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Meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts

18 October 2007

The meeting was convened in the Commission of Fine Arts offices in the National Building Museum, 401 F Street, N.W, Washington, D.C. 20001, at 10:03 a.m.

Members present:

Hon. Earl A. Powell, Chairman
Hon. Pamela Nelson, Vice-Chairman
Hon. John Belle
Hon. Michael McKinnell
Hon. Witold Rybczynski
Hon. Elyn Zimmerman

Staff present:

Thomas E. Luebke, Secretary
Frederick J. Lindstrom, Assistant Secretary
Eve Barsoum
Jose Martínez
Raksha Patel
Susan Raposa
Tony Simon

National Capital Planning Commission staff present:

David Levy
Nancy Witherell

I. Administration

A. Approval of the minutes of the 20 September meeting. Mr. Luebke reported that the minutes of the September meeting were circulated to the members in advance. Upon a motion by Ms. Nelson with second by Ms. Zimmerman, the Commission approved the minutes without objection. Mr. Luebke said that the minutes are routinely made available to the public on the Commission's website.

B. Dates of next meetings. Mr. Luebke presented the regularly scheduled dates for upcoming Commission meetings: November 15, January 17, and February 21; no meeting is scheduled in December. There were no objections.

C. Report on staff members. Mr. Luebke introduced Raksha Patel who joined the staff in September as administrative assistant. He reported that a position would soon be advertised for a staff architect to replace Kristina Penhoet who left in August; the announcement will be posted on www.USAJOBS.opm.gov. He said that a position will also be advertised for a historian to replace Sue Kohler who retired at the end of September.

Mr. Luebke said that at the conclusion of the meeting, the Commission will visit the Freer Gallery to inspect several items proposed for acquisition as part of the permanent collection. A report will be provided at the next Commission meeting.

II. Submissions and Reviews

A. Appendices

Mr. Luebke introduced the three appendices for Commission action. Drafts of the appendices had been circulated to the Commissioners in advance of the meeting.

Appendix I — Direct Submission Consent Calendar: Mr. Luebke confirmed that there were no changes to the draft appendix. Upon a motion by Ms. Nelson with second by Mr. McKinnell, the Commission approved the appendix.

Appendix II — Shipstead-Luce Act Submissions: Mr. Lindstrom reported that the only revision was to update one recommendation based on supplementary information that was provided for case number S.L. 07-131. Upon a motion by Mr. Belle with second by Ms. Nelson, the Commission approved the revised appendix.

Appendix III — Old Georgetown Act Submissions: Mr. Martinez reported several changes to the draft appendix. Several projects were added involving alterations that will not be visible from public space or replacement of existing materials that would not change the character of the buildings. These projects are listed as being returned without action. There was also minor editing of the text, with no change to the substance of the recommendations. Ms. Zimmerman asked about any changes to the two projects with negative recommendations; Mr. Martínez said that the negative recommendations remain in the revised appendix. Upon a motion by Ms. Zimmerman with second by Ms. Nelson, the Commission approved the revised appendix.

B. National Park Service

CFA 18/OCT/07-1, Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center, Constitution Avenue and 23rd Street, N.W. Concept. (Previous: CFA 17/MAY/07-1, Information presentation.) Mr. Luebke reported that the Commission had previously given conditional approval to the site and had adopted design guidelines for the project. The Commission also saw an information presentation on the design concept in May 2007; the current submission is the Commission's first opportunity for formal review of the concept. He said that the Commission had received more than two dozen letters concerning this project; many of them support the creation of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center (VVMC) without addressing the design, and others raise issues with the design. He noted the attendance of members of the public who wished to offer testimony to the Commission. He introduced John Parsons of the National Park Service to begin the presentation.

Mr. Parsons said that both the Commission and the National Capital Planning had Commission had expressed a preference for Alternative C from the three design concepts shown in May; this design has been developed further in recent months to respond to comments from the Commission and the staff. He said that the submission materials also include a discussion of how the design responds to the design principles that the Commission adopted. He said that the design meets the "spirit and intent" of the principles concerning the general impact of the project on the landscape and context; he noted that some of the principles relate to design details such as lighting that have not yet been studied.

Regarding an issue raised about the selected site, Mr. Parsons showed a new floodplain map of the area from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He said that the VVMC site is not indicated as within the 500- and 100-year floodplain boundaries. He then introduced Jim Polshek and Tom Wong of Polshek Partnership Architects to present the design.

Mr. Polshek provided an introductory statement about the project, describing the design and technical constraints of creating a below-grade building in this sensitive context. He said that the design successfully balances these constraints with the need to create a functional and welcoming building that will provide a solemn and meaningful experience and reinforce the emotional impact of the existing Vietnam Veterans Memorial. He said that the design must be "appropriate, meaningful, and deserving of the building's national public significance."

Mr. Wong reviewed some of the design background information that was previously presented to the Commission, including the organization of the exhibits into three parallel walls that would form part of the building's spatial and structural system. A ramped internal walkway along these walls would bring visitors down from the entry level to a lower level. A sunken courtyard would accommodate windows, mechanical systems, and emergency egress while avoiding protrusions into the ground plane. A perimeter slurry wall would protect the building from groundwater.

Mr. Wong provided an update on the need for electrical vaults on the site. He said that the building's transformer would probably be located in the existing vault of the National Park Service's nearby food kiosk. A second vault was also considered to house an emergency generator, but further technical research has resulted in other solutions for an emergency power generator without requiring an additional vault or exhaust system.

Mr. Wong reviewed the design alternatives that were presented in May for different strategies of grading the site to achieve a fourteen-foot height for the entrance area; the proposed design maintains a level site surface and provides a sloped walkway and stairs to reach the building entrance. He explained that the length of the walkway would be a minimum of 280 feet with a maximum slope of one in twenty. One of the walkways would extend from Constitution Avenue, toward the nearest Metro station and the proposed Institute of Peace; an intersecting walkway and a stair would provide entry from Bacon Drive.

Mr. Wong explained the changes to the earlier concept. The size of the courtyard has been slightly reduced; he said that further reductions are not desirable due to the necessary angles for receiving natural light. The entrance configuration has been revised to provide a more generous lobby space for groups to gather and for obtaining timed entry tickets. An enclosed bridge across the courtyard would then bring visitors from the lobby to the beginning of the exhibit walkway. Ms. Nelson asked about ticketing and security screening requirements. Mr. Wong said there would not be an admission fee, but timed tickets are anticipated to control the flow of visitors. Mr. Parsons said that security screening would likely involve a search of bags but would not require magnetometers.

Mr. Wong described the program that a consultant has developed for the interior spaces. The projected number of visitors to the VVMC is 1.5 million annually—compared to 4.4 million at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial—which results in a design capacity of 777 visitors per hour; visitors are expected to stay for forty minutes. He explained that the National Park Service would operate the VVMC with full-time staff. The program also includes a classroom and related support space.

Mr. Wong said that there have been minor adjustments in the siting, but the building is still oriented toward Bacon Drive, which provides the best relationship to the memorial and the bus drop-off area. Excavation for the building would not damage the critical root areas of the existing trees at the edges of the site.

Mr. Polshek provided further explanation of the design details. The entry steps would be generously dimensioned with two-foot-wide treads. The reconfigured entrance would include a skylight and would allow access to the bookstore when the remainder of the building is closed. The lobby-level interior space also includes a trash storage area since this cannot be accommodated in the exterior of the site. The exhibit route would terminate at the lower-level area containing bathrooms, a resource center, and an escalator and elevators connecting back to the lobby. The lower-level courtyard would be accessible to visitors; it would be a quiet space with a reflecting pool and possibly a water wall.

Mr. Polshek showed sections and elevations of the proposed building along with material samples. The wall along the sloped entrance walkway would contain only the name of the facility; it would be dark gray granite that would not be polished, in order to avoid similarity to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Other wall surfaces would be green slate and would be partially screened with plantings. Three wall panels of fritted glass would mark the entrance. The surface of the site would be grass with a downward slope and step near the building edges so that the wall parapets can serve as railings without protruding into the landscape. Since the building entrance would not be visible from the crosswalks leading to the site, wayfinding signage would be provided. Mr. Wong offered further details of the site sloping and wall parapets; the upper extension of the exhibit walls would have a glass structure capped by a metal plate. Mr. Polshek acknowledged that the edge of the courtyard might attract visitors and said that a mockup of the parapet design would be constructed and tested with people of various ages.

