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

Landmark/District:	Capitol Hill Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	135 13th St NE	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
ANC:	6A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
		<input type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Meeting Date:	April 22, 2021	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Case Number:	21-212	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Previous Concept

This concept for construction of a two-story accessory structure was previously reviewed by the Board on March 25, 2021. During that meeting, the Board noted that the existing one-story garage was unusual in having a cornice made of cast masonry units with a dentil motif. Though garages built of these masonry units can be found throughout the District and the Capitol Hill Historic District, it appears that more attention was given to the architectural composition of this structure. The Board requested that the applicants return with more information on the history of the existing garage.

Ultimately, the Board found the size and overall massing of the project compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District. In addition to the information requested on the history of the garage, the Board also requested to see the installation details of the proposed Corten steel panels and a design concept that would retain the existing north and south garage walls.

Revisions to Proposal

The existing garage was built in 1914 by the Palmer Concrete Machine Company. Newspaper research shows the company built several dozen garages in DC between 1910-1919 in D.C. This was one of many companies in the era that produced rusticated concrete block. The main house at 135 13th St NE was built in 1900.

The applicant did a survey to assess if the existing masonry walls could be incorporated into the new dwelling. However, the survey documented that many of the masonry units have condition issues- cracking and spalling- that preclude their reuse. As such, the applicant has proposed to modify the previous design to deconstruct the garage, salvage the intact masonry units, and reconstruct them as an inset panel at the eastern end of the north elevation on the first story.

The Corten panel installation detail shows that it will be hung as cladding panels on furring strips.

Evaluation

The inset panel presents the salvageable units as something of an artifact of the historic garage. While this recessed wall feature might not immediately be understood as being related to a historic garage that stood on that location, the proposal retains and displays what is of most interest about the garage- the composition of a field of cast masonry units with a dentil cornice. Considering the reduced number of units that can be reused because of condition issues, this approach proposes an alternative response to the Board's direction to explore retention of the north and south walls. It

would be helpful to know if the Board finds the reuse of the material as a panel to be a worthwhile or meaningful way to compatibly incorporate the existing historic garage's characteristics of interest.

The Board's questions related to rust washing off the Corten panels have not been addressed. It is not clear if the rust will run into the alley, onto the adjacent garage, or onto the re-used masonry units.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends the Board find either the revised or previous proposal to be compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District, and delegate final approval to staff.

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