

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

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Property Address:	<b>941 S Street NW</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Greater U Street Historic District</b>	<b>X</b> Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>December 18, 2014</b>	<b>X</b> Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>15-154</b>	<b>X</b> Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Anne Brockett</b>	New Construction

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The house at 941 S Street is one of a row of 12 similar houses built in 1889 by H.A. Willard using the architectural services of Thomas F. Schneider. Well known for his exuberant designs, Schneider's buildings here feature a variety of intricate roof forms, elaborate pressed brick, and ornamental stone carvings. The buildings were all constructed as three-story units with two-story rear ell wings.

The property was recently sold by the DC Housing Authority, which had owned it since 2000. It has been vacant for a number of years.

**Project Description**

Applicant Michael Welch, on behalf of 1606 Strategies Project A, LLC seeks the Board's approval to add behind and above the existing rear ell and place a roof deck on this rowhouse. The addition would extend 16 feet behind the 2-story ell and its new third floor would attach to the existing third floor of the home.

The construction would leave the dogleg intact and utilize that space with a stair down to the back yard and a spiral stair up to the roof deck. The deck would occupy a portion of both the main and addition roofs.

The design for the rear elevation incorporates siding and paired punched windows with decorative panels between each floor.

**Evaluation**

The proposal is compatible with the historic district and is consistent with other Board approvals for expanding historic homes. The addition springs off the main roof at the same height, continuing the existing roof slope toward the rear. It rests entirely behind and on top of the rear ell with only a portion of the deck proposed to sit on the original main block.

While the addition will stand a story taller than the immediately abutting houses, there are other changes in this alley that set a precedent for this kind of alteration. Two doors to the west at 945 S, there is a third floor addition on part of the rear ell as well as a roof deck. Several houses to the east is a series of roof decks, accessed by a rear spiral stair.

The current proposal has the advantage of tucking the stairs into the dogleg space, removing the visual clutter they create. In addition, the well-composed rear elevation is in keeping with the

character of the district. The roof deck is successfully set back from the rear and front, alleviating any view from both alley and street.

Finally, it is worth noting that the project will return this long-vacant property to a residence while retaining a substantial amount of the interior structure and restoring its architectural ornamentation.

Before approving a permit, the HPO will work with the applicant on selection of appropriate windows, doors, and transoms; identification of a discreet meter location; design of a minimally sized front window well; and to ensure the non-visibility of the roof deck through a flag test or roof mockup.

**Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Board find the project compatible with historic district and consistent with the purposes of the preservation act and delegate final approval to staff. The Board's decision should not be construed as endorsement or support for any necessary zoning relief.*