



# Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A

*“Serving the Foggy Bottom and West End communities of Washington, D.C.”*

September 25, 2019

Ms. Marnique Heath  
Chair, Historic Preservation Review Board  
Office of Planning  
1100 4<sup>th</sup> Street SW, Suite E650  
Washington, DC 20024  
[historic.preservation@dc.gov](mailto:historic.preservation@dc.gov)

**RE: Historic Preservation Review Board Concept Application by the George Washington University for an Addition, Removal of Rear Wall, and Enclosure of Interior Court with Glass Canopy at 1900 F Street NW (HPRB #19-542)**

Dear Chair Heath,

At its regular meeting on September 18, 2019, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A (“ANC 2A” or “Commission”) considered the above-referenced matter. With six of seven commissioners present, a quorum at a duly-noticed public meeting, the Commission voted unanimously (6-0-0), after a motion made by Commissioner Kennedy and seconded by Commissioner Epstein, to adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS, Thurston Hall (“Thurston,” 1900 F Street NW) is a contributing structure in the “George Washington University/Old West End Historic District,” (“Historic District”) created with the support of ANC 2A in 2014,

WHEREAS, Thurston was built as the Park Central Apartments in 1928 for developer Morris Cafritz and was the largest and densest residential building built in Foggy Bottom to that time and for many years after,

WHEREAS, it housed a large number of federal government employees with nearby offices (and their families) from the time it was built, through the Second World War, into the early-1960s when it was purchased by The George Washington University (“University”) for use as a student residential building,

WHEREAS, the building has since traditionally been used to house a large portion of the University’s first-year student population,

WHEREAS, Thurston has therefore had an outsized role in shaping and defining the residential experience in Foggy Bottom over the course of its 90-year history,

WHEREAS, the University is seeking to do a thorough interior demolition of the building that will largely preserve the exterior walls and the building’s basic orientation around an interior court – features which define the structure in terms of its relationship to the surrounding built environment and as a community landmark at-large,



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WHEREAS, ANC 2A believes that the University’s proposed renovations are both necessary from a building component lifecycle management standpoint and desirable in terms of improving the residential experience for the hundreds of students who live in the building each academic year,

WHEREAS, the Commission believes that the University’s proposal conforms to the design guidelines for the Historic District, and that the only demolition contemplated is not perceptible to the vast majority of people who would observe the building on street level, and

WHEREAS, the Commission further believes that the limited demolition’s purpose – to create a “notch” on the rear parts of the upper floors – is exceptionally meritorious in that it will allow for natural light to penetrate the interior court and activate a space that is both important in defining the building’s basic shape but unutilized and without benefit for building residents in its current configuration.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that ANC 2A supports the University’s application as presented because it preserves the integrity of the features that define the building as a contributing historic structure while still enabling much-needed improvements to the quality of the residential experience for those who will live there moving forward.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission requests that the University undertake a photo survey for archival purposes to document the building’s interior features prior to demolition.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission also suggests that the University incorporate some kind of commemoration of the building’s history as the Park Central Apartments into the renovated structure.

Commissioner Patrick Kennedy ([2A01@anc.dc.gov](mailto:2A01@anc.dc.gov)) is the Commission’s representative in this matter.

ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION.

Sincerely,

Patrick Kennedy  
Vice Chairperson



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CC: David Avitabile, Counsel for the Applicant  
Alicia Knight, Senior Associate Vice President for Operations, GW  
Susi Cora, Director of Campus Planning, GW  
Kevin Days, Director of Community Relations, GW