

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
8787 Georgia Avenue • Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

MCPB
Item # 1
11/1/01

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 24, 2001
TO: Montgomery County Planning Board
VIA: John, Carter, Chief, Community-Based Planning Division *JAC*
FROM: Glenn Kreger, Silver Spring/Takoma Park Team Leader *GK*
Margaret Rifkin, Planner Coordinator *MRK*
Community-Based Planning Division

REVIEW TYPE: Mandatory Referral
PROJECT NAME: Bridge Connection to Jesup Blair Park
Montgomery College, Takoma Park Campus Expansion

APPLICANT: Montgomery College

CASE NUMBER: 01103-M-01

REVIEW BASIS: Article 28, Chapter 7-112 of the Regional District Act

ZONE: R-60, I-1, I-4

MASTER PLAN: Silver Spring Central Business District Sector Plan

FILING DATE: August 17, 2001

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH COMMENTS

COMMENTS:

1. All comments and conditions from the Planning Board review on May 31, 2001, still apply with the exception of Condition #18 which is superceded as follows:

Modify the circulation and design on the Fenton Street side to

- a. Eliminate the "switchback" at the top of the ramp to improve the route for those with bicycles and wheelchairs.
- b. Ease the intersection of the ramp path as it joins the main path so that ramp users—like stair users—do not need to turn a sharp corner.
- c. Ease the corners where the path meets the Metropolitan Branch Trail and widen if possible.

CONDITIONS: Park-Related¹

2. Continue to work with M-NCPPC staff to identify a color scheme for the bridge that will successfully tie the high tech/industrial form and materials to the naturalistic setting of the park.
3. Provide a final plan for the location of security features, such as cameras and emergency telephones, and for additional enhancements under the ramps and stairs, before a Park Permit is issued.
4. Review with the Planning Board any significant changes to the bridge, ramp or stair design.

WHAT THE PLANNING BOARD DECIDED AT THE PREVIOUS MANDATORY REFERRAL REVIEW

On May 31, 2001, the Planning Board reviewed and approved with comments, Phase One of the Montgomery College, Takoma Park Campus Expansion and Cultural Arts Center Building Envelope and Location. The Planning Board's full comments are included in the Board's letter to Montgomery College (page 16) which was transmitted with the more detailed discussion of their findings in the May 31, 2001, Staff Report (page 22).

In summary, the Planning Board:

- Requested a future review of the College Facilities Master Plan including the former Giant Bakery Site.
- Approved the Fenton Street Realignment and Fenton Street Access to the Pedestrian/Bike Bridge.
- Approved the Health Sciences Building on Georgia Avenue and King Street.
- Approved the Cultural Arts Center Building Envelope and Location and Pedestrian/Bike Bridge in the park with conditions addressing tree preservation.
- Requested review of the 70% Design of the Pedestrian/Bike Bridge.

¹ Changes to Jesup Blair Park *require the approval of the Planning Board*. Therefore, comments in this section are *conditions of approval* rather than advisory comments.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project consists of a bridge spanning the Metro and CSX tracks. The bridge is part of Phase One of the College Expansion and is a critical link between the existing Montgomery College Takoma Park Campus and the expanded campus along Georgia Avenue. The bridge also connects Jesup Blair Park with the community on the east side of the tracks.

This 70% design review is limited to the bridge, and access ramp and stairs, and the open space in the immediate vicinity as shown on pages 8 and 9. One end of the bridge with its ramps and stairs is in the park. This review does not include the bridge span over Fenton Street. That bridge span has already been approved in concept and will be built as part of Phase Two. The Fenton Street span will be consistent with the design of the span across the tracks.

PLANNING BOARD ISSUES FOR THIS 70% DESIGN REVIEW

The Planning Board requested review of the 70% Design of the bridge to address compatibility and safety issues. The Planning Board requested: (Comment #18 of the June 7, 2001 Letter to the College):

- a. *To minimize the mass of the stair structure in the park, the steps should not be enclosed. If the College determines that a roof is absolutely necessary it should be transparent. Means other than roofing for avoiding costly snow and ice removal should be explored. The steps should be designed to ensure compatibility of the structure with the park setting.*
- b. *The wire mesh fence that is required by WMATA/CSX along the ramp adjacent to the railroad tracks should be designed to contribute to the gateway image for both Jesup Blair Park and the Silver Spring CBD. A similar approach should be considered for the ramp from Fenton Street.*
- c. *The design of the bridge and ramps and stairway at both ends should be brought to the Planning Board for mandatory referral review at 70% completion. At that time, the following should be addressed: The stairway and ramp design should be compatible with, and complement Jesup Blair House and the park. Their designs should inform the overall design of the bridge as well as the ramp and stair tower on Fenton Street. The bridge and gateways to the bridge should have a consistent and recognizable character unifying both sides. The spaces underneath the ramps and stairs should be designed using CPTED principles and security features compatible with the park and campus character.*

This review does not take the place of the staff review of any final tree preservation, landscape lighting, and signage or other plans as requested by the Planning Board on May 31, 2001.

COLLEGE RESPONSE

The College has responded to the above concerns as follows:

- The sides of the stairways are open.
- The roof over the steps has been changed to canopies which are now light and open, floating in several separate ascending panels that fan out. The leading edge of each panel is transparent glass. The College felt that alternatives to a roof or canopies, such as heating wires in the steps to melt snow and ice, were not long term solutions due to wear over time.
- The design includes opportunities for public art - Each railing panel at each landing on both the ramp and stairway, can receive decorative metalwork or other types of sculptural elements.
- The structural supports for the steps and the canopies consist primarily of open, light frameworks.
- The fence along the railroad track is a steel mesh. The horizontal slats are made of steel tubes and the vertical elements holding them together are steel fasteners. The mesh is semi-transparent and flexible. It is also used in the railing panels and in the "clerestory" openings for air circulation that run under the eaves of the bridge roof.
- The finishes on the bridge are exposed satin-finished metal and white for the canopies on both skyward and downward faces. Painted elements of the bridge are currently shown as a light neutral gray.
- The spaces underneath the stairs and ramps will be illuminated by down lighting to increase security.

REVIEW BY THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

At this time a legal opinion has not yet been provided concerning whether or not the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is required to review this project for issuance of an Historic Area Work Permit. If such a permit is required, the HPC would have the authority to request changes to the design.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY CONCERNS

The College has continued to conduct community outreach and most recently held a meeting on September 19, 2001, to show the bridge design to the community.

At that meeting community concerns primarily focused on: the desire for Historic Preservation Commission review to include revisiting the possibility of locating the bridge and Cultural Arts Center outside Jesup Blair Park and providing adequate lighting for security that does not intrude on nearby homes.

PROJECT ANALYSIS-FINDINGS

FINDING: Consistency with the Sector Plan, Master Plan and Environmental Guidelines – The Planning Board made this finding, with comments, on May 31, 2001. No changes to that finding are recommended. (Page 29.)

FINDING: Consistency with the Development Standards for the Zone – The Planning Board made this finding, with comments, on May 31, 2001. No changes to that finding are recommended. (Page 29.)

FINDING: Compatibility with existing and proposed adjacent uses and structures - The Planning Board made a finding of compatibility of use but not design, on May 31, 2001. (Page 30.) No changes to the finding of compatibility of use are recommended; however, compatibility of design is the subject of this review. The revised design very successfully responds to many of the compatibility concerns raised previously. There have been a number of creative changes to the stair, its roof or canopy, and supports, and to the ramp. However, there is an outstanding issue concerning color. (The memo from the Historic Preservation Unit of Countywide Planning discusses the design more fully. Page 36.)

The bridge, stairs and ramps need to achieve a careful balance between standing alone as a major new architectural statement in Jesup Blair Park, and fitting in with the treed, naturalistic setting of the park. Appropriate colors are essential to achieve this balance. The revised design successfully recalls the industrial, railroad-oriented history of the area using clearly modern architecture which is “true to its time”: 2001. It is not an attempt to create a modern-day replication of an historic railroad bridge. This revised design is “high-tech” and industrial in appearance. However, the use of a modern industrial/office color (neutral gray) for the painted elements, will tip the balance and result in a structure that is too starkly differentiated from the surrounding green of the park. The color scheme is a key factor in providing a successful, attractive visual connection between this modern high-tech structure and the trees and landscaping of the park.

Therefore, there should be further investigation into the use of a color scheme which is based on a verdigris palette. This could be a variation on the traditional verdigris which is associated with weathered brass, bronze or copper. This type of color scheme or an analogous one, should not only tie the structure visually to the natural setting of the park but recall turn-of-the-century park structures. The modern high-tech structure would then be better integrated into its historic setting. The final color selection should be reviewed and approved by M-NCPPC staff.

