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

Landmark/District:	Capitol Hill Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	214 A Street, NE	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
Meeting Date:	February 22, 2018	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Case Number:	18-209	<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, and to raze a one-story garage and construct a two-story garage at the property within the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Property Description

214 A Street, NE is a two-story semi-detached wood-framed house. The building, together with its twin 212, was built c.1874. The building has a wing extension that extends the full width of the building at the first floor and ½ width at the second floor. The lot’s northern border abuts the alley entrance. Adjacent to the alley entrance to the east is a large at-grade parking lot owned by the United States of America.

The property currently has a five-car 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 frame garages are clad in modern siding and devoid of architectural features. There are other one and two-story garages present within the alley-scape. The east elevation at the house and the garages are visible from A Street and 3rd Street, NE.



Proposal

The plans call for expanding the existing rear wing. The new wing would extend the full width of the second floor and extend an additional 4'6" beyond the building to the east at the first floor. The addition at the side would be set 30 feet from the front façade and feature a single two-over-two double-hung window at the street facing façade. Existing window openings at the east elevation would be re-arranged and new openings created, and all window openings would feature two-over-two double-hung windows. The new window openings at the visible east elevation will be regular spaced and consistently sized. The new rear elevation would be simply designed with two-over-two double-hung windows and a single leaf door.

The plans additionally call for demolition of the existing one-story multiple-car garage and construction of a two-story garage. The new garage would align with the rear property line and have a smaller footprint (24' 4" x 25' 6") than the existing garage. It would be clad in brick and stand 21 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; and the second floor would feature three 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. Both the side addition and new garage would be seen from the street.

Evaluation

Given the historic district's predominate rowhouse character, side additions are relatively unusual in Capitol Hill. When the Board has approved side additions at rowhouses within the Capitol Hill, it has typically requested that it 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, 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. However, in this case, the building abuts an alley entrance and an at-grade parking lot. The adjacent parking lot is at a higher grade than the street, and an existing brick retaining wall and mature bushes mostly screens the view of the addition from 3rd Street. The proposed wood siding and double-hung windows relate well to the historic house when seen from A Street.

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. Similarly, 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. However, the Board has been consistent in limiting new two-story garages to 20 feet in height, and a modest reduction in height would make the proposal consistent with this guidance and more in scale with historic two-story alley buildings.

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 with the stipulation that the garage be reduced in height to 20 feet or less.

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