



NEWS

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June 2010

11th Street Bridges Case Settled with Benefits for Capitol Hill

In early May, the CHRS lawsuit against the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the DC Department of Transportation (DDoT) regarding the 11th Street Bridges Project was concluded with a settlement agreement between the plaintiff, CHRS, and the defendants, FHWA and DDoT. Having been provided with the settlement agreement and a request by the parties to dismiss, U.S. District Court Judge Ellen S. Huvelle granted the joint motion to dismiss the case on May 5, 2010. CHRS filed the suit in February 2009 challenging the adequacy of FHWA's and DDoT's compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, the Department of Transportation Act, and the Federal Aid Highway Act prior to approving the new set of bridges [*CHRS v. Ray LaHood*, Civil Action No. 09-00367 (ESH)].

CHRS goals in filing the lawsuit

CHRS brought this case because the 11th Street Bridges Project will have adverse impacts on both Capitol Hill and communities east of the Anacostia River. For example, there will be nearly 50,000 more vehicles per day traversing Capitol Hill due to the expanded bridges, which will increase traffic, congestion, noise, and



PHOTO COURTESY DAVID HOLMES

Newly completed pillars, 11th Street Bridges.

air pollution. We believe that FHWA and DDoT failed to adequately take these adverse impacts fully into account and hoped that the litigation would promote additional consideration and mitigation of community concerns about how both construction and increased use of the new bridges could affect nearby neighborhoods.

The settlement agreement

In the settlement agreement, FHWA and DDoT affirmed their intent to

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President's Column: House and Garden Tour 2010

by Beth Purcell

The 53rd House and Garden Tour was an artistic and financial success. We owe thanks to many, many people. The homeowners who kindly opened their houses are the heroes of the House and Garden Tour. We are very grateful for their generosity. Special thanks is due to Paul Cromwell and

Aileen Moffatt, the Co-Chairs of the House and Garden Tour, who have done extraordinary work in planning the Tour, including selecting fascinating houses and overseeing the Tour Guide. We also want to thank the hundreds of volunteers who make the Tour possible—all the

writers, house docents, fundraisers who have worked so hard—and to the Tour's sponsors, who contributed generously. Finally, we wish to thank our members for supporting the work of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society and the Tour. ★

House Tour Sets Fundraising Record!

by Aileen C. Moffatt & Paul Cromwell

Great weather and interesting homes helped bring out a huge crowd of people for the 53rd Annual Mother's Day House & Garden Tour. Many thanks to all who participated, bought tickets, volunteered as docents, served on committees, sold tickets, or supported us in numerous other ways. All of the financials have not yet been completed but we can tell you that approximately 1600 people went on the Tour this year and, by all reports, everyone loved the small, very walkable footprint of the 2010 Tour.

We would like to extend very special thanks to our sponsors, whose contributions and support truly made a difference: National Capital Bank; Dick & Mimi Wolf; Schneider's of Capitol Hill; P&P Builders; and Stanton Developments. We would also like to thank the Adopt a House sponsors: Phyllis Jane Young; Gary Jankowski; Bob Williams; Scott Purcell; Frager's Hardware; and The Wainger Group. Special thanks

to Chuck Burger for sponsoring the Refreshment Break at the Capitol Hill Presbyterian Church.

Almost 150 volunteers are needed each year to plan, produce, and staff the House Tour. We are grateful to the many people who are so generous with their time. The vast number of volunteer hours that accrue is amazing. We believe it speaks directly of the strong community spirit that sets the Hill apart from other neighborhoods.

Most of all, we would like to thank the homeowners who so graciously opened their homes. We know how much love and care goes into preparing a house for the Tour. Thank you so much for your good humor, big hearts, and of course, the hard work that you did this winter and spring. Much appreciation goes to Bruce Lott & Jim Rowland; Nathaniel & Chantal Wienecke; Carol Euston & Joseph Watson; Gordon & Carla Bremer; Peter Meccariello & Jack Stein; Joan Keenan; Jeannie

& Jesse Hagopian; Larry Hodgson; Paul & Kelly Sherman; Steve & Nicky Cymrot; Kathryn Powers; Susan Ryerson & Richard Rubenstein; Steve Lawlor & Susan Ades; and Jon Jameson.

