



NEWS

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October 2002

Use of Public Space and Street Furniture Focus of Fall Membership Meeting

by Barbara Eck

The Fall membership meeting on Wednesday, November 6 at 7:30 pm at the Old Naval Hospital at Pennsylvania Avenue and Ninth Streets SE, will feature a panel discussion on the mayoral proposal to regulate street furniture such as news boxes, information kiosks, bicycle racks, bus shelters, benches and possible street toilets. Dick Wolf, Chair of our City Planning Committee, will be joined on the panel by Dan Tangherlini, Director of the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), Bruce Robey, President of CHAMPS, and Meg McGuire, President of Scenic America.

Introduced at a City Council hearing on September 23, the proposed legislation would "renew the District's bus shelter contract (awarded in 1983, expiring in 2003) with a new competition and the possibility of expanding it for new street furniture," such as information kiosks, benches

and self-cleaning, pay toilets. The current contractor is responsible for installation and maintenance of the bus shelters in exchange for the right to sell advertising.

Bill 14-652 would allow 90% of the current and proposed street furniture to be covered by advertising, but some limitations are placed on liquor and tobacco ads. This is an initial proposal and DDOT is eliciting full public participation in all phases of the planning and procurement and will propose appropriate amendments to the present Bill. CHRS testified against the Bill as it stands now. This testimony can be viewed on our website (www.chrs.org).

Also at the meeting, the budget for the fiscal year will be presented for a member vote and the calendar of the year's events will be discussed.

Mark your calendar now! Don't miss this important opportunity to add your comments and suggestions to the Mayor's proposal and to discuss the CHRS budget and activities for the coming year. ✧

Neighbor to Neighbor in the Historic District

by Nancy Metzger, Chair, Historic District Committee

What do you do when the home you've owned for decades needs serious repair work? If you have a steady income or are in good health, you save your money or arrange for a loan, or you do the work yourself. If you're elderly, in frail health, and with a very limited income, there aren't as many options. You might not be able to repay a loan, you can't do the work yourself, and there is very little money to save. Often the work doesn't get done. This problem may be acknowledged but is rarely acted upon by city programs and preservation organizations. CHRS recently decided to get involved and help to find some solutions.

Earlier this summer, a stop work order case was considered by the Historic District committee and the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB). At first glance, the case seemed simple enough—historic clapboard siding was being covered by vinyl siding; window and door surrounds had been removed, and no permit had been issued. The historic preservation inspector saw the work in progress and issued the order. Because covering or replacing historic siding with vinyl siding is not appropriate in the historic district, the vinyl would have to be removed and the door and window surrounds replaced. But this case had another dimension. The owner of the home was an elderly

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President's Column

by Robert Nevitt

Nearly 50 years ago, when the Capitol Hill Restoration Society was created, its purpose was to halt the planned demolition of historic buildings to make way for freeway construction and to frustrate unsuitable renovations like aluminum windows and Permastone siding. What the Society now stands for is a question I ponder as we tackle the various issues detailed in a recent column on the Society's 2002-2003 agenda. I'm not a long-time preservationist or historian. I'm not even a long-term member of the CHRS. I don't hear a lot of feedback from the membership. Neither is there a discernable comprehensive plan from the city administration or Council that we can associate ourselves with or against.

So, I take my solitary crack at identifying a broad issue through which we might define ourselves.

Capitol Hill needs to find a way to attract middle- and low-income homeowners. Perhaps surprisingly, home ownership is below the national average in the District of Columbia. This reflects in part the transient nature of much of our population, but it also suggests a dearth of appropriately priced housing.

We all take some pleasure in seeing decaying property like the Medlink site and the Bryan School turned into attractive housing, but with prices beginning at \$500,000 such development doesn't seem like the answer.

Meeting the restoration standards in the historic district often adds to the price of a house and may mean higher costs for new windows or a roof. CHRS is working to develop a program to help people with limited means to afford appropriate repairs to

their homes. (See Nancy Metzger's "Neighbor to Neighbor" article on page 1 for an example.)

Likewise, we are trying to create pressure for salvaging abandoned housing stock, using the new legislation passed by the D.C. Council. This pressure resulted in the renovation of the "Louise" building on the Medlink site, helping to turn a building thought to have no future except a meeting with the wrecking ball into a nearly million-dollar gem. Though a triumph for historic preservation, the Louise is not the answer to affordable housing! It is, however, testimony to the value of salvage over razing. There are buildings on Capitol Hill that can be saved at a cost proportional to value, buildings that can provide housing at lower cost.

Can a historic district and the demands it creates for building standards allow for homes that are also affordable? I don't see why not, and I certainly don't think affordable equates with commonplace. It occurs to me that there are three ways to ensure that a historic district isn't a synonym for elitism. First, when new developments are proposed, there has to be pressure to make some portion of the housing affordable. If the economics militates against this (as developers often protest), then costs have to be redistributed. Higher profit on top-of-the-line units can compensate for lower profits on affordable units. Second, small units should be renovated at proportionate cost. Renovation and affordable housing needn't be mutually exclusive. Finally, neither of the above can work without support from city agencies. They can put pressure on developers and landlords to behave appropriately to meet the need, and they can devise tax and other incentives for first-time home buyers and guide them through



the requirements and responsibilities of home ownership.

