

# STAFF RECOMMENDATION



J. Hirsch  
NCPC File No. 7246

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## UNITED STATES DIPLOMACY CENTER Harry S Truman Building

2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC

Submitted by the General Services Administration

May 26, 2011

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### **Abstract**

The General Services Administration, on behalf of the Department of State (DOS), has submitted a concept design for the United States Diplomacy Center (USDC). The USDC will be located in the George Marshall Wing of the Harry S Truman Building (HTB) located at 2201 C Street, NW. The USDC will serve as a museum and educational center regarding diplomacy history and the Department of State (DOS) and will include security screening. An addition will be constructed at the 21<sup>st</sup> Street entrance to the HTB to house a portion of the USDC. The remaining section of the USDC will be housed in a portion of the existing George Marshall Wing.

### **Commission Action Requested by Applicant**

Approval of comments on the concept design for the United States Diplomacy Center located in the Harry S Truman Building at 2201 C Street, NW, pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8722 (b)(1) and (d).

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### **Executive Director's Recommendation**

The Commission:

**Provides the following comments** on the concept design for the United States Diplomacy Center located in the Harry S Truman Building at 2201 C Street NW, Washington, DC, as shown on NCPC Map File No.1.34(38.00)43333.

#### Process

- Revise the Harry S Truman Building Perimeter Security Improvement Plan (HTBPSP) to include the USDC and submit the plan for final NCPC approval;
- Determine the appropriate level of NEPA review for the USDC as the Environmental Assessment for the HTBPSP did not include a discussion of the USDC and additional analysis must take into account the change in use from a security pavilion to a museum at this location;
- Finalize the Programmatic Agreement for the HTBPSP by working with the DC State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and consulting parties;
- Integrate the requirements of Section 106 into the NEPA review process to avoid, minimize, and mitigate adverse effects to historic properties;

#### Coordination

- Coordinate with the NCPC, the District of Columbia Office of Planning, and the District Department of Transportation regarding impacts to the surrounding transportation system, parking, pedestrian circulation, and streetscape as the design for USDC and perimeter security is refined;

#### Design

- Determine how the entry pavilion will meet the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* as required by the Programmatic Agreement for the HTBPSP;
- Further refine the details regarding attachment between the entry pavilion and the historic George Marshall Wing;
- Develop an alternative that lowers the roof below the cornice line of the historic building and eliminates the 2 foot increase at the center section so that the roof is essentially flat;
- Develop an alternative that uses transparent glass as wall cladding; and
- Integrate the plan and design for permanent perimeter security into the design of the USDC.

