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*65th Annual*

# HOUSE & GARDEN TOUR

*Mother's Day Weekend*

*May 7 & 8, 2022*

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# Capitol Hill Restoration Society House and Garden Tour



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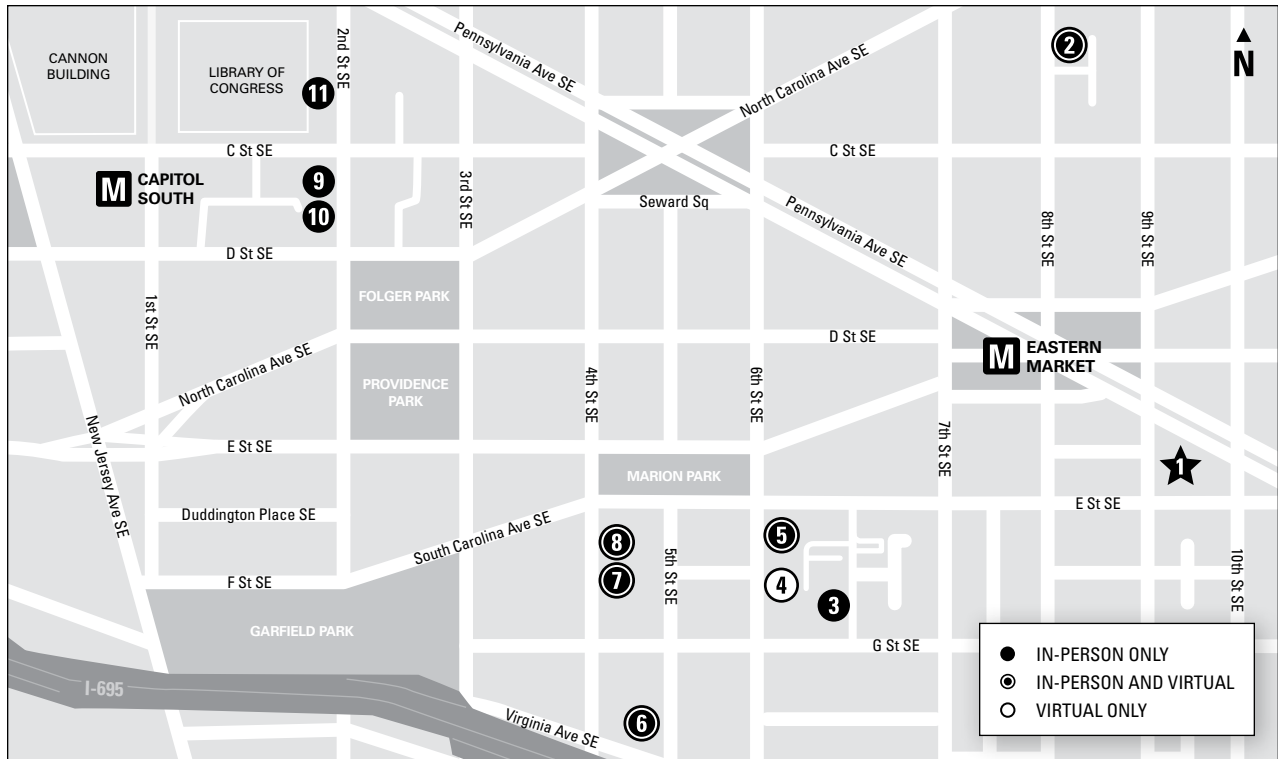
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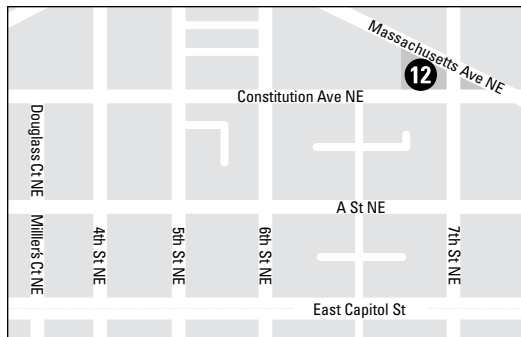
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**HOURS**

Saturday, May 7 • 4–7 PM  
 Sunday, May 8 • 1–5 PM

Proof of vaccination required. Tickets and wristbands required for all tour stops.  
 Masks required inside all homes.



**TOUR HEADQUARTERS**

★ Hill Center, 921 Pennsylvania Avenue SE . . . . . 9  
 (enter from E Street)

**TOUR LOCATIONS**

② 224 8th Street SE . . . . . 10  
 ③ Christ Church, 620 G Street SE. . . . . 11  
 ④ 528 6th Street SE (virtual only) . . . . . 12  
 ⑤ 504 6th Street SE . . . . . 17  
 ⑥ Lenox Condos, 725 5th Street SE, #21 . . . . . 18  
 ⑦ Churchill Condos, 514 4th Street SE, #201 . . . . . 21  
 ⑧ Churchill Condos, 514 4th Street SE, #301 . . . . . 22  
 ⑨ St. Peter’s Catholic Church, 313 2nd Street SE. . . . . 23  
 (Sunday only, 1–4:15 PM)  
 ⑩ St. Peter’s Rectory, 313 2nd Street SE . . . . . 24  
 (Sunday only, 1–4:30 PM)

**WALKING TOURS**

⑪ Self-guided walking tour of St. Peter’s environs . . . . . 25  
 ◀ ⑫ Docent-led walking tour: *High Life and Low Points*,  
 the Alleys of NE Capitol Hill . . . . . 28  
 Triangle park at Massachusetts, Constitution Avenues  
 and 7th Street NE  
 Saturday • 3:30 & 5:30 PM, Sunday • 1:30 & 4:30 PM



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# PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

## Welcome to the Capitol Hill Restoration Society 2022 House & Garden Tour—we're so glad you've come!



**T**hank you for taking part in this Capitol Hill tradition, our signature project and a major source of funding for our other programs and activities. See page 4 for details.

If you are visiting, we invite you to enjoy the hospitality of our neighborhood and charming homes, monumental views and tree-lined streets in the shadow of the Capitol.

If you live on the Hill, you are already familiar with the rich history, diverse cultures, walkability and family-friendly climate that make this a close-knit community. CHRS believes that Capitol Hill should be a good place to live, work, and raise families. For this reason, since our founding in 1955, we have worked continuously to protect Capitol Hill's community, history, and architecture.

Each year the tour features a different part of Capitol Hill. This year, we're focusing on houses south of Independence Avenue between 3rd and 10th Streets, within easy walking distance of each other. And we are highlighting the Civil War Era, with many properties dating back to that time. You can see some houses in person, and others by 3D virtual tours. You can take this year's special walking tour, "High Life and Low Points," that features alleys north of East Capitol and west of Seventh Streets NE. There is also a self-guided tour of the neighborhood near St. Peter's Catholic Church.

Rest facilities are available both Saturday and Sunday at Christ Church, 620 G Street SE; and Hill Center, 921 Pennsylvania Avenue SE. Refreshments will be available both days at Hill Center. Christ Church laid its cornerstone in 1806; St. Peter's Church was founded in 1821 and Hill Center occupies the Old Naval Hospital that opened in 1866. So all three are particularly fitting additions to the Tour.

We hope you get lots of ideas for remodeling, redecorating, and art collecting. Or simply enjoy the lovely homes, fragrant gardens and the company of others who share your appreciation for beautiful spaces.

On behalf of CHRS, I want to extend a sincere thank you, most especially, to all the homeowners featured on this year's tour for their tremendous

hospitality; the house captains who ensure a safe and enjoyable visit for our tour-goers; the 300+ house docents, history writers and other volunteers who staffed every aspect of the tour; the many advertisers featured in this brochure; and the generous corporate and individual sponsors and contributors without whom this tour would not be possible.

