

D. C. Building Permits Show Sharp Decline During Past Week

Building permits issued during the last week by the District Building Inspection Department totaled \$485,169, a drop of \$873,786 from the previous week's total.

Included were projects for construction of 52 dwelling units. Permits for projects to cost \$5,000 or more went to:

Dan Pollin, 931 Longfellow street N.W., owner and builder; Berla and Abel, 1636 Connecticut avenue N.W., architect; 11 3-story brick and cinder block dwellings, 4001-3-5-9-11-4013-17-19-21-25-27 E street S.E.; to cost \$38,000.

Thompson's Dairy, 2012 Eleventh street N.W., owner; William P. Lipscomb Co., Woodward Building, builder; 127 South Negley avenue, Pittsburgh, architect; one 4-story steel, concrete commercial dairy, 2004-4 Eleventh street N.W.; to cost \$80,000.

Syndicated Construction Corp., 100 Southern avenue S.E., owner and builder; Charles E. Campbell, same address, architect, to erect 12 2-story brick and cinder block dwellings, 724 to 756 Upsal street S.E.; to cost \$72,000.

Dan Pollin, 931 Longfellow street N.W., owner and builder; Berla and Abel, 1636 Connecticut avenue N.W., architect; 8 two-story brick and cinder block dwellings, 4016-18-20-22-24-26-4032-34 E street S.E.; to cost \$64,000.

Louis Richman, 931 Longfellow street N.W., owner and builder; Berla and Abel, 1636 Connecticut avenue N.W., architect; 12 2-story brick and cinder block dwellings, 4016-18-20-22-24-26-4032-34 E street S.E.; to cost \$64,000.

(Continued on Page B-2, Col. 3.)

Wage Board Denies D. C. Home Builders' Plea for Pay Changes

But Says Way Is Open For New Appeal to Fix Altered Rate Schedule

By Robert J. Lewis

The Wage Adjustment Board, in an opinion issued today, refused to grant a renewed request of District home builders that they be permitted to pay "up to" wage rates established in a recent board decision rather than the rates set.

The board reaffirmed its earlier decision that a single rate be paid for each classification of work on the grounds that multiple rates "have never been recognized historically in the construction industry as a whole."

To approve multiple rates, the board said, would be "to take an action without precedent in the history of the board," and one that "would tend to create unbalanced conditions in the construction industry in the Washington, D. C. area."

The decision, written by Chairman Arthur D. Hill, Jr., also ruled that a home builder's supplementary request, filed in connection with their fight on the new wage scale, was "not properly before" the board.

Way Open for Similar Request.

It added, however, that the way was open for the filing of a similar request.

Submitted by home builders subsequent to a hearing April 23 on the industry's petition for reconsideration of the wage schedule, the supplementary request proposed amendments which would have changed specific rates and added certain classifications of workers not contained in the schedule.

Chief effect of the supplementary request, it was approved, would have been to permit home builders to classify workers on the job and pay specific rates based on varying degrees of experience and efficiency beyond those allowed in the wage schedule.

Henry Hits "Straitjacket."

Commenting on today's decision, Ernest F. Henry, executive director of the Home Builders Association of Metropolitan Washington and attorney representing the builders, said:

"We haven't as yet had an opportunity to study the decision, but it appears on its face that we have been denied in both the original decision and in the one today, everything that we have asked for, and, instead, have been confined to a straitjacket which will cost the veterans close to a 10 per cent increase in the price of housing."

"We're not, of course, decided what further steps to take, but it would appear to be a matter of choosing between a direct appeal to the National Wage Stabilization Board or filing a completely new petition before the Wage Adjustment Board, or both."

"In any event, it will cause further delay, which is to be regretted."

Builders Sought Higher Rates.

The controversial new set of wage rates was approved by the board February 27 in response to a request January 14 by home builders for permission to pay higher wages.

Home builders, under a board decision October 3, 1942, were allowed to pay according to the so-called "B" scale, which was somewhat lower than the "A" scale for commercial and Government building.

During the war, however, in order to retain workers as the labor supply dwindled, many were forced to pay higher rates.

A recent investigation by the Wage Stabilization Board's Philadelphia Regional Office disclosed 50 local builders and contractors illegally had paid higher rates than those contained in the "B" scale.

Such violators were faced with disallowance of overscale pay rolls in (See WAGE BOARD, Page B-2.)



