



## Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: March 1, 2018

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<b>PROJECT</b> <b>Embassy of Singapore - Fence Alterations</b> International Chancery Center 3501 International Place, NW Washington, DC	<b>NCPC FILE NUMBER</b> 7952
<b>SUBMITTED BY</b> United States Department of State	<b>NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER</b> 72.10(38.00)44684
<b>REVIEW AUTHORITY</b> Approval of Projects at the International Center Center per Section 4 of the International Center Act (Public Law 90-553, amended by Public Law 97-186)	<b>APPLICANT'S REQUEST</b> Approval of preliminary and final site development plans
	<b>PROPOSED ACTION</b> Approve preliminary and final site development plans
	<b>ACTION ITEM TYPE</b> Consent

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### PROJECT SUMMARY

The United States Department of States has submitted preliminary and final site development plans for the proposed fence alterations at the Embassy of Singapore, located in northwest Washington, at the corner of Van Ness Street and International Drive. Constructed in 1993, the Embassy of Singapore occupies Lot 14 in the southwest quadrant of the International Chancery Center (ICC). The Embassy of Singapore is bound by Van Ness Street and the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) to the north; International Place and Central Park to the south; the Embassy of the People's Republic of China immediately to the west; and International Drive and the former INTELSAT Headquarters Building to the east. The site slopes steeply to the northeast, with a drop of approximately 30 feet in grade at Van Ness Street.

The purpose of the project is to enhance the existing perimeter security fence, match the height of the adjacent fence at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China, on Lot 12 (constructed in 2009), and maintain diplomacy and reciprocal benefits for the existing three meter tall (9'-10") perimeter fence at the U.S. Embassy in Singapore. The project entails removing the existing five-foot and a half tall non-hardened perimeter fence and replacing it with an approximately ten-foot tall anti-ram fence along Van Ness Street to the north and portions of International Drive to the east. The project also includes mounting a new fence on top of the existing perimeter brick wall to reach a height of approximately ten feet along International Place to the south and the remaining portions of International Drive to the east. The project scope also includes excavation and installation of barrier posts, anti-ram cabling system, utility cable tray for microwave alarm, and gates. The fence pickets design curve at the top of the fence and project about nine inches toward the sidewalk.

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## KEY INFORMATION

- Ten feet is the standard perimeter fence height for U.S. Embassies worldwide.
- The perimeter fence at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China (Lot 12), which is located along Van Ness Street, and adjacent to the Embassy of Singapore, is nine feet ten inches (9' - 10") or three meters above the final grade.
- The Embassy of Israel (Lot 1), also located along Van Ness Street to the west of the Chinese Embassy has an approximately ten-foot tall perimeter fence. The fence at the Embassy of Ethiopia (Lot 5) located along International Drive has a similar height.
- The existing perimeter wall and low fence around the Embassy of Singapore compromise the security of the adjacent Embassy of the People's Republic of China.

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## RECOMMENDATION

The Commission:

**Finds** that the Embassy of Singapore is the gateway to the International Chancery Center, located at the corner of Van Ness Street and International Drive, NW; and therefore, the design of the fence should reflect the prominence of this location by creating a safe and welcoming entry.

**Supports** the proposed perimeter fence height of nine feet ten inches (9'-10") for the Singapore Embassy pending the Commission's approval of the related amendment to the Development Controls for Lot 14 at the International Chancery Center (NCPC Project # 0706).

**Notes** that the proposed fencing will largely consist of a new metal fence mounted on top of the existing perimeter brick wall on the south side. On the east and north portions of the site, it will replace the existing International Center's perimeter fence with an anti-ram metal fence. The new fence and the fence-wall combination will reach a total height of nine feet ten inches (9'-10").

**Notes** that upon further consultation the Department of State has committed to the following design changes:

1. Maintain the vine-covered perimeter walls and provide additional landscaping to mitigate the height increase of the proposed fencing.
2. Revise the design of the top of the proposed fence from a curvilinear to a straight picket configuration to be less imposing on the public realm and consistent with the majority of fences at the International Chancery Center.
3. Revise the design of the fence to gracefully step down to follow the topography while maintaining a maximum height of nine feet ten inches (9'-10") to be consistent with the Embassy of the People's Republic of China directly to the west and the overall character of the International Chancery Center.

**Recommends** that the Department of State further study the location and scale of the proposed code of arms, and consider placing it on a solid perimeter wall to be more consistent with other chanceries within the International Chancery Center.

**Notes** that any improvements located in public space will require a public space permit and coordination with the District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT) Office of Public Space Management.

## PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

<b>Previous actions</b>	<p><b>November 1, 1990</b> – Approval of preliminary site and building plans for the Chancery of Singapore on Lot No. 14 at the International Center.</p> <p><b>October 3, 1991</b> – Approval of final site and building plans for the Chancery of Singapore on Lot No. 14 at the International Center.</p> <p><b>December 2, 2004</b> – Approval of preliminary and final site and building plans for security modifications at the Embassy of Singapore to include the addition of a new entrance pavilion containing a guard station and a screening facility (NCPC File # 4027).</p>
<b>Remaining actions</b> (anticipated)	– none

## PROJECT ANALYSIS

### Executive Summary

Staff supports the proposed perimeter fence height of nine feet ten inches at the Embassy of Singapore to improve security. The proposed fence height is compatible with other perimeter fences along Van Ness Street, including the adjacent fence at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China and the Embassy of Israel. In addition, the height of the fence is consistent with the standard perimeter fence height for U.S. Embassies worldwide, and will allow the Department of State to maintain reciprocal benefits for the U.S. Embassy in Singapore. Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission **support the proposed perimeter fence height of nine feet ten inches (9'-10") for the Embassy of Singapore pending the Commission's approval of the related amendment to the Development Controls for Lot 14 at the International Chancery Center (NCPC Project # 0706).**

### Analysis

Staff's analysis of the proposed fence alterations focuses on compliance with the *Development Controls* for the Chancery Section of the International Center adopted by the Commission in 1971,

and the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*. The Urban Design Element contains policies aimed at integrating federal campuses within the surrounding community. It also includes policies related to urban design and security that encourage federal agencies to design security barriers, including their mass, form, and materials to respond to the architectural and landscape context in which they are located and complement and aesthetically enhance the special character of the associated building and precinct. While the fence height increase is needed to enhance security, match the adjacent Chinese Embassy fence height and maintain reciprocity for U.S. embassies abroad, the fence height is not consistent with the Development Controls and the proposed picket design projecting into the sidewalk is not compatible with the design of nearby fences. The Department of State has requested an amendment to the Development Controls and has committed to alter the design to provide a fence that is compatible with the context.

#### *Existing and Proposed Perimeter Fence*

The main entrance to the Embassy of Singapore is located on the south side along International Place, facing Central Park. Currently, the Embassy is surrounded by two security elements: a stepped brick wall and a metal fence. The vine-covered brick wall is located on the southern edge of the site and continues along a portion of the eastern edge. The perimeter wall screens the parking and provides a sense of enclosure. The wall steps down from west to east following the topography. The perimeter wall along the eastern edge of the site includes vehicular gates to access underground parking, and a pedestrian gate for trash collection along International Drive. The wall stops approximately near the garage entrance, and ties into the International Center perimeter metal fence, which has a lower height (5'-6") to complete the feeling of enclosure. **Staff notes that the proposed fencing will largely consist of a new metal fence mounted on top of the existing perimeter brick wall on the south side; and replacing the existing International Center's perimeter fence with an anti-ram metal fence on the east and north portions of the site. The new fence and the fence-wall combination will have a total height of nine feet ten inches.**

#### *Previous Commission Actions*

In November, 1990, the Commission approved the preliminary site and building plans for the Chancery of Singapore on Lot 14 at the International Center. The Commission provided two comments regarding the treatment of the perimeter fence. First, the Commission requested that the applicant provide vine-covered trellises in the parking area along the southern edge of the site. Second, the Commission requested to extend the existing International Center perimeter fence to tie into the building and provide a greater sense of enclosure.

