



# NEWS

www.chrs.org

May 2009

## It's That Time of Year! May 9-10 House and Garden Tour explores *Historic Homes: Contemporary Lives*

by Aileen Moffatt

- Saturday twilight tour, 4:00 to 8:00; Sunday tour, 11:00 to 5:00
- Lola's, on Barracks Row, to host Mother's Day tea, 2:30 to 5:00
- Free jitney service will make 21 stops in Barracks Row neighborhood and beyond

As CHRS members know, living in Capitol Hill combines the best of American historical tradition with the comforts and conveniences of modern living – and each spring we share our good fortune with the public. CHRS has worked closely with Barracks Row Main Street, the Capitol Hill Garden Club, the Metropolitan Police Department, and the U.S. Marine Corps to organize another festive and fabulous weekend. With its theme of *Historic Homes: Contemporary Lives* and its focus on the Barracks Row neighborhood, this year's House and Garden Tour is sure to attract history, architecture, and interior decorator buffs from throughout the region to see how beautifully we've adapted our historic homes to our modern lifestyles.



Marine Commandant's House, 801 G Street

Among the homes on this year's tour are two of the 14 loft apartments in the Lenox School Condominium. The school, built in 1889, is typical of District school architecture of the late 19th century. The two units on this tour show dramatically how this 120-year-old structure, at Fifth and I Streets SE, has been adapted to 21st century needs. Both units, with their soaring 14-foot ceilings, have been uniquely adapted to their owners' aesthetic tastes and functional

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# President's Column

by Richard Wolf

The Capitol Hill Restoration Society's House and Garden Tour on Mother's Day weekend is one of the great traditions of the Capitol Hill community. This is the 52nd year in a row that we have had this tour, and it's for a good cause. For many years it was a way of saying that we who live here actually lead reasonably normal lives. We choose to live in a diverse and often funky place, investing our money and our time to build a community we are proud of. Much of what we have sought has been accomplished.

Several years ago, for the 50th tour, we showcased the "grand dames" of the Hill. Last year we went "Beyond the Boundaries" to show off neighborhoods beyond the Capitol Hill Historic District in order to give both visitors and our own residents a sense of the enormous variety of housing and businesses within the greater

Capitol Hill area. This year we are featuring the wonderful interface between the businesses and institutions of Barracks Row Main Street and the adjacent residential neighborhood.

CHRS not only tries to show off the various neighborhoods of Capitol Hill through the tour, but also uses it to raise money for our other activities. Membership funds alone cannot support the various projects we are engaged in, which cost money and at the same time confer a benefit on the community. These include our on-going financial support for surveys of neighborhoods throughout the Capitol Hill area that are not designated historic but have asked CHRS to support studies in aid of possible historic preservation initiatives. We are committed to doing this; the contracts have been signed and the work started. We have also spent a substantial sum

on traffic studies and a lawsuit to keep the 11th Street bridge project from inflicting harm on the Hill. These activities plus simply keeping the organization open to further costly initiatives – including substantial donations in support of the merchants of Eastern Market and the schools library initiative – are why we need the support of members in purchasing tour tickets, working as docents for tour houses, renewing memberships, and working on our many productive and effective committees.

We must be doing something right. Fifty-five years of existence, 52 years of tours, have resulted in a wonderful place to live and work. We have had a lot of formal, national recognition of what the Hill has become. But the recognition is not the goal; it's the building of that "city on the Hill", and it's a never-ending task. The tour is part of that task, so let's all pitch in to support the tour. ★

## Did You Know?

- The Board of Zoning Adjustment recently denied a request for a rooftop deck on an unattached garage on Capitol Hill. The owner had sought to raise the height of the garage to 15 feet and then place fencing and plantings on the deck. The total height would have exceeded 18 feet. The BZA also required that the garage be moved back from the center of the alley to bring it in line with other alley structures. When new work is planned, zoning rules can apply that have been in abeyance because of "grandfathering".
- The Historic Preservation Office has released its spring issue of its publication Landmarks, which includes articles on how low- to moderate-income residents of historic districts can obtain grants to restore the exterior of their home, or make major structural repairs. CHRS member Nancy Metzger is pictured convening the March 15 Contemporary and Compatible Design Symposium, which featured architectural case studies of new buildings and additions in several DC historic districts. ([http://planning.dc.gov/planning/frames.asp?doc=/planning/lib/planning/preservation/brochures/hp\\_spring\\_newsletter\\_09.pdf](http://planning.dc.gov/planning/frames.asp?doc=/planning/lib/planning/preservation/brochures/hp_spring_newsletter_09.pdf))
- The Historic Preservation Office is accepting nominations for the 2009 DC Awards for Excellence in Historic Preservation. The awards program honors significant contributions by individuals, organizations, and businesses promoting historic preservation in the District of Columbia.
- Councilmember Tommy Wells is seeking priority installation of new traffic lights at the intersections of 10th and 12th Streets and Constitution Avenue and also at both 10th and 12th Streets and Independence Avenue. These intersections have had many accidents and are a constant risk for pedestrians. ★

## Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS)

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[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)
- ★ 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.

