



MCPHERSON BUILDING ROOFTOP

*Strategic Repositioning That Transforms
the Tenant Experience*

2026

**OWNER**

Northwestern Mutual

LOCATION

901 15th Street, NW,
Washington, DC

SIZE

11,117 SF

ARCHITECT

Deceder Group

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Cushman & Wakefield

BUILDING BROKER

Avison Young

CONSTRUCTION MANAGER

White & Whitney

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

DFS Construction

MEP ENGINEER

CTA Consulting Engineers

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

Rathgeber-Goss Associates

THE PROJECT

The upper levels of the McPherson Building had long been an underutilized asset in one of the city's most competitive office corridors. When a long-term tenant was scheduled to move out at the end of their lease term, ownership recognized the opportunity to reposition the rooftop as a signature amenity. This initiated a feasibility study to understand what was structurally and operationally possible.

Collaboration began through an existing relationship with the building's brokerage team, who brought Deceder Group in to assess the opportunity after repeat success with other repositioning efforts throughout the building.

The early work that included evaluating mechanical constraints, identifying usable square footage, and producing multiple rounds of tailored renderings set the tone for the entire project. With the feasibility study and renderings as a strong foundation, the project moved seamlessly into full design for the rooftop amenity renovation, demolition of part of the 11th Floor, common corridor of 11th Floor, and addition of an elevator and stairs connecting the 12th Floor to the rooftop.

The program for the rooftop space called for a flexible, year-round environment that could support both building events and private tenant use. Key requirements included operable indoor/outdoor connections, a fully furnished terrace, and a strategy that could accommodate vertical access.

THE SOLUTION

Deceder Group developed a multi-floor repositioning strategy that addressed structure, circulation, and the elevated experience ownership envisioned.

New slab openings on the 11th and 12th floors established the framework for future vertical access via a stair and elevator. Several planning decisions established during the feasibility phase such as the restroom placement, mechanical room location, and elevator shaft alignment, were intentionally carried forward to maintain continuity and efficiency.

At the rooftop level, the design centered on a purpose built steel frame supporting a dual operable wall system. The nanowall assemblies, selected for durability and seamless operation, allow the space to function as a conditioned lounge in winter and an open air terrace in warmer months. The structural concept was developed in close coordination with the engineering team to meet setback, height, and load requirements.

RELATED PROJECTS AT 901 15TH STREET, NW

- > Two Spec Suites and Lounge Amenity on 6th Floor | 11,108 RSF
- > CorePower Renovation and Expansion | 5,700 RSF
- > Philips North America
- > 5th and 6th Floor Spec Suites
- > 6th and 8th Floor Demo | 57,000 RSF

The material palette was chosen for durability and a polished, cohesive look: curtain wall finish and glazing were to match the buildings existing system, glass railings with integrated gates, and paver system over a new topping slab. The canopy and exterior finishes were calibrated to align with the building façade, creating a seamless extension of the building's overall architectural look with the addition of wood tones for visual warmth.

Throughout construction, Deceder Group remained deeply engaged by attending weekly meetings, responding to requests for informations (RFIs), reviewing submittals, and resolving field conditions proactively.



A key part of the preliminary work involved developing early renderings for the building owner. These images captured the desired program elements and offered a first look at the rooftop's potential. What began as a small, underutilized terrace would soon evolve into the elevated and refined amenity it is today. Above are several of the initial renderings that helped guide the project.

THE RESULT

The completed rooftop amenity delivers a high end, flexible environment that not only strengthens the building's overall competitive position in the market, but proved to be the catalyst in securing another large, long-term tenant with a 30-year lease. The operable façade, elevated terrace, and cohesive material palette create a premium experience rarely available in comparable buildings. Thanks to the preliminary work completed in anticipation of this project, this rooftop transformation was completed in approximately 38 weeks without compromising initial design intent.

What was once a roof dominated by mechanical equipment and a modest garden is now a fully realized indoor/outdoor destination with panoramic views of some of the city's most recognizable monuments. This transformation demonstrates the value of strategic preliminary planning and seamless collaboration, proving that even a complex, constrained rooftop can become a long-term asset that will serve the building and its tenants for decades.





CONTACT US


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 The difference is in the details.