



NEWS

www.chrs.org

June 2014

2014 House and Garden Tour a Great Success

By Paul Cromwell

The 57th Annual House and Garden Tour has come and gone thanks in large part to a tremendous amount of assistance from countless Hill residents. By mid-summer we will already be at work on the 58th annual Tour, scheduled for May 9 and 10, 2015. We hope that our Members will mark their calendars and be prepared not only to go on the Tour but also to lend some of their much-needed and much-appreciated assistance leading up to and including Tour weekend.

A House and Garden Tour cannot, of course, exist without owners willing to showcase their properties in support of the Society. They are truly the backbone of the Tour and we are very thankful to the 13 who participated this year.

There is a large supporting cast of those whose work precedes and supports Tour weekend. Susan Young did multiple chores from helping with house selection to chairing the home owners reception; Janet Quigley did publicity and, with Michelle Carroll, advertising; Bruce Brennan provided logistical support (including those booties!); Judy May provided photographs for the brochure; Bill Peterson offered house research; Lisa Dale Jones coordinated the Refreshment Break on Sunday as well as writing House descriptions for the brochure along

with Mike Canning, Lynne Church, Camas Goble, Roberta Gutman, Penelope Hughes, Susan Young and Susan G. Williams. The Hardiman family (Mike, May, Dahlia and Maan) combined to do a lot of work on Tour weekend, as did Ronica (Ronnie) Lu. Our new CHRS Office Manager, Carl Spier, worked with our retiring manager, Gloria Junge, to undertake many tasks leading up to and during the Tour. Thank you, all.

There are many more folks who supported the Tour in all its stages of planning and during Tour weekend itself. They are all listed in the Tour brochure, which is online at www.chrs.org. We could not have a Tour without House Captains, nine of whom are real estate agents (page 31 of the brochure). The other four included Lynne Church, who captained her own garden; Ann Grace, who rallied a docent crew from Capitol Hill Village; Elizabeth Nelson, who mobilizes a great docent crew each year; and Byron Sandaford, whose docents were staff from the William Penn House.

There were eight ticket outlets (page 6), led in ticket volume once again by Hill's Kitchen. The Hill Center sold tickets and also served as a pick up location for Paypal tickets.



IMAGE COURTESY JUDITH V. MAY

628 East Capitol Street, NE.

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President's Column: Farewell

By Janet Quigley

It's always nice to go out on a high note, and two fortunate events give me just that opportunity this month as my term comes to an end.

First, DDOT has revised its policy on permits for improving triangle parks, mostly resolving confusion that pitted well-meaning neighbors against each other in a neighborhood near Lincoln Park last fall. They clarified that triangle parks must be open and accessible to the public and, as CHRS requested in September, will require ANC review of permit applications; will create an "Adopt-a-Park" program similar to that of the Department of Parks and Recreation; and will review all Reservations for possible transfer to DPR.

Second, the historic stained-glass windows have been reinstalled at the Epworth Church (700 A Street, NE), built in 1892. When the windows were removed by new owners of the church in January 2012, vigilant neighbors alerted the DC Historic Preservation Office, which responded immediately. CHRS, the nearby Capitol Hill Coalition for Sensible Development (CHCSD) and the DC Preservation League all weighed in to save the windows. An official request by the church to the Historic Preservation Review Board to remove the windows was denied in March 2012 and an appeal to the Mayor's Agent was rebuffed in June 2013. Since then the windows have been undergoing repair and restoration. CHCSD has been closely monitoring the proceedings and leader Bobbi Kregel happily reports that the windows are finally back. The process took 28 months in all: preservationists are in it for the long haul.

CHRS has had other "wins" since I came aboard. We helped to save an 1898 carriage house at 1310

East Capitol Street from razing; it was being demolished by neglect. We helped with the successful landmark designation for Spingarn High School and we held the line on the city's height limit against a dramatic liberalization proposed by the Office of Planning. Congress ultimately made a minor amendment to raise the limit on penthouses by 18 inches, so it could be called a mixed decision. The new 11th Street Bridges opened without disruption, the culmination of years of successful stakeholder coordination.

A lot of what we do is invisible to any but the wonkiest of observers. Much of advocacy is a steady trudge through administrative proceedings: calling on decision-makers, testifying at annual oversight hearings and agency hearings on individual historic preservation and zoning cases, participating in marathon periodic reviews of regulations that affect our daily lives. Results can take months or years and we don't win 'em all. But with the help of our members, we keep fighting the good fight and celebrate our many victories.

