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Capitol Hill Mayor's Agent Case Raises New Preservation Concerns

by Nancy Metzger

In July 2008, the Heritage Foundation submitted conceptual plans to the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) and the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) to add a third-floor addition to an 1886 Italianate building at 227 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, in addition to restoration work on the historic façade and constructing new basement and rear additions. Two different designs were offered, one traditional based on a mansard roof concept, and one contemporary that featured a take-off on the brick design pattern executed in stainless steel. Both addition designs were positioned very close to the front

façade of the historic building. CHRS opposed the addition, noting the building's own distinctive façade design as well as those of the neighboring buildings (both three stories high) and the intact nature of the entire row of historic buildings on this block. The Historic Preservation Office's (HPO) staff report recommended a setback to minimize the impact of the addition and, in a split vote, the HPRB did not support an addition at the front of the building, although it was divided on the specific amount of setback. Some members opposed any addition, while others supported either design.

The Heritage Foundation returned to the HPRB in September 2008 with permit plans for either the traditional or contemporary version of the addition, both positioned very close to the front façade. At the September hearing, the Board declined to recommend either design option and recommended a 25' setback of the addition. The Heritage Foundation filed an appeal with the Mayor's Agent, and Harriet

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Historic Photos of Capitol Hill at CHRS December Forum

On Monday, December 7 at 6:30 pm, there will be a CHRS Community Forum about Historic Photos of Capitol Hill. The Historical Society of Washington, DC has a vast treasury of Capitol Hill photos. Colleen McKnight, Special Collections Librarian with the Kiplinger Research Library, and local historian Cindy Janke will share these with us on December 7. Come see historic photos showing Capitol Hill by air and our life in the past—street scenes, schools, churches, and businesses. This is a chance to view vanished buildings that many of us have never seen—St. Cyprian's Church, old Payne School, Providence Hospital, and scenes from Rosedale. It will be fascinating. Don't miss it. The Forum will be held at St. Peter's Church, 2nd & C Streets, SE.

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President's Column: Some Are More Equal Than Others

by Beth Purcell

Three strong development teams competed for the Hine School site. CHRS believed that Stanton Development/EastBanc had the best proposal. Stanton/East Banc was selected, and we congratulate them. We look forward to working with the community, DC government, and Stanton/EastBanc as the process goes forward. This is very good news.

On the other hand, several strong development teams are also competing for the right to develop Reservation 13/Hill East Waterfront. The Hill East Waterfront offers 67 acres, river views, and its own MetroRail stop. CHRS and many others believe that Hunt Development Group offers the best proposal. The Office of Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (ODMPED) promised that a master developer would be selected in spring 2009. Nothing has happened.

The selection of a master developer would be the most recent step in a long process that

began in 2002. The community has invested many hours over many years in planning for the Hill East Waterfront, leading to the Council's adoption of a Master Plan. This developer competition began earlier than Hine School—the proposals from developers were submitted in October 2008, and public comments in January 2009, months before the Hine School comment period even started. The final zoning for the Hill East Waterfront has been approved—everything is ready to go. Yet, no master developer has been selected. Not only is progress on building residential and retail delayed, having no master developer prolongs the threat to the community that a Hill East Waterfront plan might represent. In the past, several controversial uses have been suggested, including a 200+ bed pre-trial halfway house and a biological weapons research facility. Although neither of these is currently proposed, Hill East Waterfront remains “free” land that DC can use for any number of municipal

uses, some of which would not be welcomed in most neighborhoods. A master developer will build the residences and retail that people want and fend off controversial projects.

This may be one reason for the delay in selecting a master developer: The federal government, not DC government, owns the Hill East Waterfront. Under the 2006 Federal legislation, DC government will get title, but first DC must find up to 12 acres for a Congressional mail-sorting facility acceptable to the Architect of the Capitol. ODMPED has been asked about getting title at every public meeting since 2007. ODMPED employees have repeatedly told the community that DC government will “soon” satisfy this requirement and get title. It's been three years, and there is still no progress on this key question. This is a total failure by city government. The city must act quickly and obtain title to the Hill East Waterfront and then expeditiously select a master developer. ★

Community-backed Developer Wins Hine Site

The Stanton/Eastbanc (Stanton) development team has been selected to redevelop the former Hine Junior High School site. The Stanton team was supported by the Capitol Hill Restoration Society, Stanton Park Neighborhood Association, Eastern Market Citizens Advisory Commission, and the Market Row Association. (See the July issue for details of the CHRS support of the Stanton proposal.) Stanton's proposal for the 3.5 acre site calls for about 510,000 square feet of total development at the site. The

development will include more than 200,000 square feet of office space, 150 apartments, 60,000 square feet of neighborhood-serving retail, and 300+ parking spaces.

