



# NEWS

www.chrs.org

April 2007

## Fiftieth Annual CHRS House and Garden Tour To Be Celebrated May 12-13, 2007



“Deer House” and Other Grand Dames Highlight This Special Tour

by Aileen C. Moffatt

This year CHRS celebrates 50 years of the annual Mother’s Day House and Garden Tour, and what a spectacular tour it will be! On Saturday, May 12, and Sunday, May 13, some of the most intriguing and notable Capitol Hill houses are being opened in honor of this special anniversary.

For the first time since 1978, the “deer house” is on the tour. Who hasn’t walked by that magnificent East Capitol home and wanted to have a look inside? Several other East Capitol grand dames also will be on view, along with a diverse collection of architecturally stunning renovations and restorations from across the Hill.

Not only are the interiors of this year’s homes spectacular, most have interesting gardens and creative outdoor spaces, often designed by master landscape architects. Waterfalls, koi ponds, and zen gardens lend a particular serenity to some of the yards, while others feature riots of colorful flowers and shrubbery. One home (the deer house) even has a beautiful

Who hasn’t walked by the “deer house” at 712 East Capitol St., NE (above) and wanted to have a look inside? Thanks to the owners, Tip and Connie Tipton, this is your chance to do just that! The garden mural (right) is just one of the many features not to be missed. Photos: top, R. Walker; right, Tip and Connie Tipton



Continued on page 6

# President's Column: The Tour Reminds Us That Capitol Hill Is a Work of Civic Art

by Dick Wolf

This is the Restoration Society's 50th House and Garden Tour. What started out as a way to say that the Hill was a good place to buy and restore a house—maybe not Georgetown, but still a decent place to live and invest—has turned into much more. There were years during and after the riots of 1968 when the House Tour was a way to face terrible adversity, and say “we are still here and won't be moved”.

Later, the Tour said to the world and the Congress, “Hey, we are here; we are a real neighbor-

hood and important to the city and even to the Congress, so don't devour another few blocks of the neighborhood to satisfy your development needs”.

Later still, the Tour was a way to feature the newly created Capitol Hill Historic District, the second largest in the country at the time of its creation. CHRS began to focus on the history of the houses, their particular architectural style, and what owners had done to actually restore many houses to original condition. Visitors and residents could take lessons on what was right and wrong about historic preservation.

Finally, the Tour of late has focused on the great variety of uses that have sprung to life on the Hill. We have featured houses from the award winning Hope 6 assisted housing complex—the old Ellen Wilson public housing project now completely rebuilt into Town Homes; houses at the Marine HQ and the Navy Yard; the Shakespeare Theatre complex on Barracks Row/Main Street; and houses of all varieties which feature life styles from singles to families. But for the 50th Tour we are featuring some of the best of the best in Capitol Hill houses: the grand dames.

What will be most noticeable to Tour participants is the context for these great houses. They do not sit in isolation but are embedded in the great complex of L'Enfant streets, spacious front yards (the “public parking”), wide sidewalks, and leafed out trees overhanging the streets and sidewalks. There are splendid views down the streets and avenues terminating in great public squares, parks, and the Capitol itself. The Hill is what the proponents of the city-beautiful movement call a work of “civic art”. There is very little of that left in the United States, and we who live on the Hill are the fortunate inheritors of a great portion of what is left of that movement in Washington, DC.

We hope that those who live in the greater Capitol Hill area—Hill East, Barney Circle, Near North East, and Kingman Park—will be moved by this Tour and our efforts to help protect and enhance their residential character and support their efforts to keep out inappropriate development. We are not resting on our laurels. So join us in celebrating Capitol Hill, wherever you live, this Mother's Day Weekend, May 12th and 13th. ✧

## Be Part of Capitol Hill History

### Call for House and Garden Tour Volunteers

How can you meet new friends, join your neighbors for a lovely weekend on Capitol Hill, support CHRS, AND take part in a significant event in our neighborhood's history?

Simple! Volunteer for the annual House and Garden Tour on May 12th and 13th. It takes dozens of people to make the weekend run smoothly. Maybe you thought about volunteering in years past but never made the commitment. As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the tour, this is the year! We are rolling out some of Capitol Hill's most gorgeous homes and gardens for a banner year.

We have many members who volunteer year after year,

but new faces are always necessary (and warmly welcomed). Volunteers are needed to serve as house docents on Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon, reception helpers for the Saturday evening reception, tea helpers for the Sunday afternoon tea, jitney guides on Sunday afternoon, and ticket sellers at Eastern Market on the weekends leading up to the tour.

One member who rode the jitney bus as a guide for the first time last year had such fun that she's going to do it again this year. Another first-time volunteer expressed disbelief about how much “behind-the-scenes” work was involved and vowed to continue helping each year.

