



**U. S. NAVAL OBSERVATORY
MASTER CLOCK FACILITY
3450 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C.**

Delegated Action of the Executive Director

October 27, 2005

Pursuant to delegations of authority adopted by the Commission on October 3, 1996, I approve the final site and building plans for a Master Clock Facility at the U. S. Naval Observatory, 3450 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 71.20(38.00)41702.

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The Department of the Navy has submitted final site and building plans for a Master Clock Facility at the U.S. Naval Observatory. The Commission previously approved the preliminary plans at its October 2004 meeting. The 5,000-square-foot, unoccupied building would be located on the main drive north of the south entrance gate. The building would house Cesium Fountain Clocks and associated support equipment in a single-story structure which must meet stringent temperature, humidity, and vibration control standards. The mission of this facility is critical in meeting the precise timekeeping requirements of the Department of Defense and the entire civilian aviation system.

As part of the proposal, seven structures determined contributing to the National Register eligible Naval Observatory Historic District will be demolished. These structures (and some foundations) must be demolished to allow for the new facility because the Naval Observatory has a maximum “built environment” limit. The structures to be demolished would ensure that the balance between built structures and open space be maintained. The Navy advises that through the Section 106 review process, a Memorandum of Agreement between the State Historic Preservation Officer and the Navy has been executed to document these structures prior to demolition and to mitigate any adverse effects. NCPC staff has reviewed the submitted information on the proposal and has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion in accordance with the Commission’s environmental policy and procedures under the National Environmental Policy Act. The Coordinating Committee reviewed and coordinated the proposal at its October 12, 2005 meeting.

Patricia E. Gallagher, AICP
Executive Director