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COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

COMMISSION MEETING

Washington, D.C.

Thursday, November 21, 2013  
Washington, D.C.

The meeting of The Commission of Fine Arts convened at 9:08 a.m., Thursday, November 21, 2013 at the Pension Building, 401 F Street, N.W., Suite 312, Washington, D.C., Earl A. Powell III, presiding.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

EARL A. POWELL III, Chair  
ELIZABETH PLATER-ZYBERK, Vice Chair  
TERESITA FERNÁNDEZ  
PHILIP FREELON  
ELIZABETH MEYER  
ALEX KRIEGER

STAFF

Thomas E. Luebke, Secretary  
Frederick J. Lindstrom, Assistant  
Secretary  
Kathryn Fanning, Historian  
Tony Simon, Architect  
Sarah Batcheler, Architect  
José Martinez-Canino, Architect  
Eve Barsoum, Architectural Historian  
Mary Konsoulis, Centennial Historian  
Susan M. Raposa, Information Specialist  
Phyllis Roderer, Admin. Officer  
Raksha Patel, Admin. Assistant

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Memorial. Intersection of Maryland and Independence  
Avenue between 4th and 6th Streets, S.W.

Concept.

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CFA 21/NOV/13- 10, Southwest Ecodistrict Initiative,  
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precinct south of the National Mall between 4th and  
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## **Dwight D. Eisenhower National Memorial**

(transcript pp. 23-84)

MR. LUEBKE: I am just going to read a little intro and introduce the team. Because of the scale of the model, and we are sorry that we can barely see--or you can't see us and we can't see you, but this is a big project.

There are other models downstairs in the Commissioners' Suite one floor down. We will be taking a little inspection to go look at those shortly.

But let me introduce that this is submitted by the National Park Service on behalf of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission. A revision to the concept design for the Dwight D. Eisenhower National Memorial located at Maryland and Independence Avenues, 4th and 6th Streets, Southwest in July 2013 when this concept was presented. including the memorial core elements, the Commission approved the presented proposals as part of a complete design in concept.

In the review, the Commission made recommendations about further development including reconsideration of the flanking monumental columns and screens, the symbolic scale of

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the memorial generally and to provide a more developed concept for the site and landscape design.

So, in response to these questions, the design team has returned today with a revised concept to develop the space more as an urban memorial park with more analysis and detail of this conceptual basis of the site design.

And, I guess, to get back to the logistics, we have a lot of visitors. As I said, the model is another room to inspect. We understand that there may be members of the public who would like to address the Commission. Mr. Chairman, you may receive this testimony at your pleasure.

As we did last time in July, we are trying to control the time here. We would ask that testimony be limited to three minutes for an individual or five for an organization. Please be mindful that the CFA's jurisdiction is design and we would prefer that that testimony address design issues. Speakers may speak only when recognized by the Chairman.

So we will now get into the project, introduce the project team. We will be following that with a presentation by the designers, perhaps first with a visit to the models downstairs. The time for deliberation--or, if you have questions about the presentation, we do that first. The

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testimony would follow. And then your final deliberation and commentary would follow that.

So, to introduce the project today is Peter May, Associate Regional Director for Planning at the National Park Service, National Capital Region.

Peter?

MR. MAY: Thank you very much. I am very pleased to be back here once again and to see the further development of this memorial. I believe that what has been done since the last time you have seen the presentation is the further development that is necessary and appropriate and is responsive to the many comments that were received.

I will turn things over immediately to Carl Reddel who is the Executive Director of the Eisenhower Memorial Foundation.

MR. REDDEL: Thank you, Peter and good morning. I will keep my comments brief. As the Executive Director of the Eisenhower Memorial Commission, it is my privilege to bring this beautifully designed memorial to a great general and president, Eisenhower.

I carry greetings from our chairman, Rocco Sicilano, who lives in Los Angeles. I make note of that. He is our last surviving combat decorated veteran on the Commission. We began

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with three. We now have one. In any sense, his greetings to all of you as a continuing supporter, of course, of this cause.

We have with us today two commissioners presidentially appointed, Alfred Geduldig from New York and Bruce Cole from Virginia.

In the simplest sense, you have given concept approval to the design before you during the past two years. Over the next several months, we anticipate several presentations to you addressing various design issues and questions in greater detail.

The commission has reviewed and approved what you see before you several times and it has asked the design team to come forward, make its presentation with a view towards seeking your findings, your review comments and then seeking your final approval.

It is a pleasure for me to give this microphone to the project manager and to a partner from Gehry Partners, John Bowers.

MR. BOWERS: Thank you, Carl.

Good morning, everyone. I would like to ask the Secretary if we would like to begin downstairs first or we can actually go through the presentation and then follow up.

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MR. LUEBKE: I don't have an opinion. I don't know, Mr. Chairman, if--it is up to you.

MR. POWELL: I would like to go see models.

MR. LUEBKE: It would be the easiest to--

MR. POWELL: To go down and look.

MR. LUEBKE: To see the stuff first and then--

MR. POWELL: Some further--a little bit deeper reference, but I am--

MR. KRIEGER: Yes.

MR. FREELON: Sounds fine.

MR. KRIEGER: It might be less disruptive.

MR. BOWERS: The models and information that we have on display downstairs were essentially all presented in July. They are there for reference for those of you that did not have the opportunity to look at and study those items.

But we can escort you, walk you through that and then come back up to deal with the presentation.

MR. LUEBKE: So let's do this. Even though everybody has just gotten settled, it is probably better to do it now than interrupt halfway through.

MR. POWELL: All right

[Recess.]

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MR. LUEBKE: The Chairman has stepped out for just a moment, but I think you could probably begin if that is okay with the Vice Chair.

MS. PLATER-ZYBERK: By all means.

MR. BOWERS: Perfect. So I will begin very briefly with a quick overview of the project site. Just to recap; Independence Avenue, 6th Street and 4th Street and the Department of Education Building to the south of the site. North is facing up.

The project is organized by the use of the colonnade and tapestries that organize our site and organize it around the central memorial core which is here centered on the LBJ Building.

There is a complete revised idea in terms of restoring Maryland Avenue and the view corridor towards the dome and away from the dome recreating the street-tree allée that mimics adjacent both sides of Maryland Avenue and then a complete redo of the ground plane which we will get into in a second.

