

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
FROM: Stephen Gyor AICP, Case Manager
 Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review
DATE: June 30, 2015

SUBJECT: BZA Case 19043, 1600 21st Street NW - Special exception from the rooftop structures requirements under § 411.11, to allow the replacement of heating and cooling equipment on the roof of an existing structure in the DC/R-5-B and SP-1 Districts at premises 1600 21st Street N.W.

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the following:

- § 411 Roof Structures (1:1 setback, vertical enclosing walls, and consistency with the main structure in architectural character, material, and color); < 1:1 setback, non-vertical walls, and harmonious character, material, and color proposed).

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	1600 21 st Street NW (“Subject Property”)
Applicant	The Phillips Collection (the “Applicant”)
Legal Description	Square 66, Lot 80
Ward	2B
Lot Characteristics	The irregularly shaped lot fronts on 21 st Street NW between Q and R Street. It is approximately 26,959 square feet in land area.
Zoning	R-5-B - Permits matter-of-right moderate development SP-1 - Permits matter-of-right medium density development
Existing Development	Art museum, permitted in these zones. The Phillips Collection building complex is the result of numerous building campaigns, alterations, and additions. Its original core is the 3-1/2 story red brick and terra cotta house built in 1896. Alterations included the construction of a mansard roof and dormers around 1901, a rear wing in 1907, and a second floor to the wing in 1917. In the early 1930’s, contemporaneous with an art school opening in the fourth floor, a prominent gable skylight was added to the southern section of the roof. Neighboring houses were bought and replaced with a three-story addition in 1959-60, connected over the alley with an enclosed bridge. In the 1980’s, the Board approved mansard roofs on the 1907 wing and 1959 addition, and in the 1990’s the Board

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	approved a refacing of the 1959 wing and expansion of the museum into an adjacent apartment building. The studio component of the Duncan Phillips House is a contributing element of the historic structure and cannot be altered.
Historic District	Dupont Circle Historic District Massachusetts Avenue Historic District
Adjacent Properties	Adjacent properties include the Indian Embassy to the west.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character	The surrounding neighborhood is characterized by a variety of land uses, including residential, office, and retail uses.

III. APPLICATION IN BRIEF

The Phillips proposes to add a double-mansard roof structure to the House building to enclose a replacement HVAC system, which is needed as part of the regular upgrades and maintenance to The Phillips Collections' facilities. The existing roof is improved with an unenclosed HVAC system and a skylight structure leading to the floor below. The existing rooftop mechanical units would be replaced with larger, increased capacity units to meet the climate control requirements of the additional gallery spaces and the lateral internal duct work would be relocated to the roof to allow for sufficient interior head-lights within the expanded gallery spaces. Because the units would be larger and more obtrusive, a screen is proposed in the form of a mansard roof. The mansard would be recessed from but engage the eastern edge of the skylight. It would be clad in copper shingles to relate to the scale and texture of the underlying slate roof, without introducing the substantial weight of a second slate roof.

The Applicant's proposal was previously approved by the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB).





IV. ZONING REQUIREMENTS and RELIEF REQUESTED

SP-1/C-3-C Zone	Regulation	Existing	Proposed	Relief
Roof Structures § 411	1:1 setback, vertical enclosing walls, and harmonious materials required	Unenclosed mechanical equipment	<1:1 setback, non-vertical enclosing walls, and harmonious materials	Relief required

V. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

b. Special Exception Relief pursuant to § 411 Roof Structures

- 411.3 *All penthouses and mechanical equipment shall be placed in one (1) enclosure, and shall harmonize with the main structure in architectural character, material, and color.*
- 411.5 *Enclosing walls from roof level shall be of equal height, and shall rise vertically to a roof, except as provided in § 411.6.*
- 411.11 *Where impracticable because of operating difficulties, size of building lot, or other conditions relating to the building or surrounding area that would tend to make full compliance unduly restrictive, prohibitively costly, or unreasonable, the Board of Zoning Adjustment shall be empowered to approve, as a special exception under § 3104, the location, design, number, and all other aspects of such structure regulated under §§ 411.3 through 411.6, even if such structures do not meet the normal setback requirements of §§ 400.7, 530.4, 630.4, 770.6, 840.3, or 930.3, when applicable, and to approve the material of enclosing construction used if not in accordance with §§ 411.3 and 411.5; provided, that the intent and purpose of this chapter and this title shall not be materially*

impaired by the structure, and the light and air of adjacent buildings shall not be affected adversely.

i. Is the proposal in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps?

The roof structure regulations require that rooftop screens have a 1:1 setback from the edge of the roof and shall harmonize with the main structure in architectural character, material, and color. Further, the regulations require that enclosing walls from the roof level shall be of equal height, and shall rise vertically to a roof.

Given the location of the historically significant skylight, the roof structures cannot be constructed with the required 1:1 setback. Further, the walls would not rise vertically but would be constructed to complement the angle of the existing mansard roof below.

According to the Applicant, cladding the roof structure in slate to match the existing mansard roof would introduce too much weight on top of the existing structure. Instead, the cladding in copper shingles would have a similar scale and texture as the slate mansards below while remaining distinguishable from the earlier roofs.

The Applicant states that there are no alternative locations for the large, state of the art mechanical equipment that is required of an art museum. The existing complex of buildings occupies the entire lot and the 1959-60 wing already includes mechanical equipment on its roof.

The proposal would help to preserve the Phillips Collection's institutional mission while helping to ensure that the building remains well-serviced and maintained.

ii. Would the proposal appear to tend to affect adversely, the use of neighboring property?

The intent of the regulations is to minimize the visibility of the rooftop structures.

The proposal would visually complement the existing structure while allowing the institution to continue to adapt for contemporary use. Further, the proposed roof structure would be modest in height and should not have a detrimental impact to the light and air of neighboring properties, particularly the adjacent Indian Embassy.

VI. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

At its regular meeting on June 10, 2015, the Dupont Circle Advisory Neighborhood Commission ("ANC 2B") voted 9-0-0 to support the relief.

As of this writing, no comments from the immediate neighbors have been submitted to the record.