



October 2025

CHRS House Expo Returns on November 1

By Beth Purcell and Libby Quaid

Are you considering undertaking a home improvement project? Or do you just have questions about your home? Help and answers are available at the Capitol Hill Restoration Society's annual House Expo in the North Hall of Eastern Market on Saturday, November 1 from 9 am–3 pm. The Expo is free and will feature more than 30 home contractors, decorators, service experts and city agencies with historic house experience. This event is a great way to find vetted providers that understand the challenges of

maintaining our Capitol Hill homes, and to talk to representatives from different DC agencies involved in building permits and safety. For more information, visit: chrs.org/house-expo-2025.

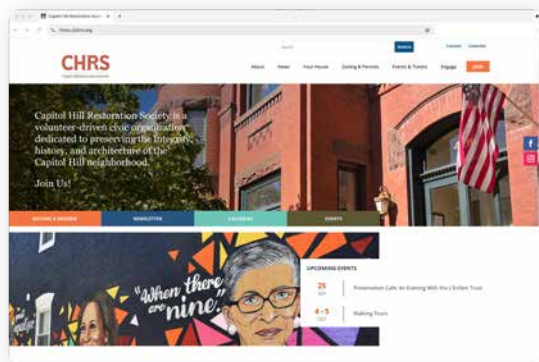
During the Expo, CHRS will also be signing up volunteers for the annual Capitol Hill House & Garden Tour, to be held May 9–10, 2026. If you would like to offer your home to be on the tour, organizers are looking for locations in the southeast Capitol Hill area that includes Garfield, Marion and Providence Parks (the

latter are popularly known as Turtle and X Parks).

We will also be signing up potential House Tour docents! All docents receive training and any docent who works at least a two-hour shift during the Tour will receive a free ticket to attend the Tour.

"It's really fun to be a docent. In addition to being in a beautiful home, you get to see Capitol Hill friends and neighbors. Docents also get to visit all the other houses for free. It's a rewarding experience," said Kay Mallon, a docent on the 2025 tour.

See you at the Expo! ★



Have you noticed? We have a new website!

CHRS volunteers have been working for months on giving the CHRS website a fresh, new look.

It now includes a monthly calendar in addition to all of the information the old one offered, such as upcoming events, research resources and how to navigate the permit and approval process. It also has archives of our newsletter and House and Garden Tour catalogs and an updated search function to find anything you need. Check it out at chrs.org.

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Mystery Eastern Market Mural

By David Pelizzari

During a recent “archaeological dig” in the CHRS office, a wonderful image of Eastern Market dropped out of a pile of papers. The image is on a conventional postcard once used in advertising for the former YeloDog Design, and the caption on the back implies that it was visible in the former Stompin’ Grounds Coffeehouse, at 666 Pennsylvania Avenue SE, which is now the Penn Theater complex.

“Mural of Eastern Market 1910,” declares the caption. The image for the postcard was photographed at

an oblique angle. A corner of crown molding in the upper left suggests it covered an entire wall. But whether it was a giant poster, printed wallpaper, an image painted directly on the wall, a tapestry (we kid), or a fresco (we kid more)—we can’t tell.

We sent the image to the Eastern Market folks, who responded, cordially, “No clue.” Do YOU have a clue? We would love help identifying what this actually was.

The style seems to be an homage to the Thomas Hart Benton, WPA-

mural era. The “1910” in the caption is part of the image’s title, not the year of its creation. And something about it suggests a lobby image that would greet moviegoers entering a fancy local cinema—which would make sense at 666 Pennsylvania. We wonder if any of our readers saw it “live,” in what context, and whether or not it still exists somewhere or other.

If you do have a clue, let us know at caphrs420@gmail.com. ★



Fall Membership Meeting

We had a good time at the fall Membership Meeting on September 11, 2025, at the Hill Center. This somewhat somber photo is of the members considering and approving the 2025–2026 budget, but afterwards they visited with one another, looked at some interesting photos of non-extant buildings on the Hill from our archives and enjoyed refreshments from Bowers Fancy Dairy Products and Heidelberg Bakery.

Our next members-only activity will be the sold-out Ghost Walking Tours on October 17 and 24. Please consider becoming a CHRS member—we’d love to have you! ★



IMAGE COURTESY CHRS

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

Zoning Briefs

By Nick Alberti

On September 3, 2025, five members of the CHRS Zoning Committee met to discuss four cases. Representatives from two cases participated to present their proposals. The Committee voted to support one case, oppose one case and to take no position on two other cases.

BZA #21346, 1130 4th Street NE.

The Committee voted to take no position on the applicant's request for variance from the lot occupancy requirements of Subtitle E § 210.1 and a special exception from the rear yard requirements of Subtitle E § 207.1.

