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

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Property Address:	<b>1827 Wiltberger Street, NW</b>	<b>X</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Holzbeierlein Bakery (pending)</b>		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>January 26, 2017</b>	<b>X</b>	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>17-077</b>	<b>X</b>	Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Steve Callcott</b>		New Construction
			Demolition
			Subdivision

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PGN Architects, representing Old City Development Group, seeks conceptual design review for rehabilitation and adding three floors atop the former Holzbeierlein Bakery complex, a property for which a landmark application is pending. If the property is determined to meet the designation criteria, this project would subject to the Board's review.

**Property Description and History**

As further detailed in the designation application, the Holzbeierlein Bakery consists of a row of interconnected two-story red brick vernacular buildings facing Wiltberger Street that were constructed between 1891 and 1930 to serve as the bakery and distribution facilities for an industrial baking enterprise. It is significant for its association with events and patterns of growth and change that contributed to the heritage and development of the city and for embodying the distinguishing characteristics of an industrial baking complex. While reflecting its evolution to different uses with some alterations to window and door openings, it remains sufficiently intact to convey its original use and appearance.

**Proposal**

The plans call for the complex to be rehabilitated and added to for conversion to retail, office and residential use. The existing buildings' original window and door openings would be retained and bricked up openings reopened. On Wiltberger, the garage door openings would be converted to pedestrian entrances, and one new retail window opening created at the southern end of the elevation. On the rear alley, the garage door openings, some of which have been already been altered over time, would be reconfigured to allow for additional parking bays.

Three floors are proposed atop the building, each of which would step back progressively from the original buildings' street face and from the south alley. The additional floors would be clad in metal panel and have large industrial style windows. A four-story element clad in brick would be constructed on the vacant site at the north edge of the property that would rise the full height at the street face.

The existing buildings have a variety of construction types and structural systems – wood frame on masonry bearing walls, concrete slab, terra cotta, and steel – that reflects the different construction methods used over time in the original construction as well as later alterations that were made to them. The renovation plan has been developed to retain the existing structural

systems with the new floors supported on existing columns and walls without substantial demolition.

### **Evaluation**

The conceptual plans have been developed based on careful analysis and documentation of the existing buildings and in coordination with HPO. The proposed treatment of the existing buildings' elevations – retaining and reopening original window openings, and replacing to match original conditions -- is consistent with the Board's window standards.<sup>1</sup> The retention of the buildings' structural systems would not result in substantial demolition as defined in the preservation regulations.<sup>2</sup>

The primary preservation consideration is the compatibility of the proposed additional floors. As a general principle, the Board's guidelines discourage additional floors being added on historic buildings, particularly when they are visible from street view:

Adding vertically to a historic building is generally discouraged as such additions typically alter significant features, such as its roof line, height, relationship with surrounding buildings, and overall form and mass. Additions on top of a building can sometimes be achieved when they are not visible from street views, do not result in the removal or alteration of important character-defining features of the building or streetscape, and are compatible with their context. If conditions allow, this approach typically requires a substantial setback, the extent of which depends on the height of the addition, the height of the building, the height of adjacent buildings, the topography of the area, the width of the street, the relationship of the subject building to its surroundings, and views from public vantage points surrounding the building.

Under most circumstances, roof additions that are visible from a public street are not appropriate, as they would alter an historic building's height, mass, design composition, cornice line, roof, and its relationship to surrounding buildings and streetscape – all of which are important character-defining features that are protected for historic property. In rare cases, a visible roof addition may be found acceptable if it does not fundamentally alter the character of the building and is sufficiently designed to be compatible with the building.

Industrial and warehouse buildings, such as is represented by the subject property, have been the type of resource that the Board has sometimes found could compatibly accommodate additional floors. Among the factors and considerations that the Board has cited in these determinations is the building's utilitarian, industrial character and original construction type that could support additional floors without resulting in substantial demolition. While each project is somewhat different, examples of industrial buildings for which the Board has found visible roof additions to be compatible include the Studio Theater (1507 14<sup>th</sup> Street), the Taylor Motor Company building (Room & Board at 1840 14<sup>th</sup> Street), the Chapman Stables (54 N Street NW), and the White Cross/Wonderbread Bakery across Wiltberger Street from the subject property (641 S Street).

Like those other projects that the Board has found compatible, the proposed addition has been designed as a contemporary contrast to the underlying brick buildings, pulled back from the street

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<sup>1</sup> DCMR 10C, Section 2300 "Standards for Window Repair and Replacement"

<sup>2</sup> DCMR 10C, Section 305 "Permit Requirements: Demolition"

facades and with a light weight skin with a higher proportion of glass than the landmark complex. The setbacks, modulation of massing and design result in a respectful relationship with the historic buildings without overwhelming them. The particular site conditions – the narrow width of Wiltberger and the large project proposed just to the north (which is not subject to historic preservation review) -- will limit long views of the additional floors, ensuring that the historic buildings remain the primary focus of the composition.

**Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept to be compatible with the character of this industrial complex of buildings, and delegate final approval to staff.*