



CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

NEWS

www.chrs.org

June 2019

Hill Spirit Shines on Mothers' Day Tour

By Janet Quigley

The rain clouds were low but spirits were high as the 62nd Mothers' Day House and Garden Tour attracted more than 900 visitors from near and far to experience the joys and curiosities of Capitol Hill life. Capitol Hill residents and businesses, known for their willingness to volunteer, pitched in to show off residential Capitol Hill in its best light.

The route featured Victorian, Wardman and Craftsman homes and gardens from Lincoln Park to South Carolina Avenue. Visitors enjoyed the classic charms of 1112 East Capitol Street NE, 922 South Carolina Avenue SE and 162 Tennessee Avenue NE; the refreshing outdoor living room of Jacqueline and Eric Emanuel (1227 Massachusetts

Avenue SE); and expansive additions by Stefanie Doebler (316 10th Street SE) and East City Books proprietor Laurie Gillman and her husband Mark (255 11th Street SE).

Pete and Connie Robinson's impeccably tended "secret garden" welcomed nature lovers at 154 11th Street SE, on the south end of Philadelphia Row. At Carl and Undine Nash's house (330 Cluss Court SE) guests were entertained, courtesy of house captain John Smith, by jazz pianist Amy Bormet, who performs at the Kennedy Center and directs the Washington Women in Jazz Festival.

Art lovers at 132 13th Street SE were dazzled by artist Jim Miller's remarkable mosaics of scenery, people and history which are built into walls, ceilings, cabinets and furniture. Children at 145 11th Street SE delighted in identifying whimsical pig figurines throughout the house, a favorite totem of owners Linda Mellgren and John Payne.

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House & Garden Tour visitors stop by 1227 Massachusetts Avenue SE.



IMAGE COURTESY BILL KOHUTANYCZ

316 10th Street SE welcomes tour visitors.



IMAGE COURTESY MARK GRACE

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Overbeck Lecture on Capitol Hill's Streets and Front Yards

By Maygene Daniels

On May 13, 2019, Chris Shaheen, Public Space Program Manager in the DC Office of Planning, presented an Overbeck Lecture on the history of Washington's streetscape, from its origins in the L'Enfant Plan to the present.


Of greatest importance for Capitol Hill, the 1870 "Parking Act," specified that the area in front of a building line to the sidewalk, the "public parking," should be maintained by the property owner. This new regulation applied to areas that previously had been part of the street right-of-way, and eventually led to the fenced, landscaped front yards characteristic of Capitol Hill.

In 1871, Congress passed the related "Projection Act," which allowed building extensions such as bays and corner towers to be built on the "public parking" to enhance the variety and interest of structures in the city's residential neighborhoods. Successive regulations implemented these two important pieces of legislation, ultimately leading to the varied facades and front gardens that characterize the urban landscape of contemporary Capitol Hill.

Shaheen reported that the DC Office of Planning has compiled the current regulations that apply to the "public parking" on Capitol Hill and throughout the city. *The Public Realm Design Manual: A Summary of District of Columbia Regulations and Specifications for the Design of Public Space Elements* is available online.

The Overbeck lecture series offers four lectures annually on the history of Capitol Hill and the larger Washington, DC community. The Overbeck Project website has

information on past and forthcoming lectures: www.CapitolHillHistory.org. Write to OverbeckLecture@CapitolHillHistory.org with suggested lecture topics, or to be added to the electronic mailing list. The Overbeck Project is an initiative of the Capitol Hill Community Foundation. Lectures are presented at Hill Center and are free and open to the public. ★

 **CHRS is on Instagram!**

To get cool photos and updates from the neighborhood, follow us at: [capitolhillrestorationdc](https://www.instagram.com/capitolhillrestorationdc). Many thanks to Laura Uvena for managing the account!



Capitol Hill 4th of July Parade

You never know who you will see at the 4th of July Parade!

