

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

NCPC File No. 6528



**WALTER REED ARMY MEDICAL CENTER, MAIN SECTION
RENOVATION OF AND ADDITION TO BUILDING 40
14th and Dahlia Streets, NW
Washington, DC**

Submitted by the Department of the Army

October 28, 2004

Abstract

The Department of the Army has submitted a preliminary design for the renovation of and addition to Building 40 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC. The project includes interior renovations and exterior restoration of the existing facility, as well as a new addition built within an existing courtyard enclosed by a new skylight.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of preliminary site and building plans pursuant to 40 U.S.C § 8722(d) and Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act (40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1))

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

Approves the preliminary site and building plans for the renovation of and addition to Building 40 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, DC as shown on NCPC Map File No. 62.10(38.00)41472.

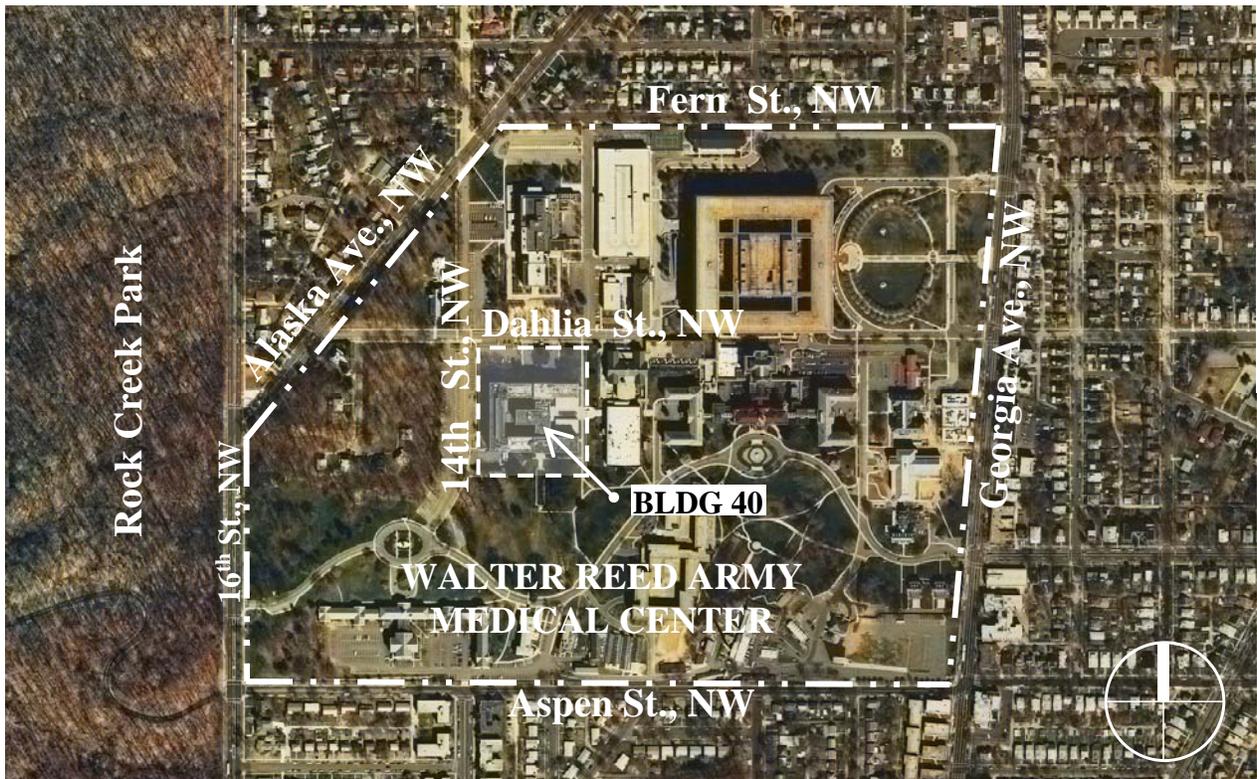
Commends the applicant for a design which retains the historic character of the building and site through adaptive use of the existing facility, while improving the quality of life for building occupants by creating a new enclosed courtyard.

