

HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

Landmark/District:	Dupont Circle HD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	1500 17th Street, NW	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	October 27, 2016	<input type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	16-686	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Kim Elliott	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

CAS Riegler, with plans prepared by McGraw Bagnoli Architects, seeks conceptual design review for construction of a three-story plus penthouse row building in the Dupont Circle Historic District.

Property Description

The site is located at the corner of 17th and P Streets and is currently vacant. To the north is a coordinated row of four three-story red brick Queen Anne rowhouses constructed in 1889 and designed by architect John Schneider. To the west is a five-story tan brick Classical Revival apartment building constructed in 1919 and designed by architect B. Stanley Simmons.

Proposal

The project calls for a three-story, two-unit row house above a partially raised basement. The body of the building would be finished in gray brick with punched windows. Two projections – a primary tower at the corner and a secondary projection on the P Street elevation – would be largely glass enframed by charcoal colored framing elements and with natural wood slat detailing at the base of each story. Metal stairs would lead to entrances on each of the two primary elevations. A terrace would be located on the roof accessed by a penthouse.

Evaluation

The proposed height, materials and general massing are compatible with the context and historic district. The width and proportions of the secondary bay on P Street is consistent with those on surrounding residential buildings, and the greater extent of glazing is balanced by the brick body of the building with its smaller punched windows.

The concept of irregular stacked blocks for the corner has the potential of being an interesting contemporary take on the traditional projecting bay. However, as proposed, its size appears proportionally too large in comparison to the building and to the bays on surrounding buildings. The problem is compounded by the large scale and extent of fenestration, and the use of the brick base-building vocabulary within the projection erodes the clarity of having light weight boxes projecting from a brick building. Further development of the proportions of the bay, with study of decreasing its size and carving away of the brick within the projections back to the building line, is recommended.

Further study of the proposed colors could also improve the project's compatibility. Buildings in the historic district are predominately composed of masonry in warm earth tones, which is very different from the cool industrial character of the proposal's gray brick and charcoal trim. A color palette that

more closely relates to those in the historic district could provide a needed balance to the greater extent of glazing that is desired and help contextualize the project to its site.

Recommendation

HPO recommends that the Board find the concept to be generally compatible with the character of the historic district, but that revisions are needed to the color of the materials and to the massing, materials and fenestration of the corner tower.