



# NEWS

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November 2008

## CHRS Adopts Parking Policy

The October CHRS Community Forum dealing with the zoning changes impacting parking in our neighborhood heard from several community representatives who have participated in the Zoning Task Force revision meetings and/or have reviewed and commented on the text amendment #08-06-2 that is before the Zoning Commission.

David Garrison, Vice Chair of ANC 6B's Planning and Zoning Committee, shared his testimony on the text amendment before the DC Zoning Commission in July. After

careful review of his testimony and consideration of his presentation and his response to questions at the Forum, the CHRS Board has voted to endorse his critique and to notify the Zoning Commission that we agree with the position expressed in his testimony.

Mr. Garrison voiced his concerns about the proposal to dispense with minimum parking requirements for new construction projects. He pointed out that he realized that in bringing individual topics such as this forward for focused discussion, the Office of

Planning seeks to be able to manage the overall process of implementing the Comprehensive Plan Update in an orderly and thoughtful way. However, as far as it concerns the topic of parking, he stated that it is difficult to assess the viability and logic of this particular proposal outside the context of proposals to implement other aspects of the Comp Plan. Moreover, the Zoning Commission needs to know what the City is willing to do on a range of related policy decisions regarding parking rules and incentives

*Continued on page 4*

## Capitol Visitors Center Opening on December 2



The fences around the east face of the U. S. Capitol have begun to come down as the Visitors Center approaches its official opening day: December 2, 2008. Final details like paving, lights and plantings are being finished. On the same date in 1863, 145 years ago, the Statue of Freedom was placed on top of the new dome.

The Visitors Center will be the largest expansion of the Capitol building. The new facility will provide two large orientation movie theatres and an Exhibition Hall that will include rarely-seen documents and artifacts from the National Archives and the Library of Congress that relate specifically to the duties and responsibilities of Congress. \*

# President's Column: Trees, Parks and the Greening of the Hill

by Dick Wolf

**D**uring the course of preparing the Comprehensive Plan for the city, it became apparent that statistically the Hill had the lowest acreage of parks in the city. But what didn't come out is that Capitol Hill with its wide L'Enfant street plan, the many small triangle parks, the public parking (our front yards), and the alley system is airy and green, with the aura of being one big park.

Essential to this sense of park is the proper maintenance of street trees and public spaces. In December, as noted elsewhere in the newsletter, CHRS will hold a Forum on the state of our street trees. Unfortunately, we are losing most of our older elms, but some of the younger Casey Tree Princeton elms are thriving. We hope to focus attention on what is happening and why and what can be done about this essential component of our "park".

But there are larger parks which offer places for play and recreation. Over the years CHRS has fostered in various ways their improvement and maintenance.

For example, years ago we set up a mechanism for residents to make tax-deductible contributions to support the building of play spaces for small children in Marion, Stanton, and Lincoln Parks. Fortunately, the earlier wooden structures these contributions supported have been replaced by the Park Service with higher grade play equipment and fenced play areas. In addition, CHRS was instrumental in working with Congress to purchase and preserve Providence Park as open space. More recently, we supported neighborhood efforts to improve Garfield Park, contributed funding for the reconstruction of Turtle Park, and helped to fund trees and gardens at several schools.

Larger scale parks lie along the Anacostia River: Kingman Island, a proposed park on Reservation 13, and of more immediate interest to residents of the Hill, the park denoted as Boathouse Row. CHRS recently encouraged the boat clubs to sponsor a walk so that residents could be introduced to the park immediately at our feet, one little used by Hill neighbors unless they are boaters. As this area is being

planned by the District government, pending its transfer from the Park Service to the city, residents should understand that this narrow long park has great potential for recreation with its clubs and open spaces which lend themselves to birding, nature watching, walking, running, and bicycle riding along the Anacostia River Walk.

Capitol Hill has been gifted by nature and history with a graceful park-like feel. We need to nurture this aspect of Hill life so that our "park" becomes even better than it is. See you at the Forum on trees. \*

## New CHRS Office Manager Appointed

CHRS has employed Ms. Gloria Junge to serve as the part-time Office Manager for the organization. She replaces Mr. Jeff Fletcher, who has served in that capacity for the past three years. Ms. Junge (pronounced "Young") is a Capitol Hill resident, a member of CHRS, and a recent retiree from the State Department, where she worked as a Human Resources Officer. She has served in a variety of posts in Africa, including Cameroon, Chad, Gabon, Botswana, and Uganda. Early in her career she served in Iran, Brazil, Swaziland, and the Central African Republic. While finishing her career in Washington, she was sent on temporary assignments to Kabul, Afghanistan, and Baghdad, Iraq.