Perhaps you'd like to express your opinion on the meaning of "historic district" and its relationship to individual and community good at our upcoming membership meeting. I would love to see you (and a large turnout) there, or, barring that, to be challenged by communications from you on this or other issues. ✧

Help Wanted

CHRS is in search of committed volunteers for the following tasks; please contact Rob Nevitt (robert.nevitt@verizon.net) to participate:

- ✧ Someone to work with board member Shelly Rydell to plan and execute the best house and garden tour ever in May 2003.
- ✧ Chair, Budget Committee. Primary duty is once-a-year preparation of the CHRS budget.
- ✧ Chair, Public Safety Committee.
- ✧ Persons willing to help Membership Committee Chair T.C. Benson launch an invigorated campaign to increase membership.

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To contact any of the above, please contact the Society offices by calling 202/543-0425 or sending email to CapHRS@aol.com.

www.chrs.org

Founded over 40 years ago to preserve and protect Capitol Hill's residential character, the Society is now the largest civic association on Capitol Hill, and one of the largest in the entire District of Columbia. From the beginning, the Society has played a key role in maintaining the diverse, residential character of our neighborhood.

Letter from DCRA Director

The following letter was sent to CHRS by the Director of the D.C. Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs:

September 27, 2002

Dear Members of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society:

Here at the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) we've come to accept the fact that when it comes to sensitive issues, that someone is not going to like the regulations that we enforce. No matter what, someone, somewhere is going to be upset with what we do. So many times we take the criticism and roll with the punches. But your recent article in the September issue of the *Capitol Hill Restoration Society News* was a hit below the belt.

The statement that DCRA did not respond to a request is not true. As a matter of fact we have responded to every telephone call, e-mail and letter pertaining to concerns regarding Boys Town. And we have copies of our response letters since 1999 to prove it.

We know that there is opposition to the building as permitted for Father Flanagan's Boys Town and that is the community's right. DCRA on the other hand is bound by law to issue permits if zoning and building regulations are met. In accordance to DCRA regulations and the Board of Zoning Adjustment order, Boys Town has the right to build single family homes as permitted—like it or not.

If for some reason the Boys Town issue changes, we too will make appropriate adjustments within the law. In the meantime, if the community sees anything that may be illegal or improper, we urge you to call our office. Until then, DCRA and Boys Town are operating within the law and we have responded to all letters and requests. So in your next newsletter, we would appreciate accurate information being disseminated.

Sincerely,
 David A. Clark
 Director

Historic Preservation Review Board Update

by Nancy Metzger, Chair, Historic District Committee

The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) agenda for each month is available on both the CHRS website calendar (www.chrs.org) and on the Office of Planning website (www.planning.dc.gov/preservation/calendar.shtm), where a timed agenda is available during the week of the HPRB meeting.

The HPRB heard several impor-

tant Capitol Hill cases in September:

- 20 Ninth Street NE: HPRB is requiring the owners to submit a complete set of plans that detail all the work done for a large rear addition that was built under a roof replacement permit. After plans are submitted, HPRB will rule on the extent and design of the "proposed" addition (as it does on all modifications to buildings in the historic district).

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Neighbor to Neighbor in the Historic District *continued*

woman with serious medical problems and on a limited income. Her children had been helping to maintain the house. One daughter had repaired the roof while a son had saved money to buy the siding as a gift to his mother so she wouldn't be embarrassed sitting on the front porch. Clearly this case required special attention.

HPRB agreed to continue the case while CHRS worked to find a solution to help this resident. Over the summer, the vinyl siding has been removed and the condition of the house (front facade) has been assessed. A coalition of volunteers has joined CHRS in tackling the problem. Grace Kang of Shalom Baranes Associates is the architect providing drawings and information necessary for the permit. PN Hoffman has agreed to donate labor with Kevin White, the foreman of that crew. Emily Paulus and Toni Cherry of the city's historic preservation staff and Councilmember Ambrose's staff are providing their expertise and knowledge of city regulations and programs. CHRS, the financial conduit, is in charge of fundraising and such non-construction items as arranging for landscaping and a tree to be trimmed after the construction is over. When this work is completed, the project will be assessed to extract lessons that would be helpful in establishing a community and citywide program for assistance to low-income homeowners within a historic district. The Hinkle family will be participating in that effort and have offered to provide an oral history of their life on Park Street for the last 35 years.

With the vinyl siding removed and a squirrel evicted from the attic, the plan of action has now been agreed upon. The elm tree in the front needs to be professionally trimmed because it is rubbing against the

house. Also on the list: stripping paint from clapboard; repairing as needed; painting; replacing the roof on the bay window; repairing holes in the brick base; replacing wood and door surrounds with repaired or new surrounds to match; and adding iron railing to steps. The estimated cost of repairs is \$6,000 although more of the labor costs may be donated. Already deposited in the special Park Street account established by CHRS is \$700 from non-Hill donors. With work set to begin in early November, we need to raise several thousand dollars quickly.

