



# NEWS

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October 2007

## News from Beyond the Boundaries

### ANC 6B Sponsors Nomination of New Barney Circle Historic District

by Donna Hanousek

At the end of September, ANC 6B nominated the Barney Circle Historic District to the DC Inventory of Historic Places. The nomination project originated with the Barney Circle Neighborhood Watch Association. A team, consisting of Beth Purcell (author) and Reuben Hameed and Antonette Russell (outreach leaders), worked for over a year to prepare the documentation and generate neighborhood support. Reuben (preservation architect) and Antonette (former ANC Commissioner for Barney Circle) moved off the Hill recently, but the Barney Circle Historic District will be a lasting legacy of their community involvement.

The CHRS Beyond the Boundaries Subcommittee provided photographic and editing support to the project. DC Preservation League (DCPL), the city-wide organization dedicated to preserving Washington's historic environment, also supported the effort. This past spring, the Barney Circle Neighborhood Watch Association and ANC Commissioner Will Hill teamed up with CHRS to nominate Hill East to the DC Preservation League's Most Endangered List. Last year, and in 2003, DCPL featured Hill East in its special Row

House Month tours. Because of DCPL, Hill East is recognized city-wide as a neighborhood worth preserving.

If accepted for local designation as an historic district by the DC Historic Preservation Review Board, the neighborhood will be able to ensure that new development and building alterations are compatible with the existing building stock,

and that the green spaces, so much a defining feature of Hill East, are not paved over. The nomination of the Barney Circle Historic District is a step toward gaining protection for the larger neighborhood.

For other news from Beyond the Boundaries, see page 6 of this issue for CHRS-sponsored Neighborhood Walking Tours beginning next month. ✧

### CHRS Fall Members Meeting Features New MPD Assistant Chief Groomes



*Councilmember Tommy Wells and Assistant Chief Groomes, May 2007.*

The Capitol Hill Restoration Society will hold its Fall Members Meeting October 30, at 7:00 pm, at St. Peters Church, Second and C Streets, SE. Former MPD First District Commander Diane Groomes will speak following a social period and a short business meeting. Assistant Chief Groomes was recently promoted as part of MPD Chief Lanier's reorganization plan. As assistant chief of patrol services and school security she will have responsibility for and direct the MPD's 2,000 patrol officers. Groomes will address particular safety issues presented by the advent of autumn and the coming holidays, as well as answer questions on community security concerns. ✧

# President's Column: What Happens After the Comprehensive Plan?

by Dick Wolf

The short answer is “nothing.” As far as the DC Government is concerned the passage of the comprehensive plan simply means that a difficult and contentious exercise has been completed and the plan can be put on the shelf: business as usual. But citizens expect changes based on the plan, including a prescribed system for implementation. We have yet to see it in connection

proposed “public/private” partnership to “sell” the Tenley Library and part of the Janney School playground in return for a new library and a re-built school. Citizens in Northwest felt that this was just the beginning of giving away many of their schools, libraries, and playgrounds to developers as happened with the Oyster School which lost its playground to the development of a large apartment house in return for a new school.

takes into account not only bottom line economics but also what economists call “public goods,” i.e., parks, schools, libraries, transportation systems and the like. As long as the city ignores a reasoned process for planning, including planning for public needs and infrastructure, citizens will continue to revolt against what they consider the secret deal—to deal off what they believe belongs to them. Colby King in his column on September 22 pointed out that the West End deal was among the worst governmental actions of the last few months. As he pointed out, citizens have a way to remediate the situation: at the ballot box.

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Until the DC Government figures out a way to plan before dealing, there will be many more citizen eruptions.

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with our Great Streets planning. But the Hill is just a side-show in citizen anger over the failure of planning in this city.

The Council—in an effort to get out of town for the summer recess—passed a series of “emergency” laws last July that included selling some government property to pre-selected developers. The most egregious of these was the sale of the West End Library to East Banc Corporation, a high-end developer in the West End and Georgetown. That sale was for the purpose of having the developer build a new library in a large development with very expensive condos, retail, and some lower-priced “work-force” housing—details to be worked out. The West End citizens and citizen organizations, already at a steady boil because of their lack of success in keeping George Washington University from taking over Foggy Bottom, just blew up over what they and many others perceived as a secret deal to give away the public’s property without any process.

