



CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

# NEWS

www.chrs.org

June 2016

## EIS Underway for Union Station Expansion

By Drury Tallant

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has begun an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as required under the National Environment Policy Act (NEPA) for expansion of the Union Station rail yard and terminal. As a designated historic landmark and in proximity to the Capitol Hill Historic District, the project is also subject to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

The expansion is necessary to provide adequate facilities for an anticipated increase in intercity passenger rail travel and commuter rail traffic, including platforms that can accommodate longer trains as well as emergency egress and ADA/handicap accessibility requirements. The project will also streamline intermodal transit demands by adding railroad support services, improving circulation and queuing areas, and coordinating with other transit modes (taxi, intercity and local bus, Metro, bicycles, etc).

The timeline for preparation of the EIS and Section 106 report extends into 2018. Two of the planned five public meetings occurred in December 2015 and March 2016. The initial meeting introduced the EIS process and described the project scope. The second public meeting addressed the purpose and need for the project and defined the project



IMAGE COURTESY DRURY TALLANT

elements and Area of Potential Effects (APE). The next public meeting in the Fall of 2016 will describe project alternatives and potential effects including those on historic resources. Additional information on this project can be found at [www.WUSstationexpansion.com](http://www.WUSstationexpansion.com). Comments can be emailed to [info@WUSstationexpansion.com](mailto:info@WUSstationexpansion.com).

CHRS is an active participant in the EIS/Section 106 process. Over two years ago CHRS joined the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Union Station

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# Diller B. Groff: Capitol Hill Builder

By Beth Purcell

**D**iller B. Groff (1841–1910) built rowhouses and alley dwellings on Capitol Hill. Groff was born and raised in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. During the Civil War he served in a unit of the Pennsylvania Volunteers, rising to the rank of Captain. In 1870, he moved to DC and began building houses. Eventually he moved on to larger projects, building out most of a number of squares in Northwest, including Brightwood Park. For several years Groff and his family lived at 1901 11th Street, NW and later at 1107 I Street, NW. He was active in the Brightwood Park Citizens' Association and the Brightwood Park Methodist Episcopal Church, located at 8th and Jefferson Streets, NW. He donated land for a new church, completed in 1900, and left the church \$500 in his will.<sup>1</sup>

In 1904, he and his brother, Samuel A. Groff, were convicted of defrauding the US Postal Service in connection with its purchase of Samuel Groff's invention. The Groffs' criminal trial was front page news

and the *Washington Post* even sent an artist to sketch the defendants, attorneys and witnesses. The Groffs were sentenced to each pay a \$10,000 fine and to serve two years at the federal prison at Moundsville, West Virginia. The "postal fraud prisoners" enjoyed excellent meals prepared by a chef-fellow prisoner (for which they paid extra) and had access to newspapers and magazines. When the Groffs were released from prison in 1906, the press covered the event.

Groff suffered a stroke while in prison and after his release he said that he wanted to take care of his health. It appears that he never again engaged in significant real estate activity. Groff died in 1910 after suffering another stroke. He was relatively prosperous, leaving an estate valued at over \$96,000 (\$2.2 million in 2014 dollars). He is buried at Rock Creek Cemetery.<sup>2</sup>

Groff's building program in Square 779 (3rd/4th/E/F Streets, NE) was typical of his real estate business. As of 1887, Square 779 was mostly vacant, occupied by only a few frame buildings. Between 1889 and 1891, Groff began to build out the square with 11 rowhouses at 516–536 4th Street, NE; 10 rowhouses at 319–337 F Street, NE; six rowhouses at 324–334 E Street, NE; and nine alley dwellings at 506–522 Groff Court.<sup>3</sup> During this time other builders, including Edgar S. Kennedy, constructed additional rowhouses, filling out Square 779.

In 1892, Groff built other houses nearby including 220–234 E Street, NE and 510–518 3rd Street, NE (pressed brick and Ohio stone, "white pine trim, cabinet mantels, latrobes [stoves], electric bells and speaking tubes") at an estimated cost of \$12,500 (both designed by Julius Germuiller). In 1894, he built 329–333 E Street, NE

for approximately \$8,000, which he purportedly designed himself. ★

<sup>1</sup> "Birthday to be Marked by Brightwood Church," *Washington Post*, 24 May, 1924, 12. "Groff Will is Filed," *Washington Post*, 13 Mar. 1910, 8.

Richard Busch, "Biographic Brief of Diller B. Groff," (1993). [www.gamebr.net/caroline/grof.html](http://www.gamebr.net/caroline/grof.html). Internet; accessed 3 Jan. 2015.

