

Meeting Minutes

FROM: EHT Traceries
SUBJECT: MLK Jr. Library Renovation
Section 106 Consulting Party Meeting #2
DATE: November 19, 2014

The following minutes represent comments received during the second Section 106 consulting party meeting for the MLK Jr. Library Renovation.

Attendees

DC Public Library (DCPL)	Richard Reyes-Gavilan Jeff Bonevechio Chris Wright	Martha Sacoccio Archie Williams
National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC)	Jennifer Hirsch	Vivian Lee
DC State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)	Anne Brockett	
Mecanoo Architects (MA)	Francine Houben Sofia Pereira Luuk van Wijlick	Hans Andersson Bianca Breumelhof
Martinez + Johnson (MJ)	Tom Johnson	Rauzia Ally
Jair Lynch Development Partners	Jair Lynch	Josh Firebaugh
EHT Traceries (EHT)	Emily Eig Bill Marzella	Kimberly DeMuro
Stantec	Liz Estes	
Commission of Fine Arts (CFA)	Thomas Luebke	
Committee of 100 on the Federal City	Stuart Gosswein	
DC for Reasonable Development (DC4RD)	Chris Otten	
First Congregational United Church of Christ (FC UCC)	Meg Maguire	
Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery	Dina Wilkins	
Office of Jack Evans, Ward 2 Council Member	Windy Abdul-Rahim	
ANC 2C01	John Tinpe	
Penn Quarter Neighborhood Association (PQ)	Jo-Ann Neuhaus	
DCPL Federation of Friends	Susan Haight	
DC Preservation League	Rebecca Miller	
MLK Library Friends	Elizabeth Elliott Robin Diener	Richard Layman

Docomomo DC	Tom Jester	Scott Paden
DMPED	Marc Bleyer	
Brookfield Properties	Anne Clinton	
Downtown BID	Rick Reinhard	
Pepco	Renante Aclan	
Additional	David Edwards	Sehine Gizaw

Presentation

1. DCPL introduced the project and discussed recent updates, including release of library program
2. NCPC reviewed progress with NEPA and Section 106 processes and reviewed comments received during the NEPA scoping period.
3. EHT reviewed historic resources within the Area of Potential Effects (APE), with focus on the significance of MLK and the preservation zones in the Design Guidelines.
4. MA presented design research and background.
5. MA presented six design (including one no-action) alternatives
6. EHT reviewed APE and criteria of adverse effect, including examples and Secretary of the Interior (SOI) Standards.
7. EHT presented proposed areas of potential direct and indirect adverse effects
8. EHT invited questions and discussion.

Discussion

1. PQ raised question of design features that were intended by Mies but never implemented. Asked if those could be identified and if their incorporation would be an adverse effect
 - a. EHT discussed these and suggested they would likely constitute an adverse effect, as they would create a false sense of historical development, which are not recommended by the SOI Standards
2. MLK Friends (Richard Layman) suggested that, if a mixed use is proposed, the building's diminished use as a civic and cultural institution should be included in the discussion of adverse effects (i.e., an unrelated or private use should be evaluated as a potential adverse effect)
 - a. General discussion of library's role in history of city and its evolution, how this process is reflective of that change
 - b. General discussion of related vs. unrelated programs/public vs. private uses
 - c. MLK Friends clarified that this would only be a concern for Alternative C (four-story addition), and that compatible uses (cultural, public, non-profit) uses should be explored
3. NCPC reiterated that program analysis has indicated need for fifth-floor addition. DCPL has not yet indicated the use for the addition proposed under Alternative C.
 - a. NCPC indicated that a change in use may meet the criteria of adverse effect. NCPC also indicated a preferred alternative had not yet been identified, but as the assessment of effects report is prepared, a change in use or introduction of new use would be evaluated for potential to cause adverse effects.
4. DC Preservation League asked if other street-level views had been developed, particularly down Ninth Street from Mt. Vernon Square.
 - a. EHT clarified that MLK (currently) could be seen from Ninth and K Streets, but not from Mt Vernon Square. (Note: Project Team subsequently restudied views along Ninth Street. Views of project from Ninth and K Streets are minimal, while views from Ninth and Eye Streets are the northernmost point at which an addition would be clearly visible.)
 - b. Requested that views be developed to inform assessment of effects from APE
 - c. General discussion of views throughout APE, visibility of various additions
 - d. FC UCC requested that views be analyzed in other ways, such as reflectivity from surrounding buildings