Stanton and the city now need to negotiate a lease for the property. Stanton will then have to have the site rezoned from residential to commercial using the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process, and the plans will have to be approved by the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB). The community will have opportunities to influence the

development in both the PUD and HPRB processes. Construction is estimated to begin in 2011 and to take 18 months to 2 years to complete.

There will be a lot of construction going on in the Eastern Market area. In the next two years, the Eastern Market Metro Plaza will be redone, and the Old Naval Hospital will be restored as a community center. Along with the newly restored Eastern Market, the additional construction will transform the Eastern Market area into a hub of community activity. ★

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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.

To start or renew a CHRS membership:

- ★ On the web at www.CHRS.org
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Starting at just \$25 per year for a single membership, it's a great deal.

"What Style Is It?" Answered by September Preservation Café

by Shauna Holmes

Architect Bruce Wentworth gave a compelling and informative presentation at CHRS's September 16 Preservation Café about architectural styles on Capitol Hill. A noted remodeling architect who has worked in the Washington area over 20 years, including numerous jobs on the Hill, Mr. Wentworth's illustrated talk focused on the Italianate, Federal, Queen Anne, Second Empire, Richardsonian Romanesque, Greek Revival, and Stick styles. He also provided a brochure created for this occasion about *The Historic, Residential, Architectural Styles of Greater Washington, DC* that was specially tailored for our Capitol Hill audience. For those with questions, he can be reached through his two websites: www.wentworthstudio.com and www.askthearchitect.org.

The evening's journey through architectural styles began with the story of an 1872 flat-front Italianate rowhouse Mr. Wentworth bought near Eastern Market in 1980 with the intention of remodeling it to be hip and modern. After removing asbestos shingles to find original 6" cedar clapboards and the "ghosting" of former windows and window hoods, he began researching the house's history, style, and character-defining architectural features and read Nancy Metzger's *Brick Walls and Iron Fences*. As he learned about its Italianate style and became emotionally attached to the house and its inherent dignity, it became the first remodeling job in which he restored a historic house to its original appearance, including replicating and replacing missing brackets, window and door hoods, pilasters, dentils, and more. Through this experience, in which

increased knowledge built respect for the house and its character, remodeling and restoring historic houses became the focus of his career.

The simple balloon framing of Mr. Wentworth's house was a cost-effective style to build during the 1840–1885 period. Its Italianate design was popular in Washington, and there are many examples and variations on Capitol Hill, some flat-fronted and some with bays. Brick and wood clapboard were the most common building materials. Typical Italianate rowhouses have wide projecting cornices with heavy decorative brackets, as well as richly ornamented windows and doorways that often have projecting wood or iron hoods.

The Federal, or Adam, style was popular earlier, mainly from 1780–1820, though it continued to be built until around 1840. Federal rowhouses have distinctive but relatively simple cornices, often with dentils, and double-hung windows that are symmetrically aligned. While Federal homes are fairly understated, the front doorways are usually their most decorative features, often topped by semi-circular fanlights within an elaborate door surround that incorporates a pediment and flanking pilasters. The 1795 Friendship House on South Carolina Avenue is a good example on the Hill.

Queen Anne is another common style on Capitol Hill, characterized by pointed towers shaped like witches' hats and topped by finials, gable details, brackets, dentils, decorative shingles and friezes, columns, and corbelled brick detailing. Its peak

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Historic Preservation Briefs

Historic Homeowners Grants: The Good and the Disappointing

The city's exciting Historic Homeowners Grants Program so far has funded over \$1.5 million in rehabilitation in historic districts. Over 250 new grant applications from the 12 eligible historic districts have been received, according to an article in the summer issue of *Landmarks*, the Historic Preservation Office's newsletter, which can be found on its website. However, given the District's budget shortfall, the program was essentially frozen earlier this summer to the grants already committed (approximately \$350,000 for the FY 2010 cycle). That was disappointing, as many new applications had been received. When the program resumes, recipients will be glad to know that the IRS recently ruled the grant funds non-taxable, making all funds payable to recipients.

Renovations Planned for Historic Engine House and Police Station

Concept plans for the renovation of the landmark Engine House #10 at 1341 Maryland Avenue, NE, and the old Police Station at 525 Ninth Street, NE, have been submitted to the Historic Preservation Review Board for approval. The cases were on the September Review Board Consent calendar. Both buildings would be converted to residential use by the Argos Group, which was selected by the city to acquire and rehabilitate the buildings. (There will be four units in the Engine House and five in the Police Station; both will include two affordable units.) The facades will largely be restored, guided by historic photos, and much of the paving on the two sites removed and landscaping installed. The new owners will be working with the Historic Preservation Office staff to further refine the concept plans, particularly in regards to fenestration and landscaping.

