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

Landmark/District: **Capitol Hill Historic District**
Address: **425 4th Street NE**

Agenda
Consent
 Concept
 Alteration
New Construction
Demolition
Subdivision

Meeting Date: **December 21, 2023**
Case Number: **24-046**

Jennifer Fowler, agent for property owners Lis Kidder and Daniel Spurlock, seeks conceptual design review for construction of a 3-story addition to a contributing building in the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Property Description

The property is an 1891 two-story brick rowhouse designed by F. B. Pyle. It is located approximately midblock along 4th Street NE and is a twin of 427 4th Street to the north, which shares the same builder, architect, and date of construction. A named alley, Carberry Place NE, runs north to south at the rear of the property. The Carberry Elementary School building (built circa 1887 and now used as condominiums) immediately abuts the alley east of the property.



Rear



Front

Project Description

The applicant proposes to extend the existing cellar and two stories to the rear by approximately 15' 10 1/2" and add a third story partially atop the existing house and the new rear addition. This work will fill in an existing dogleg at the cellar and first floor levels, but leave it open at the second and

third floors. The cellar and first floor levels will be the full width of the property, from party wall to party wall, while the second and third floors will measure approximately 13' 6" in width, leaving the roughly 3' wide dogleg on the southern elevation. The third floor will measure approximately 42' 5" in length. It will be setback from the front of the house by 18' 6" and from the rear by 5', save for a bay window that will extend into that area by about 2'. The proposed third floor will be 35' tall, approximately 5' 8" taller than the height of the existing front parapet (30' 8"). In addition, a window well is proposed at the front of the building at an existing cellar window (see image of existing cellar window below).

The first and second floor levels will be brick. The third floor will be brick where it extends above the existing second floor, and will transition to Azek panels at the rear. A projecting rowlock course of bricks will form the parapet of the second floor at the rear and will then continue along the entire visible length of the building's north and south elevations between the second and third floors. The cellar level at the rear is fully below grade and will feature no windows or doors. The first floor level will have an aluminum clad sliding door with sidelight, transom, and brick rowlock header course at the rear. The second floor will have two 2/2 aluminum windows with brick arches on the south elevation and a 2/2 double window (aluminum) on the rear elevation. The double window will feature brick rowlock lintels and sills. The third floor will have an arched double window above the original dogleg in its brick portion, with a single 2/2 frosted window amongst the Azek panels closer to the rear. The rear elevation of the third floor will have a projecting bay window and Azek panels. The third floor will be setback on the rear about 5' from the vertical plane of the floors below, while the bay window will project approximately 2'.

Evaluation

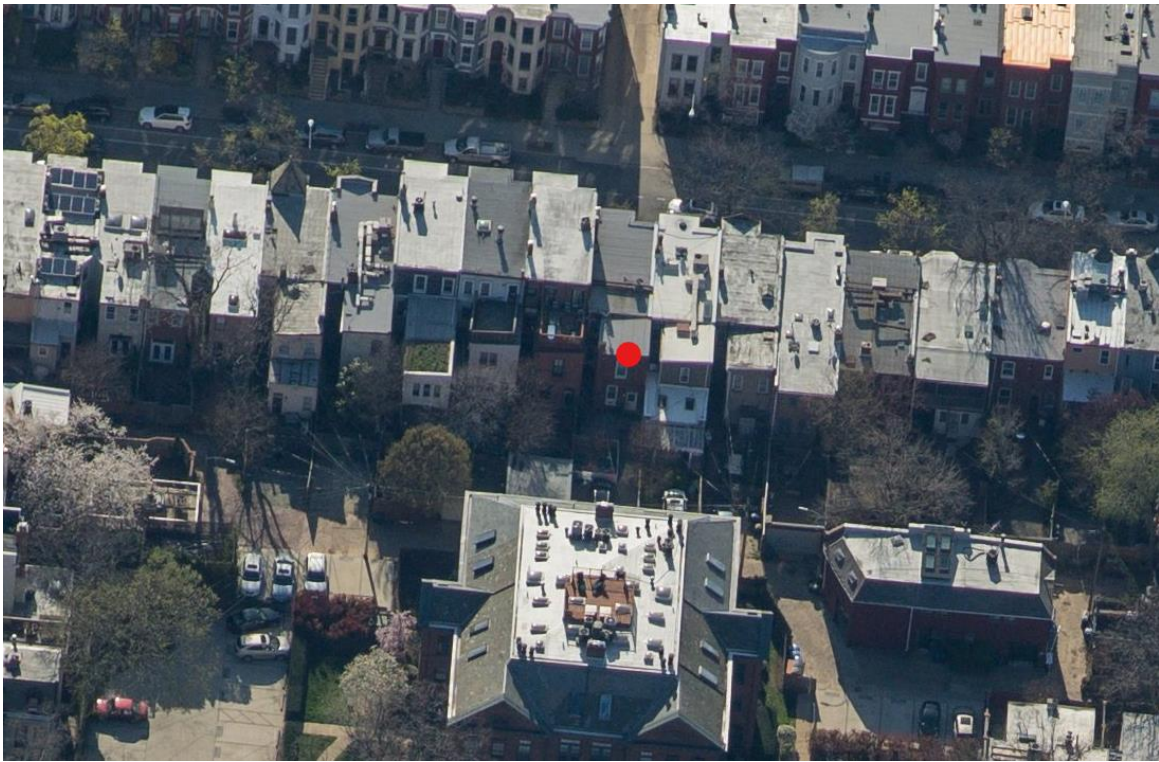
The project is compatible. The materials and design complement traditional Capitol Hill aesthetics while keeping the addition distinct. A lumber mock-up has confirmed that the proposed addition will not be visible from 4th Street. The addition will be visible from the alley, and especially for those living in the Carberry School Condominiums. However, the Board has previously approved similar projects in alleys in the past. The third story in particular will increase the massing of the building, though it will still be no taller than the neighboring three-story rowhouses directly south of the building. It will also extend to the rear at a similar distance to other houses along the alley. Overall, the increased massing is appropriate and compatible.

