

Armed Forces Retirement Home Categorical Exclusion Checklist

Project Name: Sheridan Building - Exterior Alterations for Assisted Living
Project Location: Sheridan Building (Bldg. 17, Non-contributing) - South Tower

Project Description: *(Describe what you are going to do and relate it to the documented categorical exclusion you are selecting below.)*

AFRH proposes to construct a new glass and steel elevator tower and to expand existing window openings on the Sheridan Building (Building 17). These alterations will accommodate the relocation of Assisted Living residents from the LaGarde Building (Building 56) to the Sheridan Building as part of the Home's ongoing efforts to consolidate operations in the north end of the campus. After the relocation, Assisted Living residents and services will be housed on the second and third floors of the south tower of the Sheridan Building.

Constructed in 1960, the Sheridan Building dates from outside the period of significance of the AFRH-W Historic District (1842-1951) and is identified as a non-contributing resource.

ELEVATOR TOWER

Scope

A new elevator tower at the Sheridan Building will accommodate two elevator shafts to provide access to all floors of the building, including the basement. AFRH has designed the new tower to be outside the existing building footprint because of the difficulty and cost of altering the original reinforced concrete floor structure. Instead, the tower will project from a recessed bay at the southwest corner of the Sheridan Building, adjacent to the south building entrance. The tower will extend approximately 6' above the height of the existing roof parapet and continue a full story below grade to the level of the existing subterranean tunnel between the Sheridan and Scott buildings. The tower will be constructed of a steel frame with a glass curtain wall enclosure, and the elevator cabs will feature transparent glass walls. The curtain wall will have aluminum silicone glazed mullions along the vertical joints and will be fitted with aluminum mullions along the horizontal joints, corresponding to the floor lines of the existing building. The machine room for the elevators will be located below grade and accessed from the basement to minimize the height of the tower. The tower will have a flat roof and flush cornice to be in keeping with the character of the roofline of the existing building.

AFRH will also construct a new entry pavilion at the existing south entrance to the building to be consistent in design and material with the new elevator tower. The new entry pavilion will also be constructed of a glass curtain wall with aluminum mullions. The pavilion's projecting metal roof will be supported by an aluminum-wrapped column at the southwest corner.

Purpose

- Consolidate operations on the north end of campus.
- Reduce travel distances for residents and staff.
- Improve food service.
- Improve efficiency of back-of-house services.
- Accommodate emergency equipment.

Need

- AFRH is consolidating the Home's operations in the north end of the campus to decrease operating costs for the agency. The new elevator tower is part of the relocation of Assisted Living residents and services to the north end, and thus important to the overall consolidation effort.

- AFRH seeks to minimize travel distance for food service and to avoid moving food through common areas. The existing elevators would require dining staff to travel through the central activity spaces and the primary corridors of the Sheridan Building to access Assisted Living residents in the south tower of the building. The new elevators, however, will allow staff to move directly to Assisted Living from the service tunnel between the New Commons Building and the Sheridan Building. This will make food service more efficient and cost effective for AFRH-W.
- Transporting bulk food a shorter distance between the kitchen and Assisted Living floors will contribute to a higher quality of food because appropriate hot and cold temperatures can be maintained during transit.
- The elevators will serve all floors of the Sheridan Building and will thus provide additional convenience and mobility to all residents traveling between the Sheridan Building and the New Commons Building.
- The new elevators will improve safety and comfort for residents and staff by minimizing the travel distance between the new Assisted Living community and the wellness clinic in the New Commons Building.
- Elevators that are used to transport Assisted Living residents on stretchers must allow enough space for additional medical equipment and for larger than typical patients and medics, per building code requirements. The existing elevators in the Sheridan building can accommodate a stretcher on a diagonal only and do not meet this requirement. The new elevators will meet existing code.
- Maximizing the residents' efficient and safe utilization of their living environment, promoting their access to supportive services, and enhancing the quality of food service are all important components of person-centered care, a key focus of the agency's CARF accreditation. Enhancing the residents' ability to safely and more easily move throughout the Sheridan Building will meet the goals for environmental and communications accessibility stated in CARF Quality Standards.

EXPANDED WINDOW OPENINGS

Scope

The exterior of the Sheridan Building will be altered to accommodate the new Assisted Living functions on the interior of the building. The existing masonry panels outside the corner rooms on the second and third floors at the south end of the Sheridan Building will be removed, and four existing punched openings will be expanded to accommodate larger windows.

Purpose

- Consolidate operations on north end of campus.
- Provide natural light and views to new Assisted Living day rooms.

Need

- AFRH is consolidating the Home's operations in the north end of the campus to decrease operating costs for the agency. Design changes to accommodate the relocation of Assisted Living residents to the Sheridan Building is important to the overall consolidation effort.
- Providing more modern, light-filled spaces will be an attraction to potential AFRH-W residents and their families.
- Assisted Living residents may have limited mobility and may not be able to fully enjoy the amenities and common areas that the agency provides on other parts of the campus. Increasing the visibility of the campus from day rooms and activity rooms is an important part of providing a comfortable, appealing, and calming setting for Assisted Living residents, while also providing a sense of connection between these residents and the activities taking place outside the building.

Assisted Living employees currently working in the LaGarde Building will relocate to the new Assisted Living community in the Sheridan Building once construction is complete. The new elevator tower and expanded window openings will not result in a net change of full-time employees at AFRH-W. Further, there will be no change in land use at AFRH-W as a result of this project. Therefore, the exterior alterations to the Sheridan Building for Assisted Living will not result in an increase in traffic or vehicular

emissions or a change in traffic patterns. The tower will be constructed on the footprint of an existing paved area at the entrance to the Sheridan Building and will not increase the square footage of impervious surface on the campus.

