May 25, 2022

Ms. Elizabeth Hughes  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Maryland Historical Trust  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD

Attention: Ms. Becky Roman  
Preservation Officer

RE: NIST, Building 209

Dear Ms. Hughes

In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act [54 U.S.C. 306108] and its implementing regulations, 36 CFR Part 800, NIST is providing information for your review regarding the above-referenced project that involves design and construction of a new research laboratory to be called Building 209. It is located within the NIST National Register Historic District, adjacent to Building 207 a non-contributory resource of the historic district. Based upon our comprehensive research and evaluation of the property, the specific Area of Potential Effect (APE) has been defined as the immediately visible area bounded by Building 216 (a non-contributory resource) to the north, Building 245 to the northwest and Building 207 (a non-contributory resource) to the southwest (see attached Campus Map). The proposed undertaking involves the construction of a mission driven new Robotic Response Research Facility in a relatively inconspicuous southeast campus location, bounded by both open fields, a copse of mature trees and the 2012 constructed Robotics Test Facility. The immediate vicinity of the new building 209 affords limited views of Contributory Resources within the historic district. Furthermore, the overall massing, size, scale, and architectural features of new construction are compatible with the character defining features and architectural pattern language of the historic core, without mimicking those features. NIST thus determines that the proposed new Building 209, as summarized below in greater detail, shall have No Adverse Effect.

Summary
In 2018 NIST issued a comprehensive Master Plan for its Gaithersburg campus, then already determined eligible for the NRHP as an historic district. That plan notionally called for the addition to several of the special purpose laboratories located largely in the vast acreage located south of South Drive. Among those proposed for expansion was the 2012 constructed Robotics Test Facility (a non-contributory resource) with the notionally assumed single story addition of about 8,600 square added to the east of this singular looking gray and rust colored metal clad building.
Prioritization of this project was due in part to funds made available by NIST’s recent sale of its decommissioned NIKE missile site located south of the 579-acre campus. Review of the very conceptual Building 207 expansion plans by the NIST Fire Marshal signaled that the existing building would need very costly life-safety improvements to meet current codes. Construction of an auxiliary new facility, however, would not require those costly upgrades to existing building. Agency mission and budget dictated that a new robotics response test facility, be close to 207 for ease of management as well as research needs. NIST then engaged Tribal1 (the contractor) to initiate design of the new facility to be called Building 209.

Working closely with the NIST federal preservation officer and other members of the NIST Architectural Design Review Board, the contractor has developed a design for a building of 80' x 125' x 48' in height, compatible with the immediate vicinity, viewsheds, and the greater NIST campus architectural language, patterns, massing and materials. Issues of availability, supply chain and constructability within schedule and budget parameters led to the design of a pre-cast clad panel structure. Details of the panel design include customized color selection, aluminum framed apertures referencing the proportions of the typical single pane windows found on the campus General Purpose Laboratories, scoring and patterning that references the ubiquitous attic story interlocking aluminum panels all contribute to an architectural design that is compatible without being duplicative of the original historic structures in the district. The attached graphics demonstrate the strengths of the proposed design as it has evolved to this point.

At present, thus, under its historic preservation responsibilities as mandated by Section 106 (36 CFR Part 800) of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as Amended) NIST has determined that the proposed undertaking shall have No Adverse Effect and seeks the SHPO’s concurrence on this matter. If you agree, kindly indicate your concurrence by endorsement below and return a copy of this letter to me. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (202) 309-4287 or phillip.neuberg@nist.gov.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Phillip W. Neuberg

Phillip W. Neuberg, FAIA
Federal Preservation Officer
Office of Facilities & Property Management
National Institute of Standards & Technology

Concurrence: Conditioned on NIST Review of Final Plans

Becky Roman
Maryland SHPO

Date: June 2, 2022