



# NEWS

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October 2006

## CHRS Board Files FOIA Request for Info Leading to DCPS Decision to Use Hine School as Office Space; Board Raises Concerns About Proposed Use

*Following is the text of a letter sent by the CHRS Board September 20, 2006.*

Dr. Clifford B. Janey  
Superintendent of Schools  
825 North Capitol Street, NE  
9th floor  
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Dr. Janey:

We were disappointed to find out that the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) has decided to utilize the soon to be emptied Hine Junior High School building at Seventh Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, as the administrative headquarters of the school system. We support giving Hine students a new home in the old Eliot Junior High School with its spacious campus and playing fields. However, the proposed new use of Hine is inappropriate and prevents more community-serving uses for the site.

The Hine site is one of the most valuable and important pieces of property on Capitol Hill. It is located at the center of the Capitol Hill central business district and is part of on-going community planning to create a "Town Square" both in and around the Eastern Market Metro Plaza. The Hine site is key to that planning.



It has been the thinking of community leaders that should Hine cease to be used as a school, its most appropriate use would be as a mixed-use new building or series of buildings that would incorporate housing of various types, a new library, some retail on the Seventh Street side, and also some parking. With careful planning, both the newly configured site and the design would complement both the residential neighborhood and the businesses along Seventh Street, SE—Market Row—including the magnificent Eastern Market. Of course, Hine is located adjacent to the Eastern Market Metro station and the retail activities along Barracks Row on Eighth Street, SE.

*The Hine site is one of the most valuable and important pieces of property on Capitol Hill. It is located at the center of the Capitol Hill central business district and is part of on-going community planning to create a "Town Square" both in and around the Eastern Market Metro Plaza. Photo: Larry Janezich*

It is seldom that a site of such rich possibilities becomes available.

Given these circumstances, the Hine building's reuse as an office building for DCPS is a waste of city resources and one that prolongs the continued existence of a long-outmoded building of inferior architectural character. The DCPS characterization of the building

*Hine School continued on page 9*

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# President's Column: Is There a Plan?

by Dick Wolf

*Post* readers this morning—September 25—are informed at great length that the Redskins have finally won a game: there is at least one full story about the game and two columns of commentary that cover the vast intricacies of the “game plan” and the performance of individuals. And there is an array of other stories and special interest items covering sports throughout the nation and the world, including an extended discussion of the Ryder Cup golf tournament in Ireland.

Did you see any stories in the *Post* regarding hearings on the new Comprehensive Plan for the District of Columbia that is supposed to direct planning, zoning, and historic preservation for the next 20 years in DC? Does anybody at the *Post* or any other newspaper in the area care about this issue? Or if they write about it do they know anything about it to the extent that reporters know about the medical state of Clinton Portis's shoulder or Mark Brunell's leg injuries? But I digress. Of course reporters know nothing about planning. Those stories don't sell newspapers or get reporters better jobs on the national and international desk. Planning is boring unless, of course, you find a 100 foot condo within twenty feet of your row house home and wonder how it got there.

CHRS will testify at these hearings on the new Comprehensive Plan—for our three minutes. We will try to distill our 40 years of planning experience and three

years of having sat on various Comprehensive Plan task forces into that time. We are going to say that despite a lot of good work and the creation of some worthy sections and elements, this document is not yet a plan and needs substantial re-editing, additional information, and refinement to make it workable and accessible.

These are themes that a number of us serving on the task forces have said almost from the start. The plan has to have a clear architecture and a hierarchy of policies and actions that mesh together to provide a roadmap for developers, citizens and government officials. Moreover, the language should be clear and, where necessary, prescriptive: “shall” instead of “ought” or “wouldn't it be nice”. Most importantly, the plan needs an implementation system devoted to making the plan work within a changing environment. For this purpose, CHRS, along with other groups throughout the city, have long advocated a local planning commission.

The bill before the Council does not meet those standards. It is filled with a variety of policies from which OP can pick and choose. This is why outside the historic district in near NE OP has been able to support neighborhood-threatening development by Dreyfus and other developers on the basis of “smart growth” and “transit oriented development”. If you thought this kind of cherry picking under the current comprehensive plan with a prescriptive Ward Plan is bad, have a look at the grab bag of policies being pro-

posed in the new Plan.

