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

Landmark/District:	Capitol Hill Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	1015 D Street, NE	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	November 16, 2018	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	18-041	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
		<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition

Little Red Chapel, LLC, with plans prepared by GPS Designs, seeks concept review to construct a rear addition and add roof dormers as part of a project to convert a former church to residential use in the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Property Description

1015 D Street NE is a free-standing church building built in 1900 and designed by Louis F. Stutz. It originally housed the congregation of St. Michael's Chapel, and is located mid-block between 10th Street and 11th Streets. The building is one-story tall with a steeply pitched front gable roof. The painted brick facades feature decorative string-courses and arched window lintels. A few stained-glass windows have been removed, but most remain. The alley entrance directly abuts the building to the east. At the rear of the property there is a non-historic addition.

Proposal

The plans call for conversion of the church to a two-unit dwelling. A second floor and loft would be inserted, and two non-historic rear additions would be removed and a new two-story addition constructed. The addition would have a cross gable perpendicular to the building and be slightly lower in height. The addition would be clad in a combination of brick and dark stained wood siding and feature irregular spaced single-pane windows of various sizes and shapes. Four new gabled dormers are proposed at each side of the existing gable roof. Two windows at the east elevation would be removed and replaced with single-leaf doors. Additionally, the plans show removal of the stained-glass windows and installation of transparent glazed windows. The alterations at the roof, east elevation, and the rear addition would all be visible from D Street.

Evaluation

The preservation law encourages adaption of historic buildings for current uses. Adapting sacred spaces to residential uses can present unique challenges, but has been successfully undertaken in a variety of projects approved by the Board, including at 819 D Street, NE (Way of the Cross Church) and 514 4th Street, SE (Mount Joy Baptist Church), both on Capitol Hill. These two examples differ somewhat from 1015 D in that those buildings were monumental in scale and most of the program could be housed within the existing volume of the buildings.

By contrast, 1015 is essentially the same scale as the rowhouses it abuts, and the proposal calls for a rear addition for additional living space and an interior stair, and adding dormers in the existing roof to allow for insertion of an additional floor. As the project continues to be developed, the following is recommended to improve the compatibility of these alterations:

- 1) While the pitched roof form on the rear addition is intended to create a complementary relationship with the roof of the church, their roughly equal size and height instead results in a competition and lack of hierarchy between the two. The addition would be more compatible and subordinate if it had a lower or a flat roof, with access to the third floor loft achieved by an interior stair within the existing volume of the church.
- 2) Although the rear elevation of the addition will not be seen from street view, the proposed fenestration is neither residential nor intuitional in scale, and a design that incorporates traditional materials with a more regular pattern and type of materials and fenestration would be a more compatible approach.
- 3) The introduction of dormers in the existing roof is a potentially compatible solution for providing light into the new second floor. However, the resulting design of four dormers on each side crowds the roof and places the dormers too close to the front and rear of the building. Reducing the number of dormers to three on each side, in which they were spaced between rather than aligned with the windows below, would improve their spacing and make them more secondary to the roof. Shed dormers in lieu of gable dormers may also be worthy of consideration to reduce their height.
- 4) The plans are not entirely clear as to whether the existing stained glass windows would be retained, modified, or replaced. While there have been some windows that have been lost, the majority of remaining windows would meet the historic preservation regulations' definition of "special windows" and are a character defining feature of the building. As such, they should be retained and repaired.
- 5) Rather than introducing two new doors into the side elevation of the church, the plans should be revised to provide one entry through the existing front doors. The second entrance, located toward the rear of the side elevation, could possibly incorporate the stained glass of the window into the new door.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept to be consistent with the purposes of the preservation act with the following conditions:

- *The pitched roof at the rear addition should be lowered or revised to be a flat roof;*
- *The materials and fenestration pattern at the rear elevation should be simplified;*
- *A conditions assessment should be completed for the existing stained-glass windows, and the plans revised to show substantial retention and, if necessary, adaptation of the existing stained-glass windows.*
- *The project should return to the Board for further review when ready.*

Staff Contact: Gabriela Gutowski