This ignited protests in other parts of the city over similar pending deals: Ward 3 in regard to the

Similar concerns were evidenced in Ward 7 regarding a new Benning Road Library.

Whether or not good for the citizens, these deals are viewed as being done without any prescribed process insuring citizen input or transparent decision-making based on a reasoned judgment which

Until the DC Government figures out a way to plan before dealing, there will be many more citizen eruptions. By the way, Kwame Brown, Chair of the Council’s Committee on Economic Development, has a hearing on this subject on November 1. We will be there. Note that Mr. Brown is up for re-election next year. ✧

## New Positions, Appointments in CHRS

The President has announced several new appointments with the approval of the Board. The membership voted to amend the by-laws to add two new at-large members to the Board of Directors. A special committee chaired by Paul Cromwell interviewed candidates for those positions: two persons were recommended and the President and the Board voted to adopt their suggestion. The new Board members are Richard Luna who will serve a two-year term and Peter May who will serve a one-year term.

Further appointments by the President include Barbara

Eck as the CHRS representative to the Eastern Market Advisory Committee (EMCAC). Her alternate will be Donna Hanousek who previously served on the EMCAC but is now the chair of the special committee working on our Beyond the Boundaries initiative which has already assisted the Barney Circle neighborhood in assembling the requisite material to establish that area as an historic district. That material has just been submitted to the DC Office of Historic Preservation. Congratulations to Donna and Beth Purcell for their work on this effort. ✧

## Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS)

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

President . . . . . Dick Wolf  
1st Vice President . . . . Beth Purcell  
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At Large . . . . . Elizabeth Nelson  
At Large . . . . . Shauna Holmes  
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At Large . . . . . Peter May

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Paul Cromwell, *Budget*  
Dick Wolf, *City Planning*  
Amanda Molson, *Communications*  
Barbara Eck, *Community Development*  
Beth Purcell, *Environment*  
Larry Pearl, *Grants*  
Nancy Metzger, *Historic Preservation*  
Ann Richards, *House and Garden Tour*  
Elizabeth Nelson, *Membership*  
Tom Grahame, *Transportation*  
Gary Peterson, *Zoning*

### NEWS:

Larry Janezich, David Holmes,  
Jane Ruyle, Editors  
Roxanne Walker, design and layout

### WEBSITE:

DC Access, web hosting

### OFFICE MANAGER:

Jeff Fletcher

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

# Capitol Hill Village Ready for October 6 Formal Launch

Capitol Hill Village, the new non-profit organization serving greater Capitol Hill, will celebrate its formal launch on Saturday, October 6, 2007, 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm at Friendship House, middle of 600 block of South Carolina Avenue, SE, between Sixth and Seventh Streets, ½ block from Eastern Market Metro.

The launch event plans to be a festive one, using the outdoor gardens of the historic Friendship House to both salute those persons who have already helped to get the organization off the ground and to encourage other Hill residents to sign up to receive its benefits and programs. The public is invited to attend.

Capitol Hill Village aims to help people stay in their homes as they grow older. For an annual membership fee, members of the Village can call one phone number for access to vetted services such as plumbers, electricians, handymen, or home care workers, with follow-up phone calls to determine satisfaction with the service providers. A wide variety of educational and social activities are also offered to members to help them keep better connected to this vibrant community. Capitol Hill Village is also setting

up a subsidized program to support Hill residents who want to join the Village but can't afford the annual fee.

The Village, which came together over a year ago through the efforts of several interested Hill people, formed a board and achieved non-profit status



promptly, then conducted a successful fund-raising effort this winter and spring. That effort allowed them to hire—in

May—the organization's first Executive Director, Gail Kohn, a leader in aging services with more than 25 years experience.

