

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

E. Keller



NCPC File No. 6621

FORT LESLEY J. McNAIR,
ACCESS CONTROL POINT, EAST GATE
P and 2nd Streets, SW
Washington, D.C.

Submitted by the Department of the Army

October 27, 2005

Abstract

The Department of the Army has submitted preliminary site and building plans for a new security entrance area for visitors and staff at Fort McNair in Washington, DC. The new entry road, gate area, perimeter fences, and security inspection features provide both pedestrian and vehicle access points while minimizing queuing zones or potential impacts to the 2nd Street, SW, right-of-way or public space areas. All of the noted features are required Department of Defense (DoD) security elements for military campuses with public entry points.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

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

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

Approves the preliminary site and building plans for the Fort Lesley J. McNair, Access Control Point, East Gate, as shown on NCPC Map File No 24.40 (38.00)-41699.

Requires:

- The Army re-assess the use of the wide-edge precast concrete at the guardhouse and inspection station, and determine a narrower width to the roofline edges for implementation.
- The gate area, situated between the visitor center and the guard booth and identification check area, to be fully presented with the intermediate gates and posts illustrated and dimensioned completely.
- All gate cartway vehicle barriers to be located and identified in the final design.
- The Army continue to consult with NCPC staff, the staff of the Commission of Fine Arts, and the District of Columbia Office of Planning regarding the perimeter fence focal point at 2nd Street and Potomac Avenue, to ensure the design of this feature is suitable and appropriately proportioned.

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Army has submitted preliminary site and building plans for a new access gate and security checkpoint area at Fort McNair. The design of the new post entrance would occur at the intersection of Q Street and Second Streets, SW. The facility's design responds to the Department of Defense latest perimeter security and force protection criteria. The proposed entrance provides both pedestrian and vehicle access points while minimizing queuing zones and potential impacts to the 2nd Street, SW right-of-way or public space areas.

The proposal will serve as a new secured entry/exit point for Fort McNair. The existing ceremonial entry gate at P Street, SW will remain functioning for essential employees and for exiting. The temporary access entry at 2nd St, SW and P Street, SW will be closed and removed when the new gate on the east side of the fort is completed.

