

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

NCPC File No. 2849



**WASHINGTON NATIONAL RECORDS CENTER,
BUILDING MODIFICATION FOR AIR HANDLING UNITS
SUITLAND FEDERAL CENTER
Suitland, Prince George's County, Maryland**

Submission by the General Services Administration

July 28, 2005

Abstract

The General Services Administration (GSA) has submitted preliminary and final site and building plans for small building additions to each end of the existing Washington National Records Center building at the Suitland Federal Center (SFC) in Prince George's County, Maryland. The building additions, at the north and south sides of the main structure, would house new air handling equipment that is being upgraded to match capacities and capabilities of the approved Chiller Building, which was reviewed by the Commission in April 2004.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

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

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

Approves the preliminary and final site and building plans for the Washington National Records Center Building Modification for Air Handling Units, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 3205.10(38.00)-41646.

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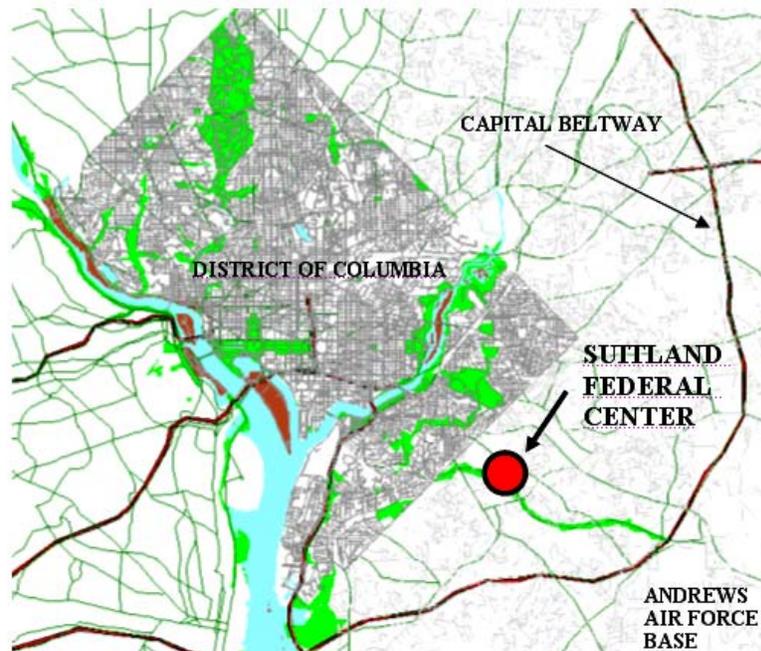
PROJECT SUMMARY

Site Description

The Washington National Records Center (WNRC) is located in the Suitland Federal Center (SFC) in Suitland, Maryland, approximately 7 miles southeast of the Capitol. The WNRC is a records storage and research facility at the Suitland Federal Center's northwest boundary. The Record Center's building area has frontage on Swann Road within the Suitland Federal Center (SFC) but has an address of 4205 Suitland Road.

SFC is a 226-acre federal employment center with the following tenants: Bureau of Census, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the WNRC. Independent of GSA, but also on the SFC campus, is the National Maritime Intelligence Center (NMIC). SFC is located at the intersection of Suitland Road and Silver Hill Road in Suitland and is adjacent to the Suitland Parkway.

The WNRC provides records management services to headquarters and field offices of federal agencies located in the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia. It also serves Federal Courts located in the District of Columbia and Armed Forces worldwide.



REGIONAL LOCATION

The WNRC stores records for hundreds of federal agency offices in its geographical service area. The Record Center building has 20 "stacks," each approximately 40,000 square feet in size. The total capacity of the Center is over 3.9 million cubic feet, with the current record holdings of over 3.5 million cubic feet.

WNRC accepts records for storage and servicing in accordance with approved agency records retention schedules, General Records Schedules, and prescribed archival standards.

Background

In March 2004 the Commission approved, the final site and building plans for the Census Bureau Headquarters Building, Phase 1, at the Suitland Federal Center in Prince Georges County, Maryland, and in October 2004 approved Phase 2 to begin construction of that major federal agency's new headquarters building at SFC. Additionally, in April 2004 the Commission approved, by Executive Director's delegated authority, the preliminary and final site and building plans to locate and construct a Chiller Plant at the Washington National Records Center, Suitland Federal Center, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 3205.10(38.00)-41336.

