

STAFF RECOMMENDATION



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NCPC File No. 7302

RESERVATION 149 TRIANGLE PARK REHABILITATION

20th and Q Streets, NW and Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC

Submitted by the National Park Service

October 27, 2011

Abstract

The National Park Service has submitted preliminary and final site development plans for the rehabilitation of Reservation 149, a triangle park bound by 20th and Q Streets, NW, and Connecticut Avenue, NW. The project includes the replacement of flagstone paving, removing and resetting concrete flatwork, planting trees, furnishing new trash receptacles, replacing soil and grass, and installing a partial perimeter fence.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

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

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

Approves the preliminary and final site development plans for the rehabilitation of Reservation 149, a triangle park bound by 20th and Q Streets, NW, and Connecticut Avenue, NW, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 31.30 (38.00)43444.

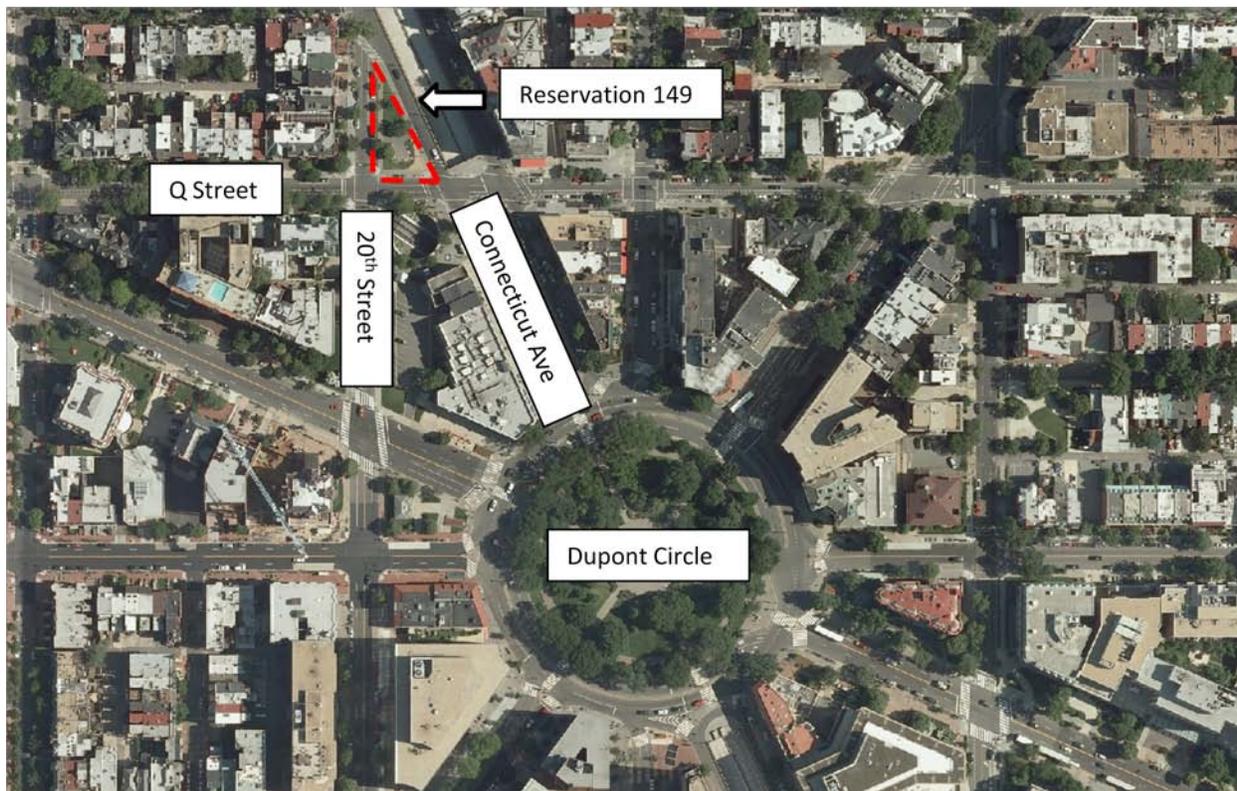
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Site

Reservation 149 is a triangle park bound by 20th and Q Streets, NW, and Connecticut Avenue, NW. The Reservation is within the administrative jurisdiction of National Mall and Memorial Parks and is a heavily trafficked urban park located just north of Dupont Circle. The site is surrounded by a mix of residential, commercial, and institutional uses.