In October, 2000, the Commission adopted amendments to the Development Controls for the Chancery Section of the International Center. The amendments provided for the combination of three lots (11, 12, and 13) into a single lot #12, and increased building height, floor area ratio, building area, setbacks, and fence height of the combined lots. In April, 2004, the Commission approved the final site and building plans for the Embassy of the People's Republic of China, located to the west of the Embassy of Singapore on Lot 12.

### *Embassy of Singapore as a Gateway and Garden City*

The Embassy of Singapore has a prominent location within the International Chancery Center (ICC), at the corner of Van Ness Street and International Drive. Both, INTELSAT and the Embassy of Singapore have gardens at the corner of Van Ness and International Drive surrounded by the ICC perimeter fence to symbolize a sense of arrival into a cohesive campus. Staff **finds that the Singapore Embassy is the gateway to the International Chancery Center, located at the corner of International Drive and Van Ness Street, NW; and therefore, the design of the fence should reflect the prominence of this location by creating a safe and welcoming entry.**

One of the original goals of the design of the embassy was to reflect Singapore as a garden city. The existing four-story "L"-shaped building responds to the site and frames the lush landscaped garden at the northeast corner of the site. The Singapore Embassy includes a curved stone retaining wall that encloses the northeast corner of the site. The stepped wall along the southern edge of the site provides security for the embassy, screens all cars in the visitor's parking area, and continues the sense of greenery along International Place. Given its location and design intent, **staff notes upon further consultation the Department of State has committed to maintain the vine-covered perimeter walls and provide additional landscaping to mitigate the height increase of the proposed fencing.**

### *Fence Design*

The majority of the fences within the ICC campus have a straight picket profile, with the exception of the Chinese Embassy perimeter fence. The Chinese embassy fence has a double picket configuration at specific locations, consisting of a straight picket on the outside and a picket with a 45-degree-angle facing toward the inside of the property. As requested by the Commission during the 2004 approval of the plans for Embassy of the People's Republic of China, the majority of the perimeter fence around the building is not solid. The lower third (knee wall) and piers are clad in granite, and the remaining two thirds are composed of an open metal fence design. The fence height is three meters (9'-10"). The granite matches the building cladding material and the fence steps down to follow the topography. Due to the composition of the fence, including the piers, and knee wall clad in the same building material, the fence achieves a balance between security and urban design.

The proposed fence at the Embassy of Singapore includes individual pickets that curve at the top toward the sidewalk, projecting about nine inches into the public space. This design is not consistent with the context of the ICC. As such, staff **notes that upon further consultation the Department of State has committed to revise the design of the top of the proposed fence from a curvilinear to a straight picket configuration to be less imposing on the public realm and consistent with the majority of fences at the International Chancery Center.**

### *Topography*

The site slopes steeply to the northeast, with a drop of approximately 30 feet in grade at Van Ness Street. The Embassy of Singapore was designed to take advantage of the topography of the site. The original design intent was to preserve the existing topography, which resulted in a building that is responsive to its surrounding environment. The existing perimeter wall steps down to follow

the topography in a graceful manner. In contrast, the proposed fence mounted on the stepped wall maintains a continuous line along International Place and does not step down to respond to the topography of the site, resulting in a fence higher than ten feet. Therefore, **staff notes that upon further consultation the Department of State has committed to revise the design of the fence to gracefully step down to follow the topography while maintaining a maximum height of nine feet ten inches (9'-10") and be consistent with the Embassy of China directly to the west and the overall character of the International Chancery Center.**

#### *Code of Arms*

The submission materials include an elevation of a sliding gate with a code of arms mounted on top. However, it does not indicate the location of this element in relationship with the building itself in the proposed site plan. **Staff recommends the Department of State further study the location and scale of the proposed code of arms, and consider placing it on a solid perimeter wall to be more consistent with other chanceries within the International Chancery Center.**

## **CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE**

### **Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital**

The Department of State has committed to implement design changes that will make the proposed fence consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The Urban Design Element policies encourage federal agencies to minimize the visual impact and the physical intrusion of the security barriers in the urban landscape. The design of perimeter security should respect the building's use, significance and location in the community. Physical perimeter security should follow design principles to achieve a sense of openness, balance, rhythm, and hierarchy that will improve way-finding and visual linkages along a street and enhance the pedestrian experience.

### **National Historic Preservation Act**

The Department of State has determined that the proposed project is not subject to further review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) because the buildings within the ICC are not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, as documented in the previous EIS documents. Due to its approval authority over the project, NCPC has an independent responsibility to comply with Section 106. On February 8, 2018, NCPC initiated consultation with the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer (DC SHPO) regarding the proposed fence alterations at the Embassy of Singapore. NCPC determined that no identified historic properties would be affected by the proposed project within the Area of Potential Effect (APE). Constructed in 1984, INTELSAT was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in 2014. NCPC determined that the proposed fence alterations at the Embassy of Singapore should not pose any adverse effect to the National Register-eligible INTELSAT Building. On February 12, 2018, the DC SHPO concurred with NCPC's delineation of the APE and its determination of no effect on historic properties.

The ICC site has the potential to yield unidentified archeological resources, related to history or prehistory, because of its geographic location, as well as being the site of the former National Bureau of Standards (NBS), constructed in the early 1900s. Moving forward, the DC SHPO is requiring that the DOS prepare an archeological assessment with a GIS analysis, and an evaluation of the above ground built resources. Both of these components (below and above ground resources) will inform the Determination of Eligibility (DOE) for the entire ICC campus to be submitted to the DCSHPO. The goal of obtaining the DOE concurrence by the DCSHPO is to streamline the review process for any future projects within the ICC.

### **National Environmental Policy Act**

Both DOS and NCPC have a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) responsibility for this project. DOS is relying on the 1976 and 1981 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) documents. The *Development Controls* for the ICC were adopted by the Commission in 1971 and analyzed in the associated EIS documents. As the project does not comply with the *Development Controls*, NCPC determined that further environmental analysis was required. NCPC staff found that the project meets NCPC's categorical exclusion §601.12(a)(2) of the Commission's recently adopted NEPA Regulations 82 FR 45421 (September 29, 2017), 82 FR 48609 (October 19, 2017), which pertains to "approval of the installation or restoration of minor site elements, such as but not limited to identification signs, sidewalks, patios, fences, curbs, retaining walls, landscaping, and trail or stream improvements. Additional features include water distribution lines and sewer lines which involve work that is essentially replacement in kind." Before applying this categorical exclusion, NCPC staff determined that no Extraordinary Circumstances were present as required by the Commission's NEPA Regulations §601.11 (b)(1) through (11).

### **ICC Master Plan – Development Controls**

The proposed fence alterations at the Embassy of Singapore are inconsistent with the *Development Controls for the Chancery Section of the International Center in the District of Columbia*, which among other things, contain specifications pertaining to fences and retaining walls, as defined in §610.00-613.13. The proposed fence will exceed the maximum height prescribed in the development controls. As such, the applicant has requested an amendment to the Development Controls (NCPC File # 0706) to allow for a 9'-10" fence at this Embassy.

## **CONSULTATION**

### **Coordinating Committee**

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the project on February 7, 2018. The Committee forwarded the proposed preliminary site development plans to the Commission with the statement that the proposal has been coordinated with all participating agencies except DDOT and the SHPO. The participating agencies were the NCPC; the National Park Service; the General Services Administration; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the District of Columbia Department of Transportation; State Historic Preservation Office; the District Department of Energy and

Environment; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. The DC SHPO noted that they had not been contacted regarding this project and consequently could not coordinate. As stated above in the NHPA section of this report, NCPC has since initiated consultation and received concurrence from the DC SHPO.

