

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Nancy Witherell

NCPC File No. 6479



SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
PATENT OFFICE BUILDING
PERIMETER SECURITY, LANDSCAPE PLAN, F STREET STAIR RECONSTRUCTION, AND
TEMPORARY EGRESS STAIR
G, F, 7th and 9th Streets, NW
Washington, D.C.

Submitted by the Smithsonian Institution

March 29, 2007

Abstract

The Smithsonian Institution has submitted a revised concept design for perimeter security, shown with the landscape plan and F Street Stair reconstruction previously reviewed by the Commission as a revised concept design at its April 2006 meeting.

The Smithsonian has also submitted a concept proposal for the installation of a temporary, demountable egress stair on the south façade of the building next to the portico, for potential emergency use by patrons of the Portico Café during the months the outdoor café is in operation.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of the revised concept design pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission, relative to NCPC Map File No. 21.00(38.40)42179:

Reaffirms its favorable comments on the proposed landscape plan and F Street Stair reconstruction reviewed as a revised concept design by the Commission at its April 2006 meeting.

Comments that the Smithsonian's concept design for the perimeter barrier would keep the barrier inside the pedestrian realm as much as possible and minimize physical and visual damage to the Patent Office Building, but **requests** that the Smithsonian Institution reassess whether perimeter security is warranted around the Patent Office Building prior to submission of preliminary site and building plans for the landscape and F Street stair.

Comments unfavorably on the bollards in public space at the northwest corner near the Metro escalator and at the G Street stair if the sidewalk is not widened.

Recommends that the Smithsonian develop a barrier around the Metro escalator, if determined to be necessary, that uses hardened street furniture (including perhaps hardened newspaper boxes) to avoid the use of bollards.

Recommends that the Smithsonian, in coordination with the Commission and other agencies, continue studying the feasibility of widening the G Street sidewalk, at least in front of the monumental stair on the 8th Street axis, by the width of the adjacent parking lane.

Comments favorably on the concept proposal for the installation of a temporary, demountable metal egress stair for the Portico Café for the 2007 warm-weather season only and **delegates final approval** of the site and building plans for its temporary installation on the F Street façade of the building to the Executive Director.

Requires that existing and future museum identification and way-finding signs be submitted to the Commission for review and approval.

* * *

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Site

The Patent Office Building, housing the Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture, occupies Reservation 8 in the L'Enfant Plan. The reservation is bounded by 7th and 9th Streets, and by F and G Streets, NW. There are monumental staircases and projecting porticos on all four elevations, although only the north and south entrances on F and G Streets provide public access to the museums. The Patent Office Building, a National Historic Landmark, was built in the Greek Revival style during the middle third of the nineteenth century. Reservation 8 is a prominent reservation in the L'Enfant Plan and a focal point for public space activities. Its surrounding sidewalks are heavily used by pedestrians.

Background

The Commission has reviewed the Smithsonian's proposal for reconstructing the F Street staircase at several meetings, most recently in April 2006, when the Commission commented favorably on a revised concept proposal for the stair reconstruction within the context of the rehabilitation of the Reservation 8 landscape. The Commission first reviewed the F Street stair reconstruction at its January 2005 meeting, when it was accepted as partial mitigation for the loss of the fabric of the courtyard and for the construction of the roof over the courtyard.

Similarly, the Commission reviewed and accepted as mitigation the proposed landscape reconstruction. The landscape rehabilitation was designed following the Smithsonian's completion of a Cultural Landscape Report for the reservation. The landscape plan recommended moving the fence line southward on F Street to its earlier alignment so that the south lawn of the reservation could be enlarged to its pre-1936 dimensions. In 1936, F Street was moved northward and the Patent Office lawn was narrowed and the fence and granite wall also

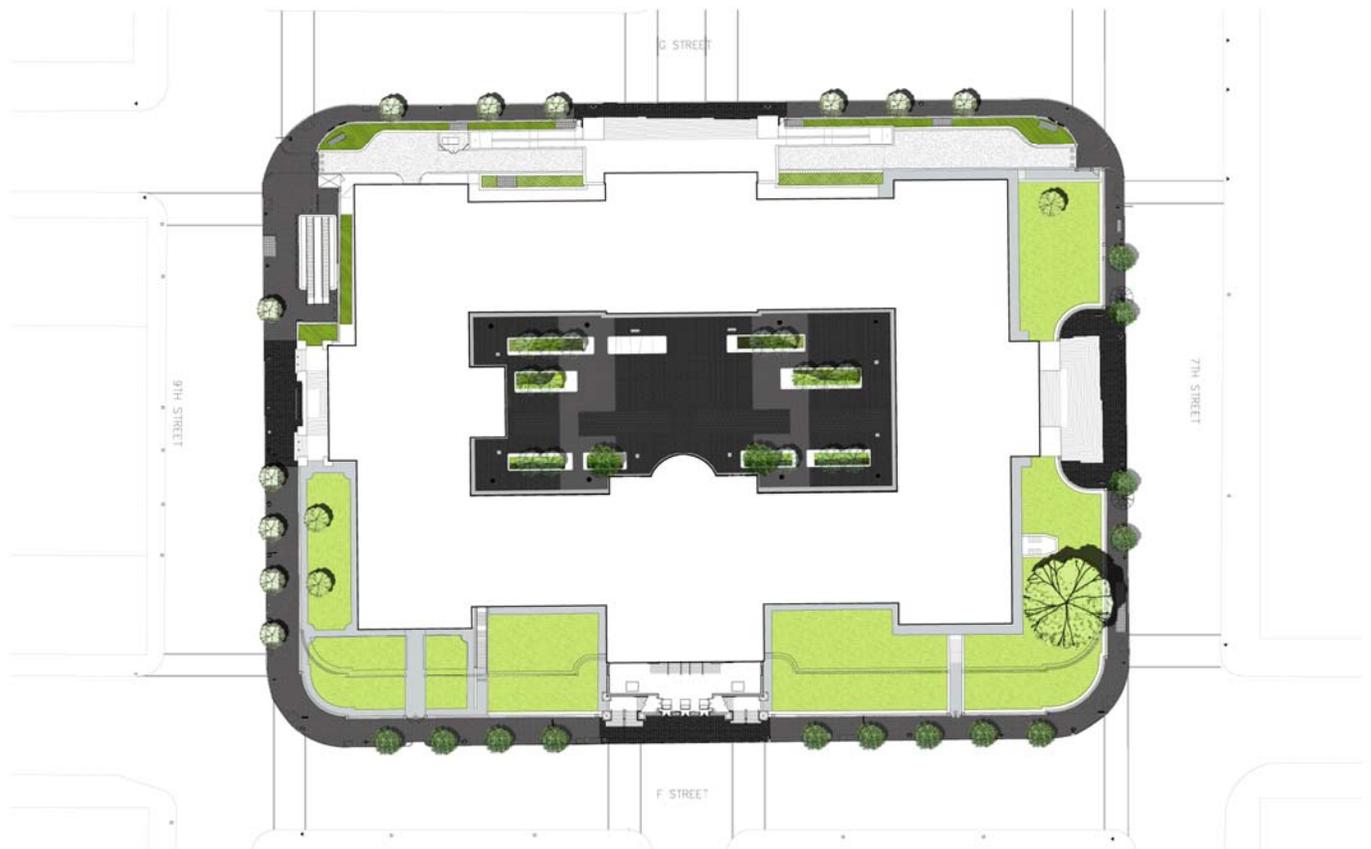
moved northward to accommodate the realigned street and sidewalk. The monumental F Street stair was removed because there was no longer enough distance for the stair run. In the late 1990s, F Street was reconstructed in its earlier alignment with the hope that in the future the staircase could be reconstructed, the south lawn expanded, and the cast iron fence reinstated in its pre-1936 location. These improvements have been developed and reviewed by the Commission over the past two years. The Smithsonian Institution has returned with a proposal that incorporates a plan for a perimeter vehicle barrier with the landscape rehabilitation and F Street stair reconstruction previously reviewed. The Commission had asked the Smithsonian to incorporate security design with its next landscape submission if the Smithsonian deemed it necessary.



