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

Property Address:	1250 U Street, NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	U Street Historic District		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	May 26, 2022	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	21-421	X	Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	Steve Callcott	X	New Construction
			Demolition
			Subdivision

Shalom Baranes Associates Architects, representing EastBanc and Jamestown, seeks on-going conceptual design review for construction of a 9-story plus penthouse apartment building at 13th and U streets and development along the Temperance Court mid-block alley in the U Street Historic District.

The project has been presented three times to the Board. At the last meeting in March, the Board found the revised proposal for the U Street apartment building (with the cut-out at the corner for the improved Metro access) to be compatible in height and mass, and asked that this portion of the project return when the architecture was further developed. The Board found the proposed redevelopment of the mid-block alley – with a building constructed over and which eliminated the original Temperance Court alley configuration – to be incompatible, and it was recommended that the applicants return to the earlier iterations of the plan, with row buildings lining the retained alley as a more compatible approach.

Revised Proposal

The design of the U Street apartment building has been further developed with a skin of light gray porcelain panels and dark gray brick. The mid-block portion of the development has been revised to include a row of three-story townhouses lining the retained north-south alley. The bay-fronted townhouses would step down in height to two stories at the rear and be clad in a brown-taupe brick with laminated wood and aluminum accent panels. The WMATA chiller plant would remain and screened with a planted green screen. The center alley would be slightly narrowed to allow the flanking service alleys to be widened for improved vehicular circulation; the alley would be converted to a pedestrian walk and is proposed to be gated at each end.

Evaluation

The proposed materials and detailing of the apartment building are compatible with the district, providing a variety of scale and texture. As the design continues to be refined, HPO would encourage that the coloration of the porcelain panels more closely relate to the warm tone shown in the renderings (pages 6, 7 and 13), which has a closer relationship with the historic district’s limestone and taupe brick buildings, than the cool gray sample shown in the materials palette (page 22).

The revised mid-block plan follows the Board's recommendation that the center alley be retained and serve as the organizing spine for new construction. The three-story townhouses are compatible in form, size, and materials. While the alley will be legally closed as part of the project, ideally it would not be closed off at each end and would continue to read as a public way that allows pedestrian circulation through the space. However, if it is to be closed off for perceived security reasons, HPO would encourage that it be done in a way that is as visually open as possible, through the use of open metal fencing rather the solid brick wall suggested in the rendering on page 18.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends the Board find the revised proposal to be compatible with the U Street Historic District and that final approval be delegated to HPO.