



CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

# NEWS

www.chrs.org

February 2022

## March Guided Walking Tours

By Elizabeth Nelson

The Tour Committee is presenting guided walking tours on Saturday and Sunday, March 26 & 27. We'll have four showings each of the popular Architecture of Capitol Hill and Capitol Hill Alleys tours and an updated version of the Our Industrial Past tour, which was last offered in May 2021.

**Architecture of Capitol Hill.** On Capitol Hill, a wide range of architectural styles and features are on display. Learn about the changing tastes and practical decisions that informed the builders' choices—and the rich variety and interplay of style and function we enjoy every day.

**Capitol Hill Alleys.** Once home to many of the city's Black residents, our hidden alleys and charming one-block streets continue as flourishing communities. Learn about the lives and livelihoods of past residents and those who currently occupy these historic properties.

**Our Industrial Past.** Capitol Hill once held many industrial and commercial operations including manufacturing, beer brewing, coal yards and other now-vanished businesses. Join this tour to learn about this fascinating aspect of our shared history.

Tickets will be released on February 12 and past response has been strong.



IMAGE COURTESY NICK ALBERT

President Beth Purcell leads the Our Industrial Past tour last Mother's Day weekend.

So if you'd like to join us—and we hope you will—please confirm your plans early. Complete information and a link to Eventbrite ticket sales will be posted at: [chrs.org/guided-walking-tours-march-2022](https://www.chrs.org/guided-walking-tours-march-2022). ✧

### Show Us What Makes a "Capitol Hill Home"

See photo contest story on page 2!

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# CHRS Seeks Nominations for Board

By Beth Purcell

CHRS will hold elections for the 2022–2023 Board of Directors by postcard ballot in May. The Elections Committee, chaired by Beth Purcell, includes Elizabeth Nelson, Nancy Metzger, Christine Mullins and Brian Alcorn.

The committee is seeking recommendations of individuals who wish to be considered for positions on next year's CHRS Board of Directors. These positions include President,

First Vice President, Second Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary, each for one-year terms, and three At-Large Members for two-year terms. Nominations for the 2022–2023 CHRS Board of Directors will be announced at the end of April and ballots will be mailed to CHRS members in May.

If you wish to be considered, to recommend someone, or to find out more about the duties of each position, please contact the CHRS

office at (202) 543-0425 or email [info@chrs.org](mailto:info@chrs.org) and a member of the Elections Committee will respond. Each recommendation must cite the position for which the person wants to be considered and must include his or her resume.

Recommendations must be submitted by the end of the day on Friday, March 25, 2022. ★

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## "The Capitol Hill Home" Photo Contest

By Elizabeth Nelson

The photo contest was first announced in December and entries are starting to roll in. The images are "top secret" until the winners are announced but I can't resist sharing the text that

accompanied an entry from Margit Leiner-Henry: "To me, a Capitol Hill home is a feast for the eye and food for the soul. No matter what time of the year, whenever you walk by a Capitol Hill house, you wish

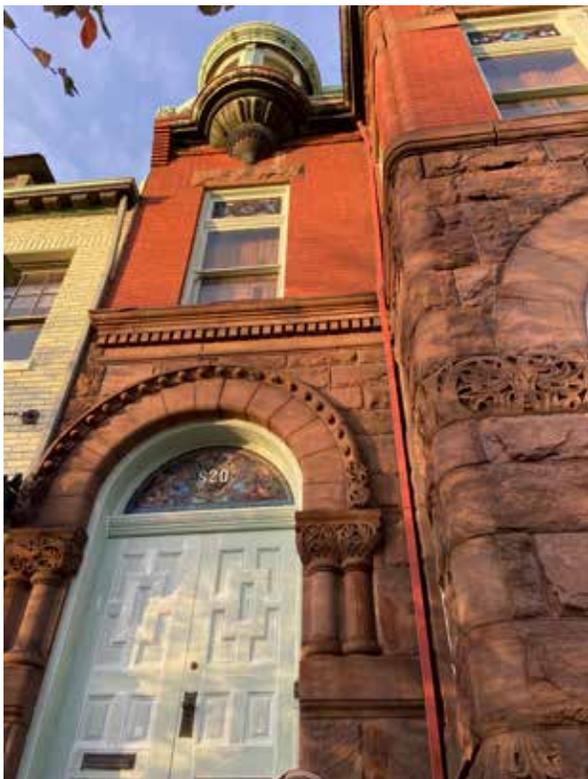
it were your own home. The obvious architectural beauty represented in so many different details in each single house; the colorful and intricately decorated facades; the opulent presence of nature in all four seasons in the yards as well as the streets that gracefully unites with the buildings to a visual masterpiece, all while still exuding a warm and homey coziness—that makes a Capitol Hill home so unique and desirable to me." That says it all!

