

**POTOMAC ANNEX
VARIOUS SECURITY UPGRADES
23rd and E Streets, NW
Washington, DC**

Delegated Action of the Executive Director

November 26, 2004

Pursuant to delegations of authority adopted by the Commission on October 3, 1996, I approve the preliminary and final site and building plans for various security upgrades at the Potomac Annex, 23rd and E Streets, NW, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 23.00(38.40)41439.

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The Department of the Navy (Navy) has submitted a proposal for security upgrades within and along the perimeter of the Potomac Annex. Currently, the Annex has sections of chain link fence along and across roads at the perimeter and within the Annex complex. The proposal would replace those sections of chain link fence that are visible from outside the complex along 23rd Street, NW with ten-foot-high black decorative steel fences with matching gates at both the north and south entrances to the Annex from 23rd Street. A future phase of the project will propose the replacement of additional sections of chain link fence within the site.

Pedestrian turnstiles would be installed where the complex's internal sidewalks meet the gates. The turnstiles are similar to those approved by the Commission at the Washington Navy Yard. At the north entrance, the turnstile would be located farther back from the gate, behind a large tree. The gates at both entrances would have pierced metal panels at the bottom to screen views of the Delta barriers directly behind them.

Additional Delta barriers would be located within the site, beyond public view. The Navy has agreed to paint the Delta barriers with a more subtle paint pattern and color than is typical at Navy installations, given the importance of 23rd Street views. The barriers will be painted gray with a white band defining the edges, rather than with bright diagonal stripes across the surface. At the north entrance, the gates would normally be open and the Delta barriers down during working hours. At the south entrance, which is used primarily for egress during evening rush hours, the gates would normally be closed and the barriers upright. The Annex includes residences for Navy personnel, however, so the barriers would need to be sufficiently visible at night for both the residents and the guards. The use of a subtler color palette and the metal panels across the bottom third of the gates will appropriately screen the Delta barriers from public view.

Other aspects of the proposed security project include widening the north driveway at the top of the hill inside the complex to create an inspection lane for vehicles. Nearby mature trees would be marked and protected during construction. In addition, modular guard booths inside the complex would be clad in red brick and roof slate to match the older booths nearer the entrances.

The case was presented to the Coordinating Committee at its November 10, 2004 meeting and was coordinated by all agencies present. NCPC staff has reviewed the submission materials and found the proposal qualifies as a Categorical Exclusion pursuant to NCPC's Environmental Procedures. The Annex is the home of the Old Naval Observatory and associated historic structures. The Observatory was built in 1844 and is a designated National Historic Landmark. The Navy has concluded its Section 106 consultation with the D.C. State Historic Preservation Office with a determination of No Adverse Effect.

The Navy has worked extensively with Commission staff and with Commission of Fine Arts staff on the design and location of the proposed security measures. I commend the Navy's efforts and responsiveness in that regard and approve the proposed security project.

Patricia E. Gallagher, AICP
Executive Director