An overview of the model in front of you all, again beginning with the colonnades which we will talk here at the very end of the presentation in terms of the Commemorative Act and a means of organizing the scale of the site.

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As you can see in the center of the site here are the memorial statuary, the tripartite scheme.

And, lastly here, before we get into the landscape, an image of the memorial core. Standing here in front of Maryland Avenue looking into the site, the tripartite scheme representing Eisenhower's president, his military career and as a young man looking out into his future achievements with the colonnade and the tapestries off into the background.

So that is a very brief overview of the current design. We were here in July. I am not going to go through all of this but a quick summary where some of issues that we talked about was the art, which we will be back in the beginning of next year to review and present some of the comments that we heard from you pretty much regarding the president's side in terms of the statuary on that, the landscape, which is what we are going to get into today, the ground plane, the trees, the canopies and I believe a little bit more of some of the detailing of the stone and the lintels that relate to the art work.

So I am going to turn this over to Mr. Joe Brown and Mr. Robert Courtenay and they will lead us through the landscape design and then we will get back to me and we will walk through

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the information building, the information center. Then we are going to talk a little bit about responding to some of the comments that we heard in July on the tapestry and colonnades.

Joe?

MR. BROWN: Thank you, John.

Well, let's start here at the larger scale. I think the landscape story starts here along Maryland Avenue and the extent of Maryland and Virginia and really the whole southwest landscape. It is certainly contemporary, even somewhat chaotic in a good way, I think.

It is not like Pennsylvania Avenue. You see lots of variety, some of it green, some of it public realm, some of it private realm, some of it infrastructure, some of it landscape.

I think that is all good because it is really of the modern era and that is just fine. I think you have to work with strong moves to make the public realm work.

So, back to the contemporary, mid-modern landscape of Maryland Avenue. So you see lots of changes, lots of variety and lots of dramatic differences here.

And then GSA's activities will be dramatic as well. You see their planning around Reservation 113 and you see the memorial. Again, I think, strong moves are very important.

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Now this is the site today which is poorly formed even somewhat sloppy. It doesn't relate to really to anything other than traffic and movement. Again, strong moves are in order.

So we have to take this site and form it from a landscape point of view in a very clear way. So what happens is the tapestries define the park and reinforce the building frames. And the park encircles the memorial core and defines that so there are a lot of definitional moves needed here.

And then we are inspired by the austere beauty of the prairie landscape, sort of the heartland of America brought to Washington, D.C. Yet we have the artistries, an artist's interpretation of that so it is not photographic. It is landscape in art that defines the park that defines the core of the memorial.

You can see a very dynamic relationship in terms of studied views both Maryland Avenue and other avenue access to the core, and there is a dynamic relationship between the artistry of the landscape as well as the alive landscape.

So those clusters of glades and groves that we are going to talk about, the tying of view edges, and we have both the formal and informal relationship. Maryland Avenue is the cut-grass corridor for park activities and then there are the

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informal groves, the prairie, swales of the landscape.

So now we are going to talk a little more about elements of that landscape and Roger is going to take over there.

MR. COURTENAY: Thank you, Joe.

Joe has described the memorial park as an integrated landscape design. I am going to focus on some of the constituent elements of that landscape and start with the trees.

We have some 85 trees on this project divided amongst ten species. These are hardy, urban hardy, species native to the mid-Atlantic and to the Kansas region. By and large, we have been looking for species that have that rugged, informal character that you saw represented in those earlier photographs, to bring that kind of character to this memorial park.

Just a little detail; along the promenade and around the information center, smaller trees more in keeping with those low planter locations, hornbeam and ironwood.

We have about six species of oaks and hackberries and so on that are scattered around the site some of which are used in the streetscape and all of these species have been metered through the various District agencies. We are very comfortable about their viability and their appropriateness to the street

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locations

A hardy variant of the London plane tree, which is a hybrid of the American sycamore, also native to the region, forms the framework of Maryland Avenue and elsewhere through the memorial park.

Just some images of mature examples of these species to give you a sense of the mature canopy, character, coloration and seasonal variation of these species; we are talking about ten species over about two-and-a-half to three acres so there is some good diversity and variation but safety in the numbers of 85 plants.

As Joe mentioned, we have organized these trees, primarily the canopy trees that is, into groves and glades, the glades focused around the Maryland Avenue cartway and the memorial core but also opening sunny spots associated with entrance to the memorial park and the groves, then, the reciprocal of those glades creating shade opportunities around the memorial core at the entrances and through the park which will be, of course, completely open and accessible to the pedestrian visitor.

There are some special-character trees that the design team has identified, some 17 or so, where we will be looking--

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and I should say that most of these trees will be planted, at least the shade trees in the 8- to 10-inch caliper range which gives us a height of maybe 20 to 35 feet and a canopy of 30 to 40 feet.

These plans are representing these trees at perhaps ten years after installation. You can see some of these trees we are expecting to find at a larger size than that standard large nursery 10- to 12-inch diameter.

These colored trees here represent special-character trees that we will be looking for either in nurseries or elsewhere where their rugged and informal character is of particular importance at the entrances at 4th and 6th Street, around the memorial core or helping us to choreograph those views through the glades to the tapestries and open those reciprocal relationships between the art and the living form.

We haven't forgotten the importance of the Maryland Avenue axis with respect to tree planting. I mentioned London plane variant along either side of the avenue, a little informal so that we can recognize those view corridors but, by and large, linear and reinforcing that axis.

A couple of sections here to illustrate how the pedestrian visitor will experience this place. This section

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here is A through the side and B to the memorial core. So the upper section through the site, the Maryland Avenue corridor with its groomed lawn, taller lawn encompassing the paved walkway to the memorial core and the vegetated prairie swale beyond that.

In the lower section, around the Maryland Avenue core, again, the swale, taller lawns and then on to the memorial core. In these sections, you understand the canopy, its height, 8 to 10, 12, feet above the pedestrian, some diversity in that species selection and its sort of informal character.

Trees will be planted in a variety of ways. Most of them are planted full in landscape conditions, the ones in red here in the streetscape, some in paving at the memorial core and at the entrances and some in planters associated with the buildings.

