



# NEWS

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Holiday 2006

## Community Groups Win Design Concessions for Massive H Street Project

### Agreement Provides First Test of Overlay Guidelines

by Monte Edwards

The large residential/commercial building planned for the southern side of the 600 Block of H Street, NE, will represent the first implementation of H Street Design Guidelines adopted early this year. The H Street Overlay set design guidelines for development on the H Street Corridor, specifically to encourage “transit-oriented” development.

Washington Real Estate Partners’ proposal for the project would retain the existing five-story office buildings on the Sixth and Seventh Street corners of H and replace the single-story structures in between (formerly housing Mega Foods and the parking lot) with a nine-story structure facing H Street that steps down to four and five stories on the interior of the block. The project would include more than 230 condominiums, office space and ground floor storefronts — including a substantial restaurant with sidewalk seating, and an underground parking garage with more than 480 parking spaces.

The site presented several challenges and required extensive review by the Board of Zoning



*The project includes more than 230 condominiums, office space and ground floor storefronts — including a substantial restaurant with sidewalk seating, and an underground parking garage with more than 480 parking spaces.*

Adjustment and the Office of Planning. For example, differences in zoning within the block permit 90-foot heights along H Street, 50-foot heights in the interior of the block, and 30-foot heights for the row houses bordering the rest of the block. Also, H Street is the only area in the city that has a Zoning Overlay but is not an officially designated Historic District. This means that the Board of Zoning Adjustment had to learn to apply design standards as part of its review, a task usually reserved to the Historic Preservation Review

Board. The outcome of this proceeding is important because it will provide the template for future large tract development along the H Street Corridor.

As a matter of right, the site could be a nine-story “wall” of offices filling the 600 block of H Street. Neighbors in the vicinity and community organizations found the building’s initial design unacceptable. After numerous discussions between the developer, community groups and the

*H Street Project continued on page 9*

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# President's Column: 2006 in Review and What's Next

by Dick Wolf

This column is about some of the good things that have happened on the Hill during the last year and what will or might happen during this next year: holiday and new year's gifts.

After 15 years of effort the old Ellen Wilson public housing project is finally transformed, in total, to the new Hope 6 mixed income community now called Town Homes at Sixth Street and Virginia Avenue, SE. This award-winning project now has its finished community center as a signature element. It will be named after the late Fran Taylor, who, along with David Perry and me, was a founding member of the Ellen Wilson Community Development Corporation (CDC). The CDC developed this festering problem into a graceful and charming addition to our community.

Fran both lived on the Hill and worked here as a real estate agent and, most importantly, was a key member of the Board of Directors of Friendship House. Her connections with the public housing residents made Town Homes possible. Fran and David were co-chairs of the CDC, and it was the CDC which selected Amy Weinstein as our architect and Telesis as our developer partner. The dedication of the new community center and the entire project will take place later in the year. We on the CDC hope that the community center will become an asset for the entire Capitol Hill community.

In addition, Barracks Row Main Street, Market Row and Eastern Market continue to flourish and foster new businesses and restaurants. Holiday decorations are appearing and everyone is bur-nishing up for the holidays. The H Street, NE, Main Street is beginning to demonstrate considerable life. Both the Atlas Theatre perfor-

mance center and the H Street Play House are going concerns with lively and important activities. In addition, new restaurants and some condos are now scattered along the corridor. CHRS will continue to support neighborhood groups in making sure that development along H Street, NE, is supportive and not destructive of the adjacent row house areas.

The Hill has a rich selection of both large and small arts venues and activities. Among these are national institutions like the Folger Theater and Library and the Library of Congress and community venues like the Capitol Hill

the District from the Park Service. Finally, we expect some further discussion about the future of the Hine Junior School site with some exciting development possibilities for that plot which would support and enhance every aspect of our community: housing, retail, offices, parking and the flea market.

Also, this next year will see the completion of the JPI condo project at Fourteenth Street and Potomac Avenue, SE, with the opening in that building of a 43,000 square foot Harris Teeter supermarket. Pull up your socks Mr. Safeway.

Most exciting is the continued attraction of the Hill to young

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Never in my 42 years on the Hill have I seen so many children, such busy parks, and so much interest in repairing and improving the public schools. This is a rewarding outcome to CHRS's many years of preserving, protecting and enhancing the residential and business neighborhoods.

