Kelsey Robertson is the winner of the 2017 Dick Wolf Memorial Lecture competition. Robertson’s lecture is based on her Master’s thesis that explores the vulnerability of historic districts to climate change and sea level rise. She identifies adaptation planning mechanisms to increase climatic resilience without significantly diminishing the integrity of the built and cultural environment of these historic districts.

The lecture will be held on Friday, March 24, at the Hill Center at 921 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, at 7:00 pm. The event is free and open to the public. The Dick Wolf Memorial Lecture is an annual event to showcase excellence in research and writing on urban planning and historic preservation in the District of Columbia by a student or intern. The winner will deliver the presentation and receive a $1,000 prize.

Following Robertson’s presentation, a panel of three special guests will discuss the lecture: Tommy Wells, Director of the Department of Energy and Environment; Tanya Stern, Deputy Director, Planning, Engagement and Design of the DC Office of Planning; and Gretchen Pfahl, Architectural Historian and a Member and former Chair of the Historic Preservation Review Board.

Dick Wolf (1933–2012) was one of the District’s most ardent and effective visionaries. After moving to Capitol Hill in 1964, he worked tirelessly and effectively on community planning (including the Comprehensive Plan), historic preservation, and sound neighborhood development. He served on the CHRS Board for many years, most often as President, and also served on the Committee of 100 of the Federal City. His vision for Washington was of a great, world-class city that houses both the nation’s great institutions as well as families with young children;
Qualified Charitable Distributions: A Correction

By Patrick Crowley

In my article last month about donating to CHRS, I stated that donations made directly to a charitable organization from an IRA (a Qualified Charitable Distribution in IRS lingo) can be deducted from taxable income and that the donation itself can be deductible. Wrong! That would be double counting. Thanks to our alert reader Norm Metzger, I went to the IRS website to learn that you can’t do both.

Generally, a distribution from an IRA to the owner of the IRA is taxable income in the year it is received. Individuals are often in a lower tax bracket when they begin taking distributions from their IRAs, which is the value of holding IRAs—deferring income to a less costly time in the life of an individual. If the IRA distribution is sent directly to the charitable organization, it never becomes income to the IRA owner and therefore is not taxable income. If the money never became taxable income, it cannot be claimed as a charitable donation.

As always, check with your financial advisor to be sure your decisions are the best for you. ✯

CHRS Seeking Nominations for Board

CHRS will hold elections for the 2017–2018 Board of Directors by postcard ballot this May. The Elections 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. ✯

Changes to the Current CHRS Board

Patti Martin has resigned as Membership Committee Chair. We’re very sorry to see her go but have accepted her decision cheerfully in light of the good service she has given the Society. She brought considerable experience and creative ideas to the committee, leading the effort to send membership invitations to many Hill residents who may not have even known we existed. Her careful consideration of the issues before the board made her a valued colleague. Thank you Patti, you will be sorely missed.

Susan Burgerman will be our new Membership Chair. Currently an At-Large member of the board, she has taken primary responsibility for organizing the quarterly Membership Meetings for quite a few seasons already. Her interpersonal and organizational skills make her an excellent choice for this important position. We’re very grateful to her for taking on the additional responsibility. She has also offered to help manage the House Tour ticket sales booth at the Eastern Market in April.
Zoning Committee Report

By Gary Peterson

During a meeting held on February 9, 2017, the committee considered the following cases:

**BZA# 19355, 600 9th Street, NE.**

This is a very unusual and difficult case involving an existing, illegally constructed two story deck built by a previous owner sometime prior to 2013. The current owner bought the property in a foreclosure sale in July 2013 from the Wells Fargo Bank. The Bank, if it knew about it, did not disclose the illegal construction. The two story deck was built on top on a garage that is connected to the house. The house and garage occupy 100% of the lot and the two story deck above also occupies around 100%. To complicate matters, the top of the garage has on it two HVAC units of 1.5 and 5 tons. These units are next to the bedroom windows of the house next door to the rear facing F Street (812 F Street, NE). The owner has applied for three variances to allow the deck to remain in place and the neighbor on F Street has strongly objected.

The Committee voted to oppose the application because of the impact on the adjacent neighbor’s privacy, air, light, view and quiet. The F Street property has windows on the side of the house abutting the deck and the deck blocks the air, light and view from the windows. There is a 4.5 foot side yard between the F Street house and the subject. The HVAC system makes unacceptable noise adjacent to the bedroom windows. The Office of Planning (OP) also opposes the application.

