

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

Property Address:	606 Butternut Street NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Takoma Park Historic District		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	March 23, 2017		Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	17-083	X	New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Anne Brockett	X	Alteration

Owner BSV LLC, working with Workshop T10 architects, seeks concept review for construction of a single family house in the Takoma Park Historic District. The proposed residence would be situated on a generous lot between a 1½ story bungalow and a 2-story foursquare within a context of similar early 20th century house types.

Project Description

The applicant proposes to construct a house in a modern interpretation of a typical Takoma Park building type. From the front, the house can be read as a gable-front Victorian with tower element or a modified foursquare. The house is 2 stories in height under a hipped roof with horizontal board siding and a brick foundation. It sits back from the street a similar distance as its neighbors and is accessed by a walkway and steps leading up to a covered front porch.

The tower element projects out from the front and side of the house under a pyramidal roof, which engages the main roof. This part of the house is clad in a different material than the main block, shown alternately as thin vertical or horizontal strips and boards of the same standard width as the rest of the house, and may be a panelized system.

Fenestration on the façade consists of large openings in a regular pattern pushed to the outside corners. The windows are vertical in orientation on the main block and more horizontal on the tower, where they appear to wrap the corner, although plans and elevations are not clear on how this would be handled.

The long side walls of the house benefit from the articulation provided on the west by a 1-story gable roof projection toward the rear, and on the east by an inset balcony in the middle of the second floor. These elevations, as well as the rear, feature a number of window types and sizes. A parking pad for 2 cars is located in the rear yard, accessed by an alley off of Aspen Street.

Evaluation

The Board's guideline *New Construction in Historic Districts* states that "Compatibility does not mean exactly duplicating the existing buildings or environment. A new building should be seen as a product of its own time." The guideline provides a set of design principles by which to evaluate the compatibility of such a project, as discussed below:

The project is compatible in *setback*, *orientation* and *height* and sufficiently matches the character of typical buildings in the historic district, as well as the immediately adjacent properties, completing the streetscape on this block. Similarly, the *roof shape* and the *massing* are consistent with surrounding houses.

The *scale* of the building's individual features is somewhat outsized. The front windows are quite large in a neighborhood that features almost exclusively punched openings. However, given the style of the architecture as well as the fact that the windows have been significantly reduced from their original size, some variation of in the scale of the openings could be compatible given the appropriate balance with the other design principles. The scale of the roof appears typical of a foursquare in the elevations but seems quite tall in the

color renderings, and it is recommended that the slope be as low as possible to allow the historic houses and their character-defining roof forms to remain the primary focus of the streetscape.

As well, the *proportion* and *rhythm* of windows may need refinement given the high ratio of solid to void on the side walls, which are quite blank, particularly on the east side, and lack a consistent rhythm of size and orientation. On the front, the window sizes are shown differently in plan and elevation for the tower element. Investigation of a more rhythmic window pattern is recommended to alleviate the long stretch of siding on the second floor.

Although the *materials, color, details and ornamentation*, and *landscape features* have not been sufficiently developed yet, it is anticipated that these elements can be worked out in a manner that is compatible with the character of the Takoma Park Historic District.

As the plans develop, clarification is needed on several items:

- The form and pitch of the roof;
- The distance the porch projects in relation to tower, shown differently in drawings and elevations;
- Material and design information on siding, porch columns, trim, and other details;
- How the tower windows address the corner.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board find the general concept for new construction at 606 Butternut to be compatible with the character of the Takoma Park Historic District, with the following conditions and recommendations:

- Further study is needed of the scale, proportion and rhythm of fenestration on the front and side elevations;
- Further study of the roof and porch should include the consideration of a lower pitch and deeper eaves for the roof, and having the porch roof either engage into the side of the tower or wrap over it to help bridge the two parts of the façade;
- The door and transom glazing should be made the same height, and the door muntins eliminated or carried through into the transom;
- Simple, clean details that are not overly historicist should be developed (such as for the porch columns);
- Construction of a garage at the rear, rather than a parking pad, is encouraged as a more compatible solution to providing on-site parking on the property;
- Additional information and clearer, more detailed drawings will be needed prior to the project returning to the Board for further review and delegation of final approval to HPO.