

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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NCPC File No. 6894



FORT BELVOIR, MUSEUM SUPPORT BUILDING

Fort Belvoir, Fairfax County, Virginia

Submitted by the Department of the Army

November 25, 2008

Abstract

The Department of the Army has submitted preliminary site and building plans for a Museum Support Building located on 5.4 acres of land at the South Post of Fort Belvoir, Virginia. This project supports the intention to locate the Army's premier National Museum at Fort Belvoir in the future, and is also the home to the Army's cultural and artifact research and maintenance operations. The building would provide space for collection storage, exhibition, research, and conservation laboratories of the United States Army for nationwide exhibit undertakings.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

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

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

Approves the preliminary site and building plans for the Museum Support Building at Fort Belvoir, Fairfax County, Virginia, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 2204.10(38.00)42659; and,

Recommends that the Army provide, in its final project submission for the Museum Support Building, documented actions that will be achieved by the project to support the transportation management plan (TMP) developed for Fort Belvoir master plan. Specified Museum Support operations should be noted that meet the alternative transportation programs of the master plan TMP.

Reminds the Army of the prior Commission request to submit the final Fort Belvoir long range master plan and accompanying required environmental and historic preservation compliance documents no later than mid-2009.

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

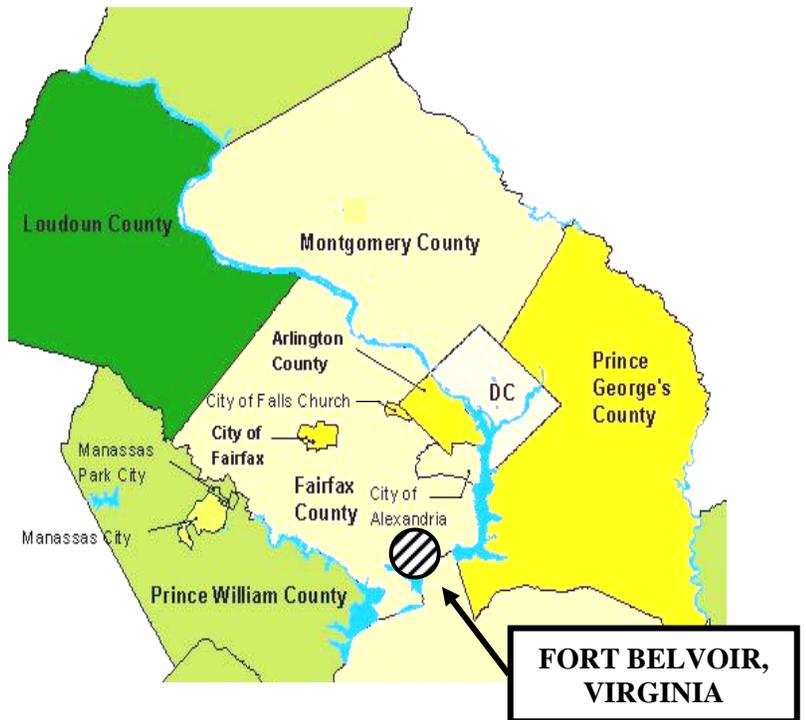
Site

The site for the Museum Support Building is located at the South Post section of Fort Belvoir at the industrial compound area of the Post. The location is bounded by North Tracy Loop to the north, Theote Road to the east, and South Tracy Loop to the immediate south boundary of the site. The total land area within these roadways is rectangular and consists of approximately 5.4 acres. The majority of the site area is undeveloped presently, but has been previously disturbed in the past by small industrial buildings that were demolished several years ago. Further to the west of the building site (0.5 miles) are the shoreline of Accotink Bay, which connects to the Potomac River, and the open space area of Accotink Wildlife Refuge.

The proposed site is well situated away from the residential areas of the base, and is at the southwest extent of the industrial zone of the South Post.

As noted, there are no existing buildings on the proposed site, but selective demolition of underground utilities will be required for the excavation of the new Museum Support Building foundation. All utility connections lost through demolition will be restored with new pipes and system connections.

