

## EXHIBIT B

In response to requests of the Office of Planning (“OP”) and the Historic Preservation Office (“HPO”) The George Washington University (“GW”, “University”) has undertaken research into the history and development of its Mount Vernon Campus (“Campus”) in order to more fully understand the character of the Campus and to assess the effects of the 2010 Mount Vernon Campus Plan (“2010 Plan”) on that character. The 23-acre Campus became the home of Mount Vernon Seminary in 1946. That school later became a junior college and then a four-year college in an effort to reinvent and sustain itself in the fast-changing world of the 1960s and 1970s. During those decades, women’s junior colleges, that staple of women’s educational options for much of the twentieth century, quickly became the educational equivalent of the dinosaur. Mount Vernon Junior College, like many other women’s junior colleges, became a four-year college in 1976. However, it continued to struggle. In 1997 its Board of Trustees voted to close the 122-year old school. Two years later it became part of The George Washington University, which has provided a vibrant and appropriate continued use for the Campus.

### History

Although its roots go back to 1868, Mount Vernon Seminary, the institution that gave the Campus its name, had its formal beginnings in 1876, when Elizabeth Somers officially opened the Mount Vernon Seminary at 204 F Street, NW. In an era when the idea of educating young women was becoming increasingly popular, Mrs. Somers’ day school provided a six-year course of study for the daughters of Washington’s wealthy and socially prominent. Similar schools could be found with increasing frequency as the nineteenth century drew to a close. Mount Vernon Seminary prospered and within a few years had outgrown its original quarters.

In 1880 Mrs. Somers then moved her school to 1100 M Street, NW and several adjacent rowhouses. There over 100 boarding students and 50 day students engaged in rigorous academic study. In 1893 the final two years of study became known as the collegiate course, which was designed to prepare girls for entrance into four-year colleges. The school continued to grow. Washington was a popular school destination even then; by the early twentieth century Mount Vernon students came from across the country and around the world to take advantage of the educational opportunities and experiences the city provided. When Mrs. Somers retired in 1915, she recognized that her school was again outgrowing its buildings and set about finding a suitable location for the growing institution.

Mrs. Somers found such a location on the east side of the 3700 block of Nebraska Avenue, NW. The fifteen-acre parcel, located in what was then an almost rural location, provided plenty of room for expansion. In 1917 Mount Vernon moved to the new campus, into a large, handsome building designed for a student body of 130 by Columbia-trained New York architect Wesley Sherwood Bessell (1883-1967), whose association with Mount Vernon lasted over thirty years and who was later responsible for the majority of the buildings at the Foxhall Road campus.

Wesley Bessell, a member of the American Institute of Architects from 1922-1941, was both prominent and prolific. He designed houses, including country houses on Long Island, apartment buildings, and commercial, retail, and institutional buildings. He designed buildings for a number of other educational institutions, including Wagner College and the Kensington School, both on Long Island. He employed the range of historicist architectural styles popular in his day. His designs for the original building at the Nebraska Avenue campus may have been done while he was working as a draftsman for Theodate Pope Riddle, Connecticut's first licensed female architect, who had designed Westover School in Middlebury, CT in 1909, and in 1927 founded and designed Avon Old Farms School in Avon, CT. The U-shaped building is Georgian in inspiration and formal in presentation. This building was the first of many Bessell designed for Mount Vernon on two different campuses. Others at the Nebraska Avenue campus included a striking chapel, something of a visual landmark on Nebraska Avenue, NW, a dormitory, another classroom building, the headmistress' house, and several other buildings.

The school prospered at its new location. In 1927 the six-year course of study was divided into a four-year secondary education program and a two-year junior college, operating independently, each of which granted diplomas. The following year both were accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. Graduating students were admitted to the Seven Sisters, Stanford, Cornell, Berkeley, the University of Chicago, and other prestigious institutions. In 1928 the school also purchased another 16 acres of land, doubling the size of the campus. These years marked Mount Vernon's heyday, its years of growth and prosperity. The academic life flourished in architecturally-significant buildings.