Next year's Tour will be Saturday, May 7 and Sunday, May 8. Please look for the CHRS ticket booth at Eastern Market in late November and into December, where you will be able to purchase gift certificates for the 2011 Tour at a discounted rate. Planning for the 2011 Tour begins this summer, so if you would like to volunteer to help with organization, house research and/or writing, media outreach, ticket sales, or numerous other jobs, please contact CHRS at: caphrs@aol.com and put "2011 Tour volunteer" in the subject line. ★

The **Environmental Assessment for the Anacostia Combined Sewer Overflows** project can be found at: www.dcwasa.com/workzones/projects/anacostia_tunnel.cfm. The assessment was released May 12, 2010.

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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.

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.

Hill Center to Break Ground

The Old Naval Hospital will celebrate the ground-breaking for the new Hill Center on Sunday, June 13, from 2-4:30 pm.

An Old-Fashioned Ice Cream Social will provide free ice cream for families and friends, and there will be a guest appearance by "Abraham Lincoln," who will stroll through the grounds and greet visitors. The United States Navy Band will perform, and the US Navy Ceremonial Guard will present the colors. The event is free and open to the public. People should come to the E Street entrance between 9th and 10th Streets, SE.

The ground-breaking ceremony will inaugurate a construction phase expected to take about one year.

The Hill Center project aims to restore the hospital building and to rejuvenate it as an educational focal point in the heart of the Hill. After restoration, the Center will become a community center with spaces for education and the arts, meeting rooms for both Hill and citywide functions, and offices for local non-profit groups.

The Old Naval Hospital opened in 1866 as a facility for seamen of the Potomac. It later housed a

Navy hospital training facility, a home for old soldiers and sailors, and several DC organizations, but the main building has been largely vacant for a decade. The Hill Center's genesis began in 2002 with the formation of the Old Naval Hospital Foundation, a coalition of Capitol Hill residents committed to restoring the deteriorating building. The Foundation is responsible for the renovation and eventual programming.

The Hill Center will cost up to \$10 million. Over \$7 million has already been committed by the DC and the federal governments, as well as grants from the "Save America's Treasures" program of the National Park Service of the Department of Interior, and the Capitol Hill Community Foundation, leaving \$3 million needed to launch the Hill Center as a historically accurate, state-of-the-art building. The Foundation has mounted a major fundraising campaign to bridge that funding gap.

To learn more about the Hill Center and its program plans, visit: <http://HillCenterONH.org>, or contact the center at 544-1845 or info@hillcenter.org. ★

Ballots Mailed

Ballots for the 2010 election of officers and board members of the Society have been mailed to all members. Please return them by **June 7** to P.O. Box 15264, Washington DC 20003-0264.

Historic Preservation Briefs

by Nancy Metzger

Anne Archbold Hall Listed as One of DC's Most Endangered Places

Anne Archbold Hall, the last intact example of DC General Hospital's Colonial Revival buildings, has been named one of the city's Most Endangered Places for 2010, the DC Preservation League (DCPL) announced in May. Designated a city landmark in 2006, the handsome four-story brick building with limestone trim is owned by the city and suffers from deferred maintenance and extensive water damage. The building once served as the Nurses' Residence for the hospital complex and was designated not only for its representative architecture but also as a site important to women's history and the importance of nursing, one of the few professions available to women in the early 20th century.

Concerned because the development at Reservation 13 has been stalled for several years and because needed repairs have not been made for even more years, the Capitol Hill Restoration Society this winter nominated Anne Archbold Hall as one of the city's Most Endangered, hoping to draw the attention of city officials to this long-neglected building. This is the second time the building has been on the list. In 2002-2003, DCPL put the building on the list because a Reservation 13 redevelopment plan at that time called for the removal of all of the hospital buildings, including Anne Archbold. In response to that demolition threat, CHRS and DCPL successfully nominated the building to the DC Inventory of Historic Sites in 2006, thus securing protection against demolition. After designation, the plan for Reservation 13 was revised to include the former Nurses' Residence as a focal point for the development's residential component.

