

## 2.2 Historic Background

### Early Site Development

During the nineteenth century, the area that currently encompasses the former Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) was rural and isolated from the District of Columbia (DC). To the south of the Site was a Civil War fort named Fort Stevens. On July 11, 1864, Confederate troops led by General Jubal Early attempted to enter the city, but were turned back by Union troops on what later became the WRAMC Site.<sup>1</sup> In the 1880s, 131 acres of land between Seventh Street and Rock Creek was purchased by J. D. Cameron, which included the 110.1 acres WRAMC occupies today.<sup>2</sup>

In 1905, at the time the land was purchased for the Army hospital, the area contained a mixture of woodlands, farmland and summer estates. At that time, a farmhouse and outbuildings, located near Cameron's Creek, were probably owned by Thomas Carberry.<sup>3</sup> Along the western border were woodlands, and west of Cameron's Creek was farmland.<sup>4</sup>

### WRAMC Historic Background

The need for an Army hospital on a separate military installation dated back to the Civil War when Surgeon General William A. Hammond first conceived of the need for a military medical reservation in the District of Columbia. His 1862 report recommended a permanent hospital complete with a medical school and a medical museum.

Lieutenant Colonel William Cline Borden, also a surgeon, hoped for better facilities and was spurred on by the death of his friend Walter Reed, a renowned doctor and scientist who proved that yellow fever was carried by mosquitoes, who died in 1902 following an emergency appendectomy.

Borden lobbied both Congress and the Army Medical Department for an Army medical center containing a hospital, medical school, museum and library. His grand plan took on the moniker "Borden's Dream." In 1903 he commissioned local architects Marsh and Peter to produce a watercolor rendering and sketch plans for a medical campus. The plans featured the main hospital administration building set on a curving main drive, with groups of hospital wards, staff housing and a chapel, arranged in a nearly symmetrical pattern around an ample amount of open green space. The curving drive linked the most significant buildings on the Site.

A board appointed by the Secretary of War solicited for a suitable location in the District of Columbia with the result of "some forty different offers" proposed Borden, who sat on the board, reported:

*... "that although the hospital was not a city hospital, it should be located within convenient reach of the main railroad depot, on a good road, and should have street-car facilities, adjacent water main and sewer, also the site should be well elevated, well drained, and sufficient size to give good air space about the hospital and to allow erection of other buildings which would eventually be required."*<sup>6</sup>

In 1905, Congress appropriated \$100,000 for the purchase of 42.97 acres of land in the northern portion of the District of Columbia. The original Site was bounded by Brightwood Avenue (renamed Georgia Avenue in 1909) on the east, Aspen Street on the south, a line near 14th Street on the west, and a portion of Dahlia Street on the north.<sup>7</sup>

In 1906, \$200,000 was appropriated for the construction of a new hospital and the land was designated a military reservation to be known as the



Figure 3-35: Historic Site Plan; undated, but prior to 1915. The heavy black line identifies the present day perimeter of the Walter Reed campus. Source: Library of Congress, Evans & Bartlett map of the District produced between 1892 and 1894.

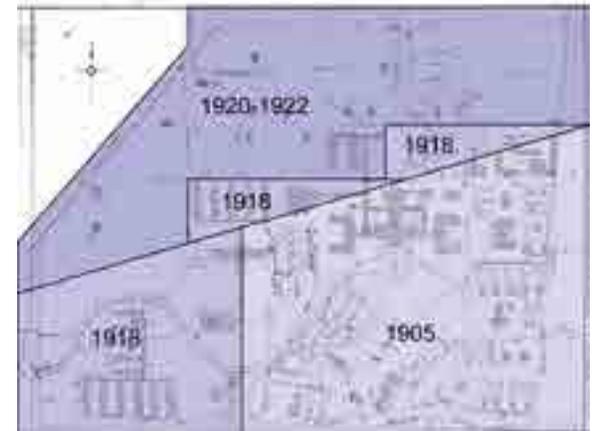


Figure 3-36: 1927 Site Plan Shows an overlay of when parcels were added to the Walter Reed campus. Many of the early additions to Building 1 and other significant structures were present at this time, including: the Main Barracks (Building 7), the Provost Marshall House (Building 12), the Central Heating Plant (Building 15), and Doss Memorial Hall (Building 17). The winding main drive through the campus and other surviving landscape elements are also in place. Note the residential nature of the northern parcel. Source: WRAMC Plan room with overlay by Oehrlein & Associates Architects.



“Walter Reed United States Army General Hospital,”<sup>8</sup> named for Borden’s friend Walter Reed.

The central hospital and administration building (Building 1), designed by local architects Marsh and Peter in the Colonial/Georgian Revival style, was completed in 1908 and opened May 1, 1909 with administrative offices, room for 75 patients, an operating room and a kitchen.<sup>9</sup>

In 1923, General John J. Pershing signed the War Department order which created the Army Medical Center. The Army Medical Center Building (Building 40) was built west of the hospital at a cost of \$500,000 and the first wing was completed in 1924.<sup>10</sup>

By 1917, Walter Reed hospital was treating thousands of veterans wounded in World War I and begins to grow rapidly. At the beginning of the war, Walter Reed is only able to accommodate 121 patients. In 1918, the Army School of Nursing opened at Walter Reed; its first graduating class has more than 400 students.

Between 1920 and 1922, 44 additional acres of land were purchased on the north side of the campus.<sup>11</sup> A year later, after the campus was expanded and temporary buildings were constructed, that capacity grew to 2,500. Even as Walter Reed treated those wounded during World War I, the center admitted thousands of civilians swept up in the nationwide influenza pandemic.