Even before its formal opening, Capitol Hill Village has been able to attract dozens of local households as members as well as a significant number of generous donors. It looks to be an important actor on the Capitol Hill scene in the years to come.

For more information visit the website at: [www.capitolhillvillage.org/](http://www.capitolhillvillage.org/). You can contact Capitol Hill Village by phone at 202-543-1778 or by sending an e-mail to: [info@capitolhillvillage.org](mailto:info@capitolhillvillage.org). ✧

## Welcome CHRS Supporters

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

### NEW MEMBERS

Charles Barnett  
Kristina Isanelli &  
Jonathan Lamy  
Kaelie Kung

### PATRONS

Jennifer Boulanger &  
Bruce Schillo  
Michael Conley &  
Mark Krikstan

Albert & Margaret  
Crenshaw

Joanne Gilles &  
David Hermann  
Geoff & Terri Lewis  
Meg Maguire &  
Dale Ostrander

David Perry  
Angela Simmons  
Austin & Megan Smith

Rich Tindall &  
Michael Piziali

### SPONSORS

Rina & Renato Beghe  
Martin Carmody &  
Acee Agoyo  
Brian Biles &  
Diane Rowland



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# DDOT Hedges on Request for New Study on Projects' Cumulative Effect on Neighborhoods

## Director Meets with Neighborhood Coalition

by Barbara Eck

CHRS and other members of the Coalition of Concerned Citizens of Eastern Washington met with DDOT Director Moneme to urge that a comprehensive, mobility study be conducted for the neighborhoods along the Anacostia River. The Coalition had sent a letter to the Mayor and City Council stating the need for a new study that would take into account ALL the development projects along both sides of the river. The Coalition letter (published in the July/August 2007 *News*) identified the deficiencies in the mobility study that the city government is relying upon to make decisions about transportation, roads and bridges that will significantly impact our neighborhoods now and in the future.

The existing mobility study falls far short of providing the

comprehensive look that is needed, given the potential for the Anacostia Waterfront projects and other development, to affect the integrity and viability of our neighborhoods and the flow of commuter and other regional travel. While the study disclaims any goal of simply "moving cars," regional drivers and commuters appear to be the major beneficiaries of the "rationalized" system it evaluates. It does not show how Anacostia Waterfront projects and other transportation projects and related economic development will affect our communities.

Director Moneme and members of his senior staff listened to our criticism of the scope of the mobility study and our plea to DDOT to commission a new study prepared by consultants who are expert in the integration of urban land use and multi-modal transportation system planning. We pointed out that highway planners like those that prepared the current study, are focused on moving vehicles and we believe that the

focus should be on alternate modes of transportation and decreasing commuter traffic through our neighborhoods. We also asked for the monetary and environmental cost of various projects, the Eleventh Street Bridges in particular.

Mr. Moneme stated that the final EIS for the Eleventh Street Bridges project would be out shortly and that would answer many of our questions. He conceded that community meetings may have not always given comprehensive information and that questions of cost and impact may not have been handled adequately. He assured us that he would see that all our questions would be answered and that he would be sending us a response to our letter to the Mayor. We await his response, but the impression he left with Coalition members is that there is no need to study the effect of all the new development projects in relation to traffic and transportation, and that the various DDOT projects along the Anacostia will move ahead as planned. ✧

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## Initial 2007 CHRS Community Grant Recipients

by Larry Pearl

For the eighth consecutive year, CHRS is continuing its tradition of devoting part of the proceeds of the annual House and Garden Tour to the Capitol Hill community. The CHRS Board has approved the following grants:

### 1. School Libraries Project

A grant of \$3500 for banners for five Capitol Hill school libraries. This is part of a larger project, an initiative of the Capitol Hill Community Foundation, to create uniquely designed fully-equipped libraries in eight Capitol Hill

elementary schools. The banners will highlight the libraries at the Maury, Paine, Peabody, Tyler and Watkins Schools, all of which were renovated this summer. CHRS provided a grant last year for banners at the libraries of the Brent, Ludlow-Taylor and Stuart-Hobson Schools, all of which were renovated during the summer of 2006.

