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WINTER 2000

# QUARTERLY

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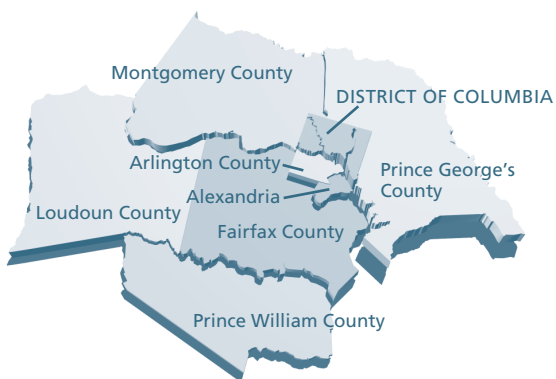
# COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING— THE BIG PICTURE

**PLANNERS FOR NATIONAL CAPITAL CITIES** face a fundamental challenge—how to meet the immediate needs of a major urban center, such as transportation improvements, environmental protection, and economic development, while at the same time plan for the future needs of a symbolic city that reflects the achievements and aspirations of a nation. The *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*, the planning document jointly published by NCPC and the District of Columbia government, is designed to meet this challenge.

The Comprehensive Plan establishes goals and policies for future development in the Nation's Capital and helps coordinate planning among federal and local jurisdictions. The plan is composed of two parts: the Federal Elements, which are prepared by NCPC and guide development of the federal establishment in the District and the region; and the District Elements, which are prepared by the District of Columbia government and direct city planning. The Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan cover such diverse issues as parks and open space protection, historic preservation, environmental regulation, and federal employment distribution throughout the region. Each element contains a statement of goals followed by the policies designed to achieve these goals.

While the Comprehensive Plan has been amended several times since it was first published 20 years ago, NCPC planners are preparing major revisions to the Federal Elements. The new plan will address a range of planning topics that have emerged as significant public policy issues since the 1980s.

- How can federal planners ensure the safety of government workers and buildings with adequate security measures while preserving Washington's urban design integrity and the physical openness that is the hallmark of a democratic society?
- What is the effect of increasing telecommuting on transportation requirements and the location and size of federal offices?



THE FEDERAL ELEMENTS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GUIDE PLANNING IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION.

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN HELPS PRESERVE THE DESIGN INTEGRITY OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL.



- How can federal planning policies advance environmental justice objectives in applying environmental regulations, reclaiming brown-field sites, and extending ecological stewardship?
- What is the appropriate distribution of federal jobs between the District and outlying jurisdictions? What federal policies, if any, are needed to direct this distribution?

The Comprehensive Plan is a principal component in the hierarchy of federal and local plans that guide development in the National Capital. The new Federal Elements will provide specific policy guidance that promotes many of the long-range objectives of the Commission's vision plan, *Extending the Legacy: Planning America's Capital for the 21st Century*. The Comprehensive Plan is also closely linked to the Federal Capital Improvements Program, the planning document prepared annually by NCPC that reports on the five-year capital investment plans of federal agencies in the region. In its review of proposed construction projects and master plans, the Commission assesses individual proposals on their consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

## THE REVISED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WILL ADDRESS A RANGE OF PLANNING TOPICS THAT HAVE EMERGED AS SIGNIFICANT PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES SINCE THE 1980S.

In preparing the new elements, the Commission and its staff are working closely with other federal agencies that look to the Comprehensive Plan as a framework in developing their own project plans. This early collaboration within the federal family will provide the foundation necessary to assess the development needs of the numerous government agencies in the region and to prepare solid planning analysis and recommendations. In developing the Comprehensive Plan the Commission and NCPC staff are also consulting extensively with regional and local planning authorities and, in particular, with the District of Columbia government. The plan will include recommendations for both short-term and long-term implementation.

The Commission will publish individually each of the eight elements of the federal part of the Comprehensive Plan over the coming three years. The first element scheduled for release is the Parks, Open Space, and Natural Features Element, which the Commission expects to circulate in draft form for public comment by the end of this summer. A public comment period will be part of the release of each element and, if the scope or impact of the revisions to the current plan warrants, the Commission will conduct workshops, focus groups, and other public outreach programs.



