



CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

# NEWS

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March 2016

## 2016 Dick Wolf Memorial Lecture

By Monte Edwards

The second annual Dick Wolf Memorial Lecture will be held on Friday, March 18, at the Hill Center at 921 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. The lecture will be held at 7 pm and will be preceded by a brief Members' meeting beginning at 6:45 pm. The event is free and open to the public.

Brook Hill, a student at Georgetown University Law Center, is the winner of the 2016 Dick Wolf Memorial Lecture prize. Mr. Hill is a remarkable law student, who as a part-time student has worked for the Washington Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs and has been awarded a prestigious post-graduate fellowship from Equal Justice Works Foundation to assist tenants in buildings timing out of subsidies to pursue other forms of legal and financial support.

Mr. Hill will explain how we can retain affordable housing and its contribution to maintaining character of place. Existing affordable housing has restrictions in place that limit the rent that can be charged but these restrictions only apply for 15-30 years. Many regulations are now expiring and owners are moving to market-rate rents when the restrictions are lifted. The net result is a marked reduction in affordable housing. Also, in recent years there has been a great deal

of redevelopment in DC that has attracted wealthy newcomers. Neighborhoods that had once been affordable are rapidly becoming out-of-reach to many lower-income tenants. The Fair Housing Act imposes an affirmative duty on the City to foster racial integration. Because of income inequality that duty obligates the City to preserve affordable housing in gentrifying neighborhoods. Mr. Hill will explain his theories about how the City should do so.

Mr. Hill's lecture will be followed by a discussion with panelists who represent the perspectives of a DC developer, an affordable housing activist and the DC Government. These representatives include:

- The Developer: Buwa Binitie is the Managing Principal of Dantes Partners where he directs the acquisition, development, management and financial activities of the firm. Mr. Binitie's career is underscored by a commitment to creating and preserving affordable and workforce housing by utilizing low-income tax credits, new market tax credits, tax-exempt bonds and a various other forms of alternative financing. These



Brook Hill is the winner of the 2016 Dick Wolf Memorial Lecture prize.

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# CHRS Seeks Nominations for Board

CHRS will hold elections for the 2016–2017 Board of Directors by postcard ballot in May. The Elections Committee, chaired by Susan Oursler, includes Scott Davis, Elizabeth Nelson and Beth Purcell. The committee is seeking recommendations of individuals who wish to be considered for positions on next year’s CHRS Board of Directors. These positions include President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary, each for one-year terms and three At-Large Members for two-year terms. Nominations for the 2016–2017 CHRS Board of Directors will be announced at the end of April.

If you wish to be considered, to recommend someone, or to find out more about the duties of each position, please contact the CHRS office at (202) 543-0425 or email [caphrs@aol.com](mailto:caphrs@aol.com) and a member of the

## CHRS Needs a Newsletter Editor!

Do you have a solid background in writing and editing? Do you love the work that CHRS does on Capitol Hill? If you’re looking for a way to get more involved, editing our monthly newsletter may be a good fit!

Responsibilities include assigning and editing articles for 10 issues per year. You should be able to attend monthly Board meetings (the third Tuesday evening of the month, except August and December) and other CHRS events as necessary in order to write or edit articles about them. Once a month, you’ll need up to two weekdays to prepare the next edition on a tight deadline, with a backup editor to help with final copyediting. The new editor will work alongside the current editor for several months to learn the job. To find out more about this rewarding volunteer position, please contact Justine P. Bello at: [justine.bello@hotmail.com](mailto:justine.bello@hotmail.com).

Elections Committee will respond. Each recommendation must cite the position for which the person wants to be considered and must include his or her resume. Recommendations must be submitted by the end of the day on Tuesday, April 12, 2016. ★

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For more information, contact:  
[CapHRS@aol.com](mailto:CapHRS@aol.com)

# Roof Issues Topic of March Preservation Café

Gary Barnhart, general contractor and owner of GL Barnhart Construction, will lead the next Preservation Café on Thursday, March 17, 2016 at 6:30 pm. The presentation, titled “Capitol Hill: New and Existing Roof Issues,” will be held at Ebenezers Coffee House (downstairs), corner of 2nd and F Streets, NE. This presentation is free and open to the public. **Please note that this marks a return to the Café being held on Thursdays at Ebenezers.** ★



Contractor Gary Barnhart.

# Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS)

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## NEWSLETTER

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## OFFICE MANAGER

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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)

# Zoning Briefs

By Gary Peterson

CHRS Zoning Committee held a meeting on February 11, 2016. The committee considered the following cases.

**BZA 19193**, 1620-22 E Street, SE. The applicant wants to join two lots, one 18' x 90' and the other 30' x 90', and subdivide them into three lots that are each 16' x 90'. To proceed with this subdivision the applicant needs a variance because the lots will not meet the minimum lot area of 1800 square feet and the minimum lot width of 18 feet. Almost all of the existing lots on the street are 16 feet wide (16 out of 19). The committee voted to support the variance.

**BZA 19194**, 229 10th Street, SE. The applicant originally proposed adding a third floor to the existing structure. After meetings with the neighbors it was decided to add a walkway to the garage, making it part of the house, and to a second floor to the garage. A small one-story addition on the house will be demolished and a two story one added. The neighbors are in favor of this proposal. The applicant needs a special exception for 68% lot coverage, lack of rear yard and nonconforming open court. The committee voted to support the special exceptions.

**BZA 19196**, 1247 E Street, SE. The applicant wants to add an apartment in the basement of this former candy factory and store. In a previous zoning case the applicant was permitted to have ground floor commercial and 4 residential units with 4 parking spaces. The applicant needs a variance from the rule that there must be 900 square feet of lot for every unit. The applicant was allowed 4 units at only 874 square feet of lot area per unit. An additional unit would lower the number to 700 square feet. The

committee voted 4 to 3 to support the application. The board must confirm this to vote because the committee needs a super majority to take a position for the Society. The Board, at a meeting on February 16, voted to oppose the application because the deviation from the 900 square foot rule was too great.

**BZA 19198**, 230 12th Place, NE. The applicant wants to remove an existing two-story porch and add a two story addition. The addition will be three feet longer than the porch. The applicant needs a special exception for lot occupancy and for the extension of an existing dogleg. The immediate neighbors support the application and the committee voted to support the application.

**BZA 19199**, 619 Elliott Street, NE. This application is one of the first to be proposed under the new pop-up regulations. The applicant proposes to add a third floor and roof deck. The existing structure and lot are nonconforming. The height of the addition is exactly 35 feet as is permitted by the new regulation. The committee was concerned by the shadow that will be cast on a neighbor's skylight and voted to oppose until the neighbor provides a letter of support.

**BZA 19206**, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. The applicant proposes a historically sensitive addition of a third floor to the two-story commercial property. The first floor will be commercial and the upper two floors will have two apartments on each floor. The property is already non-conforming in lot occupancy, rear yard setback and parking. The addition will also increase the floor

*Continued on page 6*

# Historic Preservation Briefs

by Beth Purcell

The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB or the Board) considered the following cases on January 28, 2016. 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.

**631 Lexington Place, NE, HPA 16-100**, concept review, new rooftop addition. This brick porch-front rowhouse is part of a large Kennedy Bros. row built in 1912. The project would expand the attic space and add a basement entrance. On the front elevation, the existing windows (including the dormer windows) are six-over-one, a window type often seen in Craftsman-inspired rowhouses from this period. The plans specify restoring if possible or replacing the six-over-one windows on the front exterior (including the dormer windows), with six-over-one wood windows. Replacing the metal porch columns with wood or fypon columns will restore the original appearance (based on other rowhouses on Lexington Place). Replacing the metal railing on the porch with a wood railing and pickets will also restore the original appearance. HPRB has approved several similar projects on Lexington Place, including 640 and 642 Lexington Place (HPA 14-218, HPA 15-353).

