

**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>411 8<sup>th</sup> Street SE</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> Consent               |
|                    |                                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept    |
| Meeting Date:      | <b>March 23, 2017</b>                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration |
| Case Number:       | <b>17-250</b>                         | <input type="checkbox"/> New Construction      |
| Staff Reviewer:    | <b>Imania Price</b>                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Demolition            |
|                    |                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision           |

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Zusin Development, LLC requests conceptual review to replace the brick façade on a non-contributing commercial property in the Capitol Hill Historic District. The building was built in the 1970s and is located along the Barracks Row commercial strip of 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Based on its date of construction after the period of significance for the Capitol Hill Historic District (1791-1945), it is not contributing to the historic district. The building measures approximately 20' in length and 27' in height.

**Project Description**

The proposal calls for demolishing and replacing the front façade. The new front elevation would be brick with two doors on the first floor flanking a 10' x 10' projecting storefront window capped by an overhanging cornice element. The second floor would have a single window above the south door and a 10' x 10' window above the first floor projection.

**Evaluation**

As a non-contributing building to the district, the property does not add to our understanding of historically significant architectural qualities and associations in this neighborhood. As such, the proposal should be evaluated for its general compatibility with the immediate context and the character of the historic district, rather than for its effect on the character of the building or the potential to otherwise alter the appearance of a historic structure. In considering alterations to non-contributing buildings, the Board has been mindful that these changes should be reasonably appropriate for the design of the subject property, appropriate for its specific context, and should not result in a building that becomes a focal point that would detract from the historic streetscape.

While large expanses of glazing are typical of commercial streets, Barrack's Row is typified by buildings that have smaller, residentially-scaled punched openings on the upper floors rather than large commercial storefronts on multiple levels. The applicants' streetscape images and study of proportional relationships of window openings illustrate this point. While some greater degree of glazing for the second floor is found on the surrounding historic buildings may be achievable, the proposal should better relate to the hierarchy that is predominate in this commercial strip. An increase in the height of the window bases, separation of the glazing into multiple openings, or a reduction in the size of the window glazing on the second floor is recommended.

The submission includes an option for internally illuminated channel letters atop the projecting storefront which, with a modest reduction in the size of the letters from 18 to 12 inches, would be consistent with the Historic Preservation Regulations (DCMR Title 10A, Historic Preservation, Chapter 25, “Standards for Signs, Awnings, Canopies, and Marquees”) and the city’s sign regulations; the applicant is also encouraged to consult the Barracks Row Main Street Guidelines.

**Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Board find the proposal generally consistent with the purposes of the preservation act with the following conditions:*

- 1) The second floor fenestration be revised to better relate to the scale of windows predominant on the upper floors on this commercial strip,*
- 2) The scale of the channel letters be reduced to 12” to be consistent with city sign regulations,*
- 3) Delegate final approval to staff.*