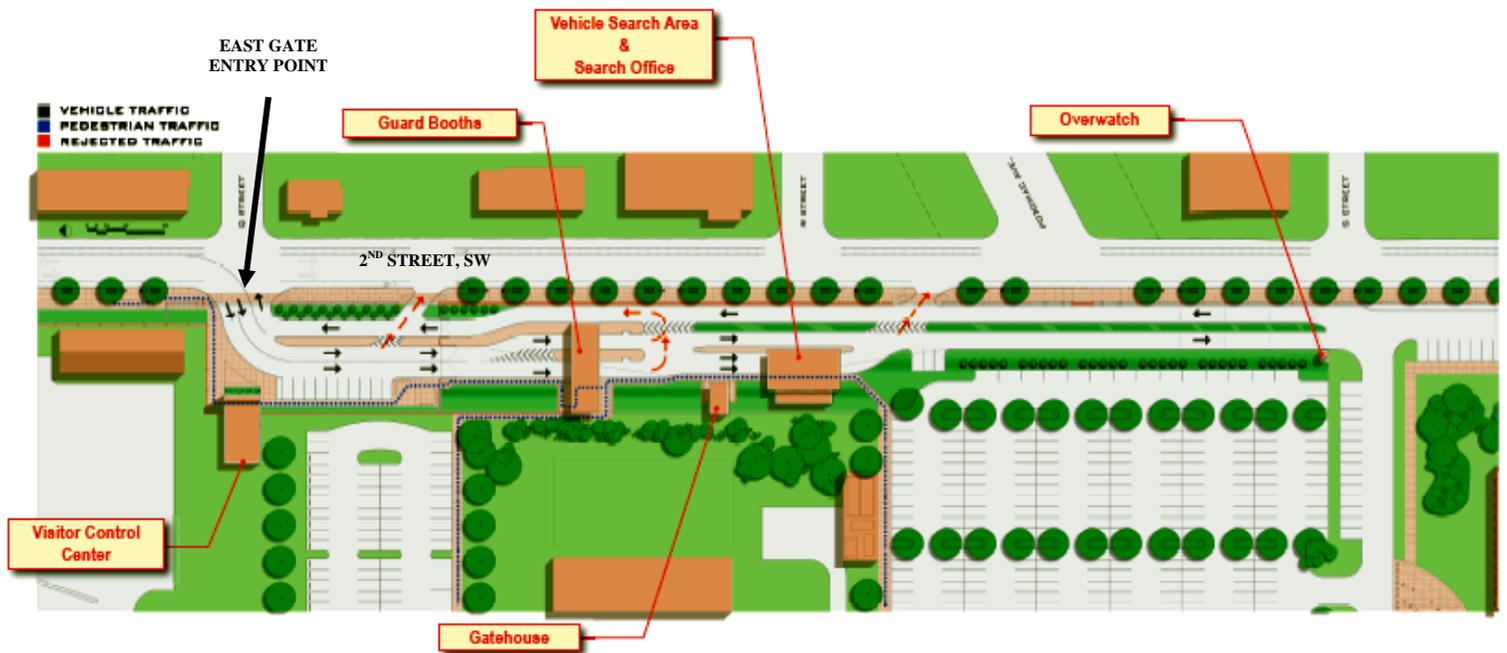
Site

The project location conforms to the location identified in the Subarea master plan for the NDU Expansion reviewed and approved by the Commission. Fort McNair is located in the southwest section of the District of Columbia and is bounded on the north by P Street, SW on the south by the confluence of the Anacostia River and the Washington Channel of the Potomac River, on the east by 2nd Street, SW, and on the west by the Washington Channel. Fort McNair is designated in the L'Enfant Plan as a military facility and one of the 16 original focal points of the plan.

The new entrance gate is situated at the eastern edge of Fort McNair, which includes Tempo C, a portion of newly acquired land that is outside of the historic district. Currently, there is a chain link fence that is overgrown with weeds and brush along the eastern boundary of post. A concrete sidewalk is located in the space between the fence, and the 2nd Street curb is twenty-five feet from the existing fence line.



ACCESS CONTROL POINT EAST GATE PROJECT LOCATION AT FORT McNAIR



PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN OF EAST GATE AND SECURITY FEATURES

Background

The preliminary submission responds to the Commission request for detailed design information on the proposed new entrance to the fort anticipated by the initial identification of such an element in the Subarea Plan in 2004. Further concept description was expressed by the Army about the new gate during the site and building plan review for the National Defense University Lincoln Hall in early 2005.

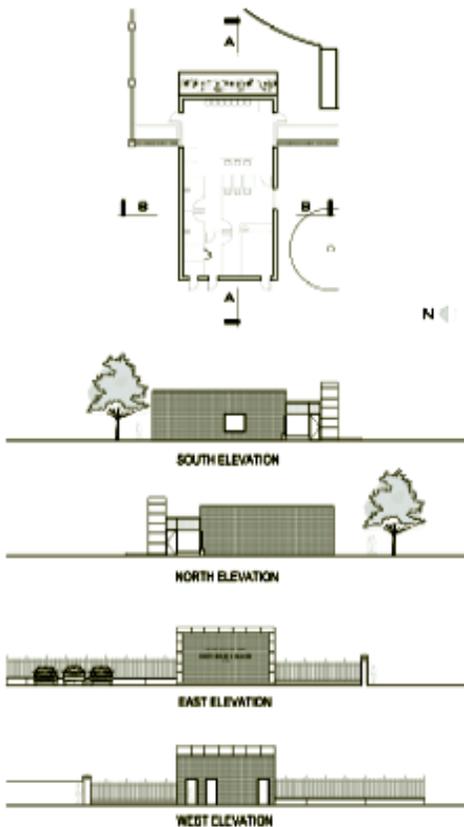
The Commission, in February 2005, excepted from the approval of Lincoln Hall's preliminary design the concept sketch submitted for the area of the new east gate, and requested that the Army continue to develop the plan for this element in a way that reflects an entrance design for post visitors that also provides a Potomac Avenue viewshed focal point, and that also would preserve the streetwall along 2nd Street while accommodating the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative plan for the Riverwalk.

