

Next
Issue
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Since 1968 • Serving Washington D.C.'s Intown Neighborhoods

By Split Vote Preservation Board Gives Nod to Adams Morgan High-Rise Hotel Design Concepts Despite Numerous Board Member Objections

By Anthony L. Harvey

Unanimous votes by the District's Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) may become a thing of the past if the Board's May 24th monthly meeting is a guide to how contentious HPRB cases are

resolved in the future.

The meeting could have been billed as Christian Science church building controversies day. Its morning session, with all nine HPRB members participating, dealt with the First Church of Christ, Scientist building in Adams Morgan, at Euclid and Champlain Streets and the presentation by developer Friedman Capital of a new design concept for its proposed 90-foot hotel tower that would loom over the Reed-Cooke neighborhood's row houses and medium height residential buildings, as well as being directly adjacent to the rear of the mostly three story former row houses now for the most part retail stores



photo—courtesy of the applicant, Friedman Capital Advisors, LLC.

Architect's rendering showing how the hotel tower will appear when viewed from Unity Park across Euclid Street from the church building; Champlain Street is to the left. Note that the apartment building shown in outline on the left appears to be more dominant in height and volume than it actually is.

Cont., HOTEL PROJECT, p. 6

U Street Reconstruction Project to Impact August "Dog Days of Summer" Sale Event

By P.L. Wolff

The DC Department of Transportation (DDOT) has announced the start of another of its series of its streetscape enhancement projects, this one to be focused on the bustling U Street corridor through the historic stretch known as "Black Broadway," from 14th to 9th Streets, NW.

Construction is scheduled to get underway starting at 9th Street early in the week of June 11th, and progressing in phases west to 14th Street with completion by spring 2013, weather permitting.

When *The InTowner* asked Public Outreach Co-coordinator Chinaka A. Young about how the contractor will alleviate disruption during the Mid-City Business Association's annual early August weekend "Dog Days of Summer" sidewalk sale, she stated that they did not know about this major event. When we mentioned that it always attracts huge numbers of shoppers and accounts for a welcome burst in retail

Cont., U STREET, p. 6



photo—courtesy, DC Dept. of Transportation.

HPRB Denies Height for 16th Street Office Building and Church Plan; Calls for Redesign

By Anthony L. Harvey

HPRB's afternoon session was primarily devoted to the even more contentious issue of the design of a proposed office building for construction on the site of the existing Third Church of Christ, Scientist at 16th and I Streets, NW; the Mayor's Agent has authorized a raze permit once the design of a replacement building has been approved.

The proposed new office building would include a replacement Third Church and would incorporate the remainder of the Landmarked site as well, namely the Christian Science Monitor Building and the plaza between it and the church building. The proposed new building would be nine stories — a reduction of two floors from the initial design — with limestone and glass framing rather than the previous bronze and glass framing, a 93-foot front façade for the first eight stories, with a 30-foot setback on 16th Street and a 15-foot setback on I Street for a ninth story that would raise the building to a height of 107 feet. The allowable mechanical penthouse would rise another 16 feet — all this according to the 16-page HPO staff memorandum on the case, but consistent with the applicant's presentation.

The remainder of the staff memorandum, however, was primarily devoted to a lawyer-like zoning brief arguing an historical case that 16th Street from the White House to Scott Circle is by statute and tradition inviolably lim-

ited to buildings no higher — in any fashion — than 90 feet. In support of its extended thesis, HPO invoked the 1791 L'enfant Plan, Congressional zoning regulations from 1894, the Federal Height Act of 1910, the 1958 comprehensive revision of the DC zoning regulations, numerous excerpts from the current Comprehensive Plan for the District of Columbia, and photographs of buildings allegedly proving HPO's case. The unusual length of this HPO



illus.—courtesy Robert A.M. Stern Architects

Project architect Graham Wyatt's 16th Street drawing shows an architectural concept for the church's new space that will be incorporated within the larger office building complex, which he describes as being a faceted, crystalline, jewel-like structure that will project the congregation's wish to present an open, welcoming, and light-filled, transparent frontage to the street. The design of this faceted glass sculptural element that will link the street level Christian Science reading room with a high ceiling, double floor church auditorium on the second and third floors was not included in the board's order calling for a re-design to lower the building height to 90 feet.

staff memorandum — a 16th Street height restriction protestation - -was even more interesting for what it did not include regarding the applicant's proposal.

Reading from his written testimony, church spokesman Darrow Kirkpatrick pointed out that in the staff memorandum, "No mention is made, however, of the lawsuit filed by preservation

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RECENT REAL ESTATE SALES

Reports are available exclusively on our website by clicking the Real Estate Sales link.

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Food in the 'Hood
by Joel Denker

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From the Publisher's Desk...

By P.L. Wolff

OH DEAR, WHAT CAN WE SAY? . . .

The *Washington Post's* columnist Robert McCartney who invariably provides us with insightful commentary on local matters, tried help us cope through his column on June 7th — the day after our city council's disgraced chairman Kwame Brown resigned following the revelation that he had been charged with federal bank fraud and was entering into a plea deal with the U.S. Attorney. (In addition, as we were preparing for posting our June issue PDF, we learned that he was also being charged with violating the DC campaign finance law and was headed to court to answer that charge, although that was less of a surprise since talk of that shoe dropping had been going on among "insiders" for several months.)

So, "how to 'explain' those D.C. scandals," McCartney's headline promises to advise. First off, he correctly reminds us that as we "venture away from home for vacation this summer, [we] can expect a barrage of humiliating questions from relatives and friends along the lines of, 'What's with all your corrupt city politicians? It's just like the Marion Barry years!'" Continuing, he correctly states that the "questioners are wrong, of course. The situation today is serious, for sure, but it's completely different from the time when Barry (D) was mayor."

McCartney then suggests four talking points we can use to "set things straight . . . things [we] can say to help defend [our] home town while acknowledging its current shortcomings." Of the four, the following three points work for this commentator: "Apart from the politicians, the city's in good shape"; "At least nobody's defending these clowns"; "A well-liked veteran [at-large Councilmember Phil Mendelson] is ready to take over temporarily."

This third point I would move to the top of the list: Councilmember Mendelson will surely be a calming and reassuring steward of the council until a special election can be had. Not only is he deeply versed in the complexities of city council procedures given his many years of service on that body and chairman of some of its most important committees, he has the trust and respect of a majority of voters across the city who value his extensive experience and understanding of the workings of city government upon which he continually draws in carrying out his oversight committee responsibilities and his willingness to constructively and knowledgeably participate in the council's deliberations in considering issues of public policy and crafting legislation.

And, yes DC is in quite "good shape," especially as compared with most other municipalities around the country; real estate is very strong (maybe only New York's Manhattan Island can beat us), tourism has seen a substantial increase in numbers of visitors and over just a year ago, resulting in a jump to \$662 million in tax revenue for the city! Even consumer confidence and the employment picture has been improving noticeably (though not all wards are yet benefiting).

