

# ARCHITECTURAL R E C O R D

## Sherber + Rad

Surface Tension: A progression of materials from rough poplar bark to smooth bronze panels takes clients through a storefront shop to the inner sanctum of a dermatologist and a plastic surgeon.



Jameson wrapped existing columns with black-painted wood to create a transition street and the shop.

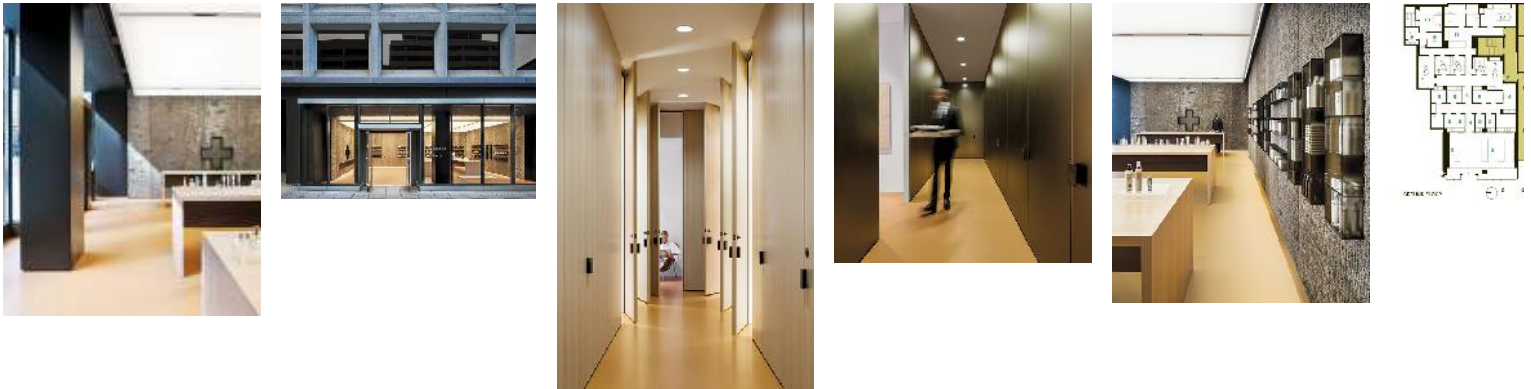
Sherber + Rad

David Jameson Architect

Washington, D.C.

Jameson wrapped existing columns with black-painted wood to create a transition zone between the

Photo © Paul Warchol



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*September 16, 2015*

*Clifford A. Pearson*

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## David Jameson Architect

### Washington, D.C.

**Surface Tension: A progression of materials'from rough poplar bark to smooth bronze panels'takes clients through a storefront shop to the inner sanctum of a dermatologist and a plastic surgeon.**

Beauty may be skin-deep, but David Jameson's design for the offices of a dermatologist and a plastic surgeon reaches beneath the surface, peeling back layers of intrigue. Inspired by the structure of a tree'with its rough bark on the outside and smoother rings closer to the core' the Washington, D.C.'based architect organized the 3,770-square-foot facility as a progression of spaces wrapped in increasingly refined materials. The sequence evokes the dermatological procedure of removing dry skin to reveal the softer tissue below.

“The project is about layering—both spatially and in terms of textures and materials,” says Jameson. Most visitors enter through a storefront retail space where they can buy skin-care products and speak with employees who can explain the items or set up appointments with either Dr. Noëlle Sherber, the dermatologist, or her husband, Dr. Ariel Rad, the plastic surgeon. Jameson lined the walls here with the thick bark of 40 poplar trees, unrolled vertically to create the impression of a flattened forest. Variations in color, texture, and width show that nature is not uniform and enhance the visual appeal of the space. Some of the bark still has lichen attached or knots where branches had been. Because bark is an inert material, it does not have to be treated or sealed.

Bronze-colored glass shelves with mirror-glass backs are attached to two walls in a crisp pattern of horizontal bands and vertical stripes. “I like the tension between the precision of the glass shelves and the irregularity of the bark,” says Jameson. On a third wall, a cross or plus sign composed of the same materials serves as a logo for Sherber + Rad and draws customers to a reception table. For flooring, Jameson used a synthetic epoxy often found on ships because it is seamless and resists germs and organic compounds. The ceiling is a stretched, translucent PVC fabric with LEDs above, so it creates an even glow across the entire room. Recessed LEDs around three sides of the ceiling make it appear to float, independent of the walls. Bleached-cypress tables—40 inches wide and 12 feet long—align with the shelves and maintain the geometric rhythm of the room.