Site development will necessitate the establishment of Virginia regulatory erosion control measures and permanent stormwater management, which are fully demonstrated in the plans submitted to NCPC.



REGIONAL LOCATION OF FORT BELVOIR, VIRGINIA

Background

This project will support the new Army National Museum that is planned to be developed at Fort Belvoir. The new building, however, also will develop space for national exhibit activities and Army expertise in museum operations with the capabilities entirely located at Fort Belvoir. These functions will include collection storage, exhibit storage, exhibition design and construction, exhibition and conservation laboratories, and office space for program staff.

Proposal

This new 124,600 square foot, high-space, one level structure includes storage, processing and research space for exhibit fabrication and artifact conservation. The building is large but creates a contemporary appearance for its fronting walls along the outwardly facing building façade at Theote Road. The largest sections of the building are placed away from the main entrance and road, and the mass has been broken into three distinct elements to provide visual interest.

The design of the Museum Support Building creates space that will house a state-of-the-art archives and collection storage building intended to support the Army's network of museums worldwide. The site plan calls for a main entrance to administrative areas, truck circulation and docking space, and a 22-space staff parking area. The anticipated amount of vehicular traffic is 22 vehicles per day, while the volume of truck traffic will consist of sporadic deliveries of artifacts and office supplies.

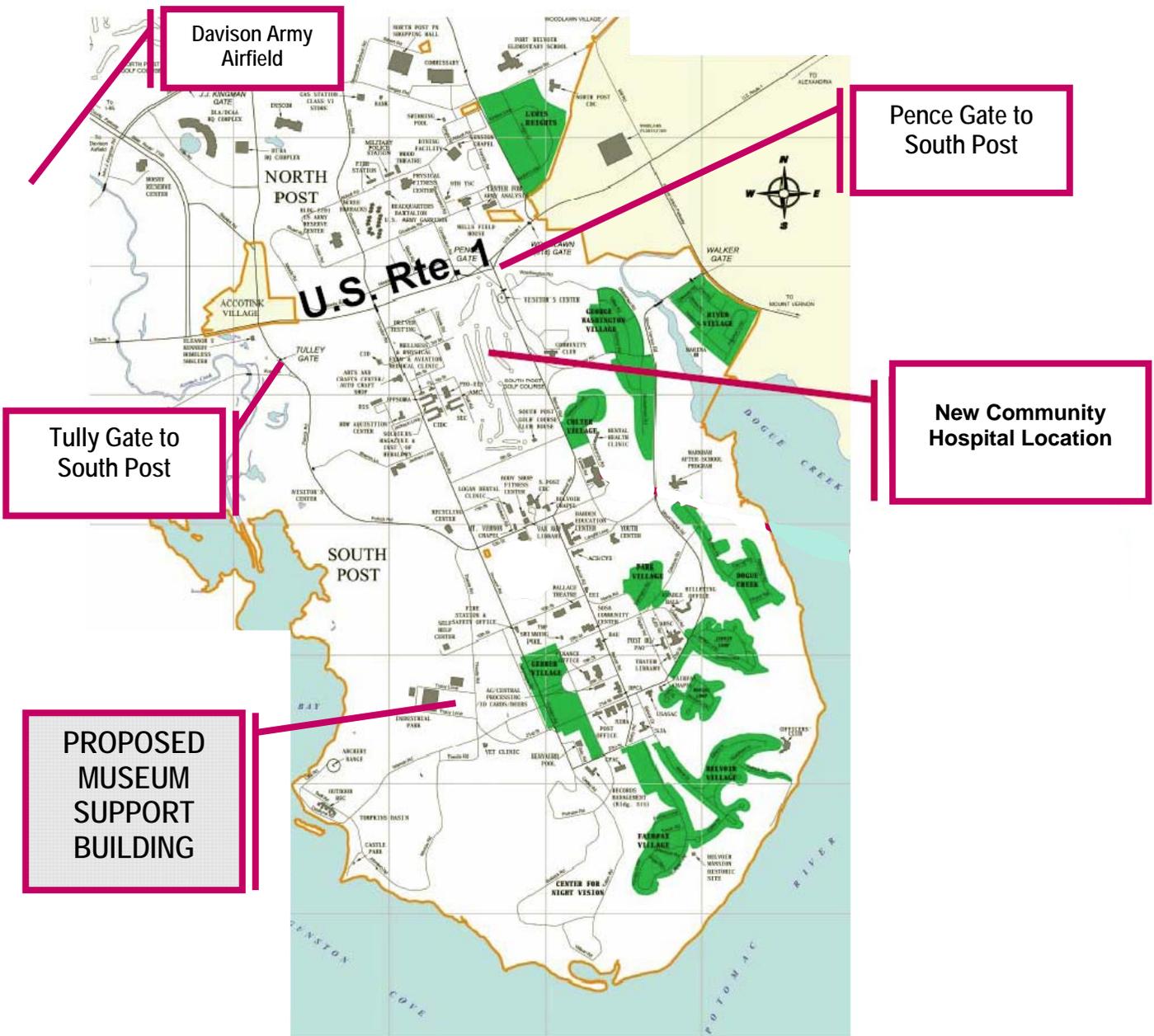
The exterior building surface materials consist of masonry, upper wall metal panels, and glazing in selected exterior walls, in a punched window theme. The lower twelve feet of the exterior wall is completely masonry for enhanced security and durability. The material changes at other points on the building assist to break down the large scale of the structure.

