



# NEWS

www.chrs.org

September 2008

## Whose Ox Is Getting Gored? New Zoning Regulations on Parking to be Program for CHRS Community Forum

CHRS invites members and the public to our September 23 community forum at St. Peter's at Second and C Streets, SE. The doors will open at 7:00 pm. There will be a brief business meeting followed by a panel discussion on the topic "What Will the Proposed New Parking Regulations Mean for Neighborhoods?"

The panel discussion will be led by CHRS Zoning Committee Chair Gary Peterson. The panel will discuss the recent Office of Planning (OP) report to amend the city's parking regulations. Members of the panel will be Travis Parker, OP Zoning Review Manager; David Garrison, Commissioner, ANC6B; Bill Crews, At-large Member of the Zoning Review Taskforce and former DC

Zoning Administrator; and Gary Peterson, Ward 6 Representative on the Zoning Review Taskforce.

The city's parking initiative marks a major shift in the city's attitude towards parked cars.

what parking requirements, if any, should be imposed on entertainment and shopping areas on the borders of Capitol Hill, i.e., near the National's stadium and adjacent to H Street, NE.

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The city's parking initiative marks a major shift in the city's attitude towards parked cars. Potentially everyone will be affected—where they live, work, or play.

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Potentially everyone will be affected—where they live, work, or play. Questions the Zoning Commission will consider include who should qualify for on-street parking; how much parking should be permitted in office buildings; whether apartment dwellers qualify for resident parking stickers; and

The city's 2006 Comprehensive Plan calls for adoption of new zoning regulations to comply with the Plan. This three-year process is managed by OP. The regulations are being reviewed in twenty subject areas and discussed with public working groups for each of the areas. The results are then sent to a 24-member Zoning Review Taskforce for review and comment. Finally a report on the particular subject is sent to the Zoning Commission.

So far, four reports have been sent to the Zoning Commission (parking, loading, height, and arts and culture). The parking report had its first hearing before the Zoning Commission on July 31, 2008. The other three reports are scheduled for hearing during September.

The parking report makes the following recommendations:

*Continued on page 3*

### Volunteers Needed for Community Events

Members are needed to staff the CHRS booth at two upcoming neighborhood celebrations:

- H Street Fair on Saturday, September 20, and
- "Oktoberfest" at Barracks Row on Saturday, September 27.

Time commitment is 1 to 2 hours. New members are encouraged to volunteer. Seasoned members will always be on hand to assist. It's a great opportunity to meet and greet for CHRS, and to help with kids' activities (face painting and bead stringing).

Contact Elizabeth Nelson: [elizabeth\\_knits@yahoo.com](mailto:elizabeth_knits@yahoo.com) or [caphrs@aol.com](mailto:caphrs@aol.com). ✧

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## President's Column

# The New Year: A Great Challenge

by Dick Wolf

CHRS enters not only a new fiscal year but a year of great organizational challenge. We have set in place in our office a 21st century set of computer hardware and software; we have launched an aggressive membership campaign; and the Board has recommended to the membership a large budget focused on our Beyond the Boundaries project. Our most recent house tour has set the stage for this initiative.

a survey of near NE will begin, a stretch of two squares between G and H Streets that goes east from 2nd to 15th Street, NE. We have also put aside funds, which combined with those of other organizations, will support a survey of H Street, NE.

These actions were undertaken by CHRS in collaboration with the Advisory Neighborhood Commissions and other community organizations. The surveys themselves are not the end. They allow neighborhoods to under-

the existing historic district. The decisions for such steps lie with the neighborhoods. But the surveys are a first, essential step, and they provide a wealth of useful information for the neighborhoods.

The complexity and effort involved in creating new historic districts is exemplified by the efforts of the residents of the Barney Circle neighborhood. They have done their homework, answered many questions from the Historic Preservation Office, and will soon be ready to present to the Historic Preservation Review Board a request for approval of their own historic district. Their work will be the subject of another newsletter.

We are digging deep into our accumulated financial assets and membership to support neighborhoods that ask for our help. We believe this is our mission, and over the years it is this kind of support which has built a flourishing Capitol Hill community. On behalf of the Board, I ask for your help during this next year of challenge. ✧

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We have already embarked on professional surveys of Rosedale and Hill East, and in the upcoming fiscal year, we are obligated to fund phase two of these surveys. In addition, once the Dreyfus PUD (Planned Unit Development) funds become available in November,

stand the historic fabric—buildings and related fences, walls, and walkways—in their area. After that, the neighborhoods will need to proceed with further documentation and outreach before there can be any proposal for a new historic district or an addition to

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## Tailored to Fit: Creating an Accessible Home

CHRS's fall Preservation Café series will begin September 17 with a program on Universal Design and measures that Capitol Hill homeowners can take to make it easier to "age in place" in the community's historic rowhouses. *Tailored to Fit: Creating an Accessible Home* will explore things residents can do to facilitate staying in their homes, and be more comfortable in those homes, when dealing with age-related limitations and/or mobility challenges.

The evening's featured speakers, Lindsey Vanderdray and Rebecca Stevens, are both architects at Architrave, a Capitol Hill

architectural firm. Ms. Stevens, who is the former Chief Historical Architect for the National Park Service's National Capital Region, has just finished a residential rehabilitation to provide access for a woman in her 70s and her paraplegic son so they can remain in their home. Ms. Vanderdray, an architectural designer who lives on the Hill, recently completed the design of two Washington homeless shelters that are being upgraded for accessibility and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. After providing general information about Universal Design, they will describe things major and

minor, both outdoors and indoors, and ranging from fairly simple and inexpensive to more complex and costly, that could be suitable and feasible for Capitol Hill homes and residents.

