

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

D. Hamilton
NCPC File No. 6588



DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER
451 7th Street, SW, Washington D.C.

Submission by the General Services Administration

May 26, 2005

Abstract

The General Services Administration has submitted concept plans for a new daycare center at the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The new facility will replace the existing day care center and will increase capacity as well as bring the facility up to standards established in the General Services Administration's Child Care Design Guide.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of design concept pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8722(d) and Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act (40 U.S.C. § 8722(b) (1)).

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

- **Approves** the design concept for a Child Development Center, Department of Housing and Urban Development, 451 7th Street SW, Washington D.C., as shown on NCPC Map File No. 24.12(38.00)41609.
- **Requires** the General Services Administration and its consultants to include in future submissions:
 - Expanded special pavement or markings to better identify the main entrance/ drop-off area to avoid potential pedestrian and vehicle circulation conflicts.

- More programmatic and design information on the operations of the infant outdoor play area to ensure that this area does not impede pedestrian circulation along the west side of the HUD building,

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BACKGROUND AND STAFF EVALUATION

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

Background

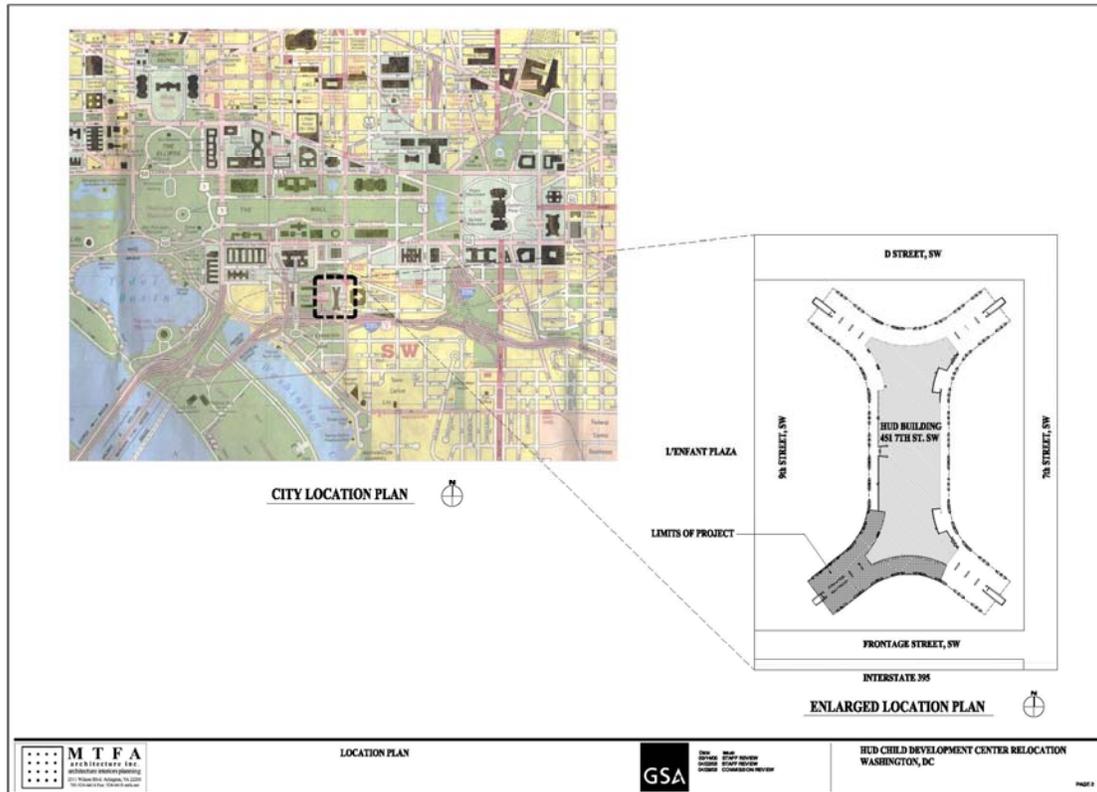
The existing Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) child care facility is currently located in the basement of the HUD building at 451 7th Street, SW. This location does not comply with the GSA Child Care Design Guide standards and has a number of life safety issues. Some of these issues include no direct access to the outside, only one means of egress, no natural light, and no infant program. The current enrollment of the program is 44 children.

Program

The program of the new facility would include approximately 8,000 square feet. It would have a capacity of 76 children including infants, toddlers, one, two, three, four and pre-kindergarten. A new exterior play area for infants would be provided directly off of the classrooms.

