

---

---

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

---

---

Landmark/District: **Saint Elizabeth Hospital Historic District** (x) Agenda  
Address: **2700 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE**

Meeting Date: **November 15, 2018** (x) Alteration  
Case Number: **19-036** (x) Permit

---

---

The applicant, Stephen Drumm (of KCI Technologies), agent for the District of Columbia Department of General Services, requests the Board’s review of a permit application to reconfigure, re-pave and expand a parking lot at the southwest corner of the East Campus to accommodate more than 200 cars, probably adding about 80 spaces. It involves some re-grading, tree removal, and the creation of a storm-water detention pond.

The work has already been completed.

**Background**

This expanded parking lot joins two new ones—one of more than 500 spaces, and one of more than 200—to serve the parking needs of the recently opened arena on the campus. There was no proposal for public parking submitted with the arena project, which was said to be a destination to be reached principally by public transit. There was, however, a smaller parking lot approved adjacent to the arena, for the use of staff and players, after the Board and the Commission of Fine Arts requested more visual buffering. The largest of the parking lots would stretch from Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue back to the 1902 stable, replacing the 1950s Dorothea Dix Pavilion. It would be accessed by existing gates near the stable and the 1923 Blackburn Laboratory. The other lot is between the arena and Buildings 115 and 116. Both of these replace smaller parking areas. Neither has been reviewed by the Board, but their permits have been issued.

The three lots are said to be temporary, although no duration has been stated. It would be more accurate to say that they will remain indefinitely, until their land is required for alternate uses, or until a thousand spaces could be incorporated into structured parking—on top of the parking demand of other new and renovated buildings that would presumably generate the revenue for garage construction. The 2012 *St. Elizabeths East Master Plan and Design Guidelines* call for the subject lot to be removed in favor of an MLK-oriented mixed-use development. The same master plan and guidelines discourage parking lots, calling for parking to occur on-street and in below-grade or “wrapped” garages.

**Evaluation**

The extension of the lot to the southeast along the southern boundary of the campus has, in itself, a minor visual effect on the campus. It may be objectionable to property owners across the alley, but the standard for the Board’s review is compatibility with the character of the historic district.

More serious is the lot's extension along the widened Sycamore Drive, putting it just feet from the right-of-way, unscreened. It may be tolerable to have such a condition remain temporarily. But the combination of this extension along Sycamore, with the aforementioned extension along the property line, and the construction of a storm-water retention area surrounds one of the campus's contributing buildings, the 1924 frame Staff Residence No. 6 (Building 99).

The most problematic piece is the expansion along Martin Luther King. The paving extends between the chapel (Building 121, now the RISE Center) and the avenue, eating away at the all-important green margin of the campus that the public sees and affecting the chapel's setting. This paving was responsible for the removal of at least one tree and extends onto the roots of others along the avenue.

**Recommendation**

*HPO recommends that the Board recommend in favor of expanding the parking lot to the south and east only, on a temporary basis, preferably with some assurance from the applicant as to its duration.*