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RESTORATION
SOCIETY

68th Annual

House & Garden Tour

MOTHER'S DAY WEEKEND
MAY 10–11, 2025



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CAPITOL HILL RESTORATION SOCIETY

68th Annual

House & Garden Tour

MOTHER'S DAY WEEKEND
MAY 10–11, 2025

Hours

Saturday, May 10 • 4–7 PM

Sunday, May 11 • 1–5 PM

Tour Headquarters

- ★ 700 Constitution Avenue NE 3
- Open Saturday, 3:30–7 PM and Sunday, 12:30–5 PM.
Visit for complementary refreshments, seating,
and restrooms available during tour hours.

Tour Locations

- A** 238 G Street NE 5
- B** 426 3rd Street NE 7
- C** Florida House, 1 2nd Street NE 9
- D** 103 4th Street NE 11
- E** Capitol Hill Baptist Church
525 A Street NE 13
- F** 101 6th Street NE 14
- G** 610 Constitution Avenue NE 15
- H** 620 Massachusetts Avenue NE 16
- I** 802 Massachusetts Avenue NE 17
- J** 25 8th Street SE 21
- K** 928 Maryland Avenue NE 22
- L** 642 Pickford Place 23
- M** 638/640/642 6th Street NE 24



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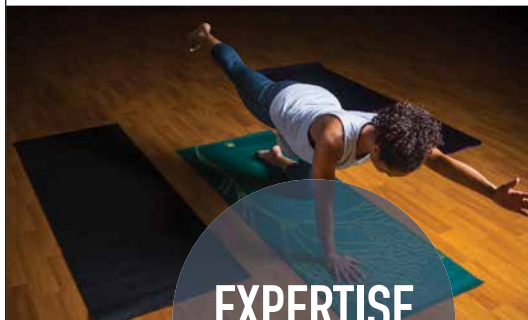
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President's Welcome



Welcome to the Capitol Hill Restoration Society 2025 House & Garden Tour—it's the 70th anniversary of CHRS and we are feeling celebratory!

This year's Tour has been two years in the making—we are giving northeast Capitol Hill the attention it deserves (though we did slip in one location just south of East Capitol Street). The homes this year are a glimpse into all of the ways that people can call the Hill home. One house is over 3,400 square feet and another is only 1,200 square feet—and both homeowners are absolutely delighted with their accommodations and location.

A few of the homes have been meticulously restored with original and period-appropriate furnishings and treatments and others have very modern touches. Keep an eye out for really personal (some have nicknames) and very valuable art. You will also find creative solutions to modern living and storage in circa 1900 buildings. There are some truly secret gardens, fountains, and a swimming pool! And we have “the triplets”—three homes in a row where you can snake your way through all of their first floors and gardens.

Since the northeast side of the Hill is residential, we are grateful to 700 Constitution Avenue NE for allowing us to use its lobby as Tour Headquarters—

that's where you can check in, troubleshoot, plan your next move or just take a break. There is ample seating and lovely restrooms.

The Capitol Hill Baptist Church and the Florida House have also generously agreed to open their doors, both to see the beautiful historic interiors and to offer restrooms and a place to sit.

The striking photograph for the promotional materials and the catalog was graciously provided by Jenny Nordstrom, a former Hill resident and fine art photographer. If you're looking for a fun field trip, you can visit her at Studio 320 in the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 North Union Street, in Alexandria, Virginia, where she sells all of her prints, calendars and note cards (we originally noticed her work on a beautiful calendar sold at East City Books).

We are offering refreshments from local favorite Capital Candy Jar at our Tour Headquarters. Please come by to have a treat—I will be there both days and would love to visit in person! ✨

— ANGIE SCHMIDT, CHRS President

House Tour Team

Special thanks to our hard-working team:

Planning

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Angie Schmidt

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Tina May, Elizabeth Nelson,
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Jonea Weekley

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The House & Garden Tour would not be possible without the assistance and generosity of our sponsors, supporters, business and individual donors—and especially the homeowners. Thank you!

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Caleb Morel, Capitol Hill Baptist Church

Steve Moore and Robert Weissert, Florida House

Refreshments provided by



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Homeowners

We are so grateful for our generous homeowners, without whom this event couldn't take place:

Betsy & Tim Abdella

Katherine Rainone & Graham Ellis

Justin Herman

Libby Quaid & Dan Hubbard

Linette & Scott Kilbourn

Rosemary Harold & Michael Knipe

Roxie & Paul Houge and the Maritz-Taylors

Barbara Leach

Molly Montgomery

Jane & John Pearce

Steve Koons & Chris Ray

Bobby Clark & Kris Rose

Nancy Lithgow & Michael Stiers

Cover Artist



A huge thank you to Jenny Nordstrom for loaning us our gorgeous cover photo! Jenny Nordstrom is a fine art photographer who creates highly saturated, textured images with a painterly feel. She is obsessed

with color, and this deeply influences her work. (Her favorite color is all of them!) She particularly loves travel photography, but finds inspiration all around her, and firmly believes that even “ugly” can be fascinating and beautiful if you look at it the right way. She has been featured in solo and group shows throughout the Washington, DC region and beyond, and is a resident artist at the Torpedo Factory Art Center in Alexandria, Virginia.



TOUR HEADQUARTERS 700 CONSTITUTION AVENUE NE

Established in 1888 as the Eastern Dispensary of the District of Columbia, the hospital was initially located at 3rd and C Streets SE. The original founders were physicians and businessmen, and the hospital was created to provide free medical services to the poor and needy persons of the District of Columbia.

When the original site was taken by the federal government for the construction of the Senate Office Building in 1905, the Dispensary relocated to the former home of Benjamin F. Leighton at 708 Massachusetts Avenue NE, which was donated and renamed Eastern Dispensary and Casualty Hospital.

On December 28, 1928, the Secretary of Treasury Andrew Mellon laid the cornerstone to the new hospital building that is the historical focal point of 700 Constitution. The 1928 façade has been recreated based on historic photos from the building's inception. In 1960s, the various nurses and doctor homes and quarters adjacent to the hospital were removed and hospital wings on both 7th and 8th Street were added.

Today these wings have been integrated into the historical design of the original hospital building and



have been further enhanced by the addition of bays that emulate the character of the prevailing historic Capitol Hill townhouses.

Casualty Hospital was renamed Rogers Memorial Hospital in the 1950s and subsequently Capitol Hill Hospital, but was permanently closed 20 years ago. Thereafter, the abandoned building became problematic to its Capitol Hill neighbors.

Their hope for the restoration of 700 Constitution became fact in December 2011 with the approval of the redevelopment plan by District of Columbia Zoning Administrator. 700 Constitution reflects the participation and input of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society, ANC 6C, and the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Review Board in creating this significant historic renovation that is elegantly integrated into the architectural context of this special neighborhood. ✨

— TRAVIS HODGE

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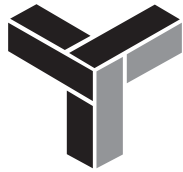
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238 G STREET NE

Homeowners: Tim & Betsy Abdella

HOUSE CAPTAINS: Oscar Alvarez &
Alexis Truitt, Truitt Management

This home was built in 1897 by John Sherman, a local developer, as part of a group of homes on the same permit stretching between Second and Third Streets NE.

The architect was well-known Thomas Franklin Schneider, the Washington, DC-born son of German immigrants who worked at the beginning of his career for Adolf Cluss on the Arts and Industries Building.

Schneider designed over 2,000 buildings in DC, including some on the National Register of Historic Places. He designed the Cairo Apartment building in Dupont Circle, which was the city's first "residential skyscraper" with over 100 units. It was controversial from the moment it was built in 1894 and was known as "Schneider's Folly."

The history of 238 is a little spotty, but it is known that an Italian-American family lived here for many years in the early 20th century, with the last name spelled both "Maitice" and "Maiatico." Raffale Maiatico was a stonemason who worked on Union Station before it opened in 1907. There is a story in *The Washington Post* from 1926 about a Jerry Maitice who had a dog that bit two neighbors and his younger brother before police shot it.