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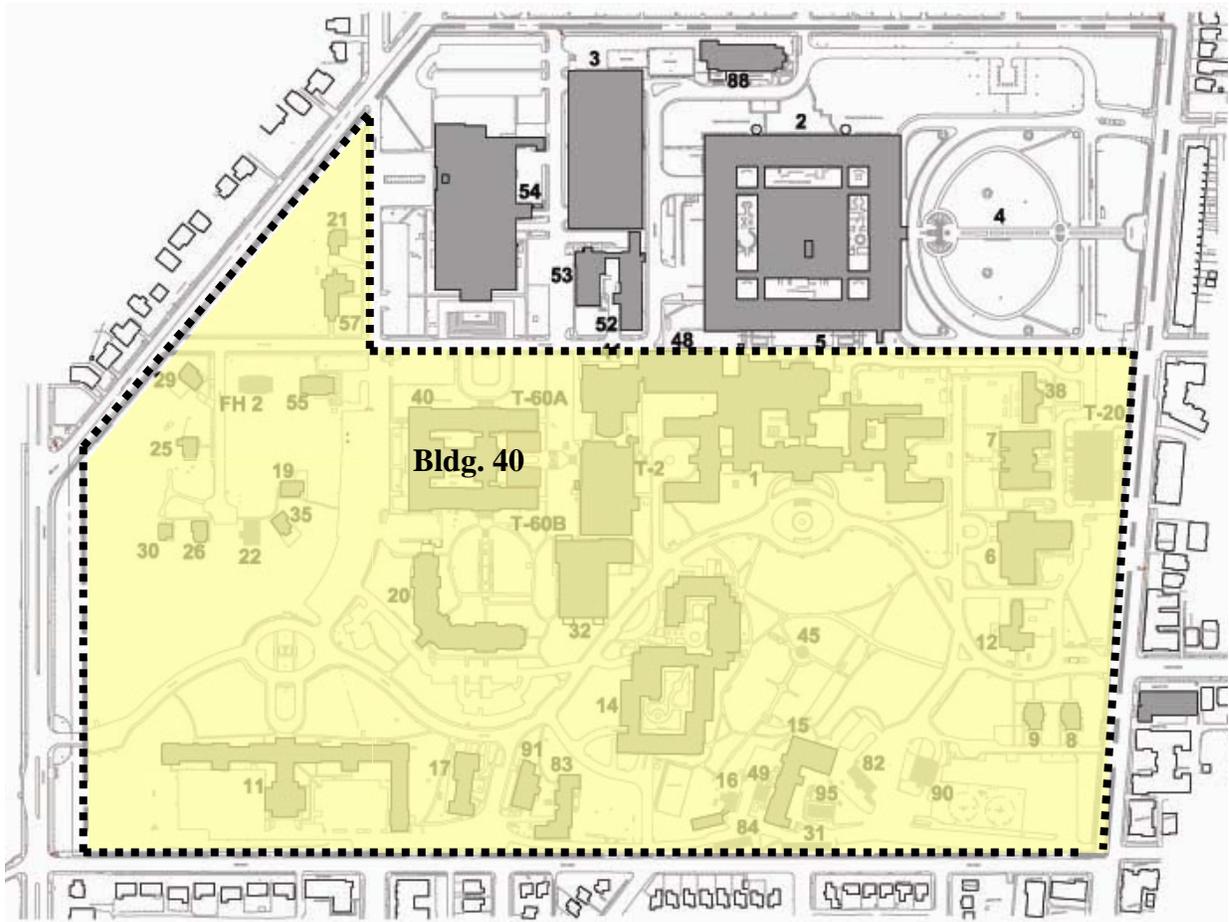
PROJECT SUMMARY

Site Description

The 113-acre Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC), Main Section, is located within a residential area in northwest Washington, DC. It is bordered on the north by Fern Street and Alaska Avenue, on the south by Aspen Street, on the east by Georgia Avenue, and on the west by 16th Street. Rock Creek Park is located across 16th Street just west of the Main Section. WRAMC has rolling topography and a significant amount of tree coverage, especially in the area adjacent to 16th Street and Alaska Avenue.