*Tailored to Fit: Creating an Accessible Home* will be held on Wednesday, September 17, from 6:30-7:15 pm in the downstairs Community Room at Ebenezers Coffeehouse at Second and F Streets, NE. The Preservation Café is free, wheel-chair accessible, and open to all members of the Capitol Hill community. ✧

## Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS)

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To contact any of the above, please contact the Society offices by calling 202-543-0425 or sending email to [CapHRS@aol.com](mailto:CapHRS@aol.com).  
[www.chrs.org](http://www.chrs.org)

Celebrating more than 50 years helping to preserve and protect Capitol Hill's residential character, the Society is now the largest civic association on Capitol Hill, and one of the largest in the entire District of Columbia. From the beginning, the Society has played a key role in maintaining the diverse, residential character of our neighborhood. With your participation we will continue to do so for many years to come.

### Start or Renew a CHRS Membership

\* On the web at [www.CHRS.org](http://www.CHRS.org)  
\* Call 202-543-0425 and choose option 2  
\* Pick up a form at one of our meetings  
Starting at just \$25 per year for a single membership, it's a great deal.

# Zoning Regulations on Parking

## Topic of CHRS Forum *continued from page 1*

- General removal of parking minimums,
- Retention of minimums for uses that are of concern to residential neighborhoods,
- Setting of parking maximums,
- Supportive strategies, including
  - > *Shared parking*—allowing minimum parking requirements to be met by spaces that are shared among multiple uses or destinations,
  - > *Car-share parking*—encouraging or requiring that a set number of spaces within accessory parking be offered to established car-sharing companies,

> *In-lieu fees*—allowing developers to build fewer spaces than required in return for payment of a fee that is used to improve public/private transit goals, and  
> *Bike parking*—establishing bike parking requirements.

The OP Report is available online at—<https://www.communication-smgr.com/projects/1355/docs/OP%20Parking%20Report.pdf>. (A link to the report can be found on the CHRS site, [www.chrs.org](http://www.chrs.org).)

Mark your calendar for Tuesday, September 23 and tell your friends and neighbors. The CHRS forum is free and open to the public; no reservations are required. ✧

## Boathouse Row Tour, October 5

On Sunday, October 5th, from noon to 3 pm, the historic yacht clubs of Boathouse Row, located on the Anacostia River, will host a walking tour of the area between the 11th Street Bridge and the CSX Railroad bridge. The yacht clubs will provide information about the history of each of the clubs and the development of recreational boating on the Anacostia River from the early twentieth century to the present.

Boathouse Row, the clubs' home for over 100 years, is currently undergoing a master planning process as part of the planned transfer of ownership from the National Park Service to the District of Columbia. The walking tour will provide visitors with the opportunity to learn more about Boathouse Row, the Anacostia River, and the master planning process.

In addition to the walking tour, the yacht clubs will provide refreshments and a BBQ. Bring your family and friends to enjoy this unique park and riverside nature preserve only a few blocks from Capitol Hill.

To get there, follow 11th Street southbound to the Anacostia River and follow the signs.

Date: October 5th, 12:00 noon – 3:00 pm

Location: 1300-1800 Water Street, SE

Contact: Mary Withum, [mwithum@msn.com](mailto:mwithum@msn.com)

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# Progress at Eastern Market

by Barbara Eck, CHRS Representative on EMCAC

Walk along Seventh Street, SE, and the exterior progress in the renovation and restoration of Eastern Market is evident. The south hall roof and windows and much exterior work on both the north and south halls are substantially complete. Roof replacement on the north hall has been ongoing since Market 5 vacated the premises about a month ago. The Eastern Market Community Advisory Committee (EMCAC) continues to diligently oversee the details of the Market restoration by reviewing the architectural plans and specifications. When presented with plans and proposals in a timely manner, EMCAC has been able to point out any problems, identify possible historic preservation concerns, and help correct plans that might have detrimental effects on our community.

The DC Office of Property Management (OPM) issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a new market manager in July. EMCAC spent many evenings reviewing the RFP proffer and questioned whether the city was providing enough information to applicants to allow them to submit a meaningful price proposal. EMCAC had earlier recommended (to OPM) specific additional financial documents that could help applicants as well as assist OPM and EMCAC in evaluating responses to the RFP. Additional criteria for evaluating the proposals were also recommended by EMCAC.

EMCAC is an advisory body, and its advisory role is statutory. The Eastern Market legislation requires that OPM provide EMCAC with documents, proposals, contracts, RFPs, and any other information regarding the management, operation or proposed changes in the Market. Submission

in a timely manner is required in order for EMCAC to fulfill its role as the community advisory body. The draft RFP contained several instances in which this legal requirement was overlooked. EMCAC brought this to the attention of OPM.

OPM and the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) have discussed (at EMCAC's urging) the need to correct the problem caused by the downspouts erected when the new Farmers Line shed was built a few years ago. The downspouts discharge directly onto the sidewalk. Since the Market restoration work includes an underground storm drain, located between the Market building and the Farmers' Line shed to receive the storm water from the Market downspouts, DDOT agreed that this drain should receive storm water from the shed downspouts.

Unfortunately, DDOT and OPM have been unable to work out problems related to this issue. At their August 27th public meeting, EMCAC voiced frustration with the failure of OPM and DDOT to cooperate and solve the problem. EMCAC pointed out that the problem was caused by this failure, by a lack of oversight when the new shed was erected, and that EMCAC has brought it to their attention over and over again. The city administration (under the previous Mayor) refused to provide EMCAC with the construction plans for review.

