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

Property Address:	1222 11th Street NW	<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Landmark/District:	Shaw Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar
ANC:	2F	<input type="checkbox"/> Denial Calendar
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept Review
		<input type="checkbox"/> Permit Review
Meeting Date:	November 20, 2014	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	#15-060	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Brendan Meyer	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

The applicant, District Design LLC on behalf of owner Konstantinos Siozios, seeks concept approval for rear and top floor additions to a 3-story rowhouse with 2-story rear wing at 1222 11th Street NW in the Shaw Historic District. Plans were prepared by the applicant.

Property Description and Context

1222 11th Street NW is part of a row of four attached houses built in 1877. All four houses were built on a single permit and credited to builder David T. Cissel (no architect is listed, which is typical of early permits). A cursory review of contemporary newspaper records shows that Cissel was a mason of some prominence who consistently won contracts to work on the Smithsonian and numerous federal buildings.

As a row, the four houses from 1218 to 1224 are a very intact example of the late-Italianate style of flat-front rowhouses that were constructed prior to the evolution of the projecting bay rowhouse which became widespread after the passage of public space and projection laws in the 1870s. While tall, verticality is offset by a rhythm of fenestration consisting of wide sections of masonry. Cornices are robustly proportioned and feature wood modillions at the top of the façade and on the one story projecting bay. Masonry is constructed of very thin joints with stone keystones in the arched window openings and skewbacks at the front entrance.

The houses are 20 feet wide and 32 feet deep and were not originally constructed with rear ells. A rear 2-story wing was added to later to 1222 11th. In 2011, the Board approved 4-story rear additions to each adjacent property.¹

Proposal

The only work proposed for the front block of the house is a roof top deck setback from the front façade 12 feet and aligned with the non-visible roof decks on each adjacent property. The rear wing will be substantially altered by the demolition of its south side wall. The existing dog-leg court will be filled with new construction at each floor with a new rear wall set back three feet from the end of the rear wing. The distinctive hexagonal bay at the end of the rear wing will be kept and unaltered. Two additional floors will be built on top of the rear wing, the uppermost story serving as penthouse access for the new roof deck. The east wall of the penthouse will align with the partial fourth floors on the adjacent properties.

¹ HPA #11-464 and #11-465, September and October 2011

Evaluation and Recommendation

HPO recommends that the concept for infill construction in the rear dog-leg court and a 2-story addition on top of the rear wing is compatible with the character of the Shaw Historic District, largely because the construction is not visible from the 11th Street right-of-way, is similar in massing to additions approved by the Board at adjacent properties, and because the construction on top of the historic buildings is restricted to a deck only.

Fundamental to the character of the rowhouses from 1218-1224 is their simple block like massing. While a new floor on top of the historic buildings would result in excessive demolition and obscure the buildings' massing, a non-visible roof deck does not share these adverse qualities. The deck requires no demolition of historic fabric, sits upon the building instead of as part of the building, and since it can be removed with little disturbance is a type of temporary, rather than permanent, construction. Likewise, the new fourth floor penthouse will align in height and setback with adjacent additions that are also not visible from 11th Street.

The rear elevations, although more elaborate and refined than what is found on a typical utilitarian alley elevation, occupy a space in the historic district that is generally afforded more flexibility because of its smaller impact on the character of the historic district. No less importantly, the most contributing feature of the rear façade--the hexagonal bay--will not be altered or demolished.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Review Board find the concept for rear and top floor additions and setback roof deck at 1222 11th Street NW to be compatible with the character of the historic district, consistent with the purpose of the preservation act, and that final approval be delegated to Staff.