

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

Landmark/District:	GWU/Old West End HD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	1900 F Street, NW	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	September 26, 2019	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	HPA 19-541	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

The George Washington University, with plans prepared by VMDO Architects, seeks conceptual design review for renovation of Thurston Hall at 1900 F Street in the George Washington University/Old West End Historic District and the Commission of Fine Arts jurisdiction.

Property Description

Designed by Harvey H. Warwick and built originally as the Park Central Apartment Building in 1928, this Art Deco and Art Moderne style building was part of the new wave of large apartment buildings constructed in the 1920s and 1930s in the West End catering to government workers. When it was built, the nine-story, 320-unit Park Central was one of the largest ‘elevator apartment-hotels’ in the city. Now known as Thurston Hall, the building serves as a residence hall for over 800 GWU students.

Proposal

The proposed project includes a comprehensive interior renovation, construction of a new occupied penthouse and vegetated roof, a canopy over the courtyard, alteration and cut away of the building at the upper floors on the south elevation, carving away and projections on the interior courtyard elevations, changing the masonry openings and replacement of windows in the courtyard, and streetscape improvements.

Evaluation

The renovation includes several significant alterations to the exterior of the building. On the south elevation, the central bay of the building would be carved away at the top three floors, creating a large opening to allow air and light into the interior courtyard space. The carving out of this portion of the building continues inside at floors 5 and 6 stepping down to the courtyard space and creating green terrace levels. Along with these green terraces a new glass canopy covers the space creating a dramatic and appealing bright courtyard. The exterior wall opening will be partially visible through the service alley from 19th Street, but the overall massing of the building would be maintained. The architect has designed hanging vegetation in the void at the exterior wall plane to refer to the original wall. Furthering this design idea could create a more powerful solution to serve as a palimpsest of the historic building.

At the roof level a new occupiable penthouse space, relocated mechanical equipment, and a new canopy covering the courtyard will be set back on all sides, and for the most part would not be visible. At some longer views there is minimal visibility of the canopy, but it does not distract from the building or the historic district.

At the street level, minor alterations enhance the public space—two small areaways are introduced on the east side but maintain the character-defining berm feature along 19th street—and a revised front entry terrace on F Street introduces new seating areas as well as additional green space.

The most significant alteration is in the interior courtyard. The interior space would be sculpted to create a dynamic green courtyard space, allowing light and air in from the carved-out south façade. This manipulation of the donut-shape building parti works well to adapt to this larger architectural move.

Where the architectural alterations are in question is with the courtyard walls. The proposed elevations and renderings suggest that every masonry opening in the existing courtyard will change—with an entirely new interior façade composition. There is a lack of notes on the drawings or write-up of the complete scope of work, so it is unclear what the design intent is. Based on several meetings with the architectural team and GWU, HPO had the understanding that the courtyard would be preserved with exposed (or painted brick) and that *some* windows would be replaced with larger scale, multi-floor projections in a few specific locations that signified common student spaces. The proposed interior facades raise the question of how the historic courtyard walls could be retained if this much brick is removed and patched? The result of this window replacement/relocation is that the original courtyard walls are not being retained and instead are being rebuilt completely. HPO recommends that the original masonry openings in the courtyard be maintained to restore this original expression of the courtyard and this building typology, and to limit the courtyard elevation alterations to a few, large-scale framed openings.

Recommendation

HPO recommends that the Board:

- 1. Find the concept generally consistent with the preservation act;*
- 2. Advise the applicant to revise the interior courtyard elevations to maintain the original window composition (with the exception of the few special, large-scale windows);*
- 3. Continue to study a solution at the south elevation that recognizes the original massing of the building;*
- 4. Delegate final approval to staff.*

Staff contact: Kim Elliott

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

Landmark/District:	GWU/Old West End HD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	1900 F Street, NW	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
Meeting Date:	October 31, 2019	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Case Number:	HPA 19-541	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
		<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

The George Washington University, with plans prepared by VMDO Architects, seeks conceptual design review for renovation of Thurston Hall, a contributing building to the George Washington University/Old West End Historic District.

Property Description

Designed by Harvey H. Warwick and built originally as the Park Central Apartment Building in 1928, this Art Deco/Moderne style building was part of the new wave of large apartment buildings constructed in the 1920s and 1930s in the West End catering to government workers. When it was built, the nine-story, 320-unit Park Central was one of the largest ‘elevator apartment-hotels’ in the city. Now known as Thurston Hall, the building serves as a residence hall for over 800 GWU students.

Proposal

The project was presented to HRPB at the September hearing in which the architect presented a comprehensive interior renovation including: construction of a new occupied penthouse and vegetated roof, a canopy over the courtyard, a cut away of the building at the three upper floors and carving out of interior spaces on the south elevation, alterations to the interior courtyard elevations, and streetscape alterations.

At that meeting, the Board determined that the courtyard was an interior space and therefore not under its purview but did express some concerns about the loss of the masonry wall at the exterior south elevation. Two revised options have been prepared to respond to the Board’s comments.

Option A cuts away two floors of the exterior central bay instead of three to respond to the Board’s comment about the loss of exterior fabric. In this option the masonry wall is cut away at the 8th and 9th floors, and the glazing from the window openings would be removed at the 7th floor to allow air into the courtyard space.

Option B cuts away three floors – similarly to the originally proposed design—but infills the void with a framework of an open metal screen element in the same plane as the masonry wall designed to replicate the rhythm and scale of the former window openings. This concept responds to the Board’s concern about the large void on the side elevation by filling the void with structure and screen element while still achieving the desired effect of air and light entering the courtyard space.

