



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

National Mall & Memorial Parks

900 Ohio Drive, S.W.

Washington, D.C. 20024-2000



H30 (NAMA-RM)

February 16, 2011

Mr. David Maloney
State Historic Preservation Officer
Office of Planning
1100 4th Street, SW, Suite E650
Washington, D.C. 20024

Re: Section 106 Consultation – Kennedy Center Potomac River Pedestrian Access Improvement Project

Dear Mr. Maloney:

The National Park Service (NPS) wishes to formally initiate consultation with the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office on the Kennedy Center Potomac River Pedestrian Access Improvement Project in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. §470) and its implementing regulations (36 CFR Part 800.3).

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (Kennedy Center) is a Congressionally designated national showcase for the performing arts and a living memorial to President Kennedy. It is located on the Potomac River at the western edge of the District's Monumental Core. Currently, there is no direct pedestrian access between the Kennedy Center River Terrace and the Potomac riverfront. Pedestrian access to the Kennedy Center is available only on the opposite (east) side of the building via the Entrance Plaza or the North Plaza. Furthermore, while visitors to the Kennedy Center are currently able to enjoy views of the Potomac River from the River Terrace, an unrealized potential exists to unite these two resources.

The Kennedy Center Potomac River Pedestrian Access Improvement Project proposes providing safe, designated pedestrian access between the Kennedy Center River Terrace and the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Trail along the riverfront. Access improvements include the construction of stairs and elevators from the Kennedy Center River Terrace, which cantilevers over the northbound lanes of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, to the landside adjacent the parkway trail. The project site – anticipated to be approximately 40 feet wide by the length of the Kennedy Center – falls within the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, which is currently under the jurisdiction of the NPS. It is anticipated that jurisdiction over a portion of land within the project site will be transferred from the NPS to the Kennedy Center. The Kennedy Center may be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Consultation was initiated with your office on February 3, 2011, regarding this topic.

Conceptual studies of the proposed Pedestrian Access Improvement Project are included in this package to provide preliminary information on the project components. In addition, attached please find a preliminary list of consulting parties and a graphic illustration of the proposed Area of Potential Effects

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(APE). These items are intended as a basis of discussion and are subject to modification as part of the consultation process.

The proposed APE for this project includes the area from which the project site is readily visible, as well as resources that could be impacted due to changes in the character of the site. A preliminary list of historic resources within the APE include the Georgetown Historic District, Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historic Park, Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, West Potomac Park Historic District, the Arlington Memorial Bridge and Related Features, Theodore Roosevelt Island, the Watergate Complex, George Washington Memorial Parkway, and the Francis Scott Key Bridge. These sites have been extensively documented; therefore, we see no additional survey requirements on potentially affected historic resources.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in cooperation with the NPS and the Kennedy Center is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze potential impacts associated with the Kennedy Center Potomac River Pedestrian Access Improvement Project in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The NPS plans to coordinate the Section 106 process with NEPA per the National Historic Preservation Act and its implementing regulations (36 CFR 800.8).

At this time, the NPS has determined that the Kennedy Center Potomac River Pedestrian Access Improvement Project will potentially have adverse effect on the historic resources within the APE but looks forward to consulting with the Historic Preservation Office to make a formal determination of effect. The NPS is prepared to work with the Historic Preservation Office to identify and evaluate modifications to the proposed project that will avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential adverse effects on the historic properties within the APE. No impact on archaeology is anticipated due to the fact that the project area consists of fill over former marshland.

Thank you for your help. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Jennifer Talken Spaulding, Cultural Resources Project Manager – National Mall and Memorial Parks at jennifer_talken-spaulding@nps.gov or (202) 245-4693.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael A. Caldwell", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael A. Caldwell
Acting Superintendent
National Mall and Memorial Parks

Enclosure

cc: Jack VanDop, FHWA