The implications of this approach are clear. There will be a continuation of “downtown style development” on three sides of Capitol Hill and possibly down Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, from Thirteenth Street to Barney Circle. A good example of what can be expected is already built along M Street, SE, and south of the Freeway down New Jersey Avenue. There will also be developer targeting of row house communities that are not protected by historic preservation for demolition and development as condos and apartments. Look at what is happening on Second and Third Streets, NE.

The draft plan does not offer much in the way of protections for neighborhoods, i.e., places where families would want to settle. In fact, the draft plan has very little to say about families of any demographic. Time and again, some of us on the Comprehensive Plan Task Force pointed out that families are the fastest disappearing part of DC's population. The proposed plan only supports replacement of these families with singles and empty nesters and, of course, a housing policy aimed only at persons eligible for HUD subsidies. In other words, the current draft plan, if approved, would sanction a twenty-year policy to create a city composed only of large buildings—some of which may be residential but most of which will be offices—and a sports and entertainment culture that will attract suburbanites and tourists. Residents, and especially families, are an afterthought. Think about the public policy implications of that direction, especially when the city is planning to spend billions in rebuilding schools and libraries.

Therefore, both in matters of policy and process, what is before the Council in the way of a new Comprehensive Plan needs work—lots of work. ✱

## Save the Dates! CHRS 50th Annual House & Garden Tour, May 12–13, 2007

A stellar list of homes is being put together for next year's House Tour. If members are interested in volunteering before or during Tour Weekend, please contact CHRS at CapHRS@aol.com or leave a message at 202-543-0425. ✱

## Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS)

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[www.chrs.org](http://www.chrs.org)

Celebrating our fiftieth year helping to preserve and protect Capitol Hill's residential character, the Society is now the largest civic association on Capitol Hill, and one of the largest in the entire District of Columbia. From the beginning, the Society has played a key role in maintaining the diverse, residential character of our neighborhood. With your participation we will continue to do so for many years to come.

Start or Renew a CHRS Membership

\* On the Web at [www.CHRS.org](http://www.CHRS.org)

\* Call 202-543-0425 and choose option 2

\* Pick up a form at one of our meetings

Starting at just \$25 per year for a single membership, it's a great deal.

# Zoning Commission Rulings on MedLink and AppleTree Favor Community

by Gary Peterson

September was a big month for Capitol Hill zoning cases. On September 11 the DC Zoning Commission ended a two-and-a-half year effort to downzone the MedLink facility at Seventh and Massachusetts Avenue, NE, from R-5-D to R-5-B by approving the downzoning. And, again, on September 25 the Commission approved the Charter Schools amendment to the Zoning Regulations ending AppleTree Institute for Education Innovation's matter of right development of 138 Twelfth Street, NE.

The MedLink property had been upzoned from R-4 to R-5-D in 1973 to allow the expansion of the community hospital. The hospital function has long ceased to exist and at least half of the building is unused. Fearing similar results as the notorious Station Place project, in May 2004 CHRS initiated downzoning of the property with ANCs 6A, 6B and 6C. The property is in 6C and borders 6A and 6B. The downzoning means that the development envelope is the same as what is currently on the

property. The R-5-D zone would have allowed even more density of development.

In the AppleTree case the Office of Planning proposed revisions to the Zoning Regulations after AppleTree's purchase of 138 Twelfth Street, NE, revealed a gap in the Regulations concerning the location of charter schools. The amendment made charter schools public schools for the purposes of the Zoning Regulations. The amendment also specified minimum lot area, lot width, lot occupancy and maximum height. During the process the Zoning Commission added a provision exempting charter schools with 16 or fewer students but this provision did not survive the final vote. The amendment will make it very difficult for new charter schools to locate in row houses in a residential zone. The 138 Twelfth Street, NE, property does not meet the minimum requirements.

In both cases CHRS, the affected ANCs and neighbors worked together to achieve these results. The results are truly a community success. ✧

## Barney Circle Walking Tour

Barney Circle is an early 20th Century community, with many fine examples of 1920s "daylighter" houses. The community features row houses designed by Albert H. Beers (who worked with Harry Wardman), Hunter & Bell, and Herman R. Howenstein. The tour will highlight neighborhood history from Native Americans to early businesses and row house architecture. Tour leaders will be Reuben Hameed, an architect who lives in Barney Circle, and Beth Purcell who writes about the history and architecture of Capitol Hill East. ✧

Saturday, October 21 • 10:00am to 12:00pm

\$10 DCPL Members, \$15 Non-Members

Meet at Potomac Metro Stop at Fourteenth and Potomac/  
Pennsylvania Avenue, SE

Reservations: 202-783-5144, or [rsvp@dcpreservation.org](mailto:rsvp@dcpreservation.org).

