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

Property Address:	2114-2124 14th Street, NW	X Agenda
Landmark/District:	U Street Historic District	Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	March 22, 2018	X Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	18-136	X Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	Steve Callcott	New Construction
		Demolition
		X Subdivision

Madison Investments, represented by architects Perkins Eastman DC and preservation consultant EHT Traceries, seeks conceptual design review for construction of a seven-story plus penthouse retail and residential building in the 2100 block of 14th Street between V and W Streets. The project would incorporate four historic buildings located on the site.

Most of the properties on this frontage of 14th Street have served as the headquarters for Martha's Table, a social service non-profit dedicated to providing food, clothing and educational services to those in need, which located to the block in 1979. Martha's Table is selling its properties and will be relocating to a new purpose-built facility in Fort Stanton/Hillsdale. The project also incorporates a one-story retail building and the corner gas station not owned by Martha's Table.

Property Description and History

The 14th Street frontage of this block contains one-, two- and three-story buildings dating from the 19th through the late 20th centuries. A detailed history and evaluation of each building is provided in a report prepared by Traceries. The report documents that some of the buildings incorporate elements of previous buildings and many have been substantially altered, some of which to the point of losing their historic integrity and warranting reclassification as no longer contributing to the character of the historic district. The buildings on the block include:

- 2100 14th: A two-story brick Italianate building constructed for retail and residential use in 1876.
- 2102: A two-story building constructed as a store with residential above in 1884, expanded with a substantial rear addition in 1916 for conversion to an auto repair shop. The pressed brick façade of the 1884 building has been lost; the façade's stucco and decorative wood detailing were applied sometime after Martha's Table took ownership in 1979.
- 2104-2106: These two lots are vacant.
- 2108: Constructed as a two-story brick dwelling in 1877; converted to a retail building with installation of a storefront in 1889. All but the façade of the building has been reconstructed since Martha's Table took ownership in 1979.
- 2110: Originally constructed as a two-story brick dwelling (a companion to 2108), with the third floor added in 1893 and the first floor converted to a retail storefront in 1910.

As with 2108, the structure of the building behind the façade has been entirely reconstructed since 1979.

- 2112: The property was initially improved with one of a pair of one-story retail buildings constructed in 1885; a large brick garage was built in the rear in 1920. The current three-story building, which may incorporate elements of the rear brick garage, dates from after 1979.
- 2114-2116: A two-story brick and concrete frame building built as a garage in 1918. The building incorporates elements of previous buildings on the site, including the side wall of the 1885 one-story building at 2112.
- 2118: A one-story brick storefront building likely constructed in 1923, but perhaps incorporating elements of earlier buildings on the site, originally used as an A & P grocery store. The building's façade brickwork and storefront opening appears to have been altered since 2004.
- 2120-2122: Originally constructed as two one-story buildings in 1885 and 1890, the buildings have been internally combined and their facades either removed or entirely obscured with parking.
- 2124: A two-story brick rowhouse constructed in 1888. The first floor was converted to retail with installation of a projecting storefront in 1920, which has since been removed and stuccoed over.
- 1400 W Street: The site appears to have been used as a gas station since at least 1932, however, the current building on the site appears to date from after 1956.

Proposal

The plans call for rehabilitation of the facades of 2108 and 2110, retention of the entire building at 2114, and retention of the original residential building at 2124; the other buildings would be demolished. The primary bar of the new building would run parallel to 14th Street behind the historic buildings and would be broken by a bridge element spanning over 2114-2116. The building masses between the historic buildings would have a variety of heights – two, five and seven stories – extending out to the front property line. The V elevation would have a four-story oriel projection extending over top of 2100; the W Street elevation would have a four-story oriel projection starting at the second level adjacent to the alley. The building materials will include light warm gray brick for the building's primary bar, a variety of light warm toned bricks for the masses between the historic buildings, a dark toned panelized system for the projections, and architectural block and decorative brickwork for the building's base.

Planning Considerations

The site is zoned Mixed-Use Uptown Arts (Arts-3), which permits a maximum height of 75 feet (83.5 feet for penthouses). The project is currently seeking special exception zoning relief from the Board of Zoning Adjustment for penthouse height, lot occupancy, and a provision in this zone that requires a 45-degree setback above 50 feet from the adjacent residential zone on the west alley elevation.

