



CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

NEWS

www.chrs.org

February 2017

Archaeology Dig Progresses at Shotgun House

By Elizabeth Nelson and Susan Oursler

Capitol Hill residents were recently treated to a rare glimpse of the past at the site of the Shotgun House at 1229 E Street, SE. Passersby have no doubt noticed that the Shotgun House is no longer standing. What they may not know is that it has been carefully dis-assembled and the materials inventoried, so that it can be moved and restored very near its original location.

In the meantime, the site is an active archaeological dig—a very rare occurrence in the Capitol Hill Historic District and an opportunity for neighbors and historians to learn more about early life in the nation’s capitol.

The Shotgun style normally refers to narrow homes constructed without hallways, one single room followed by another. Some believe that this style originated in Africa

and was brought to the Americas via the Caribbean. The earliest known records of the E Street home date to 1853, when the original structure was sold to a German immigrant family that lived in the house for nearly 40 years. The home was enlarged twice, and an outbuilding was constructed at the rear.

In 1985, the house was purchased by a developer who, in 2014, applied to HPRB for permission to raze the house. Neighbors testified that the owner had committed “demolition by neglect” in allowing the building to deteriorate. Given the historic nature and uniqueness of the house, neighbors, historians, and the CHRS

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2017 House and Garden Tour: Search for Tour Houses Underway

The search for houses is underway for our **60th Annual House and Garden Tour, May 13–14, 2017**. This year’s focus is a radius of five to six blocks from St. Mark’s Episcopal Church at 3rd and A Streets, SE, which has very generously offered to host the refreshment break on Sunday. If you think that you might consider putting your home on the Tour, please contact CHRS. Whether your house is avant garde, quaint, historic, or has a wonderful garden, intriguing artwork, or antique furniture, it is interesting and people will want to see it.

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. Patrick Crowley got us off to a great start on the 2017 Tour; Beth Purcell has since stepped into the role of house tour chair.

Please consider supporting CHRS mission by adding your home to the next Tour. Contact us at (202) 543-0425 or email at caphrs@aol.com.

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There's More than One Way to Donate to CHRS

by Patrick Crowley

Cash is every non-profit's best idea of a gift but there are other options. Stocks, bonds, or other securities make great gifts a well.

Securities investments owned for longer than one year that have increased in value are an attractive gift for both the non-profit and the donor. The value of the stocks or bonds can be deducted on the donor's taxes—up to 30% of the donor's adjusted gross income.

What if the investments have decreased in value? While any securities donation is welcome, it may be of greater value to the donor to sell the securities and donate the

cash received. The donor may be able to claim both a capital loss for the loss in value and the donation itself. Together the tax effect of the loss and donation may be greater than the current value of the assets.

An old life insurance policy may be another source of charitable giving. The point of life insurance is to ensure that dependents will be cared for should something happen to the policy holder. But if those dependents are on their own or otherwise no longer need to be looked after, the insurance policy is no longer so necessary. Donating a life insurance policy to a non-profit

can help it be cared for after the policy holder is gone. And it is tax deductible up to the current value of the policy.

Retirement plan assets can make good gifts too. IRAs, 401(k), 403(b), and other retirement plan accounts can be donated and deducted from household income for tax purposes. People aged 70.5 or older you can give directly from an IRA or Roth IRA free of income tax on the withdrawal up to \$100,000 per person per year. This donation is also deductible.

As always, check with a financial advisor to make sure what choices work best for your family. ★

Gertrude L. Reed: Gold Star Mother and Capitol Hill Developer

By Beth Purcell

Gertrude L. Reed (1865–c.1940), a widow, was an examiner with the Federal government, and worked at the Veterans Bureau at some point. She lived at 1137 New Hampshire Avenue, NW, and later at the Wardman Park Hotel.

