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

Property Address:	1521 and 1521-1/2 11th Street NW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Landmark/District:	Shaw Historic District	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept Review
		<input type="checkbox"/> Permit Review
Meeting Date:	September 23, 2021	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	21-366	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
		<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Kay Akinsinde, agent on behalf of owner Phi Nhung Nguyen, seeks review of a concept design to combine the lots of 1521 and 1521-1/2 11th Street NW into one lot and add a two-story rear addition to the two-story houses. The houses are contributing buildings in the Shaw Historic District. The concept design was prepared by Formsix LLC.

Property Description

The two houses were built together in 1880 along with 1519 as a group of three rowhouses. The matching front elevations are narrow with slender proportions emphasized by three bays of skinny double hung windows across each façade. The modest composition is completed by uncased front entrances at the head of two-step stoops and a wood cornice widely spaced modillions. Original two-story wings are still attached to the rear of each house. The adjacent building at the corner of Rhode Island Avenue NW is a non-contributing building built in 1963.

Proposal

The applicant proposes to combine the two lots into one lot and join the buildings on the interior by demolishing the shared party wall and rear wall of the main blocks of the houses. The rear wing of each house would be completely demolished and replace with a rear addition four feet longer than the existing wings. The addition would be the full width of the combined lots at the first floor. The second floor would be short of the north property line by four feet to leave room for a narrow deck and stairs down to the rear yard.

Evaluation

The new rear addition poses no compatibility problems because its height generally aligns with the height if the main block and this low profile will not be substantially visible over the adjacent non-contributing building.

However, the combination of lots lead to a proposal calling for a substantial amount of demolition beyond the limits defined in the preservation regulations.¹ The proposal shows removal of the party wall between houses, which would force removal of the second-floor joists, and the rear walls of the main blocks. This amount of removal of structural components would substantially demolish the two houses as individual buildings in the historic district. This incompatibility could be avoided if the subdivision was approved on the condition that the party wall and floor joists of the houses be substantially retained. The applicant can achieve this with only very slight modification to their proposed floor plans (see Figures 1 and 2, below).

¹ “Work considered demolition under the Act shall include, but is not limited to, any of the following... (b) The removal or destruction of all or a substantial portion of the structural components of the building, such as structural walls, floor assemblies, and roofs;” (DCMR 10C, 305.1(b))

By retaining the portions of load bearing walls shown in blue, the applicant would substantially keep the load bearing walls of the houses and also be able to retain their second-floor joists.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board find the subdivision and 2-story rear addition proposed for 1521 and 1521-1/2 11th Street NW in the Shaw Historic District to be compatible with the historic district on the condition that structural demolition be reduced to not exceed the demolition thresholds defined in DCMR 10C, 305.1 and delegate final approval to Staff.

