

DRAFT STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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NCPC File No. 6648



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUILDING MODERNIZATION – PHASE 1
Herbert C. Hoover Building
14th Street, NW and Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC

Submitted by the General Services Administration

September 29, 2007

Abstract

The General Services Administration has submitted preliminary and final building plans for the Phase 1 modernization of the Department of Commerce Building (Herbert C. Hoover Building) located at 14th Street, NW and Constitution Avenue, NW in Washington, DC. The modernization of the Herbert C. Hoover building is to be completed in eight phases over a twelve-year period and will be finished in 2020. The building will be fully occupied during the renovation, by utilizing swing space that will be created in the Courtyard 6 infill. The overall renovation program includes: new high efficiency building systems, new fire and life safety systems, enhanced perimeter security, seismic structural improvements, exterior cleaning, LEED Silver Certification, and new landscaping. This phase consists of the cleaning and restoration of the north building facade, the renovation of the existing Courtyard 6 infill, and the installation of cooling towers on the roof.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

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

Executive Director's Recommendation

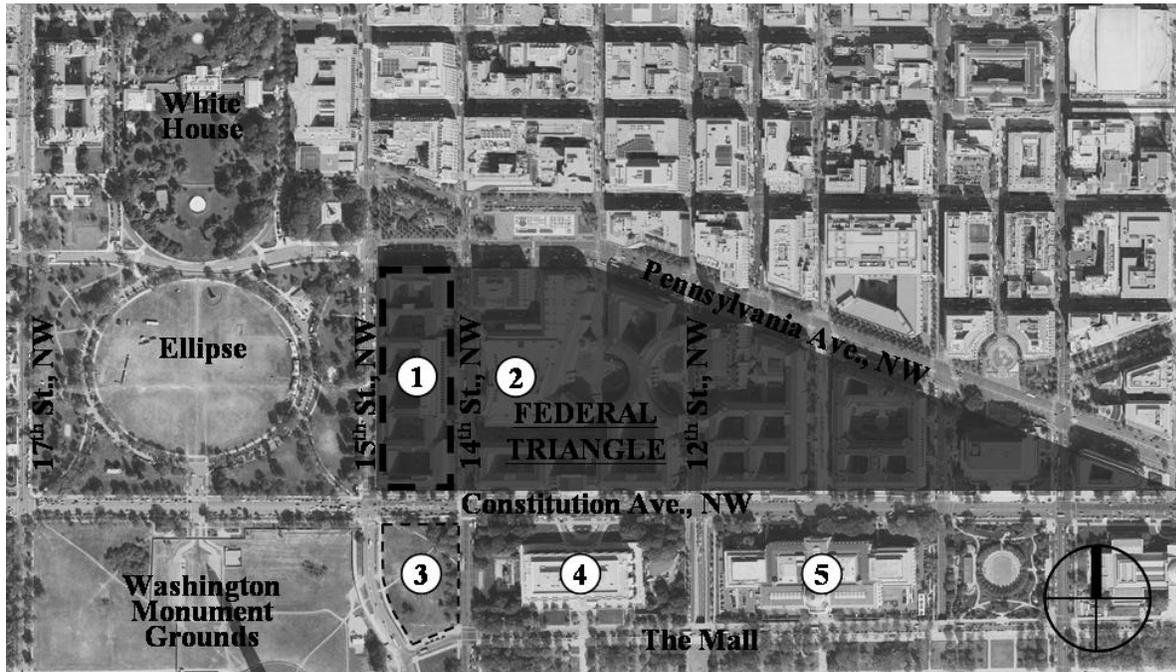
The Commission:

Approves the preliminary and final building plans for the Phase 1 modernization of the Herbert C. Hoover Building, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.23(38.40)41970. Phase I includes the cleaning and restoration of the north building facade, the renovation of the existing Courtyard 6 infill, and the installation of cooling towers on the roof.

