



## Delegated Action of the Executive Director

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<b>PROJECT</b> <b>National Zoological Park, Friends of the National Zoo Trailer Replacement and Relocation</b> 3001 Connecticut Avenue, NW Washington, DC	<b>NCPC FILE NUMBER</b> 8022
<b>SUBMITTED BY</b> Smithsonian Institution	<b>NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER</b> 2.00(38.00)44827
	<b>ACTION TAKEN</b> Preliminary and final approval of site and building plans
	<b>REVIEW AUTHORITY</b> Approval Per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)

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The Smithsonian Institution has submitted preliminary and final site and building plans for the replacement and relocation of the Friends of the National Zoo (FONZ) trailer at the National Zoological Park. The project entails consolidating five existing trailers located at the south end of Parking Lot C and the General Services Building into a new trailer; and relocating it among other back-of-house structures on Research Hill, a staff-only area located in the southern portion of the Zoo. The majority of the buildings located on Research Hill house the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute (SCBI), including the Veterinary Hospital, a Research Building, and maintenance support structures. The new trailer will not be permanent, but will house the FONZ staff for the foreseeable future.

The existing trailers are visible to the public from Parking Lot C, North Road, and Olmstead Walk. The trailers are deteriorated, and need to be removed to provide storage for adjacent activities. The existing trailers house the FONZ guest services staff. FONZ is the nonprofit partner of the Smithsonian's National Zoo and the Conservation Biology Institute. Its mission is to promote the zoo through educational programs, development, concessions, and financial support.

All structures on Research Hill are isolated from the public areas of the main Zoo and from the adjacent neighborhoods due to the existing topography and vegetation. As such, the new trailer will not be visible to the public. The new FONZ trailer will be located in a maintenance support area, surrounded by the SCBI to the west; the property yard and the Holt House to the east; storage sheds and the greenhouse to the south. The Holt House, built prior to 1827, is located on top of Research Hill. The Holt House was individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places on April 24, 1973 as a significant example of a five-part Georgian plan dwelling. The Holt House has been vacant since the 1980s. According to the submission materials, the trailer will sit 26 feet lower in elevation. In addition, it will be set back from Blue Road and will be screened by vegetation (See Figure 1).

The proposed trailer will be located at the former Migratory Birds Trailer site, where there is already a concrete pad and utilities. All utilities are existing on the site and formerly served the Migratory Birds Trailer and/or currently serve the greenhouse and storage yards. The 1,440 square-

foot trailer will measure approximately 24 feet wide by 60 feet long. The trailer will accommodate workspaces for eight staff (four in private offices and four in open workstations), a meeting room, a break room, restrooms, and support spaces. The front entry will include metal steps and an accessible ramp (See Figure 2). Due to FONZ staff reduction, fewer parking spaces will be required. Parking will be located along Blue Road and in existing parking lots.

The project was not included in the *Smithsonian National Zoological Park 2008 Facilities Master Plan*. However, the master plan indicated that the Holt House would be rehabilitated for National Zoo uses, including a meeting and training center with guest housing and 20 surface parking spaces for researchers and guests. Staff finds that although the proposed temporary modular office trailer is not an ideal solution, it is not inconsistent with the policies of the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*. In addition, the project does not require ground disturbance. It will not affect parking, vegetation or impervious surfaces. Given the plans for Research Hill included in the 2008 Master Plan, staff encourages Smithsonian to establish permanent facilities for the FONZ administrative space.

