



September 2026

CHRS Joining Push-Back Against Proposal to Hobble Federal Historic Preservation Rules

By Rosemary Harold

The Capitol Hill Restoration Society is gearing up to join other preservation groups nationwide in defending federal rules that have existed for decades under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (the “Act”). As you may have heard, the Trump Administration is seeking to convert mandatory historic preservation “consultation” requirements that apply now to federal building or development projects into “discretionary” ones—meaning that federal agencies could effectively ignore concerns raised by private citizens, as well as state and local governments, about a project’s negative impact on historic neighborhoods.

Working through a tiny agency called the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the Trump Administration’s proposed rule changes, if adopted, could have a powerfully negative impact on residential Capitol Hill. Few neighborhoods in the U.S. have as many federal sites inside their boundaries or adjacent to them. For a fuller overview of the proposed changes and the actions that have occurred so far, check the special “Section 106 Under Threat” section of National Trust for Historic Preservation’s website here: <https://savingplaces.org/section106>. (“Section 106” refers to the statutory section of the Act that the threatened rules implement.)

CHRS plans to file objections to the rule changes when the Advisory Council opens a window for public comment. Our most important contribution could be to simply give examples of when the existing rules have led to good outcomes in our area. But we need to act fast to gather that information. As of this writing, it is not clear when the comment window will open—or shut, for that matter. We expect to call on CHRS members to help us, probably at short notice, to provide facts and background history. Stay tuned! ★

CHRS 2026 Free House Expo

On Saturday, October 31 from 9 am–3 pm, CHRS will hold our annual free House Expo in the North Hall of Eastern Market. This event is a great way to find vetted providers that understand the challenges of maintaining our older, historic homes. We will have 30 tables set up with architects, contractors, electricians, painters, roofers and other building service providers. We will also have representatives from the different DC agencies involved in building permits and safety. Or just come by to talk with CHRS volunteers—we would love to meet you in person!

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September Membership Meeting

By Matt Handverger, Angie Schmidt and Nick Alberti

We are pleased to be able to hold our September membership meeting in the newest, coolest, public spot on the Hill—the renovated Southeast Library meeting room! The meeting on September 23 will begin at 6 pm where the CHRS Board will be there to answer any questions and update the membership on the past year and the year ahead.

Afterwards, the library team will be there to talk about the project and

answer any of your questions. We are looking forward to seeing the updates to this building, which CHRS was able to add to the registry of historic places.

Per our bylaws, CHRS members need to approve the proposed 2026–2027 budget before the start of the fiscal year on October 1. At its July 15, 2026 meeting, the CHRS Board of Directors voted to present the Fiscal Year 2027 operating budget outlined below to the membership for approval.

The Board recommends that the CHRS membership approve the budget.

A vote on the FY 2027 budget will take place at the September membership meeting. We encourage all members to review the proposed budget in advance of the meeting. If you have any questions or comments, please contact CHRS Treasurer Nick Alberti at alberti6a04@yahoo.com or bring them to the September membership meeting for discussion. ★

	FY 2025 Income & Expenses October 2024 – September 2025	FY 2026 YTD Income & Expenses October 2025 – May 31, 2026	FY 2027 Proposed Budget October 2026 – September 2027
INCOME: Operating Revenue			
Membership	22,530.00	17,692.50	28,100.00
General Contributions	3,435.00	6,210.00	10,500.00
House Tour Revenue	77,960.00	63,000.96	71,000.00
House Expo & Walking Tours	4,762.20	2,938.40	4,500.00
Other Income (Investment earnings, etc.)	534.37	48.04	73,746.00
TOTAL INCOME	109,221.57	89,889.90	187,846.00
EXPENSES			
Administration	61,080.60	35,226.07	72,000.00
Outreach	16,749.14	17,073.94	27,446.00
Advertising	4,625.21	4,284.90	11,000.00
House Tour Expenses	10,603.59	11,441.41	12,650.00
House Expo	2,488.80	3,548.55	3,100.00
Committees	6,629.60	952.26	11,200.00
Fundraising	125.00	341.00	450.00
Community Development Projects	0.00	0.00	50,000.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	102,301.94	72,868.13	187,846.00

Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS)

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* Chair is an appointed Board Member

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Marianne Klein and Kelly Vielmo, Editors

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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

Zoning Report

By Nick Alberti

On July 8, 2026, five members of the CHRS Zoning Committee met to discuss two cases. Representatives from one case participated to present their proposal. The Committee voted to support one case and to oppose one case.

BZA #21475, 1226 F Street NE. The Committee voted to support (5-0) the applicant's requests for two special exceptions, for the rear yard requirements of Subtitle E § 207.1 and for the lot occupancy requirements of Subtitle E § 210.

