

Capitol Hill Restoration Society
P.O. Box 15264 Washington, D.C. 202.543.0425

June 18, 2019

Ms. Marnique Heath
Chair, Historic Preservation Review Board
1100 Fourth Street, SW, Suite E650
Washington, DC 20024

Re: 520 Groff Court, NE HPA 19-311

Dear Ms. Heath:

The Capitol Hill Restoration Society's Historic Preservation Committee reviewed the plans for the project dated February 19 and April 29, 2019.

This two-story alley dwelling, built in 1957, forms part of a row with four other alley dwellings built in 1900 (512-518 Groff Court). Immediately north of 520 is a vacant lot, where the applicant proposes to build a new alley dwelling, to be connected to 520. Nearby are 501-503 and 500-508 Groff Court, row dwellings built in 1989, shown in the attached map. A 10-foot wide alley separates 512-520 from the houses at 500-508. While 520 Groff Court was built after the period of significance, it fits well into this alley scape of small, uniform houses, sharing the same scale, design, and materials.

The new house is brick with similar fenestration; the running bond coursing and the azec cornice differentiate the new house from the 1900 houses. The original entrance to 520 would be retained, and although it would no longer be operational, the doorway pattern of the row would be preserved, and the new rowhouse is brick with segmented openings over the door and windows.¹ An opening in the wall of 520 links the old and new houses. The project thoughtfully increases the living space in this alley dwelling.

However, the applicant also plans a two-story glassed-in bay at the rear of the new house, which would extend past the rear elevations of 512-512 Groff Court. Although there are fences, all these alley dwellings occupy a constrained space with high visibility. The glassed-in addition would break the building line in the rear, and would be very visible and not compatible with the massing of the other alley dwellings.

Views of neighbors are important and we would like to see information on this topic.

We believe that this project, with the exception of the rear bay, is compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,
Beth Purcell
Chair

¹ The rendering at A-4 shows 1/1 windows, but the text refers to 6 over 6. One over one windows would be appropriate for the pattern of this row.

Square 779. Red arrow points to 520 Groff Court, NE. 501, 503, 500-508 Groff Court (1989) are shown in yellow, east and south of the row containing 520 Groff Court. Source: HistoryQuest