Another issue pertains to ensuring compatibility if there are design changes that the College wishes to make as the bridge design is finalized. For example, to add to the lightness of the canopies over the stairs and to enhance the structure's compatibility with the Park, the designers created the canopies with a fan-shape with a leading edge that is glass and transparent. The remainder of the canopy is an opaque white both on the skyward side and on the underside visible from the stairs and park. The glass edge is an attractive feature; however, due to budget constraints, the College has explained that it may be removed from the final design. The College is encouraged to keep this feature in the design. However, if it feels that it is important to remove it, this design change could be handled administratively by staff. However, any other significant changes to the bridge should be brought back to the Planning Board for review.

FINDING: When the following comments are addressed, the location of the structure, open space and circulation will be adequate, safe and efficient. Security for the areas under ramps and stairs should be enhanced. To provide for security, downlighting is currently proposed under the ramps and stairs, and emergency phones and cameras are proposed along the bridge route. While these will contribute to security, additional features to further enhance security are needed under the ramps and stairs.

Therefore, a final plan for the location of security features, such as cameras and emergency telephones, should be provided for final review by M-NCPPC staff before a Park Permit is issued.

There are several recommended modifications that will improve circulation and security on the Fenton Street side of the bridge:

- a. The switchback at the top of the ramp should be eliminated to improve the route for those with bicycles, strollers and wheelchairs, and to turn an otherwise unused corner into passage space. (Page 12.)
- b. The intersection of the ramp path where it joins the main path currently is a T-intersection. This intersection should be rounded so people are not cutting across the corner following the flow of all the traffic. Ramp users should not have to make a sharp turn at the base if that can be avoided. They are the users who would most benefit from a soft flowing turn—they include all the users with bicycles, strollers and wheelchairs. (Page 12.)
- c. The intersection of the path where it meets the Metropolitan Branch Trail should be widened slightly and the corners rounded for the benefit of all users coming from either direction. While this may be difficult to do for those coming to the trail from the south, due to the slope of the path, it should still be considered. (Page 9.)

In addition, currently, three evergreen trees are proposed within 40 feet of the path. As they mature their lower branches will spread toward the path. Over time, these trees could create hiding places resulting in security concerns for users. Therefore, consideration should be given to redesigning that area.

The woodchip path from the bridge to the Health Sciences Building shown as part of this design is an interim solution. The final path design will be determined as part of a later phase. Therefore, at this time, the final path design should not be identified as "asphalt" since this is still under discussion for reasons related to both the character of the historic setting and tree preservation.

FINDING: Transportation – The Planning Board made this finding, with comments, May 31, 2001. No changes are recommended to that finding. The comments recognized the importance of improving access between the campus and on-site and off-site parking areas and suggested some actions (Comment #2, May 31, 2001 staff report). The bridge helps to provide such access. Measures to ensure that the bridge is inviting and perceived as safe will contribute to its use.

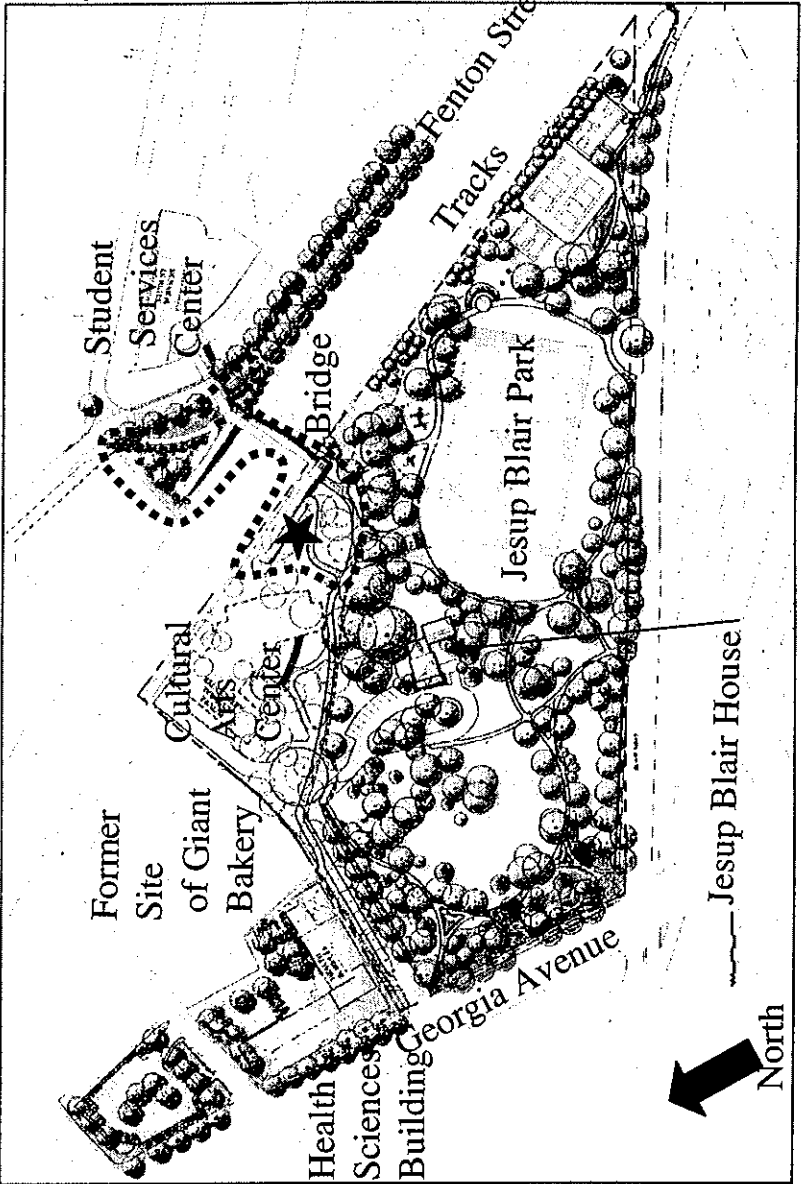
Other Planning Board Comments and Conditions from May 31, 2001

There are other Planning Board comments and conditions listed below which are from the May 31, 2001 review that relate to this bridge design. They were not specifically identified as the subject of this 70% design review but have been considered during this review. They will continue to be addressed by College and Park staff as design and construction proceed. (Page 18.)

- participation in a coordinated public art program (Comment #3),
- tree preservation (Comment # 5, #15, and #16),
- final landscape lighting and signage plan (Comment #6),
- creation of an entry feature as part of the open space and ramp design on Fenton Street (Comment #9),
- development of the Memorandum of Understanding regarding operations – maintenance, security and management of areas within the park (Comment #22).

MR:ha: a:\rifkin1\staffreportdraftoctober22.doc
Attachments

Einhorn Yaffee Prescott, Architecture & Engineering, P.C.



Area Which is the Focus of this Mandatory Referral Review

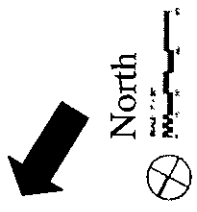
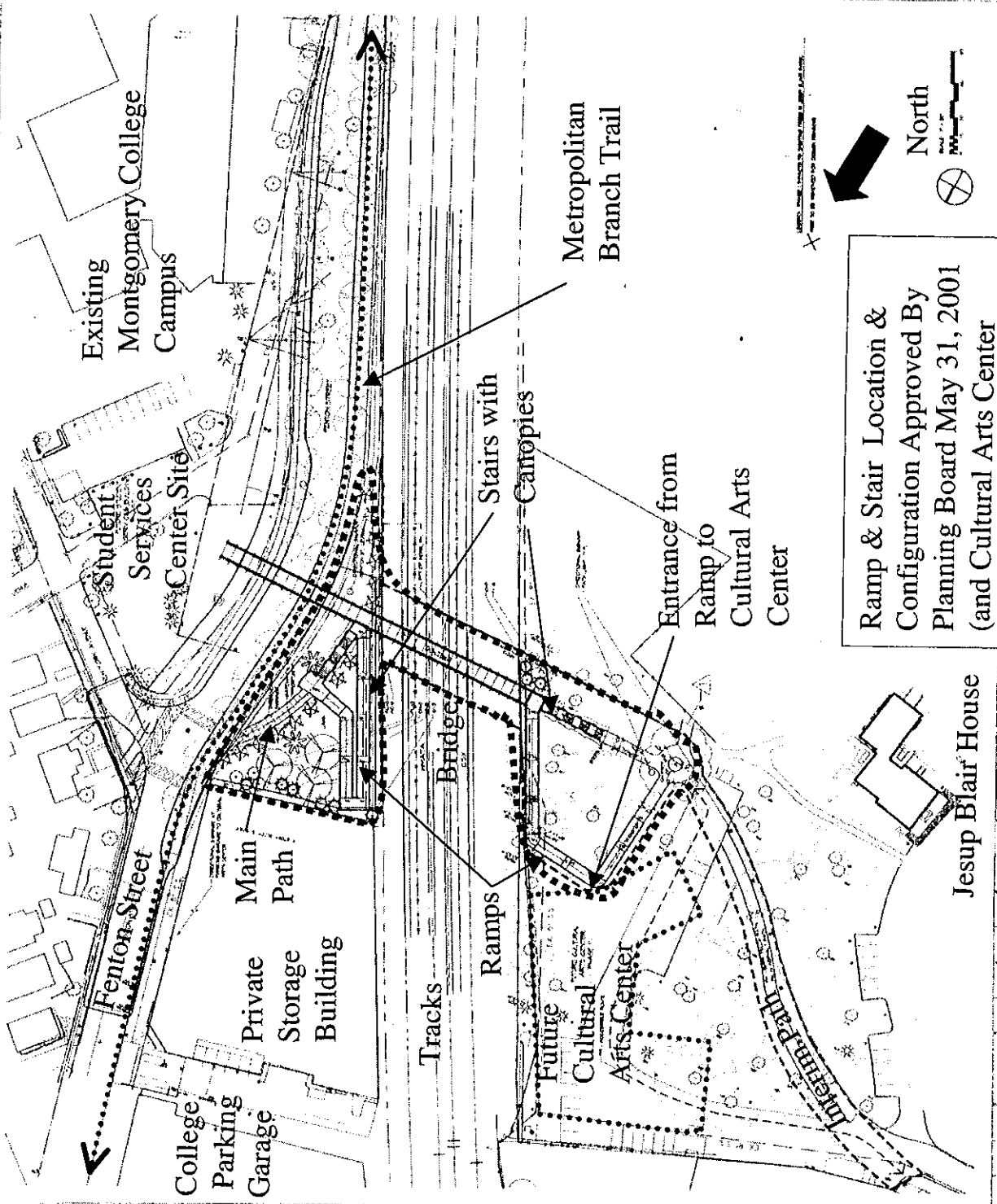
★ The Ramp configuration Approved by the Planning Board on May 31, 2001 is shown on the following page.

