

STAFF RECOMMENDATION



S. Dettman
NCPC File No. 6985

FEDERAL RESERVE WILLIAM MCCHESENEY MARTIN, JR. BUILDING VISITOR SCREENING AND CONFERENCE CENTER ADDITIONS

2000 C Street, NW
Washington, DC

Submitted by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System

February 25, 2010

Abstract

The Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System has submitted a proposal to construct visitor screening and conference center additions to the William McChesney Martin, Jr. Building located at 2000 C Street, NW. The purpose of the project is to address the Federal Reserve's building entrance security shortfalls and inadequate conference facilities. The proposed one-story visitor screening pavilion will encompass approximately 11,000 square feet and will be located along the C Street side of the building. It will contain separate entry vestibules for employees and visitors, package screening capacity, and visitor waiting areas. The proposed conference center will encompass approximately 35,000 square feet and consist of a renovated podium level and two, one-story pavilions. The pavilions will be located on the east and west terraces of the podium and encompass approximately 5,000 square foot each. The design of the additions is influenced by the Modernist architecture of the Martin Building. The enclosing walls of the pavilions are composed of glass and marble-clad columns, and will each possess a green roof. The proposed construction will occur entirely within the property line of the Martin Building with the exception of a new water feature and relocated guard booth along 21st Street, and low planting areas along C Street.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of comments on concept design pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8722 (b)(1) and (d))

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

Comments favorably on the Federal Reserve's overall concept for a visitor screening and conference center addition to the William McChesney Martin, Jr. Building located at 2000 C Street, NW, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.34(64.00)42874.

Notes that the Federal Reserve has designed a proposal that meets its visitor screening and conference center programmatic needs within the confines of the project site.

Requires the Federal Reserve to work with staff to determine whether the guard booth along 21st Street can be relocated inside the Martin Building property lines.

Requires the Federal Reserve to coordinate with NCPC and the District to ensure that all improvements within public space are consistent with local standards.

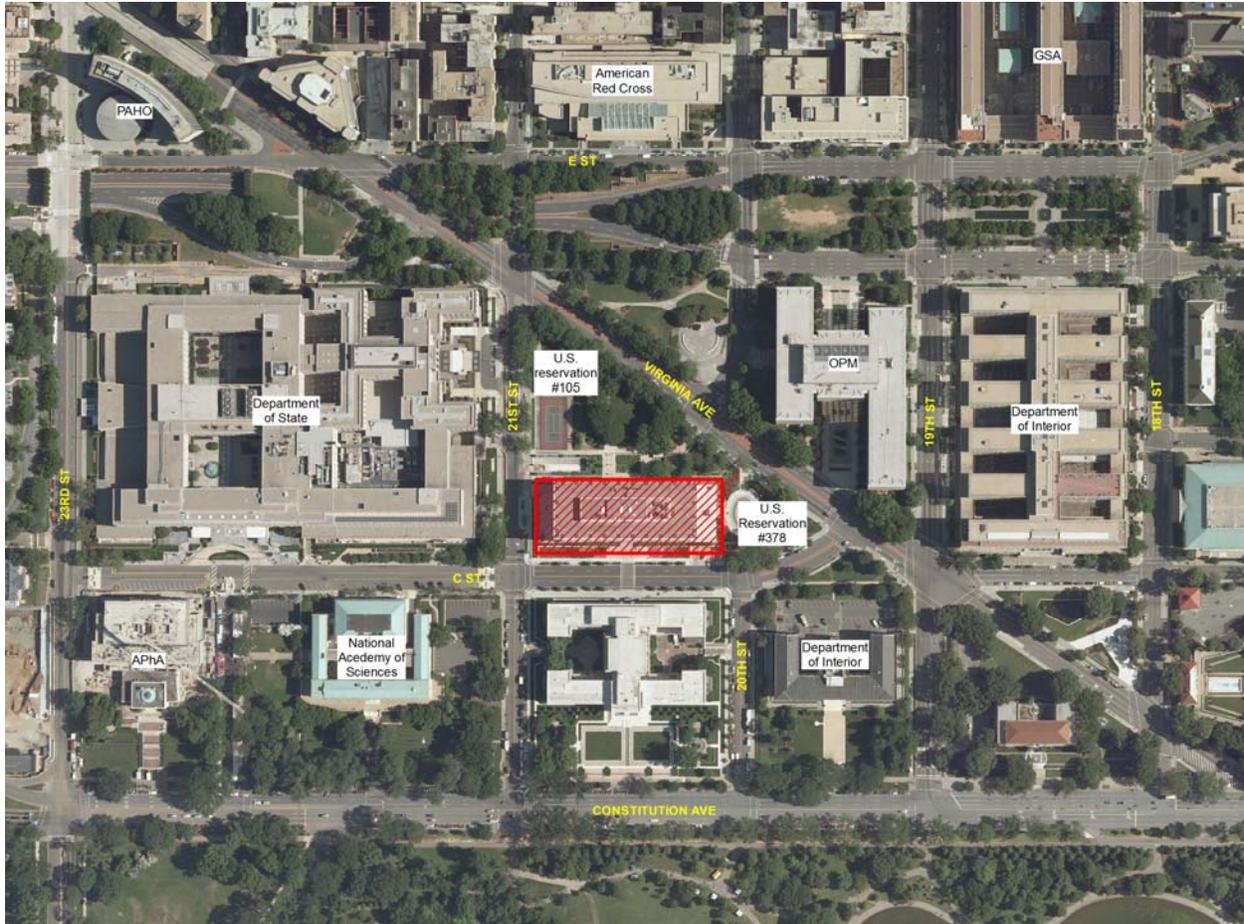
Notes that the NEPA and Section 106 processes must be completed prior to the Commission taking a preliminary and final action on the project