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# New Tougher Tax Law on Contributing Façade Conservation Easements Affects Capitol Hill Historic District

As many people living in historic districts know, the US Congress passed reforms to the laws governing charitable donations of facade conservation easements. The Pension Protection Act of 2006 (Public Law No. 109-280 §§ 1206, 1213, 1219), signed by President Bush on August 17, 2006, makes important changes to the tax treatment of conservation easements. Tax deductibility of such donations has been retained, but the law has been changed in various ways, and tightened to prevent abuses. This article focuses on the changes in the tax law as they affect individual homeowners.

## Overview of conservation easements

Congress believes that there were abuses in donating conservation easements and taking a charitable contribution deduction. The new law tightens the rules in section 170(h) of the Internal Revenue Code (the Code) for charitable contributions of conservation easements (easements to preserve a certified historic structure, e.g., a building—including a private residence in the Capitol Hill Historic District). Conservation easements include contribution of a qualified real property interest to a qualified organization for conservation purposes. A qualified interest in real property includes a perpetual restriction (easement) on the use that may be made of the real property. Certain types of charitable organizations accept easement contributions (e.g., L'Enfant Trust, [www.lenfanttrust.org](http://www.lenfanttrust.org)). CHRS does not accept donations of conservation easements.

## Increase in charitable contribution limits

In general, section 170 of the Code allows a charitable deduction for contributions to charity. The

new law raises the charitable contribution limit for donating conservation easements from 30% to 50% of adjusted gross income (or, AGI, the amount "above the line" on Form 1040), with a 15-year carryforward (instead of a 5-year carryforward). This change is effective for 2006 and 2007.

The new rules apply after July 25, 2006, and provide that:

- The easement must restrict and preserve the entire exterior of the building (including the front, sides, rear and height). Previously, the easement covered only the portion of the structure seen from the street.
- The easement must prohibit any change to the building inconsistent with the building's historic character.
- The homeowner (donor) and the qualified organization (donee) must sign a written agreement, under penalty of perjury, certifying that the donee is a qualified organization with a historic preservation purpose and that the organization has the resources and commitment to manage and enforce the restriction.

## Valuing the conservation easement—amount of the deduction

The amount of the charitable contribution deduction equals the reduction in the value of the real property as a result of granting the conservation easement. For years beginning in 2007, the homeowner's tax return for the year when the easement is contributed must include a qualified appraisal, photographs of the entire exterior of the building, a description of all restrictions on the development of the building, and a \$500 user fee (for deductions exceeding \$10,000).

A qualified appraiser using generally accepted appraisal standards

must prepare a qualified appraisal. A qualified appraiser must have earned an appraisal designation from a recognized appraisal organization, regularly performs appraisals for compensation, and satisfies such other rules as IRS may require. Appraisers must also have verifiable education and experience valuing historic buildings, and not be barred from practicing before the IRS.

Appraisers usually value the real property before and after granting the easement. The difference (if any) is the amount of the deduction. If granting the conservation easement increases the value of other property owned by the donor, or related parties benefit economically, the amount of the deduction decreases accordingly.)

The appraisal must be in writing and obtained not more than 60 days before the conservation easement is donated, and not later than the due date (including extensions) for Form 1040. The appraisal must be prepared, signed, and dated by a qualified appraiser. The appraisal must describe the property appraised, state the fair market value of the property on the date the conservation easement is granted, that it was prepared for income tax purposes, does not involve an appraisal fee violating certain appraisal rules, and requires the signature and taxpayer identification number of the appraiser. For donations of conservation easements, the appraisal and appraiser rules apply for returns filed after July 25, 2006. There are increased penalties for substantial and gross overstatements of valuations, generally effective for returns filed after August 17, 2006.

This article does not constitute tax advice. Members should consult their attorney or CPA concerning donating and tax reporting for conservation easements. ✧

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# CHRS Announces 2006 Community Grants

by Larry Pearl

For the seventh consecutive year, CHRS is continuing its tradition of devoting part of the proceeds of the annual House and Garden Tour to the Capitol Hill community. The CHRS Board has approved the following grants totaling \$8,000.00:

## 1. Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery (APHCC)

A grant of \$1250 towards the \$70,000 estimated cost of repairs to the chapel roof, a token contribution towards the maintenance of this historic structure. The applicant will conduct tours of the site to encourage owners of slate roofs to repair them in kind. This will provide a good opportunity for Capitol Hill residents and others to see a slate roof at a decent elevation. CHRS hopes that its members will also contribute to this worthwhile project.

