

(LRPC) meeting. Additional staff present included Bob Duffy, Director, DCPHD Planning, and John Liebertz, DCPHD Neighborhood Services – Historic Preservation.

Joan Lawrence, HALRB Chair, and Robert Dudka, HALRB Design Review Committee Chair, gave a presentation highlighting the work of the Wilson School architect Charles Robinson, the history of the school, its significance related to President Wilson, the physical building features indicative of a certain time and place, and the vote of the HALRB to support preservation of the Wilson School. Mr. Dudka also presented the original construction drawings for Wilson School and provided examples of preserving, incorporating, or moving historic structures.

Scott Prisco, Director, Design and Construction, Arlington Public Schools (APS), gave a presentation on the APS School Board’s decision not to support historic designation of Wilson School in the interest of maximizing on-site open space and the high cost of restoration and reconstruction of the school to its 1910 physical state.

Public Speakers

Joseph Debores spoke in support of restoring the Wilson School and focused on a methodology for restoring the school that includes establishing an expert team to prepare a detailed work plan and detailed cost and spending plans. He stated that approximate estimates for restoration and renovation are \$2 million for the exterior and \$1.7 million for the interior of the school.

Jim Huryz spoke in support of restoring Wilson School and provided successful examples of such as the Fairlington Community Center. He argued the design of the Wilson School stands the test of time as opposed to the modernist schools that are built, quickly torn down, and replaced. He added that there are 8.8 million square feet of vacant office space in Arlington that could be used for educational purposes. Additionally, Arlington is being overwhelmed by sports facilities that serve citizens of other jurisdictions.

Stuart Stein, Radnor/Ft. Myer Heights Civic Association (RAFOM) member, spoke in support of preserving the Wilson School and asked that the idea of preserving the school be analyzed thoroughly.

Stan Karson, President, Radnor/Ft. Myer Heights Civic Association (RAFOM), spoke in support of preserving the Wilson School. He highlighted an offer from the HALRB Design Review Committee to collaborate with the APS architecture team to work on possible avenues for preservation of the structure which have not been taken advantage of by APS.

Planning Commission Liaison and Committee Report

Commissioner Cole gave a report WRAPS discussion of the proposal and the Wilson School in context of the ongoing WRAPS study. He noted there is no general consensus in the WRAPS group on whether or not the school building should be preserved or if elements of the architecture should be referenced or included in a new school building. The principles generally adopted by the WRAPS working group do recommend referencing elements of the 1910 Fort Meyer Heights School building or any buildings that succeed it, which is somewhat narrower than the County Board charge. The

Working Group has worked within the Charge that the Board gave it, which did not include preservation of the school building.

Commission Iacomini, as liaison to HALRB and former member of that group, thanked HALRB for the additional research on school's architect Charles Robinson, as well as finding the original blueprints, and the research on estimates for preserving and restoring the school.

Commissioner Cole reported the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) does not make a recommendation to the Planning Commission, but is a forum that gives the Planning Commissioners the opportunity to explore issues, ask questions and improve their understanding of both the facts and related policy questions. Four planning commissioners attended the LRPC meeting on March 31 for Wilson School and asked numerous questions of historic and planning staff. He suggested the following topics for discussion: 1) the extent to which Wilson School meets the notion of historic, 2) the geographic extent of the proposed local historic district, 3) the condition of the Wilson School building, 4) the consequence for APS of creating a Wilson School local historic districts, and 5) the merit of Wilson School LHD designation and proposed collaboration.

Planning Commission Discussion

Commissioner Cole asked Ms. Lawrence for clarification on the motions made by HALRB on Wilson School and for clarification on the current position of the HALRB relative to restoration.

Ms. Lawrence responded that in the first HALRB meeting there were two motions. The first motion resulted in a unanimous determination that the Wilson School meets six criteria for historic designation. There was some discussion about whether the Board had authority to compel restoration of the building; HALRB decided to recommend restoration of the school to its 1910 appearance. At the second meeting, because the restoration recommendation had been adopted, HALRB did revisit this recommendation. HALRB took up the local historic district designation again as called for in the Memo of Understanding (MOU) between APS, HALRB and the County.

Commissioner Cole asked Ms. Liccese-Torres for explanation of omission of the question of restoration in the County Manager's recommendation. Ms. Liccese-Torres responded that it was not included because there are too many competing priorities for use of the site.

