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

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Property Address:	<b>77-79 Bryant St NW</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Bloomingdale Historic District</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar
		<input type="checkbox"/> Denial Calendar
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept Review
Meeting Date:	<b>November 30, 2023</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	<b>#24-049</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction
		<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

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The Mu Lambda Foundation, a non-profit social service and educational organization, seeks concept review for construction of two new, 2-unit residential buildings on the newly created and vacant lots at 77 and 79 Bryant Street NW.

### **Property Description and Context**

The Board last reviewed this site in 2021 when it approved alterations to the house at 2405 1<sup>st</sup> Street NW and the subdivision which created the new lots which front Bryant Street. The Georgian Revival house at 2405 1<sup>st</sup> Street was constructed in 1904 by architect Joseph Bohn as the residence of Raymond Middaugh, a prominent Bloomingdale real estate developer. In form and style, the house is unique in the urban rowhouse neighborhood of Bloomingdale and is sited up from the corner to offer a generous side yard. The Board's primary concern when approving the subdivision was to ensure that Middaugh House and its side yard would remain prominent in the historic district and not be encroached upon incompatibly by new construction.

The two new lots start 32 feet east of the 1<sup>st</sup> Street right-of-way and are 36 and 32 feet wide. The lots are separated from the rest of the rowhouses of Bryant Street NW by an alley. The rowhouses on the north side of Bryant Street were built in six different groups in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and share similar forms and attributes. The rowhouses are three stories, most have hexagonal projecting bays, some with slate turret roofs, some without. Rooflines, fenestration, and terraced porches generally align the length of the block.

### **Proposal**

Two brick, three-story rowhouses with hexagonal projecting bays are proposed. Each would house two residential units with private entrances at the first floor and basement areaways. The front facades of each house are nearly identical with two bays of windows and the front door on the right side of the elevation, and the projecting bay on the left (Sheet 7). The top landings of the front steps are extended to the projecting bays and shelter basement entrances. Floor levels are fenestrated by a regular rhythm of traditionally sized double-hung windows and string courses aligned with the sills. A dentil cornice tops the facades and is broken where the projecting bays carry their cornices three feet higher.

The formal treatment of the street-facing elevations wraps onto the west elevation of 79 Bryant Street where it faces the side yard left open for Middaugh House (Sheet 15). After twelve feet the west elevation sets back giving this side of the house the form of a square projecting bay at the corner of the house. The east elevation at the alley is configured the same way but with fewer windows.

## **Evaluation**

The concept design for two rowhouses deviates from what the Board anticipated when it approved the subdivision, but not in an incompatible way. The proposal is substantially compatible with the forms, heights and rhythms of the historic rowhouses which set the scale of Bryant Street (Sheet 7), but the Board should consider some design revisions to assure sufficient compatibility with the historic district.

During the subdivision planning process, this applicant presented several options of how to build out the proposed subdivision. As part of its approval, the Board advised the applicant that their option for four rowhouses with four projecting bays was best. The current proposal for two rowhouses with two projecting bays benefits from further design development and offers more detailed views which show an acceptable compatibility with the rhythm of Bryant Street. Although its rhythm of bays is stretched and does not precisely match the narrow rhythm of the historic houses of Bryant, this difference is not discordant but also helps distinguish the proposed houses as modern houses.

As successful as the front facades are, extending the same formal design and ornament around and onto the side elevations of the houses is not necessary. It treats the front facades and side façades equally where there should be a hierarchy which treats the fronts in a special, formal manner and treats the side elevations in a plainer, informal manner. This was how rowhouses were treated historically when their side elevations were exposed by an alley. This could be achieved by reducing the pairs of windows near the corner to one window (which is how the east elevation is already designed, Sheet 16) and by not carrying the string courses around onto the side elevations. The temptation to treat the west elevation as a corner rowhouse with a turret roof or a formal side elevation should be avoided since the new houses do not sit on the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> and Bryant. This corner is reserved for Middaugh House and its side yard.

## **Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Review Board find the concept of two, three-story rowhouses with projecting bays at 77-79 Bryant Street NW to be compatible with the character of the historic district and consistent with the purpose of the preservation act, advise the applicant on the revisions outlined above, and delegate final approval to staff.*

*Staff contact: Brendan Meyer*



*Figure 1 Middaugh House, today (left), and 1904 architect rendering (right)*