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

Landmark/District:	Capitol Hill Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	639 A Street SE	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
ANC:	6B	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Meeting Date:	June 1, 2023	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Case Number:	23-319	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Applicants Jessica Bachay and Haider Haimus, with plans by Jennifer Fowler, seek concept review for demolition and reconstruction of a contributing building located in the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Project Background

639 A Street SE is a two-story frame rowhouse built in 1897 as one of two. The Board previously reviewed a concept application and delegated authority to HPO to approve a permit for a two-story rear addition and two-story garage at the property in May 2022; the permit was issued in December 2022.

During construction, the scope of the permit was exceeded, with the roof, framing, and all exterior walls other than the front elevation removed. As the work undertaken exceeded the approved plans, a Stop Work Order was issued and the applicants were advised to submit a revised set of plans showing the extent of demolition and reconstruction for concept review before amending the issued permit.

Proposal

The applicant proposes to reconstruct the building, and the previously approved addition as well as the two-story alley structure.

Evaluation

The extent of removal that was undertaken constitutes demolition of the building per the Historic Preservation Regulations, DCMR 10, Section 305.1(b).¹ While the demolition is frustrating and regrettable, this has been pursued through the enforcement process. The issue before the Board is

¹ 305.1 Work considered demolition under the Act shall include, but is not limited to, any of the following, as determined by the Mayor's Agent:

(b) The removal or destruction of all or a substantial portion of the structural components of the building, such as structural walls, floor assemblies, and roofs;

whether the proposed reconstruction with the previously approved alterations is compatible with the character of the historic district.

No materials from the areas demolished were retained. The property owners' contractor has expressed concern over the retention of the remaining portions of the building. The reconstruction will be based on the drawings provided and photographs.

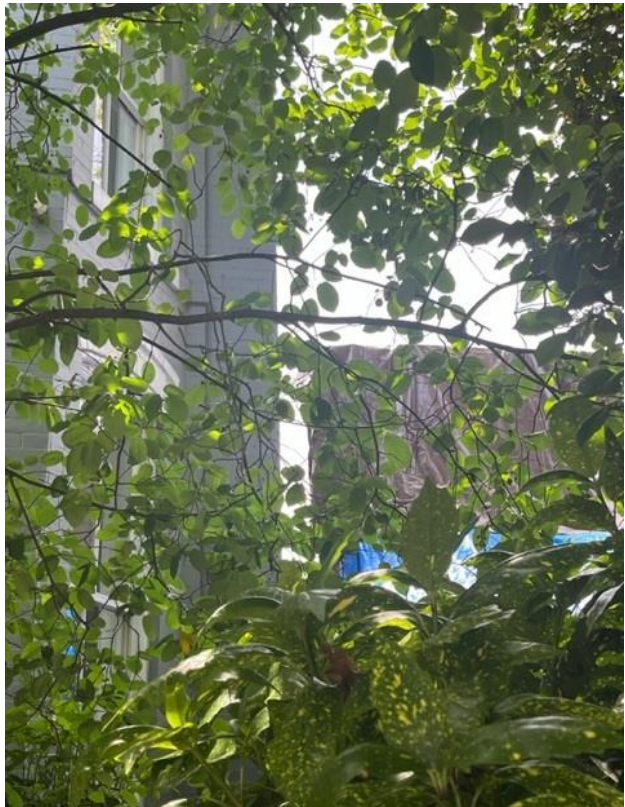
Recommendation

The HPO recommends the Board find the project to be compatible with the Capitol Hill historic district, and delegate final approval to staff.

Staff contact: Moira Nadal



639 A Street SE before demolition



639 A St SE, from the front, after illegal demolition



639 A St SE, from the alley, after demolition



639 A Street SE from the front (photo courtesy of property owner)



639 A Street SE showing back of front façade (photo courtesy of property owner)