

NATIONAL PARK SEMINARY, INDIAN MISSION
(Walter Reed Medical Center Annex, Building No. 112)
2790 Linden Lane
Silver Spring
Montgomery County
Maryland

HABS No. MD-1109-N

HABS
MD
16-SILSPR,
2N-

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

1109-N

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Location: 2790 Linden Lane, at the intersection of Woodstock Drive and Linden Lane.

Significance: The Indian Mission building was the clubhouse for the Theta Sigma Rho sorority. The building's design was inspired by eighteenth-century Franciscan mission churches of the Far West.¹ The early colonial Spanish architecture became popular in the 1890s, at the time when there was a revival of interest in historic American cultures and a romanticization of the American West. The revival style was first popularized in California but soon spread across the country. It was a counterpart to the more common eastern colonial designs. One scholar referred to the style as "an instant legacy far more prominent, ornate, and romantically delineated than its source."² The California building at the 1893 Chicago Exposition was one of the first examples of the Mission Revival style.

History: The Mission was constructed in 1903. A two-story tower was added at the southwest corner in the 1920s. The Army radically changed the exterior of the Mission. It was altered more than any of the other clubhouses. The graceful, curvilinear parapets over the one-story section were removed from the front and east facades. The arched stucco arcade on the front porch was replaced with plain wooden posts. The rooftop patio was replaced with a pitched roof. The building was used as a sorority house while a part of NPS and as officer family housing while a part of the Army.

Description: The Mission faces north and is caddy-corner to the Miller Library and the Japanese bungalow. The one-story stucco building with basement is banked so there is one story exposed on the front side and two stories exposed on the back, or south, side. It has a two-story tower at its northwest and southwest corners. The first tower is original and the second one was added in the 1920s. The original tower is three-by-three bays wide with a pyramidal roof with overhanging eaves and exposed rafters. The first floor originally had a rectangular tripartite window with diamond-pattern above and single light below but a small louvered window was inserted in its place. On the north facade, the second floor has tripartite round-arched windows.

The east end of the building has a center door flanked by two double-sash windows with diamond-pattern lights over a single sash. This part of the building has a three-bay front porch with plain wooden posts and shed roof. This simple design replaced a three-bay stuccoed arcade.

¹ See Gowan, pp. 105-118 and Duchscherer, pp. 70-71.

² Richard W. Longstreth, "Academic Eclecticism in American Architecture," *Winterthur Portfolio*, 1982, p. 76.

This section of the building also had a rooftop patio with prominent Mission Revival curvilinear parapets on its north, east, and west sides. The north side parapet had an opening in the main gable where a bell was placed in a true Mission building. The patio was replaced with a pitched roof.

On the west side of the building, the tower's round-arched windows are stepped in order to light an interior stairway. A tall double-sash diamond-pattern over single light window is located in the lower north corner. South of the tower is a mid-section topped by the sole remaining Spanish Revival parapet. There is a large sash window with smaller pair of diamond-paned windows. The two-story tower at the back of the building has a gable roof with overhanging eaves and exposed rafters in a cut-out pattern. There is a tripartite diamond-pattern casement window in the south gable end and a ground-floor door below it.

The east end of the south facade has a one-bay deep extension to accommodate the interior fireplace inglenooks. The curvilinear parapet was removed from the east facade and replaced by a simpler, linear one. A large tripartite window with diamond-pattern over single light is below it.

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