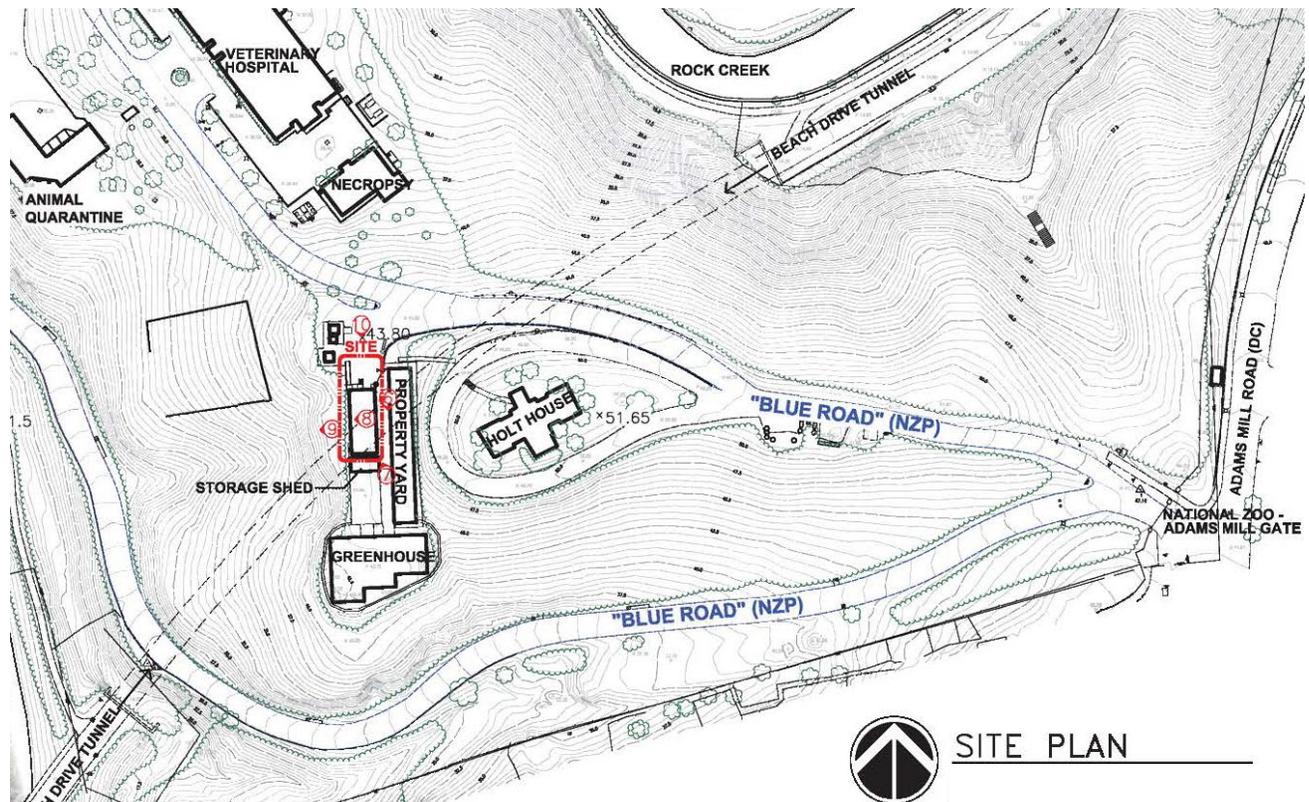


Figure 1 Research Hill Site Plan showing future FONZ trailer location



*Figure 2 Proposed FONZ Trailer exterior finishes will be steel panels with a steel skirt extending to the slab.*

The Smithsonian Institution does not have an independent responsibility to fulfill the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) as it is not considered a federal agency for purposes of NEPA. However, as a result of its approval authority over the project, NCPC does have an independent NEPA responsibility. Pursuant to Section 601.12 of NCPC's NEPA Regulations, staff has determined that the project can be categorically excluded from further environmental analysis based on categorical exclusion #6, which pertains to the "approval of Federal and District government agency proposals for new construction, building expansion, or improvements to existing facilities, when certain criteria apply.

Both the Smithsonian and NCPC have a responsibility to satisfy the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. SI initiated Section 106 consultation with the DC State Historic Preservation Office (DC SHPO) on September 20, 2018. On October 15, 2018, the DC SHPO reviewed the undertaking for both archaeology and the built environment and concurred that the project would not have an adverse effect on historic resources. However, should there be an unanticipated archaeological discovery encountered during this undertaking, the DC SHPO should be notified.

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal at its October 10, 2018 meeting. The participating agencies were NCPC; the State Historic Preservation Office; the District of Columbia Department of Transportation; the District Department of Energy and Environment; the District Office of Planning; the General Services Administration; the National Park Service; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. Without objection, the Committee forwarded the proposed preliminary and final site and building plans to the Commission with the statement that the proposal has been coordinated with all participating agencies. The DC SHPO noted that the project plans did not specify how the utility connections would be made and/or if any ground-disturbing activities were needed to complete those connections. The Smithsonian confirmed that utilities were already in place and no ground-disturbing activities were anticipated.

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