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

Landmark/District:	Capitol Hill Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	1108 Constitution Avenue, N.E.	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
ANC:	6A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Meeting Date:	March 24, 2022	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Case Number:	22-173	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Applicants Thomas McCann and Adrienne Wojciechowski McCann, with plans prepared by Eric Teran, seek concept review for a rear two-story addition at a property located in the Capitol Hill Historic District.



1108 Constitution Avenue NE

Property Description

1108 Constitution Avenue NE is a two-story brick bay-front rowhouse built for Richard Curtain in 1878 as one of four. At the rear is an open parking pad and fenced yard.

Proposal

A full-width two-story addition would replace the existing one-story rear ell. The addition would extend back about fourteen-and-a-half feet to align with the rear additions on the two adjacent properties. Clad in brick, the addition's rear elevation would be largely glazed with sliding doors on the first floor and three windows on the second.



Views along the alley on either side of 1108 Constitution Ave NE

Evaluation

The Board has, over time, approved or disapproved many proposed projects because of the impact on the rear ell (dogleg). The scale for what constitutes a dogleg to be preserved has

changed and been considered in different ways. In some instances, the interior of a block is remarkably intact, the rear doglegs unaltered and visible, and the buildings developed as part of a large single development. The regularity of that form seems like a clear choice for preservation because of the way in which they might characterize a moment or mode of development.

However, Capitol Hill is a historic district with a long period of significance (1791-1945) and encompasses many styles and groupings of buildings. Some are freestanding, some are attached rows of pairs or individuals or shorter matching rows. The variety itself is part of what characterizes the district.

The low height of the district and lack of highly visible rooftop additions (pop-ups) is another characteristic of this district. When looking at how to best manage the changes over time to Capitol Hill from a regulatory standpoint, we have to balance the demands for change and growth against potential impacts on the character of the historic district. Rear additions not visible from the street are generally the most sensitive way to add to a building while maintaining the public's experience of the district from the public rights-of-way (with a hierarchy preferencing streets over alleys). The Board has often approved very large rear additions that sometimes double or dwarf small historic buildings, as long as they are not visible from any street.

This acceptance of flexibility at the rear has not always been consistent when there is an existing dogleg at the building, unless perhaps there is no alley. The Board has at times held buildings with rear doglegs to a higher standard for care, even when not part of a larger row. Most recently the Board has come to consider if doglegs are "intact" along the block frontage, regardless of whether the buildings were designed and built together. This limits the opportunities to add on to these properties.

To restrict change for the benefit of partial alley views is something the Board might reconsider, further defining which contexts most merit the retention of doglegs. In this instance, the interior of the block, including along the same block front, is a jumble of massing and forms, even though from a site plan it looks to have mostly intact rear ells and doglegs. Creating a full-width addition at the rear of this specific property does not seem to HPO Staff to impact or detract from the character of the Capitol Hill historic district and is in fact a compatible addition.

Recommendation

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

Staff contact: Moira Nadal