
Landmark/District:	Mount Pleasant Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	3146 16th Street NW	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
Meeting Date:	November 20, 2014	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New construction
Case Number:	11-345	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Addition
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alterations
Staff Reviewer:	Tim Dennée	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Design development

The applicant, Valor Development LLC¹ (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 sponsorship, the concept approval was extended by the Board for an additional year in November 2013.

The Board looked at revisions in February and last month. After last month's discussion, the Board unanimously resolved to request:

- (A) a preservation plan for treatment of the church building;
- (B) that all the spandrels of the façade of the side addition be masonry;
- (C) that there be some kind of cornice on the additions;
- (D) that there be more emphasis of the gate between the church and side addition to signal one of the primary entrances;
- (E) that the ground-floor openings on the façade of the side entrance be real windows and doors or have some kind of decorative grilles;
- (F) that the applicant consider using true slate on the church roof;
- (G) that the applicant consider taller window openings on the additions;
- (H) that the applicant try a simpler fence in front of the side addition; and
- (I) that the applicant provide roof plans.

The applicant has since met with staff and two Board members and has addressed the above issues and some others. This report will discuss them in order.

- A. The applicant has provided a brief narrative plan to address preservation treatment of such elements original to the church as the limestone skin, the light fixtures, the iron stair railings, etc.
- B. The spandrels across the facade of the side addition are all now masonry, with horizontal bands of darker cast stone that continue across the building and give it more visual interest and suggest more of a parapet at top.
- C. The coping at the roof line has been beefed up and stepped or corbeled at the façade of the side addition.

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

- D. A fancier gate has been introduced at the gap between the buildings, and the building and street signage would flank that entrance. Frankly, a still fancier gate would not be out of place.
- E. The southernmost opening is a door to the trash room and bicycle storage room, while the other two “windows” are recessed dead openings, but with grilles over them. The grilles are probably too fence-like, however. The base now has bands of the same dark cast stone as in the spandrels above to suggest rustication.
- F. The applicant had previously considered true slate, but as the roof had previously been damaged by fire, and the roofing itself removed, the applicant has studied the necessary restructuring or reinforcement of the roof with the idea of a lighter roof in mind. The staff had considered the matter settled in favor of the faux slate in 2011, because it was previously identified and discussed. While true slate is superior in nearly all respects except weight (but including cost, comparing the relative durability of the two), the Board and the HPO have often supported a decent fake slate product when the replacement is of a monochromatic roof where a comparison is not available to real slate next door or nearby. This roof is large and pretty prominent, but mostly from across the street, a distance sufficient to reduce one’s perception of the fine details of the material.
- G. The applicant has increased the height of the openings on the sides and on the front of the rear addition, to make them more similar to the proportions of those of the façade of the side addition and to have the windows themselves look like more traditional double-hungs. The large openings in the inside corner of the meeting of the two additions have been reduced in size to be consistent with the surrounding windows. In response to community concerns, the glazing on the rear elevation has been reduced, by truncating all of the windows that flank the double doors and making them also typical double-hungs. This gives that elevation more rhythm as well.
- H. The applicant has provided a simpler fence in front of the side addition, to distinguish further the new construction from the historic.
- I. The applicant has also provided a roof plan which, among other things, shows how the stair from the side addition’s roof terrace to the main roof has been incorporated into a low penthouse structure.

Recommendation

The HPO welcomes additional comments from the Board and requests that further review be delegated to staff.