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

Property Address:	1772 Church Street, NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Dupont Circle Historic District		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	October 28, 2010	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	10-446	X	Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	Steve Callcott	X	New Construction
			Demolition
			Subdivision

Architect Matt Jarvis (Auriform, Inc.), representing St. Thomas' Parish Episcopal Church, seeks on-going conceptual review for construction of a two-story worship space. When reviewed in September, the Board approved the overall design for the building's height, mass and design direction, but asked that further study be given to the landscape plan and the form and intersection of the roof with the exterior walls.

Since the last presentation, and in an effort to move the project forward expeditiously, HPRB members Maria Casarella and Joseph Taylor agreed to meet with the architects and HPO to further discuss the Board's comments and explore refinements to the design. The design has been revised with their input.

Revised Proposal

The proposal has been revised in two important ways. First, the angled porcelain tile walls of the entrance pavilion have been made level, and the roof extended out to fully engage and extend out over the edge of the 18th Street elevation; the roof would float on a narrow metal ribbon that would cap the porcelain wall. The change has simplified the form of the roof with elimination of a cross slope and resulted in the clearstory on the alley elevation (previously expressed as a secondary element) being incorporated into the primary mass of the building. The fenestration at the corner of the pavilion at 18th and Church has been revised to help break down its mass.

Second, a variety of refinements have been made to improve the landscape and site plan. Raised planter boxes along Church Street have been eliminated in favor of running the reclaimed granite retaining wall uninterrupted around the perimeter of the site, a redundant walkway has been eliminated, the entrance stairs have been broken into two shorter runs to provide a more graceful and welcoming entrance, and the amount of paving slightly reduced for additional green space. The height of the access ramp has been lowered and is now proposed to be of the same cast concrete material as the building foundation to visually and symbolically incorporate it into the building.

Evaluation

While relatively modest given the overall scope of the project, the revisions have resulted in significant improvements to the design and it's compatibility with the historic district. The

simplified form of the overhanging roof, floating on a narrow ribbon of metal, provides a compositional top to the building that was previously lacking while also giving the façade three-dimensional depth. It also nicely demarcates and provides shelter over the front door. From the symbolic perspective, the roof further reinforces and improves the church's goal of being open and welcoming.

The changes to the landscape are similarly successful and improved. The simplification and editing of extraneous elements, the slight increase in the amount of green space, and the breaking of the stairs to extend the entrance out to the public sidewalk result in a more cohesive landscape that is more compatible with the surrounding historic district.

The HPO recommends that the Review Board approve the revised concept, and delegate final approval to staff.