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

Property Address:	1525 14th Streets, NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	14th Street Historic District		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	October 28, 2010	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	10-427	X	Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	Steve Callcott	X	New Construction
			Demolition
			Subdivision

Architect Eric Colbert, representing owner Giorgio Furioso, seeks conceptual design review for construction of a six-story retail and office building on a vacant parcel in the Greater 14th Street Historic District. The project would also include three floors of new construction atop the adjacent building at 1515 14th, a classically-styled automobile showroom constructed in 1928 for a Hudson dealership.

The Board reviewed and approved a seven-story retail and residential project for this site in 2003, designed by a different architect in a Cubism-inspired style reminiscent of the work of Frank Gehry. While the overall height and general massing are the same, the design has been entirely reworked.

Proposal

The concept proposal calls for a contemporary design of glass, precast stone, and metal panels. On the vacant site, the façade would consist of a five-story façade with a curtain of stone panels with punched window openings; the base of the building would express the two-story retail space with large two-story windows. The sixth story would be slightly recessed, clad largely in glass and metal panel and capped by a sunscreen element. Between this primary element and 1515 would be a slightly recessed glass reveal, containing the primary entrance.

The additional stories atop 1515 would be set back 19'6" from the front façade, clad in a combination of the stone and glass façade vocabularies. The applicants are seeking to retain the roof of 1515 and build the addition on top of it; the steel structure required for supporting the additional floors will result in a lost half-floor on the fourth floor and a taller height fifth floor in order for the top floor to align with the sixth floor of the new building.

Evaluation

Like many of the larger new projects in this neighborhood, the façade design and massing have been developed to break the composition into smaller elements in order to relate to the context of small-scaled historic buildings. The project is more overtly contemporary in character than many of the warehouse-inspired projects along neighboring Church

Street, but is equally successful in establishing a harmonious relationship with its surroundings.

The dominant element of the composition is the stone curtain system, which has been carefully developed to relate in material, proportions, and the vertical emphasis of its window openings to the auto showroom buildings. The two-story base establishes an abstracted but clear reference to the showrooms' classical styling, as well as having a similarly strong ground level retail presence. The proposed glass curtain wall, while still being developed, suggests a richness and variety of materials that will provide depth and shadow to the façade that is unusual for modern construction but characteristic of historic buildings.

The north side elevation, abutting a three-story contributing building (1527 14th), will be fully articulated in the same character as the front elevation based on the presumption that taller redevelopment on this site is unlikely. The full articulation of this north side (as well as the return of the building above 1515) will give the building a finished quality on all sides that will help alleviate the disparity of size with the flanking smaller historic buildings.

As did previous designs for the site, the proposal calls for additional floors atop 1515. In past reviews, the Board found that the monumental character of this auto showroom (as well as others) could visually support additional floors being added as long as they were clearly differentiated, were set back sufficiently from the front elevation, and didn't overwhelm the underlying building. While the set back has been diminished from 40 feet in the previous design to approximately 20 feet in the current proposal, the design of the addition has been simplified and the visual weight reduced to a relatively simple glass skin. The setback of the addition is the same as on 1539 14th Street, where two additional floors were added to a very similar 1928 three-story auto showroom.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Review Board approve the overall conceptual approach, including the proposed height, massing, and architectural direction, and seeks the Board's direction on whether the project should return for additional review or delegated to staff.