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

Property Address:	Blagden Alley, lots 101-105 and 111-116	() Agenda
Landmark/District:	Blagden Alley-Naylor Court Historic District Shaw Historic District	(X) Consent Calendar
ANC:	2F	() Denial Calendar (X) Concept Review
Meeting Date:	October 23, 2014	(X) Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	#14-703	() New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Brendan Meyer	() Demolition (X) Subdivision

The applicant, designer Orestes del Castillo on behalf of owner Xavier Cervera, LLC, seeks conceptual design review for alterations and small addition to a one-story non-contributing building in the Blagden Alley-Naylor Court Historic. The existing building and adjacent small vacant lots that comprise the proposal have no fixed address but consist of Lots 101-105 and 111-116 and front on Blagden Alley in Square 368.

Property Description and Context

Blagden Alley and Naylor Court Historic District was designated in 1990 as a significant example of 19th century working class housing and for its association with the early 20th century social reform movement. Blagden Alley and Naylor Court share the same architectural characteristics. When originally platted, both squares were abnormally large and laid out with large lots, each with access to a street and an H-shaped alley at the interior of the square. Almost from the start, large lots were subdivided into smaller lots, many with frontage not on a street but on the alleys. On these lots, small and simple dwellings—generally unornamented brick, two-stories tall and two bays wide-- were built for Washington's working class. Hundreds of squares included alley dwellings in the 19th century, but the alley population of Blagden Alley and Naylor Court were two of the largest and longest lasting.

On paper, the subject lots still retain their late 19th century dimensions of 37 x 14 feet when each lot was occupied by an attached alley dwelling, but no remnants of these dwellings remain on the project site. Instead, lots 101-105 are occupied by a one-story concrete masonry unit warehouse and lots 111-116 are used as a paved parking lot.¹

Proposal

The applicant proposes to insert a primary entrance on the west elevation of the existing building and add a 15 x 38 foot one story addition to the east elevation. The existing parking lot would be converted into a paved and landscaped summer garden enclosed by a new wood fence 6 feet tall. Openings would consist of paired windows and doors under common structural headers. The east wall of the addition that faces on the Blagden Alley public right-of-way would be articulated with a blind opening that recalls the trabeated vehicle openings found throughout the historic district. The existing building and new addition would be clad in stucco. Trash would be

¹ The only vestiges of the former alley dwellings nearby are seen at lots 106-111. These 2-story brick dwellings have been converted to garages on the ground level but still exhibit their original residential second floors. These buildings are not part of this project.

accommodated in a separate court north of the addition and be sheltered by a new shed roof overhang supported by large wood brackets.

Evaluation and Recommendation

The proposed alterations will not alter a contributing property. The addition and fenced summer garden will produce massings and use materials consistent with those of the surrounding historic district. Especially appropriate for the historic district is the use of real or expressed structural headers and lintels at all openings. The blind opening on the addition is especially important to how the façade compatibly inserts itself into the pattern and rhythm of openings established by the historic openings of the district. The new wood fence will re-establish the face of the alley that is now missing, currently demarcated only by a chain-link and barbed wire fence. The fence also includes two gates that mark the location and dimension of two ancient—and recently closed—three-foot wide public alleys that once trisected this group of alley dwellings.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Review Board find the concept for a 1-story addition and alterations at lots 101-105 and 111-116 to be compatible with the character of the historic district, consistent with the purpose of the preservation act, and that final approval be delegated to Staff.