# Enforcement of Prohibitions Against Parking in Public Space Begins Without Warning

by David Holmes

The City has just renewed enforcement of the long-standing prohibition against parking in the public space between a house and the sidewalk. There has been no public warning or education about the requirements of the law.

The Capitol Hill Restoration Society appreciates the distinctive park-like appearance resulting from the law governing public space, the Public Parking Act of 1870. However, CHRS has not requested enforcement. CHRS strongly feels there needs to be knowledge of the law's requirements before tickets are written. Our upcoming May 20 Preservation Café and this article are a direct response to the need for improved understanding.

In DC all space forward of a property line is public space. Typically that's the front and side yard, unless the house is set well back from the street. The front property line is often the front wall of a house. The bays that project from the front and side of many homes are usually on public space, by permission granted when the original construction permit was issued.

City law does not permit "adverse possession" of city-owned land. So, even if a homeowner has parked a vehicle at a particular spot on public space for years, the law doesn't exempt that person from fines for that violation of public space. This public land is made available to the resident without charge; property taxes are not assessed on the public space.

The City requires property owners to maintain the public space with attractive plantings. In return they are permitted to enclose that public space with a low open fence for personal use without being charged rent.

To quote a recent opinion of the Historic Preservation Office:  
*L'Enfant's plan for the city of Washington called for broad thoroughfares which would allow for the accommodation of carriage lanes, decorative rows of trees, and gravel walkways, in front of buildings. It became readily apparent as the city developed that this element of L'Enfant's plan was impractical, so in 1870 Congress passed the 'Parking Act' which envisioned the use of the land between buildings and the sidewalks as park like areas. This was followed in 1871 with the passage of the 'Projection Act' which resulted in the proliferation of the city's distinctive bays and towers, and finally in 1899 the use of the public space in front and side yards was officially given over to property owners who could now fence in the areas. The DC Building Code Chapter 32A states that encroachments in public space are a privilege and 'cannot be claimed as a right...'*

In the case of a business, the commercial use of public space requires a permit, and the payment of rent to the City. This includes sidewalk cafes and many off-street parking areas. For the homeowner, this means you cannot park in a driveway in public space – you must put the car in your garage or other private space or park on the street. There are other limitations to maintain an attractive appearance of the city's park-like yards – most relate to the height of fences and plantings, and the placement of objects, patios, and walks.

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# Annual House and Garden Tour

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requirements. These lovely units will once again be a great place to learn – about how an unused institutional structure can be made into exquisite living spaces.

The owner of another 1890s structure, which had been converted into three apartments in the 1950s, dug through historical records as she had dug out bricks that covered over some original windows. The result of her extensive efforts is an open and spacious contemporary two-story home with many of the original building's classic features – combining the best of modern living with traditional flourishes.



Lenox School Condos



District 1D1 police substation

While not exactly a home, the District 1D1 police substation at E and Fifth Street, SE, will be open for more than just getting those out-of-town parking permits. Tour goers will get to see some of the very 21st century behind-the-scenes workings of this essential neighborhood institution, continuously housed in this circa 1900 building that has been the focus of safety in our revitalized neighborhood.

One of the oldest homes on this year's tour, from 1860, has a "new" addition – from 1910 – that filled in an adjacent narrow alley. The

current owner took a property that was literally decaying under him and transformed it into a home that manages to combine coziness with classical charm. This talented designer-cum-scavenger has filled his home with bargain-basement-priced articles, flea-market finds, and alley treasures that together look like a million bucks. Nostalgic baseball fans take note: among his prized alley finds are a series of 8-foot painted panels of the old Washington Senators playing ball in Griffith Stadium, scavenged from a hotel bar near Union Station that was undergoing renovation.

A home that especially personifies this year's *Historic Homes: Contemporary Lives* theme is a brand-new, total clean-and-green re-do of a Victorian row house. Over the past year, the owners moved out and let the architect and contractor loose to convert their erstwhile cluttered and crowded two-story dwelling into a spacious, four-story, 21st century,

ultramodern, light-and-bright home with sustainable bamboo flooring throughout and new streamlined baths. The fully dug-out basement and the invisible-from-the-street third-floor addition are sure to inspire the cramped and spaced-deprived among us.

