



Historic Takoma, Inc.

Preserving the Heritage of Takoma Park-
MD & Takoma-DC

Celebrating 25 Years of Service to the Community
1979-2004.

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2002 Historic Takoma Annual Report

Archives

In February 2002, in a two-day event attended by more than 100 people, several years of hard work in organizing an Archives collection of documentary artifacts resulted in the opening to the public of the Historic Takoma, Inc. Archives in the lower level of 6903 Laurel Avenue, Takoma Park, MD. John Urciolo who owns the building donated use of the space. Ann Juneau, chair of the Archives Committee assembled a wonderful team of archive, computer technology, history, and library professionals. The Archives was staffed by volunteers for drop in hours two days a week and at other times by appointment. Individuals and organizations in the community contributed a number of new items and collections--records of the Takoma Park Sister City Committee, files from past president Ellen Marsh, the scrapbook collection of Jane Cromer, and others.

Opening the Archives to the public and mounting information on the internet has raised the profile of our historical collections. We received an increased number of inquiries and from further afield, including England and Canada. The Archives collection is also serving as a resource not only for private researchers but also for homeowners attempting restorations, professional historians and authors, students of historic preservation at the university level, documentary filmmakers, and the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History.

The lobby outside of the archives has also provided HTI with exhibit space. General historic information and pictures of early Takoma Park were provided in an exhibit at the Archives opening.

A project was also initiated to digitize our collection of historic photos, starting with those of historic houses, through a plan devised by volunteer and B. F. Gilbert Member Ed Fox and to make those photos with supporting bibliographic information available on the internet through the HTI website.

Takoma DC Survey of Properties

The DC Office of Historic Preservation awarded more than \$9000 to Historic Takoma to conduct a survey of properties in Takoma DC not already included in the Takoma Park DC Historic District created in 1980. This funding was matched by nearly \$12,000 of in-kind services, supplies and equipment from HTI, along with a \$1000 contribution from HTI. HTI Vice President Loretta Neumann served as the volunteer managing director of the project. Noted architectural historian Pam Scott, a Takoma DC resident, was the project historian and directed the survey team including historic preservation students from George Washington University working with Professor Richard Longstreth. Franz Jantzen, architectural photographer for the Supreme Court, photo-documented 40 homes selected to illustrate the variety of architectural styles in Takoma DC not presently included in the Historic District. Research was conducted on the historical, architectural and cultural history of the area, including extensive use of the new HTI Archives. The project culminated with a community presentation on May 8, 2002, in the historic Takoma Theatre, recently reopening by the Takoma Theatre Arts Project. The final report and associated work were added to the HTI Archives collection. HTI plans to use this work for reconsideration of the boundaries of the Takoma Park DC Historic District.

House and Garden Tour

The 2002 House and Garden Tour was a huge success with the greatest number of participants ever on a glorious sunny May Sunday. The tour featured eighteen homes and gardens in B. F. Gilbert's "New Takoma" addition centered around Sycamore, Beech, Elm, Poplar, Columbia and Hickory Avenues. It included innovative updates and additions in houses and gardens opened for the first time to a House and Garden Tour. These homes illustrated the gradual development of the Takoma area and also two of the city's oldest homes. The tour has become the largest fund-raising event for HTI.

Maryland Historic Preservation

HTI collaborated with the City of Takoma Park, MD, to work with Montgomery College regarding their campus in and adjacent to the Takoma Park MD Historic District. This campus is partially on the site of the Victorian North Takoma hotel and its successor, the Bliss Electrical School. The College planned to expand its campus, including some building in the historic Jessup Blair Park. Litigation not involving HTI ensued regarding these plans, during which the College asserted that it was not subject to county historic preservation laws. This raised concerns about future college development in Takoma Park. HTI, the City of Takoma Park, Montgomery County and Montgomery College developed an agreement that Montgomery College under which the College will abide by County preservation law. This landmark agreement will be enforceable by the County, the City, and HTI; it will be recorded in the miscellaneous records of

Montgomery County; and the City of Takoma Park will publish this agreement as part of the City Code. The College also agreed to narrow its legal arguments in this case to avoid a broad judgment that could be detrimental to future historic preservation efforts in Montgomery County.

