



# HISTORIC MOUNT PLEASANT

## Annual Report Of the Board of Directors Fiscal Year 2010

Presented at the Annual Meeting  
March 5, 2010

Incorporated in 1985, Historic Mount Pleasant (HMP) aims to bring neighbors together to celebrate and protect features of the Mount Pleasant Historic District that give the neighborhood its special character. Our website ([www.historicmountpleasant.org](http://www.historicmountpleasant.org)) provides basic information about historic district requirements and links to a variety of other resources on historic preservation. We regularly field inquiries from residents about individual properties and work with the Historic Preservation Office in the D.C. Office of Planning and other official entities to resolve issues affecting the historic district. We participate in the D.C. Historic Districts Coalition and sponsor social and educational activities in Mount Pleasant.

### Advice and Assistance on Exterior Renovations

Our principal ongoing responsibilities relate to exterior renovations in Mount Pleasant – advising and assisting neighbors on permit requirements, reviewing designs with architects, and providing input on cases going before the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB). Given the broad scope of authority delegated by the Board to the staff of the Historic Preservation Office (HPO), the cases actually going to the Board for decision are relatively few in number. HPO advises all applicants whose cases must go to the Board to share their plans with both HMP and the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC), and the HPRB invariably asks for our views during the hearing. If we cannot attend the hearing, we provide comments in writing to the staff beforehand. In all cases going to the Board, we invite the applicant to discuss his or her plans with us and also invite the views of neighbors who have expressed particular concerns about the project.

During the past year (December 2009-November 2010), the recession greatly reduced the number of cases reviewed by the HPRB. Indeed, there were only three in Mount Pleasant during the entire year – 1734 Lamont, 1646 Park, and 3324 18th. In September, the Board considered the proposed expansion of the third floor at 1734 Lamont to accommodate a fourth unit on the property, and it approved a revised plan for the project in October. Also in October, the Board instructed the contract purchasers of 1646 Park to scale back their expansion plans for that house; the property was subsequently sold to someone else. In November, the Board approved plans at the concept phase for the exterior restoration and modest expansion of the 1909 Schafer house at 3324 18<sup>th</sup>, but as of this writing the contract purchaser has not acquired title. This was an unusually slow year for Mount Pleasant at the HPRB.

Smaller projects are continuing, some without building permits posted. In an effort to remind all neighbors of the need for building permits, HMP developed a one-page flyer, in Spanish and English, and delivered it to all houses in the neighborhood in August. It referred residents to additional information available on official D.C. websites. The D.C. Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs issues all building permits. All work in public space requires a permit from the District Department of Transportation. The Office of Historic Preservation in the Office of Planning must clear on all permits in historic districts. The Homeowners Center – with staff from all three agencies – is now located at 1100 4<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W., on Metro's Green Line (Waterfront-SEU Station).

## Mount Pleasant Street Small Area Plan

In January 2009, the D.C. Office of Planning (OP) announced its intention to develop a “small area plan” for the Mount Pleasant commercial corridor. Small area plans supplement the City’s comprehensive Plan by providing “detailed direction for the development of city blocks, corridors, and neighborhoods” and guide government agencies in their budget and program decisions. OP invited representatives of Mount Pleasant civic associations and ANC Commissioners to serve on its advisory committee. Information was collected in 2009 and the draft plan was released in May 2010. HMP testified at both the June 19 Mayoral hearing and the November 16 D.C. Council hearing on the plan, supporting its adoption with caveats. Our statements are posted on our website. The plan was approved by the Council in December and is available on the OP website ([www.planning.dc.gov](http://www.planning.dc.gov)). We hope approval will result in higher priority being given by the D.C. Government to long-needed public investments along Mount Pleasant Street, such as new street lights and refurbishing Lamont Park.