## 2. The Capitol Hill Cluster School, Peabody Campus (CHCS)

A conditional grant of \$1000 to CHCS to improve the Fourth Street garden by plantings and materials for the transformation of a trellis into an interactive play area. We have previously granted Peabody \$3000 for wrought iron fencing adjacent

to the Fourth Street garden (2001), and \$1500 for the renovation and maintenance of the garden (2004). We would like to continue to support this important play area. However, the applicant failed to supply a budget for the project and details on the location and design of the trellis. With satisfactory submission of these materials the grant will be approved.

## 3. School Libraries Project

A grant of \$1750 for banners for three Capitol Hill school libraries. This is part of a larger project; an initiative of the Capitol Hill Community Foundation, to create uniquely designed fully equipped libraries in eight Capitol Hill elementary schools. The banners will highlight the libraries at the Brent, Ludlow-Taylor and Stuart-Hobson Schools, all of which were renovated this summer.

## 4. Capitol Hill Group Ministry (CHGM)

A grant of \$2000 to CHGM to erect privacy fencing at the rear of 1338 G Street, SE, the location of the Day Hospitality Center. The fence would replace a deteriorating chain link fence and would secure the backyard for children's play. It would also allow a parking space for a staff person when not being so used. The applicant is completing a substantial

(and expensive) interior renovation on the building that provides daytime services to homeless families. The Capitol Hill Presbyterian Church is contributing funds for planting and landscaping. CHRS welcomes the opportunity to assist as a partner for this Hill institution.

## 5. The Friends of Southeast Library. (FOSEL)

A conditional grant of \$1000 to FOSEL to construct a sign and message board that would list library activities instead of relying on notices pasted on the library door as at present. The design of the message board and its location were not entirely clear. A convoluted city review process may influence both. When these issues are clarified the grant will be approved.

## 6. Hill East Waterfront Action Network (HEWAN)

A grant of \$1000 to HEWAN for community outreach and education concerning Reservation 13 planning and zoning. There is some uncertainty as to how this group's proposed outreach relates to all of the ongoing programs from government and elsewhere about Reservation 13. Nevertheless, CHRS wants to support this fledgling 1½ year-old organization. ✧

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## September Membership Meeting Hears NCPC Planners on RFK

by Rob Nevitt

As promised on the front page of the September *News*, Phil Downs, Elizabeth Miler and David Zaidain gave a presentation on "Destinations Beyond the National Mall." They outlined their excellent concepts and plans, with particular emphasis on the RFK site.

All of the planning is designed to preserve open space, relieve pressure on the Mall for monuments, museums and activities, and create inviting new destinations for visitors. The area envisioned for this expansion includes the SW Federal Center, Banneker Overlook, East Potomac

Park, Federal Triangle, the NW rectangle (ending at the Kennedy Center), Pennsylvania Avenue and the RFK site. Beyond these connectable areas, U Street, Chinatown and Dupont Circle are examples of other areas that could be destinations for tourists and residents alike.

Although the planners envisioned their work ending in an action plan, the sub-text of the discussion was that there are a lot of organizations and authorities doing their own planning and, ultimately, what actually happens will depend on the decisions of those who control legislation and the budget process. At the outset, the planning for the RFK site

is predicated on the destruction of the stadium, a decision over which the planners have no control.

The planners' emphasis on open space and mixed use development, keeping the various sites vibrant and person-friendly are concepts that we can all hope are compelling to decision makers. It is incumbent on CHRS and its members to stay aware of actions while they are still propositions and be cognizant of planning we can endorse.

There will be a public meeting October 19 at the NCPC for those who want to see and hear more detail. ✧

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# CHRS Zoning Committee Report

by Gary Peterson

The CHRS Zoning Committee considered four zoning cases on the evening of September 14. Originally six cases had been scheduled but the case concerning 208 Tenth Street, SE, was continued until the October 12 meeting and the case at 1104 East Capitol was withdrawn.

Two cases heard that evening involved rear additions: 643 South Carolina Avenue, SE, and 743 Tenth Street, SE. The Committee voted unanimously to support the applications. The case at 1005 Fifth Street, NE, involves the restoration and rehabilitation of the existing Rutherford B. Hayes School. The plans also call for a 31 X 71 foot addition to the building. The renovated school will be used by the District of Columbia Office on

Aging as a multi-service wellness center. The wellness center will offer health screening education and aerobic exercises for seniors. The committee voted unanimously to support the application.

