



CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

# NEWS

www.chrs.org

November 2015

## What To Do With RFK?

By Monte Edwards and the CHRS Newsletter Editors

In the October issue of the CHRS *News*, our readers learned about the most recent community meeting held on September 16 to discuss the future redevelopment of the RFK Stadium site. Because this is such a high-profile and complex situation, with the potential for far-reaching impacts on the way Capitol Hill will look, feel and operate in the coming decades, we believe it is important to continue to probe this case.

### RFK, NPS, Events DC: A Complicated Arrangement

In order to understand the magnitude of the complexities in this case, it is equally important to understand who the various stakeholders are.

- **DC government:** The District owns the facilities that comprise the RFK campus. This includes the massive parking lots to the north and south of the stadium, the soccer practice fields, RFK itself and the DC Armory.
- **National Park Service (NPS):** Part of the Department of the Interior, NPS owns and/or operates numerous historic sites and parks across the country. The land that comprises the RFK campus is owned by NPS and leased to the District by the federal government under a 1986 agreement that expires in 2036.

- **Events DC:** Events DC is a facilities management arm of the city.

### Who Should be Planning the Redevelopment?

While it is clear that the current RFK site is failing, redevelopment of the site should not be a foregone conclusion. It is time to consider the question: should the process of planning the redevelopment of the stadium complex be led by Events DC?

Events DC has a clear statutory mandate to focus on revenue generation rather than civic, environmental or ecological improvement. As the District's facilities management department, its explorations of alternative futures are inherently motivated around a scenario that results in a facility to be managed. Indeed, its involvement is contingent upon the very existence of a facility! Because Events DC has a vested interest in the continued existence of a facility, how can the public trust that it would fully and responsibly explore any options for redevelopment that do not include a stadium facility? Just because Events DC is the organization that sells tickets and handles booking for a structure that may or may not be a part of the future doesn't make it the

appropriate municipal arm to lead such a process.

The federal lease restricts usage on the RFK campus to recreational facilities, open space, public outdoor recreation opportunities and other uses as approved by NPS. NPS is guided in its decisions by the Comprehensive Plan for federally-owned parks and open space. The Comprehensive Plan for the development of federally-owned parks and open space is developed by the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC). Thus, the National Park Service, the DC Office of Planning and the National Capital Planning Commission need to be involved in the planning process,

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# President's Column: Shoring up the Foundation

By Lisa Dale Jones

As those of us who live in and love old houses know, the foundation is critical to the stability of the rest of the building. No matter how beautiful the archways or how detailed the decorative brickwork, if the foundation isn't strong and level, there will be cracks. And eventually, the whole structure might come tumbling down.

Organizations are the same way. They need a strong, identifiable mission. They need people who are inspired by the mission and will keep the organization growing and carrying out that mission. And behind it all, they need bylaws, budgets and administrative systems.

CHRS held its fall quarterly members' meeting at the Northeast Library on September 29. The budget for FY 2015-2016 was approved, as was a completely revised set of organizational bylaws. The bylaws were updated to reflect new District laws concerning nonprofits.

An organization's budget can be an interesting look at its priorities. This year we've added in funds to

pay for an event planner to help with the annual House & Garden Tour. Putting on the Tour is a huge undertaking and to rely solely on volunteers—who work full-time at other jobs—to put it on just no longer works! The House Tour is CHRS's only fundraising event each year and we need to ensure that it's always a success.

We've also added funds to pay for more membership outreach. As the demographics change on Capitol Hill, we need to find new ways to attract—and keep—members who are interested in supporting what we do to keep the Hill vibrant and attractive.

No organization can last long without funding, so in addition to the House Tour, we've added in some funds to help us raise funds.

The whole reason we do any of this is because we love Capitol Hill and want to help it maintain its character while also encouraging it to thrive in the present and future.

