

# STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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NCPC File No. 6849



## WALTER REED NATIONAL MILITARY MEDICAL CENTER NATIONAL INTREPID CENTER OF EXCELLENCE (NICoE)

8901 Rockville Pike  
Montgomery County, Bethesda, Maryland

Submitted by the United States Department of the Navy

May 29, 2008

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### Abstract

The United States Department of the Navy has submitted preliminary and final site and building plans for the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE) at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. The new state-of-the-art facility will be dedicated to the diagnosis, treatment, education, and research of post traumatic stress disorders and traumatic brain injuries. The project will replace Building 12, an historic structure constructed in 1941.

### Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of preliminary and final site and building plans pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8722(a) and (b)(1).

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### Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

**Approves** the preliminary and final site and building plans for the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE) at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 3101.30(38.00)42549.

**Commends** the applicant and their design team for a well developed, sophisticated, and innovative addition to the campus.

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Background

As post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD) and traumatic brain injuries (TBI) have gained greater visibility throughout the Departments of Defense (DoD) and Veterans Affairs (DVA), there have been recommendations to establish Centers of Excellence to provide care, treatment, education, training and research related to psychological health and PTSD/TBI. In response, the Navy is planning to construct the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE) is being established with the intent of providing the absolute best in research, assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning and long term follow-up for psychological health and PTSD/TBI. The Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund, an independent not-for-profit organization founded and supported by the Fisher family and dedicated to supporting the men and women of the Armed Forces and their families, have pledged funding for construction and fit-out of this new facility.

### Site

The site for the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE) is currently occupied by Building 12, which was built in 1941 as the Chief Petty Officer barracks. The building was converted to administrative space in 1987 and this function remains the primary use of the building today. Many parts of the envelope and infrastructure are in need of significant maintenance and the existing building presents many challenges regarding handicapped accessibility. As noted in the letter to the Maryland Historical Trust, submitted on February 4, 2008, the site of Building 12 offers the ideal location for the NICoE due to adjacencies to existing medical facilities and to the existing warrior transition barracks within Building 50.

The gradually sloping site is located south of the circular drive (Wood Road) that connects to south gate of the campus. Buildings 9 and 10, both modern medical treatment buildings, are located immediately north of the site, across Wood Road. The south edge of the site is defined by a retaining wall, which also marks an average five-foot grade change from the building site to a surface parking area directly to the south.

### Proposal

The United States Department of the Navy has submitted preliminary and final site and building plans for the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE) at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) at Bethesda. The proposal is in response to the DOD's increased awareness of psychological health and PTSD/TBI.

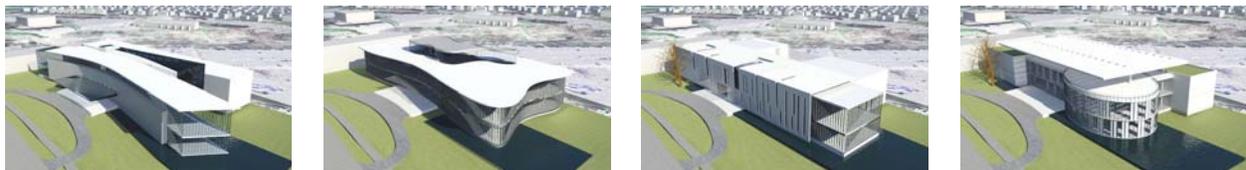
The proposed facility includes demolition of Building 12 (*see "National Historic Preservation Act" section, page 6*), minor site grading, site/access improvements, landscaping, and construction of a new two-story, 80,000 square foot state-of-the-art facility dedicated to the diagnosis, treatment, education, and research of post traumatic stress disorders and traumatic brain injuries. The center will use a multi-disciplinary family oriented approach that will incorporate the following:

- Large amorphous interior/exterior spaces for intensive evaluation, treatment, and meditative space
- Group and family treatment rooms clustered with offices
- Landscaped exterior spaces and playgrounds to be used for evaluation and treatment of wounded and their families
- An “L” section to accommodate non-clinical space (e.g., offices) for clinical and leader education, research, and administration



**SITE/LANDSCAPING PLAN**

NCPC staff, as well as the staffs from the Maryland Historical Trust and the Montgomery County Planning Department, has consulted extensively with the applicant and their design team; the resulting design is a result of several schemes and modifications made to relate the architecture of the new facility with the historic buildings and landscape that remain.