Many of her assignments were in locations where resources were in short supply and she had to make do with what was available and what could be borrowed — experience that will be of considerable value to her in her new position. Her standard office hours have not been established at this time. \*

## CHRS Street Tree Forum to be Held December 2, 2008

**S**treet trees (the trees between the sidewalk and the street) are essential to the health and beauty of Capitol Hill. Many members want to learn more about caring for trees, their watering and maintenance needs, and the resources offered by DC government and non-profit organizations. The Street Tree Forum will be a panel discussion which will include representatives from the city's Urban Forestry Administration, Casey Trees, and Trees For Capitol Hill, Inc.

**DATE:** Tuesday, December 2, 2008, 7:30 pm (doors open at 7:00 pm)

**PLACE:** St. Peter's Parish Hall, 2nd and C Streets, SE

**CONTACT:** Beth Purcell, eap1@mindspring.com \*

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To contact any of the above, please contact the Society offices by calling 202-543-0425 or sending email to CapHRS@aol.com.  
[www.chrs.org](http://www.chrs.org)

Celebrating more than 50 years 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)  
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Starting at just \$25 per year for a single membership, it's a great deal.

# Historic Boathouse Row Tour

by Mary Withum and Beth Purcell

On the west bank of the Anacostia River, between the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge and Sousa Bridge, sits Historic Boathouse Row, home of some of the first yacht clubs in the United States devoted exclusively to recreational power boating. On October 5<sup>th</sup>, four clubs—the Washington Yacht Club, the Seafarers Yacht Club, the District Yacht Club, and the Eastern Power Boat Club—hosted a walking tour for the public that highlighted the natural history and beauty of the river, as well as the local history of the riverfront and the clubs themselves.

These four historic clubs, the first established in 1905, have contributed to the development of recreational power boating in Washington during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially along the Anacostia River. The clubs are unique in that they have been affordable and open to working class boaters, including African-Americans, who were not traditionally welcomed by other area yacht clubs.

The walking tour highlighted the locations of Native American base camps and early ferries and bridges across the Anacostia River, and tracked John Wilkes Booth's escape route down 11<sup>th</sup> Street, SE. The tour also explained the Clean Marina Program and the value of preserving the surrounding natural habitat. All the clubs are certified clean marinas, which require that their operations and facilities achieve and maintain a high level of ecological compliance.

The clubs' clean marina compliance is vital to the improved health of the Anacostia River, which provides a habitat for 62 species of wildlife in greatest conservation need, including birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish and invertebrates. These include the Bald Eagle, the Common Musk



Turtle, Eastern Mud Turtle, Eastern Painted Turtle, Redbelly Turtle, Spotted Turtle, Atlantic Sturgeon, Shortnosed Sturgeon, and Dwarf Wedgemussel. For decades these creatures and others have been able to coexist with the historic yacht clubs and flourish thanks to the lack of development and preservation of wildlife through benign neglect.

Boathouse Row is unlike anyplace else in the city and represents one of a dwindling number of historic Washington venues that have been spared the cookie-cutter redevelopment and corporate commercialization of other parts of the city. This unique parkland and riverside nature preserve abutting the east side of the Navy Yard is just a short walk from Capitol Hill.

Historic Boathouse Row is currently undergoing a master planning process as part of the planned transfer of ownership from the National Park Service to the District of Columbia. CHRS is working with the clubs to preserve the historic yacht clubs and protect the Anacostia River's wildlife habitat. For further information, contact Mary Withum ([mwwithum@msn.com](mailto:mwwithum@msn.com)). \*

# CHRS Adopts Parking Policy *continued from page 1*

such as those overseen by DDoT and Department of Public Works (DPW) before they adopt parking zoning changes. He noted that decisions about how the zoning code should address parking must be made as part of the larger fabric of decisions about goals for the city's neighborhoods.

## Residential Parking Requirements in the Comprehensive Plan: Policy LU-2.1-11

*Ensure that parking requirement for residential buildings are responsive to the varying levels of demand associated with different unit types, unit sizes, and unit locations (including proximity to transit). Parking should be accommodated in a manner that maintains an attractive environment at the street level and minimizes interference with traffic flow. Reductions in parking may be considered where transportation demand management measures are implemented and a reduction in demand can be clearly demonstrated.*

In view of Policy LU-2.1.11, Mr. Garrison questioned whether this section of the Comprehensive Plan supports the recommendation

under consideration by the Zoning Commission. His further testimony continues below and is endorsed by the Restoration Society as our position on this issue:

"The sort of major policy change envisioned in the proposal to eliminate minimum parking requirements would surely result in increased competition among residents for an already scarce resource. It also goes beyond what is required to implement the Comp Plan. In order to achieve the proper balance sought by the Comp Plan, the city needs to consider the full range of government decisions impacting access by cars to our neighborhoods, including such critical, regulatory systems as the Residential Parking Permit (RPP) program. If, as proposed, the zoning code were to permit residential projects that had little or no on-site parking without the city also taking action to restrict the ability of new residents in such projects to get on-street parking permits, the result would be less on-street parking options for residents."

