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

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Property Address:	<b>900 F Street, NW</b>	<b>X</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Washington Loan &amp; Trust Building</b>		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>February 22, 2018</b>	<b>X</b>	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>18-137</b>	<b>X</b>	Alteration
			New Construction
			Demolition

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900 F Street LLC/Global Holdings Management Group, with plans prepared by Perkins Eastman Architects, seeks conceptual design review for alterations and a roof addition to the Washington Loan & Trust Building (also known as Riggs National Bank). The proposal is part of a comprehensive rehabilitation of the property for a new hotel.

### **Property Description**

The Washington Loan and Trust Building was constructed in 1891 and designed by Washington architect James G. Hill. It is significant as an early Washington skyscraper, an extraordinary example of the Romanesque Revival style, a masterful execution of granite stonework, and for its urbanistic prominence at the southwest corner of 9<sup>th</sup> and F Streets opposite the Old Patent Office, the Masonic Temple, and the Warder Building in the Downtown Historic District. While reading as a single unified composition, the building is the result of a substantial expansion that doubled its original width along F Street in 1927 with a seamless design conceived by Washington architect Arthur Heaton. The building was acquired and became widely known as Riggs National Bank in 1954, and was renovated for use as a Courtyard Marriott hotel in the 1990s.

### **Proposal**

The project calls for rehabilitation of the building for a different hotel operator. The exterior work includes replacement of the 1990s entrance canopy with an arched metal and glass canopy, installation of a similar but smaller arched metal and glass canopy at the side restaurant entrance, exterior lighting, and construction of a metal and glass conservatory event space on the roof.

### **Evaluation**

The design of the entrance canopies has been developed specifically to relate to the character of the building's distinctive arches. Among the many improvements over the existing condition, the primary entrance canopy will feature rather than obscure the opening's fanlight transom.

The intent of the lighting plan is to softly highlight the building's architecture without overwhelming it. The installation has been developed so that it will not result in penetrations into the stone and the fixtures would not be visible from street view.

The roof addition has been designed with a high percentage of glass to be light in visual weight, and would be set back at a 1:1 ratio as required by the zoning regulations. While it would not be

visible from immediately around the building, it would be seen in long views from a block or more away from the east and north.

The primary compatibility concern raised by roof additions on historic buildings is their impact on the building's massing, height and roofline as seen from public street views. To prevent adverse visual impacts, the Board has generally required that roof additions be set back sufficiently to where they are not visible, particularly when the addition would be discordant with the context and/or the specific building for which it is proposed. However, for some building types (such as large scale commercial and industrial buildings) and some contexts (such as within the most urbanized areas of historic districts), the Board has sometimes found visible roof additions to be compatible.

The highly urbanized context of the commercial downtown, the building's 110-foot height (which restricts the angle of sight to distances at least a block away), and the muscularity of the building's design suggests that some visibility of a roof addition on the building could be achieved without adversely affecting the building's massing and roofline. However, some further study of the design and setbacks of the enclosure would be worthwhile to see if the proposal's compatibility could be improved. For instance, would slight increases in the setback on one or both street elevations result in a noticeable change in proportions and reduction in visibility? Would a design that more overtly references the pattern of fenestration or round-arched shapes of the windows found on the building below improve the compatibility of a visible enclosure, or would a more contemporary expression read as lighter in weight? While HPO is confident that a roof enclosure with some limited visibility could be compatible for the building, further study of design and setback options are needed prior to making a final recommendation.

**Recommendation**

*HPO recommends that further study and development of the roof enclosure be undertaken for presentation to the Board. It is recommended that the Board find the concept for the entrance canopies and lighting to be compatible as presented, with final approval delegated to staff.*

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