In accordance with the review process outlined in the 2008 AFRH-W Programmatic Agreement, AFRH has completed an Undertaking Review Request (URR) for this project. DCHPO has signed the request in concurrence with the agency's finding of no adverse effect, contingent upon the design meeting the height described in this scope of work. No additional Section 106 review is required for this project.

Section A.4 of the AFRH NEPA Regulations states that "the following are categorical exclusions that require preparation of a checklist to ensure that no extraordinary circumstances exist that would require preparation of an EA or EIS. The action above qualifies as a documented categorical exclusion (***check applicable CATEX letter and description***).

- (a) Expansion or improvement of an existing facility where all of the following conditions are met:
- The structure and proposed use are substantially in compliance with local planning and zoning and any applicable state or Federal requirements;
 - The proposed use will only slightly increase the number of motor vehicles at the facility;
 - The site and the scale of construction are consistent with those of existing adjacent or nearby buildings; and
 - There is no evidence of environmental controversy.
- (b) Transfer or disposal of real property to state or local agencies for preservation or protection of wildlife conservation and historic monument purposes.
- (c) Disposal of fixtures, related personal property, demountable structures, transmission lines, utility poles, railroad ties, and track in accordance with management requirements.
- (d) Disposal of properties where the size, area, topography, and zoning are similar to existing surrounding properties and/or where current and reasonable anticipated uses are or would be similar to current surrounding uses (e.g., commercial store in a commercial strip, warehouse in an urban complex, office building in downtown area, row house or vacant lot in an urban area).
- (e) Demolition, removal and disposal of debris from the demolition or improvement of buildings and other structures neither on nor eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and when under applicable regulations (i.e., removal of asbestos, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and other hazardous material) when other environmental laws and regulations will be satisfied prior to the demolition, removal and disposal.

- (f) Relocations and realignments of employees and/or residents from one geographic area to another that: Fall below the thresholds for reportable actions and do not involve related activities such as construction, renovation, or demolition activities that would otherwise require an EA or an EIS to impellent. This includes reorganization and reassignments with no changes in employee and/or resident status, and routine administrative reorganizations and consolidations.

To ensure that no extraordinary circumstances exist that would require preparation of an EA or EIS, answer the following questions in their entirety. If you answer yes to one or more questions, there may be other environmental laws and regulations with which you need to comply and/or an EA or EIS may need to be prepared.

1. Is there reasonable likelihood of significant effects on public health, safety, or the environment? Yes No
2. Is there reasonable likelihood of significant environmental effects (direct, indirect, and cumulative)? Yes No
3. Would the action cause an imposition of uncertain or unique environmental risks? Yes No
4. Would this action result in a greater scope or size than is normal for this category of action? Yes No
5. Have there been any reportable releases of hazardous or toxic substances as specified in 40 CFR part 302, Designation, Reportable Quantities, and Notification? Yes No
6. Have there been or will there be any releases of petroleum, oils, and lubricants, application of pesticides and herbicides, or would the proposed action result in the requirement to develop or amend a Spill Prevention, Control, or Countermeasures Plan? Yes No
7. Would the action exceed de minimis levels for air emissions such that a formal Clean Air Act conformity determination would be required? Yes No
8. Is there a reasonable likelihood that the action would violate any Federal, state, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment? Why or why not? Yes No
9. Would there be any unresolved effect on environmentally sensitive resources, as defined in the AFRH NEPA Regulations 4.b.(1)(c)¹? Yes No

- 10. Would the action cause an effect on the quality of the environment that is likely to be highly controversial? Yes No
- 11. Would the action involve an effect on the environment that is highly uncertain, involve unique or unknown risks, or is scientifically controversial? Yes No
- 12. Does the action establish a precedent (or make decisions in principle) for future or subsequent actions that are reasonably likely to have a future significant effect? Yes No
- 13. Does the action have the potential for degradation of existing poor environmental conditions; or initiation of a degrading influence, activity, or effect in areas not already significantly modified from their natural condition? Yes No
- 14. Would the action introduce/employ unproven technology? Yes No
- 15. Does the location involve environmentally sensitive resources as defined in the AFRH NEPA Regulations 4.b.(1)(c) ¹? Yes No
- 16. Would the proposed action affect Federally listed, threatened, or endangered species or their designated critical habitat? Yes No
- 17. Would the proposed action affect properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places? Yes No
- 18. Would the proposed action impact areas having special designation or recognition such as prime or unique agricultural lands; coastal zones; designated wilderness or wilderness study areas; wild and scenic rivers; National Historic Landmarks (designated by the Secretary of the Interior); 100-year floodplains; wetlands; sole source aquifers (potential sources of drinking water); National Wildlife Refuges; National Parks; areas of critical environmental concern; or other areas of high environmental sensitivity? Yes No

¹ Environmentally sensitive resources include:
 4.b.(1)(c)(i) Proposed Federally listed, threatened, or endangered species or their designated critical habitats.
 4.b.(1)(c)(ii) Properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
 4.b.(1)(c)(iii) Areas having special designation or recognition such as prime or unique agricultural lands; coastal zones; designated wilderness or wilderness study areas; wild and scenic rivers;


National Historic Landmarks (designated by the Secretary of the Interior); 100-year floodplains; wetlands; sole source aquifers (potential sources of drinking water); National Wildlife Refuges; National Parks; areas of critical environmental concern; or other areas of high environmental sensitivity.

Conclusion

Based upon the information provided above, I conclude that this action qualifies for a documented categorical exclusion (CATEX) from the requirement to prepare an EA or an EIS, pursuant to the AFRH NEPA Regulations.



AFRH Master Planner or Project Manager



Date