ANC6A voted to support the application provided there is a curfew on the use of the deck to 10pm for the second floor and to 11pm for the third and provided that the two HVAC units are removed to the roof (the 5 ton immediately and the other when replaced). OP also asked that, if the Board grants the application, the order require the removal of the HVAC units. The Committee did not consider the ANC conditions because they were not presented at the meeting and we do not know the reaction of the neighbor.

Four cases were presented by the same architect, Jennifer Fowler. The first two cases, **BZA# 19431, 608 G Street, SE** and **BZA# 19432, 337 16th Street, SE**, involve first floor additions that require special exceptions for lot coverage and for addition to an already nonconforming structure. Letters of support from neighbors were presented and the Committee voted to support the applications.

The other two cases presented different issues.

**BZA# 18433, 1335 Massachusetts Avenue, SE.** The applicant proposes to make a two story addition at the rear of the house and to add a small third story and large deck. The third story is set back from the front of the house and, because of a turret and a very high parapet wall, is not visible from the street. To complete the addition the applicant needs special exceptions to increase the lot occupancy from 58% to 65%. Letters of support from the neighbors were presented and the Committee voted to support the application.

**BZA# 19446, 646 6th Street, NE.** Report pending. **
The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB or the Board) considered the following cases on January 26 and February 23, 2017. 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.

504 C Street, NE, HPA 17-122, permit/raze, new construction of three-story building. The applicant proposes to demolish a non-contributing brown brick building with a driveway and garage constructed in 1981, and to construct a new three-story brick building with five units, without a garage or curb cut. The height of the new building lines up with adjacent buildings, and has some traditional Capitol Hill characteristics, including a square bay, corbelled cornice, simple lintels and sills forming a belt course, one-over-one windows with transom, and a single-pane door with transom. Stacked recessed porches (i.e., not projecting beyond the building line), in steel with metal steel guardrails provide outside space. While The HPRB is not aware of any precedent on Capitol Hill for these porches (resembling triple-decker houses), they are functional and appropriate. The rear is hardipanel siding, with one-over-one paired or tripartite windows with a transom. Curb cuts take up parking spaces, so eliminating the garage and curb cut is beneficial. HPRB found that the project is contextual and approved the concept, but required that the roof deck railing be further pulled back from the street and that the utility meters be moved to the rear. Vote: 9-0.

732 4th Street, NE, HPA 17-129, concept/rear and rooftop additions. The house at 732 4th Street, NE, a brick bayfront, was built by the well-known Capitol Hill builder, Diller B. Groff in 1889, within the period of significance for Capitol Hill. This is a contributing building and retains its architectural and structural integrity. This house is within the Capitol Hill Historic District, part of the “Swampoodle” extension to the historic district approved by HPRB on May 28, 2015. The staff report for the Swampoodle extension to the historic district states:

Architecturally, the rowhouses in the expanded area provide an illustration of the building typology from the earliest, two-story flat-fronted examples of the 1880s whose ornamentation is limited to corbelled cornices and molded window hoods, to more exuberant Queen Anne examples from the 1890s, replete with double-height polygonal bays and towers capped by projecting gables, pediments and conical roofs, and featuring integrated brickwork, decorative panels, brick belt-coursing, rusticated sills and lintels, and other ornamental features such as finials and iron cresting. … The major builders and architects of the nineteenth and twentieth-century rowhouses are the same as those found elsewhere in Capitol Hill and throughout the city, including developers John H. Sherman, John Davidson, Diller B. Groff, and Herman Howenstein, and architects, T.F. Schneider, B. Stanley Simmons, George S. Cooper, Frederick G. Atkinson and others.

732 4th Street is an example of the double-height polygonal bay/Queen Anne houses that distinguish the Swampoodle extension. Fourth Street is a boundary of the Capitol Hill Historic District; the west side, where 732 4th Street, NE, is located, is within the historic district, and the east side is outside the historic district. In 2014, before the effective date of the historic district extension, popups were built at 726 and 728 4th Street, NE.

The most important issue in this case was the plan to build a third story addition clad in hardie plank, immediately behind the front bay, which would be visible from sidewalk on the opposite side of 4th Street, NE.

March Preservation Café: Antique or Modern?

Is that transom over your door a 1890s treasure or a 1980s addition? Can’t tell your cast iron from your mild steel? And what color did people paint their houses in the 1920s, anyway? Learn more at CHRS’s next Preservation Café on March 15, when architectural conservator Justine P. Bello explains how to decode the vintage from the reproduction in a talk entitled: “Antique or Modern: Identifying Original Architectural Details in Your Home.” This Preservation Café will be held at a new venue: the downstairs meeting room at the Northeast Branch Library, 330 7th Street, NE, at 6:30 pm. Hope to see you there!
According to the drawing provided, the mansard addition would not be visible standing on the sidewalk in front of the bay at 732 4th Street and looking directly up. However, a few steps to the left and sight lines change over the main plane of the building, set back by a few feet, and the popup would be visible.

