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

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Landmark/District: **Saint Elizabeths Hospital Historic District** (x) Agenda  
Address: **1200 Alabama Avenue SE** (Square 5868S, Lot 809)

Meeting Date: **October 22, 2020** (x) New construction  
Case Number: **20-316** (x) Design development

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The applicant, STE 17 Phase D LLC (Redbrick LMD), agent for and lessee of the Government of the District of Columbia, returns with design development of a project to construct a six-story 122,778-square-foot office building with potential ground-floor retail over a parking garage. The principal tenant will be Whitman-Walker

At its September 24 hearing, the Board approved the concept with the conditions that design development return with more detail on the storefront, more information on how vehicle and pedestrian traffic interact on the plaza, and material samples of a metal panel of a lighter red.

The U.S. Commission of Fine Arts continues its review of the project. Last month, it also approved the concept:

The Commission members endorsed the revisions to the building design, including the proposed cladding material of brown metal panels in lieu of the green terra cotta proposed previously. For the landscape design, they expressed support for the new configuration of the mid-block park, now proposed as a large central lawn area ringed by a paved service drive and pedestrian walks. Commenting that the park would serve as an important amenity for the neighborhood to the south, they suggested further study of the critical threshold along Alabama Avenue and careful design of the character of this important public landscape. This design development should include: crowning the central lawn to make this area feel more prominent; strengthening the lawn's edges to define it as a distinct place with a sense of enclosure, such as with curbs, shrubs, or a denser planting of trees; subordinating the service drive by reducing its width, possibly feathering its edges into the adjacent walks and planted areas; and studying the use of differentiated paving materials to emphasize pedestrians over vehicles. They also advised placing restrictions on the times of use for the loading docks, which face directly onto the central landscape.

The drawings offer more differentiation of the pedestrian zones from the vehicular through materials and a greater elevation to the lawn. The landscape and public-realm elements have been developed further.

Enlarged street-level views provide a sense of how the storefronts may ultimately be varied, but without some specification, they are likely to begin similar and evolve as customized over time.

Given the recess of the storefronts relative to the second story, a common sign band is probably going to be necessary. We would recommend against subsequent alterations that project awnings, canopies or signs beyond the second-floor overhang.

The renderings now show two shades of lighter/redder Alucobond panels. HPO recommends the middle choice, redder, but not so light. A sample of that has been sent to staff along with the original brown. They are pictured in the drawings set and on the next page, but it is difficult to capture the exact colors. The initial, brown one, "Rusted Metal" actually looks browner in person. The other, "Russet Mica" is definitely redder, with orange-brown tones. HPO believes the latter color is preferable, if the surface can be given some variation, as with the first sample. It is less important that the panels match a particular brick, and more important that it be somewhat variegated and reflect the general coloration of nearby buildings.

**Recommendation**

*HPO recommends that the Board approve the design development and delegate further review to staff.*

