



Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: September 3, 2026

PROJECT Lafayette Park Security Improvements President's Park 1600 H Street, NW Washington, DC	NCPC FILE NUMBER 8802 NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER 1.32(70.00)46256
SUBMITTED BY United States Department of Homeland Security, United States Secret Service	APPLICANT'S REQUEST Approval of comments on concept plans
REVIEW AUTHORITY Federal Projects in the District per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)	PROPOSED ACTION Approve comments on concept plans ACTION ITEM TYPE Staff Presentation

PROJECT SUMMARY

The United States Secret Service (USSS) and the Executive Office of the President (EOP), in coordination with the Department of Interior (DOI), National Park Service (NPS), requests comments on concept plans for a program of security and access improvements at Lafayette Park and its surrounding streets in northwest Washington, DC. The proposal includes a new, eight- to ten-foot height fence and gates around the perimeter of the eight-acre park which occupies a full block north of the White House, bounded by H Street, NW, Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Madison Place, NW, and Jackson Place, NW, with related corridors on Pennsylvania Avenue, NW between 15th and 17th Streets, NW and along Jackson and Madison Places.

The current reliance on temporary barriers, such as bike-rack fencing, anti-climb barricades, and modular panels provides short-term control but imposes recurring setup, staffing, and operational burdens that degrade the visitor experience and are not sustainable as a primary long-term strategy. The park cannot be easily secured during heightened conditions, and the approach to security is piecemeal and lacks a holistic framework. According to the submission, the objective of the proposed project is to enhance long-term safety, protect park resources, preserve the park's identity as a significant NPS landscape, and maintain public access to this nationally symbolic space. It seeks to maintain a welcoming northern edge along H Street, NW and ensure public access to meaningful portions of the park, including views of the White House.

The concept plans include alternatives for the fence alignment, the north center entry treatment on H Street NW, and decorative fence elements for the Commission's consideration. The concept plan review stage provides the Commission with an early opportunity to provide comments to the applicant, both to help guide the project's planning and development, and to also request additional information the Commission will need for future project review.

KEY INFORMATION

- Lafayette Park is an eight-acre park located directly north of the White House, across Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. Due to its proximity to and reciprocal views with the White House, it functions as an open civic landscape and a vital venue for First Amendment activity.
- Primary public access to the park is from north, at center of the block on H Street, NW where it intersects 16th Street, NW. This is a common location for visitors to congregate and experience views of the White House.
- The present park design was created by John Carl Warneke in the 1960s. The efforts of President and Mrs. John F. Kennedy in the 1960s led to the preservation of the park and the buildings surrounding it. The area was listed in the National Register of Historic Places and designated a National Historic Landmark in 1970.
- The physical form of Lafayette Park and the White House complex has evolved over time in response to security events, resulting in an operationally cumbersome, haphazard, temporary approach to security improvements that lack a holistic framework.
- The objective of this project is to enhance long-term safety, protect park resources, preserve the park's identity as a significant NPS landscape, and maintain public access to this nationally symbolic space.
- The proposal includes a new, eight- to ten-foot height fence and gates around the perimeter of Lafayette Park that provides the flexibility to preserve day-to-day openness while enabling temporary full and partial closures when required.
- The submission includes alternatives for the fence alignment, the north center entry treatment on H Street NW, and decorative fence elements for the Commission's consideration.
- NCPC has led conversations on integrating security with the historic fabric of Washington, DC since March 2000 when Congress authorized the Commission to establish the Interagency Security Task Force. The purpose of the Task Force was to evaluate the impact of security measures on the historic character of Washington's Monumental Core.
- The Interagency Security Task Force recommendations became the basis for the *National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan* which policies within the Federal Urban Design Element of the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital* are derived from.
- NCPC's primary interest in security improvements at Lafayette Park are related to the visitor experience, including visual impacts, historic preservation, and public access.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commission:

Notes the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital* includes policies related to perimeter security that preserve the characteristic openness of Washington's public spaces. As such, the Commission's primary interests in perimeter fencing at Lafayette Park are related to the visitor experience, including visual impacts, historic preservation, and protecting public access.

Approves the following comments on the concept plans for the Lafayette Park Security Modifications located at 1600 H Street, NW in Washington, DC.

History of Perimeter Security at Lafayette Park

Notes that due to its proximity to and reciprocal views with the White House, Lafayette Park is a popular visitor destination and important location for First Amendment activities.

Notes that physical security measures have been implemented over time at Lafayette Park and the White House complex since the early 20th century in response to heightened security events, resulting in some permanent, but mostly piecemeal, temporary methods to secure the area.

Finds the current use of temporary security elements around the White House complex, as well as Lafayette Park, continue to detract from the visitor experience and should be improved to help beautify President's Park.

Proposed Project Program

Notes that according to the submission, the proposed perimeter fence at Lafayette Park is needed to address public access during times of heightened security in a holistic manner that reflects the historic character of the site and improves the visitor use and experience.

Supports the applicant's stated goals to protect park resources and preserve the park's openness with a flexible approach that maintains temporary partial closures when necessary for situational security needs.

Notes that during temporary partial closures, the entirety of the eight-acre park and sidewalks on 15th, 17th, and H Streets, NW would be open to the public, with restricted access on Pennsylvania Avenue and Jackson and Madison Places only.

Notes the concept plan submission also includes options considered for paving modifications within the park and **supports** the applicant's preferred approach to reuse the existing pavers with an enhanced depth of placement to ensure a more stable installation.

Recommends the brick pattern and direction are evaluated in coordination with the Consulting Parties as part of the National Historic Preservation Section Act 106 process.

Fence Alignment Alternatives

Notes the concept plans include three fence alignment alternatives:

- Alignment 1 (*the applicant's preferred option*):
 - Places the fence along the perimeter of Lafayette Park in-line with the existing stone curbs and bollards.
 - Encompasses the park's corner statues, following the curve of the bases, and would

- Requires rebuilding the north wall of the Lafayette Lodge so that it is inboard of the fence line.
- Creates a hardscape plaza at H Street, NW in front of the park's north center entry gates, which would be setback from the existing perimeter to allow for First Amendment gathering activities when the park is fully closed.
- Alignment 2:
 - Places the fence along the internal edge of the park's north curved walkway.
 - Allow the park's corner statues and Lafayette Lodge to be open to the public regardless of closures, creating a larger area along H Street, NW for First Amendment gathering activities when the park is fully closed.
 - Locates the north center entry gates in-line with the fence, framing the central lawn panel.
- Alignment 3:
 - Places the fence straight along H Street NW, in-line with the existing stone curbs and bollards, and forward of the existing bollards at the north center entry gates.
 - Encompasses the park's corner statues at 90-degree angles.
 - Requires rebuilding the north wall of the Lafayette Lodge so that it is inboard of the fence line.
 - Does not provide a plaza at H Street, NW for First Amendment gathering activities when the park is fully closed.

Notes the applicant provided two sub-alternatives to Alignment 1 focused on an altered north center gate configuration:

- Alignment 1a: Proposes a center fence panel framed by metal gates with white masonry piers on either side. Multiple metal posts and gate openings are located between the piers.
- Alignment 1b: Proposes a center gate section with 10 metal posts and 11 gate openings framed by additional gates on either side with white masonry piers. Multiple metal posts and gate openings are located between the piers.

Notes the applicant identified Alignment 1 as the preferred option because it provides flexibility in the north center entry gates placement and style to allow for wider openings; maintains First Amendment gathering spaces during temporary full closures; maintains internal park circulation during temporary partial closures; limits potential vandalism of the corner statues and Lafayette Lodge; and has zero operational issues.

Finds that in comparison of the alternatives:

- Alignment 1: Effectively integrates the existing perimeter, preserves the continuous elliptical pathway within the park, and has the most physical and visual porosity; however, it encloses the entirety of the park and the multitude of metal posts and gates across the H Street entrance lacks a welcoming arrival experience.

- Alignments 1a and 1b: The center fence panel in Alignment 1a creates a more welcoming entrance than the center gate section in Alignment 1b; however, the multiple gate posts between the white masonry piers in both options reduce the perceived and functional entry width, creating a more constrained arrival experience.
- Alignment 2: Provides more space for First Amendment gatherings along H Street, NW during temporary full closures; however, much of the unenclosed space is landscaped with mature trees that may be affected by soil compaction from pedestrian activity. It also introduces an additional fence line inboard of the existing bollards and interrupts the continuous elliptical pathway within the park with fencing and gates.
- Alignment 3: Reduces spatial constraints around the corner statues with the right-angle fence alignment. However, it provides limited space for First Amendment gatherings at the north center entry, which is inconsistent with the park's character and use.

Supports the applicant's preference for fence Alignment 1 as it is the most integrated with the existing perimeter, creates a plaza space for First Amendment gatherings along H Street, NW during temporary full closures, and maintains uninterrupted circulation within the park.

Recommends further development of the fence alignment at the corner statues and the approach for the center entry gates to achieve a balance between physical and visual openness and a design that is inviting to the public.

Notes the concept plans also include three options for the fence alignment on Jackson Place at the White House Historical Society to prevent trespassers and fence scaling near the Blair House:

- Option A locates the fence away from H Street, NW near the existing Jackson Place guard booth and excludes the Decatur House.
- Options B and C encompass the Decatur House along H Street NW, with differing setbacks from the curbline on Jackson Place.

Notes that Option A has the furthest setback from H Street, NW and is the least visible from the public right of way. Options B and C are more visible as they both locate the fence along H Street, NW.

Fence Design

Notes there are a number of examples of public parks and gardens with permanent perimeter fencing around the world, such as the National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden in Washington DC, the Boston Public Garden in Massachusetts, and the Jardin du Luxembourg in Paris, France.

Finds the perimeter public park fences that are most integrated with the surrounding context demonstrate the following characteristics:

- Quality design and decorative detailing used to create civic identity;
- High transparency with thin picket profiles;

- Numerous, wide, and easily identifiable access points that create high pedestrian permeability despite full enclosure; and
- Active edges that reduce the feeling of exclusion.

Notes the proposed perimeter fence at Lafayette Park is a black, eight- to ten-foot-tall fence with four-inch picket spacing. The applicant is exploring a design palette for finials, bases, and knuckles that meet security standards and accentuates the post finials, which could reflect the park setting, as a key feature.

Supports the use of the decorative double-arched base, alternating diamond shaped knuckles, teardrop picket finials, and the approach to accentuate post finials as together they convey a park-like character that is appropriate for the site and compliment the White House fence.

Finds the proposed Lafayette Park fence design also achieves visual continuity with the White House fence through its overall form, picket spacing, and incorporation of the columns at the center entry gates.

Finds the proposal to incorporate the existing bollards into a tapered fence post base provides a creative solution to consolidating security measures.

Finds the open, double-picket post design above the rounded tapered fence post base visually integrates the posts with the panels and adds transparency. The solid fence post and squared options above the integrated base emphasize the height of the fence and create visual density at four-foot spacing.

Requests the next submission include photorealistic renderings of the proposed conditions (with the park gates both open and closed) from the following vantage points in comparison with the existing conditions at eye level:

- View from the public right of way at the intersection at 16th and I Streets, NW looking toward the White House.
- View from the public right of way at the intersection at 16th and H Streets, NW looking toward the White House.
- Views from within Lafayette Park looking toward the White House from behind and in front of the Andrew Jackson statue.
- View from Pennsylvania Avenue, NW at the south center entry gates looking north.
- Views from the approach to the park on H Street, NW at Jackson and Madison Places, NW.
- Views from the approach to the park on Pennsylvania Avenue, NW at Jackson and Madison Places, NW.

Gate Design

Finds the north center entry gates at H and 16th Streets, NW will be a prominent feature and an opportunity to further establish Lafayette Park's civic identity and sense of place through their design.

Supports aligning the gates with the primary north/south pedestrian walkways within the park, setback from H Street along the outside edge of the elliptical walkway.

Recommends the north center entry gates be designed to create an inviting threshold that becomes an easily identifiable primary access point distinctive to Lafayette Park, and that the applicant develop related designs for the remainder of the gates that correspond with the hierarchy of access points around the perimeter of the park.

Requests the next submission include detailed elevations and photorealistic renderings of the proposed center entry gates when both open and closed.

Comprehensive Planning for President's Park

Notes that in its approval of the East Wing Modernization project in March 2026, the Commission requested the applicant work with the National Park Service, General Services Administration, U.S. Secret Service, and others to develop a comprehensive security and beautification plan for the White House complex, President's Park, and the vicinity that will replace temporary security measures with an attractive, unified, permanent design solution without further limiting public access.

Notes the Commission also recently commented on concept plans for a new White House Visitor Screening Facility near Sherman Park and the Main Treasury Building, where it restated its request for a comprehensive security and beautification plan for the area.

Finds that while a comprehensive solution for the entirety of the White House complex and Lafayette Park may not be feasible at this time, it is imperative to address security and access on Pennsylvania Avenue, NW at 15th and 17th Streets as this location is part of the project study area and will require coordination with the Lafayette Park security modifications.

Requests that the applicant provide, as part of the next submission, a design approach that addresses security and access on Pennsylvania Avenue, NW at 15th and 17th Streets, including public access to the Renwick Gallery. The approach should identify how the potential fence alignment, access points, and design palette will integrate with the Lafayette Park security improvements and existing security features of the White House complex.

Notes that as Pennsylvania Avenue, NW between 15th and 17th Streets has been closed to vehicular traffic since 1995, the proposed security design solution for the Avenue in this location will need to consider whether the street will reopen to vehicles in the future or be treated as an extension of Lafayette Park for pedestrians.

Additional Coordination

Recommends the applicant continue to work with the National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 Consulting Parties, District government agencies, and the adjacent property owners to address potential on- and off-site impacts of the project on historic and cultural resources.

Notes the applicant will include data on the number of park closures and durations over the past few years in the Environmental Assessment. While anticipating the number of future closures with the proposed fence is implausible, the applicant has confirmed there is no intended change to the process for determining when closure is necessary.

Recommends the Environmental Assessment also evaluate the proposed enclosure's potential to impact occupant capacity within the park based upon egress needs during temporary partial park closures.

Requests the applicant provide, as part of the next submission, updates on the Section 106 process and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) evaluation process, as completion of both processes are required for NCPC final action.

PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

Previous actions	None.
Remaining actions (anticipated)	– Approve preliminary and final site development plans.

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

Security measures at the White House complex have evolved over time in response to changing needs. The USSS has indicated that Lafayette Park currently faces some security risks through the existing barriers, fencing, and paving. The proposed security improvements at Lafayette Park will replace reliance on temporary barriers, such as bike-rack fencing, anti-climb barricades, and modular panels. Lafayette Park is generally open to the public and is a popular location for events, programs, and public gatherings. Due to its proximity to and its reciprocal views with the White House, it is also a popular destination for First Amendment activities. Therefore, a careful balance between security needs and the open nature of this historic site is necessary. According to the applicant, installing a permanent, yet flexible fencing strategy for varying security risks is intended to improve the park's security and stability while maintaining public access and a historically compatible appearance.

The *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital* includes policies related to perimeter security that preserve the characteristic openness of Washington's public spaces. As such, the

Commission's primary interests in perimeter fencing at Lafayette Park are related to the visitor experience, including visual impacts, historic preservation, and protecting public access. Examples of such projects include the new White House perimeter fence and the redesign of the Washington Monument grounds. As such, the Commission's primary interests in perimeter fencing at Lafayette Park are related to the visitor experience, including visual impacts, historic preservation, and protecting public access. According to the submission, this proposal is intended to improve the visitor experience by reducing visual clutter created by ad-hoc installations of temporary barriers in a way that maintains public access to the park. The concept plans include three alternative alignments for the perimeter fence, various options for the north center entry treatment at H and 16th Streets NW, and a palette of decorative fence design elements for the Commission to comment on. As such, staff recommend the **Commission approve the following comments on the concept plans for the Lafayette Park Security Modifications located at 1600 H Street, NW in Washington, DC.**

Overview

Background

As described in the submission, Lafayette Park comprises the entire block bounded by H Street NW, Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Madison Place NW, and Jackson Place NW. The parcel measures eight acres and was included in the original design for "President's Park" as indicated by Pierre Charles L'Enfant in 1791. Initially an open green, the space was first designed as a park by Andrew Jackson Downing in 1851. Implementation of the design occurred over several decades during the second half of the nineteenth century. Based on Downing's plans an equestrian statue of Andrew Jackson commemorating the seventh president and his military achievements was erected in the center of the park in 1853.

Statues honoring European military leaders who supported the American Revolutionary cause—Marquis de Lafayette, the Comte de Rochambeau, Baron von Steuben, and Brig. Gen. Tadeusz Kosciuszko—were added to the four corners of the park during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1914, the Lafayette Lodge was added to the northeastern corner of the park to provide visitor services and a place for staff to store maintenance tools and equipment. The park was redesigned during the 1930s to simplify the arrangement of paths and plantings. Additional changes were made based on the Warnecke Plan of the 1960s, including the addition of a pair of fountains marking the east-west axis within the park, which were completed in 1970. The efforts of President and Mrs. John F. Kennedy in the 1960s led to the preservation of the park and the buildings surrounding it. The area was listed in the National Register of Historic Places and designated a National Historic Landmark in 1970.

Analysis

History of Perimeter Security at Lafayette Park

According to the *Cultural Landscape Report: Site History and Evaluation, 1791-1994, The White House and President's Park*, Lafayette Park was first enclosed with a wood fence by 1826, which

was replaced with a five and half foot tall iron fence from 1853-1888. In 1845 a program was initiated to improve many of the “streets, avenues, and public reservations” in the city of Washington. The reservations designated were Lafayette Square, President’s Park South, Fountain Square, the National Mall, and the vacant ground adjoining the U.S. Capitol. As part of this program, an estimate was given to enclose “Lafayette Square” with posts and wood railings “of the best materials,” possibly to replace the enclosure that existed in 1826. In 1853, the old wood fence was replaced with an iron fence, and gaslights were installed in the park. From 1888-1889, the iron fence around Lafayette Park was removed and sent to the Gettysburg Memorial Association to be used at the National Cemetery. This removal was attributed to pressure from nearby residents. In 1889, as a replacement to fencing, funding for granite curbs was requested on behalf of the NPS. Today, granite curbs continue to demarcate the edges of the park, with bollards installed along H Street, NW in addition to multiple layers of temporary security measures along H Street NW, Madison and Jackson Places NW, and Pennsylvania Avenue NW.

Overall, physical security measures have evolved over time at Lafayette Park and the White House complex since the early 20th century in response to heightened security events, resulting in some permanent, but mostly piecemeal, temporary methods to secure the area. Today, security measures around Lafayette Park include formal White House fencing, temporary bike rack barriers, and temporary large-scale fencing. This reactionary approach lacks a holistic framework, leading to a mass of visual clutter scattered throughout one of the most identifiable and visited destinations in the world. As such, staff recommend the **Commission find the current use of temporary security elements around the White House complex, as well as Lafayette Park, continue to detract from the visitor experience and should be improved to help beautify President’s Park.**

Proposed Project Program

According to the submission, the proposed perimeter fence at Lafayette Park is needed to address public access during times of heightened security in a holistic manner that reflects the historic character of the site and improves the visitor use and experience. During times of civil unrest, demonstrations, and National Special Security Events, the areas surrounding the White House complex are routinely a focal point for the public. Many demonstrations result in peaceful gatherings in Lafayette Park and on Pennsylvania Avenue. However, there are times when demonstrations elevate into non-peaceful events. Law Enforcement Officers are required to maintain the necessary stand-off from restricted areas and prevent vandalism to NPS resources throughout Lafayette Park. Utilizing unanchored temporary barrier solutions requires law enforcement officers to physically support these barriers to maintain the authorized closure area. These solutions also require increased time and costs to deploy and detract from the views within Lafayette Park and the White House. A permanent fence that is properly anchored would provide separation which would assist in de-escalating most potentially violent protests. The permanent fence is also intended to avoid the delays of closing and re-opening the park; extended disruption for temporary barrier installation and removal; and cost of installing and removing anti-scale fencing and other temporary barriers.

