



CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

NEWS

www.chrs.org

June 2022

The 2022 House & Garden Tour—It’s a Wrap!

By Elizabeth Nelson

We did it! It took the better part of three years, but we successfully held a “traditional” Mother’s Day House and Garden Tour for a cheery crowd of about 600. We had few adaptations that we will likely carry into the future:

Most tickets were sold through Eventbrite. This made it easy to track ticket sales and we were able to begin selling tickets before paper tickets came back from the printer.

Catalogs picked up at will call. In past years, guests picked them up at the house they visited first, necessitating supplies at all of the houses. The will call staff were in a good position to give advice on the tour, helping guests decide which sites and activities they would most enjoy.

Variety of activities. In addition to the homes, we had informational tours at three other sites plus walking tours. Having different activities to choose from eased congestion in the houses, making the experience more enjoyable and less crowded for all.

Robust walking tours. In recent years, we’ve offered short guided walking tours in conjunction with the event. But this year, we improved this feature. Beth Purcell developed an hour-long tour of alleys outside the



IMAGE COURTESY ROBERT WEINSTEIN

main tour footprint. Despite the foul weather, they were very well attended. For some, it was their primary reason for purchasing tickets. We also included instructions for a self-guided walking tour that can be enjoyed at a later date, extending the usefulness of the catalog.

Virtual component. We planned the virtual tour largely as an insurance policy, not knowing what health concerns might arise by Tour weekend. However, it proved a

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popular attraction in its own right; especially for people with mobility issues or scheduling conflicts. As we go to press, over 300 people have signed into the virtual tour.

New advertising outlets. This year, we placed the house tour postcards in the ubiquitous Little Libraries/book boxes. We also promoted heavily through Instagram. In both cases, we reached new audiences who, even if they didn't purchase tickets, have an increased awareness of our organization's positive activities.

New benefits to paid advertisers.

Our recurring walking tours and on-line presence for our web-based activities have given us opportunities to show appreciation to our paid advertisers, by including their logos in our materials.

On behalf of the House and Garden Tour Committee, many thanks to everyone who made the event a success—especially the hosts who graciously opened their homes for the enjoyment of our guests. ★

How you can help

As part of our advertising campaign, we hung posters and left postcards in Little Library book boxes. It's important to remove them as quickly as possible but it's easy to miss a few. When you're out and about, please keep an eagle eye and remove them yourself if you can, or send us the locations so we can collect them. Thank you!



TOP LEFT: Beth Purcell leads a damp tour of the Alleys of Northeast Capitol Hill. TOP RIGHT: Tourgoers at the Churchill Condos. BOTTOM ROW: Admiring the art and decor at different tour stops.

IMAGES COURTESY ANGIE SCHMIDT, ROBERT WEINSTEIN, NICK ALBERTI, HEATHER SCHOELL

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 Beth Hague

On May 5, 2022, 4 members of the CHRS Zoning Committee met to discuss 6 cases via Zoom. Representatives from 4 cases participated to present their proposals. The Committee voted to support 5 cases and to oppose 1 case.

BZA #20713, 135 Kentucky Avenue SE. The Committee voted to **support** the applicant's request for a special exception for lot occupancy requirements to construct a two-story rear addition, and a second story garage addition, to an existing attached, two-story residence. The Committee notes that the proposal would increase lot occupancy to 68.4% and that its support is contingent upon the filing of letters of support from neighbors and working with neighbors to develop an acceptable construction management plan, including a plan to address the movement of trucks and construction material in the alley and neighbors' access to garages. The ANC, OP, and DDOT have recommended approval or do not object.

BZA #20716, 15th Street Alley LLC (alley between 15th and 16th/C and D Streets NE). The committee voted to conditionally **support** the applicant's request for an area variance from the new alley lot requirements to construct six new, attached two-story-with-cellar-and-roof-deck principal dwelling units. Each lot will be 1800 sq.ft. in land area and each home will have 5 bedrooms, 4.5 baths, and off-street parking.

There are ten letters of support from neighbors but also some objections. The Committee notes that the applicant updated the plans in an effort to address neighbors' concerns about massing of the homes. The committee's support is contingent

upon 1) the owner's commitment to continue to make their best effort to address objecting neighbors' concerns and obtain letters of support from remaining neighbors; and 2) working with neighbors to develop an acceptable construction management plan to address the movement of trucks and construction material in the alley. The proposal has ANC 6A support with the condition that the owners work to get more support from neighbors.

