



NEWS

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Holiday 2008

Society To Defend Historic District in Mayor's Agent Case

Heritage Foundation Proposal at Stake — CHRS Appeals for Funds

by Nancy Metzger

As part of its preparation in defense of the Historic District, the Capitol Hill Restoration Society Board of Directors at its November meeting authorized President Dick Wolf to hire an experienced historic preservation attorney to represent the Society at the Mayor's Agent hearing on December 2. This appeal involves the proposal of the Heritage Foundation to add a third-floor addition to the 1887 Victorian

building at 227 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE (shown below).

One of the chief concerns with this case is that a roof-top addition with little or no setback would greatly alter the appearance of a distinctive historic building and diminish the integrity of the historic building. While additions are an accepted part of the historic district, they have generally been limited to the rear or, if on the roof, set back so that they do not impact the front façade. In addition to the significant alteration of the building itself, the Society is concerned about the impact on this intact row of historic buildings and on the potential impact on the entire Historic District.

The Capitol Hill Historic District is recognized for its "saw-tooth" roofline — a pattern developed over two centuries as buildings of greatly different heights and styles were built next to each other. The resulting roofscape accentuates each individual building or short row of buildings that vary in height from one story to four stories and that is, in turn, animated by towers and turrets, mansard roofs, classical urns, pitched roofs with dormers, and flat roofs accented with deep cornices. The Society's position is that such dramatic shifts in heights and styles should be celebrated and protected, not altered by allowing

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Legal Defense Fund

It is estimated that hiring an attorney to assist in the defense of the Historic District at the Mayor's Agent hearing could total \$10,000, which is a very large, unanticipated expense. A generous donor has offered \$5,000 but donations to cover the other \$5,000 are needed.

Please consider a tax-deductible donation to CHRS earmarked for the "Historic District Legal Defense". Send checks to CHRS, PO Box 15264, Washington, DC 20003-0425; for more information contact CHRS President Dick Wolf at CapHRS@aol.com).

President's Column: Let's Hear It for Our Committees

by Dick Wolf

This is the season for thanksgiving and holiday celebration. Despite the dismal financial situation, CHRS and the entire Capitol Hill community have much to be thankful for in the contributions by the people who run CHRS committees. Without slighting the board and other committee members who also work tirelessly on various community projects, two committees in particular deserve commendation: the zoning and historic preservation committees. With Gary Peterson as chair, each month the zoning committee wrestles with the complicated and often tension-filled applications for special exceptions and variances. The committee notifies both applicants and affected neighbors of its meetings. The various parties come and are asked cogent questions about the applications. Deliberations by the committee are careful and thoughtful, relying on the law and regulations as well as the specifics of each case to reach a decision. Those decisions are promptly communicated to applicants and the committee writes legally appropriate letters to the Board of Zoning Adjustment and the Zoning Commission as the situation requires. In addition, members of the committee, usually Gary, attend the sessions of the BZA or Zoning Commission

to testify. Even though CHRS has no official standing (as do ANCs) its positions on zoning are treated respectfully and seriously because of our years of careful work. Our thanks to Gary and his committee.

Historic preservation both on the Hill and throughout the city would not be the same without the assiduous and careful work of Nancy Metzger and her committee. As with zoning, her committee meets monthly to consider a full slate of proposed modifications and additions to historic and contributing buildings in the historic district. Consideration requires strict attention to the guidelines developed by CHRS for the historic district. With the help of architects such as Judith Capon, applicants and CHRS often arrive at design solutions acceptable to staff at the Office of Historic Preservation and the Historic Preservation Review Board. Nancy and her committee members appear before HPRB in cases heard by that Board. Again, CHRS has no official standing before the government, but its seriousness of purpose and long involvement get the respect of the officials responsible for regulation of the Capitol Hill Historic District.

With respect to historic preservation activities, there is far more than the very important handling of individual cases. Shauna Holmes and her group put on the valuable

Preservation Cafes which introduce the community to the best in preservation practices: historic lighting, historic windows, treatment of flooring and many other issues relating to living in historic houses.