We have lots to celebrate—and lots to do! Please help. ✧

Contact Amanda Molson at (202) 548-0665 or [amandamolson@yahoo.com](mailto:amandamolson@yahoo.com) to sign up.

## 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.

[www.chrs.org](http://www.chrs.org)

Celebrating more than 50 years 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.

Start or Renew a CHRS Membership

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

\* Call 202-543-0425 and choose option 2

\* Pick up a form at one of our meetings

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

# Community Forum at the Eastern Branch Boys & Girls Club

by Beth Purcell

On March 12, 2007, the Eastern Branch of the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Washington (BGCGW) hosted a community forum on the future of the Eastern Branch club, at 261 17th Street, SE. This was the third in a series of meetings about the club's future. Will Gunn, the President and CEO, chaired the meeting, which about 60 residents attended, including Councilmember Tommy Wells and ANC 6B Commissioners Will Hill, Francis Campbell and Antonette Russell.

Will Gunn outlined the history of the Eastern Branch club. The building was constructed in 1937 to serve white boys. The club was integrated in the 1960s, and soon became 100% black. In the 1970s, the club also began to serve girls.

The BGCGW merged with the Metropolitan Police Boys and Girls Clubhouse in 2003. After the merger, the combined organization operates 11 clubs in DC. The Eastern Branch club is in the oldest building and has the highest operating costs. The DC clubs as a whole have a \$14.5 million budget and ran a \$1.8 million deficit last year, which concerns the BGCGW board.

The board has commissioned a "program delivery study" for all DC clubs to determine whom the clubs serve, the clubs' capacity, and present and future projections of need for services in neighborhoods. The study should be completed in Spring 2007. BGCGW wants to be in a "growth mode" going forward, focus on children who need services the most, and continue to serve those children it currently serves.

Residents noted that there are many families with young children near the Eastern Branch club. Eastern Branch alumni and other

residents said that the club needs to do a better job of outreach to the neighborhood to involve children in club activities.

Several residents pointed out that at previous meetings, BGCGW representatives told the community that the Eastern Branch club might close on July 1, 2007. Will Gunn said that until the board receives and reviews the program delivery study, no decision would be made on the Eastern Branch club. A decision will be made by the end of this school year.

Several residents asked what the community could do to keep the Eastern Branch open. He responded that the organization's loyalty is to serving children, not to specific buildings. If the Eastern Branch building could be renovated to operate more efficiently, this would affect the decision-making process. The estimated cost to renovate the Eastern Branch club (and thus reduce its operating expenses) is approximately \$3 million.

Residents asked many questions about BGCGW's income sources and fundraising. Approximately 47 percent of the budget comes from government, foundation and corporate grants; 21 percent comes from special event fundraising. DC government contributes \$500,000 per year to BGCGW, earmarked for the club at 14th and Clifton Streets, NW (at Councilmember Jim Graham's request).

Residents asked Tommy Wells whether it was possible to obtain DC government funding for the Eastern Branch. At the end of the meeting, Tommy Wells stated that these recreational services are essential to children's welfare, and that after the program delivery study is completed, it would then be possible to assess different methods to continue to provide these services for children in Ward 6. ✧

# Calls Mount to Halt H Street Upzoning

CHRS and Stanton Park Neighborhood Association have joined with Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A to prevent further upzoning along H Street, NE. Upzoning provides for greater density and increased height for new development.

Currently all but the westernmost properties on H Street are zoned as C-2-A, the standard commercial zoning. The exceptions, on the west end of Capitol Hill, are zoned as C-2-B. C-2-A was adopted as the appropriate zoning level for H Street when the Zoning Commission added the H Street NE Neighborhood Commercial Zoning Overlay District to the Zoning Code.

The maximum matter-of-right height for areas zoned C-2-B is 65

feet. The Dreyfus Group is seeking to change the zoning on the block bounded by Second, Third, G, and H Streets to C-3-C, raising the maximum matter-of-right height to 95 feet. Even more height and density could be added with a Planned Unit Development (PUD), which Dreyfus is also seeking.

Senate Square (Abdo), across H Street from the Dreyfus site in the block that includes the old Children's Museum, has already received an upzone, giving it a permitted height of 130 feet. Take a look at it as you drive by—it overwhelms the residential and commercial properties to the east.

The H Street Overlay is still new. The three community organizations have asked the Office of Planning

to hold fast to the Overlay, keeping further development to C-2-A. Anything more would overwhelm the character of the surrounding residential community.