The building's overall structural design allows the use of a large grid with long interior structural steel spans. The steel girders and columns are anchored into a concrete slab on grade floor with conventional spread footings. The low sloped roof is a standing seam metal design that is gray in color.

The building's preliminary site design indicates the perimeter use of trees to mask the large building facades. The use of a natural rain garden at the north end of the site will allow a lower scale buffer area of plantings that will also help control stormwater drainage from the site.

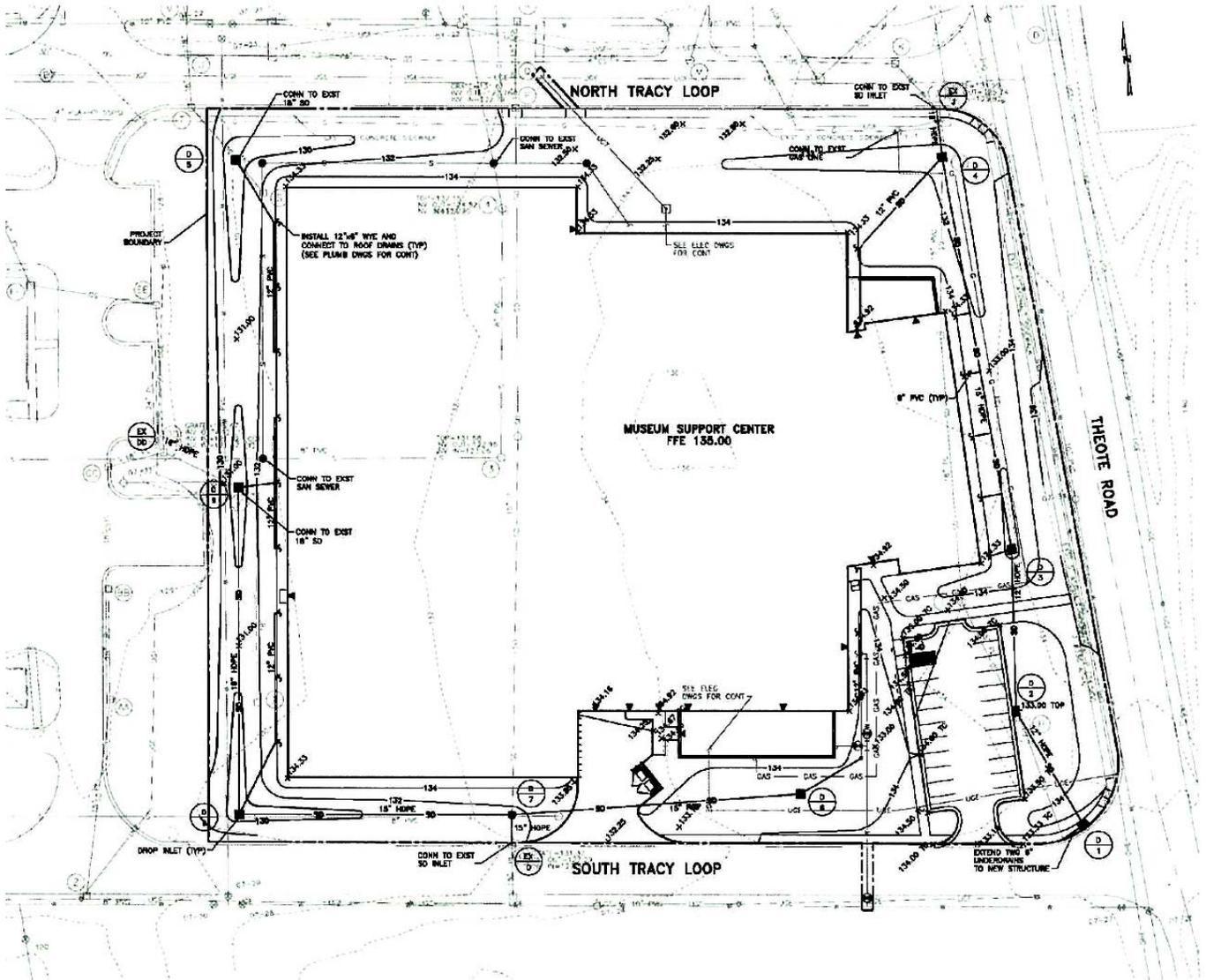
Other highlights of the project design strategies are:

- Providing functional open space for staff at the northeast corner of the building
- Utilizing quality and quantity of stormwater management
- Establishing comprehensive recycling of solid waste

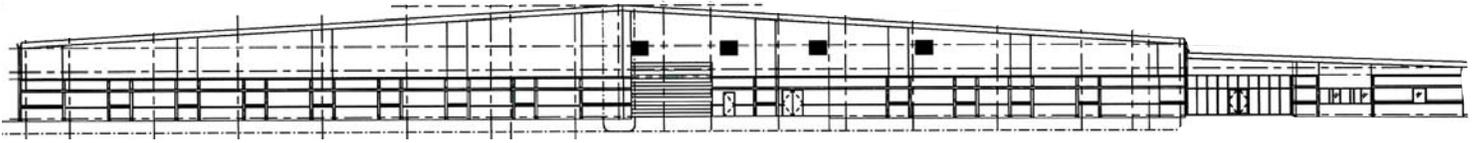


VICINITY MAP INDICATING LOCATION OF THE PROPOSED FORT BELVOIR MUSEUM SUPPORT BUILDING ON THE SOUTH POST AREA OF FORT BELVOIR

- Maintaining strategies for automobile use that limit employee parking and therefore encourages public transportation and carpools. 22 parking spaces are provided for a staff of 36 temporary and permanent employees.
- Reducing the use of potable water through recycling.



MUSEUM SUPPORT BUILDING PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN



MUSEUM SUPPORT BUILDING SOUTH ELEVATION

Development Program

Applicant: Department of the Army

Estimated Cost: Approximately \$24,380,000.

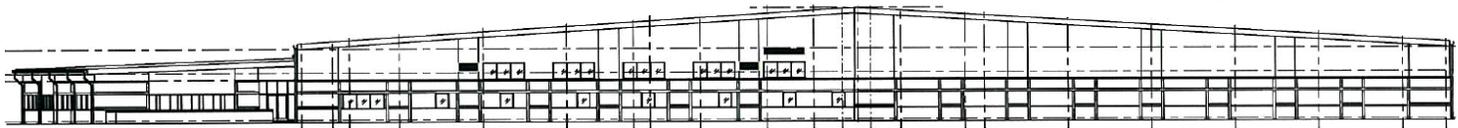
Architect: HSMM AECOM / Manhattan, Joint Design-Build consortium, Washington, D.C.

