MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
HELD IN NEW YORK CITY, MAY 6, 1933.

The eighth meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts, during the fiscal year 1933, was held in the office of McKim, Mead and White, 101 Park Avenue, New York City, on Saturday, May 6, 1933. The following members were present:

Mr. Moore, Chairman,
Mr. Swartwout,
Mr. Clarke,
Mr. Lawrie,
Mr. Howells,
Mr. Savage,
also Mr. H. P. Caemmerer

Executive Secretary and Administrative Officer.

There was also present Mr. James K. Smith, and Mr. F. J. Adams, representing McKim, Mead and White, architects of the Arlington Memorial Bridge.

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m., daylight saving time.

1. DESIGN FOR BRIDGES TO CONNECT AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT BUILDINGS: Under date of May 4, 1933, the following letter was received from Assistant Secretary of the Treasury N. W. Robert jr., resubmitting a design for a single arched bridge, 80 feet in length from curb to curb, to connect the Agricultural Department building, over B Street South;

"Reference is made to the two bridges now under contract to span B Street South between the two portions of the Department of Agriculture in Washington, and to the various letters which have been written and the discussions which have been held regarding the design and other features affecting the bridges.

In the latest letter from the Commission, dated March 20, 1933, request was made that this Department consider abandonment of bridges of any kind at the point in question and that studies be submitted for the architectural treatment of the blank ends of the Administration Building.

Since your letter was written a strong protest has been received from the officials of the Department of Agriculture, objecting to the abandonment of the bridges and to the use of tunnels as a substitution, for the protected circulation which they feel they must have between the two building-units.

This Department's obligation to carry out, as far as possible,

the wishes of the officials who are to occupy the buildings affected, has led to the decision that some form of bridge must be installed; but it is believed entirely feasible to meet the main objection of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission by changing the bridges from the design of three arches as now under contract, to a design in which the span extends across the eighty foot street from curb to curb.

A number of studies have been submitted for your information showing one, two and three arches respectively, and there is now submitted a revised study for a one arch bridge with request that it be considered by the Commission and returned to the Supervising Architect's Office with such comments as you may desire to make thereon."

The secretary stated that Mr. Simon of the Office of the Supervising Architect had said that two bridges, one at each end of the buildings, are provided for in the contract, involving about $100,000, and that if these bridges are not built the Treasury Department would get a refund of perhaps $50,000 and be required in addition to build two tunnels at from $30,000 to $35,000 each; also it would be necessary to face the two ends of the buildings with stone. However, as stated in the letter the design is being submitted on urgent request of officials of the Department of Agriculture, who want the bridges built.

Mr. Moore said the design should be considered independently of the amount of money involved, and thereupon the Commission gave the design very careful consideration. Mr. Swartwout, Mr. Howells and Mr. Clarke thought it was a better design than any formerly submitted, but felt it was altogether too heavy and would look clumsy if thus built. It was suggested that the bridge be built of steel or of reinforced concrete as certain similar bridges have been built in Westchester County. Mr. Howells felt it might establish a bad precedent to build these bridges, and result in a bad thing as the Wanamaker bridge.

Mr. Moore thereupon explained that there has been a long fight about the Agricultural Department buildings. The building was placed on the Mall

when Uncle Joe Cannon was Speaker, and was to be built without regard to the 1901 Plan for the Mall, whereupon President Roosevelt intervened, with the support of Mr. Burnham, Mr. McKim, and Mr. Olmsted, and the Administration Building was placed 8 feet below grade and on the building line of the Mall, parallel to the new axis established by the Park Commission of 1901. Then Secretary of Agriculture James Wilson took the $2,000,000 he got from Congress for the building and built simply the two end wings, and it stayed that way for almost 20 years. Then when the present Public Buildings Program was adopted, the Agricultural Department building was placed among the first four listed for construction immediately. The main building having been built on the Mall, it was understood the Department would expand southward and it was expected that the buildings would be connected, forming a court. The development of South B Street was not thought of then, and, Mr. Moore said, he doubted if it ever would become a great thoroughfare. These bridges will provide a court and help to unify this group of buildings. "If we could tell Mr. Simon that this design could be used as a basis for an arch that would be satisfactory, it would help matters considerably."

