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December 2014 / January 2015

# Many Attend Beyond the Boundaries Meetings

by Beth Purcell

**C**HRS held three public meetings on the Beyond the Boundaries project in November 2014. A total of approximately 150 people attended.

CHRS started the Beyond the Boundaries project in 2007 in order to study the history of the area that is just outside the boundaries of the Capitol Hill Historic District to gain further knowledge about the development history of greater Capitol Hill. The project also explored whether or not there was potential for a new, or expansion of the existing, historic district.

The study began with a building-by-building survey that provides basic information on each building in an area, such as date of construction, type and style of building, building material, property owner and architect. This work began in early 2008 and was completed in 2011. The survey involved reviewing permit information, conducting on-site surveys and photographing each building within the study

area. This work was accomplished by a combination of professional architectural historians and over 20 volunteers from the community. The survey was divided into four sub-areas: Southeast; Northeast; from Rosedale to East Capitol Street; and H Street from 2nd to 15th Street. The results of the building-by-building surveys have been made available to interested homeowners and the public at: [www.chrs.org/history-and-preservation-beyond-the-boundaries-map](http://www.chrs.org/history-and-preservation-beyond-the-boundaries-map).

The second part of this project was a Context Study. This is an overall development history of an area that builds in part on the survey data but also draws on broader research into the history of the area. EHT Tracerics prepared the context study between 2011 and 2014. Emily Eig, a principal at Tracerics, presented the context study at our November meetings.

Through this process, CHRS has collected substantial information on the history of the greater Capitol Hill area beyond the boundaries of the

existing historic district. So what can we do with that information? One possible next step is for people to use the survey data and/or context information to write histories on their own neighborhood or to create walking tours to disseminate the information. For example, CHRS has already used some of this information to conduct walking tours of Rosedale and Alley Dwellings in Southeast and we plan to do more in the future. Another possible next step is for residents to learn about and engage in discussion on historic districts to determine if they are interested in pursuing one. Historic districts do not happen on their own.

*Continued on page 6*

## Save the Date: CHRS Turns 60!

Mark your calendar for the evening of January 28, 2015 when we celebrate CHRS's 60th birthday. We'll have a members' meeting with stories from CHRS's past, a look at the future AND a birthday celebration, complete with cake! More details will be sent to you in January.

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# President's Column: CHRS is 60!

By Lisa Dale Jones

January 28, 2015, marks the 60th anniversary of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society. To all of you members who have worked tirelessly over the years to make Capitol Hill the special place it is today, A BIG THANK YOU! I'm one of the recent residents of Capitol Hill who benefits from your dedication to this beautiful neighborhood and its remarkable history. When I talk with some of you I hear great pride in the struggles you successfully undertook that many current Hill residents know nothing about: stopping a freeway from going up 11th Street, preventing the federal government from expanding down East Capitol Street, preserving Eastern Market and so much more.

There are lots of stories to be told and over this coming year we'll be highlighting many of them—in this newsletter and in other publications. Over the last 60 years, the story of CHRS has been the story of the Hill.

Every story has its "once upon a time." CHRS's "once upon a time" begins with its very first meeting. A photo of those original minutes is also on our website ([www.chrs.org](http://www.chrs.org)). Here's a transcription:

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The first meeting of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society was held on Friday, January 28, 1955, at 8:00 p.m., at the McPherran home, 11 Third Street, N.E.

Lt. Col. Paul L. McPherran was appointed temporary Chairman and Mrs. McPherran, temporary Secretary, until such time as an election of officers could be held.

Mr. John Poindexter was requested to draw up By-Laws for the Society for consideration by the group at a subsequent meeting.

Mr. Hassel, President of the Stanton Park Citizens Association,

offered his kind assistance to the Society and said that he would inform his Association of the work the Society intends doing.

It was suggested by Mrs. Poindexter that we use the name "Capitol Hill" on our envelopes and stationery to make as many people possible aware of our area through the use of its name.

