

STAFF RECOMMENDATION



NCPC File No. 5853

E. BARRETT PRETTYMAN U.S. COURTHOUSE
ANNEX PERIMETER SECURITY
333 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C.

Submission by the General Services Administration

February 26, 2004

Abstract

The General Services Administration has submitted a proposal for perimeter security elements, consisting of three types of bollards, along Constitution Avenue, 3rd and C Streets, NW to control vehicular access and to provide a vehicular stand-off for the courthouse annex.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of preliminary and final site development plans 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:

Approves the preliminary and final site development plans for the perimeter security project at the E. Barrett Prettyman U.S. Courthouse Annex in northwest Washington, DC, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.21(05.17)-41309.

Recommends that the applicant:

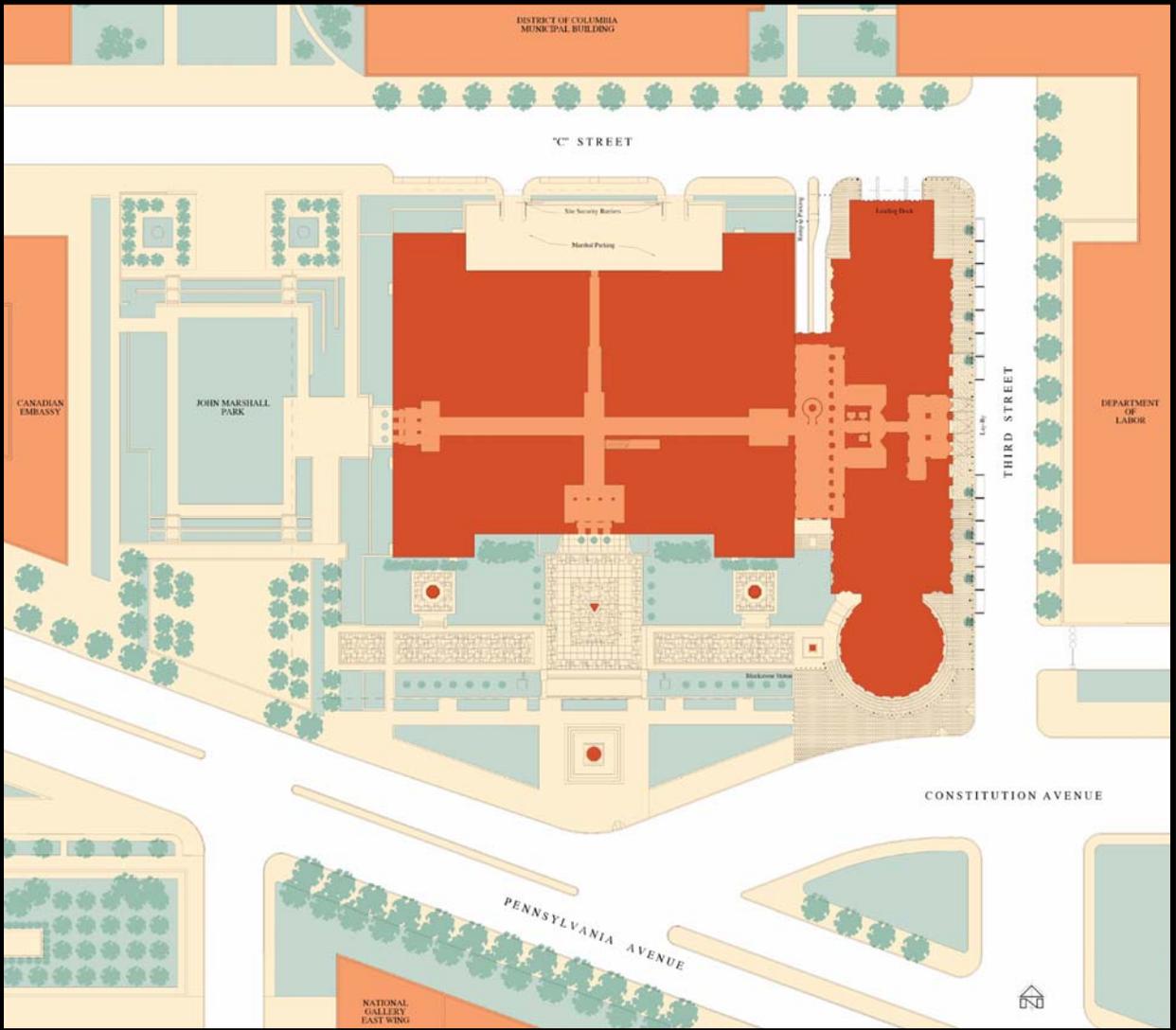
- Pull back the bollard line at the corner of C Street, NW and 3rd Street, NW to allow standing room for pedestrians waiting to cross the street at this location.
- Participate in early consultation meetings with NCPC staff prior to submitting perimeter security projects for the main Prettyman Courthouse building to ensure coordination between this project and future adjoining perimeter security measures.

