



Commission Action

December 6, 2018

PROJECT Franklin Park Rehabilitation 14th and K Streets, NW Washington, DC	NCPC FILE NUMBER 7545
SUBMITTED BY United States Department of the Interior National Park Service	NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER 21.00(70.00)44841
REVIEW AUTHORITY Approval per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)	APPLICANT'S REQUEST Approval of preliminary site and building plans
	ACTION TAKEN Approved preliminary site and building plans with comments

The Commission:

Approves the revised preliminary site and building plans for the rehabilitation of Franklin Park, located in downtown Washington, DC.

Notes that Franklin Park is a contributing element of the L'Enfant Plan and is located in a thriving and changing part of downtown Washington, DC.

Notes that unlike other NPS squares and circles in Washington, DC, the design of Franklin Park is unique in that it offers a more natural respite with mature trees, circular paths, and a fountain with a pool as its focal point.

Notes that given the changing context of downtown, the partners are mutually interested in the park serving a diversity of users including young and old District residents, workers, and visitors.

Finds the revised design must celebrate and respect the historic character of the park while addressing present day opportunities and concerns.

Provides the following findings and recommendations regarding the park design:

Children's Garden

- **Supports** the children's garden as a concept and encourages NPS to fully explore the use of natural materials in creating a unique play space for children.

Café/Pedestrian Promenade

- **Notes** the scale and materials are appropriate and the revised design now allows access to the restroom through the café and from outside.
- **Supports** the design direction of the updated café and restroom building.

- NPS has not included further information of interpretative elements for the pedestrian promenade, and staff **continues** to recommend that these elements be developed in the future.

Tree Canopy

- **Supports** the proposed changes to the tree canopy because it will allow more natural light infiltration, improve the overall environmental health of the park by increasing tree age diversity, and allow for stormwater management facilities on site.

East/West Lawns

- **Supports** the use of the east and west lawns for use as programmed event space, because it provides additional opportunities for events at the park and it reduces the need for the central plaza to be a major programmed space within the park.

Fountain/Central Plaza

Notes that NPS has provided nine concepts for a rehabilitated/reimagined central fountain that range from restoring the existing fountain and pool to full removal and replacement with a scrim and jet water feature.

Finds that analysis of the fountain design should be based on three over-arching criteria:

- 1) Historic Preservation – the Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement states that NPS will ensure that the redesign of the center fountain, including lighting, new jets and other features, will reflect the general character and retain the shape of the existing historic fountain; will maintain the fountain as a central park feature; and will reuse and incorporate the existing historic coping into the redesign of the fountain.
- 2) Central Plaza Programming – NPS and its partners prefer a fountain design that will provide an interactive experience during warmer months and allow for plaza programming during winter months when the fountain is turned off.
- 3) Design and Scale –the fountain should be appropriately designed and scaled in the context of the expanded paved plaza and the removal of some of the large trees surrounding the existing fountain.

Finds that concept 1 (restore the existing fountain as is) meets the historic preservation criteria but does not include an interactive water feature, is less conducive to year-round plaza programming, and is no longer appropriately scaled for the larger plaza and therefore should be eliminated.

Finds that concepts 8-9 fail to meet the historic preservation criteria as outlined in the MOA and therefore should be eliminated.

Finds that the concepts 2-7 can all be appropriately scaled and designed to include an interactive water feature while maintaining the historic character of the fountain in varying degrees.

Finds that the main difference between these concepts is whether the water feature maintains the pool of water (only concept 2), which differentiates this park from other L'Enfant Plan reservations and contributes to its natural character; or whether the pool is eliminated to allow for more year-round programming flexibility.

Requests that NPS provide a more detailed explanation of the programming needs for the central plaza, given programming is now proposed for the east and west lawns as well.

Requests that NPS analyze concepts 2-7 regarding the specific programming needs of the central plaza and whether maintaining a pool with the water feature is feasible.

// Original Signed // December 7, 2018

Julia A. Koster
Secretary to the National Capital Planning Commission