HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

Property Address:	**243-245 2nd Street, NE**		Agenda
Landmark/District:	**Capitol Hill Historic District**	X	Consent Calendar
		X	Concept Review
Meeting Date:	**February 7, 2002**	X	Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	**01-589**		New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	**T. Luke Young**		Demolition
		X	Subdivision

The applicants, the Friends Committee on National Legislation, and their architects Burt Hill Kosar Rittleman Associates, return to the HPRB seeking conceptual approval to renovate adjacent two and three-story brick structures, to remove non-contributing rear additions and to build a three-story addition on the back and side. Additionally, the applicant seeks approval to combine the lots. The property is situated on the corner of 2nd and C Streets and is also highly visible on a third side due to a parking lot in the back. The applicant has worked extensively with the staff since the October 25, 2001 HPRB meeting on incorporating the Board's recommendations before returning for further review.

C-Street Elevation

In the revised design the historic C Street facades (1870s) that had been heavily modified in the 1950s are proposed to be restored back to an earlier period of time. The inappropriate alterations of the last half century will be reversed by removing the plaster, re-introducing traditional windows and walk-up entries to transom lit doorways. While it is unclear that there is any documentary evidence of this configuration, it does echo the adjacent residences on the block. The solution is a creative approach to reviving these elevations and while somewhat conjectural is a plausible representation of what may have been the original condition of the buildings.

During the October HPRB meeting the Board suggested that the proposed rooftop addition could either be flush with the front of the building or set back, but in either case the impact of the new construction should not have the effect of eviscerating the distinct character between the two and three story buildings. The Board proposed a variety of recommendations from aligning the addition with the front façade to recessing it. Since October, the Board has more consistently required that rooftop additions not be visible from the street, except in cases where it may be appropriate to make them flush with the façade. The staff initially recommended a 20' setback, but in the absence of clear direction from the board the applicants program requirements dictated a maximum of 10'. The applicant has maintained a rooftop addition on the two-story building but has designed it to ensure that the two buildings read as distinct entities. The third story addition is set back 10 feet and, though still visible from across the streets, is designed to complement the existing historic building. The brick structure will match the color and detailing of the rest of the addition on the rear and the cornices are maintained in their historic locations. Additionally, the

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applicant has agreed to paint the historic buildings in a scheme that complements the brick color of the new addition.

2nd Street Elevation

The most significant revision to the 2nd Street façade is the relocation of the entrance ramp that has been moved to the south simultaneously solving a series of design challenges. The public space on the corner of the historic building has been opened up and can be landscaped, reinforcing a more traditional streetscape. With the reorientation of the ramp its length could be shortened due to grade changes on the site. Additionally, the new location of the ramp has the combined benefit of both keeping the majority of this new construction away from the west elevation of the historic building and at the same time introducing a transition element between the old and the new. The applicant has also proposed a more historically appropriate door. A contemporary entrance canopy could help tie the two buildings together the specific design for which should be further studied. It is critical that new architectural expressions on historic buildings complement rather than compete with the existing design vocabulary.

Interior

A majority of the interior structure will be preserved or replaced in-kind in an attempt to maintain separate identities between the two buildings on the interior after a lot combination. The central party wall and all exterior walls (that remain after the 1950s renovation) will be kept. The floors are in general structurally unsound and will be reinforced where possible and replaced in-kind where this proves infeasible. The applicant has agreed to work with staff to determine which floors can be salvaged.

Addition

The design of the addition has changed little since the Board's last review except to address the cornice and south elevation. The heavy cornice has been refined to be more in-keeping with the contemporary aesthetic of the addition. On the south (rear) elevation the glass block wall has been replaced with a copper clad bay window system of the same vocabulary as on the west (2nd Street) elevation. These two revisions have resulted in a more unified design for the new three-story addition.

Over the course of the last several months the applicant has worked diligently with the staff to incorporate design changes in order to develop more sensitive approaches to reviving the historic buildings and at the same time expanding their space to meet current needs in a way that complements the existing buildings and Capitol Hill Historic District. In a difficult design context on a block that bridges residential and institutional character, the architects have devised a creative solution that effectively weds the two.

<u>The staff recommends that the Review Board approve the concept as consistent with the purposes of the Historic Preservation Act and with the character of the Capitol Hill Historic District, and delegate final approval to staff.</u>