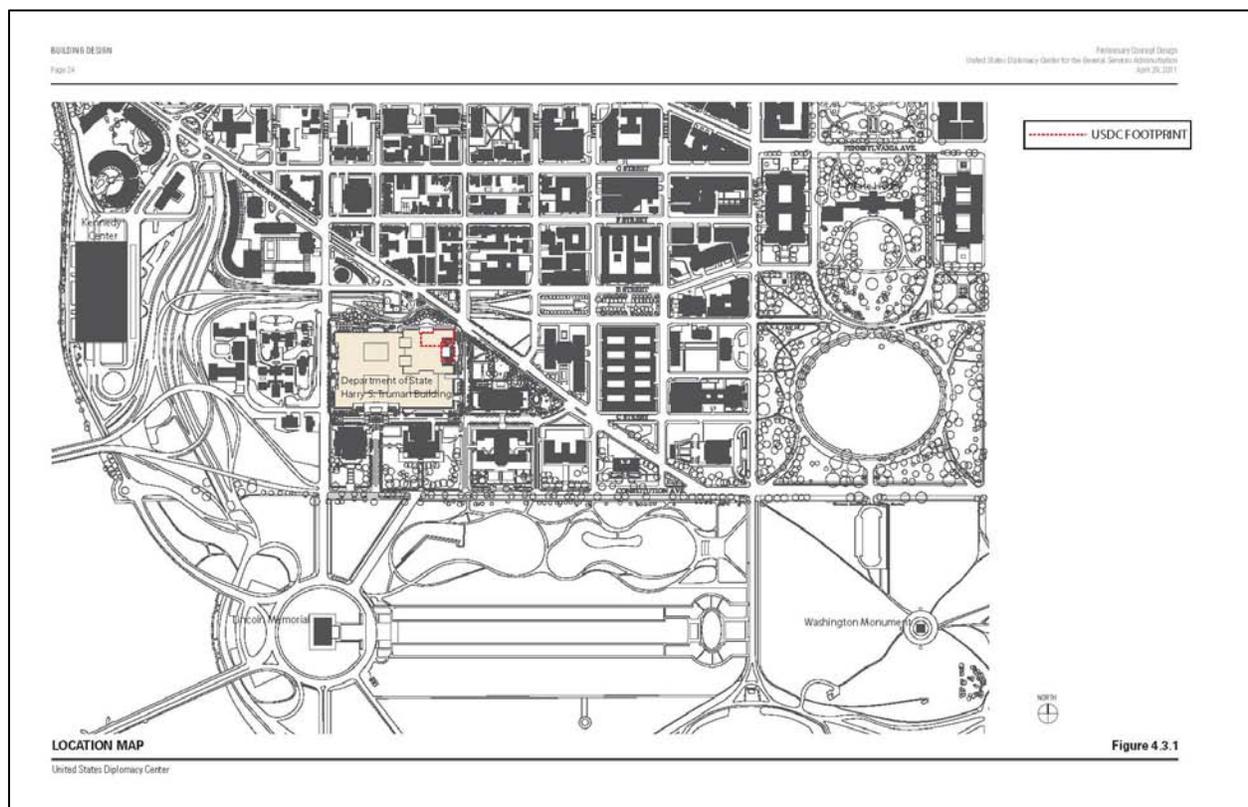
**Notes** that the DOS has placed the USDC within the property line in accordance with the Commission's comments on the HTBPSP and that the DOS has set aside some space in the USDC to highlight the historic lobby and mural, *America the Mighty*, to establish a connection between the historic building and history of diplomacy and the DOS.

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Site

The Harry S Truman Building (HTB) is located at 2201 C Street NW, and is bounded on the north by D Street, E Street Expressway on ramp, E Street, and Virginia Avenue; on the south by C Street; on the east by 21<sup>st</sup> Street; and on the west by 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. The HTB was built as two structures with the War Department, also known as “Old State” or the George Marshall Wing, constructed between 1939 and 1941. The second structure, the State Department Extension or “New State”, was constructed between 1955 and 1960. The building is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and is a contributor to the Northwest Rectangle Historic District. The American Pharmacist Association and the National Academy of Sciences are located directly to the south of HTB across C Street. The United States Diplomacy Center (USDC) would be located within the George Marshall Wing with an addition at the 21<sup>st</sup> Street entrance.



Location of Harry S Truman Building and United States Diplomacy Center

### Background

In December 2004 the Commission provided comments on the Harry S Truman Building Perimeter Security Improvement Plan (HTBPSP). The objectives of the HTBPSP are to secure the HTB, protect employees and visitors, and improve the streetscape by creating an attractive

environment for pedestrians and neighbors. When the HTBPSP was submitted in 2004, the plan included a security pavilion at the 21<sup>st</sup> Street entrance, but did not include the USDC or a museum as part of the security program. The function of the security pavilion that was described in the HTBPSP has been incorporated into the USDC.

In 2004 the Commission commented on the HTBPSP and commended the DOS for following the recommendations in the National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan, and coordinating early with federal and local agencies. The Commission also directed the DOS to work with the District Department of Transportation regarding on-street parking and modifications to street alignments; develop agreements with neighboring property owners; coordinate with the Federal Highway Administration and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts regarding proposed modifications to E Street; coordinate with the National Park Service on the possible relocation of the Bernardo de Galvez statue; further develop the design of bollards, walls, rails, and corner markers along with adjacent landscaping; re-consider the impacts of tree removal on viewsheds to and from the Lincoln Memorial; and further develop the design of the entry pavilions to reflect the character of the building's architectural era and ensure that they are located with the building yard, between the face of the building and the public sidewalk, and that they do not intrude into the view corridor of the adjacent historic street.