Another of the more than dozen homes on the tour has traditionally been known as the New Orleans House. This open and airy Capitol Hill classic from 1867 has five working fireplaces, among other period features. It was the home of Sergeant Major Dunn of the Marine Barracks, who now reposes in Congressional Cemetery. The current owners have added to their home's Southern luster by updating many of the home's fixtures with recent purchases from New Orleans artisans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

The gardens of four Capitol

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Hill homes dramatically show how our city homes can make glorious room for the natural world, both wild and cultivated. One of our gardeners has fashioned a 100-foot-deep back yard into a garden teeming with all manner of plants and birds, including a resident Cooper's hawk. Raised beds and other areas are filled with shrubs, spring bulbs, ferns, honeysuckle, camellias, roses, a pear tree, and an old apple tree that attracts insects for the birds' delectation. After



522 9th Street

performing ablutions in a three-level birdbath, the birds can take shelter in the lush ivy that's growing on walls especially for them. The woodland area at the back of the garden includes a 100-year-old elm and is enclosed by a wall with a playful trompe l'oeil painting of an open garden gate.

Another garden is connected to a home in one of Capitol Hill's byways via a large, four-season solarium built on part of a 25-by-



101 E Street

50-foot brick patio. This charming garden, surrounded by an 8-foot-high brick wall, is a private sanctuary with shrubs and annuals in the canopy of a beautiful old American elm. What could be more secluded and peaceful than a backyard garden in an updated alley?

Once again, the home of the Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps will be open, but only on Saturday, for the twilight tour. The site for this 15,000-square-foot home – the oldest continuously occupied building in Washington – was chosen with input from none other than Thomas Jefferson. The home is filled with antiques and other items of great historical interest. The Marine Barracks parade grounds will be open Sunday only, including some of the structures on the south and east sides of the grounds. Visitors may even get to peek into the officers' club.

Across G Street from the Commandant's house, occupying the space that once housed the City Bank, is the present-day office of Oehme, van Sweden and Associates (OvS) landscape architects. Exemplifying adaptive

reuse, OvS painstakingly restored the interior, including finding a new use for the teller windows, to separate the reception area from the office and design space.

This is only a sampling of the many Capitol Hill homes and gardens which have been beautifully restored and lovingly cared for that will be open to the public on this festive weekend – a 52-year-old tradition that is not to be missed by connoisseurs throughout the Capital area.

**Mother's Day tea:** Lola's

Barracks Bar and Grill, at 711 8th Street, SE, will be open for tea for tour ticket holders from 2:30 to 5:00 on Sunday only.

**Free jitney service:** Travel to the many homes and gardens will be facilitated by frequent jitney service at 21 clearly marked stops.

**Tickets:** CHRS members can purchase up to four tickets in advance (before May 9) at the discounted price of \$20 each. Advance tickets for non-members are \$25 each. All tickets purchased on the weekend of the tour will be \$30 each. Tickets can be purchased with cash, checks, or online at [www.chrs.org](http://www.chrs.org). They also can be purchased at the following outlets:

- Coldwell Banker/Pardoe, 605 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE
- Trover Books, 221 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE
- Prudential Carruthers, 216 7th Street, SE
- Appalachian Spring, Union Station, East Hall
- Riverby Books, 417 East Capitol Street, SE
- Hill's Kitchen, 713 D Street, SE
- CHRS Weekend Kiosk at Eastern Market, 7th and North Carolina, southeast corner. ★

# Nominations for the CHRS Board for 2009-2010

The Nomination Committee of Michael Canning, Paul Cromwell, Amada Molson, Rob Nevitt, and Gary Peterson presents the following list of nominees for the 2009-2010 CHRS Board:

*President:* Elizabeth Purcell

*First Vice President:* Rich Luna

*Second Vice President:* Monte Edwards

*Secretary:* Lisa Wilson

*Treasurer:* Sharon Weiss

*At-Large (one year term):*  
Shauna Holmes

*At-Large (two year term):*  
Catherine Davis

*At-Large (two year term):*  
Michelle Carroll

*At-Large (two year term):*  
Chuck Burger

*Immediate Past President:*  
Dick Wolf

Shauna Holmes, a current At-Large member, is nominated to fill the second year of Eric Snellings' two year term. Donna Hanousek and Elizabeth Nelson will continue as At-Large members in the second year of their two-year terms.

