
**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 22, 2023	X Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	23-357 (formerly 20-315)	New Construction
Staff Contact:	Steve Callcott	Demolition
		Subdivision

Gensler Architects, representing Junior Achievement of Greater Washington, seeks renewal of a concept for construction of a side and rear addition and site alterations at Embassy Building #10. The Board approved the concept in June 25, 2020.

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 and Previous Review

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.

The Board approved the conceptual design on the consent calendar.

Evaluation

The historic preservation regulations (10C DCMR § 332.1) state that "The Board's recommendations on an application, including an application for conceptual design review and preliminary review, remains in effect for a period of two years from the date of the Board's action granting conceptual approval. Upon expiration of this period, the applicant may return to the Board with a request for an extension of one additional period of two years for good cause shown.

The Board is not required to reopen the review of the application and shall not unreasonably withhold its approval of an extension.”

In this instance, the good cause cited is the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing negotiations with the District which owns the property; those negotiations have been completed and the project is ready to commence. The proposal remains the same but includes a preservation plan which was not developed at the time of the initial concept.

Recommendation

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