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November 2014

## October Preservation Café: An Evening of Archaeology

By Greg Holeyman, AIA, LEED AP

Ruth Troccoli, Chief Archaeologist of the District of Columbia since 2007, presented the results of her office’s archaeological “Investigations During the Freeway Modification” projects at Barney Circle for our October Preservation Café. Various objects were also on display during the presentation. Original artifact fragments as well as reconstructed replicas of bowls were some of the objects available for viewing.

The Barney Circle Freeway Modification Project was part of a multi-year highway development project designed to link major roadways across the Anacostia River in Washington, DC. Archaeological surveys of the proposed development corridor began in 1984. Evaluation studies of six archaeological sites found in the survey were conducted in 1989. Four of the sites were recommended eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places and data recovery excavations were conducted in 1994.

Ms. Troccoli described how the archaeological sites lay on opposite banks of the Anacostia River. The river is wide and slow moving, a perfect combination for early settlement. The river is part of the upper end of the great Chesapeake Bay estuary and is influenced by tides. The banks of the Anacostia River have changed over the years from urban development. Silting from agricultural run-off that began with the clearing of forests for tobacco farming closed the deepwater port of Bladensburg by the early 19th century. In the early 20th century the US Army Corps of Engineers dredged the channel of the river. They used much of the spoil to reclaim low-lying, marshy ground along the edges of the stream, as well as creating what is today Kingman Island.

Due to all this development, the archaeological sites on both sides of the river lay under substantial amounts of fill dirt. According to Ms. Troccoli, the fill ranged from as little

as 2 feet thick to as much as 15 feet. Heavy equipment was needed to assist in removing the fill to expose the sensitive archaeological sites below.

Once excavated, a dark occupation layer became visible and is distinct from the disturbed layers above it: Ms. Troccoli explained that the overlaying layers are lighter in color due to occupation, plowing, and construction over time. Archaeological evidence from the occupation layer included Late Archaic/Early Woodland artifacts, such as Holmes points and groups of steatite vessel sherds (including rim,

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### Save the Date: CHRS Turns 60!

Mark your calendar for the evening of January 28, 2015 when we celebrate CHRS’s 60th birthday. It’s an event you won’t want to miss!

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# President's Column: Expansion of the Historic District?

By Lisa Dale Jones

Several areas of Capitol Hill that are not currently part of the historic district now have the opportunity either to become part of the existing Capitol Hill Historic District, or become historic districts of their own.

While CHRS understands that it's up to each neighborhood to apply for that status and then up to the District's Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) to grant it, we applaud the steps that are being taken and are helping to provide the necessary documentation to allow those neighborhoods to make their case, if they so wish.

The areas in question range from just east of Union Station (a four-block area of Swampoodle) to a larger arc of Capitol Hill around the northern and eastern side of the existing Historic District, known as Beyond the Boundaries.

Over the last seven years, CHRS has worked with the architectural historians at EHT Traceries to document the built history of these areas. As a result, homeowners can find information on their individual homes for personal interest or remodeling projects, people can find historic information to support

activities such as walking tours and residents now have the information necessary to apply for an historic district designation.

Some people wonder why a neighborhood would want to become an historic district. While the most obvious—or at least most visible—reason might be to combat the recent proliferation of unsightly “pops-ups,” there are other reasons. Because of the extra layer of official permissions necessary for construction in an historic district, neighbors have more input into what others on their block are doing—including decisions on demolishing buildings and large developments that could completely alter the character of the neighborhood.

In order to obtain historic district status an area must have historic significance and that's what the studies by EHT Traceries set out to determine.

The Beyond the Boundaries area has a fascinating architectural history. It developed in the early 20th century as suburbanization moved eastward on Capitol Hill. Several favorable

developments opened up this area at this time: the streetcar was extended along Pennsylvania Avenue to Barney Circle and the unhealthy Anacostia flats were cleaned up. Commercial development grew along H Street, NE and Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. These factors yielded a variety of residential, religious and commercial buildings. Developers built hundreds of brick porch-front rowhouses with Craftsman features to attract middle-class buyers. Harry Wardman built rowhouses throughout the entire square opposite the Potomac Avenue Metro Station. The famous African-American architect, John A. Lankford, designed the church at 1401 Independence Avenue, SE in 1923. There are also quirky triangle buildings like Albert's Liquors at 328 Kentucky Avenue, SE, constructed to meet a demand for commercial buildings on triangle lots resulting from the L'Enfant Plan.

