

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

NCPC File No. 6541



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
HARRY S TRUMAN BUILDING
PERIMETER SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.**

Submitted by the U.S. Department of State

November 24, 2004

Abstract

The U.S. Department of State (State) has submitted a design concept for improving perimeter security at the Harry S Truman Building at 2201 C Street N.W. The development of this perimeter security plan is the culmination of ongoing design efforts and studies by the Department of State to improve overall security at the Harry S Truman building. The plan's objectives are to secure the Harry S Truman Building, protect employees and visitors, and improve the streetscape by creating an attractive environment for pedestrians and neighbors.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of design concept pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8722(d) and Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act (40 U.S.C. § 8722(b) (1)).

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

- **Commends** the Department of State for closely following the recommendations included in the Commission's Urban Design and Security Plan, as well as for its thorough coordination and early consultation of this proposal with NCPC, the Commission of Fine Arts, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office, and the District of Columbia Department of Transportation.

- **Approves** the design concept for perimeter security improvements, Harry S Truman Building, 2201 C Street, NW, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.34(38.40)41490.
- **Directs** the Department of State to undertake the following as the design development proceeds:
 - Develop specific agreements with the District Department of Transportation regarding elimination of on-street parking, modification to curb lines and street alignments, vehicular access restriction on C Street NW, and perimeter security elements in public space along the sidewalks adjacent to 21st and 23rd Streets including policies for use of traffic barricades on 21st Street.
 - Develop specific agreements with adjacent property owners, including the American Pharmacists Association and the National Academy of Sciences, regarding access from C Street, and circulation at the intersection of 22nd and C Streets.
 - Coordinate with the Federal Highway Administration and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts regarding proposed modifications to E Street, which could affect access improvements to the Kennedy Center.
 - Coordinate with the National Park Service regarding the possible relocation of the Bernardo de Galvez statue currently located on U.S Reservation 720.
 - Further develop the design of bollards, walls, rails and corner markers along with adjacent landscaping.
 - Further develop the design of the entry pavilions to reflect the character of the building's architectural era and ensure that they are located within the building yard, between the face of the building and the public sidewalk, and that they do not intrude into the view corridor of the adjacent historic streets.
 - Eliminate the two proposed trees that intrude into the historic 21st Street right-of-way and further study the impacts of proposed street trees within the 23rd Street right-of-way on viewsheds to and from the Lincoln Memorial.

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BACKGROUND AND STAFF EVALUATION

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

Site Description

The Truman Building, located in the Northwest Rectangle Historic District, is bounded on the north by D Street, the E Street Expressway on ramp, E Street, and Virginia Avenue; on the south by C Street; on the east by 21st Street; and on the west by 23rd Street. The Potomac Annex Historic District is adjacent to the west, the Potomac Parks Historic District is located to the

immediate south, and the Seventeenth Street Historic District is located to the east. The Truman Building was constructed in two building phases, which together, occupy 11.8 acres. The original section of the building constructed for the War Department (Old State) and occupies the northeast quadrant of the site at the corner of 21st and E Streets. New State was completed in 1960 and was constructed in an L shape to wrap around the south and west sides of the original building and fill the four blocks bordered by 21st, 23rd, C, and D Streets. The site slopes 31 feet from its lowest spot at the corner of 21st and C Streets to its highest level at 23rd and E Streets. The building has five major entrances, two on 21st Street and one each on 23rd, D, and C Streets.

Background

After the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, the Department of Justice determined that the Truman Building is a high threat Level 5 building, which is comparable to the Pentagon and the CIA Headquarters, containing functions that are critical to national security.

The Department of State based the extended perimeter requirements of the plan on the Blast Assessment Study for the U.S. Department of State, Harry S Truman Building, 2004. The blast analysis study found that greater stand-off distances and improved protective barriers were needed. Further, it was determined that the visitor screening process should take place outside of the building to prevent the possibility of someone carrying explosives into the building and mitigate the impact of an explosion on the building.