CHRS hopes to work with the Preservation League to keep the condition of Anne Archbold Hall before the City Council and the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED), which has responsibility for the building. Earlier this year CHRS testified at the Council oversight hearings about the impact the city's neglect is having on the building. Unless the District government takes steps to secure and stabilize the building, its potential role in future development plans could be compromised and its repair and renovation will be more extensive and expensive.

Other sites on the list this year include: District of Columbia Historic Firehouses (threatened by long-term neglect if de-accessioned, or unsympathetic modernization plans if the building is still in use); the Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church (1518 M Street, NW, in need of extensive repairs and renovation); and specific frame houses located within the Anacostia Historic District that are threatened by demolition by neglect (2228, 2234, 2238 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, SE, and 2253 Mount View Place, SE). The sites were selected by DCPL from nominations submitted by concerned individuals and organizations across the city and were based on the severity of the threats to the buildings in question, whether through demolition, neglect, or inappropriate alteration.

"The Maples" Gains a New Owner and Regains a Name

Although it has been known as Friendship House for almost a century, the Georgian manor house in the 600 block of South Carolina Avenue, built in 1795-97 by William

Lovering for William Mayne Duncanson, will once again be known by its historic name, "The Maples." In late March, Altus Realty Partners of Arlington, Virginia, took ownership of the building and its grounds through a \$2.6 million transaction that followed the bankruptcy filing of Friendship House Association, a community group that for nearly 100 years provided much-needed social services for the economically disadvantaged of Capitol Hill. It seems unlikely that the association will be able to offer services after the sale of the property.

In May, Terry Hindermann, a principal with Altus Realty Partners, disclosed that Cunningham/Quill, an architectural firm in NW Washington, was assessing the condition of the building in order to develop a scope of work to prevent further problems with the historic structure. Among the obvious problems are the leaking roof, where the wood is now exposed because the metal covering has been torn back, the chimney on the west side that is in need of repair, and broken windows.

Mr. Hindermann also mentioned plans to increase security for the building, such as more fencing and lighting. Cunningham/Quill and the Altus Realty Group will be consulting with the Historic Preservation Office for repair and stabilization permits. Plans for the use (most likely residential) are still being developed. Altus expects to hold a community meeting to "meet the neighbors" sometime this summer.

The Latest from DCRA: A Search Capability for Permits, Licenses, and Inspections

The Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) announced a new search application that will help residents find issued permits, residential housing complaint cases, commercial (permit-related) inspections, certificate of occupancy and home occupation permits, basic business licensing (current and past) and property conditions that may affect permitting and inspections (stop-work orders and special jurisdictions such as historic districts). The search can be initiated by going to: <http://pivs.dcr.dc.gov/property/search>. Simply enter an address or property ID (square, suffix, and lot) and search. According to DCRA, data is displayed in nine individual tabs but printer-friendly reports allow quick access to complete the picture of the property. A link is also provided to DCRA's online building permit tracking system. Basic data about the property, including zoning, ward, and ANC, are included. Additional links will take you to Google Street view, returning a current picture and map;

and the Bing Map Bird's Eye view. Another link to Google will allow exploration of other internet-accessible information on a property, including the various real estate sites like Trulia.

NE Dreyfus Project Starts with Demolition of Historic Buildings

It was just a matter of time but time finally caught up with the 13 historic buildings on the western half of Square 752 (bounded by H and G streets, 2nd Street and a north-south alley). Not within the Capitol Hill Historic District and thus not protected from demolition by the Historic Preservation law, the buildings were quietly assembled by Louis Dreyfus Property Group about five years ago to be demolished for a large commercial-residential project known as Capitol Place. To develop the site, Dreyfus went through a planned unit development process (PUD), which gave the developer some increased density in exchange for some community amenities. One of the amenities the community negotiated was a historic buildings survey of the two-block strip from F to H streets, Second to about

Fifteenth streets, NE. The community also pressed the developer and architect to vary the height of the

building considerably from H Street to G Street, depending on the context. As part of the process, because the buildings were deemed eligible for historic status, Dreyfus also contracted with Louis Berger Group for a HABS (Historic American Building Survey) level II survey to document the buildings that would be taken down. This includes a written description, photographs, and tax, deed and census information.

