



**National Trust *for*
Historic Preservation®**

**Public Testimony of Carol Quillen
President and CEO of the National Trust for Historic Preservation
Before the National Capital Planning Commission
Regarding the East Wing Modernization Project**

Thursday, March 5, 2026

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and Members of the National Capital Planning Commission.

My name is Carol Quillen, and I speak on behalf of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. I appreciate the opportunity to share comments about the East Wing Modernization Project.

Thank you all for your service. You have a big responsibility. This Commission, composed of public servants and eminent citizens, oversees the collaborative planning process for our nation's capital, something in which every American has a stake.

As the Commission's Comprehensive Plan states, Washington, D.C., is the symbolic heart of the United States. Its design and architecture should embody the enduring values of the American people and the bold aspirations of our founding. Visiting the capital should ground all Americans in these shared values so that, together, we can build a more perfect union for our children and our children's children, as our forebears did for us.

For this city to ground Americans in our enduring values, its layout and key buildings must connect to our history. We need to see the through line from the 1791 L'Enfant plan to the Comprehensive Plan of today. We must be able to recognize the places where our history happened, so that visiting them reminds us both of our founding values and of those who, generation after generation, fought to make these values concrete.

Because connecting to our history serves people in the present, this Commission identifies historic preservation as a key component of the Comprehensive Plan for the nation's capital. You are stewards of places that matter to all Americans, places where we can learn where we came from and who we can become. By acting as responsible stewards, you can inspire each of us to recommit to our highest ideals.

At the same time, this Commission also must consider the needs of the public servants who occupy our historic landmarks now.

It's a hard job. Simultaneously honoring 1) the obligation to connect the broader public to our enduring values through historic preservation and 2) the needs of public servants who now occupy our iconic buildings is a weighty challenge. I know this, because my colleagues at the National Trust strive to do that every day.

At the National Trust, we activate the power of historic places to serve people now. And, because we do this every day, I can say with confidence that you don't have to choose. You don't have to choose between respecting our history for the American people and accommodating modern government's needs. In the case of the East Wing Modernization Project, you can do both.

Doing both, however, will require that you take your time, that you move deliberately, that you engage seriously with ideas offered by the tens of thousands of architects, planners, scholars, and patriotic citizens who have submitted comments. These people are worth hearing out. The American people have good ideas.

We know you can build a 1,000-person ballroom that, unlike the plan currently under review, truly honors the iconic status, the primacy, and the historic significance of the People's House.

Comments submitted to you show how this could be done. The resulting ballroom would be smaller AND it would hold 1,000 people for a seated dinner. It would be lower in height AND it would still accommodate the functions proposed in the current plan. It would respect the building's original architectural style. And, by retaining the historic axis along Pennsylvania Avenue between the Capitol and the White House, it would preserve the material representation of the symbolic connection between the legislative and the executive branches in a nation committed to representative government and public accountability.

This consultative process exists for a reason. To borrow words U.S. Supreme Court Justice Gorsuch used to describe our legislative process, it enables you to tap the combined wisdom of many, and not just that of one man or faction.

Listening to the views of the American people and incorporating the best of our ideas will result in a better overall project as it builds a shared sense of purpose on a contentious issue. Getting to this point takes patience. Democratic deliberation is slow. It's also the hallmark of a free people.

Thank you again for the opportunity to be here today. We at the National Trust remain ready to work with you to improve this project.

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Public Testimony of David Scott Parker Regarding the East Wing Modernization Project – March 5, 2026

Dear National Capital Planning Commission Chairman Scharf and Members:

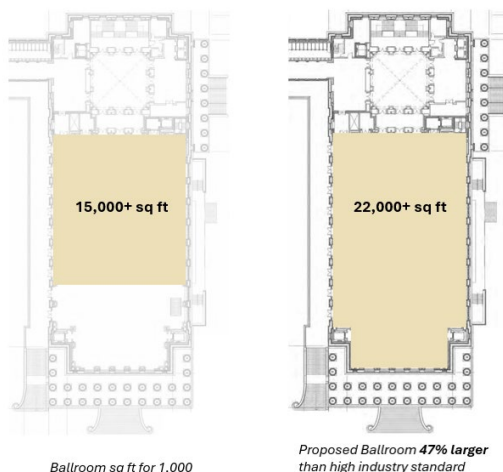
As a practicing architect for over 36 years and Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, I am writing to express grave concerns about the proposed White House ballroom and its numerous associated impacts. I've studied available materials carefully and have the following observations and constructive recommendations:

1. **SCALE OVERWHELMING:** Below is a comparison between the proposed ballroom portico with the White House and adjacent Treasury building. The disparity of scale of the proposed portico with its much larger columns to both is obvious, especially given that—as an appendage to the White House—it should be subservient.

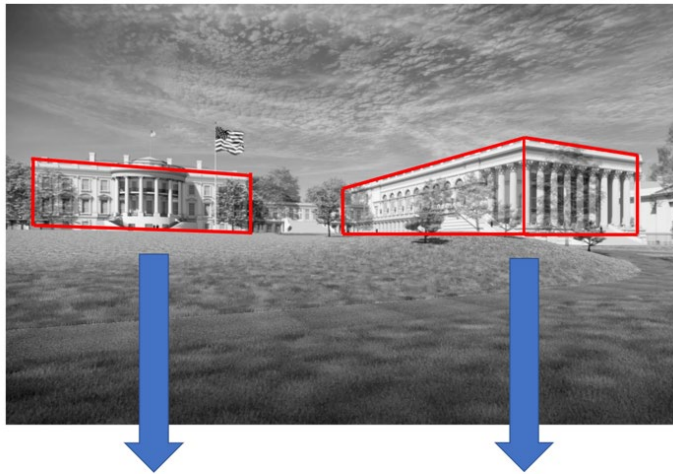


** All figures cited in these comments are approximations estimated based upon available plans.*

2. **PROGRAM INFLATED.** The ballroom structure has been represented as being sized to accommodate 1,000 people. The American architectural industry standard for ballrooms is from 10 sq ft per person (*low*) to 15 sq ft per person (*high*). Based upon the *HIGH* industry standard, the ballroom itself should therefore be 15,000 sq ft; however, the proposed space is over 22,000 sq ft, which is approximately 47% **LARGER** than industry standard.

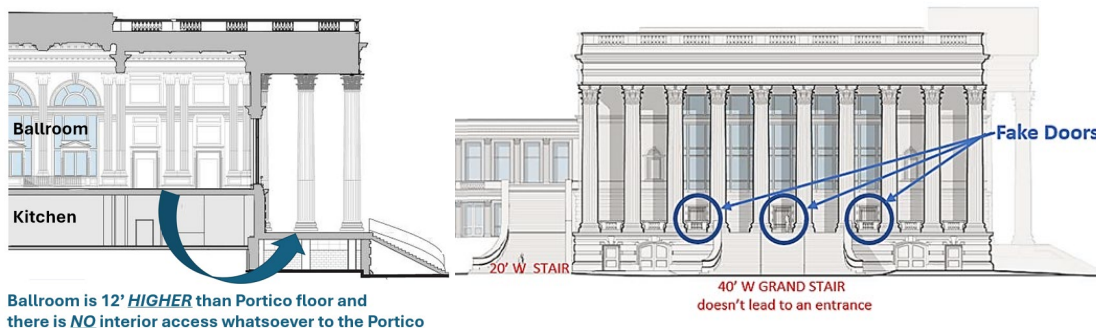


3. **VOLUME EXAGGERATED.** The *volume* of the central White House is approx. 875,000 cubic feet in contrast to the proposed ballroom structure (*not including the colonnade*) whose mass is over 2.36 *MILLION* cubic feet—*nearly 3 times the original White House*—a huge violation of *both* Classical architectural principles mandating balance AND the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.



875 thousand cubic feet **VERSUS** 2.36 *million* cubic feet
 (+ 41 thousand cu ft of portico volume) (+ 284 thousand cu ft of portico volume)

4. **PURPOSE OF PORTICO ILLOGICAL.** The Ballroom floor is 12’ *HIGHER* than—and does not connect to—its south portico, and *neither* does the Kitchen underneath (*see section below*). There is *NO internal* connection to this portico *whatsoever*.

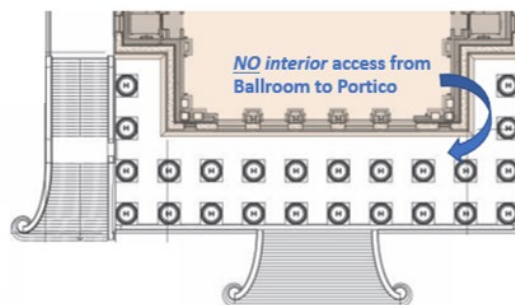


Ballroom is 12’ *HIGHER* than Portico floor and there is *NO* interior access whatsoever to the Portico

5. **FLOOR AREA USELESS.** The proposed portico has a floor area of 4,000 sq ft, is not ADA accessible, and does not lead to an entrance. The doors there are all *FAKE*, and the 24 columns render the porch useless while also blocking views from the ballroom above. It is a *portico with no function or purpose*.