DDOT did not coordinate, noting that they needed more information on the location of the fence to confirm that it was not located in public space and further, the fence design should be altered so that the top of the pickets are straight or bend inward toward the property to avoid impacts to public space. The site plan included in the submission package shows that the property line (shown as ownership lot) has a 25-foot radius at the corner of Van Ness Street and International Drive, while the proposed fence continues at a 90-degree angle beyond the property line, therefore intruding into the public space (DDOT's right-of-way). In addition, the fence design projecting into the public space poses conflicts with the existing street trees around the site. Both the placement of the fence within public space and the "bending" fence design into the public space will require a public space permit.

The Department of State does not believe the proposed fence is in public space, since the proposed fence will replace the existing fence and follow the same fence line. If it is, they will alter the design in order to ensure it does not intrude into public space. **Staff notes that any improvements located in public space will require a public space permit and coordination with the District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT) Office of Public Space Management.**

### **U.S. Commission of Fine Arts**

The Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) reviewed the final plans at its meeting on February 15, 2018. The project was included in the consent calendar agenda. As part of the recommendation CFA noted: "No objection to the installation of a perimeter security fence with a vehicular cable barrier at the Embassy of the Republic of Singapore compound in the International Center, provided that the top of the individual fence pickets are vertically straight and not curved, and that the new fence and/or the fence-wall combinations are no taller than ten feet maximum in height."

### **ONLINE REFERENCE**

The following supporting documents for this project are available online:

- Submission Package

Prepared by Vivian Lee  
02/22/2018

### **POWERPOINT (ATTACHED)**

# NCPC File # 7952

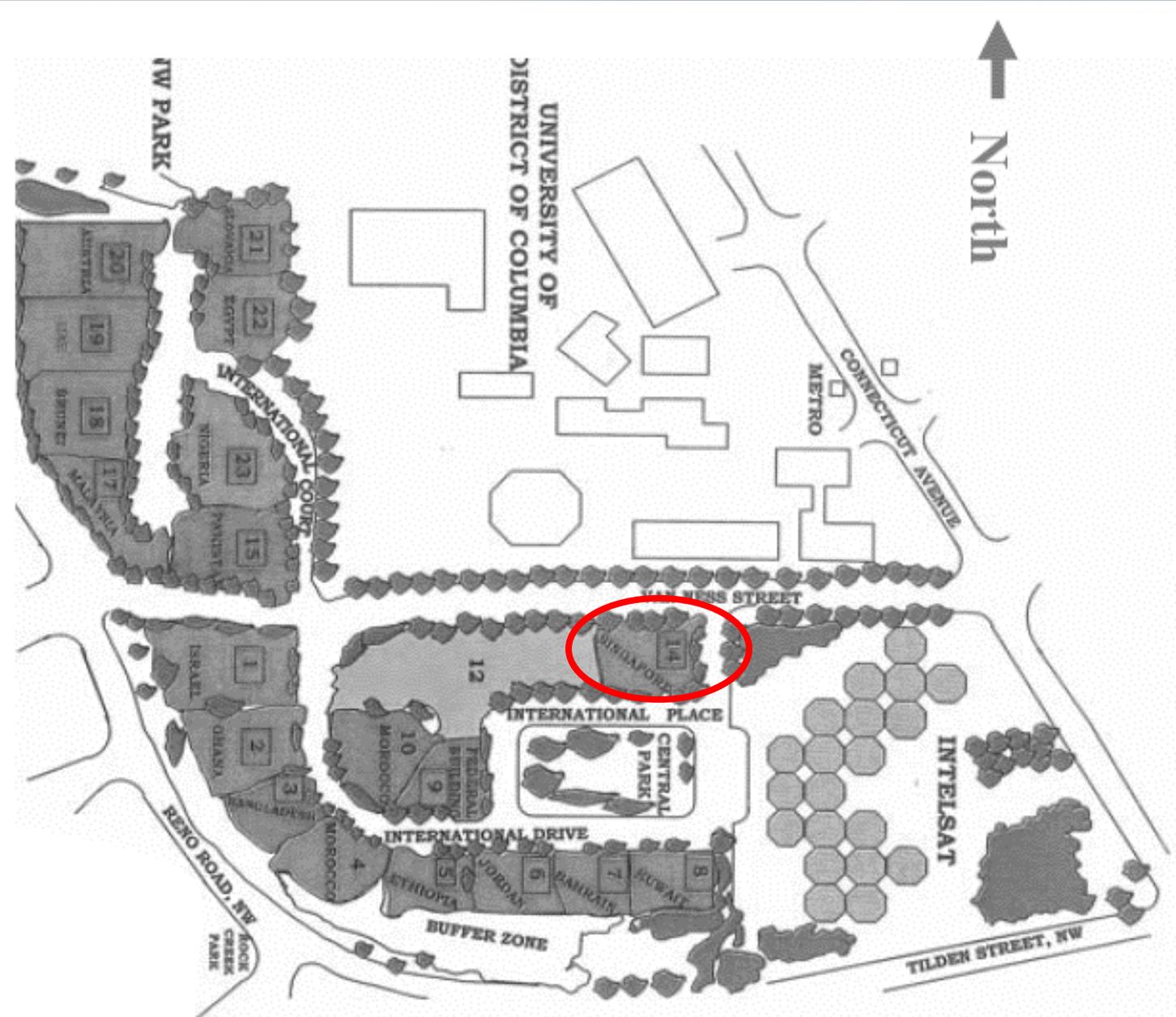
## Fence Alterations at the Embassy of Singapore

