

U. S. COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

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401 F STREET NW SUITE 312 WASHINGTON DC 20001-2728 202-504-2200 FAX 202-504-2195 WWW.CFA.GOV

22 June 2017

Dear Mr. Vogel:

In its meeting of 15 June, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed two revised alternative concepts for alterations to the Circle of Remembrance of the World War II Memorial and for a new plaque to be inscribed with the prayer delivered by President Franklin D. Roosevelt by radio on D-Day. Expressing support for both proposed alternatives, the Commission approved the asymmetrical second alternative, providing the following comments to guide the development of the design.

In their discussion, the Commission members acknowledged the strengths and weaknesses of both schemes, and they said that either alternative could be developed as an appropriate design for the D-Day prayer plaque and the associated reconfiguration of the Circle of Remembrance. They noted the straightforward, simple clarity of the symmetrical option, Alternative A, which is derivative of the design of the existing World War II Memorial, although they also expressed concern that the extent of pavement in the paths leading to the circle itself would be excessive. They observed that the more organic, spiraling form of Alternative B has a novel quality and a good formal relationship to the wider context of West Potomac Park, but its single point of entrance would create a more sequestered experience for visitors, with an emphatic focus on the plaque. For this alternative, they recommended further study of the projecting bronze plaque in relationship to the other elements of the circle, particularly the stone benches, in order to establish an appropriate hierarchy among the elements. They requested careful development of the layout of the prayer text on the curving, warped surface of the bronze form, possibly refining the design of this element overall to avoid using an extra column for support. They also suggested the possible integration of a bench facing the plaque to create a more discrete area within the circle for contemplation of the prayer, and they recommended a less directional and linear pattern for the stone pavement within the spiraling geometry of the circle.

The Commission looks forward to reviewing the development of a revised concept design that responds to these comments. 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: Sheila Brady, Oehme, van Sweden & Associates
Holly Rotondi, Friends of the National World War II Memorial