
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Landmark/District:	Capitol Hill Historic District	<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	524 8th Street, SE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	March 24, 2011	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	11-197	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Amanda Molson	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Owner 524 Capitol Hill, LLC, with drawings prepared by Francisco A. Beltran, AIA, requests concept approval for the addition of a rooftop mezzanine and storefront modifications to 524 8th Street, SE the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Property Description

Constructed in three phases, 524 8th Street, SE includes an early frame building with a side gabled roof. As occurred occasionally in the early twentieth century, the setback between the frame building and the sidewalk was infilled with a shallow, two-story brick building. In more recent years, a deeper, two-story rear addition was added, and this renovation also included parging of the original frame building's side wall and extending the new addition across the width of the lot to close an open side court. The building's storefront was also reconstructed, with photos from 2004 showing two doors flanking a storefront bay rather than one off-set entrance as exists now.

Proposal

The applicants propose to house two separate restaurants in the building, with one occupying the ground level and another utilizing the second story and a new rooftop addition. The storefront modifications proposed are minimal, encompassing the conversion of the non-original bay windows into floor-length doors that can provide additional light and air into the deep first floor space.

The upstairs restaurant would be entered via a door at the end of the side court. A large, vertical awning over this entry door would not be a primary focus of the façade but would still allow for increased visibility of the business and the opportunity to screen an unattractive air vent and downspout above. An open deck on the second story's rear elevation would be infilled with an addition measuring 14' deep, which would be inconspicuous in views from 8th Street.

A rooftop mezzanine story is proposed as a third floor, providing additional interior seating for the upstairs restaurant. The mezzanine level would be constructed only on the most recent addition to the building, set back approximately 17' from the termination of the early frame portion. A railing would enclose the setback, encompassing space for an outdoor garden. A

small overhang at the front of the mezzanine would provide shade on the interior of the mezzanine and some protection from the elements immediately below in the garden area. At the rear of the building, the rooftop addition would be set back several feet from the rear property line, reducing the impact of the massing along the alley elevation.

Evaluation

With a parking lot situated immediately to the right (south) of the subject property, achieving invisibility of the addition from public view along 8th Street is not possible. However, the visual impact is mitigated by locating the mezzanine on the newest portion of the structure, by taking advantage of an existing parapet around the rear addition's roof to reduce the perceived height, and by utilizing a setback on the front elevation. Additionally, large expanses of glass along the mezzanine walls lighten the severity of the addition. The combination of these efforts enables the addition to be less obtrusive from public view and to read as a later, more minor feature of the building.

Following conversations with the community, the applicants are considering the use of fritted or frosted glass along the south elevation of the rooftop addition (extending along the parking lot) to provide privacy for neighboring residences along G Street. This potential, minor change in the plans presents no preservation issues.

The current plans do not include signage proposals for either restaurant. The applicants should work with staff to ensure that signage is compatible with the character of the neighborhood and scaled appropriately for the building. Additionally, any door or window replacement specifications should be included in the final construction drawings.

Finally, the plans do not show a means of reaching the second or third stories other than by using the stairs. Any accessibility measures added to the plans during the permit process or after construction may require further Board review if the revisions have a pronounced impact on the building's exterior.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board approve the concept as consistent with the purposes of the preservation act and delegate final approval to staff.