

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

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| Property Address: | 1423 W Street NW | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda |
| Landmark/District: | U Street Historic District | <input type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar |
| Meeting Date: | December 5, 2019 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept Review |
| HPA Number | 19-545 | <input type="checkbox"/> New Construction |
| Staff Reviewer: | Anne Brockett | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration |

On behalf of owners 4 Tree LLC, Teass/Warren Architects seeks concept review for the construction of a 3-story addition on a 2-story house in the U Street Historic District. The house was built individually, rather than as part of a row, in 1882 for Thomas Martin. The center portion of this block of W Street is comprised largely of individual and paired houses, with a traditional stretch of rowhouses at the western end and new construction at the east end. There is a passageway of about 3 feet wide between the subject property and the building to the west.

Project Description

The project proposes replacing the rear ell with an addition that extends to the property line to the west, infilling the side court at the rear, and is 12 feet longer and a floor taller than the existing ell. The infill of the open court begins beyond the rear wall of the building's main block. The addition is 3-stories in height, clad with cementitious panels at the first two floors and vertical metal panels in a different color on the third floor. Windows are large aluminum casements with hoppers below.

The third floor of the addition provides access to a front roof deck with a solid parapet railing on the east side and open railings on the set back front and west sides.

Steps leading down to a basement entrance are proposed in the side court. The front windows are proposed to be replaced with 1-over-1 sashes with the front basement windows elongated with a new window well.

Evaluation and Recommendation

The sightline studies included in the application materials demonstrate that the addition will be visible from across the street to the west. The addition and deck railing also the potential of being visible from a further distance to the east nearing and beyond 14th Street. The addition will be visible down the side yard, where it rises to its three story height.

The HPO and HPRB have generally found roof additions on rowhouse-type buildings compatible only when they are subordinate to the existing building and are not visible from the public right of way. In light of this longstanding policy, the HPO suggests the addition and deck be pulled back (and/or in from the sides) as necessary to eliminate any possibility of visibility on W Street after construction, as confirmed by a mockup. The exception is the visibility of the addition down the side yard. The addition is set approximately 35 feet back from the façade and will abut the three-story historic portion of the building next door. HPO takes no issue with the visibility here.

The applicant has responded to HPO concerns about placing a stair and basement areaway in the front yard by shifting the steps into the side yard. While the width may be too narrow by code, staff would support pursuing a waiver, if necessary, to provide basement access here. As the Construction Code only requires one code compliant stair into a basement apartment, this could be provided in the rear. The

extremely small size of the front yard precludes exterior stairs from being compatibly installed on the front of the building. Similarly, new meters should be installed on the side elevation or inside rather than on the front elevation.

As plans develop, the window well should be limited in dimension to sit only 18” out from the face of the building given the property’s small front yard; the windows should be shown as 2-over-2 sashes, which is consistent with Italianate design of this building; and the front door should be a panelled wood door with transom.

The HPO recommends that the Board find an addition compatible with the character of the historic district, provided no part is visible from W Street, and delegate final approval to HPO staff.

Staff Contact: Anne Brockett