Location of Reservation 149

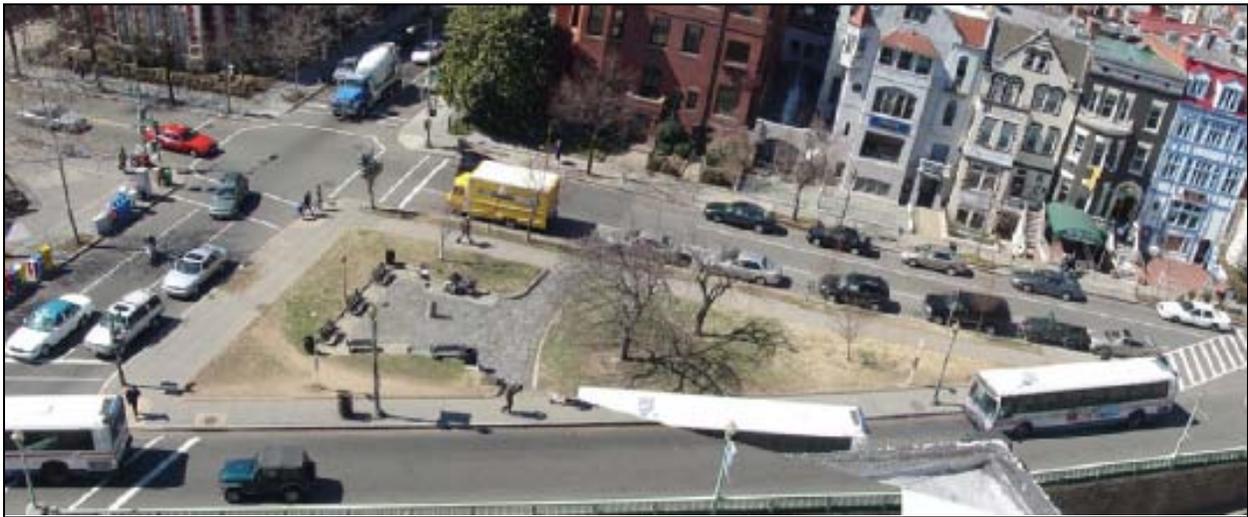


Background

The National Park Service (NPS), in partnership with the Dupont Circle Citizens' Association (DCCA) and the Historic Dupont Circle Main Streets organization (HDCMS), is proposing the rehabilitation of Reservation 149. Reservation 149 has not had significant rehabilitation since the 1960s. The site's masonry and hardened surfaces are currently in poor condition and are in need of replacement. The proximity to two WMATA bus stops and the Dupont Circle metro entrance has resulted in heavy pedestrian traffic causing chronic turf damage on the Q Street and Connecticut Avenue sides of the park. NPS trash receptacles on the site are out of date and need to be replaced with current NPS standard equipment. The health of the cherry trees on the site is declining as a result of damage caused by foot traffic and soil compaction.

Since 2006, NPS has worked with community stakeholders to plan and implement the rehabilitation of Reservation 149. The project is being partially funded by the DCCA who in July

2009 received approximately \$70,000 in mitigation funding from a PUD located at 1000 Connecticut Avenue.