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE TAKOMA PARK EXPANSION

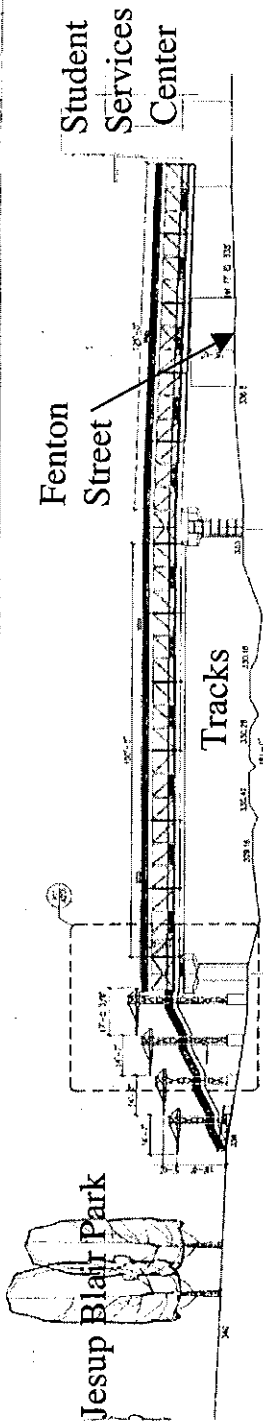
- ▶ Health Sciences Building - Schematic Design
- ▶ Cultural Arts Building - Concept Design
- ▶ Student Services Building - Concept Design
- ▶ Pedestrian Bridge - Concept Design



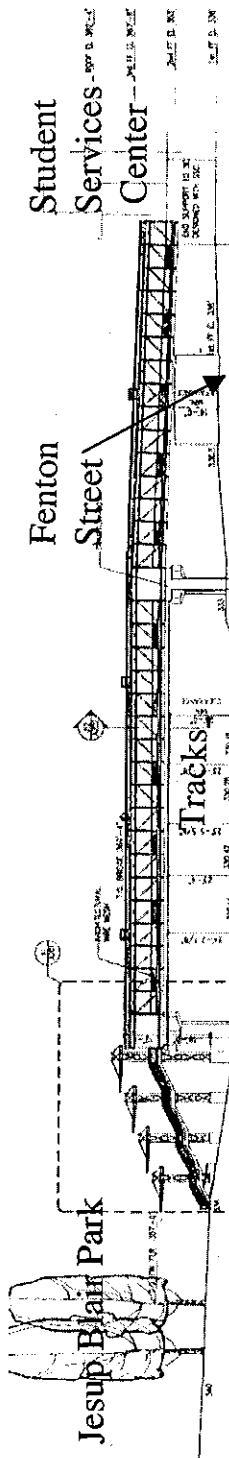
Area Which
is the Focus
of this
Mandatory
Referral
Review



Ramp & Stair Location & Configuration Approved By Planning Board May 31, 2001 (and Cultural Arts Center Location).

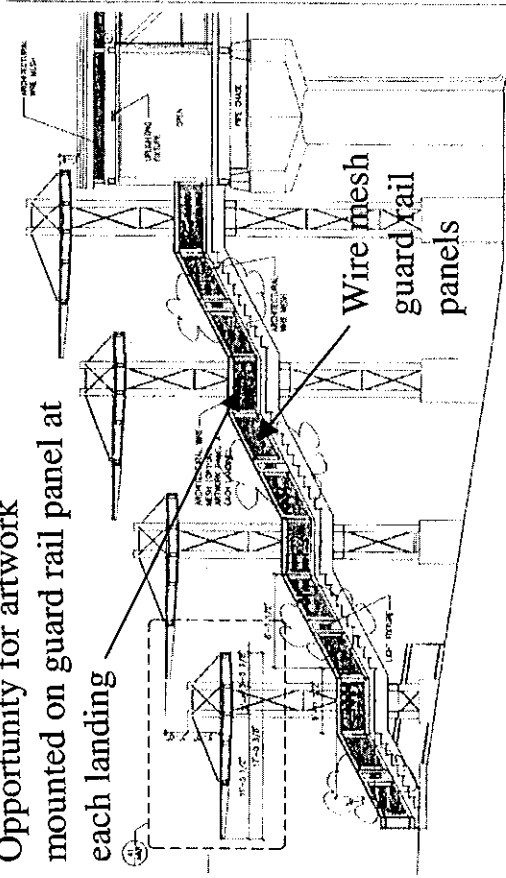


Bridge Elevation - Seen from the South

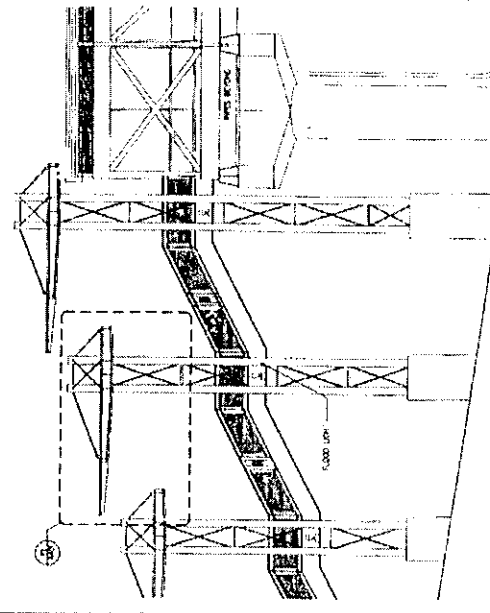


Bridge Section

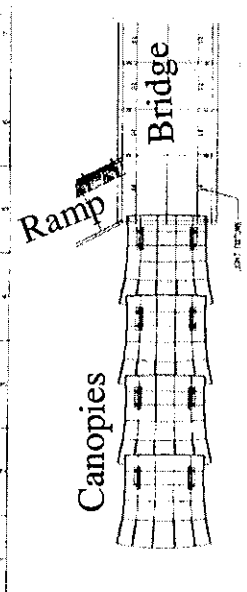
Opportunity for artwork mounted on guard rail panel at each landing



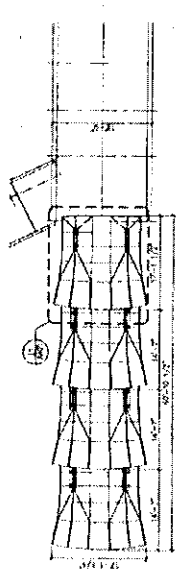
Canopy Section - Rail Design & Possible Art Locations



