



CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

# NEWS

www.chrs.org

May 2017

## The 2017 House & Garden Tour is Here! Tickets Still Available

By Elizabeth Nelson

We're marking a milestone this year: the House & Garden Tour Diamond Jubilee. That's right—60 years without ever taking a year off! In addition to the 10 private homes on the tour, we have a refreshment break at St. Mark's Episcopal Church on Sunday and the Capitol Hill Hotel is offering their hospitality and rest facilities during all tour hours. Plus Naval Lodge No. 4 and Florida House will be open for your enjoyment. Beth Purcell will give

mini walking tours of historic Terrace Court. And all this is packed into an easy walking footprint between 2nd and 8th Streets, within a block or two of East Capitol Street.

There's a new twist this year. To add to the fun, we've included a scavenger hunt. Each property on our tour has many unique features. They may be tucked away inside where only the owners and their guests can see them. Others are in plain view for all to enjoy. A selection of exterior details will be printed in the tour catalog to be matched with tour locations. We've included a sample (left) to pique your interest but you'll need to take the tour or wait until next month's newsletter to find the solution.

If you don't already have your tickets, it's not too late. They can be purchased online; through weekend of the tour at our Eastern Market ticket booth; and at any of these retail establishments: Appalachian Spring at Union Station; Berkshire Hathaway, 216 7th Street SE; Coldwell Banker, 605 Pennsylvania Avenue SE; Groovy Cards & Gifts, 321 7th Street SE; Hill's



ALL IMAGES COURTESY ELIZABETH NELSON

Stop 9, 122 Third Street SE.



Find this statue and 15 other unique house features on the tour scavenger hunt!

### Also in this issue

#### ARTICLES

- CHRS Board Elections ..... 2
- April Preservation Café ..... 5
- A Street NE Zoning Case ..... 7

#### COLUMNS

- Zoning Committee ..... 3
- CHRS Supporters ..... 7

#### LOOKING AHEAD

- June Members' Meeting ..... 4
- Upcoming Preservation Café ..... 5
- Mark Your Calendar ..... 8

Continued on page 6

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# CHRS to Hold Elections for Officers and Directors

By Beth Purcell

The Election Committee's recommendations for nominees for the 2017–2018 Board of Directors were approved by the current Board of Directors. Ballots will be mailed to all CHRS members who are on the rolls as of May 1, 2017. Once distributed, ballots must be completed and returned within two weeks.

Elizabeth Nelson has been re-nominated to serve as the President of the Society. Monte Edwards has been nominated to serve as First Vice-President. Patrick Lally have been re-nominated to serve as Second Vice-President. Susan Oursler has been nominated for a term as Secretary and Adam Apton for a third term as Treasurer. Three At-Large Members have also been nominated: Janet Quigley has been re-nominated, and Michelle Carroll and Tina May have been nominated.

**Elizabeth Nelson (President)** and her husband, Nick Alberti, have lived on Capitol Hill since 1985. She joined the Board in 2005 serving three terms as an At-Large member before becoming Community Relations Chair in 2010 and webmaster in 2014. She is just completing her first term as President and serves as a member of the House Tour Committee. Elizabeth is a prolific knitter with an interest in arts education. She volunteers at Maury ES and Eliot-Hine MS and organizes exhibits for the Hill Center's Young Artists Gallery. She is also the Treasurer of Trees for Capitol Hill. She's committed to preserving Capitol Hill's charm and neighborhood feel and to maintaining public space as a community asset.

**Monte Edwards (First Vice-President)** has been a resident of Capitol Hill since 1984. He began his professional career as an engineer and then as an

attorney for Washington Gas from which he retired in 1997. He has been a member of the Eastern Market Community Advisory Committee since its inception in 1999 and served as Vice Chair, Secretary and Chair of its Capital Improvements Committee. He served as a member of the Steering Committee and Co-Chair of the Land Use Committee of Stanton Park Neighborhood Association. He was a member of the 2001 ANC Redistricting Task Force for Ward 6. He is currently a member of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City and has served as Vice Chair and now serves as a Trustee and Co-Chairs the Planning Subcommittee. He has served as a CHRS Board Member, Chair of the Transportation Committee and 2nd Vice President and now chairs the Dick Wolf Lecture Program and City Planning Committee of CHRS.

