

CONCEPT DESIGN

MEETING Consulting Parties Meeting #2

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PROJECT HMSG: Revitalize Building + Plaza

URL

PROJECT # SF 1921101, SOM 220087, SA 2114

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Agenda

- Introduction and Context
- Potential Scope of Improvements
 - Lobby Expansion
 - Plaza Revitalization
 - Envelope Improvements
 - Accessible Entry from Sculpture Garden
 - Lower Level Expansion
 - Conversion of Fourth Floor to Public Space
 - Usable Rooftop
- Schedule and Next Steps

1 | Introduction and Context

Presented by Carly Bond

C. Bond provided general introductory remarks about the meeting as well as a summary of the projects.

- Comments or questions can be submitted in writing any time until January 17, 2024.
- The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden was designed by Gordon Bunshaft of SOM and opened on the National Mall in 1974.
- There are 3 phases of the Revitalization Project. Phase 1 was the Envelope Repair project. Phase 2 is the Sculpture Garden Revitalization. Phase 3 is the revitalization of the building and plaza and will be performed after Phase 2 construction is completed. Since the museum will need to close to complete the interior renovations, structuring the projects as such maintains the Hirshhorn's active exhibition presence on the National Mall.

Section 106 is required for the project since the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (HMSG) contributes to the National Mall Historic District. HMSG is also individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

- Character Defining Features are:
 - Drum-like form and central courtyard
 - Battered perimeter walls
 - Sculptural, cast-in-place concrete piers

- Precast concrete cladding panels
- Painted, coffered concrete ceiling structure
- Third-story balcony and fenestration
- Circular fountain in interior courtyard
- Glazed entrance lobby and revolving doors
- Magnolia trees at NW corner of the site
- Setting for the display of sculpture
- Loading dock ramp, retaining walls, and fence
- First-floor lobby interior
- Escalators
- Terrazzo floors
- Other Significant Features (not included in Determination of Eligibility):
 - Underground passage
 - Views under the drum
 - Pure geometric forms
- Project Goals in Summary:
 - Provide visitors with transformative art experiences .
 - Improve accessibility and circulation for all users throughout the campus.
 - Expand and improve amenities, operational, and programming space to meet the needs of projected significant increases in visitation.
 - Ensure the Hirshhorn campus' code compliance and improve its energy efficiency.
 - Unify the Hirshhorn Building, Plaza, and Sculpture Garden as a campus.
 - Strengthen the physical security of the site perimeter and entrances.
 - Respect the integral relationship between the Hirshhorn building and outdoor gallery spaces as an evolving platform for the presentation of modern and contemporary art.
- Current visitorship averages between 800,000 and 1 million visitors per year. The museum anticipates an increase in visitorship to 1.5 million visitors per year.
- Currently 45% of the building is publicly accessible and the renovations would increase that to 65%.

2 | Lobby Expansion

Presented by Michael Baskett and Chris Cooper

Michael presented the following opportunities considered in the Lobby Expansion:

- Entry Opportunities
 - The goal is to provide a universal accessible entry as well as an intuitive arrival to improve the current entry sequence.
- Lobby Opportunities
 - The current lobby is quite small. Security needs require a larger footprint as well as more space for visitors upon arrival.
- Vertical Circulation Opportunities
 - The current escalators are too narrow for practical usability.
- Visitor Amenity Opportunities

- The current Hiroshi Sugimoto designed cafe has been hugely successful since opening in 2018. The goal is to expand that relatively small footprint.

Chris Cooper presented the Lobby Expansion Concepts as follows:

- Existing Condition
 - The lobby was configured to allow South access only through revolving doors which does not allow for universal access or space for current security screening requirements.
 - Temporary Vestibules were added as part of recent construction projects; temporary vestibules permit intuitive Museum entry and acknowledge that many visitors access the Museum from the Mall. Revolving doors are closed but they still signal “entrance” leading to less intuitive wayfinding. Revolving doors can be hard to find for visitors coming from the Mall as they face Independence Avenue.
- There are 4 Lobby Expansion Concepts:
 - Concept 1: Retain Existing Footprint
 - Introduce vestibules for climate control & security. One passenger elevator is added to the southeast pier and the existing revolving doors are removed in this proposal since they create wayfinding confusion.
 - This option reduces usable space and does not accommodate the necessary program.
 - Concept 2: South Expansion (Dismissed)
 - The entry is maintained on Independence Avenue with a new universally designed entry expanding past the current lobby footprint to the south.
 - This concept was dismissed because expansion to the south of the lobby creates a pinch point to the existing perimeter walls and limits the space for art, which is a key programmatic element. Expanding the lobby outside of the Museum drum detracts from this significant character defining feature.
 - Concept 3: Asymmetrical Expansion
 - This concept adds programmatic spaces and increases the lobby footprint asymmetrically but without going beyond the drum above.
 - Concept 4: Symmetrical Expansion
 - This concept adds programmatic spaces and increases the lobby footprint symmetrically but without going beyond the drum above.

3 | Q&A Part 1

Moderated by Carly Bond

- C. Bond notes that the temporary vestibules were added during the exterior renovation to get visitors in and out of the building safely but has provided a lot of insight into how circulation works in the lobby space.
- **It is interesting to see this project moving forward with design proposals. I want to make sure I understand the basics; the services that are in the four piers, are they substantially changing? The design team is working around a technically and structurally rigid**

framework. Is anything changing otherwise that would inform anything else? Or, are how the piers currently existing and what is inside them, where we need to remain? It's a question of understanding where our point zero is. Are there any major changes to the other piers?

- M. Baskett - The piers provide the structure to the building and currently house mechanical shafts, scissor stairs and elevators. There are no major changes with the exception of the additional passenger elevator to the southeast pier.
 - The formal bones of the building are so strong, that it is difficult to work with, thus I believe the building should stay symmetrical. So, the question becomes, can it be articulated in a way that makes sense given the historic fabric you're working with? Currently, that is captured by working within the piers and now you're bumping it out so it creates a bit of design decision on how you handle that. Concept 4 seems like the obvious decision to me.
 - M. Baskett - I appreciate that and the symmetry has always been a critical part of our conversations with this building.
 - C. Bond - In the next section, we will review some new plaza configurations so we should come back to this topic.
- **In Concept 4, why does the entrance not stay on the left side of the plan (similar to the current configuration) instead of moving to the right side, as this would keep the entrance closer to the elevators?**
 - C. Cooper - We can look at that and it may be a better solution. We showed the entrance on the left side to leave the freight elevator unencumbered.
 - **What is setting the endpoints of the lobby expansion?**
 - C. Cooper - We've used the lines of the coffered ceiling above. This is a modest expansion but we could keep going. The goal is to keep as much openness as possible under the drum. The drum appears to float and we want to continue that appearance.
 - **You've decided to encapsulate one part of the column. What would be the consequence of fully encapsulating the piers?**
 - C. Cooper - We're prioritizing the views from the exterior of the drum and it still gives us the visual of the piers from the exterior.

4 | Plaza Revitalization

Presented by Beka Sturges and Melissa Chiu

B. Sturges presented Plaza opportunities to address the current challenges:

- Infrastructure Opportunities
 - Create permanent perimeter security that removes unsightly temporary measures
 - Infrastructure to support art and events that incorporate access to water, power, lighting, and data.
- Exhibition Opportunities

- The landscape should better support art exhibitions. Water, power and data connectivity have been a challenge for the Hirshhorn, limiting the ability to accept proposals for many art installations.
- Public Program & Event Opportunities
 - Fountain separates the audience/visitors from many performances.
 - Plaza lacks a large flexible space for performances and events.
- Visitor Experience Opportunities
 - There is an opportunity to activate the plaza with amenities and create a destination for the local community.

M. Chiu presented the curatorial aspirations as follows:

- Need to support contemporary and evolving modern art such as time based media, performance art, large scale sculpture and site responsive works.
- Create a new sense of place on the National Mall. The Hirshhorn has often inspired artists to create art as a response to it.
- The Plaza's current low weight capacity limits placement of large and heavy artworks.
- Artists are working on working on much larger scales than in 1974 when the museum opened.
- Programs on the plaza have hosted up to 1,000 guests - seated and standing.
- Time based installations have proven to be cost prohibitive without permanent power and data infrastructure.