CHRS noted that the design for the rear elevation is a hodgepodge lacking an organizing principle. The windows on the brick section



The rowhouses at 418–426 C Street, NE were designed by Charles Gessford in 1892.

are part of the historic fabric and should be retained; the applicant proposes to block off the window on the first story, replace the window on the second story with a six-over-one window and add a small six-over-one window for a bathroom. CHRS agreed that the staff should work with the applicant on the rear elevation.

The applicant proposes a new basement entrance in the front of the house. CHRS testified that it was not possible from the plans to determine the dimensions and specifics for the basement entrance or whether the entrance satisfies HPRB’s guidelines in “Preservation and Design Guidelines for Basement Entrances and Windows.”

Mark Eckenweiler, ANC 6C04, testified concerning compliance problems involving the applicant.

HPRB suggested restoring the windows if possible, using wood columns on the front porch and approved the concept, requiring the applicant to work with staff on

the rear elevation. But HPRB did not approve the basement entrance, which the applicant must re-submit with additional information.

**418–426 C Street, NE, HPA 15-150**, concept review, rear additions, penthouses, roof decks. These five rowhouses, designed in 1892 by Charles Gessford, one of Capitol Hill’s best-known architects, are some of the most important buildings on the north side of Stanton Square, with attractive alternating round and square bays. In recent years the buildings were used as small offices. Interior framing was changed or removed in inappropriate and unsafe ways. The applicant proposes to restore the buildings as single-family residences (probably condominiums) and incorporate a new addition of approximately 10 feet in the rear.

The applicant proposes to use the existing doors on the weather vestibule as the front doors to the houses, replacing the non-original iron gates in the entranceways, but proposes to demolish the weather

vestibule itself. These vestibules, often decorated with attractive ceramic tile and visible from the exterior, are important features of Capitol Hill houses. CHRS urged the weather vestibules be retained and restored.

The existing rear elevation has alternating projecting and receding walls. Earlier plans for the rear resembled the rear of apartment building, deemphasizing the different, individual rowhomes. CHRS suggested some modification to the design to emphasize the discrete units and the party wall, perhaps a slight projection or change in the brick pattern. The revised plans more clearly differentiate the five units. At the penthouse level, CHRS suggested some delineation in the center units, as was done with the end units.

The applicant plans to locate the water meters in basement closets in the rear of the addition and is investigating the possibility of placing the gas meters there as well. The electric meters are located in the front; CHRS urged the applicant to move them to the rear of the building as well. HPRB agreed. The carriage house on the property would be retained.

The applicant proposes roof decks and penthouses, set back from the front. HPRB rules provide that penthouses should not be visible from public space. The sight-line studies, based on a six-foot height, indicate that these elements will not be visible from across C Street, NE or near the center of Stanton Park. However, the staff report states that these elements will be visible from Massachusetts and Maryland avenues; they recommend that the concept be approved but find the penthouses and railings are incompatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District due to their visibility.

Members of the CHRS Historic Preservation Committee differed on whether the penthouses and decks were compatible. Some

committee members believed that the penthouses and roof decks are not compatible because they would be visible from a large public park, Maryland and Massachusetts avenues and elsewhere. The Comprehensive Plan on Historic Preservation aims to “protect and enhance the views and vistas, both natural and designed” and to “protect the generous open space and reciprocal views of the L’Enfant Plan streets, avenues, and reservations.” When CHRS reviewed the penthouse project at 146 13th Street SE (HPA 15-127), visible from Independence Avenue, SE, we asked HPRB for guidance. On May 28 and June 4, 2015 HPRB found that the penthouse access structure was not compatible because it was visible from public space. For the 418-426 C Street project, the combination of visibility from Maryland and Massachusetts avenues, C Street, 5th Street and Stanton Park combine to make this proposed penthouse structure much more visible from public space than was the structure at 146 13th Street, SE.

