www.chrs.org February 2016

59th Annual House and Garden Tour

By Patrick Crowley

Planning for the 59th Annual Mother's Day House and Garden Tour is already underway. The Tour is our major annual fundraising effort that supports the work we do to protect Capitol Hill's unique character. For sure the bulk of the work we do is volunteer-based—attending zoning meetings, studying planning documents, negotiating with builders and providing testimony before the Historic Preservation Review Board. But even a volunteer-based non-profit such as ourselves must maintain a

modest income to stay afloat and support our mission.

Every year we highlight a different part of the Hill and try to keep the footprint to an easy stroll. Getting a feel for the character of different pockets of Capitol Hill is part of the fun. This year we turn to the Barracks Row neighborhood, centered on 8th Street, SE but extending between 5th and 11th Streets, SE to the west and east and between North Carolina and Virginia Avenues, SE to the north and south.

So, a house and garden tour needs homes and gardens. Got one? It doesn't have be an award-winner, although we do take those as well. Similarly, it doesn't have to be "historic" in a monumental way—it's not necessary that George Washington slept there once. But if you have a nice collection of artwork, interesting wall treatments, an unusual layout, a hidden garden, or a grand staircase, we'd love to include you in the 2016 Tour. And if George did sleep there, you're in!

Volunteering your home or garden for the Tour is a truly valuable contribution to the Society. We'll need

Also in this issue

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Homes and Gardens Needed for 2016 House and Garden Tour: Why Not Yours?

If you'd like your home or garden to be considered for the Tour, take the following quiz:

- Is it on Capitol Hill in the "Greater" Barracks Row area (5th to 11th Streets, SE and Virginia Avenue to North Carolina Avenue, SE)?
- Is it structurally sound?
- Does it have any interesting features?
- Can it be available both Saturday, May 7 and Sunday, May 8?
- Does all exterior renovation work comply with historic preservation standards?
- Are you willing to let a lot of neighbors walk through your home under the watchful eyes of our docents?

If you answered "Yes" to each of these questions, we want to talk to you! E-mail Patrick Crowley via the CHRS main office, CapHRS@aol.com.

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President's Column: Winter Wonderland on Capitol Hill

By Lisa Dale Jones

s I write this, it's just a couple of Adays since the huge storm Jonas dumped about two feet of snow on the District. My arms still ache from shoveling our back alley and getting all that snow off our somewhat fragile historic balcony. I'm watching neighbors shovel through fourfoot high mounds of snow left by snowplows to get their cars out. But some people are having fun—walking by Providence Park this afternoon, there was a large snow fort, complete with crenellated ramparts. And people were allowed to sled down the hill in front of the US Capitol.

Having moved here six years ago from Boston, I'm always a little surprised how difficult it is for DC to deal with snow. But I suppose that if you believe you have milder winters, then you don't have the infrastructure in place to deal with snow—more plows, more salt, more drivers.

One thing is clear from walking around the Hill today: official snow removal is only aimed at helping drivers. Plows were clearing intersections by pushing six-foot high mounds of snow right to the sidewalk corners, making it impossible for pedestrians to get across. Forget about wheelchair ramps! And, as usual, sidewalks in front of apartment buildings weren't shoveled, nor were the sidewalks around and through Folger Park—the responsibility of the National Park Service. Across the street at Providence Park, however, the Architect of the Capitol had done a wonderful job of clearing the snow.

One thing I did see a lot of represents the best of Capitol Hill: groups of neighbors working together to clear snow. It's that neighborly attitude that makes the Hill special! **

Recruiting New Members: We Need YOU!

We need your help! We're working to expand our membership to increase support for the important work CHRS does to preserve our historic Capitol Hill community. Do you have neighbors, friends or colleagues in the neighborhood that you think might be interested in learning more about CHRS? We can work together! We've provided sample text below that you can borrow to plug into a friendly email to your contacts. Feel free to personalize it to underscore why YOU value CHRS!

Hi [neighbors/friends/colleagues],

As you may know I am a member of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society. The year 2016 is going to be another great year for CHRS but we could use an influx of new members to make it even better. I know you value and appreciate the Capitol Hill neighborhood; CHRS truly needs people just like you to support the important work that we do. You can learn more about membership by visiting our website at: www.chrs.org and clicking the blue JOIN/DONATE button on the home page. You can also come see yourself by joining me in person at the quarterly members' meeting, which will be held on February 24. We'd love to have you!

Please e-mail CapHRS@aol.com if you would like this text e-mailed to you.