Of course, the big concern now has to be that DC-unfriendly members of Congress are undoubtedly getting geared up to once again challenge our right to home rule. As the *Post* reported in its June 7th issue, "now some congressional leaders, for the first time in more than a decade, are seeing an opening to question the city's locally elected leadership."

To us, this is more than simply raising questions about our politicians; it really means that they are questioning whether we are yet "ready" to actually govern ourselves. They have slowly, though with great reluctance, been willing to allow us partial freedom from the plantation, but they could haul us all back there in a New York minute, especially if the Republicans gain control of the White House and the Congress in November.

Then the opinions of doubters like Utah Republican Congressman Jason Chaffetz who sits on the committee that has DC oversight jurisdiction who right away has pontificated that "city leaders keep arguing for more autonomy, but it's hard to get there when so many people keep getting indicted" will carry great weight. And, ominously, as the *Post* article further reported, "some Republicans on Capitol Hill see the charge against Brown as just the latest in a line of scandals that hurt the District's case for self-governance. . . ."

What irony — they are questioning if we can govern? They're fine ones to talk: They can't even govern the country; we doubt they would even be able to run a township! □

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Selected Recent Real Estate Sales

Prepared for the InTowner by Jo Ricks

Reporting Period: April 2012

The Selected Recent Real Estate Sales monthly feature is now available on its own web page and may be accessed directly by the link in the middle of the home page or by the button in the left side panel. This has made possible the introduction of a new format which allows for easy search by addresses by scrolling down through the list, starting with single family houses, proceeding to condominiums, and concluding with co-ops. □

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AROUND OUR COMMUNITY



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• Sun., Jun. 10 (7:30pm): The "Music with the Angels" series presented by the Church of the Holy City (16th & Corcoran Sts., NW) this month will be featuring the DC Chamber Music Players Orchestra in its premiere concert with pianists Yanya Lee and Mila Naumova-Roushakes. The program will include Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 21 and his Symphony No. 40, Bach's "English Suite," and Beethoven's "Pastoral Sonata."

The DC Chamber Music Players promotes a collegial, non-competitive environment for its dedicated group of musicians who delight in coming together to play their various instruments for their own enjoyment and collective fun. Yanya Lee is an acclaimed artist, having made her debut at the age of 11 with the Kilgore College Symphony. She is a former Young Artist. Ms. Lee most recently studied under Xak Bjerken and Malcolm Bilson at Cornell University, where she performed in master classes given by Gil Kalish. Mila Naumova-Roushakes was raised in a family of generations of renowned musicians in Sofia, Bulgaria and attended the specialized Liubomir Pipkov music school in Sofia from the age of five, with concentration on piano. She earned a Master's degree in Pedagogy and Performance at George Mason University, studying with Professor Anna Balakerskaia. Ms. Naumova-Roushakes received the C. Cook scholarship award, was a part of "M3E", the modern music ensemble of the university, and founded the "Musica Pulchra," a renaissance and baroque chamber group that performed yearly.

Regular attendees of these concerts should note that this month the program will start at 7:30 in the evening instead of the customary mid-afternoon time. Admission is free, a reception will follow with light fare and refreshments to be served. Admission by donation to the church's Tower Restoration Fund welcome. For more information, call (202) 462-6734 or visit www.ChurchoftheHolyCityDC.org.

• Mon., Jun. 12 (11am): Ward 1 Councilmember Jim Graham, whose council Committee on Human Services has oversight responsibility for the Alcoholic Beverage Regulation Administration (ABRA), will be chairing a public roundtable in Room 412 of the Wilson Building (Pa. Ave. & 14th St.) on the subject of Sunday Sales of liquor by Liquor Stores and Class A licensees. In late 2011 the council member created the Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Working Group to put forward ideas for possible changes in the law and to develop a list of recommendations on specific changes in alcoholic beverage law; the final list comprised 44 recommendations which were previously circulated to interested groups. The council member is now planning to introduce Omnibus Alcohol legislation in the coming month. For more information, call the committee office at 724-8191

• Wed., Jun. 14 (7-9:50pm): The Dupont Circle ANC will be holding its regular monthly meeting at the Brookings Institution (1775 Mass. Ave., NW.). Among the items on the substantive agenda will be consideration of the application by DC Preservation League for historic landmarking of the Peyer Building at 1518 K Street NW, along with two zoning applications and three ABRA applications. For more information, visit www.dupontcircleanc.net or send email to email@DupontCircleANC.net

• Fri., Jun. 15, 22 & 29 (12:15-1pm): The free, 45-minute Friday lunch hour pipe

organ recital and demonstration series at National City Christian Church on Thomas Circle, NW, continues its organ recital series on the 15th with organist Anne Timpane of St. John's Episcopal Church, Nordwood Parish, Chevy Chase, Maryland performing "Paeon on 'Divinum Mysterium'" by John Cook; "Exultate" by Daniel Gawthrop; and the Pastorale from Charles-Narie Widor's Organ Symphony II, among works of other composers.

On the 22nd, organ majors from Mississippi College will present a widely varied program featuring Eugene Gigout's Toccata in B minor; Bach's "Little" Fugue in G Minor and the Sinfonia from Cantata 29; Lady Gaga's "Bad Romance" as arranged by Giovanni Dettori; Ennio Morricone's "Gabriel's Oboe" from the movie *The Mission*; and William Bolcom's arrangement of "What a Friend we have in Jesus!"

And on the 29th, National City's Minister of Music and Organist Charles Miller will offer the following program: "Fanfare" by John Cook; former National City's minister of music and organist Lon Schrieber's "St. Francis' Prayer" (with soprano Kathleen Walker); Scotson's Clark's "March of the Torchebearers"; Marcel Dupré's "Cortège et Litanie"; Bach's "Come, Sweetest Death" as arranged by Virgil Fo; and Charles-Marie Widor's Toccata from Symphonie #5.

These performances all take place inside the soaring John Russell Pope-designed sanctuary (reminiscent of a great Christopher Wren church in London) featuring National City's magnificent 7,000-pipe, five-keyboard Möller organ. For more information, call the church's music office at (202) 797-0103 or send an email to cmiller@nationalcitycc.org or visit www.nationalcitycc.org.

• Sat., Jun. 16 (5-7pm): This will be the third of a weekly series of Saturday evening FREE CONCERTS continuing through to July 7th. Sponsored by the Adams Morgan Partnership Business Improvement District (BID), the programs will be held outdoors on the public plaza in front of BB&T Bank at the northeast corner of Columbia Road and 18th Street.