I should say that we are planning on replacing all of the soil on the site to a depth of 4 or 5 feet and replacing it with designed soils to improve the viability and long-term health of all the planted materials and to be cognizant of the foot traffic that we expect on these grassy lawns. So the compaction rates and the design of soils anticipates that kind of usage.

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What about the ground plane. Again, the reference points are the drainages, the native meadows, the mown and unmown character of the Midwest.

And we have organized the landscape ground plan to reflect that character so a mown lawn, a groomed lawn in the Maryland Avenue cartway. We will actually be using the new National Park Service Mall Mix here which will allow us to account for the compaction issues and the high usage associated with pedestrian traffic. These are lower fescues mix for the most part.

In the triangles to north and south encompassing the memorial core, we will have a taller fescue mix which will be mown to a 6- to 8-inch height so there is less maintenance, more durability. These are species that can take the pedestrian use and are inviting in a sort of informal way and provide that informal setting for the canopy trees above.

There are also three swales, as Joe and John mentioned, organized around the memorial core to provide addition interest and reference to the Midwestern Kansas landscape, also a little bit of that at the information center.

The following slides illustrate our design ideas here. So, in this little section here, you have the groomed lawn of

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the Maryland Avenue corridor. You understand the canopy that is being delivered over the swale and into those groomed-lawn areas.

In this particular section, we see only a smaller piece of that taller lawn but understand how it segues into the taller perennial grasses and perennial flowers of the Midwest prairie.

The swales, I should say, are about 18- to 24-inches deep. The plants in those are basically 2- to 3-feet high and then some of the accent perennials will come up another foot or so above that. So, we are maintaining visibility but creating a lot of interest in actually a physical presence of the landscape on the ground plane.

In this, you see a little better the composition of those plants, their informal layout in the swale.

And a couple of slides here. There is sunnier swale and two shadier one. The basic palette is a little blue-stem and a bottle-brush grass so you get a sense of the sort of character and flavor of what most of the swale will be expressed as and then, within that, the accent plants in a much lower percentage which will come up through that and provide additional visual interest.

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And then in the shadier version, you see the accent plants change. That is associated with the different micro-climate associated with those swales.

Finally, the other very important part of the ground plane is where most people will be walking, the paved areas of the memorial park and its surroundings, very clear, calm and simple.

The city comes right up to the edge of the memorial park. We will be executing the National Mall exposed aggregate sidewalk around three sides of the memorial. Across the front of the Department of Education, we will be using a pre-cast unit paver which is very much in keeping with the aesthetic of that building.

And then, in the memorial park, itself, we will be using the Ambar limestone which is the stone of the memorial-core elements and the veneer on the columns. So there is a consistent hard material through all the architectural and hard landscape architectural features of this scheme.

You see in this sort of horizontal, or left-to-right, pattern an idea of how that leads everything down toward the memorial core.

I think we wanted to talk a little bit about how this

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all comes together three-dimensionally. We have some sketches here which, with the model, help us to illustrate that.

MR. BROWN: So let me--I am not doing too well here with technology. You take that. I take this.

So this is really an urban park and I think there will be plenty of activity there. There will be all kinds of noon-day, lunch-time activities, events there. That will be lots of people there from the Air and Space Museum because that will spill over.

So you see this relationship between the art and live landscape and the actually of the people. And I think you are going to get a very vibrant--again, both formal and informal. Remember the tapestries define the block and the park. The part defines the core of the memorial, and it works both ways, formal, informal, native landscapes to D.C. as well as the native landscape of the prairie, a great promenade which will enliven the LBJ Building.

And now will go on to the information center.

MR. BOWERS: Thank you, Joe and Roger.

So, beginning with the information center, the little building is located right here on 4th Street. It is approximately 2,300 square feet with a full basement. The idea

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with doing this was really, in the beginning part of the program, finding a home for some of the basic functions for the memorial and for the Park Service staff. The park ranger contact point actually is one of the major ones.

The building consists of essentially a small book-sale space to the north of the building, the point-of-sale and ranger-contact station that faces towards the memorial, itself, so there is a site line across the site, itself, support spaces for each and some small storage areas.

And then the southern half of the building contains public rest rooms and there is also a unisex rest room.

Again, the floor plate is approximately just over 2,300 square feet. The basement below this contains the mechanical equipment and also contains the equipment for the very large storm water-retention system that we are collecting, the rain-water runoff for that. The equipment to monitor that is housed in the basement, and the southern half of the basement is for storage for the Park Service, itself.

There is equipment left here for NPS to use in terms of getting the equipment up and down from the cellar level and then there is also a smaller seasonal storage building here. It is about 150 square feet towards the southern portion of the

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building. This would be used more in terms of a seasonal day-to-day approach storing equipment that they don't obviously have to keep going through the building to pull things in and out.

So this would be used more in a seasonal basis only, and then the off-season pieces are stored in the cellar.

As you can see from the footprint itself, the building is really touched on all four sides. It is organized on 4th Street primarily because that is the best spot and most space that the site has to offer to place such a small structure.

It has the opportunity to deal with bus loading right off of 4th Street, and 4th Street, we know, is way more active than 6th Street. 6th Street terminates here at Independence. 4th Street runs across through the Mall.

And it also deals with the book store in terms of a public face towards the north of the site, which we believe to be the most active intersection of 4th and Independence. Facing that orientation, it also contains glass walls on both sides so there is transparency through the retail section.

As I said earlier, the ranger station here faces towards the memorial, which was intentional for that cross-site visibility. The bathrooms are orientated towards the south and with less of a public face because they are public rest rooms.

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They will be available for the public and visitors. We did not want them, obviously, facing towards 4th Street, nor did we really want them facing towards the memorial. So this seemed to be the most logical choice and entry point into the structure itself.

Here is an architectural model that we worked with Eastern Regional, the manager and the operator for the book store. There is millwork and shelving storage and display on the northern walls, loose shelving and carts that are in the middle for display in the point of sale to the south of that.

And this is viewing south, so the point of sale with the ranger contact station, the visibility in the book store to the north.

The sections and materials; the building is approximately 16 feet tall. It is a single-story, as I said, with one cellar. It is complete with mechanical systems and storage.