The applicant is proposing to construct a third-story addition to an existing, detached, two story 4-unit apartment house in the RF-1 zone. The proposed addition will add more space to the top two existing units. The property will remain a 4-unit building.

The building has an existing non-conforming lot occupancy of 82%. The third-floor addition will have a lot occupancy of 70%, requiring special exception relief.

To date, two letters and several notes of opposition have been filed from neighbors; however, their concerns are focused on tenant issues, not related to the zoning issues at hand. The applicant has addressed concerns regarding privacy, by agreeing to install a trellis to shield the line of vision from neighboring properties.

ANC6A02 has not yet met to review this case.

The BZA hearing is currently scheduled for September 16, 2026.

BZA #21478, 912 5th Street NE. The Committee voted to oppose (5-0) the applicant's request for four special exceptions: for the rear addition requirements of Subtitle E § 207.5;

for the lot occupancy requirements of Subtitle E § 210; for the penthouse requirements of Subtitle C § 1501.1; and for the residential conversion requirements of Subtitle U § 301.1(b) and (e).

The applicant is proposing to construct a third story plus penthouse and roof deck, and a three-story plus cellar rear addition, and to configure 3 dwelling units on the lot—two dwelling units in the primary building and a third in an accessory building. The existing structure is a semi-detached, two-story plus cellar principal dwelling in the RF-1 zone.

Lot occupancy is at 70% and will not change: this is consistent with the 70% maximum allowed by a special exception in the RF-1 zone.

The Committee opposed the Special Expectation needed to allow three dwelling units on the lot. The applicant is proposing to construct three dwelling units on a lot with a lot area of 1,620 ft.² Creating three dwelling units on the lot would result in only 540 ft.² of lot area per dwelling unit which is significantly less than the 900 ft.² required for matter-of-right use.

The Committee does not support the Special Exceptions needed to allow for the proposed penthouse. The current building height is 30'. The proposed total height of the building, including the third story addition and the penthouse would be 45'—10' beyond the matter-of-right height of 35'. The proposed height of the building excluding the penthouse is 38 ft. 8 in. The proposed penthouse would be 10' in height (1' taller than the 9' matter-of-right height for a penthouse) and would rise above the third story to a total height of 45'.

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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 July 23, 2026. 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.

513 10th Street SE, HPA 26-334, concept/rear and roof additions. This four-unit apartment building was designed by George T. Santmyers in 1926 for owner/builder Rob Roy Mackay. It is a contributing building. The building is symmetrical, with three bays, two stories, and basement, in brown tapestry brick, in six to one American bond coursing, Craftsman-inspired six-over-one windows and a flat roof. Santmyers (1889–1960) was one of the most talented and prolific architects to practice in Washington. Santmyers is particularly noted for his apartment buildings.¹ In the 1920s he designed Colonial Revival apartment buildings, “symmetric in composition, [with] large multi-light windows, a symmetrically located doorway, flat symmetrical façades, ordered fenestration.” 513 10th Street SE dates from this period of his work. Other examples include: 637 3rd Street NE (1926), 3100 Wisconsin Avenue NW, 5433 Connecticut Avenue NW (1925). 513 10th Street SE is a more modest

Colonial Revival apartment from this period of Santmyers’ work. He transitioned to less historicizing Modern designs in the 1930s.

Capitol Hill roofs are flat. We believed that the proposed very visible tent-like roof is not compatible and likely exceeds allowable building height. In addition, it would be visible from public space from oblique angles. The elevation and building section drawings appeared to be depicted from the lowest point (and thus least visible) in the proposed third floor roof. The drawings submitted lack any clear dimensioning for building heights per DOB’s standards for measuring.

The awning over the entrance is in poor condition and is probably not original. But the proposed pent roof awning is not compatible. We suggested that the applicant study period photographs of apartment building entrances from the 1920s, preferably Santmyers’ designs.

The applicant proposed to remove a substantial amount of building fabric, essentially reducing the building to a shell. We believe that this is excessive demolition. The DC historic preservation law defines demolition to mean “the razing or destruction of a historic building or structure “entirely or in significant part.” 10 DCMR 305.1.

The garage appears to date from the period of significance. It is one-story, brick, with a roll-up door, and corbelling at the roofline. Adding a second story is consistent with the *Preservation and Design Guidelines—Alley Buildings and Garages*, p. 4, 7, but we thought that the height of the garage with the second story addition should be clarified. It appeared that



Front and garage view of 513 10th Street SE.

the corbelling would be preserved, as required in the *Guidelines* when a second story is added.

We believed that this project as it pertains to the apartment building is not compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District. We believed that the plans for the garage were compatible; nevertheless, the Board found the general concept compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District and delegated final design of the front awning and addition visibility to staff for final approval.

