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

Property Address:	3515 Wisconsin Avenue, NW	X Agenda
Landmark/District:	Cleveland Park Historic District	
Meeting Date:	September 28, 2023	X Concept
H.P.A. Number:	23-514	X Alteration
		X New Construction
		X Demolition

The Washington Ballet, with plans prepared by SmithGroup Architects, seeks conceptual design review for demolition, new construction and alterations to a complex of non-contributing buildings in the Cleveland Park Historic District.

Property Description

The Washington Ballet was founded as the Washington School of Ballet in 1944 by Mary Day and Lisa Gardiner. Its campus at the corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Porter Street includes a former 1915 house (Building A), and two purpose-built classroom/studio buildings: Building B (1958, with an addition in 1964) and Building C (1995). While the four-square house was once of the type that would be considered contributing to the historic district, it had been substantially altered prior to the designation of the Cleveland Park Historic District and was specifically determined non-contributing for its loss of integrity when the district was designated.

Proposal

The project calls for demolishing Building A and replacing it with a new two-story building to house studios, offices and support spaces. The building would be roughly the same size as the house, with a slightly narrower footprint that brings its façade nearer to Wisconsin Avenue. An enclosed stair on the front of Building B, made redundant by the construction of the replacement building, would be removed, and a new façade erected to provide a coordinated appearance with the new Building A. The new and refaced buildings would be clad in fiber-cement panels and EIFS with storefront glazing systems. The project would also include site improvements and a new vehicular drop off that removes the curb cut and driveway off Wisconsin Avenue.

The project will require a variance from the Board of Zoning Adjustment for an increase in FAR (from 0.9 to 0.97) and lot occupancy (from 40 to 44.6 percent).

Evaluation

The alterations and new construction are compatible in form, height and massing with the character of buildings in the Cleveland Park Historic District, and they will provide an aesthetically unified and improved public face to the institution. The materials and detailing should continue to be developed and refined to ensure that they have a richness of finish and appearance commensurate with the quality of the historic district.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board find the addition and alterations to be compatible with the character of the Cleveland Park Historic District and that further review be delegated to staff.