



CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

NEWS

www.chrs.org

November 2019

Eastern Market Signage Approved

By Monte Edwards

The Commission on Fine Arts has approved the Eastern Market signage designed by Brick and Story that incorporate the recommendations of EMCAC. For all of the signage, the type fonts are those used on the Eastern Market logo.

Main Entrance. The “Eastern Market” sign is located over the main entrance. The letters are small, but with the banners on either side, the

design would bring attention to the main entrance because the banners would advertise the Market or call attention to seasonal events. The banners would rotate and would be replaced when they fade. This would call more attention to the Market’s main entrance and compensate for the modest sign. The banners can be designed and changed without having to go back to CFA each time.

North Wall. The “Eastern Market” sign has letters that project about an inch beyond the brick wall. They are mounted on a horizontal bar that is mounted to the wall or cornice, thereby requiring fewer fasteners than if the letters were mounted individually. Bird netting protects this area and bird nesting/roosting is not a concern. The “North Hall” sign is painted on the wood trim above the entrance door as endorsed by EMCAC.

South Wall. The “Eastern Market” sign has letters that are mounted flush with the brick wall, and thus do not provide any space behind the letters for bird nesting or roosting (this area is not protected by bird netting). ☆



Signage for main entrance (top left), north wall (bottom left), and south wall.



IMAGES COURTESY EMCAC

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House Tour Team Forming—We're Looking for a Few Good Homes

By Elizabeth Nelson, Tour Chair

As reported in our October issue, planning is underway for the 2020 Mothers Day House and Garden Tour. The House Tour Committee's first and most critical tasks are to identify the "footprint" and recruit neighbors willing to open their homes for the tour. For this year, the focus will be south of Independence Avenue, between 4th and 13th Streets SE.

Houses (and condos) do not have to be "grand" or formally decorated to be on the tour; our guests enjoy visiting a variety of homes. What we look for is a house that is interesting. It could be its size (large or small), or an unusual floor plan. Perhaps the owner has collected art or souvenirs from a lifetime of travel. Maybe a well-known person once lived there (or still does). A fabulous kitchen, a meticulous

restoration, or unusual interior detail—any of these make a home "tour worthy." This year, we're hoping to include some pre-Civil War homes.

If you know of a house that others would enjoy seeing, please let us know. If it's your own, so much the better! If not, provide us with contact information and we'll do the asking. If it's outside the proposed tour area, let us know, anyway: we may adjust the boundaries and we are also thinking ahead to 2021. I received a "hot tip" the very day the October article came out—I look forward to hearing from you, too! ★

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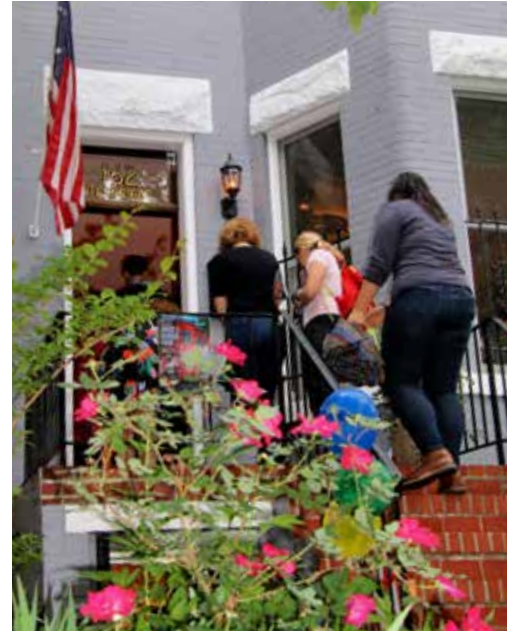


IMAGE COURTESY BILL KOHUTANVCZ

Visitors entering one of the homes on the 2019 CHRS House and Garden Tour.

New Neighbors? Tell Them About CHRS!

