



CHRS CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

NEWS

www.chrs.org

October 2023

Get Ready for the House Expo at Eastern Market

By Angie Schmidt

On Saturday, October 28, from 9 am–3 pm, the Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS) will hold our annual free House Expo at the Eastern Market North Hall. We offer this event as a way to find vetted providers that understand the challenges of maintaining our older, historic homes.

At the House Expo, qualified experts in the building trades and in related fields, including real estate, finance, insurance, and property management will be available to answer questions—plus representatives of city agencies, including the Department of Buildings and the Department

of Licensing and Consumer Protection and local non-profits.

Members please attend and invite your friends! We want to show our exhibitors that their participation is appreciated. Plus, there are lots of giveaways and CHRS volunteers will be providing free historic architecture tours of Eastern Market. Additional information and an updated list of exhibitors can be found at: chrs.org/house-expo-2023. ✧



IMAGE COURTESY ELIZABETH NELSON

Homeowners can talk directly to experts and city agencies at the CHRS Home Expo.

Community Input Sought on RFK Campus Redevelopment

Now that demolition has begun on the old RFK Stadium, residents need to speak up and let the District government and Congress know what they would like in the future. Friends of Kingman Park Civic Association is surveying residents on what facilities neighbors would like to see on the RFK Campus—active recreation, nature preserve, new stadium, other. The survey is available at: RFKFuture.org.

On October 18, 2023, at 7 pm, Mayor Bowser will discuss a new Washington Commanders stadium on the RFK Campus at St. Benedict the Moor Church, 320 21st Street NE. For updates, please contact: fokpcivic@gmail.com.

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Fix These Sidewalks

By Gary Peterson

CHRS has joined the Capitol Hill Village's (CHV) initiative to have brick sidewalks repaired as quickly as potholes are repaired. District Department of Transportation (DDOT) promises to fix a reported pothole within 3 working days and, in contrast, a tripping hazard on a sidewalk in 270 working days. In the case of sidewalks, DDOT achieves the goal only 53% of the time versus 84% for potholes.

According to the CDC, falls are the leading cause of injury related deaths among adults age 65 and older. In June 2023, 473 residents responded to a survey by ANCs 6A, 6B and 6C, reporting 263 injuries in the last two years due to falls on public sidewalks. No deaths were reported but sidewalk

injuries have cost the District \$1.9 million in damages from lawsuits in the past year. There is no incentive for DDOT to fix the sidewalks more quickly because the damages are not paid out of the DDOT budget, but are paid out of the DC government's operating funds.

In response, CHV has established a sidewalk hazard team, with goals to:

- Increase DDOT budget for sidewalk repairs,
- Reduce DDOT goal for time to repair sidewalks,
- Reduce backlog of sidewalk repairs, and
- Establish a DDOT program to monitor sidewalks.



IMAGE COURTESY GARY PETERSON

What can you do? Send CHV an email!

CHV will collect your complaints about sidewalks in Ward 6, file them in the DC 311 system, and track complaints through completion. Email CHVPedestrianSafety@gmail.com to let us know about a sidewalk that needs repair. Let's make injuries to people as important as car damage. ★

Sidewalk Talk

By Libby Quaid

Welcome to Sidewalk Talk, an occasional look at the history of pedestrian paths on Capitol Hill.

Are you curious about when sidewalks were paved, and why bricks were often used? We know that by 1881, there were 225 miles of brick sidewalks in the District, according to a *Washington Post* story quoting assistant engineer Lt. F.V. Greene as saying that one-tenth or more were in urgent need of repair. But competing demand to replace rotting wood paving along city streets was gobbling up congressional appropriations.

There's an 1893 *Washington Post* account of a contract being awarded to a Frederick Maryland brick factory for bricks to pave DC sidewalks. "They would have much

preferred giving the contract to a local firm, but the Frederick brick has proved so durable that they felt the interests of the Districts compelled them to take it," reads the June 20, 1893, item. "Sidewalks laid several years ago of this material are in perfect condition, while brick from local makers have crumbled."

Brick wasn't the only material in early use. We also found a *Washington Post* account from 1900 about a cement sidewalk being ordered on blocks of 5th and G Streets NW, and about objections being raised because property owners would be assessed for the cost of the paving, which was needed after roads were widened.

Brick pavement was despised by a resident named Ivan K. Gulden, who wrote the *Post* in 1935 that brick

sidewalks "hold the record for being mean." "Ice forms quickly on them, lasts longer and is more slippery," Gulden wrote. "In my opinion these brick walks are as obsolete as old gas street lamps. They belong to the era of 1835, not 1935."