The proposed eight- to ten-foot-tall perimeter fence is intended to provide flexibility for temporary full and temporary partial park closures. During temporary partial closures, the entirety of the eight-acre park and sidewalks on 15th, 17th, and H Streets, NW would be open to the public, with restricted access on Pennsylvania Avenue and Jackson and Madison Places only. The applicant will include data on the number of park closures and durations over the past few years in the Environmental Assessment. While anticipating the number of future closures with the proposed fence is implausible, the applicant has confirmed there is no intended change to the process for determining when closure is necessary. Currently, park closures are determined by protective operations and specific security determinations which cannot be projected. Under the proposed condition, all public access restrictions will continue to be based on a specific security determination and, wherever possible, the USSS will continue to request those access restrictions in advance and in writing from NPS. For planned events, USSS will continue to provide NPS written notice of a requested full or partial closure and the security determination. However, there will also be emergency situations where the park would need to be rapidly closed, (e.g. a suspicious package requires clearing the park for Presidential and public safety). As such, staff recommend the **Commission support the applicant's stated goals to protect park resources and preserve the park's openness with a flexible approach that maintains temporary partial closures when necessary for situational security needs.**

The concept plan submission also includes options considered for paving modifications within the park. It indicates that the existing brick pavers are too thin and insufficiently embedded, making them prone to dislodgement that can cause tripping hazards and raise safety concerns if bricks are misused as projectiles during heightened security periods. The options considered include granite and brick materials in various colors, sizes, and paving directions. However, the applicant ultimately determined resetting the existing brick is preferred to replacing it with another material, and staff recommend the **Commission support the applicant's preferred approach to reuse the existing pavers with an enhanced depth of placement to ensure a more stable installation.** Further, staff suggest the **Commission recommend the brick pattern and direction are evaluated in coordination with the Consulting Parties as part of the National Historic Act Preservation Section 106 process.**

Fence Alignment Alternatives

The concept plans include three fence alignment alternatives:

- Alignment 1 (*the applicant's preferred option*):
 - Places the fence along the perimeter of Lafayette Park in-line with the existing stone curbs and bollards.
 - Encompasses the park's corner statues, following the curve of the bases, and would
 - Requires rebuilding the north wall of the Lafayette Lodge so that it is inboard of the fence line.
 - Creates a hardscape plaza at H Street, NW in front of the park's north center entry gates, which would be setback from the existing perimeter to allow for First Amendment gathering activities when the park is fully closed.
- Alignment 2:

- Places the fence along the internal edge of the park's north curved walkway.
- Allows the park's corner statues and Lafayette Lodge to be open to the public regardless of closures, creating a larger area along H Street, NW for First Amendment gathering activities when the park is fully closed.
- Locates the north center entry gates in-line with the fence, framing the central lawn panel.
- Alignment 3:
 - Places the fence straight along H Street NW, in-line with the existing stone curbs and bollards, and forward of the existing bollards at the north center entry gates.
 - Encompasses the park's corner statues at 90-degree angles.
 - Requires rebuilding the north wall of the Lafayette Lodge so that it is inboard of the fence line.
 - Does not provide a plaza at H Street, NW for First Amendment gathering activities when the park is fully closed.

The applicant also provided two sub-alternatives to Alignment 1 focused on an altered north center gate configuration:

- Alignment 1a: Proposes a center fence panel framed by metal gates with white masonry piers on either side. Multiple metal posts and gate openings are located between the piers.
- Alignment 1b: Proposes a center gate section with 10 metal posts and 11 gate openings framed by additional gates on either side with white masonry piers. Multiple metal posts and gate openings are located between the piers.

Overall, the greatest difference between the alternatives is the alignment of the fence along H Street, NW and treatment of the north center entry gates. While distinct, there are some common elements between the alternatives. All three alternatives include south center entry gates at Pennsylvania Avenue, as well as gates at the park's four corners and mid-block on the east and west sides where existing pedestrian access points occur. The south center entry gates are intended to mirror the north entry gates straight along Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. In addition, the viewshed study provided in the submission illustrates that in all alternatives, due to the sloped grade, visitors standing on H Street, NW (when the gates are open) and from within the north side of the park inside the fence would see over the park and White House fences for uninterrupted views of the White House and Andrew Jackson statues. However, these views would be temporarily interrupted when the gates are closed. In comparison of the alternatives, staff recommend the **Commission find:**

- **Alignment 1:** Effectively integrates the existing perimeter, preserves the continuous elliptical pathway within the park, and has the most physical and visual porosity; however, it encloses the entirety of the park and the multitude of metal posts and gates across the H Street entrance lacks a welcoming arrival experience.
- **Alignments 1a and 1b:** The center fence panel in Alignment 1a creates a more welcoming entrance than the center gate section in Alignment 1b; however, the

multiple gate posts between the white masonry piers in both options reduce the perceived and functional entry width, creating a more constrained arrival experience.

- **Alignment 2:** Provides more space for First Amendment gatherings along H Street, NW during temporary full closures; however, much of the unenclosed space is landscaped with mature trees that may be affected by soil compaction from pedestrian activity. It also introduces an additional fence line inboard of the existing bollards and interrupts the continuous elliptical pathway within the park with fencing and gates.
- **Alignment 3:** Reduces spatial constraints around the corner statues with the right-angle fence alignment. However, it provides limited space for First Amendment gatherings at the north center entry, which is inconsistent with the park's character and use.

The applicant identified Alignment 1 as the preferred option because it provides flexibility in the north center entry gates placement and style to allow for wider openings; maintains First Amendment gathering spaces during temporary full closures; maintains internal park circulation during temporary partial closures; limits potential vandalism of the corner statues and Lafayette Lodge; and has zero operational issues. Based on the above findings and the site's operational needs, staff recommend the **Commission supports the applicant's preference for fence Alignment 1 as it is the most integrated with the existing perimeter, creates a plaza space for First Amendment gatherings along H Street, NW during temporary full closures, and maintains uninterrupted circulation within the park.** However, there are aspects of Alignment 1 that could be refined to improve the visitor experience; therefore, staff suggests the **Commission recommends further development of the fence alignment at the corner statues and the approach for the center entry gates to achieve a balance between physical and visual openness and a design that is inviting to the public.**

In addition, the concept plans include three options for the fence alignment on Jackson Place at the White House Historical Society to prevent trespassers and fence scaling near the Blair House:

- Option A locates the fence away from H Street, NW near the existing Jackson Place guard booth and excludes the Decatur House.
- Options B and C encompass the Decatur House along H Street NW, with differing setbacks from the curbline on Jackson Place.

Option A has the furthest setback from H Street, NW and is the least visible from the public right of way. Options B and C are more visible as they both locate the fence along H Street, NW. Option C is reflected in the submission's drawings of the applicant's preferred alternative, Alignment 1.

Fence Design

As noted in the submission, the *Foundation Document for The White House and President's Park* outlines the importance and purpose of Lafayette Park. Key themes and ideas of the site include

preservation as an open public space in the foreground of the White House, as a setting for passive activities, First Amendment activities within legal limitations, and as a support area for presidential inaugural activities. It goes on to describe Lafayette Park as a large open area associated with the White House for freedom of public expression and assembly activities, as well as for public use and enjoyment. As a valued historical and cultural resource that will continue to provide a venue for public expression into the future, the fence must be thoughtfully designed and executed in a manner that is inviting and integrated with the surrounding context.

There are a number of examples of public parks and gardens with permanent perimeter fencing around the world, such as the National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden in Washington DC, the Boston Public Garden in Massachusetts, and the Jardin du Luxembourg in Paris, France. Overall, staff recommend the **Commission find the perimeter public park fences that are most integrated with the surrounding context demonstrate the following characteristics:**

- **Quality design and decorative detailing used to create civic identity;**
- **High transparency with thin picket profiles;**
- **Numerous, wide, and easily identifiable access points that create high pedestrian permeability despite full enclosure; and**
- **Active edges that reduce the feeling of exclusion.**

The proposed perimeter fence at Lafayette Park is described in the submission as a black, eight- to ten-foot-tall fence with four-inch picket spacing. The applicant is exploring a design palette for finials, bases, and knuckles that meet security standards and accentuates the post finials, which could reflect the park setting, as a key feature. For example, the historic Lafayette Square fence posts were capped with finials resembling corn cobs, expressing the importance of agriculture during its time of construction. The other decorative elements considered in the submission include diamond and tear drop shaped picket finials, single and double-arched fence bases, and curved, rounded, and diamond knuckles on all pickets or alternating pickets. Overall, staff recommend the **Commission support the use of the decorative double-arched base, alternating diamond shaped knuckles, teardrop picket finials, and the approach to accentuate post finials as together they convey a park-like character that is appropriate for the site and compliment the White House fence.**

The submission includes a comparison of the proposed Lafayette Park fence with the White House fence, scaled to meet the park's security needs. The installed White House fence measures ten feet, seven inches in height above an approximately eighteen-inch stone base. Anti-climb features measuring one foot in height are installed at the top of the fence, and the entire assembly measures thirteen feet, one inch from the ground. This fence design includes two-inch wide pickets with five and a half foot spacing. The elements at the top of the fence provide additional design details, while accommodating anti-climb measures such as "pencil point" style spikes along the top rail of the fence. Distinct post-top finial designs with an urn and flame mark the pedestrian gates. At the time of its approval, the Commission noted that the unique character and condition of the public spaces in the surrounding area may require different security solutions, including fence height. As such, staff recommend the **Commission find the proposed Lafayette Park fence design also achieves visual continuity with the White House fence through its overall form, picket**

spacing, and incorporation of the columns at the center entry gates. Staff notes the applicant also studied replicating the original ornate 19th-century cast-and-wrought iron historical fence around Lafayette Park, which would require raising the total height of the fence to more than 10 feet due to its design features that do not meet present day security needs.

As mentioned above, Alternative 1 aligns the fence with the existing stone curbs and bollards along H Street, NW. This alignment allows the bollards to be integrated with the fence posts and staff recommend the **Commission find the proposal to incorporate the existing bollards into a tapered fence post base provides a creative solution to consolidating security measures.** Different fence post options are illustrated throughout the concept plan submission including the applicant's preferred option - a solid post above a rounded, integrated base and two alternatives: an open square form defined by four pickets on above square integrated base and an open, double-picket post above a rounded integrated base. Overall, staff recommend the **Commission find the open, double-picket post design above the rounded tapered fence post base visually integrates the posts with the panels and adds transparency. The solid fence post and squared options above the integrated base emphasize the height of the fence and create visual density at four-foot spacing.**

While the drawings in the concept plans aid in understanding the fence design, additional renderings are needed to understand the impact of the proposed fence on the visitor experience. Therefore, staff recommend the **Commission request the next submission include photorealistic renderings of the proposed conditions (with the park gates both open and closed) from the following vantage points in comparison with the existing conditions at eye level:**

- **View from the public right of way at the intersection at 16th and I Streets, NW looking toward the White House.**
- **View from the public right of way at the intersection at 16th and H Streets, NW looking toward the White House.**
- **Views from within Lafayette Park looking toward the White House from behind and in front of the Andrew Jackson statue.**
- **View from Pennsylvania Avenue, NW at the south center entry gates looking north.**
- **Views from the approach to the park on H Street, NW at Jackson and Madison Places, NW.**
- **Views from the approach to the park on Pennsylvania Avenue, NW at Jackson and Madison Places, NW.**

Gate Design

The north center entry to Lafayette Park at H and 16th Streets, NW is a primary access point into the park and a popular place for visitors to experience views of the White House and Andrew Jackson statue. In many examples of public park spaces with perimeter fencing, entry points inadvertently create areas of sociability and exchange as park entrances become meeting points where people instinctively congregate and interact. Therefore, staff recommend the **Commission find the north center entry gates at H and 16th Streets, NW will be a prominent feature and an opportunity to further establish Lafayette Park's civic identity and sense of**

place through their design. The entrance itself is defined by a central rectangular lawn panel flanked by two, approximately 15-foot-wide brick walkways that align with the 16th Street, NW right of way, reinforcing the formal axis and vista between the White House and destinations to the north including Scott Circle and Meridian Hill Park. As such, staff recommend the **Commission supports aligning the gates with the primary north/south pedestrian walkways within the park, setback from H Street along the outside edge of the elliptical walkway.** As noted previously, this entrance configuration is mirrored on the south side of the park along Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. There are also secondary access points at the corners of the park and mid-block along Jackson and Madison Places. Since the park will be fully enclosed, some of these gates may be considered egress during partial closures. Therefore, staff suggest the **Commission recommends the Environmental Assessment also evaluate the proposed enclosure's potential to impact occupant capacity within the park based upon egress needs during temporary partial park closures.**

The submission includes photorealistic renderings of the north center entry, demonstrating the various alignment alternatives with the gates open. However, the submission does not include details on the design of the north center entry gates or gates. Instead of simply adapting the fence design to the gates, staff suggests the **Commission recommend the north center entry gates be designed to create an inviting threshold that becomes an easily identifiable primary access point distinctive to Lafayette Park, and that the applicant develop related designs for the remainder of the gates that correspond with the hierarchy of access points around the perimeter of the park.** To achieve this, staff recommend the Commission request that the next submission include detailed elevations and photorealistic renderings of the proposed center entry gates when both open and closed.

Comprehensive Planning for President's Park

As discussed earlier, security measures at Lafayette Park and the White House complex have evolved over time, resulting in reactionary, temporary measures that lack a holistic approach. This was also recognized in the Commission's review of other projects in this area. In its approval of the East Wing Modernization project in March 2026, the Commission requested the applicant work with the National Park Service, General Services Administration, U.S. Secret Service, and others to develop a comprehensive security and beautification plan for the White House complex, President's Park, and the vicinity that will replace temporary security measures with an attractive, unified, permanent design solution without further limiting public access. The Commission also recently commented on concept plans for a new White House Visitor Screening Facility near Sherman Park and the Main Treasury Building, where it restated its request for a comprehensive security and beautification plan for the area.

The project area includes Lafayette Park and the intersections with Pennsylvania Avenue NW, which has had multiple fencing types over time and recent interventions that are more contemporary in character. Therefore, staff recommends the **Commission find that while a comprehensive solution for the entirety of the White House complex and Lafayette Park may not be feasible at this time, it is imperative to address security and access on Pennsylvania Avenue, NW at 15th and 17th Streets as this location is part of the project study area and will**

require coordination with the Lafayette Park security modifications. Therefore, staff recommend the Commission that the applicant provide, as part of the next submission, a design approach that addresses security and access on Pennsylvania Avenue, NW at 15th and 17th Streets, including public access to the Renwick Gallery. The approach should identify how the potential fence alignment, access points, and design palette will integrate with the Lafayette Park security improvements and existing security features of the White House complex. Staff also notes that as Pennsylvania Avenue, NW between 15th and 17th Streets has been closed to vehicular traffic since 1995, the proposed security design solution for the Avenue in this location will need to consider whether the street will reopen to vehicles in the future or be treated as an extension of Lafayette Park for pedestrians.

CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

On the whole, the project is generally consistent with the Federal Elements of the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*. As a reminder, the Commission takes a holistic approach when applying the *Comprehensive Plan* policies within the context of the project's needs and objectives when making a consistency determination. The Federal Historic Preservation, Visitors & Commemoration, Parks & Open Space, and Urban Design Elements of the *Comprehensive Plan* recognize that, as the seat of the federal government and home to many nationally significant buildings and spaces that are integral to American history, security is a fundamental part the Nation's Capital that must be executed in balance with Washington's unique historic and physical attributes.

The policies within the Urban Design and Security section of the Federal Urban Design Element are derived from several efforts developed over the last 20 years. NCPC began leading discussions on integrating security improvement with the historic fabric of Washington, DC in March 2000 when Congress authorized the Commission to establish the Interagency Security Task Force. The purpose of the Task Force was to evaluate the impact of security measures on the historic character of Washington's Monumental Core. The Interagency Security Task Force recommendations became the basis for the *National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan* (2002). NCPC reconvened the Interagency Task Force and produced an addendum in 2004 with updated information. In 2005, NCPC adopted an updated set of objectives and policies for reviewing perimeter security projects. The updated policies reinforced the importance of design quality in the nation's capital and balancing building security with the functional and visual qualities of public space. The *Comprehensive Plan* policies related to urban design and perimeter security are the result of this work. The policies support development of effective security systems that preserve the characteristic openness of Washington's public spaces and recommend that when physical perimeter security is necessary in public space, that it be done in an unobtrusive manner that integrates security barriers and furthers or creates an attractive urban landscape. The comments provided by the Commission on the concept plans for the Lafayette Park security improvements are intended to bring the project into further alignment with these *Comprehensive Plan* policies.

National Historic Preservation Act

NCPC has an independent responsibility to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) process. NCPC intends to designate the applicant as the lead federal agency for the purposes of compliance with the Section 106 process of the NHPA. The applicant has indicated the proposed changes to Lafayette Park are following applicable historic preservation regulations and policies, including Section 106 of the NHPA. NCPC will not take a final review action until the Section 106 process has been completed. As such, staff suggests the **Commission recommend the applicant continue to work with the National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 Consulting Parties, District government agencies, and the adjacent property owners to address potential on- and off-site impacts of the project on historic and cultural resources.**

National Environmental Policy Act

NCPC has a responsibility to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) based on its approval role for federal projects within the District of Columbia. The applicant has indicated the proposed changes to Lafayette Park are being evaluated with respect to natural resources, visitor experience, traffic and circulation, and cultural resources. It has been determined that the appropriate environmental document is an environmental assessment (EA).

Updates on both NHPA and NEPA compliance will be helpful as part of the next review. Therefore, staff recommends the **Commission request that the applicant provide, as part of the next submission, updates on the Section 106 process and the NEPA evaluation process, as completion of both processes are required for NCPC final action.**

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the concept plans at its August 12, 2026 meeting. The participating agencies included NCPC, the U.S. General Services Administration, the NPS, the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA), the District State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the District of Columbia Office of Planning (DCOP), the District of Columbia Office of Energy and the Environment (DOEE), the District Departments of Transportation (DDOT) and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

The Committee forwarded the proposed comments on concept plans to the Commission with the statement that the proposal was coordinated with some, but not all, participating agencies. The SHPO is not coordinating and objects to the project being added to NCPC's September agenda because the alterations will result in significant adverse effects on this National Historic Landmark historic district and as of the time of the Coordinating Committee meeting, no Section 106 consulting parties meetings had been held. The first such meeting occurred on the same date as the NCPC Coordinating Committee meeting, but later in the day, and the SHPO noted the Consulting Parties will need adequate time to review the project information and provide comments, which

NCPC and other relevant agencies need to consider. DOEE is also not coordinated and requested that the applicant contact it to schedule a Preliminary Design Review Meeting, if needed. DOEE also noted that pathway work land disturbance will likely require an erosion and sediment control plan.

