

MEMORANDUM

To: Historic District Commissioners
From: Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator
Date: February 10, 2011
Re: HDC10-164 215 N Fifth Ave

This application was postponed at the January 13 HDC Meeting to allow the applicant to consider concerns expressed by the Commission. Those concerns included (but are not limited to):

1. The appropriateness of the proposed casement windows. The verticality of the windows was described as visually jarring.
2. The height and materials of the fence, especially the solid wall portion in close proximity to the street and sidewalk and its effect on the pedestrian experience. A lower fence was suggested, as was the use of brick or concrete in piers between metal fence sections instead of on the fence itself.
3. The lack of a street-facing front door, which is prevalent in the neighborhood.
4. Related to #3, the blankness of the street-facing elevation. Articulating (popping out) the chimney was suggested to give the eye something to look at.

Revised drawings have been submitted by the architect and are attached along with last month's staff report. Changes include the following:

- A1.0 Revised site plan showing fence and walkway material revisions.
- A1.1 A floorplan for the ground floor has been provided.
- A 2.0-5.0 Horizontal muntins have been added to the steel casement windows. The muntins are noted on the plan as optional: if the Commission is in favor of the muntins, staff suggests including them in a motion as a condition of approval.
- A2.0-5.0 The fence design has been changed. Along Fifth Avenue, the fence has been lowered to 36" in height on the southeast corner. As the fence runs north, architectural concrete is used to build up the base to keep the fence level. At the northeast corner, the 36" metal fence sits on approximately 5" to 7" of concrete. Along the north property line, the fence is predominantly 36" metal on architectural concrete, with two 16' sections of 5' high concrete fence opposite the two doors. On the south side, from the street wall of the house back to the rear module of the house, the fence is 5' concrete on a zero to 3' concrete base. Along the rear

module, the fence reverts to 36" metal on 3' to 4' concrete base. Facing the alley, two metal gates would be installed on either side of the garage, and the architectural concrete from the fence base would carry over onto the foundation of the west elevation. Staff will show comparison drawings (original and revised) at the meeting.

A2.0-4.0 Twin chimney pots have been added on top of the chimney.

A1.0, 2.0, 3.0, 5.0 The steel canopy structure over each of the two doors has been replaced by a steel trellis.

A7.0 A new context drawing showing elevations of buildings on the entire block has been provided.

Staff's opinion is that the window muntins modestly improve the overall design by softening some of the verticality of the casement windows. The fence height and materials along Fifth Avenue is now consistent with the fence next door at the Armory. Commissioner concerns about the blankness of the street-facing elevation (with the exception of the window muntins) and side entrance have not been addressed by these revisions.