Q&A On Home Maintenance and Repair

CHRS encourages members and non-members to email questions about historic district guidelines. We try to answer questions as best we can. If you have a question, please contact CapHRS@aol.com

- Q: We learned that the owner of the rowhouse next to us plans to install a large, industrial-looking utility meter box on the front of the house, bolted to the wall on his house, but right up against our stairs, where we will see it every time we come or go. What are the rules concerning the location of a utility meter?
- **A:** The Historic Preservation Review Board has issued guidelines on utility meters in historic districts. All changes to a building should be compatible, especially if visible from the street. Ideally, electric meters should be on the interior. If placed on the exterior, they should be as low and unobtrusive as possible and substantially below a pedestrian's line of sight and established fence lines; they should not obstruct views across adjoining front yards. Utility meter boxes should be painted to match or blend with the color of the building or surroundings. (Valves, hinges, connections and display monitors should not be painted.)

See specifications and examples at www.planning.dc.gov > Historic Preservation > Design Guidelines > "Design Guidelines for Utility Meters."

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

Zoning Briefs

By Gary Peterson

The CHRS Zoning Committee met on January 14, 2016 and considered the following cases:

BZA 19165, 1301 H Street, NE. The owner of this property, a former church on the southeast corner of 13th and H Streets, NE is going to demolish the modern church and build a four-story mixed commercial and residential building. The owner needs relief from the parking and loading requirements. No loading dock will be built and only two of the 14 required parking spaces will be provided. The lot is an unusual "L" shape and has a curb cut on 13th Street. The shape of the lot and the location of the curb cut make it extremely difficult to provide loading and parking. The committee voted to support the application. One interesting note is the plans call for two 3 bed/2 bath units and one 2 bed/2 bath unit per floor — a welcome addition to the market.

BZA 19153, 1524 Independence Avenue, SE. This case involves a variance to reduce of the number of parking spaces available for a condominium from eight to two. The developer believes that he kept ownership of the spaces and can proceed without the condominium board's approval. The applicant did not appear at the meeting and the committee, believing that this is a condominium law issue, took no position. The case is not set for hearing until February 23 and the committee will invite the applicant to that meeting.

BZA 19207, 518 6th Street, NE. This is an appeal by ANC6C to the issuance of a building permit for this vacant dwelling. The building footprint exceeds 60% of the lot area and needs a special exception in order to proceed with construction.

For some unknown the reason the Building Administrator issued a building permit and failed to require that the case go to the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) for a special exception. The Zoning Administrator and the Director of the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) have failed to answer any of the ANC's questions thus requiring this appeal. The committee voted to support the appeal.

ZC 15-12, 1401 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. This application involves a planned unit development (PUD) for what is currently the New York Pizza property. The site comprises 28,000 square feet and is zoned C-2-A with a portion split-zoned R-4. The applicant proposed to build 170 to 190 units and to have 22,000 square feet of ground floor retail. The property is close to the Potomac Avenue Metro station and for this reason is considered for higher density. The applicant will widen the existing alley from 10 feet to 20 feet to allow for loading, trash pickup, and automobile and bicycle parking. The car and bicycle parking will have separate garages. The applicant has tapered the building so as not to loom over the adjacent residential property. The building will be seven stories in height but there will be no penthouse because the usual mechanical elements will be in the center of the seventh floor. The applicant is also proposing to include 3-bedroom units in the building including in the inclusionary units. Currently, there are no 3-bedroom units in the inclusionary zoning inventory. The committee voted to support the project.

Continued on page 7

Historic Preservation Briefs

by Beth Purcell

The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB or the Board) considered the following case on December 17, 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. There was only case on the calendar (and no calendar cases):

1220 Potomac Avenue, SE, HPA 13-566, new construction. This is a noncontributing building constructed in 1998 by Habitat for Humanity on a frying pan-shaped lot fronting on Potomac Avenue, SE and a panhandle fronting on I Street, SE. The property is zoned R-5-B. In a hearing before HPRB in June 2014, the Board generally approved the concept but decided that the applicant could not continue to use the existing curb cut on Potomac Avenue. (CHRS did not object to retaining the Potomac Avenue curb cut, but testified against opening a new curb cut on I Street.) The applicant has revised the plans that HPRB reviewed in 2014. The project would create eight units, incorporating the existing house on the property and continuing the building line on the block. There will be no on-site parking (per variance received from Board of Zoning Adjustment) and no roof deck.

