



June 22, 2026

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE BURDEN OF PROOF

1. Introduction

The Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia (the "Embassy") proposes to renovate the existing Embassy and construct two new Security Screening Facilities and perimeter Security Fence at its existing property at 601 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C., in the MU-2 zone. As described below, this application complies with the requirements of the Foreign Missions Act, 22 USCA § 4306 et seq. (2014), and Chapter 10 of the Zoning Regulations. Accordingly, the Embassy respectfully requests that the Foreign Missions Board of Zoning Adjustment ("FMBZA") not disapprove the proposed expansion of the existing Chancery.

2. Description of Property

The property at 601 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W., is known as Lot 823 in Square 19 (the "Property"). It is bounded by public streets on all four sides: New Hampshire Avenue to the west, 25th Street on the east, F Street on the South and G Street on the north. The Property contains approximately 55,941 square feet of land area and is located in the MU-2 Zone District. It also falls within the boundaries of Shipstead-Luce Act and is thus subject to exterior design review by the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts. The Embassy purchased the Property in 1983 and has used the existing building on the site as its Chancery since that time.

3. Description of Proposed Use

The Embassy proposes to fully renovate its existing Chancery, and replace its existing guard houses located at the 25th Street driveway entrance with two new Security Screening Facility at the same location. Presently, the full screening facilities are inside the Chancery building just inside the main entrance along 25th Street. Visitors arriving to the site are first greeted by security personnel stationed at the guard house and then are directed to the main entrance for full screening. Delaying the security screening until visitors are already inside the building creates safety risks for chancery personnel and visitors alike. The proposal to construct a new screening facility just inside the main driveway entrance will allow the Embassy to detect security risks before they are inside the building. Additionally, a new perimeter fence will be added, and it is also designed to stop intruders prior to reaching the Property.

As shown on the attached drawings, the proposed Business Compound Access Control (BCAC) is a one-story security screening facilities, and includes a security reception area, a check-point and waiting area, and exit point through a one-way circulation. The proposed Mail Compound Access Control (MCAC) is a one-story security screening facilities, and includes a package screening area, and two-stop service elevator to connect to the existing Chancery levels at Ground and Level 1. The CAC exteriors will be clad in a combination of stone panels and metal cladding. The proposal also includes security improvements to the existing entrance/exit gates on 25th Street and a new anti-climb perimeter fence, extent as shown on the drawings. The new anti-climb security fence will consist of steel rails and pickets, powder-coated black, with granite veneer posts spaced approximately ten feet on center. The overall height of fence will be ten feet.

The two new security screening facilities and perimeter fence are vital to the protection of the Embassy, its diplomats and personnel, and visitors to the site. The Embassy has been the subject of several threats in the past, including an attack on one of the diplomats on the chancery grounds. Presently, there is no perimeter fence on the Property. The existing screening facilities, located inside the building, do not reflect the latest advances in security. The security facilities must be updated to address modern-day concerns and address any potential threats at the property line before they reach the interior of the Chancery building.

4. The proposed Chancery is consistent with the Foreign Missions Act and the Zoning Regulations.

The Foreign Missions Act, 22 USCA § 4301 et seq. (the "Act"), and Chapter 10 of the D.C. Zoning Regulations (the "Regulations") govern the location, replacement and expansion of Chanceries. The proposed renovations, security enhancements, and screening facilities in this application are consistent with both the Act and the Regulations. Because the proposal meets the six criteria for approval, as set forth below, the proposal should not be disapproved.

A. The International Obligation of the United States.

The United States has an international obligation to facilitate the provision of adequate and secure facilities for foreign missions in the Nation's Capital. See 22 USCA § 4306(d)(1); D.C. Official Code § 6-1306(d)(1); 11 DCMR § 1001.2. The U.S. Department of State supports the filing of this application. Favorable action by the FMBZA on this application would fulfill the international obligation of the United States.

B. Historic Preservation, as Determined by the FMBZA.

In order to maintain compatibility with historic landmarks and districts, the Act requires substantial compliance with District of Columbia and federal regulations governing historic preservation, with respect to new construction and to demolition of or alteration to historic landmarks. The Property is not deemed as an historic landmark nor is it located in an historic district listed in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites or on the National Register of Historic Places. Consequently, this evaluation criteria does not apply.

