

**FEDERAL OFFICE BUILDING 8
EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS**

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT



WASHINGTON, DC

U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

IN COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION

AUGUST 2009

This page intentionally left blank

FEDERAL OFFICE BUILDING 8 EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Responsible Agency:
General Services Administration

Cooperating Agency:
National Capital Planning Commission

Abstract:

The General Services Administration (GSA), in cooperation with National Capital Planning Commission, has prepared this Environmental Assessment (EA) for exterior improvements to Federal Office Building 8 (FOB 8) in Washington, DC. The project includes the renovation of the exterior of the building and its grounds, the addition of an entrance pavilion, and the installation of permanent perimeter security. This EA considers the environmental effects of implementing the No Action (no build) alternative and three action alternatives. The action alternatives differ in the location of perimeter security and the design of a landscaped plaza on the north elevation of the building.

For information concerning this document contact:

Suzanne Hill
GSA NCR NEPA Lead
301 7th Street SW
Room 7600
Washington, DC 20407
Phone: (202)205-5821
suzanne.hill@gsa.gov

This page intentionally left blank

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	Purpose and Need	
1.1	Introduction	1-1
1.2	Background	1-3
1.3	Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action	1-5
1.4	Public Involvement and Agency Coordination	1-6
1.5	Environmental Issues Considered	1-7
2.0	Alternatives	
2.1	Introduction	2-1
2.2	Alternatives Considered But Dismissed From Detailed Analysis	2-1
2.3	Alternative A: Preferred Alternative	2-3
2.4	Alternative B	2-9
2.5	Alternative C	2-12
2.6	No Action Alternative	2-14
2.7	Comparison of Alternatives	2-14
2.8	Selection of Preferred Alternative	2-18
3.0	Affected Environment	
3.1	Cultural Resources	3-1
3.1.1	Archaeological Resources	3-3
3.1.2	Historic Resources	3-4
3.1.3	Visual Resources	3-22
3.2	Socio-Economic Resources	3-36
3.2.1	Land Use	3-36
3.2.2	Planning Policies	3-37
3.2.3	Public Space	3-42
3.3	Natural Resources	3-43
3.3.1	Vegetation	3-43
3.3.2	Water Resources	3-45
3.4	Transportation	3-46
3.4.1	Vehicular Circulation	3-46

3.4.2	Parking	3-47
3.4.3	Public Transportation	3-48
3.4.4	Pedestrian/Bicycle Circulation	3-49
3.5	Utilities/Infrastructure	3-51
3.5.1	Utilities	3-51
3.5.2	Stormwater Management	3-52
3.5.3	Hazardous Waste/Contamination	3-53
3.6	Air Quality	3-54
3.7	Noise Levels	3-55
4.0	Environmental Consequences	
4.1	Cultural Resources	4-1
4.1.1	Archaeological Resources	4-2
4.1.2	Historic Resources	4-4
4.1.3	Visual Resources	4-8
4.2	Socio-Economic Resources	4-17
4.2.1	Land Use	4-17
4.2.2	Planning Policies	4-17
4.2.3	Public Space	4-20
4.3	Natural Resources	4-23
4.3.1	Vegetation	4-23
4.3.2	Water Resources	4-23
4.4	Transportation	4-25
4.4.1	Vehicular Circulation	4-25
4.4.2	Parking	4-26
4.4.3	Public Transportation	4-26
4.4.4	Pedestrian/Bicycle Circulation	4-27
4.5	Utilities/Infrastructure	4-30
4.5.1	Utilities	4-30
4.5.2	Stormwater Management	4-33
4.5.3	Hazardous Waste/Contamination	4-34
4.6	Air Quality	4-35
4.7	Noise Levels	4-36

4.8	Cumulative Impacts	4-37
5.0	Appendix	
5.1	Sources	
5.2	Preparers	
5.3	Notification List	

FIGURES

Figure 1-1	FOB 8 Project Site and Surrounding Area	1-2
Figure 1-2	FOB 8 as viewed from the north side of C Street, SW	1-4
Figure 2-1	Entry Pavilion Reduction	2-2
Figure 2-2	Proposed Exterior Improvements to FOB 8	2-4
Figure 2-3	Typical Streetscape Condition	2-5
Figure 2-4	Typical Plaza Condition	2-7
Figure 2-5	Alternative A Site Plan	2-9
Figure 2-6	Alternative B Site Plan	2-12
Figure 2-7	Alternative C Site Plan	2-14
Figure 3-1	Area of Potential Effects for Historic Resources	3-2
Figure 3-2	L'Enfant Plan for the City of Washington, 1791	3-5
Figure 3-3	The Mall	3-7
Figure 3-4	View south on 3 rd Street from Jefferson Drive	3-8