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Site Description

The project is located along the west side of 3rd Street, NW between C Street, NW and Constitution Avenue, NW. To the immediate west is the Prettyman Courthouse, to which the annex is connected. To the east, across 3rd Street is the U.S. Department of Labor headquarters. To the south are Constitution and Pennsylvania Avenues, and to the north across C Street is the District of Columbia Municipal Building. The site is urban in character, and surrounded by relatively narrow sidewalks along 3rd and C Streets.



Site Plan

Background

The Commission approved the design of the Courthouse Annex on October 10, 2001, but excepted approval of the proposed perimeter security concept, which consisted of a continuous line of bollards around the perimeter of the building. The Commission expressed concern over the use of long lines of bollards in general, and cited the fact that NCPC's Urban Design and Security Plan (UDSP) was just getting underway. The Commission directed the applicant to resubmit its perimeter security plan in accordance with the guidelines established by the UDSP upon the plan's completion.

The General Services Administration (GSA) resubmitted the perimeter security plan to staff in December of 2003 for the January 2004 meeting. The new submission differed only slightly from the design rejected by the Commission in October of 2001, and staff advised GSA to withdraw the project until February so that NCPC and GSA could work together to improve the perimeter security design. During the month of December, staff worked with the applicant in an attempt to incorporate other streetscape elements into the design in accordance with the UDSP but was not able to develop a satisfactory solution in time to meet deadlines for the February meeting. The applicant withdrew the project once again and continued discussions with staff. The project described herein is the result of those discussions between the applicant and NCPC staff, and represents the applicant's best efforts to comply with the requirements of the UDSP. The project was accompanied by a threat assessment.

The applicant will develop a perimeter security plan for the main Prettyman Courthouse building in the future.

Proposal

The proposal consists of a continuous line of bollards, incorporating four different bollard designs and a post and rail element. The bollards are approximately 38 inches high and are placed 4 feet on center, set back a minimum of 24 inches from the curb line in accordance with requirements established by the District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT). The three bollard designs are:

- Retractable stainless steel bollards used in front of the C Street loading docks.
- Concrete-filled steel post bollards clad in a concrete finish to complement the annex building architecture.
- Concrete-filled steel post bollards clad in a concrete finish to complement the annex building architecture, and topped with an illuminated fixture. These bollards are used at the base of the building's rotunda on Constitution Avenue.
- Steel bollards that are square in section and finished to match the color and sheen of the Washington Globe street lights, and topped with an illuminated fixture. These bollards are used at the building's entrance on 3rd Street and intermittently along 3rd Street.

The post and rail element will be utilized in front of eight street trees that will be incorporated into the streetscape along 3rd Street. The vertical posts will be identical to the square steel

bollards, but will be joined together by a horizontal rail that is also square in section. The entire assembly will be finished to match the other square steel bollards.

