



Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: July 9, 2026

PROJECT National Gallery of Art West Building Seventh Street Entrance Improvements National Gallery of Art 7th Street, NW and Constitution Avenue, NW Washington, DC	NCPC FILE NUMBER 8762
SUBMITTED BY National Gallery of Art	NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER 1.24(64.20)46236
REVIEW AUTHORITY Federal Projects in the District per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)	APPLICANT'S REQUEST Approval of comments on concept plans
	PROPOSED ACTION Approve comments on concept plans
	ACTION ITEM TYPE Consent Calendar

PROJECT SUMMARY

The National Gallery of Art (NGA) has submitted concept plans for alterations to the Seventh Street entrance of the Gallery's West Building, located between Constitution Avenue and Madison Street, adjacent to the National Mall, in downtown Washington, DC. The Seventh Street entrance alterations project will create a new accessible entrance to the West Building, significantly reducing the distance visitors must travel from the National Mall to an accessible entrance into the gallery. In addition, the project seeks to make the entrance more welcoming and improve visitor experience, with opportunities for seating, shade, and improved wayfinding. The project will incorporate modifications to the entrance plinth and adjacent landscape, along with new entrance doors.

The project aims to solve several current problems with the Seventh Street entrance as it is currently constructed. The Seventh Street entrance serves as a public entry to the West Building and plays a significant role in shaping the visitor arrival and orientation experience. Since the building's original construction, the entry sequence has been impacted by changes in operational requirements, security procedures, and visitor experience. Exterior level changes, stair configurations, and path geometry present challenges to universal accessibility, while the organization of pedestrian circulation, vehicular movement, landscape, and security elements require coordinated consideration. The project will ensure a safe and beautiful arrival experience for visitors to the Gallery.

KEY INFORMATION

- The National Gallery of Art is one of the world's leading art museums, with a significant collection of American and European masterworks.
- The mission of the Gallery is to serve the country by preserving, collecting, exhibiting, and fostering understanding of works of art for the American public.

- The National Gallery of Art's West Building was designed by John Russell Pope and completed in 1941; and the East Building, and the connecting link, was designed by I. M. Pei, and opened to the public in 1978.
- The West Building is listed individually in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites and as a contributing element of the National Mall Historic District in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites and in the National Register of Historic Places. It is adjacent to both the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site and the Federal Triangle Historic District.

RECOMMENDATION

Approves comments on the concept plans for the National Gallery of Art's West Building Seventh Street Entrance Alterations as follows:

Supports the goals of the project to provide ADA-access to the National Gallery of Art's West Building while improving the visitor experience as well as public use and enjoyment.

Finds the overall design approach is appropriate for the project purpose and historic building and setting, while attempting to minimize impacts to historic fabric.

Recommends the applicant work with the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office, the National Park Service, NCPC, and other consulting parties to continue to explore design refinements that further minimize impacts to the building's historic fabric, while still meeting the project's goals of providing accessibility to visitors and users.

PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

Previous actions	None
Remaining actions (anticipated)	– Review preliminary site and building plans. – Review final site and building plans.

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

The National Gallery of Art (NGA) has submitted concept plans for alterations to the Seventh Street entrance of the Gallery's West Building, located between Constitution Avenue and Madison

Street, adjacent to the National Mall, in downtown Washington, D.C. The project will create a new accessible entrance to the West Building, significantly reducing the distance visitors must travel from the National Mall to an accessible entrance into the gallery. In addition, the project seeks to make the entrance more welcoming and improve visitor experience, with opportunities for seating, shade, and improved wayfinding. The project will incorporate modifications to the entrance plinth and adjacent landscape, along with new entrance doors. The project will ensure a safe and beautiful arrival experience for visitors. As such, staff recommends the **Commission express support for the goals of the project to provide ADA-access to the National Gallery of Art's West Building while improving the visitor experience as well as public use and enjoyment.**

NGA met with review agencies at the beginning of the design process to review options for the alterations to the Seventh Street entrance, recognizing the need to minimize impacts to historic fabric and materials, while still meeting the project goals. The applicant's preferred concept appears to address the agency comments and recommendations. As such, staff recommends the **Commission approves comments on the concept plans for the National Gallery of Art's West Building Seventh Street Entrance Alterations as follows.**

Analysis

Historic Context

The Seventh Street entrance to the West Building was part of John Russell Pope's design, completed in 1941. Alfred Geiffert, Jr. designed the original landscaping. And while the entrance design has not changed since construction, the circulation patterns have been altered, particularly in the 1970s, when the NGA Sculpture Garden was opened. Some of the landscape elements have also been lost during the last several decades, but much of the original design intent has been retained by NGA. The entrance has never been accessible, and therefore visitors with mobility considerations must make their way to the 6th Street entrance on Constitution Avenue, currently the only accessible entrance, to gain access to the West Building.

Existing Conditions

The Seventh Street entrance is centrally located on the west side of NGA's West Building. The West Building and landscaping are bound by Constitution Avenue on the north, Seventh Street on the west, and Madison Street on the south. The entrance faces NGA's Sculpture Garden on the opposite side of Seventh Street.

The Seventh Street doors are accessible to visitors via the U-shaped Seventh Street drive and a set of central steps and landings. Flanking the central public access entrance are two limited access moat areas that house facilities and maintenance operations including greenhouses. These two areas are accessed by two pairs of metal doors in the stone site wall, one on either side of the public entrance.

The doors to the Seventh Street lobby are at an elevation above both the Seven Street driveway sidewalk and the ground floor level, requiring visitors to navigate up to the lobby, and then to circulate down to access ground floor program areas. The Seventh Street lobby is four feet, four inches higher above the driveway, and three feet, four inches above the ground floor.

Existing Landscaping Elements

The Seventh Street entrance landing is framed by two plant beds that flank the base of the terrace steps and are bordered by granite curbing. Each is planted with a pair of American holly against the site walls and annuals in front. The central panel, containing the u-shaped drive, includes two mature American elms, planted symmetrically, one on the north side of the lawn, the second on the south. Large, continuous level lawn panels surround the building between the site walls and sidewalks.

Curvilinear, mulched beds are located along the site walls. Each contains a single Southern Magnolia tree and two American holly trees in the same arrangement. Deep in the corner of the north lawn panel a single Chinese elm is planted to the east of the Southern magnolia against the site wall. Along the exterior edge of the north lawn panel an American elm and two Japanese zelkova tree are planted near the granite curb. Today, there are no flowering understory trees, and the plant bed edges lack spatial definition. While some of the trees remain in their original locations, the overall planting does not convey the layered evergreen scheme originally designed and intended by Geiffert.

Design Approach for Alterations

The concept design reinforces the Seventh Street entrance as welcoming and clearly identifiable public threshold, clarifying its relationship to the West Building, the Sculpture Garden, and the surrounding landscape. At the same time, it responds to contemporary visitor expectations by improving accessibility, safety and intuitive movement, prioritizing pedestrians while supporting clear wayfinding. All interventions are conceived with careful stewardship of the historic architecture and designed landscape, ensuring that the character defining features of the West Building, including the clean, symmetrical composition, entrance procession with two ascents, and the restrained stone and bronze palette, as well as the heritage elm trees remain central to the experience.

As proposed in the concept, a dignified and accessible pathway from Seventh Street to the building entrance gently slopes upward toward a tiered exterior plinth. A second inclined walkway along the building elevation brings visitors to the enlarged upper plinth and entry. The existing moat gates are retained, while pedestrian paths are set at a slightly higher elevation, subtly distinguishing the public realm from service areas through both grade and material expression. A generous level zone at the stairs and along the sloped walkways, designed without raised curbs accommodate both pedestrians and vehicles, ensuring flexibility without compromising accessibility.

The lower ends of the sloped walkways follow the slight curve of the existing pedestrian pathway, creating a stronger visual and physical connection, along with a more direct, intuitive route onto

the plinth. The tiered plinth entry approach into the Gallery is retained with the addition of sloped walkways to create a fully accessible entry sequence. From Seventh Street, the historic entry sequence remains legible and aligned with the original vision, while the simplified geometry enhances clarity and presence, New architectural lighting, combined with restore historic bronze light standards, strengthens the sense of safety and approachability.

The plinth also serves as a place of pause and gathering. The expanded upper plinth and the relocation of the Calder sculpture from the central lawn panel reinforce a visual dialogue with the Sculpture Garden across Seventh Street , strengthening connections across the campus. Additional secondary functions can be accommodated on the plinth, ensuring adaptability over time.

NGA intends to the greatest extent possible to salvage existing historic site materials and reuse them, when possible. The top priority for reuse are the pitched-top Milford granite curbs at the outer boundaries of the current walk and drive, which are planned to be raised in elevation, but to be replaced in nearly the same horizontal locations. The flat-topped central curbs that currently define the seam between the drive and walk will be shifted to accommodate a widening of the pedestrian-zone. The sloped walkways, low walls, stairs, and plinth will maintain the same material palette as to the original design. Tennessee Pink Marble and Milford granite are intentionally used on horizontal and vertical surfaces, to mimic the original design intent of Pope.

Further Coordination

Staff is supportive of the design approach. The applicant has explored several design alternatives in coordination with the agencies, prior to selecting the preferred concept. Further refinement will occur prior to the next review. As such, staff suggests the **Commission recommend the applicant work with the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office, the National Park Service, NCPC, and other consulting parties to continue to explore design refinements that further minimize impacts to the building's historic fabric, while still meeting the project's goals of providing accessibility to visitors and users.**

CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

Staff has reviewed policies from the Urban Design, Historic Preservation, and Visitors & Commemoration Elements, and the analysis and recommendations are intended to support consistency with the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*.

National Historic Preservation Act

At the concept review, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act does not have to be completed. However, NCPC has initiated consultation with the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer (DC SHPO), and expects consultation will include other consulting parties to evaluate the project and possible impacts to historic resources.

National Environmental Policy Act

The National Gallery of Art does not have a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) responsibility for this proposed work' however, NCPC does have an independent NEPA compliance responsibility. While NEPA does not have to be completed for a concept review, NCPC staff has determined that the proposed site alterations to the West Building Seventh Street Entrance of the National Gallery of Art likely meet the criteria for Categorical Exclusions under NCPC's NEPA regulations, particularly categorical exclusion (2) which applies to the approval of the installation or restoration of minor site elements, such as, but not limited to, identification signs, sidewalks, patios, fences, curbs, retaining walls, landscaping and trail or stream improvements. A final NEPA determination will be made prior to the Commission's final review action.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the project at their June 17, 2026 meeting. 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. SHPO's coordination is subject to completion of the Section 106 review process, including the development of the Memorandum of Agreement required to document the measures that will be taken to resolve the adverse effects that will result from constructing the modifications. DOEE is not coordinated, noting that based on the building's proposed square footage the work will likely only trigger erosion and sediment control requirements. Major substantial improvement requirements may come into play based on the full scope and cost of construction. DDOT asked if there was any information about anticipated increase of vehicle drop offs and where they would take place. There was no information about that in the submission, but NCPC will ask the applicant. CFA noted that its staff looked at the project and anticipates that it will be submitted for CFA review next month. The participating agencies were: NCPC, the U.S. General Services Administration, the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, the National Park Service, DC SHPO, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, DOEE, the District Department of Transportation, and the District of Columbia Office of Planning.

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts

The U.S. Commission of Fine Arts is expected to review the concept plans at their July 2026 meeting.

ONLINE REFERENCE

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

- Submission Package

Prepared by Lee Webb
06/16/2026

POWERPOINT (ATTACHED)

National Gallery of Art West Building Seventh Street Entrance Improvements

6th Street, NW and Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC

Approval of Comments on Concept Plans

National Gallery of Art

Project Summary

Commission Meeting Date: July 9, 2026

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

Applicant Request: Approval of Comments on Concept Plans

Session: Consent Calendar

NCPC Review Officer: Lee Webb

NCPC File Number: 8762

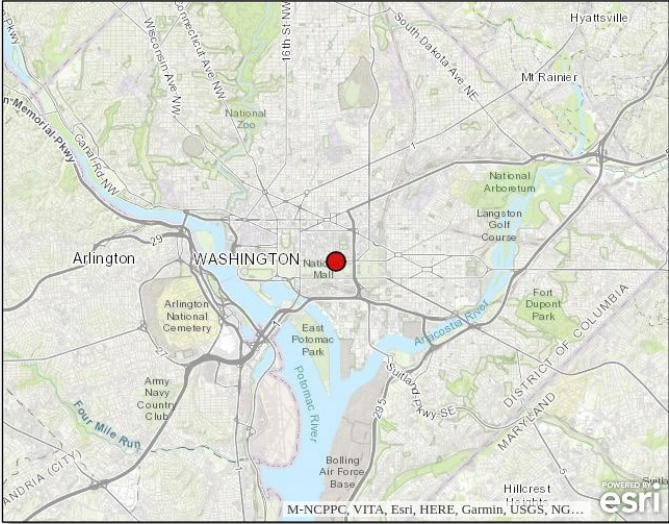
Project Summary:

The National Gallery of Art (NGA) has submitted concept plans for alterations to the 7th Street entrance of the Gallery's West Building, off of Constitution Avenue, in downtown Washington, D.C. The Seventh Street Project will create a new accessible entrance to the West Building, significantly reducing the distance visitors must travel from the National Mall to an accessible entrance. In addition, the project seeks to make the entrance more welcoming and improve visitor experience, with opportunities for seating, shade, and improved wayfinding. The project will incorporate modifications to the entrance plinth and adjacent landscape, along with new entrance doors.

The Seventh Street Project proposes to solve several current problems with the entrance as it is currently constructed. The Seventh Street Entrance serves as a public entry to the West Building and plays a significant role in shaping the visitor arrival and orientation experience. Since the building's original construction, the entry sequence has been impacted by changes in operational requirements, security procedures, and visitor experience. Exterior level changes, stair configurations, and path geometry present challenges to universal accessibility, while the organization of pedestrian circulation, vehicular movement, landscape, and security elements require coordinated consideration.

The West Building is listed individually in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites and as a contributing element of the National Mall Historic District in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites and in the National Register of Historic Places, and adjacent to both the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site and the Federal Triangle Historic District.

Site Location



Location Map

National Gallery of Art 7th Street Entrance Alterations

National Capital Planning Commission Concept Submission

National Gallery of Art Seventh Street Entrance Improvements

PROJECT OVERVIEW



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Project Overview

National Capital Planning Commission Concept Submission

PROJECT OVERVIEW

PROJECT SCOPE

The Seventh Street Entrance serves as a public entry to the National Gallery of Art's West Building and plays a significant role in shaping the visitor arrival and orientation experience. Since the building's original construction in 1937-1941, changes in operational requirements, security procedures, and visitor expectations have contributed to the entry sequence being experienced differently today. Exterior level changes, stair configurations, and path geometry present challenges to universal accessibility, while the organization of pedestrian circulation, vehicular movement, landscape, and security elements require coordinated consideration.

The scope of work focuses primarily on the exterior entry environment along Seventh Street, including the entry door and vestibule, exterior steps, circular drive, northwest and southwest moat access areas, and the exterior spaces encompassed by those elements. The project work area for the Seventh Street Entrance Improvements is illustrated in Figure 1-3.

GOALS

The Seventh Street Entrance Improvements project is guided by a set of goals that were established at the outset of the project and refined through a series of design workshops and stakeholder discussions. These goals provide a shared conceptual basis for decision making and reflect the National Gallery's broader priorities for campus unity, responsive adaptation, and long-term stewardship. The goals below translate these principles into specific objectives for the Seventh Street Entrance.

The proposed design will address the following project goals:

1. Unify the Seventh Street Entrance within the broader National Gallery of Art campus by reinforcing its identity as a welcoming public entry and clarifying its relationship to the West Building, the Sculpture Garden, and adjacent landscapes.
2. Adapt the Seventh Street Entrance to contemporary visitor expectations and operational requirements by improving accessibility, safety, and clarity of movement, while prioritizing pedestrians and supporting intuitive circulation and wayfinding.
3. Steward the historic architecture, designed landscape, and mature trees that define the character of the West Building and its Seventh Street landscape, ensuring that proposed interventions are integrated to respect character-defining features.

PROGRAM

The proposed project is needed to address the following concerns:

- Provide a universally accessible exterior path from the public sidewalk along Seventh Street to the West Building entry.
- Improve the clarity and functionality of the exterior entry sequence, including relationships among pedestrian circulation, vehicular access, landscape features, and security requirements.
- Support intuitive exterior wayfinding and visitor orientation within the project boundaries, consistent with the Gallery's Wayfinding Design Intent.
- Respect and carefully consider the historic significance and character-defining features of the West Building exterior and entry elements, including the existing bronze vestibule.

