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

Landmark/District:	Mount Pleasant Historic District	(x) Consent calendar
Address:	1654 Irving Street NW	
Meeting Date:	October 25, 2018	(x) Alteration
Case Number:	18-676	(x) Concept

The applicant, Charles Warren (Teass\Warren Architects), architect and agent for property owners Grant Russell and Nancy Gentry, requests the Board's review of a concept for a two-story rear addition and alterations to this two-story brick house, one of a row of five constructed in 1913. The drawings depict a second dwelling unit in the basement.

Demolition

The concept proposes demolition of the brick rear wall and the two-story rear porch to construct an addition in their place. While retaining the rear wall in whole or in part would be a better preservation outcome, the Board has recommended approval of similar demolition when the floor plan called for rooms spanning that location.

The drawings also call for the removal of apparent bearing walls within the main block. This raises the question of whether the floor framing would be retained. *If the joists are also removed*, then the total removal of exterior walls and structure would result in demolition of the building in significant part, to an extent that would almost certainly be contrary to the purposes of the preservation law's purpose to retain and enhance contributing buildings.

Addition

The proposed addition would be two stories, stretch the full width of the lot, and terminate in a narrower two-story screened porch. Including the porches, the depth would be less than nineteen feet. Considering that the house is one of the smaller on the block, it lacks a garage, and the addition would replace partially enclosed porches, the net gain in volume is not great, and it is not out of proportion to the main block, the row, or the immediate context.

The main body of the addition would be clad with red brick, to more or less match that of the existing building. The porches would presumably be mostly of wood. A basement areaway would be excavated next to the porches.

The addition is probably going to need a few inches of parapet on the west side, to keep the roof draining only to the rear.

Alterations and repairs

The drawings note repairs to the lead walk, porch and front windows without explicitly defining the nature and extent of the repairs.

The second-story front windows are proposed for replacement “with historically correct profiles,” but the configuration depicted—the present configuration—is incorrect, as the original arched-upper-sash windows had been replaced with rectangular windows with semicircular transoms. The first-floor double-hung window would be replaced as well.

The main entry door is also proposed for replacement, but it, too, is not drawn as of the original configuration. As the entry’s sidelights suggest—and two of the other doors on the row attest—the proper configuration is not a full-light door, but a fifteen-light door.

The meters would remain concealed beneath the porch and entry steps. One of the basement window openings beneath the porch would be sealed, with the other window and door replaced. The present lattice porch apron, which is presently divided into a fixed portion and a swinging portion would be removed entirely. While having an aperture for entry is reasonable where an basement door exists, such a porch should retain a proper apron.

It appears that the front entry stair to the basement would be dug deeper, increasing its run to nearly that of the parallel main-entry stairs. As long as these new steps do not push the upper landing further forward into the front-yard berm, this alteration is consistent with the Board’s guidelines on basement entrances.

The existing pipe rail would be relocated to the opposite side of the main-entry steps. A skylight would be added to the main roof. There would be spot repointing of the façade brick.

Adjacent to the alley, the replacement of a single-car concrete parking pad with a double-width pad is proposed. A chain-link fence would be removed to accommodate the parking. No replacement fencing of gates are proposed (and any freestanding roll-up door would be discouraged).

No new or replacement mechanical equipment is depicted.

Recommendation

HPO recommends the Board approve the concept as compatible with the character of the historic district and consistent with the purposes of the preservation law, with the conditions that:

- 1. the house’s floor framing be retained in place;*
- 2. the second-floor front windows be replaced with windows with arched upper sash that fit the original masonry openings;*
- 3. the main door be a wood, fifteen-light door;*
- 4. the landing at the top of the basement stair not be expanded or relocated;*
- 5. all exterior meters be placed under the porch;*
- 6. there remain an apron below the front edge of the porch, one that allows a door-sized entry to the under-porch area;*
- 7. the addition have a few inches of parapet on its west side;*
- 8. the repointing be performed with mortar to match the existing consistency, color and profile of the existing joints, with the present mortar raked out, as necessary, with hand tools, so as not to cut or abrade the edges of the bricks; and*
- 9. no roll-up vehicular door(s) be installed.*