

WALTER REED ARMY MEDICAL CENTER, MAIN CAMPUS
TEMPORARY SECURITY ENHANCEMENTS
6900 Georgia Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C.

Delegated Action of the Executive Director

Pursuant to delegations of authority adopted by the Commission on October 3, 1996, I approve the revised final site and building plans pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d) for temporary security enhancement features at the Elder Street and 16th Street post gate areas, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 62.10(38.40)-42263, for a period not to exceed two years.

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The Department of the Army has submitted preliminary and final site and building plans for temporary security gate improvements at the 16th Street and Elder Street gates at the Main campus of the Walter Reed Army Medical Center. The design introduces temporary improvements to the current Jersey barrier and stone configurations of vehicle perimeter barriers at these two locations. The effort clearly maintains a temporary definition to the improvements by using only small portable guard stations, small portable over-watch structures, and moveable plate vehicle-barriers at the traffic lanes of the campus entrance roadways. The direction of the Army with regard to the security gate areas is that of improvement for a more attractive security solution at the Medical Center, while recognizing that the Walter Reed Army Medical Center will be closed in 2011.

The temporary efforts involve the installation of an enlarged rock garden border at the existing entrance roadways. The rock gardens will be formed by systematically placing mixed sized boulders, stone benches, and rock garden plants that are native to the Washington area. The placement of the boulders will be loosely based on a series of overlapping arches. This will create a nonlinear border between the roadway and property beyond. At the Elder Street entrance, the tree canopy within the boulder area will be supplemented with native shade trees and the benches, and the rock garden will protect the property from vehicular access. The existing guard booth at Elder Street beyond the entrance gate will be replaced with a new temporary guard station. The 16th Street entrance will be improved by adding trees to supplement the existing canopy along the rock garden. The existing guard booth at 16th Street will also be replaced, and a new over-watch booth will be added near the security barriers at the top of the inclined entrance road, approximately 200 feet from the main street.

All roadway plate barriers will have the portable wheels removed and are to be painted a neutral matt shade of grey that will match the slate roof at the existing Elder Street entrance structure.

The project qualifies as a delegated action for review due to its temporary security attributes and with the eventual closing of Walter Reed in four years. The Army has consulted with the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office (DC SHPO) about the final design. In August 2002 the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with the proposed measures for full permanent security, but now that effort is significantly reduced in scale and effect. The Army further contacted the DC SHPO on June 1, 2007 and received no indication of concern that would alter the previous finding that “the work will not be located in or necessarily be seen from the eligible historic district. However, the temporary barriers, mainly and namely the boulders, must indeed be temporary”.

On June 13, 2007, the Coordinating Committee reviewed this project and forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the project has been coordinated by all agencies participating.

Pursuant to the regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Department of the Army completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) of the master plan update in October 2002 that included security measures. The EA addressed the potential environmental impacts of new security facilities that included the earlier submitted permanent security gate areas and a permanent truck screening facility at 16th Street. The truck facility is deleted from the current temporary plans. A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was determined and signed by the Department of Army authorities in November 2002 on the master plan. The Commission staff, pursuant to delegations of authority, adopted the EA and issued a FONSI in January 2003. The reduced scope and all modifications that have occurred in the revised final plans for temporary improved barriers would not significantly revise or alter the environmental analysis of the proposed actions or the conclusions identified by the EA. Consequently, the determinations of the Finding remain valid.

Patricia E. Gallagher, AICP
Executive Director