

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

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Property Address:	<b>2152 Florida Avenue NW</b>	<b>X</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Dupont Circle Historic District</b>		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>June 25, 2020</b>	<b>X</b>	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>20-317</b>	<b>X</b>	Alteration

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Owner Beck Vissat, of 10 Square LLC, working with Adam Crain of 2Plys, seeks the Board's review of a concept design to add a 4-story addition to the 3-story Arts and Crafts style cottage at 2152 Florida Avenue NW. The house was designed in 1888 by the renowned firm of Hornblower and Marshall for developer George Dearing and was the first building on this side of the block.

### Proposal

The proposal would keep the front roofline with its mansard roof intact while slightly raising the roof toward the rear to provide headroom in the former attic. A tall but quite narrow addition is proposed in the same footprint as the existing rear ell, which was expanded in length incrementally over the years nearly to the rear property line.

The addition measures 32 feet deep by 12 feet wide and it is set back approximately 35 feet from the façade. The 12 foot wide front elevation features a pent roof clad in slate. The front wall has slate siding above cementitious board siding. French doors provide access to a front roof deck that is 7 feet deep and occupies the full width of the of the house. A parapet wall with metal railing extends across the front of the deck.

On the side, the addition is clad with cementitious plank siding for the upper three floors over the existing brick 1-story addition. Punched windows offer light to the interior and a spiral stair extends from grade to the roof deck.

There is an existing front basement entrance under the stairs which will be modified by shifting the door location and by adding a sidelight. The existing window well will be expanded and the window lengthened to allow for egress. All windows and doors are proposed for replacement.

### Evaluation

The plans have been altered due to the HPO's concerns about visibility by shifting the roof deck from the rear to the front in order to set the addition back further, and by softening the front edge of the addition with a pent roof. The addition will still be visible from the front given the width of Florida Avenue and the low height of the existing house. However, the range of visibility is limited by the taller buildings to either side. The addition also has the advantage of sitting far back on the roof and will replace the view of an existing large chimney and mechanical equipment that currently intrudes on the roofline. The HPO is satisfied that the changes will adequately reduce or disguise the visibility to the point that the addition can be deemed compatible.

Although the addition will be visible from the side, it is from an alley view. The proposal is compatible in materials and design and raises no preservation concerns. The visibility of the deck railing is not clear, and staff will work with the applicant to ensure that it is not visible.

It is worth considering if the existing windows and door can be retained. The unusual configuration of the front windows (4/4, 6/1, and 8/2 sashes) and door (paneled with wide sidelight and transoms with diamond configuration) are important to understanding the building's architectural style. This would comply with the

Board's Sustainability and Window guidelines and maintain the historic character of the façade in a way that replacements, even with the same pane configuration, cannot.

The HPO further recommends that the basement door be fully hidden under the stoop with no visible sidelight, that the window well be covered with a grate rather than utilizing a railing, and that the electric meters be located inside or under the front stoop.

### **Recommendation**

*HPO recommends that the Board find the proposed addition compatible with the character of the historic district in consideration of the comments above and consistent with the purposes of the Act. The HPO further recommends delegation of final approval to staff. The decision of the HPRB should not be construed as approval of any necessary zoning relief.*

*Staff Contact: Anne Brockett*