HTI continued to be an active participant in the difficult process involving the new Takoma Park MD Fire Station. While the community succeeded in keeping a fire station on the historic site, and securing the development of a design in harmony with the early 20th century homes in that area, difficult issues remained regarding the destruction of two houses. HTI supported plans for saving at least one house while not compromising the station or the design.

Joining with other historic preservation organizations and members of the greater Silver Spring-Takoma Park community, HTI supported designation of the art deco Canada Dry Bottling Plant on East-West Highway between George Avenue and Colesville Road as a designated historic site on the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

Takoma DC Historic Preservation

Historic Takoma was consulted on the design of, and testified in support of, two significant new housing and retail developments on blighted properties in what was the original business district of the Takoma community. Both developers worked with HTI and the community on their plans and incorporated many of our thoughts and suggestions.

New Legacy Partners purchased the vacant lot at the corner of Blair Road and Cedar Street and is planning a four-story building that will house 45 residential condominiums, most of them two-level, two-bedroom units. Ron Eichner, the developer, plans to include retail space on the Cedar Street ground level side which will be designed to echo the historic Mattingly's Drug Store that once stood in that area. On the Blair Road side, the frontage will be set back from the road with a landscaped area. Construction was scheduled for the fall of 2002 or early 2003. HTI testified before the D.C. Historic Preservation Review board in support of these plans.

Architect and developer Russell Katz planned for a contemporary-style, mixed-use building for the pie-shaped "graffiti lot" on Carroll Avenue directly opposite the Metro station. The proposed building will have retail space at street level on Carroll Avenue and approximately 58 one- and two-bedroom apartments and duplexes above. The building plan includes a "green" roof and other environmentally friendly features. HTI testified about the project at the DC Historic Preservation Review Board hearings, and HTI supported Mr. Katz's application for minor zoning exceptions necessary based on the difficult site.

In late 2002, a car accident damaged the iron fence protecting boundary stone NE2 on Maple Avenue. This is one of the surviving original boundary stones

installed from 1791 to 1792 to demarcate the borders of the District of Columbia, now protected by the Daughters of the American Revolution. HTI immediately worked with the DAR and the governments of DC and Takoma Park, MD to have the fence repaired by DC Public Works and then repainted by the City of Takoma Park. Plans to re-landscape around the stone and to dedicate a mini-park continue.

2002 was a banner year for the only Takoma Park property listed on the National Register of Historic Buildings: the Cady-Lee Mansion. Located at Piney Branch Road and Eastern Avenue, this glorious Victorian mansion has survived many threats since its construction in the 1880s. In January 2002 Takoma Park, MD resident Frances Phipps complete a full restoration of the mansion. A non-profit group, the Forum for Youth Investment, purchased the property and expressed interest in carefully maintaining its historic character. HTI met with the Forum to discuss the future of the mansion under their stewardship. HTI wrote a letter to ANC 4B and testified before the DC Board of Zoning Adjustments on June 11 in support of the application by Francis Phipps for a zoning exception to allow a nonprofit group to occupy the Cady-Lee as a residential structure. This enabled the Forum to avoid the kind of commercial changes to the building that could severely damage its historic integrity.

Takoma DC has a community recreation center with a historic pool house at 3rd and Van Buren Streets, NW. A new building was planned and a groundbreaking occurred in 2002. HTI worked with community stakeholders to ensure preservation of the old pool house and a design for the new building that would harmonize with it.

The New Testament Church owns a historic brick bungalow at 6812 Fourth St., NW, near downtown Takoma DC. The Church wanted to expand the home, which serves as the residence for the pastor and others, but had not considered the historic district issues. After the D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board rejected their initial plans, the Church consulted with HTI. We helped familiarize them with the issues involved and have made ourselves available to work with them further on this property.

