

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

Property Address:	1708 ½ 10th Street NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	U Street Historic District		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	December 17th, 2021	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	HP 21-521	X	Alteration Subdivision

Applicant Arcadia Design returns for on-going concept review for the renovation and alteration of a non-contributing two-story building into a three-story building with a raised basement in the U Street Historic District. When the Board reviewed the project in September, it did not take a vote on the proposal, but encouraged the applicant to consider how to improve the compatibility of the project, including lowering the height to be not substantially taller than the houses on each side and reducing the visibility of the setback third floor.

Property Description

1708 ½ 10th Street NW is a two-story flat front brick building constructed in 1953 for Edwin Shelton. Based on its date of construction, it is non-contributing to the U Street Historic District. The building is flanked by a row of contributing two-story flat front rowhouses to the north and a row of taller bay-fronted two-story rowhouses with raised basements to the south.

Proposal

This is a revision to the proposal submitted to the Board in September 2021. The existing building would be substantially renovated into a three-story with raised basement brick row house. The existing façade would be pulled 4’ forward to sit between the two adjacent buildings and the height increased to match the neighboring two and a half story properties. The front façade will be clad in brick with two three-ganged double hung windows. A metal stoop and stair to the entry door would be offset to the side to accommodate a basement entrance that sits beside a window well. The main entry would have a full lite door with a large transom window, awning, and punched window above. The cornice would have corbeled brick detailing to align with the two and a half story contributing building on the left. The proposal retains two roof decks at the rear elevation and on the third story addition. The third story addition will be set 13’ from the façade to be visible from 10th street. At the rear of the property would be two parking pads and a raised brick patio.

Evaluation

The proposed visibility of the third-story addition continues to raise compatibility concerns and creates a height that is distinctly taller than the flanking contributing properties and appears discordant with the overall heights of the block. While one or two-story additions on non-contributing buildings can be appropriate, the scale must remain in line with the context of the row, and the third story addition should not be significantly taller than the neighboring property (1708). The problem is exacerbated by the roof deck on the third story that adds to height of the

addition and does not include the measurement of the parapet and glass guard rails towards the rear.

The mass of the building - with a raised two-story primary block and a slightly recessed (but still quite visible) third story - is not typical of the straight-forward, simple massing presented by rowhouses in the historic district and is more typical of pop-ups found outside of historic districts. HPO recommends the applicant set back the third story to be not visible and aligned with the non-visible third story addition on the adjacent property.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends the Board find the project design to be compatible with the U Street Historic District on the condition that the visible third story level be set back to be non-visible from the front and that final approval be delegated to staff.

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