Program & Alternatives Discussion

NHPA, Section 106
Consulting Parties Meeting

October 10, 2007
NMAAHC Plan for Action
Presidential Commission Act of 2001,
Public Law 107-106
Architectural Program

• “Reasonable needs”
• Neither “too conservative or unnecessarily generous”
• Is a “critical benchmark in evaluating sites”
• Recognizes museum will grow and evolve overtime
The NMAAHC Act, P.L. 108-184

One Hundred Eighth Congress
of the
United States of America

AT THE FIRST SESSION

Began and held at the City of Washington on Tuesday,
the seventh day of January, two thousand and three.

An Act

To establish within the Smithsonian Institution the National Museum of African
American History and Culture, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of
the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “National Museum of African
American History and Culture Act”.
Exhibit / Support 160,000 gsf
Visitor Services 50,000 gsf
Assembly 35,000 gsf
Building Services 50,000 gsf
Public Programs 35,000 gsf
Offices/ Admin. 25,000 gsf

SI validates and reinforces Presidential Commission 350,000 gsf optimal program
Prepare “block, stacking and massing” diagrams for scenarios
Alternatives from Previous Studies

- **Presidential Commission**
  - **Option 1a & 1b**: both 350,000 gsf with varying levels above and below ground

- **Site Evaluation Study**
  - **Option 2**: 490,000 gsf; 3 levels above ground, 1 below
  - **Option 3**: 840,000 gsf; 8 levels above ground, 5 below

(Note in both options one level was considered to be about 15 feet slab to slab)
Alternatives

• First round in the EIS process pulled alternatives for earlier report for further analysis

• Simple “boxes” to test wide range of massing

• Used 350,000 gsf as optimal

• Some alternatives more, some less
Alternatives considered

• Option 1 series
  – About 45 feet high
  – 3 levels above grade (60,000 – 80,000 sf)
  – 1 or 2 levels below grade (111,500 sf)

• Option 2 series
  – About 75 feet high
  – 5 levels above grade (60,000 – 80,000 sf)
  – No or 1 level below grade (111,500 sf)

• Option 3 series
  – About 105 feet high
  – 7 levels above grade (30,000 – 54,000 sf)
  – 1 or 2 levels below grade (21,000 - 95,000 sf)
Alternatives considered

• **Option 1 series**
  - Low, horizontal element
  - Not in scale with purpose & need or the surroundings
  - 350,000 gsf difficult, without much of it underground

• **Option 2 series**
  - More reasonable scale
  - Massing similar with surroundings
  - 350,000 gsf easier to achieve

• **Option 3 series**
  - Visual impact may be too great; creates vertical element
  - Footprint could be smaller; more open space
  - More than 350,000 gsf easy to achieve
Alternatives

Second round in the EIS process
12 alternatives were other than
No-Build considered.
No Build Alternative

• Pros
  – Historic viewsheds & landscape preserved
  – Existing open space preserved

• Cons
  – Purpose & need not met
  – Contradicts Presidential Commission Report and SI Site Evaluation Report, both noting this as a suitable site for the program
  – Puts aside a long thoughtful site selection process
  – New site selection process must be justified and initiated through SI Regents and Congress
  – Must also be justified to public & community at large
Alternatives considered

- Contextual building alignment
- Washington Monument orientation
- Central diagonal view preservation
- North diagonal view preservation
- South diagonal view preservation
- Floating museum
- Multi-volume
- Hinge
- Blob
- Monumental Pavilion
- Courtyard
- Green roof park
Alternatives dismissed

- Contextual building alignment
- Washington Monument orientation
- Central diagonal view preservation
- North diagonal view preservation
- South diagonal view preservation
- Floating museum
- Multi-volume
- Hinge
- Blob
- Monumental Pavilion
- Courtyard
- Green roof park
Alternatives dismissed

• North diagonal view preservation
  – Inefficient, small above ground floor plate
  – Over priority on one viewshed
• South diagonal view preservation
  – Same as above
• Floating museum
  – Nearly continuous landscape, but program challenges with significantly separated above & below grade levels
• Multi-volume
  – Inefficient, small above ground floor plate
  – Very little above grade programming flexibility
• Monumental Pavilion
  – More specific than other alternatives
  – Begs a design solution that could be incorporated in any alternative
• Courtyard
  – Any courtyard of sufficient size would create undue bulkiness
Alternatives advanced

- Contextual building alignment
- Washington Monument orientation
- Central diagonal view preservation
- North diagonal view preservation
- South diagonal view preservation
- Floating museum
- Multi-volume
- Hinge
- Blob
- Monumental Pavilion
- Courtyard
- Green roof park
Alternatives advanced

- Contextual building alignment
- Washington Monument orientation
  - Central diagonal view preservation
  - North diagonal view preservation
  - South diagonal view preservation
  - Enframing
- Floating museum
  - Multi-volume
  - Hinge
  - Blob
  - Monumental Pavilion
  - Courtyard
  - Green roof park
  - Terraced Roof
  - Free Form
Additional Alternatives to be considered

- Bifurcated program and site (especially, noting NMAH west side)

### Principles
- Potential for smaller footprint and profile, ergo, smaller viewshed impact
- Potential for some, but not all, historic landscape being preserved

### Reasons for Probable Dismissal
- Builds in museum program inefficiencies
- Builds in administrative difficulties
- Builds in maintenance redundancies
- Does not meet intent of P.L. 108-184; select one of four sites, not two or three, or from other sites not designated
- SI would need to set aside to thoughtful, earlier studies and justify this change in thinking to Congress
- Implies institutional re-structuring
- Future plans for NMAH west side
Site Development Plan

Smithsonian Institution National Museum of American History, Behring Center
Comprehensive Facilities Development Plan, February 3, 2006

Executive Summary - XXXII
Master Plan
Conclusion

• Long, sometimes iterative, process
  – Before NEPA & 106
  – During NEPA & 106
  – Into Programming & Design

• Keep the two processes in tandem

• But, always moving forward