Her son, James B. Reed, died serving in the 165th Infantry Brigade in World War I, and was buried in France. His mother went on the Gold Star Mothers' pilgrimage to the American military cemeteries in France in 1929 and 1931 (a program where the US government provided all-expense-paid trips for mothers whose sons were buried in France, so they could visit the American cemeteries there).¹

In 1923, she hired Henry W. Febrey to design and build rowhouses at 301–309 17th Street,

SE. Febrey (1891–1971) was a builder, and specialized in home remodeling. There are many ads for his business in the *Washington Star*. Earlier, Febrey designed the rowhouses at 311–317 17th Street, SE, for John W. Brawner. ★



IMAGE COURTESY BETH PURCELL

307–309 17th Street, SE.

¹ "11 Capital Mothers Would Visit France," *Washington Post*, 14 Feb. 1930, 22. DC Building permit 3 2733 (27 Sept. 1923, Reed), # 9694 (26 Apr. 1923, Brawner).

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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 Committee Report

By Gary Peterson

During a meeting held on November 10, 2016, the committee considered the following case:

BZA# 19344. This case involves the application of 1336 H Street, NE, for three special exceptions to make a two story addition to an existing two story building located at 1336 H Street, NE. The first floor will be commercial and the upper three floors will have five apartments. Because of the construction, the applicant needs a special exception from the lot occupancy requirement, the rear yard requirement, and the open court requirements. The applicant is also claiming an extra 0.5 FAR because it claims it is preserving a façade that was constructed before 1958.

The CHRS Zoning Committee voted to oppose the application.

The committee opposes the extra FAR because the façade is new construction to replace the façade that fell off the building. It was not constructed before 1958 and no matter how the applicant explains the new construction we cannot pretend that it is old.

The committee also opposes the special exceptions because the design of the addition does not enhance the urban design features of the immediate vicinity. In particular, the windows of the addition clash with the windows on that side of the street because they are two big. Further, the addition needs to be set back at least 10 feet and must be lowered by one story. For all of these reason, the committee recommends opposing the application. ★

CHRS Seeks Nominations for Board

CHRS will hold elections for the 2017–2018 Board of Directors by postcard ballot in May. The Elections Committee, chaired by Beth Purcell, includes Monte Edwards and Michelle Carroll. The committee is seeking recommendations of individuals who wish to be considered for positions on next year's CHRS Board of Directors.

These positions include President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary, each for one-year terms and three At-Large Members for two-year terms. Nominations for the 2017–2018 CHRS Board of Directors will be announced at the end of April.

If you wish to be considered, to recommend someone, or to find out more about the duties of each position, please contact the CHRS office at (202) 543-0425 or email caphrs@aol.com and a member of the Elections Committee will respond. Each recommendation must cite the position for which the person wants to be considered and must include his or her resume.

Recommendations must be submitted by the end of the day on Tuesday, April 4, 2017.

Historic Preservation Briefs

by Beth Purcell and Alison Ross

The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB or the Board) considered the following cases on December 15, 2016. 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.

434 3rd Street, NE, HPA 16-697, is new construction of a three-story two-unit brick rowhouse with basement on a shallow vacant lot. The design and materials of the front facade with a developed cornice across the entire front, a full-height square bay, references elements in the adjacent buildings. The rear and side walls will be brick. The areaway recalls Capitol Hill doglegs. The design and materials are appropriate.

However, the plans show a full flight of stairs leading to a roof hatch, suggesting plans to use the roof. It appears that there are three areas on the roof, including a deck area in the rear; no materials for the roof are specified. Specifications on any planned roof deck, including location, dimensions, materials and placement of and materials for railings are needed. If the project receives concept approval, we urge that HPRB specify a roof hatch access to the roof, and not a penthouse.

We believe that subject to the roof deck access issue, the project is compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District.

On January 26, 2017, as this issue went to press, the HPRB unanimously voted to deny the application to build the popup.

108-110 8th Street, NE, HPA 16-694, are contributing two-story rowhouses which date to at least 1857.¹ The project calls for making the single-family dwelling into two residences, constructing a three-story rear and two-story side addition, and building a new one-story garage.