5. David Edwards asked for clarification regarding “false sense of historical development.”
 - a. Suggested design for public art in the form of a reconstruction of the Edmund Pettus Bridge on the library plaza.
6. Mr. Edwards also stressed general need to improve the interpretive and commemorative aspect of the renovation.
 - a. Various parties agreed with Mr. Edwards’s assessment, but suggested that this discussion may not be relevant to discussion of adverse effects.
 - b. The commemoration aspect was a recurring topic throughout the discussion.
 - c. Mr. Edwards reiterated these points later in the discussion
7. Committee of 100 suggested that activity on roof (people, trees, etc.) has the potential for adverse effects on views, particularly from surrounding buildings.
8. MLK Friends (Robin Diener) requested additional clarification on timeline and process, expressed frustration with cyclical nature of public outreach.
 - a. Requested summary of comments received during public scoping
 - b. Requested financial analysis from DCPL.
 - c. EHT responded that the next step in the Section 106 process is to present finding of adverse effects and to begin to formulate potential resolution strategies.
 - d. NCPD indicated that a NEPA scoping report would be posted to ncpc.gov (following the Section 106 meeting, the NEPA scoping report was posted and consulting parties were notified via email on November 20, 2014 of its availability.)
9. Penn Quarter again raised discussion of replication of lost or unimplemented historic and architectural features, using Willard Hotel as an example.
 - a. Questioned the application of standards between various preservation projects
 - b. EHT, NCPD, others replied that application of standards is somewhat subjective, but ultimate determination is made in consultation with SHPO.
10. CFA provided general comments, including:
 - a. MLK Library deviates from the canon of Mies’s work; does not quite fit either of his two typical building types.
 - b. Stated that evaluation must be made on existing, contributing features, not conjectural ones
 - c. Discussed general challenges of preservation modern architecture, including envelope
 - d. Stated that Alternative B.4 (fifth-floor extrusion) does not meet SOI standards 3, 9, and 10; read those standards
 - e. Discussed general concern about scale and massing of Alternative C
11. Docomomo offered general comments, including:
 - a. Rehabilitation of buildings offers a tremendous opportunity to preserve a significant Modernist landmark.
 - b. Suggested that an HSR should be created to inform the design approach
 - c. Stated that Alternative C was not an appropriately scaled addition
 - d. Questioned if the greater urban context had been studied
12. DC4RD stated that privatized space on top of public space was incompatible, and suggested that it would result in a greater impact to the maintenance and environmental demands.
 - a. Requested that Alternative C be removed from consideration.
 - b. Seconded request for financial analysis
13. FC UCC stated that significant advancement had been made from 1 ½ years ago, including release of library program
14. MLK Friends (Elizabeth Elliott) offered general comments, including:
 - a. General familiarity with MLK Library, evolution over time, and Mies’s work
 - b. Discussed structural issues, namely accelerating collapse of vaults along south granite plaza
 - c. Discussed focus on approach and corner of building, using Kennedy Center staircase addition as an example
 - d. Discussed general issues with sustainability and Modernist architecture

15. MLK Friends (Richard Layman) discussed need to address adverse effects within greater cultural landscape and context of civic uses in DC, may allow for differing interpretation of SOI Standards.
16. Committee of 100 suggested that the height restrictions in DC have created unique precedents for development, which creates many situations in which historic properties are incorporated into new developments.

Conclusion and Next Steps

1. NCPC presented the information on the final slide, with instructions for accessing documents and submitting additional comments. NCPC indicated comments would be accepted until Dec. 3, 2014.

