

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

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Property Address:	<b>2012-14 Kalorama Road, NW</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Kalorama Triangle Historic District</b>	Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>April 25, 2013</b>	<b>X</b> Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>13-164</b>	New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Anne Brockett</b>	<b>X</b> Alteration

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Lock 7 Development, working with Ron Schneck of Square 134 Architects, seeks the board's review of a revised concept to add to the rears of two adjoining townhouses in the Kalorama Triangle Historic District. The Board approved the concept in October 2012 and further considered comments from the public and applicant January 2013, when it upheld its previous approval, but requested that the applicants continue to work with neighbors and the ANC to refine the project and return to the Board for final approval.

**2012 Approval**

The design previously reviewed by the Board entailed 3-story additions across the rears of both properties which extended the full width of each lot. The nearly identical additions derived their design character from the existing Colonial Revival dwellings, notably in the use of brick, gambrel roofs, and dormers. The project would also demolish two garages and restore the missing berm, front door, and porch to 2014. While large, the Board determined the additions compatible given the immediate context of large flanking apartment buildings and found the garages to be non-contributing to the significance of the historic district.

**Revised Design**

The project has evolved significantly in response to community concerns and Board comments. Notable improvements include the retention of more of the rear wall on the first and second floors and full retention of the third floor rear wall, with its distinctive gambrel roof and dormers. The additions, which previously extended the full width of each lot, are now set back on each side. On the 2012 side, the setback is 5 feet on the first three levels with an additional 4 foot setback for the top floor. On the 2014 side, the setback is 8 feet with a further inset of 4 feet at the top floor. There is a break in the plane of the side walls about halfway along the wall of the addition, which shows as a line in the elevations, but is negligible in plan.

The indented "hyphens" that connect the original buildings and their additions have been shifted forward, where they now attach directly to the back of the existing buildings. The two courtyards created by the hyphens have been adjusted for an overall increase in their size. The length remains the same for 2014, but the addition has gained 2½ feet at 2012, so that the rear elevation for both buildings is in the same plane.

The height, form, and style have transitioned away from a traditional design to a more modern aesthetic. Rather than using a shed roof and continuing the use of brick where the addition attaches to the original building, the design now calls for an inset hyphen between new and old, a

common architectural device for adding to historic properties. This hyphen is a full story shorter than previously proposed and is inset more. However, the addition itself has grown in height with a newly proposed fourth floor. This addition puts the roofline of the addition about 4 feet higher towards the front of the property and a full story taller at the rear. The much more rectilinear design utilizes large expanses of glazing on its sides and rear, rather than replicating the traditional sash windows of the original house. While the cladding remains brick for the most part, the top floor is proposed to be sheathed in metal panel, as will the largely glazed hyphen.

Other alterations include adding balconies on the rear and side walls, eliminating the below-grade areaway at the rear, adding a front basement entry at 2014, proposing a trash storage area adjacent to the sidewalk, removing the rear chimneys, and relocating some of the AC units from the roof and concealing them under the front porches and stairs in the side areaways.

### **Evaluation**

The overall footprint that was approved in concept by the Board has decreased in width considerably. Although the Board had approved the addition to extend to the lot lines given its position 90 feet back from the sidewalk, the addition has now been comfortably tucked in 4 feet from the wall of the side bay of 2014 and is in line with this wall at 2012 (but is set off by the inset hyphen). The length has increased by a negligible 2½ feet on the 2012 side.

The height has increased, but remains no taller than the existing building. The additional story that is proposed will be minimally visible from the front, but is mitigated by the vast improvement of a narrower addition, the top floor inset of 4 feet on each side (5 feet in the rear), the change in material from brick to metal, and the distance of the top floor of over 90 feet from the sidewalk. In all, the visibility of the addition has been decreased significantly

Overall, what was a gambrel-roofed addition joined to the existing via a somewhat awkward shed roof, has become a truly distinct, modern structure. The lower, more inset hyphen allows the rear roof and dormers to remain intact and the addition to read almost as a separate, small building. The decreased width gives deference to the existing duplex and more breathing space to the flanking buildings. As viewed from Wyoming Avenue, across the parking lot for 2101 Connecticut – the only true vantage point – the design would be integrated into the immediate context of apartment buildings. It is this context of a duplex between large apartments – not within a row of houses – that enables an addition this large to be considered compatible.

Like the rest of the addition, the fenestration has taken on a modern aesthetic, but would benefit from further refinement as the design progresses. The staff continues to support the restoration of the missing berm and front porch at 2014, as well as the addition of skylights on the rear roof slope of the original buildings, the shifting of balconies, concealed location of AC condensers, the removal of the rear, utilitarian chimneys (the front shared chimney will remain), and a new basement entrance in the front of 2014 that is consistent with the Board's guidelines for basement entries.

As the designs progress, the HPO would like a clarification the break in the plane and color differentiation on the sides of the addition, verification of the locations of gas and electric meters (which should be placed out of view from the street), and would recommend further refinement of fenestration and the metal panel system. A darker color and smaller scale for the cladding of the top floor – something more akin to roof slate – should be considered. In addition, the walkway paving in front must be kept to a minimum and should be squared off, rather than angled toward the stairwells. While the restoration of the berm has support, the HPO would recommend avoiding terracing and retaining walls and keeping the half-round curb at the sidewalk. Finally, the HPO looks forward to a more sensitive location for trash can storage at 2014, which is not supported in its current position adjacent to the sidewalk in a berm cutout that necessitates additional retaining walls.

With the comments above, the HPO supports the revised concept design and commends the owners, architects, and neighbors for their diligence in ameliorating impacts. The form, scale, and massing of the project are compatible with 2012-2014 Kalorama Road and with the surrounding historic district and consistent with previous Board approvals.

### **Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept to be compatible with the character of the historic district and consistent with the preservation act, with consideration of the comments above, and direct the applicant to return to the Board for permit review. HPRB approval shall not be construed as endorsement for any necessary zoning or building code relief.*