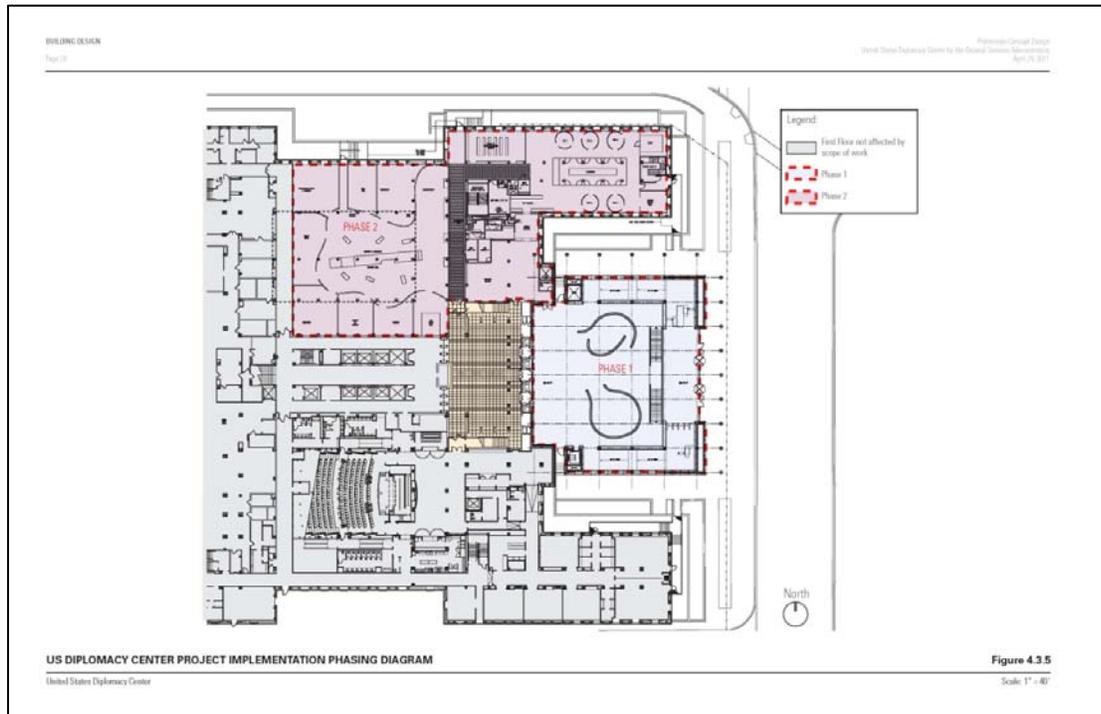
The project currently under review only includes the concept design for the USDC and does not include the HTBPSP. The USDC will require security and should be connected to the HTBPSP, but a revised HTBPSP has not yet been submitted for the Commission's review.

### Proposal

DOS proposes to construct an entry pavilion of approximately 12,194 square feet within the forecourt of the HTB at the 21<sup>st</sup> Street entrance to house the USDC. The remaining space of the USDC would be housed within an existing adjacent space of the George Marshall Wing. When completed the USDC would contain a total 41,400 square feet of space. The USDC is projecting that the museum would attract 225,000 annual visitors.

The USDC program has been broken down into three areas corresponding to the Diplomacy Center Master Plan. The first area is Hall 1 or the main floor of the entry pavilion and the second area is the lower level of the entry pavilion. The third area includes Hall 2 and Hall 3 to be located in an existing portion of the George Marshall Wing directly adjacent to the new entry pavilion and historic lobby.

The construction and implementation of the USDC would be broken down into two phases. Phase 1 would include the construction of Hall 1 or the entry pavilion that will serve as the primary entrance to the USDC. Hall 1 will contain a reception area, two security screening stations, entry ramps, and a central exhibit space. A monumental stair will serve as the main access to the lower level of the entry pavilion. The lower level of the entry pavilion will contain restrooms, café/gift shop, café seating, coat check, water reclamation room, museum storage, and several mechanical/electrical rooms. Phase 2 includes the renovation of an existing section of the George Marshall Wing that will become Hall 2 and Hall 3 of the USDC. Both of these halls would primarily be used as museum exhibit space. Hall 3 would also house the Decision Center, an educational component of the USDC and a theater with seating for up to 30 people.



