

U. S. NATIONAL ARBORETUM
PRELIMINARY AND FINAL SITE AND BUILDING PLANS
NEW ENTRANCE
3501 New York Avenue, NE

Delegated Action of the Executive Director

December 30, 2003

Pursuant to delegations of authority adopted by the Commission on October 3, 1996, I approve the preliminary and final site and building plans to construct a new roadway entrance for the U.S. National Arboretum on Bladensburg Road, NE, including the construction of a new gatehouse, tram shelter, and removal and transplanting of trees, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 43.20(38.00)-41241.

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The Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, has submitted preliminary and final site and building plans for a new gatehouse, tram shelter and 22-foot-wide paved road, 4200 feet in length, as part of a new entrance complex at the National Arboretum, in conformance with the November 2000 Commission approved master plan.

The new road provides an arboretum entrance at the west perimeter of the 446-acre facility on Bladensburg Road, NE. Two small buildings, a gatehouse and tram shelter, are located at the beginning and end of the new roadway, respectively. The asphalt road follows an existing unpaved dirt service road corridor, south and east, and will connect to a relocated visitors parking area that provides space for 382 vehicles. Additional features with the road include a dedicated tram lane, 1500 feet in length; a new tram shuttle ticketing shelter--combined with public restrooms that would be located north of the new parking area; and new landscape plantings throughout the road corridor. The tram shelter contains 1,800 square feet of space.

All the structures are clad in Mankoto cream limestone with Mankoto golden buff limestone rusticated banding. The metal roofs of both the gatehouse and tram shelter consist of standing seam copper while the windows and fascia are highlighted by dark green trim. All gateway retaining walls feature the same Mankoto cream limestone as the buildings, cut in larger cladding squares, and exhibiting a honed finish with rough-cut coping.

The entrance road intersection at Bladensburg Road would be signalized, and features a new formal limestone entry wall with lighted engraved signage. The District of Columbia Department of Transportation has coordinated the improvements with their proposed new work on Bladensburg Road, and at this time believes no major impediments exist to implementing the proposal. The District's construction will precede this project. The National Arboretum's New York Avenue entrance will be closed and the R Street entrance will be gated and limited to use by neighborhood pedestrians and National Arboretum staff. All pedestrians using the R Street entrance gate would have an access card.

The project, which involves less than 50,000 square feet of building floor area, would have no adverse impact on land uses or environmental resources of the general site. The proposal is a portion of the master plan that involves only one eighth of the land area of the Arboretum, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. An inventory of cultural resources within the site was completed in the summer of 2000. The Department coordinated the project's review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act with the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office and completed all compliance requirements in November 2003. In conformance with its NEPA compliance procedures, the Department completed an environmental assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact for the project in October 2000. The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal on September 10, 2003, forwarding the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the project has been coordinated with all agencies participating.

Patricia E. Gallagher, AICP
Executive Director