



# Nebraska Avenue Complex Master Plan for the Department of Homeland Security Washington, DC

National Environmental Policy Act and  
Section 106 of the National Preservation Act

Public Scoping Meeting  
November 17, 2009



# Purpose and Need Statement



U.S. General Services Administration, in cooperation with Department of Homeland Security (DHS), is proposing to develop a Master Plan for the NAC Campus at the appropriate security level to house DHS. It is intended that the Master Plan will guide future renovation and development of the campus by establishing design and land-use planning principles for the construction of new buildings, roadways, open green space, utility systems, and other infrastructure needs, while minimizing environmental, economic, and social impacts. The Master Plan's design and planning principles will encourage the preservation and rehabilitation of the NAC's historic landscape and buildings.

The NAC Master Plan is needed to support the goals of the DHS National Capital Region Housing Master Plan which proposes to consolidate 28,000 DHS employees currently housed in 40 locations into 8 locations. The extreme dispersion of DHS components imposes significant inefficiencies in daily operations which can be magnified at the most critical moments when the department must act as an integrated team responding to significant natural disasters or terrorist threats. In order to fulfill DHS' significant space needs, GSA continues to explore various locations for DHS facilities throughout the National Capital Region. The NAC is identified in the DHS NCR Housing Master Plan as a viable site for certain DHS components.

In order to strengthen DHS operational management capabilities, the DHS NCR Housing Master Plan suggests that DHS employees continue to be housed at the NAC – one of the few locations in Washington, DC that can achieve the Interagency Security Committee (ISC) requirements for an ISC Level V secure campus. DHS' NCR-wide consolidation efforts could result in new or additional components to be housed at the NAC; therefore, a Master Plan is needed to guide any anticipated new facility, security, or infrastructure requirements.

Further, a NAC Master Plan is needed to serve as a guide that will provide for functional flexibility in serving programmatic changes related to the evolving mission of DHS. The NAC Master Plan will steer long range campus construction, renovation, and maintenance to serve DHS mission needs. There is a need for a comprehensive plan at the NAC to guide federal investment to maintain, improve or construct new campus facilities, security, and infrastructure.

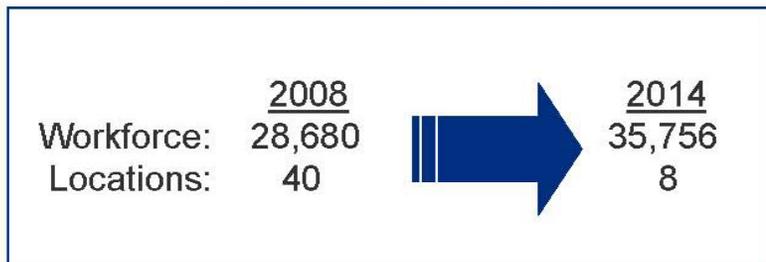


## “ONE DHS” Headquarters Consolidation



Department of Homeland Security | National Capital Region

### Consolidation Plan



### 2014 Final Plan Consolidation Locations

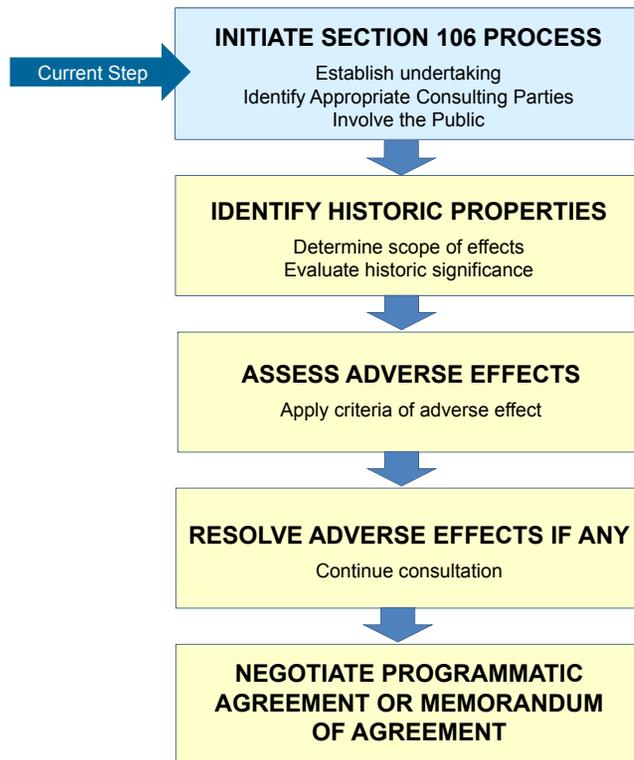
Saint Elizabeths	Nebraska Avenue Complex	Ronald Reagan	Pentagon City
Chinatown	Potomac Center North	Omnibus Prospectus	Growth TBD

# National Historic Preservation Act and NEPA Process



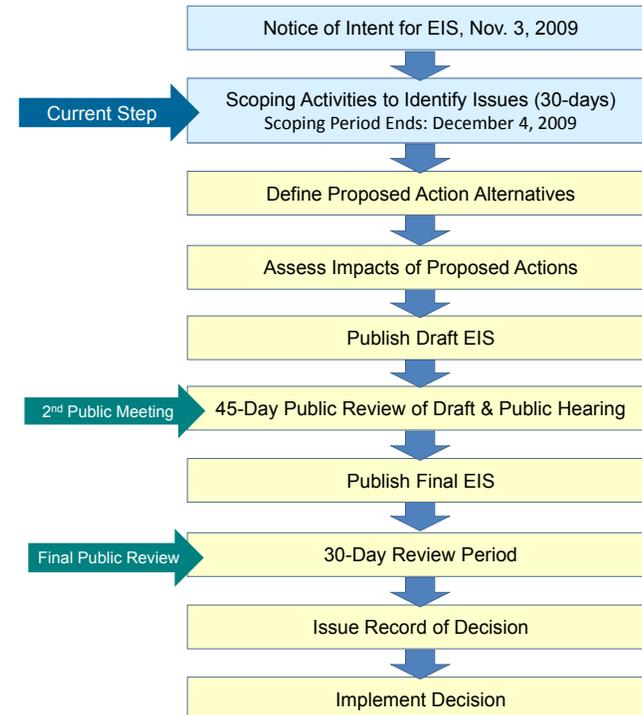
## National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended

Section 106 of this Federal Act stipulates that Federal Agencies must take into account the effect of their undertakings on historic properties (whether listed in or determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places) and provide the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation the opportunity to comment.



## National Environmental Policy Act

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, commonly referred to as NEPA, is landmark environmental legislation. NEPA's stated purpose is to declare "a national policy which will encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment." NEPA provides for consideration of environmental issues in federal agency planning and decision-making. Council on Environmental Quality regulations require Federal agencies to involve the public during the planning process. Throughout the preparation of the EIS, several opportunities will be provided to the public to review and comment on the proposed action.



# Site Overview



## Key Facts about the Nebraska Avenue Complex:

- The Nebraska Avenue Complex is a 37-acre site located at 3801 Nebraska Avenue, NW, Washington, DC.
- On the site are more than 30 buildings containing approximately 650,000 gross square feet plus site support including parking, guard houses, and backup generators.
- The site was home to the Mount Vernon Seminary for Girls from 1916-1942 and was acquired in 1943 to be used as the site of U. S. Naval cryptanalysis during World War II.
- The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) obtained the site for use by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in 2004 as mandated by Congress via Public Law No. 108-268.

## Historic photographs of the Nebraska Avenue Complex:



Historic Photos courtesy of GSA Nebraska Avenue Complex Archives



The map above displays the existing footprints of the buildings on-site.