# PROCEEDINGS

This issue of the Quarterly summarizes actions taken at the Commission meetings on January 6, February 3, and March 2, 2000. Additional information on individual projects may be obtained by contacting the National Capital Planning Commission, 801 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20576 or by calling (202) 482-7200.

## PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE QUARTER REDEVELOPMENT

Washington, D.C.  
February 3, 2000

The Commission endorsed a major redevelopment project in the Pennsylvania Avenue Quarter of downtown Washington that will include more than 400 residential units and approximately 80,000 square feet of retail and arts-related space, including a 250-seat performance space. The project offers an extensive historic preservation component including the renovation of two significant historic buildings, the restoration of existing building facades, and the installation of replicated or historically accurate new storefronts.

Located on 7th Street, between D and E Streets, NW, the development will contribute to the cosmopolitan environment in this revitalized area of the city that blends architectural examples of the neighborhood's past with its cultural and arts-oriented present.

The property, which is one of the last major undeveloped parcels in the portfolio of the now-defunct Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation, is administered by the General Services Administration. NCPC is charged with ensuring that any development on the site complies with PADC's



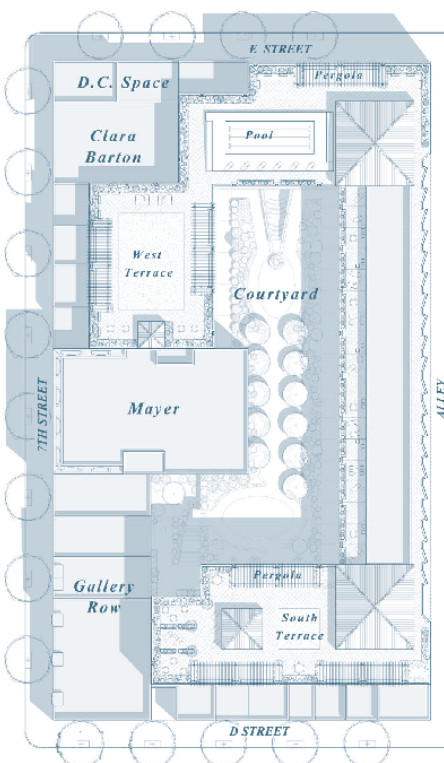
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT 7TH & E STREETS, NW WILL PRESERVE MUCH OF THE HISTORIC CHARACTER OF THE SITE. *Courtesy Esocoff & Associates*

Pennsylvania Avenue Plan of 1974. The plan stipulates that residential, arts, and arts-related uses must be included in the development of this site.

In keeping with the spirit and intent of the PADC guidelines, the General Services Administration in its selection of a developer required significantly more housing units than actually called for by the plan. GSA intends to transfer title of the property to the private developer later this year; construction is expected to begin in 2001 and to be completed in 2003.

Four hundred and five rental apartment units will be located on eleven floors beginning one floor above the ground level at E Street, where the main residential lobby will be located. These floors form a U-shape around a large, landscaped courtyard. A residential rooftop terrace will feature private and public areas, as well as a shallow swimming pool. The project includes below-ground parking for 550 vehicles with an entry from E Street.

Apart from garage, theater, and residential entrances, all street frontage will be used for retail activities. Nearly 32,000 square feet will be devoted to the arts



A LANDSCAPED COURTYARD WILL BE A FOCAL POINT FOR RESIDENTIAL UNITS IN THE MIXED-USE PROJECT.

*Courtesy Esocoff & Associates*

and arts-related activities, including a live theater and a theater school. The entry to the theater will be located on D Street, just east of Gallery Row, set among street-level shops in a way that encourages pedestrian-friendly street life. The site currently contains some interesting and locally well known late nineteenth-century structures, including the building from which Clara Barton ran the Missing Soldier's Office in the years immediately following the Civil War. The developer is responsible for the rehabilitation of the Barton offices.