Mr. Swartwout, Mr. Howells, and Mr. Clarke then agreed that this design could be used as a basis for study of a satisfactory type of bridge. It was assumed that the bridge would be built of reinforced concrete encased in masonry. They then called attention to certain particular defects: the bridge is too heavy; it is faulty in design and should have a complete barrel arch; the passageways at the ends should be more semicircular, and the arch should be more properly related to the abutments. Mr. Moore then suggested that the bridge be built so as to have an out-door walk for use particularly in summer.

The other members of the Commission welcomed this suggestion, and said the bridge could be designed so as to have such a walk and balustrade, with arcaded windows in back of it, forming the central passageway. Mr. Howells then called attention to the Ponte Vecchio, and the Bridge S. Trinità in Florence, built by Michelangelo, which has such an outside walk. Mr. Swartwout said the bridge should be built like the fine bridges of this kind in France and Italy. The Commission decided that a new design should be submitted according to these suggestions. Mr. Swartwout submitted a statement in behalf of the Commission as to the design, which was embodied in a report to Assistant Secretary Robert. (Exhibit A).

2. WOODROW WILSON HIGH SCHOOL: Under date of May 5, 1933, the following letter was received from Major J. C. Gotwals, Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia, submitting a revised design for the Woodrow Wilson H. S.:

My dear Mr. Moore:

"The Municipal Architect's Office, with the collaboration of our Consulting Architects, have gone vigorously into the development of the plans of the Woodrow Wilson High School along the lines suggested by you in your letter of April 26, 1933.

While a great deal of work has been done on these plans, they are somewhat tentative to-date, and before proceeding further, your comments would be appreciated so that we can arrive at mutually satisfactory plans. I am therefore asking you to show the accompanying plans to the Commission and let us have the benefit of their comments before further development is made.

It is believed that we have a satisfactory grouping and that we are still adhering to the general scheme of the Roosevelt High School in a way that will not arouse any criticism in Congress as to violent departure from standard plans. The restricted funds under which we are now working forces us to eliminate every possible item of cost. These revised plans have not been approved by the District Commissioners, the School Board, or the Park and Planning Commission at this time. We have begun the construction of a model of the grounds and building grouping, and it will be completed later.

The need for this school is pressing, and I would appreciate your cooperation in the early solution of our problem in the general layout of this building. The preparation of contract plans for such a large structure consumes much time and such plans cannot be prepared until a satisfactory general layout has been adopted."

The Commission inspected the design and felt some improvement had been made over the design previously submitted, but it was still felt it could be much improved. The units had been arranged so as to face the city instead of the minor Chesapeake Street. The Commission objected strongly to placing the main central building on a plinth, with the adjacent wings at a lower level, and advised that it should be lowered or else the terrace opened. Mr. Howells suggested that an alternate study be made showing roofs. Mr. Swartwout said the architectural committee had not given sufficient study to the project, and also Mr. Clarke thought the committee should be able to do better in fitting the design to the landscape. It was thought to omit the portico would improve the design.

The Commission noted that in this design the powerhouse had been moved from Nebraska Avenue to a site adjacent to the Fort Drive. Here the smokestack would also be objectionable. The Commission recommended that it be inclosed in the power plant building as in the new Federal Heating and Lighting Plant, which is now being built east of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. The Commission were pleased to note that a model of this project is being made, which is to be inspected at the next meeting of the Commission. A report was sent to Major Gotwals. (Exhibit B).