### 2. Friends of the Northeast Library (FONE)

A grant of \$2100 for new lighting in the Main Room of the Northeast Library. FONE proposes to replace the fluorescent lights in the Main Room with polished nickel pen-

dant lights, similar to the lighting in 1937 when the library opened. The grant will pay for eight compact fluorescent fixtures and their shades. This will open up the 15-foot ceilings currently encumbered by banks of fluorescent lights. The new fixtures will hold compact fluorescent bulbs for energy efficiency. Installation will be the responsibility of the DC public library system.

CHRS expects to announce additional grant recipients in the near future. ✧

# Looking Back on Capitol Hill

by Nancy Metzger

While children often use costumes from the drug stores and favorite “dress-up” clothes for their Halloween costumes, adults sometimes resort to costume shops for their make-believe finery. Before there was Back Stage on Eighth Street, SE, for costume needs, Lola Beaver had a well-known costume shop at Eighth and A streets, NE. In this 2003 interview with Renee Braden, 93-year-old Mrs. Beaver recounted how she came to the Hill, her early days in the costume business and some of her memorable customers.

**Braden:** Have you had some famous people come into the shop, to rent costumes?

**Beaver:** ... the Bobby Kennedy family... were always having something, you know, benefits and so forth. They got a lot of stuff from me. Then around that time, the Women’s Democratic Club had a big show, they did the Arena Stage, and I did costumes for that, and they had somebody representing all the Democratic Presidents’ wives, all the way back. Margaret

Truman represented her family. And we made a 1940s—a very good-looking ‘40s dress for her, very good looking—the hat and the brim and so forth. She said she’d never had anything like that when she was in the White House. And it was true—she did not dress that well! The rest were senators’ wives, senators’ or congressmen’s wives, who represented the different Presidents’ wives...

The Johnson girls did a lot of—got a lot of costumes from me. They had parties a lot. They dressed up the band, they dressed up themselves, and everything, you know, a lot. And then—my main claim to fame is that I made neckties for President Johnson. ... It was when blue tuxedos just came in style. They hadn’t had blue tuxedos. And, of course, he had one but he couldn’t find a bow tie. They frantically looked all over the United States, and they couldn’t find a blue bow tie. So one day a man came in my shop on K Street [just before she moved to Capitol Hill in 1972] and said, “Do you make bow ties?” And I said, ‘Yeah, I guess so.’ And he said, ‘Could you make about four or five of them?’ And I said,

‘What is it, a singing group?’ And he said [whispering], ‘No, it’s for the President.’ And I said [loudly], ‘The President of what?’ And he said [whispering], ‘The President of the United States.’ So I almost had a nervous breakdown, you know, making those ties, but I made them. He brought a tie like the one he liked, it was black, a wide tie, like a butterfly thing. It was in style then, in black. I took it apart and used it for a pattern. I got plenty of material because I was going to have it perfect or not at all. I worked one whole weekend, and I was exhausted. He came to pick them up, asked me how much, and I said, ‘There isn’t enough money in the world to pay for this, so I’m not going to charge him.’ And I said it was an honor, anyway, to make something for the president. So then, a little while later, he comes back with a signed picture. And then, later on in the fall, he sends me a pen, one of the pens he signed treaties with. I thought it was very nice.”

The complete transcript of this and other interviews can be read on the Ruth Ann Overbeck Oral History website, [www.capitolhill-history.org/](http://www.capitolhill-history.org/). ✧

## DDOT City Map Updated

### Newest Version of Citywide Map Includes new Landmarks

DDOT has released an updated version of its new citywide map, “Washington, DC: The American Experience.”

The map was produced using Geographic Information Systems technology. The reverse side provides detailed bus and snow emergency routes and other information such as a map of the city’s bikeways, a map of the DC

Circulator bus line and a centralized map of DC’s public transportation network—Metrorail and Metro bus. It includes a mini-map of the city’s car sharing locations in partnership with Flexcar and Zipcar.