The rear addition is primarily off the main block of the historic house, as required by 146 13th Street, SE (HPA 15-127). There is considerable demolition for this project; the entire north exterior structural wall, chimney, most internal walls, and the rear elevation. The rear elevation will be split into three new sections all with two-over-two aluminum-clad, double-hung windows.

The three-story northernmost section will have aluminum-clad French doors on the first story and AZEK panels on the second and third stories. The three-story middle section will be clad in brick with segmental arches, and the one-bay southernmost section will remain two stories and feature an aluminum-clad glass door on the first floor and a segmental-arched window on the second. There will be new decks on the first and third stories. The sight line study suggests that the new addition will not be visible from across 8th Street NE.

The reviewed plans describe the north exterior wall as “an existing partition to be removed” to allow for the side addition. The side addition not only removes the north exterior structural wall in its entirety but also erases the historic horse-trot passageway that runs between 110 8th and 114 8th Street, NE. The current clapboard two-story gated wall on the front elevation is an extrusion of the original façade and covers the gap between the two

houses. This extension was built sometime between 2007 and 2009.

A photo on the DC Property Information Verification System dated 10/20/2004 as well as a Google Map image from November 2007 show a small lattice gate between the two houses.² A permit issued in 2008 stresses replacement in kind of architectural features.³ In accordance with the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Guidelines, CHRS is concerned with the reversibility of this proposed side addition as well as how the current, non-compatible, gated wall detracts from the appearance of the original building’s primary elevation.

CHRS advocates preserving the north structural wall, removing the two-story gated wall and restoring the horse-trot passage to its 2007 condition. In the alternative, we suggest, at a minimum, locating the wall that will replace the gated wall between 110 and 114, so that it is at least two feet back from the façade of 114. This proposed, recessed, side addition would reveal a portion of the original brick side wall and recreate some of the line and shadow that originally demarcated the horse-trot passage way. This notch should be of a sufficient depth and should be expressed all the way up through the roofline, to emphasize the intentional passageway that existed between the two houses. This notch would re-establish the proportion and balance of the original historic façade while clarifying what is original and what is an addition.

In the rear yard, an existing garage, which appears to be in poor condition, would be demolished. The new one-story brick garage will have a space for one car, a studio and a full bath. The alley elevation has a garage

Capitol Hill Home Photo Contest Deadline Extended

The submission deadline has been extended for the “The Capitol Hill Home,” a photo contest celebrating the upcoming 60th Anniversary Mother’s Day House and Garden Tour. **Entries are now due February 25, 2017.**

Send us an exterior shot that illustrates your ideal of a Capitol Hill Home—it could be a small architectural detail, a bit of landscaping or a yard ornament. The Hill Rag has asked to publish the finalists, in addition to their appearing in the CHRS newsletter and on our website, so the finalist photos will receive lots of exposure. The grand prize is two complimentary passes to the 2017 CHRS Mother’s Day House & Garden Tour. Submissions can be emailed as a high-resolution JPEG to HouseTourCHRS@gmail.com (cell phone photos are fine if the files are at least 1MB).

Be sure to include your name and address, email address, and the address of the property in the photo.★



IMAGE COURTESY PATRICK CROWLEY

The small details in this iron fence make for a compelling Capitol Hill Home photo.

New Venue for Preservation Café

The spring Preservation Café series will begin with Justine Posluszny Bello on Wednesday, March 20, 6:30 pm. You can be sure it will be worth attending. Her past presentations have included *Repointing Mortar*; *Painted Brick: Pros and Cons*; and *Capitol Hill Monuments*. We’re trying out a new venue: the downstairs meeting room at the Northeast Branch Library, 330 7th Street, NE. Hope to see you there!

door with rowlock headers. The yard elevation features an aluminum-clad glass door with transom and two-over-two, aluminum-clad, double-hung windows with segmental arches. The design is traditional and very appropriate. Due to serious flooding of the impervious alley paving, neighbors expressed concern about the location of runoff from the gutter and downspout on the north elevation. The downspout should drain into the yard rather than directly into the brick-paved alley.

