



GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
MARY E. SWITZER BUILDING, BUILDING MODERNIZATION
330 C Street, SW
Washington, D.C.

Delegated Action of the Executive Director

February 25, 2005

Pursuant to delegations of authority adopted by the Commission on October 3, 1996, I approve the final site and building plans for the Building Modernization of the Mary E. Switzer Building at 330 C Street, SW, Washington, D.C., as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.72(38.00) 41538.

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The General Services Administration (GSA) has submitted final site and building plans for the modernization of the Mary E. Switzer Building, which received preliminary approval from the Commission in January 2004. The Switzer Building, located at 330 C Street, SW, is south of the Cohen Building, which faces the National Mall across Independence Avenue, SW. There are limited views of the Switzer Building from the National Mall. GSA has determined that the limestone-and brick-clad Switzer Building, which has Egyptian Revival architectural details, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. While most of the project involves interior work not subject to review by the Commission, alterations to the uppermost portion of the building and the roof are exterior alterations requiring Commission review.

The building's penthouse (with a footprint of 35,000-square-foot) would be converted to office use by creating sixth and seventh stories for the building. Simple square window openings, appropriate for the style of the building, would be punched into the walls of the penthouse at regular intervals to provide light for the new office space. Two modest elevator structures would be removed and replaced with two taller and larger penthouses for the elevators, which would be extended to the new sixth and seventh stories of the building. Three raised skylights would connect the two new elevator penthouses on the roof to provide further illumination to the new top story. While these proposed roof elements are prominent in elevation drawings, they are set back sufficiently from the edge of the roof of this large building to minimize the effect of the alteration.

The Switzer Building has an “E-type” plan, with the main bar parallel to and facing C Street. The roof alterations and office conversion would occur in the main bar of the building. The building has six wings perpendicular to the main bar that extend south. The second proposed exterior alteration is the installation of vegetative roofs on two of the six wings.

The project was coordinated at the preliminary review level by all agencies attending the December 10, 2003 meeting of the Coordinating Committee. GSA has determined that the project qualifies as a Categorical Exclusion under its environmental procedures developed pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality’s Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act. GSA has concluded its Section 106 responsibilities with a Memorandum of Agreement with the D.C. State Historic Preservation Office. The project was determined to have an adverse effect on the building. Negotiation focused on the proposed interior alterations to the building.

I am pleased to commend GSA for this good example of adaptive use of a portion of a historic building that will preserve the architectural character of the building while allowing for the construction of additional office space.

Patricia E. Gallagher, AICP
Executive Director