






# NATIONAL PARK SEMINARY

National Park Seminary was a resort hotel from 1887 to 1893, a school for young women from 1894 to 1942, and a U.S. Army medical facility from 1942 to 2004. It is now a unique residential community.






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Guests at The Forest Inn, students at National Park Seminary, and recovering wounded soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center all enjoyed the tranquil beauty of the surrounding forest. The school's name evoked the famous Rock Creek Park that is only a short walk through the woods. Canoeing, horseback riding and hiking were an important part of Seminary life.

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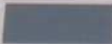

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The classical style of the gymnasium, built in 1907, was reinforced by the addition of a columned porch in 1925. Its basketball court, tiled swimming pool, bowling alley, solarium, and nearby tennis courts, ball fields, and riding rings provided a recreational balance to the academic and social life of the Seminary students. Later the gym served as therapy and entertainment for recuperating soldiers.

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

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The Aloha cottage was built in 1898 as a residence for the Seminary's founders, John and Vesta Cassedy, and was later enlarged for use as a dormitory. Its name reflects the spirit with which they welcomed students into their home. The distinctive Porch of the Maidens with its row of caryatids, female figures used as columns, was added in 1923-24.

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Seminary students belonged to sororities that held their meetings and social events in small, uniquely designed clubhouses. Eight sorority houses were built between 1898 and 1905, three of which are visible here. Starting on the left, the first house built was the American Bungalow in 1898 for Alpha Epsilon Pi. The Dutch Windmill was built in 1899 for Kappa Delta Phi. The Colonial House, built in 1903, was used as the clubhouse for Phi Delta Psi.

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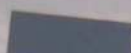

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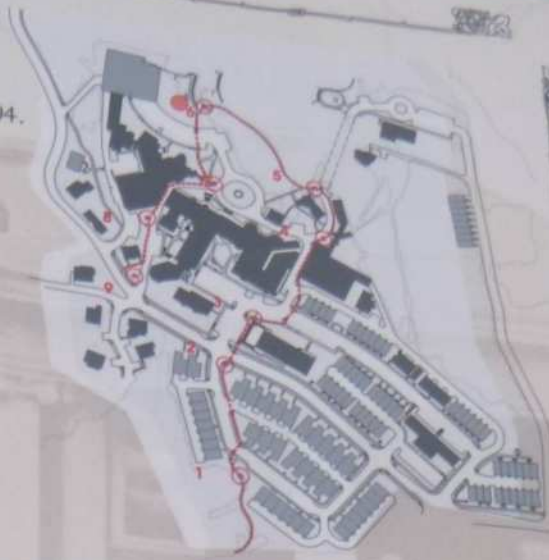


Hotel guests and Seminary students arrived at the Forest Glen railroad station and entered the campus by one of several bridges across the glen. The natural beauty of the glen was enhanced with stone paths, stairways, and a spring. The bridges were removed and part of the glen was lost when the Capital Beltway was built in the early 1960s. The Italian Villa, a dormitory built in 1906-07, and the English Castle, built in 1904 for the Pi Beta Nu sorority, can be seen across the glen.

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A panorama of five connected buildings reflects the expansion of the Seminary. The turreted President's House was built as a residence for Seminary President James Ament in 1918. The Senior House dormitory was built in 1900, Senior Annex in 1907, and the columned Music Hall in 1926. Missing from the panorama is the Odeon, the Seminary's classical theater used also for graduation ceremonies. Built in 1901, it was destroyed by arson in 1993.

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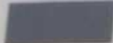
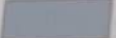
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The Forest Inn was built in 1887 as a summer resort hotel. In 1894 it was leased and later purchased by John and Vesta Cassedy to be the National Park Seminary for young women. The hotel building became known as Main and was expanded several times, providing space for classrooms, dormitory rooms, and school offices. When the Walter Reed Army Hospital acquired the Seminary in 1942, it used Main for administrative offices and convalescent wards.

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The massive Ament Hall, built in 1927, contains an elegant ballroom inside. Seminary students used the ballroom for daily dance practice and frequent formal dances. After 1942, the Army used it as a patient recreation center. The nearby chapel was built in 1898. The three sorority clubhouses visible here are the Japanese Bungalow built in 1899 for the Chi Omicron Pi sorority, the Japanese Pagoda built in 1905 for the Chi Psi Upsilon sorority, and the Swiss Chalet built in 1899 for the Zeta Eta Theta sorority.