ANC 6C will consider a similar resolution at its 7:00 pm meeting on April 11 at the NPR building. 6C's Planning, Zoning, and Environment Committee will consider a proposed resolution at its meeting on April 4, also at the NPR building at 7 pm (see related article on page 11). ✧

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## Planning and Zoning in Ward Six

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### Ward 6 Neighborhood Planner:

Jeff C. Davis, [jeff.davis@dc.gov](mailto:jeff.davis@dc.gov), 202-442-7704

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### Online Resources:

Office of Planning:  
[www.planning.dc.gov](http://www.planning.dc.gov)

Capitol Hill Area Element—Comprehensive Plan, [www.planning.dc.gov/planning/frames.asp?doc=/planning/lib/planning/AreaElements-122006.pdf](http://www.planning.dc.gov/planning/frames.asp?doc=/planning/lib/planning/AreaElements-122006.pdf)

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### Other Contacts

Gary Peterson, Chair, CHRS Zoning Committee, [pgarylaw@aol.com](mailto:pgarylaw@aol.com)

Drew Ronneberg, Chair, ANC 6A, Committee on Economic Development and Zoning, [ronneberg6a02@gmail.com](mailto:ronneberg6a02@gmail.com); <http://anc6a.org/>

Francis Campbell, Chair, ANC 6B, Committee on Planning and Zoning, [francis6b10@anc6b.org](mailto:francis6b10@anc6b.org); <http://anc6b.org/>

Ryan M. Velasco, Chair, ANC 6C, Committee on Planning, Zoning and the Environment, [ryan.velasco@anc.dc.gov](mailto:ryan.velasco@anc.dc.gov); <http://anc6c.org/>

Andy Litsky, Chairman, ANC6D, [alitsky@aol.com](mailto:alitsky@aol.com); <http://anc6d.org/index.html> ✧

## CHRS Representatives Meet with Interim Director of DCRA

by Gary Peterson

Mayor Adrian Fenty has appointed Lisa Marie Morgan as interim director of the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA). Morgan returns to the city from the private sector. Her previous projects for the city include creating and directing DC's Customer Service Operations Office and, before leaving DC government, assessing the management of DCRA. In her new job, Morgan will meet with DCRA customers from 2:00 to 3:30 pm each Thursday. Each session will last approximately 10 minutes. A sign-up sheet is available on a first-come, first-served basis each Tuesday at the information desk in the Permit Center.

At CHRS President Dick Wolf's request, Councilmember Tommy Wells arranged a meeting between Morgan and CHRS,

which was held in Wells' office on March 19. Accompanying Morgan were Monica Lamboy, Director of Permits; Nick Majett, Director of Inspections; and Bill Crews, Zoning Administrator. President Wolf; Nancy Metzger, Chair of the Historic Preservation Committee; and Gary Peterson, Chair of the Zoning Committee, represented CHRS.

Morgan was told that CHRS had a history of monthly meetings with the Director of DCRA to resolve problems on Capitol Hill. She was advised that the last Director had agreed to meetings but never attended them, and that there have been no meetings for the past six months. Morgan agreed to resume the meetings on April 17, and Wolf gave her a list of 30 items that CHRS wants to discuss. Anyone having problems with DCRA should send an e-mail to Gary Peterson, [pgarylaw@aol.com](mailto:pgarylaw@aol.com). ✧

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# DC's New Wildlife Action Plan

## Numerous Species Inhabiting Our Urban and Non-urban Landscape Are at Risk

by Beth Purcell

DC is home to 782 species of mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, and amphibians, plus many more types of invertebrates. Some species are maintaining stable populations, but many are not. The DC Department of the Environment recently completed a study of wildlife in DC, identified 148 species in greatest need of conservation, and began work on a plan to conserve threatened wildlife habitat. Threats to wildlife habitat include destruction by converting it into commercial or residential development or recreation areas, fragmentation, dumping, contamination, sedimentation, storm water erosion, and invasion by nonnative species.

Capitol Hill is classified an urban landscape. This includes backyards, school campuses, golf courses, and cemeteries. Urbanized areas nevertheless provide a habitat for migratory and non-migratory species. Ten species in greatest need of conservation that live in our urban landscapes include: black-crowned night heron, brown

thrasher, chimney swift, eastern towhee, red-shouldered hawk, eastern chipmunk, eastern red bat, gray fox, eastern box turtle, and eastern hognose snake. Conservation actions needed to protect urban habitat include reducing the impact of recreation on wildlife habitat by maximizing use of existing recreation areas, land use planning to maintain habitats, minimizing impacts of utilities and road corridors, reducing night-time light pollution (to prevent disorienting migrating birds), and integrated pest management.

DC also has non-urban landscape hosting many species of wildlife, some of which are at risk. Emergent tidal wetlands on the Anacostia River host plants like sedges, rushes, lotus, bullrush, nuphar, spikerush, wool-grass, swamp milkweed, and pickerelweed, all of which filter sediment and other substances, improving water quality. Over 90 percent of the historic Anacostia tidal wetlands have been destroyed or altered by land conversion, dredging, and filling. Work is underway to restore tidal wetlands, home to 13 species in greatest need of conservation, which include: American bittern, least bittern, American

black duck, black-crowned night heron, sora, Virginia rail, Wilson's snipe, American mink, northern river otter, southern bog lemming, Virginia opossum, American eel, and warmouth.

