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

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Landmark/District:	<b>Greater U Street Historic District</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	<b>1421 Florida Avenue NW</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
		<input type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Meeting Date:	<b>October 28, 2010</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Case Number:	<b>10-438</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Eldra D. Walker</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

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Chris Colross of SGA Architects, on behalf of 1421 Florida, LLC, seeks conceptual review for construction of a six-story, sixteen-unit condominium building. Now vacant, the lot was improved in 1889 and once occupied by one half of a two-story frame duplex.

**Proposal**

The proposal calls for constructing a six story masonry clad apartment building, five stories above an at-grade parking level. The building will read as six stories from Florida Avenue, but with the excavation into the escarpment, will read as only three stories from the north. Traditionally inspired in design, the building will feature building materials found throughout the historic district: brick, 2/2 windows, stone accents, and metal panels. The façade will follow the form of the street, running parallel with Florida Avenue, which runs at an angle to the L'Enfant Plan. The building's front, side and rear elevations will be fully articulated with ordered fenestration, brick pilasters with stone caps, and horizontal bands of stone (the east (side) elevation was not submitted). Large recessed brick panels and a modern embattlement will crown the new structure. The project proposes a curb cut off Florida Avenue, with entrance to a garage entrance next to the building. The roof of the garage will support a first-floor terrace garden.

**Evaluation and Recommendation**

While a structure of this height may at first glance seem out of scale with the rowhouse context to the south and west, the building will fit comfortably within the context of large- and mid-rise apartment buildings to the east along Fourteenth Street and to the north on Belmont Road. The building will likely forever remain separated from the historic rowhouses to the west by the rear yard of a large apartment on Belmont that looms over the block.

The regularity and repetition of form and the use of traditional materials results in a design that, in spite of its height, is understated, calm, and residential in character. The traditionally inspired façade composition, comprised of brick and stone, 2/2 windows, and decorative metal panels has a sense of commonality and familiarity with buildings in the historic district. The use of horizontal elements, such as stone bands and uninterrupted brick courses, will ground the building and break it into smaller scaled components, further mitigating its height and perceived scale.

While the Board has not often approved curb cuts in historic districts, it has approved two for new apartment projects on this block. In those instances, the Board found the unique character of Florida Avenue, without public space front yards and with several existing curb cuts, could absorb new curb cuts if minimized and sensitively designed. The curb cut and garage door in this proposal have been similarly sized and placed not to dominate the façade composition.

The HPO recommends the Board approve the proposal in concept delegating final approval to staff.