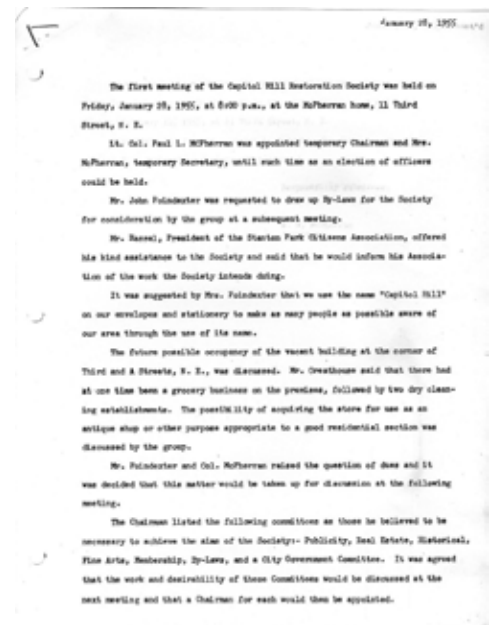
The future possible occupancy of the vacant building at the corner of Third and A Streets, N.E., was discussed. Mr. Greathouse said that there had at one time been a grocery business on the premises, followed by two dry cleaning establishments. The possibility of acquiring the store for use as an antique shop or other purpose appropriate to a good residential section was discussed by the group.

Mr. Poindexter and Col. McPherran raised the question of dues and it was decided that this matter would be taken up for discussion at the following meeting.

The Chairman listed the following committees as those he believed to be necessary to achieve the aims of the Society: Publicity, Real Estate, Historic Fine Arts, Membership, By-Laws, and a City Government Committee. It was agreed that the work and desirability of these Committees would be discussed at the next meeting and that a Chairman for each would then be appointed.

It was further agreed that all members would serve on the Membership Committee, bringing two new members to the next meeting to be held on Monday, February 14, 1955, at 11 Third Street, N.E.

There being no further business to discuss, the first meeting of the



CHRS's first meeting minutes, January 1955.

Capitol Hill Restoration Society was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
W. W. McPherran  
Secretary

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I love the idea of each member serving on the Membership Committee! And I'd like to propose that every current member consider him or herself as a membership ambassador. Between now and our 60th anniversary, can you encourage two of your neighbors to join CHRS? You have your own story to tell them as to why CHRS is important. You can even give them a membership as a holiday gift! We look forward to welcoming you—and them—at the Members' Meeting and birthday party on January 28, 2015. ★

## Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS)

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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.

### 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)

# Steve Cymrot, Hill Leader, Dies at 72

Capitol Hill lost a true friend, Renaissance man and champion with the passing of Steve Cymrot on November 22. He leaves behind his wife of 47 years, Nicky; a daughter, Helen, and son, Paul; and four grandchildren. The community is staggered by this loss.

Steve was a businessman, owning Riverby Books and rental properties across the Hill; a guru of city politics; and a philanthropist. Among his many tangible achievements on the Hill, the most recent one is the beautiful restoration of the Old Naval Hospital (ONH), an effort that Steve and Nicky spearheaded. The ONH, completed in 1866, was for 50 years a prominent,

derelict building at 9th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. In the ONH he saw an opportunity to restore a magnificent building and to create a community facility. The state-of-the-art restoration has won awards and the Hill Center has become an educational and social center of the community.

Steve could often be found sitting in the bay window at Jimmy T's completing the New York Times crossword puzzle and eating a peanut butter and bacon sandwich. He was always available for a short chat on some issue of the day and his encouragement and advice was invaluable. His sense of humor was always spot-on. He will be missed. ★

## CHRS Zoning Briefs

*By Gary Petersen*

The CHRS Zoning Committee considered the following cases on November 13, 2014:

**BZA 18855**, 213 11th Street, SE

**BZA 18859**, 438 New Jersey Avenue, SE

**BZA 18872**, 510 Independence Avenue, SE—continued at applicant's request

**BZA 18877**, 15 Browns Court, SE

**BZA 18901**, 141 Kentucky Avenue, SE

All of these cases involved additions to existing structures of a type that the committee routinely approves. The applicants provided letters of support from neighbors and the committee voted unanimously to support each application. ★

## Calling All Houses!

CHRS is on the hunt for houses for the 2015 Mother's Day House and Garden Tour. This two-day event features some of the most beautiful homes and gardens on the Hill, opened up for the public to take a peek inside. The 2015 Tour will focus on the general area around Stanton Park and along Massachusetts Avenue towards Lincoln Park. If you or someone you know has a home in this area that belongs on our tour, please contact Alia Khan at [aliajkh@gmail.com](mailto:aliajkh@gmail.com) for more information!

