

DC PRESERVATION ADVOCATE



Winter 2007

THE MISSION OF THE DC PRESERVATION LEAGUE IS TO PRESERVE, PROTECT, AND ENHANCE THE HISTORIC AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT OF WASHINGTON, DC, THROUGH ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION.



Hubbard Hall of the National Geographic Society
1146 16th Street, NW, now included in the District
expansion.

SIXTEENTH STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT EXPANSION

On January 18th, the DC Historic Preservation Review Board voted unanimously to expand the *Sixteenth Street Historic District* to include all properties fronting 16th Street from Scott Circle, NW, south to H Street, NW. The historic district's northern boundary at Florida Avenue, NW, also the original boundary of the Federal City, remains. The expanded historic district includes a number of significant residential, religious, commercial, and institutional properties and the expansion provides a more complete picture of the history and development of this important avenue.

In January 2000, DCPL submitted an application to HPO to expand the boundaries of the Sixteenth Street Historic District designated in 1977. Through a grant from the Historic Preservation Fund, DCPL contracted with EHT Tracerics, Inc., to research and to prepare documentation. The nomination form was filed and remained unheard for several years.

The expansion of the district is based on the cohesive physical development of this portion of 16th Street that began in the early nineteenth century and continued with

continued on page 5

DC PRESERVATION LEAGUE CELEBRATES 35TH ANNIVERSARY

Four hundred and fifty friends of the DC Preservation League (DCPL) gathered on January 25th at the historic Willard InterContinental Hotel to celebrate 35 years of preservation activism at a sold-out fundraiser to support DCPL's education and outreach activities. **Mayor Adrian M. Fenty** delivered the keynote address and declared himself to be the "451st preservationist in the room" as he acknowledged the vital role that DCPL and historic preservation play in the life of the nation's capital.



DCPL President Edwin Fountain presents historic images of the District Building to Mayor Adrian M. Fenty

The Willard InterContinental Hotel was a fitting location for the 35th Anniversary Celebration. The fight to prevent the demolition of the hotel was a notable early victory for Don't Tear It Down/DCPL. In 2006, the hotel celebrated the 20th anniversary of its rehabilitation and return to service.

Robert Aubry Davis, a native Washingtonian and television and radio personality, served as Master of Ceremonies. DCPL would like to acknowledge XM Radio and Mr. Davis for their support of the event.



Ambassador Knut Vollebaek, Master of Ceremonies Robert Aubry Davis and Ellen Vollebaek

continued on page 6

DCPL AT 35: THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS AT 35TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

35 years ago, the preservation movement in this country - and in Washington - was just beginning to achieve critical mass. The National Historic Preservation Act was only five years old; passage of the District's Historic Landmark Protection Act was more than five years away; and there was no citywide citizen organization committed to preservation in Washington. Preservation was no longer in its infancy, but it was still a long way even from adolescence.

Today, at 35, DCPL is still younger than I am - so I hesitate to call it middle-aged. But preservation in DC is what economists would call a mature industry. Or, to use a term more appropriate for this city, it has become institutional. Washington has more than 550 landmarks; 27 districts with 25,000 contributing buildings; an Historic Planning Office and Preservation Review Board that are dedicated, knowledgeable, and sophisticated in design review; a Mayor's Agent well-versed in the preservation law; and a comprehensive plan for the City with integrated preservation elements.

Just as importantly, Washington has not only a broad coalition of committed preservationists, activists, and historians, but also a community of architects, builders and developers - many of whom we have been proud to have on our board - who have internalized the values of preservation. They not only accept that preservation is a requirement of building in DC, but they welcome the challenge and opportunity of harmonizing economic development with historic resources.

And if you don't believe there is economic opportunity in preservation, then just walk down M Street in Georgetown on a Saturday afternoon, or price a row house on Capitol Hill, or book a room at the Hotel Monaco.

Preservation is thus no longer a series of pitched battles at the barricades. It is no longer picket lines and protests; it is no longer 11th hour restraining orders and bulldozers in the dark of night; it is not so much confrontation but collaboration. Because all of us - preservationist and builder, planner and architect - each in our own way recognize the unique treasure we have in Washington.

It is not just century-old height limits that give this city its uniquely livable scale. It is also the fact that DC was not some industrial burg where capital



Edwin L. Fountain

[Continued on next page](#)

This program has received Federal financial assistance for the identification, protection, and/or rehabilitation of historic properties and cultural resources in the District of Columbia. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, or disability in its Federally assisted programs. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20240.