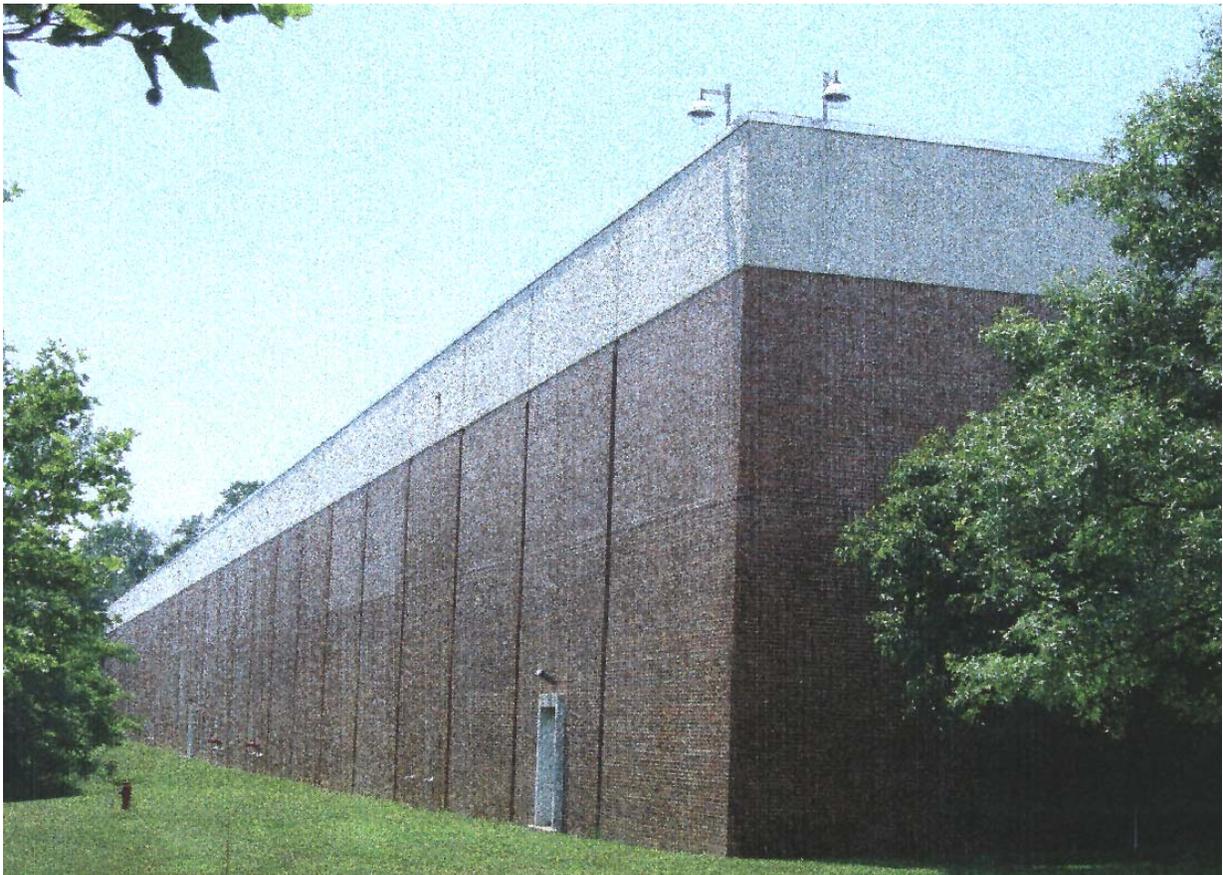


**AERIAL VIEW OF SUITLAND FEDERAL CENTER AND
LOCATION OF THE WASHINGTON NATIONAL RECORDS CENTER**

Proposal

The WNRC additions, at the north and south ends of the large building, would exhibit a height of about 30 feet and a width from the main brick building of 18 feet. The total building addition area comprises 16,560 square feet of new construction.

The purposed additions provide building space necessary for the replacement of the current air handling unit system that is failing within the main building and that is incompatible with the new chiller system constructed at the Center. Only service access doors and large vents areas, for air intake and exhaust, are exhibited on the visible elevations of the new building additions. An Exterior Insulated Finish System (EIFS) building façade treatment was first proposed for the additions but was subsequently changed to a matching brick exterior wall finish. The existing main building is multiple shades of brown-red brick with a top parapet of EIFS banding (see existing photo).