HPRB did not consider any other Capitol Hill cases on the consent calendar. ★

Interested in learning more about historic district designation?
Contact CHRS at info@chrs.org.

¹ EHT Tracerics, Multiple Property Document, Apartment Buildings in Washington, D.C. 1880-1945. P. E-34. HPO, DC Architects Directory, Biographies, P-S.

Fall Walking Tours

By Angie Schmidt

Get ready for a new season of walking tours! CHRS volunteers will be offering walking tours September 19 and 20, and also October 17 and 18. Tickets for the September tours are available on eventbrite now and the October tours will be available on September 15. Three of the tours in October will be different from the September ones, but we will be repeating our newest tour of Fifth Street in October, since it is likely to sell out. Tickets are \$15 and go to support CHRS programming.

SEPTEMBER 19 AT 1:30PM

The Civil War and Before. This tour highlights some of the neighborhood's oldest history and buildings and how the area grew and changed. Learn about the groups of people who were the original inhabitants of the area near the Navy Yard. Meet at the corner of 8th and M Streets SE (by the Ovarions Eye Institute).

One-Block Streets in NE. Our one-block streets are among the most charming streets on Capitol Hill. Come on this tour and learn who created them and why, the communities who lived here and the changing architectural styles popular in the 1870s, 1890s, 1900s, 1910s. Meet in front of 222 11th Street NE (corner of 11th and Park Street NE).

SEPTEMBER 20TH AT 1:30PM

SE Alleys. Capitol Hill has many hidden alleys and charming one-block streets. Take a trip back in time to explore the workaday world of past residential and industrial uses and some of our most diverse populations. Starts at 233 12th Street SE.

Fifth Street. This tour has a mix of everything—architecture, civil war history, notable people, and the general development of Capitol Hill. The tour starts in Stanton Park—meet by the statue of Nathanael Greene—and ends in Seward Square.

MEMBERS-ONLY TOURS

October will also feature a spooky **Ghostly Capitol Hill** walking tour on Friday, October 16 at 6:30 pm and Saturday, October 24 at 8 pm. These tours are for CHRS members only—RSVP to caphrs420@gmail.com to reserve your space! ★

Thank You, CHRS Supporters!

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

CONTRIBUTORS

General Donations

Leah Castelaz & Blair Pitcairn
Dawn Nelson

MEMBERSHIPS

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Kristen Hutchens
Riley Mistrot
Dawn Nelson

Household

Leah Castelaz & Blair Pitcairn
Jackie M Clegg Dodd
Annie Trentham & Daniel Sweat

Join Us for Hilloween!



IMAGE COURTESY ELIZABETH NELSON

CHRS will be hosting a children's activity table at Hilloween, the Hill's annual street festival centered on the Eastern Market North Hall (225 7th Street SE). This year, Hilloween will be held on Friday, October 30; organizers have not announced the time yet, but last year's event ran from 4:30–6:30 pm.

We'll entertain the kiddos with beads to string while we share info on our organization and promote the House Expo scheduled for the following day—and pass out treat bags sporting the CHRS logo.

If you'd like to join in the festivities, we would surely welcome your assistance. Costumes are appreciated but not required. If you know you're coming, please send an email to elizabeth_knits@yahoo.com, but it's fine to just show up!

Continuing the Sidewalk Repair Project

By Angie Schmidt

Capitol Hill Village and CHRS have partnered to try to improve the speed of repair to brick and non-brick sidewalks in our neighborhood. We have had many meetings with representatives from DC Department of Transportation (DDOT) and continue to work to have sidewalks repaired in a timely fashion and in a rational manner. We believe that the sidewalk program is not functioning well—repairs are ignored or delayed and good sidewalks are often replaced unnecessarily.

While we hope that everyone is familiar with the 311 system to report sidewalks that need repair, we are now also encouraging neighbors to report any injuries they have sustained, in the hopes that our government, and specifically DDOT, view poor sidewalk conditions as the health, safety, and liability issue that they are.

While we hope you don't get injured by falling on a city sidewalk, there is a way you may be able to get reimbursed for medical expenses and/or lost income. Within six months of your injury, you can file a claim

with DC's Office of Risk Management at: <https://orm.dc.gov/service/tort-liability-claims>.

You can file electronically by clicking on the eFiling Portal to submit a Tort claim. Or, download the form on the website and mail it or hand deliver it to the DC Office of Risk Management, One Judiciary Square, 441 4th Street NW, Suite 800 South, Washington, DC 20001.

Let's make our government agencies accountable and remind DDOT that pedestrians are entitled to safe transportation routes. ★

Walk this Way for Art

By Elizabeth Nelson

On September 12 and 13 from 12–4 pm, local artists and artisans will display (and sell) their work in their own micro-galleries in Capitol Hill home-studios, on porches or in yards during the Capitol Hill Art Walk. Over 100 artists have registered at 60 locations, offering treasures in a wide variety of media—paintings, sculpture, photography, ceramics, textiles, jewelry, and more.