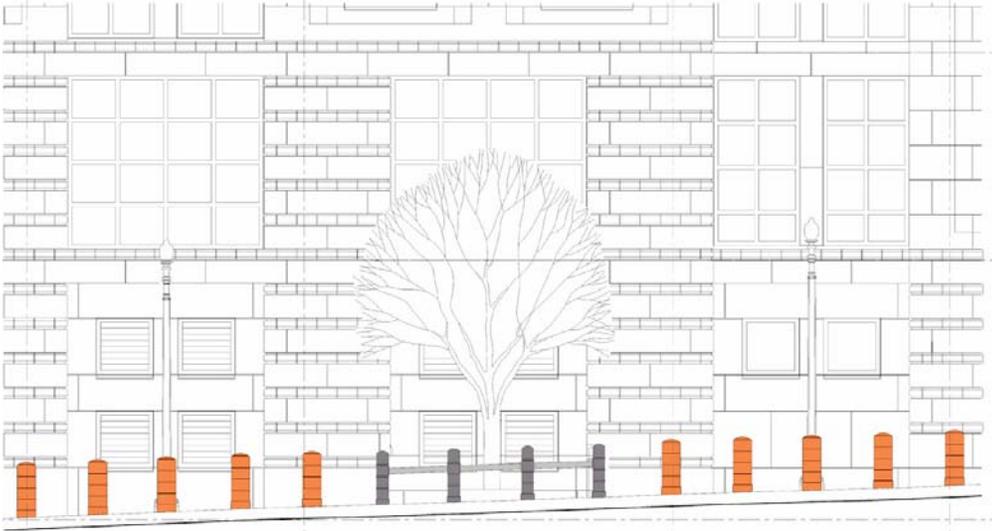
The bollard line will extend from the southwest corner of the annex building along Constitution Avenue, continue along the entire length of the building on 3rd Street, wrap around the building on C Street and end near the northwest corner of the annex building. The bollard line will meet the existing perimeter security for the main courthouse building on both the north and south sides of the project.



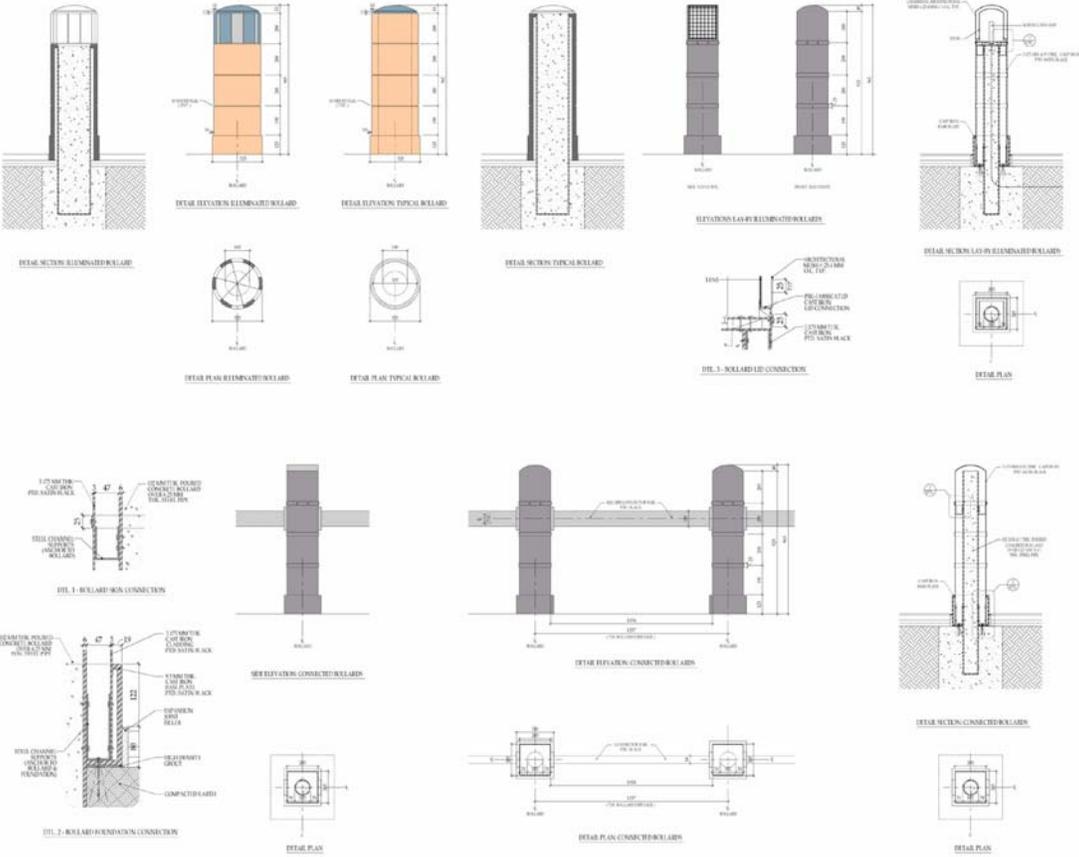
View along 3rd Street, NW facing northeast