"Groff Will is Filed," *Washington Post*, 13 Mar. 1910, 8.

<sup>2</sup> DC Building permits # 1463 (23 Jan. 1891), 1814 (5 Apr. 1890), 1410 (8 Feb. 1890), 757 (25 Sept. 1890), 758 (25 Sept. 1890), 1463 (23 Jan. 1891), 1167 (10 Dec. 1889).

<sup>3</sup> DC Building permits # 1738 (19 Mar. 1892), 1739 (19 Mar. 1892). "Ten Millions This Year," *Washington Post*, 27 Mar. 1892, 10. "Building Permits Issued," *Washington Post*, 5 Sept. 1894, 7. One of Groff's houses is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.: In 1879, he built a three-story brick Queen Anne house at 1800 Vermont Avenue, NW for Edwin P. Goodwin, an insurance agent. The building later served as classrooms for Frelinghuysen University, a school for African-American adults. DC Inventory of Historic Sites (2009). DC Historic Preservation Review Board. [www.planning.dc.gov/page/landmarks-and-districts](http://www.planning.dc.gov/page/landmarks-and-districts). Internet; accessed 9 Jan. 2015.

IMAGE COURTESY BETH PURCELL



Groff building at 528 4th Street, NE.

## Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS)

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### 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](http://www.CHRS.org)

# CHRS Receives Award for Preservation Work

On Saturday, May 14, the DC Preservation League (DCPL) presented Capitol Hill Restoration Society with an award for “advocacy, education, community outreach efforts and for its early and sustained contributions to preservation efforts in Washington, DC.”

The award was presented at DCPL’s 45th Anniversary celebration, which took place on Pennsylvania Avenue under a tent that occupied a city block between 11th and 12th Streets, NW—directly in front of the Old Post Office. This was a significant location for DCPL, as the (continuing) fight to protect this building led to the organization’s founding in the early 1970s.

CHRS was honored for 60 years of championing historic preservation. The award recognized early achievements, such as conducting the multiyear building survey that led to Capitol Hill’s designation as a Historic District in 1976, and the leadership’s involvement in drafting what became the Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act of 1978.

In addition to the activism of earlier decades, the award acknowledged CHRS’s ongoing efforts to include more neighborhoods under Historic District protection. A notable contemporary achievement is the “Beyond the Boundaries” study of areas adjacent to Capitol Hill, which CHRS undertook from 2007 to 2014. This entailed an exhaustive building survey, and produced a database, maps, an historical context report, and analysis for potential Historic District expansion—all available to the public ([chrs.org/category/chrs-activities/beyond-the-boundaries](http://chrs.org/category/chrs-activities/beyond-the-boundaries)). These findings enabled CHRS to lead a successful effort to include the



IMAGE COURTESY JASON HORNICK

CHRS Board Members accept DCPL Award.

Swampoodle neighborhood in the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Capitol Hill Restoration Society now enters its seventh decade of advocating for our community. Each month, CHRS provides expert testimony to District offices, in particular the DC Historic Preservation Review Board, the Zoning Commission, the Department of Transportation, and the City Council. CHRS activities keep Hill residents informed about the laws and spirit of historic preservation. The organization advises residents on preservation methods and assists them with Historic District policy questions through “Guidelines” booklets and website information. It provides educational opportunities through the Dick Wolf Lecture Series, Preservation Cafes, and public presentations. It showcases different neighborhoods through walking tours and the annual House and Garden Tour. And it keeps CHRS members current on local developments through this newsletter.

The Board wishes to express its gratitude to the DC Preservation League for recognizing CHRS’s efforts—past, present, and future. ★

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# Historic Preservation Briefs

by Beth Purcell

**T**he Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB or the Board) considered the following cases on April 28 and May 5, 2016. HPRB is responsible for determining if proposed changes to a building are consistent with the DC Preservation Act. A “concept review” is a preliminary determination of a building owner’s plan to alter the building, and if the concept is approved, the owner will return to the HPRB for a final review. In these reports, “staff” refers to the staff of the Historic Preservation Office (HPO), which serves as the staff of the HPRB.

**1101 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE,** HPA 16-308, concept/alteration and new construction. As a result of the extensive damage from the 2013 fire, what remains of Frager’s are structures, not buildings. CHRS supported the applicant for its plan to restore these historic buildings, community landmarks, and for the respectful, well-thought out additions to the buildings. The massing of the three new upper stories over the Frager’s store is pulled back from Pennsylvania Avenue and from 11th Street, reducing their visibility (and in the process creating outdoor spaces for the residential units). The applicant plans 34 residential units, retail space for Frager’s (equivalent in size to the original store), other retail and underground parking. The brick coursing above the Frager’s buildings will closely resemble the brick in the original building; the store front bays will be restored using bronze metal, replacing the blue-painted metal (a color that we understand is not historic). The keystones and brick designs over the windows and store windows will be retained. The entrance to the

residential units between the Frager’s buildings is clearly delineated, has complementary brick, and a square glass and metal bay on the second story, similar to the bay on the 11th Street side.