# Historic Preservation Briefs

by Beth Purcell

The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) considered the following cases on December 4, 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.

**645 Maryland Avenue, NE.** HPA 15-065. The applicant proposes to add two stories to this one-story garage to create three condominiums. The changes to the first story would preserve the building’s original color scheme and openings as well as remove an inappropriate door and blocked transom. Although some aspects of the design appear appropriate, there are major concerns because the proposed second and third story addition are not subordinate to the historic one-story building. Several of the five neighbors who testified at the hearing objected to the addition. On the other hand, one neighbor expressed concern that if no addition was allowed, the garage might again be used as an auto-repair facility. ANC 6C opposed

the project. This is a complex case.

The HPRB approved earlier but different plans for 645 Maryland Avenue in HPA 03-472 (February 26, 2004). Those plans also included a two-story addition, but it was set back 17 feet from the front face of the existing building so that the addition “no longer sits flush with the adjacent rowhouses to the west, but rather sit[s] 6 feet behind them, reducing somewhat its overall visibility from the street.” HPO staff report, HPA 03-472 (Sept. 25, 2003). This case seeks a two-story addition, set back only 12 feet, which would be very visible from public space and have an impact on adjacent rowhouses on this attractive residential street. CHRS urged that if the HPRB decides to approve the concept, it again require the 17-foot setback.<sup>1</sup> Further, several neighbors objected to the large mass and depth of the proposed addition. One commented that the addition “looks like a prison.”

CHRS believes that HPRB’s more recent precedents from 2012 and 2013



Garage at 645 Maryland Avenue, NE.

IMAGE COURTESY BETH PURCELL

on additions to one-story commercial buildings should apply. As we noted in our letter dated November 12, 2014, a series of precedents concerning additions to one-story commercial buildings (the 1300 block of Constitution Avenue, NE) should control. One-story buildings are important elements of the Capitol Hill Historic District’s development history and thus they should not be casually transformed into two- or three-story buildings. In those cases, adding a second or third story was allowed because:

- One building had already acquired a second story during the historic district’s period of significance.
- Another building had a rear second-story wall that was falling down.
- The block’s commercial character was already fractured.
- The third story addition approved for one of the buildings was not visible from public space.

Given the already fractured historic context of this block, as well

<sup>1</sup> “Roof Decks and Roof Additions: Design Considerations and Submission Requirements,” in the section on Roof Additions reads, in part:

Adding vertically to a historic building is generally discouraged as such additions typically alter significant features, such as its roof line, height... and overall form and mass. Additions on top of a building can sometimes be achieved when they are not visible from street views....this approach typically requires a substantial setback, the extent of which depends on the height of the addition...the width of the street, and views from public vantage points surrounding the building....Under most circumstances, roof additions that are visible from a public street are not appropriate.

*Continued on page 6*

# Plans for Condominiums at Imani Temple

By Beth Purcell

The church at 609 Maryland Avenue, NE was designed in 1891 by the well-known architect Appleton P. Clark, Jr. for the Eastern Presbyterian Church. The two-story church is a Gothic Revival style with a prominent bell tower, a smaller tower with Potomac bluestone and limestone trim and multiple stained-glass windows. In 1954, Eastern Presbyterian Church merged with another congregation to form the Capitol Hill Presbyterian Church. The building at 609 Maryland Avenue was sold to the Greater Mount Zion Baptist Church, which used the building until selling it to the African American Catholic Congregation (Imani Temple) in 1994.

Imani Temple has entered into a contract to sell the church to a developer for conversion to condominiums. Imani Temple may be part of a trend: other churches have been or are planned to be converted to residential use, such

as St. Monica's Episcopal Church at 1340 Massachusetts Avenue, SE and Way of the Cross Church at 819 D Street, NE. Several neighbors tell us that they want the building to continue to be used for religious purposes. However, if Imani Temple is no longer to be used as a church, it is an impressive building dominating an important intersection and needs to be economically viable so that it can be preserved. If people buy condominiums there, the hope is that they would be good stewards of the church building. The condominium project has the potential to restore an important building through adaptive use and careful historic repair and rehabilitation. Any changes to the church's exterior must be minimal.

