

Mount Pleasant Library Report

EXHIBIT: 4

Mount Pleasant Fire Safety Articles/Press Releases

- (a) Washington Post: DeauvilleApts: 2008.03.14
- (b) DCPL Press Release: 2008.03.13
- (c) WTOP "Trouble spots": 2009.08.13
- (d) DC FEMS Press Release: 2002.06.30
- (e) Washington Post: DCFD & WASA: 2007.10.05
- (f) US Red Cross Announcement: 2009.03.18

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D.C. Blaze Displaces Nearly 200

Northwest Apartment Building Had History of Code Violations

By *Petula Dvorak and Allison Klein*
Washington Post Staff Writers
Friday, March 14, 2008

The fire that ripped through a four-story apartment building in Mount Pleasant yesterday, leaving almost 200 people homeless, came after years of complaints about living conditions from tenants and the D.C. government.

GALLERY



Fire Destroyed Mount Pleasant Apartment Building

A major fire a year ago today ravaged a Mount Pleasant apartment building, displacing nearly 200 people. The five-alarm blaze was the worst D.C. had seen in about 30 years, firefighters said.

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In recent months, the owners of the property had made repairs and were on the verge of settling a lawsuit brought by the tenants association. The building, where more than 7,000 housing code violations were recorded in recent years, is a shambles, and residents do not know when they might return.

Officials have not determined the cause of the fire at the Deauville building at 3145 Mount Pleasant St. NW. The fire apparently began shortly before midnight Wednesday and continued into the morning. Firefighters said they were amazed that no resident was seriously hurt during the fire or the harrowing evacuation. Some residents had to climb out of windows and descend on ladders put up by firefighters. Others stumbled through smoke-filled stairwells. One firefighter suffered smoke inhalation.

Flames shot through the top half of the building in the first five-alarm blaze in the District in nearly 30 years. By contrast, the large fires last spring at Eastern Market and the Georgetown public library were three-alarm blazes.

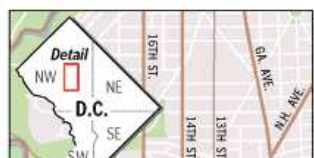
In addition to the 85 apartment units at the Deauville, the building housed the Ethiopian Community Service Center, an outreach program that provides computer and

Broken Codes

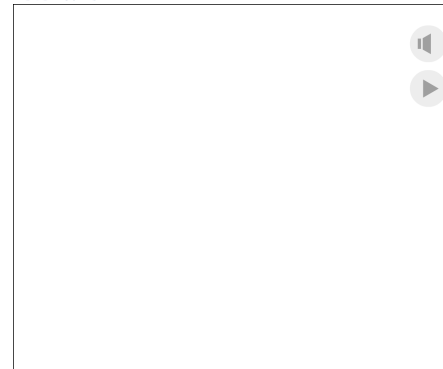
The Mount Pleasant apartment building that caught fire yesterday has an extensive history of building code violations. Since Jan. 1, 2004, inspectors have logged more than 7,100 violations. They include:

- 52 Leaking pipes
- 64 Fire safety violations, including defective smoke alarms and fire extinguishers
- 91 Broken refrigerators
- 154 Cases of broken heating
- 316 Holes in walls and ceilings

Nearly 500 Broken electrical outlets



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language classes, counseling and youth programs. The fire also heavily damaged the Meridian Hill Baptist Church next door, where the roof collapsed and stained-glass windows shattered. A temporary homeless women's shelter in the church's basement was also damaged.

Five neighboring buildings were evacuated and a local library branch was closed because of heavy smoke. The Columbia Heights Community Center suspended recreation programs so that it could serve as a temporary shelter. The local chapter of the Red Cross is working with the D.C. Emergency Management Agency to temporarily house people in hotels and help them find other accommodations.

The displaced tenants, most still in pajamas late yesterday, hugged and cried outside the building. They were a diverse mix of immigrant families, single professionals, artists and musicians.