## Current photographs of selected existing buildings:

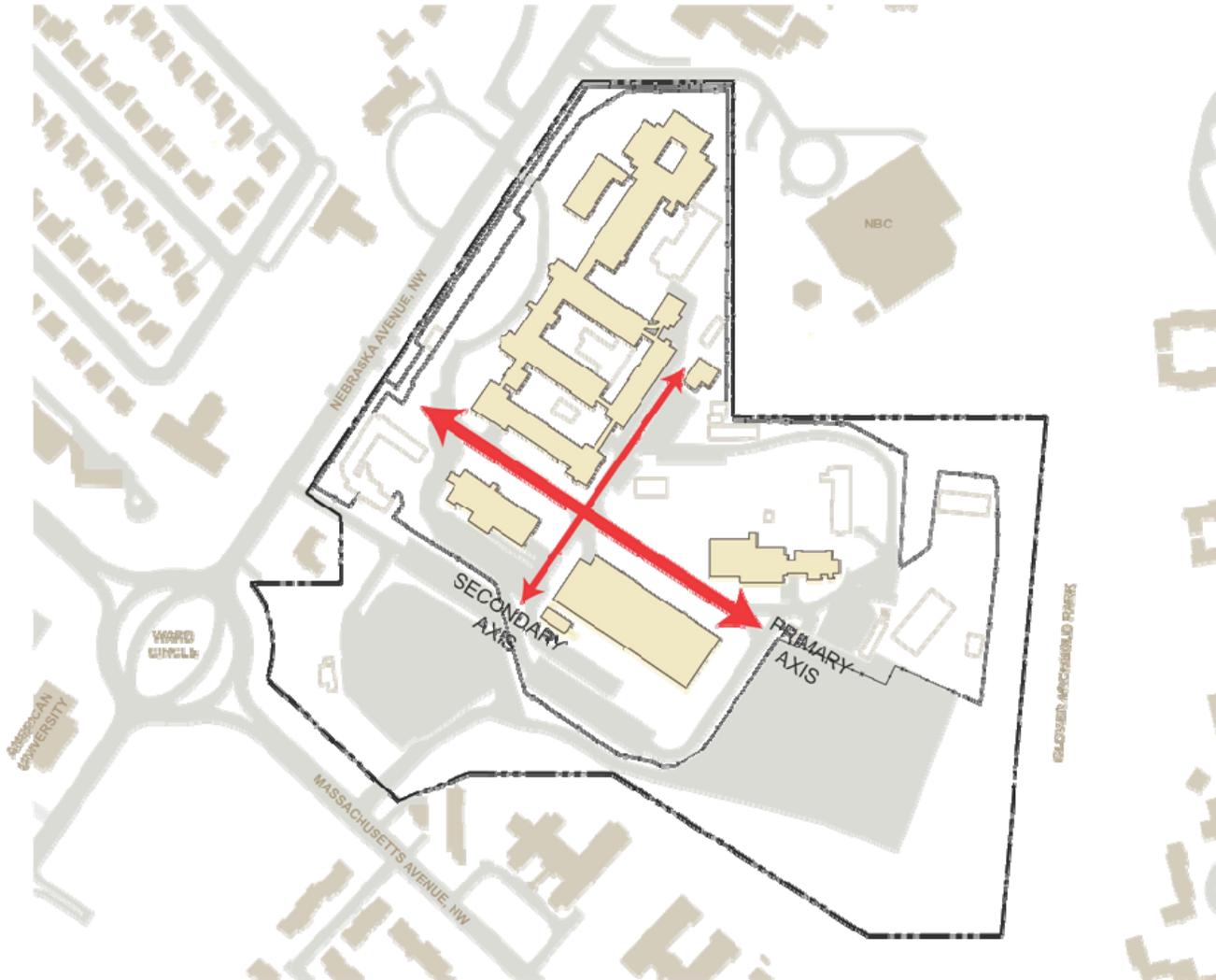
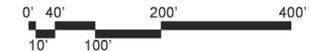


# Preliminary Planning Principle - Campus Layout



Organize the campus buildings and circulation along a primary and secondary axis. The main view and pedestrian corridor should occur along the primary axis while vehicular traffic should use the secondary axis to minimize pedestrian-vehicular conflicts.

## LEGEND

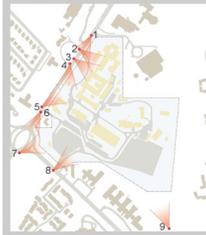


# Existing Visual Resources / Community Assessment



## NEIGHBORHOOD VIEWS

The campus fronts the neighborhood in a variety of different ways that are in accord with the neighboring properties. Along Massachusetts Avenue, the Nebraska Avenue Complex (NAC) is visually screened through heavy landscaping and a topographical change between the street and the site. Along Nebraska Avenue, the buildings are set back from the street and the property line is edged with regular plantings and fences. There is some visibility into the historic portion of the campus from Nebraska Ave.



## SURROUNDING CONTEXT

The buildings on Nebraska Avenue near Ward Circle are set back from the street. The buildings north of Ward Circle have a strong visual presence (Figure 1, 2, 3) while the buildings south of Ward Circle appear more urban and part of American University (Figure 4).



Figure 1: American University - Katzen Arts Center



Figure 2: Temple Baptist Church



Figure 3: American University - Nebraska Hall



Figure 4: Ward Circle



## SURROUNDING CONTEXT

The surrounding residential buildings, located along Massachusetts Avenue, are set back from the street by a landscape and topographical buffer. The taller buildings have views into the NAC. There are a mix of high rise residential buildings (Figure 2 and 3) and townhouses (Figure 1 and 4) in the area.



Figure 1: Townhouses



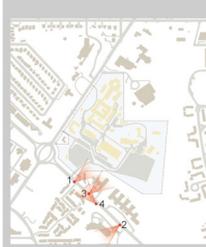
Figure 2: The Foxhall Condominiums



Figure 3: Greenbair Condominiums



Figure 4: Westover Place



## SURROUNDING CONTEXT

The nearby embassy residences (Figure 1) are set back from the street and obscured from view by fencing and landscape elements. NBC (Figure 2), has little frontage along Nebraska Avenue although the radio tower provides visual presence throughout the neighborhood and can be seen from Massachusetts Avenue as well. National Presbyterian School (Figure 3) has a visual presence on Nebraska Avenue and lines the street with a fence and landscaping. National Presbyterian Church (Figure 4) celebrates its street frontage with a large fountain and significant landscaping physically separating the building from the street.



