

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

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Property Address:	<b>1809 14<sup>th</sup> Street NW</b>	<b>X</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>U Street Historic District</b>		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>June 27, 2019</b>	<b>X</b>	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number	<b>19-376</b>	<b>X</b>	Alteration

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Architect Gregory A. Kearley requests that the Board review the building history of 1809 14<sup>th</sup> Street NW and to declassify the property as a contributing building to the U Street Historic District.

**Evaluation**

A contributing building or structure is defined by the preservation regulations as a building, structure, or site located within a historic district that adds to the district's sense of time and place and historical development (DCMR 10-C, Chapter 99: Definitions). A building or structure is evaluated by comparison with the established historic significance and physical attributes of the overall district or landmark, and the determination of whether a building or structure contributes to the district's historic significance is based on information such as date of construction, function, associations, and physical characteristics.

The following considerations apply when determining whether a property meets the definition of a non-contributing building, structure, or site: (a) a building or structure does not add to a district's sense of time and place and historical development if its qualities of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association have been so altered or are so deteriorated that the integrity of the property is irretrievably lost; (b) a building or structure does not share the historic associations or historic architectural qualities for which a district is significant if it does not date from the district's period of significance, does not relate to its documented significance, or no longer possesses historic integrity due to changes since the period of the significance.

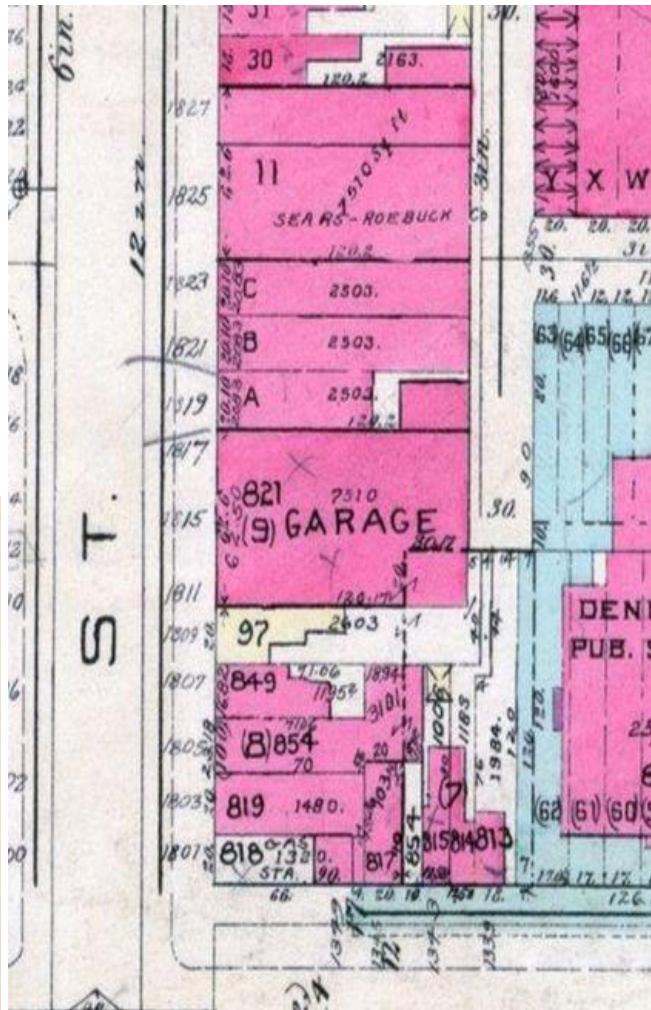
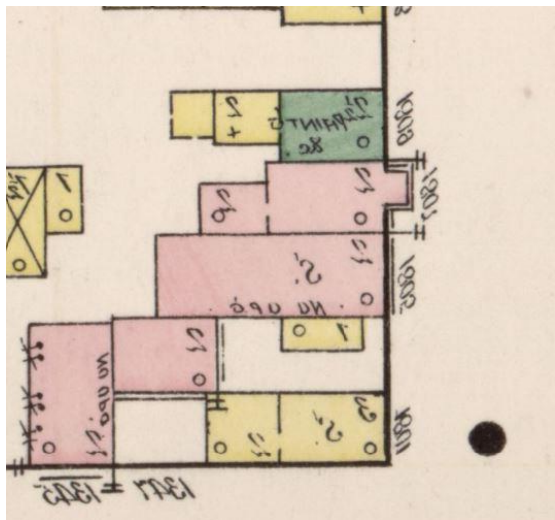
The earliest buildings remaining in the U Street Historic District date from the Civil War era, after the construction of streetcar lines along 14th Street opened the area up to speculative development. The twentieth century stole the future away from those who thought that traditional patterns were going to continue. Residential development in the historic district in the twentieth century was characterized by two major changes: a commercial construction boom resulting from the growing streetcar system and the increasing popularity of the automobile. The automobile industry's needs for storage and display space prompted new building forms and the adaptation of old ones. Beginning in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, 14th Street rapidly developed as the nucleus of the city's automobile industry. Many late-nineteenth-century residential and commercial buildings were razed by the 1920s to accommodate newly-designed automobile showrooms and garages. Consequently, all of Washington was drawn to the elegant high-style automobile showrooms that were erected on 14th Street, dubbed "Automobile Row" in the 1920s and 1930s.

Based on the 1901 Sanborn map, the building at 1809 14<sup>th</sup> Street was originally a two-story paint shop. In the early 1930s, the building was converted into an automobile repair shop. That earlier building was replaced by the current brick structure in 1937, designed by architect Marcus Hallett. It had one large open room and remained in continuous commercial use by a variety of tenants. Although the storefront and signage has been altered, the property still reflects that era of building construction in its massing, style and details. Throughout the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the building footprint of the property expanded towards the rear to accommodate more retail space. The building was identified as contributing to the character of the U Street Historic District in the National Register nomination approved by the Board when the district was designated in 1998.

While modest in design, with a common brick façade capped by a simple stepped parapet, 1809 14<sup>th</sup> Street is typical of neighborhood-oriented commercial construction in Washington in the 1930s. The building was constructed within the period of significance for the historic district and retains its qualities of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. While the building's alterations illustrate that it has evolved and been expanded over time, these are not uncommon alterations for a commercial building, do not detract from the historic character of the property, and do not result in a loss of integrity sufficient enough to have it classified as "non-contributing."

#### **Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Board reaffirm the listing of the building in the National Register nomination for the U Street Historic District as a contributing building, as the structure adds to the district's sense of time and place and historical development and shares the historic architectural qualities for which the district is significant.*



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