On the other hand, some committee members believe that the penthouses and roof decks are compatible. These rowhouses face Stanton Park and not Maryland or Massachusetts avenues. To have a view angle from Massachusetts Avenue you have to go to the intersection of 4th and Massachusetts. At that intersection, the rowhouses at the corner block the view of any set back penthouses on the applicant’s project. Likewise, to get a view angle from Maryland Avenue, you have to go the intersection of 6th and Maryland. There you have a whole block of buildings including Amy Weinstein’s building on the corner of 6th and Maryland blocking any possible views of the penthouses on this project. These committee members noted that generally we support projects without roof decks and associated penthouses. However,

we very much appreciate the return of these C-2-A-zoned properties to residential uses and, given the rear yard use for parking, there is no other outdoor space. (However, others counter that there is a large public park across the street.) Given that, they believed that the roof decks are reasonable and compatible.

A neighbor testified against the penthouse at 426 C Street, NE. The applicant indicated that it might be possible to remove the penthouses at 418 and 426 C Street and that there are alternative methods of roof access not requiring penthouses. The staff report found the penthouses and roof decks not compatible, relying on the precedent set by 146 13th Street, SE.

The board approved the project, but required that the weather vestibules be retained and held that any visible addition, such as the penthouses and roof decks, as shown in the plans reviewed on January 28, 2016 were not approved because they would be visible from public space.

The following case, in which CHRS participated, was on the consent calendar:

**240 Kentucky Avenue, SE**, HPA 16-145, concept review, two-story rear addition and rear decks. ★

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efforts have led to the creation of over 1,000 units of workforce and affordable housing.

- The Affordable Housing Activist: Will Merrifield is the Staff Attorney with the Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless where he works on the Legal Clinic's Affordable Housing Initiative, focusing on preserving and expanding the supply of affordable and subsidized housing for low-income residents of DC. He advocates with various DC government agencies for the creation and preservation of affordable housing.
- The DC Government: Allison Ladd is the Chief of Staff of the Department of Housing and Community Development that plays a prominent role in both the creation and preservation of affordable housing. Ms. Ladd

is a housing policy expert and previously served as Associate Executive Director of the DC Housing Finance Agency.

The lecture and panel discussion will be followed by a champagne reception, allowing the public to converse with Mr. Hill and the panelists.

The Dick Wolf Memorial Lecture showcases excellence in research and writing on urban planning and historic preservation in the District of Columbia by a student or intern. The winner will deliver the presentation and receive a \$1,000 prize. Last year's inaugural lecture was extremely well received, with standing room only.

Dick Wolf (1933–2012) was one of the District's most ardent and effective visionaries. For over 40 years, he worked tirelessly and effectively on community planning (including the Comprehensive

Plan), historic preservation and sound neighborhood development. He served on the CHRS Board for many years, most often as President, and also served on the Committee of 100 of the Federal City. His vision for Washington was that of a great, world-class city that houses both the nation's great institutions as well as families with young children; balances its appetite for massive growth with preservation of the character of its irreplaceable historic residential neighborhoods; and integrates sound, sustainable city planning principles, practices and administrative processes into all the city's day-to-day business. The Dick Wolf Memorial Lecture program seeks to preserve and advance that vision. ✨

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Zoning, continued from page 3

area ratio (FAR) from 2.0 to 3.0 (up to 2.5 is allowed). The committee was very concerned about trash storage for the residential and commercial uses and voted to not support the application until this issue is resolved. No trash rooms were shown on the plans.

**BZA 19221**, 160 North Carolina Avenue, SE. The applicant proposes to add a third floor to the house that will bring the height to exactly 35 feet, the maximum allowed. The house has third floor dormer windows that let light into the attic. The plan is to raise the existing rear shed roof to 35 feet so it is not visible from the street. The lot is large, with a total area of 2425 square feet. The

house and garage already occupy 80% of the lot (1940 square feet). The house currently has 4 bedrooms and one full bath. When completed, there will be two full baths and three bedrooms. The applicant is a family of two adults and two children. The committee believed that the house was already very large and that the applicant did not meet the test for a variance. Refinishing the existing basement could provide for any amenities the applicant may want. The neighbors oppose the addition and the committee similarly voted to oppose. ✨

## Thank You, CHRS Supporters

*We thank the following new members and donors.*

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# Volunteer Your Home or Garden for the CHRS House & Garden Tour

By Patrick Crowley

Every year several Capitol Hill homeowners get to make a big contribution to the community at very low cost to themselves. How? They open up their home or garden for the annual CHRS House & Garden Tour. It's that simple.