Edilma Alvarez, 33, nine months pregnant, sat on a folding chair and said she had just set up a crib for her baby. Alvarez's due date is today. "I had everything all ready in the apartment, and now it's destroyed," said Alvarez, a native of Guatemala who has lived in the building for three years.

Maria Irma Villatoro was still wearing a gray top and blue pajama bottoms yesterday afternoon as she waited to find out if anything in her apartment was salvageable. She clutched a bag that contained her green card and a few other important papers that she grabbed before rushing out after hearing a smoke alarm.

"All I have is what I'm wearing," Villatoro said, her eyes filling with tears. "I don't even have a dollar."

Villatoro was among the tenants who years ago pressured the D.C. Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs to take action against Deauville Partners, the owners of the building. Aided by a nonprofit advocacy group, the residents had applied pressure for repairs. The tenants association had considered buying the building, but plans fell through and a court battle ensued.

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At a news conference yesterday, DCRA Director Linda Argo said the building had "a lot of issues" for many years. "I would call it a troubled building." Argo said, however, that authorities have no reason to suspect that code violations contributed to the fire.

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Smoke From Apartment Fire Prompts Mt. Pleasant Library to Close

March 13, 2008

Library is expected to reopen March 14, 2008

Due to extensive smoke caused by the **fire** located at 3145 **Mount Pleasant** Street, NW, the Mt. **Pleasant** Neighborhood **Library** of the **DC** Public **Library**, located at 3160 16th Street, NW is closed effective 1 pm, March 13, 2008.

Media contact: George Williams, (202) 727-1184

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District fire list names 34 trouble spots

August 13, 2009 - 11:14am

WASHINGTON - Across the District there are nearly three dozen locations where firefighters anticipate problems with every fire they fight.

The list of locations where firefighters need to do extra planning includes 34 spots and "changes from day-to-day." The list of potential problems firefighters may encounter also is constantly changing.

Those locations range from college campuses to construction sites to the National Zoo.

Mayor Adrian Fenty mentioned the list in a preliminary report on the Chain Bridge Road fire that gutted the home of prominent Washingtonian Peggy Cooper Cafritz.

"These locations are a concern to us for a variety of reasons, not necessarily for the water supply," D.C. Fire and EMS spokesman Pete Piringer says.

The potential problems include small water mains, hydrant configuration, topography, permanent or temporary structures that block access and hydrants on private property, he says.

Piringer says the fire department has plans to make sure there's enough water to fight fires in the areas on the list.

"These are areas where we have solutions in place, ready to respond. We're very confident of these plans, should there be an emergency at any of these locations."

The list, first obtained by Channel 9, names the following locations:

- Mayfair Parkside, NE
- Poplar Point Pumping Station, SE
- Fort Station Reservoirs, SE
- Williamsburg Lane, NW
- Adams Morgan North of Columbia Rd, NW
- Taylor Street, NE
- Randle Circle, SE
- Queens Chapel/ South Dakota, NE
- International Drive, NW
- East Portion of Saint Elizabeth Campus, SE
- Howard University Law School, NW
- FEMS Training Facility, SE
- Mount Pleasant Area (North)
- Mount Pleasant Area (South)
- East and West Potomac Park
- National Zoo
- Metrobus Bladensburg Division
- Georgetown University
- George Washington University, Mount Vernon Campus
- Gallaudet University
- Edmund Burke School
- Hillwood Museum
- Levine School of Music
- Washington International School
- Maret School
- Catholic University
- Trinity College
- 1300 Block of Upshur Street, NW
- Wyoming Ave & 23rd St, NW
- 39th & T St, NW
- 29th & P St, NW
- Massachusetts Ave, Between Dupont Circle and Sheridan Circle, NW
- 2600 Block of Myrtle Ave, NE

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June 30, 2002

More Than Two-Dozen Rescued From Mt. Pleasant Apt Fire

A smoky apartment fire in Mt. Pleasant forced the evacuation of a five-story residential building and resulted in up to 30 rescues being made amid heavy smoke and fire conditions.

