

STAFF RECOMMENDATION



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NCPC File No. 7063

ARTS AND INDUSTRIES BUILDING ROOF AND WINDOW REPLACEMENT

900 Jefferson Drive, SW
Washington, DC

Submitted by the Smithsonian Institution

March 25, 2010

Abstract

The Smithsonian Institution (SI) has submitted preliminary and final site and building plans for replacement of the roof and windows at the Arts and Industries Building on the National Mall. The exterior work, which also includes repair and cleaning, and additional interior renovation, is funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The Arts and Industries Building, designed by Adolph Cluss and Paul Schulze, opened in 1881 and is a National Historic Landmark.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of preliminary and final site and building plans, pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b (1) and (d).

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

Approves preliminary and final site and building plans for the replacement of the roof and window sash on the Arts and Industries Building at 900 Jefferson Drive, SW, Washington, DC, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.41(38.00)43005.

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Site

The Arts and Industries Building (AIB) is located on the south side of the National Mall, adjacent to the Smithsonian Castle, at 900 Jefferson Drive, SW.

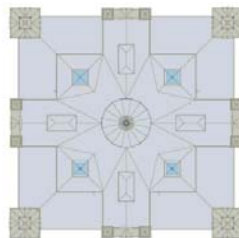
Background

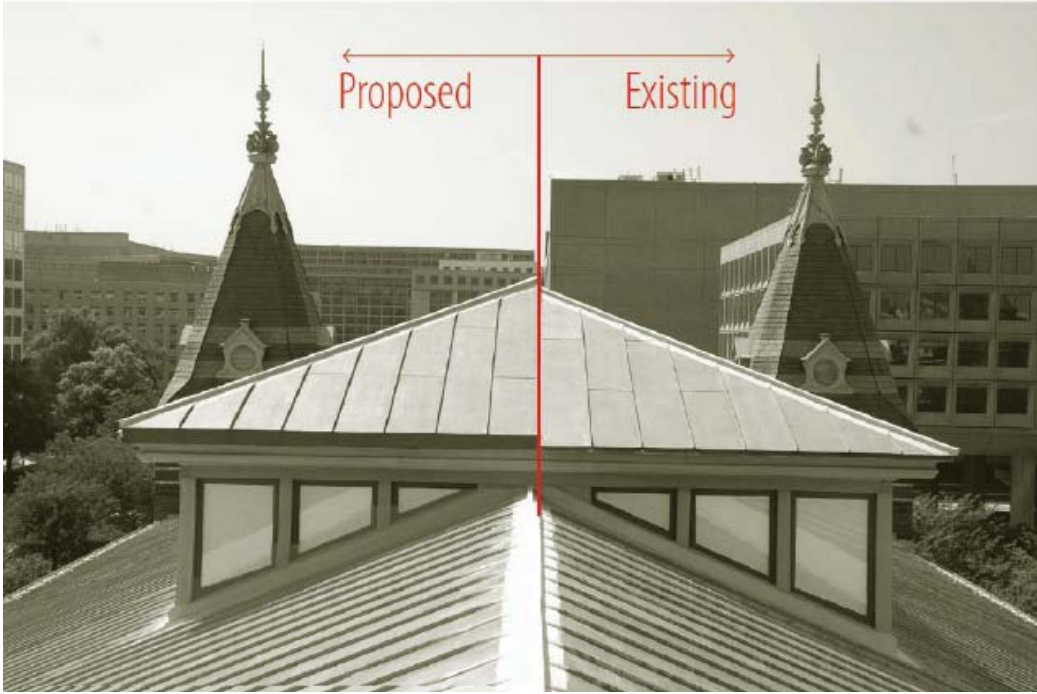
The AIB is currently vacant, undergoing rehabilitation for a future use that has not been determined. The building, designed by Adolph Cluss and Paul Schulze, was opened in 1881 and was the site of President Garfield's inaugural. It housed objects that had been displayed to represent American arts and manufactures created for the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. Several rehabilitation periods have occurred since then, including significant work in the 1970s and 1980s. The current roof and windows are not original to the building.

Proposal

SI has requested preliminary and final approval for the replacement of the non-original slate and metal roof of the building. The roof has a surface comprising 2.2 acres in area. Most of it is seamed metal, but the corner conical roofs are clad with slate shingles in a polychrome pattern. Gray Buckingham slate and colored slate to match the existing will be used, and standing-seam steel with a color and finish similar to the existing will be used in the replacement. The SI has been concerned in recent years about the potential for damage from heavy loads such as snow. Due to SI's determined need for structural roof decking and insulation, the new roof will be between 5 and 7.5 inches higher at the peaks than the current roof. The difference in thickness will be masked through several measures, including a minor modification in the scale of the eave trim and the reconstruction of the original built-in gutters (and the removal of the contemporary hung gutters).

In addition, the non-original windows (wood sash installed in the 1980s) will be replaced with custom extruded aluminum sash that will be structurally stronger than the wood sash and that will allow the use of blast resistant glass. The south façade of the building is immediately adjacent to the north sidewalk of Independence Avenue, SW. The new sash will match the existing sash in dimension and color. The special shapes of some of the windows will be replicated and all of the colored glass will be restored and reinstalled. Many of the windows have decorative iron work that will also be reinstalled after the new windows are in place.







PROJECT ANALYSIS

The staff recommends that the Commission approve the preliminary and final site and building plans. Section 106 compliance by SI has been completed. The District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer (DC SHPO) and the staffs of NCPC and the Commission of Fine Arts, have reviewed the specifications. The DC SHPO has determined that the project will have No Adverse Effect.

The building is a National Historic Landmark. Any proposed changes to the structure must be carefully considered. In this case, given that the roof and window sash are not original or historic, it has been agreed that proposed alterations to modernize the building for climate-control, blast-resistance, and for greater structural strength to the roof and insulation, are appropriate goals for the rehabilitation project. The colored glass in the decorative windows will be reinstalled, as will the ornamental ironwork on some of the windows. The built-in gutters will be reconstructed. All roof finials and sculptural elements will be reinstalled. The project will allow the building to meet a future use, which is yet to be determined.





CONFORMANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

The proposal meets the goals and conforms to the policies of the federal elements of the Comprehensive Plan, especially those of the Preservation and Historic Features Element.

National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan

The new windows will be designed to be more blast-resistant than the current windows. The building is adjacent to the sidewalk of Independence Avenue, SW.

National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA)

NCPC serves as the federal agency for purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act. The project qualifies for categorical exclusion #2 (replacement of windows and roofs) under the Commission's Environmental and Historic Preservation Policies and Procedures, amended April 1, 2004.

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

SI has consulted with the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office (DC SHPO). The Arts and Industries Building is a National Historic Landmark. The change in material for the windows is acceptable in this specific case for two reasons: the windows to be replaced are not the building's original windows; and aluminum will offer improved strength and performance, given the large dimensions of the windows. The alteration in the dimension of the roof is considered imperceptible to the viewer from the street or Mall and is necessary to modernize the building with insulation and structural improvements. The reconstruction of the built-in gutters (removed when the roof was previously replaced) will mask the difference in dimension and replicate the earlier appearance of the building.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal at its March 10, 2010 meeting and forwarded it to the Commission with the statement that the proposal was coordinated by all participating agencies. The participating agencies were NCPC; the National Park Service; the General Services Administration; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the Fire and Emergency Medical Services; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

Commission of Fine Arts

The Commission of Fine Arts approved the project on its consent calendar at its March 18, 2010 meeting.