If you are not already a member, I hope you will be inspired to join us. If you love Capitol Hill and its historic character, then CHRS is an organization worthy of your support. To complete on-line registration or for more information, please visit: [www.joinit.org/o/chrs-capitolhillrestorationsociety](http://www.joinit.org/o/chrs-capitolhillrestorationsociety). *And now... enjoy the tour! ★*

— Beth Purcell, CHRS President

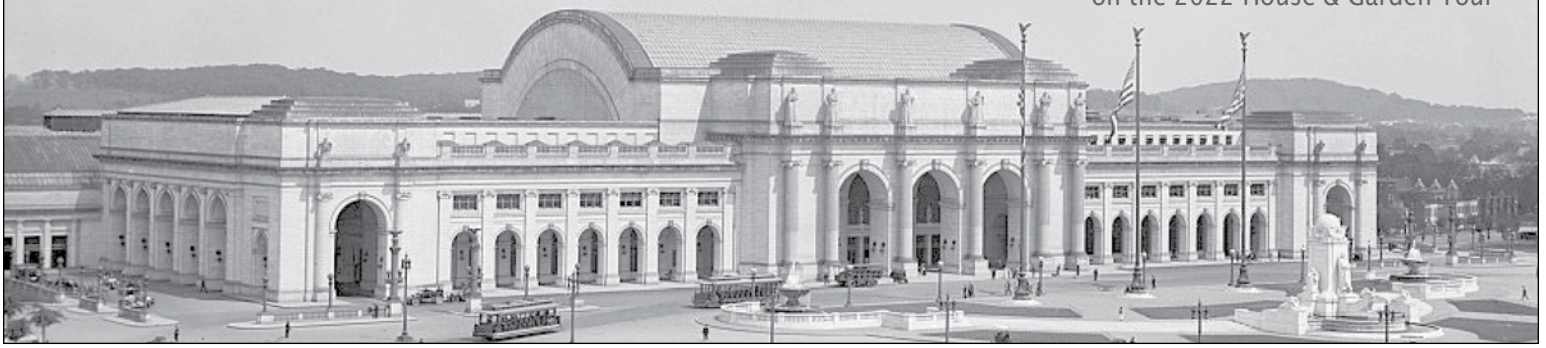
### A MESSAGE ABOUT THIS YEAR'S TOUR

We are delighted that we can once again offer this Mother's Day tradition—in person! As you take the Tour this weekend, please be mindful that many of the properties are private residences whose owners have been extremely kind in opening them for your viewing pleasure. We are committed to keeping them, as well as our guests, safe.

*With that in mind, we are requiring proof of full vaccination against Covid-19 for all participants, as well as masks in all indoor locations and anywhere on private property. We will provide masks for anyone who needs one and wristbands to indicate vaccination status. We will also maintain maximum air circulation within the homes and control the flow of guests for social distancing. Houses or rooms in houses may need to be pulled from the tour on short notice.*

We appreciate your patience and flexibility as we adjust to the unpredictability of the pandemic. Let's celebrate this season of renewal together!

— Elizabeth Nelson, House Tour Chair



## A PANDEMIC PIVOT

The past two years presented unique challenges to the House & Garden Tour Committee. With a traditional, in-person Tour an impossibility, we transitioned to a series of virtual or outdoor activities.

In 2020 we offered the #StayAtHomeHouseTour, a virtual tour with 3D scans of select private homes, plus directions for self-guided walking tours (Scavenger Hunt, Historic Sites Tour and Mural Tour) all of which are still available on our website.

In 2021, we staged the Mother's Day Tour of Tours, a collection of docent-led walking tours, and Artists at Home, "pop up" galleries at or near artists' residences. The guided walking tours proved so popular that we offered them again in September, November, and this past March. Themes included Architecture of Capitol Hill, Capitol Hill Alleys, Notable People, The Resistance, Hollywood on The Hill, Whimsy of Capitol Hill, Parks—Treasures of Capitol Hill, Community Evolution Near Logan School, and Our Industrial Past.


Many thanks to the folks who researched and created these tours: Mike Canning, Fynnette Eaton, Joanna Kendig, Jackie Krieger, Nancy Metzger, Elizabeth Nelson, Robert Pohl, Beth Purcell, Alison Ross, Angie Schmidt, and Heather Schoell. ★



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# CHRS EVENTS

We connect with our members and the Capitol Hill community through events that promote and strengthen the character of our historic neighborhood.

## PRESERVATION CAFÉS & COMMUNITY FORUMS

Our Preservation Cafés and Community Forums feature speakers on a wide range of topics of interest to the greater Capitol Hill community, and are free and open to the public! Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have offered lectures virtually; recordings available at [chrs.org](http://chrs.org) as noted. 🗨️

### 2021–2022

- *Adaptive Reuse of Our Alley Buildings*, Justine Bello
- *Arming a Navy: The Naval Gun Factory and Its Local Workforce*, Edward Valentin 🗨️
- *The Botanic Gardens and the Senate Park Commission: Three Decades of Controversy*, Matthew Gilmore 🗨️
- *Designing a Net Zero Energy Rowhouse*, Will Teass 🗨️
- *Exploring House History in the Time of COVID*, Maygene Daniels 🗨️
- *Living New Deal in Washington*, Richard Walker 🗨️
- *Meet Our Arborists*, Steve McKindley-Ward and Alex Grieve
- *Uncovering the History of the District's Buried Streams*, Joe Arrowsmith, Josh Burch, and David Ramos 🗨️
- *Voices from Our Past—Researching Oral Histories of Capitol Hill*, Bernadette McMahon and Brian Kraft

### 2019–2020

- *Architectural Ghosts of Capitol Hill*, Justine P. Bello
- *DC's Comprehensive Plan*, Andrew Trueblood
- *DDOT Planning on The Hill*, George Branyan and Abdullahi Mohamed
- *Homicide on The Hill*, Robert Pohl
- *Lost Farms & Estates of Washington DC*, Kim Prothro Williams 🗨️
- *Public Squares and Parks*, Justine Bello
- *Restoration Tools and Materials of DC's Historic Masonry Buildings*, Gary Barnhart
- *Swampoodle History*, Matthew Gilmore

Special thanks to East City Bookshop (645 Pennsylvania Avenue SE) for hosting many of our past community events.



## HOUSE EXPO

The CHRS 2021 House Expo was held on October 30 in Eastern Market's North Hall, with over 25 home improvement professionals, having expertise in home repairs, building permits, iron work, windows, kitchen and bath, carpentry, lending and insurance, and house histories. Speakers addressed topics such as solar energy, landscaping, roofing, DIY projects, and building materials. District government agencies were also represented. We hope you can attend the **CHRS 2022 House Expo on Saturday, October 29!**

These events and many others are free and open to the public. Check the Calendar page at [chrs.org](http://chrs.org) for events that may interest you!

## DICK WOLF MEMORIAL LECTURE

The Dick Wolf Memorial Lecture is an annual event to showcase excellence in research and writing on urban planning and historic preservation in the District of Columbia by a student or intern. Each year the winner delivers a presentation and receives a \$1,000 prize. The program is on hiatus, but we offer our congratulations and appreciation to past winners:

- Nicholas Malin, *RFK Stadium: From the Past to the Future* (2020)
- John Hillegass, *Dismantling the Streetcar System—What Have We Learned?* (2019)
- Christine Ames, *New Discoveries at the Shotgun House Archaeological Site* (2018)
- Kelsey Robertson, *Historic Districts and Climate Change: Examining the Vulnerability of Washington DC’s Historic Districts to Sea Level Rise* (2017)
- Brook Hill, *The Loss of Affordable Housing* (2016)
- William King, *Modifying the DC Historic Preservation Law* (2015)

## CAPITOL HILL HOME PHOTO CONTEST 2022

In anticipation of the 65th anniversary of the Capitol Hill House and Garden Tour, CHRS sponsored a photo contest: “The Capitol Hill Home.”



- 2022 Contest Winner: David Parkes (above)
- 2022 Second Place: Patrick Serfass
- 2022 Third Place: Margit Leiner-Henry
- 2021 Contest Winner: Robert Weinstein (right)
- 2020 Contest Winner: Megan Grimaldi

All winning and honorable mention photos available online at: [chrs.org/2022-photo-contest-winners](https://chrs.org/2022-photo-contest-winners).

## CAPITOL HILL COMMUNITY EVENTS

CHRS volunteers participate in a wide range of community activities:

- 4th of July Parade
- Barracks Row Fall Festival
- Hilloween
- Capitol Hill Little League “Society Nats” Sponsor

## SWAMPOODLE GRANTS



Residential property owners in the four squares 752, 753, 777 and 778 bounded by Second to Fourth Streets, and F to H Streets NE can apply to CHRS for home improvement grants. These grants are for the purpose of preserving the historic features of the neighborhood and,

wherever possible, correcting historically inaccurate alterations to building facades. Energy conservation grants are also available. Please visit [chrs.org/swampdoodle-grants](https://chrs.org/swampdoodle-grants).

## TOPICS OF SPECIAL FOCUS, 2019–2022

Our positions and testimony on issues facing residents of the District, especially Capitol Hill, can be found on our website. We have reviewed the proposed Union Station redevelopment plans, defended “public parking” as public space, advocated for affordable housing at Reservation 13, and successfully nominated the Southeast Branch Library for the Inventory of DC Historic Sites. ★



# THANK YOU

The House & Garden Tour would not be possible without the assistance and generosity of our sponsors, supporters, ticket outlets, and individual donors—and most especially, the homeowners!

