

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

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Property Address:	<b>1826 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW</b>	<b>X</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Greater U Street Historic District</b>		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>December 18, 2014</b>	<b>X</b>	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>15-094</b>	<b>X</b>	Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Anne Brockett</b>		New Construction

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The five two-story brick rowhouses at 1826-1834 15<sup>th</sup> Street were constructed in 1878 as speculative housing. The sixth in the row, at 1824, and a large corner house at 1822 were demolished in 1910 for the construction of the apartment building at the corner of 15<sup>th</sup> and Swann Streets, against which 1826 15<sup>th</sup> rests. The row dwellings exhibit typical architectural features of the period, including one-story bays, projecting pressed metal cornices, and wrought iron stairs.

### **Project Description**

Scout Motor Company Architecture seeks the Board's conceptual review to add a third story to this rowhouse, set back about 17 feet from the front façade and occupying approximately half of the original block of the house as well as the rear dogleg addition.

The project would also construct a rear two-car garage measuring 15 x17 feet and standing 13 feet tall at the roof peak. The garage would be clad in horizontal siding, while the addition would be stuccoed.

### **Evaluation**

When reviewing rooftop additions, the Board's general requirements are that 1) the roof addition not be visible from the public right of way; 2) the addition be set back so as not to sit on the original main block of the house; and 3) the addition be set back from the rear elevation where the existing alley scape features fairly uniform, lower scaled buildings.

In this case, it appears that the addition would be visible from 15<sup>th</sup> Street. As demonstrated in the sightline drawing, the height and setback of the addition are so close to the line of sight from directly across 15<sup>th</sup> that there is no room for error or the inevitable adjustments that take place during construction, nor does the design fully factor in perspective views from oblique angles. When considering the lower height of the houses to the east and the proximity of the subject property to an intersection with longer lines of sight, it is likely that the third floor addition would be visible from the street.

Regardless of its potential visibility, the proposed addition is not compatible in massing with the existing house or consistent with approvals on similar two-story residences in the U Street Historic District. The Board has consistently required that roof additions, when appropriate, be set back to the rear wall of the main block of the house.

Regarding the third standard for a setback from the rear face of the building, the HPO does not consider this a necessary requirement for this property, given the abutting apartment building, which provides a large mass against which a third story addition would not stand out.

The garage, while not incompatible in concept, may be driving the design of the addition in an upward, rather than outward, direction. Traditionally additions were put on the rears of homes, rather than on top, but the presence of the substantial garage in the rear yard would preclude a rear addition. Rather than a roofed garage which contributes to lot coverage, and a roof addition which would likely be visible, the applicant could consider a roll-up security gate that does not count towards lot coverage and gain additional interior space with a rear addition that fills in the dogleg.

**Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept incompatible with historic district and inconsistent with the purposes of the preservation act. The Board's decision should not be construed as endorsement or support for any necessary zoning relief.*