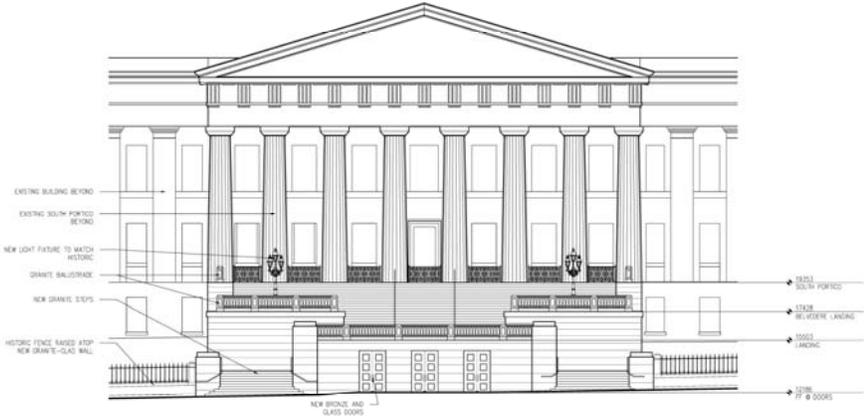
This historic photo of the F Street (south) façade of the Patent Office Building shows the monumental stair before it was removed in 1936. The stair will be reconstructed to nearly identical dimensions. The photo also shows the historic cast iron fence and granite curb before they were moved closer to the building when F Street was realigned northward. The Smithsonian will return the fence line (and extend the south lawn) to the location shown in the photo. In order to provide a perimeter vehicle barrier, the Smithsonian proposes raising the granite curb 18 inches from approximately 8 inches in height (similar to that shown in the photo) to a wall of approximately 26 inches in height. A one-inch cable would be imbedded in the wall at a height of 24 inches. A second, parallel cable would be attached at a height of 32 inches to the bottom rail of the cast iron fence, which would be reinstated atop the new wall. The Smithsonian proposes a precast concrete wall topped by the granite curb.

Proposal

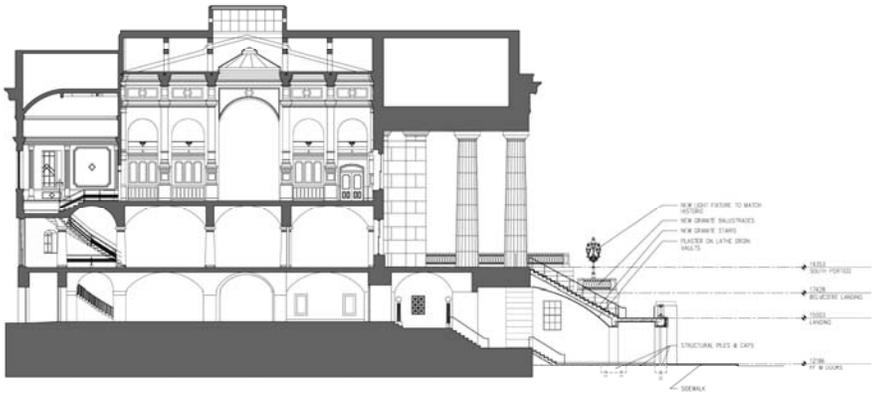
Most of the reservation is surrounded by the original cast iron fence, which dates to as early as 1859, mounted on a low granite base approximately 8 inches in height. The fence and wall are contributing historic elements of the landscape because they were constructed during the historic period of significance: 1836-1880. Some pieces of the iron fence are replications where replacements were necessary and the location of the fence and granite base was moved northward of the original F Street location when F Street was realigned in 1936. The earlier fence location will be restored as part of the landscape rehabilitation.



Landscape plan reviewed by the Commission at the April 2006 meeting. The current fence line will be extended southward in order to restore the pre-1936 fence line. The fence will be reestablished at the new lawn edge.



