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

Landmark/District:	Shaw Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	1402 12th Street, NW	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	April 22, 2021	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	21-259	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
		<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition

Patrick Bloomfield, representing 1402 12th LLC, seeks concept design review for front, rear and site alterations and a roof addition to a row building in the Shaw Historic District. Plans have been prepared by architect Jonathan Kuhn.

Property Description

1402 12th Street is a three-story building constructed as a residence above a ground-level retail space. It is clad in tan brick and features a centered projecting oriel bay topped by a turret roof; the first floor has a projecting storefront capped by a bracketed, overhanging balcony. The building was designed and constructed for Otto Ruppert in 1894 by architect C.A. Didden; a nearly identical building designed by Didden exists at 522 8th Street SE in the Capitol Hill Historic District.

The projecting oriel window was partially reconstructed in the 1990s but remained uncompleted and clad only in Tyvek for many years. After pursuing enforcement action against the property for failure to meet the city's property maintenance requirements, DCRA hired a contractor to clad the bay based on a design prepared by HPO.

Proposal

The project calls for converting the building to a 10-unit residential condominium. On the front, the windows and doors would be replaced in-kind and the non-historic aluminum balcony railing replaced with a more authentic and code compliant railing. The wood detailing on the projecting oriel would be replaced with PVC panels with fypon trim. A large basement window well/sunken terrace, extending 6'6" from the face of the building and 8'2" wide, would be added in the public space front yard under and in front of the storefront window, with an at-grade landscaped area abutting the sidewalk. A window and a door on the basement level would be added to open into the sunken terrace.

On the rear, the bricked-in garage door opening would be opened up to allow for a recessed trash storage area and a basement window well, and larger window openings created and filled with ganged double hung windows.

The roof addition would be 11'10" in height, set back 24' from the front elevation and an unspecified distance (approximately 20') from the rear. Mechanical units would be placed on the third floor roof to the rear of the roof addition.

Evaluation

The replacement of the windows and doors is generally compatible with the Board's standards and guidelines, although it appears from photographs that the southern entrance door is likely original. If it is, it should be evaluated for repair and retention or replacement in-kind if beyond reasonable repair. Specifications for the balcony replacement should be submitted to HPO for review, and the front trim work and rear alterations are compatible.

The new basement window well is not consistent with the principles in the Board's *Basement Entrances and Window* guideline, which permit basement areaways and window wells only where they can be inserted without changing a property's setting and the relationship of the building to grade. The proposal is awkward and incompatible, creating a large hole in the public space front yard and leaving the building's storefront window ungrounded and hovering over a void; it is inconsistent with multiple principles cited in the guideline:

The creation of large sunken patios or outdoor living areas in front of a primary elevation of historic property is not appropriate.

Creating new basement windows and window wells may be appropriate if they are unobtrusive.

New or replaced basement windows and window wells should be compatible with the character of the property.

Window wells for basement windows should be kept to the minimum dimensions required by code.

The roof addition is sufficiently set back from the front as to not be visible from front street view, however it is unclear whether it would be seen over the top of the adjacent corner building. A field test mock-up should be conducted with HPO staff to ensure that it is not prominently or incompatibly visible; if it is, it should be lowered in height or adjusted as necessary.

Recommendation

HPO recommends that the Board approve the general concept for alterations and a roof addition on the condition that it is not visible from street view as documented through a field test mock up, but find the sunken areaway in front of the building to be incompatible. Final approval could be delegated to staff on the condition that the areaway is removed from the plans.

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