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Site

The Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System ("the Board" or "the Federal Reserve") occupies a two-building complex located in the area of Washington, DC known as the Northwest Rectangle. These two buildings, the Marriner S. Eccles Building (Eccles Building) and the William McChesney Martin, Jr. Building (Martin Building) are generally bounded by Virginia Avenue to the north, Constitution Avenue to the south, 20th Street to the east, and 21st Street to the west. C Street runs between the two buildings with the Eccles Building to the south, and the Martin Building to the north. The two buildings are connected by an underground pedestrian tunnel below C Street. The visitor screening and conference center additions that are the focus of staff's review are proposed for the Martin Building ("the project site" or "the site"). To the west of the project site, across 21st Street, is the U.S. Department of State headquarters.



Project site and surrounding context

Immediately east and north of the Martin Building are two, triangular reservations under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior (Reservations #378 and #105). The reservation to the east is located directly along the 20th Street axis, and is improved with benches, planting beds, and an elliptical geyser fountain. The reservation to the north contains a tennis court, benches, and sculpture. Also surrounding the project site are the headquarters of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), U.S. Department of Interior, the American Pharmacists Association (APhA), and the National Academy of Sciences. The project site is located in the Northwest Rectangle Historic District of Washington, DC.

Background

The six-story Martin Building was constructed between 1971 and 1974, and is an example of Formalism, a Modern-era architectural style generally characterized by flat projecting rooflines, smooth wall surfaces, high-quality materials, columnar supports, and strict symmetry. The building's steel-frame structure is encased in concrete and clad with marble curtain walls that contain large, deeply inset windows and corners. The glass enclosing walls of the first floor, or podium level, are set back from the upper floors which are supported by pilotis, or structural stilts. A flat roof with projecting cornice appears to float over the recessed upper-story that features a wraparound window that opens up to an outdoor terrace.



Photo of Martin Building from C Street and 21st Street, NW

At its April 2004 meeting, the Commission gave final approval to permanent perimeter security enhancements for the Martin and Eccles Buildings. Security improvements at the Martin Building included the installation of landscape features such as plinth walls, planters, bronze-clad bollards, a fence wall, and three guard booths. Construction was completed in 2005. Following construction of the security enhancements described above, the Board began to address deficiencies in the security of its building entrances, and its lack of adequate and secure

conference facilities. The current configuration of entrances and conference facilities has evolved over the years and has been determined by the Federal Reserve to be outdated and inadequate.

