

# U. S. COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

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401 F STREET NW SUITE 312 WASHINGTON DC 20001-2728 202-504-2200 FAX 202-504-2195 WWW.CFA.GOV

22 June 2010

Dear Ms. Park:

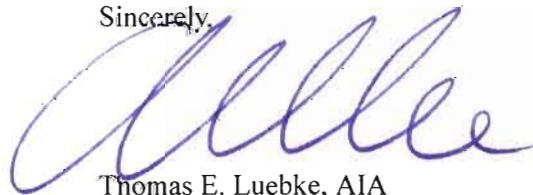
As you know, the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) David Maloney raised several concerns regarding adverse effects created by the proposed design of the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) in the Section 106 consultation meeting for this project on 8 June 2010. The Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) staff recognizes that the Smithsonian Institution is obliged to respond to these concerns in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act and supports the decision to defer review of the concept design by the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC); the resolution of these issues is properly addressed in advance of the completion of the concept design review process.

On 16 June 2010, NCPC staff hosted a meeting between several of the consulting parties—NCPC, CFA, the National Park Service, and the SHPO—to discuss issues of impacts and to advise on alternatives for the development of the design as required under the Section 106 process prior to the presentation of a preferred concept design submission. Themes of concern expressed by all of the parties at the meeting included questions about the relationship of the building to its context, such as between the proposed building mass and the topography and character of the Washington Monument Grounds and the geometry of the National Mall; as well as the impact of the building on views and circulation through the site and the impact of new structures in the Constitution Avenue building yard. There is agreement among the parties that the landscape plan should be developed further which will provide the greatest opportunity to integrate the building within the existing historic context.

We support the direction of our colleagues in requesting the design team to consider a range of design responses to address the issues raised by the consulting parties. The CFA staff agrees that the analysis of adverse effects will be facilitated by further documentation of the proposals, such as indicating the location of the 445-foot Mall centerline setback on all site plans, preparing fly-through animations to illustrate each design alternative from a connected series of views, and presenting aerial views of the museum site from the U.S. Capitol building and from the flight path over the Potomac River.

The Commission of Fine Arts staff encourages the continued development of alternatives as required by the regulatory process and anticipates a positive outcome from further design work needed to address the identified issues and concerns. Please contact me or Sarah Batcheler of the CFA staff if you have any questions about these comments and we look forward to continued involvement in the successful development of this important project.

Sincerely,



Thomas E. Luebke, AIA  
Secretary

Sharon Park, FAIA  
Historic Preservation Officer  
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