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

Landmark/District:	Capitol Hill Historic District	<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	818 C Street, NE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	June 30, 2011	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	11-288	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Amanda Molson	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Owners Brian Rohal and Jamie Strnisha, with plans prepared by Michael Fowler, request Board approval for the removal of an existing, one-story rear addition and its replacement with a new, two-story rear addition at 818 C Street, NE in the Capitol Hill Historic District. The project would also involve restoration work on the previously-altered main block.

Property Description

The construction of the semi-detached, three-story (two stories plus a raised basement level) main block of 818 C Street, NE pre-dates building permits but was likely a product of the 1860s or 1870s as evidenced by its early frame construction. At some point in the late 1800s or very early 1900s, a one-story rear addition was added.

The rear extension has experienced some structural issues in recent years, and the rear elevation of the house suffers aesthetically from an oddly-placed picture window on the second floor and visible duct work and mechanical units. Both the main block and the addition have been parged in stucco that replaced frame siding, and it is likely that a window on the second story of the front elevation was closed at some point. Even with the existing rear addition, the property is atypically small for a rowhouse, with the kitchen in the basement, the only bathroom on the first floor, and one bedroom upstairs.

Proposal

The applicants propose to remove the existing, one-story addition and the covered patio, replacing them with a two-story addition. The new addition would be inset from the side property line by 8', highlighting the massing of the main block by creating a clear differentiation between old and new and by somewhat obscuring the new rear addition in views from the street. The addition would extend approximately 23' in depth, as compared to the depth of the three-story main block at approximately 16'. The rear addition would be clad in hardplank siding, with simple fenestration to match the front elevation.

Restoration work on the remaining main block would entail replacing the existing parging with wood siding, repairing the existing cornice, replacing the modern metal landing and steps leading

to the front door with wood, and reopening the window on the second floor to restore symmetry to the facade.

Evaluation

The Board generally requires that new additions not exceed the overall massing of a historic property in order to ensure that the addition is subordinate and deferential to the main block. At three stories rather than two and extending wider on the lot, the main block will continue to exceed the square footage of the new addition. Additionally, the owners have set back the new addition to lessen its perceived size in street views. Even with the new addition, the house remains proportionally small in comparison to others along the row, with the abutting house at 816 C extending much deeper into its lot.

Exterior restoration of the historic house will contribute significantly to the streetscape, and the owners should be commended for including this work in their plans. The applicants should consult with the HPO before work on the main block begins. If the existing stucco is to be removed in preparation for the new wood siding, there will be an opportunity to look for clues about the façade's original features. It is possible that the original wood siding remains under the stucco parging, potentially providing clues on the original siding lap and dimensions and on window and door trim.

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.