Many of our Capitol Hill neighborhoods have reached a point where demand exceeds the sup-

ply of on-street parking spaces. For those living in townhouses on blocks with no interior alleys and no off-street parking areas, parking one's car on the street is the only option. Many Hill residents have already reduced their car ownership to the bare minimum. Introducing more demand into these neighborhoods while supply remains constant would fundamentally and detrimentally affect our ability to access and use our homes.

It isn't clear that people who are attracted to walkable neighborhoods like Capitol Hill want to abandon their cars. Residents want to access the nearby amenities in their neighborhood by walking and also have the option of driving to other areas of the city and the region. Since we have on-street space for residents to park near their homes, we would prefer to use those spaces for residents than for commuters or tourists. If the city wants to reduce the number of cars on city streets it should focus on the far larger problem presented by commuters.

It might make sense to use a tiered, pricing policy to discourage multiple car ownership among residents and to encourage full use of off-street parking resources, including garages, in residential areas. But, is it wise or effective to attempt to reduce car ownership among existing residents by either reducing the supply of parking spaces and/or increasing the demand for parking without increasing supply?

I support efforts by the city to reduce dependence upon automobiles in areas adjacent to major bus and transit nodes. However, I do not support approaches that would result in significantly reduced neighborhood parking options for existing residents. Until all elements of the city are able to come together around a coordinated set of decisions on parking, the Zoning Commission should withhold action on this proposal." \*

## Inappropriate Bricks Specified for Eastern Market Sidewalks and Plaza

by Monte Edwards

**A**t a construction coordination meeting on October 21, it was learned that all of the original, moulded sidewalk bricks that have been removed from the south end of the Market and under the Farmers' Line shed have been used for fill or destroyed.

The Office of Property Management (OPM) recalls that the community has some interest in the type of brick, and has specified that the replacement brick match the brick pavers in the North Plaza: wire-cuts that

were installed as part of the 1970s renovation. This is contrary to the specifications that EMCAC advocated and that are included in the DDoT Streetscape contract:

*The contractors chosen by DDoT will reuse existing brick, where feasible, or use moulded brick (as opposed to wire-cut) for sidewalk construction.*

This language is verbatim from the Memorandum of Understanding that was developed at the February 5, 2005, meeting attended by DDoT, OPM, the EM Tenants Council, EM management, and EMCAC.

*Continued on page 7*

# Historic Windows the Subject of Lively October Preservation Café

by Shauna Holmes

Owners of historic Capitol Hill homes take great interest in their windows, and many turned out for CHRS's October 15 Preservation Café to hear Christian Kelleher, of The Craftsmen Group, tell the story of our historic wood windows and explain their importance. It can be difficult for us, in the 21st century, to really comprehend how hard it was in the mid- to late-19th century to craft the windows we enjoy and admire today. For instance, only in the 1870s did the steel industry ramp up the capability to make machinery that could produce the metal pulleys necessary to suspend windows for the double-hung design we now take for granted. Larger window panes weren't technologically feasible until the latter part of the century, and the process to make really large panes wasn't perfected until the 1950s. Similarly, until steam power and new railroads could transport a wider range of parts and materials to more regions of the country, 19<sup>th</sup>-century window makers were limited to locally available woods, parts, and glass.

Because our original wood windows were painstakingly hand-crafted and thus much harder to make than current products, they were typically made very well and made to last. The careful workmanship is reflected in the high quality of the windows, and Mr. Kelleher believes we owe it to ourselves and the people who made our windows to respect those objects, value their quality, and preserve them to the fullest extent possible. In short, he said, quality matters.

Mr. Kelleher finds historic windows easier to repair than factory-made ones, both because of the quality of their craftsmanship and the high quality of their wood. On Capitol Hill, windows were usually made of old growth pine, which is a very durable wood that stands up well to many decades of use and weathering. Contemporary farmed pine, in contrast, can't measure up to the old growth in durability and resistance to bacteria that attack wood and break it down. Therefore, homeowners should be very careful about what woods are used to repair or replace their windows.

Mr. Kelleher recommends Spanish cedar or South American mahogany or white oak as pretty good substitutes for old growth pine and warns owners not to let contemporary pine be used for any window part that would be outside exposed to weather, since it would be susceptible to rot.

To fight drafts, Mr. Kelleher said the best thing to do is stop air infiltration with putty and weatherstripping. To protect woods, he recommends using tung oil, first cutting it with a solvent, then applying it in graduating thicknesses and rubbing it in well. Varnish can also be used (he suggests Marine Spar or Sikkens), but never polyurethane, which is brittle. As to old, leaky glass, it can be retrofitted in-house.

