

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

Property Address:	2649 Connecticut Avenue NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Woodley Park Historic District		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	March 31, 2016	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	16-147		New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Anne Brockett	X	Alteration

Working with Anila Angjeli of Aline Architecture, owner NOHA, LLC proposes to add to the rear and roof of this building as well as restore elements of the historic façade. The building is one of a pair built in 1916 by Harry Wardman as designed by A.M. Schneider and Co. Because of a grade change, the rear of the building stands four stories over the alley, where the facing Connecticut Avenue is a three story edifice.

Originally built as a residence, the property has long been used on the lower levels for commercial purposes, as is the case for all of its neighbors fronting along the busy Connecticut Avenue corridor. The proposal would maintain a restaurant use on the street level, with residential units above.

Project Description

The project would partially demolish the rear ell and infill the dogleg area on the upper floors (it is already filled in on the first floor) with a 37-foot addition at the elevated first floor that reduces to 20 feet on the upper two floors. A parking area would be located below the first floor, in a manner similar to the adjacent building, and a roof terrace would be situated on top. The addition will project 5 feet beyond the rear wall of the building to the south and 37 feet longer than the building to the north.

A penthouse stair tower will be situated 37 feet back from the façade and will provide access via spiral stairs to two small roof decks. Decks at the second and third floors extend 5 feet toward the rear. Materials for the addition are brick, with inset metal panels above and below windows and doors, slated to be multipane sliders.

On the front, the non-historic storefront will be replaced in its current opening and windows above will be replaced. The second floor windows will be returned to their original size and the decorative metal railings restored. Awnings will be removed from the façade.

Evaluation

Although unusual in its form, the addition is compatible given the alley's overall lack of integrity and long-standing context of commercial use. The two abutting buildings to the south are non-contributing and together occupy a very large footprint along the alley. Other buildings to the south have been expanded both outward and upward. To the north are two smaller scaled buildings and, moving northward, a building that occupies its full lot, rising two stories in height on the alley, and a substantial apartment building at the corner of Connecticut and Woodley Road.

As the design moves toward permitting, consideration of further refinements to the rear should be considered, including constructing the rear decks in metal rather than pressure treated wood, removing the railings at the lower deck, and cantilevering the upper balcony to eliminate the need for post supports. Slider windows are not typical of historic districts, and if they are to be used here, they must

have exterior muntins, rather than a flat grid sandwiched between panes. Casements or sashes would be more contextual as would french doors, again with exterior muntins.

The rooftop stair enclosure will be minimally visible from a considerable distance to the west along 24th Street. The structure is quite large given that its purpose is to contain only two spiral stairs and the HPO recommends that it be reduced to the minimum size necessary. This reduction in size and the proposed brick cladding will help it read as a small penthouse, rather than a roof addition. Should the roof parapet not be sufficient to serve as a railing for the decks, the HPO will work with the applicant to ensure that the deck railings have no visibility from the public right of way.

Recommendations

The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept compatible with the character of the commercial area of the Woodley Park Historic District and consistent with the Act. It is further recommended that the Board delegate final approval to the HPO.