

# the Preservationist

Fall 2003



*A county building permit allowed only interior work on this individually-designated historic house.*



*The HPC issued a Stop Work Order after being notified that the exterior had been altered without a Historic Area Work Permit.*

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## **HPC Dealing with Record Number of Violations**

In the past several months, there have been an unusually large number of violations of the Historic Preservation Ordinance. In fact, the inspector who investigates historic preservation violations is currently working on 20 cases of individuals who did work without a required Historic Area Work Permit or individuals who received a Historic Area Work Permit, but did not follow it.

A recent case that has been before the Historic Preservation Commission is particularly troubling. As the photos show, an individually-designated historic site on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* has been dramatically altered. The property received a building permit to conduct interior work only; however, the contractor proceeded to strip the building of the great majority of its original exterior materials. This included the loss of much of the 4-<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>-inch wood horizontal siding, the removal of the front cornice and trim, the removal of the front, rear and side porches, the removal of the diagonal wall sheathing on the first floor of the front, rear and right side elevations, the removal of all windows and doors on the first floor, and the removal of five trees larger than six inches in diameter on the property.

In this case, the architect for the project had even met early on with Historic Preservation Commission staff to learn exactly what work would require a Historic Area Work Permit. Still, a great deal of exterior work was done with no permit.

The case was brought to the attention of the Historic Preservation Commission staff and a Notice of Violation and Stop Work Order was issued. This case is now before the Historic Preservation Commission as a “retroactive” case. The Commission is extremely concerned not only about the loss of historic materials at this site, but also the fact that the work was done without a permit.

One of the primary responsibilities of owning property in a Montgomery County historic district or owning an individually-designated historic site is that owners must obtain a Historic Area Work Permit before undertaking demolition, new construction, or any kind of exterior alteration to the property. This includes building decks, sheds and fences, as well as erecting signs. It also includes making changes to doors, windows, porches, siding materials, and roofing materials. Historic Area Work Permits must be approved by the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) *before* work is started.

Historic Area Work Permits are not required for ordinary maintenance projects, such as painting, gutter repair, or repair of exterior features – meaning retention of original materials.

Another recent issue that the Commission has been grappling with is a proliferation of projects that propose extensive removal and replacement of historic buildings materials, such as all the horizontal wood siding on a building. In fact, some projects propose actually dismantling a historic building and rebuilding a replica of it.

This begs the question of what makes a building “historic”? New structures in some communities that are being built today – such as Kentlands – use older architectural styles, but they are not historic buildings. Thus, it is clearly not just the overall architectural appearance that makes a building historic.

Preservationists believe that an important part of what makes a building “historic” is the materials that comprise it – the original wood windows, the original wood horizontal clapboard siding, the original standing seam metal roof, etc.

So what exactly is historic preservation?

*See “Violations,” Page 2*

# Historic Preservation News and Notes



Gwen Wright and Lee Burstyn at the HPC booth at Happy Birthday Montgomery County.

## Happy Birthday Montgomery County

Fifteen County historical organizations participated in celebrating the 227th Birthday of Montgomery County September 7 at the Beall-Dawson House in Rockville. Four of these presented exhibits on projects they had completed with the help of Historic Preservation Grants. In addition, two of the videos shown in the video tent were also the products of HPC grants. In the HPC tent Commissioners Susan Velasquez, Nuray Anahtar, Lee Burstyn,

coordinator Gwen Wright, and planner Corri Jimenez presented the work being done by the staff and commissioners to help preserve our County's history.

## Magical Montgomery

The Historic Preservation Commission joined with many other cultural and arts organizations on October 11 for a grand street fair in Silver Spring. An engaging activity in this year's HPC booth involved both children and adults in replicating, with Lincoln Logs, Tinker Toys, and blocks, the different techniques of construction in historic buildings. Commissioners Kim Williams, Julia O'Malley, Nuray Anahtar, and Steve Breslin greeted visitors to the booth.