The developer has hired an architectural historian and is in the process of seeking concept approval from the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB), beginning with proposed changes to the church's



IMAGE COURTESY BETH PURCELL

Imani Temple at 609 Maryland Avenue, NE.

stained glass windows. The stained glass windows are a character-defining element of this church with colorful Christian symbols, flowers, and abstract designs in ribbon glass. The windows are now covered with plexiglass and are difficult to read from the outside. HPRB recently considered a similar church-to-condominium conversion at 819 D Street, NE (HPA 14-180). The same approach will be followed for this important church. As in that case, the developer has begun to catalog each window (including the windows in the tower) and to illustrate on large, detailed color photographs how each window might look before and after any proposed changes. CHRS has responded in detail to the proposed changes in the windows, urging that the substitution of clear glass for stained glass be kept to a minimum so that the windows' designs remain visible. The developer has indicated a desire to work with the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) and CHRS on the project.

*Continued on page 7*

## Appleton P. Clark, Jr.

Appleton P. Clark, Jr. (1865–1955) was born in Washington, DC and graduated from Central High School in 1883. He designed many well-known buildings and residences in a number of styles including: National Savings & Trust Building, the Homer Building, the old Washington Post Building, Columbia Theater, Continental Hotel, Roosevelt Hotel, Fourth Presbyterian Church, Foundry Methodist Church, and Wilson Memorial Building (Garfield Hospital). For many years he also served as the president (and architect) for the Washington Sanitary Improvement Company; in that capacity he designed the low-income rental residences at 1000–1022 13th Street, SE, 1301–1311 K Street, SE, and 1306–1332 L Street, SE (1911). He also designed three homes for children in the Washington area. In 1945, he wrote a book, *Institutional Homes for Children*, urging architects to design children's homes as cottage-type buildings, rather than as a single building.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Appleton Clark, 89, Dean of Architects," *Washington Post*, 27 Mar. 1955, sec. B, p. 2; Benjamin Forgey, "Topping Off A Landmark," *Washington Post*, 15 Oct. 1983, sec. C, p. 1., AIA Archives, membership application.

First, there must be strong community support in a specific area for that area to even initiate the process. If the support is not there, there will be no historic district in that area. Whether or not a historic district is a good idea for a specific area is a topic that will need extensive public discussion. The November meetings were a first step in that discussion.

CHRS strongly believes in historic districts as both a way to honor and preserve neighborhood

history and also as a tool for shaping the future development of one's neighborhood. For any group of neighbors interested in learning more about designation, or who may already be interested in pursuing designation, CHRS would be happy to work with any ANC, community organization or group of individuals who request our help. If requested, CHRS can help facilitate a meeting between residents and the Historic Preservation Office to delve further

into what designation means and how it might be established. CHRS, however, will not apply for any historic district extensions or new historic districts. Our role is to gather and provide the information, start the dialog and assist when asked. ★

Interested in learning more about historic district designation?

Contact CHRS at [caphrs@aol.com](mailto:caphrs@aol.com).

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Preservation Briefs, continued from page 4

as the loss of the block's original strong commercial presence, we believed that in this isolated instance a second story on one of the buildings could be acceptable. We noted that we viewed this decision to be an anomaly because of factors specific to this particular location and set of unique circumstances and hoped that this case would not set a precedent for the historic district or even for other nearby one-story buildings. In this case, CHRS did not object to the rear third-story addition only because the applicant had made a commitment to build the third story in such a way that it would be not be visible from Constitution Avenue.<sup>2</sup>

In 2013, the HPO staff report on another one-story building on Constitution Avenue, NE, noted that that the historic context of this block was already fractured due to inappropriate construction which preceded the city's preservation law and demolition of historic buildings approved by HPRB because they were structurally unsound.<sup>3</sup> HPRB allowed adding a second story and a third story to this one-story building at 1331 Constitution Avenue only if the third story was set back and not visible from public space.

CHRS believes that The Constitution Avenue projects are in no way comparable to the proposed garage addition at 645 Maryland Avenue. Unlike on Constitution Avenue, this garage is in a block that still retains its historic integrity and the garage has no rooftop additions on it already. The third stories on the formerly one-story Constitution Avenue buildings are low enough and set back far enough that they are not visible from public space on Constitution Avenue, a relatively narrow street. In contrast, the proposed second- and third-story addition to the garage is very close to the front of the garage, in line with the mass of the rowhouses beside it and will be fully visible from Maryland Avenue, a wide and highly trafficked road.

