

**Testimony of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society before the DC Historic Preservation
Review Board June 25, 2015**

HPA 15-246 801 North Carolina Avenue, SE

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.

This church is an important Richardsonian Romanesque building at a major intersection on Capitol Hill. We agree with the staff report that this church is a landmark in the common sense of the term, and that the church's lantern is a character-defining feature. CHRS met earlier with the project architect and a representative of the church.

The tower roof is in serious disrepair and leaks. The applicant proposes reproducing the tower roof, and we believe that this proposal warrants consideration. The May 28 plans are a major improvement over the earlier 2015 plans. The revised plans call for reproducing the tower roof, with a simplified four-faceted roof, and reproducing the barrel arches and conical caps with cast elements, in either GFRC or GFRP, materials that have been used for over 40 years, and have an expected 100-year useful life. The replacement tower would be cast using the existing tower elements as models. The estimated cost is \$200,000 to \$300,000. The existing finial would be retained and reused. While we believe that the May 28 plans have the potential to recreate the experience of the original Richardsonian church and be compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District, several important questions first need to be addressed:

- A critical geometric design element is how the conical caps intersect with the roof. The plans at pages 12 and 13 do not agree with existing conditions, and need to be revised. The applicant has agreed to study this issue.
- According to the applicant, it is technically possible to reproduce all the detailing, not just simplified detailing. It would be helpful to know the cost to exactly reproduce the tower roof. We agree with the staff report that the fluted detailing on the four corner towers and the dentils are integral design elements. The applicant agreed to work toward reproducing more of the details.
- A sample of the texture and color of the columns and roof covering in GFRC or GFRP to be used for this church is needed in order to assess whether replacing the tower roof using this method is appropriate. A matte finish would work best. The applicant agreed to furnish a sample to HPO and plans to use a matte finish. We also suggest a paint analysis of the tower be performed, in order to determine the original color of the metal elements in 1901, and that the replacement materials match that color, which the applicant agreed to do.
- The design for the roof covering should replicate the original slate in size, color, and finish. We understand that proposed plan of the roof on page 12 is preliminary on this point and does not show the complete plans for replicating the roof slates. The replicated roof slates should be a matte finish.
- The scalloping on the louvers provides shadowing and interest to the tower, and we suggest that the applicant investigate whether it is possible to reproduce the scalloping, or the effect of scalloping. The applicant agreed to reproduce the scalloped louvers.
- If HPRB approves this application, we suggest that the HPRB order require that HPO staff sign off on all shop drawings before the start of any reproduction work. The applicant agreed to this process.

Thank you for considering our comments.