

U.S. COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

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27 January 2017

Dear Mr. Vogel:

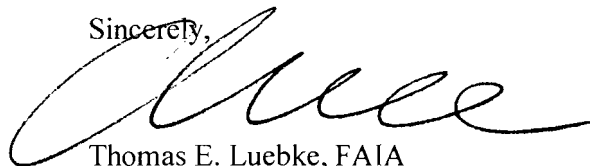
In its meeting of 23 January, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed a submission to modify the approved final design for the Dwight D. Eisenhower National Memorial, proposed to be constructed at Maryland and Independence Avenues between 4th and 6th Streets, SW. The Commission approved the design in concept, subject to the review of a full-size mockup of a segment of the new design for the memorial's stainless-steel tapestry.

The Commission members supported the change to the memorial's extensive tapestry image from that of a Kansas landscape, evocative of President Eisenhower's boyhood home, to a composite present-day view of the Normandy beaches, where the D-Day landing occurred under Eisenhower's command during World War II. While they found that the previously approved tapestry image of the heartland landscape provided greater unity with the theme of a memorial within a park, they suggested that the peacetime image of the beaches in France could be compelling as a symbol: a transformation of the harrowing battlegrounds into a landscape representing world peace. However, they questioned the legibility of this panorama when rendered in the form of a metallic tapestry, particularly due to the dominance of the sky and clouds with a relatively narrow band of the image serving to depict the beaches. They noted that the tapestry will typically be seen by pedestrians looking upward from the memorial plaza and nearby streets, and they suggested that this viewing position be considered in developing the tapestry image. They therefore approved this fundamental change in the memorial's design concept, conditional upon the fabrication and review of a mockup in order to test the legibility of the image and the suitability of the subject matter—distant landforms and clouds—with the proposed technique of welded stainless-steel wire.

The Commission members did not support the proposed relocation of a statue of Eisenhower as a youth from its previous position at the center of the memorial to a new location behind the tapestry. They commented that the new proposed location—on the terrace of the adjacent Lyndon Baines Johnson Department of Education Building—appears to make the statue an unrelated element of the memorial; they recommended that the statue be situated more deliberately within the main landscape of the memorial, possibly on one of the broad pedestrian paths. They also did not support the proposed removal of several trees from the design, commenting that this removal would reduce shade for visitors to the memorial while not appreciably improving the perception of the tapestry. In general, they urged that the experience and comfort of visitors be given greater emphasis in any refinements to the design.

The Commission looks forward to the review of a full-size mockup of the revised tapestry design, as well as a fully documented final design submission that responds to these comments. As always, the staff is available you in preparing this revised project for its final review.

Sincerely,



Thomas E. Luebke, FAIA
Secretary

Robert Vogel, Regional Director
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cc: Carl Reddel, Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission
Craig Webb, Gehry Partners