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

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| Landmark/District: | Capitol Hill Historic District | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda |
| Address: | 326 A Street, SE | <input type="checkbox"/> Consent |
| | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept |
| Meeting Date: | October 26, 2018 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration |
| Case Number: | 17-591 | <input type="checkbox"/> New Construction |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Demolition |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision |

Owner James R. Jones, with plans prepared by architect Kim Jones, seeks on-going concept review for restoration of a two-story frame house and construction a three-story rear and side addition in the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Property Description

326 A Street, SE is a wood frame house built between 1854 and 1857¹ featuring architectural elements of the Greek Revival and Italianate styles. The building is uniquely sited on a double width lot on a raised berm set back from the street. The ground floor porch at the south elevation likely dates from the early 20th century based on the construction details and a 1922 permit issued for “new 1-story front porch in front of house”.² HPO staff visited the site and found a non-historic wing to be deteriorated beyond repair; after obtaining the necessary permits, it was demolished in August 2017.

The applicant last presented to the Board on October 26, 2017. At that meeting, the concept proposal was to demolish and reconstruct the building and add a three-story rear and side addition. The Board voted to support the staff report with the following findings: 1) if demolition of the house is proposed, a report needs to be prepared that details the existing conditions and plans developed to dismantle, salvage, relocate, and reconstruct the house using as much original fabric as possible; 2) the entrance at the house’s east elevation should be retained; and 3) further refinements be made to the design at the side addition.

Proposal

The revised plans no longer call for the demolition and reconstruction of the building. Instead, the plans call for substantial restoration of the building in place. The plans also eliminate the excavation of a cellar floor beneath the building.

The design of the side addition has been modified. It still will recall the Second Empire Style to intentionally differentiate itself stylistically from the existing house. The front elevation would be

¹ The 1854 real property tax assessment shows the owner as Gillies Groenfeldt and others, Dutch bankers who were creditors of the speculator James Greenleaf, and who would not have constructed improvements. The house must have been constructed by a later owner and is seen, with a rear addition, in the 1857 Boschke Map, so it must have been built between 1854 and 1857. (Research credited to the Capitol Hill Restoration Society)

² Building Permit # 8351 issued May 10, 1922.

clad in wood siding and feature two-over-two double-hung windows with profiled wooded lintels and trim; the third floor would feature a mansard roof with three dormers. The metal cresting at the roofline has been eliminated, and instead of double-hung windows at the ground floor there would be two sets of French door. A wood pergola would be installed at a paved patio in front of the French doors. No longer does the concept call for the removal of excavation of the existing berm. Instead, the existing concrete stairs would remain and lead to an entrance at the east elevation. The existing entrance door at the east elevation would be relocated one bay towards the north. A six-over-six double-hung window would be installed in place of the existing single-leaf door.

The third floor remains unchanged. It would be set back 44' 9" from the front elevation and be clad in wood siding. A portion of the stair at the third floor would be clad in asphalt shingle to match the shingles at the mansard roof at the side addition. A portion of the third-floor rear addition would be seen from A Street.

Evaluation

The elimination of excavation and retention of the building in situ substantially improves the compatibility of the proposal. Enough original historic fabric remains at the property that missing and deteriorated architectural feature can be accurately replicated and reinstalled. As the restoration plans continue to develop, detailed measured drawings of replicated architectural features should be drawn and filed as part of the construction documents.

Given the angle of the building to the street, it will not be easily discernible that the entrance door at the east elevation has been shifted one bay. The retention of the berm and concrete stairs and landing will maintain the building's historic relationship to the street.

The proposed side addition, set back from the street and the house significantly, successfully reads as a separate building. While it is an unusual solution for a side addition, it is compatible with the historic district and this specific location in terms of its general height, massing, the proportions and scale of its elements, materials and general level of detailing and articulation. While one story taller than 326, the addition's residential character and appearance as a separate house is consistent with historic three-story brick bay-fronted buildings within the streetscape. Designing the side addition to read as a separate rowhouse in a different architectural style creates a varied streetscape and helps mitigate the impact on the house.

The proposed rear addition will be set back significantly from the front elevation and will not extend onto the roof of the historic building. The majority of the addition is set far enough back from the street that it will not be visible or as incompatible as the straight-on elevation drawing suggests. A portion of the stair at the third floor will be seen from A Street, however the sloped roof and asphalt shingle cladding will cause it to recede from view and read as a secondary roof structure. The east elevation of the side addition may be visible from 4th Street over a one-story garage. As the design continues to be developed, the elevation should be designed in terms of material and fenestration to be compatible with the streetscape.

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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