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

Property Address:	218 Cedar Street, NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Takoma Park Historic District		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	July 11, 2019	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	19-318		Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	Steve Callcott	X	New Construction
			Demolition
			Subdivision

218 Cedar LLC, represented by Neighborhood Development Corporation, seeks conceptual design review for construction of a four-story plus penthouse mixed-use residential and retail building in the Takoma Park Historic District. Plans have been prepared by Square 134 Architects.

Property History and Description

The property is located at the corner of Cedar and Carroll Street on a site currently occupied by a non-contributing 7-11 convenience store and surface parking. To the north, on Cedar, are two detached single-frame houses that are contributing to the historic district; the street continues north across Eastern Avenue with similar early 20th century houses located in Maryland. To the east is the four-story residential and retail Takoma Central building, constructed in 2013 after being approved by the Board. To the west is an open green space and the Takoma Metro station.

The property is located in the Takoma Central District which was the subject of a small area plan adopted by the Council in 2002. The plan was the product of a community-driven planning process that defined strategies for encouraging revitalization and community-oriented, mixed-use development. The plan envisions the renewal of the area as a town center that draws inspiration from the area's historic character and village-like scale.

Proposal

The project calls for construction of a four-story building clad in red and gray brick. The penthouse would be clad in dark metal panels and the exposed base on Cedar Street, where the topography drops off, would be clad in local stone. Each of the two street-facing elevations would have continuous storefronts on the first floor; the upper levels would have an informal distribution of windows and recessed balconies. An exterior loading zone and entrance to the cellar level parking would be located on the north side of the building.

Evaluation

The building's height and mass are consistent with the vision for the area outlined in the Takoma Central District small area plan and with recently-built new construction projects. The proposal is consistent with the plan's goals to improve neighborhood retail along Carroll Street, redevelop underutilized parcels, and add more infill housing of a scale that is compatible to the existing character of the area.

The building is clearly contemporary in design but achieves compatibility with the historic district through the use of brick and local stone in colors and of a scale that is characteristic of the historic district. With input from the community and HPO, the building's clearly-delineated retail base has been reduced in scale – particularly on Carroll -- to be more compatible with the scale of other storefronts in the district. The top of the building has been designed to provide visual interest through the use of sloped rooflines, perforated hoods around the windows in the corner tower, and a crowning sunscreen element on the penthouse. On the north side of the building, the upper floors have been pulled away and the corner of the building clipped and articulated with open balconies in an attempt to ease the height and massing transition to the abutting single-family residential neighborhood.

As the design continues to be developed, attention to the following is recommended:

- 1) the detailing of the storefronts will be particularly important to ensure that the building has visual interest at the pedestrian level and relates to the character and scale of the neighborhood;
- 2) the base of the corner tower element should be refined with a reduction in the height of the openings and providing bases to the doors and sidelights
- 3) the stone and brick proposed on the two street-facing elevations should be carried around and used on the north elevation; while this elevation is obscured by trees in the renderings, it will be quite visible from the north on Cedar Street;
- 4) a landscape plan should be developed for the building base and planters that provides year-round interest and helps soften the change in topography.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Review Board find the concept compatible with the character of the Takoma Park Historic District and that final approval be delegated to staff.