



## Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: December 3, 2015

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<b>PROJECT</b> <b>Rehabilitation and Adaptive Reuse of the Center Building</b> St. Elizabeths West Campus, United States Department of Homeland Security 2700 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, SE Washington, DC	<b>NCPC FILE NUMBER</b> 7707
<b>SUBMITTED BY</b> United States General Services Administration	<b>NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER</b> 83.10(38.00)44214
<b>REVIEW AUTHORITY</b> Approval per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)	<b>APPLICANT'S REQUEST</b> Final approval of site and building plans
	<b>PROPOSED ACTION</b> Approve as requested
	<b>ACTION ITEM TYPE</b> Consent Calendar

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### PROJECT SUMMARY

The United States General Services Administration (GSA) is proposing an adaptive reuse of the Center Building on the St. Elizabeths West Campus, the first federal mental hospital, established in 1853. The building will house approximately 900 personnel and will become the main headquarters for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). It will include the offices of the DHS Secretary, Deputy Secretary and related administrative components. The 264,000 square-foot building is a contributing element to the National Historic Landmarked campus and is located in the center of the campus. The edifice is comprised of a series of seven buildings, constructed between 1853 and 1884 using a wood-frame structure, masonry bearing walls and sloped metal roofs. The buildings are numbered Buildings 1 thru 6 and Building 8 (1895), and they range between two to four floors in height and include a basement. Building 7, built in 1871, was demolished in 1965. This assemblage of buildings, which consists of patient rooms facing north and south along double-loaded corridors flanked on either side of an administrative core, stretches nearly 1,000 feet and is essentially symmetrical in layout and massing. The architect for this Gothic Revival style complex was Thomas U. Walter, who is noted as the fourth Architect of the U.S. Capitol building and is credited for the design of the Capitol dome. The Center Building was vacated in 1987 when the D.C. Department of Mental Health took over operations and moved into a new building on the St. Elizabeths East Campus.

GSA included the adaptive reuse of the Center building in the 2009 DHS Headquarters Consolidation at St. Elizabeths Final Master Plan (West Campus Master Plan), which was approved by the Commission. GSA is proposing to restore, rehabilitate or renovate the interior of this building. The *Historic Structures Report and Building Preservation Plans: St. Elizabeths West Campus* (2010), a study of the interior masonry and wood frame structure, determined that the Center building is in "...extremely unsound condition and [is] no longer viable to support contemporary building code and programmatic requirements for federal office use." Despite this degradation, GSA notes that the building's exterior and massing remain in fair condition and can

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be repaired and retained. GSA is proposing to restore the building's façade and landscape elements, including a brick skirt that encircles the building. This proposal includes adding a few trees as well. The façade restoration includes molding, cornices, exposed fieldstone foundations and steps, along with cast iron ornamental elements. GSA will repair or replicate the wood-framed porte-cochere, wood-framed bay windows and double hung windows, and wood panel doors. GSA is also proposing a new, one-story loading dock that will be located on the southwestern portion of the Center Building.

Staff is including general descriptions of the interior rehabilitation, restoration and renovation work to fully describe the complex scope of the project, however, the staff recommendation and analysis is limited to the building exterior and setting.

## KEY INFORMATION

- Dorothea Dix, a noted mental health advocate and philanthropist, and Charles Nichols, the first superintendent, jointly chose the site for this mental hospital.
  - Thomas U. Walter, fourth architect of the U.S. Capitol building and designer of the Capitol dome, designed the Center Building. The building layout was inspired by Thomas Kirkbridge, a noted physician and mental health advocate, and it incorporated a central administrative building flanked by two wings that included wards segregated by gender, illness, and race.
  - The landscape around the Center Building and throughout the campus provided a natural setting thought to be instrumental in mental health care for patients and is as important an element as the building itself.
  - The Center Building was listed as a contributing element to the National Historic Landmark District in 1990, and it has been vacant since 1987. Based on the Historic Structures Report (2010), the period of significance is from 1856 to 1905.
  - The Department of Health and Human Services transferred the property to GSA in 2001. The building was closed in 2004 in anticipation of its adaptive reuse.
  - The Center Building will become the Headquarters of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).
  - In January 2009, the Commission approved the campus master plan. One of the main goals of the master plan is to retain as much of the historic fabric of St. Elizabeths West Campus as possible.
  - A Programmatic Agreement (PA) signed in 2008 outlined the process for historic preservation. Six Section 106 Consulting Party meetings have been held in 2014 and 2015 specifically focused on the Center Building adaptive reuse project. A specific Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the Center Building was executed on September 2015.
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## RECOMMENDATION

The Commission:

**Approves** the final site and building plans for the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the Center Building on the St. Elizabeths West Campus located in Southeast Washington, DC that will become the home of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

**Notes** that GSA proposes to build a new loading dock on the southwestern portion of the Center Building.

- **Finds** that placing the loading dock in this location is acceptable, as it will allow the Center Building massing to hide the loading dock from the north; the Creamery Building and a potential new addition will hide views of it from the south.
- **Encourages** GSA to utilize identical or complementary cladding for the loading dock's southern facade for consistency with other exterior treatments.

## PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

<b>Previous actions</b>	<p><b>January 2009</b> – Approved the Department of Homeland Security Headquarters Consolidation at St. Elizabeths Final Master Plan.</p> <p><b>June 2012</b> – Approved the DHS Consolidation at St. Elizabeths Master Plan Amendment: Federal Use Parcel of the East Campus (FEMA).</p> <p><b>September 2015</b> – Approved the preliminary site and building plans for the Center Building adaptive reuse project.</p>
<b>Remaining actions (anticipated)</b>	None

## PROJECT ANALYSIS

### Executive Summary

Staff evaluated the preliminary phase of this project by determining GSA's consistency with the 2009 DHS Headquarters Consolidation at St. Elizabeths Final Master Plan (Campus Master Plan) and relevant policies within the Preservation and Historic Features, Federal Workplace, and Transportation Elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital. As noted above, staff is including descriptions of the interior rehabilitation, restoration and renovation work to fully describe the complex scope of the project, however, the staff analysis is limited to the building exterior and setting to reflect the Commission's statutory purview.

This project is generally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan policies which seek to avoid impacts to historic resources, ensure safe and accessible workplaces and promote multi-modal commuting to reduce traffic on roadways and air pollution.

This contributing element to the National Historic Landmark (NHL) district was completely vacated in 1987, nearly 30 years ago. GSA proposes to demolish and reconstruct the interior elements to address degradation of the wood-framed walls and masonry. While not ideal, there are limited alternatives to the demolition given the building degradation. The scope and complexity of the interior demolition and rehabilitation work prompted important historic preservation and design questions.

The adaptive reuse of this building means GSA does not need to construct additional buildings for housing these employees. The building area and massing will generally be the same with only an increase from the new, one-story loading dock. There will be approximately 900 additional personnel commuting to this facility and GSA notes it is currently reviewing and updating the installation master plan including the transportation management plan. GSA notes it will provide an update on the master plan and transportation plan in the spring or summer of 2016. Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission **approve the final site and building plans for the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the Center Building on the St. Elizabeths West Campus located in Southeast Washington, DC that will become the home of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).**

### Analysis

Staff reviewed this project determining its consistency with the Campus Master Plan and Comprehensive Plan. The Campus Master Plan describes all of the development that is expected on this installation as part of the various phases identified in it. The Center Building is included in Phase 2 of the Campus Master Plan.

At 264,000 square feet, the Center Building is the single, largest adaptive reuse project on the campus. The Campus Master Plan includes a document entitled *Preservation, Design and Development Guidelines*. These guidelines describe character-defining features, such as design principles and material selection and treatment; and they also identify standards for campus-wide building treatment, interior treatment, and new construction. There are also parcel-specific standards and guidelines. Staff reviewed these as part of the preliminary review in July 2015 and determined that GSA's design for the Center Building following these standards. Staff reviewed the final design and determined that GSA continues to adhere to these standards.

At the preliminary review of the project in September 2015, the Commission Action required that GSA respond to the following:

- A more detailed description of the design of the new egress doors and the port-cochere, including identifying its period of significance.
- A refined landscape plan that identifies locations for site elements including plantings, reconstruction of pathways and driveways, lighting, signage, security devices,

communications equipment and all other elements in order to understand how they integrate with this site and respond its character-defining elements.

- An update to the transportation management plan (TMP) showing how closely DHS is conforming to the mode split and parking ratio set forth by the installation master plan in 2009 as this will be the second major tenant to be relocated to this site.

The National Park Service, through the National Historic Landmark Program, provided some comments and questions regarding both interior and exterior elements of this project. The comments and questions concerned the following exterior elements: identifying the porte-cochere's period of significance and improving the design of the three new egress doors GSA is installing on the building's southern façade.

