

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC LIBRARIES**  
**WATHA T. DANIEL-SHAW BRANCH LIBRARY REPLACEMENT**  
1701 8<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC

**Delegated Action of the Executive Director**

January 28, 2005

Pursuant to delegations of authority adopted by the Commission on October 3, 1996, I approve the preliminary and final design plans for the proposed replacement of the Watha T. Daniel-Shaw Branch Library of the District of Columbia Public Libraries, located in Northwest Washington, DC, to include demolition and new construction within the footprint of the existing building, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 31.20(38.00)41458.

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The District of Columbia Public Libraries (DCPL) proposes to demolish the Watha T. Daniel-Shaw Branch Library, in operation since 1975, and to construct a new one in the existing footprint. The DCPL will replace the existing two-story library of approximately 23,150 square feet with an open floor plan on two levels with less area but more efficient useable floor space.

The building is contemporary in design but traditional in its “flatiron” plan that conforms to its triangular site. The building’s design, similar to other libraries planned under the DCPL’s capital construction program, is intended to denote its use as a branch library and its status as a community landmark. This is particularly significant in its location across R Street from a Metrorail station. Due to its proximity to public transit, no new parking is proposed on site. The building features greater transparency, through the use of green-tinted glass, than does the current building, especially along the Rhode Island Avenue and 7<sup>th</sup> Street facades. The contemporary two-story design clad in brick, and the brick and glass colors are appropriate for and compatible with the scale and design of buildings in the surrounding area. Community comments are supportive of the design, including the brick color and added meeting space. Glass that is transparent even at night is intended to make pedestrians feel safe by observing and connecting to activities through the glass inside the library for “engaging the mind, expanding

opportunities, and elevating the quality of life”, while allowing views out from the building towards the street.

The proposal was coordinated by the Coordinating Committee at its January 12, 2005 meeting. As a District of Columbia agency project on non-federal property, the National Environmental Policy Act does not apply to the proposed construction. The District of Columbia has reviewed the action and determined that it qualifies as an exempted action in accordance with the implementing rules of the District of Columbia Environmental Policy Act of 1989. The library site is within the Central Area and the Commission served as the lead agency for Section 106 review. The DC State Historic Preservation Office has concurred with the Executive Director that the project would have no effect on historic resources. The site is not located in a historic district. The project is compatible with the character and scale of the nearby Shaw and Greater U Street Historic Districts.

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Patricia E. Gallagher, AICP  
Executive Director