

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

Property Address:	1851 9th Street NW		Agenda
Landmark/District:	U Street Historic District	X	Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	July 23, 2015	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	15-476	X	Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	Anne Brockett		New Construction

On behalf of owner Hollow Creek Investments, James Foster of Arcadia Design seeks concept review to add one floor to the roof and make minor exterior and site alterations to this contributing building in the U Street Historic District. Built in 1932 as an African American temple of the International Order of Odd Fellows, the building has most recently been used as a charter school. The current proposal would convert the building to multi-unit housing.

Project Description

The project seeks to add a roof addition to encompass living spaces and provide access to roof terraces. The addition would occupy the center of the roof and connect to the existing brick penthouses, located at opposite ends of the roof. It would sit back approximately 17 feet from the building edge on all sides and is shorter in height than either existing penthouse. Its simple design incorporates mostly glazed walls with a flat roof that wraps partly around the western penthouse. The building benefits from a parapet of 3½ feet in height, obviating the need for a railing.

Other changes include lengthening the T Street basement windows, which are existing within a deep well, but must be lowered to satisfy egress requirements for basement level residential units. On the opposite, courtyard-facing, south side of the building, three new basement windows and a well are proposed at the western end of the building. On the rear, a window will be converted to a door and a new window well will be excavated along the alley.

Evaluation and Recommendation

The proposal is respectful of and compatibly designed with the building. The roof addition, while somewhat visible from various angles, is set in far enough and screened well enough by the high parapet wall, that it does not interfere with the ability to understand the historic building. Unlike on some building types, visible penthouses are not unusual or uncharacteristic on this type of large institutional building, and the penthouse has been designed to not interrupt the roofline, alter the perceived height and massing, or detract from the scale of the underlying building. The basement window changes on T Street would not be visible within the areaways, and the changes to the rear are compatible for a secondary elevation.

The Board has approved similar additions on this type of industrial/institutional building, including at 1612 U Street and 1840 14th Street NW. This project also offers several benefits, including the removal of the chain link fence around the roof, introduction of much needed landscaping to the site, and proposes to keep the historic auditorium largely intact. As the design progresses, the HPO will look to ensure that the southern window well does not come too close to the front corner of the building to alter the perception of the building's ground presence and that rooftop HVAC equipment is located at the non-visible southeast corner of the building or installed below the parapet.

The HPO recommends that the Board find the proposal compatible with the historic district and consistent with the purposes of the preservation act and that final approval be delegated to the staff.