



CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

# NEWS

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July/August 2017

## Coopers, Peddlers and Bricklayers: June Members' Forum

By Susan Burgerman

The goal of an archaeologist is to uncover objects from the past, conduct the research that will identify, date, and source these artifacts, establish the context in which they were used, and to construct a narrative of the past based on this data. This is the aim of the Shotgun House Public Archaeology Project that Historic Preservation Office District Archaeologist Dr. Ruth Troccoli and members of her team presented at the Members' Forum on June 21, 2017, "Coopers, Peddlers, and Bricklayers: Telling the Story of a Working-Class Property through Public Archaeology in Capitol Hill."

The property in question is the house at 1229 E Street SE. Referred to as the "Shotgun House," for nearly twenty years it has been at the center of a running dispute between the owner and the relevant DC government agencies, HPO and DCRA (with support from CHRS). The house is historically significant because of its age—it was built in 1853, which makes it older than most Capitol Hill homes—and its unusual architectural style.

Shotgun houses are common in working class neighborhoods of the deep south, but not in this area. Why a German immigrant in the mid-19th



IMAGE COURTESY ELIZABETH NELSON

Members examine artifacts from the Shotgun House at 1229 E Street SE.

century would build a shotgun house in Capitol Hill is part of the narrative that Dr. Troccoli's project seeks to construct.

The previous owner offered several plans for the building, and in 2014 unsuccessfully sought permission to demolish the building. (For photographs showing the building's condition at the time, as well as the slides from Dr. Troccoli's presentation, please see [chrs.org/what-secrets-lie-beneath-the-shotgun-house](http://chrs.org/what-secrets-lie-beneath-the-shotgun-house).)

In 2015, an architect-developer bought the property. The new owner proposed to the Historic Preservation Review Board that he be allowed to carefully disassemble the building, then restore and reuse as much of its original materials as possible. HPRB

approved the proposal in July 2016, with the stipulation that Historic

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# CHRS Proposes Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan, the city's most important land-use law, is amended every 10 years, and 2017 is the start of the amendment cycle. The Comprehensive Plan guides growth and change in the District. Zoning changes and development decisions are required to be consistent with the plan. The DC Office of Planning develops the Plan and the Council approves the Plan. CHRS has proposed several amendments to protect Capitol Hill:

- Preserve the 45-foot building height limit in four squares directly opposite the Washington Navy Yard, an important and secure Department of Defense facility. The height limit "allow[s] and encourage[s] a medium density of commercial development in the interest of securing economic development, while restricting building heights to a low level so as to respect the historic scale of buildings and the entrance to the adjacent Navy Yard."
- Establish wetland setbacks that would prohibit new development within 600 feet (approximately the size of a city block) of the Anacostia River shoreline.
- Preserve and provide new public access to the Anacostia River and connectivity with city neighborhoods through enhanced and expanded land and water trails, bicycle infrastructure, gateways and portals, public transit, and waterborne transportation.
- No new road on the west side of the Anacostia River because development, roads and other physical obstructions have a direct and negative impact on the natural resources areas, the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail, and block access to the river. The existing major highway on the east side of the Anacostia is a barrier to enjoying the Anacostia; we don't need one on the west side, too.
- Improve pedestrian and bike access to the Anacostia River and allow new environmentally-appropriate visitor access points to the waterfront and the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail.
- Promote cleanup of the Anacostia River and retain environmentally-fragile areas such as wetlands and riparian areas along the Anacostia River as open space or parkland. In areas under federal jurisdiction such as the Anacostia waterfront, work with the National Park Service to conserve and carefully manage such areas, and to implement an effective policy of "no net loss" of natural resources areas.
- Include the entire Capitol Hill area, including near Southeast, in the Capitol Hill Planning area, in order to create a unified plan for all of Capitol Hill. ★

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## CHRS Board Changes: Welcome and Thanks

By Beth Purcell

There are big changes on the CHRS Board of Directors this year. We will be joined by two new members, three current Board members will have new positions and two members will be stepping down. The Board of Directors would like to acknowledge the contributions of the following individuals for their past service:

First, grateful thanks are due to Patrick Crowley who served two terms as First Vice President, following a stint as Treasurer. He also chaired the House and Garden Tour in 2015 and 2016.

Second, thank you to Justine Posluszny-Bello for her service as Secretary and as newsletter editor. Susan Oursler will be the new Secretary while continuing as Budget and Finance Chair. We're sad to lose Justine from the board but she will continue to shine as a presenter at our Preservation Café, where she is one of the most popular speakers.

Scott Davis is also leaving to join the Board of Urban Ecosystem Restorations here in the DC region. Our loss is their gain.

