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15 Allen Street
City of Buffalo Historic Preservation Board
written description of proposed work

In accordance with to our previous submissions, which were approved by the Historic Preservation Board in March and again in June of 2017, we have demolished the existing structure at 15 Allen Street, retained those elements of the facade which were salvageable, and able to be restored and reused. The project is currently in the initial stages of site work and construction of a new multiple dwelling residential structure in its place, with a facade that will incorporate those elements retained from the original. The reasoning for this submission is to gain approval for revised materials of the non-historic rear portion of the building. The following is a comprehensive description of the project.

The new structure we have proposed is a three-story, wood-frame Type-V multiple dwelling structure, whose massing and design will comply with the City of Buffalo Green Code. The third story has been designed with multiple setbacks from the original, reconstructed facade so as to distinguish the new construction from the historic facade. The original residential entry at the east side of the facade, including the decorative cast stone surround with the number "15", would become the main entry for all residential tenants. Although the retail storefronts would most likely be combined into a single space, the original design of two separate storefronts and entries would be retained.

We propose to clad the newly constructed volumes primarily with 8" wide metal siding panels with narrow reveals. These panels would be dark-grey in color and installed at various angles, giving the elevations a greater sense of texture, scale and proportion. The east elevation, being nearly a zero-lot-line wall with the potential for future adjacent new construction, has been designed without any glazing, as has the rear north elevation, which is directly opposite another blank wall of the Salvation Army only a few feet opposite. The primary new facade is the west elevation, which is where the new units will obtain a majority of their daylight. This facade has been designed with punched windows, which are intended to be sympathetic in scale to prevalent historical typologies. Many of the windows will be somewhat recessed, which will improve shading from solar gain and give the facade a greater sense of depth.

The building generally complies with the massing prescribed by the Green Code: a retail space with a 15 foot clear height; a three story structure with a maximum roof elevation of 44 feet (although this elevation is not reached until the building is well back from Allen Street), parapets that rise above the roof in some instances to a maximum of 49 feet, and a small decorative feature at the rear of the building which rises to a height of 57 feet and acts as a clerestory window to bring daylight into the main stair within.

As part of this work, in order to make the proposed new structure at 15 Allen code compliant for life safety, a second means of egress is required. We proposed, and subsequently were permitted, to selectively demolish a small portion of the adjacent structure at 19 Allen, making what is currently an interior corridor into an exterior pathway. This corridor is not within the footprint of the original single-family home at 19 Allen, and does not impact any interior spaces, only entry circulation. From the exterior, the change would be minimal, with most of the existing facade being retained as is, and only the existing door being removed, widened and replaced by a gate.

Further, it should be noted that due to changes made in the 1960s removing an older Moderne-style facade, 19 Allen has previously been found to be "non-contributing" to the District. This modification will result in residents of 15 Allen having a second, exterior, means of egress connecting to the public right of way.