Join your friends and neighbors on July 4! Again this year, CHRS will celebrate Independence Day by fielding a contingent in the Capitol Hill Parade. We'll carry the CHRS banner and toss Mardis 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 starts at 10 am and will take one hour from start to finish.

If you would like to participate, contact Elizabeth Nelson, elizabeth_knits@yahoo.com (or just show up a half-hour ahead and locate our group). In particular, we're looking for a fun conveyance - perhaps an antique car, to spice up our presence. As we go to press, some details are still in flux: we may be coordinating with other groups to extend a "Votes for Women" theme to recognize the 100 year anniversary of the 19th Amendment. Details will be posted on our website as they become available. We hope you'll march with us; it's a lot of fun!

Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS)

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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 Report

By Gary Peterson

April

During a meeting held on April 18, 2019, the CHRS Zoning Committee considered the following cases:

BZA #19997, 1348 Constitution Avenue NE. The applicant proposes to fill in approximately half of a second floor dogleg (the first floor dogleg has already been totally filled in). The footprint of the property will remain unchanged. The applicant has provided letters of support from adjacent neighbors. Based on this information, the committee unanimously voted to support the application.

BZA #19993, 1250 Constitution Avenue NE. This case involves the Maury Elementary School modernization project. The applicant needs zoning relief from the required screening of mechanical equipment and the parking lot. The committee found that the relief sought made great sense and, in the case of the screening for the parking lot, recommends that the zoning regulations be amended to make an exception for schools. The committee unanimously voted to support the application.

BZA #20005, 1719 C Street SE. The applicant seeks zoning relief to construct a two story accessory building containing a one dwelling unit. A new accessory building cannot be used as a dwelling unit for five years after it is built without a special exception. The property is very deep and contains 3,400 square feet. The existing lot occupancy is 25% and the accessory building will boost the lot occupancy to 40%. This square is very large and has a big community garden in the center. The garden is surrounded

by an alley and the part of the alley behind the property is 30 feet wide. The abutting neighbor supports the project and one neighbor on D Street opposes the project for safety and excessive development reasons. The committee believed the size of the building when compared to the size of the lot, the alley and square was very modest. For this reason, the committee unanimously voted to support the application.

May

During a meeting held on May 16, 2019, the CHRS Zoning Committee considered the following cases:

BZA #20019, 530 11th Street SE. This case involves a rear two story addition that is 25 feet by 15 feet. The applicant needs two special exceptions: the first exception is a simple increase in the lot occupancy from 41% to 67%, and the second exception is to extend the addition more than 10 feet beyond the real wall of adjoining neighbors. In this case the solid two story wall will extend 25 feet beyond the neighbor to the north and 12 feet beyond the neighbor to the south. The applicant's shadow study shows significant increase in shadows on the property to the north in March, September, and December. The neighbor to the north has not signed a letter of support. For these reasons, the Committee voted to oppose the application. It should be noted that the applicant can do a matter of right three story addition that will have much less impact on the neighbors. The Committee recommends that the applicant pursue that option.

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 April 25, 2019. 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.

620 C Street SE, HPA 19-222, concept/ façade alterations and third story addition. This two-story three-bay flat front brick building is a contributing building. Our primary concern in this case was the plan to construct a pop-up on the front of the building. We believed that this project is not compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District.

At the hearing on March 28, 2019, the Board generally supported changes in the openings on the first story, but ruled that a third story must be set back, be only minimally visible, be visually lightened through the inclusion of more glass and lighter colors, be compatible with the block, rejected the proposed mansard roof on the third story as incompatible, and required that the rear line of the building not exceed the rear line of the houses to the west. This case returned to the Board in April.

The revised plans at the April hearing addressed several of the Board’s concerns. The applicant stated that the rear elevation would align with the rear of 618 C Street to the west. The third story would be set back 7 feet 6 inches from the front, and is a simpler design. But the sightline study, which was not presented in the usual way, appeared to show that the third story addition

would be visible from public space. We agreed that any roof deck in front must be setback. Several neighbors testified against the project and stated that 22 neighbors opposed it. (The applicant noted some neighbors do support the project.) While the Board believed that the project was improved, they voted 3:2 to set the third story back another three feet, and required that the front area of the third story not be occupied. For prior coverage, see *CHRS News* (May 2019).

