



# Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: May 7, 2026

---

<b>PROJECT</b> <b>Eisenhower Executive Office Building Exterior Beautification Project</b> White House Complex 1650 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Washington, DC	<b>NCPC FILE NUMBER</b> 8777
<b>SUBMITTED BY</b> Executive Office of the President, Office of Administration	<b>NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER</b> 1.31(64.20)46205
<b>REVIEW AUTHORITY</b> Federal Projects in the District per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)	<b>APPLICANT'S REQUEST</b> Approval of comments on concept plans
	<b>PROPOSED ACTION</b> Approve comments on concept plans
	<b>ACTION ITEM TYPE</b> Staff Presentation

---

## PROJECT SUMMARY

The Executive Office of the President, Office of Administration (the “applicant”), has submitted concept plans to improve the Eisenhower Executive Office Building (EEOB) exterior. The project scope includes cleaning and masonry preservation measures such as re-pointing, sealant replacement, and stone restoration, as well as painting the exterior façade, and repainting cast iron elements. The building’s exterior walls are granite. The submission presents two potential exterior painting options: Option 1 would paint the building’s granite walls in white and would not paint the base. Option 2 would paint all exterior walls in white, including the base. The concept submission 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

- The Eisenhower Executive Office Building (EEOB) was built between 1871 and 1888 as the State, War, and Navy Department Building, bringing these rapidly growing interrelated government departments together under a single roof. Alfred B. Mullett, Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department, designed the building. It was built in four stages and replaced two existing executive office buildings that stood west of the White House. The south wing (1871-1875) housed the State Department. The east wing (1872-1879) housed the Navy Department. The north (1879-1882), west and center wings (1884-88) housed the War Department.
- In 1957, the President’s Advisory Commission on Presidential Office Space recommended demolition of the building and replacement with a modern office building. This recommendation was never implemented.
- Designated a National Historic Landmark in 1969, the building is also located within the Lafayette Square National Historic Landmark District. It was renamed the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building in 1999 and rededicated in 2002.

- The building is a major example of French Second Empire style architecture. Designed by Alfred B. Mullett a few years after completion of the nearby Treasury Department Building, Congress required that his design match Treasury's building plan and use of fireproof materials. However, it is set apart by its highly articulated gray granite facades with tiers of porticoes, paired Doric and Ionic colonnades, and slate-covered mansard roofs. These are characteristic features of the Second Empire style favored by Mullett.
- The applicant will prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) per the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and comply with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

---

## RECOMMENDATION

The Commission:

**Approves** the following concept comments on the proposed Eisenhower Executive Office Building (EEOB) Exterior Beautification Project.

**Notes** at concept review the Commission provides comments and requests for additional information that will inform the Commission's action at preliminary and final review.

### *Building and Context*

**Notes** the EEOB was constructed in the French Second Empire Style, between 1871 and 1888, and is designated a National Historic Landmark (1969); listed on the National Register of Historic Places (1972); listed as a "contributing resource" to the Lafayette Square National Historic Landmark District (1971); and is recognized as a local landmark by the District of Columbia.

**Notes** the National Register nomination describes the building as a "*paradigm of post-civil war architecture and one of the three grandest structures in the United States in its style.*"

**Notes** the building's exterior walls, above street level, are constructed of purple-grey Virginia granite. Both materials are original to the building design, as noted in the National Register nomination.

**Notes** the building's north, west, and south elevations are highly visible from public space along 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW and F Street, NW.

**Notes** EEOB's last modernization project occurred between 2004-2012 and included cleaning of the granite exterior walls and repairing roof elements such as the cast-iron chimneys and skylights.

### *Proposed Project Scope*

**Notes** the project scope includes cleaning and masonry preservation measures such as re-pointing, sealant replacement, and stone restoration, as well as painting the exterior façade (with two different options) and repainting cast iron elements.

**Notes** Option 1 would paint the building's granite exterior walls in white, but would not paint the base. Option 2 would paint all exterior walls in white, including the base.

**Notes** that according to the submission, the color, design, and massing of the existing structure do not align visually with the surrounding architecture, and it lacks any symbolic cohesion with the White House.

**Supports** the applicant's intent to clean and preserve EEOB's masonry with re-pointing, sealant replacement, and stone restoration; however, additional information is needed for the Commission to evaluate either proposal to paint the building exterior.

*Further Project Evaluation*

**Requests** the applicant provide, as part of the next submission, further information related to the proposed painting options:

- Evaluation of potential visual or physical impacts of the project on the EEOB, and the Lafayette Square National Historic Landmark District which includes a number of historic resources.
- Summary of other measures considered to meet the project goals, including cleaning the building and/or lighting.
- Information about the proposed paint to be used, including details regarding initial application, adhesion, water infiltration, long-term maintenance and upkeep, and ease of removal; along with examples of where paint has been successfully used on exterior granite facades in other projects.
- Photo-realistic visualizations of the EEOB for each paint option and existing condition from pedestrian level locations, including 17<sup>th</sup> Street NW, F Street NW, and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW.

