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

Landmark/District:	U Street Historic District	<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	944 S Street NW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	December 3, 2020	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	21-046	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
		<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Owners Robert Kratcoski and Rex Wingard, with plans prepared by architect Jim Martin, seek concept review for a partial third-story addition on a two-story rowhouse in the U Street Historic District.

Property Description

944 S Street, NW is one in a row of six two-story brick rowhouse originally owned and built by C.V. Trott in 1884. Trott owned and designed homes along 940 - 950 S Street NW. Distinct in architectural style and form, the rows of buildings are two-stories in height with projecting two-story bays extending up to the buildings' cornice. The buildings are two bays wide with single and paired window openings ornamented with segmental arched lintels, distinguished by corbelled brick cornices and pedimented parapets with raked cornices.

Proposal

The plans call for the construction of a partial third-story addition that would be set back 17' 7" from the front façade and align with the existing rear elevation. The front portion of the addition would measure 10' 6" in height and be clad in stucco to match the existing siding. The gutter and cornice will be repaired and replaced to match the existing box-gutter and detailed cornice design. The plan will require a chimney extension, which is to be painted a gray/matte to blend into the roofscape.





The applicant constructed and documented images of a roof-top mock-up as part of their application. The mock-up indicates that the addition will be seen obliquely through the alley on 10th street. The addition would not be seen from S Street when standing directly across from the building.

Evaluation

The Board’s design guideline on rooftop additions states, “Under most circumstances, roof additions that are visible from a public street are not appropriate, as they would alter an historic building’s height, mass, design composition, cornice line, roof, and its relationship to surrounding buildings and streetscape – all of which are important character-defining features that are protected for historic property. In rare cases, a visible roof top addition may be acceptable if it does not fundamentally alter the character of the building and is designed to be compatible with the building and context. Generally, this type of addition has been approved on buildings with little architectural character, or one-story buildings set within a context of larger buildings.”

However, the Board has frequently approved rooftop additions within the U Street Historic District (and elsewhere) where they could be seen from the rear or side of the property through an alley or side yard in context with other additions or activity in the rear, as is the case here. Such visibility along a rear elevation, even when seen from street view, has been found to not fundamentally alter the character of the building, composed streetscapes, or the historic district. Images of the rooftop mock-up demonstrates that the rooftop addition would not be visible from or alter the apparent height or roofline of the building as seen along S Street and is consistent with other similar projects that have been found compatible.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept to be compatible with the historic district and to delegate further review to staff with the stipulation that that the applicant verify setback non-visibility from S Street during construction..