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

Landmark/District:	Cleveland Park Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	3203 Macomb Street NW	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	May 28, 2015	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	15-303	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Frances McMillen	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Applicant Laure Redifer, with drawings prepared by Cunningham Quill Architects, requests concept review for a curb cut, driveway, and addition to 3203 Macomb Street NW in the Cleveland Park Historic District.

Property Description

Constructed in 1947, 3203 Macomb Street is a brick, two-story, colonial revival house with a side gable roof. A wide single-story side addition was added prior to the creation of the historic district. A deck extends off the rear of the house. Based on its date of construction outside the period of significance for the Cleveland Park Historic District (1880-1941), the property is non-contributing to the district.

Proposal

The proposal calls for a two-story side addition, curb cut and driveway. The addition is proposed to be broken down into two compositional elements -- a recessed hyphen measuring 11' in width joining the house, and an 18' wide outer section that would extend out to the same plane as the front of the house. Two options are proposed – option one provides a 36” setback for the hyphen; option two provides a more modest 8” setback. The options also include possible variations of brick or clapboard for the larger of the two sections of the addition, and different paint schemes to further differentiate the hyphen. Fenestration would include a mix of multi and full light casement windows.

The curb cut and driveway would be 9' in width; a 6' tall wood driveway gate adjacent to the front of the house is also proposed.

Evaluation

Greater flexibility is certainly warranted for alterations and additions to non-contributing buildings, and the proposal offers an opportunity to improve the existing condition of the current side addition which is not particularly compatible. The subject property is located on a substantial lot that can accommodate a sizable addition. Macomb Street's mix of house styles and sizes, with some homes that are quite large, also provides a context in which a house of the proposed size is not out of keeping with the streetscape.

Nevertheless, as evidenced by the applicant's various options, the narrow width of the existing main body of the house creates a challenge with how to add laterally to it to the extent that is proposed. Despite attempts at breaking the addition down into two elements, a proportional relationship of the house to the proposed addition is difficult to accomplish without creating an unbalanced relationship between the original building and the new construction. The problem is exacerbated by the existing location of the front door at the far south end of the facade.

The proposal has been revised based on suggestions of the staff, including lowering the height of the roof and developing the option with the more substantial setback for the hyphen. These revisions have improved the design by breaking down the mass of elements and in helping make the addition subordinate to the main house. The applicants would prefer not setting the addition substantially further back, and it is not clear that this would be effective in changing the relationship of the elements to each other. While the composition is somewhat unusual, the design has a comfortable, domestic scale of elements that would not feel out of place for the cadence of this block.

Curb cuts and driveways are a common feature along this block of Macomb Street (which does not have a mid-block alley), so the proposed curb cut and driveway would not be out of keeping with the context or the subject property. As the design continues to develop, it is recommended that a slightly more open gate design be considered.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept Option 1 compatible with the historic district, and delegate final approval to staff.