Mr. Wong explained that new elm trees would be planted where necessary to complete the historic landscape design of the Lincoln Memorial setting. The remainder of the site would remain as an open recreational lawn. Mr. Polshek said that photo simulations of the project in the broader site context are available for the Commission's review but are generally not helpful because the building is only minimally visible from a distance.

Mr. Parsons introduced Ann Sherman Wolcott, a past president of the Gold Star Mothers, to address the Commission. Ms. Wolcott said that her son died in Vietnam in 1969. She emphasized the need to tell the story of the war and of those who died, with the VVMC serving to provide further memories of the people whose names are on the memorial; the VVMC would also tell the stories of those who died in other wars. She expressed support for Mr. Polshek's design and said that she would be honored to place her son's

memorabilia at the VVMC. Ms. Wolcott also read a statement from Eric Hitchcock, president of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Association, in support of the VVMC.

Mr. Parsons noted that other audience members would like to address the Commission. Mr. Powell said that comments should address the design of the VVMC rather than the desirability of creating it, since its existence has already been authorized by law.

Mr. Powell recognized Justin Martin of the Teach Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. Mr. Martin, a wounded veteran of the war, said that he had spoken with over 1,000 veterans about the proposal. He reported a consensus that the VVMC would provide a needed educational supplement to the existing memorial; it would not be perceived as a new memorial itself but would be a culmination of the memorial design. He said that the VVMC's unobtrusive subterranean configuration and its location near the Lincoln Memorial were appropriate.

Mr. Powell recognized Judy Scott Feldman, chairman of the National Coalition to Save Our Mall. Ms. Feldman said that her group has been a consulting party during the historic preservation Section 106 review process. She said that the National Park Service has scheduled the next public consultation meeting for October 24, when public comments on the current design proposal will be heard; she said that the submission to the Commission is therefore premature and urged the Commission not to take action on the proposal until after October 24. She said that the Commission's postponement would be necessary to protect the integrity of the public consultation process.

Ms. Feldman expressed several concerns about the design concept, commenting that it would cause "serious adverse effects" on the Mall, the Lincoln Memorial, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, a result that would be inconsistent with the authorizing legislation. She acknowledged that the design provides desirable light and ventilation for the VVMC, but the result is adverse impacts on the nearby memorials and the Mall's historic landscape. She said that several questions about the design remain unresolved: issues of public safety, traffic, pedestrian circulation, flooding, lighting, the loss of recreational space, cumulative effects with other nearby construction projects, and the relation of the VVMC to the experience of visiting the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Regarding the issue of flooding, she said that there is a disagreement among government agencies on whether this area's flood control systems—which include sandbagging by hand to complete a levee when necessary—are sufficient to justify the conclusion that the site is not in a floodplain.

Ms. Feldman concluded by relating the VVMC to the larger problem of excessive construction on the Mall, and she urged that the Mall be expanded to accommodate future growth. She said that this idea is gaining support from the mayor, Congress, and the public; she asked the Commission to take a leadership role in promoting a vision for an expansion of the Mall.

Mr. Powell recognized Joe Davis, the public affairs director of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He recommended that the Commission approve the design, and he emphasized the importance of educating future generations about the importance of honoring and caring for the nation's veterans.

Mr. Powell asked Mr. Parsons to respond to the public comments. Mr. Parsons said that the National Park Service treats the various review processes—including review by the Commission, the National Capital Planning Commission, and the Section 106 public review process—as concurrent rather than sequential. He said that most of the issues raised by Ms. Feldman do not relate to the Commission's role of providing design guidance; he therefore urged the Commission to take action on the concept rather than postpone the review.

Ms. Zimmerman asked for further information on the flooding issue. Mr. Parsons said that the Corps of Engineers recently released the map that he showed to the Commission; a concurrent study by the Corps and the National Park Service is studying the flood-control levee that extends from the Lincoln Memorial to the Washington Monument Grounds. He said that the temporary sandbagging procedure has been used since 1939 to address gaps at 17th and 23rd Streets; a permanent solution is being considered. He acknowledged that the Corps is not willing to certify the sandbagging solution, although it is the standard solution to flooding. Mr. Powell asked if resolution of this issue by the Corps would be necessary in order to construct the VVMC; Mr. Parsons said that the VVMC could be built regardless, and the traditional sandbagging method would provide flood protection if a permanent flood-control system is not in place.

Mr. Rybczynski asked where lines of visitors would form during crowded times. Mr. Polshek explained that the lobby is quite large in

the revised design, so visitors could gather or wait in this interior space; for larger numbers of visitors, the exterior sloped walkway or stairs would provide additional room. Mr. Rybczynski asked about the relative importance of the various entrance routes. Mr. Polshek said that none of the routes would be secondary, although aesthetically the stairs would be the primary entrance feature. Mr. Polshek and Mr. Wong explained that due to the shallow slope of the walkway, no railings or landings will be required.

Ms. Nelson commented that design influences people's behavior; visitors tend to be quiet at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, but she said that such reverence will not be likely at the VVMC. She asked if the VVMC and the courtyard might become a noisy setting rather than a place of reverence and reflection, and she questioned whether the crowds would overwhelm the intended educational purpose of the building. Mr. Polshek said that the VVMC is expected to have fewer visitors than the memorial; Ms. Nelson commented that the memorial's visitors are spread out across a larger outdoor area. Mr. Polshek explained that visitors will not ordinarily enter the courtyard, so it should remain a quiet place; it is 31 feet deep which gives some protection from outside noise, and the water wall would provide additional screening noise. He said that the VVMC would not tend to cause irreverent behavior but this is difficult to control or predict.

Ms. Zimmerman asked for further information about the program and displays in the building. Mr. Polshek said that Appelbaum and Associates is designing the exhibits with the architect's involvement. He reiterated that the building's emphasis will be on the exhibits rather than the architecture. Mr. Parsons said that the National Park Service curates a collection of 100,000 items that will be used as the basis for the exhibits.

Ms. Zimmerman said that the design is successful in keeping a low profile but she commented that the nearby food-service kiosk does not look good in this context; Mr. Powell agreed that it appears isolated and should be reconsidered. Mr. Parsons said that the kiosk began complete operations only three months ago.

Mr. Belle commented that the design challenge is difficult and he commended the sensitivity of the proposal. However, he questioned whether the design has too much similarity to the existing memorial wall, diluting the memorial's impact. Mr. Polshek said that the veterans who have looked at the design, as well as the designer of the memorial, have concluded that the VVMC design will reinforce the memorial rather than dilute it. He said that there have been extensive discussions about the choice of granite and configuration of the entrance walls to address this concern. He said that the below-grade configuration would inevitably result in some similarity to the experience of the memorial. He said that the VVMC is for information, and the memorial is for reverence and memory, with each telling a part of the same story. Mr. Belle acknowledged that the requirement for underground construction causes the similarity; he also expressed concern about the recent trend of underground visitor centers in Washington.

Mr. McKinnell said the design was "in many ways brilliant" but he expressed concern about the paradox of creating an emotionally moving visitor center that complements, rather than subverts, the emotional impact of the memorial. He clarified that this design paradox is separate from the question of the need for further education about Vietnam, which he acknowledged is necessary; but he questioned the appropriateness of locating this educational experience on the Mall near the memorial. He commented that the VVMC may be part of an ongoing series of educational facilities on the Mall that would result in similar paradoxes. He reiterated that the design solves the program very successfully, but his concern was with the appropriateness of the program at this location.

Mr. Powell asked Mr. Parsons to comment on the potential for this project to set a precedent for similar facilities on the Mall. Mr. Parsons said that the authorizing legislation includes a provision that there will not be other visitor centers on the Mall. Ms. Nelson and Mr. Powell questioned whether this provides sufficient assurance, since the prohibition could be superseded by a new law. Mr. Powell noted that the Commission is already working with the National Capital Planning Commission and the National Park Service on a study to plan for the future growth of the Mall while protecting the existing Mall as a completed work of art; he suggested that the Commission proceed with the understanding that the protection of the Mall would remain in effect.

Ms. Nelson asked if the design could be slightly reduced in size, particularly to reduce the impact of the building when seen from the Lincoln Memorial steps. Ms. Zimmerman reiterated her concern that the Commission needs to see more details of the program in order to evaluate whether the design is appropriate. Mr. Polshek explained that the program for exhibits includes several components: display of some of the National Park Service's collection of objects; projection of soldiers' faces; and a timeline of the war's history. He said that the design is sized to accommodate this program, and a small reduction in the building's size would not significantly reduce its visual impact. He clarified that the National Park Service's collection would not be stored at the VVMC.