How can you participate in this neighbor-to-neighbor effort?

Send a contribution right away to help defray costs that are not donated. The CHRS board voted to establish a

separate account to receive donations. Send your check to CHRS, P.O. Box 15264, Washington, D.C. 20003, earmarked "1132 Park Street Fund."

We're also trying to locate a woodworker/craftsman who could replicate the window and door surrounds, perhaps donated in whole or in part. This is a critical component of the plan, since the surrounds have been saved but are not really suitable to be reused. If you are or know of this person, please get in touch with me at 546-1034 or n.metzger2@verizon.net I'd also like to hear from you if you have an interest in, experience with, or ideas about establishing a permanent program to assist low-income residents within historic districts with facade repairs. ✧

Looking Back on Capitol Hill

by Nancy Metzger

Park Street NE is one of the little-known treasures of Capitol Hill, and a lesson from the past. Just one block long, it is lined on both sides with frame and stucco houses made lively with porches, bays, and Victorian details. Built in the nineteenth century, the row was rehabbed in the 1960s by the Housing Development Corporation (HDC) in an effort to "prevent the displacement of black and other poor residents by Capitol Hill restoration." According to a 1972 report that followed a Washington Preservation Conference sponsored by the Society of Architectural Historians Latrobe Chapter and the National Trust for Historic Preservation:

"In planning and rehabilitation of the [Park Street] houses, HDC was determined to provide the occupants with soundly built, attractive structures that would appreciate in value. Function took precedence over form in redesigning the houses, and dysfunctional systems were replaced with modern conveniences. But it was more economical as well as architecturally satisfying to go backward in time rather than forwards in handling certain features. False brick asphalt siding was removed to expose the beauty of old clapboard. Wooden floor planking was refinished instead of being covered by asphalt tiles. Well-designed moldings and the more functional wooden window sashes were repaired instead of being replaced by modern substitutes." ✧

November 12 Overbeck Lecture Revisits the Hill of the 1960s

Sam Smith and Kathryn Schneider Smith, prominent Hill activists during the 1960s will present "Joining the Hill: Cauldron and Community" at the Overbeck History Project's lecture on Tuesday, November 12, at 8 pm at the Naval Lodge Hall, 330 Pennsylvania Avenue SE. The couple will recall a turbulent decade when Congress grappled with civil rights and the war on poverty while people living in the shadow of the dome struggled to save a neighborhood hit hard by neglect, misguided development, and middle-class flight to the suburbs.

In the 60s, Sam Smith was founder and editor of the *Capitol East Gazette* and served on the first board of the Capitol Hill Arts Workshop. Kathy also worked on the paper and was intensely involved in local organizations. She served as president of the Circle on the Hill for Friendship House and vice chairman of the Emergency Recreation Council.

Today Kathy is executive director of the D.C. Heritage Tourism Coalition, which she helped start five years ago to bring more of Washington's visitors into the city's downtown and

residential areas. A lifelong public historian, she has consistently focused on the themes of neighborhood and community, which she notes are not always the same. She's the author and editor of a number of books on the history of our city, including *Washington at Home: Neighborhoods in the Nation's Capital*.

Sam, who helped to found the D.C. Statehood Party and the national Green Party, is now editor of *The Progressive Review* and a prominent critic and commentator on D.C. life and politics. The first of his four books, *Captive Capital*, written in 1974, is still one of the basic books about Washington. His latest is *Why Bother? Getting a Life in a Locked Down Land*.

The lecture is free, but seating is limited and a reservation is required. If possible, reserve by email to info@CapitolHillHistory.org. You may also leave a message at 202-544-1845; please provide your name, phone number and street address (and e-mail address if you have one) when calling. ✽

CHRS Backs Survey of Old Naval Hospital

by Barbara Eck

The CHRS board voted to support CHAMPS Community Foundation in its application for grants to fund a HABS/HAER of the Old Naval Hospital at Pennsylvania Avenue SE. The acronym stands for the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, which produces "graphic and written documentation of historically significant architectural, engineering and industrial sites and structures." The HABS/HAER will provide a complete set of measured drawings of the Old Naval Hospital, along with a written history and large-format photographs. The survey will ultimately go to the Library of Congress as a public record.

CHAMPS Community Foundation has proposed a new entity: The Old Naval Hospital Foundation, to oversee the restoration and renovation of the building and grounds, and to manage a new center for childhood learning and community life. The foundation seeks planning money from several other foundations and the D.C. Department of Housing and Economic Development.

In its plans, an expanded Southeast Branch of the D.C. Public Library would be the main tenant. Space would also be provided for an after-school homework center for community children, and for community organizations, receptions, performances, and lectures. The building would also include a display commemorating the building's history as a Naval Hospital and as the home of the group that worked to create the national holiday honoring Martin Luther King, Jr.

