



CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

NEWS

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November 2016

September Members' Forum: Cemeteries and Graveyards of Capitol Hill

By Susan Burgerman

The Fall 2016 CHRS Members' Forum was held on September 28 at the Congressional Cemetery Chapel, an appropriate venue for the Forum topic: "Cemeteries (and Graveyards) of Capitol Hill."

The quarterly business meeting preceded the presentation; the main agenda item was the 2016-17 fiscal year budget. Susan Oursler, the Budget and Administration Committee Chair, presented the budget, which had been published in the last newsletter, for discussion. A vote was taken and the budget passed without objections.

The guest speaker was Matthew Gilmore, a leading authority on Washington history and former reference, collection development, and special projects librarian at the Washingtoniana Division of the DC Public Library. His blog, matthewbgilmore.wordpress.com, is a rich source of articles and resources concerning the history and current affairs of our city. The remainder of this article is an overview of his presentation.

The City of Washington in the District of Columbia was chartered in 1800. Prior to becoming the nation's capital, the region was occupied by



IMAGE COURTESY PATRICK LALLY

Speaker Matthew Gilmore explains the current and former locations of cemeteries on Capitol Hill at the Members' Forum.

a few major landowners and some smaller farms. Burial practices were not centralized; the families either had plots on their own property, or buried their dead in churchyards.

When the region was organized under the L'Enfant Plan into squares and quadrants, the new city's commissioners selected two areas at the far east and west corners to serve as public cemeteries. The previously-existing burial plots were not factored into the planning. The only records of their locations appear in the maps of city surveyor Nicholas King, and only

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President's Column: Giving Thanks

By the time you read this, Thanksgiving will be just around the corner—one of my favorite holidays. I enjoy its simplicity—no gifts to buy or decorations to string up. It doesn't overstay its welcome, being done in a day. It's not tied to a particular faith, so its pleasures are available to all. Expectations are low and so is the chance of disappointment.

I also appreciate the reminder that I have a lot to be thankful for; perspective matters.

Abigail Adams, in a letter to her husband John, expressed gratitude that she had "all of life's necessities and so many of its comforts." Keep in mind that she did not have central heat, indoor plumbing, electricity, fresh fruit in winter, mass transit, internet access or a cell phone.

I have all that and more: The Blue & White Machine (aka, Eastern High School marching band) doing practice runs in front of my house; the Young Artists Gallery at Hill Center; the Capitol Hill Community Foundation and the youth programs it funds; Crocs, polar fleece and GORE-TEX; the Capitol Hill 4th of July Parade; a Literary Feast; Hilloween and Halloween (we know how to party); Frenchie's pastries; H Street Farmers Market and Eastern Market; Freecycle; flu shots; our Ward 6 arborist and my good buddies at Trees for Capitol Hill; sidewalk chalk drawings and meadow-in-a-can gardens; knitting needles and yarn, delivered to my door; Little Free Libraries; loving friends and friendly neighbors; my husband, a steadfast companion

and the best cook I know; my fellow CHRS Directors and volunteers, and you, our members—the Hill is my home; I appreciate all you do to preserve and protect the place that is most precious to me.

I hope when you count your own blessings, you'll have a list at least as long as mine.

Happy Thanksgiving!

— Elizabeth

Members' Forum, *continued from cover*

noted there because they were in the path of the expanding road system and would need to be relocated. All traces of them have vanished.

The designated Eastern cemetery was located at the city's northern boundary (Boundary Road, now Florida Ave), roughly near what is now the Atlas District. The location, hardly approachable by road, was isolated and inconvenient and therefore under-used by residents. It was eventually replaced by the present Congressional Cemetery.

Several known private burial places and graveyards were established and vanished as well. For example, there was for a brief time a Graceland Cemetery situated just outside the city boundary and just east of the old Eastern burial ground, on what is now the site of Hechinger Mall.

St. Peter's Church originally buried its parishioners in the churchyard. When that became overcrowded, St. Peter's obtained a graveyard site on H Street, NE. The German Lutheran cemetery was already there, more or less across H Street from St. Peter's new site.

