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

Landmark/District:	Mount Pleasant Historic District	(x) Agenda
Address:	1756 Kilbourne Place NW	
Meeting Date:	July 9, 2015	(x) Additions
Case Number:	15-422	(x) Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	Tim Dennée	(x) Concept

The applicant, Teass\Warren Architects, architect and agent for property owner 1756 Kilbourne LLC (Thornton Development LLC, etc.), requests the Board's review of a concept to construct a third floor on this two-story house and fill in the court along its rear wing and rebuild porches. A circular stair through the porches would provide access and egress at the rear. At completion, the house would be a few feet less deep than it is now. The reconstructed rear of the building would be sided with fiber-cement board. The intention is to convert the single-family dwelling to two flats.

Third-story addition

The new roof would be built behind the existing ridge. (There is a drawing error in the section on page 8, which shows the new roof instead extending forward to the Flemish gable.)

The Board has approved several such roof additions in Mount Pleasant and elsewhere, as they can be obscured from public view behind the partial attic if designed *and built* carefully. The new roof obviously must not be built high enough to be seen over the roof ridge. Similarly, the firewalls or parapets at the side of the rowhouse cannot be built up so as to be visible from Kilbourne Street. The same goes for locating any rooftop mechanical equipment (not shown).

The Board and HPO have typically recommended that the rear of rooftop additions be set a few feet forward of the existing rear wall plane in order to retain a sense of the original roofline along a row. The exception has been instances such as this, where a series of porches serve to interrupt views from the alley to the addition.

However, an easily overlooked detail calls into question the viability and appropriateness of the proposal. The upward termination of the front mansard is at a ridge board that is not merely vertical but, in fact, a molded cornice that widens and projects forward at the top. As is commonly the case, the proposed addition slopes upward to the rear from this ridge, meaning that water from that roof would have to drain over it. But the front of the house has only a small built-in gutter that catches only rainfall onto the mansard. Runoff from a larger roof behind would have to pour or dribble over the ridge molding. There does not seem to be a neat way to resolve this in an inconspicuous fashion, so it calls for rethinking the addition's roof form.

Reconstruction of the rear

The addition would necessitate the demolition of nearly all of the rear wing and the rear porches, in addition to most of the roof. This demolition is considerable, but given that the wing is not very deep, the project probably remains on the compatible side of demolition “in significant part.” Yet, the preservation law expressly balances the need for alteration with the strict preservation interest, so considering the specific programmatic need is germane to a finding of compatibility even if the same level of demolition occurred at another property. One cannot help but observe that, especially with the shortening of the house’s depth, the reconstruction of the rear adds little net space. The principal gain from widening the wing is the space devoted to circulation from the interior rooms to the rear porch. If this access to the porch could be achieved instead via a wraparound section of porch within the existing court (code permitting), the demolition might not be necessary. The rhythm of this row’s dogleg eaves would be retained, and some brick could be retained as well, preferable to a broader expanse of Hardiplank. The applicant is encouraged to explore this alternative first before concluding that this level of demolition is necessary.

Other work

Inside the house, partitions would be demolished and constructed, and the basement slab would be lowered and the walls underpinned. As the demolition on this project is fairly extensive, the floor framing in the main block should be retained.

As for work in the front of the house, most would be repair and repainting of wood elements. The basement window openings under the porch would be enlarged and a doorway converted to a window.

Any new or replacement meters should be installed inside or inconspicuously under the porch. A lattice apron should be retained beneath the porch deck.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board support the concept of a roof addition and reconstruction of the rear as necessary, but that it ask the applicant to address the problem of the addition’s roof form and roof drainage and to consider whether more of the rear wing can be retained. It is recommended further that:

- 1. no part of the addition or its appurtenances be visible from Kilbourne Place;*
- 2. any new meters be placed under the porch or inside;*
- 3. a lattice apron remain under the front porch;*
- 4. the fiber-cement siding not exceed six-inch exposure; and*
- 5. the floor framing in the main block remain.*