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Arts Workshop, the Capitol Hill Chorale, the readings at Riverby Books, and—one of my favorites—the Corner Store at 900 South Carolina Avenue, SE, run by Kris Swanson. This year, the Corner Store features Five&Ten—a show of new paintings by five artists with the ten Corner Store students they've mentored. Don't miss this twelve-day show and silent auction, closing with a Gala Winter Solstice party on December 21. My apologies for artistic activities I failed to mention—there are many in our talented community.

In the new year we look forward to some exciting initiatives. The Capitol Hill Community Center has been proposed for the Old Naval Hospital, and a decision by the city on this initiative should be made soon. The concept plan for the Eastern Market Metro Plaza should soon start to take shape with the transfer of that land to

families. Never in my 42 years on the Hill have I seen so many children, such busy parks, and so much interest in repairing and improving the public schools. This is a rewarding outcome to CHRS's many years of preserving, protecting and enhancing the residential and business neighborhoods. And, it proves that we were right in our persistent and incremental views about how a community revitalizes itself. Most importantly, it not only helps us on the Hill but it is a vital contributor to the health of the city.

Finally, in the new year we will have virtually an entirely new set of elected officials. Mayor Adrian Fenty, City Council Chairman Vincent Gray, Ward 6 Councilman Tommy Wells, School Board Chairman, Robert Bobb, and School Board Member for Wards 5 and 6, Lisa Raymond. The Council will have the greatest turnover

*Continued next page*

## Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS)

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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.

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Celebrating our fiftieth year helping 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. With your participation we will continue to do so for many years to come.

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\* On the Web at [www.CHRS.org](http://www.CHRS.org)

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Starting at just \$25 per year for a single membership, it's a great deal.

## President's Column *from page 2*

with two new members being elected from Wards 4 and 7. There is great hope attached to this new leadership, but remember—they need our advice and experience as well as their new ideas. We will get an opportunity to have such interchanges in a series of membership meetings.

It is with great regret that we are losing the services of Sharon Ambrose as our Ward 6 councilmember. Sharon has been a good friend to the Hill and to me and my family for many years. Most of us know her for service on the council where she did many good things for us and the city: reforming the ABC agency and board, supporting our planning and zoning initiatives, saving Reservation 13 for us and ensuring that a proper

study was made of our health care needs before simply re-building DC General. But Sharon was our friend and neighbor for many years before her election. She was president of Brent PTA in the 1960s; she worked for Betty Ann Kane as her staffer while Betty was on the school board and then at-large councilmember. When Betty left the Council she worked as John Ray's principal staff assistant. Sharon helped us in untold ways in all those positions. Nobody was smarter, and quicker to understand the substance of an issue and the politics than Sharon. Did we always agree? No. But our respect and gratitude for Sharon is boundless, and we give her our best wishes for this next phase of her life and that of her family. Thanks and love, Sharon. ✧

## McLeod Leaves Directorship of Barracks Row Main Street

*by David Holmes*

Bill McLeod, the Executive Director of Barracks Row Main Street (BRMS), is leaving Capitol Hill for Mount Vernon Triangle, a new Business Improvement District (BID) roughly bounded by Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York Avenues.

Partnering with CHAMPS, CHRS, the Capitol Hill BID and the Barracks Row Business Alliance, BRMS has encouraged the investment of \$20 million in public and private funds in the Eighth Street Corridor. Revitalization of the Street began in earnest with the purchase and renovation of the Shakespeare Theatre facilities. From that strong beginning, the revitalization of the business corridor has rapidly proceeded.

McLeod points to the 51 facades renovated, 43 new businesses and the many new outdoor cafes as some of the results of the hard work BRMS and he have performed. He also says there's work yet to be done; there are 50 more facades that need work or better signage and Eighth Street south of the freeway is just now starting to develop. Nonetheless it's clear that the momentum towards a viable attractive commercial corridor from Pennsylvania Avenue to the Navy Yard is irreversible.

The Shakespeare Theatre will soon be moving many of its facilities and its staff to the new Harman Center downtown. But McLeod is confident that this very attractive space will easily find another tenant.