By the time Tim and Betsy Abdella purchased this home in 2006, it had many problems, starting with the title. The building was in such disrepair that the Abdellas have replaced or repaired almost every part of it—floors (the main floor was only partial, with an opening to the basement level), roof, foundation, windows, HVAC, plumbing—to make it the inviting residence it now is.

Some of the few things that are original to the building are the front cast iron stairs (though they were repaired), the interesting curved archway in the entry, the stair treads and the slate mantle in the living room. And you can't beat a corner lot with windows on three sides.

The home is the only one on the 2025 House & Garden Tour in the Swampoodle addition to the Capitol Hill Historic District. When the Abdellas purchased



and began renovating 238 G Street NE, the home was located just outside of the Historic District, which ended one block south on F Street.

In 1996, CHRS first explored historic district protection for squares between F Street NE and H Street NE since this area was omitted from the original 1976 designation of the Capitol Hill Historic District due to urban renewal policies following the 1968 riots. A new sense of urgency developed in 2010 when developers of the Station Place apartment building bought a large portion of land adjacent to the H Street Bridge, and razed 26 19th-century rowhouses. Most of the demolished properties would have been protected as contributing structures had they been in the Capitol Hill Historic District at that time.

This demolition galvanized the community to demand meaningful mitigation for the extensive loss of the area's historic fabric. CHRS and the local advisory neighborhood commission negotiated with the developer to pay for a building-by-building survey of all the blocks north of the existing historic district up to H Street, setting the stage for the subsequent boundary extension. The Swampoodle section in the four-square area—bounded by 2nd to 4th Streets and F to H Streets NE—has been included in the Capitol Hill Historic District since 2015. Residents outside these four squares will also have the documentation they need if they, too, should seek protection under the DC Preservation Law. ✨

— ANGIE SCHMIDT

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426 3RD STREET NE

Homeowners: Jane & John Pearce

HOUSE CAPTAIN: Dalys Keith,
Coldwell Banker

This beautiful “in-fill” home, built in 2018, is the newest house on its Capitol Hill plot. But it also appears to be the *oldest* house on the plot. That’s because the land beneath the structure seems never to have been used for a residential building. Instead, the plot now numbered as 426 has spent most of its existence, at least since the late 19th century, serving commercial or religious purposes.

District of Columbia records show that an “Ed. Landvoigt” (an active local builder) obtained a permit for the site in 1878 to construct a new, two-story brick structure for storage use. Such a purpose makes sense given the mixed commercial/residential nature of the block that fronts on the north side of Massachusetts Avenue between 2nd and 3rd Streets NE. The ground now under the current Heritage Foundation headquarters was devoted in the late 19th century to a soda water bottling factory owned by F.M. Finley & Son. (The company’s products were popular locally; 21st century excavations in the Cannon House Office Building turned up Finley ginger ale bottles in an old building trench.)

Property maps for the period show that the large bottling works was surrounded along Massachusetts Avenue NE and the southeastern edge of the block facing 3rd Street by several small, wooden buildings—and a fair amount of open space—consistent with light industrial uses, including parking and storage areas. In contrast, typical brick rowhouses were constructed along the northern edge of the block, which borders E Street NE.

By the early 20th century, the commercial plot at 426 3rd Street NE had been combined with the next-door plot at 424. The larger land area was home to a small, African American Baptist house of worship originally known as Northeastern Baptist Church.

As of 1939, a successor congregation called Unity Baptist Church owned the plot and its building. The congregation made several changes to the two-story structure over the years, including the addition of a



new, blond-brick façade at mid-century that survived into the 21st century. The congregation later changed its name to Galilee Baptist Church and expanded its footprint into SE Washington and Prince George’s County, locations where it continues to operate today.

The church’s decision to relocate away from Capitol Hill coincided with the Heritage Foundation’s desire to expand its operations on the block. Needing more space for employee and visitor vehicles, Heritage bought the church property in 2004, as well as other immediately adjacent lots, and obtained the District’s permission to construct a large underground parking lot—on the condition that the development effort also add more residential uses above ground. Heritage, in turn, razed the church building in 2011 and found a developer to oversee the design, construction, and sale of six large, high-end row houses, which stretch from Nos. 420 through 430 3rd Street NE.

The houses hit the market in 2018, and the Pearces moved fast to purchase one. It is easy to see the appeal. From the outside, the six houses look like larger cousins to the circa-1880s row houses across 3rd Street NE and further north along the block. Although considerably bigger, the new “Heritage Row” homes do a fine job of replicating the 19th century proportions of the windows, doors, and articulated floors to the building heights. The facades sport much the same kind of Victorian eclectic trim seen on the older structures, such as transoms over front doors, arches over windows, and triangular pediments along the roof line.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Inside, the Pearces have abundant space. The living area offers more than 3,600 square feet over three full floors, with four bedrooms, 4.5 bathrooms, and an interior elevator that connects all three floors to the underground parking below the house. The development deal with Heritage delivered an amenity to envy: a single-car garage for each of the six houses that is enveloped within the larger office building garage. (The garage is not on the tour, but photos of the space will be displayed.)

The house's space and layout make it easy for the Pearces to host family gatherings. Their marriage of 50 years has produced four adult children (two of whom live in the D.C. area with their own nuclear families) and 12 grandchildren. The spacious patio space off the kitchen supports both entertainment and the grandchildren's sports activity—and a former next-door neighbor, Sen. Mitt Romney, graciously returned a soccer ball that a Pearce grandchild accidentally lobbed over the back garden wall.

Both Jane, a retired lawyer, and John, a retired architect, cite the large windows and high ceilings as among their favorite aspects of the structure because of the light those elements bring into their home. Jane also credits the house's sophisticated blend of traditional elements cloaked in modern style as an appealing aspect. That setting provides a great backdrop for old furnishings, new artisan pieces, and art that they love, such as the 100+ year old breakfront in the living room and the close-to-a-century old painting of John's father as a teenager. Jane is especially fond of the kitchen bar stools, with legs shaped like axe handles, and the main bedroom's bed frame, featuring carved birds, which were created by a modern artisan.

John also counts the ambience and beauty of the Capitol Hill neighborhood as a plus, which is relatively new to him. Before retiring, Jane worked in DC—and lived during the week in a small C Street NE row house—while John pursued his architecture work elsewhere on the East Coast. They originally retired to an apartment in New York City, but Capitol Hill (and proximity to two of their children) kept calling to Jane. The end result suits them both. ✨

— ROSEMARY HAROLD

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FLORIDA HOUSE 1 2ND STREET NE

HOUSE CAPTAINS: Joanna Kendig,
Gene Imhoff & Elizabeth Nelson

Florida House is the result of the vision and effort of Rhea Chiles, wife of Lawton Chiles, then U.S. Senator and later, governor of Florida. In 1972, Mrs. Chiles responded to the need to create a gathering space for visiting Floridians by buying and renovating the Manning House on the corner of East Capitol and Second Street. And so this house embarked on the latest incarnation of its many lives as America's Only State Embassy.

Florida House is a nonpartisan, nonprofit 501(c)3 organization comprised of cross-section of Florida business, cultural and philanthropic leaders who network with other influential Trustee Chapters throughout the state to benefit Florida and connect with the Florida Delegation to Congress.

The house was constructed in 1891 by builder C.C. Meads—at an estimated cost of \$5,300—for Edwin Manning, an engineer working on the Library of Congress. From the original building permit description (then 200 East Capitol Street) we know it was built of brick, with three bay projections. That exterior, except for two small additions and alterations in 1894 and 1902, remains largely unchanged.

The interior was reconfigured several times in response to occupants' changing needs. Built as a single-family residence, it was converted to apartments in 1924. Between 1948 and 1956, it reverted to a single-family dwelling, but in 1962 it was listed as five apartments, and then in the 1960s, it appears to have been a rooming house. Its owners and residents have included congressmen, engineers, lawyers, carpenters and nurses. After remaining vacant for some years, it is again filled with life.