The applicant proposes to build a 10-foot-deep rear deck/carport rear deck to an existing, attached, two-story plus basement, principal dwelling unit in the RF-1 zone. The rear yard depth is currently only 10 feet, and the addition of a rear deck/carport would increase the lot occupancy from 69% to 84%. Several neighboring properties have rear decks with similar dimensions covering most of their rear yards. The applicant has received letters of support from two adjacent neighbors.

The Committee determined that the proposed deck/carport could be built without causing substantial detriment to the public good and without substantially impairing the intent, purpose, and integrity of the zoning plan.

However, the Committee also determined that this application for zoning relief does not meet the standard for granting a variance. Specifically, there are no existing features of the property that would cause strict application of zoning requirements to result in exceptional practical difficulties or undue hardship upon the owner. For those reasons

the Committee chose to take no position. The BZA hearing is currently scheduled for October 1, 2025.

BZA #21352, 828 12th Street NE.

The Committee voted to oppose the applicant's request for a special exception from the roof top or upper floor element requirements of Subtitle E § 204.1. The applicant proposes to construct a penthouse with roof deck to an existing, semi-detached, two-story with basement, principal dwelling unit in the RF-1 zone.

The proposal includes removal of an original roof top turret facing the street at the front of the residence. The Committee opposes the removal of this element, as it would disrupt the established pattern of architectural features along this block of 12th Street NE and is contrary to the intent of the zoning regulations.

In addition, the Committee concluded that the architectural plans are vague and are not sufficient to illustrate the full scope of the planned demolition and construction. No one attended the meeting on behalf of the applicant. (The owner has requested that we review this case a second time at our October meeting.) The BZA hearing is currently scheduled for October 22, 2025.

BZA #21355, 916 D Street NE.

The Committee voted to support the applicant's request for a special exception to the lot occupancy requirements of Subtitle E § 210.1. The applicant proposes to construct a front porch addition to an existing, semi-detached, two-story with basement, principal dwelling unit in the RF-1 zone.

The Committee noted that the residence appears have had a front

CONTINUED PAGE 5

L'Enfant Trust Shares About Easements at September Preservation Café

By Libby Quaid



IMAGE COURTESY LIBBY QUAID

Preservation easements were the subject of a free online talk on September 25. Part of our Preservation Café series, the talk was led by staff of the L'Enfant Trust, which holds most of Capitol Hill's easements.

An easement is a legal agreement that permanently protects a home's historic character. Easements do not expire and "run with the land," meaning that future owners are also bound by them.

Lauren McHale, the Trust's president and CEO, and Katie Williams, its operations and communications manager, answered a variety of questions, including:

- How to donate an easement
- What makes a property eligible
- Responsibilities of easement property owners

They also shared about the Trust's Historic Properties Redevelopment Program in Historic Anacostia. Since 2013, the Trust's HPRP has created affordable homeownership opportunities for the community by

rehabilitating deteriorated, vacant historic properties.

You don't have to own an easement property to get help from the Trust, McHale said. She said the Trust is happy to offer guidance to anyone about a historic property. It has a full-time professional staff to advise owners on maintenance, preservation and architectural design review for proposed changes to the exterior.

The organization's website has a toolkit for easement property owners as well as guides to preserving historic exteriors and researching your historic property. Visit: lenfant.org.

L'Enfant Trust easements are marked by round cast bronze plaques featuring a star. The Trust holds conservation easements on more than 1,150 historic DC properties. DC maintains a list of more than 1,700 properties citywide that are protected by conservation easements.

Do you have suggestions for a future Preservation Café? Let us know! Email: caphrs420@gmail.com. ★

Thank You, CHRS Supporters!

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

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Environmental Briefs

By Joanna Kendig

PurpleAir Sensor Project

Some areas of our city are suffering from air pollution more than others. To better understand these patterns, the DC Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) is running the PurpleAir sensor project, lending sensors that monitor air quality on local level to residents across the city, and collecting and assembling that data into the big picture.



To quote DOEE: “PurpleAir sensors track and collect localized air quality data, measuring particulate matter (PM2.5) in the surrounding area.” The program is already running so you can look up available data, or volunteer to sign up for the program.

To learn more, visit: doee.dc.gov/service/purpleair-sensor-project.

The Bottle Bill

The Bottle Bill (DC B26-0058 Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Amendment Act of 2025) is moving through our legislative process.

The bill as proposed will establish a collection and recycling program for beverage containers. In essence, the Bottle Bill proposes consumers pay a refundable ten-cent deposit on plastic, glass, and aluminum beverage bottles at the point of purchase. Upon returning them, the consumers reclaim their deposit.

The program is to be managed by a new nonprofit, and overseen and enforced by DOEE. The bill, introduced in January, is in review by the Committee on Business and Economic Development through mid-November. A public hearing is scheduled for October 1, then the bill will move on to the Committee on Transportation and the Environment.