Figure 3-5	U.S. Capitol Building	3-10
Figure 3-6	View to U.S. Capitol from the northeast corner of the project site	3-11
Figure 3-7	Hubert H. Humphrey Building	3-12
Figure 3-8	View of Hubert H. Humphrey Building from FOB 8	3-13
Figure 3-9	Mary Switzer Building	3-15
Figure 3-10	Wilbur J. Cohen Building	3-17
Figure 3-11	U.S. Botanic Garden	3-18
Figure 3-12	View of U.S. Botanic Garden from FOB 8	3-19
Figure 3-13	The Bartholdi Fountain	3-21
Figure 3-14	View east on C Street from 3 rd Street, SW	3-24
Figure 3-15	View west on C Street with FOB 8 and the Switzer Building in the foreground	3-25
Figure 3-16	View along the Diagonal Portion of C Street from the northeast corner of the project site	3-26
Figure 3-17	View looking north along 3 rd Street from D Street, SW	3-28
Figure 3-18	View looking north on 3 rd street near C Street, SW	3-29
Figure 3-19	View looking east on D Street, SW with FOB 8 on the left	3-31
Figure 3-20	View along D Street, SW looking west with FOB 8 on the right	3-32
Figure 3-21	View south on 2 nd Street from C Street, with FOB 8 on the right	3-34

Figure 3-22	View north on 2 nd Street, SW with the Humphrey Building on the left, and the National Mall and U.S. Botanic Garden in the Center of the View	3-35
Figure 3-23	Magnolia at the corner of C and 3 rd Streets, SW	3-44
Figure 3-24	Narrow sidewalk at the east end of C Street, SW with FOB 8 at the left	3-50
Figure 4-1	District-wide Perimeter Security Projects	4-41

This page intentionally left blank

1.0

PURPOSE AND NEED

This page intentionally left blank

1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Federal Office Building 8 (FOB 8) was constructed as a laboratory facility for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 1965 and was occupied by FDA until 2002. The building is located approximately two blocks southeast of the U.S. Capitol Building, filling an entire city block in Southwest Washington, DC. The block is bounded by C Street, SW in the north, 2nd Street, SW in the east, D Street, SW in the south, and 3rd Street, SW in the west (Figure 1-1). In conjunction with a major modernization of the building that will convert laboratory to office space, the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) proposes to install permanent perimeter security at the building, add an entrance pavilion, and renovate the exterior of the building and its grounds.

GSA is preparing this Environmental Assessment (EA) to determine the potential impacts of the exterior improvements to the building and site work on the natural and man-made environment. The National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) is a cooperating agency in this effort. This EA is consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA [40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1500-1508 (1986)], the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, and GSA's PBS *NEPA Desk Guide*.

This EA identifies three action alternatives and a No Action alternative. Potential environmental impacts are outlined for each of the alternatives, including short-term construction-related impacts, long-term operational impacts, and cumulative impacts resulting from the implementation of the proposed action together with other current or planned projects. In addition, mitigation measures are suggested to address identified impacts. The study area for the assessment of impacts is generally within a one-block radius of the site, however, this area may expand or contract based on the resource discipline.



Figure 1-1: Project Site and the Surrounding Area
Source: EDAW

1.2 BACKGROUND

Located at 200 C Street, SW, FOB 8 was designed and constructed in 1965 for FDA as laboratory space. Additional tenants have included the Consumer Product Safety Commission and a division of EPA. FDA vacated the building in 2002 and interior renovation began, including the abatement of hazardous materials. The renovation will convert vacant, former laboratory, space to office space suitable for use by federal agencies. There is currently a market for federal office space, particularly in the vicinity of the U.S. Capitol Building, and the renovation of FOB 8 will provide additional space to satisfy the demand. Once the renovation is complete, the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will be lease holders for the spaces within FOB 8. The space being leased by AOC will be occupied by the U.S. House of Representatives. Abatement of hazardous materials has been completed and minor interior renovations have begun. Prior to any work on the building, compliance with NEPA was achieved through the completion of a categorical exclusion. At the time the categorical exclusion was completed the scope of the project did not include the installation of permanent perimeter security, an entrance pavilion, and the conversion of the existing surface parking lot to landscape plaza. Due to the change in the scope of the project, and inclusion of perimeter security elements that may be located in public space, an EA was deemed necessary to understand the impacts that the proposed exterior improvements and enhanced site work could have on the human environment.

The building is comprised of eight levels: a basement, a ground level, and six additional stories (Figure 1-2). There is also a rooftop penthouse containing mechanical equipment. The basement level contains an underground parking garage that accommodates 59 cars and is accessed from a driveway off of 2nd Street. The garage is located outside of the main building footprint, below a surface parking lot on the north face of the building.



Figure 1-2: FOB 8 as viewed from the north side of C Street
Source: EDAW, 2008

1.3 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

The purpose of and need for the proposed action is to enhance the building and building site and provide Level IV protection for the facility. The proposed action includes improvements to the façade of FOB 8 and adjacent grounds, the installation of permanent perimeter security measures, the conversion of a surface parking lot to a landscaped plaza, and the construction of a new entrance pavilion for the building.

The proposed permanent security measures were developed in accordance with the Interagency Security Committee (ISC) Security Design Criteria for New Federal Office Buildings and Major Modernization Projects approved by concurrence of the ISC membership on September 29, 2004. The ISC Security Design Criteria require that security measures be based on a building-specific risk assessment resulting in a recommended Level of Protection. The level of protection is determined by tenant function missions, adjacent facilities and targets, significance of the facility, and building size and location. The only “risk assessment” that was performed on FOB 8 was completed in 2003 when the facility was vacant. The Facility Security Level Determinations for Federal Facilities (ISC Standard) that was conducted by the tenant agencies, Federal Protective Service (FPS), and GSA determined that the facility was a Level IV facility. The subsequent Decision Support Tool (ISC Standard) determination indicates a High Level of Protection for perimeter security, defended standoff, and blast resistant tables. Designation as a Level IV facility implies that the building will house at least 450 federal employees and is likely to be: over 150,000 sf; have a high-volume of public contact; and house tenant agencies that could include high-risk law enforcement and intelligence agencies, courts, judicial offices, and highly sensitive government records. The proposed permanent perimeter security measures were developed to provide the level of protection that is required by the risk assessment. The three action alternatives were designed to reduce vulnerability from identified threats.