Aerial View: Walter Reed Medical Center, Main Section



WRAMC Site Plan: Historic District (shaded area) with Building 40

Building 40, the subject of this review, occupies a prominent 4.2 acre site within the Walter Reed Historic District which is south of Dahlia Street and west of 14th Street, NW. The site is bounded by Dahlia Street, NW to the north, 14th Street, NW to the west, Buildings 42 and T-2 to the east and Building 20 (Malone House) to the south. To the north a U-shaped driveway, from Dahlia Street, leads to the main building entrance. The building is surrounded by lawns with mature trees and foundation plantings. Walkways are located to the west, south and east and a formal garden which includes a pond is located directly to the south. An existing small parking lot is located on the northwest corner of the site with additional parking along and adjacent to 14th Street.

Background

Building 40 was originally constructed in three phases as the Army Medical School, later renamed the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research. The south wing was completed in 1923, followed by the center auditorium and north wing in 1932 and finally the west wing in 1962. The building contains approximately 279,000 gross square feet. The wings and auditorium connect to form a U-shaped courtyard. The building has five floors, including a basement level partially

below grade, and a partial attic over the center sections of the north and south wings and the west wing penthouse. The steel and concrete structure is clad in red brick and trimmed with limestone, marble and granite. Flat roofs are hidden behind high parapet walls. The building has undergone frequent internal and external alterations to accommodate the changing needs of laboratory and research use. Each of the building additions installed different window types. In 1999 the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research moved out of the building and the facility has remained unoccupied since that time.

Building 40 is a contributing resource for the Walter Reed Historic District, that is eligible for listing on the National Register.



Existing Photo: North Entrance



**Existing Photo:
Partial View of Courtyard**

Proposal

Site Modifications

The applicant proposes to retain most of the existing site features and landscape design on the 4.2 acre site. Trees located immediately adjacent to the building and overgrown foundation plantings will be pruned. Most of the existing trees, plantings and open lawn areas will remain, however some trees and plants are planned to be removed in order to reestablish the landscape design as originally intended around the existed building. Existing walkways, to the west, south and east, and the south garden will remain. No additional parking will be provided.

Building Modifications

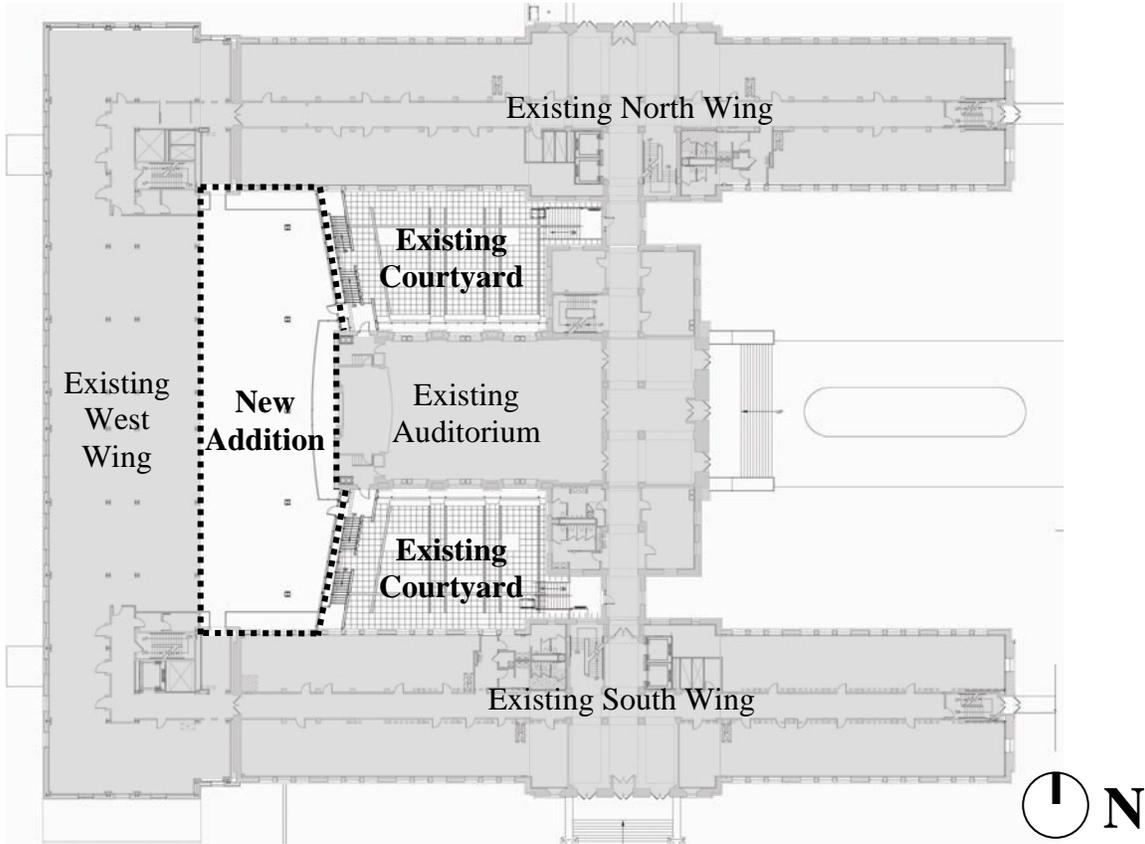
The project will rehabilitate Building 40 to provide interior tenant space for administrative functions. The majority of the project scope involves internal demolition and renovation. There will be some external repair and renovation as well as the removal of two trailers (T60-A, T60-B) in the east auditorium forecourt.