The applicant plans to retain or restore the painted “Frager’s Hardware” sign. We suggested that the applicant continue to work with HPO staff on the selection of brick for the upper stories above the original Frager’s building, to ensure that this brick complements the early 20th century tapestry brick.

CHRS noted that the new section, to be built on the garden center’s location, in brick with shades of brown, has square glass and metal bays, with vertical accents in champagne-colored metal. The brick wraps around the corner, then continues throughout the rear of the new building. The entrance is clearly marked, and has a modern marquee. The color palette of the brick and metal is carefully selected and complements the original buildings.

The board approved the concept. One member said that this is a textbook proposal for adaptive use of a historic building. The board suggested that the brick on the third story above the original Frager’s buildings be a different color than the original brick, that the color palette be simplified, and that the lighting for the commercial and residential sections be differentiated. The case is scheduled to return to the board on the consent calendar.

**518 6th Street, NE,** HPA 16-199, concept/rear addition. This is a three-story brick bay front, a contributing building. The plans dated March 25 and April 18, 2016 call for constructing a subordinate three-story rear addition, replacing

an existing non-historic one-story addition. Mark Eckenweiler, ANC 6C04, on behalf of ANC 6C, testified concerning demolition done without permits, stop-work orders and errors in the plans. ANC 6C only had the opportunity to review the March 25 plans, and had not seen the April 18 plans. Several neighbors testified against the project, describing damage to their property and unsafe work practices. It appears that the rear wall on the second floor has already been demolished. The plans call for a significant amount of demolition, including the rear exterior wall, an interior load-bearing wall, and floor assemblies, which conflict with 10 DCMR 305.1 (a), (b). We learned that a significant amount of interior demolition had already taken place, which is not reflected in the plans. The project architect agreed that it is possible to revise the plans to show past and proposed demolition. We urged the Board to require the applicant to submit revised plans satisfying these requirements. The plans also failed to indicate the adjoining property owners’ rear additions. While these additions are visible in photographs, the plans indicate only the party walls, not the rear face-on-line additions for the properties on either side. It would be helpful to have a drawn rear elevation of the adjoining properties and of the applicant’s property to better show the relationship between all three elevations. We believed that these steps were necessary in order for the staff and the Board to evaluate this case. Because of the defects in the plans, we believed that as of the May 5, 2016 hearing, the project was

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<sup>1</sup> HPO, DC Historic Alley Buildings Survey, 21, 22.

# June Membership Meeting: History and Programming at Historic Congressional Cemetery

By Elizabeth Nelson

A Membership Meeting will be held on June 15, 2016, at the Congressional Cemetery Chapel. The presenter will be Paul K. Williams, President, Historic Congressional Cemetery. Mr. Williams will provide a brief history of Congressional Cemetery and speak about the people (interesting and sometimes infamous) who are buried there. The talk will address the challenges of operating and maintaining such a large, historically significant, yet also active cemetery—especially the continual challenge of raising the funds necessary to cover the Congressional Cemetery's annual costs.

The presentation will begin at 7 pm, preceded by a brief business meeting for all members at 6:40 pm. The event is free and the public is encouraged to attend.

not compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Although the plans have been clarified on certain points that we raised in our prior comments, the cornice on the rear addition needs additional definition (for example, some simple detailing), to be compatible with nearby houses. We requested that if the Board recommended concept approval, we agreed with the staff report that the applicant must work with staff on the final selection of materials, main entry door, and the design of the rear addition balustrade. We urged that the applicant be required to work closely with HPO staff, ANC 6C, and the community throughout every stage of the project.

One HPRB member wanted complete plans, and a railing for the rear balcony, not siding. HPRB voted to defer the case until ANC 6C had an opportunity to review the April 18 plans, or a subsequent complete set of plans.

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

**631 Lexington Place, NE,** HPA 16-100, revised concept/ basement entrance

**609 2nd Street, NE,** HPA 16-302, concept/ rear addition to veterinary clinic (in the Swampoodle addition to the Capitol Hill Historic District). ★

**Interested in learning more about historic district designation?**

Contact CHRS at [caphrs@aol.com](mailto:caphrs@aol.com).