CHRS' activities in the community have been rewarding. More than 1,600 visitors attended this year's House and Garden Tour. We have made \$67,000 in historic home improvement grants to homeowners in the Swampoodle neighborhood. Our walking tours of Swampoodle and Hill East are always full. The Preservation Café on alleys and the Membership Forum on permits were standing room only. These are proof of an engaged, healthy community.

The Capitol Hill community is resilient because of its institutions and the people who make them up. It has been a pleasure working with the Hill Center, Eastern Market, Capitol

Hill Village, the Overbeck Project, the Capitol Hill Community Foundation, the Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, Capital Community News as well as area schools, libraries, churches and businesses. These groups have their fingers on the pulse of our community and work constantly to improve it. We are lucky to have them.

It has been a privilege to work with the knowledgeable and tireless CHRS board members, both present and past. They are the backbone of the organization and the reason for its success. Incoming President Lisa Dale Jones brings new skills, fresh ideas and a reporter's eye to the organization. You can look forward to great things with her leadership.

"Capitol Hill is a treasure and we are giving it away one jewel at a time," says my friend and ANC Commissioner Scott Price. Our open spaces, historic structures and residential quality of life are challenged daily. The promised benefits of Planned Unit Developments have not always delivered. Planners sometimes use our neighborhoods for their experiments. Public school buildings are being sold even as more families move into the District. I sometimes wonder if there is anything the city government would not sell off if given the chance. This is why it is so important for each of us to stand up for and protect this remarkable place that we call home.

As always, it is the members who make the organization. CHRS members, I thank you for your support of CHRS and your dedication to the Capitol Hill residential community. You make the difference! ☆

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To reach any of the above, please contact the Society offices at (202) 543-0425 or via e-mail: CapHRS@aol.com.

www.CHRS.org

Celebrating nearly 60 years helping to preserve and protect Capitol Hill's residential character, the Society is 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.

New DDOT Policy on Triangle Parks

by Beth Purcell

As reported in the *News* in 2013, the DC Department of Transportation (DDOT) granted a permit to install plantings in a public triangle park on Capitol Hill without prior notice to the appropriate ANC or to the community. In addition, in a letter to ANC 6A dated October 25, 2013, DDOT stated that the triangle park was not a public park, but instead was "parking," commonly understood to mean the land between the rear edge of the sidewalk and the building line (not as a place to leave vehicles).

DDOT's Departmental Order No. 1-2014, issued April 30, 2014, revises its official position on parking and public parks. Order No. 1-2014 draws a distinction between parking and public parks. Section C, entitled "Permit Applications for Private Improvements to Triangle and Pocket Parks," states that DDOT shall preserve triangle

parks and public parks as "publicly accessible neighborhood amenities." An application for a permit to improve a park must satisfy several requirements, including preserving public access to the park, promoting the public use and enjoyment of the park, and avoiding changing the real or implied function of the park as public open space. All applications should be sent to the applicable ANC, whose recommendations shall be given great weight.

Departmental Order No. 1-2014 is effective April 30, 2014. In theory, the position in the order can be changed without notice in a subsequent order, unlike regulations, which can only be issued or amended after notice, comment and a public hearing.

To read DDOT's October 25, 2013 letter and Departmental Order No. 1-2014 (April 30, 2014), visit: www.chrs.org/category/issues/public-space. ★

Understanding Construction in the Capitol Hill Historic District

Summer construction season is here and residents should be aware that certain kinds of work in the Capitol Hill Historic District may be in violation of the DC Historic Preservation Act. Following are some basic resources on how to report violations and different kinds of construction that may require separate approvals from the DC Historic Preservation Office (HPO), and the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB). All information is also available on the DC Office of Planning web site at www.planning.dc.gov.

Reporting Illegal Work

Anyone may report illegal construction on a property in an Historic District. You may report illegal work anonymously but if the work is completed, your testimony may be the only way to bring a case to enforcement.

Identifying Illegal Construction

To see what types of work on buildings in the Capitol Hill Historic

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District require advance approval, please see box on this page.

Once the project is approved to begin construction, a building permit must be posted on the property that is visible from public space and lists the permitted work (i.e. "Interior Work Only" or "Wood Window replacements to match original"). If you do not see a permit or if the work appears to violate the terms of a posted permit, you may request an inspection as described below. If you are unsure what the permit allows, please call the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA), Records Management Division, at (202) 442-4480.