By Maygene Daniels

CHRS has been active on Capitol Hill for so long that we may take its existence for granted. Yet neighbors new to the Hill may not be aware of all that CHRS has done to create and preserve this wonderful neighborhood where they have chosen to live. Please let them know!

Over more than 60 years, CHRS has served the Hill, with achievements that have protected the neighborhood's distinctive architectural character, notably through the Capitol Hill Historic District. CHRS continues to rigorously review zoning and construction proposals to safeguard

neighborhood integrity, and monitors city-wide development, transportation and environmental issues that impact the Hill.

Its volunteers have a deep understanding of the city and its requirements. CHRS provides information freely and generously, and seeks ways to involve the community in discussions and celebrations.

CHRS represents and helps us all. Spread the word and encourage neighbors, old and new, to join. All are welcome. We depend on everyone's participation! ★

2019 House Expo a Success!

Thank you to our visitors, exhibitors, and our sponsors: *Hill Rag* and Chuck Burger, Steve Hagedorn, and Coldwell Banker.

More information will be shared in the December 2019 issue of the *News*.

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: caphrs420@gmail.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

During a meeting held on October 17, 2019, the CHRS Zoning Committee considered the following cases:

BZA #20124, 333 9th Street SE. Sam and Joelle Ballew have applied for special exceptions from the lot occupancy and rear yard requirements to construct a two-story rear addition. The applicants propose increasing the lot occupancy to 70% and reducing the rear yard from 22.5 feet to 19.5 feet. Abutting neighbors have filed letters of support and the Committee voted to support the application.

BZA #20149, 138 11th Street SE. This case involves the application of George Ingram and Lynn Hart for a special exception from the lot occupancy requirements to construct, on the alley, a two-story accessory structure. The first floor will be used as a garage and the second floor for storage. There will not be a bathroom or kitchen in the structure. Many neighbors, including abutting ones, have written letters of support and the Committee voted to support the application.

BZA #20147, 148 11th Street SE. Christopher Lobb and Paola Barbara, asked for special exceptions from the lot occupancy requirements and from the nonconforming structures requirements to build a one-story rear addition and a two-story side addition. The rear addition will replace a covered porch and the side addition, in the dogleg, is just large enough to house an elevator. The lot occupancy will increase to 66.4%. The abutting neighbors have signed letters of support and the Committee voted to support the application.

BZA #20139, 716-718 L Street SE. The applicant in this case needs a special exception from the ground floor use requirements to construct an addition to the existing detached building, and to convert the entire building into an 18-unit apartment house. The property is in the commercial NC-6 Zone and is required to have 50% of the gross first floor area dedicated to retail or service business. There are no parking requirements because the building is in the Historic District. The Committee voted to support this request for a special exception.

BZA #20139, 717 Kentucky Ave SE. This case concerns the application of Andrew and Courtney Briggs for special exceptions from the lot occupancy requirements and from the rear yard requirements in order to construct a two-story rear addition. The addition extends 18 ft behind the current residence and adds approximately 40% to the size of the residence.

The committee did not support the zoning relief for the lack of required rear yard setback. The proposed area of the rear yard is less than 70% of what would exist if there was a minimum of a 20ft rear yard setback. The committee felt that a slightly smaller addition was feasible and would provide a more ample and more appropriately sized year yard. The Committee was provided with letters of support from 715 and 719 Kentucky Ave SE. The Committee voted to oppose the application.

BZA #20128, 1421 D Street SE. This case involves a third floor and a three-story rear addition. The adjoining properties on either side are 2-story residences. The

Continued on page 5

Historic Preservation Briefs

By Beth Purcell

The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB or the Board) considered the following case on September 26, 2019.

142 D Street SE, HPA 19-329. This two-story two-bay brick rowhouse (one of four) was designed and built in 1885 by Samuel Norment.¹ The house is 12 feet wide and 30 feet deep, and has a dogleg. It is a contributing building.