As characterized by the BID's executive director, Kristin Barden, these are "family-friendly events designed to bring the community together to hear some great, eclectic music before going to dinner, going out for the night or putting the kids to bed." There will be limited number of chairs for the audience, so the organizers say to "feel free to bring your own beach chair." In the event of rain, the program will be canceled; there will be no rain dates scheduled. For more info, call 997-0783 or send email to kbarden@adamsmorganonline.org or visit www.adamsmorganonline.org.

On this evening (the 16th), the featured band will be The Black Sparks, a punk band made up of five middle schoolers serious about their music and the alternative rock scene in DC. Their music is high energy, all original, post-punk that promises to be both dynamic and engaging. They have performed at the 9:30 Club (winning multiple Battles of the Bands), the Black Cat, Fort Reno, Fredericksburg All Ages, and other venues throughout the DC area. Visit them at www.theblacksparks.com. The three remaining concerts will feature, on the 23rd, Down Tyme (www.facebook.com/pages/DownTyme/271637024794); on the 30th, Batuque (www.facebook.com/batuque-band); and on July 7th, DaWena. □

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LETTERS

DC's Small Business Agency Responds to Our Commentary

In the "DC's Economy Requires Helping Our Small Businesses" editorial last month (see, From the Publisher's Desk, May 2012, PDF page 2; <http://tinyurl.com/8ykocp>) you referenced a Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council (SBEC) report. You, and the SBEC, use that report (called the "Business Survival Index") to position the District as the worst state in the country for small business.

The index is not a very useful tool for diagnosing state small business environments or for identifying policies that correspond with entrepreneurship and small business success. Specifically:

■ There is no statistical relationship between the SBEC score and the rate at which people start small businesses;

■ There is no statistical relationship between the SBEC score and the small business closure rate;

■ There is a very weak statistical correlation between the SBEC ranking and the number of small businesses per capita; and,

■ Even if these fatal errors didn't exist, the worst six states still exceed the best six states' Gross State Product by well over \$1,000,000,000 per year

In fact, the District is the #1 region in the country for fastest-growing private companies, the #1 jurisdiction for young professionals to move to, and just cracked the list of top 25 cities in "the world" for start-ups.

To make the District the world-class business environment that residents deserve, hard work and hard conversations remain. Demonstrably inaccurate analysis and hyperbole have no place in either; in fact, they discourage entrepreneurs and investors from considering the District. Bad analysis is bad business. It has no place in the serious work of improving our business environment.

I'm certain you share our commitment to improving the District of Columbia. I hope you'll be as unafraid to celebrate the District's business successes as you are to point out its challenges, and that your commitment to accuracy leads you to conclude that the SBEC Index is too flawed to be part of the work ahead.

Brendon Miller,
Director of Public Affairs
DC Department of Small and
Local Business Development

Editor's Note: Even though we devoted a mere 32 words to the SBE report's conclusion, the remaining 672 words of our editorial focused not on the matter of tax burden but rather on the regulatory burdens faced by small businesses here in DC. Unfortunately, the writer of this letter did not address the primary issue raised by us.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Emergency Relief Fund Established for Prominent Civic Activists Dorothy Brizill and Gary Imhoff

By Robert Malson & Marie Drissel

In the wake of a major fire that totally destroyed the entire structure of 1870s Columbia Heights home and everything within, a committee of DC residents has come together to spearhead the fund. They include the authors of this submission — Robert Malson, president of the DC Hospital Association (committee chair), and Marie Drissel, well-known community activist (committee treasurer). The other committee members include Jonetta Rose Barris, author and columnist, *The Washington Examiner*; Robert Vincent Brannum, president emeritus, DC Federation of Citizens Associations; Ron Drake, attorney; Herbert Harris, Jr., DC Consumer Utility Board; Ann Loikow; Joslyn N. Williams, president, Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO; Nathan Saunders, president, Washington Teachers Union; Yolanda Woodlee, former reporter, *The Washington Post*.

There are people among us who are engaged in the hard and critical work of building community. They advocate public policy that empowers citizens. They tackle, directly, debilitating socio-economic conditions. They teach the disenfranchised and disillusioned how to battle government neglect and abuse. And, most important, they inspire us to cross real or imagined boundaries so that we may know, trust and appreciate each other as neighbors.

These individuals do not seek reward, award or remuneration. Creating a better quality of life for everyone—their neighbors—is their greatest satisfaction.

Dorothy Brizill and Gary Imhoff are such people. They exemplify the best in civic leadership.

For the past 30 years, they have dedicated themselves — time, energy, talents and money — to improving communities throughout the District of Columbia. It doesn't matter where you live, you or your neighbors surely have benefited from their tireless work.

"Dorothy Brizill and Gary Imhoff are as essential to the District of Columbia as air," *The Washington Post* columnist Colbert I. King said recently. "Government accountability and vigorous oversight of public service would virtually evaporate without them."

Robert Brannum, president emeritus of the DC Federation of Civic Associations, noted that, "Through [Dorothy's and Gary's] selfless service, citizens of the District have been informed about what has been happening beyond the headlines and official government press releases."

This time, Dorothy and Gary need our help.

Last month, a two-alarm fire engulfed their Columbia Heights home, totally destroying everything — computers, clothing, books, art, and precious memorabilia. Equally devastating, Gary and Dorothy lost files, records and photographs detailing 30 years of history and public policy debate in the District. Adding to this pain and injury, their insurance company has refused, thus far, to honor their claim.

In the spirit of neighbors helping neighbors, a group of us met to consider how we could aid Dorothy and Gary in this time of loss and grief. They have contributed so much — enriching our lives and our city. Given their dire situation, we decided to establish an emergency relief

fund.

We know you agree with WUSA/Channel 9's broadcast reporter and anchor Bruce Johnson who said he has always been "inspired" by Dorothy and Gary's "love of our great city and hard work to keep it safe and working for all citizens."

The proof of Dorothy and Gary's dedication is in their record of achievement: When residents were concerned about the safety of the city's drinking water, they made available a secret WASA database that detailed lead level readings for every home in the District. They advocated for community policing. They fought for more support for small businesses along neighborhood commercial corridors.

After trying unsuccessfully for several years to encourage elected officials to establish a government website, Dorothy and Gary founded DCWatch.com. Begun in 1995, it was the first citywide website to publish DC government information, providing copies of legislation and other documents.

In other words, Dorothy Brizill and Gary Imhoff have been on the scene for nearly every important struggle and development in this city.

"How they have been able to keep at it without the bi-weekly pay checks that most of us count on makes them near saints in my book," said Johnson.

Sometimes, even saints need help. It's our turn to support Dorothy and Gary.

Please make a donation of whatever you can afford to this fund today and send to: *Emergency Relief Fund for Brizill and Imhoff, c/o PNC Bank, 800 17th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006 - Attn: Maggie*. All contributions of any amount will be gladly accepted and greatly appreciated. We recommend individuals consider a contribution of \$100 and organizations donate \$500 or more.