The architectural expression of the project is both contemporary and sympathetic to the historic, architectural, and urban design context of the site and the surrounding neighborhood. This contextual relationship is achieved through the use of building setbacks and massing, proportion, materials, color, and architectural detail.

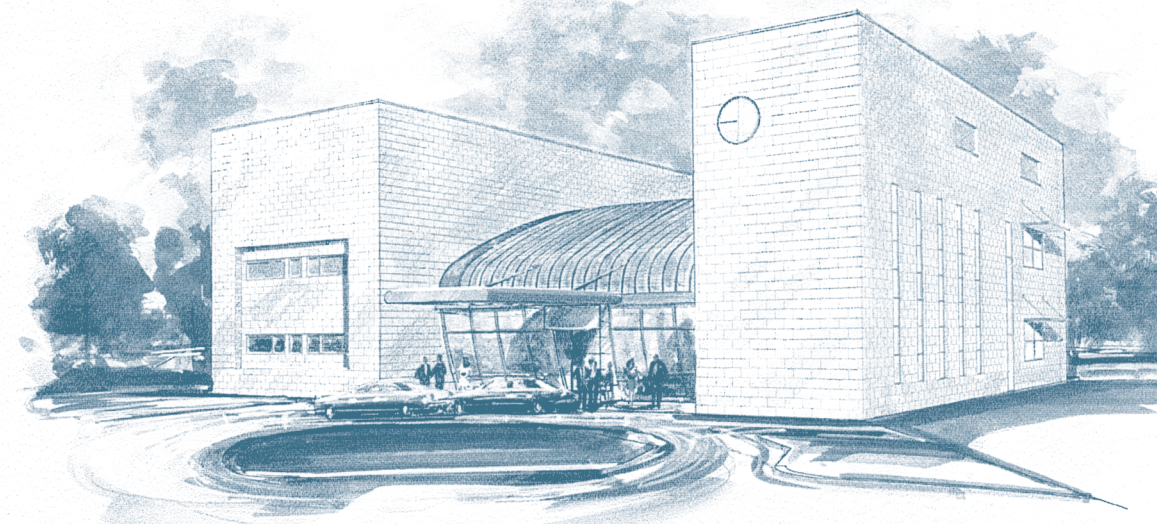
The Commission requested that in the development of final site and building plans, the project team consider varying the height of the building structures and breaking the continuous roof line to better integrate the design with the surrounding neighborhood. The team was also requested to further study the articulation of the facades so as to differentiate the towers, further reduce repetition, and generally provide greater variety. Finally, the Commission recommended that the developer explore the feasibility of allowing public access to the project's lower courtyard for use as a vest pocket park for at least part of the day.

## CHANCERY OF SLOVAKIA

Washington, D.C.  
March 2, 2000

The Commission's approval of the final site and building plans for the Chancery of Slovakia paves the way for the construction of another architecturally distinctive foreign mission in the International Center, the 47-acre diplomatic enclave located at Connecticut Avenue and Van Ness Street, NW. The new chancery will occupy a site in the Northwest Quadrant of the Center, immediately adjacent to the University of the District of Columbia. The building's design is the winner of a public architecture competition held in the Republic of Slovakia.

The inspiration for the 24,308-square-foot chancery is derived from the traditional design of fortified East European Slovakian towns, which featured a central square set within protective stone walls. The building's rectangular wings are set in a U-shape configuration evocative of a walled Slovak town. In this current-day interpretation of the traditional design, however, a transparent and open structural element rather than masonry walls connects the three wings of the chancery. The solid exterior walls of the building are punctured by window openings suggesting traditional fortress lookouts. Light gray cast stone and split-faced concrete facades will recall the typical building materials of Old World towns.



