

Staff Report – September 10, 2013

844 Park Avenue

Mount Vernon Historic District

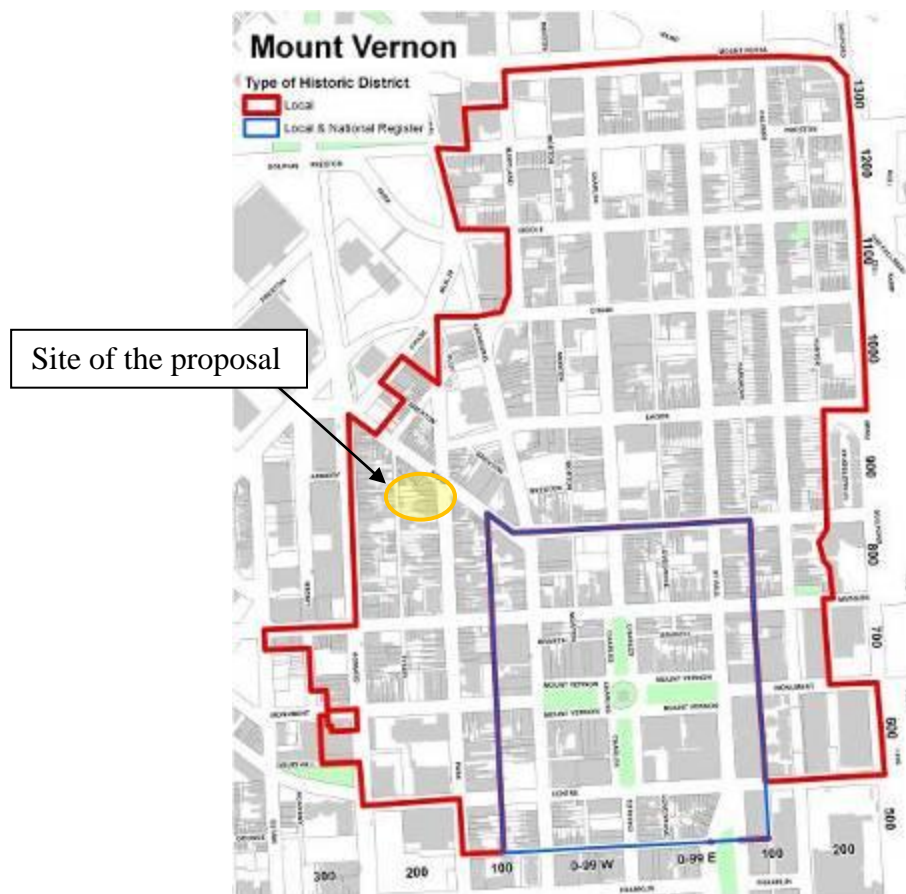
Plan: New three-story construction above and adjacent to a one-story structure- Concept Review

Staff: Eric Holcomb

Applicant: Urban design Group, LLC

Background: 844 Park Avenue is located in the Mount Vernon local historic district on the southwest corner of Park Avenue and Read Street. The site is approximately 30 feet wide and 170 feet long, with a one-story structure facing Park Avenue. This project incorporates an existing structure in its design instead of adding to an existing structure; therefore, the proposal will be reviewed under the Mount Vernon New Construction guidelines.

Plans: The developer proposes to construct a three-story building on top of and adjacent to a one story structure located at the southwest corner of Park Avenue and Read Street. Eight apartments are planned for the project. Commercial space will occupy the first floor facing Park Avenue.





Aerial images of project location



A view of the current structure



A view from Park Avenue, looking southwest



**Top image: view looking south from mid-block on Read Street
Bottom image: view looking south on Tyson Street from Read Street.**



View looking south onto Tyson Street, from Read Street.