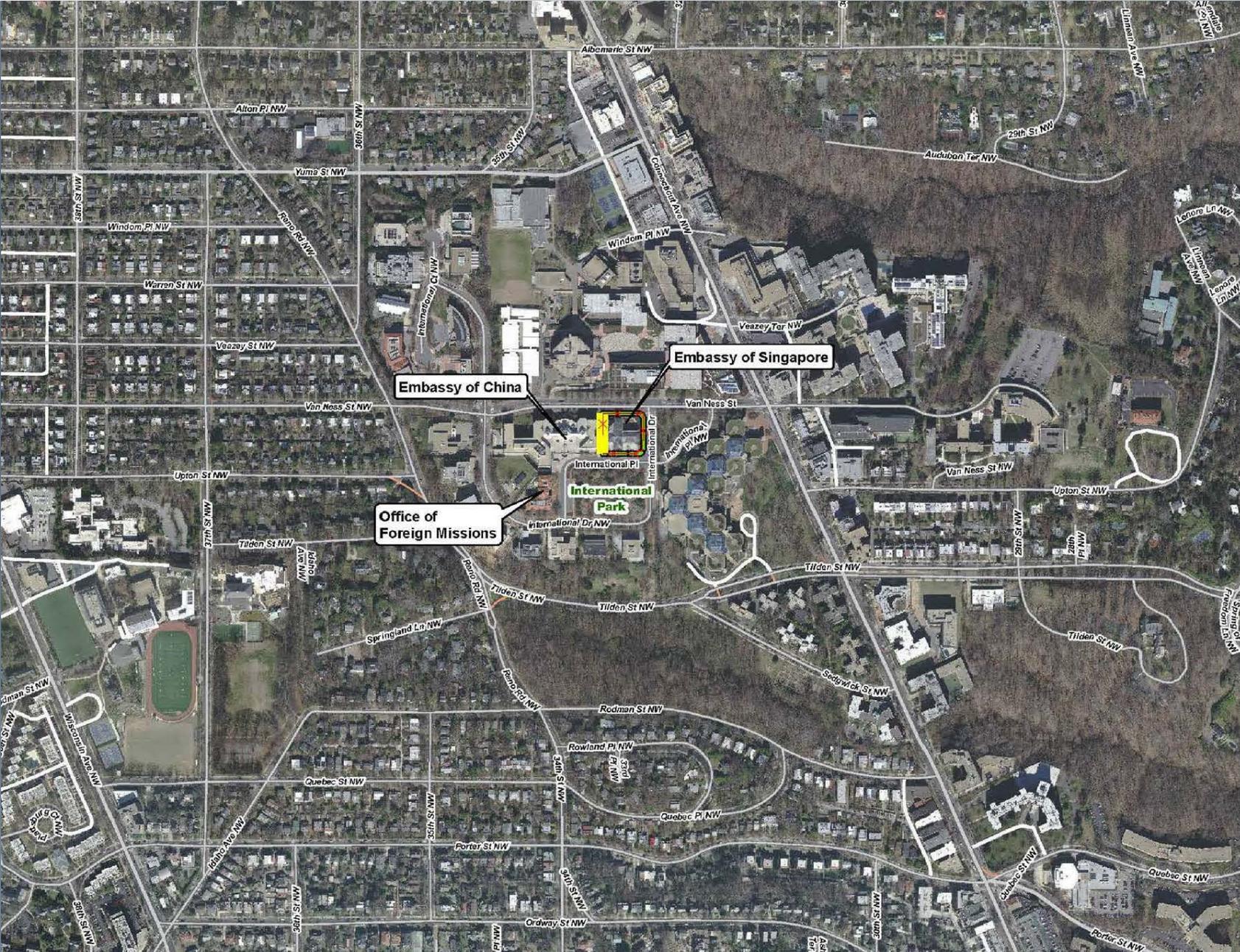
International Chancery Center  
3501 International Place, NW,  
Washington, DC 20008

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United States Department of State

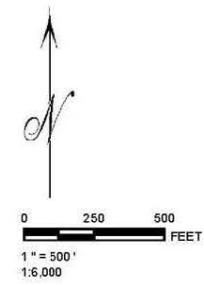
Preliminary and Final





**LEGEND**

-  Ownership Lot
-  Existing Fenceline
-  Chinese Embassy Fenceline Demarcation



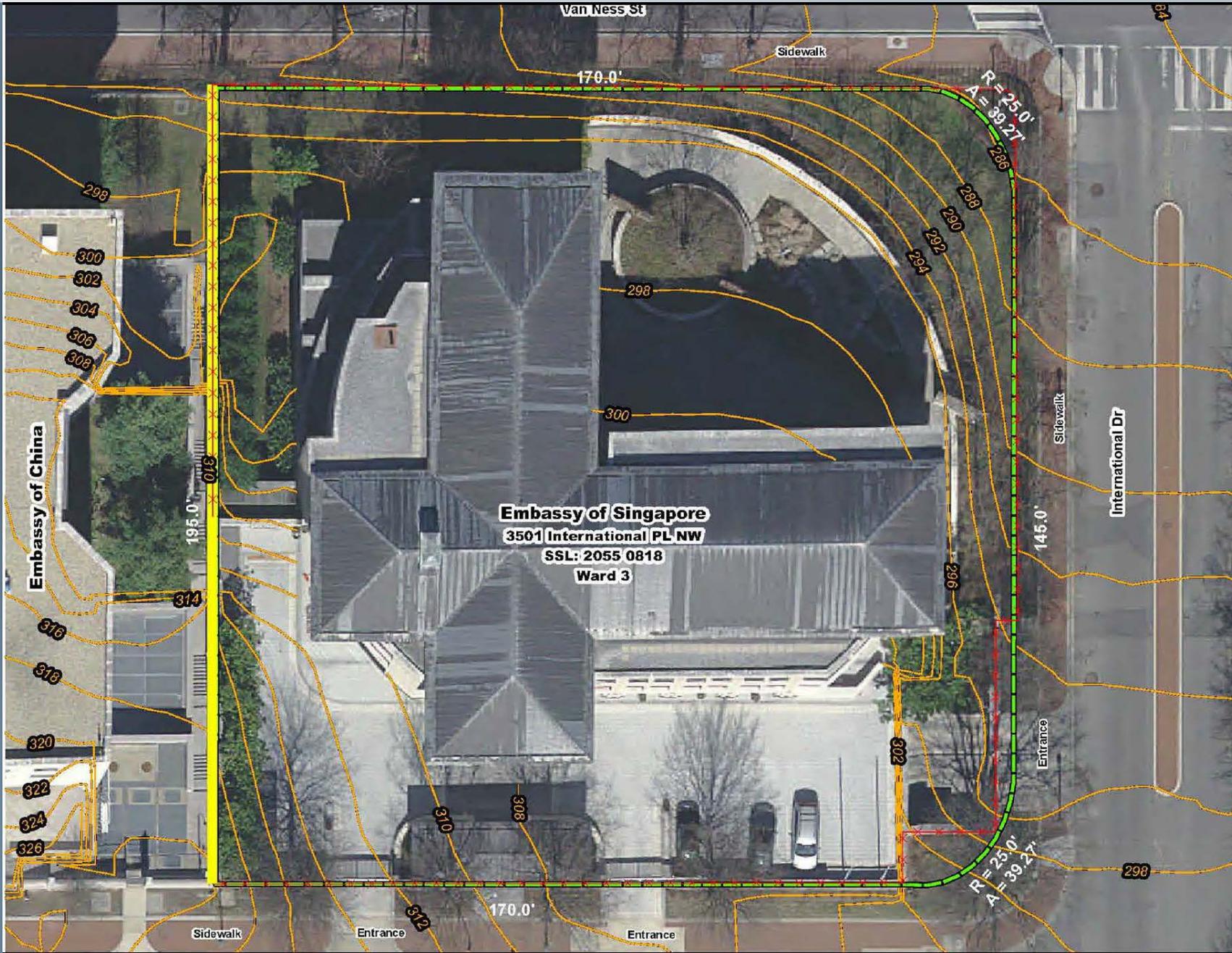


### LEGEND

-  Ownership Lot
-  Existing Fenceline
-  Chinese Embassy Fenceline Demarcation



0 50 100  
FEET  
1" = 100'  
1:1,200



### LEGEND

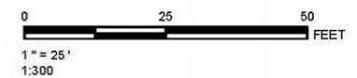
-  Ownership Lot
-  Existing Fenceline
-  Chinese Embassy Fenceline Demarcation
-  Topography - 2 Foot Contours

