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

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Property Address:	<b>1201 -1215 Good Hope Rd S.E.</b>	<b>X</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Anacostia Historic District</b>		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017</b>	<b>X</b>	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>17-591</b>	<b>X</b>	Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Imania Price</b>	<b>X</b>	New Construction
			Demolition
		<b>X</b>	Subdivision

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Applicant MLK Gateway Partners LLC, with plans prepared by Cunningham Quill Architects, seeks conceptual design review for construction of a four-story infill commercial building as an addition to four contributing historic commercial buildings in the Anacostia Historic District. The project would require a subdivision to combine several lots.

**Property Descriptions**

1201-1215 Good Hope Road SE are four properties located on the corner of Good Hope Rd at Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue. The properties were built between 1891 and 1925 as retail buildings. Each property is listed as contributing to the historic district and are in various states of fair to poor condition.

1203 is a one-story vacant commercial brick building built in 1916 by A.W. Brinels. The exterior storefront façade wall is clad with fiber cement siding and has a projecting storefront bay with a shed roof. It shares a party wall with 1205 and the west façade has an exterior masonry wall that has been parged and painted with a mural. Its roof and much of its structure have recently been reconstructed.

1205 is also a one-story vacant commercial brick building built in 1928 by Brinels. The exterior front façade is clad with brown brick with a flat storefront window and door.

1209 building is a one-story commercial brick building with a partial basement built in 1925 by Claude Norton. The exterior façade is clad in brown brick with masonry piers.

1213-15 is the most intact historic resource. It is a two-story commercial brick building built in 1891. The exterior façade is clad in brown brick with two-over-two windows with first floor storefronts, and is capped by a flat roof.

These buildings represent typical contributing commercial buildings in the historic district. The vacant site at the corner was once occupied by a one-story building but was demolished by the late 2000s and has since been used as a community space with an art structure.

**Proposal**

The project calls for façade restoration of the historic buildings, with some rear and roof demolition. A three-story addition would be constructed on top of the rear portions of the one-story buildings; the first two floors would be set back 15' from the historic buildings' facades, with a further 10' recess for the top

fourth floor. The existing two-story building at 1213/15 will be restored and connected internally without additional construction above.

A new three-story building would be constructed at the vacant corner, which will have large plate glass storefront windows capped by transoms and separated by pillars. This corner element would be set back 5' from the Good Hope Rd property line and 2' from the MLK Jr. Avenue property line. A differentiated four-story element would be constructed behind the corner building facing Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, with a recessed canopied lobby entrance, and an adjacent two-story projecting brick bay element. The fourth floor would be set back 23' from the street facade.

The materials include traditional red brick on the infill at 1201, a horizontal white masonry unit on the additional floors above the historic buildings and on the infill piece behind 1201, and metal panels on the recessed fourth floor. The windows on the 1201 corner element would be one-over-one double hung in a traditional proportion; the windows on the remaining new construction would be single light casements with a slight variety of heights and widths.

### **Planning Considerations**

The Comprehensive Plan specifically encourages retail development in Historic Anacostia and encourages combining upper story housing/offices and ground floor retail.<sup>1</sup> The Anacostia Transit-Area Strategic Investment and Development Plan (2004) states that new retail in Anacostia should emphasize smaller stores in a transit-oriented environment. It highlights that MLK Jr Avenue is the focus of attention for new development and its design should represent a vibrant and pedestrian-friendly “heart” of the Anacostia neighborhood. The Transit Area plan also recommends that infill buildings should be sensitive additions into the historic fabric and build to the existing street grid. Special design considerations should be considered to ensure appropriate corner treatments, ground floor uses, and the potential for a central piece of public art and/or gathering place at these commercial crossroads.

