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

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Property Address:	<b>300 8<sup>th</sup> Street, NE</b>	<b>X</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Capitol Hill Historic District</b>		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>July 28, 2016</b>	<b>X</b>	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>16-443</b>		Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Steve Callcott</b>	<b>X</b>	New Construction
			Demolition
			Subdivision

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Community Three Development and Tori Gallas and Partners Architects, represented by owner/architect Grant Epstein, seek conceptual review for construction of a four-story plus penthouse residential building in the Capitol Hill Historic District.

**Property Description**

The site, located at the corner of 8<sup>th</sup> and C Streets NE, is occupied by a one-story brick building with roof top parking that was reportedly built as a grocery store. The building's construction post-dates the publication of the 1967 Baist map and is non-contributing to the Capitol Hill Historic District as it was constructed outside the period of significance (1791-1945). The site is adjacent to a 15' wide public alley to the north, and abuts a 30' wide inner-block alley to the west.

**Proposal**

The project calls for demolishing the existing building to construct a four-story apartment building (47' tall, plus penthouse) above one level of below-grade parking. The height, massing and design have been developed to appear as two separate structures: a larger building with a symmetrically-composed, four-story façade with full-height projections flanking a centered entrance on 8<sup>th</sup> Street, and a smaller building on the corner that would rise to three-stories with two-story projections. The larger building would be clad in a light-toned or painted brick with large paired, multi-light double hung windows; stylistically, it is reminiscent of Washington's late 19<sup>th</sup> century public school buildings. The smaller building would be clad in red brick with two-over-two double hung windows and would feature a bracketed wood cornice and panelized wood projecting bays; stylistically, it is evocative of 1870s Italianate residential architecture.

**Evaluation**

The proposal is compatible with the historic district and this specific location in terms of its general height, massing, materials, the scale and proportion of its elements, and in its proposed level of architectural articulation and detailing. Composing the building to appear as two separate structures is successful in breaking down the appearance of what would otherwise read as a very large and horizontal building, and the step down in height at the corner provides an appropriate transition to the two-story houses on C Street.

The design precedents on which the new construction is based are common and feel familiar to the historic district; these precedents were selected after an earlier proposal was found by many in the community to be overly industrial in character. However, a drawback of using such a specific residential historicist vocabulary for the corner structure is that it doesn't lend itself to having a visible penthouse on top of it in the same way that a more commercial or industrial looking structure might. As proposed, the contemporary penthouse on the corner is discordant with the building's Italianate bracketed roofline. It is recommended that the fourth floor penthouse be pulled off the corner building or reduced in size to where it is no longer visible from street views. Alternatively, a different vocabulary could be explored for the corner element that might make for a more compatible relationship between it and the desired penthouse. While less problematic on the larger building, simplifying the shape of the penthouse to eliminate the bump out on the front (facing east) would help to minimize that penthouse's visibility and retain the primacy of the parapet wall as the visual focus of the roofline.

**Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Review Board find the concept for new construction, with the revisions to the penthouses as outlined above, to be not incompatible with the character of the historic district and consistent with the purposes of the act.*