

# STAFF RECOMMENDATION

J. McIntyre

NCPC File No. 6650



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**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY**  
**PERIMETER SECURITY**  
15th Street, NW and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC

General Services Administration

March 30, 2006

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## Abstract

The General Services Administration, on behalf of the United States Department of Treasury, is submitting concept site development plans for perimeter security for the Department of Treasury Main Building located at the intersection of 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW in Washington, DC. The proposed concept includes two options for the treatment in front of the building yard fence at the northeast corner of the site that faces Pennsylvania Avenue, NW.

## Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of concept site and building plans pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d).

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## Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

**Comments favorably** on the concept site development plans for perimeter security for the Department of Treasury Main Building, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.31(38.00)41995.

**Recommends** implementation of the option that would place a bench in front of the historic building yard fence at the northeast corner of the site, facing Pennsylvania Avenue, NW.

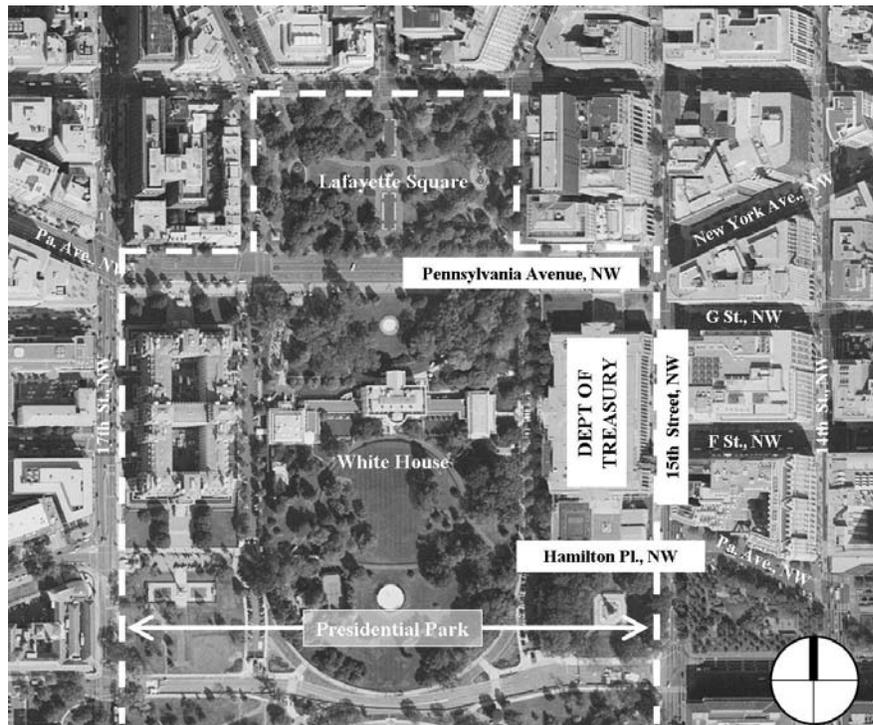
**Recommends** a preferred spacing of five feet on center between structural members, or a minimum of four feet clearance between finished bollards in areas where the security line crosses pedestrian routes at the sidewalk near 15<sup>th</sup> Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, and at crosswalks and handicap curb ramps along 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW and Hamilton Place, NW.

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Site

The Department of Treasury Main Building is bounded by 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW to the east, by Pennsylvania Avenue, NW to the north, Hamilton Place, NW to the south and by The White House to the west. The Department of Treasury is located within the Presidential Park precinct.



**Vicinity Plan**

### Background

The Treasury Main Building is one of the first--and one of the most historically and architecturally significant--public buildings ever constructed by the federal government. Begun in 1836 under the direction of Federal Architect Robert Mills, it was completed over a period of three decades under succeeding Supervising Architects.