### Data Sources:

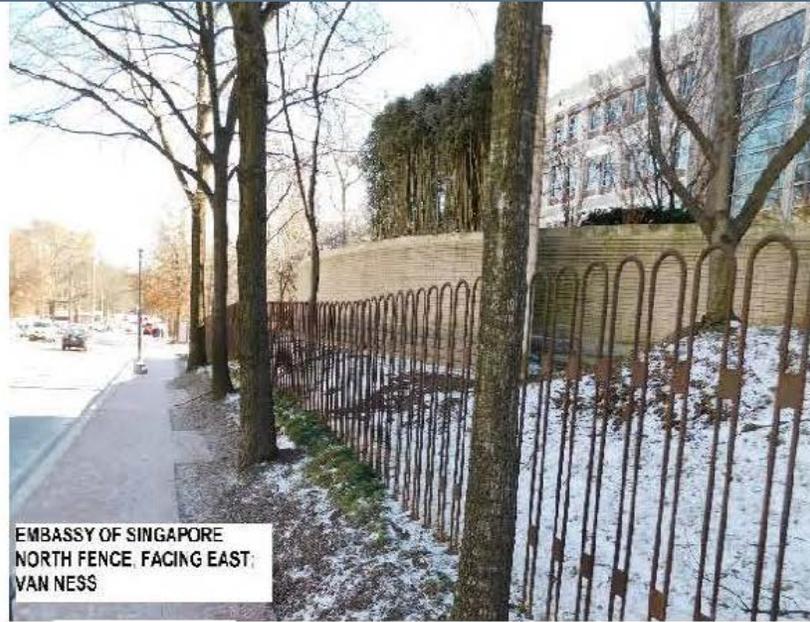
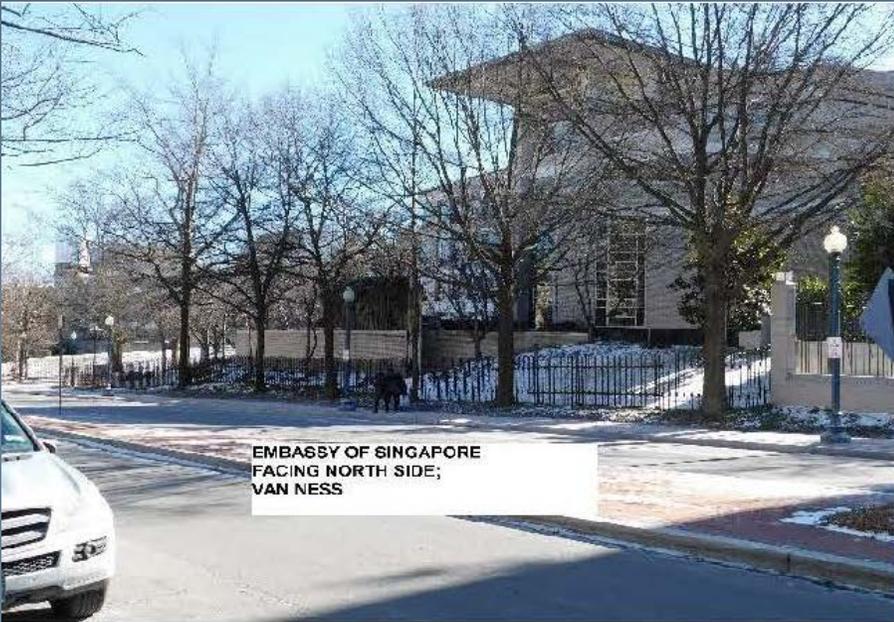
Plat Boundary Data from the District of Columbia Government, Office of the Surveyor, January 22, 2018 (SR-18-02532-2018)

Urban Forestry Street Trees is from the District of Columbia, Department of Transportation Street Spatial Database.

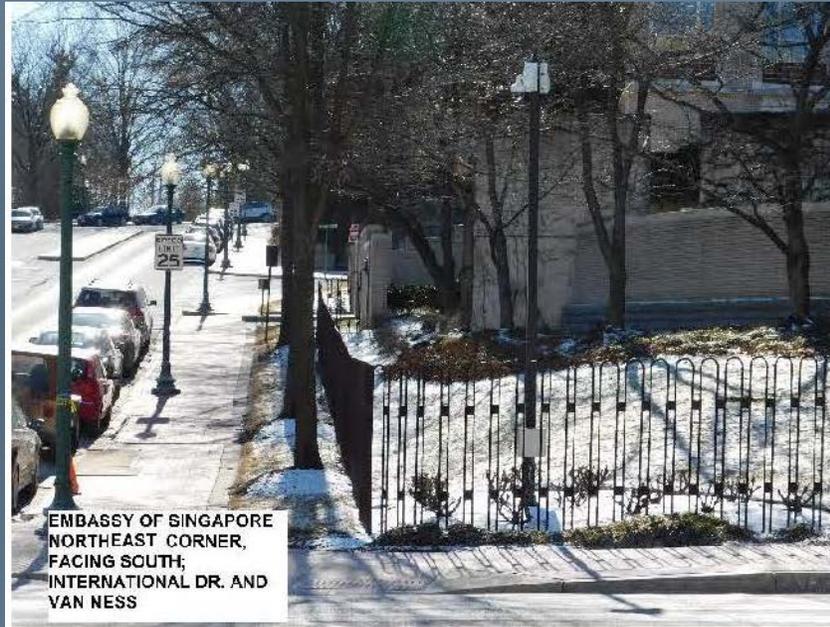
Elevation 2-ft interval topography data, created as part of the DC Geographic Information System (DC GIS) for the D.C. Office of the Chief Technology Officer (CTO)



# Embassy of Singapore – Existing Perimeter Wall and Fence



# Embassy of Singapore – Existing Perimeter Wall and Fence



EMBASSY OF SINGAPORE  
NORTHEAST CORNER,  
FACING SOUTH;  
INTERNATIONAL DR. AND  
VAN NESS



EMBASSY OF SINGAPORE  
FACING FRONT, SOUTHWEST CORNER,  
AND EMBASSY OF CHINA  
STANDING ON INTERNATIONAL PL.