Commissioner Siegel asked if APS has a number of classrooms in mind for this site. Mr. Prisco responded the current CIP is based on number of seats; 775 seats are called for at this site. APS estimates 112 seats would be captured in four classrooms if the building were reconstructed and restored. The number of classrooms is dependent on the different programs which includes a program for students with special needs and the H-B Woodlawn program. The new school will be approximately 168,000 square feet when completed. If APS were to restore this building, that would be reduced by approximately 2,800 square feet. The current Stratford building is approximately 144,000 square feet for 700 students.

Commissioner Brown asked about moving the building and if staff had done any research on receiving sites. Ms. Liccese-Torres responded that several years ago there was a study of the idea of moving the property. In 2008, the estimate for relocation of the 1910 portion of the building on-site

was estimated to be \$400-\$500k. That idea has not been revisited with this designation request. There has been no consideration of moving the building off-site.

Commissioner Iacomini clarified that the notion of moving it off-site was not to another place in the County but from either school property to adjacent non-school ground or somewhere else on the school's property.

Mr. Dudka responded that HALRB contacted a contractor who in turn came up with the same cost range based on the construction documents from 1908, but the assumption was that the building would be moved within the site or nearby.

Commissioner Ciotti asked Mr. Prisco if the APS position is that they could not establish the educational environment and structure that they need if this building stays. Mr. Prisco responded that if APS were mandated for the building to remain, they have a very creative architectural team that could make it work. There would be a less efficient layout and more costly end result, which is the biggest concern. There is \$80.2 million in the APS Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to get 775 seats and maximize open space and that would be jeopardized with a mandate to restore or reconstruct the building.

Commissioner Ciotti asked if there was any possibility of raising the money to restore this building if this site was designated historic. Mr. Duffy responded that fundraising has not been explored. Commissioner Ciotti expressed concern about historic designation without sufficient funding. Mr. Dudka responded that he could not speak to the financial considerations, but restoration is done frequently all over the country.

Commissioner Cole pointed out that APS has an obligation to open school seats by 2019 and has to plan and build a new school building. If APS were to commit to preservation, they would need to have guaranteed funding for restoration of the school outside of the Arlington community. He asked if Mr. Dudka was optimistic that the funding would be available to include it in the planning so there would be a commitment to restore the building. Mr. Dudka responded that immediate action would involve discussions with the project architect and he does not have information on fundraising.

Commissioner Forinash asked if the County Board created a Local Historic District designation and the School Board continued on its current path, would APS be compelled in any way to preserve this building in any state or would that create additional obligations that the School Board would have to follow. Ms. Liccese-Torres responded that it would trigger additional review. It does not mean that something else could not be built on other parts of the site. It means a greater process occurs and there is increased collaboration between all the involved stakeholders. Normally historic designation requests come forward with design guidelines. In this case, in accordance with the MOU with APS, design guidelines were not created because APS does not support the designation request. If the local historic district were designated for the school, those guidelines would need to be created to address the historic character of the building and ways that it could be thoughtfully renovated and/or added onto in terms of new construction around it, which would take several months depending on how long it would take to get all the stakeholders together.

Commissioner Siegel stated that the two parts of the staff recommendation are to deny the proposed local historic designation but direct the County Manager to create a collaboration. Alternatively one could imagine approving the local historic designation and creating a collaboration along the lines that the HALRB has suggested. Those two framings allow more historic preservation and more conditions in the second case. But within the scope of the staff recommendations there could be and presumably would be a degree of historic preservation whether it is elements or perhaps more than just reference but not an entirely preserved building.

Ms. Liccese-Torres agreed that the intent of the second recommendation was to address, absent preservation of the entire physical building, the appropriate ways to recognize and memorialize the Wilson School whether through reproducing or recalling certain elements in the new building. The intent was beyond the physical historic district boundary itself.

Commissioner Iacomini asked when Wilson School will enter the PFRC process. Commissioner Sockwell responded in May. Commissioner Iacomini asked Mr. Prisco if APS has hardline drawings yet of the buildings they will propose to PFRC. Mr. Prisco responded there were sample drawings done just to show a school could fit on this site, but the actual design process is at the very beginning.

