

---

---

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

---

---

Landmark/District: **Mount Pleasant Historic District** (x) Agenda  
Address: **1815 Lamont Street NW** ( ) Consent

Meeting Date: **November 20, 2014** (x) Alteration/addition  
Case Number: **15-004**

Staff Reviewer: **Tim Dennée** (x) Concept

---

---

The applicant, Roderick L. Cameron, representative of property owner 1815 Lamont Street LLC, requests the Board's review of a concept to add a rear addition, roof decks and a stair penthouse to this three-story, 1909 rowhouse. The architect is Andrew Sheldon.

This porch-fronted row is nearly intact, with no additions to speak of, only the enclosure of some of the two-story sleeping porches and the unusual third-story porches at the inside corners of the short ells. The Board has, however, twice approved concepts for a sizeable addition behind the long-vacant 1855 Lamont, at the western end of the row, and that project should soon have a permit.

The addition would be a full three stories tall and 23 feet wide, stretching from side lot line to side lot line, necessitating the demolition of the three-story ell and the two-story rear porch. The addition would be deeper as well, replacing the 8.4-foot-deep ell and six-foot-deep porch with a seventeen-foot-deep envelope, plus a one-story eight-by-twelve-foot projection detailed as an enclosed porch (the dimensions given on the site plan on Sheet A-0 are not accurate; the side elevation/section on Sheet A-4 best compares the proposal with the present ell and porch). The landings for an exterior spiral stair add to the bulk.

The addition's sides would be clad with fiber-cement lap siding. The rear would be partly brick-faced, with the third story in siding to recall the differentiated attic story on this row.

## **Evaluation**

### Siding

The cladding materials need some revision. If the addition is to be three stories, then differentiating the top story is appropriate, although it would better be done with some kind of slate or fiber-cement shingle, i.e., something more closely related to the shingles on the attics of the other houses. More important, the primary wall materials on the rear elevation should return around the addition's sides. Not doing so is acceptable in some circumstances, such as when the sides cannot be easily seen, but here it just makes the brick look false. Still, changes in material

between the main body of the addition, its top story, and its one-story projection do break up the larger mass into finer-scaled parts.

### Size and massing

The literally larger question is the size of the addition relative to the main block and the rest of the row. There are no such additions yet on the row, but it would be well to develop an idea of what solutions may be generalizable here, as it is too much to hope that no one else will wish to adapt other homes for more intensive use.

The coming three-story addition at 1855 Lamont will be slightly more than twenty feet deep in acknowledgement of its deeper lot. But that depth is added to the depth of the ell that is to be retained. On the other hand, that addition was designed to be a “dogleg” ell with a side court at least the width of a zoning-compliant side yard, so it should be similar in volume to this one.

Just comparing the addition to the main block, the new construction does not overwhelm it or look disproportionately large in relation. The changes in the exterior material help articulate it. It should also be noted that at some other properties on this row, a significant amount of the available volume is occupied by a garage, which is not the case here or at 1855 as they have no accessory structures.

### Roof decks

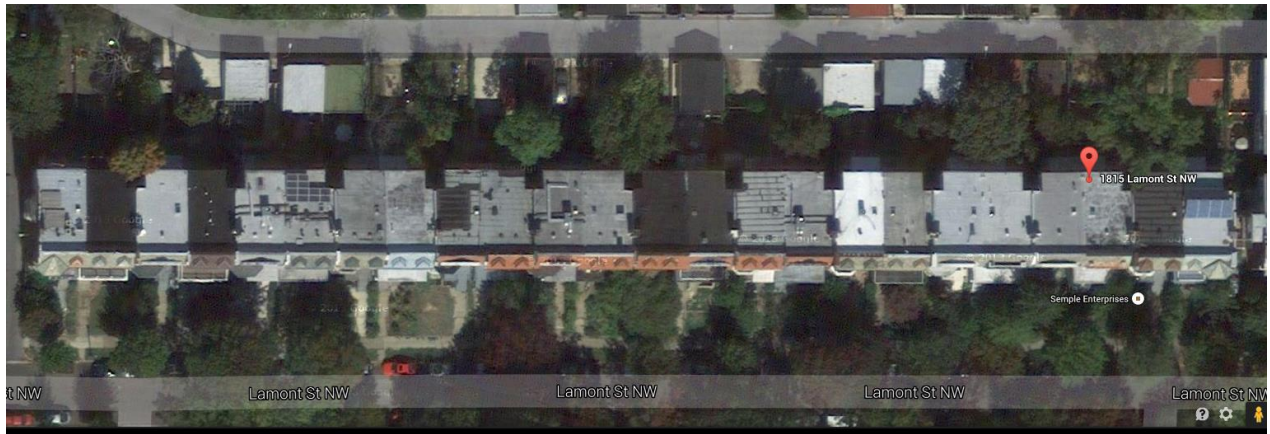
Stair penthouses are an unfortunate innovation that are at home atop large apartment buildings but not on rowhouses. Thus far, we have been fortunate to keep them out of Mount Pleasant, except in one instance. But as long as single-family homes are converted into apartment buildings, we will have to deal with the appurtenances of the latter. Here, we have requested the same that has been done in other historic districts: that the penthouse not be visible from anywhere on the street in front, and that it is also be pushed forward on the roof so as not to be prominent on the rear either.

The deck on the principal roof appears pulled forward sufficiently so as not to expose to view much of its supporting framing. For the same reason, the sides of the deck should be pulled in more from the sides of the addition, because the addition extends beyond the neighboring houses, making the deck that much more conspicuous.

### **Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Board approve the concept and delegate further review to staff on the conditions that:*

- 1. the brick and siding on the rear elevation return around the sides of the addition, so that the materials are consistent, and the top story is differentiated;*
- 2. the stair penthouse not be visible from Lamont Street;*
- 3. the sides of the deck on the principal roof be pulled in more from the sides of the addition.*



*Above: The row as seen from directly above (north is up).*

*Below: An aerial photo of the rear of the row (north is down).*