Reminds the applicant that they will need to conduct an environmental assessment to analyze the potential impacts associated with all portions of this project proposed for installation in public space, including perimeter security elements and the relocation of the National Aquarium, which is anticipated to have a new entrance facility located at least in part in public space.

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

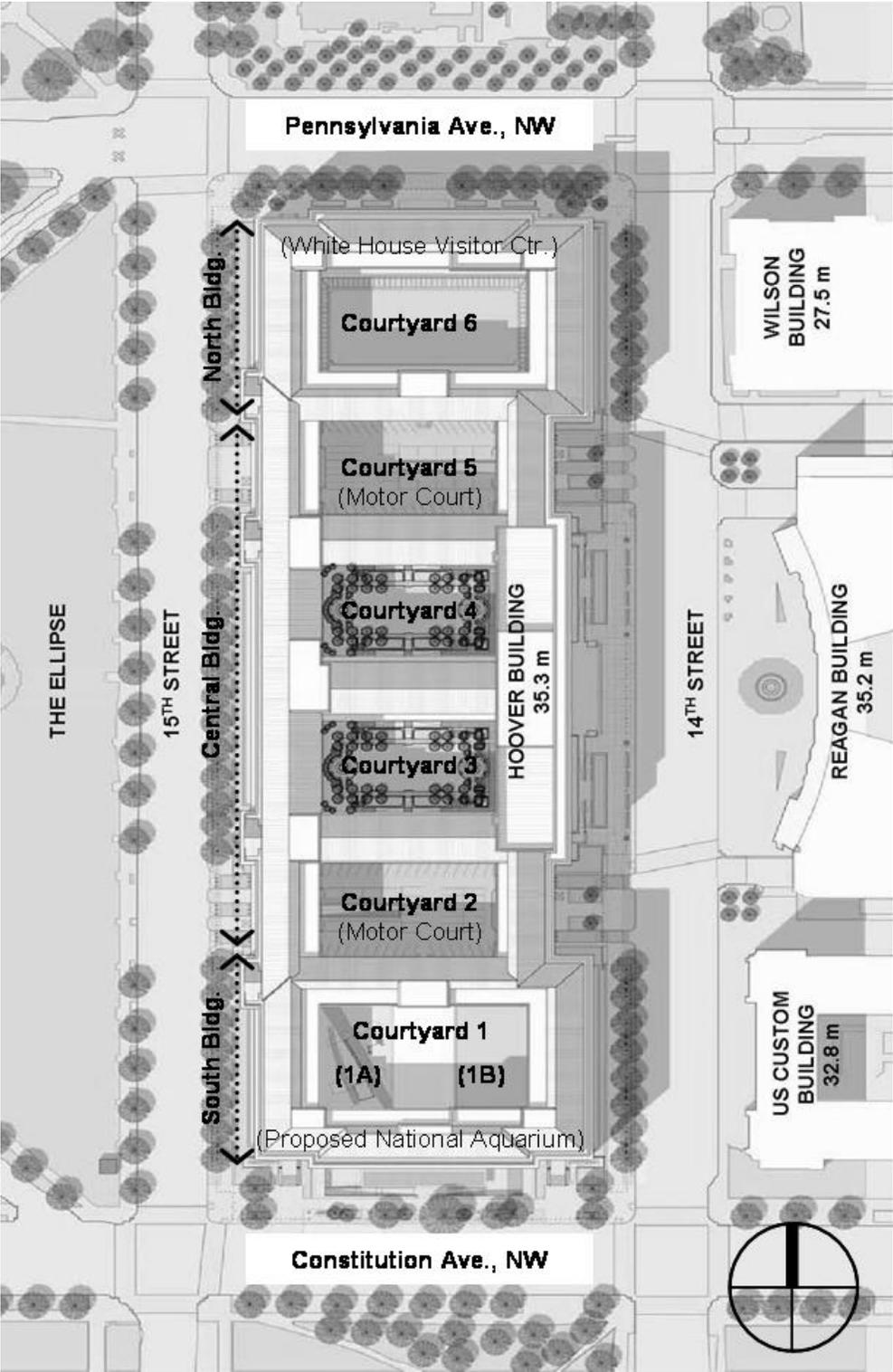


- 1. Department of Commerce, Herbert C. Hoover Building; 2. Ronald Reagan Building; 3. Future National African American Museum of History and Culture;**
4. National Museum of American History; 5. National Museum of Natural History