THE NEW CHANCERY OF SLOVAKIA FEATURES A TRANSPARENT ENTRY AREA. *Courtesy Leo A. Daly and Bogar Fischer, Kralij Lizon & Ervin*



The building's canopy over the main entry represents a drawbridge gateway; however, it has been placed on a light, curving roof structure to convey a sense of openness and welcome. The building's lobby leads to an open hall, a representation of the town square, and then to a gathering area and terrace beyond. The roof over the gathering area is curved and partially glazed as if it were a tent suspended over a town square.

The new chancery will contain offices for 21 employees, meeting spaces, a suite for the ambassador, staff residential units, and underground parking for 16 vehicles, accessed by a ramp located on the building's north side. Generous landscaping will screen the chancery from the UDC campus, the nearby park, and the North Cleveland Park residential neighborhood.

## DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Washington, D.C.  
February 3, 2000

The Treasury Department's main building at 15th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW is one of the first—and one of the most historically and architecturally significant—public buildings ever constructed by the federal government. During the past year the Commission has reviewed, at several stages, plans for a major renovation of the building. In its most recent consideration of the project in February, the Commission approved the preliminary site and buildings plans for the exterior improvements.

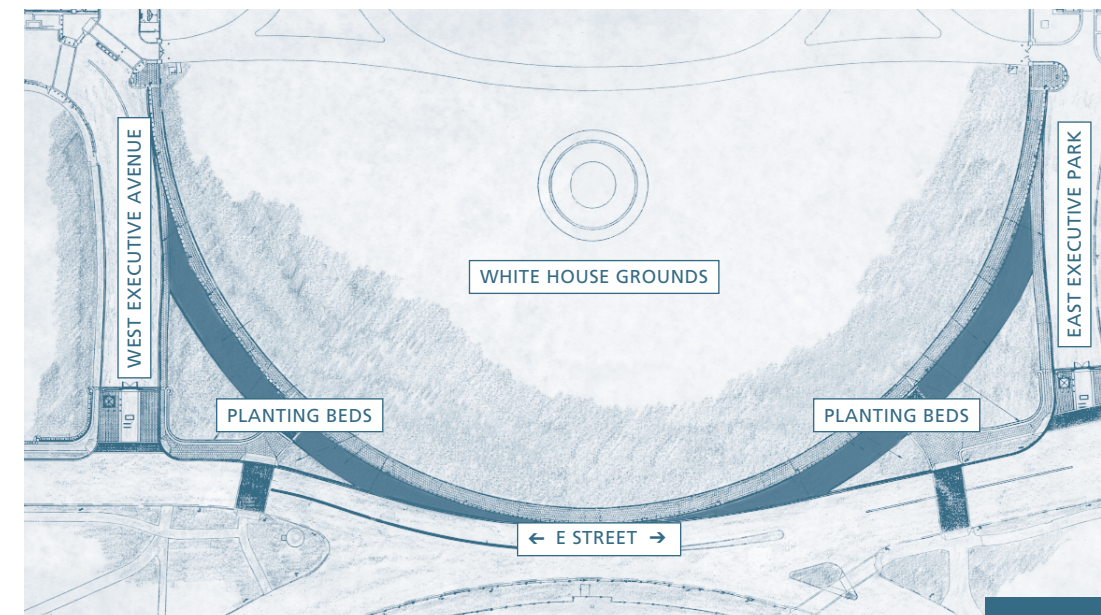


Begun in 1836 under the direction of federal architect Robert Mills, the Treasury Building was completed under subsequent architects over a period of three decades. The building, along with two other architectural landmarks that were begun under Mills' direction—the Old Patent Office Building and the General Post Office Building—collectively illustrate the federal government's use of classical orders and building types to create an architectural iconography for the young nation. All of the proposed renovation work, which will take five years to complete, is being researched and supervised by Treasury staff in conjunction with architectural consultants noted for their expertise with historic architectural fabric. The Commission's approvals during the past year have included key elements of the exterior renovation:

- The installation of new and historically accurate mahogany and bronze doors on all four facades replacing the current utilitarian glass and aluminum doors.
- The reconstruction of the original tripartite domed skylight on the roof of the west wing of the building.
- The replacement of non-historic windows with frames and sashes that are consistent with the historic character of the building.
- The installation of replicated historic cast-iron light standards on the walls around the building forecourts.

