

# STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Eugene Keller

NCPC File No. 6383



## GEORGETOWN WATERFRONT PARK WISCONSIN AVENUE TERMINUS, Wisconsin Avenue to 31<sup>st</sup> Street, NW, Washington, D.C.

Submitted by the National Park Service

July 3, 2008

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### Abstract

The National Park Service (NPS) has submitted final site and building plans for the Wisconsin Avenue Terminus portion of the Georgetown Waterfront Park that was approved by the Commission as a preliminary design in February 2007. This key focus area of the Park maintains all features approved by the Commission in its earlier review.

### Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of final site and building plans pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8722 (b)(1) and (d)

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### Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

**Approves** the final site and building plans for the Georgetown Waterfront Park, Wisconsin Avenue Terminus, as shown on the NCPC Map File No. 72.00(70.00)-42569.

**Notes** that the National Park Service is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Georgetown University Boathouse project that includes an alternative of locating a boathouse in the Georgetown Waterfront Park.

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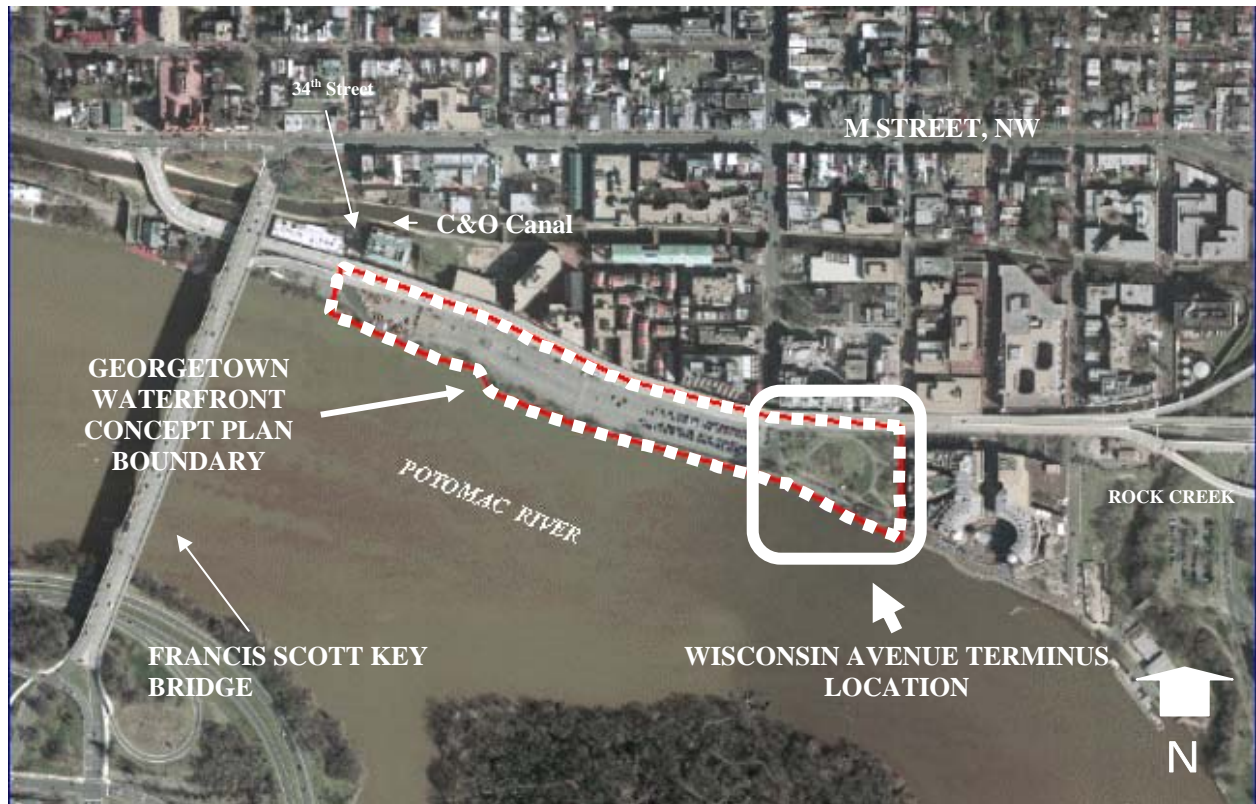
## PROJECT SUMMARY

### Site Description

The National Park Service's final site and building plans involve a limited portion of the waterfront in the vicinity of the Wisconsin Avenue entry terminus. This area of the park contains approximately 2.3 acres and is the main entry section of the recreational area. The design takes in an area that extends back from the shoreline approximately 185 feet to K Street, NW, and reaches under the Whitehurst elevated roadway. The Whitehurst Expressway, above K Street, defines the length of the northern edge of the site and creates a visual barrier between Georgetown and the planned park. However, the Wisconsin Avenue view-corridor leads directly into the park and is oriented north/south under the elevated road. The preservation of the vista from Wisconsin Avenue to the Potomac River and a pedestrian connection along the river's edge at this area of the park, which links to the shoreline from Rock Creek, are major attributes established by the final design.



**VICINITY LOCATION OF GEORGETOWN WATERFRONT PARK**



### **BOUNDARY OF OVERALL GEORGETOWN WATERFRONT PARK CONCEPT**

#### Background

The Commission last reviewed aspects of the Georgetown Waterfront Park, Wisconsin Avenue Terminus, in February 2007. At that time the Commission approved the revised preliminary site and building plans for the Georgetown Waterfront Park, Wisconsin Avenue Terminus, as shown on the NCPC Map File No. 72.00(38.00)-42167.

No other issues were reviewed as outstanding items or concerns by the Commission dealing with the Wisconsin Avenue area.

#### Proposal

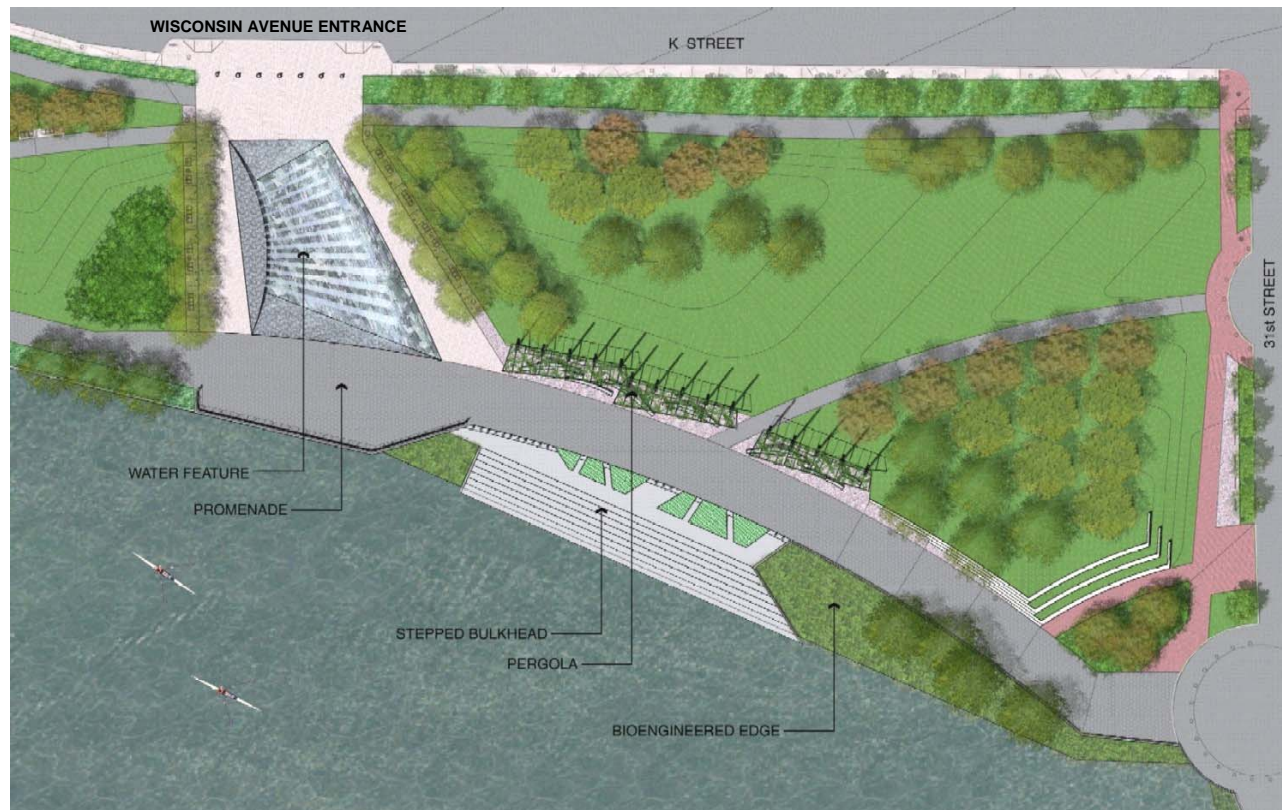
The currently submitted Wisconsin Terminus final plans include the following activity areas:

- A promenade at the river's edge.

- Alignment of a regional trail component (Crescent Bike Trail) at the section's north edge.
- Open lawn areas for passive recreation.
- A shelter/pavilion (pergola) for shade, sitting and viewing.
- A primary plaza space at the foot of Wisconsin Avenue as the major gathering space of the park.
- An interactive water feature with no water pool.
- Opportunities to be in proximity to the water.

The completed final site development plans implement the preliminary design approved by the Commission and present the final project design specifications, materials, and construction drawings for minor structures of the project.

The final plans maintain the pergola near the promenade that is a major focal feature of the lower plaza facing the river. The primary materials of the pergola involve steel structural members colored dark olive, which are canted backward at an angle and have a suspended arm extending forward from the vertical forms that create the roof support of the pergola.



**2007 SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR WISCONSIN AVENUE TERMINUS**

An open metal screen comprises the up-angle roof profile and serves to support vegetation growth the will create the shading green roof (see detail at pages 8 and 9). A series of undulations along the leading edge of the pergola further augments a sense of motion to the pergola. The seating elements are granite, arranged in curving shapes to provide a variety of viewing orientations. The granite used for the seating will match the granite used at the fountain, thus establishing a consistent theme for the park's site features.

The park pedestrian pavement, as in the earlier design, consists of areas of granite pavers and pressed asphalt paver units at the ground plane with adjacent tree-shaded seating areas. The fountain area in the final design is established as a conventional fountain arrangement utilizing a large low-height seating area, with readily controlled low-angle jet streams. All water streams are located within an internal draining water basin.

The fountain jets are generated from a water pool located within the bench area that is beneath the granite base. The design also provides seating around the fountain by using a large granite bench which serves the purpose of also enclosing a portion of the mechanical elements of the fountain itself. The slight depression (basin) in the paving collects the water. Pedestrians can either walk through the fountain, or around it, when moving toward the stepped bulkhead and the shoreline promenade.

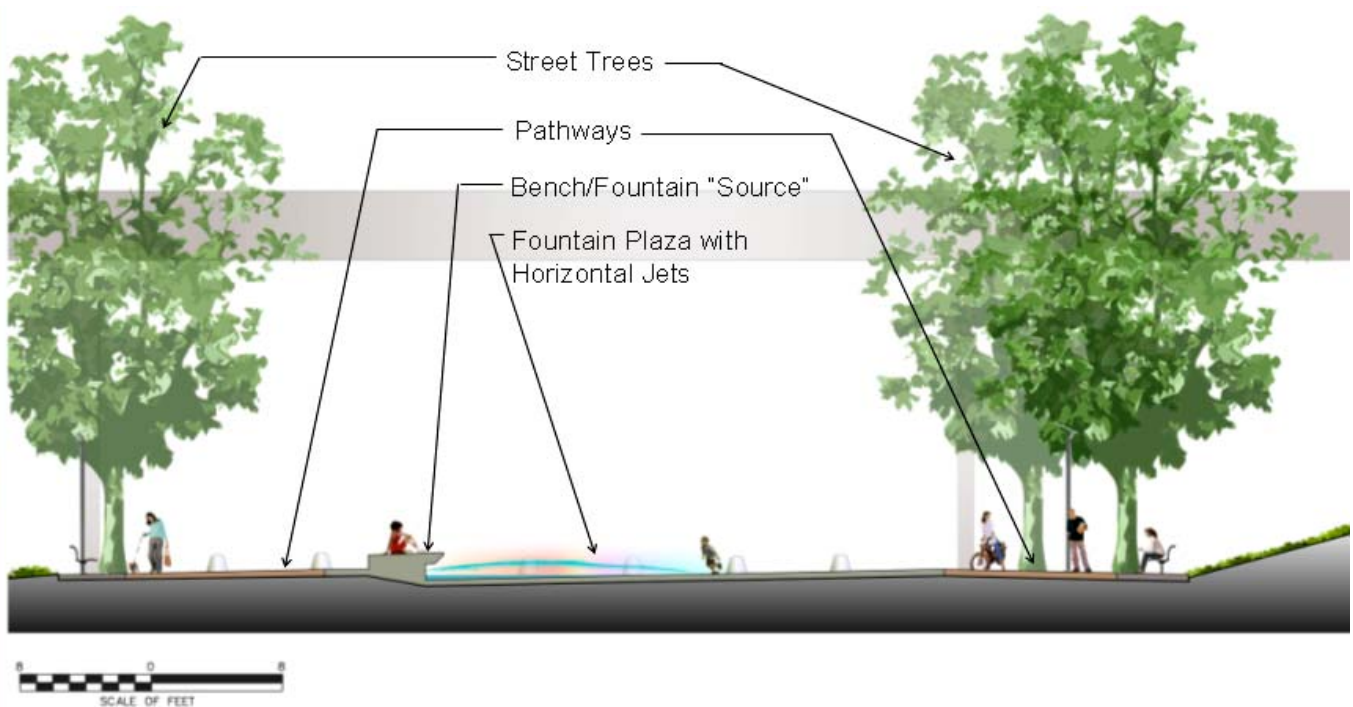
Park perimeter lighting features the single-lamp Washington Globe light standard along K Street and 31<sup>st</sup> Street.



**FINAL DESIGN OF WISCONSIN AVENUE TERMINUS FOUNTAIN AREA  
AND SEATING AREAS**

Other elements of the final design include:

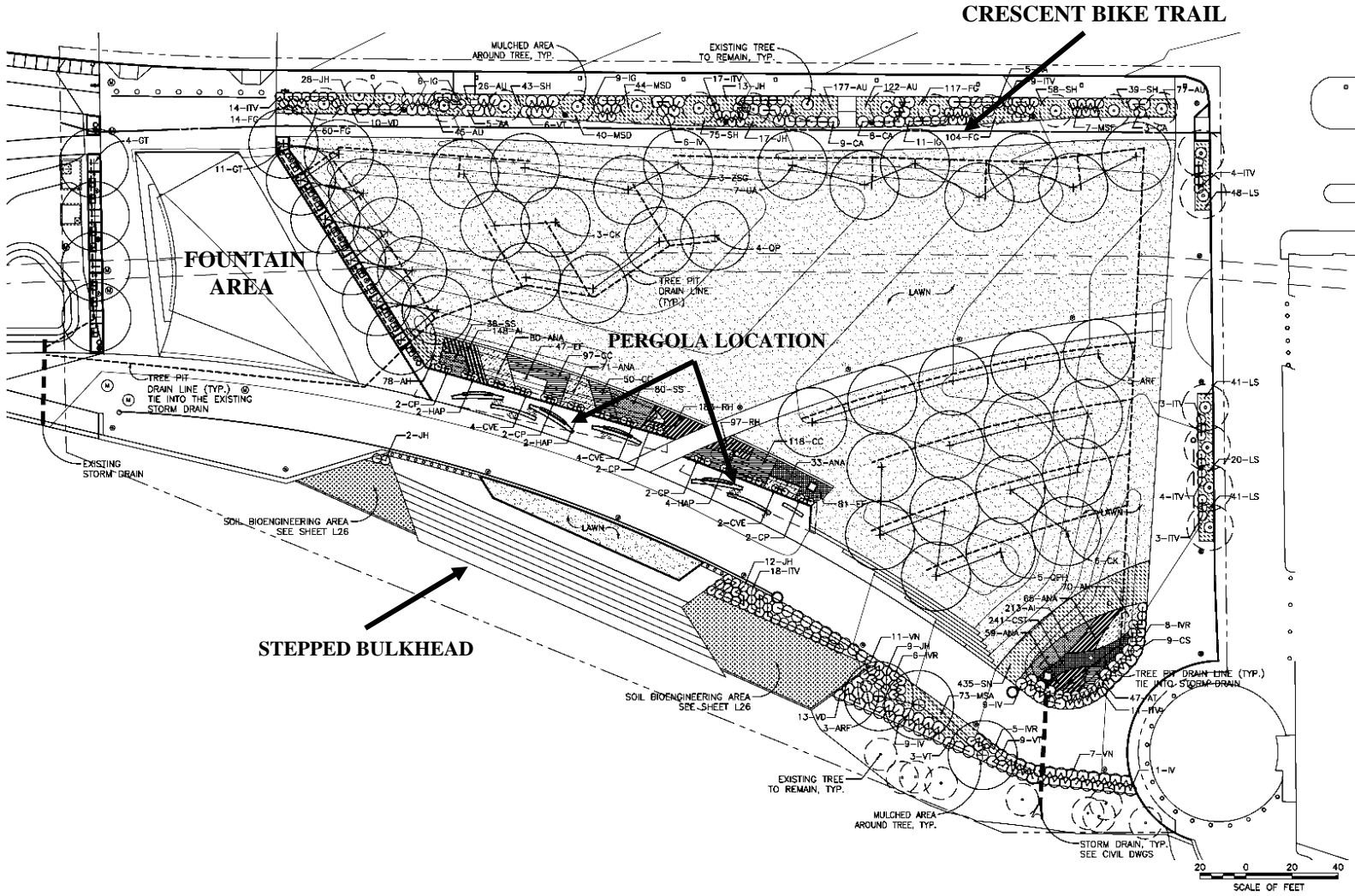
- A vegetated soil bioengineering system for greenscape performance at the shoreline.
- Placement of river stairs (stepped bulkhead) for containment of planting at the bulkhead edge.
- Design of the promenade that passes through along the plaza between the fountain and the river shore.
- Configuration of the plaza at the river's edge that permits pedestrians to view the river directly from a railing. All walking surfaces are completely accessible.
- Promenade bollards to make the pedestrian area handicapped accessible while precluding wheelchairs from accidentally going over the bulkhead edges.
- Grass panel at the stepped bulkhead for lounge use.



### SECTION OF THE GEORGETOWN PARK WISCONSIN AVENUE TERMINUS CENTRAL PLAZA AND FOUNTAIN

Final landscape plant material selection provides a transition in both the overhead plane and ground areas with various species and plant forms. Trees are grouped into groves of high-canopy trees with grass beneath them. At the fountain, trees provide high canopy shade to the perimeter. A large informal lawn area is established in the park. The final plans execute a

wider north landscape buffer of small trees and shrubs between the Crescent bike trail and K Street, thus incorporating the trail to the interior side of the park perimeter.



**WISCONSIN AVENUE TERMINUS FINAL SITE LAYOUT AND PLANTING PLAN**

Development Program

Applicant: The National Park Service

Architect: Wallace, Roberts and Todd, LLC, landscape architects  
Parson, Brinckerhoff, Quade, and Douglas, site engineering  
With support of Robbin B. Sotir & Assoc., Delon Hampton & Assoc.,  
Grenald Waldron Assoc.

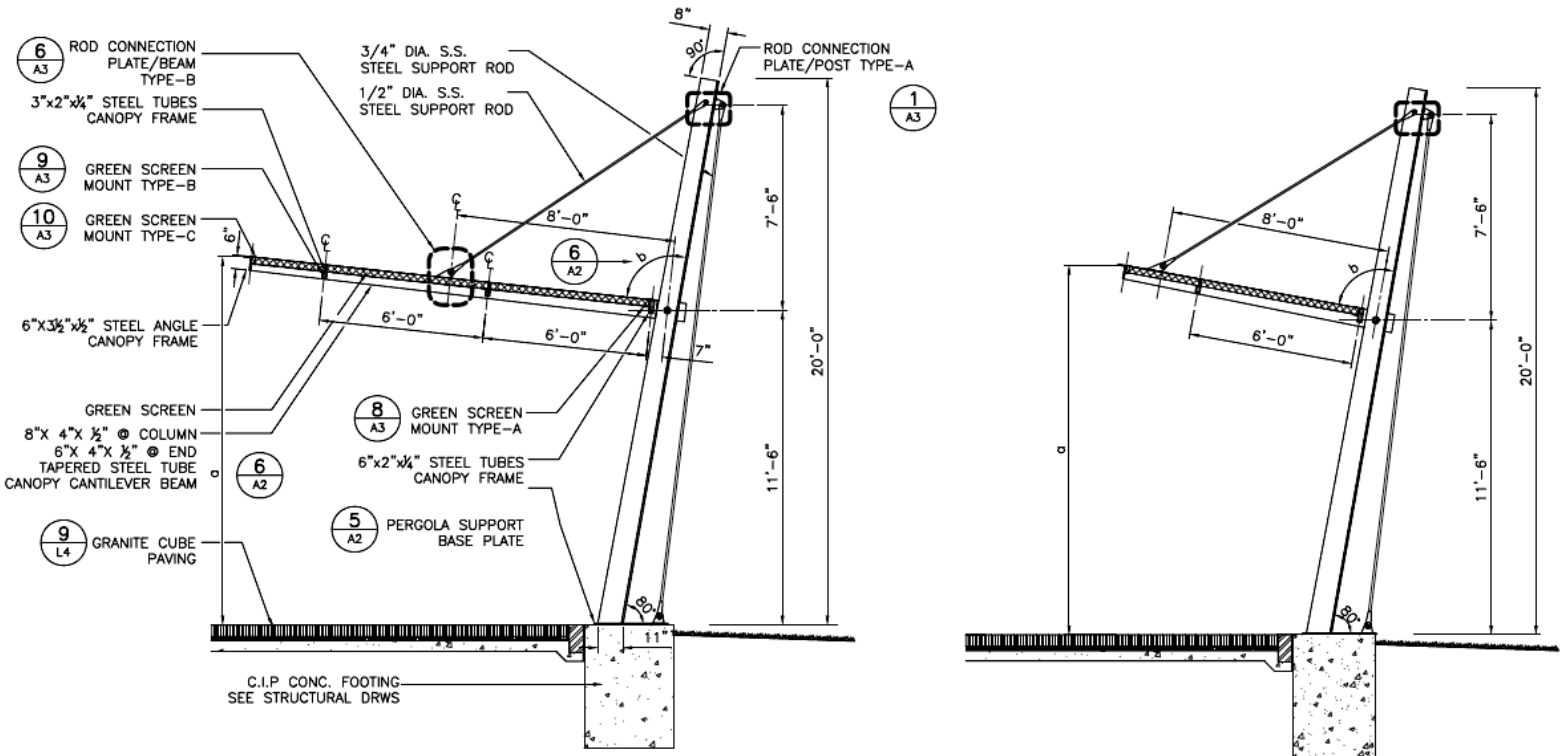
Square Footage: 2.3± Acres

Estimated Cost: Approximately \$16 million, based on estimated current scope for full  
10 acre park development.

