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

Property Address:	3015 4th Street, NE	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	St. Paul's College		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	December 21, 2017	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	18-101		Alteration
		X	New Construction
			Demolition

The Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle, with plans prepared by Bonstra/Haresign Architects, seeks conceptual design review for construction of a new residence and mission house for the Paulist Fathers on the grounds of St. Paul's College.

Property History and Description

St. Paul's College was established by the Missionary Society of Saint Paul the Apostle to serve as a seminary dedicated to the education of priests. The property consists of a single building initially constructed in 1914 and expanded in a series of wings added over the course of building campaigns in 1935, 1941, 1956, and 1957. The 1914 building, designed by the firm of Murphy and Olmsted, is a three-story stone structure, and is executed in an academic expression of the Gothic Revival style. The later additions, built to accommodate a convent, residential quarters, a library, and a chapel, all respected the stone building materials and collegiate Gothic style of the original building, making for a stylistically sympathetic composition.

St. Paul's College was designated as a landmark in November. It is significant for its role in the education of priests to perform evangelical work in North America, and is an important part of the story of the development of a constellation of Catholic institutions covering much of Washington's northeast quadrant, catalyzed by the establishment of the Catholic University, but comprised of various and independent orders and institutions. St. Paul's College is also significant as an excellent example of twentieth-century Collegiate Gothic architecture appropriate to its function, and of the early work of the architecture firm of Murphy and Olmsted. The building manifests high quality craftsmanship particularly in its carved stone ornamentation and Tudor Gothic detailing. The additions to the original building are sympathetic, continuing the use of stone and of Gothic Revival details. The original building and its wings set upon the hill create a distinctive campus entity.

The designation boundaries established by the Board includes the hill top on which the building sits, and a section that extends down the hill to 4th Street.

The landmark building was sold last year and is now used to house two charter schools. The Paulist Fathers retained ownership of an approximately ¾-acre parcel on the hillside.

Proposal

The project calls for construction of a three-story building (two stories above a partially below-grade lower level) located on the hill side leading up from 4th Street to the landmark building. The building would be clad in stone and smooth stucco, and capped by a standing seam metal roof. On the north elevation – facing the driveway and framing the view to the historic building on the hill – the mass would be expressed as a series of pavilions housing the library, meeting and dining rooms, and a chapel capped with a tower element. The south elevation – facing the Chancellor’s Row townhouses across a 75’ wide retained open space – would house the dormitory rooms, and would be lower in height and more residential in character. The existing driveway would be relocated slightly to the north.

Evaluation

Since the prospect of development of this site was first raised with the Office of Planning several years ago, OP encouraged consideration of how it would affect the public view of the historic building from 4th Street and how the Paulist’s new building could relate to and enhance the historic campus. After studying many different options for the building’s location, shape and height, the proposed location (together with a minor realignment of the drive) was arrived at as the best solution to not only retain but enhance and frame the view of the landmark. The proposed building takes advantage of the site’s topography to minimize the impact of the below-grade parking and garage entrance, and to create a compatible and deferential relationship with the original college building at the top of the hill.

The proposed design’s wall and roof materials clearly relate to the landmark, and the varied scale of elements on the north and south elevations expresses the differentiated uses on each side while also relating to the specific context of each elevation – more institutional facing the campus and more residential facing the surrounding townhouse community. As the design continues to be refined, the use of smooth stucco rather than wood siding for the top wall sections may be worthy of consideration to simplify the palette of materials.

The project meets the three primary purposes of the preservation law in that it: 1) retains important character-defining features (the historic building and public view from 4th Street), 2) ensures that alterations are compatible in character with the landmark through the placement and design of the new building, and 3) encourages adaptation for current use in providing the applicant with a new residential and mission house facility.

Recommendation

HPO recommends that the Board find the concept compatible with the character of the landmark and delegate final approval to staff.

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