Additional improvements include the repair or replication of ornamental cast-iron elements such as light fixtures and window grilles, the conservation of the statues in the north and south plazas, the cleaning and lighting of the building, and the replacement of the hand rail at the 15th Street entrance.

In its reviews, the Commission has commended the project planners for their careful work to repair and restore historic elements of this significant National Historic Landmark structure.



THE REMAINING FRAGMENTS OF SOUTH EXECUTIVE AVENUE WILL BE CONVERTED INTO LANDSCAPED PLANTING BEDS.  
Courtesy National Park Service

## E STREET BETWEEN 15TH AND 17TH STREETS, NW

Washington, D.C.  
February 3, 2000

In its December 1999 approval of plans to restore two-way traffic on E Street between 15th and 17th Streets, NW and its February 2000 approval of landscape plans for the project, the Commission has strongly endorsed efforts to relieve traffic congestion in downtown Washington. As a result of a 1995 security review of the White House and its grounds, traffic on E Street was restricted to eastbound only and private vehicles were banned on west South Executive Avenue and State Place. Currently, the bulk of westbound traffic is diverted north to I and K Streets, both of which have become seriously overloaded.

This project will direct westbound traffic on E Street to 17th Street and New York Avenue. The plan will provide two travel lanes in each direction and reduce the length and width of the existing E Street median. It will also remove the traffic island and eliminate parking spaces on E Street between 17th Street and South Executive Drive, add a right-turn lane for southbound 17th Street

between F Street and New York Avenue, and remove existing temporary barriers on E Street. The reopening of E Street will remove a significant barrier to westbound traffic across the central area of the city.

The Commission also approved landscaping plans associated with this roadway improvement project. These landscaping plans are consistent with the National Park Service's draft Comprehensive Design Plan for the White House and President's Park, which offers long-range guidance for the mansion and its grounds. The approved landscape plan integrates the vestigial sections of South Executive Avenue, which are no longer used for traffic. These sections, used principally for staff parking since 1995, will be converted to planting beds containing low evergreen shrubs. The existing sidewalk, curb, and bollard line around the South Lawn fence will be retained and there will be no changes to the sidewalk's appearance or function for visitors and pedestrians.

The Federal Highway Administration expects E Street to be open to two-way traffic by October 2000. The Park Service expects to complete the southside barrier project and associated landscaping improvements by October 2002.

EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS TO THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE TREASURY BUILDING ARE UNDERWAY.

Photo by Tony Simon



## WASHINGTON DULLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Loudoun and Fairfax Counties, VA  
February 3, 2000

As the central planning agency for the federal government in the National Capital Region, NCPC has an interest in planning and project development at Washington Dulles International Airport. NCPC's specific interests in the airport are defined in a 1986 Memorandum of Understanding between the Commission and the Washington Metropolitan Airports Authority. The Commission provides guidance to the Authority to help preserve the magnificence of the Main Terminal in its broad landscape setting as originally designed by Eero Saarinen.

At its February meeting, the Commission reviewed the master plan modification and preliminary site and building plans for the West Flank Parking Garage at Washington Dulles International Airport. The Commission determined that two of the six proposed amendments to the master plan had the potential to affect the visibility and appearance of the Main Terminal. These two amendments proposed changing the land-use category of the East and West Flank areas from Airport Support to Public Parking. Such a change would facilitate the construction of parking structures adjacent to the Main Terminal. Since any structure in the East Flank area could negatively affect the visibility of the Main Terminal from the approach, the Commission recommended that the Airports Authority consider other parking alternatives. If parking is still deemed necessary for this area, a thorough visual analysis should be performed during project design.

In considering the preliminary site and building plans for the West Flank Parking Garage, the Commission concluded that, although the proposed parking garage would be visible, its visibility would not adversely affect views to the Main Terminal. The low horizontal form of the building, the uncomplicated facades, and the substantial evergreen tree buffer will all contribute to making the garage subordinate to the Main Terminal. As proposed, the four-to-five-story garage will create approximately 3,900 public parking spaces.

