

## **CAPITOL HILL NORTHEAST POWERPOINT TEXT – JANUARY 19, 2011**

### **SLIDE 1:**

The *Beyond the Boundaries* survey began in January 2008 and is a multi-phase architectural survey of the greater Capitol Hill area. When finished, this architectural survey will have documented approximately 6400 properties. This portion of the project documented the architecture to the north and east of the existing Capitol Hill Historic District known as Capitol Hill Northeast. The northern boundary is created by H Street, N.E. (although excluding those properties fronting H Street) with 15th Street, N.E. as the eastern border. The western boundaries are formed by 2nd Street, N.E. (between H and F Streets, N.E.), 11th Street, N.E. (between E and F Streets, N.E.), 12th Street, N.E. (between C and E Streets, N.E.), and 12th Place, N.E. (between Constitution Avenue, N.E. and C Street, N.E.) Constitution Avenue to North Carolina Avenue, N.E. serves as the southern edge of the survey area.

The goal of the project was to survey and describe each property, including all primary and secondary resources, noting date of original construction, architects, and builders. It was purely an architectural survey and did not include any historic research. The historic documents used included the original building permits, tax assessment records, and maps.

### **SLIDE 2:**

The survey was performed in its entirety by the architectural surveyors of EHT Tracerics. We recorded 46 squares, with 2,521 properties.

### **SLIDE 3:**

Overwhelmingly, the primary resources documented as part of the Capitol Hill Northeast survey were domestic, providing single- and multi-family housing for residents of Washington, D.C. Construction in this area began with freestanding single-family dwellings (typically wood frame) in the mid-nineteenth century. Rowhouses, begin to appear at a steady rate in the mid-1880s and came to dominate the urban landscape throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Although rowhouse construction accelerated in Capitol Hill Northeast in the mid-1880s, the first examples in the survey area date from sometime between 1871 and 1872 (728-732 6th Street, N.E.). Construction of rowhouses continued in earnest during the first two decades of the twentieth century, resulting in a variety of dwellings reflecting the characteristics of the Queen Anne, Romanesque Revival, Italianate, Classical Revival, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman styles. The availability of housing during this period by speculative developers was spurred by the area's accessibility by the streetcar, which began servicing H Street, N.E. in 1871. Multiple dwellings and duplexes became common in the survey area by the late 1890s; the first appearance of an apartment building occurred in 1903. The increasing need for housing in the 1920s hastened the construction of apartment buildings in the area, thus providing greater density of housing to a single-family residential neighborhood that was largely developed by late 1930s.

#### **SLIDE 4:**

The domestic forms found in the survey area imitate those citywide, beginning with flat-fronted dwellings of wood-frame construction. Ornamentation of these vernacular buildings was limited to the main entry surrounds and cornice lines. Italianate details, such as projecting window and door hoods, tend to dominate these earlier wood-frame dwellings. Few of these buildings remain in the survey area, but the extant examples are clearly discernible because of their forms, materials, and modest stylistic expressions.

With the revision of municipal building regulations in 1877, construction of wood-frame buildings was prohibited. Although wood-frame buildings continued to be built until the late 1880s, brick construction dominates the urban landscape of the survey area.

#### **SLIDE 5:**

Major changes in building regulations enacted in the 1870s greatly affected the siting, materials, and forms of domestic architecture. The streets of the survey area, as planned by Pierre L'Enfant in his 1791 plan for the City of Washington, were generously wide—90 to 160 feet—and grading and paving them required immense resources. The expense became an acute problem with the city's rapid expansion in the decades following the Civil War. In response, Congress passed a law in 1870 narrowing the roadbed and allowing much of the remaining strips on either side to be "parked." The public land extending between the sidewalk and front building line became *defacto* private gardens, although it is still, to this day, technically owned by the District of Columbia.

This initial blurring of the division between public and private was intensified by a second law passed in 1871, commonly known as the Projection Law. This law permitted the extension, first, of bay windows and, later, other types of projections beyond the front edge of the lot line out into the newly designated, quasi-private gardens.

Unlike other areas of the District of Columbia, builders in the survey area did not immediately take advantage of the 1871 Projection Law and therefore the earliest examples of urban rowhouses found within the survey area feature flat fronts. Commonly, these earlier rowhouses are two stories in height and two bays wide. These buildings were typically designed in the Italianate style and feature such details as corbeled brick cornices, soldier brick segmental arches and door hoods with scrolled brackets.

