

District of Columbia Office of Planning



March 11, 2010

Colonel Peter T. McHugh, Garrison Commander
United States Army Garrison Walter Reed
6900 Georgia Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20307-5001

Dear Col. McHugh:

Thank you for your February 18 letter initiating our review, in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, of the potential transfer of a portion of Walter Reed Army Medical Center property to the Local Redevelopment Agency.

We concur that the transfer of a property containing historic resources out of federal ownership without sufficient protections would constitute an adverse effect on these properties, and we look forward to participating in the upcoming public consultation on this undertaking. The list of invitees appears fairly exhaustive, but there are undoubtedly interested parties that may not yet be included and may ask to be, such as immediately adjacent property owners, the National Park Service, and the Alliance to Preserve the Civil War Defenses of Washington (we have forwarded your meeting invitation to the latter two). It also occurs to me that the U.S. General Services Administration and the Department of State may be interested in participating, given their apparent intention to occupy the adjacent portions of the post. We concur that there are no federally recognized Tribes in the District of Columbia.

As the transfer of the property will necessitate a Programmatic Agreement outlining future protections, and as that consultation seems poised to overlap with reviews of the LRA plan, it is conceivable that the consultation and the agreement may ultimately bundle future preservation procedures with specific reference to a master plan that has been refined to resolve adverse effects.

We have no objection to the coordination of Section 106 and NEPA compliance.

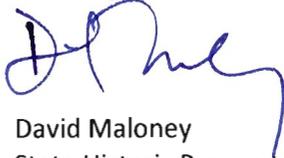
We also look forward to further discussions of efforts to inventory resources on the post. We are inclined to accept an Area of Potential Effects which includes the surrounding couple of city blocks, because any eventual redevelopment at Walter Reed will have the most immediate physical and visual effects on historic resources on the post itself, with such effects diminishing with distance. There is certainly the potential, for instance, for adverse visual effects on the Takoma Park neighborhood across Georgia Avenue, which has been surveyed and contains an historic district. Of course, we remain open to consulting party suggestions on any reasonable modifications to determinations of effects, APE, etc.



We commend you on your commitment to designate the property, in accordance with Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and your willingness to cooperate with the D.C. Preservation League in doing so. We have already agreed with DCPL to postpone a hearing on its nomination indefinitely with the expectation that yours would supersede it.

The transfer of the NHL National Museum of Health and Medicine Collection is certainly an unusual case. We have consulted with the National Park Service's National Historic Landmark staff and concur with them and you that, as long as the move is conducted carefully by museum professionals and bonded movers, there should be no threat to the resource. As for the association of the collection with the hospital, it is of relatively recent vintage; the collection was largely compiled, and designated, prior to the transfer to Walter Reed. Thus, we do not consider the further shifting of its location to constitute an adverse effect.

Sincerely,



David Maloney
State Historic Preservation Officer

cc: Harriet Tregoning, Director of the Office of Planning