This money will help Dorothy and Gary purchase items critical to getting back on their feet and re-establishing their lives. Non-cash contributions also are being accepted. Should you wish to donate a pre-paid gift card, computer, camera, any furniture, household items or clothing, you may call (202) 234-6982 or send an email to donations@dcwatch.com.

We think you'll agree with us, their recovery is as important to the District of Columbia as it is to them. □

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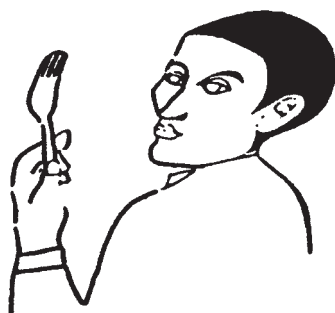
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HPRB DENIAL

From p. 1

groups in the District Court of Appeals which seeks to rescind our procedurally granted right to redevelop our property, nor our case in Federal District Court for being denied our religious rights under [the federal statute enacted in 2000 known as the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, said to correct the problems of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993].”

Continuing, Kirkpatrick stated: “Both of these cases are temporarily stayed pending a satisfactory resolution to the parties of our efforts to build a new church. The Mayor’s Agent appeal and these lawsuits have taken \$315,000 of very precious resources out of the collection plate to pursue our legal rights which resulted in a serious degradation in carrying our mission of ministering to the downtown community.”

Kirkpatrick praised the design of the church in the proposed new office building, expressing the congregation’s “gratitude to Robert A.M. Stern Architects for incorporat-



photo—DC Office of Planning, Historic Preservation Office public record file.

ing the qualities in the design that we feel are most important — light, transparency, i.e., nothing hidden, welcoming outside and inside, in a word representational.”

David Stern, principal with ICG Properties, the lead developer of the project, included in his testimony reference to a specific provision in the Comprehensive Plan for this 16th and I Street site which Stern stipulated that HPO had left out of its presentation. That provision, stated Stern, calls for high-density development of the 16th and I Street site, and high-density is defined as “characterized by buildings of greater than eight stories.” His assertion went unchallenged.

Stern further noted the absence of any mention of the nearby Hay Adams Hotel at 16th and H Streets and its recently approved and constructed addition overlooking the White House. “In fact,” said Stern, “our top floor is lower, and our setback is more than three times as deep. As a result, our top floor is virtually invisible from within the historic district. The HPO report, however, never mentions the Hay Adams, nor is it highlighted or even visible in any of the report’s thirty-eight photographs.”

Stern Architects’ Graham Wyatt formally presented to the board the revised design of the proposed building, stressing the desire of the church to remain downtown and the historic importance of the site. Wyatt further described the iterative process by which the proposed height of the building was first reduced by one and then by two floors and with the bronze framing being replaced by limestone framing. He also noted the importance of materials for this special building and the developer’s intention to preserve the church bells.

The gloves were fully removed when the Dupont Circle ANC commissioners gave their testimony. First, Commissioner Victor Wexler blasted HPO for once again slapping down a proposal that had been already modified in accordance with its own staff’s recommendations to raise the cornice height, to remove two floors, and to replace bronze with limestone framing; Commissioner Mike Silverstein asserted, among other charges, that “there is no question in my mind that some of the opposition to this proposal is payback or retribution because the church dared to exercise its constitutional rights under religious civil rights law — laws that you still will not address — and they did so in defiance of the preservationist community”; and Commissioner and ANC Chair Will Stevens reminded the board and HPO of its seeming refusal to grant “great weight,” as required by DC law, to ANC

resolutions that differ in recommendations from decisions of the board and of its practice of tightly restricting the testimony of the ANC — on zoning matters, for example — while allowing HPO to devote all the time it cares to on zoning. Stevens further noted that he brought up the issue of great weight “in particular today because the staff report on this project does not even mention the ANC once in its 16 pages.”

View of the Third Church of Christ, Scientist’s Brutalist-style building as it currently appears and the adjacent Monitor Building, looking north from the southeast corner of 16th and I Streets toward K Street.

The preservation community roared back with testimony from former HPRB member Charles Robertson, speaking on behalf of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City, who praised the architecture of the present Third Church building as the finest example of Brutalist architecture in the entire Washington area, extolled the HPO staff report and recommendation that an absolute height limitation of 90 feet be observed, and agreed that the applicants should be directed to restudy their proposed building design. Sally Lichtenstein Berk, a prominent member of the DC Preservation League, though speaking for herself, urged the HPRB, as phrased in her submitted statement, “to reject the applicant’s proposal on the grounds that it presupposes the demolition of the Monitor Building; the design is incompatible with the 16th Street Historic District; and the order by the Mayor’s Agent for Historic Preservation which would allow the demolition of the Third Church sanctuary is predicated on receiving a construction permit for a new church on the site. I see no church.” Other preservationists piled on, and as the evening drew nigh, fewer and fewer questions were asked, and tighter time restrictions were observed.

At the end, the HPRB members voted five to two, with two members having recused themselves, to adopt the staff report, sending the applicant’s proposal back for revision and refusing to alter the absolute 90-foot height limitation recommendation from the staff — this in spite of several board members, who voted in the affirmative, expressing no concern for a rigid interpretation of the 90-foot zoning restriction. The two board members who voted in favor of the applicant also expressed no concern for the height being proposed, one member specifically citing the Hay Adams exception. □

Editor’s Note: For a report on how the project design was received by the community when presented in November 2011, see “Proposed Design for 16th Street Complex to Replace Existing Brutalist-Style Third Church Christ, Scientist Near White House Well-Received by Dupont Circle ANC,” website Special Online Content section, <http://tinyurl.com/cq9vjlo>. And, for more background on this case, see “After Four Years of Controversy Christian Science Church Near White House on Track to Get New Home as Part of Office Complex,” *The InTowner*, May 2011, issue PDF page 1. All news reports are available in the Current & Back Issues Archive at www.intowner.com.

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U STREET

From p. 1

sales receipts as well as sales tax revenue, she said that they would look into how to work with the event organizers. She also noted that none of the neighborhood merchants who had attended the May 30th public meeting at the Reeves Center sponsored by Ward 1 Councilmember Jim Graham had brought this to the attention of the meeting's conveners.

Of the \$5 million project cost, 84 percent will be federal funds and the District will contribute the remaining 16 percent.

And while this project will not be nearly as comprehensive as was the 14th Street project that got underway in late 2010 (see, "Major Streetscape Enhancement Proposals for 14th Street Above Thomas Circle Unveiled by DDOT," *InTowner*, October 2010, PDF page 1), the street will be re-surfaced, one block and one side at a time; brick gutters and granite curbs will be installed. Sidewalks will be reconstructed and wid-



map—GeoEye/U.S. Geological Survey, modified; courtesy, DC Dept. of Transportation.

