



Architecture Ahead

A First Look at Six Projects Coming to 14th Street

by Ellen Sands

Langston Lofts

14th & V Streets, NW

Shalom Baranes Associates

Expected Date of Completion: Spring 2005

The Langston Lofts, named in honor of writer Langston Hughes, will be a strong new anchor at the corner of 14th and V Streets, NW, and what Robert Sponseller, AIA, Principal at Shalom Baranes Associates, calls “a contemporary loft building, not a nostalgic one.” The project is across the street from the Reeves Center, while the rear property line abuts the green space of Harrison Park. Accordingly, the building offers two faces to the public.

The bolder 14th Street elevation will recognize the larger scale of the nine-story Reeves Center, the hub of DC’s local government. The construction will be metal panel and brick, and the language will be a crisp late modernism. Pieces of the building—the

glass bays and the brick piers that support them—will be simple yet bold. The design shows minimal ornament other than the elegance of the materials themselves and their juxtaposition to each other.

The interiors of the condominium units will be spacious and loft-like, with double-height spaces and industrial-look finishes, such as exposed ducts. On the flip side of the site, the design will take on a smaller, more intimate scale to create a relationship with the park. Lower than the front piece, these duplex units will still have double-height, loft-like spaces. Residents will have direct access to the park. A second-floor open-air terrace will run along the south side of the project, connecting front to rear and providing residents with additional outdoor space. In addition to the architectural challenges of these two fronts, the architects had to confront some more prosaic, but very demanding, site constraints, including accommodating two Metro subway tunnel shafts.