

**HUBERT H. HUMPHREY BUILDING**  
WIDENING OF 3<sup>rd</sup> STREET GARAGE ENTRANCE AND TEMPORARY SECURITY  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C.

**Delegated Action of the Executive Director**

March 27, 2008

Pursuant to delegations of authority adopted by the Commission on October 3, 1996, January 9, 2003 and 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d), I approve the preliminary and final site development plans for the widening of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street parking garage driveway entrance and associated temporary security measures, for a period not to exceed two years, at the Hubert H. Humphrey Building at 200 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C., as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.71(38.40)42486.

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On behalf of the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the General Services Administration (GSA) has submitted preliminary and final site development plans for driveway improvements at the department's headquarters at 200 Independence Avenue, SW. The building was designed by Marcel Breuer and completed in 1975. The proposed project's scope is limited to the widening of the at-grade parking garage driveway entrance at 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, SW, with attendant temporary security measures to accommodate the widened driveway. All of the proposed temporary alterations will occur behind the property line, not in public space. Currently, the one-lane, 15 foot-wide driveway serves the Secretary and other officials, HHS employees, as well as visitors whose credentials must be checked by guards. Since the driveway is short, waiting cars back up on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, SW. The submission proposes widening the driveway from 15 feet to 24 feet so that a second lane is created and employees and visitors can be checked through separately.

The driveway will be widened behind the property line, with no alterations proposed for the driveway apron or sidewalk. Because the driveway is at grade and an element of the broad plaza surrounding the building, its edges are marked by 36-inch-high sculptural elements that can also serve as seats. They are original to the building's design and define the vehicle lane within the pedestrian plaza. The use of these sculptural seats as visual markers is even more pronounced in

front of the building's Independence Avenue entrance. At 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, the seats will be relocated to the new edges of the widened driveway. To secure the widened driveway, three additional hydraulic bollards will be added to the three already in place. The bollards are set back from the sidewalk approximately one and one-half car lengths. A second vehicle arm will be added across the driveway to serve as a visual barrier for the second lane. The granite pavers, cracked and damaged from the weight of vehicles over the years, will be replaced temporarily with concrete pavers, pending the renovation that will occur with the building's modernization. The abandoned undercarriage camera system will be replaced with a new system, installed flush with the pavement, behind the hydraulic bollards. A guard booth has already been installed on the plaza and will remain unchanged.

The submission describes the security measures as temporary, due to the anticipated future complete building modernization. Therefore, I am approving the driveway widening and installation of three additional hydraulic bollards for a period not to exceed two years, consistent with the Commission's policy for temporary security measures. GSA may resubmit the project for renewal after two years.

GSA has applied a categorical exclusion to the project under its procedures to implement the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), finding that the proposal adheres to its Categorical Exclusion 5.3 (k) because no toxic or hazardous substances are involved with the project or exist on site, no properties listed or eligible for the National Register are involved, the building footprint or envelope will not be increased, there is no evidence of community controversy, and there is no evidence of other unresolved environmental issues. NCPC staff has reviewed the proposal under the Commission's Environmental and Historic Preservation Policies and Procedures. Since the installation of temporary security elements will occur behind the property line and not in public space, staff finds that the project qualifies as a Categorical Exclusion under Section 8 (C) (21): Improvement of an existing facility where all of the following conditions are met: The structure and proposed use are in compliance with local planning and zoning and any applicable District of Columbia, state, or federal requirements; the proposed use will not substantially 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 community controversy or other environmental issues.

The Coordinating Committee coordinated the proposal among participating agencies at its meeting of March 12, 2008. The 1975 Marcel Breuer building has not been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places; nevertheless, GSA notified the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office of the proposal, determining that the temporary driveway alterations would have no adverse effect on the building or site.

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Marcel C. Acosta  
Acting Executive Director