HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

Landmark/District: Address:	Carlton Hotel/Sixteenth Street Historic District 923 16 th Street, NW	(X) Agenda() Consent Calendar
Meeting Date: H.P.A. Number:	May 26, 2016 16-293	(X) Alteration () New Construction
Staff Reviewers:	Steve Callcott	() Subdivision(X) Conceptual Design

Seldar DC Holdings LLC, with plans prepared by Rod Henderer, FAIA (Callison RTKL Architects), seeks conceptual design review for construction of a rear and roof addition to the St. Regis Hotel (historically, the Carlton and later, the Sheridan Carlton), a landmark and contributing building to the 16th Street Historic District.

Property History and Description

The Carlton Hotel was constructed in 1926 by developer Harry Wardman, designed by master architect Mihran Mesrobian. Since it was built, except for a brief stint during World War 2, it has remained one of the city's most luxurious hotels. Architecturally, it is one of the finest and most fully realized examples of the Italian Renaissance Revival in the District.

Proposal

The project calls for building a nine-story addition at the rear of the property facing K Street, and a penthouse roof addition centered on the roof. The K Street addition has been designed to appear as a separate adjacent building, albeit one that relates to the landmark through the common use of limestone and an alignment of cornices and belt courses. The roof addition, set back 15'6" from the outside walls, would also be clad in limestone with windows that would replicate the spacing and design of those on the underlying building. A roof deck with a frameless glass railing would extend around the addition, set back 5'6" from the perimeter walls. The smaller original penthouses, clad in smooth concrete and which have classical detailing in character with the building, would remain as featured elements within the new larger penthouse enclosure.

Evaluation

The adjacent addition is compatible with the landmark and the historic district in its materials, classical composition, and high level of detailing. While taller than the landmark, it is successful in reading as its own building and exists in an urban context in which it is common for buildings of different heights to stand in proximity to each other. While buildings fronting 16^{th} Street in the historic district have a maximum height of 90 feet, the higher height on K Street is not incompatible because the addition does not have frontage on 16^{th} Street (indeed, this lot is located outside the historic district and the project is only subject to review because it is being connected to the landmark).

In terms of height and massing, the roof addition has been developed to follow the urbanistic and

architectural rules that were codified in the zoning regulations that have shaped development in the historic district since the 1920s. The penthouse level is set at a generous setback from the outside walls and centered on the building. Architecturally, the design has been developed to relate to the materials, colors and finishes of the underlying building. However, as the design continues to be refined, some adjustment to the proportions of masonry and glazing is needed to achieve compatibility; as rendered (particularly on applicant's submission page A13), the proportion of glazing is too wide and the masonry piers too narrow for the proportions of this building. At the very least, the width of the masonry in the addition should align with the width of the piers on the top floor; ideally, they would be slightly wider.

As well, final approval of the project should be contingent on removal of gilding that has taken place without permit approval on the limestone cartouches located on the 16th Street elevation above the third floor.1 Unfinished, these highly detailed sculptural elements showcase the masterful carving that typifies this building's stonework; when gilded, they stand out as contrasting elements in which the original material and craftsmanship is lost.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board:

- Find the concept for the rear to be compatible with the character of the landmark and historic district;
- Find the concept for the roof addition to be compatible in height, placement, and general architectural character, but that adjustments be made to reduce the proportion of glazing to masonry in order for it to be compatible with the landmark and the historic district;
- Delegate final approval to staff.

¹ The application of paint or other finishes on unpainted masonry on a historic landmark is defined as an alteration in the preservation law requiring a DC building permit.