The outbreak of World War II had a direct effect on the school. The United States Navy declared the campus necessary to the war effort and commandeered the school; students left for Christmas break unsure if they would have a school to which to return. The school administration determined to continue and on February 1, 1943, school reopened on the second floor of the brand new Garfinckels's Department Store at 4820 Massachusetts Avenue, NW. This Colonial Revival, almost-suburban branch store, designed by Gordon MacNeil for W.C. and A.N. Miller, opened in 1942. Classes were held in this building and the school purchased several nearby houses to serve as dormitories.

It was during this time that the financial and administrative strain of operating two separate schools – the Seminary and the junior college – began to seriously affect Mount Vernon. Although the Navy had offered a substantial sum of money for the Nebraska Avenue campus, the school turned it down, saying it was insufficient. The school took the Navy to court in hopes of being awarded a larger sum of money. In the meantime, the school's finances were shaky. It was not until 1944 that Mount Vernon prevailed in court. The school was awarded more than \$1 million, substantially more than the Navy's original offer, for the Nebraska Avenue campus. With that money the school could find itself a new permanent home.

Again Mount Vernon found a rural site with plenty of room for growth. In 1945 the school purchased approximately twenty acres of farmland on Foxhall Road, NW for its new campus, followed shortly thereafter by the purchase of several additional acres. On November 5<sup>th</sup> of that year ground was broken for the Academic Building, the first building on the new campus. The architect for this building and other early buildings on the Campus was again Wesley Bessell. Bessell clustered Mount Vernon's new buildings around a hilly, somewhat idiosyncratic Quad at the northern edge of the Campus. The new Academic Building anchored the northwest and lowest corner of the Quad. Bessell also designed four residence halls in 1945, Somers, on the Quad, and Cole, Hensley, and Clark, which line the road leading up to the Quad. With the completion of these buildings, along with a regulation-size field hockey field, Mount Vernon Seminary and Junior College reopened in October, 1946 at its new and last home. These original buildings are simple, stripped College Colonial Revival structures, unremarkable for their design, reflecting the realities of war-time construction and financial constraints. Sadly, these buildings exhibit none of the architectural distinction of the buildings on the Nebraska Avenue campus.

Additional buildings, most designed by Bessell, were added in the late 1940s and 1950s. Merriweather Hall, originally called Post House and funded by alumna Marjorie Merriweather Post, was built in 1949. Lloyd Hall, the combination gymnasium and auditorium, was completed in 1951. The Webb Building, constructed as the home of the college president, was completed in 1953. It was converted to office space in 1966, after the president moved to a house across W Street, NW from the Campus. Ames Hall, originally an infirmary and residence hall, was completed in 1955. It was converted to a dining hall in 1965. Acheson Hall, the science building, was completed in 1956. This group of buildings is even less distinguished than the 1940s buildings. Although they share materials they lack even the limited architectural detailing and the quirky appeal of some of the original buildings. While Ames and Acheson complete two sides of the Quad, they do so with much less interest than the Academic Building.

The next wave of construction on the Campus was the result of the 1968 master plan developed by the fledgling Washington firm of Hartman-Cox. Three buildings from that plan were constructed, the Florence Hollis Hand Chapel, from 1970, and the Gatehouse at the W Street entrance to the Campus and Pelham Dormitory from 1971. These buildings moved Mount Vernon firmly into the Modern era, in stark contrast to the other buildings on the Campus. Pelham Dormitory has since been replaced by a new residence hall generally at the same location. The Gatehouse has been extensively altered, losing its architectural integrity. The award-winning Hand Chapel remains one of the city's early Modern icons.