#### **SLIDE 6:**

An interesting exception to the typical early rowhouse form is located at 1339-1351 C Street, N.E. Constructed in 1886 by Charles Gessford, who acted as owner, architect, and builder, these one-story, two-bay brick dwellings represent an urban interpretation of the shotgun form. The shotgun was developed primarily in the rural southern regions and is

one room wide and two to three rooms deep. A shallow-pitched gabled roof typically caps this freestanding structure. The dwellings erected by Gessford, although not freestanding, imitate their vernacular predecessors; yet, because they are attached like the rowhouse, are adapted to fit the urban landscape. Reflective of the Italianate style, each dwelling is ornamented with a corbeled brick cornice and a projecting two-course brick stringcourse. Two segmental-arched openings pierce each façade and are surmounted by a two-course, rowlock brick segmental arch. Two-rooms deep, these unique dwellings are the only example of this form found within the survey area.

### **SLIDE 7:**

The bay-front rowhouse was the dominant form for new housing constructed in Washington, D.C., from the late nineteenth century and continued to be popular well into the twentieth century. Initially, small-scale rowhouses were built in the 1880s and often exhibited elements of the Italianate style. Constructed in 1887 by Charles Gessford, the three rowhouses located at **536-540 13th Street, N.E.** are illustrative of this earlier building type.

By the late 1880s, the Italianate, Queen Anne, and Romanesque Revival styles had gained popularity with an increasing amount of fanciful moldings and ornamentation. Two bays wide and typically two stories in height, although three stories was not uncommon, each dwelling was usually constructed on a raised foundation with a full-height ell extending from the rear elevation. Projecting bays (square, canted, or round), capped by pyramidal roofs, and false mansard roofs or parapets were typical elements utilized by architects to define their work. Oriel windows occasionally marked the second story of Romanesque Revival-style dwellings. Molded metal cornices with brick corbeling were employed to finish the roof, and window and door openings were frequently accented with decorative moldings.

### **SLIDE 8:**

The arrival of the twentieth century introduced the simpler, yet refined Classical Revival style, which became prevalent throughout the survey area. Often constructed with either a full-height projecting bay or a flat front, these dwellings generally exhibit a restrained interpretation of the style. Prominent cornices with scrolled or block modillions provide decoration, while classical motifs, such as swag molding, typically embellish the frieze. Plain or rock-faced concrete lintels often surmount façade openings. The 300 block of G Street, N.E., constructed in 1907 by owner/builder Joseph M. Carmody from the design of architect Arthur M. Poynton, display many of these characteristics.

### **SLIDE 9:**

The popularity of the projecting bay waned as the Classical Revival style and the “daylight” form gained popularity. The daylight form was generally wider, but only two rooms deep to improve interior lighting and circulation. A false mansard roof fronts the façade and is often marked by either one or two dormers. In most cases, it also featured a

spacious front porch, which like the earlier projecting bays, was typically built out over public land. The application of the full-width front porch on these flat-fronted houses provided sheltered outdoor living space overlooking small front yards. Daylighter rowhouses dominated the last significant period of rowhouse construction in Washington, D.C. and are ubiquitous to the Capitol Hill Northeast neighborhood.

**SLIDE 10:**

As the need for housing increased because of the population explosion caused by an influx of military and federal government workers, new domestic building types were introduced to the growing neighborhood of Capitol Hill Northeast, which had become a suburb of Capitol Hill. Higher density housing began modestly, under the guise of a two-unit building known as a duplex. First appearing in the survey area in the 1890s, duplexes are typically wider than a single rowhouse unit; they are generally three bays wide. A typical duplex is composed of a complete apartment on both the first and second stories of the building. Many original duplexes in the survey area have been altered and are now single-family houses.

**SLIDE 11:**

At the turn of the twentieth century, small-scale multiple dwellings, often containing four units, were constructed and they closely resemble the rowhouse in size, massing, and ornamentation. The use of projecting bays easily married this multi-family building with neighboring single-family dwellings.