Kingman Island has tidal mudflats (the area between the marsh and the water's edge). Mudflats also purify the water and, because wave action is low, provide habitat for invertebrates, a food source for birds and mammals. Species that are at great risk live here: bald eagle, Wilson's snipe, American mink, northern river otter, southern bog lemming, Virginia opossum, American eel, bog turtle, common musk turtle, and bullfrog.

Conservation actions needed to protect tidal wetlands and tidal mudflats include reducing sedimentation and pollution (e.g., by installing trash traps in storm drains), eliminating invasive plants and animals (e.g., lesser celandine, *Ranunculus ficaria*, rats, non-migratory Canada geese), and reducing storm-water runoff into the river.

For the complete report, including fact sheets on each species of greatest conservation need, see [www.ddoe.dc.gov](http://www.ddoe.dc.gov). ✧

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## DC Community Heritage Project Request for Proposals

The Humanities Council of Washington, DC, announces a special request for proposals for projects focused on community heritage, history, and preservation projects in the District of Columbia. Projects may focus on a range of ideas and issues from communities across the District, and may include a wide variety of formats, from a historical resource center for your neighborhood to an oral history project for your community. They are seeking projects from all across the city, in all eight wards and all four quadrants, from groups doing

the important work of preserving DC's rich heritage.

Information on the grants and application materials are available on the Council's website at: [www.wdchumanities.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=194](http://www.wdchumanities.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=194). If there are any questions, please contact Jennifer Foley by emailing [jfoley@wdchumanities.org](mailto:jfoley@wdchumanities.org) or by calling (202) 387-8391, ext. 15. There will be a grants assistance workshop on Wednesday, April 4, 2007, at the Martin Luther King Library to help answer questions and explain the process to anyone

who is thinking of applying. These workshops are free and open to the public. If you would like to reserve a space for the workshop on the 4th, please email [grants@wdchumanities.org](mailto:grants@wdchumanities.org) with your name, email address, phone number, and the name of your organization, if you are working with one, or call the number above. If you are not familiar with the DC Community Heritage Project, you can learn more about it at: [www.wdchumanities.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=43](http://www.wdchumanities.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=43). ✧

# Fiftieth House and Garden Tour *continued from front page*



The home of Todd DeGarmo and Bill Sales (above) at 17 Fifth Street, SE has been lovingly designed, both inside and out. This year's Tour poster (below) features Capitol Hill homes and landmarks. Photos: Studios Architecture; poster: R. Walker

mural painted onto the wall of the house next door that evokes a romantic idyll for those lounging on the porch or patio. Whatever your mood, there will be a yard that surely will appeal and inspire.

Light and bright are recurring themes in this year's homes. Three of the venues, for example, have opened up the back of the house with floor-to-ceiling glass doors and windows. The result is to extend

the boundaries of the home into the outdoors and allow the sunlight to brighten the kitchen and family room. Other homeowners have extended their homes by adding a screened-in porch or awnings to help keep the elements at bay.

One of the Hill's great restoration projects of recent years is another highlight of this year's tour. Once divided into nine apartments, the house at East Capitol and 8th Street is now a modern family home with four young boys in residence.

Notwithstanding some disheartening setbacks while the work was being done, the

*Continued next page*



## Tickets for the 50th Annual CHRS House and Garden Tour will be on sale at:

- Coldwell Banker/Pardoe, 605 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE
- Trover Books, 221 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE
- Prudential Carruthers, 216 7th Street, SE
- Appalachian Spring, Union Station, East Hall
- Cherry Antiques, 1526 Wisconsin Avenue, NW
- Riverby Books, 417 East Capitol Street, SE
- CHRS kiosk, weekends at Eastern Market
- CHRS office, 420 10th Street, SE, 202-543-0425



Some of the treasures that await you on this year's Tour (clockwise from top left): 911 E. Capitol St., SE; a view of 800 E. Capitol St., NE from the late 1800s; 15 Seventh St., NE; 623 Constitution Ave., NE; and 900 S. Carolina Ave., SE. Photos: top right, Mary Ellen Abrecht; others, R. Walker

*Tour continued from previous page*

house was finally completed after 3½ years. The preservation work in this house is remarkable, from the floors to the pocket doors and trims throughout.

Saturday evening the tour runs from 5:00 – 8:00 pm, with a reception for ticket holders at

the Community Building of The Townhomes on Capitol Hill, located at 750 Sixth Street, SE. May 12 is also Second Saturday on Barracks Row, and we encourage you to visit the restaurants, galleries, and shops on Eighth Street, SE.