A steering committee of city and community representatives and



Volunteers and contributors are enabling the renovation of a historic home on Park Street NE.

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Candidates Respond to CHRS President's Questions

Two candidates running for the Ward 6 City Council seat in the November election responded to questions posed by President Rob Nevitt. The unedited, written responses of Sharon Ambrose (Democratic Party) and Jenefer Ellingston (Green/Statehood Party) to two of those questions appear below.

Q: Ward 6 neighborhoods continue to be plagued by many abandoned, nuisance properties that breed a variety of health and crime problems. What have you done or what will you do to help clean up these hazardous eyesores?

Ambrose: From the very start of my first term as the ward 6 Councilmember, I have taken a strong, proactive approach to the abatement of abandoned and nuisance properties—both through constituent services delivered by my office as well as legislation I have shepherded through the Council to provide the tools, both new programs and funding, to address this problem. An example of legislation, which I have introduced that specifically addresses this issue was Bill 13-25, the "Prevention of the Demolition of Historic Properties by Neglect Amendment Act of 1999," which ultimately, was passed as part of omnibus legislation.

When I became chair of the Committee on Consumer and Regulatory Affairs in 1999, I started my chairmanship by holding hearings, beginning in February 1999, to listen actively to residents' complaints about this ongoing problem. I demanded that the agency responsible for nuisance property abatement, DCRA, take action. The result was D.C. Law 13-281 (Bill 13-646), the "Abatement and Condemnation of Nuisance Properties Omnibus Amendment Act of 2000," which grew from many bills that I and other Council members introduced as well as some legislation

introduced on behalf of the Mayor.

Passage of this law involved considerable discussion with the community, ANCs, the Mayor's agencies tasked with carrying out the law, as well as analysis of DCRA's personnel and budget and the literally thousands of constituent services calls my staff has forwarded to DCRA for its action. Consequently, not only have I crafted legislative solutions—which include both "carrots" and "sticks"—but also I have carefully tracked DCRA's budget over the last 4 years which has included monitoring of the revolving fund (the "5-513 fund") which the city uses to abate nuisance properties and is supposed to be replenished from the collection of liens levied on those property owners who, after repeated notices of infractions, have failed to maintain their property so that the Mayor has to come onto that property and secure it. Through my efforts, that fund has grown from a paltry few thousand dollars to several millions today, and under the new legislation I championed, it should continue to develop to ensure that there is funding for ongoing nuisance abatement.

Ellingston: I fought for 1 1/2 years to finally fund the Housing Production Trust Fund and aim its funding at low and very low income. Then the mayor's budget cut the fund in half and we lobbied the council insistently and restored full funding to the Housing Fund. Groups like ILSR, MANNA, ACORN, Sustainable Community Initiative, and even Homes Not Jails are ready and able to rehabilitate or dismantle blighted properties and restore them for sale to low income residents. Also, the DC government will probably be able to take advantage of the National Housing Fund. There are many homeless people well-equipped to help restore blighted housing. Many

abandoned properties taken over by the city should be rehabilitated and returned to the housing stock right away (this can also be a source for apprenticeships and job training for DC residents). For privately owned abandoned properties, the city should increase property and other taxes and thus encourage the owners to rehabilitate them. Or, if that fails, the city should have the right to seize them for rehabilitation.

Q: What have you done or what do you plan to do to raise awareness of the long and varied cultural and economic histories of our Capitol Hill community? What have you done or what will you do to improve architectural preservation in and beyond the historic district of Ward 6?

Ambrose: I have been strongly supportive of the Overbeck history project and will work to expand our collection of oral and written records. I am also supportive of the requirement for some archeological review of certain building sites prior to construction. I have been a consistent supporter of funding for the neighborhood heritage tours and am delighted that one is regularly available for Capitol Hill. I have attempted and will continue to work on expanding local income tax credits for renovation of properties older than 50 years. I inserted language in the last Comprehensive Plan review asking that the Zoning Commission set down a case to determine if the Capitol Hill Historic District should be expanded.

Ellingston: I fully support historic preservation in this city. I regret that so much of down town development overran and/or overruled historic preservation and gave us the mindless building blocks in the central city. I will work with Capitol Hill Preservation Society to prevent the same degradation of Capitol Hill. *

Recent Developments on the H Street Commercial Corridor

by *Drury Tallant*

The long anticipated revitalization of the H Street NE commercial corridor has moved several steps closer to reality. This summer, the corridor was designated as one of the District's five Main Street programs. Thus far, a Main Street board, an executive committee, and four standing committees have been formed, the articles of incorporation has been filed, and 501(c)(3) status has been requested. A temporary office is under renovation. Interviews for the executive director position are ongoing. The committees are beginning to get down to business, and will benefit from the revitalization report currently being prepared for the DC Office of Planning by the architectural firm HOK and their project team. By early 2003 H Street should have a functioning Main Street program with its own office, a full-time executive director, and a revitalization plan to help guide policy and projects for the corridor.

