

From: Gabriel Cheung, NCARB, LEED-AP, ALEP
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To: Department of Planning & Inspections
City of Dover
PO BOX 475
Dover, DE 19903

Date: September 13, 2024

Re: **Legislative Hall Addition – Design Narrative**

The project involves the renovation and expansion of the existing State of Delaware Legislative Hall building. Originally constructed in 1932, the existing building is three (3) stories in height above grade and serves as the capitol building for the State of Delaware. Housing the chambers of the Delaware General Assembly, the project includes three (3) stories of new building area for approximately 16,000 square feet per story for a total building area of approximately 133,400 square feet of building area. The project includes an additional 12,000 square feet of existing building renovation area.

The expansion area features assembly committee, hearing and meeting rooms at the Ground and 1st Floor levels serving the existing Senate and House Chambers, including the creation of an open court area and secure entry Lobby. The 2nd Floor is limited to office use activity with open workspaces and clerical support areas as an extension of the existing building office use activity. The addition also contains an atrium spanning three (3) stories, connecting the Ground through 2nd Floor levels. There is an interior courtyard that is accessible from the 1st Floor.

Site

A new plaza is proposed in front of the Legislative Hall Addition, completing the semi-circular loop of Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. The plaza is designed with three distinct levels: the main public entrance, the upper plaza, and the lower plaza/monument walk.

The main public entrance, located at the center of the half-circle, serves as the focal point of the plaza. Monumental stairs lead to the entrance, with ramps on either side and brick planters filled with shrubs and trees in front. The entrance features three doors, with the central door being the most prominent, adorned with decorative elements, and acting as the primary access to the building's 1st Floor.

At the base of the monumental stairs lies the upper plaza, a versatile open space designed to accommodate a variety of gatherings and events, such as inaugurations and press conferences, with the main entrance serving as a podium or stage.

The lower plaza connects directly to the sidewalk along Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. This space will feature the relocated Revolutionary War Monument, "Delaware Continentals" Statue, at its center, while the other four monuments will be placed within surrounding green spaces. The walkway affectionally named "monument walk" provides a walking path connecting the monuments. The area will be enhanced with landscaping, shaded walkways, and benches, creating a welcoming environment for visitors to relax and enjoy the monuments.

The sidewalk and plaza will be paved with brick to match the existing sidewalks in the Legislative Mall area. Red pavers will dominate, with accents of white to visually break up larger areas.

Two new crosswalks are proposed between Legislative Hall and the parking garage and Delaware Archives Building. The crosswalk will be level with the street and marked with brick pavers, adhering to DelDOT standards for materials and signage. For additional safety, Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB) will be installed at these crosswalks. Brick planter boxes with matching coping will line both sides of Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., containing trees, shrubs, and low-growing plants. Special care will be taken in selecting plants to ensure they do not obstruct visibility for drivers or pedestrians.

Monuments

There are five (5) memorials and monuments that will be carefully removed, stored, and reinstalled as part of the new plaza.

1. Revolutionary War Monument “Delaware Continentals” Statue
2. Dover Light Infantry Monument
3. Middle East & Afghanistan Conflicts Monument
4. Medal of Honor Monument
5. World War II Monument

Façade

The proposed addition is conceived as a seamless extension of the existing building, thoughtfully designed to blend with the original structure in terms of materials, style, and architectural detailing. The intention is to maintain visual coherence while enhancing the building's overall functionality and capacity.

The architectural style of the addition mirrors that of the original structure, maintaining the same proportions, rhythm, and aesthetics. The addition will carry forward the existing building's use of symmetrical windows, gable roofs, and brick chimneys preserving its historical integrity or stylistic intent. Key features such as window shapes, mullion patterns, and keystones will be replicated to sustain uniformity across the façade.

The addition will adhere to the same dimensional standards as the existing building, ensuring that it integrates seamlessly into the existing form. The overall height, depth, and width will be proportionally scaled to maintain balance and avoid overshadowing the original structure. Rooflines will align precisely, continuing the established roof pitch and eave heights to preserve the cohesive silhouette.

Cornices, moldings, and other decorative trims will be meticulously replicated in the addition, ensuring continuity in detailing. The new cornices will match the profile, depth, and articulation of the existing ones, providing a unified aesthetic. Where appropriate, any distinctive architectural moldings will be carried through to the new structure, preserving the integrity of the building's design language.

Roof

The addition will continue the hipped roof design around the entire perimeter of the building. The roofing material will be lightweight concrete tile, matching the material used in the recent roof replacement. An internal gutter system runs along the roof's perimeter, directing water to a rain collector box and downspout. The dormers will be finished with concrete tile siding, a flat seam copper roof, and matching trim. Rooftop balustrades will adorn the sloped roof, blending seamlessly with the existing structure. The

flat section at the top of the hipped roof will be covered with a single-ply membrane. A sunken flat roof houses the chiller, which will remain hidden from street view and surrounding buildings.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gabriel Cheung', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Gabriel Cheung, NCARB, LEED-AP, ALEP

Applicant: Legislative Hall Building Addition

Variance Request #1: Variance from City of Dover Zoning Ordinance, Article 4, Section 4.15

Variance Requested: Variance from the required 10-foot front yard setback for the Institutional and Office (IO) zoning district.

Project Background Information: The proposed project is located within the Historic District, City of Dover along Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard S/ Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard N.

A variance is being requested to allow the building addition to encroach into the required 10-foot front yard setback. The addition is designed to enhance the operational capacity of the Legislative Hall while maintaining architectural continuity with the existing structure.

The variance is for an encroachment of 6.7 ft into the required 10 ft setback to accommodate the addition's layout and functional needs. The encroachment is necessary due to existing site constraints, including the limited available space and the need to accommodate the functional requirements of the addition. This variance will enable the building to fulfill its intended function effectively, with the encroachment being minimal and having no significant impact on adjacent properties or the overall character of the area.