On Sunday, the tour is from 12:00 noon – 5:00 pm. Jitney service will be provided between all venues. The annual Mother's Day Tea will be held at Christ Church Parish Hall, 620 G Street, SE, from 2:30 – 5:30 pm. In addition, CHRS is pleased to help Historic Congressional Cemetery celebrate its 200th anniversary by providing special jitneys that will leave from

Christ Church hourly beginning at 12:45 pm for guided tours of the Cemetery.

By the time you are reading this, CHRS members should have received a notice regarding the purchase of discounted members' tickets. (If you haven't received the notice, contact CHRS at 202-543-0425 or CapHRS@aol.com. The non-member ticket price is \$25 in advance and \$30 on tour weekend. Tickets may be purchased at the CHRS kiosk at Eastern Market (weekends only), on-line at [www.chrs.org](http://www.chrs.org), or at select venues around the city (see list on page 6). ✨

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# Reserve Now for April 10 Overbeck Lecture: “Hollywood on the Potomac”

On Tuesday evening, April 10, *Hill Rag* film critic Michael Canning will deliver an Overbeck History Lecture on the strange, ill-informed, and occasionally accurate ways that Hollywood movie-makers have depicted Washington, DC. With clips from films spanning most of the twentieth century, Canning will present amusing examples of mangled geography and cultural tone-deafness, along with some notable cases where the filmmakers actually got it right, and will feature a number of scenes shot on Capitol Hill.

A longtime Hill resident, Canning worked for 28 years as a press and cultural officer for the U.S. Information Agency both in Washington and overseas, and began writing movie reviews for the *Rag* upon his retirement from the Foreign Service in 1993. Since 1999, he has also served as a programmer and commentator for the Capitol Hill Arts Workshop’s classic films series. In addition, he has published a number of articles on the treatment of Washington and the U.S. Congress in American feature films, including a paper

delivered to the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association in 1997.

The lecture will be held at 8:00 pm Tuesday, April 10, at the Naval Lodge Hall at 330 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. As usual, admission is free, but a reservation is required due to limited seating. Please email [OverbeckLecture@aol.com](mailto:OverbeckLecture@aol.com), or phone 544-1845, leaving your name, address and phone number so you can receive a confirmation and any updates. ✧

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## Looking Back on Capitol Hill

by Nancy Metzger

Six years ago, shortly after Kris Swanson and Roy Mustelier bought the old store building on the northeast corner of 9th Street and South Carolina Avenue, SE, they interviewed the former owner, Tony Cuozzo. Tony’s mother and father bought the store in 1917, and the family ran it until 1968. Kris now has her art studio in the front room of the store, and Kris and Roy live in the rest of the house, just like the Cuozzos did for over 50 years. The Corner Store will be one of the buildings featured on the CHRS House and Garden Tour on May 12–13. The following excerpt from the interview indicates that it’s not just present-day Capitol Hill residents who think about additions and renovations.

**Tony Cuozzo:** “We moved over to that store in September of 1917. My dad was a huckster [editor’s note—using a wagon to sell goods] and he still had his horse and wagon. He opened the store and parked the horse and wagon in front of the store all day long. Later on, after he got rid of the horse, he got a Model

T Ford. He was driving that and going to the market in that. ...

“By the way, where that kitchen is today, there was nothing but a frame shack. There was no bathroom there. The kids had to take a bath in the kitchen. Of course they had the coal range in the kitchen, and then they had Latrobe heat in the dining room.”

**Roy:** The outhouse? Was it always there?

**Tony:** “It was always there. It was the only thing we had. ...”

**Roy:** Since you moved into the house, what changes were made to the house?

**Tony:** “The original building is just like it always has been. It was back in the kitchen where this frame shack—that’s all it was, a shack. We wanted to knock it down and rebuild it. We went through a hassle with the government. They said that we couldn’t rebuild it, we could remodel it. So we got this contractor and got a permit to remodel it. What the contractor did was build a new one on the inside and then tore the old one out. As

I told Kris, that kitchen has a sub-floor on it in case we could ever build on top of it. We wanted to build an addition there, but they wouldn’t let us because they said it interfered with the air in the neighborhood. I don’t know where they ever got that idea. ... Of course, while Dad was in the store, he put hardwood floors—maple floor in the store and throughout the house he had hardwood floors. ... Of course, they need to be refinished. Dad always said that every May he had to do something to fix the house up. ... Then Dad put that little bathroom in. That back room was one big bedroom. He cut that down and put the bathroom in.”