The map includes new features such as the addition of new landmarks and named alleys. For a copy of the new map, stop by DDOT’s headquarters at the Reeves Center, fourteenth and U Streets, NW, Fifth floor. A PDF version can be downloaded at <http://ddot.dc.gov/>. ✧



*Time to update again... Reservation 13 in Hill East is labeled as "National Capitol Medical Center (site)."*

# Zoning Demystified at September Café

by Shauna Holmes

At CHRS's September 19 Preservation Café, CHRS Zoning Committee Chairman Gary Peterson provided basic information about zoning designations and such technical aspects of zoning as special exceptions, variances, lot occupancy, and Planned Unit Developments (PUDs). Handouts citing brief excerpts from zoning regulations made it easy for the audience to follow along as Gary used humor, diagrams, and plain language to demystify zoning and make the arcane clear.

For example, in residential areas zoned R-4, one of the most common designations on Capitol Hill, structures are typically allowed to occupy up to 60 percent of a single lot. Anything with a roof—including sheds, carports, garages, and porches—counts toward lot occupancy, as can small courts under certain conditions. Special exceptions can be granted, however, if they're in harmony with the intent and purpose of the zoning regulations and don't have an adverse effect on the neighbors' use of their property. Gary said these can be fairly easy to get when a property owner has letters from owners of neighboring properties expressing support for a proposed plan.

A zoning variance, which was described as sort of an "escape valve," is harder to get. Variances are usually sought when owners claim an "extraordinary or exceptional situation or condition" applies to their property or assert that strict application of a zoning regulation could cause them "exceptional and undue hardship." An area variance requires more weight to get than a special exception, and a use variance, which would change or add to a property's use, needs the most weight of all to get.

Gary's description of how Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) work was very helpful and timely, since we are seeing more and more of these developments proposed or underway in the Capitol Hill vicinity. A PUD enables a developer to work with a larger site and create something that benefits both the developer and the community. In exchange for providing specified, negotiated benefits for the immediate community, PUD developers can gain increased building height and den-

sity beyond what would otherwise be allowed.

The District of Columbia is embarking on a process of reviewing zoning designations throughout the city, as well as reviewing and revising the zoning regulations. The process is expected to take about 18 months, although given its scope and complexity, it could take longer.

CHRS thanks Ebenezer's Coffee House for generously making its community room available for Preservation Cafés. ✧

## October Preservation Café: "Restoring Eastern Market"



The Capitol Hill Restoration Society's October 17 Preservation Café, "Restoring Eastern Market," will bring architect Tina Roach to Capitol Hill to describe damage caused by the April 30 fire, explain how the Market fabric is being stabilized and protected while work is conducted, and outline plans for the Market's restoration. Ms. Roach works for Quinn Evans Architects, which is designing the restoration for the DC Office of Property Management.

"Restoring Eastern Market" will be held in Eastern Market's North Hall on Wednesday, October 17, from 6:30–7:15 pm. ✧

## CHRS Offers Row House Walking Tours

As part of the CHRS Beyond the Boundaries Program, Beth Purcell, Donna Hanousek and Elizabeth Nelson are offering free walking tours tailored to neighbors' interest. Each 1-2 hour tour will focus on a few square blocks and present information about the architectural styles and building materials of the homes, their builders, and date of construction. The first of these will begin in the triangle between the 1400 block of North Carolina

Avenue and Constitution Avenue, NE, on October 20 and will focus on homes within a block or two of that location. We hope this will increase interest in and appreciation of the historic qualities of our neighborhoods—and encourage the residents to preserve them.

For more information or to suggest a neighborhood contact, call 202-543-3512 or email Elizabeth\_knits@yahoo.com with "CHRS Tour" as the subject. ✧



# Shakespeare Building Originally Odd Fellows Hall

by Amanda Murphy

Anyone strolling along Barracks Row must have noticed the administrative offices of the Shakespeare Theatre at 516 Eighth Street, SE. While we admire this grand building for its unique architecture, many do not know that the history of this local gem is related to the Washington Monument and a nineteenth century fraternal society.

