

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NORTH SIDE PLAZA IMPROVEMENTS**
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C.

Delegated Action of the Executive Director

September 1, 2005

Pursuant to delegations of authority adopted by the Commission on October 3, 1996, I approve the preliminary and final site development plans for north side plaza improvements, Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C., as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.71(38.00)41668, with the understanding that the plaza improvements will complement and not interfere with any future development of a memorial adjacent to this site as indicated in the Commission's *Memorials and Museums Master Plan*.

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The General Services Administration (GSA) proposes to improve the north side plaza of the Department of Education's main building at 400 Maryland Avenue, SW. The Department of Education's building is bounded on the north by Maryland Avenue, on the south by C Street, on the east by 4th Street, and on the west by 6th Street. The National Air and Space Museum and the National Museum of the American Indian are located immediately north of the site on the National Mall. The existing north plaza is paved in concrete sections from the building face to the existing concrete sidewalk along Maryland Avenue. These concrete sections are interspersed in a random pattern with sixteen low planter boxes containing small shrubbery. The proposed plan for this plaza would be reconfigured to provide additional greenery that defines a variety of sub-areas. The proposal includes a large group ceremonial gathering space; a stage area; a circular entrance walk that is fully accessible for the handicapped that leads directly to the main entrance; large raised planters that include tree plantings; a series of break-out spaces for pedestrian and employee relaxation; and the enhancement of the defining edge of Maryland Avenue by the addition of a row of trees adjacent to the existing sidewalk. GSA advises that no perimeter security elements are planned for this site. The proposed plaza improvements are within an area that is designated as Site #3 in the Commission's *Memorials and Museums Master Plan (Plan)*. Specifically, the Plan indicates that a memorial could be located immediately

adjacent to the north of the plaza site and states that “*Renovation and redesign of the existing plaza would complement adjoining federal government and visitor uses.*”

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The proposed plaza improvements should not adversely impact the development of any future memorial in the immediate vicinity; rather, it should be complementary.

The proposal was reviewed by the Coordinating Committee at its April 13, 2005 meeting. GSA advises that it has determined that the proposal is a Categorical Exclusion pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Further, GSA advises that the Department of Education Building is not a historic landmark and therefore not subject to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Patricia E. Gallagher, AICP
Executive Director