

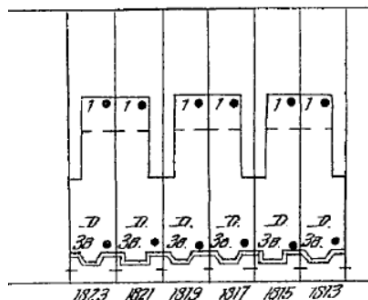
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Property Address:	1819 Vernon Street NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Washington Heights Historic District		Consent Calendar
			Concept Review
Meeting Date:	January 24, 2019	X	Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	19-106		New Construction
			Demolition
			Subdivision

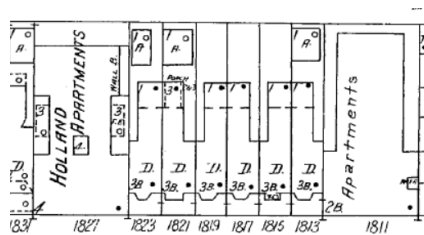
Owner Lucie Schmidt, working with architect KC Price of AFA Studios, seeks the Board’s review of a rear addition, roof deck, and front basement entrance at this contributing building in the Washington Heights Historic District.

The rowhouse is one of six, constructed in 1901 by developers Kennedy and Davis. The row is elevated on a high berm over a narrow residential street. All were constructed as three stories high with a one-story wing at the rear. Prior to 1928, the row was hemmed in by brick apartment buildings and the one-story portion of 1821 was built up to three stories. The same occurred at 1817 by 1959. Four of the buildings in the row had garages present over the years and several were used historically as flats and apartments.

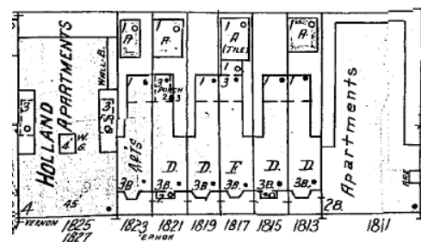
1916



1928



1959



Proposal

The project would replace both the three-story and one-story portions of the rear ell with a new ell of three stories that extends approximately two feet deeper into the rear yard. The addition would maintain the dogleg shape and would provide access to a rooftop deck via a small penthouse. An exterior spiral stair leads from a second floor landing to grade at the rear.

Large windows are proposed in the dogleg space and on the rear elevation, where they punctuate the proposed Boral horizontal siding. The roof deck aligns with that of 1817 Vernon, which is not visible due to the topography along the street. A front basement entry is proposed under the front stoop.

Evaluation

In November, HPO approved a permit for demolition of a portion of the first floor rear wall in order to excavate and underpin the basement, with the provision that the wall be returned to its previous condition. In December, the entire rear ell was demolished, exceeding the scope of the approved permit and a stop work order was issued and fines were paid. HPO subsequently signed off on a permit to structurally secure the building, seal the premises, and to cease further work until HPRB could review the project.

The addition will take the place of the demolished wing, rising three stories overall and extending slightly further rearward. The Board has approved this type of addition frequently where it does not overwhelm the underlying building or the surrounding alleyscape.

The design has the advantages of maintaining the dogleg and continuing the height of its abutting neighbors, which are historic additions to this row. It is not being proposed in an alley that retains a significant amount of integrity and will not be visible from the front.

Initially a basement entry was proposed through the center of the canted bay, which does not meet the Board's *Preservation and Design Guidelines for Basement Entrances and Windows*. It is currently proposed under the front stoop, which is a more appropriate location. However, photos of the existing conditions were not submitted, so the proposal cannot be evaluated at this time. Should a design that meets the *Guidelines* be submitted, HPO will approve it under its delegated authority.

In its height, orientation, setback, materials, scale, massing, and other characteristics, the addition is consistent with the Board's guidelines *Additions to Historic Buildings*. It is not visible from the front and will not impact a pristine alleyscape. While the rear windows are large, similar windows have been approved in other historic districts on rear-facing elevations where they do not adversely impact the character of the historic district.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Review Board find the concept for the addition to be compatible with the character of the historic district, and delegate final approval to staff.

Staff contact: Anne Brockett