The Committee voted to oppose the final case of the evening involving the property located at 601 to 645 H Street, NE, on the South side of H Street. This property is included in the H Street Overlay District. The part of the property fronting on H Street is zoned C-2-C and the rear of the property on the alley is zoned C-2-A. This is a large property containing 109,000 square feet. There are currently two five-story, modern office buildings at the corners of Sixth and Seventh Streets. The applicant proposes to build a nine-story building on H Street and a five-story residential building at the rear. The building will be mixed

use with retail, office and 234 residential units. Approximately 500 parking spaces will be constructed.

The Committee voted to oppose the application because the applicant had not complied with the requirements of the H Street Overlay and the H Street Design Guidelines. The H Street Overlay is the only Overlay District that is not in a historic district and under architectural controls (for example the Eighth Street Overlay is within the Capitol Hill Historic District). For this reason the Design Guidelines were meant to replace the Historic Preservation Review Board's controls. Without going into details, even under the most generous of standards, the application does not comply. CHRS has asked that the hearing on October 10 be continued so the applicant can amend his application. \*

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## Native Plant Tour/Invasive Plant Removal at the Arboretum

by Beth Purcell

On September 16, 2006, a group of Capitol Hill residents met at the National Arboretum for a workshop on identifying and removing invasive non-native plants. Joan Feely, the curator of native plants, led the group on Meadow Road, to see some of the Arboretum's natural wooded areas.

She explained that the definition of "native plants" varies, depending on the context. To many, native plants are those present in North America before the arrival of Europeans (but would include plants brought from Asia when ancestors of Native Americans migrated to the Americas). "Native plants" also refers to plants native to the deciduous forest on the east coast, or certain genotypes. For example, red maples (*Acer rubrum*) grow from Maine to Florida. But a red maple in Florida differs genetically

(e.g., in climate adaptation) from a red maple farther north. Ms. Feely pointed out several native plants, including a tall plant with purple flowers—New York Ironweed (*Vernonia noveboracensis*), goldenrod (*Solidago*), milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*), staghorn sumac (*Rhus typhina*) and Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), a native vine that grows up trees, but does not harm them.

Many non-native plants (also known as exotic plants) are beneficial. Some, however, are not checked by diseases or insects, or eaten by herbivores. These plants can crowd out or kill native plants and some encourage growth of pathogens. Different woodland environments vary in susceptibility to non-native invasion. Dry clay soil with low nutrients is less hospitable to invasive non-native plants. As an example, she showed us the beech woods on Meadow Road. This is a dense wood with many native tree

varieties and few non-native plants. Just across the road, however, in a moist flood plain, many invasive non-native species are growing. Species identified included:

- Sweet autumn clematis (*Clematis terniflora*): Common on Capitol Hill, this vine growing 10 feet forms dense tangles blocking light from native plants. In September it has attractive fragrant flowers.
- Amur honeysuckle (*Lonicera maackii*): Grows 6-20 feet into dense stands and smothers trees. Birds love the berries.
- Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*): A woody vine growing 30 feet, it kills trees by strangling.
- Porcelainberry (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*): A vine with attractive pink and blue berries, it grows 25 feet, covering trees.

*Arboretum continued on page 7*

# Old Naval Hospital to Show Off New Restoration Work

## Oct. 7 Open House Will Feature Lecture on Wood Graining and Faux Painting

by Donna Hanousek

The Friends of the Old Naval Hospital, in cooperation with the DC Office of Property Management, is sponsoring an Open House of the Old Naval Hospital (ONH). The event will be Saturday, October 7, from 1:00pm – 4:00pm.

Once on the DC Preservation League's "Most Endangered" list, this Capitol Hill landmark, dubbed a "Hero Building" by the Urban Land Institute, is now through the first phase of its exterior restoration.

Visitors will be able to walk through the un-restored interior of



the ONH, see the newly restored windows, portico, and ironwork from the first phase exterior restoration work, and learn from a master craftsman about wood graining technique.

The craftsmen who did the work on the exterior will be available for questions and will explain the work they have done on the windows, portico and cast iron, just recently completed. Architects from BellArchitects, who oversaw the exterior restoration, as well as representatives from the DC Office of Property Management (the building's landlord), will also be available.