Other current and former CHRS Board members deserve special recognition. Donna Hanousek has been almost a one-person band in launching our *Beyond the Boundaries* project to assist Capitol Hill residents outside the Historic District survey the historic aspects of their neighborhood. Finally, Beth Purcell and Mary Withum have been essential to the development of the pending Barney Circle Historic District and in highlighting the important history of Boat House Row. Thanks to you all and a happy holiday season. ✧

Jeff Fletcher Retires as CHRS Office Manager

The Capitol Hill Restoration Society is very grateful for the years of quality service Jeff Fletcher gave our membership and board before retiring as CHRS office manager at the end of October.

A DC native, Jeff previously worked 32 years for the National League of Cities. Since his retirement in 2003, he has run the CHRS office. He graduated from Williams College in Massachusetts with a major in Spanish, served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Bolivia, and completed a Master's degree in Latin American Studies at George Washington University.

Jeff now provides consulting services to a nonprofit organization of local government communications professionals, serves on the board of a human services organization, and volunteers on ANC 6A's economic development and zoning committee. We wish the very best for him in this second retirement. ✧

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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

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

Society To Defend Historic District in Mayor's Agent Case *continued from page 1*

an addition that modulates the dramatic roofscape. Losing this case — allowing the Heritage Foundation to build a third-story addition near or at the front of the building — could well set a precedent for myriad cases across the Historic District.

Heritage's appeal is from the decision of the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB), at its September hearing, to not approve the Heritage Foundation's proposal to construct an addition that would extend immediately above or very close to the historic cornice line. The Heritage Foundation then appealed the HPRB decision, contending that the proposed rooftop addition is consistent with the purposes of the Historic Preservation Act. Under the Act, decisions by the Historic Preservation Review Board can be appealed to the "Mayor or his agent," which is the highest and

most formal appeal. For at least the past decade, historic preservation cases have been heard by Administrative Law Judge Rohulamin Quander, however, this case is scheduled to be heard by the Office of Planning Director Harriet Tregonning.

It is not known who will represent the HPRB/the city in the appeal or whether or not they will be represented at all. In any case, CHRS must be prepared to strongly defend the decision since the Heritage Foundation is represented by one of the city's largest land-use law firms, Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pitman. Andrea Ferster, an attorney in private practice who has represented many non-profit organizations in land use and historic preservation cases, has been engaged to assist the Society with the case. ✧

Save the Dates: 52nd Annual CHRS House and Garden Tour

Barracks Row and Surrounding Neighborhoods

Saturday, May 9, 5 – 8pm &
Sunday, May 10, noon – 5pm

Currently, we are vetting houses and gardens for inclusion on the tour. If you have a suggestion of a property south of Pennsylvania Avenue and west of 11th Street, please let us know!

Volunteers are needed for Tour Subcommittees: communications, ticket sales, volunteer coordination, and transportation. Even a little of your time is a big help!

Please contact:

Aileen Moffatt acmoffatt@hotmail.com or Paul Cromwell paulcromwell@verizon.net ✧



Historic Lighting Illuminated at Nov. Preservation Café

by *Shauna Holmes*

The November 19 Preservation Café audience gained a lot of valuable information on historic lighting from expert Dan Mattausch, a scholar, preservation consultant, and long-time Capitol Hill resident who is widely regarded as one of the foremost antique lighting experts in the nation. Furnishing and restoring his 1891 home sparked his interest in historic lighting, and he has since worked with clients ranging from the Smithsonian, Blair House, and the Library of Congress to museums and producers of period movies.

Mr. Mattausch's presentation, which was illustrated with many wonderful slides and antique lights that he brought along, started with the dominant styles and technologies that were in use when most of Capitol Hill's 19th century homes were built. He began in the 1830s with classical lights using whale oil and candles and moved through the Rococo revival, Eastlake and Renaissance revival lights of 1840-1879 that used lard oil and coal gas, and later gas and kerosene. In the 1880s through the end of the century, more spartan, stylized lighting of Aesthetic (Anglo-Japanese), "bent brass" and "pierced work" design began appearing, and gas and kerosene, the lighting fuels most commonly used, were joined by electricity. Gas lighting peaked in the 1920s

as electricity use grew, and ultimately could not survive the popularity of the tungsten filament bulb.

Accurate interpretation of historic light fixtures involves considering three elements: the hardware, including the scale and design of the metalwork; the glassware and design of the shades; and the finish. Customers in the 1890s typically selected their lights by choosing each of these elements separately, unlike now, when we choose from among finished lights. People lucky enough to have original lights in their homes should be very careful when having them cleaned. For instance, hard polishing (i.e., motorized buffing) is guaranteed to destroy the appearance and value of early- to mid-19th century lights.