**VIEW OF EXISTING BRICK WASHINGTON NATIONAL RECORDS CENTER
MAIN BUILDING — SOUTH SIDE**

Development Program

Applicant: The General Services Administration
Architect: Unknown

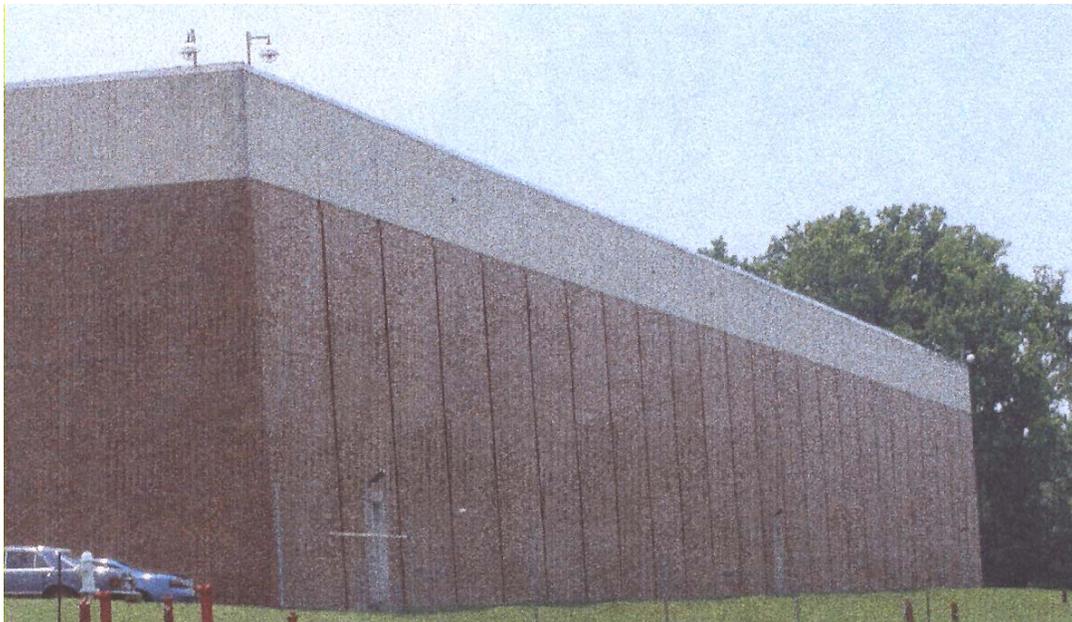
Square Footage: Approximately 16,560 gross square feet of building area.
Estimated Cost: \$ 7,989,000 total project cost

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

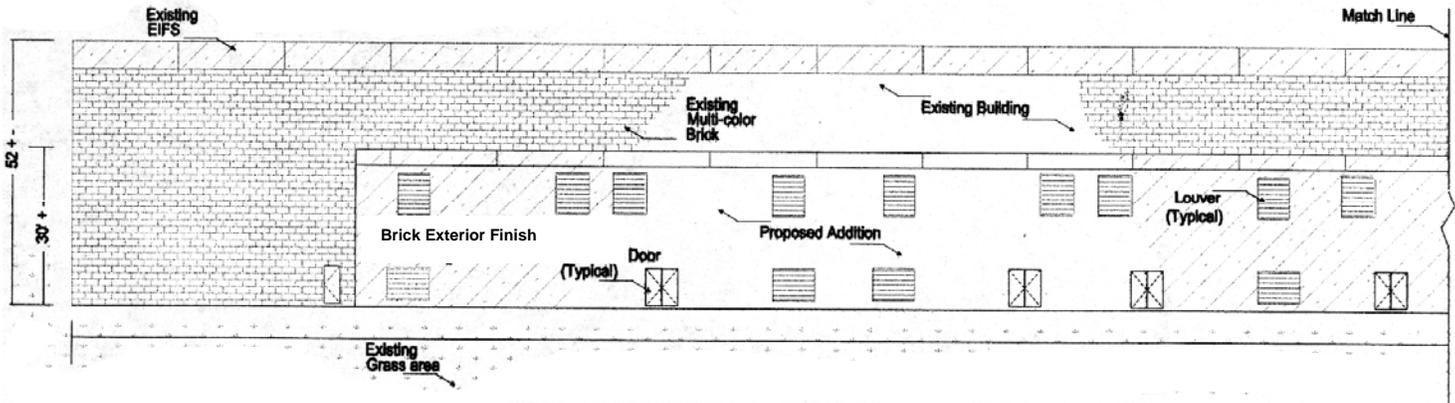
Staff **recommends approval of the submitted preliminary and final site and building plans.** The preliminary and final site and building plans initially demonstrated the additions' exterior EIFS façades contrasted too greatly with the existing brick building wall and visually would become much more pronounced in its presence due to its light color. The main building's color, material make-up, and proportion should be the dominate feature of the whole structure. The additions have a minor utilitarian function and are not public accessible space.

