

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

Landmark/District:	U Street Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	1520/1522 T Street NW	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	October 26, 2017	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	17-662	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Imania Price	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

EL Studio, representing the owner, seeks concept review for lot consolidation to combine two rowhouses on a single lot, alterations to internally combine the two houses, and construction of rooftop addition in the U Street Historic District.

Property Description

1520 and 1522 T Street NW are two of a row of seven bay-fronted brick rowhouses built by Thomas King in 1891. The projecting bay on 1522 is topped by a slate turret roof; the bay on 1520 has a flat roof. Both rowhouses retain their historic cast-iron stairs and decorative brick detailing. At the rear, both buildings retain their ell wings and while the rear fenestration has been altered the arched brick-lintels have remained.

The buildings are located mid-block between 15th and 16th and back up to an alley in the rear. The block is an intact row of two story contributing buildings with no third story additions.

Proposal

The proposal calls for combining lots 0045 and 0046 into one lot for a project that would create a single single-family dwelling. The plans call for some interior removal of the party wall to allow for internal connection, and construction of a one-story rooftop addition that would span the two houses. The rear elevations of the ell wings would be retained with sliding glass doors on the first floor and window openings restored on the upper floors; the ell wings would be joined together with glass infilling the court between them.

The plans call for removal of floor joists for a new stair; in addition, structural columns supporting the floor framing would also be removed, making it likely that that the framing they support would be removed as well. Since initially submitted, the plans have been revised to retain a greater portion of the masonry party wall separating the buildings. The roof addition would necessitate some removal of roof structure to allow the roof addition to be set down to the height of the existing second floor ceiling.

The addition would be set back 14'5 from the front elevation and will extend to the ell wing; a roof deck with a glass railing would extend to align with the rear elevation of the ell wings. The addition will be clad in an undetermined material with continuous glazing across the north and south elevations.

Evaluation

Combining two rowhouses into one building on a single lot has been found to be compatible by the Board if interior demolition and removal of party walls between the buildings does not result in substantial demolition as defined in the Board's regulations (DCMR 10C, Section 305), and that exterior features that identify each property are retained (e.g. both sets of exterior stairs and front doors). In this instance, the exterior elements will be retained and the amount of demolition has been reduced, however, it is still somewhat unclear how much retention of interior floor assemblies will be possible given the removal of support beams and the new floor plan. This should be clarified by the applicants in the presentation to the Board.

The rear elevations and wing ells will be retained, maintaining the integrity of the intact row. Infilling the court between the ell wings with glass is a clever solution to maintain the rhythm of dog-legs within the block while allowing creation of a single, larger room within. The placement of the roof-deck at the rear of the roof rather than the front is consistent with other roof deck proposals approved by the Board.

While the proposal for a roof addition spanning two rowhouses is unusual, it conforms with the Board's standard that it not be visible from public street view, as confirmed in a field-test mock-up seen by HPO. Nevertheless, the size of the roof addition is proportionately large for the building and would be improved with some further reduction in size. The Board previously approved a roof addition (proposed by a different owner and never constructed) for 1522 that called for a 24 foot setback, which resulted in a more deferential proportion of addition to underlying building. It is recommended that the addition be reduced in size and pulled back from the front several additional feet.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept generally compatible with the character of the historic district and consistent with the purposes of the preservation act, but that further clarification on the extent of demolition and some further reduction in size of the roof addition is needed, and to delegate final approval to staff.