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ARCHITECTURE DC

Urbane Renewal Renovations & Additions

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P-2 P20 1228

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1200 New Hampshire Avenue, NW

Courtesy of Bonstra | Haresign Architects

Addition to 1200 New Hampshire Avenue, NW

The original architects of the office building at 1200 New Hampshire Avenue, NW, which was completed in 1978,

surely envisioned the small, triangular plaza in front of the building as a public amenity, drawing pedestrians into adjacent shops and restaurants while providing places to sit in pleasant weather. In reality, although one end of the space is often used by the adjacent restaurant for outdoor dining, the fairly steep slope of the plaza has always discouraged passersby from cutting across it to get to the retail spaces. Exacerbating the problem is the fact that the storefronts are set back from the primary façade plane about six feet, behind large concrete columns, further discouraging pedestrians from entering the shops and food service establishments. Tellingly, one of the prime corners of the ground floor is currently used not for retail, but as back-office space for one of the building tenants.

To address these problems, **Bonstra | Haresign Architects** has designed a one-level addition to the building that will fill in the small plaza while storefront modifications will bring retail spaces right to the edge of the sidewalk. The triangular addition will provide a double-height space with a vast wall of glass along New Hampshire Avenue—an ideal location for an elegant restaurant or high-end store. The new construction will also bring the main lobby of the building closer to the street, while a new canopy and planters will make the entrance more inviting.

On top of the addition will be a green roof, which will simultaneously address environmental concerns about stormwater runoff and enhance views from offices above. Moreover, in concert with the soaring glass wall of the restaurant/retail space below, the green roof will terminate the visual axis from M Street, NW, which angles away from its predominant east-west orientation just before it reaches the building.

The owners and the architects hope that the redesigned street frontage of 1200 New Hampshire will help to enliven a traditionally undervalued intersection at the juncture between the Dupont Circle, downtown, and West End neighborhoods.



Rendering of proposed addition and renovation of 1200 New Hampshire Avenue, NW.

Courtesy of Bonstra | Haresign Architects