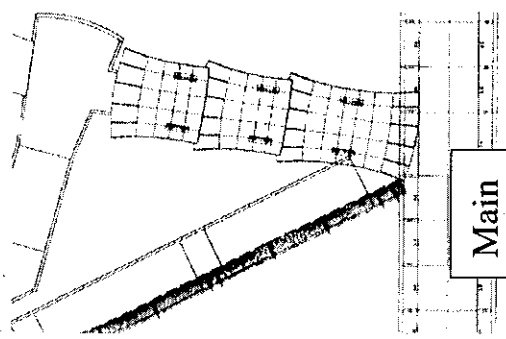
Partial Canopy Elevation



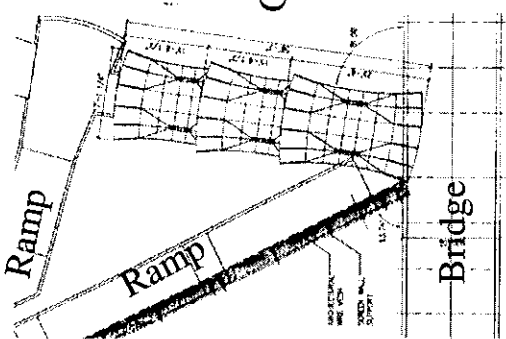
N Park - Canopies over Stairs



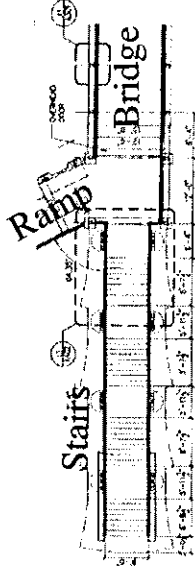
J1 ROOF PLAN



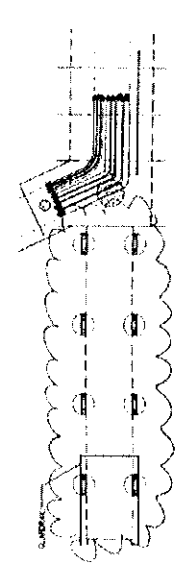
J8 REFLECTED OVERHEAD PLAN



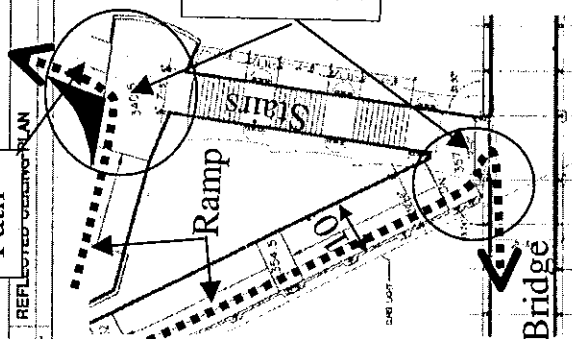
Fenton Street - Canopies over Stairs



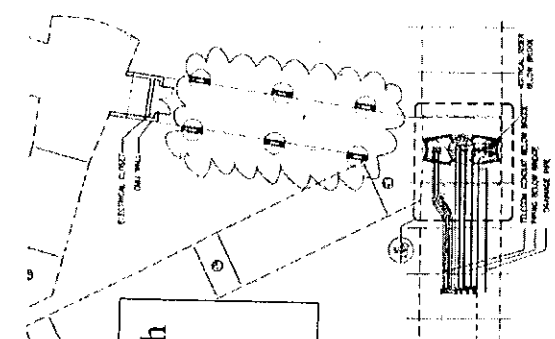
Park - Stairs & Ramp Joining Bridge



A1 BELOW SLAB PLAN



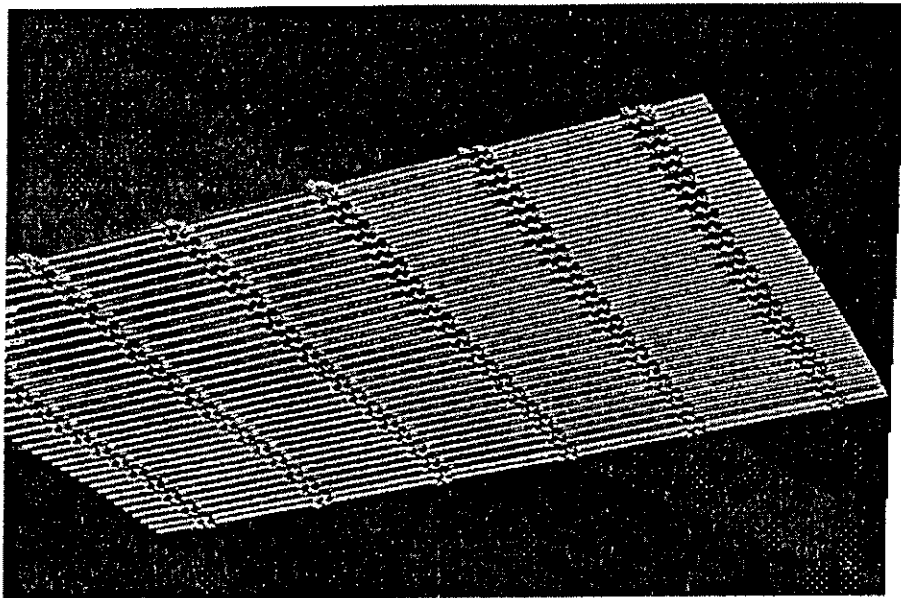
Fenton Street - Stairs & Ramp Joining Bridge



A3 BELOW SLAB PLAN

Flexible Wire Mesh for Fence
along Tracks and for the Panels
of the Guard Rails along the
stairs and the ramps.

Horizontal slats secured with
metal fasteners.

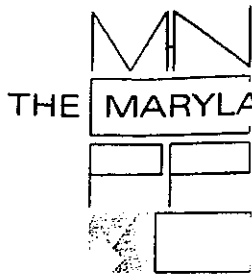


ATTACHMENTS

June 7, 2001 Letter to Chairman of the Board of Montgomery College with pages 1-14 of May 31, 2001 Staff report – page 16

Memorandum from Historic Preservation Unit of Countywide Planning Division - page 36

Memorandum from Park Police - page 38



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

8787 Georgia Avenue • Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

(301) 495-4605

Montgomery County Planning Board
Office of the Chairman

June 7, 2001

Dr. Robert E. Shoenberg, Chair
Board of Trustees
Montgomery College
51 Mannakee Street
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Mandatory Referral Proposal # 01103-M-1

Dear Dr. Shoenberg:

At the regular meeting of the Planning Board on May 31 the Planning Board reviewed and approved the mandatory referral proposal for Phase 1 of the expansion of the Takoma Park Campus and the Cultural Arts Center Building Envelope, with the attached comments and conditions pertaining to:

- The Health Sciences Building - design, size and location
- The Realignment of Fenton Street - design and location
- The Pedestrian/Bike Bridge, Ramps and Stairways - size and location
- The Cultural Arts Center Building Envelope - size and location
- Utility Lines in the Park - locations

The Planning Board continues to support the overall concept for the College's expansion, which will help to provide educational opportunities for the diverse citizens of our county. The Board also wishes to see Jesup Blair Park activated and South Silver Spring revitalized for the benefit of the larger community.

The Planning Board particularly wants to express our continued support for the College's cultural arts facility in Jesup Blair Park. While the Board acknowledges the value of the Park's green space, we believe that the Violet Blair Janin Cultural Arts Center will enhance the Park and make South Silver Spring a better community. The building is part of the expansion concept that has been discussed publicly for several years. It is specifically shown within the park in the Approved and Adopted February 2000 *Silver Spring (CBD) Sector Plan*. The concept of an arts facility in a park has been successful elsewhere. The Board feels that the siting of such a facility is consistent with our practice of selectively placing buildings and other facilities in our parks, which enhance the use of the park itself.

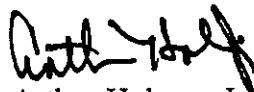
Dr. Robert E. Shoenberg, Montgomery College
June 7, 2001, MR # 01103-M-1
Page two

The Planning Board's discussion included the idea of asking the College to wait and take the entire Giant Bakery site into consideration to look for ways to preserve more trees and green space in the Park. However, the Board decided not to ask the College to do this for several reasons. The former Giant Bakery Site is not vacant. There is already a building on it that would have to be razed at considerable cost. We also understand that the College is planning to use the building for its programs. There would be a long time delay to allow for academic planning and a revision to the College's master plan (3-4 years) to determine the use and design of the site. This would delay the expansion plans and their benefits.

The Planning Board also believes that the revised plans and construction strategy presented by the College are essentially sound. We appreciate the College's responsiveness to the concerns previously expressed by the Planning Board focusing on the trees and the ramp from the pedestrian/ bike bridge into the Park. The impact on the trees has been reduced and could be considered minor relative to the Park as a whole. The Board also believes that the College has done what it can in this regard without actually removing the former Giant Bakery building. The fact that the College will stage construction on the former Giant Bakery site is important in limiting impacts on the Park. We encourage the College to give more thought to the protection of our historic resources, Jesup Blair House and its setting.

The Planning Board's staff report on the mandatory referral is enclosed. It provides a detailed discussion of the issues that may be helpful to you in the future. We endorse the recommended comments and conditions in the staff report and look forward to a successful partnership between the M-NCPPC and the College. We appreciate the hard work of your staff and look forward to working with them on future phases of the College's expansion.