DDOT had several questions, particularly regarding the bike lane on Madison Place (an important north-south connection). DDOT also inquired about the location of the fence on Pennsylvania Avenue. NCPC noted that there are no permanent enclosures on the 15th and 17th Street ends of the Avenue – this would be in a future design phase and there are no details included in this submission. DDOT also asked about the interface of the fences with existing buildings and infrastructure (such as by Jackson Place and Madison Place).

CFA staff noted that its Commission reviewed the project at its last meeting and sent a letter to the applicant. The Commission mentioned it is looking for the least amount of enclosures, would like to see a similar fence vocabulary as that of the fence around the White House, and is supportive of the piers by the main H Street entrance gates (Alternative 1A). In addition, while CFA supports the idea of a fence around the park it has not taken official action yet.

DCOP asked about the fence points at the top, noting that it does not recommend sharp points (including at fences around embassies) as it conflicts with guidance of the District's Public Realm Design Manual.

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts

The U.S. Commission of Fine Arts provided comments on the concept plans at their July 16, 2026 meeting. A copy of the letter is attached.

ONLINE REFERENCE

The following supporting documents for this project are available online at www.ncpc.gov:

- Submission Package
- Project Synopsis

Prepared by Stephanie Free
08/13/2026

POWERPOINT (ATTACHED)

Lafayette Park Security Modifications

1600 H Street, NW, Washington, DC

Approval of Comments on Concept Plans

United States Department of the Interior

Project Summary

Commission Meeting Date: September 3, 2026

NCPC Review Authority: 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)

Applicant Request: Approval of Comments on Concept Plans

Session: Staff Presentation

NCPC Review Officer: Stephanie Free

NCPC File Number: 8802

Project Summary:

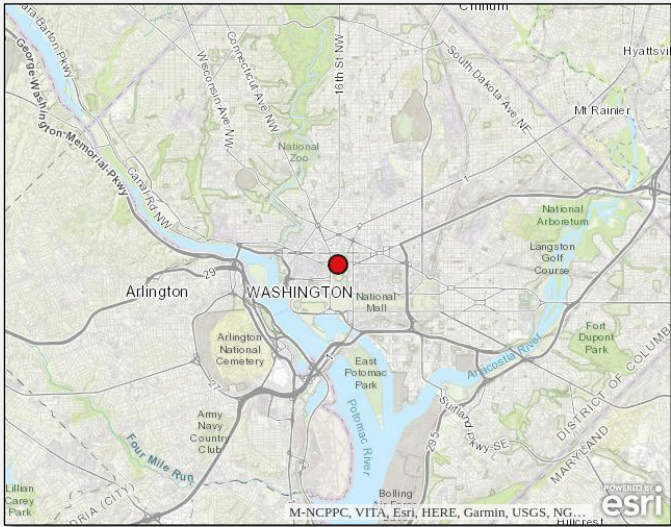
The United States Secret Service (USSS) and the Executive Office of the President (EOP), in coordination with the Department of Interior (DOI) and the National Park Service (NPS), requests comments on concept plans for a program of security and access improvements at Lafayette Park and its surrounding streets in northwest Washington, DC.

The proposal includes a new, 8- to 10-foot height fence and gates around the perimeter of the 8-acre park which occupies a full block north of the White House, bounded by H Street NW, Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Madison Place NW, and Jackson Place NW, with related corridors on Pennsylvania Avenue NW between 15th and 17th Streets NW and along Jackson and Madison Places.

The current reliance on temporary barriers, such as bike-rack fencing, anti-climb barricades, and modular panels, provides short-term control but imposes recurring setup, staffing, and operational burdens that degrade visitor experience and are not sustainable as a primary long-term strategy. The park cannot be easily secured during heightened conditions, and the approach is piecemeal and lacks a holistic framework.

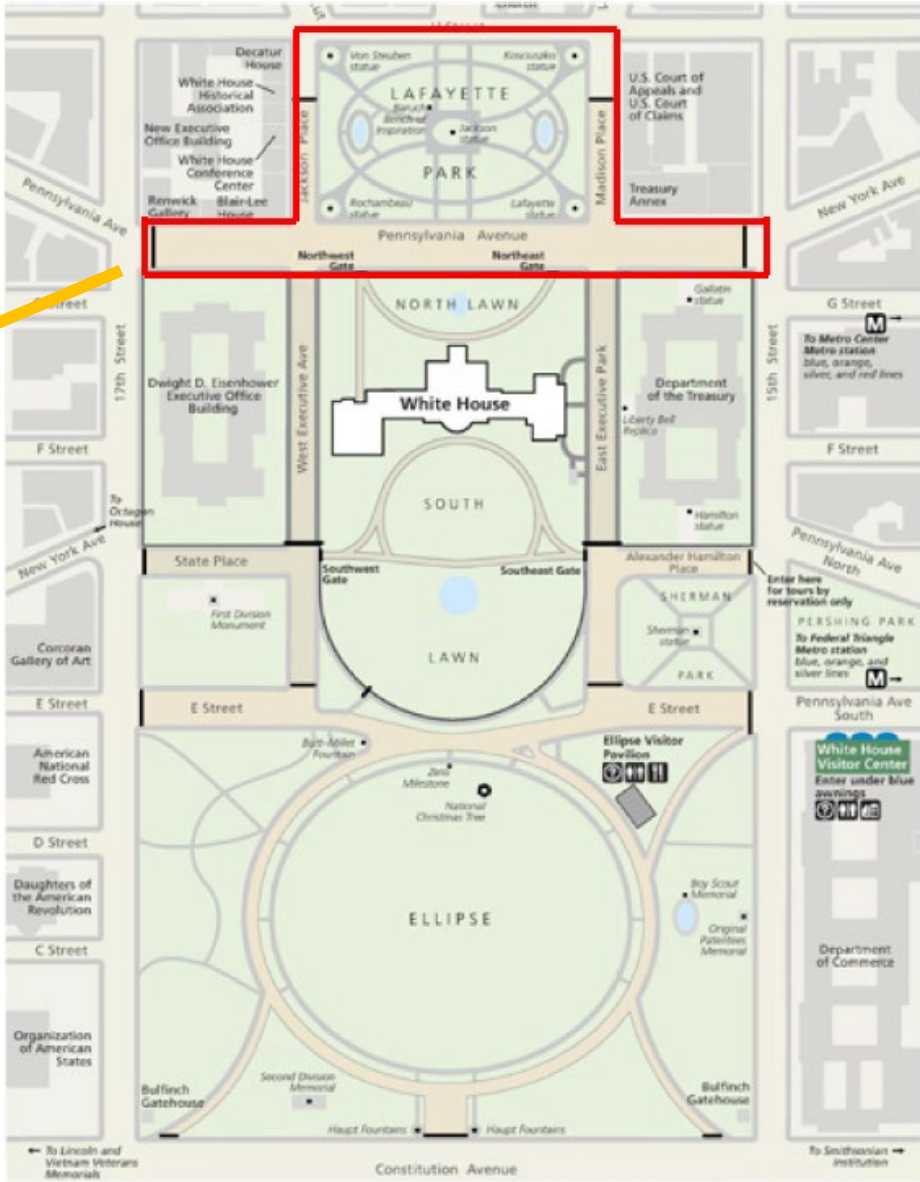
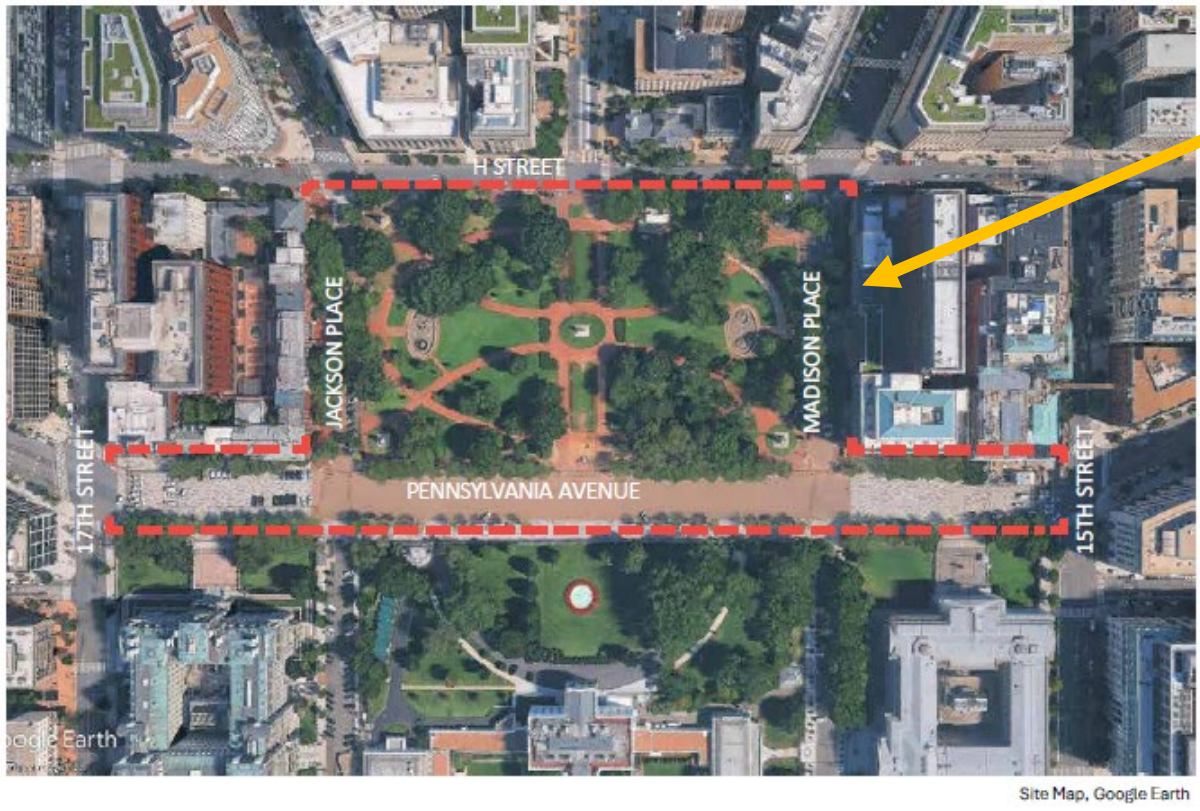
The objective of the project is to enhance long-term safety, preserve the park's identity as a significant NPS landscape, and maintain public access to this nationally symbolic space. It seeks to maintain a welcoming northern edge along H Street, NW and ensure public access to meaningful portions of the park, including views of the White House.

Site Location



Location Map

Site Context and Location



Site History

The siting and symbolic configuration of the landscape of the White House and President's Park as a centerpiece for the new federal city of Washington, D.C., were first articulated in plans prepared by Pierre Charles L'Enfant in 1791 and led to federal government acquisition of the necessary land, which became known first as Appropriation 1, and later Reservation 1.



LOC, 1857



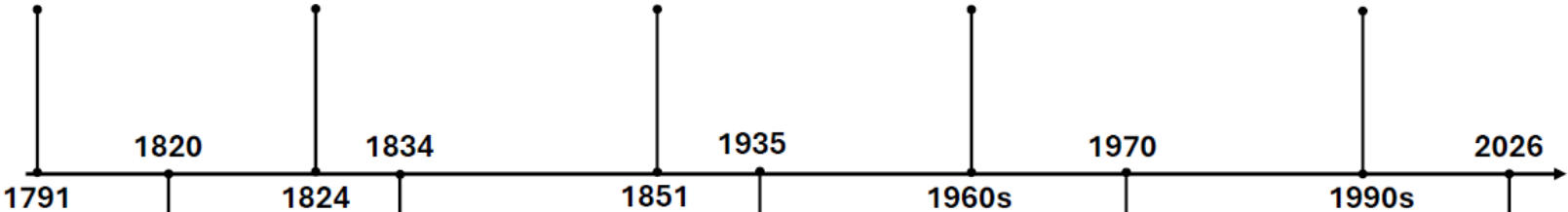
John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston

President authorizes separation of President's Park from White House Grounds

Architect Andrew Jackson Downing hired to design park grounds

President Kennedy implements additional security measures at the park

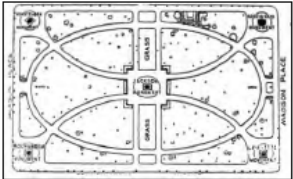
Pennsylvania Avenue NW closed to vehicular traffic following the Oklahoma City Bombing



In 1820, the route of present-day Pennsylvania Avenue NW was cleared to "practically and symbolically" separate the private portion of the President's Grounds from Lafayette Square, which was indicated as set aside as a park for the people.

President's Park becomes known as Lafayette Square

Olmsted Management Plan re-emphasizes importance of L'Enfant vistas to the south and north and calls for plant modifications to complement this concept (Diagram from 1937 reconditioning)



NPS PRPA Lafayette Park, 2021

Lafayette Square becomes a National Historic Landmark District



Library of Congress

America's 250th Anniversary

September 3, 2026

8

NCPC Submission



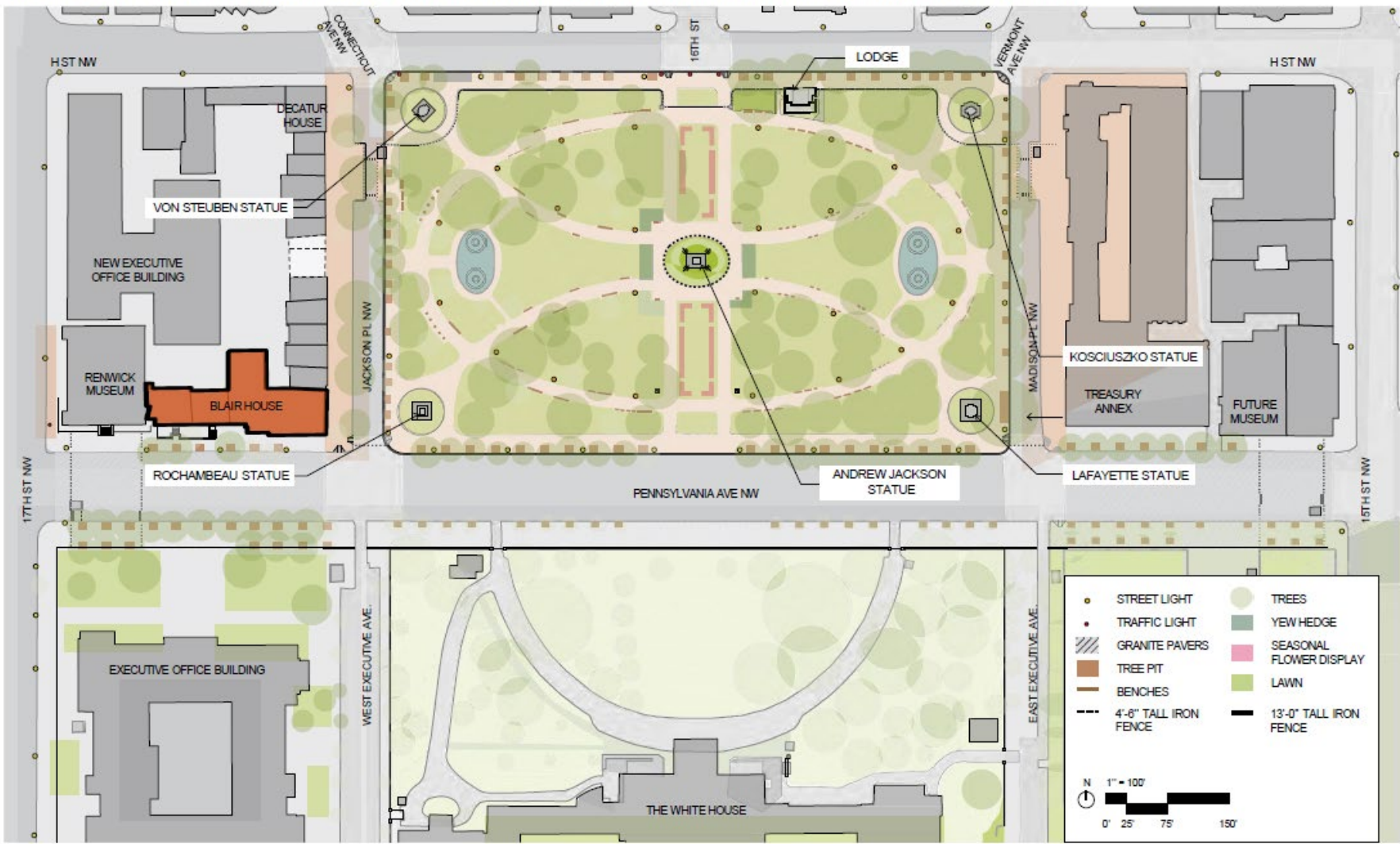
Lithograph, 1848



LOC, 1880

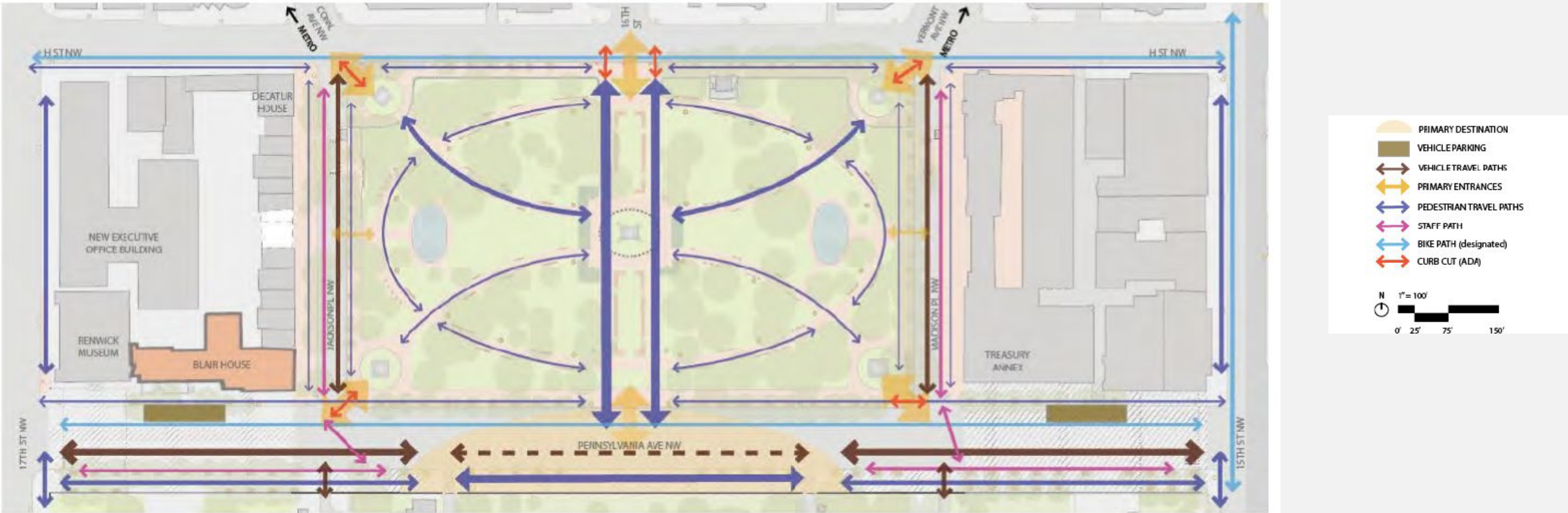
Existing Conditions – Site Plan

The 8-acre Lafayette Park project site comprises the entire block bounded by H Street NW, Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Madison Place NW, and Jackson Place NW.