Figure 1: Embassy Residences



Figure 2: NBC



Figure 3: National Presbyterian School



Figure 4: National Presbyterian Church

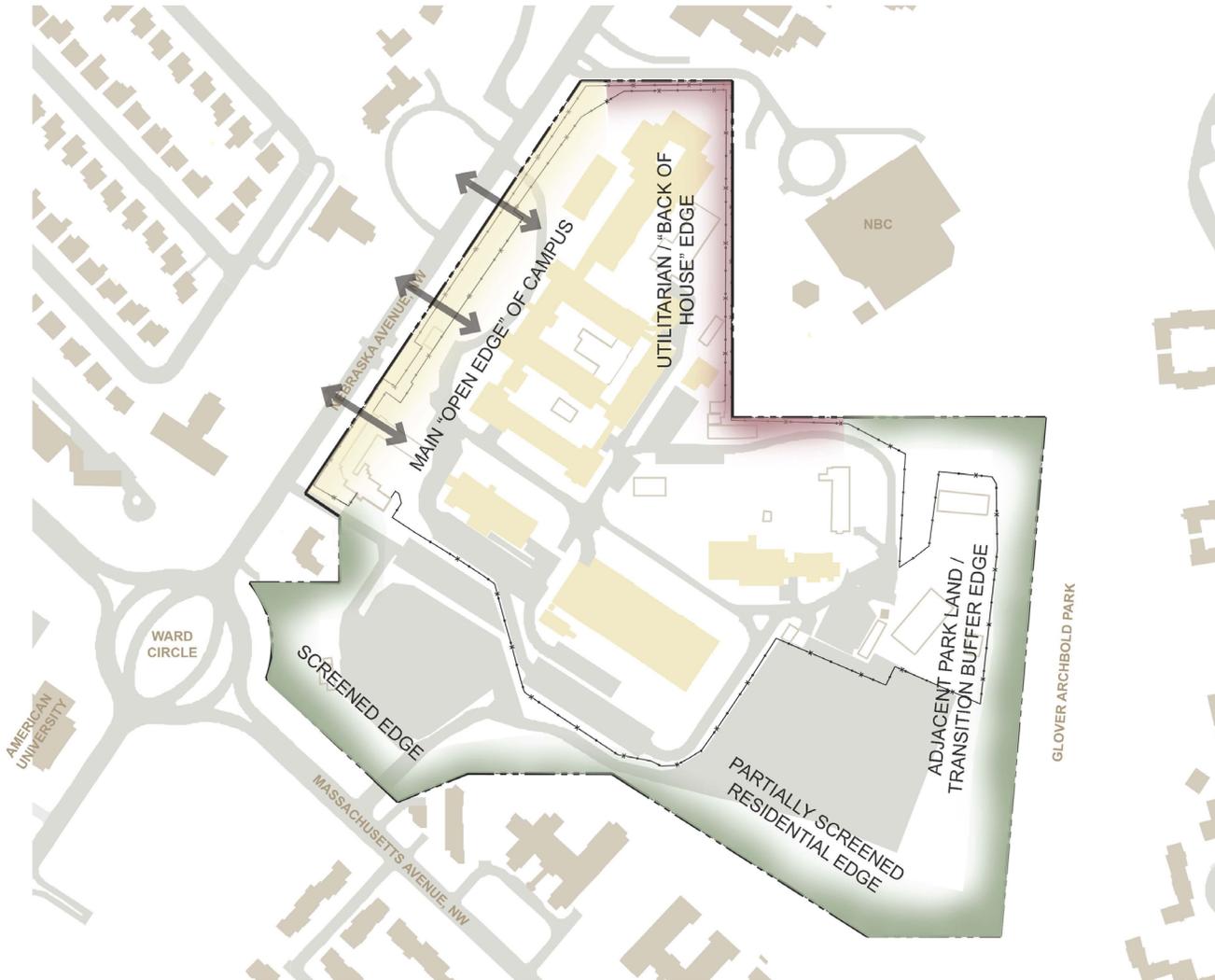


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# Preliminary Planning Principle - Edges



Define the character of the campus perimeter for consistency with adjacent development. The open edge along Nebraska Avenue creates the image for the campus.



## LEGEND

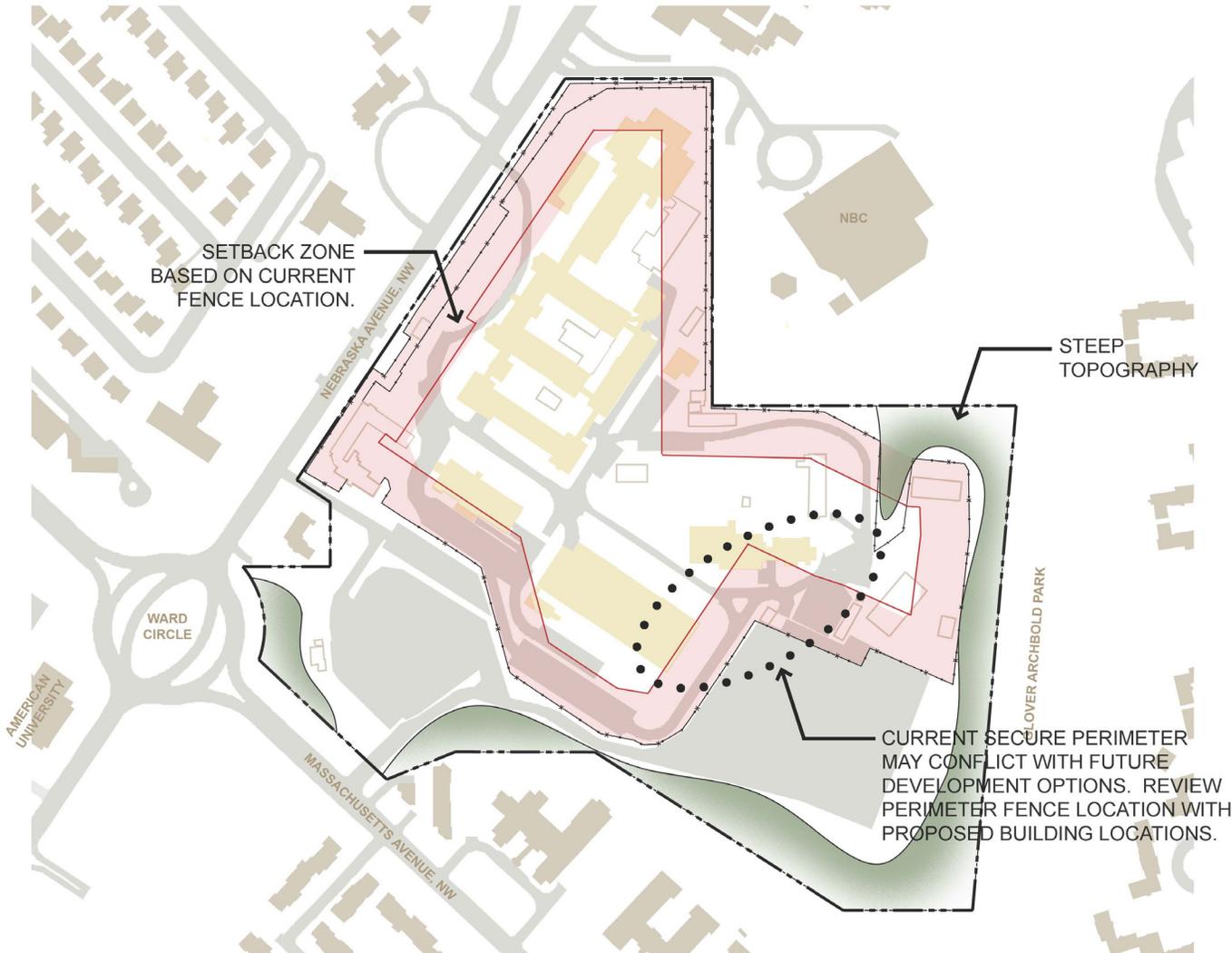
- PROPERTY LINE
- FENCE BOUNDARY



# Preliminary Planning Principle - Security



Provide security to an ISC Level V with a 100' minimum setback from the outer boundary perimeter fence.



## LEGEND

	PROPERTY LINE
	FENCE BOUNDARY



# Historic and Cultural Resources



## The Historic Character of the Nebraska Avenue Complex:

- The 38.6 acres (including Gatesly, Bldg. 8; which is not part of the NAC property) of the Nebraska Avenue Complex is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as an Historic District.
- This historic site includes two periods of significance:
  - 1916 through 1942, when it was developed as the Mount Vernon Seminary for Girls campus
  - 1943 through 1945 when it was used as the site of U. S. Naval cryptanalysis during World War II.
- Seven buildings date from the Mount Vernon Seminary for Girls period, eight date from the cryptanalysis period and eighteen were built between 1946-1997 when the U.S. Naval Security Station operated from the campus.
- Fourteen of the extant buildings (including Gatesly, Bldg. 8) are considered contributing resources; while twenty existing buildings are considered non-contributing.
- The area along the west side of the Chapel (Bldg. 6) has been identified to have potential for yielding archeological information from the Paleo-Indian period.