There will be a special demonstration of, and lecture on, wood graining (a painting technique

*Above and left: Restoration work in progress at ONH. Photos: Donna Hanousek*

which makes a plain wood surface appear to be fancy wood) from Malcom Robson, a sixth generation wood grainer and faux painter. Mr. Robson did the current work on the main doors of the ONH, and has done work in the US Capitol Building.

The demonstration and lecture by Mr. Robson will begin at 2:00pm in the ONH meeting room, and last approximately one hour. There will be room for only about 70 persons to attend, and admission will be on a first come, first served basis.

For more information on the ONH, check out our website: [www.oldnavalhospital.gov](http://www.oldnavalhospital.gov). ✧



*Arboretum continued from page 6*

- English ivy (*Hedera helix*): Common on Capitol Hill, it forms a dense mat, harbors pathogens and covers trees.
- Mile-a-minute vine (*Polygonum perfoliatum*): Annual thorny vine forms a mat shading out native plants.

She also pointed out Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*), an annual low-growing grass,

resembling bamboo, which spreads widely into thick mats and takes nutrients. It will grow in shade or sun.

Non-native plants arrived through the horticultural trade or by accident. For example, kudzu (*Pueraria lobata*) and rosa multiflora were introduced for soil stabilization. Stiltgrass appeared accidentally.

Ms. Feely then led us to a large

tree covered with porcelain berry and Amur honeysuckle (so covered that it was hard to tell the tree's species). With pruners and determination, we liberated the tree from the smothering vines, a very satisfying conclusion to the morning.

For more information on invasive non-native plants, see "Weeds gone wild" at [www.nps.gov/plants/alien](http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien). Arboretum website: [www.usna.usda.gov](http://www.usna.usda.gov). ✧

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# The Navy Yard Area Five Years After Historic Designation

by Nancy Metzger

Attendees at September's Preservation Café had a chance to review the way the southern stretch of Barracks Row and the surrounding blocks looked five years ago, just before the area was protected by historic district designation. Barracks Row Executive Director Bill McLeod and CHRS Historic Preservation Committee chair Nancy Metzger provided the slideshow and alternating commentary about the buildings' histories and what might be happening soon. Some of the highlights of the evening's presentation and discussion included:

- The Navy Yard Car Barn, now a landmark building at Eighth and M Streets, SE, continues to house three charter schools and an adult day care center. New owners purchased the building for \$20 million a year ago and continue to look for alternate sites for those tenants, while considering various development possibilities.
- The Virginia Avenue Playground (Virginia and Potomac Avenues between Ninth & Eleventh Streets, SE) was given a facelift by the DC

Building Industry Association in the past year and now features community gardens near Ninth Street. The Café audience was surprised to hear about the Wednesday evening amateur boxing matches that had been held in the park until the renovation—a facet of Capitol Hill life known to few.

- Chicken Tortilla Café has taken over the old Goodman Market at Eighth and L Streets, SE, and instituted the first sidewalk café on Eighth Street south of the Freeway.
- Some of the most dramatic changes showed up in the houses that are east and north of the Seventh and L Street Market. The photos taken five years ago show mostly derelict houses—boarded up and graffiti covered.

The present-day photos show newly renovated buildings, occupied by residents and businesses. Julia Pic built the Market itself in 1854 for a grocery store and residence. It is hoped that a grant will help the present grocery store owner restore some of the façade

to its handsome appearance as shown in earlier photographs.

- The biggest project presently on the drawing boards is a mixed-use development at 801 Virginia Avenue, designed by architect William Bonstra. The former Sound Car building has been razed and it is expected that work will begin soon.
- Plenty of development opportunities remain. Some owners of vacant lots and empty buildings are wealthy, non-resident individuals who are quite content with the status quo. Barracks Row Main Street has contacted owners, suggesting it's a favorable time to rehabilitate, develop or sell.

Dudley Brown, who came to the Hill in the 1950s remarked how exciting it was to attend the Café and see the progress after only five years of historic district status. He noted that 30 years ago many people believed that there would never be any preservation effort south of the Freeway. The staff at Trattoria Alberto provided their usual gracious welcome and CHRS appreciates their donation of the use of the space. ✧

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## October Preservation Café Features DDOT's Historic Streets and Alleys Program

by Nancy Metzger

Capitol Hill has a picturesque collection of alleys. Some are little more than cart or pedestrian paths while others are used as secondary streets and are lined with residences, garages, and businesses. Many are paved with historic materials—red and/or yellow brick, asphalt pavers, and river rock with brick carriage tracks.