3. DESIGN FOR GASOLINE STATION AT 27th STREET AND NEW HAMPSHIRE AVE.N.W.: Under date of May 1, 1933, Mr. Julius Wenig submitted a revised design for a Gasoline Station at 27th Street and New Hampshire Ave., N.W., with letter:

> "I herewith submit two revised sketches for proposed Gasoline Service Station at New Hampshire Ave. and 27th St., N.W. with changes as suggested by the Commission in letter dated April 28, 1933. You will note that the small windows on the west elevation are toilet windows, a lattice fence will be erected on that side and climbing vine will be planted.
>
> Gasoline pumps can be enclosed as shown on sketch No.2. Three twin Gasoline pumps will be located as shown in red spots on plat plan. Parking will be landscaped, also the small triangle on the south if the present owner of the same will give us permission to use this lot for that purpose. Any other suggestions of the Commission will be appreciated.

The design was sent to Mr. Clarke, who inspected it and approved it with the recommendation that the lattice work be omitted. The Commission concurred in this. (Exhibit C)

4. ACACIA LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY BUILDING AND PLAZA HOTEL, ROOF SIGNS: Under date of May 2, 1933, the following letter was received from Mr. N.A. Hill, President of the Claude Neon Lights of Maryland, Inc., protesting against the action of the Commission of Fine Arts in disapproving the application for repainting the roof sign of the Acacia Life Insurance Company building and of the Plaza Hotel, as follows:

> "We note your disapproval recently of permits for repainting only of our roof signs on the Acacia Life Insurance Company's own office building at First & Indiana Ave., N.W., your city, which is a single purpose building, occupied entirely by the owners and on which the signs come well within the limits of the District code. We therefore can see no justification of this refusal, which is working a definite hardship on our client and putting us in default in a way since our service includes these annual repaints.
>
> Similarly we have been refused a permit through your objections for the repaint of our one roof sign on the Hotel Plaza, 339 First St., N.E., your city, again working a hardship to our client in this matter and putting us in default on service, because of our inability to give this annual repaint now due.
>
> We understand that both our clients in these matters have protested this refusal of permits and we urgently ask that you review these matters and give us permission to proceed with this work."

Mr. Moore said the Government has spent many hundred thousand dollars in improving Union Station Plaza, so as to provide a dignified approach to the Capitol and that these roofsigns are a plot in the landscape, where the dominating feature should be the dome of the Capitol. Mr. Moore related that when Mr. Burnham designed the Union Station he persuaded his clients, the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, to build the station as low as possible so as to subordinate the Station to the Capitol, and then made the Company build their tracks five feet lower at considerable extra expense. Also the height of buildings adjacent to the Plaza was limited to 80 feet. Mr. Burnham

had in mind a frame for the Plaza, which can be provided by improved type of buildings adjacent to the Plaza. The height of buildings adjacent to the Plaza was limited to 80 feet. Roof signs on them are unsightly and must be prohibited. The Commission concurred with Mr. Moore in this.

Mr. Howells suggested that the Claude Neon Light company be given this historical information as to developing Union Station Plaza and that their attention be also called to the fact that other concerns, as the American Security and Trust Company and the Star Newspaper Office, have similarly had their applications for roof signs disapproved by the Commission. A report was sent to Mr. Hill accordingly (Exhibit D)

5. CONTINENTAL HOTEL SIGNS: The Secretary submitted an application from the Inspector of Buildings of the District of Columbia for repainting the sign "Continental Hotel", 40' x 29", on the wall of the building. The Commission disapproved the application on the principle that the sign is too large and mars the landscape in its location adjacent to Union Station Plaza.

6. SIGNS FOR A. SCHULTE CIGAR STORE, 601 15th Street, N.W.: Under date of May 2, 1933, an application was received from the Building Inspector of the District of Columbia for two signs on the cigar store of A. Schulte at 601 15th Street, N.W., measuring 19' x 4' 6" and 21' x 4' 6", respectively, flat against the wall of the building.

The Commission approved the application, with the understanding that each of these signs will measure approximately 12' x $2\frac{1}{2}$' and will not be in excess of 25 square feet. A report was sent to the Inspector of Buildings accordingly.