Currently, there are two entrances to the Eccles Building with one located along C Street, and the other located within the building's east courtyard. The entrance along C Street is primarily used by employees. The configuration of this entrance does not allow for adequate screening which is limited to ID checks within the foyer. The foyer is not protected by blast resistant glass, and there is no capacity to detect or protect against chemical, biological, and radiological (CBR) agents. In the 1970s, a small entry vestibule was added to this entrance to provide shelter for those waiting to enter the building. In addition, it has very little queuing space, no restroom facilities, and is located in a remote part of the building.

The C Street entrance to the Martin Building is the primary entrance to the Eccles-Martin complex and is used by employees, visitors, and other Federal Reserve staff arriving to conduct business. The existing interior configuration of this entrance was constructed following September 11th, and was intended to be temporary until a permanent solution could be implemented. According to the Board, the current configuration does not meet basic security and facility requirements.



Queuing outside of Martin Building's C Street entrance

For example, it is not designed to: protect against ballistic and CBR threats, provide safe queuing and entry processing, provide proper package screening, and does not have adequate visitor waiting space and restrooms.

The Federal Reserve also has a need for expanded conference center facilities. Currently, the Board uses the employee dining rooms on the sixth-floor of the Martin Building for most of its conferences and meetings, which limits the size and number of events that can be held. These spaces also have an odd configuration, poor acoustics, and limited audio-visual capabilities. Furthermore, this space cannot be isolated from the lower office floors, which presents a security risk, and requires visitors to be escorted by Federal Reserve employees at all times.

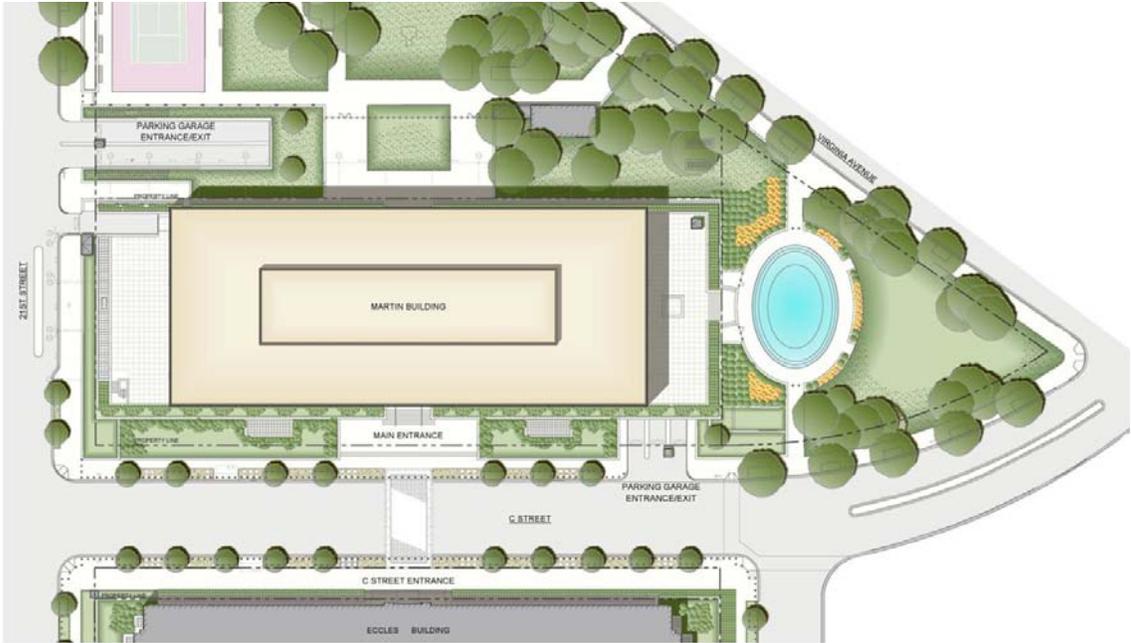
Proposal

To address its building entrance security shortfalls and inadequate conference facilities, the Board has submitted a proposed concept for new visitor screening and conference center additions to the Martin Building. The proposal consists of three, one-story pavilions located along the east, west, and south sides of the building, and sets out to accomplish the following objectives:

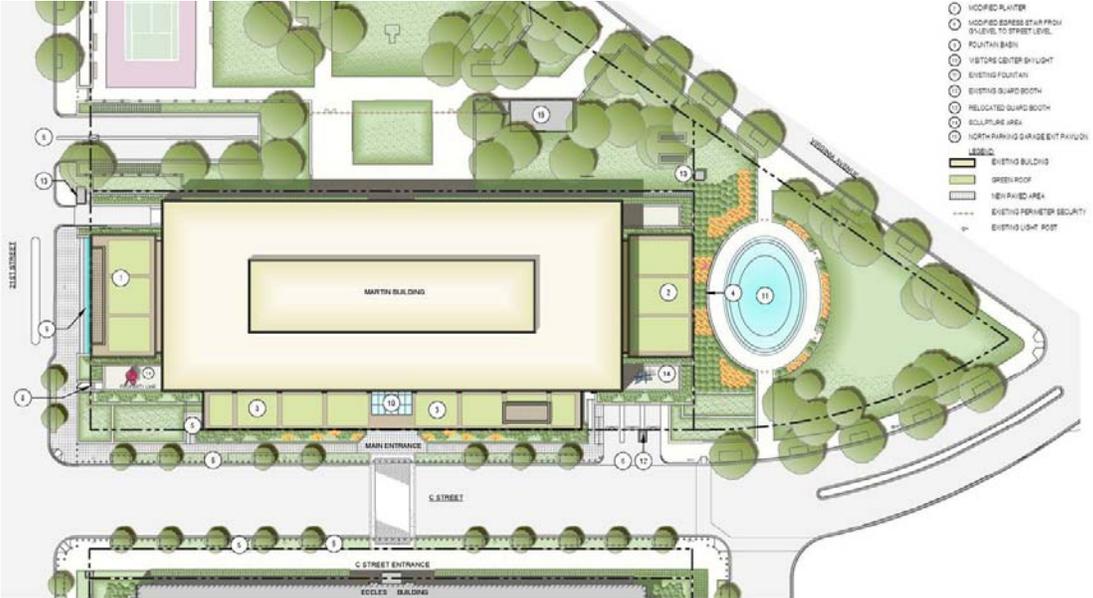
- To integrate all security measures and conference requirements in a discreet manner, ensuring that the new facilities complement the quality of the existing buildings and neighborhood.
- To complement the design of the Martin Building, and maintain a sense of unity between the Martin and Eccles Buildings.
- To preserve the sense of openness along C Street.
- To maximize opportunities for vistas, public art and public amenities for both exterior and interior spaces.
- To optimize opportunities for sustainable design in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the U.S. Green Building Council.

The proposed visitor screening pavilion is located at the C Street entrance to the Martin Building, and is intended to serve as the new main entrance to the Board's two-building complex. This single point of entry will encompass approximately 11,000 square feet (SF) and include separate entry vestibules for employees and visitors, adequate space to implement new security measures, a courier drop-off for screening packages, a dedicated HVAC system able to provide CBR protection, and suitable visitor waiting areas.

As proposed, the visitor screening pavilion will extend the façade of the podium level out to the south property line, move the building entrance to be at-grade with the sidewalk, and extend along the sidewalk for approximately 250 feet, or a little over 8 bays of the existing building. The entrance to the pavilion continues to be on axis with the entrance to the Eccles Building across C Street, and has been recessed in order to define it as the main entrance to the complex. The architecture of the pavilion is influenced by that of the existing Martin Building, with the use of the piloti as the primary aesthetic feature and structural element. The enclosing walls of the visitor screening pavilion are composed of glass and marble-clad supporting columns which relate in form and function to the pilotis. Before connecting to the original building, these walls are indented slightly in order to emphasize the separation of the pavilion from the Martin Building. Finally, the visitor screening center will have a green roof, and a planting area is proposed within public space at the base of the pavilion along C Street.