## Neighborhood Investment Fund Grant

In January 2010, in partnership with the Mount Pleasant Business Association, HMP applied for a \$50,000 grant from the Neighborhood Investment Fund to provide technical assistance to small businesses on Mount Pleasant Street. In early April, we were notified that we would receive \$40,000. Under the grant, HMP provided the required 501(c)(3) framework and fiscal oversight, while the Business Association – specifically its Executive Director Gabriela Mossi – provided day-to-day management and liaison with the businesses. Grant funds could be used only for training and technical assistance, as opposed to material and labor for property improvements. Thus, the grant focused on providing assistance to individual businesses, including assistance in obtaining the necessary building permits, to develop plans that they could implement themselves. The project began with an invitation to all businesses for assistance, which was then provided on a first-come, first-served basis. It also enabled the Business Association to design the colorful posters now displayed in neighborhood bus shelters. Grant funds were received in June and required to be obligated by September 30, resulting in a very compressed period of activity. Nonetheless, visible changes are occurring, and we hope they will encourage more investment by businesses and property owners in the commercial corridor. The following is a list of the areas in which technical assistance funded from this grant has been provided to individual businesses.

- Alex’s Unisex Salon – design and permits for façade restoration, construction expected spring 2011;
- Boveda – website and Facebook pages to promote business, research on outdoor signage options;
- China Town – recommendations for minor façade and interior repairs, grates removed but reinstalled;
- Don Juan – design for expansion of sidewalk café, public space application, research for door replacement and minor outdoor repairs;
- Dos Gringos – graphic design and item selection for new printed menu and indoor sign;
- Heller’s Bakery and Marx Café – logo redesign, design of printed media advertising;
- Marinelli Thrift Store – visual merchandising assistance initiated but then declined;

- Mount Pleasant Care Pharmacy – merchandise display and interior signage;
- Old School Hardware – design and permitting for new signage, website;
- Progreso International Market – merchandise display, inventory management;
- Pupusería San Miguel – façade and public space improvement, signage design, trash storage plan;
- Samber Market – merchandise display, inventory management, recommendations for purchase of new fixtures;
- Tex Mex Burrito – logo creation, sign and menu design, interior design, research for exterior repairs ; and
- Bus Shelter Posters – group marketing and advertising, logos.

In addition, HMP committed \$500 of its own funds toward the cost of the new sign for Pupusería San Miguel, which payment was made in 2011. This was the first time a business had accepted our standing offer to contribute up to one-half the cost of a new sign on Mount Pleasant Street, but not more than \$500, when new signage was part of a broader renovation project. Pupusería San Miguel has also removed trash from the front of the store and is planning on further improving the public space between the sidewalk and the building.

### Community Heritage Grant

In May, HMP applied for a \$2000 grant under the Communities Heritage Program, a joint initiative of HPO and the Humanities Council of Washington, D.C., to help communities tell their own stories. Given the growing development pressure on Mount Pleasant Street and the dearth of readily available information about individual properties, the Board decided to develop a history of the commercial corridor. We sought funding to research and document the evolution of both its physical and commercial features and to place these developments within their broader historical context. The proposed product was two-fold: a research paper presenting primary source information on architects, builders, and businesses to be made available on the HMP website and a pamphlet providing an overview of the history to be distributed to current businesses and others in the neighborhood. We hoped bringing this information together would heighten appreciation for the historic nature of the commercial corridor and encourage the continued renovation and/or reconstruction of its buildings as contributing structures within the Mount Pleasant Historic District.

We received the grant in June and were required to complete the project by October 15. However, we soon realized that the information we were collecting could not possibly be properly organized and developed in that period of time. As we recorded the owners, builders and architects of individual properties, there emerged a Who's Who of the building industry in the early twentieth century. Building permit applications often included drawings, and for some we were able to find full-size originals at the National Archives. With the help of Best Addresses by James Goode and historic property nominations on file with the National Park Service, we saw how apartment buildings on Mount Pleasant Street fit into a broader pattern of residential development in the city. The city directories provided year-by-year information on occupants which, coupled with property records, showed a diversity of national origins multiplying over time. While we had hoped to invite residents to provide personal recollections

of Mount Pleasant businesses as part of our project, we found we could not get to that stage of our research in 2010.

