

Navy Withdraws from Navy Museum Land Swap Agreement with DC



Then-Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro unveiled conceptual renderings from five architecture firms at the National Museum of the U.S. Navy in April 2023. *Photo credit: Naval History and Heritage Command*

Secretary of the Navy John Phelan has withdrawn the service from a land swap with the District of Columbia that was to have created a home for a long-awaited new Museum of the United States Navy, the Navy's Office of Legislative Affairs notified Congress.

"We want to notify you directly that, in consultation with the White House, the Secretary of the Navy has decided to strategically shift away from the leasing arrangement that contemplated private or mixed-use development of the 0 Parcel

at the Washington Navy Yard in the interest of national security,” the OLA said in a statement provided to *Seapower* by the Naval History and Heritage Command.

“Given the sensitive work at the WNY, evolving national security threats, and a renewed focus on force protection, private development on the Washington Navy Yard property is not feasible from a national security perspective.

“This decision does not reflect a negative assessment of the land exchange, the developer [RedBrick], or the future National Museum of the Navy; instead, we are focused exclusively on the national security concerns of private development on the Washington Navy Yard. Please be assured we are committed to the future National Museum of the Navy.”

Former Navy Secretary Kenneth Braithwaite, now chair of the Navy Museum Development Foundation that is raising money for the new museum, first made the news public at a panel discussion at the Congress of the Naval Order of the United States in Philadelphia.

In a recent edition of the [Tuesday Tidings](#) newsletter of the National Maritime Historical Society, Braithwaite said the move means fundraising is on hold until a new site can be identified.

The location of the new museum was the subject of a [press briefing](#) last October, where then-Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro and other officials, including Braithwaite, praised the location, which would have been near the Navy Yard as well as the Washington Nationals baseball stadium and the Audi Field soccer stadium.

Even had the site development continued there, it would have been a long time before anyone walked through the door. The foundation was charged with raising nearly half a billion dollars for the museum and the groundbreaking wouldn't have been before 2030 at the earliest.