

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

NCPC File No. 6665



OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
PERIMETER SECURITY
Theodore Roosevelt Building
1900 E Street, NW
Washington, DC

Submitted by the General Services Administration

April 27, 2006

Abstract

The General Services Administration is submitting concept site and building plans for perimeter security for the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Theodore Roosevelt Building located at 1900 E Street, NW in Washington, DC.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

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

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

Comments favorably on the concept site and building plans for perimeter security for the Office of Personnel Management, Theodore Roosevelt Building as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.35(38.40)42024, security **except** for:

- The 30 foot high intake enclosures flanking the south entrance.
- The fence and gate elements crossing the south entrance plaza at Virginia Avenue.
- The placement of the security elements crossing the north entrance plaza at E Street.

Recommends that GSA use the Decision Support Tool developed by GSA's Office of the Chief Architect to develop the Design Basis Tactics and Level of Protection as recommended in the Interagency Security Committee (ISC) Security Design Criteria for New Federal Office

Buildings and Major Modernization Projects, and include this information with the supplemental security information.

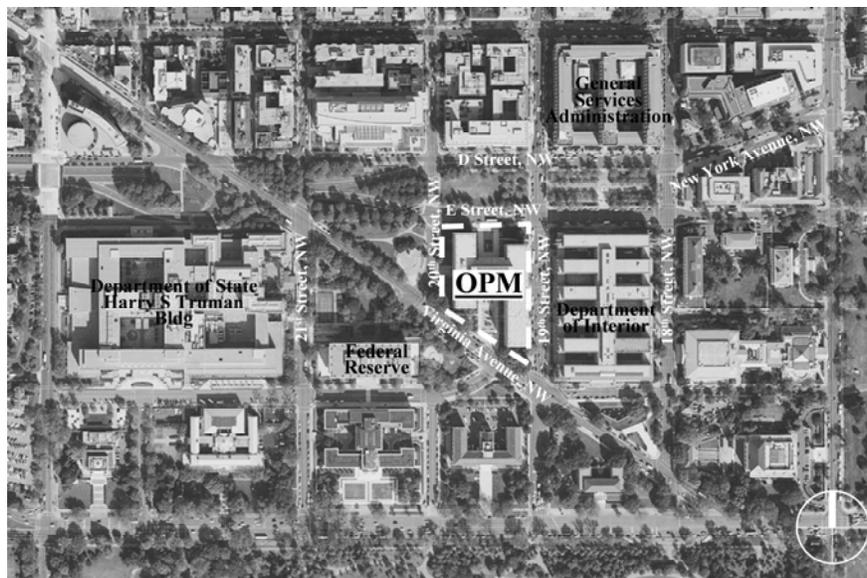
Recommends that in further development of the design, the General Services Administration (GSA):

- Refine the design of the proposed air intake enclosures flanking the south entrance so that they are visually and physically integrated into the architecture of the building design.
- Modify the design of the proposed security elements crossing the south entrance plaza on Virginia Avenue to accommodate visual and public access through the use of elements such as bollards and planters, and eliminate the triangular planter.
- Replace the proposed bollards located in the green space of the north entrance plaza on E Street with benches or relocate the line of proposed plaza benches and bollards north to align with the back edge of the raised planters.
- Ensure that perimeter fence along Virginia Avenue is designed to protect the roots of existing trees.
- Replace the proposed security wall along 20th Street with a fence wall.
- Integrate the proposed security wall along 19th Street into the landscape through the use of backfilling and landscaping.
- Provide multiple openings through proposed continuous perimeter barriers to allow public access into the building yard.

Advises the applicant that the project as proposed does not meet any of the Commission's criteria for categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act, in which case an environmental assessment may be required to accompany the preliminary submission.