Then, as World War II raged on, more than 18,000 service members are admitted in 1943 alone. The figure tops the previous record of 13,752 service members hospitalized during World War I. The increase in patients pushed the Army to purchase the old National Park Seminary nearby to create a “convalescent section.”

In 1948 General John Pershing died at Walter Reed. Pershing, who led US forces in Europe during WWI, was a vocal supporter of the hospital and advocated for the medical care of the sol-

diery who served under him. His room at Walter Reed became known as the “Pershing Suite” and thereafter treated famous officers, including General Peyton March and President Dwight D. Eisenhower, during their hospital stays at Walter Reed.

The new building for the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology was completed in 1955. It was built to be atomic bomb-proof, with dense concrete walls and no windows. Decades later, the institute helped identify the remains of unknown soldiers from Vietnam and victims of the September 11 terrorist attacks.

Then-Vice President Richard Nixon entered Walter Reed as a patient with a staph infection in 1960. He left in early September of that year, but was not completely recovered by the time he had to participate in the first televised Presidential debate. Nixon famously appeared sick and frail next to a very vibrant John F. Kennedy. Nixon eventually recovers from his illness but loses the 1960 presidential race.

Seven years after leaving the White House, in 1968, President Eisenhower enters WRAMC as a patient. He spends eleven months at the hospital and is treated for coronary artery disease and congestive heart failure. He dies at Walter Reed in 1969 and is one of six US President’s to receive treatment there.

In 1977, the new Hospital, Building 2, was completed; it took five years to construct. The building was supposed to replace the older facilities at Walter Reed and is so large that it required its own electrical power plant that has the capacity to power a city of 50,000.

Throughout its more than 100 years of activity, Walter Reed served more than 150,000 active duty and retired personnel from all branches of the military. Besides US Military members, the U.S. President, Vice President, Senators and



**Figure 3-37: Post 1977 Historic Photo**  
View looking north at Building 1 with new hospital, Heaton Pavilion (Building 2) looming behind. Note the curving Main Drive with trees and open grassy areas. Source: Walter Reed Directorate of Public Works Archives, Box 1, Folder 2, #09-4498



**Figure 3-38: 1915 Historic Photo from Southeast**  
View of hospital (note east and west additions were completed by this time) with open landscaping, curving main drive, and trees planted along roadways. Source: Walter Reed Directorate of Public Works Archives, Box 1, Folder 5, #09-4706



**Figure 3-39: 1915-22 Historic Aerial Photo from South**  
View looking north with powerhouse, original bandstand and temporary buildings in the foreground. Source: Walter Reed Directorate of Public Works Archives, Box 1, Folder 1, #09-4467



Representatives were authorized to and did receive care at Walter Reed.

In 2005, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) recommended that the Army close the WRAMC, with the name to be carried over to the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) in nearby Bethesda, Maryland.

For over a century, the WRAMC provided facilities for patient care, medical research and educational development for the Armed Forces of the United States. Patients have included soldiers from all branches of the Armed Forces; their dependents as well as, retired military personnel, heads of state as well as high ranking government officials.

## ENDNOTES

1. KFS Historic Preservation Group, p. 9.
2. *Ibid*, p. 9.
3. *Ibid*, p. 11.
4. *Ibid*.
5. Mary W. Standlee, "The Walter Reed General Hospital of the United States Army," by Major William C. Borden. *Postface of Borden's Dream, Washington, DC: Borden Institute, 2009, p. 436.*
6. *Ibid*, p. 436.
7. KFS Historic Preservation Group, "Main Section, Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, DC, Section 106 Report – Draft Report," May 1994, p. 11.
8. War Department, General Orders No. 83, May 2, 1906, from Walter Reed Directorate of Public Works Archives, Box 3, Folder 58.
9. Standlee, pp. 437-438.
10. Undated report, Walter Reed Directorate of Public Works Archives, Box 3, Folder 62.
11. Walter Reed Army Medical Center Centennial: A Pictorial History, 1909-2009, Washington, DC: Borden Institute, 2009, p. 28.

