

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Cheryl Kelly

NCPC File No. 6809



HOWARD D. WOODSON SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

5500 Eads Street, NE
Washington, D.C.

Submitted by the Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization

May 29, 2008

Abstract

The District of Columbia Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization has submitted a conceptual design for the construction of a new Howard D. Woodson Senior High School to be located at 5500 Eads Street, NE in Washington, DC. The proposed project to build a new 176,658 square foot high school will include demolition of the existing school currently located on this site. Also current site includes athletic facilities which will also be demolished and replaced as part of this project.

Commission Actions Requested by Applicant

Approval of comments on concept design, pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8722 (b) (1).

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

Comments favorably on the concept design for a new Howard D. Woodson Senior High School in Washington, D.C., as shown on NCPC Map File No. 81.20(38.00)42485.

Commends the Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization and the development team for incorporating sustainable design features into the project and designing a multifunctional building that can be enjoyed by the community as well as the students.

* * *

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

The current Howard D. Woodson Senior High School was constructed in 1972 and is currently in operation. The facility is an 8-story concrete tower built upon a raised outdoor plaza above a windowless lower level. This building will be demolished to allow for the construction of the new facility. This project was first initiated by the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) based on the DCPS Master Facilities Plan of 2006 and the DCPS Design Guidelines.



EXISTING SCHOOL



Site

The proposed development is located in Northeast Washington, D.C., on a 15.23 acre site that fronts 55th Street, NE to the east and Eads Street, NE to the south; the nearest north and west streets are Nannie Helen Burroughs Avenue, NE and Division Street, NE, respectively.

The south side of the site borders Marvin Gaye Park, a District owned park. To the north, between the property and Nannie Helen Burroughs Avenue and across 55th Street, NE are residential uses. Between the site and Division Street are commercial uses.

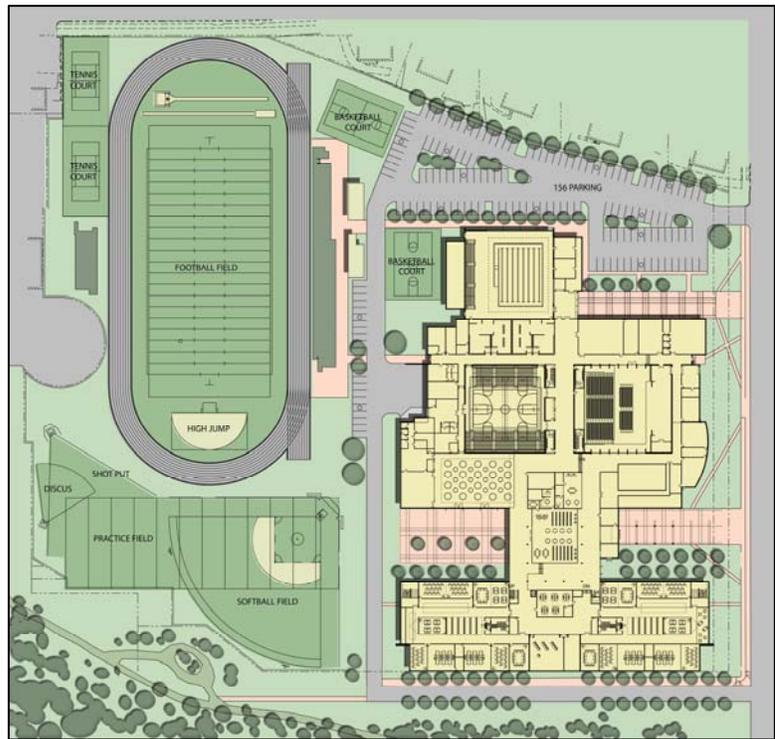
Proposal

The proposed new building has been designed for a capacity of approximately 1300 students and will also house a gymnasium and pool facility that will be open to the public after school hours.

The total building area is 176,658 gross square feet. A new soccer/football field, track, softball field, and practice field will be built on the western section of the site, generally in the same location they are currently located. Parking for approximately 156 vehicles will be provided for the teachers and employees on northeastern part of the site. The parking lot will be accessed from 55th Street.

The three story south wing will house academic classrooms, for English, math, social studies, and special education, on the first floor and science labs on the two upper floors. The first level of the academic wing will also have an adolescent Wellness Center sponsored by Healthy Start and the D.C. Health Department, and space for the University of the District of Columbia to have evening classes. The one-story, north wing of the building will include the media center, cafeteria, band room, gymnasium, swimming pool, art rooms, and administration offices. The community will have access to the pool and ball courts/fields as well as Visual and Performing Arts and Physical Education facilities in the north wing after school hours. The school is designed with a STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) layout, which encourages collaborative spaces and project-based learning.

A number of sustainable design features and energy efficient systems will be incorporated into the new construction, with the goal of achieving a Silver rating based on the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) for Schools criteria (adopted by the U.S. Green Building Council in April 2007). Some of the environmental features proposed to meet LEED Silver are: a vegetative roof on 50 percent of the roof area, a highly reflective surface (a “cool” roof) on the remainder of the roof area, collection of roof runoff, geothermal heating and cooling systems, solar domestic hot water heating, water conserving plumbing fixtures, and automated lighting control systems.



SITE PLAN



EAST ELEVATION: MAIN ENTRANCE



SOUTH ELEVATION: ACADEMIC WING

PROJECT ANALYSIS

As a result of staff consultation, the applicant redesigned the building entrance by removing a drop off area from the front of the building along 55th Street, NE. Staff determined that the previous design detracted from the building entrance and created some confusion with regard to parking. In redesigning the entry the applicant also rearranged some of the program areas located in the north wing. This redesign allowed the classroom areas in the south wing to be better delineated and greatly improved the entrance which also improved the aesthetic value of the overall building.

Staff **comments favorably** on the concept design for a new Howard D. Woodson Senior High School. Staff also **commends** the Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization and the development team for incorporating sustainable design features into the project and designing a multifunctional building that can be enjoyed by the community as well as the students.

CONFORMANCE

National Environmental Policy Act

Since NCPC is advisory for District of Columbia projects outside of the Central Area, it has no independent NEPA obligation for this project. However, the applicant is required to comply with the District of Columbia Environmental Policy Act, DC Code 8-109.01 et seq. The applicant has submitted an Environmental Impact Screening Form to the District Department of the Environment (DDOE). DDOE has “determined that the proposed project is not likely to have substantial negative impact on the environment.”

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

The project documents have been reviewed by the DC-SHPO (SHPO), who confirmed that the current Howard D. Woodson Senior High School is not listed as a D.C. historic landmark, nor does it meet the criteria for designation as a historic property. The SHPO has determined that the demolition would result in No Effect on eligible historic properties under Section 106 of NHPA. The Commission does not have independent review authority with respect to the project since it is located on District of Columbia public land outside the Central Area.

CONSULTATION

Coordination Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal on May 14, 2008, and forwarded it to the Commission with the statement that the project has been coordinated with all agencies represented. The participating agencies were NCPC; the National Park Service; the General Services Administration; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the District Department of Transportation; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA)

On May 15, 2008, the Commission of Fine Arts voted to approve conceptual plans for the construction of a new high school on the Howard D. Woodson Senior High School site. The Commission commented favorably on the design and building program and requested that it return for final building plans approval in the future.