

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

Property Address:	1841 15th Street NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	U Street Historic District		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	October 23, 2014		Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	14-649	X	Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	Anne Brockett		New Construction

On behalf of owner Ian Story, Matthew Dirksen of Case Designs seeks the Board's review of a concept to add to a corner rowhouse in the U Street Historic District. Although currently accessed from 15th Street, the house was built as the last in a row of 2 story brick homes occupying the entire south side of the block between 14th and 15th Streets.

The house was built in the 1870s or early '80s, but was converted to a grocery store and the dogleg filled in between 1888 and 1903. It continued as a store likely until it was converted back to a residence, sometime after 1960, when the entrance was relocated and the address changed from 1468 T Street to 1841 15th Street. The date of the stucco application is unknown, although it may coincide with the other post-1960 changes to hide the former front door opening.

Project Description

The project seeks to add a two story addition with bay towards the alley – i.e. the original rear and current side of the property. With a minimal amount of demolition, an addition of 15½ feet in length, spanning the width of the property, will be attached. Stucco is proposed to match the existing exterior walls, while the bay would be clad with fiberboard panels over a brick base, although the plans allow for flexibility on materials.

The roof of the addition would step up slightly from the existing roof, but would be masked by continuing the parapet wall. It is somewhat unclear from the plans if the parapet will continue around the rear elevation and whether it is intended to have a cornice or a simple flashing.

Not shown on the plans is the window well that would be needed in front of the bay. Nor do the plans indicate any restorative work to this house that has suffered some loss of its historic character.

Evaluation

In consultation with the HPO, the design has already been revised to lower the height of the addition and to make the bay narrower in both width and depth. The proposed wood siding and an ornate cornice and brackets have given way to a simpler design with less embellishment, in keeping with the architecture of the house.

While large two-story bays are more typical on high Victorian buildings rather than older Italianate rowhouses, similar two-story bays were found compatible on the reconstructed building at 1467 Swann (directly behind the subject property, across the alley) and on an addition to a similar two-story house to the subject property one block south at 1461 S Street. All of these bays include window wells at their bases.

The size and design of the addition is compatible with the character of the historic district and consistent with prior Board approvals. Ideally, the proposal would include restoration of the front door on T Street, to return some of the building's original character and if the stucco needs replacing or repair during this or future construction, the HPO encourages the door opening to be uncovered and used.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept for a rear addition compatible with the character of the historic district and consistent with the purposes of the preservation act and delegate final review to staff.