



CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

# NEWS

www.chrs.org

June 2017

## Emerald Street Historic District Approved

By Angie Schmidt

Residents of Emerald Street NE (13th/14th/E/F Streets) sought a historic district to protect their street. ANC 6A sponsored the application, which CHRS supported. After much hard work by the residents, the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) approved the new historic district on May 25, 2017.

Emerald Street retains its integrity of feeling and association as a one-block residential street, looking very much as it did the day the last house was completed in 1923. HPRB members noted that Emerald Street is “one of the most beautiful streets in the whole city” and has a “wow factor.”

Congratulations to all who worked on this project. For more



IMAGE COURTESY BETH PURCELL

information and to view the testimony and nominating material,

please go to <http://chrs.org/emerald-street-ne-historic-district>. ★

### March with Your CHRS Friends and Neighbors on July 4!

Again this year, CHRS will celebrate Independence Day by fielding a contingent in the Capitol Hill Community 4th of July Parade. We'll carry the CHRS banner and toss Mardi Gras beads into the crowd. The route begins at the I-295/395 overpass (at 8th and I Streets SE) and ends at the Eastern Market Metro Plaza. The parade steps off at 10 am and takes just over an hour to finish.

If you would like to participate, please contact Elizabeth Nelson at [elizabeth\\_knits@yahoo.com](mailto:elizabeth_knits@yahoo.com), or just show up a half-hour in advance and find our crew. It's a lot of fun, especially for children, so invite your young neighbors to join you. The more, the merrier!

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# Historic Preservation Briefs

By Beth Purcell and Alison Ross

Interested in learning more about historic district designation?

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

The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB or the Board) considered the following cases on April 27, 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.

**602 E Street SE, HPA-17-295**, is a contributing brick bay front, with two stories and a raised basement and basement entrance. It was built in 1882 for owner George E. Emmons by Robert Barr and designed by an architect named Dutton. The building currently has three residential units, which would be retained. The lot’s configuration is unusual: it faces E Street and South Carolina Avenue SE (a major street) and the rear yard is visible from across Marion Park and 6th Street SE. The lot’s South Carolina side is currently vacant.

The proposed plan calls for restoring the façade by removing the Federal style door surround, replacing the front door with double leaf doors,

and restoring the tulip pattern front steps. It also called for a two-story rear addition clad in siding which would enclose the current gap between neighboring 603 South Carolina Avenue SE and 604 E Street SE. Neighbors were concerned about this addition blocking light, air and a view of Marion Park from their backyards.

To preserve the viewshed, CHRS suggested an alternative—that the applicant consider reconfiguring 602 E Street SE, from three units to two, omit the rear addition, and build a new house fronting on South Carolina Avenue SE to complete the row.

HPRB picked up on this idea and explored it with the applicant. The applicant chose to defer a vote on their two-story brick addition to work on plans to maintain their three residential units between the existing house and the addition of an accessory structure to face South Carolina Avenue SE.

**231 10th Street SE, HPA 17-317**, is a contributing two-story three-bay brick porch-front house that was designed in 1939 by the well-known African American architect Lewis Wentworth Giles for owner/builder H.V. Hudgins. The applicant, a principal in a design-build firm, obtained a building permit for a large addition to a house in the Capitol Hill

Historic District, without the required HPRB approval. The applicant began to build the addition, received a stop-work order, then filed for HPRB approval. CHRS argued that the addition violated three key historic preservation rules:

- 1) A rooftop addition must not be visible from public space. This addition will be visible on 10th Street from oblique angles, from only two or three houses away. In addition, if the tarp covering the house were removed, the third story would be visible from across 10th Street.
- 2) An addition must be subordinate to the historic building. The historic building is 1,448 square feet, and to be subordinate to the historic building any addition must not exceed 1,448 square feet. The proposed addition is 2,762 square feet, almost twice the size of the historic building, thus is not subordinate and overwhelms the historic building.
- 3) From the plans it appears that the project would demolish part of the existing roof (so labeled on drawings) to create a deck on the front of the house accessible from the third story master bedroom. The sight-line study shows that a third-story addition is to be built halfway over the main block of the historic house. HPRB requires that an addition must not be built on the original block of the historic structure (see 146 13th Street SE, HPA 15-127).

