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**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD  
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

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Property Address:	<b>1242 New Jersey Ave NW</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Mount Vernon Square Historic District</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar
ANC:	<b>6C</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Denial Calendar
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept Review
Meeting Date:	<b>January 24, 2013</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	<b>#13-019</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Brendan Meyer</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

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The applicant, owner I.S. Enterprises, Inc., seeks concept review for a 3-story, 2-unit brick rowhouse with setback penthouse at 1242 New Jersey Avenue NW in the Mount Vernon Square Historic District. Plans were prepared by the applicant.

**Property Description and Context**

The original structure on the existing lot was a contributing 2-story brick rowhouse with projecting bay which collapsed in 2006. The building was condemned and razed for public safety. A remnant of the rear wing still exists but, devoid of the context of the main part of the house, does not contribute to the character of the historic district. The 1200 block of New Jersey Avenue includes rowhouses of multiple forms across a long time frame. Small, flat-front rowhouses from the years around the Civil War are mixed together with taller projecting-bay rowhouses built around 1900.

**Proposal**

The owner acquired the property in September 2012. The standing remnants of the 2006 collapse will be razed. Plans call for a 3-story brick rowhouse with 3-story projecting bay. The front cornice height will align with the neighbor to the south. Individual windows will fenestrate all sides of the projection and the bay over the front entrance. A basement entrance and areaway will branch off the lead walk at the front stoop. A penthouse structure, accessing decks on the front and rear, is set back 15 feet from the front roofline and will rise 4 feet taller than the front brick corbelled cornice which acts as a visual screen of the deck space.

**Evaluation and Recommendation**

The form and materials of the building, as proposed, closely mimics the pair of rowhouses at 1238 and 1240 New Jersey. The new construction's compatibility benefits from replicating specific historic motifs including a corbelled brick cornice, rounded corners on the projecting bay, and segmental arch window headers which should not be eliminated during final design or construction. The basement areaway, while not typical of historic construction is non-obtrusive and discreet largely due to the fact that the public space of the avenue affords a very deep front yard. The rooftop penthouse is setback sufficiently that it should not be visible across the 130 foot wide avenue.

Small matters of detail in error on the plans, for instance the uncentered front door, should be refined and corrected during the permit review process and the plans should be developed with a wall section drawing and other detail drawings that clearly indicates the extent and depth of brick corbelling and other details.

**Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept for a three-story brick rowhouse at 1242 New Jersey Avenue NW compatible with the historic district, and delegate final approval to staff, on the condition that:*

- 1. the penthouse structure shall not be substantially visible from the New Jersey Avenue right-of-way, and*
- 2. the window/door segmental arches, brick cornice and rounded bay corners are integral to the design and shall be sufficiently detailed in the permit drawings.*