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

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Property Address:	<b>3101 Wisconsin Avenue, NW</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>National Cathedral and Close</b>	<b>X</b> Consent Calendar
		<b>X</b> Concept Review
Meeting Date:	<b>September 22, 2022</b>	<b>X</b> Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	<b>22-367</b>	New Construction
		Demolition

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St. Alban’s School, represented by David Hutchinson, seeks concept design review for an approximately 2,000 square foot addition to the Little Sanctuary chapel on their campus within the grounds of the National Cathedral and Close Historic District. Architectural plans have been prepared by Robert Allen of DLR Group and Bowie Gridley Architects.

**Property History and Description**

The St. Alban’s campus is located on the southwest corner of the Close and is comprised of a variety of buildings constructed over the past century. The neo-Gothic Lane-Johnston building (1905) remains the central focus, facing the “Senior Circle.” The subject building, the Little Sanctuary chapel, defines the northwest side of the circle.

The Little Sanctuary chapel is a complex structure that has been expanded multiple times between its original construction in 1902 through the 1960s, reflecting the growth of the school’s student population. Despite the numerous additions, the cruciform plan remains legible, and the building remains unified by the continuing use of Gothic styling and stucco cladding with formed metal trim accents.

**Project Description**

The project calls for expanding the building with an addition to the east, organized as a second transept capped by a square tower and an elongated nave. The slate roof, stucco and metal trim cladding, windows and architectural detailing would match the existing building, and a distinctive mid-century modern stained-glass window on the east elevation would be reused on the new east elevation. A memorial marker and sundial adjacent to the building would be relocated to the east to accommodate the building expansion.

**Evaluation**

The addition continues the tradition of expansions to the chapel in a manner that is consistent and compatible with its history and architectural character. The elongated nave results in an elegant and harmonious composition that is arguably more in scale with the building’s fanciful 3-story bell tower.

The project’s only sacrifice is the impact on views that it will interrupt. This includes the views of downtown Washington from the Peace Cross – a 20-foot Celtic cross unveiled

by President McKinley in 1898 just prior to the initiation of the Cathedral's construction that was aligned to face (and presumably influence the occupants of) the US Capitol. The view of the Cathedral from the plaza in front of Lane-Johnson and from Senior Circle will also regrettably be blocked. To be fair, the view from Peace Cross has already been somewhat compromised by other construction projects and the maturing tree canopy, and overall these impacts don't outweigh the project's thoughtful and compatible design.

As the site plan continues to be developed, a continuous pedestrian path should be provided from Pilgrim Road to the relocated sundial, around the expanded chapel, and connecting to the sidewalk ringing Senior Circle in front of Lane-Johnson.

**Recommendation**

*HPO recommends that the Board find the proposed concept to be compatible with the National Cathedral and Close Historic District and that final construction approval be delegated to staff.*

*HPO Contact: Steve Callcott*