

HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

Property Address:	1318 9th Street NW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Landmark/District:	Blagden Alley/Naylor Court Historic District	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar
	Shaw Historic District	<input type="checkbox"/> Denial Calendar
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept Review
		<input type="checkbox"/> Permit
Meeting Date:	July 9, 2020	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	#20-309	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
		<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

The applicant, Catarina Ferreira, AIA, on behalf of 1318 9th Street NW LLC, seeks conceptual review to add third and fourth floors to a two-story commercial building at 1318 9th Street NW in the Blagden Alley/Naylor Court Historic District. Plans were prepared by Archi-textural.

Property Description and Context

Blagden Alley and Naylor Court Historic District was designated in 1990 as a significant example of 19th century working class housing and for its association with early 20th century social reform movements. The relationship between large formal rowhouses on streets and small spartan dwellings on the alleys is a hallmark of this historic district. The alleys of the district also include journeyman workshops, stables, garages and large commercial buildings.

1318 9th Street NW is a contributing building in the historic district consisting of several periods of construction that has resulted in a two-story building occupying the entire lot. The brick front-façade is a modest arrangement of fenestration and ornament built in 1926. It's original projecting storefront is missing. At the rear of the lot is a two-story brick accessory building which may date prior to 1873 and has been altered several times. The property is surrounded by notable buildings. To the north at 1320 is the remnant half of a larger house dating to about 1860 which still exhibits its curious gable roof form to the street. To the south at 1316 9th Street is a building architecturally similar to 1318 which received third and fourth floor additions in 2009.¹ Across the alley to the west is a large two-story commercial stable first built in 1883 and renovated in 1912 by Snowden Ashford when it was used by city's street cleaning department for its fleet of horses and carts.

Project Summary

The proposed third and fourth floor additions would be a series of diminishing volumes setback from both the front elevation on 9th Street and the rear elevation on Naylor Court, all of which would have varying degrees of visibility. The new third floor would be setback 22 feet from 9th street and 20 feet from Naylor Court. It would be two primary massings linked by a circulation hyphen. The new fourth floor would have deeper setbacks (35 feet from 9th and 24 feet from Naylor) and its two primary massings would be linked by an open metal stair. Miscellaneous roof decks are called for on the front and back. The missing storefront on 9th Street would be

¹ HPA 08-112

reconstructed. The most notable demolition would be to the second-floor façade of the alley building. Its roofline would be raised and the openings of both floors rearranged and enlarged to match the new materials of the addition which are glass, metal, and masonry.

Evaluation and Recommendation

While a roof addition of some insubstantial visibility may be appropriate at 1318 9th Street, the proposed concept is out of scale and requires substantial revision.

One challenge of adding on top of a contributing building is that any additional height must not significantly change the perceived height and scale of the historic building. As a general rule, a rooftop addition should be setback from primary facades so that its visible portions are reduced as much as possible and do not incompatibly intrude onto the roofline or profile of its surrounding context. This consideration is not absolute and some visibility may be possible if—like any type of addition—it is compatible with its surrounding context.

The curious historic building at 1320 9th with the gable roof and esoteric dormers is quintessentially of this historic district because it exhibits so many different layers of architectural history. It presents an interesting opportunity. As proposed, the new third floor setback at 1318 9th Street would generally align with the historic roof at 1320. It would be visible as a background element much like the 19th century gable roof next door and its small amount of visibility would be generally compatible with the overall dimensions of the varied streetscape

The proposed fourth floor however steps beyond the flexibility of context and produces a new height out of scale with its neighbors. From 9th Street its mostly glazed front elevation would be unrelated to its context and from Naylor Court its narrow rear elevation with its very deep shadow lines would produce a massing peculiar for the alleys of the historic district. The rear addition seeks to align with and generally reproduce the addition built at the rear of 1316 9th, but this previous addition is out of scale with the alley context of the historic district. The tower-like addition at 1316 should not be repeated. The last consideration for the rear is that the height of the existing alley building should not be increased so much. It is currently slightly smaller than the adjacent alley buildings, and while most facade openings on the alley have been significantly rearranged and walls have even been reconstructed, their heights have been generally kept in common. Any additional masonry height to the alley façade should be limited to nothing taller than its neighbors.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Review Board find the concept for the new third-floor addition to 1318 9th Street NW to be compatible with the character of the historic district, advise the applicant to eliminate or substantially reduce the fourth-floor addition, and return to the Board for further review.

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