

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS STAFF REPORT

TO: HALRB

FROM: Rebecca Ballo, Historic Preservation Planner

DATE: September 15, 2015

SUBJECT: 2338-2354 and 2406-2408 Columbia Pike, CoA 14-11, Columbia Pike Form Based Code Project

This is a proposal to construct a six-story, mixed-use, residential and commercial building at 2338-2354 and 2406-2408 Columbia Pike. The request is being made pursuant to the requirements of the *Columbia Pike Revitalization Plan* (2005) and Form Based Code and will also require a use permit from the County Board prior to final approval. The site contains two existing commercial structures that have been designated as Historic Facades that will be preserved as part of this project.

The two buildings to be preserved, 2338-2354 Columbia Pike and 2406-2408 Columbia Pike, were constructed circa 1955. The strip located at 2338-2354 is constructed of concrete block with a painted white hard brick facing on the (north) elevation, decorated with horizontal painted brick bands. The flat roof line is topped with a flat coping, with a stepped parapet along the side walls. The three store fronts have recessed doors with slightly inward angled plate glass windows all covered with a cantilevered projecting flat roof. There is a fourth storefront in a smaller section on the east side of the building faced with narrow white bricks laid in all-stretcher vertical rows. It has a slightly lower roofline and its own cantilevered roof over the storefront. Decorative and window treatments match the larger building at 2406-2408 and they appear to have been constructed at or near the same time.

The strip located at 2406-2408 Columbia Pike is also a moderne-style commercial building, constructed of concrete block with a white hard brick facing on the (north) elevation, and decorated with horizontal painted brick bands. The flat roof line is topped with a raised flat parapet on the north elevation and continues several feet on the east and west elevations. The whole is topped with a flat coping. The two store fronts are recessed within the brick side walls and a cantilevered flat roof supported in the center with a steel pole. The storefronts are divided by a central wall covered with formstone that appears to be original to the building. Storefront windows are plate glass.

The historic classification of these storefronts has changed since the Form Based Code was adopted in 2005. Originally designated for Full Building Preservation, the storefronts are now designated for Façade Preservation. The previously recorded 1945 construction date and the circa 1930 construction date were inaccurate, according to historic aerials and permit records. These building did not appear on a 1951 aerial, but did appear on a 1962 aerial. A permit was issued for the construction of the 2338-2354 strip in 1954. Based on the more recent construction date, and further analysis regarding the elements of these buildings that contribute to the architectural and historical character of Columbia Pike, staff recommended that the historic classification of the buildings be changed from Full Building Preservation to Façade Preservation. This change was approved by the County Board at their April 12, 2014 meeting as part of a package of amendments to the Form Based Code listed in Staff Report PLA-6696. The HALRB also recommended approval of this amendment in September 2013. The buildings are still listed as Important in the County's Historic Resources Inventory, and that designation remains unchanged.

The current proposal will preserve the storefronts as part of a six-story commercial and residential building. The facades will be incorporated into the base of the new building with infill commercial bays on either side. The applicant met with the DRC and HALRB multiple times from 2013-2015 to discuss the preservation of the facades and the proposed design for the new building. The design of the new building has been updated and refined in multiple iterations to satisfy the comments and concerns of the DRC and HALRB.

Many of the early issues identified related to height and massing, and how this new building would interact with Columbia Pike, how it would successfully incorporate the 1950s storefronts, and, finally, how it would impact the neighboring Arlington Village buildings to the south. The latest iteration presented in this CoA has addressed all of the DRC and staff concerns. The base of the building successfully preserves the façade and creates new retail bays that carry forward some of the vocabulary of the historic buildings such as the large picture windows, the horizontal orientation of the spandrels, and streamlined parapets that wrap the corners of the building. The upper floors are set back from the street, and the historic storefronts are offset by small areas of spandrel glass that allow them to read slightly separately from the new building, while still being part of the base of the entire new structure. The upper floors also use midcentury design cues such as offset wood colored panels, streamlined building elements, and large panes of glass for the window openings. The rear elevation is relatively subdued and has been altered in response to the Arlington Village condominiums.

In addition to the design, the DRC and Staff are satisfied with the details being submitted for the removal and reconstruction of the historic facades. Each item on the facades has been catalogued and will either be preserved and repaired, replaced with an exact replica, or, where necessary, replaced with a new building element that matches the original as closely as possible. The storefronts must be deconstructed in order to excavate and build the new structure, and the items to be preserved and repaired will be photographed, catalogued, and stored in a safe location until reassembly on site. Staff and the DRC have worked with the applicant to also deal with the new grade that will be created on site, and the demolition and preservation plan as presented will ensure that the preserved storefronts will “sit” on the Pike in nearly the same manner as they do today, even though the grade will be slightly altered.

After this HALRB hearing, the proposal will be heard by the County Board for a use permit. After that use permit is issued, the HALRB will hear the CoA case again, in order to incorporate any minor alterations into the HALRB approval. The HALRB will also, at a later date, have the opportunity to review the historic preservation easement that will be placed on these facades, pursuant to the requirements of the Form Based Code.

The DRC last heard this case at its September 2, 2015, meeting. The DRC recommended that this application be placed on the consent agenda for the September 16, 2015, HALRB meeting. Staff finds that this proposal is appropriate and in keeping with the recommendations and goals of the *Columbia Pike Revitalization Plan* (2005) and recommends approval.