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

Landmark/District:	Capitol Hill Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	146 13th Street, SE	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	May 28, 2015	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	15-127	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Sarah VanLandingham	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Applicants Hubert and Jennifer Schoemaker with plans prepared by Ali R. Honarkar seek concept review for a revised penthouse addition in the Capitol Hill Historic District.

On April 2, 2015 the Board approved a renovation to the property that included enclosing an existing rear porch and altering the fenestration on the side and rear of the house. At that time the Board asked the applicant to revise the penthouse in “material, color, finish, and mass” so that it did not dominate the alley. The motion stated that “if there is a 4th floor that can be added to this [house] that it is not visible from public right-of-way” including Independence Avenue.

Revision

Since the previous meeting, the applicants have revised the plans to reduce the size of the penthouse, pull it further away from the alley, and change the material to an Ipe wood siding. The applicants have constructed a lumber mock-up to show the impact of the penthouse and its visibility.



Evaluation

Although the applicants have reduced the size of the penthouse, the lumber mock-up (traced in red on the image above) shows that it remains visible from a small section of Independence Avenue looking down the alley behind the house. Furthermore, it has become clear through this exercise that any penthouse at the rear would be visible from this location. The mock-up does not appear to be visible from any other vantage point in public space.

If the previous motion is to be taken literally, not only does this revised proposal not meet the conditions set out for compatibility (no visibility from Independence Avenue), it is unlikely that any penthouse on this house could be designed to be invisible from both the front and rear of the property.

That said, the current proposal has been substantially scaled back from the original plans and has been pulled in from the alley so that it does not have as much of a looming presence at the rear. The L'Enfant Trust supports the revised preliminary architectural plans based on the reduced penthouse.

Recommendation

The HPO seeks the Board's direction as to whether the reduced size of the penthouse, while still visible from Independence Avenue, is sufficient in addressing its concerns, or whether the penthouse should be eliminated so that there is no visibility of a fourth floor addition atop the building from Independence Avenue.