For these reasons, CHRS argued that the project is not compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District, and that the Board should order that the partly-built third story be removed.

## June Members’ Forum

Ruth Troccoli, the DC Historic Preservation Office’s District Archaeologist, will be the guest speaker at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, June 21 at the Hill Center, 921 Pennsylvania Avenue SE. Dr. Troccoli directed the excavation of the site at 1229 E Street SE, the pre-civil war home which is often referred to as “the shotgun house” for its architectural style. A display of artifacts found at the site will accompany the presentation of the excavation results.

A brief membership meeting will precede the presentation at 6:45 pm. The results of the election will be announced and the incoming Directors introduced. Highlights of the 2017 House & Garden tour will be shared.

*Continued on page 3*

# Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS)

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## NEWSLETTER

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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

# Zoning Committee Report

by Gary Peterson

During a meeting held on May 11, 2017, the committee considered the following cases:

**BZA #19497.** This case involves a request for special exceptions for lot occupancy and rear yard requirements for 1506 E Street, SE. The applicant proposes filling in a dogleg and adding a third floor. The lot occupancy increases from 64% to 70% and the rear yard is unchanged at 18.7 feet although 20 feet is required. The third floor is set back 5 feet from the front of the house and the committee believed that it should be set back further to avoid damaging the pattern of the houses along the street. For this reason, the committee voted to oppose the application.

**BZA #19498.** The applicant proposes to build a two story carriage house on the foundation of a previously existing one at 1109 D Street, SE. A special exception is needed in order to occupy the structure. The

committee voted to support the application.

**BZA #19504.** CHC BOLD PAC seeks to convert an existing residential building at 428 New Jersey Avenue SE, to an office for a nonprofit organization. Conversion of a residence to nonprofit use is permitted by special exception if six conditions are met. The applicant, by its own admission, does not meet one of those six requirements that the gross floor area of the building be 10,000 square feet or greater. The structure in question contains 2,156 square feet above ground and another 1,000 square feet in the cellar. Because the gross floor area is less than required, the applicant requires a variance from the 10,000 square foot rule. The neighbors are actively opposed to the application and the ANC has also voted to oppose. The committee believed that the applicant did not qualify for either the special exception or variance. ★

## Preservation Briefs, continued from page 2

In addition to violating these three important substantive rules, we argued that a property owner, who is required to obtain HPRB approval for a project, must not be allowed to circumvent the HPRB by somehow obtaining a building permit without HPRB approval, starting to build, and then presenting the Board with a fait accompli.

Three neighbors testified against the project. Based on the visibility and size of the addition, the Board ordered a modified building permit for only two stories. For additional information and photos, email info@chrs.org.

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

- **210 10th Street SE, HPA-296,** concept/rear addition, demolish garage
- **913 East Capitol Street SE, HPA 17-299,** concept/three-story rear addition
- **622 D Street NE, HPA 17-258,** permit/rear and rooftop additions
- **618 3rd Street NE, HPA 17-302** concept/rear addition, demolish garage. ★



# Terrace Court NE

By Beth Purcell

The 2017 House and Garden Tour included outdoor walking tours of Terrace Court NE (2nd/3rd/A/East Capitol Streets NE). At least 150 people took the tour, which was free and open to everyone. Tour participants learned how the L'Enfant Plan affected Capitol Hill development in profound and lasting ways.

In 1790, George Washington selected the site for our city; Congress expected to move the capital from Philadelphia to what is now Washington, DC, in 1800, but would only appropriate funds for the move from Philadelphia to Washington, not additional expenses. As a result, funds from other sources were needed to build the Capitol and President's House. Washington met with the local landowners and persuaded them to transfer one-half of their land to the federal government (which would sell its lots to raise money), and retain the other half (which was expected to become very valuable).

The land was surveyed into squares and lots (usually in equal sizes and even numbers, to facilitate division between the landowners and the government). Square 759,

which includes Terrace Court, is typical of the L'Enfant squares. Lots 12 and 13, which fronted on A Street NE were each 54.10 feet wide and 142.8 feet deep and nothing was built on them until 1889.