That balance was highlighted by our guest speaker at the meeting,

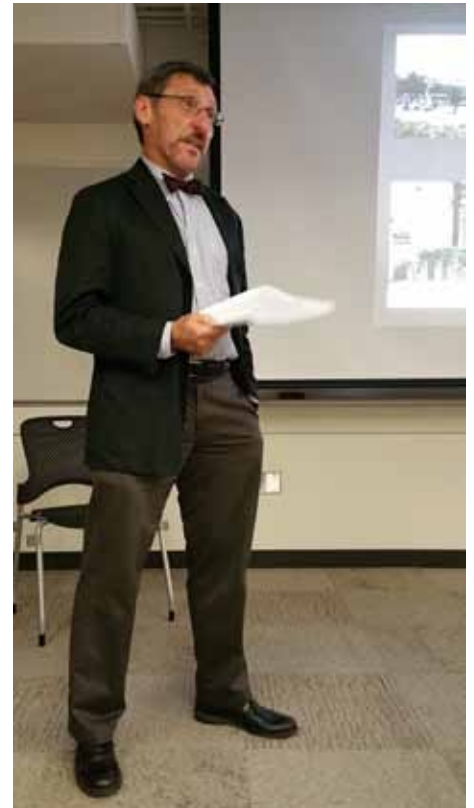


IMAGE COURTESY LISA DALE JONES

DCPL President John Sandor.

John Sandor, President of the DC Preservation League. Using many photos, Sandor pointed out how the character of the Hill defines how we live here today. He illustrated the many modern amenities, such as Metro stops, Bikeshare stations, restaurants and schools, that help make this a vibrant neighborhood. And he also pointed out areas where historic preservation guidelines have been flouted, leading to a degradation of the surrounding area. But his overall message was that the historic nature of Capitol Hill is what makes it such an appealing place to live in the now. We heartily agree! ★

## DDOT's Alley Paving Rules

Members have asked about DDOT's rules on repaving alleys with historic paving materials.

DDOT policy is to restore, to the extent possible, the historic location to its previous condition. As we remove the old materials they are cleaned and placed back into service. Due to natural aging, many of the layers below the top have deteriorated into mostly sand and small pebbles. If the existing materials cannot be reused, DDOT creates a porous concrete base and places the recovered stones on top. See DDOT's blue book standard. These standards are updated every five years and move through peer review of civil engineers, design engineers and material specialists.

Contact: Alberta Paul, Communication Specialist, DC Department of Transportation-IPMA, (202) 671-4667.

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To reach any of the above, please contact the Society offices at (202) 543-0425 or via e-mail: CapHRS@aol.com.

### ABOUT CHRS

Capitol Hill is a special place. We promote, preserve, and enhance the character of our historic neighborhoods.

Since its founding in 1955, CHRS has worked continuously to make Capitol Hill the desirable location it has now become. Due to CHRS's efforts, Capitol Hill won designation as a historic district in 1976. Today, that legacy of standing up for the community continues with our work in planning, zoning, historic preservation, and public safety.

CHRS is a volunteer organization, made up of Hill residents who love their historic neighborhoods and want to ensure that the unique character of the Hill is around for future generations. Come join us!

To learn more or join, please visit:  
[www.CHRS.org](http://www.CHRS.org)

# November 9 Overbeck Lecture: Donald Ritchie on Emily Edson Briggs of The Maples

In the late nineteenth century, visitors at The Maples, the grand old home on South Carolina Avenue, SE, that later became Friendship House and now, a multi-unit residential development, would have been greeted by the indomitable Emily Edson Briggs. A leading hostess of the day, Briggs won fame and fortune by writing a colorful, irreverent newspaper column under the pen name "Olivia." She presented the Washington political scene as social entertainment, skewering inflated egos and pushing for women's suffrage some fifty years ahead of its achievement.

On Monday, November 9, at 7:30 p.m., U.S. Senate historian emeritus Donald Ritchie will present an Overbeck History Lecture on Briggs's life and times. Ritchie is the author of several books including *Reporting from Washington: A History of the Washington Press Corps* and *Press Gallery: Congress and the Washington Correspondents*, which includes a chapter on Briggs.

The event will be held at Hill Center and admission is free, thanks to the Capitol Hill Community Foundation, which founded the Ruth Ann Overbeck Capitol Hill History Project to give local residents a deeper understanding of their neighborhood. To reserve seating, visit [HillCenterDC.org](http://HillCenterDC.org) or call (202) 549-4172.

During the Lincoln administration, Emily Edson Briggs became the first woman to report directly from the White House and later she was among the first to be admitted to the congressional press gallery. She was elected founding president of the Women's National

Press Association in 1882 and in 1906 a collection of her columns was published as *The Olivia Letters*.

The Maples, at 630 South Carolina, SE, was Briggs's home during her last decades in Washington. It was built in 1796 for the wealthy tobacco planter William Duncanson, who entertained George Washington and Thomas Jefferson there and was later owned briefly by Francis Scott Key.