Drury Tallant, a resident of Square 752, reported that Sean Cahill, a vice president of Dreyfus, expects that the actual building of the project will begin in 8–12 months. The site is an unusual one, as the H Street/Hopscotch Bridge descends to the H Street level directly in front of the proposed building. The building is expected to be mostly residential, with some commercial spaces at the corners and ranging in height from 9 stories at the northwest corner by the bridge, down to four stories along G Street. The existing parking lots near H Street will be resurfaced and will continue to be used for parking until construction begins. In the other part of the site, the rubble has been used to fill basements and the lots have been "graded smooth." ★

Demolition on Square 752 between G and H Streets, NE at 2nd Street for the Capitol Place project.



PHOTOS COURTESY DAVID HOLMES



fulfill their commitments set forth in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and their Record of Decision (ROD). In addition, DDoT agreed to do the following:

- Establish a Community Communications Committee composed of representatives of affected communities to which DDoT will provide ongoing information about the project at quarterly meetings, until construction of the bridges is substantially complete.
- Provide its photographic simulations of the bridges to CHRS within 60 days after executing the agreement.
- Have a licensed engineer hired by DDoT monitor and report on vibration levels during construction.
- Minimize construction traffic on 8th Street, SE.
- Communicate with the Community Communications Committee to assess noise levels and potential abatement measures.

- Affirm that it has no plans to stage construction in historic Virginia Avenue Park.
- Comply with the terms of its Programmatic Agreement with DC's Historic Preservation Office regarding any inadvertent discovery of archeological resources during construction.
- Review information from the public regarding areas affected by the 11th Street Bridges that should be studied for traffic calming.
- Show wetlands on construction documents.
- Keep elevated sections of the roadway as low as possible to minimize visual intrusions into Anacostia Park, historic districts, and neighborhoods.

Regular meetings with the community during construction

CHRS was very pleased that DDoT agreed to the item topping CHRS's list of requests—to establish a mechanism for regular dialogue with people in the affected communities—even before the settlement agreement

was finalized, which was a welcome sign of good faith. DDoT created a Community Communications Committee through which DDoT, affected ANC's, and representatives of neighborhoods and community organizations on both sides of the river can exchange information, air community concerns, and discuss effects of the construction on nearby residents and businesses. This committee, which will meet quarterly, met for the first time in December 2009 and for the second time in March. DDoT has been providing information on pile driving, street closings, detours, routing of construction traffic, construction progress, and evolving bridge design. DDoT has also heard in the meetings about community concerns and requests for reconsidering design and access issues.

CHRS is encouraged to see DDoT actively engaging at these meetings in real give-and-take with community organizations, including CHRS, on many aspects of the construction's design and effects

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Organizer Offers Ways to Take Back Our Closets

by Shauna Holmes

“It’s really all about simplifying,” said Jill Lawrence at CHR’s May 19 Preservation Café. A Capitol Hill resident, Ms. Lawrence is the owner of Jill-of-all-Trades Professional Organizing Services. Everyone present hoped the organizing expert whose business card reads “Make room...for your life” could provide advice on tackling and conquering their cluttered, over-stuffed closets, and they got what they came for.

The first step is to make getting into our closets easier. Entry is often hampered by doors that limit access, and may also be blocked by furniture, encroaching treadmills, animal beds, stuff hanging on the inside of the door, or whatever else has accumulated nearby or on the floor of a walk-in closet. Clearing away obstacles outside the closet will help, as can redesigning an awkward door or moving hinges to the other side for easier entry.

Ms. Lawrence, who lives in a Capitol Hill rowhouse, noted that many Hill closets are often poorly configured for easy access. In one type, the “Gauntlet,” the walk-in pathway between parallel rods is too narrow, making it difficult to get a good look at everything and even harder to get things out. In another, the “Twin Tormentor,” rods placed at right angles in an L-shape make getting anything into and out of the corner so awkward people usually give up. In still others, rods are too high to reach or so close to shelves above them that getting hangers onto and off the rods is too hard. Also, double rods may be too close together, so that clothing on the upper rod conceals clothing on the lower one and makes it hard to use. In all of these cases, identifying how much hanging space you need, and how much should be for long

clothes and how much should be for short things like shirts, is necessary in order to figure out the best way to redesign rod and shelf placement so all clothes are easily accessible. Which brings us to the next step: sorting through your clothing.

