



CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

NEWS

www.chrs.org

July/August 2018

June Members' Forum: Mapping Early Washington

By Susan Burgerman

For nearly two decades, DC history specialist Brian Kraft has combined his background in data management with his abiding interest in local history to create innovative tools for social science researchers, historians, and anyone interested in the history of their own home or neighborhood. He introduced the audience at the June 28 CHRS Community Forum to several of his projects, beginning with the current one, Mapping Early Washington.

The project uses Geographic Information System (GIS) technology to show how Washington City developed from the initial division into squares and lots. He added data on individual homeowners using the 1822 and 1858 City Directories, which yielded a map showing clusters of selected occupations, from laborers to surgeons. Mr. Kraft intends to expand the project to include tax assessment, census, and other data to produce a rich, fact-based history of our city.

You can see the maps created by this project, and learn about Brian Kraft's other projects, on his website: briandkraft.blog. Be sure to visit his most recently completed project, the Atlas of Early Capitol Hill (chrs.org/kraft-atlas), and HistoryQuestDC (planning.dc.gov/node/1203082), an earlier project funded by the Historic Preservation Office.

The presentation was preceded by a brief membership meeting to announce the result of elections for the CHRS Board of Directors. ★

DC history specialist Brian Kraft shares his research at the CHRS June Members' Forum.



IMAGE COURTESY ELIZABETH NELSON

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September Preservation Café: Historic Doors—Preserve or Replace?

By Gregoire Holeyman, AIA

Washington, DC is a beautiful old city and has many historic districts which have wonderful original detail. When your doors start to rot or to show their age what do you do? Should you preserve or replace?

Joel Truitt of Capitol Hill-based Joel Truitt Builders will discuss how you know when a door is able to be preserved, what doors are deemed

appropriate by the DC Historic Preservation Office, what is most suited for your house's architecture, and if you need to replace where you can find a historically-accurate replacement. The Truitt team has been building and restoring front and interior doors in his 7th Street shop for over 40 years. The details are what make our old houses so appealing.

This Preservation Cafe will be held September 19, at 6:30 pm at the Northeast Library, located at 330 7th Street NE. The presentation will be in the handicapped-accessible downstairs meeting room. No reservations are required. The Preservation Café series is a free forum with topics of interest to the greater Capitol Hill community. ★

And A River Runs By It

By Nancy Metzger

Ananostia Park, a 1,200-acre park, is celebrating its 100th birthday this year. With the steady improvement of the Anacostia River and recently opened Anacostia Riverwalk Trail, the park is undergoing a renaissance. The park's value as a recreational area is obvious. However, underneath these ballfields and trails is a history stretching back thousands of years.

Join Vince Vaise, Chief of Visitor Services at Anacostia Park, in an exciting talk that details the stories of Native Americans, civil rights battles, and historic landmarks. This is an Overbeck History Lecture you won't want to miss on September 24 at 7:30 pm at Hill Center, 921 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. Admission will be free but reservations will be required. Details will appear on the calendar at CHRS.org in early September. ★

September Community Forum: Creating Capitol Hill

When members of the United States Congress first arrived at their new capital in 1800, they found very little in the way of housing and residential services. Local businessmen and land speculators, who were deeply invested in having their home be the nation's capital, sought to provide for the growing federal government.

In a new US Capitol Historical Society publication, *Creating Capitol Hill: Place, Proprietors, and People*, Pamela Scott describes how Daniel Carroll of Duddington, the wealthy planter who owned the land on which the Capitol was built, joined with one of the original land speculators, Thomas Law, to build a local community in order to serve Congress when it moved to Washington. She will present her research at the next CHRS Community Forum. Dr. Scott is a noted architectural historian and expert in the history and development of Washington's built environment.

The event will be held on Wednesday, September 26, 2018, in the Hill Center's John Philip Sousa Hall, 921 Pennsylvania Avenue SE. Street parking is available. The presentation will begin at 7 pm and will be preceded by a business meeting at 6:45 pm, at which members will approve the CHRS FY2019 budget.

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

Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS)

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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 Briefs

by Gary Peterson

During a meeting held on June 14, 2018, the Committee considered the following cases:

BZA #19784, 237 10th Street SE.

The applicant proposes building a one story garage and extending an existing deck. The lot occupancy will increase from 44% to 70% and a special exception is required to expand the lot occupancy over 60%. The adjacent neighbors have signed letters of support. The Committee voted unanimously to support the application.

