

**Testimony of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society
before the DC Preservation Review Board on January 25, 2018
400 D Street, SE HPA 17-488**

My name is Beth Purcell and I am testifying on behalf of the Historic Preservation Committee of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society. We reviewed the concept plans for the parking structure dated December 22, 2017 and revised plans sent on January 12, 2018. CHRS has traditionally opposed new curb cuts, and we opposed the curb cut, access road, and parking structure in this case because they would introduce commercial parking into the interior of the square and increase vehicle traffic and noise. The applicant plans a new curb cut, access road, and a parking structure. HPRB earlier granted concept approval for building new rowhouses on this site, ruled that it had no jurisdiction over the curb cut or access road, and requested that the applicant submit plans for the design of proposed parking structures.

The parking structures, 13 feet 4 inches tall, with automated lifts, will accommodate 15 automobiles. Autos will be parked above grade and below-grade. The pergola (without solar panels) will help screen the automobiles from neighbors looking down. Both options have tan brick and either tan brick or wood slat screening on the exterior. The wood slats option is less top heavy and seems a little lighter in structure. The applicant has responded to questions on the materials for the exterior, access means to the parking structure, and decibel levels from operating the lifts.

Ebenezer United Methodist Church, a large red brick church at 4th and D streets, SE, (1897) is listed on the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites (1975). The parking structures should minimally detract from the historic church. For this reason, and because there are a number of red brick buildings nearby, we suggest red brick for brick areas of the exterior.

Neighbors' views on this project are very important. There is both opposition and support for off street parking, depending on where the neighbors live, on the block or nearby. The examples of interior block parking on p. 15 of the revised plans appear to be open spaces, without a parking structure. Traditional Capitol Hill "parking structures" are garages in alleys. See generally HPO, "D.C. Historic Alley Buildings Survey."

We believe that in view of the Board's determination on jurisdiction, the only issue in this case is the design of the parking structure, and for this reason we believe that the project is compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District.

We understand that when DDOT considers the applicant's request for a curb cut, it will ask HPRB for a recommendation, and when this occurs, we request that the community be informed of DDOT's inquiry.

Thank you for considering our views.