The dogleg will remain at the second floor. So, for an observer in the alley whose view of the first floor is mostly blocked by garages and fences (in the rear, the cellar is fully below grade), the form of the dogleg will remain intact and in view. The most visible portion of the third floor above the dogleg will not be brick, like the second floor, and so will create a distinct transition. Currently, 67% of the rowhouses fronting 4th Street NE on this block contain doglegs. The existing rhythm of those doglegs, which are mostly concentrated midblock, will not be dramatically changed by this project for two primary reasons: 1) the proposed third floor has a rear setback of 5' and will be of different materials to demonstrate distinction from the original, and 2) the existing dogleg rhythm has previously been disrupted. Neighboring rowhouses have added roof decks and rear extensions that have caused imperfections in the height and rear alignment of the doglegs. Other blocks of Capitol Hill, including on the opposite side of 4th Street NE, contain far better-preserved rows of visible doglegs (see aerial and oblique images below).

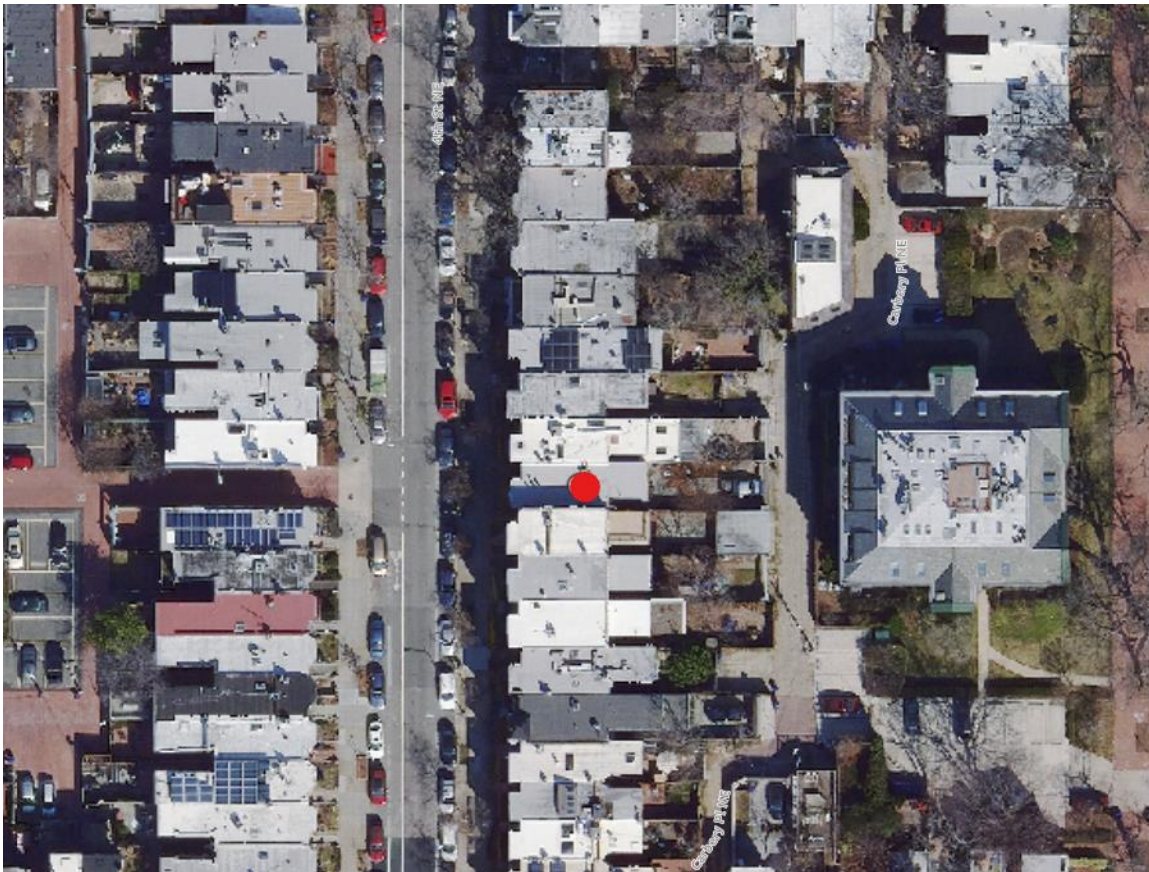
Recommendation

HPO recommends the Board find the project compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District, and delegate authority to staff.

HPO Contact: Todd Jones



Oblique aerial view (2015) showing 425 4th Street NE (red dot at center) and neighboring doglegs



Oblique aerial view (2021) showing 425 4th Street NE (red dot at center) and neighboring doglegs



Front of the house depicting the existing cellar window.