

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

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Property Address:	<b>1808 S Street NW</b>	<b>X</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Dupont Circle Historic District</b>		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>September 22, 2020</b>	<b>X</b>	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>20-396</b>	<b>X</b>	Alteration

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On behalf of owner S2 S Street NW LLC, R, Michael Cross Design Group seeks the Board’s review of a concept to add a floor to this rowhouse within the Dupont Circle Historic District. The building was constructed in 1894 as part of a speculative row of four buildings, only three of which were built.

**Proposal**

The design proposes to add a roof addition and basement entry to convert this building from a single-family residence to 4-unit building. The addition would be set back 11’7” from the façade and would open onto a rear-facing deck, setting it back 9’10” from the rear. It would be clad in cementitious board with no windows facing the front. The addition will be visible from north along 18<sup>th</sup> Street, as shown in images 4, 5, and 6 of the visibility study and the staff’s augmented image below.

At the building’s façade, a basement entry will be added under the existing front door, accessed by concrete steps. The plans also show a good deal of new interior framing,



**Evaluation**

As demonstrated, the addition will be visible from the north from both sides of 18<sup>th</sup> Street. Staff asked if the design could be reconfigured to put the roof deck on the front to set the addition back onto the ell, but this design would be inconsistent with zoning setback requirements. The addition has been pushed back and lowered, per staff’s request, but still would present a visible intrusion to the historic

roofline of this row. The argument could be made that the view is impeded for a certain distance by the gas station canopy at the northwest corner of the intersection of 18<sup>th</sup> and S Streets. In addition, the gas station may, at some point, be replaced. However, the visible addition detracts from the view of the building's distinctive turret as a three-dimensional form. It sits on more than half of the main roof and is not compatible with the historic district or consistent with prior Board approvals for roof additions.

The creation of a basement stair is consistent with the Board's guidelines as long as the original stoop, stairs, and railing remain. The new areaway under the steps will provide a location for the large meter bank that will be necessary. The architects have also indicated that the paved front yard will be returned to a green landscape.

The staff has advised the architects that the amount of interior demolition without evidence of structural failure was excessive and not consistent with the preservation regulations but that sistering new joists to the existing would be an acceptable alternative approach. The HPO will ensure interior demolition is limited and that appropriate window and door replacements occur on the façade.

Although the rear of the building is not visible due to its location against a walking alley and across from a tall apartment building, HPO would support larger window openings here.

## **Recommendation**

*HPO recommends that the Board approve the basement entry with the meters located under the existing stoop but recommends against the roof addition as incompatible with the character of the historic district and inconsistent with the purposes of the Act. The HPO further recommends delegation of final approval to staff.*

*Staff Contact: Anne Brockett*