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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>645 Maryland Ave, NE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	<b>January 22, 2015</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	<b>15-065</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Sarah VanLandingham</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

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Applicant OPaL, LLC, with plans prepared by GPS Designs, seeks conceptual design review to construct an addition above and behind a one-story commercial building in the Capitol Hill Historic District, and convert the structure into a multi-family dwelling. The two-story addition will be setback approximately 12' from the façade of the garage, just behind the façade of the porch-front houses. The addition will be of a modern design and feature rhythmic fenestration with large openings and Juliet balconies on the top floor. The façade will be clad in dark weathered zinc.

At the December 4th hearing, the Board found the general concept of an addition to be compatible but found the proposal to be too dominant and directed the applicant to refine the design in order to:

- Reduce the overall mass,
- Study retaining more of the original fabric and reducing the amount of demolition,
- Develop the façade so that the addition is more recessive, and
- Study the façade configuration, details, and proportions.

### **Property Description**

This one-story commercial building is located mid-block amid a residential section of Maryland Avenue and surrounded on both sides by three-story brick rowhouses. A row of three early porch-front houses abuts the garage to the west. The fronts of the porches are aligned with the façade of the garage resulting in a 12' setback of the main block of the houses. To the east are Victorian era rowhouses in line with the garage and featuring bays that project into public space.

According to permit research, the brick garage building was built about 1906. It occupies almost the entire lot and features a large garage door, two windows, and a pedestrian door on Maryland Avenue. Based on its date of construction and architectural integrity, the building is a contributing structure to the historic district.

The Board approved a proposal by a different owner and design team in 2003/2004 that called for a similarly-sized two-story addition set back 17' from the garage façade.

### **Revised Proposal and Evaluation**

Since presented in December, the plans have been updated to reduce the size of the addition substantially. It has been pulled off the rear of the building 17' to be in line with rear line of houses on this block. This has reduced the overall mass of the building but not altered how it is perceived from Maryland Avenue.

The cladding material for the façade has been reduced in scale to better relate to the prevalent masonry units. The applicant has included more images of the proposed cladding material but a sample should be provided to better illustrate its properties such as finish and reflectivity. A stronger cornice relates better to the surrounding context of the block. The roof access structure has been removed and replaced with a hatch, substantially reducing the likelihood of the roof structures being visible across the long sightlines of Maryland Avenue and D Street.

More information has been provided regarding the degree of deterioration of the interior and the plans reflect efforts to retain more of the interior structure, albeit for decorative and not structural use. The three existing skylights will be moved to the front of the building and reused.

While the revised submission addresses many of the issues raised by the Board, the essential height and setback remain the same, and relies on the finer detailing and neutral coloration to achieve the more recessive quality that the Board requested. The applicant has made efforts to improve the detailing of the façade to better relate to the historic context but the two-story addition will still be a prominent element and there is only so much that can be accomplished through detailing to make the addition recessive and subordinate.

### **Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends the Board find the revised concept for a two-story addition to be compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District and direct the applicant to work with staff to further refine the design.*