The proposed façade improvements have been designed to maximize the amount of natural light into the building interior, while at the same time providing blast resistant exterior walls and windows. These façade improvements are needed in order to create high quality office space that meets the level of protection deemed necessary for the building and proposed federal tenants. The conversion of the surface parking lot to a landscaped plaza would provide public gathering space for occupants of the surrounding federal buildings.

1.4 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND AGENCY COORDINATION

1.4.1 Public Involvement and Agency Coordination

GSA initiated the public scoping process on February 11, 2009 through the distribution of letters to regulatory and review agencies requesting comment on the proposed exterior improvements to FOB 8. In addition, an announcement was posted on the GSA website stating the agency's intention to prepare an EA and to solicit public comment during the scoping period. The public comment period was open through March 13, 2009. Comments received during this period were taken into consideration in the development of this EA.

As part of the coordinated Section 106 and NEPA process, consultation meetings have taken place. The first meeting occurred on April 7, 2009 and included NCPIC, the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA), DC Office of Planning (DCOP), National Park Service (NPS), and other interested agencies. The second consultation meeting occurred on July 2, 2009. Meetings will continue, as necessary, throughout the environmental and historic preservation review process.

1.4.2 Public and Agency Comments on the EA

The public and agencies are encouraged to comment on the contents of this EA. The organizations, agencies, and individuals listed on the notification list in the Appendix were notified by mail or email of the availability of the EA. The FOB 8 EA has been posted on GSA's website and copies of the EA are available for review at: the offices of the National Capital Planning Commission at 401 Ninth Street, NW, North Tower, Suite 500, Washington, DC; Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library, 901 G Street, NW, Washington, DC; Southwest Neighborhood Library, 900 Wesley Place, SW, Washington, DC; and Southeast Neighborhood Library, 403 7th Street, SE, Washington, DC

Comments on the EA must be submitted during the 30-day comment period, which concludes on September 25, 2009. Comments should be mailed, emailed or faxed to:

Ms. Suzanne Hill, GSA NCR NEPA Lead
U.S. General Services Administration
301 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20407
Email: suzanne.hill@gsa.gov

1.5 ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES CONSIDERED

This EA has been prepared to evaluate the potential impacts that the proposed building façade and site work renovation and security elements would have on a range of natural and man-made resources. These include:

- cultural resources (historic, archaeological, and visual resources);
- socioeconomic resources (land use, planning policies, and public space);
- natural resources (vegetation and water resources);
- transportation (vehicular circulation, parking, public transportation, and pedestrian circulation);
- utilities/infrastructure (utilities, stormwater management, and hazardous materials);
- air quality; and
- noise.

Through the scoping process, it was determined that cultural resources was a key topic of consideration and thus required a more detailed analysis.

Several issues were initially considered for evaluation in this EA, but were eliminated from detailed study because there would be no impacts or impacts would be negligible. These issues, and the rationale for their elimination, are as follows:

Economic and Fiscal Resources: Exterior improvements to FOB 8 would not increase or decrease economic activity in the area, nor would they impact local tax revenues. Thus, this resource area was dismissed from detailed study.

Community Facilities: The proposed action would not increase or decrease the population of the area, or change the current residents' access to community facilities. Thus, there would be no impacts to this resource area.

Demographics and Environmental Justice: Due to the project's location, the proposed action would not directly affect the resident populations. Thus, there would be no impacts to demographics or environmental justice.

Geology, Topography, and Soils: The exterior improvements to FOB 8 would not have any substantive impacts on the site's natural geology, topography or soils, as little excavation would be required and the soils in the area are generally the result of fill. Further, the site has been previously disturbed and exists within a dense urbanized area.

Wildlife: Wildlife on the FOB 8 site is limited to urban species, including grey squirrels, house sparrows, and pigeons. These species could be temporarily dispersed during construction. However, urban wildlife would be expected to return to the site once construction is completed.

2.0

ALTERNATIVES

This page intentionally left blank

2.0 ALTERNATIVES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This EA evaluates a range of alternative actions related to the proposed exterior improvements and permanent perimeter security elements for FOB 8. Four alternatives are considered within this EA, three action alternatives and a No Action alternative. The three action alternatives each present different concepts for the location of perimeter security and the design of the plaza on the north side of the building.

2.2 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT DISMISSED FROM DETAILED ANALYSIS

Over the course of more than a year, GSA considered numerous designs for the landscaped plaza on the north face of the building. These concepts ranged from hardscaped plazas to open grassy lawns. The three alternatives considered within this EA were refined during the public scoping process and represent a range of potential design options.

