

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

Landmark/District:	Dupont Circle Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	1711 19th Street, NW	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	November 17, 2016	<input type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	17-040	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Kim Elliott	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Owner Sanjay Rupani, with plans prepared by architect David Bloom, seeks conceptual design review for conversion of a single family dwelling into an 8 unit building in the Dupont Circle Historic District.

Property Description

This large townhouse was built in 1911 and designed in the Renaissance Revival style by the locally prominent architecture firm Wood, Donn & Deming. It includes a one-story masonry garage at the rear built between 1913 and 1919. The 2nd floor of the house contains a series of grand rooms with intact original wood and plaster work, mantles, detailed crown molding, a grand stair, and original doors and built-ins.

Proposal

The project calls for converting the building to eight units. Exterior work includes adding two window wells at the front elevation, infilling window openings and adding new windows at the side elevation, replacement of original windows, restoring the decorative roof balustrade, expanding the garage by removing the west wall and increasing the footprint by two feet, and rear alterations. On the interior, there would be a significant amount of demolition—most of the interior walls, all of the stairs, roof skylight, and all of the interior original woodwork and architectural details. The plans suggest that one load bearing wall on the basement, 1st and 2nd floors will be maintained and that floor joists will be retained and sistered with new joists as needed.

A roof deck is proposed on top of the garage, and a 10’ tall penthouse stair pop-up, clad in hardie plank siding, is proposed for access to a roof deck on the top of the house.

Evaluation

The scope of demolition is extensive, and it is not entirely clear how the joists will be maintained as indicated when almost all of the interior walls, the stair, and many load-bearing components are being removed. The proposal should be revised to maintain more of the load bearing structure. While the Board’s purview does not extend to interior finishes, the extent of demolition is regrettable given their intact condition and quality, and the applicants should consider alternative plans that would retain at least some of these features and finishes.

On the front façade, the proposal calls for replacing all windows with new wood windows. However, at the second floor the original floor-to-ceiling jib windows would meet the definition of “special

windows” as defined in the Board’s standards, and should be restored instead of replaced.¹ Likewise, floor-to-ceiling double door windows with Juliet balconies on the rear façade should also be restored and not replaced with vinyl substitutes.

The window alterations on the side elevation -- infilling two existing openings and adding five new windows – are compatible with the character of the elevation. The new openings are appropriately scaled and in alignment with other side elevation windows. All windows that are visible should be non-clad wood to match the historic wood window profiles on the front of the house.

The proposed window wells at the front will be at grade with grates over the top. The strong stone base to the building should not be cut or compromised to create these wells and plantings should be included in the scope to hide the window wells and grates.

As the project continues to be developed, the project scope should include specifications for the in-kind repair of the roof balustrade and replication of the missing segment, and a more detailed preservation plan for the exterior documenting the historic elements and how the exterior will be restored.

The sightline section for the proposed roof deck and stair tower suggests that it will not be visible from public street view, but a flag test is needed to ensure that this standard is met.

The alteration to the garage is minimal and maintains the alley edge along with the other rear buildings on this row which is an important feature for the alley context. Several one-story garages along this row have similar roof top decks.

Recommendation

HPO recommends that the Board make the following findings:

- 1. The concept for the treatment of the exterior is generally compatible with the character of the historic district, but a preservation plan needs to be developed that documents the historic elements and how they will be preserved and treated;*
- 2. The existing special windows should be retained and restored, and any replacement windows on the two primary elevations should replicate the existing units in material and other qualities to be consistent with the Board’s window standards;*
- 3. More complete structural drawings should be prepared that fully explain what and how structural elements will be retained, and further efforts should be made to retain more of the load bearing structural walls;*
- 4. Final approval of the roof deck and stair tower is contingent on a flag test being conducted that demonstrates that these features will not be visible from street view;*
- 5. The applicants are encouraged to explore retention of the building’s distinctive interior finishes and features.*

¹ A “special window” means a window that creates a special architectural effect, or is a custom design, not typically found in a manufacturer’s catalogue. These windows may or may not be repetitive, and usually involve one or more of the following attributes: (c) Multi-pane configuration with twelve or more panes in a single sash. (DCMR 10-C, Section 2301)