**Roy:** The garage? Was that always there?

**Tony:** “No, that was wood shed back there. It was the same height as the one next door to it. Dad had that taken out and the garage built. We had two cars in that garage because I had a ’31 Ford I used to keep in there. Of course, later on Dad bought a Dodge from some salesman he used to know when he was huckstering.” ✧



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# March Preservation Café: House History— How to Start and Where to Find Information

by Donna Hanousek

House history was the topic of the March Preservation Café, which was held at Ebenezer's Coffee House at Second and F Streets, NE, and drew more than forty people. Matthew Gilmore, co-editor of H-DC, a listserv devoted to the History of the District of Columbia (H-DC@H-Net.MSU.EDU), provided a mini-version of his evening-long course in historic building and neighborhood research. Mr. Gilmore worked for several years as a reference and collection development/preservation librarian in the Washingtoniana Division of the DC Public Library, and has recently co-authored the book, *Historic Photos of Washington DC*, which is due out next month. What follows is a summary of his presentation.

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## Lot and Square

Mr. Gilmore explained that it all begins with knowing your lot and square, which is the key to researching records. The lot and square is part of the legal description of your property. There are two sets of lot numbers. The earliest is the record lot, which is numbered in succession from '1', and is shown as 'part of 1, etc.' when subdivided (although sometimes subdivided lots were given new, larger numbers). The second set of lot numbers is the tax lot, which is an 800 series that was added at the end of the 19th century to account for multiple buildings on one lot. You can start with your tax lot and work backwards with historic maps to obtain all lot numbers ever associated with your lot.

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## Tax Record and Building Permits

If your building is early, prior to 1877, then you must do tax record research to date your property. This is complicated, but you can search the tax assessment books for the assessed value on your lot

and square, looking for a jump in value to indicate building construction. To narrow down your time frame for the tax research, you can look at historic maps to determine when your building footprint appears on the lot. You can find real estate tax assessment information at the Historical Society, the National Archives, and in the Washingtoniana Room on the third floor of the M. L. King Public Library at 901 G Street, NW. If your building was built in 1877 or later, you can find its building permit, as well as subsequent permits for alterations, at either the National Archives or in the Washingtoniana room.

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## Historic Maps

The Boshke map of 1859 and 1861 is the oldest, and it shows building footprints, but no lot and square. The Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (1888-1999) show lot and square, building footprint, and building materials. You can compare the information with what you find in the Hopkins Atlas, which has detailed information in its 1887 and 1892 editions, and with the Baist Atlas (1903-1945). These maps can be found in the Library of Congress map room, which is in the Madison Building at 101 Independence Avenue, SE, or in the Washingtoniana Room.

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## Deeds

From 1927 to 1985, the Washington Board of Realtors kept records on real estate transactions, which you can find on microfiche at the Washingtoniana Room. You can also research deeds at the Recorder of Deeds. They are arranged by lot and square, and they are indexed from 1900-1923 and from 1937 to the present. For research from 1792 to 1900, you need the name of either the grantee or the grantor (which hopefully you found during your tax research).

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## City Directories and Census

To learn about the people who lived in your building, the City Directory listed heads of households living in DC from 1822 to 1973, but the list is by name and not address until 1914. After 1914, the occupants are listed by street as well as name. You can get more detailed information on people by address from census information from 1880-1930 (except 1910).

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## Other Sources

You can research your address, or people connected to your building (builder, architect, tenants), through the search engines of Washington Post.com. The collections at the Historical Society and Washingtoniana Room are also rich with local history. The Historical Society has several collections of historic photographs, including the Whymer Collection, which contains many photos of neighborhoods throughout Washington, DC, that were taken from 1948-1952.

For more information and training opportunities, contact Matthew Gilmore: [dchist@hotmail.com](mailto:dchist@hotmail.com). ✧

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## April Preservation Café

For those of you who have been confused about the zoning process and the players, the next Preservation Café will be "Zoning 101." It will be held on April 18 at 6:30 pm, at Ebenezer's Coffee House at Second and F Streets, NE. There will be a presentation by Richard Nero, Deputy Director, and Sara Bardin, Special Assistant to the Director, for the Office of Zoning. Zoning decisions affect all neighborhoods, so it's good to understand how those decisions are made, who makes them, and what part citizens can play in the process. ✧

# DDOT Needs to Do Comprehensive, Peer-Reviewed Traffic Study for Capitol Hill and Surrounding Areas

by Barbara Eck and Tomas Grahame

Readers of the CHRS *News* may remember that CHRS has requested that DDOT produce a comprehensive traffic study that would show the impacts of all the different traffic projects which are being proposed.

In 2005 and 2006, there were five such studies: South Capitol Street; Middle Anacostia Crossings, or MAC (mainly new 11th Street bridges options); Kenilworth Avenue Corridor (affecting the Hill mainly through a new bridge at Massachusetts Avenue over the Anacostia, and through a new “park road” on the western banks of the Anacostia); Capitol Hill Transportation Study; and the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative. We were told at various times that the impacts for projects in one study—for example, the Capitol Hill Transportation Study—would be modeled in some other, upcoming study. However we have been unable to get DDOT to do a study that modeled all the impacts of all the new projects together.

