

DC Mud

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CATO Institute Builds Up and Out

Posted by Shaun on 12/09/2009 08:33:00 AM

Labels: Akridge, Clark Construction, Gensler Architects, HOK Architecture



The Cato Institute's landmark headquarters building on Massachusetts Avenue in NW will soon expand up and out after razing its southern neighbor and constructing a 34,000 s.f. addition designed by Gensler Architects. While liberals may groan, both the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) and the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) approved the plans, including

the raze request and relief from rear loading requirements, setting in motion demolition this spring followed by construction expected to last 14 months.

The conservative think tank won plaudits in 1993 for its 6-story, HOK-designed glass atrium that conformed the building to its site on diagonal Massachusetts Avenue. Gensler's plans include adding an extra floor to the existing building and constructing a new, 7-story addition that will attach to the southern perimeter. The final product will include approximately 69,752 s.f. of office use, including the 34,150 s.f. expansion.



Bill Erickson, Vice President for Finance & Administration at Cato, said he had been trying to acquire the National Medical Association (NMA) building for almost 12 years, but the NMA had resisted, wanting to stay within the District. Cato ultimately purchased the property in June 2009 for a \$7 million, and filed their raze



application in July. The NMA will likely move out in February and start their new lease in Silver Spring.

Cato will

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welcome the addition because,

according to Erickson, it is "totally out of office space" and has been renting about 5,000 s.f. from a nearby office. The think tank is also looking to expand program space, increasing the size of their theater to include 194 seats and adding amenities like a gym and rooftop garden for a growing program staff. They will not seek LEED certification despite several green features.



Akridge is managing the project for CATO, and the firm is currently determining the construction costs through consultation with Clark Construction, though no formal contracting has taken place. The estimated total construction cost is \$25 to \$28 million, which Cato plans to fund through a capital campaign, according to Erickson.

Erickson described the reaction of the community and various oversight agencies as very positive,

including unanimous approval from both the ANC and the BZA. Erickson added the Office of Planning and neighbors at 1010 Mass loved the plan and were happy to hear an "eyesore" would be replaced and improved.



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