The Committee expresses its thanks for the work of Tom Grahame for his eight years as a Member At-Large, Mike Canning for seven years as Treasurer, Rob Nevitt, who served as Immediate Past President for the past four years (and as President before that), and Dick Wolf, who served four years in his second tour as President.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Paul Cromwell  
Chairman, Nominating Committee

**Beth Purcell** has served on the CHRS board for four years and is the First Vice-President this year.

She works on the CHRS Beyond the Boundaries project, was the co-leader of several recent historic walking tours, and chairs the CHRS Environment Committee. She is also President of Trees For Capitol Hill, Inc., and has helped to plant hundreds of trees on Capitol Hill. She lives in the Hill East neighborhood; has been an Orange Hat walker for over ten years; and researches and publishes articles on the architecture of eastern Capitol Hill. She works as an attorney in the federal government.

**Richard Luna** has been an At-Large board member since 2007 and serves on the CHRS Zoning Committee. He first moved to Capitol Hill in 1996 to work for a senator. After leaving to pursue adventures in Annapolis, Brooklyn, New York City and Houston, he returned to the Hill in 2002, drawn by its vibrancy, sense of community, and beauty. Since then, he has worked through ANC 6A's Economic Development and Zoning Committee to protect and encourage neighborhood-appropriate architecture, businesses and transportation by working on zoning cases, public space cases, and proposals for regulation changes. By day, he is a benefits and compensation attorney at a law firm. He and his wife Kara, who grew up on the Hill, are renovating their home on Linden Place, where they look forward to raising their daughter.

**Monte Edwards** is a Washington area native, having grown up in Montgomery County, and has lived on Capitol Hill in the 300 block of E Street, NE, for over 20 years. He has served as an At-Large Board Member of CHRS and has been the Second Vice President for the past year. Monte is involved in other community activities, serving as a

Steering Committee member and as the Co-Chair of the Land Use Committee of the Stanton Park Neighborhood Association. He has been a member of the Eastern Market Community Advisory Committee (EMCAC) since it was first established and now serves as its Secretary as well as Chair of the Capital Improvements Committee. Now retired, he worked as an engineer and attorney for Washington Gas Light Company.

**Lisa Wilson** moved to Capitol Hill with her husband in 2007, and joined CHRS the same year. She is an attorney in the Solicitor's Office at the Department of Labor, to which she walks from her home. Previously, she worked with the National Association of Attorneys General and the Washington Lawyers' Committee. As a resident of NE just outside the historic district, she is interested in the Beyond the Boundaries efforts. She also is a member of the Stanton Park Neighborhood Association, and participated in the development of the CHRS House and Garden Tour brochure in 2008 and 2009.

**Sharon Ivy Weiss** received her Bachelor of Science degree from the University of North Carolina in Charlotte. After working in public accounting for four years, she made a career switch to non-profit accounting and has remained in that field for over 13 years. Sharon has extensive experience in supervising the financial functions of federal grants and contracts, and has worked in the capacity of Chief Financial Officer for non-profit advocacy organizations for the last eight years. She has experience with strategic planning, budgeting, and all aspects of organizational financial accounting. She began working as an independent

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consultant in 2008, and currently works with three different non-profit agencies in DC: the National Congress of American Indians, the Council on Library and Information Resources, and the Atlantic Council of the United States. She has worked with the House Tour and the Budget Committee of CHRS.

**Shauna Holmes** and her husband David moved to Capitol Hill as empty-nesters in late 1997, and have been CHRS members ever since. She has served on the CHRS Board since 2007, has been on its Historic Preservation Committee over ten years, and has been managing CHRS Preservation Cafés for several years. She also belongs to the DC Preservation League and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Before retiring in late 2004, she worked over 21 years for the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation handling publications, training, awards, and educational outreach. Shauna is committed to working with neighbors and community organizations to protect Capitol Hill's historic integrity and distinctive character.

**Catherine Davis**, born in the District and raised in Northern Virginia, moved to Capitol Hill with her husband in July of 2007. She served the Board as Secretary for the past year, and participated in the development of the House and Garden Tour brochure for 2008 and 2009. She has worked at the US Department of Education as Chief of Staff for the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools and as Deputy Chief of Protocol for the Secretary of Commerce. A graduate of the University of Virginia, Catherine has lived in Charleston, SC; Atlanta, GA; Chicago, IL; and is proud to call Washington, DC, home.