Bill McLeod, as top staffer for Barracks Row Main Street, has done a lot for Capitol Hill and we wish him success at his new venture. ✧



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# Latest Info on New Transportation Proposals Affecting Capitol Hill

by Thomas Grahame

New information is now available about the Eleventh Street bridges upgrade, and on new proposals for a Massachusetts Avenue bridge and a “park road” on the banks of the Anacostia, northeast from Barney Circle to Benning Road.

## Eleventh Street Bridges Cost Estimates and Funding Sources

DOT staff recently updated CHRS on the latest cost estimates for the Eleventh Street bridges project, and provided answers to follow-on questions. As of February, 2006, the Eleventh Street bridges project was estimated to cost about \$377 million. The latest update is in a range of \$465 to \$500 million. These costs include both the new connection to I-295 northbound (a link which currently doesn't exist, and the reason for the project) as well as a new four lane bridge for “local traffic.” Because the interstate portion and the local portion are designed together, DDOT cannot give separate cost estimates for (1) a project which makes the new connections between I-395 and I-295 (Kenilworth Avenue) northbound, and (2) building a new four lane bridge for “local” traffic, which would substantially increase commuter traffic spilling onto Eleventh Street, SE, on the Hill.

There are two reasons for the cost escalation: (1) costs for basic materials such as cement and steel have increased and (2) the project is more fully designed now (although not yet at a 30 percent benchmark) than in February.

As it now stands, the Eleventh Street bridges upgrade will be funded almost entirely from local funds, with only \$17.6 million

coming from federal funds. Under the Capitol Improvements Plan for 2006-2011, there is a dedicated source for some of the needed local funds: fifty percent of parking tax revenues will be securitized and allocated for improvements at the Eleventh Street and Sousa bridges.

## New Massachusetts Avenue Bridge and Park Road

Two recent public meetings—by DDOT for the draft Kenilworth Avenue Corridor (KAC) study and by the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation—increased both knowledge and confusion about these two proposals. Although Kenilworth Avenue is east of the Anacostia, the KAC study is the DDOT study which includes proposals for both a new park road west of the river and a new Massachusetts Avenue bridge. The new information provided at the KAC meeting is that a two lane “park road” is currently estimated to cost at least \$5 million, and a new Massachusetts Avenue bridge (midway between the East Capitol and Sousa bridges, just a mile apart), capable of carrying vehicles from one side of the Anacostia to the other, would cost at least \$10 million. CHRS has provided comments on these two proposals in the KAC project (see September CHRS News). The comments point out, among other things, that a complete set of options for both the park road and the new bridge should include a “no build” option, not just several different “build” options.

Lack of clarity surfaced as a result of the recent AWC meeting. As readers of the CHRS News know, there are four ongoing transportation plans which affect Capitol Hill, all adjacent to each other (the South Capitol Bridge and the

Capitol Hill Transportation Plan are the other two). In response to CHRS and others pointing out that there should be one plan for the area with common assumptions and common modeling, DDOT officials in the past have said that everything will “come together” in the AWC presentations, since the AWC planning area includes land in all four of the plans. However, the AWC presentation did not include a new Massachusetts Avenue bridge, even though DDOT continues to include a new bridge in its planning, despite lack of apparent local resident support for it.

The omission is even more difficult to understand because it isn't clear which entities actually want either the bridge or the park road. At the KAC meeting, DDOT consultants told CHRS staff that neither the park road nor the Massachusetts Avenue bridge were projects pushed by DDOT, but rather were “place holders” for the National Park Service. Given the serious budget problems at NPS, it seems unlikely that NPS would spend \$15 million in an urban area on a “bridge to nowhere” and on a road which would benefit commuters while destroying park values in much of a narrow strip of land currently owned by the NPS.

CHRS asked NPS staff whether NPS is the driving force behind these proposals. Verbally, one answer was that NPS has asked DDOT to remove these projects from DDOT proposals. CHRS asked NPS staff to agree with, or amend, a written summary of staff's verbal comments, but no reply has yet been received. Thus we cannot report with certainty whether it is the AWC, DDOT, or perhaps even the NPS which is the major proponent of these two projects. ✧

# November Preservation Café Spotlights Local Archeology

by Shauna Holmes

Archeologist Robert Sonderman, a Capitol Hill resident, led a lively discussion of Washington archeology at the CHRS-sponsored Preservation Café on November 15. As the longest-serving member of DC's Historic Preservation Review Board and an archeologist for the National Park Service's National Capital Region, he is intimately familiar with the city's settlement patterns, history, and archeological research.