BZA #19785, 322 8th Street SE. The applicant needs a special exception to build a second-story apartment on an existing one-story garage. There will not be a roof deck on the garage but there will be a small balcony on the yard side of the building. There were no letters of support from the adjacent neighbors. The Committee were informed by the applicant that the neighbors across the 30-foot alley to the east objected on privacy grounds. The Committee found that the 30-foot alley and the existing garages on the objectors' property was sufficient protection of privacy. The Committee voted to support the application subject to the receipt of letters of support.

BZA #19786, 1016 Massachusetts Avenue NE. The applicant wants to build a third floor on top of the two-story rear of the building. Even though the lot occupancy will remain 63%, a special exception is required to expand the lot occupancy higher. The applicant also needs a special exception for making an addition to an already nonconforming structure. Abutting neighbors have yet to sign letters of support and the Committee voted unanimously to support the

application subject to receiving the letters.

BZA #19792, 220 14th Place NE. The applicant proposes to fill in a dogleg and build a two-story rear addition. The infill of the dogleg will increase the lot occupancy from 60% to 68%. The applicant provided letters of support from the neighbors and the Committee voted to support the application.

BZA #19799, 518 9th Street and 816 E Street NE. This case involves two adjacent apartment buildings that are on two different record lots. The applicant wishes to combine the lots. The two buildings were designed by owner and architect Frank Russell White and constructed in 1926. The buildings are non-conforming in lot occupancy, height, and use. The owner is going to rehab the buildings and needs to combine the lots in order to facilitate compliance with District Department of Environment stormwater management requirements. The Committee voted to support the special exception needed to combine the lots. ★

Historic Preservation Briefs

By Alison Ross and Beth Purcell

The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB or the Board) considered the following cases on May 31 and June 28, 2018. 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.

732 4th Street NE, HPA 18-248, concept/rear and rooftop additions. In January 2017, HPA 17-129 (CHRS News March 2018), the Board reviewed a proposal to construct a popup at this address, and unanimously ruled that the project was not compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District because the proposed third story addition was very visible from public space. In 2018, a new application was filed.

732 4th Street NE is a brick bayfront rowhouse, one of eight (718–732 4th Street NE) developed by the well-known Capitol Hill builder, Diller B. Groff (1841–1910). The house at 732 4th Street was built in 1889 and is a contributing building. Although not well maintained, 732 4th Street 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 (Case 15-01). The two main issues were infilling a dogleg and the visibility of the third-story addition and roofdeck from public space.

Infilling dogleg: Doglegs are a character-defining feature of Capitol Hill houses, and therefore, this dogleg should be preserved. The two nearby row houses with popups

built before the effective date of the historic district extension in 2015 (728 and 726 4th Street NE) enclosed the dogleg. Two others, 730 and 732 4th Street, retain the original footprint and dogleg. (The dogleg at 720 4th Street on the same block has been enclosed, and this also appears to have occurred before the effective date of the historic district.)

The Board has acted to protect doglegs, particularly in situations where there is an intact row of doglegs.¹ Here, the doglegs were interrupted by pre-historic district additions, but only three of the doglegs in this row have been enclosed, so the row of doglegs is primarily intact. We argued that applicants should not be allowed to bootstrap on the destruction of character-defining features predating historic district protection. Nevertheless, because some of the doglegs in this row had already been infilled (unlike the row including 316 G Street NE), the Board allowed infilling this dogleg.

Visibility from public space—sightlines: We questioned whether the roofdeck on the new third story would be visible, because during construction it might prove necessary to raise the roofline to accommodate the roofdeck, and the dimensions in the plans looked very tight. Staff shared this concern, and one HPRB member was “not convinced by the drawings.” We argued if HPRB grants concept approval, that staff should conduct a visual test of the third story and roof deck if/when the height dimensions change as the project progresses from concept proposal to permit documents.

The Board found the revised concept to be compatible with the historic district and delegated final

review to staff with the following conditions: (1) that drawings be developed that document and confirm that substantial demolition is not proposed and that the building section confirms the new third floor does not intersect the windows at the front elevation; (2) that the roof deck be eliminated; and (3) that a frame mockup be erected to ensure that the roof addition is no more visible than presented. Vote: 8-1.

637 E Street NE, HPA 18-432, concept/basement areaway and walkway. This rowhouse, a contributing building, is part of a Kennedy Bros. enterprise to build rowhouses throughout Square 862. This house was designed by A. H. Sonneman and built in 1914.² To create a front entrance for the mobility-impaired, the applicants sought to cut a hole in the front retaining wall, add a gate, and excavate the front yard to create a path leading to a new basement entrance.