The building was completed in 1878 as a meeting hall for the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. A group of "laboring men" of "odd" trades, the Odd Fellows' primary purpose was to help one another through hard times in life. Each member paid monthly dues which collectively were used to provide funds to other members in the event of illness, unemployment, or some other tragic event that kept them from working. The Odd Fellows also gathered for social occasions, and contributed time and money to many charities including the Naval Hospital at Ninth and Pennsylvania Avenue, SE.

The Odd Fellows hall on Eighth Street, SE, was constructed for Harmony Lodge no. 9 on the site of their former home since 1854. It was the only DC Odd Fellows building originally designed and constructed in the Second Empire style. The Odd Fellows were acutely aware of the era's popular architectural styles, and felt that attractive and modern halls built in nice communities would draw upstanding gentlemen to their society.

On the building's dedication day, October 2, 1878, a *Washington Post* article mentions the lead carpenter and contractor—P.H. McLaughlin. At the same time he was working on the Eighth Street hall, McLaughlin was superintendent in charge of the day-to-day construction of the Washington Monument from 1877 until the monument's dedication



516 Eighth Street, SE, built in 1878 as an Odd Fellows meeting hall, served as a meat market, shoe repair shop and pool room in more recent times. Photo: Larry Janeczich

on December 6, 1884. On this day, McLaughlin personally released the rigger which placed the pyramidion atop the Monument. For the rest of his life, he was known across the country as "Monument McLaughlin" and was lauded in the press as the man responsible for the completion of the Washington Monument.

Between 1880 and 1920, Harmony Lodge boasted the largest Odd Fellows membership in the city. Yet in 1902, they sold the Eighth Street Hall and began meeting at 209 Pennsylvania Avenue,

SE. In the 1970's Harmony Lodge folded into another lodge and moved downtown.

Over the years the Eighth Street building changed hands many times, and was the home of a department store, meat market, shoe repair, auto supply store, and pool room. In the early 1990's, after years of neglect, the building stood as a vacant ghostly shell until the Shakespeare Theatre purchased and meticulously restored it in 1997. Today, 516 Eighth Street is the oldest remaining building constructed for the Odd Fellows in DC. ✧

# School Chancellor Rhee Addresses CHRS Forum

by Barbara Eck

Chancellor Michelle Rhee addressed the CHRS Forum at Maury School in Northeast on September 25. She spoke of her vision for the schools as well as how heartened she is with the progress being made in repairing the physical plant, setting measurable standards for teachers and staff as well as students, and insuring that all the plans are put into practice.

She had high praise for Mayor Fenty's commitment to the schools and his willingness to place every possible resource into making the schools successful. The Mayor is the only person who can say "no" to any change she proposes. However, the Mayor also demands accountability and she and her staff are continuing to refine the systems by which they can implement change and measure effectiveness. She emphasized the importance of evaluating schools and staff based on criteria known to all stakeholders, including parents and the wider community.

Under her administration the school principals are being given control over many areas that have previously been the purview of the central administration. She pointed out that it isn't "rocket science" to get employees paid on time and toilets repaired. Many times parents fault a principal whom they believe to be "in charge" when he/she is even more frustrated than they are because central administration doesn't respond to their need.

Ms. Rhee was asked if she was part of a taskforce convened by the Public Charter School Board to look at "future charter school growth" in view of the fact that "32 percent of the DCPS budget is spent on charter schools." She stated that she had contacted the Board and intended to be part of the discussion.