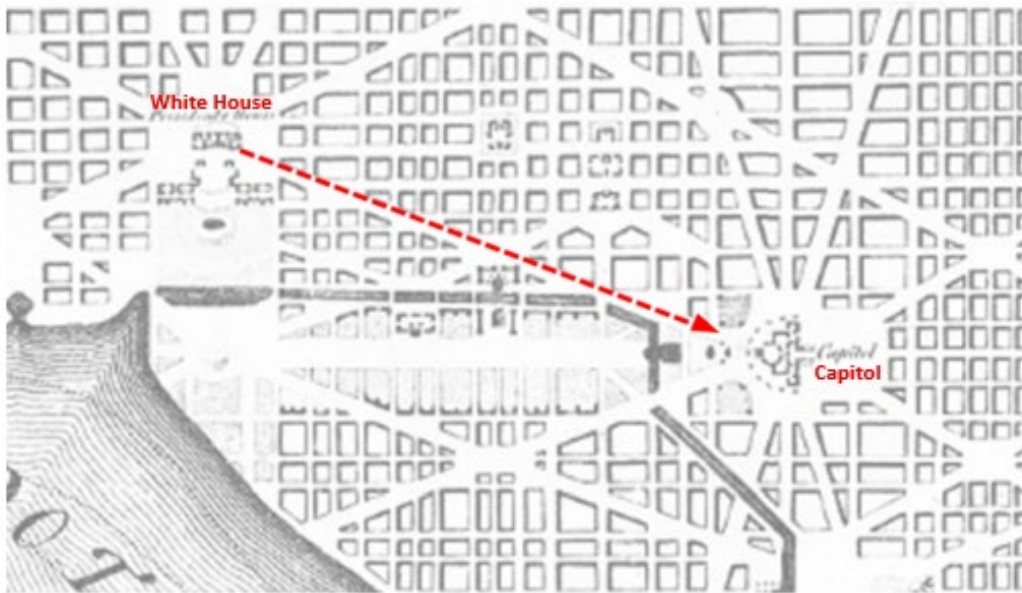


Columns superimposed on view done prior to addition of portico



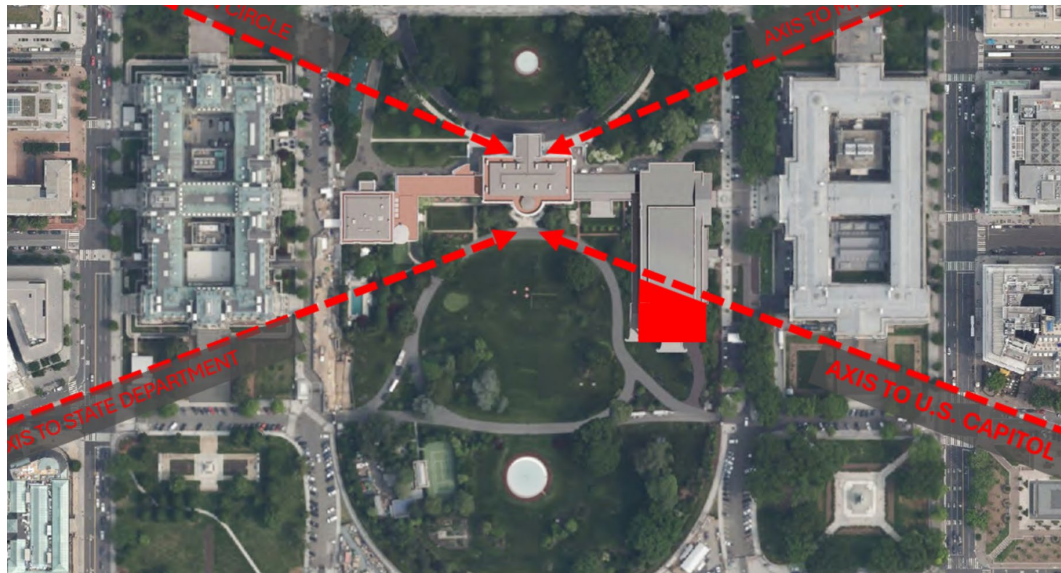
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6. **ORIGINAL CITY PLAN IMPACTED.** George Washington commissioned L'Enfant to design Washington DC in 1791 (*partial plan below*) and the two buildings he specifically called out 'ON AXIS' were the President's House and the Capitol. *The importance of this axis—urbanistically, historically, and symbolically—cannot be overstated.*



IMPACTS ON THE ORIGINAL PLAN FOR WASHINGTON

7. **SIGNIFICANT AXIS ABORTED.** The symbolic connection between the two branches of our government will be totally interrupted by the proposed ballroom. The axial connection created by L'Enfant, at the request of *George Washington* and endorsed by our *FOUNDING FATHERS*--will be forever *aborted*.



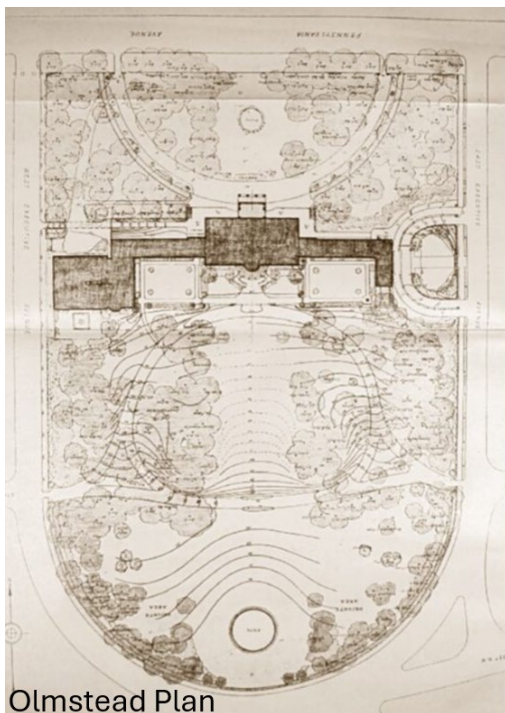
PROPOSED STRUCTURE COMPLETELY BLOCKS AXIS

8. **CAPITOL VIEW BLOCKED.** A highlighted and enlarged rendering from the latest architect’s submission —depicting the view from the Capitol steps looking up Pennsylvania Avenue toward the White House reveals that the new ballroom *BECOMES* the main feature, totally blocking the White House and its grounds.



VIEW FROM CAPITOL STEPS TO WHITE HOUSE COMPLETELY BLOCKED BY NEW BALLROOM

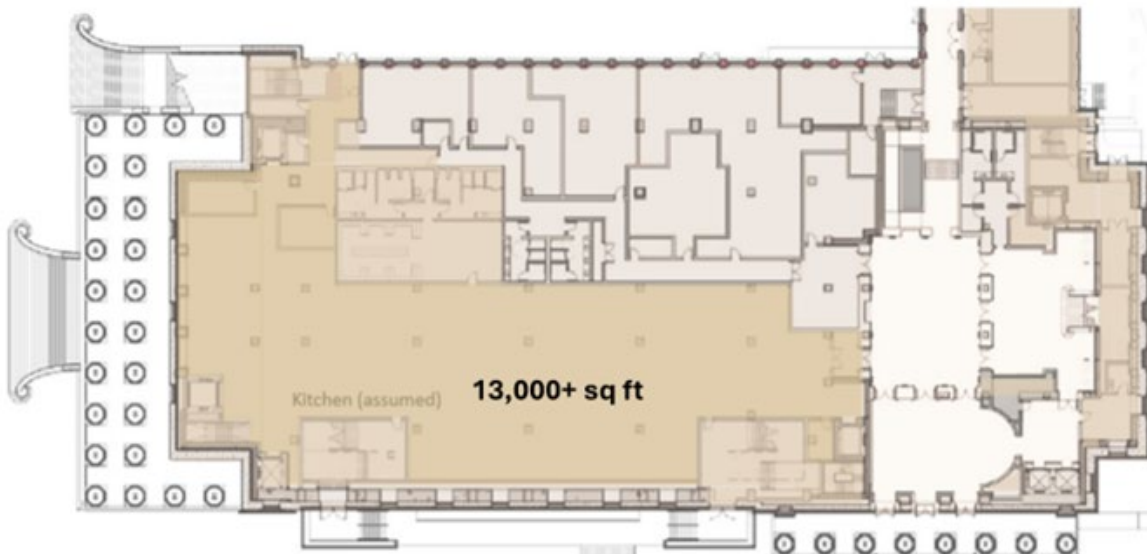
9. **HISTORIC LANDSCAPE DESIGN DISFIGURED.** The *pre-eminent* American Landscape Architect Frederick Law Olmstead designed the White House grounds with its *symmetrical* drive leading up to the south entrance. The proposed ballroom forces a “*dogleg*” detour to the venerated White House approach.



Olmstead Plan



10. **ENTRANCE LEVEL USE IRRATIONAL.** Most of the entrance level is irrationally devoted to non-public service/support spaces (*with blank windows*)—relegating the ballroom to an upper floor *25½' ABOVE street level* while making the building *unnecessarily high*. The kitchen is *IMMENSE*—more than *2½* times the Industry Standard to serve 1,000 people.



EXCESSIVE SERVICE AREAS INFLATE VOLUME

11. **MASSIVE SIZE AND SCALE.** A recently provided rendering of the ballroom as viewed from Pennsylvania Avenue shows the *massive* volume of the proposed structure with its enormous south portico.



MASSIVE SIZE AS VIEWED FROM PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE

12. **POTENTIAL MASS IF CORRECTLY SIZED.** The massing could be *reduced* by over 38% *IF* the Ballroom were *resized* to Industry Standard, while *lowering* the currently fully-above-grade kitchen and *eliminating* the inaccessible and unusable south portico.



MASS OF STRUCTURE IF RESIZED AS SUGGESTED

There are numerous other ways the bulk of the proposed structure could be reduced. Please respect the historic White House—the “*People’s House*”—as well as its landscape, axial viewshed, and symbolic relationship to the Capitol. Thank you for considering these careful observations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Scott Parker".

David Scott Parker, FAIA

cc: Carol Quillen, President and CEO, National Trust for Historic Preservation

March 2, 2026

Mr. William Scharf
Chair, National Capital Planning Commission
401 Ninth Street NW, Suite 500N
Washington, DC 20004

RE: Testimony on the East Wing Modernization Project, NCPC Project Number 8733

Dear Chairman Scharf and NCPC Commissioners,

The White House is a National Historic Landmark and the People's House. Any visible change must be exceptionally restrained. The proposed ballroom and East Wing modernization, as submitted to NCPC by the Office of the Executive Residence, would permanently and adversely alter the character of the complex.

Size and Massing

The proposed East Wing is disproportionately large in footprint, height, and volume relative to the Executive Mansion, West Wing, and colonnades. It overwhelms the ensemble and diminishes the Mansion's visual primacy. For more than two centuries, additions have been scaled to preserve that primacy. McKim, Mead & White's West Wing (1902–16) was held to one story with explicit guidance that added height would injure the White House; that restraint was respected in the 1934 West Wing expansion and the 1902 and 1942 East Wing works. By program and section, the current scheme exceeds what is necessary for a 900-person assembly and substitutes bulk for careful siting. The issue is recognized by the current architect in his proposal to raise to two stories the West Colonnade to balance the increases on the east; this is the correct diagnosis, but the incorrect remedy. The remedy is straightforward: require significant reductions in footprint, height, and mass.

Classical Design

The proposal is neither discreet nor well-proportioned for this context; the composition appears ponderous. The Colonnades and large arched windows are repetitive and overblown, ill-matched to the Mansion's quieter scale. On the east, the pediment and colonnade are too big and asymmetrically placed, unresolved in plan and not in register with interior spaces. Removing the south pediment is welcome, but further reduction is needed. Here, classical design should defer, not compete. If a fitting solution cannot be achieved, a responsible path would be to rebuild the East Wing's exterior largely as it was and locate the ballroom elsewhere.

Architectural Details

Several elements amplify the outsized reading. The three cascading south stairs have no precedent on the campus and rival the South Portico's more modest steps. The proposed east and south porticos, with large Corinthian columns, compete with the Executive Mansion's smaller, finer Ionic order. Column size, count, and spacing draw attention from the Mansion rather than frame it. These are not programmatic necessities; they are choices. NCPC should require removal of nonessential features – beginning with the south portico and cascade – and mandate revisions to orders, proportions, and spacing so the addition supports, rather than overshadows, the historic core.