## Timeline

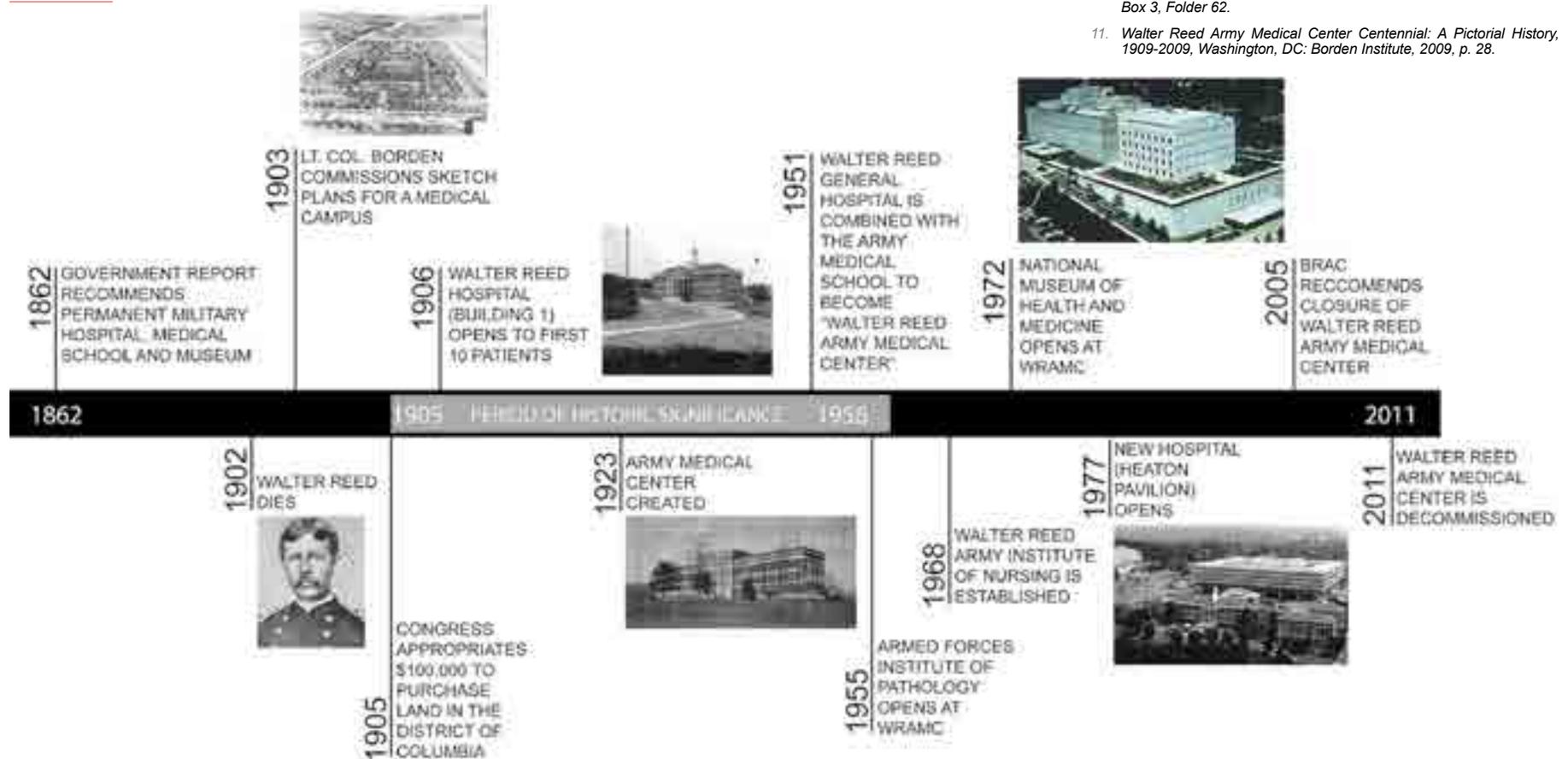


Figure 3-40: Timeline diagram showing the history of the Walter Reed campus and identifying the Period of historic Significance. Source: Oehrlein & Associates Architects.