Rhee visits with children after addressing the CHRS Forum at Maury School.  
Photo: Elizabeth Nelson

She responded to many questions from the large audience of parents and some young Maury students with clarity and forcefulness, emphasizing the importance of measurable goals and standards,

hiring good teachers and administrators well in advance of school opening, and insuring that every student receives the guidance and assistance that he/she needs to succeed academically. ✧

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## The Hill on Film

by Mike Canning

*(Continuing our regular series about how Hollywood movies have treated elements of Capitol Hill. CHRS board member Canning writes movie reviews for the Hill Rag.)*

This month, the world of Hollywood invaded Capitol Hill—at least for a day. A major studio action-thriller, *Pack of Lies*, took over Eastern Market on September 5 with A-list director Ridley Scott on hand to film a car explosion (which was supposed to take place in Amsterdam!). Set-up and take-down for this one sequence, involving tons of gear, 15–20 trucks of all sizes, a cafeteria tent, dozens of techs and extras and hangers-on, basically took a whole day, all leading up to the Big Shot of the Big Bang. With none of the stars on hand for this loca-

tion (the film's leads are Russell Crowe and Leonardo DiCaprio) and no serious dialogue recorded, my guess is that the entire shoot will probably contribute less than a minute to the film's running time.

It has always been thus with major studio pictures: inordinate prep on location shoots for sometimes mere wisps of screen time. Capitol Hill has been witness to a number of them, and I recall a few.

Take the Goldie Hawn vehicle *Protocol* (1984), a comedy about a waitress who blunders her way into the State Department's protocol office. The filmmakers used a Capitol Hill house on Ninth Street, NE, to stand in for Goldie's residence, and took most of a day to film her being delivered to that house in a service station truck. That day's shooting resulted in

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# Zoning Report

by Gary Peterson

The Capitol Hill Restoration Society Zoning Committee considered one case at its September 6, 2007, meeting. The case involves the application of Jamal Kadri for a special exception from the lot width and lot area requirements and a use variance to allow the construction of a two-story accessory private garage with second story living quarters for a domestic employee (au pair suite), in an R-4 District at 654 Independence Avenue, S.E. The applicant and his architect, Stephen duPont, Jr., appeared at the meeting and one neighbor in support of the application also appeared. The committee, after considering all the evidence presented by the applicant and the neighbor voted, 4-1-1, to oppose the application because the application does not meet the requirements for a use variance.

The applicant's property is a regular shaped lot, 14 feet wide by 88.33 feet deep containing 1,237 square feet. The lot does not comply with the lot width and square footage requirements for R-4. The lot is small but not unique for Capitol Hill. In fact, the lots on either side, 652 and 656, have similar measurements and lots at 600 through 606 Independence

Avenue are smaller. The structure on the property has a 37 percent lot occupancy and the applicant wants to increase this to 64 percent by adding the accessory building. This property was considered previously by the BZA in Application No. 16975. In that case a previous owner wanted to add to the rear of the house and increase the lot occupancy to 70 percent. The Board approved the application by summary order. The instant application is different in that the applicant proposes no addition to the house and wants to build a 2-story accessory building instead.

For the BZA to grant variances the applicant must show an exceptional condition or uniqueness of the property, practical difficulties or exceptional and undue hardship upon the owner in complying with the zoning regulations arising out of the uniqueness, and no detriment to the public good or impairment of the zone plan. First and most significantly, the lot is not unique for the purpose of obtaining a zoning variance. The lot and house next door at 652 are nearly identical in size and age. The critical point is missing here and that point is that "... the extraordinary or exceptional condition must affect a single property."

Capitol Hill Restoration Society v. District of Columbia Bd. of Zoning Adjustment, 534 A.2d 939, 942. Even if one concedes that there is an exceptional condition on the property, the applicant does not make the more difficult showing of "undue hardship," which applies to use variances.

The applicant purchased the property in February of 2006 knowing about the February 2003 BZA and Historic Preservation Office approval of the addition to the house. The applicant can expand his house without the variance relief asked for here. As a practical matter, the applicant has no difficulty in complying in all ways with the zoning regulations without a variance, and can put the property to sufficient economic use. In addition, the CHRS Zoning Committee believes that granting this application would undermine the R-4 zoning on Capitol Hill.

Subsequent to the Zoning Committee's ruling, the applicant hired an attorney and asked for a continuance of the September 25 hearing date. The applicant proposes to present a new, improved case to the Committee at a later date. The next Zoning Committee meeting will be November 8 at 7:30 pm. ✧

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## The Hill on Film *continued from previous page*

about 10 to 15 seconds of on-screen time.