GSA also considered several designs for the security pavilion on the building's north elevation. Alternatives not carried forward within the EA include a one-story pavilion with a reduced footprint, a larger pavilion than the one currently proposed, and the absence of a pavilion. The latter would require that security screening occur within the main body of the building. This option was rejected as it would not meet established security criteria for FOB 8. The one-story pavilion with a substantially smaller footprint was rejected due the fact that it would not allow sufficient screening space to accommodate the required program. The larger pavilion which was initially considered would have stood 44'-10" high, with a footprint of 43'-6" wide by 46'-3" deep. A smaller design was chosen as it would reduce visual impacts on adjacent properties and view corridors, in addition to creating additional public space within the plaza. Figure 2-1 illustrates the reduction in the size of the pavilion from that originally considered.

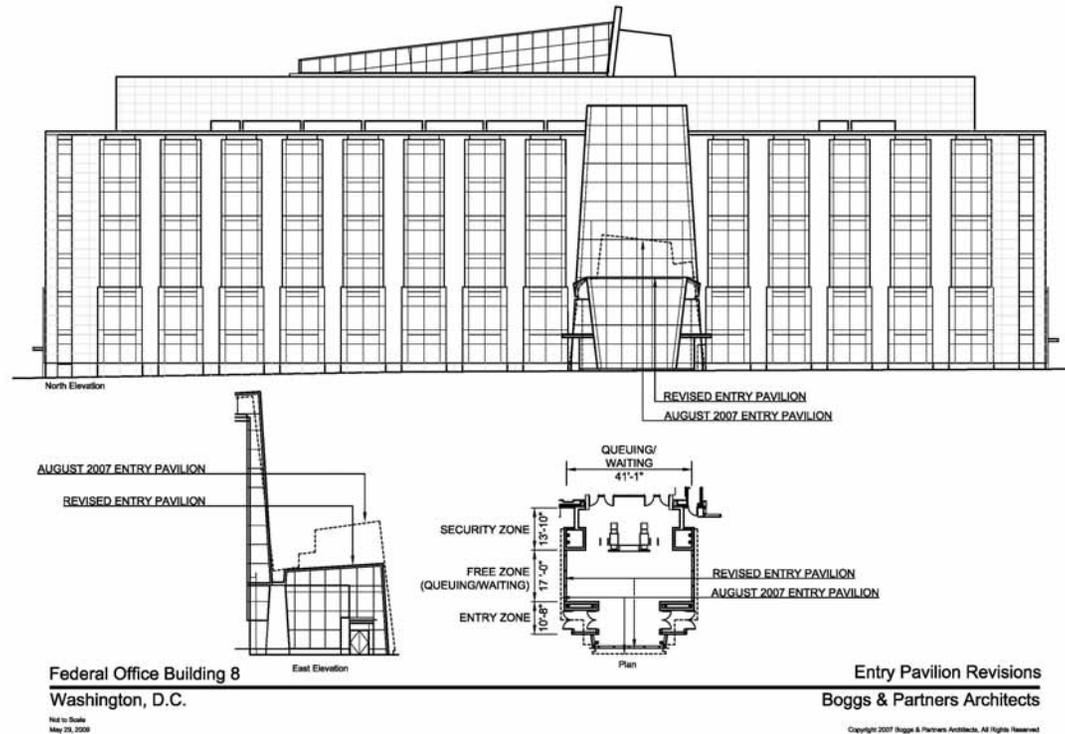


Figure 2-1: Entry Pavilion Reduction
 Source: Boggs and Partners, Architects, 2009

GSA considered establishing the defended security perimeter at 50 feet from the façade of the building, as required by the established level of protection, along 2nd, 3rd, and D Streets. This alternative, however, was rejected as it would have required closing traffic lanes on these streets. Further hardening of the building to reduce the recommended standoff was considered but would have required substantial demolition and dramatically increased the cost of the renovation.

2.3 ALTERNATIVE A: PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Under Alternative A, exterior improvements would be made to FOB 8 as a part of the renovation of the building. FOB 8 was originally designed as laboratory space and thus glazing is limited, particularly on the 2nd and 3rd Street elevations. Under Alternative A, the vertical bands of windows on the C and D Street elevations would be maintained; however, where the individual windows are now segmented by panels, the renovated structure would have continuous bands of glazing. On the 2nd and 3rd Street elevations, the current glazed vertical bands would be replaced with 42'-8"-wide glazed panels, allowing natural light into the new offices. In addition, a skylight would project from the surface of the roof (Figure 2-2).

In addition to the new glazing, a security pavilion would be installed at the main entrance on the north face of the building. It would be 30'-9" high, with a footprint of 43'-6" wide by 46'-3" deep. The pavilion would be constructed of granite and glass, with the glazed walls serving to minimize its apparent mass and scale.



Figure 2-2: Proposed Exterior Improvements to FOB 8 along 2nd and C Streets

Source: Boggs and Partners, Architects, 2009

A landscaped plaza would be installed on the north face of the building, replacing the current surface parking lot. The plaza would include grassy treed panels on either side of the entrance. An additional lawn area is envisioned for the northwest corner of the lot, with a hardened seatwall defining the edges of the panel on 3rd and C Streets. Wide rectilinear paths would bisect the plaza, allowing for circulation between 2nd, 3rd and C Streets, and the entrance to the building. The below grade parking garage, loading dock and service areas would continue to be accessed from the drive on 2nd Street.