**Patrick Lally (Second Vice-President)** is a native Washingtonian and has lived in the Stanton Park neighborhood with his wife and children for 33 years. He is currently serving in the office of Governor Larry Hogan after completing an appointment as Special Assistant in government affairs and communications at the National Transportation Safety Board. Prior to that, he ran the Congressional Affairs Division at the National Trust for Historic Preservation and directed Mayor Rudy Giuliani's Federal Affairs Office in Washington. An ardent preservationist, Lally has served on the boards of CHRS, the DC Preservation League, and Congressional Cemetery, and was a trustee of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City. Most recently, he worked on the successful campaign to designate the "Swampoodle Addition" to the Capitol Hill Historic District.

**Susan Oursler (Secretary)** moved to Capitol Hill from Indiana in 1979. Over the past 30 years she and her husband, Richard Kasting, have owned and lovingly restored the 1912 home that they share with their two daughters. Susan has been an active volunteer for various Capitol Hill organizations including the North Lincoln Park Neighborhood Association and the Peabody, St. Peter, Maury and Capitol Hill Day schools. Susan retired from the Senate in 2014, where she served as the Chief Clerk of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. As chief of the nonpartisan staff, Susan worked closely with the Senate Historian to preserve Senate and Committee records and to publish previously classified documents created in the 1960s and 1970s. She also provided input to the staff of the Architect of the Capitol on renovations of buildings in the Capitol complex and to landscaping of the Capitol grounds. She now works part time for the Indiana University Office of Federal Government Affairs.

**Adam Apton (Treasurer)** moved to Washington with his wife in 2013. After a number of years living in and around the Brooklyn Heights Historic District in Brooklyn, New York, the Hill felt like home in almost no time at all. Adam is an attorney by profession. While living in New York, he focused his practice on construction-related matters representing both property owners and developers. He now spends the majority of his time representing private investors in corporate investigations and securities fraud actions. Adam and his family enjoy helping preserve the charming

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*Continued on page 4*

# Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS)

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President . . . . . Elizabeth Nelson  
 First Vice President . . . . . Patrick Crowley  
 Second Vice President . . . . . Patrick Lally  
 Treasurer . . . . . Adam Apton  
 Secretary . . . . . Justine Bello  
 At Large . . . . . Susan Burgerman  
 At Large . . . . . Scott Davis  
 At Large . . . . . Steve Kehoe  
 At Large . . . . . Joanna Kendig  
 At Large . . . . . Janet Quigley  
 At Large . . . . . Susan Oursler  
 Immediate Past President . . . . . Lisa Dale Jones

## COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Beyond the Boundaries . . . . . Beth Purcell  
 Budget & Administration\* . . . . . Susan Oursler  
 City Planning\* . . . . . Monte Edwards  
 Communications\* . . . . . Nina Tristani  
 Community Development\* . . . . . Chuck Burger  
 Community Relations . . . . . Elizabeth Nelson  
 Environment\* . . . . . Greg Holeyman  
 Grants . . . . . Larry Pearl  
 Historic Preservation\* . . . . . Beth Purcell  
 House & Garden Tour . . . . . Beth Purcell  
 Investments . . . . . John Shages  
 Membership\* . . . . . Susan Burgerman  
 Public Safety\* . . . . . Undine Nash  
 Public Space . . . . . Steve Kehoe  
 Zoning\* . . . . . Gary Peterson

\* Chair is an appointed Board Member

## NEWSLETTER

Angie Schmidt and Kelly Vielmo, Editors

## WEBMASTERS

Donna Breslin, Elizabeth Nelson

## OFFICE MANAGER

Carl Spier

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 April 13, 2017, the committee considered the following cases:

**BZA #19404, 434 3rd Street NE.** The applicant needs variances from the minimum lot area requirements, lot occupancy requirements, and the rear yard requirements to construct a 3-story flat (2 units). The property is an 816 square foot vacant lot that has no alley access. The three properties to the north are equally small and occupy all of their lots. The applicant is providing a trash room in the front of the building. The committee voted to support the application

**BZA #19460, 619 Elliot Street NE.** This case was previously opposed by the committee. Since that time the applicant has modified the plans and the owner of the house to the north has added solar panels. The plans now call for the third floor addition to be set back 5 feet from the front face of the building. This is an improvement that the committee supports but would like it set back an additional 5 feet. The plans still show the third floor cantilevered over the rear dogleg. The committee proposed eliminating the cantilever, bringing the back of the third story in line with the back of the house, and, to make up for some of the lost space, filling in half of the dogleg. The solar issue needs to be resolved with the neighbor before this application is heard by the BZA.

