



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

**Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the
Installation of Playground Equipment on the
South Lawn of the Main Treasury Building**

This action has been reviewed by the Treasury Departmental Offices Operations and it has been determined, by the undersigned, that this action will have no significant effect on the human environment.

This finding of no significant impact is based on the attached "Environmental Assessment for the Installation of Playground Equipment on the South Lawn of the Main Treasury Building". The results of this assessment provide sufficient evidence for the determination that an environmental impact statement is not required.

Copies of this assessment, or additional information pertaining to this action, may be obtained by contacting the Treasury Departmental Offices, Office of Environment, Health and Safety at 202-622-0728.

Recommended:

8/31/11

Clayt Lauter
Director, Office of Environment, Health and Safety
Departmental Offices

Approved:

8/31/11

James Thomas, Jr.
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Departmental Offices Operations

**Environmental Assessment for the
Installation of Playground Equipment on the
South Lawn of the Main Treasury Building
September 2011**

Purpose of and Need For Action

The U.S. Department of the Treasury is proposing the installation of playground equipment on the Southwest quadrant of Treasury's South Lawn within the Rose Garden area (see Figures 1 and 2). The playground is needed to provide Federal Government employee's children at "US Kids" and "Small Savers" day care centers a safe outdoor play/exercise facility on Treasury property. Completion date of the project will be dependent upon approval of the respective review agencies, which is anticipated to be the Fall of 2011.

The primary issue related to this action is the impact of a playground on the aesthetics and public's southern view of the Main Treasury Building.

Project Description

The proposed project is to install playground equipment and a synthetic grass surface in the southwest lawn of the Main Treasury Building (see Figures 3 and 4). The proposed playground is intended to be temporary and seasonal, with some of the equipment to be removed during the winter months. To minimize impact on the site, only the footings for the heavier equipment will be installed below ground to act as an anchor. A small iron fence is also proposed to restrict the children's access to the adjacent rose garden.

The playground equipment has been selected by a playground consultant and is primarily constructed of high-density polyethylene (HDPE) plastic, stainless steel and recycled aluminum. The equipment is constructed to meet or exceed the requirements of the Consumer Products Safety Improvements Act of 2008. Additionally, the equipment manufacturer conforms to the following standards:

- American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standard F1487- Standard Consumer Safety Performance Specification for Playground Equipment for Public Use
- Canadian Standards Association (CAN/CSA) Z614- Guideline on Children's Play Spaces and Equipment
- ASTM F1292-Standard Specification for Impact Attenuation Under and Around Playground Equipment

The synthetic grass will be laid over a resilient base that will provide shock absorption in the event of falls.

Alternatives Considered

Among the alternatives considered was the No Action Alternative (or baseline) defined as not installing the playground which would leave the grassy area of the southwest lawn in its current state. Another alternative considered but eliminated, was placing the playground on the north lawn of the Treasury building. This alternative was eliminated due to that location's close proximity/high visibility to the public. The final alternative considered was an area at the southwest corner of the Treasury Building (also known as the "moat") which is currently being used for parking (see Figures 8 and 9). Due to its small size and proximity to delivery traffic, this alternative was considered potentially dangerous and was also eliminated from consideration.

Preferred Alternative

The preferred alternative would allow for the construction and installation of the playground equipment on the southwest lawn of the Main Treasury Building. Annual maintenance requirements would include a detailed, thorough safety audit and inspection of the playground's structural integrity to be performed by the installation contractor.

Affected Environment

This section describes existing conditions in the potentially affected environment, i.e., that portion of the environment potentially impacted by the proposed action. The boundaries of the potentially affected environment will vary according to the nature of the potential impact and the environmental feature or resource under consideration. Certain potential impacts (e.g., impacts to topographic conditions or drainage patterns) are highly site specific and are likely to be confined entirely within the project boundaries. Other potential impacts (e.g., economic impacts or impacts on traffic patterns) would be more likely to have an effect on the surrounding community.

Site Characteristics

Soils

Natural Resources Conservation Service soils maps identify as "Urban Land" the soils found in the project area.

As part of another project proposal, a composite sample of the shallow soils (SW-1) was collected from the southwest quadrant of the Main Treasury Lawn in January of 2010. The sample depth was approximately 4 inches and was analyzed for metals, total petroleum hydrocarbons and chlorinated herbicides. No hydrocarbons or herbicides were detected but detectable levels of manganese, vanadium and arsenic were found in this sample. Arsenic was the only one of these three metals with a level above the

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region III Risk Based Concentration (RBC) residential value of 0.39 parts per million (ppm). Sample SW-1 contained 15 ppm of arsenic. However, a fact sheet published by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers titled, "Arsenic Sampling and the Removal Decision Process" in October, 2001 indicated a background range for DC area soils of 3-18 ppm. The 15 ppm concentration of arsenic found in SW-1 falls within this range.

