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

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Property Address:	<b>523 Cedar Street, NW</b>	<b>X</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Takoma Park Historic District</b>		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>July 28, 2022</b>	<b>X</b>	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>22-242</b>		Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Steve Callcott</b>	<b>X</b>	New Construction
			Demolition
			Subdivision

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Applicants Rachel and Angeloe Wilson, with plans prepared by MWB Architects, seek on-going concept review for construction of a three-story frame house on a vacant lot in the Takoma Park Historic District.

At the June meeting, the Board did not take a vote but encouraged the applicant to continue refining the design to lower the building's height, reduce its mass, and simplify its design. The Board suggested that the applicant look more closely at roof forms and third stories on other houses in the historic district, consider significantly reducing the size of the third floor plan, lowering the roof ridge, making the roof symmetrical, using a shed dormer on the rear to retain usable third floor space, or using a different roof form (such as a cross gable) to reduce the roof size. The compatibility of the width of the house was also questioned.

#### **Revised Proposal**

The project has been revised in response to the Board and HPO comments. The elevation of the house has been lowered by 2 feet (the first floor elevation was previously at 307'2" and is now at 305'2"). The roof ridge has been lowered and centered on the roof to make it symmetrical, and a shed dormer added across the back slope. The width of the house has been reduced by 2 feet, increasing the setback from the side lot line on the east side from 8' to 10'; the second floor projection on the east side has also been reduced from 5' to 2'. Additional fenestration has been added to the side elevations, and the site plan has been updated to include grading where the current driveway is located and a walkway provided to the public sidewalk.

#### **Evaluation**

The revisions are responsive to the Board's recommendations and improve its compatibility with the street and historic district. The lowered elevation and roofline provide a gentler stepping down in height and mass between the flanking houses. The symmetrical roofline and increased fenestration on the side elevations improve its profile and how it will be seen in perspective. The decrease in the width of the main body of the house and of the second floor projection, the restoration of the sloped siting, and the introduction of a lead walk are all more consistent with the character of houses in the Takoma Park Historic District.

As illustrated in the renderings, the brick base of the building still reads as a little heavy and bifurcated from the top floor. As the applicants continue to refine the design, it may be worth considering eliminating the use of brick on the first floor in favor of wood siding to further unify the design. If some distinction between the two floors is desired, wood shingles or siding in a

different reveal than the first floor could be studied, as each of these would provide a less sharp contrast between the two levels.

**Recommendation**

*HPO recommends that the Board find the revised compatible with the Takoma Park Historic District and that final approval permit approval be delegated to staff.*