

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

Property Address:	1914 8th Street NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	U Street Historic District		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	September 27, 2018	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	18-624	X	New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Anne Brockett		

Owner Eckington Station LLC, working with architect Armstrong Kassa of SGA Companies, returns to the HPRB to seek concept review of a revised proposal for this contributing building in the U Street Historic District. The modest 2-story brick rowhouse was built in 1879 and is the lone historic survivor in a largely redeveloped block. It is currently flanked by two modern 4-story buildings to the south and a 6-story building to the north, which steps down to 4 stories where it abuts this historic building.

Project Description

In 2016, the HPRB denied an application to add three floors directly atop this building. In July of this year, the Board approved a proposal to erect a 5-story addition directly behind the main block, in place of the existing rear dogleg. This approved addition is set 32' back from the front wall.

The applicants now return with an intermediate proposal utilizing the same height and façade design but set back only 15' from the façade. In the approved design, the rooftop stair penthouse was set back 47 feet and the roof deck railing 42'. In the current proposal, the penthouse and railing are set back 32 feet from the façade. A third floor terrace on the roof below is set back 10' from the façade.

Evaluation

Guidance from the Board in 2016 and from staff with the current owner has been consistent:

“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.”

The Board has typically held that roof additions on rowhouses should not sit atop the roof of the main block, but may be approved above rear doglegs. Unlike the previous iteration, where no part of the addition would rest on the roof of the original building, this proposal is set back a minimal distance from the street and occupies a substantial portion of the roof. With its three additional floors plus a penthouse, the addition will overwhelm the underlying historic building. Despite the change in materials, the diminished setback does not allow the building to read as a separate, backdrop building. It will clearly be understood as a large roof addition. The rear wall and roof structure will be demolished and, although the plans indicate that the existing interior structure will be reinforced by sistering in joists, there is risk of loss of the building's integrity.

The proposal that was approved in July was developed in consultation with HPO staff and met the standards established through previous Board reviews. The HPO recommends that the current proposal is not compatible and that the approved iteration of the form, massing, and setback is the only appropriate approach to adding onto this property. As stated in July, the HPO will work with the applicants on elements of the façade restoration, including window and door types and a simplified application of the surface panels, with fewer vertical and horizontal elements.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board deny the concept as designed as inconsistent with the preservation act.