Elizabeth Nelson, Patrick Lally, Adam Apton, and Janet Quigley will continue on as President, Second Vice President, Treasurer, and At Large, respectively. Monte Edwards, the current City Planning Chair, will become the new First Vice President.

The Directors also welcome the following new members: Michelle Carroll has rejoined the board as an At Large member and will be our 2018 House and Garden Tour Chair. Finally, Tina May will also serve At Large. We're very happy to welcome her as the one truly-new board member. ★

# Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS)

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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 Public Space . . . . . Steve Kehoe  
 Zoning\* . . . . . Gary Peterson

\* 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

During a meeting held on June 8, 2017, the committee met and considered the following cases:

**BZA 19527.** This case involves the construction of a third story and a three story rear addition to an existing non-contributing two story structure at 119 7th Street SE. The construction is a matter of right except for two special exceptions. The first special exception is needed to move the existing cornice line in front of the house from the second floor to the new third floor. The second special exception is necessary to construct a roof structure to admit light into the center of the house. The abutting neighbors support the addition and several neighbors oppose it.

The zoning committee voted to support the application for the following reasons:

- The Cornice Line. The regulations require a special exception to change the location of a building's cornice. The committee believed that the building will look much better with the cornice line moved to the top of the new addition. The committee believed that the special exception will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the zoning regulations and maps and will not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property.
- The Roof Line. The maximum permitted height is 35 feet. However, a special exception may be requested to achieve a maximum of 40 feet. Here the applicant proposes to construct a 12 by 7 foot structure that is 3 feet higher than the 35 feet allowed. The structure is set

back almost 14 feet from the front of the house and over 14 feet from the rear of the house. The roof structure does not harm a functional chimney or block a solar energy system. Given the location of the structure, the light, air and privacy of neighboring properties is not affected or compromised. Also, the roof structure is not visible from the street and will not visually intrude upon the character, scale and pattern of houses along the street.

The neighbors in opposition appealed the committee's finding to the CHRS Board. The Board voted to support the moving of the cornice line and to take no position on the roof structure.

**BZA 19528.** The applicant proposes to enlarge an existing 21 x 12 foot shed by adding a second story to 716 16th Street SE. To accomplish this addition the applicant needs special exceptions from the parking requirement and to expand an existing accessory building for residential use. The applicant submitted letters of support from adjacent owners and the committee voted to support the application.

**BZA 19529.** The owner needs special exceptions to make an addition to an existing nonconforming structure at 1108 South Carolina Avenue SE, and to increase the lot occupancy from 64% to 69% in order to construct a rear and side addition. The committee voted to support the application. It should be noted that the CHRS Historic Preservation Committee has voted to oppose the project because the applicant proposes to demolish a porch.

Continued on page 5

# Historic Preservation Briefs

By Beth Purcell and Alison Ross

The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB or the Board) considered the following cases on June 1 and June 22, 2017. 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.

**316 G Street NE, HPA 17-227**, concept/rooftop and three-story rear addition. The applicant submitted new plans on May 15, 2017. While the new plans show that interior demolition has been reduced, CHRS testified that the new plans fail to address the visibility of the proposed third-story addition from G Street, and would continue to fill in almost the entire length of the dogleg.

We believed that the primary issue in this case is the proposed third-story addition. This block is pristine - there are no third-story additions here. The project proposes a third story rear addition which would be the only third story structure on this block.

On the April 24 and May 15 plans, the proposed third story is unchanged in front, and still presents the same visibility issues as the February 9 plans. The third story addition could be pulled back from the front by reducing the size of the master suite. (The size of the third-story addition has been reduced in the rear.) Although the sight-line study indicates that the addition would not be visible from across G Street, it would be visible from oblique angles on G Street. It is essential to have a

lumber mockup so that visibility can be tested from all angles.

The character-defining doglegs on the 300 block of G Street NE are intact. (Before this square was added to the historic district, other doglegs within this square, but none on this block, were filled in.) Although the area of the dogleg to be filled is smaller than in the February 9 plans, the current plans still impair an intact mirror-image pair of doglegs, character-defining features in the historic district.

Like the uninterrupted roofline, all the doglegs on this block are now intact. We believe that it is possible to preserve the entire dogleg while allowing a viable addition. If approved, this project would set a bad precedent by allowing filling almost the entire dogleg, in a block where all the doglegs are intact.

The Board voted to approve the concept, but required that the dogleg remain intact and that the applicant construct a lumber mockup.

**501 C Street NE, HPA 17-427**, concept/construct rear additions, alter façades. This three-story brick corner building, built in 1876, occupies a prominent location opposite Stanton Park. The building has been altered over the years, and two one-story buildings were added in the 1920s.