Archeological evidence shows that people have lived in DC from about 12,000 BC. According to Mr. Sonderman, Washington was a political center in prehistoric times, much as it is today, drawing people from nearby piedmont and coastal areas with its two navigable rivers, water and food resources, and prime agricultural land. DC, like most urban areas, has many archeological sites and resources, with over 200 known sites in the

city; dozens of them are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. There is no central city repository for DC artifacts, though hundreds of thousands of objects have been recovered.

The Capitol Hill area, lying near the confluence of the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers and, in the past, crisscrossed by many streams, is rich with archeology, as are nearby locations like the Ellipse and the Tiber Creek area near the Washington Monument. Mr. Sonderman described archeological sites at Barney Circle, the Navy Yard, and the Marine Barracks and showed slides of artifacts from archeological work ten years ago near the Whitehurst Freeway that revealed a Native American burial with bone beads, ceramics, remnants of a textile bag, and tools. The Rock Creek valley was a popular lithic gathering site and is rich with artifacts, and the NPS is now doing a four-year archeological assessment of the area.



Robert Sonderman inspects treasures that Café attendees have unearthed.

Photo: Norm Metzger

Members of the audience produced a wide array of artifacts from their yards, which Mr. Sonderman used to explain what archeologists look for to determine an item's provenance and the time, type, and location of manufacture. Animal bones can reveal the type of saw used for butchering, and oyster shells reveal the salinity and other qualities of the water in which they grew. Every artifact talks to you, Mr. Sonderman said, and tells a story about itself and the people who left it behind, including ethnicity, social status (from cuts of meat, types of china), diet, and occupation. Residents' artifacts included perfume and whisky bottles; pitcher, tile, and ceramic fragments; a Civil War bullet (58 caliber minie ball); clay marbles; and a WWII air raid warden hat.

There are no legal requirements for homeowners who find artifacts on their private property. However, if residents come across any in public space, they should contact Mr. Sonderman at [Bob\\_Sonderman@nps.gov](mailto:Bob_Sonderman@nps.gov) or the DC Historic Preservation Office at 202-442-8818. ✧

## Preservation Beyond the Boundaries of the Capitol Hill Historic District

by Donna Hanousek

Members of CHRS's Historic Preservation Committee are forming a new subcommittee to work with neighborhoods that are seeking assistance with their historic preservation efforts outside the boundaries of the Capitol Hill Historic District, but within the Capitol Hill Planning Area. This assistance can range from sponsoring activities designed to promote appreciation of neighborhood history to assisting with survey of the neighborhood's historic resources. The DC Office of Planning, in its Capitol Hill Area Element of the Comprehensive Plan, roughly defines the boundaries of this planning area as Florida Avenue and Benning Road to the north, Second Street to the west, and the Anacostia Waterfront to the south and east.

If your neighborhood falls within the Capitol Hill Planning Area, and you want to learn more about the process of identifying and protecting your historic resources or get ideas on how to celebrate your history, we can help. Contact Donna Hanousek at [hanousek@earthlink.net](mailto:hanousek@earthlink.net) for more information. ✧

# Remembering Peter Powers

Remarks of Richard N. Wolf, President, Capitol Hill Restoration Society at the Memorial Service for Peter Powers

St. Mark's Church,  
November 19, 2006

This day is a celebration of the life of Peter Powers. It embodies much of Peter's enthusiasms: music, literature, religion, the Smithsonian, and his family. But what it doesn't quite capture is his deep affection for—and activities on behalf of—his beloved Capitol Hill. The Capitol Hill we know today would not exist except for Peter.

When he moved here in the 1960s along with a group of his Smithsonian colleagues, the Hill was in the midst of a vast transition. World War II and its aftermath had shaken this staid middle and working class community from its moorings of tight ethnic enclaves and segregation. As the old Hill residents moved out, new ones moved in—some from the ruins of the Southwest urban renewal, some from the South, and some from the new bureaucratic class in the JFK government. Many of the churches were a shambles, including St. Mark's—crash pads at best. At the same time, government was attempting to re-make the city through urban renewal and a vast highway network link to the burgeoning suburbs.