Commissioner Brown asked Mr. Prisco if APS has thought about how to memorialize the Wilson School in the drawings. Mr. Prisco responded they would have to put a lot of time and energy into that and it will take months. He expressed that it would be a fully incorporated part of their design process from the first to last BLPC meeting and through development of the design documents which they expect to be a one and one-half year process. APS recognizes this is an important building, but does not have funds to preserve the building. He said APS would love to preserve the building and it would be a different discussion if they had an extra \$8 million dollars in the budget.

Commissioner Brown clarified that if APS had \$8 million more, APS would preserve this building.

Mr. Prisco responded that if APS were given \$8 million tomorrow and the Planning Commission and the County Board said that because APS has the funding and make it work, we would make it work.

Building meets historic criteria

Commissioner Iacomini stated the process for establishing local historic districts has two parts. One is finding that the building is historic and the second is what to do with it. Design guidelines come forward with Arlington's local historic districts that say to the owners this is what the County expects should the structure (or land) be contemplated for alteration.

Commissioner Iacomini noted some additional information has been presented at this Planning Commission public hearing about the history of the school and its architect and that information should be captured in a written format from HALRB to the County Board. All of the information including the letters and remembrance from former pupils would be helpful.

Commissioner Iacomini said she is comfortable with the designation points brought up by HALRB, especially Criteria B, D, E, F, and K. She stated she is not as comfortable with Criterion G regarding embodying elements of design that render it significant.

Commissioner Siegel stated that HALRB said the site meets six designation criteria identified by HALRBN and asked if staff agrees or disagrees with those. Mr. Liebertz responded the staff report listed that the building meets Criteria B and K. The other criteria have merit but staff felt there was a question of building integrity and staff only wanted to list the criteria that were met for certain.

Commissioner Iacomini pointed out that more information concerning the school has come to light during the process and so HALRB had more information at its disposal than staff did at their initial evaluation. Staff noted they had not changed their initial report from a few years ago, only updated it with references to the re-numbered sections of the Zoning Ordinance. New information informed Criterion D and the school's association with the architect Charles Robinson and Woodrow Wilson.

Commissioner Cole responded that the staff report dated April 2, 2015 should reflect all the thinking up through last week and there are two criteria listed which are the ones the County Manager concluded would stand.

Ms. Liccese-Torres responded that the staff recommendation has not changed from the revised 2014 report. Staff found it met the minimum of two criteria as called out in the zoning ordinance. The HALRB, given the testimony and additional findings and testimony that they have heard, found it has met more than that and that is the opinion that they have brought forward.

Commissioner Cole asked if staff has found it met the maximum criteria, not just the minimum.

Mr. Libertz responded that in their professional opinion using the guidance from the National Park Service (NPS), staff could not say it met those criteria definitively. It is a subjective analysis and staff used architectural histories and background to come up with these criteria. They evaluated those two criteria and are sure those have met the zoning ordinance requirements. Staff did not want to open up additional discussion about the other four. There are others that may have merit, but there are two that staff definitively support as meeting the criteria.

Commissioner Sockwell stated that he thought there was a strong argument under Criterion K about whether or not that criteria was met. Mr. Liebertz responded that that the building could be restored but the practicality and cost effectiveness of that is up for a larger debate in the community. Staff does not go into a financial analysis. It is more focused on the question of whether it could be restored and does its importance suggest it should be restored. The other questions of practicality and County plans are not addressed in the designation report.

Commissioner Iacomini, for the purposes of discussion, showed two visuals to illustrate other instances of incorporating old buildings into new buildings. One includes the Wyeth hotel in New York and the other is by BIG Architects in Denmark at the Maritime Museum where they used a boat slip and did a wonderful modern addition that incorporated the historic element with the new. She noted that APS has a design team on board in BIG Architects that is highly skilled and clearly

capable of mixing historic preservation and new construction of a modern design into a finished building.

Planning Commission Motion

Commissioner Cole moved the Planning Commission recommend the County Board, with respect to County Manager's recommendation #1, deny the proposed local historic district as described in the memo of April 2, 2015; and with respect to the County Manager's recommendation #2, that the Planning Commission recommend that the County Board direct the County Manager and her staff and request the HALRB and the Arlington Public Schools collaborate to explore the most appropriate ways to memorialize and commemorate the historic and community value of the Wilson School in construction of a new facility on the existing site. Commissioner Gutshall seconded the motion.