EMCAC strongly believes the problem must be corrected before someone is seriously injured by the ice created from the standing pools of water. The resulting lawsuit will have to be paid by taxpayers. Unfortunately the Mayor's representative was not in attendance, but EMCAC will see that he knows that a solution to this problem must be found.

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## Seventh Street, SE, Streetscape

Work on the Seventh Street, SE, streetscape is being coordinated with the Market restoration. Forty or fifty special manhole covers with the Eastern Market logo have been designed for the street, and EMCAC suggested that they also be used to replace the four currently-specified, standard utility covers on the sidewalk south of the Market. The streetscape construction contract has been awarded to Anchor Construction. Construction has been delayed, in part because WASA has decided to replace the water main and that has been delayed. WASA has submitted plans to DDOT and Anchor to have the water main replacement included as an add-on to the streetscape, but the specifications do not yet meet DDOT's standards.

DDOT is in the process of hiring a consultant to prepare two options for differentiated street pavement in front of the Market. These options will be presented to the Construction Coordination Group, composed of representatives from EMCAC, ANC6B, the Tenants' Council, the Seventh Street Merchants, the Market, and the city agencies.

There will be no designated project staging area. The contractor will bring in what is needed at the specific time and apply for public space permits as required. The Construction Coordination Group should be apprised of the need for any specific permits and given an opportunity to comment and make recommendations. There is little space in the area to locate the construction trailer for streetscape work. At the moment it appears that the Rumsey Aquatic Center Plaza is the best option. DDOT considered Turtle Park, and was advised that this choice would face community opposition. ✧

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# Market Master's Office Spotlited at June 11 Café

by Shauna Holmes

CHRS's June Preservation Café featured the little-known Market Master's Office on Eastern Market's second floor. Tucked away above the central entrance pavilion on the Market's east side, the office was untouched in previous renovations and survived the April 2007 fire.

After the fire, three organizations—the DC Preservation League, DC's Historic Preservation Office, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation—joined together to commission a conservation report that would provide a history of the Market Master's Office, document its condition, provide technical recommendations for rehabilitating the space, and determine the optimal period of historic significance to provide a framework for interior rehabilitation and interpretation. Three of the preservation experts who worked on the report spoke at the Preservation Café: Tanya Beauchamp, an architectural historian, and Gretchen Pfaehler and Cristina Radu, preservation architects at EwingCole, which developed and produced the report.

As Ms. Beauchamp said in her introductory remarks, German-American architect Adolph Cluss designed Eastern Market to provide Washington with a prototypical modern American market for an expanding city and expanding urban neighborhood. "The plan, lighting, ventilation, and other details of the building were carefully thought out. The role of the Market Master and the design of his office were central to the efficient working of the market. Providing the Market Master with an elevated position where he could observe both the indoor and outdoor marketing activities, have easy and quick access to all

areas...and yet provide a measure of privacy in which to conduct the business of the market was key to its success." The space was used as Cluss intended for nearly twenty years, after which it was converted to public space and used mostly as a café for several decades. The report recommends 1873-1908 as the period of significance and interpretation for restoring and rehabilitating the space, since that includes the earliest years of the market and the time when the space was used as originally intended.

Using excellent PowerPoint slides to illustrate their architectural survey and findings, the speakers described their examination of the space's surfaces and finishes; its partition, door, windows, and knee wall; and the winding stair and its enclosure. The original configuration was one room with no enclosures and showed a high quality of craftsmanship. The condition of original materials was found to be fair for walls, windows, and floors, but poor for the stair and ceilings. Changes over time included a partition wall, mantel surround, stair enclosure, a platform along the stair, and wallpaper. The meticulous survey of finishes included identifying historic paints through stereoscopic and polarized-light microscopy and microchemistry.

Recommendations for rehabilitation of the Market Master's Office include following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation in all work, which would include removing additions like the partition wall, platform doors, stair enclosure, and miscellaneous wood pieces. Recommended work would also include restoring the stairs' structural soundness; constructing a handrail along the stair; reconstructing the ceiling in the stairway; repairing and refinishing

the wood floor boards and the knee wall along the stair; restoring and refinishing all wood trim and window frames and sashes; and reconstructing hatches to the attic in their original locations. The plaster walls should be repaired and refinished per the finishes recommended in the Historic Paint Finishes Report, and the missing section of baseboard should be reconstructed and finished according to that report as well.

The conservation report recommends too that interpretation play an important role as the office is rehabilitated. It recommends, for instance, that current ceilings should be removed and new ceilings constructed and finished according to the recommended period of interpretation; the fireplace surround should be retained and interpreted; small sections of wallpaper should be saved, mounted, and exhibited as part of the history of the space; and the gas fixtures should be documented and removed for use in an exhibit interpreting the café period. And, since Adolph Cluss designed the space as an office, the report recommends that the space continue to be used as an office, which would also comply with the first of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, which states that "A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to [its] defining characteristics..."

CHRS's next Preservation Café on Universal Design and measures that Capitol Hill homeowners can take to make it easier to "age in place" in the community's historic rowhouses will be September 17 (see story on page 2). ✧

# Proposed 2009 CHRS Operating Budget

by Paul Cromwell

The proposed CHRS 2009 Operating Budget by and large proposes to continue line item expenditures based on previous years, with several notable exceptions.

