

COMMISSION ACTION

NCPC File No. 6479



SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
PATENT OFFICE BUILDING
COURTYARD LANDSCAPE
G, F, 7th, and 9th Streets, NW

Submitted by the Smithsonian Institution

April 6, 2006

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of preliminary site development plans pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d).

Commission Action

The Commission:

Approves the preliminary site development plans for the reconstruction of the courtyard landscape, with the exception of the catering benches and the configuration of the water scrim, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 21.00(38.00)41998.

Disapproves the catering benches as designed and located, and recommends that the primary catering utilities and storage be removed from the courtyard.

Recommends that the water scrim be redesigned to be more responsive to the “design character and setting” of the courtyard as a central gathering space, softening the scrim’s dominant linearity across the courtyard floor in order to improve its compatibility with the courtyard facades and spatial proportions.

Concurs with the Smithsonian that the historic courtyard fountains are in fair to poor condition, that they will not be restored and reinstalled to working order either in the courtyard or in the lawn as Secretary Small committed to doing in June 2005, and that, in partial mitigation for the loss of the historic courtyard, they instead be treated as artifacts and interpreted in the permanent exhibit on the history of the building in a gallery inside the F Street entrance.

Requires that, prior to final submission of the courtyard landscape, the Smithsonian develop a plan for the introduction and interpretation of the historic fountains in the museum exhibit and related publications.

Deborah B. Young
Secretary to the National Capital Planning Commission