B. Sturges showed Plaza As-Built Comparison and Plaza Concepts being considered:

- How do we accommodate these necessities while keeping open space as originally designed?
- James Urban produced a design to improve accessibility and created outdoor rooms for art exhibitions. We are seeking to preserve these goals as well as enhance existing views under the drum.
- Plaza Concepts
 - Concept 1: Corners
 - Builds on the radial geometry and creates four spaces in the corner quadrants with a concentration of plantings at those corners. Accessible entries are located at the northeast and northwest corners.
 - The program is arranged in an axial organization. Monumental art is placed along Jefferson Drive to balance the magnolia trees. The east-west axis remains open.
 - Radial circulation.
 - Concept 2: Gradient
 - Concentrates gathering into the center with more dispersed plantings throughout the Plaza.
 - Program is distributed and the magnolia trees are not preserved. Seating is distributed throughout. Symmetrical accessible entries from the center are located at the existing opening in the Plaza perimeter from Jefferson Drive.
 - Meandering circulation.

- Concept 3: Frame
 - Lateral symmetry emphasizes the north south axis of the space. Plantings are placed at the edge to create outdoor rooms for art exhibition.
 - Accessible entry is asymmetrical from the center at the existing opening in the Plaza perimeter from Jefferson Drive. There is radial symmetry to this scheme.
 - Edge circulation
- All Plaza concepts have universal access from the Mall and spaces for monumental art. Components from the Plaza concepts can be “mixed and matched.”
- Magnolia Trees
 - Options are to preserve, remove and transplant, replace in kind, or replace with nine suitable trees.
- Ripley Garden Access
 - Creating an opening at the west Plaza wall to access the Ripley Garden and the east entrance of the Arts & Industries Building is included in the South Mall Campus Plan. This option was studied but the grade difference makes this access unachievable without major disruption to both the Ripley Garden and the Hirshhorn Plaza. Smithsonian does not recommend pursuing this option under this project or future projects.
- Streetscape Improvement Opportunities
 - The streetscape could be more related to the experience of the revitalized Plaza.
- Accessible Entry Concepts
 - Entry Concept 1: Corner Ramps
 - Openings in the Plaza perimeter walls at the northwest corner (similar to the existing condition) and northeast corner (new entry).
 - Entry Concept 2: Flanking Ramps - Bilateral Symmetry
 - Establishes a similar arrival experience for all visitors from the north with ramps placed at the center opening in the Plaza wall on Jefferson Drive.
 - Entry Concept 3: Plinth - Allows art to be a part of the ramp experience.
 - Asymmetrical ramp at the center opening in the Plaza wall on Jefferson Drive. Gives the longest route for exploration and engagement with art.

C. Cooper presented the fountain opportunities and concepts:

- The fountain is not functional and no longer retains water. This project will require a complete reconstruction of the fountain. In its replacement we are evaluating a full range of opportunities. The questions the design team has been asking are:
 - Is it possible to extend the use of the fountain from 6-8 months to year around?
 - Is it possible to expand the program of the fountain?
 - Can it improve the microclimate?
- It is currently asymmetrically composed slightly towards the north. The drum courtyard is the single largest space at the Hirshhorn.
- Fountain Design Concepts
 - Concept 1: Replace in Kind

- Mitigate waterproofing issues. Determine how much original material could be restored and reused in the reconstruction.
- Concept 2: Stage Configuration
 - Allow for extended fountain and multiple programmatic uses.
 - Could incorporate a stone platform for performances or temporary art.
 - In this concept the size and position of the fountain is retained, but it is slightly modified in order to enhance and add programmability.
- Concept 3: Clerestory - Dismissed
 - Opens up the edges of the fountain to provide daylight to spaces below.
- Concept 4: Skylight
 - Glass surface in place of water. Skylight creates a visual activator of the courtyard and brings daylight to the lower level as an orienting device. Could still allow use as a performance platform.
- Concept 5: Fountain Removal - Dismissed
 - Considered because it allows for the greatest program flexibility and eliminates the potential water issues.

