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

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Landmark/District:	<b>Anacostia Historic District</b>	(x) Agenda
Address:	<b>1448 W Street SE</b>	
Meeting Date:	<b>October 3, 2019</b>	(x) New construction
Case Number:	<b>19-554</b>	(x) Permit

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Jack Becker, architect and agent for owner 1446 W Street SE LLC, requests review of a permit application for construction of a two-story house on a vacant lot, to abut a second proposed house—a near mirror twin—on the west.

The Board approved the concept’s size and massing in January 2018, recommending that the project be revised to address detail issues raised in a letter from the Historic Anacostia Preservation Society (HAPS), such as recommendations for all-wood siding, a more compatible entry door, and brick-faced foundations and porch piers.<sup>1</sup>

The design is consistent with last year’s concept, but:

1. the exposed side and the rear of the building are now to be sided with cedar shingles, rather than fiber-cement lap siding;
2. the foundation and porch piers are now proposed to be faced with “thin” brick;
3. the porch roof is now standing-seam metal;
4. the front door has been changed to a one-light-over-one-panel, but its material is not specified;
5. one window has been eliminated from the east side;
6. a skylight has been added; and
7. the rear deck is now cantilevered.

The rear deck is presumably of pressure-treated lumber. The front porch decking has not been specified but is rendered like 1x6s. The through-wall vents are not depicted on the side elevation. The electrical and mechanical are depicted on their own plans, but not on the elevations.

### **Evaluation**

It is not clear why two siding materials and exposures are proposed, when both can be seen at once at the house’s front corner. While wood shingles were commonly employed in gables and second stories of Anacostia’s Queen Anne houses, turning a corner with the material gives the house a rustic and improvised appearance. “Shakes” also implies that they have a rough surface, as if riven, without planing and perhaps without painting. Although wood is a traditional material, it would have been more consistent to stick with the originally proposed fiber-cement boards. It is recommended that at least the side elevation be sided with wood or fiber-cement lap

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<sup>1</sup> A recent email from HAPS indicates that “some of the comments... have been considered [but] we were not able to check the size of the propose[d] wood siding... [and] the propose[d] front porch lacks historic details.”

siding consistent with the exposure at the façade. Otherwise, if the Board supports the shingles, they should be painted to match the field color of the front siding.

The cornice should have a bigger frieze board.

The elevations show essentially no window casings at side and rear and should have something more substantial, even if they do not match the front casings.

It would be more practical to box the porch rafters. The square-section porch posts should at least be chamfered, to give them some refinement. The porch balustrade looks heavy; it is acceptable to have balusters that are splats—wide in one dimension, but thin in the other—but the handrails should be narrower for gripping. The porch apron's lattice panels should be framed with 1x4s. The decking should be narrow, tongue-and-groove boards—even if they are a decent composite product such as Aeratis—rather than gapped 1x6s.

The electrical plans show the meter on the front porch (Sheet E001). Because this house is to have a side yard, the meter should go there, on the east wall.<sup>2</sup>

### **Recommendation**

*HPO recommends that the Board find the project generally compatible with the character of the historic district and delegate further review to staff, with the condition that the applicant adequately address the recommendations above.*

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<sup>2</sup> While it would be nice to bring the electrical supply through the back yard, the alley is too narrow to accommodate utility poles, so the houses here are fed from the street.