

NATIONAL PARK SEMINARY, MAIN  
(National Park Seminary, Forest Inn  
Walter Reed Medical Center Annex, Building Nos. 101A, 101D & 101E)  
Linden Lane  
Silver Spring  
Montgomery County  
Maryland

HABS No. MD-1109-A

HABS  
MD  
16 SILSPR,  
2A-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C St. NW  
Washington, DC 20240

ADDENDUM  
FOLLOWS

HABS  
MD  
16-SILSAR,  
2A-

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### NATIONAL PARK SEMINARY, MAIN (The Forest Inn)

(Walter Reed Medical Center Annex, Buildings Nos. 101A, 101D, 101E)

HABS No. MD-1109-A

Location: This building is the long, rambling structure in the middle of the campus.

Significance: Main exemplifies the site's evolving history. It is a conglomeration of eight buildings with adjoining extensions and adaptations that were completed between 1887 and the 1940s. It is the core of the campus compound. In its original still legible form, the building is one of the few remaining nineteenth century resort hotels in the Washington area. It was designed by the well-known Washington architect, Thomas Franklin Schneider. While many of Schneider inner-city rowhouses and apartment buildings are extant, the inn is a rare surviving example of his large-scale domestic and resort architecture. The varied and complex Queen Anne building design was intended to echo the diversity of forms and naturalistic features in the surrounding picturesque landscape.

History: Main originated as a Queen Anne-style resort hotel, known as The Forest Inn, that was constructed in 1887. The building was commissioned by the Forest Glen Improvement Company, a land syndicate of Washington businessmen who constructed the hotel to promote the sale of residential lots on an adjoining one hundred acres. Schneider was the architect and William Lipcomb was the builder. When the hotel venture failed, the site was sold to two educators who transformed the hotel into a boarding school in 1894. The Cassedys invested at least \$75,000 in remodeling and upgrading the hotel, including \$5000 the first year that they arrived.<sup>1</sup>

The front of the original ell-shaped structure spanned from the cross-gable on the east end of the north facade west to the turret. A large southern wing extended off the western end of the front facade. The front facade originally terminated at the large gable just east of the main entrance. The protruding six-sided one-story diningroom extension below this gable was erected by 1902. In 1907, a new dining and kitchen wing was added at the east end of the structure. The north side of the addition matched the hotel's stylistic forms, but the east and south sides had Spanish Revival features, like neighboring service buildings. The Cassedys also added a three-story fifty-foot extension at the south end of the west wing in 1907. A new library and offices for the school prefect were placed on the first floor. The second and third floors had student rooms and storage areas. The interior corridor aligned with the existing hallway and the exterior echoed the original building's shingle-style features but was more symmetrical in form.

---

<sup>1</sup> The financial costs were noted in the school catalogs.

In 1919, three years after Ament acquired the school, he erected a large V-shaped addition that merged Main and the Senior Houses into one monolithic building. Ament covered all of the walls with pebble-dash stucco, presumably to hide the differences between the buildings and to give the campus a more stately feel. Its orientation and size dramatically altered the character of the school grounds. The new stucco walls, accentuated by the contrasting decorative wood trim, made the building look more like an English manor house and less like a folksy inn. One arm of the addition (referred to here as the Main extension) formed a parallel extension of Main's front facade from the turret east. The other arm, known as the President's House, jutted out at approximately a forty-five degree angle. Its front facade faced northeast towards the circle in front of Main.

Main was valued at \$335,000 in 1921, a jump from \$185,000 from just four years before.<sup>2</sup> The \$160,000 increase could reflect the cost of the addition, interior improvements, and, perhaps the fabulous accumulation of furnishings and decorative arts. In the 1920s, a three-story pedimented portico with Corinthian columns was constructed on the end of Main's south wing. **(Figure 17)** A large stained-glass rose window was placed within the pediment. Stone staircases were built into either side of the portico.

Davis added a few new features to the great mix of existing facilities in Main. A hair salon was constructed by 1941. Science labs and accompanying lecture rooms were either added or updated. An infirmary was located in the southwest wing of Main.<sup>3</sup> He made no major changes to the building's exterior.

Under the Army's occupancy, Main, including the Senior House extensions, became the site of administrative offices, a few hospital wards, dentist offices, research labs, and a branch of the main WRAMC section library (presumably in NPC's library site located at the rear of the southwest wing). Little was done to alter Main's exterior, but the interior was transformed beyond recognition. The large entrance wooden stairway in Main was replaced with fireproof metal risers. Throughout the building, partitions were added, walls painted, and plain metal doors inserted. In the Sixties, the belltower in the front of Main collapsed and was removed. The changes eradicated the old inn's domestic character and replaced it with a much more institutional form.