GRAPHIC SCALE
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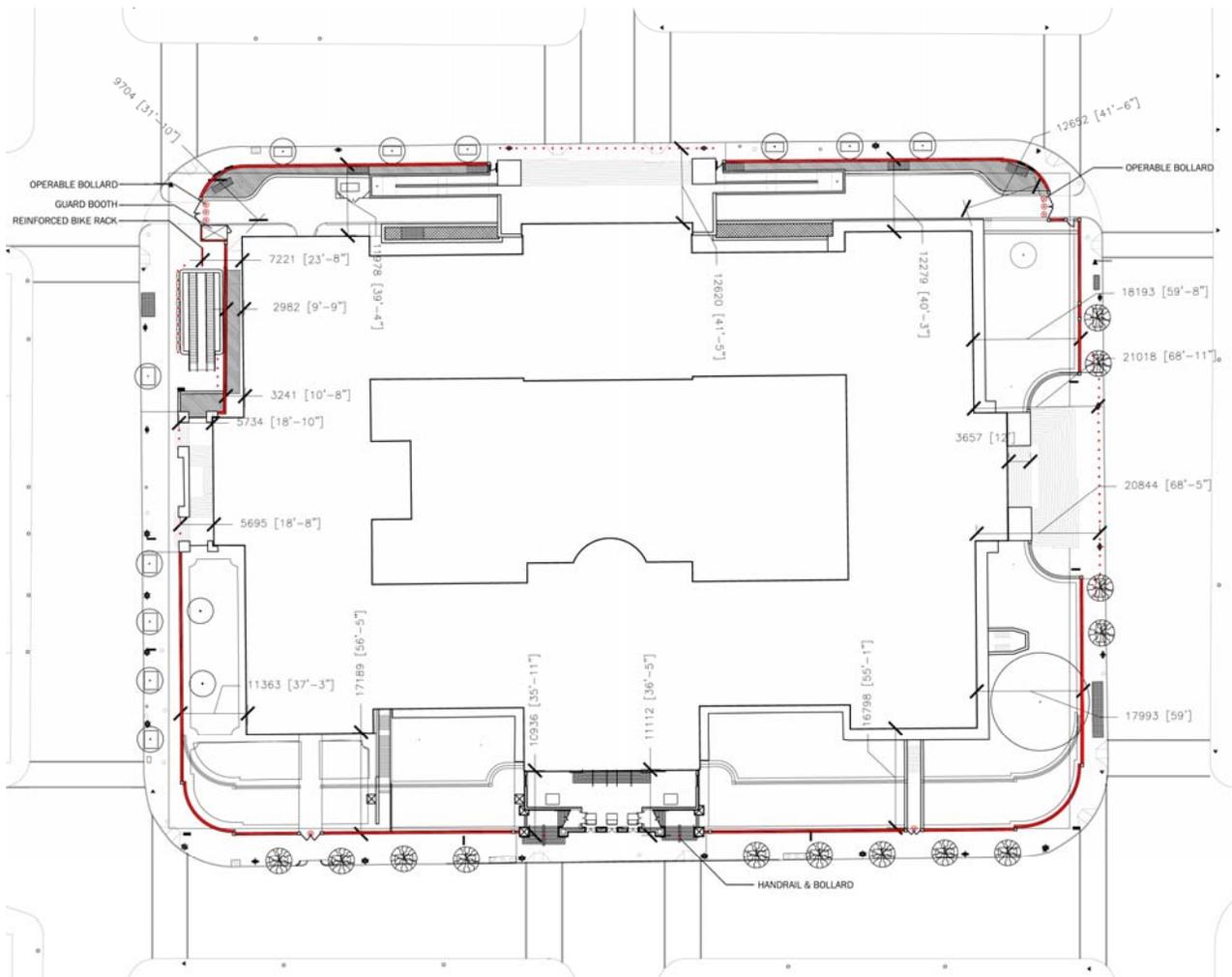
GRAPHIC SCALE
1:200 0 1000 2000

Elevation and section showing the proposed reconstruction of the monumental stair on F Street, NW.

The reconstruction, unlike the original, will have three doors at the sidewalk for an accessible, at-grade entrance. Staff recommends that the Smithsonian’s preferred option of using gates at the entrance openings, with glass doors set behind, be selected.

The Smithsonian completed a risk assessment for the building, taking into account the physical characteristics of the building and site, the adjacent streets and building uses, the nature of the resources and public use inside, and the type of target a cultural institution might present. Based on these and other considerations, including the ability to employ operational security measures, the Smithsonian has proposed vehicle barriers and a stand-off distance to meet a medium level of protection. The proposed stand-off distance of the barrier perimeter was strongly influenced by the historic character of the building and setting.

The Smithsonian's perimeter security proposal consists of three major components: 1) alteration of the *fence and stone base inside the sidewalk edge* to convert them to vehicle barriers; 2) installation of *bollards at the four staircases* on the four sides of the building, with the bollards at the G Street and 7th Street stairs placed in public space at the curb; and 3) installation of *security elements and a guard booth at the northwest corner, near the Metro escalator and service drive*.



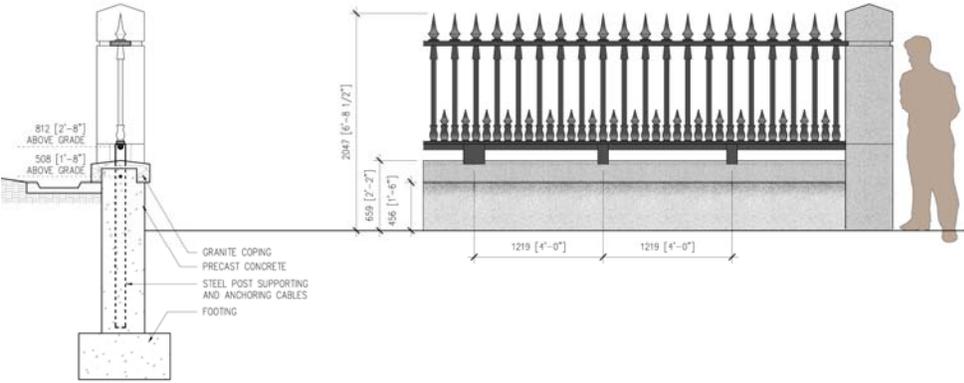
Proposed plan for perimeter vehicle barrier

Fence and wall: altering the historic fence and granite curb to serve as a vehicle barrier

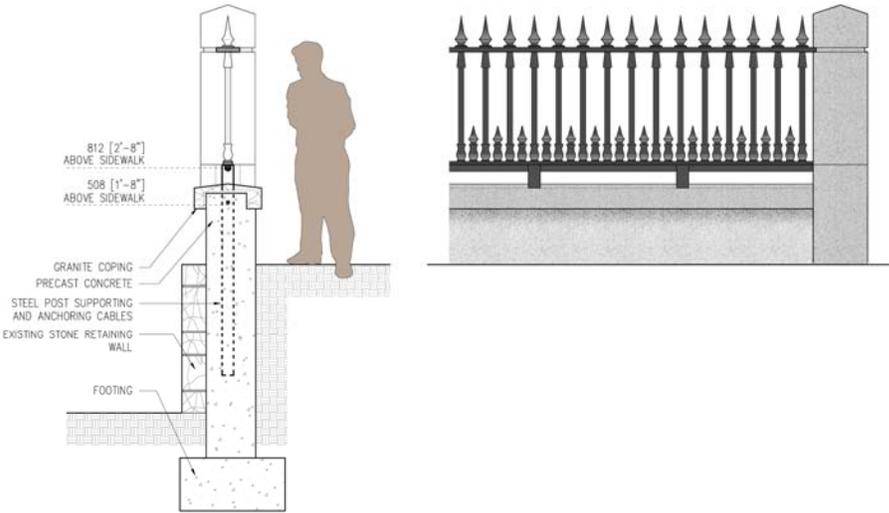
The submission proposes raising the granite cap of the historic base (about 8 inches in height) and affixing it atop a new precast concrete wall (18 inches in height) for a total wall height of 26 inches. The historic cast iron fence would be reinstalled on top of the raised wall, for a total fence height of 6 feet 8 inches.

