

STAFF RECOMMENDATION



NCPC File No. 6529

PENTAGON RESERVATION
RENOVATION AND CONSTRUCTION OF LIBRARY AND CONFERENCE CENTER
Arlington County, Virginia

Submitted by the Department of Defense

October 28, 2004

Abstract

The Department of Defense has submitted preliminary site and building plans for improvements to an area of the Pentagon complex which formerly housed the Pentagon Athletic Center. The new space, at approximately 121,500 total square feet, would house the Pentagon Library, a new Joint Use Conference Center and the administrative office space for the Law Enforcement Division of the Pentagon Force Protection Agency by renovating an existing facility that is primarily below ground. Minor additions above ground will provide natural light and access to the facility.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of preliminary site and building plans pursuant Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act (40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1)).

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

Approves the preliminary site and building plans for the Renovation and Construction of a Library and Conference Center at the Pentagon Reservation, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.62(38.00)-41473.

Commends the applicant for designing the above ground project elements so that they are integrated with the formal grass panels and the path of the landscaped setting.

Advises the Department of Defense to submit an updated master plan for the Pentagon with any future proposals presented to the Commission. The Department has indicated that such a master plan update is underway and the Commission is favorably disposed to review that undertaking as soon as it can reasonably be made available.

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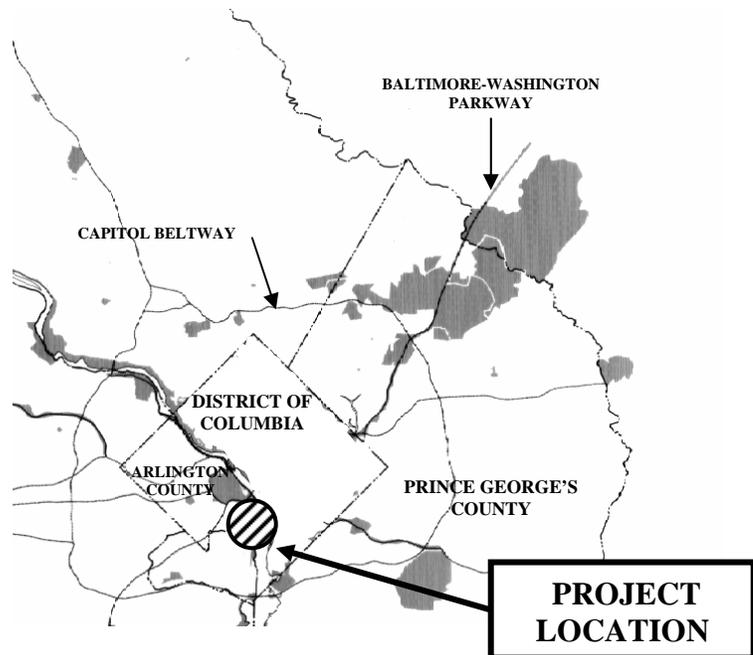
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Site

The proposed improvements to the Pentagon Reservation are located under the eastern portion of the River Terrace Parade Ground at the east side of the Pentagon in Arlington County, Virginia. The project includes improvements to both the upper and lower levels of the site. The lower level space is recessed and partially sheltered by the existing ground. The upper level space at the terrace has been recently connected with new pedestrian overpasses at both the north and south sides of the River Terrace. The proposed 1.31 acre project modifies, to a minimal degree, the historic River Terrace at the external elevated terrace level.

Background

In May 2003, the Commission approved the preliminary and final site and building plans to relocate Route 110 on the east side of the Pentagon Reservation and also provide a secure access lane to the Remote Delivery Facility at the Pentagon reservation in Arlington, Virginia, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.62(38.00)-41184.



REGIONAL LOCATION

In addition to relocating a portion of Virginia Route 110 to the east side of the Pentagon Reservation outside of the Parade Ground Terrace footprint, the relocation project provided two ramped pedestrian bridges from the River Terrace area to the north and south parking areas, and the waterfront. All these measures were necessary perimeter security enhancements to the Pentagon Reservation.

Proposal

The submitted project will alter the historic River Terrace at the east end of the Pentagon Reservation in a minor and limited fashion that includes the introduction of two new skylight structures with low profiles situated at the east side of the north and south ends of the terrace. The skylights would be screened from view by new hornbeam hedges and green space areas created adjacent to the skylights. These areas would provide seating and walkways similar to the existing extent of open space at the Parade Ground level (See plan at page 5).