The original porte-cochere, built in the late 1800s, was torn down and rebuilt in the late 1930s. Since the Commission review of the preliminary design of the project in September 2015, GSA conducted further discussions on the porte-cochere as part of the Section 106 process. GSA is now proposing to use 1874 as the period of significance for the porte-cochere while also incorporating decorative metal railings from 1938. The new egress doors, which will fulfill life and safety requirements, includes removal of existing windows. NPS recommended that GSA explore maintaining the design intent of the façade as it replaces the windows with new doors. that the proposed egress doors will have the same look whether they were new doors or replacement doors. Staff supports this strategy to maintain a consistent look for the facades.

Staff requested additional information be provided at final review for four standards. In particular, these include standards pertaining to lighting, the location of any communication equipment (large or small scale), security features, and a unified signage system:

- **Lighting.** In June 2012, the Commission approved a lighting plan for all of the roadways and pathways at the St. Elizabeths West Campus. The guidelines note that individual building lights should be "...small and unobtrusive and must not damage the historic building fabric." In addition it should have "...the minimum level of illumination needed for the safety and security of the site." GSA is not proposing any building illumination beyond replacement of historic lighting fixture over egress doors. GSA is not proposing any security or landscape lighting with the design.
- **Communication.** At preliminary review, the Commission requested information describing how or where emergency and cell phone equipment will be permanently installed on the campus or if any will be located on the Center Building. GSA notes in the final design review that no large-scale telecommunications equipment will be included in Parcel 1 area as described in the installation guidelines. Any small-scale antennas will be minimal in nature and be hidden on the roof. GSA also notes that it will submit all antennas, photovoltaic panels or other elements to the GSA National Capital Region - Regional Historic Preservation Officer for approval. **Security.** At preliminary review, the Commission requested information about any additional security features, particularly exterior elements such as fencing, barriers, cameras or lighting. GSA provided a plan that identified locations of security cameras which would be mounted on the building parapet.

GSA proposes to mount all of the cameras on metal arms and attach these metal arms to the building by drilling holes through the mortar joints. By not drilling into the brick and only drilling into the mortar joints these elements are seen as being reversible and would only minimally impact the integrity of the building. As GSA is not proposing any additional security for the exterior of the building, staff is supportive of this proposal.

- Signage. GSA is proposing limited amounts of signage that it will apply to the exterior of the building near the entrances of the building. As part of the submittal, GSA notes “...a campus-wide wayfinding and Signage Strategy for the St Elizabeths Campus was developed and applied to several buildings on Campus, including the US Coast Guard Headquarters. The goal of this previous effort was to create a logical and consistent approach to wayfinding so that users may easily find their way across the campus and within buildings of varying sizes, ages, and levels of complexity. The overarching principle is to provide a unified aesthetic and promote the philosophy of “One DHS.” Staff is supportive of this effort.

GSA notes it is currently reviewing and updating the installation master plan including the transportation management plan. GSA notes it will provide an update on the master plan and transportation in the spring or summer of 2016.

GSA is proposing a new one-story loading dock, attached to Buildings 3 and 5, on the southwestern portion of the Center Building. The dimensions of the loading dock are 82 feet by 88 feet. Staff **finds that placing the loading dock in this location is acceptable, as it will allow the Center Building massing to hide the loading dock from the north; the Creamery Building and a potential new addition will hide views of it from the south.** GSA notes that it intends this loading dock to be a central location used by several nearby buildings. It also notes it will only use small box trucks, which will approach the dock from the east. The loading area has two truck bays for deliveries and an additional bay for trash and recycling pick up. As the Center Building’s main employee entrance is located east of the loading dock along the south facade, GSA notes that deliveries will be limited to the early morning and later in the evening to reduce pedestrian conflicts. GSA is proposing to clad the loading dock with brick and vertical cedar panel siding. In addition, a metal panel will be used to clad one wall between the new loading dock and the Center Building. GSA is using the cedar siding because it is used on a nearby, temporary stair structure and this wall is intended to be temporary. GSA says it will remove the wood when the new addition is built south of the loading dock. As another building could be added to the southern façade of the loading dock, staff **encourages GSA to utilize identical or complementary cladding for the loading dock’s southern facade for consistency with other exterior treatments.**

## CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE

### Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

As noted above, this project meets policies and goals of various elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital.

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### **National Historic Preservation Act**

GSA has proposed to restore, rehabilitate or renovate different parts of the interior of the building and has identified three zones where it will undertake each type of reconstruction. GSA notes that the identified zones are reflective of a hierarchy of relative architectural importance and public visibility of a building based on its own internal procedures which applies the Secretary of the Interior Standards (36 CFR 67) and the Historic Structure Report (2010) it conducted for the building. GSA will restore the exterior of the building to the period of significance, which is 1856 to 1905.

As this project is located in Washington, DC, the Commission has an independent responsibility under Section 106. NCPC designated GSA as lead agency and, along with NPS, FHWA, ACHP and GSA, was a signatory for a Programmatic Assessment for this project in December 2008. Under the PA, GSA is required to conduct consulting party meetings for the various project projects proposed at this site. GSA organized six Section 106 consulting party meetings during 2014 and 2015 specifically focused on the Center Building adaptive reuse project. An MOA was executed for the Center Building Adaptive Reuse project dated September 21, 2015.

### **National Environmental Policy Act**

GSA evaluated the Center Building adaptive reuse project in the 2008 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the campus master plan. GSA signed a Record of Decision (ROD) for the master plan EIS in 2008. NCPC adopted the GSA ROD in 2008.

## **CONSULTATION**

### **Coordinating Committee**

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal at its November 10, 2015 meeting. The Committee forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that it has been coordinated with all participating agencies with the exception of NCPC that stated possible historic preservation concerns with the proposed security cameras. NCPC discussed the issues with GSA and the DC SHPO and it determined that there is no longer a Section 106 concern. The participating agencies were: NCPC; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the District of Columbia Department of Transportation, the General Services Administration; the National Park Service and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

### **U.S. Commission of Fine Arts**

The Commission of Fine Arts reviewed and approved the concept design at its September 19, 2015 meeting. CFA reviewed and approved the final design at its November 19, 2015 meeting.

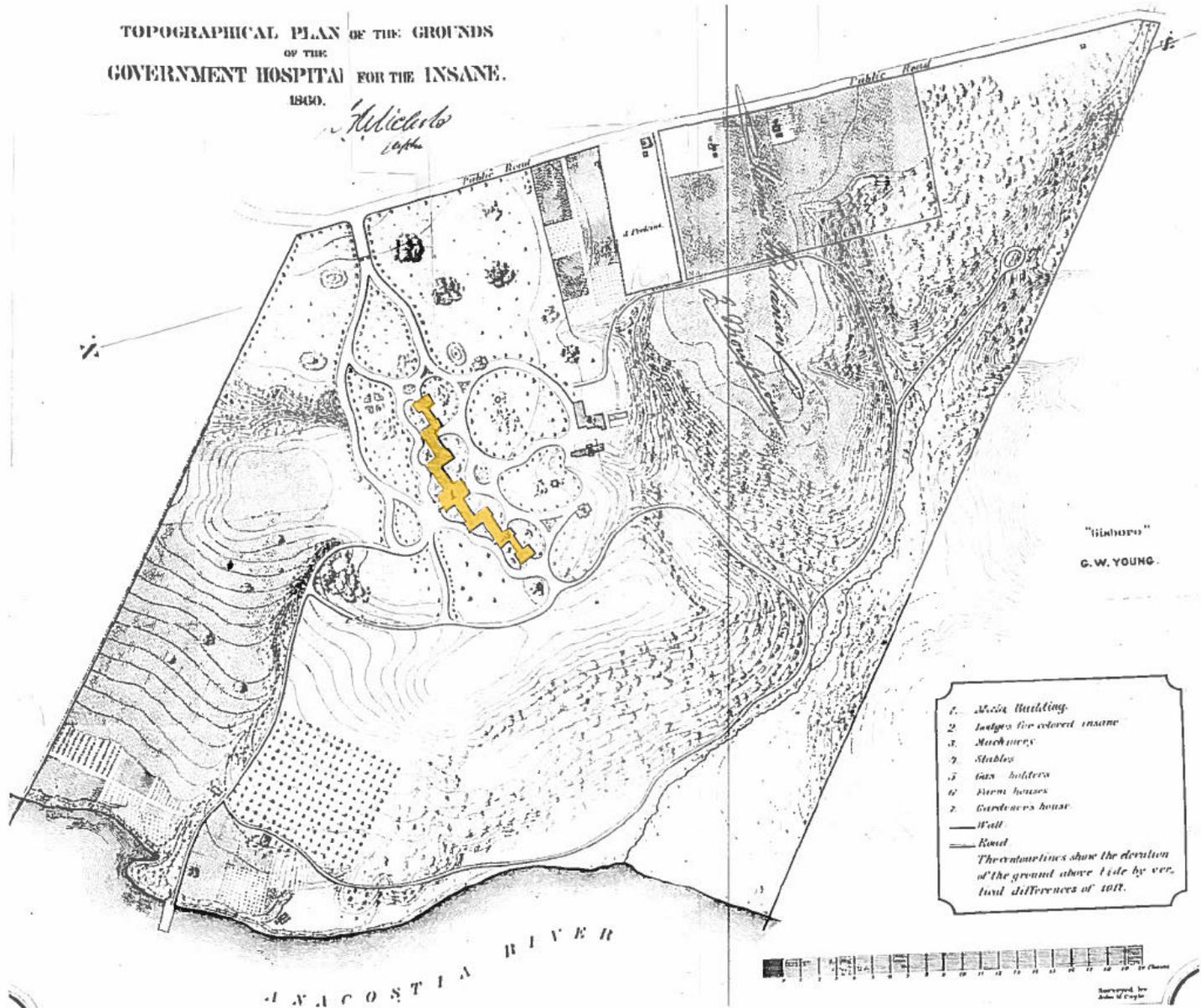
## **ONLINE REFERENCE**

The following supporting documents for this project are available online:

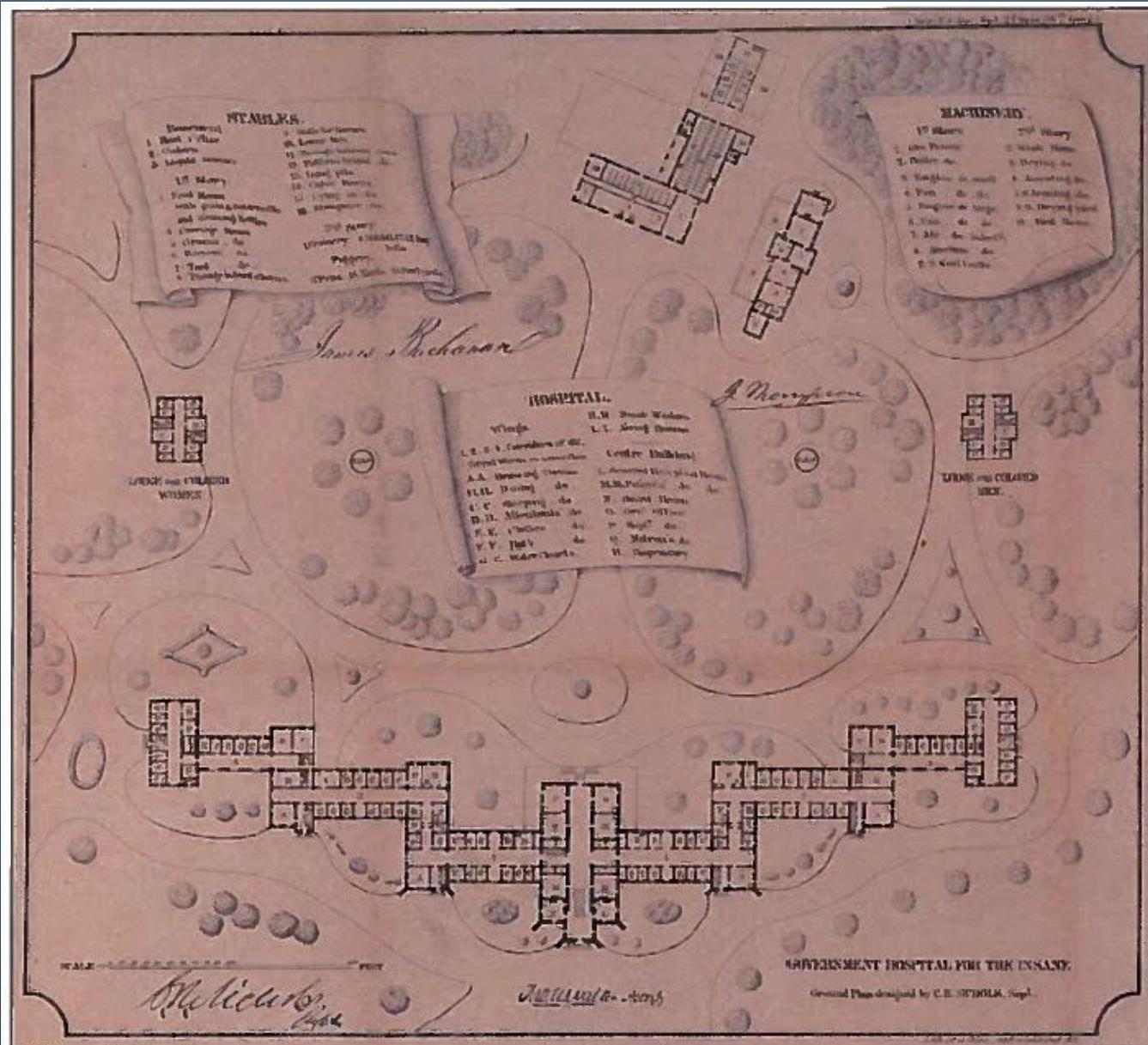
- Submission package
- NEPA and Section 106 documentation

Prepared by C. Hart  
11/25/15

## **POWERPOINT (ATTACHED)**



Superintendent Charles Nichols is credited with St. Elizabeths early landscape treatment, as seen in this 1860 topographical plan. (Library of Congress)



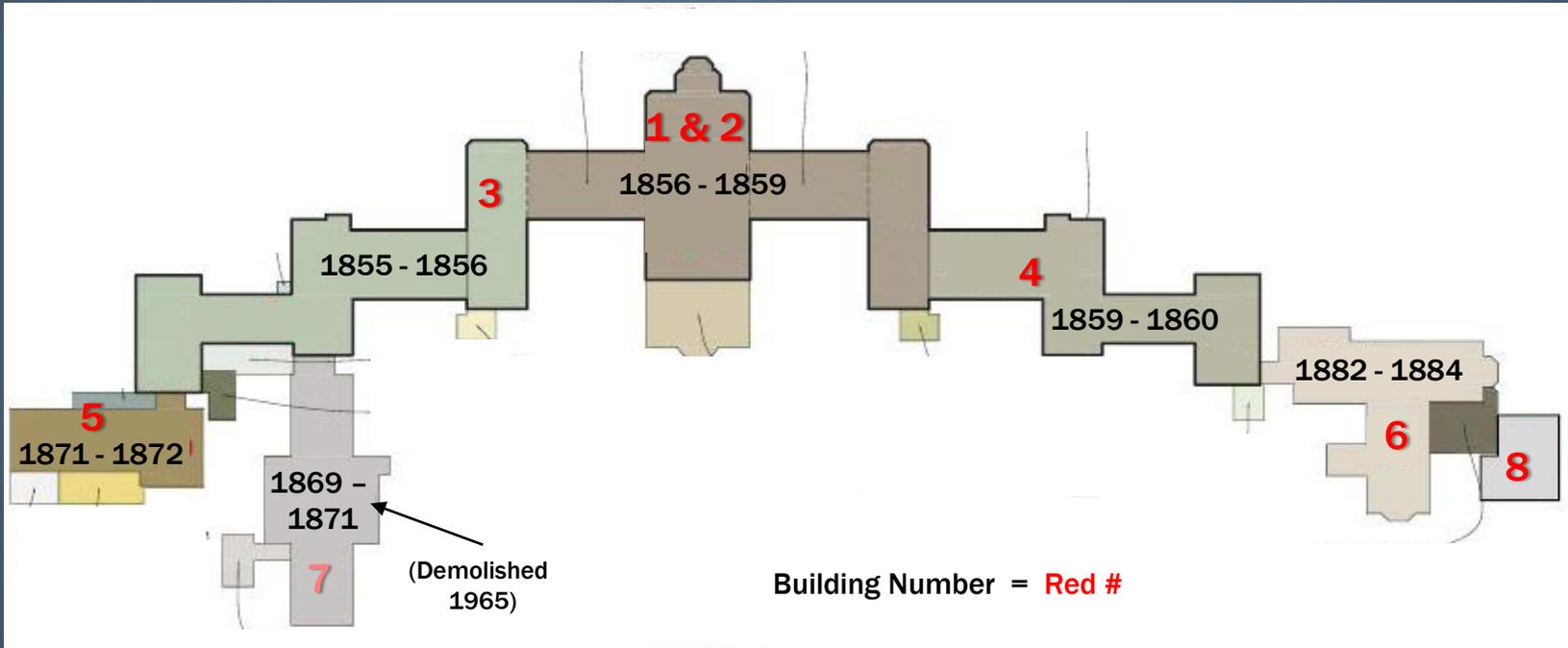
Early plan of the campus, as designed by architect Thomas U. Walter, circa 1860. (St. Elizabeths West Campus Cultural Landscape Report, 2007)

