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

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| Landmark/District: | Capitol Hill Historic District | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda |
| Address: | 212 A Street, NE | <input type="checkbox"/> Consent |
| Meeting Date: | June 28, 2018 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept |
| Case Number: | 18-426 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> New Construction |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Demolition |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision |

Owner Jonathan D. Schmidt requests concept review for rear and side additions to a rowhouse, to raze a one-story garage, and to construct a two-story garage at the property in the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Property Description

212 A Street, NE is a two-story semi-detached wood-framed house. The building, together with its twin 214, was built c.1874. The building has a one-story and a two-story rear wing that extend ½ the width of the rear elevation. The building’s front yard is raised above the sidewalk and a brick retaining wall extends at a consistent height the full length of the block. The building directly to the west is a two-story plus basement semi-detached brick rowhouse built in 1876.

The property currently has a one-story multiple-car frame garage at the rear of the lot. A garage appears on a 1927 Sanborn map, however it is unclear if it is the current structure. The garage is clad in modern siding and devoid of architectural features. There are other one and two-story garages present within the alley.



At the February 22, 2018 HPRB meeting, the Board approved a concept plan to construct rear and side additions, and to raze a one-story garage and construct a two-story garage at 214 A Street, NE.

Proposal

The plans call for the demolition of the rear wings and construction of a two-story extension. The rear addition would extend the full width of the second floor and extend 7' 0" less into the rear yard than the existing wings. The roof height of the addition would be slightly taller than the existing two-story wing, but would remain shorter than the tallest roof pitch at the existing building. The addition at the side would be set 30' 4" from the front façade and feature a two-over-two double-hung window at the street facing façade. An existing window opening at the 2nd floor at the west elevation would be infilled and a new opening created farther back on the elevation; all window openings would have two-over-two double-hung windows. The new window openings at the west elevation will be regularly spaced and consistently sized. The new rear elevation would have two-over-two double-hung windows and a single leaf door, similar to the design of the approved rear addition at 214. The rear wings at 212 and 214 would align.

The proposed interior drawings show extensive demolition of interior walls and finishes, however, the submitted existing conditions photographs document that the interior of the building is highly altered and no original fabric remains. The new stairs are proposed to be at the same location as the existing stairs. The plans calls for exterior restorative work, including the removal of the aluminum siding and installation of new cedar siding, installation of two-over-two double-hung wood windows, and restoration of the wood cornice and decorative window lintels.

The existing frame garage would be demolished and replaced with a two-story brick garage that would align with the rear property line. The height would be approximately 19.5 feet tall plus the height of the cornice. The alley-facing elevation would feature a large paneled garage door and a single-leaf entrance door; the second floor would feature two-over-two double-hung windows. The house-facing elevation would have regular spaced door and window openings and the two side elevations would be brick with no fenestration. Neither the addition nor the new garage would be seen from the street.

Evaluation

Given the district's predominate rowhouse character, side additions are relatively unusual in Capitol Hill. When the Board has approved side additions, it has typically requested that they be set back significantly as to allow the historic width of the building to remain legible. The proposal follows this principle by setting back the side addition 30 feet from the front façade; with the building set back 18' from the sidewalk, the total distance from the sidewalk to the side addition would be 48 feet. Side additions can be problematic when there is a historic space between two rowhouses as this space can act as a significant reminder of a block's larger development history. In this case the block's topography is consistently raised within public space and the possibility of a "horse walk" or other passage way between two buildings seems unlikely. An existing brick retaining wall and mature bushes mostly screens the view of the addition from A Street.

The rear addition is compatible in height, mass, materials and relationship with the main block of the house. The depth of the new rear addition and the set back of the side addition will be consistent with what the Board approved at 214, thus create a symmetry between the buildings.

While potentially dating from within the period of significance for the historic district, the existing garage does not contain distinctive character-defining features. The new garage will align with the alley's edge and have a general proportion and footprint that is typical of Capitol Hill garages and carriage houses. The design, materials, and detailing of the proposed garage are compatible with the character of the alley and with the historic district. There are other two-story historic garages with in the alley, including the recently approved two-story garage at 214.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board approve the concept as consistent with the purposes of the preservation act and delegate final approval to staff.

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