**Michelle Carroll**, originally from New York, started her love affair with DC when she was a freshman at the Corcoran School of Art and George Washington University. After college, moving back to NY, getting married, and having children, her husband Dennis had an opportunity to work for the government (USAID). What with Dennis being born and raised in DC and her "love affair" with DC, it took no time at all to decide that DC was going to be home. Michelle is an events planner for the Pew Charitable Trusts and other, primarily environmental, organizations. She has chaired the CHRS House Tour twice and has been in charge of the House Tour Tea for five years (and her house has been on the Tour).

**Chuck Burger** is a Capitol Hill real estate agent with Coldwell Banker, and has served on a variety of local and District Committees, including a stint as chair of the ABC Board. He has served as a House Captain for the Tour for a number of years. He currently serves as Vice Chair of EMCAC, and is on the board of CHAMPS and Barracks Row Main Street.

**Dick Wolf** automatically becomes an ex-officio member of the Board as Immediate Past President. He has been a CHRS member since moving to Capitol Hill in 1964; has been on the Board of CHRS since 1969; and has served as President since 2005. He also served as President from 1977 to 1980. His particular interests have been the DC Comprehensive Plan and zoning issues, and he currently chairs the CHRS City Planning Committee. He currently serves on the planning and zoning committees of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City. He is a retired Federal government lawyer. ★

## Public Space

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Further information can be obtained at [http://os.dc.gov/os/frames.asp?doc=/os/lib/os/info/odai/title\\_24/title24\\_chapter1.pdf](http://os.dc.gov/os/frames.asp?doc=/os/lib/os/info/odai/title_24/title24_chapter1.pdf) or by reading the brochure *Yours, Mine, and Ours: Front Yards and Other Public Space on Capitol Hill* at [http://www.chrs.org/Pages/6\\_Pubs.html](http://www.chrs.org/Pages/6_Pubs.html).

The May 20 Preservation Café will offer the expertise of several officials from the city's Public Space Policy Office at the Department of Transportation. They will give a short presentation about public space and be available to answer questions. See the story on page 8 for more details. ★

### Rosedale Historic Walking Tour – May 30, 11 am-1 pm

Learn about Rosedale's history (Native Americans and financial panics) and its vanished past: Camp Barry (a Union Army Civil War camp), Graceland Cemetery, and alley life in Graceland Court (tragedy, a love triangle, a terrible fire). The tour will also highlight Rosedale's historic frame and brick rowhouses, the architects who designed them, and the people who lived in them. Sponsored by Rosedale Citizens' Alliance and CHRS. Meet at 17th & Gales Streets, NE (Rosedale Recreation Center).

Contact: Ken Granata, [space-creator@hotmail.com](mailto:space-creator@hotmail.com) ★

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# May Preservation Café to Feature Front Yards and Public Space

**W**hat kind of fence can I have between the sidewalk and my front yard, and how tall can it be? Can I park my car on the little driveway in front of my garage? Do I need a permit to put a patio in my front or side yard? If so, where can I get it? What can I plant in my front yard without a permit? What if I need to repair or replace the walkway between the public sidewalk and my front steps? Come to the CHRS May 20 Preservation Café for answers to these questions and more from city officials who implement the laws and regulations that govern use of public space in DC.

Though it may surprise some Capitol Hill residents and property owners, public space includes not only streets, public sidewalks and alleys, and small “pocket parks”,

but also the yards in front of, and sometimes beside, our rowhouses. Even more, most of our houses’ front and side bays protrude into public space, as well as our front porches and steps. Because DC’s Department of Transportation (DDOT) manages public space in the city, CHRS has invited several of its officials to come tell us what this means for Hill residents and what we may and may not do to and in our public space.

Guest speakers at **Public Space and Front Yards: Yours, Mine, and Ours** will be Alice Kelly, Program Manager at DDOT’s Public Space Policy Office, and Matthew Marcou and Steven Kehoe, who are both Program Analysts there. Some may know Mr. Kehoe as a long-time Capitol Hill homeowner, and Ms. Kelly has also lived on the Hill.

They will fill in the Preservation Café audience on the history and intent of the DC law that gives residents the use of their front yards, which are indeed public space, so we can all enjoy them as part of the city’s green park land. In return for our un-taxed use of the space, certain rules and constraints apply, which the audience will also hear about from the speakers.

**Public Space and Front Yards: Yours, Mine, and Ours** will be held Wednesday, May 20, from 6:30-7:15 pm in the downstairs community room at Ebenezers Coffeehouse at 2nd and F Streets, NE. The Preservation Café is free, wheelchair accessible, and open to all in the Capitol Hill community. No reservation is needed to attend.

