

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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NCPC File No. 6759



WALTER REED NATIONAL MILITARY MEDICAL CENTER MEDICAL FACILITY ADDITIONS

8901 Rockville Pike
Montgomery County, Bethesda, Maryland

Submitted by the United States Department of the Navy

September 27, 2007

Abstract

The United States Department of the Navy has submitted concept designs for new medical facility additions to the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, located at 8901 Rockville Pike in Bethesda, Maryland. The project will include renovation of existing facilities as well as construction of two new buildings to accommodate the medical service expansion required by the 2005 BRAC recommendations. The new buildings and related utility/site upgrades will accommodate a new outpatient facility and expanded diagnostic and critical care functions of the Medical Center.

Commission Actions Requested by Applicant

Approval of concept design for the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center at Bethesda pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8722(a) and (b)(1).

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

Comments favorably on the concept design for the new medical facility additions to the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda, with the exception of the fenestration pattern, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 3101.30(38.00)42383.

Requires that the following items be included in the preliminary design submission:

- Revised elevations indicating a more compatible fenestration pattern, and including dimensions and material notations.
- Information regarding the buildings' related site features, including lighting (proposed fixtures, locations, and foot-candle levels).

- Samples of the proposed finish materials.
- Completed Environmental Impact Statement, Master Plan, and Transportation Management Plan for the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.
- A summary of planned staffing and related parking accommodations, as will be determined by the completed Environmental Impact Statement, Master Plan, and Transportation Management Plan.
- Completed Section 106 consultation for the project and a final determination of effect from the Maryland Historical Trust.

Notes that during project development the applicant should address the following comments by other affected State and county entities:

- The proposed buildings are generally consistent with agency plans, programs, and objectives.
- The Maryland Historical Trust accepted the concept design with regard to location, footprint, and massing; and requested Section 106 consultation to move forward with fenestration design, materials selection, and other design and planning details.
- Environmental effects of the proposed project require additional review, coordination, and compliance with applicable regulations. Areas of potential effect include, but are not limited to, traffic and parking; hazardous materials and waste; construction materials and methods; energy sources; and emissions.
- The project has not yet been commented on by the Montgomery County Planning Board, and recommendations of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission are subject to, and contingent upon, the comments of the Planning Board.

Notes that the Commission's final action will take into account the findings of the Environmental Impact Statement, and the content of the Master Plan and Transportation Management Plan for the Medical Center, currently under development.

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

As a result of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) recommendations, the existing Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) located in Washington, D.C., will be closed and military medical services in the National Capital Area (NCA) will be realigned between two primary facilities serving the northern and southern portions of the NCA. The southern NCA will be served by a new hospital at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia; and the existing National Naval Medical Center (NNMC), Bethesda, Maryland will be expanded and renovated to serve the northern NCA. All existing tertiary (sub-specialty and complex care) medical services currently provided at WRAMC will be relocated to this northern facility. The expanded NNMC will be renamed the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda (WRNMMC) and is the location of the current project. As a funded project associated with BRAC, work is required to be completed by September 2011.

The Navy is currently in the process of updating the Master Plan, including a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) for the site, as well as preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in response to the pending expansion related to BRAC. Due to the ambitious timeline to implement BRAC recommendations, this concept design has been submitted prior to completion of the Master Plan update and environmental analysis, and has therefore been referred to affected agencies through the Maryland State Clearinghouse. The agencies that have been included in that referral are the Maryland Departments of Transportation, the Environment, and Natural Resources; the County of Montgomery; the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission in Montgomery County; the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, and the Maryland Department of Planning; including the Maryland Historical Trust.

The 20-story main tower with connecting L-shaped wings (“Building One”) of the NNMC was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978; part of its significance is due to its design concept that originated with a vision of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Inspired by the Nebraska State Capitol (Lincoln, NE, 1924), President Roosevelt sketched a rough plan and elevation on White House stationery for the new Naval Hospital – the spirit of his design was brought to fruition by Architect Paul Cret and the Navy architectural staff under Fredrick W. Southworth. The integrity of the tower remains largely intact, and is a highly visible landmark and one of the key defining elements of the campus.

