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December 2009

Survey Results: The Buildings of H Street New Commercial Historic District Recommended

by Donna Hanousek

On November 10, 2009, at the Atlas Performing Arts Center, architectural historians from the firm EHT Tracerics presented to the community the results of a survey they made of the buildings of the H Street NE commercial corridor, now commonly known as H Street Main Street.

Architectural historians Maria Dayton and Paul Weisher summarized the results of the survey, a database covering every building along H Street from 2nd to 15th Street, as well as recommendations on H Street’s potential for landmark and historic district designations. The survey was funded through a collaborative effort by ANC 6A, H Street Main Street, and Abdo Development, and managed by the Stanton Park Neighborhood Association (the Capitol Hill Restoration Society served as a technical advisor).

The survey consists of an individual record for each building. Each record consists primarily of building permit information (such as building owner, architect, style, materials, date of construction, cost, etc.), for those built after 1876, or building information from tax assessment records (owner, materials, and value) for those older than 1876. The building permit information

collected is limited primarily to “to build” permits and major alterations, so there is still the information to be obtained from sign permits for the interested amateur historian to uncover. The record also contains an architectural description and digital photo.

Survey Methodology

Tracerics’ research methodology relied on a combination of building permits, maps, and tax records. Tracerics illustrated how the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps can show major changes to buildings over time. For example 822 H Street is shown as it began in 1904, a dwelling unit with a carriage house; it became a store by 1928; and by 1960, it had become a restaurant, while the original carriage house had become an automobile repair shop. All that information came from viewing just three maps. They also explained the use of the *Faetz & Pratt Real Estate Directory* of 1874, which is the best tool for dating those buildings constructed just a few years before permits were issued.

Individual Recommendations

Tracerics recommended five buildings for individual landmark status (these buildings could be

listed on both the DC Inventory of Landmarks and the National Register of Historic Places):

- 1) 720–722 H Street (Northeast Branch of the Home Savings Bank)—a 1912 neoclassical building designed by notable architect Appleton P. Clark, Jr.
- 2) 800 H Street (National Bank of Washington)—a 1921 Beaux Arts building by prominent architect Stanley Simmons.

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President's Column: Streetcars—Yes. And Only the Best

by Beth Purcell

The last streetcar disappeared from our streets in 1962. Like many of us, I regret that I never got a chance to ride on one. People who did said they glided along almost silently and were fun to ride. And, our old streetcars ran without overhead wires.

The DC government is about to spend \$1.8 billion on a new 38-mile streetcar system. This is a significant amount of money. This streetcar system will be with us for a long, long time. We are entitled to the best streetcar system. The best system is well-engineered, reliable and energy-efficient and will add to, not detract from, our city.

We have all purchased technology that we later realized was a mistake, learned from that experience, and then moved on to better technology. For example, many people bought VCR players, and when DVDs came out, they abandoned VCRs and bought DVD players instead because DVDs are better.

DC has purchased three streetcars in the Czech Republic, and these cars rely on overhead wires. There are promising alternative technologies to power streetcars without overhead wires. Other cities are now building streetcar systems without overhead wires. The DC government owes it to us to thoroughly study all alternatives, then select the best one. If the alternatives are better, DC should install one of them and walk away from the Czech models. Just because DC purchased three cars relying on overhead wires does not mean that DC should perpetuate this mistake (if it is one) and invest over \$1 billion in second-rate technology. Every homeowner knows better. ★



PHOTO COURTESY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON, DC

Providence Hospital, circa 1959.

Historic Photos of Capitol Hill at CHRS December 7 Forum

Come see historic photos showing Capitol Hill by air and its life in the past—street scenes, schools, churches, and businesses. This is a chance to view vanished buildings that many of us have never seen—old St. Cyprian's Church, old Payne School, Providence Hospital, and scenes from Rosedale.

On Monday, December 7, at 6:30 pm, the CHRS Community Forum about Historic Photos of Capitol Hill will feature photos from the archives of the Historical Society of Washington, DC. Colleen McKnight, Special Collections Librarian with the Kiplinger Research Library, and local historian Cindy Janke will present these treasures. The Forum will be held at St. Peter's Church, 2nd & C Streets, SE, downstairs.