# Existing Conditions: View along Van Ness Street

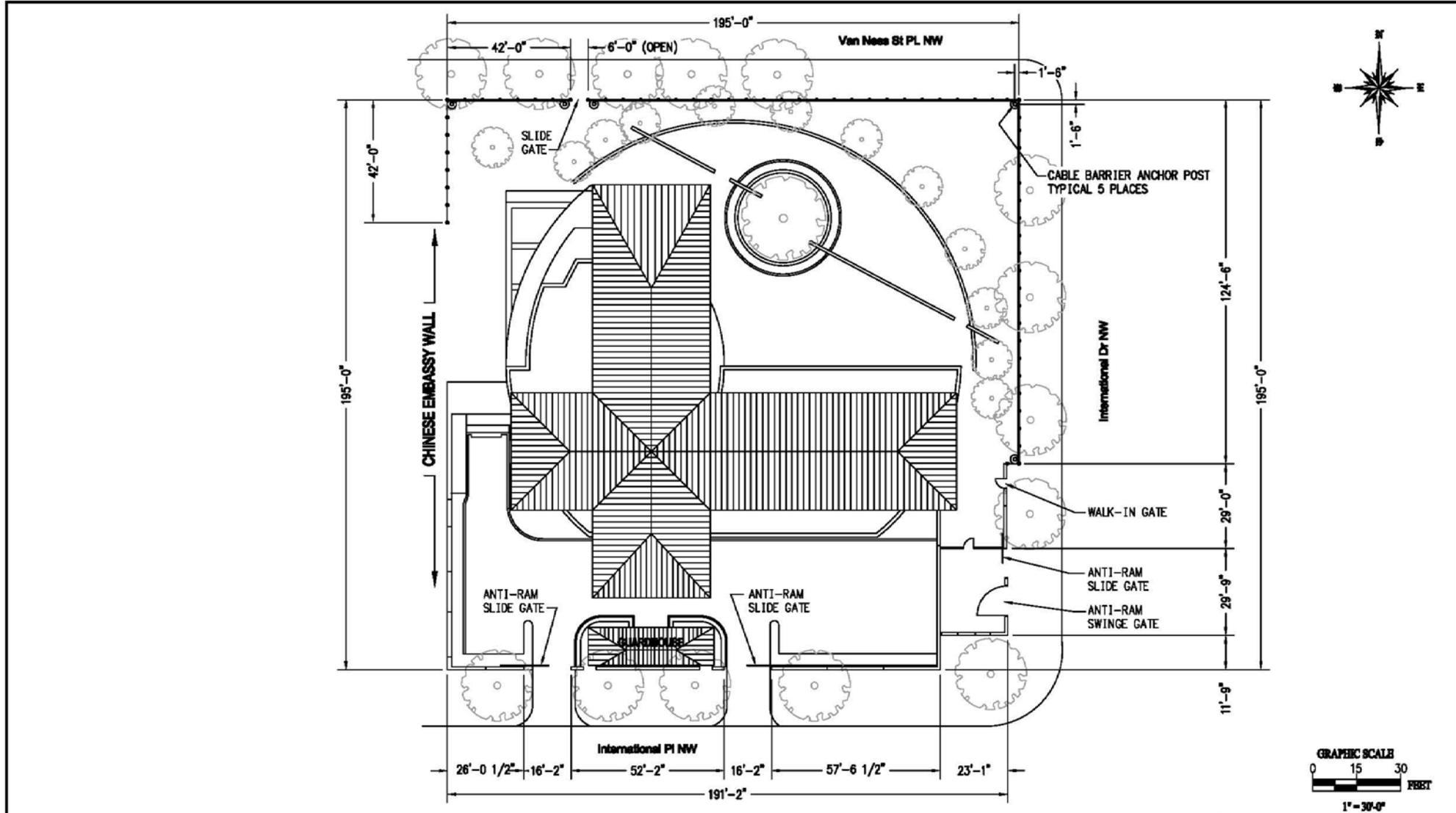


# Existing Conditions: Intersection of International Drive and International Place



# Existing Conditions: View along International Place





**GENERAL NOTES:**

1. DIMENSIONS ALONG EXISTING WALLS ARE MEASURED FROM EDGE TO EDGE OF WALL.
2. DIMENSIONS ALONG NON-WALLED SECTIONS ARE FROM POST CENTER TO POST CENTER UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
3. ALL DIMENSIONS TO BE VERIFIED BY CUSTOMER.

NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	DRAWN	CHECKED	APPROVED
REVISIONS					

ISSUED FOR CONSTRUCTION:	
AI APPROVAL:	DATE:
CLIENT APPROVAL:	DATE:
OWNER APPROVAL:	DATE:
DRAWN BY:	DATE:
BLB	1/16/18

**AMERICAN FENCE INC.**  
 701 East Lulcher Drive  
 Orange, TX 77632  
 408-883-8088  
 Fax: 408-883-7832

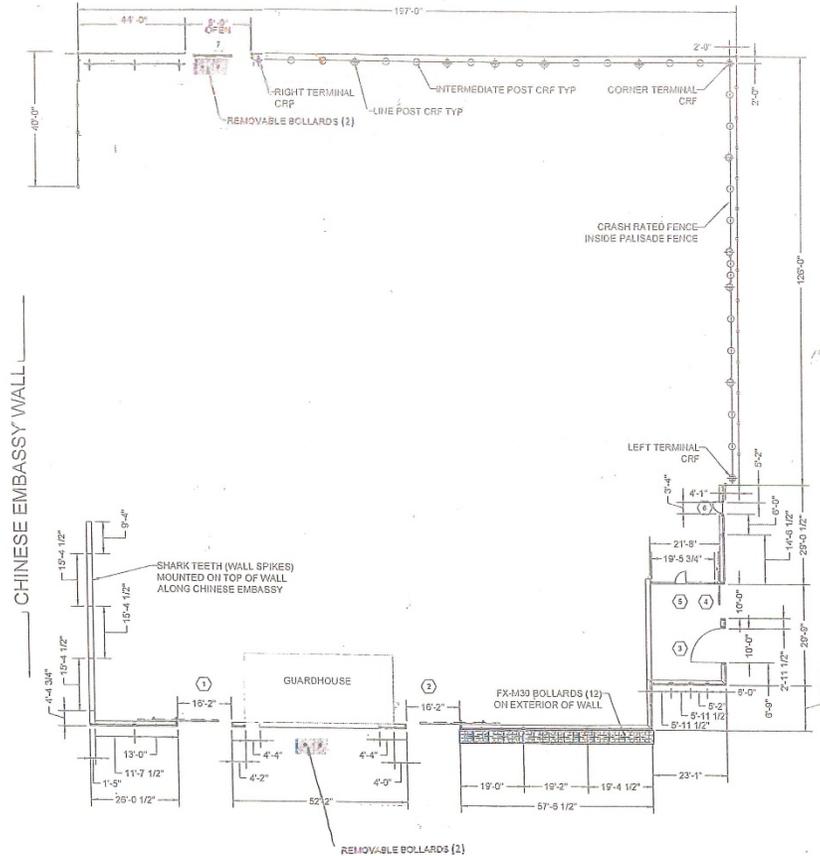
**Embassy of Singapore**  
 EMBASSY SITE PLAN  
 3501 INTERNATIONAL PL NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20008  
 SSL 2055 0818 WARD 3

SCALE:	PROJECT #:	DRAWING NO.:	REV:
1" = 30'-0"	F00000117000047	A1-F00000117000047-000	0

NOTES:  
1) DIMENSIONS ALONG EXISTING WALLS ARE MEASURED FROM EDGE OF WALL TO EDGE OF WALL  
2) DIMENSIONS ALONG NON-WALLED SECTIONS ARE FROM POST CENTER TO POST CENTER UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

ALL DIMENSIONS TO BE VERIFIED BY CUSTOMER

GATE SCHEDULE		
GATE#	WIDTH/HEIGHT	REMARKS
1	15' X 9'-10"	CANTILEVER GATE
2	15' X 9'-10"	CANTILEVER GATE
3	19' X 9'-10"	SWING GATE
4	19' X 9'-10"	CANTILEVER GATE
5	3'-4" X 8'-4"	PEDESTRIAN GATE
6	3'-4" X 8'-4"	PEDESTRIAN GATE
7	8' X 9'-10"	CANTILEVER GATE



