
HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

Property Address:	1337 Good Hope Road, SE	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Anacostia [expansion area]		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	September 30, 2021	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	21-500		Alteration
		X	New Construction
			Demolition

Recovery Café DC, with plans prepared by Cunningham Quill Architects, seeks a courtesy concept review for construction of a five-story mixed use building in the proposed expansion area of the Anacostia Historic District. While the property is not currently subject to review under the preservation law, it would fall under the Board's jurisdiction if the proposed boundary increase is approved. The applicants are seeking the Board's determination on whether the project meets preservation standards if it becomes subject to preservation review.

Property History and Description

The property is currently occupied by a one-story former fast-food restaurant surrounded by parking. It is classified in the historic district expansion nomination as non-contributing.

Good Hope Road has a variety of one-, two-, and three-story historic buildings, the new four-story Gateway project at the corner of Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue (within the existing historic district and approved by the Board), several four- and five-story new construction projects, non-contributing buildings and vacant lots in the expansion area. A large three-story Verizon switching station (also classified as non-contributing) is located immediately to the west, and a one-story contributing commercial building is located to the east.

Proposal

Recovery Café DC is a non-profit organization that provides support to those that have been traumatized by addiction and other mental health challenges, homelessness and incarceration. The project would provide a café meeting space and residential lobby on the first floor, 48 housing units on floors 2-5, and 10 surface parking spaces.

The existing one-story non-contributing building would be demolished and replaced with a five-story building set flush with the front building line. It would step down in height and adjoin the Verizon building with a three-story element. The open east side of the building would have the residential entry at the corner and parking.

On Good Hope, the massing of the building would be broken down into a primary block clad in brick and a tower element clad in cementitious siding. On the east side, the building would be broken down into three pavilions separated by reveals and clad in siding.

Evaluation

The mid-rise height of the building is a comfortable and compatible fit with the mix of heights in this context and reinforces the definition of the street as one of the commercial spines of the Anacostia neighborhood. The breaking down of the mass into smaller component elements is

successful in relating the building to the smaller-scaled historic buildings in the existing and potentially expanded historic district.

The use of brick for the primary mass on Good Hope Road is consistent with the predominant building material found in the commercial area of the neighborhood, and the use of cementitious siding is reasonable for the secondary east side elevation. However, as the design continues to be developed, it is recommended that additional study be given to the corner tower. While wood siding (which cementitious siding seeks to replicate in its aesthetic) is common in the residential portion of the Anacostia Historic District, it is not typical of the commercial areas nor commonly found on primary elevations of larger, mixed-use buildings. As well, the ratio of window-to-wall in the corner tower makes the element feel heavy, bulky and institutional by comparison to the other portions of the building and would benefit from additional refinement.

Recommendation

While the Board typically does not take a formal vote or action on courtesy concept reviews, it is recommended that the Board provide its support for the general height, mass and design, with the need for additional study of the materials and fenestration of the corner tower element. If the property is included in the boundaries of the historic district, it should return to the Board for a formal concept review when ready.

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