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Stephen Staudigl
stephen@ncpc.gov

Julia Koster
julia@ncpc.gov

NCPC Provides Feedback on New U.S. National Arboretum Entrance

Commission also comments on New Marine Barracks Washington Quarters

Washington, DC—At its [May 4, 2023 meeting](#) the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) provided feedback on a proposed **new main entrance for the U.S. National Arboretum**. The Arboretum seeks a new main vehicle entrance on Bladensburg Road, NE, a new 1,200-foot access road from it to Azalea Road, and the refurbishment of a 3,700 section of Azalea Road on the Arboretum grounds. Once the Bladensburg Road entrance is finished, the existing R Street, NW main entrance and the secondary New York Avenue, NE entrance will be closed to the public for vehicular use. The 446-acre National Arboretum, established by Congress in 1927, opened to the public in 1959 and receives more than 600,000 annual visitors.

The Commission supported relocating the main entrance to Bladensburg Road, NE to improve public accessibility, increase the Arboretum's visibility, and reduce traffic along R Street, NE; however, prior to the next review phase, the Arboretum needs to complete a transportation study of the project's impacts. The study should also evaluate changes to internal circulation, particularly for Azalea Road, as well as impacts to pedestrian/bike safety. Commissioners felt that the design for the new entrance gates needed improvement, as it will become the primary entry, and made several recommendations for how to improve the design. They also requested a security analysis justifying the location of bollards in front of a retaining wall next to the new entrance and encouraged a more thoughtful design.

The Commission then provided comments on the **Marine Barracks Washington's P158 Bachelor Enlisted Quarters and Support Facility**. Plans submitted by the Department of the Navy, Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Washington call for a 115,000 square-foot, six-story building with housing and support for 250 enlisted personnel, barracks, administrative offices, a non-commissioned officers club, fitness facilities, and a cafeteria. It will be located on the Sousa Annex at 1053 7th Street, SE, which is southwest of the historic Main Post on 8th Street, SE. The main post opened in 1805.

The new building will connect to an existing residential and support building (Building 25) that influenced its design. However, the Commission questioned whether the new quarters should draw design inspiration from this adjacent building or consider another approach. Further, Commissioners said that the current design should be improved by changing its scale, proportion, and design features, including increasing the number (or the size) of the windows. They also requested a detailed landscape plan in the next submission.

[Commission actions and related materials are available online.](#)

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The Commission approved one item on the Consent Calendar (no presentations were made).

1. Comments on concept plans for the District of Columbia Office of Budget and Performance Management, Washington, DC – District of Columbia Capital Improvement Plan FY 2024–2029 (0348)

The Executive Director approved four items under authority delegated by the Commission. Unless otherwise noted, all projects are in Washington, DC.

1. Preliminary and final site and building plans for the National Zoological Park Great Flight Aviary Repair, 3001 Connecticut Avenue, NW. (8454)
2. Preliminary and final building plans for the Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling LEARN Charter School Temporary Trailers, 100 Duncan Avenue, SW. (8308)
3. Final site and building plans for the Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts - Concession Stand A, 1551 Trap Road, Vienna, Virginia. (8341)
4. Comments to the Council of the District of Columbia for the Proposed Closing of a Public Alley in Square 762 - S.O. 23-01974, 224 2nd Street, SE. (8458)

The National Capital Planning Commission is the federal government's central planning agency in Washington, DC and surrounding counties of Maryland and Virginia. The Commission provides overall guidance for federal land and buildings in the region. It also reviews the design of federal projects and memorials, oversees long-range planning for future development, and monitors capital investment by federal agencies.