### **Evaluation**

This site represents a prominent entrance to and node within the historic district. Early businesses in Anacostia clustered around the intersection of Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue and Good Hope Road, and the row buildings along these two streets represent the most intact block of historic commercial buildings in the district. The commercial architecture of contributing buildings in the Anacostia Historic District include early Italianate buildings, relatively modest purpose-built retail buildings, and some Art Deco style buildings. Typically, the contributing commercial buildings are one to two-story buildings with patterned brick or stone, fully glazed storefronts and flat roofs.

The project has the potential to add needed vibrancy and result in high-quality façade improvements to this important location. The challenge is how and to what extent additional new construction can be incorporated into a larger composition in a manner that is compatible with the original one to two story commercial properties along the two streets. The height, massing, proportion, and scale of a four-story building does not fall within the ranges seen in the historic district itself, although larger scaled construction is found close by just outside the district, including the noncontributing three-story office building immediately across the street.

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<sup>1</sup> Policy FSS-1.1.7

### *Demolition/Alteration*

The extent of alteration and demolition to the existing buildings is shown on A-14. While demolition appears almost total for 1203, this building has been extensively reconstructed in recent years, and therefore will not result in the loss of historic structure or framing. The treatment of 1205 implies that the roof framing will be retained (“Repair roof framing as required”), with a modest amount of removal of the rear portion of the structure. However, the extent of demolition for 1209 – specifically the roof framing – is not evident and should be clarified. Similarly, while it assumed that roof framing on 1213-1215 is being retained as no new construction is proposed above, this should also be clarified. The plans should also be developed to indicate how the structure of the additional floors will be work with the existing buildings.

### *New Construction*

The use of setbacks for added floors behind historic buildings has been found to be a compatible approach in many of the city’s historic districts. However, the extent of setback currently proposed is somewhat less than is typical, nor is it sufficient to provide a sense that the historic buildings have been preserved and for the new construction to read as an independent building behind them. If the setbacks are to remain as proposed, dividing the elevation of the new construction into differentiated sections – with greater variety of setbacks and architectural expression – would help alleviate the new construction’s horizontality and break down its scale.

The use of masonry for the majority of the new construction is appropriate and compatible, as it is the most common material used for the district’s commercial buildings. Red brick (as is proposed for the corner building at 1201) and light blond/tan brick are most common. As the palette of materials continues to be developed, the compatibility of the new construction could be enhanced by using a more typical blond or beige brick, rather than white. A closer alignment of material colors to the district’s historic buildings could help better relate the larger building to its context. The use of metal panels for the fourth floor, particularly for the size of the mass proposed, raises greater compatibility concerns. If the fourth floor is to remain, consideration should be given to ensure that the panels do not appear metallic or reflective in finish; alternatively, stucco or an alternative finish may be worthwhile to consider.

## **Recommendations**

As the project continues to be developed, HPO recommends the following:

1. The extent of demolition to the historic buildings and how the structure of the new construction will intersect with the historic buildings should be clarified.
2. The fourth floor should be eliminated or substantially reduced in size. The fourth story will be highly visible along MLK Jr Avenue, and introduce an unprecedented height and complicated mass into the historic commercial district that will be disruptive and incompatible with the one and two-story contributing commercial buildings in the historic district. If a smaller fourth floor penthouse structure is retained, further consideration should be given to ensure that the materials are compatible in color and finish.
3. Two additional floors atop the historic buildings would be more compatible if the design was provided with a greater variety of setbacks and architectural expressions to break up the long expanse that extends across multiple historic buildings. More compatibly spaced and sized

windows and material colors that more closely related to buildings in the historic district would help balance and contextualize the less-than-optimal setbacks and the three-story height.

4. The two-story projecting bay on MLK Jr. Avenue provides a helpful transitional element between the larger subject building and the adjacent row of one-story retail buildings. However, as currently composed, the monumental scale of its two-story (20' high) storefront feels foreign to the historic district and should be refined to a more human scale.

*HPO recommends that the Board approve the general concept, with the recommendations above, and that the project return to the Board for further review when appropriate.*