Site

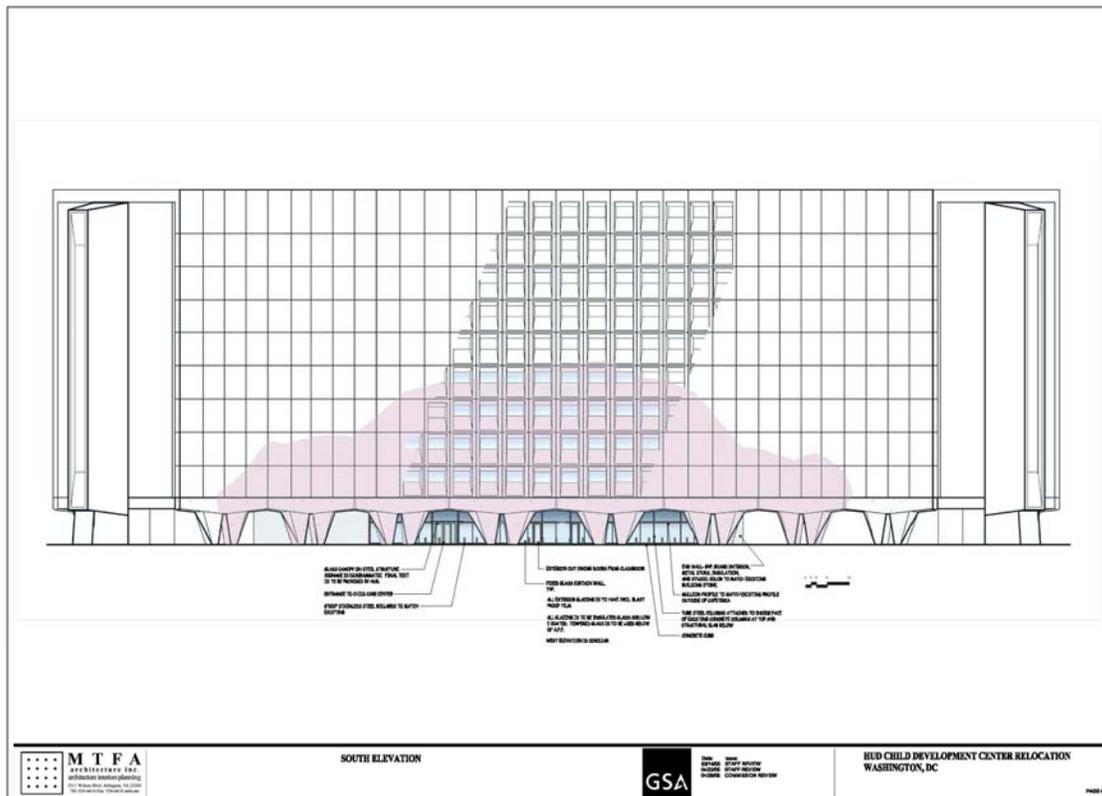
The HUD building, located in southwest Washington DC, is bounded on the north by D Street, on the south by the Southwest Freeway, on the east by 7th Street, and on the west by 9th Street and the L'Enfant Plaza East Building. The proposed location of the new child care facility is on the first level of the HUD building under the arcade at the southwest corner of the building. The view of this area is screened from the nearby streets by a secured parking lot.



Design

The HUD building is not a designated historic landmark. It is located in the Southwest redevelopment Area, the most complete post- World War II urban renewal community in the nation. The building itself designed by Marcel Breuer (it and the Hubert Humphrey building are the only Breuer buildings in Washington) was completed in 1968. The proposed location of the site will maintain the original design as viewed from the adjacent streets and sidewalks. The proposed center is completely reversible so that it does not have a permanent impact on the original exterior design of the building. The existing building proportions, mullions, and glazing have been used a design clues for the proposed project.

The proposed glazing system will be set one foot behind the inside face of the existing concrete pilotis. New main horizontal glazing would contain blast proof film on the interior face. New perimeter bollards would match the existing stainless steel bollards that flank the garage entrance and exit driveways along 7th Street.





PROJECT ANALYSIS

Staff recommends approval of the design concept for the proposal:

- The new day care center would provide a facility that is consistent with the GSA Design Guidelines for Child Care Facilities by providing a second means of egress, natural light, and accommodate infants, unlike the current facility in the basement of the HUD building,
- Its location on the south and west sides of the HUD building is hidden from views from 7th Street by the adjacent secure parking lot, thereby providing visual security for the children.
- Although the HUD building is nearing eligibility for historic designation, construction of the proposed facility is completely reversible and should not adversely impact any such designation.

The GSA requested preliminary approval, but submitted concept drawings. Staff has consulted with GSA on this matter and GSA concurred with the staff's recommendation of concept review.

As the GSA and its consultants prepare preliminary and final plans, staff recommends that:

- Special paving or marking at the main entrance to the day care facility be expanded to better identify the drop-off area to avoid potential pedestrian and vehicle circulation conflicts in this area.

- GSA provide more programmatic and design information on the operations of the infant outdoor play area to ensure that this area does not impede pedestrian circulation along the west side of the HUD building. As currently proposed, it appears that the outdoor play area for infants would prevent pedestrians from continued access along the pedestrian pathway on the west side of the HUD building.

CONFORMANCE

Comprehensive Plan

The proposed concept is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital. The Federal Workplace Element states that the federal government should:

Provide a variety of services for employees or have these services available within a reasonable travel time or walking distance. Services should include restaurants, retail outlets, financial services (including ATMs), day-care centers, and health and fitness centers (Page 52, policy #3).

National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan

The proposed concept is consistent with the Urban Design and Security Plan (UDSP), which encourages agencies to assess the need for proposed security elements. GSA advises that no new perimeter security elements are associated with the proposal. The location of the day care center is such that it is visually screened from the surrounding streets by a secure parking lot. The proposed bollards that would be located in front of the main entrance are the same as used to flank the existing garage entrance along 7th Street. These bollards are not for security, rather, they are to channel traffic.

National Environmental Policy Act

GSA advises that the proposed project is designated a Categorical Exclusion under its procedures in implementing the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act.

Historic Preservation Act

The HUD Building, designed by Marcel Breuer and built between 1963 and 1968, was a significant architectural statement for the newly formed cabinet-level department, and a fulfillment of President Kennedy's directive to improve the quality of public building design. In addition to its radical and efficient design, the building was the first federal office building to be made of precast concrete.

The building is not yet listed in the National Register of Historic Places and therefore not subject to further review under the National Historic Preservation Act because of its relatively recent construction date, but GSA is cognizant of its significance. The child care center has been designed in a manner that is reversible.

CONSULTATION

GSA and its consultants met informally several times with Commission staff in the development of this proposal. As a result, the proposal has been simplified and has less impact on the HUD building.

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal on May 11, 2005. The Committee forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the project meeting has been coordinated with all agencies represented. The participating agencies were: NCPC; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the District of Columbia Fire Department; the General Services Administration; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.