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

Property Address:	1220 and 1224 11th Street NW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Landmark/District:	Shaw Historic District	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar
ANC:	2F	<input type="checkbox"/> Denial Calendar
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept Review
Meeting Date:	October 27, 2011	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	#11-464 and #11-465	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Brendan Meyer	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

The applicant, Brook Rose Development, seeks concept approval for rear and top floor additions to two 3-story rowhouses at 1220 and 1224 11th Street NW in the Shaw Historic District. The applicant is the contract purchaser for both properties. Plans were prepared by District Design LLC.

Property Description and Context

1220 and 1224 11th Street NW are matching, non-adjacent houses within a row of four attached houses built in 1877. All four houses were built on a single permit and credited to builder David T. Cissel (no architect is listed, which is typical of early permits). A cursory review of contemporary newspaper records shows that Cissel was a mason of some prominence who consistently won contracts to work on the Smithsonian and numerous federal buildings.

As a row, the four houses from 1218 to 1224 are a very intact example of the late-Italianate style of flat-front rowhouses that were constructed prior to the evolution of the projecting bay rowhouse which became widespread after the passage of public space and projection laws in the 1870s. While tall, verticality is offset by a rhythm of fenestration consisting of wide sections of masonry. Cornices are robustly proportioned and feature wood modillions at the top of the façade and on the one story projecting bay. Masonry is constructed of very thin joints with stone keystones in the arched window openings and skewbacks at the front entrance.

The houses are 20 feet wide and 32 feet deep and were not originally constructed with rear ells. Over time, 1218 and 1222 were added to with multiple generations of rear additions. While 1222 exhibits a single, well-composed rear ell of 2-stories, 1218 is a riotous collection of dendritic ells and additions that climb to three stories and nearly fill the entire lot. The subject properties at 1220 and 1224 stand in stark contrast for the fact that they have never been expanded with rear additions, save for a one story bump-out at 1224.

Proposal

Both rowhouses would receive four-story, rear, full-width additions approximately 25 feet deep resulting in a total depth of about 57 feet. Also, atop the existing historic structure, a rooftop deck would be placed in front of the new construction and extend to a point 12 feet setback from the front parapet. The rear additions would be frame, with a single 16 foot wide opening at each floor consisting of ganged French doors. The fourth story would be the exception and feature a wide band of short attic windows.

Evaluation and Recommendation

HPO recommends that the concept for a 4-story addition to the rear of the existing building is compatible with the character of the Shaw Historic District, largely because the construction is not visible from the 11th Street right-of-way, but also because the construction on top of the historic buildings is restricted to a deck only.

Fundamental to the character of the rowhouses from 1218-1224 is their simple block like massing in the main part of the house, and their expansion with a series of smaller additions and ells. While a new floor on top of the historic buildings would result in excessive demolition and obscure the buildings' massing, a deck does not share these adverse qualities. The deck requires no demolition of historic fabric, sits upon the building instead of as part of the building, and since it can be removed with little disturbance is a type of temporary, rather than permanent, construction.

The rear elevations, although more elaborate and refined than what is found on a typical utilitarian alley elevation, occupy a space in the historic district that is generally afforded more flexibility because of its smaller impact on the character of the historic district.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board approve the concept for a 25 foot deep, four-story frame addition at the rear as a compatible alteration to 1220 & 1224 11th Street NW, consistent with the purposes of the preservation act, and delegate final approval to staff.

No portion of this recommendation shall be construed as approval for any necessary zoning relief.