

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

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Landmark/District:	<b>Dupont Circle Historic District</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	<b>1772 Church Street, NW</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	<b>March 26, 2015</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	<b>14-530</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Kim Elliott, Steve Callcott</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

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CAS Riegler Development, in partnership with St. Thomas Episcopal Parish, seeks conceptual design review for a project incorporating the existing parish hall into a mixed-use building that will include apartments and a new church at the corner of 18<sup>th</sup> and Church Streets in the Dupont Circle Historic District. The project was presented at the September HPRB meeting; since that time, the applicants have been working to revise the design of the residential component and have developed an entirely new design for the church, both of which have been designed by Hickok Cole Architects.

At the September meeting, the Board made the following findings:

- The church should be designed to be the dominant element in the composition;
- The project needed to more welcoming and compatible at the pedestrian street level;
- The composition needed to be further thought through with regard to scale, materials, and hierarchy of church to residential;
- Increased setbacks at upper floors were needed to decrease the perceived height and mass of the residential building;
- The residential component needed to be more clearly residential in character and detail.

### **Proposal**

The revised design includes modifications and refinements to the residential component as well as a completely new church design.

#### *Residential:*

The residential block is still expressed in three distinct masses. The piece with the most notable changes is the main block next to the church which comprises the bulk of the building. Three protruding metal bays with shallow balconies and large glazed openings delineate the main residential façade for the first 4 floors. These metal bays are framed by a brick back drop up to the 5<sup>th</sup> floor, and then a metal and glass window wall system frame out the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> floors. The revised design includes several more setbacks than in the previous design—3' at the 5<sup>th</sup> floor, 7'-3" at the 6<sup>th</sup> floor, 12'-7" at the 7<sup>th</sup> floor and another 11'-11" at the penthouse.

#### *Church:*

The church is a composition of three geometric forms with a void-solid-void reading. The first floor is largely glazed and open, the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor sanctuary space above is clad in terracotta rain screen panels with integrated glazing, and the top floors are clad in a light metal and glass window wall system. Stone cladding grounds the building at the south west corner and a tall tower element clad in terracotta with an inset metal cross punctuates the front façade.

## **Evaluation**

### *Residential:*

Increased setbacks to the residential component have improved the massing and reduced the visibility of the upper floors. Previously the design was set back at the 7<sup>th</sup> and penthouse levels; the current design steps back progressively at the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and penthouse floors – creating less visible mass from the street and a reduction in the building's perceived height. Shifting of the penthouse 2-1/2' to the west, further away from the rowhouses on Church Street, has also helped reduce the visibility of this element.

The elimination of the monumental proportions of the previous design and the use of bay projections, further detailing, and a reduced scale of elements have all improved the compatibility of the proposal with the street's rowhouse character. However, the number of layers and materials is overly complicated and fails to come together into a resolved whole. As currently proposed, the façade consists of metal bays attached to a larger heavy brick bay that is attached to a metal/glass frame that is then attached to a brick building. Finding a balance between articulating the setbacks with an edited and more consistent language of materials and scale is needed. Converting the metal bays to brick, developing a more unified fenestration pattern, and simplifying the base condition of the bays to allow for a continuous planting bed or box should be explored.

Further resolution is also needed at the rear of the Parish Hall elevation. The industrial windows are being replaced in-kind at the side elevation, while the rear elevation and addition are proposed to have very different window types and spaced at different floor alignments than the retained side elevation. These three elevations could perhaps be more closely related and simplified, and there needs to be a more compatible relationship between the rear and side elevations – specifically how the windows relate to the floor levels.

### *Church:*

The new design is more modern and sculptural than its previous incarnation, and therefore distinguishes itself as a separate and significant building with its own identity. As a large sculptural object, it has been developed to use an edited palette of materials and details to express the building's spaces and function. A high degree of glazing on the first floor provides an inviting openness. The evocative sanctuary floor screened in terracotta with a pattern of integrated window system is intended to mark the ascension up to this ceremonial space, creating a rhythmic composition of light in the sanctuary space during the day and a compelling elevation at night. The glass cube at the top floors, set in from the sanctuary form, illuminates the classroom and fellowship spaces. The sanctuary space is clearly defined by the expressive treatment of the rainscreen and floats above the first floor, only touching the ground at the southwest corner creating an interesting tension of this large heavier mass above a light glass form. The tower with the cross identifies the building and establishes a strong corner, while also serving as a skylight element to illuminate the interior of the sanctuary space.

As the design continues to be refined, it is suggested that the following areas be given further consideration:

- Further accentuating the building entrance – this could be done with signage, landscaping, a material change, or other architectural clues;
- More clearly express the sanctuary space as the largest and most dominant element by increasing its proportions relative to the other parts of the composition;
- Minimize the penthouse mass as much as possible – currently this form sits heavily atop the composition and has too great of a presence.

**Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Board make the following findings:*

- 1. The increased setbacks for the residential building result in a height and mass that is compatible with the historic district, but that the design should continue to be simplified and edited, as suggested above;*
- 2. The revised church design appropriately results in it being the dominant element of the overall composition, and is compatible as a new religious edifice within the historic district, and should continue to be refined as outlined above;*
- 3. The project should return to the Board for additional review when appropriate;*
- 4. No portion of this recommendation or the Board's action shall be construed as support for any needed zoning relief;*