The layer of padded base material and synthetic grass that would be installed over the entire playground area would essentially act as a "cap" or barrier to prevent soil contact with any of the users of the playground facility.

Hydrology

The synthetic grass and base material are pervious which will allow rainwater to flow into the ground and should not adversely affect the site drainage pattern.

Cultural Resources

The Treasury building is a National Historic Landmark that was constructed in its present configuration from 1836 to 1869. Beginning in 1986, the building has undergone a number of historic restorations, the most notable being the Cash Room, West Dome, and historic offices, the Salmon P. Chase and Andrew Johnson suites. These restored interior spaces reflect the building's evolution in different architectural styles that contrast markedly with its Greek Revival-style exterior.

The building's surrounding landscape has evolved over an equally long period of time. Initially, the four building quadrants were elaborately landscaped with a fountain on the North elevation and formal gardens in all four quadrants. The addition of the statues of secretaries Hamilton on the South Lawn and Gallatin on the North Lawn changed the landscape and the South Lawn received the present planting beds in the mid-20th century.

The proposed playground constitutes a further evolution to the South Lawn's appearance. The playground originated with Secretary Robert Rubin who encouraged the lawn's use for this purpose by donating playground equipment circa 1995. The playground remained on that site until the building modernization project brought about its removal with the placement of construction related materials.

The proposed playground will occupy the former playground site, and is intended to be temporary for a period of three years while the forthcoming President's Park South project is undertaken. The playground equipment will require footings but is not considered permanent and will be removed at the end of the three year period.

The South Lawn quadrant is considered to be the less obtrusive site since public access will be severely restricted by the President's Park South project.

Aesthetics

Figures 5, 6, and 7 provide views from various vantage points of the southwest lawn area where the proposed playground would be located. Until the President's Park South Project is completed, the view that the public will have is unknown. It is anticipated that the security perimeter will be at a greater distance and will reduce the view of the Treasury South lawn even further than what is illustrated in Figure 7. Figures 10 and 11 provide a rendering of what the views would look like after the playground equipment installation.

Community and Regional Characteristics

Land Use and Zoning

The proposed project site has been the location of the U.S. Department of the Treasury Building since the 1830's. The District of Columbia Office of Zoning map shows the property as well as the entire White House complex as "unzoned". The east side of 15th Street is shown as DD/C-4 which is the Downtown Development (DD) Overlay District. This is applied to the core of the Downtown area in northwest Washington, D.C. The general purpose is to create a balanced mix of uses; to guide office development, which is favored by market forces, so as to further the land use objectives for retail, hotel, residential, entertainment, arts and cultural uses; to protect historic buildings and places while permitting sensitive and compatible new developments; to achieve desired land use and development policies; to guide building design to be generally consistent with the Downtown Element of the Comprehensive Plan; to foster growth opportunities for and retention of small and minority businesses; and to provide adequate and visually acceptable short-term parking and consolidated loading from streets other than F, G, and 7th Streets. The overlay contains requirements that govern the use, design, height, and bulk of development. It contains both area-wide design standards and use provisions, as well as requirements that are tailored specifically to the Downtown Shopping District, the Downtown Arts District, Chinatown, and the Mount Vernon Triangle District. The overlay provides a wide range of overlapping incentives and requirements to meet its development goals

The C-4 designation further describes the downtown core area comprising the retail and office centers for the District of Columbia and the metropolitan area, and allows office, retail, housing and mixed uses to a maximum lot occupancy of 100%.

Utilities

No utility service will be required at the project site. It is not expected that the proposed project will have a significant adverse impact on current water or sanitary system customers.

Installation/construction of the proposed project would generate solid waste requiring collection and disposal by one of the contract haulers that serve the Main Treasury. Solid waste of various types and quantities would be generated during construction of the playground structures. The disposal of construction debris and wastes would be the responsibility of the construction contractors involved, and is not anticipated to adversely impact solid waste collection and disposal services currently being provided.

Transportation

As a matter of general practice, permissible traffic movements into and out of the project site should be coordinated with appropriate government agencies and officials. Any disruptions to normal roadway operations resulting from construction activities should also be kept to the shortest duration possible.

