

= United States Institute of Peace Headquarters =

The United States Institute of Peace Headquarters houses staff offices and other facilities for the government @-@ funded think tank focused on peacemaking and conflict avoidance . The building is the first permanent home for the United States Institute of Peace ( USIP ) , established in 1984 . The headquarters is sited on a prominent location near the National Mall and Potomac River in the Foggy Bottom neighborhood of Washington , D.C. The environmentally friendly building , noted for its unique roof , was designed by architect Moshe Safdie and completed in 2011 . Critics ' reviews of the building 's design have been mixed .

= = History = =

In the 1980s , Democratic Senator Jennings Randolph of West Virginia led a group of lawmakers calling for a federal peace institute . USIP was established by Congress in 1984 and for many years rented office space in various buildings in downtown Washington , the last being 1200 17th Street NW . In 1996 , Congress approved a site on the National Mall for USIP . The site chosen for a new headquarters , the first permanent home for the USIP , was on the corner of 23rd Street and Constitution Avenue NW in Foggy Bottom . It was previously a parking lot for Bureau of Medicine and Surgery employees at the adjacent Old Naval Observatory . The land was transferred to the USIP without charge with an agreement that underground parking spaces would be built for the Navy employees . The site is on the northwest corner and last buildable site available on the National Mall , overlooking the Lincoln Memorial , and across the street from the historic American Institute of Pharmacy Building .

In 2004 , Congress authorized \$ 100 million for construction of USIP 's headquarters , in part due to the efforts of Republican Senator Ted Stevens of Alaska , while the institute was required to raise the remaining \$ 86 million . The funds raised by USIP included a \$ 10 million donation from Chevron Corporation . Another corporate donor to the building fund , defense contractor Lockheed Martin , was named a " Founding Corporate Partner " after donating \$ 1 million . William Hartung of the Center for International Policy criticized the USIP for " taking money from the world 's largest producer of the weapons of war . "

In April 2001 , USIP issued solicitations for a design and twenty @-@ six architects submitted proposals . Moshe Safdie had never heard of USIP before receiving the design request , but he was one of the five finalists chosen . The other four were Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects , Michael Graves and Associates , Polshek Partnership ( now known as Ennead Architects ) , and Weiss / Manfredi ( which withdrew ) . According to USIP president Richard H. Solomon , Safdie 's design was chosen because the other designs " were basically square buildings . " USIP 's headquarters is the second building in Washington , D.C. designed by Safdie . The first was the fortress @-@ like headquarters of the Bureau of Alcohol , Tobacco , Firearms and Explosives , completed in 2008 , which dominates the busy intersection of Florida and New York Avenues NE .

The National Capital Planning Commission ( NCPCC ) unanimously approved plans for the building in 2007 . The groundbreaking ceremony took place the following year in June . Dignitaries in attendance included President George W. Bush , Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi , Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice , former Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci , and former Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger , George P. Shultz , and Madeleine Albright . During the ceremony , some of the speakers hinted their opposing views of Bush 's use of preventive war . Construction of the 154 @, @ 000 sq ft ( 14 @, @ 300 m<sup>2</sup> ) headquarters , which is LEED Gold certified , was carried out by Clark Construction Group of Bethesda , Maryland . The U.S. Green Building Council certified it as the first environmentally friendly building on the National Mall . The headquarters , which is managed by real estate services firm Akridge , was dedicated in October 2011 . That same year , the Samuel W. Lewis Hall was dedicated in honor of the former ambassador to Israel and USIP president . "

= = Design = =

According to Safdie , the building " is by definition the physical symbol of peace in the capital 's skyline " and needed to convey the spirit of peace . Safdie stated : " I 'm not one who believes in overt symbolism , but my sense of a building dedicated to peace was a sense of the lightness of being , ... It should be a serene building . It should not be an aggressive building . It should be full of light . " Safdie achieved this by designing a glass curtain wall facing the Lincoln Memorial and a billowing glass ceiling . The ceiling is one of the building elements in common with Safdie 's design for the Yitzhak Rabin Center in Israel . The 8 inches ( 20 cm ) thick roof is made of 1 @, @ 482 white glass panels and supported by steel frames while the interior of the roof is covered by a translucent plastic film . It is opaque and white during the day and glows at night .

There are two main entrances to the building , one facing Constitution Avenue , and another facing 23rd Street NW . The building is made of acid @-@ etched precast @-@ concrete and resembles limestone . The design is centered around two atria , a large one facing the National Mall that is designed for the public , and a smaller private one for staff that overlooks the Potomac River . The larger atrium , the George P. Shultz Great Hall , measures 11 @, @ 800 sq ft ( 1 @, @ 100 m2 ) and features the 80 ft ( 24 m ) high glass curtain wall facing the National Mall . The 230 @-@ seat Frank C. Carlucci III Auditorium , Jacqueline and Marc Leland Atrium , and 20 @, @ 000 sq ft ( 1 @, @ 900 m2 ) Global Peacebuilding Center , an interactive museum dedicated to peacemaking , are accessible via this atrium . The roof over the Great Hall , designed to convey a dove 's wings , is called Ansary Peace Dove . The second atrium , also known as the International Women 's Commons , measures 3 @, @ 600 sq ft ( 330 m2 ) and is lined with offices , a library , meeting rooms , conference center , and the Farooq Kathwari Amphitheatre . The roof over this atrium is a simplified version of Ansary Peace Dove . There is a 2 @, @ 000 sq ft ( 190 m2 ) outdoor terrace and adjoining boardroom facing the Lincoln Memorial . A three @-@ story underground parking garage can accommodate 230 vehicles ; 140 of those spaces are reserved for Navy personnel .

= = Reception = =

Katherine Gustafson of ArchitectureWeek thought the building " succeeds as a monumental edifice befitting its place in the urban frame of the National Mall " while Nathan Guttman of The Jewish Daily Forward described the headquarters as an " architectural gem . " Architect Roger K. Lewis , professor emeritus of architecture at the University of Maryland , had mixed feelings about the building . He said it was " most visible and aesthetically enticing after dark " , while its " unique , idiosyncratic form appears somewhat less enticing " during the day . During the NCPC meeting in 2007 giving final approval to the building , a National Park Service representative said " This building will be a foreign object in the landscape of classical architecture of this city " , criticizing the design compared to the neoclassical and Beaux @-@ Arts buildings along Constitution Avenue . The building is highly visible to commuters on Interstate 66 as they enter the city , a fact lamented by Philip Kennicott , Pulitzer Prize @-@ winning critic for The Washington Post . In two scathing reviews of the headquarters , Kennicott said " If it were not for the roof , the building would be unexceptional , just another exercise in boxy architecture pierced by deadening rows of identical rectangular windows " and " The institute 's design marks yet another low point in Safdie 's long descent into repetitive corporate architecture . "