SITE AERIAL

Site

The Department of Commerce, Herbert C. Hoover Building is located at 1401 Constitution Avenue, situated between 14th and 15th Streets, NW and Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues, NW. The building is located at the western end of the Federal Triangle and is directly adjacent to the National Mall to the south and the Ellipse to the west. The Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center is located to the east, across 14th Street, NW. The proposed site for the future Smithsonian Institution National Museum of African American History and Culture is located immediately south of the building across Constitution Avenue.



SITE PLAN

Background

The seven-story, Herbert C. Hoover Building was the first building constructed in the Federal Triangle. The 323,865 square foot footprint occupies the entire site and six exterior courtyards divide the complex into three buildings, the center, north and south buildings. Courtyards 2 and 5 are motor courts, accessed from 14th and 15th Streets, that provide limited employee parking and service access. The complex provides 1,913,245 square feet of tenant space; the primary building tenant is the Department of Commerce. The White House Visitors Center occupies a portion of the north building and has a visitor entrance directly off of Pennsylvania Avenue. The National Aquarium currently occupies the basement of the center building and visitors enter off of 14th Street. A pedestrian tunnel, below 14th Street, connects the Herbert C. Hoover and Ronald Reagan Buildings.



Aerial photo of Herbert C. Hoover Building

At its December 6, 2001 meeting, the Commission approved preliminary and final site development plans for a temporary security barrier system at the U.S. Department of Commerce Herbert C. Hoover Building for a period not to exceed 18 months. The project included installation of concrete planters around the perimeter and replacement of six vehicle barrier gates at Courtyards 2 and 5 driveway entrances on 14th and 15th Streets. The Commission noted they “understand that GSA is working on a permanent security solution for the Commerce Building and other buildings within the Federal Triangle in accordance with the *Urban Design Guidelines for Physical Perimeter and Entrance Security: An Overlay to the Master Plan for the Federal Triangle* and requests that proposals are also consistent with the recommendations of the Commission’s Interagency Task Force on Security and coordinated with the Urban Design and Security Plan now in preparation.”

At its September 5, 2002 meeting, the Commission approved preliminary and final site development plans for panel antennas below the seventh floor balcony and balustrade on the northeast corner, south façade and west façade of the building for a period of five years, except for the stealth boxes. The Commission delegated approval of the final antenna screening design to the Executive Director. The Commission “expects the General Services Administration to submit for review those antennas currently installed on the Department of Commerce Building that have not been previously reviewed by the Commission.”