When firefighters first arrived at 1458 Columbia Rd., NW just after 7 pm, they encountered several people who were preparing to jump from the second through the fifth floors. Firefighters stood ground ladders to the rear of the building and took as many as 10 adults and children down to the ground. The firefighters were able to calm the individuals as the residents stood on balconies and windowsills to escape the thick smoke. As many as 20 rescues were made via the interior stairway.

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The Washington Post

D.C. Fire Officials, WASA Point Fingers After Blaze

By Sylvia Moreno and Mary Beth Sheridan
Washington Post Staff Writers
Friday, October 5, 2007

As an Adams Morgan condominium building burned Monday morning, District firefighters searching for adequate water pressure opened nearly a dozen nearby hydrants, and a water agency official on the scene to help warned that a dramatic increase in water flow could break the area's antiquated and undersize water mains.

The details were presented at a D.C. Council hearing held yesterday to determine why it took more than six hours to contain the fire at the 30-unit building in the 2600 block of Adams Mill Road NW. Officials who testified also revealed major communication problems between the D.C. fire department and D.C. Water and Sewer Authority.

Problems encountered at the Adams Morgan fire have raised concerns about fighting large fires in neighborhoods served by small-diameter water mains. Of the District's 1,300 miles of water lines, 1,075 are 12 inches and smaller in diameter. City officials immediately called on WASA to update its water main replacement plan, and the agency's board of directors yesterday directed its staff to come up with a plan within a month.

At the hearing, fire officials played recordings of radio calls from firefighters describing hydrants going "dead" as it turned into a four-alarm fire. A WASA official who responded to the scene had an outdated water main map and was able to order only a slight increase in water pressure from a nearby pumping station, Fire Chief Dennis L. Rubin said.

"He said, 'I can give you five more pounds of pressure or nothing at all,'" Rubin said at the hearing, called by D.C. Council member Jim Graham (D-Ward 1), who represents the Adams Morgan area.

Attempts to draw enough water to fight the fire were not successful until an hour and a half after the blaze started and crews had unfurled 4,000 feet of hose to Connecticut Avenue and 3,000 feet of hose to Columbia Road, where 20-inch mains are located.

But WASA's chief engineer, John T. Dunn, testified that the agency had determined this week that two hydrants at Columbia Road and 18th Street NW, 600 feet from the building, were connected to 12- and 16-inch water mains. When tested Wednesday, the hydrants pumped 3,500 gallons per minute -- the amount that fire officials said they needed to put out the fire, he said.

Dunn said he had reports from the scene that a firetruck was connected to at least one of the two hydrants.

He added that sending fire crews outside the immediate neighborhood to bring in sufficient water to fight a large fire is not unusual. "In areas where you have small mains, you're able to respond to a one- or two-alarm fire," he said. "But once you exceed that, you've got to go out and bring in flow from larger mains. That's a fairly standard procedure."

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Rubin said he could not immediately confirm whether firefighters used the two hydrants at Columbia and 18th streets. An "after-incident" report will outline the timeline of the fire, the response, and which hydrants were used and for how long.

"The response that all we had to do was connect to two different hydrants I find perplexing and, frankly, not true," Rubin said. "All the facilities we used did not suppress the fire in the manner they should have."

Early on, two WASA workers were at the scene, Rubin said, and "they never offered any information other than there was adequate water flow and they could only add five pounds of water pressure."

As to whether the department should have gone outside Adams Morgan, to Woodley Park, for water, Rubin said such action would have been precluded had firefighters had enough water when they arrived at the scene. Asked whether the lack of water contributed to the acceleration of the fire, Rubin said: "Tremendously. We feel we should have handled this as a two-alarm fire."

Graham said he was seeking answers to several key questions.

"Our firefighters did not fail us at the scene, but our water system surely did," he said. "Knowing what we know now, is Adams Morgan safe in another major fire? How could it happen that entire neighborhoods are under threat of burning to the ground?"

Firefighters were impeded in their job because of the century-old six-inch water mains in Adams Morgan, which were unable to supply water fast enough to put out the fire, officials said.

