

CONSULTING PARTIES MEETING #3 AND NEPA SCOPING

MEETING	Part 2	DATE/TIME	Wednesday, May 23, 2024
LOCATION	Virtual	PROJECT	HMSG: Revitalize Building + Plaza
URL		PROJECT #	SF 1921101, SOM 220087, SA 2114

PANELISTS

Smithsonian Institution

Al Masino
Carly Bond
Marisa Scalera

SOM-Selldorf

Chris Cooper
Michael Basket

Reed Hilderbrand

Beka Sturges

Mueller Associates

Matt Velky

Agenda

- Introduction
- Potential Scope of Improvements
 - Perimeter Revitalization
 - New Entry from Sculpture Garden
 - Lower Level Expansion
 - Lobby Expansion
 - Plaza Revitalization
 - Fountain Revitalization
- Schedule and Next Steps

1 | Introduction and Context

Presented by Carly Bond

C. Bond provided general introductory remarks as well as panelist introductions.

- Reviewed NEPA scoping
- Reviewed how to provide comments
 - Instructions on how to provide comments
 - NEPA Comments
 - 1. Due 5/31
 - Section 106
 - 1. Due 6/22

- Submit comments via email to: preservation@si.edu

2 | Potential Scope of Improvements - Perimeter Revitalization

Presented by Beka Sturges - Reed Hilderbrand

Beka Sturges reviewed the National Mall context plan and HMSG campus plan as well as prior feedback from Consulting Parties Meeting #2.

- Reviewed perimeter revitalization goals
- Reviewed Jefferson Drive:
 - Reviewed existing conditions
 - Reviewed proposed accessible entry concepts
 - Concept #2 - Flanking ramps is preferred scheme for universal accessibility
 - Street trees on the south side of Jefferson Drive are not proposed per the Monumental Core Streetscape Guidelines
 - Preferred concept for perimeter security is hardened handrails
 - Streetscape
 - Preferred concept for the streetscape is to improve existing conditions
 - Preferred scheme provides an artwork display opportunity at the NE corner of the site, outboard of the Plaza perimeter walls, at the intersection of Jefferson and 7th Street
- Reviewed Independence Avenue:
 - Reviewed existing conditions
 - Monumental Core Streetscape Guidelines
 - Add tree boxes - consider alternate solutions for high pedestrian volume
 - Maintain 10' clear pedestrian zone
 - Expand shade
 - Reviewed streetscape concepts
 - Concept 1 - Improve Existing Conditions
 - Concept 2 - Tree Boxes at Curbs - preferred scheme
- Reviewed 7th Street:
 - Reviewed existing conditions
 - Monumental Core Streetscape Guidelines
 - Integrate plantings and perimeter security
 - Expand tree canopy
 - Match rhythm of existing trees on both sides of street
 - Improve soils
 - Maintain pedestrian clear zone
 - Reviewed streetscape concepts:
 - Concept 1 - Improve Existing Conditions
 - Concept 3 - Realigned Sidewalk with Planted Buffer - preferred scheme

Q&A | Perimeter Revitalization

Moderated by Carly Bond. Participants' names who provided the question are listed first in italics.

Respondents are listed in order.

1. *Daniel Fox CFA:* What is the existing tree species along 7th Street? Will reducing the treebox size and increasing sidewalk impact their survivability?

Response B.Sturges: Elms. We do believe the increased tree box size and soil improvements will help tree health. We will follow SG guidelines.

2. *John Edwards:* Can you explain again what the downside is of bringing the ADA ramps in along the corner openings in the battered wall?

Response B.Sturges: We believe a better design solution is to leave the battered perimeter walls alone. Universal access design requires placing the arrival location in one place for all mobilities. Concept 1 separates arrival points for those who aren't able to use stairs.

3. *Carlton Hart:* Do you need to add more handrails on the Jefferson side for perimeter security?

Response B.Sturges: We will study this in closer detail in the next phase of design. We consider this a good solution to minimizing adverse effects to the monumental stair.

