
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Property Address:	1625 P Street, NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Dupont Circle Historic District		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	February 22nd, 2018	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	18-133	X	Alteration
		X	New Construction
			Demolition
			Subdivision

The DC Department of Parks and Recreation, with plans prepared by architect Outerbridge Horsey, seeks conceptual design review for alterations and new construction in Stead Park at 1625 P Street NW in the Dupont Circle Historic District.

Property History and Description

Square 180 was initially developed by Henry Hurt, a veteran of the Confederate Army who came to DC shortly after the Civil War as an ambitious railroad conductor; not long thereafter, Hurt found himself president of the Washington and Georgetown Railroad Company. In the 1870s Hurt and his wife purchased a lot on square 180, as early prospectors in the Dupont Circle neighborhood that was rapidly becoming a fashionable upper-class neighborhood. Hurt developed his lot with a two-story brick house and eventually acquired the neighboring parcel and constructed a two-story brick stable at the rear of that lot. Over following decades, into the early half of the 20th century, square 180 developed as a residential block with row houses and secondary structures in the alleys. Citing a need for improved parks in Dupont Circle, the National Park and Planning Commission (NPPC) procured funds to acquire and demolish several properties on square 180, including the original Hurt property, in the 1940s. NPPC redeveloped the lots into what is today Stead Park, named after Mary Stead, wife of architect Robert Stead, who willed \$80,000 to the District of Columbia for playground improvements in the District.¹

Today, the stable that was once at the back of the Hurt property now faces P Street and is all that remains of the Hurt-built structures. The two-story brick stable features two wings with flat roofs and a central front gable spanning the wings. What was once a central open passageway at the first-story is currently infilled with brickwork, likely done in the 1960s. The second-story is also spanned by a five-by-three bank of awning windows with metal encasements - work that is not original, though older than the brick infill at the first-story. This work was likely completed when the property was acquired by NPPC. In the 1990s, a modest two-story addition was added to the rear of the historic stable. The stable building is flanked by a basketball court to the west and playground to the east. To the north is a turf multi-purpose field and walking path.

Proposal

This project proposes to remove the 1990s addition at the north (rear) of the stable and construct a new two-story addition in its place. The new rear addition would connect to rear of the historic structure with a glass enclosed hyphen that extends toward the park with three bay openings at the

¹ Laura Hughes and Paul Kreisa (2008), *Hurt House at Stead Park: Phase I/II Archaeological Investigation*. Washington: EHT Tracerics.

east elevation. The north elevation features four bay openings with a central glass vestibule that, while extending the full height of the new addition, is setback at the second floor. The rooftop features activity space and a glass turret topped with a green roof. Spiral stair access extends off of the roof at the east elevation, separated from the structure, with a single passageway at the roof level attaching the stair to the addition. Other work to the historic stable includes removing the mid-20th century infill at the central passage and constructing a new glass vestibule that is slightly inset from the historic facades of the two flanking wings. Restoring the original window openings at the south façade is also proposed.

A second two story addition to the stable is also proposed to extend from the western elevation of the new addition to the western edge of the existing basketball court. This addition features a crenelated parapet at the north, east, and west elevations and elevator and mechanical units housed at the roof of the south elevation. The rear of the west addition features a basement well and seven offset bay openings at the first and second stories. The roof plan includes a pergola and a green roof.

Additional site work includes adding a solar roof structure over the basketball court to the west and adding a Walholla, a sort of contained jungle gym and climbing wall, at the eastern front edge of the park, along with an additional shade structure and a splash pad, also on the eastern side of the park.

Evaluation

Compatibility of the additions is achieved for this project by consideration of the massing, scale, and orientation of the new additions. The north addition is primarily contained to the rear of the historic stable, while keeping the scale at or below the existing roofline. The massing of the rear addition does extend beyond the existing footprint of the structure. Nevertheless, in keeping the massing contained to the rear, without extending over the roofline, the new work maintains a deference to the historic stable. The lone element of the north addition not located directly behind the historic stable, the stair to the roof, is offset to the east of the rear addition. However, it is only attached at the roofline of the new addition and reads as detached playground equipment that would be expected in the park's landscape.

Another addition is located at the western edge of the park, behind the basketball court and stepped back from the historic stable. The western addition helps ease the transition from a mixed commercial and residential environment into that of an urban park and helps frame views toward the historic stable. This is achieved by relating to the scale of the urban environment to the west and north of the park. Currently, uninterrupted long views northward direct attention towards the Cairo, an apartment building at the far north side of the square. By placing a significant new addition at the western edge of the park, sightlines are directed inward, towards the structures in the park, rather than drifting towards the Cairo as the eye moves across the park's landscape. By setting the addition back from the historic stable, defining edge lines are retained at the stable's southern façade and west elevation, helping define the stable's historic form. Additionally, the crenelated parapet is a whimsical nod to Stead Park's considerable history as a playground.

The solar structure over the basketball court and the Walholla will also be significant new features on the playground. While these structures will somewhat restrict oblique views of the historic structure, they are also largely transparent, with the basketball structure also serving to mitigate some of the scale of the new western addition to the historic stable. It should also be noted that while the historic stable is an unusually dignified structure for a stable, it is also an outbuilding that was originally sited for the rear of a lot. It is unlikely that significant consideration was taken into the design of oblique viewsheds and its appearance from the street. Though it is the lone remnant that connects a visitor to the site's time as a residential square, care has been taken with the proposed design to create new

architectural elements that are designed around the historic stable, centralizing it in the park plan, as well as activating it for new uses. In this case, the proposed design's considered use of rhythm, massing, and orientation, as well as removing non-historic alterations in exchange for a more transparent vestibule in the original passageway, compose a proposal that is compatible with the historic district.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Review Board find the concept for additions to be compatible with the character of the historic district, and delegate final approval to staff.

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