Peter moved into this maelstrom of change and found a small group of residents who—through an organization called the Capitol Hill Restoration Society—were fighting to retain the quirky but fragile physical attributes that made the Hill so attractive to many of us. CHRS had been instrumental in saving Eastern Market and keeping the inner loop of the freeway from creating a wide ditch between Ninth and Eleventh Streets. Numerous other Hill organizations had formed to deal with social change. CHRS took the position that social changes could best take place within the context of the existing physical framework of the neighborhood and it was that mission which was our focus: more Jane Jacobs, less Robert Moses—more organic, less new urbanism.

Peter not only understood, instinctively, what the dangers were, but he also eagerly entered into the life of the community which was so threatened, giving it both leadership and intimate involvement. He relished the early morning breakfasts of Capitol Hill Kiwanis—the first integrated service organization in Washington—and enjoyed ringing the bells around the Kiwanis kettle at Eastern Market at Christmas with Austin Beall, Robert Hughes and Paul Beattley. The incongruous image of this tall aristocratic man with the Oxford accent standing with the worker bees became an integral and symbolic part of the Capitol Hill landscape.

In terms of saving the Hill we

know, Peter was the indispensable man. After the destruction of Mary's Blue Room, he and his family marched with the rest of us to stop further demolition of the 500 block of East Capitol Street to make way for the National Shrine of the Southern Baptist Church. He made it possible for the notorious dirt pile on the old Providence Hospital site to become "Providence Park" through a Congressional Act which took the land and retained it as a "green park" until it would be used for a page school—an unlikely possibility now. The Metro stop at Seventh and Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, became "Eastern Market" instead of "Marine Barracks" because of Peter's intercession with Carlton Sickles, Chair of WAMTA. He stood in this church one Memorial Day weekend in the early 1970s to lead the way in stopping the Speaker of the House from taking the square on which this church sits as part of the enlargement of the Capitol complex. Clearly, it was stopped.

Because of the numerous incursions by government and real estate developers, historic preservation became an essential tool of self preservation. Once again, Peter used his magic rolodex to connect the Capitol Hill community with the Keeper of the National Register and the Director of Preservation at the National Capitol Planning Commission. With their help and that of Ruth Ann Overbeck, Hazel Kreinheder, and the NCPC staff, Peter's leadership within CHRS resulted in the creation of the Capitol Hill Historic District and its placement on the National Register. Later Peter and others such as Doug Wheeler were instrumental in creating our local historic preservation law—one of the best in the country.

So as we stand here speaking about the life of Peter Powers, we are also celebrating our own lives. Many of us would not be here except for him. Thank you, Peter. ✧

## Welcome CHRS Supporters

We thank the following new members, patrons, and sponsors.

### NEW MEMBERS

Matthew Dippell and  
M.B. Schultheis  
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# Shop Talk: New Culinary Options on 7th Street

by Nancy Metzger

If food is on your agenda this holiday season, a visit to Seventh Street, SE, would be worth your while. Several new culinary attractions have joined the list of old Eastern Market favorites. Check out Le Petit Gourmet (224 Seventh) where you'll find wonderful sandwiches and soup, cheeses and special meats, and artisan chocolates. These Kingsbury chocolates, made by a talented Capitol Hill resident, are the next best thing to "home-made." Truffles come with flavors such as Cardamom Blueberry, Black Russian, Pistachio Lavender, Raspberry Dark Chocolate and Tiramisu (to name just a few); shoppers can also find chocolate cashew toffee, and specially packaged gifts of jams, and waffle/pancake mixes with all the fixings.

Across the street is the new Marvelous Market, offering a host of possibilities, from baked goods galore to extra special deserts and pastries. Soups, salads, and sandwiches are perfect for a take-home meal during the busy holiday season, and the Market also features treats special enough for you or anyone else on your list.

And if, perchance, your life could use more zest, you can stop in at Uncle Brutha's (323 Seventh Street) and pick up any number of hot sauces to spice things up—or to use to pack a gift basket or stuff a stocking for the friend who likes it hot.

Don't forget to check out the Forecast which carries all kinds of elegant dishes for presenting the food you have in store as well as some wonderfully exotic teas and a few other specialty items.