This newsletter has been financed in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. However, the contents and opinions contained in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of the Interior.



DC Preservation Advocate is a quarterly publication of the DC Preservation League. DCPL's mission is to preserve, protect, and enhance the historic and built environment of Washington, DC, through advocacy and education.

Readers are encouraged to submit information and opinions.

Board of Trustees

Edwin L. Fountain, Esq., President

Colden Florance, FAIA, Vice President

Loretta Neumann, Vice President

James A. Smailes, P.E., Secretary

John Bellingham, FCIIOB, AIC, Treasurer

James Abdo
Shalom Baranes, FAIA
Lisa M. Burcham
John Clark, Esq.
Jacqueline Corbett
Edward D. Dunson, AIA
Constance Maffin, GRI
Susan D. Neumann
Andrew Potts, Esq.
Francine Raizes
John Sandor
D. Peter Sefton
Chuck Wagner

DCPL Staff

Rebecca Miller
Executive Director

Paige Wojcik
Administrative Assistant



Old Post Office

DC Preservation League
401 F Street, NW, Room 324
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: 202.783.5144
Fax: 202.783.5596

E-mail: info@dcpreservation.org
www.dcpreservation.org

was king, and architects were hired by corporate tycoons to fulfill what the writer Deyan Sudjic called an “edifice complex.”

Rather, Washington was a federal city populated by federal employees, where public classicism and grandeur mixed with private middle-class refinement and elegance. And because it was a government town, it was spared the pressure of economic development and growth long enough so that by the time preservation took hold in the 1970s, there was still much historic fabric worth preserving.

If the 35 years beginning with the New Deal and World War II saw an unprecedented expansion of government, then the next 35 years saw an equal growth of the private sector that supported that government: the lobbyists, law firms, associations that filled Connecticut Avenue and K Street, and that later filled in the old downtown business district bounded by White House, the Capitol and Pennsylvania Avenue. That growth made much of the story of DCPL’s first 35 years. Now that phase is over, and we are well into the 21st century, with a new set of challenges.

Let me highlight five.

First, preservation faces an interlocking set of new challenges caused by fact that we remain a federal city. We are again at war, and again seeing an expansion of the federal government. Unlike past wars, however, this one poses a physical threat to security here at home. The result is a demand for federal enclaves, walled off from the life of the city. This includes the proposal to locate the Department of Homeland Security on the St Elizabeths campus; and the closure of Pennsylvania Avenue, E Street and the Ellipse.

There is now a bunker mentality - literally - on Capitol Hill and at the site of other federal monuments. As a result, the two vistas that to my mind give the best views of the city - from the Point at St. Elizabeths, looking across the Anacostia over the city, and from the west porch of the Capitol, looking down the Mall and across the Potomac to Virginia - are in danger of being irretrievably lost.

At the same time, other parcels are being released from use by either the federal or District governments, such as Walter Reed Army Medical Center, the McMillan Reservoir, and the Soldiers’ Home.

These transfers of property create development opportunities and preservation challenges. They

underscore one of DCPL’s current areas of focus, which is the preservation of public campuses — those large tracts of land combining historic, public buildings with communal open space. DCPL intends to identify the historic resources at these sites before development plans are in place, in order to facilitate economic development while preserving historic features and public open space.

Second is the continuing renaissance of the city. Residential and related growth has already begun in NoMa, the H Street corridor in Northeast, in Southwest and Southeast along the Anacostia, and in Anacostia itself. DCPL must engage with segments of the city that are not as familiar with preservation and the aesthetic and economic benefits it can provide.

The next three challenges facing preservation today reflect the fact that preservation, like the city itself, is an evolving thing, that it is not just about saving late 19th Victorians, but is part of the 21st century.

Third, the wartime and post-war growth of Washington made it a laboratory for modernist architecture. There is a wealth of significant mid-century architecture in Washington, and we are only now beginning to understand what we have. DCPL’s second current focus is DC Modern, our effort to inventory the stock of mid-century architecture and identify those buildings that have lasting value.

Fourth, it has long been a challenge to accommodate the sometimes competing goals of preservation and building codes. Today we must add to that the demands of environmental sensitivity and energy efficiency, so-called “green” design. In March DCPL will co-host, with the DC Building Industries Association, a program on historic preservation that will include segments on green design, DC Modern, and developing public campuses.

The fifth challenge is the most forward looking — it is the need to help create new architecture today that will be worth saving 35 years from now, that stands in harmonious contrast with the existing historic fabric of Washington.