View north along 3rd Street, NW showing position of street lights



Detail of post and rail element at street trees along 3rd Street, NW



Details of bollard types

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

The proposed project strikes a difficult balance between security and urban design requirements. The courthouse has a security requirement for maximum visibility along the sidewalk to minimize potential blind spots, making the incorporation of street furniture difficult to accomplish. The project design attempts conformance with the National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan recommendations for the use of bollards and landscape fence elements in the Federal Triangle zone, to which it is adjacent. The applicant has used a variety of bollard types in order to accomplish several important urban design goals. Illuminated steel bollards help to define the 3rd Street entrance, while illuminated concrete bollards highlight the base of the rotunda on Constitution Avenue and become visually integrated into the building’s architecture. Steel post and rail fence elements allow a visual break in front of street trees along 3rd Street, punctuating what would otherwise be a continuous bollard line. In light of the security requirements of this building and the limited public space in which the applicant has to work, the

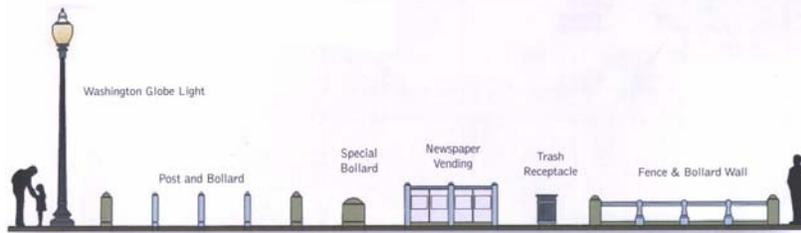
submitted project successfully integrates elements of the UDSP and avoids the monotony that would result from the use of 150 bollards of the same type along the entire length of the 3rd Street façade.



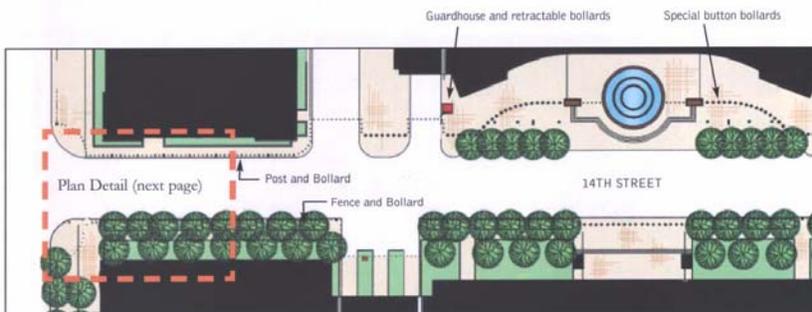
Illuminated Metal Bollards define 3rd Street, NW entrance

National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan

The applicant has worked at length with staff to develop a project that conforms to the guidelines and recommendations of the Commission’s Urban Design and Security Plan (UDSP). Although the Prettyman Courthouse annex lies within the area denoted by the UDSP as “Downtown,” its setting is more similar to the “Federal Triangle” zone. In fact the project site sits adjacent to the east end of the Federal Triangle zone, as defined in the UDSP. The UDSP recognizes the limitations imposed by narrow sidewalks in the zone and recommends fence and bollard solutions along those streets where sidewalks are too narrow to include other types of street furniture. Fence solutions are recommended to be utilized in front of planted areas, with bollards used in other locations. The UDSP depicts the incorporation of several complementary bollard types into a perimeter security scheme. Staff agrees that the project design does conform to the guidelines of the UDSP for the Federal Triangle zone.



