

**Testimony of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society
before the DC Historic Preservation Review Board on December 16,
2021
912 G Street, SE HPA 22-085**

My name is Beth Purcell and I am testifying on behalf of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society's Historic Preservation Committee. We reviewed the plans filed December 10, 2021. The applicant proposes to add a roofdeck and a parapet wall to a one-story garage. The adjacent garages are one story. The alley-facing elevation would be clad in hardiplank with three optional openings. The other elevations would be partially hardiplank topped by latticework. The effect would be a visible hollow box 19 feet 4 inches high, not compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District.

We support the staff's recommendation that the plans should be revised to specify a simple railing. In our comments we flagged the Board's three-foot setback rule for garage roofdecks.¹ For this reason, if the Board approves this project, we request that the Board require that the roofdeck be set back by a railing, at least three feet from the edge of the alley elevation.

Thank you for considering our comments.

¹ In 1120 Park Street, NE (HPA 16-242) we argued that a roof deck on a garage is not compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District because garages are utilitarian buildings, not locations for recreation. An HPO publication notes that Capitol Hill has a significant number of garages, and describes garages:

Building Style and Characteristics: The standard garage form—a small, one-story, single-bay structure—was fully developed and widely built by the 1910s. Typically, the garage is purely utilitarian with a garage door opening on the front, sometimes a window on one side wall, flat roof, and little or no ornamentation. Garages were built as freestanding structures and as attached structures, both independently and together. HPO, *DC Historic Alley Buildings Survey*, 22.

In 1120 Park Street, NE, in response to our concerns, the Board ordered the applicant to install a railing three feet back from the edge of the garage roofdeck fronting on the alley. The proposed elevated roof deck is the functional equivalent a roof deck on a garage.