HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

Landmark/District:	**Dupont Circle HD**	(**X**) Agenda
Address:	**2000 Florida Avenue, NW**	( ) Consent
		(**X**) Concept
Meeting Date:	**May 26, 2016**	(**X**) Alteration
Case Number:	**16-258**	( ) New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	**Kim Elliott**	(**)** Demolition
		( ) Subdivision

The American Geophysical Union, with plans prepared by Hickok Cole Architects, seeks on-going conceptual design review for exterior alterations and interior renovations to a non-contributing building in the Dupont Circle Historic District in an effort to achieve a "Net Zero" energy building.

Property Description
The building was built in 1996 for the American Geophysical Union, the largest organization of Earth and Space scientists, designed by Shalom Baranes Associates Architects. Post-modern in style, it is located at the edge of the Dupont Circle Historic District on the corner of Florida Avenue and 20th Street. It is surrounded by a mixed context of large non-contributing office buildings to the north and south, and smaller-scale contributing commercial and apartment buildings to the west and across 20th Street to the east. The building's design was reviewed in 1995 by the HPRB and found to be compatible with the character of the historic district however based on its date of construction outside the period of significance (1875-1931), it is non-contributing to the district.

Proposal
The project calls for a full renovation to achieve net zero energy use through new penthouse and roof elements including a photovoltaic array structure on a projecting roof canopy, an accessible roof terrace, window replacement, and alterations to the façade. The project was presented to the HPRB in March where the Board found the design concept to be worthy of further development but directed the applicant to examine the presence and scale of the canopy, re-evaluate the updated window configurations and curtain wall, and study the details of the existing building and alterations.

Evaluation
Over the past two months the architects have been coordinating with their energy consultant and structural engineer to find the best approaches to incorporate the Board's suggestions while meeting their net zero goal. The team has also been working closely with HPO, the community, and the ANC to keep everyone up to date on the design progress. A resolution from the ANC and letters from DCC and DCCA have been submitted for the record.

The design has been revised in the following ways:

1) Window articulation—The Board identified that the multi-light composition of the windows was an important component in the building being found compatible with the historic district when it was approved in 1995, and that the simplification of the windows to what read as a large pane of glass with a

single narrow muntin resulted in a loss of scale and character. The revised design reintroduces a strong horizontal muntin to recreate a "transom" matching the original composition, and a stronger vertical center muntin. This articulation is carried through all of the elevation components – at the punched window openings, the projecting vitrine windows at grade, the main entry, and the projecting window element at the west elevation.

2) Main entry and West façade elements—Similar to its comments about the windows, the Board found the design of the main entry and the projecting element on the top floors of the west elevation to be so simplified that they no longer had a scale or proportions that were compatible with buildings in the historic district. In response, the main entry has been redesigned in the same language as the windows, with stronger framing elements. The projection element on West façade has been revised with the introduction of stronger horizontal and vertical framing elements and articulation of the vertical structural supports that reference the original brick elements.

3) Canopy—The Board's concern about the canopy focused on the height, dark presence, and its connection and architectural integration with the underlying building. In response to these comments, the height of the roof top canopy has been lowered by 3'-6" feet. The lowered height is more successful in unifying and integrating the new roof element into the building's tripartite organization, making it more a part of the building rather than something that sits on top of it. The improved proportions are more convincing in conveying the roof overhang as a modern cornice element that relates to and compliments the animated rooflines of neighboring buildings.

   The structural supports have been made thinner and further sculpted into a three pronged rotated support. The result is a lighter and more organic expression. After studying numerous material options for the structural support, a pigmented, pre-weathered zinc is proposed to provide a warm, natural color that complements the rich materials of the original building.

   The canopy design has also been developed to include transparent PV panels. These transparent panels will comprise approximately 10% of the full PV array and will be dispersed throughout the canopy's outer edge in order to provide a less dark, sun-dappled surface.

4) Landscape/Streetscape improvements—The design has progressed to improve the plaza and green space at the corner of Florida Avenue and 20th Street, including a more inviting entry point off of 20th Street, and adding additional trees in the public space. The vitrine windows introduced at the street level create a more welcoming relationship with the street with views into the building while still referencing the original masonry openings. The proposed storefronts are more compatible with the character of commercial streets in the historic district than the more solid, office base that the building currently expresses.

   The revised design responds to the Board's previous comments and achieves greater compatibility with the historic district. While the proposed roof structure would not be compatible on a contributing building or in a context that is more unified, the design solution is uniquely appropriate because of the site context. The building is non-contributing, on the edge of the Dupont Circle Historic District, and set in a varied context with non-contributing buildings to the north and south and a varied and eclectic collection of historic buildings to the east and west that lack consistency in style, time period, massing, scale, roofline, or materials.

   Through these design revisions the building will retain what was originally found by the Board to be compatible with the historic district. The detailing and design of the windows and entrance has been

refined to provide an appropriate level of articulation and human scale. The roof canopy has been redesigned to provide proportions that are more in keeping with those found in buildings with a tripartite organization, and made lighter in visual weight to better relate it both to the underlying building and to the character of roof features in the historic district. The alterations at the street level improve upon the compatibility of the building by offering storefront windows that are characteristic of the historic district and provide an improved pedestrian-oriented relationship.

Recommendation

HPO recommends that the Board find the concept compatible with the character of the historic district based on it being on a non-contributing building with this particular site context, and to delegate final approval to staff.