## A-1 AMERICAN FENCE SECURITY SYSTEM- MODEL EMBASSY 10,000

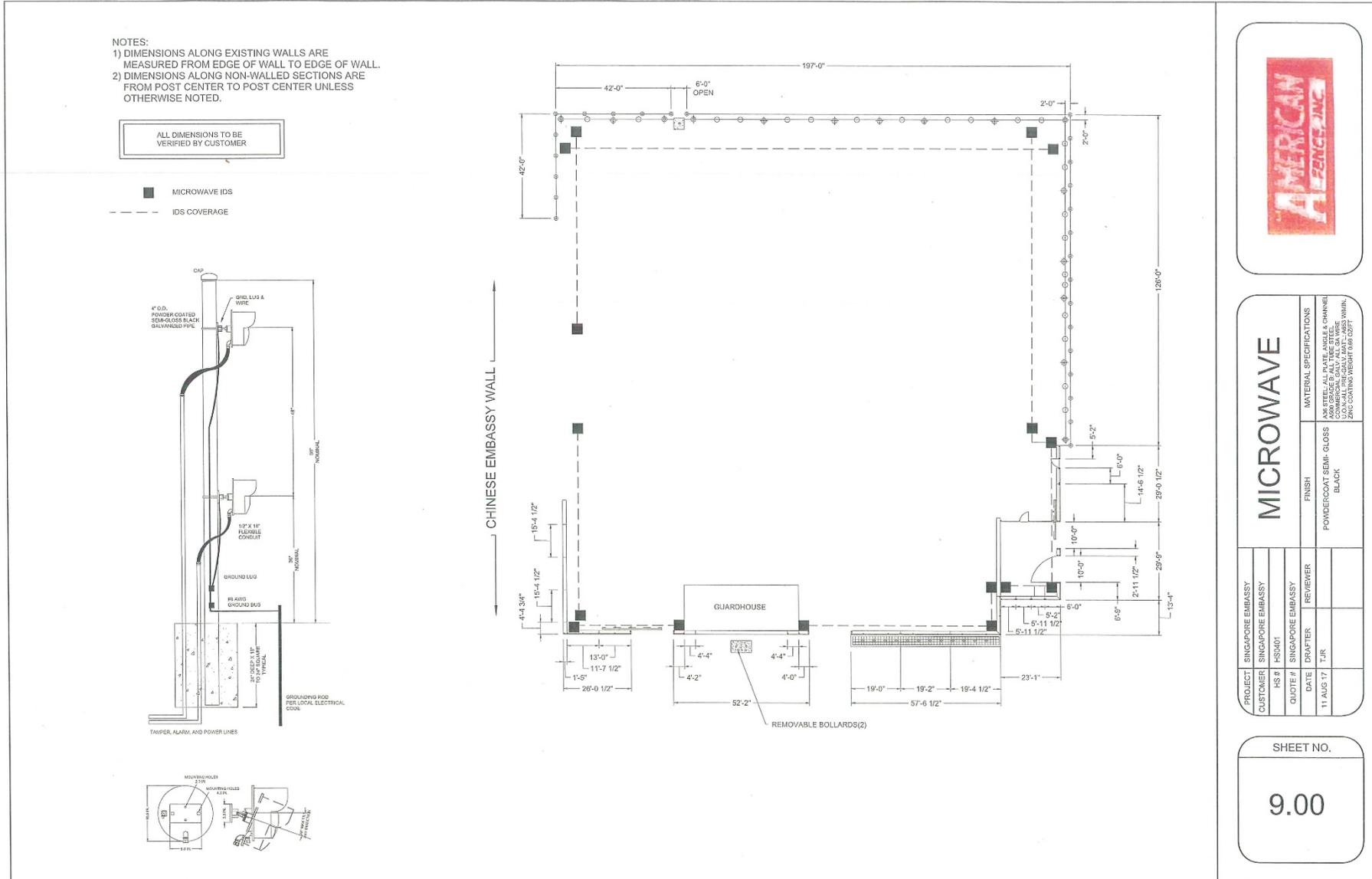
**AMERICAN FENCE CO. INC.**

REV	DATE	DESCRIPTION

**SITE LAYOUT**

PROJECT: SHANGHAI EMBASSY	DATE: 11/11/12	FINISH: POWERPOW SEMI-GLOSS BLACK
CUSTOMER: SHANGHAI EMBASSY	QUOTE: 11/11/12	
DATE: 11/11/12	DESIGNER: J. J. JONES	
PROJECT: 11/11/12	PRODUCT: 11/11/12	

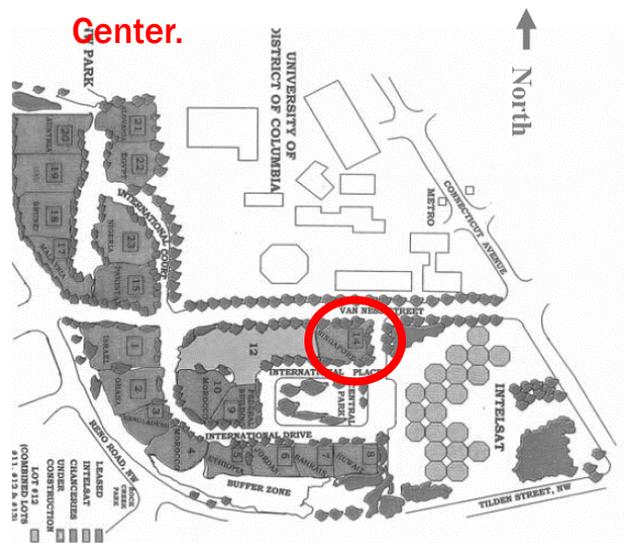
SHEET NO. **X.XX**



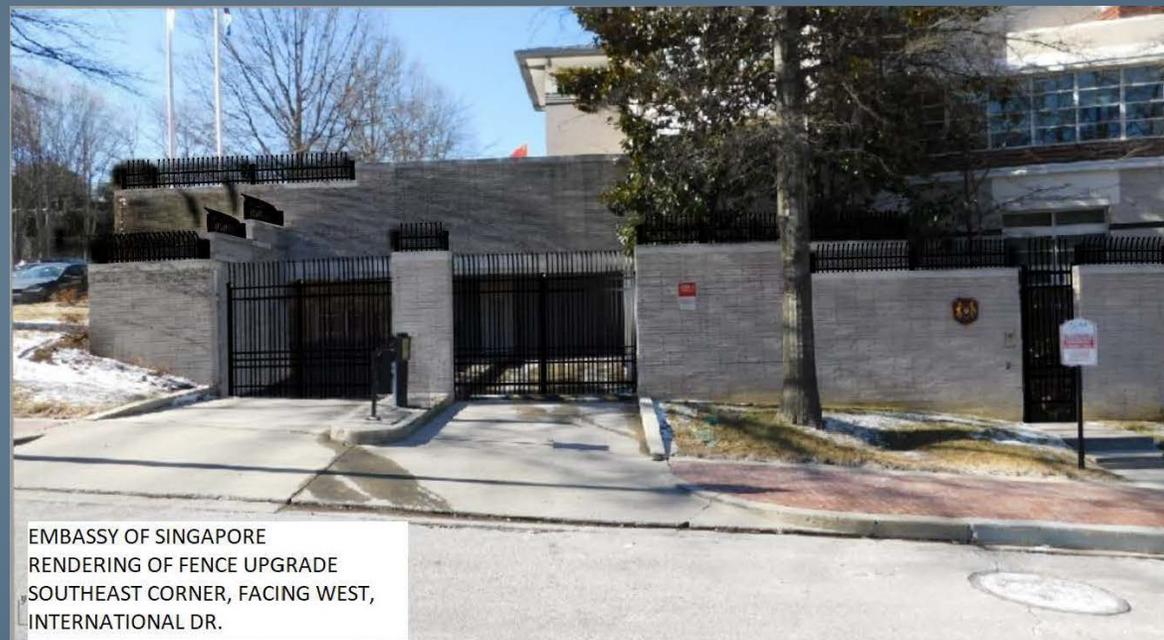


DOS has committed to the following design revisions:

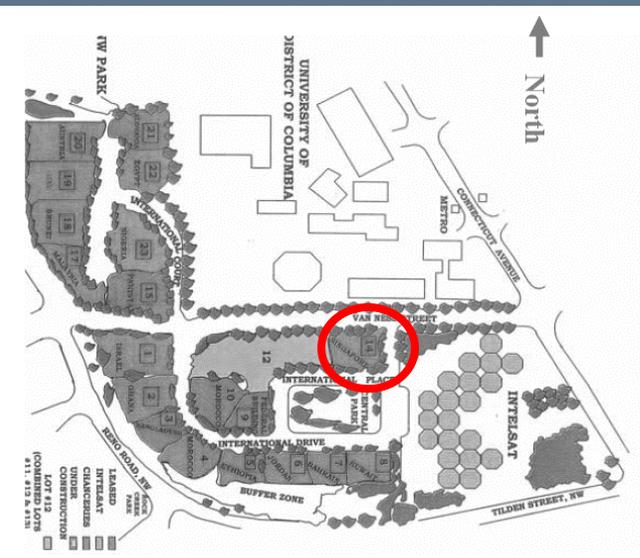
- Maintain the vine-covered perimeter walls and provide additional landscaping to mitigate the height increase of the proposed fencing.
- Revise the design of the fence to gracefully step down to follow the topography while maintaining a maximum height of nine feet ten inches (9'-10") to be consistent with the Embassy of the People's Republic of China directly to the west and the overall character of the International Chancery Center.