*This will be the last spring Preservation Café; the Cafés will resume in September. ★*

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# Earth Day Preservation Café Focused on Being Historically Green

by Shauna Holmes

**C**HRS’s series of “green” Preservation Cafés concluded very appropriately on Earth Day, April 22, with **Historically Green**. LEED-certified preservation architect David Bell, former president of the DC Preservation League, centered his presentation around the rehabilitation of a historic 1880s DC rowhouse for his architectural firm while seeking LEED certification for the project. (LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design and is a green building rating system created by the U.S. Green Building Council.)

Mr. Bell described “building green” as an investment in the future that uses resources well and focuses on environmental resource protection; energy efficiency; holistic, integrated design; and a long-term investment approach. Worldwide, buildings are the #1 CO2 emitters, ahead of both transportation and industry. Because buildings involve 40% of America’s primary energy use, 72% of its electricity consumption, 39% of its CO2 emissions, and 13.6% of potable water consumption, green buildings can substantially reduce energy and

water use, CO2 emissions, and solid waste. Given such numbers, historic preservation is an excellent green strategy – rehabilitating, renovating, and occupying existing buildings for contemporary purposes, be they residential, commercial, educational, institutional, or industrial.

LEED standards address the complete lifecycle of a building, with four levels of recognition: Certified, Silver, Gold, and Platinum. Later this year, certification for residences is expected to become available. Steps to LEED certification are

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registering the project, tracking progress and documenting achievement, and applying for certification. There are five LEED credit categories within which a project can earn a percentage of points toward certification: Sustainable Sites (22%); Water Efficiency (8%); Energy & Atmosphere (27%); Materials & Resources (20%); and Indoor Environmental Quality (23%).

Using his rehabilitation of the historic DC rowhouse as an example – and with the audience following along on a LEED Registered Project Checklist – Mr. Bell explained the certification credit category elements and showed how his project made the building energy-efficient while respecting its historic integrity and meeting the Secretary of the Interior’s Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. While doing so, he pointed out materials and strategies especially pertinent for homeowners living in historic rowhouses and how sustainable design and historic preservation can go hand-in-hand.

The Sustainable Sites category, for instance, includes points for community connectivity – i.e., having nearby basic services like grocery stores, pharmacies, churches, parks, banks, and medical care – within, say, a ½ mile radius, an element on which Capitol Hill projects could clearly earn points. Alternative transportation access, also abundant on Capitol Hill with its bike lanes and multiple Metro and bus stops, counts for additional points. So do providing stormwater control measures and reducing the urban heat island effect with something like the high-albedo roof coating which Bell

used that reflects solar heat and reduces heat absorption.

Mr. Bell’s project achieved Water Efficiency targets with dual-flush toilets and faucets with “smart sensors” that use less water while recharging with the energy of the water flowing through the faucet, for a water use reduction of 34%. To meet Energy and Atmosphere targets, Mr. Bell used: soya-based expandable foam to insulate; the highest-efficiency HVAC systems; a gas water heater that heats water only as it’s used instead of storing hot water and constantly heating it; high-efficiency lighting; Clean Currents Green Energy Solutions to provide power; and solar-tracking rotating skylights that provide day-long light for the entire top floor, reducing the need for artificial lighting. All of these measures could work equally well for a residence.

To meet Materials and Resources standards, Mr. Bell restored the front Italianate brick façade; rebuilt, weather-stripped, and restored existing windows; replaced missing pocket doors by recycling historic pocket doors from another building; used the historic wood flooring where possible, with an oil coating instead of polyurethane; recycled old brick excavated onsite to pave an interior areaway and steps; retained most of the original interior configuration, including walls and floors; and engaged an experienced craftsman to repair and rebuild a historic interior staircase. He also used natural, non-outgassing linoleum flooring made from flax, wood flour, and jute, as well as other interior components made from recycled materials, such as a decorative wall panel made from 100% reclaimed agricultural fiber, particle board made from recycled wood, and

stainless steel countertops with high recycled content.

High Indoor Environmental Quality was achieved with low-emitting materials, including low-VOC carpet tiles; zero-VOC paint; formaldehyde-free particle board made with water-based resin; and low-VOC, odorless sealers with bio-based content. Daylight and outdoor views also contribute to the pleasant interior, with over 75% of the interior lit with sunlight from front and rear windows, an areaway covered with a skylight, and several rotating solar-tracking skylights on the roof. In the U.S., people spend, on average, 90% or more of their time indoors, and EPA studies show that occupants of “green” buildings are healthier and more productive, enjoying better indoor air quality and natural light.