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## Violations, from page 1

Taken inversely, "historic preservation" is the preservation of historic resources. These words are not randomly chosen; in fact, they have very specific definitions. To preserve is the first step one can take to protect a historic resource. It is defined by the Secretary of the Interior in the *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. According to that document:

*PRESERVATION is defined as the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. New exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment; however, the limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing*

*systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a preservation project.*

*Rehabilitation, on the other hand, is defined as the "act of process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values." Finally, reconstruction is defined as "the act of process of depicting, by new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving . . . building. . . for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time. . ."*

The preservation of historic resources, therefore, requires that a property owner sustain, protect, and stabilize resources by maintaining and repairing historic materials. Without historic materials, the buildings are threatened with a loss of integrity (due to absence of design, materials, and workmanship).

The trend toward wholesale removal of historic materials is counter to the idea of "historic preservation." **To remove historic materials and replace them with new materials – even in-kind (identical) materials – is a step of last resort, and one taken only when materials are so far deteriorated that their maintenance and repair is impossible.** Again, quoting from the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Preservation*: "Preservation strives to retain existing materials and features while employing as little new material as possible. Consequently, guidance for repairing a historic material. . . begins with the least degree of intervention possible . . ."

## the Preservationist

The *Preservationist* is the official publication of the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission, 8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Phone: 301-563-3400. Statements herein do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Commission. Created by the Historic Resources Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 24A, Montgomery County Code) the Commission is responsible for identification, designation, and regulation for purposes of protection, preservation, continued use, and enhancement of sites and structures of historical, archeological, architectural, or cultural value. Commission members are appointed by the Montgomery County Executive and confirmed by the Montgomery County Council.

### Commission

Susan Velasquez, Chair Julia O'Malley, Vice Chair  
Steven Breslin, AIA Douglas A. Harbit Lynne B. Watkins  
Kimberly Prothro Williams Nuray Anahtar, AIA Lee Burstyn Jef Fuller, AIA  
Historic Preservation Coordinator Gwen Wright

Requests to be on the mailing list and content information should be directed to the Commission.

See "Violations," Page 3

# 2004 Historic Preservation Grants Awarded

**Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity** received a grant for the placement of a historic sign for the Smithville School in Colesville. The organization has owned the 1927 Rosenwald school since 1997 and has been renovating it and converting it for use as a museum and educational center. The school is on the County's *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

A grant for the production of a 24-page plus Booklet on the history of Seneca for free public distribution goes to the **Cultural Strategies Institute**. The purpose of the publication is to re-establish the community's identity, inform visitors, and forge an alliance with other local historical organizations. CSI is an international organization focused on reducing cultural conflict and facilitating cultural co-existence through education and the use of technology and its office is located in Seneca.

The **Germantown Historical Society** will be doing an oral history project that will include at least eight transcribed oral histories of local people. The interviews will be conducted by non-professionals, and they will be given instruction by a professional. The GHS will supply the equipment needed.

**Historic Medley District** had a grant last year to produce a web site. This year the grant is for four brochures to correspond with web site, to publicize their historic sites and programs.

Having finished their 3-phase oral history project, **Historic Takoma** will be doing a walking Tour of Takoma Park brochure in 2004.

A new organization to apply for grants, the **Hyattstown Mill Arts Project**, will be preparing a traveling exhibit: *The Way We Were*, a photographic journal of Michael Dwyer. The

collection will form a photographic essay that will describe Montgomery County's lost heritage.

**Lincoln Park Historical Foundation**, active for the past five years giving tours of African American historic sites in the county and producing a map/brochure of the same, will be producing in 2004 a *Training Manual* on how to research and correctly document African American history and genealogy.

For the past five years the **Montgomery County Historical Society** has been sponsoring "Montgomery County Heritage Days Weekend" (formerly Montgomery County History Tour) which coordinates more than 25 sites for special exhibits and tours for one weekend a year. In 2004 The HPC will help with the printing of the brochure and signs for the event.

**Montgomery Preservation, Inc.** will again be hosting the annual Preservation Awards Reception in the spring, creating an "Endangered Site" list, and presenting the Montgomery Prize and other awards to worthy recipients in May. The HPC supports this event annually. The organization will also continue to work on the production of a video history of the Silver Spring Train Station, *Next Stop Silver Spring*. The video is being produced by Cutting Edge Productions, which produced "Silver Spring: Story of a Suburb" that made such a splash last year. The 2004 grant will be for the editing and distribution of the film.