For the future Top Chef candidates among the younger set—Dawn Price Baby (325 Seventh) has some dish sets to make food more fun; the folks at Fairy Godmother (children's books and toys at 319 Seventh) can find just the right book for any age child. (Remember *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs?*)

For a caffeine pick-up this street offers many choices. Everyone has their favorite—Bread and Chocolate, Murky Coffee, or Port City Java—or Ben and Jerry's for that delicious coffee ice cream. Then, of course, you can get your coffee with a meal at Montmartre, Tunnickliff's Tavern, or Tortilla Café. A busy holiday shopper can accomplish a lot on Seventh Street, and support local businesses while doing it! ✨

## Celebrate Christmas with the Award-Winning Eastern Market

by Donna Hanousek

You've probably noticed that your beloved Eastern Market is decked out for the holidays with Christmas lights and wreaths like never before. And, for those of you who have been very, very good, you have two opportunities for face time with Santa. He will be visiting Eastern Market on Saturday, December 9 and 16, from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Santa and his helpers will be accepting good little boys and girls in the Market Manager's office, which is immediately to the left as you enter the main door at the Center Hall. But that's not all.

For young and old alike, Eastern Market is offering a Holiday Musical Concert by the Blues Alley Youth Combo (part of the famous Blues Alley Youth Orchestra) on Saturday, December

16, between 11:00 am and 2:00 pm. In case you don't know, the "Orchestra" was co-founded in 1985 by Dizzy Gillespie and a former owner of Blues Alley. The combo consists of only the most talented and senior members of the Orchestra, and they play at a variety of events all around town.

Eastern Market was recently voted "Best Place to Take Out-of-Towners" in *washingtonpost.com's* Best Bets 2006 Readers' Choice contest. Eastern Market already offers one-stop holiday shopping for a fabulous feast, a selection of Christmas trees, and plenty of presents—now you have Santa Claus and great entertainment too, so bring the family. Who needs a shopping mall? (Check out [www.easternmarketdc.com](http://www.easternmarketdc.com) for additions and/or changes to the holiday schedule.) ✨

## Be Part of Hill History

Volunteers Needed for the CHRS 50th Annual House & Garden Tour, May 12–13, 2007

A stellar list of homes is being put together for next year's House Tour, but the tour takes the work of dozens of people to make it run smoothly. Whether you can spare two hours or twenty for this historically significant event, we have a volunteer job for you. If you want to be a part of this important event, before or during Tour Weekend, please contact CHRS at [CapHRS@aol.com](mailto:CapHRS@aol.com) or leave a message at 202-543-0425. ✨

# Historic Preservation Briefs

by Nancy Metzger

**Correction:** Bruce Brennan was missing from the list of Capitol Hill recipients of the Mayor's Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation last month in this newsletter. Bruce was presented with the Chairman's Award for his work on the Historic Preservation Amendment Act of 2006.

- The American Trucking Association gained preliminary conceptual approval at the October Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) hearing for its proposal to put a "skin" on the 1960s building at 430 First Street, SE, and restore two other adjacent buildings it owns. The building would change from its current "upside down wedding cake" profile to one that echoes the bay rhythms of Victorian-era homes. In addition, the curb cut and drive will be moved from the main First Street façade to the new alley at North Carolina Avenue. The 1960s modi-

fications to the center row house at 434 First Street (ground floor windows extended to full-length doors) will be reversed. Additional landscaping will be installed in front of all three buildings, restoring the urban park that once lined the street. Finally the corner building (100 North Carolina Avenue)—a commercial building from the 1920s with a Tudor Revival feel—will be restored following the original plans and historic photos. When this project is finished it will make a dramatic difference to this corner whose historic character was greatly altered several decades ago.

- The 1930s commercial building at 104–110 North Carolina Avenue, SE, was also on the October HPRB agenda. The Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation has proposed a third-floor addition set back from the façade of this two-story structure, which was originally built as a row of stores with apartments above. The HPRB voted to support the concept provided that the Foundation dig up the

cement paving area in the public space where cars now park and return that to landscaped green space as the American Trucking Association is doing at the corner property. CHRS's Historic Preservation Committee opposed the very visible third-floor addition. The committee consistently opposes adding to the top of a building in a visible manner because that alters the character-defining features.