Last year CHRS began a new initiative called "Beyond the Boundaries," which recognizes the interest of the Society in the historic nature of neighborhoods outside the boundaries of the Capitol Hill Historic District, but within the Capitol Hill Planning Area. This effort has ranged from sponsor-

ing activities designed to promote appreciation of neighborhood history to assisting with surveys of the neighborhoods' historic resources.

Most of the CHRS funding has been devoted to the survey of historic buildings in order to document the buildings and create an important database of information for the neighborhoods. The DC Office of Planning, in its Capitol Hill Area Element of the Comprehensive Plan, roughly defines the boundaries of this planning area as Florida Avenue and Benning Road to the north, Second Street to the west, and the

Anacostia Waterfront to the south and east. A total of \$36,000 was included in the 2008 budget, and a total of \$80,000 has been proposed by the Board for 2009.

This significant effort cannot be supported by our normal sources of income, including memberships and proceeds from the house tour. Therefore funding to support Beyond the Boundaries activities is proposed to be transferred from the Endowment Fund account (Transfer in from other Accounts) and the temporary suspension of the CHRS Grants Program (\$12,000).

*Continued next page*

## CHRS Grant Helps Renovate Turtle Park

by Larry Pearl

"FEAR THE TURTLE" is the slogan for the University of Maryland. But children (and adults) need not fear the new turtles that grace Turtle Park, pinched between North Carolina and Independence Avenues, right next to Eastern Market.

The unveiling of the turtles took place on June 30th, but not before some ancient and modern history was recounted. Edee Hogan lived on Sixth Street, SE,

some 40 years ago, and her then-two year old daughter used to play at the park. Edee was involved in the fundraising for the original turtles, working with Friendship House's Market Day and the Congressional Circle Wives. She lobbied the Department of the Interior to supply the gravel "so the turtles wouldn't run away." The turtles were fabricated on Archibald Walk, and Edee pressured the fabricator to deliver the big turtle by bringing school kids by the workshop until he relented.

Fast-forward to the present, where a CHRS grant helped to fabricate the new turtles, once again on Archibald Walk. The fabricator was John Giesecke, who used clay from Eastern Market Pottery that remained after last year's fire. He used to play on the turtles, as do his children.

Dan Tangherlini, City Administrator, noted that his children, too, played on the turtles.

Tommy Wells, Ward 6 Councilmember, spoke of how the project represented "empowered people." Muriel Martin-Wein, the sparkplug of Friends of Turtle Park, thanked everyone who had made the day possible. And then the turtles were unveiled.

Subsequently, Ms. Martin-Wein sent an email to Dick Wolf, saying "Words cannot begin to express the joy and the gratitude Friends of Turtle Park feel. Watching the kids' faces and reactions to the new 'friends' is truly priceless. One little boy rode his bike to my home and said, 'Someone drew a face on the turtle but I wiped it off.'

Thanks to you all we have new turtles with clean faces. ✨

### Help Wanted: CHRS Office Manager

Work 12-15 hours per week at the Society's office at 420 10th Street, SE. Work schedule can be flexible. Pay is \$13 per hour, and the only other benefits are involvement in a wide range of community service matters. We need a mature, personable, well-organized person with general office skills, including computers. Members of the Society and residents of Capitol Hill preferred.

Work includes maintaining membership records of the Society; responding to telephone and email inquiries by supplying routine information and publications or by referring inquiries to the proper Board member; helping prepare for Board and Membership meetings; maintaining stocks of literature and promotional materials; and assisting in preparations for the annual House and Garden Tour and other events. If interested, call the CHRS office, 202-543-0425 and speak with Jeff Fletcher, the current Office Manager. ✨