Visitors enter from 2nd Street into light-filled rooms furnished with a blend of Victorian and coastal chic furniture and featuring works by prominent Florida artists. In the reception area hangs a 1996 portrait of Mrs. Chiles by Jean Wagner Troemel, accompanied by an antique sideboard and a tall case George III clock from the early 19th Century. On the

long wall of the main stateroom, you will see a grand pier mirror, which belonged to Senator Robert Rice Reynolds of North Carolina, who owned the house in the 1940s.

To the left are three paintings by a group of self-taught African-American artists known collectively as the Florida Highwaymen. In the 1950s, they overcame racism and prejudice to emerge as a school of outsider



art. To the right of the mirror are three paintings by A. E. "Beanie" Backus, an artist known for his Florida landscapes.

Above the sofa, is a stunning black-and-white landscape photograph by Florida photographer

Clyde Butcher. Clyde is one of Florida's best-known photographers, and he operates one of the largest darkrooms in the country.

While the crown molding and wood trim may not be original, they are in harmony with historic stained glass window transoms, which survived through the many reconfigurations of the house. A view of the Capitol through the window is accompanied by *View in Spring*, painted by Mrs. Chiles.

The current exhibit, "Sunshine Stories," is a collaboration with the University of Florida's Smathers Libraries, and begins near the door. The exhibit starts with the earliest accounts of Florida, and with the city of St. Augustine, the first European colony in North America. Here you can see what early Spanish colonizers and British visitors noted about the city, including the roads and waterways. The tour during May 10 and 11 ends in the garden, featuring *Beach Ball*, a sculpture by Romero Britto and *Florida, a Seminole Girl* by internationally acclaimed sculptor Nilda Comas.

You are invited to return to Florida House during business hours, Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm, to view the upper level and the gorgeous views of the Capitol—and enjoy a glass of fresh squeezed orange juice! ✨

— STEVE MOORE

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103 4TH STREET NE

Homeowners: Rosemary Harold & Michael Knipe

HOUSE CAPTAIN: Fynnette Eaton

The current owners of this Capitol Hill home consider it a house of hidden surprises—and not just for the usual “look what they did inside” reasons.

A carpenter-turned-developer, C.C. Meads, built the structure in 1886 as part of a row of 10 houses constructed within a two-year time frame. Meads was a 48-year-old Virginia native who, like a good number of his DC contemporaries, was a Confederate veteran.

The son of a Navy carpenter in Norfolk, Meads himself became a Confederate naval officer who served on the CSS Merrimack during its battle with the USS Monitor (the first-ever battle between iron-clad warships). After the war, Meads moved first to Baltimore and then to DC, where he became a successful residential builder as well as a City Assessor, owner of a hardware store at 1301 H Street NE, and a resident on 7th Street SE.

The 4th Street house has had 10 owners (counting co-owners as one) over time, most of whom were owner-occupants. The current owners, Rosemary Harold and Michael Knipe, hold the record for owning and living in the home the longest: 25 years. They also have survived four significant renovations during that time, two of them involving whole-floor makeovers. One of them, as noted below, is where the real surprise came in.

Rosemary and Michael are recently retired lawyers, but Rosemary also worked as a journalist and graphic designer before law school, as well as a theater set designer in college. That experience accounts for much of the interior design, including arranged groupings of small art pieces and family photographs on the walls. Michael’s interest in the Indian subcontinent, initially triggered by his childhood on a U.S. Air Force base in Pakistan, account for the Asian art pieces around the house.

The front doors are about 20 years old, but the proportions mimic the original (and rotting) doors they replaced. Rosemary designed both the doors and the stained glass, which attempts to marry Art Nouveau style with some Arts-and-Crafts elements.



The 2014 renovation of the first floor revealed the biggest surprise in dramatic fashion: the back wall of the house fell down. This was *not* according to plan, which had called only for the kitchen’s back wall to be extended slightly and replaced largely with glass. Unbeknownst to the contractor or current owners, however, a nondescript brick near the kitchen’s ceiling functioned as a keystone. When it was removed, the entire wall for both floors collapsed. (Or, as the contractor put it, the wall “shifted 18 inches” before falling into the back garden.)

It turns out that Meads or his workmen did shoddy work 128 years earlier; they failed to solidly tie the back wall into the side walls. Fortunately, their work on the side walls, which support the floor joists, was done sufficiently well, so the second floor’s primary bedroom remained in place—albeit with a 12-foot-wide temporary “window” open to the east. After the initial repair work was done and Rosemary and Michael recovered from the shock, memories of that view inspired the addition of a sunroom off that wall nine years later.

The *planned* renovation of the first floor reopened the living room to its original length by removing an internal wall (likely installed in the 1920s or 1930s) that had split the room into unequal parts—and had also eliminated the fireplace except for the flue. In restoring the living room to its original size, the current owners ordered a travertine mantel in a historically sensitive style for the revived fireplace. (The fate of the original mantel is unknown, but Rosemary thinks she spotted pieces of it in the crawl space under the dining room.) They also commissioned new wood trim for windows, doors, and wall moldings that replicated the original designs and had the matching material installed throughout the house wherever higgledy-piggledy changes decades earlier had eliminated them.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

The dining room was largely unchanged in 2014 except for the widening and repositioning of doorways. The change opens the first floor's sight-line throughout the east-west length of the house, flooding the entire floor with more light.

The kitchen and powder room are new—the 2014 renovation stripped the interiors back to the floor joists and exterior brick walls. The kitchen's back wall was pushed out to the footprint of the original open-air Victorian porch, which provided room for the small half-bath between the dining room and kitchen. Four new windows pierce the southern wall. The kitchen's look is intentionally more relaxed than the living and dining rooms' echo of high Victorian style; the current owners aimed for a mild nod to the Arts-and-Crafts style common to homes in the Upper Midwest of their childhoods.

On the second floor, the room overlooking 4th Street likely served as the master bedroom during much of the house's existence, but it now functions as a study/home office. The arch over the alcove to the north is original, but the arch over the new built-in bookcase was replicated during the 2017 renovation to match. The wallpaper mural in the alcove was added in early 2025.

The current primary bedroom was reconfigured in 2017 to accommodate the huge—by Hill standards—new bathroom/dressing room space. This ensuite arrangement envelops space previously dedicated to two small, back-to-back bathrooms (not original), a very small bedroom, and a two-foot-deep bite out of the study itself. The renovation left the original windows intact, and by necessity it incorporates a two-step staircase to accommodate the change in ceiling heights on the first-floor level.

In 2023, Rosemary and Michael finally ended the “wall fell down” saga by building a small, enclosed sunroom that they use throughout the year. The sunroom's window design echoes the arrangement of the kitchen windows on the first floor.

The house's exterior style is Queen Anne/eclectic. It sports a stylized bracketed cornice made of bricks; bay windows; rounded top edges of the window sashes and main door opening; ornamental cast-iron stairs and fence; and a bit of decorative brickwork. The current owners purchased custom storm windows that follow the top curve of the original window sashes. The front façade appears to have never been painted, which makes maintenance easier today. *

— ROSEMARY HAROLD

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CAPITOL HILL BAPTIST CHURCH 525 A STREET NE

HOUSE CAPTAINS: Tina May & Beth Hague

Capitol Hill Baptist Church has been known by three names throughout its history. It was formed in 1878 as Metropolitan Baptist Church. In 1963, the church added “Capitol Hill” to the front, and for thirty years it was known as “Capitol Hill Metropolitan Baptist Church.” In 1995, the name changed again, this time dropping “Metropolitan,” to its present name.

The church grew out of a group of 31 neighbors who wished to have a Baptist church in the eastern half of the city. In 1874, a vacant plot with high elevation was chosen and a one-room brick Sunday school building was built where the current church now stands.

To keep the costs low, the members agreed to provide the building material for the church themselves. The children in the Sunday school took this seriously and went to neighborhood brickyards to ask for bricks. The brickyard owners were charmed enough that only the front elevation of the Sunday school was constructed out of purchased bricks—all the rest were donated. That building was completed in 1876.

As the church grew, it embarked on a fundraising campaign and sent letters across the country asking for donations. These letters included an engraving of the architectural plans for an ornate Gothic structure, which could be built in stages. The architect was renowned Appleton P. Clark Jr., brother of church treasurer Allen C. Clark. The final total cost was \$50,000, including furnishings.