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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 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.

To start or renew a CHRS membership:

- ★ On the web at www.CHRS.org
- ★ Call (202) 543-0425; 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.

Streetcars Without Overhead Wires

by Monte Edwards

The Capitol Hill Restoration Society's Board of Directors unanimously passed a resolution on November 17 supporting streetcars without overhead wires. CHRS recognized that not only can a properly designed streetcar system integrated with the city's bus and Metro systems improve public transportation, but streetcar lines can be built for much lower costs than expanding the Metro rail system. Streetcars can provide greater operating efficiency than expanding the bus system because, among other reasons, a steel wheel on a steel rail has significantly less rolling resistance than a rubber tire on pavement.

The issue is how to power our streetcar system. Streetcar systems that have been installed in this country in recent years have used overhead wires. Europe and other parts of the world are installing newer, non-overhead-wire streetcar systems. The use of established, US-based technology is appealing to our city planners, but overhead wires would introduce an visual element that has been intentionally avoided and prohibited for over a century. The National Capital Planning Commission (NCPCC) has found that "(t)he future use of streetcars with an overhead contact system... would change the historically open character and appearance of Washington's rights-of-way." This distinct, wire-free character of our city has been protected in planning doctrine since the late 1800s, allowing Washington's downtown streets to be clear of projecting infrastructure and wires that would interfere with our viewsheds. Even traffic lights and street signs have been installed on posts near the curb rather than on

cantilevered arms or cables across traffic lanes as in other cities.

Lisa MacSpadden, spokesperson for NCPCC, pointed out in a letter in the *Voice of the Hill* (11/20/09, p. 8) that the city "successfully operated streetcars from the late 1800s to the mid-20th century without using overhead wires" in the L'Enfant and Georgetown areas, and commended the city's "commitment to study alternative propulsion technologies." The importance of viewsheds and the need to protect them is clear, but there is now a debate about what part of the city's viewsheds are to be protected. Is it the original L'Enfant City and Georgetown? Or, as some now claim, merely the "monumental viewsheds" that can be accommodated with a segmented, overhead wire system, which uses batteries to cross avenues and streets with a view of the monuments, but subjects the rest of the city to the visual pollution of overhead wires? The CHRS resolution unequivocally states:

"Washington is a planned city with vital vistas and views that make it unique in the world, and those views are located throughout Washington, including areas outside the L'Enfant Plan that deserve protection from unsightly overhead wires used to power streetcars ..."

CHRS is asking the city to conduct a study of streetcar powering systems that are not dependent on overhead wires, including those being installed in Charlotte, NC, in Europe, and in other parts of the world. There is time to perform a comprehensive study of those alternative systems because it will be some time before the streetcars roll. ★