Completion Date: Occupancy is scheduled for mid 2010.

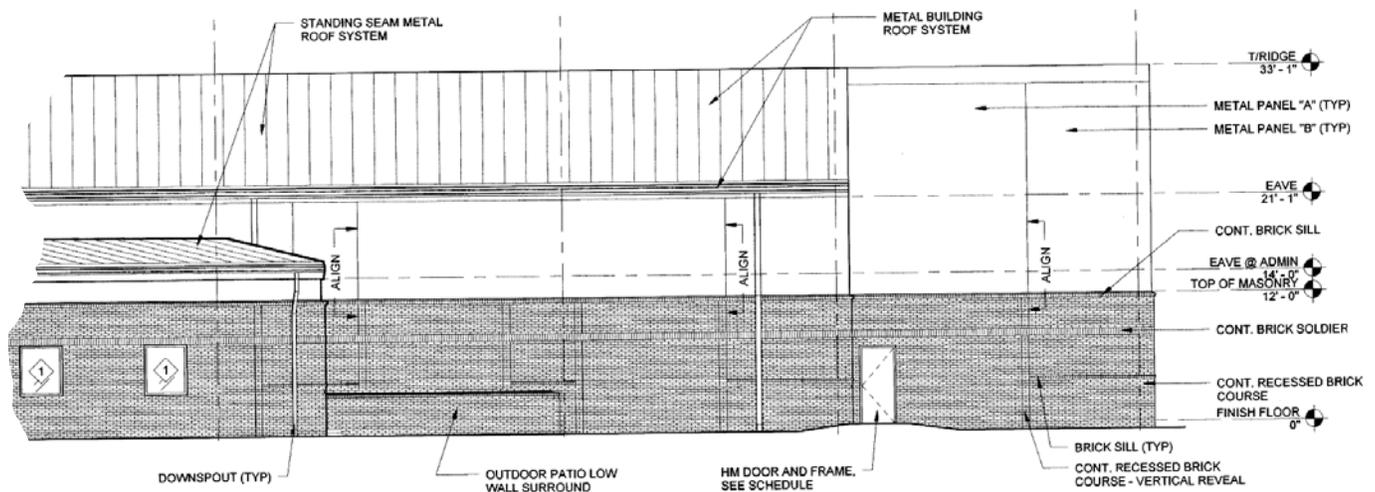
COORDINATION

Fort Belvoir Army planners initiated consultation with NCPC staff concerning the project in mid 2007. The BRAC action EIS for Fort Belvoir identifies the National Museum and the Museum Support Building in regard to possible locations and general purpose.

The location of the proposed Museum Support Building is within an existing land use zone for industrial facilities/research development. The project does not require a land use modification, and was not referred to local jurisdictions, due to its conformance with the existing land use plan approved by NCPC in 1993. The present draft master plan of the South Post maintains the 1993 industrial/research development land use zone, with added expansion of the zone near Tully gate. The Virginia Department of Historic Resources reviewed and responded to the prepared plans of the Museum Support Building on November 19, 2007; finding no conflict with any historic attributes.



MUSEUM SUPPORT BUILDING NORTH ELEVATION



DETAIL OF BUILDING WALL WITH FINISH SYSTEMS

PROJECT ANALYSIS

The Army has achieved a well integrated plan of development of the Museum Support Building that compliments features of its proposed location by relating balanced proportions of the building to the existing bounding roadways and maintaining the present drainage patterns of the industrial site. Additionally, by adding landscaping to the currently barren site, the proposal re-introduces trees adjacent to Theote Road and reduces the prominence of the planned structure.

Preliminary exterior finishes of the building are in keeping with the scale of the South Post and the thematic concepts and visual language of this area of Fort Belvoir. Staff believes that the architectural objectives and the design of the building are consistent with Fort Belvoir design guidelines.