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

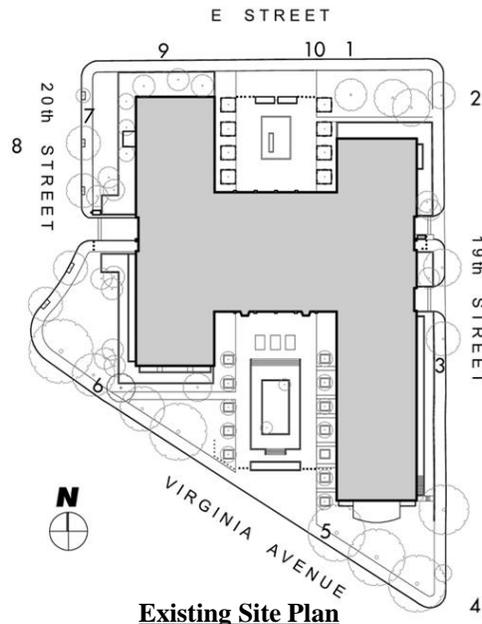


Aerial

Site

The Office of Personnel Management, Theodore Roosevelt Building is located at 1900 E Street, NW. The building occupies the entire block and is bounded by E Street to the north, 19th Street to the east, Virginia Avenue to the south and 20th Street to the west. OPM is located four blocks west from the White House and two blocks north from the Mall. Its immediate neighbors are the Department of Interior to the east, the Department of the Interior South Building (Bureau of Indian Affairs) to the south, the Federal Reserve to the southwest, and the State Department to the west.

The OPM building has two main entrances and entrance plazas; the E Street entrance is used for both employees and visitors and the Virginia Avenue entrance is exclusively for employees. There are secured vehicular entrances located mid-block on 19th and 20th Streets; 20th Street also functions as a service entrance. Currently there are bollards and raised planters placed across the front of the E Street entrance and the front and western edge of the Virginia Avenue entrance plaza.

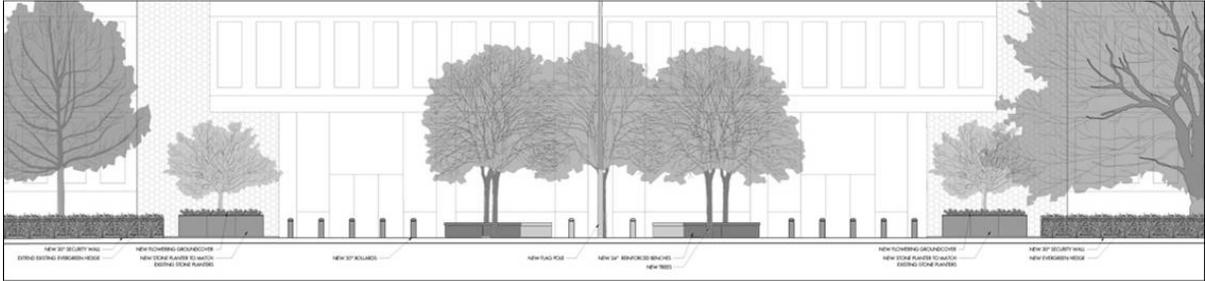


Background

At its December 2, 1999 meeting, the Commission approved final site and building plans for Security Barriers System at the OPM, Theodore Roosevelt Building. The project installed security controls and elements, such as Delta Barriers, card readers, moveable barriers gates, and bollards, to protect the garage and loading dock entrances located mid-block on 19th and 20th Streets.

Currently OPM's site is under continuous operational security and the main pedestrian and vehicular entrances are secured by guard staff during normal business hours.

The following are the proposed locations and types of perimeter security elements:



E Street Entrance Plaza: Proposed Elevation Detail

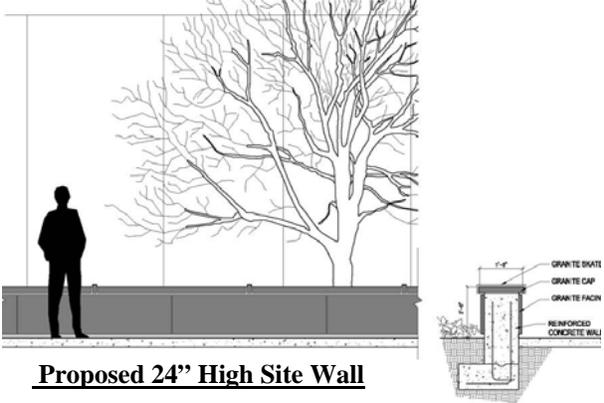


Proposed 30' High Site Wall

- E Street:
 - 30 inch high, freestanding site walls, clad to match the existing building, adjacent and located behind the existing hedge, running along the sidewalk, within the building yard
 - 30 inch high, bronze bollards, raised planters, granite benches and trees set back and located within the building yard and across the entrance plaza