FEDERAL TRIANGLE - HARDENED STREETScape ELEMENTS



FEDERAL TRIANGLE - 14TH STREET SAMPLE APPLICATION AREA

The proposed streetscape design framework on the north-south streets of the Federal Triangle incorporates:

- A fence and bollard wall on the curbside of the tree planting beds.
- Bollards where sidewalk conditions are too narrow to employ the fence wall, such as adjacent to the Wilson Building on 14th Street.
- Custom-designed solutions for the 12th Street hemicycle and 14th Street plaza in front of the Ronald Reagan Building.
- The General Services Administration's proposal for the design of a fountain at the 13th Street terminus at Pennsylvania Avenue.
- Redesign of the fountain in front of the National Archives on Pennsylvania Avenue to accommodate security requirements.
- Removal of the parking lanes on both sides of 10th Street. A study to develop modifications of 10th Street bus operations is recommended to make the street more pedestrian friendly, as appropriate to this street and its termination at the Constitution Avenue entrance to the National Museum of Natural History.
- Guardhouses, as required at points of vehicular entry to parking and service areas, to be located close to the buildings, and designed to be compatible with the associated building architecture. Gate arms are acceptable in areas of high traffic volume.

Design Framework

Streetscape designs for the Federal Triangle reflect the hierarchy of Pennsylvania Avenue, Constitution Avenue, and the north-south streets in this precinct. The designs distinguish the avenues from the streets. Design concepts respond to the historic site and architectural character while enhancing the pedestrian experience.

The Federal Triangle design concept incorporates a uniform streetscape design for the majority of the north-south streets. Specific design solutions are applied to the special conditions that exist on these streets, including: custom design of the hemicycle on 12th Street, the terminus of 13th Street, and the 14th Street entry plaza of the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center.

Security components proposed for the Federal Triangle include several bollard designs, a street fence design, and modifications of existing plinth and retaining walls. The typical north-south streetscape design incorporates a fence and bollard wall located on the curbside of the existing tree planting beds (typically two trees in length). Where breaks in this element exceed security requirements, a bollard or other hardened streetscape component is incorporated. While not proposed as a component of this security barrier, hardening of the street light poles is also an option. Bollards are used on corners and where the sidewalk is too narrow to incorporate street trees and the associated fence wall.

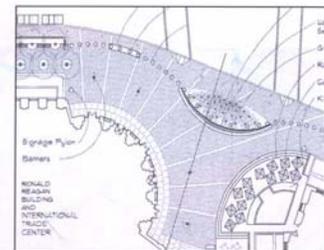


FEDERAL TRIANGLE KEY PLAN

LEGEND

- Post and Bollard
- Fence and Bollard
- Plinth Wall
- Special Bollard
- ⓔ Vehicle Entrance
- ✱ Special Projects
- - - Sample Application Area

The Plan endorses the General Services Administration's proposal for the design of a fountain at the 13th Street terminus at Pennsylvania Avenue.



Excerpts from National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan for Federal Triangle Zone

Bollards

All of the bollards used in the project are approximately 38 inches high, spaced 4 feet on center, and set back 24 inches from the face of the curb. The setback conforms to regulations established by the DDOT, and the four foot spacing between bollards allows for easy access by pedestrians. The bollard height is consistent with other submissions for perimeter security bollards that have been reviewed by the Commission. The various decorative finishes utilized on the bollard exteriors are designed to complement the building architecture and the required Washington Globe street lights. Illuminated bollards are utilized both to enhance the prominent rotunda on Constitution Avenue and to provide additional lighting at the 3rd Street entrance, and to draw attention to the entrance along the building's façade. Post and rail elements used in front of street trees along 3rd Street serve to break up the bollard line, protect the trees from impact, and differentiate these landscape elements from the surrounding hardscape.