To get to the medical area, visitors open a door in the back of the boutique—camouflaged because it’s covered in bark, like the rest of the wall. Only a small bronze door handle reveals its function. “Washington is a city that emphasizes discretion,” says Sherber, “so we wanted to create a place where a politician or a television personality could come, browse the merchandise, and no one would know he is getting treatment.” For very special people, there’s a private entry off the building lobby that leads directly to a VIP treatment suite.

Off a short gallery displaying artworks made with encaustics is a pair of parallel corridors, the first one surfaced in bleached cypress and the second in glass panels backed with bronze. The cypress corridor takes patients to individual waiting rooms—or “cabanas”—each one outfitted with wood-clad walls and an Eero Saarinen womb chair, where they can relax during the 30 minutes it takes for numbing cream to prepare them for Botox or other procedures. Then they proceed to the treatment rooms behind the bronze-backed-glass doors. “The combination of organic and high-tech elements reflects our approach to our work,” states Rad.

Set in a mid-1960s Brutalist concrete office building in a part of downtown Washington where many lobbyists work, Sherber + Rad is embedded in the city’s peculiar culture of power and appearance. And with its sophisticated retail front and high design, it challenges the traditional model of a

medical practice. Come in for a look at the fancy skin creams, and you might end up with a nip-and-tuck to tighten that beautiful-but-aging face of yours.

**Architect:**

David Jameson Architect

4435 Wisconsin Ave NW Suite 410

Washington, DC 20016

202-363-0080

Size: 3,770 square feet

Cost: withheld

Completion date: June 2015

**People**

**Client/Owner:** Ariel Rad, Noelle Sherber

**Architect:**

David Jameson Architect

4435 Wisconsin Ave NW Suite 410

Washington, DC 20016

202-363-0080

*Personnel in architect's firm who should receive special credit:*

David Jameson (FAIA, Principal), Frank Curtis (AIA, Project Manager), Oscar Maradiaga (Project Architect)

**Interior designer:**

David Jameson Architect

**Engineers:**

Greenman – Pedersen, Inc. (MEP)

**Consultant(s):**

*Lighting:* DKT Lighting, David Tozer

**General contractor:**

Madden CCI, Mike Madden

**Products**

**Structural system**

Typ. metal stud construction

**Doors**

*Wood doors:* Typ. Solid Core 1 ¾” Thick

**Hardware**

*Locksets:* Omnia

*Closers:* Dorma

*Exit devices:* Prolume

*Pulls:* Custom door pulls by Metal Specialties  
Doug Mockett (cabinet)

*Security devices:* Petitbone Security

*Other special hardware:*

Ezy Jamb door frames

Rickson Door Hinges

**Interior finishes**

*Suspension grid:* USG

*Cabinetwork and custom woodwork:*  
Potomac Woodworking

**Photographer(s):**

Paul Warchol 212-431-3461

*Paneling:*

Bark House Bark panels

Quarter sawn Cypress millwork by Potomac Woodworking

*Plastic laminate:* Abet Laminati

*Solid surfacing:* Corian

*Special surfacing:* Galaxy Glass

*Floor and wall tile:*

*S + R Shower:* Stone Source

Subway wall tile

*Carpet:* Carpet tile

*Special interior finishes unique to this project:*

Boldit by Fusion Floors

*Office furniture:* Client provided

*Reception furniture:* Furniture from Scandnavia by Annette Rachlin

*Chairs:* Knoll

*Tables:*

Custom Tables by Potomac Woodworking

*Other furniture:* Custom glass vitrines by Galaxy Glass

**Lighting**

*Interior ambient lighting:* Barrisol

*Downlights:* Lucifer, Dasal, Portfolio

*Task lighting:* Bartco, iGuizzini

**Plumbing**

Duravit, Mirabelle, Newport Brass, Hansgrohe, Geberit

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Clifford Pearson joined *Architectural Record* in 1989 and now serves as a deputy editor-in-chief, overseeing the magazine's annual Design Vanguard program and its Asia coverage. He is the author of the book *Indonesia: Design and Culture* (Monacelli, 1998) and the editor of *Modern American Houses: Four Decades of Award-Winning Design in Architectural Record* (Harry N. Abrams, 1996). He holds a master's degree in architectural history from Columbia University and a bachelor's degree from Cornell University.

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