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

Landmark/District:	Foggy Bottom Historic District	(x) Consent calendar
Address:	949 25th Street NW	
Meeting Date:	January 30, 2020	(x) Addition
Case Number:	16-116	(x) Concept extension

The applicant, property owner Steve Charnovitz, requests the Board’s extension of a concept approval for the construction of an addition atop and beside the rear wing of this 1890 rowhouse, causing demolition of much of the wing. The Board approved the concept on its consent calendar of September 22, 2016, with a delegation to staff of further review, with the conditions set forth in the staff report (attached).

On October 2, 2019, HPO staff received notification of a permit application for the project but did not clear it, as the Board’s concept approval had expired a year prior. Therefore, the applicant has requested a two-year extension, to date from September 23, 2018.

By regulation (10C DCMR § 332), Board approvals and staff delegation expire after two years, but a single two-year extension is available “for good cause shown. The Board is not required to reopen the review of the application, and shall not unreasonably withhold its approval of an extension.”

The present permit application is consistent with the 2016 concept approval. The applicant has written HPO, stating “We believe that there is ‘good cause’ for the extensions because the applicants have working diligently from September 2016 to refine the design of the project and since September 2018 to secure the construction permit applied for in September 2018. Both before the 2016 application for conceptual review and since then, both the homeowner and the project agents have been in communication with DC government officials about the details of the project.” The permit application was opened prior to the expiration of the initial concept approval.

Recommendation

HPO recommends that the Board extend the concept approval for a period of two years, beginning September 23, 2018, and delegate to staff further review, with the conditions that the addition’s side elevations be finished with true stucco painted in the same color as the brick, and that the spacing of the slats of the wood screen be three quarters of an inch.

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Landmark/District:	Foggy Bottom Historic District	() Agenda
Address:	949 25th Street NW	(x) Consent
Meeting Date:	September 22, 2016	(x) Addition
Case Number:	16-616	(x) Alterations
Staff Reviewer:	Tim Dennée	(x) Concept

The applicant, Jonathan Kuhn, architect and agent for property owner Steve Charnovitz, requests the Board’s review of a concept to construct an addition atop and beside the rear wing of this 1890 rowhouse, causing demolition of much of the wing.

The house is unusual in that it is one of the few contributing buildings in the historic district that was constructed at three stories.¹ Like many similar Victorian houses in, say, Dupont Circle, it was built with a lower rear wing. In other historic districts, the Board has frequently approved additions atop one- or two-story wings that “fill out” the house behind a taller main block.²

This addition would also fill in the court described by the ell. This is also a common alteration, as it is a logical direction for expansion on a narrow lot, especially when rearward extension is precluded, as here. The combination of roof addition and side addition, however, means the demolition of much of the ell’s structure. The demolition of even an entire ell, if not too large, has sometimes previously been supported by the Board, if necessary to adapt a building. Here, without the need to remove the wing’s rear wall³, the proper balancing of the preservation and adaptation interests allows, indeed calls for, the retention of two walls of the wing, while its side wall along the court and the rest of its framing may be demolished. Thus, a sense of repetition of the two-story side-shedding wing next door (951) is retained.

The new construction has a contemporary expression, consisting mainly of posts supporting a rain screen of two-inch-wide slats. The drawings suggest that these would be spaced two inches apart, but the architect reports that the gaps would be only three quarters of an inch, so that the backing black-colored “Vapro Shield” vapor barrier would be in shadow. Larger gaps would be provided for undivided glazing on the first two stories and, uppermost, an open porch. The design of the infill has the benefit of appearing light and framing the walls of the wing in a way that clearly differentiates new from old, while emphasizing the solidity of the latter. The side

¹ The mansard roof of 949 25th seems a slightly odd fit, but the construction permit specifies three stories. There are only a handful of true three-story historic buildings in the neighborhood. A few others have had their basement stories fully exposed by re-grading.

² In contrast, the Board has generally recommended denial of roof additions atop the rows of two-story homes in Foggy Bottom, because they would typically be visible from the street, and because they would have an overwhelming visual impact on the row seen from front or back.

³ Another window would be added, however.

elevations would be stuccoed, a common enough material for additions, and painted in the color of the masonry, as the wood cannot be wrapped around for reasons of fire separation.

Recommendation

HPO recommends that the Board approve the concept and delegate to staff further review, with the conditions that the addition's side elevations be stuccoed with true stucco painted in the same color as the brick, and that the spacing of the slats of the wood screen be three quarters of an inch.