



Delegated Action of the Executive Director

PROJECT U.S. Department of Justice Robert F. Kennedy Federal Building Flood Barrier 950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Washington, DC	NCPC FILE NUMBER 8171
	NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER 1.24(38.00)45117
SUBMITTED BY United States General Services Administration	ACTION TAKEN Approve preliminary and final site development plans
	REVIEW AUTHORITY Approval Per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) has requested preliminary and final approval of site and building plans for the installation of flood control gates at the Department of Justice (DOJ) Robert F. Kennedy Federal Building, located at 950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, in Washington D.C. Constructed in 1935, the Robert F. Kennedy building serves as the headquarters for the United States Department of Justice and is a contributing resource in the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic District. The purpose of the flood control gates is to prevent or minimize the amount of damage that might result from a local flooding event in the Federal Triangle area, similar to the event that occurred in June of 2006.

The project scope calls for the construction of fixed flood control barriers at the ramped entrances on 9th and 10th Streets. The entrances are no longer used as points of entry for the building but are a source of frequent water intrusion during periods of heavy rainfall and flooding. The ramps slope downward from the street, and therefore direct floodwaters toward the building. The project includes the construction of reinforced walls on either side of the ramps and the installation of a steel-clad flood gate at the upper most point of the ramps. The height of the new walls will match the 100-year flood level and will not exceed the height of the adjacent moat walls. The walls will be clad with limestone on the upper portion and granite on the lower, matching the moat wall detailing. The flood gates will be clad with metal work to complement the metal work on the existing ramp entry doors. The flood gates will align with the top of the ramp and will replace a line of sandbags that are currently in place to divert rainwater from the building, and the existing precast planters located at the entrance of the ramps will be removed following construction.

GSA conducted a feasibility study to determine the optimum location of the flood barriers. Various locations along the length of the ramps were considered to minimize the visual effects of the installation, but due to excessive structural loading during flood conditions, it was determined that the flood gate should be set at the high point of the ramp to minimize potential structural failure of the ramps and the building façade. As the ramps and the barriers are located within the building yard area, there will not be an impact to sidewalk area or pedestrian movement.

Construction disturbance will be limited to the ramp areas and will have minimal impact to the building façade and moat walls. Locating the flood barriers at the upper entrance of the ramps allows for the flood barrier footing to be constructed slab on grade, eliminating the need for additional structural support, which would have been required if the gate were placed at a lower location along the ramp. The installation of the flanking walls will require alterations to the existing ramp walls. Building elements that require removal will be reinstalled or replaced in kind. The historic iron railing will be restored and installed on the outer barrier walls in order to preserve this original feature.

Overall, staff finds the project is necessary to protect the existing building from flood events. The proposed barriers have been designed in a sensitive manner with materials that are complementary to the historic building. The overall approach is similar to other projects that NCPC has reviewed in the Federal Triangle. As such, the project is generally consistent with the policies set forth in the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*.

GSA and NCPC each have an independent responsibility under the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act for the project. . GSA has applied a categorical exclusion which states “repair and alteration projects involving, but not adversely affecting, properties listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, when there is no evidence of community controversy or other environmental issues”.. The project also satisfies NCPC Categorical Exclusion #2 which applies to the installation of or restoration of minor site elements, such as retaining walls. Staff determined that no extraordinary circumstances were applicable. GSA and NCPC each have an independent responsibility to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). GSA conferred with the DC Historic Preservation Office, State Historic Preservation Officer who concurred that there are no adverse impacts due to the flood barriers. For the purposes of this review, NCPC has designated GSA the lead federal agency.

