



CHRS

Capitol Hill Restoration Society

February 2024

“The Capitol Hill Home” Photo Contest Open

By Elizabeth Nelson

CHRS is sponsoring a photo contest to highlight our annual House & Garden Tour. The winner will receive two tickets to the Tour, May 11–12, as well as have their image featured in this newsletter and on our social media.

It’s always a treat to see the images that exemplify your vision of what makes a home a “Capitol Hill Home.” We’re privileged to live in an environment that is a delight to the eye, with tree shaded streets, lush gardens, yard ornaments, and houses with a wealth of architectural detail. Iron stoops, arched windows, stained glass transoms, ornate brickwork,



Changes for the New Year

We are pleased to debut the new look for the printed CHRS *News*! Starting with this issue, it will be printed in full color, which we think will make it easier to read as well as more pleasurable (no more blue photos for the House and Garden Tour or the Photo Contest). We have also revamped our masthead to take advantage of the full range of hues.

Another less noticeable change is that our open office hours are moving to Wednesdays from 9 am to noon, in case you need to stop by for an extra copy of a newsletter or one of our informational brochures about historic homes. Email us anytime at: caphrs420@gmail.com, or contact President Angie Schmidt directly at: akschmidt@yahoo.com. Our office phone is (202) 543-0425; leave a message and we will get right back with you.

welcoming porches—can’t decide which image you like best? Send your favorites and let us be the judges.

Send your high resolution images (>1MB)—exterior shots only—to HouseTourCHRS@gmail.com, or text to (202) 329-7864. Be sure to include your name and address, email address, and the address of the property in the photo. If you need inspiration, please visit: chrs.org/photo-contest-2024 for details and links to past winning entries.

Entries are due Friday, March 8, 2024. Keep your camera or cell phone handy as you walk about the neighborhood since inspiration could strike at any moment! ★

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Sidewalk Talk: Snow Days Emphasize Hazardous Sidewalks

By Libby Quaid

The snow and ice in January only emphasized how treacherous Capitol Hill sidewalks can be. We think this calls for another installment of Sidewalk Talk, an occasional look at the pedestrian paths in our neighborhood.

The *Washington Post* reported on sidewalk falls on Capitol Hill in a Metro section column on January 13, 2024, focusing on the effort Capitol Hill Village is leading to get sidewalks fixed faster. The CHRS Board of Directors voted in September to support these efforts.

Did you know the city only promises to fix tripping hazards within 270 days? And DDOT only hits that target about half the time, according to city figures. Compare that to potholes in streets, which reliably get fixed within days.

A Capitol Hill Village survey generated responses from 473 households on the Hill, and of those, 305 people said at least one person in their household had fallen on a sidewalk in the past couple of years, the *Post* reported. Of those falls, there were 263 injuries and 114 that required medical care, the *Post* said.

If you see a sidewalk trip hazard, Capitol Hill Village asks that you:

- Photograph it
- Label it with the closest house address (number, street, quadrant)
- Send the information to: CHVpedestriansafety@gmail.com

Capitol Hill Village will file complaints in the DC 311 system and track repairs through completion. ★



IMAGE COURTESY ELIZABETH NELSON

Sidewalk hazards, holiday edition.

New Homeowner Grants Available

By Angie Schmidt

The DC Office of Planning has announced that grants are available to income-qualifying homeowners for exterior and structural renovations, restorations and repairs of historic houses. Project priority is determined using criteria that measure the benefits to historic preservation and the community.

The maximum grant that can be awarded is \$50,000. Grant awards are subject to available funding. To learn more, visit: <https://planning.dc.gov/service/historic-homeowner-grant-program>.

All historic landmarks and qualifying houses in all District of Columbia historic districts are eligible. Non-contributing houses (modern houses not built during a historic time period) are not eligible. Homeowner Grants qualify as non-taxable income and grantees do not owe income tax on them.

For additional questions about the historic homeowner grant program, email: historic.preservation@dc.gov. ★

Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS)

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To reach any of the above, please contact the CHRS office at (202) 543-0425 or via e-mail at: caphrs420@gmail.com.

ABOUT CHRS

The Capitol Hill Restoration Society is a nonprofit, volunteer organization devoted to protecting, preserving, and celebrating our historic Capitol Hill neighborhood.

Founded in 1955, CHRS is a pioneer in the urban preservation movement. CHRS was instrumental in securing Capitol Hill's designation in 1976 as a national historic district. Since then, CHRS has worked continuously to protect historic spaces and to enhance life on the Hill.

CHRS is driven by members who love their neighborhood and want to preserve and share the dynamic story of Capitol Hill for future generations. Come join us!