Primary access to the proposed site would be from the Hamilton Parking and Moat Parking areas.

No adverse impacts to traffic are expected from this project.

Air Quality

Site preparation and construction operations typically result in fugitive dust emissions in and around a project site. Any such impacts will be temporary, occurring only while construction is in progress and certain meteorological conditions occur. Fugitive dust emissions typically occur during ground clearing and preparation, grading, the stockpiling of materials, on-site movement of vehicles and equipment, and the transportation of construction materials. Fugitive dust can occur during dry weather periods, periods of maximum construction activity, and/or high wind conditions.

Techniques to limit fugitive dust include using tarp covers on trucks transporting materials to and from the construction site, and wetting unpaved surfaces.

Motor vehicle operations represent the greatest potential for project-related impacts on air quality. However, their use would be minimal in this project and no adverse impacts to air quality are anticipated.

Noise

Noise caused during the construction process is expected to be typical for the construction activities related to this type of project. The activities expected to take place generally include excavations for concrete footings and possibly some minor grading along with the installation of the playground equipment. The noise from this activity will be temporary, lasting through the construction period which is expected to be approximately 3 days, most of which will be completed over weekends.

Measures to mitigate potential construction noise impacts should be addressed during the project planning stage to include consideration of the following provisions: source control, site control, and time and activity constraints.

The potential noise impact of this project upon the surrounding areas is considered insignificant.

Environmental Analysis Checklist—See Attachment A.

Does the proposed action require further analysis or assessment?

Yes _____

No _____

Based on the information presented here, Treasury Departmental Offices Operations has determined that this action will not have a significant or adverse impact on the environment.

Prepared By: Eric Bradley
Eric Bradley, Environmental
Program Manager

Date: 8/31/11

Reviewed By: Clayt Lauter
Clayt Lauter, Program Director
Office of Environment, Health & Safety

Date: 8/31/11

Approved By: James Thomas, Jr.
James Thomas, Jr.
DAS, Departmental Offices Operations

Date: 8/31/11

Figure 1:

Site Plan

Treasury Building - South Lawn

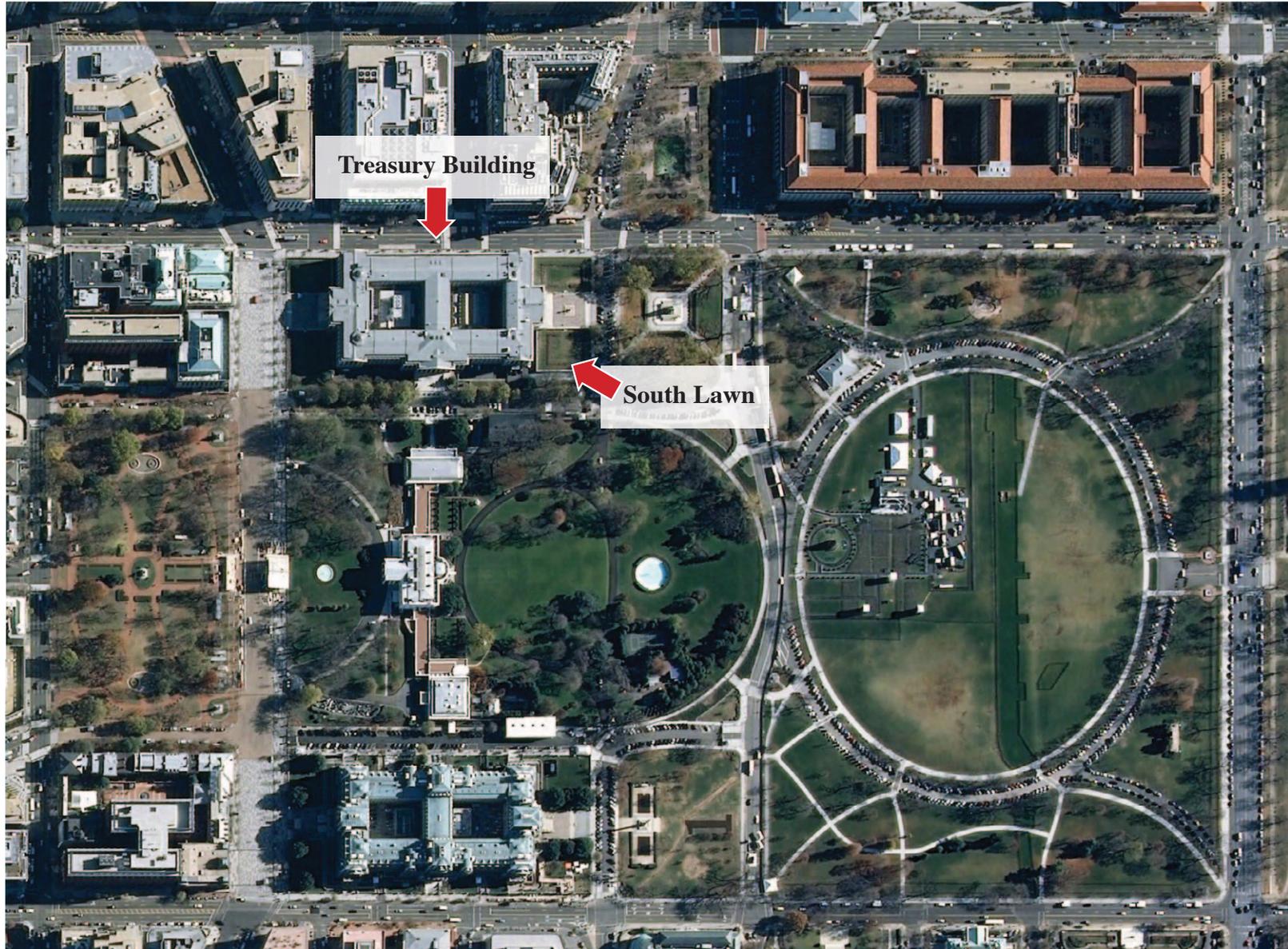


Figure 2:

