



CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

NEWS

www.chrs.org

February 2018

Capitol Hill Restoration Society Photo Contest



In anticipation of the 2018 Mothers Day House and Garden Tour, we are sponsoring a photo contest – “The Capitol Hill Home.” We had so many delightful entries last year, we just couldn’t resist doing it again.

To participate, take a high-resolution (1 MB or larger) exterior shot of what you think makes a home a Capitol Hill home (cell phone photos are fine) and email it to housetourchrs@gmail.com. The image might be a close up of an architectural detail, a garden nook, or a loving portrait of your own home. Include your name and address, email address, and the address of the property in the photo.

The winning image will be awarded two complimentary passes to the 2018 House & Garden Tour

and be prominently displayed on our website.

Entries are due by March 2. In submitting your photo you agree that it will become the property of CHRS, which may reproduce, modify, and digitize and adapt the photograph. You retain the right to continued use of the image. For details, visit: chrs.org/photo-contest. ✧



Submissions to the CHRS Photo Contest capture the unique details of “The Capitol Hill Home.”



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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 Monte Edwards, includes Nancy Metzger and Beth Purcell. The committee is seeking recommendations of individuals who wish to be considered for positions on next year's Board.

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 will be announced at the end of April and postcard ballots will be mailed to CHRS members in May.

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 3, 2018. ★

Overbeck Lecture: A Closer Look at Capitol Hill's Historic Alleys

by Nancy Metzger

Capitol Hill has a rich collection of historic alleys and alley buildings that have long been valued by Capitol Hill residents. In the 1930s, Capitol Hill residents began to renovate run-down alley dwellings despite a law that called for their demolition. That law was eventually reversed, leading to the preservation of many of the Hill's historic alley structures.

On Thursday, March 15, architectural historian Kim Williams will trace the history of Capitol Hill's alleys through successive waves of changing uses, demographics, demolition, preservation, and new development. Ms. Williams is a preservation planner for DC's Historic Preservation Office, Office of Planning.

The lecture will be presented on Thursday, March 15, 2018, at Hill Center, 921 Pennsylvania Avenue SE. The lecture will begin at 7:30 pm.

As always, admission is free but a reservation is required due to limited seating. To register, go to Hill Center calendar (hillcenterdc.org/events) after February 1 or call (202) 549-4172. We suggest that all guests arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the event. Seating will begin at 7:00 for those who hold reservations. Available seats will be released to guests on the waitlist beginning at 7:15 pm.

Overbeck lectures are supported by the Capitol Hill Community Foundation. ★

Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS)

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** Chair is an appointed Board Member*

NEWSLETTER

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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

March Preservation Café: Sustainable DC and Historic Preservation

By Joanna Kendig

By 2032, the District is set to become the healthiest, greenest, and most livable city in the country as outlined in the Sustainable DC Plan. These issues are important to us all as we create more livable communities. In December 2017, Mayor Bowser also set an ambitious goal of becoming carbon-neutral by 2050. How these goals can best be achieved while maintaining historic fabric of our neighborhood will be explored through engagement and conversation with some of our city's experts.

In this first presentation of a three-part series, Jay Wilson, Green Building Program Analyst with the District's Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE), and Steve

Callcott, Deputy Preservation Officer with the DC Office of Planning (OP), will tell us how Washington is on the path to becoming one the greenest cities in the world. They will give an overview of Sustainable DC initiatives, and share with us how these intersect with historic preservation practices throughout the city and on Capitol Hill.

This Preservation Café will be held on March 14, 2018, at 6:30 pm in the downstairs meeting room at Northeast Neighborhood Library, 330 7th Street NE.

Look for follow-up presentations on renewable energy (solar panels) programs and on improving energy efficiency of our homes in April and May. ★

Zoning Committee Report

By Gary Peterson

During a meeting held on January 11, 2018, the Committee considered one case involving an alley lot located in the square bounded by Pennsylvania Ave, C Street, and 2nd and 3rd Streets SE. The property was previously before the committee as **BZA #19536**.

In that case, the applicant wanted to build a two-story, two-unit dwelling. The committee voted to support the application provided the applicant made provisions for storing

the garbage cans on the adjacent walkway. Apparently the applicant failed to gain permission. The new case, **BZA #19683**, was filed. In this case, the applicant wishes to build a two-story, one-unit house that has a small side yard for garbage storage and a one-car garage. The applicant produced a shadow study that showed that the 20-foot high building produces minimal impact on adjacent properties. The committee voted to support the application. ★

DC Grassroots Planning Coalition Urges Action to Safeguard the Comprehensive Plan's Protections for Neighborhoods

By Beth Purcell

While planning may seem a dull topic, when done right, it gives residents a voice in creating rules for development in their neighborhood and empowers residents to block developments that don't adhere to these standards. At a standing-room-only meeting at the Southeast Neighborhood Library on January 20, people from all eight wards came together to organize against efforts to dilute protections for neighborhoods.