Existing site plan

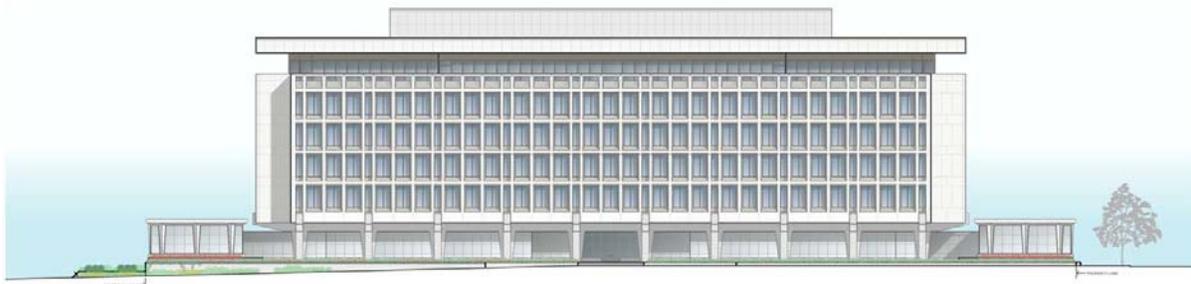


Proposed site plan

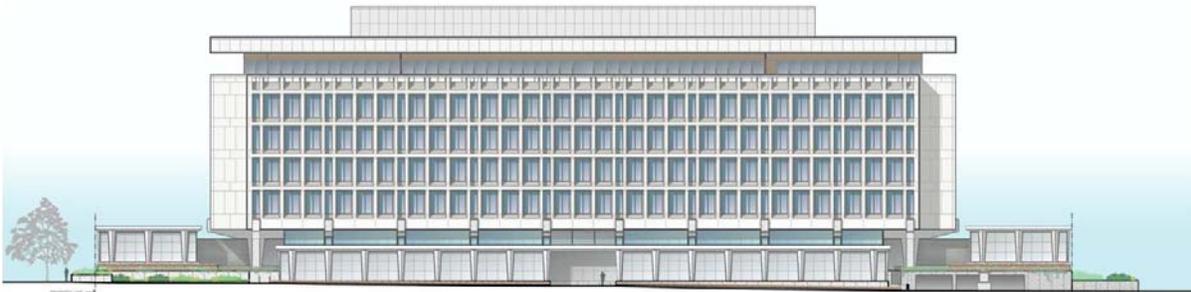
The proposed conference center will encompass approximately 35,000 SF. This will be accomplished through renovation of the existing podium-level interior space, and adding two 5,000 SF pavilions located on the east and west terraces. The conference center will include a 75-seat lecture hall; a 325-seat multi-purpose room; several meeting and training rooms; conference registration and management offices; a business center; pantry designed for serving catered events; pre-function areas; and break areas suitable for receptions. As eluded to earlier, physical and information security requirements preclude unescorted conference center visitors from the Federal Reserve’s operational spaces. In order to correct this issue, the Board has combined the development of the conference center with its proposed visitor screening center. Locating the

conference center on the podium level and controlling access to the remainder of the buildings will allow visitors to attend functions without the Federal Reserve having to provide escorts.

The architectural design of the two pavilions is the same as the proposed visitor screening center. The enclosing walls will consist of glass and marble-clad columns, and each will possess a green roof. While in form these pavilions will be identical, they will serve two different functions. Given the presence of the elliptical fountain and gardens on the east side of the Martin Building, the Board has decided that the east pavilion is best-suited to accommodate the 325-seat multi-purpose room. The window glazing chosen for this pavilion will maximize the views to the east. The west pavilion, with less inviting views along 21st Street, will contain the lecture hall. The glazing used on the windows of the west pavilion will be obscured on the interior given the requirement for a windowless space. Finally, as a site amenity, a new water feature will be constructed within public space along the 21st Street elevation of the pavilion. The east and west pavilions will be connected to the Martin Building with stone curtain walls to strengthen the visual separation between the two.



Proposed north elevation (from Reservation #105)



Proposed south elevation (C Street)



Proposed east elevation (from Reservation #378)



Proposed west elevation (from 21st Street)

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

Overall, staff is supportive of the proposed concept and notes that the Federal Reserve has designed a proposal that meets its visitor screening and conference center programmatic needs entirely within the confines of the project site. Staff's analysis of the project focused primarily on the size and scale of the visitor screening center, and impacts on views and the surrounding public space. While the project does not extend into public space, staff does have concerns with respect to the size and scale of the proposed visitor screening center and its impacts on the original design intent of the Martin Building, and sense of openness that is characteristic of streets within this area of the city. Staff also has concerns that the placement of the conference center pavilion walls immediately at the east and west property lines will necessitate the need for additional perimeter security within public space along 21st Street, and jeopardize public access to the adjacent Federal reservations.

