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

Property Address:	57 N Street, NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Chapman Coal Company Stable and Garage		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	July 23, 2015	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	15-306		Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	Kim Williams	X	New Construction
		X	Demolition

The applicant, contract purchaser John Sunter and Four Points, with the architecture firm Studio 27 Architecture, seeks conceptual design review for the renovation of and addition to the Chapman Stable and Garage building for conversion into a 110-120 unit apartment building. The project calls for combining two lots, one of which holds the landmark building, the other one of which is vacant and not part of the designated site. The proposal includes a roof addition to the landmark and new construction at the rear. The new construction—technically an addition connected to the historic building by a stair hyphen—is a five-story structure significantly larger than the landmark, but separated it from it by a sizeable courtyard.

In May 2015, the Board approved the project’s concept site plan, including the consolidation of two lots into one, and the construction of a new building to be connected to the landmark, but expressed concern about the following: the scale and visibility of the rooftop addition on the landmark building; the height and character of the connecting hyphen; the amount of rooftop construction on the new building; and the detailing of materials and their coloration on the new building. The Board requested that the applicant develop a preservation plan of the historic landmark building to guide the retention of historic building elements, window replacement, and the removal and addition of painted surfaces. The Board recommended that the applicants revise the concept plan to address the above concerns.

Revised Proposal

Renovation and Addition

Since the previous meeting, the proposed plans for the renovation and addition to the landmark building have been revised to address comments from the Board. In particular, the revised plans retain the historic metal stair and its landing on the building’s N Street elevation and no longer propose painted window arches. The metal canopy, determined to not be an original feature, is being proposed for removal and the painted wall surfaces are shown as having the paint removed to expose raw brick. The rooftop addition, set back 12’ 6” in the previous scheme, is now proposed to be set back 21’ 6” from the façade, aligning with the back of the existing elevator tower. The existing building is approximately 25 feet high at its front cornice line, sloping down to 20 feet at its rear wall; the addition would rise an additional 25’ feet at its full height, resulting in a total building height of 50 feet at its maximum point, which remains unchanged from the previous proposal.

In plan, the addition has been reduced from a double-loaded corridor with apartments on either side to a single-loaded corridor. The fourth floor (first floor of the rooftop addition) has ceiling heights ranging from 9' 6" to 13 feet, and the fifth floor (second story of the rooftop addition) extends 12 feet high at its maximum point.

Connecting Hyphen

The connection between the new construction and the landmark has been reduced in height by a story, to the level of the fourth floor rather than that of the fifth floor, but is now separated from the landmark by 10 feet rather than the previous 17'6". The hyphen has also been widened from approximately 15 feet to 60 feet. Rather than containing a stair, the connector accommodates apartments on the lower floors and a corridor between the new construction and historic building on the upper floors.

New Construction

The proposed new construction, a five-story building, retains its L-shaped plan and its courtyard in the center in these revised plans. The penthouse on the roof has been re-designed with an exercise room and restroom facilities under cover. It is not clear how the condensing units, shown on the roof plan, but not on the overhead view, will be treated on the new building or on the addition to the landmark.

Evaluation

As revised, the proposed plans take certain steps towards successfully resolving the Board's concerns regarding the renovation of the landmark building. For instance, the revised plans retain the historic stair on N Street and no longer propose painting the window arches. However, the revised plans do not adequately address the more significant issue of the scale of construction on the historic building's rooftop. The staff recommendation on the previous proposal, adopted by the Board, noted:

The roof addition should be removed entirely, or be set back no less than 35 feet to the point of the current roof monitors, rise no more than one-story in height, and not extend the full length of the building. Any new roof addition proposal should use the footprint of the existing roof monitors as a point of reference and should not be prominently visible from N Street.

Although the revised roof addition is set back further than it was previously, it is still not appropriately recessed, still rises well above the building's roofline, still extends the full length of the building, still retains a full second story, and would still be visible from the street from most vantage points. While a modest rooftop addition may be attainable, neither the revised plans, nor an alternative scheme with recessions and projections shown to staff, are consistent with the Guidelines. As presented, the roof addition will be visible from the street and its design is not compatible with the character of the historic landmark. As suggested in the previous staff report, enlarging, extruding or raising the existing roof monitors may be an opportunity to gain additional square footage by providing loft-like interior spaces or roof decks.

In terms of the new construction, the penthouse has greater architectural treatment than the previous scheme, as requested, and the hyphen has been reduced in height giving it a more human scale, as suggested. The treatment of the alley side of the new building, and the detailing of the materials have not been further refined at this point, but will likely be addressed in future submissions.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board approve the project with the condition that a preservation plan be prepared and presented and that the proposed roof addition to the landmark be removed entirely, or be sharply reduced in scale.