Mr. William Scharf
March 2, 2026
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Park Landscape

The ballroom's southern footprint forces an abrupt bend into the existing curved drive, disrupting President's Park's historic composition of soft, axial curves and symmetric greens. Reduce the southward extension to restore the legible, continuous geometry of drives and lawns.

Viewsheds

From the Capitol steps and from the east – 15th Street and East Executive Park – the new mass blocks and overwhelms views of the Executive Mansion and its landscape rooms. Protect these views by lowering height, tightening the plan, and pulling mass away from key sightlines.

Please require meaningful reductions in size and massing, a restrained classical language, and details that restore the Executive Mansion's clear visual supremacy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. C. Green", with a horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Bryan Clark Green, Ph.D.

My name is Priya Jain and I am a licensed architect in the state of Texas. I offer these comments as a private citizen and as Chair of the Heritage Conservation Committee of the Society of Architectural Historians. These views do not represent the opinions of my employer, Texas A&M University.

The Society of Architectural Historians, founded in 1940, is the leading organization for architectural historians in North America. The White House is the most significant building in our nation. Since 1800, it has served as the symbol of our democracy and as the temporary home for American Presidents. The ballroom and East Wing modernization project, under your review, will adversely and permanently alter this National Historic Landmark.

While we acknowledge the White House has evolving needs, we emphasize that this project is the first major change to its exterior appearance in the last 84 years. We therefore urge NCPC to exercise due diligence in evaluating this proposal, and respectfully draw attention to four major issues:

1. **Disruption to President's Park Landscape:** Due to the ballroom's large footprint the curved driveway south of the East Wing has an incongruous sharp bend. This is not only aesthetically jarring but strays from the historic design of softly curved pathways and symmetrical green spaces. President's Park, a designated National Park, reflects landscape design principles that have withstood the test of time and are seen in a series of classical, circular and elliptical forms. The ballroom disrupts this harmony and can easily be improved by reducing the footprint.
2. **Incompatible Massing, Size and Scale:** The proposed East Wing is disproportionately larger than any single building in the White House. Therefore, it overwhelms everything and most importantly the central, historic residence. A study of the architectural history of the White House makes it abundantly clear that since 1800, each subsequent addition has maintained the visual supremacy of the Executive Residence. When the architects McKim, Mead and White added the West Wing in 1902, they specifically designed a one-story addition and noted that "no increase in height be permitted, because of the injury that would result to the White House." This was respected in 1934 when the West Wing was expanded (by adding a short penthouse addition, and subterranean spaces), and both in the 1902 and 1942 expansions of the East Wing. Some flamboyant additions that dwarfed the Executive Residence were indeed proposed between 1880 and 1902 but rejected by Congress. This history of change at the White House proves that thoughtfully designed, intentionally scaled and appropriate additions are possible. You *can* and *should* ask for a building that is significantly smaller.
3. **Incompatible Architectural Details:** There are many individual elements that conflict with the historic architecture and contribute to the outsized scale. For example, the three cascading stairs on the south. There is no precedent for these in the historic building, and they rival the more modest stairs at the South Portico of the Executive Residence. Similarly, the proposed massive columned porticos of the ballroom, rival the modest North and South porticos at the Executive Residence in their size and number of columns. Large Corinthian

columns, most ornate of the three Greek orders, are used at the ballroom and detract from the simpler, thinner Ionic columns at the Executive Residence. We urge NCPC to ask for removal of these unnecessary features and modification of others.

4. **Loss of Key Viewsheds:** The view of the White House from the US Capitol Building, a key element of the L'Enfant Plan, will forever be altered due to the obstructing ballroom. This critical issue can again be solved by reducing the ballroom's mass.

In the past, NCPC has rigorously reviewed projects at the White House that were much smaller in scale and visual impact. Yet, for this substantial addition, you propose a rushed timeline, approving both concept and final plans today. Not only does this limit a thorough review but silences the voice of American people through decreased opportunities for input.

We respectfully urge you to ask for an improved ballroom addition, and preserve this symbol of American heritage. Thank You.

Members of the NCPC,

As a resident of a community listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and a locally designated historic district, following established guidelines for review of new construction ensures that projects maintain the importance of landmark buildings as part of our shared history. Nowhere is this more important than the White House, the People's House.

Modernization and growth are not in conflict with honoring the historic significance of buildings but reflect the journey of these structures.

I urge a deliberate and thoughtful evaluation of the needs for those utilizing the building, needed modernization while honoring the role of the East Wing as a part of the overall White House and its grounds.

Thank you for your consideration.

Joanna Hampton

I would like to provide comments regarding the proposed ballroom construction adjacent to the White House, with emphasis on scale, massing, contextual design, and preservation of architectural hierarchy.

Rob Cagnetta



March 5, 2026

William Scharf, Chairman
National Capital Planning Commission
401 9th Street, NW, #500N
Washington, DC 20009

RE: NCPC File Number: 8733 - White House Complex, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC, East Wing Modernization and Ballroom Addition. Preliminary & Final

Dear Chairman Scharf and Members of the Commission:

The DC Preservation League (DCPL) is a nonprofit organization based in Washington, DC, dedicated to preserving and protecting the District's historic resources. Founded in 1971 as "Don't Tear It Down" to save the Old Post Office building on Pennsylvania Avenue from demolition, the League has consistently worked to ensure that proposed new developments and the adaptive reuse of historic buildings do not compromise the character of this great city.

DCPL appears today to express serious concerns and strong opposition to the current mass and proportions of the proposed East Wing addition to The White House. While the current Administration has emphasized the need for modernization and functionality for this important addition to The White House grounds, the proposed design strays far from the most fundamental principle of historic preservation, which dictates that new additions to historic buildings should be deferential and should allow the primary structure's significance to remain intact.

The scale of the proposed new construction raises significant concerns as it dwarfs the Executive Residence. The original spaces within The White House were designed to convey a sense of proportion and intimacy, which are vital to the building's charm and historical significance. In contrast, the proposed East Wing addition is disproportionately large and impersonal, and will detract from the dignified atmosphere that has characterized presidential events for centuries. This stark shift in design reflects a troubling impulse directed to grandiosity that would prioritize spectacle over the subtleties of the history and image of our country.

Questions also arise regarding the proposed east colonnade's attachment to the Executive Residence. Currently, there is no known demolition plan that is publicly available, leaving it unclear whether access to the proposed second floor of the colonnade would be through the existing central door or through enlarging it to engulf and remove the historic windows and pediments to the south.

The proposed changes raise important questions about the stewardship of The White House. Preserving the integrity of the Executive Residence is not merely about maintaining its physical structure but also providing for public input and transparency on proposed modifications to this highly symbolic building. Through a substantially secretive process, depriving the public of

reasonable and meaningful participation, for the sake of grandiose expansion, we risk erasing the very essence of what makes The White House a leading symbol of American history.

DCPL acknowledges the need for facilities that meet modern requirements, but we believe such decisions must be approached with the utmost respect for history and context. The proposed addition, in its current form, not only violates established norms of historic preservation by overshadowing the historic structure, but it also risks diluting the rich heritage that The White House represents. The argument that the scale of the proposed new construction is compatible because of the scale of adjacent structures like the Treasury and the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, is a specious one. Further, the argument that erecting tents on the South Lawn diminishes the integrity of the historic landscape with only temporary and reversible impacts does not appropriately acknowledge the profound and permanent impacts of the proposed East Wing addition.

For more than fifty years, DCPL has served as the leading voice for the preservation of Washington, DC's architectural heritage and possesses the expertise and responsibility to identify adverse impacts on historic resources. Based on that expertise, we conclude unequivocally that the current proposal would harm the integrity, character, and setting of The White House complex and President's Park.

Mr. Chairman, at the last hearing, you lobbied your fellow commissioners about the need for a space to host foreign dignitaries. You held forth on King Charles hosting events at Windsor Castle, while American Presidents host their guests under a tent. I'll remind the commissioners that there is no monarchy in the United States, and this country doesn't have castles that are 950 years old. We do, however, have a classically inspired, palatial ballroom that the federal government owns, mere blocks from The White House - it's called the Mellon Auditorium. It accommodates 1,000 guests and was recently restored at great expense to the tax payer.

The Commission has received thousands of public comments from residents and experts opposing the size of this project. Do not ignore the public sentiment for an addition that is respectfully deferential to the historic landmark, and compatible with The White House Complex and President's Park.

Respectfully,



Rebecca Miller
Executive Director
DC Preservation League

This is a brazen and illegal act perpetrated by a corrupt administration and the vile and weak pedo felon that leads it. I'd rather see a holding cell built so we have someplace put these criminals when the trials are done.

Tim Bahlke

Please rebuild the East Wing as it stood. As a registered historical building, the interior and exterior design should be restored to the original specs in all aspects down to the same materials and techniques and technology used to build it in the first place (electrical/wiring/plumbing notwithstanding). Thank you.

Ghazzal Dabiri

Restore the exterior dimensions and architectural style, update wiring etc. and make interior ADA accessible where possible. Follow past process for making needed but historically sensitive changes.

If a ballroom is needed, construct it elsewhere in the city.

The White House is the people's house.

Mary Ellen Segraves

New construction must be in balance with the historic White House. The public plans I've seen so far are ostentatious and extravagant beyond belief. While the White House is the President's home and office while serving his/her term, it still belongs to the citizens of the U.S. I was aghast at the current President taking a wrecking ball to the property. What renter would get away with ripping apart and remodeling a house without consent and knowledge of the landlord?

Susan DeBree

I am a resident of Historic Old Town in Alexandria, VA who has participated vigorously in our own city's struggles with historic preservation under an onslaught of modernization and densification. I live on one of the lots laid out here by George Washington in 1749 and have a healthy reverence for our history.

I cannot more vociferously oppose what I consider to be the criminal demolition of the U.S. citizens' house and the plan to overwhelm the White House – long revered by its simplicity, accessibility, and lack of opulence – by constructing the obscene ballroom apparently meant to assuage someone's delusions of grandeur.

All beautiful and historic cities stay that way only with vigilance through some sort of architectural and design review process, competitively vetting and selecting architects and construction contractors, and clear boundaries for acceptable development.

Washington apparently has the institutions and this kind of process, but we face a current White House occupant who, characteristically, thumbed his nose at the process and the input of subject matter experts, historians, and D.C. residents and simply decided on this grotesque vanity project as if the White House were another cheap real estate development on which he can hang his name.

I'm for using every legal lever of power to halt further demolition, terminate the current architects and builders and go through a public procurement process to select new ones, downsize the addition so it proportionally balances the wings of the White House and ensure that the materials, fits, and finishes match what's left of Our House. I'm also for prohibiting the new wing from carrying the name of the president in any form – ever.