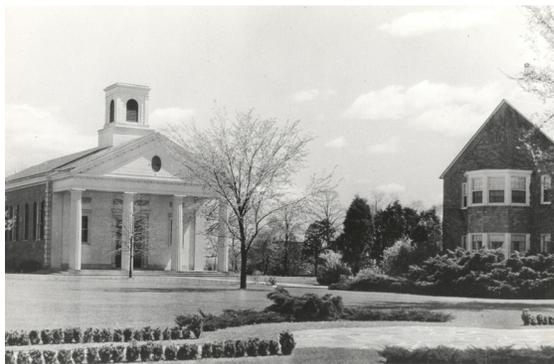
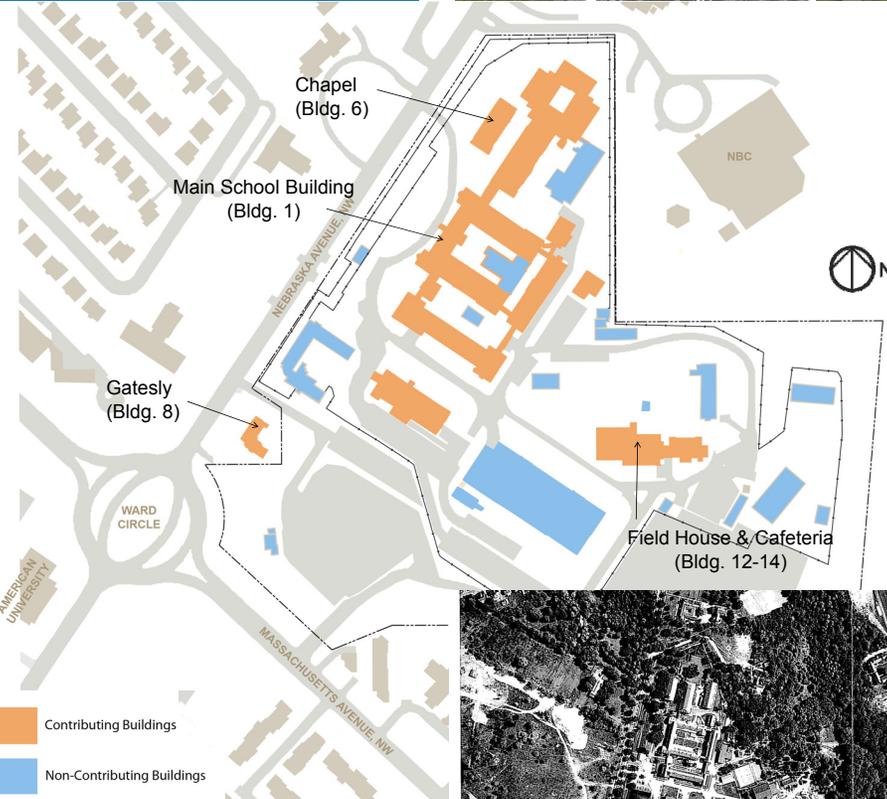


Photo circa 1930s Chapel and Main School Building  
*(courtesy of GSA Nebraska Avenue Complex Archives)*



Photo circa 1930s Main School Building  
*(courtesy of the Mount Vernon Seminary Archives at The George Washington University)*



Aerial Photo 1952  
*(courtesy of the National Archives)*



**Homeland Security**

# Historic and Cultural Resources



Images showing character defining features then and now:



1916 – Main School Building (Building 1) (Left photo circa 1930s, right photo Oct. 2009)



1924 - Chapel (Building 6) lobby & stair to choir loft (Left photo circa 1930s, right photo Oct. 2009)



1942 - aerial view of Ward Circle & NAC before the U.S. Navy acquired property



1946 Office Building (Building 19) employed Georgian Revival Style detailing



Open historic courtyard and cloister walk at rear of Main School Building, now completely closed off



1929 - Cafeteria (Building 14) (Left photo circa 1930s, right photo Oct. 2009)

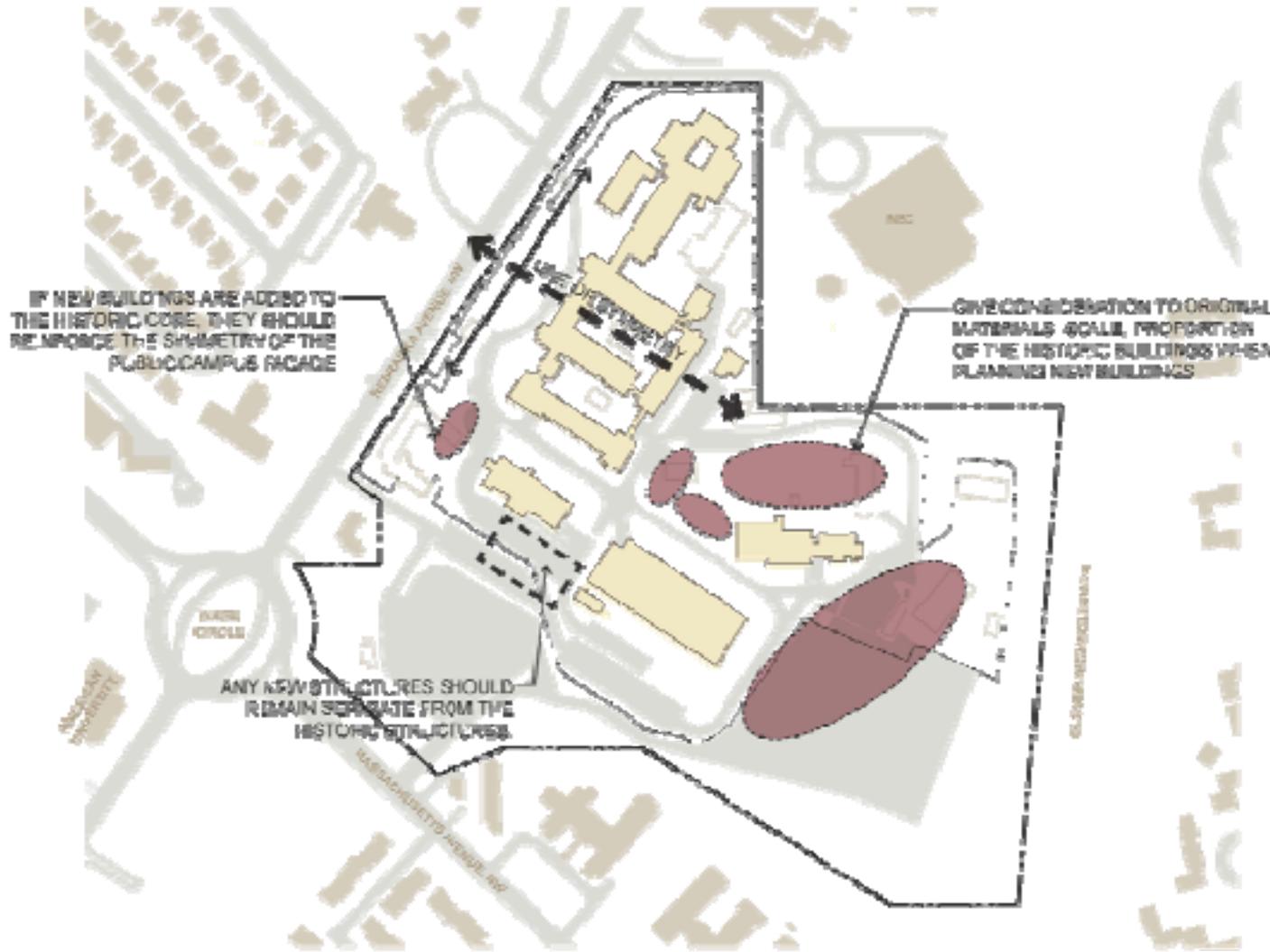


# Preliminary Planning Principle - Historic Character



Rehabilitate and renovate the existing historic resources to the extent possible. In the development of the new facilities on site, consideration should be given to appropriate siting and to the use of materials, scale and proportion which are compatible with the historic built environment.

A Programmatic Agreement or Memorandum of Agreement will be negotiated amongst the identified Federal Agencies and other Consulting Parties (e.g. the District of Columbia SHPO, the Advisory Council on Historic Presentation, and others to be identified) to define a process through which Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, will be complied with during future, on-site undertakings.



# Preliminary Planning Principle - Views

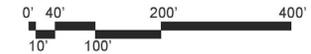


Reinforce and maintain key view corridors around the perimeter of the site and provide a park-like setting to the buildings. Through the Section 106 process, the cultural landscape report will identify historic views that should be maintained or restored.