Commissioner Iacomini moved the question be divided. Commissioner Ciotti seconded the motion. Commissioner Iacomini clarified that dividing means the first part of the main motion is discussed and voted upon, followed by the second part. The Planning Commission voted 9-0 to divide the motion. Commissioners Brown, Ciotti, Cole, Forinash, Gutshall, Iacomini, Harner, Siegel, and Sockwell all voted aye.

Commissioner Forinash took up the first main motion to support the County Manager recommendation to deny the proposed local historic designation.

Commissioner Iacomini made a substitute motion that the Planning Commission recommend to the County Board that it find the 1910 portion of the existing Wilson School building to be historic and defer consideration of the creation of a local historic district for the Ft. Meyer Heights School's original 1910 section of Wilson School for 30 days. Commissioner Ciotti seconded the motion.

Commissioner Siegel asked what the 30 days accomplishes. Commissioner Iacomini responded that instead of just doing an outright denial, it suggests finding that the Wilson School is historic which is not a designation and waiting for designation for 30 days until the collaboration called for in the second motion kicks in so there is time for people to confer.

Commissioner Siegel said she would support that because what seems illogical is that the minimum of two criteria have to be satisfied in order for historic designation to be conferred and those have been found.

Commissioner Cole responded that the Planning Commission is being asked for an opinion on whether the Planning Commission agrees with the finding.

Commissioner Siegel responded that it seems that staff and HALRB have sifted through the information and there seems to be consensus on at least two points. Commissioner Cole noted the School Board feels completely differently about it.

Commissioner Gutshall asked Commissioner Iacomini to share how 30 days might yield a different outcome.

Commissioner Iacomini responded that APS and historic preservation staff have been thinking about this and the APS representative stated this evening that if there were a mandate, they could preserve the school. APS is serious about providing a new structure, a good school, and a way to move forward with providing space for the Stratford and H-B Woodlawn programs, but there is also needs to be serious consideration on the historic preservation side and input from the design review professionals on HALRB could provide this to APS. There are ways to preserve this building that may have not been fully explored because there has not been a mandate to actually sit down and do it. The structural engineering will not be done in thirty days, but there could be parameters and goals set that could be taken forward into the BLPC and PFRC processes that could preserve at least part of Wilson School.

Commissioner Gutshall asked if it is implied in the motion that Planning Commission is recommending that the County Board find the money to fund restoration of the 1910 Wilson School building or are we intentionally being silent on the funding question.

Commissioner Iacomini responded she is intentionally being silent on the funding because the complete planning for the building hasn't been done and she is not convinced that the \$1.6 million number from HALRB for restoration is correct nor is she sure the APS projection of \$8 million is right. There is a set amount of funds allocated by APS for this particular project and APS would work within that number. If they are given a mandate to incorporate the building, they would make the numbers work.

Commissioner Harner thanked the attendees and said he would support the substitute motion. He believes APS can create a great project by tearing down Wilson School, they need the open space, and the WRAPS process has been arduous. However he believes that communities are a little more textured and varied and richer by taking into account historic resources and the work the Mr. Dudka did to show adaptive reuse is at least worth consideration which is captured by the substitute motion by attempting to take a look at how to incorporate some or all of the 1910 Fort Meyer Heights building.

Commissioner Forinash asked why the Planning Commission would separate the finding of the structure as historic and yet defer and possibly never designate a local historic district instead of deferring both.

Commissioner Iacomini responded that these questions are whether something is historic and then what to do with it. Those two things are sometimes so inextricably linked that the historicity of a building is denied just because we do not know what to do with it. Perhaps we need to acknowledge that something is historic and yet in the end, depending on what the County Board does or what comes out of the collaboration, maybe it is not saved. But at least we have not been intellectually dishonest to say it was not important. Let the County Board find it historic now although it may never get to local designation which is possible. But the discussion about the historic nature would be off the table. We keeping finding in this County that we are confused by what is historic. A single family house is designated because the owners love it but a 105 year old historically important building is not designated. Perhaps we should say it is historic and try to work on it and see where the chips fall.

