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

Property Address:	2600 Woodley Road, NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Wardman Tower (Wardman Park Hotel and Arcade)		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	February 24, 2022	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	22-146		Alteration
		X	New Construction
			Demolition

CP VII Wardman 1-A LLC, with plans prepared by Shalom Baranes Architects, seeks conceptual design review for construction of two residential towers adjacent and connected to the landmark Wardman Tower.

Property History and Description

The Wardman Tower was constructed in 1928 as a luxury apartment-hotel annex to the adjacent 1917 Wardman Park Hotel that was located on the site of the proposed redevelopment. The annex's prominent hilltop location had been the site of developer Harry Wardman's own house, which he tore down in order to put the property to more profitable use. The tower's design was conceived by Mihran Mesrobian who worked as Wardman's architect during much of the 1920s, the most prolific period in each of their careers.

The Tower's Georgian Revival design was evocative of luxury resorts of the era. The building's four wings project off the central core, each of which contained interconnected rooms that provided a variety of apartment configurations based on how many rooms a resident wanted. A glazed arcade connected the annex to the hotel.

Until the 1960s, the building was considered one of Washington's most prestigious residential addresses. In his extensive history in *Best Addresses*, James Goode lists the dozens of well-known residents, including Presidents Hoover, Eisenhower and Johnson, numerous vice presidents, cabinet members, Senators and Representatives, Supreme Court Justices, and Washington's legendary "hostess with the mostest" Perle Mesta, the inspiration for Irving Berlin's 1950 Broadway musical *Call Me Madam*.

The 1917 hotel was demolished and replaced in the 1970s with the existing modern building and conference facilities. The Wardman Tower was separated from the hotel and renovated and converted to a residential condominium in 2013. The hotel, run as a Marriott, declared bankruptcy in 2021 and sold at auction to the applicant.

The Wardman Tower, interior lobby, arcade, porte cochere and the original gate posts to the 1917 hotel are listed in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites and on the National Register of Historic Places. The hotel site is not within the boundaries of the landmark.

HPRB Review

While the site of the 1970s hotel and proposed redevelopment is outside the boundaries of the landmark, it occupies the same record lot (lot 32) and is subject to the Board's review because it will be connected to the Wardman Tower via the arcade. The connection is necessary under the zoning regulations, which prohibit more than one building on a lot, technically making the new construction an addition to the landmark building.

Proposal

The plans call for demolishing the 1970s hotel tower, one-story conference facilities, and the portion of the property that fronts Calvert Street. Two 90' tall free-form residential towers would be constructed around a central courtyard. Building A would be clad in verdigris colored terra cotta and dark gray slate. The building would be accessed from the existing driveway on Woodley Road and would step down in height toward Woodley Road. The same terra cotta material would be used to extend and connect the building to the arcade. Building B would be clad in a dark gray manganese iron-spot brick, linked to Building A through a one-story courtyard connector and accessed from both the Woodley Road driveway and Calvert Street. It would step down in height as it fronts Calvert to reflect the drop in the site's topography and to match the height of the flanking buildings.

The below-grade parking garage would be retained and the open space above it fronting Woodley Road would be enhanced with pedestrian paths inserted between the historic gate posts and supplemental plantings; the site would remain open (unfenced) for public access. No work is proposed for the Woodley Tower landmark, which is owned and operated as a separate condominium.