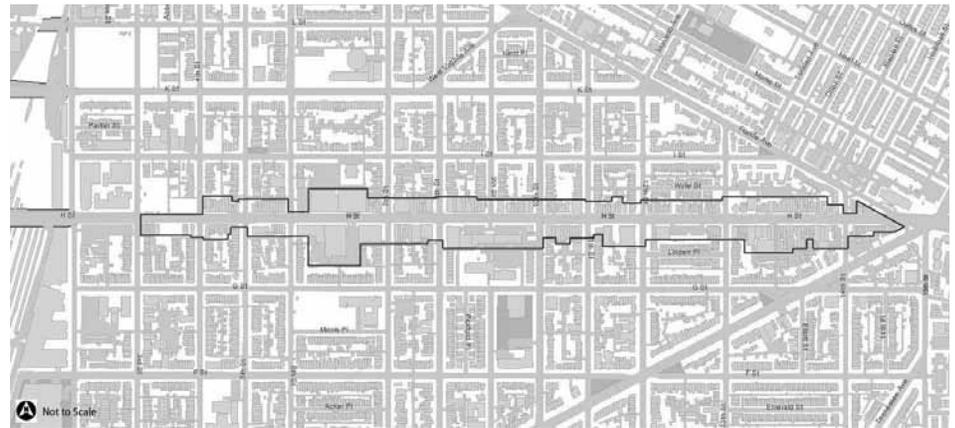
H Street Survey, *continued from cover*

- 3) 1110 H Street (Hubert Newsom Real Estate Building)—an 1890 dwelling converted into a classically-inspired office building in 1920 by real estate developer and lawyer Hubert Newsom.
- 4) 1114 H Street (Hospitality Community Federal Credit Union)—a modernist 1973–74 building, the first constructed after the 1968 riot, which housed a credit union that was organized by the United Planning Organization in 1965.
- 5) 800 11th Street (Douglas Memorial United Methodist Church)—an 1898 Romanesque building constructed by J. C. Yost.

Historic District Recommendations

Traceries showed a series of then-and-now shots, which compared the streetscape of the 1940s with today, and demonstrated what they determined to be a very much intact corridor. They noted that despite a number of unfortunate alterations and gaps, the street still “reads” as it did in the past, so it is well worth preserving what is there. They also cited the relationship of the development of H Street to the original streetcar line, which was built in 1871. The H Street corridor was and remains today a primary corridor into the city.

In making a recommendation for a historic district, both boundaries and a period of significance are important. For the boundaries, they recommend a historic district that would run from 3rd Street on the south side and 4th Street on the north side, continuing eastward to the convergence of 15th Street, Maryland Avenue, and Florida Avenue. For the period of significance, they



TOP: An illustration of the recommended H Street, NE, commercial historic district.

MIDDLE/BOTTOM: The 600 block of H Street, NE, in 1925, and today.



What Comes Next

The presentation had 117 attendees, a testament to the community’s interest in H Street. The audience included ANC Commissioners, the H Street Main Street Director, the State Historic Preservation Officer, and community leaders from the Stanton Park Neighborhood Association and Capitol Hill Restoration Society. Those who attended were predominately

community folks, but there was a smattering of business and property owners from H Street as well.

H Street Main Street will have a copy of the database to share with its constituents, as will ANC 6A. The presentation has been posted

recommend the period from 1869, when H Street was on the cusp of development, to 1968, when economic decline and the riots following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., stopped the growth of the once-flourishing commercial corridor.

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Roofs 101 Caps Fall Preservation Café Season

by Shauna Holmes

CHRS's fall Preservation Café season ended with a flourish as David Lindeman, head of L&M Contracting, provided a wealth of information about the low-sloped roofs that top most of Capitol Hill's historic rowhouses. L&M has been recognized as a top quality company by *Washington Consumer Checkbook*. Because so many of Hill roofs are tin, that's where the illustrated presentation began.

Metal roofing, particularly tin, can't be beat for longevity. An original tin roof that has not been coated or otherwise messed with can last a good 100 years; indeed, benign neglect can often be the best approach an owner can take. Unfortunately, the acid rain of recent decades can eat away copper. With a metal roof, it is especially important that such features as wall caps, coping, and skylights be designed for flat roofs.

One of the most common metal roofing materials in the 19th century, tin was typically sheet steel coated with terne, an alloy that was 80% lead and 20% tin. About ten years ago, Terne II was developed, which uses an alloy of zinc and tin and is all that's available now. Terne II can come in a variety of gauges, and the important thing to know is the thickness of the gauge. While tin can cost more than other types of roofing, if you need to replace your roof and are going to be in your house a long time, tin amortizes well and can be worth the investment.

Though Mr. Lindeman says tin is pretty forgiving of human foolishness, it is not a good idea to coat it with asphalt. This might stop a leak at first, but because tin expands and contracts, water can seep through the resulting cracks and eventually cause damage. Therefore, every time a roof is coated, there is short-

term gain but long-term loss. Mr. Lindeman said that painting tin only makes sense if you have a roof that hasn't been coated with asphalt.

