

PROJECT	Smithsonian Institution- Revitalization of the Historic Core (RoHC)	MEETING DATE	2/22/2023
ORGANIZER	Smithsonian Institution, Carly Bond (moderator)	TIME	2:00-4:00pm
LOCATION	Virtual/Zoom		
PANELISTS	Carly Bond- Smithsonian Institution Christopher Lethbridge- Smithsonian Institution Brenda Sanchez- Smithsonian Institution Matthew Chalifoux, EYP-Loring Anthony Bochicchio, AIA, EYP-Loring Michael Galway, EYP-Loring		
SUBJECT	Consulting Parties Meeting #10		

MEETING MINUTES

Purpose – This was Consulting Parties Meeting 10 for the Revitalization of the Historic Core (RoHC) project of the Smithsonian Institution. The meeting was held in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

The agenda for this meeting was focused on Phase 2 of the Section 106 consultation. The meeting agenda included the following design issues:

- **Roof Mechanical Elements**
- **Lightning Protection**
- **Emergency Generator**
- **Exterior Masonry Restoration**

Phase 2 of Section 106 consultation will continue through 2023.

The meeting was assembled virtually and included a slide presentation, which has been posted on the RoHC project website. Attendees were asked to post questions or comments in the chat during the presentation. The following is a list of the questions and comments with a summary of the responses. Information regarding the project, including the slide presentation, is available through the project webpage: <https://www.sifacilities.si.edu/historic-core>

Questions and Comments

Written

1. **Q:** Where is the elevator shaft, in plan, in relation to the large brick arch below the overrun?

R: The elevator shaft will occupy a portion of the area behind the arched widow opening. The space is currently occupied by an egress stair which will be removed to insert the elevator. The plan configuration was shared in an earlier Consulting Parties meeting. We will be reviewing this again at a future meeting when we review the interior effects of the insertion of the elevators.

2. **Q:** I much prefer the two detailed elevator bulkheads, either with or without the slate roofs. They're less noticeable because they're a better fit with the building's other architectural details.

R: Thank you.

3. **Q:** On the tall louvered penthouse, did you consider a gray color, more slate-like?

R: We have not, but we will continue to evaluate design options, including materials and colors for these elements to reduce their visual impact.

4. **Q:** On the north tower, might it be possible to lower the height by making the side louvers triangular? It's a shame these are so high, blocking the towers

R: We will investigate additional options for configuring the louvers as a means of reducing the height of these elements.

5. **Q:** They shaft and overrun are not centered on the arch. (*Referring to the elevator overrun structures at the South Tower.*)

R: That is correct, the shaft is not centered on the window opening and the roof dormer for the overrun is aligned with the shaft. To insert a code compliant elevator, provide connectivity to all floor levels, and minimize disturbance to significant interior spaces such as the Children's Room and the Regents Room, the best plan option is to place the elevator as currently shown, off center from the arched windows.

6. **Q:** The north tower louvers as proposed seem to have a significant visual impact. Were any other locations considered that might minimize their height/bulk and visibility?

R: The team did evaluate locating a louvered penthouse between the North and Flag Towers but this was in conflict with other uses in the attic. The current locations are close to the mechanical equipment located in the attic to which these louvers supply air, but as tight as possible to the south face of the Towers.

7. **Q:** NCPC staff agrees that the copper for the overrun would be appropriate. It's so minimally visible.

R: Thank you.

8. **Q:** SHPO agrees that the north tower penthouses will have a significant visual impact and need to be revised.
- R:** We will evaluate additional options for the configuration of these elements to reduce and minimize their visual impact.
9. **Q:** I also agree that these are not small and will be visible from the National Mall landscape. Any design tweaks that could minimize these are encouraged. Thank you!
- R:** We will evaluate additional options for the configuration of these elements to reduce and minimize their visual impact.
10. **Q:** Maybe it's been already addressed, couldn't these green units be the same color as the building- or maybe they are green just to be clear what is discussed.
- R:** The green represents patinated copper, which has been used historically for other elements on the roof. Selecting a painted finish that "matches" the masonry of the building is very difficult. The stone varies in color, and it is almost impossible to select a paint color that perfectly matches masonry. We have presented that the new louvers in the north wall of the South Tower will be a painted finish, most likely a bit darker than the adjacent brick.
11. **Q:** With cladding - texturizing the paint could help with what Tom Luebke mentioned regrading louvers behind South Tower. Could also be considered for alternative colors/cladding for other louvers and overruns.
- R:** We will investigate if a textured paint finish has ever been utilized successfully in this type of installation. Even with a textured finish, however, the color match will be very difficult.
12. **Q:** In slide 39 is the ground plane changing that much (in the proposed condition on the right) or does this image not show all landscape and pathways that will be there in the future?
- R:** The rendering does not include the landscape and pathways that will be part of the overall site plan.
13. **Q:** Regarding emergency electricity supply for The Castle, what is potential for large-scale batteries at present? And regarding the large-scale batteries what might be the prognosis in terms of future industry developments? And would there be a potential for a network of large-scale batteries plus emergency generator(s) as backups if the general network supply system is not functioning? The natural gas supply options would be the recommended option if the battery capacities are not sufficient at present as the natural gas would be a somewhat more "climate-friendly" supply source.
- R:** The use of storage batteries for emergency power has been studied, but the amount of battery storage required would require much more space than the gas generator.
14. **Q:** It would be helpful to see photos of what lightning protection is there now.
- R:** We will include photos of the existing lightning protection system on the Castle in a future presentation.
15. **Q:** As someone who is familiar with the mechanical systems in the north attic, I realize that it is