The applicant plans no changes to the front elevation, and proposes to build a third story addition with a mansard roof and dormer, to match 140 D Street, SE; the addition would extend 20 feet beyond the rear wall of one of the adjacent houses. This project raises three issues:

- 1) An addition should be subordinate to the historic fabric. According to the applicants' information, the footprint of the historic house is 521 square feet, and two stories (1,042 square feet). The new proposed footprint is 716 square feet, and three stories (2,148 square feet) minus 1,042 square feet of historic fabric, for an increase of 1,106 square feet, and exceeding 1,042 square feet. Therefore, the addition is not subordinate.
- 2) The third story addition should not be visible from public space. HPO, Additions to Historic Buildings, 13. The applicants plan to match the design and setback of the third story addition at 140 D Street SE, which we believe is visible from public space; the applicants understand that this addition was built, and approved by HPRB in approximately 2000. Because HPRB's website shows no HPA for 140 D Street SE, we could not research the history of that addition.

- 3) Doglegs are character-defining features of Capitol Hill rowhouses, and doglegs in an intact row, such as this one, should be preserved. Infilling the dogleg, especially for 20 feet, eliminates this important landscape feature and would also significantly reduce the natural light entering the adjacent building.

The fenestration on the rear elevation could be improved by enlarging the windows. Additional information would be helpful in order to further evaluate the project:

- Photograph of the front and rear elevations
- Drawings showing the context of the project
- A sightline drawing

Although not a historic preservation issue, we urge that the mature trees be protected. Views of neighbors are important and we would like to see information on this topic. We understand that this project will be reviewed by the Fine Arts Commission, and will also require zoning relief. We believe that at this time, this project is not compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District. ★

¹ DC Building permit # 392 (23 Aug, 1885).



CHRS enjoyed being part of Barracks Row Day 2019.

IMAGE COURTESY ELIZABETH NELSON



IMAGES COURTESY BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

Albert's property façades on 14th Street SE (left) and Kentucky Avenue SE (right).

addition extends 12'10" beyond the adjoining residences on either side. The applicants, Matthew Pregmon and Arielle Giegerich, need special exceptions from the rear wall extension requirements, from the lot occupancy requirements, and from the nonconforming structure requirements to construct the rear and third-floor addition. At the meeting the applicant's architect provided shadow studies for the proposed addition.

The committee concluded from the studies that the addition, especially the third floor, would adversely affect the use of the neighboring properties. Specifically, the Committee concluded that the addition significantly increased the amount of shadow cast on the neighboring residences at 9:30 am and 3:00 pm all year. It is important to note that the first floor of the addition extends 8'3" beyond the adjoining residences while the second and third stories of the addition extend 12'10" beyond the adjoining residences.

The applicant has numerous letters of support from neighbors. Despite the letters, the Committee opposes the relief of rear yard

Why CHRS Opposed Albert's Variance

By Beth Hague

The CHRS zoning committee voted to oppose an application by the owner of Albert's, the property at 328 Kentucky Avenue SE. The property currently is home to a liquor store that occupies the whole triangular lot, almost 800 square feet including the bay windows on both sides of the building. The owner had requested an area variance from lot occupancy requirements to construct a two-story residential unit on top of the existing building.

The proposed addition would exceed lot occupancy but not height requirements. Abutting the lot to the south is a small triangle park. The zoning committee voted against the property because it was thought that the owner is already able to use the existing property effectively, i.e., that the applicant did not prove that the strict application of the zoning regulation would result in "peculiar and exceptional practical difficulties" to the owner of property because the owner intends to continue its current and ongoing retail use after the addition is complete.