**BZA #19479, 1 Library Court SE.** This case involves a 521 square foot alley lot behind St. Mark's Episcopal Church. The property is improved with a two story house that occupies 365 square feet of the lot (70% lot occupancy). The applicant proposes a first floor addition with a roof deck that would increase the lot

occupancy to 100%. In effect, the applicant is covering the lot and moving the outdoor space to the second floor. Part of the addition will provide natural light to the newly dug out basement. In order to accomplish this, the applicant needs 3 variances and 7 special exceptions. The committee agreed that the applicant needs relief but also believed that he was asking to stretch the rules too far. In particular the committee was concerned about waiving the previous surface and rear yard requirements. There is also no provision for the trash and when asked about it, the committee was told that it would be stored inside the house. The committee will support the applicant so long as there is a 5 foot rear yard that has a pervious surface and provides storage for the trash. This still allows a second floor deck that is 6 feet deep.

**BZA #19489, 17 6th Street NE; BZA #19465, 1336 E Street SE; and BZA #19487, 328 8th Street SE.** These three cases all involve various size additions that need lot occupancy relief. The committee voted to support these cases. In the case of 17 6th Street NE, the support is conditioned on a letter of support or no objection from the neighbor to the north.

*Subsequent to submitting this report, the owners of 619 Elliott Street NE and 17 6th Street NE withdrew their applications. In the case of 17 6th Street NE, the owners are going to proceed with a matter of right project and will not need zoning relief.*

**BZA #19494, 507 2nd Street NE.** This commercially zoned property was improved during 2015/16. The contractor did not follow the

*Continued on page 7*



# June Members' Meeting: What Secrets Lie Beneath the Shotgun House?

By Susan Burgerman

The guest speaker for our June meeting is Dr. Ruth Troccoli, the DC Historic Preservation Office's District Archaeologist. Dr. Troccoli directed the excavation of the site at 1229 E Street SE, a pre-Civil War home which is often referred to as "the shotgun house" for its architectural style—a style that is common in New Orleans but unusual on Capitol Hill. At the Members' Meeting, Dr. Troccoli and her team will present the results of their excavation; a display of artifacts found at the site will accompany the presentation.

The event will be held on Wednesday, June 21, 2017, in Drummond Hall at Hill Center, 921 Pennsylvania Avenue SE. A business meeting for all members will take place at 6:40 pm, at which the results of the election for the 2017–18 CHRS Board will be announced. The presentation will begin at 7 pm. Street parking is available.



This event is open to the public, so please bring your friends and neighbors! ☆

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## Elections, continued from page 2

tree-lined streets that made their transition from the Heights to the Hill so wonderful. Adam is completing his second term as Treasurer.

**Michelle Carroll (At Large)** began her love affair with DC when she came here from New York for college and eventually made it her home. She owns and operates her business, Pilliod Meeting Planning. She brings her grace and expertise in overcoming the complexities of the meeting planning process to her work with CHRS. Twice she has chaired the House Tour, including one year when she planned her daughter's wedding to take place the same weekend! Due to her planning and organizational skills, it is second nature for her to undertake contract negotiations, deal with organizational structures and budgetary constraints, and adjust to last-minute changes. She is also a partner in N&M House Detectives, a house history company. She and her husband Dennis have lived on the Hill for 20 years.

**Janet Quigley (At Large)** has served on the CHRS Board since 2009 and was President from 2012 to 2014. Her primary interests are historic preservation, land use and encouraging home improvement. She previously served as an Advisory Neighborhood (ANC) Commissioner, Stanton Park Neighborhood Association (SPNA) Land Use Committee member, and Capitol Hill Coalition for Sensible Development Chair, and has lived on Capitol Hill since 1995.