A 1985 historic preservation law required the use of bricks if more than 20 feet of sidewalk was being repaired in a half-dozen of DC's historic districts, according to a 1993 *Washington Post* story. Those were Capitol Hill, Georgetown, Anacostia, LeDroit Park, Logan Circle and the Strivers neighborhood in northwest DC.

This just scratches the surface of the history of sidewalks in DC. We'll be back with more Sidewalk Talk. ★

Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS)

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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 Nick Alberti

On September 6, 2023, 6 members of the CHRS Zoning Committee met with representatives from 5 cases to review their proposals. The Committee voted to support 3 cases and to take no position on 2 cases.

BZA #20947, 314 9th Street NE. The Committee voted to **take no position** on the applicant's request for a special exception for rear addition requirements to construct a two-story with cellar, rear addition to an existing, attached, two-story with cellar principal dwelling unit in the RF-1 zone.

The applicants are proposing an addition that will extend 15' beyond the rear wall of the adjacent properties to the north and south, which is 5' beyond the 10' matter-of-right distance. Both adjacent properties have unenclosed rear decks extending approximately 12'; the applicant's proposed addition will extend 3.5 feet beyond these neighbor's decks. The applicants are also proposing to add a rear deck. The applicant has provided sun studies and letters of support from four neighbors (two directly adjacent and two nearby). The BZA hearing is currently scheduled for September 27, 2023.

BZA #20954, 202 10th Street SE. The committee voted to **support** the applicant's request for a special exception from the lot occupancy requirements to construct a two-story rear addition and roof deck, to an existing, attached, two-story with basement, principal dwelling unit in the RF-1 zone.

The applicant is requesting to increase lot occupancy to 69.6% (including a balcony) from the current 64.4%. The committee notes that there are currently rear porches extending from both the first and second floors, and that the roof deck will not be visible from the front of the house and only slightly visible from the back. The applicant has provided letters of support from one adjacent neighbor and a nearby neighbor. The BZA hearing is scheduled for October 4, 2023.

BZA #20959, 223 8th Street SE. The Committee voted to **support** the applicant's request for a special exception for lot occupancy requirements to construct a rear addition to an existing, semi-detached, three-story principal dwelling in the RF-1 zone.

Continued page 5

Halloween: Volunteers Needed!

On Friday, October 27, CHRS will host a children's activity table at Hilloween, the annual free street party outside of Eastern Market. We'll have beads to string, CHRS trick-or-treat bags, and other goodies. The festivities kick off at 5 pm and end at 7:30 pm.

We need a few people for setup, to run the kids activities, and to move the tables and chairs into the North Hall at the end of the evening so they'll be in place for the House Expo the following morning. Email elizabeth_knits@yahoo.com—or just show up! Costumes appreciated but not required. Details and sign-up at: chrs.org/hilloween-2023.

November Preservation Café: Designing and Creating a Private Garden

Creating a garden is a work of complexity and creativity. Each region has its own landscape materials and traditions, each site has its challenges and opportunities, and each gardener has a vision for their personal expression and environment.

On Tuesday, November 28, author Claudia Kousoulas will highlight the work of the Capital region's premier designers from her book, *Private Gardens of the Potomac & Chesapeake*. Claudia will share her insight into the gardens they've created, from urban balconies to waterfront estates. We'll see reworked existing houses and sites and new architecture and gardens, enhanced work-at-home and play-at-home spaces and gardens created on a deadline as well as life-long projects.

The designers brought their expertise and fine eye to each project—ensuring water protection for the Chesapeake Bay, creating habitats with a palette of native plants, creating visually arresting environments, and fitting gardens into historic communities. Each one upends conventional expectations for residential gardens.

Please join us for an evening of green inspiration! ✨

Our CHRS Preservation Cafés are free to CHRS members and non members. We hope to see you online on Tuesday, November 28 at 6:30 pm. You can access the presentation link at chrs.org/designing-garden-pc.

Thank You, CHRS Supporters!

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

Contributors

General Donations

Heather Diehl & Benjamin Dunlap

Memberships

Individual

Pat Broom

Thomas Grooms

Sidney L. Neely, Jr.

Ann Telgarsky

Household

Heather Diehl & Benjamin Dunlap

Heather Bien & Adam Shapiro

Bronze

Sheridan Harvey

Join Us on Our Fall Walking Tours

We had fun and beautiful weather during our September Walking Tours. Tickets are still available for the October Walking Tours, to be held on both the 7th and 8th at 2 pm. We will be offering the new Civil War Tour, the new Building Capitol Hill Tour, a tour of Parks on the Hill, and the ever-popular SE Alleys Tour.

Tickets are available via eventbrite at: eventbrite.com/e/october-walking-tours-tickets-710713752967. We hope to see you there! ✨



IMAGES COURTESY FYNETTE EATON, ELIZABETH NELSON

Capitol Hill Art Walk A Success!