HPRB requires that additions to historic buildings must not be visible from public space (HPO, Additions to Historic Buildings, 13). HPRB has enforced this visibility standard, including recent cases, 531 8th Street, SE (HPA 16-518) (not approved because addition to the commercial building was visible from public space), 418-426 C Street, NE (HPA-15-150, penthouses visible from public space not approved) and approved cases where the addition was not visible from public space: 518 6th Street, NE (HPA 16-199). For these reasons CHRS argued that the project was not compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District because the proposed third story addition was very visible from public space. Vote: 9-0.

517 7th Street SE, HPA 17-181 concept/three-story rear addition. The main block of this contributing building is a two-story, three-bay wood frame house with a full width porch, built in 1857 or earlier. The two northernmost bays, with a gable roof, appear to be the oldest part of the main block, which was later enlarged, adding the third bay on the south (without a gable roof), enclosing a horse trot or earlier gap between buildings. This house reflects how owners often expanded their houses by adding a new section on the side of the original house. In the early to mid-nineteenth century Capitol Hill property owners regularly enlarged houses or built additions. The project proposes to add a gable roof infill to the southern bay, slightly lower than the original gable roof, altering the house’s historic form, which we believed was not appropriate.

Several rear structures have also been added at the rear, which do not appear to be historic fabric. The applicant proposes to demolish these and rationalize the rear of the house with a new addition. We agreed with the staff report on needed changes to the design and materials of the addition. The Board decided that the infill roof gave enough indication of the house’s original form, approved the concept, directing the applicant to eliminate or reduce the size of the third story, to be redesigned as a shed dormer, revising the fenestration to feature vertically-oriented double-hung windows, and moving the mechanical equipment to a less conspicuous location. Vote: 6-0.

417 4th Street SE, HPA 17-076, concept/three-story rear addition. This case was before the Board on December 15, 2016 and on February 23, 2017. 417 and 419 4th Street,
SE, are Greek Revival rowhouses, probably built together, and definitely before 1857. 417 4th Street, SE, was altered in the past, increasing the height on the front elevation, altering the frieze windows on the third story, and adding a side addition and one-story entrance.

The project has excellent features, including removing the inappropriate shutters and replacing the inappropriate door with a four-panel wood door with Greek Revival wood surround, and installing six-over-six windows in the existing masonry openings, which sources indicate were original to Greek Revival houses (1825–1860). The owner of 419 4th Street testified that when he sought approval from HPRB in 2010 to build a three-story addition, HPRB decided that the addition would not be subordinate to the historic part of the house, would be visible from E Street, and therefore approved a two-story addition, which he built. He questioned why HPO staff viewed the applicant’s proposed three-story addition as subordinate. HPRB has recently approved three-story additions on Capitol Hill, and it may be that its position on additions is evolving.

In December, the Board approved the proposed alterations to the primary façade and roof, however stipulating that the roof be clad in standing seam metal, that no part of the rear addition extend past the rear façade at 419, that the third floor at the rear not extend past its current plane, that the applicant work with staff to refine the design and details of the rear façade. The applicant must also address drainage questions. Revised plans submitted for the February hearing revised the pitch of the third-floor roof to slope away from the street and eliminated a gable. The addition aligns with 419 4th Street, SE. There are fewer, and better-spaced windows in the rear elevation. Because of a grade change and distance, the addition will be minimally visible. Vote: 6-0.

108-110 8th St NE, HPA 16-694, concept/three-story addition, new carriage house (garage dwelling). 108-110 are two contributing, two-story rowhouses which date to at least 1857. The project calls for making the single-family dwelling into two residences, constructing a three-story rear addition with new decks on first and third stories, a two-story side addition recessed ten feet from the façade, and building a new one-story, two-bay brick garage on the old footprint. 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 brick structural wall, chimney, most internal walls, the rear elevation, and an historic though significantly deteriorated one-story, two-bay garage.

Staff found the newest plans to be compatible with the Historic District. A structural engineer’s report found the north wall to be beyond repair and in need of replacement. CHRS and neighbors testified about how the current plans addressed some of the committee’s concerns about the garage orientation and quieter rear elevation. Neighbors brought images showing that the passageway on the north side of 110 is one of six such passageways on the square, the other five remain open. They are an important way to allow light and air into the dead-end alleyway. HPRB was conflicted about retaining the passageway and some believed it to be a character defining feature of the property and the square. In the end, HPRB approved the revised concept with the stipulation that the notch go all the way back to the ridgeline of the roof to better resolve the front elevation and to keep the chimney intact as a character defining feature. Vote: 6-1, and 1 abstained.