National Gallery of Art Seventh Street Entrance Improvements

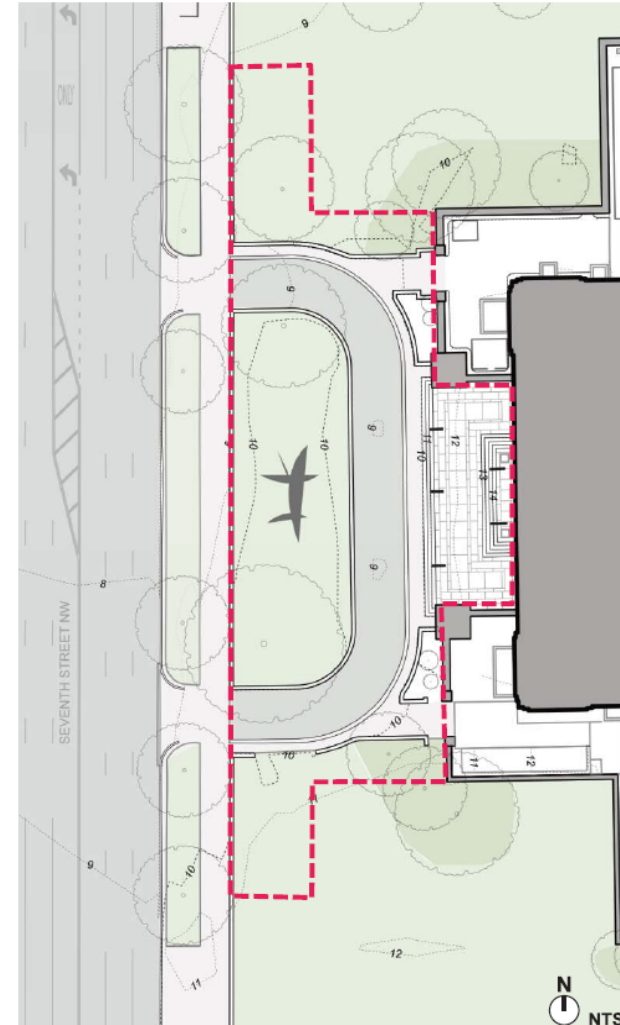


Figure 1-3. Diagram of Project Scope

National Gallery of Art Vicinity Map

National Capital Planning Commission Concept Submission

National Gallery of Art Seventh Street Entrance Improvements

VICINITY MAP

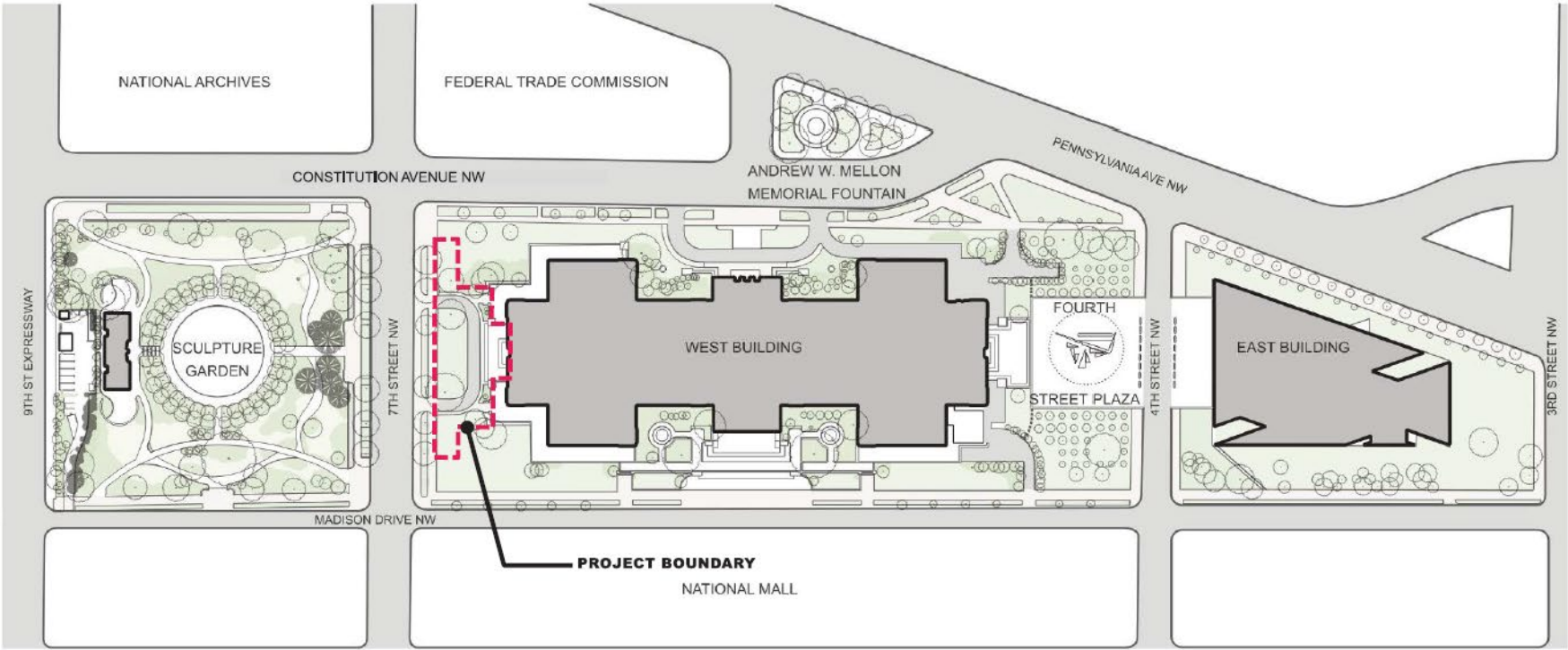


Figure 1-4. Vicinity map of the National Gallery of Art campus.



7th Street Entrance Existing Conditions

National Capital Planning Commission Concept Submission

National Gallery of Art Seventh Street Entrance Improvements

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Seventh Street Entrance is centrally located on the west side of the National Gallery of Art West Building. The West Building and landscape are bound by Constitution Avenue on the north, Seventh Street on the west, and Madison Drive on the south. The entrance faces the National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden located on the opposite side of Seventh Street.

The Seventh Street Entrance doors are accessible to the public via the U-shaped Seventh Street drive and a set of central steps and landings. Flanking the central public entrance are two limited-access moat areas that house facilities and maintenance operations including greenhouses. These two areas are accessed by two pairs of metal doors in the stone site wall, one on either side of the public entrance.

The doors to the Seventh Street Lobby are at an elevation above both the Seventh Street driveway sidewalk and the Ground Floor level, requiring visitors to navigate up to the lobby and to then circulate down to access ground floor program areas. The Seventh Street Lobby is 4'-4" above the driveway and 3'-4" above the Ground Floor.

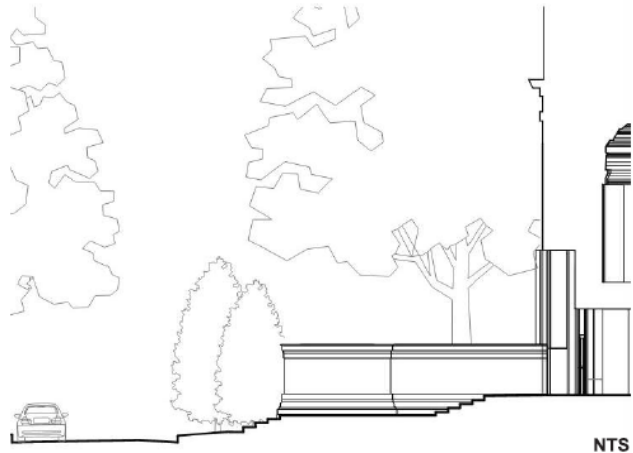


Figure 1-5. Section of the existing Seventh Street Entrance plinth.

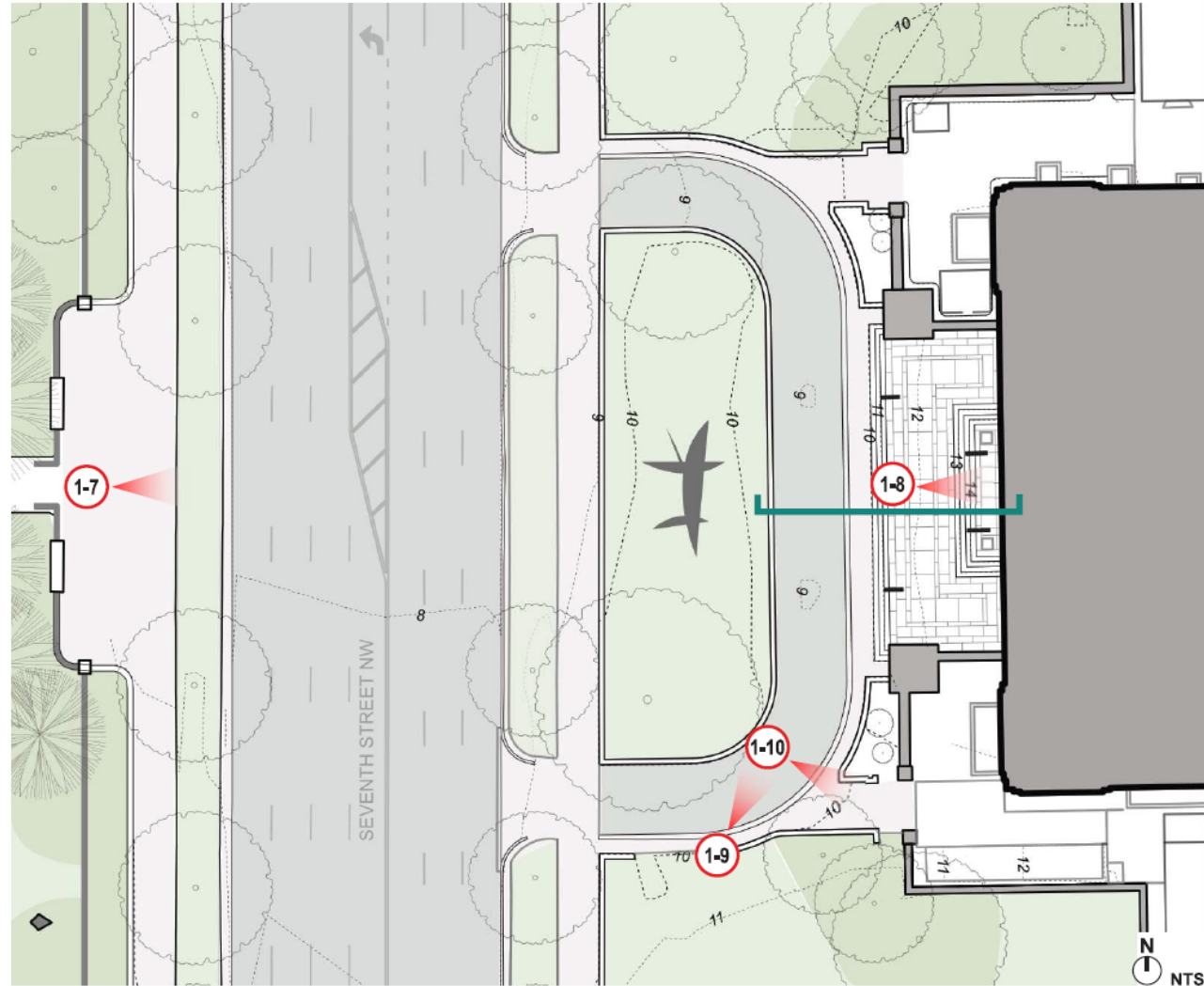


Figure 1-6. Site plan of the Seventh Street Entrance.

Photographs of Existing Conditions at 7th Street Entrance



Figure 1-7. View of Seventh Street Entrance from Sculpture Garden Entrance.



Figure 1-8. View of bronze entry doors and light standards.



Figure 1-9. View of Seventh Street drive and center lawn panel.



Figure 1-10. View of SW moat entrance.

7th Street Entrance Area Site Features

National Capital Planning Commission Concept Submission

National Gallery of Art Seventh Street Entrance Improvements

SITE FEATURES

- ① Heritage Elms
- ② Central Lawn Panel
- ③ Drive
- ④ Plinth
- ⑤ Moat & Moat Walls
- ⑥ Moat Gates
- ⑦ Southern Magnolias

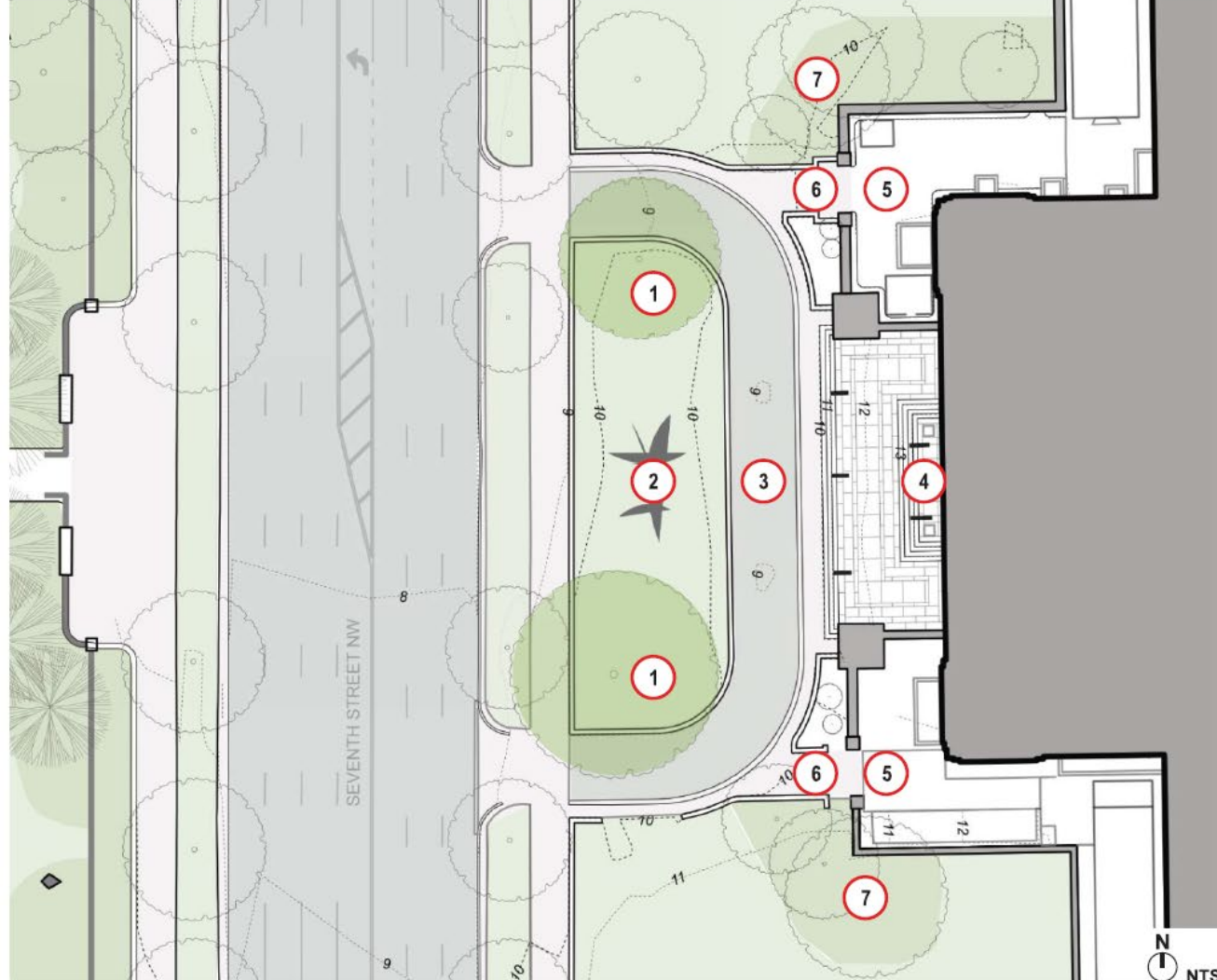


Figure 1-11. Key plan of prominent site features.

7th Street Entrance Area Site Features

National Capital Planning Commission Concept Submission

SITE FEATURES

- ① Heritage Elms
- ② Central Lawn Panel
- ③ Drive
- ④ Plinth
- ⑤ Moat & Moat Walls
- ⑥ Moat Gates
- ⑦ Southern Magnolias



Figure 1-12. View of heritage elms.

National Gallery of Art Seventh Street Entrance Improvements



Figure 1-13. View of Seventh Street Entrance drive and plinth.