A new entrance pavilion structure, clad in limestone, would be located at the northeast end of the terrace facilitating access from the pedestrian overpass walkway to the Conference Center. Other entrances to the renovated space at the lower level, below the terrace, would provide direct ground-level access using the tunnel abandoned when Route 110 was relocated and would serve as entry points from surrounding areas within the Pentagon Reservation.



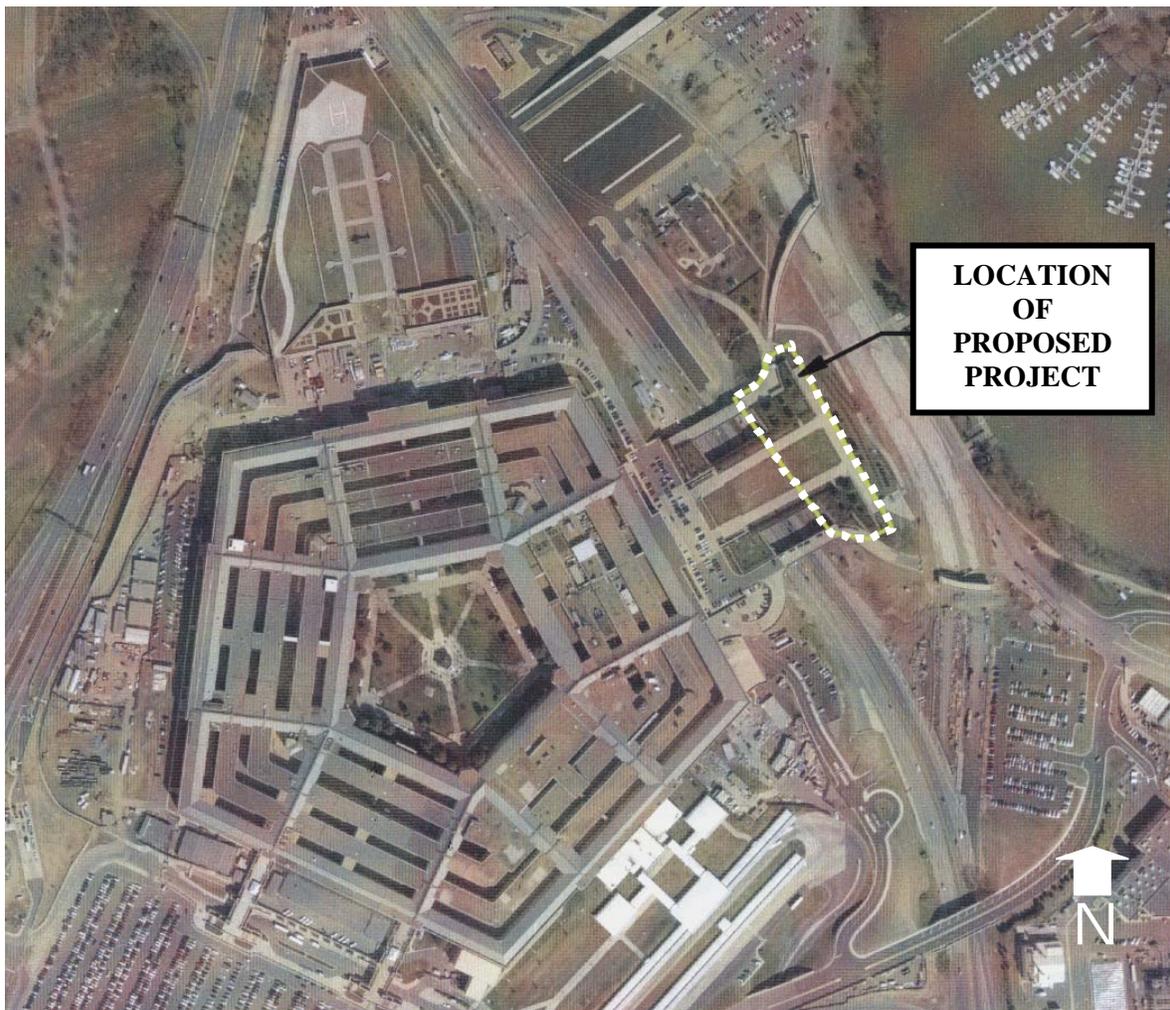
AERIAL VIEW OF THE PENTAGON RESERVATION

The balance of the project would affect only the full interior of the underground space of the existing River Terrace structure, and would not impact the limestone detailing on the monumental stair wall facing the Potomac River waterfront. The existing monumental wall and stairways would be maintained in their current historic positions.