To start that process, get all of it out and set up three huge bags. Then sort the clothing into categories, grouping similar items like tee shirts, dresses, and trousers together on over-the-door hangers, shower curtain rods, or the backs of chairs or in piles. While sorting, put stained, moth-eaten, or damaged items into one big bag to be recycled as rags or thrown out – and be realistic about whether you’re really going to fix that broken zipper some day or take the time to mend that ripped sleeve.

Then try on items from each category, preferably accompanied by a trusted friend who will be candid but not mean about what fits best from all angles, what makes you look your best, and what should really be passed along to a new home. If you do this step without a friend, use items of your best-fitting clothing as templates to evaluate whether other similar items are likely to fit well. When you try things on, be sure to check them out from as many viewpoints as possible in really good light. Items in good condition that don’t fit well or don’t make you look good can go into bags two and three for consignment at a shop like Clothes Encounters or donation to a charity like Goodwill.

After completing this process, take a good look at the keepers that remain in each category. This will reveal whether there are wardrobe gaps that need filling, as well as how much hanging space you need, what can be stored in drawers or easily accessible boxes, and what can be put

into somewhat less-accessible boxes or closets for seasonal storage. Then you’re ready to assess whether your closets provide the rods, shelves, and easy access you need or whether they need to be reconfigured to accommodate everything as well as possible.

To make maximum use of hanging space, replace thick curved hangers with slim ones and use “outfit hangers” that hold tops and bottoms on a single hanger. You can also get tiered hangers that can hold 5-6 items like shorts, trousers, or skirts on one hanger, as well as special hangers designed to hold ties and scarves in a compact space.

To separate things stored on shelves, dividers from the Container Store will help keep everything from becoming a mishmash of items you can’t see well or untangle. Hard-to-reach space can hold rarely used items like holiday stuff, the AeroBed for guests, and suitcases. Taking shoes out of shoeboxes and putting them under hanging clothing or on shoe shelves will save room and make footgear more visible. High shelves that are difficult to reach should hold soft things like guest pillows, comforters, beach towels, and out-of-season blankets so you don’t get hurt if they fall while you’re putting them away or taking them down.

After deciding what to keep, planning the best place and way to store it, and structuring your closets and other storage areas for optimum use of space and easy access, you will enjoy the benefits of organization based on your needs rather than happenstance, as well as simplified access to your clothing and other items. Should you decide you’d like a professional consultation with Ms. Lawrence, she can be reached at jilltrades2@aol.com. ★

New Protections Against Lead Now Required for Home Repair Businesses

Businesses that renovate and repair homes, daycare centers, and certain other older buildings are now required to have trained and certified personnel on-site and to conform to safe lead abatement practices. Contractors, plumbers, electricians, and painters must test for lead paint (present in almost all non-transparent paints made before 1978), use plastic sheeting to block circulation of lead dust, and use respirators and protective clothing to protect from airborne particles propelled into the air by heating or sanding paint.

While anyone reading this newsletter is likely to be very aware of the dangers of ingested and airborne lead dust, protective measures for home projects are now mandated by law and regulation. Dust and fumes must be confined to the work area. Renovation methods must be selected that do not generate large amounts of lead dust. Torches and heat guns that generate more than 1100°F are now prohibited. Sanders, water or air blasters, and grinders must have shrouds and HEPA vacuum attachments. Fines can be as large as \$37,000 per day.

These legal requirements apply to contractors and craftsmen, but do-it-yourself homeowners should take equal caution to protect themselves and their families. Be sure, for example, to prohibit your family from traversing a repair site or allowing any access or airflow until the work has been completed and cleaned thoroughly.

Lead poisoning in children can cause such symptoms as learning disabilities, behavior problems, loss of appetite, abdominal pain, vomiting, weight loss, constipation, anemia, kidney failure, irritability, and lethargy. Children may also

experience loss of newly acquired abilities, especially speech skills; hearing loss; delayed growth; drowsiness; or clumsiness. Adult problems include memory loss, reproductive problems, and loss of coordination.