Proposal

The preliminary site and building plans for the new east gate provide a pedestrian and visitor check-in center, guard booth inspection point, gatehouse, vehicle search area and search station, perimeter fence and wall, access road extension, and overwatch guardhouse. All these features are required DoD security elements for military posts. Critical to the establishment of the new entrance area is its adjacency and provisions for the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative's (AWI) Riverwalk. In the AWI plan adjacent to Fort McNair, a street bikeway corridor or trail is located on Second and P Streets, SW. The bikeway corridor is addressed as a pedestrian environment with

street trees and a dedicated bike lane within Second Street. Additionally, the perimeter fence provides an open transparent focal feature, within the viewshed of Potomac Avenue, SW, that coincides with the perimeter fence. The Army established these elements after discussion with the Commission of Fine Arts staff, the District of Columbia Office of Planning, the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation staff, and the District of Columbia Department of Transportation (see attachment for record of District agency meetings and Commission of Fine Arts agenda).

The preliminary site plan for the new gate and security elements is organized as a linear layout along the post boundary line of 2nd Street, SW. The main entry is located at the intersection of 2nd Street, SW and Q Street, SW with circulation onto the post through the perimeter fence using a car queuing and visitor control center parking area. The post entrance road is designed with a slight bend that will reduce vehicle threats by slowing vehicles as they enter while diminishing vehicle queuing impacts to surrounding streets. Visitors that would obtain passes must stop at the visitor control center. All other credentialed personnel would proceed without stopping.



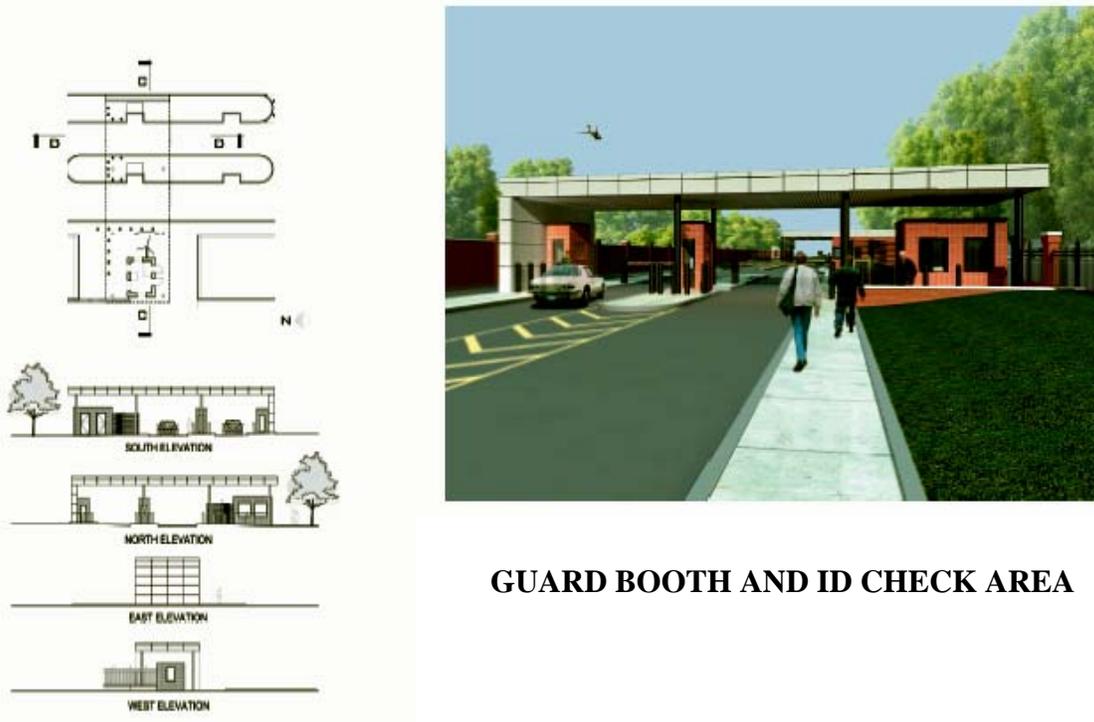
**VISITOR CONTROL CENTER
AT ENTRY POINT**

Moving to the interior of the entry road, vehicles and pedestrians must stop at the guard booth area, for an ID check, which is situated beyond the visitor control center area. Vehicles are either cleared to enter or are directed to the vehicle search area for an inspection. All truck delivery vehicles must go to the vehicle search area. Rejected vehicles are sent through an exit point leading outside the post, near the intersection of R Street, SW and the proposed extension of Potomac Ave, SW. These rejections would rarely take place and the gate would typically be closed and would not serve as an entry location.

