



## Commission Action

December 3, 2015

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<b>PROJECT</b> <b>National China Garden</b> United States National Arboretum 3501 New York Avenue, NE Washington, DC	<b>NCPC FILE NUMBER</b> 7674
<b>SUBMITTED BY</b> United States Department of Agriculture	<b>NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER</b> 43.20(38.00)44264
	<b>APPLICANT'S REQUEST</b> Approval of comments on concept design
	<b>ACTION TAKEN</b> Approved with comments
	<b>REVIEW AUTHORITY</b> Approval per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)

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The Commission:

**Comments favorably on** the concept design for the National China Garden at the United States National Arboretum.

**Notes** that an important principle of the traditional Chinese Garden is the formal arrangement of built and natural elements and their relationship to one another. As the design develops, it will be important to understand how the garden expresses itself internally *and* its relationship to its immediate setting within the Arboretum and the broader city context.

**Recommends** the applicant to continue to work closely with NCPC, the US Commission of Fine Arts, and the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office to improve the design, and consider the following prior to submitting for preliminary review:

### Views and Lighting

- Provide additional simulations indicating views and vistas, both to and from the garden, in order to better understand:
  - The relationship of the China Garden within the Arboretum context, and the relationship between the structures and landscape.
  - The implications of changes to topography and the height of the proposed structures within the garden complex.
  - Pedestrian views along Holly Spring Road indicating the walled gardens and other vantage points within the garden.
  - The visual impacts of height, scale, and topography of the proposed White Pagoda, and Five Pavilion Terrace on Washington's skyline.
- Minimize light pollution from the garden complex in the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Consider the placement, intensity, and programming of lighting as to not detract from the views to important symbols and civic buildings, particularly within the Arboretum setting.

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Accessibility and Circulation

- Identify locations for tram stops, bus drop off areas, and bicycle racks.
- Explore opportunities to improve pedestrian circulation, considering hierarchy and scale, to provide a sense of orientation around the garden.
- Analyze the impacts of accessible routes, including paths, ramps, and handrails, in relationship with the topography and landscape.

Pedestrian Amenities

- Provide benches as appropriate along the paths to enhance the pedestrian experience, considering shade and views to and from the garden.
- Integrate wayfinding and interpretive signage throughout the garden to express the China Garden's mission, and highlight the history and name of the proposed structures.

Landscape and Sustainability

- Identify and protect specimen trees, minimize tree cutting and other vegetation removal; where the removal is necessary, replace trees to prevent net tree loss.
- Analyze proposed plant list to avoid introducing invasive species.
- Consider water-efficient irrigation systems and water efficient landscaping to reduce irrigation needs.
- Consider low impact development strategies to manage stormwater and reduce runoff to the Anacostia Watershed, including permeable paving or other porous material along the paths and parking areas.

General Comments

- Provide a vegetated buffer to screen the maintenance building along Holly Spring Road.
- Pending the visual study of viewsheds noted above, examine alternative locations for the White Pagoda.
- Consolidate parking as feasible to provide a more efficient layout and limit ground disturbance.
- Ensure that the proposed structures, including service buildings, have a compatible architectural vocabulary consistent with the garden complex.

**Requests** a stormwater management plan, prepared in accordance with the Commission submission guidelines, that addresses compliance with the District Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) and Section 438 of the Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA) regulations.

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Deborah B. Young

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Secretary to the National Capital Planning Commission