HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

Landmark/District:	**Anacostia Historic District**	( ) Agenda
Address:	**1528 W Street, SE**	(x) Consent
Meeting Date:	**January 27, 2005**	(x) New construction
Case Number:	**05-038**	(x) Demolition
Date Received:	**October 22, 2004**	( ) Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	**Tim Dennée**	(x) Concept

The applicant, Petros N. Zouzoulas (Inscape Studio), agent and architect for owner Arch Training Center, requests the Board's conceptual review of a proposal to construct a two-story detached dwelling on a largely vacant lot at the corner of W and 16th Streets, SE. The house would be roughly 60 feet deep, divided into three sections or masses. It would be clad with Hardiplank and stucco and roofed with asphalt shingle.

The project would require the demolition of a dilapidated, frame, garage—a building that would be considered not contributing to the character of the historic district. It is not a particularly early garage, and the alterations and deterioration to it make both its architectural significance and integrity highly suspect. The applicant would replace the garage with a parking pad for two cars, accessible from the alley.[1] The rear yard would also be bounded by a high fence, but the details have not yet been provided.

The Board first reviewed this project in November and recommended that the form, massing and fenestration of the house be made more compatible with the front-gabled Victorian houses that characterize the block. The applicant has changed the front and rear, formerly cubic sections to gable-fronted. The windows, while not of traditional double-hung sash, are nonetheless vertical like others in the neighborhood and thus consistent with the proportion and orientation of those and the present design.

The front porch has become more traditional and functional, and it addresses the street corner in wrapping around to the 16th Street side. The side portion would be better if it had the same depth as the front section. For zoning reasons[2], the house is set back only

[1] For zoning reasons, specifically allowable lot coverage, the garage would probably have to be removed to accommodate a house of the proposed footprint.

[2] The case is to be heard by the Board of Zoning Adjustment shortly. The lot, which was formerly built upon, does not conform to the present requirements for a buildable lot. The principal issue is the lack of sufficient side yards for a detached house, so the applicant has responded by trying to provide a side yard on each side, although about half of what is required. It is simply a matter of historic building patterns not necessarily meeting current standards. It would seem that the lack of a side yard along 16th Street would not be much of a problem, since there can be no adjacent structures there. If a larger side yard is ultimately

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four feet from the 16th Street right of way, making the overhang there only about three feet. If only four feet is available, then that should be the depth of the roof projection. This would help the side section should read more as a porch than as a covered walkway. Toward that end, the porch slab or deck and balustrade should terminate below the porch roof and not continue rearward to the entrance in the central section. A traditional lead walk would be appropriate there instead, as would a simple, low stoop beneath the canopy over the latter entrance. Not covering most of the side yard with a slab would also permit more planting. If the side yard is to be fenced at the property line or the inside edge of the sidewalk, so be it, but continuing the porch balustrade as a sort of fence or security barrier is an unnatural design solution that detracts from the porch gesture. A fence could spring from the rear corner of the porch, but then either its material or design should be distinguished from the porch balustrade.

The continuance of the porch deck/walkway is indicative of an ambivalence about openness versus security. Certainly, the house is in an exposed position on the corner, and there are still real security issues in the neighborhood. But security can be managed with actual fences, as mentioned above, while leaving the approaches to the doors otherwise unobstructed. Despite the fact that the front door is not intended to be the primary entrance, it is natural to place it on W Street under the porch. Following the traditional approach to its logical conclusion, the porch then should be accessible from its front or the end facing the corner. There should be no gate obstructing the opening in the balustrade.

The staff recommends that the Board approve the project in concept, including demolition of the garage, with a delegation to staff of further review, including addressing the points above and further review of fences.

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required on the opposite side, then it is certainly conceivable that the house could be shifted a few feet toward 16th Street and the side porch eliminated.