This 12-member commission includes three presidential appointees and is led by chairperson, Will Sharf one of 47's top regime White House aides. It is also a part of the Executive Branch of our Government.

Can this group tell the American People they are objective?

Why have someone, spend their time and all of you spend time and funds to develop a webpage that offers the public the opportunity to comment as I am doing now, if the decision to move forward with the East Wing Modernization Program has already been reached?

Will someone within this group answer this when I am done speaking?

When I watched the video of your February Meeting it was sorrowful to watch a US Citizen give testimony and then within less than a minute of her ending, you all took up a vote as if her testimony was a formality, you could not wait to get through.

Why are you giving me, the opportunity to speak, when it has already been decided the ballroom, will be built?

(PAUSE) You are individually responsible for the further destruction of the power of U.S. citizens to create change (PAUSE) and therefore responsible for the growth of fascism (PAUSE) through your membership in this regime.

Hiding under the guise of the title the National Capital Planning Commission will not remove your individual actions.

You are complicit in the destruction of a national monument. According to the National Capital Planning Act of 1952, which created your Committee, The White House is a national monument, which was illegally torn down. You are approving the building of an indoor ballroom over the site and on the ground where this National Monument stood because you wish to be pleasing to 47 and the Republican Party?

You all need to be reminded you have free will (PAUSE) which if you do not oppose this, you are using to do the bidding of an amoral human.

Your acts of today will be written in history along with each of your names, rather than the innocuous title of the National Capital Planning Commission.

I ask anyone hearing my words to go to the staff webpage of the National Capital Planning Commission where you may email or telephone every member of this group in perpetuity, or until they remove their telephone numbers and email addresses.

I am a PhD cultural historian in the field of American Studies with a strong interest in and commitment to historical preservation. The proposed « modernization » of the East Wing of the White House is an abomination—a monument to the unmitigated vanity of a malignant narcissist whose occupation of the building will remain a permanent stain on our nation's history.

Peter Kizilos-Clift

The East Wing Modernization Project should reflect the original scale and design of the previous wing. The project should conform to current ADA standards, incorporate the latest technology and provisions to make it "future proof" so further expensive renovations won't be necessary. Since this is truly the "People's House", it should be open to the public, and be used for public events, not as a gilded set piece for the political Elite. The interior and exterior details and decorative aspects should harmonize with the rest of the White House, an understated elegance reflective of the long history and temporary nature of any single administration, not a monument to bloated excess and the personal taste of one occupant.

Marcie Monroe

The abomination proposed by trump cannot be completed as he intends. Its only purpose is to facilitate the grift of the president. We do not need or want a monument to his ego that screams 'you are not my concern' to people who are struggling to make ends meet.

Timothy Stafford

I am outraged that this monstrous ballroom was designed and the construction of the original without any approval. This is the people's house and should have been authorized by the people.

Heidi Johnson

As the owner and steward of a property listed on the National Register of Historic Places which was built in the 1800's, I understand firsthand the responsibility that comes with caring for a historic estate. Restoration and rehabilitation require discipline, patience, and strict adherence to established preservation frameworks and not taking away from the original building to be preserved.

When managing a National Register property and business, I have learned that the order of operations matters. Review, evaluation, and public engagement are not optional steps — they are foundational to responsible stewardship. Historically contributing structures should not be altered or removed before appropriate review and public input have taken place.

Public voice is most meaningful when it occurs before irreversible decisions are made. Once historic fabric is disturbed, the opportunity for true deliberation diminishes. That is why preservation standards emphasize process prior to action.

Rehabilitation can absolutely coexist with preservation. Thoughtful modernization strengthens long-term viability. However, transparency and compliance must lead the way — not follow behind.

From my experience restoring and operating a National Register of Historic Estate, I believe strongly that established preservation procedures exist to protect not only buildings, but public trust. When those procedures are honored from the beginning, outcomes are stronger, and confidence in the project remains intact.

I would welcome the opportunity to speak from the perspective of an active historic property owner who has navigated these frameworks and understands both the challenges and the necessity of doing things in the proper order.

Thanks,

Tara Brown

I am one of many citizens who object to the size of the 90,000 sq ft ballroom, that overpowers the historical icon, the White House. Accommodating important events indoors is acceptable. But this is the people's house, not a monument by private contributions by corporations and individuals for financial gain or for presidential ego. Any decisions on the project should include members from the National Trust for Preservation, a representative of the people as well as skilled architects, engineers schooled in enhancing historic places. This cannot be the work of crony arrangements or contracts. The reckless start to the project is an embarrassment and is deeply distrusted by most Americans. Plan in an open, transparent way. Finally, Don't let the president be the architect or the interior designer.

Martha Shea

Do not allow this administration to do any further modifications to the people's house. The matter can be resubmitted for comments when competent leadership is in charge.

Diana Niculescu

I am writing to express my strong opposition to this proposed development. First of all the building was a historic treasure, and Our national parks are not for sale; they are treasures that belong to all Americans.

Lucinda Rundell

As a concerned citizen I object to the current plans for a ballroom in place of the East Wing of the White House. I had the honor of being received in the East Wing as part of a internship for Nursing Organization leaders. The history of the East Wing speaks for itself and I object to its destruction. Repair, update and replace the East Wing to its intended purpose and this does not require a ballroom,; those activities can takeplace in other locations in the DC area.

Respectfully submitted
Niki O'Keeffe RN retired

I wish to convey that the new East Wing should instead be a recreation of the original East Wing, with minor expansion to allow a larger ballroom. A 90k square foot ballroom would overwhelm the architectural character of the rest of the White House.

Kye Rowan

The need for a “ballroom”—that is, a large space with the infrastructure necessary to entertain dignitaries and other guests of the President of the United States—is self-evident. Yet the White House and its grounds were never conceived to function as the palaces of Europe, where grand entertainments for courtiers were woven into the fabric of daily life. Rather, the White House has evolved as an organic structure whose interiors—including the formal rooms on the first floor—have shifted and changed in response to the practical requirements, personal tastes, and budgets of its occupants.

Since the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt in the early twentieth century, however, and under the architectural guidance of Charles Follen McKim, the classically ordered exterior of the building has remained largely unchanged. The principal departures from the original structure are the West and East Wings, each of which developed according to distinct functional needs. McKim’s design for the East Wing in 1902—shaped in part by the architectural sensibilities of Thomas Jefferson—created a formal public entrance while maintaining a deferential relationship to the main house. Although its role was expanded in the 1940s, the addition remained subordinate to the original structure.

The precedent established by these interventions is clear: alterations to the White House have historically been approached with careful deliberation, involving not only political leadership but architects, planners, and other professionals. Such consultation inevitably slows the process, yet it ensures that proposals are rigorously examined and that the architectural integrity of the White House is preserved even as new needs arise.

The proposed ballroom must be afforded the same level of scrutiny as any major government project. Beyond a careful assessment of the design itself—which pays little homage to the nation’s most iconic residence—the ballroom raises a fundamental question: Does such a space belong on the White House grounds?

Could it be more successful, both aesthetically and functionally, if located elsewhere in Washington, D.C.? Why not incorporate it into a redesign of the Kennedy Center, the monumental building designed by Edward Durell Stone during the Cold War to impress and demonstrate American strength? With its grand scale and ceremonial interiors of gold and royal red, the Kennedy Center already serves as a venue for national celebration and international hospitality.

A new White House ballroom risks both design misstep and historical inconsistency. This project deserves careful deliberation, not haste.

Mary Anne Hunting, PhD

Architectural historian and author of *Edward Durell Stone: Modernism’s Populist Architect* (2007).

The demolition of the White House East Wing is totally unacceptable. Our American legacy, history and traditions have been completely ignored and trampled. Please do all you can to stop the "modernization" of the White House East Wing and to restore it to it's original structure.

Mary Costanzo

The sudden, illegal and irresponsible destruction of the East wing during a shutdown while people are losing food assistance for a ballroom no one asked for.

Heather Sarandos

This project should not proceed until the following actions are taken:

- 1 Recusal of members or their representatives appointed by President Trump.
2. Completion of estimates to secure the site, and payment of said costs in advance by President Trump.
- 3.GSA appraisal of buildings razed by Trump actions and securing funds from same in advance to cover rebuilding of the razed structure.
4. No further consideration of ballroom construction at or near the White House.

Thank you for your consideration.

Conover Hunt
preservationists and public historian, ret.

The destruction of the White House wing has been a disaster. Standing guidelines rules and codes were not followed. A total disrespect for regulations and rules.

Robert Vegter

I utterly oppose the spending anything on this project, which was initiated without the proper authorization, permits, or design review.

It is not a modernization project, it is ridiculous.

I want this project canceled. No one is above the law and to permit this project to go ahead without penalizing those who broke the law would be an affront to all law-abiding Americans.

Catherine Cox

I oppose this waste of money to satisfy one person's vanity. I suggest the funding billionaires redirect their gift to benefit our fellow citizens who are suffering in some way, poverty, persecution, health care inequality. Thank you.

Matias Grau

The damage that has been incurred is already irresponsible - to destroy such history without oversight, consideration or thought to the public will is unforgiveable. We can never get back what was. The only way to make up for it is to do a professional, non-politically motivated rebuild following all protocol and procedures to ensure the PEOPLE'S HOUSE is carefully protected. IF a ballroom is determined to be required - or whatever is determined through long and thoughtful planning with consultation of all required agencies, oversight organizations and Congress, then it should be tastefully built to match the architecture of the rest of the building. It should also include state-of-the art sustainable building techniques and materials - all by US craftspeople, with US-made materials.

Kathleen Ridihalgh

Do not modernize our people's house. Restore it to its historic beauty . Donald Trump should pay for it with his money, since he did not have permission to demolish it.

Nancy Tychevicz

Trump's huge ballroom plan is an abomination and would dwarf our beautiful, stately White House! Please do NOT allow it!!! Please reconstruct the East Wing!!!

Cheryl Shushan

As I'm watching Trump take down the East wing and ruin our institutions I can't imagine we should have to pay for this Obnoxious project also....I'm afraid my grandchildren will never get to use that huge ballroom ,But our family is scheduled to visit DC in 2028 and we were looking forward to visiting the East.Wingbwere the best first lady Michelle Obama did all her work .and Now this administration has ruined it ..

Michelle Baker

The demolition of the east wing and building a ballroom is illegal and should be stopped and it should be built back as close to the original state as possible.

Niedra North

The gutting and destruction of the East Wing of the “People’s House” went forward without any input from the very people to ent administration will whom it belonged. The oversized building proposed by the current president will dwarf the structure that has , in its simplicity, housed our Presidents for almost two hundred years years. It should not be a vanity project for the current inhabitants.

