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

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Landmark/District:	<b>Shaw Historic District</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	<b>1435 11<sup>th</sup> Street, NW</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
		<input type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Meeting Date:	<b>December 16, 2010</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Case Number:	<b>11-465</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Eldra D. Walker</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

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Architect Alfred Liu seeks conceptual review for construction of a four-story plus basement multi-unit structure on a vacant lot at 1435 11<sup>th</sup> Street, NW. A two-story flat fronted brick dwelling once stood on the lot; constructed prior to 1873, it was likely similar to the extant structures at 1431 and 1437 – Italianate in design with a bracketed wood cornice and ordered fenestration.

**Proposal**

The proposal calls for the construction of a four story plus basement multi-unit dwelling. The traditionally-inspired lower floors of the building, comprised of the basement, first and second floors, will be composed as a bay-fronted row house with corbelled cornice and punched windows and door opening. The upper two floors of the building would consist of two glass penthouses, set back ten feet and thirty feet from the façade, respectively. Each level will have a rear balcony. Neither rear elevations nor side elevations were included with the submission.

**Evaluation and Recommendation**

The Board encourages new construction in historic districts which is contextually compatible in terms of height, scale, materials, and according to other criteria established in their guidelines. Notwithstanding the lack of congruency between the drawings (which have inconsistencies in plan, section and elevation), the plans are sufficient to determine that the proposed building height, composition and massing are fundamentally incompatible with the historic district.

The Board’s guidelines “New Construction in Historic Districts” state that “typically, if a new building is more than one story higher or lower than existing buildings that are all the same height, it will be out of character.” At four stories above a basement level, the proposed structure would loom nearly three stories above the adjacent historic properties. While there is a multi-unit building of similar height on this side of the block, that building is much wider wherein its height is mitigated by its width, and the building is designed as a single architectural composition that is consistent with other small scale apartment buildings in the historic district.

Compositionally, the design is bisected into competing halves -- the top two floors clad in glass, and the lower floors clad in masonry – which have no relationship with each other. The result is discordant and incompatible with the surrounding context of rowhouses and small scale apartment buildings.

The stepped massing of the top two floors is unprecedented for a rowhouse. Stepping the top two floors back from the façade may somewhat reduce the upper floors visibility from immediately in front of the building, but these set backs will not lessen the visual impact of the building’s height from the north and south and are not sufficient to make them invisible or even secondary as seen from perspective views.

**The HPO recommends that the Board deny the concept as incompatible with the character of the historic district.**