

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

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Property Address:	<b>218 Vine Street NW</b>	<b>X</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Takoma Park Historic District</b>		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>October 5, 2017</b>	<b>X</b>	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>17-429</b>		Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Anne Brockett</b>	<b>X</b>	New Construction

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Working with KTG Architects, Jair Lynch Real Estate Partners returns to the Board for further review of proposed construction of a multi-unit residential building in the Takoma Park Historic District. The building would be sited on a vacant parcel at the corner of Vine and Maple Streets, currently used as a parking and storage lot for the adjacent warehouse building to the west.

**Project Description and Evaluation**

When the Board reviewed this project in June, it made several recommendations for further study. The design team has worked with HPO to address the Board’s and staff’s comments, which were to:

- further study the loading and parking entrances
- limit and refine the material palette
- consider eliminating the top floors of the bays and/or lower the ceiling height of the top floor
- develop the design of the corner entrance, and
- eliminate fencing around the courtyard.

*Loading/Parking*

The applicants have provided an analysis of four loading and parking locations. The current proposal, which is the preferred option, has the loading bay located at the south end of the site and the parking entrance to the west of this. Option 1 pushes the loading entrance westward to abut the parking entrance and provides residential windows closest to the street; Option 2 puts the parking entrance at the street face with the larger loading entrance immediately next to it; and Option 3 studies shifting the loading to the north end of the site off Vine Street. The applicants provided data and floorplans for Option 3, but did not explore an elevation design fully because they have determined this option is infeasible based on the loss of units.

Of the three feasible alternatives, Option 1 is recommended, as it sets the loading entrance in from the southeast corner of the building, providing a more residential character at the streetscape. While the details of the fenestration and canopy must be resolved, this option is the most appropriate for the residentially-scaled streetscape and the small historic single family residences directly across Maple Street.

*Materials*

The current design has increased the use of brick across the bays and substitutes cementitious panels in lieu of cement board siding. These adjustments offer a more refined appearance and a scale more appropriate to an apartment building rather than single family residences or rowhouses. The revised materials palette is consistent with the Board’s request and compatible the historic district.

### *Height and massing*

Although the height has not been reduced, several design changes have been made to address the concerns about this aspect of the design. The bays have been capped with a projecting cornice and the recessed areas between each bay now have canopies. The introduction of these horizontal bands serve to reduce the perceived height of the building. The use of larger dimensioned panels and centering the windows within each bay are successful in enhancing the design of the bays simply by reducing the visual distraction of multiple boards at the top of the building and in breaking up the expanse of the siding material. In addition, two projections at the corner roof terrace that were adjacent to the first bays on each side have been eliminated. This both simplifies the massing and makes the canopy a stronger design element that more successfully caps the corner of the building.

### *Front entrance*

The canopy design which surrounds the corner entry has been bulked up with cable tiebacks and the address added as an entrance feature. The doors have been inset, flanked by sidelights, and continue the use of the organic motif expressed on the railings and canopy. The more substantial canopy and doors, the recessed entry, and addition of signage over the entrance successfully address the Board's recommendation to increase the prominence of the entry design.

### *Window wells and other details*

There are no true window wells proposed on Vine Street as all windows are at or above grade. The large single well for the below grade windows within the Maple Street courtyard has been revised to slope or gently step down toward the windows. This design provides a landscape solution that obviates the need for a guard rail.

Window details showing the depth of their inset from the exterior wall plane have been provided as have vent locations and specifications. The lay-by proposed on Maple Street has been eliminated at DDOT's direction.

### **Recommendation**

The design has evolved with a strengthened and refined design including the addition of more detail, a compatible application of materials and finishes, and an analysis of various loading options. HPO recommends support of the concept with a recommendation to pursue Option 1 of the loading schemes. HPO will work with the applicants on the final treatment of the elevations with this design option.

*The HPO recommends that the Board approve the revised design, with Option 1 for parking and loading, as consistent with the purposes of the Act, and delegation of final review to staff.*