Josephine Cunningham

Please revisit this terrible plan.

The building was torn down without congressional approval, the ballroom project should be completely overseen by the proper parties.

Richard Andaya

The East wing should be restored back to what it was

Kim Adams

I oppose the spending of \$300 million on this project, which was initiated without the proper authorization, permits, or design review. It is not a modernization project but rather a complete razing of American history. I want this project canceled, and the East Wing rebuilt and restored to its former design. No one is above the law and to permit this project to go ahead without penalizing those who broke the law would be an affront to all law-abiding Americans.

Faith Smith

I oppose the spending of \$300 million on this project, which was initiated without the proper authorization, permits, or design review. It is not a modernization project but rather a complete razing of American history. I want this project canceled, and the East Wing rebuilt and restored to its former design. No one is above the law and to permit this project to go ahead without penalizing those who broke the law would be an affront to all law-abiding citizens

Rainy Fackler-Adams

I oppose the spending of \$300 million on this project, which was initiated without the proper authorization, permits, or design review. It is not a modernization project but rather a complete razing of American history. I want this project canceled, and the East Wing rebuilt and restored to its former design. No one is above the law and to permit this project to go ahead without penalizing those who broke the law would be an affront to all law-abiding Americans.

Elizabeth Ludtke

I am most egregiously against this project.. The demolition was without due process and input. TA ballroom is antithesis to rhe We the People and democracy.

Diane Holland

I oppose the spending of \$300 million on this project, which was initiated without the proper authorization, permits, or design review. It is not a modernization project but rather a complete razing of American history. I want this project canceled, and the East Wing rebuilt and restored to its former design. No one is above the law and to permit this project to go ahead without penalizing those who broke the law would be an affront to all law-abiding Americans

Kathleen Gore

Restore the East Wing to it's former state.

Terrence Puryear

I disapprove of this project. It uncalled for. and shon should be restored back to what it was

.

We do not need a balloon there.

Debra Johnson

I oppose the spending of \$300 million on this project, which was initiated without the proper authorization, permits, or design review. It is not a modernization project but rather a complete razing of American history. I want this project canceled, and the East Wing rebuilt and restored to its former design. No one is above the law and to permit this project to go ahead without penalizing those who broke the law would be an affront to all law-abiding Americans. Additionally, the current president of these United States lied to the people he represents by promising not to alter the people's house. This degradation of our history has got to stop and it's up to Congress to do so.

Mary Buckley

I am just a concerned citizen that feels what is being done. Here does not represent the wants and wishes of all Americans. What has already been done as a disgrace to the White House. I am happy to expand more on my thoughts and feelings if needed, please feel free to reach out to me at my provided contact information.

Catherine Johnson

I believe the majority of American citizens never wanted our precious White House to be torn down. I demand the project go be voted on in mid-terms by the American people. By all people in America. Thank you for hearing my voice.

Kathryn Gray

Putting in that gwady ballroom is unconscionable.

Sheryl Doggett

I oppose the spending of \$300 million on this project, which was initiated without the proper authorization, permits, or design review. It is not a modernization project but rather a complete razing of American history. I want this project canceled, and the East Wing rebuilt and restored to its former design. No one is above the law and to permit this project to go ahead without penalizing those who broke the law would be an affront to all law-abiding Americans.

Mary Calvert

I would like the chance to speak out against this project that has destroyed history without permits and without the proper channels. So many Americans are deeply disturbed by this. The White House belongs to America's, not to one person.

Bonnie Polanco

The president resides in the peoples house and has no authority to destroy it!! He needs to be stopped!

Margaret Pritchard

No plan no permit stop this nonsense

Thomas Straughan

Stop the madness! This is the people's house

Jenny Crowe

I oppose the spending of \$300 million on this project, which was initiated without the proper authorization, permits, or design review. It is not a modernization project but rather a complete razing of American history. I want this project canceled, and the East Wing rebuilt and restored to its former design. No one is above the law and to permit this project to go ahead without penalizing those who broke the law would be an affront to all law-abiding Americans.

Kathryn Gutierrez

DO NOT let Trump get away with demolishing the East Wing! Rebuild the exterior and modernize the interior, and require Trump to pay for it out of his personal funds.

Kathryn Austin

The destruction of the historic East Wing is a crime against the American public. Lacking ANY authorization, procedural review or public input, the Trump administration destroyed our national treasure with no plan, except to display Trump's temper. We demand full restoration of the East Wing to exactly how it was before his impulsive and vicious attack on OUR White House. This is part of the physical demonstrations that he is shoving down our throats: that he is above the law and can lay claim to any and all parts of our government. This is wrong on every level. He should be impeached for high crimes and misdemeanors in every aspect of our democracy. Everything he touches is polluted by his toxic narcissism and I call on every member of Congress to stop 🙅 the destruction he is wreaking on OUR country. STOP HIM and his administration before it's too late!

Thank you.

Barb Drainville

No,no,no!!! Disgrace! All Cheeto wants to do is drain this country's money for personal gains! All he wants is to do is take tax dollars from tax paying citizens and be the JERK HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN! No one likes him everyone hates him! How dose he sleep @ night ? He will be judged by his EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS WHEN HE DOES DIE! They probably won't have his funcking back much longer either! Burn in hell!

Kim Wertz

My wife and I are long time members and supporters of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and are proud of them for bringing a lawsuit against the Trump administration for their destruction of the East Wing and their proposed ballroom.

This demolition and project have clearly not followed correct protocol to date. The ballroom itself will be a travesty. Just because Trump says "everyone has wanted one" and he can get individual donors to bend to his will does not mean it should happen.

The White House is the People's House. It does not belong to Donald Trump. If he wants to tear things down and build anew he can go to Mar-a-Lago for that.

We are completely opposed to this.

Christopher Clucas

I oppose the spending of \$300 million on this project, which was initiated without the proper authorization, permits, or design review. It is not a modernization project but rather a complete razing of American history. I want this project canceled, and the East Wing rebuilt and restored to its former design. No one is above the law and to permit this project to go ahead without penalizing those who broke the law would be an affront to all law-biding Americans

Jim Gurski

As a United States Veteran, it is my belief that White House Upgrades will assist in bringing pride to the United States citizens. Those oppose this are unpatriotic at best, irresponsible with their "Rights" at worst. If A democratic President was doing this, the left would be celebrating. Stop obstruction of the Beautification of our National Capitol. Allons!

Jace Lombardi

The east wing was torn down without following the proper procedures

Those who authorizing, doing the work or contributing money to the project should be held responsible

The east wing should be rebuilt as it was. The rebuild should be funded by our current president of the USA

since this was his idea

Bruce Munick

Please do not spend 30 million on this. Let's preserve history, not tear down things.

Sharon Avery

I oppose the spending of \$300 million on this project, which was initiated without the proper authorization, permits, or design review. It is not a modernization project but rather a complete razing of American history. I want this project canceled, and the East Wing rebuilt and restored to its former design. No one is above the law and to permit this project to go ahead without penalizing those who broke the law would be an affront to all law-abiding Americans.

Elizabeth Skadden

THIS IS NOT WHAT AMERICAS HARD EARNED MONEY SHOULD BE SPENT NOR SHOULD DONALD J TRUMP DO WHAT EVER HE WANTS TO DESTROY OUR CAPITAL FOR A BALLROOM.

Joseph Fulgenzi

Please cancel this project which was started with no prior approval and with no discussion of need. What is the projected replacement is completely out of scale with the White House arguably one of the nation's most important buildings. Block further development until new appropriate plans are developed

Lynn Hanlin

The White House has long been known as the People's House, and any proposal that alters its historic character deserves careful scrutiny. As a former member of the White House Visitors Office during the administration of George H. W. Bush, I strongly oppose the proposed East Wing project.

During my time in the Visitors Office, I saw firsthand how meaningful it is for Americans and visitors from around the world to experience the White House and its history. The White House is not simply a residence or an office complex—it is one of the most recognizable symbols of American democracy. It is also unique among state residences around the world because members of the public are able to visit it. For generations, millions of Americans—students, veterans, and international visitors alike—have walked its halls and connected directly with the story of our nation.

The White House East Wing itself is part of that living history. Since its expansion in the twentieth century, it has housed the First Lady's office, the White House Visitors Office, and the infrastructure that makes public access possible. It represents the engine that allows the People's House to remain open to the people. Altering or removing historic spaces within the East Wing risks erasing the institutional memory of the staff and public servants who have worked there for decades to welcome visitors and preserve the traditions of the presidency.

Throughout history, presidents have served as temporary stewards of the White House—not its owners. While each administration inevitably leaves its mark, the building itself has been carefully preserved so that it reflects the continuity of the American republic rather than the preferences of any single presidency. Preservation has long been recognized as a national responsibility, reinforced by historians, curators, and institutions dedicated to protecting the integrity of the White House as a historic site.

Modernization and preservation do not have to be in conflict. Necessary improvements should be made thoughtfully and in ways that protect the historical character and legacy of the building. Presidents should respect the White House as a historic institution entrusted to their care, rather than seek to dramatically alter or redesign it in their own image.

For these reasons, I urge decision-makers to reconsider the current plans and pursue solutions that preserve the history, dignity, and public trust embodied in the People's House.

I oppose what has been done to the East Wing without proper permission from the American people or permits from proper sources. I want the original East Wing restored to preserve history and protect democracy.

Eileen Blazic

Please disapprove this project that did not go through normal processes. It will be a tacky, gaudy abomination and violates the aesthetic symmetry of "the people's house". Do not let this temporary resident further debase the structure more than he already has. He has already paved over the rose garden, uglified bathrooms, kittlered tacky gold decorations throughout the oval, and created the most disrespectful display of presidential history imaginable. His judgment on permanent large scale renovations cannot be trusted- they continue to evolve even after he demolished the east wing. Have him restore it so at least the outside resembles what it was before. A bigger ballroom will not contribute to America's greatness.

Laurie Sylla

I oppose the spending of \$300 million on this project, which was initiated without the proper authorization, permits, or design review. It is not a modernization project but rather a complete razing of American history. I want this project canceled, and the East Wing rebuilt and restored to its former design. No one is above the law and to permit this project to go ahead without penalizing those who broke the law would be an affront to all law-abiding Americans.

Marthita Thomas

I oppose the spending of \$300million on this project which was initiated without the proper authorization, permits, or design review. It is not a modernization project, but rather a complete rainforest of American history. I want this project canceled, and the East Wing rebuilt and restored to its former design. No one is above the law, and to permit this project to proceed without penalizing those who have broken the law is an affront to all law-abiding U.S. citizens.

Cheryl Dunn Bychek

Architecture is a creative act that should not be used as propaganda.