The following cases, in which CHRS participated, appeared on the HPRB consent calendar:

1127 C Street, NE, HPA 17-123, permit/rear and rooftop additions. Alteration to a 1948 noncontributing brick building.

202 9th Street, SE, HPA 17-125, concept/new two-story garage/dwelling with green roof. ✯

Interested in learning more about historic district designation?
Contact CHRS at caphrs@aol.com.
The Dick Wolf Memorial Lecture is an annual event, now in its third year, to showcase excellence in research and writing on urban planning and historic preservation in the District of Columbia by a student or intern. The winner delivers the presentation and receives a $1,000 prize. This article is about the winners of the first two lectures and describes what they are doing now.

William King won the first Dick Wolf memorial Lecture held on March 27, 2015. King addressed the question of whether the “Special Merit” exception provides too much political discretion in permitting demolition of historic properties. At the time of the lecture, Mr. King was a law student and worked as legal intern for the Committee on Oversight & Government Reform for the U.S. House of Representatives. King graduated from Georgetown Law two months after the lecture. He is now a licensed attorney in both Maryland and Washington, DC. He is finishing a two-year clerkship for a judge in the United States District Court for the District of Maryland, Baltimore Division. At the conclusion of his clerkship this fall, King will be joining the D.C.-centered law firm of Venable LLP, although he plans to work primarily out of the firm’s Baltimore office.

He lives in downtown Baltimore in a converted 1920s-era office tower called 10 Light Street. 10 Light is the latest in a series of conversion projects aimed at transforming Baltimore’s ailing central business district into a vibrant residential community. King has been very involved in promoting this transformation since he moved here. He is working to organize a community association for this rapidly changing region. Among other things, the group seeks to encourage residents to participate in the development review process. Many of the projects underway in the neighborhood are adaptive reuses of historic office buildings.

Brook Hill won the second annual Dick Wolf Memorial Lecture held on March 18, 2016. Hill explained how economic pressures to convert existing affordable housing to market rate housing is greatly diminishing the stock of affordable housing and that this redevelopment has attracted wealthy newcomers. Gentrifying neighborhoods are rapidly becoming off-limits to minorities because of price. The lecture identified the factors causing this trend and suggested how to reverse the trend in order to retain affordable housing and its contribution to maintaining character of place.

As a former community organizer in Brooklyn, NY, issues of affordable housing and racial segregation were not new concerns for Hill and after graduating from Georgetown University Law Center in May of 2016 he continued his work with low-income tenants. In September of 2016 he began a two-year Equal Justice Works Fellowship with the Washington Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs. During his fellowship, he will represent tenants in properties that are timing out of subsidy in gentrifying neighborhoods with the goals of preserving affordability and ensuring compliance with fair housing laws. To date, the most noteworthy case Hill has taken on is the representation of tenants at Brookland Manor where families with children will be disproportionately impacted by the developer’s plan to exclude 3-, 4- and 5-bedroom units from a pending redevelopment project.
We are delighted to announce the winners of the photo contest celebrating of the 60th Anniversary of our Mother’s Day House and Garden Tour. We challenged members, friends and neighbors to show us, with an exterior shot, what they think “makes a home a Capitol Hill Home.” It was extremely difficult to choose just one winner, so we gave up and chose four, each of whom will receive a pair of tickets to the upcoming Tour, May 13–14, 2017. We also gave the photos names, which we thought captured their personality.

Many thanks to the Hill Rag for co-sponsoring the competition. And many thanks to each and every person who submitted an entry; reviewing them has been pure pleasure.

These and other images taken by the “runners up” are available on our website at: chrs.org/photo-contest.

†

WINNER: “The Old Arch”
This image by Steven Fall conveys the old guard strength of Seneca Creek sandstone found throughout the Hill while at the same time reminding us that all things are temporary. These heavy features give provide a sense of stability that undergirds much of the Capitol Hill housing stock.
FOURTH PLACE: “Hill Center Fencing”
This image by Robert Weinstein captures the long shadow cast by wrought iron fencing over space and time. The rich detail at the bottom of the fence hints at the grand stature of foregone days while the shadows lay out patterns that return day after day.

SECOND PLACE: “Handle’s Messiah”
This image by Jane Hoffman reflects on the importance of first impressions. Capitol Hill homes vie for distinction in many ways including the richness of door accessories.