Moreover, the zoning committee was concerned that the two-story residential addition would add undue density to the neighborhood, since a 600-foot lot is a small space to house both a grandfathered retail unit and a new residential unit. However, the project was approved by the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA), with the approval of ANC6B, the Office of Planning, and the DC Department of Transportation.

requirement C 205.4 (limit of the 10ft extension beyond adjoining building) and believes that building to the 10ft line would mitigate some of the shadows caused by the three-story addition. ★

October Preservation Café: Recognize the Ghosts of Capitol Hill

by Christine Mullins

You don't need to be an expert to see the many ghosts who continue to live on in our houses on Capitol Hill related Justine Bello, longtime-resident, architectural conservator, and lover of all things related to old buildings. Just open your eyes!

Create a new way of looking at the buildings that surround us to learn about their stories, suggests Bello. You don't need expertise: you just need to expand your awareness, build a new vocabulary, and practice.

Capitol Hill is old. Today, we can see the same fundamental street system L'Enfant laid out in 1791. Even our square numbers are the same as those assigned some 200 years ago. In a simple yet profound way, this street map has impacted how we have built our buildings,

alleyways, and parks. For example, are our row houses long and narrow like they are in New York or square like they are in Chicago? It probably depends on the shape of your block.

Bello says we can increase our awareness by learning how to read an old building. Cast your eyes upward when you walk through your alley. What is "hidden in plain view"? If you are lucky, a cast iron marker may tell you when the structure was built or restored. Can you see any holes or changes in the color of brick that may signify a missing porch, the letters of a partial sign, or windows or doors that previous homeowners may have bricked in? Did the owner try to artfully use the same kind or color of brick? Or did they simply fill the hole in with cinder blocks because price or time may have been an issue?

Different layers of use could indicate cohabitation or a prior business. What about the shutters an owner did not bother to remove prior to painting, or porches propped up with all kinds of materials. Water always wins, cautioned Bello, when owners layer foreign materials on top of brick, whether it is paint or faux stone siding.

Try to increase your old building vocabulary.

Remember that form follows function. The

shape of the building or object usually relates to what it did. Of 302 stables identified in Washington's alleyways, Capitol Hill has 82 former stables in its midst. During her presentation, Bello showed a photo of a building that had several windows positioned at the perfect height for horses to poke their heads out and get some fresh air.

Do you see a long beam above a doorway that could have held a pulley system to hoist hay for storage on the second story? In many old stables, garage doors have replaced the carriage entrance. Why did Capitol Hill have so many stables? Compared to other parts of the city, like Georgetown, Capitol Hill has many long, wide alleys, such as between 13th and 14th streets, that provided enough room to house horses, carriage houses, alley homes, and other sorts of dwellings.

To learn more, take a moment to read this great overview, The DC Historic Alley Buildings Survey at: planning.dc.gov/publication/dc-historic-alley-buildings-survey.

Take a look inside your Capitol Hill house. For example, exposed brick which is newly fashionable may uncover holes in the brick and masonry walls that indicate prior floor joists or ceilings. Did the owners cover the transom with wood or brick, or open it up to let more light inside? Take a look in your yard. Can you see where an owner may have moved the fence line? Bello says that when we make renovations, we tend to dump the stuff we remove nearby because we are too busy or can't be bothered to move it. These remnants provide clues to a not-so-distant past.

In addition, said Bellow, as you walk around Capitol Hill you will see

IMAGE COURTESY JUSTINE BELLO



This former stable has windows positioned at the perfect height for horses to poke their heads out and get some fresh air.

several obvious large “ghosts”. We now treasure the Old Naval Hospital, which was built in 1864, but quickly outlived its use and was later left in disrepair. The Hill Center was repurposed in 2011 and has become a vibrant center for our community.

The Commandant’s House in the Marine Barracks is an interesting “ghost” because it is one of the few buildings in Washington that survived the War of 1812. Supposedly, while most of the city was burning, people were eating dinner inside. You wouldn’t know how old this precious building is by looking at it since it is so well maintained and has undergone several renovations. Bello said she was part of an historic paint study and found some walls had been painted to look like they were brick.