Detail, Treasury South Lawn Proposed Playground Site

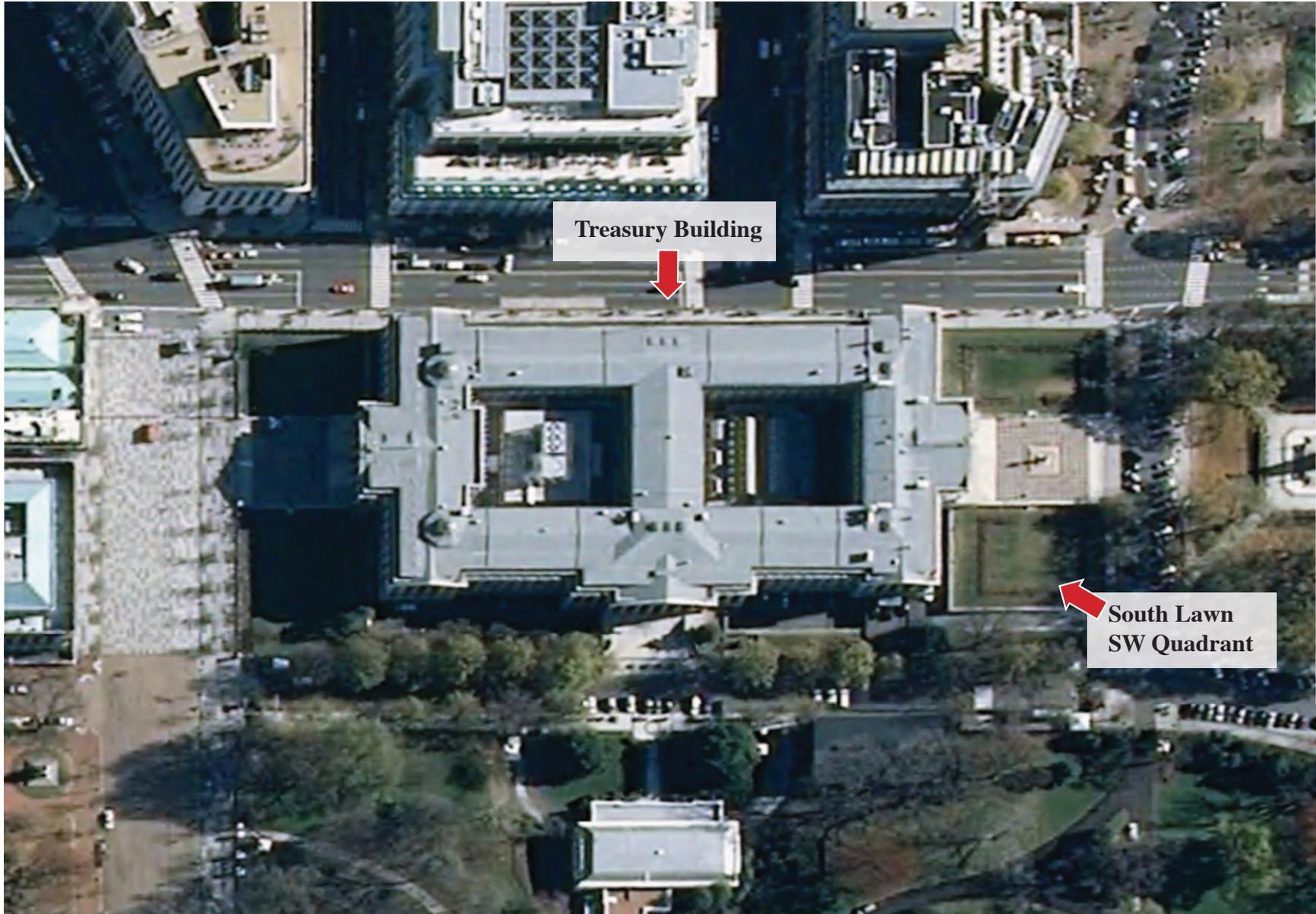


Figure 3:

Treasury South Lawn, Proposed Playground Site View Looking North



Figure 4:

Treasury South Lawn, View Looking West from Treasury South Plaza



Figure 5:

Treasury South Lawn, View Looking North from Access Gate off E Street



Figure 6:

Treasury South Lawn, View Looking North from Hamilton Place and Sherman Park



Figure 7:

View of Proposed Playground Site on South Lawn taken from 1500 E st. NW



Figure 8:

View of Alternative Site, Treasury Moat View Looking East



Figure 9:

View of Alternate Site, Treasury Moat View Looking North



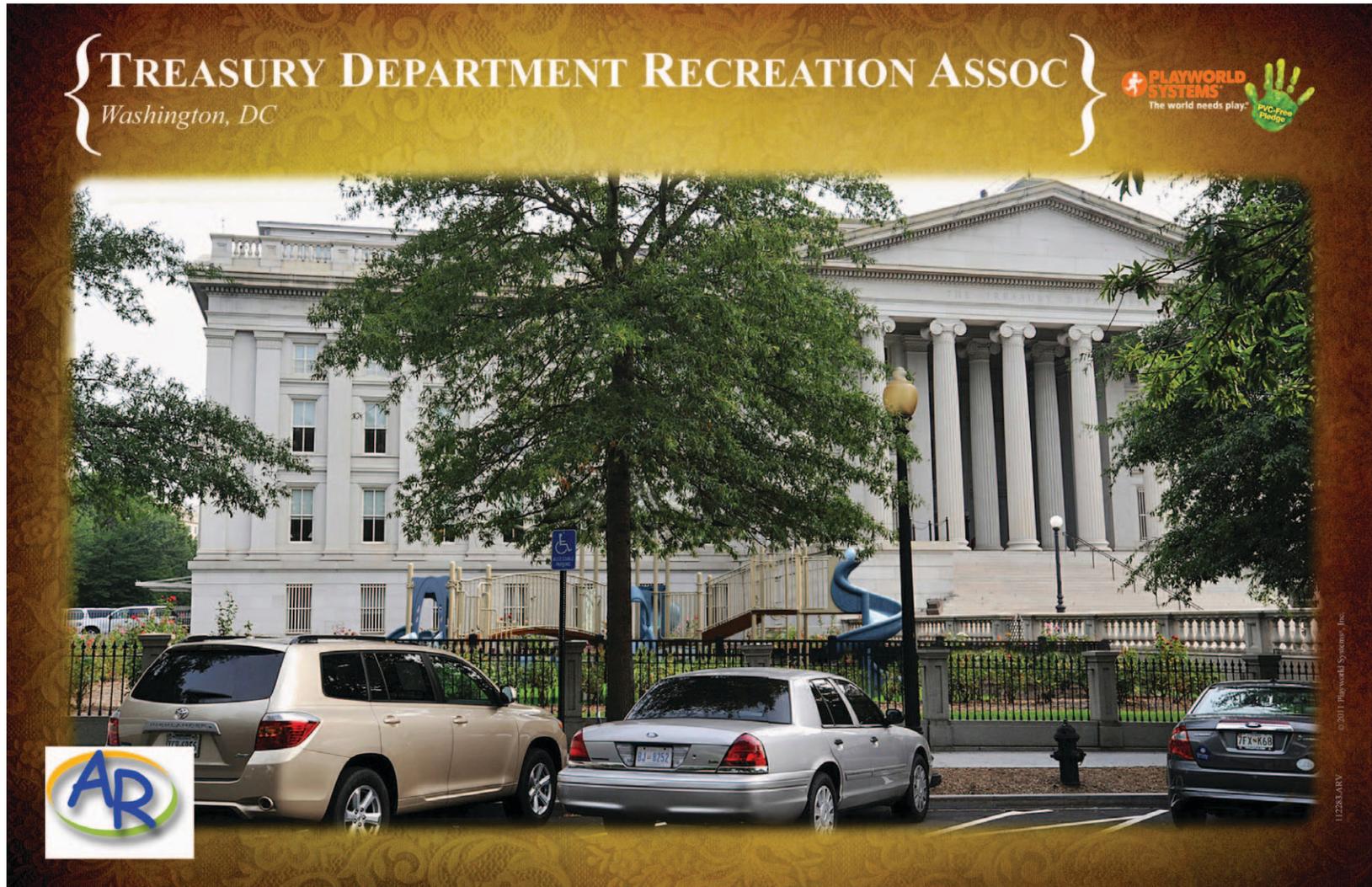
Figure 10:

Proposed Playground Equipment



Figure 11:

Proposed Playground Equipment on Treasury's South Lawn from Hamilton Place



Attachment A
Environmental Checklist

**Installation of Playground Equipment
South Lawn of the Main Treasury Building
Environmental Checklist**

SECTION I-PROJECT INFORMATION			
Date: 08/26/2011	Personnel: <input type="checkbox"/> In-House <input type="checkbox"/> Contractor	Project No.	
Location: South Lawn, Main Treasury		Contract No.	
Contracting Officer:		COTR: Phone:	Coordinator: Eric Bradley Phone: 202.622.0728
Description of Project: The U.S. Department of the Treasury is proposing a playground be constructed on the Southwest quadrant of Treasury's South Lawn within the Rose Garden area. The proposed playground is intended to be not only temporary but seasonal, with much of the equipment to be removed during the winter season. In consideration of the site, only the footings for the heavier equipment will be installed below ground as an anchor. A small iron fence is also proposed to restrict the user's accessibility to the adjacent rose garden.			
Environmental			
YES	NO	N/A	<u>Air Quality</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will construction adversely affect ambient air quality due to dust, vehicle emissions, open burning, etc.?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will industrial activity related to this project result in a significant increase or decrease in air emissions?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the proposed action conform to State Implementation Plans?
			<u>Water Quality</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will the project result in wastewater or other pollutants being discharged into any body of water?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will the project require a discharge permit?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will contaminated water runoff from the construction site be allowed to enter storm sewers?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will the temperature of the surrounding water be raised by discharges resulting from construction?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there potential for an accidental release of oil or any hazardous or toxic material into the storm sewer?
			<u>Wetlands/Wildlife/Farmlands</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will the project result in the loss of any wetlands or farms?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the project likely to impact on any rare or endangered species?
Other			
YES	NO	N/A	<u>Transportation</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will the project involve a significant increase in vehicle traffic on local streets or highways during construction?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will the project require re-routing of traffic?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Historic</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the project site located in an area of archeological, cultural or historical significance?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will the archeological or historical site or structure be altered by the project?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the structure eligible for listing with the National Register of Historic Places?
			<u>Noise</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will construction significantly increase ambient noise levels?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will operations following the completion of the project significantly increase ambient noise levels?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will construction or operations include equipment with unusual noise characteristics?
Economic			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will the project result in a significant increase in the local community population?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is there a shortage of support facilities (hospitals, schools, shopping centers)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will the project result in an increased load on utilities (sewage, water, electric)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Will the project have a significant effect on the economic activity of the area?
Health & Safety			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will the public be exposed to hazardous areas?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will the project require the storage, treatment, handling or disposal of hazardous waste?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will the project require the use of explosives?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will the storage of fuel be required?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will the construction or operation result in significant safety risks for employees or the public?
Land Use			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the proposed use of the project site inconsistent with land use in the area?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the project conflict with local zoning ordinances?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Will the project require the relocation of private residences or business?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Is the proposed architecture inconsistent with the surrounding architecture or landscape?

Impacts

None	Potential Minor	Potential Significant		None	Potential Minor	Potential Significant	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Air Quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ambient Noise
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Water Quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Economic
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wetland/Wildlife/Farms	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Health & Safety
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Land Use

Mitigating Factors

There are no significant environmental impacts associated with this project.