5 | Envelope Improvements

Presented by Michael Basket

- Phase 1 has been previously completed - the replacement of all the concrete panels and addition of insulation, air and water barrier, and addressed blast requirements as well as the full roof system replacement.
- This project will address what was untouched at the inner facade to meet blast requirements, add waterproofing, and mitigate thermal bridges.
- Repair and restoration of the balcony cast in place concrete.

6 | Q&A Part 2

Moderated by Carly Bond

- **Are we considering adding restrooms to the lobby level?**
 - C. Bond - No we are not, but we are considering adding them to the gallery levels.
- **Thank you to the team for the very thorough presentation. NCPD staff concurs that the symmetrical lobby expansion option is the way to go. I am concerned with losing the revolving doors completely. When you have such a minimalist design, elements that are anomalies such as the revolving doors become more important as character defining elements. They are features that add to the character of the building. Can they be retained or adapted?**
 - C. Bond - They do not provide an accessible entrance, but we can look more at this condition and discuss at our next meeting.

- Inextricable from the plaza design is how those expansions interact with the roof above. Is there any way to do the screening between the piers to the South? Back to the plaza, I see the opportunity to develop this for a wider range of programs. The first plaza idea extends the concept of the building. The second is a bit more interesting. The third one really creates a frame. I don't know where this goes to historical precedent. I am particularly drawn to the third option that provides a consistent setting to the incredibly strong form of the Bunshaft building. Worried about Concept #2 that creates a whole new formal idea that is quite possibly confusing – a fight between figure and ground. The first one can probably work but it's the safest and the least interesting. While it's sad to lose the fountain, there is a fountain in the sculpture garden. The skylight option would be a huge boon to programming the lower level which is kind of a rabbit warren now and could be an organizing feature. More art could be displayed with natural light.
 - B. Sturges - Comments are resonant with the conversations we've been having. The gradient scheme enhances the microclimate but it is the least formally consistent.
- I'm having trouble in each of the schemes with what is really the framework from the landscape - what comes and goes? Is the intent for the pop ups to move around? I think diagrams would help as this thing develops as to what moves. I agree the gradient one is the most out of character for the modernist landscape. It could be that Concept #3 makes the most sense. There was a lot of conversation with the modernist landscape to the North.
 - Question on the programming - it seems it's similar to the conversation in the sculpture garden. Is it duplicative?
 - C. Bond - We will discuss the connection between the Sculpture Garden and the Museum in our next section, so let's circle back to your question then.
 - Question related to landscape - how is the visitor entry sequence informing the ramps. It seems divorced from the entry.
 - Have you explored creating a new pavilion here, where the fountain is?
 - C. Cooper - The fountain footprint would be as you know it today but shallower so it can also become a platform for performance art. Flexibility is the focus there.
- Related to the plaza concepts, NCPG staff agree that Concept #2 should be dismissed and we should see how Concept #1 and Concept #3 evolve.

7 | Accessible Entry from Sculpture Garden

Presented by Michael Baskett

- Sculpture Garden Revitalization Plaza Stair Opening
 - The intent is to follow the original details to the greatest extent possible while meeting current code requirements and operational needs of the museum. This would add a new dimension for them in terms of the ability to host events within the garden that can then transition into the lower level.

- Issue with connectivity we need to overcome is the position of the current theater sits directly in line with where the stair is being re-connected. As we're looking to expand the lower level plan, we're looking to reposition the auditorium just to open up a broader circulation access from the north to the south.
- Options:
 - Entry Concept 1 - Looking to open up a broader circulation space around the Plaza stair, which would help with the congestion in this area at certain times of day and support security screening during entry and exit.
 - Entry Concept 2 - This diagram studies a slightly larger expansion of that entrance below the plaza. In this option the aperture at the plaza level would remain the same but introduce a little bit more daylight.

8 | Lower Level Expansion

Presented by Michael Baskett

- There is currently no physical connection to the Sculpture Garden. Since we're already going to be excavating to add approximately 43,000 SF of space, we intend to connect to the original stair tunnel.
- We are holding a 21' setback from the 9th St tunnel.
- Our overall ambition is to add 12,000 SF of public space.