Now there are going to be more traffic generators. The new ball park and the increasing development it will spawn, development in NOMA (North of Massachusetts Avenue), and the present and future proposals for H Street (many in the community near H Street are rebelling

against the scale of new proposals there) are all in the mix.

Several questions stand out:

- How much traffic would be generated?
- What streets would each endeavor use, and what would the volumes be?
- How would these volumes and destinations change with different configurations of the proposed new 11th Street bridges?
- Would we still be able to experience Capitol Hill as a liveable, walkable neighborhood?

Let’s not forget that DDOT has a goal of getting more people out of their cars and walking to destinations. If the walkability goal is threatened, what changes can be made in traffic plans to ensure that people who want to walk instead of drive would find that option safe and attractive?

It is hard to know what to think about new traffic proposals without a comprehensive study, before most of the new projects are set in stone. One that is not set in stone is the upgrade of the 11th Street bridges. CHRS signed on to support the original proposal for this upgrade three years ago, because DDOT told neighborhoods on both sides of the river that connecting the 11th Street bridges to I-295 (Kenilworth Avenue) north-

bound would remove traffic and thus reduce congestion on the Sousa Bridge. Although the 2005 MAC study showed a one-third reduction in 2030 Sousa Bridge volumes, compared to today’s volumes, the 2006 11th Street bridges Draft Environmental Impact Statement showed virtually no improvements, with or without the new connection.

DDOT’s latest proposals now call for far more than just a new northbound connection; they call for four additional traffic lanes, said to be “local” but connecting easily with the freeway. These new lanes bring with them the possibility of crowding Capitol Hill with traffic coming up 11th Street. Additionally, the latest cost estimates are nearing \$500 million, and we understand that the DC cost-share is over 80 percent. And, of course, the proposals would destroy the historic boathouse now in use by many Capitol Hill residents and take about 12 acres of parkland.

CHRS recognizes that despite the lack of suggested benefits on the Sousa Bridge, there may be reasons for upgrading the 11th Street bridges; we are, after all, seeing much new development. However, it isn’t clear what the traffic flows from different options would be, what the costs of alternatives would be, and whether there might be designs that could save the popular boathouse while also keeping costs down.

DDOT’s record on this project has not been stellar. So let’s have a comprehensive and transparent traffic study BEFORE committing to a specific 11th Street bridges upgrade alternative. That train is moving fast. However, our sense is that both the new mayor and our new Councilmember favor walkable communities not dominated by traffic, so our guess is that both should favor such a study. ✧

## Welcome CHRS Supporters

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

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# Mark Your Calendar!

APRIL

**10 Tuesday, 6:30 pm**

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

**10 Tuesday, 8:00 pm**

Overbeck Lecture: "Hollywood on the Potomac." Naval Lodge Hall, 330 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. *Hill Rag* film critic Mike Canning will discuss the strange, distorted, and occasionally accurate ways that Washington has been depicted on the silver screen. Free but reservations required. E-mail Overbeck Lecture@aol.com or call 544-1845.

**10 Tuesday, 6:30 pm**

Atherton Lecture: "The Past, Present and Future of the Planning of Washington," presented by architect and past NCPC and Commission of Fine Arts chairman David Childs. National Building Museum; \$12 members, \$20 nonmembers. Details: www.nbm.org

**11 Wednesday, 9 am-6 pm**

Symposium on "Framing a Capital City" will feature scholars, designers, policymakers, and citizens addressing how the nation's capital will evolve in its dual role as showcase for the nation and a livable city. Speakers include Lawrence Vale, Lucy Barber, Alex Krieger, Michael Wise,

Judy Scott Feldman, Dan Tangherlini, and Timothy Beatley. Admission free but registration required. National Building Museum. Details: www.nbm.org.

**12 Thursday, 7:30 pm**

CHRS Zoning Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Cases for consideration: 1111 New Jersey Avenue, SE; 1404 Constitution Avenue, NE; 314 12th Street, NE; 1359 C Street, SE; 1383-85 H Street, NE; and 323 C Street, SE. Committee also will consider proposed Zoning Commission text amendments #06-23 (eating establishment definitions) and 07-03 (minimum lot dimensions in the R districts.) Details: Gary Peterson, 547-7969.

**14 Saturday, all day**

**Public tickets for the 50th Annual House and Garden Tour go on sale!**

Outstanding homes have been selected this year's very special tour, May 12-13. Advance sale tickets are \$25 and provide admission to all Saturday and Sunday events. They will be on sale at the CHRS kiosk weekends at Eastern Market, through the CHRS office, and at retail locations on Capitol Hill and throughout the city.

