



CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

# NEWS

www.chrs.org

December 2016/January 2017

## Capitol Hill Home Photo Contest

By Patrick Crowley

In anticipation of the 60th anniversary of the Capitol Hill House and Garden Tour, the Society is sponsoring a photo contest: “The Capitol Hill Home.”

You know it when you see the quintessential Capitol Hill home. For me, it’s the bay-front Victorian. Arched windows, of course. Tall double door front entry. Iron steps. Hairpin fence out front. Muted complimentary paint treatment on the brick window trim.

However, it’s often not the house itself but some almost hidden feature of the house or garden that defines the whole structure and steals the show—the iron front steps, brick detail over the front door, the painted transom window, or the rusted fountain in the yard.



IMAGES COURTESY PATRICK CROWLEY

Unique architectural details are signatures of “The Capitol Hill Home.”

Walk down any Capitol Hill street and—if you pay attention—you can find these gems at house after house. A small, round window overlooking an alleyway; an old corbel architectural adornment has no structural function but defines the home nonetheless; the wide front porch with a hanging swing.

We’d like to hear how you define “The Capitol Hill Home.” Even better, show us—take a photo of what you think makes a home a Capitol Hill home. Email the photo to us at [housetourchrs@gmail.com](mailto:housetourchrs@gmail.com). Be sure to include your name and address, email address, and the address of the property in the photo.

The winning image will be awarded two complimentary passes to the 2017 CHRS Mother’s Day House & Garden Tour and be prominently displayed on the CHRS website.

Entries are due by February 10, 2017. ✧

*In submitting your photo to the CHRS 2017 House Tour photo contest, you agree that it will become the sole and exclusive property of CHRS, which may reproduce, modify, and digitize and adapt the photograph.*

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# President's Column: The Work of CHRS Continues

Just over 60 years ago, a group of volunteers, alarmed at the destruction of historic properties in their neighborhood, banded together to form the Capitol Hill Restoration Society. Their efforts were rewarded with the creation of the Capitol Hill Historic District, providing significant protections within its borders.

Now, it's up to us—you, the Board, and other members—to continue their work, safeguarding our neighborhood as we adapt to changing circumstances and increased development pressure. We must pull together to ensure that Capitol Hill, within and beyond the borders of the Historic District, remains the place where we want to live, raise our families, and spend our retirement years.

The past year has been busy and productive; we've continued our traditions and pursued new ways to demonstrate our value to the Capitol Hill community:

- In March, we held the second Dick Wolf Memorial Lecture at the Hill Center to a capacity crowd. The topic, "The Loss of Affordable Housing," was and is particularly timely.

## Did You See? CHRS in the News

The November 11, 2016, issue of the *New York Times* included an article about the Capitol Hill Historic District in its Real Estate section: "Capitol Hill Historic District, Washington, D.C.: Surprisingly Homey." Find the link on our website at: [chrs.org/capitol-hill-in-new-york-times](http://chrs.org/capitol-hill-in-new-york-times).

## New CHRS Public Space Committee

Many hands make light work, so the adage goes. With that in mind, the Board of Directors voted to create a new ad hoc committee called Public Space. This committee will advise CHRS on issues pertaining to utility installations, alleys, streetscape (lighting and signage), federal reservations/pocket parks and public parking (front yards) and will leverage the unique qualifications of Steve Kehoe as Chair.

Steve is also serving in an at-large position on the CHRS Board of Directors and has a wealth of experience, having only recently retired from the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) where he worked on various public space policy and regulatory initiatives. He has a passion for preserving the unique character of the District's public space and maintaining public access to Capitol Hill's numerous small parks. His expertise has already proven invaluable to the Society since he joined the Board earlier this year. We're very grateful to Steve for taking on this additional responsibility.