Mr. Rybczynski commented that the tops of the walls are below the general grade of the area but are not below the adjacent ground, exaggerating their apparent size and visibility despite the lightness of their glass sides. Mr. Polshek explained that this design feature was carefully studied in relation to the metaphorical significance of the walls and the gradations of lighting. Mr. Wong added that various configurations of sloped ground were considered, and a simple consistent profile was chosen.

Mr. Rybczynski commented that the perspective view of the entrance facade highlights the uncomfortable similarity between the VVMC and the existing memorial; he suggested further study of this issue. Mr. Polshek commented that much of the entrance facade would be glass, creating a very different feeling than stone; the hanging plantings above the wall would also provide a different character. He said that a different color choice is possible for the stone portion of the entrance facade, and he welcomed the Commission's suggestions. Mr. Rybczynski acknowledged that the flight of steps at the entrance will provide some differentiation from the memorial.

Mr. Powell commented that the design solution is handsome but is somewhat prominent in some views, even though it addresses most of the design criteria. He summarized the Commission members' comments supporting the design as a distinguished work of architecture. He expressed regret that the Commission's role is constrained because the authorizing legislation already mandates the Commission's ultimate approval of the VVMC; he noted the Commission's understanding that the VVMC would be the last project of this type on the Mall.

Mr. Powell then offered a motion to approve the design concept subject to further study of outstanding issues, particularly the entrance area and site design. Mr. Belle asked if the further study would include the issues raised in the public testimony; Mr. Powell said that the motion generally includes the concerns that the Commission has discussed, with the specific wording to be worked out in the follow-up letter. Mr. Rybczynski emphasized that the project's size is a concern, as Ms. Nelson had discussed; he commented that the project appears to have grown since the discussion in September 2006, and he said that the design problems would be more easily addressed if the program had instead been reduced. Mr. Polshek offered to study this further; he explained that the courtyard had become slightly smaller while the interior areas were slightly larger. Mr. Powell agreed that further study would be useful, commenting that the underground components affect the appearance of the ground surface.

Mr. Powell clarified his motion to approve the concept subject to the concerns expressed by the Commission members; with a second by Ms. Zimmerman, the Commission approved this motion.

C. General Services Administration

1. CFA 18/OCT/07-2, St. Elizabeths Hospital, West Campus. 2700 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, S.E. Preliminary Master Plan and Security Master Plan for the Department of Homeland Security Headquarters. Concept. (Previous: CFA 21/JUN/07-1, Information presentation.) Mr. Luebke introduced the proposal for a high-security campus to consolidate the Coast Guard and the headquarters components of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). He summarized the Commission's comments at the June 2007 information presentation about the amount of density that could reasonably be accommodated on the site. He said that the current submission is the first opportunity for the Commission to take a formal action on the project; the proposal is a master plan rather than a specific architectural design.

Mr. Luebke noted that the site is a National Historic Landmark and said that the Commission staff has been participating in the historic preservation Section 106 consultation process to address the impact of the proposed redevelopment. He explained that there is also a concurrent process for environmental review; the preservation and environmental review processes are separate from the Commission's review but involve related issues. He noted the attendance of members of the public who wished to offer testimony to the Commission. He introduced Mike McGill of the General Services Administration (GSA) to begin the presentation.

Mr. McGill explained that GSA acquired control of the 176-acre St. Elizabeths West Campus in December 2004 because of the expectation that the federal government would be needing substantial space in a high-security campus environment to replace existing leased facilities that do not meet newer security requirements. GSA is now proposing a master plan to place DHS on the site. For the past two years, GSA has been preparing studies of the campus's historic resources, site conditions, and environmental issues. He said that the presentation would focus on design issues but a team of experts in the audience could answer other questions that arise. He introduced the GSA development director, Dawud Abdur-Rahman, to present the proposal.

Mr. Abdur-Rahman explained that the presentation would include an update since the previous presentation, additional information on

the site characteristics in response to the Commission's request, and a discussion of the master plan including the two preferred alternatives that have been identified in the environmental review process. He said that the appropriations process for the project has resulted in the availability of additional design studies by Perkins + Will that illustrate how the master plan can be interpreted into an architectural design. He said that the presentation would also include a discussion of security-related aesthetic issues and transportation impacts.

Mr. Abdur-Rahman explained the environmental review steps since the last presentation. GSA issued a formal notice that the specific purpose of the project is to house the DHS headquarters, which has a program of 4.5 million gross square feet of space plus associated parking to accommodate 14,000 employees. GSA has also issued a Preliminary Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to consulting parties, including the Commission, for discussion and comment. Some contamination was found on the site, and GSA held a community meeting to discuss the findings and next steps.

Mr. Abdur-Rahman said that GSA is continuing to report to the D.C. government and meet with various stakeholders. GSA sponsored a Business Opportunities Forum in the community to promote the economic benefits that could come from this project. He said that an appropriation of \$300 million is anticipated in the coming year to support the project.

Mr. Abdur-Rahman discussed the program in more detail. DHS was formed in 2002 from twenty-two agencies; the Congress has subsequently asked DHS to develop a plan for the efficient consolidation of these operations into a single agency. DHS identified an overall headquarters function of eight million gross square feet and recommended that a portion of this space—4.5 million square feet—be consolidated to a single location which is proposed for St. Elizabeths. He said that reports from the Government Accountability Office confirm that the existing configuration of DHS facilities does not facilitate effective performance.

Mr. Abdur-Rahman said that the master plan considers four alternative layouts for the campus, each accommodating the proposed program. A majority of the site's contributing historic buildings—78 percent on a square-footage basis—would be adaptively reused. Two of the alternatives have been identified as preferred. He said that design guidelines for the campus would be developed in the next month, so the Commission's suggestions in shaping them would be particularly helpful. He then introduced Martin Denholm of the SmithGroup to discuss the design proposal of the preliminary master plan.

Mr. Denholm provided an overview of the site characteristics that shape the master plan. He explained its setting on the Anacostia hills overlooking central Washington. Interstate 295 is on the west edge, with the Bolling-Anacostia military bases and the Potomac River beyond; residential areas are to the north and south; and Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue is on the east, separating the west campus from the east campus which is used by the D.C. government. He indicated the two Metro stations within a 15-20 minute walk from the site; the three gates to the campus along Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, with Gate 1 being the most important; the tunnel beneath the avenue to connect the east and west campuses; the Center Building, the oldest and most prominent building on the site; the Point which is a promontory providing the best view of central Washington; the grouping of greenhouses near Gate 1; the cluster of buildings forming the Ellison Quad; another quadrangle to the south; and the Overlook site to the west, containing more modern warehouse and maintenance facilities. Mr. Denholm also showed the ravine cutting through a central area of the site; another wooded area to the south that is adjacent to a bald eagle nesting area outside the campus; and the National Park Service property along the west edge of the site. He noted that access through that property would be needed to accommodate development of the campus.

Mr. Denholm showed a map identifying the buildings that contribute to the campus's historic designation; most of the non-contributing buildings are at the Overlook area. He said that each contributing building was studied for potential reuse; the greenhouses were the least practical to use.

Mr. Denholm noted that the landscape as well as the buildings contributes to the site's landmark designation, showing a diagram of the landscape features including the meandering roads and walkways, lawns, special views, plateaus, steep slopes, and forest. He indicated the spatial characteristics of the building and landscape groupings at various locations on the campus; some areas are well defined and other areas could be enhanced by additional development that would provide further spatial definition. He noted the major internal landscape features of the south lawn and the lawn behind the Center Building, as well as the many smaller courtyard spaces. He described the wildlife related to the site, including the populations of deer and wild turkey as well as the nearby bald eagle. He said that another design goal is not to increase water runoff from the site; various techniques including green roofs will be used. The existing power plant would be reused as the project's central plant. Other utility infrastructure would be carefully located and bundled to minimize the impact of excavation; the utilities would be located beneath the existing roadways as much as possible. He explained the views into the site from the surrounding neighborhoods, from I-295 and the military bases, and from across the river.

