

B E R O A R C H I T E C T U R E P L L C

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE:

July 30, 2010

TO:

Kimberly A. Williams
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FROM:

Katie Eggers Comeau, Architectural Historian

RE:

Jane A. Delano Home

PROJECT:

Collegetown Terrace
Ithaca, New York

PROJECT NO:

09130

The following information is provided to correct and supplement the historical background provided for the Jane A. Delano Home at 113-115 Valentine Place, and is intended to be included in the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Collegetown Terrace project. We appreciate the work of commenters, particularly Mary Tomlan, the ILPC, and John Schroeder, whose research augmented the information provided in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

The north section of 113 Valentine Place was a single-family, Colonial Revival-style house built in approximately the first decade of the 20th century. The house was purchased from Mary and Walter Williams in 1922 to provide additional housing for nearby Ithaca City Hospital's nurses and nursing students.

Prior to purchase of the Williams property, nursing students were housed "in rooms all around East Hill." (Charles D. Bostwick, "Dear Sir" fundraising letter, 31 May 1922, Ithaca City Hospital file, History Center in Tompkins County.) The house was remodeled and named in honor of Jane A. Delano, a native of nearby Montour Falls (Schuyler County), who was one of the most prominent nursing advocates and educators in the United States from 1902 to 1919. Delano died in 1919, prior to acquisition of the Williams house, so naming of the new nurses' home was likely intended as a memorial to a nationally significant figure with upstate New York roots.

Even after the former Williams property was purchased and remodeled, providing accommodations for about 20 young women, hospital administrators considered the housing situation for nurses unsatisfactory. In addition to the Williams property, nurses were housed in a rented portion of the Van Rensselaer house at 811 East State Street, and in a house southeast of the hospital; conditions were crowded in all three locations. In the 1925 Annual Report of the Ithaca City Hospital, the need for additional nurses' quarters where all nurses and students could be housed in one building was mentioned repeatedly. The report noted that the nursing school had developed an excellent reputation, but many qualified applicants could not be accepted due to a lack of housing. As hospital superintendent Genevieve Clifford stated in the Annual Report,

“A young woman who enters a school of nursing is entitled first to a real educational opportunity and secondly to proper living conditions. These of course should be given in return for her services to patients in the Hospital ... The quality of nursing care you and your friends receive while in the Hospital or in your home depends to a great extent upon the kind of women we can attract to our Hospital. We must have proper housing conditions to secure desirable students.”

The improvement and expansion of the Jane A. Delano Home as a consolidated location for the housing of all nurses and nursing students was considered one of the most significant needs of the hospital, on par with or more important than other requirements such as construction of a maternity ward and a new heating plant (1920s fundraising flyers, hospital annual reports, Archives of the History Center in Tompkins County). The 1925 Annual Report included an illustration of a proposed addition to the Williams house designed by Gibb and Waltz, one of Ithaca’s most prominent architectural firms, who had also designed the hospital building. Between the time of the 1925 report and construction of the addition in 1929, the firm of Gibb & Waltz dissolved and Ornan H. Waltz died. Architect J. Lakin Baldrige was selected to prepare the final design, which resembled the Gibb and Waltz proposal in its footprint and massing but differed in style and details.

According to a 1973 newspaper article, nurses were required to live in the Jane A. Delano Home until 1947 ([Martin Tinker], “Hospitals Here Tried to Suit Medical Needs,” *Ithaca Journal* 6 January 1973). The hospital relocated in 1958, and the Jane A. Delano Home was converted for use as a men’s dormitory for Ithaca College.

The building retains integrity of association with its role as a dormitory for nurses, nursing students, and administrators of the Ithaca City Hospital.