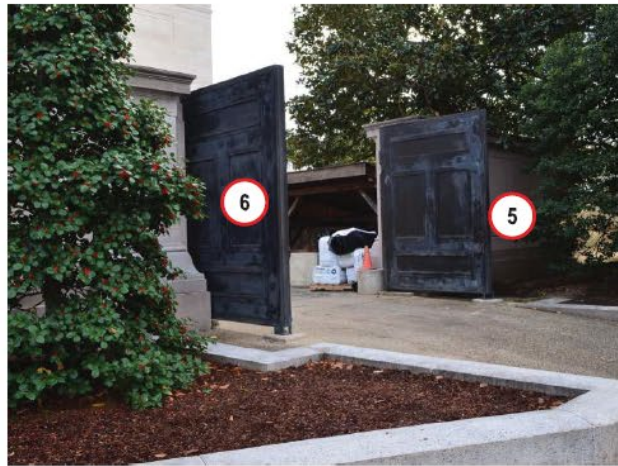


Figure 1-14. View of moat walls and open moat gates.



Figure 1-15. View of heritage elm and Southern Magnolia tree.

Public Realm and View

National Capital Planning Commission Concept Submission

National Gallery of Art Seventh Street Entrance Improvements

PUBLIC REALM AND VIEWS

- Creating connections between the Sculpture Garden and the East and West Buildings of the National Gallery is central to establishing a cohesive museum campus.
- Currently, the relationship between the Seventh Street of the West Building and the Sculpture Garden is obscured by a number of visual and physical barriers, including the Calder sculpture and parked cars.
- Strengthening the visual relationship and increasing pedestrian flow between these two campus elements will reinforce the mission of the National Gallery to attract and engage with all visitors across a diverse population.
- Existing primary signage indicating the Seventh Street Entrance for visitors is minimal at the corners of the Northwest and Southwest lawn panels.



Figure 1-16. View of the Seventh Street Entrance from the corner of Seventh St NW and Madison Drive NW.



Figure 1-17. View of the Seventh Street Entrance from the corner of Seventh St NW and Constitution Avenue NW.

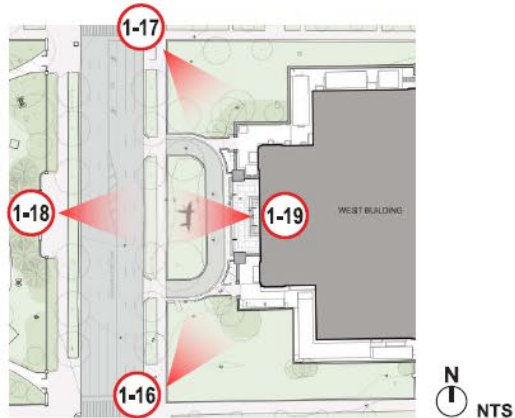


Figure 1-18. View of the Seventh Street Entrance from the entrance of the Sculpture Garden.



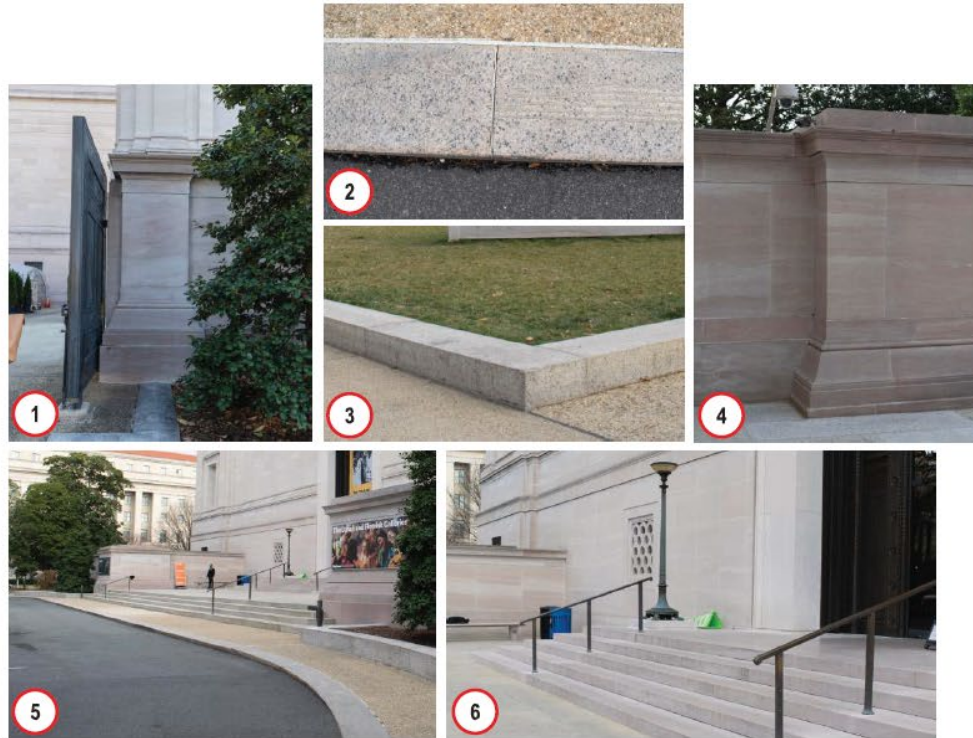
Figure 1-19. View towards the Sculpture Garden from the Seventh Street Entrance.

7th Street Area Texture and Materiality

National Capital Planning Commission Concept Submission

National Gallery of Art Seventh Street Entrance Improvements

TEXTURE AND MATERIALITY



LEGEND:

 U-SHAPED CIRCULATION DRIVE	 MILFORD PINK GRANITE CURBS	 TENNESSEE PINK MOAT WALLS
 STONE PLINTH	 EXPOSED AGGREGATE CONCRETE	 TENNESSEE PINK PIERS

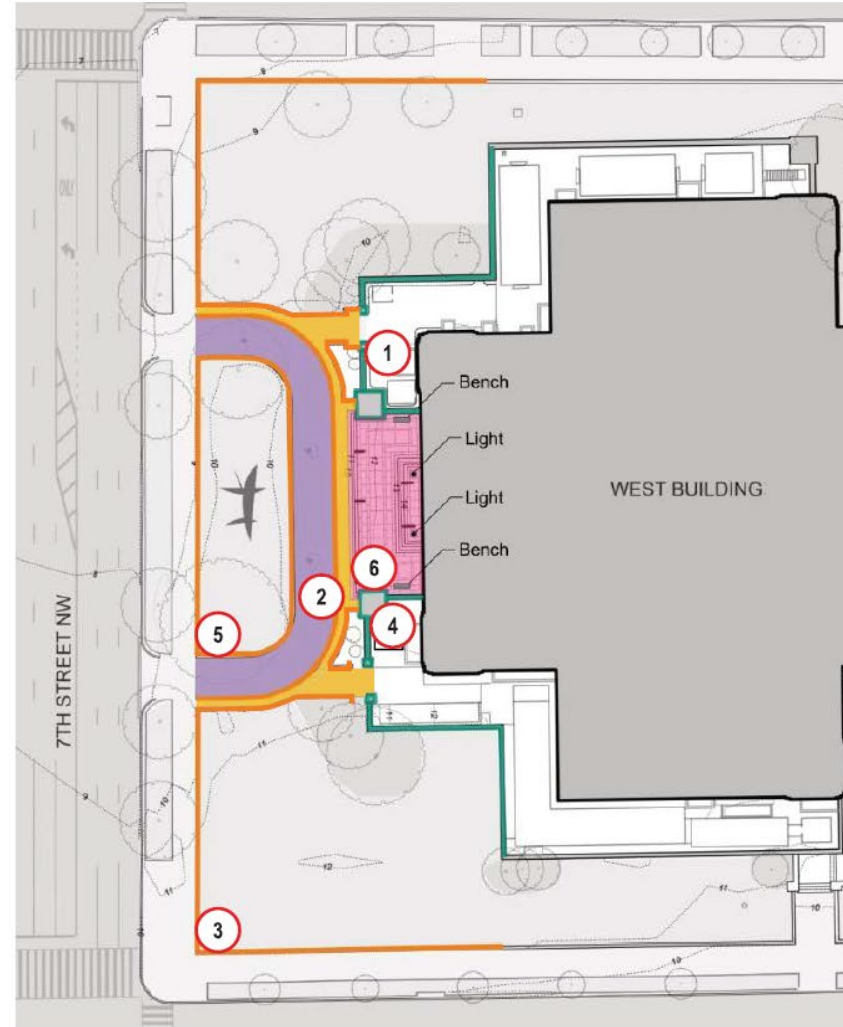


Figure 1-20. Site diagram of existing materials and finishes.

Existing Plantings

National Capital Planning Commission Concept Submission

EXISTING PLANTINGS

The Seventh Street Entrance landing is framed by two plant beds that flank the base of the terrace steps and are bordered by granite curbing. Each is planted with a pair of American holly (*Ilex opaca*) against the site walls and annuals in front.

The central lawn panel, circumscribed by the U-shaped drive, includes two mature American elm (*Ulmus americana*) planted symmetrically, one on the north side of the lawn and the second on the south. Large, continuous level lawn panels surround the building between the site walls and sidewalks.



Against the site walls are curvilinear, mulched beds that reach to the service drives. Each contains a single southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) and two American holly in the same arrangement. Deep in the corner of the north lawn panel a single Chinese elm (*Ulmus parvifolia*) is planted to the east of the Southern magnolia against the site wall. Along the exterior edge of the north lawn panel an American elm and two Japanese zelkova (*Zelkova serrata*) are present near the granite curb.

Today, the American elms in the central lawn and the southern magnolias and American hollies flanking either side of the U-shaped driveway remain. These still preserve the original evergreen structure of the planting as intended by landscape architect Alfred Geiffert, Jr., who designed the planting plan for the West Building in 1937-1941. The shrub and groundcover layers only partially exist and the species, arrangement, and quantities are substantially different. The lawn continues to exist as it did in 1940, but the species and locations of specimen trees in these areas are different and lack symmetry. There are no flowering understory trees, and the plant bed edges lack spatial definition. While some of the existing trees remain in their original locations, the overall planting does not convey the layered evergreen scheme that Geiffert designed.



LEGEND:


FOREGROUND (LOW HEIGHT, BROAD COVERAGE)

-  EVERGREEN HEDGES WITH DECIDUOUS ACCENTS
-  LAWN PANELS

BACKGROUND (MONUMENTAL SCALE, SILHOUETTE)

-  SPECIMEN MATURE EVERGREEN AND DECIDUOUS TREES

MIDDLE GROUND (MID HEIGHT, ORNAMENTAL)

-  EVERGREEN MASSING WITH DECIDUOUS ACCENTS

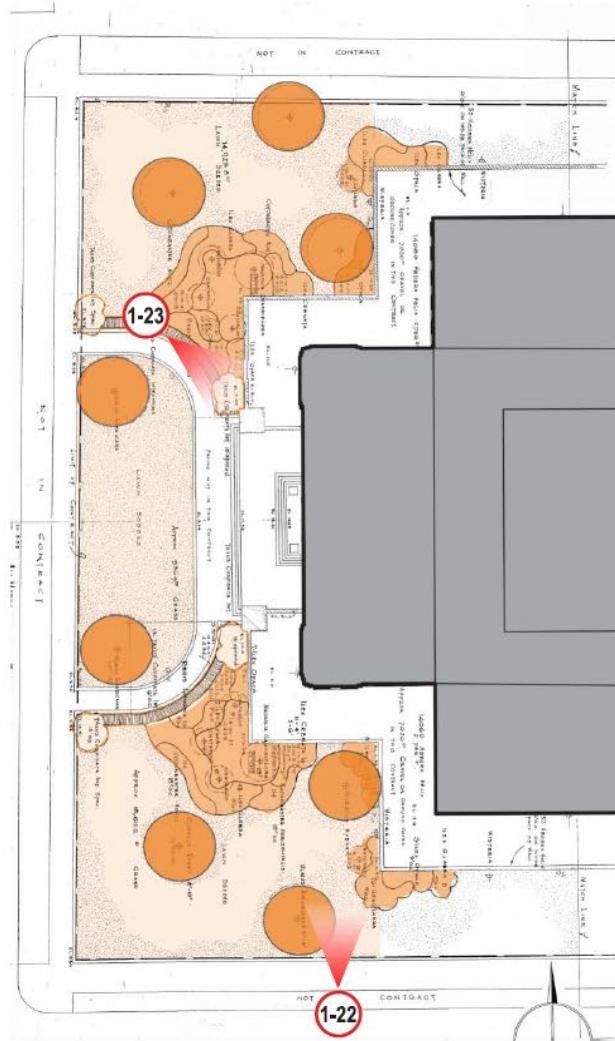


Figure 1-21. Diagram of character-defining vegetation.

National Gallery of Art Seventh Street Entrance Improvements



Figure 1-22. View of the southwest side of the Seventh Street Entrance showing a southern magnolia and American elm.



Figure 1-23. View of the plant bed on the north side of the steps at the Seventh Street Entrance.



Security Perimeter

SECURITY PERIMETER

The National Gallery of Art provided direction to the design team regarding the intent for perimeter security. The current configuration where vehicles are prevented from accessing the plinth area and the moat areas are controlled-access areas shall be maintained in the proposed design.



LEGEND:

-  RED ZONE - SECURITY PERIMETER AT CONTROLLED-ACCESS AREAS
-  PURPLE ZONE - SECURITY PERIMETER AT VEHICLE-INACCESSIBLE AREAS

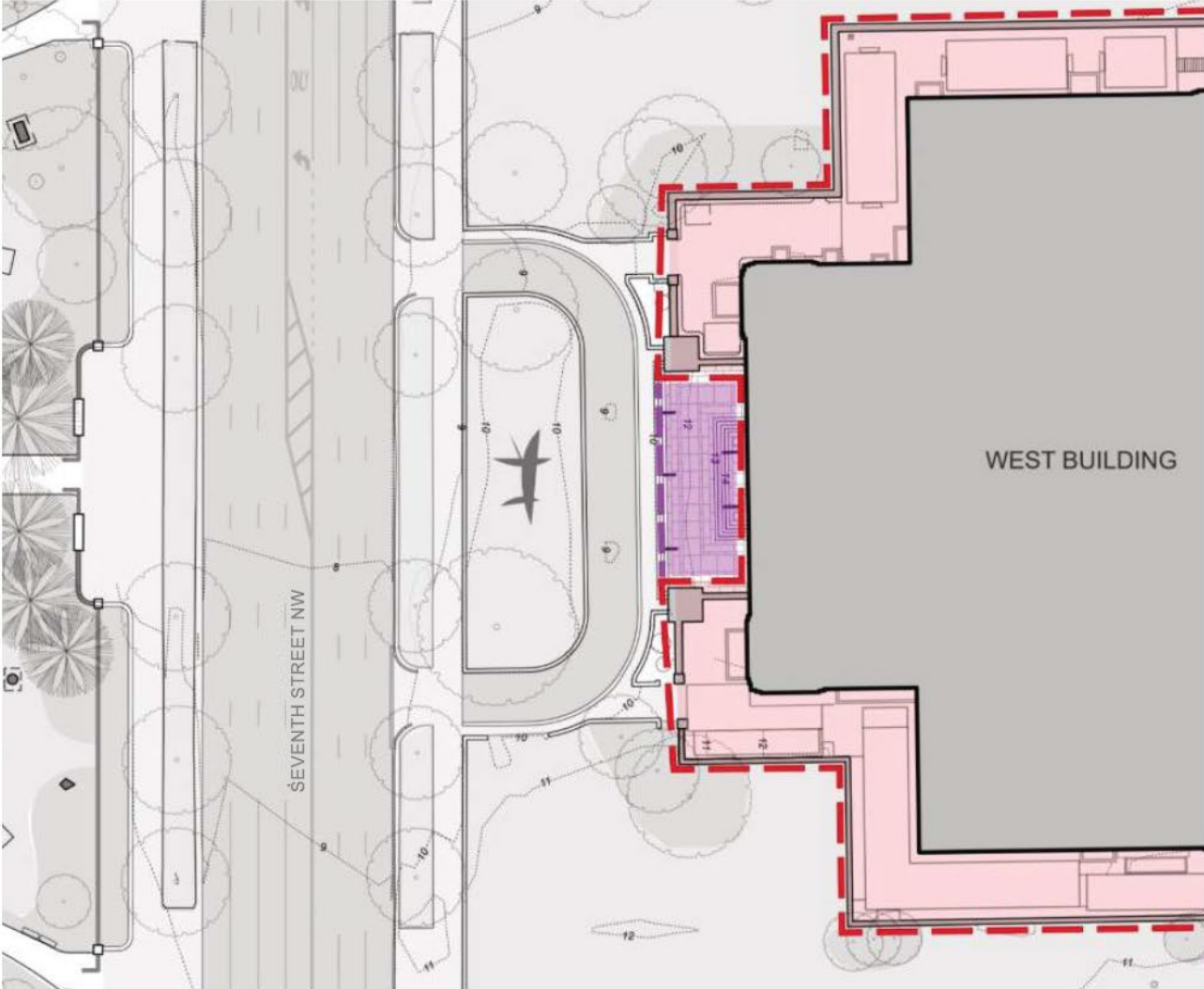


Figure 1-24. Diagram of existing security perimeter.

