



PRESERVATION OUTLEASING SUCCESS STORY

A National Model Public Building: GSA Headquarters

Washington, D.C.

THE PROJECT

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) Building in Washington, D.C., constructed as the headquarters for the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) between 1915 and 1917, was the first truly modern office building constructed by the U.S. Government and served as a national model for federal offices through the early 1930s. After GSA was established in 1949, its headquarters became the former DOI building, as DOI moved to a newer and larger building nearby. The Neoclassical-style GSA building, designed by New York architect Charles Butler, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1986. In the early 2000s, GSA proposed a comprehensive modernization including the following: restoration of significant interior public and executive spaces; exterior repairs and alterations; elevator upgrades; mechanical, plumbing, and life-safety improvements; construction of an infill addition; window sash rehabilitation; and construction of retail additions on the rear elevation, to serve an area of the Foggy Bottom neighborhood with very few such establishments.

THE PROCESS

Carefully addressing preservation, sustainability, building performance, and space utilization goals, GSA completed the first phase of the project with funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in 2013. Glazed infill additions included new office, meeting room, and special function space, which increased building efficiency and improved circulation by connecting the E-shaped building's wings. A "green" roof, photovoltaic roof panels, increased insulation, window rehabilitation, and features such as daylight sensor-driven window shades and lighting helped the project achieve substantial energy savings, earning the United States Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Gold Certification. Increased teleworking and initiation of a new "hoteling" strategy for building occupants, in which employees reserve their workstations on an ongoing basis, allowed for consolidation of employees. In 2012, the building housed 2,600 employees, and today provides office space for 3,600 employees. The addition of public retail pavilions flanking the ground-floor courtyard entrances and facing historic Rawlins Park was part of an agency-wide effort to project a more open and engaging face to the public and also contribute to the revitalization of the neighborhood.

“We are proud to be a partner in the effort to restore and preserve the country’s heritage while delivering value to the American people.”

— Dan Mathews, Former GSA Public Buildings Commissioner

At the U.S. General Services Administration Building, new public retail pavilions flank the ground-floor courtyard entrances and face historic Rawlins Park. (Taylor J. Lednum/GSA)



THE SUCCESS

The new retail showcases GSA's award-winning National Historic Preservation Act Section 111 outleasing program and is a critical element of this model rehabilitation. Section 111 allows federal agencies to lease property to the private sector and use the proceeds to strategically reinvest in their historic properties and preservation programs. GSA's outleasings make otherwise often highly secure federal buildings more accessible to the public; introduce retail, hotel, and museum uses; allow limited access to movie and television crews; and even contribute to telecommunications infrastructure with additional rooftop antennae. Established in 1999, GSA's program has earned more than \$173 million in income, while the outleasing projects themselves comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The three new restaurants at GSA's headquarters, one of which is locally owned, enliven the neighborhood and serve office workers, students from an adjacent university, as well as visitors to the National Mall and nearby museums. Balancing historic preservation requirements with state-of-the-art updates, and federal security standards with the needs of the neighborhood, GSA's rehabilitated headquarters serves once again as a national model for federal offices.

Left, new glazed infill additions include new office, meeting room, and special function space. (Sarah A. Garner/GSA); Right, ground-floor retail contributes to the revitalization of the neighborhood. (Taylor J. Lednum/GSA)

Partners:

- U.S. General Services Administration
- U.S. Department of the Interior
- National Park Service
- Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
- U.S. Commission of Fine Arts
- National Capital Planning Commission
- DC State Historic Preservation Office
- Advisory Neighborhood Council 2S
- American Architectural Foundation
- American Institute of Architects
- California Tortilla
- Committee of 100 on the Federal City
- Corcoran Gallery
- DC Department of Transportation
- DC Preservation League
- George Washington University
- Greenberry's Coffee Co.
- Shalom Baranes Architects
- Which Wich Sandwiches

