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

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Property Address:	<b>1333-43 H Street, NW</b>	<b>X</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Real Estate Trust Company</b>		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>October 30, 2014</b>	<b>X</b>	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>14-652</b>	<b>X</b>	Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Steve Callcott</b>		New Construction
			Demolition

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RP MRP 1333H LLC, with plans prepared by Gensler Architects, seeks concept design review for façade replacement of a 1980s office building addition to the Real Estate Trust Company. The Real Estate Trust Company is a pending landmark; the project would be subject to the Board’s review if the building is designated.

**Property History and Description**

The Real Estate Trust building is a twelve-story commercial office building at the northeast corner of H and 14<sup>th</sup> Streets. It was constructed in 1913-14, designed in a highly ornate Beaux Arts Renaissance Revival-style by the Washington-based firm Milburn, Heister & Company. The building is architecturally notable for its façade of ivory-colored terra cotta with polychrome accents.

The building is largely intact to its original appearance, with a few notable exceptions. The elaborately detailed concave attic story was originally capped by a pierced metal cornice that has been missing since at least the 1950s. The first two floors are clad in white marble that was installed in a 1980s renovation to replicate the general character of the original condition, but resulted in some changes to proportions and loss of detailing.

Concurrent with the 1980s renovation, a substantial 11-story addition was built to the east. Clad in horizontal bands of gray granite and dark tinted aluminum framed windows, it is an unremarkable speculative office building of its era and does not appear to have been designed with any intent of relating to the Real Estate Trust building. As it is located on the same lot and interconnected with the pending landmark, alterations to it are subject to review.

**Proposal**

The proposal calls for recladding the 1980s addition with a skin comprised primarily of butt jointed clear and spandrel glass with accents in stone and aluminum. The long H Street elevation would be broken down into a two-part façade, each of which would have a tripartite composition. The façade closest to the landmark would have a two-story base clad in butt-glazed glass, three three-foot projecting oriel bays in the midsection terminating at the tenth floor, and a single story top. The top and bottom two floors would be clad in butt joint curtain wall; the oriels would be framed in metal.

The eastern portion of the façade would have a two-story base enframed with stone piers, the midsection would be a simple glass skin framed in metal, and the top floor would continue the vocabulary of the western portion of the building but be capped by a minimal projecting cornice element.

As before, one of the sets of entrance doors within the historic building would be replaced with a double door; the opening would be capped by a projecting metal marquee.

### **Evaluation**

The proposal has been revised from a submission made in September to reduce the extent of projection for the eastern portion of the building. In that previous proposal, the midsection was to have projected two feet from the building line. Based on concerns raised by the Board about similarly oversized and continuous projections across entire elevations, the HPO recommended that this element be restudied. The revised proposal reduces the projection to that necessary to attach a new skin to the existing frame of the building – approximately one foot in depth. As well, the proportions of the building have been revised to extend the height of the midsections by one floor and reduce the top section to a single floor. Both of these changes improve the compatibility of the proposal. The extent of projection for the eastern portion has been reduced to a point where it will no longer read as a projecting mass, and the change in tripartite proportions no longer precisely mimic the landmark but result in a more dynamic relationship.

As before, the proposal is successful in breaking down the block-spanning horizontality of the existing addition and creating a more sympathetic rhythm that would better relate and tie the Real Estate Trust to the buildings of similar widths to the east of the addition. The use of vertically-oriented projections would provide some depth and shadow -- important characteristics of the landmark -- and also be an improvement over the existing addition's sheer flatness. The vertical proportions of the glazing in the eastern portion of the building would similarly improve the compatibility of the addition with the vertical orientation of the landmark's fenestration.

The proposed replacement doors are closely based on the original appearance of this opening, and are compatible in proportions and general appearance.

### **Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Board approve the proposal in concept as consistent with the purposes of the preservation act and delegate final approval to staff.*