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

Property Address:	6901 Willow Street, NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Takoma Park Historic District		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	April 27, 2023	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	23-178		Alteration
		X	New Construction
			Subdivision

Jemal's WTU LLC, with plans prepared by Eric Colbert & Associates Architects, seeks concept review for construction of a three-story apartment building in the Takoma Park Historic District.

Proposal

The site is located at the eastern edge of the historic district at the corner of Willow and Aspen streets and is currently used as a playground. The context is varied, with a large warehouse to the north (outside the historic district) and a variety of one and two-story houses and duplexes across Willow and Aspen.

The project calls for construction of a three-story apartment building facing Willow and with a generous side yard setback from Aspen; nine parking spaces would be located lining the rear alley. The building would be modulated in plan with projecting bays contained under an overhanging butterfly pitched roof. The primary entrance would be centered on the Willow elevation, with private brick terraces on each side. The building's primary walls would be clad in wood shingles above a brick base; its roof and secondary elevations would be clad in standing seam copper.

Evaluation

The thoughtful and creative quality of the design provides an excellent model for how small-scale apartment buildings can be inserted into and enhance existing residential neighborhoods. Through its modulated massing, strong roofline, rich use of natural materials, and generous open landscape plan, the proposal is contextual and compatible with the Takoma Park Historic District.

At the suggestion of HPO, the applicant has revised the proposal since initially submitted by pushing the building five feet further back from the public sidewalk on Willow to provide a more generous landscaped area in front. The larger front yard open space provides an area sufficiently sizeable to support larger canopy trees, which should be incorporated into the landscape plan. Other revisions include pulling the front terraces back to align with the building's overhang and lowering the brick walls of those terraces to align with the building's water table.

Recommendation

HPO recommends that the Board find the new construction project compatible with the Takoma Park Historic District and delegate final approval to staff.

HPO contact: Steve Callcott