Size and scale of the visitor screening center

As mentioned above, the Martin Building was constructed in the mid-1970s in the Modernist architectural style. Elements such as the elevated podium, supporting pilotis, and surrounding landscaped open space are some of the building's most defining characteristics, and reinforce the Northwest Rectangle's overall sense of openness. While the entire proposed concept has the potential to intrude upon this sense of openness, the potential is most notable along C Street at the proposed visitor screening center. As mentioned above, the proposed one-story visitor screening center will extend almost the entire length of the C Street façade, and extend out to the property line. Currently, the distance between building face and the property line is approximately 20 feet, and approximately 30 feet between the building face and the inside edge of the sidewalk. The proposed visitor screening center will reduce these distances to zero and ten feet, respectively. While the reduction will not impede access to the public space, it does have the potential to detract from the quality of the space, and from the original design intent of the building.



Existing view along C Street (looking west)



Proposed view along C Street (looking west)

Impacts on views and surrounding public space

Since the proposed visitor screening and conference center additions will be located completely within the Martin Building property line, and will not extend into any street rights-of-way, the project will not impede any of the views or vistas associated with the historic L'Enfant Plan, nor should it have direct negative impacts on the surrounding public space. The project does propose some changes to the surrounding public space including relocation of an existing guard booth and constructing a new water feature along 21st Street, additional planting areas along C Street between the property line and the sidewalk, and rebuilding the sidewalks adjacent to the project site. In order to develop and maintain an attractive and consistent public realm, any changes to what currently exists within public space should only serve to improve the quality of this space, and should be consistent with local standards. As the project advances, a close look should be taken at where improvements can be made to the public space.

Existing view from C Street and 21st StreetProposed view from C Street and 21st Street

Public access to Reservations #105 and #378

Because they are contributing elements to the historic L'Enfant Plan, free and open public access to Reservations #105 and #378 should be maintained even if the proposed concept is implemented. Of particular interest to staff, is the continued accessibility to the reservation

located to the east of the Martin Building, and along the 20th Street axis. Currently, the distance between the east face of the Martin Building and the adjacent property line is approximately 50 feet. Following construction of the east pavilion, this distance would be reduced to zero feet, and the east wall of the pavilion would be coincident with the common property line between the project site and the reservation. NCPC's recently adopted Monumental Core Framework Plan considers 20th Street to be an important pedestrian connection between the National Mall and the E Street corridor. The success of this connection depends upon the continued visual and physical access to this reservation and its prominent elliptical fountain. The Board's decision to eliminate this standoff distance should in no way compromise the continued public accessibility of this visually prominent reservation along the 20th Street axis.



Existing view from Virginia Avenue



Proposed view from Virginia Avenue

Compliance with local public space standards

A consistent and accessible public realm is a critical element to providing safe and convenient pedestrian connections throughout the city. While variety should be encouraged for individual building sites, consistency within the public space should be enforced in order to weave individual building sites, city blocks, and the city together. Therefore, any and all improvements made to public space as a result of the proposed concept should be made in conformance with local standards. In order to successfully integrate federal facilities into the city, assist the local government in developing and maintaining a consistent public realm, and provide the Federal Reserve with the assurance it needs when ultimately seeking a public space permit, close coordination between the Board, NCPC, and the local government should take place as the project moves forward.

CONFORMANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

The Federal Workplace and Preservation and Historic Features Elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital contain several policies that pertain to the project. The location of the visitor screening center on site and out of public space, and integrated security features such as blast-resistant glazing, are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's policies pertaining to

workplace security. The plan also encourages the federal government to “incorporate civic art, memorials, plazas, public gardens, fountains, sculpture, and murals, into federal workplaces.” The proposed concept successfully does this policy with a new water feature along 21st Street, and locations for plantings and sculpture along C Street.