The gatehouse is located further along the entrance road and has specific features to act as a command and control center for the whole entrance complex. The gatehouse is only occupied by post security personnel. The last building located in the design is the overwatch structure. Vehicle barriers are located to the east of the overwatch position and would secure the new entrance road, if activated by the overwatch guard. Beyond the overwatch building, the new entry road brings traffic directly to the campus areas adjacent to the new Lincoln Hall and the roadway connecting to 5th Street on Fort McNair.

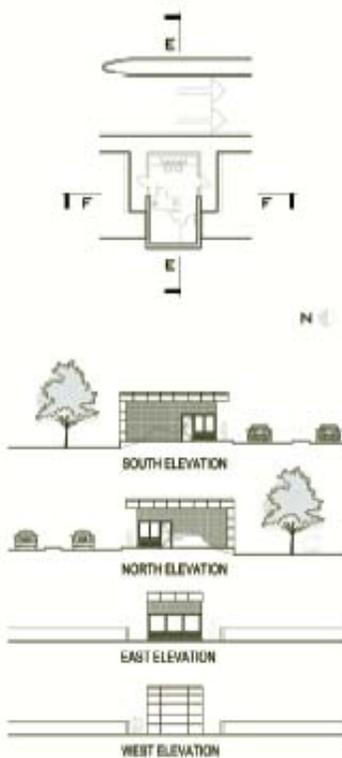
The new gate and security landscaping is designed to minimize the visual impact of the separate features of the gate area as noted above. The eight-foot tall fence along 2nd Street, SW is designed to be as open as possible along the perimeter, with brick piers and base to match the existing wall at P and 2nd Streets, SW. Its primary feature is the use of iron pickets to maximize openness. The portion of the fence directly adjacent to the guard booth and vehicle search area is designed with brick piers and a solid infill of brick up to eight feet for adherence to security design criteria to obscure and protect. The security landscape is established as a series of layers from outside the post boundary, at the fence line, and with landscaped berms within the security operations areas. The landscape berms will also aid to block views from outside the fort area through the fence to the parking area of Lincoln Hall. Finally, the new security buildings are linked with significant shrub planting and trees internal to the post.

Design of the five individual structures for the new entrance maintain an overall material and dimensional detailing theme. The visitor control center is designed as both an entry sign at the end of the Q Street Axis and to fulfill all requirements to efficiently process visitors requiring entry passes (see illustration on page 4). The eastern façade faces the main entry with a large frame of precast concrete and stacked bond brick infill that will be lighted for easy recognition.



GUARD BOOTH AND ID CHECK AREA

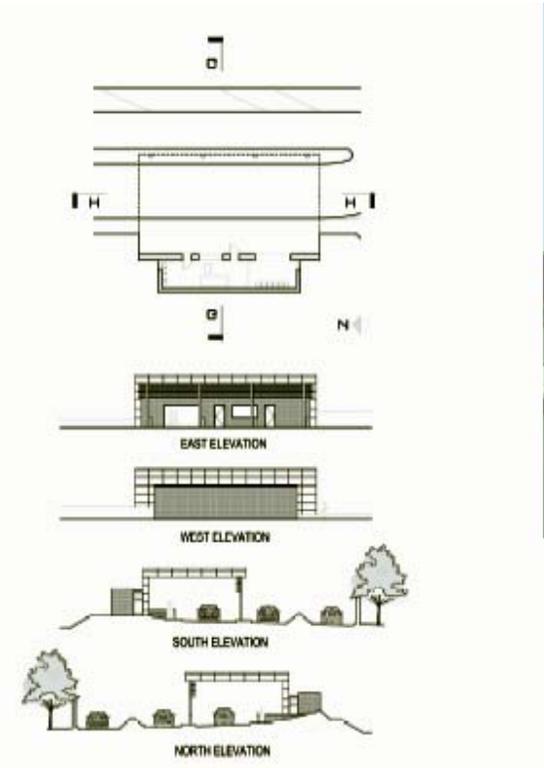
The guard booth and ID check area are designed with a precast concrete canopy supported by steel columns (see page 5). Inserted beneath the canopy are the guard booths which are clad in brick to match other entrance architectural features. The gatehouse is designed with a precast concrete shell and stacked bond brick infill (see below). The windows and doors are grouped with a metal base. All glazing is projectile resistant.