- The Uline Ice Company and Arena near Third and M Streets, NE, were designated as new historic landmarks at the November HPRB meeting. The brick ice company plant, a rather utilitarian building, was designated for representing a significant but nearly vanished industry and Washington's industrial past in general. The Uline Arena itself, with its distinctive vaulted roof that is visible from the trains traveling into and out of Union Station, was cited for historical as well as architectural reasons. Finished in 1940, Uline Arena was the city's major recreation venue for 50 years, serving as the home for professional basketball, and amateur and professional hockey and other cultural events in between. While perhaps best known as the site of the first personal appearance of the Beatles in the U.S., the Uline was also the focus of anti-segregation rallies and boycotts in the 1940s and 1950s. Hailed as a "triumph in concrete" when completed, the Arena was the first thin-shell concrete building erected in Washington. The vaulted roof, supporting its own weight, allowed for an unobstructed interior space, approximately 140 by 270 feet, which, in turn, accommodated the largest indoor hockey rink in the country. The building is presently owned by the Douglas Development Company, which did not oppose the land-marking. Plans for its future use have not been announced. ✧

## Looking Back on Capitol Hill

by Nancy Metzger

New Year's parties have long been a tradition of Capitol Hill life. In 1852, 14-year-old Frank French, recorded the following in his journal, which was published in 1997 by the Library of Congress under the title, "Growing Up on Capitol Hill, A Young Washingtonian's Journal, 1850–1852, by Francis O. French:

*" Thursday, January 1 (1852): 'Wish you a happy new year,' broke forth at my first appearance this morning. 'I wish you many,' is the reply; these two sentences have been repeated in my prescence, without variation, (except father who wished me seventy to come) at the first shadow of a person's countenance, throughout the day. ... In the evening I went down to Mr. Monroe's where we staid until about ½ past eight. Came home and wrote this, and what follows under this date. They say (the people that tried it) that at the President's Levee there was certainly a crowd. Mr. Masi stated that the house was three times filled, for they locked the doors thrice to prevent being squeezed to death, and that there were several thousand people without, awaiting the reopening of the doors.*

*" Father went all around town today and paid his respects to his friends, I believe having an excellent time." ✧*



# Design Concessions for H Street Project from page 1



The renderings above show how the project will be integrated with existing structures on H Street.

city, the project evolved to meet a variety of needs. In all, six groups, consisting of the Sixth & H Street Neighborhood Association (a newly formed association of neighbors within 200 feet of the project), ANC 6A, ANC 6C, H Street Main Street, SPNA and CHRS, met with the applicant and the Office of Planning from September through November.

As a result of those discussions, substantial settlement was achieved, as follows:

**Reduced height facing row houses:** The rear of the property (the interior of the block) is zoned for a matter-of-right height of 50 feet. The applicant agreed that the height of a substantial portion would be stepped-back to 40 feet to provide a transition to the existing townhouses.

**Increased set-backs from row houses:** The Design Guidelines require zero side set-backs. The settlement calls for an exception set-back of 10 feet, with planted landscaping. Also, the Design Guidelines specify rear set-backs of 10 to 25 feet. The settlement calls for 15 to 18 feet, with planted landscaping. The result of this agreement on set-backs is that the rear of the houses on G, Sixth and Seventh Streets will have an improved transition from this project.

**Beneficial redistribution of mass:** The front of the property

that faces H Street will be allowed to go its matter-of-right height of nine stories. The amount of floor area on the ninth floor amounts to less floor area than what was given up by adjustments of side and rear set-backs and height step-backs. The result is a design in which the mass of the project is distributed in a manner that is less invasive to the community.

Additional terms of the settlement include:

- (1) Redesign of the rear and side facades that are more compatible with the town houses they will face.
- (2) Reconfiguration of the trash and loading dock area to screen them from the surrounding neighbors.
- (3) A second garage entrance on H Street to relieve the traffic pressure on the residential streets, that entrance being located near the center of the block (to break up this, the longest block in the H Street Corridor). A traffic signal will control access, prevent queuing of cars waiting to enter and help prevent traffic congestion and interference with the Trolley. A mid-block pedestrian cross walk will make the area more pedestrian-friendly and provide an element of traffic-calming. The community groups have agreed to work with the applicant in persuading DDOT to implement the cross walk and signal as neces-

sary to make such a curb cut work.

(4) The application of the Design Guidelines for the first time (Abdo, Dreyfus and Stuart were all PUDs and were filed before the Guidelines were adopted).

