

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

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Property Address:	<b>1312 18<sup>th</sup> Street NW</b>		Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Dupont Circle Historic District</b>	<b>X</b>	Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>January 28, 2021</b>	<b>X</b>	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>21-133</b>	<b>X</b>	Alteration

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On behalf of owner Harry Dematatis, Bonstra Haresign Architects proposes to convert this building from small offices to nine residences. The building was originally a free-standing residence, built in 1890 for R.F. Shepherd and designed by the architectural firm of Barry, Simpson and Andrews. The grand mansion is unusually styled with its stepped facade aligned to the diagonally oriented Connecticut Avenue at the rear, elaborate brick detailing including over windows and at the chimneys, and a shingled oriel with bowed windows at the south corner of the third and fourth floors.

### Proposal

The proposal would add minimally over existing projections on the rear and side. The rear addition extends the existing stairs at the lower levels up to the top floors to provide egress. All work is in brick to match the existing building's construction.

At the front, a vestibule would be added in place of the existing awning. Historically, there was a porch in this location, added sometime between 1903 and 1928 and evidenced by the remaining brick pier and remains of a concrete deck over the front door. The vestibule, constructed of brick with banded detailing to emulate the existing, would feature a multipane door flanked by two windows. Above, a new railing frames a small deck, accessed by converting a window to a door (likely restoring the former door to the porch).

Other changes include converting a first floor window to the right of the vestibule into a door, replacing all windows, and improving the public space, which is entirely paved at present.

### Evaluation

The HPO supports the alterations to the rear, which are not visible from any public perspective, and the addition of the vestibule with deck on top. The house is not part of a unified row, which would preclude consideration of a façade alteration of this type. The building's front entrance has experienced previous alterations, including the historic addition (and subsequent removal) of a porch located where the vestibule will be. Not insignificantly, the building has a rather undistinguished front door currently; in fact, HPO cannot confirm that the front door was located at the basement level or first floor level originally.

The HPO also has no objection to creating two doors where windows are currently located, or to restoring a south-facing bricked in window. However, the electric meters proposed on the south-

facing wall of the vestibule are too prominently visible and should be located inside the vestibule or elsewhere inside the building.

Windows should be restored if possible, or storm windows added, as they are original and appear to be in good condition. The windows in the oriel have bowed sashes and curved glass – special windows as defined in the Board’s regulations – and all efforts should be made to repair these. If they are so deteriorated as to require replacement, these character-defining features would need to be replicated.

The HPO notes that if the units are rentals, rehabilitation tax credits for the interior and exterior work may be available to the owner. Regardless, HPO will need to review the interior work to ensure the demolition does not compromise the building’s integrity.

**Recommendation**

*HPO recommends that the Board approve the project as consistent with the Act with the removal of meters from the exterior, retention of windows to the extent possible, and delegation of final review to staff.*

*Staff Contact: Anne Brockett*