Additional Comments

1. Additional comments received (included as attachments):
 - a. ANC 2C01, December 1, 2014
 - b. SHPO, December 3, 2014

Minutes prepared by Bill Marzella, EHT Traceries, December 8, 2014

From: [Hirsch, Jennifer](mailto:jennifer.hirsch@ncpc.gov)
To: [Rauzia Ally: "tjohnson@mjarchitecture.com"](mailto:tjohnson@mjarchitecture.com); [Bill Marzella](mailto:Bill.Marzella@stantec.com); [Emily Eig](mailto:Emily.Eig@stantec.com); liz.estes@stantec.com; ["jeffrey.bonvechio@dc.gov"](mailto:jeffrey.bonvechio@dc.gov); ["chris.wright@dc.gov"](mailto:chris.wright@dc.gov)
Subject: FW: MLK Library Renovation Project - Public Comment
Date: Tuesday, December 02, 2014 4:12:14 PM

I am forwarding a public comment we received since the Section 106 meeting.

Jennifer Hirsch

Federal Preservation Officer | Urban Design and Plan Review
National Capital Planning Commission
401 9th Street, N.W. | Suite 500
Washington, D.C., 20004 | 202-482-7239
jennifer.hirsch@ncpc.gov

Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail

From: Tinpe, John (ANC 2C01) [<mailto:2C01.ANC@dc.gov>]
Sent: Monday, December 01, 2014 3:30 PM
To: Hirsch, Jennifer
Subject: RE: MLK Library Renovation Project - Public Comment

Dear Jennifer,

Thank you for the meeting and compiled report.

From what I see from the report, there has been a detailed study on the design. There has also been specifically mentioned Adult and children's spaces.

But most importantly, this library must be dedicated to the memory of the late Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

There must be a permanent exhibition at the entrance, or main hall, dedicated to the work, life and achievement of the late Dr. King. There should be photographs and displays in glass cases, books and archives, relating to the Non-Aggressive Civil Disobedience Movement, the Civil Rights March, the signing of the Voter Rights Act with President Johnson. The Anti-War Peace Movement against Vietnam War. The Federal agencies wire tapping all of Dr. King's activities and attempts to discredit him as a Communist. Finally, the assassination of Dr. King and the resulting riots all over the nation including Washington, DC.

From what I hear from the meeting, there is a fear from the community that among all the discussion about design, commerce, aesthetics and practical purposes, the memory of the martyr maybe overshadowed and history white washed.

Please re-dedicate to the memory and life of Dr. King. Please re-emphasize the importance by dedicating principle space in the principle area to the man and his work. The man who gave his life to Civil Rights so important, not only to African Americans, but all minorities including Latinos, Asian Americans and members of the GLBT communities.

Thank you for your attention.

Best wishes,
John Tinpe
ANC2C01

From: Hirsch, Jennifer [jennifer.hirsch@ncpc.gov]
Sent: Thursday, November 20, 2014 6:29 PM
To: Hirsch, Jennifer
Subject: MLK Library Renovation Project - Materials available on NCPC website

Dear Consulting Parties,

The presentation that was provided during yesterday's Section 106 meeting on the MLK Library Renovation Project has been posted to NCPC's website. Please provide any comments regarding effects on historic properties by December 3, 2014.

[http://www.ncpc.gov/ncpc/Main\(T2\)/PublicParticipation\(Tr2\)/Public%20Participation\(Tr3\)/PublicCommentOpportunities.html](http://www.ncpc.gov/ncpc/Main(T2)/PublicParticipation(Tr2)/Public%20Participation(Tr3)/PublicCommentOpportunities.html)

Along with the Section 106 presentation, the NEPA scoping report has been posted to NCPC's website and can be found on this link:

<http://www.ncpc.gov/project/mlklibrary/>

If you have any questions on these materials, please let me know.

Thank you,
Jennifer

Jennifer Hirsch

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GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE



December 3, 2014

Ms. Jennifer Hirsch
National Capital Planning Commission
401 9th Street NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Ms. Hirsch:

The District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has reviewed the materials distributed at the Section 106 Consulting Party Meeting held on November 19, 2014 as well as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Public Scoping Report dated November 2014, for the renovation of the Martin Luther King Jr Memorial Library. The Library, including the first floor public spaces, was designated a D.C. Landmark in 2007 and was subsequently listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

As a local landmark, the project is subject to review by the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB), the official body of advisors appointed by the Mayor to guide the government and public on preservation matters in the District of Columbia. In addition, the National Capital Planning Commission has initiated a review under Section 106 of the National Preservation Act. Thus for the purposes of HPRB review, Section 106, and the NEPA planning process, the SHPO offers the following comments.

