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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>231 10<sup>th</sup> Street SE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
Meeting Date:	<b>April 27, 2017</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Case Number:	<b>17-317</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Gabriela Gutowski</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
		<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

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Applicants Eric and Christal Goetz of Blue Star Design Build, seek concept review of rear and rooftop additions. The applicants came before the Board in February of last year and gained approval to construct a two-story garage at the rear of the property. <sup>1</sup>

A permit for construction of the rear and roof addition was erroneously issued by DCRA without referral to the Historic Preservation Office for review and clearance. <sup>2</sup> The work has since been stopped and the applicants are before the Board today seeking approval.

**Property Description**

231 10<sup>th</sup> Street, SE is a semi-detached brick house built in 1939 and designed by Lewis W. Giles. Based on its date of construction during the period of significance (1791-1945), it is considered a contributing property in the Capitol Hill Historic District. The primary façade features an elevated front porch accessed by concrete stairs. The porch roof is flat with a profiled wood cornice supported by square brick piers. The second floor has one-over-one double-hung windows and a solid brick parapet with decorative recessed brick panels. The rear façade is not visible from any streets.

Framing for the proposed rear and rooftop addition has been completed and therefore the original rear façade can no longer be seen. Plans provided by the applicant indicate that there was an existing rear addition set in from both sides. Photographs of the rear addition prior to the construction provided by a neighbor show a two-story rear addition clad in siding with a second floor wood balcony.

The immediate neighbors to the north (229) and south (233 and 235) are two-story wood frame Italianate style houses built c.1874. Although these houses are have the same number of stories

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<sup>1</sup> HPA #16-209 February 25, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> B1700524 “reduction in lot occupancy of single family home including mechanical, electrical, and plumbing work” and B1703499 “Revision to building permit to reflect reduction in lot occupancy, addition, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing work associated with the addition, alteration and repair and soil disturbance associated with the scope of work”.

as the property in question, 231's total height from sidewalk to the top of parapet is taller and the floor heights do not align. There are three-story buildings within the block.

### **Proposal**

The plans call for the construction of a three-story rear addition and one-story roof addition extending onto the roof of the original house. The rear addition would be approximately 35 feet in height and extends approximately 16 feet towards the rear yard. The ground floor of the addition would feature accordion doors leading to a rear deck extending an additional 9 feet. The rear fenestration at the addition would be a combination for three grouped and single rectangular windows with a single horizontal muntin. The rear elevation at the addition would be clad in a combination of stucco and wood siding. The secondary north and south elevations at the additions would be clad in stucco and brick. The rooftop addition is set back 16' 2 ½" from the primary elevation. The roofline at the roof addition steps up towards the rear of the property. The street-facing elevation at the roof addition would be clad in brick and feature paired doors and irregular spaced windows.

The visibility of the proposed additions can be assessed from the street and alley since the volume of the additions has already been framed. Although there is construction netting at the primary elevation's parapet, it appears likely that the rooftop addition would be seen over the primary elevation from 10<sup>th</sup> Street. Due to the shorter heights at the adjacent neighbors, one can also see the side elevations of the additions when looking north and south from 10<sup>th</sup> Street.

### **Evaluation**

The Board's guideline *Roof Deck and Roof Additions: Design Considerations and Submission Requirements* discourages roof additions as a type of addition that is rarely compatible, particularly for historic row houses. It states that rooftop additions "can sometimes be achieved when they are not visible from street views, do not result in the removal or alteration of important character-defining features of the building or streetscape, and are compatible with their context." The guidance goes on to state that in general, "roof additions that are visible from a public street are not appropriate, as they would alter an historic building's height, mass, design composition, cornice line, roof, and its relationship to surrounding buildings and streetscape – all of which are important character-defining features that are protected for historic property."

One of the most architecturally defining features at the primary elevation at 231 10<sup>th</sup> Street, SE is the decorative brick parapet. Although simple, this feature is characteristic of houses of this style and age within the district. The rooftop addition will be seen above the line of the parapet wall and no longer will the parapet be seen against the backdrop of sky. The adjacent properties (233 and 234) have side-gable roofs, a defining architectural feature of late 19<sup>th</sup> C. Italianate style houses. The addition as designed will obscure the rooflines resulting in them also no longer reading against a background of sky. This is exasperated by the additions stepped roofline, which gains height as it goes back towards the rear yard.

The *Historic Preservation Guidelines for Additions to Historic Buildings* also discusses the importance of proportions when designing additions to historic buildings, reading; "The design of an addition should respect existing proportions of a building and those of neighboring

buildings”.<sup>3</sup> Similar proportions are more nuanced than having the same number for stories. 231 may have the same number of stories as other two-story buildings in the row, but its proportions are different. Therefore, adding a third story to the building results in a building that is significantly taller than the neighboring buildings. This added height overwhelms the building and detracts from the architectural character of the adjacent properties.

The proposed rear addition will extend to a depth comparable to other rear elevations within the row. The first and second floors at the rear addition cannot be seen from any streets and are reasonably compatible in their use of wood and stucco materials and in its fenestration. If the third floor was eliminated it is likely that no part of the addition would be seen from 10<sup>th</sup> Street.

***Recommendation***

*The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept for a two-story rear addition to be compatible with the character of the historic district as presented, but that the third floor roof and rear addition is incompatible with the character of this property and the historic district. HPO recommends that the Board delegate final approval for a modified permit that includes only a two-story rear addition.*

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<sup>3</sup> Section 5.1 “Historic Preservation Guidelines for Additions to Historic Buildings”.