Staff consulted with the applicant and the project manager indicated revisions to the submission might be achieved to down-play the initial façade or modify it. GSA personnel had emphasized the additions would be surrounded to a degree by existing vegetation. However, staff analysis found the coverage of the remaining viewshed at the front side of the WNRC is large (over 200 feet) with the building additions visible from the new NOAA Building site, southeast of the Records Center.

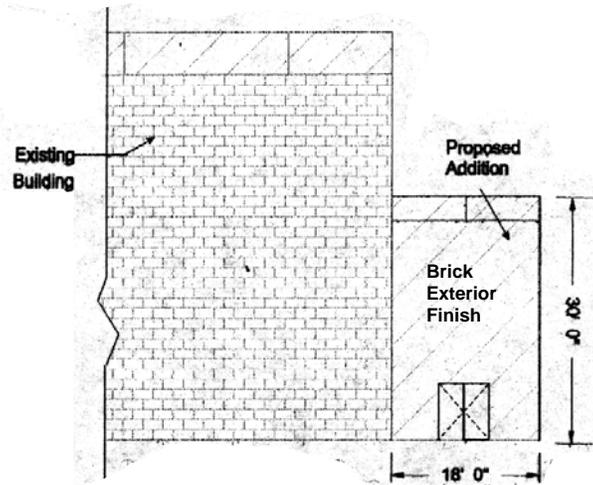


**VIEW OF EXISTING BRICK WASHINGTON NATIONAL RECORDS CENTER
MAIN BUILDING—NORTH SIDE**

GSA, in continued discussions with staff concerns, agreed to modify the exterior wall finish and construct a brick façade on the additions. Consequently, staff recommends the Commission approve the air handling unit building additions with the GSA agreed upon use of matching brick for the exterior wall finish.



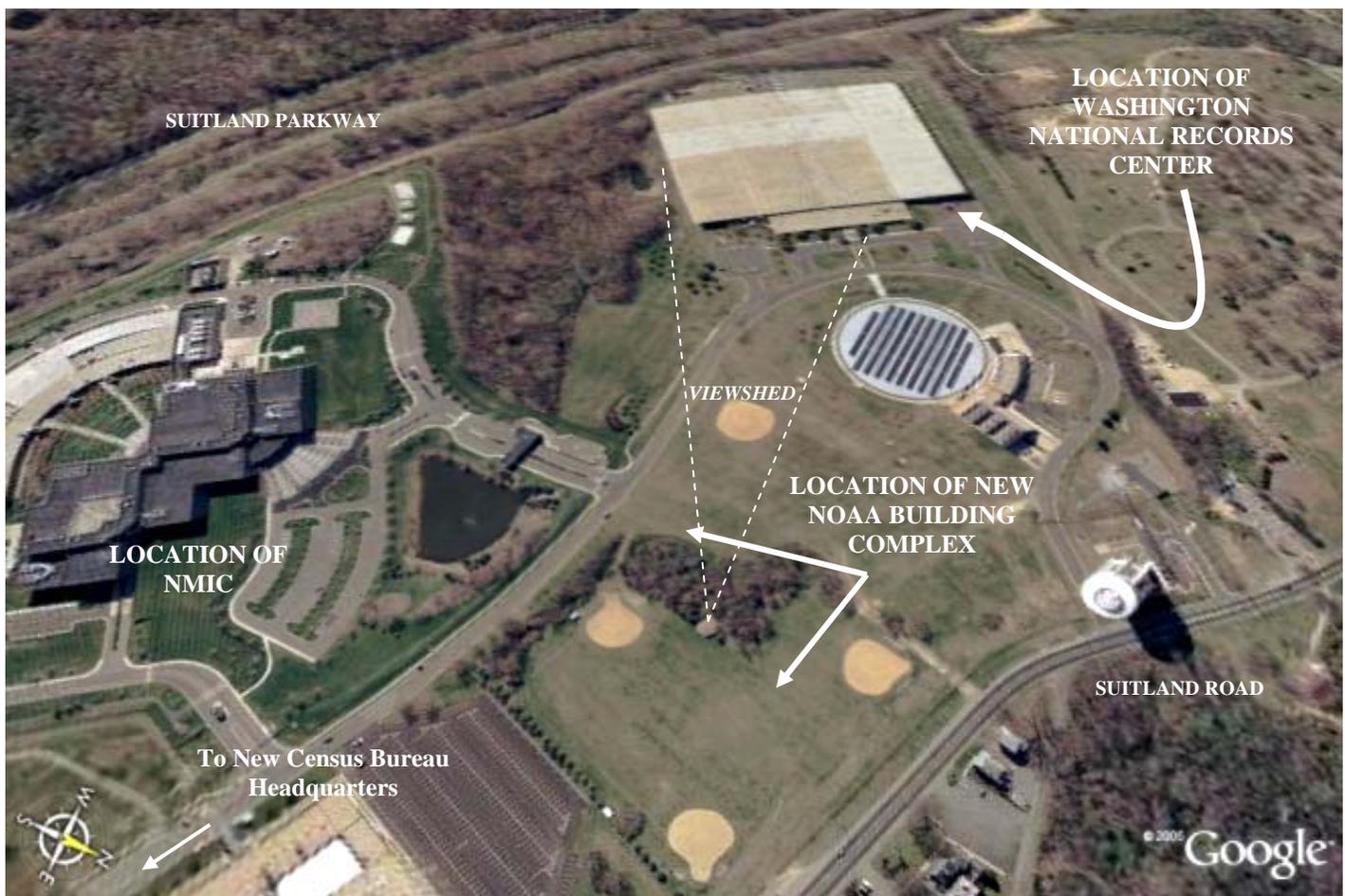
PARTIAL BUILDING SIDE ELEVATION SHOWING EXTENT OF AIR HANDLING ADDITION (TYPICAL FOR BOTH LOCATIONS)