Review of Marine Security Upgrades Postponed

The review by the Historic Preservation Review Board of proposed security upgrades in the public space at the Marine Commandant's House, 801 G Street, SE, has been postponed to allow the Marines and their architect, David Bell Associates, to address concerns brought by the immediate neighbors at a neighborhood meeting in late September.

CHRS's Historic Preservation Committee had reviewed the plans and made some specific suggestions regarding the proposals, which centered on bollards, a 5'-tall fence directly in front of the Commandant's House, moving the historic fence to the farther ends of the public space, extending the front garden towards 8th and 9th Streets, guard posts, and two large planters. In addition the committee, in its report to the Historic Preservation Office staff and applicants, said:

"The committee recognizes that the present Commandant and his wife have been enthusiastic supporters of the neighborhood, its merchants, and its traditions. We appreciate greatly their personal involvement in the neighborhood as well as the contributions of other officers, musicians, and enlisted men and women.

"Part of the difficulty in assessing this proposal is that we have no real information about realistic security threats or an assessment of what these proposals would accomplish, even though some members of the committee have worked with security issues. In addition, the Environmental Assessment Report is still only in draft form and is being reviewed.

"The security upgrades proposed for the Marine Commandant's House would mark a new chapter in the

Engine House #10 at 1341 Maryland Avenue, NE.



PHOTO: DAVID HOLMES

relationship between this historic post and its surrounding neighborhood. For over 200 years the House has addressed its neighbors in much the same way as the surrounding residential homes address their more famous neighbor—a front door, steps, a modest front garden, and low-scale fence at the sidewalk. Even when the house was greatly expanded early in the 20th century, its presence on the street maintained the typical neighborhood pattern. It is probably one of the few—if not the only—commanding officer’s house of the US military services that is not totally enclosed within the surrounding walls of the post. This neighborhood commonality has been a hallmark of this section of Capitol Hill, whatever annoyances the civilians and the military have otherwise inflicted on each other. The security features proposed, while presumably providing some measure of protection for the House and its occupants against potential dangers, would begin to wall off the neighborhood and alter the historic commonality. The committee is deeply troubled by this change.”

New Window Standards Released in Draft Format

As just about anyone involved in historic preservation at the neighborhood level can attest, there is often controversy swirling about window replacement. The Historic Preservation Office has released draft window standards for public comment. There is emphasis on repair first, and retention of historic material where possible. When replacement is necessary, emphasis is on how close it looks to the original/historic window. An important change is that some materials other than wood may be approved if the appearance closely matches. (The standards say, “Matching the original material of historic windows is

strongly encouraged. Alternative materials may be approved if they can convincingly replicate the appearance of the historic window and are appreciably undistinguishable from the original material.”) This lets open the door for some of the newer materials (Fibrex®, for example) and others yet to be discovered, while keeping the emphasis on how the proposed new window would function visually as a replacement for historic windows. As with the present windows standard, there is a less stringent materials requirement for windows in the rear or non-primary facades. This first draft, available through the Historic Preservation Office website, is scheduled for comment at the October 22 Board meeting. In addition, comments can be sent in writing to the Historic Preservation Office, 2000 14th Street, NW, Fourth Floor, Washington, DC 20009.

Regulations for Historic Landmark and Historic District Designations

A final draft of new regulations for designating historic districts and historic landmarks has been published, and the Historic Preservation Review Board will be taking comments at the October 22 meeting. These regulations have changed in important ways since the public participation issue was discussed last year at the Chel-Bowser Bill legislative hearing, where CHRS and many historic preservation organizations testified about the importance of public participation in the process but also suggested changes in the legislation that would have impacted the designation procedure.

Several key points in the regulations are:

All property owners will be notified of pending designation, and owners have the right to submit a statement to the Board before the

hearing stating their objections or their support.

It would require a majority of owners expressing their opposition in written form to block a nomination. They could testify at a hearing, but the HPO staff would tally the written comments. If the Board feels that there is not broad community support, particularly as indicated by the written comments, then there’s a waiting period of 12 months before a nomination can be reconsidered. (The regs explicitly say the applicant doesn’t have to demonstrate universal support or support from those declining to register an opinion.)

Although the regulations say listings in the DC Inventory can be amended or revoked, it also says properties may be removed only if they no longer meet the criteria for designation.

There is a section that requires draft historic district guidelines for each individual historic district that must be distributed before a determination is made by the Board.