Sincerely,


Arthur Holmes, Jr.
Acting Chairman

cc: Blair Ewing, President, Montgomery County Council
Dr Charlene Nunley, President, Montgomery College
David Capp, Chief Facilities Officer
Stephen Spurlock, Chairman, Historic Preservation Commission

Attachment and Enclosure
1. Comments and Conditions
2. Staff Report

**Comments and Conditions for Montgomery College,
Takoma Park Campus Expansion, Phase 1 and
Cultural Arts Center Building Envelope and Location
Mandatory Referral No. 01103-M-1**

COMMENTS

A. Overall

1. Coordinate with M-NCPPC in the future on a revised College Facilities Master Plan, to include the former Giant Bakery Site recently acquired by the College. This Plan should be brought to the Planning Board for review before approval by State authorities.
2. Develop a Parking Management Program to improve security for users of the College's parking garage. Consider means for improving access to parking areas as identified in the memorandum from the M-NCPPC Transportation Planning Unit (Staff Report Attachment page 6).
3. Participate in a coordinated public art program with M-NCPPC, the Public Arts Trust, citizens and others to include creating pedestrian gateways for the campus and park at Jesup Blair Drive/Georgia Avenue and on Fenton Street at the bridge entrance.
4. Participate in the Silver Spring Wayfinding Program and in creating a coordinated signage system for Jesup Blair Park and the College, with M-NCPPC.
5. Provide a final Forest Conservation Plan and Tree Save Plan for approval by M-NCPPC staff as identified in the memorandum from the M-NCPPC Environmental Planning Unit (Staff Report Attachment page 11).
6. Provide a final landscape, lighting and signage plan for review by M-NCPPC staff.

B. Fenton Street Realignment & Access to Pedestrian/Bike Bridge

7. Coordinate with M-NCPPC staff as final revisions to the street design are made as part of the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) and City of Takoma Park permitting processes.
8. Design any pedestrian crossings of the realigned Fenton Street to discourage jaywalking by creating direct paths to building entrances and locating transit stops appropriately subject to DPW&T approval.

9. Create an entry feature for Jesup Blair Park and the west campus including information about performances at the Cultural Arts Center, as part of the open space and ramp design on Fenton Street.

10. Build the Metropolitan Branch Trail within the full limits of the work for the Fenton Street realignment.

C. Health Sciences Building on Georgia Avenue & King Street (except Park edge)

11. When the College submits their proposed revision to the College Facilities Master Plan to the Planning Board, the College should include public use space and density calculations for the entire College-owned property west of the railroad tracks, included the Health Sciences Building site.

12. Provide an interim green space along Georgia Avenue between King Street and Burlington Avenue. Identify the site through signage as the location for future construction.

13. Coordinate the streetscape design on Georgia Avenue with the Department of Housing and Community Affairs, (DHCA), M-NCPPC, Montgomery County of Public Works and Transportation and the State Highway Administration.

14. Design an attractive pavement pattern for the corners where the brick pavers used on King Street and Jesup Blair Drive transition to the concrete pavers used on Georgia Avenue.

CONDITIONS

Changes to Jesup Blair Park require the approval of the Planning Board; therefore, what follows are *conditions of approval* rather than advisory comments.

D. Park-Related Cultural Arts Center and Bridge (Including Tree Preservation and Historic Preservation)

15. Use the "Preservation Techniques" (Staff Report Attachment page 35) to ensure the survival of the mature trees not authorized for removal. Provide landscape plans for each phase, that include new trees to compensate for trees that are removed.

16. Include a penalty clause in each construction contract, identifying the amount to be paid by the contractor(s) for not following the tree preservation techniques. The penalty should be proportional to the infraction.

17. Ensure for the Cultural Arts Center building envelope and location shown in Staff Report Attachment pages 22-24, that:

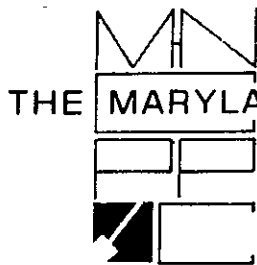
- a. The trees identified in Staff Report Attachment pages 24-26 for preservation are preserved and that the critical root zones of those trees will be affected to no greater extent than shown in a final tree impact analysis accepted by M-NCPPC.
 - b. The character of the building, when designed in Phase 3, is compatible with, and complementary to, Jesup Blair House.
 - c. There are windows from active areas within the building overlooking all parts of the pedestrian and bike routes between the bridge and the proposed Cultural Arts Center entrance to provide “eyes-on-the-park” for the comfort and safety of users.
18. Pedestrian/Bike Bridge and Park Access (Ramp and Stairs): Provide more detailed design:
- a. To minimize the mass of the stair structure in the park, the steps should not be enclosed. If the College determines that a roof is absolutely necessary it should be transparent. Means other than roofing for avoiding costly snow and ice removal should be explored. The steps should be designed to ensure compatibility of the structure with the park setting.
 - b. The wire mesh fence that is required by WMATA/CSX along the ramp adjacent to the railroad tracks should be designed to contribute to the gateway image for both Jesup Blair Park and the Silver Spring CBD. A similar approach should be considered for the ramp from Fenton Street.
 - c. The design of the bridge and ramps and stairway at both ends should be brought to the Planning Board for mandatory referral review at 70% completion. At that time, the following should be addressed: The stairway and ramp design should be compatible with, and complement Jesup Blair House and the park. Their design should inform the overall design of the bridge as well as the ramp and stair tower on Fenton Street. The bridge and gateways to the bridge should have a consistent and recognizable character unifying both sides. The spaces underneath the ramps and stairs should be designed using CPTED¹ principles and security features compatible with the park and campus character.
19. Utility Lines - The location of utilities should be designed to minimize the impact on trees during construction/installation and maintenance of the utilities.
20. Path to Health Sciences Building from the Bridge – show the interim design for the time period after construction of the bridge but before the Cultural Arts Center and final path will be built in Phase 3. The design should minimize tree impact and is subject to M-NCPPC approval.
21. Jesup Blair Drive - Provide a design along the northern edge that “brings the park across the drive” as follows: locate the northern curb 24 feet from the existing southern edge of pavement. Provide a well-landscaped “park” edge along the northern curb with a 10-foot

¹ Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

(minimum) sidewalk beyond it.

22. Operations: Include in a Memorandum of Understanding with M-NCPPC concerning maintenance, security and management of all areas within Jesup Blair Park, the goals and objectives identified in the Memorandum from Montgomery Parks (Staff Report Attachment pages 31-33).

G:ARIFKIN\AttachmentOneLettertoCollegefromPB.doc



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
8787 Georgia Avenue • Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

MCPB
Item # 7
5/31/01

May 23, 2001

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: John A. Carter, Chief, Community-Based Planning Division JAC
FROM: Glenn Kreger, Silver Spring/Takoma Park Team Leader
Margaret Rifkin, Planner Coordinator MKR
Community-Based Planning Division

REVIEW TYPE: Mandatory Referral

PROJECT NAME: Montgomery College, Takoma Park Campus Expansion, Phase I
and Cultural Arts Center Building Envelope¹ and Location

APPLICANT: Montgomery College

CASE NUMBER: 01103-M-1

REVIEW BASIS: Article 28, Chapter 7-112 of the Regional District Act

ZONE: CBD-1, R-60, I-1, I-4

MASTER PLANS: Silver Spring Central Business District Sector Plan
Takoma Park Master Plan
East Silver Spring Master Plan

FILING DATE: March 19, 2001
Amended May 22, 2001

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH COMMENTS. The following comments are based on the revised design plans and text provided by Montgomery College on May 22, 2001.

¹ The *building envelope* is the area inside which the building must fit. The building can be smaller than the *building envelope*, but not larger.

COMMENTS:

A. Overall

1. Coordinate with M-NCPPC in the future on a revised College Facilities Master Plan, to include the former Giant Bakery Site recently acquired by the College. This Plan should be brought to the Planning Board for review before approval by State authorities.
2. Develop a Parking Management Program to improve security for users of the College's parking garage. Consider means for improving access to parking areas as identified in the memorandum from the M-NCPPC Transportation Planning Unit (Attachment page 6).
3. Participate in a coordinated public art program with M-NCPPC, the Public Arts Trust, citizens and others to include creating pedestrian gateways for the campus and park at Jesup Blair Drive/Georgia Avenue and on Fenton Street at the bridge entrance.
4. Participate in the Silver Spring Wayfinding Program and in creating a coordinated signage system for Jesup Blair Park and the College, with M-NCPPC.
5. Provide a final Forest Conservation Plan and Tree Save Plan for approval by M-NCPPC staff as identified in the memorandum from the M-NCPPC Environmental Planning Unit (Attachment page 11).
6. Provide a final landscape, lighting and signage plan for review by M-NCPPC staff.

B. Fenton Street Realignment & Access to Pedestrian/Bike Bridge

7. Coordinate with M-NCPPC staff as final revisions to the street design are made as part of the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) and City of Takoma Park permitting processes.
8. Design any pedestrian crossings of the realigned Fenton Street to discourage jaywalking by creating direct paths to building entrances and locating transit stops appropriately subject to DPW&T approval.
9. Create an entry feature for Jesup Blair Park and the west campus including information about performances at the Cultural Arts Center, as part of the open space and ramp design on Fenton Street.
10. Build the Metropolitan Branch Trail within the full limits of the work for the Fenton Street realignment.