Request an Inspection

To report a violation, send an email to historic.preservation@dc.gov or call the Historic Preservation Office at (202) 442-8800. We also suggest that you contact the Historic Preservation Specialist for the Capitol Hill Historic District: Frances M. McMillen, frances.mcmillen@dc.gov, or 202-442-8839.

When reporting a violation, please provide the following information:

- The address of the violation
- Whether the work is in progress or has been completed
- A brief description of the work being done or completed
- If possible, the contractor's name, any license plate numbers of the vehicles on site performing the work and make/model of the vehicle.
- To identify the historic preservation inspector assigned to a specific district, select the related publication – Historic District Inspection Assignments. ★

Work on Buildings Requiring DCHPO Full Staff Review

HPO response/ approval typically within five business days of filing. Includes:

- Front alterations; side alterations when prominent from a street
- Window replacement, consistent with HPRB standards
- Door replacement
- Porch reconstruction, replacement of elements (not including enclosure)
- Work in front yards and side yards when prominent from a street
- New steps, walks and paved areas
- Trellises and landscape structures
- Major regrading and alteration of topography; retaining walls over 12 inches high
- New areaways or basement stairs, consistent with HPRB design standards
- Masonry repointing and replacement requiring HPO site visit or review of test patch
- Roof decks, penthouses, solar panels and other roof alterations requiring HPO site visit and/ or mock-up and determined not visible from street views
- Minor additions (less than 500 square feet in size) at rear or side of property if not prominently visible from the street
- Rear decks and balconies extending above the first floor
- New one-story garages along an alley or not prominently visible from a street
- Signs, awnings, canopies and marquees, consistent with HPRB standards
- Projects involving substantial scopes of rehabilitation work, specification or narratives requiring review

Major Work Requiring HPRB Review

Review by HPRB typically within 30-60 days of filing. Includes:

- Demolition of landmarks or contributing buildings in historic districts, substantial or in their entirety, as defined in DCMR 10-C, Section 305
- New buildings
- Front and side additions, including new porches (other than reconstruction of missing original porches) and porch enclosures
- Front alterations (e.g. new dormers, entrances and entrance features)
- Substantial rear additions
- Roof additions or decks visible from a street
- New two-story garages; garages prominently visible from a street
- New curb cuts, driveways and parking pads in front or side yards
- Significant alteration of important architectural features
- Window or door openings on front facades
- Removal of special windows, distinctive materials and decorative architectural features
- Subdivisions involving landmarks, significant changes in lot boundaries, or substantial combination/ division of lots
- Work that exceeds HPO delegated authority or determined by HPO to be inconsistent with HPRB standards and practices

May Preservation Café: Alley Buildings of Capitol Hill

By Greg Holeyman, AIA, LEED AP

Kim Prothro Williams, an Architectural historian with the DC Historic Preservation Office (HPO), was the May Preservation Café speaker. Ms. Williams' duties at HPO include conducting research on historic properties, preparing nominations for properties listed in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites to be added to the National Register of Historic Places and writing and editing historic district brochures.

Ms. Williams' presentation focused on her recent survey work of alleys in the Capitol Hill Historic District. Part of a city-wide Alley Buildings Survey, the goal of the project is to provide an inventory of historic alleys and their structures and to record basic information about them (i.e. identify alleyway configurations, paving materials, building construction types). Other goals of the survey are to research and develop a better context for understanding and evaluating alleys and their buildings as well as to make recommendations for future preservation action.

Ms. Williams began the presentation with a brief history of alleys and alley structures. In the 1850s, many of the city's deep lots became subdivided, creating smaller lots fronting the alleyways. This phenomenon occurred as the city's population was increasing and land values were rising, making alley-facing lots appealing both to property owners who could realize income from lot rentals and to the city's poorest residents who could not afford the rents of the row houses lining the public streets.

The first alley dwellings were of frame construction with no indoor plumbing or heat, Ms. Williams described. Shared water pumps, outhouses and lack of a sewerage

system contributed to unhealthful and insanitary conditions that attracted the attention of housing and social reformers.