Forms have meaning, and the meaning of the White House is truth in governance. The White House is a welcoming home for the American people and the entire globe. Presidents have the privilege of inhabiting this house for their time in office. That has meant that each family leaves their mark. But this palimpsest of history has, at its best, reflected respected the fact that we are a democratic nation.

Architecture has meaning.

That meaning should not be co-opted to speak the language of historical power. Instead of an anachronistic, super-sized vocabulary harkening to Roman times of absolute rule, we should choose an architecture of welcome. We have the right to reject imposing facades, to say no to grandiose rooms, no to inaccessible staircases, no to glitter, no to gold, and these features mean.

Public buildings are more than physical; they have a soul, a central driving spirit. That spirit reflects its purpose, context, and the people it serves. The White House embodies the soul of the United States — our freedoms.

Architecture, at its best, is an act of optimism. Let the White House be optimistic — not about power, but about welcome. It is a home open to all — not a stage set for presidential power, privilege, and pageantry.

Wendy Evans Joseph, FAIA

Studio Joseph

President, National Academy of Design

Is there anyway to get the Ballroom smaller to be in appropriate scale to White House.

Teresa Carroll-Gillis



215 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE • Washington, D.C. 20003 • 202/546-4996 • www.citizen.org

Public Citizen testimony at National Capital Planning Commission on proposed
White House Ballroom Project, NCPC File Number: 8733 – March 5, 2026

My name is Jon Golinger and I speak to you today on behalf of Public Citizen. Public Citizen is a nonprofit consumer advocacy organization that champions the public interest in the halls of power.

1. The fix is in

The fix is in for this project and on this vote. When President Trump appointed three top White House officials – White House Deputy Chief of Staff James Blair, White House Office of Management and Budget Associate Director Stuart Levenbach, and White House Staff Secretary William Scharf – to NCPC Commission seats last July, that put them in a position to take the president’s pet projects, ram them through NCPC, and then rubber stamp them. However, those appointments were not just a crude political power play – they were unlawful and they destroy the credibility of today’s vote.

The section of the National Capital Planning Act that Congress designed to establish this commission – specifically 40 U.S.C. §8711(b)(1)(B) – requires that only “citizens with experience in city or regional planning” are eligible to be appointed by the president to

NCPC Commission seats. Given the highly specialized mission of NCPC to engage in extensive and often intricate planning decisions, this seems clearly designed to ensure that NCPC is led by members who are qualified enough to understand what they're being presented with and know what they're doing.

However, none of those three individuals had that required planning experience when they were appointed to NCPC by the president. Therefore, they should recuse themselves from voting on the White House Ballroom Project today rather than risk jeopardizing the legal validity of that vote tomorrow. Then they should resign from NCPC so that the president may find and appoint the qualified citizen commissioners the law requires. If they don't, it will be clear to all that – on today's vote, the fix is in.

2. A fiasco from the start

President Trump's White House Ballroom Project has been a fiasco from the start. When the White House announced it in July 2025, President Trump claimed nothing about the existing White House would be changed. Three months later, he demolished a third of it. Without regard to the law, NCPC was not notified or consulted until the project was underway. Since Mr. Blair, Mr. Levenbach, and Mr. Scharf worked at the White House, I call upon them to answer today what they knew and when they knew it: whether they knew the East Wing was going to be demolished before it was and, if so, why they withheld that information from the rest of NCPC Commissioners and staff who, under the law, should have been advised.

3. A big tacky billboard

A massive amount of money has flowed from corporations, billionaires, and an unknown number of secret donors through what a federal judge has called a “Rube Goldberg contraption” designed to evade Congressional and public oversight and shield the donors and recipients of the money from scrutiny. According to news reports, the expectation is that those names will be etched on the White House as part of the ballroom's brick or stone. It is outrageous that the Trump Administration would engrave the names of corporations with government contracts who gave them checks on the White House like a big tacky advertising billboard. I urge NCPC to explicitly prohibit them from doing so.

4. Wildly out of whack

The proposed White House Ballroom Project before you today is wildly out of whack with the existing White House – it’s too tall, too bulky, will block public views, and fails to “best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and the general welfare, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development.” Those are the objectives of NCPC, according to the National Capital Planning Act of 1952, which created this commission as it exists today.

5. Back to the drawing board

Since the White House Ballroom Project fails to meet those objectives, NCPC should reject it and send it back to the drawing board so they can start over and get it right.

Common Cause testimony at National Capital Planning Commission meeting on WH Ballroom renovation – March 5, 2026

- Good afternoon. My name is Abigail Bellows, Senior Policy Director for Anti-Corruption and Accountability for Common Cause, a nonpartisan, grassroots organization that for more than 50 years has been upholding core values of American democracy.
- On behalf of our 1 million members across the country who are angered by President Trump's ballroom construction, I want to highlight how this project raises serious ethical questions about influence peddling and corruption.
- Let's talk about what this project really represents.
- The White House is the *People's House*. It represents our shared history and our government's responsibility to serve the *public* — not wealthy donors.
- But President Trump is trying to pay for his *\$400 million* ballroom through checks from megadonors and corporate titans, like Lockheed Martin and Amazon.
- That's not just a construction project. That's a golden invitation for *corruption*.
- Many of the corporations funding the glitzy ballroom have business before the federal government, including companies under federal investigation or competing for government contracts. That's a massive *conflict of interest*.
- Let's not kid ourselves. These donors aren't doling out millions to bankroll the president's pet project out of the goodness of their heart. We all must ask: *what do they expect in return?*
- Because that's how *pay-to-play* politics works. Making donations buys you access to power.

- That power may come in the form of pardons for crimes like money-laundering. It may come in the form of hefty contracts. It may simply come through privileged access – which enables corporate interests to sway the very regulators who should be acting independently.
- Sometimes there's an explicit *quid pro quo*, but other times it's an *implied* understanding: you'll scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours.
- Either way, *government decisions are being auctioned off to wealthy donors*. This leaves everyday Americans wondering: Who is our government really working for?
- And to have even the appearance of impropriety corrupting the *People's House* – the ultimate sacred symbol of our democracy? That's a deep violation of public trust. The White House should not be for sale.
- And while Trump builds his golden ballroom, *people are struggling*.
- Costs are skyrocketing. Trump's tariffs have cost the average household \$1,000.
- Marie Antoinette once said 'Let them eat cake' when her people were starving. Now, President Trump says 'Let me build a \$400 million ballroom' when Americans can't afford rent, groceries, or healthcare.
- That's why people across the country are speaking out.
- More than *134,000 Americans* have already signed our petition calling for an investigation into the financing of Trump's ballroom.
- Because we deserve to know:
 1. *Who is funding this project*. ALL of the donors. Right now some are still "anonymous," which opens the door to influence-peddling by foreign governments or criminal organizations.
 2. *How much is each donor contributing*.

3. *Whether those donors have received any government contracts, favorable enforcement actions, or other potential kickbacks since they made their donation.*

- Congress must launch a full *investigation* into the funding behind this ballroom.
- Congress should also pass the *Stop Ballroom Bribery Act*, which would ban presidents from soliciting corporate donations for projects like this and prevent donors with conflicts of interest from contributing.
- In closing, this isn't just about the White House as a *building*. It's also about the White House as a *symbol* of our government. We cannot have the financing of a building renovation continue to erode the trust in our government.
- Each member of this Commission has a responsibility to *pause* this project. *Recuse* yourself if you cannot vote independently. And help avoid *protect the People's House*, so that our government stays in the hands of the people.
- Thank you.

Its about time to have a ballroom, its been a long time coming.

James Hugh

White House Ballroom

As a board member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and former President of the American Institute of Architects I would like to challenge the NCPC to thoroughly and thoughtfully carry out its duty to ensure that the modernization of the WH East Wing meet the highest standards of architectural design sensitivity, balance and, proportion as is warranted in a project of such national stature. As currently proposed the overwhelming scale and faux classical facade of the Ballroom will undermine the historic architectural significance of the White House residence disrupting the founding fathers' original campus design intentions. Likewise the massive expansion will obscure the symbolic sight lines between the White House and the Capitol Building as originally planned in L'Efant's original street grid. The intentional design of our Capital is rooted in symbolic architectural traditions established by classical ancient Greek and Roman design principles that have been preserved and honored by the George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. While a presidential ballroom may be long overdue, the project should not be haphazardly expedited at the expense of centuries of well established planning and regulatory processes. Our nation's history and future deserve more dignity, consideration and due diligence. I respectfully oppose the design as submitted and implore the NCPC to demand further design options that respect the historic integrity of the people's White House campus!

Regards,

William J. Bates

FAIA, NOMA

**Testimony of Mary Smietanka before the National Capital Planning Commission
Regarding the Proposed White House Ballroom
March 5, 2026**

Chairman Scharf and Commissioners, thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Mary Smietanka, and I am a private citizen from Clancy, Montana. I understand the Commission cannot consider issues like political motives, personal taste, or broader disagreements with the administration, so I am limiting my testimony to the planning and design matters that fall within your authority. I return to the District every year, and each visit reminds me how important it is to protect the historic and architectural character of the White House.

This proposal puts that at risk. I am concerned that this project, as proposed, does not meet the standards that protect the federal core.

First, I'm uneasy about a major addition to the White House being privately funded. Private financing brings outside interests into a federal project. That affects how decisions are made, how large a project becomes, and how much it alters a historic site. Allowing a privately funded structure of this scale sets a troubling precedent: it opens the door for future federal buildings to be shaped by private donors rather than by consistent public planning standards.

Secondly, the size and height of the ballroom would visually overwhelm the White House. It appears to sit over the building rather than beside it. The White House should remain the primary visual element on its own grounds, and this structure would change the proportions and views of the South Lawn in a way that can't be undone. Protecting the scale and setting of the White House is central to maintaining the character of the capital.

Which leads me to my third concern: When this project was presented to the Commission on January 8, 2026, it was noted that additional changes to the West Wing and the surrounding grounds are being contemplated and will be brought forward later. Given the scale of what is being proposed, it is troubling to consider any demolition or partial demolition of the West Wing without understanding how those future plans relate to this project. The Commission should be able to review the full scope of anticipated changes together, and I believe plans for the West Wing must be considered as part of the East Wing modernization before any demolition occurs.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Commission to require a more complete and coordinated approach—one that addresses private financing, protects the scale and setting of the White House, and evaluates any changes to the West Wing as part of a unified plan. Only a design reviewed in its full context can truly respect the White House's history, its scale, and its place in the federal city.



March 5, 2026

Mr. William Scharf, Chair
National Capital Planning Commission
401 9th Street, NW
Suite 500N
Washington, DC 20004

Re: **East Wing Modernization Project**, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC.

