
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Property Address:	1666 Connecticut Avenue, NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Dupont Circle Historic District		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	November 17, 2022	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number	23-042	X	Alteration
			New Construction
			Demolition

On behalf of Meridian 1666 Connecticut LLC, architect Peter Kozloski with Interspec Design seeks the Board’s approval of one story addition to the side of this commercial building in the Dupont Circle Historic District. The building was constructed in 1962 and its first floor was rework likely in the late 1990s or 2000s to include an angled glass canopy. It is non-contributing to the Dupont Circle Historic District.

Project Description

The addition is proposed to permanently enclose the existing outdoor seating on the R Street side of this 7 story commercial building at the corner of Connecticut and R. An aluminum frame is proposed with fixed glass panels facing Connecticut, guillotine glass windows along R Street, and a glass roof. The grid of the frame is drawn from the division of panes of the building to which it is being attached.

The enclosure measures 10’8” tall by 18’ wide by 53’ long, which is one bay longer than the current café in order to cover the current door into the restaurant. The new access would be through the addition.

A small rooftop screen is also proposed at the west end of the existing penthouse surrounding new rooftop mechanicals.

Evaluation and Recommendation

The Board has typically not approved sidewalk café enclosures when they obscure the historic building to which they are attached or when they disrupt the continuous open character of the public space on which commercial buildings front. The first condition does not apply here and there are several comparable cases to examine regarding the second. Specifically within the Dupont Circle Historic District, the Board has approved enclosures on the 19th Street frontage of 1500 New Hampshire (Jury’s Hotel), on the 19th Street side of 1517 Connecticut (Kramer Books and café), on 1647 20th Street directly across Connecticut from the subject building, and on 2017 and 2011 S Street, one block up on Connecticut. In all of these situations, the enclosures were approved because they did not disrupt the continuity of the public space on the major commercial thoroughfare, and at the point where a commercial area turns the corner to meet a residential street.

In this instance, the HPO supports a glass addition in concept, but further refinements would improve the compatibility of the design. The proposal calls for the retention of the canted glass canopy running along part of the R Street elevation. This creates an awkward and visually busy façade, which may not be technically feasible. The HPO recommends removing the canopy to reduce the number of projections. The HPO would also support a reduction in the number of grid divisions in the addition as a way to lighten the overall design and increase transparency through it.

Staff has also suggested that the addition not expand to include the restaurant door. Entry into a building is better understood through its façade rather than through a demountable addition. Leaving the door uncovered would allow the business to retain its signage here since mounting signage on the addition or limiting its transparency with window signage would not be permitted.

The café seating has been present in this location for some time, with a variety of umbrella types and configurations. While an addition of this type would likely not be approvable on a smaller building or street, where it would greatly affect a context of residential buildings, it is appropriate here on a non-contributing building that is separated from the residential nature of R Street by the building's garage entry.

The HPO takes no issue with the discreet rooftop addition.

The HPO recommends that the Review Board direct the applicant to refine the addition as described above to increase compatibility and delegate final approval to staff, subsequent to review by DDOT's Public Space Commission.

Staff contact: Anne Brockett