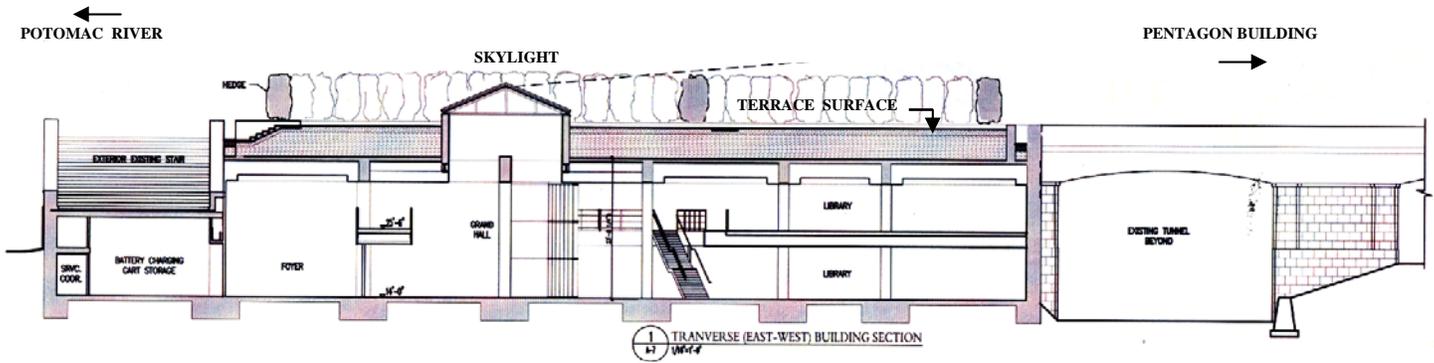
PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

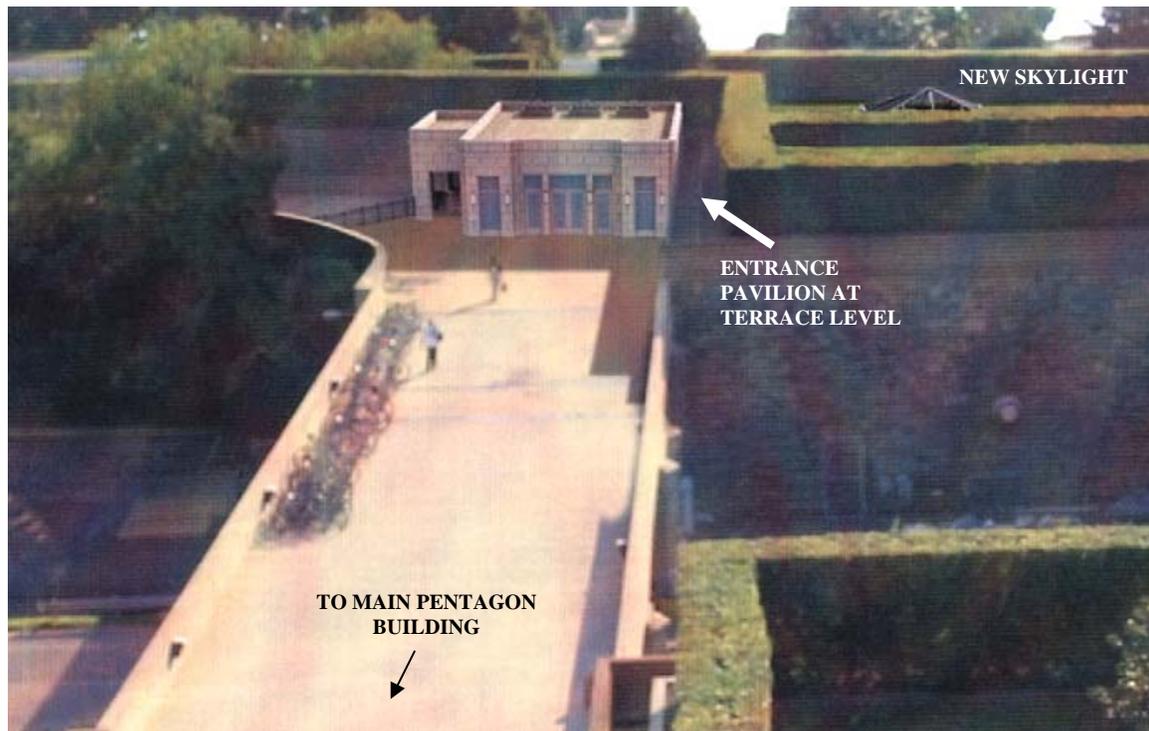
The **staff recommends approval** of the preliminary site and building plans. The initial design of the proposal, as reviewed in a consultation meeting by staff two months ago, found the overpass walkway pedestrian access spaces adjacent to the entrance pavilion to be extremely narrow and constrained. Expressing their concerns, staff recommended redistributing the internal area of the entrance pavilion to accommodate a widening of the exterior circulation space. The applicant has responded to staff comments in this submission by reapportioning the upper level site area to reduce the pavilion footprint size. The north side of the pavilion features a security screening area and visitor check-in that the Pentagon maintains are necessary to provide screening of all visitors and employees entering from the north parking areas.



