

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



January 24, 2006

Ms. Lisa Burcham
Associate Director and Historic Preservation Officer
D.C. Office of Planning
801 North Capitol Street, NE
Suite 3000
Washington, D.C. 20002

Reference: Improvements to Columbus Circle Plaza, Union Station

Subject: Section 106 Consultation, National Historic Preservation Act

Dear Ms. Burcham:

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT), in conjunction with the National Park Service (NPS) and the Union Station Redevelopment Corporation (USRC), is seeking to improve access and circulation patterns in and around Columbus Circle Plaza for pedestrians, taxis, bicyclists, private vehicles, commercial vehicles, Metro buses, private motor coaches, and tour buses with permanent stops at Union Station. The project design will include new handicapped accessible routes, separation of vehicles and pedestrians at critical bottleneck locations, creation of new intersections to improve vehicular flow, and re-design of lane widths and traffic signalization patterns. A brief project description and preliminary design plans are enclosed.

In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR 800.4(b)), three (3) cultural resources eligible for or listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) have been identified within the project area: Union Station, Columbus Plaza and Columbus Fountain, and the City Post Office. Union Station, designed by Daniel Burnham, was constructed between 1903 and 1908. The Neo-Classical Revival building, located north of the U.S. Capitol at Massachusetts and Delaware Avenues, NE, serves as the railroad's gateway into Washington, D.C. It was listed in the D.C. Inventory of Sites in 1964 and in the NRHP in 1969. Columbus Plaza is a pivotal component of the Union Station complex, serving as a gateway to the main terminal, representing in design, style, and materials the essential planning principles of the City Beautiful Movement as promulgated by Daniel Burnham. Columbus Plaza was determined eligible for listing in the NRHP in 1980 and is listed on the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites. Columbus Fountain is a significant sculpture of Lorado Taft. The City Post Office,

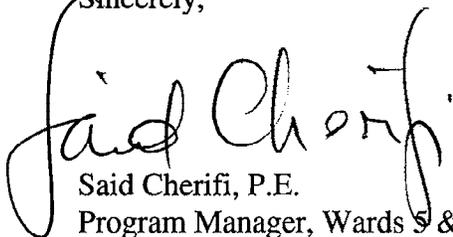
located at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and North Capitol Street, NE, was constructed in 1914. Designed by the D.H. Burnham & Company, the Beaux-Arts building served as the main Washington, D.C. post office from the time of its completion until 1986. The City Post Office was listed in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites in 1964 and determined eligible for listing in the NRHP in 1983.

We would like to formally initiate Section 106 consultation with your office. Since the proposed project will be conducted within the existing transportation corridor rights-of-way in and around Columbus Circle Plaza, we have determined that the area of potential effect (APE) extends two hundred (200) feet beyond the Limits of Disturbance in all directions as identified on the enclosed design plans. This APE encompasses the area affected by construction as well as includes a buffer zone in which visual or audible intrusions could occur.

We request your concurrence on the proposed APE and solicit your comments pertaining to the proposed project. We look forward to working through the Section 106 process with you.

If you have any questions regarding cultural resources, please contact Gary Burch of the Parsons Transportation Group, our consultant for this project at (202) 775-6097. If we may be of further service or you wish to discuss any aspect of the project in detail, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned at (202) 671-0479.

Sincerely,



Said Cherifi, P.E.
Program Manager, Wards 5 & 6
District Department of Transportation
Infrastructure Project Management Administration

Enclosures

Cc: David S. Ball, USRC
Alexa Viets, NPS

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



January 24, 2006

Ms. Kristina Penhoet
The Commission of Fine Arts
National Building Museum
441 F Street, NW
Suite 312
Washington, D.C. 20001-2728

Reference: Improvements to Columbus Circle Plaza, Union Station

Subject: Review of Revised Design Concept

Dear Ms. Penhoet:

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT), in conjunction with the National Park Service (NPS) and the Union Station Redevelopment Corporation (USRC), is seeking to improve access and circulation patterns in and around Columbus Circle Plaza for pedestrians, taxis, bicyclists, private vehicles, commercial vehicles, Metro buses, private motor coaches, and tour buses with permanent stops at Union Station. The project design will include new handicapped accessible routes, separation of vehicles and pedestrians at critical bottleneck locations, creation of new intersections to improve vehicular flow, and re-design of lane widths and traffic signalization patterns.

