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

Property Address:	7050 Eastern Avenue, NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Takoma Park Historic District		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	October 27, 2022	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	22-487		Alteration
		X	New Construction
			Subdivision

The NHP Foundation, the designated representative of the Elm Gardens Tenants Association Inc., seeks concept review for a project that includes demolition of an existing three-story non-contributing apartment building and construction of a new six-story apartment building in the Takoma Park Historic District. Project plans have been prepared by Soto Architecture and Urban Design, and land use counsel provided by Carolyn Brown.

Property Description

The property consists of Lot 12 in Square 3351, located at 7050 Eastern Avenue NW, and is currently occupied by a three-story tan brick apartment building. The site is quite long and narrow, measuring approximately 75 wide facing Eastern and 350 deep extending back to the elevated Metro rail tracks.

The existing building is oriented to the southeast, facing a narrow parking lot that extends to the rear of the site, with a blank wall facing Eastern. It was constructed in 1966, well outside the period of significance for the Takoma Park Historic District (1883-1940) and is therefore non-contributing. It is flanked by a pair of three-story non-contributing apartment buildings to the southeast (7036-7044 Eastern) and a pair of four-story non-contributing apartment buildings to the northwest (7054-7058 Eastern). The Lucinda Cady House, an 1887 Shingle Style house designated a landmark for its architectural significance and representation as one of the finest houses in the original Takoma development, is located at the northwestern end of the block at the intersection of Eastern and Piney Branch Road. The Montgomery County Maryland Takoma Park Historic District is located across Eastern Avenue.

Proposal

The plans call for demolition of the existing building and construction of a six-story apartment building with approximately 110 units of affordable housing. The primary elevation would face Eastern and the façade massing broken down into four and five story components stepping back 25, 30 and 35 feet from the property line; the sixth floor would be set back from the front elevation. The façade would include the lobby entrance marked by a projecting marquee in the forward-most mass and a garage and loading entrance in the furthest recessed mass. Cladding materials would include gray brick, timber-like architectural planks, shingle-like panels, and fiber cement panels. The design of the garage/loading door is still being developed but the intent is to have some type of art installation. The site plan would include a front entrance garden and pedestrian walk, a vehicular entrance to the garage at the

location of the existing curb cut, and plantings and a storm water retention landscape around the perimeter of the building.

The project will require a map amendment rezoning from RA-1 and MU-4 to RA-3. The rezoning application has been submitted to the Zoning Commission and is scheduled for hearing later this year.

Evaluation

Flanked by non-contributing apartment complexes, this property is not a particularly historically distinctive location within the historic district. Nevertheless, the proposal has been developed to not only significantly improve the condition presented by the existing building's blank street elevation but with sensitivity in its siting and architectural treatment to relate to the character of the historic district. Pulling the building back from the property line, orienting the façade of the building to the street, and providing a landscaped front garden will provide a compatible setting and relationship of the building to the street. The front setback and façade modulation in height and mass will result in a height and scale that will be harmonious with the flanking buildings and, more importantly, relate to the character of the historic district. The use of brick, siding and shingles in a variety of earth tones relate to materials and colors characteristic of the historic district and are used to break down the scale and size of the building.

The increased setback of the building from the street, the drop in the topography, and the intervening buildings will result in the building not being visible from – much less obtrusive to or incompatible with – the landmark Cady House located at the north end of this block.

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