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

Landmark/District:	Capitol Hill Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	1010 & 1012 Pennsylvania Ave, SE	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	July 23, 2015	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	15-425	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Sarah VanLandingham	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Applicant City Center Real Estate with plans prepared by R. McGhee & Associates seeks concept review for a rear addition to two row buildings in the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Property Description

Built sometime in the mid-19th century, 1010 and 1012 Pennsylvania Ave SE are row buildings with three-story main blocks, two-story rear ells, and one-story rear extensions. They are located one building in from the corner lot containing a five-story apartment building that was reviewed and approved by Board. The rears of the buildings are visible through an alley from 11th Street.

Proposal

The plans call for subdividing to combine the lots, removing the one-story rear additions on both buildings, demolishing the rear ell of 1012, and some interior structural demolition. These changes are to allow for a new four-story addition behind the main block of the building. A new shared stair between the buildings at the front requires demolition of sections of the party wall. The rear additions would be mirrored ells with a central court containing shared exterior stairs and covered with a trellis. The rear of the site shows three parking spaces.

While the façade of 1010 retains its historic integrity and will remain as it is currently, there are various schemes for the façade of 1012, which was previously lowered from its original condition to an at-grade entrance. Most recently, the applicants have indicated a preference for a “hybrid” scheme (page 20) in which the commercial tenant would still enter a street-level door but the door to the rest of the building would be returned to its original height.

Evaluation

This part of Pennsylvania Avenue has long sightlines due to the intersections with E Street and 11th Street and thus it is difficult to construct an addition taller than the main building without it being prominently visible. However, the site benefits from the taller building to the east, which would block sight lines of the taller addition from that direction. An initial lumber mock-up indicated that an addition setback 20’ from the front would not be visible from public space; the adequacy of this dimension should be ensured as the plans are more fully developed.

The definition of demolition in the DC Historic Preservation Regulations includes “[t]he removal or destruction of all or a substantial portion of the structural components of the building, such as structural walls, floor assemblies, and roofs” (10C DCMR § 305.1). The applicant has identified the extent of demolition somewhat but has not included existing floor plans showing where the stairs and interior walls are currently located. Moving the stair to a central location will result in changes to the joists and a framing plan is necessary to understand how this will be accomplished without being effectively a demolition when coupled with the other elements that are being removed.

While the addition is large, it is not out of scale with other buildings in the area. By designing the addition to have a central court, the building follows a pattern typical of historic buildings and breaks up the mass in the rear. Although the plans call for retaining the rear and side walls of 1010, the rendering indicates that they will have new fenestration and cladding to match the new addition to 1012. The extent of work here should be clarified.

The additions will be quite visible from the rear on 11th Street and slightly visible through an alley on D Street. Specific information on the new windows, cladding, and other materials has not been provided and this information will be helpful in ensuring a compatible appearance.

While it may be possible to achieve a first floor façade that incorporates both an at-grade entrance and a raised entrance, this is a lot of program for a narrow rowhouse façade to compatibly absorb. As designed, the resulting hybrid façade scheme results in no clear hierarchy or relationship between the recreated rowhouse entrance and the retail storefront entrance. Maintaining/replacing the existing storefront or returning the building to its original configuration may result in more compatible solutions rather than trying to achieve both.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends the Board:

- 1) Find the general concept for the addition to be compatible with the historic district if it can be ensured that it will not be visible atop the buildings from Pennsylvania Avenue;*
- 2) Ask that the applicant clarify and specify the extent of demolition;*
- 3) Approve either retaining a ground-level storefront or restoration of the original residential façade of 1012; if a hybrid solution is sought, a revised design should be developed that compatibly blends the two approaches.*