
Landmark/District:	Mount Pleasant Historic District	(x) Agenda
Address:	3146 16th Street NW	() Consent
Meeting Date:	October 23, 2014	(x) New construction
Case Number:	11-345	(x) Addition
		(x) Alterations
Staff Reviewer:	Tim Dennée	(x) Design development

The applicant, Valor Development LLC,¹ (with architects BKV Group) requests review of design development of an approved concept to convert a church to residential use, to demolish the rear of the building, to make some exterior alterations, and to add taller side and rear additions. The concept was approved in December 2011 and, under new ownership and sponsorship, the concept approval was extended by the Board for an additional year in November 2013.

The Board looked at revisions in February and approved alteration of the church's side windows; the elimination of the garage entrance in front of the side addition; the elimination of "cut-outs" from the church roof. The Board supported the higher penthouses depicted if they are not followed by prominent rooftop HVAC equipment, but the Board did not approve the construction of a rooftop pergola on the rear addition or a large sign on the church entablature.

The Board requested that design development return for further review, expecting to see more detail on the additions' materials; improvement in the treatment of the ground floor of the side addition and the landscape in front; and refinement of the upper floor on the side addition, including lightening the frame above the roof terrace and better integrating that with the floor behind (and distinct from the floors below).

The applicant presents minor revisions and additional notes and information on materials and details. It is expected that the applicant will bring samples of the primary materials to the meeting.

The masonry frame over the side addition's roof terrace has been removed entirely, and the projection of the lower floors, relative to the uppermost, is to be clad with cast stone, in contrast to the brick exterior of the rest of the addition. With the elimination of the frame, the top floor has not been distinguished as an attic story, which gives it more in common with the background rear addition, despite the fact that its setback is little more than one to one. The loss of the frame exposes a roof-access stair, something that would not be visible at the foot of the building, but would be from across 16th Street. The trade-off is that that stair obviates the need for additional penthouse volume. But not seeing it at all, or having a stair rise behind the penthouse, would obviously be preferable.

¹ Deeds and tax assessment records indicate that Meridian Hill Baptist Church is still the property owner.

There is additional landscaping in front of the side addition which certainly greens the area, and it also looks calculated to serve as a physical or psychological barrier between the public sidewalk and the side wing.

The former garage entrance behind it has been revised to two recessed, dead openings, which might be better detailed or textured with some kind of grillage. The third opening on the façade's ground floor looks like a window in the perspective shown on the cover sheet, but like louvers in the elevation (Sheet 2.0). In fact, it is an emergency egress door. These three openings/recesses are an improvement over the garage door, but would be further improved to the extent that they become functional window or door openings.

Mechanical equipment is still not shown, but as mentioned in previous staff reports, it should not be conspicuously visible from 16th Street.

The applicant will bring to the hearing plans for the ground floor and top floor, to illustrate challenges to alternatives for the ground-level openings and the rooftop stair.

Recommendation

The HPO requests the Board's comments on materials and revisions—especially regarding the ground-floor openings at the side addition, the upper portion of the side addition and the landscape—as direction for staff review of the eventual construction documents.