## LEGEND

- PROPERTY LINE
- FENCE BOUNDARY

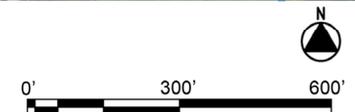
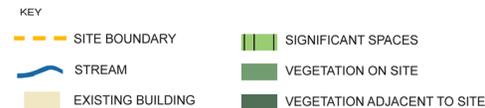


# Existing Natural Features Conditions



## Key natural features on and surrounding the Nebraska Avenue Complex:

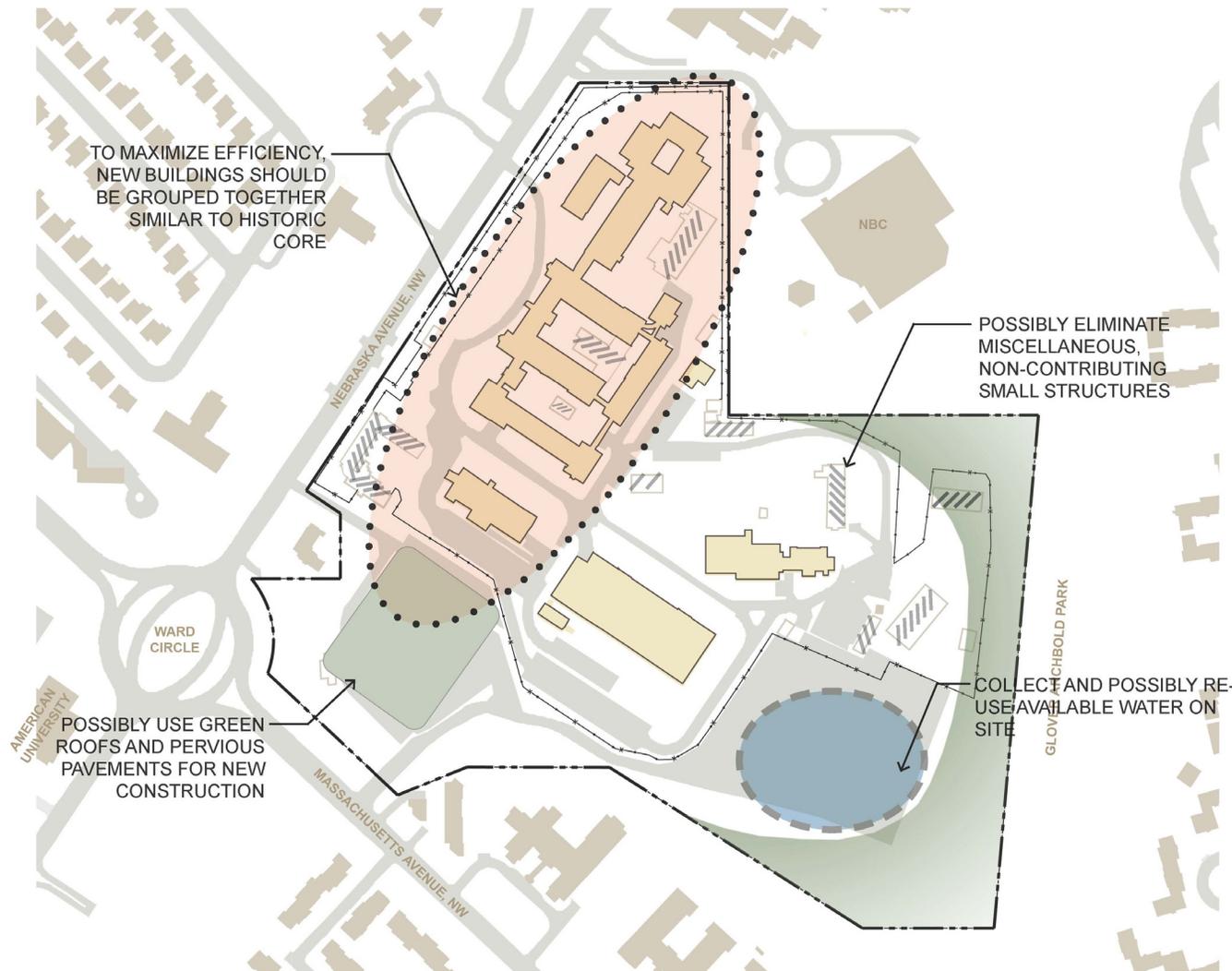
- The south edge of the site has a thin wooded buffer from Massachusetts Avenue, and the east side of the site extends to Glover-Archbold Park, a 183-acre section of Rock Creek Park administered by the National Park Service.
- There are no wetlands or floodplains within the site boundary. A stream, the Foundry Branch, passes through a small portion of the southeast section of the site. Foundry Branch flows south through Glover-Archbold Park, terminating in the Potomac River. The stream's water level ranges from a dry bed to an overflowing stream depending on the amount of precipitation received.
- More than half of the NAC site is developed, leaving 17.9 acres of vegetated area. Most of the vegetation is cultivated landscaping, but some areas of mature vegetation exist at the eastern edge of the site, along the border with Glover-Archbold Park.



# Preliminary Planning Principle - Sustainability



Planning and building design on the site should achieve the highest feasible and reasonable LEED rating using sustainable design principles. The master plan should look to enhance the indoor environmental quality of the spaces, optimize the site potential and minimize non-renewable energy consumption. One potential sustainable design strategy would be to rehabilitate and renovate the existing buildings.



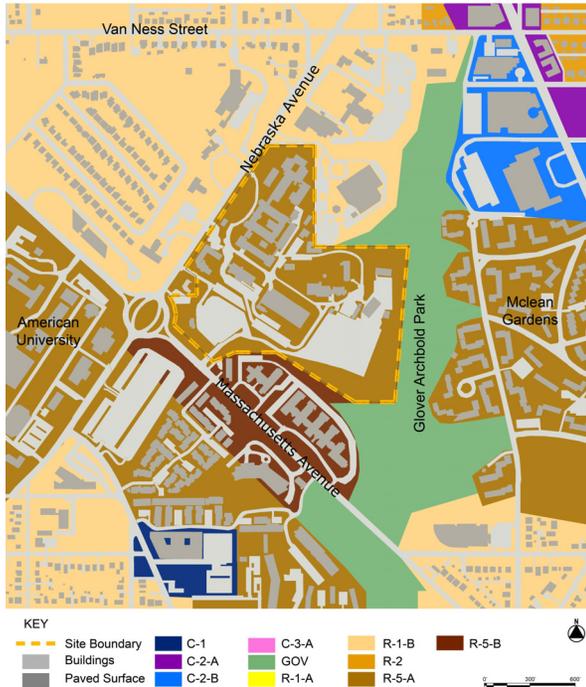
## LEGEND



# Existing Land Use/Zoning Conditions



## Zoning Map of Nebraska Avenue Complex and Surrounding Area



NOTE: While the site is zoned R-5-A, the federal government is exempt from local zoning regulations.

Table of the Descriptions of District of Columbia Zoning Designations

Zoning	Description
C-1	Neighborhood shopping. Permits matter-of-right neighborhood shopping and low density development .
C-2-A	Community business center – low moderate density. Permits matter-of-right low density development, including office, retail, and all kinds of residential uses.
C-2-B	Community business center – medium density. Permits matter-of-right medium density development, including office, retail, housing, and mixed uses .
C-3-A	Medium bulk major business and employment. Permits matter-of-right development for major retail and office uses.
GOV	Major Federal tracts
R-1-A	Single family detached dwellings. Permits matter-of-right development of single-family residential uses for detached dwellings with a minimum lot width of 75 feet, a minimum lot area of 7,500 square feet.
R-1-B	Single family detached dwellings. Permits matter-of-right development of single-family residential uses for detached dwellings with a minimum lot width of 50 feet, a minimum lot area of 5,000 square feet.
R-2	Single family detached dwellings. Permits matter-of-right development of single-family residential uses for detached and semi-detached structures.
R-5-A	Low density apartments. Permits matter-of-right development of single-family residential uses for detached and semi-detached dwellings, and with the approval of the Board of Zoning Adjustment, new residential development of low density residential uses including row houses, flats, and apartments .
R-5-B	Moderate density apartment houses. Permits matter-of-right moderate development of general residential uses, including single-family dwellings, flats, and apartment buildings.

## Existing Land Uses within the Nebraska Avenue Complex



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# Preliminary Planning Principle - Campus Zones

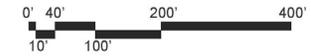


Reinforce existing campus zones with new buildings and landscaping.