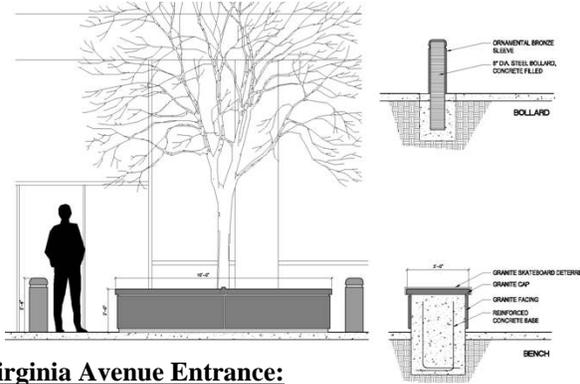
Proposed 36' High Reinforced Perimeter Fence



Proposed 24' High Site Wall



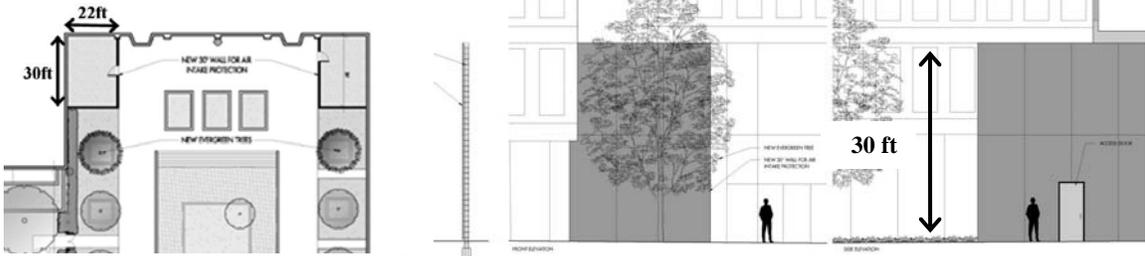
Photo Montage: Proposed Perimeter Fence along Virginia Avenue



Virginia Avenue Entrance: Proposed Bollards and Raised Planter/Bench Details



Existing Photo: Virginia Avenue Entrance



Virginia Avenue Building Entrance: Plan, Section & Elevations of Proposed Air-Intake Screen Walls

- Virginia Avenue:
 - 36 inch high cable reinforced, metal fence, with decorative panels reflecting the fenestration pattern, located adjacent to the existing sidewalk and at the building yard edge
 - Three reinforced benches located in front of the metal fence, outside of the building yard and within the public sidewalk
 - Entrance Plaza:

- 36 inch high cable reinforced, metal fence, with decorative panels reflecting the fenestration pattern, located within the building yard and across the southern edge of the entrance plaza
 - Two 36 inch high, card operated, employee access gates and 30 inch high retractable, bronze bollards located within the building yard and across the southern edge of the entrance plaza
 - 18 inch high, triangular raised planter/bench, clad to match the existing building, located in front of the entrance plaza
 - Two 30 foot high screen walls, clad to match the existing building, will enclose and protect unauthorized access to the existing air-intake grilles flanking the building entrance.
- 20th Street:
 - 30 inch high, freestanding site walls, clad to match the existing building, located adjacent to the existing sidewalk and at the building yard edge
 - Guard booth with a base clad to match the existing building and a metal roof, replacing the existing booth located at vehicular entrance
 - 30 inch high, bronze bollards located adjacent to the existing vehicular entrances
 - 36 inch high cable reinforced, metal fence, with decorative panels reflecting the fenestration pattern, located adjacent to the existing sidewalk and at the building yard edge
 - 36 inch high maintenance access gate, to match the metal fence, and 30 inch high retractable, bronze bollard located adjacent to the existing vehicular entrance.
 - The proposed project will also include the following site improvements:
 - Landscape
 - Flowering ground cover
 - Flowering and shade trees within the building yard
 - Shade trees in the E Street entrance plaza and front of the Virginia Avenue entrance plaza
 - Evergreen trees in front of proposed air intake screen walls
 - Street trees
 - Evergreen hedges around the Virginia Avenue entrance plaza and elevated dining platform, and the 19th Street fire egress area way
 - E Street entrance plaza flagpole
 - Building signs at the northeast, southeast and southwest building yard corners

