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American Institute of Architects project is backed by the National Capital Planning Commission

Washington Business Journal - by [Tierney Plumb](#) Staff Reporter

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The **American Institute of Architects** heard good news from the **National Capital Planning Commission** on Thursday. The NCPC is supporting its headquarters design plan and sending along recommendations to the zoning commission.

AIA is in the process of turning its 1970s-era headquarters into a green and carbon neutral building. The 180,000-square-foot building at 1735 New York Ave. NW was originally designed by The Architect's Collaborative and was first occupied in 1973.

NCPC said at its meeting on Thursday that AIA's proposed plan would not adversely affect federal interests.

AIA wants to move its bookstore so that it will be accessible directly from the front plaza, as will a ground-floor conference room that will be used for meetings and events with the capacity for 150 people.

AIA's bookstore currently sits on the ground floor of the building but is removed from the street so it does not get as much foot traffic as it could. A zoning change would allow the architects group to utilize the desired bookstore space, which has previously not been zoned for retail use.

The zoning commission has given preliminary approval of the project, and it should get full zoning approval June 22.

According to Paul Tummonds, real estate partner for Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP in D.C., AIA is happy to hear that NCPC supports its design plan.

In order to attain a Platinum Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating, the AIA is looking for a zoning adjustment to construct high-level sustainable design features.

It plans to build three building ventilation shafts through the top four floors of the building to be used in conjunction with proposed operational windows to help cool the building using natural air flow.

The D.C. office of Studios architecture will partner with the AIA and DPR Construction Inc. to complete the renovation.

The initial goal is a 60 percent reduction in fossil fuel use by 2012 with carbon neutrality by 2030. The project is expected to start in early 2010.