

HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

Property Address:	2213 14th Street NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	U Street Historic District		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	December 15, 2016	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	16-699		New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Anne Brockett	X	Alteration

In October, the Eisen Group, on behalf of owner 14th and R Street Enterprises LLC, presented three iterations of concept plans for a 5-story addition on top of a 3-story, non-contributing building. The Board requested a reduction of the height along the south end, where the building abuts a row of historic 2- and 3-story buildings, strengthening the base and entryways, and giving further thought to balconies, materials, and colors.

Project Description

The building has been reworked to address massing, materials, and overall compatibility. The design has been broken down to read as two distinct parts rather than as one large edifice with projecting bays. The portion of the facade abutting the historic buildings has been lowered in height by 2 stories and is designed to read as a low-scale brick apartment building. The façade here is flush with the adjacent historic building and would feature a wide, central, 4-foot-deep projection. The base has been redesigned with granite across the first floor level punctuated by storefront glazing.

The rest of the façade design, represented by a vertical sliver adjacent to the tall non-historic building to the north as well as the upper floors, is more modern in aesthetic. A 5-story bay projects above the first floor to call attention to the residential entry and provides a balcony to a 7th floor unit. The bay's dark paneling continues at the windows on the setback 6th and 7th floors and wraps to the south façade to give relief to this at-risk façade.

The upper floors are set back 13 feet from the south property line and the penthouse is set in an additional 10'4" from both the south and west (front). Roof decks with glass railings would extend to the full footprint on each setback floor.

Evaluation

Limiting the number of bays, different bay widths, balconies, and materials has helped unify the design. The appearance of a solid brick building of only 5 stories in height is a more appropriate relationship with the historic character of the buildings to the south. This part of the edifice is appropriately scaled and proportioned to mimic an early-mid 20th century apartment building. Although balconies continue to interrupt the simplicity and planarity of the façade, the design has reached an appropriate level of compatibility with the historic district.

The HPO will continue to work with the applicant on the materials, incorporating a panel system with unit sizes appropriate to the scale of the building, and cornice details that are compatible with the district. As the design progresses toward permitting, the HPO also strongly recommends the following:

- Eliminate or reduce the depth of the balconies to allow the center projection to remain the most prominent part of the design;
- Eliminate the vertical recess that bisects the center projection, which should either read as a single element or be broken convincingly into two separate bays;
- Continue the use of the façade brick on the south side wall; and
- Add windows on the sides of the bays - especially the north side of the northern bay.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board find the design compatible with the historic district, with the recommendations listed above, and delegate final review to staff.