

Staff Report- January 8, 2013
Founder's Green -MICA
Baltimore City Historic District- Bolton Hill

Plan: Renovate existing building; construct a new entry on McMechen Street

Staff Presenter: Stacy Montgomery

Applicant: Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA)

Architect: Ayers Saint Gross

Background

The Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) proposes to renovate the existing buildings known as Commons I (now Founder's Green) which are located within the Bolton Hill Historic District. There are three existing buildings (now Spear, Glace, and Carter Halls) and the gatehouse (now Latrobe Hall) that are part of the residential complex. The proposed renovations will help provide the complex with an inviting street frontage on McMechen Street, and help with connectivity to the new residential facility Commons II (now Leake Hall). The Commons (now Founder's Green), a residence hall constructed in the early 1990s, is located at the southern edge of the property by McMechen Street.

Since the existing building dates to the late 20th century, this project is being reviewed in accordance with CHAP Guidelines 8.10 Signage and Awnings, Chapter 10 Design Guidelines for Historic Landscapes and Chapter 11 Design Guidelines for New Construction. Staff also applied Standards #9 and #10.

Plan

The plan is to construct a new entrance, foyer, and stairs at McMechen Street. Add new glazing in the existing masonry openings on the interior façade of Glace Hall and 1st floor of Carter Hall along the driveway/Bolton North at McMechen Street. Changes to landscaping are also proposed.

Latrobe and Carter Halls

A new glass box entry lobby would be added between Latrobe and Carter Halls, which would align with the existing staircase. New windows on Latrobe Hall would match the configuration of those of Carter and the other buildings, but the color would match the new building (Leake) in grey. "Founders Hall" lettering would run between and 1st and 2nd story windows on Latrobe Hall. Windows on Carter Hall facing the new entry would be enlarged. A painted MICA sign would run along the corner of Carter Hall facing McMechen Street. New landscaping along McMechen Street would allow for an ADA ramp in front of Latrobe Hall. New tree wells and concrete campus pavers would be installed in front of the stairs on McMechen Street.

On the East elevation of Carter Hall, facing McMechen Street and Mount Royal Avenue, divided light windows on the 1st story windows would be removed and replaced with single-pane glass windows.

Glace Hall

Glace Hall is located at the north end of the complex. The proposed renovations would include infilling the 2-story openings between the stairwells with glass. The size of the opening to the west stairwell would be increased; the opening to the east stairwell would be enclosed with glass and a full glass door. One 1st story paired window would be converted to a door.

On the east elevation of Glace Hall a window would be removed on the 1st story and a new venting system for the proposed café would be added near the roofline. Two windows on the west elevation would be bricked.

The landscape of the interior courtyard would be enhanced with pavers, shrubs and an outdoor seating area. All of this work would not be visible from the exterior of the complex.

Analysis

The plan as proposed meets CHAP Guidelines 8.10 Signage and Awnings, Chapter 10 Design Guidelines for Historic Landscapes, and CHAP Guidelines for New Construction 11.1 Guiding Principles for New Design, 11.2 Site Design, 11.3 Scale and Form, 11.4 Building Features, 11.5 Materials and Detailing, and Standards #9 and #10.

Much of the work will not be visible from the surrounding streets. The work to the entrance at McMechen Street is compatible with the surrounding buildings, many of which also date to the late 20th century. The new glass box on McMechen Street enhances the connection between the building and the street, as does the landscaping. The signage meets CHAP Guidelines as it is simple and easy to read, and does not obstruct any architectural details.

Neighborhood Comments

The Bolton Hill Architectural Review Committee has reviewed the plans as proposed and will present comments at the hearing.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the applicant be given approval of the plan as it meets CHAP Guidelines 8.10 Signage and Awnings, Chapter 10 Design Guidelines for Historic Landscapes, and CHAP Guidelines for New Construction 11.1 Guiding Principles for New Design, 11.2 Site Design, 11.3 Scale and Form, 11.4 Building Features, 11.5 Materials and Detailing, and Standards #9 and #10.

Site Plan



View Facing North



View Facing South



View Facing East



View Facing West



Existing McMechen Street Elevation

