

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

---

---

Property Address:	<b>1719 and 1723 N Street NW</b>	<b>X</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Dupont Circle Historic District</b>		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>December 16, 2021</b>	<b>X</b>	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>22-080</b>	<b>X</b>	Alteration

---

---

Working with ZGF Architects, the Society for Science and the Public proposes to join two buildings via a glass hyphen and construct rear, basement, and roof additions. The buildings, which contribute to the Dupont Circle Historic District, were constructed as freestanding residences. Hornblower and Marshall designed the three-bay, flat-fronted 1719 N Street in 1901 and Clarence Harding designed 1723 N Street with its bow-fronted bay in 1894. The buildings have received an accretion of historic additions to their rears and maintain a side yard between them.

**Proposal**

The proposal would add a hyphen between the two buildings accessed through new openings on each floor. At the front of 1719, the new openings are located just in front of the side bay projection. On 1723, they are directly across and sit between existing windows. Larger openings are proposed at the rear ells of each building.

The hyphen is comprised of butt-jointed glass and is set back from the facades by 8 feet. It is shorter than 1719 but would raise the height of 1723 where it connects just behind 1723's chimney. The exterior walls of the two buildings would remain exposed on either side.

The rear addition is designed as a unified composition with three bands of floor-to-ceiling glazing framed by horizontally oriented masonry composite panels. The glazing alternates between vision and spandrel glass. Abutting 1723 is a narrow termination of the glass hyphen, set in slightly from the existing rear wall.

The roof addition is somewhat complicated in plan in order to accommodate a conference room, roof terrace, multiple egress points, the elevator override, and mechanical space. All parts are shown as clad in metal panels.

While generally not under the purview of the HPRB, consideration has been given to preserving elements of the interiors. Rather than demolish the floor structure of one building to match the other's floor heights, the difference will be accommodated with stairs in the hyphen and with half-stops on the elevator. Most of the fireplaces and mantels will be retained, along with wainscoting, moldings, and other decorative features.

Two options have been presented for vertical circulation in 1719 (p. 28-29). The current proposal replaces the original grand stair on the first floor with an enclosed fire stair and opens the wall between the reception area and the former library/study. The alternate retains the original stair with its ornamental column and railing but requires a fire stair be added elsewhere. The alternate puts this enclosed stair within the study, creates a larger opening into the study from the hall, and keeps the wall between reception room and study. The alternate, as designed, would result in the loss of fireplaces on all floors.

## **Evaluation and Recommendation**

The design team has worked with HPO over the past year to develop a project that retains as much exterior and interior historic fabric as possible. The resultant plans connect the two buildings in a sensitive manner, leaving much of the exterior walls intact and exposed within a new atrium space. Floors have not been extended over this space with the exception of modest bridge connections between buildings. Floor assemblies are retained, despite having to add additional stairs throughout to connect between differing floor heights. The separation between these distinct, high-style buildings will thus be retained.

The rear elevation, while modern, is set back from the alley and from the adjacent carriage house. The alleyscape is a jumble of small historic carriage houses and garages, large non-historic office and residential blocks, and parking. Because of this altered alleyscape, the design of the addition does not raise significant preservation concerns.

Where the design deserves further attention is where the hyphen rests on the party wall of 1723, at the openings in the side wall of 1723, at the roofline of the rear façade, at the interior staircase of 1917, and in consideration of visibility of the roof addition. The HPO offers the following observations and comments on these issues:

- Clarification is needed for the design of the hyphen where it rests on the party wall of 1723 N Street. HPO suggests that the built up be glass like the rest of the hyphen and be constructed behind, not attached to, the freestanding decorative chimney.
- The design calls for punching new door openings between, and very close to, existing window openings on the side wall of 1723 N Street (p. 21). HPO suggests that the existing window openings be used and the bridge/landing be expanded to align with these openings.
- Replacing the parapet wall at the rear roof terrace with a cable or glass railing would lower the height to that of the historic roofline of 1723, rather than stand taller. As these adjustments are made, side elevations should also be developed and submitted.
- HPO appreciates the efforts made to preserve much of the interior, but the loss of both original staircases in both buildings seems as if it could be avoided or, at least modified. The grand stair at 1719 creates much of the historic feeling of the entry sequence and original reception area. If the stair is kept, is there another location for the new fire stair that doesn't abut the historic fireplaces? Could the columns and enframing of the staircase be retained with the fire stair enclosed behind it? Regardless, historic wood trim from the hallway walls should be retained and reused.
- A flag test is necessary to determine visibility of the roof addition on 1719. The design will require adjustment if the addition can be seen from oblique views on N Street.

## **Recommendation**

*HPO recommends that the approve the proposed project in concept, with direction to continue development of the design as noted above, and delegate final review to staff.*

*Staff Contact: Anne Brockett*