Two one-inch cables and vertical posts would harden the wall and fence. One cable would be imbedded in the wall at a height of 24 inches. The second would be attached to the base of the cast iron fence at a height of 32 inches. The cable system would be used in conjunction with hardened vertical posts in the wall placed every 20 feet. (The fence posts occur every 4 feet.) The posts would be visible below the cast iron fence but would not extend higher than the bottom of the fence.

The wall and fence would surround the reservation in the same locations they do at present. The wall would be either be free-standing or serve as a retaining wall, depending on the grade and slope of the lawn.



Section of proposed retaining wall (on the F Street and 7th Street sides of the reservation).



Section of proposed free-standing wall (on the 9th Street and G Street sides of the reservation).



At left, top: Rendering of the reservation from the southeast corner on F Street, showing the proposed 26-inch high granite and precast concrete wall. The historic granite curb would be reused where possible on top of a precast wall. A covered cable would be attached to the underside of the bottom fence rail. The historic fence would be reinstalled atop the wall, for a total height of 6 feet 8 inches.

At left, center: Photo of bottom rail of cast iron fence—the cable and its cover would be attached to the underside of fence rail.



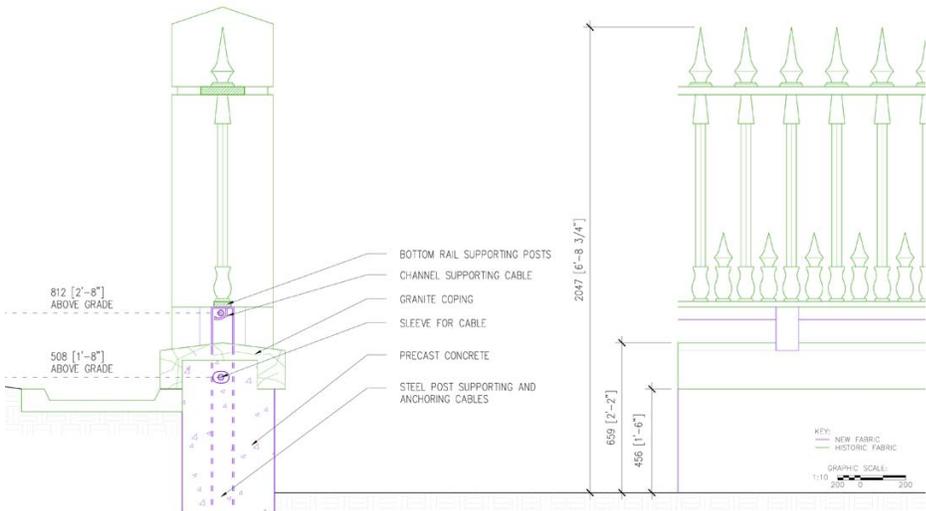
At left, bottom: Photo of retaining wall at northeast corner of reservation from 7th and G Streets, NW. This is similar in appearance to the proposed retaining wall to be installed around the reservation. The precast wall has a granite cap and measures 20 inches in height. (Annotated white dotted line roughly shows height of proposed 26-inch retaining wall.)

Below: cable and its sleeve, to be attached to the posts along the underside of the bottom fence rail





Photo rendering of fence with cable underneath and with replaced fence supports



Section and elevation of cable and sleeve assembly on cast iron fence

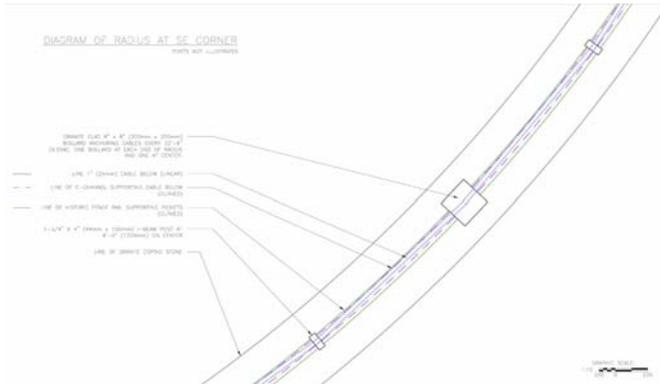
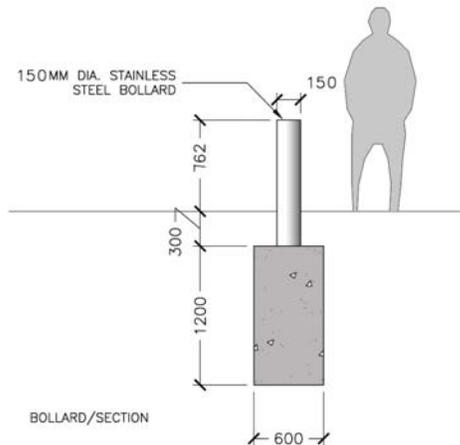


