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

Landmark/District: **Sixteenth Street Historic District** (X) Agenda
Address: **1101-1111 16th Street, NW** () Consent Calendar

Meeting Date: **May 26, 2016** (X) Alteration
H.P.A. Number: **16-157** () New Construction
() Subdivision

Staff Reviewers: **Steve Callcott, David Maloney** (X) Conceptual Design

Akridge Development, with plans prepared by HOK Architects and Oehme van Sweden landscape architects, seeks on-going conceptual design review for façade replacement and public space alterations for two adjoining buildings at 1101 16th Street (built as the American Soft Drink Association, now the American Beverage Association building) and 1111 16th Street (the American Association of University Women building).

The Board reviewed a proposal in March that was developed by a different architect. While no vote was taken, the Board found the size and extent of glazing in the bays to be too great and the masonry spacing between the projections too small; the applicants were asked to study alternatives that provided greater overall unity to the design and return to the Board when appropriate.

Property History and Description

1101 and 1111 16th Street, NW are Brutalist-style office buildings with concrete grid exterior exoskeletons. Constructed in the 1970 and 1974, respectively, they fall outside of the period of significance (1875-1959) and are non-contributing to the 16th Street Historic District. Each building is 90 feet in height; the first floor of 1101 is at grade, while the first floor of 1111 is raised up on a plinth approximately 4'6" from grade. The treatment of the public space – a paved plaza with raised planters -- is characteristic of the era in which the buildings were constructed, but is very much out of character with the historic district.

Proposal

The new design organizes the 16th Street elevation into three equal-width vertical limestone faces linked by glass hyphens; the L Street elevation would have the limestone vocabulary at the two ends with a larger glass element in the center. The fenestration in the limestone elements on floors 1-6 would consist of double-height openings with metal spandrels; the seventh floor would have single-height openings. The applicants are studying the use of vertical planting on a metal trellis system that would be overlaid on the glass elements. The entrance would be capped with a sculptural metal canopy. The public space plan remains largely the same as previously presented, with a slightly revised entrance sequence to the front door, and taking into account the Board's previous comments about the plant material and planting plan finding the appropriate balance between being naturalistic but still relating to the dignified and manicured character of public space found in the historic district.

Evaluation

The proposal is successful both in unifying the two existing buildings into a single unified composition, and in achieving a balance between masonry and glass that is compatible with the character of the 16th Street Historic District. The organization of the 16th Street elevation into three elements results in a cadence and proportions that relates well to nearby buildings, such as the University Club and the Hilton, which have a similar façade organization. The use of limestone and metal spandrel panels, with inset windows and reveals to provide shadow and depth to the elevations, is not dissimilar in character to buildings such as the Hod Carriers and AFL-CIO buildings. Despite being located at the corner rather than in the center of the composition, the raised entrance plaza, the sculptural canopy element and the treatment of the second floor fenestration above the primary door results in a solution that doesn't appear out of balance. The monumental proportions of the first two floors and the single height opening of the top floor provide a contemporary version of the classical tripartite composition that is characteristic of most of the district's historic buildings.

As the design continues to be developed, attention should be given to ensure that the design and materials of the penthouse are fully commensurate with the underlying building; given the width of 16th Street, penthouses are quite visible and typically express a high quality of materials and design. The design, maintenance and plant selection for the vertical planted trellis elements will be important to fully think through to ensure that it will be successful.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept to be compatible with the character of the historic district and delegate final approval to staff.