

# Holland & Knight

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December 2, 2013

## VIA HAND DELIVERY

Zoning Commission for the  
District of Columbia  
441 4th Street, N.W., Suite 210S  
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: Zoning Commission Case No. 07-13D  
PUD Modification – 65 I Street, S.W. (Sq. 643-S, Lot 801)  
Former Randall School Site

Dear Members of the Commission:

In follow up to our letter dated November 12, 2013, TR SW 2 LLC (“Applicant”) provides the following update regarding design review of the proposed PUD modification before the D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board (“HPRB”). On November 21, 2013, the Applicant presented revised concept plans to the HPRB, which are the same plans pending before the Zoning Commission. HPRB unanimously adopted the staff recommendation to approve the concept plans and delegated final approval to staff. In adopted the staff report, HPRB found that

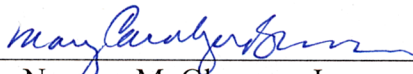
[t]he revised submission responds successfully to each of the Board’s comments on the treatment of the school, museum wing, and apartment facades. The addition of the historic balustrade and retention of the auditorium windows represent major improvements in the scope of preservation work. The museum wing is more gracefully attached to the historic school, and the balcony creates both a welcome rear façade and a sense of interaction with the courtyard. The more detailed description of preservation work also meets the Board’s standards for compatible treatments.

A copy of the staff report adopted by HPRB is attached.

ZONING COMMISSION  
District of Columbia  
CASE NO.07-13D  
EXHIBIT NO.24

Respectfully submitted,

HOLLAND & KNIGHT LLP

By:   
Norman M. Glasgow, Jr.  
Mary Carolyn Brown

Attachment

cc: Jennifer Steingasser, OP (email 12/2/13)  
Matthew Jesick, OP (email 12/2/13)  
ANC 6D (hand delivery 12/2/13)  
Andy Litsky, ANC 6D (email; hand delivery 12/2/13)  
Rhonda Hamilton, ANC 6D (email; hand delivery 12/2/13)  
Donna Hopkins, ANC 6D (email; hand delivery 12/2/13)  
Roger Moffat, ANC 6D (email; hand delivery 12/2/13)  
David Garber, ANC 6D (email; hand delivery 12/2/13)  
Ed Kaminski, ANC 6D (email; hand delivery 12/2/13)  
Southwest Public Library (hand delivery 12/2/13)  
Southwest Neighborhood Assembly (hand delivery 12/2/13)

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

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Landmark/District:	<b>Randall School</b>	(x) Agenda
Address:	<b>65 I Street, SW</b>	( ) Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>November 21, 2013</b>	(x) Demolition/Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	<b>13-341</b>	(x) New Construction
Date Received:	<b>November 12, 2013</b>	( ) Subdivision
Staff Reviewer:	<b>David Maloney</b>	(x) Conceptual Design

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Owner TR SW 2 LLC, design architect Bing Thom Architects Inc., and architect of record Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners LLP, return to the Board for further conceptual review of the proposed redevelopment of the old Randall School property at First and I Streets, SW. The proposal envisions a new museum of contemporary art, restaurant, and commercial/education facility in the historic school building, and a 12-story apartment building with about 550 units and underground parking.

The Board reviewed previous versions of the conceptual plans for this project on June 27 and October 24, 2013. At the October meeting, the Board endorsed the revised design concept with the following recommendations:

- avoid lowering the auditorium windows;
- include restoration of the cornice balustrade on the center block;
- refine the design of the museum wing to improve the relationship to the historic building;
- refine the metal skin at the corners; and
- explore ways to improve the relationship between the historic building and the residential addition, with a closer look at revising the cantilever elements supported by the single columns.

### **Project Revisions**

The applicant returns with revisions addressing these recommendations. The applicant has also submitted a more detailed preservation plan for the historic school. The design changes include:

- *Auditorium windows:* Lowering of the windows no longer appears in the design concept.
- *Cornice balustrade:* The reconstructed balustrade is included in the design concept.
- *Museum Addition:* The design of the museum wing has been developed by adjusting the shape, introducing a glass hyphen between the school and the new wing, and adding a large inset balcony on the top floor, overlooking the courtyard.
- *Metal skin:* The treatment of the rounded corners has been refined to balance the pattern of windows at the corners.

- *Relationship between the school and apartment building:* The concept design now shows a series of columns rather than a single column supporting each cantilevered wing. The applicant considered the Board's recommendation for further reduction in the size of the cantilevered wings, but believes it is not possible to achieve this within the scope of the project.

### **Evaluation and Recommendations**

The revised submission responds successfully to each of the Board's comments on the treatment of the school, museum wing, and apartment facades. The addition of the historic balustrade and retention of the auditorium windows represent major improvements in the scope of preservation work. The museum wing is more gracefully attached to the historic school, and the balcony creates both a welcome rear façade and a sense of interaction with the courtyard. The more detailed description of preservation work also meets the Board's standards for compatible treatments.

The minor refinements to the apartment building facades are also consistent developments of the design concept. The revised design includes more supporting columns, but this does not substantially affect either historic preservation concerns or the overall architectural quality of the project. On the question of a further reduction in the size of the cantilever, the applicant's position seems credible given the impact this would have on the program of uses, but ultimately that is a determination to be made by the Mayor's Agent.

The applicant's aerial photograph showing the project in the context of its surroundings helps to evaluate the impact of the apartment block on its neighborhood environment. Aside from the landmark Randall School, the historic context for the project also includes the Southwest Urban Renewal Area, which is increasingly being recognized for its own historic significance. The Board has now designated four of the "new Southwest" apartment groups as historic.

As shown in the aerial photograph, the scale of the proposed apartment group is clearly compatible with the scale of other Southwest apartment groups. It is consistent with the intermixture of high-rise apartments and low-rise townhouses that typifies the renewal area. Like those expressions of progressive mid-century design, this project also explores progressive architectural expression of our time, including such ideas as highly sculptural building forms and dramatic raising of whole building blocks off the ground through feats of engineering. This seems a reasonable approach in the context of this neighborhood and for a project of "special merit" centered around a museum of contemporary art.

*The Historic Preservation Office recommends that the Board take the following action:*

- *Find that if the Mayor's Agent determines that the proposed demolition is necessary to construct a project of special merit, then the design concept is compatible with the character of the historic landmark; and*
- *Recommend that the applicant continue to coordinate with the staff as the design progresses to ensure that design development plans are consistent with the concept; and*
- *Delegate final review of permit plans to the staff.*