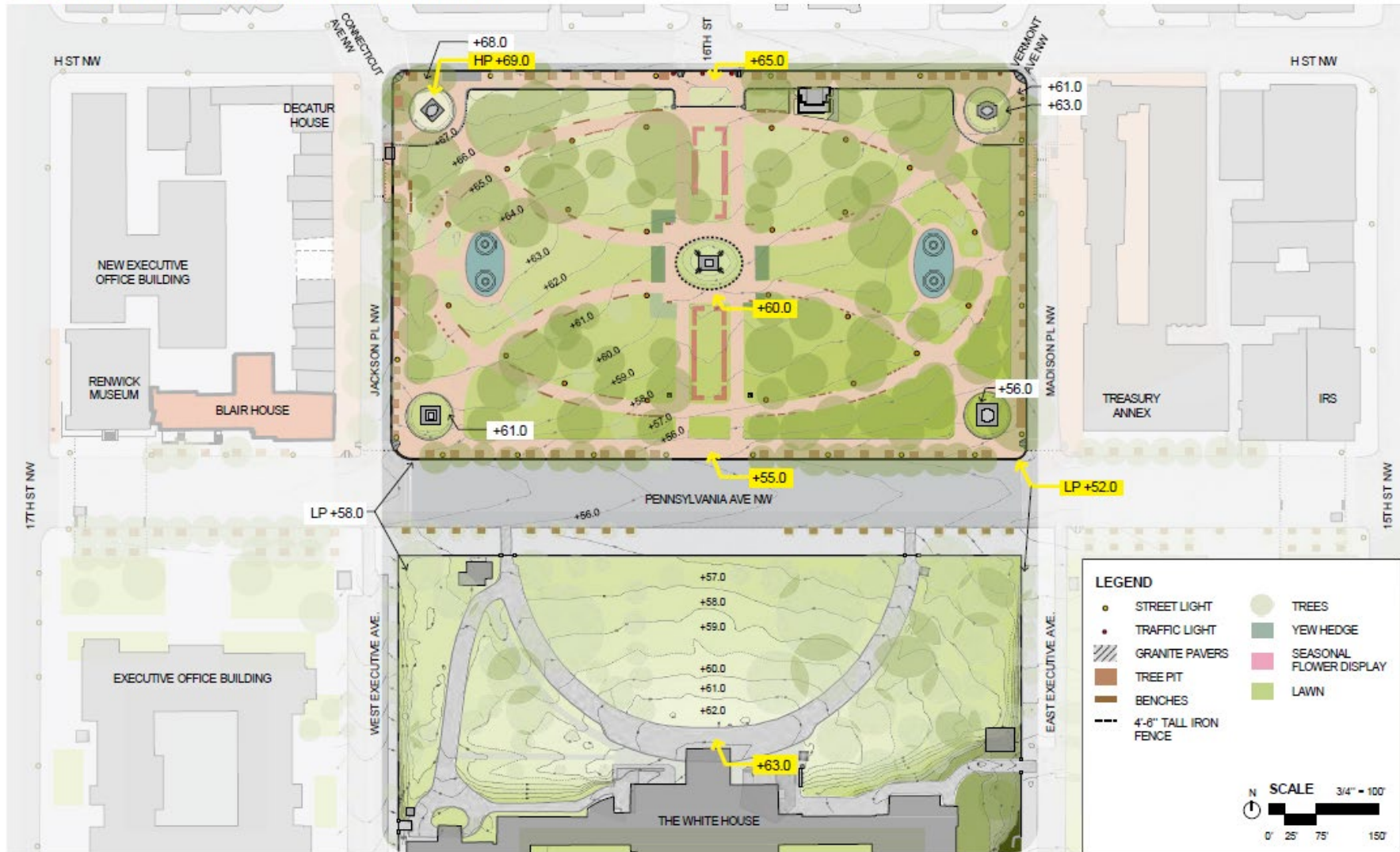
Existing Conditions - Circulation

Lafayette Park currently allows vehicular, pedestrian, and bike traffic on H Street. Pedestrian and bike traffic are allowed on Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Madison Place NW, and Jackson Place NW. Sally port entrances are located on the northern end of Jackson Place NW and Madison Place NW.



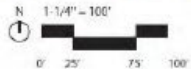
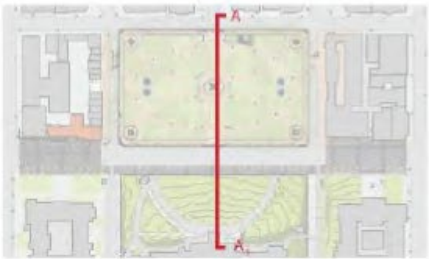
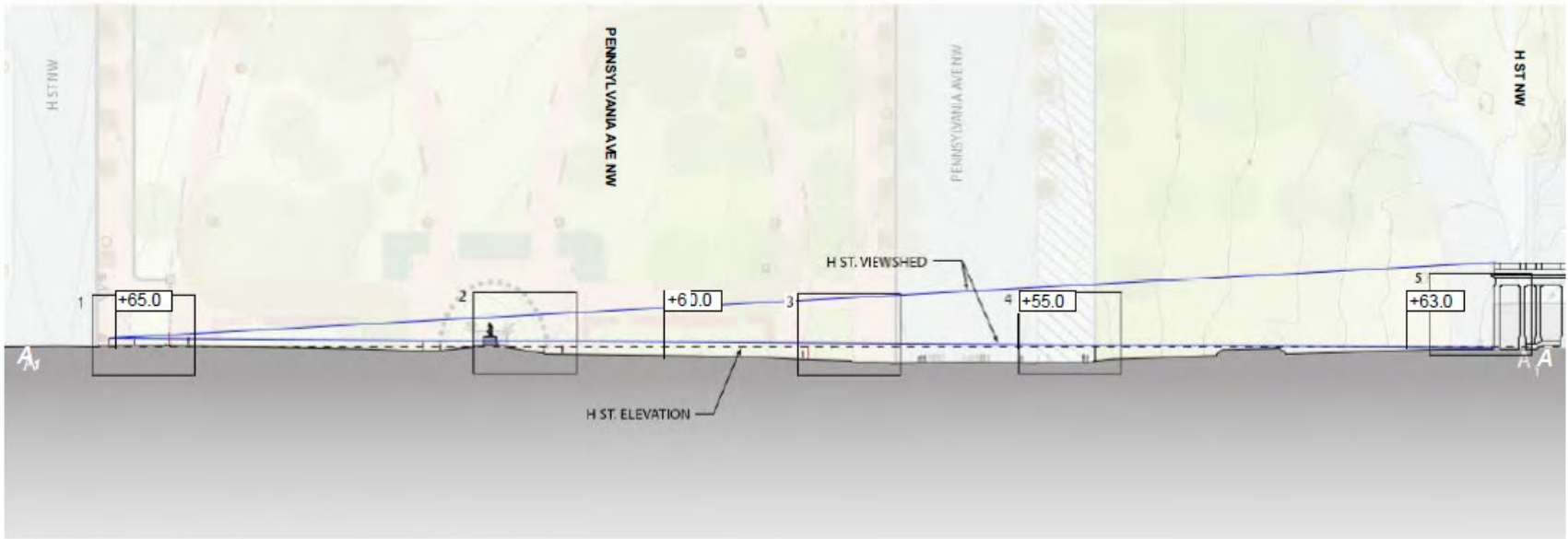
Topographic Plan

The topography of the site generally slopes from northwest to southeast.



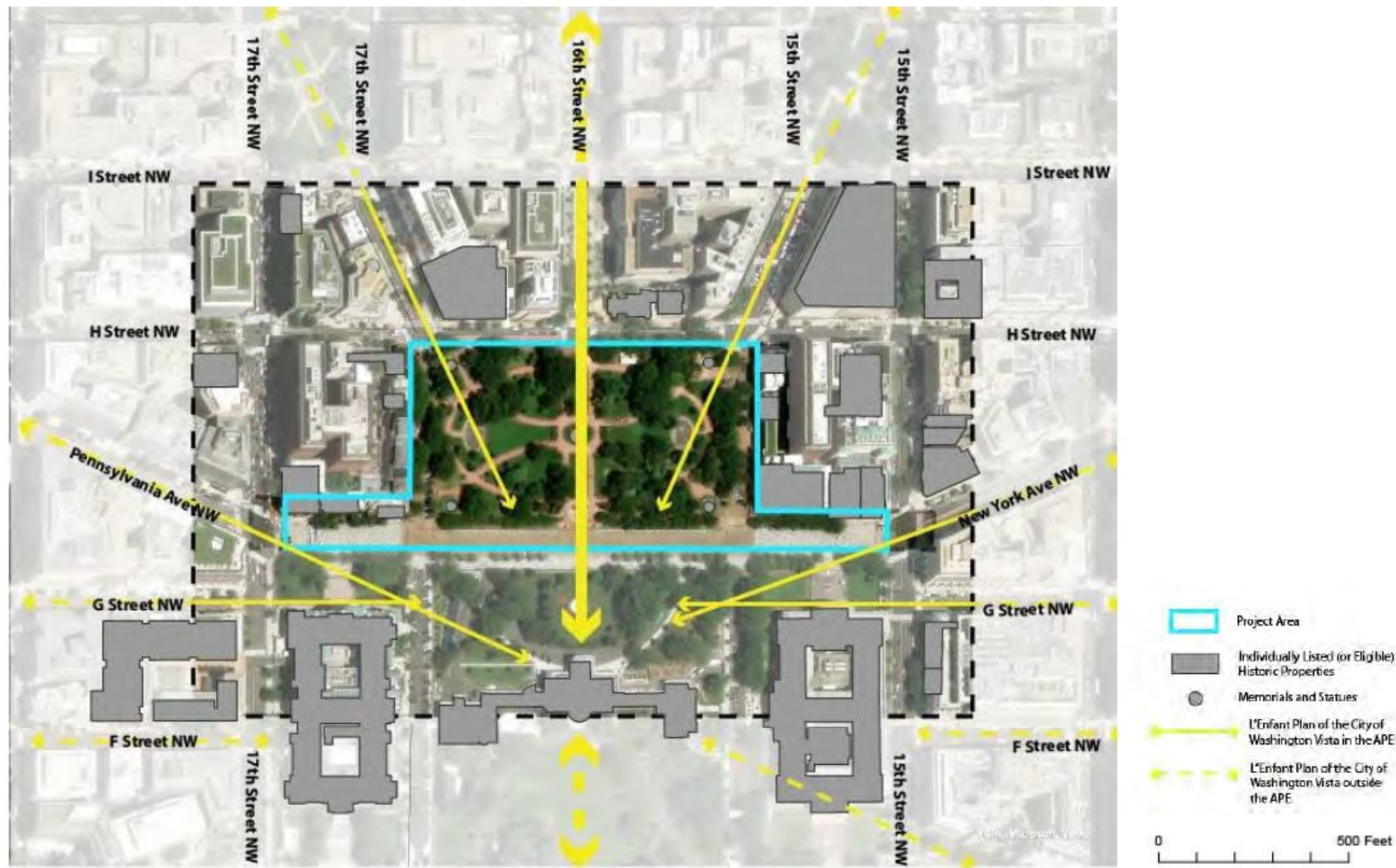
Existing Conditions – North/South Axis Section

Elevation of the park is highest at the White House and H Street NW at 63 feet and 65 feet respectively, with a decline to 55 feet of elevation at Pennsylvania Avenue NW.



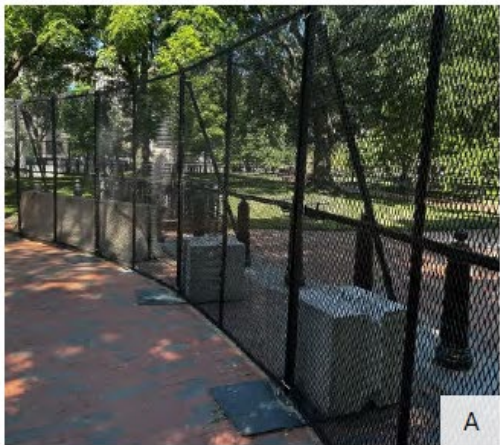
Existing Conditions – Contextual Views

This map shows the contextual view corridors through Lafayette Park from the surrounding streets within Washington, D.C. highlighted in yellow. Lafayette Park is outlined in light blue.



Existing Conditions – Temporary Security Barriers

Many types of barriers are currently in use within and around Lafayette Park. Below is a description of the temporary barriers and their locations.



Anti-scale fencing on H Street NW, June 2026



Anti-scale fencing and concrete barriers at H Street and 16th Street NW, June 2026



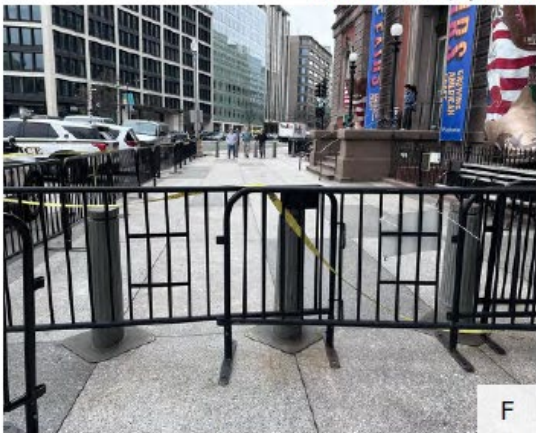
Bike rack barriers on Pennsylvania Avenue NW near the White House, April 2026



Chain link fencing on Jackson Place NW, April 2026



Bike rack barriers on Pennsylvania Avenue and 15th Street NW, April 2026



Bike rack barriers on Pennsylvania Avenue and 17th Street NW, April 2026

Existing Conditions – Temporary Security Barriers

Currently, Lafayette Park has temporary fencing enclosing the park. Pictures below shows temporary fencing surrounding the park, with fence heights ranging from 4' bike racks and concrete barriers to 10' temporary fencing, shown below. Personnel is required to transport temporary barriers to the park, set up the fencing, and secure the panels to each other to ensure their stability. The set up of temporary fencing can take as long as 72 hours, and dismantling the barriers can take equally as long. The added personnel needed to implement this measure, along with the unappealing aesthetics of this fencing, led to the dismissal of this solution.



September 3, 2026



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NCPC Submission

Past Fencing Alignment

According to *Cultural Landscape Report: Site History and Evaluation, 1791-1994, The White House and President's Park*, Lafayette Park (Lafayette Square) was first enclosed with a wood fence by 1826. In 1845 a program was initiated to improve many of the "streets, avenues, and public reservations" in the city of Washington. The reservations designated were Lafayette Square, President's Park South], Fountain Square, the National Mall, and the vacant ground adjoining the U.S. Capitol. As part of this program, an estimate was given to enclose "Lafayette Square" with posts and wood railings "of the best materials," possibly to replace the enclosure that existed in 1826. In 1853, the old wood fence was replaced with an iron fence, and gaslights were installed in the park. From 1888-1889, the iron fence around Lafayette Park was removed and sent to the Gettysburg Memorial Association to be used at the National Cemetery. This removal was attributed to pressure from nearby residents. In 1889, as a replacement to the fencing, funding for granite curbs was requested on behalf of the NPS.



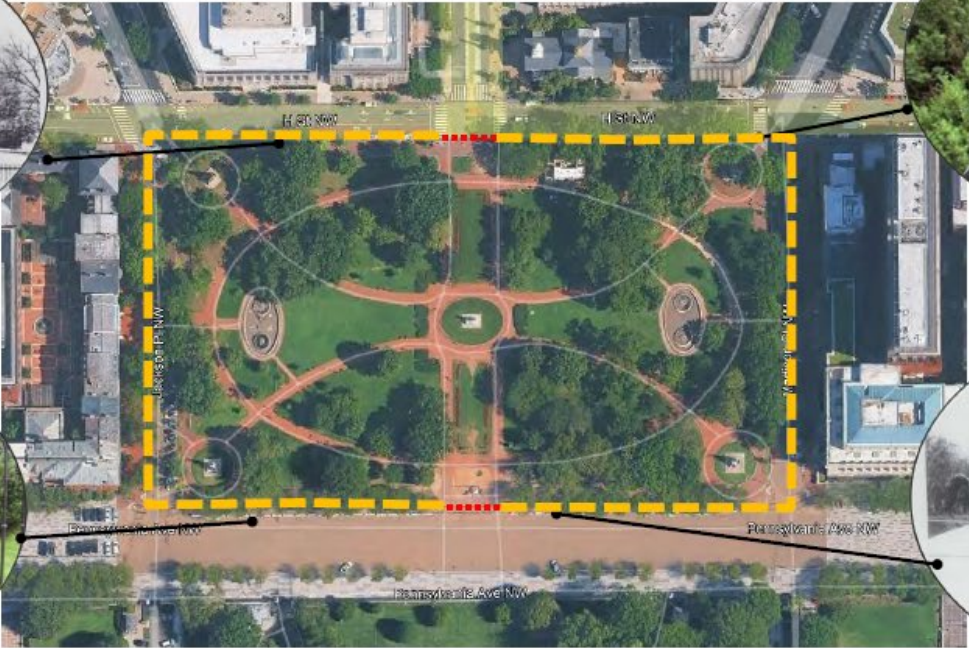
Lafayette Park from H Street, CFA 1885



Finial on Original Lafayette Park Fence, 2009



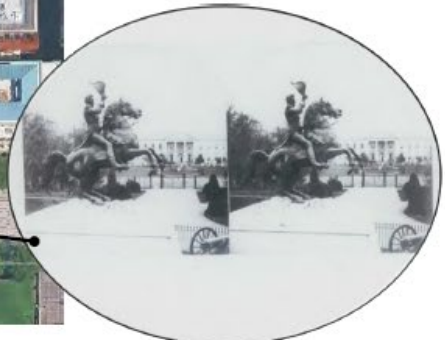
Original Lafayette Park Iron Fence, Located in Gettysburg Cemetery, 2009



1853 Iron Fence Perimeter



1853 Iron Fence Gate

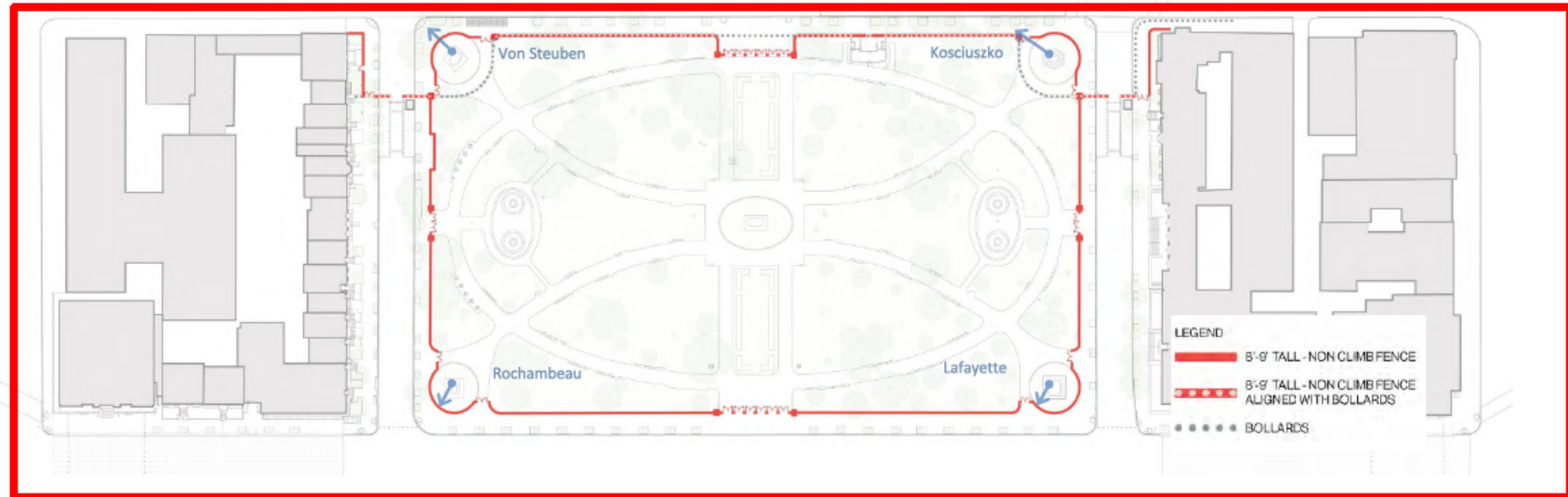


Lafayette Park Fence Gate, 1853-1889

Fencing Alternative – Alignment 1 (Preferred)

The preferred alignment places the fence along the perimeter of Lafayette Park. The alignment allows flexibility in the North Center Entry gates' placement and style to allow for wider openings. It also provides for a larger hardscape plaza at H Street NW, which will allow for First Amendment gathering activities when the park is closed. Overall, this combination provides a more open visitor experience along H Street while still maintaining security standards needed to secure the park during key moments.