We request your review of the revised design concept at the February 16, 2006 meeting. As required, please find enclosed the following information:

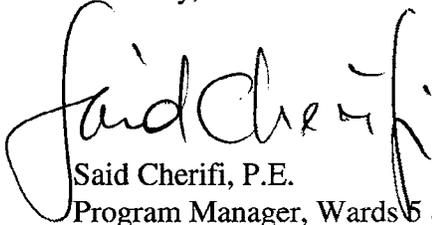
Two (2) complete sets of the full size drawings
Ten (10) sets of selected 11 x 17 drawings (including existing conditions, revised plans, and special details as needed)
Twelve (12) sets of photographs (1 set per plan set) showing existing conditions
Twelve (12) copies of the project description

We have initiated Section 106 consultation with the District Historic Preservation Office and will forward information to you when it is available. Pending your review, we will be consulting with the National Capital Planning Commission in the near future.

K. Penhoet
January 24, 2006
Page 2

If you have any questions regarding this project, please contact Gary Burch at (202) 775-6097 of the Parsons Transportation Group, our consultant for this project. If we may be of further service or you wish to discuss any aspect of the project in detail, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned at (202) 671-0479.

Sincerely,



Said Cherifi, P.E.

Program Manager, Wards 5 & 6

Infrastructure Project Management Administration
District Department of Transportation

Cc: David S. Ball, USRC
Alexa Viets, NPS

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



January 24, 2006

Ms. Patricia Gallagher
Executive Director
National Capital Planning Commission
401 9th Street NW
North Lobby, Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20004

Reference: Improvements to Columbus Circle Plaza, Union Station

Subject: Project Submission - Preliminary Design Review

Dear Ms. Gallagher:

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT), in conjunction with the National Park Service (NPS) and the Union Station Redevelopment Corporation (USRC), is seeking to improve access and circulation patterns in and around Columbus Circle Plaza for pedestrians, taxis, bicyclists, private vehicles, commercial vehicles, Metro buses, private motor coaches, and tour buses with permanent stops at Union Station. The project design will include new handicapped accessible routes, separation of vehicles and pedestrians at critical bottleneck locations, creation of new intersections to improve vehicular flow, and re-design of lane widths and traffic signalization patterns.

We request your review and approval of the preliminary design at the March 2, 2006 meeting in accordance with Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act. As required, please find enclosed the following information:

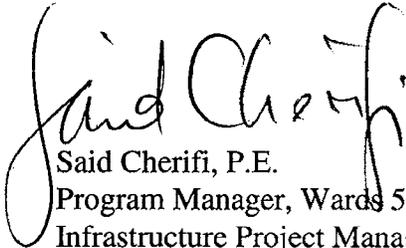
- Three (3) sets of half size drawings
- Three (3) copies of the project description
- Three (3) copies of correspondence with the District Historic Preservation Office
- Three (3) copies of correspondence with the Commission of Fine Arts
- One (1) compact disk containing the electronic version of the aforementioned materials

We have initiated Section 106 consultation with the District Historic Preservation Office and coordination with the Commission of Fine Arts. We will forward information from these agencies to you when it is available.

P. Gallagher
January 24, 2006
Page 2

If you have any questions regarding this project, please contact Gary Burch at (202) 775-6097 of the Parsons Transportation Group, our consultant for this project. If we may be of further service or you wish to discuss any aspect of the project in detail, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned at (202) 671-0479.