**Tina May (At Large)** moved to Capitol Hill in 1982 for an affordably-priced rental house with college friends and has lived here ever since. Soon thereafter, she and her husband Peter bought their first house in need of restoration. Working with little more than a subscription to the *Old House Journal* and a lot of patience, they completed that house, and then a second, and are now working on their third (the "gut job"). They have been members of CHRS since at least 2002—back in the days when a membership included a subscription

to the *OHJ*. The Mays raised three sons in the middle of these renovations who not only survived the occasional lack of plumbing and more than a few splinters, but they actually became (sometimes) willing renovation workers before leaving to become engineers. Tina has been active in many local issues, especially neighborhood public schools and the Boy Scouts. She cares deeply about public institutions and the public realm. Tina works in the music business doing concert production. ☆

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# April Historic Preservation Café: Elements of Traditional and Historic Masonry

By Gregoire Holeyman, AIA

*Gary Barnhart, a Capitol Hill-based general contractor and owner of GL Barnhart Construction, was the April 2017 Preservation Café speaker. A frequent presenter for CHRS, Gary's firm focuses on modern renovations, historic restorations, and construction work. This presentation, titled "Elements of Traditional and Historic Masonry," focused on the masonry materials commonly found on Capitol Hill homes.*

Composed of simple and locally-abundant materials (sand and clay), brick was a readily-available construction material at the turn of the century when many of the rowhomes of Capitol Hill were built. Urban areas also had building codes which mandated masonry construction to prevent the rapid spread of fire in densely-populated areas. Around the early 20th century, over 100 brickyards were believed to be in operation in the DC area. At their peak, these kilns were producing over 100,000 bricks per day. Few of these historic structures remain, although one can still view the remnants of beehive-style kilns at the National Arboretum.

Pressed bricks, combined with narrow "butter" mortar joints, were used at front facades. Common bricks were installed at the other less-visible exterior walls. Common bricks were machine-made but soft due to being fired at a lower temperature in the kiln. Pressed brick, introduced in the late 19th century, was put in a hydraulic or screw press and fired immediately at a high temperature, leading to minimal shrinkage and a high-quality brick. Many buildings were built with a Flemish bond in the masonry pattern, creating a

decorative and an interlocking unit system at exterior walls.

A short walk around the Capitol Hill neighborhood will provide one with a multitude of different historic details and styles of masonry construction. Creative architectural styles have employed brick and terracotta details to embellish what would otherwise be simple looking buildings. Corbel cornices, quoin corners, and arched openings are prolific in the homes of Capitol Hill. A masonry corbel, typically employed at the cornice, is the portion of brick that steps out increasingly further towards the front away from the planar field surface of a masonry facade. Quoins are stones that make up corners or door and window openings that are larger or better shaped than the stones that make up the wall. A string course is a distinctive or multiple string of bricks across an entire facade or at a single position, like a window sill.

One of the advantages of brick is it does not require a lot of maintenance and care. A brick facade can last for 50 to 100 years. However, the mortar joints deteriorate much faster and are usually the focus of restoration and repair work. When the joint does need to be repaired, the characteristics of the mortar has to be similar to that of the brick. The mortar joints need to allow moisture

to move across the membrane. Painting the softer historic brick can create issues with moisture movement; painting can create an impermeable barrier that does not allow moisture to move in and out of the wall.

If you would like to learn more about historic masonry and construction on Capitol Hill, visit Gary's blog at: [glbarnhart.com](http://glbarnhart.com) Happy to answer any renovation questions, Gary can be reached directly at 202.569.8471 or [Gary@GLBarnhart.com](mailto:Gary@GLBarnhart.com). ★

## May Preservation Café: Capitol Dome

**Seth Baum** of Historical Arts and Casting, Inc., will discuss the firm's recent restoration and reconstruction work of the cast-iron dome of the Capitol Building. Baum's presentation will be on Wednesday, May 17 at 6:30 pm in the downstairs meeting room of the Northeast Neighborhood Library, 330 7th Street NE.



**House Tour, continued from cover**

Kitchen, 713 D Street SE; Labyrinth Games & Puzzles, 645 Pennsylvania Avenue SE; the Hill Center at the Old Naval Hospital; and at any of the houses on the tour, during tour hours (cash and check only).

For more information, including a complete list of tour destinations, visit the CHRS website: [chrs.org/house-and-garden-tour](http://chrs.org/house-and-garden-tour). ★



LEFT (TOP): Stop 12, 19 Second Street NE; (BOTTOM): Stop 7, 122 Fifth Street SE.

RIGHT (TOP): Stop 10, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 301 A Street SE.

MIDDLE (TOP, BOTTOM): Handpainted Egyptian motifs at Stop 8, Naval Hall No. 4, 330 Pennsylvania Avenue SE.

RIGHT (BOTTOM): Stop 14, 330 A Street NE.

