

**U. S. NATIONAL ARBORETUM
HEADQUARTERS SITE IMPROVEMENTS
3501 New York Avenue, NE**

Delegated Action of the Executive Director

April 29, 2004

Pursuant to delegations of authority adopted by the Commission on October 3, 1996, I approve the preliminary site development plans to construct a new surface parking area, at the U.S. National Arboretum adjacent to and east of the Headquarters Building, as depicted on NCPC Map File No. 43.20(05.17)-41348.

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The Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, has submitted preliminary site development plans for construction of a new 11,000-square foot parking area for 90 employee vehicles. Approximately 124 personnel work throughout the facility.

The new surface parking replaces the existing front parking area that features 145 spaces and will be dedicated to visitor parking while construction occurs throughout the Arboretum implementing new master plan visitor facilities. The existing parking area would ultimately be reduced in size as a new visitor center and its associated parking south of the central meadow is constructed.

The new Headquarters parking area involves only the preliminary design and entails minimal clearing and excavation because of its location within the existing cleared area of the current service yard of the building. The surface parking, located at the rear of the building and removed from public view, connects with an existing service road at the north end of the administration complex. No public access is allowed in this portion of the Arboretum. The building itself will undergo limited interior renovation of the structure but that effort does not change the exterior façade except for upgrading of windows. The new replacement windows match current windows in appearance and configuration as demonstrated in the submitted plans.

The USDA completed a request for review by the DC SHPO pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The Department initiated consultation for the headquarters project with the DC SHPO on February 26, 2004, and received a response on April 14, 2004.

The DC SHPO concurred with USDA that the construction of the parking lot would have no adverse effect on the Arboretum, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The headquarters building was built in 1961 and is a non-contributing building.

The project, which involves no built floor area and is consistent with the Commission approved master plan, would have no adverse impact on land uses or environmental resources of the general site. In conformance with its NEPA compliance procedures, the Department completed an environmental assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact for the project as a portion of the master plan in October 2000. The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal on April 14, 2004, forwarding the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the project has been coordinated with the agencies present.

The Executive Director, in taking this action, notes to the Department of Agriculture that in the submission of final project site development plans to the Commission, the Department is to provide complete documentation of its coordination and design compliance with the District of Columbia Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs permitting regulations regarding the District's *1987 Standards for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control*.

Patricia E. Gallagher, AICP
Executive Director