We'd love to see your images of what makes a home a "Capitol Hill home," and there's plenty of time—the submission

deadline is Sunday, March 13, 2022. Email your high resolution images (> 1MB), exterior shots only, to [HouseTourCHRS@gmail.com](mailto:HouseTourCHRS@gmail.com). Cell phone photos can be texted to (202) 329-7864. Be sure to include your name and address, email address and the address of the property in the photo.

The winner will be awarded two complimentary passes to the House Tour. If you need inspiration, please visit [chrs.org/photo-contest-2022](http://chrs.org/photo-contest-2022) for details and links to past winning entries. We are also posting past contest entries on Instagram ([CapitolHillRestorationDC](https://www.instagram.com/CapitolHillRestorationDC)) and Facebook ([@CapHRS](https://www.facebook.com/CapHRS)). Take a peek—you might see your own or one of a friend's. ★

IMAGE COURTESY STEPHEN MORRIS



# Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS)

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\* Chair is an appointed Board Member

## NEWSLETTER

Angie Schmidt and Kelly Vielmo, Editors

## WEBMASTER

Elizabeth Nelson

## OFFICE MANAGER

Jill Uvena Cullinane

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 Committee Report

By Beth Hague

During a meeting held virtually on January 26, 2022, the Committee reviewed the cases listed in detail below:

**BZA #20607**, 327 Tennessee Avenue NE. The Committee voted to take no position on the applicant's request for a special exception for rooftop and upper floor requirements to construct a third-story addition to an existing two-story dwelling. The project would involve replacing an existing Mansard roof with an additional floor that incorporates some Mansard-like features. The dwelling sits in the middle of a row of seven uniform homes. The Committee notes that while the proposed addition is a pop-up and will visually intrude upon the scale and pattern of houses in the neighborhood, the architects have taken considerable care to design an addition consistent and in character with the surrounding neighborhood. The ANC and Office of Planning support the plan.

**BZA #20608**, 403 7th Street SE (Southeast Library). The Committee voted to support the applicants' request for a special exception for lot occupancy and an area variance for pervious surface requirements in order to expand the existing library both vertically and horizontally. This will include providing a new accessible entrance and will double the square footage of the library. The Committee believes that the proposed facility has been thoughtfully planned, will improve the use and attractiveness of the corner and will better serve the public than the current facility. The proposal is supported by DDOT, the Office of Planning, ANC6B and Historic Preservation. Separately, CHRS' Historic Preservation Committee,

which also reviewed and supports the plan, provided some suggestions for the plan that the architects incorporated.

**BZA #20614**, 133 Kentucky Avenue SE. The Committee voted to support the applicant's request for a special exception for lot occupancy and rear addition requirements in order to enclose the first-floor open porch of an existing two-story addition. The project has letters of support from both adjacent neighbors and the ANC. The Committee notes that the existing addition extends 15', which is beyond the 10' allowed under current zoning regulations, and the Committee would not approve it today. However, at the time that the original addition was approved, a 15' extension was allowed under the zoning code.

**BZA #20615**, 751 10th Street SE. The applicant has applied for special exceptions for lot occupancy and side yard requirements in order to construct a two-story rear addition and a two-story accessory garage to an existing two-story semi-detached home. The Committee voted to oppose the request for side yard zoning relief to construct the two-story rear addition and to support the request for lot occupancy to construct the two-story accessory garage. The applicant's home sits adjacent to an apartment building on its north side and an attached row house on its south side. The proposed two-story rear addition would abut directly onto the wall of the adjacent apartment building, which was built in 1912, has south-facing window wells that would be hemmed in by the proposed addition, and does

Continued on page 6

# New Short Term Rental Regulations

By Gary Peterson

In 2018, the DC City Council passed a law to regulate short-term rentals and vacation rentals. Short-term rentals are mistakenly called B&Bs (bed and breakfasts), which are subject to lodging regulations.

On December 3, 2021, DCRA's regulations on these rentals went into effect. Operators of these rentals must obtain a license by April 10, 2022, or face fines. To obtain a license go to [dcra.dc.gov/shorttermrentals](https://dcra.dc.gov/shorttermrentals).

To qualify for a short term license, the property must be owner-occupied during the rental and the guest must have restricted use of the home. There are no limits on the number of rentals per year but individual rentals are limited to 30 continuous nights. A short-term rental is not a hotel, inn, motel, boarding house, rooming house, or bed and breakfast. A short-term rental operates within a portion of the host's residential property, unless it is a vacation rental.

