

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS MAY 17, 1910

J. CARTER BROWN, Chairman

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JOHN S. CHASE
SONDRA G. MYERS

WALTER A. NETSCH
ALAN R. NOVAK
EDWARD D. STONE, JR.

CHARLES H. ATHERTON, Secretary

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MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

10 November 1981

The meeting was convened at 10:00 a.m. in the Commission of Fine Arts offices at 708 Jackson Place, N. W., Washington, D. C.

Members Present:

Hon. J. Carter Brown, Chairman
Hon. Harold Burson
Hon. Sondra G. Myers
Hon. Walter A. Netsch
Hon. Alan R. Novak
Hon. Edward D. Stone, Jr.

Staff Present:

Mr. Charles H. Atherton, Secretary
Mr. Donald B. Myer, Assistant Secretary
Mr. Jeffrey R. Carson
Mrs. Sue Kohler
Mr. Richard H. Ryan

National Capital Planning
Commission Staff Present:

Mr. George Evans

I. ADMINISTRATION

- A. Dates of next meetings, approved as: 15 December 1981
12 January 1982

It was also suggested that the February meeting be scheduled for Wednesday, 17 February 1982.

- B. Minutes of 13 October 1981 meeting, approved.

C. D. C. Bill 4-215, "Building Restriction Line Modification Authorization Act of 1981", report. The Secretary said that the staff, concerned that passage of this bill could radically change the appearance of residential streets, was seeking direction from the members as

D. Intelsat

1. CFA 10/NOV/81-3, Detailed study of wall section for headquarters complex, Van Ness and Connecticut Avenue, N. W. Slides were shown of the previous presentation of this project in preparation for the mock-up to be inspected on the site following the meeting. No action was taken at this time. (See IIIC, Site Inspections.)

E. National Park Service, National Capital Region

1. CFA 10/NOV/81-4, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, revision to and development of preliminary designs. The Secretary reviewed the Commission's request for further study in regard to safety, possible drainage problems, handicapped access, and the size and type of lettering to be used for the names to be incised on the granite walls. He introduced architect Kent Cooper to discuss the results of this further study. Mr. Cooper first introduced designer Maya Lin who showed slides of the model and explained her solution to the safety problem. Rather than use a swale, which looked more like a ditch, she had decided to place a black granite curb, one foot in height, eleven feet back from the drop-off. This eleven foot wide area would be flat and seeded with grass. Inside the memorial, a granite path, twenty-one inches from the wall and constructed on a gentle slope of 1 to 24, would facilitate the movement of wheelchairs to the lowest point, where the two walls intersect. The path would be four feet in width at its beginning, near the ends of the walls at the point where the listing of names begins, and increase to a width of eight feet at the intersection.

Mr. Cooper said drainage from the memorial area would be carried off through pipes to the storm sewer beneath Constitution Avenue, which is at a lower grade than the lowest point of the memorial. Soggy ground would be eliminated through the use of a "horse hair" type of metal mesh placed under the sod. This would allow rapid drainage, protect the roots of the grass and stabilize the turf. Mr. Cooper said the most difficult problem he had faced was accommodating all 57,000 names on the walls. To do this, each wall had been extended to a length of 246 feet as compared to the original length of 200 feet. The names would occupy 230 feet, leaving the extremely low ends of the walls blank. Slides and a sample of granite with names sandblasted on it were shown to the members. The etching process and spacing were done in consultation with John Benson; "Optima" font, all capitals, was selected. The names were .53 inches in height, five names to a line. A prologue would introduce the listing; an epilogue would close it. Mr. Cooper explained the sandblasting technique whereby the letters are transferred to the granite through a photographic process and the sandblasting is accomplished by a mechanical arm. He said a locator for the names would be placed close to the memorial, near the Tourmobile stop.

Mr. Netsch and the Chairman were still concerned about the possibility of drainage problems. Mr. Cooper and John Parsons from

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the National Park Service assured him that a thorough study had been made and that the wire mesh had been used with great success on football fields. A question was asked about the wording of the prologue and epilogue. Robert Doubek of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund was present and recited them for the members. All agreed that the Commission's questions had been responded to satisfactorily, and the preliminary design was unanimously approved. pending an examination of the new scale on the site. Exhibit D

F. General Services Administration, Region 3

1. CFA 10/NOV/81-5, Addition to Building 213, Washington Navy Yard. The Assistant Secretary introduced Frank Miles from GSA. He explained that this building had originally been a warehouse and was later converted to office use. At this point an addition is needed to provide more office space. He showed drawings of a two phase addition, similar in fenestration pattern to the original. Actually, there would be solid panels instead of glass in the window areas (as had been done in the previous remodeling) because of security considerations. He noted that the building is in the industrial section of the Navy Yard, not in the historic area. There were no objections and the addition was unanimously approved. Exhibit E

The meeting was adjourned at 12 noon and the members left for a site inspection.

III. SITE INSPECTIONS

A. Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Upon inspecting the staked-out lines of the memorial, the members expressed their regret concerning the increase in the length of the walls. However, the architect explained that the lettering was already small, and to reduce it further in order to shorten the walls would probably make it difficult to read. The members agreed and accepted the modifications to the length.

B. Quadrangle-Marriott. The lightest of three brick samples was approved. In the initial inspection this same panel had been one of four, with one lighter and two darker. While this panel had appeared too light at the time, the members noted that attempts to darken it slightly had only thrown off the color; they agreed that this original lighter brick would be the best choice in the long run. It was identified as Hanley Brick Company 272-A with Flamingo C-55 mortar color additives.

C. Intelsat. A mock-up of a typical section of window and attached sun screen was inspected on the site. The design of the screen was questioned with regard to problems with window cleaning and ice formation. The architects discussed certain changes to be made, and the members were satisfied that they would solve these problems. The modified design was approved subject to submission of a confirmation drawing by the architects.