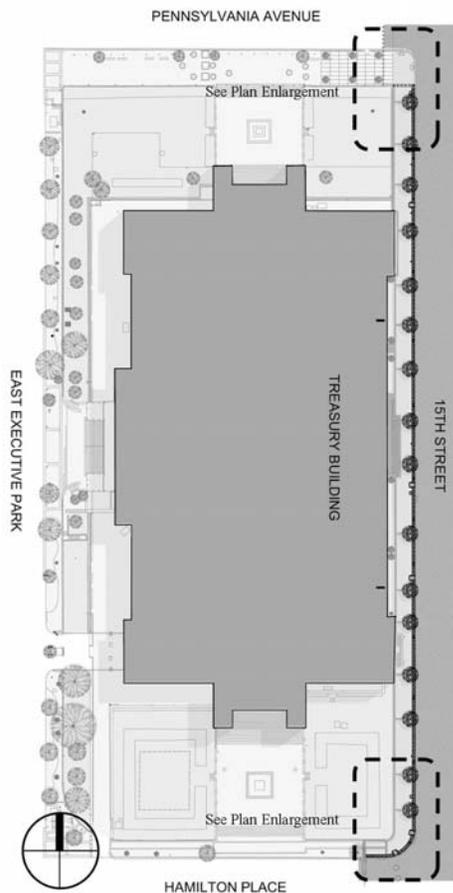
At its November 5, 1998 meeting, the Commission approved preliminary and final site and building plans for the north wing renovation of the U.S. Department of Treasury Main Building at 15<sup>th</sup> Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.31(38.00)-40586.

At its September 4, 2003 meeting, the Commission approved final site and building plans for landscape and security improvements to Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House which also included the area immediately north of the Department of Treasury Main Building.

On August 5, 2004, the Executive Director approved preliminary and final site and building plans for the North Pedestrian Officer's Booth at the Treasury Building at 1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 21.00(38.00) 41410

### Proposal

The General Services Administration (GSA), on behalf of the United States Department of Treasury, is submitting concept site and building plans for perimeter security of the Department of Treasury Main Building located at 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. The proposed bollards will match the bollards currently installed throughout the Presidential Park. The bollards will extend from in front of the northeast corner of the historic building yard fence facing Pennsylvania Avenue, across the 15<sup>th</sup> Street sidewalk, along the curbside of 15<sup>th</sup> Street and Hamilton Place and terminate at the existing vehicular control gate structure on Hamilton Place. Where possible, GSA will incorporate streetscape elements, such as light fixtures, as part of the proposed perimeter security.