The primary exterior repair and renovation involves the removal of exposed building vent shafts and ventilation grilles in various locations around the facades that were installed for previous laboratory functions. Existing wood and steel windows and entrance doors will be retained and restored. Blanked windows as well as windows obstructed by mechanical penetrations will be reopened and replaced by window units fabricated to match existing profiles and finishes. The brick and stone masonry will be cleaned, repaired and re-pointed as required. New building light fixtures, matching the original historic fixtures, will be installed at the north, east and south entrances; and the existing west wing light fixtures will be restored and reinstalled. The north entrance will be modified to provide ADA accessible building access from grade down to the basement level.

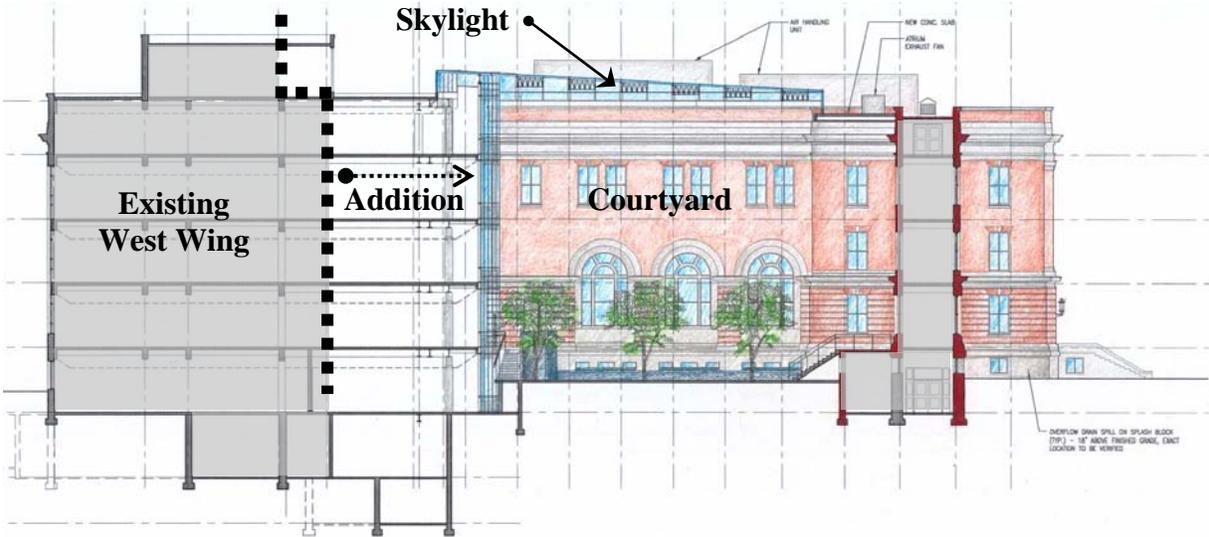
A new multi-story addition (approximately 31,500 square feet) will extend from the west wing into the existing courtyard. The courtyard and the addition will be enclosed by a skylight. The low profile, single slope skylight will angle from the east up to the west. The skylight will project approximately 4 to 6 feet above the perimeter parapets, however it is set back 80 feet from the parapets and is positioned in the central portion of the building mass. The skylight will be clad with insulated clear and fritted glass panels framed by aluminum mullions. The skylight will be supported by internal, exposed steel trusses spanning the courtyard opening. A 12-foot by 13-foot cantilevered glass canopy, matching the skylight finishes, will be installed over two of the west wing entrances. The existing west wing penthouse will expand to the east to house additional mechanical equipment. Two air handling units will be installed on top of the existing auditorium roof.



