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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>531 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.E.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
ANC:	<b>6B</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Meeting Date:	<b>December 15, 2022</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Case Number:	<b>23-090</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

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Applicant Jessica Stern, with drawings by architect Chris Lyon, seeks concept review for a third story addition with roof deck at a property located in the Capitol Hill Historic District.

### Property Description

531 12<sup>th</sup> Street SE is a corner property that was built by A. Thompson in 1891 as one of two. The brick building is two stories over a raised basement with a total of three projecting bays on both street-facing elevations.

### Proposal

A third story is proposed to occupy almost the entire building footprint. To accommodate this, two existing chimneys are shown to be demolished. An existing areaway at the south elevation would be retained and the depth increased, with an above-ground railing added. At the rear, a curb cut, driveway, and parking pad are shown.

### Evaluation

The Board has typically found visible rooftop additions on residential properties in Capitol Hill to be incompatible, as they alter the character-defining height, mass and roofline of those structures. Although the existing roof parapet is tall and the project presents an interesting design solution that does not result in the exposure of a full additional floor, the addition would nevertheless be highly visible on all sides and would raise the height and roofline of the building. Adding on at the roof would potentially have further impacts on the decorative brick chimneys that are incorporated into the side elevation, likely requiring that they either be demolished or extended above the new roofline to comply with fire code regulations.

The existing south elevation door is not in a configuration typical of a property of this age or style. Its proposed replacement should be in a style compatible with those shown in the Board's *Door Repair and Replacement Preservation and Design Guidelines*.

The proposal also shows a new curb cut and driveway through public space to obtain access to a new rear parking area. Capitol Hill is characterized by the continuity of its public space front and side yards, forming a park-like strip that unifies the architecturally diverse rows of houses. The

Board has consistently denied curb cuts and driveways through public space on Capitol Hill as inconsistent with the character of the historic district and DDOT similarly has a long-standing policy of denying applications for curb cuts in the city's rowhouse neighborhoods.

**Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends the Board find the project for the rooftop addition, door replacement, curb cut, and driveway to be incompatible with the Capitol Hill historic district.*

*Staff contact: Moira Nadal*