

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

D. Hamilton

NCPC File No. 6315



EISENHOWER EXECUTIVE OFFICE BUILDING
STATE PLACE WING MODERNIZATION AND SCISSORS LIFTS
17th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C.

Submitted by the General Services Administration

September 1, 2005

Abstract

The General Services Administration (GSA) has submitted a proposal to modernize the State Place (south) side of the Eisenhower Executive Office Building (EEOB), and to provide scissors lifts at the carriageway entrances along the 17th side of the building. The modernization improvements include providing central air conditioning, replacing electrical and mechanical systems, providing blast proof windows and hardening the roof. The current proposal is Phase II of a three-phase modernization effort. The Commission has previously approved the overall concept and the final plans for Phase I.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of preliminary and final site and building plans pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8722(d) and 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 State Place Wing Modernization and Scissors Lifts, Eisenhower Executive Office Building, 17th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.32(38.00)41671.

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BACKGROUND AND STAFF EVALUATION

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

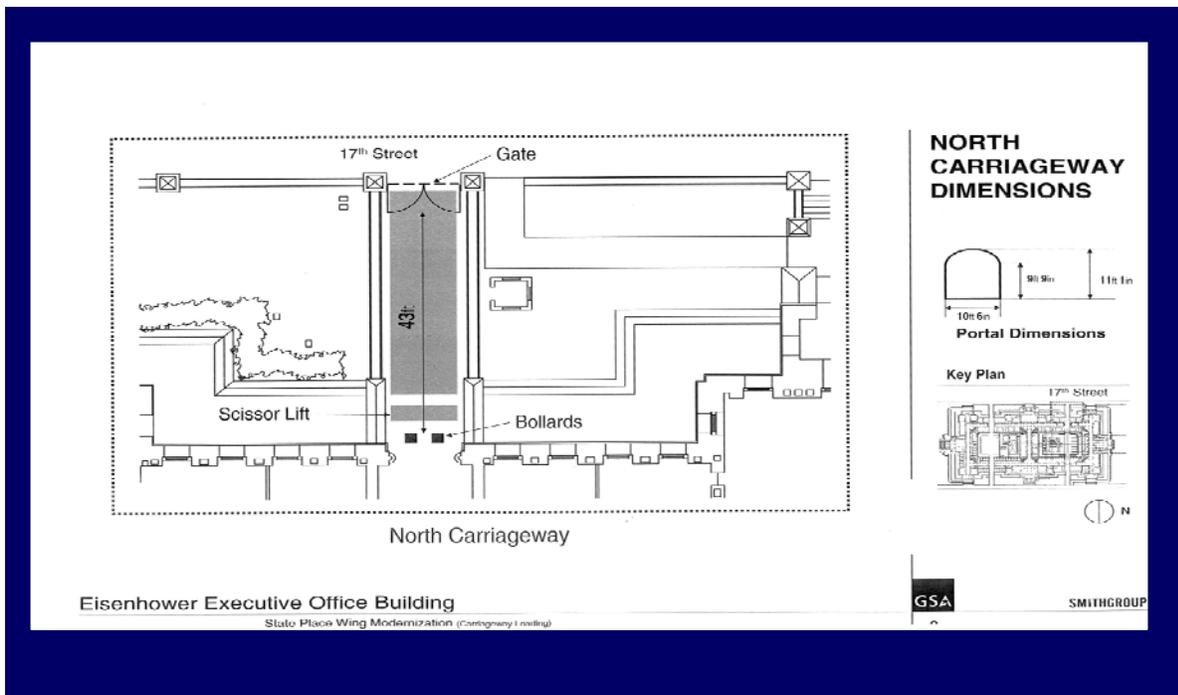
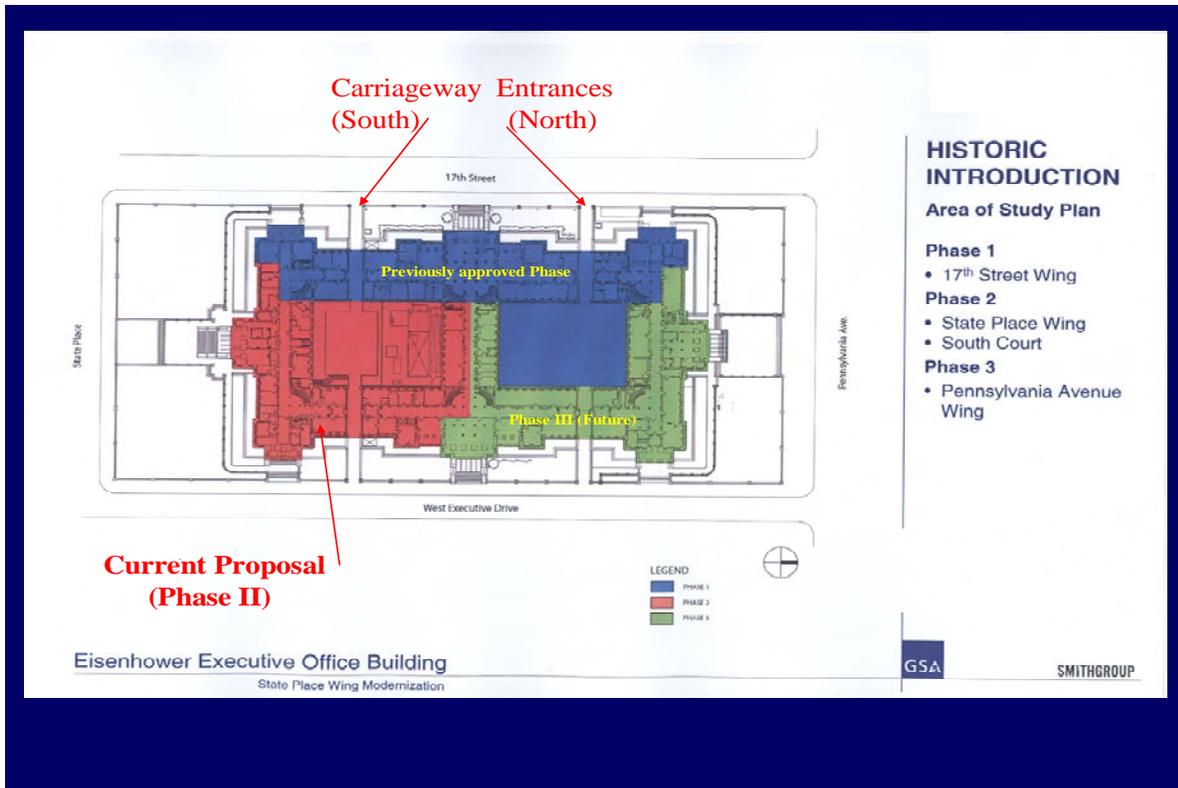
GSA has submitted a proposal for the modernization of the State Place side of the EEOB in northwest Washington, DC. The EEOB is bounded on the north by Pennsylvania Avenue, on the south by State Place, on the east by West Executive Drive, and on the west by 17th Street. The building was constructed in four phases between 1871 and 1888. The Commission previously approved the concept for the overall modernization and final plans for Phase I. The current proposal is for Phase II, which would involve a continuation of the modernization and hardening of the section of the building that is referred to as the State Place Wing. Modernization activities include:

- Providing central air-conditioning and removing the existing window A/C units.
- Replacing the electrical distribution system, switchgear and transformers, plumbing systems and telecommunications infrastructure.
- Hazardous material abatement and containment.
- Providing a utility vault in the south courtyard to house new electrical switchgear, transformers, and chiller equipment that will serve the State Place wing of the EEOB. The new service will be distributed via the basement and designated spaces on the fifth floor. Existing horizontal and vertical chases will be used to extend utilities services between floors.
- Replacing the existing windows with blast and ballistic resistant windows and hardening the mansard roof.
- Returning interior offices to their original historic layout as well as restoring damaged historic materials.
- Handicapped accessibility upgrades and fire and life safety improvements.

All of the proposed activities are intended to bring this portion of the EEOB up to contemporary building standards while improving security through hardening. Also included with the proposal is the installation of scissors lifts within the entrance to the carriageways along the 17th Street side of the building. These lifts are being provided to allow delivery vehicles to off-load behind the entrance gates of the carriageway next to the sidewalk along 17th Street.

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTION

At its October 2, 2003 meeting, the Commission approved the preliminary and final site and building plans for the modernization of the section of the EEOB that fronts on 17th Street (Phase I of the overall modernization).



STAFF ANALYSIS

Staff recommends approval of the preliminary and final site and building plans:

- The proposed modernization and hardening of the State Place wing of the EEOB is fully consistent with, and a continuation of, the modernization activities currently under construction on the 17th Street wing (Phase I).
- The provision of central air-conditioning in conjunction with blast resistant windows would both improve security as well as remove the unsightly window A/C units.
- The new vault and associated transformers and chillers would not be visible to the public because they would be located in a new, high-design quality industrial structure in the south courtyard.
- All piping, electrical, and telecommunications lines would use existing horizontal and vertical chases, thereby eliminating the need to extend new chases through the interior of the building.
- The modernization would result in the restoration of original office configurations as well as repair of damaged historic architectural fabric.
- The provision of scissors lifts in the entrance of the carriageways would allow for construction staging to take place within the courtyards and also allow for deliveries to be made behind the carriageway entrance gates along the sidewalk on 17th Street. Pedestrian circulation along 17th Street would not be adversely affected because the delivery vehicles would be behind the perimeter fence within the building yard.
- The scissors lifts would also provide for quick off-loading of delivery vehicles.

CONFORMANCE

Comprehensive Plan

The proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital. The Federal Facilities Element designates the EEOB as part of facilities of the Executive Office of the President. The proposal would bring the building in conformance with contemporary office standards for federal workers.

National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan

The proposal is consistent with the National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan. The proposal does not include any perimeter security elements that are external to the building. The hardening of the windows, roof and other components would provide for increased security while maintaining the visual continuity of the EEOB.

National Environmental Policy Act

Staff review of GSA's submitted information has determined that the proposed project qualifies as a Categorical Exclusion in accordance with NCPC and GSA environmental review procedures under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The proposal entails much interior renovation work and only minimal exterior site impacts. The few exterior features established by the project are enclosed or screened from any potential views by the public and would not affect any off-site areas.

National Historic Preservation Act

The EEOB is part of the White House and its grounds and is therefore exempt from the provisions of Section 106, as stated in Section 107 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Thus, the project was not required to be submitted to the D.C. State Historic Preservation Officer for review.

The EEOB, originally the State, War, and Navy Building, was designed by Alfred B. Mullett and built between 1871 and 1888. It was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1971 and is also a contributing structure in the Lafayette Square Historic District.

The proposed security improvements include the replacement of the existing wood sash windows, which are not original to the building, with aluminum sash that is designed to be as historically accurate as possible while also providing blast resistance. The muntin profile and configuration of the sash will be replicated in aluminum. The reinforced sash will be installed with the existing cast iron window surrounds. In addition, the roof will be reinforced from the interior and the skylights protected.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal on August 17, 2005. The Committee forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the project has been coordinated with all agencies represented, the participating agencies were: NCPC; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the District Department of Transportation; the Department of Housing and Community Development; the Fire Department; the General Services Administration; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.