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

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Property Address:	<b>1427-29 Rhode Island Avenue, NW</b>	<b>X</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>14<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District</b>		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>July 28, 2011</b>	<b>X</b>	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>11-357</b>		Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Steve Callcott</b>		New Construction
			Demolition

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Owner Abdo Development seeks conceptual review for construction of an eight story apartment building on a vacant site in the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District. The property was formerly occupied by a two-story 1870s frame house and an 1897 stone Romanesque Revival rowhouse; based on their deteriorated condition and loss of integrity, the Board approved their demolition in 2006.

**Proposal**

The property is flanked by two nearly identical brick and stone façade apartment buildings, both designed by architect William Harris in 1929 and 1930 (and both renovated by Abdo Development), which have provided the design inspiration for the proposal. As with those buildings, the façade would have a classical tripartite organization, with a two-story stone base, a five-story midsection clad in brick, and a brick attic story with a cornice. Providing some differentiation from its neighbors, the new building would have two metal oriel bays on the middle floors. The entrance would be off-center to provide an efficient parking level on the basement level accessed from a shared driveway with the building to the east.

**Evaluation**

The stretch of Rhode Island Avenue from Logan Circle to Scott Circle is a particularly fine example of a grand residential boulevard from the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. With a few exceptions, these blocks are characterized by large distinguished residences and dignified apartment buildings set behind generous public space front yards and under a canopy of mature street trees that provides a distinct sense of place. The proposed project continues in that tradition, wisely eschewing the temporary vogue of a scale-less all-glass façade for a dignified and relatively quiet classically-inspired building that will relate to and enhance its context.

While the project is still quite conceptual, the applicants are eager to obtain approval for the general height, mass and architectural direction prior to appearing before the Board of Zoning Adjustment in September to obtain relief from parking and loading requirements. As these aspects of the project are entirely consistent with the contributing buildings flanking the site, they raise no preservation concerns. The applicant should continue to coordinate with the HPO on design development, with attention being given to the material treatment and proportions of the building's base, the relationship of the building to grade, and the detailing of the metal bays.

**Recommendation**

The HPO recommends that the Review Board find the conceptual height, mass and architectural direction for the project be found consistent with the purposes of the preservation act, and that the applicant be directed to continue working with the HPO on development of the design.