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

Landmark/District:	Capitol Hill Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	732 7th Street, S.E.	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
ANC:	6B	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Meeting Date:	February 23, 2023	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Case Number:	23-175	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Applicant Eric Goetz, with plans by Teass-Warren Architects, seeks concept review for a three-story plus penthouse rear and rooftop addition on a non-contributing building in the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Property Description

732 7th Street SE was built in 1941 for the Potomac Electric Power Company. It is a one-story brick utilitarian building with limited ornament and no fenestration and was determined non-contributing by the Board when considering a previous proposal circa 2014.



732 7th Street SE as seen from 7th Street

Proposal

The existing building would be largely retained, with modifications, and added on to. The existing cornice, base, and door surround would be retained, and a large multi-lite window added around the door surround. Large divided lite windows would be added along the detached elevation at the alley. The existing building would be extended towards the rear about 42 feet.

A two-story mass would be added atop the existing structure, which would be slightly inset from the front as at to not interfere with the cornice of an adjacent historic building. The two-story mass would sit atop the existing building and extend atop a proposed rear addition. An inset from the rear would create a space for a roof deck. Atop the two-story mass would be a partial fourth story inset from both the front and back. The new two-story mass would be brick, and the fourth story clad in standing seam metal panels. Above the fourth story would be a screened mechanical penthouse. A wood fence and roll-up garage door would be erected at the rear property line.



Views of 732 and the 8th Street-fronting buildings as seen from the through-block alley

Evaluation

As the building is non-contributing, the standard for review is the project's general compatibility with the historic district. There are large rear additions on the opposite side of the alley, both buildings facing onto 8th Street. On this block frontage along 7th Street, most of the nearby buildings are 1-2 stories, with the tallest building at 748 7th. In the below photograph, 732 is visible on the far left and 748 is to the right. In the applicant's renderings, 732 appears to be much taller than 748, but this might be the result of the perspective. It would be helpful to better understand the height comparison between the proposal and 748.



Block context along 7th Street, 732 is to the far left and 748 is to the right

The design would better fit into the historic district and solid massing of the existing building if the partial fourth story is removed or pushed further back so that it isn't as prominently visible. The additional height of the mechanical penthouse should also be removed, and the equipment relocated to the interior or rear of the addition.

The color palette of the paint and materials used would be more compatible if it related to the warm earth tones -- red and tan -- found on the existing building and throughout the historic district rather than utilizing cool shades of grey.

While there are many rear roof decks found throughout the historic district, the Board has generally not been supportive of front-facing roof decks. If the inset is retained at the fourth story, the front inset should not be used for a deck or amenity space because of the high visibility. The rear roof deck at the second story shows a pergola. This is atypical for the historic district.

The rear elevation and partial views of the detached side elevation will be visible from 8th Street because of the through-block alley. This visibility is also true for the rear addition the Board approved on 8th Street, as seen in the below photograph. In previous cases regarding rear additions and alley buildings, the Board has had concerns about light-pollution and visibility where large fenestration is shown at the alley. This concern could be addressed by reducing the size of the large window shown on the first story rear to reduce the amount of light that will be visible at the alley and from 8th Street.



Recommendation

The HPO recommends the Board find the project to be generally compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District, with revisions made to eliminate or reduce the visibility of the fourth floor, roof deck, color palette, and rear fenestration as outlined above, and that final approval be delegated to staff.

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