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

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Property Address:	<b>1936 2<sup>nd</sup> Street NW</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>LeDroit Park Historic District</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Consent Calendar
ANC:	<b>1B</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Concept Review
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Permit Review
Meeting Date:	<b>May 31, 2018</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	<b>18-386</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	New Construction
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Subdivision

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The applicant, owner James Cornelius, seeks concept review for a two-story addition and a partial third-floor rooftop addition at 1936 2<sup>nd</sup> Street NW in the LeDroit Park Historic District. Plans were prepared by the owner. The Board approved a two-story garage for this property in April 2018.

### **Property Description and Context**

The subject property is part of a row of nine porch-front, two-story houses designed by A.E. Landvoigt in 1913. They are an early example of the porch-front rowhouse and exhibit distinctive colonial revival details in the porch columns and millwork, roof cornice and dormers. On the rear, most of the original two-story sleeping porches are intact and in varying degrees of enclosure. The rear yards are approximately 100 feet deep which is exceptionally large for the historic district. Two recent projects at 1938 and 1946 have taken advantage of the generous site conditions and have built two-story rear additions with roof decks.

### **Proposal**

The concept proposes to maintain the house as a single-family dwelling and expand it with rear and rooftop additions. The rear sleeping porch would be demolished and replaced with a two-story addition and roof deck 17 feet deep and the full width of the lot. In aggregate, this would produce a new rear elevation ten feet beyond that of the southern neighbor and seven feet short of the northern neighbor. On top of the house, the front 17 feet of roof would be preserved and the remaining 23 feet of roof would be removed so that a partial third floor addition could sit on the ceiling joists of the second floor. The roofline at the front of the addition would be 32 feet above building grade and under the line of sight from directly across the street. The front elevation will be restored using materials and methods regularly approved at the staff level under delegated authority.

### **Evaluation**

Fundamental to the character of rowhouses is their simple block like massing in the main part of the house, and their rear wing extensions which can be a series of diminishing additions, wings, and porches. The massing typical of a historic rowhouse follows a hierarchy where the main block is taller than, or equal to, the height to its rear wing. For an addition to be compatible it should conform to this historic pattern of massing and hierarchy, and--by its scale, dimensions and location--be secondary to the main part of the house. The common understanding that additions should not be visible from the street is a convenient, but incomplete, synopsis of these principles.

These principles are especially important as they are applied to the rowhouses of LeDroit Park because no precedent of permitted roof additions on rowhouses has been identified. The Board, through its actions, has regularly reinforced the absence of roof top additions in LeDroit Park and preserved this neighborhood characteristic of the historic district.<sup>1</sup>

In March 2013, the Board approved the two-story rear addition at 1938 2<sup>nd</sup> Street which is adjacent to the subject property to the north. That addition was found compatible because its prominence would be mitigated by the very deep lot, and no part of the addition would be on top of the main block of the house. In terms of compatibility with historic districts, rear additions such as at 1938 offer the advantage that they have less impact on historic rooflines. The importance of this consideration increases in a context such as this where the houses are a uniform design and two-story height. Any roof top addition on this row would distinctly alter the rear roofline of the row.

It is recommended that the Board continue to endorse and encourage additions on this row to be two-story rear additions. Consistent application of this standard will produce a series of consistent additions that does not change the character of this part of the historic district as a place of two-story rowhouses with large rear yards.

### **Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept for a two-story rear addition at 1936 2<sup>nd</sup> Street NW to be compatible, but find the third floor addition is not compatible with the character of the LeDroit Park Historic District.*

*Staff contact: Brendan Meyer*

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<sup>1</sup> 324 U St NW (HPA 15-490) July 2015, the Board did not approve a three-story rear addition on a two-story house. 1852 3<sup>rd</sup> St NW (HPA 14-246) May 2014, the Board did not approve a three-story rear addition on a two-story house. 320 U St NW (HPA 14-292) April 2014, the Board approved raising the height of the rear roof on the condition that it not be taller than the main block of the rowhouse.