

Delegated Action of the Executive Director

PROJECT

Façade Renovation Project at National Place and Amendment to the PADC Square 254 Guidelines for Parcel A
1331 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC

REFERRED BY

United States General Services Administration

NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER

21.10(38.00)44824

NCPC FILE NUMBER

P8019

DETERMINATION

Approval of amendment to the PADC Square 254 Guidelines; approval of preliminary and final site development plans

REVIEW AUTHORITY

Amendments to the PADC Square Guidelines pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 6702(d) and the Memorandum of Agreement dated July 25, 1996, 61 Fed. Reg. 41789)

The General Services Administration (GSA) has submitted a proposed amendment to the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation Square Guidelines for Square 254, Parcel A. The amendment proposes to remove the requirement for weather protection along F Street between 13th and 14th Streets, NW, and supports a proposal by the property owner of 1331 Pennsylvania Avenue to improve the ground floor retail spaces and the office lobby entrance located on F Street.

NCPC has reviewed the information submitted by GSA, including the plans and renderings of the property owner's vision for ground floor retail uses and a new lobby entrance. Per the 1996 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for post-Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation responsibilities between NCPC, GSA and the National Park Service, NCPC must review the submission and proposed amendment from GSA and share its position within 45 calendar days.



*Existing (top) and
proposed (right)
ground floor
building facades*

The project includes removal of the existing first floor steel and glass canopy, storefront facades, and granite, steel, and glass office entrance that were most recently improved in 2004. The retail facades will be replaced with a more open aluminum and glass design with tenant signage mounted directly to the building's sign band. Per the submission, tenants may "install their own mullion covers, grilles, and other applied materials to the storefront system." The office entrance will remain in the same location and refurbish the existing canopy with a new aluminum, stainless steel-clad aluminum, and glass design.

GSA issued a Categorical Exclusion under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for the Square Guidelines Amendment. The site sits outside of the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site District and is not subject to the Section 106 process for the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

The building owner's representatives consulted early with GSA and NPS on August 15, 2018, where it was identified that the proposal was not consistent with *Guideline 10, Pedestrian Features*. The guideline currently states that "*weather protection shall be provided along the entire length of F Street.*" NCPC supports this change, as well as the updated design of the ground floor retail and office lobby.

As GSA notes in their submission letter, retail storefronts are undergoing significant changes in Washington and throughout the country. Given the rapid rise of online shopping, the retail industry is repositioning many of its brick-and-mortar locations to ensure their future viability. As such, building owners are making physical changes to ground floor retail in order to keep spaces leased and provide a more engaging experience for pedestrians. This change is happening at many downtown buildings, including the new building just south of this submission at 1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, where the Square Guidelines were amended to remove weather protection and allow ground floor retail entrances to sit more visibly at the building line.

The project was approved by the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts on September 20, 2018 (SL-18-200). NCPC staff coordinated review of the project on October 9, 2018 with GSA, National Park Service (NPS), and DC State Historic Preservation Office (DC SHPO), and confirms it will not significantly change "the existing character or use of the property." The proposed improvements are not inconsistent with the goals of the 1974 Pennsylvania Avenue Plan or the General Guidelines.

As Pennsylvania Avenue continues to evolve, NCPC looks forward to working with stakeholders on improvements supporting the continued economic and cultural success of the area through the Pennsylvania Avenue Initiative.

