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

Landmark/District:	Capitol Hill Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	203 Rear 3rd Street SE	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
ANC:	6B	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Meeting Date:	July 11, 2019	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Case Number:	19-326	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Owner James Silk seeks concept review for a 2nd story addition to an existing one-story alley building with plans prepared by architect Mateusz Dzierzanowski located in the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Property Description

Ruppert's Court, the interior to square 0762, housed a row of 2-story brick alley dwellings built in 1887 by C. Ruppert during the alley building boom of the 1880s. Other buildings in this square were used for commercial purposes. In 1934 Congress established the Alley Dwelling Authority (ADA) to eliminate all alley dwellings and to encourage economic redevelopment of the squares.¹ The ADA demolished this row of alley dwellings and replaced it with a commercial garage in 1936, designed by architect Homer Smith and built by H.S. Ward. The ADA leased this auto repair shop to a private tenant and it was renamed Long's Garage. Commercial garages emerged as automobile use became prevalent in the early 20th century.

The existing building is a one-story brick utilitarian building with 6 garage bays on the north elevation, and one garage bay and two door openings on the west elevation. The exterior is still intact minus the original garage doors and painted signage. The interior is still a relatively open space and the original concrete beam structure remains. The space is currently used as a residential unit.

¹ *The DC Historic Alley Buildings Survey*, DC HPO



PROJECT NO. 1. *This nest of five alley houses, facing a brick wall in Rupperts Court, was the first purchase of the Authority. The houses were crowded into the interior of a square. The principal street boundary of the square is a commercial artery. Other buildings in this alley were used for commercial purposes*

Rowhouses at 203 Rear 3rd Street SE, Ruppert's Alley. Demolished 1934.



WHERE ALLEY HOUSES STOOD. *Constructed by the Authority on the site of Rupperts Court alley houses, this repair shop completes commercial development of the alley. The Authority has leased the shop to a private tenant*

Long's Garage, built in 1936 by the Alley Dwelling Authority.

Proposal

The proposed project is a modern 2nd story addition to the garage building and renovation of the interior space as a single-family residence. The addition is set back 11' from the east end, creating an exterior patio space, and 3' to 8'-3" on the south side, creating a green space. The proposed 2nd story will be 21'-8" tall – slightly taller than the adjacent building which was built as a stable in 1887. The material of the addition would be standing seam metal with a contrasting darker corrugated or textured metal detail dividing the original fabric from the 2nd story. Horizontal windows punctuate the 2nd floor elevations aligning with the garage door openings below. The metal cladding continues down to the ground on the north elevation at one garage door opening.

The renovation includes maintaining the original exposed concrete beam ceiling in the interior at the first floor and maintaining the original commercial garage door masonry openings on the north elevation and west elevations.

Evaluation

A second story addition on an alley building is compatible based on the history and the context of this site. Two-story rowhouses once stood on this site and the massing and scale are compatible with the many 2-story historic alley buildings in this and adjacent Capitol Hill squares. Setbacks on the east and south sides are effective in giving necessary breathing space to the adjacent houses. A simple metal vertical trellis screen at the west elevation creates a simple and useful hyphen between the new addition and the neighboring stable building. The height of the addition is driven by the desire to keep the historic concrete beam ceiling—an effort that HPO encouraged—which is 10'-8-1/2" tall, creating an overall height of the addition that is 2' feet taller than the adjacent historic alley building. Without further increasing the height, a more thoughtfully designed roof cornice or cap could improve the addition to make it look more complete.

The proposed addition will be standing seam metal with a detailed corrugated metal banding – differentiating it from the brick garage and highlighting the historic structure. The metal cladding that extends down to the ground at the second garage door should be reconsidered so that the original building is not covered by another material and so that the full massing of the historic structure is legible. HPO recommends that the architect continue to refine the design composition and design consistency of the new garage doors—referencing the industrial commercial garage doors, while working out the details of transparency and opacity as desired for the interior spaces. In addition, the elevations can be further developed to clarify the corrugated metal banding, the corrugated accents, and the awning windows on the west elevation.

Recommendation

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

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