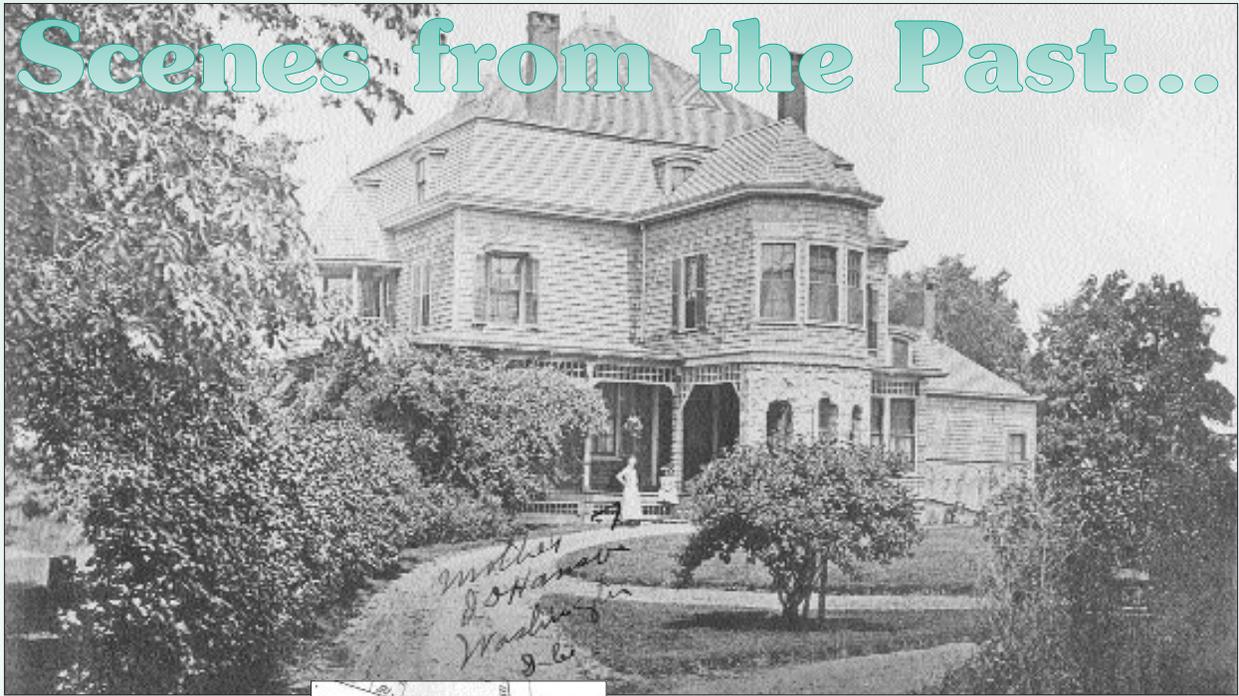
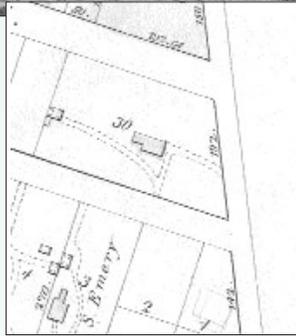


Scenes from the Past...



Above, view of Hill House from about 1890, located on the west side of 14th Street "Extended" (as it was then known), between today's Monroe and Newton Streets. In this view, below, from the front porch looking southeast, one can discern a horse and carriage coming up the driveway, having arrived from the forested, rolling hills that characterized the Columbia Heights area in the 1890s.

When people consider the history of their row house in Washington, they often have the view that not much is to be uncovered before the house was actually built. On the contrary, many of today's long rows of dwellings seen throughout the city were built on portions of estates large and small, as were the homes located on the eastern portion of the 1400 blocks of Newton and Monroe Streets in Columbia Heights. They were built on the site of a large stone and wood frame residence, known as the Hill House, illustrated here.

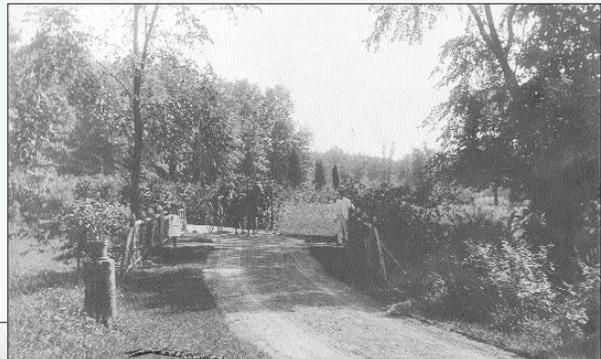


This detail from the 1887 Hopkins map shows the location of the Hill house at the center of what is today's Square 2677, bounded by today's 14th Street on the far right, Newton Street at the top, and Monroe Street the next one to the south.

