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

Property Address:	621 Florida Avenue NW	<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Landmark/District:	LeDroit Park Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept Review
		<input type="checkbox"/> Permit Review
Meeting Date:	December 15, 2022	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	23-041	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
		<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

The applicant, Michael Blake, AIA on behalf of owner Fl Ave Oz LLC, seeks concept review to add one story to a two- and one-story rear wing at 621 Florida Avenue NW. The existing house is a three-story rowhouse at the front and contributes to the Droit Park Historic District. Plans were prepared by bestudio Architecture.

Property Description and Context

621 Florida Avenue NW was built in 1892 by J. M. Coleman as a matching pair with 619 Florida to the east. The pair is an exuberant display of varied forms, materials, and ornament. The first floor up to the second-floor windows is brownstone with the upper stories clad in brick. The round projecting bay and arched main entrance are trimmed in stone ornament capped with ornate metalwork. The third floor of the elevation above the bay is an esoteric temple composition with bundled brick piers carrying a heavy lintel over a large arched window surrounded by a radiating field of brickwork. Most of the front windows are original and special windows. Sashes in the bay are curved to match the curve of the bay and the large undivided sashes open by passing through the transom.

The house was used for the last several decades as a funeral home. During that time its two-story rear wing was expanded several times until it connected with the garage at the rear of the lot. This conglomeration of small additions is imperceptible from the tight dead-end alley at the center of the square. The rear wing of 621 Florida is further obscured and backdropped on the west by a large non-contributing church which extends the full depth of the square.

Proposal

The applicant proposes to add a story to the two-story part of the rear wing so that its roof aligns with the rear of the three-story main block of the house. A new story would also be added to the one-story garage by replacing a non-original pitched roof with wall. The fiber cement coursed siding would be fenestrated with traditional double hung windows and the roof would be occupied by mechanical equipment solar panels and railings at the roof edges. The applicant proposes a robust preservation plan for the front façade. The plan thoroughly documents current conditions which require substantial work to repair delaminating stone, sashes and millwork far into decomposition, and glass panes replaced with acrylic panels.

Evaluation

The concept does not raise compatibility concerns with the historic district due to the site's forgiving context and offers the hope of long overdue restoration of a very ornamental and complex front façade. The size of the addition will not be prominent because it is located on the lower mass of the rear wing and will not add any height to the main block which is the highest part of the house. The new height of the rear wing will be backdropped by the taller church to the west so no new building silhouette would

be produced. The most apparent change visible from the tight confines of the ally will be the new second story on top of the garage which is already in a much-altered condition.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Review Board find the concept of adding one-story to the rear wing of 621 Florida Avenue NW to be compatible with the character of the LeDroit Park Historic District, and consistent with the purpose of the preservation act, endorse the preservation plan for the front elevation, and delegate final review to Staff.

Staff contact: Brendan Meyer