The Commission commended the Airports Authority for the sensitive design of the parking garage and for its cooperation with Commission staff in revising the design of the garage to ensure that the Main Terminal remains the dominant feature in the airport landscape. After early consultation with Commission staff, the Authority revised the proposed design to eliminate the top level of the garage in the area closest to the Main Terminal and reduced the height of the light poles on the top level from 30 feet to 20 feet.

## OTHER COMMISSION ACTIONS

**ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE, BUILDING 1535, CAMP SPRINGS, PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MD.**  
The Commission approved preliminary and final building plans for a roof replacement and entrance improvements to Building 1535 at Andrews Air Force Base. The existing flat roof, which has developed numerous irreparable leaks, will be replaced by a standing seam metal roof. In an effort to bring focus to the building and add monumentality to the entrance, a new portico will be located at the visitor entrance. (1/6/00)

MAIN ENTRY OF THE PLANNED DAMASCUS POST OFFICE.

*Courtesy FACE Associates, Inc.*



### DAMASCUS MAIN POST OFFICE, NORTH WOODFIELD ROAD AT DAMASCUS CENTRE, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD.

The Commission approved final site and building plans for the new post office, which will inhabit a 2.5-acre site on the west side of North Woodfield Road. With the new facility, USPS expects to improve its customer service in the general Damascus, MD area. (3/2/00)

### FORT LESLIE J. MCNAIR, MAIN ENTRANCE, P STREET, SW, WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Commission approved preliminary and final site development plans for the installation of the main entrance gate to Fort Leslie J. McNair. The proposed gate, which will reflect the design of the historic gate formerly at the entrance, is one step in ongoing security improvements around the fort's perimeter. (2/3/00)

THE NEW MAIN ENTRY GATE AT FORT MCNAIR WILL RECALL THE DESIGN OF THE ORIGINAL MCKIM, MEAD & WHITE GATE, CIRCA 1905.

*Courtesy Dhillon Engineering, Inc.*



### FORT MYER, PUBLIC SAFETY CENTER, ARLINGTON COUNTY, VA.

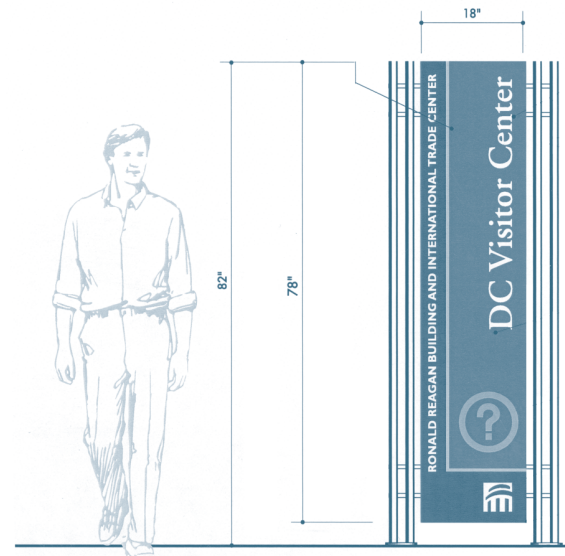
The Commission approved preliminary site and building plans for the 18,350-square-foot Public Safety Center. This state-of-the-art building should accommodate all operational requirements of the fire protection and security personnel that serve the Fort Myer reservation. Associated project elements include a new access drive, sidewalks, vehicle parking, landscaping, and stormwater drainage. (3/2/00)

### LEESBURG BRANCH POST OFFICE, BATTLEFIELD PARKWAY AND FIELDSTONE DRIVE, LOUDOUN COUNTY, VA.

The Commission approved the location and program for a new branch post office in Leesburg, but made some requests of USPS in the preparation of preliminary site and building plans. These requests included the preservation of existing trees and the provision of a sufficient setback at one of the project boundaries. The proposed post office will be developed on a 4.6-acre site in the northern section of Leesburg, close to U.S. Route 15. (1/6/00)

