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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>2216 Chester Street SE</b>	
Meeting Date:	<b>October 3, 2019</b>	(x) New construction
Case Number:	<b>19-552</b>	(x) Revised concept

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Jack Becker, agent and architect for owner District Properties, requests review of a revised conceptual design for a subdivision and for construction of two two-story single-family dwellings and two rear accessory dwellings on a vacant lot in the Anacostia Historic District.

The proposal calls for subdividing the lot into two lots. Matching two-story frame houses would be built on each lot. The houses would be built to the side property line with no side yards. The exterior would have wood siding and nearly flat-roofed front porches. The foundations and porch slabs are presumably concrete. A ground-level passageway between the houses provides access to the two-story accessory dwelling units at rear.

At the August 1 hearing, the Board recommended that the application be revised to address design details (such as the porch details, the cornice and window heights), site drainage and utility locations; to specify materials; to consider separating the front building into two, or making it look like a multi-family building; to consider separating the rear buildings and/or reducing them in size or apparent size. The Board also recommended that the time used for revision also be used to afford ANC review.

The changes since then include the following:

1. the cedar shingles are now to be only on the rear of the primary building(s) and on the accessory building;
2. the front porch posts are to be chamfered;
3. the height of the gate in the passage has been reduced; and
4. the upper story of the accessory dwelling units has been revised to a dormered and mansarded attic.

## **Evaluation**

### Main houses

Although slightly taller and wider than neighboring homes on Chester Street, the dimensions and massing and materials of the main houses are compatible with the historic district and nearby historic buildings. The height of the window openings should probably still be reduced somewhat.

The porch posts should be reduced in width. Lacking the delicacy of the neighborhood's typical turned posts, they have now been chamfered, but they appear to be of nominal 8x8 lumber, which is significantly wider than other such posts and beefier than necessary to carry to load of the roof.

Where at least one end of a front porch is at a side property line, we would recommend a flat roof or a very low pent, rather than a hip, so that there is no need to fit a gutter in at the property line.

The exposed-rafter-end cornice may be acceptable on a new house, but it is not an especially close analog for the smaller brackets on the historic cornices, and exposing that much wood with that degree of projection makes the elements vulnerable to the weather. The same may be said of the rear cornice, which are uncommon anyway. New details clarify that these are at least not part of the roof structure, merely decorative.

Details will have to be developed for the permit set, including the front fence—which is unclear as to material and construction details—and the windows casings side and rear. Mechanical units should be hidden on the roof or in the rear yard. Utility meter locations have not been revealed. Especially as each lot contains two units, the meter cabinets will be large and should not be on the facades or in front of the houses.

#### Accessory units

If the Board finds the revision of the upper story to be a sufficient response to render the building(s) compatible in this context, then the blocky dormers should be refined, with the window openings better fitting them.

#### **Recommendation**

*HPO recommends that the Board approve the concept design for the subdivision and the proposed houses and delegate to staff further review, with the condition that the applicant revise the drawings to address adequately the points raised above.*