Phase 2, Stage 1 & 2

ened as needed but the only section of sidewalk that will receive special decorative treatment will be that in front of the Lincoln Theatre. New "teardrop" overhang and Washington globe streetlights will replace the existing fixtures; trees will be planted and tree boxes improved and traffic signals and storm drains will be upgraded.

Construction work will affect rush hour and commercial traffic as it will be

scheduled to be performed between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., Monday through Saturday and may occasionally take place on Sundays and during overnight hours. Curbside parking will be temporarily restricted along construction areas so to allow for temporary pedestrian walkways; access to the Metro station and bus stops will be maintained throughout the duration of the project.

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map—GeoEye/U.S. Geological Survey, modified; courtesy, DC Dept. of Transportation.

Phase 1, Stage 1 & 2

HOTEL PROJECT

From p. 1

and restaurants that line the east side of 18th Street in the Washington Heights Historic District.

Ninety feet is the technical zoning height of the proposed hotel tower that would be constructed behind the building that had been the First Church of Christ, Scientist – calculated from the church building's Euclid Street front façade. The hotel, which would be constructed 28 feet behind the Church on Champlain Street, would take advantage of the descending slope of the street, adding 12 to 15 feet to its actual height, plus an additional height of 15 feet for a public access roof terrace and hotel penthouse structures; a further addition of five levels of underground parking would sit below an approximately 224 room hotel.

Following three successive monthly hearing sessions, when lively testimony, both for and against the project, was heard and entered into the record, the Board voted six to three to approve the developer's design concept but stipulated that that approval was, in the board chair's words, "subject to any comments that the board members have had." Those comments were strikingly direct and went to the heart of the controversy over the proposed new structure – its height, massing, and the manner in which it would relate to the character of its immediately surrounding neighbors, especially in Reed-Cooke and on the east side of 18th Street and also on Columbia Road across the triangular park directly facing the church.

Board member comments began with those of Nancy Metzger, a new member but well-known to the historic preservation community for her long-standing leadership position with the Capitol Hill Restoration Society and for her serving as co-coordinator of the DC Historic Districts Coalition. Reflecting on her on-site observations and viewings, Metzger asserted, "I simply could not convince myself that the height and the impact of the height on the church building was compatible."

Graham Davidson, a partner in Hartman-Cox Architects and a trustee of the DC Preservation League, curtly dismissed the developer's historic preservation expert's assertions of the compatibility of the hotel building with the church building according to historic landmarking standards, and then focused on what he asserted would be adverse affects of the proposed hotel building on the Reed-Cooke and the Kalorama historic districts, especially the 18th Street row of buildings. He also pointed out that "the building's height is really located along Champlain Street – a very narrow street – and the street is mostly buildings that are appropriate to the width of the street." Graham further asserted that the hotel building should be 70 feet, the height of the apartment building across Champlain Street.

Several board members complained of what they perceived as a "warehouse look" to the design and of the appearance of vertical windows being tacked onto hotel floors designed for a horizontal structure. Also coming under criticism was the design for a porte-cochere on the Champlain Street side of the proposed hotel and its consequent disruption of the structure's engagement with pedestrian traffic and the neighborhood generally.

HPRB board member Gretchen Phaeler, while noting, "I don't feel strongly about the height as some of my colleagues," nonetheless complained of a commercial feel to the building's design, recommending that it "dissolve" more and fit better into the existing street vernacular, which Phaeler said she found to be part of the charm and character-defining aspect of the neighborhood.

Board member Joseph Taylor, after commending the project architects for progress being made in compatibility of the hotel design, concluded with the observation that "beginning to be compatible is not a solution but tells you where to focus."

Member Maria Casarella, an associate with Cunningham Quill Architects, disagreed with board Chair Catherine Buell and the developer's historic preservation expert that only compatibility of the hotel design with the yet to be designated church

building should be considered, and stated that the HPRB must consider the impact of the proposed project on the immediately adjacent historic district and for that matter on adjacent neighborhoods whether they be designated historic districts or not. Casarella concluded that "there should be consideration of reducing the mass again and redesigning those elements that have the most impact."

Archaeologist board member Robert Sonderman observed several times that the hotel building was too high – certainly on Champlain Street it was too tall; he conceded, however, that he was not sure that the height should be reduced all the way down from 90 to 70 feet.

Next Steps

Prior to the board's consideration and vote, the Adams Morgan ANC had defeated – with a tie vote – a motion to recommend to HPRB approval of Friedman Capital's concept design for its hotel development proposal.

Next steps for this project include public hearings before the District's Zoning Commission, scheduled for September 6th and 13th, to say nothing of further consideration of design changes by the HPRB and the U.S. Department of the Interior's federal tax credit staff review.

According to the Historic Preservation Office (HPO) staff report, Friedman Capital "has submitted an application for a consolidated Planned Unit Development (PUD) and related map amendment. In addition to the map amendment . . . five areas of zoning flexibility would be required. . . . The Office of Planning has suggested that the [hotel] design would be more consistent with the [Comprehensive Plan] if the building were reduced in height, with special consideration given to its relationship to adjacent buildings to the south and west and nearby buildings across Champlain Street and Columbia Road."

HPRB's jurisdiction over this matter remains a murky one, and the process by which the board and the HPO staff have gone forward with the consideration of this proposal has been both opaque and fluid.

The hotel site is not in an historic district but does abut both an historic district and the First Church's 1912 neo-classical revival building, said by the Historic Preservation Office to be an excellent example of such architecture; there is currently a pending application for historic landmark designation.

The church building is proposed to be incorporated into this project as the event center for the hotel complex; it would be directly connected to the hotel tower by a 28-foot-wide "hyphen" building. And, according to HPO, "an application nominating the [church] building to the DC Inventory of Historic Sites was submitted by the Adams Morgan Main Street Group in 2008. In consultation with the church and development team, HPO agreed to defer scheduling the designation hearing to allow the development team to study compatible development treatments."

