

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

Property Address:	1207 10th Street NW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Landmark/District:	Shaw Historic District, Blagden Alley-Naylor Court Historic District	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar
ANC:	2F	<input type="checkbox"/> Denial Calendar
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept Review
		<input type="checkbox"/> Permit
Meeting Date:	May 4, 2017	<input type="checkbox"/> Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	#17-300	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Brendan Meyer	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Architect Will Teass, on behalf of owner Bailey Real Estate Holdings LLC, seeks review of a concept design for a subdivision and construction of a three-story, two-unit residential building at 1207 10th Street NW in the Shaw and Blagden Alley-Naylor Court Historic Districts. The site is vacant.

Property Description

The site proposed for 1207 10th Street is a collection of small lots subdivided off of the rear of rowhouse lots fronting on M Street. The intent of creating these small 700 square foot lots is unclear, but they precede the creation of the historic district in 1990 and have been vacant since then. Combining three of these lots will create a 30x60 lot fronting on 10th Street.

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 modern construction projects.¹

Project Summary

A three-story, two-unit brick building on a stone water table is proposed which would have a 15'-6" wide projecting bay on the alley side of the front façade.² The bay would rise past a cornice above the second floor and be capped with a gable roof that crosses with a mansard roof at the third floor. A shed dormer would accompany the projecting bay by occupying the adjacent space in the mansard roof. To the right of the projecting bay would be the main entrance for both units above a private basement entrance for the lower unit. The front materials wrap around and continue down the alley elevation which is fenestrated by a random arrangement of double-hung windows and has a roof profile that slopes down away from the front ridge of the mansard roof. The house is only 36 feet deep and offers a flat rear elevation to Blagden Alley. Its third floor is clad in vertical metal panels and is niched to house set-in spiral stairs that provide access to a roof deck nested into the center of the roof.

¹ 1209 10th Street (HPA #15-358), 1225 10th Street (HPA #14-161), 1232-1234 10th Street (HPA #13-024)

² The front elevation is rendered in two variations: one with a brick projecting bay and one with a metal-clad projecting bay. This staff report presumes the brick projecting bay proposal because that is the superior option in terms of compatibility with the historic district.

Evaluation

The primary design challenge for compatible new construction on this new lot centers on the unusual dimensions of the lot. The 30 foot width is inconsistent with the more typical 20 foot width, making it too wide to accommodate the proportions of a single rowhouse form but too narrow to accommodate the proportions of two rowhouses or a duplex. Using the components of a 19th century rowhouse (projecting bay, mansard roof, raised front entrance) is a manageable design direction that can result in a compatible composition but the proportions and arrangement of those elements require further study.

The classic Washington Victorian rowhouse form derives greatly from public space regulations that allowed bays to project into public space. The dimensions for bays, especially their width but not their height, were strictly restricted to proportions derived from the width of the building face. For instance, a rowhouse 20 feet wide was allowed a bay 11 feet wide; a little bit more than half was the aim of the regulation. While precise numbers were the basis of projecting bay dimensions, the numbers resulted in commodious and proportional forms that by large measure define the rhythm and scale of our rowhouse historic districts.

These public space regulations are still in effect and normally limit a building with a 30 foot width to a single bay 14 feet wide or two bays with a total width of 16 feet. In this case due to the unusual dimensions of the lot, simply following the numbers doesn't necessarily result in a compatible solution. Even though the proposed bay is only slightly wider than allowed by regulation, the disproportion is evident. A projecting bay which rises three stories and through the mansard roof is a common massing and could help break down the horizontal emphasis of the width of the building. That effect can also be achieved with a narrower bay, of 12 feet for instance, which would be closer in proportion to the bays on the street and be a better fit for the typical fenestration for a bay: paired double-hung windows on the front and narrow individual double-hung windows in the sides. The remaining building width should be organized with two banks of openings and an entrance with a wide single-leaf door. The shed dormer holds its proper complementary role to the projecting bay.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Review Board find the height, materials and components proposed for 1207 10th Street NW to be compatible with the character of the historic district, but that their proportions and arrangement require further review before the concept application can be approved.