429 5th Street NE, HPA 19-214, concept/ three-story and roof addition. This brick two-story square bay front rowhouse was one of four houses built in 1885 for owner S. Quick.¹

The applicant proposed no change to the front elevation and planned a two-story and three-story rear addition, and to underpin the basement (but not for a basement apartment). The dogleg was previously infilled on the first story; the proposed addition would cover the dogleg on the second and third stories. The applicant brought new plans to the hearing, which the Board, HPO, and CHRS had not seen previously. We had noted that the sightline was tight and suggested a lumber mockup to test for visibility; the staff visited and found no visibility problem. Because there was insufficient information on the basement entrance, demolition plan, possible rear deck, and utility meters, the Board took no action, and ordered the applicant to return with revised plans.

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

414 Constitution Avenue NE, HPA 19-235, concept/ rear three-story addition with cellar; rooftop addition;

rear deck and balcony; conversion to two-family dwelling. The three-story brick rowhouses at 414 Constitution Avenue NE and 416 Constitution Avenue NE were originally owned by S. H. Walker and permitted as a mirror-image pair in 1888.² They feature projecting two-story bays, third-story Mansard roofs, cast-iron front stairs and stoop, and elaborate front entrances with carved wood, stained-glass transom windows with the street number, paired glass front doors, and air-locks with paired half-glass doors within; 414 still retains its stained glass in the paired half-glass air-lock doors. We recommended that the applicant retain the air-lock vestibule and air-lock doors as a character-defining feature of this house and its pair.

The clear, beveled-glass front doors appear original and showcase the ornate stained glass air-lock doors which are highly visible from the public right of way. The repetition and pattern of these entrances, with glass doors opening into air locks within, is not only a feature of these three similar S. H. Walker houses but it is replicated in his other houses across the street; it pervades the character of the 400 block of Constitution. It is a character-defining feature of most Capitol Hill row houses; the entrance at 414 Constitution is an outstanding example of this architectural feature. CHRS is encouraged that the April 14, 2019 plans show the applicant restoring the air-lock vestibule, refurbishing the stained-glass interior doors, and replacing-in-kind the wood and glass exterior doors.

811 E Street SE, HPA 19-259, concept/ two-story rear addition with partial

Continued on page 7

BZA #20027, 520 Groff Court NE. The applicant owns a small alley dwelling and an adjacent vacant lot and wants to build an identical dwelling on the vacant lot as an addition to the existing house. Because this is an alley lot, the applicant needs a series of variances to build the addition. In other cases involving only a vacant lot the Committee has supported variances to construct a house. Neighbors support the addition. The Committee voted to support the application.

BZA #20033, 302 South Carolina Avenue SE. In this case the applicant needs an area variance to increase the lot occupancy from 65.3% to 76.4%. In support of this request, the applicant reports that this will replace a sleeping porch that was demolished in 2008 and that Historic Preservation rules prevent him from adding a third story (it must be noted that this HP argument was rejected by the courts many years ago). The Committee

noted that, with the original sleeping porch, the lot occupancy was 71%. To achieve an area variance the applicant must prove: "...that, as a result of the attributes of a specific piece of property... the strict application of a zoning regulation would result in peculiar and exceptional practical difficulties to the owner of property; ..." This property is in a row of houses all having the same lot size and house footprint. The difficulties for the property are the same for the neighbors. Despite the large numbers of neighborhood support, the Committee voted to oppose the application.