- In May, the Society received the DC Preservation League award for our "advocacy, education, community outreach efforts and for its early and sustained contributions to preservation efforts in Washington, DC."
- Mother's Day weekend saw the return of the annual House & Garden Tour.
- In September and October, we led walking tours on Emerald Street, NE, where neighbors are considering applying for Historic District status.
- October also saw the introduction of our House Expo, highlighting service providers working on Capitol Hill.
- November found us playing host to the District's Zoning Administrator, Matt LeGrant at a Preservation Café.
- Throughout the year, our dedicated volunteers attended community meetings held by developers and District employees to represent your interests.

And in between all that, we've made time to address your concerns... Whether zoning and historic preservation cases, lighting choices on Maryland Avenue, NE, access to public space, inappropriate signage, or obtrusive gas meters—if it's important to you, it's important to all of us.

None of this would have been possible without your help. As much as we need volunteers, we need financial support as well. Please consider a gift to the CHRS Annual Fund in addition to your membership dues; your gift really will make a difference in keeping Capitol Hill the vibrant, beautiful historic neighborhood we all love. Details available at: [chrs.org/join-chrs](http://chrs.org/join-chrs).

Thank you for your membership and support of CHRS. Best wishes for a fabulous Capitol Hill 2017!

— Elizabeth

# Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS)

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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\* Chair is an appointed Board Member

## NEWSLETTER

Angie Schmidt and Kelly Vielmo, Editors

## WEBMASTERS

Donna Breslin, Elizabeth Nelson

## OFFICE MANAGER

Carl Spier

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

# Zoning Committee Report

By Gary Peterson

**D**uring a meeting held on November 10, 2016, the committee considered the following case:

**BZA #19344.** This case involves the application of 1336 H Street for three special exceptions to make a two story addition to an existing two story building located at 1336 H Street, NE. The first floor will be commercial and the upper three floors will have five apartments. Because of the construction, the applicant needs a special exception from the lot occupancy requirement, the rear yard requirement, and the open court requirements. The applicant is also claiming an extra 0.5 FAR because it claims it is preserving a façade that was constructed before 1958.

The committee opposes the extra FAR because the façade is new construction to replace the façade that fell off the building. It was not constructed before 1958 and no matter how the applicant explains the new construction, we cannot pretend that it is old.

The committee also opposes the special exceptions because the design of the addition does not enhance the urban design features of the immediate vicinity.

In particular, the windows of the addition clash with the windows on that side of the street because they are too large. Further, the addition needs to be set back at least 10 feet and must be lowered by one story. For these reasons, the committee recommends opposing the application. ★

## CHRS Welcomes New Board Members

**Justine P. Bello** is an architectural conservator who has been based in Washington, DC, for the last 10 years, with the last five spent living on Capitol Hill. Her work has allowed her to travel widely throughout the United States, Canada and the Caribbean preserving historic buildings, artifacts and works of art. She speaks frequently on a variety of preservation topics, including at previous Preservation Cafés. Justine is a proud parent to a Payne pre-schooler and volunteers with the school's Early Childhood Education committee. Justine was co-editor of the CHRS newsletter from 2014–2016 and is happy to be re-joining CHRS to complete the term of Secretary previously held by the late Gloria Junge.

**Nina Tristani** and her husband, Steve Nordholt, have lived in their Capitol Hill house for 26 years. She originally came to DC as a college intern and fell in love with the city. Nina has over 25 years of experience in publishing and communications. She has worked for the Smithsonian, *Congressional Quarterly* and the American Public Health Association. Currently she is co-owner of N&M House Detectives, a company that researches home histories. Nina served as a principal in the inaugural House Expo, has taken over primary responsibility for our Twitter account and manages the Events posting on our Facebook page. She will be working with other committee members to expand our social media, web and print presence.

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# Historic Preservation Briefs

By Beth Purcell and Alison Ross

The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB or the Board) considered the following cases on October 27, November 3, and November 17, 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.

**1116 Constitution Avenue NE, HPA 16-526**, concept/rear and roof additions. This is a two-story angled-bay contributing brick building. The applicant plans to repoint the brick on the front exterior where needed, repair rotten fascia, and restore the transom with new glass and retain the existing windows, which are commendable undertakings. The applicant plans to demolish an existing one-story frame addition (not historic fabric) and to construct a subordinate third story addition, filling in a dogleg. This addition would be the first third story on this block. The footprint will remain the same.