## ELIGIBLE ELEMENTS FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

- Buildings
- Landscape

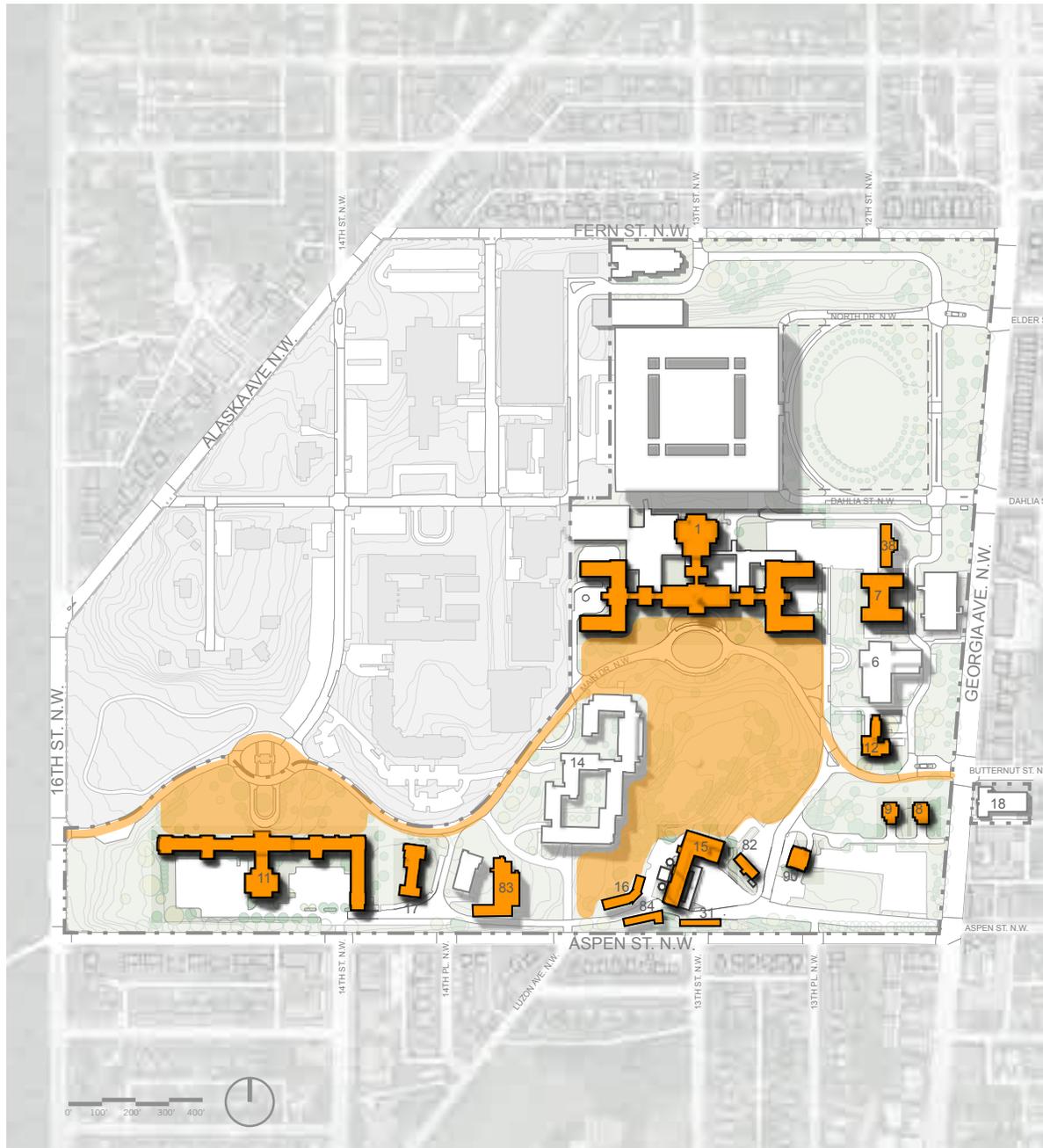


Exhibit 3-41: Preserve Historic Elements



WALTER REED ARMY MEDICAL CENTER

SMALL AREA PLAN - DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT - JANUARY 28, 2013

## 2.3 Urban Design & Public Realm

### Existing Buildings

The 27 existing buildings on the 66.57 acre LRA parcel<sup>1</sup> at the former WRAMC campus present a rare and exciting opportunity for large-scale redevelopment in DC.

The Site contains a vast collection of buildings, some of which are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (see “Exhibit 3-41: Existing Buildings on LRA Site” on page 37). The following is a general overview of the built environment:

- The Site contains a good quantity of existing building stock suitable for rehabilitation. Most buildings are in good condition and robustly constructed.
  - Several large, existing buildings on the Site are suitable for redevelopment as office space, providing the opportunity to bring many new jobs.
  - Several large, existing buildings are suitable for redevelopment as multi-family housing, providing a place for users of the Site to live close to work and shopping/retail.
  - The vast open space south of Building 1 and east of Building 14, known as the Great Lawn, contains historic open space and should be maintained as a programmable site amenity.
  - Buildings with little reuse potential and that are not historically significant can be considered for demolition/removal to accommodate new development on the Site.
- In creating a new program for the Site, preserving the legacy of the historic structures helps to define a unique sense of place.
  - Reuse of existing buildings serves as a model for environmental sustainability.
  - Buildings 8 and 9 are owned by a company operating under an agreement with the Army for a 50 year lease. The lease went into effect on July 1, 2004.

#### ENDNOTES

1. *The Army notified the LRA in June 2012 that the acreage of surplus property at Walter Reed changed from approximately 67.5 acres to approximately 66.57 acres.*



## EXISTING BUILDINGS

 LRA Boundary

| Bldg No.                   | Name                               | Total SF (Gross) |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1                          | Administration Building            | 396,134          |
| 2                          | Heaton Pavilion Army Health Center | 2,584,477        |
| 2A                         | Military Advanced Training Center  | 33,500           |
| 4                          | Patient / Visitor Parking          | 424,514          |
| 6                          | Borden Pavilion                    | 65,649           |
| 7                          | Main Barrack                       | 50,379           |
| 8                          | Officer Housing                    | 7,994            |
| 9                          | Officer Housing                    | 7,712            |
| 11                         | Delano Hall                        | 148,679          |
| 12                         | Provost Marshal Admin              | 18,019           |
| 14                         | Abrams Hall                        | 170,821          |
| 15                         | Central Heating Plant              | 25,042           |
| 16                         | DPW Grounds Facilities             | 5,215            |
| 17                         | Doss Memorial Hall                 | 20,488           |
| 18                         | Walter Reed Inn                    | 28,162           |
| T20                        | Mologne House                      | 95,600           |
| 31                         | Warehouse                          | 1,987            |
| 38                         | Vaccaro Hall                       | 9,641            |
| 45                         | Bandstand                          | 688              |
| 48                         | Chiller Plant                      | 18,637           |
| 49                         | Supplemental Chiller Plant         | 1,212            |
| 82                         | Auto Skills Center                 | 2,256            |
| 83                         | DOIM Information Center            | 15,054           |
| 84                         | Equipment Shed                     | 2,736            |
| 88                         | Recreation Center                  | 15,834           |
| 90                         | Fire Station                       | 6,057            |
| 91                         | Administration Building            | 8,581            |
| <b>TOTAL LRA Buildings</b> |                                    | <b>4,165,068</b> |

