



Marist Hall Landmark Application Response

**ANC5A Committee
June 25, 2025**

Introduction

Dedicated to advancing the dialogue between faith and reason, The Catholic University of America seeks to discover and impart truth through excellence in teaching and research, all **in service to the Church, the nation, and the world.**



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Introduction

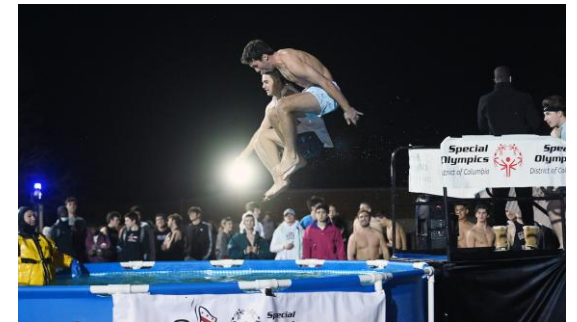
Catholic University scientists, engineers, nurses, philosophers, theologians, historians, architects, social workers, musicians, artists, lawyers, and scholars in all fields embrace both reason and faith as we apply the resources of Catholic intellectual tradition to **help solve the problems of contemporary life and enrich the culture around us.**

Catholic University students uniquely benefit from learning outside our classrooms, with **service and engagement opportunities in ANC 5A and surrounding Brookland neighborhoods**, throughout Washington, DC, the greater DMV region, across the nation and around the world.



Introduction

- The legacy of Catholic University is closely associated with the **history of Washington, DC** and our **Brookland neighborhood**.
- Catholic University's commitment to thoughtful **preservation and stewardship of our campus resources** is deeply rooted in our Catholic tradition.
- Our campus resources are enjoyed by our university community and **shared with our neighbors and guests**.



Catholic University's Commitment to Preservation

- **There are important historic resources on campus, and the University is committed to their care and preservation.**



Father O'Connell Hall, originally constructed 1914, major renovation 2013-2015



Maloney Hall, originally constructed 1917, major renovation 2017-2019



Heritage Hall space in Father O'Connell Hall



Della Ratta Auditorium in Maloney Hall

Catholic University's Commitment to Continued Stewardship

- Investment in new development purposefully reflects the campus context and University values



Garvey Hall Dining Commons, 2022



West Campus Solar Array, 2024



Conway School of Nursing 2024

Marist Hall Landmark Application: Background and Context

- Marist Hall landmark application was filed by the DC Preservation League (DCPL) in November 2022 **without substantive consultation with the University.**
 - October 14, 2022 Letter of Intent to file the application was sent to “whom it may concern” at the University
 - Reasonable time for review, due diligence, response, and engagement was not afforded before the application was submitted to the DC Historic Preservation Office
- A **broader conversation** is necessary to reach fully informed conclusions with respect to Marist Hall.
- Campus Plan 2027-2042: Appropriate consideration of historic resources is a key element of developing the upcoming renewal of our existing 2012-2027 Campus Plan.
- Catholic working closely with DC Historic Preservation Office to evaluate campus historic resources and develop a Campus Historic District to recognize notable buildings

Catholic University Historic District Does Not Include Marist

Key
1. Gibbons Hall
2. Albert Hall
3. Graduate Hall
4. Apostolic Mission House
5. Maloney Chemical Laboratory
6. B. & O. "University" Station
7. Phi Kappa Fraternity House
8. National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception
9. Stollen Memorial Library
10. St. Thomas' Hall
11. Gymnasium
12. Aeronaustic Laboratory
13. Mechanical Engineering Machine Shop
14. Mechanical Engineering Building and Power Plant
15. Stadium
16. St. John's Hall
17. McMahon Hall
18. Music Building
19. Caldwell Hall
20. Salvus Regina Building
21. Priest-Professors' Buildings

Location of Marist Hall
(outside University
property lines in 1939)



Marist Hall, 1900



Marist Hall, 2025

- Marist Hall is not within the historic core of campus and will not be included in the campus historic district
- Marist Hall was not constructed by Catholic and **served no role** in the University's establishment
- Not acquired by Catholic until the mid-1970s

Figure 10. Map of the campus, 1939. ("The Catholic University of America: A Half Century of Progress," 32. On file at Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, Washingtoniana Division.)

Marist Hall Does Not Meet Landmark Criteria

- **National Criteria A** refers to a property that is “associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history”
 - The DCPL nomination argues that Marist should be designated due to its association with the development of “Little Rome” ; but **Marist was not part of the original Catholic University campus** and there are several more noteworthy buildings throughout “Little Rome”.
- **National Criteria C** refers to a property that “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master. Or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction”
 - Marist is not one of architect Lemuel W. Norris’ more notable buildings and **would not rise to the level of the “work of a master”** under the national criteria.

Marist Hall Does Not Meet Landmark Criteria

- Marist is prominently sited at one of the highest elevations on campus – but its **position and orientation have no direct relationship to any other noteworthy campus building.**
- Upon closer inspection, an **uninspiring architectural composition is revealed.**
- Other notable and more well-executed Richardson Romanesque buildings in the District have been appropriately preserved and protected.
- Importantly, the **question of whether the building retains its structural integrity is paramount** to an evaluation of the landmark application.
 - Dating back to the 1930s, the walls required supplemental reinforcing with the addition of tie rods and star anchor bolts.
 - Given the **considerable damage** that was sustained from the 2011 earthquake and other deleterious conditions, **its structural integrity is fundamentally compromised.**
- For these reasons, **we do not believe Marist Hall warrants designation.**

Marist Hall: History of Unsuccessful Stabilization Efforts



The University has made **multiple substantial and costly investments** in the building, including extensive efforts to stabilize the structure in 2012 following the 2011 earthquake. The building continues to move and crack.

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Marist Hall: History of Unsuccessful Stabilization Efforts



- The structural integrity of the building **foundation, structure and facades** is extremely compromised mainly due to continuing fluctuations in subsurface clay soil and varying underground water conditions
- A summary of structural reports has been provided to the ANC 5A Commissioners



Conclusion

- Through careful consultation with recognized experts in Historic Preservation, **we do not believe that Marist Hall satisfies the required criteria set forth in the District's preservation regulations.**
- DCPL's unilateral action to seek landmark designation of Marist Hall – without consent from or collaboration with the University, and lacking an understanding of critical contextual circumstances – **will not serve the University, the community, or the District of Columbia.**
- We seek ANC 5A's support for our opposition to the DCPL's Marist Hall landmark application.
- Catholic University looks forward to **continuing to serve as an active steward of the rich historical fabric of this diverse neighborhood** for generations to come and **prioritize our investments in the most significant buildings in our historic core where public engagement with our mission is most concentrated.**