Those are the challenges of preservation in Washington today. We appreciate your support of DCPL as it takes on these challenges, and continues its mission to preserve, protect and enhance the beauty and grace that make this city one of the world’s great capitals.



Patsy Fletcher is the Community Liaison for the DC Historic Preservation Office

SAVING THE STRAND

By Patsy Fletcher

A new book on architecture asks us to consider what makes one building beautiful and another ugly. Most of us concerned with such matters have been trained to look at factors such as symmetry, materials, harmony, and “artistry”. Edifices or collections of edifices that

exemplify these principles are frequently considered beautiful and worthy of recognition and preservation. However, finding beauty in a building for reasons other than its physical appearance, and then seeking its historic designation, well... certainly is not about architecture, but perhaps is about its [sniff] social history!

Many of the buildings in neighborhoods where I work are unremarkable and in some cases considered downright ugly. And, frequently, deeming buildings pretty enough to save takes a back seat to issues of safety, sanitation, and survival. At the same time some of the few remaining “beautiful” buildings, harking back to a different time and demographic, represent ugly occurrences for the community that now surrounds these relics. The Tivoli, for example, generated vociferous arguments for its razing and against its restoration because, among many reasons, it had also been a place that refused admittance to citizens of a darker hue. The community residents of the 1980s instead wanted jobs and a decent place to buy groceries for their families. A compromise was ultimately reached and the rest is history. However, a recent meeting in Columbia Heights got loud around whose neighborhood it is and whose history/buildings needed to be preserved.

In Marshall Heights, there are undertones of gratitude about the proposed tear down of a swath of edifices to erect something new and magnificent in scale under the New Communities program. Residents feel gratified that their community is finally getting something new – that their community is worthy of this kind of investment. Never mind that over 50 years ago, its community leaders fought hard to keep their ramshackle self-built homes because the buildings represented ownership and hard-won piece of the American dream. Those residents refused to accept the assessment that the architecture was ugly and that they were therefore not happy.

But back to the issue of what is beautiful and what is not and if architecture can make one happy. To me the answer is a rather obvious and unenlightened one. It is the associations with the building most often that determine its beauty. Was it a place of happiness? In response to our request,

DCPL is currently working with the community to landmark the Strand Theater building in Deanwood. The building is unremarkable, especially after decades of neglect. And it occupies a corner that with appropriate investment and development could serve as the linchpin of a revitalization of the area. In the recent past the Strand has been the site of relentless criminal activity, and the neighbor of a methadone clinic and of a trash transfer station. Residents, past and current, had begun to wonder at their happy memories of a place of enchanting movies, youthful pranks, and the surreptitious kisses of first love. This was the only theater in northeast Washington that catered to an African American clientele. Owned by Jewish entrepreneur Abe Lichtman, he made it his business to ensure that the employees in his extensive chain of similar theaters reflected the black patrons he sought. From all reports the Strand was a happy place.



The Strand Theatre in Deanwood

But is the Strand worthy of preservation? Fortunately in a community that I would describe as preservation skeptical, there is agreement that it is. Also worthy of preservation in that community is a church building whose original architecture is considered unprepossessing and which has been rendered, to “discriminating” eyes, architecturally ambiguous by a couple of additions. However, it is a happy building, at least according to residents and parishioners. It is a building that represents shared values and endurance. It has significant social history in that community. My point is that we have to broaden or rethink the definition of beautiful architecture when we are considering preservation of our local built environment. There is a place for the more modest neighborhoods, and accepting the local definition of architectural beauty or significance will engage residents more than imposing other standards. The Deanwood community wants to preserve the theater and the church because they “speak of visions of happiness”. Is that not enough?

continued from page 1

distinct phases through the early- and mid-twentieth centuries that mirrored the growth of the city as a whole. The expanded district includes an expanded period of significance that will extend through 1959 to reflect a more detailed study of the significance of mid-twentieth-century building practices. The expanded historic district will include 36 additional properties, bringing the total number of contributing resources to 145 and the number of non-contributing resources to 16. The boundaries of the expanded district will not extend to the adjacent streets, as these areas are not within the viewshed of the 16th Street corridor. The exception to this practice is the inclusion of a building at the northern end of the district. The Rochelle Apartments at 1603 U Street, NW has an important presence on 16th Street. The Sixteenth Street Historic District expansion provides a more cohesive understanding of a primary route leading to the city's symbolic center and of the distinguished addresses still sought after by prominent individuals, institutions and commercial concerns.

