



CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

NEWS

www.chrs.org

April 2015

58th Annual House and Garden Tour, May 9–10

By Patrick Crowley

The Capitol Hill Restoration Society’s House and Garden Tour returns for its 58th run this Mother’s Day weekend, May 9 and 10, 2015. This year we focus on the near northeast Stanton Park neighborhood with homes on the unit block of Second Street, NE to the 600 block of E Street, NE.

As usual, we have an outstanding collection of houses this year! We have wood frame homes from shortly after the Civil War, brick Dutch Tudors, Victorian bay-fronts and classic Federal beauties. We have cozy attic libraries, basement family rooms, in-law suites and grand master bedrooms. There are rickety stairs down to unfinished cellars, back stairs for the staff and twisting, turning stairs that Harry Potter might recognize.

There are several large gardens on the tour. The House Tour Committee first saw them under a foot of snow but spring promises a resurgence of greenery and a colorful show of blooms. You’ll see a lot of great art, too. Traditional oil-on-canvas ancestral portraits, South African tribal masks, modern Giacometti-like sculpture and an impressive trompe l’oeil window treatment—so convincing you might not even realize it’s there!

Some houses will leave you wondering how they fit all those rooms into that footprint and at others you’ll wish there were more rooms with more wonderful surprises. We hope you get loads of ideas for remodeling, redecorating,

or art collecting from these incredible spaces.

Tickets are \$40 the weekend of the tour, \$35 in advance and \$30 per ticket (two ticket limit) for CHRS Members until April 24th, using the order form in this newsletter. Regularly-priced tickets can be ordered online, purchased at our Eastern Market booth or other local retailers beginning in mid-April, or by calling the CHRS office at (202) 543-0425. A pair of Tour tickets makes a great gift for friends or family. ★

Calling All Volunteers—We Need YOU!

The House and Garden Tour has been a mainstay of CHRS’s financial stability since the very beginning. If we do it right, it all comes off looking smooth and effortless—but effortless it is not. A tour like this has many moving parts, intricate coordination and staffing needs. So we still need your help! In order to staff each room of each home over 100 volunteers are needed—volunteers who can say “Please don’t open the closet,” “The bed is only for looking,” and “It’s your turn to use the stairs.” If you can spare a two-hour shift, please celebrate Mother’s Day weekend by helping out our visitors on the Tour. Call the CHRS office to sign up at (202) 543-0425.

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President's Column: It's House Tour Time Again!

By Lisa Dale Jones

Just as surely as the cherry blossoms signal the start of the DC tourist season and April is the start of baseball, Mother's Day is the start of *real* Spring on Capitol Hill—it's the annual House and Garden Tour! The Tour has been around nearly as long as the Capitol Hill Restoration Society itself. And each spring nearly 1,500 visitors take the Tour, enjoying the chance to see how their neighbors live.

Although there are only a handful of basic house layouts on Capitol Hill, it's seeing what each owner does with that space that makes the Tour so much fun. One person might decorate with French antiques. Someone else might fill his or her space with pieces collected while being stationed abroad through the Foreign Service. Another person might have cultivated a sleek, modern vibe in an historic townhome. It's these differences that give us so much pleasure as we look at the different houses.

In earlier years the Sunday afternoon "Tea" was a formal affair. At our 60th anniversary celebration, Hazel Kreinheder recalled memories of white gloves and formal silver tea service, with everyone baking to make the refreshments themselves.

Today, people are happy to get water bottles and quick snacks, along with a place to sit down and use the facilities. No more formal white gloves! But it's still the same wonderful experience—walking around Capitol Hill on a (normally) beautiful day, seeing how other people live.

This year's Tour is centered around Stanton Park, an area of eclectic and beautiful homes. We'll feature one homeowner's major art collection and another's

globe collection. We'll see houses from the late 1800s and some with modern interiors. We'll even visit a yoga studio.

The tour will take place Saturday, May 9 from 4–7 pm and Sunday, May 10 from 12–5 pm. We look forward to seeing you there! ★

Call for Nominations: CHRS's Board of Directors

Community service has been a hallmark of Capitol Hill from its earliest days. Commodore Thomas Tingey, the first Commandant of the Navy Yard, served on the city's first school board. George Blagden, Superintendent of Masons for the building of the Capitol, served on the Vestry of Christ Church, the first church on Capitol Hill. But that was then. How are you serving your community today? Fortunately, the opportunities to pitch in abound.