Sincerely,



Said Cherifi, P.E.
Program Manager, Wards 5 & 6
Infrastructure Project Management Administration
District Department of Transportation

Cc: David S. Ball, USRC
Alexa Viets, NPS

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**



June 20, 2007

Mr. David Maloney
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
D.C. Office of Planning
801 North Capitol Street, NE
Suite 3000
Washington, D.C. 20002

Reference: Rehabilitation of Columbus Circle Plaza, Union Station

Subject: Determination of No Adverse Effect under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act
'De Minimis' Finding under Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act

Dear Mr. Maloney:

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT), in conjunction with the National Park Service (NPS) and the Union Station Redevelopment Corporation (USRC), is seeking to improve access and circulation patterns in and around Columbus Circle Plaza for pedestrians, taxis, bicyclists, private vehicles, commercial vehicles, Metrobuses, private motor coaches, and tour buses with permanent stops at Union Station. The project design will include new handicapped accessible routes, separation of vehicles and pedestrians at critical bottleneck locations, creation of new intersections to improve vehicular flow, and re-design of lane widths and traffic signalization patterns. An internal draft Environmental Assessment and a separate Section 106 Compliance Review document have been prepared and are enclosed for your review.

In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the criteria of adverse effect have been applied (36 CFR 800.5(a)(1)), and no adverse effects will occur to the three (3) properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in the project area: Union Station, Columbus Plaza, and the City Post Office. Union Station and the City Post Office will not be affected by any construction activities associated with the proposed improvements; audible and visual intrusions will occur during the construction phase but these effects will be temporary and will not adversely affect any architectural elements or contributing elements to these resources. Temporary effects to Union Station and the City Post Office from visual, audible, and atmospheric intrusions during construction will be mitigated through use of watering and cover materials to reduce visual intrusions from particulate matter and visual screening of any adjacent construction staging areas.

The historic footprint, character, and features of Columbus Plaza (such as the three American flagpoles, the Columbus Memorial, the east and west fountains, balustrades and the radial walkway pattern) will not be adversely affected by the proposed undertaking. There will be no changes to the historic structures within the plaza, other than minor improvements which will preserve the integrity of the plaza and provide for improved functioning of the memorial fountains. The existing brick paving will be repaired and replaced in kind as needed. The existing subsurface mechanical systems (including water and electrical systems for the fountains and lights) will be repaired and upgraded. The existing metal fence and shrub hedge along the southern perimeter of Columbus Plaza will be removed, restoring the open character of the plaza. The non-historic interior circulation roadway in front of Columbus Plaza will be removed. The extension of parkland will create a more substantial buffer area between traffic and the Columbus Plaza and will reintroduce uninterrupted pedestrian access and the radial walkway system through the plaza to Massachusetts Avenue.

D. Maloney
June 18, 2007
Page 2

The radial walkway pattern will, in fact, be enhanced with extension of the radii to the curbline with Massachusetts Avenue and placement of additional radial walkways to approximate the original configuration. The 56 flagpoles that curve around Massachusetts Avenue on AOC property south of Columbus Plaza will not be affected. The vista and connection of the flag display to Columbus Plaza will be maintained. Minor alterations to Massachusetts Avenue on the southern and eastern edge of Columbus Plaza and subsurface utility and fountain system repairs will not affect the overall integrity of the plaza design. The proposed undertaking will improve long-term potential impacts to Columbus Fountain by removing the interior circulation roadway, thus removing vibration within close proximity as well as the potential for vehicular damage to Columbus Fountain (no longer having vehicles driving right in front of the memorial).

Temporary vibration of construction activities in close proximity to the Columbus Fountain, and the east and west bowl fountains, have the potential to be somewhat more pronounced than the daily vibration impacts caused by buses and other traffic in the interior circulation roadway. The NPS has requested mitigation measures to address the potential impacts caused by vibration during the construction phase of the project. These include: installation of crack/joint monitors in several key points on Columbus Fountain; regular monitoring of these cracks/joints for signs of stress or failure; immediate cessation and reevaluation of work activities if structural failures become apparent; providing appropriate drainage and staging areas away from Columbus Fountain during construction; and limits to the proximity of heavy equipment to Columbus Fountain during construction. Mitigation measures for visual and atmospheric intrusions, and vibration impacts will be incorporated into the design specifications for construction contractor compliance.