FOURTEENTH STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT EXPANSION

On January 18th, the Historic Preservation Review Board voted to expand the boundaries of the *Greater Fourteenth Street Historic District*, listed on the DC Inventory of Historic Sites in May 1994 (and in the National Register in November 1994). The recent expansion was originally surveyed as part of the Logan Circle Resources Survey, but was not included in the original Greater Fourteenth Street boundaries despite recognition at the time that the boundaries were arbitrarily limited and excluded numerous properties worthy of preservation. In January 1995, a group of buildings identified as the "Rhode Island Avenue Residential Buildings" were designated as a DC Landmark, highlighting one of the most prominent residential boulevards of the original L'Enfant Plan. At that time, the HPRB directed HPO to prepare full documentation to support a range of historic resources in the mid-city area, but staffing limitations prohibited further action until recently.

The expanded historic district boundaries now extend to recently restored Thomas Circle, NW, on the south, the historic dividing line between pre- and post-Civil War Washington. This new boundary includes several DC Landmarks including the Rhode Island Avenue Residential Buildings, the Braxton Hotel at 1440 Rhode Island, NW, and the National City Christian Church at Thomas Circle, NW. The expanded northern boundaries are now the 1400 block of Massachusetts Avenue, NW, (on the southwest) and the 1300 block of N Street, NW, (on the south-

east). The expanded district will also include mid-20th century apartment buildings that reflect the significance of this building type as the manifestation of the mid-century demand for middle-class housing convenient to downtown. The expanded historic district includes an additional 40 resources, 26 contributing and 14 non-contributing. The expanded historic district is now listed in the D.C. Inventory and National Register as the *Fourteenth Street Historic District* rather than the Greater Fourteenth Street Historic District.



1225 15th Street, NW in the expanded 14th Street Historic District

DCPL WELCOMES NEW TRUSTEE

The Board of Trustees would like to introduce its newest member. **Jacqueline Corbett**, a resident of the District, is Director of Communications for American University's School of Public Affairs. Previously, she was Senior Public Affairs Officer and Senior Development Officer at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, one of the world's most visited museums. At The Smithsonian Associates, the Institution's membership and travel arm, she was Chief of Public Affairs. She has also written for Hearst and Conde Nast publications among other media.

Jackie will chair DCPL's Development Committee and assist in expanding member communications.



Interested in volunteering with the DC Preservation League? Opportunities on Landmarks, Education and Development Committees are available. Please email Rebecca at info@dcpreservation.org.

continued from page 1

In addition to the Mayor, the program included remarks by **Rebecca A. Miller**, Executive Director, **Edwin L. Fountain**, President of the Board of Trustees, **Representative Brad Miller** (D-NC), co-chair of the Congressional Historic Preservation Caucus, **David J. Brown**, Executive Vice President, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and **Alison Owings**, who in 1971 founded Don't Tear It Down, the predecessor of DCPL.

The evening brought together preservation activists, developers, architects, bankers and builders from across the metro area. Other notable attendees included **His Excellency, Knut Vollebaek, The Ambassador of Norway** and his **Mrs. Ellen Vollebaek**, Ward 3 **Councilmember Mary Cheh**, **James Dinegar**, President and CEO of the Greater Washington Board of Trade, and **Harriet Tregoning**, Director of the Office of Planning.

The event received coverage in Bisnow on Business, The Georgetown, The Northwest Current, The Washington Times, and WTOP Radio.

DCPL would like to acknowledge all of those in attendance and the contributions of more than 100 sponsors for their support of the 35th Anniversary Celebration. For a complete list of sponsors, see page 7 of this newsletter.

35th Anniversary Photos

Additional photos can be viewed online at www.dcpreservation.org.



Tom Archer, Forest City Washington, William McIntosh, Sean Cahill, Louis Dreyfus Property Company, and Peter Cole, Republic Property Trust



DCPL Past Presidents Jim Rogers, Latham & Watkins and Bob Peck, Staubach Company, with Trustee Ed Dunson



DCPL Past Trustee Joan Brier-ton, Executive Director Rebecca Miller, and Trustee Shalom Baranes, Shalom Baranes Associates



ANC 4A-06 Commissioner Brian Lang, DCPL Volunteer Kevin Locke and Kristin Lang



Cassandra Cullison, CORE Architecture and Tadjer Cohen Edelson - Structural Engineers



