



CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

NEWS

www.chrs.org

June 2015

Capitol Hill Historic District: What It Means

By Lucinda P. Janke

In 1965, the 10th year of the existence of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society, the American Institute of Architects published its first guide to the architecture of Washington. The first section, titled Capitol Hill, consisted of mainly public buildings, with the exception of the Folger Shakespeare Library and Museum of African Art in the former Frederick Douglass home. The following section was titled Southeast Washington, “now one of the city’s forgotten areas.” The sites there were also publicly accessible with the exception of the Philadelphia Row houses on 11th Street, SE. By this

time, the restoration movement on the Hill was well underway. Alas, the 2nd edition, dated 1974, repeated this omission of Capitol Hill, adding only one private house, 120 4th Street, SE, a 1970 tour house. No mention was made of residential Capitol Hill north of East Capitol Street. Clearly CHRS, with its mission to promote and protect the Hill, had its work cut out for it. The 1994 edition combined the two sections but again included few houses, although it had dropped the “forgotten” description. By then the Hill had historic district status.

Three speakers at the 60th anniversary celebration in January

stressed the importance of the creation of that status. Several threats and painful losses, including Mary’s Blue Room at 5th and East Capitol Streets, NE, and the site where the Madison Library building now stands, underscored the need for protection of the Hill’s historic buildings. Mimi Wolf recounted her late husband, Dick Wolf’s, sense of urgency to apply for historic district status when a 12-story building was proposed for Pennsylvania Avenue and 14th Street SE. Dick Wolf, along with Larry Monaco, both of whom had served as CHRS president,

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What’s Happening to the Dome? Find out at the CHRS Annual Meeting June 15

We’re delighted to welcome Stephen T. Ayers, FAIA, LEED AP, the Architect of the Capitol, as the guest speaker at our annual meeting on June 15! You have questions about the restoration work on the Capitol Dome—and he’s coming to answer them. Mr. Ayers has spoken to us at meetings in the past, and he always has fascinating information and photos to share. In addition to letting us see behind the scaffolding, Mr. Ayers will also tell us about work to restore the Grant Memorial at the base of the West Lawn.

When: Monday, June 15, 2015

Where: National Community Church (Theatre), 535 8th Street, SE

What: 6:45 pm Members’ meeting to announce election results
7 pm Program with Mr. Ayers, open to the public

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President's Column: Summer Still Busy on Capitol Hill

By Lisa Dale Jones

This is a wonderful time of year to be on Capitol Hill! The trees and flowers are in bloom, the outdoors is beckoning, and it's not yet super hot and muggy. I've enjoyed walking the neighborhoods seeing everyone's gardens. (If you've noticed someone stopping to sniff your peonies, that was probably me!) The Nats are playing well, families are kayaking on the Anacostia, and friends are playing croquet at Lincoln Park.

But there are changes happening on Capitol Hill as well. Some may end up being good, some may end up being bad. Since we don't always know in advance, it's critical that we stay vigilant.

Hine Construction Underway

If you've been to Eastern Market recently, you've noticed that the flea market vendors are now located on 7th Street—which is closed to traffic on weekends during market hours. The Hine School is being demolished to make way for a new, large project that few people seem to be entirely happy about.

CSX Tunnel Construction In Preliminary Phase

Despite an emergency motion for a stay and reversal filed by the Committee of 100 for the Federal City, CSX has been permitted to begin moving utility lines and cutting down mature trees along Virginia Avenue. Beyond the construction itself being an extremely difficult experience for the neighbors, when it's finished, the upgraded tunnel will allow CSX to move even more hazardous materials through the core of the District at higher speeds. Additionally, more CSX trains in the future means less space on those tracks for commuter rail coming in from Virginia.

At a CSX open house a while back, the chief engineer for the

project, Chuck Gullakson, assured me that it's actually safer running trains with hazardous materials through highly populated areas, because those tracks are kept in better condition and create a smoother ride, making derailments less likely. He said it with a perfectly straight face...

Marine Barracks Relocation

As we noted in last month's newsletter, the Marine bachelor quarters currently located on I Street SE between 8th and 9th Streets need to relocate due to updated security regulations. Currently, the building is too close to the sidewalk, the streets, and the freeway. The Marines are studying five potential locations within a 10-minute walking distance of the parade ground. Along with a coalition of other neighborhood organizations, CHRS is recommending that they reduce those five potential locations to two. The other three locations would demolish existing or planned retail, would take down historic buildings, and would create "dead zones" around the lower end of 8th Street, SE. The two remaining locations are already owned by the federal government.