**Oak Chapel United Methodist Church** has been around since 1886, but the cemetery has been there since at least 1873. Their grant project is to prepare a restoration plan for the Historic Cemetery in the Layhill community, complete with plat of cemetery, timetable and costs. Both the church and the cemetery are on the County's *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

The preparation of a Disaster Plan for its collection will be the project of **Peerless Rockville** for 2004, and this plan may be a prototype for other organizations in the county for the future that do not have such a plan.

A new group has formed in the county to preserve neglected and forgotten burial grounds. **Peerless Rockville** and **Historic Takoma** will have a grant to perform an inventory of historic burial grounds in Montgomery County (phase I) and put this inventory into a database that can be used for reference.

The Historic Preservation Commission voted on October 22 to award \$30,000 in matching grants to county non-profit groups for 13 projects that will increase public awareness of our county's history, protect our county's heritage resources, and promote the preservation of historic structures. The funding is limited to non-capital projects and all of the projects must be completed before December 31, 2004.

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## Violations, from page 2

To assure that proposed projects are consistent with the historic preservation principles discussed above and with the Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Historic Preservation Commission staff is glad to consult with anyone considering a proposal for new construction, demolition, and exterior alterations to a designated historic property. You are encouraged to discuss proposals for major work with the staff in advance of filing a Historic Area Work Permit. For information or to make an appointment, call 301.563.3400.

# Calendar

**Through March 28** Exhibit: *Useful and Ornamental: Women's Education in Montgomery County*. Beall-Dawson House, Rockville. Tuesdays through Sundays, 12:30-4:30 p.m. Call 301-762-1492. [www.montgomeryhistory.org](http://www.montgomeryhistory.org)

**Through December 20** Exhibit at the Waters House in Germantown: *A Kaleidoscope of Quilts*. Wed.s 2pm-9pm, Sat.s 10am-4pm. Call 301-762-1492. [www.montgomeryhistory.org](http://www.montgomeryhistory.org)

## November

**12** HPC Meeting, 7:30 p.m., MRO Auditorium, 8787 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring. Call 301-563-3400. [www.mc-mncppc.org](http://www.mc-mncppc.org)

## December

**2 – January 4, 2004** When decorated for the holidays the Beall-Dawson House becomes the showcase it was intended to be. Tours end with hot spiced cider and homemade cookies. Tours are free to members (\$3 non-members). Tuesday to Sunday from 12-4pm with the last tour of the day at 3:15pm. Call 301-762-1492. [www.montgomeryhistory.org](http://www.montgomeryhistory.org)

**3** HPC Meeting, 7:30 p.m., MRO Auditorium, 8787 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring. Call 301-563-3400. [www.mc-mncppc.org](http://www.mc-mncppc.org)

**4** Holiday Open House at the Red Brick Courthouse, Rockville. Peerless Rockville 301-762-0096. [www.peerlessrockville.org](http://www.peerlessrockville.org)

**6 & 7** 1st Annual Holiday Craft Boutique at the Waters House in Germantown. Sat. 10am-5pm, Sun. 12 noon-7 pm. [www.montgomeryhistory.org](http://www.montgomeryhistory.org)

**7** 7th Annual Waters House Tree Lighting from 4:30 to 6 p.m. at the historic Waters House, Royal Crown Drive and Milestone Manor Drive in Germantown. Santa on a horse-drawn wagon, hot cider, cookies, carol singing. Call 301-762-1492 for information. [www.montgomeryhistory.org](http://www.montgomeryhistory.org)

**14 & 15** Christmas on the Farm: hayrides and Candlelight Tours of the Bussard Farmhouse at the Agricultural History Farm Park, 18400 Muncaster Road, Derwood; noon to 8 p.m. Call 301-670-4661. [www.montgomeryparksfnd.org/fg](http://www.montgomeryparksfnd.org/fg)

**17** HPC Meeting, 7:30 p.m., MRO Auditorium, 8787 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring. Call 301-563-3400. [www.mc-mncppc.org](http://www.mc-mncppc.org)

## January 2004

**14 & 28** HPC Meeting, 7:30 p.m., MRO Auditorium, 8787 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring. Call 301-563-3400. [www.mc-mncppc.org](http://www.mc-mncppc.org)

**Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission**  
**8787 Georgia Avenue**  
**Silver Spring, MD 20910**

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