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Restoration to Rejuvenate Aging Eyesore in Shaw

One of the city's more historic rowhouses will soon get a renovation and conversion to a multi-family building, now that the Historic Preservation Review Board has approved Community Three Development, LLC's conceptual design for a rear addition to a historic row house at 444 M St. NW.

The house was built in the late 1870s and had fallen into disrepair (see picture); as a result, the Board had “previously determined that [the property did] not contribute to the character of the historic district.” After complaints from neighbors, in May 2007, 444 M St. became the subject of one of Mayor Adrian Fenty's Ward 2 “Operation: Fix It” projects, wherein government agencies devote several days to improving a particular neighborhood. Representatives of the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs built a temporary blockade to prevent use of the garage. But first, the Department of Public Works had to tow an equally abandoned truck from the property, apparently used solely for “illicit criminal activity”.



Now, Grant Epstein, the President of Community Three Development, LLC, intends to make Bob Vila proud. Besides renovating the gutted, deteriorating original row house, he plans to take advantage of the depth of the lot (194') by building a four-story addition behind the original house. Epstein describes the project as “one structure with a courtyard in the middle... in order to provide light to all the units.” His current plan calls for eight units that would be designed for use as either condo or rental units.

Given that the Review Board has given the go-ahead, Epstein projects that creation of architectural drawings will last approximately six months, the process of receiving a permit will take two to six months, and construction should last about a year.