Flashing Neon Signs?

The Mayor's Office has released proposed new sign regulations.

The part that caught the eye of some of us at CHRS and other civic organizations is a proposal to allow the Mayor to designate certain areas that include dining and entertainment venues as "Designated Entertainment Areas" (DEAs). As proposed, the regulations would allow the Mayor to designate areas as DEAs without requiring any outside input or decision-making. The proposed regulations also aren't clear about exempting historic districts. Under the current proposed language, H Street NE could be designated as a DEA, which would then allow large, flashing and moving neon signs, as at the Verizon Center downtown. It's even possible that Barracks Row could qualify at some point. CHRS has submitted comments on the proposed regulations asking for changes, and will be testifying at a roundtable convened by Councilor Mary Cheh on the issue.

Progress is a wonderful thing—and it can be done the right way so that the best of the past is preserved while the best of the new gets its chance to be established. But we have to stay vigilant to ensure that progress is truly progressive, and the qualities that make Capitol Hill the best place to live in DC remain. ★

Election Reminder

Ballots for the Officers and Board of Directors for CHRS are in the mail. The 2015 Nominating Committee (Patrick Crowley, Beth Purcell and Elizabeth Nelson) request that you complete and return your ballot by the June 13, 2015 deadline.

Strange as it may seem, ballots must be signed! The DC Nonprofit Corporation Act requires that ballots for member voting have a signature line and that the **member must sign his or her name**. CHRS must receive at least 25 signed ballots, so, even if you are supporting the slate, your vote is important. Results will be announced at the June 15 Membership Meeting.

Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President Lisa Dale Jones
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Second Vice President Drury Tallant
Secretary Susan Burgerman
Treasurer Patrick Crowley
At Large Chuck Burger
At Large Greg Holeyman
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Community Development Chuck Burger
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Environment Vacant
Grants Larry Pearl
Historic Preservation Beth Purcell
House & Garden Tour Patrick Crowley
Membership Janet Quigley
Zoning Gary Peterson

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Jean Kohanek, Layout

WEBMASTERS

Donna Breslin, Elizabeth Nelson

OFFICE MANAGER

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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

Historic Preservation Briefs

By Beth Purcell

The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) considered the following cases on April 23 and 30, 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.

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

432 New Jersey Avenue, SE, HPA 13-263.
A renewal of approval from HPRB in 2013.

527 6th Street SE, HPA 15-282,
concept/rear addition and deck. ★

BCA Finalizes Preservation Plan for Union Station

By Drury Tallant

In advance of plans to build Burnham Place in the air rights over the tracks at Union Station, the Union Station Preservation Coalition is lobbying for historic preservation and proper long term planning of the station's expansion. The Coalition was formed in 2013 specifically in response to the plans for Burnham Place. The Coalition is led by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, together with the Committee of 100, DC Preservation League, CHRS, and the District of Columbia Office of Planning.

Burnham Place would greatly expand the passenger terminal in conjunction with the 14-acre air rights project above a reconstructed rail yard. Burnham Place will bring significant changes to Union Station's retail areas and also alter circulation patterns through and around Union Station. The Coalition has worked closely with the Union Station Redevelopment Corporation (USRC)

to assure that the historic fabric of Union Station will be preserved, restored, and enhanced. (See Burnham Place's website at: www.burnhamplace.com.)

USRC recognized that a planning document was needed to guide any expansion, and engaged Building Conservation Associates (BCA) to develop the Preservation Plan. The purpose of the Preservation Plan is to identify and document the existing condition of historic fabric to be preserved and restored as changes are undertaken. The Coalition recently commented on the final draft of BCA's *Washington Union Station Preservation Plan*. The Coalition's letter is available on the CHRS website. After BCA's Preservation Plan is complete, the Coalition expects the Preservation Plan to be available online, and CHRS will provide a link to the completed document. ★