Of course, development does not wait until the Main Street program and the revitalization plan are in place. The pace of projects on H Street is already picking up steam. The H Street Playhouse at 1365 H Street opened this past summer. It has attracted critical acclaim for the quality of its performances and a steady stream of patrons. Nearby, a new, nonprofit corporation has purchased the Atlas Theater with a gift from the Sprenger-Lang Foundation and a commitment from Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to write off the mortgage at 10% per year. The complex will include two professional theaters (300 seats and 200 seats), two lab theaters, three dance studios, a costume shop, dressing rooms, a production shop, and offices. A

restaurant is also planned to help support the complex. The Atlas Theater project should break ground next summer, and open sometime in 2004.

At the other end of the corridor, the 1.4-million-square-foot Securities and Exchange Commission project adjacent to Union Station is under construction, with completion due in early 2004. The purchase of the air rights above the rail corridor by Akridge Development is due by the end of October. Although no plans have been made public, anticipated uses are a major hotel and a significant amount of new office space.

Other projects include on-going discussions with BP on the development of the gas station at 3rd and H and efforts to improve the quality of a project by the H Street Community Development Corporation (CDC) at 8th and H. In nearly every block of the corridor, small renovations are underway. A facade program funded by DHCD should bring substantial improvements to approximately 40 storefronts. Finally, a cultural resources survey is underway to document the rich history and architectural heritage of H Street and the Near Northeast neighborhoods.

There are many hopeful signs of economic vitality along the H Street corridor, but starting out on the right development path is especially important in order to send the proper signal to potential investors. The Office of Planning, the Main Street Board, the CDC, the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC), and the community need to take a hard, close look at proposed projects to examine how well they meet the goals of the revitalization plan. For example, is a gas station at 3rd and H the best project we can secure for this gateway block? Is the one-story retail

store proposed by the CDC the best expenditure of public funds? Is the facade program helping to improve H Street's image?

There are many positive signs that a healthy redevelopment of the H Street Corridor is finally underway, but that development potential needs careful cultivation and guidance, as well as the strength to discourage undesirable projects.

*Architect Drury Tallant has a Ph.D. in Urban Planning. He is co-chair of the Stanton Park Neighborhood Association Land Use Committee, vice-chair of the H Street Main Street Design Committee, SPNA's representative on the BP project, and a community representative on the H Street Revitalization Task Force. **

HPRB Update *continued*

- Results the Pool: HPRB approved the concept of a swimming pool on the west side of the renovated Giddings School building but is requiring that the pool and wall not extend as far into the public space as presented. The proposed curb cut and parking spaces facing G Street were denied. Final details are to be worked out with staff, based on the board's direction.
- Demolition: HPRB approved the raze permits of 1224 and 1226 Pennsylvania Avenue SE due to lack of physical integrity of the structures. The case involving 1229 E Street SE (the shotgun house described in detail in the September News) was continued to allow a more complete assessment of the physical condition of the property. *

Update on the Battle Over Station Place

by Charles McMillion

CHRS has urged the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to formally withdraw from its lease agreement for construction of offices at Station Place alongside Union Station. We have also asked the SEC to encourage its developer, the Louis Dreyfus Property Group, to immediately stop all construction on the site until they comply with fundamental legal safeguards for community and employee health and safety.

As reported in the February *News*, the SEC dropped their argument that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) does not apply to their planned lease and construction. Unfortunately, this reversal occurred too late to have any effect on the DC Zoning Commission's approval of the massive structure. The law requires that before a federal lease agreement can be signed or construction begun, an Environmental Assessment (EA) must be completed which produces a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), or if significant impacts are found, a full and public Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) must be completed.

Almost one year earlier, in March 2001, the SEC had signed its lease/construction-with-options-to-purchase agreement with Dreyfus. Construction began this past April on what is planned to be the largest private building ever constructed anywhere in the District. The SEC finally circulated their draft EA in July—16 months after signing their lease/construction agreement and three months after the start of construction.

To review the draft EA, CHRS commissioned Bregman & Company, Inc., the highly respected environmental consultants that conducted the EIS for Union Station. The review points

out many inadequacies of the draft EA, including its complete silence on the central issue of a FONSI. The Bregman report finds dozens of significant impacts involving water and soil contamination and finds a clear need for a full and public EIS. (Read the full Bregman report on the CHRS website at www.chrs.org.)

Symbolic of problems with the SEC's EA are the pictures purporting to show the "Affected Environment & Environmental Consequences" of the building. The photos are said to be "Looking west on F Street at 3rd Street," but both photos are indisputably looking west from 4th—not 3rd-Street. Indeed, they completely eliminate the block of two-story Victorian homes that abuts the proposed building.

The draft EA also errs in stating that the northwestern boundary of the Capitol Hill Historic District is F and 4th Street NE and does not abut the proposed SEC building. In fact, the northwest boundary of the Historic District has always been F and 2nd Street NE, abutting the proposed SEC building. None of the many maps of the area support the statement which is key to the SEC's dismissal of historic preservation concerns. Even in this time of enormous concern for homeland security and the safety of federal employees, the EA completely ignores the vital issue of building security and, in turn, the security of building occupants and the near neighborhood.

