

**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:	July 28, 2016	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	16-055		New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Anne Brockett	X	Alteration

In March, the Board reviewed a project to add to the rear and roof of this property in the Kalorama Triangle Historic District and to alter the front basement access. The Board found that a roof addition was not appropriate here and that the rear addition would need reworking to attain a supportable level of compatibility. Working with architect K.C. Price, owner Mike Cassar returns with a revised proposal that works to address some of the HPRB's concerns.

Project Description

The revised project still calls for demolishing the three-story rear ell and screened in porch and replacing it with an enclosed addition as in the previous submission. However, it now retains its dogleg form, infilling only the innermost 6' of this space. Otherwise, the enclosed portion of the addition occupies the same footprint as the existing screened porch. Projecting off the addition are 6' deep decks at each level. A spiral stair and landings have been tucked into the dogleg space. The addition would be glazed on the main rear wall and clad in brick on the two walls facing into the dogleg.

A fourth floor continues to be proposed on the main roof and part of the addition. It sits back from the front 18'4" and approximately 6' from the rear wall. The roof addition would be clad in hardiplank and would follow the form of the dogleg below. It would be set into the roof structure so as to stand only 6' or so above the existing front mansard. On its façade, the addition opens on to a roof deck that extends to the rear slope of the mansard roof. The drawings do not depict a railing, and it is not clear if one is required given the height of the mansard. On the rear of the addition, french doors open onto a deck that extends to the rear wall plane of the building below, with a metal cable railing.

In the rear, the basement of the addition will extend roughly 20' into the rear, but will be completely below grade, excepting a stair leading down. Details for how the roof will be treated have not been provided. At the front, plans for a front window well and alterations to the basement stair have been submitted, but discrepancies remain between plans and section in the number and direction of risers, the height of the basement floor, and the demolition of a partial wall under the front porch.

Evaluation

In its previous review of this project, the Board determined that a roof addition was not compatible and that a rear addition could be compatible if it was redesigned. A roof addition remains in the current proposal, and its setback from the front has decreased from 31' (where a flag test confirmed it was not visible) to 18'4" with roof decks occupying the rest of the roof. Although a mockup was not visible during a recent site visit, any modifications made during construction or removal of tree foliage may create a potential for visibility. Indeed, by drawing in a sightline on the site elevation (page A0200) from a 6' tall person directly across the street toward the addition, the addition verges on being visible. The addition also occupies a little over half of the roof of the original block of the building, more than is typically approved, but has been set back more significantly from the rear. Should the Board consider any roof addition, it should be pushed back several feet from the to

ensure that there is no chance for visibility during the winter months. A visibility study was not conducted for a front roof deck railing.

At the rear, the proposal has been significantly reworked to respond to the Board's comments to design it in a more compatible manner. A major improvement is replicating the dogleg form to continue a feature typical in this alley and reduce the scale of what was previously a very wide rear elevation. The dogleg also has the benefit of allowing for the removal of the previously proposed exterior stair that zig-zagged across the rear. The spiral stair tucked into the dogleg is more successful in limiting its impact as seen from the alley.

The addition projects toward the rear the same depth as both abutting neighbors and the decks on floors 1-3 project the same depth as the porches on the house to the south. Houses to either side of the immediately adjacent properties extend deeper into the rear yards than what is proposed at 2341 and the depth of the projection rearward raises no preservation or compatibility concerns.

While the HPO supported the previous proposal for a roof addition as it was not visible from the front, rested on only a small portion of the original house, and was set back from the rear elevation, the HPRB did not. The HPO seeks the Board's direction on the current proposal and clarity on whether any roof addition, roof deck or stair tower is appropriate here.

While the HPO takes no issue with the extended subterranean basement, we recommend a landscape treatment for the structure's roof. The HPO will work with the applicant to ensure that enlarging the front basement steps and areaway meet the Board's guidelines. The plans should also clarify the extent of removal of floor and roof assemblies to ensure that they do not constitute substantial demolition as defined in the Board's regulations (DCMR 10-C, Section 305).

Recommendation

The HPO recommends approval of the rear addition and decks as compatible with the Kalorama Triangle Historic District, and seeks the Board's guidance on the appropriateness of a roof addition, roof deck, and/or stair tower at this property, with delegation to HPO to approve permits at the Board's discretion.