The Metropolitan Branch Trail is a planned hiker-biker trail, which will eventually link Takoma Park and Silver Spring with north central DC and Union Station. The Trail is planned to go through the historic North Takoma community in Maryland and through the center of the historic Takoma DC downtown. One possible alignment of the trail, favored by some bicycle groups, would be detrimental to the Cady-Lee mansion. HTI's DC Preservation Committee followed this issue closely, meeting on several occasions with Chris Holben, Bicycle Program Specialist for the District Department of Transportation, as well as other stakeholders; attending DDOT's monthly MBT Advisory Group meetings. and offering comments on the draft report of the Alignment Study for the Takoma Area Corridor of the MBT.

HTI Vice President Loretta Neumann worked with the Vinegar Hill-Military Road School Alumni Association to protect the historic African-American

School in the District (between 13th and 14th Streets NW) from further deterioration and inappropriate re-use as well as protecting adjacent land from a proposed townhouse development. The area is significant both to African American History and to the Civil War battle of Fort Stevens.

Takoma Metro Site

Since 2000, HTI has been actively involved in the question of development on the Takoma Gateway Site, a park adjacent to the Takoma Metro station, the single largest remaining green space in the community. Private residential development is proposed not only for this green space, but also for the station entrances, bus access, pedestrian access, bicycle access, vehicle access, parking lot, trees and bicycle storage. WMATA had announced the sale of the entire site in 2000 to a private residential developer without prior input from the historic community that will be most impacted by such development. After public outcry, the DC Office of Planning began working on a comprehensive plan for Takoma DC development that would include this site, and they formed a community working group. An HTI volunteer, Jessica Landman, served on that group on behalf of HTI, the only community group represented in the process. The Office of Planning's final Takoma Central District Plan included extensive development and revitalization plans. The Metro Site was slated for a small park and up to 95 townhouses. In June of 2002, the DC City Council held hearings on this plan. HTI testified in general support of the plan but asked Council to not approve it until after a transportation study in the effected area was completed so that the plan could be revised to reflect transportation realities of an area already plagued with traffic and transit access problems.

Membership

The PastPerfect software acquired for the Archives cataloging project includes a module for managing membership information. With the assistance of volunteer Becky Miller, the membership list was entered in the database. This database also facilitates mass mailing, emailing, printing labels, posting dues payments, and tracking donations.

In an effort to better engage with our membership, Board Directors and volunteers were often at the Takoma Park Farmers' Market, the Takoma Park Street Festival, and other community events hoping to attract new members. Part of this process was the sale and distribution to members of a commemorative calendar for the year 2003 which included a number of unique, unpublished photos from the Archives collection. Perhaps 30 new members were brought in to the organization through these efforts. HTI also continued to gain new members through the Takoma Park realtors' House Warming Program and a joint membership drive with the Takoma Theatre Arts Project. At the end of the year, the organization received several new memberships at the B. F. Gilbert level. Still, membership levels overall have decreased in recent years.

Website

Historic Takoma unveiled its own website, www.historictakoma.org, in February 2002 in conjunction with the opening of the HTI Archives. The website includes a comprehensive collection of information about the history of Takoma Park as well as detailed information relating to the Historic Takoma organization itself. It also provides a forum for announcing history- and preservation-related events and issues. The Archives database is searchable via the website and certain materials from the collections, such as photos of houses, are available as online exhibits.

Takoma Theatre Arts Project

The Takoma Theatre Arts Project (TTAP) was formed by Takoma DC and Maryland residents to restore the historic Takoma Theater at 4th and Butternut Streets, NW in DC. HTI supported TTAP by serving as its initial sponsor while it worked through filing non-profit incorporation and tax exempt status. The Theater is a landmark within the Takoma DC Historic District, and it has been largely dormant during the last 20 years. TTAP is working to develop it into a community-based and professionally-managed nonprofit cultural arts center. With HTI's assistance TTAP also quickly started a website at www.takomatheatre.org that included organizing and performance information.