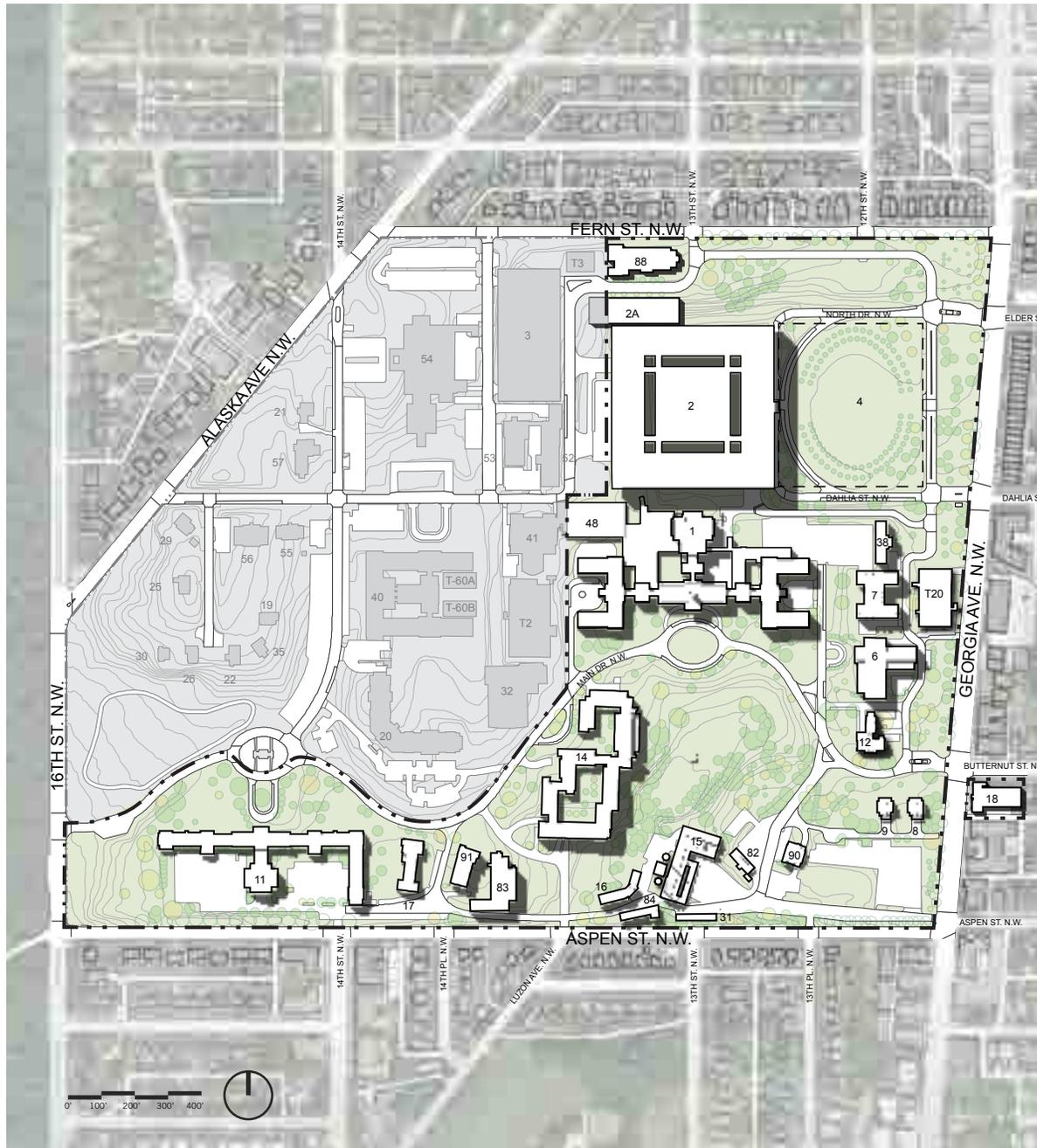
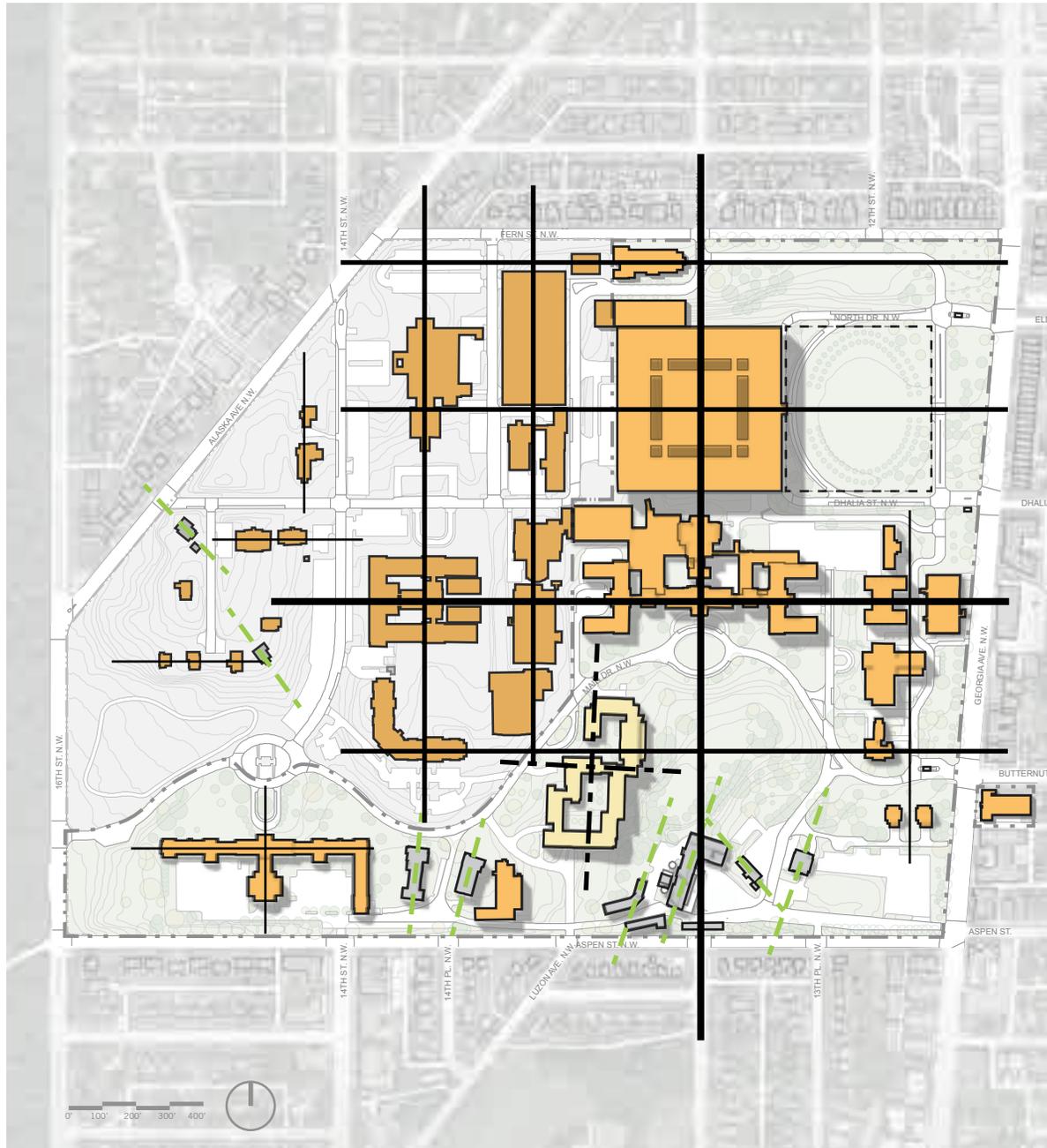