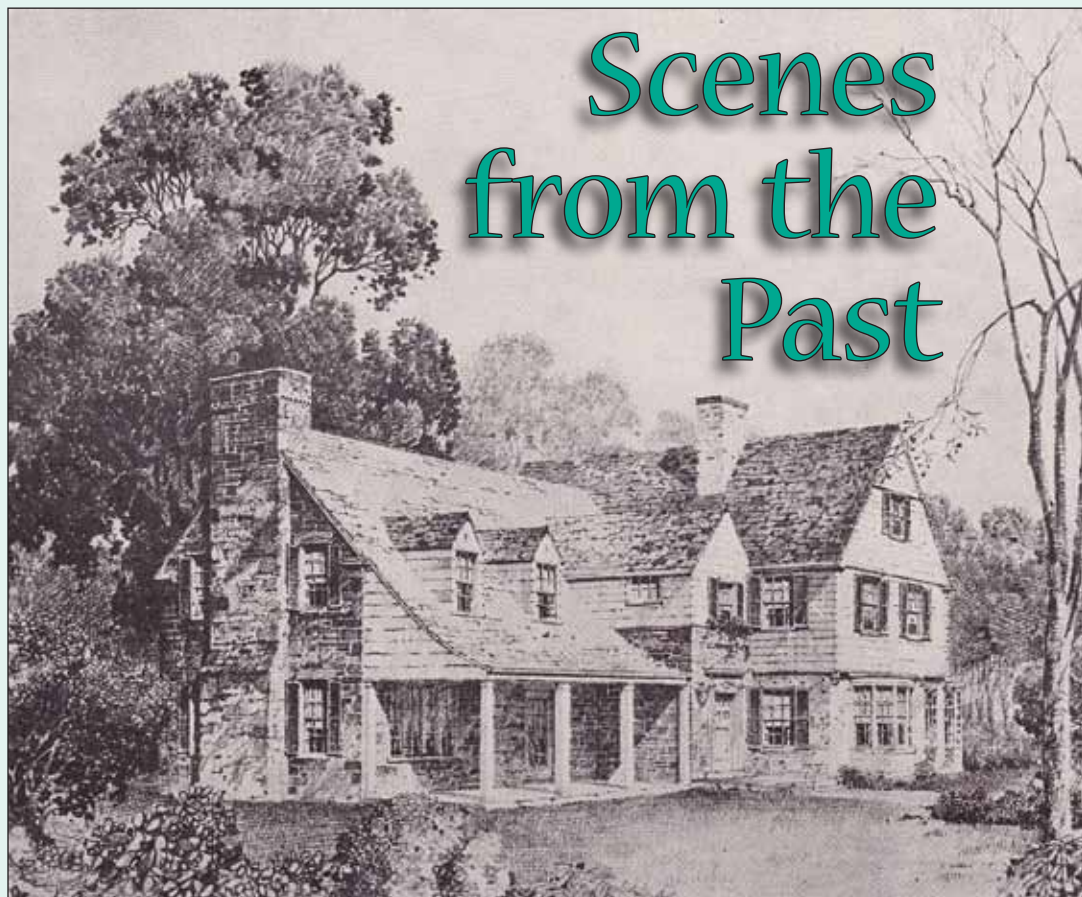
It should be added that the developer's concerns are at least partly related to the question of the project qualifying for federal historic preservation tax credits and thus being eligible for a subsequent comparable benefit from the District – a benefit to compensate for the District having no provision for state or city historic preservation tax credits. The project has also already been granted by previously enacted city council legislation a \$46 million property tax credit.

By virtue of HPO accepting this constrained application and deeming it a pending historic landmark, a raze permit to demolish the structure cannot be issued. The church's congregation, which owns the building and site has stated that unless this project is approved it will apply for just such a permit.

Editor's Note: For background, see "Long-Awaited PUD Application Filed for Controversial Luxury Hotel Tower on Champlain Street in Adams Morgan," *InTowner*, August 2011, PDF page 1.

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Scenes from the Past



Heaton's own house at 4861 Indian Lane in Spring Valley, DC

drawing—Kelsey & Assoc. private collection.

Arthur B. Heaton designed over a 1,000 commissions that included lavish apartment buildings, commercial build-

ings, theaters, and lavish private mansions and homes in the metropolitan Washington area throughout his career, which lasted from 1897 to 1947.



photo—courtesy Google StreetView.

Recent view of the former Heaton house as it now appears from the street, surrounded by mature trees.

He was born on November

12, 1875 in Washington, DC, the son of Frank M. and Mabel (Berthrong) Heaton. Following his 1892 graduation from Central High School, he was employed as a draftsman for the local architectural firms of Frederick B. Pyle, Paul J. Peltz, and Marsh and Peter, and continued his own education in Europe, tour-

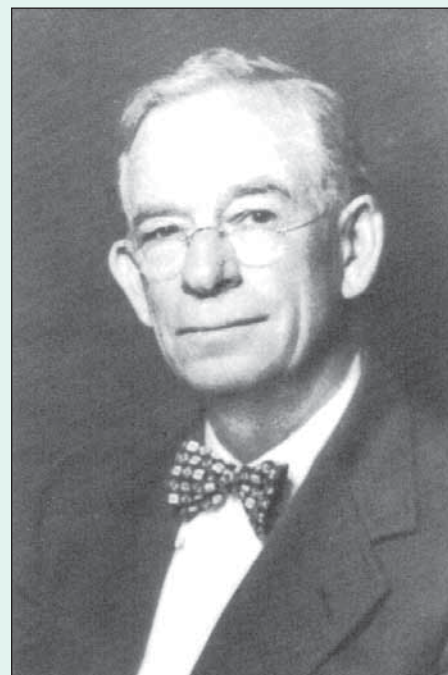
ing the great cathedrals and attending the Sorbonne for a year. He partnered with architect George A. Dessez for the seven houses located between 1712 and 1720 22nd Street, and 2206-2208 Decatur Street, NW. Heaton then opened his own office in 1898.

Immediately successful, Heaton designed four important apartment houses in the first two years of his own practice, an impressive feat for any aspiring architect. They included the Augusta (1900), the Marlborough (1901), the Montgomery (1901), and the Highlands (1902). In all, Heaton would go on to design 28 apartment houses during the period from 1900 to 1940, including the Altamont in 1917, located at 1901 Wyoming Avenue, perhaps his best example. He also served as the first supervising architect

on the construction of the Washington Cathedral from 1908 to 1928.

Heaton also designed a number of homes for private individuals of means, including William S. Corby, David Lawrence, Rudolph Kauffmann, George Judd, and Gilbert Grosvenor's country house in Rockville, Maryland. He provided the plans for the stone-clad house at 1500 Farragut Street, NW in 1915 for coal business owner William E. Barker; designed the house at 2122 Bancroft Place, NW for lawyer Frederick Eichelberger in 1911; and the house at 1848 Biltmore Street, NW for owner R.V. Belt, which was featured in the February 22, 1911 issue of *American Architect*.

Heaton provided plans for



photo—Kelsey & Assoc. private collection.

Arthur B. Heaton.

include the National Geographic Society at 16th and M Streets, NW in 1911; the John Dickson Home for Aged Men at 14th and Gallatin Streets, NW in 1912; the Equitable Building Association; the Washington Loan and Trust Company at 17th and G Streets, NW in 1924; the Capitol Garage on New York Avenue between 14th and 13th Streets, NW; the Embassy building of 1932 at Connecticut Avenue and N Streets, NW; and what is considered the first planned neighborhood shopping center in the country, the 1930 design for the Park and Shop complex in the Cleveland Park neighborhood at Connecticut Avenue and Porter Street, NW.

Heaton married Mabel Williams in 1902, and together, they had two children, Doris (b. 1906), and James (b. 1911). The family first resided at 3320 Highland Avenue, NW, but moved into his own designed house at 4861



drawing—Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

Architect Heaton's elevation rendering for the Embassy Building.