Description: The large, rambling Queen Anne-style building contains an eclectic array of architectural components, including gables, bays, turrets and windows, in many shapes and sizes.

---

<sup>2</sup> NPS catalogs, 1917 and 1921.

<sup>3</sup> NPS catalog, 1938. It might have been in this location under Ament but the this is the first time that the specific site is mentioned.

The two-and-a-half story building with basement is wood-framed with a granite foundation. The granite was probably from the Ray Quarry, located approximately a third of a mile northwest of the inn. The inn's exterior walls were originally covered with wooden shingles and decorative ornamental wooden "stick" details. The shingles survive, in relatively good condition, under a layer of stucco that was added to the facades in 1919. Much of the decorative wood trim is also extant. The original slate gable roof was installed by Charles J. Fanning who also completed contracts at the Navy Yard, the Smithsonian Institution, the Soldiers' Home, and other private and public buildings in the late nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> It was replaced by an asbestos shingle roof.

The building was originally ell-shaped but numerous additions to its east and west ends resulted in an undulating t-shaped structure. Main has a variety of asymmetrically-arranged windows. The typical first-floor window is a floor-to-ceiling sash window with a transom above it set in various groupings. The typical second-floor window is a twelve-over-four sash window. Ornamental exposed timberwork forms a belt course above and below most windows. The original north, or front, facade spanned from the turret east to a large cross-gable. A first-story porch with large overhanging pent roof and large, plain brackets runs across the entire facade, from the turret to the end of the dining wing. The porch has brick piers and a balustraded rail. The original porch surrounded the inn, except for a small section at the northeast corner. It had wooden posts and railings.

There is a large four-by-two bay gable-fronted two-and-a-half story entry pavilion with a bowed shingled-pediment, windows, stick ornamentation, and a second-story balcony. The features are all original, though some changes were made to them. The top-story windows consist of two twelve-over-two light sash windows between sixteen-light windows with decorative scalloped bottom sills. The sides of the pavilion have twelve-over-two light sash windows. The second-floor of the pavilion contains a center pair of windows with a large central pane surrounded by smaller panes that are flanked by single-light windows.

Between the top and second floor windows of the pavilion, there are three belt courses. There is a narrow band of wood trim over a wider plain stuccoed band (originally shingled) that is over a wide band of vertical, curvilinear stickwork. The balcony has four narrow turned pillars which are topped with crude triangular wooden ornamentations. According to historic images, these panels were originally open-slatted. There is a two-tiered railing along the base of the balcony. The top portion has circular cutouts and the bottom portion has rails that step up at the posts. Below the pavilion is a pedimented porch entrance that is decorated with stick-work and a blue-green stained glass window with the name "Ye Forest Inn" included in the design.

---

<sup>4</sup> Forest Glen Improvement Company, *Forest Glen Inn and Park* (Forest Glen Improvement Company, c.1887). An advertisement for Slater is in brochure.

There were originally two dormers on either side of the central pavilion, but those on the east side were removed. The dormers' windows have multiple-light upper sashes and two-light sashes below. A square bell tower with an open-arched bell cote and a pyramidal ogee roof once graced the one-by-one bay tower to the east of the entrance pavilion. It collapsed in the 1960s. West of the pavilion is a large three-story round turret. Like the bell tower, it has arched-shaped openings, although these are railed and form a second-story balcony instead of a belfry. A portion of the balcony that ran along the western facade was covered by the 1919 west extension.

East of the bell tower remnant is a cross-gable that once marked the terminus of the building. It has a bowed, shingled pediment like the front pavilion. A center double-sash twelve-over-one light window is flanked by square multiple-light casement windows with decorative scalloped bottom sills. Below the gable is a one-story flat-roofed six-sided extension with balustrade. It was added by 1902. There was originally no roof over its porch. It was added in the 1920s. The extension has large floor-to-ceiling four-by-four light windows with transoms.

East of the one-story extension is the 1907 two-and-a-half story dining and kitchen wing. The addition is rectangular with an undulating front, or north, facade. This facade continues the Queen Anne motifs of Main with timber framing, a continuation of the first floor porch that follows the jagged contours of the wing, and a complex roof design. At the west end of the addition, there is a large gable flanked by smaller gables and a bay with a conical roof at its eastern side. At the northeast corner of the addition, there is a six-sided turret with round windows, decorative timberwork, and a tall pyramidal roof. A stone chimney is located adjacent to the tower. At this side of the addition, the stone foundation forms an exposed one-and-a-half story basement. Ornamental iron brackets support the first floor porch.