IMAGE COURTESY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Donald Ritchie joined the Senate Historical Office in 1976 and served as U.S. Senate historian until his retirement last spring. He is a former president of the Oral History Association and also served on the councils of the American Historical Association and the Society for History in the Federal Government. His historical commentaries have been heard frequently on C-SPAN, NPR and other news outlets. ★

# Historic Preservation Briefs

by Beth Purcell

The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB or the Board) considered the following cases on October 1, 2015. HPRB is responsible for determining if proposed changes to a building are consistent with the DC Preservation Act. A “concept review” is a preliminary determination of a building owner’s plan to alter the building and if the concept is approved, the owner will return to the HPRB for a final review. In these reports, “staff” refers to the staff of the Historic Preservation Office (HPO), which serves as the staff of the HPRB.

**604 A Street, SE, HPA 15-492.** This is an 1888 brick two-story semi-detached house. The applicants propose a new penthouse on the rear (36 feet 5 inches), a roof deck in front, solar panels on the roof in two locations, replacing all existing windows in the front to replicate original, new

windows on the north elevation and replacing the rear porches. CHRS testified that our primary concern is the potential visibility from public space of the penthouse, the roof deck and the solar panels and that materials needed to be specified for the windows and porches. A number of neighbors continue to strongly object to this project and two testified against the project at the hearing. The staff report recommended that the applicants work with staff to ensure that the penthouse, roof deck and any roof appurtenances are not visible from public space. The HPRB chair urged the applicants to communicate with neighbors. The HPRB accepted the staff report, adding that the design should evolve to be compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District. The applicants were also directed to study the windows and porches and retain them if possible.

The following cases, which CHRS also reviewed, appeared on the HPRB consent calendar:

- **209 C Street, SE, HPA 15-503,** concept/roof addition.
- **160 North Carolina Avenue, SE, HPA 15-578,** concept/attic expansion.
- **705 North Carolina Avenue, SE, HPA 15-580,** concept/rear addition (commercial building).
- **525 A Street, NE, HPA 15-502,** concept/new ramp for accessibility.
- **401 11th Street, SE, HPA 15-498,** concept/new carriage house. ✪

**Interested in learning more about historic district designation?**

Contact CHRS at [caphrs@aol.com](mailto:caphrs@aol.com).

## November Preservation Café: Home Maintenance Tips



COURTESY IMAGE

Cliff Kornegay, owner of Capitol Hill Home Inspections, will discuss Home Maintenance Tips, with an emphasis on decks and deck inspections, at our next Preservation Café on Wednesday, November 18.

The presentation will begin at 7 pm at the Kaiser Permanente building, at 700 2nd Street, NE. Enter on the street level and turn immediately to your left after you pass through the front doors. The event is free and the public is encouraged to attend. The space is handicapped accessible. No reservations required.



# Providence Hospital

Providence Hospital was established in 1861 at the invitation of Abraham Lincoln, when the Daughters of Charity began their service to District residents. At the time, President Lincoln signed an Act of Congress to charter Providence Hospital, the longest continuously operating hospital in Washington, DC.

According to a June 11, 1961 article in the Baltimore Sun that celebrated the 100th anniversary of Providence Hospital, the hospital was founded on June 10, 1861 and stood for 95 years at Second and D Streets, SE. The location of the hospital was originally part of the Cerne Abbey Manor tract, acquired in 1730 by a pioneer settler of Maryland, Thomas Notley. It was named for an old Benedictine abbey in Dorsetshire, England. A portion of the tract descended through the Carroll family.

The hospital itself had been formed when the city's only civilian hospital, the Washington Infirmary on Judiciary Square, was seized by Union army officials on the eve of the Civil War. Washington doctors approached the Daughters (Sisters) of Charity in Maryland to assemble a team of nuns to come to the city and assist in forming a new civilian hospital.

Providence Hospital was founded to care for wounded soldiers of the Civil War and was used to serve as a teaching hospital. The building selected for the hospital was a wood frame house available for rent, occupying Square 735. During the war, the remainder of the vacant block was filled with army tents and the doctors treated those that flooded into Washington, civilians and military alike.

The first patient at the new Providence Hospital, a typhoid case named Lawrence O'Toole, was

admitted on June 27, 1861. A month later the hospital was receiving casualties from Bull Run. Hospital records show the admission, on July 22, 1861, of two privates of the 71st New York Volunteers, William Behan and George A. Cooke.

Behan was described as suffering from "a wound of thigh." Both were wounded the day before at Centreville in a skirmish preliminary to First Manassas.