# Center Building - Aerial Photograph





# Center Building – Construction Chronology

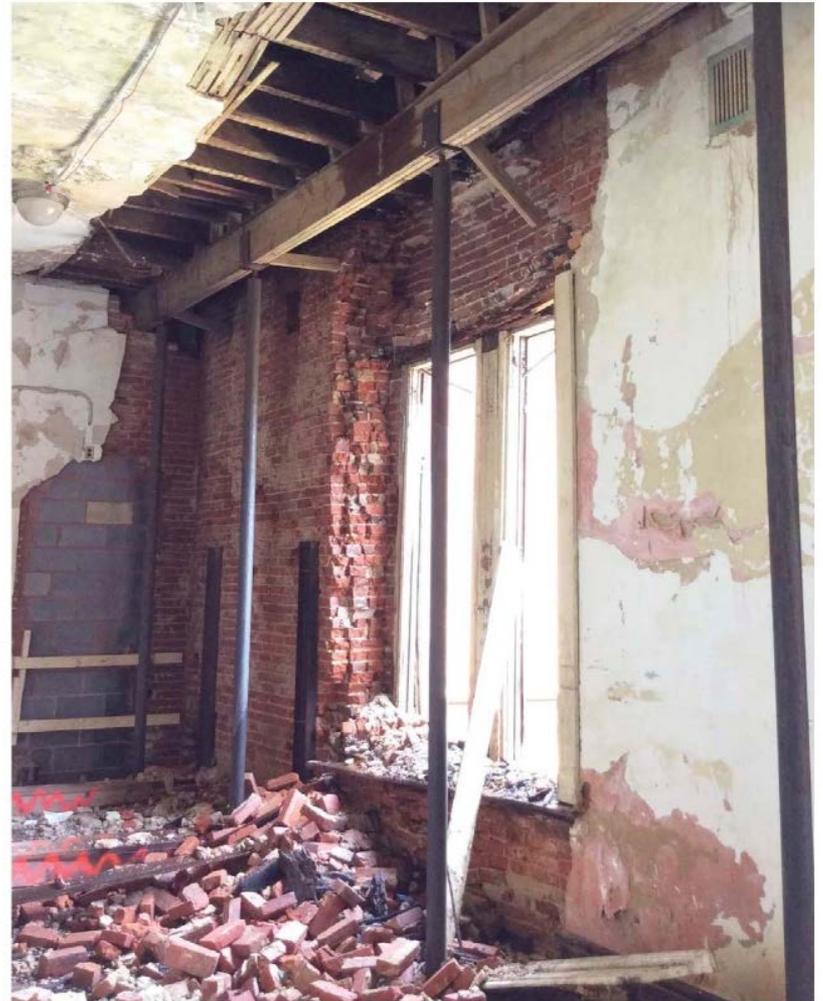




*Deteriorated plaster.*



*Deteriorated plaster w/ iron bullnose edge.*



*Full depth repair (Building 3).*



1 Main Hall in the Superintendent's apartment, 1905.



2 Superintendent's Study, 1905.



3 Superintendent's Dining Room, 1905.



4 Superintendent's East Sitting Room, 1905.



Red numbered photos are in Zone 1: Restoration and are located on Enlarged Floor Plan Level 02



*Efflorescence staining.*



*Cast iron staining.*



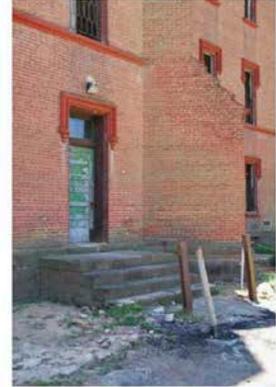
*Northeast Exit - Building 12*



*Southeast Exit - Building 4*



*Southeast Exit - Building 8*



*Northeast Exit - Building 12*



*Efflorescence/atmospheric staining.*



*Biological staining.*



*South Entrance - Building 1 & 2*



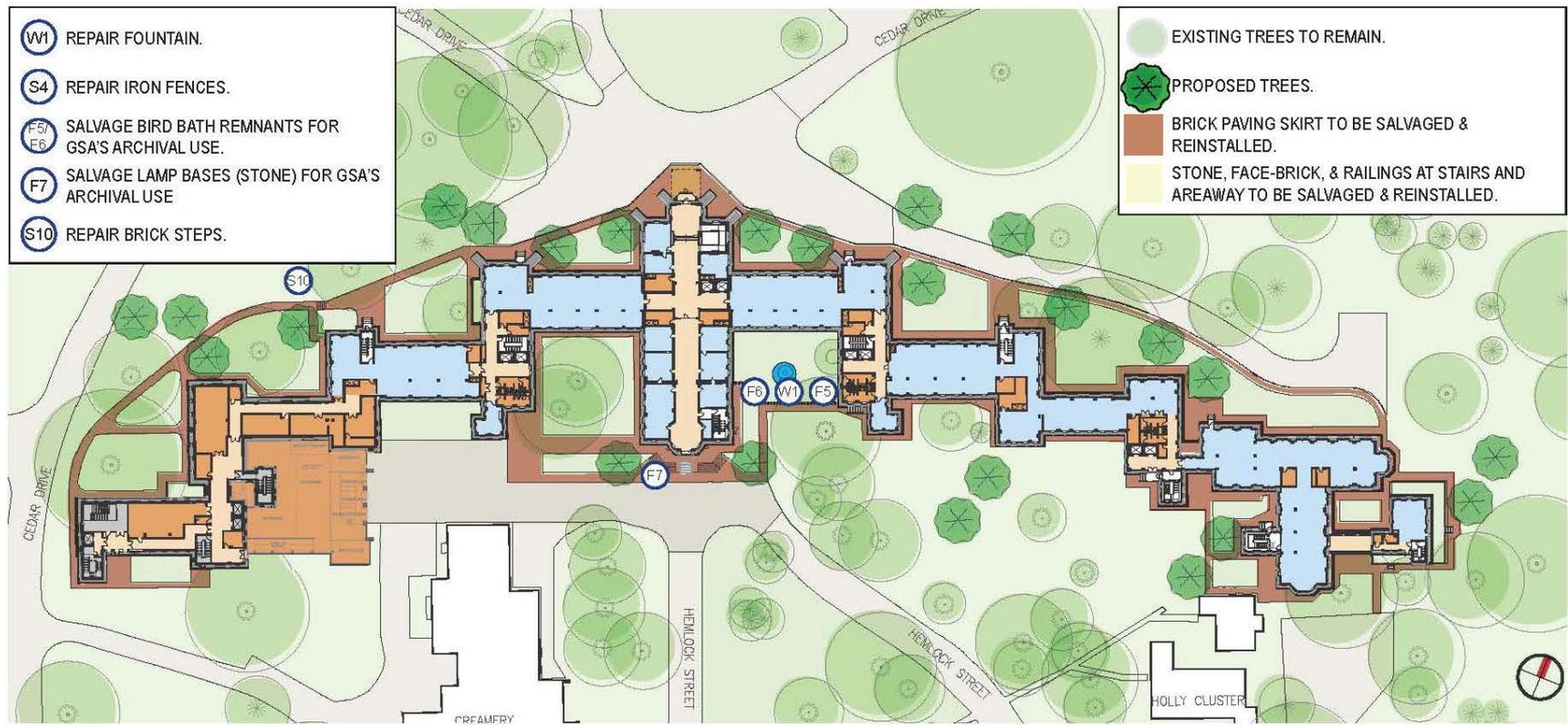
*North Entrance - Building 1 & 2*



The basic design intent and performance requirements documented in this submission are to meet the basic objectives of the government. Simply stated, these project goals are:

- *Preservation – To respect architecturally significant parts of the existing buildings, particularly in the Zone 1 preservation areas in Buildings 1 & 2;*
- *Flexibility – To provide modern flexible work places for tenant groups, complying with accessibility, life safety and security requirements;*
- *Sustainability – To incorporate environmentally sustainable design with the goal of achieving LEED Gold certification.*





Note: extent of materials to be salvaged will be determined by GSA's RHPO.