If signed into law, the program is expected to begin in 2028. The bill aims to achieve a 70% recycling rate in the first year of implementation and to divert 80% of the city’s waste away from landfills and incineration by 2032. Ten other states that have similar bottle bills witnessed significant container return rates (Maine achieved 77%) and reduced bottle and can litter. ★

Zoning Briefs, *continued from page 3*

porch at one time, most likely as part of the original design. The character of the proposed porch is consistent with porches typically found on similar residences in the surrounding neighborhoods. The applicant has also received the support of nine neighbors. The BZA hearing is currently scheduled for October 22, 2025.

BZA #21349, 628 15th Street NE.

The Committee voted to take no position on the applicant’s request for a special exception from the minimum vehicle parking requirements of Subtitle C § 701.

The applicant proposes to construct a new detached, two-story, accessory dwelling unit in the RF-1 zone.

The Committee could not definitively conclude that the requested zoning relief could be granted without substantial detriment to the public good and without substantially impairing the intent, purpose, and integrity of the zoning plan. It noted that on-street parking is a premium in the neighborhood. The addition of a second residence on the subject property could increase demand for limited available parking. No one attended the meeting on behalf of the applicant. The BZA hearing is currently scheduled for October 8, 2025. ★

Are you following CHRS on social media? We’re always active—keep up to speed while you wait for the next newsletter!



CapitolHillRestorationDC



@CapHRS

Historic 1891 Organ Returns to St. Joseph's Catholic Church After Restoration

By Libby Quaid

The historic pipe organ at St. Joseph's Catholic Church has returned after more than a year of repairs in Maine. Following several weeks of reinstallation, St. Joseph's plans an organ concert series so that the community can experience the organ's majestic sound.

The 1891 organ was built by Hook & Hastings of Boston, a company that designed and manufactured organs from the 1820s to the 1930s. It was carefully disassembled in June 2024 and transported and repaired by David E. Wallace & Co. Pipe Organ Builders in Gorham, Maine. The restoration cost more than \$600,000.

Reinstallation began in late September, and a November concert is planned as a rededication. The church plans a concert series next year on the second Sunday of each month.

During the St. Joseph's organ restoration, Music Director Maria Balducci played a smaller Hook & Hastings 1875 organ that was restored by Meloni & Farrier Organbuilders of Rye, New York, in 2021.

Information about the organ restoration comes from St. Joseph's, which was founded in the 1860s by a community of German immigrants. The Gothic church on 2nd Street NE was built of brownstone on a foundation of red Seneca stone and was dedicated in 1891. ★

IMAGES COURTESY LIBBY QU Aid



A Gorgeous Weekend for Capitol Hill 2025 Art Walk

It was a great weekend for the Capitol Hill Art League (CHAL)'s 2025 Capitol Hill Art Walk, held September 13–14, 2025. More than 150 artists and artisans were set up at 70 locations, and enjoyed a steady stream of art-loving visitors. The *Hill Rag* and CHRS were community sponsors. To learn more about CHAL, visit their website at CapHillArtLeague.org. To see the list of this year's participating artists, please visit: hillrag.com/2025/09/12/art-walk-2025. ★



IMAGES COURTESY ELIZABETH NELSON



Get Ready for Hilloween!

By Elizabeth Nelson

On Friday, October 31, CHRS will host a children's activity table at Hilloween, the annual free street party outside of Eastern Market. It's always a blast! 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. If you'd like to volunteer, please e-mail elizabeth_knits@yahoo.com—or just show up! Costumes appreciated but not required. More details and sign-up at: chrs.org/hilloween-2025. ★



IMAGE COURTESY ELIZABETH NELSON



Capitol Hill Restoration Society

420 10th Street SE
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

OCTOBER

4 Saturday, 10 am • 1 pm

5 Sunday, 1 pm

Fall Walking Tours. Details: chrs.org/event/october-walking-tours.

6 Monday, 6:30 pm

Historic Preservation Committee meeting,
420 10th Street SE.

14 Tuesday, 10 am

Communications Committee Meeting,
420 10th Street SE.

15 Wednesday, 6 pm

Board meeting, Northeast Library,
330 7th Street NE.

17 & 24 Friday

Members-only Ghost Walking Tours.

31 Friday, 5–7:30 pm

Halloween. Outside Eastern Market,
225 7th Street SE. Details: chrs.org/halloween-2025.

NOVEMBER

1 Saturday, 9 am–3 pm

CHRS House Expo 2025, Eastern Market
North Hall, 225 7th Street SE. Details:
chrs.org/house-expo-2025.

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.

DECEMBER

3 Wednesday, 7 pm

Zoning Committee Meeting,
420 10th Street SE.

8 Monday, 6:30 pm

Historic Preservation Committee meeting,
420 10th Street SE.

9 Tuesday, 10 am

Communications Committee Meeting,
420 10th Street SE.

17 Wednesday, 6 pm

Board meeting, Northeast Library,
330 7th Street NE.