

FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION
FACILITY UPGRADE WITHIN FORT RENO PARK

3900 Donaldson Place, NW
Washington, D.C.

Delegated Action of the Executive Director

May 31, 2007

Pursuant to delegations of authority adopted by the Commission on October 3, 1996, and 40 U.S.C. §8722(b)(1) and (d), I approve preliminary and final site and building plans for the facility upgrade at the Federal Aviation Administration facility within Fort Reno Park, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 10.05(38.40)42210.

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The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has requested preliminary and final approval of site and building plans for facility upgrades at the FAA facility within historic Fort Reno Park, on land currently under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service (NPS). The Park is titled to the United States and is administered by the National Park Service as a component of the Fort Circle Parks of Washington; the land occupied by the FAA facility is slated to be transferred to that agency later this year.

The facility upgrade project will include replacement of an existing single-story metal shed with a moderately larger metal shed in the same general location; the larger building measures approximately 50 feet by 60 feet in plan, and is needed to house equipment and materials necessary to support ongoing operations at the communications site. The new structure will abut an existing tower and be of similar construction as the existing shed, with prefabricated metal siding (painted red) and a roof height of approximately 25 feet. Related site elements also proposed for the project include a new chain-link perimeter fence atop a stone base wall (partially constructed), an electric vehicle access gate, and a pedestrian turnstile.

Through consultation between the FAA, the NPS, and NCPC staff, the current proposal responds to the historic nature of the surrounding landscape. The shed has been reduced in size from the initial design and the FAA has agreed to replace the existing galvanized chain link mesh and black slats with an eight-foot high, black vinyl-coated mesh; the fencing modifications will be undertaken following the completion of the shed construction.

Related site lighting and landscaping is also planned for the site, and designs for this work will be submitted for review under separate cover within the next few months. The FAA is developing site and perimeter lighting that will complement the site and keep light levels to within District of Columbia standards for light pollution. The applicant has also agreed to retain the services of a landscape architect by July 1, 2007 to develop a formal landscaping plan along the park-side of the stone wall. The goal for landscaping is to break up the expanse of stone wall; low-maintenance plantings will be native to the area, possibly a combination of evergreen trees and low flowering plants/shrubs. The landscape design will be developed with NPS review, and completed within 12 months. Installation of the approved plan will occur at the first planting season following design completion.

The FAA will be responsible for the long-term maintenance of the landscaping under an agreement between the FAA and NPS; the details of such an agreement have yet to be determined.

The applicant has determined that the project is categorically excluded from the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) under FAA Order 1050.1E, Paragraph 310f), which excludes proposed actions that include "...storage buildings, garages, small parking areas, signs, fences, and other essentially similar minor development."

Staff has reviewed the proposed action under NEPA and determined that it adheres to the Categorical Exclusion requirements under §8(C)(2) and §8(C)(21) of NCPC's Environmental and Historic Preservation Policies and Procedures.

Consultation with the D.C. State Historic Preservation Office resulted in a determination of no adverse effect (letters dated March 28, 2007 and May 23, 2007). NCPC has reviewed the proposal and determined that it will not have an effect on National Register listed properties.

Patricia E. Gallagher, AICP
Executive Director