extremely limited for space and ventilation purposes. Has any consideration been given to moving the roof access points out of the north towers to allow more room for the venting visually.

R: We will revisit the need for the access ladders/ stairs that are currently located on the south elevations of the North and Flag Towers. Providing roof access for maintenance staff is very challenging on the castle due to the complex geometry of the roofs.

16. **Q:** I would urge you to document the removal of the rooftop elements as part of a HSR Part 3. In addition, research into those historic ventilation systems would be helpful for understanding how the building has operated over time. Documentation is especially important where you're unsure of its date and original use.

R: This is a great suggestion. As the building is opened up during construction, we anticipate uncovering elements that will be important to the historic record of the building.

17. **Q:** Good points on why the generator makes better sense. Thank you.

R: We appreciate the input.

18. **Q:** About this north tower overrun/vents, can you show the constraints in a diagram so we can understand this visually? Also, can you add side by side images (existing and proposed) for all the proposed changes on the roof?

R: Thank you for the suggestions. We will incorporate these diagrams and comparative images in future presentations.

Verbal

19. **Q:** Thank you for exploring elevator overrun with slate; seeing the images it makes sense to stick with the copper. Slate might call more attention to itself than necessary. Copper minimizes the visual impact and matches the roof top element family. Supports all copper. Appreciates the look of decorative/all copper

R: Thank you.

20. **Q:** I understand that the roof top interventions are necessary. In terms of color and finish, unpatinated copper is our friend, but copper will mellow out in reality. Pertaining to the South Tower louvers I would suggest a finish that is less saturated and darker. Metal will reflect the sky and appear brighter; a darker color is less likely to reflect the sky.

R: Thank you for the input. We agree that "matching" the masonry color is not possible or preferred. As we move forward, we will be undertaking specific color selections and will share them as they are developed.

21. **Q:** I'm surprised at the scale and extent of the louvered penthouses to the south of the North and Flag towers. Could the penthouses be a shed form, more horizontal, to blend in more with the roof line? Similar to the shape of the existing elevator penthouse that is being removed.

R: These louvered penthouses are a significant challenge. They are serving two of the largest mechanical units which are providing outside air to all levels of the Main Building, which includes most of the public assembly spaces and the largest population levels. Historically the building has been underserved regarding outside air. We will evaluate additional options for the configuration of these elements to reduce and minimize their visual impact.

22. **Q:** Did the team evaluate to possibility of inserting louvers in the existing openings of the North and Flag Towers, similar to the approach at the South Tower? Perhaps a portion of the louvers are in the towers, to reduce the size of the new penthouses.

R: The team did evaluate this option, and there were significant challenges to making this work. The available area of the arches is not sufficient to meet the air intake design requirements, interior configuration of the towers would complicate the routing of ductwork, the size of the ducts connecting the louvers to the units is very large requiring a significant opening in the masonry support wall of the towers, and the modifications would complicate the seismic reinforcement of these two, tall, thin towers. We will further investigate options for reducing the size of the penthouses, including using a limited number of existing arched openings in the towers.

23. **Q:** Please take into consideration that reversing past modifications that would be considered adverse effects (brick infill of arched openings, addition of exterior access ladders/stairs) is considered mitigation when evaluating the overall project.

R: We appreciate that input and will document any such reversals as part of the consultation process.

24: **Q:** I appreciate the teams acknowledgement of the former cloister on the north side of the West Range.

R: While this area has been converted in the past to support functions such as a kitchen, and will continue to serve as support space, the team is aware of the historic use of this area and will preserve physical evidence of that early use where possible.

END OF MEETING