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### ABOUT OUR COVER ARTIST

Joseph Snyder lived on Capitol Hill and sold his paintings at Eastern Market for a long time. He and his family now live in his native East Tennessee, but all his work can be seen at [josephharrisonsnyder.com](http://josephharrisonsnyder.com).

### HOMEOWNERS

Ashley Doherty  
Margaret & Ted Gold  
Chris and Kara McGuinn  
Elissa Preheim  
Carol Rabenhorst & Bernard Wood  
Bettilou Taylor & Domenic Ruscio  
Rev. Gary Studniewski

### SPECIAL THANKS

Hill Center  
Christ Church  
St. Peter's Catholic Church  
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Eastern Market  
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### Office Manager

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### Walking Tour Guides

Beth Purcell, Angie Schmidt

### Additional Thanks

Many thanks to past House Tour Chairs Michelle Carroll  
and Janet Quigley for their advice and assistance.

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# 1 HILL CENTER AT THE OLD NAVAL HOSPITAL 921 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE SE

TOUR HEADQUARTERS

**H**ill Center is this year's House and Garden Tour headquarters. Begin the tour by collecting your ticket and wristband at "will call" (proof of vaccination required), accessible through the E Street entrance to the building. Then enjoy the 2022 regional juried art exhibit hung throughout the building. Claude Elliott, arts consultant and independent curator, was the juror for the show. Artists from the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia were invited to submit original hanging work, in any medium, to be considered. Response from the call was significant, with 157 artists submitting more than 700 pieces. Elliott selected 118 pieces for the show, all from different artists. Many of the artists will be on hand to discuss their work and Hill Center docents will be available to answer your questions.

**In the spring of 1864, three years into the American Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln asked Congress for \$25,000 to build the country's first permanent Naval hospital. It opened two years later at 921 Pennsylvania Avenue SE.**

The building has been home to many organizations in the 156 years since, and this year marks its tenth anniversary as Hill Center at the Old Naval Hospital.

It was an imposing building with a blend of Second Empire, Italianate and Greek Revival architectural styles. A 7-foot-high cast-iron fence circled the perimeter of the property. In a design by Washington ironsmiths Frederick and August Schneider, each section of the fence consisted of 13 vertical bars (the number of original states) extending upward from a base created by a row of seven compass circles representing the seven seas.

Within 30 years of its opening, however, the building was considered obsolete as a hospital and was used for training, offices, a records center and finally as the temporary Home for Veterans of All Wars, which closed in 1963. Control of the site was transferred to the District of Columbia and subsequently housed several social service organizations. By 1998, the derelict building was surrounded by untended grounds and the monumental fence had been broken and vandalized.



In 2002, a group of concerned neighbors developed a plan to rehabilitate the site as a center of cultural enrichment, lifelong learning and civic engagement. The city accepted the plan in August 2007.

In just over 18 months, the Old Naval Hospital underwent an \$11-million historic renovation. It was painted its original colors and surrounded by its refabricated iron fence. The building now includes such twenty-first-century upgrades as a fully ADA-accessible design and a green footprint with a heating and cooling system supported by 32 geothermal wells.

Before the pandemic, more than 50,000 visitors a year came for classes, concerts, lectures and art exhibits. Like all community organizations, Hill Center struggled in the uncertain world of COVID-19. After six months of reduced income and closed doors, Hill Center launched the All Hands on Deck campaign asking for the community's help in meeting operating expenses.

Part of the fundraising effort was the creation of *A Taste of Hill Center*, a community cookbook for a community trying to reconnect. The book contains more than 140 recipes from Hill Center staff, neighbors and friends as well as from many of the professional chefs who have taught classes at the center.

*A Taste of Hill Center* continues a long national tradition of fundraising cookbooks. Coincidentally, the first was published in 1864 to raise funds for Union soldiers wounded in the Civil War—the same year President Lincoln commissioned the building that now houses the center for which the cookbook is raising funds.

The cookbook is for sale at Hill Center, on-line at [HillCenterDC.org](http://HillCenterDC.org), East City Bookshop, Hill's Kitchen, and DCarter. ★

— BONNY WOLF

Guided tours of Hill Center are available both days at 3 PM.

# 2

## 224 EIGHTH STREET SE

Home of Christopher and Kara McGuinn

HOUSE CAPTAIN: Heather Schoell,  
Berkshire Hathaway HS PenFed Realty

In 1897 Julia Wilson married Benjamin Burch Earnshaw, a clerk. They had three children and lived at 1220 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, later relocating to 440 Seward Square. In 1904 Julia engaged architect C.E. Webb to design this three-story (plus basement) brick house, built by Samuel Maddox, for her parents, Samuel A. and Juliana Wilson. Julia, her daughters, and her parents lived there with three boarders. Julia and Benjamin are buried at Congressional Cemetery.

In 1923, Ralph DeSimone bought this house and lived here with his wife Rosa and nine children. DeSimone, Frank Cicero, and Samuel Brocato operated the Columbia Fruit Company at 909 Louisiana Avenue, NW. His heirs sold 224 Eighth Street in 1991.

Chris and Kara have lived on the Hill since 2009 and purchased this house in 2021. Many of its fine original features can still be seen, including several fireplaces with detailed surrounds. It has 4 bedrooms and 3 full baths, offering abundant living space for the family. Chris comes from a family of collectors. Placed prominently throughout the house, you'll find fine examples of modern/contemporary art, and artifacts from various countries' manned space programs.

**In the vestibule, a mixed group of mirrors, notably a recently purchased, circa 1800 federal parcel-gilt example from the Peter A. Pfaffenroth collection, reflect the art in the living room.**

A recent addition is a diorama titled "Art Fair" by Abigail Goldman @tinylittlelives. A gift to Chris from Kara, it depicts the crowd at an art gallery, oblivious to a grisly murder that has just taken place—a commentary on the obsessive nature of the collector and the absurdity of the art world.

Down the hall is a 110-pound oak door from a jail in England. The date "1630" and other carvings appear on the door—a sample of seventeenth-century graffiti. Chris found this on a trip to England, had to have it, and moved "heaven and earth" to get it safely to Capitol Hill.

Across the hallway is the dining room, home to several pieces from the originators of the graffiti style in New York City in the 1970s and 1980s through modern



masters. One of the first pictures that Chris bought is over the sideboard. Entitled MOPAC, the artwork is by DC-born graffiti artist, Tim Conlon. His work was featured in the first Smithsonian show focused on graffiti as a unique artform. A scroll, "Face Girl/Ass Girl" by Leah Schrage, is over 100 feet long. Addressing the way women are commoditized to suit a male gaze, it contrasts the comments received on her more sexualized social media approach, with a much shorter list from an account with a more modest profile.

In the kitchen, is an Andy Warhol print from his "Space Fruit" series, purchased by Chris's mother, who served on the Board of the Andy Warhol Museum for 25 years.

On the second floor you'll find the office, featuring collected pieces of spaceflight history. At the top you will see a NASA brochure from 1967 signed by an astronaut from Apollo 8, 11-14, and 16. One of the highlights of Chris and Kara's collection is the early model of the Lunar Lander Research Vehicle (LLRV) No. 2 prototype that was likely provided by Bell Aerosystems for the NASA Apollo program, 1964-1966. It was purchased from the estate of Col. Emil "Jack" Klueva, the only pilot to fly LLRV, No. 2. The nursery is graced with three original Matisse drawings—and three "fakes" (can you guess which?). The guest room features photographs of large-scale flypaste installations by the French artist JR, who uses his works to bring social awareness. He recently completed a piece in Lviv, Ukraine which was featured on the cover of *Time* magazine.

A suite with a large bedroom and full bath occupies the third floor. Note the spectacular views—and the set of stairs that allows the family's little dog, Tilly, to access the bed. ★

— FYNNETTE EATON

# 3

## 620 G STREET SE

Christ Church + Washington Parish

HOUSE CAPTAINS: Linda Mellgren,  
Nancy Metzger

**C**hrist Church, built in 1807, was the first religious structure completed in the Old City of Washington and is one of a very few remaining buildings on Capitol Hill that dates to the first decade after the US Government moved to its new capital in 1800. Officially established in 1794, congregants had previously worshipped in a converted tobacco barn at New Jersey Avenue and D Street SE.

