

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

Property Address:	2341 Ashmead Place NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Kalorama Triangle Historic District		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	June 23, 2016	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	16-055		New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Anne Brockett	X	Alteration

In March, the Board reviewed this project and recommended against a fourth floor addition and the proposed exterior stairs. The HPRB also recommended a redesign of the addition, suggesting retention of the sleeping porch and dogleg aesthetic.

Working with architects K.C. Price and Michael Beidler, owner Mike Cassar returns with a revised proposal that works to address some of the HPRB's concerns.

Project Description

The project retains the proposal to demolish the three-story rear ell and former sleeping porch and replace it with an addition of four stories. The footprint and treatment, however, are much improved. The plans retain a dogleg form on the east side, tucking a spiral stair and balcony into the space to allow it to read as largely open, but also absorb some of the stair structure that was found incompatible in the previous design. The building on this side would be extended by roughly 6½ feet plus the spiral stair and landings measuring 11½ feet long. The depth of the stair would align with the main rear wall of the addition, which would increase the overall length of the ell (including porches) by 7'4". The previous proposal was for an addition of 11 feet in length.

The roof addition remains part of the application, set back approximately 7 feet from the new rear wall behind a balcony (and behind the projecting porches on the lower floors). Unlike the previous proposal, the upper story jogs in at the dogleg, removing the balcony here and relieving some of the addition's perceived bulk from the alley. The upper floor would be clad in cementitious boards with simple punched openings while the remainder of the rear façade will be largely glazed behind the projecting porches. The recessed wall in the dogleg would be clad in brick.

Although set back from the rear, the roof addition has moved further forward on the roof, resulting in an 18'4" setback from the front facade, as opposed to the previous 31' setback. The proposed front roof deck has also expanded, going from a 16' setback to the edge of the front parapet.

Finally, the project proposes to expand the front basement steps from 2'4" to 4'3", increase the depth of the window well and windows, reduce the size of a pier under the porch, and shave off the corner of the front bay, all to gain easier access to the basement unit.

Evaluation

The revised treatment of the rear is improved in its material selection and retention of a dogleg form, with brick wall and punched windows behind a tucked-in spiral stair. The design successfully reduces the size and breaks down the scale of the addition in a manner that is compatible with the historic forms of rowhouse rears. The staff suggests removing the roof of the uppermost porch to decrease the feeling of enclosed space along the alley.

The HPO previously recommended support for the roof addition based on the non-uniformity of the alleyscape; because it did not overwhelm the underlying historic building; and as consistent with previous Board approvals. The HPRB, however, did not concur with the recommendation and asked that the roof addition be eliminated. The current larger roof addition is not compatible in size and scale with the building, and the HPO recommends either pulling the addition back to the vicinity of its previous setback of 31 feet (where a roof mockup showed it would not be visible) and pulling back the roof deck. Alternately, a design that significantly sets the addition in from the rear wall may be compatible. Eliminating the fourth floor entirely as previously recommended by the Board would be compatible.

The front basement steps are incompatibly wide as proposed, but reducing them to a minimum required code width of 3 feet would be acceptable. The stair design should also be refined to not project further toward the sidewalk, to clarify the number of existing and proposed risers, and to clarify the interior floor height of the basement. Shaving away a corner of the front bay is not a compatible treatment and is inconsistent with the Board's guidelines for basements entrances, which states "Original or character-defining entrance stairs, porches and projecting bays should be preserved and not be altered to accommodate basement entrances." The depth of the front windows and window well are in keeping with the design guidelines and represent a compatible alteration.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board find the following:

- *That the rear addition is compatible with the Kalorama Triangle Historic District and the preservation law;*
- *That the roof addition is compatible if pulled back significantly from both the front and rear;*
- *That the front deck is compatible if pulled back significantly from the front;*
- *That increasing the depth of the front window well and windows is compatible;*
- *That the front access to the basement be redesigned to be consistent with the Board's Basement Entrances and Windows Guidelines;*
- *That further review be delegated to the staff.*