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

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Landmark/District:	<b>Capitol Hill Historic District</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	<b>201 8<sup>th</sup> Street, NE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
Meeting Date:	<b>January 24, 2019</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Case Number:	<b>19-104</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction
		<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

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Owner 201 8<sup>TH</sup> Street, LLC, with plans prepared by El Studio Architects, seeks concept review for façade alterations, lot subdivision, and construction of a new multiple-unit dwelling, at the property located within the Capitol Hill Historic District.

**Property Description**

201 8<sup>th</sup> Street NE is a free-standing apartment building located at the corner of 8<sup>th</sup> Street and Constitution Avenue, NE. A surface parking lot occupies the northern portion of the lot facing 8<sup>th</sup> Street where there is an existing curb-cut and driveway. The abutting properties along 8<sup>th</sup> Street are comprised of two-story late 19<sup>th</sup> Century rowhouses. East of the property along Constitution Avenue stand five brick rowhouses constructed in 2001.

Constructed of red brick with limestone trim, the building stands four stories tall above a partially raised basement. The existing windows are one-over-over replacement windows. The primary entrance is located at the 8<sup>th</sup> Street elevation and features classical limestone pilasters and a denticulated entablature.

The building was designed by A.S. Rich and built by W. F. Hummer in 1939. During the early 1960's the building served as a nurse's residence for the Eastern Dispensary and Casualty Hospital. More recently the building was occupied by medical offices.<sup>1</sup> The building was constructed within the period of significance (1791-1945) and is contributing to the Capitol Hill Historic District.

**Proposal**

The application before the Board has three components: alterations to the existing building, subdivision of the northern portion of the lot into new lots, and construction of a new apartment building on the new north lot.

The alterations include removal of the basement windows at the 8<sup>th</sup> Street elevation and elongating the window openings to accommodate installation of double-hung windows, and

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<sup>1</sup> Building history courtesy of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society.

excavation of new light wells for those modified openings. New six-over-six, aluminum-clad wood windows would be installed on the primary 8<sup>th</sup> Street and Constitution Avenue elevations. The original building entrance on 8<sup>th</sup> Street would remain as an architectural feature but the main entrance to the building would be relocated to the rear, accessed through a new metal lattice fence and gate facing Constitution Avenue. At the secondary east elevation, the plans call for removal of double-hung windows and enlarging the masonry openings to accommodate sliding doors leading to new balconies. On the interior, the non-original non-load bearing partitions and interior staircases would be removed.

The new building, located on the new subdivided lot, would be located at the far north portion of the site, north of the existing curb-cut, and abutting a row of historic rowhouses. The building would rise 35' 0" in height and be three-stories above a raised basement. Clad in light-colored brick, the building's primary elevation would feature two rectangular projecting paws, metal framed single-pane windows, metal entrance stairs, and a centered entrance. The portion of the building directly above the entrance would be recessed and clad in patinated metal shingles; a shingled metal canopy would project over a metal gate at the entrance. The gate would lead to an interior courtyard providing access to the individual residential units. The secondary south elevation would be seen from the street and would also be clad in brick with single-pane metal windows. Two roof decks would be located at the roof set back significantly from the front of the building.

### **Evaluation**

The proposed alterations at the basement windows at the 8<sup>th</sup> Street elevation will be minimally discernable from the street and are consistent with the Board's Preservation and Design Guidelines for Basement Entrances and Windows. The proposed replacement windows are compatible with the character of the building and consistent with the Board's guidelines for window replacement. Shifting the main entrance to Constitution Avenue requires no change to the building's street elevation, and the removal of the low, non-original brick wall at the rear of the building does not raise preservation concerns. The new windows, doors and balcony at the secondary east elevation will be inset significantly from the street, result in the removal of plain brick, and will be minimally visible from the street.

While erecting a new gate at the rear of the building would not be incompatible with the building or the streetscape, some additional design refinement is recommended. While metal work is common on Capitol Hill, the fence's industrial vocabulary is not characteristic of the residential neighborhood. Lowering the height (it appears to be approximately 14 feet high) is also recommended.

The architectural approach to the new construction continues a development pattern common in the historic district, in which small-scale apartment buildings were given the appearance of a single-family row house.<sup>2</sup> An historic example of such an apartment building is located a few blocks west at 221 Constitution Avenue; other examples within the district include 314 East Capitol Street, SE (1901) and 116 6<sup>th</sup> Street, NE (1914). Like those historic examples, the proposed height and massing of the new construction is compatible with the district's rowhouse context. Eliminating a portion of the at-grade parking lot and constructing the new building will

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<sup>2</sup> Capitol Hill Historic District National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination, Section 8, Page 4-5

help complete the street-wall along 8<sup>th</sup> Street, and the proposal's brick cladding and high level of architectural articulation will relate well to the abutting historic rowhouses along 8<sup>th</sup> Street. As plans for the new construction develop, the applicant should continue to work with staff to refine materials and design details.

**Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept for building alterations, subdivision, and new construction to be compatible with the historic district. The new construction and the height and design of the gate element should continue to be developed in consultation with HPO, and final approval delegated to staff.*

*Staff Contact: Gabriela Gutowski*