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

Property Address:	1329-1335 11th Street NW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Landmark/District:	Shaw Historic District	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar
ANC:	2F	<input type="checkbox"/> Denial Calendar
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept Review
Meeting Date:	August 3, 2017	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	#17-187	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Brendan Meyer	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

The applicant, owner David Dale, seeks on-going concept review for a subdivision to combine four lots from 1329 to 1335 11th Street NW into one lot and to construct a three-story rear addition and roof top addition on the existing three-story rowhouses. All four houses are contributing to the Shaw Historic District. Plans were prepared by Square 134 Architects. The Board heard this application in May 2017.

Property Description and Context

The four subject houses are part of a row of five houses that were built by L.S. Chapman in about 1870.¹ The date of construction predates reliable building permit records, but the row is attributable to Chapman through contemporary newspaper accounts. Chapman was a prolific carpenter and real estate speculator in this part of the city for about ten years after the Civil War. The houses reflect a period of development which predates the development of the eponymous projecting bay rowhouse. The houses were originally three stories on a terrace above the current grade of 11th Street. The houses are 40 feet deep and were not built with rear wings which is not unusual for the time. Rear wings have never been added to the four houses.

Since the May hearing, staff has conducted a site visit with the applicant to assess the condition of the structural components of the houses. Most notably, the unattached south party wall of 1329 has been previously reconstructed and much of the original framing that remains in the wall assemblies will likely need to be replaced. The other houses show better structural conditions and, with the exception of isolated deterioration in the vicinity of plumbing stacks, much of the original framing and load bearing walls can be retained.

Proposal Revisions

The interior layout has been substantially revised by reducing the number of residential units from 11 to 7 and switching to a program of 2-bedroom units rather than studios. The rearrangement does not require the previously proposed corridor across and through the houses or a second set of stairs. Circulation is now consolidated at the rear of the two center houses and in the new rear addition. The rhythm and massing of the addition is also consolidated at the center of row and its dimensions now align with the historic property lines. The front terrace and metal entry steps have been consolidated and simplified with a common retaining wall height across the row. Steps have been converted to straight run steps instead of turned. The visibility of the penthouse at the fifth floor has been reduced by increasing the setback from the south elevation from 11 feet to 20 feet.

Evaluation

The revisions produced by the applicant are all positive responses to the Board's prior advice, with the primary remaining question being whether the dimensions and visibility of the fifth floor penthouse have been reduced enough to be compatible with the historic district. While visibility of the addition has been reduced, the long

¹ The fifth house in the row, 1337, is on the corner of O Street and is also owned by the applicant. 1337 is not part of this concept application.

sight lines produced by the length of view along 11th Street expose the addition to view. South of N Street, this visibility recedes into the background of the streetscape and rooflines, such that it would not impact the character of the historic district in a discernable way. However, north of N Street and in proximity to the row, parts of the addition would be more distinguishable above the side parapet and over the front cornice. As the tallest buildings on the block, and with no back drop buildings behind it, the addition would change the profile of the building. The Board has generally not found changes of this degree compatible with intact historic rows. A small measure of flexibility is afforded by the fact that the south parapet and party wall is not original and likely requires reconstruction again. It may be possible to slightly increase the height of the south parapet without perceptibly altering the character of the building's profile or height and thus screen the addition from view. Visibility above the cornice, however, is more problematic. The visibility of the addition should be eliminated either by shrinking or setting back the addition even more, or by rebuilding the south parapet slightly higher to screen the addition from view. Staff can assure the Board's determination by flag tests during final review and construction.

The other revisions—substantial retention of structural components, aligning the proportions and rhythm of the rear addition with the historic property lines, and streamlining the design of the front terrace and steps—are conceptually compatible with the historic district. Small details of window configuration and location on the south elevation, dimensions of the front entry steps, and materials and ornament of the terrace and bay projection to be reconstructed can be addressed by staff before final approval.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Review Board approve the subdivision and the revised plans for the interior and rear addition, but require that visibility of the roof top addition be eliminated or further reduced, and delegate final approval to staff.