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

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Landmark/District:	U Street Historic District	(x) Agenda
Address:	941 Westminster Street NW	
Meeting Date:	March 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2023	(X) Alteration
Case Number:	HPA 23-321	(X) Permit

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The applicant MCD Studio, on behalf of the owners Mark Schamel and Deborah Ritter request a permit revision to a roof deck on Westminster Street NW in the U Street Historic District.

**Property Description**

The three-story brick rowhouses in the 900 block of Westminster Street are Romanesque style with classical design motifs. The block is characterized by the uniform massing of its houses – three story main blocks with two-story rear wings. The property is located near the corner of Westminster Street and 10<sup>th</sup> Street, and the rear of the property is visible from Vermont Avenue and 10<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Project Description**

In 2022, the applicant applied for a building permit for adding a multi-level roof deck above the second and third floor roof which include a straight run staircase to connect the decks. The projecting straight-run staircase made the structure more prominently visible from Vermont Avenue and 10<sup>th</sup> Street and out of character with these visible rooflines. HPO recommended a spiral case as a more compatible solution, as it would be smaller in footprint and volume and be less visible against the rear elevation of the house. The applicant submitted the permit application and plans with the recommended spiral stair and the permit was approved in April 2022.

In March 2023, construction on the property was stopped for violating the approved scope of work. The construction installed the unpermitted straight-run staircase instead of the approved spiral stair. The applicant requests HPRB approval of the constructed straight-run staircase.

**Evaluation and Recommendation**

HPO recommends that the Board find the constructed straight-run stair to be incompatible in form for a location that is so visible from street view, and that a spiral stair is the most appropriate option. HPO recommends that the Board deny the permit, and direct the applicant to remove the straight run stair and install the previously-approved spiral stair.

1: Installed Straight-run Staircase at Property





2: Existing Neighboring Roof Deck with Spiral Staircase

