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

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Property Address:	<b>1777 Church Street, NW</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Dupont Circle Historic District</b>	<b>X</b> Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>April 26, 2012</b>	<b>X</b> Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>12-304</b>	<b>X</b> Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Jonathan Mellon</b>	New Construction
		Demolition

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Hapstak & Demetriou Architects, representing owner John Vance seeks conceptual design review for construction of a two-story addition and egress stair on the rear of a contributing house in the Dupont Circle Historic District.



**Property History and Description**

1777 Church Street was constructed in 1892 for owner T.W. Bedford, as part of a row of five three-story (above English basement) single family residences. The row is characterized by its two-story projecting bays, arched raised entrances, and mansard roofs with distinctive dormer windows of varying designs.

The rear section of the house was identified in the HPO's Historic District Alley Survey as originally being a separate kitchen building (as shown on a 1903 Sanborn Map) which was subsequently connected to the main body of the house and used for a period as an artist studio. The original kitchen building is notable for its large double-hung windows with transoms, and prominent exterior chimney.

## **Proposal**

The proposal calls for construction of a two-story addition on the rear of the house, which would be on top of the original kitchen building; the third story is proposed to extend roughly half the depth of the second story which will allow for an open air art studio space. The new addition would be clad in brick (reclaimed brick from the demolition work as well as new matching brick), with ganged double hung wood windows on the side (east) elevation, and fixed single pane windows on the rear (north) elevation. Full glass doors would provide access to the egress stair as well as to the open air art studio space on the third floor.

At the rear (north) elevation a new prefabricated metal egress stair clad in a welded wire frame with gate at ground level is proposed.

## **Evaluation and Recommendation**

Alterations to the rear elevations of rowhouses have been given greater latitude by the Board, due to the recognition that they are generally less significant in defining the character of a building. In a case such as this, when the rear facades of a row of houses have already seen numerous alterations and face an alley comprised of a variety of structures, the public impact of proposed changes on the character of the historic district is minimal.

As noted previously, the original kitchen building has been identified as being the only remaining, and largely intact, structure of its kind. Due to the early historic district designations not comprehensively covering alley buildings, these structures are not well documented and many have been lost.

While the proposed addition would be subordinate in size to the existing house and consistent in size with other additions approved by the Board, the proposal would benefit from further study in order to allow for the retention of the overall massing and character defining features of the original kitchen building. This could be addressed through the addition having a setback on the sides and rear which would allow the massing and prominent exterior chimney of the original kitchen building to be retained. As well, the large double-hung windows with transoms should be retained and incorporated into the design.

The importance of the original kitchen building has been brought to the attention of the applicant and owner, and they have agreed to work with staff to address these concerns.

The HPO recommends that the Review Board approve the project in concept and delegate final approval of the plans to staff.