Site

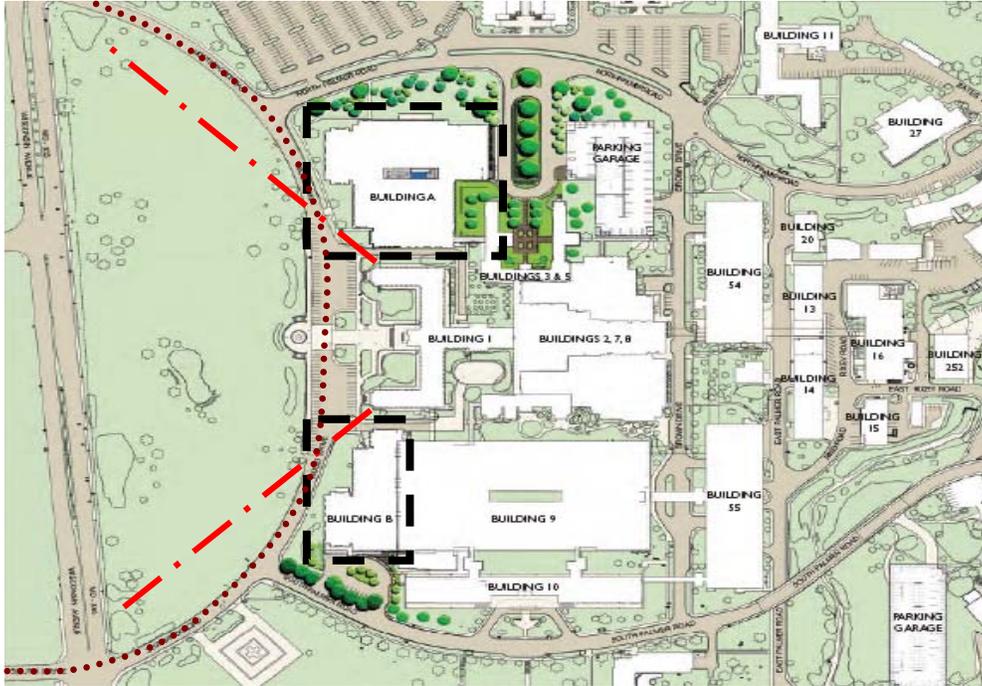
The gradually sloping landscape and terraces of the Medical Center were also designed by Paul Cret as part of the original construction. The tower and wings of Building One are centered on a circular drive (Wood Road) that spans between the north and south gates marking the Campus entry points from Wisconsin Avenue. Wood Road, along with the north and south retaining walls that extend 215 feet from the central terrace, define the edge of the semicircular central terrace that extends 130 feet from the building entrance.

In the center of the front lawn lie a granite and bronze flagpole and base, together reaching a height of 90 feet. Two large anchors rest to the north and south of the flagpole, and on the western side of the base there are three steps leading down the hillside.

Proposal

The United States Department of the Navy has submitted concept designs for additions and site/utility improvements to the medical facility at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) at Bethesda; the proposal is the result of thorough assessment of the BRAC requirements and subsequent master planning. As such, the general size, scale, massing and architectural character is not expected to change significantly and the concept design as presented will proceed through design and construction.

The proposed concept includes renovation of 261,000 square feet of the existing medical facility, construction of a new six-story building (Building A) of 533,000 square feet, and construction of a four-story addition (Building B) of 157,000 square feet to the west of Building Nine. The new buildings will flank the existing Building One of the campus, and each will have symmetrical facades, western footprints around Wood Drive, and roof heights.



SITE/LANDSCAPING PLAN

The new buildings will be constructed of pre-cast concrete with a stone base and aluminum-frame windows; incorporation of recessed vertical window openings will be used relate to the geometry in the fenestration pattern of Building One. It is important to note that the windows shown in the proposal are schematic in nature and are likely to change with the next phase of design. Due to the difference in floor-to-floor heights between Buildings A and B, creation of symmetrical fenestration of both buildings is an acknowledged design challenge.

