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

Landmark/District:	Capitol Hill Historic District	<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	517 7th Street, SE	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	February 23, 2016	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	17-181	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Gabriela Gutowski	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Owners Jonathan and Kate Grabill, with plans prepared by architect Paul O’Sullivan, seek concept review for a three-story rear addition in the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Property Description

The subject property was built c.1857 and is a three-bay wide, two-story tall, semi-detached wood framed house with horizontal wood siding and six-over-six double-hung wood windows. The ground floor at the primary façade features a raised porch supported by decoratively carved piers. A side-gable standing seam roof extends over the two northern-most bays and transitions to a flat roof over the entrance bay. This roof condition, along with the location of the stair within the floor plan, implies that the building was originally built as a two-bay wide free-standing house, and a third bay was added later. The irregular dimensions separating the second floor windows further support this theory.

The rear façade currently has a series of additions that make up three volumes. There is a two-bay wide one-story addition, a one-bay two-story addition, and a one-story shed roof addition. The one and two-story additions have one-over-one double-hung window with wood sills and enframements. All the additions are clad in horizontal siding. The rear façade cannot be seen from any streets.

Records show that in 1913 a permit was issued for a wagon shed with a flat tin roof at the property. It is possible that the two-car garage currently at the rear of the property is the shed that was permitted, as its construction dates range from 1904-1927. Due to the height of the garage, when standing directly behind the property and looking towards the garage, one cannot see the rear of the house. The rear façade of the building is visible from the alley looking through the rear yard at the adjacent property, 515 7th St, SE. However, a two-story carriage house was recently approved by HPRB, and once constructed would eliminate the view (HPA-17-071 December 2016).

Proposal

The plans call for increasing the roof height through the introduction of a gable at the portion of the roof that is currently flat (located over the entrance bay). The gable ridge-line would be

slightly lower than the ridge at the existing gable roof. The proposal also calls for the removal of all of the rear extensions and the construction of a new single-volume three-story rear addition. The addition would be clad in horizontal Hardi-plank siding on all three sides and feature paired single-light casement windows and doors. The north elevation would feature four horizontally orientated awning windows. The second floor would have a projecting metal balcony. Mechanical units and exterior ductwork would be installed at the roof of the third floor. The proposed rear addition would not be visible from the street with the exception of one view point. When standing on 4th Street the secondary north elevation is visible through a metal gate and walkway between 517 and 515.

Evaluation

The house clearly has been added on to in various forms through the years. The new gable roof across the entrance bay at a lower height allows the original roofline to read as distinctly separate and the “history” of changes at the building to remain transparent.

Removing the existing rear extensions will not eliminate significant historic fabric. The proposed rear addition will extend less into the rear yard than the current extensions. However, the third floor of the addition as proposed completely consumes the pitch of the historic roofline. It may be feasible to create addition height at the top-most floor, however, any alterations should allow the historic pitch of the roof to read clearly. The applicant may want to consider the introduction of a shed roof dormer pulled down from the ridge-line and in from both sides of the roof. The use of horizontal Hardi-plank siding relates well to the wood siding at the historic house and is in keeping with other extensions and rear elevations within the row. The use of single-light casement windows and horizontally orientated awning windows are not typical to rear and secondary elevations within the historic district. Given the age of the building and the visibility of the north elevation from the street, vertically-oriented double-hung windows would be more appropriate to the building and historic district.

Although not visible from the street, the proposed rooftop mechanicals and ductwork are unsightly and detract from the architectural character of the building and its neighbors. The mechanical units should be placed in a less conspicuous location on the ground or on the roof, and the ductwork located on the interior.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept to be generally compatible with the character of the historic district and delegate final approval to staff with the following conditions:

- *The third floor should be eliminated or reduced in size and redesigned as a shed dormer;*
- *The addition's fenestration should be revised to feature vertically-oriented double-hung windows;*
- *The mechanical equipment and ductwork should be moved to a less conspicuous location.*