7th Street Entrance History

National Capital Planning Commission Concept Submission

SEVENTH STREET ENTRANCE HISTORY

Designed by John Russell Pope, the West Building – of which the Seventh Street Entrance is a component – opened to the public in 1941. At that time, the campus property consisted of the West Building parcel and the parcel directly to the east. It was not until 1991 that the National Park Service transferred the west parcel including the Sculpture Garden to the National Gallery.

Pope designed a U-shaped circulation route and tiered stair and landings on the Seventh Street Entrance to complement the east and north entrances to the West Building. The symmetrically arranged circulation elements illustrate the intent for a gradual approach that responded to the elevation change between the U-shaped circulation route and the entrance that was less monumental than the primary, National Mall entrance, yet continued to respect the formality of the neoclassical architecture of the building.

Architect John Russell Pope and landscape architect Alfred Geiffert Jr.'s 1937–38 design included a U-shaped circulation route with a drive for vehicular access flanked by a sidewalk for pedestrians. The circulation route was eventually redesigned and built in 1940 for pedestrians only. When the museum opened in 1941, galleries were located on the museum's Ground Floor adjacent to the Seventh Street Entrance; however, the entrance was not open to visitors on a regular basis.

The National Gallery made changes to the Seventh Street circulation in anticipation of increased visitor use of the entrance with the completion of both the Sculpture Garden in 1974 and additional galleries on the building's Ground Floor in 1983. The U-shaped circulation route was widened between 1968 and 1970 to create two-way vehicular traffic. The project moved the existing Milford granite curbing to accommodate the widened route. A new sidewalk bordered the outer edge of the widened vehicular drive. The marble terrace was slightly truncated to accommodate these changes. Additional modifications at this time included the approach sidewalks leading to the new bronze access doors on the site walls.

The use of the Seventh Street Entrance shifted after the completion of Operation Breakthrough and the opening of the new Ground Floor galleries in 1983 when it opened on a regular basis for the first time. One of the intentions of Operation Breakthrough was to allow visitors to enter the West Building from Seventh Street, directly progress through the Ground Floor of the building and its new galleries and museum shop, and ultimately visit the Connecting Link and the new East Building. In 2020, the Gallery modified the U-shaped drive by replacing the exposed aggregate concrete with asphalt.



Figure 1-25. Construction progress on the West Building, November 1940. (National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, Gallery Archives, RG26A, National Gallery of Art Architecture Images - West Building Original Construction, Photograph by Commercial Photo Co., 26A23_2289_001)

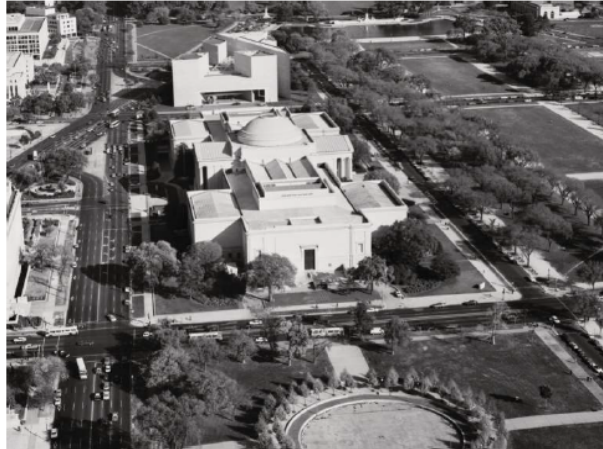


Figure 1-27. Aerial view of the National Gallery of Art and the Sculpture Garden in 1980, prior to the construction of the pavilion. (National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, Gallery Archives, RG26A, National Gallery of Art Architecture Images - Building, Campus, and Art Installation Views, 26A5_2680_001)

National Gallery of Art Seventh Street Entrance Improvements



Figure 1-26. Historic photo (1971), west elevation. (National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, Gallery Archives, RG26A, National Gallery of Art Architecture Images - Building, Campus, and Art Installation Views, 26A5_34392_004-4K)



Figure 1-28. View of the Sculpture Garden, West Building, and East Building looking southeast, 2018. (National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, Gallery Archives, RG26A, National Gallery of Art Architecture Images - Building, Campus, and Art Installation Views, Photograph by Rob Shelley, 26A5_135388_008-4K)

Designation Status

DESIGNATION STATUS

The West Building is listed in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites and as a contributing element of the National Mall Historic District in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites and in the National Register of Historic Places. Also, the West Building is adjacent to, but outside of, the south boundary of the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site, and adjacent to, but outside of, the south boundary of the Federal Triangle Historic District.

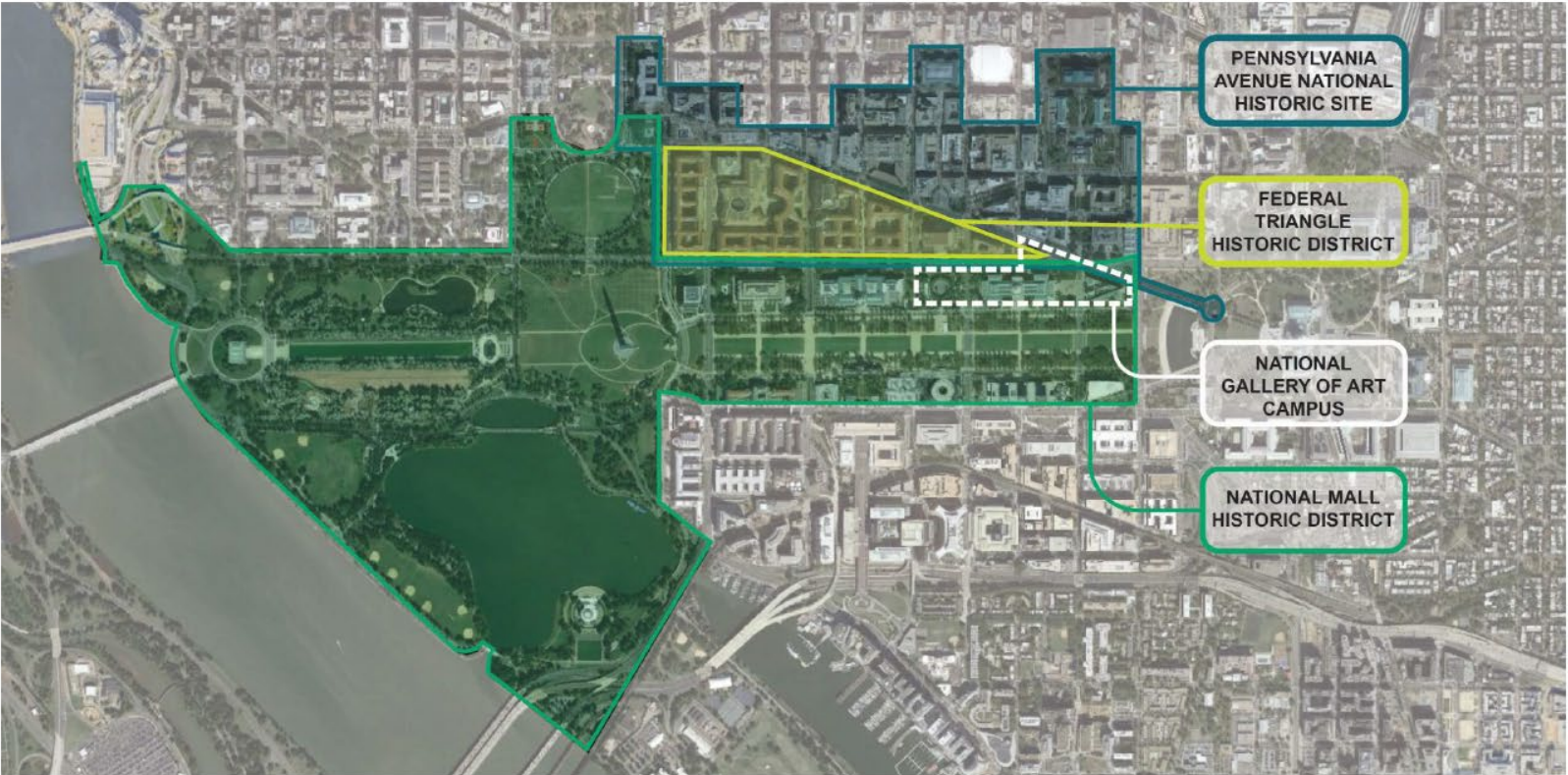


Figure 1-29. Map showing the National Gallery of Art and National Register of Historic Places Historic Districts.

7th Street Entrance Site Evolution

National Capital Planning Commission Concept Submission

SITE EVOLUTION

Quinn Evans' study of the historic landscape's evolution, beginning with Alfred Geiffert, Jr.'s 1937 plans, identified the following character-defining features:

- North-south symmetrical alignment with a balanced composition centered on the Seventh Street entrance
- U-shaped circulation enclosing a central lawn panel
- Symmetrically planted canopy trees aligned with the Seventh Street entrance
- The composition of stone stairs and landings
- Milford granite curbs
- Exposed aggregate concrete paving
- Plant beds at moat wall corners emphasizing dark evergreen foliage and deciduous flowering trees
- Elevated lawn panels

The proposed design seeks to maintain the essence of these historic patterns and materiality while modifying slopes, planting, and hardscapes as required to create a welcoming, accessible entrance for present-day visitors.

The site's history revealed a landscape that has regularly changed in significant ways to accommodate contemporary needs. The Milford Pink curbs were moved and the U-shaped walk was widened from a pedestrian walk to a driveway in the 1960s. In addition, doors were added to the site walls for access. Paving has, at various times, crossed the central lawn and then been removed. Alexander Calder's Tom's sculpture was added in the center of the lawn, breaking the axial view between the sculpture garden pavilion and the Seventh Street door. Asphalt paving replaced the exposed aggregate paving in the drive in 2020. The original plantings experienced some immediate failures and replacements. Subsequent planting beds have been reshaped and have declined so that now only the largest trees and the turf remain. The shrub and groundcover layer of the originally designed landscape has been lost.



LEGEND:

- | | | |
|----------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| | | |
| Canopy Tree | Flowering/
Understory Tree | Turf |
| | | |
| Evergreen Tree | Shrubs | East-West Axis |

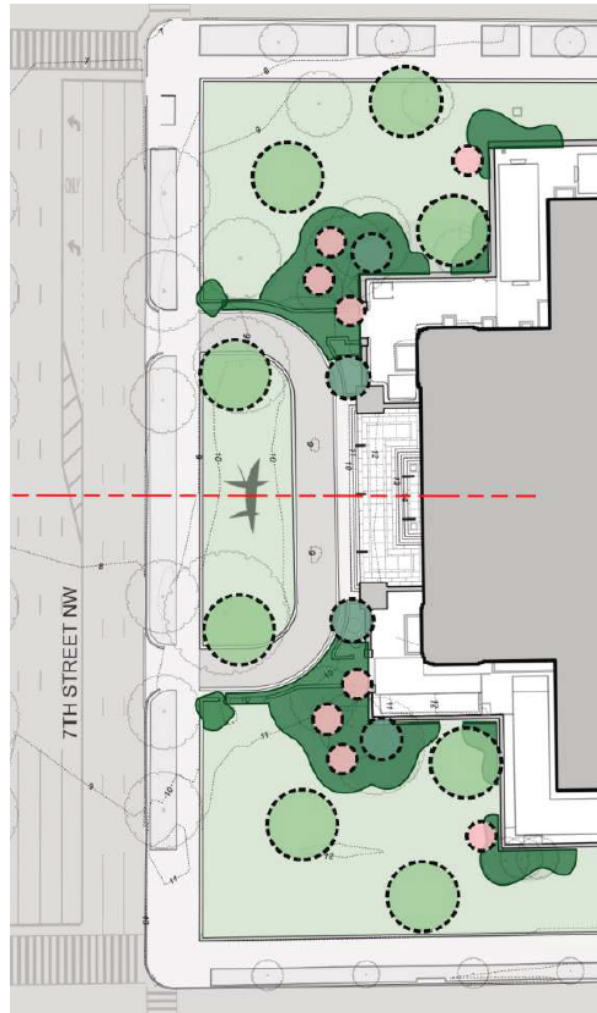


Figure 1-30. 1941 Planting plan.

National Gallery of Art Seventh Street Entrance Improvements

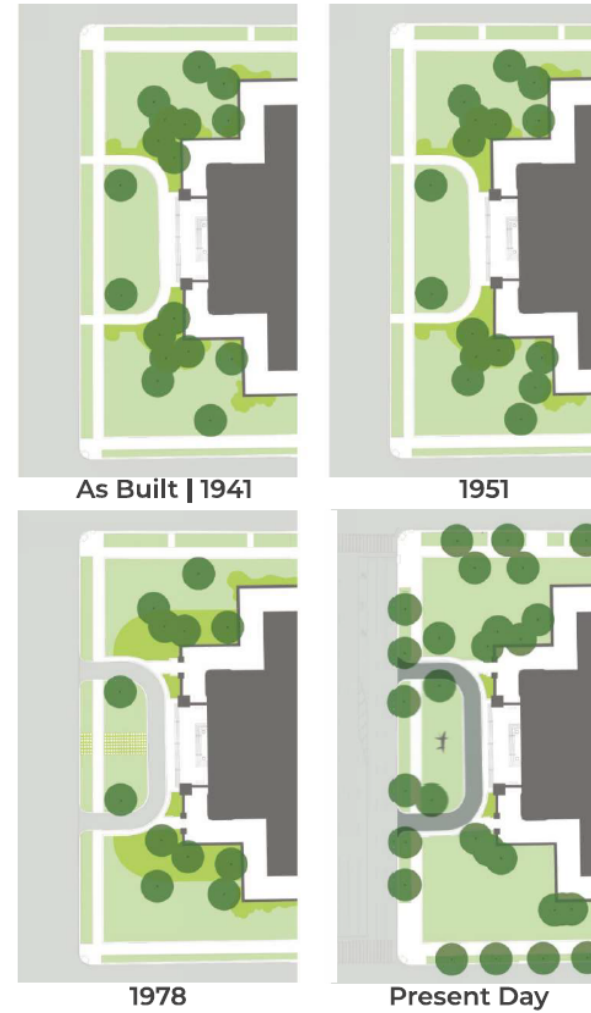


Figure 1-31. Evolution of the West Building's landscape.

West Building Entries

National Capital Planning Commission Concept Submission

WEST BUILDING ENTRIES

The landscape surrounding the West Building, designed by architect John Russell Pope and landscape architect Alfred Geiffert, Jr., was completed in 1940, prior to the museum's formal opening and dedication in March 1941. The design features clearly defined spaces, distinct circulation routes, thoughtfully arranged vegetation, and carefully selected plant species. These elements work in harmony with the building's monumental surroundings to create a cohesive and balanced integration of architecture and landscape. Pope's vision for the building emphasized a neoclassical style, and Geiffert incorporated formal landscape features to complement it.

MALL ENTRANCE

Pope deliberately designed the Mall Entrance as the formal entry to the building, reflecting the McMillan Plan's direction for "great institutions" facing the National Mall. The scale and formality of the neoclassical grand staircase mirrors other museums and monumental structures on the National Mall. The secondary walkways leading from the staircase guide visitors to the more intimate, fountain courtyards that underscore the harmony of the landscape design, the building, and its surroundings. The symmetrically arranged circulation elements harmonize with the building. The monumental stair, site walls, and plinths use a combination of Tennessee Pink marble and Milford granite as a balanced material palette.



Figure 1-34. Mix of stone finishes at the Mall Entrance.



Figure 1-32. Early study of the National Gallery of Art design by John Russell Pope. (National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. Acquired from Eggers and Higgins, Architects, 1984.44.22)



Figure 1-33. View looking west of the assemblage of lawn panels, stairs, site walls, and the courtyards and grand staircase beyond.

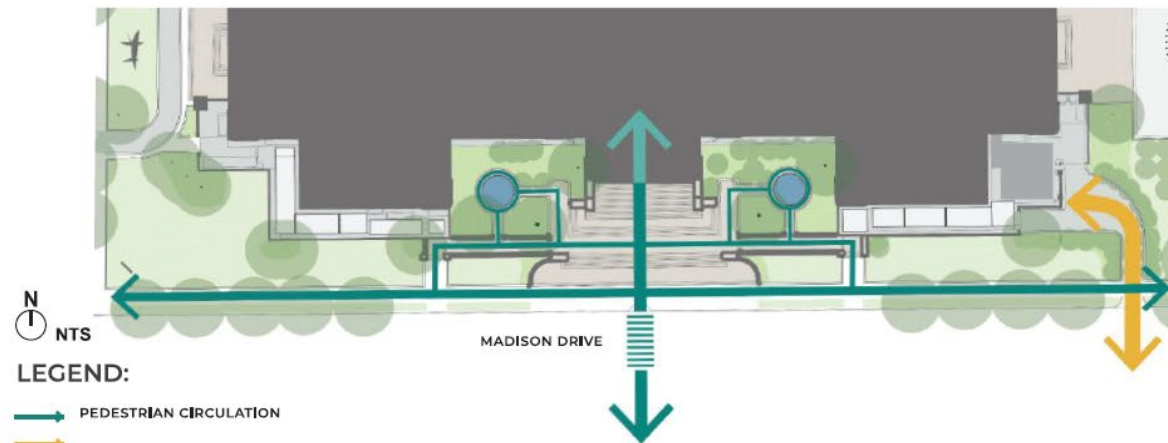


Figure 1-35. Mall entrance circulation analysis.