In 1852 a regulation was passed forbidding the establishment of new cemeteries within the Washington City boundaries. By the 1860s, both St. Peter's and the German Lutheran graveyards had become overcrowded and were then relocated outside of the city.

During the same period, two Methodist cemeteries—Ebenezer and Union Beneficial—were immediately adjacent to Congressional Cemetery. Both were removed in the 1890s. Some of the bodies that had been

interred at Ebenezer were relocated to Congressional, but the whereabouts of the rest remains a mystery.

Mr. Gilmore left the audience with a teaser: there were graveyards at the Washington Asylum/Workhouse complex on Reservation 13, but the history of those and their relocation is another story—one which we hope Mr. Gilmore will return to tell us. ☆

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ABOUT CHRS

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

Since its founding in 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 Committee Report

By Gary Peterson

During a meeting held on October 13, 2016, the committee considered the following three cases:

BZA# 19337. This case is the appeal by a neighbor of 325 5th Street, SE, from the issuance of a building permit by the Zoning Administrator. The property in question was the subject of a BZA order in BZA# 18938 dated October 15, 2015. The owner of 325 5th Street received special exceptions to construct an addition. The appellant appeared in the case, objected to the addition, and lost. He now attempts to appeal the decision of the BZA by appealing the issuance of the building permit. The committee found that the Zoning Administrator properly issued a permit based on the plans approved by the BZA in 18938 and the appellant cannot appeal any error committed by the BZA in this manner. The committee recommends opposing the appeal.

BZA# 19352. This case involves the request for special exceptions to make a rear addition at 328 12th Street, SE. The applicant needs special exceptions because the lot is substandard in size and width. The applicant also needs a special exception to enlarge the lot occupancy to 63%. The committee voted to support the application.

BZA# 19357. This case involves the application for an area variance to construct a deck at the rear of the property located at 712 8th Street, NE. The property contains 1219 square feet, is 16.25 feet wide, and has a lot occupancy of 72.4%. There is currently no deck but just stairs that lead to the ground from the back door. Adjacent properties have similar configurations. The zoning regulations specify that for an area variance the applicant must prove that the strict application of the zoning regulation would result in peculiar and exceptional practical difficulties to the owner of the property. The committee found that the applicant did not meet this test regarding a deck and voted to oppose the application. ★

November Preservation Café: Zoning

Join us for the November CHRS Preservation Café, where we welcome District Zoning Administrator Matt LeGrant as our speaker.

Thursday, November 10, 6:30–7:15 pm
Ebenezers Coffee House, 2nd & F Streets, NE

Second Emerald Street Walking Tour Draws Second Large Crowd

By Beth Purcell

On October 8, 2016, CHRS held a second walking tour of Emerald Street, NE (between E, F, 13th, and 14th Streets). Emerald Street is a one-block street lined with brick Queen Anne houses. Tour attendees learned about population trends, architectural styles, and methods of brick construction, and how the rapid growth of the middle class in the late 19th century created a demand for housing on Capitol Hill.

Speculators and developers searched for vacant land that could be subdivided for rowhouses for the middle-class market. As of early 1892, square 1029, the future site of Emerald Street, was open space. Two speculators, William Mayse and Louis D. Wine, formed a syndicate and bought the entire square.

Square 1029, like many other squares on Capitol Hill, was surveyed when the city was founded; it was divided into 26 lots, fronting on E, F, 13th or 14th Street with access to an H-shaped alley. In 1892, Mayse and Wine widened the alley to create Emerald Street in order to create additional circulation in the square, allowing them to add more rowhouse lots, 169 in total.

In 1895, Francis S. Carmody subdivided again to add one more lot.¹ Soon after their subdivision was approved, Mayse and Wine began selling rowhouse lots. They sold quickly: by 1894 there were 43 owners and Mayse held a part interest in only four lots. George P. Newton bought lots on Emerald Street, and was already building Queen Anne brick houses in 1892.

