

# U.S. Department of Agriculture South Building, Modernization and Security Upgrade

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Washington, DC

**Owner**

United States Department of  
Agriculture

**Architect**

Shalom Baranes Associates

**Contractor**

Phase One: Hensel Phelps  
Construction Company  
Phase Two: Sigal Construction  
Phase Three and Four: Grunley  
Construction Company

**Completion Dates**

Phase One: 2001  
Phase Two: 2003  
Phase Three: 2005  
Phase Four: 2011

**Construction Cost**

\$105 million

**Total Area**

2,160,000 sf

**Awards**

Engineering Achievement Award for  
Innovative Integration of Competing  
Demands in the category of  
Building/Technology Systems, ACEC,  
2004

Craftsmanship Award (Wing Three),  
Washington Building Congress, 2001



Thornton Tomasetti provided structural design for the first four phases of a 15-year renovation of the USDA's South Building. The project included evaluation of the building's lateral load-resisting frames and design to support for architectural and mechanical modifications such as new stairs, elevators, mechanical shafts and extensive penthouses for the complete building renovation.

Engineers provided non-destructive and limited destructive testing to determine material strengths and properties, facilitating the analysis of existing floor systems for live-load capacity and the production of comprehensive mapping documents for the owner.

Work included integration of sustainable design features and modifications to the structure in accordance with AT/FP standards. The project also relocated the visitor's center and renovated the department's in-house print plant. A portion of the renovated building, completed in 2011, earned LEED CI Gold certification.

In 2001, the owner ordered a comprehensive review and enhancement of security measures for the entire USDA complex to be included in phase two. New security measures for the South Building included progressive collapse analysis, wall design for blast mitigation, perimeter security improvements and a security upgrade for the mailroom and loading dock.

Work at the South Building was performed under three separate contracts: a base contract and two consecutive five-year IDIQ contracts.