The first stage involved erecting a small 300-seat chapel, later adding the impressive spire and main sanctuary once the rest of the funds could be raised. Construction of the new chapel was completed in March 1887. The church broke ground for the rest of the building in 1911. While they constructed the new building, Sunday worship was held in tents erected across the street. The first indoor Sunday service was held on December 24, 1911.

The story of Capitol Hill Baptist Church is similar to the story of the neighborhood. In the early part of the twentieth century, there was a large influx of people to the neighborhood that lasted until the 1950s. The church did



what many others did and bought adjoining properties as investments. But the population decline brought on by civil unrest and violence in the 1960s moved many people to the suburbs. As the church became less of a neighborhood church and more of a commuter church, it razed some of the buildings in the immediate square bounded by 5th and 6th Streets and A and East Capitol Street NE, in order to create parking lots.

The removal of two buildings (one of which was the Second Empire building, “Mary’s Blue Room”) on East Capitol Street NE in 1972 infuriated neighbors and, with the help of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society, led to the creation of the Capitol Hill Historic District in 1976. In recent years, much as the Hill has become a more desirable place to live, the congregation has grown to approximately 1000 people. Two of the church parking lots on 6th Street were turned into intern/pastoral housing, bringing the church back into the neighborhood.

The building itself is a pretty typical house of worship, with beautiful stained glass windows in the main sanctuary. Because of the increased size of the church, some reorganization of the space has led to the side chapel being incorporated, making the pulpit almost “in the round.” In the smaller section, there is a plaque and a framed document of the original charter and founding members of the Metropolitan Baptist Church. There is also a small bookstore with books ranging from theologies to children’s books. Newly published *A Light on the Hill: The Story of Capitol Hill Baptist Church* by Caleb Morell will be available for sale and you may even meet the author!

The Ruth Ann Overbeck Project interviewed Caleb Morell in 2023; that interview is available at: capitolhillhistory.org/interviews/caleb-morell. *

— ANGIE SCHMIDT



101 6TH STREET NE

Homeowners: Michael Stiers & Nancy Lithgow

HOUSE CAPTAIN: Beth Purcell

This two-story brick Italianate house with basement, deep eaves and a one-story hexagonal bay, is one of four similar houses built in 1874 or earlier. For much of its life, this was a boarding house/apartment house and traces of that history remain.

When Nancy Lithgow purchased the house in 1999, it was divided into three apartments, one on each floor. The first floor apartment was entered through what is now the dining room and the living room was part of that apartment, entered through the foyer dining room, and the first-floor corridor beyond the dining room (which did not yet exist) was created when the kitchen was remodeled (as part of the transition from apartments back to single-family.) The staircase leading to the upper floor apartment had been enclosed and had a door at its base.

Nancy chose the house because she loved the architectural look of the house, its three-story bay windows, the high ceilings upstairs and down, and the garden's hidden potential. The corridor off the kitchen to the rear of the house was not part of the original house but was created when the kitchen was remodeled in 2011. The door to that corridor is original and its assortment of locks still shows evidence that the house had numerous occupants at one time.

An advertisement in 1918 offered a "neatly furnished large room with bay window, detached house, private family, no children, near Capitol and library, \$20 per month, men only." As late as 1965 the house was advertised for rent, but not to Black people. The house's past occupants include:

- Convicted embezzler Thomas F. Karr (1915)
- Accused embezzler Roland R. Roderick (1916)
- Capitol Radio Engineering Co. office (1927)
- Anna G. Parkman, an early influencer, who promoted Rinso laundry detergent "clothes are so white and clean!" (1929)
- A hermit said to have lived in the basement (1940s–1950s).

The house was sold at a trustee's sale in 1922 and offered for sale at \$65,000 in 1973.



As you enter you will see the soft sculpture "Gloxinia" at top of the stairs, a signed piece by Tiger Lily Studios, Los Angeles. The piece is named for the Gloxinia Trocadero Ballet Company that preceded the formation of Les Ballets Trocadero de Monte Carlo.

The living room is on the left. The fireplace was deemed not operable (perhaps to deter tenants from starting a fire) when Nancy purchased the house and had serious scorch marks on the wood when it was torn down and rebuilt. The current marble mantel & surround were acquired during the renovation. Over the fireplace is *Cecropia Leaves* by Andrea Ottesen, an artist who exhibits at the Hill Center.

Walking back from the living room to the dining room, you will see an antique gas chandelier. The Fischer piano and Bombé chest belonged to Nancy's mother. From the dining room, walk into the kitchen.

When Nancy purchased the house there was a small galley kitchen, installed on a former sun porch, complete with metal cabinets from the 1940s. The ceiling beam over the stove shows the location of the original brick wall enclosing the old kitchen. The other half of the current kitchen was part of a room from when it was an apartment. Andea Ottesen's *Fiddlehead Ferns* hangs in the kitchen. The whimsical animal plates under the cupboards are from California ceramic artist Suki Diamond and the chubby-cheeked cherub over the doorway is from Mexico.

The original one-story addition in the rear of the house is an office (not open for the tour).

In the garden you will find an *Olive Martini Elaeagnus* vine by the back door, the frog fountain and pond and sculptures on the wall, including a ram's head. The ivy-covered column was built to filter fumes from a former neighbor's exhaust fan (no longer an issue). The granite blocks surrounding the crepe myrtle were saved and repurposed from the deconstruction of the living room fireplace. *

— BETH PURCELL



610 CONSTITUTION AVENUE NE

Homeowner: Barbara Leach

HOUSE CAPTAINS: Chuck Burger & Maggie Daley, Coldwell Banker

Barbara Leach's 1884 Victorian row home stands out from its neighbors with the only stylish pointed Stick Style treatment at the roofline on the block. Barbara purchased the residence from a congressman in 1995 when the member was defeated at the polls. He downgraded his planned renovations of the former shell, and decamped with his wife to Virginia.

Having recently arrived from Iowa, Barbara employed a small subterfuge by telling the lender that her "boyfriend" was going to move in and pay rent. No matter, her career in Democratic politics soared in the following years. "My personal money pit," is how Barbara describes her 30-year (and counting!) efforts to restore and renew the house to its deserved glory.

The house is part of a six-house row and 10 house block, on what was then known as "B" street (it was renamed "Constitution Avenue" on February 26, 1931). The lot was developed by Thomas W. Smith, with the prolific rowhouse designer Julius Germuiller as architect. The first known resident was Harvey M. Heber, listed as a "clerk at 6th and O." Dr. Heber is buried in his hometown of Evansville, Indiana, having died in DC in 1914 at the age of 75.

Beginning in 1915 additional residents are noted as living at 610 B Street (rear). This confirms what a contractor once told Barbara—that the front and back of her house were built at different times and he had to perform additional work to stitch them back together. A visible crack remains. Occupations of the rear residents include a chauffeur and a duo of Navy Yard machinists.

As you enter, note the curved plaster wall that has been lovingly maintained, despite the headaches this narrow opening causes for furniture delivery). Here Barbara has removed carpet and extensively repaired the staircase, keeping the original balusters and large newell. She had the oft-painted canvas wall coverings removed to reveal failing plaster which was repaired. While the original pocket doors are in place, a short-sighted electrician removed the tracks, so they are not currently operable.



In the cheerful and sunny living room, the fireplace is original and working. Not original, but essential to Barbara's social hosting, is the charming wet bar. You'll also see a d'Argental cameo glass table lamp manufactured by Maison Gallé-Reinemer. Émile Gallé, a pioneer of the Art Nouveau movement, used real life flowers and plants as models for design. Barbara acquired the lamp on a business trip to Bucharest after Gallé-Reinemer had moved its manufacturing from France to Romania.

The glamorous red dining room also has a fireplace, which Barbara says works almost too well, overheating the space during her soirées. Also downstairs is a recent project that provides for a home office where the laundry had once been.

