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

Property Address:	1322-1326 18th Street NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Dupont Circle Historic District		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	May 26, 2022	X	Revised Concept
H.P.A. Number:	22-144	X	Alteration
			New Construction
			Demolition

The Board reviewed this concept to add above and behind three rowhouses in March of this year. At that time, the Board took no action, but asked the applicant to revise the proposal to study ways to reduce the visibility of or disguise the addition, particularly as viewed from the north and east, and to return for further review when ready.

Proposal

The project would add a fifth and sixth floors on the roof of and behind a row of three connected rowhouses. The present design proposes a pent roof and slight cornice on the east (front), north and south of the sixth floor. Other revisions are a change from one-over-one to six-over-one windows on the historic rowhouses, and improvement of the accuracy of the submission.

Evaluation

The Board recommended that the applicant explore ways to reduce the visibility and prominence of the addition. The proposal responds to one Board suggestion to explore a mansard roof form as a method to camouflage the addition. It lowers the previously proposed pent roof to just above the window heads but extends the form higher than the previous design. The result actually *increases* the height and visibility of the roof and does not improve the design's compatibility with the historic buildings.

As stated in the earlier staff report, HPO supports the rear addition and fifth floor, with the condition that it be set back to the rear of the original rowhouses and off the main roof, a typical recommendation for similar rowhouse additions. HPO continues to find the addition of a sixth floor problematic, as it gives the building a top-heavy appearance and disrupts the proportionality of the horizontal base provided by the three historic rowhouses.

In all other respects, the proposal is the same as the Board previously reviewed save the windows. While massing and visibility were the primary concerns at the March meeting, the revised submission does seize the opportunity to provide additional information or study other potential responses to the suggestions in the previous staff report (reiterated below) or those of the Board.

Recommendation

The design as revised does not go far enough to reach compatibility with this historic row. The project with a setback 5th floor and no 6th floor would provide some 32 units of housing in a neighborhood that supports densification and is consistent with the Preservation Act. The HPO makes the following recommendations to improve compatibility:

- The proposal to lengthen and widen a window in the front bay of 1326 to make a door is inconsistent with the Board's *Preservation and Design Guidelines for Basement Entrances and Windows*, and the HPO recommends removal from the design.
- The exposed, brick side wall of 1326 should be retained as it steps down toward the rear.
- The historic vestibule materials, stained glass transoms, and front doors should be retained.
- The use of brick should be considered on the first four floors of the addition where exposed to view.
- Prospective rooftop mechanical equipment should be depicted in plans and elevations.
- At 1322 18th, the original size of the main entry should be restored, with compatible doors installed, rather than filling the opening with windows.

HPO recommends that the Board approve a five-story addition set behind the original block of 1322-1326 18th Street, with the condition that revision of the project for permit adequately addresses the comments above, with final clearance delegated to staff.

HPO contact: Anne Brockett