



# NEWS

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February 2011

## Out-of-Scale Union Station Air Rights Proposal

by Monte Edwards

The Office of Planning has proposed a new zoning chapter, Union Station North, which would permit the construction of an air rights development on a 14-acre platform above the existing railroad tracks north of Union Station on both sides of H Street NE. While the 1910 Height Act limits the height of the development to 130 feet, the Office of Planning proposes to use the top of the H Street bridge, about 30 feet above the existing railroad tracks, as the measuring point from which to measure this 130 foot height.

CHRS concedes that the development south of H Street would likely provide a better connection between Union Station and the H Street Bridge than is now provided by the Union Station garage. The development north of H Street will be located between 1st and 2nd Streets, NE, but will not front on 2nd Street (separated by the Railway Express building and transformer structure) or 1st Street (separated by the Metro tracks). Thus, the northern part of the development will not connect to the existing street grid and it will be located on a platform, 30 feet above the existing track, which in places is already 20 feet above the streets. The result will be the equivalent of a walled city, not unlike a medieval



IMAGE COURTESY CHRS/C100

Elevation view of proposed development relative to Union Station and the US Capitol.

castle, with its entrance or “gate” located on the H Street Bridge.

The proposal would result in a 160-foot high development (with 18.5-foot penthouses) immediately behind Union Station, which, at the highest point of its vaulted roof, is 125 feet. CHRS and the Committee of 100 (C100) presented drawings demonstrating the mass and scale of the proposed Union Station development and provided views that corrected misleading depictions of the height and scale of the project submitted by the Office of Planning and prepared by the developer. The CHRS/C100 drawings demonstrate that the proposal would permit a zoning envelope that would alter important vistas and the skyline surrounding Washington’s most symbolic and historic structures.

CHRS argued that the proposed air rights development would have an out-of-scale presence relative to Union Station and the US Capitol. At

the end of the hearing, the Zoning Commission required the Office of Planning to resubmit its proposal in February showing what the building would look like using natural grade as the measuring point. ★

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# President's Column: Goodbye and Hello at CHRS News

by Beth Purcell

**D**avid Holmes has done a fantastic job editing our newsletter. Not only is he an excellent editor and researcher, but he has written many key articles that members enjoyed, taken photographs, and suggested ideas for articles and for CHRS membership forums. We will miss you, and we wish you every success as Chair of ANC 6A.

At the same time, we are happy and excited to welcome our two new editors, Lisa Dale Jones and Kelly Vielmo. Lisa moved from Boston to Capitol Hill in 2010. She and her husband love the old buildings here, including their 1907 row house. Lisa was an award-winning public radio producer for ten years, and for five years was the speech editor for

an international speakers bureau. Lisa also has experience writing newsletters. Kelly moved to Capitol Hill in 2001, rowed with the Capital Rowing Club, and is very involved in the community. He works for a management consulting firm dealing with the federal government. Kelly and Lisa have many great ideas for articles and features for the *News*. ★

## Book Review

### *Washington: The Making of the American Capital*

by Beth Purcell

**I**n 1790, the nation's capital was in Philadelphia, and very nearly remained there. Philadelphia was at that time the largest city in the new nation, as well as the most cosmopolitan. In *Washington: The Making of the American Capital*, Fergus Bordewich gives a vivid account of the players in Congress angling to move the capital to Baltimore, Wilmington (Delaware), or to other locations in Pennsylvania. George Washington appears as a master politician, determined to move the capital to the banks of the Potomac River, near Mount Vernon, Virginia.

Slavery affected relocating the nation's capital. Philadelphia had a vibrant free black community and laws favorable to blacks. A slave residing in Philadelphia for six months became free. George Washington rotated his slaves in Philadelphia, so that no one remained there for six months. Slave-owners, (including Washington, Jefferson, and Madison), wanted the capital moved to a more congenial southern

location. Over dinner, Jefferson and Madison figured out a way to do this.

Congress approved moving the capital to somewhere on an 80-mile stretch of the Potomac River and made George Washington personally responsible for completing the new capital by 1800. But Congress approved funding only for moving expenses, and nothing to pay for buildings for Congress, the President, the State Department, or the War Department (later to become the Department of Defense). That meant that the money for buildings had to be raised primarily from private sources. Local landowners had agreed to contribute half their land to the government, with the hope that their remaining half would become very valuable. To raise money, the government sold lots in the District to very leveraged speculators, who engaged in international finance and double-dealing, then defaulted and went bankrupt. Endless litigation resulted, and District land titles were in chaos for years afterward.

