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Design Excellence and Site Selection Priorities

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4.0 Introduction

Site selection is not a formal part of the Design Excellence process. Site decisions, however, can have a profound impact on a project's success. The following provides an overview of important Design Excellence site selection issues and useful resources.

4.1 Criteria for Selecting the Best Project Site

Site selection is a decision that affects the organization, massing, function, sustainability, efficiency, and aesthetics of a project. Security mandates and budget considerations are additional site selection issues. The goals in this decision should be to:

1 Contribute Meaningfully to Community Development

A federal facility can be a catalyst in the growth and vitality of a neighborhood. It can provide public open space. It can revitalize an existing historic landmark. It can enhance the quality of a city's urban environment.

2 Maximize the Potential for Architectural Design Excellence

A site and its context should stimulate the creativity and imagination of the design team to produce a distinguished federal facility. The site should allow for the development of at least three distinct design options. Its size, shape, and physical characteristics such as slope or existing structures should not result in a design that compromises integrity, function, and performance or requires costly sitework that negatively impacts the budget.

3 Support Effective Sustainable Design Strategies

GSA is required to have a "silver" LEED rating for all of its projects. Site-related decisions are important in achieving this goal. The site should allow designers to take advantage of the orientation to sun and wind. It should be in areas with existing infrastructure and be near alternative means of transportation. It should minimize environmental problems.

4 Meet Current Security Standards

Setbacks and other aspects of security such as vehicular access and parking are inherently linked to site selection. Sites should allow for appropriate perimeter security without isolating a building from its surroundings or making it a fortress. Federal facilities should be both open and secure, welcoming the public at the same time that they protect those who work and use these buildings.

Resources

These are valuable site selection resources:

The Site Selection Desk Guide, GSA Office of the Chief Architect, 2003

A complete compendium of the issues and processes related to site selection. The guide includes a discussion of technical issues and offers an extensive list of criteria essential to shortlisting and evaluating site options. It also contains a directory of professional organizations that may be useful contacts in the site selection process. Documents related to site selection are included in *The Site Section Desk Guide*. There are no formal Design Excellence site selection documents.

Urban Development/Good Neighbor Program

A program managed in the Office of the Chief Architect to articulate urban design excellence principles and facilitate and demonstrate urban design excellence in GSA projects. Contact the Office of the Chief Architect at 202.501.1888.

<http://civicsquare.gsa.gov/cvsq/>

A comprehensive web-based database managed by the Urban Development/Good Neighbor program. The site provides GSA staff with searchable project, image, and document databases on site selection, design, management, and other issues that impact local context. Project information presents site selection processes that successfully involved local stakeholders. Documents include sample site selection agreements between GSA and local municipalities, various land agreements, and a growing collection of solicitation documents and strategies for design and site selection related to lease construction projects.