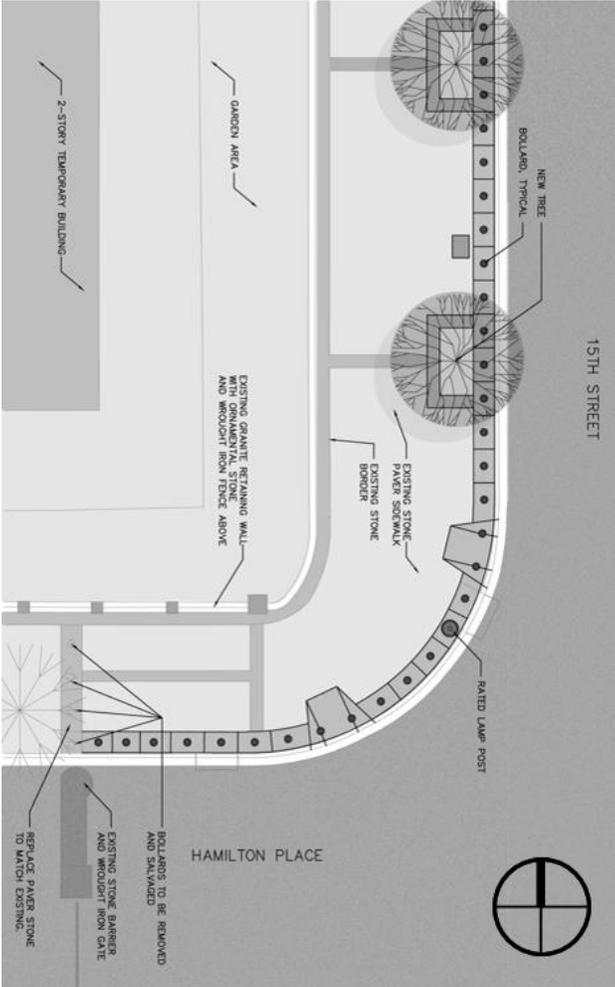
**Site Plan**



**15<sup>th</sup> St., NW: Existing Conditions**

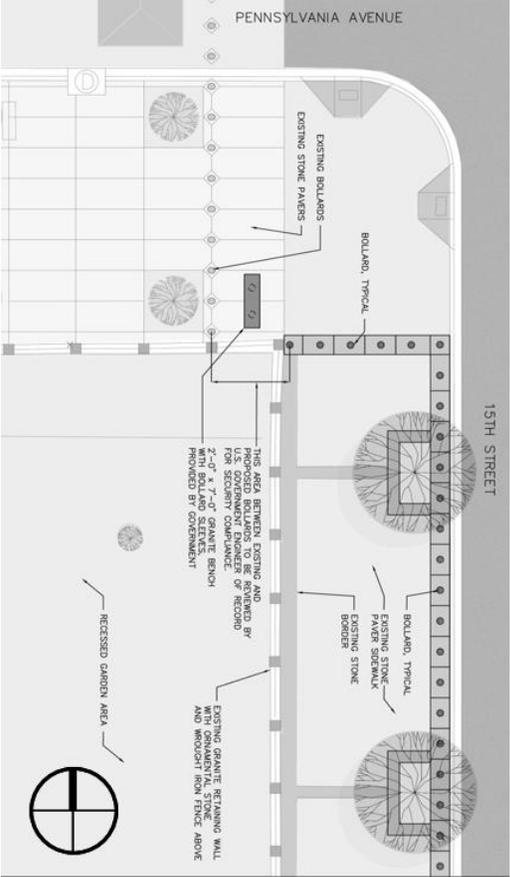


**15<sup>th</sup> St., NW: Proposed Bollards**

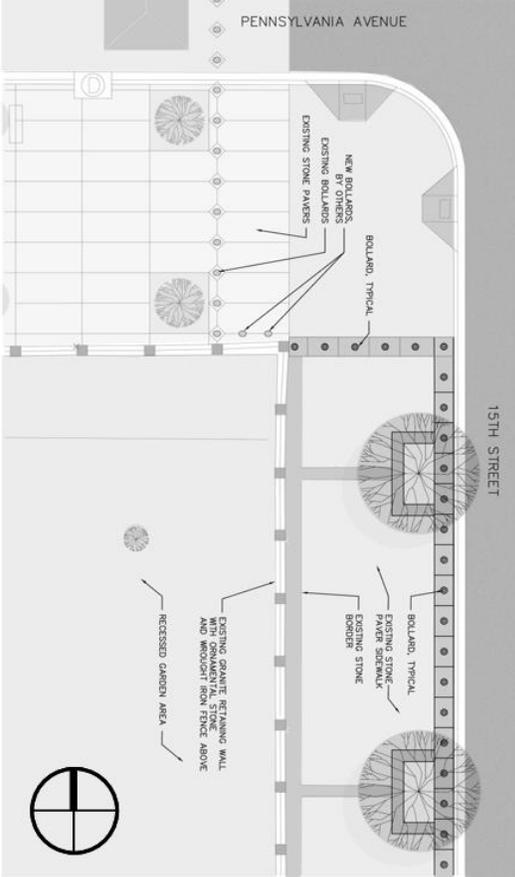


**Plan Enlargement: 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW & Hamilton Place, NW**

GSA submitted two proposed options for the northeast corner of the historic building yard fence that faces Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. One option places a stone bench, similar to benches placed along Pennsylvania Avenue, perpendicular to the fence and the other places two bollards, similar to the oval bollards that transverse Pennsylvania Avenue, parallel to and in front of the fence.



Bench Option



Bollard Option

**Plan Enlargement: 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW**

Development Program

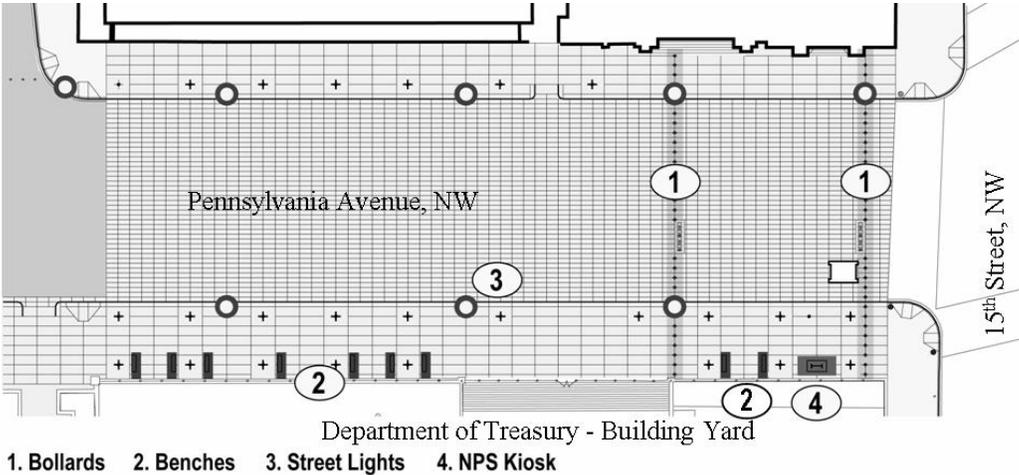
- Applicant: Department of Treasury
- Architects: Vitetta
- Acreage: *information not provided by applicant*
- Estimated Cost: *information not provided by applicant*
- Schedule: *information not provided by applicant*