Learn more and join at chrs.org

Restoring and Reimagining Capitol Hill's Southeast Library

Join CHRS as Jaspreet Pahwa, director of capital planning and construction, and Martha Saccocio, director of community engagement for DC Public Library, virtually discuss the renovation of Capitol Hill's Southeast Library on Tuesday, February 27, 2024, at 6:30 pm.

On January 4, the Southeast Library closed for a multi-year, \$33 million renovation that will modernize, expand, and restore parts of the historic library, one of the oldest in the DC Public Library system. The work will go through 2026.

The Southeast Neighborhood Library was constructed in 1922. Designed by renowned library architect Edward L. Tilton, it was funded by American industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. In March 2021, the DC Historic Preservation Board designated the Library as a historic landmark.

The library has served the Capitol Hill community for more than 100 years. Given its age and evolved community needs, the qualitative and quantitative improvements will expand the two-floor 8,500-square-foot historic structure to a three-floor 19,900-square-foot library, maximizing the footprint of the library above ground and below grade.

The modernization will preserve, rehabilitate, and re-interpret the historic site and create a new universally accessible public entry at ground level with meeting spaces.

We hope to see you online! CHRS Preservation Cafés are free to members and non-members. ★

Spring Preservation Cafés

These presentations are all virtual and can be found on Eventbrite and at chrs.org.

Power and Light: The Story of Electricity on Capitol Hill

Joanna Kendig

Tuesday, March 26, 2024 at 6:30 pm

Hidden Alleyways of Capitol Hill

Kim Prothro Williams

Tuesday, April 23, 2024 at 6:30 pm

100 Years of Eastern High School

Jen Harris and Erin Roth

Tuesday, May 28, 2024 at 6:30 pm

Historic Preservation Briefs

By Beth Purcell

The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB or the Board), considered the following case at its virtual hearings on November 30 and December 21, 2023. 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.

630 G Street SE, HPA 23-574. This three-story brick house with a side bay with basement was built by Samuel A.H. Marks in 1841.¹ It is a contributing building and one of the oldest buildings on Capitol Hill.

F Street Terrace, a named alley, runs north/south on the west, and the property borders G Street on the

south. The alley itself is significant, which historically, and still to an unusual degree today, embodies the vibrant, mixed-use character of many alleys throughout the city. In addition, it is adjacent to Christ Church (built in 1807), among the oldest places of worship in the city.

The applicant proposes to build a three-story rear addition, penthouse and roof deck.

At the hearing on November 30, 2023 the Board voted to have the project return at a future date for reevaluation following revisions involving the rear addition and roof deck. The Board asked that the penthouse stair be moved to the northern end of the historic house and have the deck limited only to the new rear addition. The Board also asked that the rear addition appear more distinct from the existing house by lowering its height by a

perceptual though not a significant height, simplifying or eliminating the cornice, and reassessing the rear addition’s exterior materials or colors. The Board supported an extended cornice on the side of the historic house. Vote: 4-0.

As indicated by the project architect, the revised plans:

1. Lower the roof height down to 38’—keeping the parapet wall the same height. Creating a higher visibility screen.
2. The penthouse footprint remains where it is but lowered the roof even further—bringing it well below the level of visibility from the street.
3. Lower the deck height by removing the roof deck sleeper system and using a duradek style decking where the roof level acts as the deck instead of a structure being built on top.
4. Holding the railing system in another 6” on the Alley side to hold the people back from roof’s edge.
5. All together, these revisions would lower the plane at which roof top activities happen by 16”. The two remaining issues are the location of the penthouse stair and the dimensions of the roofdeck.

Penthouse stair

The applicant did not relocate the penthouse stair. We understood that the project architect believes that the stair cannot be moved. In fact, while it’s challenging, the stair could be moved further to the rear of the addition by flipping the location of roof stair with the adjacent dressing room/closet and creating a new window opening on a non-primary



IMAGES COURTESY SCHMIDT DEVELOPMENT, BETH PURCELL

Correction. The December 2023–January 2024 article “Updated Design for 601 Massachusetts Avenue NE,” should have mentioned that Schmidt Development is building the project at 601 Massachusetts Avenue NE and provided the image on the left. An updated photo of the actual site in January 2024 appears on the right.

The 2024 House & Garden Tour

By Fynnette Eaton, Jackie Krieger and Angie Schmidt

We are looking forward to spring and the House and Garden Tour! We would like to add some additional homes and gardens—the tour is going to be in an area stretching from Pennsylvania to Massachusetts Avenues, bordered by 5th and 13th Streets. If you are interested in having your home (or think one of your neighbor’s homes should) be part of the Tour, you can reach out to us at: caphillhousetour@gmail.com.