Because the outside appearance of buildings is so important in the Capitol Hill Historic District, Mr. Mattausch focused primarily on exterior lighting. In the 1890s, most exterior fixtures were round gas lights or triangle lamps that were often tin with square, angled glass. Homes were most likely to have the gaslights on residential-scale posts in the front yard, rather than beside their doors. For this reason, we don't have many precedents for Victorian door lights and instead need to look at what is available, either as antiques or reconstructions, that's most authentic for the period. Carriage lights are not really historically accurate, as they

were used for coaches rather than homes. For period authenticity, he said to think big, primarily big and round, though triangular, squared and even simple octagon heads could work as well. In fact, even for homes built in the 1920s, he said you can't go wrong with round and big, but to shy away from shiny and brassy. Lamp metal around the turn of the century was usually black and not polished, and period yard lamps often looked like they had hats. He recommended avoiding lights sold at the large, chain home renovation stores and suggested Rejuvenation as a good source of reproduction lights, adding that some Rejuvenation lights will be used in the Old Executive Office Building. They have a website at www.rejuvenation.com as well as a catalog.

In selecting appropriate period exterior lights for the Hill, the key factors are location, style, scale, and technology. The best location would be on a wall or post, and the style should be in keeping with the building's façade. In terms of scale, think big or bigger, and regarding technology, look for venting or air exchange features resembling those used in period gas lights.

There will be no Preservation Cafes in December or January; they will resume in mid-February, so look for dates and information in the CHRS February newsletter and on our website. ✧

FiOS Won't Reach Most of Capitol Hill Anytime Soon

by *David Holmes*

Recently Verizon announced the beginning of FiOS access in the District of Columbia. Several changes in that plan have just been announced. FiOS, which stands for Fiber Optic Service, is an ultra high-speed method for piping a digital signal into a home or business. It is by far the fastest (50 megabits/

second) internet service available to home subscribers in the Washington region. The roll-out will take nine years to reach all areas of the District.

Only those parts of Ward Six east of 12th Street, NE, and north of Lincoln Park will receive FiOS over the next three years. Initial service will be made available in most of Ward 4 and all of Ward 3 in Northwest, Barry Farm and

historic Anacostia in Southeast, Deanwood, and eastern Capitol Hill in Northeast only. The Northeast section was just added in response to complaints about the exclusion of the Hill.

In the second expansion, Verizon will add the Southwest Waterfront and Buzzard Point, most of Ward 1, Dupont and Logan circles, and

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CHRS Zoning Committee Report

by Gary Peterson

The Zoning Committee met on November 13 and came to the following conclusions.

1. 17842, 901-03 D Street, NE — OPPOSE: The case involves the application of the DC Teacher's Federal Credit Union for a use variance to allow the continued use of the former Edmonds public school for general office use in the R-4 District at 901- 903 D Street, NE. The committee believed that the property should be put to community use or housing and that the applicant did not meet the burden of proof for a variance.

2. 17845, 1418 K Street, SE — SUPPORT: The case involves the application of Arnold Nicholson for a special exception to allow a two-story rear addition to an existing one-family row dwelling under section 223, not meeting the court requirements in the R-4 District at 1418 K Street, SE.

3. 17846, 130 14th Street, NE — OPPOSE: Application of Brown Memorial A.M.E. Church for a variance from the lot occupancy requirements and a variance from the rear yard to allow an addition to an existing church building in the R-4 District at 130 14th Street, NE. The applicant proposes to have 100% lot occupancy. The committee believed this was excessive.

4. 17847 1118 Park Street, NE — NO POSITION: for a special exception to allow a second story addition to

an existing one-family row dwelling not meeting the lot occupancy and court requirements in the R-4 District at 1118 Park Street, NE. The applicant nearly completed the construction by an unlicensed contractor without a building permit. The committee ordinarily would approve this application but didn't want to because of the late attempt to cure. This case highlights the need to hire a licensed contractor. To her credit, the landowner turned herself in.