THIRD PLACE: “The Blue Transom”
This image by Oscar Alvarez reflects a playfulness the homeowner brings to the otherwise stately demeanor of the bay front Victorian. Its bold blue molding detail and colorful stain glass throws caution to the wind and says “I am what I am!”
The revised zoning regulations allow new buildings to be constructed in alleys if certain requirements are met. One requirement is that the alley must have a name. Recently, ANND LLC Series A planned to build an alley building on lot 28 in Square 1075 (15th/16th/D/E Streets, SE) and needed to name the alley, so they approached CHRS for research about people who had a historical association with the alley.

In 1891, John H. Duvall (1832–19??) built seven brick two-story dwellings in the alley, 13’ x 28’, on lots 28–34. In 1891, he also built six wider brick rowhouses fronting on 15th Street (15’ x 28’ at 422–432 15th Street, SE). A 10.5-foot wide pedestrian alley separated the rear yards of the alley dwellings from rear yards of the houses fronting on 15th Street, SE. All seven alley houses existed between 1891 and 1967–1968. The 1968 real property tax assessment no longer shows improvements on lots 28–34 in Square 1075. However, the houses that were built in front, at 422–432 15th Street, SE, are extant in 2017.

The Census from 1900-1920 shows that the alley houses were occupied by tenants. In 1900, all the alley residents were white. Richard Schneider, born in Germany, lived in one alley dwelling with his wife and four children. He was a brewer. Three brewery laborers also lived in the alley and two of them were also German. They likely worked at the nearby Capital Brewery Company at 14th and D Streets, SE. In 1910, six houses were occupied, five by white families and one by a black family. No brewery workers appear on the 1910 Census. In 1920, all the residents were African American.

The property owner requested that the alley be named “Duvall Court.” CHRS’s research was provided at no charge. *
Virginia Avenue Park

By Joanna Kendig

Virginia Avenue Park is one of many projects that are shaping our Capitol Hill. The park is located between 9th and 11th Streets, SE, just south of the Southeast Freeway exit ramp. It is in the Capitol Hill Historic District and ANC6B04. Since 2015 it has been torn up by the construction of the CSX train tunnel. ANC Commissioner Kirsten Oldenberg is leading community discussions on the future of the park as it is restored.

The area south of the freeway and adjacent to Navy Yard is evolving, with several residential developments under construction or in the planning stages, adding over 300 apartments. Nearby schools and the Marine Barracks Annex offer playgrounds and sports fields. The park, by virtue of its location, will become significant recreation opportunity for growing number of residents.

At a stakeholders’ meeting on February 4, the landscape architecture firm, Oehme van Sweden, presented its current design for the park. The design incorporates community input on previous park plans. The firm is offering its considerable design talents pro bono, as a community service.

This plan preserves an established, well-functioning community garden. It proposes a variety of green spaces for many ages and interests. Large multi-purpose open space and mounded lawn areas will allow unstructured play. Shade structures and benches along the paths will provide comfortable seating from which to observe children at play and to socialize. An enlarged dog park close to 11th Street, SE, will provide another opportunity for neighborly interaction.

Dick Wolf Lecture, continued from cover

balances its appetite for massive growth with preservation of the character of its irreplaceable historic residential neighborhoods; and integrates sound, sustained city planning principles, practices and administrative processes into all the city’s business. The Dick Wolf Memorial Lecture program seeks to preserve and advance that vision.

Robertson received her Master of Arts degree in Urban & Regional Planning from Georgetown University in December 2016 and currently works in government affairs at AVANGRID, a national renewable energy developer and operator of regulated utilities. Prior to AVANGRID, she spent several years at the American Wind Energy Association. Robertson graduated summa cum laude from Connecticut College where the undergrad major was International Relations. She originally hails from Westport Island, Maine.

The lecture will be followed by a champagne reception. The 2015 and 2016 lectures were extremely well received, with standing room only. For more information contact CHRS at 202 543-0425 or email to caphrs@aol.com.

Thank You, CHRS Supporters

We thank the following CHRS members and supporters:

GOLD
Michael Halebian

SILVER
Denny Lane & Naoki Aoki
Susan van den Toorn

FRIENDS OF CHRS
John & Marcia Duncan
Monte Edwards
Tom Grahame & Jan Kern
James & Mary Lischer

OTHERS
Marcia Hilt
Tom Rall
Capitol Hill Restoration Society
420 10th Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003

Mark Your Calendar!

**MARCH**

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.

**APRIL**

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

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

18 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.

If you received a complimentary copy of this newsletter, please consider joining CHRS!

www.chrs.org

60th Annual Capitol Hill House and Garden Tour
Mother’s Day Weekend · May 13–14, 2017
More information at (202) 543-0425 or www.chrs.org.