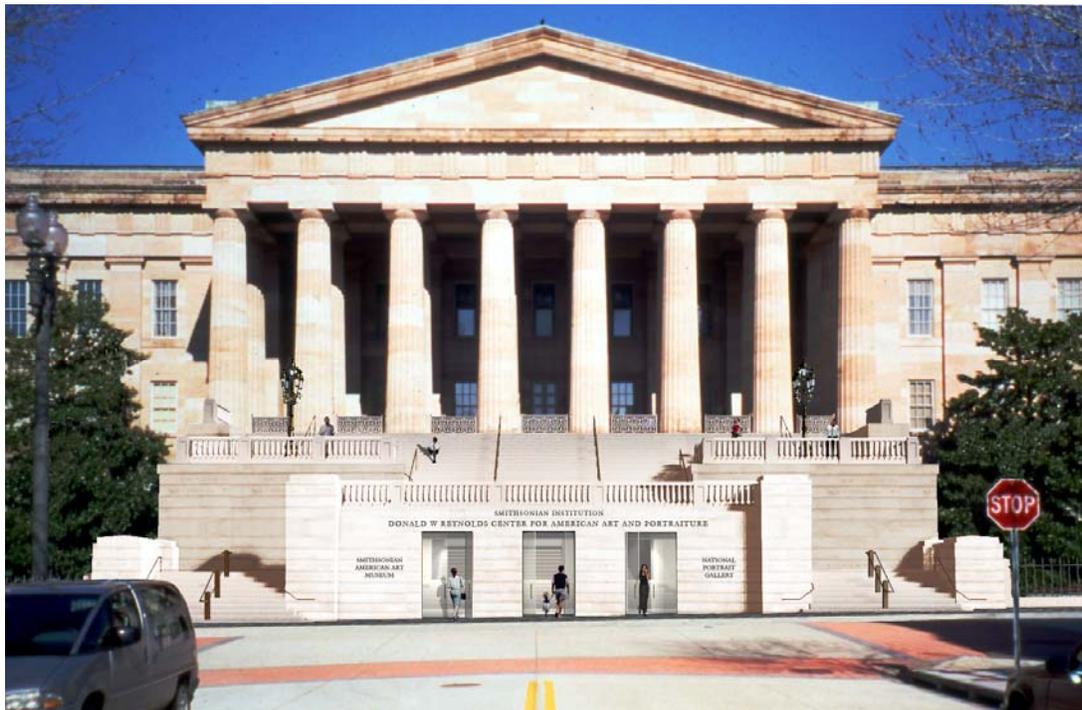
Diagram of radius at southeast corner of reservation

Bollards at the monumental staircases

The proposal also includes a variety of bollard lay-outs for the four monumental staircases on the four facades of the building. The bollards at the curb on 7th Street and G Street would be contemporary in appearance and of smooth stainless steel; the bollards on the F Street and 9th Street stairs would have a bronze finish to be compatible with the handrails. The size and spacing of the bollards reflect the Smithsonian's recent barrier tests and reduce the size and appearance of bollards from projects submitted to the Commission by agencies in the past. The bollards are 30 inches in height, 6 inches in diameter, and spaced 5 feet on center.



F Street: The new stair would be constructed as a hardened façade. Bollards would be attached to hand rails as supports in the lower runs of the stairs.



9th Street: Bollards would be attached as supports to new handrails. This entrance is not open to the public.

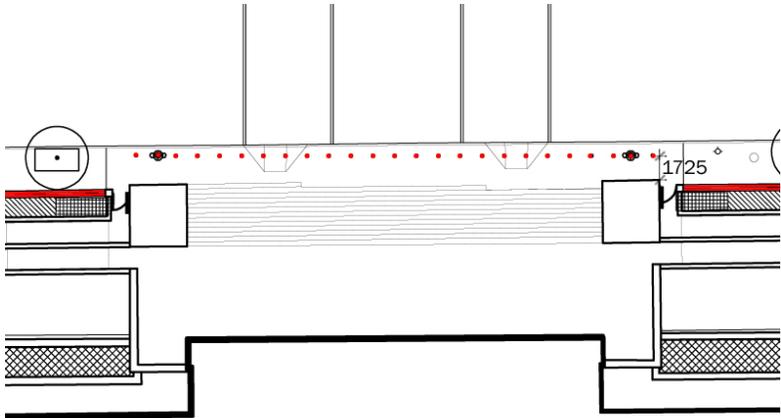


On 9th Street, NW, bollards would be installed on the bottom steps of the two staircases, attached to handrails.

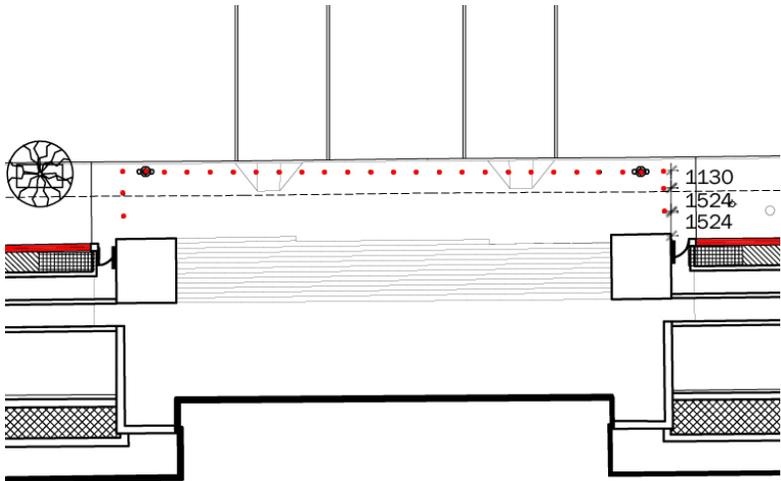
G Street: A line of bollards would be installed inside the curb opposite the G Street stair. The sidewalk is less than 10 feet wide, leaving 6 feet clear passage in front of the stair, which serves as the evening and auditorium entrance to the museum. Staffs of NCPC, the Commission of Fine Arts, and the D.C. State Historic Preservation Office have suggested widening the sidewalk and narrowing the street in the 7-800 blocks of G Street in order to provide a sidewalk that would incorporate the parking lane (which would create a new sidewalk pedestrian clearance width of 13'8"). The Smithsonian has submitted both options, shown in plan on the following page.



Rendering of bollards inside curb of G Street (with the current sidewalk width). No bollards would cross the sidewalk in this alternative. If the sidewalk were widened, the Smithsonian would propose installing bollards across the sidewalk at either end.

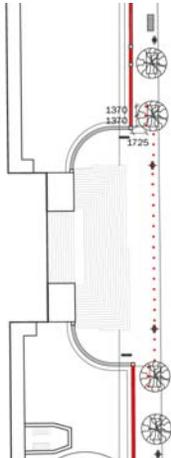


Proposed bollard line with existing sidewalk and curb (5'10" pedestrian clearance).