The applicants’ architect testified that the applicants plan to use the basement entrance to access a rental unit, and while the applicants are currently able-bodied, they might become mobility-impaired in the future, and some relatives are mobility-impaired. HPO staff explained that the process is for HPRB to rule on compliance with the historic preservation act, and that DCRA has the authority to grant a building permit for an opening in the retaining wall to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, even if HPRB had ruled against the project.

The applicants pointed to four addresses with a “similar proposed entrance” in square 862: 619 and 641 Lexington Place NE; 643 E Street NE; and 425 6th Street NE. HPRB approval would be needed in



212–214 A St NE.



Nooshi mural on the south side of 526 8th Street SE.

advance of constructing any of these proposed entrances. We searched HPRB's website and found no HPRB case for any of these addresses. The applicants' architect testified that he found no HPRB approval or building permits for any of these four basement entrances.

Retaining walls are character-defining features:

"Retaining walls ... significantly contribute to the character of the property and its neighborhood. Typically retaining walls are constructed of stone, although some brick and cast concrete walls can be found. In addition to the material used, the profile of the mortar joints and the type of coursing contributes to the character of the wall." HPRB, *Landscaping, Landscape Features and Secondary Buildings in Historic Districts*, 6.

637 E Street NE has a coursed granite fieldstone retaining wall, and is typical of many stone retaining walls on Capitol Hill.³ In 2014, the Board found that a proposal to cut an opening in a retaining wall for a basement entrance to be incompatible with the Capitol Hill historic district and inconsistent with the preservation act (325 D Street SE, HPA 14-536).

We believed that the project violated HPRB guidelines for basement entrances and agreed with the staff report that the project is not compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District. The Board denied the application.

212 A Street NE, HPA 18-426, concept/demolition of existing garage; new construction of rear addition and carriage house. This two-story frame house, built in 1874 or earlier, is a contributing building.⁴ HPRB recently reviewed an application concerning the adjacent house from the same applicant (214 A Street NE, HPA 18-209, CHRS News March 2018). Both houses were probably built at the same time by the same owner.

The applicant proposes new rear and side additions, to demolish existing garages and construct a new garage. The applicant plans to rehabilitate the front elevation, retaining the wood brackets, replacing aluminum trim with wood trim, replacing aluminum siding with cedar wood siding, and Marvin two-over-two wood windows. If HPRB grants concept approval, we suggest requiring HPO staff signoff on the replacement wood siding and windows. The rear elevation, with two-over-two wood windows and wood siding, is appropriate.

We were initially concerned about a potential horse walk on the west side of 212 A Street NE leading to the rear of this deep lot. The Hopkins map (1893) shows 212 A Street NE and a passageway leading to a frame accessory building at the rear of the lot (and another accessory building at the rear of 214 A Street). The map's legend indicates that this accessory building was a "stable and shed" and we thought that in 1893, before automobiles were common, this accessory building may have been a stable, and the passageway a horse walk.

However, we are persuaded by the staff's analysis of the lot's topography, suggesting that the passageway was not a horse walk. Nevertheless, these open spaces are defining features of Capitol Hill rowhouses. One type of open space are horse walks between houses, a character-defining feature. We believed that setting back the side addition 30 feet from the front elevation preserves a significant amount of the open space and that the project was compatible. The Board approved the concept.

Continued on page 6

2018 CHRS Board Election Results

By Monte Edwards

CHRS members received ballots and voted on officers and directors for 2018-2019. Elizabeth Nelson, Susan Oursler, and Adam Apton, continue as President, Secretary, and Treasurer, respectively. Monte Edwards, the current First Vice President, will continue as City Planning Chair. Janet Quigley will serve as First Vice-

President and Tina May as Second Vice-President. Patrick Lally will move from Second Vice-President to At-Large Director and Joanna Kendig and Steve Kehoe were re-elected as At-Large Directors. The Officers and Directors welcome the following new At-Large members: Angie Schmidt and Maygene Daniels. ★

Preservation Briefs, *continued from page 5*

526 8th St SE, HPA 18-433. The proposed project involves combining two lots into one lot and constructing an in-fill development on a surface parking area that has been vacant for many years. The proposed three-story, mixed-use building would be clad in brick with brick soldier courses, feature first floor projecting bay windows, second floor paired and single windows, and a two-story projecting bay at the southern end. A smaller, set-back third-story would lead to a rooftop deck that extends to ten feet from the front of the building.

The scale, fenestration, and solid/void relationship were very reminiscent of nearby properties and the initial design was a very “safe” design that would blend in with the streetscape. However, HPO and CHRS sensed that this vacant lot presented a rare opportunity to bring something more contemporary to Barracks Row and the applicant submitted a more contemporary design for final review.

