

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

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Property Address:	<b>919 R Street NW</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>U Street Historic District</b>	<b>X</b> Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>February 25, 2015</b>	<b>X</b> Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>16-206</b>	New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Anne Brockett</b>	<b>X</b> Alteration

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Working with Ron Schneck of Square134 Architects, property owner Lock 7 Development seeks the Board's review of a concept to shorten the length of a two-story rowhouse by 3'9" and add upward. The home was built in the early 1880s as a single building. To the east, it abuts a composed row of dwellings, and on the west is separated from another set of rowhouses by a gap of about three feet. The residence features elaborate brick detailing and original windows with routed mullions and stained-glass arched transoms.

**Project Description**

The proposal would reduce the length of the house by 3'9", in order to become compliant with zoning regulations, and add atop the roof. The rear wall has been stuccoed and currently contains only one opening, a window in the second floor. The new elevation would open up the rear with large fenestration on the first three floors and ganged windows on the added upper floor.

The dogleg, which historically was occupied by a two-story porch, will be left open, but will be covered with a trellis-like structure for zoning reasons. It will contain a small second-floor deck with a spiral stair leading down to the ground. A basement level would also be excavated with a sunken terrace placed in the rear yard.

The roof addition would occupy about twelve feet of the main block of the house as well as the entire rear ell. At the front, the addition would provide access to a deck, for which a railing may not be necessary given the height of the house's parapet.

**Evaluation**

The staff has consulted with the applicant to set the addition off the rear wall by four feet, in order to retain a sense of the original roofline. With this change, the addition is compatible with the historic district and consistent with previous Board approvals. A mockup was constructed to check the addition's visibility from R Street. Because of the gap between the subject property and the abutting house to the west, a sliver of the addition will be visible. However, due to the narrowness of this gap, visibility will be limited to a particular vantage point in front of the house and would not fundamentally detract from how the building is perceived.

The HPO does not support elongating the front basement windows or the addition of a window well in front of the bay. The yard is quite shallow and these changes, which are not required by code, would detract from the character of the property. However, adding a window under the front stoop may be possible in order to provide more daylight. This may also provide a suitable location for

electric meters, which are currently proposed in a spot where the neighbor's steps would obstruct access.

As the project moves forward, the HPO strongly recommends repair and retention of the historic cast iron fence. The HPO will ensure that the interior structure is largely preserved, with new joists sistered in as needed, and will work with the applicant to place meters inconspicuously.

**Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept compatible with the character of the historic district and consistent with the purposes of the Act, and that further review be delegated to staff.*