CLOSE-UP AERIAL VIEW OF PROJECT LOCATION



EAST / WEST BUILDING SECTION



SIMULATED VIEW TOWARD NEW ENTRANCE PAVILION AS SEEN FROM PENTAGON

The Pentagon is continuing discussions with the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) regarding the project's alterations at the exterior upper level of the River Terrace, but has found the preliminary design plans have raised no significant concerns to date with the Virginia SHPO.

Staff reminds the applicant that all final color finishes are to be submitted in the request for final approval of the Renovation and Construction of the Library and Conference Center. Further, staff recommends to the Commission that the Department of Defense (DOD) should analyze future DOD project submissions in association with an updated master plan. Such a master planning effort had previously been indicated to staff in mid 2004, and the Commission is favorably disposed to review that undertaking as soon as it can reasonably be made available.



ENTRANCE PAVILION IN SIMULATED VIEW FROM NORTH



2 ENTRANCE: NORTH ELEVATION



1 ENTRANCE: WEST ELEVATION

ENTRANCE PAVILION BUILDING ELEVATIONS

Development Program

Applicant: Department of Defense
Architect: BBG / BBGM, Washington, DC
Cost: Total estimated project cost is \$29,800,000.
Schedule: Start of construction in April 2006.

COORDINATION

Commission of Fine Arts

The Commission of Fine Arts reviewed the project at its October 21, 2004 meeting and granted concept approval of the proposal to the Department of Defense.

CONFORMANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

Staff review finds the proposed Renovation and Construction of the Library and Conference Center consistent with the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital. The Plan notes that “the presence of the Pentagon and other military installations in northern Virginia has fostered a large military services and research sector that attracts new military related facilities”.

The following polices adopted by the Commission within the Federal Workplace Element, in August 2004, apply regarding federal actions relative to existing facilities:

- “10. Utilize available federally owned land or space before purchasing or leasing additional land or building space. Agencies should continuously monitor utilization rates of land and building space to ensure their efficient use.
11. Consider the modernization, repair and rehabilitation of existing federally owned facilities for federal workplaces before developing new facilities.”

Staff has determined that the project plans would not have an adverse effect on other federal facilities or federal interests and adhere to the policy objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

Master Plan

The Commission approved a revised master plan for the Pentagon Reservation in October 1991 with modifications for various and more recent improvements in the ensuing years since that review and approval.

The 1991 land use plan identifies the Parade Ground Terrace as open space. The planned Library and Conference Center project does not alter the essential and overall qualities of the

area which define the terrace as a primary open space element. Much of the actual new utilized space of the project involves interior areas, and no visible evidence beyond the skylights and small entrance pavilion are visible at the exterior terrace level. Consequently, while small areas of the terrace are modified, the character and overall extent of the terrace are not diminished. No major change in land use is proposed by the submittal at the exterior levels of the River Terrace. Staff finds the plans are consistent with the approved land use by maintaining the open space quality of the terrace and augmenting the exterior landscape of the River Terrace surface.

National Environmental Policy Act

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Commission staff has reviewed the submission and has found the proposal is consistent with the Commission's categorical exclusion requirements at Section 8 of the Commission's Environmental Procedures.

National Historic Preservation Act

The Pentagon Renovation Office, Washington Headquarters Services, on October 1, 2004, initiated consultation with the Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer (VA SHPO), determining that the proposed project would not have an adverse effect on the Pentagon reservation, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The project has been submitted to NCPC for preliminary review; DOD is still in consultation with the VA SHPO.

The staff commends the applicants for designing the above ground elements—the skylights and the entrance pavilions—so that they are integrated with the formal grass panels and the path of the landscaped setting.

Federal Capital Improvements Program

The 2004-2009 FCIP was adopted September 4, 2003 and included the Renovation and Construction of the Library and Conference Center as part of the Pentagon Officer's Athletic Center Restoration Project. The Commission specified the proposed improvements, in its FCIP review, as a *recommended and strongly endorsed* proposal with a total cost estimated to be \$38,100,000.