State also referenced the NCPC Urban Design and Security Plan, October 2002. The study recommended greater stand-off distances, the removal of some street parking, and reconfiguring the E Street Expressway. Additionally, State conducted traffic studies and gathered data to evaluate the impact of street restrictions on the neighborhood. State advises that the C Street restrictions proposed in the plan are completely reversible.

Design Concept

The Department of State has an overall threefold plan to secure the Truman Building:

- Replace windows to incorporate blast resistant glass and reinforcement of walls.
- Extend and reinforce the site perimeter.
- Add security screening pavilions at all entrances.

The replacement of windows to incorporate blast resistant glass and reinforcement of walls is being incorporated in the Old State building as part of the Old State Modernization Project. Subsequent work would coincide with the future modernization of the New State. The current design concept focuses on reinforcing and extending the perimeter and adding security screening pavilions at all entrances.

Extend and Reinforce Site Perimeter

The objective of the site improvements is to increase the building's security perimeter and enhance the area surrounding the Truman Building. The major features of the site plan include replacing drop-off and /or parking lanes with additional sidewalk and protective fencing, reconfiguring the ramp from the E Street Expressway on the building's north side, installing retractable security devices in selected streets, revising the truck delivery inspection area, and providing significant landscaping and street furniture. More specifically, the major features of the plan are:

- Drop-off and /or parking lanes would be replaced with additional sidewalk and protective fencing along 21st and 23rd Streets and Virginia Avenue.
- At 21st Street, there would be two truck inspection areas, the existing truck inspection area would be redesigned for the Department of State and a new truck inspection area would be provided for the Federal Reserve.
- Recessed security barriers would be located near the intersections of 21st Street with both C Street and Virginia Avenue.
- The ramp from the E Street Expressway would be reconfigured. A fifth leg would be added to the Virginia Avenue/E Street intersection. Traffic on D Street would be limited to Department of State traffic.
- C Street would be redesigned to restrict traffic and would include a landscape median that would provide a continuous design along C Street from the Federal Reserve to the Department of State.
- Retractable bollards would be placed at the C Street/22nd Street intersection.
- New guard booths would be installed at D and 23rd Streets, D Street and Virginia Avenue, the Truck Inspection area on 21st Street, C and 21st Streets. And C and 23rd Streets.
- Significant landscaping and street furniture would be introduced to create a pedestrian friendly site.

The protective fencing or railing proposed in the concept would be comprised of structural bollards that would be concealed within a system of decorative cladding and covers. The system includes stone clad walls, steel cover posts and semi-transparent steel fence panels that in combination intend to create a unified family of street furnishings that are complimentary to the building. The stone clad elements would be granite similar to the granite on the building and the steel covers and railings would be stainless steel and be removable to allow for repair and cleaning. At the entrance on 23rd Street, the railing would be designed with an emergency break away feature. A significant amount of low plantings would be combined with the new railing to enhance the pedestrian walkway and streetscape.

Guard booths would be placed on C Street, D Street, and 21st Street. The design would contain elements of the original building's architecture – stone, glass, stainless steel, and extending canopies with receding columns. The booths would also incorporate landscaped areas, signage, and kennels. The larger guard booths located on C, D, and 21st Streets would accommodate three guards and two guard dogs. The booths on C and D would be vehicle check points and the one on 21st Street would house the guards that inspect delivery trucks. Smaller booths would house one person and be located at entry points to the garage on 21st Street, the exit at the garage on D Street, and the exit point of D and C Streets.

New benches, light fixtures, flag poles and other architectural elements have been designed to integrate with the perimeter railing components and to compliment their appearance. Some would also serve to conceal structural bollards. The new amenities would be concentrated near entry pavilions and pedestrian gathering areas. Landscaping would be provided in a park like manner along D Street where much of the existing roadway is being altered. New street trees would be planed on both sides of C Street and a new planted median would be created to continue the scheme suggested in the Commission's Urban Design and Security Plan. Additional street trees would be planted along 21st Street in the newly created planting areas between the sidewalk and roadway. The full length of the 23rd Street façade would also be planted with new street trees.