Other roofing systems you might find on your house include tar topped with gravel, EPDM, and modified bitumen. Tar and gravel usually weighs around ten pounds per square foot, whereas a tin roof's weight is a fraction of that, so tar and gravel can put a significant strain on the framing that supports a roof. Another material, EPDM (ethylene propylene diene monomer), is a true rubber roof that will stretch like an inner tube. If installed properly, it can be a good roofing system. A third type, modified bitumen, doesn't stretch. It seams better than EPDM, but unlike EPDM, it must be seamed with a blowtorch, which can lead to a fire. If a homeowner needs to repair or install a bitumen roof, Mr. Lindeman recommends that the installer have good insurance and that a guard be posted for at least two hours after the blowtorch has been turned off to ensure no fire has been ignited.

Another type of roof you might already have or want to consider if you need to replace your roof is a Miracote roof. Miracote is an adhesive copolymer that was initially used for balconies. It is installed, with no seams, in several coatings; can be resurfaced and guaranteed; can be a light color for energy efficiency; and can be patched if necessary with fiberglass mesh. It is supposed to be recoated every ten years or so and does not require scraping off earlier layers before recoating.

Mr. Lindeman offered four recommendations for homeowners who need to replace their roofs. First, do not use tar and gravel, which is too heavy. Second, get the

entire existing roof stripped off and removed. Third, repair or replace any part of the roof support system that has broken or degraded. Fourth, get a licensed contractor with a good reputation and insurance.

CHRS plans to bring Mr. Lindeman back next year for Roofs 102, when he can address pitched roofs, mansard roofs, slate roofs and towers, and other roof-related subjects of special interest to Capitol Hill homeowners.

No Preservation Cafés are scheduled in December or January. They will resume in mid-February, so keep an eye out for details in CHRS's February newsletter and on our website at: www.chrs.org. ★

Welcome CHRS Supporters

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

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Preservation Briefs

by Nancy Metzger

Appeals Court Clears Path to Hear Mayor's Agent Case

On November 17, the DC Court of Appeals rejected the Heritage Foundation's Motion to Dismiss, on timeliness grounds, the petition for review filed by the Capitol Hill Restoration Society in the Mayor's Agent case concerning the construction of a full third-story addition to the 1886 Italianate at 227 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. The court indicated that the parties were free to raise the timeliness argument as part of the merits of the appeal. In the same order, the Appeals Court ordered the Office of Administrative Hearings to file the administrative record within 60 days.

In the related issue concerning the Motion for a Stay of the decision allowing the addition, Mayor's Agent Harriet Tregoning, director of the Office of Planning, on her own initiative, issued a new set of briefing schedules on November 20, allowing the Heritage Foundation additional time to develop its opposition to the CHRS-requested stay, although the previous briefing order had plainly stated that the Heritage Foundation's failure to respond to CHRS's Stay Motion would be taken as conceding that motion. Notwithstanding this plain warning, the Heritage Foundation had not offered a substantive opposition to the Stay Motion by November 2, the first deadline set by the Mayor's Agent. CHRS's Counsel, Andrea Ferster, immediately protested this unasked-for extension of deadlines noting, "Every day in which such a request is delayed—and it has already been substantially delayed by the Applicant's frivolous filings—contributes to the potential that historic properties will be irreparably

injured." In giving the Heritage Foundation a second opportunity to oppose CHRS's stay request, the Mayor's Agent has demonstrated her willingness to bend accepted rules of procedure to favor the Heritage Foundation.

The briefing schedule established by the November 20 Mayor's Agent order provided for a written opposition that addresses the merits of the Motion by December 4, with the CHRS reply due December 11.

Pilot Parking Funds to Be Invested in Community Amenities

When the Nationals moved from one edge of Capitol Hill to another, everyone could see that, without some planning, parking would be a major problem for residents of Capitol Hill below Pennsylvania Avenue and up to Barracks Row, in the SE ballpark area, and in Southwest. Enter the Ward 6 Performance-Based Parking Pilot Program that began with the installation of the multi-space meters in April 2008—a program designed to provide some amenities to the neighborhoods most affected by the Nationals' relocation.

