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

Property Address:	2339 Massachusetts Avenue, NW	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Sheridan-Kalorama Historic District	X Consent Denial
		X Concept Review
Meeting Date:	November 17, 2011	X Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	12-031	New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Steve Callcott	Demolition
		Subdivision

Owner Lou Hughes, represented by Konstant Architecture, seeks conceptual review for removal of windows on a sun room at 2339 Massachusetts Avenue in the Sheridan-Kalorama and Massachusetts Avenue Historic Districts.

Property History and Description

2339 Massachusetts Avenue is a four-story limestone-clad Beaux-Art styled apartment building. Originally known as Wendell Mansions, it was constructed in 1906 and designed by Baltimore architect Edward H. Glidden with a single apartment on each floor. It is illustrative of the “mansion” apartment type, designed to appear as a grand single family mansion.

The building’s entrance is located at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Decatur Place, with primary elevations of equivalent design and clad in limestone on both streets; the rear and side elevations are utilitarian and clad in red brick. At the eastern end of the Decatur Place elevation, the building has a sun porch on each floor, enclosed by casement windows.

Proposal

The staff previously approved a building permit application from the owner to create a new opening in the unarticulated side wall to take advantage of the sun room’s corner location by creating a second bank of casement windows facing east. The owner would still like to create that second opening but maintain it as an unfenestrated opening in the masonry wall; as well, the proposal includes removing the existing wood casement windows on the Decatur Place elevation.

Evaluation

The Board’s Standards for Window Repair and Replacement (DCMR 10-C, Chapter 23) do not specifically address removing windows where no replacement is anticipated. However, the intent of the preservation law and regulations is to retain character-defining features of historic property, particularly where they contribute to primary, street-facing elevations. The casement windows that articulate the stacked sun rooms certainly constitute an important character-defining feature of this unusual mansion-type apartment building. A conservatory or sun porch was a common feature in Victorian and Edwardian

houses, particularly those of the affluent; the transference of this type of luxury feature was important in making apartment building living acceptable for an affluent clientele. While the applicant has raised the possibility that the windows might not be original, no evidence has been suggested that they are not. The fact that identical windows are found in all four apartment units certainly suggests that they are original or were added early in the building's history; either way, they present a unified appearance on all floors that would be disturbed by the removal of one or two sets of windows.

The HPO recommends that the Review Board deny the concept for removing the casement windows as inconsistent with the purposes of the preservation act.