**SLIDE 12:**

Apartment buildings erected in the 1920s were typically constructed of brick and often demonstrate characteristics of the Classical Revival style. The main entry is generally accented by a bold, molded concrete surround. Decorative motifs, such as swag molding, quoins, and shields, ornament most facades. Simple lintels finish the window openings. Full-height square or canted bays are also common features. Two notable apartment buildings, **501 12th Street, N.E. (1925)** and **“The Lexington” at 1114 F Street, N.E. (1926)**, were designed by preeminent D.C. architect George T. Santmyers, who is most celebrated for his contribution to apartment building architecture in the metropolitan area of the nation’s capital. Santmyers’ early apartment buildings from the 1920s, like 501 12th Street, N.E. and 1114 F Street, N.E., were typically Classical Revival in style, symmetrical in composition, and employed a formal vocabulary based on architectural elements associated with the American Georgian and Federal periods. A majority of these buildings featured a centrally located doorway adorned with a prominent portico, symmetrical fenestration patterns with molded lintels, and classical embellishments such as enclosed tympanums and ornate entablatures.

**SLIDE 13:**

The building at **1100 F Street, N.E.** is a noteworthy example of an apartment building constructed in the International Style. Designed by Dillon & Abel, this three-story, 23-unit building was constructed in 1937 by the Eastern Construction Company, Inc. Charles E. Dillon, and his partner Joseph H. Abel, were among the first architects in Washington, D.C. to adopt the International Style for apartment house construction. James Goode, in *Best Addresses*, wrote that Dillon & Abel “were the first Washington architects to follow the guidelines of the International Style—lack of ornament, severe facades, and functionalism.”

**SLIDE 14:**

The success of Capitol Hill Northeast as a stable and unified residential neighborhood is due not just to the domestic architecture, and of course the residents and property owners, but the religious, commercial, and social buildings. The trend of the commercialization of H Street, N.E. extended well into the twentieth century and impacted commercial development within the greater Capitol Hill area and those squares located directly south of H Street. Purpose-built commercial buildings are not common to the Capitol Hill area, save those along nearby H Street, and commercial activity was often limited to mixed-use corner properties. These corner stores were generally more visible to passersby, and often served the dual purpose of residential and commercial space.

One of the earliest examples of a dwelling & store constructed within the survey area is located at 601 10th Street, N.E. Owner L. Chappel had this building erected (which also included 1002 F Street, N.E.) for a cost of \$3,500 in 1876.

**SLIDE 15:**

The one-story building at **404 13th Street, N.E.** was erected in 1916 by owner/builder Harry A. Kite. Originally constructed as a grocery store, this small building was erected at a cost of \$2,500. Produced from the design of Albert E. Landvoight, the building is reflective of a restrained interpretation of the Classical Revival style.

**SLIDE 16:**

Construction in the Capitol Hill Northeast survey area continued at a swift pace through the 1880s and 1890s and due to the rapidly increasing and diversifying population, new schools were a necessity. Beginning in 1886 with the construction of the Maury Public School, eight extant public schools were erected in Capitol Hill Northeast. Four of these schools, constructed in the 1880s and 1890s, are representative of the earliest period of school construction within Washington, D.C., and are greatly similar in design and form.

The Maury School, named for John Walker Maury, the fourteenth mayor of the City of Washington, was completed in 1886. Located at 1230-1250 Constitution Avenue, N.E., the Maury School was an elementary school intended for the white student population. The building is composed of a two-story main block, constructed of red brick, with a

tower rising from the central projecting pavilion on the façade. Ornamentation consists of decorative pressed brick segmental arches over the window openings.

Constructed in 1889, the Madison Public School shares a similar form and design features with the Maury School. This two-story, seven-bay Romanesque Revival-style building is constructed of brick and features a central projecting pavilion on the façade, which rises to a bell tower. A pyramidal roof, covered with slate shingles, finishes the tower. Full-height brick pilasters accent the façade, which is pierced by segmental-arched window openings.

**SLIDE 17:**

The original Logan Public School, located at 301 G Street, N.E. and was constructed in 1891. The commissioners of the District of Columbia named the school after John A. Logan, a radical Republican Senator from Illinois.

The school emulates the Romanesque Revival style and is significant because it served the growing population of African-American students living in the Capitol Hill area during the era of educational segregation.

By 1933, Logan School no longer had adequate space for its student population and work on a new eight-room extensible elementary school began in 1934.