For a vacation rental license, the owner must not be present and the guests have exclusive use of the entire home. Rentals are limited to 90 nights per calendar year and individual rentals cannot exceed 30 continuous nights. Please note that the property must be the primary residence of the owner which means it qualifies for the Homestead Tax Deduction. The cost of either of the two-year licenses is \$104.50.

The Zoning Regulations have been amended to allow either of these rentals in the RF Zone so long as there is a valid license. Accessory dwelling units and English basements may be used for the rental. Guests may park on the streets but they are subject to residential parking restrictions. Visitor parking passes **may not** be used.

To check if a property has a license, go to: [dcra.dc.gov/shorttermrentals](https://dcra.dc.gov/shorttermrentals) or call (202) 221-8550. ★

## Thank You, CHRS Supporters!

CHRS wishes to thank the following donors for their invaluable support:

### Contributors

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Peter and Tina May

#### PLATINUM

Jack and Micky Penkoske  
Josephine Torrent

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# Capitol Hill Legacy of Architect B. Stanley Simmons

By Beth Purcell

Architect B. Stanley Simmons (1872–1931) designed the PNC Bank building at 800 H Street NE. The DC Preservation League and CHRS nominated the building as a historic landmark.

Simmons was one of the most prolific architects in Washington, and worked with every major developer, including Harry Wardman and Lester Barr. He started designing and building houses in the 1890s, before he moved on to bigger commissions. The rowhouses at 603–607 3rd Street NE and 300 F Street NE (1894), 1345–1363 Constitution Avenue NE (1894), 1443–1447 East Capitol Street SE and 715 15th Street SE (1901) date from his early career.

Simmons designed more than 60 apartment buildings between 1890 and 1926, including The Wyoming (1810 Wyoming Avenue NW, considered by some to be his masterpiece), the Embassy, (1613 Harvard Street NW) and the Highview (2505 13th Street NW) for Herman R. Howenstein. Simmons also designed the National Metropolitan Bank at 15th and G Streets NW (1905); the Northeast Savings Bank (now a PNC Bank) at 800 H Street NE (1921), the Barr Building at Farragut Square (1929); the Elks Club at 919 H Street NW (1908, now demolished); and the Fairfax Hotel at 21st and Massachusetts Avenue NW (1921). ★



The PNC Bank building at 800 H Street NE was designed by B. Stanley Simmons.

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# 2022 Mother's Day House and Garden Tour: Moving Forward

By Elizabeth Nelson

As reported in the December/January newsletter, we're planning a traditional in-person House Tour for Mother's Day weekend. We expect to adopt a "hybrid model" to accommodate a range of safety and comfort levels.

We'll offer a package that includes some houses that will be open to guests, some that will be virtual, and guided walking tours. The projected footprint is south of Pennsylvania Avenue between 2nd and 11th Streets SE. We are also looking for houses for the virtual tours—in these cases the location is not a major consideration. If you

would consider including your home for either type of tour, please contact the Committee at [HouseTourCHRS@gmail.com](mailto:HouseTourCHRS@gmail.com).

Homes are the essential ingredient of the Tour and we promise to take every precaution to ensure a safe experience for hosts, docents and guests; masks and proof of vaccination will be required. Mark your calendars for May 7 & 8; and plan to purchase your tickets in April through Eventbrite. ★

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## Zoning Report, *continued from page 3*

not have central air conditioning, therefore directly impacting light and air accessibility. The proposed project has received letters of support from neighboring homes, HPRB, the ANC, and OP and letters of opposition from the residents and owners of the apartment building.

**BZA #20627**, 632 5th Street NE. The Committee voted to support the applicant's request for a special exception for lot occupancy (from 60% to 67%) in order to construct a two-story garage with roof deck. The garage would include a second-story living area with no kitchen and the roof deck would cover a smaller area. The Committee notes that the applicant has provided letters of support from adjacent neighbors. The architect added a shadow study to the file the day after the meeting after the Committee inquired about one.

**BZA #20629**, 745 10th Street SE. The Committee voted to support the applicant's request for a special exception for lot occupancy and rear yard requirements in order to construct a two-story accessory garage with roof deck to an existing, attached, three-story home with cellar. The Committee notes that our support is contingent upon receipt of letters of support from adjacent neighbors.