To the Chairman and members of National Capital Planning Commission:

I write to state our strong opposition to the White House “ballroom” project as currently proposed.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important project. Whether it’s an individual or the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the American public needs to be given the opportunity to offer comments, insight and guidance on such projects. As we all know, the White House is a public space, owned by we the American people. Presidents are merely temporary guests and thus require, by law, permission to make modifications to the building, especially at the scale we see here.

I’d also like to thank David Scott Parker Architects for the comments and more reasonable design alternatives they have submitted for consideration. Their input covers many of the same points I was to cover today, specifically the square foot industry standards they highlighted and the overall symmetry of the White House grounds.

Since I appear here today representing a private nonprofit, I am not beholden to any special interest, political party or any one individual. Therefore, I can speak candidly.

A person can tell just by viewing the White House grounds, when the East and West Wings were added the design was purposeful and done with careful consideration of what the White House represents. When the American flag is presented with other flags, out of honor and respect, it is at the center and is the highest point of the group, and so it should be with the Executive Mansion.

In my thirty year career as an industrial designer, I have participated in thousands of design reviews. Not a single time do I recall a designer submitting to a client a one-off stand-alone concept to solve the identified problem. There are *always* multiple concepts and iterations



submitted for review. I would hope a similar process has been followed here. I respectfully request those preliminary plans also be made available for public comment.

I believe that everyone present here today (as well as millions of people across the county), deep down, really know this 90,000 square foot proposal is grossly out of scale, disrespectful of the White House and borderline obscene. Even an undergraduate architecture student would never propose such an out of proportion plan. The structure is so out-sized that the elegant symmetry of the roadway loop within the south lawn had to be deformed to make room for it. The symmetry of the entire parcel, so perfectly laid out by Frederick Law Olmsted is destroyed. The attempt to solve the problem of inadequate public event space has been lost in the exercise of stroking one man's ego. Surely, Mr. Baranes you can do better. Do you really want this to be your legacy?

As so well communicated in the comments presented by Mr. Parker, the new East Wing can and should be significantly smaller than this current proposal, both in footprint and in overall volume. I urge you to give careful thought and consideration to his input.

There is significant refinement that still needs to be done and questions that remain to be answered. I will conclude with some of those questions. If they have already been addressed, I again request the information be made available for public review.

1. Have other preliminary concepts been explored? If so, why were they eliminated?
2. Has the appropriate research been conducted to determine realistic office space requirements for the current and future First Ladies and First Gentlemen?
3. Have maintenance and utility costs been analyzed for such an enormous building that will only be utilized a limited number of times per year?

Referencing Mr. Parker's comments -

4. Are all the "grand staircases" actually functional and necessary or are they just eye candy?
5. Can the oversized south portico be reduced in size or eliminated altogether?
6. Where will his name appear? That is not shown anywhere but we all know it will be there.

Remember – the East Wing that stood last fall was torn down in a matter of days. The same can be done to this man's monument. So let's save everybody a lot of time, money, grief and anger and do it right the first time.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this historic project.

Sincerely,
John F. Kasper, Founder/President
East Wing Restoration Project

I am a retired architect, but today wish to address this Committee (to whom I have previously presented projects along the Mall) not as an architect, but as an American deeply concerned about the underlying norms this project has already shattered.

This 'modernization' began as a desecration of the 'people's house' by tearing down the East Wing without NCPC oversight. The fact that this esteemed Committee, long tasked with oversight to safeguard our history and built legacy of our Capital Region, is now considering the 'modernization', will in my opinion, ratify the prior acts of this applicant. Defy this desecration. Reject this proposal since prior acts alone are cause for rejecting any proposal to build on this site. Violations of the rule of law, must not be rewarded. Turn down this proposal based on past failure to follow the laws this Committee upholds.

While the history of the White House may not all be clean, a President who is actively whitewashing history and also demolishing our built legacy, is not honest with the American People, and will not be honest with those of you who nobly serve this Committee.

Furthermore, this addition to the White House, funded by opaque interests will be a permanent visible monument to special interests seeking favor with a President. Do not immortalize grift on this site of immeasurable importance to American democracy. Future generations will point to this 'modernization' as a visible monument of shame.

Do the right thing, regardless of architectural merits, which are extremely dubious at best and better left to others to address. If this project, a ballroom where 'the people' will not be invited is approved, it will be, as Prince Charles once said, a 'monstrous carbuncle on the face of a dear friend' - and auger the collapse of the guardrails that NCPC has provided for generations.

Walter Crimm

My name is Tom Shiner. I am a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and a longtime member of the DC Chapter of the AIA. After beginning my career as an associate in a Dupont Circle architecture practice, I opened my own firm, THOMAS S SHINER ARCHITECT, more than four decades ago. I am licensed to practice architecture in the District of Columbia and in other jurisdictions.

My career has focused on residential architecture. I have designed dozens of projects with relationships to historic structures in sensitive historic areas. I have presented designs for review, here and abroad, including to the US Commission of Fine Arts. I am qualified to speak as an expert to the NCPC about the proposed addition to the nation's most famous historic residence, the White House.

Before designing a project, architects are trained to first study the site. A project's site and context will limit, and often dictate, what can be built. The size and shape of a site will certainly determine the size and shape of what can be built on it. The predictable daily path of the sun will strongly influence a design. One of the principles that guide an architect is respect for the existing structures on and around the site.

The design of the proposed ballroom does not respect the existing structures on and around its site. At twenty-five times the size of the East Room that once stood there, it overwhelms the existing historic structure. Although it is attached to a residence that is modest in scale, its typology—that of an “event hall” or convention-scale center—will despoil the residential character of the White House.

Having seen a presentation of the proposed design published in the Washington Post, I first noticed how confusingly similar the proposed massing and arched fenestration are to the adjacent Neo-Classical Treasury Building. The proposed ballroom bears a closer relationship to the 600,000 SF Treasury Building than to the 55,000 SF residence to which it is attached. Second, the proposed ballroom is so large that it requires introducing a kink in the now symmetric oval driveway, violating one of the elegant features of the south lawn of the White House. To build this ballroom in its current design will be a mistake, in my opinion, ruining the view of the South Portico and the entire White House composition from the Ellipse, that lovely oval green space to the south and on axis with the Portico.

If I found myself alone in thinking the proposed design is unbalanced, I would be surprised. Any architect can tell you that the mass of the proposed ballroom will block out the morning sun that lights up the south elevation of the White House, leaving its graceful Portico and its lawn in shadow. Robbing morning sunlight from the icon is a transgression of thoughtful design.

I am an architect who was born and brought up in Washington, DC. My intelligent and enlightened parents taught me to appreciate the harmony, grace, and beauty of DC's historic buildings and public spaces. My childhood dream of becoming an architect began about the time I attended art school at the Corcoran Gallery near the White House.

Along the way in my career, I have had the good fortune to have lived, worked, and studied in two other capital cities; Copenhagen, Denmark and Berlin, Germany. I have observed processes by which cities take serious care of historic buildings, vistas, planning, and construction. For example, I learned that Berlin requires architects working there to erect full-scale mock-ups of a new public building's façade to elicit public comment about proposed details and materials. A presentation of a large sample of the intended building's skin and fenestration, along with plans and views of a project, is required to be made to the public with the intention of testing and making clear the physical and visual impact of the design. Criticism and discussion of the proposed design is invited, with the assumption that alternative solutions may provide improvements on the original. This expensive, time-consuming step in the approval process is about getting it done right. Architects appreciate this opportunity for review because they know that they will have support for the design that is finally built.

I request the following:

- 1) to learn about any scaled-down alternatives evaluated by the NCPC, especially alternative designs based on preserving and protecting the Classical character and modesty of the historic White House,
- 2) to learn about physical samples and mock-ups of the proposed details and materials for skin and fenestration for the proposed design.

In my expert opinion, the proposed addition is too big. The sheer mass and height of the proposed design will dwarf James Hoban's iconic presidential residence. I have escorted visitors from other countries to view the White House. Several have been surprised by the modest scale of the home of the U.S. president. They expected to see a palace. I explained to them what I learned as a schoolboy in Washington, D.C. and what all U.S. children are taught about this historic structure: that it is a symbol of representative government, a government of, by, and for the people. In such a government, the leaders are no more grand than the people who elect them and so do not live in splendor.

I affirm my professional commitment to long-term preservation of the White House as a national landmark. I affirm my respect for the NCPC process. I affirm my respect for any and all sincere comments made by others toward the goal of careful and thoughtful architectural preservation.

As a registered Republican and a historian, I can agree that the White House would benefit from an indoor ballroom. The proposed design is too out of scale with the White House and the layout of Washington DC. I am also concerned that much of it is non-functional such as the unconnected portico and the false windows on the first floor. The stated goal is to seat 1000 people, but the kitchen and ballroom are exponentially larger than necessary to reach that goal. I encourage the commission to send the ballroom back to the design phase to create a design that achieves the goals while preserving the scale, historic connection to the Capital, and is more efficient in design. Thank you for your attention.

Renee Henry

Testimony

East Wing Modernization Project, Proposed White House Ballroom, March 5, 2026

Jonathan Herz, FAIA

Chairperson and Commissioners, thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Jonathan Herz. As a long-time federal government architect with extensive experience working on historic federal buildings here in Washington—and as a long-time resident of this city—I care deeply about the quality, dignity, and stewardship of our Nation’s Capital.

I urge the Commission to disapprove the proposed White House Ballroom project because it is inconsistent with NCPC’s goals and legal responsibilities and would harm both the historic and civic character of the White House.

The White House was designed as a statement of republican governance—a dignified executive residence, intentionally in contrast to the palatial homes of European princes and tyrants. A 90,000-square-foot ballroom is of an entirely different character—less presidential residence than convention center. It would distort both the scale and symbolism of the nation’s chief executive’s home.

There is also no functional need for this project. Only a few blocks away stands the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium—a magnificent executive-branch facility seating a thousand guests. If the Administration needs a grand space for official events, that building already fulfills the requirement. If greater connection to the Executive is desired, perhaps it could be renamed to honor our presidents. Duplicating such a hall so near the White House contradicts the Commission’s long-standing principles of efficient, coordinated planning.

NCPC’s legal review authority over new construction on federal property within the National Capital Region—including the White House grounds—must be meaningfully maintained. For decades, major White House projects have been reviewed here before construction for consistency with the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan: massing, height, site design, security, circulation, and above all, relationship to the historic setting. On those criteria, this proposal fails.

Its scale and bulk overwhelm the site and block L’Enfant’s intended connection to the Capitol; architectural detailing is mismatched—using Corinthian orders where Ionic are appropriate—and a grand staircase to a landing with no entrance, a supercilious design gesture at what should be the nation’s most dignified address. A single 1,000-person hall large enough for 1,500 people, impossible to subdivide, ensures any event will look half attended— This is not good design.