The USDC will be constructed in two phases with Phase 1 focusing on the entry pavilion and Phase 2 focusing on the renovation of an existing portion of the George Marshall Wing.

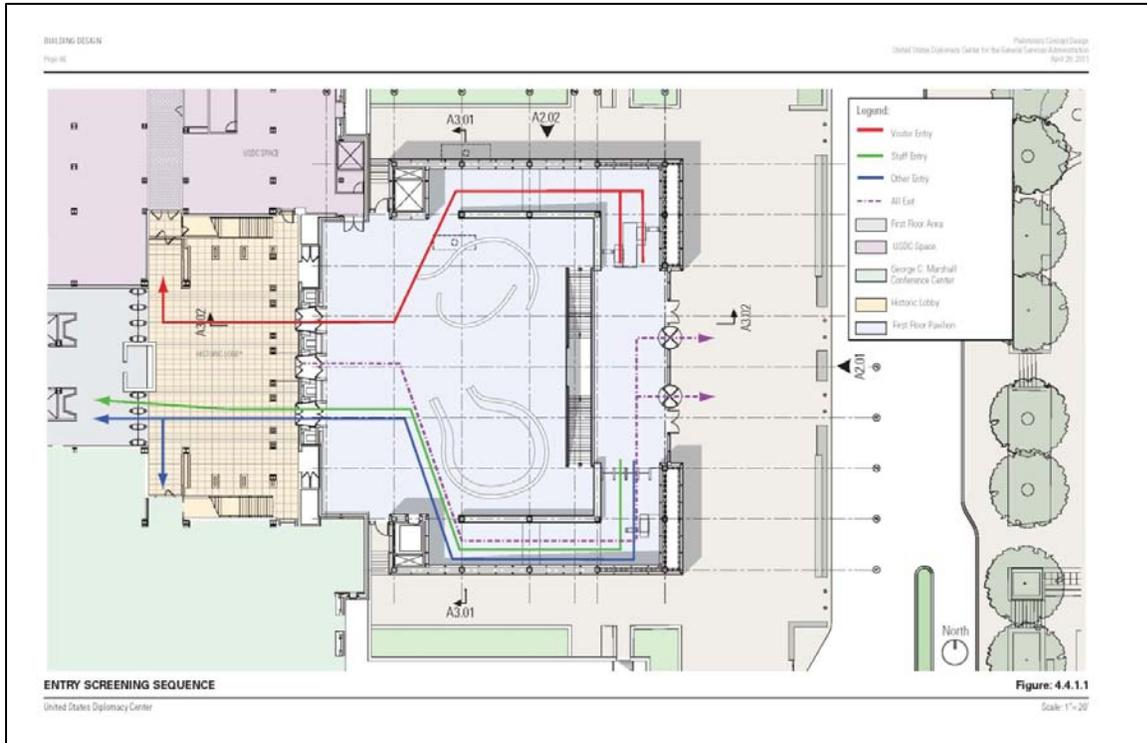
The historic lobby of the War Department building currently serves as the east entrance to the HTB. The lobby is a two story marble clad rectangular space surrounded on the north, east, and south sides by marble clad paired columns. Bronze is used for all doors, door trim, and stair railings. The large mural, *America the Mighty*, was painted by Kindred McLeary shortly after the building opened in 1941. The lobby was renovated in 2003 as part of the George Marshall Conference Center project. Modifications to the historic lobby for the USDC would include a new bronze paneled door to connect the entry pavilion to Hall 3. In addition, the existing historic bronze doors may need to be replaced with replicas that will address fire separation and egress. Other modifications to the lobby would include directional graphics, lighting enhancement, and the addition of exhibit cases.

There is very little historic fabric intact in the space that will become Hall 2 and Hall 3 of the USDC. Interior modifications include new egress doors in existing window openings. One door will require cutting through existing masonry. The historic flooring that separates the east and west section of the first floor area would be restored. The flooring consists of Tennessee gray marble pavers with a black marble border and base.

