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FLOOD CONTROL GATES  
THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES BUILDING

700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C.

Finding of No Significant Impact

**MAR 24 2009**

Pursuant to Section 10 of the Commission's Environmental Policies and Procedures, I have evaluated the preliminary and final site development plans for the proposed installation of flood control gates at the National Archives Building in Washington, D.C., as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.25(03.40)42731. After reviewing the environmental assessment, I have determined that the project will not have a significant impact on the human environment.

The District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer has reviewed the project plans in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 requirements and has determined that the project will not have an adverse effect on the historic property.

Consequently, after review of the environmental assessment, I have determined pursuant to Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act, the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR, Parts 1500-1508), and NCPC's Environmental and Historic Preservation Policies and Procedures that the project would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment.

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Marcel C. Acosta  
Executive Director

## Background

This project has been initiated by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) for the installation of automatic flood control gates at the National Archives Building in Washington, DC. The gates would be installed at the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Street entrances near the bottom of the ramp leading to each entrance. The purpose of the flood control gates is to prevent or minimize damage that might result from a local flooding event in the Federal Triangle area similar to the event that occurred in June of 2006.

NCPC has adopted NARA's environmental assessment as a cooperating agency and has evaluated the potential impacts on the environment of the proposed site improvements. This environmental documentation is consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA [40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1500-1508], the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, and NCPC's Environmental and Historic Preservation Policies and Procedures (adopted April 1, 2004).

The District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office (DC-SHPO) has reviewed and completed its analysis of the project determining there is not an adverse effect resulting from the undertaking. The DC-SHPO has issued its conclusion as required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and has completed compliance reviews for the project.

The environmental assessment and comments about the environmental assessment analysis are information that is made available for review at NCPC offices in compliance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Commission's implementing Environmental and Historic Preservation Policies.

NCPC's requirements for a FONSI are set forth in the Environmental and Historic Preservation Policies and Procedures at Section 10(E).

## The proposed action

The proposed action is the installation of automatic flood control gates at the National Archives Building. The gates would be installed at the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Street entrances. The purpose of the flood control gates is to prevent or minimize the amount of damage that might result from a local flooding event in the Federal Triangle area similar to the event that occurred in June of 2006.

The design for the flood control gates involves relatively minor permanent work on the exterior of the building. The gates will be installed at the bottom of the driveways on the building side of the moat walls and therefore hidden from view from the street level. This placement will also allow for the historic gates at the bottom of the driveway to open freely. The flood control gates, which will be twenty-five feet wide and approximately five feet in height, will be installed in a vault below grade and therefore not visible from the street. Rising flood waters will trigger the self-rising gates to come up without human intervention.

### Alternatives considered in the environmental assessment review

The environmental assessment examines in detail two alternatives; the proposed action and the no action alternative.

### Potential impacts

NCPC staff has found no significant or adverse environmental impacts with the proposed action.

### Standard for evaluation

Under NEPA, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, and NCPC Environmental and Historic Preservation Policies and Procedures, an environmental assessment is sufficient and an Environmental Impact Statement need not be prepared if the environmental assessment supports a finding that the federal action will not significantly affect the human environment. The regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality define “significantly” as used in NEPA as requiring consideration of both context and intensity of impacts as noted by 40 CFR §1508.27.

Applying the standards, factors, and analysis here, the Executive Director must make the assessment of whether approval of the proposed project will “significantly” affect the human environment based on the environmental assessment. As to the factor of the context, this is a site-specific action, and the Executive Director looks at the effects on the locale. The proposal does not present any major or significant adverse effects.

NCPC is taking a federal approval action on the installation of flood control gates at the National Archives Building, requiring adoption of the environmental assessment that analyzes attributes and issues of possible environmental impacts, in accordance with Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and the Environmental Policies and Procedures implemented by NCPC.

