

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

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| Property Address:  | <b>1737 11th St NW</b>             | Agenda                             |
| Landmark/District: | <b>U Street Historic District</b>  | <b>X</b> Consent Calendar          |
| Meeting Date:      | <b>April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019</b> | <b>X</b> Concept Review            |
| H.P.A. Number:     | <b>19-227</b>                      | <b>X</b> Alteration<br>Subdivision |

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**Property Description**

Architect Teass/Warren, representing the owner, seeks a permit revision for exterior alterations to a contributing building in the U Street Historic District. The three-story brick rowhouse was built in 1899 by architect Louis Stutz and is the lone three-story house in a row of two-story houses. The building is flanked by an alley on the north and two-story buildings to the south.

**Historical Significance**

The original owner of the house was Robert Wade Brown, MD. A well-known DC African American physician in the early 1900s. Born in 1862, he graduated from Howard University Medical College in 1891 and practice medicine from his residence at 1737 11<sup>th</sup> ST, NW. In November of 1920, Robert Brown was murdered at his residence. The case went unsolved for nine months until Alphonso Frye was arrested during the investigation of another crime and confessed to the murder. Frye's lawyer asked William Moulton Marston to question Frye using a lie-detection technique the doctor had developed at the Harvard Psychological Laboratory. However, when Frye came to trial in D.C. Supreme Court in July of 1922, the judge refused to admit the test results or allow a courtroom demonstration. The Supreme Court's decision was affirmed by the D.C. Court of Appeals on Dec. 3, 1923. In the landmark case of Frye v. the United States, the judge found that the lie-detector test was off "somewhere in the twilight zone" of scientific acceptability and upheld the ruling that barred its use in the courtroom. That landmark decision has kept the polygraph out of the nation's courtrooms ever since, with only a few exceptions.

**Evaluation**

The permit revision proposes extending the parapet walls to reduce the visibility of the roof decks. The railings are proposed to be slightly visible from the street. The architect proposes to make the railing metal in material and to keep the mechanical units non-visible. As the tallest building on the row, the parapet should be raised to make the railing non-visible with stepped features to mimic the original outline of the roof.

**Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Review Board approve the amended permit with the recommended adjustments to the height and non-visible roof deck.*

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