

**Testimony of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society before the DC Historic Preservation
Review Board January 28, 2016
HPA 16-100 631 Lexington Place, NE**

My name is Beth Purcell and I am testifying on behalf of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society's Historic Preservation Committee. Thank you for letting us share our views on this project. The Historic Preservation Committee of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society reviewed the revised plans for the project dated January 14, 2016.

This brick porch-front rowhouse is part of a large Kennedy Bros. row built in the early twentieth century. The project would expand the attic space and add a basement entrance. On the front elevation, the existing windows (including the dormer windows) are six-over-one, a window type often seen in Craftsman-inspired rowhouses from this period. The revised plans specify restoring if possible or replacing the six-over-one windows on the front exterior (including the dormer windows), with six-over-one wood windows, as shown in the plans at A001. Replacing the metal porch columns with wood or fypon columns, which appear to be Tuscan order, will restore the original appearance (based on other rowhouses on Lexington Place), as described in the plans at A001 and an email from Brian Craddock to Beth Purcell dated January 8, 2016. Replacing the metal railing on the porch with a wood railing and pickets will also restore the original appearance.

We noted that it appeared that a significant amount of the floor assembly would be removed, which appears inconsistent with 10 DCMR 305.1(b). The revised plans show that existing floor system would remain in place, except in connection with joists near the stairs, which would be replaced. However, some of the walls to be demolished appear to be structural walls.

In our earlier comments we noted that the rear elevation is a hodgepodge lacking an organizing principle. The windows on the brick section are part of the historic fabric, and should be retained; the applicant proposes to block off the window on the first story, and replace the window on the second story with a six-over-one window, and add a small six-over-one window for a bathroom. The siding will be hardie; the windows will be wood (A005). We agree that the staff should work with the applicant on the rear elevation.

Because the sightlines are very tight, in our comments we stated that it is essential that the applicant provide a sight-line study. The sight-line study in the revised plans is helpful, but uses a 5-foot 6 inch guide, instead of the required 6-foot guide. Because the sight lines are tight, we suggest a revised study and a lumber-mockup.

Earlier we also noted that specifications are needed on the new proposed front basement entrance, in order to determine if it satisfies HPRB's guidelines in "Preservation and Design Guidelines for Basement Entrances and Windows." Although the applicant has provided additional information, it is not totally clear how the new entrance and steps will be integrated with the porch and front yard.

We believe that after additional information is provided, the project may be compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Thank you for considering our comments.