

U.S. COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

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26 April 2018

Dear Mr. Horvath:

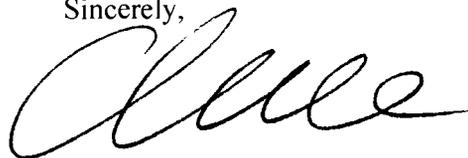
In its meeting of 19 April, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed the proposed South Campus Master Plan for the properties of the Smithsonian Institution on the south side of the National Mall between 7th and 12th Streets, SW. The Commission approved the master plan as a basis for proceeding with the design of the plan's components, and provided the following comments.

The Commission members thanked the project team for the concise summary and the clear presentation responding to their previous concerns, and they acknowledged both the complexity of the undertaking and the potential benefits of improving many aspects of the Smithsonian's operations, including circulation, visibility, and visitor experience. They expressed overall support for the project, which now proposes new programming for the Arts & Industries Building and less excavation under the Castle; however, they noted the challenges to be faced in future design phases, such as accommodating the new truck access and loading facility, and the potential reconfiguration of access to the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and the National Museum of African Art beneath the Quadrangle. Citing the sightline studies presented, they agreed that the plan to relocate the entrances to the underground museums to new portals farther north would open up views toward the historic museum buildings and create more street presence for the Enid A. Haupt Garden—transforming this area into a vital connection point between the National Mall and the adjacent Southwest Ecodistrict. They suggested that the designs for the new entrance pavilions could be informed by the collections and programs of the museums they would serve.

For the development of the design of the Haupt Garden, they expressed support for the general landscape plan, which would allow for the creation of a new garden imbued with important design characteristics derived from the existing one—such as intimacy and shade—as an alternative to a previously presented plan to construct a smaller, compromised parterre in place of the one to be demolished. They said that the revised plan presents an opportunity to create an innovative garden design expressive of the Smithsonian's mission to educate the public, revealing the layers of a living landscape planted on the rooftop of the renovated underground museum complex. They also suggested informing the future landscape design with the philosophy and legacy of Enid A. Haupt, one of the country's great horticultural patrons; this could include devising inventive and sustainable methods to adapt the landscape to climate change.

The Commission looks forward to reviewing submissions for each of the component projects of this master plan as designs for the architecture and landscape are developed.

Sincerely,



Thomas E. Luebke, FAIA
Secretary

Albert Horvath
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cc: Aran Coakley, Bjärke Ingels Group
Marcel Acosta, National Capital Planning Commission