BZA #20038, 221 10th Street SE. The applicant needs a special exception from the lot occupancy, the accessory structure lot occupancy, and the accessory apartment regulations to construct a two story garage with an accessory apartment unit. The lot occupancy will change from 44% to 67% and the garage will occupy 30

square feet more than the matter of right 450 square feet. The regulations require a special exception to build an accessory apartment into an accessory building sooner than 5 years after the building has been constructed. Neighbors support the new garage and apartment. The Committee voted to support the application.

BZA #20051, 633 7th Street NE. The applicant is going to build a small two story rear addition and needs lot occupancy relief. The lot occupancy will change from 61% to 70%. The Committee voted to support the application.

BZA #20052, 708 4th Street SE. The applicant proposes increasing the footprint of the house by 33 square feet by infilling a small dogleg. The lot occupancy will change from 63% to 68%. The Committee voted to support the application. ★

Rediscover Eastern Market June 7–9

By Monte Edwards

A celebration marking ten years after the restoration of Eastern Market will be held from Friday, June 7 through Sunday, June 9.

The event will begin on Friday morning when Eastern Market will be featured on FOX 5's Zip Trip program. This broadcast features various neighborhoods in the metropolitan area with live programming. Later in the day, the DC Department of General Services will hold an open house in the Market's North Hall.

Food tours will be conducted on Saturday. The tours will feature many

of the unique items available at the Market. Visitors will enjoy live music performed by a variety of artists throughout the day.

On Sunday, tours of the Market will explain the architecture, history and community significance of the Market, beginning at 10 AM and running until 3 PM. Games will be available in the North Hall as well as more live music.

Sign-up sheets will be posted at Eastern Market for those wishing to take the tours. ★

Please remember to vote in the CHRS election!

Members will soon receive a ballot to elect officers and directors for 2019–2020. Please remember to vote—fill out the ballot, sign, mail, and return to CHRS in the envelope provided. Ballots must be received by June 15, 2019.

Thank You, CHRS Supporters!

CHRS wishes to thank these Individual Donors for their invaluable support:

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House Tour, *continued from cover*

Participants in Beth Purcell's Gessford Court alley tour learned about working class life at the turn of the century and viewed the home where Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. hosted discreetly located political meetings with Barry Goldwater and Hubert Humphrey in the 1960s. Members of the Gessford family, descendants of 1890s builder Charles Gessford, stopped by and greeted the tour.

This 62nd tour was truly a team effort, led by Michelle Carroll's House Tour Committee and supported by more than 200 volunteer writers, researchers, editors, ticket-sellers, docents, drivers, photographers, greeters and a host of others.

The tour would not have been possible without the gracious hosts who opened their homes: Carl and Undine Nash, Ashley Yesayan, Stefanie Doebler, Laurie and Mark Gillman, John Payne and Linda Mellgren, Fynnette Eaton and Jim Miller, Jacqueline and Eric Emanuel, Steven Koons and Chris Ray; and the house captains who ensured a safe and enjoyable visit: John and Aaron Smith, Brent Jackson, Heather Schoell, Ann Grace, Chuck Burger, Cindy Hays, Meg Shapiro, Elizabeth Nelson and Maria Strylowski.



IMAGE COURTESY JANET QUIGLEY



IMAGE COURTESY BILL KOHUTANYCZ

TOP: The "secret" garden at 154 11th Street SE was a tour highlight. **BOTTOM:** A sundial decorates a garden at 1112 East Capitol Street NE.

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Garden walk at 1100 Constitution Avenue NE.

to put on the tour. CHRS deeply appreciates their generosity. Five local businesses served in a vital role as ticket outlets: Hill's Kitchen, Coldwell Banker Capitol Hill, Berkshire Hathaway at Eastern Market, Groovy Cards & Gifts, and Labyrinth Games.

Special thanks are in order for those who helped in unique ways: Jennifer Cate and the Capitol Hill Garden Club; Kris Swanson and Roy Mustelier of The Corner Store; Sharon Bosworth and Barracks Row Main Street; the Eastern Market; Nancy Lee; and the Miracle Theater.