The history of Swampoodle is even more colorful. In the mid 1800s the low-lying land where the Tiber and Goose Creeks came together was not a particularly desirable



Wardman Rowhouses at 701-703 14th Street, SE.

IMAGE COURTESY BETH PURCELL



Albert's Liquors, 328 Kentucky Avenue, SE.

IMAGE COURTESY BETH PURCELL

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### ABOUT CHRS

Capitol Hill is a special place. We promote, preserve, and enhance the character of our historic neighborhoods.

Since its founding in 1954, CHRS has worked continuously to make Capitol Hill the desirable location it has now become. Due to CHRS's efforts, Capitol Hill won designation as a historic district in 1976. Today, that legacy of standing up for the community continues with our work in planning, zoning, historic preservation, and public safety.

CHRS is a volunteer organization, made up of Hill residents who love their historic neighborhoods and want to ensure that the unique character of the Hill is around for future generations. Come join us!

To learn more or join, please visit:  
[www.CHRS.org](http://www.CHRS.org)

# Reserve Now for Overbeck Lecture: Why DC Has No Vote in Congress

By John Franzen

**A**mong all the capital cities of all the democracies in the world, only Washington, DC has no voting representation in its national legislature. How did this happen? And why, after two centuries of trying to rectify the problem, do citizens here still endure taxation without representation?

Local historian and political activist Nelson Rimensnyder will address these questions at an illustrated Overbeck History Lecture on Monday, November 17 at the Naval Lodge Hall.

Rimensnyder is a longtime student of DC history and champion of DC home rule. During his career at the Library of Congress (1970–1975) and then as director of research for the House Committee on the District of Columbia (1975–1992), he compiled what he describes as “the only existing comprehensive archive on the history of the complex DC-Federal relationship.” He has been intensively involved in local

historic preservation efforts and has served on the boards of the Historical Society of Washington, DC and the Association of the Oldest Inhabitants of the District of Columbia, in addition to running as a candidate for DC public office.

The lecture will be held at 7:30 pm on November 17 at the Naval Lodge Hall, 330 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE (please note this event is scheduled for a MONDAY, not a Tuesday as usual). As always, admission is free but a reservation is required due to limited seating. To reserve, or to request inclusion on the Overbeck notification list, please contact [OverbeckLecture@CapitolHillHistory.org](mailto:OverbeckLecture@CapitolHillHistory.org).

The Overbeck Lecture Series is presented by the all-volunteer Ruth Ann Overbeck Capitol Hill History Project, which collects oral histories from longtime neighborhood residents. Both are initiatives of the Capitol Hill Community Foundation. ★



IMAGE COURTESY GREG HOLEYMAN

## Meet New At-Large Board Member Greg Holeyman

Greg Holeyman (AIA, LEED AP) recently joined the Board as an at-large member, completing the term of Ben Klay who resigned recently. Greg is the founder and owner of Barnstar Architects, a Capitol Hill-based design firm specializing

in residential renovations. After graduating from the University of California—Berkeley, Greg moved to Washington, DC to work for various local architecture firms. Greg completed his Masters of Architecture at the Catholic University of America, specializing in historic preservation and sustainable design, before starting his own firm in hopes of working on smaller scale residential projects. Greg has been a resident of Capitol Hill since 2004 and has helped organize the Preservation Cafés since 2013.

# Historic Preservation Briefs

by Beth Purcell

The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) considered the following cases on October 23, 2014. HPRB is responsible for determining if proposed changes to a building are consistent with the DC Preservation Act. A “concept review” is a preliminary determination of a building owner’s plan to alter the building and if the concept is approved, the owner will return to the HPRB for a final review. In these reports, “staff” refers to the staff of the Historic Preservation Office (HPO), which serves as the staff of the HPRB.

**429 12th Street SE rear (Walker Court),** HPA 14-624, concept/second-floor addition to one-story garage. This garage is a simple utilitarian building in an alley with several other comparable structures. The garage covers approximately 100% of the lot and is in deteriorated condition. The applicant proposes to add a second story and roof deck over the entire first story to the garage, preserving as much of the garage’s structure as much as possible. The HPRB, while approving the concept, decided that

the second floor and roof deck are too large and should be scaled back in size, with simpler details more suitable to a utilitarian building.