Mr. Denholm said that new buildings would be sited to support the existing patterns of building alignments and open spaces. He showed the placement of new buildings in the two preferred alternatives, which differ primarily in the treatment of the Center Building: Alternative 3 would add substantial additions immediately behind it, while Alternative 4 would add only small additions for circulation to the Center Building while placing another new building on the site of the greenhouses near Gate 1. The greenhouses would be demolished in either alternative. He said that both alternatives would have a new warehouse and screening facility on the western part of the site. A semi-circular area at the southern end of the site would remain undeveloped, due to its steep forested slopes and its proximity to the bald eagle's nest. New buildings would complete the framing of the south lawn in both alternatives; these buildings would be low along the lawn and taller toward the rear. On the west portion of the site, a Civil War cemetery would be retained and would be made accessible to the public. Mr. Denholm said that there has been extensive discussion of providing public access to the Point so that people could enjoy its views of the city. He said that DHS is willing to consider periodic special-use access by the public.

Mr. Denholm explained that the parking program for the site includes 1.8 million square feet for 5,000 vehicles. The intention is to place parking at the perimeter of the site; there would not be significant vehicular circulation within the campus. Both alternatives include a large parking structure on the southwest portion of the site, set below the grade of the plateau, with 1.3 million square feet. An additional half-million square feet of parking would be placed below-grade along the eastern edge of the site near Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue. The distribution of parking corresponds to the expected distribution of arrivals, with 70 percent arriving from I-295.

Mr. Rybczynski asked how pedestrians would move between the parking areas and the offices. Mr. Denholm said that a shuttle system will circulate on the campus to connect the buildings and the parking. He explained that the distances across the campus are not too long for comfortable walking, but the steep grades and potential inclement weather make a shuttle system desirable.

Mr. Denholm explained that building heights would be kept relatively low to allow the Center Building to remain prominent; only the stacks on the power plant would be taller. Some buildings would gain additional height due to the downward slope of the land while not rising to the height of the Center Building. The parking structures would be partially below grade. Emphasis would be given to retaining the older wooded areas of the site, with less concern for the tree growth of recent decades.

Mr. Denholm discussed the perimeter security design for the site. He described the requirement for a 100-foot setback, which he said is easily accommodated. The existing walls, trees, and topography provide extensive vehicle barriers; additional barriers would only be needed at the existing gates and the new entry points that would be created toward the southwest, where a new access road would connect to the interchange of I-295, South Capitol Street, and Malcolm X Avenue. A double fence would surround the site to prevent pedestrian access. The fence would be aligned to exclude the Civil War cemetery which could then be made accessible to the general public.

Mr. Denholm described the phasing of the master plan. The Coast Guard would be the first tenant with a new building on the west along with associated parking. Restoration of some of the historic buildings would also begin so that shared-use facilities would be available for the Coast Guard. The second phase would include the restoration and potential expansion of the Center Building, along with the warehouse and some of the south lawn development. The final phase would include the remainder of the campus.

Mr. McKinnell asked about the scale of the proposed buildings. Mr. Denholm said that the Center Building is 750 to 800 feet long; Mr. Luebke said that it is actually 900 feet long. Mr. Denholm said that the width of the buildings is typically shown as 90 to 120 feet.

Mr. Rybczynski asked whether the historic buildings would contain important functions. Mr. Denholm said that the Secretary's office and immediate staff would be in the Center Building, which is the most important building on the site. Many of the other historic buildings would contain shared uses such as the day-care center, fitness center, and cafeteria.

Mr. Denholm showed animated fly-through simulations of the two master plan alternatives, illustrating the existing and proposed buildings within a three-dimensional representation of the topography. He explained that many of the proposals are similar in both of the preferred alternatives.

Mr. Abdur-Rahman then introduced the team of architects from the firm of Perkins + Will, which GSA has hired to design the Coast Guard headquarters for the campus. He emphasized that the campus master plan is being developed independently of the architectural design for this initial phase; nonetheless, GSA has asked Perkins + Will to consider the master plan and the overall campus program in designing this component. He said that the historic preservation Section 106 process for the Coast Guard headquarters would be

separate from the process for the master plan. Aki Knezevic, a principal at Perkins + Will, introduced his colleagues Ralph Johnson and Tom Mozina.

Mr. Johnson said that the Coast Guard building program encompasses 1.2 million square feet. Proposals have been developed for three sites on the campus: the Overlook site; a site among the pavilions framing the south lawn; and the greenhouse site near Gate 1 in conjunction with an addition behind the Center Building. Mr. Johnson said that the capacity of these three sites totals approximately 4.5 million square feet, which is the size of the overall DHS program that the master plan seeks to accommodate; the three alternative studies by Perkins + Will could therefore be used in combination to illustrate the full proposed build-out of the campus. Mr. Luebke clarified that only the master plan is submitted for the Commission's review; the Coast Guard proposals are being shown only for illustrative purposes, not for formal review.

Mr. Johnson said that the design studies show the potential massing at each site, illustrating how the development would relate to other buildings, open spaces, topography, and views; the studies also show the design impact of sustainability-related features such as green roofs and thin buildings that emphasize day-lit spaces. The building designs have been developed to create courtyards that relate to the existing open space pattern of the campus; in some locations the siting is intended to preserve existing trees. Mr. McKinnell asked if the program requires that all of the Coast Guard's space be contiguous; Mr. Johnson said that this is necessary, and some of the space—such as the parking garage—can be located underground.

Mr. Knezevic said that the visual impact of the buildings will be much less than that suggested in aerial views; the massing is designed to include moderate-scale elements at the level of the campus's plateau with much of the buildings' bulk not apparent from ground level due to the tree cover and the topography. Mr. McKinnell asked for clarification of the program sizes for the Coast Guard and DHS. Mr. Luebke noted that Mr. Johnson's discussion of program sizes does not include the proposed parking, which would be nearly two million square feet for the entire DHS program. Mr. McKinnell commented that the model should therefore be understood to include a fourth building mass, in addition to the three that are shown, to illustrate the full amount of built space that would be required to accommodate the DHS program. Mr. Mozina said that this additional bulk is illustrated in the animation and on the plan diagrams.

Mr. Belle asked when the sustainability-related features of the design would be sufficiently developed to be able to evaluate their success. Mr. Denholm said that this evaluation is already underway in the design studies; the team is looking at issues such as hydrology and solar orientation. Mr. Belle commented that it is premature to evaluate the success of the design while these factors are still being analyzed. Mr. Denholm said that the design studies seem to show that the basic orientation and footprint of the buildings is consistent with issues of sustainability and the characteristics of the site. Mr. Belle said that a stronger commitment is needed to the principles of sustainability in developing the master plan.

Mr. Abdur-Rahman said that perimeter security would be an important part of the project to reuse the campus, regardless of whether the occupant is DHS or another federal agency or major organization. He introduced Gill Thompson, the project security consultant, to discuss the department's needs and the proposed perimeter security solution.

Mr. Thompson said that one security component would be a double fence around the perimeter of the campus. The outer perimeter would be a metal fence designed to be aesthetically pleasing, such as the existing outer fence at the Nebraska Avenue Complex. The inner perimeter will be a no-climb high-security fence. The "no-man zone" between the fences, approximately twenty feet wide, would be grass; this area would not include trees or bushes. He said that DHS is discouraging the placement of trees or "climbable foliage" within ten feet of either fence; existing trees could remain, even with touching canopies, provided that the limbs do not provide an opportunity for a person to traverse the fence line. He noted that perimeter security along Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue is already provided by the existing ten-foot-high stone wall; much of the remaining perimeter is within forested areas and most of the new fence line will not be visible to the public. He acknowledged the historic landscape and the importance of existing trees, explaining that the fence line could meander through the forest on an alignment that would protect these resources.

Mr. Thompson said that security lighting would be provided but would only be turned on when there is a security breach; he said that DHS is sensitive to the concern about generating excessive light and noted that it is also preferable from a security viewpoint not to light the perimeter fence. He said that low-light cameras would be used to monitor the perimeter. He added that the existing landscape or modifications to it could provide many security features, such as trenches, berms, boulders, and trees, making it unnecessary to make extensive use of bollards or other barriers.

Mr. Abdur-Rahman discussed the transportation-related concepts of the master plan. He said that specific information about traffic volumes and proposed interchanges is also available if necessary. He explained that the project's impact on Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue—a concern for the community—would be minimized by trying to put 70 percent of campus traffic on the access road that would be constructed near I-295 on the west. Four alternative designs have been developed for the configuration of the access road and its connection to I-295. One alternative would involve an elevated ramp; renderings of this proposal would be developed for future presentations of the master plan. Mr. Abdur-Rahman said that GSA is working with DHS to develop a transportation management plan; a survey of 7,000 employees has been conducted. The preliminary conclusion is that one parking space will be needed per three employees. He noted that the National Capital Planning Commission is recommending a ratio of 1:4, although he added that other facilities in the area have a ratio of 1:2 or 1:3.