This book will appeal to anyone who enjoys political intrigue or real estate shenanigans. ★

*Washington: The Making of the American Capital* (2008). Fergus M. Bordewich. 367 pp. Amistad / HarperCollins. \$27.95.

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[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 the largest civic association on Capitol Hill, and one of the largest in the 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](http://www.CHRS.org)
- ★ Call (202) 543-0425; 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.

# Research Your Home's History at the February Preservation Café

On February 16, 2011, CHRS is pleased to offer the first of a two-part series on house history research. This first session will focus on "The Homes." Matthew Gilmore, a local historian, will outline the resources needed to document your home/building, including maps, tax records, and photographs. Part two, to be held at the April Preservation Café, will focus on "The People," at which time Mr. Gilmore will outline the resources needed to document your home/building's occupants, including city directories and census records. Together, these two Preservation Cafés will provide a primer to get you started in researching your historic home.

Mr. Gilmore has been giving local history workshops since 1995, drawing on his experience as a reference librarian in the

Washingtoniana Division of the DC Public Library. He has edited H-DC ([www.h-net.org/~dclist](http://www.h-net.org/~dclist)), a website dedicated to Washington, DC history and life, since 2000. Since leaving the Library he has authored or co-authored four books, the most recent on Foggy Bottom (published in November 2010). He is also an editorial board member and erstwhile guest editor of and contributor to the Historical Society of Washington DC's journal, *Washington History*. In addition, he serves on the program committee for the annual conference on Washington, DC studies.

The Preservation Café will be held on Wednesday, February 16 from 6:30-7:15 pm in the basement of Ebenzers Coffee House, at 2nd and F Streets, NE. ★

## Mark Your Calendars for the Capitol Hill House and Garden Tour!

On May 7 and 8, 2011, the Capitol Hill Restoration Society will host its 54th annual tour of houses and gardens. The focus this year will be on the area between 8th and 13th Streets SE below East Capitol Street to Pennsylvania Avenue.

To volunteer your house or suggest a house within the area, please contact the Chair of the Tour, Paul Cromwell, at 543-7530 or [paulcromwell@verizon.net](mailto:paulcromwell@verizon.net). Those who wish to volunteer as house docents on the weekend of the Tour should contact Dori Fengler at [dorifengler@yahoo.com](mailto:dorifengler@yahoo.com). Further information is on the CHRS website at [www.chrs.org](http://www.chrs.org).

Letters will soon be mailed to all CHRS members presenting a limited-time offer to buy up to four tour tickets for \$20 each. Otherwise, tickets will be \$25 each in advance and \$30 on the tour weekend.

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# Historic Preservation Briefs

by Nancy Metzger

## Historic Congressional Cemetery Gains New Recognition

In November 2010, the Landmarks Committee of the National Park System Advisory Board recommended that the Historic Congressional Cemetery, located at 18th and E Streets, SE, be designated as a National Historic Landmark. Established in 1807, the cemetery has long been recognized in both the DC Inventory of Historic Sites as a landmark of national and local significance as well as a landmark in the National Register of Historic Places. The newest designation, a higher level of distinction, won unanimous support of the Landmarks Committee, and it is expected that all official procedures will be completed this spring.

National Historic Landmarks are those buildings, sites, districts, structures and objects that have been determined by the Secretary of the Interior to be nationally significant in American history and culture. Congressional Cemetery will join the list alongside the White House, the Capitol and the Supreme Court as well as the Tuskegee Institute, Parkin Indian Mound, Carmel Mission and the Star-Spangled Banner Flag House, to name a few. A 53-page documentation of the cemetery's history and significance, compiled by Julie Sienkewicz, was first submitted in 2007. She made the presentation and was in the audience when the final vote was taken. Landmark status means more than simply prestige; the National Park Service provides technical preservation advice and information on preservation issues to owners of National Historic Landmarks.

The Association for the Preservation of Historic

Congressional Cemetery has a robust web site that is a boon for historic researchers, as well as a very informative quarterly newsletter, *Heritage Gazette*. On the website, check out the docent-led tours for some spring-time strolls: [www.congressionalcemetery.org](http://www.congressionalcemetery.org).