By then, there was a big demand for housing, and in 1889, Benjamin H. Warder, a major real estate developer, owned these two lots; he resubdivided them to create six smaller rowhouse lots fronting on A Street NE, a new alley, and eight lots on the new alley.<sup>1</sup>

Later in 1889, Warder's contractors, George E. Emmons and Charles W. King, built six brick rowhouses at 213-223 A Street NE, and eight alley dwellings, 1 through 8 Terrace Court NE. The alley houses are 13 feet wide and 28 feet deep, two stories, two bays wide (a door and a window), built in common brick, in American bond coursing, 6:1, with corbelled cornices (stepped brick



IMAGE COURTESY KERRY MULLINS

Beth Purcell leads an outdoor tour of Terrace Court NE.

decoration at the top of the house), segmental arches (rounded brick lintels) over the door and windows, and a scrolled spandrel (carved horizontal wood panel at the top of the window or door). These building elements are common to Capitol Hill houses of this period.

The Terrace Court houses, like most 19th century alley dwellings, are two stories, with four rooms: a living room and kitchen on the first story and two bedrooms on the second story. Residents used stoves for heating and kerosene lamps for lighting. In the rear yard was a toilet inside a shed and a water hydrant. A tour participant asked about the hydrant; it's the same type of pump used to get water at campgrounds. There was no running water or electricity on Terrace Court until the late 1940s.

Terrace Court was a typical alley dwelling rental project geared toward African Americans. Terrace Court residents were typical of alley residents: In 1900, although an elderly white couple and their four adult children lived in one house, African Americans lived in the other seven houses; six were married couples and one was a widow. Like other alley residents during this time, the African American residents worked in unskilled jobs as a porter, laborer, servant, or laundress.

## Lamb's Court to Terrace Court

Terrace Court (2nd/3rd/A/East Capitol Streets NE) was probably named for the Washington Terrace rowhouses built in 1874 or earlier on 3rd Street NE, in the same square. The name "Terrace Court" appears as early as the 1900 Census. In researching Terrace Court for the House and Garden Tour, we found references to the alley as "Lamb's Court," but could find no information about Lamb.

William DeCosta, who wrote a house history for nearby 219 A Street NE in 1998, had solved the mystery: In 1861, C.M. Lamb started the National Pie Bakery at 220 East Capitol Street NE in the same square as Terrace Court. As of 1880, W.I. Schneider was running the business, which employed 12 people.

Source: Elmer Epenetus Barton, *Historical and Commercial Sketches of Washington and Environs* (Washington, D.C.: E.E. Barton, 1884, 192-193).

*Continued on page 6*

# The CHRS House and Garden Tour 2017: Our Diamond Anniversary was a Real Gem

By Elizabeth Nelson

**W**e knew we needed to pull out all the stops to make our 60th anniversary tour a very special one—and by all accounts, we think we succeeded. With ten gorgeous private homes plus Florida House, Naval Lodge No. 4, and a refreshment break at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, we could hardly go wrong. As an added bonus, there were free tours of Terrace Court with our guides, Beth Purcell and Kerry Mullins. Although we were well prepared for rain, the weather broke by tour time on Saturday and was utter perfection on Sunday. We had many compliments on the variety of homes and other tour stops, the beauty of the gardens, and the walkable footprint.

Many thanks to everyone who made the event a success, most notably our House Tour Chair, Beth Purcell, and the house tour committee members, and the gracious hosts who put their homes on the tour: Ernest Beyard and Jaqueline Gillan; Bill and Pat Driscoll; Steven Choi and Will Sherman; Stephanie and David Deutsch; Tom and Mary Edsall; Bob and Connie Faltynek; Jane Hannon;

House Tour visitors enjoyed touring homes and the good weather on this year's tour.



Celia Morris; Theresa Sullivan; and Marina and Duane Tackitt. Thanks also to the House Captains, scores of docents, editors, photographers, writers, researchers, advertisers, donors, and many other volunteers. Additional photos are posted on the CHRS website.

Although we're barely recovered from the 2017 tour, we can't rest on our laurels. We'll soon be recruiting a new committee for the 2018 tour. Their first task will be to identify houses. If you have a home that folks would love to see, or friends with fabulous homes, please let us know right away. If you would like to (or can be persuaded to) join the fun folks planning this event, send an email to [HouseTourCHRS@gmail.com](mailto:HouseTourCHRS@gmail.com).