Since the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, Department of Justice and General Services Administration guidelines require that new federal sites with over 450 employees be set back significantly from the street. Based on these guidelines, the mere 30 feet of set back currently planned for Station Place poses a potential danger

both to the SEC's employees and to the community. We believe that the failure of the EA to even consider this vital issue is a major omission and that it must now be addressed within the context of a full EIS, with public hearings and expert testimony. In addition to all this, we have recently received a copy of a ground water monitoring report that the Dreyfus engineers were required to file with the DC Water and Sewer Authority. As we had expected in this community formerly known as "Swampoodle" bordering on Tiber Creek, the long, 45-foot deep excavation at the site has dramatically lowered the water table for more than 300 feet into the residential neighborhood. This has caused many of the 110-year-old homes to sink or settle by as much as half an inch; many homeowners have found cracks and roof damage.

The SEC has not responded to our latest letter of August 19. CHRS President Rob Nevitt and Councilmember Ambrose have submitted an op-ed article to the *Washington Post* on this issue. As we attempt to have the laws enforced and the health and safety of the community taken seriously, we are actively seeking a major law firm that is willing to provide pro bono representation for CHRS and affected homeowners. Anyone with other ideas or who would like to help, please contact me at 544-4614 or by email: cwmcmlion@attglobal.net. ✧

Survey *continued*

experts has been formed. Historic preservation expert Judith Capen is the consulting architect. The proposal includes a not-for-profit organization with an endowment to assure continued maintenance and operation. ✧

New Farmers' Line Shed Construction Scheduled for January, Streetscape Improvements Delayed

by Brian Furness, Chair, Community Development Committee

If all goes well, construction of a new Farmers' Line shed will begin in January 2003, after the holiday sales period. The new shed will replace the tattered 1930s structure and will provide light and utilities for the farmers and vendors underneath.

The new shed reflects design principles endorsed by Eastern Market Community Advisory Committee (EMCAC) and hammered out with the community during the last ten months. The shed will have an 18-foot opening at the entrance, creating a visual focus and sense of entrance into the market that the present structure lacks. The shed will be extended a comparable distance toward North Carolina Avenue so that no covered space will be lost, a point stressed by the current vendors. The city and architect Heery International will present the concept to the Historic Preservation Review Board on October 24.

Seventh Street streetscape improvements, an important initiative of the District Department of Transportation

(DDOT), will not be ready to start when the shed work is scheduled. DDOT has just hired a design engineer, launching a process that could take a year or so to produce results. EMCAC and the city's Office of Property Management had recommended the shed's architects to ensure design consistency. Monte Edwards, chair of EMCAC's Capital Improvements Subcommittee, wants construction to be scheduled after the 2004 holiday season, when outside activity is at its lowest. Still, this means that the street and plaza will be torn up twice.

In other developments, EMCAC approved a motion on September 30 that calls on the manager to give priority to expanding Farmers' Line activities to encompass a week-day produce market and extending business hours. The EMCAC also elected officers, returning Ellen Oppenweiner (Mayor's representative) as chair, Monte Edwards (Stanton Park Neighborhood Association) as vice chair, Tom Kuchenberg (independent community representative) as secretary, and Jean Marie Neal (Councilmember Ambrose's representative) as treasurer. ✱

Perilous Road to Restoration at 800 East Capitol Street

by Nancy Metzger

At September's Preservation Cafe, owner Robert Reed and contractor/former owner Bill Cromley outlined the saga of the house at 800 East Capitol Street from the time of its construction in 1876 to the present. Reed and Cromley have been restoring the handsome structure to its original use: a large, detached single-family home.

In the 1920s, the house was an "Atypical Public School" for special needs children. It was later converted into as a rooming house and then into a nine-unit apartment house. By the time the Reeds purchased the building not much original material was left inside, only the staircase and newel posts, gas pipes in the walls, and some fragments of original interior trim and exterior corbels.

Historic photographs of the house and detailed photographs of the reconstruction work made Reed and Cromley's presentation visually exciting. They also showed copies of letters and other papers of the Welpley family, the builders and first owners of 800 East Capitol Street. Cromley's permit research turned up an 1893 application for a porch and conservatory that was substantiated by the uncovering of a foundation slab. The present addition was designed to suggest a nineteenth-century conservatory but

it is really an extension of the interior rooms.

Although it appeared to be very substantial and solidly built, the building was perilously close to ruin when restoration began. Its most dramatic episode was when the bay at the side of the house tumbled down into the yard. (A startled man waiting at the adjacent bus stop found his voice with one word: "Oops!") The entire back wall also had to be rebuilt, since a little push at the top caused the entire wall to "wave."

Reed and Cromley vividly described many problems uncovered during the restoration. The original roof was built improperly. This was evidenced in an old photograph that showed an ice buildup at one of the dormers as well as the reference in an historic family letter of a leak in a daughter's bedroom. Roofers uncovered conclusive evidence that the lack of a solder joint had caused rotten boards at that location.