**The present church was the result of a gift and challenge: in 1806 landowner William Prout donated two prime lots provided a church was built within a year.**

With plans most likely drawn by Robert Alexander, a friend of noted architect Benjamin Latrobe, construction began on a simple two-story, red brick building with a gable roof and inside dimensions of 38' x 45' featuring a gallery (balcony), supported by posts, running along the west, south, and east sides. Two doors led directly from the churchyard to the sanctuary. By the time the church was consecrated in 1809 (delayed over construction debt), Bishop Claggett would call it "not large but sufficiently elegant."

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the neighborhood and congregation grew as work expanded at the Navy Yard and more houses were built nearby and around the Capitol. In 1824, the church was expanded 18' to the north to accommodate more box pews. In 1849 the Vestry, wanting a bell and a more fashionable Gothic style, added a 4-story tower with a center door in the front. Battlements, folded sheet-iron finials, and wooden tracery in arched windows added to the Gothic appearance and English churchyard feel. During the Civil War, the tower was used as an observation post. In 1865, reflecting the city's divided sympathies, parishioners felt relief at the war's end and Union victory but also grief that one of its young members, David Herold, had played a role in Lincoln's assassination.

In 1877, in conjunction with roof replacement, the east and west galleries were removed and iron columns inserted for roof support. The etched-glass side windows were installed. In 1891 a fifth story was added to the bell tower (the original bell remains). Rose windows were added to the tower and a projecting porch to its base.



Pebble-dash stucco, first applied in 1868 only to the front of the church, was applied all over in 1900, giving the church its uniform "vernacular Gothic" appearance.

Stylistically, the interior has been plainly painted, ornate Victorian, faux Gothic stone, and then harmonized in 1955 by the noted architect Horace Peaslee to evoke its original simplicity. The brass rail and pulpit were purchased in 1903. The marble bas-relief of the Virgin and Child on the west wall references an 1885 incident.

In 1921, two Tiffany-style windows were installed. The three stained-glass windows above the altar were imported from England in 1927. The center window was dedicated to the mothers of the parish. In the exterior front, best seen looking toward the doors, is a contemporary window (1955) by Rowan and Irene LeCompte showing Christ with his hands raised in blessing. Two additional LeCompte windows grace the exterior front of the church. In 2020 new exterior protective coverings were installed by Willet Hauser Architectural Glass under a grant from the DC Preservation League and a bequest from long-time parishioner, Bob Conley, greatly enhancing the luminescence of the stained glass windows.

The new Casavant Frères organ was installed in 2018. Originally, the organ and choir inhabited the south gallery. That gallery was removed during the 1921 renovations, the chancel area was deepened, and the organ and choir moved to the front of the church. Both moved to the back of the sanctuary in the 1970s and have remained there ever since.

More information about the church and its programs can be found at [www.washingtonparish.org](http://www.washingtonparish.org) or by visiting the church. ★

— NANCY METZGER & LINDA MELGREN

# 4

## 528 SIXTH STREET SE

Home of Bettilou Taylor & Domenic Ruscio

VIRTUAL ONLY

Occupations of the residents of 528 Sixth Street SE, often reflected their proximity to the Navy Yard. According to city directories (i.e., the Facebook of the nineteenth century) machinist George F. Cunningham lived there in 1877 and in 1881 a brass finisher and blacksmith in the McCathran family was a resident. The Guest family lived there in 1903; Francis was a clerk and George a purser. The basement was rented in the 1920s to a housekeeper and in the 1930s, the second floor, then three rooms and a bathroom, were advertised for rent. For the second half of the 20th century, the Leggett family owned the home. The house underwent a major transformation in 2007, including adding a two-story atrium at the center of the house, a rear and side addition, and a new staircase. Bettilou and Dom purchased the house in 2012 and, after stripping several layers of paint, found the date “1858” penciled on the cornice.

**The house’s interior includes sculptures, family heirlooms, and whimsy. Bettilou could host the BBC show “The Repair Shop” given her knack for repairing and rehabilitating forgotten pieces.**

The house features examples of Bettilou’s creative and meticulous eye. She refinishes furniture and antiques, like the table by the front door that displays a collection of vessels: Boston felted wool, brass with turquoise, Hawaiian glass, and La Jolla pottery. She also made the side table by stacking antique mercantile books and painting their pages silver and gold. The owners designed the wood and marble mantels for the gas fireplaces.

Bettilou and Dom’s careers include working in the Senate and government affairs. Bettilou worked for Alaska’s Senator Ted Stevens, hence the many pieces of Native Alaskan craft in the living room, like the baleen basket on the piano and stone bear sculptures.

As you go upstairs, Baldrick the Bear greets you with a display of rock concert tickets and lanyards. Notice Dom’s Italian family portraits on the left and Bettilou’s Scottish family on the right.



In the master suite, sits a 1940s vanity and an early twentieth-century gold-framed mirror—both family heirlooms. Here, Bettilou also has her collection of dolls, including a Revlon Doll and custom-made motorcyclist dolls. (They ride their Harley trike on weekends!)

Moving to the middle of the house you will find the media room off the two-story atrium. Using poster board, Bettilou built a fake wall under the stand to hide the TV cables.

Dom is a Patriots fan, as evident from the signed Tom Brady jersey in the right rear bedroom. Dom’s mom’s art deco dresser needed some repairs, so Bettilou covered some of the panels with grass cloth. The bedroom on the left features more of Dom’s mom’s furniture and Bettilou’s hand-made muppet, a replica of their friend Kevin, who greets guests with a smile.

Downstairs, look up into the two-story atrium featuring three men scaling the wall as well as a giant icicle suspended on braided, 200-lb. wire below the pyramid skylight.

The kitchen island, actually Bettilou’s grandmother’s dresser refinished and topped with granite, features a natural wood bowl with a terrarium inside. The clock in the breakfast nook is from the owner of Aatish on the Hill restaurant. Over the mantel is a landscape scene, embroidered on a 1954 Singer sewing machine.

The garden stays beautiful all year—it is landscaped with artificial turf and stamped concrete. The basement apartment is not on the tour. ★

— ALISON ROSS



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# 5

## 504 SIXTH STREET SE

Home of Elissa Preheim

HOUSE CAPTAINS: Brent Jackson and Rob Sanders, The Rob and Brent Group, TTR, Sotheby's International Realty

Joanna Kendig

At the first glance this brick bayfront might appear to be a typical nineteenth-century row house, yet on closer examination it is rather exceptional due to its generous side yard and side porches.

As with many nineteenth-century houses the history of this house remains somewhat hazy. Earlier research for house tours in 1975 and 1998 found indications of one or two buildings on this lot dating back to before 1877 when building permit records began, perhaps as early as 1864 or 1872. Further research into deed and tax records will be needed to answer those questions. However, in 1886 owner Charles E. Nelson received a repair and alteration permit “for brick addition bay windows,” 30' x 18', 2-story, indicating a major addition to an earlier structure. The Nelson family appears to have owned the property on the corner of E and 6th streets and developed it over time into four houses, including this one. The corner house at 601 E Street appears on the 1874 Faetz and Pratt map. Rowhouses at 603 and 605 E Street were built in 1889, also for Nelson, who lived and died at 504 Sixth Street where his funeral services were held, according to the *Evening Star* September 1911 obituary that refers to him as a “Southeast Washington merchant.”

As is the case with many Capitol Hill houses this house has been repaired, modified and restored over possibly 150 years. Owners Charles A. Nichols in 1971 and subsequently, Terry and Geoffrey Lewis in 1995, undertook major projects to repair termite and other damage and to renovate the house. Through all the changes, the house retains its nineteenth-century flavor while offering modern conveniences.

In 2012, Ms. Preheim moved in and made the house her own. The house, generously lit by south-facing windows and French doors, is full of color. Walls are sparkling with art works collected by Elissa on her foreign travels. Some are connected to her growing

up in a family on foreign assignments including time in Haiti. Particularly interesting are works by Haitian artist, G. Clerge, stylistically reminiscent of Jacob Lawrence.

As with the house itself, old and modern furnishings coexist side by side. Grandfather's side-by-side, cabinet/secretary sits across the dining table from a contemporary Japanese silk screen. Other modern Japanese prints Elissa found in Kyoto on a trip to Japan. A modern, abstract collage, found closer to home at an Alexandria arts festival, faces the living room fireplace.



