HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

Property Address:	**3100 Wisconsin Avenue, NW**	**X**	Agenda
Landmark/District:	**National Cathedral Close**		Consent Calendar
		X	Concept Review
Meeting Date:	**July 28, 2005**	**X**	Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	**05-213**	**X**	New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	**Steve Callcott**		Demolition
			Subdivision

The applicant, St. Alban's School, returns for on-going conceptual review for expansion of the New Wing academic building, construction of an underground performing arts center, and site improvements to the academic portion of the campus. The revised proposal does not include the athletic fields, which continues to be studied and will be presented as a later time. As before, the school is represented by Coleen Meehan, director of planning for St. Albans, architect Roger Duffy of SOM (New York), landscape architect Richard Burck, and Whayne Quin and Carolyn Brown of Holland & Knight.

When reviewed last month, the Board expressed general comfort with the contemporary vocabulary of the New Wing – composed of a clear glass curtain wall and stone to match the Lane-Johnston building – but asked that a study model be prepared to allow for a better understanding of this complicated multi-storied addition that connects several buildings and bridges between the upper and lower portions of the academic campus. There was skepticism expressed about the effectiveness of trying to extend the language and character of the naturalistic Olmsted Woods through the campus with a request that this either be rethought or further explained. While few comments were made on the performing arts center and the reconstruction of the entrance drive around Senior Circle, the Board wanted to ensure that the below-grade arts center didn't preclude the area above from being planted in a manner consistent that the surrounding landscape.

Revised Proposal
As shown before, the three-level auditorium would be located almost entirely below grade, under Senior Circle, which would be recreated above. The flagstone terrace in front of Lane-Johnston would extend to the new wing entrance, and wrap around a large skylight to the arts center entrance [this is shown in the plan; the rendering on page 3 in the submission has not been updated to show the entrance]. The only other above grade components of the auditorium would be an additional skylight northeast of the circle, and an exit for an emergency stair adjacent to the Little Sanctuary, both of which should continue to be studied to minimize their presence and blended into the landscape. The landscape plan for this area has been further developed to include less paving and areas where some larger trees can be introduced.

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EXHIBIT NO. 45

A model has been prepared for the expanded and reclad New Wing, the design of which has also been somewhat revised since last month. As before, the extension of the wing would span over the service road and connect it with the Steuart Building. This intersection has been revised to include a glass connection and retention of the exterior wall of Steuart in order that the existing structure will retain its own individual identity. The connection with the Lawrence Pool building on the lower campus has been simplified by shifting and simplifying the exterior stairs and walkway connections. The revised design now culminates in a cantilevered element, and incorporates more stone than when previously presented.

The intent of the landscape plan has been more fully explained. Rather than replicating or attempting to literally extend the Olmsted Woods through the campus, a comprehensive list of plant material in the Woods has been developed, with the idea that many of the same species would be introduced into the campus. By necessity and design, the effect would be different than in the Woods, but the goal is to establish a commonality between the two areas, and to avoid such things as formal foundation plantings in lieu of more naturalistic masses of plantings that would include large hardwood trees, understory trees, high and low shrubs and groundcovers in the palate of materials.

The HPO recommends that the Review Board approve the revised proposal for the New Wing and performing arts center as consistent with the character of the St. Alban's campus and National Cathedral Close. The HPO further recommends that the applicants continue to work with the staff and a delegated Board member on design development and future review of plans, and that final construction approval be delegated to staff.