Make sure your contractor is certified and actively protects your family and his or her workers by conforming to the law. Further information at: www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/renovaterightbrochure.pdf and at www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/renovation.htm. ★



Capitol Hill Restoration Society to Host Architect of the Capitol at June 17 Forum

Stephen T. Ayers, the newly confirmed Architect of the Capitol (AOC), will be the guest speaker at the Capitol Hill Restoration Society's June Forum. On May 12, the U.S. Senate unanimously confirmed Mr. Ayers for a 10-year term as the 11th Architect of the Capitol.

Thursday, June 17, 2010
St. Peter's Catholic Church
313 Second Street, SE
Reception at 7:00 pm • Remarks at 7:30 pm
Open to all

Since February 2007, Mr. Ayers has served as Acting Architect, heading up the 2,600-person office. Among the many accomplishments under his leadership, the office provided vital support for the 56th Presidential Inaugural ceremony and completed construction and opened the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center in December 2008.

The AOC is responsible for the maintenance and operation of the Capitol Building, the care and improvement of more than 450 acres of Capitol grounds, and the operation and maintenance of 16.5 million square feet of buildings including the House and Senate Office Buildings, the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, the Library of Congress, the U.S. Supreme Court Building, the Thurgood Marshall Federal Judiciary Building, and the U.S. Botanic Garden. He also serves on the three-member U.S. Capitol Police Board, which is responsible for the Capitol Police that patrol parts of the residential areas of Capitol Hill.

Mr. Ayers will discuss the enormous success of the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, progress on the tunnels, and other projects by the AOC office that impact the Capitol Hill community.

Looking Back on Capitol Hill

by Nancy Metzger

As noted elsewhere in this issue, the houses that were demolished for the Dreyfus Capitol Place project had been documented before they were destroyed. The most architecturally distinguished house of the group that was demolished was 721 Second Street, NE, the home of Albert S. Reavis, a metal worker who also built a two-story workshop at the rear of the lot. Designed by the well-known architect B. Stanley Simmons (1872–1931) in 1897, the brick home is described as “exhibiting Romanesque Revival and Queen Anne stylistic features of the late 19th century period. The façade features a Romanesque round-arched entry elaborated with a large keystone. The projecting square bay on the façade is topped with a tall, steep pyramidal roof to provide visual interest common to the Queen Anne period.”¹

Given the owner’s business, it seems likely that he supplied the metal work for his own home. The Berger Group documentation notes: “The round-arched brick lintel is embellished with a cast-iron keystone and a rounded archivolt that terminates in sheet metal moldings made to imitate rusticated stone. ...On the façade, the window sills are sandstone and window lintels appear to be wood with applied sheet metal imitating rusticated stone lug lintels. ...The dormers are detailed with full gable pediments decorated with sheet metal egg-and-dart moldings. ...The heavy cornice is detailed with scroll console brackets of sheet metal. The brackets are attached to a sheet-metal fascia and the face of the projecting cornice is covered with decorative sheet metal.”

The Reavis Sheet Metal Cornice Company, begun in Southwest DC in 1891, moved to Second Street in

1897 and the company continued in business until at least 1940. (The last years were under the management of George A. Reavis, Albert’s son). “Reavis was responsible for the metalwork on residential and commercial buildings and his best known work includes the exterior ornamentation of the Carnegie Library and at the Wyoming Apartments.”

Mr. Reavis’s popularity as a metal cornice maker did not lead to popularity with his neighbors. According to an account in the July 24, 1902 issue of the Washington Post, “[c]omplaints from twenty-two of Reavis’s neighbors led to the submittal of a petition to the city commissioners in 1902. The complaint was based on Reavis and his men’s use of the then-vacant lot adjacent to his shop. The Washington Post reported that [s]ometimes it is complained, the noise is almost deafening and continues into the night.” ★

¹ All descriptions and historic information about 721 Second Street, NE, are taken from the documentation on “Capitol Place” prepared by The Louis Berger Group, Inc., for the Louis Dreyfus Property Group in 2008.