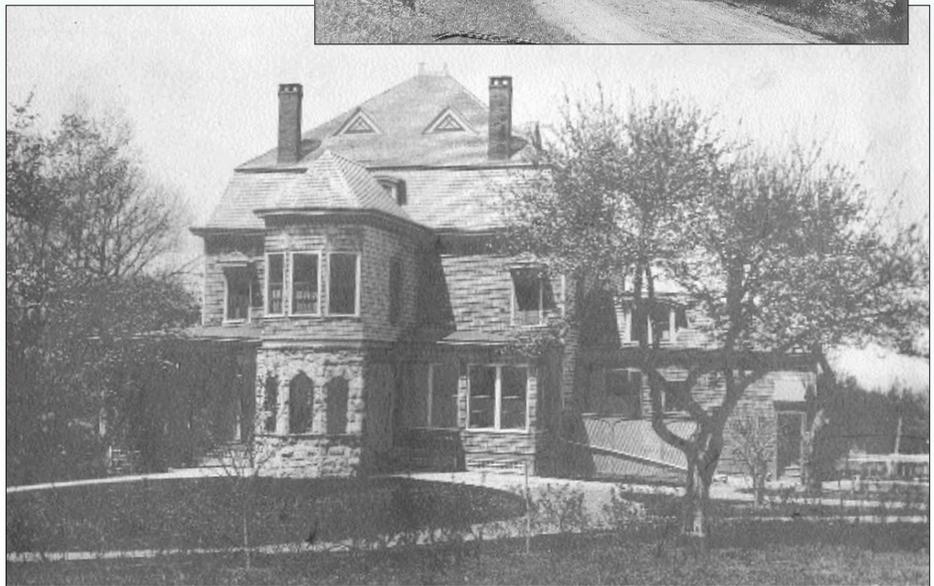
The discovery of this house came about in the opposite way that most house history is researched—directly from hints contained on the back of old photographs. Purchased together from an on-line auction, they all obviously depicted the same house, and all dated from about 1890, having been mounted on heavy embossed cardboard. Luckily, on the reverse of each were clues to the location and owners of the house.

One image had the phrase "Martha Cooper Hill House, Washington, DC"; another stated, "Sister of my mother, J.S. Hanson"; while a third bore the notation, "Picture of Grandma Wilkins and George Hill in Washington, DC, when he was still alive." Armed with these vague clues, the 1896 *City Directory* was consulted and which revealed that only two men by the name George Hill lived in the city at that time: one at 3222 Wisconsin Avenue, and the other at "14th near Howard Avenue, Mount Pleasant."

Maps of the era revealed that the house pictured was not the one located at 3222 Wisconsin Avenue, so the Howard Street connection of George Hill was further studied. As seen in this 1887 Hopkins map, a house with the general basic shape at 14th and Howard Streets fit the description, as did its driveway layout. Other houses near that intersection had family names demarcated on the map, which allowed the elimination of those structures.



photos & map-courtesy, Kelsey & Associates collection.



View of Hill House as it was seen when approaching down 14th Street from the north.

RESERVATIONS RECOMMENDED

By Alexandra Greeley*

matchbox Matchless Pizza

Twirled in the air by pros, the authentic pizza pie may rank as one of man's best food friends. That there are loads of pizzerias making cheesy claims about their pies' superiority only adds a certain cachet to this economical meal-in-one. With stiff competition in every neighborhood, it would seem there is not much room for yet another pizza place.

Well, there is. It may not win the award for the smallest restaurant in town, but matchbox (no typo here; management wants it this way!)—just around the corner from the MCI Center—could brave the pizza wars and come away decked out with blue ribbons.

Pizzas—thin-crust, New York-style pizzas—are what make this place tick, and smoke from its wood-burning brick oven mingles freely with that from the BBQ place almost next door. Chinatown now has the aroma of a Wyoming campfire.

matchbox is just one of the latest of interesting eateries to open up near DC's sports arena, and it offers a valid alternative to uptown, cross-town or downtown pizza places. Pies include such classics as the Portobello mushroom, spicy meatball, veggie, and the sausage-and-onion pizzas.

A small one of the sausage pies at \$11 makes a great dinner for one or appetizer for two, but offers nothing outlandish or outrageous—just a good crust dripping a fair amount of melted mozzarella paired with pieces of sweet Italian sausage. A quirkier choice would be their matchbox meat pie, which assembles pepperoni, sausage and prosciutto with a drizzle of tomato sauce baked on a crust. On the other hand, the fire & smoke pizza may take the prize: fire-roasted red peppers with chipotle chilies and smoked gouda atop a thin crust.