Mr. Abdur-Rahman discussed the project schedule. He said that there is some urgency because of the need to improve the operations of DHS and the desire to put the existing campus into productive use. He explained that GSA has been receiving appropriations for the repair and maintenance of the existing buildings, which were not in good condition when GSA gained control of the site. He said that a \$300 million appropriation is anticipated for fiscal year 2008 for construction of the Coast Guard facility. He noted the numerous public meetings scheduled in coming weeks for the master plan and the Preliminary Draft EIS, as well as review of the master plan by the National Capital Planning Commission in early November. Additional coordination is scheduled with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the National Park Service.

Mr. Abdur-Rahman said that the consulting parties for the master plan held a work session in July that resulted in their consensus recommendation for the density and configuration of development on the campus. He acknowledged the discrepancy between this consensus recommendation and GSA's proposed program and master plan. He said that GSA is analyzing the consensus recommendation and would propose a response or mitigation within the next month.

Mr. Rybczynski asked the architects from Perkins + Will what they had learned from their design study for the Coast Guard facility. Mr. Johnson responded that the project would be feasible at any of the three sites that were studied. The site along the south lawn offers a relatively flat area and a traditional campus quadrangle setting. The Overlook site combines a traditional campus setting at the top with a dramatic topography along the rest of the site. Mr. Rybczynski observed that the resulting schemes have very different configurations and asked if DHS or the architects have rejected or preferred any of the proposals, such as the "big swooping behemoth" shown in one option. Mr. Johnson said that several alternatives were developed for each of the sites, and some have been dropped; for example, alternative 1B appears to be too massive for the site. Mr. McKinnell noted that the Coast Guard proposal is not currently the subject of the Commission's review. Mr. Johnson confirmed that the Coast Guard project would be submitted separately, and Mr. Powell suggested that the Commission focus the current discussion on the master plan.

Ms. Nelson asked how the master plan would relate to the overall location of DHS facilities. Mr. Abdur-Rahman said that DHS has an overall need for eight million gross square feet in the national capital region. DHS concluded that 4.5 million square feet of that total should be at a single location in order to effectively support leadership, policy, and execution. Currently DHS facilities are in dozens of buildings at many campuses and leased locations. The proposed consolidation would place approximately half the facilities at St. Elizabeths West Campus, with the other half at a small number of other locations such as the Nebraska Avenue Complex and the Ronald Reagan Building.

Ms. Nelson asked if the east campus of St. Elizabeths could be part of the project, providing the opportunity for future expansion or for reducing the density proposed for the west campus. Mr. Abdur-Rahman said that GSA has been discussing this possibility with D.C. government officials. One possibility is to locate the parking on the east campus, but D.C. officials would prefer that office space be built on the east campus, preferably using a leased arrangement rather than federally-owned facilities in order to generate local tax revenues. He said that GSA would continue to coordinate with the D.C. government on the plans for the east campus to address both GSA's programmatic needs and the mitigation of the combined impacts of development on both campuses. Mr. Luebke noted that a representative from the D.C. government would make a statement to the Commission.

Ms. Zimmerman observed that there was much discussion about environmental issues, green buildings, and open space, and asked if a landscape architect is working on the project; Mr. Denholm confirmed that a landscape architect is part of the project team. Ms. Zimmerman asked about wildlife living on the site and whether the mobility of the land animals would be affected by the creation of a security perimeter. Mr. Denholm said that most of the wildlife is small and could probably get around the fences such as by using trees. He said that the deer population "would probably have to be managed in some fashion;" he said that this would still need to be studied, and he noted that the population of deer had not yet been determined because they tend to move around. Ms. Zimmerman

said that this migration was the point of her question, and she commented that the proposed fences might be too high for the deer to jump over. Mr. Powell asked if the master plan would be configured differently if the eagle were to leave the area. Mr. Denholm said that the area of the site that would be kept undeveloped due to the eagle is an area that would likely be kept undeveloped anyway due to its steep topography, forestation, and possible soil contamination due to its proximity to the power plant stacks.

Mr. Belle observed that the preliminary master plan was submitted to the Commission after the consensus recommendation was formulated; he asked if the submission has taken into consideration this recommendation of the consulting parties, which includes the National Trust for Historic Preservation whose president has written to GSA about the project. Mr. Abdur-Rahman said that the preliminary master plan does not reflect the consensus recommendation, and he said that the consulting parties were advised in July that it would not be possible to incorporate their work into the materials that GSA was already preparing for submission in September. Mr. Belle expressed regret for this sequencing, particularly since GSA had requested that the consulting parties develop the consensus recommendation. Mr. Abdur-Rahman said that the recommendation would be used to inform future discussions about the project concerning mitigation of impacts, design guidelines, and development of a programmatic agreement. He acknowledged that one of the overall issues for the site is the level of density that is appropriate for the campus compared to the greater density required by the DHS program.

Mr. Luebke commented that the issues raised by the consulting parties in July have also been raised consistently with GSA over the past two years of consultation, so he questioned the claim that GSA's lack of response to these issues is due to scheduling problems. He suggested that the Commission address whether the master plan is appropriate for the site rather than try to evaluate the stated programmatic needs of DHS. Mr. Belle commented that the difference between the size of GSA's proposal and the consensus recommendation is quite large, approximately two million square feet of office space; Mr. Luebke noted that the difference between GSA's total proposal of 6.4 million square feet and the consensus recommendation of 2.5 million square feet would be approximately four million square feet of overall built space.

Mr. McKinnell said that the obvious issue for the site is whether it can reasonably accommodate six million square feet of developed space, and the answer would depend on what criteria are referenced. He said that if historic preservation is the criterion, then clearly six million square feet could not be accommodated in a way that would meaningfully preserve the site's historic buildings and landscape. A much lower amount—such as the suggested total of two million square feet—would be more feasible but would still alter the site's historic character. He questioned whether preservation should be the single criterion and said that he didn't think most of buildings on the site were extraordinary enough to require preservation. He said that a large amount of development, perhaps considerably more than two million square feet, would be acceptable if it were demonstrated that this construction would improve the physical character of the site, which he acknowledged was possible; however, he said that the master plan does not demonstrate this. He complained that the master plan does not provide meaningful alternatives but offers only minor alternative variations in the placement of the proposed buildings. He said that a better study is needed due to the scale of the proposal and the topographical prominence of the site, regardless of its historic features. As an example, he offered an alternative of accommodating the entire program in two-story buildings grouped around a series of courtyards; he recommended comparison with other campus-like groupings of similar scale in order to gain a better understanding of how a program of this size could be accommodated.

Mr. Rybczynski commented that the master plan appears to identify two important constraints: the eagle's nest and the old buildings; the entire proposal is designed to work around these constraints. He suggested that these might be the wrong constraints to emphasize, particularly since the resulting master plan is not satisfactory from a historic preservation viewpoint. He also noted that the DHS program is treated as a fixed number, which is problematic. He suggested that more flexibility from all parties would be helpful; he agreed with Mr. McKinnell that the master plan is unconvincing as presented.

Mr. Powell recognized Robert Nieweg of the National Trust for Historic Preservation speaking on behalf of Richard Moe, president of the Trust. Mr. Nieweg said that the Trust has been actively involved as a consulting party to the Section 106 process. He said that in the past, the Trust has highlighted the threat to the campus from vacancy and neglect, and he said that the Trust supports "reasonable federal redevelopment" at the site. But he said that the large size of the DHS program has created an impossible task for GSA that would overwhelm the historic site and result in the demolition of twenty-five of the site's sixty-two historic buildings in addition to historic landscape features. He emphasized that GSA and DHS are required by the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) to strive for maximum preservation at the site. He said that the Trust has suggested for the past two years that GSA develop designs in the range of 1.5 to 3 million square feet of development. He said that both of the preferred alternatives in the master plan are inconsistent with NHPA despite the master plan's references to stewardship of historic resources. He urged the Commission to ask GSA to "radically rethink" the proposed density.

Mr. Nieweg said that the consensus recommendation of the consulting parties, including the Trust and the Commission staff, is for 2.5 million gross square feet of which nearly one million would be the reuse of existing space; he said that this number would have some flexibility depending on factors such as underground development. Mr. McKinnell asked how this number was determined. Mr. Nieweg said that the staffs of the consulting parties derived the calculation independently based on limited information and resources, including a map and narrative descriptions of the campus.