BZA #20717, 634 East Capitol Street NE. The Committee voted to **support** the applicant's request for a special exception for lot occupancy requirements to construct a rear, two-story-with-cellar addition, and to convert to a flat an existing attached three-story with cellar apartment house. The proposal will increase lot occupancy from 61.2% to 69.6%. A letter of support from one adjacent neighbor has been filed, a shadow study has been completed, and the proposal has been recommended for approval or approved by the ANC, HPRB, and the Office of Planning.

BZA #20723, 109 11th Street SE. The committee voted to **support** the applicant's request for a special exception for rear addition requirements to construct a second-story rear addition to an existing attached two-story principal dwelling. While the addition will extend 19' beyond the adjacent property to the south (9' beyond the 10' matter-of-right), it would be built on top of the footprint of an existing structure and therefore will have no impact on actual footprint.

The Committee supported the project due to the oddly shaped lot, its support from neighbors and

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Historic Preservation Briefs

By Beth Purcell

The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB or the Board), considered the following case at its virtual hearing on May 5, 2022. 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.

745 10th Street SE, HPA 22-243. The applicant proposed to build a new two-story brick office and garage at the rear of the lot. There are several one- and two-story buildings in this alley; 747 10th Street is three stories. The new building's alley elevation would have traditional doors, three two-over-two double-hung aluminum wood-clad windows, with rowlock sills and soldier course lintels, with corbeling at the cornice.

The parapet conceals a roofdeck.

The yard-facing elevation has the same type of windows, a Juliette balcony and a spiral staircase. At 22 feet, it is within the height limit. The design and materials were appropriate. This project is similar to the new two-story alley-facing building, 751 10th Street SE, HPA 22-091, approved by HPRB. CHRS supported the project.

Several neighbors opposed the project, including the roofdeck, and noted that the adjacent building, 747 10th Street SE, is eight feet closer to the alley than shown on DCRA's site plan (relied on by the project architect), and that this error affected the view from 747 10th Street. The Board found that this fact raised no historic preservation issue. They complimented the 42-inch parapet



The corner blue house at 300 G Street SE.

shielding the roofdeck and approved the project.

CHRS participated in the following case which HPRB approved on the consent calendar:

- **300 G Street SE**, HPA 22-230, concept/two story rear and side addition. ★

Interested in learning more about historic district designation?

Contact CHRS at info@chrs.org.

Zoning Briefs, *continued from page 3*

lack of effect on their light, and the project's adherence to the existing footprint; moreover, the proposed expansion is consistent with historic district requirements. A sun study has been filed showing insignificant impact. Several letters of support from neighbors have been filed and the ANC supports the proposal.

BZA #20725, 420 4th Street NE.

The Committee voted to **oppose** the applicant's request for special exceptions for rear deck, alley centerline setback, and accessory building rear yard requirements, and an area variance for lot occupancy requirements. The applicant is

proposing to construct a single-story accessory garage with roof deck, to an existing attached two-story with basement flat, which would increase lot occupancy from 73% to 95%. The committee believes that the applicant's reasons for requesting a variance do not meet the test for granting an area variance, which is as follows:

An applicant for an area variance must prove that, as a result of the attributes of a specific piece of property described in Subtitle X § 1000.1, the strict application of a zoning regulation would result in peculiar and exceptional practical difficulties to the owner of property.

Furthermore, the Committee's decision to oppose is consistent with a previous BZA ruling on this square. ANC 6C PZA Committee voted unanimously to oppose the application.

BZA #20730, 1208 D Street SE. The Committee voted to **support** the applicant's request for a special exception for lot occupancy requirements to construct a second-story accessory garage addition to an existing attached, two-story principal dwelling. The owners have done extensive outreach with the community and the proposal has received many letters of support, and none opposed, from neighbors. ★

Not So Perma-Stone: A History of a House in its Facade

By Christine Mullins

During his presentation on May 17, Peter May described the journey he and his wife Tina have taken to remove the Perma-Stone facade from their house at 1017 C Street SE. Their house has undergone many changes during the past 150 years since it was built during the 1870s. Nearly all of its interior has been altered or replaced, and the front and rear yards have lived many lives. While it was built as a modest home, it has also housed two different businesses over the years (both for several decades), and likely served as a boarding house.