At a meeting in November, the affected neighborhoods learned from the DC Department of Transportation that the 20% of the program's revenue from the meters that is to be returned to the neighborhoods for "non-automobile improvements" would fund such items as bike racks, wayfinding signs and map kiosks to help people navigate the area, a new pedestrian trail linking the heritage trails on Barracks Row and in Southwest, benches (designed to prevent snoozing), lighting and other upgrades to the New Jersey Avenue underpass, and information kiosks (one for SE and one for SW)

where neighborhood information will be available for visitors. Among the innovative items listed were digital signs to be installed along M Street and Barracks Row to provide information for pedestrians (such as times of next buses) and a pilot test of specialized large trash cans with compactors run by solar power.

Included in the list were some of the items that were in an earlier grant proposal submitted to the DC Department of Transportation by the Capitol Hill Restoration Society on behalf of the Sign Tigers, a group of representatives from ANC 6B, Barracks Row Main Street, Capitol Hill BID, Capitol Hill Association of Merchants and Professionals, Eastern Market Community Advisory Committee, the Navy Yard Museum, and CHRS. The Sign Tigers have focused on the issue of bringing visitors to Capitol Hill, highlighting the community's history and historic district status as a means of encouraging increased numbers or length of visits, which will benefit the small businesses of Capitol Hill. One of the items on the Sign Tigers' list has been completing the installation of Historic District discs, which will be accomplished for those intersections within the Pilot boundaries. Another goal has been to help visitors who arrive by subway orient themselves to all of the neighborhood's attractions through metro plaza signs and neighborhood photographs and information; this project has also been adopted under the amenities program.

2009 DC Historic Preservation Awards Presented

The newly renovated Old DC Courthouse / DC Court of Appeals (430 E Street, NW), complete with a

stunning new glass entry pavilion, was the setting for the ceremony honoring those who received the city's 2009 Awards for Excellence in Historic Preservation. The awards ceremony gave the attendees an opportunity to view the inside of the building, which received this year's State Historic Preservation Officer's Award, presented by David Maloney.

Two of the awards have special Capitol Hill significance. One of the awards for Excellence in Restoration and Renovation was given for the preservation of historic monuments at Congressional Cemetery (1801 E Street, SE) and presented to a team of participants that included the Association for Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery, US Department of Veterans Affairs, National Park Service, and the Smithsonian Institution.

Andrea C. Ferster, Esq., received the Historic Preservation Review Board Chairman's Award for Law and Public Policy. Ms. Ferster is now serving as counsel to CHRS in the Heritage Foundation (227 Pennsylvania Avenue) Mayor's Agent appeal as well as the suit over the 11th Street Bridges.

In his introduction to the HPRB award presentation to Ms. Ferster, HPRB Chairman Tersh Boasberg noted that "As counsel to city-wide preservation organizations, neighborhood groups, and historic district organizations throughout the city, she has been an advocate extraordinaire. ... In 1998, she successfully represented the Logan Circle Community Association in an early DC Court of Appeals case which upheld the designation of the Greater 14th Street Historic District and, for the first time in this city, set legal parameters defining the First Amendment rights of religious organizations. Recently her strong representation of the Committee of 100 in front of the

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2010 House & Garden Tour

The 2010 Mother's Day House & Garden Tour is upon us already! For the first time, we will be selling gift certificates at the CHRS booth at Eastern Market on weekends from Thanksgiving through December 20. You also may purchase tickets on our website, www.CHRS.org, using PayPal.

A great way just to say "Thanks!"

The certificates will sell for \$20, which makes them the perfect stocking stuffer! They are great "thank you's" for your neighbors who take in your mail when you are gone, or the barrista who always makes your latte just right, or the person who styles your hair. How about the woman at the drycleaners who remembers your name and asks about your family? Or the pharmacist who fills your prescription every month? Or your kids' teachers?

Gift certificates will be redeemed in April for a ticket that has all of the houses listed. Recipients will be able to redeem them at the CHRS booth at Eastern Market or at Hill's Kitchen, Riverby Books, and a number of other outlets.

For additional information, please contact CapHRS@aol.com or visit www.CHRS.org.