*Project Coordination and Next Steps*

**Recommends** the applicant consider whether updated exterior lighting can be evaluated as a relatively quick and cost-effective option to help beautify the building.

**Requests** the applicant prepare a mock-up of the proposed granite material painted as proposed at the site to reflect the actual site and lighting conditions in addition to testing, in advance of the next Commission review.

**PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE**

<b>Previous actions</b>	None.
-------------------------	-------

<b>Remaining actions</b> (anticipated)	Review of preliminary and final building plans.
---	---

## PROJECT ANALYSIS

### Executive Summary

The project scope aims to improve the EEOB exterior with cleaning and masonry preservation measures such as re-pointing, sealant replacement, and stone restoration. The scope also includes two options for painting the exterior façade, along with repainting the cast iron elements. The project submission includes information about the significance and history of the EEOB, along with photo simulations of the painting options. Concept review is an opportunity for the Commission to provide comments to help guide the development of the proposal. The Commission may also request additional information to help inform future reviews. Therefore, staff recommends the **Commission approve the following concept comments on the proposed Eisenhower Executive Office Building (EEOB) Exterior Beautification Project.**

### Overview

#### *Building and Context*

The Eisenhower Executive Office Building (EEOB), originally known as the State, War, and Navy Building in Washington, DC, was designed by Alfred B. Mullett in the Second Empire version of the French Renaissance Revival Style. This style was popular following the American Civil War, and characterized by a large and boxy form; a high-level of decorative ornamentation; towers and pavilions; and mansard roofs. The EEOB is unique in its size (approximately 662,600 gross square feet) with a prominent location immediately to the west of the White House at the corner of 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. Building construction started in 1871 (under the Grant Administration) and was completed 18 years later in 1888.

The EEOB is configured as a long rectangle, approximately 520-feet-long by 285-feet-wide, with a top rooftop elevation of 134 feet above the sidewalk. The building is six stories high, with purple-grey Virginia granite exterior walls. The granite material, as noted in the National Historic Landmark Register nomination, is original to the EEOB design. Other notable building features include a steeply-pitched mansard roof, heavily articulated chimneys, elaborately modeled dormers and trim-work, ionic columns, and pediments. The rectangular EEOB site is approximately 6.3 acres and surrounded by a granite wall and iron fence, with the building located closer to the east (West Executive Avenue) and west (17<sup>th</sup> Street NW) site edges. The building is set-back further from the north (Pennsylvania Avenue, NW) and south (State Place, NW) edges, behind wide expanses of lawn.

The building is designated a National Historic Landmark (1969); listed on the National Register of Historic Places (1971); and listed on the District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites. The EEOB is also listed as a “contributing resource” to the Lafayette Square National Historic Landmark District (1971). As described in the NRHP form, the EEOB is considered to be a

*“paradigm of post-civil war architecture and one of the three grandest structures in the United States in its style.”* GSA last completed a multi-year EEOB modernization between 2004-2012, which included installing new windows, reinforcing the building structure, and upgrading the building systems, as well as cleaning the building’s granite exterior walls and repairing various roof elements. As such, it has been nearly 15 years since the building was completely cleaned.

### *Project Description*

The concept submission describes the project as exterior improvements to include cleaning and masonry preservation measures such as re-pointing, sealant replacement, and stone restoration, as well as painting the exterior facade and repainting cast iron elements. The proposal presents two potential painting schemes: Option 1 would paint the building’s granite walls in white and would not paint the base. Option 2 would paint all exterior walls in white, including the base. The submission includes building elevations and simulations that show the two options from different vantage points, and the submission presents a brief building history and some existing condition photos.

### *Analysis*

Concept review is an opportunity for the Commission comment and help guide the development of the proposal. It is also an opportunity for NCPC to request additional information that will help inform the next stage of review. The current submission provides some information about the significance of the EEOB and its history, as well as building elevations and photo-simulations of the building after painting (both Options 1 and 2). According to the submission, the color, design, and massing of the existing structure do not align visually with the surrounding architecture, and the building lacks any symbolic cohesion with the White House. In addition, the project scope includes cleaning and masonry preservation measures such as re-pointing, sealant replacement, and stone restoration, as well as painting the exterior facade and repainting cast iron elements. The last time the façade was cleaned and repointed was 2012. NCPC’s Comprehensive Plan Policy *HP.C.7 Ensure the continued preservation of federal historic properties through ongoing maintenance* supports the cleaning and preservation aspects of the project. Therefore, staff recommends the **Commission support the applicant’s intent to clean and preserve the Eisenhower Executive Office Building masonry with re-pointing, sealant replacement, and stone restoration.**

The EEOB is a National Historic Landmark and part of Lafayette Square National Historic Landmark District. The building’s grey-purple granite exterior is identified in the National Register nomination as original to the building. Staff notes that the submission does not provide information about potential project impacts, implementation, or maintenance, and the project has yet to be evaluated through the NHPA. As such, staff recommends the **Commission request the applicant provide, as part of the next submission, further information related to the proposed painting options:**