Minor jurisdictional changes will occur between DDOT, the NPS, USRC and the Architect of the Capitol (AOC). These small land transfers are not considered adverse effects under 36CFR800. 5(a)(2)(vii) because all parties are Federal agencies (DDOT and USRC have management responsibility but the roads and Union Station are owned by the U.S. Government). Any such land transfers will be reviewed and approved by appropriate federal agencies (DDOT, NPS, USRC, and AOC).

As a result of the mitigation measures identified to reduce visual and vibration impacts during construction, and the beneficial effects of increasing the park-like setting within Columbus Plaza and preserving the open character of the grand plaza, we recommend a finding of No Adverse Effect as a result of this rehabilitation project. We request your concurrence on this Determination of No Adverse Effect in accordance with 36 CFR 800.5 (b). As a result of this Determination and in accordance with the 'de minimis' criteria for Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act, we also request written concurrence from your office on the use of the 'de minimis' approach for Section 4(f).

If you have any questions regarding cultural resources, please contact Susan Bupp ([202] 775-3480) or Gary Burch ([202] 775-6097) of the Parsons Transportation Group, our consultant for this project. If we may be of further service or you wish to discuss any aspect of the project in detail, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned at (202) 671-0479.

Sincerely,

Said Cherifi, P.E.
Program Manager, Wards 5 & 6
Infrastructure Project Management Administration
District Department of Transportation

Cc: David S. Ball, USRC
Alexa Viets, NPS

PARSONS

1133 Fifteenth Street, NW • Washington, DC 20005-2701 • (202) 775-3300 • Fax: (202) 775-3422 • www.parsons.com

July 24, 2007

Mr. Richard O. Bennett
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Northeast Regional Office
300 Westgate Center Drive
Hadley, MA 01035-9589

Subject: Columbus Circle/Columbus Plaza Rehabilitation
Draft Environmental Assessment

Dear Mr. Bennett:

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT), in conjunction with the National Park Service (NPS) and the Union Station Redevelopment Corporation (USRC), is seeking to improve access and circulation patterns in and around Columbus Circle Plaza for pedestrians, taxis, bicyclists, private vehicles, commercial vehicles, Metrobuses, private motor coaches, and tour buses with permanent stops at Union Station. The project design will include new handicapped accessible routes, separation of vehicles and pedestrians at critical bottleneck locations, creation of new intersections to improve vehicular flow, and re-design of lane widths and traffic signalization patterns.

At the request of Brian Glenn, Federal Transit Administration, and Said Cherifi, DDOT, we are formally transmitting one (1) copy of the draft Environmental Assessment for your review. Because the entire Union Station project area and vicinity are completely developed/landscaped and/or surrounded by paved surfaces, we anticipate no impacts to natural habitats (e.g., wetlands or floodplains), wildlife, or threatened or endangered species.

If you have any environmental questions, please the undersigned ([202] 775-6097) of the Parsons Transportation Group in Washington, D.C. If you wish to discuss any aspect of the project in detail, please do not hesitate to contact the Said Cherifi, DDOT at (202) 671-0479.

Sincerely,



Gary A. Burch, P.E.
Principal Project Manager

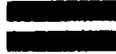
Enclosure as Stated

Cc: Cherifi, Said, DDOT
Glenn, Brian, FTA



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
OFFICE OF PLANNING

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July 30, 2007

Said Cherifi, P.E.
DC Department of Transportation
64 New York Avenue, NE
Washington DC 20002

RE: Section 106 Review – Columbus Circle Plaza Rehabilitation

Dear Mr. Cherifi:

Thank you for the submission of the Draft Environmental Assessment and Section 106 Compliance Review materials for Columbus Plaza, dated June 2007. These documents detail the reconfigurations proposed for car, bus, bike, and pedestrian traffic in and around this National Register-listed historic site.

