



# CHRS

Capitol Hill Restoration Society

# News

December 2024/January 2025

## The History and Future of the National Mall

By Marci Hilt

Nearly everyone who lives in DC or visits has fond memories of the National Mall and the Tidal Basin with its spring flowering Japanese cherry trees.

The 1,000 acres of Mall is a public space, but also a place where history is happening every day, Teresa Durkin, executive vice president of the Trust for the National Mall, said. Durkin, along with Catherine Townsend, president and CEO of the Trust, spoke at the Capitol Hill Restoration Society’s Annual Dick Wolf Memorial Lecture at the Hill Center on Tuesday, Nov. 19. Nearly 70 people attended the event.

The Tidal Basin was created in response to flooding, Durkin said. But, the Mall and the basin have issues that threaten THEIR continued use. Both were created from fill dirt, which is unstable. The landscape is at risk and crumbling; and it floods twice each day.

“People have used it many different ways,” she said, “It is not just a place for recreation, it is a place for memorials.” It is now home to memorials to Thomas Jefferson, Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Martin Luther King, Jr.

“The National Mall needs it to be here for the next 200 years,” she said. If other cities flood, you just get out of

the way, she said, but we can’t just get out of the way here. Durkin said we must plan for a 2.5 foot rise in the tide by 2050. And we must find a way to stabilize the area. The planning must be done on a regional level.

Durkin detailed the history of the area and explained some ideas for responding to changing environmental concerns and preserving the area, including floating walkways and ways to address the crumbling infrastructure.

Townsend said the Trust for the National Mall is the leading nonprofit partner of the National Park Service and is dedicated to restoring, preserving and enriching the National Mall. The Trust works to help restore monuments on the Mall, as well as operating a Monument Cam and a Bloom Cam for the cherry blossoms. The Trust has helped restore the Lockkeepers House, as well as the U.S. Park Police’s Horse Stables. It is currently running a campaign to raise \$250 million for a 2026 celebration of America’s 250th anniversary.

To learn more about the Mall, and ideas for rescuing and transforming the Tidal Basin, visit the Trust website: <https://nationalmall.org>. ★

CHRS presents the Dick Wolf Memorial Lecture each year to honor Wolf—a city planner and activist who was a Hill resident who championed the cause of historic preservation. Wolf, who died in 2012, served as CHRS president for many years. The lecture series showcases excellence in research and writing on urban planning and historic preservation in DC.

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# President's Letter

By Angie Schmidt

In 2025, we will mark the 70th anniversary of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society. I feel proud and honored to be part of this community organization. So many good things happen in our neighborhood when we work together.

Some 2024 highlights include a sold-out House & Garden Tour, debuting our new CHRS t-shirts at the House Expo, providing guided history tours of Eastern Market, highlighting the work on the National Mall in our Dick Wolf Memorial Lecture—and recently being honored with a Brickie Award from Councilmember Charles

Allen for our work supporting the Sidewalk Repair Taskforce with Capitol Hill Village. We also continued our ongoing work with this newsletter, our Zoning and Historic Preservation Committees, our walking tours, our strong social media presence, and answering any questions about preservation and history that come our way.

We have some fun things planned to celebrate our 70th year, including a party this spring. The website will have an update in the next few months. We will also be resuming our Preservation Cafés, and planning is

already underway for the 2025 House & Garden Tour, which will focus on the Northeast side of the Hill.

If you regularly volunteer your time with us—THANK YOU. We can't hold our events without your help. And if you haven't yet had time or aren't sure what you can do for CHRS, please ask! We need people with all backgrounds and expertise to keep this organization robust. We need your help for CHRS to continue celebrating more milestone anniversaries.

Here's to a happy new year!

