

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

Landmark/District:	Dupont Circle HD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	1610 Riggs Pl, NW	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	February 2, 2017	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	17-127	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Kim Elliott	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Owner Max Salas with plans prepared by Architect John Katinas seeks conceptual design review for 1610 Riggs Place for a rear fire stair addition on a rowhouse in the Dupont Circle Historic District.

Property Description

1610 Riggs is part of a coordinated row of 13 houses on the south side of Riggs Place designed by architect Harvey L. Page and built in 1889 by developers Addison & Larcombe. The original Queen Anne architecture is very intact at the front and for most of the rear of the row. The majority of the rear of these buildings has a rigorous continuity, with flat rear facades, regular window composition, and all but the end unit, 1610 Riggs, built to the same depth. Several houses have had one-story doglegs that were added in the 20th century. 1610 has a 3-story rear ell built at the same time or early 1900s and is parged brick. The original 1-story brick garage frames the edges of the alley and includes a wood-frame deck structure on top.

There have been very few alterations along the rear of this row. Two notable exceptions are at 1616 Riggs and 1624 Riggs. At 1616 Riggs there was a 2-story plus partial 3rd story rear addition; while the original construction of this addition could not be located, it is known that it was re-clad in copper about 12 years ago. In 2015 a fire destroyed the interior of the property.

Proposal

The proposal calls for a new, steel fire stair to be added in the existing dogleg nook that would extend from the ground and continue to the roof level. Additional doors would be added at each floor level for egress. The proposed plans also include adding 2 casement windows to the alley elevation at the basement level. No modifications to the existing garage roof deck structure are proposed.

Evaluation

The Board reviewed two cases on this row of Riggs Place in October 2016 that each proposed 2-story rear additions. The Board's Actions determined that only a 1-story addition would be compatible given the unique context of this row and rigor of the rear facades. The majority of the row has a coordinated continuity with all of the houses in the same plane and with the same window composition with only a handful of 1-story doglegs and a couple of rear 2-story additions. However, at the east end of the row the rigorous rear façade consistency exemplified on the majority of this alleyscape is absent. 1610 Riggs Place was the one house built with a deeper footprint than the entire rest of the row and its rear ell was built the full three stories tall. In addition, there are several houses that have had major rear additions and structures built on top of their garages near the end of this row, breaking up the continuity expressed further westward. The proposed fire stair located within the dogleg is compatible as it does not change

the overall massing of the original house, does not project beyond a consistent rear plane, and is not visible from street views. The immediate context offers numerous examples of similar fire stair appendages directly across the alley from this site.

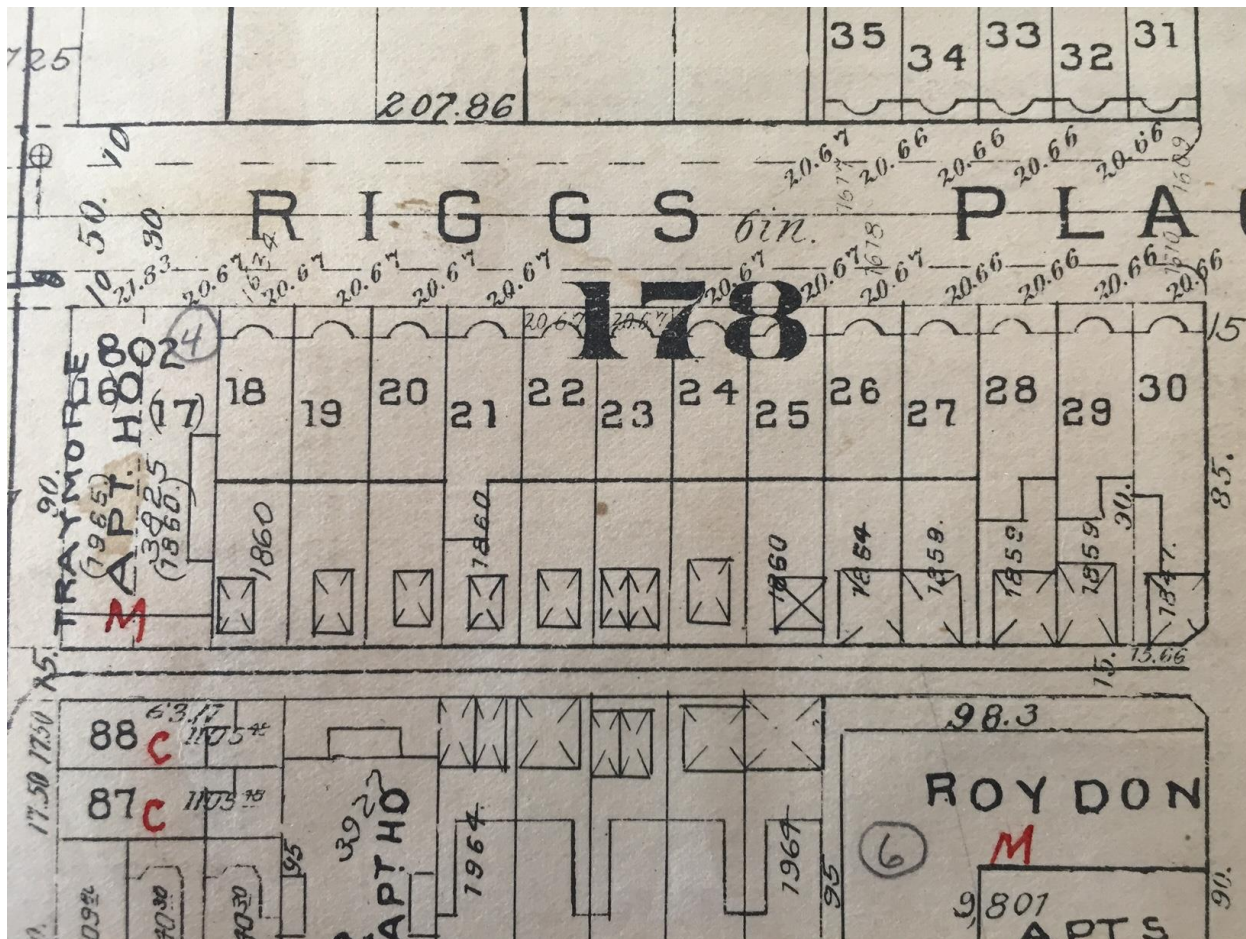
HPO recommends removing the top flight of the stair so that it does not project above the roofline, maintaining the consistent and undisturbed roofscape of this entire row. Therefore the stair would run from the 3rd floor down to the ground. HPO further recommends that the applicant consider altering the structure on top of the garage, minimizing the height of the enclosure, and simplifying the materials. The proposed windows at the alley elevation would be more compatible if matching the existing basement casement windows.

The owner has been working with HPO to design a solution that follows the HPO guidelines and the Preservation Act.

Recommendation

HPO recommends that the Board find the concept generally consistent with the preservation act and consistent with the purposes of the preservation act with the following provisions:

- 1) Limiting the fire stair to 3 stories, running from the 3rd floor to the ground and not continuing to the roof,
- 2) Redesign the proposed basement windows to match the existing basement casement window,
- 3) Consider altering and minimizing the structure on top of the garage roof



Baist map 1937: 1634-1610 Riggs Place



1634-1628 Riggs



1616 Riggs



1610 Riggs