5. 17848, 1510 Massachusetts Avenue, SE — OPPOSE: Application of Anne M. Holbrook for a variance from the lot occupancy requirements, a variance from the rear yard requirements, and a variance from the nonconforming structure provisions to allow an addition to an existing one-family row dwelling in the R-4 District at 1510 Massachusetts Avenue, SE. This applicant wants to achieve 100% lot occupancy but does not meet the test for a variance

6. 17853, 155 North Carolina, SE — SUPPORT: Application of Simeon and Carol Booker for a variance from the nonconforming structure provisions (not meeting the lot occupancy requirements) to allow a second level addition to an existing one-family dwelling in the CAP/R-4 District at 155 North Carolina Avenue, SE. This case involves a very unusual property and building. The addition would not increase the footprint of the building and would have no impact on the neighbors.

The unusual lot and building created practical difficulties and qualified for a variance.

7. 17860, 1442 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE — OPPOSE: Application of Jemal's KFC LLC for a variance from the floor area ratio requirements, a variance from the rear yard requirements, and a variance from the parking requirements to permit the development of a two-story commercial building in the C-2-A District at 1442 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. The applicant wishes to build a two story office building that will be 25% larger than allowed and to provide no on-site parking. In addition, the proposed building is not appropriate for the site and would look much better in a suburban shopping center. There is no reason the applicant cannot build a conforming building. CHRS is working with the neighbors and applicant to design a more suitable building.

8. 17879, 138 D Street, SE — NO POSITION: Application of Lloyd and Libby Doggett for a special exception for a rear addition to an existing one-family row not meeting the lot occupancy requirements, the nonconforming structure provisions, and the court requirements, in the CAP/R-4 District at 138 D Street, SE. The addition will have a second floor porch and one adjacent neighbor objects. If there was not objection the committee would probably support the application.

Next Zoning Committee meeting will be Feb. 12. ✧

FiOS *continued from page 4*

Shaw within six years. The last three years will bring FiOS to Brookland, Congress Heights, downtown, Georgetown, midtown and Lincoln Heights. As previously negotiated, no commitment had been made about when these neighborhoods would get FiOS.

Current high-speed internet access is available from Comcast (up to 20 megabits/second under best conditions) and Verizon DSL (up to 4.5 megabits). Alternate very high-speed service may eventually come from Comcast with its Extreme 50 service, which has download

speeds of up to 50 megabits/second. Also down the road, digital internet access may use the frequencies about to be vacated by over-the-air television frequencies, now available as a result of the pending national conversion to digital television. ✧

Elliott Street: An Early History in Three Parts

Part Three: Ethnicity and Occupations from 1900–1930

A Look at a Few Residents of Elliott Street in the Early Years

by Donna Hanousek

Washington was not known for being a large immigrant town in the 19th century or early 20th century, but the near northeast did have a higher concentration of immigrants, mostly Irish, Germans, and English in the 19th century, along with Italians, Eastern European Jews, and Greeks in the early 20th century. A study conducted of the near northeast in 2002-2003, found about 30% more foreign born than the city as a whole — a rate of about 8% as opposed to 6%. Elliott Street's population was consistent with this trend early in the 19th century — its immigrant population exceeded 8% until 1930.

In 1900, most of the residents on Elliott Street had been born in the US, but there were some immigrant families, one each from Italy, England/US, and Denmark/Sweden. (While three doesn't sound like many, there were only nine

families total; that represents one-third of the population of the street.) In 1910, there were four immigrant families out of 23, and by 1920, there were four out of 25 families. By 1930, Elliott only had the Danish family and a Scottish/US family, making up a portion of its more than 45 families. That year, the city's population was more than one-quarter African-American, but none were yet living on Elliott Street.

Occupations

Of the nine families living on Elliott in 1900, the majority was employed in white collar professions — three clerks, a merchant, an engineer, and a boat dealer; the others were a carpenter, a molder, and a lift operator. One boarder on the street was a sculptor.

In 1910, the occupational profile of the street had begun to shift and the majority of the jobs held by Elliott's residents were blue collar. Professions included four white collar jobs (a clerk, an agent, a physician, and a lawyer) and fifteen blue collar jobs (stationary engineer, an electrician and a plumber, merchants, carpenters, a telegraph operator, a policeman and a fire-

man, a plate printer and a printer's assistant, a lathe operator, a stove setter, a cashier, model makers, and servants). For the first time, there were two wives and a daughter working.