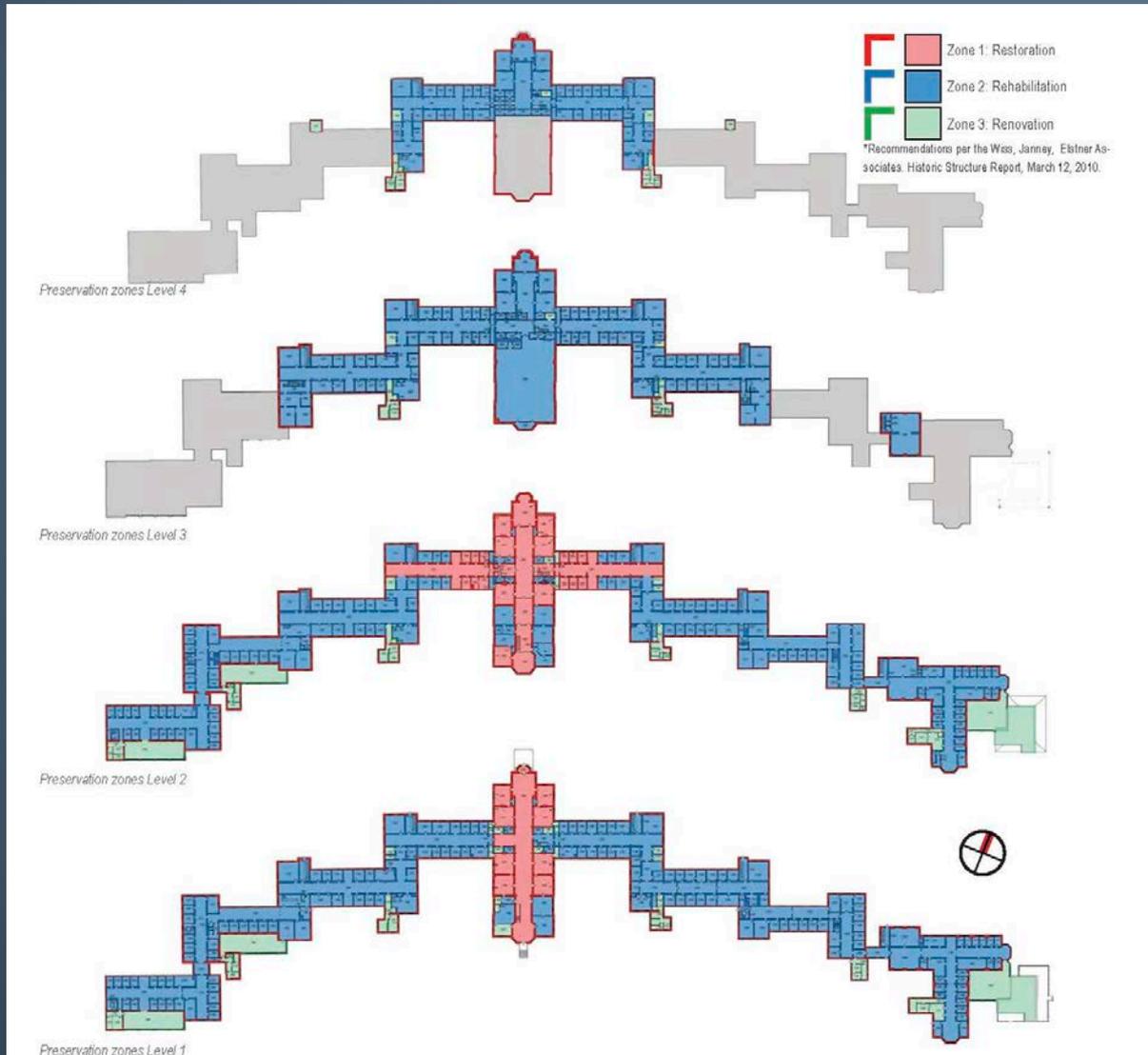
Decorative metal fence



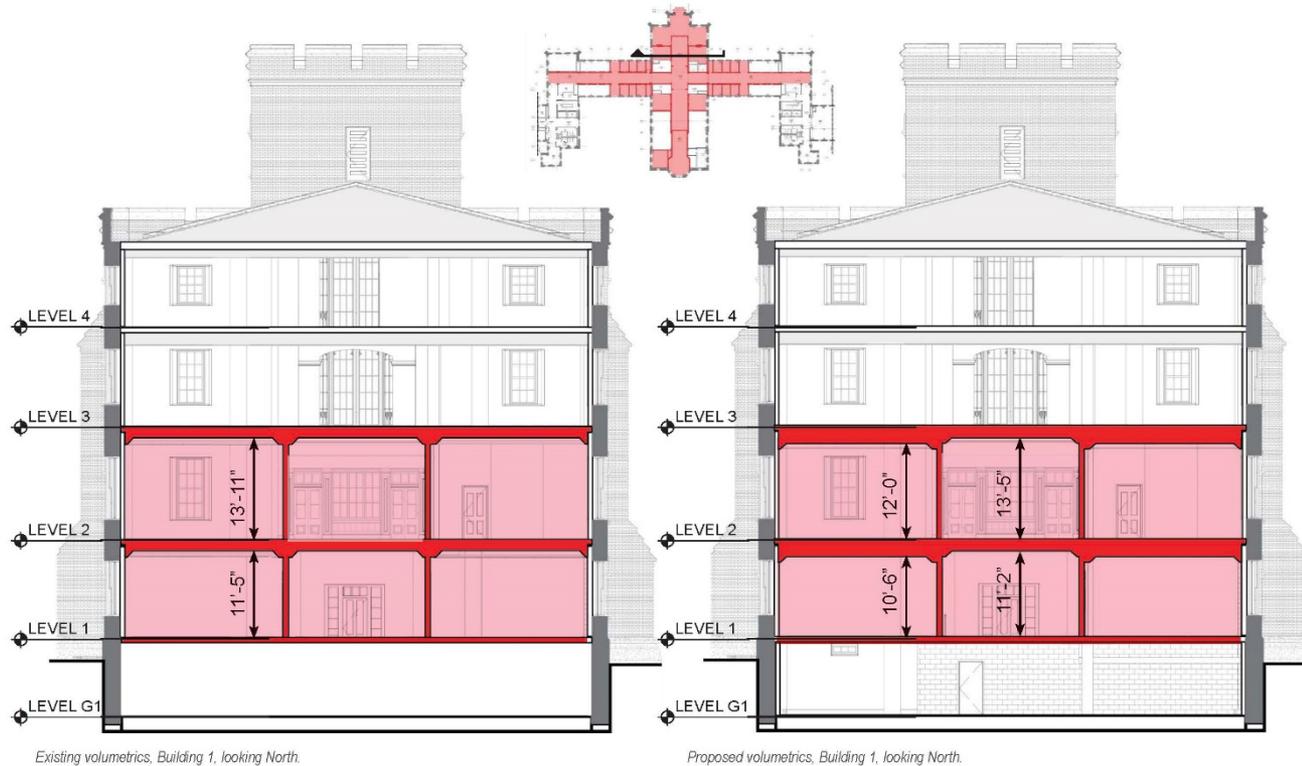
Fountain



Brick and stone stair with metal railing



## INTERIOR VOLUMETRICS



Existing volumetrics, Building 1, looking North.

Proposed volumetrics, Building 1, looking North.



**St. Elizabeths West Campus**  
Washington, DC

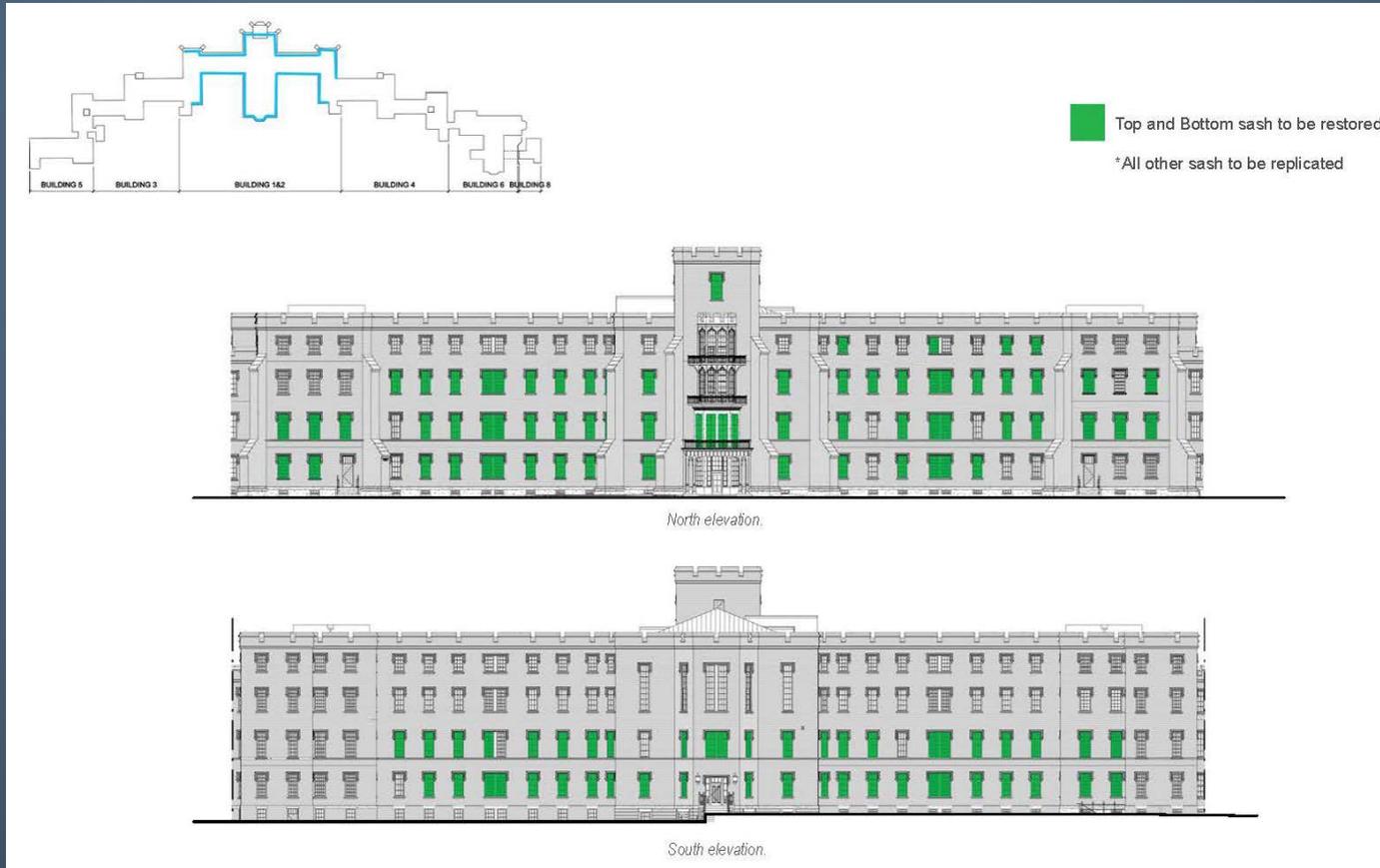
General Services Administration  
Department of Homeland Security  
July 31, 2015