Bright interiors make even dark winter days pleasant. In warmer weather, pleasures of the garden are just outside the door. The current garden was designed and built by Gary Hallewell of Garden Arts at the time of the 1995 renovations. As with the house, new complements the old. Valuable mature trees were preserved. Two crepe myrtles, a spruce, a hemlock, and a photinia are spaced around the garden and a magnificent magnolia sits just outside the dining room. From the street, the wood gate admits visitors into this quiet garden with a brick path leading to various glass doors and on to the back gate opening to the alley, passing under a wisteria-draped trellis. There are places here for outdoor socializing or quiet reading and the upstairs porch outside the sitting room is perfect for gazing into the tree canopy with a cup of coffee in hand. ★

— JOANNA KENDIG

# 6

## LENOX SCHOOL LOFTS 725 FIFTH STREET SE, #21

Home of Ashley Doherty

HOUSE CAPTAIN: Chuck Burger

The Lenox School Lofts are filled with American and DC history. Two of Washington's traditions regarding schools are part of Lenox's history: public schools were segregated until the *Bolling v. Sharpe* Supreme Court decision in 1954 and schools were named for presidents and DC mayors.



Walter Lenox served on the Washington City Council (the lower of its two legislative chambers) from 1842 to 1843, then as an Alderman from 1843 to 1849, serving his last term as President of the Board of Aldermen. At age of 33, he was elected the thirteenth Mayor of Washington, DC (the first to be born in DC) and served only one term, from 1850-1852. He did not accomplish much in such a short time but was a strong proponent of public education. He joined the Confederacy in Richmond when the Civil War began in 1861. When he returned to DC in 1863, he refused to stop publicly promoting the Confederacy, was arrested and spent 20 months in Fort McHenry until the end of the war. He died in 1874 and was interred in Rock Creek Cemetery.

Lenox School was built in 1887 as a whites-only school and named for former mayor Walter Lenox. By the 1960s, school enrollment in the city decreased and the school system struggled to maintain the surplus buildings, forcing the city to sell many of them for adaptive reuse, including the Lenox School in the 1990s.

Row houses were built on the playground and the Lenox Lofts were completed in 2004. The exterior of the building does not hide its original use; note the steps that are uneven from being worn down by many pairs of small feet.

This unit, one of four on the floor, retains much of the original charm of the building while creating useful modern living space. Past the entry hall and utility closet (washer and dryer inside), the main living space is graced with large windows and exposed brick. The main wall is filled with bookcases divided by a cast-iron gas fireplace. The ceiling fixtures help remind you that this once was a school.

Downsizing from her single-family house, Ashley kept the things most meaningful to her. In the foyer, hang a photo of Ashley House in Deerfield, MA (built in 1734); a map of southeast Missouri, the frontispiece to one of her father's books; and paintings she did in high school. The mid-century modern furniture was handed down from her parents and the Victorian sofa from a great-aunt. The Alabama poster in the kitchen recalls her late husband.

The modern kitchen is tucked on the side—note that the windows are the oversized originals and the ceiling floats away from them, which you will also notice from the bedroom above. A small room, enjoyed by the owner's granddaughters as a playroom, is tucked round the corner. Another small bedroom and a bathroom also occupy this floor. Steps in unusual places add to the charm of the space.

The main staircase leads up to another bath and a large bedroom tucked under the eaves. This bedroom serves as both guest quarters and sewing room and "shares" the windows from the kitchen below, making it bright and airy. A small "attic" above this room hides the hot water heater and extra storage.

In 2012, Ashley decided to leave her home in Northwest DC and chose Capitol Hill and the Lenox Condo because she wanted a walkable and more diverse neighborhood. Access to public transportation was important to her for both convenience and the environment. And she wanted to get away from the upkeep of a house and yard. She particularly enjoys the light from the tall windows—and her neighbors, whose helpfulness eased the isolation of the pandemic. ★

— ANGIE SCHMIDT



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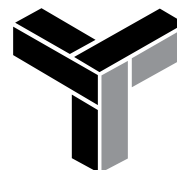
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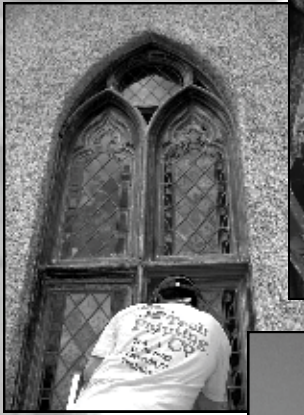
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## THE CHURCHILL CONDOS 514 FOURTH STREET SE

HOUSE CAPTAINS: Ann & Mike Grace,  
Capitol Hill Village

**T**he name of this condominium project is apt—there has been a church on this site for a very long time. A small brick church, built here in 1811, was the first Methodist church in Washington City, and was known by various names over time including Fourth Street Station and First Methodist Church. The biracial congregation grew, in spite of losing Black members who, in 1827, formed the Ebenezer United Methodist Church, which is still in its handsome Romanesque Revival Church at Fourth and D Streets SE. Built in 1897, it is a stop in the city’s African-American Heritage Trail.

The Fourth Street congregation made plans in the 1850s for a larger building, with classrooms on the ground floor and the sanctuary above. If the light gray paint were to be removed from the Churchill and the present front door replaced with side-by-side doors set within arched brick surrounds one would see the church much as it was built in 1857—a dignified brick structure with Italianate and Romanesque Revival elements. The house to the south was erected as a church residence in 1885.

The First Methodist Church sold the building in 1945 to the Mount Joy Baptist Church, a Black congregation that had been worshipping at the old Masonic Hall nearby at Fifth and Virginia Avenue SE.

**In 1966, an explosion occurred while the building was in use, killing one person and wounding a dozen more. It ripped out almost two stories of the back brick wall. Originally feared to be a bomb, the explosion was later determined to be the result of a faulty water boiler repair. Because of this explosion, DC created its first interagency team to investigate explosions and other disasters.**

Repairing the damage from the explosion took almost four years. The building was rededicated in May 1970, in a joyous celebration with about 500 members and guests. The Mount Joy Baptist congregation continued to use the building until 2011, when the buildings—church and residence—were sold to



developers and the congregation moved to Oxon Hill, Maryland. The building was renovated by the Altus Realty Group, which also did the conversion of The Maples, the 1795 landmark house at 619 D Street SE. The Churchill opened as residences in 2017 and includes off-street parking behind the building.

# 7

## UNIT #201 (2ND FLOOR)

Home of Margaret & Ted Gold

**T**his unit was seen by Margaret and Ted before construction was complete and it was love at first sight. Because work was still being done, they were able to choose the lighter floor color to complement their existing furnishings. (All the other units have much darker floors.) They were looking to downsize from a home in McLean and wanted a condominium so they could travel more. Notice the many photo books on the living room shelves documenting their adventures.



The art throughout the unit has been collected from many places over the years. Margaret and Ted are fans of Jiang Tieng, the founder of the Yunnan School of Painting, one of the most important contemporary movements of abstract art in China. The bronze sculpture of the tiger in the living room and the zebra in the bedroom are by him as well as the prints on the left side of the gallery wall. They have additional pieces of art not on display and are the owners of the landscape triptych in the entry hall of the building in the corner opposite the stairwell. The other residents were happy to share the space.

Margaret and Ted made a few modifications to their unit and were very pleased with the work of local cabinet-maker Peter Hackett. One change was to the kitchen cabinets, which were hung too high for them to be able to fully use. The cabinets were lowered, and a lighted display case was added above, with a railing added for the custom aluminum ladder.

**The headboard and bridge in the primary bedroom was created to connect the two shelving units from the former home and was stained to perfectly match the older mahogany.**

On the other side of the unit, the office boasts floor-to-ceiling bookcases and a built-in desk. Mirroring the kitchen detail, the clever railing and lightweight custom ladder have been included to create more usable space and access. The den/spare bedroom also has a built-in desk and shelves and cabinets. The mirrored wall contains a pull-down Murphy bed!

## 8

### UNIT #301 (3ND FLOOR)

Home of Carol Rabenhorst & Bernard Wood

**A**partment 301 is the only unit in The Churchill that has been re-sold since development, and the only one with a second floor. Carol, a retired attorney, was looking to downsize from her traditional home in Kalorama and was delighted with both the spacious feeling of this unit and the light provided by the large, arched windows across the front of the building. She decided to scrap almost all her furnishings, aside from artwork, and start over with contemporary furniture to complement the new modern space.



Carol and Bernard have acted as their own interior designers, to wonderful effect. The unit has recently been repainted to add more warmth to the large volume of space. A few other adjustments were made, such as the built-in bookshelves with ladder in the den (also built by Peter Hackett who was recommended by neighbors in the Churchill) and moving the door to the second bathroom to face into the guest bedroom instead of into the dining area. The new bathroom door was created on the same scale to match the rest of the oversized doors. Extra storage was included in the redesign.