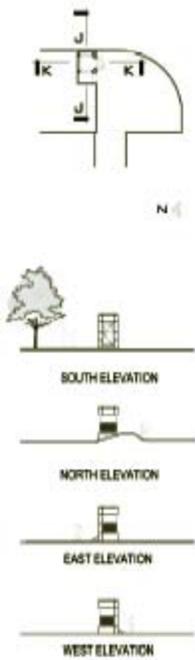
GATEHOUSE FOR SECURITY PERSONNEL

The vehicle search area is developed with a precast concrete canopy supported by steel columns. The building space attached to the canopy structure is designed with stacked bond brick and metal detailing, with minimal window space (see page 7).

The overwatch structure is a small booth featuring architectural precast concrete cladding combined with a metal and glass insert. This six-foot by six-foot booth is designed to terminate the security area and reflect its presence as an entry pylon to the fort with views of the new Lincoln Hall beyond.



VEHICLE SEARCH AREA



OVERWATCH STRUCTURE

Development Program

Applicant: Department of the Army

Estimated Cost: Preliminary design cost is established at \$2,500,000.

Architect: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill in conjunction with Design-Build Contractor Turner Construction Company

Completion Date: July 2007

Urban Design Context

The urban planning initiatives within the District of Columbia addressing the general area of Fort McNair include the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (AWI).

In the AWI plan adjacent to Fort McNair, a street bikeway corridor or trail is located on Second and P Streets, SW. The bikeway corridor is addressed as a pedestrian environment. Staff believes, as observed by the District Office of Planning in comments on the Fort McNair Subarea Plan, the street corridor adjacent to the proposed new Fort McNair east gate can accommodate the location and design of the desired bikeway/pedestrian walkway presented in the AWI. The Army has acknowledged the desired presence of the pedestrian/bike walkway and provides for the location of the AWI Riverwalk adjacent to the east boundary of the post.