The neighbor to the north at 114 8th Street, NE submitted a letter of approval for this project. We believe that the project, as currently

presented, is not compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District due to the side addition design.★

¹ HistoryQuest DC GIS-based web map, source: DC IPS Database, accessed 12/7/2016. <http://arcg.is/2k5Litt>

² Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs Property Information Verification System (DCRA PIVS) accessed 12/7/2016. <https://pivsservices.dcrad.gov/PIVS/Results.aspx>

³ DCRA PIVS accessed 12/7/2016. <https://pivsservices.dcrad.gov/PIVS/Results.aspx>

Interested in learning more about historic district designation?

Contact CHRS at caphrs@aol.com.

Shotgun House, *continued from cover*

successfully argued that the structure could and should be saved.

In 2016, the property changed hands again. The current owner will soon rebuild it as a part of larger home on the same property. A more detailed account of the history of the house and efforts to preserve it can be found at chrs.org/category/issues/shotgunhouse.

District Archaeologist Ruth Troccoli is spearheading the dig, which began last fall. During a recent

tour of the site, Troccoli noted that when her team first gained access to the property, they discovered the floor joists had been sawed through, contributing to the instability of the structure. Fortunately, the sturdy mortise-and-tenon construction helped keep it together, aided by the siding that bridged the join between the additions. Although the damage to the joists was detrimental to the house, it gave the archaeologists unusual access to the area directly beneath.

Since then, the house has been deconstructed and a proper

“dig” laid out. Test pits were dug, followed by full-scale excavation. A number of small objects have been found plus a great many old bottles; several may be from local breweries. There is also an intriguing line of brick dust below a midden (trash pit) at the rear of the property.

Ms. Troccoli will present her findings at a CHRS Preservation Café this spring. Details will be posted on the CHRS website as soon as they are available and will be published in a future newsletter. Please plan to join us for this exciting event. ★



IMAGES COURTESY ELIZABETH NELSON



TOP LEFT: Sifting soil to reveal small objects. TOP RIGHT: Excavating the area underneath the house; stacked timbers appear in upper left. BOTTOM LEFT: Susan Oursler taking the tour with Ruth Troccoli. BOTTOM RIGHT: Bottles may have come from local breweries.

Buzzard Point: From Indians To Soccer at March Overbeck History Lecture

The Overbeck Capitol Hill History lecture series continues its 2016–17 year on Monday, March 6, at the Hill Center when local historian Hayden Wetzel takes a look at the often-neglected neighborhood of Buzzard Point, SW, located close to Capitol Hill and the Navy Yard along the Anacostia River. After the Indian habitation of the area, Buzzard Point attracted the attention of early 1800s speculators, city planners, market gardeners, numerous small industry owners and a small residential community. Wetzel's presentation will continue on to the proposed new soccer stadium and other plans for the area.

A professional tour guide, Wetzel will share his research of this area adjacent to Fort McNair. He has also contributed to the record of Washington by researching and writing many landmark nominations and studies of various aspects of DC life.

The free lecture will be held at Hill Center at 921 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, at 7:30 pm. Register at: www.hillcenterdc.org/event/overbeck-lecture-buzzard-point, or call (202) 549-4172. Seating will begin at 7 pm for those who hold reservations. Available seats will be released to guests on the waiting list beginning at 7:15 pm. ★

Thank You, CHRS Supporters

We thank the following CHRS members and supporters.

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CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

Capitol Hill Restoration Society

420 10th Street, SE
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Mark Your Calendar!

FEBRUARY

6 Monday, 6:30 pm

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

16 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 board room. Details: Elizabeth Nelson, (202) 543-0425, info@chrs.org.

25 Saturday

Extended deadline for Capitol Hill Home photo contest. Details on page 5.

MARCH

6 Monday, 6:30 pm

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

15 Wednesday, 6:30pm

CHRS Preservation Café with Justine Poszluszny Bello, topic TBA. Northeast Branch Library, 330 7th Street, NE. Details: Greg Holeyman, (202) 543-0425.

16 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 board room. Details: Elizabeth Nelson, (202) 543-0425, info@chrs.org.

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