



## Delegated Action of the Executive Director

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**PROJECT****School Rehabilitation and Addition**

Jesse Reno School  
4820 Howard Street, NW  
Washington, DC

**NCPC FILE NUMBER**

7334

**NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER**

10.05(38.00)43493

**SUBMITTED BY**

District of Columbia Department of General Services

**ACTION TAKEN**

Preliminary approval of site and building plans

**REVIEW AUTHORITY**

Advisory  
per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1)

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The District of Columbia Department of General Services has requested preliminary approval for the rehabilitation of, and addition to, the Jesse Reno School located adjacent to Alice Deal Middle School in upper Northwest, Washington. The proposed addition will physically connect the two schools and create a unified campus. The project will provide needed core program educational spaces to Alice Deal Middle School and rehabilitate the Jesse Reno School, a building listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Jesse Reno School was designed by Washington, DC's first municipal architect, Snowden Ashford, and constructed in 1903. The school served the predominantly African-American neighborhood known as Reno City, which was located near the present day school. In the mid-1930s, Reno City was demolished to make way for an expanded reservoir and other improvements. The school is one of the remaining structures directly associated with the former neighborhood, serving its original purpose until its closure in 1950. After the school closed, the building was re-used as a Civil Defense Office and special needs facility for Alice Deal Middle School; however the building has been vacant since the 1990s.

The project will rehabilitate approximately 13,000 square feet in the two-story Jesse Reno School. A new 25,000 square foot addition will be constructed to connect the Reno School and the Alice Deal Middle School buildings. The new addition will accommodate 300 new students and when completed, the population at the middle school will be approximately 1,200 students. A daycare facility will be located at the north end of the addition, accommodating children of faculty up to 3 years old. The project is designed to achieve LEED Silver certification.

The interior of the Jesse Reno School will be rehabilitated to meet current building and safety codes, and the exterior building facades will be restored. The school building's original floor plan will be restored and used for classrooms. The first floor main hall will become a shared learning space that directly connects the Jesse Reno School to the Alice Deal Middle School through a new staircase in the addition. The new stair and elevator will be enclosed in a glass hyphen-shaped structure that will serve as a bridge between the historic school and the new building addition. This new structure will be lower than the existing cornice line of the Reno School, and a glass curtain wall system will allow views of the west façade of the historic building. The two-story addition will be constructed on the west side of the Reno School. The proposed addition

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will connect to the Middle School at an existing doorway located on the southwest side of the building. The connection between the Reno School and the new addition will serve as an axis and circulation space, providing learning paths to display information on local history and the school. A lobby-commons area in the addition will provide access to classrooms and administration areas. This lobby-commons will function as a circulation space and informal shared learning space. The hallways located in the addition will serve as “social” learning areas, where both structured and unstructured educational activities can occur.

The addition will utilize a stone or masonry base and combination of solid panel, metal, and glass materials on the upper floors. The use of these materials will differentiate the new addition from the pebble finish of the historic building. The addition will also be setback 20-feet from the west façade of the Reno School building. With its low profile, flat roofs, varied massing, and glazed surfaces, the addition will continue to allow the Reno School to appear as a free-standing building. Access to the building addition will be from Howard Street, and six parking spaces will be located adjacent to the Reno school building. Also as part of the project, Howard Street will be repaired and the existing parking and turn-around area (located on the Alice Deal Middle School property) will be reconfigured to provide a child drop-off and pick-up area.

As this is a District of Columbia project outside the Central Area, NCPC does not have an independent responsibility to carry out the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act or National Historic Preservation Act.

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal at its December 14, 2011 meeting, and forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the proposal has been coordinated with all participating agencies. The participating agencies were NCPC; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the District Department of Transportation; the National Park Service; the General Services Administration; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

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Pursuant to delegations of authority adopted by the Commission on October 3, 1996 and 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1), I approve the preliminary site and building plans for the Jesse Reno School rehabilitation and addition, located at 4820 Howard Street as shown on NCPC Map File No. 10.05(38.00)43493.

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Marcel Acosta  
Executive Director

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