In addition, there is a section that states the Board, Mayor’s Agent, and staff may use the Comprehensive Plan and the Historic Preservation Plan for “additional guidance on the listing of properties in the DC Inventory and on the review of construction affecting historic landmarks and historic districts.”

The complete regulations, showing corrections, can be accessed through the HPO website. Comments on the proposed regulation should be submitted, in writing, to Tersh Boasberg, Chairman, Historic Preservation Review Board, 2000 14th Street, NW, Fourth Floor, Washington, DC 20009. ★

Tregoning, director of the Office of Planning who acted as Mayor's Agent (MA), heard the case in early December 2008.

In her decision released September 4, 2009, the MA ruled that the application for a building permit using either design could be cleared for purposes of historic preservation review. CHRS is weighing the possibility of appeal.

Beyond the immediate outcome of this ruling that will compromise the visual integrity of this building and row, the MA decision also included several other points of interest to the preservation community.

First, the good before the bad

A very good holding was the rejection by the Mayor's Agent of the Applicant's assertion that the building envelope created by the Capitol Hill Commercial Overlay District controls the character (height and density) of the Capitol Hill Historic District. The explanatory footnote said that "Zoning only establishes restrictions that can be further limited by other laws." This is a clear statement that may be useful in deflecting over-size development in historic districts that have zoning envelopes larger than the housing stock.

Another positive holding was the MA saying that "compatibility" should be considered in terms of a particular building in a particular block, rather than the historic district as a whole. This is important because there was a very troubling recent MA case in Georgetown that said that "compatibility" should be considered in the context of the entire historic district. That case involved a three-story building that the MA allowed in a block of two-story buildings, because there were three-story buildings elsewhere in the historic district. However, in spite of the compatibility statement, the MA

then, in my opinion, proceeded in the Heritage Foundation case to ignore the most distinctive character-defining feature of the building in question and looked chiefly at the relative height of cornice lines in the block. As one architectural historian pointed out, "The second story retains its original brick and terra cotta ornamentation, arched window openings and deep corbelled cornice. The composition created by the projecting pilaster-like side elements and the heavy cornice at the top of the second story is one that is emphatically complete. This building does not require enhancing. A third story, whether a faux Victorian addition with mansard and porch or a stripped-down modern addition utilizing stainless steel panels, would not add to the already complete and handsome original design, but rather would detract from it and create a confusing new entity." My lesson from this is that a good principle doesn't necessarily lead to a good result.

Then there are the serious problems . . .

The MA basically said that HPRB review could be cut out of the equation, noting that HPRB review is not required when CFA has jurisdiction (which is essentially when a building faces or abuts Federal property). Our basic law does require a review by HPRB or CFA (in areas where CFA has jurisdiction), but the practice has always been dual review because the CFA is concerned only about whether a proposed alteration/construction has a negative impact on Federal property/interest, while the HPRB is more directly focused on historic preservation issues such as compatibility. It is difficult to believe that the Council and Mayor truly think that a sculptor from North Dakota or a painter from Hawaii or the other CFA members from around the country appointed by a president should be the only

ones recommending actions that affect the Capitol Hill Historic District and other historic district properties that abut federal lands and buildings. It seems absurd on the face of it. But the end result because of this ruling, for the time being, is that CFA's determination of negative impact (or not) may be the only recommendation considered for the foreseeable future; if both entities review a project, and there is a difference of opinion between the two, all an applicant has to do is ask for a MA hearing—and the HPRB's recommendation might once again be ignored.

Another footnote packed a big wallop—this time against the efficaciousness of the current HPRB/HPO Guidelines and information materials that attempt to bring some order to the multi-faceted permit system and help applicants understand why some projects receive HPRB approval and others do not. The particular publication that we cited, like many of the Guidelines, had never been formally adopted by the Board, although they are based on past Board decisions and guidance. The Mayor's Agent declared all HPRB Guidelines, as presently written, essentially worthless in helping to determine such issues as "compatibility", which is the essence of most HPRB alteration and construction decisions. No particular type of alteration or construction can be prohibited beforehand, because the Act does not prohibit any particular alteration or type of construction. Guidelines and other publications will need to be framed in such a way that says these practices (no visible addition or whatever) would be likely or unlikely to lead to a finding of "compatibility", depending on the particular circumstances of each building/block/historic district. The whole HPRB/HPO Guideline series may well have to be recast and then put through the formal process of

draft public comment, public hearing, formal Board adoption, etc.—an enormous undertaking. Until we learn more, the HPO staff, Board, and neighborhood organizations are going to have to be very careful in the discussion of these cases and always be very precise as to the unique set of circumstances.