No one was seriously injured, but damage to the building was estimated to be in the millions. Authorities determined that the fire was accidental, started by an electrical problem near the roof deck.

Of the city's 1,300 miles of water lines, 13 percent, or 173 miles, are six inches in diameter. Most date to the 1800s and early 1900s and are scheduled to be replaced under a 20-year facilities plan WASA adopted in 2000.

Mayor Adrian M. Fenty (D), Graham and fire officials have called for immediate action to address aging and undersize mains throughout the city. Yesterday, the 11-member WASA board directed the agency's general manager, Jerry Johnson, and his staff to "reevaluate its approach and schedule for water main upgrades."

Board Chairman Robin B. Martin ordered a one-month turnaround for a comprehensive evaluation of District neighborhoods that are served by small-size mains. The agency, he said, must ensure "that there is an adequate supply of water within a reasonable distance to provide adequate coverage."

The water mains are the responsibility of WASA, which was criticized this year by city officials for not acting quickly enough to fix broken fire hydrants. The complaints came after a major fire at the Georgetown public library, where the first two hydrants tapped by firefighters did not work. They wound up using hydrants about two blocks away.

The District is one of many cities struggling with aging water pipelines. A 2001 report by the American Water Works Association estimated that U.S. jurisdictions would have to spend \$250 billion over 30 years to replace worn-out water pipes and related structures.

Many of the mains date from building booms in the late-1800s and first half of the 20th century and are reaching the end of their usefulness, the report said. It predicted "significant increases" in the rate at which pipes break and said some municipalities would find their pipes too small to carry the amount of water needed for firefighting or other uses.

Alan Roberson, director of security and regulatory affairs for the American Water Works Association, cautioned that the flow of water to a fire involves more than the size of the water main in the neighborhood.

"Size of the line is a factor, but it's one factor," he said. Other issues include the level of corrosion of a pipe and its distance from a pumping station. "If you have an eight-inch line with corrosion, it could be worse than a six-inch line that's pretty clean," he said.

Roberson said the number of six-inch mains in the District does not seem unusually high. The bottom line, he said, is that city authorities "need to have some kind of regular system for testing these hydrants" throughout the District.

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Residents of Deauville Apartments in Mount Pleasant Neighborhood of D.C. Observe One-Year Anniversary of Massive Fire That Destroyed Everything...Except Their Spirit

By **Kathy Thompson**

Fairfax, Va. (March 13, 2009) – One year ago today, the American Red Cross of the National Capital Area responded to a massive, five-alarm fire that destroyed an entire apartment building in the Mount Pleasant neighborhood of Northwest D.C., displacing more than 200 families from their homes. During the tragic incident, the local Red Cross provided care and support to the community, and today, continues to offer encouragement as residents remember the devastation they experienced one year ago. Below are a few stories of residents we served during that disaster.

Stories from Mount Pleasant Fire, March 13, 2008

From Kathy (Chapter staff and volunteer)

I worked with a tiny, beautiful African American young lady in her early 20s. Sitting quietly at the table where the Red Cross was helping families, she was wearing jeans, a tee shirt and a baseball cap. I have been thinking about her particularly because she recounted her story so calmly, but she seemed so alone in the drama. She was very composed and articulate as she spoke, despite the fact she looked so incredibly tired.

She said she awoke to a ruckus in the hallway. She thought it was the kids next door playing in the halls, which they often do. She then smelled smoke and realized this was a real fire. She called 911, and they told her there was a fire and she should get out of the apartment immediately. She went to the door, opened it and found the hallway was so full of smoke she couldn't get out. She closed the door, put a wet towel against the bottom of it, and called 911 again. They asked her what unit she was in. When she told them, the dispatcher said, "Hold on." She came back and said, "The fire is in the unit right below you. Stay right where you are. The firemen will come get you." She told the dispatcher she couldn't stay. The apartment was filling up with smoke. The 911 dispatcher told her to stay. She then broke out a window so she could breathe and so the firemen could see where she was. They were able to get the ladder to her window where they carried her to safety. She said she was the last one



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