And for those who were wondering, the lion in the scavenger hunt "teaser" in the May issue is at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 301 A Street SE.



A huge "thank you" to our individual donors:

## **BENEFACTORS/PLATINUM**

Michael Halebian  
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# CHRS Supports 1511 A Street NE Zoning Case

by Brian Alcorn

Neighbors on the 1500 block of A Street NE are fighting against an excessively large building that a developer wants to build on their block. 1511 A Street NE, a 1920s porch-front house, was formerly zoned commercial (C-2A) and is now zoned RF-1 (the zoning for Capitol Hill rowhouses). Due to a mistake in the application of the zoning laws, a developer obtained a permit that would allow demolishing the rowhouse and building a five-story, 18-unit building that would tower

## CHRS Accepting Donations for A Street Case

Your financial support is needed to help our neighbors fight to maintain the quality of life and streetscape on Capitol Hill. To contribute to this effort, you can make a tax deductible contribution to CHRS. Make checks payable to 'CHRS', put '1511 A Street NE zoning case' in the memo line, and mail it to P.O. Box 15264, Washington, DC 20003.

over the two- and three-story houses on the block. DCRA cancelled this erroneous building permit and the developer is appealing that cancellation. Neighbors have hired

an attorney to defend the cancellation of this erroneous permit, and to protect their block. ANC 6A is also an appellant in a related case (#19412). ★

## Terrace Court, *continued from page 4*

Between three and seven people lived in each house, including boarders living in four houses.<sup>2</sup>

A series of movements to reform alley dwellings culminated in the Alley Dwelling Authority, created in 1934 with a mandate to discontinue alley dwellings by 1944 and to care for displaced alley residents. Facing a wartime housing shortage, the deadline was extended to 1955.

The Terrace Court houses remained as rentals until 1946, when people began to buy the houses to live in, obtaining building permits for renovation, bringing in utilities, adding an indoor bathroom (either inside the original house or in an addition). All the owners agreed on a design: painting the exterior walls white, adding green shutters (the same color scheme as George Washington's Mount Vernon), installing electric coach lanterns next to the doorway, and planting shrubs in front.

Interiors were individually designed, some with built-ins and a fireplace; interior woodwork was left natural or painted "Colonial white." A 1949 newspaper photograph shows

the new exterior color scheme and the interior of 8 Terrace Court, with Early American wood furniture (Windsor side chairs and a Windsor settee).<sup>3</sup>

As the 1955 deadline approached to vacate all alley houses, homeowners who rehabilitated their alley houses mobilized to save their homes; the Washington Court Dwellers Association was organized and retained an attorney. At a hearing before the Commissioners in 1953, Olga Jamison Brown and Walter Wood, Terrace Court homeowners, testified that they should be allowed to continue to live in the alley houses which they had transformed into modern, safe structures. Terrace Court homeowners won; the deadline to vacate alley dwellings was repealed in 1954.<sup>4</sup>

## Further reading

James Borchert, *Alley Life in Washington* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1982)

Charles Frederick Weller, *Neglected Neighbors: Stories of Life in the Alleys, Tenements and Shanties of the National Capital* (Philadelphia, Pa.: John C. Winton Co., 1909) [reprint available]

DC Historic Preservation Office, *DC Historic Alley Buildings Survey* (2014). [www.planning.dc.gov/page/historic-preservation-review-board](http://www.planning.dc.gov/page/historic-preservation-review-board) > DC History

Terrace Court Walking Tour handout, [www.chrs.org](http://www.chrs.org) ★

<sup>1</sup> DC Office of the Surveyor, 16/91 (13 Feb. 1889), 16/194 (9 July 1889).

<sup>2</sup> US Bureau of the Census, Population Census (1900, Washington, DC, ED 122).

<sup>3</sup> Robert J. Lewis, "Owners Who Reclaimed Blighted Area Seek Street Status for Neighborhood," *Washington Star*, 29 Oct. 1949, sec. B, p. 22. "Witnesses Appeal to Save Alley Homes," *Washington Star*, 28 Sept. 1953, 22.

<sup>4</sup> An Act to provide for the discontinuance of the use as dwellings in the District of Columbia, 48 Stat. 932 (1934). Public Law 594 (83rd Cong., 1954).