MGM Public Policy, LLC, plans to use the building for its lobbying activities. It plans to restore the building, which will help ensure its architectural significance for years to come, and agreed to make several improvements to the plans, as suggested by CHRS. We had two primary concerns with the plans: the elevator addition and the roof deck.

The elevator would be in a new separate masonry structure that would



IMAGE COURTESY BETH PURCELL

501 C Street NE.

obscure over one-half of one of the highly visible historic elevations. We urged that the location of the elevator be restudied to minimize the effect on the exterior of the building by locating the elevator inside the existing historic building (as was done in the Hill Center), or relocating the main stair to a new glass addition (as was done in the Northeast Library).

The proposed roof deck above the 1920s additions would be 40 x 40 feet, extending to the edges of the parapet, and directly across from residences on 5th Street.

Lobbyists entertain and, for this reason, it appeared to us the roof deck would be likely be used to entertain. We urged that the roof deck be pulled back. ANC 6C and neighbors testified against the project.

The Board ruled that the elevator should be placed inside the existing building, if possible, reduced from three stories to two if feasible, and that the accessible area of the roof deck should be reduced in size, and that the deck and pergola be pulled back from 5th Street. The Board directed the applicant to work with

the community to refine the design, taking these concerns into account, and return to the Board, possibly on the consent calendar.

**525 A Street NE, HPA 17-417**, five new rowhouses. Capitol Hill Baptist Church proposes to construct five new three-story brick rowhouses with cellars on a portion of its parking lot. The project will have 10 units; two will be duplexes. The row will have an ABABA pattern: Three houses (A) with full-height bays and two houses (B) with two-story bays, a traditional Capitol Hill element.<sup>1</sup> Other traditional elements include sill courses, modillions at the cornice, two-over-two and one-over-one wood windows with cast-stone lintels and sills, and fanlights or transoms.

The parapet on the A houses has been simplified, an improvement. Simple glass doors and simple metal railings are planned. The brick will not be painted. The brick cladding will continue around the side and the rear elevations are likely to be clad in hardieplank and will be visible from the parking lot (in three colors, not five as in the earlier plans, also an improvement). The project fits in well

with the surrounding buildings and streetscape. One of two existing curb cuts will be closed.

There will be green roofs, two roofs will have private patios, and roof access structures are planned. The parapet has been raised to shield these. We had suggested slanting the roof access structure to minimize visibility, if consistent with zoning, and creating a sightline study to determine the potential visibility of the roof access structures.

We believed that the project was compatible with the historic district and suggested at the applicant consider some refinements in the design:

- Make the parapet line uniform, or
- Consider adding bay caps (e.g., as on Charles Gessford rowhouses) to the rowhouses with full-height bays.

The Board approved the project and directed the church to work with staff to minimize the height of the roof access structures, and to use either one-over-one or two-over-two windows, but not both, and create a consistent cornice line.

The following cases, in which CHRS participated, appeared on the HPRB consent calendar:

**516 3rd Street NE, HPA 17-397**, concept/rear addition, basement entrance and garage demolition. The Board requested that the staff ensure that the “period-specific” entry stair be a cast-iron stoop compatible with the house.

**17 6th Street NE, HPA 17-298**, concept/rear and rooftop additions and garage addition. The Board recommended approval with the conditions that the utility meters be located in the areaway; that the basement stair layout be resolved

to avoid unsafe or non-compliant winder-stair depths; that the fiber-cement not be joined with fasteners exposed on the surface; that the casement window details be clarified; and that the lintels be a precast or cast stone of compatible color and texture.

**1362 East Capitol Street NE, HPA 17-403**, concept/two-story rear addition. The Board asked that the extent of demolition be minimized.

**Square 762, Lot 828, HPA 17-426**, concept/new two-unit brick dwelling in alley. The Board made clear that it was not taking on the zoning relief needed, and asked that the height be reduced to less than 20 feet and no higher than the adjoining buildings at 207 and 209. ✪

<sup>1</sup> See Samuel C. Heald House, 1016 East Capitol Street NE (1895) and William Hutton House, 1012 Massachusetts Avenue, NE (1891). Antoinette J. Lee and Pamela Scott, “Capitol Hill Neighborhood,” *Buildings of the District of Columbia* (New York, N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1993, 257, 258).