Piggly Wiggly Innovates on Independence Avenue

By Beth Purcell

In 1920, Piggly Wiggly supermarkets took Washington by storm, opening 26 stores in one day and opening still more in 1921. On opening day everyone received a free carnation. Piggly Wiggly's founder, Clarence Saunders, believed that retail groceries could be more profitable and provide a better shopping experience if customers could select their own groceries, pay and take their groceries home. Shoppers entered a Piggly Wiggly store through a turnstile, picked up a basket, then walked through the store's four aisles, arrayed with individually-priced items, selected what they wanted, went to the check-out counter, where a clerk added the purchases on an adding machine, the customer paid and the clerk placed the purchases in a free paper bag for the customer to bring home. Saunders's ideas no longer appear innovative. But prior to this, customers carried monthly accounts, clerks waited on customers individually and groceries were delivered to customers' residences. Apparently there were complaints about pushy clerks who played favorites with customers, delivery men who brought damaged groceries hours late, or left them outside.

Piggly Wiggly dealt directly with suppliers and cut out wholesale grocers. The chain's business model was to lease stores and staff them with its own employees (men only). Self-service required fewer clerks. By today's standards, the stores were small (the Hill East store was only 1,750 square feet) and carried only about 1,000 items.

The Hill East store at 1403 Independence Avenue, SE was designed by Frank R. Hollingshead, built in 1919 to dimensions of 25

feet wide by 70 feet deep at an estimated cost of \$4,000. The Piggly Wiggly store opened there in 1921 and operated through 1925. Other Piggly Wiggly locations on Capitol Hill in the early 1920s could be found at 412 and 715 8th Street, SE; 11 7th Street, NE; and 1333 and 1500 H Street, NE. Later, many of the Piggly Wiggly stores were acquired by other companies including Sanitary Grocery, which in turn was acquired by Safeway. Today there are more than 600 Piggly Wiggly stores in 17 states in the Midwest and South, each independently owned and operated.

After the Piggly Wiggly store closed at 1403 Independence, Eugene and Maude Racca, who lived at 1426 Ames Place, NE, used the location for the Crusty Pie Co. from 1929 to 1933. The bakery subsequently continued in business at other locations. In the 1940s and 1950s it was occupied by radio and appliance shops and in



Piggly-Wiggly advertisement in *Washington Evening Star*, 1920

the 1980s, a printing company. The building is now owned by Thankful Baptist Church. ★



IMAGE COURTESY BETH PURCELL

Groff Court Neighborhood Walking Tour

Saturday, June 20 | 10 am

Tour this historic neighborhood featuring Victorian houses, famous Washington builders, economic boom and bust, scandal, and life in the alley.

Meet at 324 E Street, NE, rain or shine. Free and open to the public; no reservations needed. Details: caphrs@aol.com, (202) 543-0425.

N&M House Detectives: Unlocking History

By Adrienne Williams

When Michelle Pilliod Carroll and Nina Tristani decided to research the history of their circa 1800s homes in Washington, DC, (both on C Street, SE), they never imagined that what began as a hobby fueled by curiosity would soon become a career.

"We had so much fun visiting libraries and combing through websites, but quickly learned that the research was a very lengthy process," said Michelle. "Learning to use microfilm and rewinding it properly was a trial for me," quips Nina. "And often times, it has been difficult to decipher the writing from over 200 years ago." One of the most challenging aspects of the project was locating archival photographs specific to this area. In order to respectfully highlight the history, imagery and the original local maps, they decided to print their discoveries in the format of a full-color coffee table book. They were so pleased with both their findings and the finished results that they thought others in the community may enjoy a similar book about their own homes, highlighting their unique and varied histories. And so began the birth of their company, N&M House Detectives: Unlocking History.

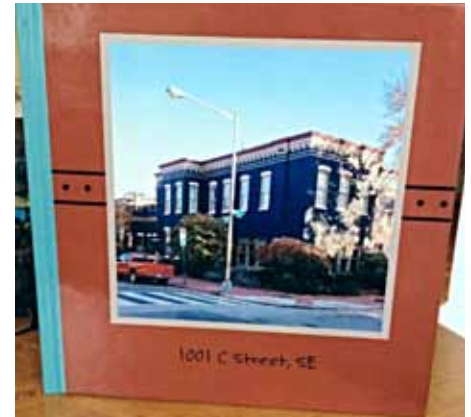
The DC area is extraordinarily rich in history. N&M House Detectives delves into the past of each house they research and provides the details about the original building permits, the names of those who have lived at that particular address, the occupations of the residents, the history of ownership, archival photographs of the property, and whatever other interesting and fun information they can uncover.