 Recommended Alternative



Positives for Visitor Use:

- Allows flexibility in North Center Entry gates placement and style to allow for wider openings because it is no longer aligned with bollards
- Enables hardscape plaza at H and 16th Streets NW, which allows gathering for First Amendment activities when park is closed
- Retains existing park bench locations
- Offers access to statues during Pennsylvania Avenue NW closure

Positives for Operations:

- Swings gates out of the Park towards H Street NW, in the direction of egress
- Accommodates Inauguration stands
- Establishes multiple gates to facilitate egress

Negatives for Visitor Use:

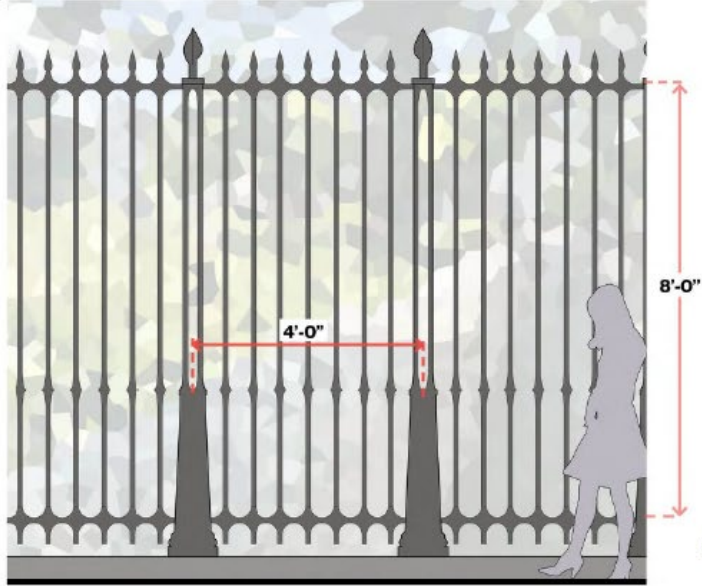
- Adds additional barrier line due to moved bollards to entrance along H Street NW at 16th Street NW
- Emphasizes closed feeling of the park due to continuous fencing directly along H Street NW, except at North Center Entry
- Limits viewing area when Pennsylvania Avenue is closed

Negatives for Operations:

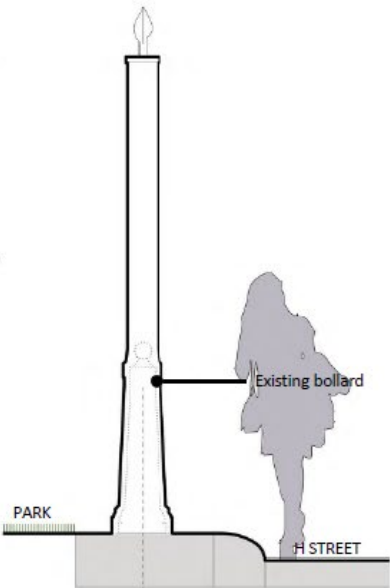
- None identified

Alignment 1 (Preferred) – Integrated Bollard

The recommended approach for Lafayette Park includes 4" spacing and incorporation of existing bollards, tapering towards the top of the fence. This option is the recommended alternative should the alignment follow the existing bollards.



FENCE ELEVATION AT H STREET



FENCE SECTION



FENCE PLAN



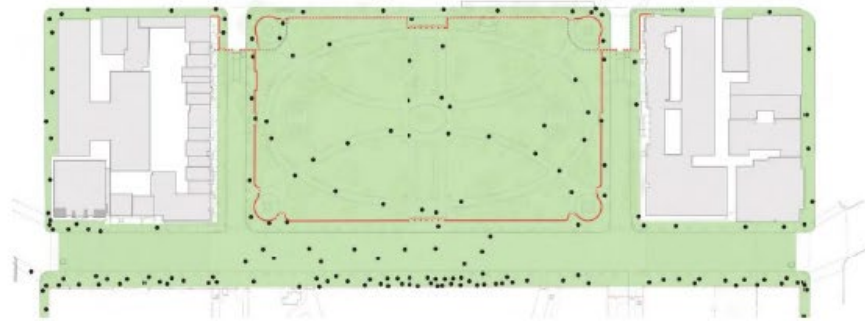
FENCE MATERIAL

Painted steel

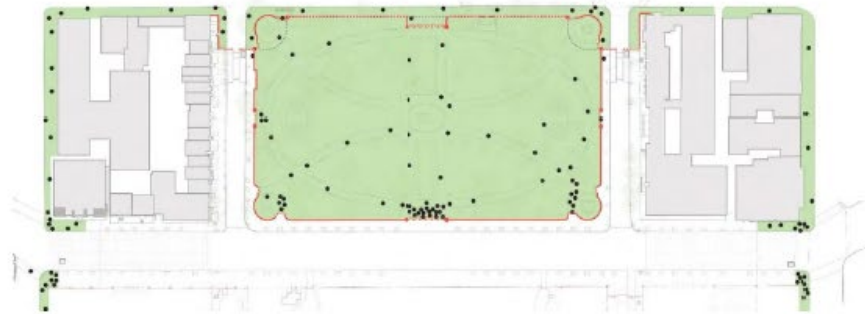
Alignment 1 (Preferred) – Access Scenarios

The below graphics show Lafayette Park with the preferred alignment implemented and how access to the park would be affected in different security scenarios. Green areas symbolize spaces where the public could access in each scenario, with the black dots representing members of the public. It is anticipated that future submissions will provide data on park closures.

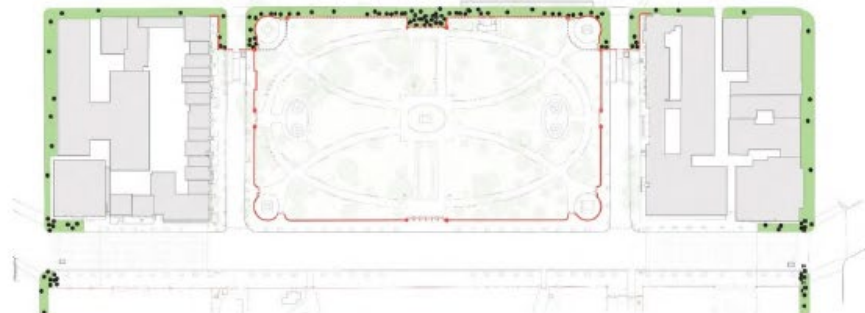
TYPICAL CONDITION



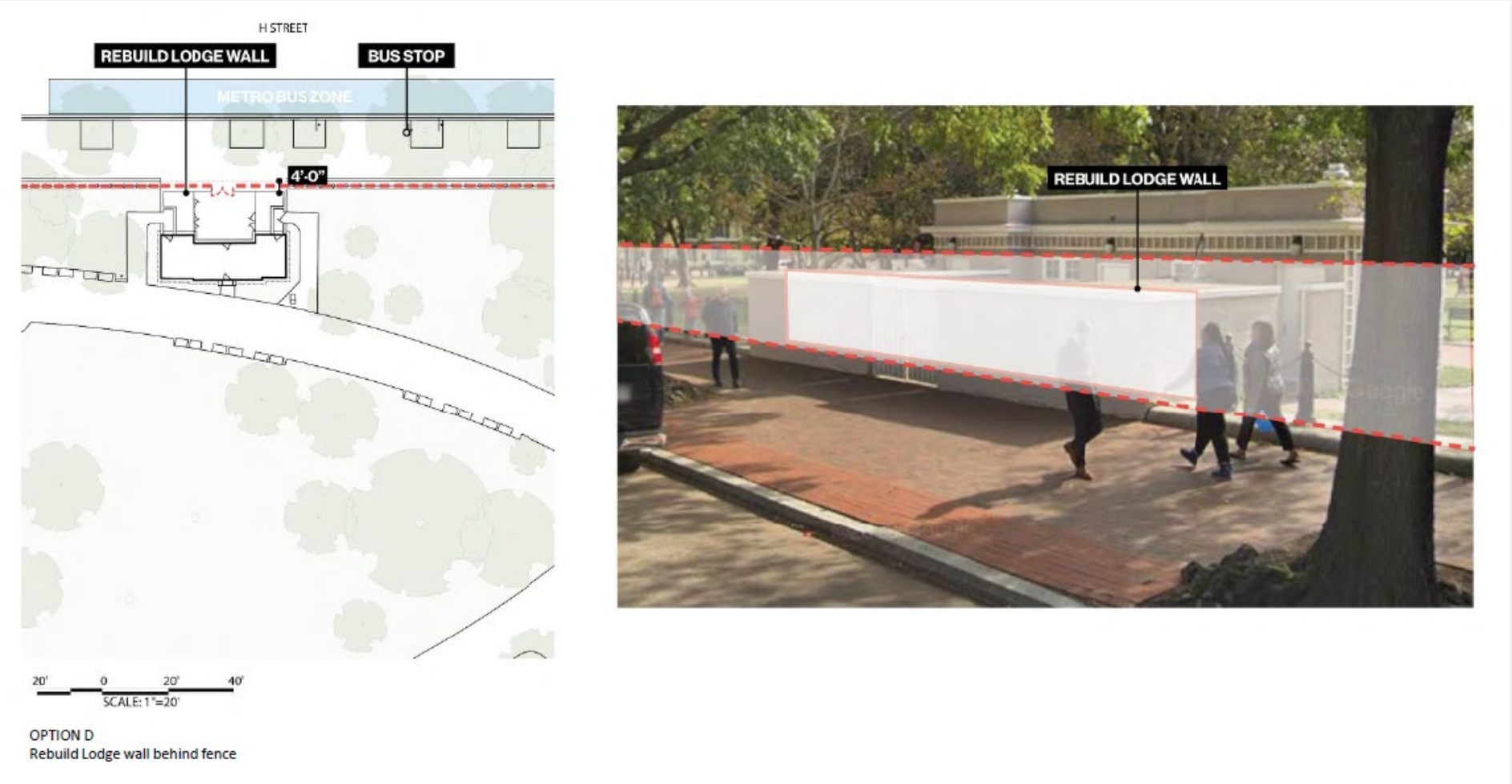
TEMPORARY PARTIAL CLOSURE



TEMPORARY FULL CLOSURE



Alignment 1 Alignment 1 (Preferred) – Lodge Treatment



Alignment 1 (Preferred) – Visualization

This rendering shows the preferred fence alignment, Alignment 1, with piers on either side of the northern fence gates on 16th Street NW and H Street NW. The gates allow visitors to move freely in and out of the park when open. The below configuration also allows for a sizable viewing area of the park on H Street NW when the gates are closed.



Alignment 1 (Preferred) – Visualization

This rendering shows the preferred fence alignment, Alignment 1, with piers on either side of the northern fence gates on 16th Street NW and H Street NW. The below configuration also allows for a sizable viewing area of the park on H Street NW when the gates are closed. This view is shown at eye level across the street from the Lafayette Park.



Alignment 1a – Visualization

This rendering shows the preferred fence alignment with an altered gate configuration, referred to as Alignment 1A. Two sets of gates open on either side of the center fencing panel. Piers are present on either side of the gate openings on 16th Street NW and H Street NW, and the middle fencing panel lines up with the Andrew Jackson statue and the White House. This positioning would provide a less obstructive viewing area for patrons of the park.



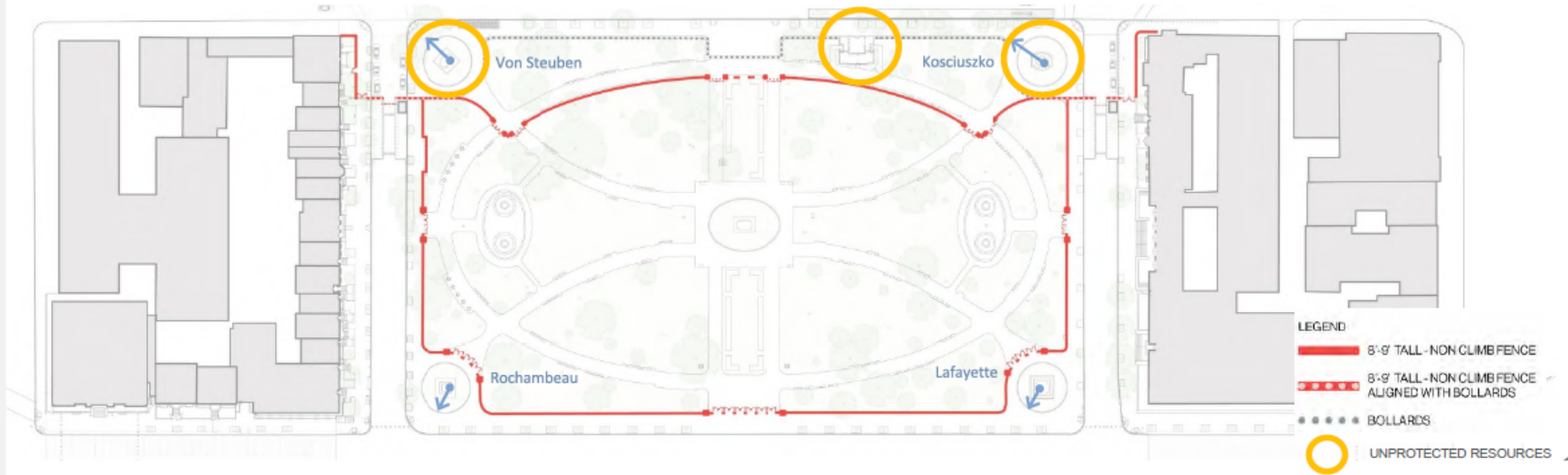
Alignment 1b – Visualization

This rendering shows the preferred fence alignment with an altered gate configuration, referred to as Alignment 1B. Two sets of gates open on either side of the center gate section. Piers are present on either side of the gate openings on 16th Street NW and H Street NW, and the middle set of gates has 10 metal posts and 11 gate openings. This allows the middle gate opening to line up with the Andrew Jackson statue and the White House to provide a less obstructive view for patrons of the park.



Fencing Alternative – Alignment 2

The alignment of Alignment 2 allows flexibility in the North Center Entry gates style to allow for wider openings. The fencing is placed so that statues remain open to the public at all corners of the park. It also allows a larger hardscape plaza at H Street NW, which will allow for First Amendment gathering activities when the park is closed. Lafayette Lodge will be enclosed with this fence line as well, providing additional security to the structure. Overall, this combination allows the park's statues to remain open to the public regardless of closures, and the perimeter allows for the maintenance of security standards needed to secure the park during key moments.



Positives for Visitor Use:

- Enables larger hardscape plaza at H and 16th Streets NW, which allows gathering for First Amendment activities when park is closed
- Enables more access to park north of fence line along H Street NW, including northern corners, during Park closures
- Provides more open visitor experience along H Street NW
- Appears less imposing due to curvature of fence line
- Allows circulation within southern elliptical walkway during Pennsylvania Avenue NW closure
- Maintains statues open to Pennsylvania Avenue NW

Positives for Operations:

- Swings gates from Pennsylvania Avenue NW into the Park, in the direction of egress
- Accommodates Inauguration stands
- Establishes multiple gates to facilitate egress

Negatives for Visitor Use:

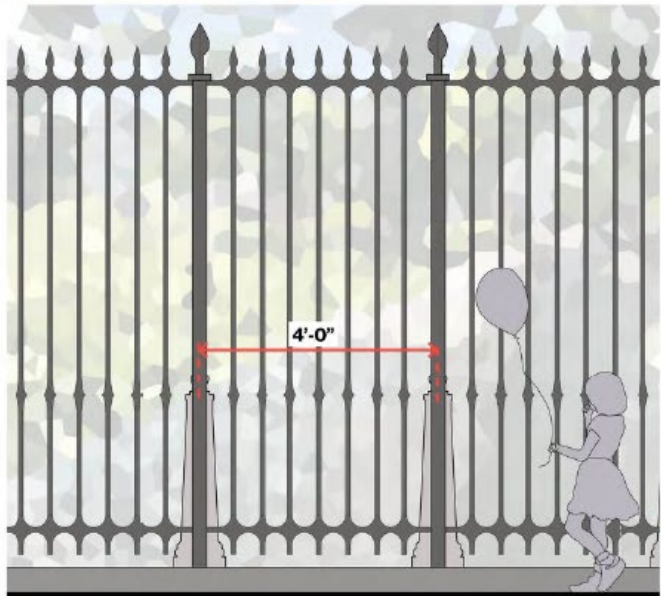
- Adds additional barrier line due to fence relocated inboard of entrance along H Street NW at 16th Street NW
- Potentially requires existing benches to be relocated
- Constrains potential gate locations at north center entry
- Limits viewing area when Pennsylvania Avenue is closed

Negatives for Operations:

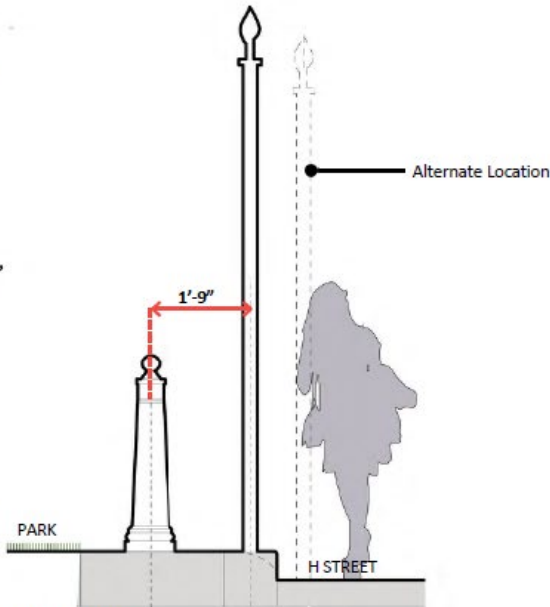
- Places Lafayette Lodge outside the fence line
- Exposes two statues on H Street NW to potential to vandalism
- Swings East and West gates swing into the Park, against the direction of egress
- Swings north side gates in against the direction of egress from the Park

Alignment 2 – Fence Separate from Bollard

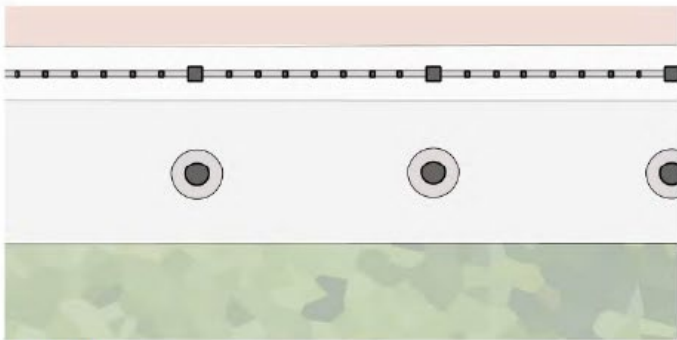
Other options for Lafayette Park included placing fencing in front of bollards.



