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

Landmark/District: **Foggy Bottom Historic District** (x) Consent Calendar
Address: **938 24th Street NW**

Meeting Date: **January 26, 2017** (x) Addition
Case Number: **17-056** (x) Alterations

Staff Reviewer: **Tim Dennée**

The applicant, property owner Tamara Lanham (with Field Craft Studio, architects), requests the Board's review of a concept to construct a two-story rear addition; add a skylight, some wall anchors, and a mail box/slot; and perform some site work and window and door replacements.

The subject house was erected as one of a row of four in 1884. The subject property and that next door at 940 24th Street presently have no rear additions. 936 24th has a smaller addition that extended its rear ell to both side lot lines. There is a substantial addition behind 942 24th (visible in the photographs on sheet 3) that nonetheless retains that house's ell.

The 940 24th addition is useful for comparison in that, although larger than this proposal, it still does not overwhelm the main block. These lots are deeper than most within the historic district, and they lack garages, so they can take additions that are larger than average. Because of this availability of space, the applicant has been able to observe the important principle of minimizing demolition, emulating 942 24th in retaining the ell while stretching across the lot's full width.¹ A subordinate addition creates a pleasing balance with the main block, with the ell as connector.

In height, massing and retention of fabric then, the project is compatible with the character of the historic property and historic district. There are a few revisions recommended as a condition of a permit:

1. The addition's proposed siding should not be vinyl, a discouraged substitute material, but rather wood or fiber-cement of an exposure of no more than six inches.
2. The roof drainage should not be through scuppers in the rear wall, a condition that could fail over time and cause leakage into the wall, but rather *over* the rear wall into a gutter.
3. The six-over-six configuration proposed for the front replacement windows does match most of the windows on the front of the row today, but a modest 1884 row would have had two-over-two windows. As the window regulations suggest by their preference for the historic configuration, it is preferable that the row gradually return to the original condition.

¹ Even the rear wall of the ell would be retained, but with the necessary penetrations for passage from the existing rooms.

4. Although the original front-door configuration would not have been full-light (and more likely a solid four-panel), we have supported such replacement doors in the past, especially in Capitol Hill, where applicants have sought to draw more light into narrow rowhouses.² The door should be of wood, however.
5. If there is going to be a balcony at rear, and it is to be fashioned of wood, then it should be painted to make it more porch-like and better integrate it with the building than the raw wood. Exposed, pressure-treated wood is more suited to modern decks, while wood elements upon historic houses were painted.
6. The parking pad would replace existing, deteriorated paving. The height and configuration of the rear fence and gates are not depicted in concept drawings, but such details can be settled in the permit drawings. Six- and seven-foot-tall pressure-treated privacy fences are cleared by staff in rear yards daily, as such issues are typically delegated to staff anyway.
7. The mechanical unit must be located far enough back on the roof that it cannot be seen from 24th Street, consistent with the treatment of other rooftop features, including mechanical penthouses, expressed in the design guidelines.

Recommendation

HPO recommends that the Board approve the concept as necessary in the public interest because it is compatible with the character of the historic district, and that further review of the project is delegated to staff, conditioned upon the permit drawings addressing the above enumerated recommendations and upon the retention and reinforcement of the house's existing framing.

² The guidelines for door replacements state that “The design of the replacement should be compatible with the character of the building and fit within the size and shape of the original opening. If documentary or pictorial evidence of the original door exists, it should be used to design the replacement....”