Exhibit 3-42: Existing Buildings on LRA Site. Source: Perkins+Will





## BUILDING ALIGNMENT

-  Primary Axis Line
-  Secondary Axis Line
-  Tertiary Axis Line
-  Topography Axis Line
-  Slightly Skewed Axis Line
-  Buildings Aligned to North-South and East-West Axis
-  Buildings Slightly Skewed from the Cardinal Axis
-  Buildings Aligned to Topography

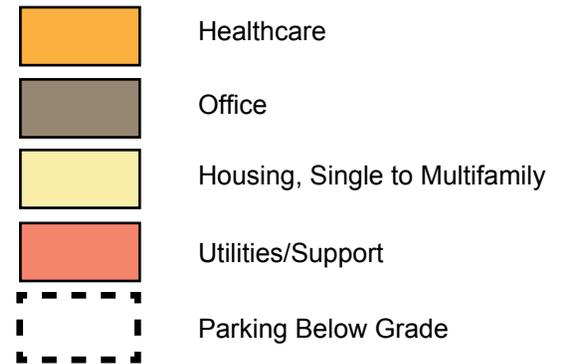
Buildings maintain a strong orthogonal orientation, with most aligning to the cardinal directions. The primary orientation axes were originally established by Building 1 and followed by most of the subsequent buildings as the campus grew. The alignment of individual buildings oriented to the cardinal directions generally does not vary in response to the site topography, despite the considerable slopes and changes in grade.

The arrangement of building clusters responds to the Site topography, while maintaining the orientation to the cardinal directions. The main exception to the primary axes is a collection of buildings surrounding Building 15 (the Steam Plant), which may have had a frontal relationship to Cameron Creek, and a few others along the southern edge. The more recent Building 14 shifts atypically off the cardinal axes just slightly, possibly in response to the topography and available land. This shift is small enough that it is hard to perceive.

Exhibit 3-43: Building Alignment



## INTENDED ORIGINAL BUILDING USES



### Intended and WRAMC Building Uses

Within the Walter Reed Site, there are 27 buildings representing approximately 4.1 million gross square feet (GSF) of space. The original uses of 19 of these have hardly changed over time. The other 8 buildings have undergone use changes over time, as seen in the exhibit on this page (“Exhibit 3-43: Intended Original Building Uses”) and “Exhibit 3-44: WRAMC Former Building Uses” on page 40; they are Buildings 1, 12, 8, 9, 17, 91, 11 and Building 18, which is vacant.

