

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

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|--------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Property Address:  | <b>1914 8<sup>th</sup> Street NW</b> | Agenda                   |
| Landmark/District: | <b>U Street Historic District</b>    | Consent Calendar         |
| Meeting Date:      | <b>September 22, 2016</b>            | <b>X</b> Denial Calendar |
| H.P.A. Number:     | <b>16-442</b>                        | <b>X</b> Concept Review  |
| Staff Reviewer:    | <b>Anne Brockett</b>                 | New Construction         |

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Applicant 1914 8<sup>th</sup> St LLC, working with architect Sassan Gharai of SGA Companies, seeks concept review of 3-story addition on top of a 2-story rowhouse. The house is constructed of brick on a brick foundation and was permitted in 1879. Along with 1912 and 1910 8<sup>th</sup> Street, it was 20 feet wide and built as an individual dwelling, rather than as part of a row, although all three shared party walls. A row of 4 houses was added to the north in 1903 with other small speculative rows built soon after to fill the remainder of the 8<sup>th</sup> Street side of this square. The surrounding residences have all since been demolished, likely following the riots of 1968 (they were present through at least 1960). To the south, the building is now flanked by two 4-story buildings designed to evoke bay-front rowhouses. To the north is a 6-story building, which steps down to 4 stories where it abuts this historic building.

While the character of the block has changed over the years and the streetscape in the immediate vicinity has a higher roofline, this building remains as an early example of a residential property in the outer reaches of the developing city.

**Project Description**

The project calls for adding 3 floors directly atop the existing building with a series of minimal setbacks at each floor (1 foot for the third floor, 2 feet for the fourth floor, and 1 foot for the fifth). The overall height would be 54 feet, several feet taller than the abutting buildings and more than doubling the building's existing height. At the rear, the project proposes demolition of the ell and, presumably, most or all of the interior structure, although demolition plans were not submitted. The addition would extend 14 feet on first floor, and 18 feet on the 4 floors above.

The design is historicist on the front with brick veneer, cornices at each floor and punched openings. The rear would be clad in cementitious board siding with ganged windows and a stair providing access to grade from each floor.

**Evaluation**

The proposed addition represents an incompatible way to add to a designated property. It overwhelms the building to which it is being added and obliterates its small scale and 2-story character. In addition, it appears that only the facade and party walls would be retained, resulting in far more demolition than would be appropriate for a building to retain its integrity. Should an addition be considered here, previous Board approvals for similarly scaled buildings in a similar context should serve as a guide. In cases where the historic streetscape is no longer intact, the HPRB has supported additions that are taller if they are set far back from the façade and are designed in a distinguishable aesthetic in order to look like a separate building. This building is the last of the houses on this block to represent the development of the northern part of the city and it should continue to be read as a late 19<sup>th</sup> century residence.

**Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Board deny the concept to add to this property as designed as inconsistent with the preservation act.*