EMBASSY OF SINGAPORE  
RENDERING OF FENCE UPGRADE  
FACING NORTH, TOWARD SOUTH WALL,  
INTERNATIONAL PL



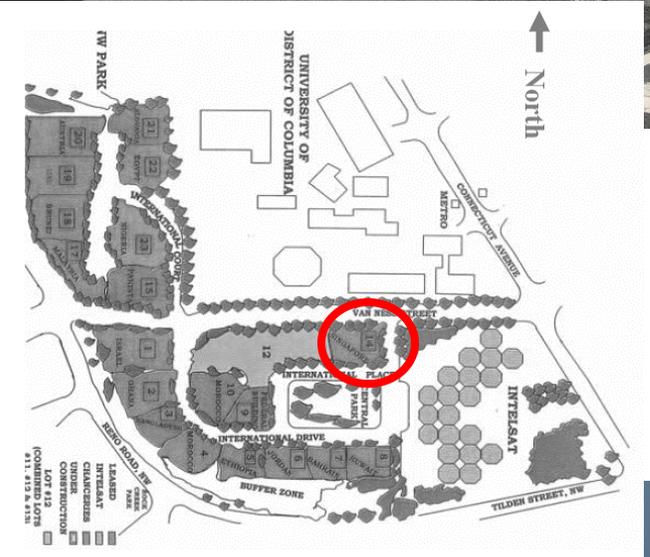
EMBASSY OF SINGAPORE  
RENDERING OF FENCE UPGRADE  
SOUTHEAST CORNER, FACING WEST,  
INTERNATIONAL DR.

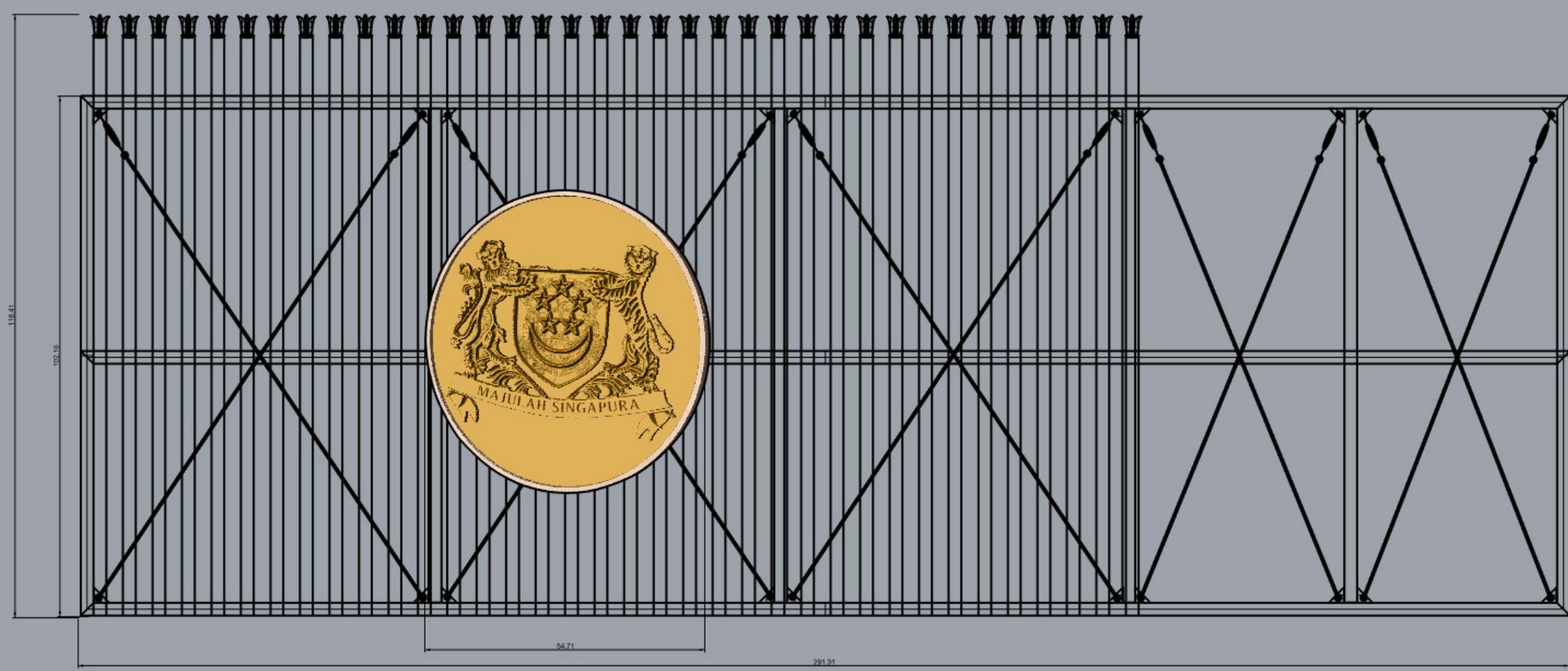




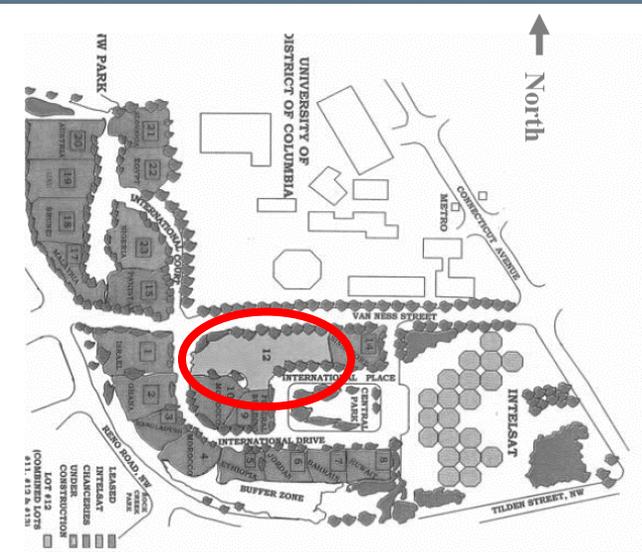
EMBASSY OF SINGAPORE  
RENDERING OF NEW FENCE  
NORTHEAST CORNER,  
FACING WEST  
INTERNATIONAL DR. AND VAN NESS

**DOS has committed to provide additional landscaping to mitigate the height increase of the proposed fencing**





The Department of State will further study the location and scale of the proposed code of arms, and consider placing it on a solid perimeter wall to be more consistent with other chanceries within the International Chancery Center.

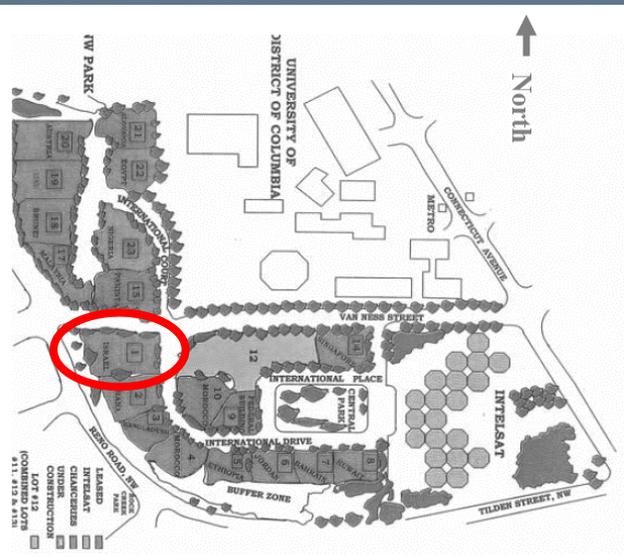




Van Ness Street



International Drive



# Existing Conditions Ethiopian Embassy Fence



International Drive