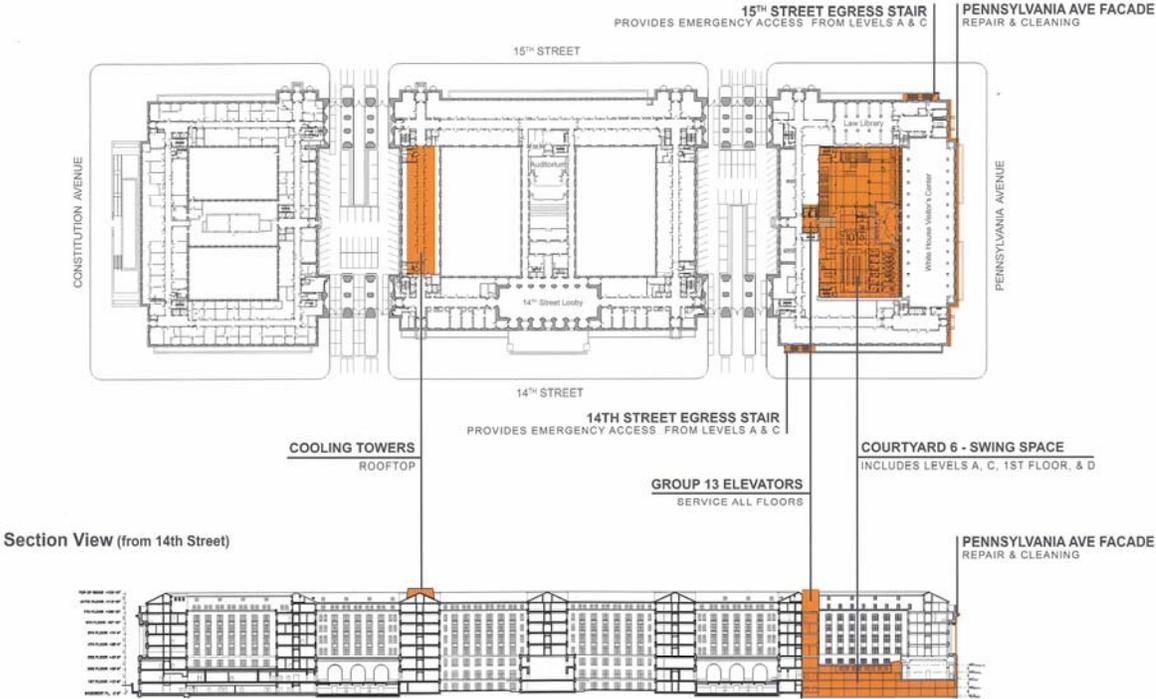
At its March 30, 2006 meeting, the Commission approved the concept site and building plans for the phase one building modernization. GSA has now submitted the preliminary and final site and building plans for Phase 1.

Proposal

The General Services Administration (GSA) is undertaking building modernization work to be completed in eight phases by the year 2020. The building will be fully occupied during the renovation, by utilizing swing space that will be created in the Courtyard 6 infill. The overall renovation program, estimated to cost \$642,248,000 includes:

- New high efficiency building systems including new chillers, new primary and secondary electrical services, new cooling towers, new emergency generators, and new plumbing.
- New fire and life safety systems in addition to a temporary sprinkler system in the main egress corridors to protect employees as construction proceeds over the 8 phases.
- Enhanced perimeter security including blast resistant windows and streetscape barriers
- Seismic Structural Improvements
- New National Aquarium entrance on Constitution Avenue
- LEED Silver Certification
- Exterior building cleaning, pointing of stonework, and restoration of existing windows
- New exterior landscaping

Phase 1 will begin at the end of 2007 and is estimated to be complete in April of 2009. The total estimated cost of Phase 1 is \$44,091,000.



Phase 1 Scope of Work

Phase 1 includes three sub-phases:

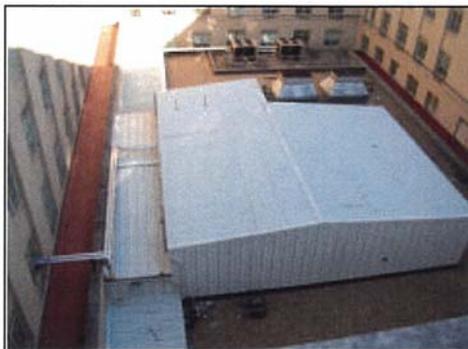
Phase 1A

Phase 1A includes the cleaning and restoration of the north building façade, specifically the portion of the exterior visible from Pennsylvania Avenue. The building stone will be cleaned due to corrosion of metal elements and biological growth. The windows will be scraped and cleaned and prepared with a new finish coat. The color of the final finish will be based on historic finishes. In addition the exterior wall will be re-pointed as necessary and window frames will be scraped, clean, and prepared with a new finish coat.