Pavilions

As mentioned, there are five entrances to the Truman Building and new entrance pavilions would be constructed at each entrance. It is intended that the design of the pavilions incorporate the spirit of the current canopies (sculptural forms, linear floating structure, and receding columns). Each pavilion would house three main functions that State determined would be needed at each entrance:

- Employee entry
- Visitor check-in and screening
- Ceremonial entrance for dignitaries, heads of state etc.

The pavilions would feature stainless steel clad columns and large projecting canopies. Each entry point would be highlighted with round frosted skylights in the style of the original building. A glass and stainless steel storefront system would enclose each pavilion. All pavilions would include a reception desk that could accommodate four receptionists; turnstiles to be used by employees and visitors to the Department of State; and screening equipment that includes an x-ray machine and magnetometers.

The overall concept for the Truman Building would be implemented in phases that include:

- Phase I – design and construct guard booths at C Street and locate retractable bollards at the intersection of C and 22nd Streets.
- Phase II – add a guard booth at the corner of 23rd and D Streets, reconfigure the entry at D Street and construct a pavilion at the D Street building entrance.

- Phase III – incorporate bollards and fencing at the perimeter, reconfigure D Street and the E Street Expressway exit ramp, extend the sidewalk perimeter at 21st and 23rd Streets.
- Phase IV – design and construct a pavilion at the main 21st Street entrance.
- Phase V – design and construct a pavilion at the secondary 21st Street entrance.
- Phase VI – design and construct the pavilion at 23rd Street.
- Phase VII – design and construct the pavilion and plaza on C Street.

Development Program

Applicant: U.S. Department of State
Architects: Karn Charuhas Chapman & Twohey
Acreage: 11.8 acres
Estimated Cost: 53.5 million
Schedule: Project design is scheduled to begin in October 2005 and implementation will be over a 5 year period with Phase VII completion slated for September 2010.

Previous Commission Action

At its June 3, 2004 meeting, the Commission approved the preliminary and final site and building plans to construct and operate, for a period not to exceed two years, the temporary vehicle access security control measures at the Harry S Truman Building.

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Staff is particularly pleased with the manner that the Department of State has coordinated this proposal and consulted with NCPC Staff and the progress made in Section 106 consultation prior to the development of preliminary design plans. Additional consultation was undertaken with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office, and the Commission of Fine Arts, as well as with the District of Columbia Department of Transportation. Much progress has been made in refining the concept. The Department of State should be highly commended for these efforts of consultation and coordination.

The design concept would provide a visually cohesive environment for the Old and New State portions of the Harry S Truman Building as well as greatly improve the overall streetscape for pedestrians. The close adherence to the majority of recommendations contained in the Commission's Urban Design and Security Plan for this area would provide a model for other federal agencies seeking to enhance perimeter security.

The provision of the perimeter barriers and entry pavilions are proposed as a result of the blast analysis conducted by the State Department. The external pavilions are intended to provide a contained delay and response time in the event of terrorists activities.

The widening of sidewalks along 21st and 23rd Streets, planting street trees, and providing pedestrian amenities should transform the surrounding sidewalks into a pedestrian friendly environment. Staff recommends continuing study of the placement of new street trees and their impact on historic L'Enfant rights-of-way and viewsheds along 21st and 23rd Streets. Eliminating the drop-off lanes and parking lanes along these streets should not adversely impact on traffic movements.

Although the staff is very pleased with the development of the design concept it is recommended that the Department of State further demonstrate:

- Develop specific agreements with the District Department of Transportation regarding elimination of on-street parking, modification to curb lines and street alignments, vehicular access restriction on C Street NW, and perimeter security elements in public space along the sidewalks adjacent to 21st and 23rd Streets including policies for use of traffic barricades on 21st Street.
- Develop specific agreements with adjacent property owners, including the American Pharmacists Association and the National Academy of Sciences, regarding access from C Street.
- Coordinate with the Federal Highway Administration and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts regarding proposed modifications to E Street, which could affect access improvements to the Kennedy Center.
- Coordinate with the National Park Service regarding the possible relocation of the Bernardo de Galvez statue currently located on U.S Reservation 720.
- Further develop the design of bollards, walls, rails and corner markers along with adjacent landscaping.
- Further develop the design of the entry pavilions to reflect the character of the building's architectural era and ensure that they are located within the building yard, between the face of the building and the public sidewalk, and that they do not intrude into the view corridor of the adjacent historic streets.
- Eliminate the two proposed trees that intrude into the historic 21st Street right-of-way and further study the impacts of proposed street trees within the 23rd Street right-of-way on viewsheds to and from the Lincoln Memorial.

