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

Property Address:	456 Ridge Street NW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Landmark/District:	Mount Vernon Square Historic District	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar
		<input type="checkbox"/> Denial Calendar
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept Review
Meeting Date:	December 16, 2021	<input type="checkbox"/> Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	22-035	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

The applicant, owner Trudy E. Scott, seeks concept review to reclassify 456 Ridge Street NW, currently certified as a contributing building in the Mount Vernon Square Historic District, as a non-contributing building for the purposes of demolition. An engineer's report prepared by Louis & Associates, LLC of Burke, Virginia is provided for the Board's consideration.¹

Property Description

The property was built in 1863 according to survey by the Historic Preservation Office. It is a two-story frame house with a flat roof and was originally attached only on its west side. The front façade contains no historic materials, is clad in stucco and asbestos-cement shingles, and the fenestration has been rearranged. The cornice and roof framing have been reconstructed. Removal of the attached neighbor compelled construction of a new side wall of masonry and parging. The opposite east side is clad in modern clapboard siding.

Evaluation

The appearance and condition of the house has changed little since designation of the historic district in 1999. The engineer's report from Louis & Associates presents several observations noting unrepairable framing conditions or deficiencies in the original design of the structure and concludes that the building has lost its structural integrity and cannot be repaired.

Staff has inspected the interior of the structure and its framing components and concurs with the engineer's report that the building cannot be reasonably salvaged.

The original post and beam framing is substantially deteriorated due to rot, moisture damage and termites over several decades. The connections of the original framing, which one would hope to be resilient mortise and tenon jointwork are merely butted and nailed members. The load of the front wall is carried on a new frame wall constructed adjacent to the original post and beam framing. Conditions of rot are nearly universal across the entire perimeter of ground floor at the sill plate and its attached studs. First floor joists are unobservable because they are embedded in a modern concrete slab. The rear wall framing has been replaced with a small addition and CMU construction. The ceiling framing of the second floor and roof framing are non-original

¹ Historic Preservation Regulations, DCMR 10A, 703.1: "The following [consideration applies] when determining whether a property meets the definition of a non-contributing building, structure, or site: (a) A building or structure does not add to a district's sense of time and place and historical development if its qualities of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association have been so altered or are so deteriorated that the integrity of the property is irretrievably lost."

dimensional lumber members. The only original material identified by staff are the wood clapboards of the east elevation which were observed from the inside where they attach to the studs.

Based on the deterioration or absence of original framing members, the insufficiencies of the original construction and the absence of any character defining architectural components on the front elevation, the integrity of 456 Ridge Street is irretrievably lost and no longer contributes to the character of the historic district. Classifying the building as non-contributing for the purpose of demolition would not diminish the character of the historic district and, in this instance, is a reasonable course of action.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board reclassify 456 Ridge Street NW as a non-contributing property to the Mount Vernon Square Historic District for loss of integrity and delegate approval of the raze permit to staff.

Staff contact: Brendan Meyer