Development Program

Applicant:	Office of Personnel Management
Architects:	Stephenson & Good
Acreage:	4.08 acres
Estimated Cost:	Phase I approx. \$460,700 Phase II approx. \$790,100 <u>Phase III approx. \$272,100</u> Total Cost approx. \$1,522,900
Schedule:	Phase I construction is estimated to begin in late 2006; construction duration for all phases not determined at this time

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

In general, staff supports the proposed perimeter security design concept for OPM and the removal of the existing security barriers located across the E Street and Virginia Avenue entrance plazas. The proposed security elements are, for the most part, located within the building yard and this allows for unobstructed pedestrian circulation in the public sidewalk surrounding the site. Through consultations with NCPC and CFA staffs, the applicant has modified and improved the various design elements, in response to the architectural context, and has integrated them within the building yard. However, staff recommends further consultations and refinement of the proposed concepts, as noted in the comments below, prior to preliminary and final submissions.

National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan

Staff notes that perimeter security technologies and designs have advanced since the *National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan* was adopted in October 2002. The submitted design concept has modified and, in some cases, improved upon some of the UDSP design approaches for OPM recommended in the West End framework plan and sample application.

- The UDSP 19th Street staggered fence and bollard elements, located adjacent to the curb, have been replaced by proposed, freestanding low site walls and a perimeter fence located along the edge of the building yard. The proposal allows the sidewalk to remain open and visually uncluttered. **Staff recommends integrating the proposed free standing wall located on 19th Street into the site by backfilling and landscaping.** Staff suggests that the applicant study and coordinate the height of the retaining wall in conjunction with the existing area way, topography and building façade.
- The continuous plinth wall located along the Virginia Avenue building yard, as shown in the UDSP, has been replaced by a proposed cable reinforced perimeter fence. Staff believes that the limited disturbance for fence post installation will help preserve the existing mature trees; subsurface construction that would be required for continuous plinth walls would destroy the existing tree roots and trees. **Staff recommends that**

multiple openings be provided through the proposed perimeter fence to allow for pedestrian and employee access into the building yard. Staff recommends that the proposed reinforced benches, located on the public sidewalk and in front of the perimeter fence, be relocated off of public space and placed within the building yard.

- The UDSP 20th Street fence wall is proposed as a perimeter fence located at the edge of the building yard along the southern portion of the street. Staff recommends that the proposed continuous site wall located at the edge of the building yard and along the northern portion of the street, be replaced by a matching perimeter fence. The fence will visually open the site from the public park across the street. **Staff recommends that multiple openings be provided through the proposed fences to allow for pedestrian and employee access into the building yard.**
- The proposed plinth wall along E Street is consistent with the UDSP.

National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan Objectives and Policies

In general, the proposed design concept is consistent with the Objectives and Policies for the *National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan* as adopted by the Commission in August 2005. However, the following are inconsistent with the objectives and polices:

- C.1. Barrier Placement and Design
 - (C.1.4) “Protection of exterior air-intakes systems should be visually and physically integrated into the architecture of the building design. ...” The proposed 30 foot high screen walls in front of the vertical intake louvers have not been architecturally integrated into the building design and the massing appears to be additive. **Staff recommends further architectural development of the air-intake screen wall design and does not support resolving it through restricting public access into the Virginia Avenue entrance plaza.**
 - (C.1.6) “The placement of security barriers in public space is discouraged ...” **Staff recommends that the benches placed in front of the Virginia Avenue perimeter fence be moved off of the public sidewalk and relocated within the building yard.**
 - (C.1.8) “When physical perimeter security elements are located at the edge of the building yard, designs should accommodate visual and physical public access to the building lawn and designated entries.” (C.1.12.c) “Placement of security barriers should incorporate best design practices and be arranged to ensure that the public space is visually and physically accessible.” Access to the OPM site should remain open for pedestrian and employee circulation. **Staff is not in favor of installing perimeter security elements as a means of restricting and controlling public access to the building yard, in particular the Virginia Avenue entrance plaza.** Note that this was designed as the primary entrance, on a major L’Enfant street, and while it may no longer be the public entrance, it shouldn’t appear like the “back door” either. **Staff suggests that operational security measures should be used to monitor public movement within the building yard and around the site.** The proposed continuous perimeter security elements, located at the edge of the building yard, should be designed with

multiple openings to allow pedestrian and employee access into the site. Maintenance access gates should be removed and alternative access be integrated into the design.

