

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

Property Address:	1901-05 9½ Street NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	U Street Historic District		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	March 24, 2015	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	16-101		New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Anne Brockett	X	Alteration

The Board has previously reviewed proposals for these three lots on 9½ Street for additions to two existing alley dwellings (1901 and 1905) and infill construction between them (1903). The Board found the first proposal to unify the historic buildings and new building under a mansard roof incompatible. The second proposal, which proposed to build a three-story mansard-roofed building on the vacant lot at 1903 and to add third floors on 1901 (set back five feet) and 1905 (set back eight feet), was also determined incompatible.

The current proposal retains the overall design vocabulary of the previous submission, but sets back the third floors for all three buildings considerably from the facades. Similar future construction is planned on the vacant lot at 1907 and a design has been ghosted in for the Board's reference, but is not part of the current application.

Project Description

The new building at 1903 now fully adopts the two-story roofline of the adjacent alley dwellings. The lower façade with its brick and steel corbel, inset glazing and spandrel panel is unchanged. The third floor aligns with additions atop 1901 and 1905, all set back over 26 feet from the facades. As before, they are clad with metal panels but have been revised with paired casements to accommodate the roof of the sloping stair enclosure.

The rear additions and new construction will extend the existing buildings by approximately 24 feet in length and the rear design remains as before. The depth of the rear areaways has been increased slightly. On the front, the two historic facades will be restored and roof decks are no longer proposed.

Evaluation

At its February meeting, the Board indicated that in order to approach compatibility, any design would need to set the third floors of all three buildings back half the depth of the overall footprint. The application has been revised accordingly, with a setback of 26½ feet on the buildings' proposed 55½ foot length. The roof additions, which are no longer sloped like mansards, are not visible from the north. They will be visible from the west, but are set back far enough as to read almost as separate buildings. Indeed, they meet the Board's general requirement that additions should not occupy a substantial portion of the roof of the existing building, resting on only 5 feet at the rears of the existing dwellings.

As redesigned, the new construction and additions are compatible with the two-story character of the alley. The third floor is set back substantially, largely constructed behind the existing buildings, and reads as distinct in its architectural character. As the design progresses toward permit, the HPO will work with the applicant on the corbel detailing and placement of rooftop condensers to minimize their visibility.

Recommendations

The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept to construct a residence at 1903 9½ Street and add to 1901 and 1905 9½ Street compatible with the character of the U Street Historic District and consistent with the purposes of the Act and to delegate final approval to staff. The Board's action should not be construed as approval or endorsement for any necessary zoning relief.