The Colonial Revival-style brick structure now known as the Logan School is composed of a central two-story, three-bay block, covered with a hipped roof and flanking wings connected by hyphens. Concrete quoins and a molded cornice with modillions provide ornamentation.

**SLIDE 18:**

The Pierce School was erected in 1894. Named for Franklin Pierce, the fourteenth President of the United States, the school was initially constructed to educate white students. This building was designed in the Romanesque Revival style. This red brick building is composed of a two-story main block with an octagonal corner tower (capped by a conical roof) and projecting central pavilions and is capped by a mansard roof. Upon completion, the *National Building Register* described the building as “the best of all our school buildings” due to its excellence of construction.

Constructed in 1921-1922, the Kingsman School, located at 1375 E Street, N.E., is notable in its design because it was intended as an extensible building. Originally, the building was to be named the Lincoln Park School, but after members of the community began petitioning, the school was named for Richard Kingsman. A physician, Kingsman was a member on the Board of Education, served on the public health committee of the Washington Board of Trade, and was also a local resident of the nearby Lincoln Park neighborhood. The Renaissance Revival-style building is three stories in height and is

constructed of brick. The central section is adorned with limestone and is identified by limestone pilasters rising from the second to third stories.

**SLIDE 19:**

Religious buildings were added to the growing neighborhood beginning in the 1890s with the construction of several churches. The earliest church documented within the survey area is located at **1350 Maryland Avenue, N.E.** This two-story, three-bay church was constructed in 1890 by J.C. Yost for the Maryland Avenue Baptist Mission and Reverend Charles White. Designed by Appleton P. Clark, Jr., the church has been covered in Permastone, rendering its original architectural style difficult to discern. However, the gabled roof, projecting tower with corbeling, and round-headed openings are illustrative of the Romanesque Revival style.

A similar Romanesque Revival-style church, rebuilt in 1899, is located at **1423 C Street, N.E.** This building was constructed by the building firm Bond & Braxton from the design of architect Edwin H. Fowler. It is noted on the 1904 Sanborn map as Lanes A.M.E. Chapel. Constructed of red brick, the building is composed of a front-gabled, two-story, rectangular main block with a two-story, hipped-roof square bay rising from the northwest corner. Segmental-arched window openings, holding stained glass, span the façade (west elevation), while the second story of the main block is pierced by round-headed openings.

**SLIDE 20:**

Several churches, such as those at 1323-1325 Maryland Avenue, N.E. (1947), 1227 Maryland Avenue, N.E. (1966), and 256 13th Street, N.E. (ca. 1965), were constructed post World War II and are identifiable by the clear influence of the Modern Movement. Though these post World War II churches range in size, several themes emerge. Faced with brick, all three buildings are capped by a front-gabled roof and feature restrained ornamentation, often limited to the window surrounds. Windows often reach into the upper gable of the façade and are typically sheltered by wide, overhanging eaves.

**SLIDE 21:**

One of the more utilitarian buildings in the survey area is the Old Engine House No. 10, located at 1341 Maryland Avenue, N.E. Designated by the District of Columbia in January 2008 as a landmark and listed in the National Register of Historic Places in November 2008, this two-story, three-bay building was designed by prominent architect Leon Dessez.

**SLIDE 22:**

Although the development of the survey area was undertaken by a collection of builders and architects, by far the most active architect in the Capitol Hill Northeast neighborhood

was George T. Santmyers, who practiced architecture in Washington, D.C., for fifty years. The work produced by his office was by far more proficient than those of any other Washington, D.C. architect. Santmyers designed over 15,000 buildings by 1949, while only a handful of other architects designed more than 1,000 buildings and no other listed in the permit database designed more than 1,600.[1] While Santmyers is credited with the design of commercial buildings, banks, churches, public garages, and thousands of private residences, he is most celebrated for his contribution to apartment building architecture in D.C. His work in Capitol Hill Northeast, includes numerous rowhouses and twenty-seven apartment buildings and multiple dwellings.

[1] D.C. Building Permit Database, State Historic Preservation Office, Washington, D.C.

### **SLIDE 23:**

During the course of the architectural survey, several individual buildings were noted for further study and possible nomination to the District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites and to the National Register of Historic Places. Each building requires that a historic context be prepared and an assessment of integrity be performed to determine whether future nomination is warranted.