All in all, Mr. Bell said that his experience demonstrated that going green can be cheaper, particularly over the long term, as well as healthier and more comfortable; their electrical bill dropped a lot, for instance. He also learned the importance of making sure the people you use know what they’re doing regarding green methods and technologies; his project lost some easy points because a subcontractor discarded some materials that could have been recycled. Good contractors can be found through testimonials, checking references, and seeking a good track record with satisfied clients.

Interested Capitol Hill homeowners planning renovations or replacing home systems or components can enjoy many of the same benefits discussed during the Preservation Café, and with innovations coming rapidly in green technologies, even more possibilities will be available soon. ★

# Conceptual Plans for Hill Center at the Old Naval Hospital Before Preservation Board

by Nancy Metzger

**R**estoration and rehabilitation plans for the Old Naval Hospital won a favorable report at the April 23 hearing of the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB). This is one of the necessary steps in the process to adapt the 1866 building for use as the Hill Center, a multi-use community and education facility proposed by the Old Naval Hospital Foundation.

Architect David Bell presented the conceptual plans, highlighting aspects such as:

- Restoration of windows, roof, cornice, the Pennsylvania Avenue porch, and steps.
- Removal of the fire escapes and unsightly roof-top equipment. The override for the new elevator will extend only 18" above the roof, but still it will remain below the ridge line.
- Retention of most of the interior configuration. (The staff report noted that the building retained incredible architectural integrity given its extensive use over the past 150 years.) New code-compliant fire stairs and an elevator will be inserted within the building.

Final permitting plans will be based on decisions made during the conceptual review process.

The staff report, written by Anne Brockett, noted several areas that should receive further study before final conceptual approval is given:

- A proposed glass and metal canopy over the ground-floor west entrance that will be the

main entrance to the facility. Concern centered around the method of securing and supporting a canopy.

- Landscaping and site plan, with particular attention being paid to lessening the amount of hardscaping. The handicapped-accessible entrance to the facility will require some re-grading in that area.
- Proposed addition to the east side of the carriage house / stable. While supportive of an addition that might assist in the reuse of the carriage house as a café, the staff felt a light and glassy addition should still have a roof of typical roofing material and perhaps a hipped roof design. The north side of the carriage house will remain open as part of an outdoor terrace, and the plywood infill on the south side will be replaced by glass walls. The interior of the carriage house also remains very much intact; the staff report noted that it "retains its barn-like character with narrow steps up to the hayloft" as well as appurtenances in the old feed room (ground floor). Those features would remain.
- Main doors to the carriage house, so that the large barn-like opening on the west façade is an appropriate fit.

Earlier in the month, CHRS's Historic Preservation Committee made very similar comments in its report to the Historic Preservation staff and applicants. At the hearing, CHRS reiterated its support for the plans, agreeing with the staff on the areas that

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needed further study and development. David Garrison for ANC 6B supported the design proposal but, given the conceptual nature of the plans, asked for further review as decisions were made on outstanding items. Both the Historic Preservation staff and HPRB chair Tersh Boasberg confirmed that the staff would seek community comments as the plans developed. Karl Kindel of the Friends of the Old Naval Hospital was also supportive of the restoration plans. ★

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# Looking Back on Capitol Hill

by Nancy Metzger

In 2003, Joe and Connie Citro interviewed Admiral Charles Loring Waite, then 80, for the Ruth Ann Overbeck Oral History Project. Admiral Waite spent many years during his childhood on Capitol Hill with his parents and also visiting his maternal grandparents, who lived in several houses in the neighborhood. His remembrances, recorded only several months before he died, include many things that are still part of life on Capitol Hill – and many differences:

“The Old Naval Hospital was there, and when I was little there were veterans from the Civil War occupying it and an occasional veteran from the Spanish-American War. Of course, as the years went by, the mixture changed – you had less

Civil War veterans, more Spanish-American War veterans, and that was ... very close to our favorite theater, which was called the Avenue Grand, which was on the same side of the street and just a short distance away ... Now, we also, you know, I can remember playing around the Capitol grounds when I was a kid. We thought nothing of walking through the whole Capitol building and exploring the place. We all had passes to the Senate Gallery if we wanted to go in and listen to some old guy talk, you know [laughs], but we went down to the basement and found an old statue of George Washington, which the Smithsonian had rejected because it didn't have enough clothes on it, you know, and things like that. We'd ride the subway,

which was, they had this little train that ran between the Senate office building and the Capitol and that was neat. Then, I remember my mother telling me that was one of the worst injuries she had was roller skating down Capitol Hill as a child and losing control and banging up her knees, you know, and so forth. But it was pretty open and free in those days; everybody was pretty friendly. And, of course, nearby were marvelous things like the Smithsonian Museum, you know, which on a rainy day or snowy day you'd spend all day in there just as kids without any supervision. ...”