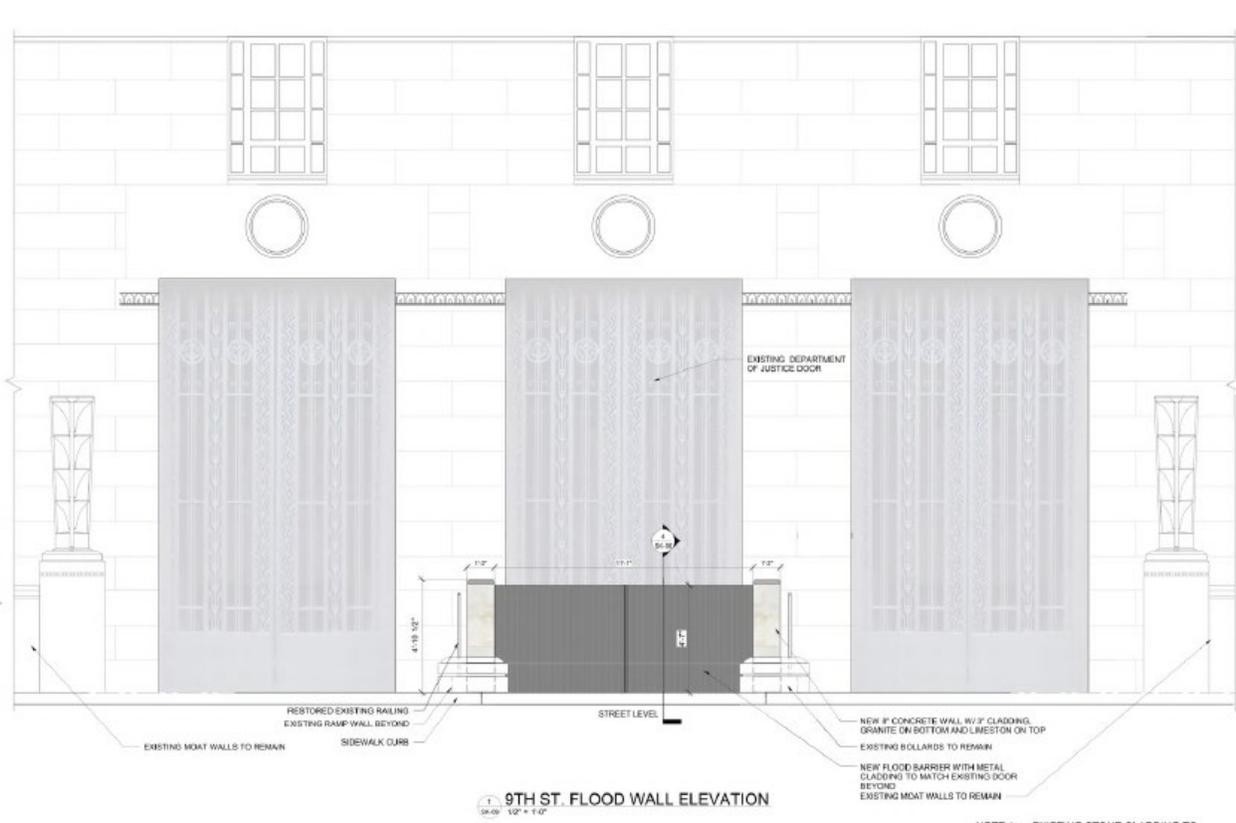


Figure 1: 9th Street Flood Barrier

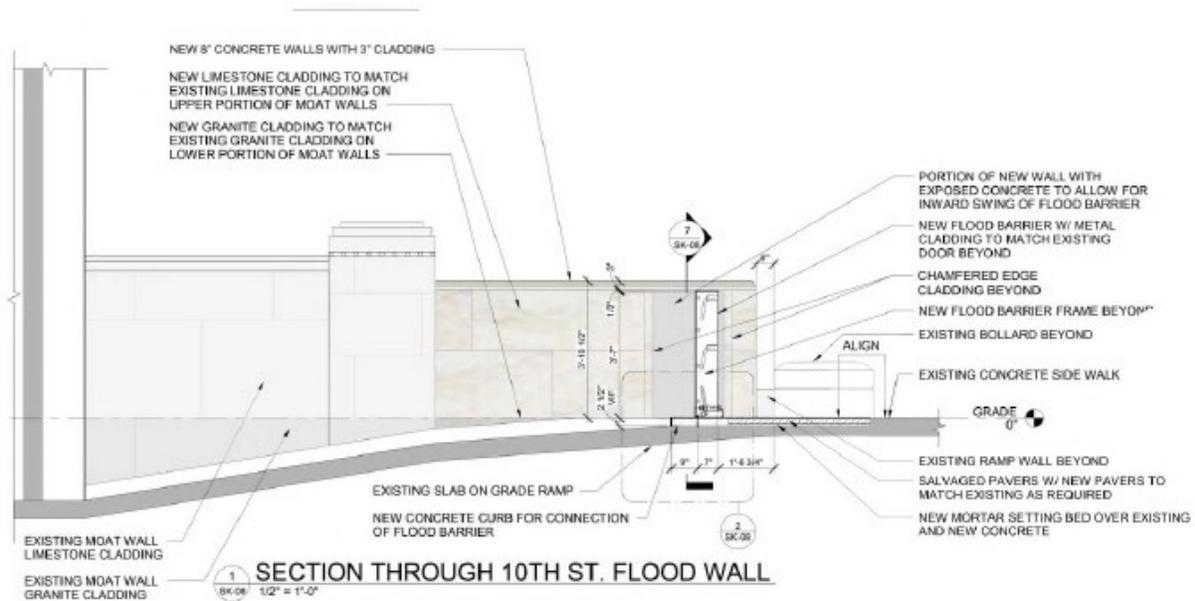


Figure 2: 10th Street Flood Barrier Section

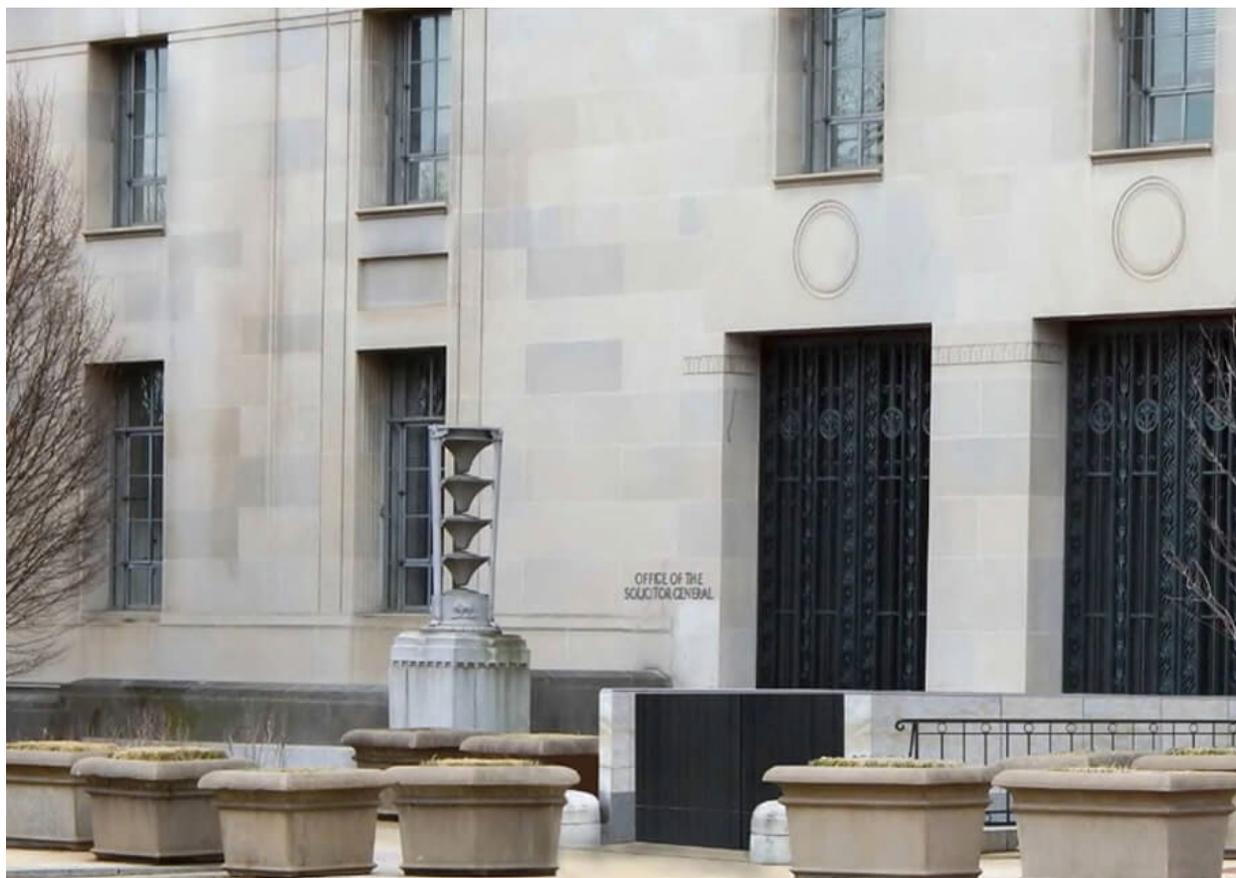


Figure 3: 9th Street Flood Barrier Rendering



Figure 4: 10th Street Flood Barrier Rendering

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the project at their May 13, 2020 meeting and forwarded the proposed preliminary and final site development plans to the Commission with the statement that the

proposal has been coordinated with all participating agencies. DOEE noted that the project may need an erosion and sediment control permit. The participating agencies were: NCPC; the General Services Administration; the National Park Service; the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the District of Columbia Department of Transportation; the District of Columbia Department of Energy and Environment; and the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office.

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Pursuant to delegations of authority adopted by the Commission on October 3, 1996 and per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d), I approve the preliminary and final site development plans for the installation of a flood barriers at the 9th and 10th Street entrances of the Department of Justice, Robert F. Kennedy Building at 950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC.



Marcel Acosta
Executive Director



Date