Up the stairs is a large loft area—one of the highest perches in the neighborhood. It is used as a study and home office for Bernard, a professor at George Washington University, and as an entertainment center. A mechanical room with storage area fits under the eaves, and an additional finished storage room was added at the rear of the loft.

**The domes of the Capitol and the Library of Congress are clearly visible from the apartment most of the year—only in the summer do leaves on the trees partially block them from view. ★**

— ANGIE SCHMIDT

# 9

## ST. PETER'S CATHOLIC CHURCH 313 SECOND STREET SE

HOUSE CAPTAINS: Mary Lynn Stevens and Jackie Krieger

SUNDAY ONLY • 1-4:15 PM



**S**t. Peter's Catholic Church opened its doors to worshippers on October 14, 1821. It is the oldest Catholic church on Capitol Hill and the second oldest within the boundaries of the original Washington City. Built on land donated by Daniel Carroll, whose Duddington

estate encompassed much of the neighborhood, it was established to serve the growing number of Catholics living and working around the Navy Yard and the Capitol. That church was the first of three to occupy the site at Second and C Streets SE.

Before the nineteenth century was out, the parish had outgrown its original home. In 1889, Baltimore Cardinal James Gibbons laid the cornerstone for a new, and bigger, church. The ceremony was preceded by a procession from McPherson Square to St. Peter's, accompanied by the Marine Corps Band conducted by John Philip Sousa. The second church was consecrated in 1890.

**Fifty years later, disaster struck. Three days after Easter 1940, a five-alarm fire, sparked by a workman's blowtorch, destroyed most of the second church. The steep Gothic roof collapsed into the sanctuary and the interior was completely gutted.**

The church was rebuilt in Roman basilica style, preserving the original exterior walls and the French stained-glass windows. Almost exactly a year after the fire, priests and parishioners celebrated Easter Mass in the new church. Since then, the interior has undergone successive renovations—the installation of an elevator for accessibility, new altar furnishings—but the third church is the one parishioners worship in today.

In the 1970's and 1980's, following the Second Vatican Council, some modifications were made to the church interior to be in line with changes in



liturgical practice instituted by the Council. This included repositioning the altar to be closer to the congregation. In 1986, the church interior was painted in the Italian Renaissance style. The late Andre Houston, a parishioner, was the architect/designer for these updates and the installation in 1992 of the elevator. In 2010, wooden furniture integrating church architectural elements was placed in the sanctuary; former bronze communion-rail gates were repurposed as centerpieces for a new marble altar of repose and marble ambo; and the c. 1890 wooden baptismal font also was restored. Damage from the earthquake in 2011 required repairs to the roof, mortar and stone work, and the marble cross atop the façade. In 2020, after 35 years, the church interior was refreshed with new colors while retaining the Italian Renaissance design. The bell tower is currently being restored.

The 2011 earthquake hastened the demise of the extant pipe organ that had served Saint Peter's Church on Capitol Hill since the rebuilding of the present sanctuary in 1941. The Noack Organ Company of Georgetown, Massachusetts, built the present organ which was dedicated on November 14, 2019 by Philippe Lefebvre, organist of Notre-Dame de Paris. The pipework was voiced by Bertrand Cattiaux who, having voiced many major organs in France, brought his French disposition to this Washington DC instrument. The magnificent case was designed by Noack president Didier Grassin. It has 47 stops, i.e., discrete sets of pipes organized by instrumental color, spread out over three manuals and pedals for a total of 1599 pipes. St. Peter's Sacred Music Series can be enjoyed in person or via Live Stream at <https://saintpetersdc.org/music>. Past performances remain available.

St. Peter's is a historic parish in a historic neighborhood and city. It is an active and welcoming place where parishioners worship, celebrate, and reach out to their neighbors, near and far. Advent calendars celebrating the parish on its bicentennial, will be available for purchase at the church during tour hours. ★

— ST. PETER'S PARISH FAITH COMMUNITY, REV. GARY STUDNIEWSKI, PASTOR

# 10

## ST. PETER'S PARISH RECTORY 313 SECOND STREET SE

HOUSE CAPTAINS: Des Mowry and  
Christine Mullins

SUNDAY ONLY • 1-4:30 PM

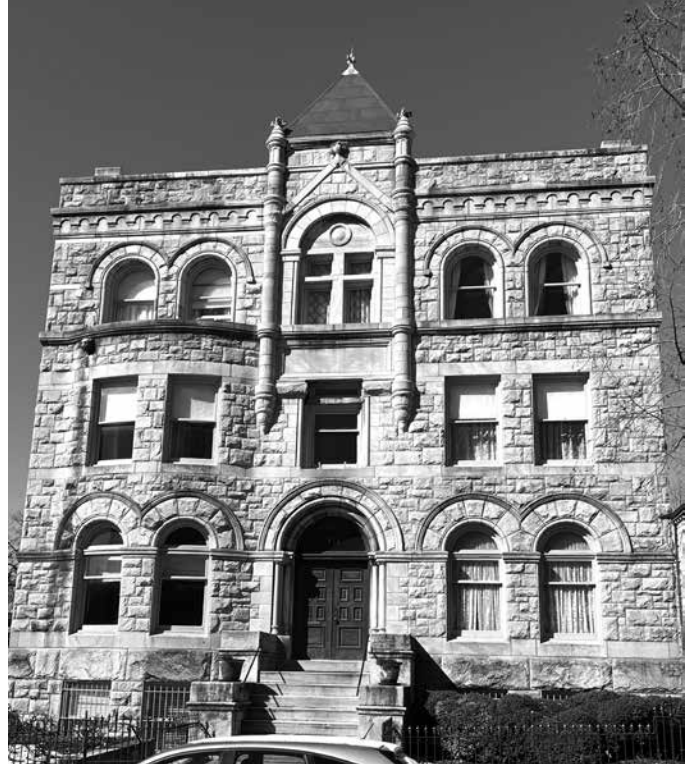
**W**elcome to St. Peter's Parish Rectory. The house serves as the residence of the pastor, Rev. Gary Studniewski; Parochial Vicar (assistant pastor), Rev. Brendan Glasgow; and other clergy. It also accommodates parish offices and provides meeting room space.

The present rectory was built in 1901 during the pastorate (1888-1922) of the Rt. Rev. James M. O'Brien. It is the third St. Peter's rectory and the second on this site. This house replaced an earlier one built of brick in 1834 when the Rev. Joseph Van Horsigh was pastor (1834-1849). The first rectory was a small two-story, four-room cottage located on the C Street side of the church. It was constructed in 1824 under the first pastor, the Rev. James F. M. Lucas (1821-1829).

**The rectory's façade is designed in the Romanesque style to match the architecture of the church built in 1890. It is faced with the same Baltimore County, Maryland marble used for the exterior of the church.**

The house consists of three floors and a basement level. The first floor features a large double parlor divided by pocket doors, an equally generous dining room, kitchen, and parish offices. The upper two floors are residential. The basement provides meeting rooms, additional offices, and utility spaces.

Today, you will be visiting rooms on the first floor, including the double parlor and the dining room. Of special note in the double parlor are a black marble mantelpiece and two Irish-crystal chandeliers. These important decorative features originally graced the Duddington manor house. This was the home of Daniel Carroll of Duddington, a prominent member of the illustrious Carroll family of Maryland, and owner of much of the land we now call Capitol Hill. Carroll was one of the parish founders and donated the land on which Saint Peter's is built. A third Irish-crystal chandelier, also from Duddington, sheds its light as a central feature of the dining room. All of these items



were removed from the mansion prior to its demolition in 1886. The mantelpiece was later gifted to St. Peter's by Mr. and Mrs. Howe P. Cochran.

Duddington was originally constructed in 1791. Later in 1791, Peter L'Enfant was appointed by President George Washington to plan the new Federal City. In his planning, L'Enfant determined that Carroll's new house would be located in the middle of his route for New Jersey Avenue SE. The house was largely demolished by L'Enfant late in 1791 as one act in a bitter controversy between L'Enfant and Carroll over the siting of the house. This battle required the direct and repeated intervention of President Washington for resolution. Multiple controversies finally resulted in President Washington's dismissal of L'Enfant from his position in 1792. In 1793, Carroll rebuilt his house in the square bounded by First and Second streets and E and F streets, SE. This square is now bisected by Duddington Place, which was planned for housing for Navy Yard and U.S. Arsenal workers.