The project requires eight condensers, which appeared in the panhandle and next to the building in the October 2015 plans. At the request of ANC 6B, the applicant

investigated the possibility of relocating all condensers to the roof of the building, to be accessed through a roof hatch. However, a sight-line study in the October plans showed that the condensers on the roof would be visible from public space. CHRS supported relocating the condensers to the roof of the building and when we met with the applicant, we explored the possibility of raising the parapet, which would have the following beneficial effects: (1) eliminating the visibility of the condensers on the roof, (2) accentuating the cornice, and (3) enhancing green space on the site.

The applicant incorporated this suggestion in the revised plans in December, raising the parapet by three feet. The revised sightline study indicated that the condensers would not be visible from public space. However, while the December plans showed the higher cornice it also added elongated windows on the third story, which appeared out of scale with the other windows on the house and with the fenestration of other houses on the block. CHRS supported the higher cornice with uniform windows, or the applicant's suggestion of a 42-inch screen around the condensers. HPRB asked about adding windows to the blank wall on the east elevation. The applicant promised to contact the neighbor facing that wall about possibly adding windows there. The applicant has changed the glass entrance door to 8 feet tall, which better complements the windows.

CHRS testified that the project is compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District. HPRB approved the concept, including Option B (but without the elongated windows) noting that many Capitol Hill houses have tall cornices and adding that

the stringcourses should be under the windows, that the stair railing in front should be light and simple, that meters should not be on the front of the building and that the possibility of windows on the east elevation be explored.

CHRS suggested that if HPRB approves this project, that the order require the applicant to eliminate the concrete driveway (excavating and removing all concrete) and to eliminate the existing curb cut on Potomac Avenue, SE. As HPRB pointed out in the hearing on this case in 2014, curb cuts are not compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District. In the current plans the curb cut remains, the driveway location appears as grass and the existing fence across the front of the property would remain. However, this fence has an opening for access to the driveway. In the future, if the curb cut remains in place, it would still be possible (and certainly tempting) for people to drive through the curb cut and park in the front yard on the grass. The applicant promised to seek a public space permit to remove the curb cut.

There were no cases on the consent calendar. ★

Interested in learning more about historic district designation?

Contact CHRS at caphrs@aol.com.

Cindy Janke: An Appreciation

By Nancy Metzger

On January 16, family, friends, co-workers and neighbors gathered in historic Christ Church for the memorial service for Cindy Janke who died October 27, 2015 of injuries suffered in a fall in her home. As several speakers noted, Cindy loved to find connections—between organizations, people, places, facts, numbers. If you knew Cindy, it was likely she'd know someone else you should meet, an organization you should know about, or perhaps simply an obscure fact that she thought interesting and thought you would enjoy. She made such connections not only in her personal life but also professionally as a historian and curator.

One of her important contributions as a historian is the research that she and her friend Ruth Ann Overbeck undertook to tell the story of William Prout, one of the least known of the 19 original landholders of the Federal City. Their portrait of Prout as "Capitol Hill's Community Builder" in the Spring/Summer volume of Washington History meant he was no longer simply a name on a list of 19, overshadowed by Daniel

Send Your E-mail Address!

We're missing the email addresses for a surprising number of CHRS members. Please help us be more efficient when sending announcements about CHRS events and activities by providing us with your address. We'll also save on paper and postage costs. Send your email address today to the office at CapHRS@aol.com. Thank you!

Carroll and others with greater social connections, but that his business acumen and his civic endeavors were finally acknowledged for their impact in the development of Washington and particularly that of Capitol Hill. They argued that his decision to focus not just on selling his lots for a profit but also on establishing the infrastructure of community lifechurches (including Christ Church), the first Eastern Market at 5th and K Streets, SE, near the Anacostia River, the Anacostia Fire Company and many other ventures—meant that he not only avoided the fate of financial reversals suffered by many of the other original 19 but also that the Navy Yard area of the Hill became a well-established "village" during the first decades of the 19th century. After the death of her partner-in-research and co-author, Cindy continued collecting details about Prout's family in both Washington and England (and dearly loved telling people that some lived in the charming village of Chipping Sodbury) and was on a constant look-out for a drawing of the Slater-Prout house that stood near 8th and M Streets, SE.

Cindy knew the power of stories to help people see the ordinary in a new way. She told the stories carefully, highlighting the facts but with delight and infectious enthusiasm whether during a walking tour, presenting a lecture, or writing a book. She consulted on exhibitions and was curator or cocurator of others, including "For the Record: The Art of Lily Spandorf," currently on view at the new George Washington University Museum.