Commissioner Cole said this is a difficult issue because the Ft. Meyer Heights School was an incredibly important building in the history of Arlington. Commissioner Iacomini has said yes the first question is whether this building is historic. Like a lot of other people who went to college, he went to a college with a building that was called University Hall built in 1876 and at one time the entire university was housed in the building which deteriorated over time. At one point, the university decided that the building would be replaced with another building that looks every bit exactly like the building it replaced except it is a late 20th century building as opposed to a late 19th century building. They spent the money to do it. They decided that the value of history there was very important. He does not deny the value of history in Arlington. What seems to him to be the case however is that the Wilson School building as it stands today and as it has stood since 1950 or 1963 for all intents and purposes is not the building it once was. It is a building which is a blemish and the question is whether this building is historic. It's not whether a restored building is historic.

Commissioner Cole continued, there have been lots of discussions about what is meant by historic. When the historic resources inventory first came before PC, Mike Levanthal, who at that point was leading the Historic Affairs staff, was asked what does it mean to be historic. His response was that a historic building is architecturally important and that a building in which something historic happened but the building is not architecturally important is not necessarily appropriate for a local historic designation. He used the example of the home of General John Pershing in Ft. Meyer Heights. General Pershing was the first 5-star General in the U.S. and Commander of Allied Forces in World War I. Every time he was stationed in Washington, he lived in a white wood-framed house in Ft. Meyer Heights. Mr. Levanthal said it was not quite the same as George Washington living there and the building in itself was unremarkable and it might be more appropriate to put a historic marker in front of it, but it is not clear that the building in and of itself should be preserved. No one wishes more than I that our forefathers had not done what they did in tearing off the cupola, the front, the rear staircase, the windows, and the main entrance of the Wilson School. What remains is four walls and we do not have what was once there and are deprived by it. It is a shame, but it is the truth. We should not consider whether this building is restorable and the determination of whether it is historic today which are those are severable and different questions. On the first question, he does not believe it is historic today and he will not vote to support deferral. Additionally, after lengthy conversations with APS during the WRAPS process, he is keenly aware of the timetable they are working on and maybe Commissioner Iacomini believes that a conversation can be begun held and concluded within 30 days but he does not believe this but rather that the conversation could go on for months. Conversations where people have fundamental disagreement about things are not easily resolved. And so he does not think that in 30 days the Board will have clarity from the community and will know what to say. He does not think the 30 day deferral is the way to go and is happy to comment on the conversation about how to memorialize this because he thinks it is vitally important that the presence of the school building be memorialized in a way that keeps it in our consciousness as opposed to just lip service. He will oppose the deferral.

Commissioner Iacomini stated that what exists now is the bones of what was there which happens often with historic structures and they can be brought back partially or fully, and then rehabilitated. In 1860, Mt. Vernon was dilapidated. From a group of visitors in May 1860, "This is now in dilapidated condition. The broad portico in front is propped up to keep it from falling and even the stone floor under the portico gives evidence of crumbling back to dust." But look at it today. What still now of the Wilson School is a blight because the community has let this happen, but it can be

restored. Whether or not it can be restored back to its full glory or partially restored with the portico and four brick walls incorporated into the building is for design professionals to study. Design professionals can come up with the outline pretty quickly when those who employ them give them a deadline. As a whole community and not just APS or WRAPS, we can say what is important to us and 30 more days might help but it can't hurt.

Commissioner Gutshall said he would not support the motion to defer. While there have been some strong and eloquent arguments in support of the motion, as stewards of this property, we have an obligation to look at the best outcome for the broader Arlington community, and in this case, the prevailing interest is the needs of students. The 2019 opening date makes introduction of any delay inadvisable. The current condition of the building together with the likelihood that the building would need to be relocated based on the numerous goals wrestled with by the community in the WRAPS process, essentially requires a complete reconstruction of the building. It may be a worthy goal but a locally designated historic district is not the most appropriate tool to achieve that. He agreed that the Wilson School meets at least two of the criteria, but finding the school historic is not the issue. The issue is what is to be done with that, and the local historic district is not the right thing for the community at this point.

Commissioner Harner said that he supports Commissioner Iacomini's motion because it will allow for APS to work with HALRB and the Community to see if a satisfactory solution could be found, nothing more and nothing less. He thinks there should be more than 30 days. He expressed concern about the interpretation of what constitutes a historic resource and the NPS guidelines, and that it is important to be careful with the strict definition about what is historic and what can be designated. With the sense of the property having the merit to be designated and the idea of at least taking a look, it may be that it doesn't work out. It may be that APS simply cannot accommodate all of the tough constraints that the WRAPS group has already struggled with, but he would still support the motion.