Although the proposed trees at 21st Street and Virginia are to partially screen the redesigned truck loading area, they would intrude on the historic 21st Street right-of-way and should be eliminated. Staff generally doesn't support the closure, even on a temporary basis, of a public

street, however, we support the restriction of vehicle access to C Street as long as it continues to provide access to adjacent property owners, is thoughtfully designed, and is easily reversible.

Staff also does not generally support the use of concrete traffic channeling as is being done on 21st Street, but find it acceptable here because we recognize the need to screen trucks outside of the building.

We do not generally support the elimination of curbside parking, but accept the need for a 50-foot stand-off along 23rd Street given the fact that it will not adversely affect vehicular traffic and will enhance the pedestrian experience.

We commend the design's palette of perimeter security elements, particularly at the corners of 21st, 23rd, and C Streets, and along 23rd Street, and the limited use of free-standing bollards.

Staff recommends approval of the design concept for perimeter security improvements.

CONSULTATION

The Department of State has met several times with NCPC staff, the Commission of fine Arts Staff, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the State Historic Preservation Office and the D.C. Department of Transportation in the development of this proposal. This consultation process has been on-going and has resulted in the proposal now before the Commission. Earlier in the consultation process, staff made recommendations regarding several aspects of the proposal, for example, the perimeter fence system along 23rd Street has been modified from a continuous wall to a system to one with more visual porosity allowing for views to the Truman Building from vehicles. Staff is currently in consultation with State regarding the design of the entry pavilions to ensure that they reflect the character of the building's architectural heritage and remain within the building yard so as to not intrude in the public space.

CONFORMANCE

Comprehensive Plan

The proposed concept is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital. The Federal Workplace: Location, Impact, and the Community element states that federal agencies should:

- Be “Guided by the National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan, federal agencies should integrate building perimeter security in a manner that enhances and beautifies the public realm. Security elements should not be separate or redundant systems that unnecessarily clutter or impede access to public spaces.”
- “Incorporate building hardening into new and existing construction to meet blast resistance requirements when it is important to maintain a building line that provides accessible ground floor uses...”

- “Coordinate the planning, design, and construction of building perimeter security for neighboring federal buildings that share frontage on a street.”
- “Does not excessively restrict or impede operational use of sidewalks or pedestrian handicap and vehicular mobility.”

The proposal is consistent with all of the above policies.

National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan

As mentioned earlier in this report, the development of the design concept for providing enhanced security for the Truman Building evolved from recommendations contained in the Commission’s National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan. The proposed widening of sidewalks, providing a median along C Street, the use of a fence/railing system rather than a continuous row of bollards, the provision of street furnishings, heavy landscaping and addition of street trees, and use of an architectural vocabulary that is consistent with the Truman Building are all included in the Urban Design and Security Plan. Additionally, the Department of State is continuing to extensively coordinate this proposal with review agencies as design development continues.

COORDINATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal on November 10, 2004. The Committee forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the project had been coordinated with all agencies represented except the General Services Administration. The representative from GSA did not coordinate pending further resolution of coordination issues between GSA and State Department staff regarding procedures for joint NCPC submissions. GSA subsequently agreed to coordinate. The participating agencies were NCPC; the District of Columbia Office of Planning, Department of Housing and Community Development, and Department of Transportation; the National Park Service, General Services Administration; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

National Environmental Policy Act

The current submission, as a concept design proposal, does not require the Commission to complete its NEPA determination at this stage of project review. Based on the initial information by the Department of State, it will be undertaking preparation of an environmental assessment prior to submission of preliminary plans and in accordance with the Commission’s Environmental and Historic Preservation Policies and Procedures.

