

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

Property Address:	1909 9th Street, NW		Agenda
Landmark/District:	Greater U Street Historic District	X	Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	May 26, 2016	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	16-095		New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Anne Brockett	X	Alteration

Owner Mezgebu Gebeyebu seeks the Board’s review of a concept to alter the roof and add attic space to this historic building in the U Street Historic District. Based on map and permit research, it is likely that the gable roofed building is of frame construction, built immediately prior to or following the Civil War. Around the 1870s, a brick façade and Italianate trim were applied and the exposed side wall was stuccoed. Subsequently, it was converted to commercial use and storefront glazing was added.

Recent Permit and Construction History

The owner was cited in 2014 by the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs for a number of structural, electrical, fire, and mechanical code violations. The work that was stopped included raising the height of the existing gable roof to create a habitable third floor, despite the approved permit for a rear 2-story addition which states “No third floor construction. Building to remain two stories. No alteration, removal or change in dimension to any exterior or structural component forward from, and including, gable roof ridge.”



Before construction



After roof alterations. Note the ghost mark on the side wall showing the original building outline.

After paying a reduced fine of \$6000, the owner received a permit to restore the roof to its original form, using the ghost marks on the side stucco as a guide for construction. The owner initiated this work, as seen in the photos contained in the submission. He has since come forward with the current proposal to modify the roof.

Project Description

Rather than restore the full gable, the project would keep the recently restored front slope only and would replace the bump-up at the ridgeline with a roof that slopes up more gently toward the rear and the levels off above the added third floor. This proposal would rectify the non-compatible roof form and allow the attic floor space to remain under a more sensitively designed roof.

Some aspects of the design remain to be worked out, including an accurate measurement of the head height in the attic and the materials for the sides of the attic.

Evaluation

While elevations and plans were not submitted (and it may be beyond the capacity or contract of the draftsman), the HPO can infer that the proposal will not be significantly visible from 9th Street and will represent a marked improvement over the building's current condition.

One outstanding element which may affect the proposal is the floor-to-ceiling height in the attic, which is not clarified in the section drawings (indicated as "Verify in Field"). Should these measurements deviate from what is shown in the plans and require modification for code compliant head height, the *interior floor* must be adjusted to accommodate the discrepancy with *no change in roof height or slope* from what is presented in this submission.

In addition to accurate measurements, the permit drawings should also indicate that no change is necessary to the built-in gutter to accommodate the additional water shedding from an enlarged roof. The permit drawings must also include a roof plan and section showing appropriately placed, minimally tall vent stacks.

Because of the minor visibility at oblique angles, the side walls should be finished with stucco or a parge coat. Modern horizontal siding or panels are not appropriate on the proposed roof form because they cannot not be finished in a manner that successfully integrates with the historic building.

With HPRB approval, the HPO staff will expect a permit application and a complete set of permit drawings, including all mechanical, electrical, structural and plumbing drawings needed to obtain a permit within 60 days. Once the permit is issued, the HPO will place a hold on the property to ensure that the exterior construction proceeds in a timely manner and is completed within 120 days of the receipt of the permit.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board approve the concept as compatible with the historic district and consistent with the purposes of the preservation act and delegate final approval to staff with the requirements described herein.