7. ARLINGTON MEMORIAL BRIDGE: (a) Memorial Avenue. Mr. James K. Smith, of the firm of McKim, Mead and White, said he had been asked to represent Mr. Kendall while absent in Europe in considering matters with the Commission of Fine Arts relating to the Arlington Memorial Bridge. The question has been raised by his office whether the niches are definitely out of the Memorial Avenue or whether they are still under consideration and are to be put in. Also, he said, the location of lamp posts and trees is affected by the niches.

Mr. Moore replied that the Commission had decided here in this room last October to take out the niches for the present. There is a large crypt at the Arlington Amphitheater that in ten years' time has never been used, and to put niches along the Avenue now for Memorials might raise perplexing problems.

Mr. Clarke felt that the question of trees in relation to the niches is not so important, and that it might be interesting and most satisfactory aesthetically if the center line of the niches did not come exactly half way between two trees in the formal row. Col. Grant says there is no money available for planting at this time; it is therefore a matter that can be adjusted to the satisfaction of Mr. Kendall later, if necessary. The trees will be back of the hedge, which will be on a line with the pylons, exactly as shown on the McKim, Mead and White's plan.

2 (b). COLUMBIA ISLAND PLAZA: In connection with the development of Columbia Island Plaza, Mr. Moore said there are certain questions he would like to have the Commission settle now, so that when the time comes for carrying out the project, there will be a definite plan for it. Mr. Moore offered the following suggestions for consideration:

1. Where the columns were located, put in two large fountain pools as shown on the McKim, Mead and White's plan. Pools to have low, broad coping.

2. The entire Plaza to be paved of the same material as the Arlington Memorial Bridge proper, without curbs, leaving an entire open space between the pools.
3. Permit traffic to find its way as in the Place de la Concorde.
4. Create circles at ends of Cross Axis. Should there be pools?
5. Consideration of the connections on each side of Arlington Cemetery.

Mr. Adams submitted prints showing that Mr. Kendall had suggested a peristyle in place of the columns. This plan was disapproved some time ago. The river gods were shown on this plan on the Plaza, each side of the roads leaving the north and south ends. The Commission felt that these would be appropriate.

Mr. Clarke said he had given consideration to the peristyles, and felt that as located in the Plaza they would form an unfortunate obstruction to the long vista possible between the two terminal circles and would therefore be objectionable. He felt that two large fountain pools would give the proper accents to the central plaza and make for greater breadth and simplicity tending to keep the entire formal scheme of Columbia Island as a unit. The other members of the Commission agreed with Mr. Clarke in this.

Mr. Smith said that Mr. Kendall had suggested the peristyles (55' in height) to take the place of the columns, which were to be about 200 feet high, because, admitting the necessity of a cross axis and being prevented from erecting the columns, he now desired to get mass from the peristyles to take the place of height that he would have gotten from the columns. The Commission felt that large fountain pools with low coping and high, perpetual sprays of water, placed in the center of circles having a diameter of 200 feet, would be more interesting and would adequately accentuate the cross axis. Mr. Smith raised the question whether the water is available. Mr. Moore said he did not think there would be any doubt about that, and called attention to the Union Station fountains, the Dupont Memorial Fountain, and others in Washington, that have operated for years.

The Commission decided that the entire Plaza should be paved as a unit. The Commission felt that the Plaza should be free from artificial or mechanical traffic devices, but thought that movable posts and chain could be placed at each side of the center driveway as it passes the cross axis, to be removed in case of great processions over the Memorial Bridge. In general the Commission felt that traffic on the Plaza should find its way in a manner more or less similar to the circulation at the Place de la Concorde in Paris.

The Commission reaffirmed the view that circles having an inside diameter of not less than 200 feet should be created at the ends of the Cross Axis, as shown on the Plan prepared by McKim, Mead and White. It was suggested that to construct pools at these points would be worthy of consideration. Two rows of trees (red oaks) should be planted from the central plaza to the end ~~xxxxx~~ circles, as provided for in the plan of McKim, Mead and White.