## LEGEND

- PROPERTY LINE
- FENCE BOUNDARY



# Preliminary Planning Principle - Campus Environment



*Provide indoor and outdoor, formal and informal meeting, social and recreation spaces that reinforce a sense of campus.*



## LEGEND

-  PROPERTY LINE
-  FENCE BOUNDARY

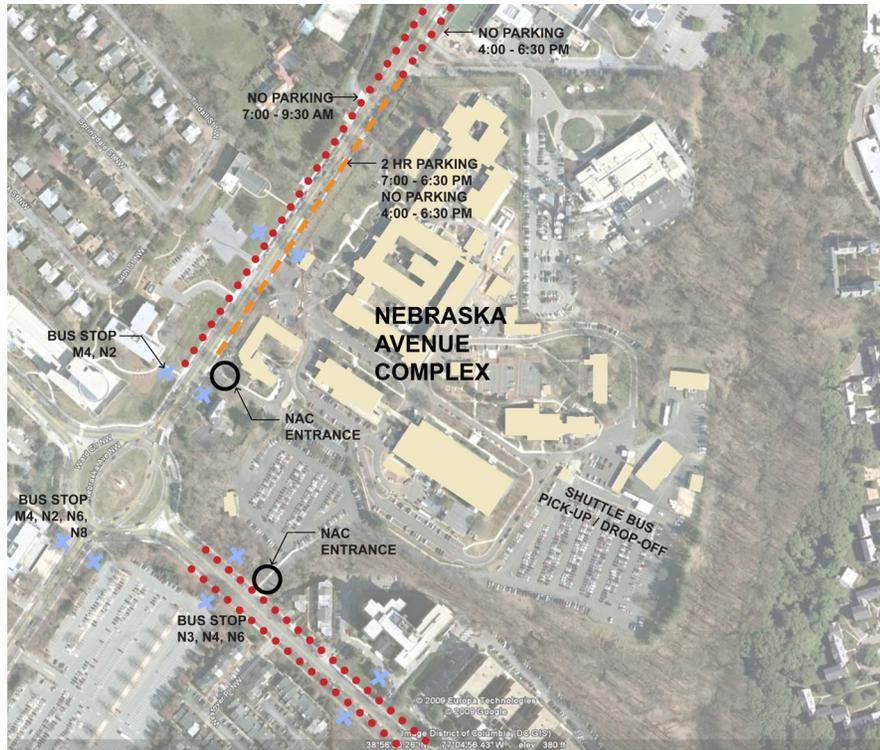


# Existing Transportation Conditions



The existing transportation and parking issues identified at the Nebraska Avenue Complex (NAC) are:

- Two major travel routes to the NAC and two points of access to the site.
- Accessible to transit (bus and Metrorail).
- Opportunity for a walkable, pedestrian friendly campus.
- Limited parking available for employees and visitors.
- Emergency access to public roads is critical.

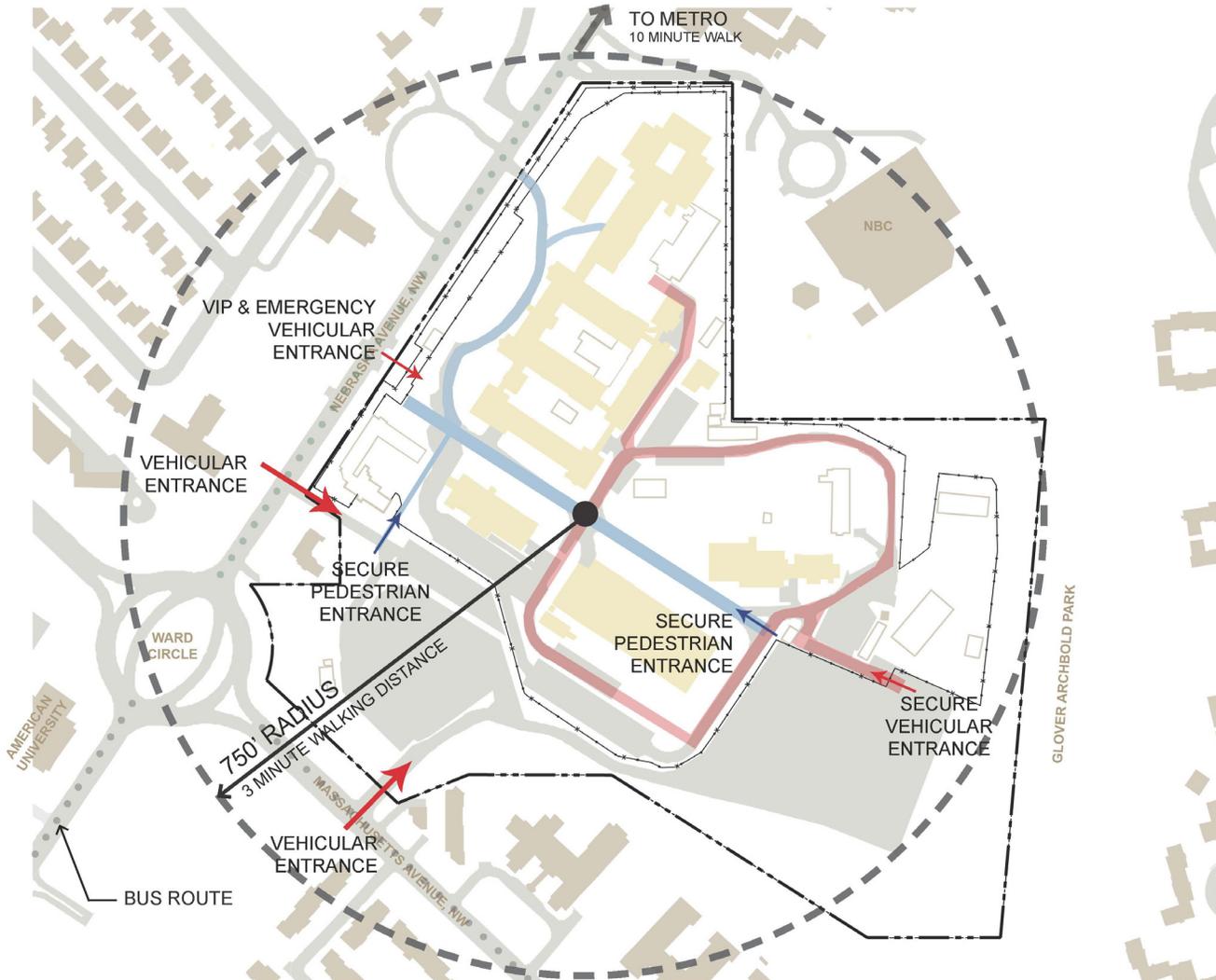


The maps demonstrate that the Nebraska Avenue Complex is accessible to transit. The Tenleytown-AU Metrorail station is located approximately 0.75 miles from the site. In addition, the NAC is served by three Metrobus Routes (Route M4, Route N2,3,4, 6, and Route N8).

# Preliminary Planning Principle - Access and Circulation



Create a pedestrian centered campus which minimizes walking distances and increases connectivity and encourage multimodal travel to the site by utilizing the nearby transit services and connection pedestrian facilities. This plan illustrates the approved security upgrades that are ongoing. It is anticipated that this work will be completed over the next two to three years. The master plan may include recommendations to adjust the location of the internal fence.