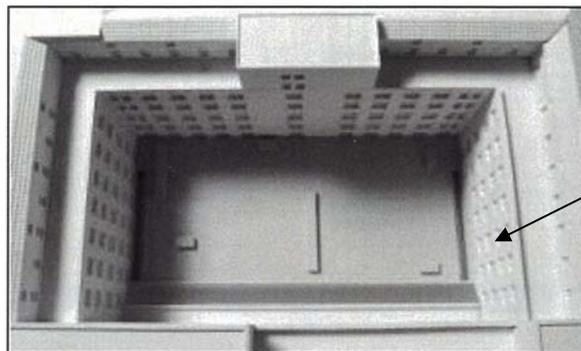
Phase 1B

Phase 1B includes the complete renovation of the existing Courtyard 6 infill, which will be used for temporary swing space necessary for the completion of the full renovation. The challenge for this space is that the space was originally designed for file stacks and therefore did not have natural light or windows. The floor to floor heights are also below typical office standards and the entire area is not code compliant in areas of fire and life safety. Building renovations to address these issues include the following:

- Courtyard 6 will be sprinkled and updated with fire and life safety amenities.
- A new egress stair tower will be installed at the south side of the infill space to address non-aligned floor levels between the courtyard infill and the existing building. This stair tower will serve the subbasement, basement mezzanine, first floor and first floor mezzanine levels vertically and will direct all egress to the first floor level.
- All of the existing air handling units that currently occupy the roof and will be relocated to the subbasement and basement mezzanine levels. The rooftop will be waterproofed and protected with white pebbles.
- A new skylight will be installed to bring natural light to new office spaces.



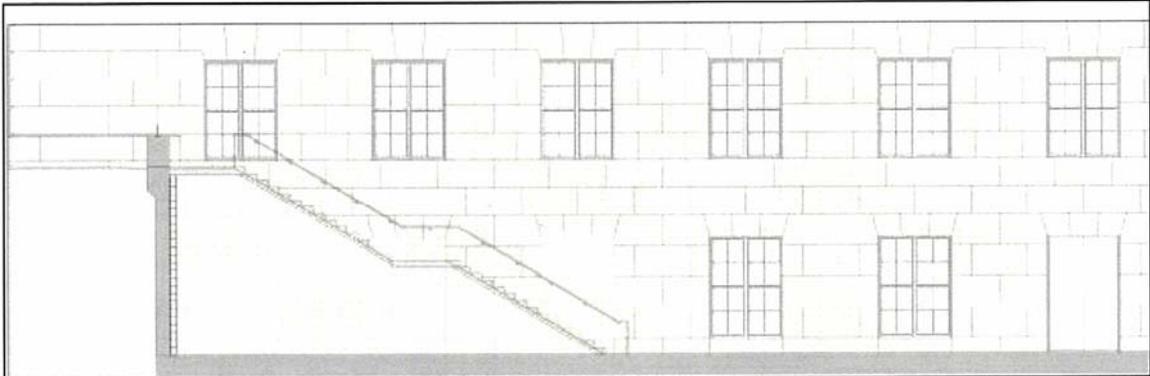
Existing Courtyard 6 /Rooftop



Skylight

Model of Courtyard 6 Rooftop with skylight

- New concrete egress stairs will be constructed in the two areaways located along the east and west facades at the north end of the building leading from the basement level to the public areaway. The existing window openings behind the staircase will be blocked with full height granite panels matching the original granite.