- **Evaluation of potential visual or physical impacts of the project on the EEOB, and the Lafayette Square National Historic Landmark District which includes a number of historic resources.**

- **Summary of other measures considered to meet the project goals, including cleaning the building and/or lighting.**
- **Information about the proposed paint to be used, including details regarding initial application, adhesion, water infiltration, long-term maintenance and upkeep, and ease of removal; along with examples of where paint has been successfully used on exterior granite facades in other projects.**
- **Photo-realistic visualizations of the EEOB for each paint option and existing condition from pedestrian level locations, including 17<sup>th</sup> Street NW, F Street NW, and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW.**

### *Project Coordination and Next Steps*

As previously noted, updated exterior building lighting may be a relatively quick and cost-effective way to brighten and beautify the building. In particular, the building's many recessed areas result in shadowing during times without direct or near-direct sunlight. Therefore, staff suggests the **Commission recommend the applicant consider whether updated exterior lighting can be evaluated as a relatively quick and cost-effective option to help beautify the building.**

Staff understands the applicant is in the process of developing an approach for paint testing on granite. It would be useful if the applicant provides one or more sample mock-ups of the proposed painting on-site in order to reflect realistic outside conditions, prior to the next Commission review. In addition, staff would also like more information about the longevity of the paint. Therefore, staff recommends the **Commission request the applicant prepare a mock-up of both the proposed granite material painted as proposed at the site to reflect the actual site and lighting conditions in addition to testing, in advance of the next Commission review.**

### **Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital**

Staff reviewed the project considering the policies set forth in the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*, particularly those found in the Historic Preservation Element. 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. Staff will fully analyze the proposed project in accordance with NCPC's policies once it receives the requested information.

### **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 an Environmental Assessment (EA) will be prepared for the project. NCPC will not take a final review action until the applicant completes the EA process.

### **National Historic Preservation Act**

---

Pursuant to Section 107 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the White House and its grounds are exempt from the requirements of NHPA and Section 106 consultation. However, the applicant has committed to complying with the NHPA, including consulting with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and SHPO. NCPC will not take a final review action until the applicant completes compliance with the NHPA.

## **CONSULTATION**

### **Coordinating Committee**

The Coordinating 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 District Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) noted that if the masonry work/repairs disturb more than 50 square feet of land then an erosion and sediment control plan will need to be submitted. CFA noted that the project is on its April 16 agenda and that there are people who signed up to speak and submitted comments. The District of Columbia Office of Planning (DCOP) asked if there were any material changes between Options 1 and 2. NCPC noted the above-grade exterior walls are granite, and CFA noted that the sub-basement is Maryland sandstone and will share information about this with NCPC. The District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office (DCSHPO) commented by email and stated their strong opposition to the project and therefore, are not coordinating.

Participating agencies included NCPC, the U.S. General Services Administration, the NPS, the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, the District State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the District of Columbia Office of Planning, the District Departments of Transportation and Energy and the Environment, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

### **U.S. Commission of Fine Arts**

The U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, at their April 16, 2026 meeting, approved the concept plans for the EEOB beautification project, stating a preference for Option 2. They also provided comments regarding the need for testing. A copy of the letter is attached.

## **ONLINE REFERENCE**

The following supporting documents for this project are available online at [www.ncpc.gov](http://www.ncpc.gov):

- Submission Package

- 
- Project Synopsis

Prepared by Michael Weil  
05/01/2026

**POWERPOINT (ATTACHED)**

## 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 April 2026

Dear Mr. Fisher:

In its meeting of 16 April, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed a concept design proposal for alterations to the Eisenhower Executive Office Building (EEOB), occupied by the Executive Office of the President and located adjacent to the White House at 1650 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. The Commission approved the concept, conditional upon the specification and successful technical testing of the proposed exterior paint, and provided the following comments for the development of the design.

In their discussion, the Commission members expressed strong support for the intention to beautify the French Second Empire-style EEOB—a National Historic Landmark constructed in the late 19th century to house the State, War, and Navy Departments—commenting that the massive gray granite building would benefit from exterior revitalization. As such, they endorsed option #2 to paint all of the building's granite exterior white, which they said would enhance its appearance and unify the White House complex, from 17th Street to the proposed new ballroom at East Executive Avenue. However, based on the technical information provided by historic preservation and building conservation experts, they advised that further testing of the painting process should be undertaken to avoid permanent damage to the granite, and they requested that the experts raising concerns about the proposal be invited to participate in this evaluation. If the painting of the stone is determined to be technically infeasible, they recommended cleaning and repointing the stone; they also expressed support for the general use of illumination to highlight the building's presence and detailing.

The Commission looks forward to further review of this important proposal to enhance the White House complex. As always, the staff is available to assist you with the next submission.