CHRS' Nominations Committee is seeking nominees to stand for election to the CHRS Board of Directors. Those interested in serving or recommending others who may be willing to serve should contact the committee members (Patrick Crowley, Beth Purcell, or Elizabeth Nelson) via the CHRS office at (202) 543-0425 or caphrs@aol.com.

CHRS by-laws stipulate that all officers and three at-large members stand for election every year. The officers include the president, 1st vice president, 2nd vice president, secretary and treasurer. The president is responsible for managing the organization and serves on all

committees by default. The 1st vice president is expected to support the president with all membership activities, annual meetings, speaker events and other outreach events. The 2nd vice president is expected to support the president with all fundraising events, including the annual house tour. At-large members are also expected to support the annual house tour program. The secretary and treasurer are expected to fulfill the standard duties of such offices.

If you like Capitol Hill's historic look and feel, you have CHRS to thank for protecting that historic character from massive redevelopment plans and well-intentioned but misguided ideas. If you have expertise in fundraising, event planning and membership drives, we'd especially like to hear from you. Join the crowd of distinguished Washingtonians who created and protect Capitol Hill: volunteer to be on the board of CHRS and help preserve Capitol Hill. ★

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 1955, 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

March Preservation Café: How to Spot a Cheap Flip

By Greg Holeyman, AIA, LEED AP

The March Preservation Café speaker was Gary Barnhart, general contractor and owner of GL Barnhart Construction. A Capitol Hill resident, Mr. Barnhart previously trained as a construction inspector before starting his firm in 1997. Today, the company focuses on modern renovations, historic restorations and construction work in the Capitol Hill area.

The presentation, titled "Top Ways to Spot a Cheap Flip," focused on visible items that will indicate to potential buyers that a house was remodeled quickly. These clues may warn of larger problems with the construction of the house. Topics covered included paint, exterior details, tile, access panels, cabinets, flooring, doors, trim and piping.

Gary's tips for items to look out for include:

- **Paint:** Look for obvious clues of an unprofessional paint job including: "paint holidays" (a missed spot when using a roller, the previous color of paint shows through), tape release marks, poor paintbrush cut-ins, ceiling paint spots found on walls, bad caulk jobs.
- **Exterior assemblies:** Confirm that siding material is installed properly and matches trim material (different rates of expansion between materials leads to cracks over time). Brick pointing must be done with the appropriate mortar (lime-based mortar for older bricks).
- **Tile:** Ceramic tile not installed in the center of a room (look for uneven tile widths at the perimeter walls) can indicate a rush installation job. Be aware of grout lines next to the toe kick,

missing grout sealer (if the water doesn't bead up, it indicates the grout is not sealed properly), tile lippage.

- **Access panels:** Access panels are often required by code at shower controls, crawl spaces, attics, shut off valves and all electrical connections. These panels are sometimes covered up or not provided by flippers. Access to the interior of walls, attics and crawlspaces can help confirm if the correct materials were used (such as cement fiber board at tiled bathroom walls).
- **Cabinets/built-ins:** Finding gaps between appliances and cabinets indicates a lower end of cabinetry was installed. Higher end custom systems provide filler strips, solid wood doors, full opening/ closing and better accessories.
- **Flooring:** Understand the difference between thin engineered floors and solid hardwoods. Hardwood floors should not typically be installed in below-grade levels.
- **Grading:** Confirm that water sheds away from the house at yards, patios and porches and that gutters and roofs are correctly sloped to avoid pooling water.
- **Doors:** Make sure that all six sides are painted to maintain the manufacturer's warranty.
- **Pipes:** Copper piping is usually better than CPVC plastic.

Happy to answer any renovation questions, Gary can be reached at (202) 569-8471 or Gary@GLBarnhart.com. ★

Historic Preservation Briefs

by Beth Purcell

The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB or the Board) considered the following cases on February 26, 2015. 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.

