

**Testimony of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society  
before the Historic Preservation Review Board on September 28, 2017  
418-420 7th Street, SE (HPA 17-487)**

My name is Beth Purcell and I am testifying on behalf of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society's Historic Preservation Committee. On August 31<sup>st</sup> the committee reviewed the revised plans for the project dated August 25, 2017, and later reviewed revised plans dated September 18 and 21, 2017. In September the applicant has twice ( September 18 and 21) shared revised plans for the project presenting schemes A & B, with and without the carriage house. Aside from the carriage house the designs do not appear to be significantly different from the ones our committee saw on August 31st. The applicant now proposes only scheme B, without the carriage house.

Weller and Repetti built these two contributing houses, 17 x 35 feet, with doglegs, as part of a row 414-426 7th Street, SE, on a single permit in 1889. They are contributing buildings. Weller and Repetti were examples of the many small-scale builders active on Capitol Hill during the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> One house has a pyramidal bay cap. The houses at 400-426 7th Street and around the corner at 703-713 D Street, are nineteenth-century brick row-houses with doglegs largely intact.

Our comments on the earlier plans noted problems with excessive demolition, eliminating intact doglegs, and a large nontraditional "carriage house." At the hearing on August 3, 2017, the Board found the concept incompatible with the historic district. For the project to be found compatible with the historic district, the Board found that the plans should be modified to accomplish the following five requirements:

(1) Significantly reduce the amount of demolition to be consistent with DCMR 10-C, Section 305. (2) Retain the rear elevation walls. The applicant notes that the interior walls are not original to the house, and plans to remove these. Floor assemblies will be retained. The party wall will be retained, but two new openings are planned. However, the rear walls will be removed.

(3) Pull the rooftop addition in several feet from the rear elevations, eliminate the deck at the front of the roof, and relocate the HVAC equipment off the roof of the roof addition, and prepare a roof mock-up of the proposed roof addition to test for visibility. The rear roof deck has been pulled back and the front roof deck has been removed. The condensers will be moved to the front of the third story. A member of the committee looked for the mockup on September 3, 2017 and did not see one.

(4) Inset any infill next to the dog-leg additions from the rear elevations to retain a memory of the original massing and rhythm of the rear elevations. The applicant has not satisfied this requirement; the miniscule "notch" does not reflect the dogleg.

(5) Limit the height of the new rear building to 20 feet and explore the possibility of pushing it further back on the lot. This issue is now moot.

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<sup>1</sup> DC building permit # 2119 (26 May 1889). Historic Preservation Office, *Capitol Hill Historic District*, (2003), 16-17.

We believe that with the exception of retaining the rear walls, the mockup, and the dogleg, the revised plans for this project satisfy the Board's requirements. Scheme B without the carriage house, retains a larger intact area of green space in the rear of the yard. .

Thank you for considering our comments.