

**Testimony of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society
before the DC Preservation Review Board June 28, 2018
212 A Street, NE HPA 18-426**

My name is Beth Purcell and I am testifying on behalf of the Historic Preservation Committee of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society. Thank you for letting us share our views on this project. The Historic Preservation Committee of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society reviewed the plans for the project dated May 21, 2018. This two-story frame house, built in 1874 or earlier, is a contributing building.¹ HPRB recently reviewed an application concerning the adjacent house from the same applicant (214 A Street, NE, HPA 18-209). Both houses were probably built at the same time by the same owner.

The applicant proposes new rear and side additions, to demolish existing garages and construct a new garage. The applicant plans to rehabilitate the front elevation, retaining the wood brackets, replacing aluminum trim with wood trim, replacing aluminum siding with cedar wood siding, and Marvin two-over-two wood windows. If HPRB grants concept approval, we suggest requiring HPO staff signoff on the replacement wood siding and windows. The rear elevation, with two-over-two wood windows and wood siding is appropriate.

We were initially concerned about a potential horse walk on the west side of 212 A Street, NE leading to the rear of this deep lot. The Hopkins map (1893) shows 212 A Street, NE and a passageway leading to a frame accessory building at the rear of the lot (and another accessory building at the rear of 214 A Street). The map's legend indicates that this accessory building was a "stable and shed" and we thought that in 1893, before automobiles were common, this accessory building may have been a stable, and the passageway a horse walk. However, we are persuaded by the staff's analysis of the lot's topography, suggesting that the passageway was not a horse walk. Nevertheless, these open spaces are defining features of Capitol Hill rowhouses. One type of open space are horse walks between houses, a character-defining features. The Board recognized the importance of open spaces such as horse walks in 108-110 8th Street, NE, HPA 16-694, and allowed a partial infill, beginning 10 feet from the front of the house, based primarily on the deteriorated condition of the house's wall facing the horse walk. We believe that setting back the side addition 30 feet from the front elevation preserves a significant amount of the open space.

While there is a substantial amount of interior demolition, it appears that little original fabric remains. We have no objections to demolishing the existing garages. The proposed two-story garage/accessory building is simple and compatible. However, the height, at 24 feet, 7 inches, exceeds HPRB's 20 foot limit for alley buildings.

We believe that the project is compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Thank you for considering our comments.

¹ See Faetz & Pratt (1874).