

# U. S. COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

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23 June 2016

Dear Mr. Vogel:

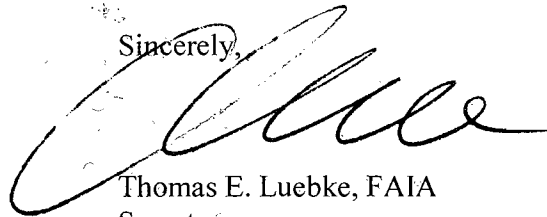
In its meeting of 16 June, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed a concept design for a new perimeter fence at the White House to replace the existing lower fence. Recognizing the need to meet contemporary standards of security requiring a higher, more robust perimeter barrier, the Commission approved the concept design, conditional upon the review and approval of a full-scale outdoor mockup of a segment of the proposed fence, with the following comments.

The Commission members expressed appreciation for the analysis of proposed options for the fence's configuration and for the advancement of the design details since the previous presentation in April 2016; they gave a general approval for the proposed height, width of pickets, and inclusion of decorative and anti-climb elements for the fence, as well as the gates and piers. However, they reiterated their concern regarding the great increase in the dimensions of the fence—whose height and size of individual pickets would more than double—in relation to the scale of the human body and the associated experience of the visitor. They supported the U.S. Secret Service's preferred option, which employs the largest pickets, as it provides the widest gaps between pickets and conveys a character of strength. For the various elements at the top of the fence, they asked for further development of the design to achieve a harmonious balance of simplicity, detail, and hierarchy.

Finally, the Commission members commented that the presentation of the fence, drawn on paper and shown in an interior space, was inadequate to comprehend fully the proposed design. They requested that a full-size mockup in an exterior location be prepared in order to evaluate the proportion of the elements in relationship to each other—including the intermittent support posts and their finials, the typical picket finials, the anti-climb spikes, and any other details. They also requested that the mockup include options for the optimal color for the fence in order to maximize a sense of visual transparency.

The Commission looks forward to the development of the fence design and the review of the mockup as a condition of this concept approval; the Commission also anticipates the initial review of the second phase of this larger initiative for perimeter security at the Treasury and Eisenhower Executive Office Building properties in the coming year. As always, the staff is available to assist you as the design and mockup are developed for review.

Sincerely,



Thomas E. Luebke, FAIA  
Secretary

Robert Vogel, Regional Director  
National Park Service, National Capital Region  
1100 Ohio Drive, SW  
Washington, DC 20242

cc: Thomas Dougherty, U.S. Secret Service  
Michael Mills, Mills & Schnoering Architects