**530 8th Street SE,** HPA 14-707, concept/side addition and roof deck. The applicant proposes a new side addition to this detached commercial building and a roof deck, accessed by two stairways as required by the occupancy rules in the building code. The building is adjacent to a vacant lot. A side court will be partially preserved by a setback in front. Because roof decks must not be visible from public space, the applicant should consider reducing the size of the roof deck and no awning or roof structure may be built on the roof.

**518 6th Street SE,** HPA 14-722, concept/raze garage and construct a shed. Although the brick garage is in good condition and was built between 1928-1938 during the period of significance for the Capitol Hill historic district, the HPRB approved demolishing the garage, to be replaced by a covered parking

area and garden shed. In July 2014, HPRB had approved a concept for an addition to the house at this address (HPA 14-722).

The following cases, which CHRS also reviewed, appeared on the HPRB consent calendar:

- **1334 A Street SE,** HPA 14-457, concept/rear addition
- **1300 South Carolina Avenue SE,** HPA 14-560, concept/rear addition
- **438 New Jersey Avenue SE,** HPA 14-663, concept/rear addition

**1229 E Street, SE,** HPA-14 435 (shotgun house). As reported in the CHRS newsletter, the HPRB denied the raze permit for this building because it can be salvaged. The DC Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) is now seeking a contractor to stabilize the building. CHRS has reached out to other preservation organizations seeking referrals for contractors to contact DCRA about this work. ★

## January 28, 2015 is CHRS’s 60th Birthday! (And we want your help.)

Are you a long-time CHRS member? Do you know someone who is? We’re looking for people who took part in CHRS activities in the early decades of the organization. At our members’ meeting in January we’ll celebrate with birthday cake and we’ll hear from some of these long-time members about how CHRS helped make Capitol Hill the wonderful, historic community it is today. (To read the very first meeting minutes, go here: <http://bit.ly/chrs1955>.)

If you’d like to share a story with us—either for the members’ meeting or for our archives and website—please contact the CHRS office. We can be reached by e-mail at [CapHRS@aol.com](mailto:CapHRS@aol.com) or by phone at (202) 543-0425. We look forward to hearing from you!

## Keep Up with CHRS on Social Media



On Facebook, find us at:  
[www.facebook.com/CapHRS](http://www.facebook.com/CapHRS).



On Twitter, follow us at:  
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We hope you’ll “Like” and “Follow” us!

# History Beyond the Boundaries

By Beth Purcell

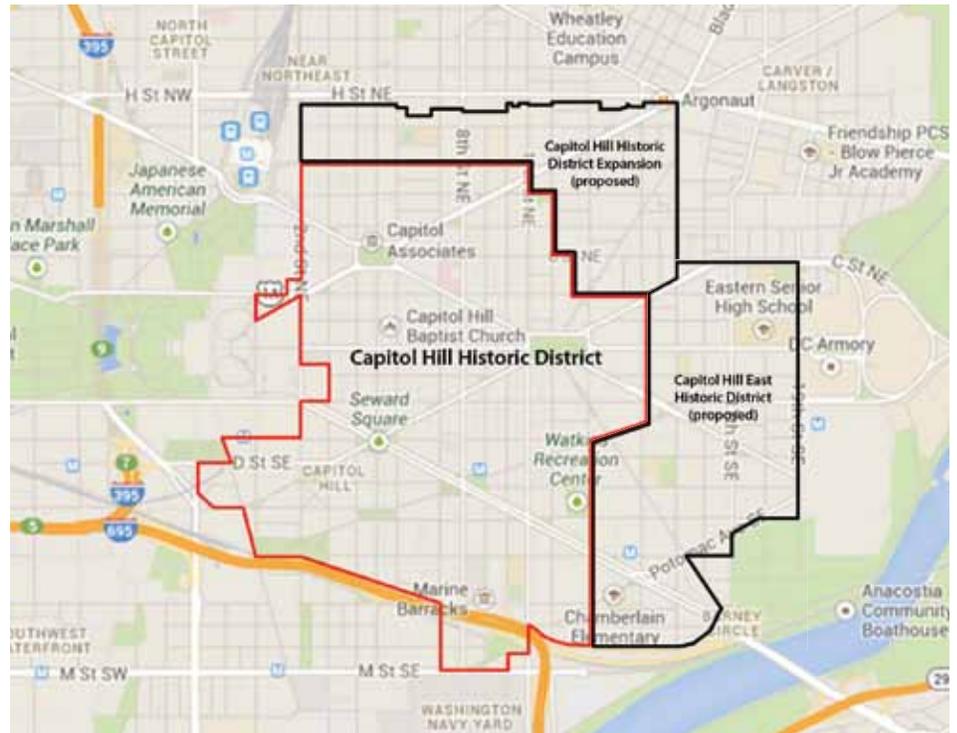
CHRS has been working on a two-phase project to study the history, buildings and people on Capitol Hill beyond the boundaries of the Capitol Hill Historic District. As shown on the map, the Beyond the Boundaries area is bordered on the west by the Capitol Hill Historic District (generally 12th and 13th Streets, NE and SE), H Street, NE on the north, 19th Street, NE and SE on the east and the Anacostia River on the east and south. The area includes Hill East and Rosedale.