If we take the MA at her word when she said "...while past Mayor's Agent decisions reviewing similar additions are useful resources, they cannot predict or dictate the outcome of a particular application", such a position would seem to fly in the face of an orderly administrative system of predictability and precedent. But somehow we will have to find ways to protect the next building, rather than just assume any visible addition will win clearance. Deconstructing her reasoning, she states that (1) both designs "relate to and are compatible with the scale of the building" (I guess that means it's about the same size as the other floors); (2) "both consider the width of Pennsylvania Avenue, SE" (I haven't a clue what that means, but maybe it's about Pennsylvania and Independence Avenues being so wide at this point that a roof-top addition can't be completely hidden. Perhaps we'll have a better chance with the streets that aren't so wide); and (3) "neither design alters the character-defining features of the façade or surrounding buildings" (a true statement in the limited physical sense that nothing will be removed, but completely overlooking the diminution of importance to the surrounding buildings and to the design of the subject building, which for most people alters the features. Roof-top additions on Italianates wouldn't usually physically destroy something, but maybe that line of reasoning will help our pitched-roof buildings).

The most important statement, however, may well be her inclusion of the concept of Capitol Hill's saw-tooth

rooflines and explicit statement that after the addition, this building will still remain lower than its neighbors and that a saw-tooth pattern will be retained. So maybe we won't be forced to accept a pop-up on a building surrounded by similar height buildings. The letters of the experts, who pointed out the characteristics of this particular building that would be harmed by either addition and the building's contribution to this particular block, were not even mentioned, and she simply dismisses all our similar arguments with the statement that she disagrees and cites the above as reasons.

I can only foresee a continuing ordeal of cases where we have to prepare/present before the HPRB and then prepare all over again for a contested MA hearing, particularly in cases involving the CFA. Lawyers are no doubt cheering at the prospect of more appeals; neighborhoods will be overwhelmed in this marathon, as with each case there will be a fresh, well-heeled "opponent". Furthermore, historic preservation basically has no sure advocate at this level, because the Office of the Attorney General is advising the non-professional Mayor's Agent (instead of, as before Ms. Tregoning, the MA cases being heard by a professional administrative law judge and the OAG representing the HPRB). We were lucky to have Tersh Boasberg represent the HPRB this time which bolstered our side—but of course, the HPRB recommendation was disregarded anyway.

Another very troubling aspect is the "adaptation for current use" phrase. After listing all the alterations that will be done (excavating the basement for full height, lowering first floor for handicapped accessibility, replacing a rear addition with a new one and constructing a third-floor addition), the next sentence is, "The project will allow the applicant to use the

building for offices, a conference facility and meeting rooms." It is almost like anything the applicant wants to do is fine—any use is an adaptation for current use. Virtually every homeowner wants another bedroom, or a home theater or playroom, or a bathroom the size of a bedroom. Virtually every non-profit or corporation would love to have a prestigious office for its president that looks out over Pennsylvania Avenue and the Capitol to impress its clients and visitors. If it's a current use, it's OK, and the building should be expanded to fit any and all desires of the owner? I'm not sure how balance will ever be restored to the world of additions. Of course, the statute notes that not only is adaptation to current use a purpose of the act, but the alteration must at the same time "retain and enhance" the historic property. It is hard to see how the addition of a third floor that fundamentally alters the basic architectural concept "retains" and "enhances" 227 Pennsylvania Avenue. ★

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October Preservation Café to Feature Backyard Archeology

Come to CHRS's Preservation Café on October 21 for archeologist Bob Sonderman's "show and tell" about what may be underfoot on Capitol Hill. Mr. Sonderman—senior archeologist for the National Park Service, Capitol Hill resident, and a member of DC's Historic Preservation Review Board—will bring an assortment of artifacts typical of those found on Capitol Hill to describe for the audience. According to him, there still is an incredible amount of prehistoric and historic archeological material being found in the city, although some of it is a number of feet below the surface.

After his presentation, there will be an opportunity for members of the audience to show Mr. Sonderman the bottles, pottery, and other objects they have found in their yards (or perhaps walls or cellars) so he can identify them and explain what residents have found.

So bring those artifacts to "Backyard Archeology", which will be held Wednesday, October 21, from 6:30–7:15 pm in the downstairs community room at Ebenezers Coffeehouse at 2nd & F Streets, NE. The Preservation Café is free, handicapped accessible, and open to all in the Capitol Hill community. No reservations are required.