By 1920 the street became less blue collar - there were nine less blue collar - there were nine white collar and 16 blue collar jobs. Occupations included a sheet metal worker, a plate pressman, an accountant, a 2nd Lieutenant, sales, a clerk, an electrician, a bookkeeper, an auditor, a plate printer, a dispersing clerk, a pressman, a machinist, a file clerk, a plasterer, a stationary engineer, a fireman (steam railroad), a brakeman, a pressman, a carpenter, a metal lather, a ship fitter, a dynamo tender, a car repairer, and a merchant. We see more types of government jobs represented (at least 16 of the jobs are clearly government jobs), but still quite a mix between blue collar and white collar types of employment.

In 1930, the new jobs added were mostly blue collar and included those of night watchman, engraver, executive, laborer, newsboy, dial instructor, tinner helper, messenger, painter, tallyman, real

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LOCATION				NAME of each person whose place of abode on June 1, 1900, was in this family. Give surname first, then the given name and middle initial, if any. Denote every person living on June 1, 1900, (and address, too, on June 1, 1900.)	RELATION Indicate by of each person to the head of the family.	PERSONAL DESCRIPTION										NATIVITY		
IN OTHERS	House Number	Number of family, in the whole of this lot.	1			2	3	4	5	6	DATE OF BIRTH		Age at last birthday.	Whether single, married, widowed, or divorced.	Number of years married.	Number of boys and girls living.	Number of those still alive.	Place of birth of this person.
				Month	Year													
	631	17	1			Hamilton	Head	M	31	Feb	1871	29	M	3			Alabama	Alabama
						Huey	Wife	F	31	Sept	1872	27	M	3			Virginia	Virginia
	637	41	1			Paladini Antonio	Head	M	30	Nov	1864	35	M	13			Italy	Italy
						Blasione	Wife	F	31	Dec	1866	33	M	14	1	1	Italy	Italy
						Frank	Son	M	30	July	1874	25	S				Germania	Italy
						John	Son	M	20	Aug	1879	20	S				West-Columbia	Italy
						Woodward Peter	Boarder	M	28	May	1872	28	Pro				Italy	Italy
	639	42	1			Spindler Edgar	Head	M	30	Jan	1869	31	M	8			Virginia	Virginia
						Estelle M	Wife	F	31	Nov	1867	32	M	8	2	2	West-Columbia	New Jersey
						Evelyn	Daughter	F	9	Dec	1890	9	S				West-Columbia	Virginia
						Wendell R	Son	M	10	Dec	1889	10	S				West-Columbia	Virginia

Elliott Street, Part Three *continued from page 6*



639 Elliott Street was on the 2008 CHRS House & Garden Tour.

estate sales, taxi driver, tailoress, rodman, woodworker, awning hanger, attendant, truck driver, housework, sexton, motorman, mechanic, repairman, bricklayer, parker, saleslady, driver, operator, refinisher, seamstress, and manager. A large number of the jobs are represented in the automobile, train or railway, and utility and power industries.

Long time Residents

There were a handful of residents of Elliott Street that stayed for multiple decades. Here are snapshots of some of these interesting folks:

Antonio Palidini, (molder / artist from the 1900 and 1910 censuses) of 637 Elliott Street. Paladini came here from Italy in 1886. He rented 637 Elliott and lived with his wife, Desire (also from Italy), and two sons, Frank and Linis (both born in the U.S.). During 1900 he had a boarder, Peter Giordani, who was listed as a sculptor. In 1920, his brother-in-law, listed as a model maker, came to live with the family. Pallidini was working on the plaster finishings, frets, cornices, and borders for the US Treasury building. Presumably, the boarder and brother-in-law were too. His sons, in school during 1910, went on to become a lawyer and a clerk by 1920.

Edgar Speiden, (engineer / physician from the 1900 and 1910 censuses) owned 639 Elliott Street (shown above). He and his wife Eunice had five children, four of them while on Elliott Street. He graduated from

medical school in 1905, and is listed as a physician in the 1910 census. The family moved to the northwest in 1911 to a three-story Harry Wardman house that was designed by Beers who was profiled in part I of this series. Interestingly, the 1900 census lists Speiden as a lift operator. We know that he worked for 29 years at the Chesapeake & Potomac Telephone Company, and then went on to practice medicine for 25 years.

