

HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

Property Address: **801 N Street NW**
Landmark/District: **Shaw Historic District**
ANC: **6E**

Meeting Date: **March 23, 2017**
H.P.A. Number: **#17-186**
Staff Reviewer: **Brendan Meyer**

☒ Agenda
☐ Consent Calendar
☐ Denial Calendar
☒ Concept Review
☐ Permit Review
☐ Alteration
☒ New Construction
☐ Demolition
☐ Subdivision

The applicant, The Foundry Companies, acting as the agent for owners, seeks conceptual design review for construction of a four-story apartment building with penthouse on a vacant lot in the Shaw Historic District. Plans were prepared by Cunningham | Quill Architects. The Board approved a concept design for a five-story building at this site for a previous owner in March 2015 (HPA #15-109, Figure 1)

Property Description and Context

The site is a vacant lot most recently used as a parking lot and storage facility for car sales. It is at the south end of the short block of 8th Street between the Convention Center on N Street and the O Street Market. Across 8th Street is the landmark Immaculate Conception Church. To the north is a small collection of two- and three-story rowhouses of varied dates and styles that contribute to the character of the historic district.

Project Summary

The project calls for construction of a four-story brick apartment building. The street facades are organized by repeating bays of fenestration and spandrel panels between brick piers, with three bays on N Street and four bays on 8th. The center bay on N Street contains the building entrance and is wider than the other bays. Rising to a height of 50 feet, the building would be topped by a flat roof that projects four feet on all unattached sides to form a prominent soffit. Articulated downspouts contribute to the architectural effect that the robust piers are carrying a prominent roof feature. A penthouse of materials and roof type matching the building would be set back 15 feet from all sides and is surrounded by a green roof. The building is sited on the lot to allow for a 20 foot side yard along the alley on the west property line. This side yard is slated for surface parking and a screen of undetermined material shielding the parking from view from N Street. On the south and east sides of the building the public space that is currently paved will be landscaped with lawn and shrubbery sufficient to screen basement areaways located in each bay of the front and side elevations.

Evaluation and Recommendation

Like the concept reviewed in 2015, the height, massing, material, rhythm, and orientation of the proposal is solidly compatible with this part of the historic district. The building's size and strength of design will provide an appropriate bridge between the Convention Center to the south and the smaller, more fine-grained rowhouses to the north. As the design continues to be developed, HPO encourages further development and consideration of the following:

- While the overall openings for the fenestration are proportional and in rhythm with the historic district, a more residential character could be achieved by reconfiguring the sash sizes, types and divisions. This would add scaled details and verticality to the units.
- The screen of undetermined material between the parking and N Street could benefit by choosing whether to be a fence or wall. If a wall, it should be located at the property line as an extension or component of the building façade, matching its material and detailing. Or, if a fence, it should be set back as a secondary, recessive landscape feature and designed with materials and dimensions of suitable formality for view from the street.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept for a four-story, brick apartment building at 801 N Street NW compatible with the character of the Shaw Historic District and that final approval be delegated to staff.



Figure 1. Previous concept for site approved for former owner, March 2015. Not built.