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

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Property Address:	<b>610-24 Eye Street, NW</b>	<b>X</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Downtown Historic District</b>		Consent Denial
Meeting Date:	<b>November 20/December 4, 2014</b>	<b>X</b>	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>14-242</b>	<b>X</b>	Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Steve Callcott, David Maloney</b>		New Construction
		<b>X</b>	Demolition
		<b>X</b>	Subdivision

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Monument Realty, with plans prepared by Hickok Cole Architects, seeks on-going conceptual review for a project in Square 453, bounded by 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, H and Eye Streets, NW, in the Downtown Historic District. The project includes renovation and alteration of nine contributing buildings on Eye Street and within the alley and demolition of a five-story contributing alley warehouse for construction of an 11-story retail and residential building. The applicants will be seeking approval from the Mayor's Agent for a project of special merit.

**Previous Review**

When last reviewed in September, the Board made the following findings:

- the revised height and mass were found to be compatible with the historic district;
- the elimination of construction above the east-west alley was found to be a major improvement;
- the reduced size and width of the bridge over the north-south alley was found acceptable, but the applicants were asked to prepare studies that would reduce the number of connecting floors and eliminate the cantilevers over the alley;
- greater deference was needed for the retained alley buildings, with less mass and further design work to improve the relationship with the new construction above;
- further work was needed to improve the pedestrian experience along the alley.

**Revised Proposal**

The project has been revised accordingly:

- the cantilevers over the alley have been eliminated;
- the mass and setbacks of new construction atop the alley buildings remains the same but the design of the two floors above has been revised to include a lighter-weight metal panel system with larger windows;
- the number of floors connected by the hallway over the north-south alley remains the same;
- materials have been developed, which includes brick and metal panels;
- a program of artwork and paving for the alley has been developed;
- a landscape plan has been developed that provides a combination of brick paving and planted yards in front of the buildings on Eye Street;

- a plan for introducing green roofs on the historic buildings has been developed in a manner that retains and supplements the existing structural framing of those buildings.

### **Evaluation**

The removal of the cantilever, material choices and additional development of the alley elevations all improve the compatibility of the concept. The landscape plan for the public space front yards on Eye Street improve the existing condition by introducing a balance of paved area (possibly for outdoor café use) and planted area; this plan should continue to be developed in consultation with HPO, as there may be some additional opportunities for substituting landscaping for paving.

The alley paving plan is certainly an improvement over the existing condition, but it is unfortunate that it is limited to the area immediately impacted by the project rather than proposing something that seeks to provide a greater impact and improvement of a larger area. As has been discussed with the applicants since the genesis of the project, a plan for alley improvements could be a valuable part of a special merit argument as to the benefits that the project could provide to the Chinatown neighborhood.

The vocabulary for the new construction above the alley buildings is lighter and provides a better transition between the retained structures and the new construction, albeit without the removal of mass or greater setbacks as requested. For the reasons outlined in the previous presentation, the applicants do not believe they can remove additional floors from the bridge connection over the alley.

The plan for introducing green roofs to the historic buildings is compatible and respectful. The plan would retain and supplement (rather than remove) the existing roof assemblies, and the planting area would be pulled back from the outside edges of the building.

### **Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Board find the revisions to improve the compatibility of the concept. The HPO seeks the Board's direction on whether the project should return for further review if it is approved by the Mayor's Agent.*