Rev. Gary Studniewski and the entire St. Peter's faith community send this message to tour-goers: We thank you for visiting with us today and hope that you enjoy your tour. ★

— ST. PETER'S PARISH FAITH COMMUNITY, REV. GARY STUDNIEWSKI, PASTOR

# 11 SELF-GUIDED WALKING TOUR OF ST. PETER'S ENVIRONS

## 200 BLOCK OF SECOND STREET SE

Old neighborhoods always have stories. One rich with stories is the Capitol Hill neighborhood close to Second and C streets SE. There is the story of the Anacostan Indians, known for farming and trading along the banks of the Potomac and its eastern branch, now known as the Anacostia River. The colonial farmers, plantation owners and enslaved people contribute the stories about their lives. The residential neighborhood of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is the one most visible today, even though the story is often hard to see beyond the brick houses that are left.

These were the homes of politicians and shopkeepers, of clerks, brick masons, hod carriers, marble cutters and laundresses—the people who made this their neighborhood.

We invite you to use these notes as you take a tour of “what-you-see and what-you-don’t,” through the neighborhood that remains in the shadow of the Madison Building of the Library of Congress.

The story of the Anacostans is buried deep but is augmented by research and archaeological finds, such as the skeleton and artifacts discovered in 1883 when land at Second and F Streets SE (now Garfield Park) was re-graded. That site lies close to the old Duddington mansion on which a spring was located—and the likely attraction for Indians to site a village on this side of the Anacostia. It’s also only four blocks south of St. Peter’s Church and on land owned by Daniel Carroll in 1790.

Some stories can only be told through photos, drawings, or written documents. Such is the case for **Carroll Street, half-way down Second Street, between St. Peter’s and Pennsylvania Avenue**, the entire square now occupied by the Madison Building of the Library of Congress. Some of the earliest structures near the Capitol were built here for homes, shops, and workshops making other necessities. You won’t find a trace of Carroll Street, once a charming east-west “minor” street between First and Second streets. It and all the buildings around the entire square were



demolished in the 1960s. Carroll Street, of course, was named for Daniel Carroll of Duddington, the major landholder in this area of Capitol Hill and in the Southwest, who inherited his

acreage and sold land to develop Washington. He was also an enslaver: the 1800 census lists 25 enslaved people under his name. The number of enslaved people drops in succeeding censuses until 1862 when the DC Emancipation Act was passed. At that time Daniel Carroll’s daughters, Ann Carroll and Maria Fitzhugh, asked for compensation for Beckey Rawlings, age 14, and Louis Brown, 57.

But a remembrance of Carroll Street remains in a 2002 oral history interview.<sup>1</sup> Long-time Capitol Hill resident Marie Hertzberg recalls that in the 1950s: “I wanted a house on Carroll Street because I thought it was the most interesting street on the Hill. It was a very varied street. The houses had been built more or less individually, or maybe two at a time. And it was lined with ginkgo trees, brick sidewalks, a very wide alley behind, and then it backed to C Street, and C Street on both sides of the street had matching flat-front brick houses built all at one time. . . . Then Congress decided to take two square blocks of property, which included Carroll Street.” When the houses were about to be demolished, residents were told they could take anything they wanted. What did the Hertzbergs want? In addition to their new kitchen and antique shutters, they took the soil they had carefully enriched over the years—just carted it over in an old Ford Edsel to their new house at 600 East Capitol Street where the roses in the front garden enchanted neighbors for decades. And that’s what remains of Carroll Street.

On the other side of Second Street at **224 Second Street SE** stands the Watterston House, a DC landmark listed on the National Register of Historic Places. At first glance you might think this dignified brick house, with its cast-iron porch and steps, was built in the late 1880s. However, these later alterations disguise the origins of a house built sometime between

1813 and 1819 for George Watterston, third librarian of Congress (1815–1829). When he lived there, it was a more typical Federal town house (although unusually large at 38' wide) with two stories above a raised basement, flat window lintels, and a pitched roof. Sometime before 1877 a one-story brick addition with a semi-hexagonal projecting bay was built facing the garden which originally extended to C Street. George Watterston (d. 1859), in addition to his role as Librarian of Congress, was active in a number of civic endeavors: an organizer of the Washington Botanical Society in 1817, member of the Select Committee to welcome General Lafayette in 1824, Commissioner of Draining Low Grounds, and the first Secretary of the Washington Monument Society. (He lived to see it reach the height of about 150 feet.) A favorite story about the Watterston family that entered into neighborhood lore is that George's civil engineer son David, even when



dining alone in the latter part of the 1800s, used to dress formally for dinner each evening, during which he was served his meal by a well-trained servant.

The house remained in the Watterston family until 1905 when it was sold to Patrick Kennelly, who is listed in

*Boyd's Directory* as an auctioneer and partner in the firm Magrath and Kennelly. In 1906 the roof was raised 4-1/2 feet and changed to a flat metal roof with a galvanized iron cornice decorated with garlands added just below the roof. He also built a large two-story stable in the rear of the property, perhaps as an adjunct to his business which included auctioning horses. The large addition now visible behind the Watterston House was built by the current owners, the National Indian Gaming Association, as a meeting and conference space.



**B**uilt in 1871 at the northeast corner of Second and C streets SE, **Lincoln School** is now mostly forgotten but was once a symbol of the push for public education facilities for the city's Black children, long neglected under the city's segregated and ill-funded school system. It was an outgrowth of the first publicly financed school for African Americans opened in 1864 at the Little Ebenezer Church at Fourth and D streets SE. A handsome red brick building in the Second Empire style, it had two stories on a raised basement topped by a light-colored Mansard roof. The entrance was marked by a slightly projecting bay, with four large oval windows flanking the arched doorway on the first floor and an arched window on the floor above. With 8 classrooms, it was almost instantly overwhelmed by prospective pupils, so great was the demand by parents for an education for their children. It was listed to be 'abandoned' as part of the 1908 school reorganization plan, partly because the lot was too small for a suitable playground. Finally closed in 1947, it was bought by a developer and torn down in 1948. The Capitol Hill Hotel now stands on the site.

**O**n the way to **Rumsey Court** (alley entrance next to 133 C Street SE) note the ebullient, Second Empire houses at 139 and 137 C Street with the bays, mansard roof and elaborate window and door hoods. They were definitely built after 1871 when such embellishments were stylish and projections into public space allowed. Contrast them to the reserved, three-story, flat-front brick row houses marching down the street (133–109 C Street SE). The plaques on some say "1868" and show Italianate styling with the deep cornices. Before the Madison Building, houses such as these lined that side of the street as well.



Alley dwellings, converted stables, a delightfully detailed mural, glimpses of gardens and porches—Rumsey Court offers everything but the old-fashioned smell and noise. Most alleys are somewhat flat given the geography of the Hill but this one, on the southern edge, echoes the steepness of the slope of the streets. Two old stables or workshops on the upper alley, now modified for residences, are easy to spot by the wood hoists extending from the second floor. The eye-catching mural next to them is worth studying as it shows the houses lining D Street. Note the oriel windows shown on the D Street house by the alley—and the real one you can see looking towards D Street from the alley, built in an effort to capture sunlight into the house.<sup>2</sup>

The “Children at Play” sign at the top of the alley highlights one of the great things about an alley—the community of residents and day-time workers who meet there. The 1900 census lists the occupations of the mostly Black residents as laborers and domestics, hod carrier, paper hanger and elevator operator. In 1900 the rent for the approximately 550-square-foot houses was \$8. The five alley dwellings that survived the purges of anti-alley-dwelling activists through the 1950s are typical of Washington’s nineteenth-century alley houses—about 13’ x 25’, two stories, two bays (window and door) with brick window and door hoods and distinctive cornice. Leo Simmons was the owner/designer/builder of the row. An interesting footnote about Rumsey Court is that apparently for years it was “no name” alley until perhaps after the houses were built and census takers and postmen needed official addresses. ★

— NANCY METZGER

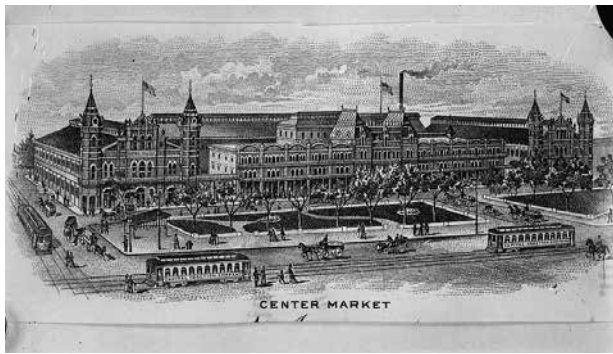
<sup>1</sup> Entire interview at [www.capitolhillhistory.org/interviews/marie-hertzberg](http://www.capitolhillhistory.org/interviews/marie-hertzberg).