West Building Entries

National Capital Planning Commission Concept Submission

WEST BUILDING ENTRIES

SIXTH STREET ENTRANCE

Pope and Geiffert designed the Sixth Street Entrance to be secondary to the National Mall entrance to the building. When the museum opened in 1941, it provided direct access to the Ground Floor galleries and lecture hall, as well as access to stairs leading up to the galleries and rotunda on the Main Floor. A U-shaped driveway allowed for vehicles to drop off and pick up visitors from this entrance. A direct, central walk provides access from the Constitution Avenue sidewalk to the entrance landings and door. Although the Sixth Street Entrance featured a grand portico similar to the Mall Entrance, access was from the level below, resulting in a more modest, gradual entrance terrace.

The circulation adjacent to the Sixth Street Entrance changed with the construction of the East Building and Connecting Link. A new ramp was constructed between 1974 and 1976 to provide access to the new below-grade garage and truck dock in the Connecting Link. The project required the removal and replacement of a portion of the granite curb and paving on the north entrance and slightly modified the east side of the U-shaped driveway. Pedestrian ramps were added in 1993, connecting the first and second landings for accessibility. Today, the entrance terrace retains integrity of design intent. Changes made to the circulation after 1941, particularly modifications related to the U-shaped drive and service ramp, altered the symmetry of the circulation elements designed by Pope and impacted the physical character. The entrance steps, ramps, plinth, and curbs are all crafted from Milford granite.



Figure 1-38. View of the Sixth Street Entrance steps and west ramp, facing southwest.



Figure 1-36. Sixth Street Entrance vegetation, ca. 1945. (National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, Gallery Archives, RG26A, National Gallery of Art Architecture Images - Building, Campus, and Art Installation Views, 26A5_2395_033)

National Gallery of Art Seventh Street Entrance Improvements



Figure 1-37. Ground-level view of the U-shaped vehicular and pedestrian routes to the Sixth Street Entrance.

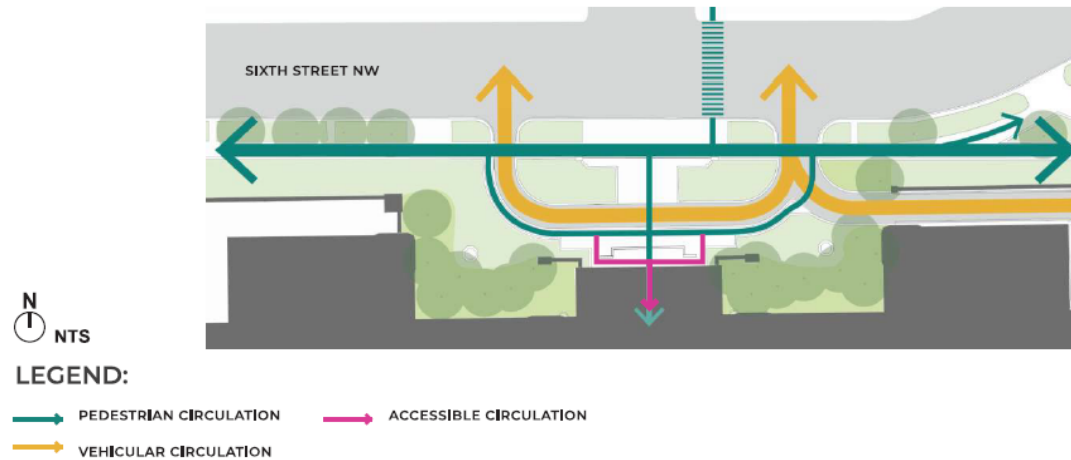


Figure 1-39. Sixth Street Entrance circulation analysis.

West Building Entries/7th Street Entrance

National Capital Planning Commission Concept Submission

WEST BUILDING ENTRIES

FOURTH STREET ENTRANCE

The Fourth Street Entrance elevation mirrors the architectural qualities of the Seventh Street Entrance elevation. However, the central entrance door that leads to the Fourth Street Lobby no longer retains the bronze grille over the large window and features a glazed entry with bronze hardware. The large bronze sliding doors remain intact and are still in use. The central Tennessee marble stairs lead up to the building and connect to the Fourth Street Plaza. Tennessee marble site walls continue along the east elevation and connect to the site walls on the north and south elevations.

Architect I. M. Pei collaborated with landscape architect Dan Kiley of Kiley Tyn dall Walker to design the Fourth Street Plaza, which was completed in conjunction with the opening of the Connecting Link in 1976. The plaza is a T-shaped open space composed of three main elements. The stem of the "T" is a rectangular paved area oriented east-west, while the top of the "T" consists of two roughly square, formally planted green spaces located to the north and south of the plaza. The paved section physically links the Fourth Street Entrance of the neoclassical West Building with the main entrance of the modern East Building. The Fourth Street Plaza cobblestones are Autumn Rose granite, with Rockville granite used as the plaza border and landing pavers. The Fourth Street Entrance landing and stairs are Tennessee Pink marble.

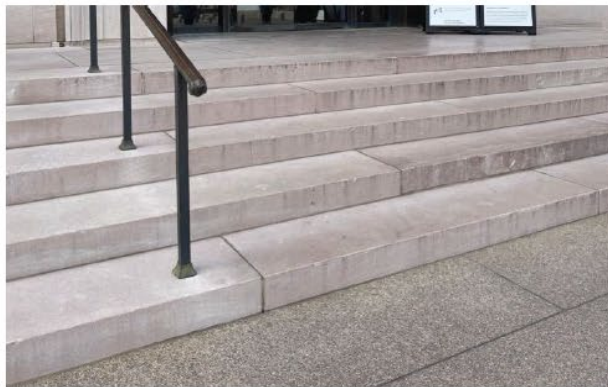


Figure 1-41. Mix of stone finishes at Fourth Street Entrance steps.

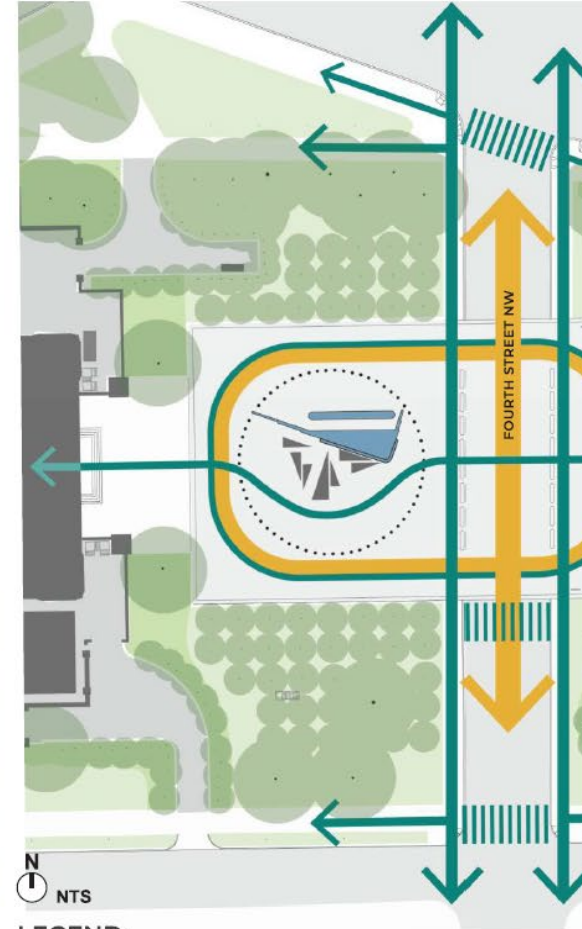


Figure 1-40. 1978 view of the Fourth Street Plaza. The spatial organization of the Fourth Street Plaza has remained the same with minor changes to plantings. (National Gallery of Art Architecture Images - Building, Campus, and Art Installation Views, 26A5_2881_003)



Figure 1-42. Marble landing and stairs and granite landing at the Fourth Street Entrance of the West Building.

National Gallery of Art Seventh Street Entrance Improvements



LEGEND:

- PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION
- VEHICULAR CIRCULATION

Figure 1-43. Fourth Street Entrance circulation analysis.

West Building Entries

National Capital Planning Commission Concept Submission

WEST BUILDING ENTRIES

FOURTH STREET AND SEVENTH STREET ENTRANCES

The Fourth Street and Seventh Street entrances of the National Gallery of Art's West Building present two distinct design approaches shaped by their intended roles and the evolution of the site. The Seventh Street Entrance is characterized by its more intimate scale, reflecting its purpose as a secondary point of access. Its design intent fosters a quieter, more human-scaled arrival sequence, with plantings and broad lawn panels that reinforce this understated atmosphere.

By contrast, the Fourth Street Entrance, reshaped considerably during the 1970s plaza construction, adopts a grander scale and a more monumental presence. The expanded plaza introduces broader spatial volumes and a more formal planting language that aligns with its function as a visitor gateway between the East and West buildings.



LEGEND:

- PLANT BED
- MATURE CANOPY TREES
- EVERGREEN SCREEN
- BORDER HEDGE
- SINGLE-SPECIES, FLOWERING UNDERSTORY, MULTI-STEMMED BOSQUE
- ELEVATED LAWN PANELS
- STONE PLINTH

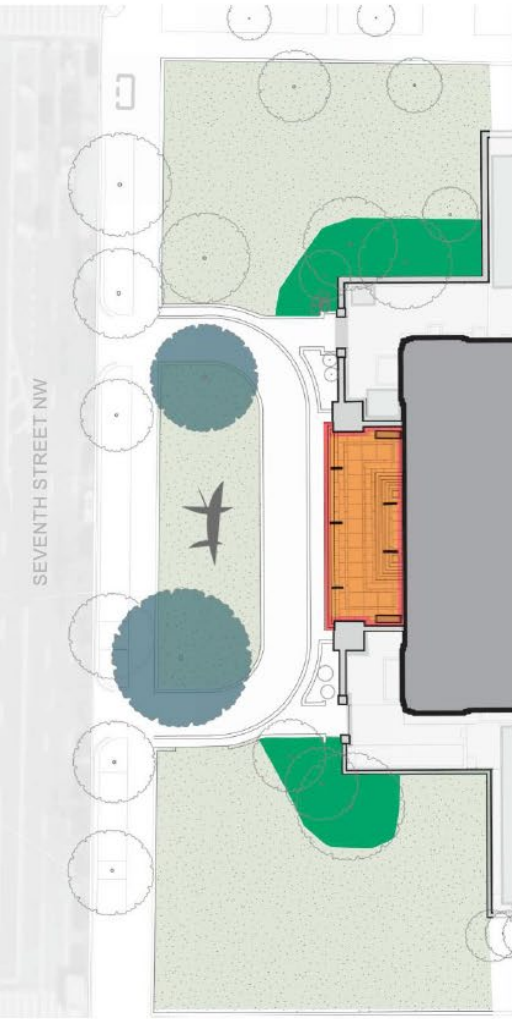


Figure 1-44. Seventh Street Entrance site plan.

National Gallery of Art Seventh Street Entrance Improvements

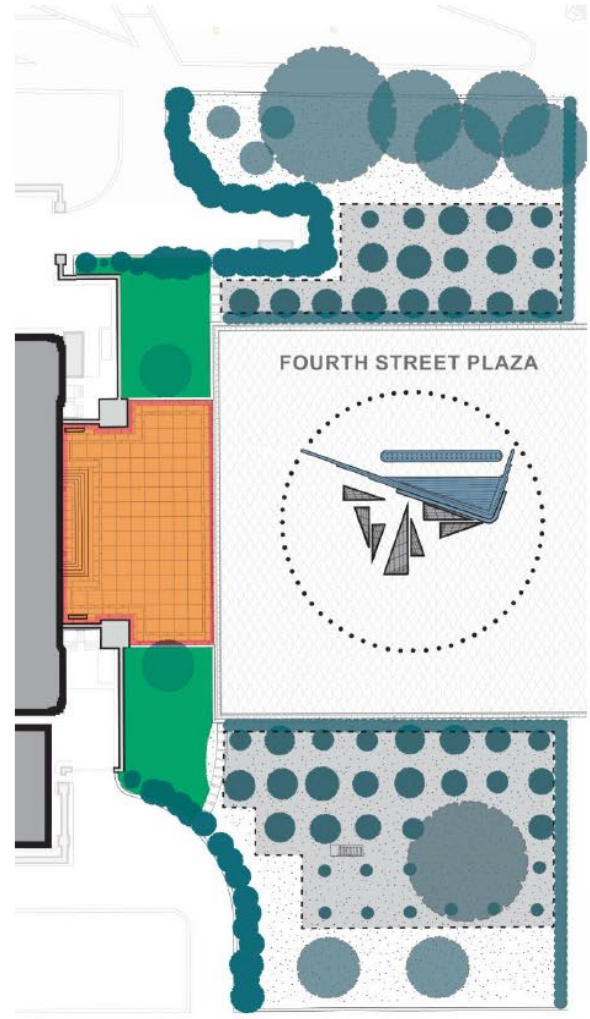


Figure 1-45. Fourth Street Entrance site plan.

Environment - Flooding







ENVIRONMENT - FLOODING

The NGA West Building is located within the flood-prone area of Federal Triangle. Although flood mitigation is not a primary goal of this project, the proposed improvements will provide a modest increase in the site's flood resiliency. The ground elevations at the gates to both the north and south Moats will be raised by approximately 0.5 feet just in front of the gates, providing a minor increase in flood protection for the Moats. In addition, the existing storm drainage system within the project limits will be completely overhauled and replaced with a new system designed to safely convey runoff from a 15-year storm event away from the site. During a major flood event, if the existing public combined sewer system is overwhelmed beyond its capacity, the proposed onsite storm drainage system will have limited ability to prevent flooding. However, once capacity is restored in the public combined sewer system, the new storm drainage system will facilitate the draining of standing stormwater within the site.



Figure 1-46. View of bronze moat gate.

ELEVATIONS TABLE

	SCENARIO	MIN. ELEV. (FEET)	MAX ELEV. (FEET)
	100-Year, 6-hour Storm	-7.0	7.8
	6.0" of rainfall event	7.8	8.2
	500-Year, 6-hour Storm	8.2	8.7
	7.7" of rainfall event (200-year, 6-hour storm)	8.7	9.0
	11" of rainfall event (2080's estimated 200-year, 6-hour storm)	9.0	11.0
	NGA Protected Flood Elevation	11.0	13.0

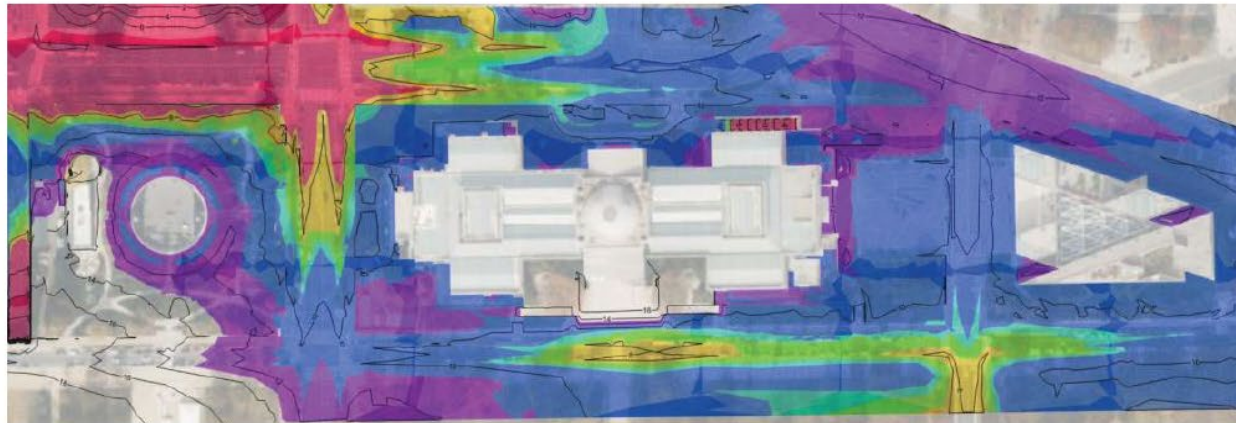


Figure 1-47. Flood elevation map.