The elevations--you know, obviously in the architecture, it is not meant necessarily to compete with the memorial, itself. It is utilitarian. The material--we have a material board behind me that we can look at. It is consisting of an architectural pre-cast panel.

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We have changed the material slightly from the memorial materials, themselves, purposely so it does not use or mimic necessarily the same limestone. And that was on purpose. It has stainless-steel trim essentially on the canopies at the entry points and at the doors and very simple and very clean detailing.

Here is the elevation that is facing that is towards the memorial, itself. Again, the main entrance into the book store, the park-ranger contact station and operable windows to reach to the ranger.

And the bathroom doors--you will notice there are clerestory windows that provide natural light into each of the public rest rooms. We didn't want to go too much with glass in the rest rooms because they are not air conditioned but rather just room temperature, and air changes. We don't make it too comfortable in there. So that was purposeful.

The next piece here that I wanted to get into to close this out is one of the comments that came from our meeting in July, which is really kind of back to the tapestries and columns and site organization. Most of you were not participating in the review and the discussion in 2011 when most of the design, as you see now that has gone through many iterations, was

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presented.

So in our book, we did provide many of the studies. We went back and studied a few new ideas, and many of the older studies and had them all laid out and compared. We provided some of those towards the end of the book that we have submitted.

So, as you can see, just a few points here, that I wanted to recap kind of the big picture and why we are where we are. The size and the scale of the site, and we will get to that in one second, is very large. The columns and the tapestries are a means for us to organize the site and create a space.

What I mean by that is in a few simple diagrams to kind of explain the idea. We initially started the design way back even at the time of the competition and then again after the competition has closed and we moved into the design phases, there was a lot of study of the site. You realize this--when you are on site and you are studying it and looking at it, it is seven-and-a-half acres. And that is face of building, the face of building.

So the solid red ones here kind of represent seven-and-a-half acres visually as you are standing and looking around on the site. The dashed lines are in the inferred, which it

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breaks away because you can see it in the model as a lot of the spaces, or some spaces, successful spaces, here in D.C. where the buildings actually do define the square.

This does not do that. Our site doesn't do that. So the intention of trying to create something in the middle to define our site and, too, to define the memorial was the idea.

With that, using the idea that--one being the very large urban precinct, the addition of the tapestries creating No. 2 here which is our memorial precinct, No. 3, then, the scale reduces and shrinks to the memorial core, itself.

The additional spaces which are represented here as No. 4 are the urban spaces that are now created with the colonnades between the adjacent buildings to the memorial site, we think, are exciting and new spaces that really add to the setting of the memorial into the site.

And that is something I don't think that many people have looked at or truly understood about it. It is more about the scale and the size of this, but understanding the complete urban context of how this is set into the site is really important and was really thought out.

So this slide essentially basically says what I just stated verbally - the issue of what gets into the studies of

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looking at alterations of the east and west tapestries and their north-south orientation.

You know, there are many rules and regulations that we have gone through Maryland Avenue of trying to balance the sense of each tapestry and trying to keep the view corridors through here so that everything kind of makes sense and actually becomes very formal when you really study it and understand it.

The balance in the size and scale and proportional relationships between the east and west are, and have been, really considered fully through all of the studies. This is where we are. This is what we think is the right solution for the project.

One last thing, and then we are done here. I think it is really important, too, to understand the context. Again, when we were studying the site and truly understanding Independence Avenue and really looking at the Southwest District and understanding how this whole side of the city compared to Northwest--I mean, it is very different.

The pre-war--the buildings are very rigid, tight to the street in the Southwest. The buildings are undulating throughout, the Mid-Century buildings that are in and out. And it is actually the two buildings at the end, which is the

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Department of Agriculture and the Rayburn Building that are the tightest to the street, are actually tighter to the street than our project is.

So, you know, as our site and our project relates to this, we feel very comfortable with the relationship and organization of that to the site.

And that's it. Thank you.

MR. POWELL: Thank you.

MR. LUEBKE: So, Mr. Chairman, if you have got any more questions, for the team, you could--

MR. POWELL: Open it up now.

MR. LUEBKE: Open it up or take--if you are done with that, you could take testimony. You may have questions. There are some members who probably have never been presented with this design before.

So, at your pleasure.

MS. MEYER: I have got two questions.

MR. POWELL: Please.

MS. MEYER: One question, is there any change to the location of elements in the site plan between July and now or the change is really about materials? Is the site plan exactly the same and it is just that the materials have been elaborated,

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because you didn't talk about that.

MR. BOWERS: Correct. There is no change in terms of the position of the trees, in terms of the material. It is essentially the same. We thought that this presentation would elaborate on those materials versus last--in July we didn't have all of the materials presented to you at that time.

MS. MEYER: And then the second question is, I think-- I mean, today's presentation has been very good in terms of making a kind of argument the order and organization of the memorial and a big focus on the symbolism of materials and the iconography of the project.

But the one thing I don't really understand is your sense of the memorial as an experience. What I mean by that--I am trying to--if you could just explain--like, how do you think someone is going to move through here and how does the experience unfold.

I am particularly confused about what seems to be the difference between the walk to the actual center and then the walk I don't understand which is the walk on Maryland Avenue. I don't understand how the walk on Maryland Avenue relates to the experience of the memorial.

And so I just wonder how would you imagine--I know

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there are many ways to walk through this, but just give me a couple of trajectories or choreograph this so that it is not just an aggregation of material symbols.

MR. BROWN: I think the walk is varied, as varied as the landscape story is there. It is very modern so you have choices. You come through on Pennsylvania Avenue--excuse me, Maryland Avenue--the grasses, or picnic or have lunch. Or you walk on the pavement, so from the corners of the streets.

So I think it is very varied, very modern, very much typical of the Southwest District. So I don't know if that answers your questions. Does anyone else want to take this?

MR. COURTENAY: I just add that this open variability gives the opportunity for a process of discovery. The main pathways obviously create some formality in a way in which you could approach the memorial and they are there to help guide you on that kind of more organized way into the memorial if you choose.