Sincerely,



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: Ed Forst, General Services Administration

# Eisenhower Executive Office Building Exterior Beautification Project

1650 17th Street, NW, Washington, DC

Approval of Comments on Concept Plans

Executive Office of the President – Office of Administration

# Project Summary



**Commission Meeting Date:** May 7, 2026

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

**Applicant Request:** Approval of Comments on Concept Plans

**Session:** Staff Presentation

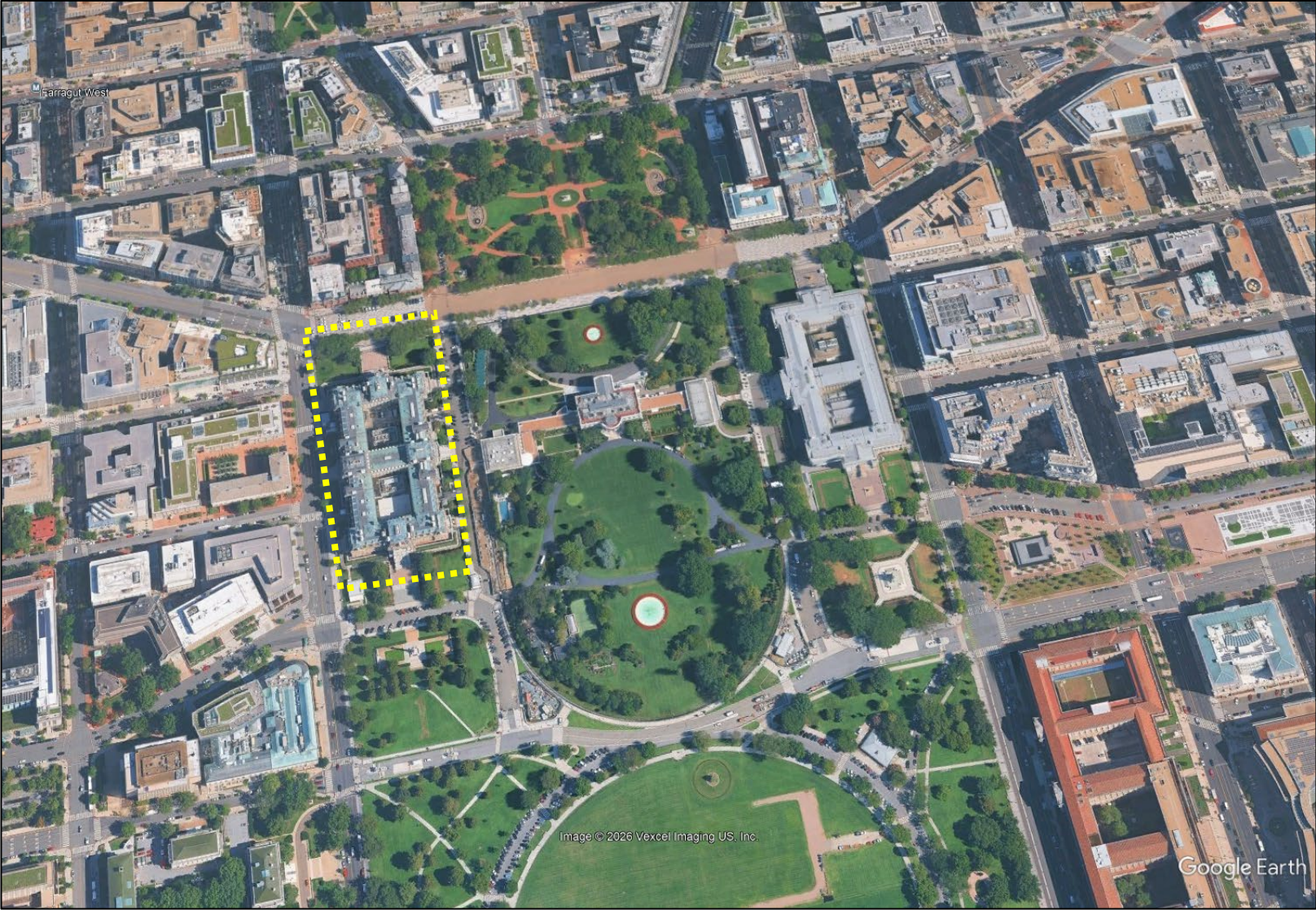
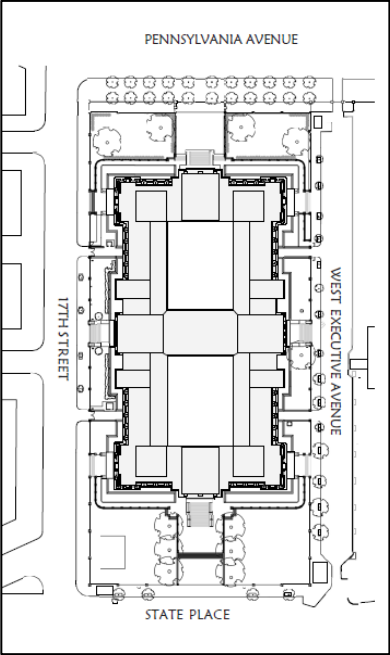
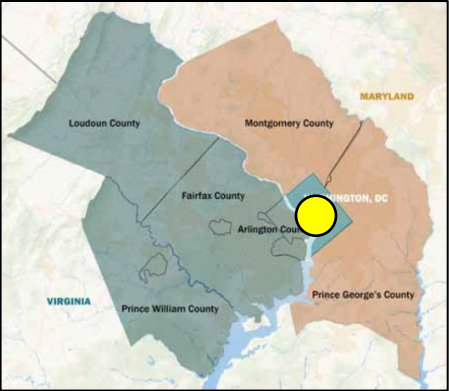
**NCPC Review Officer:** Michael Weil