C. Health Sciences Building on Georgia Avenue & King Street (except Park edge)

11. When the College submits their proposed revision to the College Facilities Master Plan to the Planning Board, the College should include public use space and density calculations for the entire College-owned property west of the railroad tracks, included the Health Sciences Building site.
12. Provide an interim green space along Georgia Avenue between King Street and Burlington Avenue. Identify the site through signage as the location for future construction.
13. Coordinate the streetscape design on Georgia Avenue with the Department of Housing and Community Affairs, (DHCA), M-NCPPC, Montgomery County of Public Works and Transportation and the State Highway Administration.
14. Design an attractive pavement pattern for the corners where the brick pavers used on King Street and Jesup Blair Drive transition to the concrete pavers used on Georgia Avenue.

D. Park-Related² Cultural Arts Center and Bridge (Including Tree Preservation and Historic Preservation)

15. Use the "Preservation Techniques" (Attachment page 35) to ensure the survival of the mature trees not authorized for removal. Provide landscape plans for each phase, that include new trees to compensate for trees that are removed.
16. Include a penalty clause in each construction contract, identifying the amount to be paid by the contractor(s) for not following the tree preservation techniques. The penalty should be proportional to the infraction.
17. Ensure for the Cultural Arts Center building envelope and location shown in Attachment pages 22-24, that:
 - a. The trees identified in Attachment pages 24-26 for preservation are preserved and that the critical root zones of those trees will be affected to no greater extent than shown in a final tree impact analysis accepted by M-NCPPC.
 - b. The character of the building, when designed in Phase 3, is compatible with, and complementary to, Jesup Blair House.

² Changes to Jesup Blair Park require the approval of the Planning Board therefore, comments in this section are conditions of approval rather than advisory comments.

- c. There are windows from active areas within the building overlooking all parts of the pedestrian and bike routes between the bridge and the proposed Cultural Arts Center entrance to provide "eyes-on-the-park" for the comfort and safety of users.
18. Pedestrian/Bike Bridge and Park Access (Ramp and Stairs): Provide more detailed design:
 - a. To minimize the mass of the stair structure in the park, the steps should not be enclosed. If the College determines that a roof is absolutely necessary it should be transparent. Means other than roofing for avoiding costly snow and ice removal should be explored. The steps should be designed to ensure compatibility of the structure with the park setting.
 - b. The wire mesh fence that is required by WMATA/CSX along the ramp adjacent to the railroad tracks should be designed to contribute to the gateway image for both Jesup Blair Park and the Silver Spring CBD. A similar approach should be considered for the ramp from Fenton Street.
 - c. The design of the bridge and ramps and stairway at both ends should be brought to the Planning Board for mandatory referral review at 70% completion. At that time, the following should be addressed: The stairway and ramp design should be compatible with, and complement Jesup Blair House and the park. Their design should inform the overall design of the bridge as well as the ramp and stair tower on Fenton Street. The bridge and gateways to the bridge should have a consistent and recognizable character unifying both sides. The spaces underneath the ramps and stairs should be designed using CPTED³ principles and security features compatible with the park and campus character.
19. Utility Lines - The location of utilities should be designed to minimize the impact on trees during construction/installation and maintenance of the utilities.
20. Path to Health Sciences Building from the Bridge – show the interim design for the time period after construction of the bridge but before the Cultural Arts Center and final path will be built in Phase 3. The design should minimize tree impact and is subject to M-NCPPC approval.
21. Jesup Blair Drive - Provide a design along the northern edge that "brings the park across the drive" as follows: locate the northern curb 24 feet from the existing southern edge of pavement. Provide a well-landscaped "park" edge along the northern curb with a 10-foot (minimum) sidewalk beyond it.

³ Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

22. Operations: Include in a Memorandum of Understanding with M-NCPPC concerning maintenance, security and management of all areas within Jesup Blair Park, the goals and objectives identified in the Memorandum from Montgomery Parks (Attachment pages 31-33).

MAJOR ISSUES FOR THE PLANNING BOARD TO ADDRESS

1. *The location and size of the Cultural Arts Center building envelope, and the effect on tree preservation, historic Jesup Blair House and its setting.* Some citizens would like to see the Cultural Arts Center moved to the Giant Bakery Site to save trees and others would like to see it in the Park to activate the Park.
2. *Safe Access to the Bridge from the Park: the size and location of the ramp and stairs.* Some citizens as well as members of the Historic Preservation Commission have expressed concern about the visual impact and the effect on tree preservation.

EXISTING CONDITIONS: NEIGHBORHOOD AND SITE

The neighborhood along Georgia Avenue is in need of revitalization and extends into the District of Columbia. This is an area where safety is a concern for many citizens. The existing land uses are commercial and residential. On the site proposed for the Health Sciences Building, the uses include a veterinary clinic, motel, restaurant and car rental. The site is next to the abandoned Giant Bakery recently purchased by the College. Other nearby uses along Georgia Avenue include a motel, 7-11 and variety of shops facing the park across Georgia Avenue.

The Cultural Arts Center is proposed for Jesup Blair Park which includes the historic Jesup Blair House. This house is currently used as a multi-family residence by the Housing Opportunities Commission. The proposed Cultural Arts Center site currently includes an existing asphalt parking lot as well as several small groves of mature trees set within a lawn. Next to the site is a railroad track carrying freight and passenger trains and Metrorail. Next to the site to the north is the abandoned Giant Bakery facility with the former loading and service area nearest the park.

The Fenton Street Realignment will occur in a neighborhood that includes, in addition to the College, residential uses on the east side of the street, and commercial/light industrial uses on the west side. A rental business and several auto-related uses have been purchased by the College and will be removed to make room for the realignment. A self-storage facility sits between the bridge and the College's parking garage further north on Fenton Street.

Existing conditions and existing zoning are shown in the Attachment pages 2-3.

SUMMARY OF PROJECT AND PROCESS

Overall Project

The College expansion in South Silver Spring fulfills several objectives. It allows the cramped Takoma Park campus to expand and meet the educational needs of the community, provides community space, and improves access to health care. It creates a strong presence in South Silver Spring on Georgia Avenue and will contribute to revitalization. It will help to activate Jesup Blair Park and make it a more inviting and safe park for the community.

The College expansion will occur in three phases as shown in the Attachment page 4.

Project Description

Phase 1 - The Health Sciences Building (HSB), Pedestrian/Bike Bridge and Fenton Street Realignment are the main focus of this mandatory referral. The Health Sciences Building on Georgia Avenue includes a Health Clinic run by Holy Cross Hospital where nursing students can train, a Job Resources Center and classrooms. The building is illustrated in the Attachment pages 18-19.

The Pedestrian/Bike Bridge will cross the CSX/WMATA tracks to connect the existing campus, neighborhoods, and future Metropolitan Branch Trail to the new College buildings, Jesup Blair Park, and South Silver Spring. The bridge will be 12 feet wide and connected to both the park and Fenton Street by ramps and steps. There is the potential for the ramp to be connected directly to the CAC.

The Fenton Street realignment brings the street closer to the railroad tracks in order to create a larger site for the new Student Services Center (Phase 2). The Metropolitan Branch Trail is part of the street design. The intersection of New York Avenue will also be realigned and a half block of Chicago Avenue will be removed. The Fenton Street design includes an open space with access to the bridge.

Phase 2 – The Student Services Center will be constructed in Phase 2, with the bridge span over Fenton Street. The concept for this span is part of this mandatory referral review.

Phase 3 - The Cultural Arts Center (CAC) will be constructed in Phase 3. The building envelope establishes the location, height, and footprint limits for the future building and is part of this mandatory referral review. The CAC will include a black box theater, an auditorium, some related classrooms and offices, as well as an art exhibit space. See Attachment pages 22-24 and 29-30.

Previous Planning Board Actions

The Planning Board previously reviewed and approved several related plans and projects. Throughout these reviews, the Planning Board supported the College expansion in South Silver Spring, and the general concepts of new buildings along

Georgia Avenue and Fenton Street with a cultural arts center in the park and a pedestrian bridge crossing the tracks.

Most recently, the Planning Board received a briefing by the College (April 2001). The discussion that followed focused on additional options for the location of the CAC to save trees, in light of the College's purchase of the Giant Bakery Site and safety issues related to bridge access via ramp, stair or elevator. This was not an action item and therefore there was no decision by the Planning Board on any aspect of the proposal. The College has modified the project presented in April 2001, in response to comments from the Planning Board.

Future Reviews

Future mandatory referral reviews in coming years, will occur for Phase 2 (the Student Services Center) and Phase 3 (the Cultural Arts Center) of the College expansion. The College is also being asked to provide for Planning Board review of the amendment to Montgomery College's Facilities Master Plan to include the Giant Bakery Site.

At that time, the final design for King Street should be addressed to include two through lanes and two parking/drop/off lanes. That design should also allow for future extension of the street to serve the former Giant Bakery Site.

