



Entrance façade of Slowe Hall.

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Chapter Design Award in Historic Resources/Preservation

Slowe Hall

Washington, DC

Bonstra | Haresign ARCHITECTS

Landscape Architect: STUDIO39

Structural Engineer: FMC & Associates, LLC

MEP Engineer: SAH Design Group, INC

Civil Engineer: CAS Engineering DC, LLC

General Contractor: UIP General Contracting (UIPGC)

Slowe Hall, a three-story building in Washington's LeDroit Park neighborhood, was originally built in 1942 and housed single Black women working for the US government during World War II. The building, with 306 single-room units, was designed by Hilyard Robinson, a notable Black architect, and named for Lucy Diggs Slowe, the first female dean of women at Howard University.

Howard acquired the building after the war for use as student housing, but in 2017 made a strategic decision to bring its students closer to campus and leverage outdated assets. The university requested that Slowe Hall and one other building (Carver Hall, covered on the next page) be adapted to modern residential use.

Bonstra | Haresign's design for Slowe Hall produced a building with 101 affordable apartments. "Turning the buildings' narrow footprints—filled with single rooms and communal public spaces—into spacious, light-filled apartments required inventive interior reconfigurations," the firm said. The project's biggest challenge was addressing the first level's nine changes in floor height—a problem that the firm solved by infilling floors and replacing mechanical lifts with ramps.

The building's "strong presence on the street was preserved and enhanced through period-appropriate replacement windows and doors, exterior accent lighting, and repairs to exterior brick masonry and cast stone," the architects said. The project "satisfies a need for moderately priced housing in a walkable area, preserves a neighborhood fixture, and provides a sustainable future for a building with a meaningful past. The renovation of this historically and culturally significant building preserves a marker of both segregation and achievement."

The project was previously covered in the Spring 2022 issue of **ARCHITECTUREDC**.