**NCPC File Number:** 8777

## Project Summary:

The Executive Office of the President, Office of Administration (the “applicant”) has submitted concept plans to improve the Eisenhower Executive Office Building (EEOB) exterior. In particular, the project would re-point, seal, replace, and restore portions of the EEOB’s stone exterior; paint the historic building’s façade; and re-paint EEOB’s cast iron elements where needed. The submission presents two different exterior painting options: Option 1 would paint the building’s superstructure in white and maintain the exposed basement and sub-basement granite facades (with no painting), and Option 2 would paint both the superstructure and building basements in white. The concept submission provides the Commission with an early opportunity to provide comments to the applicant on the project in preparation for later reviews.

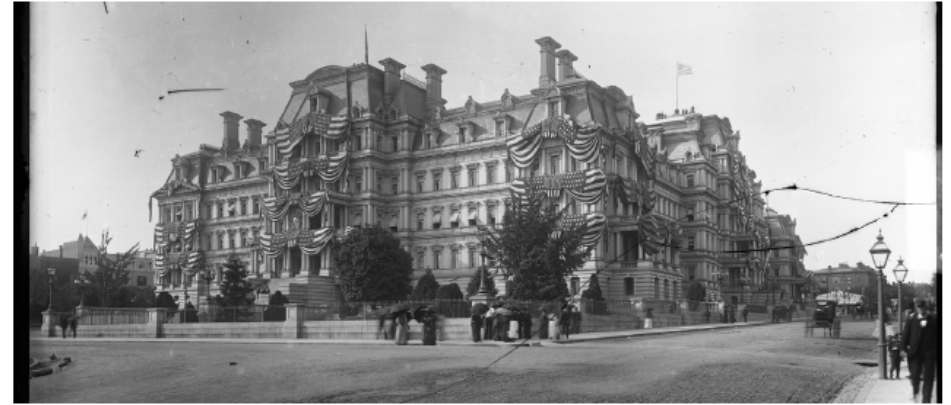
# Site Location



# Background

## BUILDING HISTORY

FROM ITS COMPLETION, THE EISENHOWER EXECUTIVE OFFICE BUILDING'S (EEOB) HIGHLY ORNATE DESIGN HAS GENERATED CRITICISM, WITH SOME OBSERVERS VIEWING IT AS INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE SURROUNDING NEOCLASSICAL FEDERAL ARCHITECTURE (QUINN EVANS ARCHITECTS, 1993). SUBSEQUENTLY, SEVERAL PROPOSALS WERE DEVELOPED TO EITHER SIGNIFICANTLY MODIFY THE BUILDING'S EXTERIOR OR DEMOLISH IT ENTIRELY, INCLUDING PLANS TO REPLACE ITS SECOND EMPIRE FEATURES WITH A NEOCLASSICAL FAÇADE SIMILAR TO THAT OF THE NEIGHBORING TREASURY BUILDING, WHICH HAD BEEN CONSTRUCTED FROM 1836 TO 1869 (BLOCH, 1957; NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE, 2024). INDEED, IN 1955, THE PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COMMISSION ON PRESIDENTIAL OFFICE SPACE RECOMMENDED DEMOLISHING THE BUILDING IN FAVOR OF A NEW STRUCTURE THAT WOULD BE MORE IN KEEPING WITH THE CHARACTER OF THE WHITE HOUSE. (H. DOC. NO. 85-211). HOWEVER, THE SCALE AND COST OF SUCH MODIFICATIONS ULTIMATELY PREVENTED THEIR IMPLEMENTATION. THE EEOB WAS LATER DESIGNATED A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK IN 1969 (DEFERRARI, 2014), AND LISTED ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES (NRHP) AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA INVENTORY OF HISTORIC SITES IN 1972. THE EEOB IS ALSO A CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE TO THE LAFAYETTE SQUARE NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK DISTRICT (NHLD).

