NATIONAL PARK SEMINARY, AMERICAN BUNGALOW
(Walter Reed Medical Center Annex, Building No. 106)
2885 Dewitt Circle
Silver Spring
Montgomery County
Maryland

HABS No. MD-1109-H

HABS
MD
16-SILSPR,
2H-

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

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

National Park Seminary, American Bungalow
(Walter Reed Medical Center Annex, Building No. 106)

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Location: 2885 DeWitt Circle; northeast of Main's front entrance.

Significance: The American bungalow is one of five buildings erected during the Cassedy's first year of construction in 1898. It was the first of eight sorority houses on campus. It was the home of the Alpha Epsilon Pi sorority. Its shingle siding, broad overhanging roof, wide veranda and central dormer exemplifies the bungalow style of architecture. The bungalow was a popular form of suburban architecture from the 1890s through the early twentieth century. Because of its ubiquitous presence, it became an emblem of the American home. Judging by the great wealth of the NPS students, this modest dwelling were probably not going to be their future house design. They were like playhouses on the NPS campus. They were idyllic representations of home in which the young women perfected their domestic skills. Their small scale and prototypical suburban house and garden designs added essential domestic elements to the large academic institution whose primary aim was to train young women to be ideal mothers and wives. They were constructed in a variety of eclectic designs. Most styles highlighted the innate, natural qualities of the building materials and were intended to blend well with the natural surroundings. The American bungalow was the most conventional of all the sorority houses built on the NPS campus.

History: The American bungalow was constructed in 1898. A two-story porch was added to its rear, or east, facade between 1919 and 1922. The lower porch was completely enclosed at a later date, probably during the Ament era. The building was one of eight NPS clubhouses. It was used as officer family housing by the Army.

Description: Alpha, as the first clubhouse was known, was prominently placed on the entry carriage sweep at the front of Main. It faces west. According to an alum's memoirs, it was made out oak trees growing on the campus grounds.[1] The one-and-a-half story building with basement is banked into the hillside, creating an exposed basement on the east side. The gable roof has flared extensions in the front and rear. Its broad overhanging eaves cover the front and back porches. The building and the porch piers are shingle-sided. The center front door has a transom and sidelights in a diamond-pattern design. There is also a window with diamond-pattern lights in the top half of the door. The door is flanked by triparte casement windows with diamond-pattern lights. The front facade has an off-center dormer with pyramidal roof and three pairs of casement windows with diamond-shaped panes. The low front porch rail is not original.

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[1] Gwendolyn Gay, (class of 1938), "School Ties Never Die," manuscript.

On the south side, the overhanging gable end joins an extended three-by-one bay central alcove with windows in the typical pattern. There are paired casement windows with diamond-pattern lights in the top floor. The north side of the building is similar to the south side but with fixed diamond-pattern light windows. A horizontal window is located above two vertical windows. They are placed above paired casement windows. The front porch projects out to the north forming a one-bay extension on this side. A glass-enclosed first- and second-story porch runs the length of the east facade. The two-story stone piers of the original open two-story porch are extant.

ADDENDUM TO:
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PHOTOGRAPHS

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