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

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Property Address:	<b>411 Ridge Street NW</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Mount Vernon Square Historic District</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar
ANC:	<b>6E</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Denial Calendar
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept Review
Meeting Date:	<b>April 25, 2013</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	<b>#13-270</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Brendan Meyer</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision
		<input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology

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Sanni Mufutau, acting as agent on behalf of owner 411 Ridge LLC, is the applicant for construction of a new brick and curtain wall 3-story 2-unit building in the Mount Vernon Square Historic District. The design was prepared by Architectural Design Graphics.

### **Property Description and Context**

The lot has been vacant since designation of the historic district in 1999. It is located on the north side of Ridge Street, a narrow one-block street originally platted as an alley. The street is characterized by modest, two-story flat-fronted frame and brick houses, rare survivors of what were once typical and fairly common 19th century working class alley dwellings. The street contains at least 7 houses constructed before the Civil War, and despite a period of construction that spans from as early as 1855 to as late as 1911, they have a remarkable consistency of simple block forms, punched windows, and spare detailing.

The subject lot sits between an alley to the east and a row of four contemporary flat-residences to the west that were reviewed and approved by the Board in 2002-03 (413-423 Ridge Street, NW HPA #02-496). The contemporary row was approved when it was recommended that the brick sections of front facades replicated the height (two stories) and width (14-16 feet) of the 19<sup>th</sup> century rowhouses on the block and that canting the top floor mitigated its additional height.

### **Proposal**

The design for 411 Ridge Street NW seeks to replicate the design of 413-423 Ridge Street by extending the row by one additional building. The lot is approximately five feet narrower than the precedent row (15'-6" vs. 20'-0") and the façade is adjusted to fit the lot by reducing the width of the brick section accordingly. As a result the brick section calls for two bays of casement windows rather than three bays. The profile of the new building mimics the existing end condition and consists of a canted third floor at the front, tall parapet with roof deck behind, and fourth story penthouse at the very rear. Unlike the currently unfenestrated wall at the end of the row, the new construction along the alley will be fenestrated and clad in stucco. All horizontal elements (floor levels, stoop, fasciae, ridges and railings) will align with the row.

### **Evaluation**

While examples of extending a modern row of houses is rare, due to the rarity of modern rows to begin with, the notion of duplicating a successful design some years later is a timeless approach that has been done ubiquitously throughout Washington's historic rowhouse neighborhoods. The

historic context of the historic district has not changed between 2002 and today and the Board has not adopted any guidelines for new construction that would now preclude the type of design approved and executed at 413-423 Ridge Street NW. The one practical difference between the existing row and the proposed concept is the difference in lot width. The difference could have also been compensated for by making the section of brick span the full width of the lot. This would eliminate any curtain wall at the first and second floor, but make the width of brick nearly equal to those of the contemporary row (15'-6" compared to 16'-0") which have fit into the rhythm and proportions of Ridge Street quite successfully.

### **Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Review Board find the concept for a three-story flats-residence at 411 Ridge Street NW compatible with the character of the Mount Vernon Square Historic District and consistent with the purposes of the preservation act and delegate final approval to staff.*

*No part of this recommendation shall be construed as a recommendation for approval or disapproval for any necessary zoning relief or interpretation.*



**Figure 1.** 413 Ridge Street NW and vacant site of 411 Ridge Street NW (photo by applicant)