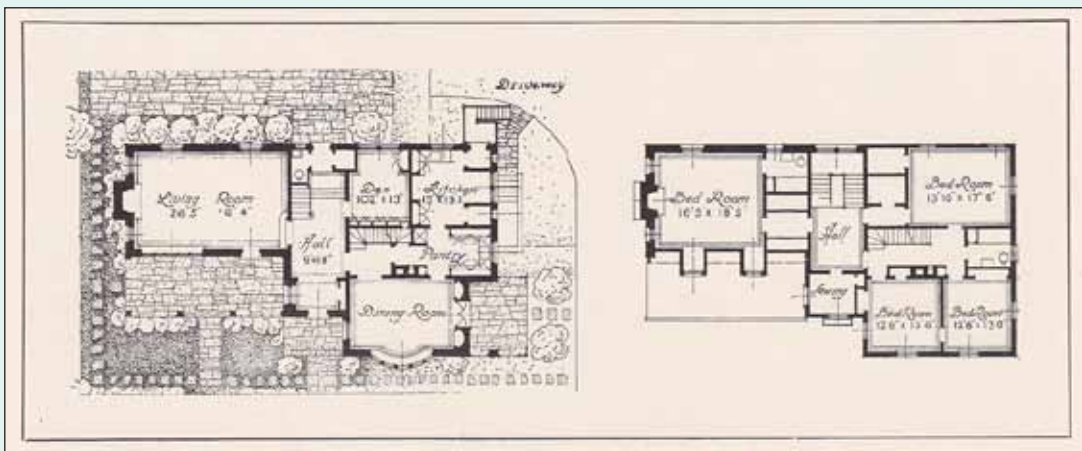
and 1932. He is also noted for an unusual section of homes along a cul-de-sac at Rittenhouse Street and Broad Branch Road in the Chevy Chase DC neighborhood, designed and built in 1931. An early preservationist, Heaton incorporated salvaged architectural elements from the H.H. Richardson-designed mansion, built in 1884 for Henry Adams at 16th and H Streets, NW and razed in 1926, into two individual houses he designed that same year at 3014 Woodland Drive, NW and 2618 31st Street, NW.

Heaton's commercial designs

an office at 1211 Connecticut Avenue for much of his career, and a later colleague, Leon Chatelain III, donated nearly 10,000 of Heaton's drawings and plans to the Library of Congress.

—Paul Kelsey Williams
Historic Preservation Specialist
Kelsey & Associates,
Washington, DC

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drawing—Kelsey & Assoc. private collection.

Architect Heaton's floor plans for his Spring Valley house.

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Johns, *Green Angel* (1991).

Since 1960 with his first finished graphic art production, a stone lithograph print of a black and white target with a blurry bulls eye, American art star Jasper Johns has been exploring and experimenting in graphic techniques with the deconstructing, rearranging, and repeating of images, with revisions, recastings, and overlays based on forms, colors, hatchings, and compositional fragments and components from his paintings, drawings, and sculptures dating from the 1950s. This has resulted in the prodigious production of 360 works, 101 of



Johns, *Untitled* (2011).

which are now on display in this intriguing exhibition, "Jasper Johns: Variations on a Theme."

These terrific graphic creations that span the full 50 years of the artist's efforts in stone lithography and offset prints together with etchings, silk screens, and extraordinary lead reliefs are the outputs of Johns' collaborations with master printers at the renowned Universal Limited Art Editions on New

York's Long Island and that of Gemini G.E.L. in Los Angeles.

Beginning with the painted images that made Johns famous – targets, flags, stenciled numerals, and maps of the continental United States – and continuing with works that incorporate images of ordinary household objects, visual puns on the passage of time, photographic and dream memories of family and personal experiences, the appropriation of pictorial elements from great paintings of the past that have influenced the artist's aesthetic and emotional expressions, Johns and his master printer collaborators have created graphic works that extend the boundaries and techniques of the print media.

These graphic works are fascinating to encounter and contemplate, both for what they reveal and for what they hide of Johns' ideas and concerns in their respective displays of his search for the manner in which images weave their way into his densely compacted compositions and how these images, forms, and colors determine his



Johns, "The Seasons" (*Summer*) 1987.

unusually idiosyncratic creative processes.

How Johns takes apart – deconstructs – his paintings, examining component parts, comparing variations, and devising overlay interim versions will astound artists, printers, and connoisseurs. Magnificent finished works such as the four, content-rich and beautifully colored etchings from the late 1980s, each one named for one of the four seasons and together titled simply "The Seasons," along with the triptych *Black with Primaries*, with its intensely saturated primary colors made in 1991, and his most recently finished untitled work from 2011, one in which elegiac enigmas abound, will enchant all viewers.

John Russell in a 1987 *New York Times* review hailed "The Seasons" as "proving – among much else – that difficult and demanding major art can still be made in an age that loves to flirt with work that is as flimsy as it is immediate." Johns' 2011 untitled work demonstrates the continuance



Johns, *Untitled (Black with Primaries)* (1991).

of that same state in today's contemporary art world.

An explication of "The Seasons" (*Summer*) would begin with the silhouette outline figure of Johns in the left panel of the two-part etching, a form that repeats in each of the four paintings, with the summer's version the most robust and the winter's being contrastingly faint. Inherent forms, which are drawn in outline over a boy's silhouette in the first print and comprise pairs of triangles, squares, and circles are now filled with texture. Images in the print's second panel include flags, star fish, cross hatchings, what appears to be a ladder, and an omnipresent large black face of a clock, the arm of which is in descending, counterclockwise direction in the first three etchings, clockwise in the fourth. The open, medieval hand of God completes the arm.

Two adjacent images are revealing; the first is one that is repeated in several of Johns' paintings and prints, namely a seahorse, the male of which bears the species' offspring, and next to the seahorse is a Mona Lisa image. The ages of man are one of several connecting narrative themes for this ensemble of the four seasons. Much of the imagery is direct and seemingly straight forward. Much is also complex and difficult to decipher and yet is in no way off-putting. One only wants to know more in order to comprehend and feel more deeply the impact of this engaging work.

A more puzzling work is the 1991 etching *Green Angel*. Johns has reportedly hinted that it somehow relates to Matthias Grunewald's *Isenheim Altarpiece*, specifically to the middle position of the work – a triptych titled *The Incarnation*. Johns has explicitly used this work in both paintings and prints, sometimes prominently, as in appropriations in paintings, and sometimes submerged in under layers in prints. *Green Angel* has no direct reference to the *Isenheim Altarpiece* and Johns has declined to explain the title and its reference to this work and to a second work in the show.

Green Angel, in fact, looks like a make-believe topographic map laid out like a jigsaw puzzle with coded colors and line directions providing the meanings for its individual map components. The more

one looks, however, the more one begins to see identifiable forms. For example, Johns' seahorse image appears when a certain component is read to the left; the same component read to the right reveals a profile of a Renaissance dandy with a fancy, perhaps plumed cap as drawn or painted by a Holbein.