## Demolition of Little House Leaves Big Hole in Historic District

For decades neighbors and others worried about the little 1880s Italianate house at 820 C Street, SE. As the years went by, the building remained boarded and in need of major repair. After the big 2010 snow, it was clear that the roof and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor had collapsed to the ground. It was a mystery to all who passed by—great location, wonderful block, charming appearance. What was the problem? Why wasn't it sold and restored as thousands of other buildings have been in the historic district?

As it turns out, many people were searching for solutions and did try to buy the brick building covered in stucco, but their offers were always rejected by the owner, Jennie F. Jew of Springfield, Virginia, who claimed she would like to fix it up but she didn't want to sell because it was the first property her family had owned. One would-be buyer even offered to put up a plaque honoring the family history, but that was refused. Ms. Jew, according to her biography on the Fairfax County website, is chair of the county Commission for Women and represents the Springfield District. Apparently she is "a nationally known speaker and consultant whose expertise and experiences are associated with programs and projects which focus upon the economic, educational, social, or

political opportunities of groups and communities."

CHRS, in its campaign to bring vacant and neglected properties under the proper tax code to pressure owners to sell or fix up their properties, brought this house to the attention of the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) and the Office of Tax and Revenue a number of years ago, but somehow, the proper classification and tax rate were not applied—so there was no financial incentive for the owner to fix it up or sell. After the adjoining neighbors repeatedly contacted DCRA officials about their worries concerning the impact on their own house (cracks, water damage, mold, etc.), DCRA and Historic Preservation Office (HPO) staff met Ms. Jew at the property to assess the conditions and inform her of their probable actions: If she did not undertake in a timely fashion to correct the problems, then the city would do so itself and bill her for the costs. Still she did not even begin to meet DCRA's requirements so DCRA hired a structural engineer to prepare a stabilization plan.

In September, 2010, DCRA determined that, to protect the house next door, a partial demolition of 820 C Street was necessary, but that as much of it as possible, with guidance from the Historic Preservation Office, would be preserved and stabilized. In a message to CHRS, Eric Rogers, manager of DCRA's Enforcement Division, said, "the front façade and part of side and rear walls will remain with the rest being demolished. ... Significant demo should be occurring early next week." But the demolition did not begin until three months later, in December, and then DCRA's contractor recommended that the



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entire structure be demolished—and so it was, with ropes attached to large pieces of wall and pulled by a heavy tractor.

## Historic Districts Coalition Looks at Future HPRB Appointments

Coming up in the first six months of the Gray Administration will be the appointment of seven members (architects, historian, archaeologist, and citizen members) to the nine-member Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB). While some historic preservation organizations forwarded recommended names for consideration, the Historic Districts Coalition, of which CHRS is a member, sent a letter to the Mayor and the Office of Boards and Commissions stressing the importance of appointing highly qualified people to the Board. CHRS joined with ten other neighborhood historic preservation organizations to send the following letter:

“ ... Historic Districts Coalition members believe that the HPRB works best for all city residents, businesses, and property owners when it is composed of knowledgeable, highly qualified and dedicated members who can deliberate historic preservation issues, relate them to proposed contemporary changes, and render appropriate and professionally grounded opinions. We recognize that there are many avenues to arrive at such a Board but we believe that the following ingredients are essential:

- ★ **Professional members who have attained the highest levels of education, experience and respect of their peers.** Historic Preservation Law 2-144 sets only the minimum criteria for professional members—in type of profession, experience and educational attainments. HPRB members will be considering
- projects of great complexity and cost in terms of design, preservation issues, and historic values. Their decisions must be grounded in fact, tempered by experience, and cogently expressed.
- ★ **Members who are able to fulfill the responsibilities of the Board.** The HPRB has a significant caseload each month; Board members must be able to prepare for each Board meeting by reviewing plans and staff reports, visiting the sites, and understanding the issues. Sometimes members must recuse themselves from a case because of conflicts of interest. Nominees should be considered carefully in this regard as it is imperative that the Board always have sufficient numbers and that the design-review capability of the Board be strong.
- ★ **A balance between rotation of Board members and continuity of experience.** We are pleased that the Board is now divided into three panels, each with different three-year terms. We ask that architects be assigned to different terms so that members with that critical professional expertise are not changed at the same time.
- ★ **Members who are drawn from different parts of the city and different demographic groups.** This directive in the city’s law to strive for diversity is important to the public’s understanding that historic preservation is a citywide benefit.
- ★ **Citizen members who have demonstrated a “competence, interest, or knowledge in historic preservation.”** Coalition members urge that citizen member nominees should

have demonstrated more than a nominal interest in historic preservation *before* being nominated. Each decision of the Board has consequences, and applicants and neighborhoods deserve to have those decisions made by people who have previous experience in historic preservation.