— Angie ★

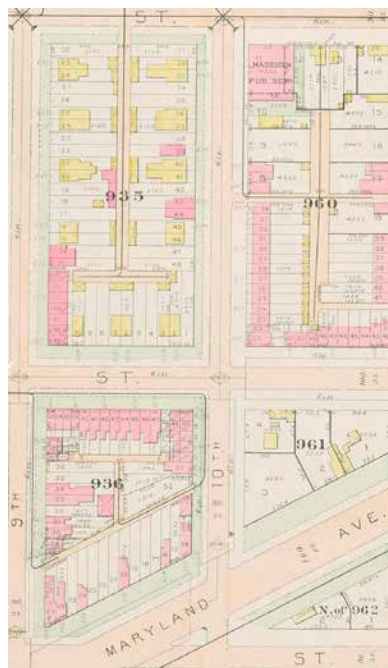
## Learn to Research House History at January Workshop

By Libby Quaid

Do you love researching and writing about history? Are you interested in volunteering for our biggest annual event? This workshop is for you!

We'll hold a training session from 3–4 pm on Saturday, January 11, 2025 in the second-floor meeting room at the Northeast Library, 330 7th Street NE. Volunteers will learn how to look up historical information about Capitol Hill homes to write about the buildings on our 2025 House & Garden Tour.

If you'd like to attend, please RSVP to akschmidt@yahoo.com. Plan to bring your laptop—let us know if you will need a loaner. ★



This image is from an 1893 Washington, D.C., real estate plat book published by Griffith M. Hopkins.



IMAGE COURTESY LIBBY QUAID

## Help CHRS Build Inventory of Historic District Signs

Do you have one of these signs in the neighborhood? Tell us where! CHRS wants to take an inventory of these historic district signs and start replacing any that are faded/worn, but we need to know where they all are. Send details to caphrs420@gmail.com, including cross streets and condition. Thank you!

# 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 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](http://chrs.org)

# Zoning Briefs

By Nick Alberti

On November 6, 2024, three members of the CHRS Zoning Committee met to discuss one case. No representatives from that case participated to present their proposal. The Committee voted to oppose the case.

**BZA #21196**, 910 12th Street NE. The applicant proposes to construct a third story with roof deck and a three-story with cellar rear addition to an existing, attached, two-story with cellar principal dwelling unit in the RF-1 zone. The Committee voted to oppose (3-0) the applicant's request for special exceptions for the roof top and upper floor element requirements. However, the Committee supports zoning relief from lot occupancy requirements for the rear addition.

The proposed construction will alter the mansard roof, requiring relief from the roof top and upper floor requirements of the zoning regulations. The mansard roof will be moved higher, though it will keep the original design. The cornice line

will move up, altering the cornice line pattern of the houses along the block. The Committee opposes relief for this special exception. However, we recommend that the applicant consider maintaining the current cornice integrity in their proposal design.

Lot occupancy will increase to 64.4%, which is below the 70% maximum allowed by a special exception in the RF-1 zone.

Also, while the addition does not extend more than 10 feet beyond the furthest rear wall of either of the two adjacent homes, the adjacent home to the south has an open space on its first floor, under an enclosed space above that open space. The space is inset from that home's furthest rear wall by approximately 7.5 feet. The Committee believes that this does not violate the 10-foot rule under the zoning regulations.

Nine letters of support have been filed by neighbors. The BZA hearing is currently scheduled for November 20, 2024. ★

## CHRS 2025 Photo Contest Coming Soon



IMAGE COURTESY ROBERT WEINSTEIN

Get ready! We have some exciting changes to the 2025 photo contest—details in the next newsletter on new categories and prizes, but the contest is open to ALL AGES. The deadline will be March 15, 2025.

This picture was taken by 2021 Photo Contest First Place Winner Robert Weinstein.

# Historic Preservation Briefs

By Beth Purcell

The Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB or the Board), considered the following case at its virtual hearing on November 21, 2024. 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.

**16 3rd Street NE, HPA 24-472,** concept/three story rear addition. This contributing two-story frame rowhouse with attic and mansard in the front and rear, was built in 1874 or earlier, according to Faetz & Pratt. The adjacent houses, 12 - 24 3rd Street, appear to date from the same period. There are mansards on the rear of the attic story, an unusual and character-defining feature, at 16, 18 and 20 3rd Street. The applicant proposed to demolish the rear/dogleg section and the one-story rear section and construct a new three-story rear addition, and a full basement under

the addition and the front section of the house. The three-story rear addition would block views of the mansard on the rear elevation. The staff stated that while the rear section is “likely original,” “the integrity [of the rear section] has been compromised by later alterations and additions” and supported removing the rear section. While we initially took the position that the dogleg section should be preserved, we decided to support the staff’s approach to remove the rear section while preserving the rear mansard. There is a one-story addition at the rear of 16 3rd Street, which does not appear to be historic. The Board did not take a vote but asked the applicant to revise the plans to include less demolition and to retain the rear mansard roof and return for further review.

