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

Landmark/District: **Mount Pleasant Historic District** (x) Consent calendar
Address: **3224 16th Street and 1604 Park Road NW**

Meeting Date: **October 23, 2014** (x) Subdivision
Case Number: **15-016**

Staff Reviewer: **Tim Dennée**

The applicant, property owner Holy Spirit Association for Unification World Christianity, requests the Board's review of a subdivision to combine two lots, Lots 652 and 644 in Square 2608, containing the buildings known as 3324 16th Street (itself a combination of two buildings, 3220 and 3224) and 1604 Park Road NW. These buildings have been used as classroom and administrative space for a couple of schools for several years.

No construction is presently planned. The purpose of the subdivision is simply to combine the buildings, as the rear sections of the two abut and were connected internally several years ago.¹ The attached plan depicts the door/stair connections already made, including a stair addition between the buildings. Buildings that are connected internally must be formally combined into one for code and zoning purposes, because it is not permissible to have on a single lot more than one primary structure, and because completely separate buildings must have proper fire separation. Apparently, the property owner has previously received certificates of occupancy despite this issue, but a recent inspection has raised it again, and it must be cured.

Technically, the combination of the lots probably does not raise the potential building envelope under the zoning regulations, because the two have differing zoning classifications (R-5-D on 16th and R-5-B on Park), and the split-zoned condition will presumably remain. Yet, it is conceivable that, straddling the zone boundary, the property could receive more lenient treatment in a future Board of Zoning Adjustment or Zoning Commission review, with the more intensive bulk and density regulations applied to the whole property. It is the smaller and formerly residential 1604 Park Road that would have the greater available lot occupancy, especially if the R-5-D zoning were applied throughout. This could lead, for instance, to a sizeable addition behind that building.² This is speculation, of course, but considering potential outcomes is the reason for Board review of subdivisions. In any case, the Board retains the charge and the ability to ensure that any construction is compatible with the character of the properties and the historic district. Construction atop either building appears unlikely and unpromising, and any addition to the rear of 1604 would have to remain subordinate to the historic main block.

¹ The historic preservation regulations reserve to the Board the review of subdivisions unless they constitute "minor or insignificant lot changes compatible with the character of the property or its setting"; the conversion of assessment and taxation lots to record lots; and subdivisions necessary to implement a project approved by the Board.

² A side addition would be complicated by that building's present circulation and emergency egress needs.

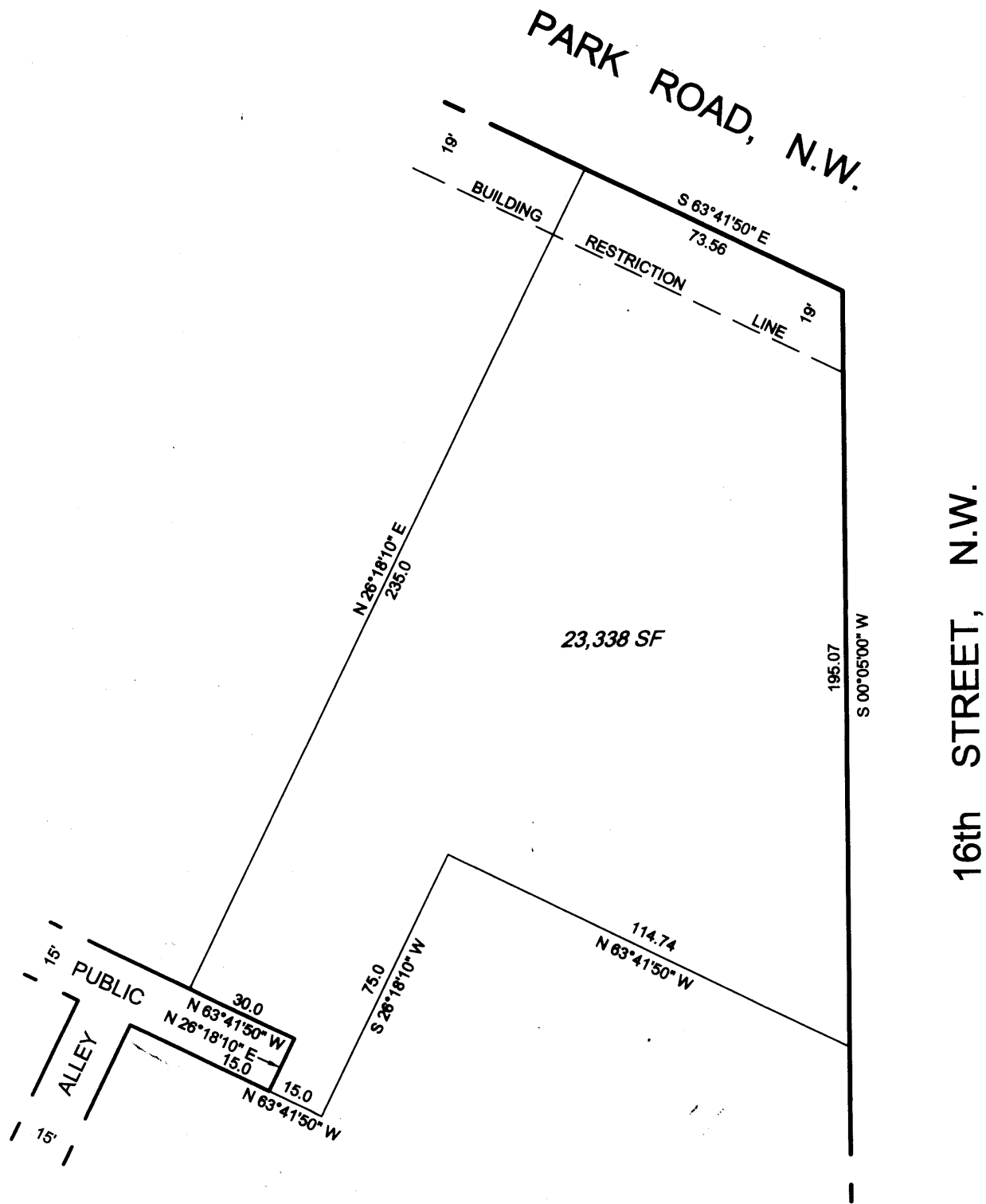
The other consideration is the degree to which the two buildings are ultimately connected. The present connections are presumably sufficient, at least for now. Of course, sometimes such openings expand to a degree that they cause or constitute substantial demolition of a building, one of the reasons why we scrutinize ostensibly interior-only work for structural demolition. But again, the buildings are already connected, and the abutting walls in question are bearing walls, so connections probably will, and certainly should, remain limited.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board approve the subdivision as consistent with the purposes of the preservation act.



A DC Property Quest detail of the two subject lots and the building footprints. 3224 16th Street is highlighted; 1604 Park is immediately to the left (west). Sixteenth Street itself is to the right.



The plat depicting the proposed subdivision to consolidate the two lots.



Above: 3224 and 3220 16th Street NW seen from the corner with Park Road.

Below: 1604 Park Road NW and the north end of 3224 16th Street.





A detail of an aerial photo showing the rears of the subject properties.