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

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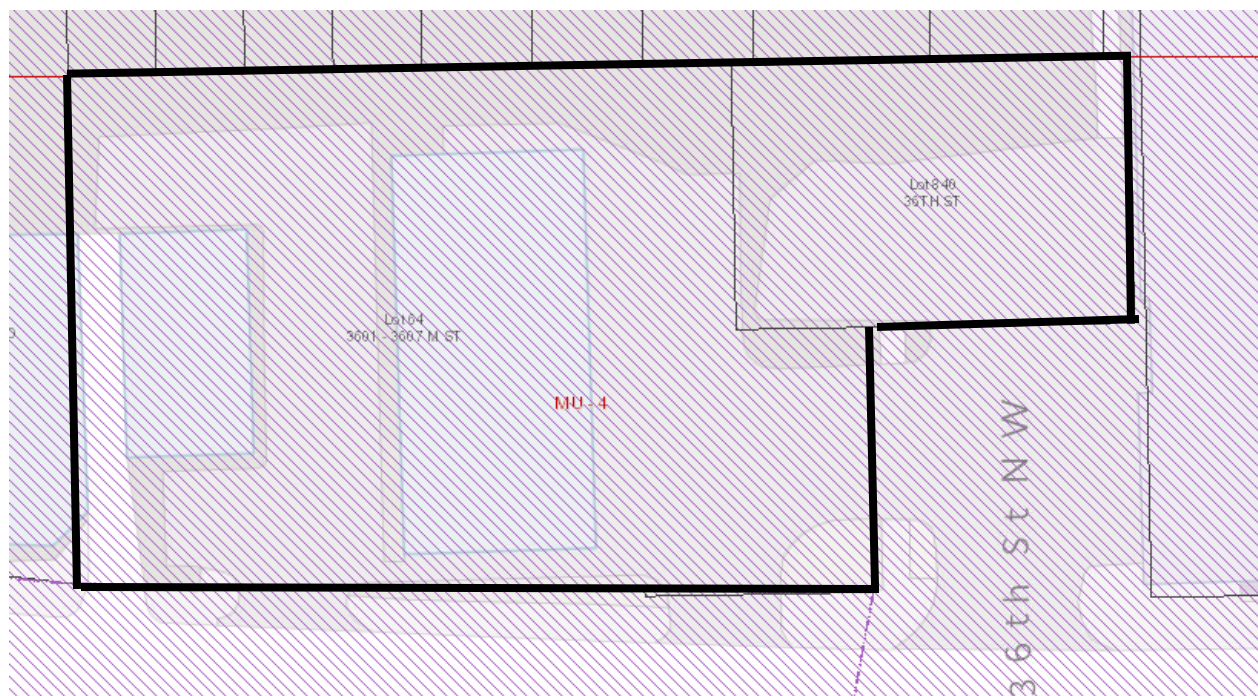
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Landmark/District: **Georgetown Historic District** (x) Agenda  
Address: **3601 M Street NW**  
Meeting Date: **January 24, 2019** (x) Subdivision  
Case Number: **19-122 and 19-032** (x) New construction  
(x) Permit

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The applicant, property owner 3601 M Associates LLC (Altus Realty), requests the Board’s review of a proposal to consolidate into a single lot of record Lots 64 and 840 in Square 1202. The subdivision is necessary for the zoning conformity of a new building to be constructed straddling the present lot lines.



The Historic Preservation Review Board reviews Georgetown cases relatively rarely, because the District of Columbia’s preservation statute and regulations do not require that an application reviewed by the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts also be reviewed by the Board. It is typically when a project is not in CFA jurisdiction—such as an addition not visible from a public thoroughfare—that the Board must take it up.

The present case is before the Board because the Old Georgetown Act invests the CFA with review jurisdiction over construction, demolition and alterations, but not subdivisions. By regulation, the HPO may administratively clear “minor or insignificant lot changes” or subdivisions necessary to implement a project that the Board has reviewed and approved, but the

combination of two lots is typically not seen as insignificant, and the Board has not previously seen the new construction.

If a particular project necessitates a subdivision, that project is typically put before the Board, so that it may evaluate whether the anticipated consequences of the subdivision are compatible. The project that necessitates this subdivision is a five-story masonry-and-glass apartment block that would take the place of the Exxon station. The Old Georgetown Board has been reviewing it since 2011, with a hiatus of a couple of years and a change of ownership and of architects. A new-construction concept was approved by the Commission in spring 2014 and a revised concept in summer 2017. Since then, the Commission has recommended issuance of a permit for demolition of the gas station and its appurtenances and, in November, recommended in favor of a permit for the entire project. A sample board of exterior materials now stands on site, and there are permit applications awaiting HPO clearance.

HPO weighed in on the project at the Old Georgetown Board over the years, supporting the division of the mass into three pavilions, a revision of the brick from black to gray, the softening of hardscape in the front yard, and the reduction of penthouse structures. More generally, the staff expressed the opinion that this Georgetown location is perhaps uniquely suited to a large, contemporary building, because: 1) the new construction would replace a noncontributing building; 2) there are large four- and five-story buildings immediately east and west of the site, one of which is noncontributing; 3) the adjacent Capital Traction Company Union Station is a very prominent and robust building that can visually stand up to sizable new construction; 4) there are no historic buildings immediately across the street; and 5) the building would back up to a cliff, beneath the houses on the south side of Prospect, some of which are noncontributing, but most of which have seen considerable alteration, especially at the rear, facing this site. The HPO concurs with the findings of the OGB and CFA that the project is compatible with the character of the historic district.

The Board may comment on the construction-permit application, but it is not required to do so. The Board must, however, take a decision on the proposed consolidation of the two lots.

### **Recommendation**

*HPO recommends that the Board recommend clearance of the subdivision to consolidate the two lots, to allow construction of the proposed building.*

