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

Property Address:	1223 5th Street NW	<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Landmark/District:	Mount Vernon Square Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar
ANC:	2C	<input type="checkbox"/> Denial Calendar
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept Review
Meeting Date:	October 25, 2012	<input type="checkbox"/> Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	12-621	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Brendan Meyer	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Owner Lovelyn Anderson seeks concept review for a new two-story, two-unit brick rowhouse in the Mount Vernon Square Historic District. Plans were prepared by Yellow Room, Inc. A different concept for this site was approved by the Board in 2011.

Property Description and Context

The site is a vacant corner lot that historically had been used as a commercial lumber and coal yard, and later as a gas station. This type of commercial use was not infrequent in Mount Vernon Square; the southeast corner of 4th and Ridge streets had the same history of use. As these types of commercial uses were eclipsed in the 20th century, many such corner lots were improved with commercial or residential buildings.

The owner also owns and occupies the rowhouse at 1225 5th Street NW. In 2011 the Board reviewed and approved a concept to join the lots and construct a large side addition to 1225 5th Street. In the evaluation of that concept, HPO had posited that the vacant corner was best suited for single adjoined building large enough in size to anchor the corner.

Proposal

The owner proposes to leave the lots separate and construct a two-story brick rowhouse similar in size, form and orientation to the existing rowhouse at 1225 5th Street. The design is a straight forward contemporary version of the traditional Victorian rowhouse form with a two bay front elevation (one bay projected). The long side elevation along Ridge Street would be simply fenestrated with a symmetrical rhythm of 2-over-1 windows. Ornament would be minimal and consists of brick string courses, header courses and a trim cornice. The front entrance would be raised approximately 4 feet above grade in order to accommodate a basement entrance underneath for the separate unit.

Evaluation and Recommendation

The concept design meets nearly all criteria for compatible new construction in a historic district. Its height, orientation, massing, rhythm and proportions all align with the immediate neighbors. Perhaps the only deviation from the pattern of houses on 5th Street is that the first story is raised higher off grade than the historic neighbors which are all essentially on grade. In the full measure of the design's compatibility, this is a minor and unimportant aspect overshadowed by the strengths of the design.

Minor items of detail should be considered. The openings of the entry bay, especially the second floor window, should either be enlarged or shifted slightly so that they are centered in the bay. Additionally the cornice material should replicate either brick or metal, not wood. The selection of PVC should only be used if it can achieve this.

This positive staff report is partially based on the masonry details drawn into the elevations. The applicant should be advised not lose or drop these details during the permit or construction phase.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board:

- *find the concept compatible with the historic district and consistent with the purposes of the preservation act,*
- *delegate final approval to Staff, and*
- *reiterate that no part of this recommendation shall be construed as a recommendation for approval or disapproval for any necessary zoning relief or interpretation.*