If the College should decide to relocate the Cultural Arts Center to a site outside the Park, for any reason, the new location should be part of the review of the Facilities Master Plan. In addition:

- The uses and design for the Giant Bakery Site should contribute to activating the Park, particularly along the Park edge.
- A pedestrian and bike connection from the original campus across the tracks to the Park should still be provided.
- A smaller activating use should be considered for the Park for placement within the limits of the existing parking lot in the park.

The College is also being asked at this time, to provide for future Planning Board review at 70% design, of the bridge and the ramp/stair in the Park and at Fenton Street.

The Planning Board will have the opportunity to review and approve the Memorandum of Understanding with the College concerning joint operations for maintenance, security, and management within the Park.

There will also be review by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). The Historic Preservation Commission must approve historic area work permits for any construction within the Park. A Preliminary Consultation for the College and Parks staff with the HPC is scheduled for June 2001.

Community Outreach and Community Concerns

The College has conducted extensive community outreach in recent months. Most recently the College held a meeting on May 22 to show the community the revised designs that are the subject of this staff report. Earlier in the spring, M-NCPCC staff held an open house for the community as well. The written comments from the open house are in the Attachment page 47.

Community concerns have primarily focused on the Park and, for some, preserving more trees; and for others, activating the park. Other concerns have been raised concerning parking management in the neighborhood near Fenton Street and building height of the Student Services Center to be built in Phase 2. As noted, the Student Services Center will be addressed in a future mandatory referral.

PROJECT ANALYSIS-FINDINGS

1. **FINDING: The proposed new College buildings on Georgia Avenue and in the park, the pedestrian/bike bridge, and the realignment of Fenton Street are consistent with the Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan and East Silver Spring and Takoma Park Master Plans. These Plans specifically recommend:**
 - Expanding College buildings along Georgia Avenue and into Jesup Blair Park as well as on Fenton Street. (CBD Sector Plan, page 118 & Takoma Park Master Plan p. 90.)
 - Providing a pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the railroad tracks, connecting the expanded campus, Takoma Park and South Silver Spring and Jesup Blair Park and the Metropolitan Branch Trail.
 - Realigning Fenton Street to accommodate the College expansion and the Metropolitan Branch Trail.

2. **Finding: This project is consistent with the Development Standards for the Zones except as explained below:**

(A detailed analysis of the development standards for the zones is provided in the Attachment pages 20 and 44.)

Setback of CAC (R-60) from the Property Line along the Railroad: The rear yard setback would normally be 20 feet. However, a lesser setback of 0'-5' is acceptable due to the fact that the adjacent use is a railroad line and that the lesser setback provides for better tree preservation in the park.

Density and Public Use Space Calculations: The Health Sciences Building is in the CBD-1 Zone. The College has chosen to use the "standard method of development" that is used for private development projects, as the yardstick for this public project. On the Health Sciences Building lot, the FAR for the building exceeds the standard

method limit of FAR 1: it is FAR 1.73. However, taking all the College-owned properties west of the tracks into consideration the FAR would be within the standard method limit.

With this in mind, when the College submits proposed revisions to the College Facilities Master Plan to the Planning Board for review, the College should provide density calculations and public use space calculations for the entirety of the College-owned property west of the railroad tracks. This would include the Health Sciences Building under review as part of this mandatory referral.

3. Finding: This project, with modifications, is compatible with existing and proposed adjacent uses and structures:

Health Sciences Building - The academic and clinic uses and parking proposed for the Health Sciences Building are compatible with surrounding uses. The College owns two of the adjacent lots and plans to use them for its own programs: a CBD-1 lot across King Street and an I-1 lot to the east, the Giant Bakery site. To the south is Jesup Blair Park which is primarily park use and includes one multi-family residence in the R-60 Zone. Across the street on Georgia Avenue are commercial uses in the CBD-1 Zone (and Ripley South Silver Spring Overlay Zone), including a 7-11 and a recently renovated hotel. The HSB height is 60 feet along Georgia Avenue and steps down to 30 feet along Jesup Blair Drive in the park. It is compatible with the park. The streetscape is being coordinated with DHCA, M-NCPPC, DPW&T, and SHA as appropriate with the nearby streetscape created by DHCA along Georgia Avenue.

Pedestrian/Bike Bridge - While this use is compatible with the park, there are unresolved design issues related to the structures. The stairway and ramp design should be compatible with, and complement Jesup Blair House and the park. Their design should inform the overall design of the bridge as well as the ramp and stair tower on Fenton Street. The bridge and gateways to it should have a consistent and recognizable character unifying both sides.

Due to the need to bring the bridge users down a full two stories to the park, the ramp and steps are structures of significant size. The ramp is approximately 270 feet long and the steps extend over 70 feet. A roof and enclosing transparent panels for the steps are currently proposed to provide protection from rain, snow, and ice. The roof increases the height and mass of the structure. The steps should be redesigned to be an attractive feature within the park, either without a roof and enclosing panels or with just a roof that is transparent and visually "light".

The portion of the ramp that borders the railroad track must be fenced to specific railroad standards to prevent both people and objects from landing on the tracks. The fencing should be incorporated into a design feature that is more appropriate for a park that is also an historic setting. Consideration should be given to camouflaging the fencing with a trellis, or other ornamental features. A similar approach should be considered for the ramp from Fenton Street.

Fenton Street Realignment- The design of Fenton Street is not only compatible but will enhance the neighborhood with the new streetscape.

Cultural Arts Center – The CAC use is highly compatible with the park use and will activate the park in many excellent ways –from the increased pedestrian traffic, to the eyes-on-the park features of the building. The CAC building envelope is carefully positioned to ensure the preservation of most of the mature white oak trees in that corner of the park. The tree preservation results of the recent revisions to the project are: 12 trees removed instead of 22 to 26: 1 post oak, 4 willow oaks, 2 hollies, 3 white pines, 1 cedar and 1 spruce. A total of 22 additional trees are impacted to varying degrees: 7 of them very lightly. An analysis of the tree impacts is in Attachment pages 24-26, and will also be presented at the Planning Board session. In addition, the building envelope is shaped so that the trees appear to have grown around the building.

The compatibility of the actual final building design with the park setting and its visual compatibility with the Jesup Blair House remains a primary concern.

4. **Finding: When the following comments are addressed, the location of the buildings, open space, and circulation will be Adequate, Safe, and Efficient.**

Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation is adequate and efficient. Coordination concerning safety aspects of pedestrian and bike use of the park, particularly after dark, should occur with Parks staff. A bikeway connection should be signed, through the park to Jesup Blair Drive and then to an appropriate signalized crossing of Georgia Avenue to be determined in consultation with M-NCPPC staff.

Parking and access to it are adequate. (See Attachment page 6-11, Memorandum from Transportation Planning Unit.)

Fenton Street: The *concept* of the span over Fenton Street to connect to the Student Services Center is part of this mandatory referral review. The *detailed design* of that span will be addressed in the Phase 2 mandatory referral review when the Student Services Center is submitted.

The bridge connection to the Student Services Center provides a direct link from the second floor of the Student Services Center to the Cultural Arts Center in the Park. However, it is important that the pedestrian crossings of Fenton Street that are at street level are designed to function well as the *primary* crossing for students and the community. In addition, the presence of the bridge over Fenton Street should not deter the College from investing in the pedestrian environment of the street.

On Fenton Street, particular attention should be paid in Phase 2, to ensuring the most direct access from the entrance to the Student Services Center to the crosswalk on Fenton Street that leads to the Parking Garage and to the bridge. The bus stop on the west side of Fenton Street should be located north of the crosswalk to increase the likelihood that transit users will want to use it.

Additional design review is needed in the vicinity of the Fenton Street intersection with New York Avenue to ensure that sidewalks and crosswalks line up and are ADA compatible and that safe egress is provided from the relocated driveway for 805 New York Avenue.

Safety: Providing safety and a welcoming setting for park and campus users has been a major objective of this project. The location of the CAC in the park and the provision of active internal uses overlooking the park contributes greatly to natural surveillance (eyes-on-the-park). The flow of pedestrians across the bridge and through the park also contributes to safety. The location of the ramp nested against the building and the provision of an entrance to the CAC from the ramp creates an active highly visible area which would otherwise have been hidden from most park users and therefore less safe. The Maryland-National Capital Park Police in a May 10, 2001 Memorandum (Attachment page 42) recommend a variety of ways to provide for safety. These recommendations should be reflected in the final design for the CAC and bridge and in the management agreement for the park.

5. Comment: Alternatives and Mitigation Measures

Alternatives and mitigation measures have been considered for the building envelope for the Cultural Arts Center and pedestrian/bike bridge and ramp/stair. The objectives were to reduce the visual impact on the historic resource and save more trees - valued Park resources. A table summarizing the various alternatives and their evaluations is included in the Attachment pages 27-28. An analysis of the tree impact of the most recent revisions to the project are in Attachment pages 24-26. Mitigation measures, which include both preservation strategies and tree replacement, are described in the Memorandum from Montgomery Parks and 'Preservation Techniques' (Attachment pages 31 and 35).

