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

Landmark/District:	Anacostia Historic District	(x) Agenda
Address:	2242 Chester Street SE	
Meeting Date:	October 3, 2019	(x) New construction
Case Number:	19-553	(x) Revised concept

Jack Becker, agent and architect for owner District Properties, requests review of a revised conceptual design for construction of a two-story frame dwelling. The site is vacant. Notably, the application initially called for a large, one-story-and-attic accessory dwelling in the modest rear yard, but that has been eliminated in response to the Board's comments.

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); to specify materials; to consider putting the side yard on the opposite side of the lot; and most important, to shrink and simplify the proposed accessory dwelling unit to see if it could be built in this modest rear yard. The Board also recommended that the time used for revision also be used to afford ANC review.

Proposal

With the major exception of the deletion of the accessory dwelling, and the reasonable expansion of the rear deck, the proposal is nearly the same. It is a semi-detached two-story frame house 23 feet wide and approximately 64 feet deep, with one five-foot side yard. It is capped by a flat roof with an exposed-rafter cornice at front and back. A standing-seam-metal-roofed front porch will align with that of the attached house. The porch posts are now to be chamfered. The exterior walls are to be sided with wood—narrow-exposure horizontal lapped boards in front and cedar shakes now only on the rear. The windows are to be wood and the foundation and porch deck are presumably concrete.

Evaluation

Although slightly taller and wider than neighboring homes on Chester Street, the dimensions and massing and materials of the house 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 typical 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 shed, rather than a hip, so that there is no need to try 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 cornices, which are uncommon anyway. New details clarify that these are at least not part of the roof structure, but merely decorative.

Details will have to be developed for the permit set, including the rear deck, the front fence—which is unclear as to material and construction details—and the window casings side and rear. Utility meters should be on the side of the house and mechanical units on the roof or in the rear yard.

Recommendation

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