Site improvements related to the new buildings will include landscaping and utility/infrastructure improvements to the central equipment plant. The courtyards to the rear of Building One are contributing elements of the National Historic Landmark and will be preserved; neither construction from this project, nor from future projects anticipated as part of the pending Master Plan update, will alter the existing courtyard configurations or materials, and any landscaping that is disturbed will be replaced in-kind.



SITE PERSPECTIVE – APPROACH ON WOOD DRIVE

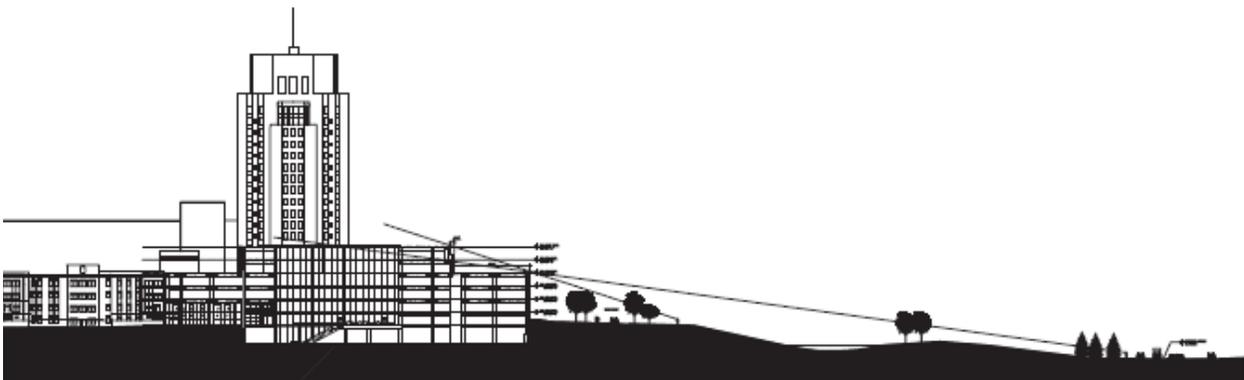
Several design parameters evolved as a result of design consultation with NCPC and MD-SHPO staffs, including the following:

- The buildings must be symmetrical about Building One.
- The adjacent front planes of Building A (Outpatient Care Pavilion) and Building B (Inpatient Addition) cannot be forward (west) of the front of the wings of Building One.
- The view shed west of Building One is to remain unobstructed. The west footprints of Buildings A and B, along Wood Drive, are to step away from the wings of Building One.
- The front walls of Buildings A and B cannot be higher than the wings of Building One.
- Building heights may be permitted to be higher than the wings of Building One provided their front walls are set back to minimize visibility from within the site.
- The overall heights of Buildings A and B are to be the same.
- New construction should respect, and enhance where possible, the historical importance of the other buildings and courtyards on the site.

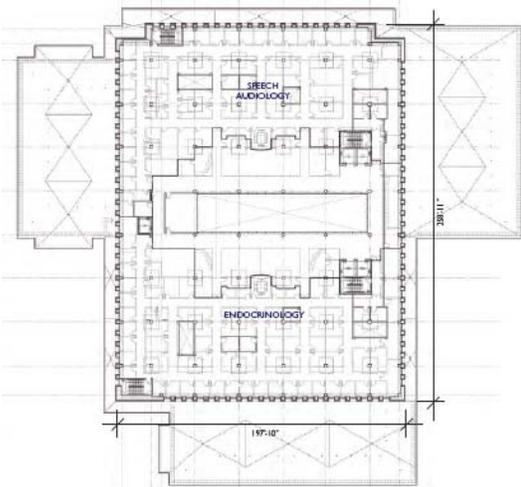
Additionally, a number of sustainable design features and energy efficient systems will be incorporated into all new construction; the buildings will be certified according to the US Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program.



