

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

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Property Address:	<b>2000-2002 11<sup>th</sup> Street NW</b>	<b>X</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>U Street Historic District</b>		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>October 1, 2015</b>	<b>X</b>	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>15-535</b>		New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Anne Brockett</b>	<b>X</b>	Alteration

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Neighborhood Development Company, working with Bonstra/Haresign and Freelon Architects, seeks review of a concept to demolish a non-contributing, two-story building and construct a 10-story residential tower. The proposal would also combine this lot with the adjacent lot on the corner of 11<sup>th</sup> and U Streets, which is occupied by the Industrial Bank building, an historically significant two-story structure that was built c. 1917 with a 1920s addition. A narrow alley separates the bank from its non-contributing, 2-story neighbors to the west on U Street and the property directly to the north contains the non-contributing, 5-story Lincoln Condominiums.

**Project Description**

The project calls for constructing a 10-story-plus-penthouse structure that would replace the c. 1970s building; while reading as a separate structure, it would technically be an addition to the Industrial Bank. Although set back at the rear for zoning purposes and set in from the side lot line to allow for a light well for the at-risk windows of the adjacent condo building, the new construction would essentially occupy the entire lot as viewed from the street. On floors 5 through 9, the building's footprint expands to project 4' over 11<sup>th</sup> Street at the south corner and 6' over the bank building, with three slightly projecting balconies per floor. The 10<sup>th</sup> floor would step back to the current property lines, while the penthouse would be set back an additional 6 feet on the U Street side, 16 feet on the 11<sup>th</sup> Street side, and 12' on the rear.

**Evaluation**

Designing a compatible 10-plus story addition to a 2-story edifice, especially within a context that is defined primarily by small-scale buildings, is a challenging design scenario. Typically it would be expected that there be some variety and stepping down of height to bridge the disparity between the existing and new. However, this approach doesn't work on a lot of this small size where there isn't sufficient space to modulate the height and mass of the new construction. Ultimately, given the small size of the lot and the character of its context, lowering the proposed height to a mid-rise building would be a more compatible approach for this location.

Surface articulation is another approach that could help alleviate heavy massing in close proximity to small scale historic buildings. As developed, the articulation is minimal, provided only by Juliette balconies which do not go far enough to reduce the building's mass within the U Street Historic District.

As it has evolved, the new construction's entire midsection cantilevers to the south. While raising the height of the cantilever above the bank's roof and eliminating it from the uppermost floor has somewhat alleviated its bulk, the heavy massing is too dominant and unbalanced for such a slender building and above the diminutively scaled bank. Particularly at the southeast corner, where a relief in scale is most needed to give deference to the bank, the overhang continues and wraps around to the 11<sup>th</sup> Street side. If cantilevering is to be used here, it should be limited to light, compact, discontinuous bays or balconies

that help reduce the overall mass, not as a continuous band five stories in height that accentuates the disparity of size and mass between the new construction and its context. Any projection to the east (on the front façade of the new construction) should be shifted northward away from the historic bank building and located over public space; no part of the proposed addition should project over the corner of the bank building.

A more pedestrian-oriented scale at the lower levels on 11<sup>th</sup> Street should also be explored. This could include a bay at the sidewalk level, reflecting the bays on the Industrial Bank's first and second floors and the porches on the abutting condominium building. The design of the new construction should also more clearly relate to the character of the bank in the apparent floor heights, in scale and uniformity of fenestration, and with some acknowledgement of the bank's cornice line.

**Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the applicants restudy the height and massing of the proposed addition and return to the Board for further design review. The Board's recommendation should not be constructed as endorsement for any necessary zoning relief.*