Charles Allen, (government executive from the 1920 and 1930 censuses) owned 611 Elliott in 1930. In 1920, Allen was a clerk for the US Treasury. He and his wife were from Maine and lived on Elliott with their two daughters. Allen's sister-in-law, a Ms. Hutchins, who was a clerk at the Bureau of War Records, also lived with them. By 1930, Allen had become an "executive" with the US Treasury and was in fact "in charge of the income tax unit in this city" (Washington Post, October 9, 1927). The Allens showed up in the society pages and Ms. Hutchins was active in the Women's Guild of the Central Union Mission.

Peter Peterson (1900, 1910 and 1920 censuses) owned 627 Elliott Street (valued at \$2,600 in 1930). He came from Denmark, his wife from Sweden. They had two daughters. He was a naturalized citizen and worked as an engineer, according to the 1900 census; a merchant in the Navy Yard, according to the 1910 census; and a machinist in the Navy Yard, according to the 1920 census. The 1920 census lists him as a sexton (church caretaker). He was still living in this house when he died in 1941. ✧

Louis Dreyfus Property Group Complies with Zoning Commission Order

On November 12, 2008, Louis Dreyfus Property Group, Regional Vice President, Robert H. Braunohler presented a check for \$83,500 to Gary Peterson, Chair, CHRS Zoning Committee.

The payment to CHRS is one of the conditions of the Zoning Commission Order in the PUD application for the property owned by Dreyfus located in the 700 block of G Street, NE. CHRS will use the funds to do a historic survey of the properties located south of the H Street Overlay, north of F Street, NE, and between 2nd and 15th Streets, NE. As part of satisfying another condition,



Dreyfus has completed a survey of the properties along 2nd Street, NE, and G Street, NE, that it proposes to demolish. Both historic surveys are in mitigation of the demolition of these historic buildings which lack Historic District preservation. The survey will begin in the 2009. ✧

Read the entire series of Elliott Street articles at www.chrs.org/ElliottSt/. Photos of the street along with U.S. Census pages are also online. (A portion of the 1900 U.S. Census is shown on page 6.)

Preservation Importance Recognized at Eastern Market

by Barbara Eck

The November issue of the *News* reported on the contractor's destruction of original brick on the Eastern Market plaza and plans by DDOT to replace it with non-historic, wire-cut brick rather than a molded brick that more closely replicates the original.

The Eastern Market Advisory Committee (EMCAC) reminded the Administration that as early as five years ago when the 7th Street Streetscape was in the planning stage, the City agreed that any historic brick that could be re-used would be saved and that any additional brick needed would be molded brick which replicates the original. EMCAC was distressed to hear that the contractor had used the historic brick for landfill and

trashed the remainder.

The CHRS Board, advised of this problem by our representative to the EMCAC, authorized our President to write a letter to the directors of OPM, DDOT, the Mayor, and the Office of Historic Preservation, pointing out the urgency to stop delivery of the inappropriate brick and the ordering and installation of the historic, molded brick. The letter quoted preservation law and reminded the City that there is a responsibility to continue to preserve. Eastern Market is a National Historic Site and this designation is compromised by use of inappropriate materials in restoration.*

We are pleased to announce a prompt response from the Mayor's office and a press release highlighting the intent to preserve historic brick sidewalks and bluestone



curbs, and to replace any missing or damaged material with molded brick and granite. We have also learned that the contractor gave some of the original brick to a Market neighbor who is negotiating with the City for its return.

*The full text of the CHRS letter can be viewed at www.chrs.org ✧

The Hill on Film

by Mike Canning

(Continuing our occasional series about how Hollywood has treated — and mistreated — elements of Capitol Hill. CHRS Treasurer Canning writes full-blown movie reviews for the Hill Rag.)

Many Hollywood movies which deal with Washington politics feature sequences in the US Capitol. Since the US Senate and House have never allowed commercial filmmakers to shoot within their actual chambers, production companies have had to come up with sets or locations that replicate these institutions.

The most famous of these reconstructions was the set made for director Frank Capra's 1939 film *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*. Unable to shoot in the Senate itself, Capra created a striking duplicate chamber in Los Angeles, an almost to-scale replica, one of the great film sets in history. Costing \$100,000 in its day and taking 125 men six weeks to construct, the duplicate chamber was, according to *Life* magazine,

"complete to the last acanthus leaf and arabesque."