More information on
Preservation Cafés is available
on the CHRS website:
www.chrs.org

Preservation Café, *continued from page 3*

period was 1880–1910. Although a very ornate style, it tends to be somewhat subdued in urban rowhouses, where materials included patterned brick or stone, slate, and sometimes terra cotta panels. Elements of the style were adapted for Capitol Hill townhouses, including triangular roof peaks, textured surfaces, molded metal detailing of pressed tin or copper, oriels, turrets, and custom-molded bricks. Bays were common, and window surrounds tended to be fairly simple.

Second Empire style, which was popular from 1855–1885, tends to be tall, large, and grand. One of its defining features is the sloping mansard roof, sometimes topped with iron cresting. Larger panes of glass were becoming feasible during this period, so the windows are often 1/1. Decorative details included ornate window hoods, heavily bracketed cornices, bay windows, quoins, and other cut stone embellishments. The Shakespeare Theatre Company's building on Barracks Row and the Old Naval Hospital at Pennsylvania Avenue and Tenth Street, SE, are good examples.

Quite a few brick and stone Richardsonian Romanesque homes are sprinkled around Capitol Hill. Their solid, eclectic style, inspired by ancient Roman architecture, flourished between 1880–1900. Wide rounded arches are a key feature of the style and top doors, windows, and porch supports. Typically asymmetrical in design, with round bays, these buildings are highlighted with rough cut stone, heavy arches on cushion capitals, conical roofs, tower forms, columns, and unusual, sculpted shapes.

The Greek Revival style, popular from 1825–1860, is not very common

on the Hill, though its influence is visible in a number of rowhouses. Very simple and spare, Greek Revival houses tend to feature simple moldings, gables with pediments on low-pitched roofs, wide but simple trim along cornices, and elaborate door surrounds with pediments and pilasters. Materials were usually stucco and wood, and occasionally stone. Porches and porticos are typically supported by classical columns.

Features of the Stick style, which evolved out of Queen Anne and was popular between 1860–1890, can be seen here and there on Capitol Hill, primarily in decorative wood trusses in gables, Stick-influenced brick Victorians, and ornamental wood brackets, railings, steps, and newel posts. The 500 block of Constitution Avenue, NE, has a number of examples.

Many houses on the Hill are an eclectic blend of styles, with architects and builders borrowing a little of this and a little of that for their designs. Knowing his home's style and history provided Mr. Wentworth clarity in designing his restoration and renovation. Likewise, understanding your home's style and the historic features that make it unique can guide your planning when remodeling and repairing it. Such understanding and respect for the home's historic integrity can also help homeowners protect the value and appeal of their unique houses.

The presentation closed with a quote from Mark Twain, who was very fond of his Stick-style house: "To us, our house was not insentient matter—it had a heart, and a soul... it was of us, and we were in its confidence, and lived in its grace and in the peace of its benediction....and we could not enter it unmoved." ★

CHRS Partners with SHPO for Phase Two of Southeast Survey

CHRS received a grant of \$17,887 from the District's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to support the historic survey effort underway in the southeast portion of greater Capitol Hill. The funds are part of the District's share of Federal grant-in-aid assistance from the National Park Service.

Last year, CHRS, through a combination of self-funding and a volunteer effort, surveyed the area bounded by approximately 13th Street (west), 19th Street (east), L Street (south), and D Street (north). Over the next year, the firm EHT Traceries will conduct phase two of the survey to cover the area from D Street (south) to East Capitol Street (also from 13th to 19th Streets). The grant will pay for approximately half the cost of the survey.

Once completed, the entire area southeast of the Capitol Hill Historic District (on the west side of the Anacostia River) will be surveyed. The survey results will provide the community with a database containing basic construction information, along with a photograph, for every building in the survey area. The information will include the construction date and name of the architect or builder, as well as the data from major permitted remodeling projects. The database will be useful in a variety of ways: in preparation of house histories, which have become very popular; or on a broader level, as a basis for neighborhood walking tours, which CHRS sponsors to explain and learn about the development and history of our many wonderful Capitol Hill area

neighborhoods; and also to provide to homeowners information on construction (so useful in renovation projects). The survey results can also be the first step in preparation of an historic district or individual landmark application, should the neighborhood decide to pursue legal protection of its historic resources.

We thank the SHPO for its support in uncovering more of our rich development history! ★

For more information on or questions about historic surveys, see the article "Building Survey Begins Beyond the Boundaries" under Beyond the Boundaries on the CHRS website, www.chrs.org, or contact Donna Hanousek at chrs@aol.com.

PHOTO: ELIZABETH NELSON



CHRS volunteer Nancy Metzger (right) admires a beading project at the H Street Festival in September.