**RONALD REAGAN BUILDING AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTER, 1300 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

The Commission approved preliminary and final site and building plans for exterior building signage that will announce the varied activities of the Ronald Reagan Building, which features a conference center, a food court, restaurants, the D.C. Visitor Center, and federal trade organizations. The approval did not include the proposed 35-foot banner poles and banners at the Pennsylvania Avenue entrance. The Commission recommended that GSA evaluate alternative options that would not obscure views of the rotunda base or create visual clutter and delegated approval of this component to the Executive Director. (1/6/00)



FREESTANDING DIRECTORY PANELS AROUND THE RONALD REAGAN BUILDING WILL HELP ORIENT VISITORS.

*Courtesy Douglas Gallagher*

**DELEGATED ACTIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

On behalf of the Commission, the Executive Director approved:

- Preliminary and final site and building plans for the construction of an Administrative Storage Facility in the Naval Medical Clinic Area, Marine Corps Base, Quantico, Prince William County, VA. (12/21/99)
- Revised final site development plans for the National Christmas Tree Perimeter Fence at President’s Park, the Ellipse, E Street, between 15th and 17th Streets, NW, Washington, D.C. (12/21/99)

**WALTER REED ARMY MEDICAL CENTER, NW, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

The Commission approved preliminary site and building plans for a much-needed physical fitness facility at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. In preparing final site and building plans, the Commission requested the Department of the Army to further define the north entrance and better integrate the east entrance into the overall building mass. (3/2/00)



WALTER REED’S NEW PHYSICAL FITNESS CENTER WILL HOUSE BASKETBALL, RACQUETBALL, AND VOLLEYBALL COURTS.

*Courtesy the Hilliard Group*

- Pending completion of the Section 106 review, preliminary and final site and building plans for the construction of an addition to Building 91 at the U.S. Naval Observatory, 34th Street and Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. (12/21/99)
- Preliminary and final site and building plans for the construction of a new helicopter hangar and related fuel system improvements at the U.S. Park Police Anacostia Operations Facility, 1900 Anacostia Drive, SE, Washington, D.C. (12/21/99)
- Preliminary and final site and building plans for the East Child Care Center at the Bethesda campus of the National Institutes of Health, Montgomery County, MD. (12/21/99)
- Preliminary and final site and building plans for construction of a new replacement cooling tower at Building 235 at the National Institute of Standards and Technology in Gaithersburg, Montgomery County, MD. (1/27/00)
- Preliminary and final site and building plans for the Family Advocacy Center at Andrews Air Force Base in Camp Springs, Prince George’s County, MD. (1/27/00)
- Final site and building plans for the Engleside Branch Post Office located at 8588 Richmond Highway, Fairfax County, VA. (2/24/00)
- Preliminary and final site and building plans for construction of a Fleet Technical and Evaluation and Assembly Building at the U.S. Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division, Montgomery County, MD. (2/24/00)
- Preliminary and final site and building plans for a 5,300-square-foot addition to building L-11 at the U.S. Coast Guard Telecommunication and Information Systems Command, Fairfax County, VA. (2/24/00)

- Preliminary and final site and building plans for a temporary storage facility for K-9 training at the Pentagon Reservation, Arlington, VA. (2/24/00)

**ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION, THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MADE A DETERMINATION THAT:**

- The Map Amendment to the Zoning Regulations to rezone from R-4 to R-5-B Lot 825 in Square 653 (Syphax School at Half Street, SW, Washington, D.C.) would not affect the federal interest nor be inconsistent with the Federal Elements of the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*. (1/27/00)
- The proposed Downtown Development District Housing-Related Text Amendment, relating to 1301 and 1331 L Street, NW, Washington, D.C., would not affect the federal interest nor be inconsistent with the Federal Elements of the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*. (2/3/00)



**NCPC QUARTERLY**

Winter Quarter 2000

January 6, February 3, March 2

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

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