FENCE ELEVATION AT H STREET



FENCE SECTION



FENCE PLAN

September 3, 2026

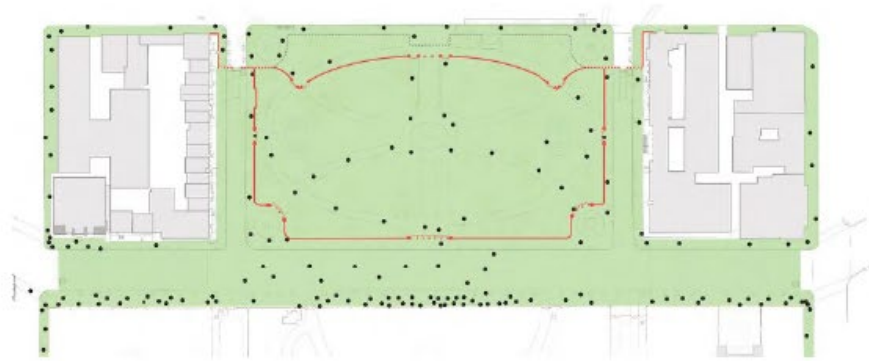
74

NCPC Submission

Alignment 2 – Access Scenarios

The below graphics show Lafayette Park with the preferred alignment implemented and how access to the park would be affected in different security scenarios. Green areas symbolize spaces where the public could be present in each scenario, with the black dots representing members of the public.

TYPICAL CONDITION



TEMPORARY PARTIAL CLOSURE



TEMPORARY FULL CLOSURE



Alignment 2 – Visualization

This rendering shows Alignment 2 with two sets of gate openings on either side of a center fencing panel. Two sets of gates open on either side of the center fencing panel on 16th Street NW and H Street NW, and the middle fencing panel lines up with the Andrew Jackson statue and the White House. This positioning will provide a less obstructive viewing area for patrons of the park. The below configuration also allows for a sizable viewing area of the park on H Street NW and the northern path of the park when the gates are closed.



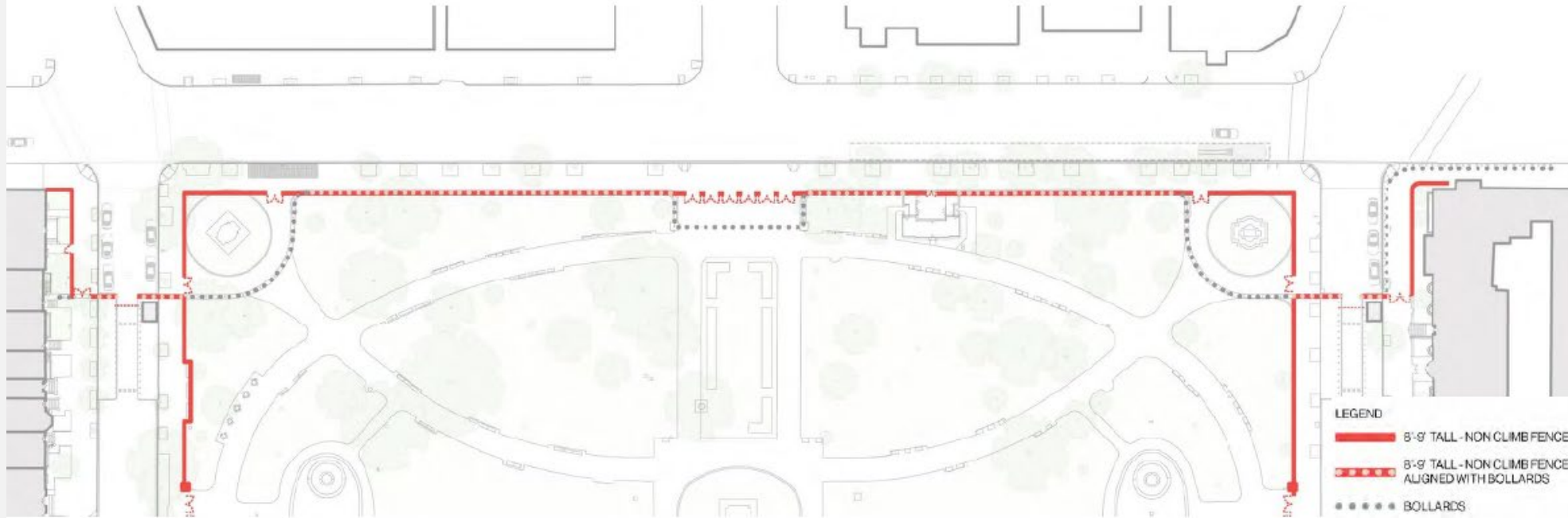
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Fencing Alternative – Alignment 3

Another alignment along the northern portion of Lafayette Park explored installing a fence straight along H Street NW. This alignment allows flexibility in the North Center Entry gates' placement and style to enable wider openings. It does not provide a plaza at H Street NW for First Amendment gathering activities when the park is closed. Overall, this combination provides a secure perimeter along H Street that maintains security standards needed to secure the park during key moments. This exploration does not currently include assessments of a southern alignment.



Positives for Visitor Use:

- Allows flexibility in North Center Entry gates placement and style to allow for wider openings because it is no longer aligned with bollards
- Retains existing park bench locations

Positives for Operations:

- Protects the Lafayette Lodge and statues

Negatives for Visitor Use:

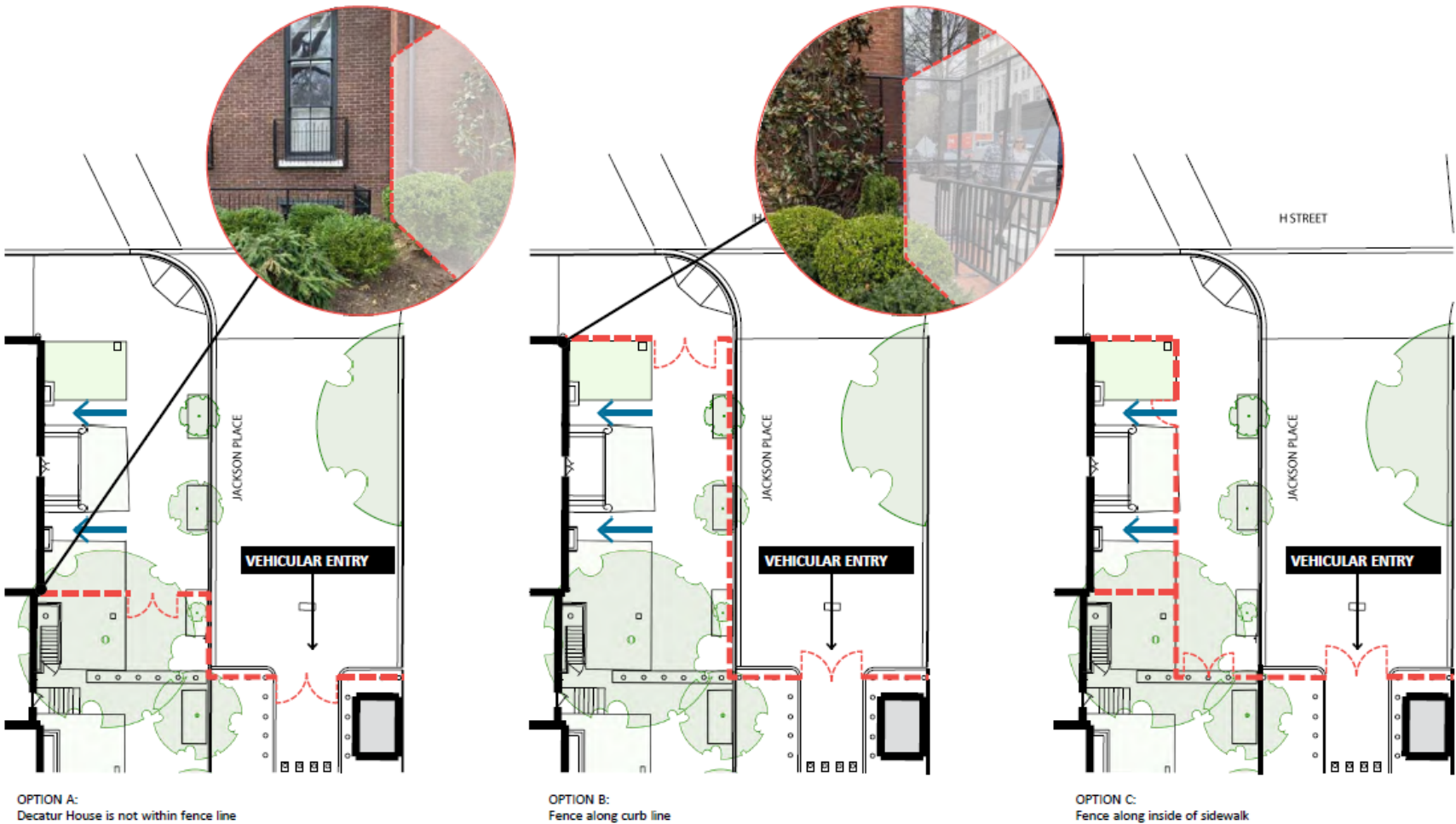
- Emphasizes closed feeling of the park due to continuous fencing directly along H Street NW
- Limits viewing area when the park is closed
- Closes northern corners of the Park, limiting access during Park closures
- Limits access to statues

Negatives for Operations:

- Swings north side gates into the Park, against the direction of egress
- Exposes pedestrian gates at 16th and H Streets NW to potential vehicle intrusions

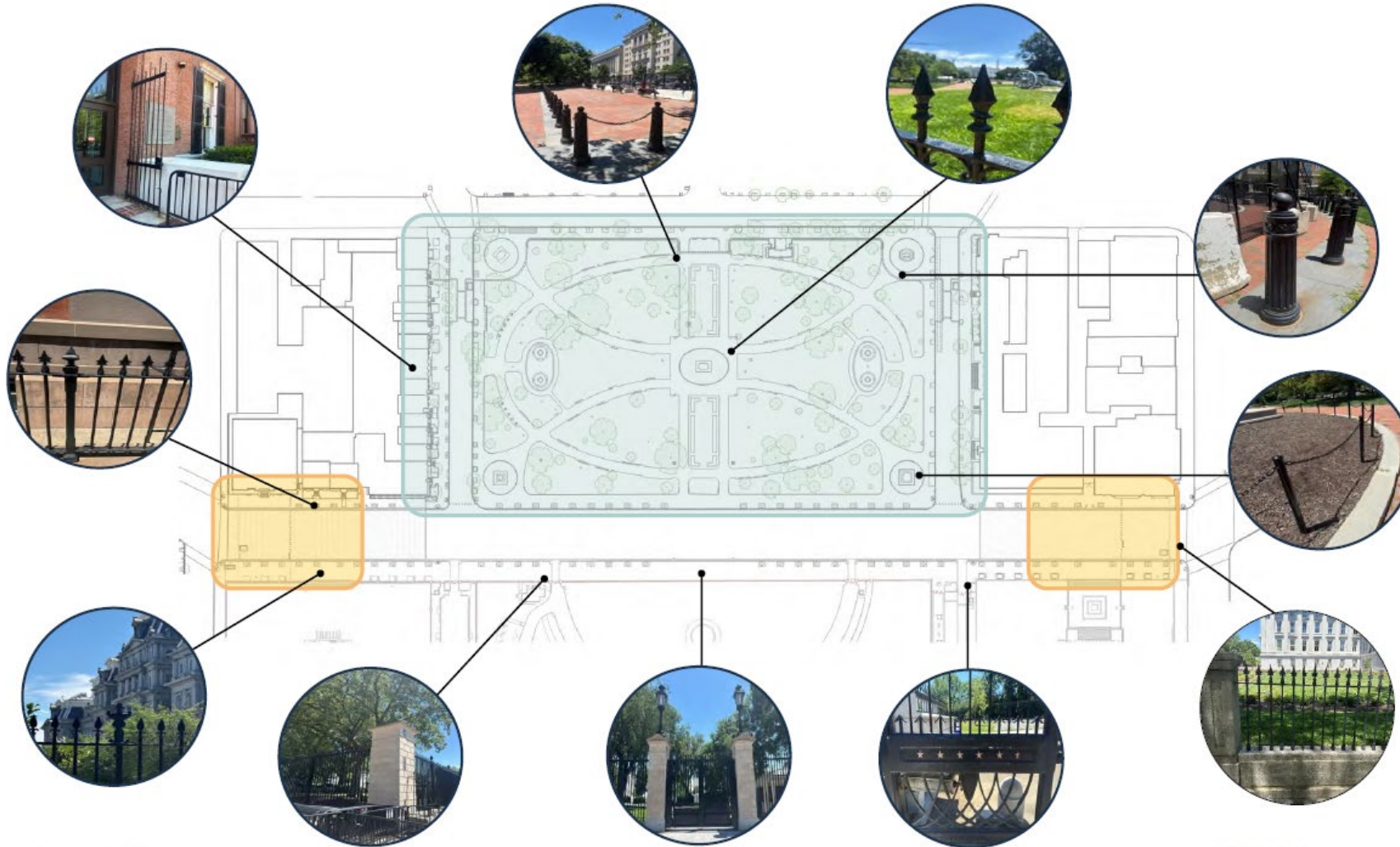
White House Historical Society Alignments

Multiple fence alignments at the White House Historical Society could address security requirements. Fence alignments would extend to the edge of the Decatur House to prevent trespassers and fence scaling near the Blair House.



Fence Character – Existing Context

The project area includes historic Lafayette Park and intersections with Pennsylvania Avenue NW, which as has had more recent interventions that are more contemporary in character.



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Fence Character – Current and Historic Fences

The project area has had multiple fencing types over time.



TREASURY BUILDING



ANDREW JACKSON STATUE



EISENHOWER EXECUTIVE OFFICE BUILDING



WHITE HOUSE FENCE



HISTORIC WHITE HOUSE FENCE



HISTORIC LAFAYETTE PARK FENCE



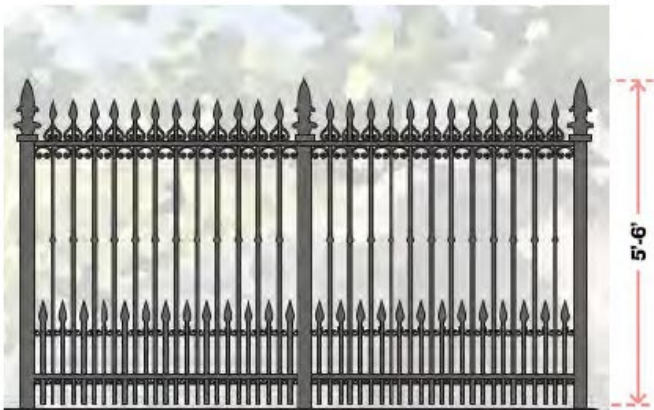
HISTORIC LAFAYETTE PARK FENCE
(Current location at Gettysburg National Cemetery)

Historic Fence Adapted

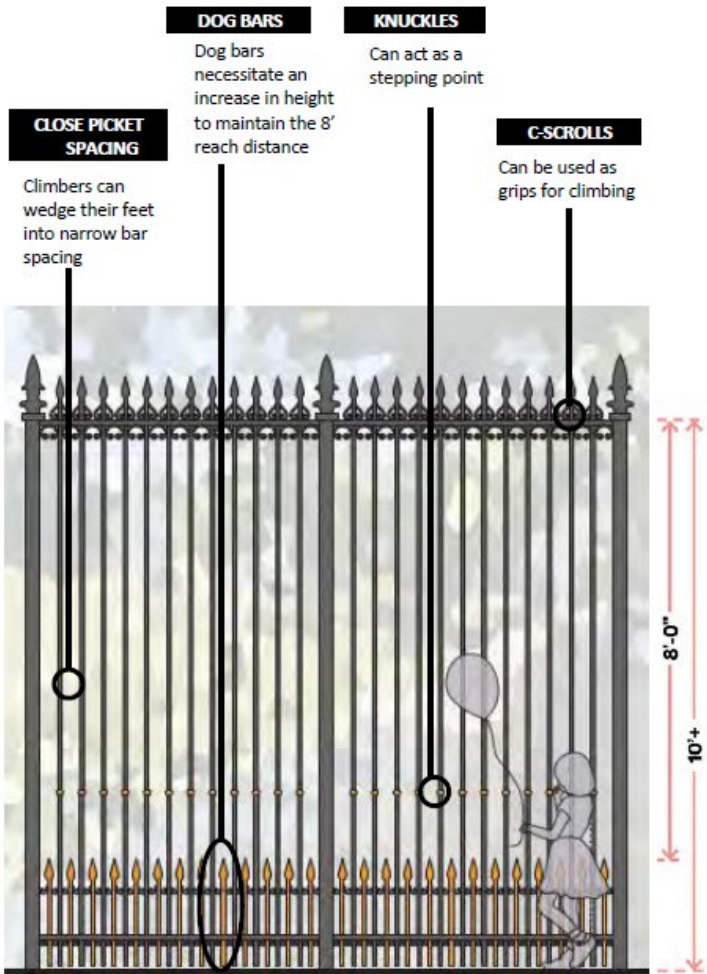
In the past, Lafayette Park had a 5'-6" fence enclosing the park. Below is an image of the original historical fence, currently located at Gettysburg National Cemetery. An illustration below that image shows the original dimensions of the historical fence. Due to present day security needs, the proposed Lafayette Park fence would need to be 8' to 10'. The graphic on the right-hand side shows the fence dimensions if the historic fence was raised to the fence height appropriate for present-day security concerns.



HISTORIC LAFAYETTE PARK FENCE
(Current location at Gettysburg National Cemetery)



Historic Fence



Historic Fence - At Required Height

Picket Spacing

The suggested approach to picket spacing would meet security requirements while still appearing porous and allowing views.

☒ Recommended Alternative



3" SPACING BETWEEN PICKETS

Narrow spacing
obstructs views



4" SPACING BETWEEN PICKETS

4" maximum to prevent
passing of a child through
opening



5" SPACING BETWEEN PICKETS

Spacing is too wide to
create a secure fence

Character Exploration – Bollard-Fence Integration

Below is a rendering of the Lafayette Park fence shown with different integrated bollard treatments. The top option features a rounded bollard cover, and the bottom option features a square bollard cover.