- The walls of the upper floors were only one brick thick, causing them to bow on each side.
- The low pitch of the roof pushed down on the walls, exacerbating the problems caused by their thinness.

continued on page 11

Who's Getting CHRS Grants This Year

by Larry Pearl, Chair, Beall Bequest Committee

For the third consecutive year, the Capitol Hill Restoration Society solicited applications for grants to enable part of the proceeds of the Mothers' Day House and Garden Tour to be returned to the community. CHRS received 12 proposals from 11 organizations. Taken together, requests totaled almost \$37,000. CHRS Committee funds were used to supplement the grants so that the Society could fund as many of the proposals as fully as possible. The proposals funded by CHRS this year:

- ✧ North Lincoln Park Neighborhood Association will receive \$2,000 to expand Kingsman Field. The field is in the 1300 block of D Street NE, adjacent to the closed Kingsman Elementary School. The field is heavily used by Capitol Hill soccer and baseball leagues and on an informal basis by neighborhood children. The expansion will incorporate 1,000 square feet of an adjacent alley that has been closed since 1978. It appears that the DC Departments of Parks and Recreation and Transportation support this expansion. The funds would be used to move the existing chain link fence, and to remove the asphalt from the alley and replace it with sod. PEPCO owns an adjacent 1,000 square feet of alley space that they may be amenable to donating to the field if the first expansion works out.
- ✧ Near Northeast Citizens against Crime and Drugs (NNCACD) will receive \$5,000 to conduct ten oral history interviews in the Near Northeast/Capitol Hill North neighborhood. The funds will support the work of an oral historian and a transcriber as well as the design and production of a brochure that would inform the community about the project. The National Park Service made a \$30,000 grant to NNCACD last October to document the history of the northern part of Capitol Hill. CHRS provided a letter of support for that project. The requested \$5,000 would be counted toward \$30,000 that NNCACD is required to raise as its matching share under the terms of the federal grant. The oral history interviews are to be made widely available, including publication on the Internet. They will supplement the Overbeck History Project funded by the CHAMPS Community Foundation.
- ✧ Trees for Capitol Hill (TCH) will receive \$635 to restore the historic ironwork of the post-and-chain fence at the triangle park at the intersection of 15th Street and Kentucky Ave SE. In the 19th century, many triangle parks were enclosed with cast iron posts and chain fences to deter squatters and the dumping of garbage. This proposal is similar to several past proposals from TCH that CHRS has funded to preserve and restore the streetscape of the Historic District.
- ✧ The Corner Store at 9th Street and South Carolina Avenue SE will receive \$1,250 to fund the development of an anti-littering video whose screenplay, masks, and costumes are to be produced with the help of children and teens from Potomac Gardens. ✧

Acronyms Used in this Issue

ANC	Advisory Neighborhood Commission
CDC	Community Development Corporation
CHAMPS	Capitol Hill Association of Merchants and Professionals
DCRA	(D.C.) Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs
DDOT	District Department of Transportation
DHCD	Department of Housing and Community Development
EMCAC	Eastern Market Community Advisory Committee
HDC	Housing Development Corporation
HPRB	Historic Preservation Review Board
NNCACD	Near Northeast Citizens against Crime and Drugs
SPNA	Stanton Park Neighborhood Association
TCH	Trees for Capitol Hill

WELCOME CHRS SUPPORTERS

WE THANK THE FOLLOWING PATRONS & SPONSORS

NEW MEMBERS:

Kristin E. Anderson
Michael P. Moore
Jeffrey Rinne

PATRONS:

James Duley
Robert & Ida May Mantel
Larry Pearl & Anne
Womeldorf

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The Endowment Committee: Before the Fall

by Charles McMillion, Chair, Endowment Committee

On the last business day of summer, the Endowment Committee dumped its remaining holdings of stocks and lunged further into the staid security of the money market. Time will tell whether this move is best characterized as "better late than never" or "closing the barn door only when the horses want back inside." But Committee members are sleeping better.

Those sleeping more soundly include Lyle Schauer and John Shages. They are joined by new members Shelly Rydell, Dave Powell, and Linda O'Brien. The committee is an interesting mix of lawyers, architects, and economists. We have nothing against professional financial advisors: we plan to listen to them and read their advice separately, then come together twice a year to compare notes and discuss recommendations.

Anticipating the end of the worst quarterly losses on Wall Street since 1987, and the worst two consecutive quarters since the 1930s, the committee met September 19 for the first time since last December. As a tax-exempt organization, we can ignore the inhibiting effects that tax considerations have on short-term personal and business transactions. On the other hand, since CHRS also does not have any retirement or children's tuition to anticipate, we can focus almost exclusively on the very long term.

We are charged with managing the CHRS assets that consist almost entirely of proceeds from the 1999 sale of the Yost House. The CHRS board has spelled out the objectives of the committee as, in order of priority, 1) preservation of capital, 2) appreciation, and 3) generation of income.