Under Alternative A, perimeter security would be provided largely between the sidewalk and the curb. Security elements would include a combination of low fences, tree boxes, hardened walls and seatwalls, and hardened streetscape features, such as bike racks, trash receptacles, and streetlights. These features would be set back two feet from the curb, per DDOT standards (Figure 2-3). Bollards would be utilized at entrances, corners, and where the security line crosses the sidewalk. Existing trees surrounding the site would be removed and replaced with new lines of trees between the sidewalk and the curbline.

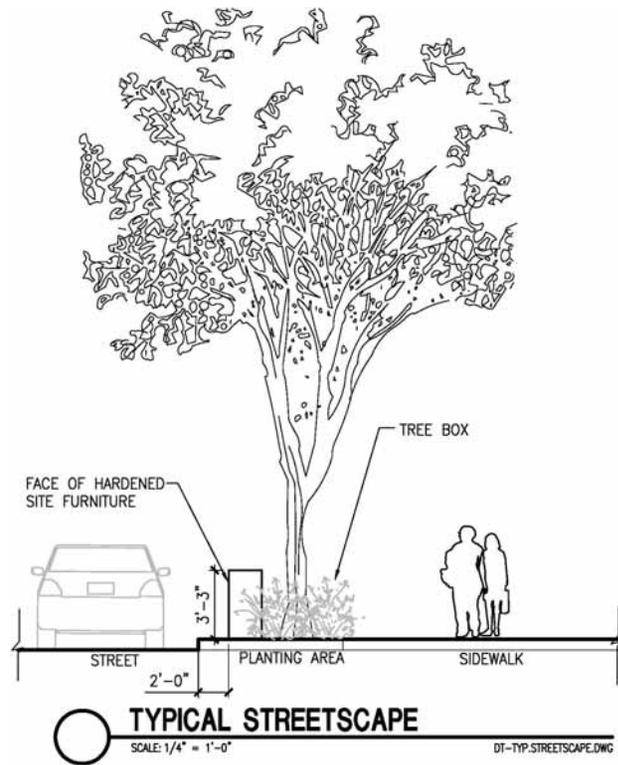


Figure 2-3: Typical Streetscape Condition

Source: EDAW, 2009

On C Street, the perimeter security would be provided through a hardened seatwall at the west end of the plaza (Figure 2-4), a low hardened wall bordering a grassy bed at the center of the block, and a hardened wall that currently defines the entrance to the parking garage on the east end of the site, approximately 94’ from the north face of the building. Bollards would run between the small central grassy bed and entrance drive and planting bed walls. The proposed bollards would be 11” in diameter and spaced 4’11” apart on center, allowing for a 4’ clearance.

On 2nd Street, retractable bollards or pop-up barriers would be employed at the garage entrance, and a small guard station would be located just south of entrance. South of the guard station, bollards would cross both the walk from the entrance plaza

and the sidewalk on 2nd Street. Moving south, a combination of hardened streetscape elements would be sited between the sidewalk and the curbline, approximately 26' from the face of the building. Near the south end of the block, these elements would be replaced with bollards and the security line would pull in slightly from the edge of the curb to accommodate an existing Metrorail vent.