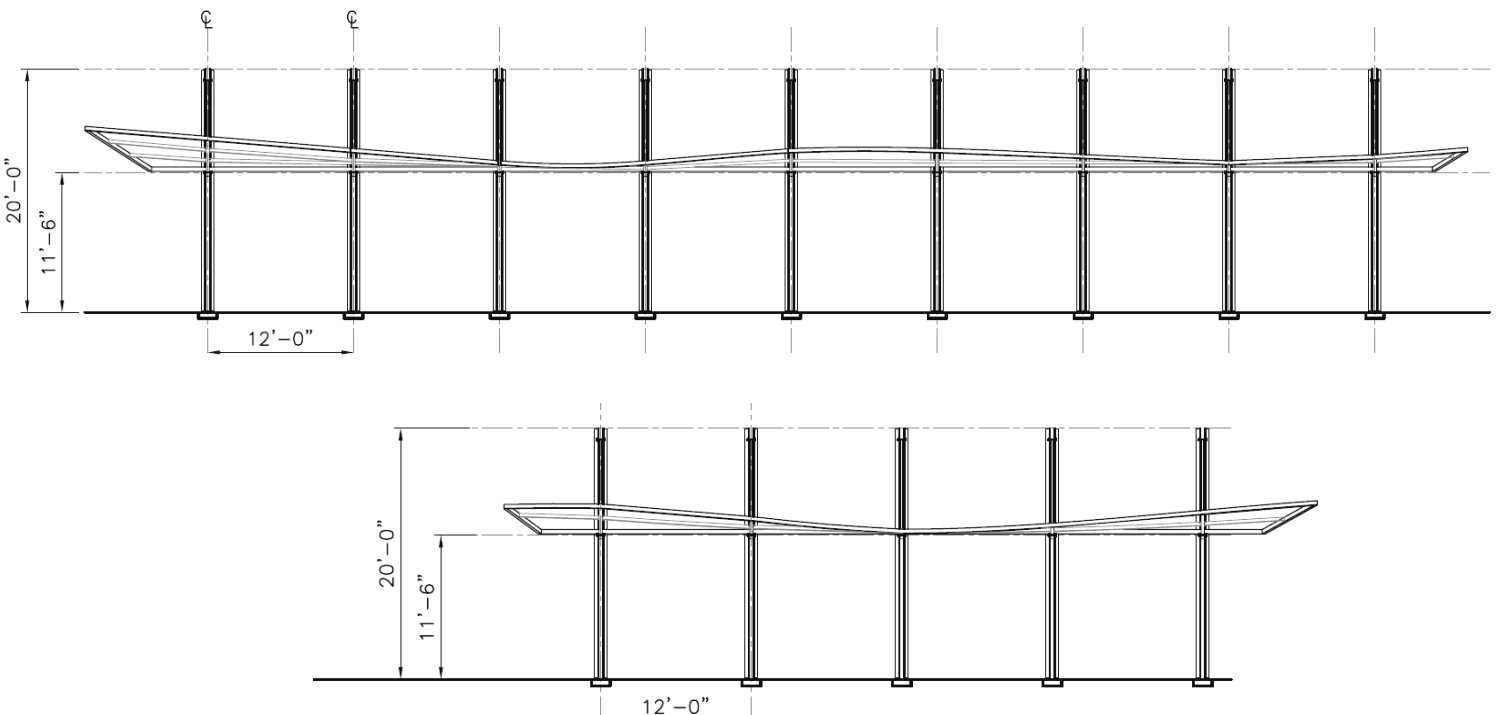


**PERGOLA DESIGN WITH SEATING AREAS BENEATH**

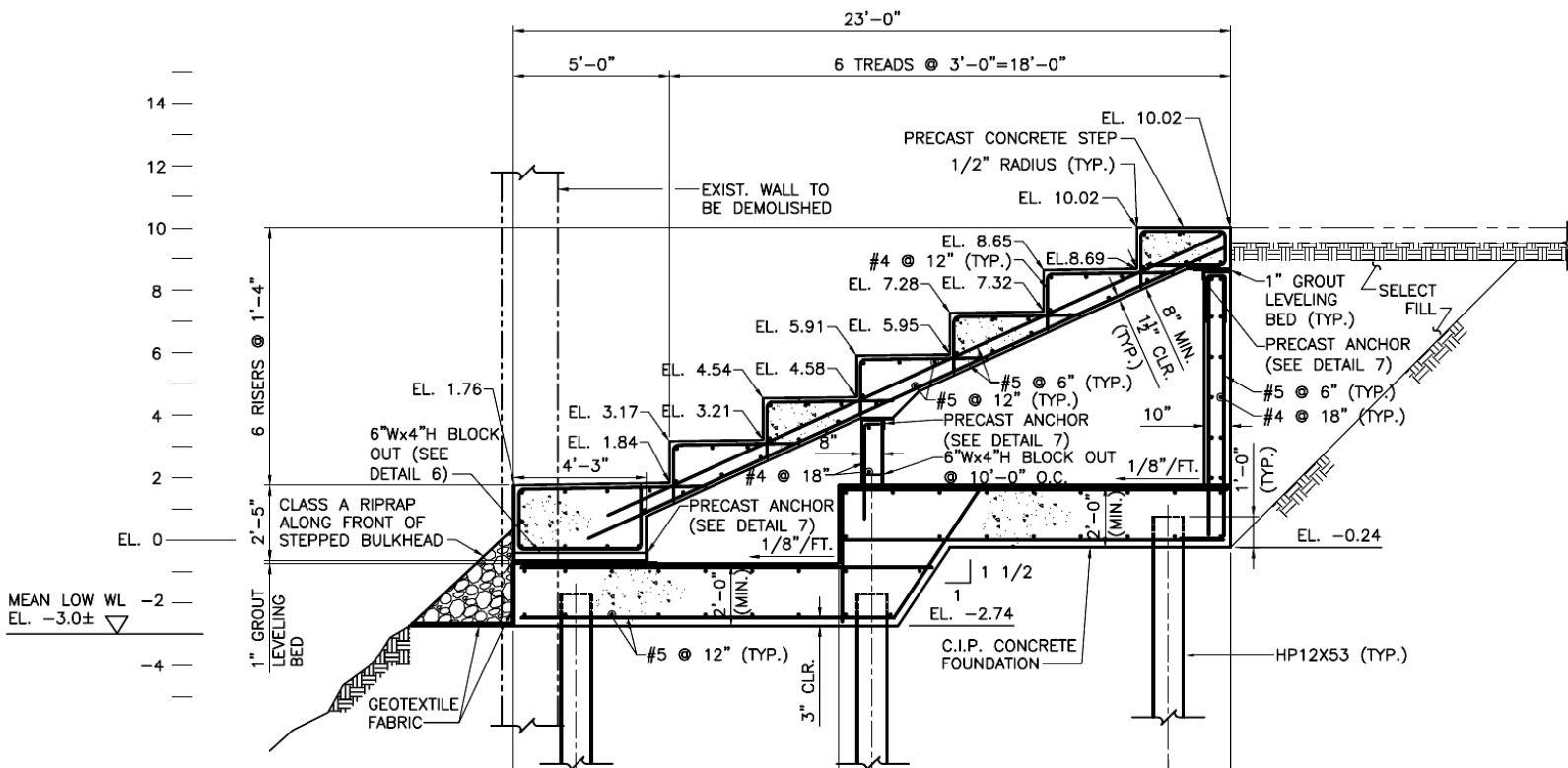




**FINAL DESIGN OF PERGOLA SUPPORT SECTIONS IN SIDE ELEVATION**



**PERGOLA FRONT ELEVATIONS OF EACH SECTION'S FINAL DESIGN**



**STEPPED BULKHEAD FINAL DESIGN**

**PROJECT ANALYSIS**

Executive Summary

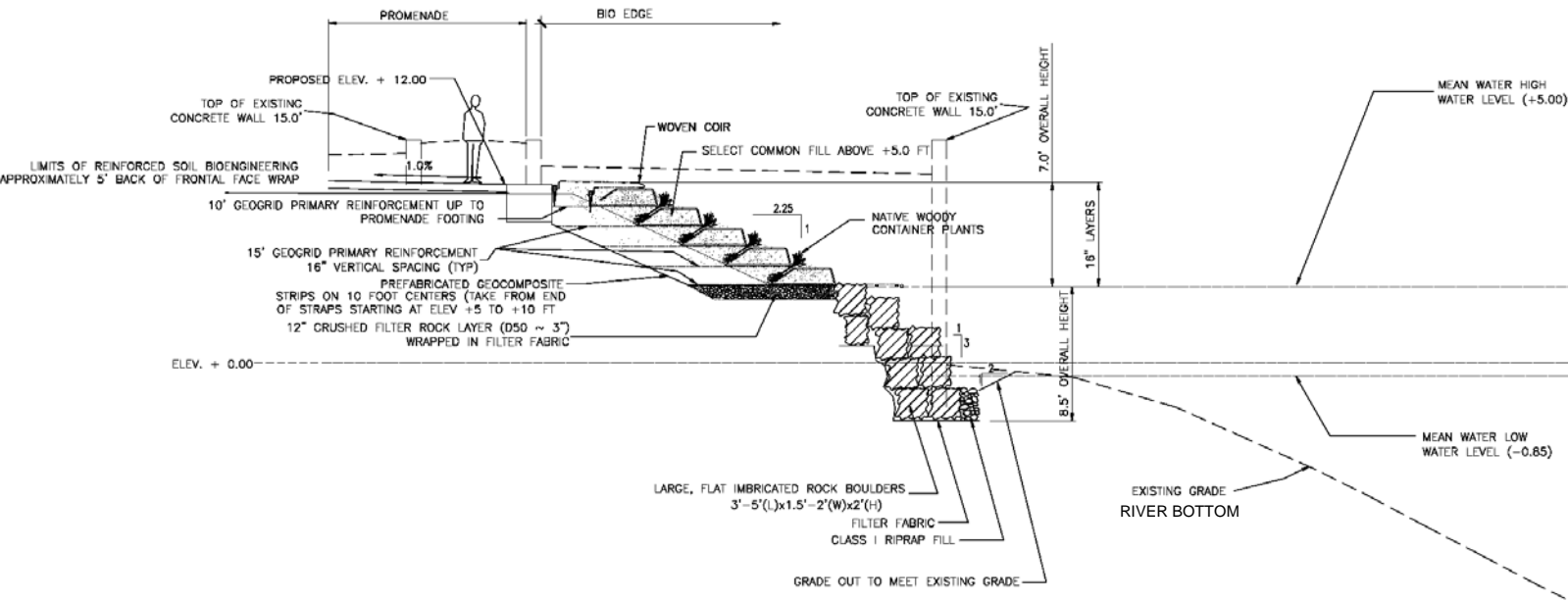
**Staff recommends approval of the final site and building plans** for the Wisconsin Avenue Terminus. Staff finds the final site and building plans implement the previously approved design and supports the focus for the park to provide contrast, view arrangement, and openness in the terminus area that was sought by the Commission’s earlier reviews in the 1980s, 2003, 2004 and 2007.

The original concept plans of 1985 and the revised 2003 concept established that the park's character would be passive in nature and that objective is maintained in the current submittal. Features such as promenades, plazas, walkways, open lawn spaces, plantings, benches, and lighting were to constitute the development within the park, and are featured and maintained in the final plans for the Wisconsin Avenue Terminus park area. No surface parking was to be provided within the park as originally proposed. The current plan offers no parking within the park area.

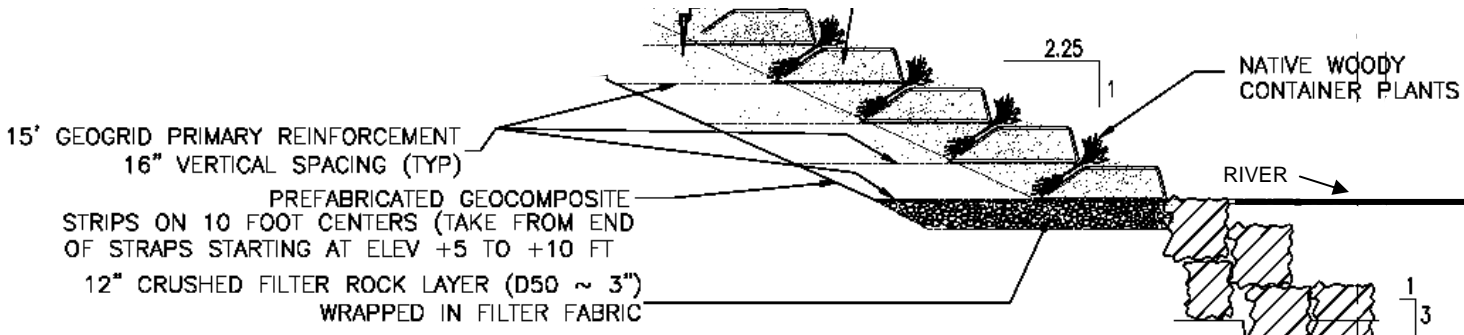
The original and revised plans exhibited a shoreline promenade that was to be created for the entire length of the park between Rock Creek and Key Bridge. Bike and pedestrian usage was to be separated by landscape architectural treatments, such as paving patterns and street furniture. Surface treatment would vary depending upon the location within the park. All these goals as physical design features are maintained in the submitted final plans.

Both the 1985 and revised 2003 plans featured an entire shoreline offering a variety of elements to achieve interest at the water's edge. Steps, esplanades, walls, and natural vegetated slopes were all to be employed. Much of the existing bulkhead was noted by both plans to be retained and improved through modification and surface treatment. The 1985 design also preserved and respected existing views from north/south streets toward the river. The plan emphasized and was evaluated by the Commission adopted environmental review that such views were to be preserved so that the historic visual relationship of Georgetown to its waterfront is maintained. Shade trees were to be planted throughout the park to screen as much of the Whitehurst Expressway as possible. The use of trees and their careful placement to direct views is fully maintained in the final plans for the Wisconsin Avenue Terminus.