Over the course of her research, Ms. Williams found that hundreds of alley dwellings were demolished in the early 1870s when the city's first Board of Health was established to condemn alley dwellings that were deemed unfit for human habitation. In 1880, the Board of Health was abolished and condemnation proceedings were halted. With no legal restrictions imposed, the construction of alley dwellings boomed over the next 10 years. Thousands of dwellings—this time in brick—were built in the city's alleys. Ms. Williams explained that many of today's remaining alley structures were built between this time and 1892, when a ban on the construction of new alley dwellings came into effect. The creation of the Alley Dwelling Authority in 1934, established to eliminate all alley dwellings and to encourage economic redevelopment of the squares, resulted in the unfortunate removal of many alley structures.

The Historic Alley Buildings Survey spearheaded by Ms. Williams has identified a variety of building types, including those from the horse-drawn and automobile eras. Existing structures were identified as either dwellings, warehouses, garages (private and public), sheds or stables (public and private).

Ms. Williams found a 1912 house inventory that determined that there were 3,337 alley

dwellings in the city's inhabited alleys (275 squares). According to Ms. Williams' survey to-date, 108 alley dwellings remain. Fifty-five of the alley dwellings identified in the 1912 inventory survive on Capitol Hill. Two alleys—today known as Terrace Court and Gessford Court—retain all of the original brick alley dwellings identified in the 1912 inventory.

The current survey identified 335 surviving stables; 97 of these are located on Capitol Hill, the oldest of which date to the early-to-mid 1880s. The majority of the garages surveyed date from the 1920s and 1930s. Thus far, the survey has identified eight rows of garages on Capitol Hill. One of the oldest garages found within the District is the garage at 622 (Rear) A Street, NE. It was built in 1902 and is identified as a "Locomobile Shed" on the D.C. Permit to Build. The garage was most likely used to store a small steam car.

Much of the information presented was researched and authored by Ms. Williams, who can be reached at kim.williams@dc.gov. The DC Historic Alley Buildings Survey can be found online through the HPO website, or through the CHRS website at www.chrs.org/category/chrs-activities/preservation-cafes. ★



Square 867 alley buildings.

IMAGE COURTESY KIM WILLIAMS

The CHRS Board provided most of the support for ticket sales at Eastern Market. Thirty-three organizations purchased ads in the brochure. We were also generously supported by 36 financial donors (also on page 6), along with the family of Dr. Robert L. Lester who were Silver Contributors but were inadvertently not included in the brochure. We owe the fantastic design, layout and production of the brochure itself to 202 Design. Finally, we are especially grateful to the many members, neighbors and friends who attended the Tour. Thank you for your support and we hope to see everyone on the 58th annual tour in 2015. ★

Notes from the 2014 Capitol Hill House and Garden Tour

Just couldn't get enough of the fantastic houses and gardens on this year's tour? Although the brochure contains a thorough description of each stop on the Tour, we are limited to about 600 words per house. Often, we have additional information we'd like to share. Bill Peterson has created a working list of previous residents of Tour homes researched through various web resources, including historic issues of the Washington Star and the Washington Post. These notes are available on the web at: <https://www.evernote.com/pub/wsp/housetour2014> (click on "view notebook" without joining Evernote, place the cursor on a house address and click).

If you visit the site you will learn more about several of the residents of **415 Independence Avenue, SE**, one of whom was murdered in the front hall in 1941. Also learn more about the mysterious Lizzie Wilson and her husband, Robert Wilson, who was a barber at the Ebbitt House. When he died in 1910 the Mayor of Washington, William P. Magruder, served as a pallbearer.

The house at **619 Constitution Avenue, NE** was constructed in 1893 by William M. George, where he lived until he died at age 93 in 1941. His obituary notes that he attended the laying of the cornerstone of the Washington Monument. It also observes that he was the father of Judge Albert B. George, who was the first African American to be elected to a judgeship in a court of record in Illinois.

A congressman who lived at **628 East Capitol Street, NE** (see cover photo) in the early twentieth century was well known for saying, "No man is old as long as he keeps the cradle filled." He named one of his sons in honor of President Grover Cleveland, only to have a falling out with the President in later years.

We are always on the lookout for volunteers for specific jobs on the House Tour staff. I was very pleased when the CHRS office received an e-mail from a woman named Tami, who offered to assist with publicity. She included a resume listing positions that she had held in the field, mostly on the West Coast. I immediately called and, after listening to an enthusiastic automated response, I left a message saying that I would contact her at 9 the next morning. When I called back a sleepy voice replied, "Why are you calling me at 6 am?" I now know that Seattle also has a Capitol Hill House Tour!

