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

Landmark/District:	Capitol Hill Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	504 4th Street, S.E.	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
ANC:	6B	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Meeting Date:	July 27, 2023	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Case Number:	23-435	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Applicants Kyle Lehman and Jessica Sun, with drawings by architect Ziad Elias Demian, seek concept review for a three-story rear addition, partial rooftop addition, and a secondary dwelling building at a property located in the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Property Description

504 4th Street SE is a semi-detached two-story frame house. It was built prior to 1874, based on the Faehtz & Pratt Real Estate Directory. The rear abuts another fenced yard; there is no interior alley access.

Proposal

The rear ell (dogleg) would be infilled and an additional full-width addition would extend back twelve feet. The rear addition would be three stories tall, with a height of about 32 feet, with its roof sloping upward toward the rear. It would be largely glazed, with some areas of siding. The existing house's main gable roof would be demolished behind the ridge to create a roof deck area forward of the addition's front wall.

An accessory dwelling unit would be constructed at the rear of the yard with access from 4th Street through the side yard. The two-story building would also have a sloped roof and the materials would reflect those of the addition, with a large section of glazing on the elevation facing toward the front yard and wood siding or metal cladding on the other elevations along with smaller window openings.

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, massing and roofline of those structures. In some limited instances, minimally visible rooftop additions have been found compatible, but, not on frame houses. The Board has found additions visible along the side to be compatible if they do not supersede the main roof. For example, views along a detached side of a two-story rear addition on a two-story plus gable roof frame house.

Next door to the subject property, at 506 4th St SE, there is a large and highly visible rooftop addition. The addition proposed at 504 would start about ten feet further back. How it would compare in height is unknown, but in renderings they look to be about the same. Considering the extent of visibility of the adjacent addition, even with the additional setback, the proposed rooftop addition and third story would be visible from along 4th Street.

The applicant erected a lumber mock-up that included a point at the front wall corner and a midpoint on the north (E Street) side, but only at the front corner on the south side due to the inset of the existing ell (see drawing below). To understand the visibility of the proposed addition, one must imagine the upward slope of the roof springing from the lowest posts seen of the mock-up. In this case, the addition would be highly visible along E Street and at the detached side on 4th Street. It is also very likely that because of the upward slope of the addition's roof, that it would be partially visible over the existing roof ridge and more visible from the front than is shown by the lumber mockup of the front corner.

Along E Street the deck and addition would be highly visible, almost reading as a separate building at the rear. However, it is not typical of Capitol Hill for there to be a three-story alley or rear building. Additions that could be perceived as a nearby building is not a strategy employed in this historic district as it might be in more urban historic districts such as Downtown or 14th Street. The rear addition would likely be compatible if reduced to two stories as there are numerous two-story additions and alley buildings found throughout this historic district.

The rear accessory dwelling unit building will be set to the furthest rear area of the lot and though partially visible, be unobtrusive from 4th Street. It is not expected to be visible from E Street.