Visit HillRag.com/Art-Walk-2026 for details of this free event, including a list of participants and a map. The map will also appear on the back cover of the September *Hill Rag*.

The Capitol Hill Art Walk is presented by the Capitol Hill Art League (a program of the Capitol Hill Arts Workshop) and co-sponsored by the Hill Rag and the Capitol Hill Restoration Society. ★

2027 House and Garden Tour

It's never too early to be thinking about the next CHRS House Tour! Has the dust settled at the end of a bathroom or kitchen renovation? Finally found the perfect wallpaper for the hallway? Has your garden become your go-to outdoor entertainment space?

Please reach out to us if you would like to have your home considered for the 2027 House and Garden Tour, to be held Mother's Day Weekend, May 8–9, 2027. We are just starting to figure out the best area to highlight this year and have a few new fun options for headquarters in mind. Contact caphillhousetour@gmail.com.

IMAGES COURTESY JON GOLLINGER



Participants at last year's Capitol Hill Art Walk.

Seventy Septembers of CHRS Newsletters

By David Pelizzari

Our September newsletters have mapped the whole CHRS itinerary over some 70 years—almost exactly. “Almost,” because, while our first issue appeared in March of 1957, the Septembers that followed sometimes found us too preoccupied with urgent matters to publish in September. So, in the photo, you’ll see no September newsletters for 1957, 1964, 1965, or 1997; in fact, we can’t be certain a September issue was even published those years. We CAN be certain that issues for the month of September alone constitute only one-tenth of our annual newsletter output. We could easily cover many more office floors with ten times the number of unique issues we’ve produced.

We’ve got it all detailed, because this year we undertook to continue the principles established by the internationally recognized archivist Trudy Huskamp Peterson, our former president (1987–88) and ongoing supporter. The archive she initiated is now in almost up-to-date shape.



Seventy years of the September issues of CHRS News—we’re just missing 1957, 1964, 1965 and 1997.



IMAGES COURTESY DAVID PELIZZARI

All of the newsletters are kept in the CHRS archives.

But, again, “almost”—because we need some help. Best practice calls for more than one copy of each past issue in our archive; for some issues we have only one. Do you have old issues you hesitate to toss? Perhaps, even, of those “missing” Septembers? Toss them to us!

We’ll triage the newsletters to solidify our archive, and responsibly recycle the rest. Let us know at caphrs420@gmail.com, so we can arrange to take them off your hands and give them a forever home within an organized and usable system of records. A system that tells our CHRS story—and the story of Capitol Hill—in an accessible, sometimes juicy, always informative and historical way. ★

Zoning Briefs, *continued from page 3*

In addition, the Committee was critical of the position of the proposed penthouse. The building is positioned adjacent to a walkway and a two story apartment. As such, the proposed penthouse would be visible from the front and would disturb the harmony of the existing pattern of buildings on the block.

To date, no letters of support or opposition from neighbors have been filed ANC6C06 has not yet reviewed the proposal.

The BZA hearing is currently scheduled for September 2, 2026. ★



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

SEPTEMBER

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

8 Tuesday, 10 am
Communications Committee Meeting,
420 10th Street SE.

8 Tuesday, 6:30 pm
Historic Preservation Committee Meeting,
420 10th Street SE.

10 Thursday
Southeast Library Reopening. Details:
chrs.org/selibrary-renovation-pc.

12–13 Saturday/Sunday, 12–4 pm
Capitol Hill Art Walk. Event details
including an artist listing and map at:
HillRag.com/Art-Walk-2026.

16 Wednesday, 6 pm
Board Meeting, Northeast Library,
330 7th Street NE.

19 Saturday, 1:30 pm
Fall Walking Tours: “Civil War and Before”
and “One Block Streets.”

20 Sunday, 1:30 pm
Fall Walking Tours: “SE Alleys” and “Fifth
Street (Stanton Park to Seward Square).”

23 Wednesday, 6–7:45 pm
Fall Membership Meeting at the
Southeast Library, 403 7th Street SE.

Halloween at Eastern Market
October 30 (time TBD)

CHRS 2026 Free House Expo
October 31, 9 am–3 pm

OCTOBER

5 Monday, 6:30 pm
Historic Preservation Committee Meeting,
420 10th Street SE.

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

10 Saturday, 5 pm
Dead Man’s Run 5K, Historic Congressional
Cemetery, 1801 E Street SE.

13 Tuesday, 10 am
Communications Committee Meeting,
420 10th Street SE.

17–18 Saturday & Sunday
CHRS Fall Walking Tours.

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