



## Commission Action

April 5, 2018

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<b>PROJECT</b> <b>South Mall Campus Master Plan</b> National Mall, between 7 <sup>th</sup> Street, SW, Jefferson Drive, SW, 12 <sup>th</sup> Street, SW, and Independence Avenue, SW Washington, DC	<b>NCPC FILE NUMBER</b> 7630
<b>SUBMITTED BY</b> Smithsonian Institution	<b>NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER</b> 1.41(05.00)44719
<b>REVIEW AUTHORITY</b> Advisory per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(a) and (b)(1)	<b>APPLICANT'S REQUEST</b> Approval of comments on the draft master plan
	<b>ACTION TAKEN</b> Approved comments on the draft master plan

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The Commission:

**Supports** the goals of the South Mall Campus Master Plan, which address the Smithsonian's need to meet its long-term space requirements and address physical and operational deficiencies across the campus that impact visitor use and experience as well as the Smithsonian's ability to effectively and safely implement its programs.

**Notes** the Master Plan identifies elements and general locations of projects to be implemented over the next 20-30 years; and further, that individual projects contained within the Master Plan, including new pavilions and gardens, will be subject to additional Commission review and approval at the time when detailed designs are developed.

**Notes** a Programmatic Agreement (PA) will be prepared pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act that will describe the process and steps necessary for developing the detailed designs for individual projects at the time of their implementation. The process will take into account and avoid, minimize and mitigate adverse effects.

**Finds** the Master Plan must consider the context of a changing city, particularly the SW Ecodistrict and Southwest Waterfront, which will change the character of Independence Avenue and the southern approach to the campus.

**Supports** the projects identified in the master plan as they help improve visitor service, increase access across the campus, and modernize facilities, while recognizing that program and functionality must be balanced with historic preservation, planning and urban design goals.

**Finds** the South Mall campus provides an important physical and cultural link between the Smithsonian Institution, the National Mall and Southwest Washington, DC; and further, this connection will be strengthened with the implementation of the master plan and continued coordination and collaboration among all stakeholders.

**Notes** that pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, a Draft Environmental Impact Statement was prepared and public comments were received regarding the proposed alternatives and their impacts.

**Notes** the Smithsonian Institution developed a number of alternatives in response to comments and feedback received throughout the planning process:

- Alternative D was the first alternative created and included the most dramatic changes to the campus, and would change the character of the garden, the setting of the Castle and maximize excavation under the Castle.
- Alternative B included more minimal changes to the campus, but it did not best achieve the goals of the Smithsonian.
- Alternative F was then developed to balance changes to the campus with the need to meet the master plan goals. Alternative F retains the character of the gardens, reduces excavation under the Castle and maintains its setting.

**Supports** the Smithsonian Institution's preferred Alternative F as the basis of the campus master plan and the preferred alternative to be identified in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

**Supports** the use of design guidelines to help inform the design of individual projects at the time of their development, in conjunction with the Section 106 consultation process and further input from the Commission, staff and other agencies.

Regarding the Smithsonian Castle:

**Supports** the restoration of the Castle to its period of significance.

**Finds** the Castle is the physical and symbolic center of the Smithsonian Institution as well as the South Mall Campus, and therefore is the more appropriate location for a centralized visitor center.

**Finds** the relocation of a number of support facilities for the visitor center to an adjacent below-grade space will allow for the restoration of the Castle, including the Great Hall, to its period of significance while improving the visitor experience.

**Notes** the Castle and visitor center spaces will have a direct connection to the Sackler Gallery and National African Art Museum.

Regarding the Arts and Industries Building

**Notes** the Arts and Industries Building is a National Historic Landmark that is recognized for its architectural style and role in initiating one the greatest museum complexes in the world.

**Supports** the restoration of the Arts and Industries Building to its period of significance, including removing non-historic walls and other contemporary interventions, to allow the building to return to its original grandeur and use as an exhibition hall with voluminous spaces and a clear expression of structure when a full revitalization is undertaken.

**Finds** the Smithsonian Institution has a need for large-scale event and exhibition space that does not exist elsewhere on the campus, and further the Arts and Industries Building can provide that space in a way that is consistent with its historic use and character.

**Finds** adding a visitor center and related uses into the building would require adding new walls, rooms and other elements that would be inconsistent with the goals of the building restoration.

**Notes** the Smithsonian Institution has completed a building shell revitalization, and is actively fundraising for additional interior renovations to enable the building's reopening as an exhibition hall in the near future.

**Notes** the Smithsonian has hired a full-time director with a goal of creating year-round programming available to the public.

Regarding the Quadrangle Building:

**Supports** improvements to the Quadrangle Building, including increased public access, expanded amenities and programming, and improved daylighting, that will enhance the visitor experience and help the Smithsonian Institution meet its needs.

**Finds** the relocation of the pavilions will help improve the functionality of the below-grade Quadrangle Building spaces, and notes the new facilities and improved spaces will help provide additional programming, events and educational opportunities for residents and visitors.

**Notes** that the exact location, size and design of new pavilions will be determined at the individual project stage, in consultation with the relevant agencies and consulting parties through the Section 106 process.

**Finds** the relocation of the pavilions opens up the Haupt Gardens, the Smithsonian Castle, and the National Mall to Independence Avenue and the rapidly evolving southwest neighborhood.

**Finds** that the relocated pavilions and addition of large-scale ramps to a lower level could alter the setting of the Castle and the Arts and Industries Building and may have undesirable effects on these two National Historic Landmarks.

**Recommends** that at the time of individual project design, the Smithsonian evaluate the size and scale of any proposed ramps or stairs to help minimize their impact on the setting of the Castle while balancing circulation and access needs. SI will further engage the relevant review agencies and consulting parties through the Section 106 process.

Regarding the Haupt Garden:

**Notes** the garden is the roof to the Quadrangle Building and the 30-year old roof membrane under the garden is at the end of its useful life and must be replaced.

**Finds** the garden provides a view to and setting for the Castle as seen from the south; and further, the intimate character and scale of the existing garden is a beloved component of the South Mall campus, and are an important counterpoint to the scale and openness of the National Mall.

**Notes** the garden design has evolved over time and will continue to be altered to respond to changes in aesthetics, functionality, and climate.

**Notes** the Smithsonian has committed to retaining the parterre, although the exact design and layout of the remainder of the garden will be determined at the individual project stage, and further, the Smithsonian has committed to maintain the high quality landscape of the garden, along with its intimate character.

**Requests** the Smithsonian Institution consider opportunities to reuse existing garden elements, where appropriate, to provide a link between the history of the garden and its future iterations

**Requests** the Smithsonian Institution evaluate opportunities to save, store and replant trees and other plantings after construction has been completed.

**Requests** the gardens continue to accommodate a variety of native plants as well as those that will help support pollinator health.

**Requests** that at the time of garden design, tree replacement should prevent net loss of tree canopy in accordance with the policies set forth in the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*.

Regarding the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden:

**Supports** restoration of the museum and only a limited open in the perimeter wall surrounding the site to provide a direct pedestrian connection to the Arts and Industries Building.

**Supports** restoration the below-grade tunnel connection between the museum and sculpture garden.

**Notes** that the Smithsonian Institution may seek to alter the sculpture garden response to contemporary needs related to the function and display of art.

**Requests** that future project submissions for the sculpture garden should describe the proposed program needs, the existing and proposed functionality of the space, and how the project might affect the garden's original design intent.

//Original Signed//

04/05/2018

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Julia A. Koster  
Secretary to the National Capital Planning Commission

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Date