While we are not recommending particular persons for consideration, other preservation groups have suggested people they believe would be strong candidates. The Coalition strongly urges that its concerns about the qualifications of nominees and the composition of the Board be a part of the nomination process established by your administration.” ★

# Christmas Present for DC Streetcars

By Monte Edwards



PHOTO COURTESY TRINELEC

Overhead wire-free streetcar now operating in Seville, Spain. The sign on the side of the streetcar—“Tranvia Sin Catenaria”—translates to “Tramway Without a Catenary [overhead wire].”

Three days before Christmas the District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT) received a \$1 million grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to study alternatives for the K Street Corridor, other alternative streetcar route alignments and streetcar propulsion alternatives.

The study will review options for connecting the H Street/Benning streetcar route, now under construction, with K Street, NW. When completed, DDOT anticipates this will be the nation’s preeminent streetcar system with high-quality service on dedicated transit lanes.

“We want to thank the Federal Transit Administration for its trust in us to lead the push for new propulsion technology,” said then-DDOT Director Gabe Klein. “We’re

already pursuing a vehicle that can operate without overhead wires. This grant will help us accelerate our efforts and could lead to new innovations in modern streetcars.”

DDOT is planning a more than \$1.5 billion streetcar system, a portion of which is already under construction. CHRS has been advocating that DDOT find an alternative way of running the streetcars besides power from overhead lines that would be an unwelcome visual element prohibited or substantially avoided in our city for 121 years. Some cities in Europe are now operating non-overhead wire streetcar systems and CHRS believes that the debate over overhead wires will become moot as new technologies develop. ★

# Zoning Briefs

By Gary Peterson

On January 13, 2011 the Zoning Committee took action on the following Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) cases:

**BZA #18158, 428 4th Street, NE.**

The applicant is seeking a special exception to allow a single story rear addition to a one-family row dwelling, not meeting the lot occupancy, side yard, and nonconforming structure requirements in an R-4 zone. She needs a special exception for the increase in lot occupancy from 66% to 69%, and for the existing non-conformity of her structure. She presented letters of support from her neighbors and the Committee voted unanimously to support the application.

**BZA #18159, 627 G Street, SE.**

The applicant seeks a special exception to remove an existing rear addition that has a side yard of seven inches and replace it with a new rear addition that keeps the seven-inch side yard. For this the applicant needs a special exception to allow an addition to an existing one-family semi-detached dwelling not meeting the side yard requirements. The committee voted unanimously to support the application.

**BZA #18160, 138 12th Street, NE.**

Appletree Charter School has a building permit that lapsed after two years because it did not start the project. During that time, the zoning regulations regarding Charter Schools were amended, and the property now cannot be developed as a Charter School without BZA approval. The Zoning Administrator issued a new building permit without requiring that Appletree get BZA approval. This past September 17,

2010, a decision by the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs granted a building permit for a private charter school, Appletree Institute for Education Innovation Inc., located in an R-4 zone. Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A appealed that decision. The committee unanimously supports this appeal.

**BZA #18161, 1245 G Street, NE.**

The applicant needs a variance from the nonconforming structure provisions, to allow a second story sunroom addition on top of an existing attached garage serving an existing one-family row dwelling in an R-4 zone. The property is a three-story, corner property with three bay windows. It has an attached garage and the improvements occupy 100% of the lot. The applicant is rebuilding the attached garage and wants to add a sunroom, requiring a variance, to the second floor of the house that will cover a portion of the garage. For the BZA to grant variances the applicant must show an exceptional condition or uniqueness of the property, practical difficulties in complying with the zoning regulations arising out of the uniqueness, and no detriment to the public good or impairment of the zone plan. The committee did not believe that the applicant's property qualified for a variance under this test, and voted unanimously to oppose the application.