PRELIMINARY LANDSCAPE PLANTING PLAN

The submission provides information addressing the transportation management planning for the structure and operations that requires limited staff and provides 22 parking spaces. The building's parking ratio is 1 space per 1.6 employees. The project parking maintains the recommended ratio goal of the Comprehensive Plan of 1 space per 1.5 to 2.0 for employees. As the project staffing level is below 100 individuals, no transportation management plan (TMP) is required for NCPC review. Nevertheless, staff requests the Commission recommend that the Army provide, in its final project submission for the Museum Support Building, documented actions that will be achieved by the project planning to maintain and support the current Fort Belvoir TMP that is being developed in conjunction with the Fort Belvoir Master Plan. This information would confirm to the Commission the on-going commitment of the Army to develop new projects in conformance to the prepared TMP.

Specifically the information required in the final project submission should include identifying project actions that meet the alternative-use transportation programs within the Fort Belvoir TMP.

In the context of the staff's review of the project plans, **staff recommends: (1) approval of the preliminary site and building plans for the Fort Belvoir Museum Support Center, and (2) an associated recommendation that Fort Belvoir submit its final long range component master plan for all Post facilities to the Commission in early 2009. This request for the master plan submission was conveyed to the Army previously in July 2008, and in the 2009-2014 FCIP adopted in September 2008.**

CONFORMANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

The Museum Support Building is not inconsistent with the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*. The *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements* notes that:

“...federal workplaces that require extensive land for medical or research activities...are primarily located in suburban areas. These include intelligence, research, development, and testing activities. Military installations, such as the Department of the Army's Fort Belvoir, have become administrative centers for a variety of government tenants with these types of land uses.” (Federal Workplace Element, p. 26)

Furthermore, the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements* includes the following policy:

Parking ratios for federal facilities located outside of the District of Columbia, Arlington County, and Old Town Alexandria, and beyond 2,000 feet of a Metrorail station:

- Suburban areas beyond 2,000 feet of Metrorail, phased approach linked to planned improvements over time (1:1.5-1:2)
(Federal Transportation Element, Parking ratios, p. 85)

Federal Capital Improvements Program (FCIP)

The 2006-2011 FCIP included The Museum Support Building as a budgeted initiative. The recommendation in the adopted FCIP noted:

- Museum Support Center
Recommended for Program Purposes Only
\$27,000,000 (estimated total project cost)

The Army accomplished additional review of the project by discussion of the project with the Virginia SHPO, and in meetings about Post projects with Fairfax County authorities in November and December 2007. No issues were raised pertinent to the planned project location or its operation.

Master Plan

The submission is a building design that adheres to the existing master plan established in 1993 as an industrial use within the existing designated industrial/research zone of the South Post.



SIMULATED VIEW OF MUSEUM SUPPORT BUILDING AS SEEN FROM SOUTHEAST

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

The U.S. Army completed a NEPA analysis of the site and project by accomplishing an environmental review and applying a Categorical Exclusion for the proposal, issued on March 3, 2007. The Army determination completed the NEPA review by the Army for its Museum Support Building proposal.

The project is a proposal outside the District of Columbia and consequently the Commission does not have an independent NEPA responsibility in accordance with NCPC Environmental and Historic Preservation Policies and Procedures. NCPC staff has reviewed the Army's NEPA Categorical Exclusion, and its supporting information, and finds the analysis complete.

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

A Programmatic Agreement, pursuant to requirements of Section 106 of the NHPA, addresses the assessment and mitigation of potential adverse effects to historic properties from undertakings by the Army. It has been developed and signed by Fort Belvoir, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and interested consulting parties.

The Army further analyzed the specific design of the Museum Support Building and consulted with the Virginia SHPO in October 2007. On November 19, 2007, The SHPO concurred with the Army's analysis and conclusion, pursuant to NHPA Section 106, of "No Historic Properties Affected."