

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

Property Address:	1223 Talbert Street SE	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Anacostia Historic District		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	May 4th, 2023	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	HP 23-289	X	New Construction Subdivision

Applicant Caser Layton, with plans developed by Square 134 Architects, seeks concept review for construction of a four-unit residential building above a cellar on a vacant lot in the Anacostia Historic District.

Property Location

Located to the east of Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, Talbert Street extends up a steep hill and is lined by single family detached and rowhouses constructed from 1890 to 1936 which followed the broader development trends found in other parts of Anacostia. Houses illustrate a variety of architectural styles and building forms, including Colonial Revival, Craftsman, and four-squares. Further to the east the lots become larger in size, and the houses appear suburban in character and are set back at greater distances, approximately 25-30 feet from the sidewalks. The proposed building would be situated on a generous lot between an alley and a 2-story four square with cellar within a context of similar early 20th century house types.

Project Description

The applicant proposes to construct a four-unit building – two side-by-side stacked units – styled in an interpretation of a four-square house. From the cellar to the roof, the property will be approximately 30’6 in height. The project calls for a high-pitched hipped roof with an eave that overhangs the roof rafters. The roof features shed dormers at each elevation; the roof and dormers would be clad in asphalt shingle. The body of the house would be clad in siding above a brick foundation. The project will sit back from the street a similar distance to its neighbors and is accessed by a walkway and steps leading up to a covered front full-width porch. The two entry doors would be centered on the front façade; windows would consist of double grouped and single punched windows openings in a regular pattern on the facade. The plans do not provide information on the rear parking pad/garage.

Evaluation

The Board’s guidelines on New Construction in Historic Districts provides design principles by which to evaluate the compatibility of new construction. In evaluating the proposal against those, the project is compatible in setback, orientation, massing, and height and sufficiently matches in materials and detailing with buildings in the historic district, as well as the immediately adjacent properties.

There are a few areas where the design could be improved by additional refinement. While the massing is consistent with surrounding houses, the roof form is somewhat oversized to accommodate a full living space. The scale of the roof appears typical of a four square in the elevations but appears tall in the color renderings. It appears that there is room to lower the height of the top floor by 12"-18" without affecting the interior living space, which is recommended to improve the relationship of the roof form with the proposed building and the surrounding context. Conversely, the dormers and dormer windows might benefit from being modestly enlarged, both to improve their proportions and to provide more light to the top floor unit. Similarly, the front windows on the body of the building might also benefit from some additional refinement and slight expansion.

Although the materials, color, details and ornamentation, and landscape features have not been sufficiently developed yet, it is anticipated that these elements can be worked out in a manner that is compatible with the character of the Anacostia Historic District. Material and detailing information on the siding, porch columns, trim and cornice, as well as the proposed rear yard garage should be coordinated with HPO.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board find the general concept for new construction to be compatible with the character of the Anacostia Historic District, with the above recommendations to be coordinated with HPO, and final approval delegated to HPO.

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