Pizzas are not the only game—though with a wood-burning oven at work, these seem an obvious choice. But there's more: Their Bistro Burger fits neatly onto a brioche roll dripping with melted gorgonzola and it is heavenly accompanied by a sizzling side of skin-on fries and a fat pickle spear. This adds up to 10 ounces of ground Angus beef, so you know the meat will be outstanding.

Other sandwiches offered include grilled chicken breast, warm vegetarian with the requisite mushrooms and roasted red pep-

pers, and Italian cold cuts—all of the above on toasted ciabatta.

Want something sturdier? A very short section of the menu lists such entrées as chicken farfalle, grilled salmon, grilled sirloin, and a spicy pecan-crust chicken breast with mashed potatoes from their upstairs kitchen. With one of these main meals, you may want to dress up dinner and kick off your meal with their mozza carrozzi, an ultra-caloric fried-mozzarella cheese-and-bread treat with tomato sauce.

I can heartily recommend the chopped salad, a retro dish that makes the garden-variety house salad seem uninspired, for here this chopped creation tosses together thin slices of pasta with diced tomatoes and crispy bacon.

Odds are good that the fried calamari will be crisp, and the unusual 3-6-9 Mini Burgers, priced according to the number of burgers you order, puts an unusual spin on having it all: You can start with small burgers, and order up the larger size for dinner.

Really disappointing is the absence of tempting sweets. A choice of ice creams or a chocolate chip bread pudding may appeal to some, but this high-class casual menu begs for a confection worthy of the meal. Toss in a warmed apple cobbler, lemon meringue pie or chocolate fudge cake, and a matchbox meal would win kudos from the dining public and sports fans alike. But until that day comes along, I'll be content with a hot pizza and a chilled coke, and—from my seat at the gleaming wood bar downstairs—wonder about the stairway that climbs upward and away.

Tip: seating is best where all the action is—that is, where the pie baking and drink making go on and on right downstairs. And then . . . let the games begin!

matchbox, 713 H St. NW; tel., 289-4441 (www.matchboxdc.com). Pizza entrée prices, \$11-\$17; other entrées, \$14-\$21. Hours: 11:30am-10 or 11pm (sometimes to 1:30am). Major credit cards accepted.

*Alexandra Greeley is a food writer, editor and restaurant reviewer. She has authored books published by Simon & Schuster, Doubleday, and Macmillan. Other credits include food editor of Vegetarian Times, restaurant reviews and food articles for The Washington Post and The Washington Times, as well as former food editor/writer for the South China Morning Post in Hong Kong.

SCENES

From p. 12

Later maps revealed that Howard Street was renamed Newton Street, and the street to the south of the house as Monroe Street; "14th Street extended" was later widened. The photographs of the house, thought to date from the 1890s, show several additions, such as the two story covered port cochere, and a small kitchen addition to the north.

George Hill at the time employed as a clerk at the Treasury Department, which would have allowed him to build such an elegant residence not far from the trolley lines that would have transported him to work.

The land upon which his house was built was known as the rather small "Mount Pleasant" subdivision (not the general neighborhood known today), which was first platted in October 1866 by Samuel Peters Brown. It had been carved

out of the much larger Pleasant Plains and Lamar's Outlet subdivisions.

Maps from 1925 also reveal that Hill House and its extensive grounds had been replaced with eight houses along 14th Street, three houses on Newton Street, and six homes along Monroe Street, all in Square 2677. They had been built as speculation houses, and were connected to houses built simultaneously along the 1400 blocks of Newton and Monroe on the Hill property and adjoining former estates.

Later, the houses facing 14th Street on this square were demolished, and a vacant lot remains in their place to this day. The homes along Newton and Monroe, however, remain. Residents gardening there today might be likely to unearth a cut stone, old brick, or even personal items long lost by the occupants of Hill House.

—Paul Kelsey Williams
Historic Preservation Specialist
Kelsey & Associates, Washington, DC

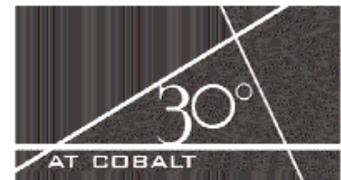
TWO 4 ONE MARTINI DESTINATION

MONDAY - FRIDAY
5PM - 8PM

HAPPY HOUR



AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT WAY TO CHILL



17TH & R, NW
THIRTYDEGREES.COM