# May Preservation Café: Seth Baum from Historical Arts and Casting, Inc.

By Gregoire Holeyman, AIA

The May Preservation Café, held on May 17 at the Northeast Neighborhood Library, featured Historical Arts and Casting, Inc., a designer, fabricator, and installer of custom, architectural, ornamental-metal products based in Salt Lake City. The presentation, titled “United States Capitol Dome Restoration” focused on the firm’s work in the recent restoration / reconstruction of the Capitol Dome.

Cast iron first appeared in a Shropshire, England bridge built in 1770, eventually being used as the core building structure of the Ditherington Flax Mill for the first time in 1797. By 1850, it became a more commonly used construction material, as seen in Joseph Paxton’s Crystal Palace and in the first US Patent by James Bogardus of Cast Iron Facades in the US.

The US Capitol dome we see today was designed by Thomas U. Walter and constructed by Montgomery Meigs between 1855–1859. Set on the existing Dr. William Thornton-designed Capitol structure, the new 287-foot tall dome needed to be lightweight and strong enough to support both the interior and exterior domes. Building it out of heavy stone to match the existing edifice was not practical, so the whole of the new dome structure (structural ribs, exterior columns and cladding, interior coffers) was constructed with cast iron.

Almost 9,000,000 lbs. of cast iron, produced in Bronx, NY, was shipped to DC and assembled with a crane located at the center of the dome, without the availability of electricity. Since it was being built during the Civil War, it was considered

important to not delay construction of the dome which was considered a national symbol and because most of the already delivered iron would rust if left on site.

In recent years, the dome was in major need of restoration after years of deferred maintenance and rust issues created from previous non-successful renovation projects. Historical Arts and Castings, Inc. was a subcontractor on the large project, tasked specifically with restoration of cast iron decorative elements. Typical work was reconstruction of corroded / broken castings and fasteners and removal of fractures and rust jacking in salvaged materials.

Original material was salvaged and repaired as much as possible before new parts were inserted. The original material was sandblasted to remove existing paints and rust, then restored either via Dutchman replacements, lock and stitch, brazed and mechanical repairs and filling and patching. The cast iron was then finished with a Tunemic primer to protect the material.

When replicating missing or broken parts, the originals were documented via sketches, images and digital scans or with plaster molds. The information was drafted as a shop drawing, then fabricated in the Salt Lake City shop or at the on-site work-shop where an oven was available for braising-type repairs.

One example of the restoration was presented with the Boiler Plate Balustrades (near the top of the dome). Existing materials were sandblasted and documented in place, then disassembled and shipped to

Salt Lake City for reconstruction of the system in the shop. Once all existing and new parts were confirmed to fit correctly, the assembly was shipped back to DC and re-assembled on site.

Historical Arts and Castings, Inc. is made up of artisans who restore life to the classical and bring new meaning to America’s architectural heritage. Seth is available to answer questions about the renovation at [seth@historicalarts.com](mailto:seth@historicalarts.com). ★

## Thank You, CHRS Supporters

*We thank the following CHRS members and supporters:*

### NEW MEMBERS

Lauren Dufresne  
Marcia Montgomery  
Ann & Terry Godwin

### FRIEND OF CHRS

Barbara & Edward Wendel  
Michelle Esperdy  
(New Member)

### 1511 A STREET NE ZONING CASE FUND

Brian & Sarah Alcorn  
Michael Halebian



**CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION**

## Capitol Hill Restoration Society

420 10th Street SE  
Washington, DC 20003

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## Mark Your Calendar!

### JUNE

**5** Monday, 6:30 pm

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

**15** Thursday, 7:30 pm

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

**20** 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** Wednesday, 6:30 pm

CHRS Members' Meeting, Hill Center, 921 Pennsylvania Avenue SE, Drummond Hall. Details: www.chrs.org or info@chrs.org.

### JULY

**3** Monday, 6:30 pm

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

**4** Tuesday 10 am

Capitol Hill Community 4th of July Parade. Meet at 8th and I Streets SE. All are welcome to march with CHRS! Details: www.chrs.org or info@chrs.org.

**13** Thursday, 7:30 pm

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

**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.

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

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