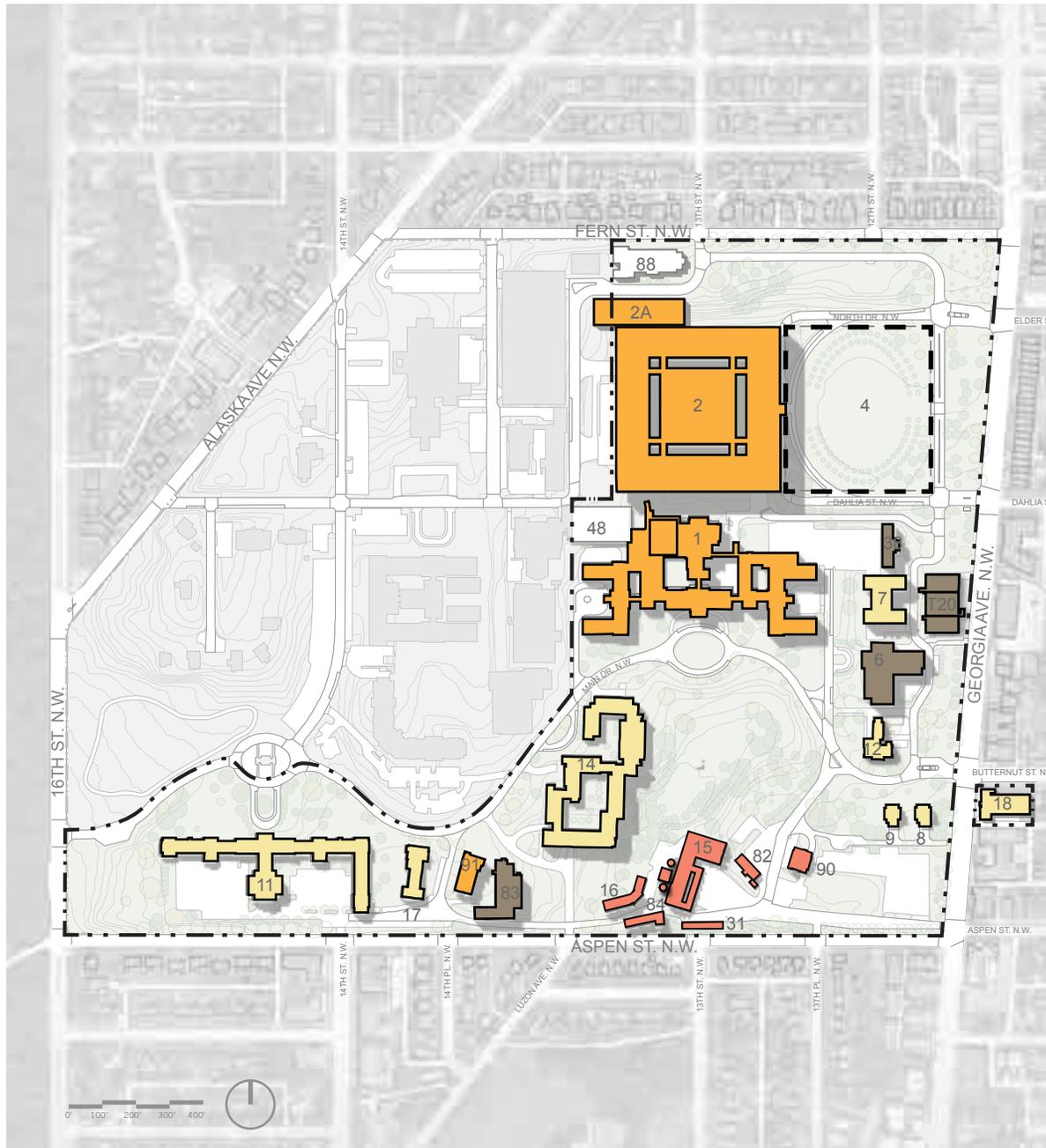


Exhibit 3-44: Intended Original Building Uses. Source Oehrlein & Associates and Perkins+Will



## WRAMC FORMER BUILDING USES

-  Healthcare
-  Office
-  Housing, Single to Multifamily
-  Utilities/Support
-  Parking Below Grade
-  Vacant