As the map shows, many houses were built between 1892 and 1895, and the balance of Emerald Street was built

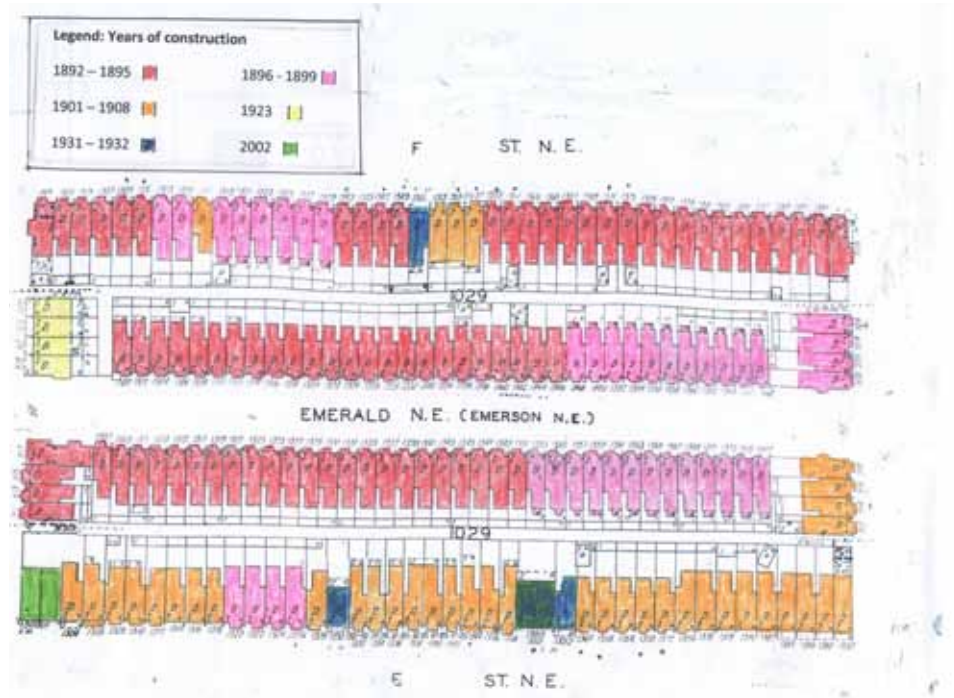


IMAGE COURTESY BETH PURCELL

Map showing years of house construction: Baist map annotated by Beth Purcell.

out by 1899. This rapid construction reflects the demand for the houses. During the mid-1890s, there was an economic downturn and the building activity in the city declined. Despite this headwind, construction on Emerald Street was unaffected by the downturn and proceeded quickly.

The next period of construction was during Urban Renewal. H Street, NE was extensively damaged during the riots following the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in April 1968. DC government established an H Street Urban Renewal Area which included Square 1029. The DC Redevelopment Land Agency (RLA) boarded up damaged buildings, purchased fire-damaged, vacant, and abandoned properties and severely dilapidated buildings on H Street, NE, and began new construction of low- and moderate-income housing, and rehabilitation of existing housing.

Unlike in Southwest Washington, Square 1029 was spared demolition. Instead, RLA's Urban Renewal was a

multi-year effort to rehabilitate houses on Emerald Street and throughout Square 1029 (88 houses in the square, including 39 on Emerald Street).

RLA's mandatory residential rehabilitation standards set out detailed requirements for structural components, party walls, fire-resistant construction, air circulation, kitchens, bathrooms, interior stairs, central heating, hot water heater, 1000 AMPS electric service, bedrooms and closets. Exterior walls were required to provide safe and adequate support for all loads upon them and protect against water or excessive moisture. Dishwashers and air conditioning were not required.² RLA rehabilitated and sold houses to new owners for \$25,000; they had to agree not to resell the houses for at least two years.

The Emerald Street Walking Tour handouts are available online: www.chrs.org > CHRS Activities > Walking Tours. ★

Continued next page

DDOT Agrees to Minimize Light Pollution from Streetlights on Maryland Avenue

By Beth Purcell

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has been working since 2011 to redesign Maryland Avenue, NE, to improve safety. DDOT recently circulated for public comment its 30 percent completion of the engineering portion of the project, including new Washington Globe street lights. These lights, unless shielded, can create glare, light pollution and intrude into homes. To prevent these adverse effects, CHRS joined ANC 6C

to recommend that all Washington Globe streetlights installed as part of the Maryland Avenue redesign be shielded or equipped with a “full cut-off.”