Capitol Hill Restoration Society

53rd Annual House and Garden Tour May 8-9, 2010

Purchase discounted tour Gift Certificates at the CHRS booth at Eastern Market weekends from Nov 28 - Dec 20 or visit the CHRS website.

www.chrs.org | caphrs@aol.com | 202-543-0425



Phase One of the Eastern Market Plaza Study Ends

by Dick Wolf

After more than a year of work, the Capitol Hill Town Square project team has finished their work for this phase. Three alternatives for the rebuilding of the plaza were developed, as required by federal reviewing authorities: the 'existing improved', the Triptych, and Central Park. As previously noted in these pages, CHRS has rejected the Central Park concept. The community task force, in reviewing the three alternatives, on a straw vote overwhelmingly favored the Triptych, with its oval central park area flanked by the two existing parks. The total area of this concept with sidewalks and traffic lanes is more than 6 acres.

A final task of the design team was to take its three conceptual designs and prepare a cost estimate for each alternative. It should be noted that under any realistic scenario, the project could not be under construction for at least three years. There is the necessity to secure funding, conduct a formal Environmental Assessment, and undertake final design and preparation of bid documents.

Because of these uncertainties, the cost estimates prepared are expressed in current (2009) dollars.

The general construction cost estimates are as follows: existing improved, \$17 million; Triptych, \$28 million; and Central Park, \$27 million. These figures exclude architectural and engineering design fees, a fund for long term maintenance, any management fees that the District government might choose to add on, a construction contingency fee, and any cost escalations over the next several years. To give some comparison to similar on-going projects, the Starburst Plaza at the intersection of H Street, Florida Avenue, and Bladensburg and Benning Roads has just been put under contract for construction at a cost of \$35 million—it is about 4 acres in size. The Canal Park project just south of Garfield Park is undergoing re-design and is estimated to cost between \$21 to \$25 million for 1.5 acres. This project is well within the ballpark of such costs.

The next step is to identify a governmental entity to take ownership of the further work. That

would include an Environmental Assessment, much of which has been done, but would go much further in traffic studies to understand vehicle flows that would result from any limitation of Pennsylvania Avenue traffic to two lanes from three plus the effects of any initiatives for a traffic circle at 14th and Potomac and Pennsylvania Avenues.

Personally, I see the Triptych concept as an outstanding design that would truly create the sense of a Capitol Hill Town Center, knitting together important business blocks and affording residents a magnificent new ensemble of parks which would neatly embrace a variety of community uses, including a much friendlier major transportation interface. The handling of the various public meetings by Barracks Row officers, Tip Tipton and David Perry, was outstanding; the community task force was thoughtful in its deliberations; and the consultants were professional, innovative, and thorough.

As I said more than a year ago, this is a project we can support. ★

Overbeck Lecture Features CHRS

There will be a lecture by Dick Wolf, immediate past President of CHRS, on the history of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society. He's expected to recount, among other topics, some of the organization's early battles to save our neighborhood from the bulldozer and wrecking ball. The lecture will be held Tuesday, February 9, 2010, at 8:00 pm at the Naval Lodge Hall at 330 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. As always, admission is free, but a reservation is required due to limited seating. E-mail Lecture@CapitolHillHistory.org, and indicate the number of seats you will need. The reservation is automatic—you will be notified only if no more seats are available.

Mayor's Agent and in the DC Court of Appeals resulted in a victory which saved the Italian Embassy. This 2008 case defined important legal precedents for protecting landmarks and articulated the contours of special merit cases in the areas of exemplary architecture and economic hardship. Ms. Ferster was also the successful attorney in such well-known preservation cases as the saving of the Victor Building in 1995; protecting the Webster School in 2000; and in working out the settlement of one of the most contentious legal disputes ever: Carroll Square in the middle of the Downtown Historic District in 1999-2000. All of these cases established precedents which have guided the maturation of the preservation movement over the last two decades."

Awards for Excellence in Historic Preservation were also announced in the following areas:

- ★ Excellence in Restoration and Renovation: Chinese Community Church (501 I Street, NW); Takoma Park Library (416 Cedar

Street, NW); and Ford's Theater (517 Tenth Street, NW).