Building Entrance

Previous Commission comments focused on the fact that the 3rd Street entrance to the Courthouse Annex did not stand out visually along the building's 3rd Street façade. The Commission requested additional architectural features or other means to emphasize the entrance. The project employs a change in bollard appearance at the building entrance, to highlight the location of the entrance along the street. The dark color of the bollards against the light colored finish of the building creates a visual "opening" in the bollard line, indicating that this is a place to pass through the perimeter security elements. Additionally, these bollards are illuminated at night, providing even greater focus at the building entrance.

Loading Dock

At the C Street loading dock and parking garage entrance, the applicant proposes to install retractable stainless steel bollards. These bollards are a logical choice for the function of these two areas; the bollards will sit within the overall bollard line.

Connection to Prettyman Courthouse Perimeter Security

The bollard line employed around the Prettyman Courthouse annex will abut the existing temporary perimeter security system in use at the adjoining Courthouse building. GSA is in the process of completing a threat assessment for the existing Courthouse and will submit a permanent perimeter security plan for the existing Courthouse at a later date.

Street Trees

The applicant has designed a special post and rail element for use in front of the eight street trees that line the 3rd Street side of the building. The post and rail elements match the finish of the bollards in front of the 3rd Street building entrance as well as that of the Washington Globe street lights. The vertical posts are identical in size and shape to the entry bollards. The horizontal rail complements the vertical post design and serves to prohibit movement from the street to the sidewalk at this location. When viewed along the street from a distance, these elements appear as voids in the bollard line because of their dark color, helping to break up the appearance of the overall perimeter security design. The bollard line appears to be punctuated by the trees.

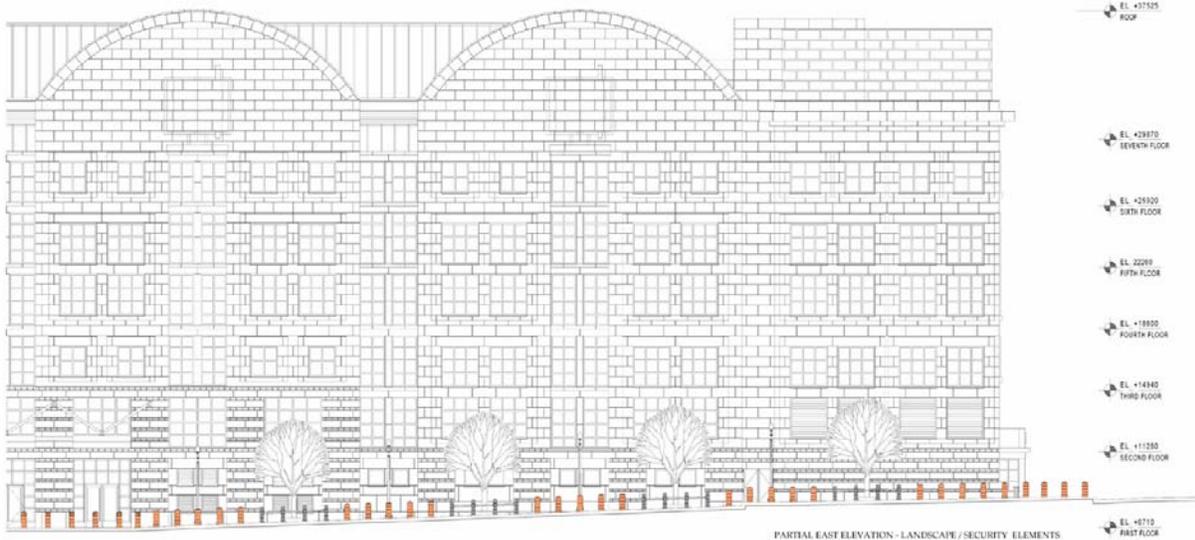
Street Light Fixtures

Standard Washington Globe street lights will be installed along the sidewalk in the vicinity of the Courthouse Annex. Originally, the applicant placed these street lights within the bollard line, hardening them as part of the perimeter security design. The incorporation of streetscape elements such as street lights is recommended by the Urban Design and Security Plan. Upon further consideration of the visual impact of incorporating these fixtures into the bollard line, the applicant has decided to move them back behind the bollards and place them in between the street trees and staff concurs with this decision. Because the project has evolved to include three different types of bollard elements along 3rd Street, the applicant and staff agreed that incorporation of the street lights into the bollard line resulted in visual clutter.