By Elizabeth Nelson

The Capitol Hill Art Walk, co-sponsored by CHRS and the Capitol Hill Art League (CHAL), took place September 9 & 10 with over 50 participating artists, including several CHRS members.

The artists reported high levels of visitors, despite the unpredictable weather. They enjoyed an opportunity to share their art with a new audience and most of them offered their work for sale. Some

visitors were from other parts of the city and some had traveled from outside the metro area just for this event in our neighborhood.

CHRS benefitted by having over 9,000 visits to our website, on the Art Walk post alone. It also generated substantial goodwill within our community, and sparked cooperation with new audiences that have not been as



IMAGE COURTESY ELIZABETH NELSON

engaged with our more traditional offerings. CHAL has already registered their interest in running the event again next September, with our cooperation. ★

IMAGE COURTESY JEFF FLETCHER



Interested in joining CHRS?

Annual membership is only \$35 and includes the newsletter, a set of historic guidelines, and early access to events, including our annual House and Garden Tour. To join, scan this code or visit chrs.org today! ★



Zoning Briefs, continued from page 3

The applicant is proposing to build a one-story screened-in porch over a current stoop, thereby increasing lot occupancy to 66% from the current 61.4%. Two letters of support from adjacent and nearby neighbors have been filed. The BZA hearing is scheduled for September 27, 2023.

BZA #20986, 504 4th Street SE.

The Committee voted to **take no position** on the applicant's request for special exceptions for the rear addition requirements to construct a third-story rear addition to an existing, semi-detached, two-story principal dwelling unit in the RF-3 zone AND voted to support the use of a new accessory building as a dwelling.

The applicant is proposing to build a rear addition that extends

12' beyond the façade of an adjacent dwelling which is 2' beyond the 10' matter-of-right distance. The applicant is also requesting to build a two story accessory building that would be used as a dwelling unit within the 5 year prohibition period prescribed by the zoning code for use of a new accessory building as a dwelling.

The applicant has received three letters of support from adjacent neighbors and one verbal commitment of support. The applicant has provided a sun study and has received support from the ANC and Historic Preservation Board. The BZA hearing is scheduled for November 15, 2023.

BZA #20990, 650 H Street NE. The

Committee voted to **support** the applicant's request for a special exception for the matter-of-right uses to permit financial services use on the

ground floor of an existing, six-story, mixed-use building in the NC-10 zone.

While current rules permit the use of 20% of ground floor retail space for financial services, the applicant is requesting—for reasons of financial hardship incurred during the pandemic—the use of 100% of the ground floor space of this mixed-use building to operate a full-service financial services business. The committee believes that the applicant has demonstrated sufficient evidence of economic hardship and notes that the proposal will increase foot traffic and activate the corner of 7th and H Streets NE. The BZA Hearing is scheduled for November 29, 2023. ★



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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 or postponements will be posted as they are known.



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OCTOBER

2 Monday, 6:30 pm
Historic Preservation Committee meeting,
420 10th Street SE, first floor.

4 Wednesday, 7 pm
Zoning Committee Meeting, Kirby
House, 420 10th Street SE.

7–8 Saturday & Sunday
Fall Guided Walking Tours. Details:
chrs.org/walking-tours-fall-2023.

18 Wednesday, 6 pm
Board meeting, Northeast Library,
330 7th Street NE.

24 Tuesday, 6:30 pm
Preservation Café: *Reuse, Repurpose,
Redistribute with Community Forklift*
(virtual). Details: chrs.org/community-forklift-pc1023.

27 Friday, 5 pm
CHRS will host a children’s activity table
at Hilloween, an annual free street party
outside of Eastern Market. Details or to
volunteer: chrs.org/hilloween-2023.

28 Saturday, 9 am–3 pm
House Expo 2023 in the North Hall of
Eastern Market. Multiple vendors and
city agencies represented. Free admission.
Details: chrs.org/house-expo-2023.

NOVEMBER

1 Wednesday, 7 pm
Zoning Committee Meeting, Kirby
House, 420 10th Street SE.

6 Monday, 6:30 pm
Historic Preservation Committee meeting,
420 10th Street SE, first floor.

15 Wednesday, 6 pm
Board meeting, Northeast Library,
330 7th Street NE.

28 Tuesday, 6:30 pm
Preservation Café: *Designing and Creating
a Private Garden* (virtual). Details:
chrs.org/designing-garden-pc.

DECEMBER

4 Monday, 6:30 pm
Historic Preservation Committee meeting,
420 10th Street SE, first floor.

6 Wednesday, 7 pm
Zoning Committee Meeting, Kirby
House, 420 10th Street SE.