

<p style="text-align: center;">HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION</p>

Property Address: **1205 10th Street NW**
Landmark/District: **Shaw Historic District**

Meeting Date: **July 28, 2022**
H.P.A. Number: **#22-321**

- Agenda
- Consent Calendar
- Denial Calendar
- Concept Review
- Permit
- Alteration
- New Construction
- Demolition
- Subdivision

The applicant, Gregory Brennan on behalf of the ownership group Brennan Development, seeks concept design review to combine three lots into one new lot and to construct a four-unit residential building in the Shaw Historic District. Plans were prepared by Arcadia Design. The Board approved a three-story residential building on this site in 2017.¹

Property Description and Context

The existing site consists of three vacant, garage-sized lots (5, 6, 815) on the south side of the east-west alley which connects 10th Street and Blagden Alley. The lots were originally part of the rowhouse lots facing M Street and existed at the time this historic district was designated.

This block exhibits a wide variety of building forms, styles, and construction dates. Vernacular, Italianate and Victorian 19th century rowhouses, both small and grand, are intermixed with early 20th century apartment buildings and several cases of modern construction, including the new building on the other side of the alley from this site.²

Project Summary

The new combined lot would be 60 feet deep and almost 30 feet wide. The new brick building would be a symmetrical composition with side-by-side units sharing a projecting bay centered on the front façade. The bay and front façade would be fenestrated with double-hung windows ganged with transoms to provide a range of window sizes. The third floor of the bay would be frame construction with a ribbon of windows wrapping all three sides of the bay. At the top of the façade, flanking the bay, are stairs with open railings providing access to roof terraces at the center of the roof. These stairs are corner elements which engage both the north and south side elevations. The south elevation is a minimally fenestrated with irregularly placed windows while the north elevation along the alley is more formally composed. Its center is pulled back slightly from the property line giving the walls which remain at the property line a projecting bay effect. The bay towards the street is capped by the rooftop stair composition and the bay towards the rear duplicates the lantern fenestration of the front bay. The rear elevation is lightly fenestrated and includes an open deck at the first floor.

¹ HPA #17-300, April 2017

² 1209 10th Street (HPA #15-358), 1225 10th Street (HPA #14-161), 1232-1234 10th Street (HPA #13-024)

Evaluation and Recommendation

The proposed concept is generally compatible with the height, massing, fenestration and materials of the historic and contemporary rowhouse type buildings of this historic district. The roof stairs at the corners of the front façade are creative and with some refinement could be a compatible modern re-interpretation of historic cornices which are fundamental to the ornament and proportion of historic rowhouses.

The roof stairs proposed are unique and innovative. While the stairs themselves are hidden from view, the cable-stay railing system of horizontal cables and metal posts is visible as a roof element engaged with the fenestrated lantern at the top of the central bay. The height of metalwork they create is roughly proportional to the cornice height one would expect to find on a historic rowhouse. This effect could be improved if the density of cabling was increased with extra cables and fully commit the railings to be a purposeful ornament of the front facade. At the side elevations, the parapet is stepped down with a notch which gives a complex effect where historically this part of a rowhouse is simple. Realigning the parapet under the railing to a single height--and running it along with the railings in a single band terminating near the center of the side elevation--would improve the compatibility of this creative design.

Smaller, but just as essential revisions, should also be made on the front façade. The vertical band of windows at the second floor should be separated so that there are small windows demarcating the third floor on either side of the central bay. The brick on all four sides of the building, which may be interpreted as black or gray in the renderings, should be red on all sides to match the type of brickwork which predominates this 19th century historic district.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Review Board find the concept for a subdivision and new three-story brick building at 1205 10th Street NW, to be compatible with the character of the historic district on the condition that it be revised as described above, and delegate final approval to Staff.

Staff contact: Brendan Meyer