Grunewald's feathered green angel, hand-somely painted in the middle portion of his *Incarnation Triptych*, is also puzzling. Some scholars have labeled it an image of Lucifer and speculated that Grunewald was incorporating a programmatic conceit of Dante's in *The Divine Comedy* that explained or symbolized the introduction of evil into the nativity scene of the birth of Christ. Others have simply noted the beatific gaze by the green angel in the direction of Gabriel, the divine messenger – one scholar simply referring to the green angel as a cherubim.



Johns, *Savarin*, 1977.

The 21st century's take on this 16th century mystery and the unexplained use of "the green angel" reference by Johns may be best explored in the review and subsequent exchange in the *New York Review of Books* on this very topic and, perhaps humorously, in the engagement of an on-line jigsaw puzzle of the *Isenheim Altarpiece*, whose first segment begins, ironically in this context, with "The Incarnation."

A handsome pamphlet accompanies this exhibition which continues on view through September 9. □

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

**SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN
ART MUSEUM**
8th & F Sts., NW; info., 633-1000
Daily, 11:30am-7pm

With an exhibition comprising a wonderfully eclectic array of 100 hand-somely presented paintings, sculptures, prints and photographs by 43 African-American artists, the Smithsonian is celebrating the roles played by these artists in many of the social, political, and cultural movements of the 20th century – the “Roaring” ‘20s and the jazz age, the Harlem Renaissance, the civil rights movement, and the continuing struggle in America for economic equality.

One of the stars of the exhibition, *Portrait of Black Madonna* by Benny Andrews, an oil painting and collage on canvas, is a work not previously shown by the museum – one of the more than half of works featured that are being exhibited by the museum for the first time. These include, in addition to the work by Andrews, paintings by Jacob Lawrence and Lois Mailou Jones and photographs by Roy DeCarava, Gordon Parks and Marilyn Nance. All of the works in the exhibition



Benny Andrews, *Portrait of Black Madonna* (1987).

invents the name of Colonel Frank, the cabinet is filled with fascinating items, many of which Stout scavenged or found in junk shops; some she made or adapted herself. This ensemble of objects is completed with chair and rug and a small portrait above the cabinet. Reversing Marianne Moore's



John Biggers, *Shotgun, Third Ward #1* (1966).

are from the museum's own collection, demonstrating the unusual depth and richness of the Smithsonian's African-American art holdings, said by the museum to be the largest and finest in the United States.

More than half of the works in the show are photographs, and range in nature from emotionally engaging fine art examples, carefully posed studio portraits and deftly captured documentary works, to important photojournalism contemporary to its time. (Several additional, stunning photographs are included in the exhibition catalog described below.)

A self-portrait photograph by Renee Stout, *In the Green Suite*, intriguingly introduces Stout's remarkable cabinet of curiosities which is beautifully installed at one end of the exhibition. That work, titled *The Colonel's Cabinet*, mimics what a 17th or 18th century traveling gentleman might have collected when moving about in Africa and on islands adjacent to that continent. Based on Stout's father, for whom she



Sam Gilliam, *The Petition* (1990).

famous admonition to create imaginary gardens with real toads in them, Stout gives her imaginary colonel a real local address: 1523 Swann Street, several blocks north of the 15th Street home – mid-way between Logan and Dupont Circles – of Washington's iconic abstract colorist Alma Thomas, two of whose exuberant, kaleidoscopic paintings are also in the exhibition.

Sam Gilliam's powerful and richly colored metal wall hanging, installed at the other end of the exhibition, is its standout sculpture. The piece echoes these uniquely Washington painterly traditions. The work is called *The Petition*, a title politically resonant with the nation's capital; it is a complex assemblage of painted aluminum cutouts that projects several feet into the viewing space with a strong, insistent quality – a people's petition demanding to be heard. Other terrific sculptures on display include Frederick Eversley's untitled black disk with a shifting focus of light, a work that is poetically described in the catalog by the following: “Its highly polished surface concentrates ambient light in a bright

orb at the center that shines like a distant star in the emptiness of space and draws the viewer into a cosmic place.” And the light shines differently depending on the angle at which one views this ingenious abstract work.

The range of painting styles and content in the exhibition extend from that of John Biggers' glorious realism in his depiction of a church burning

and its seemingly detached spectators and playing children in a work titled *Shotgun, Third Ward #1* to Lois Mailou Jones' celebration of African traditions in her horizontal, three-part painting titled *Moon Masque*, the imagery of which is based on central and west African traditional masks. Eldzier Cortor's magnificent painting called “Southern Gate,” a black nude worthy of comparison with Botticelli's famous painting entitled “The Birth of Venus” or any of the French romantic and exotic works Cortor admired while studying at the Art Institute of Chicago, is another star of the



Earlie Hudnall, Jr., *Hip Hop* (1993).

exhibition. The most moving self-portrait in the exhibition for this viewer is the 1934 canvas by Malvin Gray Johnson, a painting that fills one with a sense of foreboding in what is never the less a beautifully composed and richly executed oil on canvas work.

The large body of photographs exhibited in this show are worthy of a separate exhibition. Whatever their genre, they are each and all masterworks, from both well-known and lesser known photographers. My favorites among the lesser-known are those of Ronald L. Freeman, Tony Gleaton, and, in a class by himself, Earlie Hudnall, Jr., whose photographs titled *Looking Out* and *Hip Hop* are absolutely

riveting.

A splendid exhibition catalog with hand-somely printed full color illustrations which include photographs of additional works that are not in the show is available for sale in the museum bookshop. The catalog is prefaced with a provocative introduction by Duke University Professor Richard J. Powell, followed by unusually informative entries about each of the 43 artists together with the beautiful reproductions of the works in the show and the extra illustrations to boot.



Alma Thomas, *Light Blue Nursery* (1968).

A photograph entitled “Husband and Wife and Bills,” Wayne F. Miller's poignant depiction of painter Eldzier Cortor, his wife Felicia and a partial inclusion of daughter Miriam with wife Felicia sitting on an upright piano bench and holding a clutch of bills illustrates part of the title of the catalog introduction, this in a phrase of W.E.B. Du Bois: “Herein Lie Buried Many Things.” The catalog's introductory essay's title continues with “Screens, Entryways, and Cabinets in Twentieth-Century Black Visual Discourse.”

The exhibition will remain on view through September 3. □

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*Anthony L. Harvey is a collector of contemporary art, with an emphasis on Washington artists. He is a founding member of the Washington Review of the Arts. For many years he was the staff person in the United States Senate responsible for arts and Library of Congress oversight by the Senate's Rules and Administration Committee and the House and Senate's Joint Committee on the Library.



Keith Morrison, *Zombie Jamboree* (1988).