C. Adequacy of Off-Street Parking and Public Transportation.

The Embassy anticipates that there will have no measurable impact on the off-street parking needs of the Chancery. Presently, the surface parking lot provide 31 employee parking spaces, which will be reduced by seventeen spaces to install the new security screening facilities. The building also has 19 underground parking spaces, which will be reduced three spaces to install a new fire pump. The site is well served by public transportation. The Property is a seven minute walk from the Blue Metrorail Blue Line, the Orange Metrorail Orange Line and the Silver Metrorail Silver Line at the Foggy Bottom Metrorail Station. There is ample Metrobus service in the area, with the D10 Metrobus line adjacent to the site, and traversing along 16th Street in front of the subject Property, and at least seven additional Metrobus lines within 0.2 miles of the site. Carshare and Bikeshare stations are located within close proximity. There is also a public parking garage located in the Watergate office building located directly across the street from the site. Thus, the loss of seventeen surface and three underground parking spaces will not have limited perceptible effect on the off-street parking needs of the Chancery.

D. The Extent to Which the Area is Capable of Being Adequately Protected, as Determined by the Secretary of State.

The U.S. Department of State, in consultation with the federal agencies responsible for protective services, has an obligation to allow that the proposed Chancery can be adequately protected. The proposed security enhancements will directly support this obligation. This site will also be protected by the Uniformed Division of the Secret Service, which provides federal protection to the Embassy and Chancery properties in the surrounding area.

E. The Municipal Interest, As Determined By The Mayor.

The FMBZA must consider the municipal interest, as determined by the Mayor, in deciding whether to approve an application related to a Chancery use. In this case, the proposed security enhancements are consistent with the municipal interest for the following reasons.

1. Zoning Regulations.

The existing facility's conformity with the Zoning Regulations is consistent with the municipal interest. The Property is located in the MU-2 zone. The MU zones are designed to act as a buffer between adjoining commercial and residential areas, and to allow that new developments are compatible in use, scale, and design with the transitional function of the zone district. 11 DCMR § 500.2. The MU zones preserve and protect areas adjacent to Commercial districts that contain a mix of row houses, apartments, offices, and institutions at medium to high density, including buildings of historic and architectural merit.

11 DCMR § 500.3. The MU District permits chancery use, subject to disapproval by the FMBZA. 11 DCMR § 501.3. Chancery applications are not subject to the variance and special exception requirements set forth in Sections 3103 and 3104 of the Zoning Regulations. 11 DCMR §§ 3134.1-3134.6. Instead, FMBZA's determination on a chancery application "shall be based solely on the criteria of Section 1001" of the Regulations. See I I DCMR § 1002.4. Here, the continued use of the Property as a Chancery with enhanced security facilities is appropriate and is consistent with municipal interest and Regulations.

2. Comprehensive Plan.

The proposed use of the Property as a Chancery cultural center is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The Future Land Use Map designates the Property as Low Density Commercial / High Density Residential. The Low Density Commercial designation is used to define shopping and service areas that are generally low in scale and character, comprised primarily of one- to three-story commercial buildings. Retail, office, and service businesses are the predominant uses. The continued use of the Property as a Chancery with enhanced security features is consistent with the City's vision for the future of the neighborhood as low density commercial.

3. Neighborhood Uses.

The existing chancery use of the Property with enhanced security features is also consistent with the mix of uses in the immediate area. The neighborhood includes a wide

variety of uses, including office, residential, hotel, cultural and institutional uses. The Watergate office, hotel and residential complex is located directly across the street to the west and the Kennedy Center is located to the south. Several other residential and office buildings are located in the West End / Foggy Bottom neighborhood, as well as nearby George Washington University. The continued use of the Property as a chancery continues to be compatible with this variety of uses.

6. The Federal Interest, as Determined by the Secretary.

Approval of this application is in the federal interest. The proposed renovation and security enhancements were submitted to the Department of State, Office of Foreign Missions (OFM) and accepted as presented, subject to compliance with District of Columbia laws and regulations. In addition, a separate approval from the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) is being pursued as the property is in the Shipstead-Luce Act area. The Department of State supports this application, refer to submitted Diplomatic Note from OFM.

Respectfully submitted,



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