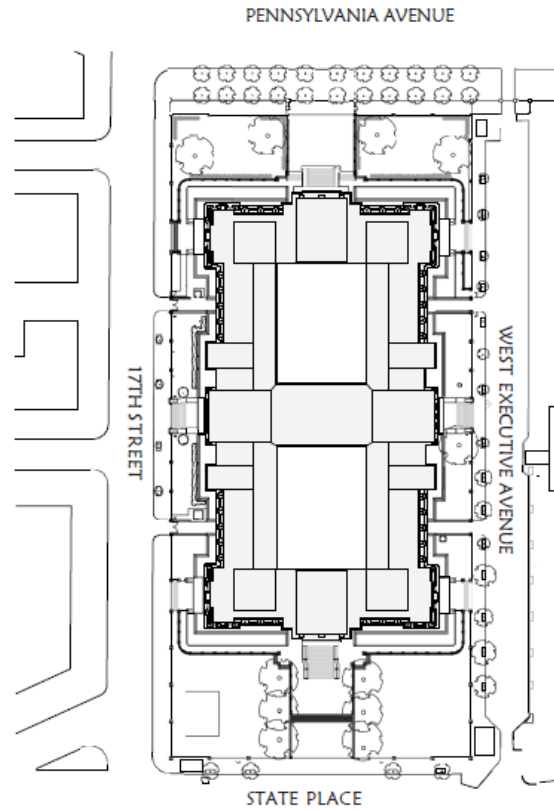


State, War & Navy Building decorated with flags, from south, in the 1890's - LC-BH836- 151



Elevation Drawing for the South Front of the State, War and Navy Building - NAID 6861826

## EXISTING STRUCTURE & CONDITIONS



THE EEOB HAS BEEN LARGELY NEGLECTED SINCE ITS CONSTRUCTION IN THE LATE 1800'S. MINOR EXTERIOR FAÇADE MAINTENANCE WAS CONDUCTED IN THE 1960'S AND THEN AGAIN IN THE EARLY 2000'S. THERE HAVE BEEN NO OTHER NOTABLE EXTERIOR REPAIRS OR RESTORATION COMPLETED ON THE EEOB.

THE COLOR, DESIGN, AND MASSING OF THE EXISTING STRUCTURE DOES NOT ALIGN VISUALLY WITH THE SURROUNDING ARCHITECTURE AND LACKS ANY SYMBOLIC COHESION WITH THE WHITE HOUSE.

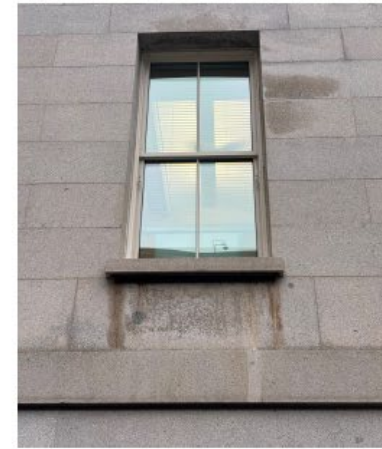
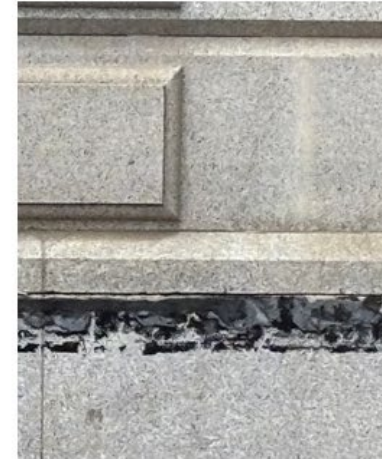


## EXISTING STRUCTURE & CONDITIONS, CONT'D

CONDITIONS OF THE EEOB INCLUDE GRIME, SOOT AND STAINING WHICH HAS IMPACTED THE NATURAL STONE AND DULLED THE GRANITE.

THE EEOB ALSO HAS ABRASIONS, CRACKS AND DEEP LINES FROM YEARS OF POOR OR NON-EXISTENT EXTERIOR MAINTENANCE, AND GENERAL DISREGARD.

THE BENEFIT TO PAINTING THE STONE IS THAT IT IS REPEATABLE. THE INABILITY TO BRING THE STONE FACADE BACK TO A BASELINE COLOR HAS PLAGUED THE MAINTENANCE OF THE EEOB IN THE PAST, AND WILL CONTINUE TO PLAGUE IT IF NOT ADDRESSED.



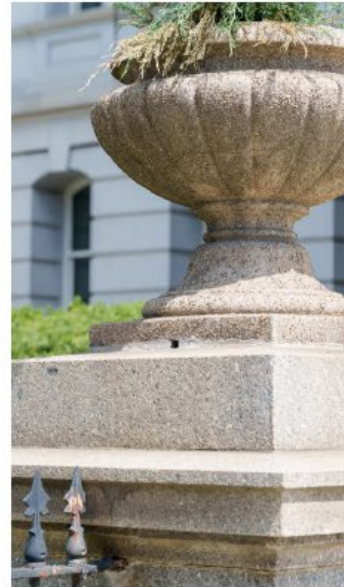
## EXISTING STRUCTURE & CONDITIONS, CONT'D

WHEN STONE MASONS HAVE ASSESSED THE ABILITY TO CLEAN THE FAÇADE, THEY OFTEN STATE THERE IS NO GUARANTEE HOW MUCH BROWN AND STAINING CAN BE REMOVED FROM THE STONE.