CHRS provided attendees two guidelines: CHRS's *Windows: The Eyes of a Building*, and the DC Historic Preservation Office's *Window Repair and Replacement for Historic Properties*. The speaker's company, The Craftsmen Group, is among the businesses suggested in the HPO guidelines for window repair and is currently working on the windows for Eastern Market's restoration. \*

## November 19 Preservation Café Will Feature Historic Lights

Have you ever wondered what kind of light fixture would be most appropriate for your historic home? If so, please come to CHRS's November 19 Preservation Café on historic lighting.

*Lighting Capitol Hill's Historic Homes* will focus on the style, designs, and types of lights that would be most fitting for Capitol Hill residences. Because the exterior appearance of buildings is so important in the Capitol Hill Historic District, the presentation will focus primarily on historically appropriate exterior lights, especially at front doors.

The Preservation Café's featured speaker will be Dan Mattausch, a scholar and preservation consultant on historic lighting. While his degrees are in public policy, political science, and history, his passion is antique lighting, especially gaslights. A 21-year resident of Capitol Hill, his interest in historic lighting was sparked by the challenge of restoring the lights and furnishings in his 1891 home. He has conducted extensive research on historic lighting and is a founding member of the International Guild of Lighting Researchers. Considered one of the foremost experts on

antique lighting in the country, he has advised clients ranging from the White House, Smithsonian, and Monticello to producers of period movies. He has also served as a U.S. Capitol Historical Society Fellow at the Curator's Office of the Architect of the Capitol.

*Lighting Capitol Hill's Historic Homes* will be held on Wednesday, November 19, from 6:30-7:15 pm in the downstairs Community Room at Ebenezers Coffeehouse at Second and F Streets, NE. The Preservation Café is free, wheel-chair accessible, and open to all members of the Capitol Hill community. \*

# Call Box Commemorates Wallach School



by Nancy Metzger

Artist Will Fleishell and welding and engineering consultant Bradley Comar installed plaques commemorating Wallach School and its architect Adolph Cluss in the call box on the NW corner of Seventh Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. The location is particularly appropriate, as the Wallach School stood across Seventh Street from the call box and Cluss was also the architect of Eastern Market, which is in the next block of Seventh Street.

The sidewalk side of the box features a low-relief bronze sculpture of a view of the front façade, showing the deep arched recesses of the entrance, students walking to school, and trees that shaded the grounds. The art is based on a historic photograph. On the street side, there is a steel polychromed plaque with a portrait of the architect, who was known for his innovative designs for numerous schools, the Arts and Industries Building of the Smithsonian, and Eastern Market. The call box itself, once used by citizens to report fires, has been painted two shades of blue.

Wallach School, erected in 1862 during the Civil War, was razed in 1950 for the present Hine Junior High School. Richard Wallach, Washington's mayor from 1861-68, pushed for a tax of 5 cents on each \$100 worth of assessable property to be used for the construction of a major public school building in each section of the city. Wallach School, innovative for the times, had ten classrooms and space for 600 students. Girls used the classrooms and entrance on the east side, and boys used the ones on the west. Ventilation, a concern of the time, was provided for all classrooms through the molded brick structures at the corners of the side pavilions. Four chimneys were

located on the center gable roof, and a small bell tower was on top of the front gable. Even acoustics were considered as the teacher's desks were placed in niches on raised platforms. [Information from James Goode's *Capital Losses*.]

Will Fleishell, an artist with the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, donated many hours of his time, carving the wax model



of the bronze plaque and working with several foundries before finishing the project with Franklin Bronze foundry in Franklin, Pennsylvania. A donation by the Stanton Development Company helped cover costs. Bread and Chocolate supplied the electricity so that the welding could be done. The call box project is part of the city-wide project Art on Call, which had been managed by Cultural Tourism DC with support from the DC Commission on Arts and Humanities, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development, and the District Department of Transportation. CHRS is the neighborhood sponsor.

Other finished call boxes on Capitol Hill are at 11th and North Carolina, SE (Carolina Theater), 11th & C, NE (Home Theater), and First and D, SE (Party Animals). \*

## Welcome CHRS Supporters

We thank the following new members, patrons, and sponsors.

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# Looking Back On Capitol Hill

by Nancy Metzger

**H**elene Au is one of the few people on Capitol Hill who attended Wallach School in the second decade of the twentieth century. She and her brother grew up on Capitol Hill on Independence Avenue — first near Fourth Street and later near 11th. In March 2000, during an oral history interview with Nancy Metzger, she spoke of her memories of Wallach School and of the other two schools that stood on the same square — Towers and Hine. The Hine Junior High School she refers to was the original Eastern High School.

...

*AU: Wallach was an Italianate red brick building with large shade trees around it — very handsome. They had a picture down at CVS of it without a shade tree in sight. Poor Wallach — that's not how it looked. It had beautiful shade trees and I don't think that any of the kids ever went near the front. We always played in the little playground.*

*Miss Baker was my favorite teacher in elementary school. She lived in the 200 block of 8th Street. Miss Stineberg had been my father's teacher. Miss Cannelli was also a favorite. Her father owned a leather findings shop on the Avenue near the Avenue Grand [movie theater at 645 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE]. Miss Downey was also a teacher at Hine Junior. At Hine Junior High I had Miss*

*Penny who had taught Lindbergh. At Eastern I had Miss Buckrum who had taught General McAuliffe, who said 'Nuts.'*

METZGER: You said 'leather findings shop'? What is that?