The fenestration on the rear elevation is not aligned, and the window proportions are unequal, and although the fenestration was improved in the plans shown to HPRB on November 3, the small window on the first story looked unbalanced. We suggested that the applicant consider symmetrically placed one-over-one windows.

In the August and October plans, the existing garage was to be demolished and replaced with a roll-

up door at the rear of the property, to maintain the edge at the alley. However, we agreed with HPO’s recommendation about preserving part of the garage, and welcomed the applicant’s offer to retain the alley elevation and a side elevation.

The visibility study showed that the addition should not be visible from Constitution Avenue. Four neighbors testified against the project, raising several concerns, including visibility of the addition from 12th Street on the south (which the applicant disputed). One HPRB member noted that a portion of the third-story addition would also be visible from nearby Walter Houp Court, NE, a wide inhabited alley and a major pathway. Neighbors also criticized the siding on the addition’s rear as incompatible with nearby brick buildings, and argued that the three-story addition would destroy the original character of the block, and set a bad precedent for a “pop-up and pop-back.”

There was no letter from ANC 6A in the public record. Because they had approved similar additions in prior cases, we expected that the Board would find that the project was compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District. However, HPRB decided that the three-story addition undermined the relative integrity of the existing houses, and directed that the addition be re-designed to be no more than two stories, and that the applicant work with staff to refine the proportions, placement, and sizing of the fenestration at the rear addition, and explore maintaining the masonry volume of the garage.

**119 7th Street SE, HPA 16-692**, concept/rear addition. This is a non-contributing two-story brick rowhouse with garage (possibly

constructed by Barrett Linde), and curb cut. The applicant submitted plans in September and October, 2016, and we believed that the September plans were superior in several respects.

Both plans called for retaining the garage and adding a third story over the garage, and a new addition in the rear with a clerestory. The October plans specified a new two-story bay (oriel window) in front. The September plans called for a three-story brick bay with solid wood double-hung windows, rowlock lintels and concrete sills, and a solid wood door with transom, which related well to nearby historic houses. But the October plans called for a two-story bay with larger window openings and single-pane casement windows in the bay and over the garage.

The larger window openings in the October plans did not relate as well to the windows on the nearby houses. We also thought that they dwarfed the entrance opening below. On the first story, the wood glass door with transom and paired windows in the September plans had been replaced by a centered door with a divided transom and sidelights. The garage door in the September plans related better to the fenestration of the adjacent houses.

A small roof deck is proposed for the rear. The rear elevation has long board siding, aluminum-clad casement and awning windows on one side, and on the other, hardie panel and trim, aluminum clad doors; the small deck on the third story has cable railing, as does the Juliette balcony on the second story. We suggested that an alternative material be considered in place of the hardie panels. Although the plans call for significant interior demolition, historic fabric is not affected.

We believed that while the September plans were compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District, the October plans were not compatible because of the over-large casement windows. The Board found that the parapet was too tall, the bay was over-large, the windows in the bay should be restudied, as well as the cupola.

The following cases, in which CHRS participated, were on the consent calendar for October:

- **219 9th Street SE, HPA 16-612**, concept/second story addition to one-story garage. HPRB agreed with the staff report that brick is the better choice over hardie plank for the second story addition. Although differing materials shows what is new and what is old, bricks are preferred. If the proposed new hoist beam is not serving a purpose, it should be omitted since there is already a historic version in the alley. Instead of copying a hoist beam, let the original stand alone as historic and not give a historicist/false providence to the new garage addition.
- **730 and 732 3rd Street NE, HPA 16-633, 16-634**, concept/new carriage house.
- **1109 D Street SE, HPA 16-682**, concept/two-story carriage house. HPRB questioned the design component of a new hoist beam which may or may not be useful; if the use is decorative, the hoist beam should be removed.
- **625 E Street NE, HPA 16-691**, concept/roof addition and roof deck. ★

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

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

## Tree Planted to Honor Gloria Junge

By Elizabeth Nelson

On November 19, we said a final farewell to Gloria Junge, CHRS Secretary and former office manager (September *CHRS News*, "In Memorium: Gloria Junge"). Trees for Capitol Hill, another organization she supported, arranged to have a memorial tree planted directly across the street from her house. They chose a nut-bearing hickory to support the squirrels that Gloria used to feed in her yard.