The participation of homeowners is crucial to maintaining CHRS' ability to keep tabs on development issues that affect the value of your home as well as the neighborliness of our community. This year's Tour will focus on the Barracks Row neighborhood—from 5th Street to 11th Street, SE and Virginia Avenue, SE to East Capitol Street. If your home is within that footprint you're one step closer to being included in this year's tour.

How does it work? Every year CHRS selects eight to 10 Capitol Hill homes and/or gardens from among the dozens nominated. Prospective homes are evaluated on the basis of historic character, appropriate upgrades and novel interior furnishings or amenities. Those selected will have glowing reviews written for the tour brochure and assistance in "crowd-proofing" the home. Homeowners are asked to have the home clean and presentable and to be absent from their home during the tour. And rest assured, every room of every house on the tour is staffed by a CHRS volunteer to safeguard the homeowners' property.

So hit the museums for the day and enjoy greater DC while letting your home do the work of raising funds for a worthy cause. If you are interested and able to nominate your home for the 2016 House & Garden Tour, please contact us at the CHRS office (202) 543-0425 or [caphrs@aol.com](mailto:caphrs@aol.com). ★

## House Tour: How Does It Work?

### Home Selection Process

- Homes are nominated for the House Tour by homeowners, neighbors, CHRS members and House Tour Committee members
- A review committee makes an assessment as to whether or not the house is in general conformance with historic preservation guidelines and zoning regulations
- House Tour committee members narrow the nominees down to approximately eight to 10 homes based on historic interest, general appearance, unique interior features or furnishings and representations of housing styles
- Homeowners and CHRS sign an agreement that the House will be on the Tour

### House Tour Preparation

- One or two House Tour Committee members visit to get background about the homeowners and the house for the Program Guide
- CHRS photographer visits to take photos of the outside of the home
- Walkthrough by the house captain to get the lay of the house and how many volunteers will be needed for each home
- House cleaned and in presentable condition for the tour

### Homeowner Events and Benefits

- Homeowners Reception before the House Tour to meet the other homeowners, CHRS board members and house captains
- CHRS President's Party in June
- Two complimentary tickets to the House Tour
- Framed copy of the Program Guide write-up of their home

### Tour Days

- House Packets will be delivered to each house on Saturday morning with balloons, program guides, tickets, paper and pens, rain footwear and various supplies
- Homeowners are generally not at home during tour hours
- A CHRS volunteer will be in every room of every home to guide visitors and make sure nothing is disturbed
- House Captains will make sure the house is left as it was found when the tour is over



**CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION**

**Capitol Hill Restoration Society**

420 Tenth Street, SE  
Washington, DC 20003

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## Mark Your Calendar!

### MARCH

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

**10** Thursday, 7:30 pm  
CHRS Zoning Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street SE, first floor conference room. 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.

**17** Thursday, 6:30 pm  
CHRS Preservation Café: Gary Barnhart, "Capitol Hill: New and existing roof issues." Ebenezers Coffee House (downstairs), 2nd and F Streets, NE. Wheelchair accessible; no reservations required.

**18** Friday, 7 pm  
Dick Wolf Memorial Lecture (Members' meeting at 6:45 pm, lecture at 7:00 pm), Hill Center at the Old Naval Hospital, 921 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. Details: CHRS office, (202) 543-0425.

### APRIL

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

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

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

**21** Thursday, 6:30 pm  
CHRS Preservation Café (topic to be determined). Ebenezers Coffee House (downstairs), 2nd and F Streets, NE. Wheelchair accessible; no reservations required.

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## 59th Annual Capitol Hill House and Garden Tour

Saturday, May 7 • 4-7 pm | Sunday, May 8 • 12-5 pm

More information available at (202) 543-0425 or [www.chrs.org](http://www.chrs.org).