

**Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture
Section 106 Consulting Parties Meeting #2**

Date of Meeting: January 20, 2010
Project: Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture
Location of Meeting: 600 Maryland Avenue, NW – 7th Floor
Time of Meeting: 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Attendees: Dreck Wilson, ASAALH
Brenda Sanchez, Smithsonian Institution
Harry Rombach, Smithsonian Institution
Louise Brodnitz, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
Perry Wheelock, National Park Service
Andrew Lewis, D.C. Historic Preservation Office
Ken Walton, National Capital Planning Commission
Elsa Santoyo, SmithGroup
Bryan Sieling, NMAAHC
Lynne Chase, NMAAHC
Jud McIntire, Smithsonian Institution
Peter May, National Park Service
Sarah Batcheler, U.S. Commission of Fine Arts
Thomas Luebke, U.S. Commission of Fine Arts
Nancy Witherell, National Capital Planning Commission
Tom Whitley, Guild of Professional Tour Guides of Washington, D.C.
Kelan Dyer, Smithsonian Institution
Daria Gasparini, Robinson & Associates
Judith Robinson, Robinson & Associates
Amy Ballard, Smithsonian Institution
Stephanie Dyer-Carroll, AECOM
Alan Harwood, AECOM
Sharon Park, Smithsonian Institution
Jane Passman, Smithsonian Institution
Judy Scott Feldman, National Coalition to Save Our Mall

Meeting Summary

Sharon Park (SP), Smithsonian Institution, brought the meeting to order at 9:40 am and reviewed the meeting agenda. SP welcomed Louise Brodnitz (LB), Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and Kelan Dyer (KD), Smithsonian Institution, inviting them to introduce themselves. LB explained that she would be filling the spot vacated by Martha Catlin and briefly described her role at the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. KD briefly described her background and noted that she is working with Brenda Sanchez (BS), Smithsonian Institution. SP suggested that the meeting attendees go around the room and introduce themselves.

1. Section 106 Progress Report

Judith Robinson (JR), Robinson & Associates, summarized the Section 106 process that was completed during the Tier I EIS/S106 consultation, including what Section 106 information would transfer from the Tier I EIS/S106 to the Tier II EIS/S106. The carryover will include the primary and secondary areas of potential effect (APEs). The carryover will also include Tier I's thorough identification of potentially affected historic resources. (Maps of the APEs and identified historic resources are available on the

project website.) The next step in the S106 process is to study the alternatives when they become available and analyze their effects.

2. NEPA Scoping Report

Jane Passman (JP), Smithsonian Institution, reminded meeting attendees that on November 10, 2009, a notice was issued indicating that the Smithsonian would recommence the EIS process for the NMAAHC project. This notification officially kicked off Tier II scoping. JP then reviewed the purpose and process of scoping.

Alan Harwood (AH), AECOM, continued the discussion of NEPA scoping. He noted that the scoping period officially started on November 10, 2009, and ended on December 24, 2009. A notice of intent (NOI) was issued in the federal register and several newspapers. In addition to the public scoping meeting on December 10, 2009, meetings were also arranged with the National Park Service and with the National Aquarium and General Services Administration (GSA).

JP mentioned that a scoping report prepared by AECOM is in draft form and will be available in about a month.

AH provided a summary of the contents of the scoping report. He stated that comments were received in various formats – by letters, email, and verbally at agency meetings. Comments covered various topics including alternatives, schedule, programming, site selection, and the competition design. Comments received at the last consulting parties meeting were also incorporated into the scoping report.

Thomas Luebke (TL), U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, asked AH to briefly list the comments that were specific to the issue of the alternatives. AH read these from the draft report.

Judy Scott Feldman (JSF), National Coalition to Save Our Mall, remarked that since the close of the scoping period additional reports had been made available to her. In reviewing the reports, it came to her attention that there is an issue regarding the characterization of the location of the building. JSF explained that based on her interpretation of existing documentation, the building site is actually not located within the Washington Monument grounds, and this has a major implication for the design of the building and its landscape. JSF made the case that the Washington Monument grounds start at 15th Street – a change to previous thinking. As she understands the documentation, the Washington Monument grounds were defined as from 15th Street to the river and the Mall from 1st Street to 15th Street. JSF stated that she believes the building site is not a hinge, but actually represents the end of the formal continuum of the buildings and landscape of the Mall. She believes this issue is important because it determines how the process will move forward. JSF urged the consulting parties to further clarify what is the actual immediate context of the building site.

Perry Wheelock (PW), National Park Service, responded to JSF's comments. She noted that the National Register documentation for the Washington Monument grounds is for Reservation 2. PW clarified that there are two cultural landscape documents associated with this area. The cultural landscape inventory (CLI), which covers all of Reservation 2, is an eligibility document, meeting Section 110 requirements. The cultural landscape report (CLR) is a treatment document and does not analyze the entire monument grounds.

Judith Robinson (JR), Robinson & Associates, noted that everyone would probably like time to absorb the comments made by JSF. JR noted that there is much existing documentation in place that has

defined that piece of ground and helped establish the context and importance of the site. JR stated that the legal National Register definitions for the Washington Monument Grounds and the Plan of the City of Washington (L'Enfant and McMillan Plans) are important in terms of Section 106. JSF noted that Reservation 2 (the Monument grounds) cite 15th Street as the eastern boundary.

