

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

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Property Address:	<b>2009 18<sup>th</sup> Street NW</b>	<b>X</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Washington Heights Historic District</b>		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>November 29, 2018</b>	<b>X</b>	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>18-621</b>	<b>X</b>	New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Anne Brockett</b>		Alteration

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In March and May 2017, the HPRB reviewed and approved construction of a new building in place of a non-contributing gas station and parking lot at the corner of 18<sup>th</sup> and California Streets NW. Since that approval, the owner Jurassic Properties, has changed design direction. Now working with Grupo7 Architects, they return to the Board with a new concept that retains the existing gas station and incorporates it into a U-shaped restaurant with a side courtyard facing California Street.

**Project Description**

The building would front on 18<sup>th</sup> Street with a slightly recessed face that allows seating along the sidewalk. A wing abutting the adjacent non-contributing building would connect this new front spine with the existing rear spine (the gas service station). The building is proposed to be substantially faced with grey brick with vertical wood screens and full height fenestration along the 18<sup>th</sup> Street and California Street elevations. The existing gas station building would be clad in the same brick as the front spine and would feature a new flat roof. A matching grey brick wall would continue to the rear of the lot to obscure a parking area, dumpsters, and an accessible ramp.

Rather than a full second floor, as previously proposed, the design features a monitor roof along the 18<sup>th</sup> Street spine. Design details include a coreten entry wall, a grey brick chimney-like structure punctuating the roof, a trellis covering the courtyard, and horizontal banding at the main and monitor roof levels.

**Recommendation**

Overall, the proposal presents a successful design that infills a parking lot with a compatible addition to the streetscape. The building, while modern in its materials, takes its inspiration, in part, from the numerous one story commercial buildings throughout the Washington Heights Historic District. Its height, rhythm, and clerestory windows that mimic historic storefront transoms reflect the commercial character of 18<sup>th</sup> Street buildings.

In response to HPO comments, the architects have reworked the roofline to hide the green roof and have lowered the rear retaining wall, adding inset plantings to break up its length and mass along the sidewalk. The façade has become more regularized, with rhythmic fenestration and an increased compatibility of solid to void spacing. The blank north elevation of the garage has been suitably broken down with the use of a wood screen.

As the plans continue to be refined, HPO requests that the monitor roof be connected to the adjacent two-story building, rather than leaving a space between buildings. As designed, the monitor roof seems to be an element more in keeping with a free-standing building, rather than one that shares a party wall. In addition, the resulting space creates an odd court and may not be an appropriate location for equipment, as noted on the plans.

The HPO further recommends that the design continue the use of divided light windows on the side elevation rather than introducing a different window type here. Elevations of the courtyard walls will be needed and full light windows without dividers may be appropriate here.

The overall approach is modern in materials and style, yet compatible due to its scale, rhythm, proportions, and massing along 18<sup>th</sup> Street. The changes made thus far have refined the compatibility of the design and improved the building's relationship to the streetscape and the historic district as a whole.

*The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept for new construction compatible with the following recommendations and delegate final review to staff:*

- *connect the monitor roof to the adjacent building*
- *use divided light glazing on the side elevation.*