



HSC Foundation Building, with renovated row house in the foreground.

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Award for Excellence in Architecture

HSC Foundation

Washington, DC

Group Goetz Architects

Contractor: Sigal Construction Corporation

The HSC Foundation is a non-profit umbrella organization that oversees the HSC Health Care System, whose roots in Washington go back to 1883 (the initials HSC recall the institution's longtime moniker, the Hospital for Sick Children). The foundation's subsidiaries include the hospital itself, an associated health care management plan for children, and a home health agency, all of which specialize in children with special needs. The foundation also has a for-profit consulting arm and a grant-making division that funds research and programs for children with disabilities.

As of 2010, the foundation's headquarters is a seven-story glass tower integrated with an existing Victorian row house and carriage house on a site amid the campus of George Washington University (GWU). The project was designed by **Group Goetz Architects**, a practice that closed in May 2011. In consideration of the client's extensive work with disabled people, the building is designed to the most stringent standards of accessible design, but these elements are so seamlessly integrated that the jury



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Lobby of the HSC Foundation Building, incorporating statutory found on the site (at center).

focused on more strictly architectural issues, notably the careful insertion of the building onto a small site.

The pre-existing Victorian row house is neither located in a historic district nor a designated historic landmark in its own right. Accordingly, the architects could have chosen to demolish it and its carriage house, but they felt that "urban responsibility" dictated that those existing elements be retained. The exteriors of the Victorians were restored and the interiors were adapted to maintain much of their identity while allowing them to be fully integrated with the rest of the facility. The brick of the rear wing is a featured element of the lobby, for instance—a relatively rough, old material deliberately juxtaposed against sleek new marble, glass, and metal elements.

On the exterior of the new tower, what seems at first glance to be a sharp but monolithic glass wall reveals, upon second and third glances, careful design choices: The grid has both five-foot and two-and-a-half-foot modules, spaced irregularly. Selected verticals are emphasized by thin, chrome-finish fins that run the height of the building; horizontals are emphasized by graduated fritting—a kind of ceramic appliqué—on the glazed panels, which run the breadth of the building. The glass is untinted but slightly reflective. These subtle moves, combined with views into the well-appointed spaces, bring the façade to life.

The jury specifically noted the view into the lobby from an adjacent GWU pedestrian walkway. "The wall of glass of the tall lobby extends the pedestrian walkway" to mutual advantage, commented juror Julie Snow, FAIA. Both are enlivened, and both are visually enlarged. This lobby view includes, in addition to the exposed brick wall of the rear wing of the row house, three pieces of quasi-Grecian statuary that were found in the garden, providing another nuanced juxtaposition of past/present and of indoor/outdoor.