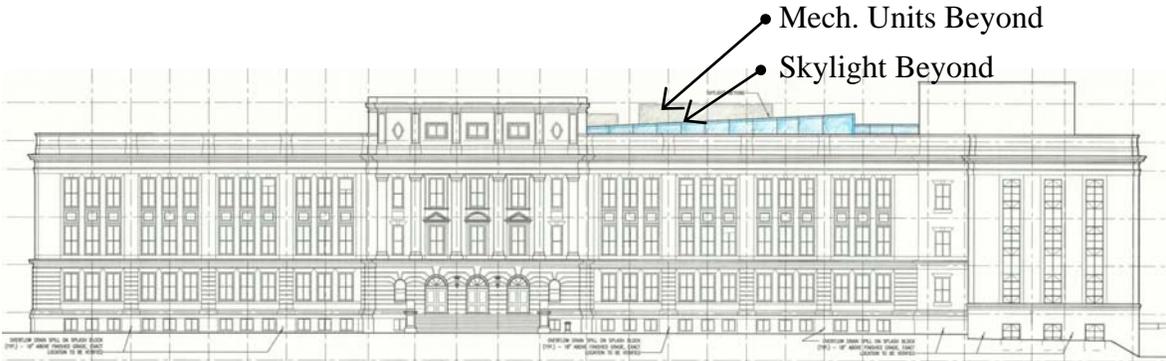
Site/Roof Plan



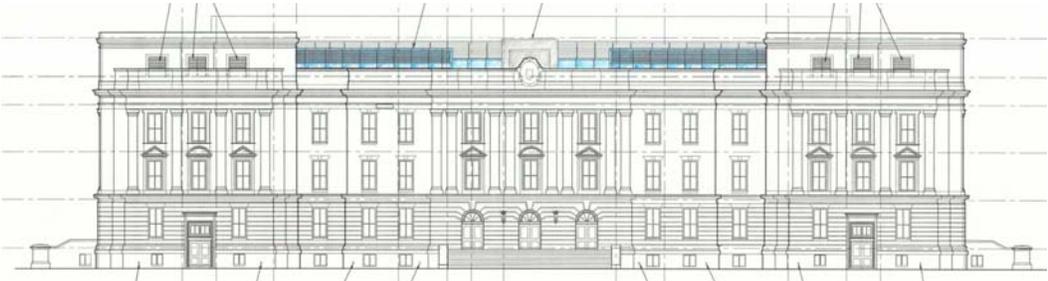
Building 40: First Floor Plan (Existing Building Shaded)