CHRS Reaches Out

by Elizabeth Nelson

As part of our "Beyond the Boundaries" program, CHRS volunteers are engaging in a variety of outreach activities, most recently staffing booths at both the H Street Festival and Barracks Row Day. Stringing beads kept the kids busy while we engaged the adults. Leftover copies of this year's House Tour catalog were especially well received. Our participation at these events is part of an ongoing effort to introduce CHRS to newcomers to the Hill and to those living outside the boundaries of the historic district. Our next event will be distributing pencils (with the CHRS logo) to students at the Walk to School Day event in Lincoln Park on October 7. Volunteers are always more than welcome—they are truly needed. Plus it's a lot of fun to meet friends, old and new. If you would like to assist in these efforts, please call or email Elizabeth Nelson at 543-3512 or elizabeth_knits@yahoo.com.

Transportation Forum Heard By Many

by Dick Wolf

A nearly full house of Capitol Hill residents heard about a broad range of topics at the CHRS Transportation Forum on September 21. Even without the presence of a DDOT representative (due to a tangle of conflicting obligations), Peter May, the Land Use Coordinator for the National Capitol Region of the National Park Service (NPS); Tom Grahame, former CHRS Transportation Committee chair; and Dick Wolf, CHRS City Planning chair and organizer of the forum, addressed a host of transportation issues that affect the Hill.

Peter May, a Hill resident and former DC government official, focused on the interests of the NPS with respect to a variety of city initiatives. Recently, the National Capitol Planning Commission (NCPC) considered the 11th Street Bridge project, which involves a

variety of federal issues. Mr. May, who represents the Secretary of the Interior on the Commission, questioned the inclusion of a light rail/trolley line on the proposed set of bridges with cars powered by overhead wires. While NPS likes transit, he pointed out that overhead wires of any kind are prohibited by a 100+-year-old federal law covering the "Old City of Washington" which is largely the L'Enfant plan for the city and includes all of Capitol Hill. Previous trolley lines in DC were powered by underground systems.

Also subject to federal review would be any alterations to the streets in the Old City, such as street furniture, loading platforms, and the like because the L'Enfant plan, including its streets, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. At NCPC's September meeting, the Office of Planning

Director, Harriet Tregoning, noted the city's commitment to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement to determine the various effects of a streetcar/trolley system in DC.

Mr. May also addressed the issue of federal involvement in the planning for any changes in Pennsylvania Avenue between the Capitol and Barney Circle. Though he said making Pennsylvania Avenue a monumental approach to the Capitol is not on the NPS agenda now, it is possible that in the future it could be.

Tom Grahame focused on addressing the environmental health issues of heavy traffic in the city. His review of numerous recent studies showed that within 150 feet of heavily trafficked streets and highways, there was a substantial increase in health problems (asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, bronchitis, and heart problems). Vehicles spew out

Eastern Market Manholes Ambivalent About Proper Spelling



PHOTOS: DAVID HOLMES

Manholes for the newly resurfaced block of Seventh Street at Eastern Market are undecided regarding how to spell Capitol. Those for water properly read "Capitol Hill"; those for other utilities unfortunately read "Capital Hill".

tiny particulates and biologically active chemicals that are dangerous to humans. In response to these studies, California has banned construction of highways within 150 feet of schools and housing developments. The 11th Street Bridge project would bring additional new highway lanes and auxiliary structures carrying 50,000 more vehicles per day within 150 feet of Tyler Elementary as well as numerous residential housing areas and developments. The 11th Street Bridge project EIS fails to address these issues.

He also addressed the need for better policies regarding commuter parking and the effectiveness of speed cameras in slowing down commuter traffic, especially in the Rosedale neighborhood.

Dick Wolf pointed out a number of planning issues pertaining to Hill transportation problems and projects. Karina Ricks, the Associate Director of DDOT for Planning, is planning on letting a number of contracts to study more discretely the vehicular traffic issues in DC. Until now, the models used to undergird planning for transportation in the city have been based on regional models used by the Transportation Planning Board of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. It is felt that these models are dated and fail to adequately account for traffic impacts in the city.

In regard to the trolley/light rail proposals, Mr. Wolf pointed out that it was the tail wagging the dog. The District has purchased three rail cars and is laying tracks without any planning for the kind of system to be used; a system map; sufficient knowledge about the kind of infrastructure that would be needed for a system; and cost analysis (DDOT says \$34 million a mile; the recently completed 20 mile light rail system in Phoenix cost \$70 million a mile). Most importantly, there have

been no community meetings on the Hill or anywhere else except H Street, NE, to discuss these issues. Few people in our audience knew anything about a trolley/light rail system on the Hill, which DDOT's Short-Term Implementation Plan map shows running along H Street, NE; 8th Street; and M Street, SE. Massachusetts Avenue, NE, is also under consideration.