**PRELIMINARY DESIGN SCHEMES**

As a result of consultation, several general design parameters have been adhered to:

- The footprint of the NICoE should be close to the same size and location as Building 12.
- The view shed west of the building is to remain unobstructed.
- The building height should relate to the Barracks building (#50) immediately to its east.
- The northwest “corner” of the amorphous volume should be more solid to better relate to the rectilinear geometry found in existing buildings on the campus.
- The established tree line along Palmer Drive should be retained, except for removal of a maximum of two trees to accommodate a drive/drop-off at the building front.
- New construction should respect, and enhance where possible, the historical importance of the other buildings and landscape elements on the site.

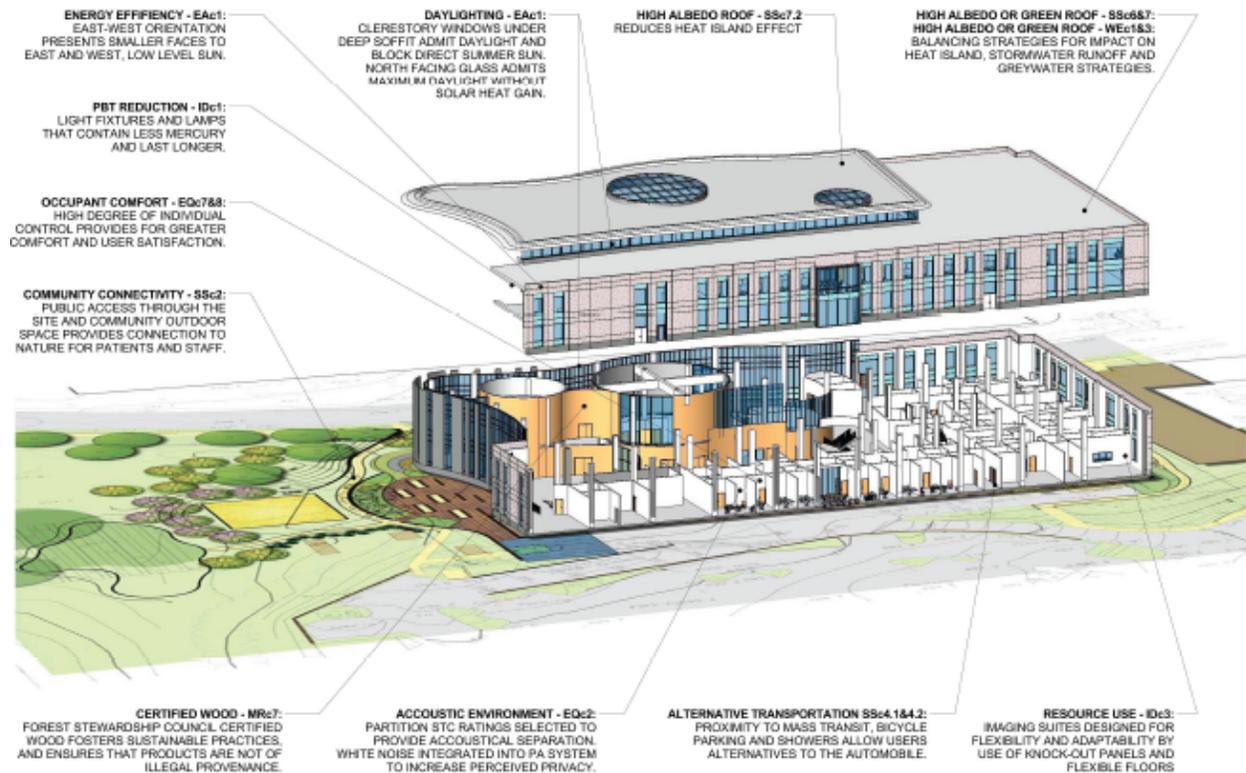


### **BUILDING PERSPECTIVE**

The resulting new building incorporates architectural pre-cast concrete, aluminum-framed windows with clear and fritted laminated low-e glass, and a floating roof plane over the amorphous treatment spaces. The incorporation of recessed vertical window openings will be used to relate to the geometry in the fenestration pattern of Building One as well as the planned Medical Facility Additions – Buildings A and B (NCPC File No. 6759 - June 5, 2008); the precast concrete mix and color is also planned to match that of Buildings A and B.