Peter said the Perma-Stone facade has covered the old brick of the house since 1958. He described Perma-Stone as a concrete resurfacing product that tries to mimic ashlar stone, but does not really succeed. You will notice it on many Capitol Hill homes once you know what it looks like.

Peter shared a 1929 advertisement from the Perma-Stone company, which claimed homeowners could shape the malleable, concrete, aggregate to look like stones using a variety of pigments. The ad said the material would harden into a water-repellent surface that would protect the

underlying brick for 60 years. Peter said the extensive water damage they discovered when they removed the Perma-Stone proved these claims were not completely accurate.

During her earlier research of the previous occupants, Tina learned that William and Annie Green had purchased the house in the late 1800s to raise their seven children. Between 1893 and 1903 the city created an alley system in the square.

By 1920, records show that Giacomina Zagami (known as James), his wife Fortunata, and their six children were residents of the house, although they must have been living there previously since Tina discovered they had obtained a permit in 1914 to build a show window at the front of the house for their shoe repair business. Their shop took up the space the Mays currently use as their living room. In 1938, Zigami built a side yard addition to the house and they moved their shop into the new space (although customers continued to enter through the entrance to the main building).

The Coleman family bought the home in the 1940s. Like the Zagamis, they also used the side yard addition for the family business—a beauty parlor—while they lived in the main building. In 1947, the Colemans altered the front window on the side addition to install a new door for customers—a separate entrance was required to bring their business to code. The Colemans added a metal awning to the front of their home in 1948, created a second floor addition above the beauty parlor in 1954, and installed the Perma-Stone facade in 1958.

Peter and Tina May's plan was to remove the Perma-Stone, do some

Thank You, CHRS Supporters!

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

Memberships

Bronze

Gary Abrecht
Louise Engle
Lou Ivey

Silver

Denny Lane & Naoko Aoki
Beth Hannold & Doug Delano
James and Bernadette McMahon
Jeff Fletcher & Tara Hamilton
James Sandman &
Elizabeth Mullin

Gold

Nicky Cymrot

necessary repairs and repointing, replace the windows and doors, and build a new porch to replace the aluminum awning. They obtained a separate permit to remove the parging on the alley-side of the house and to repair and repoint the brick.

Peter did much of the initial work, but they hired Bricklands, the Washington-based masonry contractor, to finish the brickwork when they discovered the bricks had suffered from extensive physical and water damage due to the Perma-Stone. While most of the brick repair work is now complete, the Mays are still working on the finishing touches, such as installing a new front porch roof and new windows and doors.

CHRS members were glad to receive a visual history lesson of this historic house during the renovation process. Please visit the CHRS website for the recording of this illustrative presentation! ★

CHRS election— remember to vote!

Members will soon receive a ballot to elect officers and directors for 2022-2023. 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, 2022.



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

Mark Your Calendar!

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

JUNE

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

15 Wednesday, 6 pm
CHRS Board of Directors meeting.
Northeast Library, 330 7th Street NE,
second floor Mezzanine Room (may be
virtual if necessary). Details: info@chrs.org.

16 Thursday, 7:30 pm
CHRS Zoning Committee meeting via
Zoom. For more information or details:
info@chrs.org.

22 Wednesday, 6:30 pm
Summer Membership Meeting (members
only). As part of the meeting, Mike
Canning will again offer his popular
outdoor walking tour, "Hollywood on the
Potomac." Meet at East Capitol and First
Streets SE (by the Library of Congress), rain
or shine. The walk is approximately a half-
mile and will last about an hour. Details:
chrs.org/hollywood-on-the-potomac-mm.

*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 early access to the Walking Tours
and annual House and Garden Tour.
Learn more at: chrs.org.

JULY

4 Monday, 10 am
Capitol Hill Community 4th of July
Parade is back! Meet at 8th & I Streets SE.
All are welcome to march with CHRS!
Details: chrs.org or info@chrs.org.

20 Wednesday, 6 pm
CHRS Board of Directors meeting.
Northeast Library, 330 7th Street NE,
second floor Mezzanine Room (may be
virtual if necessary). Details: info@chrs.org.

OCTOBER

29 Saturday
CHRS will hold a free House Expo at the
Eastern Market North Hall, featuring a
wide variety of home service exhibitors
and representatives of city agencies.
Details: chrs.org/house-expo-2022.