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

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Landmark/District:	<b>Capitol Hill Historic District</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	<b>900 11<sup>th</sup> Street, SE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	<b>September 18, 2014</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	<b>14-527</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Sarah VanLandingham</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
	<b>Frances McMillen</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

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Applicant Madison Investments with plans prepared by PGN Architects requests concept review for a multi-unit new construction project at 900 11<sup>th</sup> St SE in the Capitol Hill Historic District.

### **Property Description**

900 11<sup>th</sup> Street SE is currently occupied by a parking lot and small auto service station that is non-contributing to the Capitol Hill Historic District. The site is located at the corner of 11<sup>th</sup> and I (“Eye”) Street adjacent to a small two-story brick building on 11<sup>th</sup> Street and across an alley from a three-story brick residential building on I Street. The site is an incomplete rectangle measuring approximately 130’x150’ with a total square footage of 16,142 sq. ft.

This part of Capitol Hill is less homogenous than some other areas and there is a mix of building types and uses including a few rowhouses, some small scale apartment buildings, and small scale commercial structures. In addition, there are large open spaces such as the baseball field on the opposite corner. The area is also impacted by the Southeast Freeway that cuts through this section of the district.

### **Proposal**

The proposal calls for the construction of a four-story building above a raised basement to contain 48-units. The building will be comprised of units with townhouse-type individual entrances as well as units accessed from an interior corridor. It will be clad in brick up to the third story with the final story clad in fiber cement panels. Most of the parking will be located in an underground garage accessed from the alley.

The roof will feature both a shared roof deck for tenant use as well as a green roof. The mechanical equipment will be screened by the roof deck. The stair access structures will likely be visible from the street.

### **Evaluation**

The size and scale of this building, although larger than others in the immediate vicinity, is generally compatible with the historic district and not inappropriate for a lot of this size and corner location. The design is contemporary but incorporates materials and some details

common in historic buildings, such as corbelling and defined lintels. The inclusion of townhouse style entrances relates to the rowhouse architecture prevalent throughout Capitol Hill. The ratio of glazing to solid of the fenestration is compatible with the historic district and the relatively few window types create a simple rhythm that contributes to the notion of vertical modules typical of Capitol Hill.

As the project continues to be refined, the following areas are suggested for further development:

1. The employment of the single large projection is unusual for Capitol Hill where that element typically breaks up a façade into vertical pieces that distinguish changes in use, owner, or occupant. While this is somewhat mitigated by the corner location and the lack of a cohesive collection of bay front architecture in this section of Capitol Hill, breaking this up into smaller projections and distributing them across the facades of the building could help reduce the scale of the building and animate the long flat elevations. This alternative approach to the use of projections should be studied.
2. The composition struggles proportionally in utilizing a tripartite arrangement due to a base that doesn't fully ground the building and a mid-section that is not fully realized in two stories. It would benefit from pulling the language of the middle section down to the first floor and creating a stronger water-table to ground the building.
3. While the visibility of the rooftop stair access structures and elevator overrun does not detract from the character of the historic district since they are atop a new building, the penthouses should be pulled in to respect the 1:1 requirement on all sides of the building. Ideally, the penthouse structures could be reduced in size, reduced to their minimal height, and disconnected from each other; if zoning relief is otherwise sought for this project, the applicants are encouraged to seek this type of relief to reduce the penthouse mass and visibility.
4. The site plan should continue to be developed to illustrate in detail how the building and its stairs and window wells will sit on the ground, how much green space can be provided and how the property will meet the public sidewalk. The plan should also incorporate a fence or wall to screen the parking at the rear of the building from sidewalk view.

### **Evaluation**

*The HPO recommends that the board find the concept compatible with the Capitol Hill historic district and consistent with the preservation act with the condition that the applicants work with staff to further refine the façade details.*