The kitchen was remodeled in 2016 and fits nicely with the look and feel of the rest of the house. Barbara chose to retain the (not original) greenhouse window. Outside Barbara gardens with enthusiasm. At the top of the stairs is a cheerful yellow painting by Capitol Hill-based artist Tati Kaupp.

Like many Hill residents, Barbara's restoration happened over time, often due to a desire for change or an upgrade, though sometimes fate intervened. In 2003, while she was busy in the kitchen during a Christmas gathering, a quiet guest shyly alerted her to a potpourri fire in the bathroom. Barbara put out the flames but the party raged on—so delightfully so that a friend a year later remarked, "Fire, what fire?" having been busy socializing during the blaze. New paint and other upgrades were required to repair the smoke damage.

Barbara has hosted many notable figures, including Nancy Pelosi, Tom Harkin, Martin O'Malley, and others. She has been known to invite longer term guests to stay in her back bedroom ("Barb's B&B") when in town for business or special projects. This is where you can now see a well-curated display of political memorabilia from her career, including a Clinton inaugural placard signed

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18



620 MASSACHUSETTS AVE NE

Homeowners: Bobby Clark & Kris Rose

HOUSE CAPTAIN: Jackie Krieger

The modest façade of the flat-front brick row house at 620 Massachusetts Avenue NE disguises the unusual history of this building—a fascinating reflection of life on Capitol Hill in the Stanton Park neighborhood of the late 19th century. As you enter the foyer, there are framed documents which reveal some of these interesting stories.



First, there is a newspaper ad for George Otto's bottling plant. According to the 1887 Hopkins Map of Washington, DC, the addresses 614, 616, 618 and 620 Massachusetts Avenue NE, are connected because of their ownership by George Otto, a German immigrant who ran a bottling operation there. The land remained with his descendants until the mid-20th century.

There is also an article displayed from an 1884 business promotion book that describes Mrs. George Otto, Otto's widow, who ran the bottling company after his death in 1883. She bottled soda, porter, sarsaparilla, cider and Capitol Ginger Ale. She had seven employees along with three wagons to deliver her products. The business was described as being among the most prominent in the city.

There is an interesting 1897 newspaper clipping describing an incident involving James A. Bailey, of 620 Massachusetts Avenue. Bailey was inebriated and arrested for trying to kill his wife.

That wife was George Otto's widow, Elizabeth, who married Bailey in 1888. Bailey was arrested and friends put up a \$300 bond for his release. He said that he had been drinking, or the trouble would never have occurred.

Other interesting information about the Ottos was that in late 1865, George Otto had serious trouble with the law. He shot a young Black man named William Walker, who was sitting with others in a nearby sheltered area. A witness said Otto drove up in a wagon, jumped out and told the young men to get away. Otto was convicted in April 1866 of assault and battery with intent to kill and was sentenced to imprisonment for two years in the penitentiary at Albany, NY. However, a month later in May 1866, President Andrew Johnson pardoned Otto on the recommendation of the jurors who convicted him.

George Otto received a permit to build a "two story brick" building in October of 1872. This was probably the current 616, which was the bottling plant with living space above. Since the permit was issued late in the year, the building was completed in 1873. In July of 1875, Otto was issued a permit to build a "two-story brick" dwelling, probably the current 620, which is distinct from the earlier and larger brick bottling establishment. Otto also built the frame house currently at 614 prior to 1887. In 1914, a driveway that ran under 618 and between 618 and 620 was bricked up, and in 1927 the city built an alley behind all the Otto properties.

The current owners, Bobby Clark and Kris Rose bought the house in 2018. "We fell in love with our home the moment we saw it—it offered the perfect blend of space, a quiet location and historic charm, with an inviting patio and a cozy fireplace that made it feel instantly like home," they said. In 2021, they completed a full renovation of the kitchen, which has an unusual layout for Capitol Hill, as it runs lengthwise along the west side of the house.

Clark and Rose completely renovated the fireplace to make it historically accurate. The brick pattern in the fireplace and the floor of the kitchen are similar, along with the pattern on the sideboard in the dining room. The two rooms are further tied together by the marble surrounding the fireplace matching the kitchen counters. The frame above the fireplace cleverly hides a TV screen.

The first-floor layout with its spacious living area and comfortable seating along with the modern well-equipped kitchen makes it easy for the owners to entertain. The dining room, and the room above it, were probably added to the house in the mid or late-20th century.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18



802 MASSACHUSETTS AVE NE

Homeowners: Steve Koons & Chris Ray

HOUSE CAPTAINS: Gary & Trudy Peterson

A grand corner house with a turreted two-story bay, mansard roof and dormer windows, 802 Massachusetts Avenue NE presented owners Steve Koons and Chris Ray with puzzle after puzzle as they restored and renovated it to create a forever home. It is a place where their family can gather for holidays and the couple can entertain in myriad ways.

The home had lost its sense of grandeur when Chris and Steve bought it in 2022. The pressed brick facade had been painted a combination of chartreuse and lime green, while inside it had been divided more than 60 years earlier into separate apartments. However, wonderful original details remained: doors and transom windows; the staircase; pocket doors and mantels; and beautiful wood paneling.

They removed a wall to restore the original central reception hall, a space so large that it now holds a circa-1905 pool table restored by an enthusiast in Clay Center, Kansas, who drove it to DC. (The same man has restored two antique pool tables for Taylor Swift.) Atop the room's radiator is a marble slab that is notched on the sides for pool cues to rest. A tiny powder room is tucked into a corner nearby.

"You can play a game at a party, and it's not in the basement; you don't have to take people out of the party. The only people you're separated from are in the parlor, right?" Chris asked. Indeed, opening a pocket door with a leaded glass leaf leaves the hall open to the dining room as well as the kitchen.

Speaking of the parlor, it is the only main-floor space where the rich stained-wood paneling was removed at some point. So the couple seized the opportunity to add Lincrusta, a luxurious, embossed Victorian wall covering made of linseed oil and wood flour. Invented in the 1870s by the English creator of linoleum, Lincrusta was installed in several Titanic staterooms as well as in the White House.

The parlor leads into the dining room, where the rich green walls and wood paneling feel like the library it was when the home was built. From there you step



into a room that feels like an elegant yet snug little Art Nouveau speakeasy. The original dining room's ceiling is coffered with an Art Nouveau chandelier and a Bradbury & Bradbury "Lion and Dove" wallpaper frieze installed above the wood paneling, which runs to the top of the door frames. Built-in cabinets house bar supplies and china.

Next comes the kitchen, with stained-wood custom cabinetry extending to the ceiling, echoing the paneling in the rest of the house. A rolling Putnam Library Ladder helps reach the high cabinets. One wall is floor-to-ceiling subway tile with a brick-backed bookshelf niche for antique hotel china plates. Notice the green and white mini hexagon floor tile, a mosaic copied from the floors of the bakery Tatte. Pendant lights over the island are from Visual Comfort.

Upstairs, the couple had to puzzle out a layout for the primary suite, squeezing in two closets, an office, a primary bedroom with a vaulted ceiling, and the primary bathroom, which has an Art Deco vanity designed by Chris. They also managed to squeeze in a third bathroom, joining a guest room and sitting room for when parents visit.

"It was fun to make the diagram, and it's fun to see it finished," Steve said. "The part where you're worried about whether the diagram is going to come out—that was stressful."

An antique floor-to-ceiling console mirror, mounted in a bedroom when they purchased the house, greets guests on the second-floor landing. The rear of the house, along Constitution Avenue (B Street when the home was built), retains its original two levels of columned porches, though they have been structurally reinforced.

The house was built for George P. Tucker when he was 46 years old and a law examiner for the U.S. Patent Office. His contractor was Edwin D. Farnham, and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

610 CONSTITUTION AVENUE NE, from page 15

by the pop artist Peter Max, and a poster signed by Geraldine Ferraro. Barbara also has photos with former presidents Carter, Clinton, and Obama.

In the main bedroom is an antique art nouveau bronze slag glass table lamp in the manner of Handel. You'll also see some hand-built furniture inherited from the Leach Farm in Iowa, as well as an old family greenish-yellow velvet sofa—back on trend by 2025.