The east facade of the addition echoes the Mission-style motifs of the neighboring service buildings. It has a ground-floor stone arcade, a single story with stuccoed walls, and three Spanish Revival parapeted dormers in the Mission-style tiled roof. At the southeast corner, there is a one-by-one bay screened-in porch with round-arched openings. The south and west facades of the addition stylistically resemble Main.

Three additions were placed on the original southwest wing of Main. In 1907, the wing was expanded approximately fifty feet south. In 1919, Main was extended west, covering over the northern part of the wing's west facade. In 1924, a large ornate Classical Revival portico was added to its rear. The wing is two-and-a-half stories high with a gable roof punctuated by asymmetrically-placed gable-front and hip-roofed dormers. The typical window is a twelve-over-two sash window. String courses at the windows' sills and lintels create a banded effect across the facade. A first-floor covered porch originally spanned the length of the facade. It was removed when the 1919 addition was created.

A round three-story turret with a conical roof is located in the middle of the original section. The first floor has a door with transom, asymmetrical windows, and a large bay with diamond-pattern windows. The 1907 south extension has similar features as the original facade but is more symmetrical in design. Its west facade has a central second-story oriel flanked by gables. The second and third floor windows are paired with six-over-six sashes. The first floor has a boxed oriel supported by brackets. The typical first-story window is a paired arrangement of two-over sashes. A string course above second-story windows and the foundation level add to the timbered effect. The 1920s Classical Revival portico at the south end is jarringly different than the rest of the building. It has large, full-height Corinthian columns, second and third story balustraded porches, and a rose window in its pediment. Its face awkwardly brushes against the chapel building. Stone steps lead up to the first floor porch on the west and east sides.

Interior: Like many large public buildings erected in the nineteenth century, the inn's interior plan was laid out in long narrow wings so that each room had access to windows for ventilation and, in the case of public resorts, for scenic vistas. The plan is organized around central corridors that run the length of the wings, except where they are interrupted by larger public spaces.

There was a parlor with an elaborate fireplace inside the main entrance and directly above it on the second floor. The hotel office was located in a room to the east of the main entrance hall. A long winding staircase led up to the second floor parlor which opened on to the pavilion balcony. It was known as the ladies sitting room.<sup>5</sup> The south wing of the first floor and both wings of the second floor had two rows of bedrooms dissected by a central corridor. According to the FGIC brochure, the "sleeping rooms" were "finished in natural woods, and furnished with oak or ash chamber suits or artistic designs." The south wing's rooms were larger than those rooms in the north wing. Electric bells connected each room with the office. Public restrooms, with hot and cold water, were placed in the inside northwest corner of both floors.

A "sixty foot long, forty wide, and sixteen high" dining room was located in the first floor north wing. According to the FGIC brochure, it contained "broad windows reaching to the floor open out upon porches on either side, thus insuring a comfortable temperature at all times. At the end of the room opposite the main entrance [was] a deep and high brick fireplace, surmounted by a huge pair of antlers. The ceiling of the room, like that of the main hall, [was] paneled in handsome woods."<sup>6</sup> With the additional space added on to the east side of the diningroom, the original Dutch-style fireplace became the room's centerpiece instead of occupying the east wall. The kitchen was a separate annex that was attached to the dining room at the southeast corner. A

---

<sup>5</sup> FGIC, *Forest Glen Inn*. The following descriptions and quotations are from this brochure.

<sup>6</sup> FGIC, *Forest Glen Inn*.

suite of bedroom, presumably for hotel employees, was located above it. The kitchen wing's interior walls were laid with tile and equipped with massive appliances. The building was lighted with gas that was manufactured in a neighboring building.

As noted above, Davis added a few new facilities and redecorated existing areas but did implement any major changes to Main. The Army, on the other hand, radically altered the interior's functions and design. It removed most of the ornate decor and architectural features, such as the main stairway and lattice-work screens, and replaced them with simple, utilitarian forms.

ADDENDUM TO:  
NATIONAL PARK SEMINARY, MAIN  
(Forest Inn)  
(Walter Reed Medical Center Annex, Building Nos. 101A, 101D &  
101E)  
Linden Lane  
Silver Spring  
Montgomery County  
Maryland

HABS MD-1109-A  
MD,16-SILSPR,2A-

HABS  
MD  
16-SILSPR,  
2-A

PHOTOGRAPHS

PAPER COPIES OF COLOR TRANSPARENCIES

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001