### **SLIDE 24:**

#### District of Columbia Public Schools

With the accelerating development of Capitol Hill Northeast in the 1880s and 1890s, the construction of numerous schools was essential to meet the demands of the increasing population of children. Similar in scale, form, and design, the late-nineteenth-century schools (Maury, Madison, Logan, and Pierce) are distinctive landmarks upon the urban landscape of Capitol Hill Northeast. Typically eight to twelve rooms, these buildings adequately served the population of the Capitol Hill Northeast into the twentieth century. With the construction of the extensible Kingsman School in 1921-1922 and the new Logan School at 215 G Street, N.E. in 1934-1935, a new era of school construction was ushered in as the local community outgrew the older schools. Collectively, these six schools are representative of two distinct expansion periods of the D.C. Public School system and are integral to understanding the development trends of Capitol Hill Northeast.

### **SLIDE 25:**

#### Apartment Buildings

Following World War I, a severe housing shortage within the District of Columbia spurred a building boom, with the construction of apartment buildings attempting to fill this void. Buildings designed in the Classical Revival style dominated the urban landscape in the 1920s and was an architectural style favored by noted architect George T. Santmyers early in his career. As the designer of 501 12th Street, N.E. (1925) and 1114 F Street, N.E. (1926), Santmyers employed multiple classically inspired motifs on these large, imposing buildings. Beginning in the late 1920s, Santmyers began to

experiment with a more modern aesthetic, which most likely influenced Joseph Abel. Abel worked in Santmyers' office in the mid-1920s before leaving to establish his own firm in 1928. With the design of 1100 F Street, N.E. in 1937, Abel and his partner Charles E. Dillon illustrated the severe break from the D.C.'s traditionally classical- and revival-styled apartment buildings. The onset of the Modern Movement and the International Style represented the most significant change in the apartment building type in the second quarter of the twentieth century. Together, these three apartment buildings are illustrative of the changes of design taste and paralleled the trends found city-wide.

### **SLIDE 26:**

#### Home Theater, 1230 C Street, N.E.

The imposing three-story, three-bay Home Theater at 1230 C Street, N.E. was constructed in 1915 by owner/builder Home Amusement Company. A *Washington Post* article announced the grand opening of the theater in January 1916 and touted it as the "beautiful new neighborhood photoplay theater," which was "easily accessible from any part of the northeast or eastern part of the city." The theater could seat comfortably 800 people and "careful attention was given to it to avoid crowding."

Designed by W.S. Plager and constructed for an approximate cost of \$25,000, the building is an early example of the Art Deco style in Washington, D.C. with its geometric façade and the use of zigzags, glass block, and streamlined stringcourses. Incorporating many of its Classical Revival antecedents, the building has an emphasis on verticality highlighted by the elongated windows edged with reeded pilasters in the center bay.

[1] "Opening of New Photoplay Theater in Northeast Section of City," *The Washington Post* (1877-1922), January 28, 1916, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed December 1, 2010).

[2] Robert K. Headley, *Motion Picture Exhibition in Washington, D.C.*, (Jefferson, N.C: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1999) 271.

[3] Headley, 271-272.

### **SLIDE 27:**

Financed by the Louis Dreyfuss Property Group, four squares (752, 753, 777, and 778) were studied for possible inclusion within the current Capitol Hill Historic District.

### **SLIDE 28:**

Largely intact, the expanded area most closely parallels the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century development of Capitol Hill and especially the progression of the squares that form the northern boundary of the current Capitol Hill Historic District. The original justification for terminating the Capitol Hill Historic District along F Street, N.E. was purely for topographical reasons because F Street is representative as the bottom of Capitol Hill. However, it is clearly illustrated that the Historic District and Boundary Increase share a common architectural thread, demonstrated by two- and three-story

rowhouses, with varying rectangular and canted projecting bays and designed in the popular Victorian-era architectural styles of the day. Because the residential architecture of Capitol Hill is its most visible identifier and strong characteristic, it can be determined that the Boundary Increase clearly belongs as part of the current Capitol Hill Historic District.

**SLIDE 29:**

The survey in the Capitol Hill Northeast neighborhood is solely an examination of the existing architecture and allows for an understanding of how and why the neighborhood developed but does not fully capture the historic context of the development and subsequent growth. It is recommended that all of the survey phases be completed and a historic context study be prepared before any recommendations can be made.