Meanwhile, the Sisters had begun to purchase all the remaining lots on the Square and successfully lobbied Congress for financial awards in 1866, due to their commitment to treating soldiers during the war. These grants led to the construction of the brick building which began in 1866. Providence Hospital was completed in 1872 after six years of construction. It held a total of 250 beds.

The Sisters provided the first social work for the city's poor, feeding them from a soup kitchen in the basement. In 1896, a nursing school opened and the new technology of X-rays was installed. In 1899, a separate infectious ward was established to prevent disease from spreading from patient to patient.

The hospital expanded in the early 1900s and continued to provide care at the Capitol Hill location until the facility began to show its age. By 1947 a new hospital was needed but engineers determined that rebuilding on the same lot would require a two-year closure of the hospital. So the old building was purchased by the federal government to house employees of the Commerce



IMAGES COURTESY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



TOP: Staff at Providence Hospital circa 1895.  
BOTTOM: The hospital circa 1910.

Department and was eventually abandoned in 1964 when it was razed for a parking lot. The hospital moved to its current location, 1150 Varnum Street, NE in March 1956.

Providence is still a teaching hospital, offering three graduate medical teaching programs and serving as a rotational site for nursing and medical students and residents. ★

since nothing can or should happen without these three entities being in agreement.

These organizations should collaborate now and partner to collectively lead a coordinated process. All three of these entities understand appropriate citizen engagement and have the experience to develop the right planning process.

### The Role of the Comprehensive Plan

It is imperative that all vested parties consider the redevelopment of this site in a manner that is consistent with policies of the Parks and Open Space section of the federal elements of the current (2004) Comprehensive Plan mentioned above. The document embraces the following imperatives:

- “Protect, restore and enhance the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers as great open space resources and as recreational amenities, including shorelines and waterfront areas along rivers.”
- “Improve the quality of water in the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers to allow for both restored natural habitats and increased recreational use.”
- “Retain shoreline areas in their natural condition or appropriately landscape the water’s edge.”
- “Manage all lands along the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers in a manner that encourages the enjoyment and recreational use of water resources, while protecting the scenic and ecological values of the waterways.”
- “Encourage swimming, boating and fishing facilities, as well as water-oriented tourist activities, on the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers.”
- “Ensure that the shorelines and waterfronts of the Anacostia

and Potomac Rivers remain mostly publicly owned and that privately owned parks provide shoreline continuity through parks and promenades.”

- “Discourage large paved parking areas and other non-water-related development along the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers. Where large paved areas are required, preference should be given to using pervious surfaces. Existing large parking areas, such as the Pentagon’s north parking lot along Boundary Channel [and the parking lots at RFK], should be removed as soon as feasible and restored to a landscaped condition with active or passive recreational uses.”

These mandates dovetail nicely with DC’s Anacostia Waterfront Framework Plan, the Anacostia Waterfront Trust and NCPC’s own plans that govern NPS’s policies in the National Capital Region.

### Where Do We Go From Here?

Because there are only approximately 20 years remaining in the city’s lease, this means one of two things:

- 1) Any DC investments have to assumed to be short-term; or
- 2) There has to be a consensus use plan and a joint lobbying effort to manage the difficult process of getting a new federal law – one that won’t engender animus from the Congressional Representatives and Senators from Maryland and Virginia.

We have the beginning elements to prepare such a consensus plan, all of which address redevelopment of the stadium complex. This includes:

- The Parks and Open Space section of the Comprehensive Plan

- At least four development plans prepared by the National Capital Planning Commission

We need to use those as the starting point in planning the redevelopment of this site and involve the National Park Service, the DC Office of Planning and the National Capital Planning Commission in the planning process.

Given the time constraints of the city’s federal lease for the RFK campus, the easiest approach is to redevelop the RFK campus in a manner consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, the existing federal lease and DC and NCPC’s guidelines into an urban park. Creating this new oasis of green space on the shores of the Anacostia is sure to enlist the support of neighboring jurisdictions, NPS and NCPC. Moreover, as witnessed in recent community meetings, it is the clear choice of the site’s neighbors.

