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

Property Address:	3100 Macomb Street, NW	X	Agenda
Landmark:	Tregaron (the Causeway)		Consent Calendar
		X	Concept Review
Meeting Date:	December 3, 2020	X	Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	20-095	X	New Construction Demolition

The Washington International School (WIS) seeks on-going conceptual design review for construction of a multi-use building on its Tregaron campus in Cleveland Park. The project would also include relocation of the dacha cottage and landscape work. Architectural plans have been prepared by Shalom Baranes Architects and landscape plans by Michael Vergason Landscape Architects.

When reviewed at the October 1 meeting, the Board did not make a motion but provided the following comments:

- 1) The height of the classroom building should be reduced by another foot, the glazing on the north side of the building should be reduced or louvers provided, the size of the rooftop planter on the south side should be increased, and the exterior materials should be further simplified with a material mock-up panel constructed on site;
- 2) The guardhouse was thought to be incompatible in its design and location;
- 3) Concerns were expressed about the location of the dacha, both in terms of its visual impact and the extent of landscape removal necessary for relocating it to the proposed location. It was requested that alternative locations be evaluated and/or that more information on the impact of the dacha in the proposed location be provided;
- 4) Further information was requested on the design of the proposed barbeque structure;
- 5) The Board identified a less-than-a-quorum subcommittee (Heath, Jowers-Barber, Horsey) to meet with HPO and the applicants on site to evaluate and discuss alternatives for the guardhouse and dacha.

The subcommittee met on site on October 13 with members of the applicant's architectural and landscape team, school representatives, the Tregaron Conservancy and HPO.

Revised Proposal

The concept has been revised in response to the Board's comments and the discussion at the site visit. As requested, the classroom building's height has been lowered by a foot, the extent of glazing on the north side reduced, and the rooftop planter on the south side substantially increased through the reduction of paved walkways and observation areas. While no further information has been submitted regarding materials, the applicants previously committed to building a material panel mock-up on site.

The guard house has been redesigned as a wood clapboard and shingle structure. In addition to the location previously presented at the confluence of the driveway with the pedestrian path up the hill, an alternative location is proposed closer to the drive's entrance on Macomb Street.

The previously-presented location for the dacha east of the house remains the applicant's preferred option. Additional information on the extent of landscape removal and enhancement is provided, as is a plan for pedestrian circulation through the re-landscaped area. An alternative location west of the stable and behind the gymnasium has also been included.

The original gate for the four-square garden has been relocated to the west side and conceptual plans for a simple barbeque pavilion are included as requested.

Evaluation

The refinements to the classroom building are responsive to the Board's direction and improve its compatibility. The expansion of the rooftop planting bed is substantial and, together with supplemental in-ground planting in the south grove, will help soften the building's visual impact from the south lawn and pond valley.

HPO did not share the concern questioning the appropriateness of having a guard house on the property, as they are not uncommon for either estates (such as Twin Oaks next door) or at private school campuses (such as National Cathedral School on Woodley Road). However, the new guard house location closer to Macomb Street has several advantages and compatibility improvements over the previous proposal. It removes it as the central focal point from the view into the property and of the wooded northern hillside, it is moved further from the pedestrian entrance to the Conservancy so as to not intimidate public visitors, and it ensures that the degraded area where it is to be placed will be cleaned up and landscaped. The revised design for the structure is also visually lighter in weight and less permanent than the previous masonry structure.

The additional information on the preferred relocation site clarifies the extent of landscape retention and removal. That site had been partially cleared for the site visit, illustrating the extent of mature plantings that can remain and which can be supplemented to soften and obscure the building's visibility from the west and north. While the dacha could physically fit in the alternative location, it would be seen from the campus primarily across a large parking lot and fire department access lane and would not have sufficient space for landscaping around it. HPO believes the woodland setting is a far preferable and more compatible site, providing the first appropriate location for the rustic building since its unfortunate siting in the four-square garden in the 1940s.

Recommendations

HPO recommends that the Review Board approve the revised concept design for the classroom building, the guard house in the location closer to Macomb Street, and the dacha relocation in the woods east of the house, as compatible with and resulting in significant enhancements to the landmark. It is recommended that final construction approval be delegated to staff, contingent on a material mock-up panel being constructed on site for Board review. As the proposed landscape improvements are a significant and integral component of the project's compatibility and preservation benefits, issuance of the final certificate of occupancy for the new building should be made contingent on substantial completion of the landscape and site rehabilitation work.

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