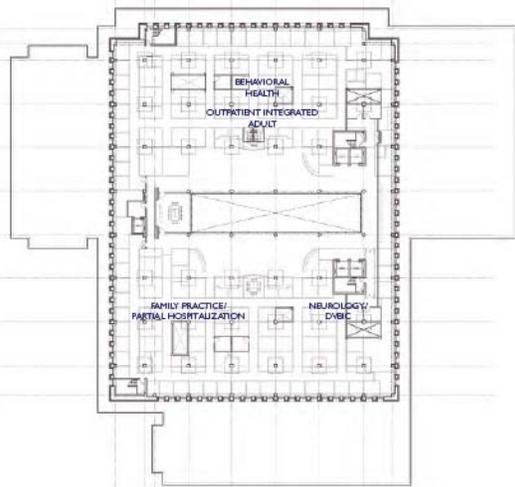
BUILDING ELEVATIONS



SITE SECTION – SIGHT LINES TO NEW BUILDINGS



FIFTH FLOOR

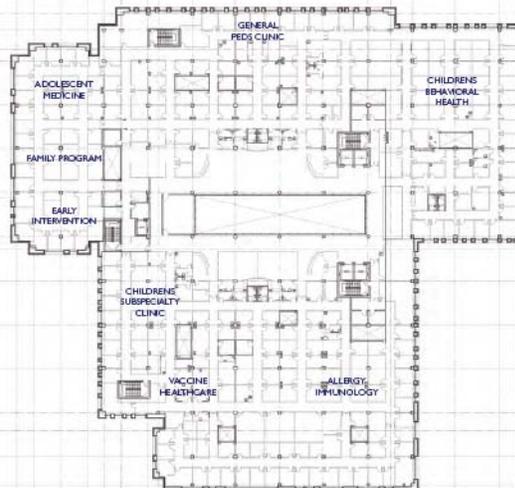


SIXTH FLOOR

BUILDING A

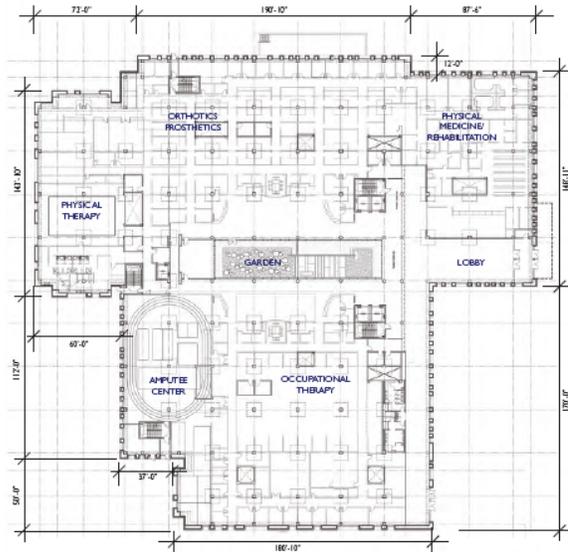


THIRD FLOOR

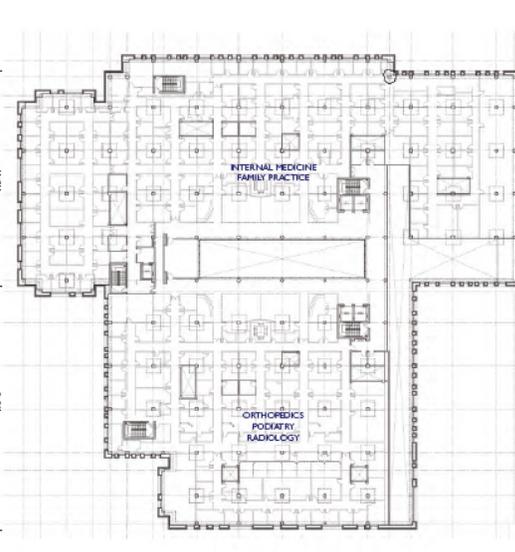


FOURTH FLOOR

BUILDING A



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

BUILDING A

FLOOR PLANS – BUILDING “A”

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Staff finds that the proposed building additions meet the design parameters that were formulated as part of consultation with NCPC and MD-SHPO staffs with regard to footprint, building frontage/setbacks, symmetry, building heights, and preservation of view sheds and historic landscapes. Additionally the scale, massing, and material selection for the new buildings are well developed and appropriate additions to the WRNMMC medical facility; the applicant and design team are to be commended for their ongoing consultation and responsiveness to NCPC and MD-SHPO staffs, including site analysis to minimize visibility of upper portions of the new buildings from within the site.