The delusion of the Redskins’ return should not be allowed to stand in the way of transformation of the RFK Campus into such a recreational and ecological amenity. ★

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*The article was prepared by Monte Edwards, Chair of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS) City Planning Committee.*

# Residential Energy Code Training at the October Preservation Café

By Greg Holeyman, AIA

David Epley, Green Building and Sustainability Manager for DC's Green Building Program (GBP), delivered the October Preservation Café. Created in 2013, the GBP operates within the structure of Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs' (DCRA's) permitting and inspections groups, with work including reviews of construction documents, conducting building inspections and collaborating with the community to further the efforts to build a more sustainable DC. Titled "Residential Energy Code Training," the presentation focused on how the newly-adopted Energy Conservation Code affects residential properties and how GBP and other DC agencies can help residents and professionals with the new requirements.

Mr. Epley described how the new Energy Conservation Code (ECC) was fully adopted by DC earlier this year. The ECC requires improvements to the thermal, pressure and moisture resistance of a new or renovated building. Thermal resistance, provided by insulation and referred to as a material's R-value, is a measure of how easily heat energy flows through a material. The pressure boundary or air barrier is responsible for slowing the flow of air through a building. And finally, proper moisture resistance or management prevents unwanted moisture from entering the building. All of these components are critical to the health and comfort of the occupants as well as the durability of the building.

According to Mr. Epley, it is considered best practice to have the air barrier and the insulation in

contact with each other, physically touching and forming a continuous barrier around the conditioned space. The best illustration of this concept is a 3-in-1 jacket system – the water resistant shell (air barrier) blocks the wind, while the breathable fleece liner (thermal/insulation barrier) keeps the body warm.

One major component of the ECC is to make the house air-tight by sealing areas of major air leakage. Mr. Epley described that these areas include joints around openings (windows and doors, chases, utility penetrations) and at building envelope junctions (soffits, kneewalls, common walls, wall/ceiling interfaces). These areas of the building envelope should be sealed, caulked, gasketed, sheathed or weather-stripped to minimize air leakage. Fiberglass and other porous insulation materials are not an acceptable material to stop air leakage.

Existing houses are leaky enough to allow for the infiltration of fresh air into the house, but a "tight" house needs to manage fresh air ventilation rates. Mechanical ventilation allows control over exactly how much fresh air is delivered and when and draws air directly from outside, so the air is guaranteed to be fresh. These systems can be set up through the bathroom exhaust fans or through a separate, dedicated system.

The ECC also requires "right-sizing" of new mechanical (heating/cooling) systems. When a system is sized appropriately per energy calculations, it decreases energy use, helps avoid humidity issues (possible mold and other moisture failures), improves comfort and equipment

lifespan and reduces potential noise issues. When installing a new HVAC system, confirm with the contractor that it is sized per ACCA Manual J and ACCA Manual S requirements.

The DC Sustainable Energy Utility (DCSEU) can provide financial incentives for DC residents to comply with the requirements of the ECC. More information can be found at: <https://www.dcseu.com/for-my-home>. Other sources of information can be found at [www.BuildGreenDC.org](http://www.BuildGreenDC.org). Mr. Epley and the rest of the GBP staff can be reached at [green.building@dc.gov](mailto:green.building@dc.gov) for more information. ★

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## Capitol Hill Restoration Society

420 Tenth Street, SE  
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## Mark Your Calendar!

### NOVEMBER

**2** Monday, 6:30 pm  
CHRS Historic Preservation Committee,  
Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first  
floor. Details: Beth Purcell, (202) 544-0178.

**9** Monday, 7:30 pm  
Overbeck Lecture: Donald Ritchie on  
Emily Edson Briggs of The Maples.  
Hill Center, 921 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE.  
Details: (202) 549-4172.

**12** Thursday, 7:30 pm  
CHRS Zoning Committee, Kirby House,  
420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details:  
Gary Peterson, (202) 547-7969.

**17** Tuesday, 6:30 pm  
CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill  
Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second  
floor. Details: Lisa Dale Jones,  
(202) 543-0425.

**18** Wednesday, 7-8 pm  
Preservation Café: "Home Maintenance  
Tips." Kaiser Permanente building, 700  
2nd Street, NE. Details on website  
calendar.

### DECEMBER

**7** Monday, 6:30 pm  
CHRS Historic Preservation Committee,  
Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first  
floor. Details: Beth Purcell, (202) 544-0178.

**10** Thursday, 7:30 pm  
CHRS Zoning Committee, Kirby House,  
420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details:  
Gary Peterson, (202) 547-7969.

**15** Tuesday, 6:30 pm  
CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill  
Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second  
floor. Details: Lisa Dale Jones,  
(202) 543-0425.