Commissioner Ciotti expressed support for the motion and stated that the past is cannibalized at our peril and there needs to be a pause in order to figure out a path forward with how to blend the old with the new.

Commissioner Sockwell said he would not support the motion because although he agrees that the original 1910 structure is a beautiful structure, the reality is that the timeline is not working, APS is stuck with a sub-par facility that sits on Quinn Street, it doesn't seem that funding for restoration will come about and APS is under an extreme deadline to find capacity.

The substitute motion failed 4-5 with Commissioners Ciotti, Harner, Iacomini and Siegel in favor, and Commissioners Brown, Cole, Forinash, Gutshall and Sockwell opposed.

The Planning Commission voted 5-4 in favor of the main motion with Commissioners Brown, Cole, Forinash, Gutshall and Sockwell in favor and Commissioners Ciotti, Harner, Iacomini and Siegel against.

The Planning Commission then took up the second main motion to direct the County Manager or request Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board (HALRB), Historic Preservation Program

staff, and Arlington Public Schools (APS) staff collaborate to explore the most appropriate ways to memorialize and commemorate the historical and community value of the Wilson School in the construction of a new school facility on the existing site.

Commissioner Iacomini made a substitute motion that Planning Commission recommend to the County Board that they direct County staff, including Historic Preservation staff, to work with APS staff for 30 days to produce options for the retention and/or incorporation of all or part of the 1910 Wilson building into the new school to be built at the APS Wilson Boulevard site. Commissioner Ciotti seconded the motion.

Mr. Prisco commented that there is a finite amount of money for architect fees allocated in the APS budget and if there is a requirement for the architect to do a study that may not otherwise be required, it would be \$100-\$200k coming out of the budget over that 30-60 day period.

Commissioner Iacomini suggested that design money spent figuring out how to memorialize the school could be channeled into trying to keep part of the building.

The substitute motion failed 4-5 with Commissioners Ciotti, Harner, Iacomini and Siegel in favor and Commissioners Brown, Cole, Forinash, Gutshall and Sockwell against.

The Planning Commission voted to support the main motion 6-3 with Commissioners Brown, Cole, Forinash, Gutshall, Siegel and Sockwell in favor and Commissioners Ciotti, Harner, and Iacomini against.

Respectfully Submitted,
Arlington County Planning Commission

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christopher J. Forinash". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and "F".

Christopher J. Forinash
Planning Commission Chair

To: Arlington Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC)
From: Stan Karson (President RAFOM)
Date: March 30, 2015
Subject: Wilson School Historic Designation (April 1, 2015 LRPC Meeting)

As one of the twelve community residents who, in a letter to the HALRB in November, asked it to recommend historical designation for the Wilson School, I hope that the LRPC members will find this background helpful as they consider the issue Tuesday night.

Our area from Rosslyn to Courthouse no longer has any building, public or private, remotely close to the vintage and history of the 1910 Wilson School, which was designed by the preeminent architect, Charles M. Robinson. It seems to us that long range planning would embrace Arlington's heritage and protect this building as a long term cultural asset for the community and the County.

LRPC members have undoubtedly heard about the frequent visits of President Woodrow Wilson and his wife, Edith, to the school to chat with the students. They may be aware too that the School Board in 1926 voted with much enthusiasm to rename the school in honor of the late President, an action that his widow endorsed at the time.

It is true that, in a **short sighted decision**, the School Board has voted against historical designation of the Wilson School. However, the School Board is **not the owner but a steward** of the property, which truly belongs to all Arlington taxpayers.

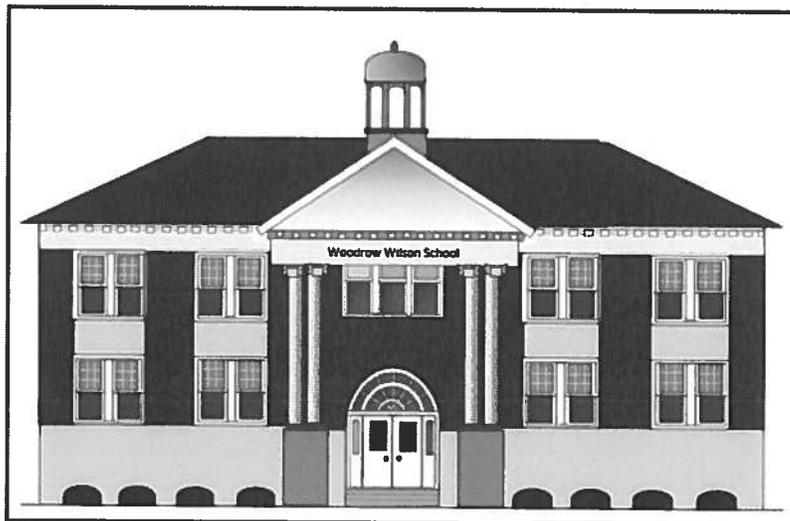
We (**and the entire HALRB**) feel strongly that a restored 1910 Wilson School, protected under Zoning Ordinance 31A, can be successfully integrated into the design of the new school.