The bathroom has been updated and expanded to include the washer and dryer. The basement had been a studio apartment which Barbara upgraded to a one bedroom apartment (not open for the tour). The iron steps in front are not original. Across the street you'll see a former blacksmith shop, as well as a Civil War-era tavern.

Barbara lives near the vibrant and active A Street NE, famous for the holiday decorations which she—an honorary A Street member—contributes to. ✨

— RACHAEL LOPER

802 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE NE, from page 17

his architect was Charles Edgar Webb, who designed nearly 250 buildings, many of them on Capitol Hill.

Born and raised in Massachusetts, Tucker had a Bachelor of Science degree from Worcester Polytechnic Institute when he moved to Washington in 1892 with his wife, Elizabeth Stearns Tucker, for an assistant examiner job with the Patent Office. He worked his way up, going to law school at night at George Washington University and National University (which later merged with GWU). Tucker was admitted to the bar in DC and became a primary examiner and then a law examiner.

He and Elizabeth, who had four children, lived at 802 Massachusetts Avenue NE for 30 years, and Tucker retired from the Patent Office in 1934 and died in 1938. Elizabeth sold the house around 1942 to William D. and Peggy Brooks, who lived there for nearly a decade. It then changed hands several times and was converted into apartments in the late 1950s.

Today, this imposing house at the intersection of two major Capitol Hill avenues is once again a single-family home, albeit one that is often filled with people.

"We can have everybody here for the holidays. A full house," Chris said. ✨

— LIBBY QUAID

620 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE NE, from page 16

As you go up the steps to the second floor, notice the map of DC's old taxi zones on the wall and the width of the hallway. There is another framed map of Stanton Park at the very top of the bookcase; they believe it's the first of the landscape architecture maps that they had reprinted from a Park Service report. The other maps hang over the couch. The owners had to choose a sectional sofa to add to their main bedroom suite because it could be carried up the narrow staircase and hall.

The owners have worked to celebrate the history of their home by adding photos, historical documents, sketches, drawings, and maps that are a mix of DC history—many bought at Eastern Market. The second-floor hallway features an entire wall of these documents.

All the light fixtures are new. The owners ultimately decided to add globe-shaped light fixtures throughout the house because they are drawn to a mid-century modern aesthetic. There are other furnishings that mimic that era throughout the house.

Clark and Rose have also redone the patio area behind the house and added two trees and a wisteria vine. There is a creeping hydrangea that runs along the brick wall on the east side. That plant is very mature and they estimate it is about 30 years old. There are also two oak leaf hydrangeas in the rock garden area off to the west side.

The house is only a few steps to Stanton Park, which was included in Pierre L'Enfant's original plan for the city. It is one of the larger Capitol Hill parks and is named after Edwin M. Stanton, the U.S. Secretary of War during the Civil War. When in full bloom in April, the cherry trees in the park are spectacular.

The symbolic importance of Massachusetts Avenue in defining the national capital is second only to that of Pennsylvania Avenue. Massachusetts Avenue is the longest, and one of the widest, of the grand radiating avenues conceived by L'Enfant in his 1792 plan for the Federal city. ✨

— MARCI HILT *with research*
by SANDY HARRELSON

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25 8TH STREET SE

Homeowners: Katherine Rainone & Graham Ellis

HOUSE CAPTAIN: Steve Hagedorn

Katherine Rainone and Graham Ellis have been custodians of this house for nearly three years, knowing it had solid bones but was in desperate need of a tune-up. With the help of Gillie Cavan Color & Design and family members, they have been on a mission to breathe life and character back into the home with period-accurate trim, wallpaper, paneling and, of course, removing nearly 130 years of paint (only to add color right back).

On the first floor, admire the custom window bench in the bay (designed and built by Katherine's dad/"architect-in-law") and a large painting over the couch by Walter Kravitz, a local Capitol Hill artist who lived and worked out of his studio on A Street SE for over 30 years. Near the kitchen entrance is Graham's grandmother's steamer trunk, which he painstakingly converted into a bar cart during the pandemic.

On the second floor in the library, say hello to the nearly life-size mounted papier-mâché rhino, nicknamed "Gustav," a courting gift between the couple. Recent updates to this showstopper of a room are the built-in linen closet/dry bar designed and installed by Katherine's father, and salvaged tile adorning the fireplace.

The library is their favorite space. "Since there's no true 'living room' on the first floor, we wanted to make sure there was a place to both relax and work on the second floor," Rainone said. "We took down a small corner of the wall and, voilà, our furniture now fits comfortably."

Pay a visit to the recently gutted renovated primary suite bathroom, also designed by Katherine's father, which features a steam shower. Notable art and curiosities displayed throughout the house include watercolor paintings by Katherine of sailboats and lighthouses, and "Marjorie," a female lion who adorns the wall in the third floor bedroom, one of several artifacts collected over the years by grandparents who were missionaries in West Africa.

This fine four-story bayfront is one of a pair of houses, 23 and 25 8th Street SE, designed in 1898 by William James Palmer and built by George Barkman for investor Benjamin Guy. Palmer was a well-regarded Washington architect whose practice spanned from 1881 to 1925. Two of his noteworthy designs on Capitol Hill are the Naval Lodge building at 330 Pennsylvania



Avenue SE and Ebenezer United Methodist Church, home of the oldest African American congregation on Capitol Hill.

Palmer designed this house with two large rooms per floor and fireplaces in each room. A full basement, now a separate apartment, might have originally housed a kitchen, where coal would have been used both for cooking and heat.

The original coal chute delivery and storage area can be seen on and beneath the front patio. Square bays extend into the garden, inviting generous light, while tall ceilings and doors with operable transoms were used to encourage natural ventilation.

It's nearly impossible to know how many people have called 25 8th Street SE home, since it was a boarding house for most of its life. Census records from 1900 to 1910 show two heads of household, Robert Garber, a bookkeeper, along with his wife and brother, Robert Cassidy, another bookkeeper, and his wife, and an additional two boarders. In the 1920s, 15 people shared the house (maybe not all at once, but it was the Great Depression!), then owned by Garber, with his family of seven, along with lodgers who worked as machinists at the Navy Yard.

Advertisements in *The Washington Post* for "rooms for rent" at this address were abundant through the 1930s and offered a variety of options—furnished, unfurnished, with or without home cooking. In the more recent past, the house might have been subdivided into apartments. The 1940 Census lists four heads of household and their families sharing the house, and old drawings show evidence of a kitchenette. ✱

— JOANNA KENDIG, *with research*
by GENE IMHOFF



928 MARYLAND AVENUE NE

Homeowners: Linette & Scott Kilbourn

HOUSE CAPTAIN: David Pelizzari

The house at 928 Maryland Avenue NE as it stands today was built in 1977—relatively new for our tour—but the history of the properties on its land and its numerous occupants span decades before then.

The property was first subdivided in 1795 and then again in 1887 (an 1888 ad in the *Evening Star* described it as “JUST THE KIND OF LOTS YOU WANT”). In 1893, a brick building with a carriage house was built at 928 Maryland Avenue, developed by John Buscher and designed by Appleton Clark who was responsible for almost 1,000 buildings throughout the District. Architect Henry Getz, who built many high-end homes in the area, built the structure.

Getz called the property home starting in 1898 but went missing in 1904, leaving a note for his wife saying he did not know when he would return. In late December 1904, the *Evening Star* reported “it is thought that Getz had considerable money with him.”

In 1905 the home, along with a “large quantity of lumber, old doors, sash and other millwork, contractor’s wagon and buggy and harness; some household furniture, and all other personal property on the premises belonging to the estate of said Henry F. Getz” was sold at a bankruptcy auction.

By 1908, Dr. A. W. Boswell lived in the home. In August 1910, four rooms were listed to rent in the home, touting a “private bath; hot-water heat” in classified advertisements. By October of that year, it was listed for sale as a “beautiful corner house,” but those four rooms were listed to rent again in November—this time stipulating that no children were allowed.

Rooms in the home were listed for rental on and off until 1948, when the “corner brick” building converted into four apartments was listed for sale for \$25,000 including a “2-story brick garage and a vacant lot.” By 1950, units were again up for rent, described as “suitable for young cple.” and convenient to government buildings. Apartments remained available to rent throughout the 1950s.