As always, we will be looking for docents and house captains for the Tour. No experience is required and all training will be provided. All docents will receive a complimentary pass for the Tour. Please mark your calendar for May 11–12! ★



IMAGE COURTESY RINDY O'BRIEN

elevation. A disadvantage would be that this room would no longer be part of the primary suite.

Roof deck

The applicant did not make any major adjustments to the roof deck’s footprint. We believe that a larger deck would not cause visual harm. We had no objection to the staff’s proposal for a restricted roof deck.

The Board voted to support the concept, including the applicant’s “option 1” for the rear addition cornice, provided that a flag test is conducted based on the revised design and that no portion of the penthouse stair will be visible, and otherwise found the project compatible with

the Capitol Hill Historic District, and delegated final approval authority to staff. Vote: 5-0.

The following case was approved on the consent calendar:

- **314 9th Street NE**, HPA 23-572, concept/two-story rear addition and deck. ★

¹ Boschke map (1858); Barracks Row Heritage Tour research.

Enjoying this newsletter? Please consider 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. Scan this QR code or visit chrs.org for more information.

Interested in learning more about historic district designation?

Contact CHRS at info@chrs.org.

Eastern High School, Our Historic Tudor Revival School

By Beth Purcell

To commemorate Eastern High School's 100th anniversary in 2023, Principal Brown requested that CHRS nominate the school to be a DC landmark. CHRS prepared the nomination, which HPRB approved on August 3, 2023.

Eastern High School is a "Tudor Revival" school. What is Tudor Revival and why was this design chosen?

The backstory is that Snowden Ashford, the Municipal Architect in charge of designing all new public schools, preferred Tudor Revival because it facilitated key goals: large windows bringing ample natural light in classrooms, and an open plan with wide corridors. Ashford was influenced by architect William B. Ittner, who designed the many Tudor Revival Schools in St. Louis.

Ashford's first Tudor Revival School was Dunbar High School (built in 1916 and demolished in 1977). Ashford continued Tudor Revival at Eastern with twin crenellated towers at the main entrance, Gothic ornament, a sundial, and a porte cochere.

It turns out that Eastern's entrance copies an actual Tudor building, the Clock Gate at Hampton Court Palace



IMAGE COURTESY BETH PURCELL

TOP: Eastern High School today. BOTTOM LEFT: The original Dunbar High School building. BOTTOM RIGHT: The Clock Gate at Hampton Court Palace.

in London. This gate is also known as Anne Boleyn's gate; the apartments above the entrance were being redecorated for her before she was executed in 1536. Above Hampton Court's clock gate is an astronomical clock, installed in 1540, showing the hour, month, day of the month, signs

of the zodiac and the number of days since the beginning of the year. It still works. Eastern's sundial is a nod to the astronomical clock. ★



IMAGES: DC HISTORY CENTER, CHS_16313_05[1]; CARDGOW, 278585-1

CHRS Seeks Nominations for the Board of Directors

By Beth Purcell

The CHRS Elections Committee (Chair, Beth Purcell; Gary Peterson, Chuck Burger, and Delancey Gustin) is seeking nominations of individuals who wish to be considered for positions for the 2024–2025 CHRS Board of Directors. These positions include President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary, each for one-year terms; and

four At-Large Members for two-year terms. Nominations for the 2024–2025 CHRS Board will be announced at the end of April and postcard ballots will be mailed to CHRS members in May.

If you wish to be considered, recommend someone, or find out more about the duties of each position, please contact the CHRS office at (202) 543-0425 or email:

caphrs420@gmail.com. A member of the Elections Committee will respond. Each nomination must include the position for which the person wants to be considered and their resume. Nominations must be submitted by the end of the day on March 25, 2024. ★

Thank You, CHRS Supporters!

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

CONTRIBUTORS

Annual Appeal

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Capitol Hill Restoration Society

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Washington, DC 20003

chrs.org

Mark Your Calendar!

Please check chrs.org for current information—cancellations or postponements will be posted as they are known.



Capitol Hill Restoration Society

FEBRUARY

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

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

27 Tuesday, 6:30 pm
Preservation Café: “Restoring and
Reimagining Capitol Hill’s Southeast
Library.” Virtual presentation. Details:
chrs.org/selibrary-renovation-pc.

MARCH

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.

8 Friday
Entries due for 2024 Capitol Hill
Home Photo Contest. Details:
chrs.org/photo-contest-2024.

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

APRIL

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

3 Wednesday, 7 pm
Zoning Committee meeting,
Kirby House, 420 10th Street SE.

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

MAY

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.

67th Annual CHRS House & Garden Tour

Mother’s Day Weekend • Saturday, May 11, 4–7 pm & Sunday, May 12, 1–5 pm
More information at (202) 543-0425 or chrs.org/mothers-day-house-garden-tour.