While the proposal to create a non-symmetrical landscape area around the Columbus Fountain is somewhat incongruous with the rigid symmetry intended in Burnham's original Beaux-Arts design, the DC SHPO recognizes that the existing configuration is not historic and a return to the historic character and appearance is not being proposed.

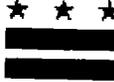
The proposed project will have *no adverse effect* on the historic aspects of the Plaza, Union Station, and the abutting Post Office. We concur with the National Park Service's request to monitor the stability of the fountains during construction and would advise the same for the rostral columns and their balustrades.

Thank you for providing this office the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 202.442.8800.

Sincerely,

Anne O. Brockett
Architectural Historian

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
OFFICE OF PLANNING



August 16, 2007

Said Cherifi, P.E.
DC Department of Transportation
64 New York Avenue, NE
Washington DC 20002

RE: Section 4(f) Review – Columbus Circle Plaza Rehabilitation

Dear Mr. Cherifi:

Thank you for the submission of the Draft Environmental Assessment for Columbus Plaza, dated June 2007. These documents detail the reconfigurations proposed for car, bus, bike, and pedestrian traffic in and around this National Register-listed historic site.

The DC State Historic Preservation office concurs with *de minimis* approach for compliance with Section 4(f) of the Transportation Act. Concurrence with the finding of no adverse effect under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act was previously submitted to you.

Thank you for providing this office the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 202.442.8800.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Brockett", is written over a faint, illegible stamp.

Anne O. Brockett
Architectural Historian

U.S. COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS 17 MAY 1910

NATIONAL BUILDING MUSEUM
401 F STREET, N.W., SUITE 312
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001-2728

202-504-2200
202-504-2195 FAX

26 September 2008

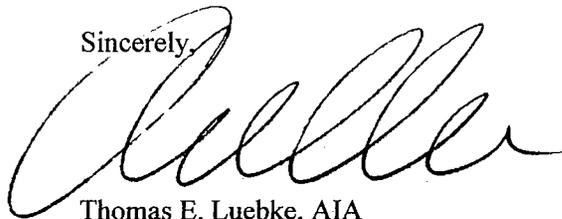
Dear Mr. Seales:

In its meeting of 18 September, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed and approved the revised concept for the reconfiguration of Columbus Plaza in conjunction with a proposal for adjacent perimeter security for Union Station. The Commission expressed its appreciation for the revisions to the public space and surrounding traffic lanes to retain and extend the original Beaux-Arts character of the plaza, which has resulted in a more coherent design.

In addition to their comments in support of the proposed configuration of the plaza, the Commission members made several recommendations regarding the treatment of the brick paving. In the extensions to the plaza, the Commission recommended that the color of the brick pavers in these new walkways should be the lighter of the two samples shown. In the area of the existing plaza, the Commission members commented that the grading and pattern of the brick paving may have been altered, particularly adjacent to the planting beds and the bases of the flagpoles; they asked that the design team research these details and, if supported by the historic record, regrade the plaza and reset the bricks to conform to the original configuration.

The Commission looks forward to reviewing further development of this proposal for this important civic space in the capital city. As always, the staff is available to assist you with the next submission.

Sincerely,



Thomas E. Luebke, AIA
Secretary

Frank Seales Jr., Interim Director
District of Columbia Department of Transportation
2000 14th Street, N.W., 6th Floor
Washington, DC 20009

cc: David S. Ball, Union Station Redevelopment Corporation
Lisa Mendelsohn-Ielmini, National Park Service
Said Cherifi, D.C. Department of Transportation
Gary A. Burch, Parsons
Michael E. Dunn, National Railroad Passenger Corporation