Evaluation

The Board has typically granted greater flexibility for changes on secondary elevations that are minimally or not visible from public street view, as is the case with the south elevation of Thurston Hall which faces a service alley and is a secondary elevation with minimal visibility from 19th Street.

Of the revised options, A reduces the extent of removal with a smaller cut into the secondary wall, while B proposes the same amount of removal as last month's proposal while seeking to reduce the perception of the change in massing by infilling the opening with a metal screen. HPO finds that either option would be compatible with the character of the building and the historic district. While some of the original fabric would be removed in each, the overall massing would remain legible and the extent of removal does not significantly affect the building's historic character.

Recommendation

HPO recommends that the Board find the revised concepts consistent with the preservation act and delegate final approval to staff.

Staff contact: Kim Elliott

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD



HPRB ACTIONS
October 31, 2019

Present: Marnique Heath, Chair; Andrew Aurbach, Thomas Brokaw, Linda Greene, Outerbridge Horsey, Barbara Jowers-Barber, Chris Landis. Absent: Gretchen Pfaehler.

AGENDA

DESIGNATION HEARING

Barry Farm Dwellings, 1100-1371 Stevens Road, 2677-2687 Wade Road and 2652 Firth Sterling Avenue SE, Case 19-07 (*Board deliberation; continuation of July 25th hearing*).

The HPRB heard testimony from the applicants for designation and the DC Housing Authority and discussed the merits of the historic landmark application. They stated their view on the record that Barry Farm deserves historic landmark recognition but did not take a vote to designate. They recommended that the parties continue ongoing discussions and report to the Board on progress by the upcoming meeting on December 5.

The proposed demolition of the site was put on temporary hold when the landmark designation application was filed, and that status remains. There has been no Board action that would affect redevelopment plans.

HISTORIC LANDMARK

Barry Farm Dwellings (*to be considered only if designated*), 1100-1371 Stevens Road, 2677-2687 Wade Road and 2652 Firth Sterling Avenue SE, HPA 19-482, raze.

This case was continued to the December 5 HPRB meeting.

YOUNG, BROWNE, PHELPS AND SPINGARN EDUCATIONAL CAMPUS HISTORIC DISTRICT

820 26th Street NE, HPA 19-547, concept/two-story addition to existing building.

The Board found the concept generally consistent with the preservation act with the condition that the applicant lower the parapet over the entrance and refine the proportion and color of the materials to better reflect the character of the historic buildings on campus. The Board delegated final review to HPO. Vote: 7-0.

GWU/WEST END HISTORIC DISTRICT

1900 F Street NW, HPA 19-542, revised concept/enclose interior court; addition.

The Board recommended that the applicant retain the brick on the 7th floor (and can removed the windows at this section), and can remove the brick at the 8th and 9th floors using a metal fin and screening element in the void at the same face as the masonry (similar to Option B); and delegated final review and approval to staff. Vote: 7-0.

DUPONT CIRCLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

1630 Riggs Place NW, HPA 19-543, concept/rear canopy over existing balcony.

The Board found the concept generally consistent with the preservation act and recommended that the applicant revise the canopy structure that rises above the 2nd floor railing to be lighter in weight and more transparent. Final approval was delegated to staff. Vote: 7-0.

MOUNT VERNON SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICT

454 Ridge Street NW, HPA 19-595, concept/new construction, rowhouse with accessory building.

The Board found the concept for a two- and three-story rowhouse and a three-story accessory building at 454 Ridge Street NW compatible with the character of the historic district, consistent with the preservation act, and delegated final approval to Staff on condition that the minor revisions described in the Staff report be included. Vote: 7-0.

TAKOMA PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

422 Butternut Street NW, HPA 19-597, permit/slate roof replacement.

The Board found the concept for replacing the original slate with asphalt shingle to be inconsistent with the preservation act. The Board found replacement in synthetic slate to be compatible and consistent with the preservation act on the condition that the color range of the existing slate roof be replicated. Vote: 6-0.

CLEVELAND PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

3141 Highland Place NW, HPA 19-601, concept/one-story additions at east and west sides of house; rebuild existing rear addition; new garage.

The Board found the concept compatible with the house and historic district, consistent with the preservation act, and delegated final approval to staff. Vote: 6-0.

CONSENT CALENDAR

The Consent Calendar was approved by a vote of 8-0.

LANDMARK DESIGNATIONS

Mitchell Park Fieldhouse, 1801 23rd Street NW, Case 18-07 (*continued from October 24*).

Chevy Chase Playground, 5500 41st Street NW, Case 18-08 (*continued from October 24*).

The Board considered the objection in the ANC resolution that the building didn't warrant designation as similar properties were already designated but found that this building, similar to those, met the designation criteria.

HISTORIC LANDMARKS

The Harrison Apartment Building (The Canterbury), 704 3rd Street NW, HPA 18-106, renewal of concept/new construction and adaptive rehabilitation.

CAPITOL HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT

1363 A Street NE, HPA 19-535, concept/new two-story garage.

1365 A Street NE, HPA 19-536, concept/new two-story garage.

333 9th Street SE, HPA 19-599, concept/rear two-story addition and interior renovations.

148 11th Street SE, HPA 19-602, concept/two-story rear addition.

CLEVELAND PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

3029 Ordway Street NW, HPA 19-604, concept/extend existing rear addition; new deck, stairs, and retaining wall at rear.

TAKOMA PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

5903 5th Street NW, HPA 19-600, two-story rear addition.

Transcripts of Historic Preservation Review Board Meetings may be purchased from the court reporting agency that covered this hearing – Neal R. Gross & Co., Inc., (202) 234-4433, www.nealrgross.com or info@nealrgross.com. Individual staff reports that are prepared in advance of the hearing are posted on our website at <https://planning.dc.gov>.