PARTIAL BUILDING EAST ELEVATION SHOWING EXTENT OF AIR HANDLING ADDITION (TYPICAL FOR BOTH LOCATIONS)

CONSULTATION

The NCPC staff contacted GSA personnel and the project manager regarding issues of the wall color and façade material during three separate telephone conversations in the review of the project in July 2005. The GSA project personnel, and particularly the project manager, were cooperative and receptive to discussions regarding potential alternatives to address staff issues about the building additions, and ultimately indicated agreement to revise the proposed additions by providing a brick exterior wall. GSA then provided a revised submission of building exterior plans to reflect the use of brick.



**AERIAL VIEW FROM THE EAST OF NORTHWEST END OF SUITLAND
FEDERAL CENTER**

PROJECT CONFORMANCE

Master Plan

The proposal is consistent with the Master Plan for the Suitland Federal Center, approved by the Commission at its October 3, 2002 meeting. The updated Plan acknowledges the existing operation of the WNRC and discussed its general location. The master plan identified no major building revisions but noted planned additions that were specified as expanses for utility space operations.

National Environmental Policy Act

In conformance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and in accordance with the Commission's procedures at Section 8, staff has determined that the proposed action is a Categorical Exclusion for Commission NEPA review purposes. GSA has determined that the proposal qualifies as a Categorical Exclusion under its environmental review procedures in accordance with GSA Order No. ADM 1095.1F, dated October 19, 1999, and in conformance with Chapter 5 of the GSA NEPA Compliance Guide.

Commission staff review of the submittal information has determined the proposal qualifies as a Categorical Exclusion in so far as the planned construction meets NCPC criteria where the following conditions are met:

- The structure and proposed use are in compliance with local planning and zoning and any applicable District of Columbia, state, or federal requirements
- The site and the scale of construction are consistent with those of existing adjacent or nearby buildings; and
- There is no evidence of community controversy or other environmental issues

Historic Preservation Act

GSA submitted project data that indicated its environmental impact review found no historic structures at the WNRC area. The proposal would have no adverse effect on the nearby Suitland House or the Suitland Parkway as both have limited or no view of the new building additions. GSA demonstrated no evidence of consultation with the Maryland State Historic Preservation Office since facility records clearly indicated the site area exhibits no historic resources or recorded archeological areas. The existing main WNRC building is not an eligible building for listing on the National Register.

Comprehensive Plan

In conformance with the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital, the proposed plans have been found by staff to conform to the following applicable policies within the Federal Workplace Element, which states:

Principles of energy efficiency should also be incorporated into the design, operation, location, and orientation of federal workplaces. Federal agencies should consider proper building orientation, efficient heating and cooling systems as required by...Executive Order 13123, Greening the Government through Efficient Energy Management. The Act requires federal agencies to reduce energy consumption of their facilities and install energy and water conservation measures.

(Development of Workplaces with Communities Policies; Building and Development, page 50)

Additional polices include the following:

The federal government should:

1. Use innovative energy conserving techniques in the design and construction, operation, location, and orientation of federal workplaces.
2. Implement methods to reduce consumption of nonrenewable energy resources and to reduce the consumption of energy through energy efficient techniques as soon as practicable at all federal workplaces or when planning these facilities.

(Development of Workplaces with Communities Policies; Building and Development, page 51)

Federal Capital Improvements Program

In the Commission's FCIP report, Fiscal Years 2004-2009, adopted September 4, 2003 the Commission recommended the project. The FCIP noted at the project description that the facility's building additions would match the existing building façade.