Although the White House is exempt from mandatory Section 106 procedures, good design practice should still follow its principles—identifying character-defining, historic features, minimizing harm, and ensuring context-sensitive outcomes. In bypassing those steps, this

proposal disregards federal interests: the critical public viewsheds surrounding the White House, the coherent landscape of President's Park, and the symbolic, civic dignity of the Executive Mansion.

The White House grounds envisioned by George Washington and Pierre L'Enfant expressed democracy through restraint and order. A project of this magnitude would betray that founding vision.

For all these reasons—functional redundancy, inconsistency with the Comprehensive Plan, and harm to the historical and symbolic dignity of the Executive Mansion—I respectfully urge the Commission to disapprove this proposal. Thank you.

Good Afternoon Commission Chair and members,

My name is Ellen Shadle and I am speaking in opposition to the proceeding of the proposed ballroom. My opposition is certainly in response to the WHAT of the ballroom itself. However, my opposition is equally if not more so in regards to the HOW and WHY of the ballroom. The HOW's and the WHY's must be addressed to determine if the WHAT: the ballroom, is justified and only when it's been justified is a procedure to commence.

Page 1 of the FONSI states that the justification for this ballroom is to meet presidential priorities for capacity and protect the historic integrity and cultural landscape of the White House. The word presidential is not capitalized here so the priorities alluded to are not those of the current president, but those I will attribute to Frank Lands and refer to him as the author of the FONSI. With that, Mr. Lands does not articulate what priorities are presidential in nature and how those priorities were determined; he also does not explain or describe the historic integrity and cultural landscape of the White House that is mentioned. These are distinctions that are relevant and necessary in evaluating the asserted justification for and purpose of the ballroom. Without presidential priorities being defined and without knowing the criteria applied to historic integrity and cultural landscape, it is impossible to make a thorough and precise assessment.

Additionally on page 1 of the FONSI is a heading of "deconstruction and design". Let's be clear. The East Wing was not deconstructed. While there is no standardized definition of deconstruction, definitions include language such as "careful disassembly" and "creating minimal waste". This is not what happened to the East Wing. The East Wing was demolished and for thoroughness and precision, transparency and accountability, it shall be identified and referred to accordingly. To refer to the demolition of the East Wing as a deconstruction deflects ownership of the demolition from those who approved and managed it. This suggests that they are not proud of their role in the demolition and chose a different, and inaccurate, word, to diminish their guilt in how the East Wing was deleted from the landscape.

The WHY the FONSI offers is an explanation, not a justification. So the WHY of the FONSI does not hold up to challenge.

As for the HOW actions were to have been taken in response to needs or desires regarding the East Wing, the HOW was determined long before President Trump was president the first time or currently. It is not for the President of the United States nor any member of this Commission to dismiss, ignore, usurp, or disregard. It is empirically documented that the decisions regarding how to repair, restore, renovate, or replace the East Wing have not followed the procedural requirements in place. While no process is perfect and without friction or barriers, at the time of any proposed action, the current process is to be followed. To the extent that established procedural requirements were disregarded warrants those who felt they were exempt from those requirements to be held accountable. Disregarding regulatory or procedural requirements impacts public trust and the social contract we hold each other to.

There is much conversation about the abandonment of social and political norms as a result of President Trump's unwillingness to acknowledge let alone adhere to, not only norms, but established policies, procedures, and laws - that has conversation has admittedly been blunted by repetition becoming an ear worm we hear echoing in our heads but no longer consider significant if we ever did.

To that end, and particularly to the presidential appointees on this Commission, as much as President Trump exercises baffling entitlement to swat at regulations like an annoying insect, you also possess the entitlement to willfully recognize and adhere to the procedural regulations required for a project like this in appreciation for the larger ecosystem in which they are necessary for our nation's civic health.

To the Commission, it is because of the unsatisfied WHYs and HOWs to this project that I urge you to deny approval of this proposed preliminary and final site and building plans. Thank you.

PRESENTATION TO NCPC MAY 5, 2026

My name is Alison Hoagland. I am here today to express my opposition to the East Wing Modernization as it has been presented. I am a long-time resident of Washington, DC, a professor emerita of history and historic preservation, and the author of six books on American architectural history. I have a long and deep commitment to historic architecture and its power to explain the past and inform the present.

The White House, the most significant residential building in the United States, was designed purposefully and symbolically. Its Neoclassical design projects order, rationality, and dignity, but not opulence. Its relatively small size is an important part of its symbolism, declaring that this was not a palace or a castle but, rather, a house. The White House should be respected by new construction, not overshadowed by it.

Four aspects of the proposed ballroom are particularly concerning:

1. The new building is three times the size of the White House and will dominate it. The architect asserts that trees will obscure the building, but this is absurd. There is no guarantee that trees will survive even a year, and certainly not for the life of the new building. Trees are not a design strategy.

2. The two-story connector is intrusive and unnecessary. The ostensible reason for this second story is so that visitors could enter the White House and proceed through the East Room to the ballroom, but it seems most visitors will enter through the east side of the ballroom, where security screening would take place. Further, wouldn't this turn the East Room into a hallway? Two of the five windows on the east wall of that room would be removed for the connector. We have not seen plans that explain the impact on the interior of the White House.

3. The exterior of the White House will also suffer damage from this enlarged connector, which will necessitate removal of the handsome Palladian window in the center of the White House's east wall, as well as an adjacent window. The exterior stone walls date back to the original construction of the White House in the 1790s, unlike much of the rest of the building. The loss of this fabric would be tragic.

4. The size of the ballroom has not been justified. It would seem that the need to gather 1,000 diners would occur only rarely, perhaps only for Inaugural Balls. Most of the time the attendance would be smaller, necessitating partitioning of the ballroom space. The 40-foot-high ceiling of the ballroom would be woefully out of scale for a ballroom half of its length or width.

More time is needed for a careful reconsideration of this project. Constructing a ballroom is possible, but it should be deferential to the White House, not overwhelming. It should be scaled for realistic uses, not aspirational ones. And it should not destroy any fabric of the White House.

Keep up the good work Mr President you're doing a great job we are behind you 100% on this project

James P. Dooley Sr

I'm appalled by the fact that this president thinks that he has the power to alter The White House. It's not his house but the house of the people

Ann Moore

To the members of this commission,

Thank you for allowing me to speak before you and allow my statement.

The White House is the People's House. It does NOT belong to whoever the current resident is. The architects who planned and laid out the city along with its buildings had a vision that was both grand and simple. The trifecta of government; Legislative, Judicial, and Executive have their own edifices that represents the power within and yet demonstrates, collectively each branch is coequal. The White House was not built to be an opulent 17th century Palace of Versailles. It was built to serve as a simple yet elegant home for the president and family to live. Additionally, it is a place to conduct the business and duties of the Executive Branch.

I do not deny that improvements and upgrades are necessary for buildings over time. Protocols are in place to ensure that improvements are made in accordance with the law and best practices to insure preservation and historic significance of the building being remodeled or renovated.

According to multiple news reports, no permit was issued, nor was public discussion prior to the destruction of the East Wing. This is a clear violation of the very protocols. The proposed ballroom design will dwarf the existing historic structure, remove sight lines that are part the plan of the original designers. It is a gaudy design that does not represent our country. It is an attempt to create some sort of physical legacy of the current resident.

We the people do not need these kinds of legacies left by our leaders. We want legacies left that benefit all the people of this great nation. As time moves forward, monuments, structures and, statues can, and should be built to honor leaders and those who served our country in positive ways. Current leaders should NOT be allowed to glorify themselves by constructing such monuments.

Thank you for your time,

Lawrence Wisniewski

I love this country and the White House's historical significance. I am concerned that the views of the main structure will be blocked. I think putting the ballroom underground makes the most sense. The president can provide the ballroom he wants and the White House's historic character will remain. What is designed is beautiful, but the founding fathers did not want a large structure and I share in their vision for the executive mansion. It's beautiful as it is and to change it any further is unconscionable. The site is historic. We don't want it to be modernized. Please return it as it was and build a ballroom underground.

Jamilah Way

March 4, 2026
East Wing Modernization Project
Diane Marlin

I appreciate questions raised at the Feb 5 NCPC meeting by Commissioners Mendelson, Argo, and Dixon related to the project's size, mass, scale, accessibility, and consistency with historic planning documents. My comments are based on information provided by the NCPC and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

- 1) **This project is far too large for the site. It can be reduced in size and scale without compromising any of the proposed functions.** The current design dwarfs the historic White House, blocks the sight line between the Capitol and White House along Pennsylvania Avenue, and disrupts the historic landscape design. In one fell swoop, it obliterates the legacy of Hoban, L'Enfant, and Olmstead. This cannot be allowed to happen.

According to the National Trust, the East Wing project has nearly three times the mass of the White House, 2.4 million cu feet above grade compared to 875,000 cu ft. The Ballroom interior ceiling is 40 feet high and other areas have ceilings as high as 23 feet. The Ballroom and Kitchen area are significantly oversized based on industry standards. Seating for 1000 people should require up to 15,000 sq ft, not 22,000 sq ft as proposed. The kitchen area is 2.5 times the industry standard.

- 2) **The East Wing project is inaccessible.** According to Mr. Baranes, there are two primary entrances to the Ballroom: From the East Room of the White House via the colonnade OR from an east side ground level driveway, where one would go up steps to the East Portico, enter a foyer and walk up a Grand Staircase to the Ballroom. Mr. Baranes further clarified that the *"primary handicap access to the Ballroom is through the front door of the White House. The other entrances won't be accessible."* This is unacceptable. There should be elevator access from the east side foyer directly up to the Ballroom. If you are building a Grand Staircase, you can install Grand Elevators.
- 3) **The colossal South Portico, terrace and staircase appear to have little purpose other than to add to the mass of the structure and they should be removed.** The Ballroom floor is 12 feet ABOVE the terrace and the kitchen is BELOW it. There is no internal connection from these rooms to the Portico. There are no functioning doors from the Ballroom to the South Portico. The Portico's 24 massive columns will block much of the view from the Ballroom windows. The 40 ft wide staircase stops at the terrace.

I urge NCPC to require the following changes to the East Wing Modernization design:

- a. Reduce the mass, footprint and scale of this project. Resize the ballroom and kitchen to industry standards, rearrange the kitchen and service areas and remove the fake South Portico to reduce overall mass by 40% (National Trust)
- b. Preserve L'Enfant's sightlines between the Capitol and the White House, follow Hoban's elegant White House design, and maintain Olmstead's vision for the grounds.
- c. Prioritize accessibility for people of all ages and abilities.