

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

Landmark/District:	Dupont Circle HD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	1630 Riggs Pl, NW	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	October 31, 2019	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	HPA 19-543	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
		<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

EZJ Ventures, LLC with plans prepared by Robert M. Gurney Architect seeks conceptual design review for a sunscreen element at the rear of a rowhouse at 1630 Riggs Place in the Dupont Circle Historic District.

Property Description

1630 Riggs is part of a coordinated row of 13 houses on the south side of Riggs Place designed by architect Harvey L. Page and built between 1892-1889 by developers Addison & Larcombe. The original Queen Anne architecture is very intact both front and rear. The rear of these buildings has a rigorous continuity, with flat rear facades, regular window composition, and all but the end unit built to the same depth. Several houses have had one-story doglegs that were added in the 20th century.

There have been very few alterations along the rear of this row. Two notable exceptions are at 1616 Riggs and 1624 Riggs. At 1616 Riggs there was a 2-story plus partial 3rd story rear addition; while the original construction of this addition could not be located, it is known that it was re-clad in copper about 12 years ago. At 1624, a two-story rear addition, measuring approximately 10' deep and extending across 2/3rds of the rear wall, was constructed sometime between 2009 and 2012. The recorded permit for this addition called for a one-story addition. Most recently the Board approved a one-story rear addition with a roof deck balcony at both 1630 and 1626 in October 2016.

Proposal

The current proposal is for a sunscreen element for the balcony at the rear of 1630 Riggs Place that would extend up from the existing 1-story addition. The existing brick pier of the rear balcony railing would extend up an additional 7' and add a 4' wide steel C-channel horizontal member the width of the existing balcony.

Evaluation

Small additions and additive features at the rear of rowhouses are typically considered compatible and not sent to the Board for review, however, HPO recognizes the unique character of this Dupont Circle row and the community has voiced concern about any construction along this alleyscape. In 2016 the Board approved a one-story plus roof deck rear addition on this property (and 1626 Riggs)—and not a 2-story rear addition—so that the continuity of the consistent rear elevations remained intact and were legible.

The proposed sunscreen is a refined, simple frame architectural element comprised of a dark horizontal steel C-channel resting on gray brick piers that have been extended 7' from the existing balcony railing. The sunscreen does not cover the rear elevations, nor does it touch the building, and it sits 9' away from the original historic wall. Although it is a distinctive design HPO finds that the proposed element is compatible and meets the HPRB's Actions' previous directive: to allow for visibility and understanding of the original Harvey Page massing and composition along this consistent row. The modern design approach—which perfectly complements the recent rear addition design in materials, color, and details—is logical and fitting with the contemporary addition. The direction of modern materials and lines in juxtaposition with the 1890s brick house is in keeping with the many modern rear additions that are prevalent on this row and elsewhere throughout the historic district.

The architect and owner have been in regular communication with HPO, the ANC, the DCC, and the neighbors to keep everyone updated on the progress of the design.

Recommendation

HPO recommends that the Board find the concept generally consistent with the preservation act, consistent with the purposes of the preservation act, and consistent with the previous Board Actions for this property.