AU: *Shoemakers would buy leather — leather shoestrings. It was retail so others would buy leather too.*

*Hine was also an attractive building, as was Towers. All three were on the block now used by Hine alone. Wallach faced the Avenue; Hine faced 7th Street; Tower faced C Street. I also attended Bryan for a year or so. The girls' entrance and the boys' entrance were on opposite sides of the building. \**

## Historic Preservation Briefs

The Historic Preservation Review Board, at its October 23 meeting, decided that the partially built rooftop addition at 145 Tennessee Avenue, NE, could not be approved and that the roof should be returned to its original height and shape. The case was highlighted in the October 9 *Voice of the Hill*.

While sympathetic to the homeowners' difficulties with a roof covered only by a tarp, Board members pointed out that the situation began when the owners started the roof addition without submitting plans to the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs for approval. As

part of that approval process, the plans would have been reviewed by the Historic Preservation Office before the old roof was removed.

The proposed alteration would be highly visible from Tennessee Avenue and would be very different from the other houses in that row. The staff report also pointed out that the "rear contextual relationship is quite troubling....Given the lack of meaningful backyards in this very intimate collection of buildings near the corner, any change in roof height impacts and overwhelms neighboring properties and alters the consistency in height along this portion of

the row." ANC 6A and the Capitol Hill Restoration Society also did not support the proposed alteration and urged that the roof be returned to its original height and design.

Although major roof repairs and replacements require Historic Preservation Office approval in the historic district, minor emergency roof patches can be made without a permit. Even when a permit is required, it is generally handled at the staff level and the permit can be obtained in a day or so, depending on the amount of structural replacement required. \*

## Inappropriate Bricks *continued from page 4*

Apparently, DDoT assigned the sidewalk work and the associated funding to OPM, but OPM did not consider that the DDoT specifications applied to them, and bid the job for lowest cost, which meant discarding the original brick and specifying the cheaper wire-cut bricks.

When EMCAC complained, OPM responded that the wire brick specification was in the specifica-

tion book and by having been provided the specs and not objecting, EMCAC endorsed the wire-cut brick.

Upon further discussion, OPM stated that their contractor, Forney, was about to order the wire cut brick and a change order would be expensive, and if EMCAC wanted the moulded brick we could hold DDoT to their specification. EMCAC complained that the taxpayer should not

bear the expense of paying twice for the same work.

The brick has not been delivered (and perhaps not ordered), and its installation is scheduled for around Thanksgiving. We have time to influence this. The CHRS Board has agreed to support the installation of moulded brick with a letter that they would coordinate with EMCAC. \*

# Plan Ahead For Meter Boxes When Considering Renovations

by Nancy Metzger

**E**veryone knows renovation projects entail many surprises. One of the most confounding surprises for homeowners has been the appearance on the front of their building of a huge electric meter box in place of the previous small round meter. Nothing destroys the essence of a historic façade quite as quickly as a metal box, 2' x 3', complete with round glass meters, mounted so that it partially covers a window.

For years when individual homeowners have protested this situation they have had to battle electrical contractors and PEPCO, and quite often they've lost the battle. Last winter the Historic Districts Coalition, (of which CHRS is a member), testified about the problem at a Council Oversight hearing on utility service. That testimony caught the attention of Councilmembers Wells and Cheh, the Public Service Commission, PEPCO, and others. The Coalition asked Denise Johnson, a former Historic Preservation Review Board member who dealt with such problems with her own house renovation, to head up a Task Force to try to find a solution for the problem.

Representatives from PEPCO, the Historic Preservation Office (HPO), the Public Space Committee of the DC Department of

Transportation (DDoT), Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA), Office of the People's Council, the Public Service Commission, Historic Districts Coalition, and an electrical contractor have met twice, gathering information and trying to understand the technological changes at the bottom of the problem and to develop some appropriate responses.

As it turns out, the large-size boxes are dictated by international code requirements established to meet the heavier electrical supply driven by modern air conditioning, more home appliances and electronic equipment. The code also mandates a separate cut-off lever (for fire fighting), increased insulation, and increased space for manipulation of the larger conduit. When a building has more than one unit, the size of the problem is multiplied. The cost and installation of the meter are PEPCO's responsibility; the box for the meter is purchased by the owner's electrician.

PEPCO has indicated that, in the short run, it has the ability to install electronic meters inside a building or in less visible locations when owners of historic properties are upgrading their electric service (often called "heavy-up"), assuming that the situation meets the code requirements. The cost of relocating meters (both the meter box and the

meter) without heavy-up is currently borne by customers and this will not change.