In developing the submission of preliminary project plans to the Commission, the Department of State should prepare an environmental assessment that should include public scoping, distribution for review and comment, and response to any substantive comments on the environmental assessment prior to the submission of the project for NCPC review. NCPC staff

emphasizes that the Department must determine the findings of its environmental review and develop a conclusion and mitigation of any adverse impacts of the planned action prior to submitting any phase of the security proposal.

Historic Preservation Act

The Department of State, with the General Services Administration as co-lead agency for Section 106 review, formally initiated Section 106 consultation with the D.C. State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation on October 26, 2004. Both agencies, interested organizations, and NCPC staff and CFA staff have already been consulting on the proposed security design for some months. DOS and GSA have determined that the potential adverse effects arise from four sources: security barriers proposed for the perimeter of the site; permanent guard booths in street rights-of-way; potential demolition of the current entrance canopies at the various entrances and their replacement with new, larger enclosed entrance pavilions for screening equipment at the entrances; and public space alterations to accommodate a new traffic pattern around the building. The DC SHPO concurred with the determination of adverse effect in a meeting on August 4, 2004.

Potentially affected historic resources include the Truman Building, a contributing historic element in the Northwest Rectangle Historic District, which has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places; the L'Enfant Plan streets and views and public reservations; and adjacent historic properties within and near the historic district, including the Old Naval Observatory (a National Historic Landmark), the American Pharmacists Association, the National Academy of Sciences, the Federal Reserve, and West Potomac Park. Views from and along 23rd Street, Virginia Avenue, and Constitution Avenue are elements of the L'Enfant Plan.

The Truman Building was constructed in two phases. The original building, Old State, was built for the War Department between 1939-1941 and comprises the northeast corner of the current building, which was subsequently expanded. The original portion of the building was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in its own right in 1992, with the concurrence of the D.C. SHPO. The canopies that are under study for replacement with pavilions are on the newer portion of the building, although a new entrance pavilion is proposed for the Old State entrance on 21st Street, as well.

Staff highly commends DOS and GSA for the level of consultation and constructive discussion to date and anticipates a successful conclusion to the Section 106 review through the eventual execution of a Memorandum of Agreement. DOS and its design team have been highly responsive to suggestions and comments made during the consultation to date. In addition to NCPC, the SHPO, and the Advisory Council, DOS is also consulting with the Commission of Fine Arts, the Committee of 100 on the Federal City, the D.C. Preservation League, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A, and the National Coalition to Save Our Mall, as well as with adjacent and neighboring institutions.

The consultation meetings to date have focused primarily on the perimeter security design and location. At the most recent consultation meeting on November 9, 2004, however, the proposed

replacement of the entrance canopies with enclosed pavilions was discussed at great length. Everyone acknowledges that further study and discussion of the pavilion designs will occur as they are developed. The parties have made the assumption that new pavilions will be constructed so that security equipment can be placed on the exterior of this Level 5 building. The proportion of each pavilion in relation to the building and the architectural style of the new pavilions are very much under discussion and are being studied by the design team. DOS would like the pavilions to be consistent in their overall style, although each entrance condition is unique.

In particular, the C Street entrance, which is visible from Constitution Avenue and from 23rd Street, and which is the primary entrance and the one used by dignitaries, requires particular consideration because the existing canopy is the most architecturally expressive and representative of the Truman Building's architectural era. If it is at all possible to preserve the canopy itself, in concert with an enclosed pavilion, staff would urge that as a solution. The C Street entrance pavilion is scheduled for the final phase of a seven-phase project, and staff anticipates that answers to how to reconcile program and security requirements with the best possible design solutions for the building and its setting will soon become clear. For staff, the 21st Street entrance to Old State is another entrance requiring particular study, since this part of the building is different and the entrance is typical of an earlier architectural era. Further, DOS anticipates a museum with public visitors in this corner of the building.

In summary, staff is very pleased with the nature and depth of the consultation to date and commends DOS, their design team, and their GSA partner for the promising start of Section 106 consultation on this very visible security design project in a historic and well-designed area of Washington.