**BZA #18170, 617 16th Street, NE.**

The applicants seek a variance from the lot occupancy requirements, a variance from the rear yard requirements, a variance from the court size requirements, and a

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*Continued on page 8*

variance from the nonconforming structure provisions to construct an attached garage addition to an existing one-family row dwelling in the R-4 zone at 617 16th Street, NE. The property is improved with a two-story single-family row house and is on a lot containing 1360 square feet. The house fronts on 16th Street and there is a 10-foot alley in the rear. The applicants park their car at the rear of the property and there is an overhead garage door that lifts to permit access. The parking area does not have a roof or a wall facing the house. The applicants want to build a garage that would occupy all of the space between the rear wall of the house and the alley and to put a deck on the roof of the garage. The property does not demonstrate either an exceptional condition or uniqueness and the applicants did not provide any contrary support. The lot occupancy with the addition will exceed 90% and is very close to 100% lot occupancy. The applicants did not show any hardship arising out of the property and for these reasons the committee voted unanimously to oppose the application.

**BZA #18171, 809 D Street, NE.**

The applicants seek a special exception to allow a rear addition to a one-family row dwelling not meeting the court size requirements in an R-4 zone. The applicants want to build a second story over an existing first floor structure at the back of the house. The addition will not change the footprint of the house. The committee voted unanimously to support the application.

**BZA #18173, 906 Maryland**

**Avenue, NE.** The applicant needs a variance from the lot occupancy requirements and the alley centerline setback requirements to allow the construction of an accessory garage serving a one-family row dwelling

in the R-4 zone. The construction of the new garage will change the lot occupancy from 52% to 71.8%. A variance is required to change lot occupancy above 70%. In this case, a neighbor's garage encroaches two feet on the applicant's property and drives the lot occupancy above 70% necessitating a variance. Due to the siting of the property on a diagonal

alley, the committee believed that there were unique circumstances that made complying with the zoning regulations difficult and it voted unanimously to support the application.

The next meeting of the Zoning Committee will be held on March 10, 2011. ★

## Coming Next Month: Development History of the Rosedale Neighborhood

Tuesday, March 8, 2011 | 6:15–8:00 pm

Rosedale Recreation Center, 500 19th Street, NE

The Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS) and the Rosedale Citizens' Alliance (RCA) are sponsoring a presentation on historic buildings by EHT Traceries, a well-known architectural history firm.

This presentation will describe the development history of the area approximately bounded by H Street/Benning Road (north); East Capitol Street (south); 15th Street (west); and 19th Street (east). Rosedale, which lies within these boundaries, is a distinctive neighborhood that developed over the late 19th and early 20th centuries, just a stone's throw from the H Street commercial corridor. Find out who developed the neighborhood and learn about the different types of architecture and buildings from knowledgeable architectural historians.

This event is free and open to the public and brought to you in part by the CHRS *Beyond the Boundaries* program, which seeks to promote the appreciation of neighborhood history and support historic preservation efforts outside the boundaries of the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Please note that the program will begin with a social hour of cookies and cider from 6:15–6:45 pm, followed by a Welcome from the RCA and a brief CHRS Business Meeting. The featured presentation will begin at 7:00 pm.

You can get details about all of our events at [www.chrs.org](http://www.chrs.org).



# Presentation on the Near Northeast Survey Draws Large Crowd

By Donna Hanousek

On Wednesday, January 19, 2011, CHRS hosted a presentation by EHT Traceries, a local architectural history firm, on the buildings of the near northeast. This was the second of three presentations that are part of the CHRS *Beyond the Boundaries* program, which seeks to promote the appreciation of neighborhood history and support historic preservation efforts outside the boundaries of the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Over 60 people attended the presentation and learned about the building history of the survey area, which consisted of the area adjacent to the H Street commercial corridor, roughly from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> Street, and from H to F Street, NE. The survey area developed largely in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, as did most of the Capitol Hill Historic District. The audience saw examples of the varied buildings that make up this area, including the Italianate, Queen Anne, and Classical Revival architectural styles, as well as the “daylight” porch front. In addition to single-family homes, EHT Traceries showed images of the later duplex building type, as well as the apartment building. One notable duplex development highlighted is located on Pickford Place, which was originally an alley, and developed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century as a series of semi-detached duplexes. EHT Traceries also showed examples of buildings other than dwellings, such as schools, churches, corner stores, a fire station, and even a notable movie theater, the “Home Theater,” originally a Moorish Revival design redone in the 1940s in the Art Deco style—well worth checking out at 1230 C Street, NE. In



PHOTO COURTESY EHT TRACERIES

**649 Pickford Place, NE—a quaint one-block street tucked between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, and F and G Streets.**

addition to learning about the types and styles of buildings, the audience also discovered who designed them, including several of the city’s most well known architects, such as Albert H. Beers, Nicholas T. Haller, and George T. Santmyers, one of the most prolific architects in the area.