John F. Deatruck, Deputy Director, Chief Engineer for the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), will point out the resources and challenges of DDOT's Historic

Alley program at the Preservation Café to be held Wednesday, October 18, 6:30–7:15 pm at Christ Church Parish Hall, 620 G Street, SE. This venue is wheelchair accessible.

In a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Deatruck will describe the program funding, alley asset database, and the construction program. Several Capitol Hill alleys have been restored under this program including Gessford Court, SE, and Brown's Court, SE.

In November Robert Sonderman, archaeologist with the National Park Service and archaeologist member of the Historic Preservation Review Board, will be leading an "armchair

tour" of archaeological sites on the Hill and nearby locations, finishing up with an identification session of the backyard finds of bottles, pottery, and miscellany. So bring those artifacts and come to the Preservation Café on Wednesday, November 15, 6:30–7:15 pm. Location to be announced soon.

Preservation Cafes are popular, free forums of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society, exploring historic preservation topics of interest to all residents of the Hill. For more information, contact the Society's offices at 202-543-0425, CapHRS@aol.com or check the website, [www.chrs.org](http://www.chrs.org). ✧

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# Looking Back on Capitol Hill

by Nancy Metzger

Although Eighth Street south of Pennsylvania Avenue has always been known as a commercial street, it has also been a residential street, with single-family homes, apartments, and shop owner's homes above their stores. Many of the houses have now been converted into offices but some apartments still remain.

Margaret Wadsworth recalled that when she was a child living at

510 Eighth Street, SE, in the 1920s her great-grandfather lived next door. In an interview last year with Beth Eck for the Ruth Ann Overbeck Oral History Project, Mrs. Wadsworth recounted:

*"... the best part of it is that there were four houses there [506–512 Eighth Street, SE] and they're still there. The hall was very long, the living room to the right, the dining room to the back. And all the way back was the kitchen. It had one of these colossal iron stoves, you know, that you lifted up the top*

*of ... We had two bedrooms upstairs and there was a basement. My great-grandfather, Major Dunne, when he retired from the Marine Corps he lived next door. Basements in those days were used as dining rooms, some of them, or breakfast rooms, if you will. He had a platform built so that he could look right out into the street. He was infirm at the time.... But people would come by, "Hi Major," and every day he would be right there. He started the day for everyone on the block." ✧*

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## DCPS Decision to Use Hine School as Office Space

*Hine School continued from page 1*

as essentially a "free" location for school administration woefully misstates the economics of the situation. The building would need substantial modification and rehabilitation to serve as offices. Essentially, it would have to be gutted and retrofitted in order to efficiently utilize the space as offices and to eliminate such environmental hazards as asbestos. Although other old schools on the Hill have been "re-adapted" to other uses such as loft apartments and even a gym, these renovations have been undertaken at substantial cost by private investors.

Those re-adaptive costs must be factored with other costs. There also is the issue of "opportunity" costs; that is, what a new Hine site building or buildings could produce in the way of taxes and contributions to the growing vitality of the area. Of course, much of the sales price and additional taxes could be added to the DCPS budget. The Hine building, unlike many of our older school buildings such as Eastern, McKinley Tech, Woodrow Wilson and others of an earlier era of school design, is unworthy of retention and rehabilitation. It is the

product of a 1950's form of public architecture that emphasized "utility" and lack of ornamentation in the creation of buildings that were strictly "functional." Some of that design sensibility created buildings of continuing design merit. Hine is not one of those. It has all the ambience of a prison. Its form is clunky. The materials used are low grade and the building is poorly maintained. Finally, as a piece of architecture it is a jarring note in what the *Financial Times* newspaper referred to as a "jewel box" of a neighborhood. Clearly, no planning for the relocation of the DCPS offices has been done. There are other locations in the city and even on Capitol Hill that would serve as better sites for these offices. In this connection, what readily comes to mind are some of the vacant buildings on Reservation 13 that used to be the location for DC General, including Anne Archbold Hall. In fact, the planning for Reservation 13 includes locations for DC offices. Just as at Hine, there is a Metro station—Stadium-Armory—virtually on site.

An additional planning issue is that the Hine site is zoned R-4 residential. Although a public school

can be located in a residential neighborhood as a matter of right, office buildings of any type, including DC government buildings, are not allowed as a matter of right. DCPS would have to go through a re-zoning of the site in order to use it as offices. We believe the proposal of DCPS that has been reported in the newspapers—it has never been discussed with the community—would not be of such merit to the Capitol Hill community and the city as a whole to warrant support for such a re-zoning.