Environment – Stormwater Management

National Capital Planning Commission Concept Submission

ENVIRONMENT - STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

This project is classified as a Major Land-Disturbing Activity based on project classification criteria outlined in the District's stormwater regulations. As such, this project is required to retain the 1,2-inch rainfall event, which represents the 90th percentile rainfall event for the District of Columbia. The project must also abide by both the 2-year and 15-year stormwater detention requirements due to it being in the combined sewer system (CSS). Final retention and detention requirements and compliance will be evaluated and confirmed during future phases of design in accordance with DOEE-approved hydrologic methods and calculation procedures.

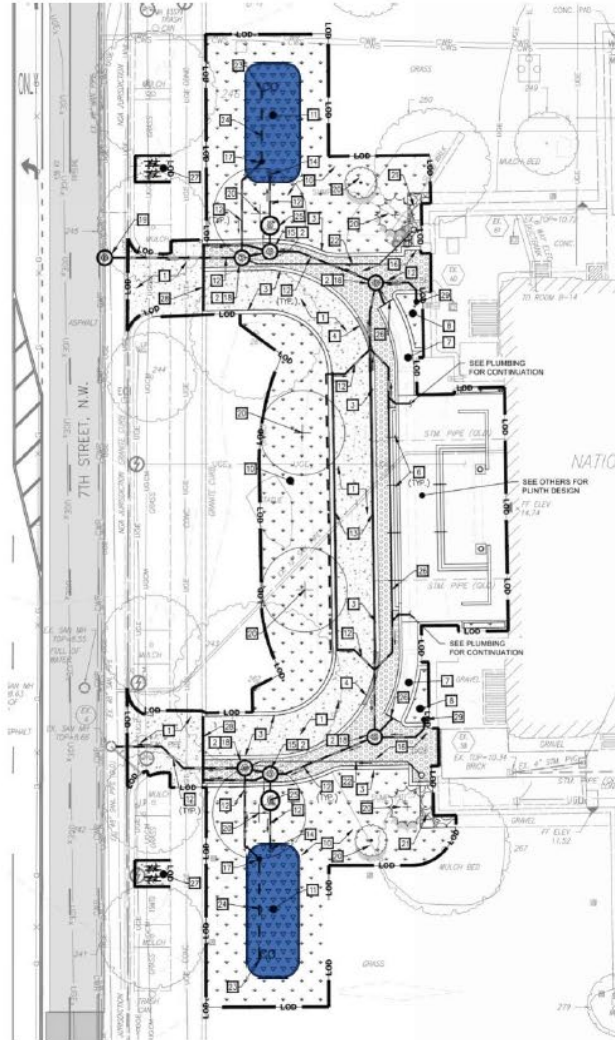


Figure 1-48. Site map of proposed stormwater management mitigation.

National Gallery of Art Seventh Street Entrance Improvements

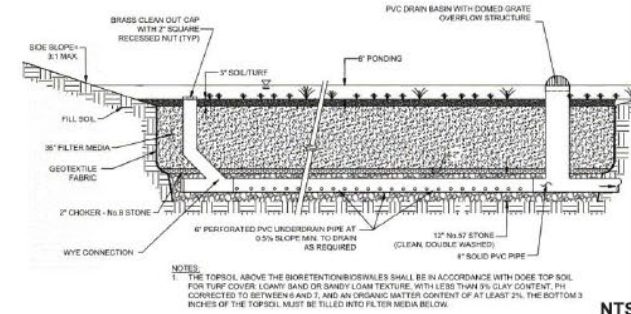


Figure 1-50. Typical bioretention section.



Figure 1-49. Image of existing bioretention at the National Gallery of Art East Building.

Environment – Tree Preservation

National Capital Planning Commission Concept Submission

National Gallery of Art Seventh Street Entrance Improvements

ENVIRONMENT - TREE PRESERVATION

Several trees near the Seventh Street Entrance are believed to date to Gieffert's original planting and were documented as preserved or transplanted during site renovations in the late 1960s. Among these, two Heritage Elms in the central lawn panel and two Southern Magnolias along the moat walls are the largest and most significant. The proposed design is intended to preserve these important, character-defining trees.

Tree Species	Condition	DBH
241 American Elm	Good	14in
242 American Elm	Good	16in
243 American Elm	Good	18in
244 American Elm	Good	18in
245 American Elm	Good	14in
246 American Elm	Good	18in

Tree Species	Condition	DBH
249 Chinese Elm	Good	9in
250 Southern Magnolia	Good	29in
251 American Holly	Good	18in
252 American Holly	Good	18in
261 American Elm	Good	51in
262 American Elm	Good	35in

Tree Species	Condition	DBH
265 American Holly	Good	22in
266 American Holly	Good	34in
267 Southern Magnolia	Good	34in
598 American Elm	Good	20in



LEGEND:

-  STRUCTURAL ROOT ZONE
-  CRITICAL ROOT ZONE
-  PROMINENT TREE



Figure 1-51. Site plan of existing trees at the Seventh Street Entrance.

Program Pedestrian Analysis and Visitor Data

PROGRAM

PEDESTRIAN ANALYSIS AND VISITOR DATA

- The Seventh Street Entrance is adjacent to important pedestrian pathways along the National Mall. However, the entrance experiences low traffic as it is not along an accessible route and visitation metrics decrease as visitors travel across the National Gallery of Art campus from west to east.
- On average, the Sixth Street Accessible Entrance is the most utilized entry, followed by the National Mall Entrance. On the East-West axis, the East Building Entrance is the most-utilized. The usage of the Fourth Street and Seventh Street entrances is similar, with the Seventh Street Entrance surpassing the Fourth Street Entrance in the last quarter of 2024.
- Pedestrian exit data shows that more visitors head to the north (rather than in the direction of the mall) upon leaving the National Gallery from the Seventh Street Entrance, presumably in the direction of public transportation. Therefore, visitor flows leaving the site are inverse to the visitor approach flows.

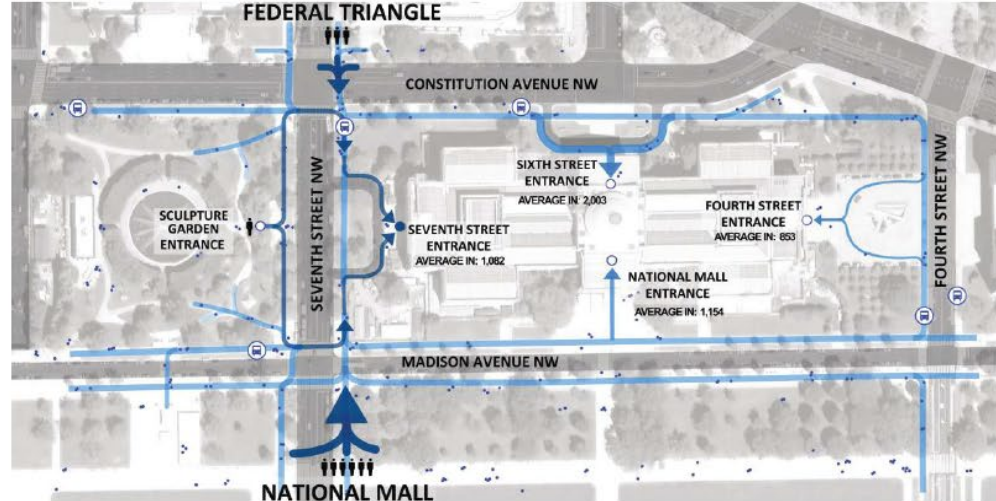


Figure 1-52, Pedestrian flow to entrances.

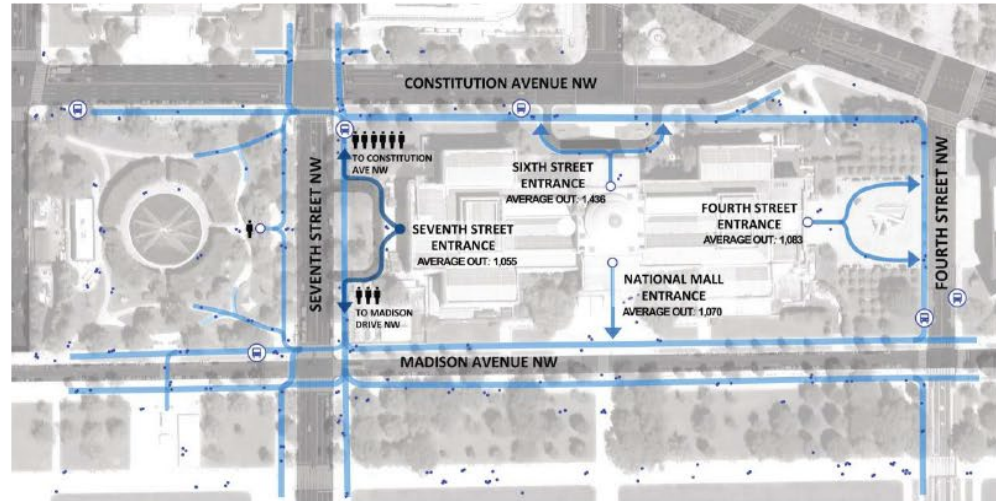


Figure 1-53, Pedestrian flow from entrances.



LEGEND:

- PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC
- PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC SPECIFIC TO SEVENTH STREET ENTRANCE
- BUS STOP

Program

PROGRAM

ACCESS DISTANCE FROM NATIONAL MALL

Accessing the National Gallery of Art's West Building from the National Mall presents notable accessibility challenges due to its limited barrier-free entry points. The Sixth Street Entrance functions as the **only** publicly accessible exterior entrance into the West Building. As a result, visitors approaching from the Mall must navigate a longer, less intuitive route to reach this single accessible entry. The reliance on a single accessible entrance underscores the ongoing need for clearer wayfinding and improved connectivity between the National Mall and the National Gallery's primary public spaces.

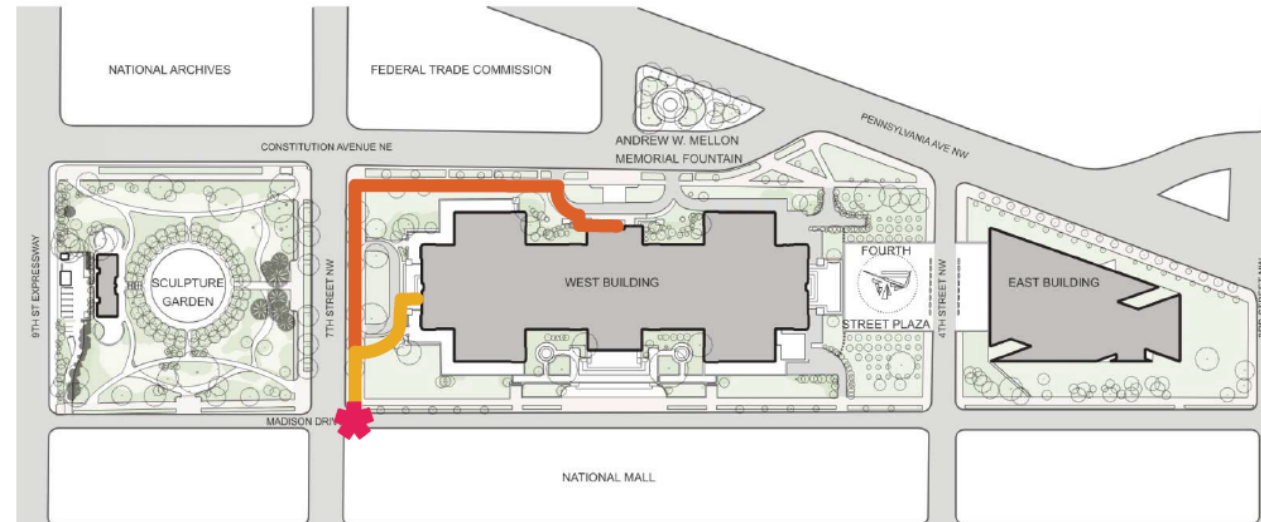


Figure 1-54. Diagram of pedestrian circulation routes to the Sixth Street and Seventh Street entrances from the National Mall.



LEGEND:

- ACCESSIBLE ROUTE TO SIXTH STREET ENTRANCE
- ROUTE TO SEVENTH STREET ENTRANCE

Program Pedestrian Procession

PROGRAM

PEDESTRIAN PROCESSION

- Δ5.12ft of grade change between the public sidewalk and the FFE at the door
- The average slope of a path along this route would be 3.4%

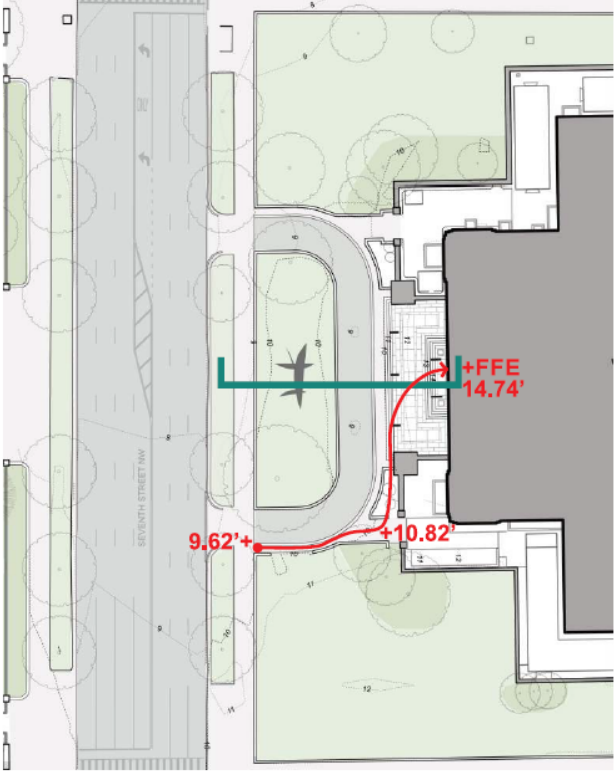


Figure 1-55. Key plan marking spot elevations along pedestrian route.

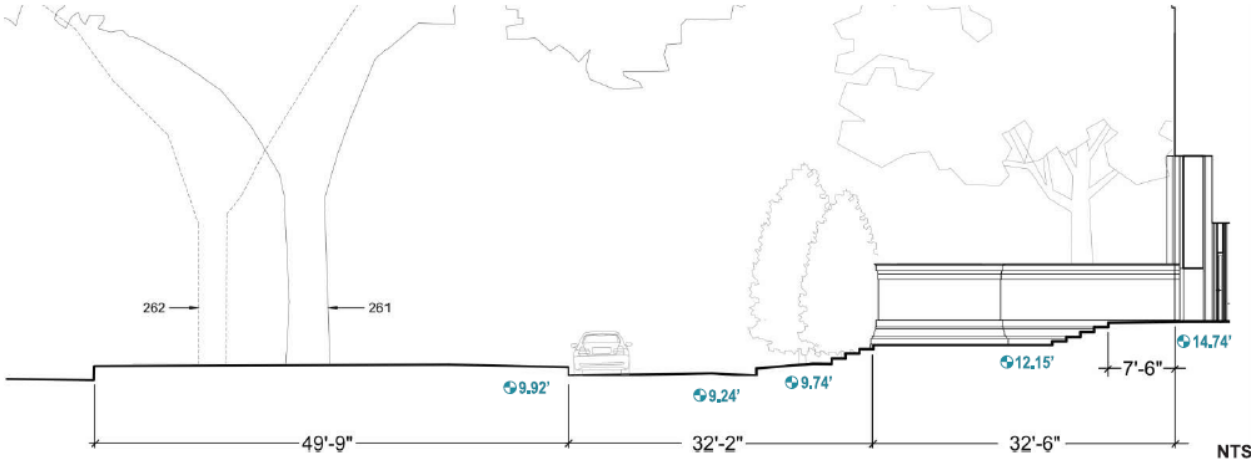


Figure 1-56. Existing site section through plinth and center lawn panel with existing spot elevations.

