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

Property Address:	3149 16th Street, NW	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Embassy Building #10	X Consent Calendar
		X Concept Review
Meeting Date:	June 25, 2020	X Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	20-315	New Construction
Staff Contact:	Steve Callcott	Demolition
		Subdivision

Gensler Architects, representing Junior Achievement of Greater Washington, seeks conceptual design review for construction of a side and rear addition and site alterations at Embassy Building #10. The building remains in District government ownership, with a proposal to lease it to Junior Achievement, a volunteer organization that fosters work-readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy skills for K-12 grade students.

Property History and Description

3149 16th Street is a four-story French Renaissance Revival building designed in 1928 by Washington architect George Oakley Totten, Jr. It is the last of ten embassy buildings that Totten designed for Mrs. Mary Henderson, wife of Senator John B. Henderson, as part of her efforts to develop 16th Street as the diplomatic and ceremonial heart of Washington in the City Beautiful era. However, the building was never used for its intended diplomatic purpose; completed just before Henderson's death in 1931, it sat vacant and was ultimately converted to a boarding house. From 1943 until 2012, it served as the headquarters of the DC Department of Parks and Recreation and is currently vacant.

Proposal

The plans call for construction of an auditorium addition on the south side of the building; the addition would wrap around to the rear elevation to include new vertical circulation and bathrooms. Site work would include a new accessible ramp to the front door and a pergola structure to provide an area for students to assemble when getting on and off school buses. While a preservation plan is still being developed, the goal is to retain the building's remaining distinctive interior spaces, features and finishes and for new features to be clearly distinguishable.

The addition would be clad in limestone to match the façade of the existing building, with a large tripartite window on the front and a partial wall of opaque channel glass on the side elevation. The landscaping plan would replicate the formal perimeter hedge that historically defined the property.

Evaluation

While clearly contemporary, the proposed addition has been developed to be contextual in materials and the composition of its front fenestration. Its height, mass and placement on a secondary elevation pulled back from the front façade are respectful, compatible and subordinate to the landmark. The detailing of the stone and metal handrails are obviously influenced by the building without resorting to literal replication, while the pergola structure has been developed as a simple and practical garden feature for providing a congregation area for student visitors. The

proposed treatment of the building according to the Secretary of Interior Standards and the development of a landscape plan to provide a more appropriate setting for the building are laudable.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Review Board find the concept consistent with the preservation act, and that final construction plan approval be delegated to staff.