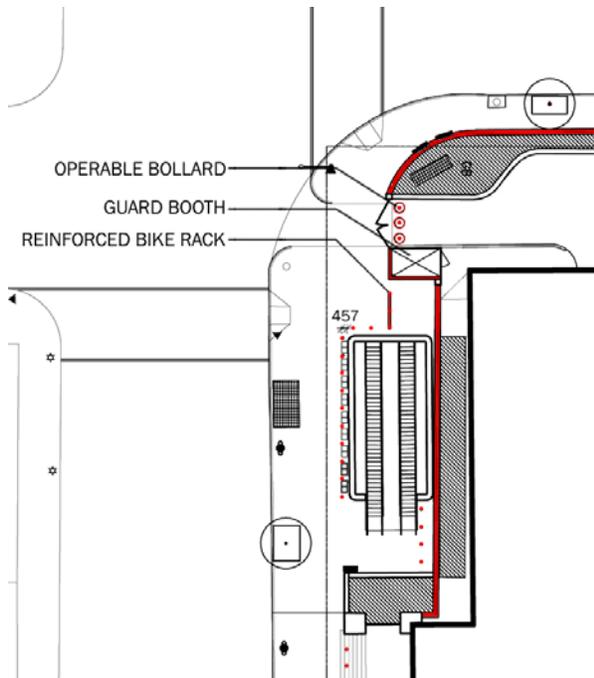
Proposed bollard line with widened sidewalk (13'8" pedestrian clearance).

7th Street: Bollards would be installed inside the curb edge opposite the staircase, which is not a building entrance. The bollards would continue along the inside edges of the two street tree pits facing the stairs. The sidewalk would not be altered.



Metro escalator and service drive

The Gallery Place Metro escalator is located in public space at the northwest corner of the site. The Smithsonian proposes installing 12 bollards in front of the escalator wall facing the 9th Street sidewalk because the wall itself cannot serve as a vehicle barrier. Four bollards would be installed against the building moat at the top of the escalator. A reinforced bike rack would be installed north of the escalator. Finally, three operable bollards and a guard booth would be constructed to control entry into the service drive from 9th Street. The guard booth is not yet designed.



Smithsonian rendering of proposed bollards interspersed with (existing) newspaper boxes at Gallery Place Metro station escalator wall.

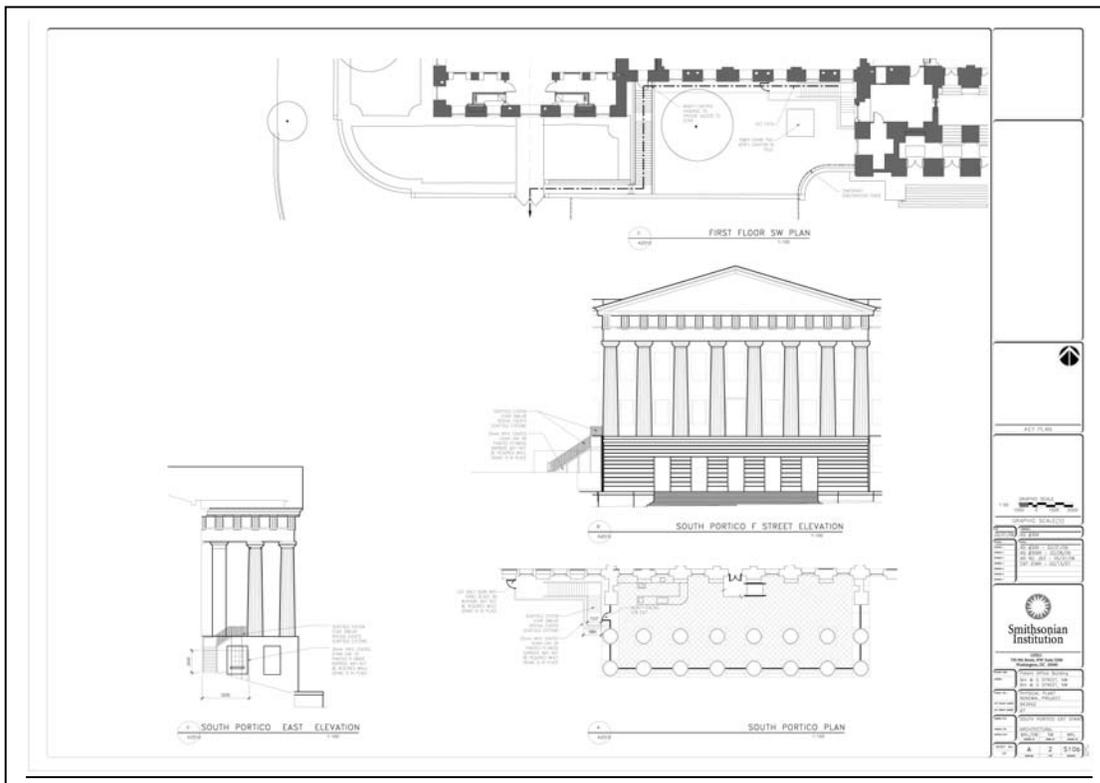


NCPC photo of unified newspaper boxes at Farragut North Metro station escalator wall. The Smithsonian has looked at these as a possible model for hardened newspaper boxes.

Temporary egress stair from portico on F Street façade

The Commission is reviewing for the first time as part of the concept submission a proposal to install a demountable egress stair next to the portico so that the number of patrons using the Portico Café could be increased during the 2007 warm-weather season. The stair would be removed in the late fall after the café is closed for the season.

The café operated last summer with a seating capacity of 50 patrons and was limited by the single means of egress. With a second means of emergency egress, the seating capacity could be increased up to 170 patrons. When the F Street stair is reconstructed, that will serve as the second means of egress. The Smithsonian proposes a temporary, demountable metal staircase, used seasonally, until the F Street stair is reconstructed. The temporary stair case would be removed during the off season. It would like to test the temporary stair, as well as expanded café service, this summer. The stair would be attached to the west side of the portico (one section of the portico rail would be removed and stored) and descend to the ground level. From there, patrons would use the same egress path and gate in the fence that would be used by the building's occupants in an emergency. The staircase would be clad in plywood or a similar material. The Smithsonian considers the installation of the stair an experiment for this season. It would be hidden behind the construction fence (which will remain in place this year) from street views.



Development Program

The Smithsonian has projected a cost of \$20 million for the stair reconstruction, landscape rehabilitation, and perimeter security installation, to be paid for with a combination of appropriated and private funds. There is no timetable at present for the installation of the perimeter security.

PROJECT ANALYSIS

The staff recommends that the Commission reaffirm the favorable comments expressed at the April 2006 meeting when it reviewed an earlier revised concept design for the reconstruction of the F Street stair and the rehabilitation of the reservation landscape, based on findings of a Cultural Landscape Report. At that meeting, the Commission asked the Smithsonian to return with a landscape plan that included perimeter security if the Smithsonian deemed security to be necessary, so that landscape plans could be reviewed as a whole.

