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

Landmark/District:	Capitol Hill Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	1013 & 1015 E Street SE	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
Meeting Date:	February 26, 2015	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Case Number:	14-720 & 14-721	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	Sarah VanLandingham	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
		<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Applicant Congressional Capital, LLC, with plans prepared by Workshop t10, seeks concept review for rear additions, new basements, and new front basement entrances to 1013 and 1015 E Street SE in the Capitol Hill Historic District.

In December 2014 the Board denied the proposed concept for a multi-unit residential project that included small rear additions to 1013 and 1015 E Street SE, a subdivision to combine the properties, and construction of a rear accessory building finding it incompatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Since then, the applicant has reworked the plans to remove the accessory building eliminating the need for the subdivision. The new plans utilize a more conventional approach to expanding historic buildings.

Property Description

Neighboring properties 1013 and 1015 E St SE were built as single family houses. The larger of the two, 1013 is a two-story Italianate style frame rowhouse with a stucco front; while no permit exists to document its date of construction, a historic marker identifies it as built in 1859 for Rebecca Garrett. The house includes two additions: a two-story rear ell and a one-story room on the east side of the building. A public alley borders the rear of the property. Separated by a narrow gap, 1015 is a brick two-story porch-front with a rear ell addition constructed in 1880. Neither house currently has a basement. There are no contributing alley buildings on either lot, but there is an assortment of small site features including a pergola and masonry wall at the alley. The neighboring buildings are a mix of commercial buildings occupying up to 100% of their lots and rowhouses with rear yards.

Proposal

The plans call for removing the existing rear additions of both houses and building two-story plus basement rear additions that would extend 40' beyond the main blocks of the houses. The addition to 1013 will be clad in fiber cement siding and the addition to 1015 will be brick. Each of these additions will be larger than the historic main blocks of the houses.

Areaways behind the houses would be excavated to allow full-sized doors at the basement level. Both historic houses would be underpinned and have new basements excavated with new front basement entrances. The existing stucco façade on 1013 is failing and the plans call for replacing it with wood siding to match either any remaining original siding under the stucco or the exposed side of the building.

A garbage enclosure and three parking spaces would be located on the alley with roll-up doors at the property line. The new electric meters would be hidden in the new basement entrance areas out of view from E Street.

Evaluation

The applicant has revised the plan multiple times to reach the current configuration and many aspects of the proposal have been improved through this process, including reducing the amount of interior demolition and providing more information on the existing conditions of the properties.

The existing rear additions on the houses are not architecturally or historically significant and their removal does not raise preservation concerns. In 2013, the Board approved a proposal by a different applicant to remove the existing rear additions on 1013 and replace them with a new rear addition (HPA#13-259).

The Board has generally cited the principle that additions to historic buildings should not exceed the size of the original structure, establishing a deferential or subordinate relationship between new and old. However, the Board has exercised flexibility where an established pattern of expansion already exists among neighboring properties, particularly in cases involving a deep lot, where a substantial addition can be more comfortably situated. In the context of the subject property, a large rear addition would not be out of context or incompatible with its surroundings since many of the properties are commercial and occupy 100% of their lot. In this case the expanded properties would each occupy 60% of their lots requiring no zoning relief for lot coverage. The new additions will not be visible from public space and no roof decks are proposed.

By taking care of garbage collection at the alley, the amount of unsightly yard clutter will be reduced. Although roll-up doors are not in themselves historic, they help to maintain the edge of the alley to ensure it is not eroded further by the inclusion of parking spaces. Additionally, the proposal to shield the electric meters from view is consistent with the Board's Utility Meter Guidelines and will help to allow the houses continue to read as single-family homes even as they are converted to apartments.

The proposal to reorient the entrance of 1013 toward the street is well-conceived and compatible with the historic district. The proposal to add a basement entrance to 1015 is more difficult but the applicant has improved the plans and as drawn they are consistent with the Board's Basement Entrance guidelines. As the project proceeds, the details of this aspect of the proposal should be carefully considered with HPO staff. The plan to restore the façade of the house to siding will return it to a more historic appearance

Recommendation

The HPO recommends the Board find the concept to be compatible with the Capitol Hill historic district and delegate final approval to staff.