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

Property Address:	1147 17th Street, NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	16th Street Historic District		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	July 25/August 1, 2019	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	19-460	X	Alteration
			New Construction
			Demolition

The National Geographic Society, with plans prepared by Hickok Cole Architects, seeks conceptual design review for construction of an entrance pavilion and building and site alterations at their campus between 16th and 17th Streets along M Street. The intent of the project is to provide a main entrance and enhanced pedestrian-oriented plaza.

Property History and Description

The campus is comprised of four distinct but interconnected buildings: Hubbard Hall (1902); a building to the south of Hubbard Hall constructed in 1912; the 17th Street annex constructed in 1963; and the 1981 M Street building that wraps behind the 16th Street buildings and opens to the courtyard facing M Street.

The 1902, 1912 and 1981 buildings are located within the 16th Street Historic District; the earlier two buildings are contributing to the district and the 1981 building is not. A landmark application was submitted for the 1963 building by the DC Preservation League in 2017. However, rather than pursuing a designation for that single building, at the encouragement of HPO, the National Geographic Society has recently agreed to prepare a landmark nomination for the entire campus that would provide a full history and evaluation of the property. It is anticipated that the application would be submitted in the fall of this year for the Board's review.

Proposal

The plans call for construction of a double-height glass entrance pavilion with stone trim on the south side of the central plaza, providing connection to the 16th and 17th Street buildings. The roof of the pavilion would have a small penthouse and a public terrace. The courtyard would be re-landscaped to provide a richer visual experience through textured paving, additional plantings and enhanced seating areas to encourage activation and use.

A door and walkway are proposed for accessible entry to the 1912 building immediately north of the central entrance. Overgrown plantings in public space would be thinned or removed to open up views of the buildings; the proposal also includes reestablishing the row of tulip poplar trees that historically lined 16th Street.

Evaluation

The proposed addition will provide a needed central focus to the campus, compatibly sited between the existing buildings. The pavilion's classical proportions and abstracted temple form are compatible with the classical character of the campus's architecture, particularly the 1963 building. The applicants have modified the proposal to limit alterations and lighten the connection to the 17th Street building to retain the integrity of that building's design.

The reimaging of the courtyard will provide a unifying and more engaging public space for the campus. The landscape plans for the public space on 16th Street will enhance the character of the site and contribute to the recreation of an important historic landscape feature for the district. The insertion of a door in the base of the building for an accessible entrance has been aligned below an existing window and is compatible with the building's formal composition.

Recommendation

HPO recommends that the Board approve the concept as compatible with the character of the 16th Street Historic District and delegate final approval to staff.

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