When the board established the committee in 1999, they directed that investments be limited to funds available through the Vanguard Financial Group. On the day of our

last meeting, the asset allocation was 49% in the stock index fund, 42% in the money market, and 9% in short-term bonds.

The committee discussed the 28% drop in the stock index portfolio since 1999 (including reinvested dividends) and the 20.4% drop so far this year. Our other funds, including reinvested dividends, were each up between 14% and 22% since 1999, and up 2% to 6% year-to-date. In 2002, the total value of the endowment's portfolio has fallen from \$225,726 to \$198,765.

After a lively discussion, we decided to reallocate all money from the stock fund to the temporary security of the money market. The committee therefore entered this fall with 91% of assets in the money market and 9% in short-term bond funds. Everyone hopes the market turns up soon so that we can jump back into stocks.

The board's current restrictions prevent the committee from even considering investing any endowment assets in our own Capitol Hill community. Everyone recognized that we lack the capability to independently evaluate risk for an individual investment and that we also lack sufficient capital to adequately diversify such risk. Nonetheless, committee members felt strongly that we should seek opportunities to invest the assets of CHRS locally and that we should actively solicit ideas from the membership. (When and if we find and agree on a specific and appropriate proposal in which to invest outside the family of Vanguard funds, we will ask the board for approval.)

If you have ideas about safe and effective ways that we might invest CHRS' meager financial assets back into Capitol Hill, please contact any committee member directly or through the CHRS office. Our next regular meeting isn't until early next year, but we can make investment decisions at any time. ✧

Perilous Road *continued*

- The removal of two rear chimneys that were integral to the house structure caused more weakness.
- Joists were cut up when plumbing for nine apartments was installed.

Special thanks to the Reeds for embarking on this restoration project and for sharing their experiences with us at the September Preservation Cafe.

The next Preservation Cafe on October 16 will be on the Call Box project. It will provide a chance to see the progress being made, to sign up for participation in the project, and to ask questions. On November 20, Patrick Lally, author of the CHRS guidelines on iron, will talk

about the importance of the iron elements on Capitol Hill, including maintenance and repair. All sessions start at 6:30 and last about 45 minutes. The cafes this fall are held in the upper room at Trattoria Alberto (506 Eighth Street SE), just one block from the Eastern Market metro. ✧

Mark Your Calendar!

OCTOBER

15 Tuesday, 6:30 pm

CHRS Board meeting, Old Naval Hospital, 921 Pennsylvania Avenue SE.

16 Wednesday, 6:30 p.m.

Preservation Cafe, "Art on Call on Capitol Hill," with Capitol Hill's Call Box Task Force. Trattoria Alberto's upper room, 506 Eighth Street SE.

17 Thursday, 6:30 p.m.

Public meeting on transformation of the South Capitol Street Corridor. Convened by the District Department of Transportation as a forum for the community to learn about the study process and provide their ideas on roadway, transit, bicycle, pedestrian and other transportation improvements for South Capitol Street between Independence Avenue and Suitland Parkway and New Jersey Avenue between Independence Avenue and M Street SE. Van Ness Elementary School, 1150 5th Street SE.

NOVEMBER

6 Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.

CHRS Fall Membership Meeting, Old Naval Hospital, 921 Pennsylvania Avenue SE (see article on page 1).

12 Tuesday, 8:00 p.m.

Overbeck Lecture, "Joining the Hill: Cauldron and Community." Naval Lodge Hall, 330 Pennsylvania Avenue SE. Reservations required (see article on p. 5).

20 Wednesday, 6:30 p.m.

Preservation Cafe, "A Homeowners Guide to Iron," with Pat Lally, author of CHRS Guideline "Cast Iron: Firmness, Commodity and Delight." Trattoria Alberto's upper room, 506 Eighth Street SE.

Check out the calendar on our website at www.chrs.org!

Revised Historic District Map Now on the Web

A revised Capitol Hill Historic District map showing the new historic district boundaries is now posted on the Capitol Hill Restoration Society web page. Printed versions will be available in the next few months. The new maps will also show the individually designated landmarks associated with Capitol Hill.

A more detailed version depicting the inhabited alleys is now being developed. However, to make sure we have included all the inhabited alleys, please check the list and notify the Society (543-0425) of any not listed below:

- Capitol Court, NE
- Justice Court, NE
- Terrace Court, NE
- Groff Court, NE
- Millers Court, NE
- Carbery Place, NE
- Walter Houpp Court, NE
- Library Court, SE
- Browns Court, SE
- F Street Terrace, SE
- Archibald Walk, SE
- Gessford Court, SE
- Windy Court, SE
- Walker Court, SE

The criteria for an alley to be included on this map is to have at least one dwelling on the alley and for the alley to have a separate name. When reporting an inhabited alley, please include not only the alley name but the surrounding streets as well (for example, Capitol Court between 2nd, 3rd, E, and F streets NE). *

Capitol Hill Restoration Society

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Washington, DC 20003