THEY ALSO STATE IT IS UNCLEAR HOW MANY PASSES, CLEANER, AND WATER WILL BE REQUIRED.

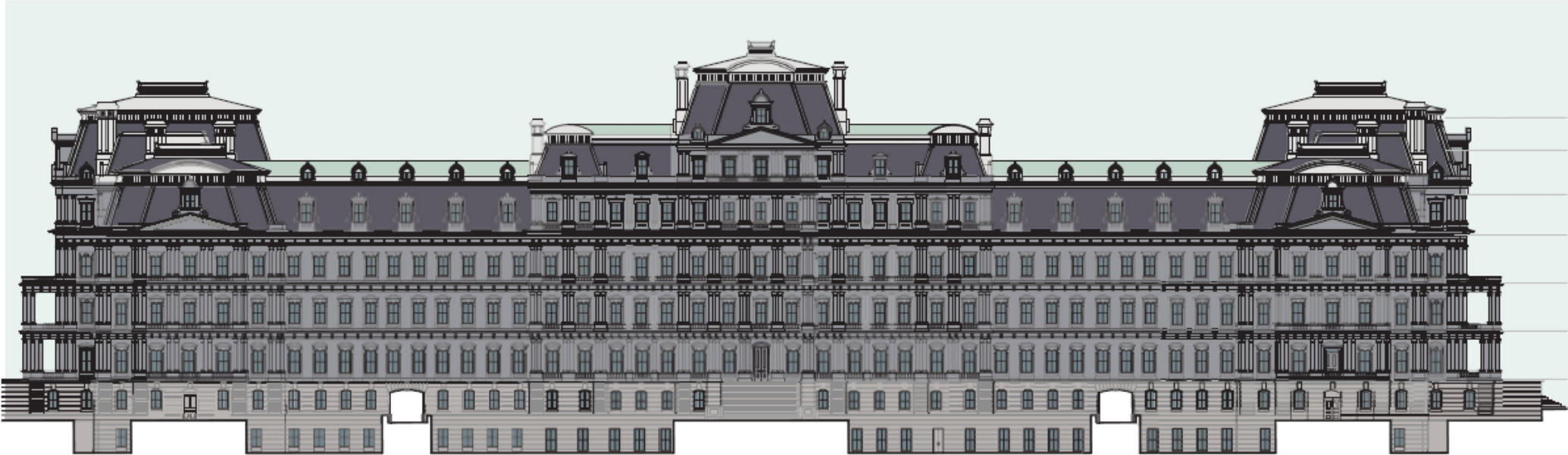
THIS INABILITY TO DETERMINE, BOTH THE FINANCIAL COMMITMENT AND ULTIMATE QUALITY OF RESULTING WORK, WILL LEAD TO FURTHER NEGLECT OF THE BUILDING'S FAÇADE.

ADDITIONALLY, REPAIRING CRACKED AND BROKEN STONE IS ALMOST ALWAYS INFEASIBLE SINCE THE STONES ARE INTEGRATED TOGETHER IN THE MASONRY WALL AND SUCH REPAIRS INEVITABLY DAMAGE SURROUNDING STONES AND METALS.



