

**Testimony of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society
before the DC Historic Preservation Review Board on November 4, 2021
626 Lexington Place, NE HPA 21-555**

My name is Beth Purcell and I am testifying on behalf of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society's Historic Preservation Committee. This three-bay brick porch-front contributing rowhouse is part of a large Kennedy Bros. project designed by A. H. Sonneman and built in 1912. It has a two-bay front porch, dormers, and is a contributing building. Figure 1 in our letter.

In 2017, HPRB granted concept approval for raising the attic and changes to the rear elevation. HPA 17-521 (consent calendar). The applicant changed architects and filed a new request for concept approval, HPA 21-555. The Capitol Hill Restoration Society's Historic Preservation reviewed the plans for the project dated June 8 and September 29, 2021.

No changes are proposed to the front elevation. The plans call for increasing the height of the roofline to enlarge the attic, as has been done with several other nearby Kennedy Bros. rowhouses (e.g., 625 E Street, NE (HPA-169), 630 Lexington Place, NE (HPA 17-401), 631 Lexington Place, NE (HPA 16-100)). It appears that raising the roofline will not be visible from public space.

The rear porch has already been enclosed with an unsympathetic treatment, which would be reversed. The proposed new rear elevation has appropriate design and materials.

The applicant proposes to enclose the dogleg. On the blockface including 626 Lexington Place, NE, doglegs remain on 19 of the 21 rowhouses, i.e., approximately 90 percent of the original doglegs are intact. (The applicant contends that a third house also had a previously enclosed dogleg.) Thus, this row of doglegs is substantially intact, with 18 or 19 intact doglegs in a blockface of 21 rowhouses. Figure 2 in our letter. Doglegs are character-defining features of Capitol Hill rowhouses. The Board has protected intact rows from infilling and should do so again in this case. See 316 G Street, NE, HPA 17-227, and 1355 A Street, NE, HPA 19-608. The applicant points to differences in rear elevations on Maryland Avenue, NE, enclosing porches, and building or changing garages as justification for enclosing this dogleg. The key inquiry is intact doglegs in the blockface, not the entire square. Enclosing a porch preserves the massing of the building, unlike enclosing a dogleg. Garages are not relevant to doglegs.

We believe that because the applicant proposes to infill a dogleg in a substantially intact row of doglegs, this project is not compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Thank you for considering our comments.