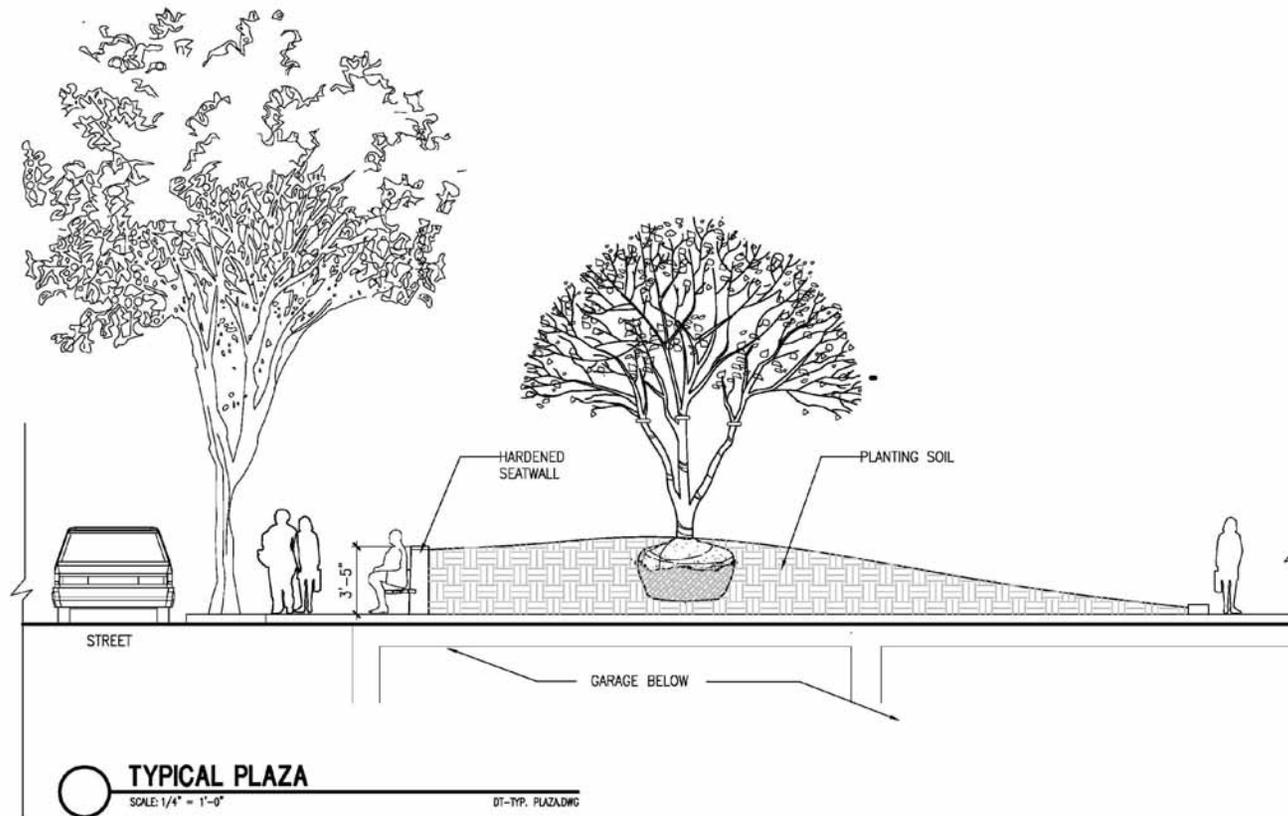


Figure 2-4: Typical Plaza Condition

Source: EDAW, 2009

On both D and 3rd Streets, the hardened streetscape elements would be placed between the sidewalk and the curblineline. On D Street, the security elements would be located approximately 24' from the face of the building, while on 3rd Street they would be sited approximately 40' from the building face. Bollards would be employed at the entrance on D Street and at the corner of 3rd and D. Where the 3rd Street sidewalk meets the landscaped plaza, the security line would move from the outside of the sidewalk to the hardened walls along the edges of the two planting beds. At this point, bollards would cross the 3rd Street sidewalk and the east-west walkway through the entrance plaza (Figure 2-5).

Even though this is the preferred alternative, the defended standoff is less than what is required (50 feet) by the determined level of protection along 2nd, 3rd, and D Streets, and thus reflects the assumption of increased risk by the tenant agencies and GSA. The distance between the security features and each side of building face is illustrated in Table 2-2.



Figure 2-5: Alternative A Site Plan

Source: EDAW 2009

2.4 ALTERNATIVE B

Under Alternative B, exterior improvements would be made to FOB 8. The new glazing, skylight and security pavilion would be identical to those proposed under Alternative A (Figure 2-2). The bollards used in Alternative B will be of the same dimensions and spacing as in Alternative A.

A landscaped plaza would be installed on the north face of the building, replacing the current surface parking lot. The plaza would include grassy treed panels on either side of the entrance. Additional lawn areas are envisioned for the northwest corner of the lot and an area northeast of the entrance abutting the entrance drive to the garage. Both areas would be accessible to pedestrians through curved paths that cut through the plaza. A hardened seatwall would be provided on the edge of grassy area along 3rd and C Streets. Two oval planters with integrated seating would be located at the east and west ends of the curved paths. The below grade parking garage, loading dock, and service areas would continue to be accessed from the drive on 2nd Street.

With the exception of 3rd and C Streets, perimeter security would be provided between the sidewalk and the curb. Along 2nd and D Streets, security elements could include a combination of low fences, tree boxes, hardened walls and seatwalls, and hardened streetscape features, such as bike racks, trash receptacles, and streetlights (see Figure 2-3). Bollards would be utilized at entrances, corners, and where the security line crosses the sidewalk. Existing street trees would be removed and new trees would be installed between the sidewalk and the curblin. On 3rd Street, a low terrace wall would be sited between the edge of the building and the sidewalk.

On C Street, perimeter security would be provided through a hardened seatwall at the west end of the plaza (see Figure 2-4) and a hardened wall that currently defines the entrance to the parking garage, approximately 94' from the north face of the building. Bollards would run between the two northernmost grassy beds, set back slightly from the sidewalk. The trees along C Street and against the face of the building would be removed and replaced with a new line of trees between the curblineline and the sidewalk.

On 2nd Street, retractable bollards or pop-up barriers would be employed at the garage entrance and a small guard booth would be constructed just south of the entrance drive. South of the guard station, bollards would cross the northern portion of the plaza pathway, meet the oval planter, and then cross the southern portion of the path and the sidewalk on 2nd Street. From there, a combination of hardened streetscape elements would be sited between sidewalk and the curblineline, approximately 26' from the face of the building. Near the south end of the block, these elements would be replaced with bollards and the security line would pull in slightly from the edge of the curb to accommodate an existing Metrorail vent. The trees along 2nd Street would be removed and replaced with a new line of trees between the curblineline and the sidewalk.

On D Street, the hardened streetscape elements would be placed between the sidewalk and the curblineline, approximately 24' from the face of the building. Bollards would be employed at the entrance and at the corner of 3rd and D Streets, and existing street trees would be replaced. Turning north at 3rd Street, bollards would cross the sidewalk to meet a hardened guardrail along the edge of the sunken courtyard. North of the courtyard, bollards would cross a small entrance on 3rd Street. To the north, a hardened terrace wall located on the inside of the sidewalk would form the security line, running to the planting bed at the corner of the building, approximately 29' from the face of the building. Bollards would then cross the southern branch of the walkway to the main entrance, meet a hardened oval planter, and then cross the northern branch of the walkway to meet a hardened seatwall at the northwest corner of the plaza. The trees along D Street would be removed and replaced with a new line of trees between the curblineline and the sidewalk (Figure 2-4).

