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

Property Address:	1948 2nd Street NW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Landmark/District:	LeDroit Park Historic District	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar
		<input type="checkbox"/> Denial Calendar
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept Review
Meeting Date:	October 25, 2018	<input type="checkbox"/> Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	18-598	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Brendan Meyer	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

The applicant, Suzannah Codlin on behalf of owner Lawrence Braithwaite, seeks permit review for construction of a two-story accessory building along the rear alley behind 1948 2nd Street NW which is a contributing property in the LeDroit Park Historic District. Plans were prepared by ARC Consultants LLC.

Property Description and Context

The property is an early 20th century rowhouse typical of the second phase of building in LeDroit Park which followed the original generation of large free-standing “villas” and Gothic Revival “cottages.” 1948 2nd Street is part of a row of four houses designed by George T. Santmyers in 1918. The row is set back slightly more than the row of 10 houses to the south, has simple full width front porches, and slate mansard roofs. The lot, like most of the others on the square, is exceptionally deep (150 feet). This group of houses was originally built with rear sleeping porches which are all now enclosed or replaced. Three houses have one-story garages which are simple and utilitarian in size, form and material. The garage at 1946 2nd Street was approved by the Board in January 2017.

Proposal

The proposed accessory building would be built in association with a two-story rear addition and new basement unit that were approved administratively by HPO.¹ The accessory building would have a parking space on the first floor and an open loft space on the second. The building would be the full width of the lot (17 feet) and two stories tall with a flat roof 19 feet above grade. It would be setback from the rear property line nine feet to align with the garage at 1946. The alley elevation would be brick veneer with a carriage door paired with a pedestrian door. The second floor would have no windows and finished with a large brick panel. The sides and rear would be clad with EIFS² and the yard-side elevation would be fenestrated at both floors with ganged windows and sliding doors. The rear yard is currently unimproved.

Evaluation

The proposed accessory building is a building type not historically associated with the 20th century rowhouse like at 1948 2nd Street. While one-story automobile garages are common

¹ DCMR 10C, 320.2 “The staff is delegated authority to review the following types of work: (a) construction of insignificant or clearly compatible minor additions or alterations; (b) removal of insignificant or incompatible minor additions or alterations; ... (f) rear decks and roof decks not visible or obtrusive from a public street...”

² Exterior Insulation and Finish System is a non-structural cladding assembly that typically includes a core of Styrofoam finished with a 2-coat stucco and other membranes for air/water resistance.

behind such properties, in addition to the lack of historic precedent, the materials, fenestration, scale, and proportions in the concept design produce a design that insufficiently matches the character of a historic carriage house of the type that would have been found behind a 19th century house.

The DC Historic Alley Building Survey (2014) analyzed the types and quantities of alley buildings that survive in downtown historic districts.³ The survey identified basic patterns of development. Carriage houses were two stories, associated with 19th century houses (the era of horse drawn transportation), and generally date to 1880-1910. Garages were one-story, associated with 20th century houses (the era of automobiles), and were prevalent starting in the 1910s. Some overlap was found where garages were added to 19th century properties as car ownership spread across the city, but no evidence was found that carriage houses were commonly added to 20th century properties.

Carriage houses were typically flat roofed, two-story brick buildings, with a carriage door and pedestrian door on the ground floor and windows/hayloft doors at the second floor. They were scaled to fit the dimensions of horses, wagons and equipage. Garages were typically one-story buildings built out of vernacular materials with a single car door at the alley. Roof forms varied mostly between flat and gable. They were scaled to fit the dimensions of automobiles.

The applicant for 1948 2nd Street built the new one-story garage with mansard roof at 1946 2nd Street in 2017. When the Board approved that concept design it adopted a staff report which recommended that while reducing the 15-foot height of the garage would improve its compatibility with the historic district, reducing its height was not required. The garage was built in accord with the concept approved by the Board.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board advise the applicant to revise their concept from a two-story carriage house to a one-story garage, similar to or smaller than the one-story garage at 1946 2nd Street NW, and return to the Board for further review.

Staff contact: Brendan Meyer

³ The historic districts within the L'Enfant Plan, plus LeDroit Park and Georgetown.