



March 20, 2019

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Marnique Heath, Chair
Historic Preservation Review Board
1100 4th Street SW, Suite E650
Washington, DC 20024

VIA E-MAIL: historic.preservation@dc.gov

RE: HPA #19-218: 209 C ST SE; concept/main entrance and basement stair reconstruction

Dear Chairperson Heath:

At a regularly scheduled, properly noticed, meeting on March 12, 2019, with a quorum present, Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 6B voted 9-0-1 to support the applicant's above-referenced request.

ANC 6B believes that the design elements of the project are consistent with Historic Preservation requirements.

This property came before the Board in 2015 for concept review for a rear addition (HPA 15-503) with the support of ANC 6B and was approved in 2015. As part of that and concurrent interior renovation project, the applicant is now seeking concept review for changes to the front areaway to add an entrance to a basement apartment.

The ANC reviewed plans dated March 5. We understand the applicant is continuing to work with HPO to revise plans; however, the commission felt comfortable reviewing the concept. Our letter should not be construed as blanket support, just support or no position for the delineated items in the last paragraphs.

The applicant presented compelling evidence that the geometry of the property precludes a safe and code-compliant middle landing for a basement entrance in line with the existing guidelines. ANC 6B recognizes that guidelines are just that, guidelines. They are required by regulation to augment, not supplant, preservation law and regulation.

Preservation regulations require the board to consider the project based on its "material integrity...allowable development rights...practical or regulatory constraints...[and] compatibility with its immediate context"

(10-A 2001 (a)-(c)). The front retaining wall has undergone many changes over time and its **material integrity** before the project was minimal. The property has by-right **allowable development rights** for a basement apartment requiring entry. This unique geometry presents **practical and regulatory constraints** because of the distance between the facade and sidewalk and height of front door. And, finally, this property's **immediate context** is a purpose-built single family dwelling adjacent to a large apartment building to one side and differing style row houses to the other. Directly across the street are large non-contributing hotels and the capitol complex begins on adjacent blocks.

Because of the confluence of these factors, ANC 6B encourages the board to approve this concept design for a new front areaway and basement entrance at 209 C St SE. We find the following aspects to be compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District and generally consistent with preservation law and regulations:

- 1) A cut in a retaining wall towards the western end of the property, allowing for a walkway with 2-4 steps down to and new basement entrance.
- 2) A rebuilt primary stairwell and retaining wall cut with as much original material as possible, including the stone steps. We recognize that safety and building code standards may require alterations. We would support changes such as those presented to us in the March 5 plans.
- 3) A rebuilt retaining wall at the sidewalk at what is best considered the historic elevation.

ANC 6B did not take a position on the size, or design of the upper landing or how it relates to the western breezeway.

Please contact Commissioner Corey Holman, ANC 6B's Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Committee Chair, at 301-664-4132 or 6b06@anc.dc.gov if you have questions or need further information.

Sincerely,



Chander Jayaraman
Chair, ANC 6B

Cc:

Applicant/Architect: Ricardo Hendi, R.A.
P&Z Chair: Corey Holman
SMD Commissioner: Jennifer Samolyk