Improved permit coordination among DCRA, HPO, DDoT (public space) and with PEPCO and electrical contractors is needed so that issues of placement can be decided before the field work begins. Currently only a postcard permit is needed for a heavy-up in general, although for historic districts, the Historic Preservation Office is supposed to see plans so that better positioning of the larger boxes could be decided before the field work begins. Improving the permitting system and providing information for residents, electrical contractors and PEPCO field workers about sensitive historic preservation issues should be a priority for task force members in the next few months.

In the meantime, DDoT offered the following priority list as the first draft:

1. Locate (or keep) meters inside, using the electronic meters. These can now be read from the street.
2. Locate meters at rear of property (if source is in alley).
3. Locate meters in a below-grade areaway (provided there is sufficient clearance to meet safety standards).
4. Locate meters above grade, attached to property, but screened.
5. Locate meters above grade, in public space.

When homeowners are considering any renovation projects, they should have a preliminary discussion about the possible need for an electrical heavy-up with their architect, electrician, or builder. Then the Historic Preservation Office can help plan for the best location of the meter box. Amanda Molson is the primary contact person for Capitol Hill cases (Amanda.Molson@dc.gov; 442-8827). \*

## Zoning Briefs

The CHRS Zoning Committee has voted to reject a developer's request to use public space to operate a service station and mini-mart at 1400 Maryland Avenue, NE. A gas station at this site would be contrary to both the city's just-adopted Comprehensive Plan and the H Street Strategic Overlay Plan.

The Committee also voted to oppose a requested variance to construct a garage at less than the legally required set-back from the centerline of the alley at 225 Ninth Street, NE. The garage with bollards is proposed to be sited about four feet from the mid-point of the alley. \*

# Elliott Street: An Early History in Three Parts

## Part Two: Developers, Builders, and Architects of Elliott Street

by Donna Hanousek

Solomon and Arthur Carr (1892-1908) and Charles A. Peters (1908-1910) were the principal developers of Elliott Street. The notable Albert H. Beers designed six of the buildings. Profiles of these and others follow:

### Solomon and Arthur Carr

Along with family names like Cafritz and Wardman, the Carr family has shaped wide areas of Washington over many decades.

The patriarch of the Carr family was Solomon Carr, a bricklayer from Shilton, Leicester, England. In 1885, Carr immigrated to the United States as a middle-aged widower with six children. Shortly after landing in Baltimore, Carr moved to Washington. Within four years he was buying and selling building lots in the Northeast quadrant. Carr soon became a building contractor who erected houses on speculation, while doubling as a Methodist "lay preacher" who spoke with what is described as "homey elegance".

Beginning in the 1890s, Carr resided at 1355 Maryland Avenue, NE, at what is now the corner of Elliott Street. In June 1892 he received permits to build the earliest houses on Elliott Street, the two story row houses at numbers 637 and 639, which he also designed. Ultimately Solomon, his sons Arthur and Josiah/Joseph, and daughter Sarah were the original owners of almost half the houses on Elliott Street. The 1900 and 1910 Censuses listed Arthur Carr and his family at 639 Elliott.

When Solomon Carr died at age 58 on December 21, 1904, the *Washington Post* fittingly called him a "pioneer in two and three story

brick flats" who "showed great ingenuity in their design and construction."

Arthur Carr, the third son of Solomon Carr, was 31 years old at the death of his father. He succeeded him as vice-president of the Perpetual Building Association and spent most of his career in commercial real estate, as did his son Oliver T. Carr.

Solomon Carr's great-grandson Oliver T. Carr, Jr. was one of the Washington area's most prominent suburban homebuilders of the 1950s and 1960s. Ironically, he became a principal figure in one of the city's most notorious early historic preservation cases; the destruction of the Rhodes Tavern by the Oliver T. Carr Company in 1984. Today, the Carr America real estate colossus is a direct descendent of Oliver T. Carr Management, Incorporated, and indirectly of Solomon Carr's project on Elliott Street, NE.

(The Carr family was responsible for the development of 625-639 Elliott between 1892 and 1908.)

### Charles A. Peters, Developer

Peters built the houses between 607 and 623 Elliott Street, apparently using well-known architect Albert Beers for 607-611 and 619-623 and an unknown architect for 615 and 617 Elliott Street.

Peters was born in 1855, and lived at both 645 C Street, NE, and 626 14<sup>th</sup> Street, NE, during 1900. He developed properties throughout Washington, first showing up in the *Post* real estate transfers in 1899—buying property in Congress Heights in 1899. He was also the "Peters" in the construction firm Jones and Peters. In 1907, the firm's work ranged from a one-story brick addition at 13<sup>th</sup> and U Streets, NW, to a new frame house in Brookland. In 1910, Peters alone is cited as developer of the entire square containing 4438 Kansas Avenue. An ad in 1926 displayed a high end house

at 4887 Potomac, boasting the best views and most modern conveniences possible, and accessible by the Glen Echo streetcar.