As a result, our 2010 project became the “first stage” of a comprehensive history of the commercial corridor. The products are: (1) an eight-page brochure providing an overview of research to date, including the new images of buildings as they originally appeared that we thought would be of most interest to the neighborhood; (2) a listing of the building permits by address, including names of builders, owners, and architects; (3) a compilation of ownership information from the Recorder of Deeds and other sources; and (4) a series of spreadsheets identifying the businesses that operated at each address annually from 1914 through 1943 (when annual publication of the city directories ceased) and also for 1948 and 1954. The grant funds were used primarily for the printing of the brochure, as HMP Board members donated their time to conduct the research. The products are all posted on our website, and we are distributing copies of the brochure to current and past members, as well as to and through businesses on Mount Pleasant Street and the Mount Pleasant Branch Library. If you have not received a copy and would like one (or more), please contact us through our website.

### Mini-Workshops

During 2010, HMP sponsored several workshops aimed at “greening” the neighborhood. In January, we arranged for the D.C. Preservation League to repeat a program on energy efficiency and old houses that it had developed for its 2009 citywide preservation conference. Before a standing room only audience at the Stoddard Baptist Home, DCPL Vice President John Sandor and Pascale Maslin of Energy Efficiency Experts in Maryland discussed the variety of possible sources of heat exchange and thoroughly debunked the common assumption that window replacement is the best or even a good answer to the problem. They recommended energy audits as a first step and gave examples of cases where significant heat loss was stopped with inexpensive insulation. In June, landscape designer Mary Pat Rowan led a walking tour of Mount Pleasant stopping at interesting yards to identify plants, comment on their use and discuss strategies for sustainable garden design with native plants. In August, HMP Board Member Andrea Foss opened her home for a green construction tour to see how she and her husband Asa are incorporating energy efficiency strategies in the rehabilitation of their house on Ingleside Terrace.

### Other Public Advocacy

In addition to testifying before the HPRB and bodies reviewing the OP Small Area Plan, HMP presented views in writing to the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities (DCCA) regarding the mural proposed for 3125 Mount Pleasant Street and to the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) on both the Klinge Valley Trail Section 106 Evaluation and the unlawful removal of a street tree in front of Haydee’s Restaurant.

After communicating several times with members by e-mail and inviting comments on the proposed City Arts mural, we wrote DCCA Executive Director Gloria Nauden on December 15, 2009, to express our disappointment with the design and request the project not be funded at that time. After several months of seemingly inconclusive discussion of the issue at

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1D, we wrote Ms. Nauden again on April 28, 2010, raising some broader policy concerns about the project review process and how DCCAHA worked in historic districts. She replied on May 3 stating that DCCAHA could not support a project that failed to obtain a letter of support from the ANC, as had happened in this case, but ignoring the more substantive concerns we had raised about conflicts between historic preservation objectives and DCCAHA procedures.

On March 31, we wrote Austina Casey, DDOT project manager for the evaluation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of the potential effects on cultural resources of the trail proposed for the barricaded portion of Klingle Road between Porter Street and Cortland Place. Our letter noted that Klingle Road had been conveyed to the District of Columbia “forever, for the purpose of a public highway,” under the terms of the transfer recorded in 1885. Thus, while we supported the proposed trail, we questioned how the option of restoring the public road could legally be foreclosed, and how the proposed design could provide access for utilities and emergency response and not for regular public vehicular use. We called for restoring and reopening Klingle Road as a public roadway consistent with its historical purpose and cross-town design.

On July 12, we sent an e-mail to DDOT Director Gabe Klein, in which Mount Pleasant Main Street and the Mount Pleasant Neighborhood Alliance joined us in calling for prompt action to restore the tree box and tree illegally removed from public space in front of Haydee’s Restaurant the previous weekend. Mr. Klein replied the same day, assuring us that appropriate steps were being taken to restore the tree box and the tree and to make sure this did not happen again. While a new tree was subsequently planted by the business, the incident demonstrates the need for more widespread understanding of public space rules and regulations on Mount Pleasant Street and their consistent enforcement by D.C. agencies.

