

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

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Property Address:	<b>1827-1829 M Street NW</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Dupont Circle Historic District</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>December 20, 2018</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept Review
HPA Number:	<b>18-518</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
		<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction

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Applicant Hartford Ventures LLC seeks concept review for a five-story addition behind two three-story rowhouses in the Dupont Circle Historic District. The applicants are requesting a review of the proposed massing and scale, understanding that they would need to return to the Board for consideration of materials, refined massing, and other details should the overall concept be found compatible.

Constructed in 1885, the former houses were speculatively built for owner Clarence Duvall and have since been converted to commercial uses on at least the first floors and elevated basements.

**Proposal**

This project proposes to convert the rowhouses to hotel use. Work would include demolishing the original two-story rear ells on both buildings as well as a one-story extension at the rear of 1827. In their place would be a one-story connector to a new five-story structure at the rear, separated from the original buildings by a seven-foot light well. The addition would stand approximately 43 feet back from the historic facades and would extend to the rear lot line. The third, fourth, and fifth floors would step in from the alley by seven feet. An at-grade entrance is proposed on the façade of 1827.

**Evaluation**

Compatibility for this project is achieved in the simplicity of its mass and by orienting it to the rear of the lot, where it is separated from the extant structures by a lightwell. This approach is successful in two ways; it reduces the physical impacts of the new construction on the historic buildings, ensuring that it does not subsume them. It also limits effects on the historic district, allowing the new structure to read as separate from the historic buildings.

Generally, the visibility of an addition over the roof of a historic structure is not considered compatible. However, the Board has approved visible additions in certain contexts, specifically commercial zones and areas with a varied context of smaller and larger buildings. In this case, visibility of the new massing is mitigated by the surrounding mix of building types and heights as well as by setting the addition off the historic structures, separated by a court.

The overall effect creates the appearance of a separate, new building in the alley behind the historic structures that blends into the taller buildings to the north, west and east. It is not expected that visibility from the front will be impactful, but the sightline should be further studied as more detailed and dimensioned plans are developed.

It should be noted that the proposal has been lowered by a floor and an initially proposed roof deck is no longer shown.

While the proposal for an at-grade front entrance cannot be fully evaluated, one may be possible given that 1827 has already lost its original front steps and door. As the designs progress, planning should include preservation of the interior structure (party wall and floor framing) to the maximum extent possible. The developed package should also include any proposed restorative work, such as compatible replacement windows and doors and removal of awnings and signage.

**Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept compatible with the character of the historic district in its setback, orientation, and massing, and that the project return for final concept review when the architectural plans have been further developed.*

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