Tour proceeds support CHRS's activities in historic preservation, planning and education such as

preservation cafes for homeowners, walking tours of historically significant areas, and community forums.

House Tour Chair Michelle Carroll expressed her appreciation for all those who assisted with the tour: "As always, the annual the CHRS House & Garden Tour would not be possible without the help of the entire community. As an organization that promotes Capitol Hill, we thank you all and look forward to seeing you again next year for the 63rd House & Garden Tour." ★

See additional tour photos at:
chrs.org/house-tour-2019-photos

HP Briefs, continued from page 4

third floor; new windows and wells on front, back and side; new siding. This frame detached house was built in 1874 or earlier.³ The original wood siding on the house is covered with aluminum siding; inoperable shutters, and an inappropriate Colonial style broken pediment on the entrance. The aluminum siding will be removed and the original wood siding on the front elevation will be restored, if possible, and if not possible, original siding and trim will be replicated. The siding on side elevations will be replaced with hardi plank siding and trim to match the front elevation. The shutters and in appropriate entrance will be replaced with a wood entrance and door appropriate to a 19th century frame house. New wood six-over-six double-hung windows will be installed. ★

¹ DC building permit 1321 (30 Mar. 1885).

² DC Building permit # 1805 (17 Apr. 1888).

³ Fraetz & Pratt Directory (1874). HistoryQuest.

Interested in learning more about historic district designation?

Contact CHRS at caphrs@aol.com.

CHRS Community Forum and Membership Meeting

Andrew Trueblood, the new director of DC's Office of Planning, will be the featured speaker for a CHRS Community Forum on Tuesday, June 25, at Hill Center, 921 Pennsylvania Avenue SE. Trueblood will discuss The DC Comprehensive Plan, the framework that guides economic development, housing, environmental protection, historic preservation, and transportation for the city. He holds a Masters in City Planning from MIT and a B.A. from Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, and is a resident of Ward 6.

The presentation will begin at 7 pm, preceded by a brief membership meeting at 6:45 pm to announce the result of elections for our Board of Directors. The event is free and handicapped-accessible, and the public is encouraged to attend. No reservations required.



CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

Capitol Hill Restoration Society
420 10th Street SE
Washington, DC 20003

Mark Your Calendar!

JUNE

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

7 Friday–**9** Sunday
Rediscover Eastern Market: A Celebration Marking 10 Years After Restoration. Open market hours each day. 225 7th Street SE. Details: chrs.org/rediscover-eastern-market.

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

Annual membership is \$35 and includes a subscription to the newsletter, a set of historic guidelines, and discounted tickets for the annual House & Garden Tour. Learn more at:

www.chrs.org

10 Monday, 7–8 pm
Village Voices: “Prehistory of Climate Change.” Northeast Library, 330 7th Street NE. Details: info@capitolhillvillage.org.

18 Tuesday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street SE, 2nd Floor board room. Details: info@chrs.org.

20 Thursday, 7:30 pm
CHRS Zoning Committee. Kirby House, 420 10th Street SE, first floor. Details: info@chrs.org.

25 Tuesday, 6:45 pm
Membership Meeting: Announcing the result of elections for CHRS Board of Directors. Hill Center, 921 Pennsylvania Ave SE. Details: info@chrs.org.

25 Tuesday, 7 pm
Community Forum: Andrew Trueblood, the new director of DC’s Office of Planning. Hill Center, 921 Pennsylvania Avenue SE. Details: chrs.org/andrew-trueblood-community-forum.

JULY

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

4 Thursday, 10 am
Capitol Hill July 4th Parade. Route begins at the I-295/395 overpass (at 8th and I Streets SE) and ends at the Eastern Market Metro Plaza. Details: chrs.org/capitol-hill-july-4th-parade-2018.

16 Tuesday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street SE, 2nd Floor board room. Details: info@chrs.org.

18 Thursday, 7:30 pm
CHRS Zoning Committee. Kirby House, 420 10th Street SE, first floor. Details: info@chrs.org.