Mr. Nieweg said that the proposed development would introduce other problems: the creation of a walled fortress and the imposition of traffic burdens on the neighborhood, with little local benefit to offset these drawbacks. He noted that the master plan calls for childcare and a cafeteria on the campus, giving the 14,000 employees little reason to make use of amenities in the neighborhood. He said that the Trust has suggested that GSA attract another federal tenant that would not require such a high level of security and consider ways to reduce the density, such as by shifting some of the program to the east campus. He suggested that the parking structures, which he said were not well depicted in the video presentation, could instead be located in the surrounding neighborhoods in order to overcome the barriers between employees and the community. Mr. Nieweg concluded by recommending that DHS be located at a different site if these problems could not be addressed successfully.

Mr. Powell asked if GSA was currently working with the Trust and others in addressing mitigation for the proposal; he suggested that today's discussion could be treated as an information presentation until GSA is able to fully address these issues. Mr. McGill said that the current submission of the preliminary master plan will be followed by the final master plan in December or January; GSA is seeking comments throughout this period to develop a single alternative. Mr. Powell agreed that the Commission's comments would be timely but questioned the need for the Commission's formal approval or disapproval. Mr. Luebke said that the requested action is approval of the concept for the master plan.

John Clark, a trustee of the D.C. Preservation League (DCPL), addressed the Commission. He said that DCPL agrees with the the Trust's comments. He explained that the consulting parties, which included DCPL, had developed their recommended maximum level of development by analyzing each parcel shown in the master plan and looking at the feasible massing within the design structure of the campus; the resulting recommendation was unanimously agreed to by the group. He said that the use of the site for a high-security double-fenced compound is questionable from the standpoint of both historic preservation and the potential social and economic impact on the local community. He said that DHS occupancy of the site, regardless of the scale of development, would permanently shut off public access to most of the site's historic resources and character, but he recommended that some public access be maintained to the site's important views—particularly from the Point. He described these views as "among the finest in the area if not the nation" and a "uniquely valuable element" of the campus. He suggested that the security perimeter be designed to enclose the center of the campus but not the Point so that open public access to the Point could be allowed. He concluded by urging the Commission to include his concerns as part of its comments and recommendations on the master plan.

Judy Scott Feldman addressed the Commission, discussing her views as a citizen and as someone who grew up in the area. She expressed concern about the vulnerability of concentrating DHS operations at a single site and its location near other major national facilities that could be targets of terrorism. She commented that perimeter security protection from pedestrians and vehicles is now known to be insufficient. She suggested that DHS be scattered among numerous campuses, perhaps including St. Elizabeths. Ms. Feldman recalled the neighborhood's enjoyable character during her childhood; she acknowledged that the area "has gone through some very hard times" and said that the right use at St. Elizabeths could help the neighborhood, while a walled compound would instead suggest a prison environment. She suggested uses such as housing or offices for the National Park Service, which is vulnerable to flooding at its current location. She said that GSA's decision about what goes on this campus will affect the neighborhood and the capital city "which is a symbol of how we think of ourselves and present ourselves to the world." She recounted the symbolism of the city's major historic plans—representing the nation's constitution in 1791 and its visions of empire in 1901—and expressed concern that the DHS proposal would suggest that the nation's modern vision involves "security and fear." She urged the Commission members to use to encourage further discussion about this decision affecting the nation's capital.

Barbara Zartman addressed the Commission, representing the Committee of 100 on the Federal City. Ms. Zartman said that the Committee of 100 has a special interest in St. Elizabeths, having prepared the National Historic Landmark nomination for the campus. She said that its significance includes not only the buildings and landscapes but also its relation to the history of treating the mentally ill; St. Elizabeths was a place of humane and enlightened care. She said that this history should be remembered but is lost in the programming details of locating DHS at the campus. She questioned whether the proposal would actually achieve a consolidation of DHS operations, noting that only 14,000 of the 26,000 DHS headquarters employees would be located on the campus according to the master plan. She said that this partial consolidation suggests the opportunity for much more flexibility in deciding how to distribute

DHS staff between this location and other facilities. She asked that this decision be reconsidered before construction occurs on the St. Elizabeths campus which she emphasized is "a very precious place in our nation's history" as well as being important to the neighborhood and city.

Tim Dennee of the D.C. Historic Preservation Office addressed the Commission, representing the D.C. Office of Planning (DC-OP). He said that the future of the St. Elizabeths campus is important to the neighborhood as well as to the historic resources within the campus. He explained that St. Elizabeths was "the first federal facility for the treatment of the mentally ill and was long a model of innovation" in mental health care. He noted that the physical development of the campus reflects the treatment philosophy, with "an emphasis on the therapeutic value of sunlight and air, serene and beautiful surroundings, and opportunities for physical activity." He said that DC-OP has been involved in consultation on this project since its inception and has expressed serious concerns throughout about the magnitude of the plans. He said that DC-OP supports very substantial development of federal offices on the site that would encourage reinvestment in the historic campus as well as generate economic benefits for the surrounding communities. He said that initial redevelopment proposals were based on an assessment of the site's particular qualities and needs but instead there is now a "very intense and very rigid program premised almost solely upon the site's ability to accommodate a 100-foot perimeter security buffer zone." He said that the proposed program would put too much pressure on the site in many ways, including demolition of historic buildings, intruding on the setting of the Civil War cemetery and other features, damaging the designed landscapes, and affecting views to, from, and within the campus.

Mr. Dennee said that the proposed parking ratio is too generous, resulting in a large parking structure that would contribute significantly to the overbuilding of the campus, as well as generating traffic that would have a substantial negative impact on the nearby neighborhoods. He commented that the master plan's projected distribution of vehicular arrivals—with only thirty percent arriving from Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue—is contradicted by GSA's security master plan which shows a greater percentage arriving from this street. He noted the presence of two Metro stations near the campus and urged that a stricter parking ratio be used. He said that the internal shuttle system proposed by DHS could be extended to connect to the Metro stations.

Mr. Dennee agreed with the concern of the Trust and others that GSA and DHS were not fulfilling their NHPA responsibilities to minimize harm to landmarks as much as possible. He described the two alternatives as "nearly indistinguishable" and said that many other alternatives could be shown. He emphasized the thoroughness and unanimity of the consensus recommendation put forward by the consulting parties, including DC-OP, which he said would allow "dramatic redevelopment" while also improving the campus.

Mr. Dennee concluded by saying that the D.C. government is "very willing to explore with GSA and DHS the possibility of accommodating some development in new leased buildings on a portion of the east campus to relieve some of the pressure from the overcrowded and even more significant west campus."

Dave Garrison, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, addressed the Commission and provided a written statement. He said that the major issue is the proposal to wall off the campus from any meaningful interaction with the surrounding community. He emphasized the great potential for the site and noted earlier proposals for mixed-use development. He said that the current proposal amounts to "taking twenty pounds of potatoes and fitting it into a ten-pound bag." He said that the program is being imposed upon GSA. He said that the DHS employees would mostly not be D.C. residents; the lack of income tax revenues, combined with the lack of economic spinoff from the walled campus—worsened by the proposed inclusion of food service within the campus—would result in burdens but no benefits for the community.

Ms. Nelson commented that "I think we don't have a plan yet." Mr. Powell agreed that the master plan was not yet ready for the Commission's action. He acknowledged the consensus indicated by the comments of the speakers as well as GSA's effort on the project. He noted GSA's intention to talk further with the consulting and interested parties in the near future; he said that he would like to learn the results of those discussions before acting on the master plan, commenting that a decision now would be premature. Ms. Nelson joined Mr. Powell in suggesting that the Commission not give preliminary approval to the current submission. Mr. Powell requested that GSA respond to the repeated criticism that the program is too large, and he suggested that GSA return after having a dialogue with the public and other agencies and organizations to reach responsive decisions and conclusions. He said that the discussion was useful for informational purposes and suggested that GSA take the valuable advice of the speakers. The discussion concluded without a formal action.

2. CFA 18/OCT/07-3, Department of Homeland Security, Nebraska Avenue Complex. Nebraska and Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. Perimeter security upgrades and new structures. Final. (Previous: CFA 19/JUL/07-2.) Mr. Lindstrom introduced the project for security-

related alterations to the current headquarters of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) at the Nebraska Avenue Complex (NAC). He summarized the Commission's review of the concept in July, including general satisfaction with screening facilities, visitor center, gates, and guard booths, and a recommendation that the General Services Administration (GSA) undertake further study of a better prototype design for security fencing that could be used at this site and elsewhere. He introduced Mike McGill of GSA to begin the presentation.

