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

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| Property Address:  | <b>2112 R Street NW</b>                | <input type="checkbox"/> Agenda                      |
| Landmark/District: | <b>Dupont Circle Historic District</b> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar |
|                    |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Denial Calendar             |
|                    |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Concept Review              |
| Meeting Date:      | <b>February 24, 2011</b>               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration       |
| H.P.A. Number:     | <b>11-147</b>                          | <input type="checkbox"/> New Construction            |
| Staff Reviewer:    | <b>Brendan Meyer</b>                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Demolition                  |

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The applicant, Fondo del Sol Visual Arts Center, seeks an after-the-fact building permit for construction of a 8 x 8 x 8 foot stair enclosure on the rear rooftop at 2112 R Street NW in the Dupont Circle Historic District. Plans were prepared by CEM Design.

### **Property Description and Context**

2112 R Street NW is Romanesque Revival rowhouse built in 1891 and designed by an unknown architect. The block, Square 66, is located between R Street, 21<sup>st</sup> Street, Massachusetts Avenue and Florida Avenue. The buildings in the square are a combination of three and four story rowhouses, and monumental civic buildings like clubs, embassies, and a museum.

The already-built roof top structure is a small, frame enclosure at the top of a flight of steps. It shelters a roof access point at the rear of the building. Clad in cement siding, it is unarticulated except for 2 small double-hung windows. A small rooftop area accessed by the structure will be enclosed by railings at the roof edge. Measuring approximately 8 x 8 x 8 feet, it is the same size as a similar structure to the west and a larger structure to the east. It is not visible from the R Street or Florida Avenue rights-of-way and is seen only from the alley.

### **Evaluation and Recommendation**

While it is always regrettable when construction takes place without the required building permits, the Board's requirement is to review and determine whether work, whether proposed or completed, is compatible with the character of an historic district and consistent with its guidelines and standards. The primary consideration the Board has weighed in assessing small penthouse additions to row houses such as this one is whether they are visible from a street or interrupt the roofline of the building or row. Here, the structure is similar to others in the block in that it is not visible from in front of the primary façade of the rowhouse or any perspective views from the street. In this instance, the structure is akin to stair-heads or monitors that, although not common, are found in historic construction. It does not fundamentally change the height or massing of the building and is not out of character with the rear portion of a rowhouse roof that often hosts other utilitarian features like chimneys and vent stacks.

### **Recommendation**

The HPO recommends that the Board approve the building permit as consistent with the purposes of the Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act.