Welcome CHRS Supporters

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

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Streetcar Propulsion Alternatives Discussed at Forum

On May 6, a community presentation of streetcar power alternatives was made by the American Public Transportation Association Streetcar Committee. The presentation discusses first overhead wires, then underground power supply, battery-powered streetcars, flywheel-powered, capacitor-powered, and on-board electrical storage/internal combustion engine hybrids. A discussion of what a streetcar system needs to consider before purchase concludes the presentation. The PowerPoint presentation can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/3yaxxgq>.

Huge Project Planned Above Boat House Row

by Shauna Holmes

A proposed project on the Anacostia Waterfront would construct a very large mixed-use development that would include a hotel, offices, and retail and commercial space. The project site is between the freeway and the Anacostia River, immediately east of Maritime Plaza and right above Boat House Row. As proposed, it will contain approximately 815,000 square feet of gross floor area and will be 130 feet tall, with an overall FAR of 6.33. The project would tower over Boat House Row and obstruct views toward the river from the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Developing the project as planned would involve construction within the rights-of-way for Virginia Avenue and M Street, SE, and would span 14th Street, SE, with an enclosed bridge connecting two buildings. Therefore, the project will require formal closing of portions of Virginia Avenue and M and 14th Streets, SE. Furthermore, the city would transfer ownership to the developer—1333 M Street, SE, LLC—of over one-and-one-third acres from the closed streets' right-of-way plus Reservations 129, 130, and 299. The street closings and land transfers are part of a settlement for a legal case involving the DC government and the Cohen Companies, majority owner of 1333 M Street, SE, LLC, to resolve an underlying lawsuit. The settlement also includes a change in zoning and/or approval of a Planned Unit Development (PUD) that would permit mixed uses at the site. If the land transfer, zoning accommodations, and street closures are not accomplished by June 1, 2010, 1333 M Street, SE, LLC can exercise its right to declare the settlement void and resume claim for damages against the District unless the Cohen Companies agree to a later date.

Because the streets slated for closure are within the original L'Enfant city, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the closure was referred to DC's Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB), which acted on the closure at its January 2010 meeting. HPRB did not object to the closure, but adopted a staff recommendation that any encroachment on the L'Enfant views and vistas be completely avoided or minimized to the maximum extent feasible through Historic Preservation Office involvement in the Office of Planning's on-going review of the project.

The National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) voted to support HPRB's recommendation. NCPC also advised DC's City Council that the proposed street closings and associated development would not have a negative impact on the federal interest provided that no development occurs within the L'Enfant streets' rights-of-way and recommended "that the development plan be modified to respect the viewsheds" of the streets. NCPC noted that "the streets in the project area are original L'Enfant Streets, of which title is held by the United States, and further notes that the federal and District governments differ in their positions regarding the authority to transfer title to such streets."

Although the U.S. government owns the streets proposed for closure and transfer, the District government maintains it has a right, under a DC statute, to dispose of portions of streets owned by the federal government. The position of the United States is that Congress did not authorize the City Council to dispose of federal property, including federally owned streets, and that

the Home Rule Act specifically prohibited the Council from disposing of federal property. At this time, we don't know how this issue will play out.

According to NCPC's staff report on the project, the National Park Service has also expressed concern about the viewsheds of 14th Street and Virginia Avenue and would like to see the viewsheds maintained. Another key issue, as the staff report points out, is that "the project is inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital, in particular the Preservation and Historic Features Element." The report cites the following applicable policies from that Element:

"Promote continuity in the historic design framework of the nation's capital by protecting and enhancing the elements, views, and principles of the L'Enfant Plan. Both the federal and the District of Columbia governments should adhere to these principles in any improvements or alterations to the historic framework.

"Protect the integrity, form, and design of the L'Enfant Plan's system of streets and reservations from inappropriate new buildings and physical incursions."

To effect transfer of the three reservations, District of Columbia Bill B18-0572 authorizes the Mayor to dispose of U.S. Reservations 129, 130, and 299 to the developer in fee simple. The bill has been signed by Mayor Fenty and was transmitted to the U.S. Congress for review on April 15. The bill is expected to become DC law by June 8, 2010. Though the developer is referred to in the April 29, 2010, NCPC staff report as "1333 M Street, SE, LLC," this bill designates the recipient of these

three reservations as CASCO Marina Development, LLC.

