

23 December 1997

Re: NEPA Technical Inquiry 0112 - Transition Zones and the NHPA

Dear NEPA Call-In User:

This letter is in response to your June 27, 1997 request for information about transition zones. The term transition zone and your question about a need to designate one comes from a programmatic agreement signed by your region and cooperating agencies. Specifically, you would like to know if there is a regulatory or formal definition of a transition zone for historic properties, and when GSA is required to designate one.

#### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

NEPA Call-In found there is no formal GSA definition of a transition zone. The need for and designation of a transition zone should be determined in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and other interested parties. GSA is required to designate a transition zone if it is determined by GSA and the interested parties that there is a need for one.

#### DETAILED FINDINGS

NEPA Call-In reviewed the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and its implementing regulations found in Title 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 800, "Protection of Historic and Cultural Properties." We found that transition zones are not defined in either of these documents.

We then contacted Mr. David Roccasalva, Director of Historic Resources, American Institute of Architects (AIA), (202) 626-7418. Mr. Roccasalva stated the AIA is not involved in the designation of transition zones, and therefore, does not have a definition of one.

NEPA Call-In contacted a GSA Advisor, Cultural Resource Compliance. The advisor stated there is no formal or regulatory definition for a transition zone. The advisor stated a transition zone is simply a designated area around a historic property or district where guidelines are set for new building construction and alterations of existing buildings. The purpose of the transition zone is to protect the historic resource from incompatible construction alterations. The need for and designation of a transition zone must be determined in consultation with the interested parties to include the SHPO. Therefore, GSA is required to designate a transition zone if the GSA, SHPO and other interested parties deem one necessary.

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Sincerely,

(Original Signed)

NEPA Call-In Researcher