The defended standoff on 3rd Street would be 11 feet less than what is provided for in Alternative A (a further reduction from what is required by the determined level of protection). The distance between the security features and each side of building face is illustrated in Table 2-2.



Figure 2-6: Alternative B Site Plan

Source: EDAW 2009

2.5 ALTERNATIVE C

Under Alternative C, exterior improvements would be made to FOB 8. The new glazing, security pavilion, and skylight would be identical to those proposed under Alternative A. The bollards used in Alternative C would be of the same dimensions and spacing as in Alternatives A and B.

A landscaped plaza would be installed on the north face of the building (C Street), replacing the current surface parking lot. The plaza would include grassy treed panels that would define the edges of a walkway angled from the northeast corner of the plaza to the southwest corner. An open plaza would be provided at the northwest corner of the site, with seating accommodated by a hardened seatwall. The below grade parking garage, loading dock and service areas would continue to be accessed from the drive on 2nd Street.

Perimeter security would be provided on 2nd, D, and 3rd Streets through a 39" hardened terrace wall located between the edge of the building and the sidewalk. On D Street, the wall would be located approximately 14' feet from the face of the building, while on 2nd Street the wall would be set approximately 17' from the building face. On 3rd Street, the space between the building face and terrace wall would be greater, approximately 29'. Bollards would be utilized at entrances and the guardrail above the sunken garden would be hardened to perform a security function. Trees along these roadways would be replaced with new lines of street trees.

At the landscaped plaza, the seatwalls would serve a security function (see Figure 2-4). Moving east, bollards would run between the two small hardened planting beds. The current wall along the edge of the entrance drive to the garage would be hardened, and retractable bollards or pop-up barriers would be employed at the drive itself. Bollards would cross the east and west ends of the plaza walkway, before meeting the hardened edge of the new planting beds that abut the north elevation of the building. Trees along C Street and against the face of the building would be removed and replaced with a new line of trees between the sidewalk and the curblin (Figure 2-7).

The defended standoff on all four sides is less than what is provided for in Alternatives A and B (a further reduction from what is required by the determined level of protection). The distance between the security features and each side of building face is illustrated in Table 2-2.



Figure 2-7: Alternative C Site Plan
Source: EDAW 2009

2.6 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under the No Action Alternative, the exterior of FOB 8 would not be improved. The surface parking lot on the north face of the building would remain and no perimeter security elements would be installed. The No Action Alternative would not meet the needs identified in GSA's risk assessment for the building, and thus either the building would remain vacant or alternative security measures would be required.

2.7 COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

The exterior improvements to the building are consistent for all three alternatives and meet GSA's intent to provide high quality and secure office environments. As previously stated, this is accomplished through increasing the natural light in the building's interior. The exterior improvements also comply with ISC Standards that require blast resistant exterior walls and windows. Further, the pavilion would allow visitors and employees to undergo proper screening protocol prior to entering the building.

The three action alternatives differ in their placement of the security features around the building's perimeter and the design of the plaza along C Street. Alternative A would provide the largest defended standoff by locating security features along the curb on 2nd, D and 3rd Streets, and between the sidewalk and the building face on C Street. The landscaped plaza would provide an open plaza and seating for occupants of FOB 8 and the surrounding buildings. Alternative A best meets the purpose and need by enhancing the building and site and most closely conforming to the 50' setback required to meet the determined level of protection.

Alternative B would locate the security line between the sidewalk and the face of the building on 3rd and C Streets, and between the curblineline and the sidewalk on 2nd and D Streets. As such, it represents a further reduction below the 50' standoff required to meet the medium level of protection. The landscaped plaza proposed in Alternative B would provide an open plaza and seating for building residents and visitors, including a grassy lawn near the northwest corner. The curved pathways are designed to funnel pedestrians through the plaza to points northeast and southwest of the site. Alternative B would meet the purpose and need by enhancing the building and site, and improving perimeter security.

Alternative C would provide the smallest defended standoff by locating security features inside of the sidewalk on each of the roadways. The landscaped plaza proposed in Alternative C would provide an open plaza and seating for building residents

and visitors focused on the northwest corner of the site. The angled pathways would facilitate circulation between the Metro station and the U.S. Capitol Building. Alternative C would meet the purpose and need by enhancing the building and site, and improving perimeter security, however it would not provide enough standoff required to meet a medium level of security.

Under the No Action Alternative, improvements would not occur at the site. This would not meet GSA’s purpose and need.

Tables 2-1 and 2-2 summarize the major elements and proposed spatial conditions associated with each action alternative and the No Action Alternative.