**Brent Elementary School, 301 North Carolina Avenue SE, HPA 24-474,** concept/raze and replacement of school. The existing Brent Elementary School, built in 1968, is a noncontributing building, and would be demolished and replaced by a new, larger, modern school. We supported the project.



IMAGE COURTESY BETH PURCELL

The house at 510 8th Street SE.

The Board approved the height and massing of the concept but requested the design be refined to be more compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District. Comments on individual aspects of the design such as the materials palette, use of color and stacked layers, were generally favorable, but the Board suggested the combined effect of these elements did not appear to “belong” to the historic district. The Board’s specific recommendations focused on simplifying, clarifying and emphasizing the verticality of the

CONTINUED PAGE 5

Interested in learning more about historic district designation?

Contact CHRS at [info@chrs.org](mailto:info@chrs.org).



IMAGES COURTESY DLR GROUP



Architect’s renderings of proposed design for Brent Elementary School, including aerial view (LEFT) and view from D Street SE (RIGHT).

# Documentary: *Voices of Resilience*

By Angie Schmidt

Did you know that there is a documentary being made about all the things that happened in 2020 in our neighborhood such as COVID restrictions, business closures, protests for racial justice and the political unrest in general (including the attack on the Capitol)?

Eileen and Paul Dougherty of Backstory Media and the Camera 1 Group filmed more than fifty interviews focusing primarily on the residents of Capitol Hill, the H Street Corridor, and Anacostia between March 2020 and March 2021. They aim to build on existing work by filming new in-depth interviews and producing *Voices of Resilience*, a documentary that captures the essence of that pivotal year with plans for the film to be premiered in 2025.



If you have any personal stories that you would like to relate, please contact Eileen at [eileen@backstorymedia.com](mailto:eileen@backstorymedia.com), or scan the QR code above to learn more. This is such an easy way to make sure that the history of that extraordinary time is preserved for the future. ★

## HP Briefs, *continued from page 4*

main entrance; reexamining the use of gray panels on the building ends; refining site features; and giving more consideration to the character defining features of the historic district. The Board also requested to be informed of comments from the upcoming CFA hearing, the results of the on-going archaeological investigations, and an opportunity to review the revised design in a future meeting. Vote: 6-0.

**510 8th Street SE**, HPA 24-477, concept/addition The Board approved the concept and delegated final approval to staff. Vote: 6-0.

The Board approved the following cases on its consent calendar:

- **1227 Independence Avenue SE**, HPA 24-480, concept/construct two story garage. Note: The November 2023 CHRS News erroneously reported this case as approved earlier.
- **609 Independence Avenue SE**, HPA 24-478, concept/raze non-contributing building, construct two rowhouse flats. ★

## Thank You, CHRS Supporters!

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

### CONTRIBUTORS

#### General Donations

Jack & Micky Penkoske  
Msgr. Stephen Rossetti  
Douglas Thomas

### MEMBERSHIPS

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# CHRS

Capitol Hill Restoration Society

420 10th Street SE  
Washington, DC 20003

[chrs.org](http://chrs.org)

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## Mark Your Calendar!

*Please check [chrs.org](http://chrs.org) for current information—cancellations or postponements will be posted as they are known.*

# CHRS

Capitol Hill Restoration Society

### DECEMBER

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

### JANUARY

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

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

**8** Wednesday, 7 pm  
Zoning Committee Meeting,  
420 10th Street SE.

**11** Saturday, 3 pm  
House Research Workshop. Northeast  
Library, 330 7th Street NE.

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

### FEBRUARY

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

**5** Wednesday, 7 pm  
Zoning Committee Meeting,  
420 10th Street SE.

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

### MARCH

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

**5** Wednesday, 7 pm  
Zoning Committee Meeting,  
420 10th Street SE.

**15** Saturday, noon  
Photo contest deadline—details to come!

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

#### Follow CHRS on social media!



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