

**Testimony of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society
before the DC Preservation Review Board on November 16, 2017
716-718 L St SE (HPA 17-658)**

My name is Alison Ross and I am a member of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society's Historic Preservation Committee. I am testifying on their behalf. Thank you for letting us share our views on this project at 716-718 L St SE.

The Capitol Hill Restoration Society's Historic Preservation Committee reviewed the plans for the project dated October 31, 2017.

A photograph from 1949 that Beth Purcell found likely shows the buildings' original appearance. We suggest the applicant return to the six-over-one and four-over-one windows as seen in the 1949 photograph. We agree with HPO's recommendations that the storefront roofs should be flat and these new storefront windows retain the transom above, as in the original, matching the transom over the other two entrances (Figures 1, 2).

The new fourth story and penthouse would be visible from across L Street and from 8th Street. In a recent case involving a two-story commercial building, 507 8th Street SE, HPA 16-518, the Board found the concept of adding a two-story addition of this size and visibility from the 8th Street SE right-of-way to be incompatible with the character of the historic district and advised the applicant to reduce the addition such that it will be smaller and less visible from the 8th Street SE right-of-way and return to the Board for further review. While the previous case was in a more prominent location of Barracks Row, this project is very similar and should not be approved in its current form.

We agree with HPO's recommendation to set back the fourth story from 10' to 20'. We are further concerned with the volume of the addition: the rear addition, fourth story, and penthouse at 7,558 square feet, overwhelm the historic building at 4,731 square feet and are therefore not subordinate to the historic building.

We also agree with the ANC 6B04 comments regarding the material of the rear addition. The historic building is red tapestry brick and the east elevation of the addition is very visible and so the brick should differ to break up the length of the building.

We believe that the rear addition to the existing three stories may be compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District, but the fourth story and penthouse are not compatible. Thank you for considering our comments.

Figure 1. John P. Wymer photograph # 1503 of 700 block of L Street, SE (1949) Image courtesy Historical Society of Washington, DC.



Figure 2. 716-718 L Street, SE