Douglas Jemal, Douglas Development, Caroline Mesrobian Hickman, Nancy Witherell, NCPC and Paul Millstein, Douglas Development



DCPL President Edwin L. Fountain with Representative Brad Miller (D-NC) and DTID Past President Carol Bickley Aten



DCPL Past President Sally Berk, Past Trustee Evelyn Wrin and David Schon, Nixon Peabody LLP



DCPL Vice President Coke Florance, Smith Group, Past Trustee Art Keyes and Nancy Florance



Bill Rice and Arthur Cotton Moore



Kingdon Gould III, Gould Property Company, and Kathy Smith, former Director of Cultural Tourism DC



Debbie Yogodzinski, Nixon Peabody LLP, Councilmember Mary Cheh, Sally Boasberg



Past President David Bell, Bell Architects



Richard Ruben, Ruben Companies and Daniel Karchem, Vornado\Charles E. Smith



Carl Elefante and Past Trustee Baird Smith, Quinn Evans Architects

35TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION SPONSORS

Benefactors

shalom baranes associates architects



FORESTCITY
— WASHINGTON —



VORNADO
CHARLES E. SMITH

Patrons

Bank of America	Horning Brothers
Clark Construction Group, LLC	Nixon Peabody LLP
James G. Davis Construction Corporation	Roadside Development
EastBanc	Ruben Companies
EHT Tracerics, Inc.	Wagner Roofing

Sponsors

BELL Architects	Martinez & Johnson Architecture
Sanders H. Berk, M.D. and Sally Berk	Metropolis Development
Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners LLP	Monarc Construction
Cunningham + Quill Architects, PLLC	Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP
Kindy French and Emanuel Friedman	Reznick Group, P.C.
Gallagher & Associates	RTKL
Gould Property Company	The Samuel M. Levy Family Foundation
Hines	SIGAL Construction Corporation
Holland & Knight, LLP	SK&A Structural Engineers, PLLC
LandAmerica Commercial Services	Tenacity Group
Louis Dreyfus Property Company	Tishman Construction Corporation of DC

Supporters

Jim Abdo, Abdo Development	Constance and Robert Maffin
Akridge	Manulife Financial
Atlantic Refinishing & Restoration, Inc.	Richard and Kathy Nettler
Howard Berger	Oehrlein & Associates Architects
Boston Properties	Robert A. Peck and Lynn D. Palmer
The Bozzuto Group	PNC Bank
Burcham and Associates Heritage Consulting	Powell Goldstein, LLP
Richard Busch	Quinn Evans Architects
Cassidy & Pinkard Colliers	Robinson & Associates, Inc.
Eric Colbert & Associates PC	Jim Rogers & Bonnie Harkness
Colonial Parking, Inc.	David M. Schwarz Architectural Services, Inc.
Consortium Structures Investments	James A. Smailes
Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects	Daniel Smith and Loretta Neumann Smith
Edwin L. Fountain, Esq	SmithGroup, Inc.
RAdm and Mrs. Robert R. Fountain	Syska Hennessy Group, Inc.
ICG Properties	Trammell Crow Company
Linda Low Realtors	Evelyn Mittman Wrin and Robert Wrin

Friends

Lawrence Aten and Carol Bickley Aten	James Cummings, AIA	J.C. McElveen, Jr.	Charles J. Robertson
James H. Barker	Edward D. Dunson, AIA	James D. and Barbara Miller	John A. Sandor
M. Jesse Carlson	Farleigh Earhart	The Moffatt Group	D. Peter Sefton and Linda Franz
Beers & Cutler PLLC	Girard Engineering	Neumann Lewis Buchanan Architects	Sheridan-Kalorama Historical Foundation
Bucher/Borges Architects PLLC	Hartman-Cox Architects	Amanda A. Ohlke	Tadger Cohen Edelson-Structural Engineers
Robert and Mary Kate Cary	Heritage Consulting Group	Laura M. Quinn	US Bancorp Community Development Corporation
Centex Construction	Gil Hill	Constance Werner Ramirez	Richard Williams Architects
Diana Edensword Conway	Justine M. Kingham, AIA	Restore Media LLC	Leonard A. Zax



DC PRESERVATION LEAGUE

401 F Street, NW, Room 324
Washington, DC 20001

Nonprofit Org.
US POSTAGE
PAID
Washington, DC
Permit 8487

The DC World War I Memorial was the site of
Washington's Most Endangered Places announcement for 2006



Look for the Announcement of
Washington's Most Endangered Places for 2007
during Preservation Month in May