# Elevation

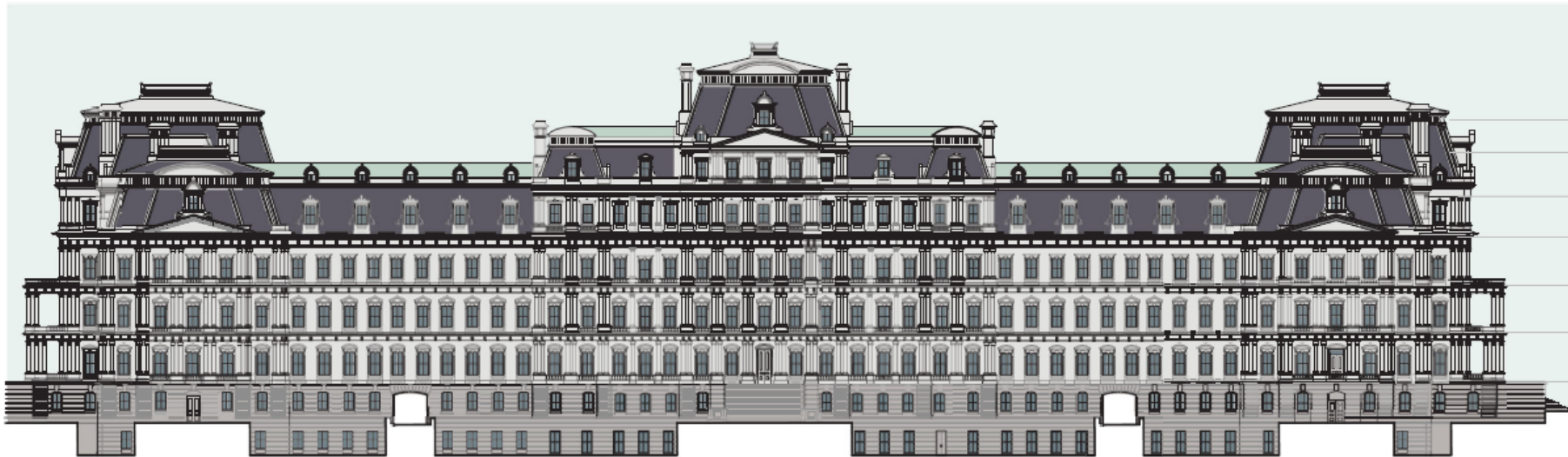
## EXISTING STRUCTURE RENDERING



# Elevation

## **PROPOSED PAINTING OPTION 1**

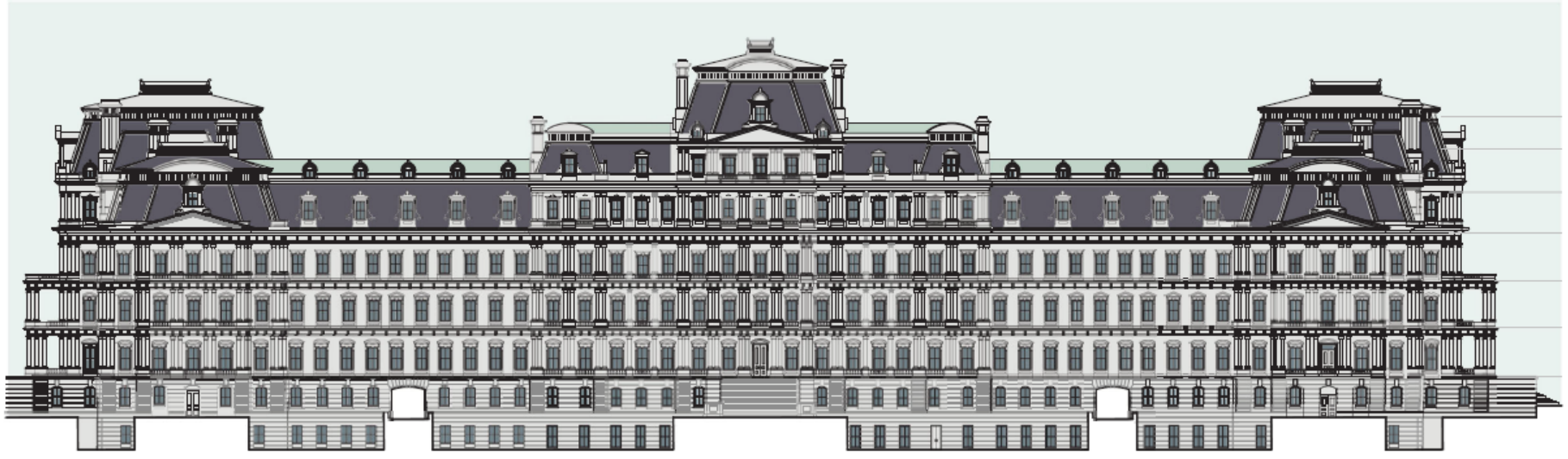
THIS PAINT RENDERING PORTRAYS THE SUPERSTRUCTURE IN WHITE WHILE MAINTAINING THE GRANITE FAÇADE ON THE EXPOSED BASEMENT AND SUBBASEMENT.



# Elevation

## PROPOSED PAINTING OPTION 2

THIS PAINT RENDERING PORTRAYS THE SUPERSTRUCTURE AND BASEMENTS IN WHITE.



# Photo-simulation



## PROPOSED PAINTING

IN THIS IMAGE WE ILLUSTRATE THE EEOB AS IT WOULD LOOK UPON COMPLETION WITH THE SUPERSTRUCTURE PAINTED WHITE, AND MAINTAINING THE EXISTING GRANITE FOR THE BASEMENT AND SUBBASEMENT.



# Photo-simulation



## PROPOSED PAINTING CONT'D

IN THIS IMAGE WE ILLUSTRATE THE EEOB AS IT WOULD LOOK UPON COMPLETION WITH BOTH THE SUPERSTRUCTURE AND THE BASEMENTS ALSO PAINTED WHITE.



# Photo-simulation



## PROPOSED PAINTING CONT'D



# Photo-simulation



## PROPOSED PAINTING CONT'D



# Photo-simulation



**PROPOSED PAINTING WEST WING VIEW**



# Photo-simulation



**PROPOSED PAINTING AERIAL VIEW**



# Photo-simulation



## PROPOSED PAINTING FINAL

