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

Landmark/District:	Anacostia Historic District	(x) Agenda
Address:	1254-1258 Talbert Street SE and 1309-1313 Morris Rd SE	(x) Concept
Meeting Date:	September 28, 2023	
Case Number:	HPA 23-441	(x) New construction

Solo Investment Group LLC, with plans by R. McGhee & Associates, seeks review of a concept for the construction of six multi-unit townhomes on vacant lots in the Anacostia Historic District.

Property Description

To the east of Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, Talbert Street extends up a steep hill lined by detached and row houses constructed between 1890 and 1936, illustrating development trends found in other parts of Anacostia. Construction between 1920 and 1940 included a few examples of Colonial Revival and Craftsman bungalow working-class housing.

Multi-story mixed-use buildings constructed within the past five years line both sides of Morris Road at its intersection with Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue. The north side of Morris is level, while the topography on the south side rises above street grade retained by concrete and stone walls along the sidewalk.

Project Description

The plans call for construction of three three-story multi-unit townhouses on Talbert Street and three four-story townhouses on Morris Road. The height of the Talbert Street properties will be 36 feet and the Morris Road properties will be 44 feet. The Morris Road construction would have a mansarded upper story and a bay projection with a full width porch element on the ground level. For the Talbert Street site is proposed a shed roof dormer set in the mansard roof with full front hipped roof porches. The concept notes four-inch siding with two-over-two windows with four-inch wood casings. The mansard edge trim will feature shallow profile wood trim cornice elements. The side elevations are blank with siding proposed. Drawings of the rear elevations are not provided, nor are the landscaping/site details.

Evaluation

The Morris Street townhouses have less of a historic context, and the taller buildings may be accommodated set into the hill. The proposal can be enhanced by redesigning the façade with a flat front, instead of complicating it with a bay component. The height of the fourth floor should be reduced, to make it a more proper attic story proportionally.

The proposed Talbert Street townhouses have more of a historic context. The property lies adjacent to a contributing bungalow. The Board's guidelines state that, in addition to complying with the

legal setback requirements, a new building should respect the setbacks established by the buildings on a street and should not extend beyond the line created by the fronts of existing buildings. HPO recommends that the front-yard setbacks of the new buildings be more in line with those of adjacent buildings.

For both Morris and Talbert proposals, the height of the new construction could be adjusted by reducing the height of the fourth floor. The side elevations will be visible from the street and need further refinement. The primary elevation should continue to detail the trim, porch, railings, and columns. Additional details for the landscaping and street view perspective should be included.

Recommendation

HPO recommends that the Board support the general massing with the project to return with revisions to address the HPO comments above.

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