

NATIONAL PARK SEMINARY, SERVICE BUILDINGS
(Walter Reed Medical Center Annex, Building Nos. 120, 121, 122, 125, 138)
Between Linden Lane & Beach Drive
Silver Spring
Montgomery County
Maryland

HABS No. MD-1109-V

HABS
MD
16-SILSPR,
2V-

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

ADDITIONAL
FOLIOS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

National Park Seminary, Service Buildings (Walter Reed Medical Center Annex, Buildings Nos. 120, 121, 122, 125, 138)

HABS No. MD-1109-V

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16-515R,
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Location: All of the service buildings are located on the southeastern part of the campus. The stables are between Linden Lane and Beach Drive (campus, not local Beach Drive). The Carpentry Shop and Servants Quarters are located next to each other behind the stables to the west and on the south side of Hume Drive. The Fire House and Power Plant are adjacent to each other on the north side of Hume Street and to the west.

Significance: The service buildings were essential for the operations of the school. Some of them, including the power plant and fire house, still are. Even though the buildings were utilitarian in function, Cassidy clad them in Spanish Mission Revival designs. The design complimented the picturesque character of the other campus buildings, however, their matching facades and their location identified them as a distinct set of structures.

The Mission style 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.¹ Many of the features, including prominent curved-and-notched parapets, round arches, and bell towers were derived from eighteenth-century Catholic mission churches of the Far West. The design proliferated in suburban architecture around the turn of the century. The California building at the 1893 Chicago Exposition was one of the first examples of the Mission Revival style.

History: The Power Plant (or Boiler House) was erected by 1902.² The Carpentry Shop and Servants quarters were erected in 1907. The present stables replaced older, smaller facilities located on the same spot. A comparison of the campus plans indicates that the stables were expanded to their present form between 1920 and 1924. The Carriage House was constructed between 1917 and 1919.

The buildings have had various uses over the decades. The Power Plant still serves its original function as a facility for the site's heating equipment. The west side of the building was historically used as maids' quarters and the Practice House for music. The Carriage House was converted into a fire house, with few alterations, in the 1940s. The Carpentry Shop was originally servants quarters. It was transformed into a carpentry shop between 1920 and 1924. The stables were converted into a dormitory by the Army. In 1984, they were remodeled into a county shelter for homeless men.

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

² This date and the others based on information in the catalogs and the campus plans.

Description: The Power Plant is made up of two buildings joined by a hyphen that has two stories at its north end and one at its south end. The west section of the Power Plant contained the Practice House at the north end and the servants quarters at the south end. The north facade has a large portico that denoted the entrance to the Practice House.³ It is a painted-brick cross-gabled buildings. The west facade has a shingled gable recessed into another shingled gable. The facade has six-over-six round-arched windows. The south facade has a shingled gable. The overhanging pediment of the gable forms a seven-by-one bay porch.

The design of the boiler house section of the Power Plant is repeated in the carriage house, the carpentry shop, and the servants quarters. They all have pebble-dash stucco walls capped by Spanish Revival curvilinear parapets with contrasting green trim on their gable and non-gable ends. They have both round-arched and regular sash windows. The Power Plant is still in use and is probably in the best condition of all the structures. It is freshly painted. The fire station (originally a garage) next door is occupied but in need of repair. The carpentry shop and servants quarters are the most dilapidated.

The stables are composed of a center gabled section with parapeted tower at southwest corner. One-and-a-half story wings extend off the east and west sides of the main section. The building has stuccoed walls and dormers with paired windows.

Across Hume Drive from the fire house is an underground storage area with large stone facade with parapet.

³ The Practice House is described in a separate report; see HABS No. MD-1109-U.

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