But, for many people in the neighborhood, and tourists and visitors, the openness of this park suggests that you can walk in from the sidewalk. And the way that this design anticipates those kinds of informal relationships is in the careful positioning of the particular species, their spatial

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relationship to each other, to Maryland Avenue which we can't forget, and then to choreographing the discovery of views of the tapestries through, under, beside, along with the living material.

So really the way we have conceived it is that you are going to experience this from not an infinite but a large possible set of points. Apart from at the memorial core, where we are really trying to engage the visitor in specific messages and symbolism, and I don't know whether the reference is necessarily correct, but like in an A.J. Downing landscape, a strolling experience in which things unfold and you understand through a process of discovery is what this park is about.

MR. BROWN: I think what distinguishes a classical landscape from a modern landscape is that visitor has the choices, makes the choice. And I think this gives you all those choices, formal, informal, symbolic, ecologic as well.

MR. POWELL: Elizabeth, you were--

MS. PLATER-ZYBERK: I wanted to follow on with a landscape question. The street trees on the outer perimeter of the block seem regular on one side, on 4th. I am wondering why they are not on Independence.

In a sense, they are not part of your site. They are

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part of the city outside of the site. I am wondering why they are not corresponding--or we don't see what they are corresponding to.

MR. COURTENAY: On 4th and 6th Street, we are in a tighter right-of-way conditions. Motorists and pedestrians are closer to the memorial precinct, if you like, and so it seemed more appropriate, although we have negotiated what we think are the more appropriate species that have this sort of informal character that we want from the outside as you view through them to tapestries.

In Independence Avenue, it is a different condition. That is where our memorial temple or park, if you like, opens up to the rest of the world in a really significant way on Independence Avenue. In fact, the terraces of the Air and Space Museum across Independence Avenue sort of participate in the views there.

So we wanted to choreograph those tree locations and what those species are very particularly with respect to the views from across the street as a motorist and as a pedestrian. So we wanted to--

MS. PLATER-ZYBERK: So it is just those five little trees on Independence. Why bother with any in that case?

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MR. COURTENAY: Well, because we do want to recognize the linearity, the linear character of Independence Avenue and then we went to provide shade for pedestrians. And we are metering out a fewer number of street trees in order to, we think, organize themselves well with the rest of the landscape.

MR. BROWN: It is a good comment. I think we should think about that, yes.

MS. PLATER-ZYBERK: I mean, it looks like they died or something.

MR. BROWN: Right. No; I think it is a good comment.

MS. PLATER-ZYBERK: It is either the street trees are, generally speaking, either an allée or they are not. And, you know, on the side streets, I wonder whether we shouldn't be addressing the other side of the street. But I won't go there. But I do think that street trees are city trees.

MR. BROWN: No; those are good comments.

MR. BOWERS: One last thing, and it is actually more of a technical issue, is the amount of utilities that are in the street and what we are able to address as well.

MR. KRIEGER: Mr. Chairman, I am not sure what we are supposed to do at the moment.

MR. LUEBKE: Right now, you are looking for any other

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information you might have--

MR. KRIEGER: Information as opposed to commentary?

MR. LUEBKE: The commentary and deliberation really needs to follow public--

MR. KRIEGER: Oh, okay.

MR. LUEBKE: So if you have things you want clarified, now would be the time.

MS. FERNÁNDEZ: Oh; so it is only questions.

MR. LUEBKE: I think, yes.

MS. FERNÁNDEZ: I have been working too hard, then.

MR. LUEBKE: This gives you more time.

MR. KRIEGER: No questions but comments to follow.

MR. LUEBKE: Yes.

MS. FERNÁNDEZ: I have a question just because I don't think I have seen every presentation. I know I haven't. I have a question about the tapestries, themselves, and how they read from the front as opposed to the back and also if they have been mocked up because it seems essential that they actually work.

MR. BOWERS: Yes.

MS. FERNÁNDEZ: In real scale and whatever magical thing they are supposed to do, if they have been tested and what happens and where are those and if we would have them.

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MR. BOWERS: There is--maybe you missed the poster downstairs, but there is--the tapestries have been in design and prototypes made. Two years ago, September, 2011, we had them actually three hanging in front of the Department of Education. They were presented to the Commission, to NCPC, the Department of Education.

And we kind of selected one direction. There are images downstairs. Maybe afterwards, you can go down and look at that mockup.

Artistically, they are fabricated, so the image is the same on both sides.

MS. FERNÁNDEZ: The image should be --

MR. BOWERS: No; the image is--

MS. FERNÁNDEZ: I didn't know if it was a Photoshopped image or if it was--

MR. BOWERS: No; that is an actual prototype. It is 10 by 15. It is still here actually in D.C. So the imagery is the same on both sides. It is fabricated from one side, flipped, and fabricated on the other side so it is an exact replication of the art on both sides.

We are now and have been over the last, say, eight months or so--been into the technical development of the

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material science and metallurgy and going through a very rigorous course of technical aspects in development of that which we will be finishing up here through the new year. And then all of that will be presented and shared as well.

MS. FERNÁNDEZ: Thank you.

MS. PLATER-ZYBERK: We are done with questions.

MR. POWELL: What now?

MR. LUEBKE: I think the time would be to entertain public comment.

MR. POWELL: Thank you. We will have some comments in a moment or two. There is a gentleman who would like to say a few words.

MR. LUEBKE: There is a podium. We actually have gone to the radical move of providing the speakers with a little podium. How about that?

MR. KRIEGER: A soap box, I think.

MR. LUEBKE: And we have a lavalier if that--no; it is probably just as well.

MR. SHUBOW: Mr. Chairman, distinguished Commissioners, my name is Justin Shubow. I am here on behalf of the National Civic Art Society. I am glad to see in attendance today Bruce Cole, President Obama's recent appointment to the

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Eisenhower Commission. Bruce also sits on our Board of Advisors.

As you may know, materials experts from the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the Smithsonian and the Department of Defense have expressed serious concerns about the durability and maintenance of the steel tapestries.

Their fears are well-founded. Thanks to a FOIA request we submitted to the National Park Service, we just learned that, according to that agency, six panels of the tapestries will need to be replaced every five years.

Furthermore, approximately 750 support cables will need to be replaced every 25 years. And 250 of those cables run the entire length of the tapestry. They are 444 feet long.