## LEGEND

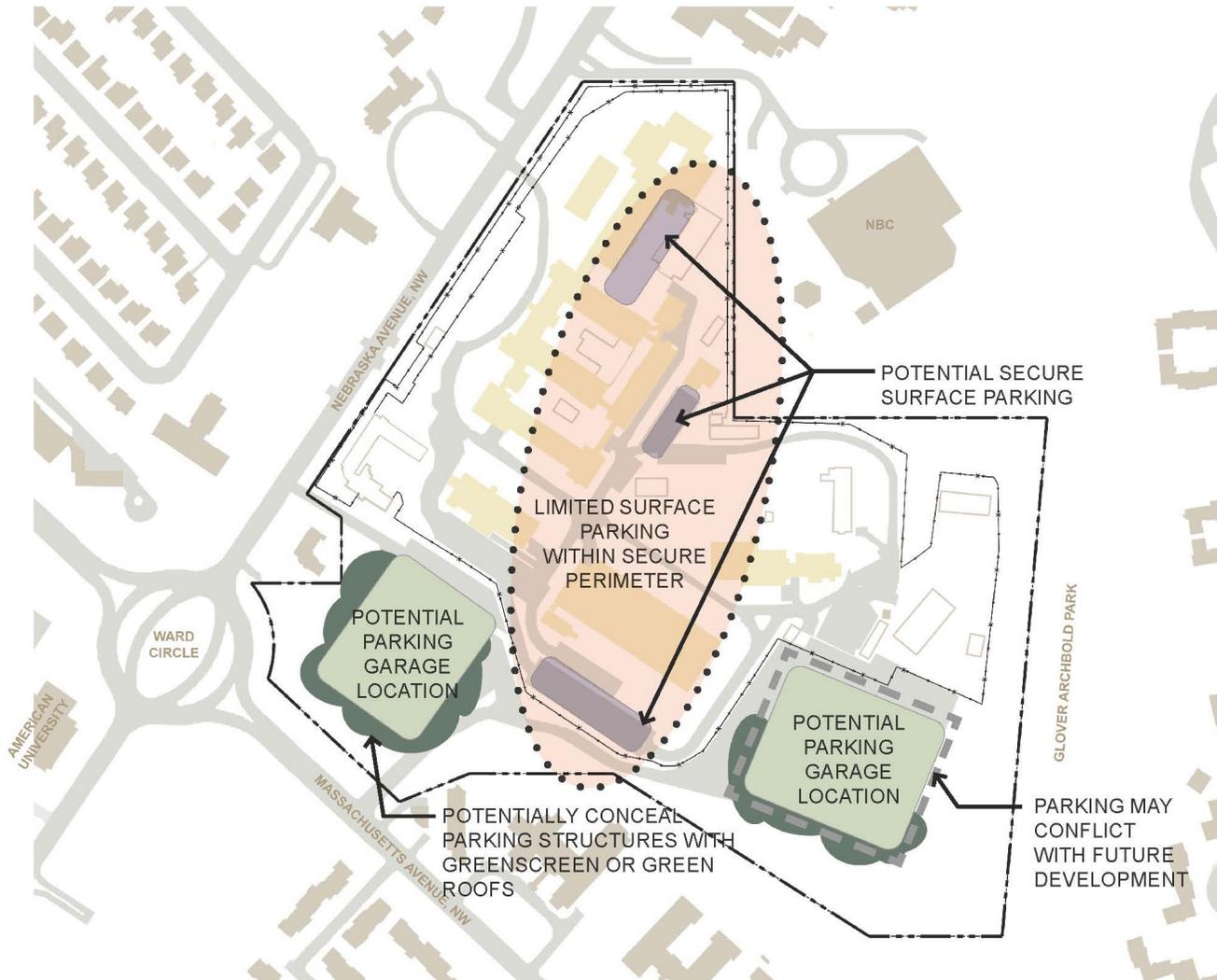
-  PROPERTY LINE
-  FENCE BOUNDARY



# Preliminary Planning Principle - Parking



Consolidate parking in a perimeter location to create a primarily pedestrian campus consistent with the historic precedent. Design the garages to minimize visual impact and incorporate sustainable features such as landscaping.



## LEGEND

-  PROPERTY LINE
-  FENCE BOUNDARY



# Existing Utilities & Stormwater Management

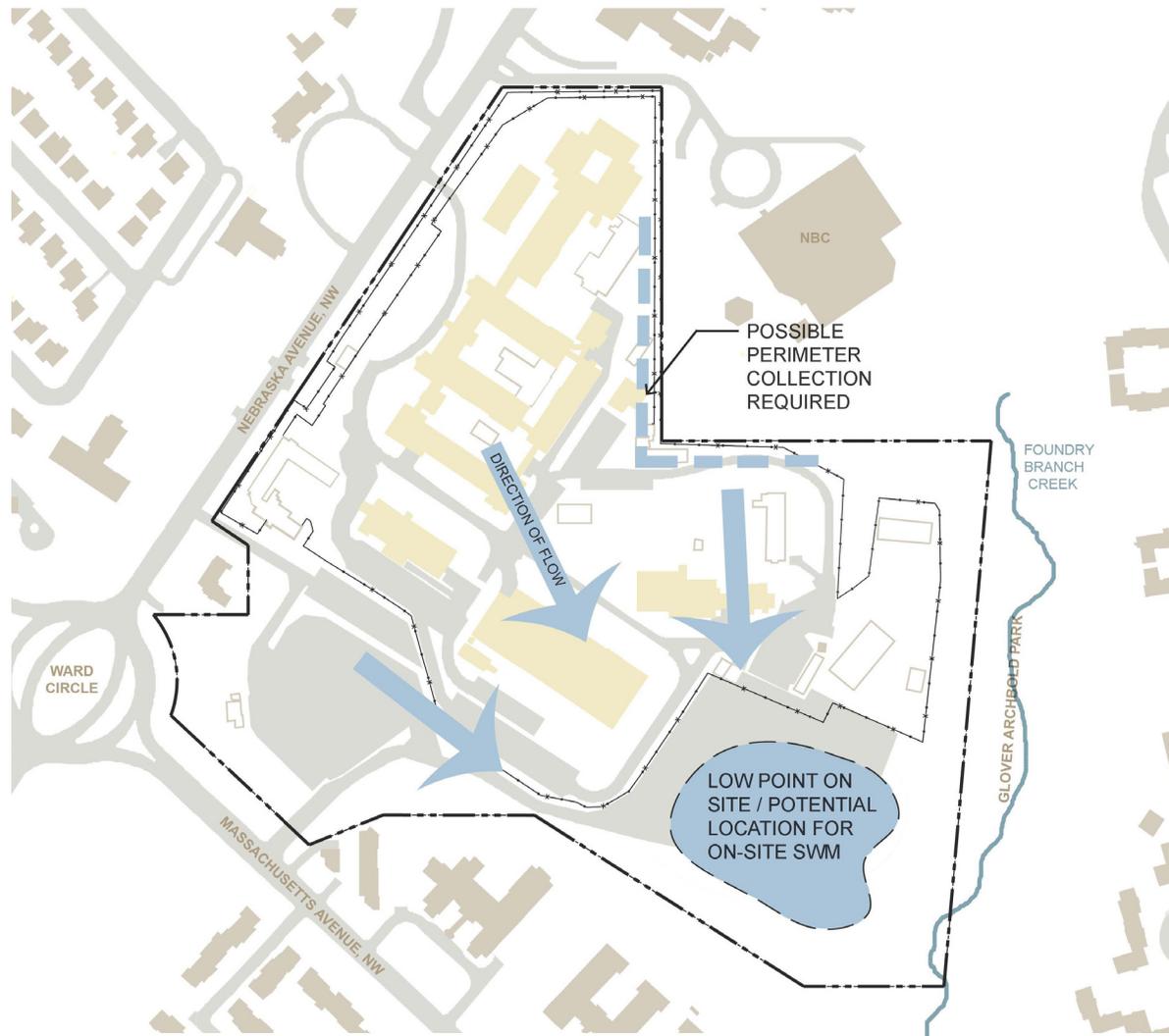


## Key utility and stormwater management considerations for the Nebraska Avenue Complex (NAC):

- Utilities including water, stormwater management, sewage, electricity will require upgrades.
- The timing of utility upgrades needs to be considered in order to avoid excessive construction fatigue by the workforce. Additionally, the phasing of the site infrastructure upgrades will require close project coordination and planning to prevent inefficient rework of site distribution.
- Building level utilities, including power distribution, HVAC, and plumbing services are anticipated to require upgrades both from a physical condition assessment as well as capacity to support new space programs from a capacity and a reliability requirement with the exception of recently renovated buildings.
- Numerous stormwater quantity and quality control mechanisms will be evaluated as part of the master planning process. Furthermore, the stormwater management for the NAC will need to comply with the most current edition of the District of Columbia Stormwater Management Guidebook, as well as meet the sustainability goals of the project.



# Preliminary Planning Principle – Stormwater Management



The stormwater management design for the Nebraska Avenue Complex (NAC) will need to comply with the most current edition of the District of Columbia Stormwater Management Guidebook. Both quantity and quality control measures will be needed and there are several ways to meet these requirements. For example, a wet pond can be used to meet both the quantity and quality requirements for the site. Depending on infiltration rates, gravel beds could be used for the underground detention to accommodate this requirement as well. Pocket bio-retention or organic filters and/or vegetative swales could also be used around the site to help meet the quality requirements. The overall stormwater management strategy will aid in making the campus more sustainable.