N
NTS

LEGEND:

→ PEDESTRIAN ROUTE (~150')

+0.00 SPOT ELEVATIONS

Program Drive Procession

National Capital Planning Commission Concept Submission

PROGRAM

DRIVE PROCESSION

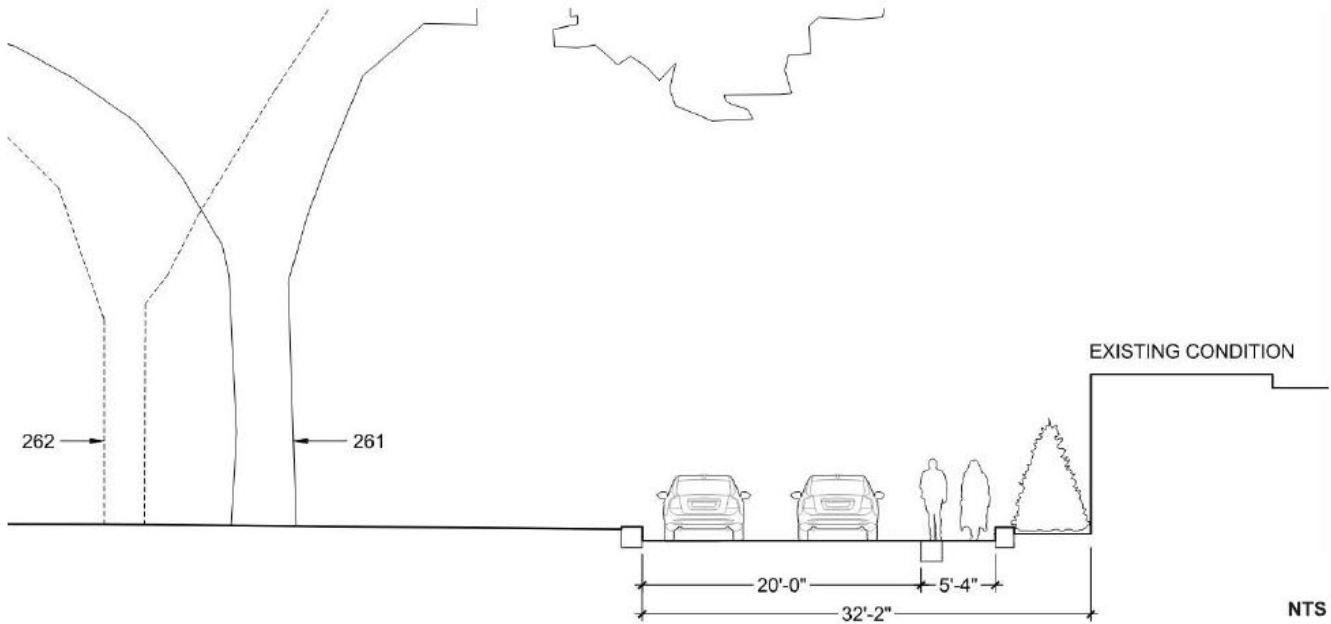


Figure 1-57. Section through existing drive, sidewalk, and moat wall.

National Gallery of Art Seventh Street Entrance Improvements



Figure 1-58. View of drive.

Program Comfort Shade and Glare

National Capital Planning Commission Concept Submission

PROGRAM

COMFORT - SHADE AND GLARE

Seating and landscape elements are understood as important tools to slow movement, encourage pause, and provide areas of rest within the Seventh Street Entrance environment. Currently, visitors utilize existing curbs and shaded edges, particularly during the summer months, as informal places to rest while moving between destinations on the National Mall or before entering and after exiting the National Gallery. These patterns demonstrate a clear need for shade and respite at this location.



Figure 1-59. View of existing Seventh Street Entrance with minimal shaded areas.



Figure 1-60. View of visitors and passing pedestrians resting on site existing curbs.

National Gallery of Art Seventh Street Entrance Improvements

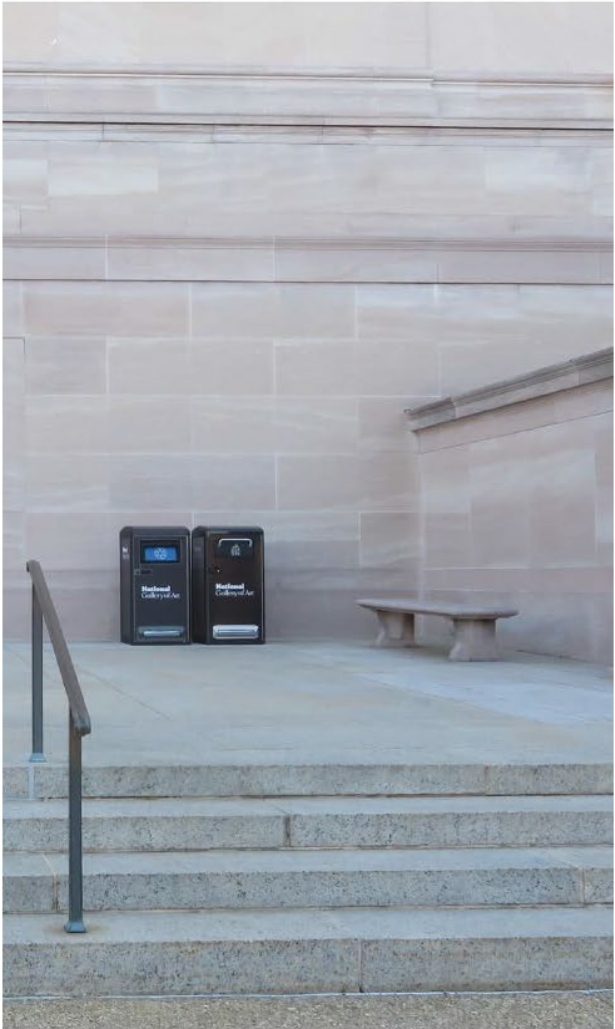


Figure 1-61. Existing seating on the Seventh Street Entrance plinth.

Design Approach

DESIGN APPROACH

DESIGN CRITERIA

The design criteria guiding the project include:

CAMPUS UNITY AND IDENTITY

Reinforce the understanding of the West Building, Sculpture Garden, and surrounding landscapes as a unified campus. The Seventh Street Entrance should be legible as a public front door rather than a secondary or service-oriented entry. Views to the building, clarity of approach, and the role of art and landscape in reinforcing identity are key considerations.

ACCESSIBILITY AND VISITOR SAFETY

Eliminate physical and perceptual barriers and support safe movement for visitors of all ages and abilities. Accessible routes should be intuitive and gracious, minimizing reliance on steep slopes and ramps. Circulation should reduce conflicts between pedestrians, vehicles, and service access, and address existing hazards such as grade changes, glare, and tripping conditions.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE AND WAYFINDING

Create a welcoming and comfortable arrival sequence that allows visitors time and space to orient themselves. Wayfinding should be reinforced at natural decision points, particularly at corners and thresholds, rather than relying on signage placed within primary circulation paths. The sequence from exterior arrival to interior destination should be clear, calm, and intuitive, reducing confusion and bottlenecks.

STEWARDSHIP OF CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES

Carefully consider the historic significance and character-defining features of the West Building and its landscape setting. The monumental character of the building, balanced symmetry, central lawn panel, and mature elm trees that frame views to the entrance should be preserved wherever possible. Proposed interventions should minimize impacts to historic fabric and critical root zones while addressing contemporary needs.

SECURITY AND OPERATIONS INTEGRATION

Integrate security and operational requirements into the overall site and architectural composition. Security measures should be legible and durable, reducing the perception of temporary or retrofitted solutions. Operational needs, including access to moats and service areas, should be accommodated without undermining the visitor experience or clarity of circulation, and with consideration for future change.

PEDESTRIAN, VEHICULAR, AND SERVICE BALANCE

Prioritize pedestrians while accommodating necessary vehicle and service access. Vehicular functions, including service and occasional bus use, should not drive the design but should be clearly accommodated through geometry, materiality, and subtle physical cues. The relationship between pedestrian and vehicular zones should support safety, clarity, and comfort for visitors.

DESIGN APPROACH

The design reinforces the entrance as a welcoming and clearly identifiable public threshold, clarifying its relationship to the West Building, the Sculpture Garden, and the surrounding landscape. At the same time, it responds to contemporary visitor expectations by improving accessibility, safety, and intuitive movement, prioritizing pedestrians while supporting clear wayfinding. All interventions are conceived with careful stewardship of the historic architecture and designed landscape, ensuring that the character-defining features of the West Building, including the clean, symmetrical composition, entrance procession with two ascents, and the restrained stone and bronze palette, as well as its heritage elms remain central to the experience.

A dignified and accessible pathway from Seventh Street to the building entrance gently slopes upward toward a tiered exterior plinth. A second inclined walkway along the building elevation brings visitors to the enlarged upper plinth and entry. The existing moat gates are retained, while pedestrian paths are set at a slightly higher elevation, subtly distinguishing the public realm from service areas through both grade and material expression. A generous level zone at the stairs and along the sloped walkways, designed without raised curbs, accommodates both pedestrians and vehicles, ensuring flexibility without compromising accessibility.

The lower ends of the sloped walkways follow the slight curve of the existing pedestrian pathway, creating a stronger visual and physical connection, along with a more direct, intuitive route onto the plinth. The tiered plinth entry approach into the National Gallery is retained with the addition of the sloped walkways to create a fully accessible entry sequence. From Seventh Street, the historic entry sequence remains legible and aligned with the original vision, while the simplified geometry enhances clarity and presence. New architectural lighting, combined with restored historic bronze light standards, strengthens the sense of safety and approachability.

The plinth also serves as a place of pause and gathering. The expanded upper plinth and the relocation of the Calder sculpture from the central lawn panel reinforce a visual dialogue with the Sculpture Garden across Seventh Street, strengthening connections across the campus. Additional secondary functions can be accommodated on the plinth, ensuring adaptability over

time. Within the central lawn panel, the preservation of the existing elms guides a light-touch approach.

MATERIALITY

To the extent possible, the proposed design plans to salvage existing historic site materials and, in some cases, to reuse them. The top priority for reuse are the pitched-top Milford Granite curbs at the outer boundaries of the current walk and drive, which are planned to be raised in elevation, but to be replaced in nearly the same horizontal locations. The flat-topped central curbs that currently define the seam between drive and walk will be shifted to accommodate a widening of the pedestrian-zone.

The sloped walkways, low walls, stairs, and the plinth will maintain the same material palette as the original design. Tennessee Pink Marble and Milford Granite are intentionally used on horizontal and vertical surfaces, emulating the original design intent of Pope.

Character Defining Features Elevation

National Capital Planning Commission Concept Submission

National Gallery of Art Seventh Street Entrance Improvements

CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES ELEVATION

Core Organizing Design Principles

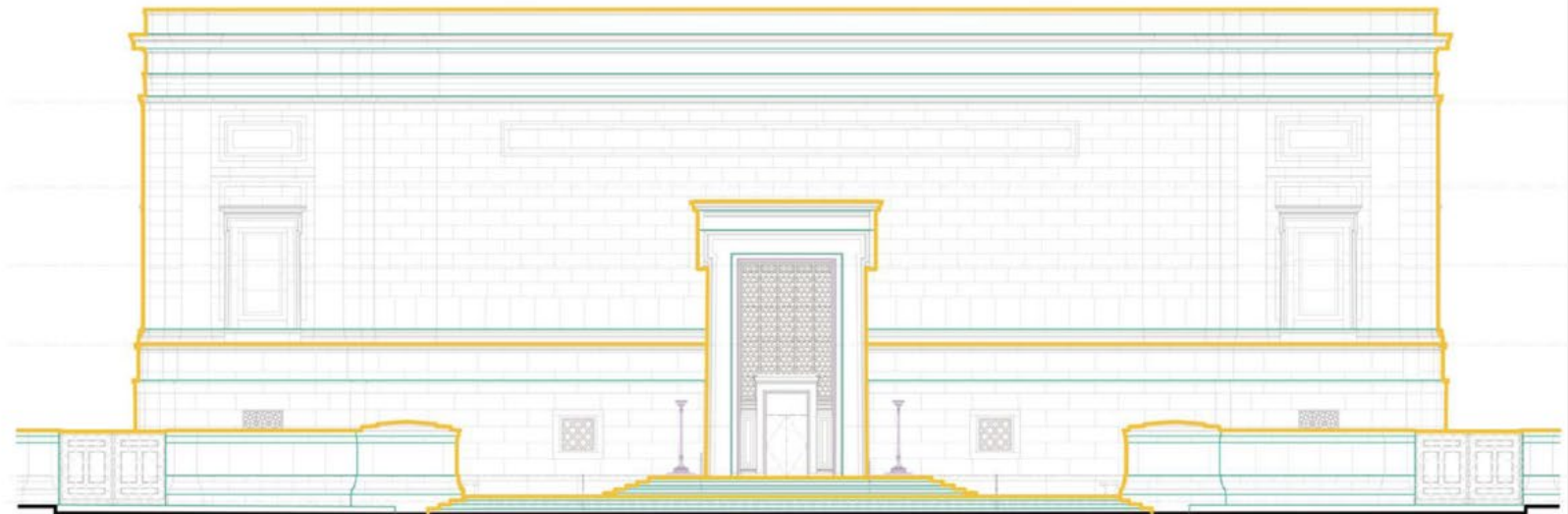
- 1 Clean, Symmetrical Composition of stepped masses
- 2 Entrance Procession w/ 2 ascents
- 3 Restrained palette of stone, bronze and plant materials with subtle gradations and delicate profiles

Space Defining Elements

- 4 Delicately detailed building profiles and horizontal banding
- 5 Tennessee Pink Marble Building, Terrace, and Upper Steps
- 6 Milford Pink Granite Site Curbs and Lower Steps
- 7 U-Shaped Circulation Route
- 8 Central and Flanking Lawn Panels
- 9 Flanking American Elm Trees

Supporting Materials & Details

- 10 Bronze Light Standards
- 11 Exposed Aggregate Walkways
- 12 Flanking Evergreen Plants



Character Defining Features Plan

National Capital Planning Commission Concept Submission

National Gallery of Art Seventh Street Entrance Improvements

CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES PLAN

Core Organizing Design Principles

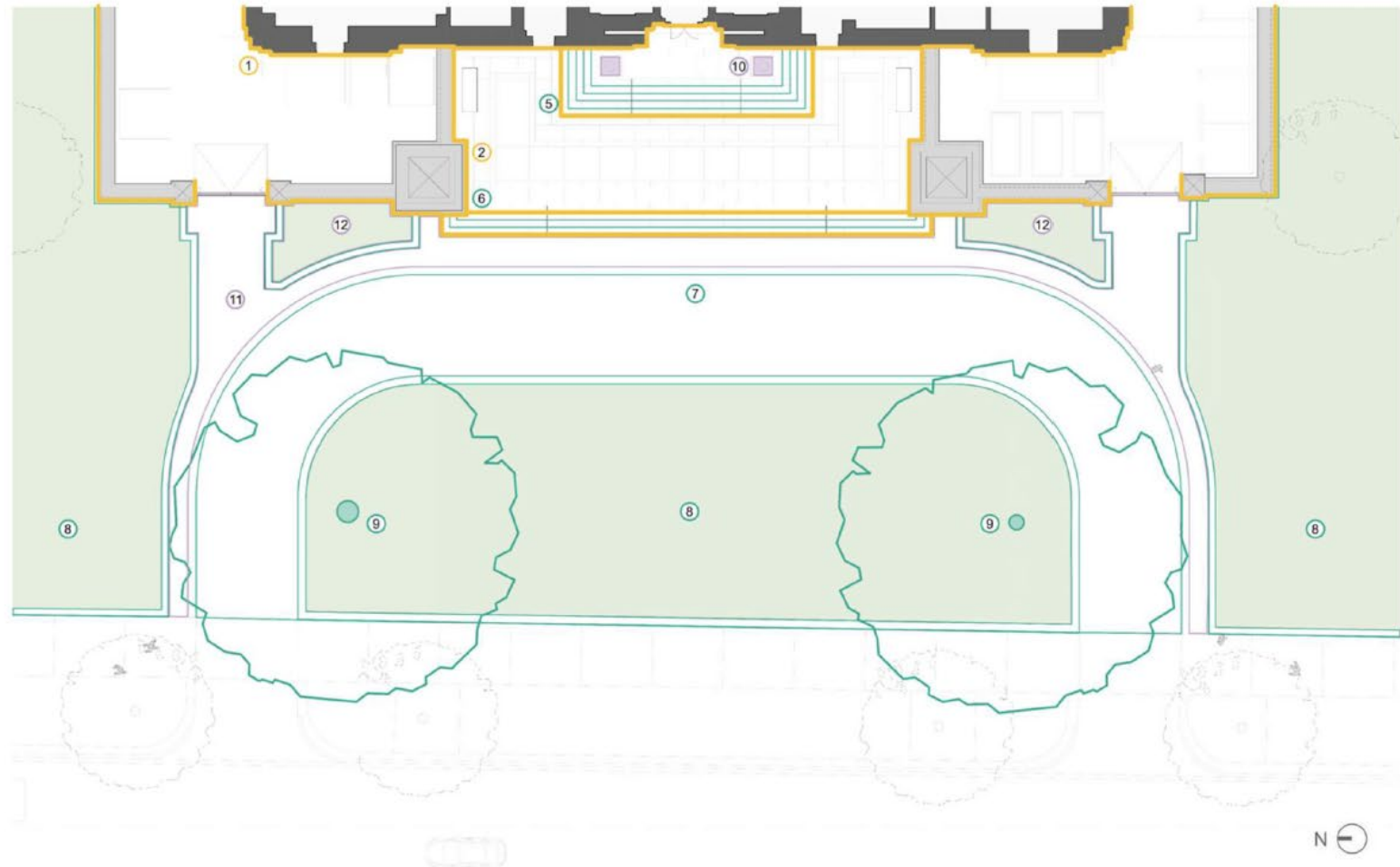
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- 12 Flanking Evergreen Plants



