

History of Citizens Association of Georgetown

The Citizens Association of Georgetown has, in one form or another, been representing the interests of Georgetown residents in local affairs for more than a century. The organization traces its roots to 1878, when the Georgetown Citizens Association was established as the District of Columbia's first civic group. By the early 1920s, the group was successfully campaigning for the community's first zoning rules to block an invasion of apartment buildings in what was then a community comprising mainly single-family homes.

Another neighborhood group, The Progressive Citizens Association of Georgetown, admitting women as members and promising a more activist approach, was organized in 1926. The group soon made a name for itself with a successful campaign to extend Georgetown's new, single-family zoning to most of Georgetown above M Street.

Over the years, the two groups worked as allies and won a number of major victories for the community. Chief among these were creation of Georgetown as an "Historic District" with enactment by Congress of the Old Georgetown Act in 1950, P.L. 81-808. Among other things, the Act defines the Historic District's boundaries and gives the Commission of Fine Arts advisory powers over all exterior construction and building alterations within that area. The same year the Act was passed, the two neighborhood groups also convinced Congress to block the demolition of the Old Stone House on M Street, considered the oldest surviving house in Washington, D.C. In 1967 the federal government designated the entire Georgetown Historic District a National Historic Landmark.

In 1963, the Georgetown Citizens Association and the Progressive Citizens Association merged to form the Citizens Association of Georgetown (CAG). In recent years, CAG has devoted itself to protecting the interests of Georgetown's residential community in a time of great neighborhood change. The association has focused its efforts on everything from reclaiming the Georgetown waterfront for a new park to promoting stricter liquor license laws and enforcement, and working with local police on a variety of successful crime-prevention programs. CAG also works with the Georgetown business community and Georgetown University on behalf of residents on initiatives to help [preserve](#) the neighborhood's livability, beauty and historic character.