# CHRS Supports 1511 A Street NE Zoning Case

by Brian Alcorn

Neighbors on the 1500 block of A Street NE, are fighting against an excessively large building that a developer wants to build on their block. 1511 A Street NE, a 1920s porch-front house, was formerly zoned commercial (C-2A) and is now zoned RF-1 (the zoning for Capitol Hill rowhouses). Due to a mistake in the application of the zoning laws, a developer obtained a permit that would allow demolishing the rowhouse and building a five-story 18-unit building that would tower over the two- and three-story houses on the block. DCRA cancelled



this erroneous building permit and the developer is appealing that cancellation. Neighbors have hired an attorney to defend the cancellation of this erroneous permit, and to protect their block. ★

## Thank You, CHRS Supporters

We thank the following CHRS members and supporters:

### NEW MEMBERS

Mia Grosjean (Friend of CHRS)  
Paul Turczynski

### GOLD

Michael & Barbara Eck

### SILVER

Michael Halebian  
Lawrence & Grace Monaco

### BRONZE

Keith Bridger & Nancy Simpson

### FUNDER

John & Patricia Skinner

### DICK WOLF LECTURE FUND

Patrick Crowley

## CHRS Accepting Donations for A Street Case

Your financial support is needed to help our neighbors fight to maintain the quality of life and streetscape on Capitol Hill. To contribute to this effort, you can make a tax deductible contribution to CHRS. If writing a check, make it payable to 'CHRS', put '1511 A Street NE zoning case' in the memo line, and mail it to P.O. Box 15264, Washington, DC 20003.

To donate online go to [chrs.org/join-chrs](http://chrs.org/join-chrs) and put '1511 A Street NE' in the "purpose of donation" box.

### Zoning Briefs, continued from page 3

approved plans and set the screened mechanical equipment 3 feet instead of the required 6.5 feet from the back of the building. The mistake here is innocuous and the committee voted to support the application.

**BZA #19499, 120 6th Street SE.** The applicant wanted to add a basement to and restore a carriage house that is 27 feet high. The applicant was persuaded by the Historic Preservation Board staff to raze the building and build a new carriage house that is 22 feet high and matches

the height of the homes opposite it on Brown's Court, SE. A special exception is needed to exceed a height of 20 feet and to increase the lot occupancy to 63%. The committee voted to support the application.

**BZA #19446, 646 6th Street NE.** This case was considered at the February meeting but was continued because the applicant amended the plans. Initially this case involved the addition of a third story to a front porch style house located outside the Historic District. The applicant proposed to remove the attic dormers and to add a third floor. Unfortunately

the addition removed the cornice that matched a series of houses along that row. The applicant has changed the plans and is preserving the cornice and dormers. However, the addition is set only 3.25 feet from the front of the house. The neighbor at 644 has an addition that is set back more than 10 feet and he objects to the short setback. The committee opposes the application and conditions approval on a greater setback. ★



**CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION**

**Capitol Hill Restoration Society**

420 10th Street SE  
Washington, DC 20003

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## Mark Your Calendar!

### MAY

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

**13** Saturday, 4–7 pm

**14** Sunday, 12–5 pm  
CHRS House & Garden Tour. Details:  
Carl Spier, (202) 543-0425, [www.chrs.org](http://www.chrs.org)  
or email [caphrs@aol.com](mailto:caphrs@aol.com).

**16** 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](mailto:info@chrs.org).

**17** Wednesday, 6:30 pm  
Historic Preservation Café, Northeast  
Neighborhood Library, 330 7th Street NE.  
Seth Baum of Historical Arts and Casting,  
Inc. will discuss the firm's recent  
restoration and reconstruction work on  
the cast-iron dome of the Capitol  
Building. Details: CHRS Office,  
(202) 543-0425.

### JUNE

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

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

**20** 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](mailto:info@chrs.org).

**21** Wednesday, 6:30pm  
CHRS Members' Meeting, Hill Center,  
921 Pennsylvania Avenue SE, Drummond  
Hall. Details: [www.chrs.org](http://www.chrs.org) or email  
[info@chrs.org](mailto:info@chrs.org).

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

[www.chrs.org](http://www.chrs.org)

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## 60th Annual Capitol Hill House and Garden Tour

Mother's Day Weekend • May 13–14, 2017

Information and tickets at: (202) 543-0425 or [www.chrs.org](http://www.chrs.org)