- C.2 Urban Landscape Contextual Design
 - (C.2.17) “Protection of existing trees, including their canopies and root systems ...” **Staff request further design and construction details of the Virginia Avenue perimeter fence supports in order to ensure that they will not impact the existing trees.**
 - (C.2.21) “Physical perimeter security should follow design principles to achieve a sense of openness, balance, rhythm, and hierarchy that will improve way finding and visual linkages along a street and enhance the pedestrian experience. ...” **Staff is not in favor of using perimeter security elements as a means of restricting public access to the building yard, and in particular the Virginia Avenue entrance plaza.** The proposed security elements exclusively restrict public access into the Virginia Avenue entrance plaza.

- C.4 Comprehensive Streetscape Design
 - (C.4.31) “The Capital’s monumental avenues, such as ... Virginia Avenue should receive special treatment to ensure that the security projects are addressed comprehensively, emphasizing the streetscape as a whole with attention to their axiality and formality.” **Since Virginia Avenue is designated as a special street in the UDSP, staff recommends that the applicant consult and coordinate the proposed perimeter security design concept with their neighbors located within the UDSP West End Contextual Area.** The UDSP Policies and Objectives note that “special streets, recognized as the monumental avenues and diagonal streets in the L’Enfant Plan, are the great linear connectors of the city and provide an important symbolic and ceremonial function in the nations’ capital. Ideally, the physical perimeter security for the buildings on these ... diagonal streets should be designed collectively as a contextual appropriate cohesive streetscape. In the absence of funding to design the entire streetscape, it is incumbent upon the federal agencies to coordinate their design solutions with their neighbors along the street and consider the larger context.”

General Design Comments

Staff requests that the applicant provide additional design information regarding the proposed signs located at the northeast, southeast and southwest corners of the site. Staff recommends that the proposed signs be hardened and integrated into the security elements.

Staff notes that the proposed triangular raised planter bench, located in front of the line of perimeter security elements across the south entrance plaza at Virginia Avenue, is a redundant security element. **Staff recommends that the proposed triangular raised planter bench be removed and the entrance plaza remains as originally designed and open to Virginia Avenue.**

Staff recommends further design development of the E Street entrance plaza security elements in order to reduce the number of bollards. Staff suggests replacing the proposed bollards located in the green space with either benches or shifting the line of proposed plaza benches and bollards north to align with the back edge of the raised planters. Also staff recommends that the proposed entrance flag pole be hardened and integrated into the security elements.

Staff suggests that in future submissions the applicant include separate graphic documentation indicating existing conditions in order to understand the extent and impact of proposed project modifications.

CONFORMANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

Staff has determined that the proposed concept is consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements*, in particular the Federal Workplace element. Policies found in the Development of Workplaces with Communities recommend incorporating security needs into the design of buildings, streetscapes and landscapes using urban design principles in a manner that:

- Enhances and beautifies the public realm, resulting in coherent and welcoming streetscapes
- Does not excessively restrict or impede operational use of sidewalks or pedestrian, handicap, and vehicular mobility

Federal Capital Improvements Program

The OPM perimeter security project is not included in the Federal Capital Improvements Program for Fiscal Years 2006-2011,

The Commission has recommended and strongly endorsed the West End Perimeter Security and Streetscape Improvements, which includes OPM, as noted in the Federal Capital Improvements Program for Fiscal Years 2006-2011. The project has been submitted, recommended and strongly endorsed by NCPC since 2004.

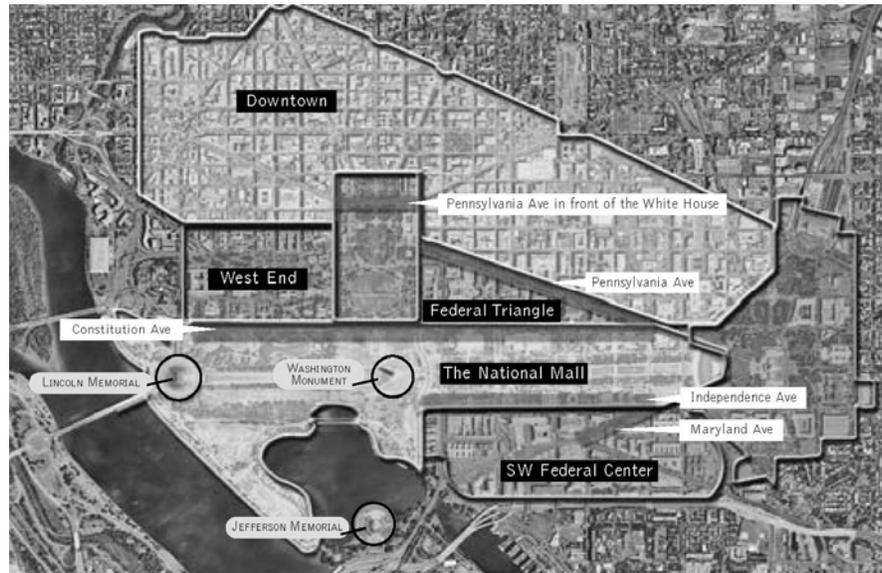
National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan

In general, staff has determined that the proposed design concept is consistent with the goals of the *National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan* as adopted by the Commission in August 2005:

- “Providing an appropriate balance between the need to accommodate perimeter security ...and the need to maintain the vitality of the public realm.”

- “Providing security in the context of streetscape enhancement and public realm beautification, rather than as a separate or redundant system ... whose only purpose is security.”
- “Expanding the palette of elements that can gracefully provide perimeter security in a manner that does not clutter the public realm”
- “Producing a coherent strategy for ... streetscape and security elements in which priority is given to achieving aesthetic continuity along streets, rather than solutions selected solely by the needs of a particular building under the jurisdiction of one public agency.”
- Providing perimeter security in a manner that does not ... excessively restrict or impede operational use of sidewalks or pedestrian ... mobility, nor impact the health of existing trees.”

The UDSP states “to establish the appropriate security response... that individual agencies must conduct risk assessments to determine the magnitude of the security threat and the level of protection required for individual buildings. Not all buildings and facilities require the same level of security.”



Urban Design and Security Plan: Contextual Areas

OPM, located in the Northwest Rectangle, is within the UDSP West End Contextual Area and is located on a special street, Virginia Avenue, which contributes to the unique urban design character of the Monumental Core. The West End design framework illustrates plinth walls along E Street and Virginia Avenue, fence walls along 19th and 20th Streets and treatment at each of the corners. A sample application area of 19th Street, between Virginia Avenue and E Street, illustrates a staggered, decorative metal fence with metal or granite bollards along the curb and around existing tree pits.

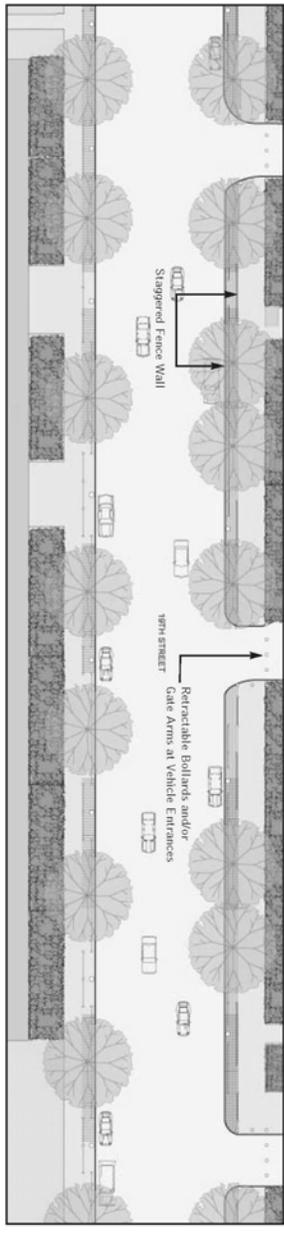
WEST END KEY PLAN LEGEND

-  Plinth Wall
-  Fence Wall
-  Green Design (parking lane removed)
-  Guardhouse
-  Street Closed (to normal vehicle traffic)
-  Corner Treatment
-  Sample Application Area