Cindy was also a practitioner of William Prout's lesson of living—build up the community—so she was an active community volunteer from the time she moved to the

Hill in 1968. She volunteered for her children's schools, CHRS house tours, for the Board of Historic Congressional Cemetery, the Washington Historical Society, the Washington Chapter of the Victorian Society and other organizations. She shared her deep knowledge of Capitol Hill and Washington history by writing essays, contributing to books and by speaking at four Overbeck Capitol Hill History lectures (the breweries of Capitol Hill; John Philip Sousa; William Prout and the Civil War; and a talk that came out of her 2013 book, A Guide to Civil War Washington, DC).

Last year, as part of the 60th anniversary celebration of the founding of CHRS, Cindy wrote an article that appeared in the January 2015 Hill Rag in which she looked at Capitol Hill's history from a perspective that she knew wellits "long tradition of community activism." She cited the work of William Prout, Albert Carry and Michael Weller—all community leaders in the 19th century—and noted the work of neighborhood residents in establishing the historic district, protesting the closure of the police substation, supporting the reopening of Eastern Market (mentioning the late Steve Cymrot, of Riverby Books and countless other pursuits, as one of the contemporary activists). Of course, Cindy herself was part of that long line of volunteer activists who invested their knowledge, time, skills and enthusiasm on behalf of her community, for which we are eternally grateful. *

Planning Continues for New Barracks at MBW Annex

By Beth Purcell

Several years ago, the Marine Corps began planning to build a new barracks to replace the barracks at 8th and I Streets, SE (which no longer meets Department of Defense's force protection rules). The new barracks requires 90,000 square feet, and a 66-foot standoff distance for protection; it would be a challenge to find a site that fits with the Capitol Hill landscape while meeting these requirements. As of April 2015, the Marine Corps was considering five sites:

Site A: Squares 929, 900 and L Street, SE (L Street between 8th and 9th Streets, SE) within the Capitol Hill Historic District, the square east of the Blue Castle on 8th Street, SE). These squares contain 14 historic buildings used for businesses and a planned condominium project, which would all need to be demolished to build the new barracks and would create a dead zone on 8th Street.

Site B: Square 976 (L Street between 10th and 11th Streets, SE) adjacent to the Capitol Hill Historic District, where the Washington Humane Society plans to build its Community Animal Care and Education Center.

Site C: A federally-owned portion of square 953 on M Street, SE west of the Washington Navy Yard, where the General Services Administration had already agreed with Forrest City to rehabilitate historic buildings and construct new office and residential buildings.

Site D: A site inside the Washington Navy Yard.

Site E: A site on the grounds of the Marine Barracks Washington Annex on 6th Street, SE.

CHRS, together with ANC 6B, Barracks Row, Capitol Riverfront BID and others, strongly urged the Marine Corps to select one of the federally-owned Sites D or E. In July 2015, the Marine Corps announced that Site E, the Annex, was the preferred alternative for locating the new barracks. This was an important and positive development. It will be possible to build the new barracks at the Annex, while preserving public access to the baseball field and basketball court (which would remain at the Annex in new locations). In 2015, as required for a

federal undertaking such as the new barracks, the consultation process under section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act began. Section 106 requires the Marine Corps to determine how historic properties will be affected, explore measures to reduce harm to historic properties and reach an agreement with the State Historic Preservation Office (DC Historic Preservation Office) on measures to resolve any adverse effects. Sixth Street, SE is part of the L'Enfant Plan, a historic landmark. The new barracks at the Annex would partially block the view shed on 6th Street. However, as CHRS has pointed out, the view shed on 6th Street, SE is already blocked by the Southeast/ Southwest Freeway, and 6th Street terminates shortly thereafter at K Street, SE. Additional Section 106 consultation meetings are planned. ★

Thank You, CHRS Supporters

We thank the following new members and donors.

NEW

Virginia Vitucci

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Nick Alberti & Elizabeth Nelson Lemoyne Blackshear Michael Halebian Susan Burgerman Scott Davis & Jennifer Cate

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Thomas Grooms Gary Peterson Harriet Rogers

CHRS Needs a Newsletter Editor!

Do you have a solid background in writing and editing? Do you love the work that CHRS does on Capitol Hill? If you're looking for a way to get more involved, editing our monthly newsletter may be a good fit!

Responsibilities include assigning and editing articles for 10 issues per year. You should be able to attend monthly Board meetings (the third Tuesday evening of the month, except August and December) and other CHRS events as necessary in order to write or edit articles about them. Once a month, you'll need up to two weekdays to prepare the next edition on a tight deadline, with a backup editor to help with final copyediting. The new editor will work alongside the current editor for several months to learn the job. To find out more about this rewarding volunteer position, please contact Justine P. Bello at: justine.bello@hotmail.com.