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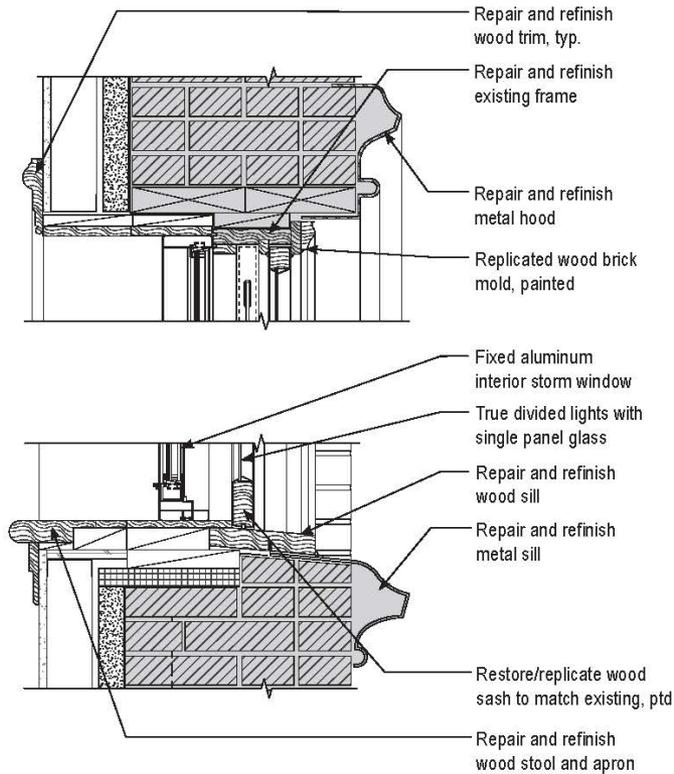
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## WINDOW RECONSTRUCTION APPROACH



**St. Elizabeths Center Building**  
Washington, DC

General Services Administration  
Department of Homeland Security  
October 30, 2016 - Revised

NCPC Final Design Submission | 40  
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Porte Cochere Circa 1889



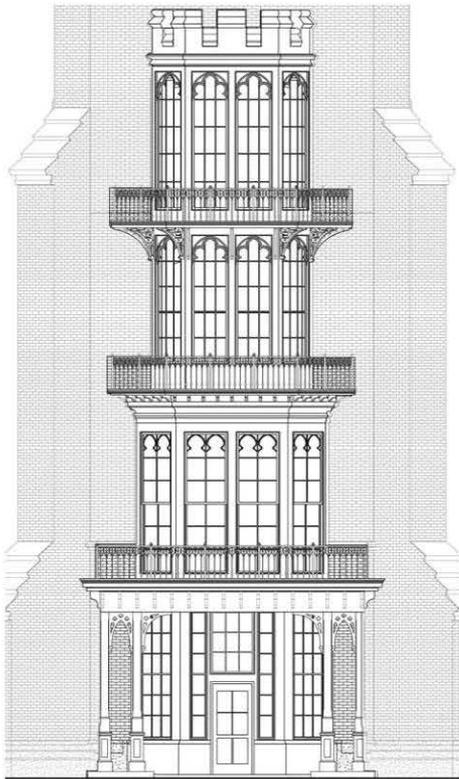
North facade, circa 1908-1932



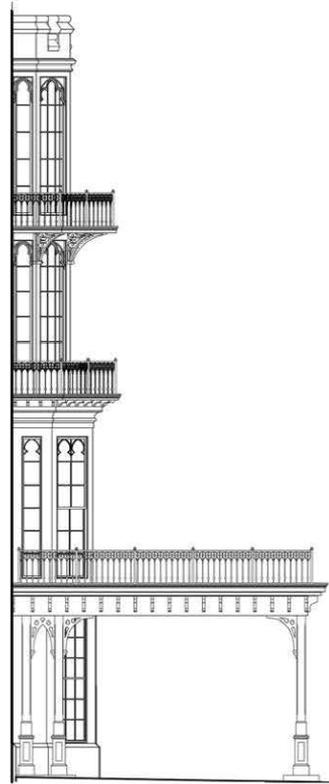
Existing Porte Cochere.



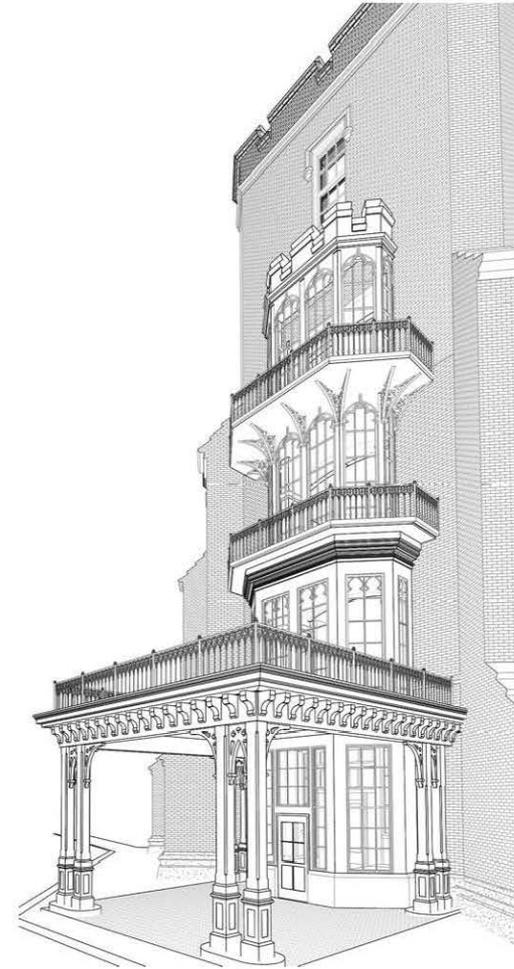
Existing bay structure



*Porte Cochere Front Elevation*



*Porte Cochere Side Elevation*

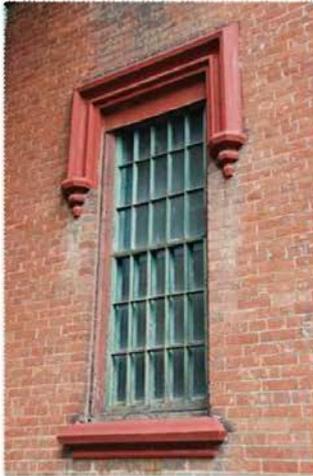


# Porte Cochere – Proposed Rendering



Design: reconstruct Porte Cochere to the original 1874 design while reusing existing 1938 decorative elements

- Reconstruct Porte Cochere, bay, and balconies to match existing with new (concealed) structural framing and replicated cornice
- Replicated 1874 wood posts on salvaged, repaired, and reinstalled stone pedestals
- Salvage, repair, and reinstall stone base at bay.
- Salvage, repair, and reinstall existing 1938 wood brackets at port cochere and at balcony above
- Salvage, repair and reinstall existing 1938 decorative metal brackets at level four balcony
- Replicated/restored window sash and decorative wood trim



