

# Martha Jefferson Neighborhood Association

FALL 2007 ISSUE

SEPTEMBER 27, 2007

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## Fall Picnic Sunday, October 14th

Please join your neighbors on **October 14th from 5-7 pm in the backyard of John and Susanna Williams' home at 737 Locust Avenue—between Poplar and Hazel Streets.**

The neighborhood will provide pizza and soft drinks. Please bring a special Fall dish to share and any other

beverages you may desire.

Lawn chairs and outdoor games are always a great idea.

Games and apple bobbing will be provided for the kids.

Information about the proposed historic district will be available at the picnic.

The rain date for the picnic will be October 21st from 5-7 at the same location.

*We are looking for alternate picnic sites for the Spring picnic, particularly closer to our Lexington Avenue border. If you and your family are willing to host, please contact Clarence McClymonds..*

## Neighborhood History Lecture, October 8th

Mark your calendars for **October 8th at 7:00 pm at Burnley-Moran Elementary School Auditorium** for an informative lecture on the history of our neighborhood. Lydia Mattice Brandt, a doctoral candidate in Architectural History at UVA, will present information about the history of the neighborhood, the development company that built it, the people who lived here, and more. If you want to learn more about your own home's history, please come!

## Recent Demolitions in Charlottesville— It does happen



Little High Street Area  
320 11th Street  
Assessment: \$320,000  
Built: pre-1920



Fifeville  
611 Booker Street  
Assessment: \$108,100  
Built: pre-1920



Fifeville  
723 Nalle Street  
Assessment: \$173,000  
Built: pre-1920

## IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER AND REQUESTS:

- **October 3rd, MJNA Monthly Meeting/Work Session.** 5:30 pm at 701 Locust Avenue. While we discuss neighborhood issues, we will also assemble the folders with archival information and photos of each property included in the proposed district.
- **October 8th, Neighborhood History Lecture.** 7:00 pm at Burnley-Moran Elementary School Auditorium.
- **October 14th, MJNA Fall Picnic.** 4:00 - 7:00 pm at 737 Locust Avenue.
- **October 24th, Virginia Department of Historic Resources Public Meeting.** 7:00 pm at Burnley-Moran Elementary School Auditorium.
- *Need volunteers to create website.*
- *Need donations for historic survey work.*

## Historic Designation Update

This summer you may have seen one intrepid soul perusing the neighborhood in the heat with notebook and camera in hand. As you know from previous newsletters and meetings, Lydia Mattice Brandt, a UVA graduate student in historic preservation, was hired by MJNA last spring to carry out an historic survey of the neighborhood.

Her hard work and long hours, assisted by some volunteers, have paid off immensely. We are thrilled to announce that the State Department of Historic Resources has approved our preliminary application for historic designation, and the nomination is close to being finalized.

We have applied to become a historic district, which is defined as “a significant concentration, linkage, or conti-

nunity of sites, building, structure or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.” If the nomination is successful at the state level, it will then proceed

*“The State Department of Historic Resources has approved our preliminary information form.”*

to a listing in the National Register. The listings at both the state and federal levels do not restrict or prevent an owner from altering or tearing down a property but recognizes the property’s importance and encourages its preservation.

The state designation on the Virginia Landmarks Register for example is “designed to educate the public to the

significance of the designated resource and to encourage local governments and property owners to take the designated property’s historic, architectural, archaeological and cultural significance into account in their planning, the local government comprehensive plan and their decision-making.

State and federal recognition of our historic neighborhood will pave the way for local designation, which is ultimately our goal, since it is one of the only ways to ensure that some of our oldest homes cannot be demolished without review, and that the integrity and beauty of the neighborhood can be preserved.

*Continued on Page 3*

## Request for Down-Zoning

In August a letter was sent to City Council, MJH, Planning Commission, and the City Manager requesting that various parcels of MJH property be down-zoned from business to residential.

A comprehensive down-zoning at this time is necessary to update the zoning ordinance as MJH abandons

this property and to ensure that future uses of the property remain consistent with the vision for Charlottesville as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan.

We believe that our proposed course of action is totally consistent with the history of land use decisions over that past several decades

in our neighborhood, will not burden MJH as they market their property for sale and is most clearly in the best interests of the City of Charlottesville.

To date, we have only received responses from Dave Norris (see below), and, this week, from the hospital. The response from MJH will

## Neighborhood Walk with Dave Norris

Dave Norris quickly responded to our letter, and requested a meeting and a neighborhood walk.

