

HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

Property Address:	2352 High Street SE	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Anacostia Historic District		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	December 17th, 2022	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	HP 23-099	X	New Construction Subdivision

High Street LLC, with plans developed by Torti Gallas + Partners, seeks concept design review for construction of a 22-unit residential project on a vacant lot in the Anacostia Historic District.



Subject site at top of street - current view



Subject site – pre-2014

2352 High Street is located at the top corner of Maple View Place and High Street. The site had been occupied by an apartment complex until 2014 when it was demolished and has been vacant since. The property is bordered by contributing single-family houses along each side with

residential properties at the rear behind a public alley. The grade gradually slopes down towards the southwest to the alley.

Project Description

The plans call for construction of two rows of six, three-story townhouse style condominium buildings along High Street and at the rear of the alley on Bangor Street. Each row would be 24' deep and approximately 33' in height, excluding the roof ridges. The High Street and alley elevations would be capped by gable roofs with punched windows, projecting bays on alternating buildings, and clad in fiber cement siding. The entrances would be set in from the façade to create a vestibule with an awning and punched window above.

The two townhouse rows would open to a central courtyard accessed from the parking area through a brick vestibule. The courtyard elevations would each be four bays in width with patios at the ground level and second story covered deck projections. The foundations will be brick and the upper stories clad in fiber cement siding. The two end units of each row facing the parking lot, and the end unit on High Street, are proposed to be clad in brick. The parking lot along the side elevation would have 15 spaces accessed from Bangor Street. The landscape plan includes preservation of two heritage trees and includes pathways and considerable plantings.

Evaluation

The proposal has been revised significantly since its initial submission in response to HPO and community comments. The resulting project, with gable roofs, a mix of frame and brick materials, punched windows, and which steps down to follow the site's topography relates well to the site and the Anacostia Historic District. While HPO recommends support of the general concept, the following refinements to the design are recommended:

1. The gable overhang atop the two-story bays is awkward and top heavy, resulting in an unnecessary projection of the roofline further out than the other houses. The two-story bays should be converted to one-story bays and the gables pulled back to align with the other houses in each row.
2. The designs would benefit from addition ornamentation and richness of materials. Converting the ends of the gables from clapboard to shingle, introducing window trim, and providing some variety in the clapboard profiles should be considered.
3. The brick clad townhouses are less successful than the clapboard units in relating to the historic district and appear out of place with the rest of the project. Converting these units to clapboard and introducing variety within a frame vocabulary should be considered.
4. Unlike the other elevations that appear as three-stories, the end elevations of the (currently brick) townhouses facing the parking lot read as a full four stories, with no differentiation or change in plane. These elevations should be further studied and revised to mitigate these tall, sheer flat walls.
5. While the perspective renderings are helpful, accurate elevation drawings should be developed that show the height of the buildings in relation to the adjacent historic buildings. (For instance, the rendering of High Street suggests that the three-story row of houses will be shorter than the flanking two-story bungalow on Maple View, which seems unlikely. The relationship of the existing and proposed heights would be clarified by true elevation drawings).

6. The plans should be developed to show locations of mechanical units and electric meters.

Recommendation

HPO recommends that the Board support the general concept with further refinement and revision of the plans as outlined above.

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