During these years the school tried to move with the times and to continue to evolve into an institution that was relevant to the changing demands of education, particularly women's education, in the mid to late twentieth century. New academic programs such as government and politics, international relations, and fine arts – programs that could take advantage of the school's location in Washington – were

offered and others, such as home economics, were dropped. The school was forced to come to terms with the difficulty of running two separate institutions and in 1965 the Board of Trustees voted to close the Seminary; the last class graduated in 1969. That year the school's name was officially changed to Mount Vernon Junior College. By that time the revolution had begun in earnest; women's junior colleges were being hit by the buzz saw of the 1960s and 70s. Mount Vernon faced continuously declining enrollment and concomitant financial difficulties.

In 1973 the District of Columbia Board of Higher Education granted the school the ability to award Bachelor of Arts degrees in Public Affairs and Government. Several other degree programs were approved shortly thereafter. The school continued to seek ways to expand enrollment and raise additional revenue, including the adding of continuing education courses. In 1976 Mount Vernon College became an accredited four-year college.

In the 1980s the school went through another master plan process, which led to the offering of seven new majors, the construction of Eckles Library in 1986, and the re-accreditation of Mount Vernon College by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. However, these efforts could not sustain the institution. In 1997 the Board of Trustees voted to close Mount Vernon College as an independent institution; the last class graduated in 1999. That year the Campus became The George Washington University at Mount Vernon College, originally offering living, learning, and leadership programs for women but soon evolving into a coeducational campus.

The history and fate of Mount Vernon Seminary, Junior College, and College reflects the history and fate of many similar schools, in Washington and the surrounding suburbs as well as across the county. These schools were born in an era when the education of young women was gaining popularity, first among the wealthy and then among the middle class. Some schools were little more than finishing schools, others were academically rigorous. Junior colleges flourished in the early half of the twentieth century but began to flounder and close in the immediate post-1960s decades. In and around Washington there were many institutions similar to Mount Vernon Seminary and Junior College. These included Marjorie Webster, Immaculata, and Chevy Chase Junior Colleges, which all closed in the 1970s. Holy Cross and Dumbarton Colleges closed in 1968 and 1972 respectively. Arlington Hall and Forest Glen never reopened after they were taken over by the military in the early 1940s, for the war effort. Many of these schools, like Mount Vernon, have found continuing uses as new and different schools. Immaculate is now part of the campus of American University, Dumbarton is part of Howard University, and Marjorie Webster is the home of the Lowell School. Chevy Chase Junior College is currently owned and occupied by the National 4-H Council.

The George Washington University's purchase of the Campus has extended its original use and given the Campus a new life. The University has maintained the general character of the Campus, with buildings either grouped around the Quad or ringing the edges of the Campus and large areas of open space, originally and currently devoted to athletic and recreational uses, at the center and northeast corner. Although GW has

adapted a mid-twentieth century campus for twentieth-first century use, it has done so while retaining the general character and feel of Mount Vernon Seminary.

### 2010 Mount Vernon Campus Plan

The 2010 Plan has been developed in consideration of both the University's physical needs at this location as well as the nature and character of the existing Campus, and those features of the Campus that warrant consideration going forward. With respect to the early buildings on Campus, the 2010 Plan is an improvement over the existing Campus Plan. Although, several first and second generation buildings will be demolished, two of the original 1945 dormitories, approved for demolition in the current Campus Plan, will be retained under the 2010 Plan. Construction in the form of a major addition and new buildings will be accomplished to accommodate GW's academic, residential, recreational space needs for the coming decade. However, the addition and the new buildings are sited in such a way as to maintain the clustering of construction in the northwest section of the Campus.

GW has undertaken a study of the Campus and its buildings, which includes research on the history of Mount Vernon Seminary and the architects and builders responsible for the buildings on Campus, as well as a Phase I archaeological assessment of the Campus. The University will share this information with the HPO. As a result of this investigation, GW has a better understanding of its Campus than it did during the last campus plan process, and it recognizes the benefit to maintaining the character of the Campus as much as possible. To that end, the University will develop, in consultation with HPO, an agreement to set forth appropriate treatment of the Campus and mechanisms for consultation with HPO on various projects on the Campus for the duration of the 2010 Plan.