

EXHIBIT E

HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

Property Address:	15 Dupont Circle, NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Patterson House/Washington Club		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	February 27, 2014	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	14-187	X	Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	Steve Callcott		New Construction
			Demolition
			Subdivision

SB Urban, represented by Hartman Cox Architects, seeks conceptual design review for a seven-story addition adjacent to the Patterson House, a landmark located in the Dupont Circle and Massachusetts Avenue Historic Districts.



Property History and Description

The Patterson House is a free-standing Beaux-Arts inspired neo-classical mansion built in 1902 for Robert Patterson, the editor of the *Chicago Tribune*, and his wife Elizabeth Medill Patterson. It later became the long-time home of their daughter, Eleanor “Cissy” Patterson, a writer, social figure and publisher of the *Washington Times-Herald*. During her ownership, Cissy used the house to host a wide variety of society events and notable guests, including President Calvin Coolidge for several months in 1927 while the White House was undergoing renovation. While in residence, President Coolidge hosted Charles Lindbergh upon his return from the first transatlantic flight.

The house is one of only two residences in Washington designed by architect Stanford White, principal of the preeminent New York firm of McKim, Mead and White. The building features an exceptionally elegant white marble and terra cotta façade with lavish ornamentation. The plan and orientation, with an entrance court breaking the south elevation of the polygonal plan, commands its unusual site by facing on-coming traffic on Dupont Circle. The house features elaborate and intact neoclassical interiors.

Upon her death in 1948, Patterson left the house to the American Red Cross, which subsequently sold it in 1951 to the Washington Club, a private women's social organization. A two-story wing was added to the east of the house in 1956. The Patterson House is featured in *Massachusetts Avenue Architecture, Volume 1* (Commission of Fine Arts, 1973). It is designated as a landmark, and is located in and is a contributing structure to the Dupont Circle and Massachusetts Avenue historic districts.

As was outlined in the previous report, the Patterson House is not only an excellent example of classical Beaux-Arts architecture designed by its leading practitioners, but also one building in a significant ensemble of a City Beautiful-inspired composition that reflects both the variety of architectural expression and the concurrent unifying characteristics that are distinct to this period of American city development. The ensemble includes the neighboring Boardman House/ Embassy of Iraq at 1801 P Street (1893, designed by Hornblower & Marshall), the Wadsworth House/Sulgrave Club at 1801 Massachusetts Avenue (1900, George Cary), the McCormick Apartments at 1785 Massachusetts Avenue (1915, Jules Henri de Sibour), and the Robert Hitt House at 1520 18th Street, NW (1912, de Sibour).

Proposal

The concept plans call for restoration of the mansion's exterior and important interior public rooms, demolition of the 1956 addition, and construction of a seven-story addition for apartments. The addition would be clad in translucent and transparent glass, rising to six-stories (about 58 feet) at the street face, with a seventh floor rising to approximately 68 feet with a 20 foot setback. The addition would be separated from the mansion by an open courtyard; a two-story all-glass connection would link the two.

Evaluation

In October 2013, the Board reviewed a concept proposal by a different contract purchaser with plans for a six-story addition prepared by a different architect.¹ The Board found the 1956 addition to be non-contributing, constructed after the period of significance for the landmark, and therefore could be demolished without referral to the Mayor's Agent. The majority of the Board members thought an addition that was taller than the house could be compatible in place of the 1956 wing, but that it would need a substantial visual separation from the mansion, and should probably step down on P Street to mitigate the disparity in height before rising up to the full height at the rear. The Board found the architectural composition of the previous proposal to be awkward and incompatible with the classically ordered and proportioned elevations of the landmark.

The present concept has been developed to respond to the Board's comments on this earlier proposal. The addition's facade on P Street has been reduced from 46 feet in width to 38 feet and

¹ While proposed at six stories, the addition rose to the same height as the current proposal, with taller public spaces on the first two floors.

has been pulled 14 feet to the east away from the Patterson House. This more substantial gap allows the new construction to read less as an addition than as an independent building with a thinner profile. While a two-story transparent glass hyphen would connect to the mansion, set back approximately 12 feet from street plane of the facades, the mass of the addition has been shifted to the far east side of the site, across an open courtyard. The sixth floor of the addition has been pulled back approximately 20 feet from the street face, serving to both lower its apparent height and to help screen the seventh floor.

The addition has been designed to have a simple, symmetrically, rigorously ordered elevation with repeating vertically-oriented window openings that relate to the proportions, spacing, scale and vertical orientation of fenestration on the Patterson House. The cladding of white spandrel glass is intended to provide a similar polish and crispness to the addition as is provided by the white marble on landmark while clearly reading as a contemporary building. The addition's simple geometric form, symmetrical composition, flat roofline, and smooth wall surfaces are somewhat reminiscent of Neo-Formalist modernism from the 1960s and 1970s, where it was often used in Washington to relate to the city's context of classical buildings. However, rather than being clad in marble or another stone, as was typical of that era, the addition takes advantage of advancements in glass technology to create a quiet and elegant companion that relates to but doesn't compete with the landmark.

As the design continues to be developed, attention should be given to the side elevations of both the glass frontispiece element and the seven-story mass behind. It is unclear why the west side of the glass element is fenestrated with punched windows as on the front elevation while the east side has windows that appear to wrap the corner. The long east elevation of the seven-story element, prominently visible from 18th Street, presents a difficult design challenge as the extent of fenestration on this property line wall is limited by the fire code. Nevertheless, as it will form the backdrop to the landmark Boardman House (Iraqi Embassy), it will be important to provide this wall with an organization and scale that relates to the residential character of the surrounding buildings. More specific information on the materials and detailing of the elevations should be shared with the Board and HPO when developed.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board find the proposed concept to be generally compatible with the landmark and the character of the Dupont Circle and Massachusetts Avenue Historic Districts.