Overbeck Lecture: Tom Lewis on Our National City

By John Franzen

On the evening of Monday,
February 8, the Overbeck History
Lecture Series welcomes Tom Lewis,
author of the highly acclaimed
Washington: A History of Our National
City, for an illustrated book talk
emphasizing the Capitol Hill
neighborhood's role in the long and
varied pageant of the Federal City.

The first comprehensive history of the District of Columbia since Constance McLaughlin Green's Pulitzer Prize-winning effort more than fifty years ago, Lewis's book presents Washington's story as a series of portraits of individuals, both acclaimed and obscure, who built the city, shaped its politics and culture and promoted or impeded the rights of its citizens.

Tom Lewis is a professor emeritus of English at Skidmore College and the author of several books, including The Hudson: A History; Empire of the Air: The Men Who Made Radio; and Divided Highways: The Interstate Highway System and the Transformation of American Life. He has also collaborated with director Ken Burns and Florentine Films on a number of documentary films for public television, serving as a consultant,

writer, director of research, and coproducer.

The lecture will be held at Hill Center at 921 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE at 7:30 p.m. and is sponsored by the Capitol Hill Community Foundation. As of press time, the event is already at capacity, but you can place yourself on the waiting list by visiting this webpage: www.hillcenterdc.org/home/programs/2578 or call (202) 549-4172. The event will conclude with an author book signing. ★

Rescheduled Members' Meeting, February 24: Historic Preservation and Community-Building on Capitol Hill

The guest speaker for our next Members' Meeting is Rhonda Sincavage, Director of Publications and Programs at the National Trust for Historic Preservation. (This meeting was originally scheduled for Monday, January 25 but was rescheduled due to Winter Storm Jonas.) Ms. Sincavage will explore the relationships between historic preservation, quality of life and the continued vibrancy of our community. Capitol Hill is on the cusp of rapid change and as a community we are forced to confront and question the economics, diversity and environmental sustainability of the Historic District. In a 2011 TED Talk, Ms Sincavage very effectively addressed these and other relevant issues for historic preservation in the national context and will bring the discussion home to Capitol Hill at the January meeting.

The event will be held on Wednesday, February 24, 2016, at Maury Elementary School, 1250 Constitution Avenue, NE; entrance is on the 200 block of 13th Street. Doors will open at 6:30 pm; the Members' Meeting will begin at 6:40 pm and the presentation will begin promptly at 7 pm. As always, it is free and open to the public, so please bring your friends and neighbors!

House Tour, *continued from cover*

a lot of volunteers down the road for the Tour itself but without your home or garden (or both!), it won't happen. The Tour is always Mother's Day weekend, which this year is May 7th and 8th, 2016. Saturday hours are from 4:00pm to 7:00pm, Sunday from 12:00pm to 5:00pm. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Patrick Crowley via the CHRS office, CapHRS@aol.com. ★

Zoning, continued from page 3

ZC 04-33G, Amendments to Inclusionary Zoning. The Coalition for Smarter Growth requests an amendment to the Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) regulations. The portion of the amendments that will directly impact the R-4 and C-2-A zones is unacceptable to the committee. In particular, the committee opposes reducing the IZ minimum lot width from 16 feet to 15 feet in the R-4 and changing the lot occupancy from

75% to 100% and the height from 50 to 60 feet in the C-2-A. Fortunately the Office of Planning agrees with us and recommends no change to these zones. The committee also voted to oppose the proposal to allow establishing the IZ units off-site in another building. We believe that this is contrary to IZ objectives and will cluster low- and moderate-income housing, a practice that has already proven to be a failure. ★



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

Mark Your Calendar!

FEBRUARY

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

Monday, 7:30 pm Overbeck Lecture by Tom Lewis on his latest book on Washington history, Hill Center at the Old Naval Hospital, 921 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. Details: Hill Center, (202) 549-4172.

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. 24 Wednesday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Membership Meeting (rescheduled from January 25). Maury Elementary School, 1250 Constitution Avenue, NE; enter from the 200 block of 13th Street. Membership meeting at 6:40 pm; at 7 pm, presentation by Rhonda Sincavage, Director of Publications and Programs at the National Trust for Historic Preservation. She will speak on Historic Preservation and Community Building on Capitol Hill.

MARCH

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

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59th Annual Capitol Hill House and Garden Tour Saturday, May 7 · 4–7 pm | Sunday, May 8 · 12–5 pm More information available at (202) 543-0425 or www.chrs.org.