The Preservation and Historic Features Element of the Comprehensive Plan contains several policies dedicated to the protection and preservation of the historic L’Enfant Plan and its redeeming qualities. Generally, these policies seek to preserve the visual and functional qualities of L’Enfant streets and reservations against inappropriate new buildings and physical incursions. The proposed concept carries out these policies by keeping all new building construction out of public space. The proposed concept does, however, contemplate some improvements within public space including a new water feature, plantings, and a relocated guard booth. For the most part these improvements will serve to beautify the public space, and improve its accessibility and function. As discussed above, the relocation of the guard booth to a place on the project site is something that should be explored in order to further protect the 21st Street right-of-way.

Monumental Core Framework Plan

The project site is located within the Northwest Rectangle precinct of the Monumental Core Framework Plan (Framework Plan). Most applicable to this project are the Framework Plan’s strategies for strengthening the public realm by designing great streets that satisfy all users equally and provide inviting, continuously accessible sidewalks; and advancing sustainability in the urban environment by investing in high-performance buildings and landscapes, improving stormwater management, and connecting and enhancing open spaces. The proposed concept has the potential to improve the condition of the surrounding streetscape through consistency with local standards pertaining to sidewalk paving materials, tree box size, and street tree species. Furthermore, by keeping the proposed additions within the property line, sidewalks will remain unimpeded and accessible. The project also demonstrates the Board’s interest in high-performance building practices through the implementation of guidelines set forth by the U.S. Green Building Council.



Framework Plan diagram showing recommended improvements and axial relationships

While the Framework Plan makes no specific recommendations concerning the Martin Building, it does with respect to its immediate surroundings. The project site is situated along a north-south axis formed at the 1901 McMillan Plan’s intersection of New York Avenue and Henry Bacon Drive. This intersection was an important node in the McMillan Plan, and though never fully realized, served as an organizing design influence for some of the Framework Plan’s

recommendations. Along this axis, north of the Martin Building, the Framework Plan envisions a new cultural or commemorative use established along a new E Street commemorative corridor.

In an effort to improve connections between the National Mall and this new commemorative corridor, the Framework Plan recommends making streetscape improvements along Virginia Avenue, 20th Street, and 21st Street, all of which run adjacent to the project site. The Federal Reserve's proposed concept will assist in facilitating these connections.

National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan Objectives and Policies

Overall, the proposed concept is consistent with the National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan Objectives and Policies. Adopted by the Commission in May 2005, these objectives and policies address planning and design issues associated with risk management strategies that impact the public realm, primarily physical perimeter security for explosives delivered by bomb-laden vehicles. They are intended to balance the need for perimeter security with the need to protect public space by keeping it open and accessible. As stated previously, the intent of the proposed visitor screening center is to further address security improvements at the Federal Reserve, and safeguard the entrances to the Eccles-Martin complex. The Urban Design and Security Plan policy that is directly applicable to the visitor screening center states that:

“pedestrian screening security operations should not be conducted in public space. If building additions or renovations are required to accommodate this function, the new construction should be compatible with the existing architecture and should not project into L’Enfant Plan rights-of-way, other public space, or viewsheds.”

As proposed, the visitor screening center complies with this policy.

Included in the proposed concept is the relocation of a guard booth located in public space along 21st Street. Currently, the booth is located along the southern edge of a vehicular entryway that provides access to the Martin Building's loading dock. The proposal is to relocate the booth to the north side of the entryway while still placing it in public space. According to the Commission's policies, “vehicular controls at building entries, such as vehicle barriers and guard booths should be located so that pedestrian movement along sidewalks is not blocked.” While the booth's existing location likely pre-dates this policy, in order to improve the quality of the streetscape along 21st Street staff encourages the Federal Reserve to assess whether the booth could be relocated on site or eliminated entirely.

Executive Order #13514

On October 5, 2009, Executive Order 13514, “Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance” (“the Order”), was enacted by President Barack Obama. The purpose of the Order is “to establish an integrated strategy towards sustainability in the Federal Government and to make reduction of greenhouse gas emissions a priority for Federal agencies.” One of the design objectives of the proposed concept is to “optimize opportunities for sustainable design, including green roofs, energy conservation, and other criteria in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating Systems developed by the U.S. Green Building Council. This objective is consistent with the purpose and policies of the Order.