#### Historic Districts Coalition

HMP continues to participate on a regular basis in meetings and other activities of the Historic Districts Coalition, an informal network of neighborhood preservation groups. The Coalition serves as a central source of information on legislative and other local initiatives affecting historic preservation and provides and coordinates testimony as necessary. To continue to provide this support beyond the tenure of its current leadership, the Coalition needs to develop a stronger organizational framework and possibly formal relationships with constituent organizations. Toward that end, we have participated in three phases of a strategic planning exercise led by the National Trust for Historic Preservation – a questionnaire, a preliminary discussion of the viewpoints provided, and a retreat to help reach a consensus on next steps. We are awaiting the final report from the National Trust.

#### Promoting Broader Membership and Involvement

The annual Holiday Party, held on the first Friday in December, has long been our main membership drive. We want to express our sincere appreciation to Carolynn Iafrate and Steve Kranz for hosting the party this year and welcoming the neighborhood to their new home at 1841 Park Road. In the past, we have mailed invitations to the entire neighborhood – at great expense

and with few visible results in terms of new members. In 2010, we decided instead to post invitations on websites and in the neighborhood and to send e-mail invitations to everyone on our active membership list. If we missed anyone who should have received a direct invitation, we apologize. We are working to improve our membership tracking systems.

We urge you to help us reach out to neighbors, particularly new ones, to tell them about HMP and elicit their support and participation. We expect to continue the Mount Pleasant Street history project this year and have begun to explore the possibility of building an interactive map to which new information could be added over time. We will need the assistance of many people, new and old residents alike, to make this a reality. We also hope to develop new activities and are always interested in suggestions from members. So please give us feedback on what we have been doing and what we should be doing in the future. And please volunteer your time. Historic Mount Pleasant can only be as effective as it is representative of its membership at large. You may contact any member of the Board of Directors or send your suggestions to our website ([www.historicmountpleasant.org](http://www.historicmountpleasant.org)).

Financial statements for the last two fiscal years follow, as last year's annual report contained only preliminary information for 2009. Final information for 2010 will be posted soon on our website with the annual report.

Historic Mount Pleasant, Inc.

Profit and Loss Statement (final)

Fiscal Year 2009 (December 1, 2008 - November 30, 2009)

Income			
	Membership and undesignated contributions		\$3,714.00
	Merchandise sales		14.00
	Holiday party bar proceeds (donations)		340.00
	Interest on savings account		22.82
Total Income			\$4,090.82
Expenses:			
	Event-related: Holiday Party		1,316.55
	Annual Meeting		200.00
	Corporate:		0
	Financial services		0
	Website operation <sup>i</sup>		175.89
	Insurance		0
	Bookkeeping software		200.82
	Membership/Outreach		0
	Mailing for Holiday Party <sup>ii</sup>		2,013.88
	November 2009 Mailing		1,481.25
	Other: Gifts and donations	Mt Pleasant Elm Fund	500.00
		Solar Fair	500.00
		Rosemount Center (fence)	1,000.00
	Awards for Preservation (plaques)		202.25
Total Expenses			7,590.64 <u>7,590.64</u>
Gain (Loss)			<u>(3,499.82)</u>

Balance Sheet (final)

End of Fiscal Year 2009 (November 30, 2009)

ASSETS		
	Current Assets	
	Bank of America Checking Account	4,557.28
	Bank of America Savings Account	14,218.12
	Total Current Assets	<u>18,775.40</u>
	Prepaid Expense <sup>iii</sup>	169.80
TOTAL ASSETS		<u><u>18,945.20</u></u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
	Liabilities Outstanding check	650.00
	Equity	
	Opening Balance Equity	21,795.02
	Net Loss	(3,499.82)
	Total Equity	18,295.20
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		<u><u>18,945.20</u></u>



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<sup>i</sup> 1 month @ \$14.90; 7 months @ \$18.15 (\$127.03); 2 months @ \$16.98 (\$33.96). (Monthly cost varies according to length of pre-payment.) Website was inadvertently down one month, so expense is for 11 months.

<sup>ii</sup> Mailing was in advance of the Holiday Party and thus treated as a fiscal year 2009 expense. Beginning in 2009, mailings are treated as membership/outreach expenses for the fiscal year in which they occur.

<sup>iii</sup> Website, 10 months (December through September) @ \$16.98.