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

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Landmark/District: **Capitol Hill Historic District**  
Address: **421 Seward Square SE**

Meeting Date: **November 16, 2018**  
Case Number: **18-044**

- Agenda
- Consent
- Concept
- Alteration
- New Construction
- Demolition
- Subdivision

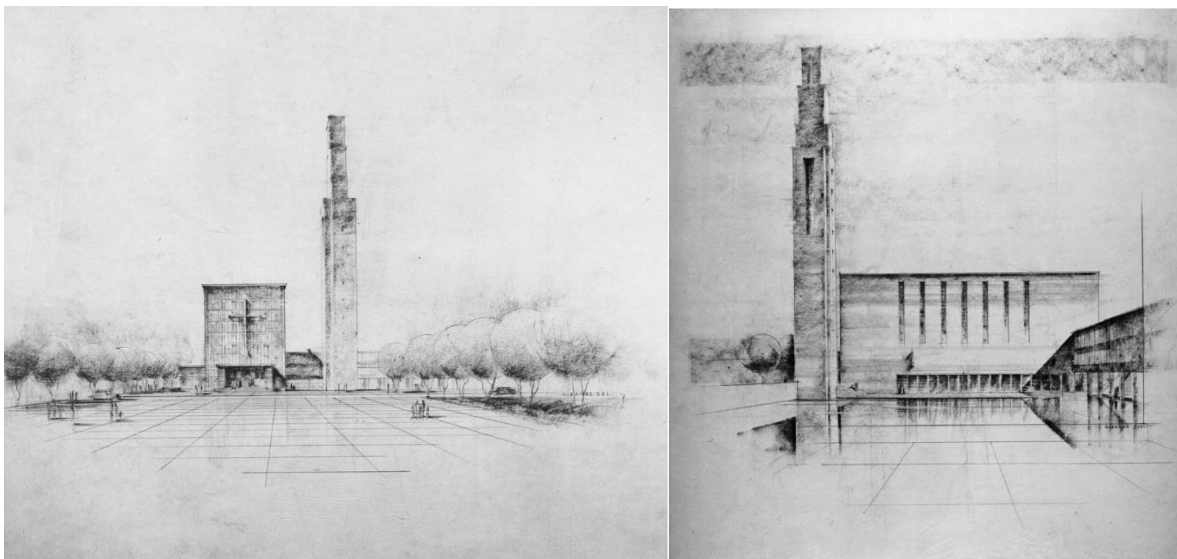
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The Capitol Hill United Methodist Church, with plans prepared by architect Ziad E. Demian, seeks concept review to construct a rooftop addition in the Capitol Hill Historic District.

**Property Description**

421 Seward Square SE was designed by A. Hensel Fink (1903-1999) and built in 1967. While it was built after the period of significance for the Capitol Hill Historic District, (1791-1945), it is a good example of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century ecclesiastical architecture. Fink was a Philadelphia based architect responsible for designing hundreds of churches nationally. This design appears to be influenced by Eliel and Eero Saarinen's First Christian Church in Columbus Ohio, completed in 1942. Both churches are characterized by a rectangular mass accented by an off-set vertical tower.



Figures 1 and 2: Early renderings of First Christian Church, Columbus Ohio

The building is located at the corner of Seward Square and 5<sup>th</sup> Street SE. The corner is marked by a prominent brick tower accented with vertical stone detailing and topped by a stone clerestory and cross. The tower is off-set from the church's central mass. A portion of the building is three stories in a cruciform plan, whereas the portion of the building fronting 5<sup>th</sup> Street is two-stories tall. The building is free-standing except for the rear elevation which shares a party wall with a wood framed house c. 1874.



### **Proposal**

The proposal consists of two construction stages. The first stage calls for the removal of the northern most entrance at the 5<sup>th</sup> Street elevation and the construction of a three-story elevator tower. The second stage would include construction of a third story addition at the currently two-story portion of the building fronting 5<sup>th</sup> Street. The addition would have an undulating roofline and projecting vertical fins. The addition would be set in from the existing brick clad third floor behind it on the southern side and extend below the existing third floor for most of the roofline except for a small “swooping” portion of the roof. The materials for the addition are not identified.

### **Evaluation**

The addition has been designed in a manner that minimally disrupts the composition of the primary north elevation fronting Seward Square. It would be located behind the corner tower and set back significantly from the primary entrance, and the tower will continue to read as off-set from the main sanctuary. Given the siting of the building, it is unavoidable for the proposed addition not to be seen from multiple vantage points on 5<sup>th</sup>, Seward Square, and through the park. However, the strong horizontal form of the addition accented by vertical fins compliments the building's existing strong vertical and horizontal axes. The addition is set in slightly on the south side allowing a portion of the brick at the existing third floor to be seen. The result is a well composed composition that compliments and does not overwhelm the mid-century modern building or the residential buildings next door and within the streetscape.

**Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Board approve the general concept as consistent with the purposes of the preservation act, and that the applicant return to the Board after selecting materials and further developing construction details.*

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