On March 8, there will be a third and final presentation of individual building survey results (the first presentation, on the southeast, was this past November at Holy Comforter Church). This upcoming presentation, co-sponsored with the Rosedale Citizens’ Alliance, will focus on the northeast area between 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Streets and will be held at the Rosedale Recreation Center (see the feature box on page 8).

You can find PDF versions of both the previous southeast presentation and this northeast presentation on our website at [www.chrs.org](http://www.chrs.org). ★

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# Looking Back on Capitol Hill

by Nancy Metzger

The EHT Traceries report on the survey of buildings in the near northeast (elsewhere in this newsletter) mentions the Home Theater at 1230 C Street, NE, as one of the buildings that could be considered for historic landmark designation. While the present façade is the result of an extensive renovation undertaken by the Warner organization in 1941, with a design by Mihran Mesrobian, a noted Modernist architect, the theater was built in 1915 by the Home Amusement Company for approximately \$25,000 following a design by W.S. Plager, an architect of a number of early theaters in Washington.

An article in *The Washington Post*, announcing the grand opening of the Home in 1916, proclaimed it a "beautiful new neighborhood photoplay theater," seating 800 people, that was "easily accessible from any part of the northeast or eastern part of the city." The *Post* went on to say, "no pains or expense has been spared ... providing in the safety and comfort of patrons, the building is new and absolutely fireproof and the latest and most modern heating and ventilating system has been installed insuring the circulation of pure and wholesome air at all times." Apparently the mezzanine was a particularly appealing feature as the *Post* singled it out as "one of the novelties of the new theater" while Motion Picture News, in its announcement of the new theater, noted: "The mezzanine tier is perhaps the unique feature of the house. This adjoins the lounging promenade, is roomy, and fitted up with comfortable chairs, and promises to be a much sought for

location by patrons. Features will form the program of the Home theatre, with a ten-cent admission. An orchestra of five furnishes the music...."

One of the Overbeck Oral History interviewees, Sidney Hoffman, had a very personal view of the Home Theater that he shared with Ev Barnes in an interview in October 2004. (Mr. Hoffman died in 2008 at the age of 85.) Mr. Hoffman was 11 when his father died, leaving his mother with two children to support. "My mother took over the shoe store [at 1021 H Street, NE] for a while, but it was too much for her. She had two children and subsequently, due to a relationship with an uncle who was in the theater business, she got a job. She was an accomplished musician; she played in theaters. She reminded me at one time that she played the piano or organ in the Home Theater. She went to the Avenue Grand [in the 600 block of Pennsylvania Avenue, SE] and stayed there until sound came in. From then on, she stayed in retail sales."

After graduating from Eastern High School, Mr. Hoffman started at Wilson Teachers College but gave that up when his part-time job at the Earle Theater (later the Warner on 13th Street, NW) led to a career in theater management. In 1936, "...I went to the Home Theater. The Home Theater was about a 600-seat theater. It was a good place to get acquainted. One of the first things I hadn't had before [at the Earle] was serials on Saturday. The light side of it was, when you had the serials on Saturday, you probably didn't want to come in there, because there was a little store. The Home Theater had two stores, which were part of the property that belonged

to the company. One of them was a little tailor shop, and the other was a little confectionery store. But they sold dill pickles, and the kids would all buy dill pickles and ... go into the theater." The result: serials accompanied by dill pickle aroma. The little confectionery shop soon had competition, as references note that during the 1930s, candy machines were introduced. They also say the theater was earning approximately \$3,000 a week.

If you'd like a side-by-side comparison of the 1915 Home Theater with the remodeled 1941 version, check out the call box on the southeast corner of 11th and C Streets, SE, where a plaque designed and installed by artist Betsy Damos shows both versions. Then go east a block and a half to see the Home Theater as it looks now. In 1952 a congregation bought the building and it is now the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith.

The complete interview with Sidney Hoffman and transcripts of interviews with other residents of Capitol Hill can be found at [www.capitolhillhistory.org](http://www.capitolhillhistory.org). ★

# 2010 Audubon "Christmas" Bird Count

By Beth Purcell

The 68th annual Washington, DC Christmas Bird Count for the Anacostia Sector was held on December 18, 2010, with area birders showing up early in the morning with their binoculars. The good weather and wonderful turnout contributed to excellent coverage and results for the sector (including the National Arboretum, Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, and Fort Dupont).