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

Staff is in support of the proposed perimeter security concept for the Department of Treasury Main Building. The proposal is consistent with perimeter security elements approved by NCPC and installed around and within the Presidential Park precinct. The proposed perimeter security treatment along 15<sup>th</sup> Street will be visually consistent with treatment along 17<sup>th</sup> Street adjacent to the Eisenhower Executive Office Building which was approved by NCPC on January 2, 2003.

Staff supports the bench option since it will incorporate the security element within an amenity consistent along Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House. The bench will preserve the view of and through the historic fence and will be similar to the corner condition at 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW.



**Pennsylvania Avenue - Partial Illustrative Site Plan**



**Existing Photo:**  
**Stone benches located on Pennsylvania Avenue in front of Department of Treasury historic building yard fence**

Staff does not recommend the option that will place two bollards in front of the historic building yard fence that faces Pennsylvania Avenue, NW since they would interfere with views of and through the historic fence and be inconsistent with the corner condition at 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW as approved by NCPC on September 4, 2003.

The proposed bollard spacing and configuration, perpendicular to the 15<sup>th</sup> Street sidewalk and across the crosswalk handicap ramps, narrows and obstructs pedestrian circulation. Staff recommends a preferred spacing of five feet on center between structural members, or a minimum of four feet clearance between finished bollards in areas where the security line crosses pedestrian routes at the sidewalk near 15<sup>th</sup> and Pennsylvania Avenue, and at the crosswalks and handicap curb ramps along 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW and Hamilton Place, NW.

## CONFORMANCE

### Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

Staff has determined that the proposed concept is consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements*, in particular the Federal Workplace and the Preservation and Historic Features Elements.

The proposed perimeter security elements are consistent with security polices found in the Development of Workplaces with Communities. The concept design will be coordinated with perimeter security elements of other federal buildings located within the Presidential Park.

The Department of the Treasury Main Building is a National Historic Landmark and is designated as a Special Place in the Preservation and Historic Features element. Portions of the perimeter security will be located adjacent to Pennsylvania Avenue and 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, which are both designated as Special Streets. The concept design preserves and maintains the historic fabric while providing appropriate protection.

### Federal Capital Improvements Program

The perimeter security project for the Department of Treasury Main Building was not identified in the Federal Capital Improvements Program for Fiscal Years 2006-2011.

### National Environmental Protection Act

NCPC submission guidelines do not require agencies to complete environmental information at the concept submission stage. GSA has preliminarily indicated its determination that the proposal may qualify as a categorical exclusion, however, staff notes that this will need to be verified depending upon the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office's determination of adverse effects.

## National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

GSA has initiated consultation with the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office (DC SHPO), determining that the project would have no adverse effect on the Treasury Building. To date, DC SHPO has not signed off with concurrence. Staff recommends that GSA submit information on the bench option to DC SHPO for their review and concurrence.

Designed by supervising architects Robert Mills, Thomas U. Walter, Ammi B. Young, Isaiah Rogers, and A.B. Mullett from 1836-1869, the Treasury Building is one of the finest institutional examples of the Greek Revival style in the nation. The building has been undergoing substantial rehabilitation, the exterior phases of which were approved by the Commission in the late 1990s. The Treasury Building was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1971. The building is also within the Fifteenth Street Financial Historic District and the Lafayette Square Historic District, and within the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site.

## CONSULTATION

### Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal at its March 15, 2006 meeting, and forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the submission has been coordinated with all participating agencies. Although the representative for the District Department of Transportation concurred in the coordination of this proposal, he expressed concern about the distance between the bollards at the handicap access ramp. The participating agencies were NCPC; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the Department of Housing and Community Development; the Fire Department; the District Department of Transportation; the General Services Administration and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

### Commission of Fine Arts

The Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) reviewed and approved the proposed concept at their March 16, 2006 commission meeting. CFA preferred the option that will place a stone bench perpendicular to the historic building yard fence that faces Pennsylvania Avenue, NW.