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HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION
2013 SEP 27 AM 10:42

Landmark/District:	Capitol Hill Historic District	(X) Agenda
Address:	508 4th Street, SE	() Consent
		(X) Concept
Meeting Date:	September 26, 2013	(X) Alteration
Case Number:	13-543	() New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Frances McMillen	() Demolition
		() Subdivision

Applicants William and Catherine Durbin with plans prepared by Phillip Anderson request concept review for a rear addition to 508 4th Street, SE in the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Property Description

Constructed as early as 1875, 508 4th Street, SE is a two-story, semi-detached brick house with a rear dogleg. The roof slopes to the rear of the house. A two-story, aluminum clad rear addition was added in recent years. The addition's second floor is supported by wood posts and extends to the property line, projecting over a side court located to the south (right) side of the house. The subject property measures approximately 58' in length and 14' in width. A frame storage structure is located to the rear of the property. The adjoining property to the north, 506 4th Street, is of identical construction and was built at the same time as the subject property, but a rear and third floor addition was added in 2003 (HPA #03-391). A driveway belonging to Mount Joy Baptist Church abuts the property to the south.

Proposal

The proposal calls for the construction of a two story rear addition with a small bay projecting off the second floor. The addition measures approximately 39' feet in length (including the projection of second floor bay) and spans the width of the property line, closing off the side court at the rear of the original house. The addition's second floor will align with the historic house resulting in the roof being slightly higher than the original building. Currently the second floor of the dogleg is approximately 8" lower than the main block of the house. The addition's fenestration consists of single one-over-one wood windows located on the first and second floors of the front (west) elevation and the rear (east) elevation. Three, ganged one-over-one windows are located on the rear (east) elevation of the bay and a single one-over-one window is located on the south side of the bay. French doors are proposed for the addition's first floor and are located beneath the bay. The addition will be clad in fiber cement siding. The proposal also calls for the demolition of the storage structure at the rear of the property.

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 18674
EXHIBIT NO. 11

Board of Zoning Adjustment
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Evaluation

The Board has generally upheld the principle that additions to historic buildings should not exceed the size of the original structure, establishing a deferential or subordinate relationship between new and old. However, the Board has exercised flexibility where an established pattern of expansion already exists among neighboring properties, particularly in cases involving a deep lot where a substantial addition can be more comfortably situated. In the context of the subject property, a large rear addition would not be out of place. The adjacent house at 506 4th Street, SE extends far into its lot as does 518 4th Street, SE and 521 and 513 5th Street, located to the rear of the property. Because of the driveway located next to the subject property, portions of the side elevation of the addition will be visible, but because of the lot depth its full length will likely not be perceptible.

In considering proposed alterations or demolition to doglegs, the Board has considered whether it is a character defining feature or offers information on the history of the building. Retaining as much of the dogleg at the subject property is encouraged, but it is understood doing so presents a challenge because it is vertically offset a few feet from the main block of the house and creates low ceiling heights on the first floor. Because the addition will align with the second floor of the house, its roofline will be slightly taller than the original building. As indicated by the drawings the increase is minimal and because of the slope of the roof of the original house the height difference will not be incompatible.

Closing the side court at the only at the rear of the historic house maintains the appearance of the court from the street and is in keeping with Board decisions approving court closures at the rear wall of the historic building (1205 Walter Street, SE, HPA #13-181; 202 9th Street, SE, HPA #13-383; 715 East Capitol Street, SE, HPA #08-280; 643 South Carolina Avenue, SE, HPA #06-229)

Recommendation

The HPO recommends the Board find the project consistent with the preservation act and delegate final approval to staff.