In 1968, the property was heavily damaged by fire—possibly related to gas updates to the building.

It was sold at auction in 1970, described as a property “containing four apartments plus two story brick garage, all in ‘as is’ condition after damage by fire,” in classified listings. In 1972, a permit was issued for its demolition.

In 1975, real estate developer and restaurant owner Herbert Lehner bought the property for \$39,000, finding the opportunity to build anew—with only the carriage house remaining—“enticing.” Lehner had a new home built in the front, renovated the carriage house, previously used as a boxing gym and car repair garage, and had a pool put in between the two.

Lehner had opened several establishments on Barracks Row following the “white flight” that started after World War II and was further sparked by the riots after Martin Luther King Jr.’s 1968 assassination. Lehner’s businesses on 8th Street SE included the Townhouse Restaurant and the Back Door Pub, a gay bar. Gay bars on Barracks Row sparked the street’s revitalization.

“The gay community sort of broke the ice,” Lehner told a reporter for *The Washington Post* in 1984. “They started opening the street up. In the ‘60s, no one would walk on the street.”

At the time he owned Piazza Pizzeria, Trattoria Alberto, Bachelors Mill and the Gentry, all on 8th Street. He and his partner Cliff helped raise a child in the home and Cliff’s parents also lived in the front house. They held fundraisers for Peabody Elementary School every year at their pool, serving hot dogs and hamburgers and letting the children enjoy the pool. Lehner and Cliff sold 928 Maryland Avenue in 2005, splitting their time between Ft. Lauderdale and an apartment over a commercial space he remodeled on Barracks Row. They now live full-time in Ft. Lauderdale.

The house gained its reputation as a “party house” from the next owner, who, in addition to hosting long-term furnished rentals (equipped with maid service and sheets), would throw lavish parties at the house, to the chagrin of the neighbors. By 2009, the home was in foreclosure.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 26



642 PICKFORD PLACE NE

Homeowner: Justin Herman

HOUSE CAPTAINS: Linette Kilbourn &
Jonea Weekley, Coldwell Banker

Two brothers, Charles and Thomas H. Pickford, built most of the 600 block between 8th and 9th streets NE. In 1897, Thomas Pickford platted out and built a one-block development of 24 two-story semi-detached houses with side entrances, designed by the well-known architect B. Stanley Simmons.

The houses are 17 x 38 feet, with flat roofs, and were originally heated by a “Latrobe” (a coal-fired cast iron stove, often ornate, inserted into the fireplace). The houses are buff brick, in American bond 5:1 coursing, with segmented arches over the windows and corbelled cornices. This home is one of these unique houses.

Thomas Pickford (1860–1939) had a long and controversial career. In 1896, while he and his brother were running their cut-price grocery, they were accused of selling oleomargarine mislabeled as butter. In 1901, he was charged with arson in Maryland, but the charges were dropped. In 1908, Pickford was building a six-story apartment building, “The Toronto,” at 2000 P Street NW when the walls partially collapsed, killing two workmen. A manslaughter charge was dropped and he prevailed in a civil suit against him. Through it all, he was financially successful—he and his wife went on a Mediterranean cruise in 1905.

As you enter the house you will see the tall windows in the living room and dining room providing ample light and creating a cozy interior. Because 642 Pickford Place, like all the houses on the block, has no attic or basement, storage is a priority.

Justin Herman’s home features a thoughtfully curated collection of contemporary art, anchored by works from Michael McGregor and Charles Johnson. McGregor’s bold lines and vibrant colors bring a sense of movement and warmth to the space, while Johnson—a former American University professor and diplomat—contributes a celebrated bust of Abraham Lincoln that adds a layer of quiet mastery and reflection, making art a living, integral part of Herman’s home.



This house, like many on Capitol Hill, was often rented. A 1918 advertisement for 642 Pickford Place: “Furnished rooms for rent; might consider light housekeeping or board; convenient to 3 car lines, half a block, women or men.” A 1920 advertisement for 642 praised its “nicely furnished [light housekeeping] rooms on the second floor, next to the bath, newly papered and painted, \$35. Per month.”

During this period Black people suffered overt discrimination in housing. But in 1917, 1927 and 1933, Pickford Place houses were advertised for sale or rent to Black people. And Black people did live here: the 1920 Census shows 38 families on Pickford Place, with two homeowners (who were White), and 36 renters. Of the renters, at least eight were Black families. A White renter, Daniel J. Stover, a clerk in a grocery store, lived at 642 Pickford Place.

Exit back into the garden, designed by Ginkgo Gardens, passing the alligator which was a prop in the play *Peter Pan and Wendy*, presented at the Shakespeare Theater Company’s Sidney Harman Hall in 2020. ✨

— BETH PURCELL

These colorful brick row houses, with their metal oriel bay windows, stand out on the block. If they look like they go together, that's on purpose! A previous owner of 638 chose its strong shade of teal. Later, the owners of 640 and 642 worked with a paint consultant to find vibrant colors that would coordinate to create the "painted lady" effect you see today. The Queen Anne Victorian architecture is richly varied, lending itself to the three or four colors used on each home.

Were these buildings always painted? Preservationists argue that Capitol Hill is a red-brick neighborhood. However, an early resident of 642 was a master painter and decorator, Addison Henry McGhan, and he patented a scaffolding for painting house exteriors. "The McGhan Patent Scaffolding Keeps Painters Out of the House," his advertisements

read. "Workmen trudging through the house, no matter how careful they may be, cause wear and tear on carpets, scratches on furniture and floors, and cause a great amount of inconvenience."

Interiors were a passion of his, too. "Dark Tones Wreck Homes," was the headline on a *Kansas City Star* dispatch about a 1916 speech McGhan made at a house painters convention. "A man owes it to his family to surround it with

bright rooms, which will catch all the sunlight there is and turn it into domestic happiness."

Built by Ray E. Middaugh and designed by R.J. Beall Jr. in 1895, each of these houses has three bedrooms upstairs and a parlor, dining room and kitchen on the main level.

Middaugh would become one of DC's more prolific speculative builders, though he constructed these homes at the start of his career. He had arrived in the city to practice law three years earlier, in 1892, after graduating from Cornell Law School. Middaugh may have been influenced to venture into real estate by a builder named Edward Kern, brother of his law firm's boss, George Kern. By the time he



The McGhan Patent Scaffolding Keeps Painters Out of the House.



In architecture, an oriel is a bay window in an upper story, and is associated with Gothic, Tudor and Victorian styles.

died at the age of 40 in 1910, Middaugh and his partner, William E. Shannon, ranked among the city's dominant developers, a short list of names led by the ubiquitous Harry Wardman.

You can find similar architecture in Capitol Hill along the 100 blocks of North Carolina Avenue and E Streets SE. Architectural features to look for:

- Oriel window with gadrooned support and arabesque ornamentation
- Slate turret roof
- Molded and boxed metal cornice
- Brick belt and sill courses
- Windows and door with rusticated lintels
- Windows with soldier brick segmental arches topped by rowlock brick molding.

638 6th Street NE: Vibrant and Eclectic

Homeowner: Molly Montgomery

The most eclectic of the three, this house captivated Molly Montgomery when she bought it in 2020. Interior walls were removed to open up the parlor, dining room and hallway, and the brick side walls were exposed.

The industrial feel of the brick is balanced by the parlor's Victorian double mantel, and its Corinthian columns and oval mirror. Chandeliers in every space amp up the sense of drama. Most of the lights were there when Montgomery moved in, though she found the parlor and dining room chandeliers on Facebook Marketplace.

"I just felt like it was so unique and had so many fun details, like the exposed brick and the fireplace and chandeliers, but then also the crazy red

kitchen with all the mismatched knobs and the bar,” Montgomery said. “It really felt like I wouldn’t have been daring enough to make all of those decisions, but they were so me.”

Montgomery has leaned into the home’s sense of drama.