Finally, our large group of attendees asked a number of questions and raised concerns which contributed to the overall understanding of these important issues. We didn't solve any problems, but we did enlighten and raise awareness. ★

Did You Know?

- ★ **The DC Department of Public Works (DPW) has discontinued its Saturday Household Hazardous Waste/E-cycling/Personal Shredding services at the Benning Road Transfer Station** and consolidated these services at the Ft. Totten Transfer Station. DPW states that the FY2010 budget cannot fund both sites. This location close to Capitol Hill has been the most convenient way to dispose of old television sets and computer monitors, batteries, cellphones, paint cans, and other dangerous and toxic trash.
- ★ **The Union Station Bike Transit Center, located on the west side of Union Station, is scheduled to open October 2.** The official opening of the \$4 million Bikestation will mark the grand opening for the long-awaited (and somewhat delayed) facility. The center, paid for by the U.S. Department of Transportation and DDOT, will offer secure bike parking, a changing room, and lockers for about \$1 a day, as well as bike rentals, repairs, and a small retail shop selling bike accessories. The facility will house over 100 bicycles, and will be staffed 66 hours per week and available to members 24/7. It will be the first of its kind on the East Coast. Bike and Roll, a local bike rental company, will operate the center. See www.bikeandroll.com for more information.
- ★ **The new fire hydrants being installed around the District are coded with colored reflective bands indicating the number of gallons per minute (gpm) available at the hose.** White bands indicate that the hydrant has not yet been tested to determine its water flow. A blue banded hydrant should release a minimum of 1,500 gpm; yellow between 1000 to 1500 gpm; orange between 500 to 999 gpm; and red up to 499 gpm. Capitol Hill and Old City water supply lines are frequently very old, with flow restricted to less than can be expected from the diameter of the pipe. In large fires, pumps feed extra water pressure into water lines running close to the fire. This pressure can burst the old pipes, as happened with the 2008 12th Street and Florida Avenue fire at Jimmy's Tire Shop.

Mark Your Calendar!

OCTOBER

1 Thursday, 7:30 pm
CHRS Zoning Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, First Floor. Details: Gary Peterson, 547-7969.

5 Monday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Historic Preservation Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, First Floor. Details: Nancy Metzger, 546-1034.

20 Tuesday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, Second Floor. Details: Beth Purcell, 622-4303.

21 Wednesday, 6:30–7:15 pm
CHRS Preservation Café, “Backyard Archeology”. Ebenezers Coffeehouse, 2nd & F Streets, NE, downstairs. Capitol Hill archeologist Bob Sonderman will show and discuss types of archeological artifacts that can turn up on Capitol Hill. Attendees are invited to bring historic items they’ve found in their yards for Mr. Sonderman to describe for the audience. Free, accessible, no reservations required. Details: Shauna Holmes, 546-5211.

22 Thursday, 10:00 am
Historic Preservation Review Board, 441 4th Street, NW, Room 220 South. Details: Nancy Metzger, 546-1034.

NOVEMBER

2 Monday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Historic Preservation Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, First Floor. Details: Nancy Metzger, 546-1034.

10 Tuesday
Great Buildings of H Street, NE. Join us for a community presentation on the results of the H Street Historic Survey (time/location TBD). More details in the November issue, or in the coming weeks at www.chrs.org or 543-0425.

12 Thursday, 7:30 pm (TBD)
CHRS Zoning Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, First Floor. Details: Gary Peterson, 547-7969.

17 Tuesday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, Second Floor. Details: Beth Purcell, 622-4303.

18 November, 6:30 pm–7:15 pm
CHRS Preservation Café, Roofs with David Lindeman. Ebenezers Coffeehouse, 2nd & F Streets, NE, downstairs. Free, accessible, no reservations required. Details: Shauna Holmes, 546-5211.

19 Thursday, 10:00 am
Historic Preservation Review Board, 441 4th Street, NW, Room 220 South. Details: Nancy Metzger, 546-1034.

DECEMBER

7 Monday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Community Forum, Historic Photos of Capitol Hill. St. Peter’s Church, 2nd & C Streets, SE.

Saturdays through November 21
9 am–12 pm (rain or shine)
H Street NE Freshfarm Market, 625 H Street, NE (across from H Street Self Storage). Fresh fruits and vegetables, pasture-raised meats, local dairy, breads and baked goods, cut flowers and more. www.freshfarmmarkets.org



Capitol Hill Restoration Society
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Washington, DC 20003