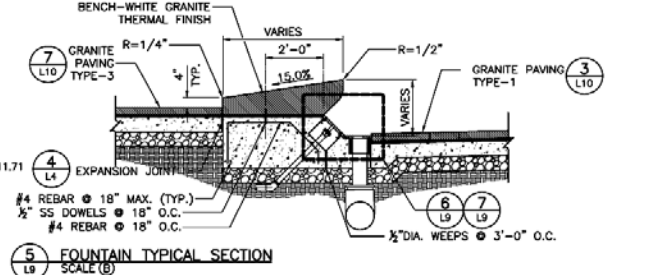
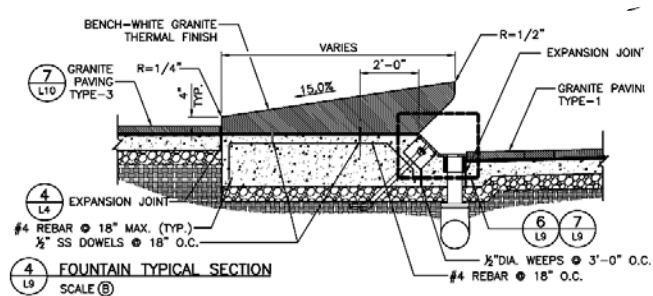
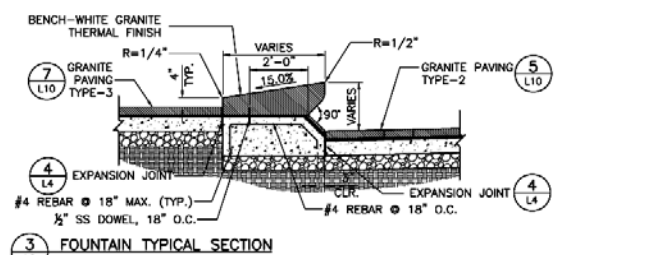
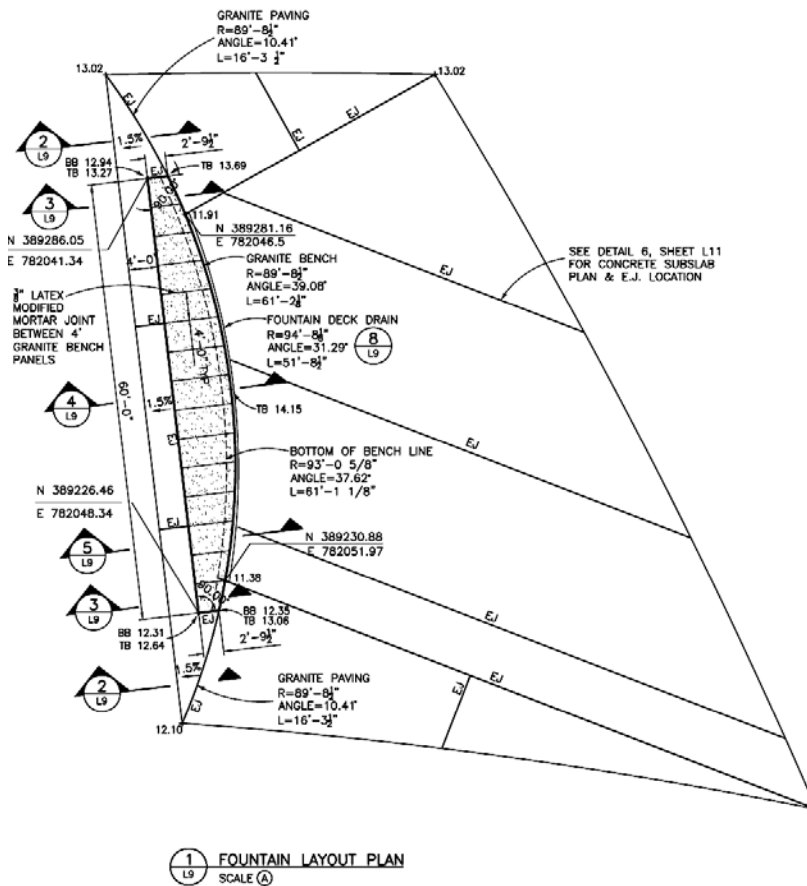
Consequently, staff finds that the final site and building plans for the Wisconsin Avenue Terminus implement all objectives, features, and purposes specified by the earlier Commission reviews and actions concerning this area of the Georgetown Waterfront Park and supports the final plans for construction.



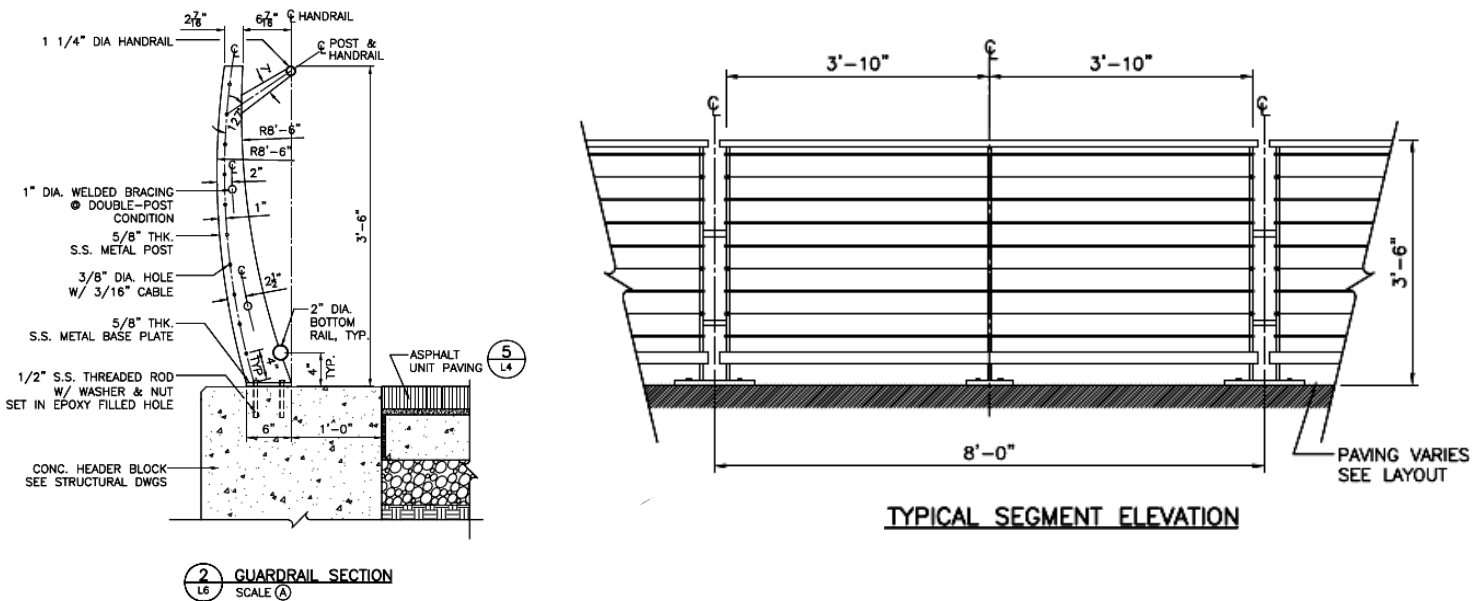
**TYPICAL SECTION OF FINAL DESIGN FOR BIO-ENGINEERED RIVER EDGE AT NORTH AND SOUTH AREAS OF STEPPED BULDHEAD**



**DETAILS OF ANCHORED PLANT MATERIAL AND GEOGRID REINFORCEMENT AT THE BIO-ENGINEERED EDGE**



**CENTRAL PLAZA FOUNTAIN DETAILS**



**PROMENADE AND BULKHEAD PEDESTRIAN GUARDRAIL  
FINAL DESIGN DETAILS**

**CONFORMANCE**

Comprehensive Plan

The proposal for the Wisconsin Avenue Terminus section of the Georgetown Waterfront Park is consistent with policies contained in the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital. The Parks and Open Space Element designates river and waterfront settings of the Nation’s Capital.

The Comprehensive Plan policies state:

The federal government should:

1. Plan for new parks as part of the park system of the region.
2. Acquire parks and open space as necessary to augment the open space system.
3. Use easements, donations, purchases, exchanges, or other means to acquire land or to enhance parks and open space. Examples of areas or park systems where further acquisition is desirable include:

- South Capitol Street,
- Anacostia River waterfront and tributaries,
- Georgetown Waterfront Park ...

(Expansion and Enhancement Policies p.103)

Furthermore, the Comprehensive Plan notes in its August 2004 update that:

The federal government should:

1. Link open space along the waterfront to provide a continuous public open space system.
4. Complete the waterfront parks in Georgetown and Alexandria.

(Parks and Landscapes Policies; Waterfront Parks p. 111)

Additional Plan objectives noted include:

The federal government should:

1. Enhance parks and preserve open green space for future generations.
2. Maintain and conserve federal open space as a means of shaping and enhancing urban areas.
3. Preserve open space that is crucial to the long-term quality of life of a neighborhood or the region.