Some of our ghosts have completely disappeared. Providence Park, also known as X Park, was the site of Providence Hospital from 1861 until it moved to Varnum Street in Northwest Washington in 1956. The hospital that remained was demolished in 1962, divided into 14 land parcels, and transformed into the green space where many kids have learned to play soccer after several development plans fell through.

But take a look at most maps and you will see a fact that points to the hospital’s roots: the park is not featured in green as most other parks. Bello mentioned that the Washington Brewery in Navy Yard suffered a similar disappearance.

Bello showed photos of how remnants of the US Capitol—both the campus and the building itself—have been dispensed with to different quadrants of the city. For example, two gate houses and eight gate posts dating to the Charles Bullfinch period have survived: the gatehouses and four gate posts are along Constitution Avenue, NW; another four gate posts are located at the New York Avenue entrance to the National Arboretum.

November Preservation Café: Restoration Tools and Materials of DC’s Historic Brick Buildings

Washington has one of the highest concentrations of historic brick buildings in the United States and preserving the historic value of our masonry makes good sense: in May 2019 the Washington Business Journal estimated the building portfolio in this city is worth more than \$250 billion. Real estate values may go through their ups-and-downs, but it is easy to see why proactive preservation and preventative maintenance are worth the cost.

Methods for preserving masonry usually depends on the type of building material used, whether it is brick, cement, stone, or others. Unfortunately, few local masonry workers are familiar with historic restoration. Misnomers and misunderstandings about the trade abound.

Gary Barnhart will discuss these materials in addition to some interesting lesser-known ones that Capitol Hill residents may be unfamiliar with. He will also describe the historic tools he uses, and those that the industry has reproduced and invented. Modern tools can speed things up, but they can also cause irreparable damage if used improperly. In some cases there is no good substitute for the tools masons and bricklayers have used for centuries.

Preservation Cafés are free to CHRS members and non members alike. We hope to see you at East City Bookshop, 645 Pennsylvania Avenue SE, on November 20th at 6:30 pm.

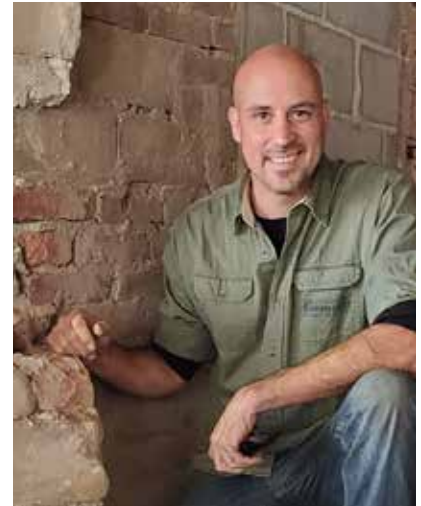


IMAGE COURTESY GARY BARNHART

Most of us have seen the 22 massive columns, originally part of Capitol’s East Portico. The Aquia Creek sandstone columns removed in 1956 when the East Front of the Capitol was substantially remodeled. They laid in purgatory at the Capitol Power Plant until 1987, when they were finally relocated to the Arboretum. Similarly, hikers in Rock Creek Park are privy to a small mountain of the Capitol’s sandstone blocks from the original quarry, scattered behind a hidden maintenance yard. But the Architect

of the Capitol still owns the stones just in case they need to use these precious stones in a future renovation! ★



CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

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

Mark Your Calendar!

NOVEMBER

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

4 Monday, 7 pm
Village Voices: "The Economist, the
Playwright & Pierre L'Enfant."
Northeast Library, 330 7th Street NE.
Details: info@capitolhillvillage.org.

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

20 Wednesday, 6:30 pm
Preservation Cafe: "Restoration Tools and
Materials of DC's Historic Buildings."
East City Bookshop, 645 Pennsylvania
Ave SE. Details: (202) 543-0425,
info@chrs.org.

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

DECEMBER

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

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

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

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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