

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

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Property Address:	<b>1202 T Street NW</b>	<b>X</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>U Street Historic District</b>		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>November 20, 2014</b>	<b>X</b>	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>14-701</b>		Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Anne Brockett</b>	<b>X</b>	New Construction

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Ditto Residential, working with dep architects, seeks concept review for construction of a new residence in the U Street Historic District. The vacant lot was formerly occupied by a rowhouse that was built along with 1200-1216 T Street in 1894-95. The row was constructed as speculative housing for George Bloomer and was designed by R. Crump. The building at 1202 was torn down sometime after 1960.

**Project Description**

The new building is three stories plus a basement, rising to the same height as the adjacent buildings to the west. It continues the lines of the mansard and the front gables, projecting out toward the front the same distance as its neighbors. At the rear, it will not extend as deep as the other properties on the block, but does appear to be one story taller than the others because of a penthouse that encloses stairs to a roof deck and a cathedral ceiling and skylight for a bedroom.

Relying on a unified palette of colors, the façade would be composed of brick with accents in stone tile and zinc. A square bay features large windows on each floor, separated horizontally by metal panels.

**Evaluation**

The design clearly takes its cues from the surrounding houses and is contextual with the row, while also maintaining its modernity. The approach is successful in its scale, rhythm, massing, height, form, and setback and compatibly places the building within the row. The material choices, while distinctly modern, use masonry units in a manner complementary to the adjacent historic buildings.

As the plans develop, however, two aspects of the design warrant further consideration. First, the treatment of the bay appears to convey a more commercial character than do the traditional punched windows on the row. While the size of the openings and pane configuration do relate to the architectural details of the surrounding buildings, more consideration to the residential character would improve compatibility. For instance, consideration should be given to using masonry between floors rather than metal panels, carrying over the presence – but not necessarily the design of – the belt courses and cornice from the abutting buildings, and achieving a hierarchy of windows between first and second floors.

Secondly, the rooftop deck and penthouse may be visible from the front and/or side along T and 12<sup>th</sup> Streets and will be visible from the rear. Although it is new construction, and some visibility

of roof features may be acceptable, compatibility with the row and the surrounding historic district merits minimizing visibility from both the front and rear to the extent possible. Certainly the rear could be addressed by reducing the height of the skylight construction. Further study is needed to evaluate the potential visibility from the front.

The final designs should also include a landscaping plan and front areaway treatment that is consistent with the Board's guidelines for basement entrances, which may require modest alterations to the placement of the basement stairs.

**Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept compatible with historic district and consistent with the purposes of the preservation act and delegate further review to staff, in consideration of the comments above.*