1013 and 1015 E Street, SE, HPA 14-720, 14-721, concept/addition. The HPRB denied this applicant’s previous project, a lot consolidation (subdivision) including a large carriage house into a total of 11 residential units. See CHRS *News* February 2015. The applicant submitted revised plans for an addition to each house.

The house at 1013 E Street is a two-story Italianate frame building that likely predates 1877. The applicant proposes to retain the detailing on the front, to remove the stucco from the front and to re clad this elevation using lapped wood siding to match the existing front siding or the house’s original wood siding visible in the areaway next to 1013 E Street. The house at 1015 E Street is a 19th century two-story brick building with a porch. The existing facade and porch would be preserved; the front door is to be replaced with a four-panel door appropriate to the house’s period of significance.

Each house would become one two-story residential unit, with two units in each addition and

two in the basement. Although the additions are larger than the historic buildings (which is normally not allowed), HPRB nevertheless found them compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District because of the unique configuration of the existing buildings nearby, some of which are commercial with 100% lot coverage. HPRB approved the projects and required the applicant to work with staff to improve the circuitous circulation, keep the side yard open (assuming Board of Zoning Adjustment approval), provide the restoration plan to staff before seeking a building permit, staff to coordinate with the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs on emergency egress from basement apartments and coordinate with the HPO archeologist on whether archeological assets may exist at 1013 E Street.

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

900 11th Street SE, HPA 14-527, concept/new construction. HPRB approved plan for applicant to refine landscaping, lighten cornice, replicate bays from the I Street elevation on 11th Street elevation. A 49-unit condominium building at 11th and I Streets, SE, will be a gateway building to Capitol Hill, replacing a service station and parking lot.

412 7th Street NE, HPA 15-199, concept/enclose rear porch. The HPRB tentatively approved altering the window openings on the brick side bay facing Lexington Place which, according to its guidelines “is almost never appropriate.” The decision was justified on the grounds that although the existing bay fenestration is original, this elevation is not as designed as the front and altering it will not diminish the character of the building. The HPRB will work with CHRS. This result is not a precedent. ★

April Preservation Café: Preservation of the Grant Memorial

The April 16, 2015 Preservation Café will feature conservator and Capitol Hill neighbor, Justine P. Bello. She will speak about the history, context, conservation and construction of various public monuments across Capitol Hill, from the relatively modest sculpture of Nathanael Greene in Stanton Park to the mighty Grant Memorial to the contentious “Swamp Fox” statue planned for Marion Park.

The presentation will begin at 7 pm at the Kaiser Permanente building, 700 2nd Street, NE. Enter on the street level and turn immediately to your left after you pass through the front doors. This is a new location and a later start time. Please also note this meeting is being held on a Thursday rather than the usual Wednesday.



58th Annual
House and Garden Tour
Saturday and Sunday • May 9–10, 2015

Individual Donations and Ticket Order Form

Tax-Deductible Contributions

Benefactors, Patrons, and Sponsors will be listed in the Tour brochure if received by April 15.

- Benefactor** (\$1,000, 8 complimentary tickets, \$760 deductible)
- Patron** (\$500, 4 complimentary tickets, \$380 deductible)
- Sponsor** (\$250, 2 complimentary tickets, \$190 deductible)
- Contributor** (\$100, completely deductible)
- Funder** (\$50, completely deductible)

My/our name(s) should be listed as follows: _____

Member Tour Tickets

For tickets only, mail or scan and e-mail this form with full payment by April 24.

_____ Member Tour tickets @ \$30 each (limit 2 per household)

_____ Additional Tour tickets @ \$35 each (\$40 each on Tour weekend)

Name: _____

Mailing address: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Payment Information

Sum of contribution and tickets. *Your cancelled check or credit card statement will be your receipt.*

- Enclosed is my check for \$ _____ payable to CHRS, Inc.
- Please bill my credit card \$ _____ Mastercard Visa

Card Number: _____ Expiration: _____

Signature: _____ CVV Code: _____

Tickets will be mailed approximately 7–10 days before the Tour.

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Alley Revitalization: An Award Winning Example on Capitol Hill

By Undine Nash

When it was built in 1921 by L. P. Steuart & Bro., the 5,000 square foot brick warehouse hidden between C and D Streets and 12th and 13th Streets, SE served the neighborhood as a distribution hub for ice in the summer and coal in the winter. By the year 2009 the functional beauty of this industrial building had degenerated into an eye sore: the roof had collapsed in several places due to multiple fires and major snowfalls, trees were growing in the walls and out of the roof and the neglected space was attracting both pests and criminals.