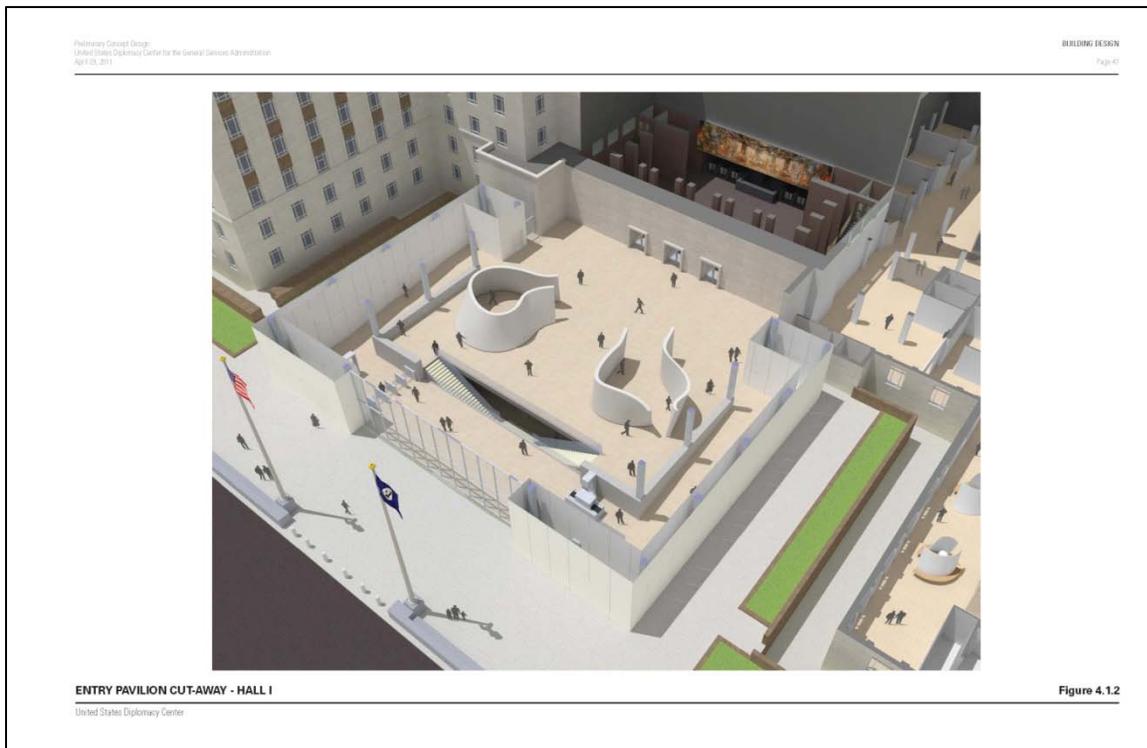
Visitors and staff will enter the USDC from 21<sup>st</sup> Street at the same elevation as the sidewalk. From the entry vestibule, the stair to the lower level will be visible along with a portion of the space below. In addition, the historic façade of the George Marshall Wing will be visible from this entry. USDC will provide staff to greet and direct visitors to the north where they will pass through security screening. Staff will be directed to the south to enter the building and will

proceed to the historic lobby where they will pass through dual authorization turnstiles. Natural stone paved ramps beyond the north and south screening areas will ascend to the main level of the entry pavilion. Exhibits installed on both ramps will highlight the work of the DOS. At the top of the ramps, visitors will enter the main space of the entry pavilion and will be at the same elevation as the historic lobby. Two sculptural enclosures will be constructed in the main space. One enclosure will consist of two undulating walls and the other will provide a semi-circular space for a small theater. Other than the two sculptural enclosures, the main space of the entry pavilion will be open so that in addition to exhibits, the space can be used for events.

The DOS has indicated that the 21<sup>st</sup> Street entrance has two peak entrance times during the day with one in the morning between 7:00 am and 9:00 am, and one in the evening between 5:00 pm and 7:00 pm. The proposed circulation scheme shows all pedestrian traffic exiting the building through the south screening station.



USDC Entry Pavilion circulation. Visitors will enter through the north and staff will enter through south screening station.



Cut away view of main level of entry pavilion.