The neighbor to the north at Nooshi testified that the new development would block the view of their mural and affect their rooftop deck adversely. HPRB voted 7-0 in favor of approving the project and delegating final approval to HPO staff.

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

- **216 8th Street NE (filed as 222)**, HPA 18-300, concept/rear addition; front alterations. St. James Rectory. The rectory will be converted into two condominiums.
- **14 7th Street SE**, HPA 18-365, concept/one-story addition at side-court.
- **322 8th Street SE**, HPA 18-434, concept/one-story addition on garage.
- **237 10th Street SE**, HPA 18-435, concept/one-story garage and rear deck.
- **232 South Carolina Avenue SE**, HPA 18-140, concept/front and side porch. ★

¹ See another Swampoodle case, 316 G Street NE, HPA 17-227.

² DC building permit # 5002 (22 May 1914).

³ Margaret Maliszewski-Pirkart, Architecture and Ornament (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co, 1998, 49).

⁴ See Faetz & Pratt (1874).

Ballot Clarification

Several members commented concerning the signature line on the ballot. The ballot contains a signature line in order to comply with the DC Nonprofit Corporation Act DC Code § 29-405.23, “Acceptance of votes,” which provides in part:

If the name signed on a ballot ... corresponds to the name of a member, the membership corporation [e.g., CHRS] if acting in good faith may accept the ballot ... and give it effect as the act of a member.

Interested in learning more about historic district designation?

Contact CHRS at caphrs@aol.com.

Outreach Efforts: July 4th Parade and Beyond

By Elizabeth Nelson

IMAGE COURTESY NICK L. ALBERTI



CHRS members braved the heat to march in the 2018 Capitol Hill 4th of July Parade.

As part of our ongoing outreach efforts, Society volunteers fielded a contingent in this year's Capitol Hill 4th of July Parade. Monte Edwards drove his classic Jaguar, an award-winning completely restored 1960 Jaguar XK 150 DHC, transporting the Mardi Gras beads in style. The weather was sunny and hot but at least it didn't rain. Many thanks to everyone who joined us! You can see

additional pictures here: chrs.org/capitol-hill-july-4-parade-2018.

On September 29 we plan to staff a booth at the Barracks Row Fall Festival, an ideal opportunity to introduce ourselves to newcomers to the Hill and to those living outside the boundaries of the Historic District. We'll offer children's activities to amuse our younger neighbors while we share information about our

accomplishments and future plans with their parents. And on October 21, we'll stage our third-annual House Expo at the Eastern Market North Hall, with over 30 home services providers.

If you can volunteer on either of these dates, please contact Elizabeth Nelson, elizabeth_knits@yahoo.com. Volunteers are always welcome—and are truly needed. ★

Dockless Bikeshare: DC Would Like Your Thoughts

Have you seen the dockless bicycles and scooters around the neighborhood?

Since September 2017, the DC Department of Transportation (DDOT) has been conducting the Dockless Demonstration Project. This is a trial period that allows several private companies to try out their models of dockless bike and scooter sharing programs and equipment. They would supplement the docked Capital Bikeshare program. Examples of these companies are Limebike, Bird scooters, and Jump motorized bikes. More information is at ddot.dc.gov/release/ddot-seeks-public-feedback-dockless-bikeshare-technology. The trial period has been extended through August 2018.

Do you have an opinion? You can send comments to: dockless.bikeshare@dc.gov.



CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

Capitol Hill Restoration Society
420 10th Street SE
Washington, DC 20003

Mark Your Calendar!

AUGUST

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

9 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.

If you received a complimentary
copy of this newsletter, please
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SEPTEMBER

4 Tuesday, 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.

19 Wednesday, 6:30 pm
Historic Preservation Café: Historic
Doors—Preserve or Replace? Northeast
Neighborhood Library, 330 7th Street NE.
Details: (202) 543-0425, info@chrs.org.

24 Monday 7:30 pm
Overbeck History Lecture Series: “A River
Runs Through It.” Hill Center, 921
Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. Admission will
be free but reservations will be required.
See chrs.org for more details.

29 Saturday
Barracks Row Fall Festival Volunteer for a
shift in the CHRS booth! Contact:
Elizabeth Nelson, (202) 543-0425,
elizabeth_knits@yahoo.com.

OCTOBER

17 Wednesday, 6:30 pm
Historic Preservation Café. Northeast
Neighborhood Library, 330 7th Street NE,
lower level. Details: CHRS Office,
(202) 543-0425, info@chrs.org.

21 Sunday, 10 am-4pm
CHRS House Expo, Eastern Market North
Hall, corner of 7th Street & North
Carolina Avenue SE. Details: Michelle
Carroll, pilliodmp@aol.com.