Section of proposed egress stair

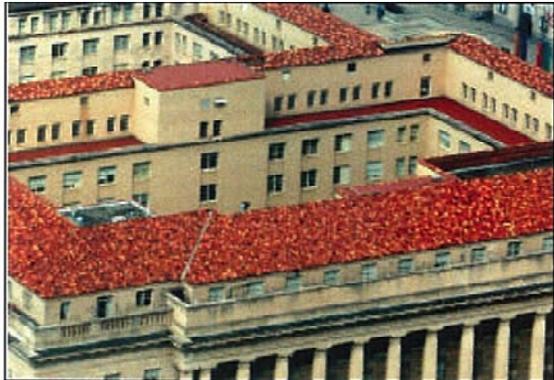


Existing conditions of areaway at proposed location of egress stair

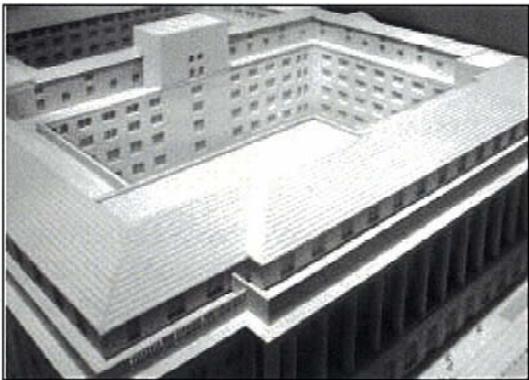


Existing conditions of areaway at proposed location of egress stair

- The elevator core will include two new passenger/freight elevators, with one servicing the eighth floor, and will require an expanded elevator penthouse on the roof of the building. The height of this penthouse will not exceed the height of any portion of the existing building. Salvaged brick from the areaways of Courtyard 6 will be reused for part of penthouse facade.



Existing Elevator Head House – Courtyard 6



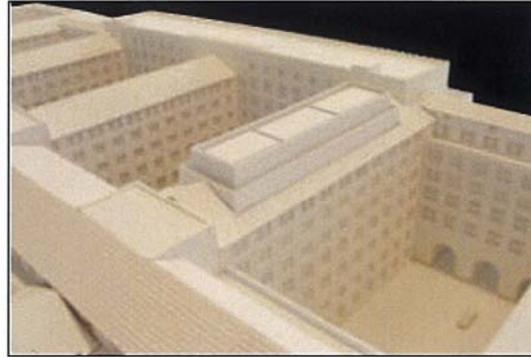
Proposed Elevator Head House – Courtyard 6

Phase 1C

Phase 1C includes new cooling towers and a screen enclosure. The current tower design provides two arrays of towers, one at each edge of the building, with a service walk between them. This pushes the towers to the edge of the building and is not sympathetic to the historic nature and character of the structure. The new towers will provide a single array of cooling towers in the middle of the roof, pulling them away from the edge of the building and allowing for the reinstatement of some of the tile roof.



Roof showing existing cooling tower



Model view of proposed cooling tower

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Phase I Building Renovations

Staff supports the proposed phase one building modernization for the Herbert C. Hoover Building. The building façade maintenance and site and streetscape improvements will refresh and re-establish the historic architecture and urban setting. Interior building and courtyard modifications will improve employees' quality of life and productivity. New fire and life safety systems will provide a much safer workplace.

The height of the proposed penthouse for the two new passenger/freight elevators will not exceed the height of any portion of the existing building. The salvaged brick from the areaways on the east and west sides of Courtyard 7 will be reused for part of the facade of this penthouse to maintain continuity of materials and coloring within the brickwork used in the interior facades of this courtyard.

The proposed cooling towers will replace existing ones that are arranged on the roof in a way that is not sympathetic to the historic nature and character of the structure. Currently there are two arrays of towers, one at each edge of the building, with a service walk between them. This arrangement pushes the cooling towers and screens to the edge of the building and is not sympathetic to the historic nature and character of the structure. The new design of the cooling towers will provide a single array of towers in the middle of the roof, pulling them away from the edge of the building and allowing for the reinstatement of some tile roof.

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, the Preservation and Historic Features, and Visitor Elements.

The proposed modernization, repair and rehabilitation will ensure the continued preservation and stewardship of federal historic property. The project will increase the quality of workplace for federal employees and will attract and retain workforce within the monumental core. The building is currently served by several modes of public transportation and pedestrian routes. The site improvements will reinforce the historic green character of the nation's capital by maintaining street trees that will frame the L'Enfant streets.