Table 2-1: Comparison of Action Alternatives				
Site Feature	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	No Action Alternative
Landscaped plaza	Funnels pedestrians to entry pavilion; most usable amount of public space	Funnels pedestrians through plaza, off-site	Funnels pedestrians through plaza, off-site	Would remain a surface parking lot
Building modernization	New glazing, new entry pavilion	New glazing, new entry pavilion	New glazing, new entry pavilion	Building would not be improved
Location of Security Features	Between sidewalk and curblin on 2 nd , D and 3 rd Streets; between sidewalk and building face on C Street	Between sidewalk and curblin on 2 nd and D Streets; between sidewalk and building face on 3 rd and C Streets	Between sidewalk and building face on all streets	No permanent security features would be installed

Table 2-2: Comparison of Spatial Conditions Under Existing Conditions and Each Alternative

Building Side	Existing: Building Face to Building Yard	Approximate Distance from Building Face to Perimeter Security			Existing: Building Face to Curbline	Approximate Distance from Curbline to Perimeter Security		
		Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C		Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C
C Street, SW	94'	94'	94'	55'/94'	103'	9'	9'	48'/9'
D Street, SW	14'	24'	24'	14'	26'	2'	2'	12'
2 nd Street, SW	17'	26'	26'	17'	28'	2'	2'	11'
3 rd Street, SW	29'	40'	29'	29'	42'	2'	13'	13'

Due to the variation in alternatives, each will have different effects on the surrounding area. The following table (Table 2-3) summarizes each alternative’s impact to the resources studied in this Environmental Assessment.

Table 2-3: Comparison of Impacts

Resource	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	No Action Alternative
Historic Resources	Negligible to minor long-term adverse impact to Switzer, Cohen, and Humphrey Buildings; minor to moderate long-term adverse impact to L'Enfant Plan	Negligible to minor long-term adverse impact to Switzer, Cohen, and Humphrey Buildings; minor to moderate long-term adverse impact to L'Enfant Plan	Negligible long-term impacts to surrounding historic properties and L'Enfant Plan	Negligible long-term impact
Archaeological Resources	Negligible long-term impact	Negligible long-term impact	Negligible long-term impact	Negligible long-term impact
Visual Resources	Minor to moderate long-term adverse impacts on C, 2 nd and 3 rd Street; moderate long-term adverse impact on D Street; beneficial long-term impact from plaza and additional street trees	Minor to moderate long-term adverse impact on C and 2 nd Streets; moderate long-term adverse impact along D Street; minor adverse impact on 3 rd Street; beneficial long-term impact from plaza and additional street trees	Minor to moderate long-term adverse impact on C Street; minor long-term adverse impact along 2 nd , 3 rd and D Streets; beneficial long-term impact from plaza and additional street trees	Negligible long-term impact
Land Use	Beneficial long-term impact from removal of parking lot	Beneficial long-term impact from removal of parking lot	Beneficial long-term impact from removal of parking lot	Negligible long-term impact
Planning Policies	Moderate long-term adverse impact	Minor long-term adverse impact	Negligible long-term impact	Negligible long-term impact
Public Space	Moderate long-term adverse impact	Minor to moderate long-term adverse impact	Negligible to minor long-term impact	Negligible long-term impact
Vegetation	Moderate long-term adverse impact; beneficial long-term impact from landscaped plaza	Moderate long-term adverse impact; beneficial long-term impact from landscaped plaza	Moderate long-term adverse impact; beneficial long-term impact from landscaped plaza	Negligible long-term impact
Water Resources	Negligible long-term impact	Negligible long-term impact	Negligible long-term impact	Negligible long-term impact
Vehicular Circulation	Short-term moderate adverse impacts; long-term negligible impacts	Short-term moderate adverse impacts; long-term negligible impacts	Short-term moderate adverse impacts; long-term negligible impacts	Negligible long-term impact
Parking	Short-and long-term minor adverse impacts	Short-and long-term minor adverse impacts	Short-and long-term minor adverse impacts	Negligible long-term impact

Resource	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	No Action Alternative
Public Transportation	Negligible long-term impact	Negligible long-term impact	Negligible long-term impact	Negligible long-term impact
Pedestrian Circulation	Short and long-term moderate adverse impacts; beneficial impacts from public plaza	Short and long-term minor to moderate adverse impacts; beneficial impacts from public plaza	Negligible short and long-term impacts; beneficial impacts from public plaza	Negligible long-term impact
Utilities	Short-term moderate adverse impact	Short-term moderate adverse impact	Short-term moderate adverse impact	Negligible long-term impact
Stormwater Management	Short-term minor adverse and long-term beneficial impacts	Short-term minor adverse and long-term beneficial impacts	Short-term minor adverse and long-term beneficial impacts	Negligible long-term impact
Hazardous Waste/Contamination	Negligible long-term impact	Negligible long-term impact	Negligible long-term impact	Negligible long-term impact
Air Quality	Short-term minor adverse impacts and negligible long-term impacts	Short-term minor adverse impacts and negligible long-term impacts	Short-term minor adverse impacts and negligible long-term impacts	Negligible long-term impact
Noise Levels	Short-term minor to moderate adverse impacts and negligible long-term impacts	Short-term minor to moderate adverse impacts and negligible long-term impacts	Short-term minor to moderate adverse impacts and negligible long-term impacts	Negligible long-term impact

2.8 SELECTION OF PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Alternative A was selected as the preferred alternative for the proposed exterior improvements to FOB 8. The rationale for choosing Alternative A as the preferred alternative is that it best complies with GSA's purpose to create secure, high quality office space and the need for this type of space in close proximity to the U.S. Capitol Building. In addition, Alternative A provides the most protection from security threats by locating security features as close to the required 50' setback as possible, without encroaching on the surrounding roadways. When looking at the overall layout and functionality of the site, Alternative A also creates the largest amount of usable public space within the plaza.