

Good Working Order

Street-level view with the former Hodges Sandwich Shop at left, Waffle Shop at center, and former Lord Baltimore station in the right background.



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Inventive Retail, Non-Profit, and Professional Projects

by G. Martin Moeller, Jr., Assoc. AIA

Chapter Design Award in Historic Resources

508 K Street

Washington, DC

Architect: Bonstra | Haresign ARCHITECTS

Structural Engineer: Rathgeber-Goss Associates

MEP Engineer: Schwartz Sievers Anioa Engineering

Civil Engineer: Dewberry

Historic Preservation Consultant: EHT Traceries

General Contractor: ADI Construction

At the corner of 5th and K streets, NW, a trio of small commercial structures originally built in three different decades on two different city blocks has been assembled into an improbable but charming low-rise village amid the dense Mount Vernon Square neighborhood. The buildings were saved and moved by Douglas Development to make way for major new projects on those two blocks. The site to which they were moved, also controlled by Douglas, was zoned for higher-density development, but the owner decided to maintain the smaller scale of the historic buildings, instead transferring some development rights to his nearby properties.

The historic structures are quite disparate in style and size. The oldest, the former Lord Baltimore Filling Station, was built in the 1920s on the opposite corner of 5th and K and includes an extensive canopy that once sheltered gas pumps. The former Hodges Roast Beef Sandwich Shop, built around the corner

from the Lord Baltimore in the 1940s, boasts an understated but elegant neoclassical façade with a large storefront window. The Waffle Shop, built in the 1950s in an exuberant mid-century modern style, was a beloved fixture on 10th Street, NW, before it was dismantled in anticipation of the move.

Bonstra | Haresign ARCHITECTS, the firm that oversaw the restoration of the existing buildings, prioritized creating a cohesive architectural composition out of this motley group. The architects placed the former gas station at the outer corner of the site, where its generous canopy now serves as a porch-like introduction to the complex with outdoor seating for the adjacent taco stand. Immediately to the east of the filling station is an uncovered dining patio. Next comes the glass-fronted Waffle House, with its reconstructed interior that evokes a coffee-shop set from *Grease*, which now serves as part of a pizzeria (for nostalgia's sake, the developer promised to ensure that the occupant of this space would continue to serve waffles for at least ten years). Last comes the former sandwich shop, running alongside the alley, which contains the rest of the pizzeria.

Linking the historic structures is a new row house-like building designed by Bonstra | Haresign that creates a neutral backdrop for the assemblage and mediates between its low scale and the high-rises beyond, while also serving practical purposes such as providing extra space for the taco stand. The result looks remarkably natural, as if the three quirky old buildings had been there all along. The project received a Chapter Design Award in Historic Resources.



Reconstructed interior of the Waffle Shop.

Aerial view with the former Lord Baltimore filling station in the foreground and the new row house structure to its rear.