The HPRB decided that while an addition could be compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District and the addition could be modern the dimensions and proportions of the proposed addition need to be rethought and more of the interior structure of the garage needs to be retained. The determination was that the applicant should return to HPRB with a revised design.

**900 11th Street, SE.** HPA 14-527. This new 49-unit residential building at the corner of 11th and I Streets, SE, will be a gateway building to Capitol Hill. The building will replace a parking lot and service station. The plans have been revised several times and, at the HPRB's request, the applicant will provide the bays, areaways, and the detailing of the mechanical penthouse.

**609 Maryland Avenue, NE.** HPA 15-153. Please see the article in this issue of the *News*.

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

**750 9th Street, SE.** HPA 15-049 / concept/rear/accessory building. ★

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<sup>2</sup> 1321–1323 Constitution Avenue, NE, HPA 12-260 (March 22, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> 1331 Constitution Avenue, NE, HPA 13-186 (HPRB March 28, 2013).

# November Preservation Café: Protect Your Home Against Winter Weather

By Greg Holeyman, AIA, LEED AP

**G**ary Barnhart, general contractor and owner of GL Barnhart Construction, was the November Preservation Café speaker. A Capitol Hill resident, Mr. Barnhart started GL Barnhart in 1997 with his father, focusing on home improvement and small commercial renovations. Today, the company focuses on modern renovations, historic restorations and construction work in the Capitol Hill area.

Gary's presentation focused on effective measures to prepare your home for the cold weather of winter. Preventative measures were recommended for plumbing and rainwater systems as well as for heating systems. Other items discussed included beefing up protective measures at the building envelope and structure.

Gary described numerous ways to protect a residential plumbing system; this includes installing a frost-proof hose bib and insulating exposed pipes. A frost-free hose bib (or sill cock) has the valve located further up the pipe and operates away from the cold exterior air. Installation of a frost-free hose bib is required by the current building code and should be slightly angled downward to allow water to escape when closing the supply valve and

emptying out the pipes for winter. The threat of frozen pipes can be mitigated by installing closed-cell sleeve insulation around the pipes, especially those located in vented crawlspaces and at exterior walls. For a more proactive approach, Gary recommends installing heat tape, a sheathed electric cable that is wrapped between the exposed pipe and the sleeve insulation and is activated when temperatures fall below a certain temperature.

For rainwater systems, Gary encourages the installation of water management measures that divert water away from the house. Examples include the installation of a French drain system, a trench filled with gravel that contains a perforated pipe that redirects surface water and groundwater away from the building foundations. Homeowners can also add extensions to existing downspouts that redirect rainwater away from the house.

For boiler and forced air heating systems, Gary advocates turning on and testing the system a month before winter begins. This will allow you to identify and fix any issues before the cold weather sets in. For forced air systems, the filters should be replaced. If a filter system is not present in the ductwork, one should

be installed to provide better indoor air quality and to extend the life of your equipment. Gary recommends installing a high-efficiency air filter system if possible.

For exterior walls, crawlspaces and attic spaces, Gary stressed that providing insulation and sealing the interior from the exterior provide the largest return on investment. Examples include weather stripping exterior window and door openings and caulking wall penetrations. If windows will remain closed for the winter, Gary recommends using a putty system to seal cracks or the installation of a film system that creates an additional air barrier at the interior.

Gary is happy to answer any renovation questions, (202) 569-8471 or Gary@GLBarnhart.com. ★

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**Preservation Café**, continued from page 5

HPRB began its consideration of proposed changes to the windows at the hearing on December 4, 2014 and decided that the project is on the right path; that while it is necessary to retain as much of the stained glass

as possible, some degree of stained glass replacement is appropriate; and that the interior plans for the six condominium units are needed in order to evaluate the plans for the windows. ★

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

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## Mark Your Calendar!

### 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 noon  
Capitol Hill Village is holding a seminar on Saving on Your Utilities. Northeast Library, 330 7th Street, NE. The event is free and open to all.

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

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

### JANUARY

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

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

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

**28** Wednesday  
Members' meeting and CHRS 60th anniversary celebration! Time and location to be announced.

### FEBRUARY

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

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

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