## LEGEND

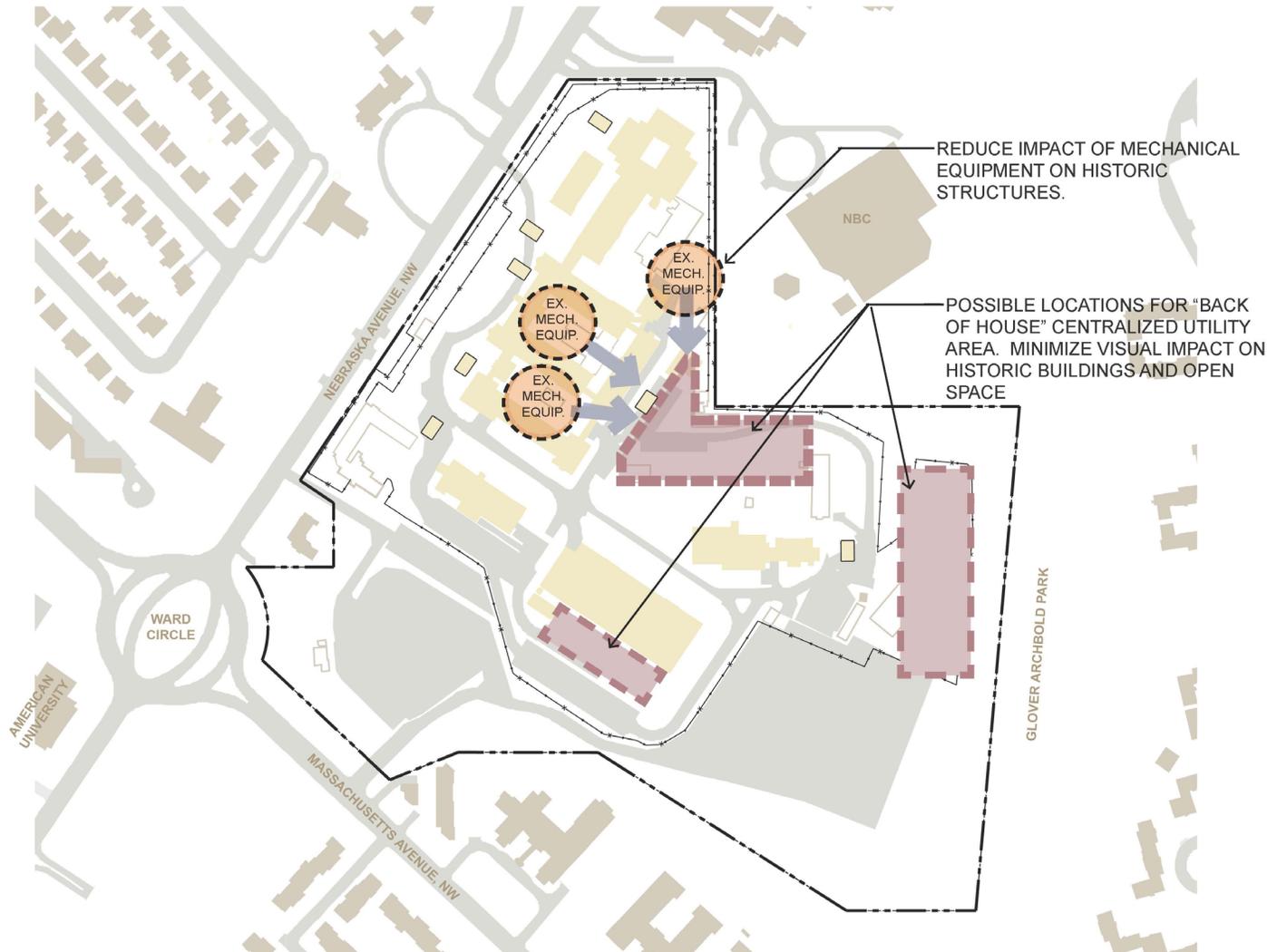
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# Preliminary Planning Principle - Infrastructure & Utilities

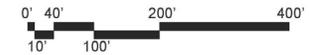


Explore ways to reduce the visual impact of the infrastructure and utilities by consolidating the utilities, mechanical and electrical infrastructure on the site.



## LEGEND

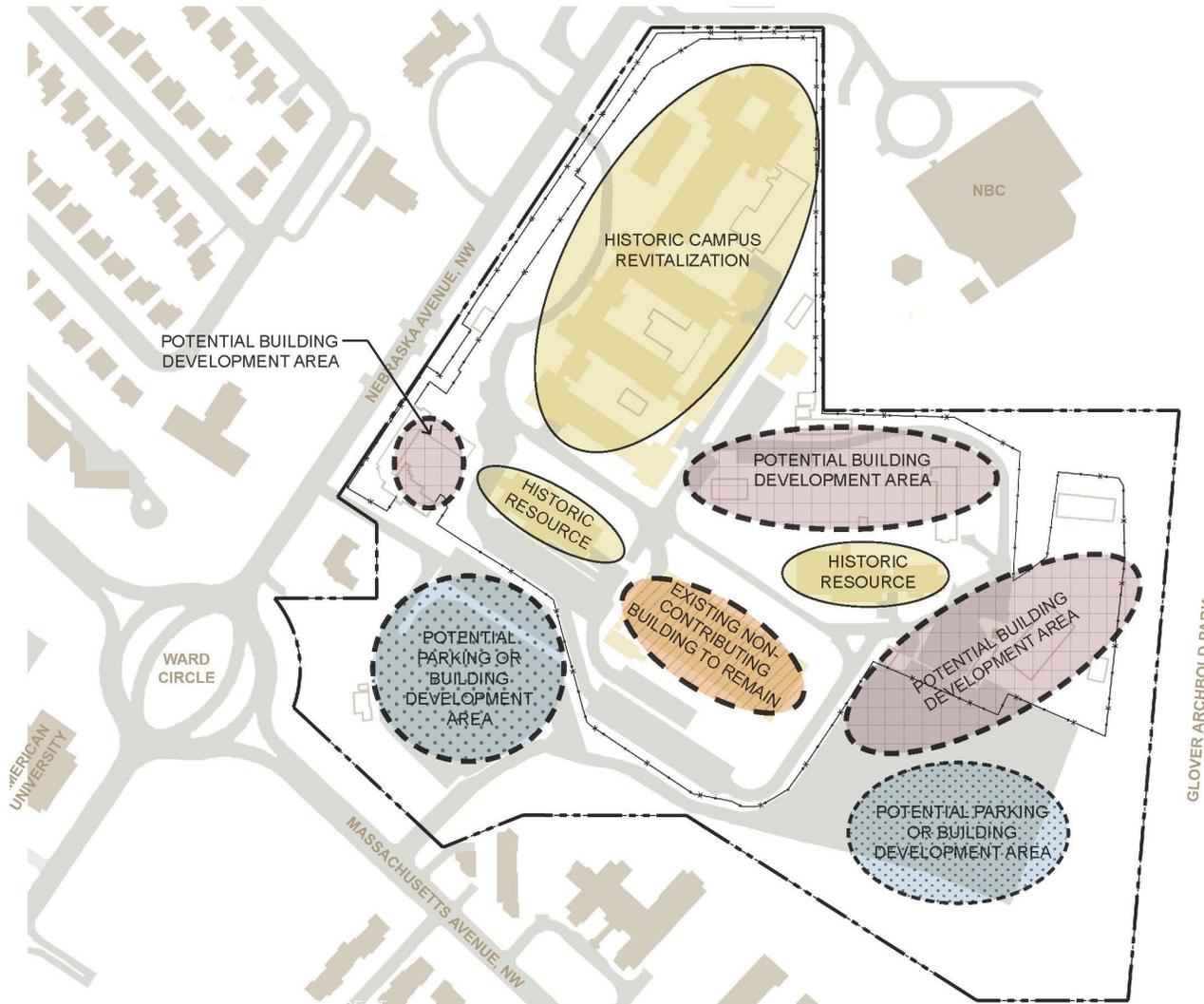
-  PROPERTY LINE
-  FENCE BOUNDARY



# Preliminary Development Concept



A range of development and renovation alternatives, including the no action alternative, will be developed for the NAC Master Plan. As part of the EIS, the impacts of each alternative on the human environment will be evaluated.



## LEGEND

-  EXISTING NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS TO REMAIN
-  HISTORIC RESOURCES & CAMPUS REVITALIZATION
-  POTENTIAL BUILDING DEVELOPMENT AREA
-  POTENTIAL PARKING OR BUILDING DEVELOPMENT AREA
-  PROPERTY LINE
-  FENCE BOUNDARY



