

**Capitol Hill Restoration Society**  
**P.O. Box 15264 Washington, D.C. 202.543.0425**

March 16, 2017

Ms. Marnique Heath  
Chair, Historic Preservation Review Board  
1100 Fourth Street, SW, Suite E650  
Washington, DC 20034

Re: HPA 17-227 316 G Street, NE

Dear Ms. Heath:

We reviewed the plans for the project dated February 9, 2017. Thank you for letting us share our views on this project. This project raises serious preservation concerns.

This house is within the Capitol Hill Historic District, part of the "Swampoodle" extension to the historic district approved by HPRB on May 28, 2015 (Case 15-01). Figure 1. This house, a Classical Revival rowhouse designed in 1907 by A. M. Poynton for owner/builder Joseph M. Carmody, is a contributing building, one or four constructed on the same building permit, and similar to 14 other houses on the block. The staff report for the Swampoodle expansion to the historic district states:

[Swampoodle] meets District of Columbia Criterion D (Architecture and Urbanism), because it embodies the distinguishing characteristics of architectural styles, building types or methods of construction, and because it is an expression of urban planning, landscape architecture, siting and design significant to the appearance and development of the District of Columbia, ... [and] also meets Criterion E (Artistry) as its buildings possess high artistic and aesthetic value that contribute significantly to the heritage and appearance of the District of Columbia; and Criterion F (Creative Masters) because the buildings of the expanded area have been identified as works of craftsmen, artists, sculptors, architects, landscape architects, urban planners and builders whose works have influenced the evolution of their fields, and that are significant to the development of the District of Columbia.

Staff report, Capitol Hill Historic District (Boundary Increase) (2015).

The poster photograph for the Swampoodle expansion would be the 300 block of G Street, NE, with its beautiful line of Classical Revival bayfronts. Figures 2 - 4. This block is pristine - there are no third-story additions here. The project proposes a third story rear addition which would be the only third story structure on this block. Although the sight line study indicates that the addition would not be visible from across G Street, it would be visible from oblique angles on G Street. This area of Capitol Hill is experiencing major development pressures; since Swampoodle was included in the Capitol Hill Historic District in 2015, there have already been

six HPRB cases, and additional cases can be expected. Allowing this visible third story would set a bad precedent that would soon be copied.

In a recent case, 1116 Constitution Avenue NE, HPA 16-526, HRPB required that a rear addition be reduced from three stories to two-stories. Key factors appeared to be that the three story addition would destroy the original character of the block, which had no third stories, setting a bad precedent for a popup, the visibility of the addition from 12th Street, NE, and from nearby Walter Houp Court. 146 13th Street, SE, HPA 15-127, also involved a proposed third story addition in an intact row of two-story houses; the Board required that the any addition be substantially reduced in size.

This project also proposes to fill a dogleg, destroying an intact mirror-image pair of doglegs, character-defining features in the historic district. Like the uninterrupted roof line, all the doglegs on this block are now intact. We believe that it is possible to preserve the dogleg while allowing a viable addition.

Extensive interior demolition is planned, which appears to violate 10 DCMR 305.1(b).

The design and materials for the rear elevation are appropriate.

A site plan is needed to determine whether the proposed basement entrance would comply with HPO's "Preservation and Design Guidelines for Basement Entrances and Windows."

We believe that the project is not compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

*Beth Purcell*

Beth Purcell, Chair

Figure 1. Swampoodle extension to the Capitol Hill Historic District.

## Capitol Hill Historic District Map – Swampoodle Extension

### HPRB Presentation CHHD Expansion



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Figure 2. Classical Revival rowhouses on the 300 block of G Street, NE, north side, looking east.



Figure 3. Classical Revival rowhouses on the 300 block of G Street, NE, looking west



Figure 4. Cornice detail, Classical Revival rowhouse, 308 G Street, NE