Mr. McGill said that GSA will undertake further study of security fencing design and has referred this issue to GSA's Office of the Chief Architect. He reminded the Commission that along Nebraska Avenue, the side of NAC where the fence would be most visible to the public, the chain-link fence would be the inner layer of a double-fence system; the public would primarily see the outer layer which would be the existing brick and metal decorative fence. Along Massachusetts Avenue, the fence line will be set far away from the street. He introduced architect Greg Lukmire of the Lukmire Partnership to present the design.

Mr. Lukmire presented a summary of the project components, saying that the presentation will focus on the perimeter security design because of the Commission's previous concern with this element. He emphasized that the perimeter fence already exists, and this project is intended only to replace the existing fencing to enhance security and improve the aesthetics. He showed the overall site plan for NAC and explained that adjustments to car and shuttle-bus circulation routes are causing the re-examination of perimeter security.

Mr. Lukmire explained that the security improvements requested by DHS include more areas of double fencing and improved crash protection in the limited segments of the perimeter that are accessible to vehicles. DHS also requires that the fence be "visually porous." He showed the existing perimeter fence along the parking lot of the adjacent television broadcast facility and showed the adjacent steep forested slopes of Glover-Archbold Park; he said that some of the boundary along the parkland would not be fenced because the fence line will follow the inner edge of the existing NAC parking lot. The existing chain-link fences in these areas would be replaced by new vinyl-clad chain-link fences, usually a single fence but a double fence in some areas. A no-climb fence with a small mesh would be used along the wooded park. He said that the existing green chain-link inner fence along Nebraska Avenue would be replaced with a black chain-link fence. The decorative outer fence along Nebraska Avenue would remain and would be extended southward to encompass the new staff entrance at Building 88. He showed that the view from Massachusetts Avenue would include the existing parking lot and landscaping, with the fence only barely visible.

Mr. Lukmire showed several alternative designs for the fence: a vinyl-clad chain-link with cable reinforcement, a mini-mesh no-climb fence, and two types of crash-resistant fence that have the appearance of an ornamental metal picket fence. He commented that the fences with the ornamental appearance have a dominant appearance and appear to be solid metal when seen at an angle. He said that in one area of the parking lot where the single-layer fence would be more visible to the staff, one of the ornamental fence solutions could be a good alternative to the chain-link fence; he said that the chain-link fence is proposed because it seems less visually obtrusive but this decision could be changed in response to the Commission's advice. Ms. Nelson asked about the details for this section of visible fencing; Mr. Lukmire explained that it would be an eight-foot-tall black chain-link fence.

Mr. Lukmire noted that NAC is intended to serve only temporarily as the headquarters for DHS, as seen earlier by the Commission in reviewing the proposed relocation of the headquarters to St. Elizabeths. He said that DHS is therefore trying to limit the investment at NAC to a level of security that will be appropriate for the less sensitive DHS operations that will be there over the long term.

Mr. Luebke asked if there were any changes to the proposed lighting. Mr. Lukmire said that the proposal is simply to replace the existing floodlights with directional lights.

Upon a motion by Ms. Nelson with second by Mr. Rybczynski, the Commission approved the proposed security-related alterations.

Mr. McKinnell departed the meeting at this point.

D. Smithsonian Institution

CFA 18/OCT/07-4, National Portrait Gallery and Smithsonian American Art Museum (Old Patent Office Building). 7th and F Streets, N.W. South stair reconstruction, landscaping, and perimeter security. Final. (Previous: CFA 15/FEB/07-3.) Mr. Lindstrom introduced the proposal for several remaining features of the Old Patent Office Building, including the final design for perimeter security, landscaping, and the reconstruction of the south stair, as well as the first presentation of signage, which the Commission in February

had requested the opportunity to review. He introduced Harry Rombach of the Smithsonian Institution to begin the presentation.

Mr. Rombach said that the landscaping and south stair have not changed significantly since the concept which was favorably reviewed, while the perimeter security design has been more substantially revised since the concept presentation to the Commission. He introduced Mary K. Lanzillotta of Hartman-Cox Architects to present the design.

Ms. Lanzillotta summarized the building's context and history, showing views of the porticoes and staircases at the center of each of its four street facades. She said that the Cultural Resources Report has guided the design of the site perimeter, with a goal of unifying the entire site design of this historic federal reservation; she contrasted this to the guidance provided by the D.C. Streetscape Manual, which would result in different types of trees, lampposts, and sidewalk paving on each of the site's four sides.

Ms. Lanzillotta said that the site has been fenced throughout its history, although little of the historic fence remains in its original location due to changes in street width and grading in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as well as the construction of the Metrorail entrance at the northwest corner of the site. She said that the existing fence and curb system would be adapted to meet modern vehicle-barrier security requirements by creating a curb twenty-six inches high upon which the existing fence and granite coping would be reinstalled, as previously presented to the Commission. Depending on the site topography, the curb would either be freestanding or would serve as a retaining wall to resolve differences in grade adjacent to the sidewalk; the height of twenty-six inches would be maintained continuously along the sidewalk. Small sections of new fence would be fabricated where necessary to fill gaps in the perimeter. She showed that the existing curb height varies with a maximum of twenty inches, so the proposed treatment will be similar to a portion of the existing conditions.

Ms. Lanzillotta said that the Smithsonian has reconsidered the bollards that were previously proposed as an element of the overall perimeter security scheme; they have decided to remove most of them from the design. Mr. Powell and Ms. Nelson expressed appreciation for this unusual reduction in the number of proposed bollards. Ms. Lanzillotta said that retractable bollards are still proposed at the driveways leading to the loading dock. She showed the two guardbooths that are proposed at the entrances to these driveways at the northeast and northwest corners of the site; the materials would be granite and a lead-coated copper roof to relate to the building. She said that the existing accessible entrance along the northwest driveway would be eliminated since the main building entrance on G Street is now accessible, with accessibility at the F Street entrance to be provided soon.

Ms. Lanzillotta discussed the landscape proposal. She said that trees have been added over time to the historic grass panels adjacent to the building; existing mature trees would remain but would not be replaced when they die. Arborvitae would be placed in the planters along G Street, and a spreading yew is proposed for other planted areas within the fence line. American elm trees are proposed around the perimeter of the site.

Ms. Lanzillotta presented the final design of the south stair reconstruction. She said that the Smithsonian has agreed to follow the Commission's recommendation to include metal gates rather than doors in the three sidewalk-level entrance openings. Within the entrance vestibule and sequence of steps, the accessible route has been simplified by relocating the elevator and altering the elevation of the upper vestibule landing; the result is that all visitors will enter the interior lobby through the same doors. Skylights will bring daylight to the entrance vestibule, as previously shown. She showed the exterior staircase which will have a fence so that access to the portico will only be from the building's interior; she explained that one section of the fence is now proposed to be a gate to provide emergency egress for visitors on the portico.

Ms. Nelson asked if signage would be presented. Ms. Lanzillotta said it is not included in the presentation but is available in the drawings if necessary. She explained that the signage was included in the submission for information purposes only, in response to the Commission's request; she said that most of the signage is already installed. Mr. Luebke said that the staff had expressed concern about the scale of the signage which was installed without review.

Ms. Lanzillotta explained that the existing lettering across the F Street entrance extends across sixty-four feet, with lettering eleven inches high for the building name; the revised proposal would extend across thirty-eight feet, with nine-inch letters for the building name and six-inch letters for the names of the two museums. Mr. Belle commented that the problem is the excessive amount of lettering more than its size, and he suggested that a shorter version of the name be used. Ms. Nelson asked about the proposed freestanding sidewalk signs. Ms. Lanzillotta explained that many of these have already been installed on the sidewalks, but their location would be adjusted as part of the site improvements, along with consideration of the location for trees and lampposts, in order

to emphasize the importance of the porticoes by keeping them clear of obstructions. Ms. Lanzillotta confirmed that the freestanding signs are the same type as those used for the Smithsonian's museums on the Mall.

Mr. Belle asked how the entrances would be lit. Ms. Lanzillotta said that there would be lighting above each entrance opening as well as lighting within the entrance vestibule to supplement the skylighting.

Upon a motion by Mr. Belle, the Commission approved the submission. Mr. Luebke commented that the security and landscaping proposals for this building have been through numerous reviews and consultations, including extensive participation by the D.C. Historic Preservation Office. He said that the iterative process has been successful and expressed appreciation for the efforts of all involved. Mr. Powell asked if the project is funded; Mr. Rombach said that funds have been raised for the south stair reconstruction, and the Smithsonian will seek additional funds for the perimeter security and landscaping.