Another DC Bill (B18-0694) that addresses the closing of the three public streets (Virginia, 14th, and M, SE) was signed by Mayor Fenty on May 19, 2010. This bill would order portions of the streets closed, with title to vest in the developer. It also releases the developer from paying rent for any vault it may construct that would occupy the Virginia Avenue right-of-way, exempts the developer from Section 4 of the First Source Employment Agreement Act of 1984, and excludes the developer from requirements of Section 3 of the DC Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 1984. Section 3 requires construction or rehabilitation of affordable housing in exchange for street closing which results in additional commercial office space. ★

Density and the Form of the City in the 21st Century

In June, Washington's Height Act celebrates its centennial. Many credit the Act with helping to shape one of the world's most unique skylines.

On May 18 when Larry Beasley, former Vancouver planning director and self-described evangelist for urban density, spoke at a National Capitol Planning Commission-sponsored gathering, he shared his views on whether the Act can coexist with the needs of a contemporary city.

Mr. Beasley spoke of the many advantages of mixed density development that is planned with extensive community involvement and sensitive to the physical place and community needs. He stressed that he thought four-story townhouse developments could coexist with and humanize very high residence/office buildings and that ground-level shopping and parks could make this type of high-density community desirable for residents.

Having said that, he compared Washington to Paris and Vienna, capital cities also built with requirements for low building heights. He said that the low heights of Washington buildings offer the virtue of human-scale architecture. He praised the preservation of historic buildings because "...their very caprice makes us happier, sometimes when we least expect it, but most need it."

Mr. Beasley's conclusion: "...those height limits may be the single most powerful thing that has made this city so amazingly fulfilling," and he concluded that Washington's height limits help make it "...so comfortable, so livable, so humane at its current scale."

Transcript at: www.ncpc.gov/DocumentDepot/Presentations/Larry_Beasley_Height_Act_Address_May182010_.pdf

11th Street Bridges, *continued from page 6*

on neighborhoods on both sides of the river. For example, DDoT has already prepared for these meetings additional drawings that provide better perspectives as to how the completed bridges will look. Also, as a result of the meetings so far, DDoT has agreed to:

- Provide images showing how the bridges and approaches will appear to pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers;
- Try to design bridge components for optimal access to parkland; and
- Study the feasibility of removing the ugly 13th Street stub (the

former bridge access ramp in Anacostia) that will be left east of the river after the old bridges are demolished.

The next meeting of the Community Communications Committee is scheduled for June 14.

Post-construction communication

To further facilitate community communications, DDoT will attend a CHRS membership meeting within nine to twelve months after bridge construction is complete. This will provide an opportunity, after the new bridges have been in use for a

while, for DDoT to answer questions and hear community concerns about issues arising from increased use of the expanded bridges and flyovers. Such concerns, resulting from tens of thousands more vehicles per day traversing the Hill each day, may include noise, higher traffic volume, air quality, congestion, and likely increased traffic on narrow residential Capitol Hill streets due to thousands more vehicles infiltrating neighborhood streets from exits onto M and 11th Streets, SE.

For questions, please contact CHRS at 543-0425 or send an email to: caphrs@aol.com. ★



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

Mark Your Calendar!

JUNE

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

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

13 Sunday, 2–4:30 pm
Old Naval Hospital ground-breaking for the new Hill Center. Access through the E Street entrance between 9th and 10th Streets, SE.

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 7:00 pm
CHRS Community Forum, St. Peter's Church, 2nd & C Streets, SE, lower level. Speaker: Stephen T. Ayers, Architect of the Capitol. Reception at 7:00 pm; remarks at 7:30 pm. The event is open to the public, and all are encouraged to attend.

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

JULY

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

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

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

Saturdays, May 1–October 30
9 am–noon (rain or shine)
H Street NE Freshfarm Market,
625 H Street, NE (across from H Street
Self Storage). Fresh fruits and vegetables,
pasture-raised meats, local dairy, breads
and baked goods, cut flowers and more.
www.freshfarmmarkets.org