

Smithsonian Institution

Architectural History and Historic Preservation

9 October 2014

Mr. C. Andrew Lewis
Senior Historic Preservation Specialist
District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office
1100 4th Street, SW Suite E650
Washington, D.C. 20024

Dear Mr. Lewis:

The Smithsonian Institution is developing a master plan for its south mall "campus" of buildings and grounds. The area along Independence Avenue, S.W. includes the Freer Gallery of Art and the Quadrangle complex, a three story underground facility which includes the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and National Museum of African Art, topped by the Enid A. Haupt Garden. Two National Historic Landmarks are included as well: the Smithsonian Castle and the Arts and Industries Building. The eastern-most component of the master plan is the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden.

The plan recognizes that there are several large projects the institution must undertake in the next two decades that lie in close proximity to each other. Integrated planning for the projects will allow the institution to optimize the benefits of connections between them to take advantage of cost and space. This will allow for shared use of utility plants and central loading docks and to incorporate sustainable best practices to the urban environment.

Major projects to be integrated in the master plan include:

- *Revitalization of the Castle including replacement of its building systems and restoration of our most iconic historic structure. Seismic reinforcement is needed to bring the building to current codes and avoid damage in the future.
- *Replacement of the original roof of the Quadrangle Building which is at the end of its useful life.
- *Interior renovations and underground construction to support the Arts and Industries Building, once decisions are made regarding its long term use.
- *Mechanical systems of the Hirshhorn and Quadrangle are reaching the end of their useful life and require replacement.

Other issues the Smithsonian will incorporate in the master plan are:

- *The lack of east/west pedestrian flow or access from the Freer Gallery to the Hirshhorn.
- *The lack of connection between the Castle and the Quadrangle which separates visitor orientation and education spaces.
- *Lack of visibility and visitor access for the Sackler Gallery and the African Art Museum.
- *Inadequate space for education and public programs.
- *Dark, intimidating gardens and building fronts at night that discourage public use.

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- *Disorienting and disconnected circulation within the Quadrangle building.
- *Need for improved and expanded visitor services and amenities including retail and restaurants.

The Smithsonian is working with BIG, the Bjarke Ingels Group, to develop the Master Plan. On 23 September 2014 Mr. Ingels presented his preliminary concepts to the staff of U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, the National Capital Planning Commission, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the National Park Service, and the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office.

At this time, the Smithsonian Institution wishes to initiate Section 106 review of elements of the master plan. We look forward to working with the public and the review agencies on these important projects and determine the Area of Potential Effect (APE) on historic properties and apply the criteria of adverse effect.

Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

With kind regards,

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon C. Park". The signature is written in a cursive style and is followed by a long horizontal line that extends to the right.

Sharon C. Park, FAIA
Associate Director