

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

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Landmark/District:	<b>U Street Historic District</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	<b>2212 12<sup>th</sup> Place, NW</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	<b>March 23, 2017</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	<b>17-185</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Imania Price</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

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### **Property Description**

Working with KUBE Architects, owner Kathleen Kern seeks permit approval for a third floor addition to her two story rowhouse in the U Street Historic District. The house is one of twenty in a row of identical brick houses built in 1885. The diminutive dwellings, lining both sides of the street, measure twelve feet in width and feature brick corbelling and simple brick windows and door hoods.

### **Proposal**

The project includes replacing the front door, adding a third floor on the rear portion of the roof, infilling the side court of the ell wing, and new window openings and windows on all floors on the rear. The new rear elevation will feature fixed aluminum clad windows; the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor will feature a Juliette balcony with a metal railing. The third floor addition is proposed to set back 15 feet from the front facade, approximately 24 feet in length, and set back four feet from the rear. The roof and sloping attic will be removed to accommodate the third floor addition. The material of the addition has not been finalized but will likely be Hardi-panel. The rear elevation of the third floor will consist of large 8' windows openings organized in a symmetrical manner that will clearly divide the floors.

### **Evaluation**

The Board's guidance, *Roof Decks and Roof Additions: Design Considerations and Submission Requirements*, generally discourages roof additions because they can "alter significant features, such as its roof line, height, relationship with surrounding buildings, and overall form and mass." However, the Board has accepted them as a compatible way to add to buildings in instances "when they are not visible from street views, do not result in the removal or alteration of important character-defining features of the building or streetscape, and are compatible with their context."

The immediate context of the subject property is the highly consistent row of houses of which it is part. In both the front and rear, few changes have altered properties on this block. Because the Board weighs the impact of an addition's scale and massing on the building itself as well as on historically intact streetscapes and alleyscapes, compatibility relies on the addition not overwhelming the original structure or compromising the historic character of its context.

In this instance, the setback from the front ensures that the addition would not be visible from any street view. In addition, the setback from the rear elevation maintains the consistent two-story height along the alley, reduces the mass, and differentiates the addition from the underlying building.

By having the rear setback, the proposal is an improvement over the two other roof additions that have been constructed in this otherwise consistent row. At 2240 12<sup>th</sup> Place, which is a largely reconstructed house, the Board approved a third story set back from the front but not the back, which results in a disruption to the continuous massing of the row in the rear. 2232 12<sup>th</sup> Place has a smaller rooftop addition but has a deck that extends to the rear wall of the house, also resulting in a large intrusion on the rear.

The applicant's proposal calls for a solid-to-void ratio at the rear elevation that is inconsistent with the row. While a greater degree of glazing on the first floor would not be seen behind privacy fencing and some greater degree of glazing on the recessed third floor would help lighten and differentiate this level from the masonry building, some greater degree of consistency with the punched windows on the second floor could help better relate the proposal to its context. The proposed rear setback and a reduction of rear window glazing on the second floor will avoid the incompatible roof addition designs that were previously constructed in the row.

### **Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept generally compatible with the character of the historic district and consistent with the purposes of the preservation act with the following conditions:*

- 1) The front door be replaced in kind;*
- 2) The fenestration on the second floor be revised to better relate to the punched windows found on the row.*

*It is recommended that final approval be delegated to staff.*