Friends and family from across the country and across the world met to settle the tree into its new home and remember Gloria's love for Capitol Hill and her block in particular. In a happy coincidence that Gloria would have especially appreciated, the person who has the contract on her



former house stopped by to show his mother his soon-to-be home, giving them an opportunity to meet the neighbors and feel the warmth of the community Gloria nurtured. ★

## Holiday Fun at Eastern Market

The Society hosted a children's jewelry making activity in the Eastern Market North Hall on Sunday, November 27, at the invitation of

Market management. They're working with the vendors and community groups to make the strip more attractive as a family shopping destination during the holidays. Our guests made bracelets for themselves or someone special on their gift list and were given CHRS pencils to take home.

This year we expanded our craft offerings to include snowman bookmarks, thanks

to the generosity of a long-time member who also financed our treats at Hilloween. Our "neighbors" in the hall were volunteers from the Southeast Library who thought the bookmarks were pretty sharp. And we enjoyed seasonal tunes played by a trio of youngsters on the violin.

IMAGE COURTESY ELIZABETH NELSON



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# November Preservation Café Reviewed New Zoning Regulations

By Gregoire Holeyman, AIA

**M**atthew LeGrant, the Zoning Administrator for the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCRA), was the speaker at the Preservation Café held on November 10 at Ebenezers Coffee House. The Zoning Administrator reviews applications for conformance with DC Zoning Regulations, under Title 11 DCMR, including building permit applications and Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) applications. The Zoning Administrator writes letters of denial, referring developers to the BZA and the Zoning Commission if they want to seek special exceptions or zoning variances to the Administrator's rulings. Mr. LeGrant has been at DCRA since 2006.

The presentation focused on the new zoning regulations, which went into effect in September, and how they affect the Capitol Hill neighborhood. The presentation also touched on zoning enforcement and proposed changes (or tweaks) to the regulations that are being considered in the near future.

Rowhomes, which fell into the R-4 zone designation, are now classified under the new RF zone designation. Capitol Hill homes generally will fall under the RF-1 zone. Restrictions from 2015 on height and solar power access that affected buildings in the R-4 zone have been rolled into the RF-1 zone.

There are four key changes to the new RF-1 zone:

**Height.** Maximum is 35'-0" or 3 stories, except where 3 or more immediately adjoining residential row dwellings building concurrently on separate record lots—then 40 foot maximum. Height maximum applies to all new buildings and additions,

subject to limited exceptions. Applicants may seek special exception relief from the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) for proposed heights between 35-40 feet.

**Conversions.** For converting an existing rowhome (1 or 2 units), to a 3 unit (or more) apartment, this is permitted only by special exception from the BZA, subject to conditions:

- Must be an existing building
- Maximum building height of 35 feet, subject to additional special exception analysis if exceeded
- Fourth dwelling unit, and every additional even numbered unit thereafter, subject to Inclusionary Zoning

**Additions.** A minimum of 900 square feet of land area per dwelling unit.

- An addition shall not extend further than 10 feet past the furthest rear wall of any adjacent principal residential dwelling\*
- No blocking of neighboring chimneys or external vents\*
- No interference with neighboring solar energy systems\*
- No removal or significant alteration of original roof top architectural elements\*
- No adverse impact on neighboring dwellings or property

BZA may waive no more than 3 of the starred (\*) requirements, so long as there is no adverse impact. Deviations from the conditions require area variances from the BZA. As well, the definition of a "Mezzanine" has changed. The space now counts as a separate story in RF zones for determining the maximum

number of stories (3) within a principal structure. A mezzanine is defined as "floor space within a story between its floor and the floor or roof next above it and having an area of not more than one-third (1/3) of the area of the floor immediately below."