The Comprehensive Plan (Plan) is the most important land-use law in the city: zoning, PUDs, BZA cases must all follow the Plan. The Plan is amended periodically, and the current amendment process began in 2017 and will be completed in 2018. The DC Office of Planning (OP) requested proposed amendments to the Plan and received over 3,000 proposed amendments, including from Advisory Neighborhood Councils and the Capitol Hill Restoration Society.

In 2016, residents won an important victory in court -- when city agencies ignored residents and approved a development that violated the Comprehensive Plan, the court agreed with residents and overturned the city's zoning and historic preservation approvals for the project.¹ OP now seeks to nullify residents' victory by weakening the protections in the Comprehensive Plan in two ways:

1) Watering down the framework element

The Plan has three parts:

- a) A framework element setting out economic and demographic data and setting overall goals for the city's future;
- b) Citywide elements for urban design, housing, environment, transportation, economic development, etc.; and
- c) Area elements, including one for Capitol Hill.

The framework element is the foundation for all the other elements. Weakening the framework element with pro-developer provisions also weakens the citywide elements and the area elements, and blocks any pro-neighborhood amendments.

2) Denying residents the chance to respond to the entire Plan before the Plan is submitted to the Council

In 2017, OP promised that the framework element, together with all proposed amendments to the citywide and area elements, would be presented for public comment, and only after the public comment would all the elements be submitted to the Council for approval. OP has broken its promise—it first wants the Council to approve the framework element alone, and if it's approved, that will control the content of the citywide and area elements.

The proposed changes to the framework element open the door to commercial development in our residential row house neighborhoods and higher density projects. The current Plan defines Moderate Density Residential, which, on the Plan's Future Land Use Map, includes Capitol Hill.

Current framework element:
Moderate Density Residential: This designation is used to define the District's residential row house neighborhoods, as well as low-rise garden apartment complexes. This designation also applies to areas characterized by a mix of single-family homes, 2-4 unit buildings, and low-rise apartment buildings. "... RF-1 ...zone [e.g., Capitol Hill row houses] [is] generally consistent with the Moderate Density category. 225.4"

Proposed new framework element shown in bold: **Moderate Density Residential:** This designation is used to **describe** the District's areas suited **generally but not exclusively for residential row house neighborhoods**, including garden apartment complexes. This designation **is also relevant** to areas characterized by a mix of single-family homes, 2-4 unit buildings, and low-rise apartment buildings. [underline added] "The ... RF-1 ...zone [e.g., Capitol Hill row houses] [is] generally consistent with the Moderate Density category. **Another zone district may be generally consistent with the Moderate Density Residential land use category when approved as described in section 225.1"**

Proposed new Section 225.1 states that the description of the land use category is "**a reference to areas for which the category is generally, but not exclusively suited.**"

[underline added] These changes to the framework element would give developers a free hand to change our

Continued on page 5

Historic Preservation Briefs

By Beth Purcell

The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB or the Board) considered the following cases on December 21, 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.

518 6th Street NE, HPA 18-108 (formerly HPA 16-199), concept/three-story addition. This is a three-story brick bay front, a contributing building, one of five designed and built by architect Edward Woltz.¹ A prior owner presented proposals for this property to HPRB, ANC 6C, CHRS, and the community. The prior owner demolished substantial portions of the structure and damaged the adjoining properties at 516 and 520 6th Street NE. The property is now under new ownership with a proposal for a two-unit condo. The current owner now

has support from the owners of 520 and 516 6th Street NE.

The plans call for constructing a subordinate three-story rear addition in the rear, over the existing one-story section, and adding a small rooftop terrace. CHRS supported the proposal, which the Board approved, while concurring with concerns raised in ANC 6C’s resolution, and stipulated that the applicant work with staff to refine the details at the proposed basement window opening, light-well and driveway roll-up gate. For prior coverage, see *CHRS News* June, 2016.

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

- **1314 Independence Avenue SE, HPA 18-066**, concept/two-story rear addition.
- **508 7th Street SE, HPA 18-069**, concept/two-story rear addition. ★

¹ DC building permit #1887 (2 May 1889).



IMAGE COURTESY BETH PURCELL

Interested in learning more about historic district designation?
Contact CHRS at caphrs@aol.com.

Comprehensive Plan, *continued from page 4*

row house neighborhood with large, incompatible projects.

