

SCHEMATIC DESIGN

MEETING Consulting Parties #4

LOCATION Virtual

URL

DATE/TIME Tuesday, February 11, 2025

PROJECT HMSG: Revitalize Building + Plaza

PROJECT # SF 1921101, SOM 220087, SA 2114

PANELISTS

Smithsonian Institution

Al Masino
Carly Bond
Marisa Scalera
Melissa Chiu

SOM-Selldorf

Chris Cooper
Annabelle Selldorf
Michael Baskett

Reed Hilderbrand

Beka Sturges

ATTENDEES

Adam Metz
Andrew Lewis
Brian Flynn
Carlton Hart
Chris Wilson
Daniel Fox
Daniel Weldon
Erkin Ozberk
Gottlieb Simon
Hillary Lord
Jason Theuer
John Edwards
Kate Morais
Katharine Cline
Kerry Kennedy
Kirby Vining
Kristi Tunstall Williams
Laura Shipman
Lee Webb
Liz Waytkus
Lucky Haile
Matthew Flis
Michael Miller
Sarah Batcheler
Sharon Park
Sophie Macklem-Johnson
Susan Dunlevy
Thomas Luebke
Todd Grover
Venessa Acham

Agenda

- Introduction
- Plaza Level
- Q&A (Part 1)
- Sculpture Garden Lobby
- Schedule and Next Steps
- Q&A (Part 2)

1 | Introduction

Presented by Carly Bond

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

- Reviewed how to provide comments
 - Due 3/13
 - Submit written comments to: preservation@si.edu.
- Reviewed Agenda
- Reviewed Section 106 Process Overview and current state for this project.

2 | Plaza Level

Presented by Beka Sturges - Reed Hilderbrand & Chris Cooper - SOM

- Reviewed Plaza Revitalization (*Presented by Beka Sturges*)
 - Reviewed existing conditions, CP#2/3 meeting concepts and updates
 - Presented revised plaza development with updated geometry and viewsheds
- Reviewed Perimeter Wall (*Presented by Chris Cooper*)
 - Reviewed existing perimeter wall conditions
 - Reviewed perimeter wall replacement strategy, proposed to retain the historic west perimeter wall which suffers the least ASR distress
 - Reviewed existing and perimeter openings and egress
 - Egress is proposed out from the perimeter walls and into the Plaza. Guard booth location discussed, bronze cladding material to match Sculpture Garden guard booth
- Reviewed Plaza Lobby Expansion
 - Reviewed previous agency/consulting parties feedback
 - Reviewed Lobby criteria
 - Reviewed existing conditions
 - Reviewed program requirements and circulation diagrams
 - Reviewed design concepts Smithsonian lobby precedents at museums with similar visitation numbers
 - *Option 1 – East-West Expansion with Bronze Vestibule (Dismissed)*
 - *Option 2A – East-West Expansion with in-kind storefront replacement at original lobby footprint*
 - *Option 2B - East-West Expansion with high transparency storefront*

3 | Q&A

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

Tom Luebke: Slight adjustment and rationalization is successful with the spirit of the building. Lobby enclosure questions: even if we are replicating the existing lobby, it's still a new replacement correct?

Response C. Cooper: Yes, correct. We have to change the glass which requires a change in mullions.

Tom Luebke: That makes me inclined to option 2B since it's all replacement anyways. It lends itself more to the ideas of transparency and the floating of the drum. From the rendering, the location of the Lobby enclosure wall is conflicting with the geometry of the piers. There has to be a way to solve this.

Response Chris Cooper: It is this glitch [offset] that actually suggests that we think one [glazing] system is better and because there is an important kind of joint between the white [underside of the concrete coffer] and the cast in place [concrete of the piers], we think we need to be on one or the other, not both sides [of the plane where the coffer and piers meet]. Our proposal to avoid the geometry of the pier is to step out and align with that joint but on the outside of it [with one glazing system]. See slide 62.

Tom Luebke: The asymmetrical form is not a good thing and doesn't signal entrance. It will never look as transparent as it's rendered. Would rather see metal or some other form inserted to the vestibule. Concerns about constructability and maintenance issues. Develop a solid vestibule structure that is secondary to the Lobby form.

Response Annabelle Selldorf: We have studied this very carefully and have considered many versions. Contrary to adding 20ft we are adding a measure of generosity. In every scheme where we have suppressed or condensed the space, the solution has felt mean [constricted]. I appreciate your concerns about how incredibly careful we need to be in the detailing of this but think the fluidity of this scheme adds to its success. It is part of the aesthetic that doesn't try to pinch it but gives people room to maneuver through security screening.

Tom Luebke: We would like to see a study of the minor vestibule treatments asked for.

SI will provide further information at a future Consulting Parties meeting.

Chris Wilson: Comment on the Section106 process in general, appreciate the shift of the intent of the team to respect the original intent of the architect and the actual building. Security standards have changed over the last few decades which weren't fully articulated. This kind of consultation is very productive. I would like to hear from other consulting parties.

Andrew Lewis: Appreciate refinements to the Plaza design. Where are the openings in the new perimeter walls?

Response by Chris Cooper: All new openings are inside facing, no openings towards the street or towards the outside. Doors in all four corners of the Plaza are required for egress from the Lower Level.