The Office of Planning has recommended approval of the height and lot occupancy relief but has not recommended approval of the rear setback relief. In response to these concerns, the plans

submitted to the HPRB have been revised to increase the setback. These revisions will still require relief from the BZA, which is scheduled to continue its hearing on the case in early April.

The location of the garage entrance has not been reviewed or approved by the DC Department of Transportation, and the location shown – facing W Street rather than within the rear alley – is not consistent with District transportation policy or the Board’s standards for new construction in historic districts. However, as this issue has not been fully explored with DDOT and the Office of Planning, it has been agreed that this aspect of the proposal would be tabled and return to the HPRB for review after those discussions and consideration of alternatives have been evaluated.

Evaluation

The conceptual plans have been developed based on the analysis and documentation of the existing buildings, retaining those buildings or portions of buildings that are contributing and removing those that are not. As confirmed by on-site inspections, undertaken both before the applicants took ownership and since, HPO concurs with the Traceries report regarding the contributing and non-contributing status recommendations of the buildings on the block. The specific recommendations include:

- 2102 should be reclassified as non-contributing to the U Street Historic District due to the complete loss of its historic façade;
- 2108 and 2110 retain their historic facades but the buildings behind were largely reconstructed in concrete block in the late 20th century; the buildings should remain classified as contributing but with the recognition that the structures of the buildings behind the facades have been replaced;
- 2112 should be reclassified as non-contributing as its original one-story form and façade have subsumed into a three-story building dating from the late 20th century;
- 2114-2116, dating from 1918 and retaining its integrity of form and construction, should be reclassified as contributing to the U Street Historic District;
- 2118 has been substantially altered and no longer retains integrity, and should remain classified as non-contributing;
- 2120-2122 retains no character-defining features and should remain classified as non-contributing;
- 2124 retains integrity and should remain classified as contributing to the district;
- 1400 W Street was constructed outside the period of significance for the district, and should remain classified as non-contributing.

The overall height and massing of the proposal is consistent with other large new construction projects incorporating smaller historic buildings that have been reviewed and approved by the Board in the U and 14th Street historic districts. The approach to the composition of building masses – retaining the small scale historic buildings, pushing the primary (largest) mass to the middle of the block, and using intermediate-sized massing elements to bridge the disparity in height between the small and large – is one which has been used successfully in this and other historic districts where the context is defined by a variety of buildings sizes and heights. The proposed intermediate massing elements exhibit proportions, scale, materials and a rhythm of openings that are compatible with historic buildings in the district. The primary mass exhibits a

common material to the district (brick) but in a more neutral color to reduce its visual impact. The use of the bridge element over the garage building is an unusual but imaginative way to break up the new building's mass, preserve the garage in its entirety (including its roof top skylights) as a centerpiece of the project, and relate to the garage's industrial character.

As the design continues to be developed, further study and refinement of the V and W Street elevations is encouraged, specifically as it relates the projections and their relationship with surrounding historic buildings. While unusual, some projection over 2100 14th Street on the building's V Street elevation could be compatible if scaled appropriately and clearly secondary to the underlying building. As proposed, the continuous 75 foot-long, four-story projection is over-scaled and ominous hovering over the much smaller corner building; the menacing quality is exacerbated by the dark color and large scale of the panel elements. If projections are to be used on this elevation, they should be revised to be more similar in size and scale to the initial concept proposal submitted (below):



On the W Street elevation, the relationship of the proposed oriel projection to the row of historic apartment buildings to the west should be clarified and further rendered. While narrower than the proposed V Street projection, the approximately 35 foot-wide oriel is roughly three times the width of the projections on the coordinated row of 1905 apartment buildings. It is unclear whether the proposed and historic projections are located in the same plane; if they are, the proposal has the ability to result in an incompatible relationship. As well, it is unusual (and was historically prohibited) for a projection to extend to a side or rear property line; more typically, projections are inset at least 18 inches from a property line, which contributes to their appearance as a secondary rather than primary massing feature of a building (see plans on pages 43 and 45, and rendering on Page 56).

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board make the following findings:

- *The treatment of the historic buildings, including some being reclassified as non-contributing due to a lack of integrity, is based on archival and on-site analysis and is consistent with the purposes of the preservation act;*
- *The general concept is compatible in height, mass, materials and architectural character with the character of the U Street Historic District;*
- *The projections on the V and W Street elevations are not compatible in size, scale and location and should be redesigned;*
- *The concept should return to the Board with revisions to the V and W Street elevations and after options for the parking garage entrance location have been evaluated.*