

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER



June 30, 2010

Ms. Kym Elder, Superintendent
Ford's Theater/Petersen House
National Park Service
511 10th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20024

RE: Section 106 Review of the Proposed Repair and Renovation of the Petersen House

Dear Ms. Elder:

Thank you for contacting the DC State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to formally initiate the Section 106 review process for the above-referenced undertaking. We also appreciated the opportunity to learn more about the proposed repair and renovation work during our April 27, 2010 site visit with NPS staff. We are writing to provide our initial comments regarding effects on historic properties based upon the results of our site visit and our review of the recently submitted project materials.

The SHPO agrees that the proposed Area of Potential Effect (APE) is appropriate for the scope of work. The list of consulting parties also appears to be sufficient with regard to any preservation-related concerns that may arise.

Given the significance of the Petersen House, we strongly recommend that damage to historic fabric be avoided to the maximum extent possible. The "Preferred Option" will result in some of the least damage to historic fabric so we generally support this course of action. We also note that the rest of the proposed work will be carried out in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards* and that the on-going efforts to identify and monitor for archaeological resources will be closely coordinated with our office.

For the reasons cited above, we agree that there may be some potential for this undertaking to have "no adverse effect" on historic properties but it is premature to make a final determination at this time since the staircase on the rear porch has been identified as a "secondary contributing feature" and its removal would likely constitute an adverse effect. In addition, we would appreciate an opportunity to review more detailed information about the other repairs proposed for the property before determining their effect. We are particularly interested to learn more about the proposed connection to the adjacent Ford's Theater Society Center for Education and Leadership since the proximity of this connection to the Death Room will require a carefully designed approach to avoid adverse effect. A joint meeting among the NPS, the Ford's Theater Society and our office may be appropriate to discuss this issue in more detail. Finally, we would like an opportunity to consider the views of any parties who have requested consulting party status. We understand that a consulting parties meeting was recently held and we would appreciate being provided with the minutes from that meeting.

If you should have any questions or comments regarding this matter, please contact me at andrew.lewis@dc.gov or 202-442-8841. Otherwise, thank you for providing this initial opportunity to review and comment. We look forward to consulting further with all parties regarding this important undertaking.

Sincerely,

C. Andrew Lewis
Senior Historic Preservation Specialist
DC State Historic Preservation Office
10-264