
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Landmark/District:	Main Pumping Station	<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	125 O Street, SE (1331 2nd Street, SE)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	January 26, 2012	<input type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	12-162	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Andrew Lewis	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conceptual Design

The District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority (DC Water) proposes to construct two new structures on the north side of the Main Pumping Station that will house infrastructure to will help control sewer overflows into the District’s waterways. The structures are required as part of the larger DC Clean Rivers/Combined Sewer Overflow Projects which also involve the construction of a new, multi-million dollar tunnel that will divert captured overflows to the Blue Plains Water Treatment Plant in Southeast DC.

Main Pumping Station

Constructed between 1904 and 1907, the Main Pumping Station is a striking 2-1/2-story brick building designed in a robust Beaux Arts manner reflecting late Renaissance Revival-style features. It is constructed of steel and concrete and is faced with a brownish-red pressed brick with extensive Classically-derived stone decorative elements. The Main Pumping Station is also an excellent example of a high-style public works project that is a direct manifestation of the City Beautiful Movement. Based upon these and other characteristics, this staff report assumes that the Historic Preservation Review Board will designate the Main Pumping Station a DC landmark prior to voting on the merits of this particular case.

Proposed New Construction

The proposed project is significantly limited by a number of design constraints. The new structures, known as the Shaft Structure and the Tide Gate Structure, are critical elements of the DC Clear Rivers/ Combined Sewer Overflow Projects and cannot be omitted from the approved plans or relocated to another site. At the same time, the potential locations for the new structures are substantially limited by the existing infrastructure to which they must connect. The minimum dimensions for the new structures must also directly relate to the functions the new facilities are designed to serve.

The earliest design concepts for the Shaft and Tide Gate Structures were based primarily upon program and engineering requirements. Although attempts were made to relate the new construction to the Main Pumping Station through the use of a similar architectural vocabulary (e.g. bricks, quoins etc.) and the development of a “contemporary” alternative, the earliest designs significantly blocked views to the historic Pumping Station from the north and were either too “high style” or overly contrasting to be compatible.

Evaluation

After consulting with DC HPO, CFA and NCPC, DC Water and the project architects and engineers redesigned the internal configuration of the new facilities so that the originally proposed 22' of separation between the two structures was widened to 40'. The dimensions of the Shaft Structure were also lowered from 16' x 57' to 12' x 50' and the Tide Gate Structure was reduced in size from 11' x 35' to 8' x 35'. As a result, views to the Main Pumping Station were noticeably improved by exposing more of the historic building's façade.

Other improvements include electing to face the new structures with relatively simple brick walls that incorporate enough decorative brickwork to be of some interest, but not so much that they compete with the decorative façade of the Main Pumping Station. An open iron fence without brick piers was also selected to reduce the visual impact of the fence and maximize views to the historic building. Overall, staff believes the new structures have been designed to be as compatible as possible with the Main Pumping Station given the significant design constraints.

With regard to archaeology, HPO has been in consultation with DC Water and the relevant Federal agencies concerning the effects of the DC Clean Rivers/Combined Sewer Overflow Projects on potential archaeological resources. In accordance with the executed Memorandum of Agreement, archaeological investigations will occur within the project's limits of disturbance on the north side of the Main Pumping Station. On January 17, 2012, the archaeological firm retained by DC Water submitted a work plan for investigations in this area to the City Archaeologist for review. It is expected the archaeological work will take place in the next few months.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board approve of the conceptual design for the proposed new structures and delegate all remaining design review to the staff.