**Design.** All new construction (including matter of right) in RF must comply with the following:

- No blocking of neighboring chimneys or external vents.
- No interference with neighboring solar energy systems.
- No removal or significant alteration of original roof top architectural elements.
- Relief from requirements require a special exception from the BZA.

Enforcement of the zoning regulations is driven by neighborhood notice or complaints. The neighbors should contact the Zoning department to make them aware of discrepancies between the approved drawings and the finished project. Most drawings are publically available through IZIS, Zoning's document portal.

A copy of the presentation can be found on the CHRS website at: [chrs.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/PC112016LeGrantRFregs.pdf](http://chrs.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/PC112016LeGrantRFregs.pdf). Working with a staff happy to respond to questions or comments, Matt LeGrant can be reached at: (202) 442-4576 or [matt.legrant@dc.gov](mailto:matt.legrant@dc.gov). ☆

# Tree Space Beautification Best Practices

By Steve Kehoe

CHRS encourages residents to adhere to these best practices, which will contribute to the robust growth and general health of Capitol Hill’s public space trees.

## Tree Space Beautification Do’s and Don’ts

DO	DON’T
If adding soil amendments or replacing some soil in a tree space, work must be done prior to tree planting. After planting, only periodic light cultivation is advised.	Never try to replace soil around a tree after it has been planted. Trying to replace soil around a tree usually results in a dead tree within 1 or 2 years—particularly for trees that are just becoming established.
Mulching around a tree is encouraged, as is watering new trees when rainfall is less than 1 inch per week. New trees need 10 to 20 gallons of water once a week from spring bloom until winter freeze. Second- and third-year trees need 20 to 40 gallons per week.	Using gravel as a groundcover or depositing soil to increase the grade of a tree space is prohibited (24 DCMR 109.10). Piling on additional soil exposes the tree bark to soil borne diseases and robs the roots of oxygen.
Any temporary barrier or fencing must allow the free flow of rainwater from the sidewalk into the tree space. This applies to permanent tree fences too. DC Dept. of Transportation (DDOT) requires a \$50 permit for a permanent tree fence (24 DCMR 225.1(h)).	Don’t install any solid border or edging around a tree space. This practice prevents or impedes the flow of rainwater from the sidewalk into the tree space. DDOT has been enlarging tree spaces in an effort to increase the amount of rainwater runoff available to trees.
Limit plantings to annual or perennial plants having a shallow root system and a mature height of no more than 18 inches tall.	Don’t use plants that grow via a deep root system, that spread by underground shoots or runners, that climb or intertwine, or that are invasive.
Acceptable plants include perennials such as variegated Liriope, Ferns, Hostas, Dusty Miller, Yarrow, Sedums, Black-Eyed Susan, and flowering annuals that grow no more than 18 inches tall. Plants should be at least 2 feet from the tree trunk.	Don’t plant bamboos and dark green Liriope, which spread by underground shoots to form an impenetrable root layer, or English Ivy which climbs. Vegetable plants are not flowers and are prohibited (24 DCMR 109.11).

## Thank You, CHRS Supporters

We thank the following CHRS members and supporters.

### NEW MEMBERS

Davis Elliott & Alan Jolley  
 Rachel & Robert Loper  
 Sherrill Mulhern  
 Sidney Neely  
 Rachel Ward & Simon Booth  
 Joan Wills

### SILVER

Stephen & Maygene Daniels  
 William Hackett  
 Amy Quinn

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**CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION**

## Capitol Hill Restoration Society

420 10th Street, SE  
Washington, DC 20003

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## Mark Your Calendar!

### DECEMBER

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

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

### JANUARY

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

**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: Elizabeth Nelson,  
(202) 543-0425, info@chrs.org.

If you received a complimentary  
copy of this newsletter, please  
consider joining CHRS!

[www.chrs.org](http://www.chrs.org)