Existing aerial view of Reservation 149

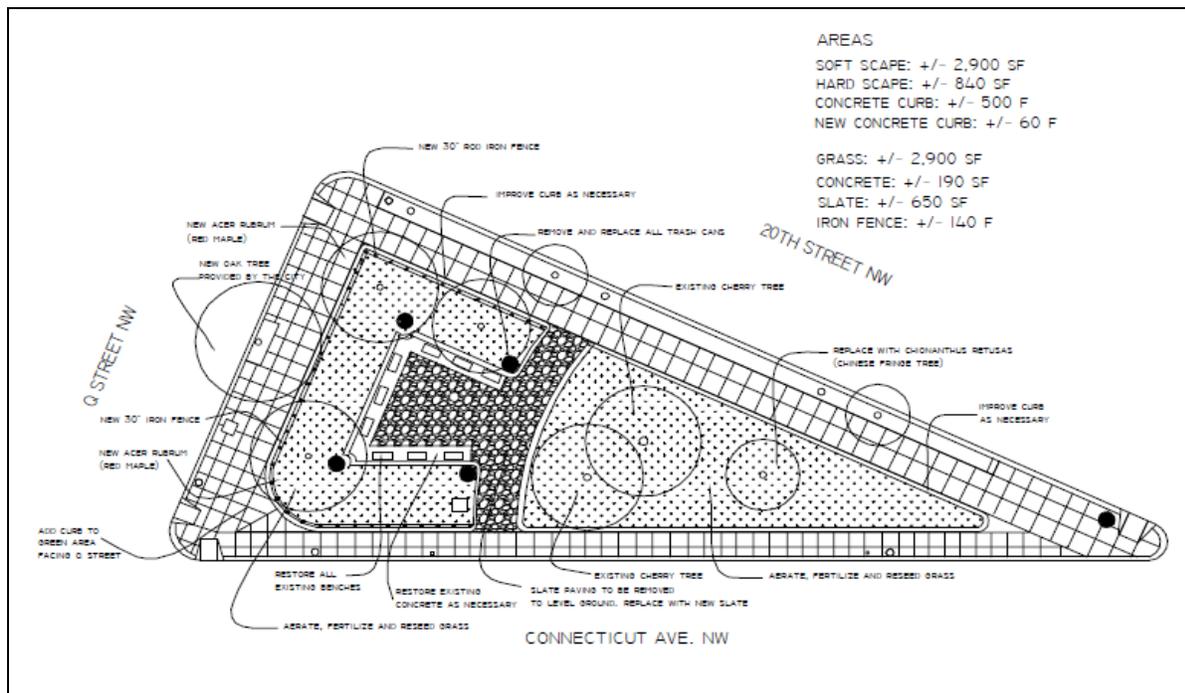


View of Reservation 149 looking toward Connecticut Avenue

Proposal

The rehabilitation of Reservation 149 primarily involves in-kind repair and replacement of materials. All hardened surfaces will receive treatment. The flagstone paving will either be reset or be replaced as needed to adjust the slope to allow for proper drainage. Damaged curbs will be removed and replaced to match the existing concrete curbs. Concrete flatwork that borders the flagstone paving will be removed and replaced or reset if possible. Concrete around the benches will be replaced with new concrete.

Planted areas will be improved with soil amendment and aeration, drainage improvements, and turf with a durable and easily maintained fescue. One damaged cherry tree will be replaced with a Chinese fringe tree and other trees will be treated to improve health. New trash receptacles will be installed. A partial black iron fence will be manufactured and installed along the property boundary on the southern end of the park to protect turfed areas. In addition, the turf area at the southeast corner of the park will be rounded to improve pedestrian circulation on the sidewalks.