We cannot think of another memorial whose art work and very structural armature will need to be replaced on a periodic basis.

I will focus my testimony on the most important action item from the last Fine Arts Commission meeting regarding the memorial, namely, the need to review the scale and placement of the columns particularly those on the east and west tapestries.

Commissioners Krieger, Plater-Zyberk and Freelon expressed strong doubts in this area and it is imperative that

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Commission follow up on this crucial issue.

I would first like to respond to the applicant's claim that the column that violates the Independence Avenue setback should not be treated as a building. They make this claim in their booklet.

At a previous meeting of this body, Mr. Gehry specifically said about the columns, "They are almost buildings. They are huge in the scheme so they are more like buildings."

The applicant also defends that invasive column by noting that the street wall is already uneven. This is like a dentist saying, "Well, you have lots of snaggly teeth so it is okay if we add one that sticks out far more than all the others."

And if the setback doesn't matter, why did the applicant make sure not to violate it in all of their prior designs? The location of that column also violates one of the very principles agreed upon during site selection in 2006.

At that time, the Park Service in association with the Eisenhower Commission prepared an environmental assessment that includes a list of constraints that the memorial must adhere to. It speaks of the need for the memorial to, "conform to the established setbacks of surrounding buildings to maintain the

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integrity of L'Enfant streets including Independence Avenue."

For the benefit of those who did not attend the last meeting regarding the memorial, allow me to detail what occurred. Commission Krieger, after eloquently describing President Eisenhower's humility, said that first impression pedestrians will get of the memorial was not, "not one of humility and is thus incongruous with who Eisenhower was."

He said, "The memorial sort of shifts to not being humble enough when you see those side panels and when you imagine that the vast majority of people in approaching this memorial might first see the back of the column, a very large column, a very sort of unprecedented column unrelated to capitals or buildings. This is the part of the memorial that, to me, seems now the weakest."

What triggers Mr. Krieger's remarks was a rendering showing the memorial from the southwest corner of the Air and Space Museum. He found that rendering in the design booklet the applicant submitted for the Fine Arts Commission meeting.

However, the applicant tellingly did not include that image in the booklet for this meeting nor have they included it in their presentation today nor downstairs. Indeed, the applicant has previously created a number of directly relevant

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renderings showing what that column will look like to visitors, yet they have not shown any of them.

If I may distribute images of that rendering from the booklet last time.

The first page here shows the rendering that opened Mr. Krieger's eyes. I have included two other renderings from the applicant from similar viewpoints.

After having critiqued the unhumble columns, Mr. Krieger went still further and asked the applicant to reconsider the side panels altogether. He explained that those panels aren't necessary to establish the urban room since, "the sides seem to be framed reasonably well by large-scaled buildings."

"Ironically," he said, "it is the side of the memorial facing Independence Avenue that is poorly framed and, for that reason, the applicant's prior design, which had those two tapestries turned parallel to the avenue, was, to that extent, better."

Commissioner Plater-Zyberk seconded him on the side panels. "I think some of the points Alex has raised, in fact, may be a very good suggestion because the original concept of enclosing those four acres in making the precinct has already been largely taken away. In fact, it may be becoming much

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stronger potentially in thinking of it as primarily a park with a backdrop."

She also criticized the scope of the design which is so big it could fit two Lincoln Memorials. "Maybe this would be a good lesson for the future about big can be too big and hard to deal with. There has been memorial sprawl among the various monuments that have been built in recent decades that this, in a sense, is part of."

Commissioner Freelon agreed. "Some of these scale issues have to do with the fact that the site is so large. I understand that the screens were reduced and the columns were reduced but perhaps not enough to make a difference. So I would concur with my colleague about the scale issue and also maybe not the need to constrain it with the side panels."

At the conclusion of the meeting, when discussing the phrasing of the motion to be voted on, Mr. Krieger said, in no uncertain terms, "The side columns, I want to get rid of, not the tapestries. But they seem to be related to each other."

Ms. Plater-Zyberk seconded. "I think that comment should stand as a request for consideration of that. I am supportive of it."

I look forward to hearing the Commission's discussion

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of that action item particularly since the applicant has not altered the side panels since the last meeting nor has it been forthcoming about what they will truly look like.

I do not need to tell you that this Commission is vested with the authority and the responsibility to protect the L'Enfant and McMillan Plans and to ensure that Eisenhower gets a memorial respectful of his humility. Only the elimination of the side panels can make that possible.

Thank you.

MR. POWELL: Thank you.

MR. LUEBKE: Just to clarify the record, the action taken by the Commission was not to recommend an actual change but was to recommend the consideration of that.

MR. POWELL: I understand that. We have read--

MR. LUEBKE: Just to make sure you know what you actually said. Thanks.

MR. POWELL: Appreciate that.

Thank you. Do you want others on this?

MR. LUEBKE: There may be others on this, other members of the public.

MR. POWELL: Well, we will then go to comments, questions. You were heavily quoted.

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MR. KRIEGER: Perhaps I should remain more silent this time around. Look. First, I would like two preambles to what I am about to say. One is, you know, as a designer, I have great empathy for the fact that for years before, and probably for years ahead, you are going to be blasted with all kinds of comment, some reasonable and some not. I understand that.

Secondly, I want to make sure that my criticism has nothing to do--nothing to do nor can be used as a way to say, gee, it should be a classical-inspired memorial. My comments have nothing to do with trying to move it towards to kind of a traditional classical aesthetic.

But, of course, I do have a comment to make about the side panels, not so much the side panels but the fact that each iteration--and you have talked about many iterations of the design--each iteration made the case of enclosure less compelling.

You know, there is a kind of traditional first-semester architectural exercise where you are given, like, three columns and four little pieces of wall and say, "define an enclosure." This would fail. It would fail. The panels are flapping in the breeze right now.

When they were along Independence, you could say, yes,

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a kind of a sense of enclosure. If they could be as long as the buildings that they supposedly don't, you know, kind of provide sufficient enclosure, maybe. They are just panels.

And, furthermore, the original concept which I thought was actually quite beautiful, each of the panels, in a sense, acts as a backdrop for a composition of the statuary. The statuary has left the side panels and is now clustered, I think appropriately, at the center. Therefore, their role as sort of backdrops for the other statuaries has also gone away.