### Albert H. Beers, Architect

Peter's architect for most of the buildings on Elliott Street, was already a notable area architect by 1910 when he designed the Elliott Street houses. Beers was originally from Bridgeport, CT, but practiced architecture and lived in Washington, DC for many years. His office was at 1242 New York Avenue, NW, and at the time of his death he lived at 757 Park Road, NW. Beers worked extensively with Harry Wardman starting in 1905. Two of their projects appear on the National Register of Historic Places. He designed many row houses for Wardman and is credited with Wardman's breakthrough designs for daylight row houses. Beers designed the porch-front row houses for Wardman in Square 1044 in 1907. He also worked with other builders, including Harry A. Kite, Chris Cox Dawson, Michael Flannery, T. J. McCubbin, as well as Charles A. Peters.

### Alexander M. Gorman, Real Estate Broker and Owner

Alexander M. Gorman owned and built the original apartments at 608 and 610 Elliott with architect Nicholas T. Haller (they are no longer extant).

A well known real estate and insurance broker in the first decade of 1900, Gorman also acted as a mortgage broker, offering loans over \$300,000 at 4% interest for DC and Maryland properties. A well known real estate and insurance broker by 1905, Gorman also acted as a mortgage broker, charging  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1% for loans between \$300,000 and \$500,000 at 4% interest for DC and Maryland properties. The

*Continued on next page*

# Nov. 11 Overbeck: Visualizing Early Washington

The next Overbeck History Lecture will feature Dan Bailey, director of the Imaging Research Center at the University of Maryland, who will present and discuss his detailed 3-D animations of Washington, DC, as it would have appeared around 1812, just before the British invasion.

Bailey has worked with architectural historians, cartographers, engineers, and ecologists to assess the often-unreliable sketches and accounts of 19th-century eye witnesses and to recreate a "best guess" glimpse of the early city. A pilot of his work was exhibited at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore last spring, and it received extensive attention in an August 31 *Washington Post Magazine* article by our September speaker, Scott W. Berg.

Bailey's films and animations have won numerous awards and



have been included in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art and the Georges Pompidou Center in Paris.

The lecture will be held on Tuesday, November 11, at 8:00 pm at the historic Naval Lodge hall at 330 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. As usual, admission is free; but a reservation is required due

A "best guess" of how Capitol Hill may have looked in 1814. [Courtesy of Dan Bailey and the Imaging Research Center]

to limited seating. Please email OverbeckLecture@aol.com and specify your name(s) and how many seats you will need. Your reservation is automatic unless no further seating is available, in which case you will be notified. \*

## Elliott Street *continued from page 9*

Gormans appeared regularly in the society pages and made a regular midseason visit to Atlantic City. In 1905, Gorman attempted suicide but recovered. He provided no explanation of the attempt. He was known for having made "several fortunes", and had been recently suffering from severe nervous attacks. In 1892, he had liquidated all of his real estate holdings to pay off debts. Perhaps the attempt was due to similar financial constraints, although he did not mention any financial concerns to friends or family.

### Nicholas T. Haller, Architect

Haller, another notable architect in the Washington, D.C. area, started as a carpenter in the 1870s and began designing buildings in 1881; appearing actively in Washington *Post* real estate transfer records starting in 1891. He designed many row houses and stores throughout

Washington and was especially prolific on Capitol Hill between 1897 and 1913. The Pancoast apartments in Southeast and 1341-1345 East Capitol Street (1903) are among his designs. He designed apartment buildings made of brick and stone for 608 and 610 Elliott in 1904. While the Haller buildings are no longer standing, his involvement in the design of some of Elliott Street's early buildings is further demonstration that Elliott Street was developed by some of the best of their day.

### Clarence W. Gosnell, Builder

Clarence Gosnell designed and built 624 Elliott Street, a 1920s apartment building.

For thirty-four years Gosnell was a builder and real estate developer in the Washington area. He also owned at least 166 apartment units in Washington. Gosnell built a

range of products including single family luxury homes, flats, and apartment buildings, and worked with well-known area architects, such as Appleton P. Clark, Jr. and Leon A. Chatelain, Jr.

His firms, Clarence W. Gosnell, Inc. and Monroe Development Corporation of Alexandria, won local and national building awards, such as honorable mention in the 1936 Board of Trade's merit awards for a four-family flat in the northeast. He was a leader in the development community, serving as president of the Home Builders Association of Metropolitan Washington and as a director of National Capital Bank, along with George A Didden, Jr. in the 1940s and as secretary of the Board of Trade in the 1950s. \*

*Part one of this series appeared in the October 2008 News. The third, and last part will appear in a future issue.*

# Support the Capitol Hill Restoration Society With a Gift to the Annual Fund

Please help us continue to preserve and protect the historic fabric of our neighborhood with your year-end tax-deductible contribution to the CHRS Annual Fund. There are three easy ways to contribute:

## **1. SEND A CHECK**

Fill out the form below and mail with your check. Mail the form and check to:

Capitol Hill Restoration Society  
Post Office Box 15264  
Washington, DC 20003-0264

## **2. VISIT CHRS.ORG**

You may make your secure contribution with a credit card via PayPal.