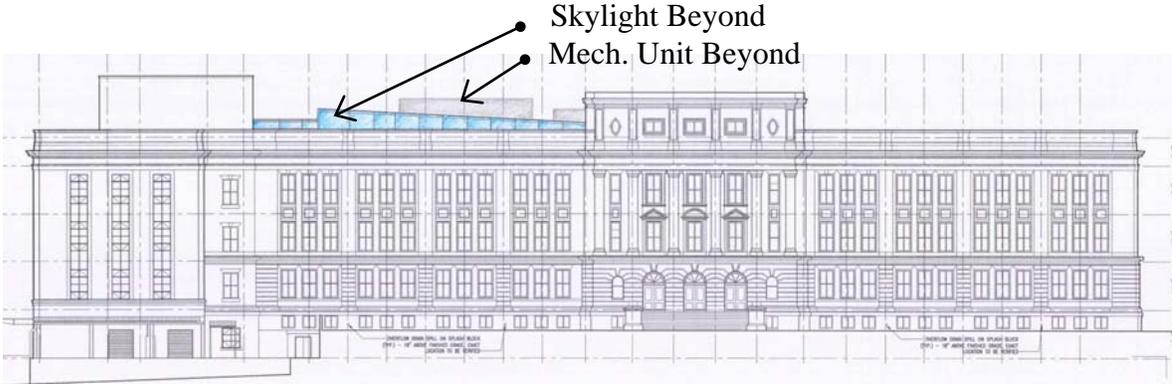
West-East Building Section



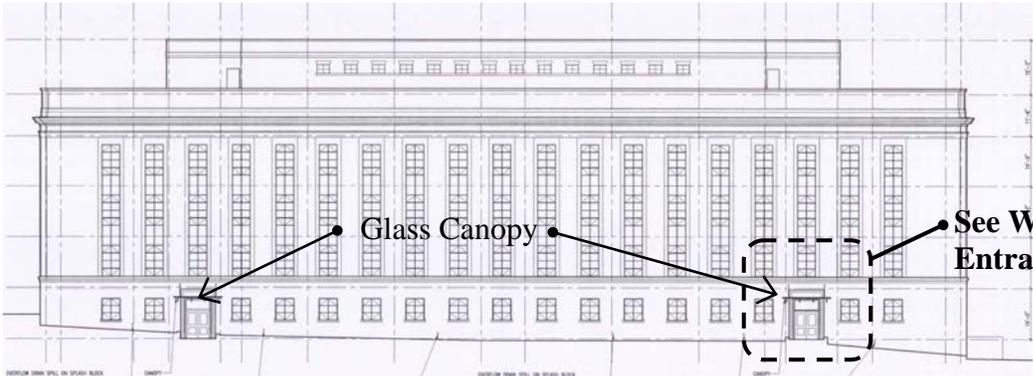
North Elevation



East Elevation



South Elevation



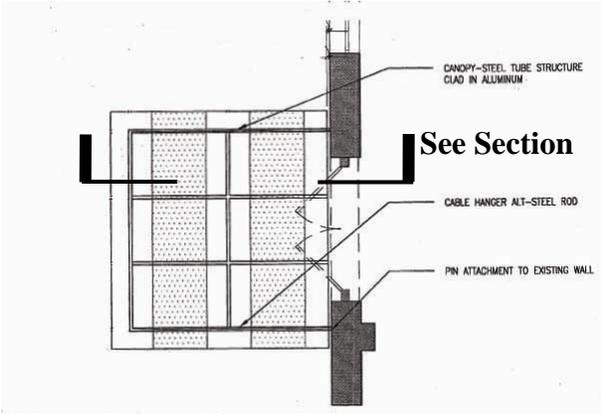
West Elevation



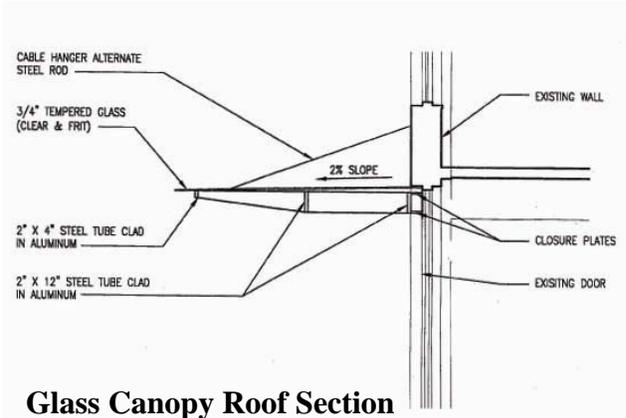
Model: View from Southeast



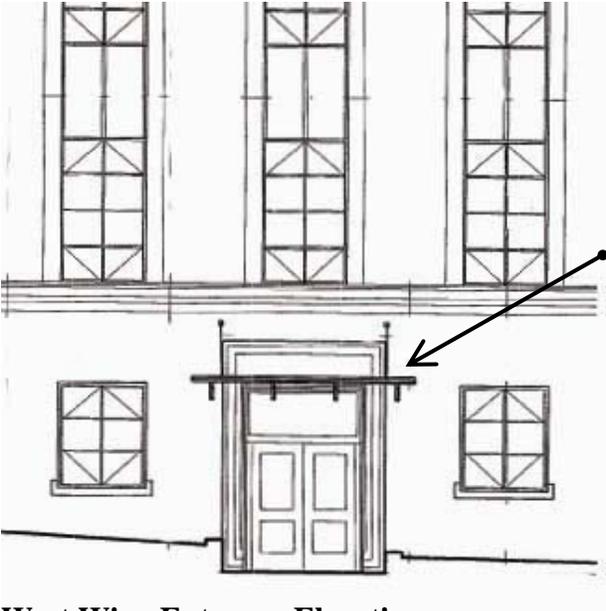
Model: Detail View into Courtyard



Glass Canopy Roof Plan



Glass Canopy Roof Section



West Wing Entrance Elevation

Glass Canopy

Development Program

Applicant: Department of the Army
Architect: Leo A Daly
Cost: Total estimated project cost is \$35,500,000.
Schedule: Start of construction in January 2005. Completion of construction in January 2006 with building occupancy in April 2006.

