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

Landmark/District:	Anacostia Historic District	(x) Consent Calendar
Address:	1326 Valley Place SE	
Meeting Date:	January 24, 2019	(x) Alteration
Case Number:	19-132	(x) Concept

The applicant, property owner the L’Enfant Trust (with Cunningham Quill Architects), requests the Board’s review of a permit application to reconstruct and add a two-story rear addition to this two-story, frame structure.

Background

This house is one of six similar, two-story, detached homes constructed on this block of Valley in 1885 by Henry A. Griswold, the developer of this subdivision, which was an addition to the south side of Uniontown. The residences are unique in the neighborhood for the projecting pediments on the porch roofs and for the vertical-board friezes below the eaves. The subject property used to be the best preserved in the group, in the sense of retaining the most original fabric, despite a lot of damage. It remained the model for restorative work on its neighbors. Unfortunately, it was also one of the most egregious examples of demolition by neglect, the correction of which by the former owner the Historic Preservation Office pursued for more than a decade. But that owner effectively abandoned the property, and the city was forced to demolish much of the house in 2010, to stabilize the rest. It acquired the property outright for unpaid taxes in 2011. In 2014, the Department of Housing and Community Development submitted a concept to repair the structure and reconstruct the approximately two-thirds of the building that had been lost—to effectively restore the row—and add a rear addition. The HPRB approved the concept.

The property has since been transferred to the ownership of the L’Enfant Trust, which recently submitted a permit application for a project that is similar to, but that improves upon, the 2014 concept. The project is before HPRB again because the proposed addition, even if measured from the point where the house’s rear wall once stood, exceeds the maximum area of an addition subject to administrative approval. A permit could have been cleared administratively as consistent with the Board’s 2014 approval, except that more than four years have elapsed since that approval.

Project

The project would reconstruct the main block of the house and repair and replace numerous lost or deteriorated elements. Rearward of the original termination of the main block would be a two-story kitchen-and-bedroom addition, distinguished from the main block by its nearly flat roof and vertical trim at the juncture of the two masses. A small deck would stand at the rear door.

The roof is to be re-clad in standing-seam metal, and the wood siding is to match the existing. The porch is to be reconstructed to match the existing.

Evaluation

The plan is generally compatible, and there is considerable urgency to undertaking this last-ditch salvage and reconstruction effort.

There are just a few details that should be worked out, to guide the contractors in the field. Given the level of replacement of elements, it would be worth specifying which are to remain, including the frieze, for instance. Also, the existing siding should be specified as to profile and exposure, rather than merely referred to, as the standard for matching the new siding.

The reconstruction of the front porch is key, and the posts should be detailed to match those the existing. Appropriate tongue-and-groove decking should also be specified. It is unlikely that there is enough space below the deck to fit the proposed lattice apron.

The window casings should also be detailed. The originals are not of the “picture-frame” type, but have a head molding; those at 1334 Valley are the best original examples for emulation.

Like the others on the row, the main entrance of 1326 projects beyond the main plane of the façade. The east side of the project has a narrow, vertical window opening. Each of the houses in this row had there a seven-over-seven double-hung window with multi-colored lights. When the 2014 concept was reviewed, this window was still largely intact, but deteriorated. Its present condition cannot be evaluated from the street, as there is presently a steel mesh over the opening. If it is still present and restorable, then it should be restored.

Recommendation

HPO recommends that the Board recommend in favor of issuance of the permit as retaining the character of the house and as compatible with the character of the historic district, with the conditions that:

- 1. the porch and window details be developed as discussed above;*
- 2. the siding be specified;*
- 3. the window at the front entrance be restored if possible.*

Staff contact: Tim Dennee

