

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

Property Address:	218 Vine Street NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Takoma Park Historic District		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	June 29, 2017	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	17-429		Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	Anne Brockett	X	New Construction

On behalf of owner Raymar Corporation, Jair Lynch Real Estate Partners proposes construction of a multi-unit residential building with plans developed by KTG Y Architects. Located 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.

The roughly triangular lot is bordered by this low warehouse, as well as others to the north across Vine; a foursquare at the corner of Vine and Maple; and several bungalows, a foursquare, and a historic frame duplex across Maple Street. A recently constructed apartment development that was reviewed and approved by the Board is located just northeast of the property.

Project Description

The T-shaped building would stand five stories tall above an underground parking deck, although it reads differently on each side because of changes in grade across the site. The mass sets back on the east side (along Maple) in the center for a small landscaped court and on the west side for an outdoor terrace. The lobby entry is at the northeast corner with the parking and loading entrances at the southeast. Bays project along both street facades with balconies spanning between them. At the upper level, the northeast and southeast corners have been notched out to alleviate the mass, providing rooftop terraces here.

The base and entry corner are clad in brick with large storefront fenestration and a canopy along both Maple and Vine. The rest of the building is clad in cement panels and cement siding with smaller window openings. Balcony railings and fencing is proposed to have an organic pattern.

Evaluation and Recommendation

Takoma Park is a historic district comprised primarily of modest single family dwellings with 3-4 story 20th century brick apartment buildings scattered throughout. Additional multifamily developments have been constructed in recent years, with 3-4 stories at the street face, in some cases with additional set back floors. It is not uncommon to find apartment buildings directly adjacent or across from bungalows and other typical small frame houses and in this case, the applicants have responded to the proximity of lower scale dwellings.

In an effort to alleviate the the height and mass, the design has been reworked in a number of significant ways in consultation with HPO staff.

- The entire sixth floor has been eliminated.
- A courtyard was added along Maple Street directly across from the residential buildings for relief along this narrow street.
- The fifth floor has been recessed at the two most prominent corners.

- The corner design has shifted from a prominent, two-story glass lobby to a more subdued and grounded edifice.
- Greater surface articulation was introduced with bays and the Maple Street courtyard.
- The previously blank loading dock wall facing Maple Street has been slightly recessed and windows were added.

These changes have all helped improve the compatibility of the proposal, but further refinement is needed for the proposal to be found compatible with the character of the historic district. HPO recommends the following:

- Continue the four stories of brick at the northeast corner one more bay to the south and west to tie into the solid walls of the bays rather than into the voids created by balconies.
- Eliminate the top floors of the bays.
- Consider using brick instead of panels on the bays.
- Consider moving the loading/parking entrance to Vine, which is a dead-end street and does not abut any historic buildings *or* shift the loading dock to the west side of the property, accessible by the same single width driveway as the garage entrance.
- Lower the ceiling heights, particularly on the upper floors.
- Consider substituting covered porches within the bay projections rather than balconies as a more neighborhood-compatible approach to outdoor space on small scale apartment buildings.
- Eliminate fencing around the courtyard.
- Continue to work on the design of the corner entrance, which seems unresolved.

Before returning to the HPRB, it is recommended that the proposal be discussed with DDOT regarding the proposed Metropolitan Bike Trail, which is slated to run in the vicinity of this property; the required sidewalk and tree box widths; and any issues with the proposed curb cut width and location of the parking and loading entrance.

The HPO recommends that the Board direct the applicant to refine the design as indicated above and return for further review when appropriate.