So they don't enclose the space. That is kind of an imaginary idea. In the meantime, yes, I would repeat my comments. I am sorry if it was kind of quoted so extensively. Your first sense of it, of this memorial, if you approach from the other side of Independence would be of gigantic columns that have little reference to Roman temples. And, by the way, why we reference Roman temples as memorials for presidents, I am not sure. That seemed to have ended with Jefferson.

The reference of them might be as, you know, gigantic chimneys that might be disguising an underground power plant. So I don't understand. I actually don't understand any further the importance of those side panels.

The original idea of enclosure seems to have left

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quite a while ago whereas, at the moment--by the way, I love the large tapestry, assuming it doesn't have any technical flaws, as a fabulous background for the entire composition of the park, landscape as well as now the particular very careful display of the kind of statuary, that core of the memorial.

So, yes; I would repeat my comments. I don't understand what the side panels have any longer to do with the design other than as a remnant of an idea that has kind of come and gone largely as a consequence of all these other iterations.

So they are just flapping in the breeze as far as I am concerned and exposing--I am actually not concerned at all about whether this column is outward of some imaginary line or not. The fact that you would be approaching a memorial looking as this describes--this is very effective, actually, especially the second and third page--you are approaching this memorial with a gigantic column in your view of the memorial. It just seems actually, at that moment, a lot less poetic than the notion of a kind of an abstract enclosure of a space that actually seems very well enclosed as your model demonstrates.

And, by the way, one more comment and I surely will stop. Both in modern, both in classical landscapes and modern landscapes, trees often, or a landscape, are a very effective

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means of enclosure, actually. And that is the part of enclosure that you aren't dealing with particularly well, as Elizabeth said especially on Independence Avenue.

Thank you.

MR. POWELL: Go ahead.

MS. FERNÁNDEZ: I agree with everything Alex said. I have a lot to say and I agree with the whole argument about the two end panels but I have bigger issues with the whole thing.

And, with all due respect to Mr. Gehry, I think the tapestries are actually very beautiful things and that they could be very beautiful things in another context, so I have nothing against them and I am not arguing for some more traditional direction either.

But there is a kind of an--and I kind of wanted to like this. I have wanted to like this. And I don't. And when I went down to look at the model, it became very clear to me why, you know. And I feel that once I understood that, I could articulate it better.

But as I looked around at this model and the ones downstairs, it seems to me that everything is working with this sort of motif, this vocabulary, of theatricality, backdrop, curtains, plinths, actors on stages, marquees. These are all

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very familiar. These are all very familiar--it is a very familiar visual vocabulary. And they are all devices that deal with flatness.

So, from a sculptural point of view and I hate to say this but Mr. Gehry, this is not a building. Just because you are an architect and you make something big does not make a building. Just because you make something tall.

As someone who makes things that are large and puts them outside in the landscape, this is not a building. And it can't be--that statement can't be made to then defend a bunch of badly designed things that come afterwards.

But the fact that all these devices that are being used in this kind of strategy deal with flatness, from a sculptural point of view, it seems very strange and very confusing that so much open space is needed for an experience that is essentially dealing with frontality.

In the model downstairs, I found them sort of very interesting to look at but then I realized that most interesting and most robust part of--and most bold aspect of the design was the model trees that were put into the model and, if you took them out, you essentially had--it was a very weak kind of design, a very sort of timid approach or this sort of backdrop

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to something that lacks some sort of integrity in terms of volume.

If you knew nothing about this and you just stumbled upon it, I would dare say that it is the trees, themselves, that define what you are presenting and that almost anything that you said, you could take out the columns and tapestries and the plinths and the figurative elements and just put a bunch of great trees.

And you could say exactly the same thing about almost every point you made, the urban room, the way people would use the space, the casual and the formal. So I feel like it is not there. It is not deliberate enough, somehow. To go back to something that Beth said that had to do with the experience, which ultimately is all we care about; right? Ultimately, that is what becomes important is what kind of experience are these design elements creating for viewers and for the public and for the memory of Eisenhower.

I think that the idea of a prairie in D.C. is a stretch. I think that in order to really say something like that and make it manifest itself into an actual experience of those words are two very, very different things that I think one need one needs to be careful with.

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I think that, in general, in any monument, in any memorial anywhere in the world, that viewers need to connect and relate to the idea of a hero or a heroine in a much more universal way and I just think that the whole reference to the prairie is very cryptic in what essentially is, regardless of how casual you want it to be or how not-designed you want it to be, it is very--it is a formal gesture.

A memorial is a formal gesture and I feel that whole reference to the prairie imagery is very cryptic, that the landscape could transport you, or that it would be enough of a contrast to the urban landscape that is around it, I don't think that that would happen with the elements that you have provided here.

I don't think that that sense of being transported is evident, would be evident, in the experience of viewers.

To quote what you had projected in your presentation that the memorial would reduce the sense of scale of the urban precinct, I think this is a really, really pretentious statement.

I think that you are not just talking about a flat backdrop with a building behind it. If you look up, you have the sky. And the landscape always wins. It is a big, big, vast

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experience that occurs above your head and under your feet and all around you and I think it is very pretentious to assume that, by putting a curtain, basically, a backdrop that is smaller than everything that is built that is around it, that you would somehow sort of reduce the scale of the urban precinct.

I really think that that sense--that is actually, for me, from a design point of view where it doesn't work, where you are trying to create a landscape but you are surrounded by the real landscape and it is a very difficult proposition.

I don't think that you are going to compete with that, your landscape, and with the vastness of open sky above your head.

So I will leave it there. I am sure my colleagues could speak more about the landscape element of it but from a sort of outdoor sculptural experiential point of view, I felt that those were the points that were of real concern to me.

Thank you.

MR. FREELON: Just to build on what Alex was saying, I will just add two comments about the scale and that the effort to--well, the site is too big. And I think the effort to fill it up has, you know, consumed a lot of energy and created

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something really too large.

As the iterations we saw downstairs I think illustrated, you know, as you move toward consolidating the former elements, the armature and the larger pieces remain essentially unchanged. So that is the disconnect for me, that there was an effort to bring things together and consolidate and make it smaller but the framework remains. And that is a bit of a problem, just to build on what Alex has said. I agree with him.

