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

Property Address:	615-621 14th Street, NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Federal-American National Bank		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	November 17, 2016	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	16-626	X	Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	Steve Callcott		New Construction
			Demolition
			Subdivision

Lincoln Property, with plans prepared by Shalom Baranes Architects, returns for ongoing conceptual design review for construction of an eleven-story addition and exterior and interior alterations to the former Federal-American National Bank at 14th and G Streets, NW. The building's designation as a DC and National Register landmark includes its two-story interior banking hall; the building is also located in the Financial Historic District.

In September, the Board approved the general concept for the office building on the condition that the projecting element over the bank project no more than ten feet and that it not result in any structural connection to the landmark. The Board approved the scope of exterior work to the bank, but asked that the applicants restudy and revise aspects of the interior including reducing the extent of glazing in the originally open lobby areas, clarifying the extent of reuse of the teller desks, exploring removal of the paint from Aquia sandstone walls, and retaining the original stairs. The Board asked that this portion of the project return for further review.

Proposal

The plans have been refined and revised to respond to the Board's comments. Revisions to the interior plans include:

- 1) The glazing has been eliminated on the east side of the mezzanine;
- 2) The original teller desks would be retained along the east side of the banking hall for reuse as a lobby information/security desk; their length would be slightly shortened on each side to allow circulation through the new openings in the east wall;
- 3) The later generation of teller desks, which have slightly different proportions, would either be reused or replaced with more authentic replicas of the original desks on the north and south sides of the banking hall;
- 4) The existing stairs would be retained;
- 5) Two non-original walls opening to the west side of the hall would be opened up;
- 6) Investigation is ongoing regarding the feasibility of removing the paint from the interior stone walls.

Revisions to the exterior plans include:

- 1) The structural connection of the overhang to the structure of the landmark has been eliminated; the projection would cantilever over but not engage the existing building;

- 2) The non-original stair penthouse, prominently visible above the building's front parapet, would be removed;
- 3) The extent of projection has been reduced by five feet.

Evaluation and Recommendations

The interior revisions – particularly the retention of the teller desks in their original location and removal of the glazing at the mezzanine level above – are substantial improvements in retaining a stronger sense of the banking hall's original plan and organization of space, particularly as experienced when first entering the space from the stairs. The removal of the two non-original partition walls on the west side of the first floor of the banking hall will have a noticeable impact on the spatial volume and quality of light entering into the space, and the retention of the original stairs is an obvious improvement in the preservation scope of work. The applicants are obtaining proposals from companies that specialize in historic masonry restoration to undertake test patches to assess the feasibility of paint removal from the interior stone walls.

The removal of the structural connection and the non-original stair penthouse comply with the Board's direction. While the extent of reduction of the projection is somewhat less than the Board requested, the reduction improves the projection's proportions and, when seen in elevation, aligns with the first bay of the bank's north façade.

Recommendations

The HPO recommends that the Review Board approve the modified concept for interior and exterior work on the landmark, and the revisions to the new construction, as consistent with the purposes of the preservation act, and delegate final approval to staff.