Window with Cast Iron Hood and Sill



Masonry Chimney and Parapets



Crenellated Parapets with Metal Flashing



Metal Buttress Cap - North Elevation



Crenellated Parapets and String Course - Original Masonry



Parapet Detail



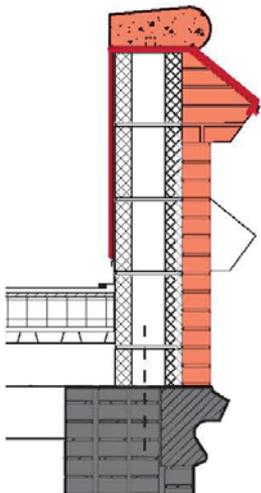
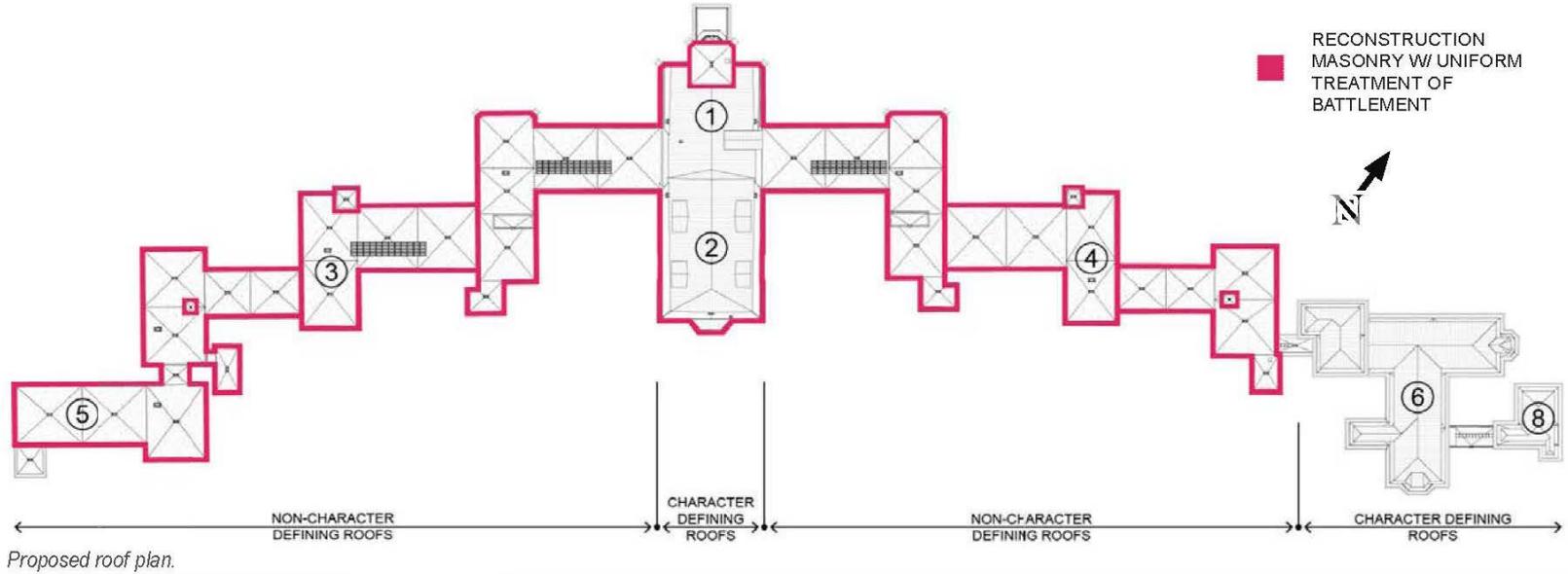
GSA

**St. Elizabeths Center Building**  
Washington, DC

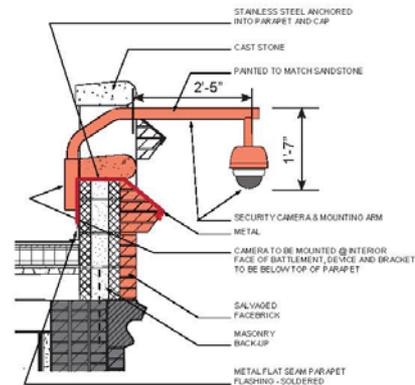
General Services Administration  
Department of Homeland Security  
July 31, 2015

EXISTING EXTERIOR DETAILS TO BE RESTORED OR RECONSTRUCTED

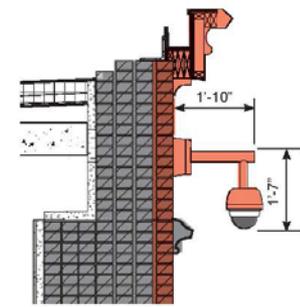
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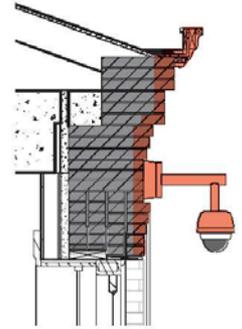
Parapet Section Detail



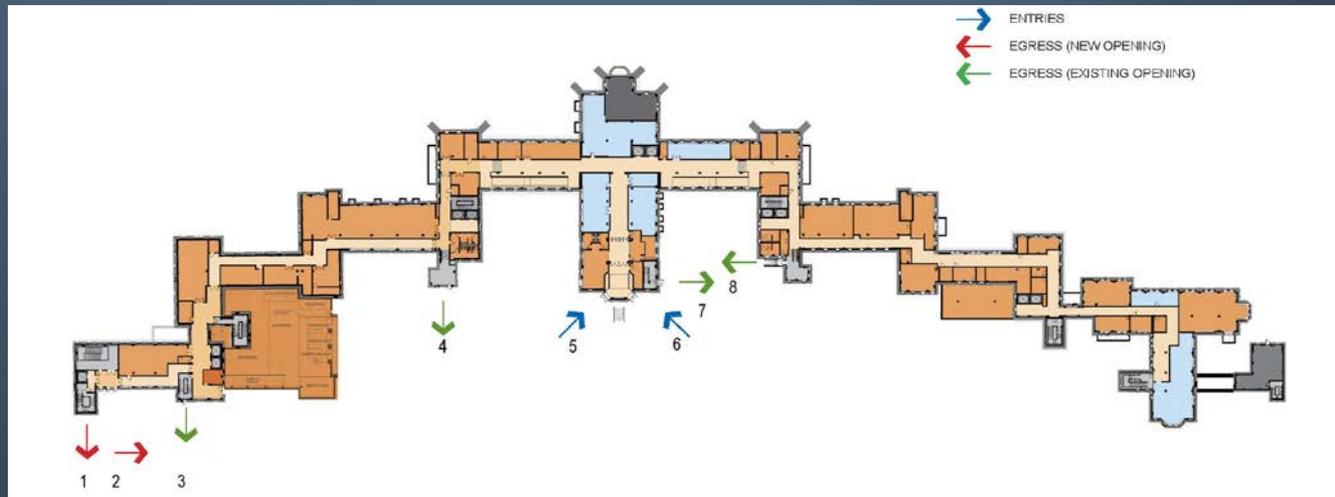
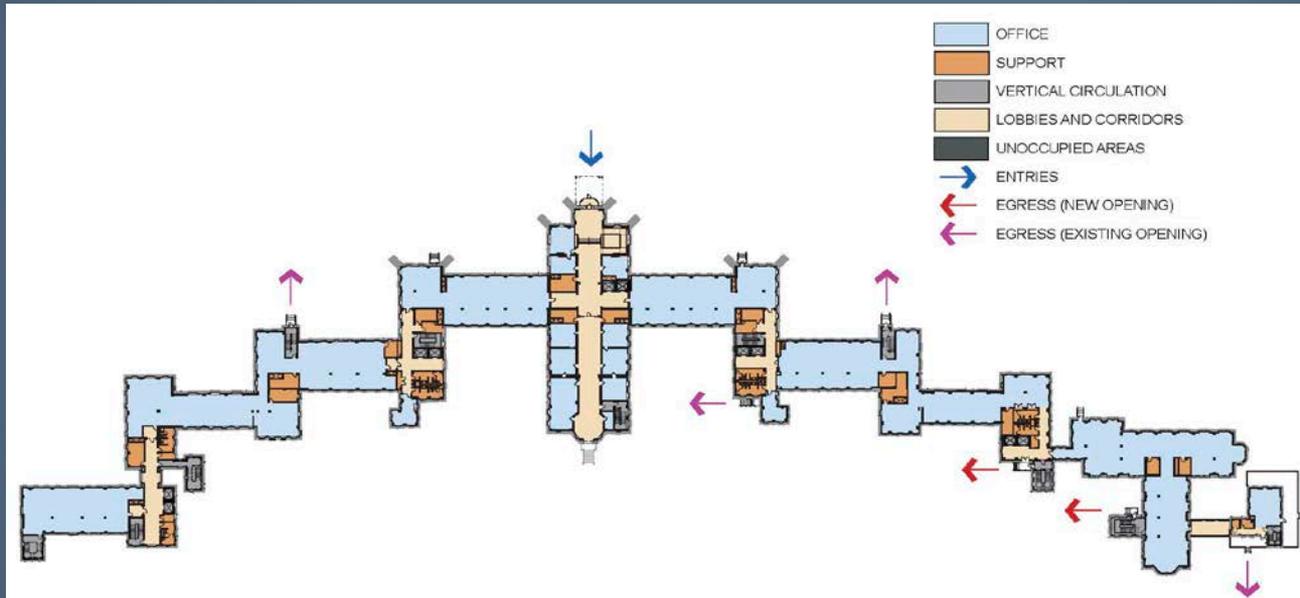
Parapet