On September 6th, we spent a very hot hour and walked to each of the properties where the neighborhood has requested down-zoning and talked about the rationale behind each request.

Dave asked a lot of questions and informed us about some of his thoughts on general development and other topics. A note soon appeared on his blog:

<http://cvilledave.blogspot.com>

where he noted that our interest in retaining “the historic and aesthetic fabric” of the neighborhood “seems like a mighty reasonable request”.

He also shared his interest in vintage postcards of sites all around Charlottesville, and allowed us to reprint some of them here.

Check out his blog for the full posting as well as additional postcards of the hospital and sites all around Charlottesville.

Thanks to Dave for taking the time to meet with us.



## Historic Designation Update (continued from page 2)



*The paving of East High Street, circa 1917. From the Holsinger Archives.*

There are several benefits associated with State and Federal designation--among them, tax credits for renovation of homes. For example, the state offers state rehabilitation tax credits equal to 25% of the cost of rehabbing eligible or listed residential or commercial buildings, whether or not the buildings are income-producing--this includes buildings that are contributing components of historic districts, not just individually designated properties. The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program offers a 20% tax credit for the rehabilitation of certified historic structures that are commercial properties.

In addition to tax credits, State Historic Designation prevents demolition, if the property is owned by the Common-

wealth of Virginia. Virginia does not currently own any properties in the proposed district.

Mary Joy Scala, the city's historic resources director has been working on creating a new "conservation" district. While the description of the conservation district is still being created, it essentially will differ from the ADC or Architectural Design Control District, in that it will have far fewer restrictions on house alterations, etc. while still preventing demolition without review.

Based feedback from a workshop held on September 5th, the entire proposal of what restrictions would be placed on contributing properties may be scrapped. The committee expressed

the desire to be less restrictive, perhaps to the extreme of requiring no review of anything except demolition, in hopes of getting *something* passed. NDS was originally asked to develop the parameters of a Conservation District three years ago, yet still none exists, nor does it seem close to happening.

*To find out more about Architectural Design Control District Guidelines see: <http://www.charlottesville.org/Index.aspx?page=809>*

*To find out more Conservation Districts go to [www.charlottesville.org](http://www.charlottesville.org) and search for "conservation districts". There are many notes and discussions referenced over the past three years, so you can see how the idea for the Conservation District has evolved.*

## 2007 Officers

Clarence McClymonds— President

Maria Chapel - Vice-President

Ellen Wagner— Past-President

Lois Wallenhorst— Treasurer, Membership Chmn

Kate Berman— Secretary

Mary and Bruce O'Dell— At-Large

Maria Al-Hamdani— At-Large

Buddy Weber— MJH Liaison

Special Thanks to Joe Aust of  
the DT Office of Real Estate  
III for printing the newsletter.



*The Martha Jefferson Neighborhood Association was founded as a response to the growth of Martha Jefferson Hospital in the 1980's. With the announcement of the hospital's departure to a new facility at Peter Jefferson Place on Pantops, we once again need strong voices and leadership to ensure our neighborhood remains the friendly, beautiful, and comforting place that drew us all here initially. Any help you can provide during this crucial time is needed and appreciated.*

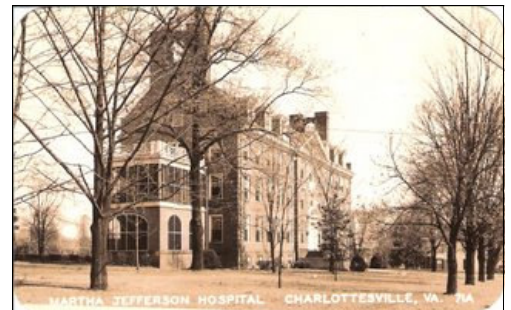
**The next MJNA Monthly Meeting is on October 1st at 5:30 pm at the McClymond's home at 701 Locust Avenue. While we discuss neighborhood issues, we will also assemble the folders with archival information and photos of each property included in the proposed historic district.**

The original hospital building, opened as a 25-bed sanitarium/ training school for nurses at 919 E. High Street on July 11, 1904.

This building was demolished when the current Emergency Room was built.



On December 9, 1929, Martha Jefferson opened its new, 50-bed facility on Locust Ave. Reported the Daily Progress: "All equipment and patients were moved from the old building... The structure itself is considered one of the handsomest in the city. The old hospital will be utilized as a home for nurses."



Circa 1970, before the construction of the South wing, which began in 1972.



*All images and captions courtesy of Dave Norris.*