

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

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Property Address:	<b>1929 15<sup>th</sup> Street SE</b>	<b>X</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Anacostia Historic District</b>		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021</b>	<b>X</b>	New Construction
H.P.A. Number:	<b>21-422</b>		Concept Review
			Alteration
			Subdivision

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The District of Columbia Department of General Services (DGS), Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), and District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), with the design team led by DLR Group, seek conceptual design review for a proposed community recreation center building and activity fields at 1929 15th Street, SE, adjacent to Ketcham Elementary School in the Anacostia Historic District.

**Property Description**

The project site is a vacant lot fronting 15<sup>th</sup> Street SE, adjacent to the Ketcham Elementary School parking lot. Ketcham was originally designed as a model for city schools by municipal architect Snowden Ashford in 1908. The surrounding neighborhood exhibits the unique, mixed character of the historic district, with modest frame and brick dwellings—freestanding, semi-detached, or part of a row—with pitched, gabled, and flat roofs, and many with front porches.

**Proposal**

The project has been designed with one-story building elements organized along 15th Street with the taller gym behind to create a scale progression from small to large. The façade features extensive glazing along the east, single story portion of the building to connect to 15th Street and is also employed on the north façade. Cladding is proposed to be brick that is similar in color to the Ketcham School and the brick clad residential structures to the east, south and west of the site. The design proposes two major gathering spaces between the building and the promenade. The first occurs at the main entrance and is defined by a prominent entrance canopy. The second is a plaza/seating area north of the gym that is shaded by an overhead trellis structure.

**Evaluation**

The mass of the building is modulated in order to reduce its perceived size and relate better to its neighbors. The design relates to the character of the historic district and the context of the neighborhood by respecting the location, scale, materials, and character-defining elements of the elementary school. The height and scale of the building is kept small as possible while meeting the programmatic requirements of the spaces within. The project has undergone significant redesign since initially submitted to take stronger cues from the original Ketcham School’s masonry pilasters and tall window groupings that are divided into two segments by a high transom.

While the improved design creates an inviting public space, with a large porch and terrace at the building's entrance adjacent to the pedestrian promenade, it could be improved with further refinement of the scale on the entry porch, gate passage into the promenade, and eliminating the horizontal support bar above the gate.

### **Recommendation**

*HPO recommends that the Board approve the project as consistent with the purposes of the preservation law and approve the concept and delegate permit review to staff to address revisions to the entry porch and gate.*

*Staff Contact: Imania Price*