

---

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

---

Property Address:	<b>3300 Newark Street, NW</b>	<b>X</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Cleveland Park Historic District</b>		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>October 4, 2018</b>	<b>X</b>	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>18-534</b>	<b>X</b>	Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Steve Callcott</b>		New Construction
			Demolition
			Subdivision

---

Newark Street LLC, represented by Sean Ruppert and Laine Shakerdge, seeks conceptual design review for a rear addition on a Dutch Colonial Revival styled house in the Cleveland Park Historic District. Plans have been prepared by Greg Sparhawk of GPS Design.

**Property History and Description**

3300 Newark Street is a two-story house constructed in 1920 designed by Washington architect Robert Beresford. Beresford is best known as the architect of the Tower Building (1929) and associate designer of the Mayflower Hotel (1925), but he was also the designer of more than 50 houses built in Washington and Maryland in the 1920s, often for the Walker Investment Company.

The first floor is clad in brick; the second floor is expressed on the front as a single continuous dormer finished in wood siding set within a slate gambrel roof. The side sun room was probably added soon after the house's construction. The enclosed front portico is also a later addition.

On the rear, an addition and deck were added since the designation of the historic district in 1987. The rear yard drops precipitously into a ravine that runs between Newark and Macomb Street, one of several valleys that run through and define the distinct topography of the Cleveland Park Historic District.

**Proposal**

The project calls for removing the existing rear addition and deck and constructing a larger addition and deck. The addition would use the same design vocabulary as the house, with clapboard siding, traditional sash windows, and capped by a second, lower gambrel roof that would run parallel to main roof of the house. Based on the dimensions provided on A2.1, the addition would project 18'3" from the rear wall of the main block of the house (the existing addition projects 11'8") and extend almost the full width of the house, with a 2'4" inset from the west rear corner, and +/- 8" inset at the east rear corner. The two-tier deck would extend 9' on the first level and 19' on the second from the rear wall of the new addition.

**Evaluation**

The Board has traditionally given flexibility for the design of rear additions for properties in historic districts, particularly when they have little or no visibility from public street view and only affect a secondary (rear) elevation, both of which apply here. In its materials, fenestration, roof forms and details, the design has been developed to relate to the architectural character of the

existing house and, while large, the addition is subordinate and secondary to the main block of the house. Since filed, the applicants have worked to refine the design, resulting in a rear elevation that is simplified and composed of fewer elements, and the current plan for the deck steps it down to better relate it to the drop off in topography.

Substantial community testimony has been received raising concerns about the proposal and specifically its impact on the ravine. While the historic district nomination discusses how the neighborhood was platted to follow the contours of the land, the ravines that run through Cleveland Park are not specifically discussed. However, the ravines have often been cited by the community – particularly in this block – as features that are highly valued as character-defining features of the neighborhood.

HPO first learned of the community interest in the Newark-Macomb ravine in 2005, when staff-level approval was given for two retaining walls in the rear yard of 3316 Newark (located in the same square as the subject property). That project unfortunately resulted in a substantial change to the natural topography of the ravine, which was not entirely evident from the plans; the result is an abrupt and fundamental change in character from a sloping, naturalistically planted landscape to a series of high CMU walls supporting plateaus of lawn. In 2013, the Board found a proposed plan for a swimming pool and pool house located behind 3210 Newark to be incompatible with the ravine's character.

However, these past cases were for construction within the ravine, rather than on the backs of houses at the top of the ravine. As is shown in the block plan, the rear elevations of this long block are varied in their width, projection, and overall mass, and the proposed addition is within that existing range. While the proposed deck extends further than most, and certainly more than the houses immediately adjacent to it, it is unclear (at least to the HPO) how the concerns that the Board raised in the previous cases regarding construction *within* the ravine should be applied to construction on the rears of houses at the top of the hill *abutting* the ravine.

Based on the Board's traditional approach to allowing even sizable additions on the rear elevations of properties in historic districts where they are not prominently visible from public street view and are contextual in design to the building they are being added to, the HPO recommends that the general concept for the rear addition on this property be found compatible. However, there are several refinements that could improve the compatibility of the design and its relationship to the house, surrounding houses, and the ravine that are recommended:

- While the gambrel roof on the addition is obviously influenced by the existing house (and - full disclosure - was a solution suggested by HPO), it results in an unusual relationship to have these two nearly identical forms pressed together in parallel fashion. Rather than creating a second gambrel, a more typical solution for expanding this roof form would be to extend a shed dormer from the main block of the house to serve as the roof of the addition; the cross gambrel on the rear elevation could remain. This approach would result in a more subordinate relationship between the addition and the house, and slightly reduce the volume and lower the roofline of the addition without substantially affecting the program.
- Given the size of the proposed addition, spanning essentially the full width of the house, even a minor additional increase of two feet in the inset on each side of the addition from

the rear corners of the main block of the house would better emphasize the secondary quality of the addition to the house.

- The stepping of the elevation of the rear deck is a compatible approach that could serve as a model for future decks facing the ravine. However, the extent of the projection, particularly for the lower deck, is substantially greater than others in the block and should be reduced. Pulling the south edge of the deck back to align with the proposed stairs to the yard would still provide generous outdoor spaces while reducing the projection into the ravine.
- The chimney on the addition seems unusually massive, particularly for a secondary addition. The proportions of the chimney should be reduced (of, if a gas fireplace is proposed, could possibly be eliminated as a feature entirely and/or vented through the wall).

**Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Review Board approve the general concept as compatible with the character of the Cleveland Park Historic District, but that the revisions outlined above be incorporated into a revised design.*