(Preservation and Maintenance Policies; p. 104)

Other objectives dealing with rivers and waterways of the plan include:

The federal government should:

4. Protect, restore, and enhance the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers as great open space resources including shorelines and waterfront areas along rivers.
5. Improve the quality of water in the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers to allow for both restored natural habitats and increased recreational use.
6. Retain shoreline areas in their natural condition or appropriately landscape the water's edge.
7. Manage all lands along the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers in a manner that encourages the enjoyment and recreational use of water resources, while protecting the scenic and ecological values of the waterways.
8. Retain both privately and publicly owned land along waterways in a natural state, except in areas that are determined appropriate for development.
9. In urban waterfront areas that are determined appropriate for development:
  - Avoid construction in environmentally sensitive areas.
  - Restore, stabilize, and/or improve and landscape degraded areas of shorelines.
  - Limit development along or near the shoreline and integrate it with the generally low and continuous line of river embankments.
10. Avoid physical barriers to the waterfront, and long, unbroken stretches of buildings or walls along waterfronts.
11. Determine building height along or near the shoreline based on the building's proximity to the shoreline.
12. Design and locate bridges so that they minimally affect local riverine habitat, waterways, shorelines, and valleys.
13. Encourage swimming, boating, and fishing facilities, as well as water-oriented tourist activities, on the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers.

(Rivers and Waterways Policies; p. 121)

### National Historic Preservation Act

The Park Service has completed its Section 106 responsibilities for the revised plan, determining that the implementation of the concept and final design would have no adverse effect on the historic or architectural character of the waterfront area.

The D.C. State Historic Preservation Officer (DC SHPO) determined that the 1986 concept plan for the Georgetown Waterfront Park would have no adverse effect on the National Register qualities of the Georgetown Historic District or the C&O Canal National Historical Park. The project was also reviewed by the D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board at that time. The effect determination was reached with two conditions: that each request for demolition be considered individually, and that the location and design of future boathouses be reviewed. The level of archaeological assessment was commended, as was the “sensitive landscape design, which avoids archaeological resources.”

The current proposal does not extend nor significantly deviate from the area of that reviewed design. Most of the proposed park area can be installed without digging significantly beneath the disturbed top layer. For tree plantings and some other features, archaeological monitoring will take place during construction to ensure that artifacts remain *in situ* and are not disturbed. The landscape design was developed to avoid disturbance.

NPS conferred again with the DC SHPO about the concept plan in the summer 2003. The current final plans implement that proposal. The 1986 determination of no adverse effect is still considered valid, given the similarity of the plans, as well as the review protection for any demolitions and the archaeological monitoring.

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation also commented on the concept plan in 1986, stating that the implementation of the plan would improve the appearance of the waterfront and enhance the public’s enjoyment of the river as a major recreation area.

### National Environmental Policy Act

Pursuant to regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Park Service and the Commission arrived at a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for this project through the completion of an Environmental Assessment in June 1984.

Staff has reviewed this project at each stage of design and determined the plans are consistent with the analysis and conclusions found in the original evaluation, which studied the alternative of creating a park at this location and considered its urban surroundings that were relatively similar to surrounding conditions found today. Other than the no action alternative, the park alternative was the least intensive use considered for the site. Additionally, no baseline changes have occurred to the shoreline or the immediate land parcels except for the removal of the previous District of Columbia surface parking lots. Staff has reviewed the action and determined the FONSI remains valid in accordance with the Commission’s procedures. The National Park Service is currently considering the alternative of locating a boathouse within the Georgetown Waterfront Park as part of the Environmental Impact Statement for the Georgetown University Boathouse project and the related land swap under consideration.

### Federal Capital Improvements Program

In the Commission's FCIP report, fiscal years 2008-2013, the Commission recommended the project. The whole of the planned park is estimated in the current FCIP at \$16,396,000. The need for funding of the overall Park has been identified by the Commission since 1981.

The Park Service's overall focus for development costs of the Georgetown Waterfront Park is through public/private funding initiatives as major portions of the park are finalized in design. A part of this funding effort involves The Georgetown Waterfront Park Fund that is managed by the National Park Foundation, a 501(c) (3) organization, chartered by Congress in 1967 as the official non-profit partner of National Parks to encourage the tradition of private philanthropy for our national parks.

### COORDINATION

#### Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee at its January 10, 2007 meeting reviewed the proposal and forwarded it to the Commission with the statement that the project has been coordinated with all agencies represented. The participating agencies are: NCPC, the District of Columbia Office of Planning, the National Park Service and the General Services Administration.

#### Commission of Fine Arts

In its meeting of May 17, 2007, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed and approved the revised concept design for the pergola, benches, and river stairs at the Wisconsin Avenue Terminus of the Georgetown Waterfront Park. In their discussion of the plans that were reviewed, the Commission members supported the undulating form of the trellis and the arrangement of the benches as proposed. The members also noted the preference of the darker color alternative for the pergola.

At the CFA meeting of June 19, 2008, the members reviewed the final design of the Wisconsin Avenue Terminus of the Georgetown Waterfront Park. The Commission approved the final design, except for the species and size of proposed trees located at the fountain area of the project. Additionally, the Commission accepted the comment of the Old Georgetown Board that ten small metal tables be removed from the pergola area, and recommended they be deleted from the final park design.

#### Public Comment

In May and March 2008, written communication to the Commission was received about the subject proposal (see attachments). The letters, written by Mr. Robert Norris, continue his expression of dissatisfaction with the National Park Service and its oversight of the Waterfront



Park development. His expressed concerns are similar to the letter written to the Commission in January 2007 and reviewed by the Commission in its action of February 2007.

The issues discussed in these letters have been previously reviewed by the Commission and concern placing the Georgetown University Boathouse in the vicinity, upstream of the Georgetown Waterfront Park. Mr. Morris prefers locating a boathouse in the Georgetown Waterfront Park. The boathouse involves a land parcel that is to be transferred from the Park Service, which was approved by the Commission on September 7, 1995. The transfer involves the exchange of two sites and is to include a site that is held by the University. This site is located approximately 4,000 feet upriver (northwest) from the boathouse site, which is itself situated  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile northwest of the Georgetown Waterfront Park—upstream of the Francis Scott Key Bridge, and is located adjacent to the C&O Canal National Historic Park.

The Commission approved the land transfer and determined that the development of the boathouse on the Park Service tract was consistent with the applicable policies outlined in the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital.

The issue of compliance of the Georgetown Waterfront Park plan with the National Environmental Policy Act is discussed at an earlier portion of this report, as it relates to the Commission's current review action of the Wisconsin Terminus. A draft environmental document and request for public comment on creating a waterfront park at this location was issued in February 1980 that subsequently led to a revised and final EA document issued in June 1984. A Finding of No Significant Impact was finalized by the Commission staff in July 1984. A public presentation of the Park plan, as developed at that time, was accomplished at the Commission's meeting of August 2, 1984 and Commission also took action in 1987.

The National Park Service issued an EA for the Georgetown University Boathouse in April 2006, and subsequently determined, in December 2007, to accomplish an Environmental Impact Statement on the Boathouse and its alternative potential locations. Although the western portion of the Georgetown Waterfront Park is one of the boathouse site alternatives being considered in the EIS, no portion of the Wisconsin Avenue Terminus park area under consideration in this report would be affected by the issues of site location for the Georgetown University Boathouse.

**ATTACHMENTS**

**Robert B. Norris**  
1801 45<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20007  
(202) 333-3925

May 9, 2008

Mr. Peter May, Associate Regional Director  
National Capital Region  
1100 Ohio Drive, SW  
Washington, DC 20242

Re: L30(NCR-LRP) (Failure of NPS to comply with NEPA)

Dear Mr. May:

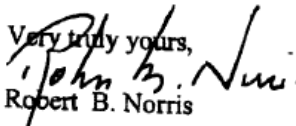
Reference is made to our telephone conversation of April 24, in which we discussed the contents of your letter to me of April 11, which purports to be a response to my letter of March 13 to NCPC.