The Washington Globe was selected as the city’s official streetlight in 1923. DDOT’s “Streetlight Policy and Design Guidelines” (2013) show basically the same Washington Globe lights as the 1923 design. Light pollution is an environmental problem: excessive

light spills upward into the sky, where it is not needed for vehicle or pedestrian safety, creating glare and interfering with bird migration. The redesign for Maryland Avenue calls for Washington Globe lights, one of the worst streetlights for glare and upward light trespass.¹

However, as DDOT and International Dark-Sky Association point out, the light pollution problems with the Washington Globe can be fixed in either of two ways:

(1) apply shielding to the top of the globe, or (2) install a “full cut off”, which controls the angle of the light, aiming all light 90 degrees down. While DDOT’s guidelines support aiming light only where it is needed and minimizing upward wasted light, consistent with scientific research on preventing over-lighting, it was unclear whether Maryland Avenue streetlights would in fact be shielded or fully cut-off. DDOT’s preliminary response to the recommendation is very encouraging: DDOT agrees that “[l]ight shields will be included” on the Washington Globe lights.² ★

¹ Sarah Pressey Noreen, *Public Street Illumination in Washington, D.C.* (Washington, DC: George Washington University, 1975, 32). Really, Really Bad Lighting,” International Dark-Sky Association. www.darksky.org

² DDOT’s “Streetlight Policy and Design Guidelines,” (2013), ES-2, p. 32. DDOT’s Maryland Avenue Access and Safety Project, Comment and Resolution Sheet (17 Oct. 2016), p. 18.

Interested in learning more about historic district designation?

Contact CHRS at caphrs@aol.com.

IMAGE COURTESY BETH PURCELL



The Washington Globe was selected as the city’s official streetlight in 1923.

Emerald Street, *continued from page 4*

¹ “Real Estate Transfers,” *Washington Post*, 25 Feb. 1891, 7. DC Office of the Surveyor, 19/63 (2 Apr. 1892), 21/73 (4 Feb. 1895).

² National Capital Planning Commission, *Summary of NDP5 Program Activities: H Street Urban Renewal Area* (1974), 5-5, 56.

CHRS Holds Inaugural House Expo

By Nina Tristani

The CHRS 2016 House Expo held on Sunday, October 16th, in Eastern Market's North Hall was a success with over 25 home improvement professionals exhibiting their expertise. Visitors were able to discuss ways to enrich their homes in several areas. Exhibitors provided information on a range of topics including home repairs, building permits, iron works, windows,

kitchen and bath, carpentry, lending and insurance, and house histories.

Speakers addressed timely topics such as solar energy, landscaping, roofing, DIY projects, and building materials. Renatta Holt of Merrifield Garden Center discussed Landscaping for the Townhouse Garden; Patrick O'Brien of Solar Energy World spoke on Solar Energy for Your Home; Dean

Jagusch of Wagner Roofing Company chatted about how to maintain your roof; and Mark Merlino of Merlino Construction talked about Common Mistakes of DIY Projects. Gary Barnhart had his antique tools

on display and also spoke about Traditional and Modern Building Materials and Ruth de Hart of Andersen Windows discussed Window Replacement in an Historic District. (More on historic district guidelines, including windows, can be found at CHRS Historic Guidelines <http://chrs.org/history-and-preservation/chrs-historic-district-guidelines>)

DC government agencies were also represented. The DC Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs staff were available to discuss the building permitting process. The DC Department of Energy and Environment was also in attendance as well as the DC Fire Department.

CHRS wishes to thank all the exhibitors and visitors for a great turnout. Special thanks goes to the 2016 House Expo sponsors, The Hill Rag, and Charles Burger and Sheila Faison of Coldwell Banker. ★

IMAGE COURTESY SUSAN BURGERMAN



More than 25 exhibitors were part of the CHRS 2016 House Expo.