- ★ Excellence in Stewardship: Northumberland Apartments (2039 New Hampshire Avenue, NW); Dumblane (Tenleytown).
- ★ Excellence in Archaeology: a team from Smithsonian Institution's Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History for research and forensic work that identified the body found in a coffin in Columbia Heights during excavation for new construction and linked the body to relatives living in Virginia.
- ★ Excellence in Community Involvement: Shaw Main Streets.
- ★ Excellence in Public Education: Cultural Tourism DC and DC Department of Transportation for the new DC neighborhood heritage trails in Adams Morgan, Brightwood, Deanwood, Mount Pleasant, and Shaw.
- ★ Individual Lifetime Achievement Award: Colden "Coke" Florance, FAIA, LEED AP.

DC Cited as a *Preserve America Community*

The entire city of Washington, DC, has been designated a *Preserve America Community* in recognition of the city's efforts to protect and celebrate its heritage, use the historic resources for economic development, and encourage people to experience and appreciate local historic resources through education and historic tourism programs. Managed chiefly by the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation and the Department of the Interior, the program has a number of components, including the opportunity to apply for *Preserve America* matching grants to support community efforts to demonstrate sustainable uses of their historic and cultural sites, and to focus on economic and educational opportunities related to heritage tourism. The city was nominated for the recognition by the Historic Preservation Office, which highlighted government and citizen efforts in historic districts, heritage trails, education about the contributions of African-Americans, and other programs. ★

H Street Survey, continued from page 4

on the CHRS website at www.chrs.org/images/H%20Street%20NE%20Presentation.pdf. The database can serve the community in a number of ways. It can be used to inform renovations and provide source material for historic tours and publications. If there is sufficient support from the community and property owners, the database can provide the basis for a landmark application for any of the buildings recommended for individual landmark status and/or for an H Street historic district.

The long-term future of H Street's historic resources will depend on the level of commitment there is to retaining its attractive facades and low-scale streetscape that are so much a part of the corridor's growing vibrancy. The success of several businesses housed in historic buildings will hopefully provide an incentive to other business and property owners on H Street to preserve their buildings, not just for their historic value, but as an integral part of the corridor's economic development program. If the

H Street community decides its best future lies in its past and becomes a historic district, its property owners can potentially reap tax savings from historic preservation tax credits and conservation easements, as well as have the satisfaction of contributing to their community's sense of place and historic roots.

Those interested in more details about establishing historic landmarks or districts will find details at the District's Historic Preservation Office website: <http://tinyurl.com/ykfy878>. ★

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 it with your check to:

Capitol Hill Restoration Society
P.O. Box 15264
Washington, DC 20003-0264

2. Visit www.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, 2009 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, 2009 deadline. Please call the CHRS office at 543-0425 if you need the bank routing number.

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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City, State, Zip

Home phone

Work phone

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

Thank you for supporting CHRS!

Did You Know?

