HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

Property Address:	**1634 North Capitol Street, NW**	**X**	Agenda
Landmark/District:	**Bloomingdale Historic District**		Consent Calendar
		X	Concept Review
Meeting Date:	**November 29, 2018**	**X**	Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	**18-556**	**X**	New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	**Steve Callcott**		Demolition
			Subdivision

Syga Thomas and James Buckley, representing Fuzion Limited 2 LLC, seek on-going conceptual design review for construction of a four-story plus penthouse building in the Bloomingdale Historic District. Plans have been prepared by Square 134 Architects.

When the project was reviewed in September, the Board found the general height and mass to be compatible for this site, but that some type of setback or design relief was needed adjacent to the firehouse. The Board made comments that the color and scale of fenestration should be reconsidered, and that the project should be presented to the ANC and community prior to coming back for further review.

Revised Proposal
The revised plans call for construction of a four-story building with a penthouse, with a lobby and restaurant on the ground-level, hotel rooms on the second and third floors, apartments on the fourth floor, and a café in the penthouse with a roof deck. The building and its two four-story projections would be clad in brick; the fourth floor would be clad in metal panels. The color of the brick is not specified.

Evaluation
The design revisions have improved the compatibility of the proposal. The spacing of the two projections on the façade is compatible with the asymmetrical composition of rowhouses found in the neighborhood. The proportion of window to wall has been reduced, and the vertical orientation of the window openings is consistent with the predominate pattern and orientation of windows in Bloomingdale. The delineation of the base with a higher proportion of glass and a horizontal metal channel capping element, together with the differentiated material of the fourth floor, establishes a tripartite composition that is similar to that found in much of the district's building stock.

Two options are presented for the fourth floor, one set flush with the underlying floors and one with a slight setback for the portion of fourth floor closest to the firehouse. The setback appears to be only a few inches and is almost imperceptible. If the Board believes a setback or step down in height is required here, it should be increased to several feet so as to appear deliberate and meaningful. Alternatively, if the change in material is found sufficient in relating the composition of the building to the height of the firehouse, the setback should be eliminated entirely.

As the design continues to be developed, the following is recommended to improve the compatibility of the concept:

1) The storefront openings in the projecting bays on the first floor don't have to align with the windows above, and the design and functionality of the retail spaces would benefit from having wider openings;
2) The fourth floor should be developed so that it doesn't simply look like a metal box on a brick building; the use of color, texture and/or a smaller-scaled material than the metal panels shown should be explored;
3) The perspective views suggest a slightly projecting frame around the window openings, which could be a starting point to providing some change in plane and shadow to the elevation; the project should continue to be developed to reduce the flatness of the primary elevation;
4) Buildings in Bloomingdale are notable for their richness of detailing, materials, color, pattern, and texture. The design should continue to be developed to relate to these characteristics in a manner appropriate for a contemporary building;
5) The materials and colors should be specified.

Recommendation
The HPO recommends that the Review Board find the revised concept improved in its compatibility with the Bloomingdale Historic District, and that the plans continue to be developed as outlined above.