Federal Capital Improvements Program

The Commission recommended and strongly endorsed the following projects as noted in the Federal Capital Improvements Program for Fiscal Years 2006-2011:

- The Department of Commerce, Herbert C. Hoover Building Modernization
- The Federal Triangle and Pennsylvania Avenue (3rd to 15th Streets, NW) Perimeter Security and Streetscape Improvements
- The Constitution Avenue (3rd to 15th and 17th to 23rd Streets, NW) Perimeter Security and Streetscape Improvements

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

The scope of the project submission for Phase 1 of the building modernization consists of repair, replacement, and cleaning of exterior building surfaces, new fire and life safety systems, and other renovation of HVAC equipment and systems. As an initial phase of the renovation of the structure, GSA has determined that the project qualifies as a categorical exclusion under NEPA. Subsequent project phases will involve more extensive actions potentially affecting various environmental attributes of both the site and historic structure. NCPC staff has determined that the Phase 1 project has independent utility and therefore qualifies as a categorical exclusion under NCPC's Environmental and Historic Preservation Policies and Procedures at Section 8(C)(5) as long as GSA continues to meet NCPC's requirements for Section 106 Consultation in accordance with NCPC's Environmental and Historic Preservation Policies and Procedures.

NCPC staff anticipates that future phases of the project will require at least the development of an Environmental Assessment to define, review, and document the potential environmental impacts of the renovation project that involve public space, including perimeter security elements and the relocation of the National Aquarium, which is anticipated to have a new entrance facility located at least in part in public space.

National Historic Preservation Act

GSA has consulted with the D.C. State Historic Preservation Office (DC SHPO), as well as with the Commission staff, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation staff, and other parties since late 2005 on proposed exterior and interior alterations to the Commerce Building.

Given the scope of the project, GSA has divided it into phases, aggregating them into two submissions. The first submission, before the Commission today, includes elements that GSA believes will not constitute an adverse effect to the Hoover Building or to the Federal Triangle and the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site. Staff concurs.

GSA and the DC SHPO anticipate that elements of the second phase will have an adverse effect. GSA has drafted a Memorandum of Agreement for the scope of the entire project and has submitted it to the DC SHPO for review and execution. The terms of the MOA include further consultation throughout the remainder of the design phases so that adverse effects can be resolved through avoidance, minimization, or mitigation.

The Commerce Building is the largest building in the Federal Triangle. Designed by the prominent New York architectural firm of York and Sawyer (formed by architects who had previously worked in the firm of McKim, Mead, and White), the building was designed principally by Louis Ayers, who represented his firm on the Board of Architectural Consultants for the Federal Triangle. Constructed between 1926 and 1932, it was said at the time to be the largest government building in the United States. Clad in Indiana limestone with the characteristic red-orange tile roof of Federal Triangle buildings, the building expresses the Renaissance Revival and Beaux Arts styles, especially in plan, and in its rusticated base, graduated fenestration pattern, and colonnades of monumental Doric columns.

The Federal Triangle, conceived in the McMillan Plan, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Part of the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site, the Triangle was designated for its exceptional architectural and planning significance and for its contribution to the image of the federal government in the Nation's Capital.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal along with the entire site concept at its February 8, 2006 meeting, and forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the proposal had been coordinated with all participating agencies. The participating agencies were NCPC; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the Department of Housing and Community Development; the General Services Administration and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. The scope of work for Phase 1 has not changed since the Coordinating Committee last reviewed the concept plans.

Commission of Fine Arts

At their March 16, 2006 meeting the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) reviewed and approved the proposed building modernization concept for the reconfigured cooling towers and the Courtyard 6 building infill. CFA did not approve the perimeter security concept with the understanding that GSA would be developing a proposal for perimeter security for the Federal Triangle. At their November 15, 2007 meeting CFA approved the new phase 1 building modernization on their consent calendar.