3 | Potential Scope of Improvements - New Entry From Sculpture Garden, Lower Level & Lobby Expansion

Presented by Michael Baskett and Chris Cooper - SOM-Selldorf

New Entry From Sculpture Garden - Michael reviewed the goals of the new entry from the Sculpture Garden in relation to this project. This connection will provide universal access to and from the Sculpture Garden to the museum lower level.

- Reviewed requirements from the Sculpture Garden Revitalization Memorandum of Agreement
- Reviewed design concepts
 - Concept 1 - Larger opening
 - Concept 2 - Limited opening

Lower Level Expansion - Michael introduced the lower level expansion and relayed the goals of this portion of the project.

- Goals
 - Increase public space
 - Improved museum support spaces
 - Improved mechanical spaces

Lobby Expansion - Chris introduced the lobby expansion and reviewed feedback from previous consulting parties meetings.

- Reviewed existing condition challenges
 - Revolving doors are not accessible
 - Retention of the revolving doors requires code compliant swing doors adjacent
 - Wayfinding from different access points is confusing

- Undersized area for SI security and screening protocols
- Undersized for program requirements and demands on the existing lobby
- Reviewed temporary vestibule condition
 - Constructed for ongoing construction projects
 - Universally accessible entrance
 - Space for visitor screening but not SI standard screening equipment
- Reviewed symmetrical lobby expansion concept
 - Universally accessible entrance/exit
 - Thermal separation for occupant comfort with vestibule condition
 - Sufficient space for visitor orientation, screening, circulation, and programming
 - New storefront system will meet thermal and blast performance requirements

Q&A | Perimeter Revitalization

Moderated by Carly Bond. Participants' names who provided the question are listed first in italics.

Respondents are listed in order.

Carly noted that the site visit scheduled for 5/29 intends to tape out the footprint of the expanded lobby on the Plaza

1. *Daniel Fox (CFA):* Couldn't the revolving doors be locked and hung with a chain or simple visual cue that sends people to the sides? The proposed entrances would be quite hidden from both north and south approaches and a doorless glass plane could be mistaken for the rear or back/non-entrance.

Response C.Cooper: It is a physical possibility but it is not an ideal configuration and would not be welcoming to visitors. Removal of the revolving doors removes the signifier of entrance and indicates that you must continue on to the entrance. Other visual cues like signage and landscaping can assist in wayfinding.

2. *Daniel Fox (CFA):* The lack of real visual cues for the entrances would still be an issue even if the revolving doors are removed. or *particularly when* the doors are removed. Thinking through the entry sequence, there will still need to be signage. There is a feeling of searching for the entry with the current concept. The removal of the revolving doors doesn't feel like a resolution. You have taken them away but am not sure you have put anything back that has improved the entry sequence. Is it worth removing them? Not sure this is resolved yet or removal is necessary.

Response C.Cooper: Building is highly symmetrical - original configuration had intent to only enter from the south. Visitors from the north still had to search for the museum entrance. Today, more visitors come from the north than the south. Placing entrances on both the north and the south further limits the footprint. C.Bond - Materiality of the bronze weight of revolvers can be moved or referenced in a new location to help with wayfinding and entry signal.

3. *Tom Luebke:* Lobes of the lobby may be bigger than they need to be and encapsulate the piers. Consider lessening the depth of the lobes on either side of the pier. Leave more of the piers more exposed on the south side. Expressing support for access at the lower level from the Sculpture Garden. Concept 1 rendering looks like a shopping mall and is it outside? This will be exposed to the weather. Is there a middle ground between concept 1 and concept 2 to balance historic fabric, visibility, and acknowledgement of the exterior space? Basement program diagram would benefit from more program details.

Response M. Baskett: Auditorium is included in the 50,000SF public space. Further program is in development for the lower level.

4. *Sarah Batcheler:* Could you please return to the lobby expansion plan? Are the piers enclosed within the expansion on the outside as well as the courtyard side?