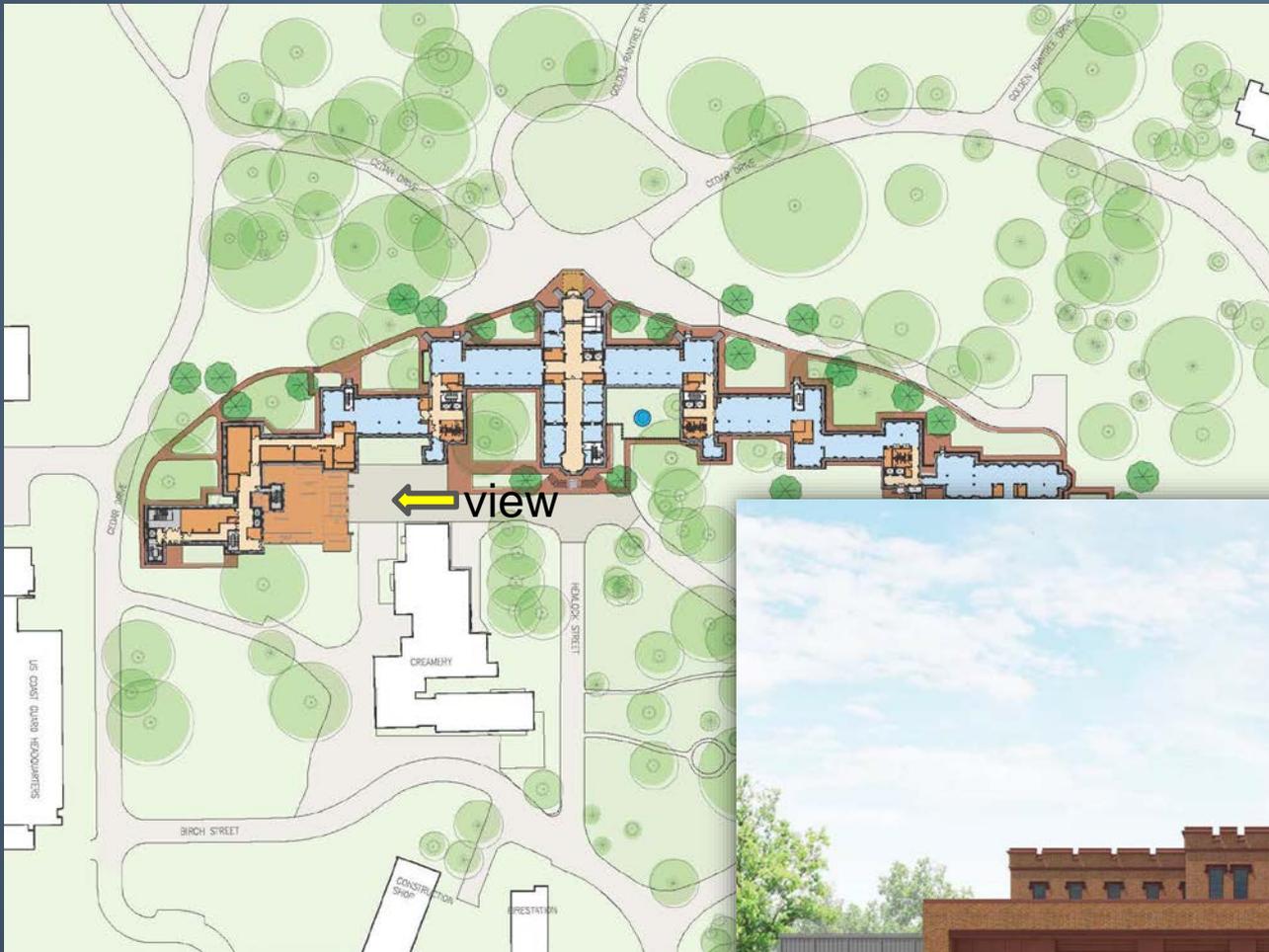


Building 6

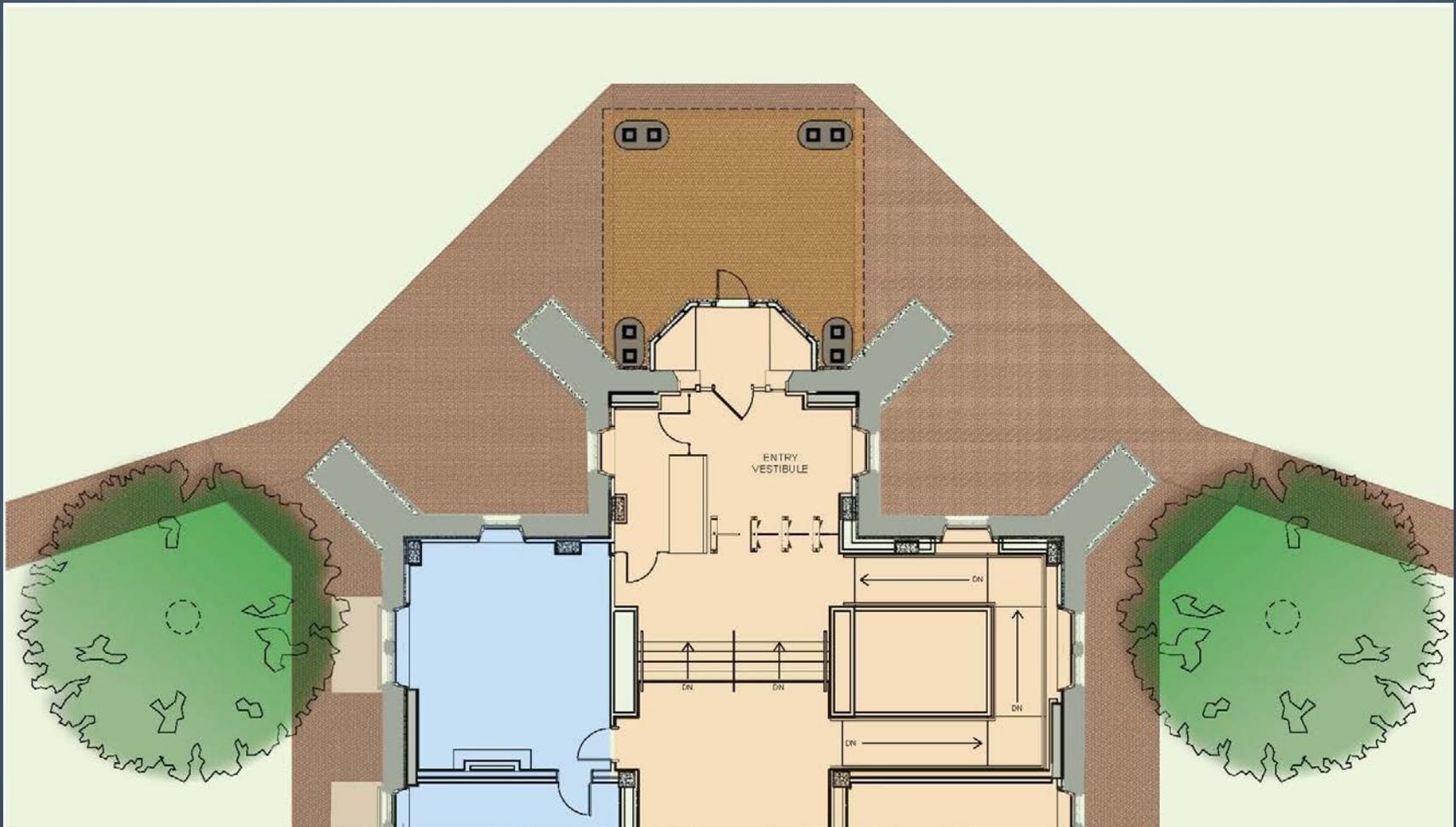


Building 8





Rendering





South Entrance - Plan



Rendering of South Entrance - Accessible Approach



Rendering of South Entrance



**St. Elizabeths Center Building**  
Washington, DC

General Services Administration  
Department of Homeland Security

October 30, 2015 - Revised

South Entry

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