Evaluation

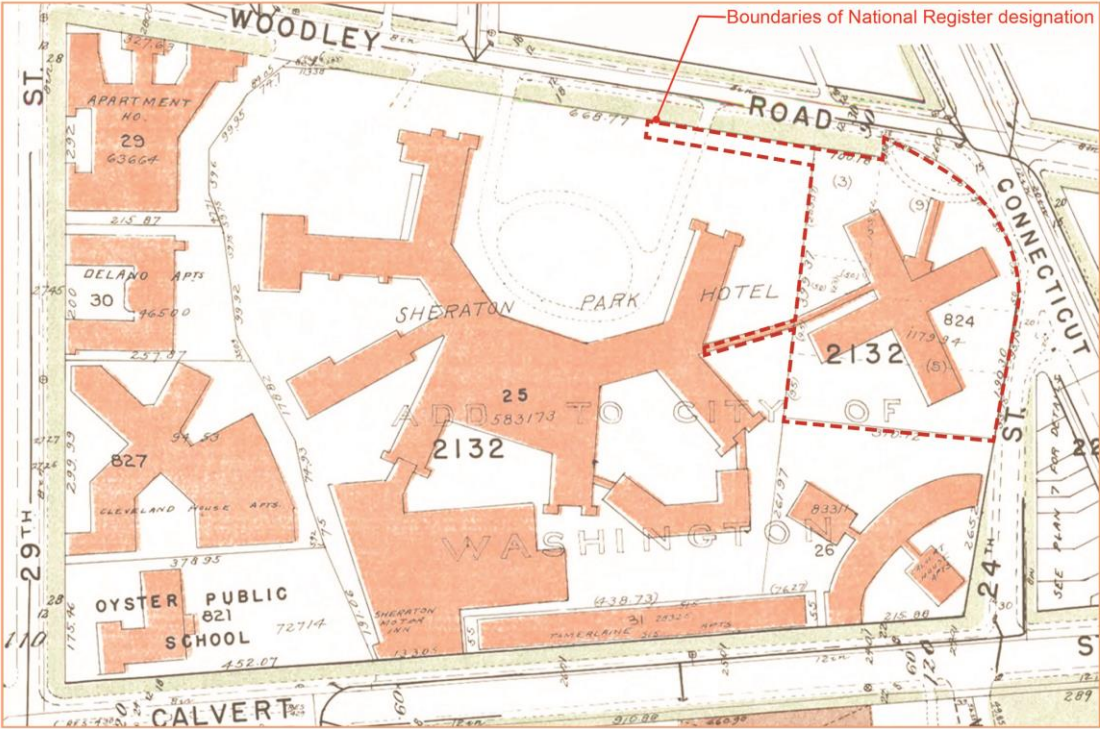
While contemporary in its architectural expression, the site plan of towers placed in an open, park-like setting is consistent with the spirit of the original hotel's site plan and compatible with the plan of the landmark tower. Whether by coincidence or conscious design, the V-shaped mass of Building A that connects to the arcade is remarkably similar to the end wings of the original 1917 hotel. The proposal will increase and enhance the quality of the landscape, providing greater unity with the landscape of the landmark (which was significantly improved during the building's renovation in 2013 and now coming to maturity). The sinuous massing of the new towers breaks down their mass into smaller components that are of a scale and size similar to the wings of the landmark tower, and the masonry colors and materials are referential to and compatible with the character of the landmark.

Recommendation

HPO recommends that the Board find the project compatible with the adjacent landmark and that final construction approval be delegated to staff.

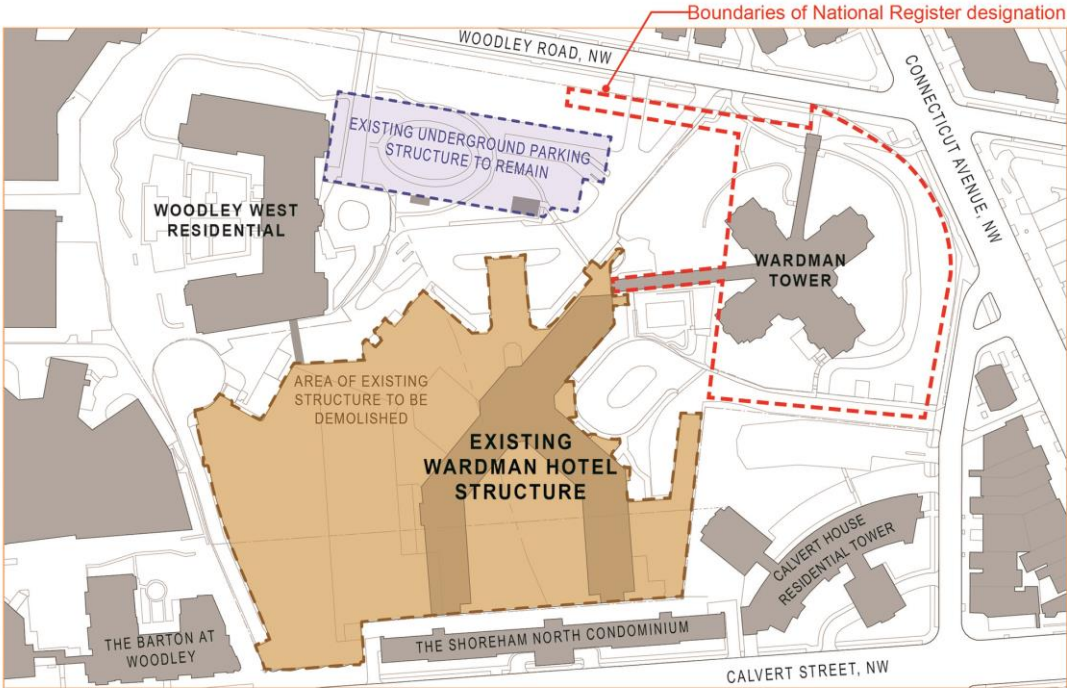
HPO contact: Steve Callcott

HISTORIC SITE MAP, 1959



SOURCE: BAIST'S REAL ESTATE ATLAS SURVEYS OF WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: VOLUME 3, PLATE 25, 1959.

CURRENT SITE PLAN



PROPOSED SITE PLAN