Analysis:

Staff has applied the *Baltimore City's Mount Vernon Historic District Design Guidelines for New Construction* to this project in the following order:

- A. Setback – the proposed building maintains the same setback as the existing one-story structure that faces Park Avenue.
- B. Orientation – The proposal orients the primary façade on Park Avenue. In addition, the Tyson (alley) Street façade has a garage entrance as well as a pedestrian entrance. The design allows this façade to read as a primary entrance. Currently, small two- and three-story houses, one-story garages, large back additions, and empty lots exist on the 800 block of Tyson Street.
- C. Scale – the proposed building uses such elements as fenestration, floor heights, and banding, to carefully relate to the neighboring buildings on the intersection, which differ in height and style. The Tyson Street façade relate to its neighbor on the north.
- D. Proportion – The proportions of the principal façade is compatible with façade of neighboring buildings.
- E. Rhythm – the rhythm of the principal façade is compatible with the façade of neighboring buildings.
- F. Massing and Composition – The structure follows the same massing as the four-story town house structures in the 800 block of Park Avenue. The cornice line between the third and fourth story lines up with 840 Park Avenue. The fourth story (top story) lines up with the mansard roof at 840 Park Avenue.
- G. Height - The proposed building well below the 80-foot height limit.
 - The height of the top floor that faces Park Avenue is approximately 54 feet. To the brick cornice (between the third and fourth floors), the height is 42 feet. The height of 840 Park Avenue is approximately 54 feet. The Read Street triangular building (207 W. Read Street) is approximately 30 feet high.
 - The height of the Tyson Street façade is approximately 43 feet (including top floor). The height to the brick cornice is approximately 32 feet, approximate to its neighbor.
 - The middle section as seen from Read Street is between 54 and 57 feet. The north façade of the structure faces Read Street. However, Read Street intersects Park Avenue at an angle. At the corner of Park Avenue and Read Street, the north façade sits approximately three to five feet from the cornice line of 207 W. Read Street. At the corner of Tyson and Read Streets, the north façade sits approximately 140 feet from Read Street. The Read Street buildings date to the 1820s and 1830s (with the exceptions of the one-story structures that date to the early 1920s). The Park Avenue buildings date to the 1880s. The proposal transitions these heights and building periods nicely. The north façade fourth story sits back four and a half feet from the property line.

- H. Roof and Cornices – Needs more study.
- I. Steeples, Chimneys, and other roof Projections – NA
- J. Materials - To be reviewed later.
- K. Shadows and Depth of Facades - to be reviewed later.
- L. Windows – size, fenestration and arrangement are compatible to neighboring structures.
- M. Color - to be reviewed later.
- N. Details and Ornamentation – to be reviewed later.
- O. Street level facades - the arrangement of windows and doors interacts with the street level. Historically and currently Tyson Street has been made up of empty lots, small two and three story rowhouses, one- and two-story carriage houses, one-story garages, and large additions to buildings on Park and Howard Streets. A garage opening is appropriate to this corridor.
- P. Doors and Main Entrance - the main entrance is clearly marked, centrally located and reinforces the pedestrian nature of the street.
- Q. Storefronts – interacts with the street.
- R. Signs – to be reviewed later.
- S. Lighting - to be reviewed later.

Recommendation: Staff believes that this project meets criteria A, B, C, D, E, F, G, L, O, P, and Q. Staff believes the applicant should study the Cornice design and come back for final approval for sections H, J, K, M, and N of the *Mount Vernon Historic District Design Guidelines for New Construction*.

In addition there may be archaeological potential at the site.

Therefore, staff recommends **approval** of the concept plan as submitted with final design elements (sections H, J, K, M, and N) to be approved by staff, or the Commission at a later hearing. In addition, staff recommends the following:

1. The applicant obtains a registered professional archaeologist to conduct a phase 1a survey and make recommendations on further archaeological investigations, which will be considered by the full commission.

The historic design review process is in addition to other applicable laws and regulations and does not diminish the force of urban renewal plans, building codes, zoning codes, etc. It is the applicant's responsibility to contact all appropriate City agencies and comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and codes.