The first stage was to survey all 6,402 buildings in the 105-squares beyond the boundaries. The architectural historians at EHT Traceries, with the help of volunteers, described the history (owner, builder, architect, year of construction) for each building along with a photograph. If your house is in the Beyond the Boundaries area, you can research your house on the CHRS website. On [www.chrs.org](http://www.chrs.org), navigate to the Beyond the Boundaries map at [chrs.org/history-and-preservation/beyond-the-boundaries-map/](http://chrs.org/history-and-preservation/beyond-the-boundaries-map/).

Find the square where your house is located. The map shows streets and squares, so it should be easy to find your square.

After you find your square, click on the square on the list of squares to the right of the map. Information on your square will open up; then navigate to your lot.

The second phase, building on this survey, is to complete a study of the history of Beyond the Boundaries, including early geography and land conditions, early landowners, the federal period, the Civil War, Shepherd's Board of Public Works, impediments to development and their solution and the World Wars and afterwards. The architectural



Map of current and proposed historic district boundaries.

historians have completed this study and will be presenting their findings at several public meetings in November 2014. Many people have asked whether the Capitol Hill Historic District should be expanded, or whether a new historic district be created. The historians have made recommendations, which they will also present. ★

## Beyond the Boundaries Public Meetings

**ANC 6A area:** Wednesday, November 5, 6:45–8:30 pm  
Maury Elementary School, 13th Street and Constitution Avenue, NE

**ANC 6B area:** Monday, November 17, 6:45–8:30 pm  
Hill Center, 921 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE

**ANC 6C area:** Tuesday, November 18, 7–9 pm  
Northeast Library, 330 7th Street, NE

**Rosedale Community:** To be scheduled

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# Two Trees for \$100—From Casey Trees and Pepco

By Lisa Dale Jones

It's a great deal—if you're a Pepco Customer and you live in the District, you can get two trees for your property for \$50 each.

That was just one of the interesting tidbits about the District's trees that was shared at the September CHRS membership meeting by Marty O'Brien, COO of Casey Trees. Casey Trees will come to your property, evaluate what trees would work best there and plant them for you. And you don't even need overhead Pepco wires to be eligible! Visit this website for more information: <http://bit.ly/CasPep>.

After a meet-and-greet for members and a brief business meeting during which the new fiscal year budget was approved, I interviewed Mr. O'Brien about Casey Trees' mission and what their goals are for the District's trees.

Casey Trees shares the Urban Forestry Administration's (UFA) goal of increasing the District's tree

canopy to 40% by 2035. In 2011 it was at 35%, down from 50% in 1950. There are many factors affecting the decline of the tree canopy, including development that covers over permeable surfaces that allow rainwater and snow to drain into the soil, plus the building process itself displaces trees. And certain trees are more prone to disease than others. While UFA is primarily concerned with the District's street trees, Casey Trees works with private homeowners and organizations to plant and maintain trees on their property. Both groups want to diversify the types of trees in the District to avoid a large-scale die-off in case of a tree disease or pest.

Some tips for helping a new tree grow and thrive: If a new tree is planted near your house, please adopt it! New trees need 20 to 40 gallons of water a week for the first two to three years after planting—from the time the first leaf buds

appear in the Spring until the first frost in the Fall. Take the water bags off during the winter to help the tree trunk grow strong. And if you use a "weed whacker," make sure you avoid the base of the trunk so you don't inadvertently damage the bark! ★

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## Archaeology, *continued from cover*

heel and base fragments). Somewhat later artifacts included Accokeek sherds and sherds tempered with steatite, hornblende or schist.

One interesting find was a deep pit feature that contained a cluster of fire-cracked rock. These rocks were typically used to heat water and cook in a leather-lined pit. Another discovery was a concentration of nearly 1,500 quartzite fragments of flaking debris along with a group of quartzite biface fragments. The artifacts appeared to be the remnants of a lithic workshop area.