Some items of interest they have learned throughout this process. . .

Building permits were not required in DC before 1877. The War Department (later to become the Department of Defense in 1947) had to approve all building permits for alterations and extensions to existing properties beginning in the 1890s. This policy would continue until 1964. George Washington attended a local church and had his own pew. Walt Whitman served as a nurse at the local Civil War hospitals. Thomas Jefferson was one of the three original DC Commissioners and is represented by one of the three stars on our District's flag. And the discoveries go on.

Both Michelle and Nina were professionally involved in fields that lend themselves naturally to this new venture. Michelle owns and has operated Pilliod Meeting Planning (a full-service meeting and event company) for over twenty years. She is also a former Vice President of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society and, in that capacity has been heavily involved in the history and preservation of her neighborhood. Nina has worked in the publishing industry for over twenty-five years with organizations including the Smithsonian Institution and *Congressional Quarterly*. "Our new projects allow me to continue my work in publishing through the research, design, and the printing of these books," says Nina.

N&M House Detectives is currently working with realtors and their clients and look forward to collaborating with both veteran and new homeowners in the community. You can visit them at www.nmhousedetectives.com or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nmhousedetectives. ★



COURTESY PHOTO

Coffee table book developed by N&M House Detectives for 1001 C Street, SE.

Thank You, CHRS Supporters

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

BENEFACTOR

Muriel (Mimi) Wolf, for the Wolf Lecture series, "In memory of Richard N. Wolf"

SILVER SPONSOR

Todd & Jennifer Sperry

PATRON

Bernadette & Jim McMahon

NEW MEMBERS

Erin Caffrey
Claire Croft
Lea Crusey
David Gelios
Scott Gould
Faye Haselkorn
Jennifer Hirsch
Steffen Jacobson
Amy Kelley
Eric Kessler
Kirt Marsh
Justin Woulfe

saw this as a dangerous precedent that would lead only to more of the same. Doug Wheeler, then-chair of CHRS's Historic District Committee, noted that this status guaranteed little without stronger preservation laws. These were enacted with the help of CHRS, which drafted the legislation that became the Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act of 1978. The resulting ordinance regulates applications for demolition and alterations, not only on the Hill but also for historic districts throughout the city. CHRS agreed to provide the research for the Hill's nomination, submitted not by CHRS but by the Joint Committee for Landmarks itself. Then-CHRS president Peter Powers appointed local historian Ruth Ann Overbeck chair of the research committee.

Longtime CHRS members Hazel Kreinheder and her husband Bob still live in the house they bought in 1963; he has lived here since 1958. A recent interview with Hazel underscored the observation that the Hill does not warrant its reputation as a transient community. There are, and always have been, many long-term residents here. I was reminded of a neighbor who in 1969 or so had lived in his house on Massachusetts at 9th Street, NE for 50 some years.

One of Hazel's claims to fame is standing in front of the bulldozer attempting to demolish Mary's Blue Room. She agreed to work on the research needed to document the application, no small task with 8,000 buildings. There were two teams, Hazel and Jeanie Hinkle, and the late Ruth Ann Overbeck with Pat Ferguson. The latter team surveyed the area from the Capitol to 8th Street; Hazel and Jeanie from 8th Street to the Anacostia. These records are voluminous, and are on file with the CHRS records in Special Collections at

The George Washington University's Gelman Library. Hazel recounted a meeting in early 1974 with Suzanne Ganschinietz on the Joint Committee staff, who acquainted the teams with maps and real estate plats to aid in the research. The nomination was approved in 1976.

In its early days, CHRS set out to determine boundaries for the neighborhood, which have changed several times since. But this laid the groundwork for applying later for historic district status. Surrounded by federal government and military buildings, the stadium and armory, and Gallaudet University on the edge of the original city boundary of Florida Avenue, no one could have predicted the Hill's growth, originally concentrated in Southeast. Interestingly, a number of both the early members of CHRS and its first meetings places were in Northeast.

A 1959 "boundary report" defined the Hill as being mostly in Southeast, with a small slice of Northeast, south as far as G Street and west to South Capitol Street. The current Historic District map can be found on the CHRS website, (along with historic district guidelines for homeowners). It is the largest residential historic district in DC, and one of the largest in the country. Its borders have had to jog around several others, mostly in Northeast, one an urban renewal area (one can't be both) and an area at 15th and C NE that was outside the original city limits. On the west, the federal buildings are not included. On the south the boundary now parallels Virginia Avenue, except for a jog across it to the Washington Navy Yard Historic District. The area includes a number of individually landmarked structures.

