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

Landmark/District:	Capitol Hill Historic District	<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	14 8th Street, SE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	July 28, 2011	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	11-405	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Amanda Molson	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Owner Ditto Residential, with drawings prepared by Kim Jones, requests concept approval for façade restoration and a rear addition at 14 8th Street, SE in the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Property Description

Permit research shows that the rear, two-story, frame portion of 14 8th Street, SE was constructed as a dwelling in the mid to late 1860s. Set back from the building restriction line, the original frame house received a shallow, two-story brick front addition in 1880. This work entailed removing the front wall of the original frame dwelling.

During the 1920s, the property's ground-floor use changed from residential to commercial, which necessitated changing the far left window on the first floor into a door to provide direct access to each floor. In 1930, the wood siding on the original frame portion was parged in stucco, and a permit from 1940 to replace glass in the front show window makes clear that the bay projection had been added by that time. Also in 1940, the brick façade was covered with Permastone.

In addition to substantial alterations to the original frame dwelling over time, the condition of this portion of the building is very poor. The HPO visited the building in July of 2011 and confirmed that the frame portion of the building would require substantial reconstruction were its massing to be retained. Termite damage has compromised floor structures and wall framing, such that portions of the now-parged clapboard siding appear to be largely supporting some side walls due to the deterioration of major structural elements.

Given the already compromised integrity of the frame portion and the substantial reconstruction that would be necessary to return it safely to service, the HPO concluded that it could be removed and replaced with a new rear addition that takes some liberties with footprint and height over existing conditions.

Proposal

The applicants plan to restore the front elevation to its presumed appearance at the time of construction. This will entail returning the altered left door back to a window and removing the

projecting bay to reconfigure this opening for a single window. Perhaps most advantageous to the historic district is the planned removal of the Permastone from the facade. It is likely, given the repair of the brick and the infill needed to resize the door and storefront window opening, that repointing and paint will be needed for a seamless appearance.

A three-story rear addition, clad in hardiplank, would extend the depth of the building over present conditions, though not substantially beyond the footprint of the abutting properties. The addition would extend the width of the lot, infilling the existing dogleg. The property is landlocked, with no public visibility of the rear elevation.

Evaluation

Important in the planned restoration of the facade will be the treatment of window and door headers, which may be intact beneath the Permastone or which may have been planed flush with the façade to provide a smooth surface for application of the Permastone. Though shown as simple jack arches in the proposed elevation drawing, it is possible that the headers will provide to be arched “teardrop” in shape, perhaps with a slightly projecting profile. The profile of the original window and door headers and sills should be restored, and all efforts should be made to retain and repair all existing masonry rather than considering its replacement.

It is possible that wood, 2-over-2 windows will prove to be more appropriate than 1-over-1 windows given the early (1880) date of construction for the brick portion and the verticality of the window openings. A 4-panel wood door, with the option of glass in the upper two panels, would be most appropriate for the entry. The existing cornice, which appears rather insignificant, may benefit from the application of a fascia board and simple corner brackets to provide some visual weight. An exploratory demo permit has already been issued to remove a portion of the Permastone in order to assess the condition of the brick underneath, and the applicants will continue to work closely with the HPO to develop a scope of work for the façade restoration prior to permitting.

A mockup has been prepared onsite to ensure that the third floor of the addition, which is set back from the façade by a generous 50’, will not be visible from 8th Street. However, a mockup of the roofdeck railing, which is lower in height than the addition but also closer to the façade, should be prepared prior to final approval of the permit drawings to ensure that it too will be invisible from 8th Street. Although the roof deck railing will hopefully prove to be not visible from 8th Street, it will certainly be visible from the upper floors of houses along the block. For this reason, the railing would benefit from staining or painting to ensure it achieves a finished look.

The rear elevation of the addition, which is shown as an asymmetrical composition of various window sizes and an off-set balcony on the second floor, should be restudied for a more streamlined appearance. This may involve enlarging window openings slightly, centering the second-story balcony and limiting its width to two doors rather than four, and reconfiguring the third-floor bathroom so that such short windows are not needed due to their present location in the bathtub. Side (north and south) elevation drawings are not provided, but it will be important that the hardiplank application is continued on all elevations to ensure that an unfinished surface does not face neighboring properties.

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 with the following conditions:

- A scope of work for façade restoration is developed in consultation with the HPO
- A mockup of the roof deck railing is prepared prior to final permitting and this element approved only if it proves to be not visible from 8th Street
- The fenestration of the rear elevation of the addition is restudied in accordance with suggestions noted above
- Existing concrete paving in the front yard, which is public space, is removed, with new paving limited to a brick lead walk extending from the sidewalk to the front door.