

U.S. COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

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29 September 2017

Dear Mr. Vogel:

In its meeting of 20 September, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed proposed modifications to the previously approved final design of the Dwight D. Eisenhower National Memorial, to be constructed at Maryland and Independence Avenues between 4th and 6th Streets, SW. The Commission was pleased to inspect a mockup of panels for the proposed memorial's monumental tapestry, located on the site as requested, and approved the revised final design subject to further review of the development of the tapestry details.

The Commission members thanked the project team for its responsiveness to their previous concerns about the revisions to the final design, supporting in particular the more abstract approach to rendering the cliffs and seascape of the Normandy coast. They observed that the technique of hand drawing used to generate the tapestry image conveys much more emotional power than the previously proposed photography, and this quality should be emphasized in the final realization of the tapestry panels. Regarding the technique of sculpting stainless steel cables to form the tapestry image, they suggested that a range of effects—from dense to more airy, from matte to glimmering—will likely be necessary for the successful depiction of the landscape.

The Commission members expressed strong support for the new proposed location for the statue of the young Eisenhower and the associated quotation near the northwest corner of the site, although they advised further study of the figure's pose on the block of stone. They recalled once again that the previous tapestry image of the prairie landscape of Abilene, Kansas, provided a legible conceptual unity for the memorial as a whole, and they asked the designers to consider strengthening the relationship of the memorial's elements with the new tapestry image. The Commission members also endorsed the final proposal for the trees on the site; noting that the visibility of the tapestry image from a distance must be balanced with the visitor experience within the memorial, they supported possibly revising the specification of trees based on their locations.

The Commission of Fine Arts is pleased to conclude its formal review of the final design for this presidential memorial within the monumental core of the national capital city. Consistent with its prior final approval of June 2015, this action is subject to the inspection of additional mockups and material samples as the sculptures, tapestry, and other design elements are developed and documented to complete the final review process. As always, the staff is available to assist you.

Sincerely,



Thomas E. Luebke, FAIA
Secretary

Robert Vogel, Regional Director
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cc: Carl Reddel, Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission
Craig Webb, Gehry Partners
Roger Courtenay, AECOM