MS. PLATER-ZYBERK: I will finish.

MS. MEYER: Maybe I will just start by repeating one thing Alex said. There is no argument I have about this being a contemporary, modernist project. So the comments are not about a critique of that.

In fact, I welcome the idea of an exciting spatial experience that deals with this president who was responsible for so many things that affect our lives as contemporary late 20s and early 21st Century citizens.

But I am not convinced that the aggregation of elements creates the memorial experience--a memorial experience. I think that the team is relying too much on materials to symbolize things. That is one. And I am really sad,

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disappointed, that the design of the elements, sculptural elements and the tapestries, seems totally disengaged from the design of the landscape elements.

I think there is a fear of landscape on the part of the architects of this project and the obsession with things like the view and vistas, which is misplaced given the fact that eye level is at anywhere from 3-and-a-half feet to, you know, 6-ish feet depending on the height of a person is going to be open under this canopy.

So I think Liz's question first about the street trees identifies that fact that is a fear of a line along Independence Avenue.

When you look at the number of trees within the grassy areas, there are about 35. The rest are on the perimeter. And there is a fear of density of a canopy that actually might create a place here that is comfortable to be and dense enough that these other elements are not the primary experience of the place.

So I am worried that there is a kind of reliance on materials to symbolize; plant species equals the prairie, when the prairie is a landscape that every 19th Century poet and novelist wrote about as being unbounded.

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I mean, it is amazing to read about the prairie and the sense of it being vast and sublime. And I think there is such an opportunity to take the elements that the designers have used to reinforce that, but it means that the elements of the prairie can't be stuck in a wet pond on the perimeter of the site, or a wet swale.

So what is another modernist sensibility besides anything goes, I can walk anywhere. One is the power of juxtaposition and that is a technique that Gehry uses a lot. So what about juxtaposing the prairie with the sublime vastness of an axis to the U.S. Capitol?

Why not get people off-axis because, as soon as you put people in that 50-foot-wide space, the scale of that axis gets domesticated. It looks like every other public park in the United States.

You could actually use the power of juxtaposition to create something very different from what you have on Maryland Avenue. You have a weak allée. You describe it as a hedgerow in your text. So what about a hedgerow of very different spacings and layerings, an audacious thick line on both sides, with a billowing field of prairie grasses with this amazing view of the Capitol and not pretend that it is the Mall with 4 feet

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of structured soil and hardy grass that you can walk on.

You can do that on the Mall, a block away. So I feel like the elements are here and yet they are not actually deployed in a way that adds up to the memorial experience. I think there is a vocabulary of banality that keeps going back to terms like formal and informal, as if we are in the 1890s when that debate was played out, and not a sense of actually the power of juxtaposition and the importance of scale in creating a memorial experience.

So I am disappointed. There is more detail on materials, like we are looking at design development, specifications, and there is not more demonstration of the incredible role that an architect and an landscape architect could play together, collaborating together to create a memorial experience.

MR. POWELL: Thank you.

Elizabeth?

MS. PLATER-ZYBERK: So, given the very broad comments that have been given, mine will seem quite prosaic. Just not to repeat others or still standing by what I said before, and not to repeat that, I would point us toward the information center since that was one of the pieces presented and suggest a couple

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of things.

One is that the second building, the seasonal storage, the whole area where that building is with the new sunken, I guess it is a diminished sunken courtyard, it is very complex and I think could be simplified. It looks a little bit messy. There are stairs. There are ramps. There is the courtyard. There is the seasonal storage. There is the passage between the seasonal storage and the building.

I am wondering whether there couldn't just be one building that is attached to the sunken-courtyard wall which is--you know, which has certain things happening to it and just completely simplify that area. Maybe it is one building and it is a breezeway between the seasonal storage and the bathroom entry.

And one thing I will repeat is I still think it is a shame that the bathrooms are being treated so meanly with their little slit windows and, now that I have heard why, even more so.

I don't think the building needs to show that intention of meanness. I think you should try to hide it.

MS. FERNÁNDEZ: I would just add one more small comment, short comment. In the 1970s, an artist by the name of

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Agnes Dennis did a very beautiful outdoor environmental art work in Manhattan. She took many acres of Battery Park and she basically grew a wheat field.

If you look up those images, they are very sort of iconic images if you went to art school. I wanted to mention it--well, they are very sort of stunning images, the contrast between the buildings and a big city and this wheat field, but, to follow up on Beth's point, it is a really good example of how that juxtaposition can happen and how that bigness doesn't have to be vertical and that staying close to the ground and making something quite low could be a really amazing way to both encompass the space, enclose it, and contrast what is there already which you are not going to change or compete with because it is always it is always going to be bigger than what you are doing.

MR. POWELL: Others? Thank you. I think there is a lot of extremely worthwhile dialogue that has happened here today and I have to say, for myself, I love aspects of it. I agree with Alex and Phil on the two end panels and I think likewise this is a telling photograph.

What I recommend we do is we are going to--we will write this all up and provide you the dialogue, the comments,

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and I think we have other opportunities going forward January among others to see further development of the design.

There are wonderful moments and I think it still needs, as my colleagues have said, to address aspects of it. And I want to thank you all very much for it and for your comments.

Tom, is that--

MR. LUEBKE: Yes. There is no--this falls--

MR. POWELL: There is not a vote involved.

MR. LUEBKE: This is not necessarily a vote involved but these are strong comments for the team to consider.

MR. POWELL: Obviously, it is a work in progress and we are going to take it as that and we don't need to vote yea or nay on this at this point. But I think there are strong comments and we want to get them all down and articulated properly.

MR. LUEBKE: Yes.

MR. POWELL: So, with that, I think we will--thank you all very much. We will get this to you as soon as reasonably possible. There is a lot to get here.

MR. LUEBKE: Because of the Thanksgiving holiday, we may not get that out until the very, whatever that is, the 1st

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of December, or 2nd of December. But we will to get those as quickly as possible.

MR. POWELL: Thank you.

MR. LUEBKE: We have to take a break because of the breakdown of the big model.

[Recess.]

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