COORDINATION

Coordinating Committee

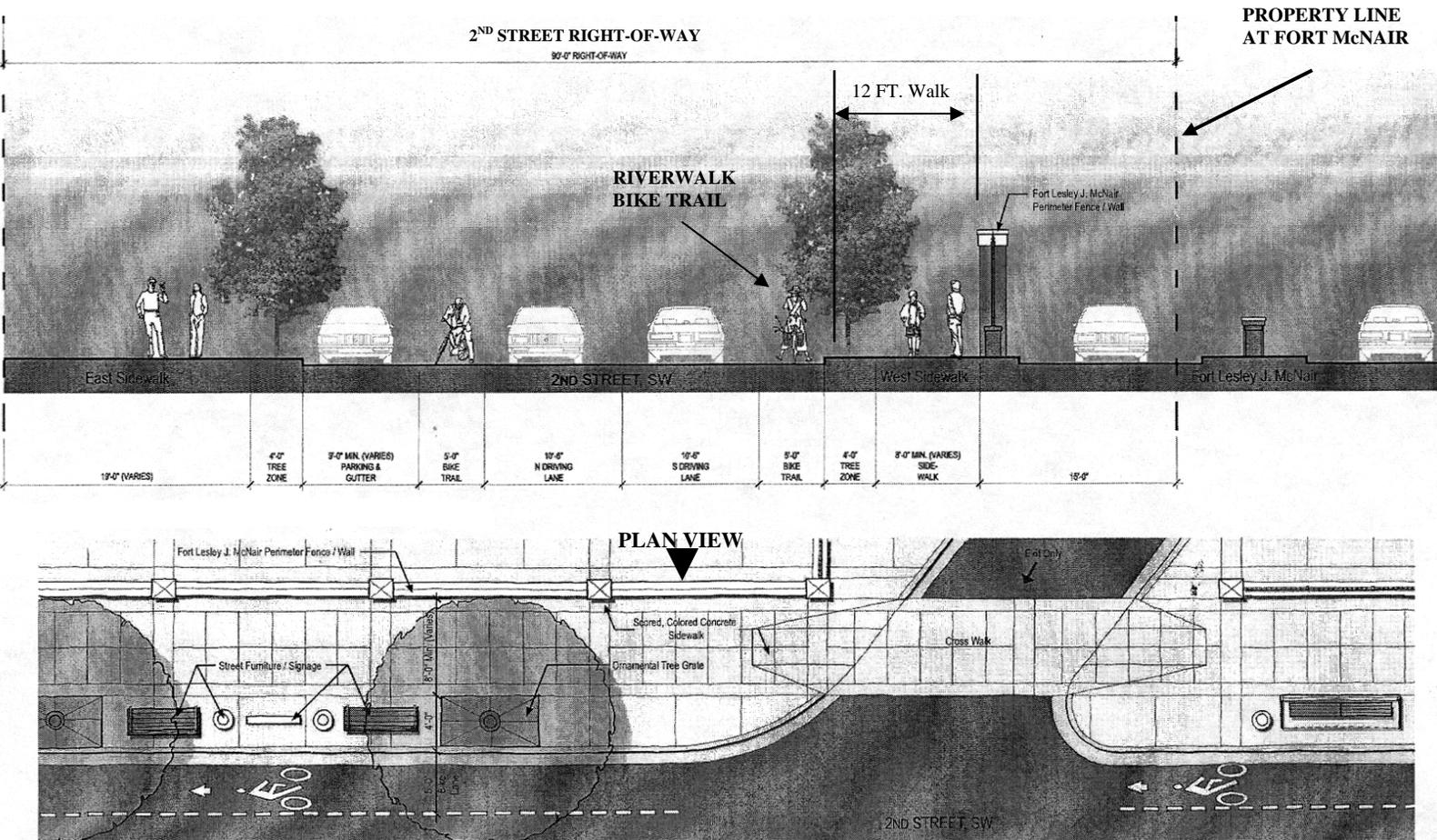
The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal on October 12, 2005. The Committee forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the project has been coordinated with all agencies represented, with the participating agencies being: NCPC; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the District Department of Transportation; the Department of Housing and Community Development; the Fire Department; and the General Services Administration.

Previously, in November of 2004, the District of Columbia Office of Planning (DCOP) expressed the following important points regarding the establishment of a new gate at 2nd Street:

- The Army must consider actions that do not replicate the blank façade walls and buildings at the post along P Street. A varied and interesting street wall, with façade treatments and visual openings, would be a significant benefit.
- The emphasis that adjacent streets leading to any relocated gate be adequate to handle new traffic patterns and volumes, including pedestrian and bicycle access.
- That 2nd Street, SW, should be maintained as a segment of the Anacostia Riverwalk and Trail from P Street to the James Creek Marina at the end of 2nd Street. Any perimeter, gate entrance and base boundary realignment must accommodate the presence of the planned trail at the 2nd Street right-of-way.

The preliminary design of the new gate area responds to the issues by continuing to maintain an open space character to the secured perimeter and provides the open visual transparency desired by local planners. Additional landscape treatments occur beyond the fence adjacent to the new entrance road which provides a green space background to the boundary and minimizes the visual height of the security structures and thus softens the building mass impact.

The proposed new gate layout at Fort McNair will require a public space permit to allow the perimeter wall and a portion of the boundary security features to be constructed in public space. The Army will submit a public space permit application for the Fort McNair gate once the general layout and components have been finalized.