The SHPO believes that all alternatives except A (No Action) would have an adverse effect on the building due to loss of historic fabric, alterations to public spaces and circulation patterns, and construction of a rooftop addition. Of the remaining alternatives, the SHPO does not support the exterior work proposed in Alternative B4 or C, which deviate significantly from the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. On the other hand, Alternatives B1, B2, or B3 - although they may have adverse effects - appear to meet the needs of the Library without diminishing the building's integrity to a degree that would compromise its historic status.

As general principles for the design process, the SHPO recommends the following:

1. Rather than thinking of this project as an opportunity for transformative design, the team should focus on ways to meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards while accomplishing the Library's goals. Bear in mind that, much like public libraries, the National Historic Preservation Act and the regulations and standards that developed after it were also established for the benefit of the public.
2. The MLK Library Design Guidelines were created specifically to direct DCPL in making decisions related to adapting MLK Library for modern use. The Guidelines were formally adopted by the Historic Preservation Review Board and will therefore guide the Board in making decisions about the treatment of the building and its components. Any proposed plans for the building should expressly relate to the preservation zones of the building, which delineate the hierarchy of significant spaces as established and agreed to by DCPL and HPRB.
3. The Design Guidelines are a thorough and comprehensive document and should be used to avoid and minimize adverse effects relative to the established preservation zones. In addition to

addressing floorplans, open space, and circulation issues, the Guidelines should direct decisions about individual historic components, including such items as built-in shelving, information and circulation desks, furniture, phone booths, water fountains, signage, dumbwaiters, etc., for which very specific guidance has been provided.

We ask that consideration be given to the following specific aspects of the design for the MLK Library building:

Exterior

- DCPL should make a determination as soon as possible on whether there will be other uses in the building, a factor which is apparently driving the necessity of adding more than one floor.
- The size of any addition should be determined by Library's *minimum* space requirements, i.e. as small and unobtrusive as possible.
- Either a curved or rectilinear addition may meet the Standards as both are reversible and clearly distinguishable from original construction. However, a rectilinear form would be more in keeping with the Design Guidelines.
- More information is needed on plans for the building envelope, including the need for replacements, proposed replacement materials, benefits of replacement vs. rehabilitation, etc.
- More information is needed on proposed new exterior doors, which ideally should be on the alley side and/or rear, not the façade.
- If avoidance is not possible, exterior light wells should be located where there is the most need for basement light and should be designed to minimize adverse effects.
- More information is needed on the extent of removal/alterations to the site walls.
- Brick removal on the façade should not occur, although replacing metal panels in the side walls of the front projections with glass, may be a good opportunity to increase natural light.
- Consideration should be given to bike storage at the rear with a more engaging use at the west side alley.

Interior

- Consider comprehensive wayfinding tools and/or a signage program rather than wholesale removal of historic materials to resolve directional issues within the library.
- If avoidance is not possible, limited insertion of glass for visibility/vertical connectivity may be appropriate, rather than wholesale removal of historic materials.
- The MLK mural on the north wall of the lobby should remain. Consider avoidance or minimization of the removal of the wall beneath it for pivoting doors (i.e. leave all or some brick bays under mural intact).

- If avoidance is not possible, consider minimizing the loss of brick walls around the central core on upper floors though the use of partial walls, half walls, piers, lintels, etc.
- Avoid dividing up the landmarked first floor reading rooms unless the proposal is for use only, not a physical division of the space.
- Avoid or minimize the loss of fabric in the vestibule (i.e. enter stairs through center bay and leave outer bays of brick).
- Carefully study the informal performance space the in the loading dock area so that a two-level design does not preclude uses or accessibility.

As the project moves forward, the SHPO looks forward to a continued public review process that identifies ways to avoid, minimize, and mitigate adverse effects. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Anne Brockett at anne.brockett@dc.gov or 202-442-8842. Thank you for providing this office the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Maloney". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Maloney
State Historic Preservation Officer