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

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

**Zoning Briefs**, *continued from page 3*

**BZA 19536**. This case involves a nonconforming alley lot at the rear of 205 3rd Street SE that contains 1120 square feet. The lot is on an alley in a square that is between 2nd and 3rd on Pennsylvania Avenue SE. The applicant proposes to build a two flat building that occupies 100% of the lot. The committee voted to support the project provided the applicant constructs a green roof equal in size to the pervious surface requirements and makes arrangements to store garbage containers on an adjacent neighbor’s property. ✪



## SAVE THE DATE ! FREE HOUSE EXPO

CHRS will hold a free House Expo featuring over 30 home service exhibitors.  
Sunday, October 22 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.,  
The North Hall of the Eastern Market  
The event is free and the public is encouraged to attend.  
There are still opportunities for exhibitors to participate.  
Contact Michelle Carroll at [pilliodmp@aol.com](mailto:pilliodmp@aol.com) if interested.



**CHRS | MORE THAN 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION**

**BECOME A MEMBER!** CHRS received a 2016 award for the DC Preservation League for its “advocacy, education, community outreach efforts and for its early and sustained contributions to preservation efforts in Washington, DC.”  
Visit [www.chrs.org](http://www.chrs.org) to learn more. Email [info@chrs.org](mailto:info@chrs.org) or call 543-0425.

## Shotgun House, *continued from cover*

Preservation Office archaeologists be given access to the site.

From August 2016 to May 2017, Dr. Ruth Troccoli and a team of HPO staff members, volunteer archaeologists and archaeology students, interns, and contractors turned 1229 E Street SE into an excavation site. They began in the rear of the lot while the house was being disassembled, then, when the deconstruction was completed in December, moved the work onto the house's footprint.

At that point the site could be opened to the public, and the Public Archaeology part of the project began. The team gave site tours and held four public visiting days, each of which averaged from forty to fifty visitors, including city council Chairman Phil Mendelson. Many community members volunteered to assist with the excavation work.

Dr. Troccoli also made contact with descendants of the last known residents, the Hartley family. The last Hartley to own the property was Edna Hartley Switzer. Mrs. Switzer's family had been living in the shotgun house for fifteen years already when she was born in 1920; it stayed in the family until she sold it in 1985. From

her descendants, the project acquired a map that Mrs. Switzer had drawn by hand, which showed the layout of the house and outlined the additions that her father had built.

The original wood frame house on what was then lot 7 of sq 1019 was likely built by John Biegler, a German immigrant carpenter who had purchased lots 4 and 7 in 1850. Biegler sold lot 7 in 1853 to another German immigrant, an iron peddler named Ernst Tungel. Tungel built a frame addition to the rear in 1887, perhaps for a second bedroom. The archaeologists found a coal cellar that had probably been added at this time, and later filled in. Tungel died in 1890 and left the house to his niece Louise and her husband, Cotter Bride. The Brides used the property for rental income; it was occupied by tenants from 1890–1905.

One of these tenants brought an element of scandal to the Shotgun House. John Herke, the last German immigrant to live there, was a cooper working for the nearby National Capital Brewing Company. Maybe he had a particular liking for the brewery's product—some of their bottles were among Dr. Troccoli's artifacts—or perhaps it was a taste for stronger libations—the archaeologists also found a number of schnapps bottles.

On September 2, 1900, the Washington Post reported that Mr. Herke had gone on a month-long bender, which ended with him breaking up the furniture (yes, they did find pieces of broken furniture among the middens) and frightening his wife and children. He was hauled off to the Washington Asylum Hospital, where he later died.

The Brides sold the house at the end of 1905 to a blacksmith, Daniel Hartley, who turned it over the same day to his son, Daniel Jr., a bricklayer who occupied the house with his wife Mabel and their children for decades. This was Edna Switzer's father. Hartley built a brick garage at the back of the lot in 1917, and added a brick kitchen to the back of the house in 1938. It might have been then that the coal cellar was filled in.

The 1940 census shows Mabel Hartley, 49 and divorced, living at 1229 E Street SE with her 20-year-old daughter Edna and 15-year-old daughter Frances. Edna was by then married to a radio engineer named Wilson Switzer; her father transferred the property to the couple in 1941.

Wilson Switzer was not recorded as a resident in 1940, but he and Edna lived there with her mother through the 1940s and ran a business, Continental Radio, out of the garage in the backyard. They owned the property until 1985; her mother stayed in the house at least until the mid-1950s.

Aside from beer, schnapps, whiskey, and medicine bottles (many of which were on display at the meeting) and broken furniture, what else did the archaeologists uncover? Under the house itself they found a concentration of older household items, such as an oil lamp, a chamberpot, and pieces of pottery including a nearly intact blue willow plate. They found a bone pit, presumably belonging to animals that the occupants had eaten for dinner.