Site Plan

SITE PLAN

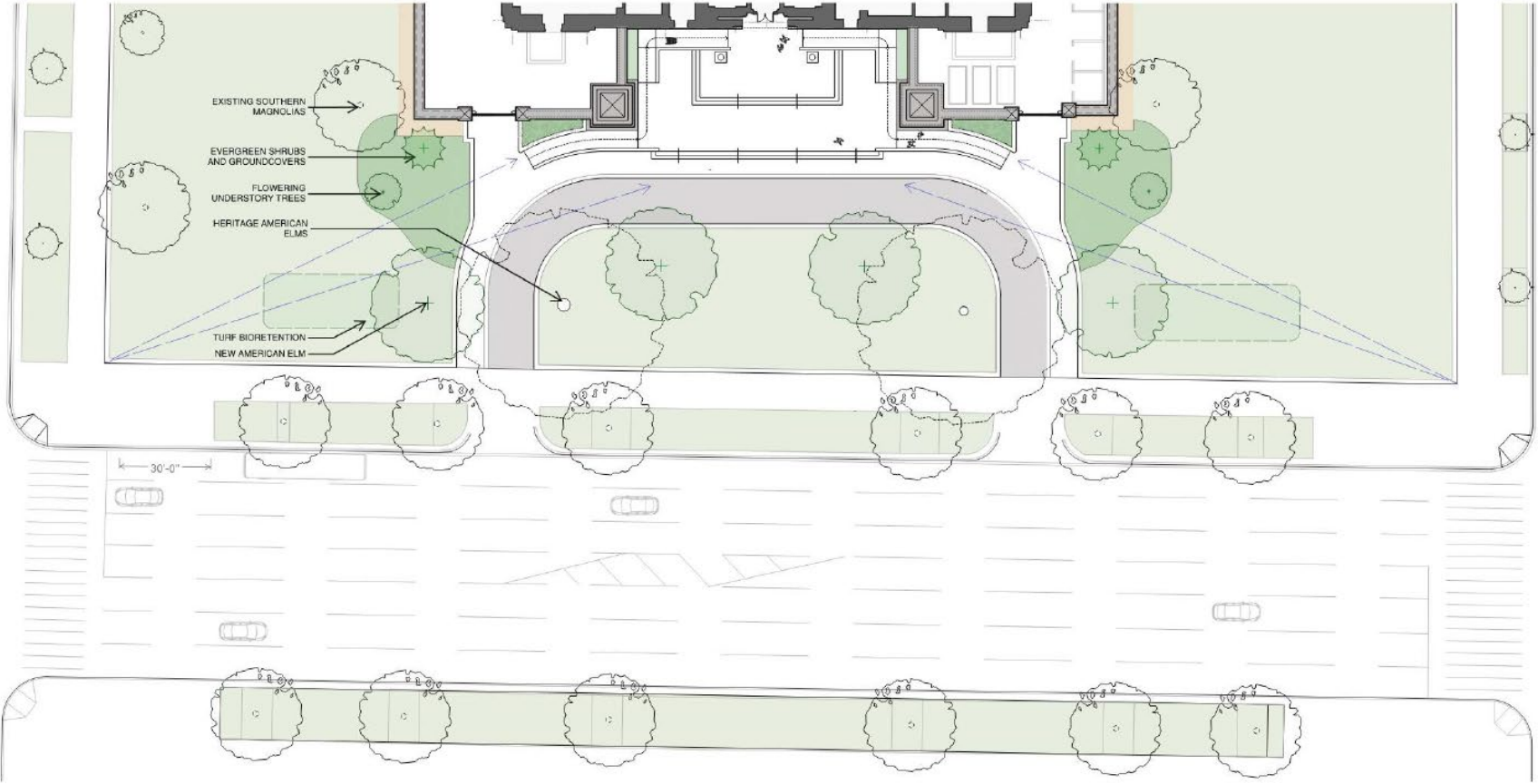


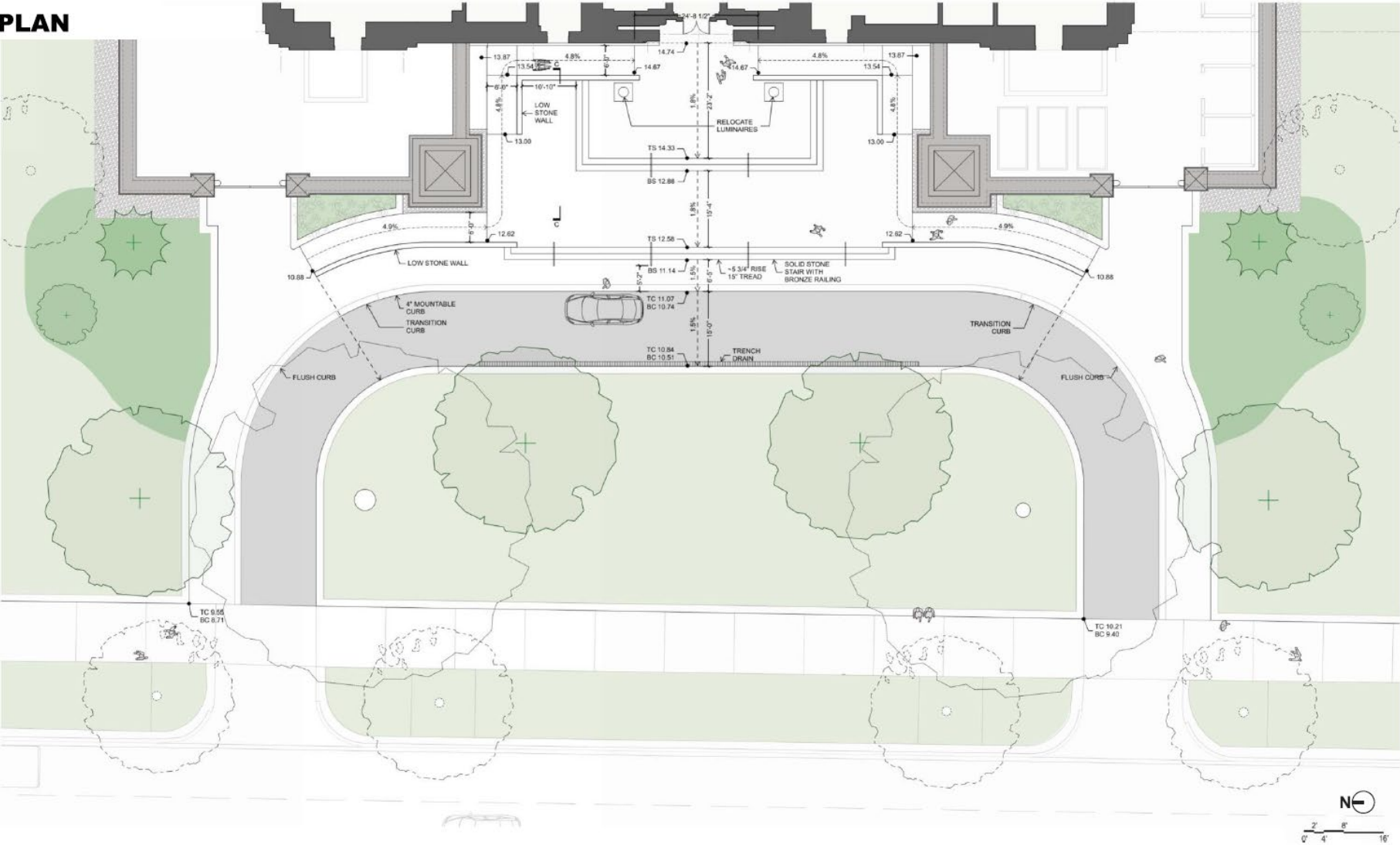
Figure 1-64. Proposed site plan.

Site Plan

National Capital Planning Commission Concept Submission

National Gallery of Art Seventh Street Entrance Improvements

PLAN

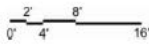


Elevation

National Capital Planning Commission Concept Submission

National Gallery of Art Seventh Street Entrance Improvements

ELEVATION



Design Options Summary With Dismissed

DESIGN OPTIONS SUMMARY

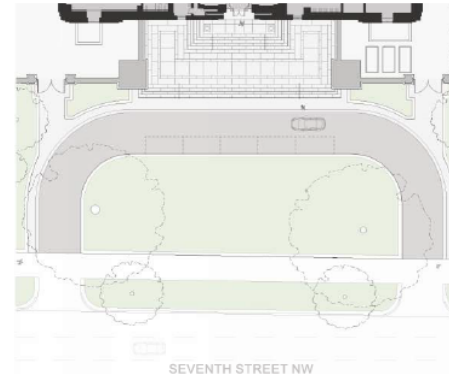
The design team studied multiple options on the path towards a balanced design that both maintains the defining characteristics of the existing stone plinth and moat walls and provides integrated and dignified accessible pathways for all visitors as they approach and leave the Seventh Street Entrance Lobby. Shown here are three previous design studies, selected for the insights they offer into the National Gallery's project goals, including universal access, clear wayfinding, and enhanced visitor comfort and care. Both the National Gallery and the design team recognize safety concerns with the current plinth conditions. The narrow landing at the top stair set introduces congestion and tripping risks for visitors. This is especially dangerous for visitors exiting on bright days as their vision must adjust to exterior conditions.

Consistent across all options explored is a careful attention to the formality, monumentality and symmetry of the original design; prioritized easy and intuitive pedestrian circulation over vehicular traffic; and the preservation of the heritage elm trees occupying the central lawn panel. The existing curb along the inside face of the drive aisle closest to the elm trees remains in place in each option. This is a critical design constraint. Pushing this curbline further west towards the central lawn panel encroaches into the critical root zone of the elm trees and places them at risk. The central vehicle drop zone elevation is also consistent across all options.

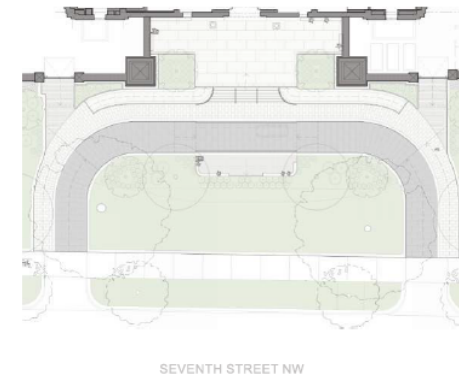
The elements studied and tested in these design iterations include:

- The level of intervention at the existing stone steps and moat walls
- The inclined pathways themselves as they navigate the grade changes from the sidewalk to the entry level
- Widths and orientation of walkways related to visitor safety and intuitive wayfinding
- Options for comfortable and protected visitor gathering and seating on the plinth

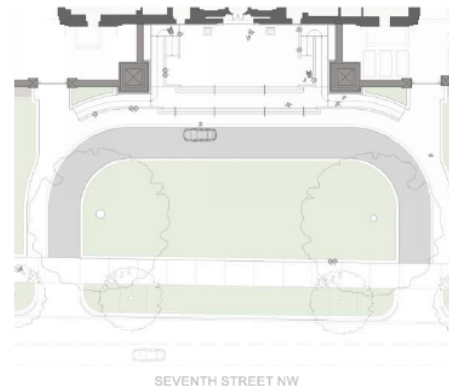
The design options studied led to a design approach that meets the National Gallery's goals of stewardship of the existing building, universal access, clear wayfinding, and enhanced visitor comfort and care.



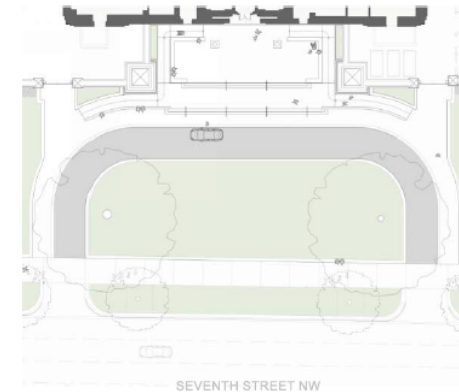
EXISTING PLAN



DESIGN STUDY A



DESIGN STUDY B



DESIGN STUDY C



NGA Master Plan Alignment

National Capital Planning Commission Concept Submission

National Gallery of Art Seventh Street Entrance Improvements

NGA MASTER PLAN ALIGNMENT

The National Gallery of Art completed a Comprehensive Campus Plan (CCP) in 2024. The CCP is an update to the Master Facilities Plan (MFP), which was originally developed in 1999 and has guided the National Gallery's capital renewal program for over twenty-five years. The CCP identifies and prioritizes work items across the NGA campus, including building systems renewal, life safety and accessibility improvements, risk mitigation, and sustainability. The Seventh Street Entrance improvements project was identified in the CCP as a high priority project to improve accessibility, significantly reducing the distance from the National Mall to an accessible entrance. The project also seeks to improve the visitor experience by creating a more welcoming entrance.

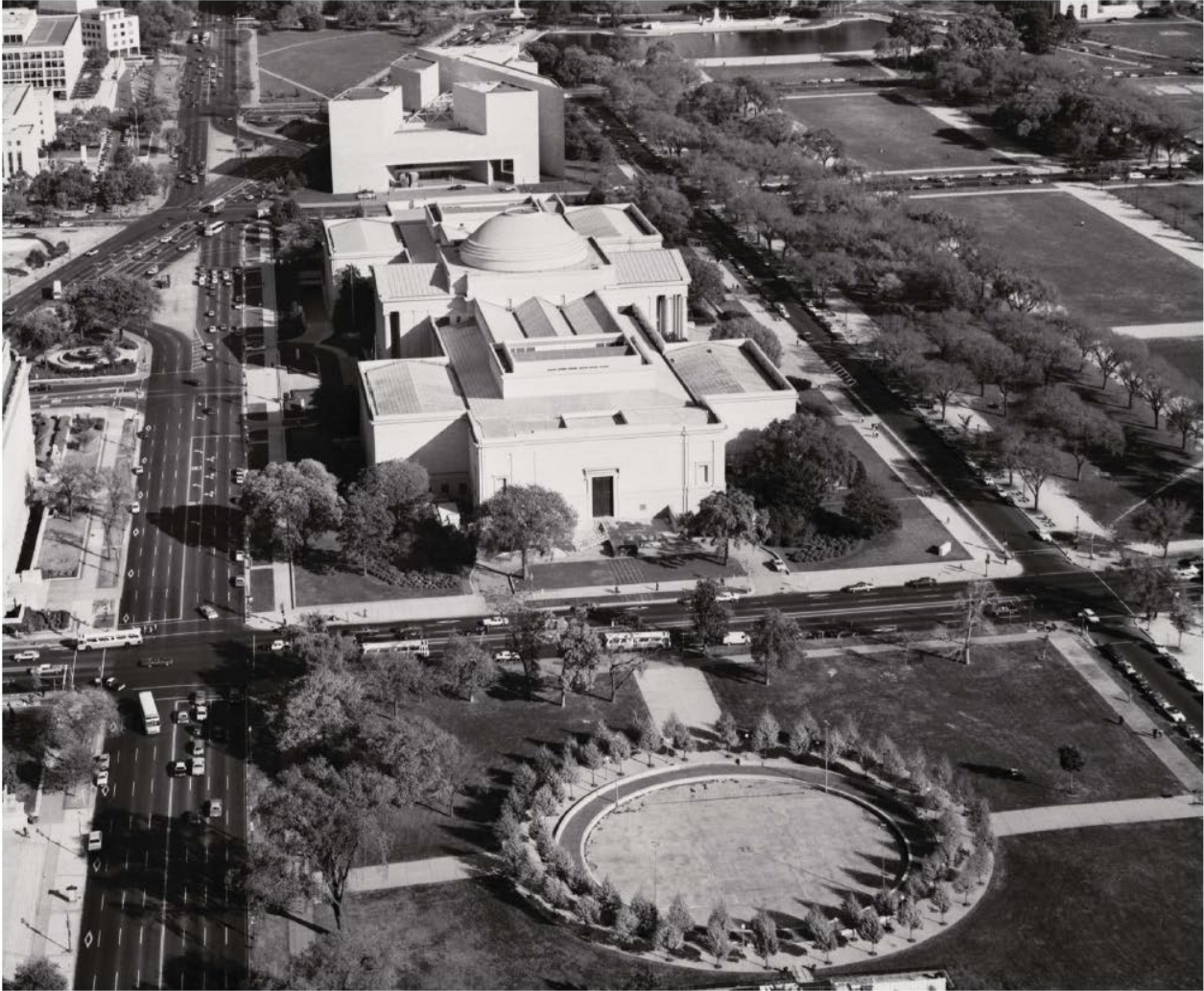


Figure 1-67. Aerial view of the National Gallery of Art and the Sculpture Garden in 1980. (National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, Gallery Archives, RG26A, National Gallery of Art Architecture Images - Building, Campus, and Art Installation Views, 26A5_2680_001)