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

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Landmark/District: **Walter Reed Army Medical Center** (x) Agenda  
Address: **1250 Dahlia Street NW**

Meeting Date: **June 22, 2023** (x) New construction  
Case Number: **23-320** (x) Revised concept

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The applicant, TPWR Developer LLC, the master developer and ground lessee from the District of Columbia, requests the Board’s review of a concept to erect a three-story-and-penthouse 102-unit residential building just north of the west wing of the historic Building 1. To prepare the site for this building, it would be necessary to demolish a portion of a remnant corridor that once led to an array of barracks-like hospital wards north of Building 1. Its further removal does not constitute “demolition in significant part” of the sprawling Building 1.

At its June 1 hearing, the Board generally supported the concept and appreciated the shortening of the penthouse but requested revisions. It found the building to be too simplified and recommended consideration of: 1) a single brick color; 2) a continuous beltcourse at the top story; 3) breaking up the penthouse; 4) varying the fenestration on the wings relative to the center of the building; 5) a recess or otherwise visually breaking up largely blank end walls; 6) porches or balconies or a pediment.

The drawings have been revised, with the principal change being the addition of monumental-scale pilasters to the pavilions at the center and ends of the building’s façade.<sup>1</sup> This helps balance its horizontality and varies the scale and the fenestration, enlivening it. The white-painted panel infill is inspired by that of nearby Building 52, a remnant of the many 1930s and 1940s ward buildings. The infill material is not specified but will almost certainly be fiber-cement board which, even with flat trim added, will likely read pretty flat. The color may be better as something darker than stark white. There is now a single brick color.

The following design revisions are recommended:

- The beltcourse below the third-floor windows should be moved above them, to give the impression of a continuous parapet across the building. The penthouse and the parapet are a sufficient top to a primary mass of only three stories that does not have a high base.
- The east end of the building now has a vertical reveal beyond the blind windows. Whatever the value of the blind windows, the distinction of this portion of the end wall suggests that the façade’s entablature should return to the point of the reveal, and to the same point on the west end of the building. The same holds for the water table.

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<sup>1</sup> The plan of the projections at the front entrance do not appear to correspond to the elevation.

- The base otherwise needs revision. The pilasters do not require bases expressed by bands of contrasting masonry. In any case, they do not align across the base, so they should be eliminated. The band indicating the water table should be consistent across the façade—not stepped, despite the grade change. That provides a sufficient base, even where it sinks into the window well at the west end, as the window well will permit it continue. The water table should at least be in the same plane as the pilasters and walls above, if not projecting slightly (the drawings seem to show this base slightly recessed relative to the corners of the pilasters).
- Compatible window and masonry products (precast?) have not yet been specified. The double-ganged windows should have a mullion between them, rather than the frames being directly mulled together.

**Recommendation**

*HPO recommends that the Board approve the concept with the conditions that it be revised to address the points raised above and that further review be delegated to staff.*