



Commission Action

July 11, 2019

PROJECT New Master Clock Facility and Building Rehabilitation US Naval Observatory 3450 Massachusetts Avenue, NW Washington, DC	NCPC FILE NUMBER 7995
SUBMITTED BY United States Department of Defense Department of the Navy	NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER 71.20(38.00)44956
REVIEW AUTHORITY Approval per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)	APPLICANT'S REQUEST Approval of final site and building plans
	ACTION TAKEN Approved final site and building plans

The Commission:

Approves the Navy's final site and building plans to consolidate the Master Clock functions into one new facility and rehabilitate historic contributing buildings on the campus.

Notes that the Naval Observatory campus has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, and has contributing elements that include buildings, structures, and landscape design elements designed by architect Richard Morris Hunt.

Supports the Navy's location for the new Master Clock facility at the Naval Observatory, as the site location is lower in grade than the historic Clock House (Building 3).

Notes that the site location was moved from an earlier discussed location north of the Clock House (Building 3), so the new Master Clock facility would not visually compete with the historic buildings centered on the Clock House, and the axial relationship established by architect Richard Morris Hunt.

Notes that there are constraints for the location of the new Master Clock facility, based on the operations of the clocks contained in the facility, the functional relationship to other existing buildings, security requirements based on the proximity to the Vice President's residence, and avoidance of sensitive archaeological sites and significant historic landscape elements.

Notes that during the Section 106 Consultation process, the design for the new Master Clock facility evolved to reflect a minimalist contemporary architectural expression, which quiets the building, allowing it to be in the background and not competing with the historic buildings on the campus.

Supports the design of the new Master Clock facility as it does not compete with the architectural character of the historic contributing buildings designed by Hunt, while relating to its function as a structure to contain the “master clocks” for the Department of the Navy, similar to a computer server room.

Notes the applicant has provided additional views and renderings of the proposed building, consistent with the Commission’s previous request.

Julia A. Koster
Secretary to the National Capital Planning Commission