The Senate chamber set was put into mothballs for several years but not razed, and it was dusted off and renovated for a second life in director Otto Preminger's 1962 film *Advise and Consent*, where its presence makes it almost another character in the film.

Since then, the Capitol's chambers shown in films have been less imposing. In comedies, especially, where verisimilitude is hardly a requisite, the House — as shown in joint sessions — has been much violated. For example, in the silly farce *Wild in the Streets* (1968) the newly-elected "hippy" president (sporting a pony tail and Edwardian suit) addresses a House chamber which is ludicrously small. More recently, in the even sillier Tim Burton lampoon, *Mars Attacks!* (1996), the House chamber bears little relation to reality: it has no balconies, no press gallery, and displays large stained glass windows on one wall

— all in preparation for it being blown up by the Martians!

In a slightly more serious vein, the comedy-drama *Dave* (1993) has the faux president Dave earnestly address the House in a climatic speech, but the space is actually within the Virginia State House. The same location is used for one of the better political films of the last decades, *The Contender* (2000), but here the president (Jeff Bridges) speaks to a (very thin) joint session in a particularly cramped and inappropriate chamber with large side windows and one inappropriate back balcony.

Very recently, the summer thriller *Eagle Eye* has its climatic scene in the House chamber (as the president speaks and a gun shot is fired). The surprise is that this not very serious movie displays an excellent approximation of the chamber — done on a movie sound stage but close to real scale — which gives itself away only through some rather baroque wall coverings. ✧

CHRS Launches First Annual Fund Drive to Support Pressing Initiatives

CHRS has had an extraordinarily busy year and 2009 looks even more challenging as we continue our fight to protect the historic fabric of our community. We are heavily engaged in leadership roles in dozens of areas including:

- the creation of a Town Square at Eastern Market Plaza
- the 11th Street Bridge project that could bring as many as 30,000 additional cars through Capitol Hill

- unacceptable changes to residential permit parking rules
- the effort to add a third story to a never-touched building on Pennsylvania Avenue
- our *Beyond the Boundaries* program to assist neighborhoods just outside the Capitol Hill Historic District with their preservation efforts.

Our expanding portfolio of initiatives takes the time of many, many dedicated volunteers. It

also takes a great deal of money! Membership dues and other sources simply do not cover the costs of CHRS's work to maintain our goal of keeping Capitol Hill as a livable, walkable community.

That is why, for the first time in over 50 years, CHRS has launched an Annual Fund to solicit donations. Members, businesses, and others who wish to help can make a **fully tax-deductible** contribution by using the form below or online with a credit card at CHRS.org. ✧

YES! 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.



Capitol Hill Restoration Society

Please find enclosed a check for:

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

\$ _____ (other amount)

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

Name(s)

Address

City, State, Zip

Home Phone Work Phone Email

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!

DECEMBER

1 Monday, 6:30 pm

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

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, 202-543-4353.

11 Thursday, 7:30 pm

CHRS Zoning Committee (tentative), Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details: Gary Peterson, 202-547-7969.

16 Tuesday, 6:30 pm

CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second floor. Details: Dick Wolf, 202-543-4353.

18 Thursday, 10:00 am

Historic Preservation Review Board, 441 4th Street, NW, Room 220 South. Details: Nancy Metzger, 202-546-1034.

JANUARY 2009

13 Tuesday, 6:30pm

CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second floor. Details: Dick Wolf, 202-543-4353

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, 202-543-4353.

Audubon "Christmas" Bird Count, Dec. 20, 2008

The Christmas Count for the Anacostia River area will be on December 20, 2008. The Christmas Bird Count develops a very important body of information for understanding local bird life and its changes over time. Teams will go to Ft. Dupont, Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, the Arboretum, Anacostia islands, and the Congressional Cemetery. CHRS members are again invited to participate — you do not need to be a bird expert. Meet at 7:00am at the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens parking lot, 1550 Anacostia Avenue, NE. There is a \$5 fee, which CHRS will pay for members. RSVP is encouraged but not required.

National Audubon Society will have a post-count party in the evening, at 1150 Connecticut Avenue, NW. Time TBA. Contact: Lou DeMouy, 301-656-3146, ldemouy@starpower.net

PLEASE NOTE: The *News* will not be published in January, 2009. Please check www.CHRS.org for news and events during the holiday season. ✧



Capitol Hill Restoration Society

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