The Hill's houses represent many architectural styles that span the



Hazel Kreinheder on front of her home on Capitol Hill.

IMAGE COURTESY LUCINDA P. JANKE

whole of the city's history. While the current boundaries of the historic district are clear, the neighborhood continues to expand – south around Nationals Park, east as far as it can go up to the stadium and other official properties, and almost exploding north past Florida Avenue and into the developing Union Market area. The 2015 house tour took place entirely in the formerly neglected Northeast Quadrant.

The significance of the historic district comes clear with the recent development of buildings known as pop-ups, of which there are a number in areas immediately beyond the borders of the protected area. If Dick Wolf was apoplectic about large buildings changing the character of the Hill section of Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, he'd be aghast at the development of these "pop-ups." ★

2015 House Tour Showcased Northeast Capitol Hill

By Patrick Crowley

The 58th Annual CHRS House & Garden Tour proved to be another great example of the variety of home styles on Capitol Hill with traditional Victorians, Wardman, and Federalist flat fronts mixed with a Scottish parsonage, rooftop aerie, and modern infill. Interior décor was just as varied. There were enough antiques to host our own Antiques Roadshow, yet plenty of modern pieces and styles to please the iconoclasts among us. Many heartfelt thanks to the homeowners who opened their doors to the neighborhood—they once again came through in spades!

As the Society's primary fundraising event for the year, the House & Garden Tour is critical to the continuing operation of CHRS. Through the efforts of our spectacular retail and real estate partners, we met our revenue goals. Next time you stop by their establishments (see box, right), please be sure to thank them for their solid community support. And a shout of thanks to the several underwriters who made donations in support of the Tour—true stars of the community.

It's never too early to start planning for the next tour. If you'd be interested in having your home on the Tour next year, or you can volunteer to staff a home, sell tickets, or advertise in the Program, give us a holler. The Tour is a wonderful joint effort of homeowners, commercial partners, volunteers, and visitors—a great example of what makes Capitol Hill the best place to live in DC. ★

Thank You to Our House Tour Partners!

Appalachian Spring

American Crafts
50 Massachusetts Avenue, NE

Berkshire Hathaway

Real Estate Agents
216 7th Street, SE

Coldwell Banker

Real Estate Agents
605 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE

Groovy dc

Cards & Gifts
321 7th Street, SE

Hill Center

Community Gathering Place
921 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE

Hill's Kitchen

Everything for the Cook
713 D Street, SE

homebody

Good Things for Our Homes
715 8th Street, SE

Labyrinth

Puzzles & Games for all Ages
645 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE

Capitol Hill 4th of July Parade



IMAGE COURTESY ELIZABETH NELSON

Join with your friends and neighbors on July 4! Again this year, CHRS will celebrate Independence Day by fielding a contingent in the Capitol Hill Parade.

We'll carry the CHRS banner and toss Mardis Gras beads into the crowd. The route begins at the I-295/395 overpass (at 8th and I Streets, SE) and ends at the Eastern Market Metro Plaza. The parade starts at 10 a.m. and will take one hour from start to finish. If you would like to participate, contact Elizabeth Nelson, elizabeth_knits@yahoo.com—or just show up a half-hour in advance and find our crew. It's a lot of fun!



CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

Capitol Hill Restoration Society

420 Tenth Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003

Mark Your Calendar!

JUNE

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

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

15 Monday, 6:45 pm
CHRS Annual Meeting and Guest
Speaker Stephen Ayers, Architect of the
Capitol. National Community Church,
535 8th Street, SE. Open to the public.
Details: CHRS office, (202) 543-0425.

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.

20 Saturday, 10 am
Groff Court Neighborhood Walking Tour.
Meet at 324 E Street, NE. The tour will be
held rain or shine. Free and open to the
public; no reservations needed. Details:
CapHRS@aol.com or (202) 543-0425.

JULY

4 Saturday, 10 am
CHRS will be marching in the annual
Capitol Hill 4th of July parade! If you'd
like to take part, find us under the
freeway overpass at the foot of Barrack's
Row before the parade starts.
Details: Elizabeth Nelson,
Elizabeth_knits@yahoo.com.

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.

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.