Rounded Bollard Cover



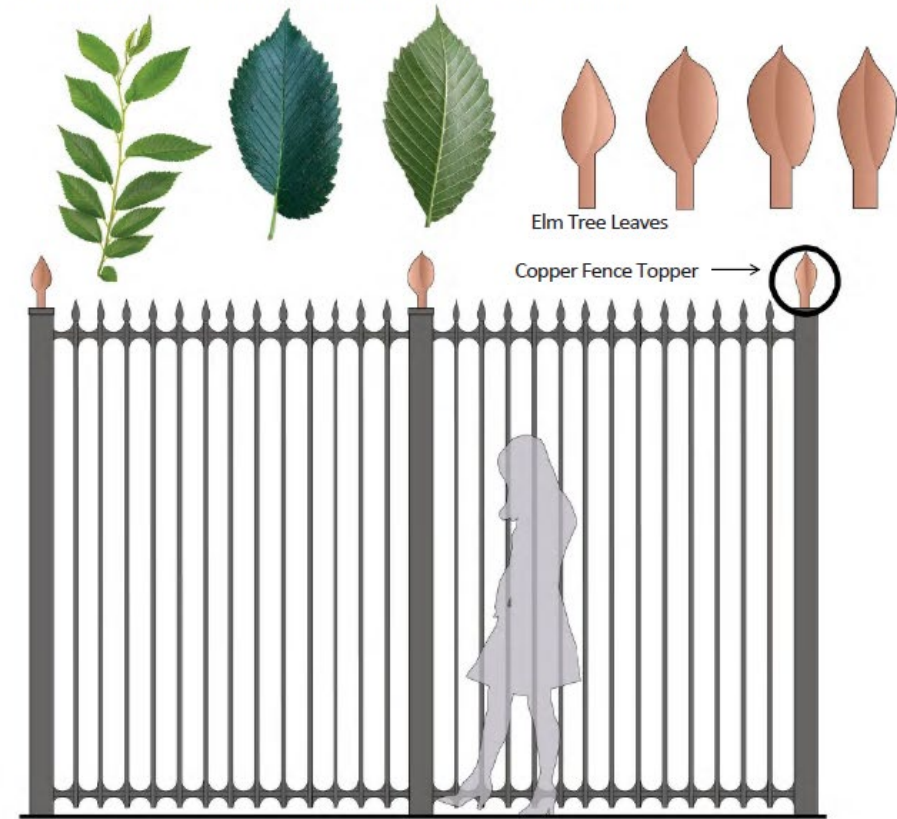
Squared Bollard Cover

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Character Exploration – Post Finials

The historic Lafayette Square fence posts were capped with post finials which resembled corn cobs, expressing the importance of agriculture during its time of construction. Various post finials positioned throughout Lafayette Square and President's Park are displayed to the right. The new post finials reference Elm leaves, a key landscape feature throughout Lafayette Square and Presidents Park. Elm leaves are always individually distinct and asymmetrical, referencing our collective American Heritage.

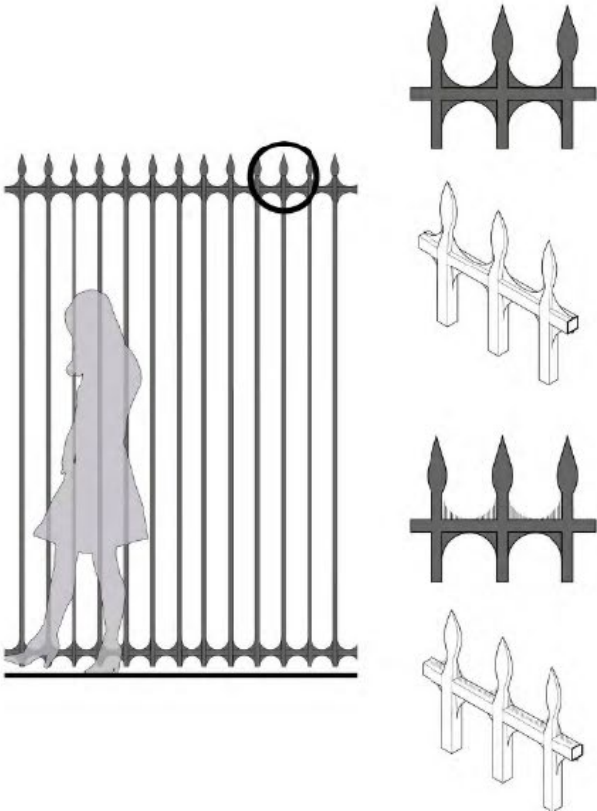
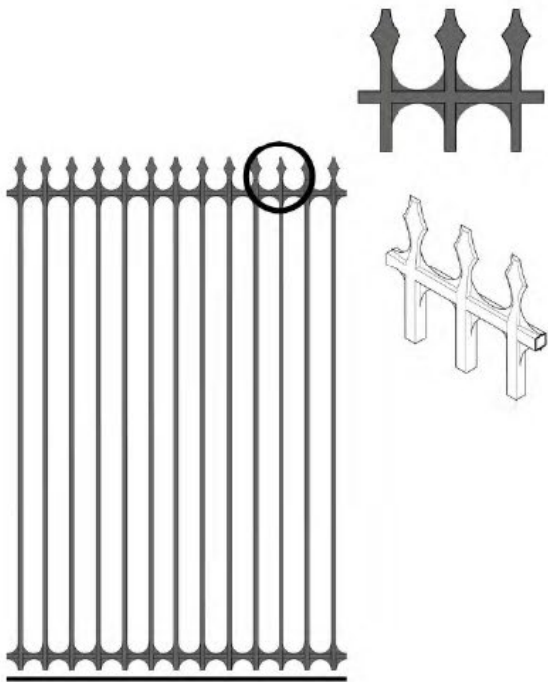


Historic Fence
"Corn Cob" Topper



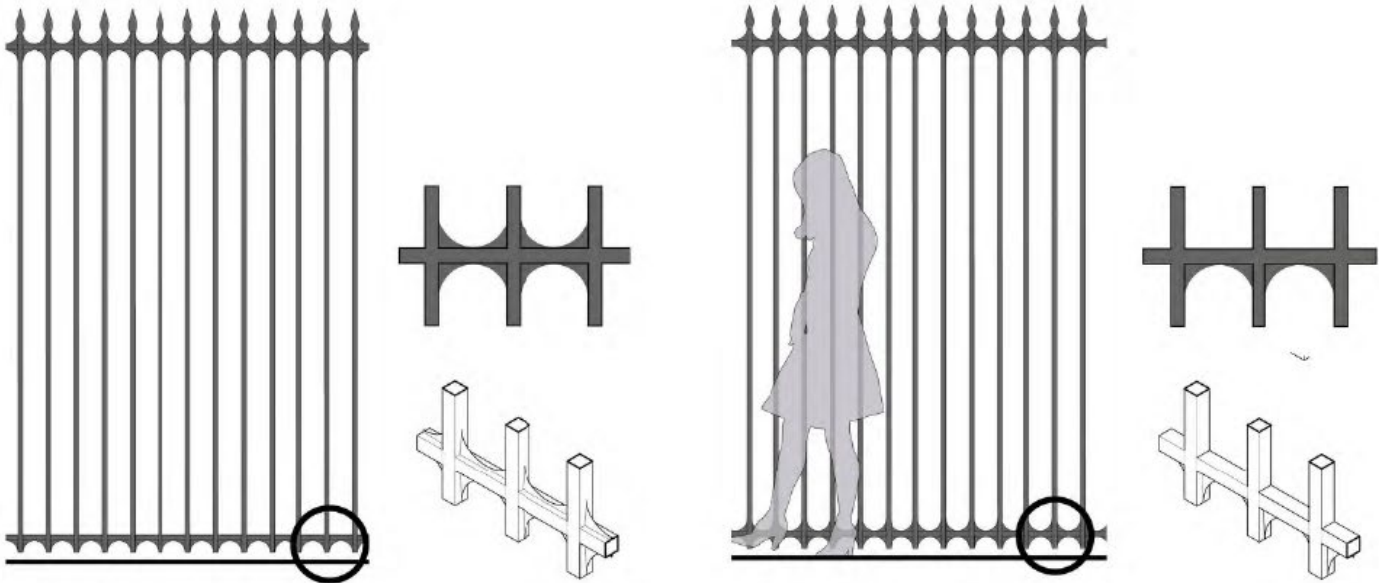
Character Exploration – Picket Finials

Various picket finials positioned throughout Lafayette Square and President's Park are displayed to the right. Below are some potential options for finials which will align with the character of the park as well as security standards.



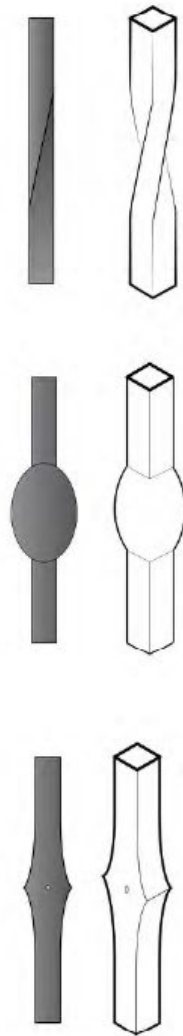
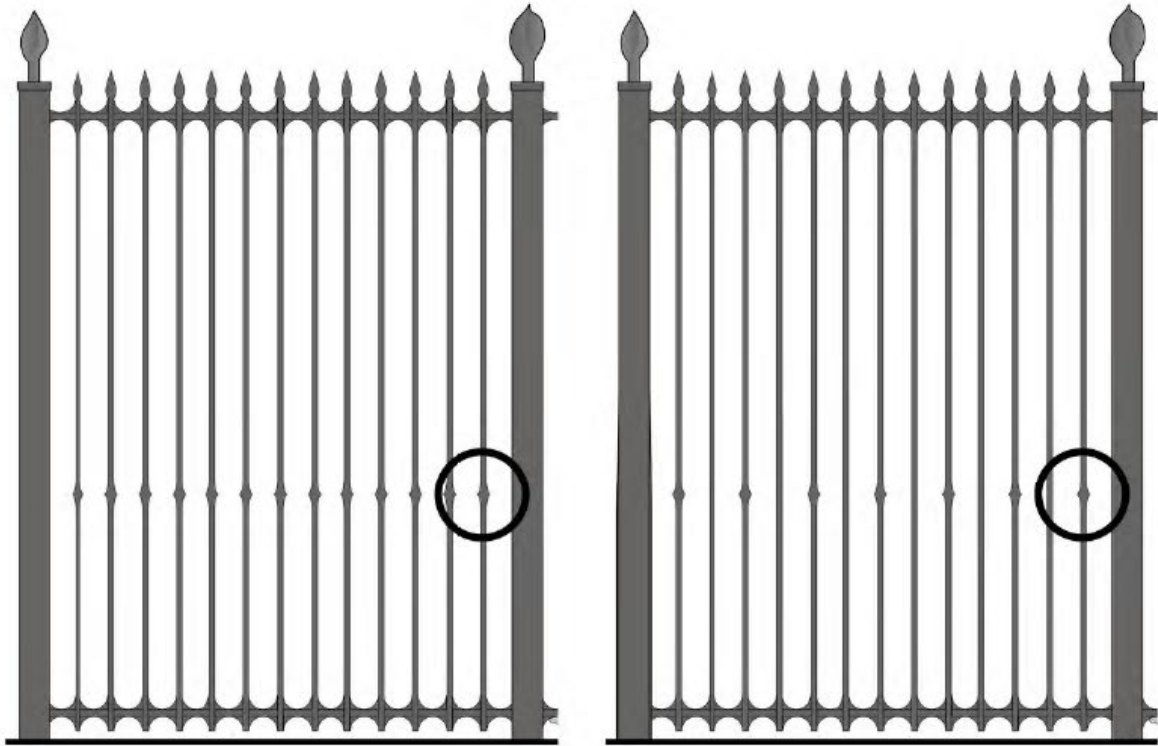
Character Exploration – Picket Elements

Various fence bases positioned throughout Lafayette Square and President's Park are displayed to the right. Below are some potential options for fence bases which will align with the character of the park as well as security standards.



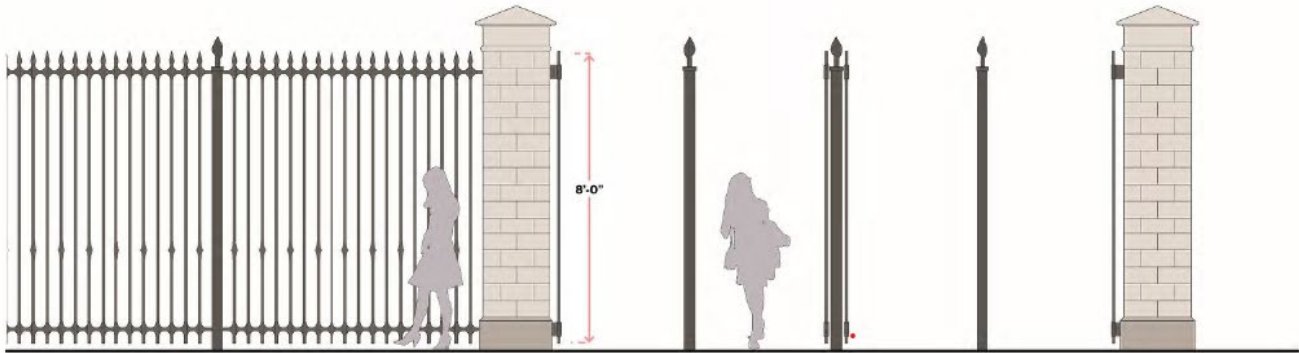
Character Exploration – Picket Elements

Various knuckles and c-scrolls positioned throughout Lafayette Square and President's Park are displayed to the right. Below are some potential options for fence knuckles which will align with the character of the park as well as security standards.

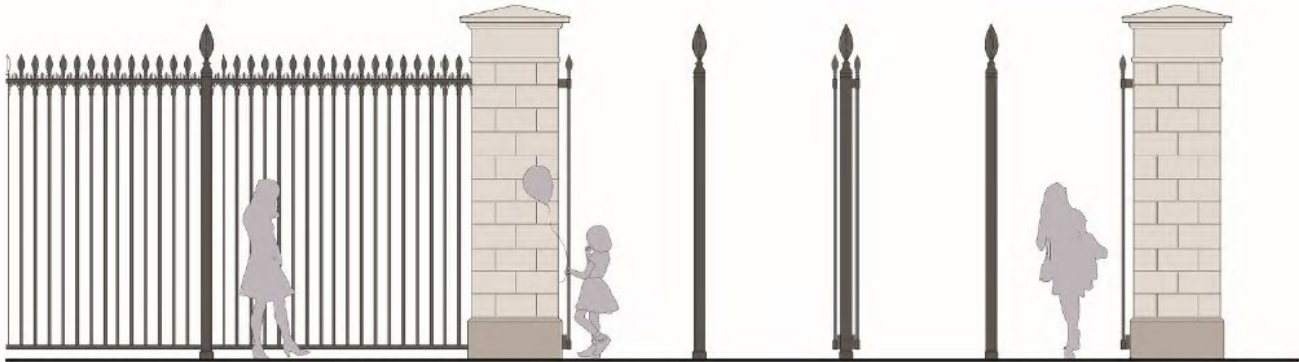


Character Exploration – Comparison to White House Fence

Various piers positioned throughout Lafayette Square and President's Park are displayed to the right. Below are some potential options for piers which will align with the character of the park as well as security standards. The top option is the proposed fencing character for Lafayette Park with added piers, and the bottom option is a scaled representation of the White House fence transposed into the dimensions and specifications of a potential Lafayette Park fence. To the right, images of the current White House piers and fence are shown.