DC Grassroots Planning Coalition sponsored the January 20 meeting. It’s an initiative of Empower DC. For additional information, see www.empowerdc.org. Another meeting is planned for February 10, 2 pm, at the Southwest Library (900 Wesley Place SW, southwestlibrary@dc.gov).

We understand that the Council will hold a hearing on the Comprehensive Plan on March 20 and CHRS plans to testify to protect neighborhoods. We will post information www.chrs.org as soon as we learn more. ★

¹ *Friends of McMillan Park v. DC Zoning Comm’n et al.* (DC Court of Appeals, Dec. 2016). www.caselaw.findlaw.com

New Plans for Southeast Boulevard and Barney Circle

By Monte Edwards

Currently the Southwest Freeway (also known as Interstate 695) ends at 11th Street SE. The DC Department of Transportation (DDOT) plans a new boulevard configuration on the road between 11th Street and Barney Circle. This new boulevard would be constructed on a deck, under which a bus garage would be built.

The new boulevard would be between 20 and 40 feet above the waterfront and access to the waterfront would be provided by one or more pedestrian/bicycle ramps and possibly stairs. The new roadway would consist of 2 lanes in each direction and 13th, 14th and 15th Streets SE would be extended to meet it. Barney Circle would be reconfigured to provide a ramp to access the bus garage.

The Capitol Hill Restoration Society has submitted comments supporting the boulevard concept, provided safeguards be included in the design to prevent the new road from becoming a freeway. CHRS strongly recommends that:

- The boulevard be limited to a two-way, four lane boulevard, with no parking lanes that might be converted to travel lanes during rush hour, (thereby converting the four travel lanes to a six lane thruway);
- Dedicated bicycle and pedestrian lanes be provided on each side of the boulevard; traffic signals and crosswalks be provided at the intersections at 13th, 14th and 15th Streets to prioritize pedestrians and bicycles;
- A pedestrian/bicycle ramp be provided from 14th Street to the waterfront, and additional pedestrian access to the waterfront be provided at 13th

and 15th Streets in the form of stairs and perhaps elevator(s) for pedestrians with limited mobility.

Not all of the existing right of way (ROW) would be used for the boulevard, bicycle and pedestrian lanes and access to the waterfront. In its present proposal, DDOT shows "Potential Excess Right-Of-Way" north of the new boulevard. In previous proposals, the unused ROW is shown as developed with medium- to high-rise development that CHRS opposes.

New Parkland

CHRS explained in its comments that this property was acquired for transportation—a public purpose. Ninety percent of the cost was provided by the federal Bureau of Public Roads under the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956. The land was acquired with public money and any of the ROW not needed for the boulevard should be used only for public purpose, such as parkland.

CHRS urges that the excess ROW be developed as parkland, with substantial trees to provide acoustic buffering from the noise of the new boulevard and pervious surfaces for the pedestrian walks, either the gravel system used on the Mall or perforated pavers.

The Bus Garage

The new boulevard would be constructed on a deck, under which would be a bus garage. The bus garage would be accessed from a ramp that would begin at a reconfigured Barney Circle, and a second access near 11th Street. DDOT explained that the purpose of the garage facility would be for Circulator buses, and with DDOT going to electric, this would be a recharging

facility, with buses arriving in the evening and leaving at 4 am for their routes. The bus garage would be largely empty during the daytime, and DDOT is apparently considering renting the space to WMATA buses. CHRS has advocated that a far better use would be to make it available for tour buses during the day, when the circulator buses were out.

Capitol Hill has been promoted as a destination. A large majority of the people coming to Capitol Hill arrive by tour bus and after the buses drop off the visitors, the buses park on our streets and idle their engines. Use of the SE Boulevard bus garage would provide an environmentally superior alternative to tour buses parking and idling on our streets.

The improvement in the quality of life on Capitol Hill without the tour bus parking and idling would eventually translate into higher property values. An increase in property value not only benefits the owner, but also to the community because the added value is capitalized when property and real estate taxes are collected. The increase in real estate taxes to the City that would likely exceed any income that DDOT might receive from renting the space to WMATA.

