model A Ford from the 1930s for neighbors' weddings, has a line of raccoon footprints going up her silk wallpaper after an uninvited visit.

Penrose houses often pass through families or sell by word of mouth. Laura Coppa's Sears catalogue house was built on property given to her grandparents as their wedding present. Her grandfather built the home in 1926, after "going down to the train station to get the pieces," she said.

"My grandmother lived her whole life in a small circle here growing up across the street, living here, then moving to a nearby assisted living center," said Coppa.

Joanne Johnson, a retired personnel specialist, grew up on the same block where she lives today. Noting that Columbia Pike is in the midst of a revitalization program, Johnson said, "You can still walk the Pike to everything, but there are different types of shops today, although we still have our independent hardware store."

Greenfield said: "We need to look out for the small businesses. The cashiers are our neighbors."

Penrose's perimeter is rich with new apartments, offices and retail space. But within the neighborhood boundaries, there are still tumbledown shacks, ripe for renovation.

Neighbors applauded Melinda Adamz for getting rid of "the scary house," as her home was once called because of its dilapidated condition, rusty chain-link fence and five-foot weeds.

"When we bought this place three years ago, it was so run down, neighborhood children would cross the street rather than walk by it," said Adamz, a playwright and manager with Horizons Theatre. "But what I saw was my fantasy—a tiny fixer-upper house on a big lot. It had the original waterfall doors and molding, and 1930s hardware."

Noting that her immediate neighbors include people of Armenian, Indian and Chilean descent, Adamz said, “This community looks like the world. People exchange international dishes, and I get to pretend it’s the kind of neighborhood I grew up in.”