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

Property Address:	150 S Street, NW	X Agenda
Landmark/District:	Bloomington Historic District	Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	September 27, 2018	X Permit Review
Raze Number:	R1800256	Alteration
		New Construction
		X Demolition

Kadida Development Group (KDG) seeks review of a permit to raze the church at 150 S Street NW in the Bloomington Historic District.

Property History and Description

The building was constructed in 1905 for St. Paul’s Methodist Church and became Tabor Presbyterian in 1927. It is a modestly-scaled, Edwardian era red brick church with a gable front and corner tower. An undistinguished side addition was constructed in the 1950s.

In May, the Board heard a historic landmark application for the building but found that it did not meet the designation criteria and voted not to designate it as a landmark. The building was listed as a contributing building to the Bloomington Historic District, which the Board designated on July 26, 2018.

Demolition began on the building on July 25, prior to the issuance of a raze permit by the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, and a stop work order issued by DCRA remains in effect. As a valid raze permit had not been issued as of the date the Bloomington Historic District went into effect, the raze is now subject to review by the Board under the preservation act.

During the demolition undertaken in July, the non-contributing 1950s wing, parts of the steel structure supporting the roof between the 1950s wing and the primary building, and a portion of the front façade were removed. In advance of the potential threat of Hurricane Florence, DCRA undertook emergency stabilization with temporary steel bracing of the facade and side wall earlier this month.

Evaluation

The unauthorized demolition has largely destroyed the non-contributing 1950s addition and compromised both the structural and design integrity of the contributing original building. Based on an assessment by DCRA’s Deputy Chief Building Official, provided in an email to the Office of Planning on September 14th (attached), most of the structure of the building, with the possible exception of the remaining stabilized front wall and tower, does not appear to be capable of being safely restored, and access to the interior is not feasible. DCRA recommends that demolition and clean-up of the debris on the site be allowed to proceed for the welfare and safety of the public.

However, the portion of the building front that remains is sufficiently intact to continue to convey the distinct character of this building and to continue to contribute to the character of the historic district. The Deputy Chief Building Official cites the front tower and façade, particularly now that they are braced, as the possible exception to his determination that the entire building is structurally unsound. While partial retention of an historic building is not the ideal preservation treatment, there are a number of examples in Washington's historic districts where this approach has been taken in unusual circumstances. For instance, the Board approved the façade retention of the former church parish hall at 1772 Church Street NW in the Dupont Circle Historic District for incorporation into a new apartment building.

As Church Street and other partial preservation projects have demonstrated, the tower and remaining portion of the front façade at 150 S Street could be meaningfully incorporated into a new construction project on the site. Such a resolution would help to retain a significant piece of Bloomingdale history while allowing new development to proceed. As permits have not been issued for new construction, the project design will need to be submitted to HPRB for further review.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Review Board find that issuance of the raze permit is consistent with the purposes of the preservation act due to the structure's loss of integrity but with the condition that the stabilized façade and corner tower be retained as a contributing element to the historic district.

September 14 email to the Office of Planning from Garret Whitescarver, Deputy Chief Building Official, DCRA:

Raze Permit Application. As you are aware, the original raze permit for 150 S St NW, R1700212, was revoked by DCRA, effective August 10, 2018, due to numerous application anomalies that could not be resolved with the available documentation evidence for proper permit issuance. Attached is recently provided affidavit evidence from local citizens indicating that the developer completed the required 30-day posting of a raze notification at the site for their original permit, R1700212; this information just became available to DCRA yesterday, 9/13/2018. DCRA Director and Code Official, Melinda Bolling, has reviewed the attached evidence and has found that it is acceptable and may be applied to the replacement raze permit application, R1800256, as proof of the required 30-day public notification posting.

The developer of 150 S St NW posted a new public notification regarding R1800256 on or about 8/23/2018. The required 30-day notice for a raze permit would normal not allow this permit to be issued until 9/24, but due to the acceptance of the provided evidence of previous posting, that wait period is considered satisfied and the developer can now complete the application process, with the caveat that all required approved raze clearance letters must be submitted to DCRA by the permit applicant. DCRA is led to believe that the only remaining clearance letter is that required from HP.

With the recent approval of the new Bloomingdale Historic District, we leave it to HP and your legal team to decide the proper approval process for the raze clearance letter associated with R1800256.

Building Status. DCRA, through Allyn Kilsheimer and Clark Construction, has taken emergency stabilization measures to protect the public safety at the 150 S St NW site. Portions of the north front façade wall and east side wall that were partially damaged and unstable as a result of an illegal raze attempt by the developer on 7/25/2018, have been shielded and reinforced. The illegal raze attempt by the developer was a violation of 12A DCMR 114.10, due to the unlawful continuation of work at the site with a posted Stop Work Order that had not been appealed or resolved at the time. Due to the partial raze, most of this structure does not appear to be capable of being safely restored, with the possible exception of the remaining stabilized front wall and stairway tower. While the remaining structure is adequately stable to allow it to remain as-is for a short period, access to the remaining interior for restoration is not feasible due to the precarious stability of the remaining roof and lateral wall support structures along the remaining east and south walls.

Recommended Action. DCRA strongly recommends that the builder be issued the raze permit, with or without conditions of retaining historically-relevant portions of the building, in the interest of public safety and the welfare of the community. The recently installed bracing may be repurposed to add additional support for the façade, especially once the demolition debris and remaining structure on the interior side of the walls has

been removed, but the remaining structure and importantly, the demolition debris, should be removed from the site as quickly as possible. High winds from local thunderstorms or new threats due to the Atlantic hurricane season could put the public at risk from windblown debris coming from this property in the interim.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

Garret Whitescarver

Deputy Chief Building Official
Inspections and Compliance Administration
Dept. of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs
1100 4th St SW, 4th Floor
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150 S Street NW, prior to unauthorized demolition



150 S Street NW, stabilization of façade (September 16, 2018)



150 S Street NW, unsupported roof (September 16, 2018)



150 S Street NW, stabilized side elevation (September 16, 2018)