Response C. Cooper: Piers are enclosed on the north side and left exposed on the south sides.

4 | Potential Scope of Improvements - Plaza and Fountain

Presented by Beka Sturges - Reed Hilderbrand and Chris Cooper- SOM-Selldorf

Beka introduced the Plaza scope by reviewing prior feedback from consulting parties meetings which provided support for the “frame” concept.

- Reviewed character defining features of the Plaza
- Reviewed Plaza design goals
- Reviewed Plaza design concepts
 - “Frame” Concept - preferred
 - Green galleries of different sizes and shapes
 - Increased canopy cover for shading
 - “Corners” Concept
 - Most similar to current Plaza design with strong axial themes
 - Consider dismissing concept due to limitations in flexible programming

Chris introduced the fountain revitalization portion and reviewed feedback from Consulting Parties Meeting #2.

- Reviewed existing fountain deficiencies
 - Failed waterproofing
 - Obsolete lighting
- Fountain form and placement is an anchoring element of the courtyard. This includes the fountain plume
- Reviewed fountain revitalization goals and concepts
 - Reconstruct in-kind
 - Multifunctional fountain and stage
 - Skylight
 - Fountain and skylight

5 | Conclusion - Schedule and Next Steps

Presented by Carly Bond

- Site visit opportunity on 5/29, 9-10AM
- Project will be submitted to CFA for review at June meeting
- Project will be submitted to NCPC for review at July meeting
- Next Consulting Parties meeting is anticipated to occur in the fall 2024
- Draft EA anticipated to be completed Spring 2025

Q&A | Proposed Scope of Improvements - Plaza & Fountain

Moderated by Carly Bond - Participants name who provided the question are listed first in italics.

Respondents are listed in order.

1. *John Edwards:* In support of the removal of the revolving doors, requiring obtrusive wayfinding signage just to retain now non-functional and unnecessary revolving doors seems counterproductive to the aesthetic integrity of the overall design – in order to maintain one original item of marginal significance, the overall entry sequence and design is aesthetically and functionally compromised even more.

Response C.Cooper: We appreciate the comment and agree.

2. *Tom Luebke:* interesting to see fountain studies, unsure how to pick one option. Reiterate that the “Frame” concept seems to be very successful on the Plaza but concerned about the impact of lobes of lobby on this concept.

Response by C.Cooper: We will study this further.

3. *Docomomo question submitted to C.Bond via email prior to meeting:* As we understand in Option 0:

- Height of rooftop addition ~ 15’6”.
- Clear height inside rooftop addition needed for stacked equipment ~ 14’0”.
- Footprint of stacked equipment in rooftop addition is approximately 60% of the rooftop space.
- Clear height of 4th floor ~ 15’8” (enough room for stacked equipment).
- More floor space on the 4th floor as the roof square footage is reduced because of the setback parapet.

Under these circumstances wouldn’t the equipment on the 4th floor take up approximately 50% of that floor plate, leaving the other 50% available for programming

Response by C. Cooper: This issue is a planning issue more than a section issue. The roof mechanical area is less square feet due to the absence of the piers at the roof. It is possible to duct over the equipment on the 4th floor but we have less of the footprint available due to the piers. There are other considerations in placing equipment on the 4th floor such as water, acoustics, and vibration.

Response by A. Masino: Losing the 4th floor is not in line with our goals of turning more space over to the public. The entire revit would be in deficit if we do not gain this space.

4. *Docomomo question submitted to C.Bond via email prior to meeting:* If the HVAC equipment was in the basement, and if all available space was used in the existing four shafts, how much extra square footage is needed for the ductwork? We think it would be reasonable to see an option that illustrates the additional vertical shaft and if that could be designed in a way to minimize the visual impact.

Response by C.Cooper: The additional shaft space required would be 3-4 times what exists currently. The additional SF would require such a significant expansion of the piers that would fundamentally alter the character of the building and the reading of the piers.