The site plan includes an access drive/drop-off, a playground area for use in diagnosis and family treatment, and other plantings to create a therapeutic landscape.

Several sustainable design features and energy efficient systems will be incorporated into the facility; the building is expected to receive a Silver rating according to the US Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program. Environmental design features will include collection of stormwater runoff, energy efficient glazing and roofing systems (including reflective and/or green roofs), use of daylighting, façade design responsive to sun angles, and renewable finish materials.



## ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN FEATURES

### PROJECT ANALYSIS

While the proposed NICoE is very modern in its design, adherence to the established design parameters has resulted in a well developed, sophisticated, and innovative design that will be a positive addition to the WRNMMC campus. Staff finds that the building's footprint, frontage/setbacks, scale, massing, materials, vertical fenestration, preservation of view sheds, and landscaping is respectful of its historic setting. The applicant and design team are to be commended for their ongoing consultation and responsiveness to NCPC and MD-SHPO staffs, including building design analysis to ensure integration with the traditional architecture of the historic buildings that remain on the campus as well as the formulation of a Memorandum of Agreement related to the demolition of historic Building 12.

The Master Plan for the campus is currently being updated, and the project has therefore been referred to affected agencies for review; the Navy's identified need to meet the established construction timeline necessitated this approach (*see "Consultation" section, page 7*). Any parking accommodations related to the proposed facility (to be identified in the Master Plan update and in related future projects) will be reviewed against the parking ratios established in the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital.

## 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 since it will enhance the efficiency, productivity, and public image of the federal government and also incorporate innovative energy conserving techniques into its design, construction, and operation.

### National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has recently been completed for the WRNMMC campus. There are no anticipated adverse impacts resulting from the proposed facility, however related traffic increases may result in adverse impacts. These impacts are required to be mitigated with the implementation of a Transportation Management Plan, currently under development as part of the ongoing Master Plan update.

### National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

Building 12 is a contributing structure in the National Naval Medical Center Historic District, eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The Navy evaluated several alternative plans that could avoid or minimize adverse effects to the building and historic district, including reuse of Building 12 and modification for adaptation of Building 12. The MHT concurred with the Navy that the specialized medical program needs could best be met by demolition of the historic building and construction of the new NICoE.

Therefore, the Navy and the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) have drafted a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the demolition of Building 12 in order to construct the new facility. The MHT has executed the MOA. Mitigation for the demolition includes visual (architectural drawings and photographs) and written documentation of Building 12, rehabilitation of Building 17, retention of Buildings 18 and 21, and treatment of the landscape in front of Building One, following the development of a landscape rehabilitation plan in consultation with the MHT.

## CONSULTATION

The Navy has completed an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in response to the pending expansion related to BRAC, and is currently in the process of updating the Master Plan, including a Transportation Management Plan (TMP), for the campus. Due to the Navy's identified need to meet the established construction timeline, the project site and building plans have been referred to affected agencies through the Maryland State Clearinghouse ahead of an updated Master Plan that includes the NICoE. The following agencies have determined the proposed project to be generally consistent with their plans, programs, and objectives:

- Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission in Montgomery County
- Maryland Department of Transportation
- Maryland Department of Planning
- Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development
- Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

### Maryland Historical Trust (MHT)

The MHT finds that the project will have an adverse effect; a Memorandum of Agreement has been drafted to define mitigation measures for the project (*see "National Historic Preservation Act" section, page 6*).

### Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE)

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) has determined that the proposed project is generally consistent with MDE plans, programs, and objectives; qualifying comments were also provided that addressed traffic and parking; hazardous materials and waste; construction materials and methods; energy sources; and emissions. The Navy has committed to coordinate construction activities and master planning efforts to address the MDE comments.

### Maryland Department of Natural Resources

No comments were received from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.