### *Proposed Entry Pavilion*

The proposed entry pavilion, measuring 120 feet wide by 87 feet deep and 28 feet tall, would be added to the forecourt of the east side of the George Marshall Wing. The entry pavilion would serve as the new main entrance for the 21<sup>st</sup> Street side of the George Marshall Wing and for the USDC. The exterior of the George Marshall Wing is clad in a buff colored limestone. The H shaped building was designed to be symmetrical in a north/south direction both in plan and elevation. A north and south wing extend east and create a forecourt for the historic entrance at the east façade. The dominant feature of the east façade entrance is the portico with its stripped classical columns and Art Moderne entry doors.

The height of the entry pavilion has been designed to correspond with the existing cornice line of the historic building. The proposed entry pavilion would extend to the east beyond the footprint of the north/south wings of the George Marshall Wing by 20 feet 11 inches and would lightly touch the existing entryway of the historic building. The structure will be constructed of a steel curtain wall and three alternatives have been developed for the cladding of the entry pavilion.

The applicant's preferred option for the entry pavilion utilizes an opaque glass panel system along all the exterior elevations. Transparent glass set in a steel frame will frame the entryway and will be slightly recessed from the plane of the opaque glass. The use of transparent glass will define the entrance and allow visitors to see through the entry pavilion to the historic entrance of the original War Department building.

The roof design calls for the use of opaque glass panels around the north, south, and east sides and clear glass in the center. This design is intended to allow views of the historic building's east elevation when standing inside the entry pavilion. The opaque glass that forms a frame around the clear glass in the center of the roof will be set at 28 feet above grade level. The center portion of the roof with the clear glass will be set approximately 2 feet higher than the opaque glass. The roof design remains the same in all three alternatives.



Preferred option for the opaque glass cladding system at the USDC entry pavilion

Alternative 1 treats the east elevation with an opaque glass frame around the edges and top of the elevation and translucent butt glazed glass in the same plane as the opaque glass on either side of the entrance. These panels would be lit from within to give them a soft glow at night. The main entrance would remain transparent glass as treated in the preferred option. The north and south elevations would be butt glazed opaque glass as an extension of the glass used at the edges of the east elevation.

Alternative 2 treats the east elevation with metal panels rather than glass. Metal panels would be used to create a frame around the sides and top of the east elevation. Additional metal panels would be inserted on either side of the entry and would be slightly recessed from the frame and accented with simple stainless vertical fins. The main entrance would remain butt glazed transparent glass as in the preferred option and alternative 1. The north and south elevations would be clad with metal panels as an extension of the system used along the edges of the east elevation.

## PROJECT ANALYSIS

**Staff recommends that the Commission provide the following comments on the concept design for the USDC.**

Staff notes that the DOS considered the Commission's comments on the HTBPSP regarding the designs of the proposed entry pavilions and their location within the property line. The USDC is contained within the property line of HTB and does not intrude on the view corridor of the adjacent street.

Staff notes that while a security pavilion was identified for the 21<sup>st</sup> Street Entrance of the George Marshall Wing in the HTBPSP, there was no mention of the USDC or a museum facility on site. Staff recommends that the DOS submit the HTBPSP for final NCPC approval and revise the plan to include USDC.

Staff recommends that DOS determine the level of NEPA analysis required for the USDC early in the planning and design process. The HTBPSP Environmental Assessment (EA) has not been finalized and a Finding of No Significant Impact has not been signed. In addition, the USDC was not included in the HTBPSP EA, and therefore the environmental impacts associated with a museum function at the HTB have not been analyzed. The environmental analysis must take into account the change in use as well as design of the proposed USDC. Information in the HTBPSP EA may be relevant and can be utilized in the NEPA analysis for the USDC. However, additional information such as projected tour bus traffic that was not in the HTBPSP EA may also be required to complete the environmental analysis for the USDC.

Along with NEPA compliance, DOS is in the process of finalizing a Programmatic Agreement (PA) for the HTBPSP which may have implications for the Section 106 review of the USDC. The PA specifies materials for the new entrance pavilions and this would apply to the USDC. The PA states that the new entrance pavilions will "...emulate the character of the original

canopies by their lightness and transparency, and by the use of original materials such as stainless steel, ceramic mosaic tile and granite.” The PA also specifies that the HTBPSP will be implemented in phases and each phase will require a separate design submission and Section 106 consultation. As the PA for the HTBPSP has implications for the design of USDC, this document should be finalized by working with the DC SHPO and consulting parties. DOS has initiated the Section 106 process for USDC in order to minimize and mitigate any potential adverse effects to historic resources.