105 APARTMENTS PROPOSED—Architect's sketch of proposed 105-apartment, seven-building apartment project to occupy a seven-acre site at 1201-49 Valley avenue S.E., for which a \$560,000 building permit has been applied for by Jack Pollin, 2414 Thirtieth street N.W., Berla and Abel, 1636 Connecticut avenue N.W., is the architect.

Real Estate Shop Talk

Capt. Ivan Bickelhaupt, U. S. N. R., deputy director of the Civilian Production Administration's Construction Bureau, will address a luncheon meeting of the Washington Building Congress at 12:30 p.m. Monday at the Mayflower Hotel.

The construction bureau handles all appeals from the CPA district construction offices' decisions on non-housing applications, as well as applications for authorization of all non-housing projects to cost over \$1,000,000.

Edward M. Syman, manager of CPA's District Construction Office, yesterday attended a conference of CPA district office managers for Region 2, comprising the District and five States, called by Regional Director Ralph A. Parker at his office in the Empire State Building, New York City.

The real estate firm of George H. Williams Co. has opened an office at 921 Twelfth street N.W., its seventh in the District area, it announced today.

A total of 139 builders composing the directorate of the National Association of Home Builders will meet here in a four-day session beginning Monday, it announced, to discuss material shortages.

The announcement said Housing Administrator Wilson W. Wyatt, Civilian Production Administration, John D. Small, CPA Administrator, Paul Porter and other officials will meet with the group.

Housing Administrator Wyatt this week announced appointment of Capt. E. A. Verpillot, U. S. N. R. of New York City, as deputy expediter in charge of the Office of Production and Supply.

Wyatt, Bradley to Talk On Veterans' Housing

Housing Administrator Wilson W. Wyatt, Veterans Administrator Omar N. Bradley and other officials will address a "Town Meeting on Housing for Veterans" at a luncheon at noon next Saturday in the Hotel Statler.

Announcing the speakers, the Combined Veterans Committee on Housing for Veterans, which is sponsoring the sessions, said Mr. Wyatt's speech will be carried to the Nation on a network broadcast.

Other speakers will be Maj. Gen. Graves B. Erskine, Maj. Gen. U. S. Grant, 3d Brig. Gen. Gordon R. Young, District engineer, commissioner and chairman of the District Veterans Emergency Housing Committee; Oscar Chapman, Assistant Secretary of the Interior, and Boris Shishkin, American Federation of Labor economist.

In a second part of the program to follow the luncheon, panel discussions will be held on "Building of Homes," "Purchasing of Existing Homes" and "Temporary Housing and Rentals."



ASSUMES FHA POST—James A. Hewitt, new director of the Federal Housing Administration's District Insuring Office, 734 Fifteenth street N.W., who assumed his duties this week. He succeeded Walter C. Cox, who this week was elected vice president of the H. G. Smith Co., real estate dealers, at 811 Fifteenth street N.W.

Gadgets

Plenty of Outlets Provided in Electric Strip for Baseboards

By Hilson Munsey

Most houses today have an inadequate number of electrical outlets, with floor lamps now used in preference to ceiling lights and kitchens almost completely electrified. Consequently the floor is frequently draped with electric cords that are a danger in many ways.

This condition can be rectified with the installation of a baseboard strip that provides outlets every few inches. Made of metal, these strips can be placed in various positions. A shallow baseboard can be used and the strip placed on top and then regular quarter-round molding as a finish for the baseboard. It can also be placed in the center of the baseboard by using two narrow pieces of board and then the quarter round on top. It can be inset in the plaster wall or placed on the chair rail.

Special sections are made for corners so that cabinets or counters can be equipped. These strips are so constructed that there is a continuous flow of current; each section does not need a separate connection with the supply lines.

Ceiling Ventilation.

Unless the kitchen is supplied with some method of drawing off the fumes of cooking and the grease that always accompanies it, the entire house will probably be filled with the odor. The appropriate place for the exit of fumes is in the ceiling because the heat from the (See GADGETS, Page B-3.)

First Aid For Houses

By Roger O. Whitman

Two Rooms in Basement for Rent.

Question—We have built two rooms in our basement to rent out. What can be done to cement floors, without making a wooden floor? I intend to have linoleum in kitchen and bathroom and rug in living room. What else could be done to keep floors warm and dry? It will not be hot-water heated. The basement doesn't seem damp, although people say it will be damp.