**17 Tuesday, 6:30 pm**

CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second floor. Details: Dick Wolf, 543-4353.

**18 Wednesday, 6:30 pm**

CHRS Preservation Café on "Zoning 101: The Basics about the Process and the Players." This meeting will feature a PowerPoint presentation by Richard Nero, deputy director of the Office of Zoning, and Sara Bardin, special assistant to the zoning director, that will focus on the basics of zoning, including how zoning decisions are made, who makes them, the different roles of the Zoning Commission and the Board of Zoning Adjustment, and how citizens can play a role in the process. Ebenezer's Coffee House, 201 F Street, NE. Details: Nancy Metzger, 546-1034.

**21 Saturday, 9 am-3 pm**

DPW household hazardous waste drop-off at Carter Barron Amphitheatre parking lot at 16th and Kennedy Streets, NW.

*Continued next page*

## News from "Beyond the Boundaries"

**A**dvisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANC) 6A and 6C announce three joint public meetings concerning the extension of the Capitol Hill Historic District or creating a new historic district north and/or east of the existing historic district.

**Wednesday, April 4 - 7:00 pm  
NPR at 635 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, second floor**

The first joint public meeting between ANC 6A's Economic Development and Zoning Committee (EDZ) and ANC 6C's Planning, Zoning and the Environment Committee (PZE) will be on April 4. This will be an information-gathering meeting to inform the ANCs' residents about the process of creating or expanding a historic district. Topics will include the pros and cons of living in a historic district, what types of building alterations are subject to historic preservation review, the requirements for surveying properties, and the criteria that must be met in order to become part of a historic district.

**Tuesday, April 24 - 7:00 pm  
Community Room at the Capitol Hill Towers, located at 900 G Street, NE**

The second joint public meeting between 6A's EDZ Committee and 6C's PZE Committee will be on April 24. This meeting will discuss respective ANC support for the creation of new historic districts, expansion of the existing Capitol Hill historic district, or not becoming part of a historic district. The potential boundaries of a new or expanded historic district will be discussed.

**Wednesday, May 23 - 7:00 pm  
Sherwood Recreation Center, located at the corner of 9th and G Streets, NE**

The third joint public meeting between 6A's EDZ Committee and 6C's PZE Committee will be on May 23. The purpose of this meeting is to make joint committee recommendations that will be forwarded for review and approval at the meetings of the full Commissions on June 13th for ANC 6C, and June 14th for ANC 6A. ✧

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## Mark Your Calendar! *continued from previous page*

APRIL continued

### 23 Monday, 7:30 PM

Community meeting about potential parking and staffing changes to Specialty Hospital of Washington (formerly MedLINK). St. James' Episcopal Church, 222 8th St., NE.

### 26 Thursday, 10:00 am

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

### 28 Saturday, 11:30 am–2:30 pm

Help restore Anacostia River marshes by planting arrow arum plants at Heritage Island. Family activity for ages 7 and up. Wear old clothes and shoes, bring socks. Boots and gloves provided. Meet RFK Lot 6, Benning Road and Oklahoma Avenue, NE. Details: Beth Purcell, 544-0178; eap1@mindspring.com

MAY

### 4 Friday, 5:00 pm

Deadline for House Tour mail order ticket sales.

### 7 Monday, 6:30 pm

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

### 8 Tuesday, 7:00 pm

Society of Architectural Historians lecture on "Rediscovering the Eccentric in Washington Architecture." National Building Museum curator and author Martin Moeller will discuss the fascinating characters who produced a thread of eccentricity in Washington's dignified if somewhat bland architecture. Sumner School Museum, 1201 17th Street, NW. \$10 for Latrobe Society members and students; \$17 others; no reservations required. Reception at 6:30. Details: Latrobechaptersah.org or Andrew Drabkin, 277-7106, a-drabkin@nga.gov.

12 Saturday, 5:00–8:00 pm

13 Sunday, noon–5:00 pm

### Fiftieth Annual CHRS House and Garden Tour

Tickets will be available weekends beginning in mid-April at the CHRS kiosk at Eastern Market and various ticket outlets around the city. See story on page 1. Details: CHRS office, 543-0425.

### 10 Thursday, 7:30 pm

CHRS Zoning Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details: Gary Peterson, 547-7969.

### 15 Tuesday, 6:30 pm

CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second floor. Details: Dick Wolf, 543-4353.

### 24 Thursday, 10:00 am

Historic Preservation Review Board, 441 4th Street, NW (#1 Judiciary Square), Room 220 south. Details: Nancy Metzger, 545-1034.



### Capitol Hill Restoration Society

420 Tenth Street, SE  
Washington, DC 20003

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