

NATIONAL PARK SEMINARY, JAPANESE BUNGALOW  
(Walter Reed Medical Center Annex, Building No. 109)  
2801 Linden Lane  
Silver Spring  
Montgomery County  
Maryland

HABS No. MD-1109-K

HABS  
MD  
16-SILSPR,  
2K-

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

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

**National Park Seminary, Japanese Bungalow  
(Walter Reed Medical Center Annex, Building No. 109)**

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Location: 2801 Linden Lane; the building is located at the intersection of Linden Lane and Dewitt Drive, between the Japanese pagoda to the west and the chapel to the east.

Significance: The Japanese bungalow is one of the oldest buildings on campus. It was begun in 1898, the first year of the Cassedys' building campaign, and completed in 1899. The clubhouse has a combination of eastern and western architectural designs. In its original incarnation, the standard bungalow design was transformed into a more exotic, oriental structure by the introduction of gracefully curved upturned eaves. Bungalows were a popular building style for middle-class suburban homes from the 1890s to 1920s.<sup>1</sup> Their ubiquitous presence in American suburbia made them quintessential emblems of idyllic domestic life.

It was not unusual to apply exotic motifs, like the Japanese upturned eaves, to a bungalow design. Exotic forms, in this case Asian, were intended to reflect the owner's sophistication and refinement. Asian designs were popular with Americans since the China Trade was established in the seventeenth century. The reopening of trade with Japan in the 1850s after years of isolation, the publication of Edward Morse's *Japanese Homes and their Surroundings* in 1885, and the exhibition of Japanese houses at World Fairs, all contributed to the increased popularity of Japanese goods and designs around the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> Many wealthy Americans had Japanese rooms in their houses and less affluent ones purchased Japanese wares. One of the most common features of Japanese-inspired house designs were upturned-eaves like those on the Chiopi clubhouse.

Since the eighteenth century, wealthy English and American estate owners have incorporated Asian garden follies on their grounds. The Japanese bungalow's neighbor, the Japanese pagoda, fits this prototype.

History: The building was the home of the Chi Omicron Pi, or Chiopi, sorority. It was the second sorority house to be constructed on the campus. The 1898-1899 catalog noted that it was

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<sup>1</sup> See the campus planning section in HABS No. MD-1109 for a full description and explanation of the bungalow.

<sup>2</sup> Clay Lancaster, *The Japanese Influence in America* (New York: Walton H. Rawls, 1963).

under construction during that academic year. According to an NPS alumnae, the cornerstone of the building was laid on April 24, 1899.<sup>3</sup>

Several Army site condition reports state that the building's upturned eaves were removed in 1927 but later catalogs show the Chiopi with the upturned eaves, leading this historian to believe that the transformation was made during the Army's tenure.<sup>4</sup> After 1931 (though probably in the Army era), a rear porch at the southeast corner was enclosed, a window on the east facade was replaced by a door, and a center dormer on the east facade was extended to the south. Since the 1940s, the wooden shingles were painted white and the original white trim was painted brown. The front porch was also screened-in.

Description: The Chiopi house is banked into sloping terrain, making a one-and-a-half story on the north and east sides and two-and-a-half stories with exposed stone foundation on the south and west sides. It has a hip roof with overhanging eaves and decorative brackets. The roof is cut by asymmetrical dormers. It has narrow clabbered siding with a decorative belt course of beaded siding between the first and second stories on the east, west, and south facades and under the eaves on the north side. The white belt course use to contrast with the building's brown exterior walls until they were painted white.

The north, or front facade, is covered by a one-story screened-in porch that was originally open. Brackets at the top of the porch's posts create an arcade effect. The first floor has a center door flanked to the east by a tripartite window with diamond-pattern lights and wood shingles. To the west of the door is a pair of windows with diamond-pattern lights and a plain wood surround with butt joints and molding along the upper edge. Above the porch is a large center gabled dormer with recessed facade. It has three double-sash, diamond-pattern light windows. The center bay is stepped higher than the others.

The south, or rear, facade has a six-bay dormer. The last set of bays on the east side form a shed dormer that sits above a pent-return on the continuous dormer of the east facade. At the west end of the south facade, there is an oriel with a pent roof. Over the oriel, there is a narrow diamond-pane casement window next to a fitted two-light window (probably a replacement). To the east of the oriel is a two-bay fully-enclosed porch that was originally open with a lattice rail fence. A first floor door was originally behind the porch but the door was moved to the south end of the east facade when the porch was enclosed. The enclosed porch has a long, narrow tripartite

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<sup>3</sup> Ruth Ann Hummer, "Chi Omicron Pi," in Helen Chewning, et al, *The History of National Park College* (c.1941), p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, WRAMC, "Facility Condition Assessment for the Historic District of the Forest Glen Annex" (unpublished report, 1996).

window with a single light (perhaps it originally had diamond panes) that is flanked by smaller three-light casement windows.

The east facade roof is cut by a continuous dormer. There is a group of five diamond-pane windows at the north end and a pair of them at the south end. On the first floor, there is a door, as noted, at the south corner. There is a full-height bay north of the door. The front bay has a tripartite diamond-pane window and each side bay has a single diamond-pattern window. They are all connected by a dark brown wood surround.

The west facade has a two-and-a-half story one-bay extension at its south end with tripartite diamond-pattern casement windows on the first and top floor. A staircase runs along the north end of the west facade to a top floor door. A three-bay pent dormer, a portion of the main roof's overhanging eaves, and a first-floor tripartite casement window were removed in order to incorporate the doorway and staircase.

ADDENDUM TO:  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

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