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

Property Address:	512 10th Street, NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	May 25, 2023	X	Permit
H.P.A. Number:	19-100	X	Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	Steve Callcott		New Construction
			Demolition
			Subdivision

OTJ Architects, representing the Ford’s Theater Society, seeks revisions to an issued permit for a roof addition approved by the Board in 2019.

Property Description

512 10th Street was originally constructed as a Pepco substation in 1920 but its appearance dates from 1963 when the building’s facade was replaced and its interior reconstructed to serve as office space. The 1963 façade features painted metal panels in a streamlined, Art Deco-inspired style, with a central entrance and aluminum casement windows. The building was determined to be contributing to the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site by the Board in 1990. The building is located across the street from Ford’s Theater and is being renovated for retail, rehearsal studios, a function room, and support spaces for the theater.

Revised Proposal

In December 2018 and March 2019, the Board approved a plan to renovate the building and add a two-story roof addition. When first presented in 2018, the roof addition was clad in a metal screening element with panels in a bold perforated design. At the direction of the Board, the screening element was redesigned and approved as a continuous scrim with a smaller-scaled mesh. Under delegation from the Board, HPO subsequently approved a permit for the addition, which is currently under construction.

Due to budget constraints, the applicants are seeking to eliminate the metal screen. The addition would be clad in a redesigned glass curtain wall comprised primarily of frosted glass, with clear vision glass limited to the public lounge area on the addition’s fifth floor.

Evaluation

During its 2019 review, the Board wanted to ensure that the glass addition didn’t appear as a bright lightbox that would draw undue attention to itself. While the Board had some concerns about the initial design of the metal screen, it approved the screen with the thought that it would help diffuse the light that the addition would cast. The revised design addresses that concern in an alternative way, which is by cladding the side of the addition in metal panels and most of the front elevation in frosted glass. As an alternative – which HPO does not think is as successful – there is also a version for cladding the front elevation of one of the two masses of the addition in same metal panels as the side elevation.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Review Board approve the revised design for the roof addition which includes metal panels on the side and frosted and clear glass on the front elevation as compatible with the character of the historic district.