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

Landmark/District:	Capitol Hill Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	1355 A Street NE	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
ANC:	6A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
		<input type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Meeting Date:	December 5, 2019	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Case Number:	19-608	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Applicant Phil Guire, with plans prepared by architect Scott Patterson, seeks concept review for construction of a two-story rear addition, a new basement entrance, and a two-story garage on a property located in the Capitol Hill Historic District.



Front elevation of 1355 A St NE

Property Description

The two-story plus raised basement brick rowhouse was built for H. R. Howenstein in 1916 as one in a row of ten. The building is 17 feet wide and was originally 33 feet deep. The row is intact and all retain their rear doglegs. The one-story corrugated metal garage is an example of early low-cost fireproof construction. It has a single opening with swinging doors and no architectural ornament. The garage is located on an alley made up of a mix of early residential garages in a variety of designs, one larger brick carriage house, and an early public garage. Most other garages range in height between ten and twelve feet. The tallest building is the carriage house at the end of the alley, measuring just over eighteen feet in height.



Alley views of the existing garage



The existing two-story carriage house at the end of the alley

Proposal

The centered basement door would be moved to the eastern window opening and the opening reduced to become a window. The basement slab would be lowered and the basement stairs extended further to accommodate the new depth. The new basement stairs would have the same projection as the main entry stairs.

The rear addition would infill the rear dogleg and extend full-width back just over four feet beyond the rear elevation of the dogleg. This addition would not extend beyond the adjacent neighbors. The new rear elevation would be clad in cement board siding. On the first-story there would be two full-lite windows and a door of the same size grouped together. On the second-story there are three grouped picture windows centered above the lower windows and door. This two-story grouping of openings is separated by a thick panel of cement board siding. A new deck with stairs provides access to the rear yard.

The existing garage would be demolished and replaced with a two-story brick and cement board siding garage measuring 17 feet wide, 22 feet deep, and 20 feet tall. The south (alley) elevation would have brick returns on the outer edges and different sizes of cement board siding on the first and second stories. On the first floor there would be a large single opening for the garage

door and on the second floor there would be two picture windows separated by a cement board panel of the same size. The materials of the sidewalls on the west and east elevations has not been indicated on the drawings. The new garage would be approximately twice as tall as the adjacent garages on either side.

Evaluation

The changes to the basement entrance and openings would be minimally visible, if at all. This block is remarkably intact, and with few exceptions, made up of groups of matching rows that retain their rear doglegs. However, it is unlikely that the rear addition would be visible beyond the proposed garage. The Board's policy on infilling doglegs with intact rows has been somewhat flexible, depending on context and circumstances, and it would be helpful to have input on this aspect of the proposal.

The Capitol Hill Historic District is distinctive for its alleys and alley buildings. This alley illustrates the beginning of individual car ownership in the city, with an organic mix of early residential garages exhibiting a variety of materials and characteristics. While this garage likely falls within the period of significance for the district, these types of secondary buildings are not specifically listed as contributing. At the October 2019 HPRB meeting, the Board approved replacing two architecturally undistinguished one-story garages at the end of the alley with two two-story carriage houses.

The proposed carriage house falls within the Board's standard of 20 feet but its compatibility would benefit from additional design refinement. The amount of siding should be reduced on the alley elevation and a greater emphasis given to brick. Additionally, there should only be one size of siding board rather than two. The proportion of the second story overwhelms the first and that hierarchy should be reversed. There is no emphasis given to the scale of the garage door opening as there would normally be with a large lintel or cornice. The size of the second-story windows should be reduced in height. The side elevations should be clad in brick.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends the Board find the concept plans to be compatible with the Capitol Hill historic district, on the conditions that (1) the side elevations be clad in brick, and (2) that the design be refined as described above; and delegate final approval to staff.

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