In addition, staff encourages DOS to meet with other DC agencies including the DC Office of Planning and District Department of Transportation as plans for the proposed streetscape alterations and perimeter security are developed. While the footprint of the USDC is contained entirely within the property line, the installation of security measures such as bollards and knee walls will likely impact the public right-of-way and traffic and pedestrian circulation. The submission states that the existing perimeter security must be maintained during construction. Staff recommends that as the design for the USDC is further refined, the permanent perimeter security is incorporated and integrated into the design.

The draft PA for the HTBPSP states, “...additions to the Truman building and all site improvements will adhere to *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties...*”. Of the three designs developed for the exterior of the entry pavilion the applicant’s preferred alternative may be the most successful in achieving this objective with the use of opaque glass as cladding material. In accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, additions should be differentiated from the historic building, but also compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment. The use of opaque glass would distinguish the entry pavilion from the limestone of the historic building and it would clearly read as an addition. Staff also recommends the applicant develop an alternative that uses transparent glass for both the entry and the wall cladding.

As currently proposed, the size, scale, and massing of the addition respects the cornice line established by the George Marshall Wing. Staff recommends DOS consider lowering the roof and also consider eliminating the 2 foot height increase at the center section of the roof. By lowering the roof, the entry pavilion would remain easily distinguishable from the historic building, and also would be deferential to the historic building. By eliminating the 2 foot increase at the center section of the roof, the view of existing windows along the east elevation of the historic building would not be impaired.

The entry pavilion will attach to the historic building at the four existing columns along the east façade. This will be a minimal alteration to the historic building and the essential form of the building and its environment would be unimpaired. As the design is further refined, the details regarding the attachment to the historic building will require additional clarification.

Staff notes that the DOS has set aside some space in the USDC to highlight the historic lobby and mural, *America the Mighty*. The incorporation of this mural and its history will be an important component for visitors experiencing the USDC as it will allow a connection to be made between the building and the history of diplomacy.

## CONFORMANCE

### Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

The proposal is not inconsistent with the federal elements of the Comprehensive Plan including the Preservation and Historic Features Element and the Visitors Element. The entry pavilion will provide an educational facility to showcase American diplomacy.

### Monumental Core Framework Plan

The project site is located within the Northwest Rectangle precinct of the Monumental Core Framework Plan. One of the plan's key goals within this area is to establish a series of connected parks centered on E Street and Virginia Avenue between the Kennedy Center and the White House. The construction of the USDC would not impede this vision from moving forward, and it may increase the need for open space in the immediate vicinity of the HTB as there will be an increase in the number of people visiting the site. The construction of the USDC is also consistent with the plan's strategy of promoting mixed use destinations by combining federal office space with a museum function.

### National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan

The submittal for the design concept of USDC did not include any permanent security measures. Temporary security measures would be in place during construction as well as after construction is completed.

### National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

The DOS is responsible for NEPA compliance. GSA indicated that DOS planned to use the HTBPSP EA for compliance with NEPA. The DOS is in the process of evaluating the need for additional NEPA analysis that may be required due to the change in use and design of the security pavilion that was described in the HTBPSP.

### National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

The DOS is the lead agency for this undertaking and is responsible for Section 106 compliance. The DOS has initiated Section 106 consultation with the DC SHPO. The HTB is individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and is a contributor to the Northwest Rectangle Historic District.

## CONSULTATION

### Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal May 11, 2011, and forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the project has been coordinated with all participating agencies, except the representatives for NCPC, the District of Columbia Office of Planning and the District Department of Transportation. These representatives noted a number of unresolved

planning issues. The participating agencies were the General Services Administration; the National Park Service; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. The planning issues will be resolved following this concept review.

#### Commission of Fine Arts

The Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) reviewed the concept design at its May 19, 2011 meeting and approved the concept design. CFA requested a few refinements to the design including the expression of the cornice line as the design is further defined. CFA also commented on the pattern and proportions of the glass wall cladding in relationship to the limestone of the historic building.