E. District of Columbia Department of Transportation

CFA 18/OCT/07-5, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (2700 F Street, N.W.) and Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway. Pedestrian access stairs and elevator from terrace to trail. Concept. Mr. Simon introduced the project for a connection between the Kennedy Center terrace and the park along the Potomac River, noting that several designs for such a connection have been presented to the Commission in the past fifteen years. He said that the project is submitted by the D.C. Department of Transportation, which intends to undertake the construction, and is being coordinated with the National Park Service (NPS) and the Kennedy Center which control the affected properties. He said that these agencies have provided letters expressing support for the concept with suggestions for further development of the design. Mr. Luebke said that the staff had several constructive meetings with the agencies and architect, resulting in a logical solution to achieving the goal of creating this connection. Mr. Simon introduced architect Don Paine of KGP Design Studio to present the proposal.

Mr. Paine said that the proposed connection is part of a larger effort to redefine the city's relation to the river's edge; he cited other recent and ongoing projects such as redevelopment along the Anacostia River, the Washington Harbour project nearby, and the National Harbor project far downstream. He said that this emphasis on the rivers results in a need to strengthen movement along the riverfront and access to it. He described the context of the Kennedy Center, including its proximity to Georgetown, Washington Harbour, the C & O Canal, and West Potomac Park including the watergate steps at the Lincoln Memorial; he said that design inspiration could be drawn from all of these. He noted the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge just south of the Kennedy Center and the existing crosswalk across the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway just north of the Kennedy Center at F Street connecting to the riverfront park. He said that the need for a connection is becoming even more apparent due to the NPS plan for improvements to the riverfront park that will create a promenade from the Kennedy Center to Georgetown. He added that the restaurants of Georgetown and the entertainment offered at the Kennedy Center have a "natural synergy" that will be supported by the improved connection between these areas.

Mr. Paine described the riverfront park at the project site, only thirty feet wide and steeply sloped, falling nearly five feet from the four-lane road beneath the terrace down to the path along the water's edge. He said that the Kennedy Center terrace cantilevers thirty-two feet over the eastern half of the roadway. He said that the design goals include creating a centralized public space that marks the Kennedy Center, providing both an aesthetic feature and a functional gathering place, while not interfering with the linear riverfront circulation along the path.

Mr. Paine showed the proposed solution of two staircases on the axis of the Kennedy Center's entrances that are positioned in relation to its two major circulation halls. Each staircase would be wrapped around an elevator tower which would provide the primary vertical support for the structural truss that would run beneath each staircase, minimizing the presence of structural elements in contact with the landscape. Cantilevered walkways would connect the tops of the staircases to the terrace without bearing on it. The staircases would land at grade by framing a plaza set slightly below the road level; a curved wall would separate the plaza from the roadway while allowing people in vehicles to have views toward the river with minimal interruption. The maximum height of the curved wall above the plaza would be slightly over seven feet, providing a sense of containment and buffering from the roadway; the ends of the wall would approach the ground level. Within the plaza, planters are proposed to contain cherry trees; a water feature might also be included in the plaza to enliven the wall and provide additional background noise that would screen the sound of traffic.

Mr. Paine described the details of the staircases. Glass treads would be set into a steel framework, with an overall emphasis on a light-

weight and inviting appearance. He said that the staircase will be used at night, so the design is intended to be particularly dramatic with night-time lighting. Ms. Nelson asked about the surface of the glass treads; Mr. Paine said that it would either be sandblasted or have an applied non-slip surface.

Mr. Powell said the concept appears "well refined and well developed." Ms. Zimmerman said that a glass staircase would be beautiful but would require careful maintenance; she noted the glass stairs at New York City's Apple computer store, which is cleaned "obsessively." Mr. Paine responded that maintenance will be coordinated with the Kennedy Center. He said that the Apple store stairs are clear glass, while the proposal here is for frosted glass which will not require as much maintenance. He acknowledged that the railings are currently shown as clear glass but this may be reconsidered. He noted that other buildings have glass railings, such as the nearby House of Sweden on the Georgetown waterfront. Mr. Belle asked about snow, ice, and rain on the glass treads. Mr. Paine responded that the problem would not be much different than for stone treads, provided that a non-slip surface is used. He emphasized the need to provide a metal frame around the glass to prevent the exposure of a vulnerable edge.

Mr. Powell suggested that review of the final design could be delegated to the staff. Mr. Luebke said that the staff had advised the applicant team that the design has a light character that is appropriate to the buoyant quality of the Kennedy Center; he said that the proposal appears to be superior to other designs seen over the past fifteen years.

Mr. Powell recognized Sally Blumenthal of NPS to comment on the design. Ms. Blumenthal said that NPS strongly supports the creation of a connection between the riverfront and the Kennedy Center, and she said that improvements to the park are underway. She said that NPS has two concerns with the project. One is that the wall screening the plaza from the roadway should not be tall enough to block the "spectacular" view toward Key Bridge from northbound vehicles; she said that this concern appears to be addressed satisfactorily in the proposal. The second concern is that the plaza or screening wall may include a fountain. She noted that the wall would serve to retain the side of the roadway and she raised the issue of where to locate the mechanical systems for a fountain. She acknowledged that the screening noise would be a useful feature, particularly because the height of the wall is being kept low at the request of NPS, but she said that a proposal for a water feature would need further coordination.

Mr. Rybczynski said that the water feature "felt like one thing too many." He commented that there are already a lot of elements in the design. Mr. Paine said that water wasn't initially included in the design because of the adjoining river; he said that Washington Harbour has fountains too and their presence there is arguably beneficial. He said that further acoustic studies could help with this decision; he emphasized that the traffic noise is considerable and, if not mitigated, the noise could harm the success of the plaza. Mr. Rybczynski said the space would really be a place to move through rather than serve as a plaza. Mr. Paine said that the intention is for the plaza to be the setting for small events that would be coordinated with the Kennedy Center; he offered to work further with the Kennedy Center to understand their vision for this space. Mr. Powell said that he would look forward to seeing the next submission with or without a water feature.

Upon a motion by Mr. Powell with second by Ms. Nelson, the Commission approved the concept subject to the comments that were offered.

F. D.C. Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs—Old Georgetown Act

O.G. 07-281, Georgetown University, 3700 O Street, N.W. New science center building. Revised concept. (Previous: O.G. 07-131, CFA 17 May 2007.) Mr. Martínez said that in May the Commission had reviewed the concept for the proposed science center, recommending further study of the landscape design as well as supporting the Old Georgetown Board's recommendation to further study the south entrance and the rooftop mechanical enclosures. He said that the architectural development including proposed materials will be presented today; the landscape design is still being developed and is not part of the current submission. He noted that the Board's favorable recommendation on the revised concept was circulated to the Commission members. He introduced Alan Brangman, the Georgetown University architect; Mr. Brangman introduced Robert Schaeffner of the architecture firm Payette to present the design.

Mr. Schaeffner explained the revisions since the previous presentation. He said that the rooftop mechanical and structural systems were refined to allow simplification of the form of the mechanical dormer; he presented several views to show that it would appear well integrated with the roofline. He described the introduction of a canopy at the south entrance to create visual emphasis as well as provide protection from rain. He explained a further revision affecting the south entrance: the configuration of windows and brick piers

has been revised to create a more consistent base along the south and east sides of the building, improving the proportions and relationships of the south elevation's design features. He showed that the curtainwall design has also been simplified while retaining a sufficient degree of character.

Mr. Schaeffner showed samples of the proposed exterior materials. On the eastern portion of the building, the upper part of the facade would have elongated terra-cotta tiles which would serve as a rain screen; the tiles would be just over five feet long, relating to the building module of 10.5 feet. The color, finish, and size of the tiles would be carefully controlled to provide a consistent pattern without warping; further details will be included in a future submission. He said that this facade treatment would relate well to the west facade which will have a technical character. He said that the facade details for the lower part of the building would be part of a future submission; the material will be brick, but the proposed size, coursing, and color of the bricks is still being studied.

Mr. Powell and Ms. Zimmerman commented that the design has been nicely developed. Mr. Brangman expressed appreciation for the Commission's previous comments. Upon a motion by Ms. Nelson with second by Ms. Zimmerman, the Commission approved the revised concept.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

Signed,

Thomas E. Luebke, AIA
Secretary

Last Modified: November 21, 2007