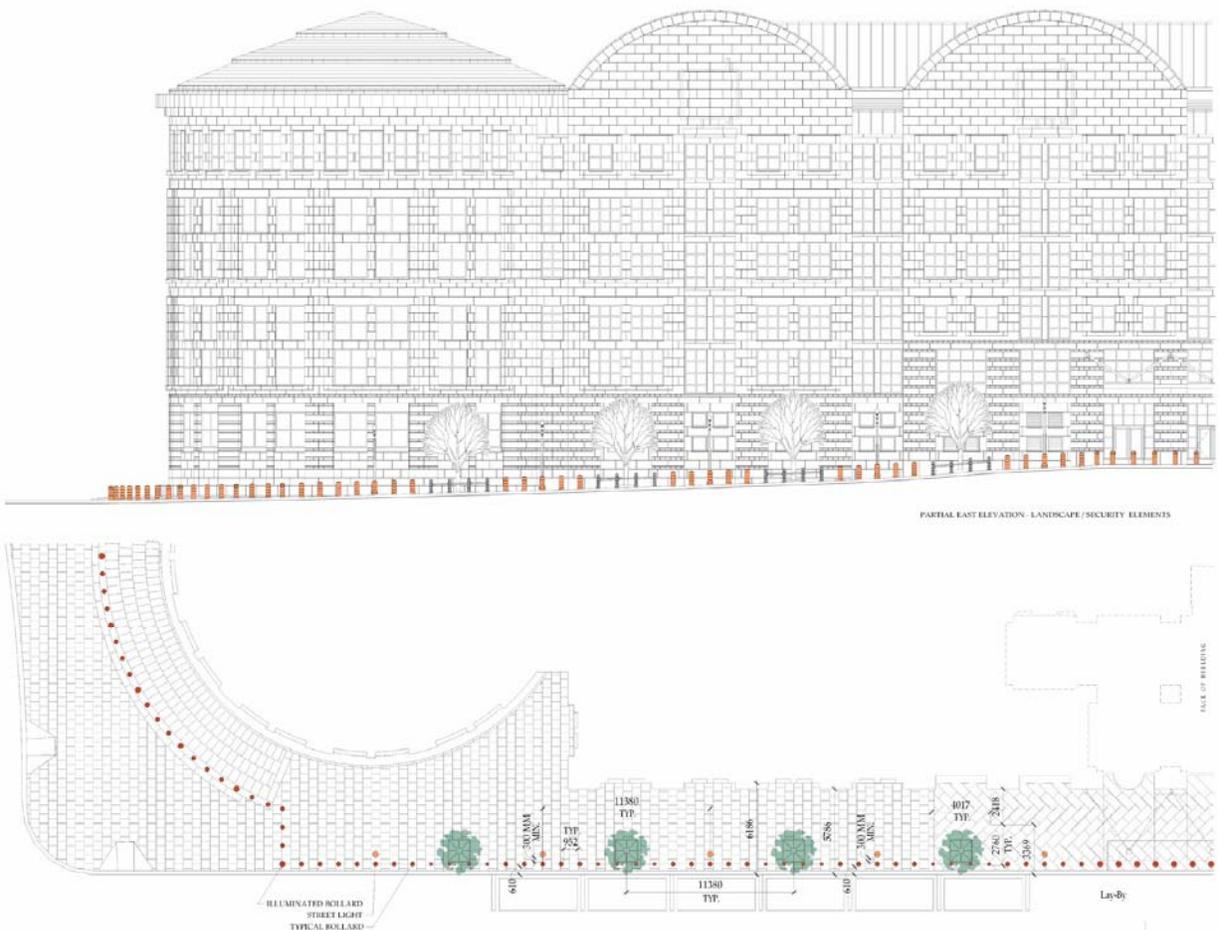
Corner Conditions

The project includes perimeter security elements at two street corners. These are the northwest corner of 3rd Street, NW and Constitution Avenue, NW and the southwest corner of 3rd Street, NW and C Street, NW. The placement of bollards at these two locations is responsive to the specific conditions at each corner location. At the corner of 3rd Street and C Street, the bollard line is pulled back behind the wheelchair ramp at that location. The space created on the far side of the bollard line may not allow adequate room for pedestrians waiting to cross the intersection. The bollards should be pulled back at this location.

At the corner of 3rd Street, NW and Constitution Avenue, NW, the bollard line becomes integral to the architecture of the building rotunda. This condition allows for plenty of room for pedestrians to gather near the corner and incorporates the perimeter security elements into the overall architectural design of the project, a goal of the Urban Design and Security Plan.



Corner Condition at 3rd Street, NW and C Street, NW



Corner Condition at 3rd Street, NW and Constitution Avenue, NW

Threat Assessment

The applicant submitted a threat assessment that supports the design of the project.

PROJECT CONFORMANCE

Federal Capital Improvements Program

The Prettyman Courthouse Annex perimeter security project is part of the E. Barrett Prettyman U.S. Courthouse Annex project, included in the Federal Capital Improvements Plan for Fiscal Years 1999-2003, adopted by the Commission at its meeting on July 9, 1998.

National Environmental Policy Act

GSA has determined that the project qualifies as a categorical exclusion under its National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance procedures at GSA Order PBS 1095.4C and the GSA NEPA Compliance Guide.

National Historic Preservation Act

The General Services Administration (GSA) consulted with the D.C. State Historic Preservation Office and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation from 1998 through 2001 on the design of the Prettyman Courthouse. The vehicle security line was indicated on the final set of drawings on which the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was based. The consultation and the stipulations of the MOA focused primarily on the proposed interior alterations to the historic courthouse, the opening of the east wall of the building, the design and footprint of the addition, and the alteration of the setting. GSA has completed its Section 106 responsibilities.