**Union Station,** *continued from cover*

Preservation Coalition—an advocacy group that includes representatives from the Committee of 100 on the Federal City, and the DC Preservation League, among others. The Coalition meets several times a year to review activities and proposals at Union Station.

CHRS shares many of the Coalition's concerns regarding this very important project. These objections include the narrow scope of the project that has been limited to essentially the rail yard itself, refusing to include Akridge's Burnham Place project within scope of public review. The Burnham Place project is a three million square foot development to be built above the rail yard to the north of Union Station.

On the latter issue, the FRA argues that the Station Expansion is a Federal undertaking, while Burnham Place is a private activity. Nonetheless, the station expansion is integral to the Burnham Place project and accommodation of the needs of that project will inevitably shape the Federal undertaking. The Coalition is exploring various options to ensure that the foreseeable impacts of Burnham Place are included in the Station Expansion EIS. Design alternatives will be presented in the Fall of 2016. ★

# House Tour 2016: A Good Time Had by All

## The CHRS House and Garden Tour 2016 Will Be Hard to Top!

Every detail of this year's tour was a delight. We had an unusually interesting mix of houses and gardens, examples of modern style and traditional taste. There were impressive homes with fine furniture, art and collectibles—and petite alley dwellings carefully curated to reflect the lifestyles of their occupants. The Sunday tea was set in the charming Hill Center. The fire station added interest for our youngest guests. Saturday tour goers got to watch WETA filming the residents of Archibald Walk and F Street Terrace where the festival atmosphere put everyone in a good mood. And the weather was absolutely perfect.

Many thanks to everyone who made the event a success, most notably our House Tour Chair, Patrick Crowley, and the gracious hosts who put their homes on the tour: Dennis T. and Michelle Pilliod Carroll; John Klaja; Gayle Girod; Doug Gold and Steve Merrill; Will Fleishell; Loraine Heckenberg; Sid Neeley; Michael Nolan; Kevin Reger; Robert Staples and Barbara Fahs Charles; and Katie J. Teel and Mindy Turbov. Thanks also to the House Captain, scores of docents, editors, photographers, writers, researchers, advertisers, donors, and many, many others. Additional photos are posted on the website.

## ...But We're Sure Going to Try.

Next year will be the 60th anniversary of the Tour. We can't rest on our laurels; we need to get a cracker-jack team in place to plan for 2017. There are many ways to help; a wide range of talents can be put to good use. There are opportunities for research, writing, staffing, advertising, photography

and planning hospitality for the related events—something is sure to be right up your alley. One of the first tasks will be to identify houses. If you have a home that folks would love to see, or friends with fabulous homes, please let us know right away. If you would like to (or can be persuaded to) join the fun folks planning this event, send an email to [HouseTourCHRS@gmail.com](mailto:HouseTourCHRS@gmail.com). ★



IMAGES THIS PAGE COURTESY MINDY TURBOV





TOP IMAGES COURTESY LORRAINE HECKENBERG

IMAGE COURTESY VICTOR ROMERO



OPPOSITE PAGE: Crew members from WETA filming on Archibald Walk (top) and F Street Terrace (bottom).

THIS PAGE: Taking tickets on Archibald Walk (top left); interior of "tiny house" (top right); 512-514 F Street, SE (bottom).

## March with Your CHRS Friends and Neighbors on July 4!

Again this year, CHRS will celebrate Independence Day by fielding a contingent in the Capitol Hill Community 4th of July Parade. We'll carry the CHRS banner and toss Mardi Gras beads into the crowd. The route begins at the I-295/395 overpass (at 8th and I Streets, SE) and ends at the Eastern Market Metro Plaza. The parade steps off at 10 a.m. and takes just over an hour to finish.

If you would like to participate, please contact Elizabeth Nelson at [elizabeth\\_knits@yahoo.com](mailto:elizabeth_knits@yahoo.com), or just show up a half-hour in advance and find our crew. It's a lot of fun, especially for children, so invite your young neighbors to join you. The more, the merrier!

## Thank You, CHRS Supporters

*We thank these new CHRS supporters.*

### NEW MEMBERS

Melissa Chow  
Hanan Nassau  
Brad Kenemuth



**CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION**

## Capitol Hill Restoration Society

420 10th Street, SE  
Washington, DC 20003

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## Mark Your Calendar!

### JUNE

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

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

**21** Tuesday, 6:30 pm  
CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol  
Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street SE,  
second floor. Details: Lisa Dale Jones,  
(202) 543-0425.

### JULY

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

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

**19** Tuesday, 6:30 pm  
CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol  
Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE,  
second floor. Details: Lisa Dale Jones,  
(202) 543-0425.

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