

KALORAMA CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

January 2012

Our 93rd year

Issue 1

HISTORY IS FOCUS FOR JANUARY 26 MEETING

The monthly membership meeting date of the KCA for January has been changed to Thursday, January 26. This was done so that our guest speakers could be scheduled.

We have an interesting meeting planned, concentrating on some of the architectural and social history of what we now know as Adams Morgan. The meeting will have three segments:

Professor Mark Mack of Howard University and Mary Belcher, KCA's community liaison to the Walter Pierce Park Archaeology Project will provide an overview and summing up, complete with slide show, of the activities of the Project to date. Over 8,000 African Americans and Quakers were interred in the area of Pierce Park in the 1800's;

Laura Trieschmann of EHT Traceries, Inc., the local architectural history firm, will provide a talk on what makes up an Historic District or Landmark, how they become officially recognized, and discuss the three historic districts in Adams Morgan, our Landmarked buildings, and touch on other buildings of note;

KCA in the past has spent much time and resources in a campaign to convince the National Zoo, part of the Smithsonian Institution, to preserve Holt House and put it to some constructive use. The Zoo's current Master Plan does just that and plans are afoot to turn the early 1800's mansion into a research facility. Zoo officials are invited to bring the public up to date on their planning.

I hope you'll be able to attend on Thursday, January 26, 7 pm at Good Will Baptist Church, 1862 Kalorama Road, NW.

-Denis James

CHURCH-HOTEL PROJECT MOVING TO HISTORIC-PRESERVATION REVIEW

The proposed Adams Morgan Church-Hotel faces its next procedural hurdle in a hearing before the DC Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB), perhaps as early as February 23, according to city officials. The developers plan to restore the exterior of the 100-year-old Church of Christ Scientist at Euclid and Champlain streets, NW, while adding a new 10-story hotel to its rear on an adjoining lot.

The project site lies in the Reed-Cooke neighborhood, which is governed by strict zoning regulations but is not in an historic district. Under their application, the developers would seek Landmark status for the existing church building, which, if approved, would make the project eligible for Federal tax credits. Thus the need for review at HPRB. The proposed 10-story hotel structure would abut and tower over the eastern edge of the Washington Heights Historic District, which includes both sides of 18th Street, NW, where most buildings are just three or four stories.

Both the Kalorama Citizens Association and the Reed-Cooke Neighborhood Association have passed resolutions opposing the height, size and potential quality-of-life problems likely to occur if the church-hotel is built at the intersection of Euclid and Champlain streets.

Despite similar concerns expressed by the DC Office of Planning in a staff report on the church-hotel project to the DC Zoning Commission, the Commission voted 3-2 on November 14 to allow the project to move forward to a full public hearing at a yet-to-be-determined date. The historic preservation hearing, which also has not yet been scheduled, will take place before the public Zoning Commission hearing.

The developers are seeking zoning changes and exceptions to build the 227-room hotel addition to the church. They have filed with the Zoning Commission a "Planned Unit Development" (PUD) application for greater zoning flexibility. The PUD application contains numerous architectural drawings of the project, but the Zoning Commissioners on November 14 complained that those drawings are inadequate to allow them to assess the project's potential physical and aesthetic impact on the neighborhood.

Zoning Commissioners raised concerns they want the developers to address. They asked them to provide: (1) a "sun-shadows" study showing how the 10-story building will cast shadows on the surrounding neighborhood throughout the year; (2) comprehensive drawings of how the church-hotel will look from a street-level perspective; (3) detailed architectural drawings showing how the church and the hotel addition will be connected; (4) more details on the complicated array of roof structures, with an eye toward the need for set-backs, and height and massing so that the building respects the character of the surrounding neighborhood; and (5) paint

JANUARY IS KCA RENEWAL MONTH!

A couple of years ago, KCA decided to make each January the month to renew dues. This was done to avoid confusion about when dues should be paid and to ease our book-keeping.

Enclosed you will find a return envelope for your convenience. Please give us your most up-to-date e-mail contact, including both e-mail addresses for two-person households.

Dues are still just \$25.00, payment of which helps defray the cost of this newsletter and other expenses, and enables members to vote on important issues at meetings.

-Denis James

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color revisions, so that the 10-story brick building would not be painted black as proposed.

“We need better drawings, clearer drawings, drawings that really articulate what we’re looking at and know what they’re trying to do with this structure,” said Commissioner Michael Turnbull, who represents the Architect of the Capitol on the Zoning panel.

“They [the developers] have to convince us with this presentation that this is worthwhile, that this is a really meaningful building that’s going to sit in this neighborhood and be a part of it, and be a good neighbor, and really do something for it. ... We’re a long ways from there right now.”

Despite the concerns, Commission Chairman Anthony Hood and Commissioners Konrad Schlater and Marcie Cohen voted to allow the Planned Unit Development application to move forward to a public hearing. Commissioners Turnbull and Peter May of the National Park Service dissented. Chairman Hood predicted that the public hearing before the Zoning Commission would be lengthy.

- Mary Belcher

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Note: Meeting date changed to

January 26, 7pm

Meeting Topic:

Aspects of Adams Morgan History

Three Presentations

See inside for details