Even in this dilapidated condition, however, major original design elements still shone through: the long run of clerestory windows extending over 70 feet each from south to north, the beautiful old brick, the industrial facade with corrugated metal and huge overhead doors.

With help and support from neighbors, the local Advisory Neighborhood Commission, Capitol Hill Restoration Society, Historic Preservation Review Board and Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, it was possible

to convert the decaying building into a wonderful residence with an in-law suite. The hurdles were high: the property had to be rezoned, all utilities had to be brought in and the building did not even have its own functional address, on an alley that remained unnamed.

Now the Nashes are the proud owners of a unique home with geothermal wells, photovoltaic solar panels, radiant infloor heating and a productive vegetable garden. The house features a large central living area with a ceiling height of nearly 20 feet. Much of the original building material was reused in the rehabilitated building, including all of the exposed brick. The kitchen cabinets include panels made from the old metal roof. Some of the old roof rafters are now a dining table that seats 16 people. In 2012 the alley was named after Adolf Cluss, the architect

of Eastern Market and many other important buildings in the metropolitan area.

To make the ending even happier, this home has been selected for a "2015 District of Columbia Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation" in the category of design and development. The award ceremony will be held on May 6, 2015 at DAR Constitution Hall during National Preservation Month. Tickets will be available in early April on the website of the DC Office of Historic Preservation at: <http://planning.dc.gov/historicpreservation>. ★

The warehouse before renovation (top right), and after.



IMAGES COURTESY UNDINE NASH

Reserve Now for April 14 Overbeck Lecture: The Washington Arsenal Explosion

By John Franzen

On Tuesday, April 14, Erin Bergin Voorheis will deliver a richly illustrated Overbeck History Lecture based on her late father's book on the Washington Arsenal explosion of 1864. The little-remembered conflagration that rocked the city on a sweltering day in June killed 21 women, most of them very young, as they assembled and packaged ammunition for the Union war effort in a gunpowder-laden building at the site of present-day Fort McNair.

The incident, Voorheis notes, serves as a dramatic reminder of a new phenomenon that came with the Civil War mobilization: the hiring of thousands of women in Washington and around the country to staff government offices and war-related manufacturing plants as men left in droves for military service. Her lecture will also offer an interesting look at "the Island," the Washington neighborhood (essentially the city's Southwest quadrant) where the Arsenal's low-paid workers lived and struggled to survive.

Voorheis's father, Brian Bergin, finished writing *The Washington Arsenal Explosion* in 2009 but died before it could be published. Voorheis stepped in as editor and took the book to publication in 2012. The author—a former Peace Corps volunteer, Vietnam veteran, teacher and employee of the AFL-CIO—was a historian by avocation with a particular interest in the Civil War. His daughter is a professional writer and editor who says she inherited her love of American history from him.

Washingtonians familiar with Congressional Cemetery may have noted a stone monument there that commemorates the women who died



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

A group of workers in front of the Arsenal circa 1864.

in the Arsenal explosion. It was paid for with donations from the victims' fellow workers and other working people throughout the city.

Voorheis's lecture will take place Tuesday, April 14, 7:30 pm at the Naval Lodge Hall at 330 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. It will conclude with a book signing. As always, admission is free but a reservation is required due to limited seating. Please email OverbeckLecture@CapitolHillHistory.org and indicate how many seats you will need. ★

The Overbeck History Lectures are a project of the Capitol Hill Community Foundation. Please remember CHCF in your charitable giving.

Thank You, CHRS Supporters

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

NEW MEMBERS

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

Mark Your Calendar!

APRIL

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

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

16 Thursday, 7 pm
CHRS Preservation Café: "Public
Monuments of Capitol Hill." Kaiser
Permanente building, 700 2nd Street, NE.

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

MAY

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

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

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

21 Thursday, 7:00 pm
CHRS Preservation Café (topic to be
determined). Kaiser Permanente building,
700 2nd Street, NE.

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More information and tickets available at (202) 543-0425 or www.chrs.org.