

U.S. COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS 17 MAY 1910

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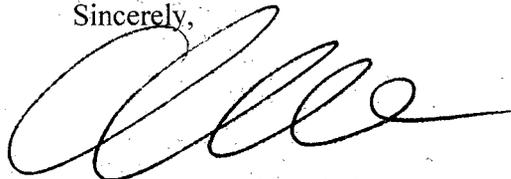
Dear Mr. Vogel:

In its meeting of 19 May, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed a concept design for interim pedestrian and bicyclist connections between 10th Street and Maine Avenue, SW, incorporating stairs, paths, and new landscape elements. The Commission approved the National Park Service's preferred concept with the following comments.

The Commission members expressed appreciation for the responsiveness to their previous advice to simplify the proposal and respect the setting of the Banneker Overlook designed by the prominent Modernist landscape architect Dan Kiley. For the development of the design, they recommended several refinements to the landscape plan. They noted that the small grids of trees meant to be reminiscent of Kiley's original grove design—which incorporated more than 700 flowering dogwoods planted across the entire site—would be inappropriate, recommending instead lining the paths with trees to provide shade for pedestrians and bicyclists, and considering the addition of massings of yews as volumetric elements in the landscape. For the open sloped areas of the site, they encouraged alternatives to turf to avoid the attendant problems of irrigation and the control of stormwater runoff; they also suggested alternative methods of improving soil health—citing the recent innovative rehabilitation of a contemporaneous Kiley landscape at the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial in St. Louis—rather than undertaking a costly soil replacement project. Finally, they observed that the proposed twenty-foot width of the sidewalk along Maine Avenue is excessive, and that decreasing it by several feet would result in a concomitant reduction in the uncomfortable height of the proposed retaining wall along the park's southwestern edge.

The Commission looks forward to further review of this project and changes to the site as the surrounding area is developed. As always, the staff is available to assist you.

Sincerely,



Thomas E. Luebke, FAIA
Secretary

Robert Vogel, Regional Director
National Park Service, National Capital Region
1100 Ohio Drive, SW
Washington, DC 20242

cc: Otto Condon, ZGF Architects
Elizabeth Miller, National Capital Planning Commission
Shawn Seaman, Hoffman-Madison Waterfront