## Proposed 2009 CHRS Operating Budget

	Budget Expended 2005	Budget Expended 2006	Budget Expended 2007	Budget Adopted 2008	Dollars thru 7/31/2008	Dollars remaining year end	Budget Proposed 2009
<b>I. SOCIETY ACTIVITIES</b>							
<b>A. Total Income</b>	<b>23488</b>	<b>25548</b>	<b>20700</b>	<b>63500</b>	<b>24676</b>	<b>38824</b>	<b>99740</b>
Membership	19626	21331	20000	20000	22168	-2168	25000
Interest	415	734	300	300	23	277	300
Contributions	20	1000	200	200	0	200	200
Transfer in from other accounts	0	0	0	43000	0	43000	74240
Miscellaneous	3427	2483	200	0	2485	-2485	0
<b>B. Total Expenses</b>	<b>58765</b>	<b>56996</b>	<b>57100</b>	<b>108500</b>	<b>62407</b>	<b>46093</b>	<b>143940</b>
Administrative Expenses	4682	4032	4500	5000	5946	-946	6000
Accounting Service Expenses	3500	4000	4000	2500	2750	-250	3000
Computer support/purchase	0	0	1500	7000	4441	2559	4000
Insurance	1087	1087	1100	800	1077	-277	800
Salaries	7799	7590	0	0	0	0	0
Personal Services Contract-Admin	0	0	9600	10000	8684	1316	10000
Employment Expenses	945	1670	0	0	0	0	0
Rent (office and storage, St. Peters)	8304	10067	9600	10560	8876	1684	11000
Grants paid	8425	9000	5000	12000	2000	10000	0
President's Party	482	273	1000	300	0	300	300
CHRS Elections	610	570	500	600	739	-139	500
City Planning Committee-Wolf	2000	0	1200	500	0	500	300
Community Development Committee-Eck	1462	475	500	500	230	270	300
Communications Committee-Vacant	469	864	0	1000	0	1000	500
Environment Committee-Purcell	0	0	100	100	15	85	100
Historic Preservation Committee-Metzger	3602	1487	4000	3000	1504	1496	3000
Beyond the Boundaries-Hanousek			0	36000	2117	33883	80000
Membership Committee-Davis	1581	540	700	4800	4985	-185	5500
Zoning Committee-Peterson	90	0	100	240	0	240	240
Newsletter Expenses	9085	9942	11000	11000	8833	2167	11000
Forums	950	88	700	300	174	126	300
Transportation					9750	-9750	5000
Website hosting (DC Access)	875	1450	1500	2000	275	1725	2000
Miscellaneous (including 50th in '05)	2818	3861	500	300	11	289	100
<b>C. Net Gain &lt;Loss&gt; from Activities</b>	<b>&lt;35277&gt;</b>	<b>&lt;31448&gt;</b>	<b>&lt;36400&gt;</b>	<b>&lt;45000&gt;</b>	<b>&lt;37731&gt;</b>	<b>&lt;7269&gt;</b>	<b>&lt;44200&gt;</b>
<b>II. SALE OF GOODS</b>							
<b>A. Total Income from Goods</b>	<b>1283</b>	<b>2963</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>550</b>
Promotional Items Sales	1231	740	500	500	208	292	500
HD Guidelines Sales	52	33	50	50	62	-12	50
Workshops Inc	0	2190	0	0	0	0	0
<b>B. Total Expenses for Goods</b>	<b>1769</b>	<b>4265</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>1350</b>
Promotional Items Purchase (Nelson)	1769	115	500	500	0	500	1300
Sales Tax	74	82	50	50	21	29	50
Workshop Exp.	0	4068	0	0	0	0	0
<b>C. Net Gain &lt;Loss&gt; from Sales of Goods</b>	<b>&lt;486&gt;</b>	<b>&lt;1302&gt;</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>&lt;249&gt;</b>	<b>&lt;800&gt;</b>
<b>III. ENDOWMENT FUND (separate report)</b>							
<b>IV. HOUSE TOURS</b>							
<b>A. Tour Income 2008 (Total)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>62860</b>	<b>62352</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>65000</b>
Prior Year (2005)	62263	0	0	0	0	0	0
Prior Year (2006)	0	57000	0	650			
Prior Year (2007)	0	0	50000				
Current Year (2008)	0	0	0	62860	62352		65000
Budget Year (2009)					0	0	
<b>B. Tour Expenses (Current and Prior)</b>	<b>12631</b>	<b>14500</b>	<b>15000</b>	<b>15000</b>	<b>21033</b>		<b>20000</b>
<b>C. Net Gain &lt;Loss&gt; from House Tours</b>	<b>49632</b>	<b>42500</b>	<b>35000</b>	<b>47860</b>	<b>41319</b>		<b>45000</b>
<b>V. CHRS OPERATING NET GAIN &lt;LOSS&gt;</b>	<b>13869</b>	<b>9750</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2860</b>	<b>3837</b>	<b>&lt;7518&gt;</b>	<b>0</b>

# Character-Defining Features: Public Space

by Nancy Metzger

A blooming garden in front of just about every house on Capitol Hill — the Congress of 1870 would be very pleased if it could see how well its innovative (and perhaps a bit desperate) plan for paving the streets of Washington has turned out. Their plan, born of budgetary necessity, has produced one of the character-defining features for the city — the wealth of green space that defines our streets.

Following the turmoil of the Civil War, the city's streets—many unpaved and rutted, dusty in dry weather and muddy in wet—needed immediate attention, but the very wide widths of the street

rights-of-way that were designated by L'Enfant's 1790 plan would entail a gargantuan paving bill if the street plan were carried out as originally mapped. Thus a masterful compromise was envisioned: the width of the streets to be paved was standardized, and there were to be sidewalks and strips of "parked" land between the sidewalks and the streets to separate pedestrians from carriages, horses, carts and other vehicular traffic. The final element of the plan was that the land between the sidewalk and the property line (generally at the building's facade) was to be enclosed with a low fence and planted with flowers, trees, and low ground cover by the adjoining property owner, thus establishing linear parks as

the setting for the urban houses. The uniqueness of this approach can be appreciated when one looks at other historic rowhouse neighborhoods, such as Bolton Hill in Baltimore, where steps descend directly to the sidewalk.

Not only did the Parking Act of 1870 establish house-front parks, it also highlighted the neglect of the reservations (or "parklets") established by the L'Enfant Plan at the intersections of the regular street grid and the diagonal avenues. A "parklet" can show up colored green on a map, but its condition on the ground is often a very different matter. While larger reservations were envisioned under L'Enfant's plan as major parks appropriate for statues and fountains (such as Stanton Park), the smaller areas, depending on their size, could either be simple plots of grass and flower beds, or they could be small parks with walks and benches as well as trees and flowers, all enclosed with fencing. (Both types of these smaller reservations can be seen near Eastern Market, where Independence and North Carolina cross at Eighth Street — "Turtle Park" at Seventh and a post-and-chain enclosed triangle at Eighth.)

As early as 1849, Commissioner in Charge of Public Buildings Ignatius Mudd wrote, "A number of small open spaces formed by the diagonal intersections of avenues and streets, demand speedy attention...some of which are located in thickly populated and growing sections of the city and should therefore be made ornamental and attractive. As they are, unenclosed and uncared for, private individuals use them at pleasure, and in many cases they are made the depositories of rubbish and offal." Actually it wasn't only private citizens who were taking over some reservations, but

*Continued on next page*

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# The Hill on Film

by Mike Canning

(Continuing our occasional series about how Hollywood has treated—or mistreated—elements of Capitol Hill. CHRS Treasurer Canning writes movie reviews for the Hill Rag.)