The day's highlights included a barred owl at Fort Dupont, two pine siskins and a bald eagle at Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, and a rare orange-crowned warbler at the National Arboretum. There were numerous tracks of wild turkey in the snow at Fort Dupont but the birds themselves were not spotted during the count. A total of 55 bird species was counted. ☆

Number of bird species by year	
2010	55
2009	45
2008	71
2007	59
2006	65
2005	68
2004	54
2003	57
2002	70
2001	61
2000	57
1999	65
1998	54
1997	53
1996	47
1995	54

## DC Christmas Bird Count Checklist 2010, Anacostia Sector (December 18, 2010)

Canada Goose	726	White-breasted Nuthatch	13
Mallard	35	Brown Creeper	2
Great Blue Heron	5	Carolina Wren	30
Turkey Vulture	2	Winter Wren	1
Bald Eagle	1	Golden-crowned Kinglet	4
Cooper's Hawk	3	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	4
Red-shouldered Hawk	3	Eastern Bluebird	7
Red-tailed Hawk	4	Hermit Thrush	16
Ring-billed Gull	249	American Robin	497
Herring Gull	11	Northern Mockingbird	30
Great Black-backed Gull	5	Brown Thrasher	2
Gull Species	25	European Starling	345
Rock Pigeon	120	Cedar Waxwing	113
Mourning Dove	10	Orange-crowned Warbler	1
Barred Owl	1	Yellow-rumped Warbler	1
Belted Kingfisher	1	Eastern Towhee	8
Red-bellied Woodpecker	34	Field Sparrow	24
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	5	Fox Sparrow	2
Downy Woodpecker	28	Song Sparrow	57
Hairy Woodpecker	6	Swamp Sparrow	4
Northern Flicker	20	White-throated Sparrow	274
Pileated Woodpecker	4	Dark-eyed Junco	183
Blue Jay	104	Northern Cardinal	52
American Crow	231	Red-winged Blackbird	6
Fish Crow	73	Purple Finch	1
Crow Species	175	Pine Siskin	2
Carolina Chickadee	39	American Goldfinch	8
Tufted Titmouse	49	House Sparrow	57
Red-breasted Nuthatch	3		
		<b>Total Species</b>	<b>55</b>



**Capitol Hill Restoration Society**  
420 Tenth Street, SE  
Washington, DC 20003

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## Mark Your Calendar!

### FEBRUARY

**7** Monday, 6:30 pm  
CHRS Historic Preservation Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details: Nancy Metzger, 546-1034, nancymetzger@verizon.net.

**10** Thursday, 7:30 pm  
CHRS Zoning Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details: Gary Peterson, 547-7969, pgarylaw@aol.com.

**15** Tuesday, 6:30 pm  
CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second floor. Details: Beth Purcell, 622-4303, eap1@mindspring.com.

**16** Wednesday, 6:30 pm  
CHRS Preservation Café, *Researching the History of Your House* featuring Matthew Gilmore (Part 1 of a two-part series; Part 2 on April 20). Ebenezers Coffeehouse, 2nd & F Streets, NE, downstairs; free, open to the public, no reservations needed. Details: Shauna Holmes, 546-5211, shaunaholmes@yahoo.com.

### MARCH

**7** Monday, 6:30 pm  
CHRS Historic Preservation Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details: Nancy Metzger, 546-1034, nancymetzger@verizon.net.

**8** Tuesday, 6:15 pm  
CHRS and the Rosedale Citizens' Alliance (RCA) are sponsoring a presentation by well-known local architectural history firm, EHT Traceries, on the history of the buildings in the greater Capitol Hill/Northeast area between 15th and 19th Streets, NE, and featuring the distinctive Rosedale neighborhood. Details: Donna Hanousek, 727-0789, hanousek@earthlink.net.

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**15** Tuesday, 6:30 pm  
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**16** Wednesday, 6:30 pm  
CHRS Preservation Café, *Roofs 102* with David Lindeman of L&M Contracting. Ebenezers Coffeehouse, 2nd & F Streets, NE, downstairs; free, open to the public, no reservations needed. Details: Shauna Holmes, 546-5211, shaunaholmes@yahoo.com.