Staff requests that the applicant provide, with the preliminary site and building plans, revised elevations that include more compatible fenestration patterns; additional information with regard to the building's overall size and height; a more fully developed site and landscaping plan; and information on proposed exterior building/site lighting (including proposed fixtures, locations, and foot-candle levels). Information and samples of the proposed finish materials should also be submitted.

A summary of planned staffing should be included at the preliminary and final design stages, as will be determined by the ongoing EIS and Master Planning processes. Related parking accommodations for the proposed buildings will be reviewed under subsequent submissions, and should comply with parking ratios established in the current Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital.

Staff encourages the applicant to initiate Section 106 consultation as soon as possible, as requested by the Maryland Historical Trust, in order to define the undertaking and "area of potential effect," to identify all eligible historic properties in the area of potential effect, and to provide a determination of effect. The Section 106 review should result in a determination of the impacts to historic structures/landscapes that will result from this undertaking, as well as any actions to minimize/mitigate those impacts.

CONFORMANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

Staff has determined that the proposed project is consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements*, in particular policies in the Federal Workplace Element.

Federal Capital Improvements Program

This project is not included in the current list of projects included in the FCIP for the WRNMMC. The applicant should add this project to the 2009-2014 version of the FCIP, along with other projects that are identified as the current Master Plan update is completed.

National Environmental Policy Act

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is currently being prepared for the WR-NMMC campus; this work is related to a Master Plan update that is being carried out concurrently. While an EIS is not required at the Concept Design review stage, a completed EIS will be required as part of the preliminary design submission. Since the EIS is used to inform decisions for the campus as a whole, findings presented in that document have the potential to change the Staff analyses and/or recommendations at later reviews.

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

Review of the proposed project, per Section 106 of the NHPA, is not required at the concept design stage. However, the applicant has been in consultation with the Maryland Historic Trust (SHPO) and has made several design changes as a result of that consultation. Formal Section 106 consultation with the SHPO is required as part of the preliminary design submission; the SHPO has requested that this formal review process be initiated in the short term.

CONSULTATION

Maryland Historical Trust (MHT)

The MHT accepted the concept design with regard to location, footprint, and massing; and requested Section 106 consultation to move forward with fenestration design, materials selection, and other design and planning details.

Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission in Montgomery County (M-NCPPC)

The proposed project is generally consistent with M-NCPPC plans, programs, and objectives; however, there are some concerns with future parking and traffic impacts. Since the Montgomery County Planning Board has not yet commented on this project, M-NCPPC's recommendation is contingent on the Applicant considering and addressing any problems or conditions that are identified by the Planning Board.

Maryland Department of Transportation

The proposed project is generally consistent with Maryland Department of Transportation plans, programs, and objectives, and without any unacceptable impact that could be determined at this stage of the project.

Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE)

Comments from the MDE identified various potential environmental effects of the proposed project that require additional review, coordination, and compliance with applicable regulations. Areas of potential effect include, but are not limited to, traffic and parking; hazardous materials and waste; construction materials and methods; energy sources; and emissions.

Maryland Department of Planning

The proposed project is generally consistent with Maryland Department of Planning plans, programs, and objectives. Qualifying comments are anticipated, but have not yet been received, from the Maryland Department of Planning.

Maryland Department of Natural Resources

The proposed project is generally consistent with Maryland Department of Natural Resources plans, programs, and objectives.

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

The proposed project is generally consistent with plans, programs, and objectives of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.