Proposed Fencing Character with Piers

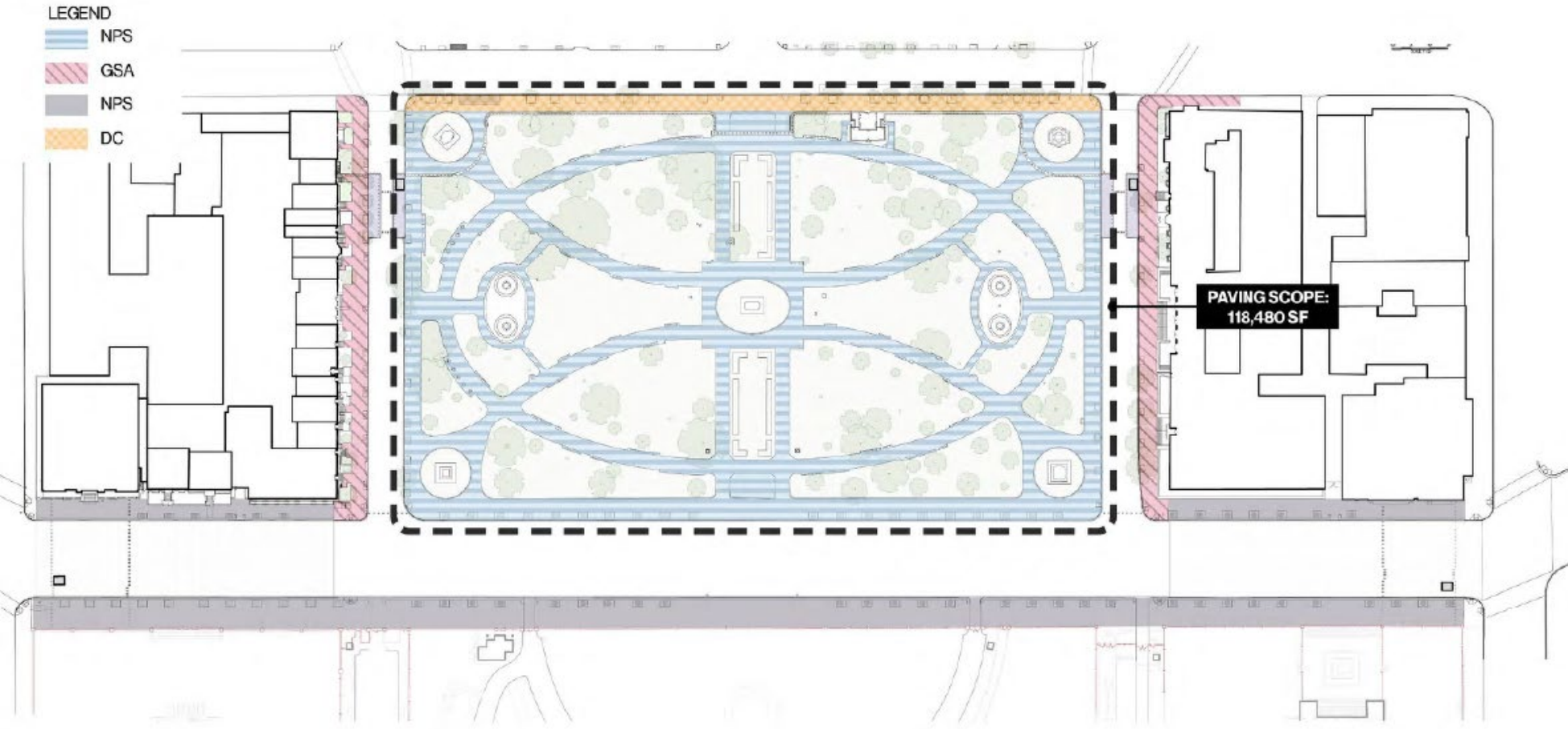


Adaptation White House Fence Scaled with Piers



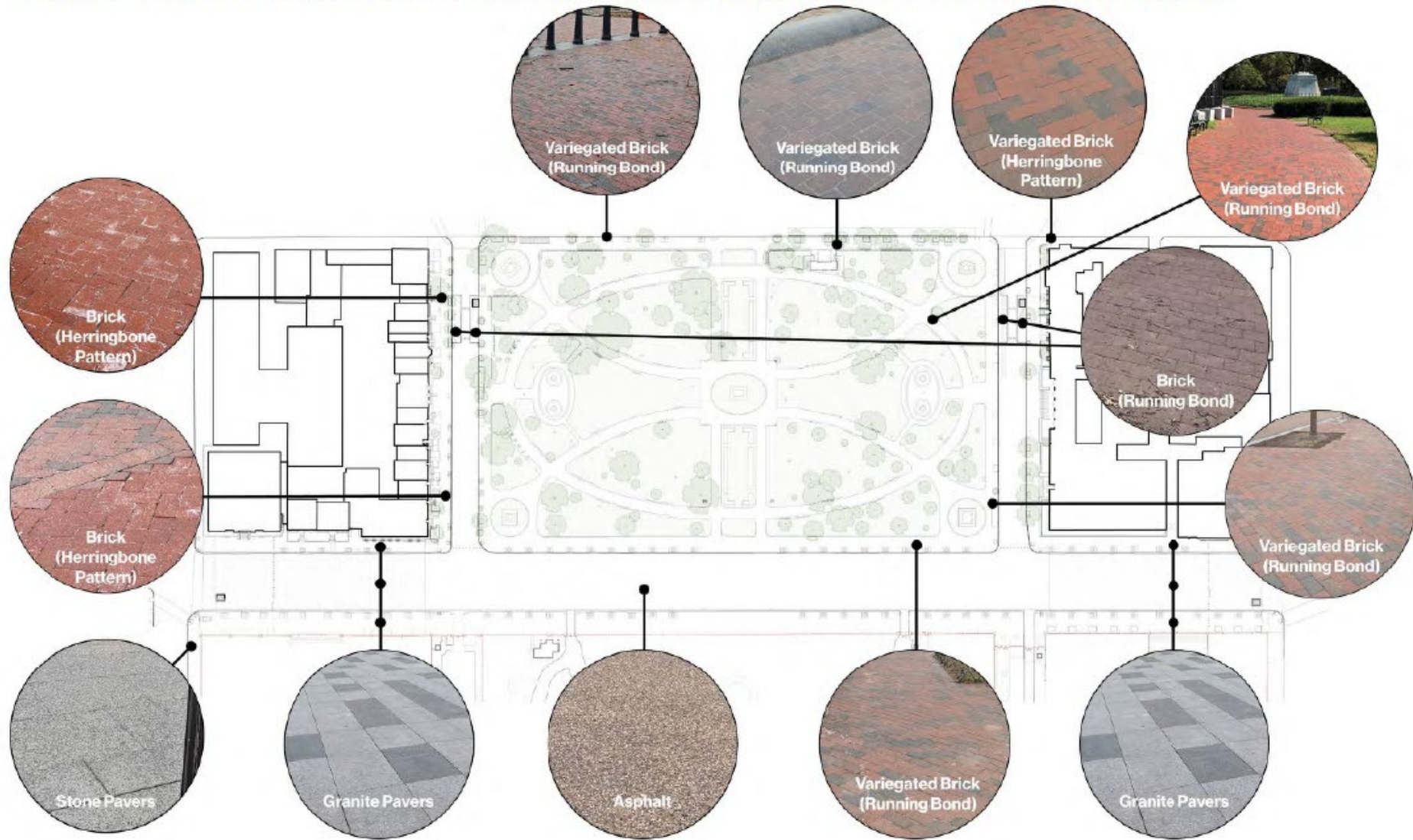
Park Hardscape

Multiple agencies, including the District of Columbia, the NPS, and the U.S. General Services Administration have jurisdiction within the project area. The map below demonstrates which agencies lead in different portions of the park, and it further illustrates the complexities of maintaining and administering updates to the park.



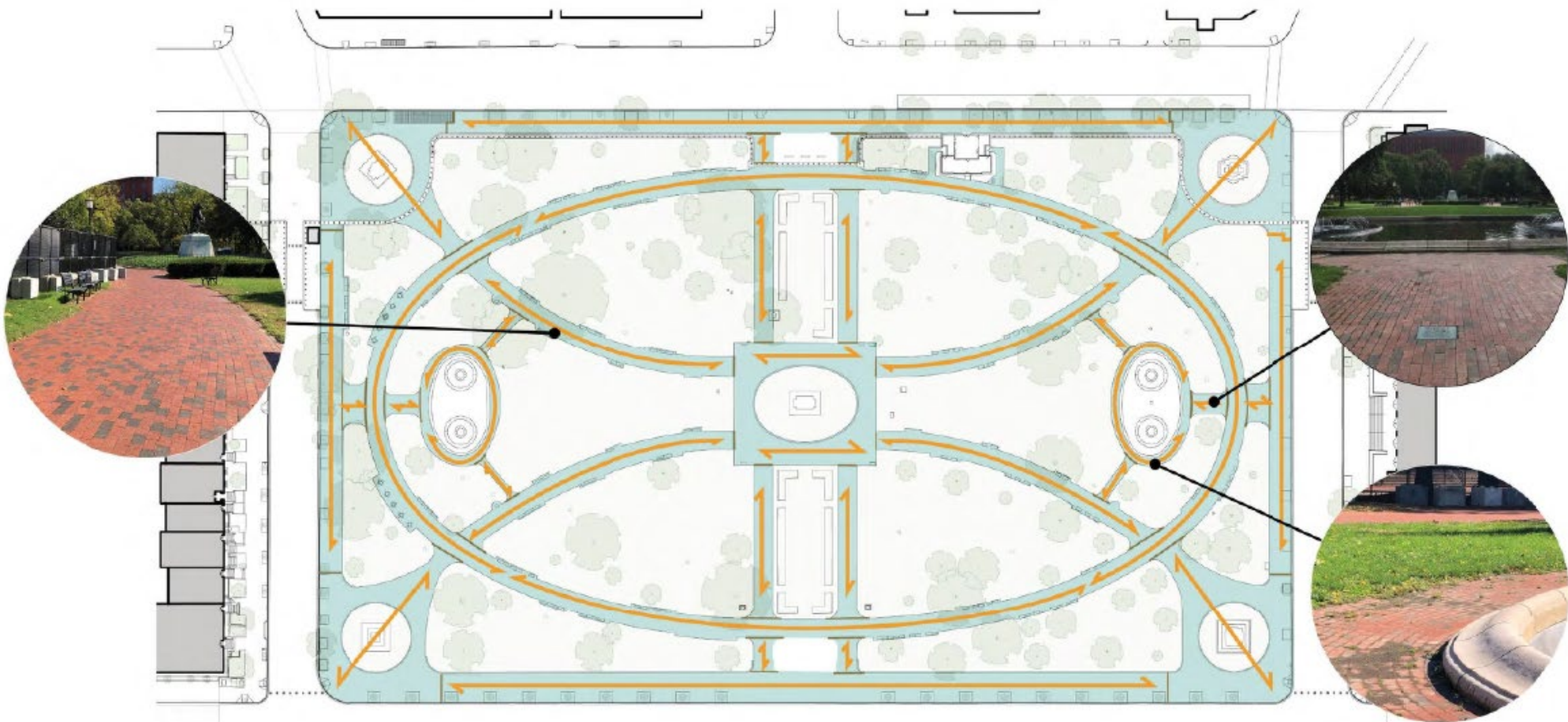
Park Hardscape – Existing Paving Types

Multiple paving types are located throughout the project area. This variety of paving types can result in a disjointed look throughout the park and work against a unified look for the park.



Park Hardscape – Existing Paving Direction

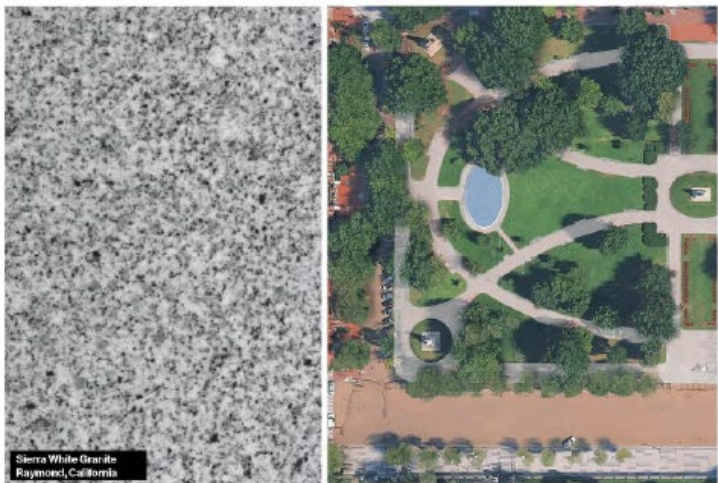
The direction of the brick pattern along walkways within Lafayette Park depends on its location. This variety of paving directions can result in a disjointed look throughout the park and work against a unified look for the park.



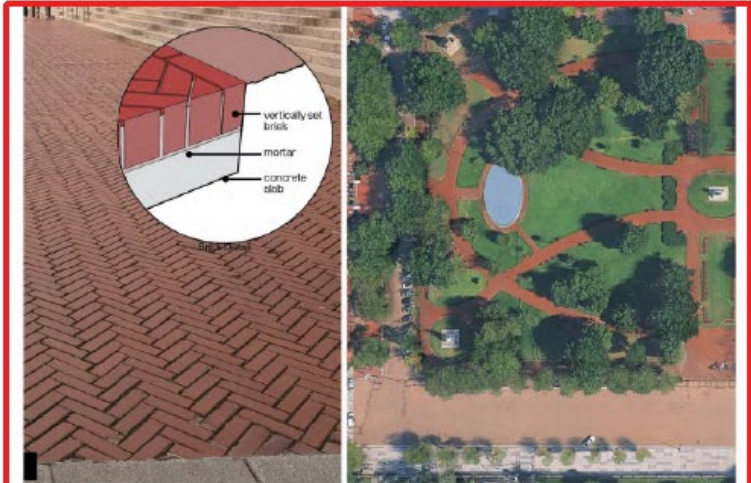
Park Hardscape – Options Considered

Multiple material options were considered for the walkways in Lafayette Park. The options below include the most considered types of granite that could be used for pavers within the park. Below are renderings of the material options, along with aerial views of the park with the applicable materials.

☒ Recommended Alternative



Sierra White Granite



Red Brick



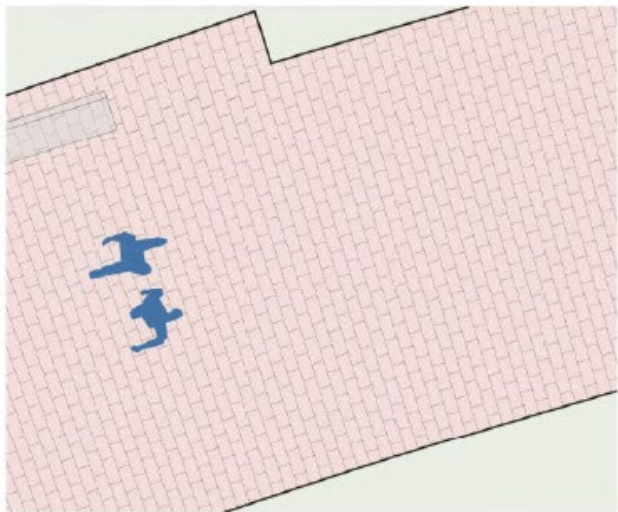
Radiant Red Granite



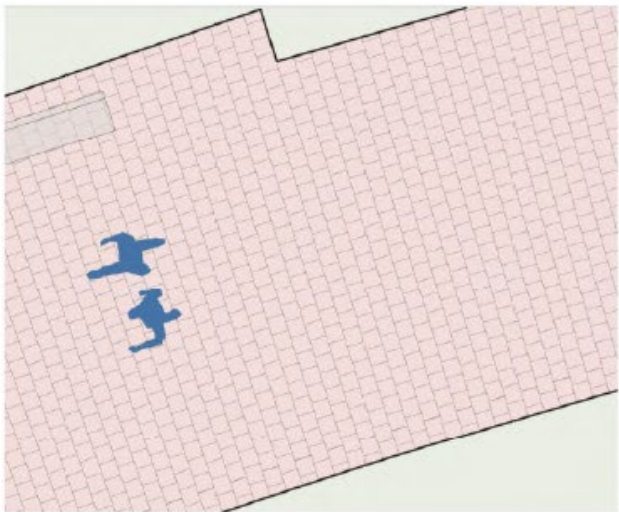
Lac Du Bonnet Granite

Park Hardscape – Options Considered

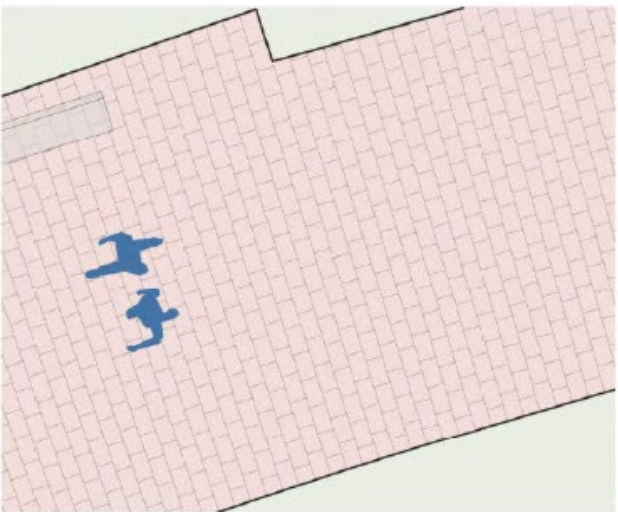
Multiple paving size and directions were evaluated. The material options on previous slides could be implemented in Lafayette Park in the below configurations. These uniform configurations will help institute a cohesiveness to the park's walkways, regardless of the layout structure or material selected.



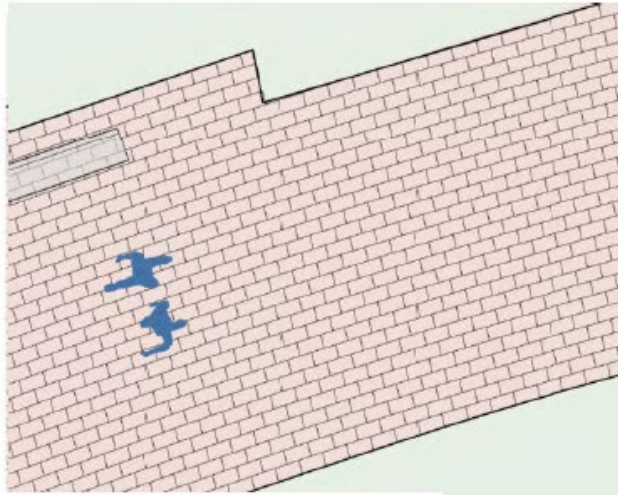
6x12 Pavers - Perpendicular to Path



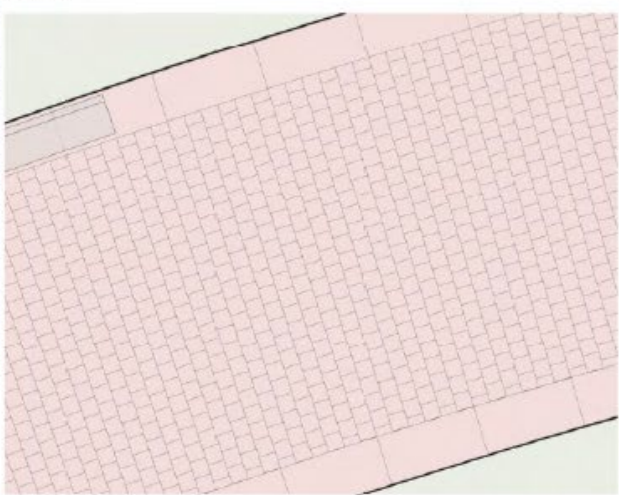
8x8 Pavers



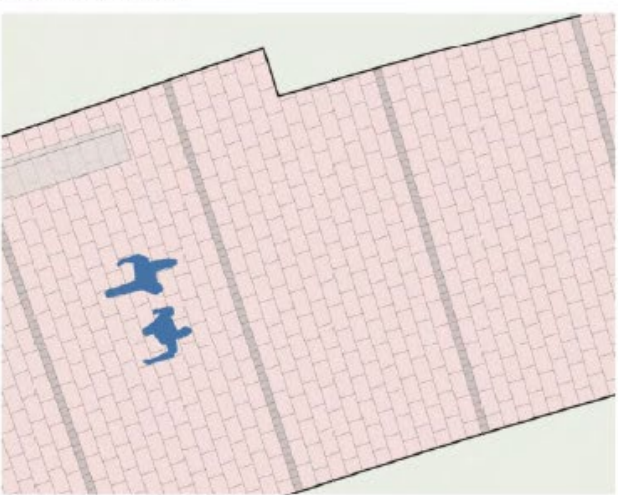
8x13 Pavers (golden ratio)



8x13 Pavers – Along Path



8x8 Pavers with Border



8x13 Pavers Alternate

U.S. COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS 17 MAY 1910

401 F STREET NW SUITE 312 WASHINGTON DC 20001-2728 202-504-2200 FAX 202-504-2195 WWW.CFA.GOV

23 July 2026

Dear Mr. Fisher:

In its public meeting of 16 July, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed a concept design for new perimeter fencing at Lafayette Square, the public reservation located between Pennsylvania Avenue and H Street, NW, and Jackson and Madison Places. Expressing support for finding a permanent solution for public safety during periods requiring heightened security in this preeminent public space facing the White House, the Commission did not take an action on the proposal and requested further development of the design.

In their discussion of the proposal, the Commission members noted the historic role of the park as a site for First Amendment activities; they advised keeping the park as open as possible for peaceful events and occupancy while also ensuring its safety. They characterized the project as one of enclosure, not closure, and they encouraged engagement with the historic preservation community to protect the park's character and use. They cited the successful design for perimeter security at the Washington Monument, which uses bermed landscape walls to achieve its goals, but they found that this solution would not work within the relatively flat landscape and urban character of Lafayette Square. For the overall configuration of the enclosure, they advised using as simple an alignment as possible, with straight lines and corners without complex geometry. They expressed a preference for a single line of enclosure only along H Street if it were possible, although they recognized that this would require frequent closure of the entire park to the public while the adjacent streets are closed; if it would help to improve the various security scenarios, they suggested including a strategy for more enclosure at the east and west ends of Pennsylvania Avenue at 15th and 17th Streets.

For the design of the elements of the enclosure, they again recommended following a spirit of simplicity in lieu of a more organic expression; they suggested using the White House fence as a model for the form and detailing of the new enclosure. They also expressed support for the four-inch clear spacing option of the fence pickets, and they requested further study and documentation of the proposed incorporation of bollards into the fence design. For the main entrances to the park at the 16th Street axis, they recommended the placement of two pairs of gates each flanked by masonry piers—similar to the historic piers at the entrances to the White House Grounds across Pennsylvania Avenue—separated by a central segment of fencing rather than a long sequence of contiguous gates. They noted that the design of gates and fencing at the corners of the site requires special attention, as these elements would affect the setting of the statues of the four foreign Revolutionary War generals.

The Commission looks forward to reviewing a concept design that develops a more specific proposal for the layout and design of the fence enclosure for this nationally

significant public landscape. Please continue to consult on the development of the design with the staff which, as always, is available to assist you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Luebke', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Thomas E. Luebke, FAIA
Secretary

Joshua Fisher, Assistant to the President
Director, Office of Management and Administration
Executive Office of the President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

cc: Andrew Stohs, U.S. Secret Service
Alan Harwood, AECOM
John Stanwich, National Park Service
Marcel Acosta, National Capital Planning Commission
David Maloney, D.C. Historic Preservation Office