**BZA #18701E**, 1247 E Street SE. The Committee voted to support the applicant's request for a modification of significance from use provisions to include general retail, service and office uses in addition to restaurant use. Because of the BZA order restrictions, we think it's a good use of the property. The property was originally built for commercial use and was the site of an historic DC candy store. The applicant has noted the devastating impact of the

Covid-19 pandemic on the restaurant business and therefore has applied for the modification to allow for other uses of the commercial space appropriate and consistent with the neighborhood. The proposal is supported by the Office of Planning and ANC6B. ★

# Zoning: Special Exceptions

By Gary Peterson

Special exceptions and variances are the area of zoning law that most people know little about and, in the case of variances, can become very confusing. The Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) is given the power to grant special exceptions where the Zoning Regulations specify that a special exception is required to build a project.

For instance, the lot occupancy permitted as a matter of right is 60% and the regulations specify that the lot occupancy can increase to 70% with a special exception. In the RF zone the BZA can grant a special exception to increase the lot occupancy up to 70% subject to the following conditions:

An application for special exception relief under this section shall demonstrate that the proposed addition, new **building**, or **accessory structure** shall not have a substantially adverse effect on the **use** or enjoyment of any abutting or adjacent dwelling or property, specifically:

- a. The light and air available to neighboring properties shall not be unduly affected;
- b. The privacy of use and enjoyment of neighboring properties shall not be unduly compromised;
- c. The proposed addition or accessory structure, together with the original **building**, or the proposed new building, as viewed from the **street**, **alley**, and other public way, shall not substantially visually intrude upon the character, scale, and pattern of houses along the street and alley frontage; and
- d. In demonstrating compliance with paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) of this subsection, the applicant shall use graphical representations such as plans, photographs, or elevation and section drawings sufficient to represent the relationship of the proposed addition, new building, or accessory structure to adjacent buildings and views from public ways.

The Board of Zoning Adjustment may require special treatment in the way of design, screening, exterior or

interior lighting, building materials, or other features for the protection of adjacent or nearby properties, or to maintain the general character of a block. Please note that the CHRS Zoning Committee often relies on c. above to oppose a special exception. (See 11 DCMR Subtitle E, Chapter 52 for more details.)

In addition to these specific criteria the proposed addition must meet the general special exceptions standards that the exception:

- (a) Will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps;
- (b) Will not tend to affect adversely, the use of neighboring property in accordance with the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps; and
- (c) Will meet such special conditions as may be specified in this title.

The applicant for a special exception has the burden of proof and must demonstrate that he meets all the criteria, even if there is no opposition. However, it must be noted that the standard of proof is very low and the BZA grants almost all unopposed applications. Thus, it is wise to talk to your neighbors before you start your project and to get letters of support from them to file with the BZA and ANC.

Next month, I will explain variances. ★

## Upcoming Preservation Cafés

### *Uncovering the History of the District's Buried Streams*

Tuesday, February 15, 2022 at 6:30 pm

Joe Arrowsmith, Ecological Engineer, Josh Burch, D.C. Department of Energy and Environment, and David Ramos, American University

### *Arming a Navy: The Naval Gun Factory and Its Local Workforce*

Tuesday, March 15, 2022 at 6:30 pm

Dr. Edward Valentin, Historian and Curator  
National Museum of the United States Navy

### *Designing a Net Zero Energy Row House: A Case Study*

Tuesday, April 19, 2022 at 6:30 pm

Will Teass, Teass Warren Architects

Zoom links will be listed on the CHRS website. Hope to "see" you there!



CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

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

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## Mark Your Calendar!

*Please check website for current information—cancellations and postponements are expected and will be posted as they are known.*

### FEBRUARY

**15** Tuesday, 6:30pm

Preservation Café: *Uncovering the History of the District's Buried Streams*. A Zoom link will be posted prior to the meeting. Details: [chrs.org/buried-streams-pc](https://chrs.org/buried-streams-pc).

### MARCH

**13** Sunday

Photo Contest 2022: "The Capitol Hill Home." Entries are due Sunday, March 13, 2022. Detail: [chrs.org/photo-contest-2022](https://chrs.org/photo-contest-2022).

**15** Tuesday, 6:30pm

Preservation Café: *Arming a Navy: The Naval Gun Factory and Its Local Workforce*. A Zoom link will be posted prior to the meeting. Details: [chrs.org/naval-gun-factory-pc](https://chrs.org/naval-gun-factory-pc).

**26 / 27** Saturday / Sunday

Guided Walking Tours 2022. Reservations can be made through Eventbrite beginning February 12. Details: [chrs.org/guided-walking-tours-march-2022](https://chrs.org/guided-walking-tours-march-2022).

### APRIL

**19** Tuesday, 6:30pm

Preservation Café: *Designing a Net Zero Energy Row House: a Case Study*. A Zoom link will be posted prior to the meeting. Details: [chrs.org/designing-net-zero-row-house-pc](https://chrs.org/designing-net-zero-row-house-pc).