
HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

Property Address: **2110 16th Street SE**
Landmark/District: **Anacostia Historic District**
ANC: **8A**

Meeting Date: **November 19, 2015**
H.P.A. Number: **#15-565**
Staff Reviewer: **Brendan Meyer**

☒ Agenda
☐ Consent Calendar
☐ Denial Calendar
☐ Concept Review
☐ Alteration
☐ New Construction
☒ Raze
☐ Subdivision

Owner CitiWide Properties LLC seeks review for a raze permit to demolish a one-story frame house at 2110 16th Street SE in the Anacostia Historic District. The structural condition report was prepared by Dennis Anibaba, P.E., Denababa Engineering Consultant, LLC.

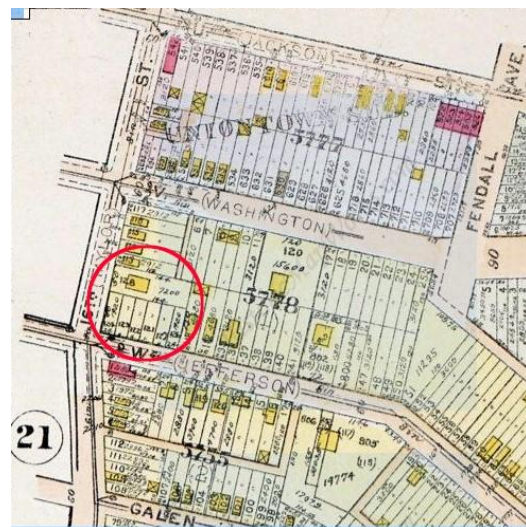
Property Description and Context

The Anacostia Historic District was designated in 1978 primarily as a notable collection of small-scale Victorian and Revival residential architecture associated with a late 19th/early 20th century working-class community. The period of significance covers the years from 1854 to 1940. Original lots were larger than standard city lots and compelled a building pattern where detached and duplex houses, rather than continuous rows of houses, were the predominant pattern. Occasionally early land improvement companies built groups of closely spaced cottage-style frame houses like at 2102-2108 16th Street SE and 1518 to 1524 W Street SE.

The house at 2110 16th Street SE (originally addressed as 1604 W Street SE) was built in 1918 by George H. Guerdrum.¹ The original lots for this square were oriented to W and V Streets of which the Guerdrum family owned several. The family also built houses at 1612 and 1614 (demolished) W Street and 1625 V Street. The earliest real estate map on which the house appears shows its width fronting W Street. Taken together it can be speculated that the current structure was moved or substantially altered to orient to 16th Street instead of W Street. This likely happened when the four lots to the south were subdivided and developed in 1936. This probable sequence explains why 2110 is set so much farther back from the street than its neighbors or any other house in the historic district.



Baist, 1907



Baist, 1920

¹ Building permit #2497, 3/23/1918, 1604 W Street SE, Square 5778, lots 26-29, frame 1-story house, \$1,200. For comparison, the cottages built to the north in 1905 cost \$4,000 each.

Today (right) the house is set back significantly from 16th Street on a steeply graded lot. Three bays wide with a simple side gable roof, the central front porch is not original. Original drop siding exists under several generations of later siding. The rear porch is enclosed. Several one-room additions at the northeast corner are dubiously constructed and abut a retaining wall holding back the higher grade of the adjacent lot.

Applicant's Condition Report

A condition report, written by a professional engineer, documents a litany of condition and structural defects resulting from inadequate original construction and lack of maintenance over the past 10-12 years of which the property has been vacant. These defects include an insufficient foundation, rotting framing members throughout and holes in the roof over the main body of the house, front porch and rear additions. The report comes to the conclusion that the building is best to be demolished.



Staff Evaluation

Staff has inspected the site and the interior of the building and cannot disagree with the conclusion of the engineer's report. Even in 2005 a staff report for a proposed addition here speculated whether the house was structurally sound enough to be restored². The addition was never built and the house has been vacant since then. The extent of deterioration is thorough and complete. Framing members are collapsed. Sill plates are rotted throughout nearly the entire perimeter of the house. Conditions have been chronically damp long enough to support mold and vegetative growth in many sections of framing. The addition of multiple bathrooms resulted in sawing into load bearing exterior wall studs in several locations to let in waste lines. The front porch is not original based on its pressure treated framing and roof framing laid down on the original main roof. The grading at the rear of the lot assures that large amounts of run-off are being channeled directly into the foundation and basement of the structure after any significant rainfall.

Most distressingly, the attic floor joists that run the length of the house lap at a central bearing wall. This bearing wall has become detached from the front wall due to severe forward displacement of the front wall. The bearing wall is therefore free to move laterally and the front porch, even in its extremely rotted condition is likely the only thing holding the front wall back from complete collapse.

To restore the house would mean to replace nearly every piece of framing with a new member, which would essentially be the same as replacing the house piece by piece. In this case it is apparent that the near total loss of structural integrity has led directly to the loss of historic integrity of 2110 16th Street SE.

Recommendation

The staff recommends that the Board:

- *Determine the house at 2110 16th Street SE to be noncontributing to the character of the Anacostia Historic District due to loss of structural and historic integrity, and*
- *Recommend to the Mayors Agent that its demolition is consistent with the Preservation act.*

² HPA #06-034, November 2005, "[One might have expected from any other applicant] a raze application, with some justification."