To this end, we have asked the School Board Chairman to authorize a meeting between its contract architectural firm and the architects on the HALRB to consider the appropriate design for such a structure. The HALRB Design Review Committee has provided a similar service for many historic structures in Arlington.

In short, we hope very much that the LRPC will send a positive recommendation to the Planning Commission on the HALRB historical designation of the 1910 Wilson School.

Stan Karson

President, RAFOM





**THE PRESIDENT
WOODROW WILSON HOUSE**

January 20, 2015

Ms. Cynthia Liccese-Torres
Program Coordinator
Historic Preservation Program
Arlington County, Virginia
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 700
Arlington, Virginia 22201

Re: Woodrow Wilson School – Historic Designation

Dear Ms. Liccese-Torres:

I write to support the pending historic designation of the Woodrow Wilson School site by the Arlington County Historic Affairs and Landmark Review Board. I ask that you please convey my sentiments to the members of the Board.

The President Woodrow Wilson House is a site of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in Washington, DC. This home was completed in 1916 and occupied by President and Mrs. Edith Wilson when they left the White House in 1921. President Wilson died in 1924. Edith Wilson lived here until 1961, leaving the home to the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The House been a historic house museum and monument to President Wilson for over 50 years.

Let me address two issues specifically: The value of historic preservation and the legacy of President Woodrow Wilson. "Historic preservation," as you know, embraces a range of uses and adaptive reuses of properties in order to enrich and preserve the character and nature of a community. The Woodrow Wilson School was built about a century ago and has achieved a cherished place in the history of Arlington and the memories of its residents. As a historic place, the Woodrow Wilson School is a unique landmark and community focus. It provides open space and relief from the sometimes relentless march of modern architecture.

Woodrow Wilson was one of the U.S. Presidents born in the Commonwealth of Virginia. President Wilson enjoyed "motoring" in his automobiles, and it is touching that Arlington school children would recognize and excitedly greet him when he would be driven through their community during and following his time in office. At the end of World War I, President Wilson imagined the world at peace and proposed the League of Nations to achieve that vision. This is a legacy that the citizens of Arlington, and especially the school children there, can value. This is history worth preserving.

If you or the Board have any questions, please let me know.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert A. Enholm". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Robert A. Enholm
Executive Director

To: LRPC from Joseph DeBor (Former HALRB member)

Arlington County preserves the physical history of its past for future generations. This includes a native American site in Potomac Overlook Park dating as far back as 13,000 years ago, the CF Smith civil war fort, and 36 local historic districts protected under Zoning Ordinance 31A.

In 1926 the School Board voted unanimously to name the school after Nobel Peace Prize Winner Woodrow Wilson because of his leadership as president and his friendship with Arlington public school students. Mrs. Wilson concurred.

In January, the HALRB, appointed by the County Board, and consisting of architects, lawyers and citizens, voted unanimously to designate the Wilson School as a local historic district. In addition, the National Trust for Historic Preservation Director of the Wilson Museum in DC documented his support the preservation of the school.

Since the exterior walls and roof are mostly intact, it is feasible to rehabilitate the 1910 school in accordance with the US Secretary of Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Historic Buildings. The rehabilitated school could provide 8 beautiful classrooms. Cost would be about \$1.6 million for exterior rehabilitation. Interior estimated at ~ \$<1 million.

The exterior rehab could be done separately and in parallel with the new construction. The HALRB and county Staff are here to support the School Board throughout the process. The LRPC has a unique opportunity to preserve our Arlington heritage for the next hundred years...



Gizele Johnson

From: Tom Dickinson <tomwd3@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 06, 2015 6:24 PM
To: Gizele Johnson
Subject: Save Wilson School!