(5) OP's acknowledgment that compliance with the specific Guidelines, rather than the "intent" of the Guidelines is required. As OP stated in its November 20 Supplemental Report:

"OP agrees with the community that the precedent of upholding the requirements of the Overlay is important in this trial case. As such, OP supports the community's assertion that the intent of the design guidelines as a whole cannot be met without substantial compliance with the individual guidelines themselves."

(6) The applicant's agreement to address each of the 58 Design Guidelines in terms of applicability and compliance.

(7) The applicant's agreement to provide an explanation of uniqueness and social benefit for deviating from two of the Guidelines. Thus, any deviation in future cases must satisfy a heavy evidentiary burden to establish uniqueness and an overriding public interest in allowing such deviation (a standard similar to the test for a Variance from the zoning regulations).

In sum, settlement has resulted in an improved design of the building that is more attractive and beneficial to the H Street Corridor, design elements that satisfy the interests of the neighbors and preservation of the integrity of the H Street Design Guidelines for use in future development along the H Street Corridor. The record will remain open for community review and comment concerning design details. A final decision is expected at the February BZA meeting. ✧

# Mark Your Calendar!

## DECEMBER

**9 Saturday, 8:00 am—noon**

Community Shredding Event. DC Government will shred personal papers for free. Parking lot—12th & H Streets, NW. Details: 202-727-5056

**13 Wednesday, 5:30 pm**

Roundtable on Civic Design. Featuring: mayors Joe Riley (Charleston) and Michael Guido (Dearborn) and *New Yorker* architecture critic Paul Goldberger. Free, but registration required. National Building Museum, 401 F Street, NW. Details: Paul Killmer, pkillmer@nbm.org.

**13 Wednesday, 6:30 pm**

Fenty Transition Ward 6 Town Hall Meeting. King Greenleaf Recreation Center, 201 N Street, SW. Details: Juan Jose Garza, 202-478-9214

**14 Thursday, 6:30 pm**

Historic Districts Coalition Meeting. Topic: A Guide to the Mayor's Agent Process. Speakers: HPRB Chair Tersh Boasberg and David Maloney, acting director of the DC Historic Preservation Office. National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW. Details: Nancy Metzger, 202-546-1034

**19 Tuesday, 6:30 pm**

CHRS Board of Directors. Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details: Dick Wolf, 202-543-4353

**21 Thursday, 10:00 am**

Historic Preservation Review Board. 441 4th Street, NW. (#1 Judiciary Square), Room 220 South. Details: Nancy Metzger, 202-546-1034

## JANUARY

**8 Monday, 6:30 pm**

CHRS Historic Preservation Committee. Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details: Nancy Metzger, 202-546-1034

**9 Tuesday, 5:30 pm**

Framework Plan Development Status Meeting. To review and seek input on plans to improve memorial sites and

visitor experiences in key DC destination areas. NCPC offices, 401 9th Street, NW, North Lobby, Suite 500. RSVP by January 4 to FrameworkPlan@ncpc.gov or call 202-482-7301

**16 Tuesday, 6:30 pm**

CHRS Board of Directors. Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details: Dick Wolf, 202-543-4353

**Please Note:** *The CHRS News will not be published in January. The next issue will be February 2007. Happy Holidays.*

## Help with Audubon's "Christmas Count" of Wild Birds

by Beth Purcell

Every year the National Audubon Society sponsors an annual bird count in December–January ("the Christmas Count"). The annual count provides valuable longitudinal data on numbers and types of wild birds in the U.S. The DC Audubon Society and Audubon Naturalist Society manage the count in DC, including the Anacostia Sector, including the National Arboretum, Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, Kingman Island, Fort DuPont Park and Congressional Cemetery. Volunteers are very welcome, including children and people who have not counted birds before. Volunteers do not need to be members of any Audubon organization. (CHRS will pay the \$5 per participant charge for CHRS members.)

**Activity:** Help with Audubon's annual bird count—learn about birds and habitat. Please bring binoculars if you have them, wear walking shoes.

**Date/Time:** Saturday, December 16, 2006, 7:00 am (rain or shine)

**Where:** Meet at the parking lot, Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, 1550 Anacostia Avenue, NE

**RSVP by December 11:** Louis DeMuoy 301-656-3146 email: Ldemouy@starpower.net ✉



### Capitol Hill Restoration Society

420 Tenth Street, SE  
Washington, DC 20003