The most controversial alternative is the one for siting the Cultural Arts Center outside of the Park in order to save more trees. This alternative came to life as a result of the College's recent purchase of the former Giant Bakery Site next door to the Park. This was seen by some as an opportunity to move the CAC out of the Park. That alternative presents the following problems:

- The CAC would no longer provide an active presence in the Park nor provide connectivity between the Health Sciences Building and the original Takoma Park campus.
- Not to allow the CAC in the Park would be a change in policy that could negatively affect the College. The Planning Board and HPC have supported the CAC in the Park in the past, and invited the College to pursue this concept to activate the Park and revitalize South Silver Spring. The College has invested significant planning and design funds based on past support. The College Board of Trustees endorsed the concept and funding from the State is based on it. The College purchased the Giant Bakery site to meet other College needs (which will be described at the presentation to the Planning Board on May 31).

It is important that the College be able to move forward with the CAC in the Park if it wishes to do so.

However, this is clearly a sensitive site with challenges, and the College will need to continue to work closely in the future with the Planning Board and HPC on mitigating the impacts and ensuring compatibility of design. The detailed bridge/ramp and stair design are still in flux and the detailed building design for the CAC will not be available for review until Phase 3. (At this time the review addresses the building envelope only. The Historic Preservation Commission will also review the detailed designs as part of the Historic Area Work Permit review.)

6. Finding: Transportation

The Local Area Transportation Review reveals that the College is not expected to have an adverse impact on the local roadway network (see attached Transportation Division Memo, Attachment page 6). The Policy Area review has identified that there is sufficient remaining job capacity in both policy areas affected by the College expansion.

The parking proposed as part of the Phase 1 submission is adequate to accommodate forecast demand for the expansion. However, consideration should be given to a variety of ways to improve access between the campus and on-site and off-site parking areas such as those identified in the attached Transportation Division memo.

The expansion has the potential to increase community concerns about illegal parking in the adjacent residential communities – particularly in East Silver Spring near Fenton Street. Additional security, education and enforcement programs should be developed to address this operational concern.

7. Comment: Operations

The College and M-NCPPC have agreed to create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to address maintenance, security and management as they relate to the College's Cultural Arts Center in the park and related events. The list of goals to be addressed in the MOU are included in the Memorandum from Montgomery Parks (Attachment page 31). That Memo includes comments and suggestions from the Park Police which should also be conveyed to the College.

8. Comment: Public Art

Public art should have an important place in both the park and campus gateways and civic spaces. With this in mind, the College should continue to participate in a coordinated public art program with the M-NCPPC, the Public Arts Trust, citizens, and

others. This includes working to create a pedestrian gateway for the park and campus at Jesup Blair Drive and on Fenton Street at the bridge entrance. A coordinated design vocabulary incorporating art should be used for both signage and entry areas for the campus and park. This should be developed by M-NCPPC and the College working together. The College is already discussing the incorporation of art into the bridge and ramps. This has the potential to make the bridge more inviting and pleasant to use. The use of art as part of the ramp fence required along the railroad track has already been recommended.

9. Comment: Historic Preservation Review Process and Issues

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) will review projects within Jesup Blair Park. They must approve an Historic Area Work Permit for each project before clearing and construction can begin. In preparation, the HPC conducts Preliminary Consultations with applicants. The second of these is scheduled for June 2001, and will address the bridge, ramp and stairs, the Cultural Arts Center building envelope, and Jesup Blair Drive.

Issues that are likely to be addressed as part of the HPC review will focus on how the new structures will relate to the historic site itself and the house. They will probably include:

- The height of the Cultural Arts Center with particular attention to the wing that is nearest Jesup Blair House and its distance from the house.
- The height and length of the ramp and stairs and any roof coverings - and their locations relative to the house.
- The design treatment of the wire mesh fence along the side of the ramp next to the railroad tracks.
- The quality of the design of each structure, including the details, to result in new structures that "look as if they were meant to be there."

A memorandum from the Historic Preservation Unit of the Countywide Planning Division⁴ (Attachment page 45) identifies these and additional issues.

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⁴ This Unit also serves as staff to the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC).

ATTACHMENTS

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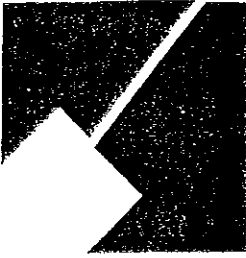
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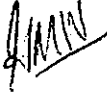
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September 10, 2001

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Gwen Marcus Wright, Historic Preservation Coordinator 

FROM: Perry Kephart Kapsch, Historic Preservation Planner 

RE: Montgomery College Takoma Park Expansion, 70% Bridge Design Submission dated August 17, 2001.

The following are comments on the 70% Design Submission, "Montgomery College Takoma Park Campus Pedestrian Bridge," dated August 17, 2001 with regard to the proposed placement of a pedestrian bridge and ramp at the individually designated *Master Plan Site #36/6, Jesup Blair House*. The house was constructed in 1850 by Francis Preston Blair for the use of his son's (James') family. James' daughter, Violet Blair Janin enjoyed the use of the estate throughout her life, and in her will left the house and grounds to be used as a public park, with particular emphasis given to the preservation and replacement of the trees in the park.

The historic preservation staff commends Montgomery College for developing a modern design for the bridge/ramp that is compatible with the Victorian Greek Revival design of the historic structure and with the historic wooded setting in which the bridge/ramp is being installed.

- The architectonic design is a starkly modern industrial design that acknowledges the bridge's function, which is to span railroad tracks.
- When the historic house was constructed, its spare Greek Revival Style combined with an elaborate front door treatment was considered forward-thinking. The simplicity of design of the current bridge/ramp project, to which have been added flourishes such as tubular lighting, can be seen as a parallel to the architectural development of the adjacent historic structure.
- The contrast of the 21st century bridge/ramp design with its destination in a lush Victorian wooded park, historically significant for its trees and as the country retreat of a prominent family, is appropriate. The Secretary of the Interior Guidelines note that each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. They go on to warn against creating a false sense of

historical development, and that new construction should be differentiated from the old.

- At the same time as there is a marked contrast between the old and new structures, the bridge/ramp design has been carefully integrated into the Victorian setting by design and materials choices such as the use of a truss span (rather than a suspension, arched or other bridge design), as well as the use of metalwork screens and metal structural cables, verdigris finishes, and concrete underpinnings. These details allude to the painted metal bridges often used to traverse railroad tracks in the 19th century. Reference to the Victorian railroads is appropriate as the railroads were flourishing in 1850 when the Jesup Blair house was under construction.
- The concrete foundation piers appear to have been sited to minimize the negative impact on the wooded park setting. The current plan indicates that a 13" willow oak, 9" pine, 11" pine, and 4" holly will be removed. The designer is encouraged to investigate further whether the loss of the willow oak could be avoided. One of the Secretary of the Interior Guidelines states, "New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner, that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired."
- Installation of new pathways and the use of asphalt paving on paths and at the base of the stairs and ramp should be minimized as the paving is out of keeping with the age of the house and the impermeable surface is detrimental to the health of the natural resources in the park.
- The height of the bridge/ramp is mitigated by the placement of its highest components at the rear of the historic site, as far as possible away from the Jesup Blair House.
- The use of a variegated green patina to resemble oxidized copper should help to diminish the scale of the bridge/ramp relative to the 2-story historic building.
- Lighting for the bridge, ramp and walks will impact the night setting of the park, but for that reason has been installed as an interesting design feature – and to encourage use of the bridge/ramp after dark – as well as for safety.

Besides serving as a connector between the existing Montgomery College campus and the new college buildings along Georgia Avenue, the bridge/ramp also provides access to the Jesup Blair Park from the Takoma Park Historic District. It serves as a replacement for the Juniper Street Bridge, an important link between the two neighborhoods that was demolished.

Jesup Blair Park is owned by M-NCPPC and administered by the Montgomery County Parks Department. As has been the long-standing practice for Park-owned historic sites, changes to Jesup Blair House and its 14.46 acres environmental setting (Jesup Blair Park), including new construction, must be reviewed by the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission under Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code. Projects using state funds also require Section 106 review by the Maryland Historical Trust.



MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK POLICE
MONTGOMERY COUNTY DIVISION



September 5, 2001

TO: Margaret Rifkin, Planning Coordinator / Urban Designer
Community Based Planning Division

FROM: Cpl. C. Winter
Cpl. D. Smith

REF: Jessup Blair Park / Montgomery College Bridge 70% Review Comments

The following comments are a follow-up of the discussion or status report from the August 10th, 2001 meeting:

Lighting

The lighting levels on bridge, stairs, ramps and approach area should be 1.5-4 foot candles for easier transition. Need a comparison of the surrounding lighting

Security Cameras

Need camera at top of stairs directed to outside of roll up door to observe the landing to detect if individuals are utilizing the area after the bridge closing.

Fire Protection Requirements

Locations of fire extinguishers and fire alarms on structure?

Bridge Stairs/Ramp Understructure Security

Landscaping that will deter individuals from "camping out" such as prickly plantings.

cc: Lt. Sheldon