*Continued on page 7*

## In Memoriam: Gerry Dunphy



We lost an important member of the CHRS family on June 5 with the passing of F. Gerald "Gerry" Dunphy. Gerry was a stalwart and active supporter of the Society for many decades and a current member of our Zoning Committee. Gerry almost never missed a committee meeting—he attended the April meeting just three weeks before his death—and could always be counted on to advocate for a preservation point of view.

Gerry also supported other Capitol Hill institutions including Capitol Hill Village and St. Peter's Catholic Church. He was a fixture at the annual Capitol Hill 4th of July parade, dressing as Uncle Sam—with real whiskers. It's trite but true, but Capitol Hill won't be the same without him; he was a real original. Our sympathies go out to his many friends and family members.

# Outreach Efforts: July 4th Parade and Beyond

By Elizabeth Nelson

As part of our ongoing outreach efforts, Society volunteers fielded a contingent in this year's Capitol Hill 4th of July Parade. We had a large turnout with members, family and friends—including many children—to help us carry our banner and toss Mardi Gras beads into the crowd. The weather was fantastic—dry and not too hot. Robert Andretta joined us again this year, this time with his red Jaguar XJ-S that took “first in class” at a recent All-Brit car show. Many thanks to everyone who joined us! You can see pictures here: [chrs.org/capitol-hill-july-4-parade-2017](http://chrs.org/capitol-hill-july-4-parade-2017).

Looking ahead ... On **September 23**, we plan to staff a booth at the Barracks Row Fall Festival, an ideal opportunity to introduce ourselves to newcomers to The Hill and to those living outside the boundaries of the Historic District. We'll offer children's activities to amuse our younger neighbors while we share information about our accomplishments and future plans with their parents. And on **October 22**, we'll stage our second-annual House Expo at the Eastern Market North Hall, with over 30 home services providers.



IMAGE COURTESY ELIZABETH NELSON

If you can volunteer on either of these dates, please contact Elizabeth Nelson, [Elizabeth\\_knits@yahoo.com](mailto:Elizabeth_knits@yahoo.com). Volunteers are always welcome — and are truly needed. ★

## September Preservation Café: A “Tour” Underground at Congressional Cemetery

Paul K. Williams, President of the Historic Congressional Cemetery, will be the featured speaker at the next Preservation Café on Wednesday, September 21 at 6:30 pm.

Still an active cemetery with plots for sale, there is more to Congressional Cemetery than 70,000 dead bodies. This illustrated presentation will delight you with entertaining tales of goats, secret activities, unique fundraising, and some of the more unusual people buried in what the Washington Post describes as “America’s Hippest Cemetery.”

The Northeast Library is located at 330 7th Street NE, and the presentation will be in the handicapped-accessible downstairs meeting room. No reservations are required. The Preservation Café series is a free forum with topics of interest to the greater Capitol Hill community.

## Shotgun House, *continued from page 6*

Further research on the bones might reveal information about the wealth of the families based on the quality of the cuts of meat. There were also personal items, for example a toothbrush, a comb, doll parts and toy tea sets, and marbles. One category of personal effects was notable for its absence: there were no religious artifacts. This might conceivably provide a clue to the

lifestyle of 19th century working class German immigrants.

The time allotted for the excavation ended in May; the archaeologists have all of the artifacts that they will be able to dig up for the project. Now they must process and catalogue, date and identify the artifacts, and conduct further archival and oral history research to complete the story of the Shotgun House at 1229 E Street SE. ★

## Thank You, CHRS Supporters

*We thank the following CHRS members and supporters:*

### NEW MEMBERS

Tyrone Phillips

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Bill & Marsha Bawden  
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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!

### JULY

**18** Tuesday, 6:30 pm  
CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street SE, second floor board room. Details: Elizabeth Nelson, (202) 543-0425, info@chrs.org.

### SEPTEMBER

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

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

**19** Tuesday, 6:30 pm  
CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street SE, second floor board room. Details: Elizabeth Nelson, (202) 543-0425, info@chrs.org.

**21** Thursday, 6:30 pm  
Historic Preservation Café, Northeast Neighborhood Library, 330 7th Street NE, lower level. Details: CHRS Office, (202) 543-0425.

**23** Saturday  
Barracks Row Festival. Help represent CHRS at this fun family event by volunteering for a shift in the CHRS booth. Details: Elizabeth Nelson, (202) 543-0425, info@chrs.org.

### OCTOBER

**22** Sunday, 10 am  
CHRS House Expo, Eastern Market North Hall, corner of 7th Street and North Carolina Avenue SE. Details: Michelle Carroll at pilliodmp@aol.com.

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

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