Proposed rehabilitation plan for Reservation 149

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

The rehabilitation of Reservation 149 will enhance public use of this urban park in the Dupont Circle neighborhood. The park will be safer for pedestrians due to the replaced paving and concrete work. The new plantings and revitalized soil treatments will result in a healthier more sustainable environment and will visually enhance the surrounding neighborhood. The proposed fence will significantly improve NPS's ability to protect the turf and the rehabilitated planting areas by directing pedestrian traffic along the sidewalks to the bus stops and the metro station entrance. The proposed addition of a partial fence is a new treatment which is consistent with other parks in the Dupont Circle neighborhood and with NPS standards. Historically, a hedge bordered the plaza, which was later removed when the metro station entrance was built across the street.

NPS has received and responded to public concern regarding pedestrian circulation at the southeast corner of the park, especially along Connecticut Avenue where an already narrow sidewalk is further constricted by the presence of a bus stop and trash receptacle. The proposed project rounds off the southeast corner of the park at Q Street and Connecticut Avenue in order to provide a more generous amount of sidewalk space for pedestrians at that intersection. The adjacent sidewalks are not within NPS jurisdiction. On September 21, 2011, NPS and HDCMS met with WMATA and a representative from the Ward 2 Councilman's office for the Dupont Circle neighborhood to discuss the sidewalk along Connecticut Avenue. As a result, WMATA has erected a replacement bus shelter a block south of Reservation 149 and plans on completing the relocation of the bus stop by November 2011. Additionally, the District of Columbia has removed the trash receptacle. Therefore, except for the existing historic light standard, the sidewalk will be clear of all other impediments and the proposed fence will not restrict pedestrian access along the sidewalk.

CONFORMANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

The proposal is not inconsistent with the policies contained in the Parks and Open Space and Preservation and Historic Features Elements of the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*. The rehabilitation of Reservation 149 will restore and protect a historic reservation of the L'Enfant Plan and maintain a small urban park.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

In accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and NPS Director's Order 12 (DO-12), the applicant has determined that the proposed action can be categorically excluded from further environmental analysis, and that preparation of an Environmental Assessment or

Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary. The categorical exclusion that NPS is applying to this project excludes from further NEPA analysis the “routine maintenance and repairs to cultural resource sites, structures, utilities and grounds under an approved Historic Structures Preservation Guide or Cyclic Maintenance Guide; or if the action would not adversely affect the cultural resource.” (DO-12, Section 3-4, C.4) Prior to making a final determination as to whether the project qualified as a categorical exclusion, NPS verified that none of the exceptional circumstances or conditions listed in DO-12, Section 3.5 applied to the project, and also accepted public comments during a 30-day period which was initiated on August 2, 2011.

At the end of the 30-day public comment period, NPS received 32 letters which collectively contained 24 general comments. The comments ranged from those that were supportive of the project to those that expressed concern regarding the introduction of a fence on the edge of the reservation. In addition, there were several comments related to the width of the surrounding sidewalk and how pedestrian circulation is currently constrained. Staff notes that NPS has responded to the comments submitted and has addressed the concerns raised in its Categorical Exclusion Form dated October 12, 2011.

Given its approval authority over the project, NCPC also has an independent responsibility to satisfy the requirements of NEPA in accordance with NCPC’s Environmental and Historic Preservation Policies and Procedures and CEQ’s regulations. Based on a review of the information provided by NPS, including the public comments received and NPS’s response to those comments, staff has determined that the proposed action meets the criteria of NCPC’s Categorical Exclusion 8(C)(2).

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

NPS determined that the rehabilitation of Reservation 149 would not have adverse effect on historic properties and conducted Section 106 consultation with the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer (DC SHPO). The DC SHPO concurred with this finding as the project involves the repair and in-kind replacement of deteriorated materials. NCPC concurs with NPS’s and the DC SHPO’s determination of no adverse effect on historic properties.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal at its October 12, 2011 meeting, and forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the proposal has been coordinated with all participating agencies. The participating agencies were NCPC; the General Services Administration; the National Park Service; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

Commission of Fine Arts

The U.S. Commission of Fine Arts reviewed the project on the consent calendar at its October 20, 2011 meeting and had no objections to the rehabilitation of Reservation 149.