Draft Judiciary Square Master Plan

The site for the subject project lies within the overall study area for the draft Judiciary Square Master Plan dated June 6, 2003; however, it lies outside of the master plan site area. Master plan recommendations will be limited to the master plan site area. The plan recognizes that the Prettyman Courthouse annex is currently under construction, and does not indicate that the submitted perimeter security project is inconsistent with the overall master plan.

Judiciary Square Transportation and Security Study

The ongoing District Department of Transportation (DDOT) Transportation and Security Study for Judiciary Square will examine transportation-related security concerns of the Judiciary Square area's various tenants. The Study will focus on issues such as traffic congestion, loading operations and parking to determine the impact that such activities have on the security of various buildings in the area. The Prettyman Courthouse and Courthouse annex are bounded on the north by C Street, NW, which has been identified as a major area of traffic congestion in Judiciary Square. Loading and parking operations at the Courthouse annex should be coordinated with the recommendations of this study.

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

The proposal is not inconsistent with the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed this item at its meeting on February 11, 2004 and forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the project has been coordinated with all agencies participating. The participating agencies were: NCPC; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the District Department of Transportation; the General Services Administration; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

Commission of Fine Arts

The Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) reviewed and approved the final plans for this project at its May 18, 2000 meeting; however, the design of the perimeter security elements has been

modified since that time. CFA indicates that the applicant should resubmit this project for their consideration following final action by the Commission at the March 4, 2004 meeting.

District Department of Transportation

DDOT requires that entities desiring to place perimeter security elements in public space comply with DDOT's Public Space Security Policy and obtain a public space permit. The removal or reassignment of on-street public parking spaces along the 3rd Street side of the Courthouse annex will also need to be coordinated with DDOT.