## **3. MAKE A TAX-FREE CONTRIBUTION DIRECTLY FROM YOUR IRA**

If you are 70 ½ or older and must take a mandatory withdrawal, you can support the CHRS Annual Fund with a tax-free gift DIRECTLY from your IRA. But time is short—you only have until December 31, 2008 to make your contribution via IRA for the current tax year.

Your donation *will not be taxed* as an IRA withdrawal and *will count towards your mandatory IRA withdrawal.*

Please contact your IRA custodian directly for details about making a transfer. You should allow extra time to process the request before the December 31, 2008 deadline. Please call the CHRS office if you need the bank routing number at 202-543-0425.

*The Capitol Hill Restoration Society is a 501(c)(3) organization. CHRS is a volunteer-run charitable organization and dues are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.*

I/we would like to make a *tax-deductible* contribution to the CHRS ANNUAL FUND to support the Society's ongoing efforts to preserve and protect the historic fabric of our neighborhood.

Please find enclosed a check for:

\$50     \$100     \$250     \$500     \$1,000

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ (other amount)

*Please make your check payable to CHRS, Inc.*

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Address

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City, State, Zip

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*Prefer to pay by credit card? You may make a secure credit card donation at CHRS.org via PayPal.*

**THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING CHRS!**

# Mark Your Calendar!

## NOVEMBER

**3** Monday, 6:30 pm

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

**4** Tuesday, 7:00 am–8:00 pm

**Election Day**. Poll hours show above are for DC and Maryland residents. Virginia polls are open 6:00 am–7:00 pm.

**11** Tuesday, 8:00 pm

**Overbeck Lecture: Visualizing Early Washington**. Dan Bailey, Director of the Imaging Research Center at the University of Maryland, will present and discuss 3-D animations of Washington, D.C. as it would have appeared around 1812, just before the British invasion. Naval Lodge Hall, 330 Pennsylvania Avenue SE. Admission is free; but reservations are required due to limited seating. E-mail OverbeckLecture@aol.com to reserve a seat.

**13** Thursday, 7:30 pm

**CHRS Zoning Committee** (tentative), Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details: Gary Peterson, 547-7969.

**15** Saturday, 1:00–5:00 pm

**Anacostia Waterfront Community Fair**. Nationals Park, 1500 South Capitol Street,

SE. Fair will feature refreshments, tour, and updates on Anacostia waterfront projects. Sponsored by several D.C. government agencies. Details: 610-0005 or [www.theanacostiawaterfront.com](http://www.theanacostiawaterfront.com).

**18** Tuesday, 6:30 pm

**CHRS Board of Directors**, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second floor. Details: Dick Wolf, 543-4353.

**19** Wednesday, 6:30–7:15 pm

**CHRS Preservation Café on Historic Lighting**. Historic lighting expert Dan Mattausch will discuss lighting that is authentic and appropriate for Capitol Hill homes, with a special focus on exterior lighting. Ebenezer's Coffee House, 201 F Street, NE, lower level community room. Event is free and open to the public, no reservations required. Details: Shauna Holmes, 546-5211.

**20** Thursday, 10:00 am

**Historic Preservation Review Board**, 441 4th Street, NW, Room 220 south. Details: Nancy Metzger, 546-1034.

## DECEMBER

**1** Monday, 6:30 pm

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

**2** Tuesday, 7:00 pm

**CHRS Community Forum on Trees**. St. Peter's Church, 2nd & C Streets, SE. Meeting is free and open to the public; no reservations required. Details: Dick Wolf, 543-4353.

**11** Thursday, 7:30 pm

**CHRS Zoning Committee** (tentative), Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details: Gary Peterson, 547-7969.

**16** Tuesday, 6:30 pm

**CHRS Board of Directors**, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second floor. Details: Dick Wolf, 543-4353.

**18** Thursday, 10:00 am

**Historic Preservation Review Board**, 441 4th Street, NW, Room 220 South. Details: Nancy Metzger, 546-1034.

## JANUARY 2009

**15** Thursday, 7:00 pm

**CHRS Community Forum** with guest speaker Vincent Gray, Chairman of the D.C. City Council. St. Peter's Church, 2nd & C Streets, SE. Meeting is free and open to the public, no reservations required. Details: Dick Wolf, 543-4353.



**Capitol Hill Restoration Society**

420 Tenth Street, SE  
Washington, DC 20003