9 | Conversion of Fourth Floor to Public Space

Presented by Michael Baskett

- The fourth floor is used for on-site storage of the collection paired with a conservation lab and staff offices. The collection has grown dramatically since the building was designed 50 years ago.
- From a conservation perspective, there is a need to limit the daylight.
- This project is considering taking this entire floor plate and providing this as accessible exhibition space so that more of the collection can be on view at any given time for the public.
- There is also a hybrid option where some of the floor plate is given to exhibition and some of the floor plate is given to education.

10 | Usable Rooftop

Presented by Chris Cooper

- An important part of this opportunity is the mechanical equipment. The project must bring the climate control up to current energy codes and compliant fresh air guidelines. We will be adding mechanical equipment to the building and most likely to the roof of the building.
- The new mechanical system will require significantly more space and placement of that equipment is critical but limited. Essentially from a HVAC perspective it is two buildings (the lower level & levels 2-4). We will be using all the current pier space for vertical services. The necessary outcome is the new mechanical equipment is going to be divided between the lower

level and the upper levels. Potential height of rooftop equipment is approximately 13' -6" above the parapet.

- Maintaining the existing roof plan is not an option. Considering two options:
 - Option 1: Mechanical Penthouses - two separate footprints as small as possible.
 - Option 2: Mechanical Penthouses + Covered Program Space – This concept offers two significant improvements: a complete circle may cause less notice and allows introduction of usable exterior covered space to the Hirshhorn.
 - C. Cooper reviewed a series of renderings of the two options from various vantage points. The height may be able to be reduced but we are showing the most conservative height at this time.

11 | Schedule and Next Steps

Presented by Carly Bond

- Area of Potential Effects - No comments received, so the APE is now final.
- Plaza Significance Evaluation - We will move this report to final. The period of significance of 1974,1981 will be used to evaluate the project. The report remains a resource document on the project webpage.
- This project will need to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and will need an Environmental Assessment to begin in the spring of 2024
- Consulting Parties #3 in April 2024. Joint meeting with NEPA scoping.
- Consulting Parties #4 in September 2024.

12 | Q&A Part 3

Presented by Carly Bond

- **Do we plan to open the balcony to visitor access?**
 - M. Chiu - Ultimately, yes. It's a great vantage point to see into our plaza and our sculpture garden and views across the mall.
 - A. Masino - Absolutely, we will just have to figure out some sort of vestibule.
- **Plaza Concept #2, the gradient option has the most pavement area.**
 - B. Sturges - Agreed but it also has the most tree canopy.
- **Just to confirm, the plaza fountain is a contributing element, correct?**
 - C. Bond - That is correct. The things we have been thinking about it how it fits and functions. What does the fountain actually do as far as space organization? It's something to keep in mind as we consider different alternatives.
- **What is the need for a new mechanical system as using the existing system does not have as big of an impact?**
 - C. Cooper – There is not a desire to bulk up the mechanical system. The current system was designed to 1970s standards and it is subpar to requirements today. There is also

an energy efficiency that we are trying to achieve as well as a high level of control within the spaces including temperature and humidity. There are a number of more strict standards we are assigned today that come with size.

- **Access at the lower level, connection into the building is great. Is it a space between walls or is it an object in a space? Maybe end up with something in between. About the rooftop stuff, we don't want to say not to achieve your energy requirements, however this is an incredibly sensitive building, that is considered the design of a master, and it is a huge impact that you are proposing and I don't know how much support you will get for it. I believe adding the ring on top of the building fundamentally changes the design and you should do everything not to do that. This is going to end up being a regulatory issue for you all. It's a very, very significant issue. Sorry to end on that note but I love the work that's been proposed generally.**
 - C. Bond - We are aware of these challenges, which is why we are showing what the work could be as we figure out how to mitigate that.

- **What is the thought on the material enclosing the mechanical space and programmatic space? Would the material in these spaces be different visually?**
 - C. Cooper - Everyone recognizes what a significant lift it would be to build above the parapet, it needs to be as recessive as possible. We recognize this is not a straightforward piece of the proposal.

- **NCPC agrees that anything going up on the roof is going to be problematic from the 106 perspective. We will have to continue to work through this as we go forward.**