Atop the mantel is a ceremonial hat from Kenya in the image of a long-horned mystical creature. Nearby hangs a large framed aerial photo of a tiger in a preserve in Africa, found at Patina in Old Town.



Across the room you’ll notice the framed “Dictator Makeovers” fabric applique and thread painting (“Anyone Can Look Better!”) from a New Orleans gallery. Also notice the pieces from Kenya, an East Africa dream board and mask and a ceremonial object made from the tail of a wildebeest with a beaded handle. There is a dagger from Yemen and tiles from Istanbul.

Montgomery chose an emerald velvet Chesterfield sofa and peacock velvet drapes, as well as leather chairs, that play off the rich reds and blues in her rugs, collected during Foreign Service posts in Afghanistan and Bosnia, and the dark-stained original heart pine floors.

The kitchen feels even more quirky, with red lacquer Ikea cabinets, a Sputnik chandelier, cork floor and tin ceiling tiles for a backsplash—a vintage touch like the apron-front farm sink. The cork floor is repeated in the bar, which has wall coverings of deconstructed wine crates and live-edge wood shelves. The bar is off the powder room, which has grasscloth wallpaper, a salvaged stained glass window sash and, of course, another chandelier.

“It just fit my style,” Montgomery said, “in terms of being eclectic and colorful and traditional but with a modern touch.”

The lines of the modern white cabinets, custom-designed in Italy, seem to vanish. Doors swing up or down, rather than opening from the side, so the gaze is unimpeded. Cabinet panels conceal a Sub-Zero side-by-side fridge. The gray Silestone counters and backsplash look seamless, too, and are echoed by the gray tile floor. An island extends 9 feet toward the glass rear wall, which draws the eye to the garden. The Hougues extended the footprint of the house by 12 feet to get the space they needed for cooking and entertaining, and this kitchen has seen it all—from homemade pasta-making and meals around the island to parties. You’ll pass a built-in bar area with a wine fridge as you enter the kitchen.

The couple bought the home in 2007 upon returning from a Foreign Service post in Senegal. They were initially drawn to the high ceilings and light in the finished basement, which is not on the tour, and were charmed by the original architectural details often found on Capitol Hill.

This house retains the most original character of these three. There are two large single pocket doors and original window and door casings with rosettes. The newel post is original, as are the dining room mantel, green Victorian tile and cast iron summer cover. 640 has also kept its original heart pine floor and tall baseboards, along with plaster walls.

An early resident of 640 was a congressman, Nelson Booth McCormick. The lawyer and prosecuting attorney from Phillipsburg, Kansas, was elected to the House as a Populist in 1896. He lost reelection two years later and returned home.



640 6th Street NE: Modern, Light-filled Kitchen

Homeowners: Roxie & Paul Houge

The goal of Roxie and Paul Houge’s bright, airy kitchen renovation was to usher you from the traditional, sometimes shadowy front rooms into a space that feels at one with the sunny, lush rear garden.

642 6th Street NE: New York Brownstone Vibes

Homeowners: Libby Quaid & Dan Hubbard

Cooped up during lockdown in 2020, Libby Quaid scrolled social media posts, savoring pictures of Brooklyn brownstones with their beautiful woodwork and high ceilings. She realized that a brownstone is a row house, and the ones she coveted were built in the same era. The difference was that 642 is more modest in size, and a gut renovation 50 years ago had removed nearly all the details. Still, inspiration had struck!

Libby and her husband, Dan Hubbard, were meticulous when they replaced the original heart pine floors, which had cracked and split after too many sandings. They hired a designer to help choose 5-inch pine planks that felt like the next best thing to keep the old house ethos.

In 2020, Libby scoured real estate listings to look at Capitol Hill homes with original mantels, moldings and other details. She read up on where to find architectural salvage and started visiting Community Forklift, Vintage House Parts & Radiators and Second Chance Salvage in Baltimore and searched Facebook Marketplace for antique mantels. She also started an Instagram account, @hill_queen_1895, to connect with other old house people.

Libby found the dining room mantel cabinet on Facebook Marketplace. It came from a 1910 house in Columbia Heights. The room originally had a fireplace in that spot—you'll see one next door at 640. And mantels with bookcases—old millwork catalogues offered cabinet inserts as an option—are found in homes nearby.

The living room mantel came from Vintage House Parts & Radiators, which closed in 2024. It had at least four layers of paint and was sent to Chemstrip Refinishing in Upper Marlboro. They used dental tools and special chemicals to remove the paint and preserve the plaster-based detail. The mantel had a manufacturer's sticker on the back: "C.F. Meislahn & Co., 19 Clay Street, BALTIMORE, Md., Fine Furniture, Mantels & Artistic Decoration." A German immigrant, Charles Meislahn studied in Paris and London before settling in Baltimore in 1872, according to *Baltimore Sun* archives.

This special mantel deserved antique Victorian tile like you find in other Capitol Hill homes. Libby bought this set, manufactured by the Ohio Tile Company in Hamilton, Ohio, through Etsy and connected with the seller, Storied Salvage Tile of Philadelphia (who participated in the 2024 CHRS House Expo).

The large console mirror in the hallway came from Community Forklift, also the source for the two



chandeliers on the main floor. It was originally in a 1906 row house in Mount Pleasant, and Libby found images online of this exact piece in a 1906 Chicago Millwork Supply Co. catalogue. *

— LIBBY QUAID

928 MARYLAND AVENUE NE, from page 22

When the current owners, architects Scott and Linette Kilbourn, went to visit the property, the current Australian tenant warned them, “the air conditioning doesn’t work, the heat is really bad, there are mice in the master bedroom, and there are roaches.” Their realtor also tried to steer them away—“you don’t want that house, it’s a mess”—but Linette, seeing an opportunity just as Lehner had before her, would not be deterred. She showed up to the foreclosure sale on a rainy day and bought the property. She had no competition.

Since then, Scott and Linette have spent years renovating the property in its entirety while living there. Long gone are the first floor’s sunken living room, the mixed tile-wood floor, and the orange-brown walls, replaced now by angled wooden shelves—hand built by Scott, bearing hundreds of records—and an open, light-filled and airy kitchen and living room space.

The upstairs holds an impressive four bedrooms and a study-play area equipped with an indoor swing for the couple’s three children. They have made the pool more accessible—adding multiple window-bearing doors to the courtyard—and installed solar panels. Only one wooden beam from the original carriage house remains visible, spanning the living room; nothing else ended up being salvageable.

The Kilbourns rent the front part of the home (926 Maryland) on Airbnb. It is also fully renovated, equipped with three bedrooms, two full bathrooms, and a full kitchen—and adorned with the couple’s overflow art collection. *

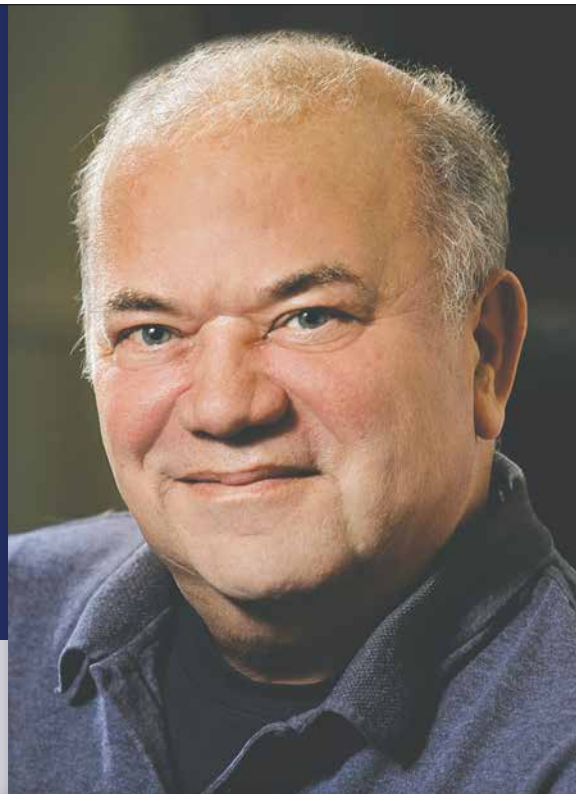
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