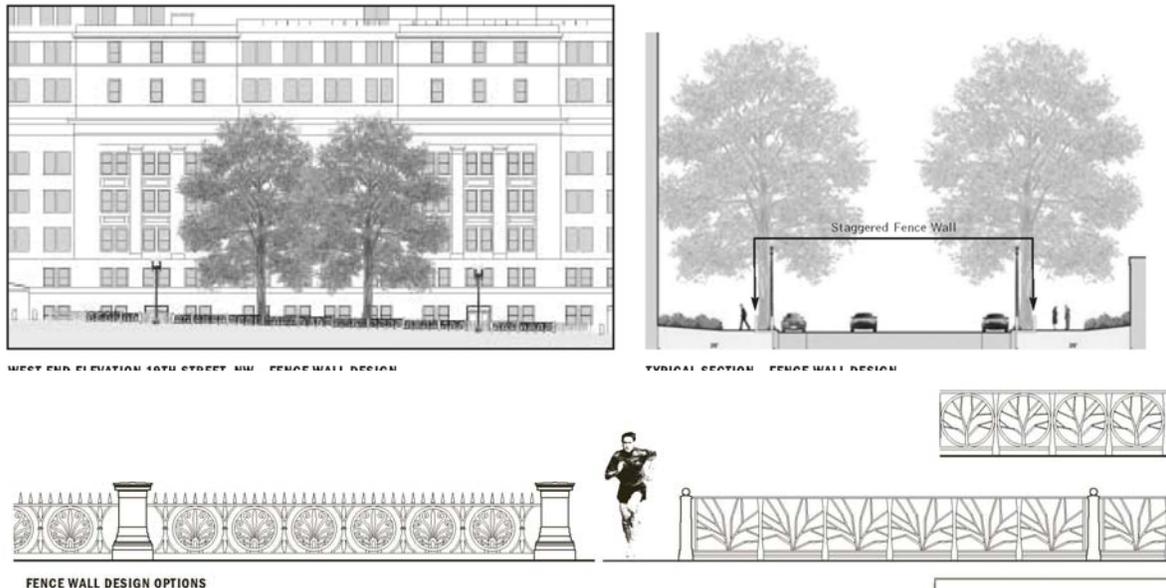
Fence Wall Streetscape Design



(Partial) West End Design Framework Key Plan



West End 19th Street, NW
Sample Application Plan



West End 19th Street, NW Elevation , Section and Fence Detail - Sample Application Plan

In general, staff has determined that the proposed design concept is consistent with the Objectives and Policies for the *National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan* as adopted by the Commission in August 2005. The Objectives and Policies for the UDSP discuss the intent and design of security planning and design to protect building and their occupants. The objectives and policies strive to balance building security with the functional and visual quality of “the monumental core’s historic resources and the democratically-inspired design principles inherent in D.C.’s historic city plan” and to protect public space from “the adverse impacts of perimeter security to ensure that residents, workers and visitors maintain their rights to access, use and enjoy the grace and beauty of public space in the capital” The policies are applied for NPCP’s review and evaluation of all perimeter security projects within urban settings of the National Capital Region.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

The Commission’s submission guidelines do not require completion of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) information at the concept submission stage. Pursuant to GSA regulations implementing NEPA, GSA staff has initially reviewed and concluded the project adheres to categorical exclusion criteria of that agency.

NCPC staff review indicates the concept design will require modifications, and consequently the revised design should be further analyzed by GSA staff for potential environmental impacts. At this stage, GSA finds that the proposal does not adversely impact project resources other than soil and immediate vegetation of the site. Nevertheless, the project site is adjacent to a viewshed of a L’Enfant Street which may be impacted to some degree, depending on the extent of design modifications made by the applicant prior to preliminary submission. Design modifications may

eliminate or mitigate the potential adverse effects. **Staff notes that the project as proposed does not meet any of the Commission's criteria for categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act, in which case an environmental assessment may be required to accompany the preliminary submission.**

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

GSA determined that the proposed alterations would have no effect on the OPM building, as it is not a structure listed in the National Register of Historic Places. However, the National Register-listed resources that should be taken into account in determining effect include: elements of the L'Enfant Plan, Main Interior, Interior South, and the Northwest Rectangle Historic District, which GSA has determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Furthermore, GSA has been a national leader in documenting and assessing its buildings of the Modern era, and should assess the proposed alterations to the entrance of the OPM building in that context. The DC SHPO has concurred with the need for a broader determination of effect and consultation if necessary before design development is concluded at the next phase.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal at its April 12, 2006 meeting, and forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the submission has been coordinated with all participating agencies. The participating agencies were NCPC; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the Fire Department; the District Department of Transportation; the General Services Administration; the National Park Service and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

Commission of Fine Arts

At their April 20, 2006 meeting the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) reviewed and approved the concept for OPM perimeter security.