Additionally, as electric bus technology develops and is used for Circulator buses, that technology would likely find its way into tour buses as well, and they would need a recharging facility after they arrive on Capitol Hill. Providing that recharging service would provide DDOT with a revenue source to defray the cost of operating the bus garage. ★

CHRS Urges Council to Keep Anacostia's West Bank Road-Free

By Beth Purcell

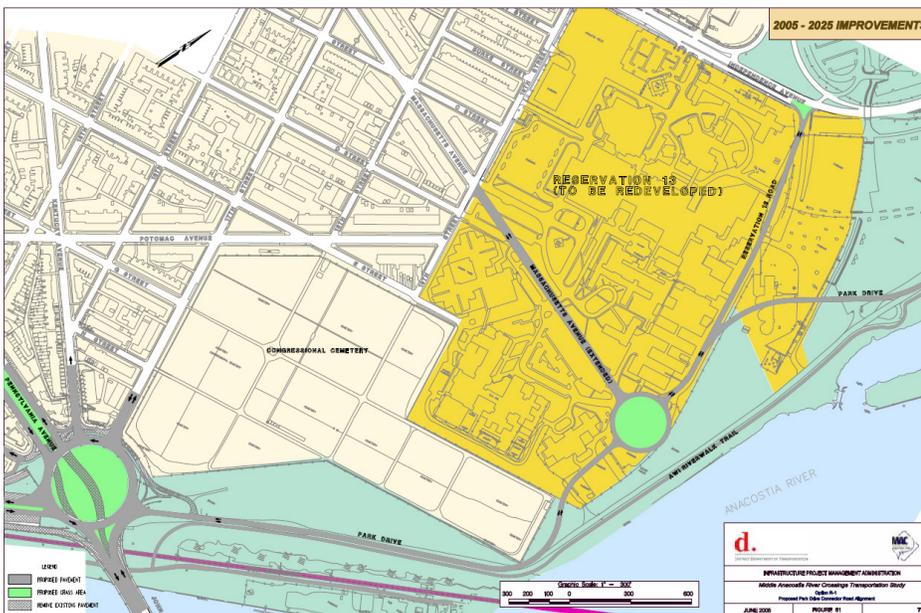
On January 11, 2018, CHRS testified before the Council against the DC Department of Transportation's (and EventsDC's) proposed "Park Drive" on the west bank of the Anacostia River. The Anacostia Riverwalk Trail runs 20 miles along the river, passing near Barney Circle and RFK Stadium. It's an amazing resource for pedestrians and cyclists. DDOT proposes to build a "Park Drive" for vehicles, paralleling the Riverwalk Trail. CHRS opposed the proposal for the following reasons:

- The proposed road is in a 100-year floodplain. No road should be ever be built here.
- This is a natural resource area and roads are a danger to wildlife.
- Residents of eastern Capitol Hill have repeatedly opposed the "Park Drive" in public meetings.

Councilmember Allen was at the hearing, and after our testimony he stated that he is "no fan" of the Park Drive, agreeing that it would become

a commuter connection, and added that if there was a lot of traffic, it could be expanded in the future from the proposed two lanes to four lanes.

To read CHRS's Council testimony see www.chrs.org. ★



DDOT's Middle Anacostia Crossings Study (2005).

Thank You, CHRS Supporters!

NEW

Robert Atcheson &
Ms. Gene Smith

PLATINUM

Brian & Susan Alcorn
Gary Peterson
Muriel Wolf

GOLD

Stephen Hedger
Terra Nelson

SILVER

Susan Burgerman &
Andrew Baxley
Lemoyne & Pamela Blackshear
Cheryl & Matthew Chalifoux
Bill Crews & Steve Kehoe
Susan Oursler

BRONZE

Nicky Cymrot
Alan & Rebecca Dye
Lisa & Gary Jones
Peter & Christina May
Lisa Wilson & Tim McCormick
Phillip S. Smith (Captel)

FRIEND OF CHRS

Keith Bridger
John Franzen
Roger Haley
Jan Schoonmaker



CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

Capitol Hill Restoration Society

420 10th Street SE
Washington, DC 20003

Mark Your Calendar!

FEBRUARY

5 Monday, 6:30 pm

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

10 Saturday, 2 pm

DC Grassroots Planning Coalition on Comprehensive Plan, Southwest Library, 900 Wesley Place SW. See article in this issue. Details: www.empowerdc.org, (202) 234-9119.

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 or info@chrs.org

MARCH

2 Friday, Midnight

Deadline for Capitol Hill Home photo contest in celebration of the 2018 House and Garden Tour. Email hi-res images to: housetourchrs@gmail.com. Details: chrs.org/photo-contest

5 Monday, 6:30 pm

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

14 Wednesday, 6:30 pm

Preservation Café: Sustainable DC and Historic Preservation. Northeast Library (downstairs meeting room), 330 7th Street NE. Details: Joanna Kendig, (609) 933-4291.

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 or info@chrs.org

23 Friday, 7 pm

4th Annual Dick Wolf Memorial Lecture at The Hill Center, 921 Pennsylvania Avenue SE. The event is free and open to the public.

If you received a complimentary copy of this newsletter, please consider joining CHRS!
www.chrs.org