<sup>2</sup> If you’d like to “peek inside” 137 D Street SE, you can find a 3D scan on our website as part of the 2020 virtual House Tour: [chrs.org/vht-2020](http://chrs.org/vht-2020).

# 12

## DOCENT-LED WALKING TOUR: “HIGH LIFE AND LOW POINTS” ALLEYS OF NE CAPITOL HILL TRIANGLE PARK AT MASS AVE, CONSTITUTION AVE & 7TH ST NE

SATURDAY • 3:30 & 5:30 PM | SUNDAY • 1:30 & 4:30 PM



**1 • 631 Constitution Avenue NE.** George C. Voneiff, (1869–1950) a baker who operated a successful business at the Center Market, built 631 Constitution Avenue in 1903 and built the stable in the rear in 1903 or 1904. This is one of the finest examples of a stable on Capitol Hill. The windows provided horses with fresh air and a view of the outdoors. Voneiff had an automobile as of 1911; he may have parked it in the stable. The Center Market, Washington’s largest market, was demolished in 1931 and replaced by the National Archives.

**2 • T-Shaped Alley: Locomobile Shed** (rear 622 A Street NE). E. A. Taylor built the main house in 1884. As of 1901, William Felger, an electrician, lived there with his brothers and sisters. They built a Locomobile shed at the rear of their lot in 1902. Locomobiles burned gasoline to heat a steam boiler which powered the automobile. It had a top speed of 15 mph and a range of 50 miles. The company switched to internal combustion engines in 1904.



**3 • Contrasting Life Styles in 6½ Court** (rear of 610–628 East Capitol Street NE). In the late nineteenth century, there were physicians’ homes and offices along East Capitol Street and live-in servants’ homes and stables along the alley. Some drama occurred in both places.

**610 East Capitol Street** was built in 1886 by Dr. Louis K. Beatty (1857–1922) as a home and medical office.

**612 East Capitol Street** was built in 1885 by D. William Oyster (1860–1923), who sold butter at the Center Market. He had a horse and buggy, which he likely housed in the building at the rear of 612 East Capitol. As of 1901, his family had two live-in servants: a coachman and a domestic.

**614 East Capitol Street** was built in 1889 by Thomas W. Smith, who ran a lumber business. As of 1899, the resident, Eugene Peters, had four live-in servants: a coachman, waitress, cook, and butler. From an 1893 map, it appears that was an ADU in the rear where the servants may have lived, plus a stable.

**616 East Capitol Street** was built in 1886 by F. M. Buckingham, designed by Appleton P. Clark, Jr. There is a large rear section, which dates from 1888 or earlier. Here was a stable with three stalls and a carriage room. Thomas W. Smith, who ran a large lumber yard at First Street and Indiana Avenue, NW, lived here from c. 1889 to 1910. He sold the house in 1910, when it became a “refined boarding house.” According to the 1910 census, Margaret Elliott, an Irish immigrant, ran the boarding house where she lived with her three children and six boarders.

**620 East Capitol Street** was built in 1989; featured on CHRS House and Garden Tour (2017).

**624 East Capitol Street** was built in 1919 for Katherine Whitty.

**626 East Capitol Street** was designed by Edward Woltz in 1901 for Marvin A. Curtis, a homeopathic physician, as his home and office.

**628 East Capitol Street** was built in 1884 by Mrs. James B. Weir, designed by Leon E. Dessez.

**4 • Eugene Peters’ Residence** (614 East Capitol Street). Eugene Peters (1853–1921), who inherited a fortune from his uncle in 1889, was a partner in a successful printing company and active in civic affairs. Peters sailed his 86-foot steam yacht, the *Coyote*, to ports on the East Coast. His life began to unravel during a trip to Hot Springs, Arkansas in 1899 when he allegedly lost large sums gambling, gave away money to other gamblers, behaved erratically, and married Clara Louise Mackay. On his return to Washington he was arrested and tried as a potential lunatic but was declared able to manage his affairs. Between 1892 and 1901, he lived at 614 East Capitol Street; his wife joined him there in 1899. In a second lunacy trial in 1901 he was found to be insane, a committee was appointed to manage his affairs, and he was confined to a mental institution. In 1909, Mrs. Peters, fearing a burglar one night, jumped out a second-story window and died later that year.

**5 • Miller’s Court NE** (300 block between East Capitol Street and A Street NE). The dwellings at 308, 310, and 312 appear on an 1888 map. They are brick, American bond coursing. 310 and 312 are a duplex with a shared gable roof, a very unusual form. 308 has corbelling at the cornice, seen on many alley dwellings. The 1920 census shows that Black people renting at Miller’s Court worked as laborers, servants, and laundresses. Being a laundress was one of the few occupations open to unskilled Black women – either doing the washing and ironing in their client’s house or using their own back yards for their work space. In 1920, Raymond Simms, a laborer who lived at 306 Miller Court, died from wood alcohol poisoning. He had purchased it from a hardware store at 204 3rd Street SE; the store owner was arrested. (DC had gone dry in 1917, which may have led to Simms buying alcohol at a hardware store.)

**6 • Douglass Court NE: Alley Dwelling Reform.** Frederick Douglass built this Second Empire house at 316 A Street NE, in 1871 and lived here until 1877, when he moved to Cedar Hill in Anacostia.

Alley dwellings satisfied a demand for low-cost rental housing in the nineteenth century. Residents were primarily Black people and immigrants performing unskilled or semi-skilled work. There were few amenities and no indoor plumbing—water was drawn from a pump, and houses had privies. Stoves were used for cooking and heating and kerosene lanterns for lighting.

**Beginning in the late nineteenth century, reformers attacked alley living conditions as unhealthy and a threat to public safety. They demanded eliminating alley dwellings or opening up “blind alleys” to promote public health.**

Between 1873 and 1877, the Board of Health ordered nearly 300 alley dwellings demolished. In 1907, District government tried unsuccessfully to condemn two frame dwellings in Douglass Court. (They have since disappeared.) Congress restricted new alley dwellings by decreeing that after July 22, 1892, no alley dwelling could be constructed unless the alley was at least 30 feet wide and supplied with sewerage, water mains, and light. In addition, all alley dwellings had to be at least 20 feet back from the alley center-line, requiring a 30-foot wide road and five feet on each side for a walkway. With few exceptions, no new alley

dwelling were built between 1893 and 2016. The Alley Dwelling Authority (ADA) was created in 1934 with a mission to end alley dwellings by 1944. In 1936, ADA demolished alley dwellings in Douglass Court and replaced them with public storage garages.

### **7 • Terrace Court NE: Defending Alley Dwellings.**

Although living in alleys was banned after 1944, the deadline was extended until 1955 because of the housing shortage during WWII. But by 1946, residents had begun to buy the Terrace Court houses to live in, obtaining building permits for renovation, bringing in utilities, adding an indoor bathroom (either inside the original house or in an addition). All the owners agreed on a design: painting the exterior walls white, adding green shutters (the same color scheme as George Washington’s Mount Vernon), installing electric coach lanterns next to the doorway, and planting shrubs in front. They were responding to a powerful cultural force: “Colonial Revival.”

Many historians believe that Americans sought, and still seek, a distinctive national “American” style, and that buildings from the Colonial era, interpreted in each decade, fill this need.

“Revivals” of colonial houses began in the early nineteenth century, and gained further momentum from the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, where millions of people saw states’ pavilions featuring adaptations of Colonial houses (e.g., John Hancock’s house in Boston, the tower of Independence Hall). Sears Roebuck’s kit houses, in addition to the bungalows, included many popular “Colonial” designs such as “The Adams” and “The Martha Washington.” Colonial Williamsburg opened in 1932 and further boosted interest in colonial architecture. Colonial Revival has remained popular ever since.

As the 1955 deadline approached, homeowners in inhabited alleys who had rehabilitated their alley houses mobilized to save them. At a hearing before the District Commissioners in 1953, Terrace Court homeowners and others testified that they should be allowed to continue to live in the alley houses which they had transformed into modern, safe structures. They won; the deadline to vacate alley dwellings was repealed in 1954. ★

— BETH PURCELL



A stop at 1227 Massachusetts Avenue SE on the 2019 House & Garden Tour.



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