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

Property Address:	1539 9th Street, NW	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Shaw Historic District	X Consent Calendar
		X Concept Review
Meeting Date:	July 28, 2011	X Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	11-404	New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Steve Callcott	Demolition
		Subdivision

Owner/designer Makeba Gaines-Kelly seeks conceptual review for a rear and partial third floor addition on a two-story rowhouse in the Shaw Historic District.

Property Description

While original building permit information could not be located, 1539 9th Street, NW appears to date from the 1880s. Its construction is likely to have been simultaneous with the house to the north, with which it shares stylistic similarities. The house is characterized by its shallow projecting bay and large first floor window opening, red brick façade and Queen Anne detailing, and pent roof capped with diamond-shaped terra cotta tile. The rear of the house is utilitarian, with a shallow rear ell-wing. The house is vacant, boarded up and in very poor condition.

The block is composed primarily of two story houses but which have a variety of heights. Some houses are raised over an English basement and many have pediments and roof features that create a varied roofline. The rear elevations are extremely varied in height, massing and setbacks. The neighboring property to the north has a one-story addition that extends the entire depth of the property to the rear lot line.

Proposal

The proposal calls for converting the house into two residential units. The rear ell would be removed and replaced by a full-width addition, extending the house from its existing depth of 43 feet to 55 feet. The addition's rear wall would have banks of large contemporary windows; the rear wall itself would be clad in the salvaged red brick of the existing rear wall. The addition would extend several feet further than the rear walls of the adjoining properties.

The partial third floor would be set back approximately 30 feet from the street and would be 10 feet tall. It would rise flush with the addition's rear wall. A roof deck would extend toward the front of the property, but its cable railing would be set back approximately 15 feet from the front façade.

Restoration work includes repair and reglazing of the front windows (currently boarded up), and pressure washing and repointing of the façade masonry as necessary.

Evaluation

The overall height and mass of the proposed rear addition is subordinate in size to the main block of the house and compatible with its context. Given the varied heights of buildings on

this block and limited opportunity for perspective views, the site is similar to other instances in which the HPRB has approved partial additional floors, where the roof addition is within the established range of heights on the block and where it can be documented that the addition will be largely invisible from the public view. The partial third floor has been evaluated in the field by the HPO, in which a mock-up was viewed from up and down 9th Street and from the alley. The field test indicated that the roof addition would have extremely minor visibility from limited vantage points on 9th Street – only about one foot of the addition being visible from the opposite side of the street. The plans have since been modified to lower its height and modify its roof line so that it will not be visible at all.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Review Board find the conceptual proposal consistent with the purposes of the preservation act, and delegate final approval to the staff.