The complete interview with Admiral Waite can be found on the website, [www.capitolhillhistory.org](http://www.capitolhillhistory.org). ★

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## The Hill on Film

by Mike Canning

(Continuing an occasional series about how Hollywood has treated – or mistreated – elements of Capitol Hill. CHRS Treasurer Canning writes movie reviews for the Hill Rag.)

Hollywood invades DC again in the smart new political thriller *State of Play*, and while it takes elaborate pains to incorporate the city into its story, it still plays with some of the old clichés of politics in film, including its portrayal of the Congress and its denizens.

The film is based on a successful 2003 British mini-series and builds its tension by placing a rumpiled, veteran reporter Cal McAffrey (played by Russell Crowe), aiming for a good story, up against an ambitious Congressman Stephen Collins (Ben Affleck), involved in political and sexual scandals.

Some familiar twists of

Washington skullduggery are played out in *State of Play*, which offers a standard Hollywood depiction of our national legislature as a thoroughly corrupt entity, a world of crooks and clowns.

The Congressional figures in *State of Play* are typical examples. Congressman Collins, for example, is bright and righteous, investigating a vile defense contractor. Yet the guy is two-timing his wife by romancing a young staffer. More nefarious is his party whip (a smarmy Jeff Daniels), who appears to be in bed not with an ingenue but with the multi-billion-dollar defense firm. As usual, this surly view allows filmgoers to feel nicely superior to these political animals.

Washington-area film buffs will have fun picking out local sights. *State of Play* is rare among DC films in the length of its shoot here and how varied its locations were (like

Ben's Chili Bowl, the Market Inn in Southwest, Rosslyn Metro station, etc.). For Hillites, though, it is particularly amusing to see how Congressional elements are treated. Apparently, the filmmakers were not allowed to film in or near the Capitol itself, so they used a series of surrogate buildings to suggest legislative gravitas and architecture.

Thus, Representative Collins stands on the steps of the National Archives, which is standing in for a House office building. Later, when the congressman is ducking into his House office building, he instead runs into the grand Mellon Auditorium on Constitution Avenue. And when journalist Cal is seen quizzing Collins in an “official-looking” colonnade on the Hill, they are actually cruising the 12th Street side of the Federal Triangle.

With such playful invention, imaginative Hollywood depicts official Washington. ★

# Mark Your Calendar!

## MAY

**4** Monday, 6:30 pm  
CHRS Historic Preservation Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details: Nancy Metzger, 546-1034.

**14** Thursday, 7:30 pm  
CHRS Zoning Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details: Gary Peterson, 547-7969.

**19** Tuesday, 6:30 pm  
CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second floor. Details: Dick Wolf, 543-4353.

**20** Wednesday, 6:30–7:15 pm  
CHRS Preservation Café: **Public Space and Front Yards: Yours, Mine, and Ours.** Officials from DDOT’s Public Space Policy Office will explain why Capitol Hill front yards are public space and why, as well as what that means for homeowners. Ebenezers Coffeehouse, 201 F Street, NE, lower level community room. Event is free, accessible, and open to the public; no reservation is required. Details: Shauna Holmes, 546-5211.

**28** Thursday, 10:00 am  
Historic Preservation Review Board, 441 4th Street, NW, Room 220 South. Details: Nancy Metzger, 546-1034.

**30** Saturday, 11:00 am–1:00 pm  
Rosedale Historic Walking Tour. Meet at Rosedale Recreation Center, 17th & Gales Streets, NE. Rain or shine. Free. See page 7 for details. Contact: Ken Granata, space-creator@hotmail.com

**Saturdays - May 2 to November 21, 9 am to noon**  
H Street FreshFarm Market, 625 H Street, NE (across from H Street Self Storage). Shop for fresh fruits and vegetables, pasture-raised meats, local cheeses, yogurt, breads and baked goods, cut flowers, and more. Open rain or shine. [www.freshfarmmarkets.org](http://www.freshfarmmarkets.org).

On May 9 the H Street FreshFarm Market will welcome Washington Mystics players to the Market from 10:00 am – noon. The basketball pros will be signing autographs, shooting hoops, and talking about the importance of a healthy diet and exercise. The Mystics, joined by Through the Kitchen Door, will conduct a cooking demonstration with fresh ingredients from the market.

## JUNE

**8** Monday 6:30 pm  
CHRS Historic Preservation Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details: Nancy Metzger, 546-1034.

**16** Tuesday, 6:30 pm  
CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second floor. Details: Dick Wolf, 543-4353.



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