Finally, one of our helpful House Captains was vigilant to a fault. Before the Tour opened at noon on Sunday she noted three people entering by the rear gate. As was appropriate she admonished them to wait until 12 pm and then enter by the front door. As occasionally happens, our House Captain had met only one of the two owners before the start of the tour. She quickly found that she had challenged the owner and his parents!

Swarming Bees? Yes, Please!

By Toni Burnham

In May 2013, CHRS published a newsletter article about beekeeping on Capitol Hill. This May, we're here to check back in on an historic resource that is seriously threatened on Capitol Hill: the honeybee population. Now that it is finally warm, DC beekeepers believe that survivor bees in the wild are likely to build up quickly and swarm. This is exactly what the beekeepers want to see!

Because of losses nationwide, many new, trained beekeepers are having a hard time getting bees, and these are probably the best possible bees they could get. This is where we need to enlist the help of our neighbors. We could really use your help if you see a swarm of bees.

If you see a swarm of bees, or even think you might, please call (202) 255-4318 or send an e-mail to dcbees@dcbeekeepers.org and we can get an experienced beekeeper over there as quickly as possible to help you out. Insecticides truly will not take care of your situation, but we can. The trained bee-keepers will catch the bees and give them a place to live and thrive.

The news on bee health has really not changed since last year. Beekeepers nationwide are fighting climate, pesticides, pests, habitat loss, pollution and a variety of the same environmental issues that challenge human health, too. DC turns out to be a place where many people make

pro-pollinator, pro-environment choices, which has the potential to change the trajectory of this epidemic.

Please remember: honeybees are under extreme threat. This year's swarms represent the unique populations that have not only figured out how to survive pests, pesticides and climate change, but to thrive. The active beekeeper can grab those bees, give them safe homes somewhere else, and help ensure a healthier future where honeybees can continue to make our food supply and green spaces grow. It is a kind of compliment to DC that we have a place where honeybees and people can collaborate so well. ★

Zoning Briefs

The CHRS Zoning Committee considered six cases at the May 8 meeting. Four of the cases involved a request for a special exception to permit an addition to a house that was already nonconforming. Four of the cases involved requests for special exceptions to permit additions to houses that were already nonconforming. In three of these cases—504 12th Street, NE, 630 A Street, SE and 103 4th Street, SE—a rear addition was proposed; the committee unanimously approved the application in each of these instances.

The fourth case, 1402 E Street, SE, concerned a third floor addition or “pop-up.” Even though this property is outside the Historic District, the Zoning Regulations still require that the addition “does not substantially visually intrude upon the character,

scale and pattern of housing along the street frontage.” The addition was set back only few feet back from the front of the house and included two sets of French doors that did not match the window spacing on the floors below. For these reasons the committee voted to oppose the application.

The last two cases involved applications for a special exception to operate pizza fast food restaurants at both 1400 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE and 405 8th Street, SE. The committee voted to oppose these applications because the trash and vermin controls proffered were not sufficient.

The next meeting will be held on June 12 at 7:30 pm. One of the cases to be considered is the Planned Unit Development (PUD) application for 1333 M Street, SE. ★

Thank You, CHRS Supporters

We thank the following new members, patrons and sponsors.

NEW MEMBERS

Desiree James
Christine Mullins
Michael Hamilton
Pat Bailey
Naomi Griffith
Abraham Clayman
Jennifer Hauser

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Craig Dean & Donna Murasky

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

Mark Your Calendar!

JUNE

2 Monday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Historic Preservation Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details: Beth Purcell, 544-0178.

4 Wednesday, 6:45 pm
Summer Membership Meeting and Forum. Quarterly membership meeting begins at 6:45; speaker at 7 pm. Guest speaker Ellen McCarthy, Director of DC Office of Planning. OP Outlook on Development, Zoning Regulation Rewrite, Conservation Districts, Reservation 13, CSX, soccer stadium and more. The Hill Center, 921 Pennsylvania Avenue SE, first floor. Details: Janet Quigley, 543-0425.

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

17 Tuesday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second floor. Details: Janet Quigley, 543-0425.

JULY

4 Thursday, 9 am
Barracks Row 4th of July Parade. Join CHRS in the Capitol Hill July 4th parade. Meet under the freeway overpass on 8th Street, SE. Details: Elizabeth Nelson, 543-3512.

7 Monday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Historic Preservation Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details: Beth Purcell, 544-0178.

15 Tuesday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second floor. Details: Janet Quigley, 543-0425.

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