TYPICAL CROSS SECTION AND PLAN OF FORT McNAIR EAST GATE PERIMETER AND AWI RIVERWALK FEATURES AT 2ND STREET, SW

Commission of Fine Arts

The Commission of Fine Arts reviewed the project as a concept for the facilities at 2nd and Q Streets, SW. The Commissioners approved the proposal, with a request for further review, and highlighted that the landscape treatments should be further evaluated to increase the height of the berming, if possible. Additionally, one Commissioner requested that the fence focal point on 2nd

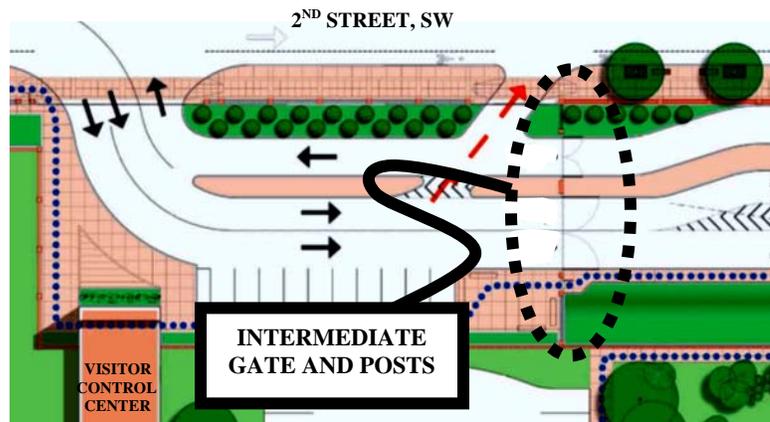
Street, SW be re-considered and perhaps removed. The review comments endorsed the compact nature and low architectural profile of the buildings and commended the Army for the overall effort.

Executive Summary

The preliminary submission reflects further refinement and detailed planning of the Army security measures to be implemented at the new Fort McNair east entrance. In December 2004, Army force protection design standards were published defining strict security requirements to be implemented in all new post entrance and security control construction projects. The standards include many technical requirements to be maintained with no variance. However, the considered Army examples, cited for implementation through the standards, did not address site limitations such as the reduced land area available for Fort McNair. The post's small size, urban location, and historic nature present unique challenges in balancing technical requirements and architectural themes in a limited area. Army post entry areas, under the new security standards, are divided into zones that provide standoff distances between security layers. Vehicle speed reduction, along with increasing the distance between the boundary gate entrance and final protection measure barriers, normally allows post security personnel enough reaction time to close off the entry area if a threat warrants such action. Fort McNair studied earlier renditions of the east gate and its layout and concluded the previous configurations did not provide adequate standoff distance between zones or reaction times for security personnel to effectively counter threats once recognized.

NCPC staff has reviewed the required specific buildings and barriers constructed in a secure area and find their introduction and location does not inhibit pedestrian and vehicular flow at 2nd Street or within the post itself. The new entry gate area will adequately function as the primary entry point for visitors requiring passes and for all delivery trucks.

Another important planning factor for the review is the transformation of the surrounding community, as the potential of the area is realized. South Capitol Street will be rebuilt in conjunction with the area revitalization planned east of Fort McNair. The Anacostia Waterfront Initiative is implementing the Riverwalk trail that will travel on the northern edge of Fort McNair along P Street, SW and on the eastern edge of Fort McNair along 2nd Street, SW. The submitted gate layout clearly allows for Riverwalk trail requirements while safely integrating these elements with Fort McNair new entry area. The Army design team continues to be involved in planning meetings with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) and District Office of Planning (DCOP) to ensure that



RECOMMENDED AREA REQUIRING FURTHER INFORMATION

the submitted design will adequately address its fit with the planning for the 2nd Street corridor area.

Staff finds the submitted architecture of the five building facades maintains important elements of the visual focus toward material use and fenestration that gives a thematic relationship to all the features of the gate area. Nevertheless, staff recommends the design team re-assess the use of the wide-edge precast concrete at the guardhouse and inspection station to determine a more appropriate width to the roofline edges, and perhaps carry that revised dimension throughout. Additionally, staff believes the project area situated between the visitor center and the guard booth and ID check area should be fully presented, and the intermediate gates and posts should be illustrated and dimensioned completely. Staff also feels all vehicle barrier systems for the gate area traffic lanes must be indicated in the final project design. Lastly, staff recommends that the applicant continue to consult with NCPC staff, the staff of the Commission of Fine Arts, and the District of Columbia Office of Planning regarding the perimeter fence focal point at 2nd Street and Potomac Avenue, to ensure the design of this feature is suitable and appropriately proportioned.

