

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

Property Address:	1409 T Street NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	U Street Historic District		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	April 28, 2022		Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	HP 22-229	X	Alteration Subdivision

The applicant, BMU 14 LLC, seeks permit review for an illuminated blade sign on the first floor of a one-story contributing building in the U Street Historic District. The building was built in 1940 by architect H.W. Gaines as a post office and is characterized by its symmetrical limestone facade, stepped parapet and large transom windows. A two-story addition sits set back on the property built in the early 2000s as part of the adjoining infill property. The building is located off the 14th Street commercial corridor immediately adjacent to historic apartment buildings and rowhouses to the east on T Street.

Proposal

The sign is a double-sided, internally-LED illuminated, circular, projecting blade sign with a white acrylic face and vinyl lettering. The dimensions of the sign are 48” in diameter, mounted to the facade with 8” aluminum mounting plates and a 2” steel support post. The sign has already been installed without permit approval.

Evaluation

The sign is visually intrusive and overwhelming for this small contributing building and its location adjacent to residential properties. While the neighboring two-story property has a similar sign, that sign is slightly smaller and on a taller, non-contributing property that doesn’t block the storefront or its transom. The brightness of the illumination – visible from 15th Street - exacerbates the problem at night. The sign is inconsistent with several standards in the HP Standards for Signs, Awnings, Canopies, and Marquees including: 2507.2, states a sign shall not project more than forty-two (42) inches beyond the building line or building restriction line; 2507.3, which states that a sign must be scaled appropriately for the building on which it is placed, and 2507.6, which requires that signs have a low level of illumination.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Review Board deny the sign as inconsistent with the character of this historic property. The applicant should work with the HPO on reducing the size and level of illumination of the signage to be compatible with the character of this building and its setting and delegate to staff for final approval.

Staff Contact: Imania Price



Blade sign installed at 1409 T Street NW