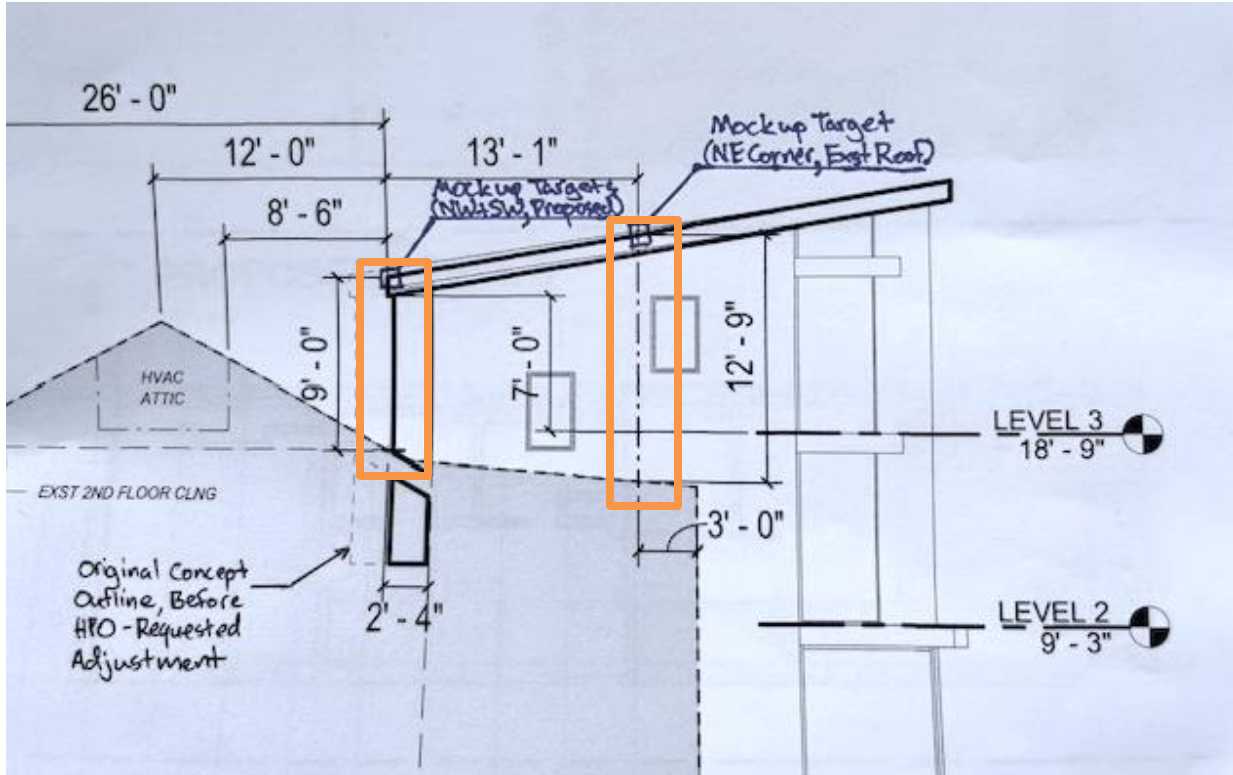
Recommendation

The HPO recommends the Board find the project for the accessory dwelling building to be compatible; but the rear addition should be reduced by up to a story in height and come back to the Board for further evaluation.

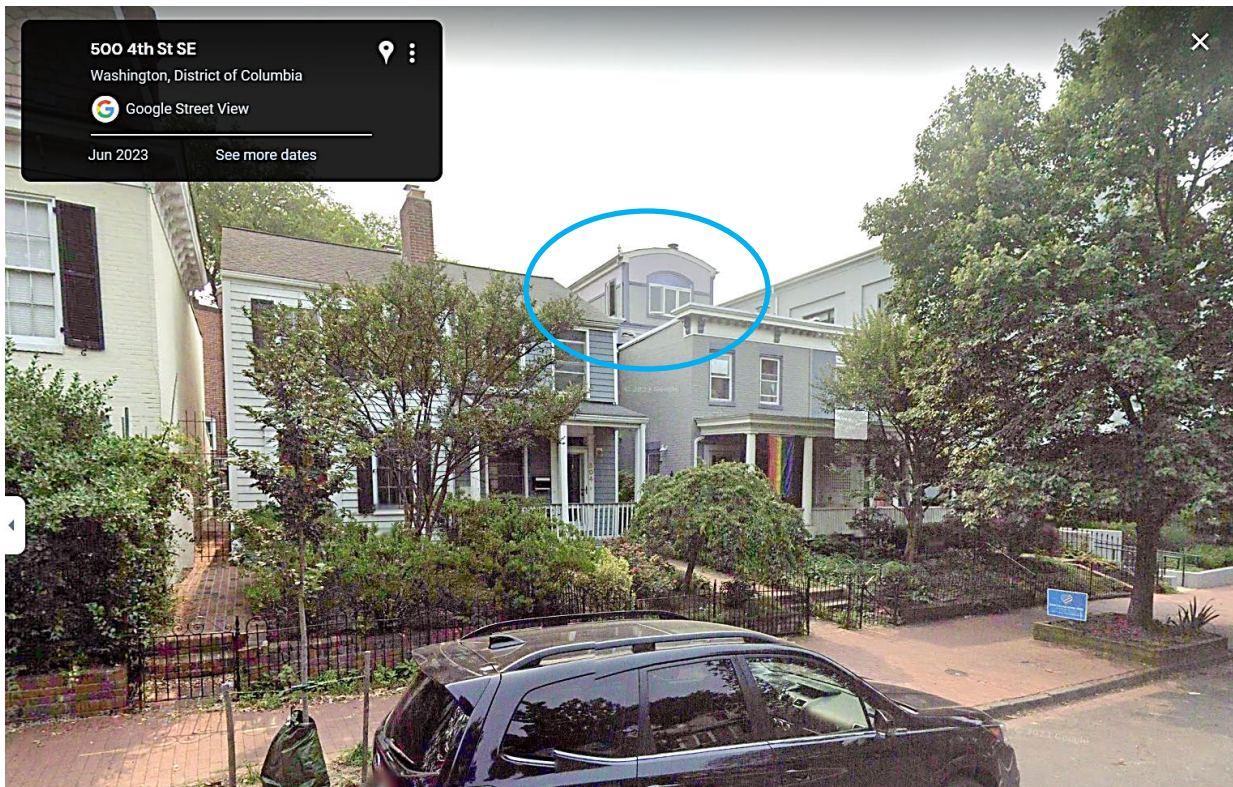
Staff contact: Moira Nadal



Front of 504 seen from 4th Street, subject property marked with star



Drawing showing lumber mock-up posts indicating front corners and midpoint



Google Streetview showing the highly visible rooftop addition at 506 4th St SE



Mock-up of rear addition front wall visible from E Street



Mock-up of rear addition front wall visible from 4th Street