East Capitol Street is one of Capitol Hill's principal arteries, our dividing line in several respects, our backbone in other ways. It was also originally intended, by the city's designers, to be our capital's Grand Principal Entryway, a majestic avenue running from the river to the East Front of the Capitol. Well, that grandiose plan never quite came off, but this still handsome street has been the backdrop and focus for some Hollywood movies over the years, and still garners filmmakers' attention.

As far back as *Washington Story* (1952), the street shows up in the finale of this story of a decent legislator played by Van Johnson. As

his lover Patricia Neal runs up the Capitol steps to embrace Johnson, we see a distant vista of East Capitol Street behind her.

More than 25 years later, East Capitol Street is featured again in the television mini-series, *Blind Ambition*, the dramatization of John Dean's tell-all Watergate book, with Martin Sheen as Dean. The East Capitol sequence has Dean-Sheen arriving at a rowhouse on the 200 block NE in a shiny red sports car.

In the comedy-drama *Broadcast News* (1986), TV reporter Aaron (Albert Brooks) lives in a townhouse on the 600 block of East Capitol, SE, and both its exteriors and interiors are used within the film.

In the taut Clint Eastwood thriller from 1993, *In the Line of Fire*, the film's key chase sequence includes Secret Service Agent Clint running after potential assassin John Malkovich, who ducks into an alley off East Capitol, then leads Eastwood and another agent on a

merry chase over the rooftops of buildings facing the street.

One of the street's grand old ladies, the Colcord on the 400 block, NE, is featured in *The American President* (1995). It serves as the building where lobbyist Annette Bening lives, and where she invites prez Michael Douglas over for dinner.

In the tart political satire *Wag the Dog* (1997), a PR stunt to protect the President involves tossing laced-together sneakers over telephone lines on East Capitol and Fifth Street (I witnessed this location shoot in the late hours of a chilly fall evening).

Most recently, *The Good Shepherd* (2006) had a half-day shoot which included the Capitol Hill Valet Cleaners—the site where rising CIA operative Matt Damon picks up some laundry with a secret inside. This sequence was the only one of those listed here that was a period piece, the story taking place in the early 1960s. ✧

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## Public Space *continued from previous page*

of course many of these were used during the Civil War for all manner of military purposes and for dumping grounds. Lincoln Park (not known by that name yet) was one of those. Even after that, the city itself built a public schoolhouse in the 1880s in Reservation 125 at Virginia Avenue, K and 9th streets (perhaps because no other vacant land was available in the Navy Yard area at that time). The building became a firehouse in 1904, and the site is now under the Southeast Freeway.

Although encroachment on public reservations by private entities still occurs, one of the biggest threats to public space was the decision in the 1950s to require, under zoning regulations, new dwelling units to provide parking spaces. In situations without access

from alleys, rowhouses with garages in the front were constructed by the score, substituting concrete paving for Congress's house-front gardens and reducing available street parking for all residents. It is expected that the revisions to the Zoning Regulations currently being considered will address the problems created by earlier regulations, as the 1870 Parking Act is important to the entire city.

Within the Capitol Hill Historic District, both the Historic Preservation Review Board and the Committee on Public Space in the DC Department of Transportation (DDOT) keep a close watch on incursions into the public space that would reduce the amount of green space. In areas outside the historic district, DDOT's Public Space Committee, which

meets monthly, has jurisdiction over such proposals. Permits are required for construction or alteration of fences, walks, walls, paved areas, etc. Information on permits can be found on the websites of the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, Historic Preservation Office, or DDOT.

[More information on the Federal Reservation system can be found in an article published in the Spring/Summer 1993 issue of *Washington History*, "The Predicament of the 'Parklets': Understanding Washington's Smaller Parks" by Elizabeth Barthold.] ✧

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# Looking Back on Capitol Hill

by Nancy Metzger

One of the parochial schools that became a public charter school this summer is the Holy Comforter-St. Cyprian School at East Capitol and 14th Streets, SE. Perhaps some Capitol Hill residents were puzzled by the name 'St. Cyprian,' since both the church and the school were torn down in the 1960s when the Catholic Diocese combined the congregation with that of Holy Comforter Church and sold both buildings to developer Barrett Linde, who constructed rowhouses on the sites.

When institutions are merged and properties demolished, it is sometimes difficult to find a trace of their former existence except for perhaps a plaque marking the spot, some photographs, and individual memories and stories. Indeed there is a plaque in a small triangular park in front of where the handsome stone church once stood at 12th and C Streets, SE. There are undoubtedly many photos of the church, but one of the best—a 1949 photograph of the choir boys in

their robes entering the church—is in the Wymer collection at the Washington Historical Society. And many Capitol Hill residents have their own memories of the church, which began in 1893 as an all-black congregation for those who felt less-than-wholly accepted at other neighborhood parishes.

St. Cyprian's School and Convent stood four blocks west of the church, at Eighth and C Streets, SE, across from the Hine School playground. The Atkins family, long associated with St. Cyprian's Church, gave that land for a Catholic School for black children. There is no plaque marking the school's existence, but a magnificent oak tree protected by a low stone wall remains in the alley, behind the 1960s rowhouses, an amazing survivor that sheltered the school and convent. (Photographs taken by Sylvia Cotter, a former Capitol Hill resident, when the building was being demolished in the 1960s can be viewed at [www.CHRS.org](http://www.CHRS.org).)

