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

Landmark/District:	Capitol Hill Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	712 5th Street, SE	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	November 15, 2018	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	19-038	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
		<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Owners Christopher and Tara Dougherty, with plans prepared by Eric Goetz of Blue Star Design Build, seek concept review for a three-story rear addition and one-story rooftop addition on a two-story rowhouse in the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Property Description

712 5th Street, SE is one in a row of thirteen two-story brick rowhouses originally owned by Preston E. Wire and designed by George T. Santmyers in 1939. The rowhouses alternate slightly in design, with some featuring a flat façade and raised brick parapet and others with a shallow mansard roof. Due to its date of construction within the period of significance (1791-1945), the property is a contributing historic resource to the Capitol Hill Historic District.

There are currently two one-story rooftop additions present within the row at 708 and 718. In both instances the projects came before the Board and were approved as *non-visible* rooftop additions but resulted in additions that can be seen from the street.¹ 708 also features a full-height rear addition.

Proposal

The plans call for removal of the rear façade and the construction of a three-story rear addition extending 10' 0" towards the rear property line. The rear addition would be clad in rectangular cementitious panels at the first floor and cementitious siding at the second and third. The second and third floors would feature four banked one-over-one double-hung windows and the first floor would feature sliding doors. The window openings at the third floor would be larger than the window openings at the second floor, and the second floor would extend farther than the first creating an over-hang above the first floor sliding doors. The rear addition would not be seen from any streets.

The one-story rooftop addition would be set back 15' 0" from the front façade and align with the rear elevation of the proposed rear addition. The front portion at the rooftop addition would measure 8' 0" in height and increase to 10' 6", and be clad in rectangular cementitious panels.

¹ 708 5th Street, SE (HPA 04-310, June 24, 2004) and 718 5th Street, SE (HPA 05-342, June 23, 2005)

The applicant constructed and documented images of a roof-top mock-up as part of their application. The mock-up indicates that the addition would be seen obliquely from 5th Street from various vantage points. It would not be seen from 5th Street when standing directly across from the building.



Figure 1: Mock-up of rooftop addition

Evaluation

The Board’s design guideline on rooftop additions states, “Under most circumstances, roof additions that are visible from a public street are not appropriate, as they would alter an historic building’s height, mass, design composition, cornice line, roof, and its relationship to surrounding buildings and streetscape – all of which are important character-defining features that are protected for historic property. In rare cases, a visible roof top addition may be acceptable if it does not fundamentally alter the character of the building and is designed to be compatible with the building and context. Generally, this type of addition has been approved on utilitarian, industrial buildings, buildings with little architectural character, or one-story buildings set within a context of larger buildings.”

Based on the direction in the guideline, owners are encouraged to develop plans for rooftop additions that are not seen from any streets; as a result, the Board reviews relatively few proposals for visible rooftop additions. When the Board has approved visible rooftop additions with in Capitol Hill, the additions could be seen from the rear or side of the property in context with other additions. The Board has not traditionally approved visible rooftop additions seen

over the primary elevation on residential properties and within residential contexts.² Because the height and proportions of buildings along residential streets is fairly uniform, such additions tend to alter the building's height, mass, design composition, cornice line, roof, and relationship to surrounding buildings and streetscape – all of which are important character-defining features that are protected for historic landmarks and in historic districts. This would be the case for this block of 5th Street which is characterized by thirteen low-scale matching rowhouses.

Images of the rooftop mock-up demonstrates that the rooftop addition would not be visible from directly across the street. However, due to the low scale of the neighboring buildings, the overall height and location of the rooftop addition, and the topography of the street, the rooftop addition would be visible from other vantage points along 5th Street. HPO recommends that the applicant increase the setback to render the addition invisible from a reasonable distance up and down the street; reducing the ceiling height may also help. In terms of the overall compatibility, the staff has suggested simplifying the massing at the proposed rear and rooftop addition by creating a uniform ceiling height and rear projection depth. Compatibility would be also increased by maintaining the same window size and type on the second and third floors.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept to be compatible with the historic district and to delegate further review to staff with the following modifications:

- *That the rooftop addition be set-back as to be invisible from 5th Street.*
- *That the applicant work with HPO to regularize the massing and fenestration pattern at the additions.*

Staff Contact: Gabriela Gutowski

² 231 10th Street SE (HPA 17-317, April 27, 2017) Board voted to deny rooftop addition visible from 10th Street, SE.