Attached to this letter is a Freedom of Information Act request that covers all the documentation that might have been associated with the decision to utilize the Hine site for DCPS office use. We would appreciate a prompt response to this request.

Sincerely,

**Richard N. Wolf**  
CHRS President

cc: Sharon Ambrose, Kathy Patterson, George Didden, Tommy Wells, Ken Jarboe, Bonnie Cain, Steve Cymrot

# Mark Your Calendar!

## OCTOBER

### 7 Saturday, 1-4pm

Old Naval Hospital Open House. 9th & Pennsylvania Avenues, SE. Details: [www.oldnavalhospital.org](http://www.oldnavalhospital.org). See page 7.

### 11 Wednesday, 6:30-8:30pm

Lecture: Researching Your Home's History. Washingtoniana Room, MLK Library, 9th & G Streets, NW. Local historian Matthew Gilmore provides hands-on tips for researching the history of your home utilizing the resources of the MLK Library. Details: 202-783-5144 or [rsvp@dcpreservation.org](mailto:rsvp@dcpreservation.org).

### 12 Thursday, 7:30pm

CHRS Zoning Committee. To consider cases involving 208 10th Street, SE; 1411 Ames Place, NE; 1022 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE; 619 Orleans Place, NE; 714 13th Street, SE; 138 12th Street, NE (AppleTree Institute); 210 and 214 South Carolina Avenue, SE (Capitol Hill Day School); and 1405 North Carolina Avenue, NE. Kirby House, 420 10th Street SE, first floor. Details: Gary Peterson, 202-547-7969.

### 17 Tuesday, 6:30pm

CHRS Board of Directors. Kirby House, 420 10th Street SE, first floor. Details: Dick Wolf, 202-543-4353.

### 18 Wednesday, 6:30pm

CHRS Preservation Café: Capitol Hill's Historic Streets and Alleys. Featuring DDOT's John Deatruck. Christ Church

Parish Hall, 620 G Street, SE. Details: Nancy Metzger, 202-546-1034. See page 8.

### 21 Saturday, 10 am-12noon

Barney Circle Walking Tour. A tour highlighting neighborhood history and architecture led by Hill East experts and residents Reuben Hameed and Beth Purcell. Space is limited; meet at Potomac Avenue Metro stop at 14th & Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. \$10 for DCPL members, \$15 others. Reservations: 202-783-5144 or [rsvp@dcpreservation.org](mailto:rsvp@dcpreservation.org). See page 3.

### 24 Tuesday, 6:30pm

Mayor's Awards for Excellence in Historic Preservation. Stephen Decatur House Museum, 748 Jackson Place NW. RSVP by October 11 to [rsvp@dcpreservation.org](mailto:rsvp@dcpreservation.org). Details: DC Preservation

League, 202-783-5144.

### 26 Thursday, 10:00am

Historic Preservation Review Board. 441 4th Street NW (#1 Judiciary Square), Room 220 South. Details: Nancy Metzger, 202-546-1034.

## NOVEMBER

### 6 Monday, 6:30pm

CHRS Historic Preservation Committee. Kirby House, 420 10th Street SE, first floor. Details: Nancy Metzger, 202-546-1034.

### 7 Tuesday, 7am-8pm

Election Day at 142 precincts throughout the city. Details: [www.dcboee.org](http://www.dcboee.org)

## Food Coop Planned for H Street

**H** Street Community Market is a member-owned food cooperative that plans to open on Capitol Hill during the spring of 2008.

The food coop will offer a one-stop shopping experience focused on offering local products such as produce, bread, pastured meat and cheese, and organic and responsibly farmed foods when available.

The market also will offer prepared foods, a juice bar, wine/beer, and dry goods.

Interested residents are encouraged to join the food coop to help shape the vision and products that will be offered.

Until November 15, 2006, all membership fees received will be matched three-fold thanks to a grant received and a generous H Street Community Market Board member.

For more information visit the website, [www.hstcommunitymarket.org](http://www.hstcommunitymarket.org), send an email to [hstfoodcoop@gmail.com](mailto:hstfoodcoop@gmail.com), or call 202-547-7053. ✧



### Capitol Hill Restoration Society

420 Tenth Street, SE  
Washington, DC 20003