- ★ **In September, the U.S. Tax Court upheld a property owner in Washington, DC, who claimed a tax deduction for a preservation easement.** In *Simmons v. Commissioner*, the court ruled that, in this specific case, the easement made to The L'Enfant Trust should be valued as a federal tax deduction at 5% of the property's value. To quote Ken Johnson of the blog *DCMud*, "Preservation easements are common agreements between the owner of a historic or archaeologically significant property and a charitable organization that is chartered to preserve such properties. The agreement grants the charitable organization a legal right to control that portion of the property [covered by the easement], a right which is recorded and retained in perpetuity. The property owner's grant to the charity results in a donation, the amount of which is therefore deductible as charitable. Grants in Washington DC generally involve the facade of a property, which thereafter cannot be altered without the consent of the charitable organization." The Court found that the preservation easement resulted in a loss of fair market value to the owner, providing justification for the deduction. However, in this decision, the easement applied only to the front façade. The amount of the loss of fair market value in other cases may differ.
- ★ **The National Capital Planning Commission (NCP) has approved final plans for Canal Park.** The park is approximately 2 acres located between 2nd Place, 2nd Street, I, and M Streets, SE. The park includes a linear rain garden with on-site water collection and treatment and reuse of storm water runoff. Part of the green space will be available for concerts, with seating room for 500 and standing room for 1,200. There will be a water feature that can be used as a skating rink in the winter. The city has chosen OLIN, a Philadelphia-based landscape architectural firm, to design the park.
- ★ **Beginning January 1, 2010, food and alcohol stores will begin charging five cents for each disposable paper or plastic carryout bag used at checkout.** One cent is retained by the business or two cents if the store offers a rebate to those who bring their own bags. The other 3 or 4 cents will go to the Anacostia River Protection Fund, administered by the District Department of the Environment, to be used to clean up the river and provide reusable bags.
- ★ **An unlikely street name in the Capitol Hill Historic District—Capitalsaurus Court— has a history.** Every year the Mayor proclaims January 28 as Capitalsaurus Day in honor of the 1898 discovery of a tailbone from a then-unknown meat-eating dinosaur, a dinosaur probably related to Tyrannosaurus Rex. Workers were excavating for a sewer line when they discovered the bone close to First and F Streets, SE. The bone now resides in the Smithsonian. Capitalsaurus is now the state fossil, state dinosaur, and a short street on Capitol Hill.
- ★ **AppleTree Public Charter School is seeking formal permission to locate an expansion campus at 138 12th Street, NE.** Earlier a related organization, AppleTree Institute for Education Innovation, had obtained building permits for the site after a long dispute with neighborhood organizations, ANC 6A, CHRS, and the Department of Regulatory and Consumer Affairs. Authorization must be obtained from the Public Charter School Board (PCSB) before a school can be opened. The Chair of the PCSB, Thomas Nida, stated in testimony before the Zoning Commission that the PCSB seeks to ascertain neighborhood support and whether or not a community need exists.

The opposition to the school is strictly based on inappropriate land use. The school for 60 students plus staff is proposed for the middle of a rowhouse block, sharing common walls with other residential rowhouses. The street front footage is only 36 feet wide, inadequate for the many cars seeking to pick-up and drop-off students. There are only two parking spots for the staff and delivery vehicles. There is no playground space, necessitating a walk to the playgrounds at the east end of Lincoln Park and crossing busy East Capitol Street. Also, the 100 block of 12th can only be entered from dense, fast commuter traffic on Constitution Avenue or East Capitol Street. The city's current zoning law prohibits the use of this kind of site for a school, but the permits had been applied for before the zoning regulations changed.



Capitol Hill Restoration Society
420 Tenth Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003

Mark Your Calendar!

DECEMBER

7 Monday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Community Forum, St. Peter's Church, 2nd & C Streets, SE. Historic photos of Capitol Hill. The Historical Society of Washington, DC, has a vast treasure of historic Capitol Hill photos. Colleen McKnight, Special Collections Librarian with the Kiplinger Research Library, and local historian Cindy Janke will share these with us on December 7. Come see historic photos showing Capitol Hill by air and life in the past—street scenes, schools, churches, and businesses. This is a chance to view vanished buildings that many of us have never seen—St. Cyprian's Church, old Payne School, Providence Hospital, and scenes from Rosedale. Contact: CapHRS@aol.com or 543-0425.

15 Tuesday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second floor. Details: Beth Purcell, 622-4303.

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

19 Saturday, 7:00 am
Audubon's annual "Christmas" bird count. Meet at the parking lot, Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, 1550 Anacostia Avenue, NE. CHRS will pay the \$5 administration fee for members. Details: Louis DeMuoy, (301) 656-3146 or via e-mail at: Ldemouy@starpower.net.

JANUARY

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.

16 Saturday, 10:00 am
"Bury Me Deep: Cemeteries in Washington, DC." Researcher Paul E. Sluby, Sr., will discuss DC's hundreds of cemeteries; book signing to follow. Free. Anacostia Community Museum, 1910 Fort Place, SE. Contact: 633-4844.

19 Tuesday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second floor. Details: Beth Purcell, 622-4303.

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