Staff's review of the proposed concept has identified elements of the design that go toward achieving the goals of the Order. For example, the proposed visitor screening and conference center addition will be covered entirely with green roofs which reduce urban heat island effects and minimize consumption of energy. In addition, according to the information provided to staff, energy efficiency benefits will be gained through the installation of a new HVAC system that will serve the new visitor screening and conference center addition, and stand apart from the existing systems of the Martin Building. Pursuant to Section 2(f)(iv) of the Order, federal agencies are required to identify and analyze "impacts from energy usage and alternative energy sources in all Environmental Impact Statements and Environmental Assessments for proposal for new or expanded Federal facilities under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended." Therefore, staff will ensure that the environmental document being prepared for this project adequately addresses this requirement. Furthermore, staff will continue to work with the Federal Reserve to identify, and quantify, additional sustainable elements associated with the project. Staff will provide the Commission with a review of these elements at a later review.

National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA)

NCPC and the Board each have independent NEPA responsibility for the project. The Board is in the process of preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA), to which NCPC is a cooperating agency, in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality's rules for implementing NEPA, and NCPC's Environmental and Historic Preservation Policies and Procedures. Staff is currently in the process of reviewing a preliminary draft of the EA, and will provide comments to the Federal Reserve by mid-March. These comments will be used to refine the draft EA prior to it being released for public comment. Staff will continue to work with the Federal Reserve throughout the NEPA process to ensure its completion prior to the Commission's preliminary and final review of the project.

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

By memorandum dated August 13, 2009, the Board formally initiated Section 106 consultation with the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer (DC SHPO). Other consulting parties to the Section 106 process include NCPC, the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

In accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA, the Board prepared a "Determination of Eligibility" for the Martin Building. This report was prepared for purposes of evaluating the building's potential eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and was based on the four criteria for inclusion in the National Register:

- Properties associated with significant events.
- Properties associated with significant persons.
- Properties that embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, properties that represent the work of a master, or properties that possess high artistic value.
- Properties that yield information important to prehistory or history.

In addition, because the Martin Building was completed in 1974, the National Register criteria for properties less than 50 years old was also used to evaluate the building. Lastly, the Martin Building was evaluated within the National Register-eligible Northwest Rectangle Historic District. Following an application of these criteria, the Board determined that the Martin Building does not at this time demonstrate exceptional significance, and therefore is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

On December 22, 2009, the Board submitted the proposed concept to DC SHPO for evaluation of the undertaking. Since it was determined that the Martin Building was ineligible for listing in the National Register, DC SHPO evaluated the undertaking for its potential effects on the surrounding historic districts, individual historic buildings and the L'Enfant Plan. Following its evaluation, DC SHPO determined that the proposed visitor screening and conference center addition would have "no adverse effect" on historic properties¹. The basis for this determination was that the proposed construction will take place entirely within the boundaries of the Federal Reserve's property lines, and because the general architectural style of the pavilions is similar to that of the existing Martin Building.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

Information on the Federal Reserve's proposed concept for the visitor screening center and conference center additions to the Martin Building was shared with the Coordinating Committee on February 16, 2010. After reviewing the information the Committee coordinated this project for the March 4th Commission meeting.

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts

The Board has presented the proposed concept to the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) on three separate occasions. On July 24, 2009, CFA reviewed the concept design and acknowledged the "difficulty of adding to this classic Modernist building on pilotis," and commented that the proposed design detracted from the simplicity of the original building and that the proposed enclosure of most of the concrete pilotis "is an unfortunate loss." CFA recommended further development of the relationship between the proposed additions and the original building, and suggested narrowing the visitor screening center to reveal two pilotis at each corner along the C Street elevation.

On September 24, 2009, following review of a revised concept design, CFA expressed general support for the "disposition of the proposed additions" and requested that options be developed for a future submission as a revised concept. CFA raised concerns with respect to the size and scale of the new additions in relation to the existing architecture of the Martin Building, and recommended further development of their massing and articulation to minimize impacts. On November 30, 2009, CFA approved the revised concept design and delegated final approval to CFA staff.

¹ Memorandum from Mr. C. Andrew Lewis, Senior Historic Preservation Specialist (DC SHPO) to Mr. H. Fay Peters, Director (Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System) dated January 22, 2010.