Andrew Lewis: This is clear and makes sense. Happy to hear this. As for Lobby modifications: the mullions and Lobby storefront are characteristic of this time period and the character of the museum.

However, since it is all to be a replacement, not sure to what extent the replacement mullions will match the existing. Are the mullions a character defining feature?

Response by Carly Bond: Yes, they are.

Andrew Lewis: It is a balancing of character defining features of the piers and drum, tend to agree that Option 2B is the most appropriate solution in the context of all the other changes. Echo Tom's comment about the asymmetry and think symmetry is important about the museum design. What other approaches can provide the vestibule? Option 1 is an interesting reinterpretation of the revolving doors, an original historical element. Warrants more careful study or sharing more of what you have already done.

SI will provide further information at a future Consulting Parties meeting.

John Edwards: Given that all of the glazing needs to be replaced regardless, the option where all the vertical mullions disappear seems to make the most sense. The almost total transparency was likely the original intent but was not technically possible at the time, but it is possible now, so it seems to be both consistent with and a fulfillment of the aesthetic intent. The asymmetry is not the greatest move, but it also not something that, in reality, is going to be readily perceived. If a functional solution could be conceived that is symmetrical, great, but it doesn't seem like it's a huge detraction if it's necessary to make the space actually work.

Noted, thank you.

4 | Sculpture Garden Lobby

Presented by Chris Cooper - SOM

- Reviewed Sculpture Garden Lobby objectives
- Reviewed previous agency/consulting parties feedback
- Reviewed Sculpture Garden Lobby criteria and circulation
- Reviewed design concepts
 - Option 01 - Limited Underground Passage Wall Opening
 - 01A - Glazing Aligned with Passage Wall (*Dismissed*)
 - 01B - Glazing Perpendicular to Opening
 - Option 02 - Full Underground Passage Wall Opening with Glazing to Match Plaza Lobby
 - 02A - Glazing Aligned with Passage Wall (*Dismissed*)
 - 02B - Glazing Perpendicular to Stairs
 - 02C - Glazing Aligned to Back of Stairs

5 | Schedule and Next Steps

Presented by C. Bond

- Reviewed project reference documents and their availability on the project website
 - Project phase narrative
 - Analysis of mechanical strategies
- Reviewed upcoming schedule
 - CP#5 in Spring 2025
 - CP#6 in Summer 2025
 - Public review of draft environmental assessment September/October 2025

6 | Q&A

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

Dan Fox: Appreciate analysis of visitor queuing/entry/capacity vis a vis other mall museums but am not sure they are necessarily peers in terms of building type and museum content (only location). Have you studied other modernist museums in terms of entrance, queuing, lobby, etc.? I'm thinking of the original Whitney, Kimbell, etc. These examples are also sculptural buildings of similar architectural stature and significance

Response Carly Bond: Benchmarking took place in Fall 2023, including other Bunshaft buildings. For the comparisons in this presentation wanted to compare SI peer institutions with similar projected visitation numbers.

Response by Chris Cooper: Typology is one comparison but the visitorship comparison felt more important based on this location.

Dan Fox: where will security gates be, if any, in the security passage. Basic operation and maintenance question—where will gates be, if any?

Response by Carly Bond: We are installing gates at the north and south ends of the passage as part of the Sculpture Garden project. These locations may need evaluation depending on the selected alternative.

John Edwards: Option 1B seems to provide a logical accommodation of the new installation, respect for the original wall, the functional needs of the existing overhead gate, and a comfortable flow of circulation where there is space for a sense of entrance off the circulation path going up the stair. Removing the wall along the stair itself in Option 2 creates an awkward visual where the concrete deck above does not appear to be supported on anything - it doesn't have the same tectonic perception that one gets above where the glazed lobby sits underneath the intentionally hefty structure of the concrete drum above. Making the stair more of an object also arguably changes the intent of the original design in a way that could actually detract from sense of movement up from under a closed space to the openness of the plaza above.

Response by Chris Cooper: Thank you for these comments. We recognize that it changes the legibility of the walls but it also balances the legibility of the entrances. That's the balance we are trying to find here.

Response by Carly Bond: The underground passage is not a character defining feature and we are treating it as such in the design and consultation of this project.

Sarah Batcheler: Agree with John that Option 1B seems to be the most successful of the options. Keeping as much of the wall in place helps to provide a unifying background to most of the features including the Sugimoto art piece and the stair. The view looking down the stair towards the Sculpture Garden, the two piers that end framing that piece seem to be a good landing place for it to terminate. The way the curve is going, the space behind the curved wall looks kind of left over and it comes together better with the stone pier next to it. The Option 2B with the belled out glass seems to fall apart with competing elements. Option 2C looks more like a mall or an airport.

Noted, thank you.

Andrew Lewis: Echoing comments that have already been made that Option 1B seems to be the most successful. Thanks to the team for all of the renderings and illustrations to help better understand the interventions. Option 2B and C don't give enough sense of transitioning and feel more like airports. Endorse Option 1B.

Noted, thank you.

Laura Shipman: NCPC staff also support 1B to retain some of the historic fabric of the walls.

Noted, thank you.

Chris Wilson: How many people are participating today? Encourage people who aren't signatories please to chime in.

Response by Carly Bond: 52 attendees, 46 currently. 1/3 are other design team members or SI team members. Please check the meeting minutes for the attendees.