Because of public opposition and budget issues, the Barney Circle

highway project was eventually cancelled. But a Memorandum of Understanding from 1983 required the site analyses and technical reporting to be completed. A recent Transportation Enhancement Grant secured by the DC Historic Preservation Office in 2011 provided funding for the work, and Ms. Troccoli's presentation was one of the results of that activity.

The sites were only small samples of the larger areas and because there were no direct impacts from construction, substantial portions of each site remain for future study. While the

Barney Circle study confirmed the general extent and intensity of occupation in the region, there is still much to learn about prehistoric use of the Anacostia River Valley. The research conducted during the Barney Circle Freeway project also provided another example that significant archaeological sites survive in seemingly developed urban settings. We should continue to look carefully at the impact of proposed developments to similar sites in the future. ★

# November Preservation Café: Winterizing Your Home

by Elizabeth Nelson

Capitol Hill neighbor and contractor, Gary Barnhart, will provide tips on preparing your home to withstand winter weather on Wednesday, November 19, 2014 from 6:30–7:15 pm at Ebenezers Coffee House, 2nd and F Streets, NE. Learn from an expert and be “snug as a bug in a rug” when cold winds blow. There’s still time to get

the work done before temperatures plummet. Special attention will be paid to reducing heating costs, preventing pipes from freezing and avoiding storm damage. The event is free and handicapped-accessible and the public is encouraged to attend. No reservations required. Details: Elizabeth Nelson, (202) 543-3512. ★



IMAGE COURTESY GARY BARNHART

Gary Barnhart at his Capitol Hill workshop.

## President’s Column, continued from page 2



IMAGE COURTESY BETH PURCELL

The 300 block of G Street, NE in the Swampoodle area.

place to live. An 1857 article on the dedication of St. Aloysius Church (now part of Gonzaga High School) described it as an area of “swamps and puddles.” The description stuck and the neighborhood became known as “Swampoodle,” initially attracting low-income Irish immigrants. In the late 1800s drainage projects brought significant improvements and the neighborhood became far more desirable. The construction of Union Station in the early 1900s followed by the 1930s construction of Logan School eliminated most what

still survived of the original Irish neighborhood. Today, Swampoodle is virtually indistinguishable from other parts of Capitol Hill, with beautifully restored row houses dating from the 1880s through the 1920s.

In this newsletter you’ll learn more about three meetings being held in different parts of Capitol Hill for the architectural historians to share their findings about the history of these areas with the public. We hope you’ll attend! ★

**CORRECTION:** In the July-August issue of *CHRS News*, the drawing of the shotgun house (page 6) was incorrectly attributed to John Michael Vlach; it was drawn by Judith Capen.

## Thank You, CHRS Supporters

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## Mark Your Calendar!

### NOVEMBER

**3** Monday, 6:30 pm  
CHRS Historic Preservation Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details: Beth Purcell (202) 544-0178.

**13** Thursday, 7:30 pm  
CHRS Zoning Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details: Gary Peterson, (202) 547-7969.

**17** Monday, 7:30 pm  
The Overbeck Lecture Series presents "Why DC Has No Vote in Congress" by local historian and political activist Nelson Rimensnyder. 7:30 pm at the Naval Lodge Hall, 330 Pennsylvania Avenue SE. Admission is free but a reservation is required due to limited seating. To reserve, contact [OverbeckLecture@CapitolHillHistory.org](mailto:OverbeckLecture@CapitolHillHistory.org).

**18** Tuesday, 6:30 pm  
CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second floor. Details: Lisa Dale Jones, (202) 543-0425.

**19** Wednesday, 6:30–7:15 pm  
CHRS Preservation Café: Winterizing Your Home with Capitol Hill Contractor, Gary Barnhart. Ebenezers Coffee House, 2nd & F Streets, NE. Details: Elizabeth Nelson, (202) 543-3512.

### DECEMBER

**1** Monday, 6:30 pm  
CHRS Historic Preservation Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details: Beth Purcell (202) 544-0178.

**5** Friday, 10 am–12 pm  
Capitol Hill Village is holding a seminar on Saving on Your Utilities. 10 am to noon, Northeast Library, 330 7th Street, NE. The event is free and open to the public.

**11** Thursday, 7:30 pm  
CHRS Zoning Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details: Gary Peterson, (202) 547-7969.