PW commented that it is important to look at the National Register nomination for the L'Enfant Plan.

JSF noted that the National Register documentation for the Washington Monument grounds is very brief and contended that it is only recently that the monument grounds have taken on the 14th Street boundary.

PW noted that it is important to take a look back at all the documentation.

JR commented that the National Register nomination for the L'Enfant Plan has been revised several times. It is important to look at the most recent draft, which is currently at the D.C. HPO and is entitled "The Plan of the City of Washington."

JSF reiterated that she is trying to fully understand the role of Reservation 2 in the McMillan Commission plan and noted that the building site is consistent with the development of the Mall rather than the Washington Monument grounds.

SP reminded attendees that the building site was transferred to the Smithsonian as a piece of land administered by the National Park Service as a part of the Washington Monument grounds. SP noted that comments made by JSF are certainly something to look at, but she believes most analysis from the last 50 to 80 years has considered it part of the Washington Monument grounds.

JSF wrapped up the discussion by adding that it is important to be very careful about how the site is addressed and to understand which landscape evolution takes priority.

3. Project Schedule and Concept Alternatives

SP informed attendees that the Smithsonian is awaiting concept diagrams from the design team and that these will respond to scoping comments. The design team is working on developing three distinct alternatives.

LB asked if the team was also looking to define the essential elements of the building design. BS explained that the Smithsonian and the design team have talked about three "irreducibles." These include the corona, the concept of a porch, and the color of the corona. LB asked if there are any other components of the corona that are "irreducible." SP noted that the form that the corona takes may change. LB asked if there can be a discussion about the irreducible elements or if it is up to the design team. SP replied that the Smithsonian doesn't know exactly where the design team is heading but that they are currently working on massing. BS clarified that the design team is working on massing and responding to the Design Principles.

LB commented that she is concerned that there are adverse effects that can be identified before starting into the development of alternatives and that others will come up as the designs are refined. JR noted that as the alternatives become available the consulting parties will be able to analyze how they respond to the Design Principles and determine adverse effects. LB clarified that she believes that until the potential effects are identified, the development of alternatives is premature. LB questioned if the alternatives will be addressing adverse effects that may have already been identified. SP noted that the

parameters used to define the alternatives studied in the Tier I EIS have already addressed certain adverse effects. SP continued stating that she believes there is consensus that building on the site will be an adverse effect and that the best way to grapple with it is to minimize impacts once the alternatives have been defined. JR noted that this is an unusual project because there is a Tier I and a Tier II EIS/S106 process and that the Tier I report includes a list of potential adverse effects. LB asked that if there have been parameters developed that respond to adverse effects she would like to see them. JR noted that the Design Principles, stated in the negative, are almost a definition of the adverse effects already identified. LB asked if the documents referred to could be synthesized in order to be looked at more effectively in the next meeting. Andrew Lewis (AL), D.C. Historic Preservation Office, asked if LB agreed that stating the Design Principles in the negative serve as a list of adverse effects. AL noted that just coming up with the Design Principles took several months. SP commented that she would be happy to schedule interim meetings prior to the next consulting parties meeting to discuss the issue. SB also noted that there were design guidelines created for the competition and that after the competition design was chosen, they were reworked into the Design Principles. TL agreed that the Design Principles were refined, but noted that whether or not the competition design responded to the principles is a matter of interpretation. BS commented that the purpose of the competition was to select a design team and now that the team has been chosen they are working to refine the competition design to respond to the Design Principles. JSF noted that she disagrees with the statement in the Design Principles that the Washington Monument grounds are Olmsteadian and argued that they need to be reevaluated in terms of landscape.

SP returned to the topic of the schedule, stating that at the February consulting parties meeting there will hopefully be schematics illustrating the direction the design team is going in terms of the alternatives. The first presentation of the alternatives will be around the beginning of April, and a preferred alternative will be identified later in April or June. The tentative date for the draft EIS is June. Later in the summer the Smithsonian will be working on a draft memorandum of agreement (MOA).

AL asked if he missed the discussion of the notion of “irreducibles.” SP clarified that it comes second hand from internal discussions at the Smithsonian, explaining that certain characteristics will show up in all of the alternatives. These include: some element of a corona, the shape of which may change; an entry sequence with some sort of covering; and a variegated color/texture/pattern that will make the building unique but compatible. AL noted that the “irreducibles” may limit the alternatives and questioned if it is possible to separate the design competition from the alternatives. AL cautioned against getting three variations of the design competition as alternatives. TL commented that he had also not heard the term “irreducibles” – he had heard “essentials” – but noted that there are certain characteristics of the competition design that will not change. SP clarified that the museum and the design team came up with what they found compelling about the competition design and that the director of the museum may have come up with the term “irreducibles” to describe what aspects of the design he found essential.

4. Next Steps

SP asked if PW would assist in reviewing and understanding the various Washington Monument grounds documents currently available. SP will work on developing a list of adverse effects identified and schedule, as necessary, interim meetings to discuss them.

SP adjourned meeting at 10:45 am.