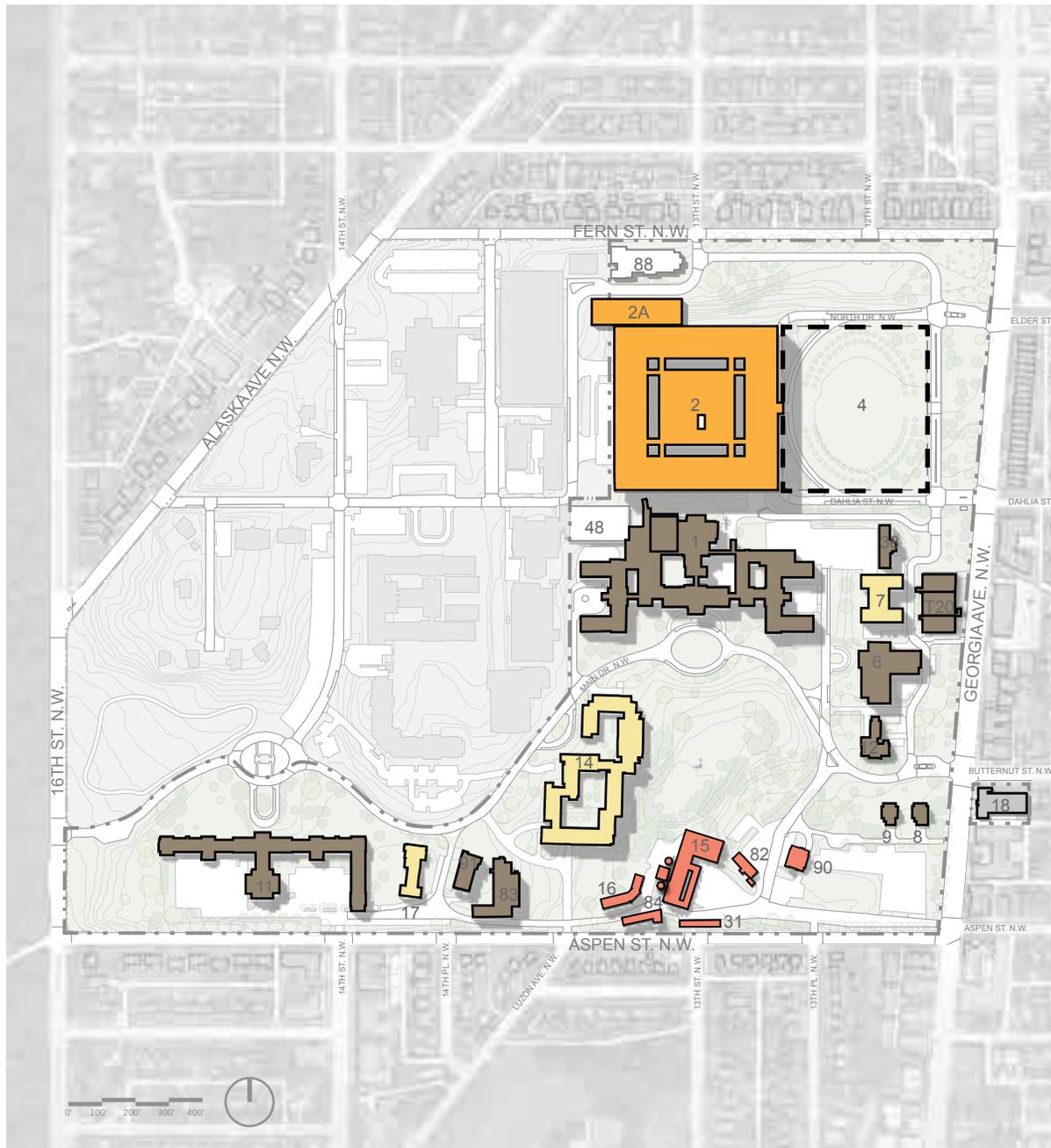


Exhibit 3-45: WRAMC Former Building Uses. Source Oehrlein & Associates and Perkins+Will



## Major Buildings at WRAMC

The following is a sampling, with photographs and brief descriptions, of noteworthy buildings in the Site. Some are notable due to their historic character and retention value, while others are rather notable for the challenges they may bring to successful redevelopment of the Site. The purpose of this section is to provide a visual snapshot of the major buildings on site represented by numbers on a plan and discussed throughout this report.

### Building 1: Administration Building, 1908

Building 1 was the first building constructed on the Walter Reed campus and has been added to several times since its original construction. It serves as the focal point and identity of the former campus. The building was originally constructed as a hospital, and then turned into an administration building.



Figure 3-46: All above – Building 1. Source: Perkins+Will.

### Building 82: Auto Skills Center, 1908

Originally constructed as a gas and service station, then turned into a vocational training center for automotive mechanical skills. The building was added onto in 1958.



Figure 3-48: View of service station following construction, dated 1942. Source: National Museum of Health and Medicine, AFIP, WRAMC History Collection.



Figure 3-49: Building 82. Source: National Museum of Health and Medicine, AFIP, WRAMC History Collection.



Figure 3-47: View of front elevation of Building 82, dated May 2010. Source: Oehrlein & Associates Architects.



### **Building 7: Main Barracks, 1910**

This building was built as a barracks for the Hospital Corps/Field Hospital Company and housed 200 soldiers. Alterations to the building took place in 1992 and 2000. The building was later turned into office space.



**Figure 3-53: View of Building 7, dated circa World War I.** Source: Walter Reed Directorate of Public Works Archives, Box #1, Folder #12, 09-4673.



**Figure 3-50: Building 7.** Source: Oehrlein & Associates Architects.



**Figure 3-54: Building 7.** Source: Oehrlein & Associates Architects.

### **Buildings 8 & 9: Officer Housing, 1910**

These two structures, nearly identical, were erected to house Army officers and their families. Additions to the rear of both buildings now include multi-car garage space and added living space. The buildings continue to serve as residences.



**Figure 3-51: All above – Building 8 & 9.** Source: Oehrlein & Associates Architects.

### **Building 15: Central Heating Plant, 1915**

This large, voluminous structure was constructed to provide heating to the buildings on the Walter Reed campus, and fulfill this function as it continues to operate today. For a utilitarian building, the structure incorporates many fine architectural details in its design. The interior features large, open spaces that are supplied with natural lighting through a monitor roof. The building has had numerous additions and alterations over time but still retains much of its original character.



**Figure 3-55: Historic photograph showing east elevation of the Central Heating Plant, dated October 11, 1922.** Source: Walter Reed Directorate of Public Works Archives, Box#1, Folder#16.



**Figure 3-52: All above – Building 15.** Source: Oehrlein & Associates Architects.



### **Building 17: Doss Memorial Hall, 1920**

This building is one of the few structures on the Walter Reed campus not designed by Army professional staff. The National Catholic War Council hired F.B.A. Ware of New York City to design the structure, and then paid for its construction. The building is I-shaped in plan and had alterations in 1944. The building used to provide temporary housing on the upper levels and office space in the basement.



**Figure 3-59: View of west elevation of Building 17, dated May 2010.** Source: Oehrlein & Associates Architects.



**Figure 3-56: View of main entrance at Building 17, dated May 2010.** Source: Oehrlein & Associates Architects.

### **Building 11: Delano Hall, 1929**

Delano Hall was built in three major sections between 1929 and 1933. The building was originally occupied by the Nursing Corps for dormitory facilities, and then changed to house administrative and office uses.



**Figure 3-60: View of Building 11 under construction, dated April 8, 1931.** Source: National Archives and Record Administration, SC 590550.



**Figure 3-61: View of Building 11 under construction, dated May 2010.** Source: Oehrlein & Associates Architects.



**Figure 3-57: Building 11.** Source: Oehrlein & Associates Architects.

### **Building 45: Bandstand, 1941**

The existing Bandstand dating from 1941 was constructed as a replacement to a previous bandstand in the same location dating from circa 1920. The structure provides for outdoor recreation space and a therapeutic healing environment for wounded soldiers.



**Figure 3-58: All above – Building 45.** Source: Oehrlein & Associates Architects.