With the issues of the building rooflines, the perimeter fence focal point, and intermediate gate to be further addressed by the applicant in its final submission of the project, **staff recommends approval of the preliminary site and building plans for the Fort McNair Access Control Point, East Gate.**



SIMULATED VIEW OF PERIMETER FENCE FOCAL POINT ALONG 2ND STREET AT POTOMAC AVENUE

CONFORMANCE

Master Plan

The final project design plans are consistent with the Subarea master plan approved by the Commission in January 2004.

Urban Design and Security Plan

The submitted plan has undergone security review and analysis by Fort McNair personnel to meet the objectives of the Department of the Army force protection measures. Setbacks for the building have been identified and implemented in the preliminary building plans. Inspection points for users and visitors to the post have been established as reflected in the submitted design.

A primary goal described in the Urban Design and Security Plan (UDSP) is to seamlessly incorporate building and perimeter security into the designed streetscapes of the city. The Fort McNair Subarea plan demonstrates this intent by providing setbacks at the street edge, the allowance for street furnishings, and the creation of building connections and security features that will not adversely affect the street corridor or the proposed AWI Riverwalk. The Army and its design team have made a concerted effort to review, incorporate, and analyze the input of the District's Plan for the AWI in establishing a setback sought for 2nd Street and the AWI Riverwalk, and the east gate design will provide direct access to the Riverwalk.

National Environmental Policy Act

Pursuant to the requirements of NEPA, the Department of Army prepared and completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) of the Subarea master plan and its project implementation that included the new gate access point on the east side of Fort McNair. NCPC staff analyzed, in conformance with the requirements of NEPA, the prepared EA and issued a Finding of No Significant Impact based on adoption of the EA in August 2003. No variation or modification of the submitted design affects the conclusions and determination of that earlier NEPA finding.

National Historic Preservation Act

The Army has initially consulted with the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office (DC SHPO) about the new gate access point and security features. There have been no objections to the current design because it is located in Tempo C land acquisition area and outside of the Fort McNair historic district. Nevertheless, further coordination and written information is required to complete National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 consultation, for this project.

Comprehensive Plan

The Federal Facilities Element designates Fort McNair as a National Defense Facility. No boundary changes are required in the design of the new gate areas and security features and its associated planning adheres to the following goals of the Commission's 2004 Federal Workplace Element, which include:

- Plan federal workplaces to be compatible with the character of the surrounding properties and community and, where feasible, to advance local planning objectives such as neighborhood revitalization.
- Associate federal workplaces in urban areas to their urban context and appropriately scale them to promote pedestrian activity.

(Development of Workplaces with Communities; pp. 50-51)

Additional measures highlighted in the Comprehensive Plan include:

10. Incorporate security needs into the design of buildings, streetscapes, and landscapes using urban design principles in a manner that:

- Enhances and beautifies the public realm, resulting in coherent and welcoming streetscapes.
- Does not excessively restrict or impede operational use of sidewalks or pedestrian, handicap, and vehicular mobility.
- Does not impact the health of existing mature trees. Design projects in a manner that does not impede commerce and economic vitality but balances the need for perimeter security with the need to enhance and maintain the viability of urban areas.

14. Design security elements to respond to site-specific conditions, such as vehicle approach speed and angles, in order to minimize the size of security elements when possible.

15. Maintain security elements to preserve the capital investment and quality of the public realm. Security improvements in public areas such as sidewalks should be maintained in a consistent and uniform manner.

16. Design security barriers and checkpoints at vehicular entry points on federal installations to accommodate vehicular queuing on site and to avoid adverse effects on adjacent public roadway operations and safety.

(Development of Workplaces with Communities; p. 55)

Federal Capital Improvements Program

The Fort McNair east gate and security features project was not included in the Federal Capital Improvements Program (FCIP), Fiscal Years 2006-2011 adopted by the Commission. The current project has secured FY 2002 funding reprogrammed from other sources.