The staff accepts the Smithsonian's revised concept for the design of a perimeter barrier, if determined to be necessary, to be located at the edge of the lawn, inside the sidewalk around most of the reservation, keeping the barrier out of the pedestrian realm as much as possible. The Smithsonian staff and their design team have responded to design and historic preservation comments of the staff and other review agency staffs and public consulting parties to date.

The staff recommends, however, that the Commission request that the Smithsonian reassess whether perimeter security is warranted around the Patent Office Building prior to submission of preliminary site and building plans for the landscape and F Street stair.

Fence and wall: altering the historic fence and granite curb to serve as a vehicle barrier

The Smithsonian design team studied and presented several options to the consulting parties during meetings this fall and winter. Useful and constructive discussions occurred at all of the meetings. The group studied placing a Stalwart post and rail system directly behind the fence—either exposed or inside a hedge. The group studied installing two cables across the fence at chest /head heights while retaining the granite curb at its present height of about 8 inches. The group studied installing bollards all the way around the reservation at the sidewalk curb in order to avoid altering the historic fence. Ultimately, a proposal to raise the stone curb to a height of approximately 26 inches, augmented with a cable system that was as minimal as possible, was proposed by the Smithsonian and supported by the review agency staffs and consulting parties.

The installation of a security barrier will have an adverse effect on the Patent Office reservation. In the Smithsonian's preferred approach, the historic cast iron fence and granite base would be altered in a way that would affect the historic fabric and its appearance. Its relationship to pedestrians, to the reservation lawn, and to the building would be altered.

The Smithsonian staff, Commission staff, and other review agency staffs and consulting parties believe that the proposed solution is better for the Patent Office Building and its reservation than other examined solutions—either barriers inside the fence line or at the street curb—that wouldn't touch or alter the historic fabric of the fence but that would be more visible as security barriers and thus alter the appearance of the fence's context and landscape more severely. Given the visual prominence of the Patent Office reservation itself in the middle of downtown, this is a significant factor, even when weighed against the desire to avoid the alteration—likely permanent—of the historic fence itself.

Staff notes that proposed security barriers in historic settings seek to balance the significance and integrity of historic fabric and elements with the significance and integrity of the historic landscape and setting. In each individual case, the applicant and the Commission must evaluate the best approach.

In the case of the Patent Office, the Commission (among others) has ascribed historic value to the grass lawn, to its gently sloping grade, and to its openness. These are qualities documented in the Cultural Landscape Report and conveyed in the new reservation landscape plan, which will be rehabilitated as one of the mitigation measures approved by the Commission in 2005 and 2006.

The planting of a thick hedge inside the fence, for example, in order to disguise a post and cable system, would be incompatible with the open character of the lawn and with the view of the lawn through the open fence. An undisguised post and cable system inside the fence line, while keeping the lawn more open in appearance, would be visually jarring. The attachment of cables to the fence at eye height (without raising the height of the granite wall) would physically and visually alter the graceful cast iron fence, especially when coupled with the vertical posts necessary to support the cable. Bollards at the sidewalk curb would leave the fence and landscape unaltered but would radically affect the appearance and function of the public sidewalks that define the reservation. Smithsonian and Commission staffs concluded that raising the height of the wall, while a clear alteration of the lower granite fence wall, would be less visually intrusive than the other options studied.

Given the perimeter barrier options available and studied, staff recommends that the Commission comment that the proposed alteration of the granite wall to create retaining and free-standing walls approximately 26 inches high, and the hardening of the cast iron fence by the installation of a cable and posts at its lower edge, is an acceptable and a viable design solution, but also request that the Smithsonian Institution reassess whether perimeter security is warranted around the Patent Office Building prior to submission of preliminary site and building plans for the landscape and F Street stair.

Bollards at the monumental staircases

The Smithsonian proposes bollards at the curbs in front of the G Street and 7th Street stairs. Staff supports the general approach of bollards at the curb (rather than barriers across the monumental

stairs themselves) but recommends that the effect on pedestrians be studied further and minimized.

At the G Street entrance, the sidewalk would be narrowed to 1725 millimeters or less than 6 feet. This clearance is undesirable at the entrance to the museum. The sidewalk, at least at the entrance, should be widened for the benefit of museum visitors as well as pedestrians in this increasingly busy part of downtown with high pedestrian traffic. Smithsonian and review agency staffs have met with DDOT representatives several times and will continue to take steps to ensure that the possibility of widening the sidewalk is studied fully and implemented if possible. Funding is a significant hurdle. The Smithsonian should provide information as it develops before the preliminary stage of review.

On 7th Street, staff supports the use of bollards inside the curb, but notes that the two tree pits also narrow the sidewalk clearance to just under 6 feet. It is less serious in this location than on G Street because the stair is not an entrance, but the proposed use of bollards behind the tree pits needs further study before the next stage of Commission review.

The staff supports a contemporary design for the bollards and notes that they would be 30 inches high and 6 inches in diameter—shorter and narrower than is typical.

The few bollards on the 9th Street stair and especially on the reconstructed monumental F Street stair are unfortunate but are integrated with new handrails to lessen their visual effect as much as possible.

Staff recommends that the Commission not comment favorably on a bollard line at the current G Street curb because it would narrow the sidewalk in front of a major museum entrance to approximately 6 feet. Instead, the sidewalk entrance should be widened for the benefit of museum visitors as well as pedestrians in this increasingly busy part of downtown with high pedestrian traffic. Staff recommends that the Smithsonian and other agencies continue to meet with DDOT to study widening the sidewalk by narrowing the cartway of G Street, at least in front of the stairs.

Since parking spaces are desired along the south side of G Street, staff recommends that at a minimum the sidewalk in front of the stairs (facing 8th Street, on axis) be widened to include the parking lane, since no vehicles should be allowed to park in front of the Patent Office to block the view of the entrance on the 8th Street axis in any event. It is now marked as a no-parking zone. Vehicle drop-off zones could be created on one or both sides of the G Street stair entrance, near the handicap ramps.

The bollard line at the 7th Street stair (which is not a building entrance) should be studied further to widen the six-foot clearance at the tree pits, if possible, given the growing pedestrian traffic along the 7th Street sidewalk.