The memories come from Helen Ogle Atkins, who married

into the Atkins family in 1935 and lived at 823 C Street, SE, one of a series of houses owned by her mother-in-law, Marion Atkins. Helen Atkins's husband worked in the Post Office at night and in real estate during the day, and his parents had a stall at Eastern Market. In a 2005 interview for the Overbeck Oral History Project, Helen Atkins, then 97, talked with Pat Driscoll about her life on Capitol Hill, her love of theater, the difficulties of living in segregated Washington, and her career teaching in DC public schools:

*ATKINS: You know about St. Cyprian's? ... It was a lovely church at night. My mother-in-law. She was a big worker in that ...the Atkins people did a lot, they put in a lot of money. They gave all to the Blessed Virgin and they gave property for the school. ... The Atkins family gave the land for a school for colored children, that didn't have any, a Catholic school for colored children. They gave the land with their family homestead on it.*

*DRISCOLL: When did they homestead?*

*ATKINS: I don't know. It was before my time. ...When I got there, they had already given it, you know. ...*

*DRISCOLL: How did the family feel then when the Archdiocese sold it?*

*ATKINS: [The Bishop] came in and told her that he was going to sell it. Was nothing that she could say or do. ...I think she was hurt. ...*

*DRISCOLL: I sure would be.... And there was a wonderful old tree. I don't know what kind of tree it was, but it was a great big tree in the St. Cyprian courtyard, in back.*

The complete interview with Helen Atkins can be found at [www.capitolhillhistory.org](http://www.capitolhillhistory.org). An interview with Georgiana Barnes by Sharon House, on the same website, tells more of the story of St. Cyprian's School. ✱

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## Reserve Now for Sept. 9 Overbeck Lecture: L'Enfant's Grand Avenues

The Overbeck History Lecture Series resumes on Tuesday, September 9, with a new look at the French visionary who designed Washington, DC. Pierre L'Enfant's critical role in the creation of the federal city will be examined by George Mason University writer and teacher Scott W. Berg at 8:00 pm at the Naval Lodge Hall at 330 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE.

Berg is the author of an excellent new L'Enfant biography, *Grand Avenues*, which traces the Frenchman's artistic and professional roots in 18th century Paris, his service in the American Revolution under General George Washington,

and his brief and troubled commission to create the basic layout of a new capital city. Berg teaches nonfiction writing and literature at George Mason and frequently contributes articles on historical subjects to the *Washington Post*.

As with all Overbeck lectures, admission is free but a reservation is required due to limited seating. Please contact [OverbeckLecture@aol.com](mailto:OverbeckLecture@aol.com) or leave a message at 202-544-1845 and specify how many seats you will need. No confirmations will be sent, but you will receive an email response if no more seating is available. ✱

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# Zoning Commission Exercises Emergency Powers

by Gary Peterson

Over the summer the Zoning Commission (ZC), at the behest of the Office of Planning (OP), invoked “emergency action” in two cases to amend the Zoning Regulations. In both cases OP, without public notice, filed for text amendments and claimed emergency action was necessary. At the hearings, the ZC, without receiving public comment, approved the text amendments for 120 days and scheduled public hearings to make the amendments permanent.

The first text amendment involves the right to bear and sell arms. The recent Supreme Court ruling in *DC v. Heller*, invalidating laws against owning a handgun, has forced the City Council to enact legislation permitting the sales of firearms. Without amendment, the zoning regulations may permit the sales of firearms in as many as nine zoning districts (CR, CM, C1-C5, M and possibly W). The amendment limits the sales of firearms to the C-3-C, C-4 and

C-5 by a special exception from the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA). The amendment forbids the sales within 600 feet of a residence, church, school, library, or playground, and requires security measures that have been reviewed by the MPD. The amendment is scheduled for a public hearing by the ZC on September 29.

Since gun sales must be permitted, choosing zoning categories to allow the sales can be troublesome and there is certainly a NIMBY factor involved. However, the sales in the C-3-C category makes no sense. C-3-C includes M Street, SE and property around Nationals Park. In Southwest, the C-3-C includes the Waterside Mall area and nearly everything north of the freeway and south of Independence Avenue. Most problematic is the area included in NE and NW along North Capitol Street from Union Station to Florida Avenue. This puts gun sales into a high crime area. Interestingly, both Dupont Circle and the Washington Hilton are in the C-3-C. CHRS is

working with Councilmember Wells to get the C-3-C area removed from the proposed amendment.

The second text amendment involves the reuse of vacant or soon to be vacant public schools. Under current regulations, if the city wants to use a school for other than school purposes, it must obtain a special exception from the BZA. The amendment will allow four uses in former public schools as a matter of right. The four uses are:

- District Government agency use,
- Medical and dental clinics,
- Community service use, and
- Office use of a not-for-profit organization.

The proposal also repeals Section 222, a section that provides for District of Columbia use of former public school buildings that are historic. Section 222 requires a special exception. Section 222 was adopted barely two years ago. CHRS is opposed to the amendment because it doesn't require a special exception. ✧

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## Historic Preservation Briefs

### Library of Congress Adds DC Maps to Website

Lovers of old maps and those interested in historic research in Capitol Hill will be interested in exploring the high resolution images from several editions of *Baist's Real Estate Atlas of Surveys of Washington, District of Columbia* that have recently been added to the Library of Congress's "Map Collections" website (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/gmdhome.html>). Each plate of the multi-volume editions (1903, 1907, 1909, 1913, and 1919) can be viewed, magnified, and downloaded for free. Capitol Hill plates can be found in Volume 2 of each year's series. The maps indicate the footprint of buildings and materials used, as well as information on street paving and other data of interest.