2017 House & Garden Tour: Step One

By Patrick Lally

Our annual Mother's Day House & Garden Tour starts with a deceptively simple Step One: selecting 10–12 houses and/or gardens. The selection is based on several factors, none of which makes a house a sure thing or no-go on its own. Curb appeal, good traffic flow, historic interest, pleasing garden, intriguing art collection, architectural uniqueness, antique furniture, rare plantings, zoning regulation conformance or proximity to other potential sites are all considered. Hit three or four of these points and we have a contender!

How about putting your home on the Tour? Certainly your home meets a couple of these points of interest. And imagine the bragging rights at your next family gathering! It doesn't have to be a mansion or an Architectural Digest gem, cozy and family-oriented works too. Traditional townhouse, avant guard, quaint historic—we consider all styles.

CHRS plays an important role in helping maintain the wonderful historic character of our neighborhood, not to mention the rising value of your home. With

high-density housing being built all around us, CHRS' voice at DC's city council, zoning, preservation and planning board meetings is more vital than ever. The House & Garden Tour is our big push every year to ensure we have the funds needed to continue protecting our fantastic village. Please consider supporting the CHRS mission by adding your home to the next Tour—you'll be so glad you did. Contact us at (202) 543-0425. ★

October Preservation Café: Comfort Solutions for Historic Rowhouses

By Gregoire Holeyman, AIA

Patrick Murphy of Harvey Hottel HVAC/Energy Solutions led the October 20 Preservation Café. Mr. Murphy has many years of experience in the HVAC business, as an installer, sales representative and energy modeler. The company focuses on designing and installing HVAC systems as well as spray foam installations of renovations and additions to historic homes. The presentation, titled “Capitol Hill Restoration and Construction Focusing on HVAC and Insulation,” focused on the many HVAC and insulation choices that can be used on Capitol Hill homes.

The exterior envelope of a house is made up of several components: the walls, roof, slab/crawlspace and their openings (doors, windows, skylights). The key to a comfortable interior is to seal the exterior, unconditioned air from penetrating into the interior of the house (air sealing). One way to do so in an older home is via spray foam insulation. Spray foam application is recommended in tight and hard to reach places, such as the rear portions of attic spaces under a low-slope roof or at furring against a brick wall, where no insulation existed before and interior floor space loss needs to be minimized. Of the two types of spray foam, open-cell is recommended over closed-cell when encapsulating an attic space, since it lets water through in case of a leak and is more cost-effective.

Examples of HVAC systems discussed by Patrick included:

Split system. The most common forced-air system found on Capitol Hill, the ideal split-system has gas heat and electric cooling. The air handler should be located in a conditioned space (encapsulated attic or an interior closet) while the condenser can be located on the roof. The two parts are connected by refrigerant lines.

Rooftop package units. These systems are completely outdoors, so they save on interior floorspace. The exterior ductwork needs to be insulated.

Mini-split systems. These electric-based systems are great in small areas due to lack of ductwork. The interior units condition each space they are installed in, creating a multi-zoned system that is energy efficient.

Gas boiler with radiators. A traditional heating system found in many Capitol Hill homes, the radiators heat rooms efficiently without introducing dry air in the wintertime. New radiator systems are more compact than older boiler-fed systems.

Glad to answer any HVAC or insulation questions, Patrick can be reached at (240) 449-8589 or Pmurphy@harveyhottel.com. ★

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420 10th Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003

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7 Monday, 6:30 pm

CHRS Historic Preservation Committee,
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floor. Details: Beth Purcell, (202) 544-0178.

10 Thursday, 6:30–7:15 pm

CHRS Preservation Café: Zoning
Administrator Matt LeGrant. Ebenezers
Coffee House, 2nd & F Streets, NE.

Details: Greg Holeyman,
(202) 543-0425.

10 Thursday, 7:30 pm

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

15 Tuesday, 6:30 pm

CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill
Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second
floor. Details: Elizabeth Nelson,
(202) 543-0425, info@chrs.org.

DECEMBER

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.

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