Metro escalator and service drive

The Metro escalator area at the northwest corner of the site would receive unique treatment with a variety of elements. A guard booth would be placed near the service drive, and three operable bollards installed across the drive. A hardened bike rack would be added. Although no bollards would be placed at the top of the escalators in the direct path of Metro users, the proposed installation of bollards adjacent to the Metro escalator wall is unsightly. Since the current situation includes a row of unsightly newspaper boxes, staff recommends that the Smithsonian extend its use of reinforced elements such as the bike rack and consider reinforced or hardened newspaper boxes. A similar use of hardened street furniture might be possible for the four bollards near the top of the escalators. The guard booth (not yet designed) is sited in the best possible position, considering that it is in public space.

Staff recommends that the Commission not comment favorably on the proposed bollard line in front of the Metro escalator wall and the building's moat wall, and recommends instead continued study of other means of providing an acceptable barrier and standoff distance, including reinforced or hardened street furniture such as newspaper boxes.

Temporary egress stair from portico on F Street façade

The staff is pleased that the museum is operating a popular outdoor café on the portico and endorses the Smithsonian's proposed experiment to expand its capacity this summer. The use of a temporary, demountable metal egress stair is seasonal and requires no permanent change to the building. The Smithsonian can submit a proposal to the Commission next year for another period of temporary installation if it wishes to continue the arrangement. Given the presence of the construction fence in front of the building this season, which will block the view of the metal stair from street level views, and the experimental nature of the proposal, the staff recommends that the Commission endorse the concept as supportive of the building's and the future F Street stair's use as a public amenity in Downtown.

The staff recommends that the Commission approve the concept design for the installation of a temporary egress stair for the Portico Café for the 2007 warm-weather season only and delegate the final approval to the Executive Director.

CONFORMANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

The staff has determined that policies in the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements* apply, in particular the following policies in the Preservation and Historic Features Element. The revised concept design is consistent with the policies in regard to the reconstruction of the F Street stair and the rehabilitation of the reservation landscape. The alteration of the granite curb and fence to create a vehicle barrier are adverse effects to the National Historic Landmark that are deemed acceptable by the fact that they are less visually

intrusive and less physically damaging than other barrier proposals studied. The proposed installation of bollards along the narrow sidewalk of G Street, NW and the proposed installation of bollards at the Metro escalator are not consistent with best practices as exemplified by the policies.

Express the dignity befitting the image of the federal government in the national capital. Federal development should adhere to the high aesthetic standards already established by the planning and design legacy of the nation's capital. This legacy encompasses both the old and the new—the capital's rich architectural heritage, continually augmented by the design contributions of each generation.
(National Capital Image: #1)

Protect the settings of historic properties, including views to and from the sites where significant, and integral parts of the historic character of the property.
(Stewardship of Historic Properties: #6)

National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA)

The Commission is reviewing this project as an advisor at the revised concept stage, and has no NEPA obligation at this phase. However, the Commission has an obligation for an Environmental Assessment (EA), Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), or categorical exclusion at the preliminary design and final review stages. NCPC's Environmental Policies, at Section 10.G.2, state that a project of this type ordinarily requires an Environmental Assessment (unless the applicant can demonstrate project attributes that would qualify the project as a categorical exclusion).

The Smithsonian Institution, as a non-federal entity for the purposes of NEPA, must consult with NCPC to undertake an environmental review of the project and provide that information in accordance with the Commission's project submission requirements.

Commission and Smithsonian staffs have discussed the need for the Smithsonian to review the current EA, which covers the stair reconstruction and the landscape, to determine what additional information must be developed.

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

The Smithsonian, a federal agency for purposes of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, is serving as lead agency for the Section 106 consultation. The project is the reconstruction of the reservation landscape and includes implementation of the mitigation agreed to during the Commission's review of the courtyard enclosure: the relocation of the fence line on F Street to its earlier configuration, the reconstruction of the historic F Street stair, and the rehabilitation and extension of the reservation landscape.

The proposed installation of perimeter security around the reservation is not the same kind of project, in that it does not reconstruct or enhance the historic elements of the reservation. The Smithsonian's security requirements are regrettable in their physical manifestation, and weaken the attributes of the proposed landscape plan. Therefore, a component of the reservation mitigation itself will constitute an adverse effect.

Given that, the Smithsonian has approached a perimeter security design with sensitivity and flexibility. Its staff and architectural team have consulted repeatedly during the past year with Commission staff, the staffs of the D.C. State Historic Preservation Office and the Commission of Fine Arts, and representatives of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the D.C. Preservation League, and the Committee of 100 on the Federal City.

The installation of a security barrier will have an adverse effect on the Patent Office reservation, since the historic fence and granite base will be altered, thereby affecting the fence and its relationship to the reservation and to the building. The Smithsonian staff, Commission staff, and other review agency staffs and consulting parties believe that the proposed solution is better than other examined solutions that wouldn't touch or alter the historic fabric of the fence but that would alter the appearance of the fence's context and landscape more severely.

Staff notes that proposed security barriers in historic settings seek to balance the significance and integrity of historic fabric and elements with the significance and integrity of the historic landscape and setting. In each individual case, the applicant and the Commission must evaluate the best approach. In the case of the Patent Office, the Commission (among others) has already ascribed value to the reservation's grass lawn and to its openness and low degree of vegetation. These are qualities documented in the Cultural Landscape Report and achieved--absent the security component--in the new reservation landscape plan, which will be rehabilitated as one of the mitigation measures approved by the Commission in 2005 and 2006.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee at its February 7, 2007 meeting reviewed the proposal and forwarded it to the Commission with the statement that the project had been coordinated with all agencies represented. The participating agencies were: NCPC, the District of Columbia Office of Planning, the District Department of Transportation, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. Although not in attendance, the representative from the General Services Administration concurred in the coordination of this proposal.

Commission of Fine Arts

The Commission of Fine Arts reviewed the proposal at its February 15, 2007 meeting, commenting favorably on the submission but expressing concern for the proposed treatment at the Metro escalator wall. Staff of the Commission of Fine Arts participated in the consultation meetings during which the current perimeter security design was developed.

Consultation with other agencies

Smithsonian staff has coordinated its proposal with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).

Commission staff has met with DDOT officials to discuss the possibility of widening the G Street sidewalk. DDOT is interested in maximizing parking on the block. Commission and Smithsonian staffs have also met with the Public Space Committee of the D.C. Department of Transportation (DDOT) and the Office of Planning's liaison to the Public Space Committee.

Smithsonian staff has also met separately with DDOT, most recently on February 8, 2007. Several scenarios for a wider sidewalk, various travel lane configurations, and improved parking were discussed.

No funding source for widening the sidewalk has been identified.