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hello Arlington County Planning Commission:

I am writing to strongly encourage you to approve saving the Wilson School Building, and not allow it to be demolished.

Demolition is painful and ugly. Go take a look at the Ballston campus of Marymount University right now. This is a building that had many good years of life left in it; could and should have been saved. It had a unique architectural presence, that will never be replaced. It was an identifiable local landmark. It was a part of Arlington.

The Wilson School, even as modified, will attract and enhance economic tourism revenues; people will come here to see an old building still alive through adaptive re-use. No one would make a new glass and concrete structure a tourist destination. History is a huge revenue generator in Virginia, especially historic buildings that still stand!

Please do not pass up this extremely rare chance to preserve a piece of early 20th century Arlington. Too often the attitude in Arlington is to ignore our rich historical past. We bulldoze our way into the future, but then have almost no sense of where we've come from, what we were, how we got to where we are.

Buildings like Wilson School tell this story and keep us on course for a better more productive future, since we can see, feel, touch and experience the essence of what made Arlington great and progressive 100 years ago.

Please preserve the Wilson School. This is a very rare opportunity for you all to put your personal stamp on the importance of preserving Arlington's rich architectural and historical fabric, and a nod to the importance of education!

Thank you very much.

Tom Dickinson
Past President, Arlington Historical Society, 2010-2012
Board of Directors, Arlington Historical Society, 2003-2013
Founding Director, Preservation Arlington 2012
Board Member, Arlington Heritage Alliance 2002-12
Member, Arlington-Jamestown Committee 2005-2009
Member, Arlington Civil War Sesquicentennial Committee 2009-Present

Subj: **The Wilson School**
Date: 3/6/2015 1:01:29 P.M. Eastern Standard Time
From: holleranbrownre7@yahoo.com
To: stan1@rafom.org
March 6, 2015

Radnor/Fort Myer Heights Civic Association
Attn: Stanley Karson / President
Re: The Wilson School

Dear Sir:

I am writing on behalf of my 85 year old mother, Harriet Turner Holleran, who grew up on North Colonial Terrace in Arlington and attended the Wilson School from 1936 to 1942. She would be writing this herself but for a recent slip on the ice which left her with sprained wrists. She was very upset to learn of the Counties' plans to tear down the school and would like you to know that your efforts in support of a historical designation for the school are much appreciated and she hopes some way is found to preserve the school in some form.

My mother has wonderful memories of the school and its teachers. She remembers a Miss Powlan from first grade and a Miss Cary from sixth grade who was also the principle of the school. She remembers that some time in either 1940 or 1941 that the school installed an electric bell. She remembers this because she and another student, who had watches, were the first to use the bell to signal the start of classes. Apparently before that Miss Cary would walk around the school-yard ringing a hand held bell for up to five minutes to call the students into class.

I'm sure my mother believes that in preserving the Wilson School in some form would not only preserve the historical importance of the building but keep alive such nostalgic memories of a simpler and more community centric time. We wish you good luck in your important endeavors.

Sincerely,

Rose Holleran Brown
On behalf of Harriet Turner Holleran
6811 Barnack Drive
Springfield, Virginia 22152

Per US, Secretary of Interior Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings



Exterior Rehabilitation of 1601 Wilson of the stand-alone 1910 structure.

Cost Estimate

Demolition/Removal of rear & side additions	200,000
(Note: ½ price since the 1910 structure will not be demolished)	
Masonry repair and replacement	226,000
Wood repair and replacement	190,000
Metal repair and replacement	70,000
Roof (Portico / Rear Reconstruction, new shingles)	240,000
Windows 64 (3'x 6') double hung windows) remove/replace	100,000
Entrances (Remove / Reconstruct) front and rear entrances	190,000
Structural Systems (Portico with Corinthian Columns)	218,000
Spaces/Features/Finishes (Cupula & missing historic features)	55,000
Mechanical Systems	20,000
Site (Design front streetscape /rear open view per 1926 APS letter)	47,000
Setting (Existing setting)	0
Energy (Replace HVAC)	60,000
New Addition (N/A)	0
Accessibility (Wilson Blvd and rear per Arlington Code)	50,000
Health and Safety (Per Arlington Code)	<u>50,000</u>
<u>Total Exterior Historic Renovation</u>	<u>\$ 1,626,000</u>