Or there was the late-night shoot more than ten years ago for Barry Levinson's *Wag the Dog* (1997) which involved an elaborate set-up of tied-up sneakers being tossed on to tree limbs and telephone wires along East Capitol. Even co-stars Robert DeNiro and Dustin Hoffman participated in this ritual, whose principal purpose seemed to be to show a glowing white Capitol dome as a backdrop to the shoes. Running time

of this sequence was probably less than 20 seconds.

And then there was, just last year, again on East Capitol Street, SE, a day-long project which involved Matt Damon—playing a rising CIA operative in *The Good Shepherd*—taking out a box of laundered shirts from the Capitol Hill Valet on that street. Those who witnessed this complicated set-up, directed by Robert DeNiro, saw an operation of at least ten hours which closed off three or four streets while littering them with

period vehicles, peopled the scenes with a clot of extras, then shot multiple sequences around the neighborhood of Fifth and East Capitol using multiple takes. A considerable effort. Result: perhaps two to three seconds of Damon striding out of the shop—nothing else...

Out in LA, they call it the "film industry." As industries go, Hollywood movie-making has to be the least efficient industry on the planet. No wonder the average cost of a mainstream flick averages \$65-70 million these days. Hey, that must mean some really good catering! ✧

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# Mark Your Calendar!

## OCTOBER

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### 1 Monday, 6:30 pm

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

### 3 Wednesday, 7:30 – 8:30 am

Walk to School Day. CHRS will pass out pencils to children in Lincoln Park. Details: Elizabeth Nelson, 202-543-3512.

### 6 Saturday, 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Capitol Hill Village, the new non-profit organization serving greater Capitol Hill, will celebrate its formal launch. Friendship House, middle of 600 block of South Carolina Avenue, SE, between Sixth and Seventh Streets, ½ block from Eastern Market Metro. See page 3.

### 16 Tuesday, 6:30 pm

CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second floor. Details: Dick Wolf, 202-543-4353.

### 17 Wednesday, 6:30 pm

CHRS Preservation Café: "Restoration of the Eastern Market." Tina Roach of Quinn Evans architects will discuss plans, progress, challenges, and costs of the ongoing Eastern Market restoration project. Location: Eastern Market North Hall. Event is free and open to the public, no reservations required. Details: Shauna Holmes, 202-546-5211. See page 6.

### 25 Thursday, 10:00 am

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

### 30 Tuesday, 7:30 pm

CHRS Community Forum: "Crime Trends on Capitol Hill," with featured speaker Diane Groomes, former 1D police commander and now assistant chief of patrol services and school security. St. Peter's Church basement hall, 2nd & C Streets, SE. Meeting is free and open to the public, no reservations required. Refreshments at 7:00 pm, CHRS business at 7:30 pm, speaker at 7:45 pm. Details: Rob Nevitt, 202-546-4293. See page 1.

## NOVEMBER

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### 5 Monday, 6:30 pm

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

### 8 Thursday, 7:30 pm

CHRS Zoning Committee (tentative), Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details: Gary Peterson, 202-547-7969. See page 9.

### 15 Thursday, 10:00 am

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

## Satellite TV Dishes Blighting Your Block?

Anything over 12 inches requires a permit. Dishes are not supposed to be attached to a front or side elevation where they will be visible, though they are permitted on the rear elevation and roof. Dish installation requires a permit and those that are attached on the front or side without a permit posted should be reported to the Office of Historic Preservation at 202-442-8800.

### 20 Tuesday, 6:30 pm

CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second floor. Details: Dick Wolf, 202-543-4353.

### 21 Wednesday, 6:30 pm

CHRS Preservation Café: Topic TBA. Ebenezer's Coffee House, 201 F Street, NE, basement level (wheelchair accessible). Event is free and open to the public, no reservations required. Details: Shauna Holmes, 202-546-5211.



### Capitol Hill Restoration Society

420 Tenth Street, SE  
Washington, DC 20003

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