Vision Award with Takoma Village Cohousing

The Committee of 100 on the Federal City, the oldest citizen planning organization in Washington, DC, presented one of its first "Vision Awards" to the residents of Takoma Village Cohousing (TVC) on 4th Street, NW, architect Donald Tucker, the architectural firm Ecohousing, and HTI in May 2002. The award recognizes "individuals and organizations whose unique developments have made major contribution citywide and to each ward within the city." TVC development was honored for its pioneering effort to meet changing human needs with energy - saving construction that accommodates new forms of community living while also fitting within the context of the Takoma DC Historic District. HTI worked with the participants to ensure that this progressive housing development, located between the historic Takoma Theater and single-family homes, would contribute to the historic Takoma DC community.

Community Historical Events

On October 28, 2002, HTI sponsored a presentation at the historic Takoma

Theater by author Rosemary Thornton about Sears houses. In the first half of the 20th century, many Takoma Park homes in Maryland and the District of Columbia were purchased from a Sears catalogue, delivered by rail, and assembled according to kit instructions, and according to Thornton, a large number of these houses survive in the community. More than 250 people enjoyed Thornton's slides and talk about these homes and their history.

Education and Outreach

HTI continued working with elementary school children. Takoma Park Elementary and Piney Branch Elementary are using Takoma Park A-Z: The Kids' Guide to the Town that Gilbert Built, a wonderful book printed in 2001 with grant funding. In conjunction with the book, HTI's Education Chair, Diana Kohn led 300 fourth grade students on walks through the historic heart of Takoma Park.

HTI participated in three major community events in 2002 that provided opportunities for historical education outreach: Montgomery County's "Happy Birthday Montgomery" historic celebration in Rockville; the Takoma Park Street Festival; and the Takoma Park Folk Festival. At Happy Birthday Montgomery we discussed Takoma Park, HTI and our programs with people from all over the county. There was strong interest in our archives database (available via laptop), as well as our website and oral history project. At the Street Festival and the Folk Festival, HTI presented exhibits about the history of Takoma Park, answered questions, distributed literature about historic preservation, sold copies of our book and the 2003 Historic Takoma calendar, and signed up new members.

Organizational Administration

Fran Eargle volunteered her time as a professional facilitator for HTI's Board retreat in early 2002. This was an important event for HTI to evaluate its work at a time when so many issues and challenges were arising. At the end of 2002 HTI revised its board structure to reflect the greater needs of the organization. Based on the recommendation of the 2002 Nominating Committee, headed by former HTI President Doug Harbit, the Board was increased to 17 members for 2003. Some new positions were created, including Vice President for Preservation, Vice President for Operations, Director for Development, and an At-Large seat. The by-laws were amended to reflect these changes. The membership adopted this board structure and the 2003 slate of board members and officers at the annual meeting in December. Doug Harbit and Robert Patenaude once again hosted this meeting at the fabulous Davis-Warner Inn. They also hosted our board retreat at the Inn.

Walking Tours

HTI instituted a regular schedule of free monthly walking tours during the summer months. Two versions of the tour consist of: 1) the historic heart of Old Takoma; and 2) The Dinky Line Trolley. Response has been good, with an average of 15 participants in each tour. One Dinky Line tour, cosponsored by the Cultural Tourism Office of the District of Columbia, attracted 40 participants.

Grants

HTI continued with its very successful track record in obtaining grant funding in 2004. We were awarded a grant from Preservation Maryland for assistance in space planning for a new home for HTI and our archives collection. Another grant came from Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission to underwrite creation of a "Walking Tour of Takoma Park" brochure. A grant from the Takoma Foundation will provide seed money for beginning a 'history wall' to be created for the new Takoma Park Community Center.

Financial Summary for Fiscal Year 2004

ASSETS	
Cash and non-interest Bank Accounts	30,974
Savings	43,619
Inventory	8988
Investments	72610
Other	1196
Total Assets:	157,360
LIABILITIES	15,000
TOTAL NET ASSESTS	142,360