Answer—I do not consider a basement suitable for living quarters. No matter what you may do to keep the place dry, there is always the possibility of dampness developing. Moreover, there will be little if any sunshine or fresh air. A basement may be all right for a rumormonger for growns, to be used occasionally, but not for living and sleeping rooms. Asphalt tile, laid by a flooring contractor, would be more suitable than linoleum.

Leather Repairs.

Question—There is a small tear in the seat of my leather armchair. I would like to repair it myself. Can you tell me how to do it?

Answer—For an almost invisible repair a piece of soft leather or stout fabric should be cemented in place on the underside of the torn spot, the edges being carefully attached. But I do not think you would be able to do this. The next best thing is to get a small piece of matching leather and cement it over the tear. Use a nitro-celulose cement.

Filling Cellar Floor Cracks.

Question—There are a couple of cracks in my cellar floor that I want to fill myself. What mixture should I use?

Answer—Widen and deepen the cracks with a hammer and cold chisel, keeping the sides of the groove straight. Brush out all (See FIRST AID, Page B-3.)

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The Week's Housing Picture

Applications for rental dwelling units totaling 2,371 were filed with the District War Housing Center, 1400 Pennsylvania avenue N.W., during the week ending last Wednesday, including 2,104 for houses and apartments and 267 for rooms. This was 26 fewer than for the previous week.

To fill the need, 78 apartments were listed with the center, in addition to 520 rooms. This was the lowest number of apartments listed since weekly records have been maintained, starting March 3.

Of the total number of applicants, 2,066 were veterans and servicemen, as against 305 nonveterans.

To give an idea of new housing on the way, 68 priority applications for 390 dwelling units were approved during the week ending May 3 by the Federal Housing Administration's District Construction Office, of which 25.9 per cent were for units to sell for \$7,500 or less or rent for \$60 a month and less.

Since January 15 a total of 787 applications for 11,234 units were approved, of which 30 per cent were to sell for \$7,500 or less or rent for \$60 a month and less.

Conditions facing applicants for rental units during the week were indicated as follows:

	Veterans and Servicemen	Civilian	Total
Just arrived	505	51	556
Separated from family	305	68	373
Unreasonable distance to commute	31	7	38
Eviction	21	85	106
Present housing inadequate	707	94	801
Totals	2,066	305	2,371

Taft Hotel Building Ownership Transferred

The four-story Taft Hotel, north-east corner of Eighth and G streets N.W., has been purchased by Emanuel Baskin, furrier, from Joseph A. Wilner, tailor, at 801 G street N.W. It was announced today by Leo M. Bernstein & Co., 1415 K street N.W., which handled the sale.

Formerly known as the Legal Building, the structure once housed the Bureau of Mines and later served as offices for patent attorneys.

Boy Scouts Win Honors

More than 40 Boy Scouts will be advanced in rank at a "Court of Honor" of the Western District, National Capital Area Council of Scouts, at 7:45 o'clock tonight at Woodrow Wilson High School. Col. A. T. Fagter will preside.

Homeowner Advised To Confine Self to Minimum Additions

By WADSWORTH W. WOOD.

The present conditions surrounding building materials and the skilled labor field have made it imperative that the average homeowner confine himself to a minimum house. Terraces, breezeways, outdoor dining areas, tool houses, guest cottages and other refinements, must—for the greater number—be left for future construction, when the building situation eases.

However, there are homeowners who are finding it possible to finish small additions to their homes by using local labor of a more-or-less skilled kind, and used material or readily obtainable new material such as cement block, brick, wall board and some of the varieties of plywood. Unfinished attics and basement recreation rooms are areas that appeal to the man with an urge to do something himself toward finishing his home.

There is a certain procedure to be followed by any amateur mechanic or builder who has decided to embark on a home improvement program. He should tackle the simplest of jobs.

When one or two minor operations have been completed he will be ready to go on to larger projects. The procedure that must be followed is: First, lay out the job to be done so that the material will be at hand, and, second, do not attempt anything that involves skill beyond ability.

In other words, if a man has decided to build a small terrace on one side of his house, he must be capable of leveling off the ground, setting up the plain rectangular forms in level shape, estimating the number of bricks needed to pave the surface of the terrace or the amount of concrete he has to order if it is to be concrete surfaced.

If the homeowner wants to erect a pergola or a trellis, he should lay out the job in rough drawing form, drive stakes at the locations of the posts or columns, measure for string and boards, and comb the market for the required material. Local labor should be lured to dig the postholes.

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