### Heritage Foundation Project to Return to HPRB in September

As reported in the July/August issue of the *CHRS News*, the Heritage Foundation proposes to restore the old Trovers Card Shop at 227 Pennsylvania Avenue, dig down for a basement floor, renovate the interior and build a new rear addition. All of those elements of their proposal were supported by the Capitol Hill Restoration Society's Historic Preservation Committee and received Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) approval at the July meeting.

The proposal to add a third floor to the two-story 1887 building, opposed by CHRS, did not gain support from the HPRB. However, Board members expressed widely divergent views on the addition proposal, with four members advocating an addi-

tion at or close to the front façade; two members rejecting any third story; and three members advocating a third story that would be pushed back to be only minimally visible. The concept submitted for approval in July involved an addition set back either 12' or 25' from the front, both of which would be visible from across Pennsylvania Avenue. Since a majority consensus on the concept proposal could not be reached in July, the Heritage Foundation has indicated that it plans to submit permit proposals for the September HPRB hearing that would place the addition at the building's façade. Depending on the HPRB decision, the Heritage Foundation could appeal denial of a building permit proposal to the Mayor's Agent. ✧

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# Mark Your Calendar!

## SEPTEMBER

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### 4 Thursday, 7:30 pm

CHRS Zoning Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details: Gary Peterson, 547-7969

### 8 Monday, 6:30 pm

CHRS Historic Preservation Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details: Nancy Metzger, 546-1034

### 9 Tuesday, 8:00 pm

Overbeck Lecture: L'Enfant's Grand Avenues, by Scott W. Berg. Naval Lodge Hall at 330 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. Admission is free but a reservation is required due to limited seating. Please contact [OverbeckLecture@aol.com](mailto:OverbeckLecture@aol.com) or leave a message at 202-544-1845 and specify how many seats you will need. (See page 3)

### 16 Tuesday, 6:30 pm

CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second floor. Details: Dick Wolf, 543-4353

### 17 Wednesday, 6:30-7:15 pm

CHRS Preservation Café. Architects Lindsey Vanderdray and Rebecca Stevens of the Hill firm Architrave will discuss "Tailored to Fit: Creating an Accessible Home." Ebenezer's Coffeehouse, 201 F Street, NE, lower level community room. Event is free and open to the public, no reservations required. Details: Shauna Holmes, 546-5211. (See page 2)

### 20 Saturday, Noon-6:00 pm

H Street Festival, 1200-1400 blocks of H Street, NE. Event features food, music, games, and information booths of community groups, including CHRS. Details: Elizabeth Nelson, [elizabeth\\_knits@yahoo.com](mailto:elizabeth_knits@yahoo.com). (Help is need to staff the CHRS booth. Please email [elizabeth\\_knits@yahoo.com](mailto:elizabeth_knits@yahoo.com) or [caphrs@aol.com](mailto:caphrs@aol.com) if you can help out 1-2 hours.)

### 23 Tuesday, 7:00 pm

CHRS Community Forum: "What Will the Proposed New Parking Regulations Mean for Neighborhoods?" Panel discussion led by CHRS Zoning Committee Chair Gary Peterson. St. Peter's Church basement hall, 2nd & C Streets, SE. Meeting is free and open to the public, no reservations required. Details: Dick Wolf, 543-4353. (See page 1)

### 25 Thursday, 10:00 am

Historic Preservation Review Board, 441 4th Street, NW, Room 220 South. Details: Nancy Metzger, 546-1034

### 27 Saturday, 11:00 am-5:00 pm

Oktoberfest on Barracks Row, Sixth Annual Festival. 500-700 blocks of 8th Street, SE. Sponsored by Barracks Row Main Street. Features food and food competitions by military chefs, music, games, and booths featuring local businesses, artists, and community groups, including CHRS. Details: Sharon Bosworth, 544-3188. (Help is need to staff the CHRS booth. Please email [elizabeth\\_knits@yahoo.com](mailto:elizabeth_knits@yahoo.com) or [caphrs@aol.com](mailto:caphrs@aol.com) if you can help out 1-2 hours.)

## OCTOBER

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### 2 Thursday, 7:30 pm

CHRS Zoning Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street SE, first floor. Details: Gary Peterson, 547-7969

### 5 Sunday, Noon-3:00 pm

Walk along historic Anacostia Boathouse Row and enjoy a barbecue. 1300 to 1800 Water Street, SE. Details: Mary Withum, [mwithum@msn.com](mailto:mwithum@msn.com). (See page 3)

### 6 Monday, 6:30 pm

CHRS Historic Preservation Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details: Nancy Metzger, 546-1034

### 15 Wednesday, 6:30-7:15 pm

CHRS Preservation Café. Christian Kelleher of the Craftsmen Group will take a stylistic look at historic windows and how changes in 19th and early 20th century window technologies influenced the windows in our homes. Ebenezer's Coffeehouse, 201 F Street, NE, lower level community room. Event is free and open to the public, no reservations required. Details: Shauna Holmes, 546-5211

### 21 Tuesday, 6:30 pm

CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second floor. Details: Dick Wolf, 543-4353

### 23 Thursday, 10:00 am

Historic Preservation Review Board, 441 4th Street, NW, Room 220 South. Details: Nancy Metzger, 546-1034

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## Capitol Hill Restoration Society

420 Tenth Street, SE  
Washington, DC 20003

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