If I understood you correctly, your assertion that the "NPS has not altered its position that environmental compliance for the Georgetown Waterfront Park is complete" was based on what you were advised had transpired prior to your employment by the Park Service. Of importance here, you did not consider the gravamen of my complaint as set forth in my letter of January 8, 2008 to Kevin Brandt pertaining to the failure of the Park Service to comply with NEPA in connection with the Georgetown Waterfront Park. You further stated that after you had written your letter of April 11, you received from the "Washington office" of the Park Service a copy of the above-mentioned letter of January 8 with instructions to respond to it by "mid-June." As I mentioned to you, this request by Director Bomar's office was in response to a request by the Inspector General of the Department of the Interior. For your information, I enclose a copy of a letter to me dated April 4, 2008 from the office of the IG.

I must confess that I was somewhat astonished not so much by your statement that there would be "full and fair consideration" of the alternative site at 34<sup>th</sup> St. in the pending EIS but that if that site turned out to be the most environmentally appropriate site for Georgetown University's boathouse, that part of the completed Georgetown Waterfront Park would be torn up to provide for that site.

Since NCPC referred my March 13 letter to you for a response, I am sending a copy of this letter with attachments to NCPC General Counsel, Lois Schiffer.

And finally, Mr. May, I was very much pleased to hear that you believe that dialogue between your agency and the public is essential to achieving a fair resolution of these matters.

Very truly yours,  
  
Robert B. Norris

cc. Lois Schiffer, Esq.

**Robert B. Norris**  
1801 45<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20007  
(202) 333-3925

March 13, 2008

National Capital Planning Commission  
401 9<sup>th</sup> St., NW, North Lobby, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20004

Attn. Ms. Deborah Young

Re: Georgetown Waterfront Park: NPS non-compliance with NEPA, NCPC File No. 6383

Dear Members of the Commission:

The purpose of this letter is to report that the 1987 Georgetown Waterfront Park Plan was illegally procured and promulgated thereby legally invalidating its implementation. As I demonstrate in the enclosed January 7, 2008 letter to Kevin Brandt, the National Park Service failed to prepare either an EIS or an EA for the Georgetown Waterfront Park. Since it is clear that the boundaries, design and contents of this Park have a significant impact on the human environment, the preparation of at least an EA is and was mandatory under NEPA.

Since I understand that the matter of the final design for Phase II of the Georgetown Waterfront Park must be reviewed and approved by the Commission, I submit the Commission should be aware of the legal deficiencies of this project.

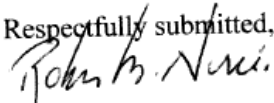
For the record, I brought this matter to your attention in a letter dated January 19, 2007. Moreover, by letter dated February 8, 2007, I wrote John G. Parsons, then a member of the Commission. Besides correcting certain misstatements made by Mr. Parsons at the February 1, 2007 Commission meeting, I urged the preparation of an EIS for the entire waterfront. At that time, early 2007, construction of Phase I of the Georgetown Waterfront Park had hardly begun. It was obviously a time when reconsideration of the waterfront plans should have occurred. As I pointed out to the Commission, the waterfront should be treated as one comprehensive area for planning purposes. This would avoid piecemeal planning. But more important, the preparation of an EIS would enable the Park Service to revisit artificially and arbitrarily drawn boundaries and develop a boathouse plan consistent with current realities. I also pointed out that the Park Service is relying on a 1984 "EA" of questionable legality as the only NEPA review for this Park. Twenty-three years old and prepared without public notice, comment or review this "EA," upon which the Georgetown Waterfront Plan was based, is completely out of date and fails to meet current needs and realities. It obviously fails to consider all the cumulative impacts of the project.

- 2 -

On December 3, 2007, the Park Service announced its intention to prepare an EIS for the Georgetown University boathouse proposal and identified as a possible alternative location for this boathouse a site within the far western end of the Georgetown Waterfront Park at 34<sup>th</sup> St. adjacent to the boathouse site promised GW. Since the Park Service rushed to complete Phase I of this Park, it is predictable that the Park Service will now contend that the work accomplished in that Park should preclude any consideration of this identified alternative site at 34<sup>th</sup> St.

In conclusion, I have always been of the view that two elegantly designed collegiate boathouses, side by side at 34<sup>th</sup> St., would anchor the western end of the Park and be an architectural tour de force. There is still time to achieve this result.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert B. Norris

**Robert B. Norris**  
1801 45<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20007  
(202) 333-3925

January 19, 2007

National Capital Planning Commission  
401 9<sup>th</sup> St., NW  
North Lobby, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20004

Attn: Ms. Deborah Young

Re: Proposed Georgetown Waterfront Park and related matters, NCPC File No. 6383

Dear Members of the Commission:

I understand that the Commission has placed the matter of the Georgetown Waterfront Park on the agenda for its February 1, 2007 meeting. NCPC File No. 6383. The purpose of this letter is to challenge the legality of the so-called 1987 Georgetown Waterfront Park Plan, and in particular its implementation, because of the failure of the National Park Service to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In these circumstances, I hereby request an opportunity to testify before the Commission on this matter at its meeting on February 1.

The National Park Service has failed to prepare either an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed Georgetown Waterfront Park. Since it is clear that the boundaries, design and contents of this proposed park may have a significant impact on the human environment, the preparation of at least an EA is mandatory. I cannot believe that the Park Service can seriously contend that a document secretly prepared for internal use in 1984 and labeled "Environmental Assessment" satisfies the legal requirement in this regard. In any event, this 1984 "EA," only made public on July 14, 2006, is completely obsolete and fails to address current needs and realities. At the very least, this stealth 1984 "EA" is deficient, if not defective, for there was no public notice, comment or review, rendering it inoperable.

Even the recent public disclosure of the existence of this 1984 "EA," after some 22 years, constitutes a tacit admission by the Park Service that before it can proceed with the implementation of the Georgetown Waterfront Park Plan, it must first, as a matter of law, prepare either an EA or an EIS addressing environmental concerns. Parenthetically, the 2005 "Compliance Summary" is a self-serving attempt by the Park Service to do indirectly what it failed to do directly. As in the case of the 1984 "EA," there was no public notice, comment or review.

As the members of the Commission may know, several participants in the scoping session held on January 11, 2005 for the pending EA on the Georgetown University boathouse proposal identified alternative sites for the University's boathouse. One of these sites is located adjacent to and immediately downstream from the boathouse site promised George Washington University at

34<sup>th</sup> and Water Sts. In my opinion, this is an environmentally preferred location for the University's boathouse. This site is located at the very western end of the proposed Georgetown Waterfront Park, an area now planned as a buffer of grass and trees.

It is not my intention in this letter to seek a delay in the work on the proposed Georgetown Waterfront Park but rather to seek an understanding that this site remain viable as a prospective location for Georgetown University's boathouse. Also, any work performed on the park, especially in Phase 1 of the Plan, should not be used as an excuse or reason for eliminating this site from consideration.

There is a solution to this imbroglio. The National Park Service should prepare a comprehensive EIS with full public participation for the entire waterfront area from Washington Harbour to the site just upstream from the Washington Canoe Club. This EIS should consider all of the alternative locations for Georgetown University's boathouse outside the C&O Canal National Historical Park. In this connection, I understand that the Park Service is currently giving serious consideration to the preparation of an EIS for the Georgetown University boathouse proposal.

With respect to the issues I've raised in this letter, I believe it would be appropriate for the Commission to review my letter to the Commission of February 14, 2006, Christine Saum's response, dated February 21, 2006 and my reply to her, dated March 1, 2006. In this connection, I respectfully request that this correspondence be made part of my presentation to the Commission.

In conclusion, the Park Service is still in control of the Georgetown University boathouse proposal as well as the proposed Georgetown Waterfront Park. To the extent that the Commission is in a position to influence the ultimate contents of the proposed Park, if an environmental and land use planning mistake has been made, it is better to correct it now than to regret the consequences in the future when corrections may be impossible.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert B. Norris