Staff contact: Brendan Meyer

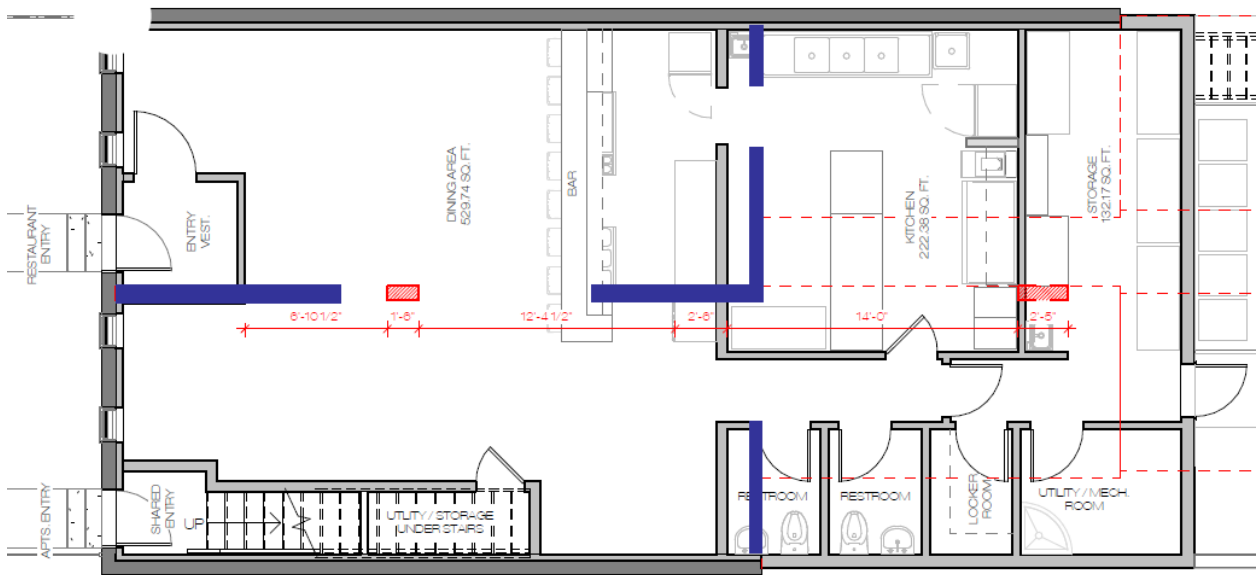


Figure 1. Proposed first floor. Staff recommendation to retain load bearing walls shown in blue

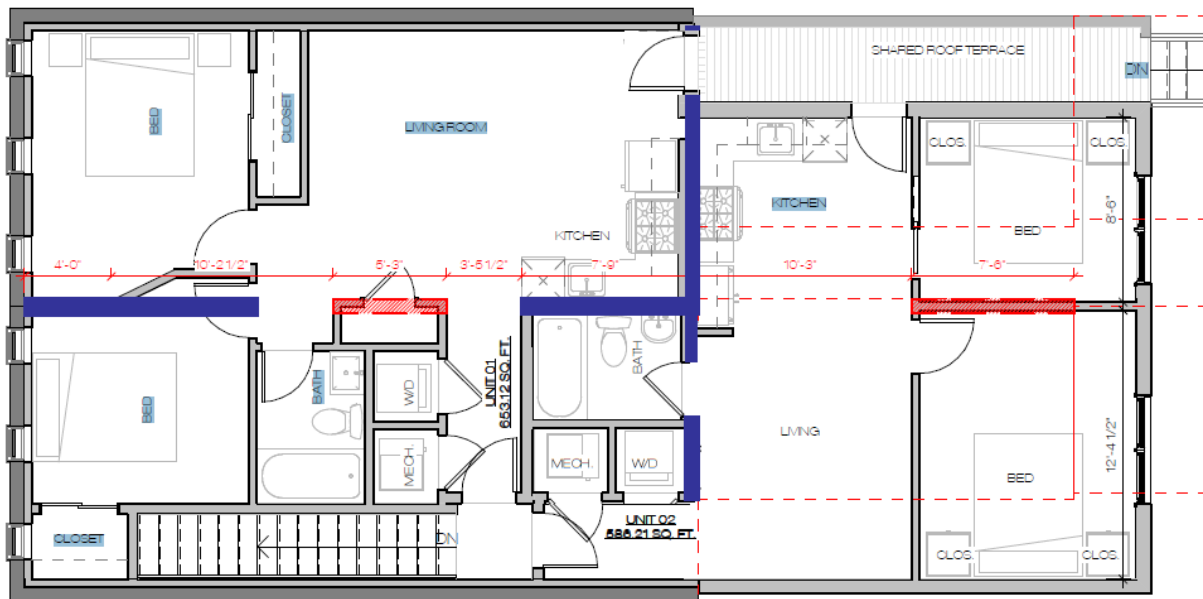


Figure 2. Proposed second floor. Staff recommendation to retain load bearing walls shown in blue