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

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Landmark/District: **Mount Pleasant Historic District** (x) Agenda  
Address: **1614 Kilbourne Place NW**

Meeting Date: **July 28, 2022** (x) Alteration/Addition  
Case Number: **22-365** (x) Concept

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The applicant, Joe Harris, architect and agent for property owner Shellys Corner LLC, requests the Board’s review of a concept to remove a sleeping porch, construct a side addition in its place, and undertake various site work and alterations to the 1910 residence to convert it to a two-family flat.

**Demolition**

The notes on the plans appear to call for demolition of all the floor framing, with a rationale that the stairs are in bad condition and perhaps the floors are uneven. Driven by the program, all interior walls, some of which would have to be load-bearing, would be demolished as well. That is a considerable amount of demolition, which probably represents an incompatible demolition of the building in significant part—unless the removal of the floor assemblies can be documented to be necessary because of a deteriorated condition.

**Roof deck**

A deck is proposed atop the primary roof. While a mock-up would be a good idea to demonstrate its dimensions, it appears that it would be visible from Kilbourne Street to the west and from Mount Pleasant Street to the east. The deck location might be a better location for the rooftop mechanical equipment.

**Fence**

HPO would normally not support a tall privacy fence that comes forward of the front corner of a building, let alone forward of a projection, but the present fence is one of longstanding, and the proposed one is an improvement as it relates to the bay. A fence would conceal a number of items that call for concealment: mechanical equipment, a window well, and a parking space.

**Side addition**

The proposal would demolish the side sleeping porch in favor of two stories elevated over the alley-side parking space. The question has been raised as to whether the porch is a character-defining feature. Despite unfortunate alterations, the answer is yes, as it would be for an original rear porch. But the Board has supported the sacrifice or reconstruction of the secondary porches on innumerable properties in this and other historic districts. The question is how it is to be done. The choice instead to build up against the attic story presents a challenge. A mansard-roofed building lowers the center of gravity and sets as an upward datum its prominent cornice—and the present porch respects that. A period addition, if it were taller, would typically have its

own smaller, subordinate mansard. When first consulted on the project, staff suggested that something of light framing and proportions, similar to the present porch, might succeed in relation to the roof. The boxy, solid addition looks out of place because of its form, its cladding and its window proportions. While it is slightly lower than the height of the primary mass, its extension upward through the cornice line, giving it a higher center of gravity that does not feel subordinate. An obvious and easy alternative would be to forgo the parking space and build two stories on grade.

**Recommendation**

*HPO recommends that the Board not approve the concept as submitted and that revisions be made to the plans to address the above comments.*