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

Landmark/District:	Washington Hilton Hotel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	1919 Connecticut Avenue NW	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	January 27, 2011	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	08-309	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Date Received:	December 2010	<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision
Staff Reviewer:	David Maloney	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conceptual Design

Lowe Enterprises Real Estate Group-East, Inc. returns to the Board for review of refinements to the concept plans for the proposed apartment addition to the Washington Hilton Hotel at 1919 Connecticut Avenue, NW. Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners LLP are the project architects.

The last action the Board took on this project was on November 18, 2010, approving an extension of the concept approval.

Revised Concept Plans

The design for the apartment addition to the hotel has been refined in four areas shown on the submitted plans. The revisions are:

West Link: The connecting link between the apartment block and the hotel has been simplified as a glass enclosure set in front of the retaining wall and stair to the terrace above. This arrangement provides a more welcoming street presence than the stone wall, and serves as a location to signify the apartment entrance. The change pulls the attachment to the hotel slightly forward, but the entrance prow still juts beyond it toward the street.

Lobby Entry: The conflict between the garage ramp and apartment entry has been resolved by raising the lobby up one level and inserting a gently sloped ramp up to it from the west link. This provides for a more gracious apartment entry, diminishes the visual impact of the garage ramp, and allows for more generous landscaping along the street.

Perimeter Berm: With the new apartment entrance location, there is a new opportunity to introduce walkways to help activate the perimeter berm along T Street and Florida Avenue. One walkway connects the apartment entrance and the pool area, and another allows for a set of stairs connecting to the corner of T and Florida. The connection to the public sidewalk in particular is a very welcome addition to the treatment of the berm.

Massing and Envelope: The details of the glass façade and features like balconies, railings, sunscreens, and roof terrace are shown in the new rendered elevations. The massing is the same as in the approved concept (with the roof penthouse slightly rearranged), and the elevations are also consistent with the concept.

Recommendations

Overall, the proposed refinements improve the concept design and enhance the relationship between the building and public space. Some further tinkering with the scale of signage and architectural emphasis at the apartment entrance would be desirable in order to ensure the appropriate balance with the historic entrance and its distinctive canopy.

The success of the façade design will ultimately depend on the quality and refinement of the glass skin as well as the panelized end walls. For this reason, a full-scale on-site mockup of a façade section will be essential to assess and refine the curtain wall details. As on the landmark hotel building, the mostly solid end walls are also key features of the design, and careful material selection is critical so that these walls (visible from Connecticut Avenue as a backdrop to the historic entrance) appear clearly as intentional finished walls creating visual interest, and giving no impression of being a temporary condition awaiting a future extension.

The staff recommends that the Board approve the revised concept plans and delegate review of final plans to the staff, to include review of developed landscape plans and façade materials, and an on-site materials mockup as the staff determines necessary.