

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

Property Address:	2001 18th Street and 1771 U Street, NW	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Washington Heights Historic District	X Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	September 24, 2015	X Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	15-489	New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Anne Brockett	X Alteration

On behalf of owner Bill Thomas, architect Eric Gronning seeks review of a concept to combine two lots and add rooftop decks and stairs at this corner location within the Washington Heights Historic District. On one lot stand 2001 and 2001½ 18th Street, whose lots were previously subdivided. This lot wraps around the corner and would be combined with the adjacent lot containing 1771 U Street. These buildings were permitted in 1912 as part of a row of eight stores designed in a Mission Revival style with red-tiled roofs and curved parapets above brick and glass facades.

Project Description

The proposal would add two stories to the rears of 2001½ 18th and 1771 U, which would connect all three buildings and serve as an enclosed stair for egress from the roofs of 1771 U and 2001 18th Street. A second required egress stair would span the roof of 1771 U Street set back 20 feet from the façade. The proposal would remove the existing roofs in order to depress the roof decks and stairs far below the current roof height. With some exceptions for new stairs and to connect through the party walls, all other interior floor framing will be retained. The parapet of the red tile roof mansard will serve as a railing for the decks.

The project would also replace the existing projecting storefronts and restore original openings that have been bricked in over the years.

Evaluation

The combination of lots would not affect the appearance of the three buildings as separate structures and the proposed interior work would result in limited alterations to party walls. Due to grade changes and differing floor heights among the three buildings, the two stair enclosure additions will not be visible from across or up 18th Street or Florida Avenue. Slivers of visibility of the brick corners of the front stair tower may occur at more distant points to the south on 18th Street and to the east on U Street. However, the additions are pushed sufficiently far back on the roof and are low enough in height so as to blend into the existing and surrounding rooflines. That they are constructed of brick atop commercial buildings - where such penthouses are common - further aids in achieving compatibility.

As the project moves toward permitting, the HPO will work to ensure retention of as much of the interior structure as possible; will coordinate with the architect on appropriate restoration of the facades; and will confirm the non-visibility of any rooftop deck railings or other appurtenances.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board find this concept compatible with the character of the historic district and consistent with the purposes of the preservation act and delegate final approval to staff.