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Staff notes that the majority of the project is a whole building interior renovation and repair and does not impact the building exterior. Staff commends the applicant for the extent of exterior renovation and restoration to reconstitute the historic character of the building and site with no adverse effects. Significant architectural features and finishes of the existing building will be retained and restored while missing elements will be replicated to match existing profiles and finishes.

Staff notes that the courtyard building addition, west wing penthouse addition, and courtyard skylight, for the most part, will have minimal impact to the exterior of the building. The courtyard addition and west wing penthouse will be visible from within the courtyard. The highest point of the sloping skylight may be somewhat visible from the north and south along 14th Street, however it will not be seen from the east or west. Staff notes that the low profile skylight will provide ample daylight to interior spaces surrounding the courtyard. Staff commends the incorporation of the skylight over the courtyard which will create a dynamic interior space and improve the quality of life for building tenants. The small, glass canopies over the west wing entrances will be compatible with the existing 1960's facade.

Staff recommends that the applicant further clarify the scope of landscape modifications for the final submission.

PROJECT CONFORMANCE

Master Plan Compliance

This proposal is consistent with the WRAMC revised Master Plan approved by the Commission in April of 2003. The site is located within the land use zone designated for administration. WRAMC is currently in the process of updating their master plan and anticipates submitting it to NCPC by the end of 2004.

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

Staff has determined that the preliminary design is consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements*, in particular the Preservation and Historic Features and the Federal Workplace Elements. The project renovates and rehabilitates an existing federally owned facility. Building modernization and interior space allocation allow for new functions and adaptive use.

Federal Capital Improvements Program

Building 40 renovation was included in the Federal Capital Improvements Program for Fiscal Years 2004-2009, adopted by the Commission at its meeting on September 4, 2003. The project cost was noted at \$24,000,000.

National Environmental Policy Act

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Commission staff has reviewed the submission and has found the proposal is consistent with the Commission's categorical exclusion requirements at Section 8 of the Commission's Environmental Procedures.

National Historic Preservation Act

Staff commends WRAMC and its design and development team for a rehabilitation project that meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The Army has determined that the proposed project, which includes a roof enclosure above an open courtyard, would have No Adverse Effect on Building 40. WRAMC has been consulting throughout the project with the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office, as well as with NCPC and Commission of Fine Arts staffs. Staff looks forward to the conclusion of the Section 106 consultation at a future phase of the project's development.

The building is a historic structure within the National Register-eligible historic district at WRAMC. It was built in phases between 1923 and 1962 in the campus' prevailing Georgian Revival style characterized by red brick with white trim but with Modern elements for the later phases. The project also includes the rehabilitation of the significant landscape elements associated with the building.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed this item at its meeting on October 13, 2004 and forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the project has been coordinated with all agencies represented. The participating agencies were: NCPC, the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the District of Columbia Department of Housing and Community Development; the National Park Service; and the General Services Administration.

Commission of Fine Arts

The Army informally met with CFA and NCPC staff members in July 2004. Comments were complimentary to the design direction and discussions focused on the revisions to the WRAMC Master Plan that are currently underway, plans for campus-wide parking and the timing of full commission reviews. The Army presented the project to the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) on October 21, 2004 and received concept approval.

Advisory Neighborhood Commissions 4A and 4B

The Army presented the preliminary design to approximately 60 people representing the Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANC) 4A and 4B and other citizens of the neighborhood at a public meeting held in July 2004. Comments were limited to concerns relating to disposal of asbestos and possible cleaning of the building by sandblasting. Neighbors were assured that the hazardous materials in the building would be removed and disposed of in accordance with Federal and District of Columbia regulations. The Army explained that masonry sandblasting was not an acceptable cleaning method and that because of the historic landscape materials surrounding the building, the masonry would be cleaned with water and detergent only. Additional comments related to concerns regarding general traffic, parking and noise issues at WRAMC.