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

Landmark/District:	Walter Reed Army Medical Center	(x) Consent
Address:	6825 16th Street NW	
Meeting Date:	April 28, 2016	(x) Additions
Case Number:	16-158	(x) Alterations
Staff Reviewer:	Tim Dennée	(x) Revised concept

The applicant, the District of Columbia International Charter School, agent for the property owner (the U.S. Army) and a future tenant of the building, requests the Board's review of a concept to add to and alter the historic Delano Hall—the former Army Nursing Corps residence and then Walter Reed Army Institute of Nursing—in order to make it suitable to the school's program. The architect is Perkins Eastman. This is the first private project at Walter Reed to come before the Board.

Permitting for and construction of the project would not take place until the Army transfers this portion of the campus to the District of Columbia, and the applicant becomes a lessee to the District government. The concept is being reviewed under the local preservation statute, with the permission of the Army, rather than under the National Historic Preservation Act. Because the property will remain government-owned, albeit by the District of Columbia, the concept was reviewed by the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts in June. The Commission approved the concept, but will also review the permit application when it is ready.

The Board first reviewed the project in February and supported the concept, while making several recommendations for revisions:

- (1) the fiber-cement panels should be a warmer and darker color, especially at the hyphen;
- (2) the pavilion on the west side of the new wing should be clad in brick matching the rest of the wing;
- (3) revision to the new wing's south end should be considered;
- (4) a darker and perhaps different material should be used for the wing's masonry base, and that it needed to be depicted in detail;
- (5) a new material, closer to the family of materials on the campus and possibly brick, should be considered for the cladding of the gym and that fiber-cement be used as an accent material rather than the primary one;
- (6) more information needed to be provided about the location and character of storm-water management measures and mechanical equipment and its screening;
- (7) the canopy at the southeast corner of the building should either fit the height, shape and width of the opening below or be more distinct from it; and

(8) solar panels should not be placed on the roof of the building's central section, and that the staff should bring back before the Board any proposed solar-panel support structures if there were concerns about their compatibility.

After the February hearing, two members of the Board met with the applicant and staff to discuss in more detail the Board's recommendations and the applicant's development of the drawings. The Board members present ultimately suggested they could support:

- a) the use of the originally proposed fiber-cement panels on the gym and as spandrels between the first and second floor elsewhere on the wing, as long as the panels were of the warmer cream color;
- b) the pavilion on the west side of the wing being mainly of brick;
- c) the hyphen connecting the new wing to the original main bar of the building being of brick, so that the connection blends and visually recedes;
- d) some revision of the openings at the south end of the wing, making it less porch-like, but employing the fiber-cement spandrels;
- e) the gym's base material being a concrete block but of a monolithic character and texture, similar to limestone in coloration;
- f) the necessary HVAC units sitting on the roof of the wing, rather than being placed within the attic of the westernmost pavilion of the existing building, and that they generally be pushed southward away from the front of the building, but screened as well as possible by well-proportioned parapets on the wing;
- g) HVAC equipment being installed in the attic of the east wing, which lacks a flat roof on which to place such equipment, as long as the vent openings are expanded as sensitively as possible, without disturbing those on the front of the building;
- h) a canopy at the southeast corner of the building that fits the arched opening, minimizing the necessary support structure; and
- i) solar panels on some roofs and perhaps on carports similar to those recently proposed at Saint Elizabeths Hospital, but not on the roof of the building's main block (solar panels are not presently proposed and have been removed from the drawings, but they may be sought later).

In the present set of drawings, the applicant proposes to employ the cream or limestone-colored fiber-cement panels on the gym and as the spandrels in the other openings around the wing.

The south elevation has been revised. The hyphen at the juncture between the addition and the main bar of the building is now to be clad in matching brick.

The rooftop HVAC equipment on the new wing is to be located according to the preferred arrangement option of the two Board members, which prioritized diminishing its visibility from the front (north side) of the building. Its screening will have to be further detailed.

The canopy at the building's southeast corner has been revised to fit the arched opening, which results in a simpler and lighter design.

There have been some slight revisions of the covered walkway in the inside corner between the new wing and the building's main bar.

Issues unresolved or lacking detail

Some of the HVAC equipment is intended to be placed in attic spaces within the gabled pavilions at the ends of the wings. This means that some of the louvered gable vents will have to be replaced by larger openings. The drawings do not yet depict such proposed alterations.

Other than appearing as darker green areas on the site plans, the storm-water detention areas are not yet detailed. The Board expressed concern about the appearance of those areas and waterproofing the base of the building next to them.

Page 19 shows a revised rooftop plan for solar-panel locations—with the roof of the central pavilion appropriately no longer one of them. Instead, depicted schematically is the idea of panels on carports in the parking lot. Yet, as discussed at the February hearing, the applicant has no immediate plans for the panels, although sustainable design is being encouraged throughout the campus.

The material of the wing's base is not further specified than as “concrete masonry veneer, 16 x 24 [inches],” except by reference to its use at the Deanwood Community Center. The color in the photograph of that building appears to be similar to that of limestone, however.

Because the applicant has complied with most of the Board's recommendations and other issues are not yet addressed, there appears to be little to discuss at the moment. Especially as the project also requires review by the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, *HPO recommends that the Board approve the project in concept, with a delegation to staff to decide whether further development or revision of the plans merits further Board review, and with the conditions that: the gable vents on the front of the building not be altered, and the new brick match the old as closely as is feasible.*