Concerning connections on each side of Arlington Cemetery, Mr. Moore said the scheme to build the Lee Highway around the north side of Arlington to connect with the circle at the north end of the Plaza has been abandoned in favor of a Lee Highway connection along the south side of Arlington. This has been approved by Congress. The road on the north side would cost fully $800,000; whereas a simple service road to Fort Myer, on the north side of Arlington, is sufficient. There will be a roadway from the north end circle to the Virginia shore to connect with Rosslyn and the driveway to Great Falls. The roadway on the south side of Arlington can connect with the circle at the south end of the cross axis. In the meantime efforts will be made also to extend Arlington National Cemetery eastward to the Potomac River.

Mr. Kendall and Col. Grant are to be advised of these conclusions.

8. RESOLUTION ON THE DEATH OF MR. GREENLEAF: Mr. Clarke submitted the following Resolution, which was unanimously adopted:

The National Commission of Fine Arts on May 6, 1933 unanimously adopted the following Minute:

J A M E S  L E A L  G R E E N L E A F

appointed by President Wilson a member of the National Commission of Fine Arts, September 11, 1918; died at New Canaan, Connecticut, on April 14, 1933.

Trained as an engineer, Mr. Greenleaf pursued that profession both as practitioner and teacher from the time he graduated from the Columbia School of Mines in 1880 until 1894. He then turned his attention to the Fine Arts and began the practice of Landscape Architecture. As a result of preeminent work as a designer of the estates of many prominent Americans, he became one of the foremost artists in his chosen profession. His personality was always reflected in his works, distinguished by their dignity, simplicity and charm.

Mr. Greenleaf was beloved by his associates on the Commission of Fine Arts. His kindly spirit, his profound interest, and sound judgment in all matters presented for consideration, caused his fellow commissioners to lean heavily upon him during his nine years of service, part of the time as Vice-Chairman. He gave unselfishly of himself. During the illness of Mr. Vitale, his successor on the Commission of Fine Arts, Mr. Greenleaf served for over a year until the appointment

of Mr. Vitale's successor in 1932. From 1928 until his death, Mr. Greenleaf served as Consulting Landscape Architect to the Arlington Memorial Bridge Commission.

We deplore the loss of this former distinguished member of the Commission. We are grateful that the National Capital has been able to profit by his knowledge and experience for more than nine years. His distinguished achievements, his courage, determination, and broad human sympathies will remain a heritage and his life will always remain an inspiration of service in the cause of the Fine Arts.

We direct that this Minute be placed on the records of the Commission of Fine Arts, and that a copy be sent to Mr. Greenleaf's family as an expression of sympathy in their sorrow.

The Commission adjourned at 1:15 p.m. The Commission were the guests of Mr. Howell at luncheon at the River Club, 52d St. and the East River. This he said had just been opened and marks an achievement in Club House construction, as four floors are below street level. The Commission inspected the building with much interest.

COPY

May 9, 1933.

Dear Sir:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting on May 6, 1933, gave very careful consideration to the design, which you submitted with your letter of May 4th, for a bridge to span B Street South and connect the Administration Building with the Extensible Building of the Agricultural Department. The Commission respectfully report:

The design is better than those heretofore submitted, but the Commission have certain criticisms to make and suggestions to offer.

The whole scheme seems very heavy, and yet the arch, as drawn, does not seem structural as there is not sufficient apparent abutment for the arch, which the Commission understandis 80 feet in clear width. The Commission assumes that the arch itself will be of reinforced concrete encased with masonry, so that its actual stability will be taken care of, but the apparent stability is a question of almost equal importance. The arch being a plain segment, the thrust seems to carry through the subordinate arches of the sidewalk on each side, and the apparent instability is increased by the small size of the pier at this point. While it is true that, scaling from the attached plan, it is nearly six feet in thickness in the center, still it is not heavy enough to give a feeling of adequate abutment.

It is the suggestion of the Commission that the lower portion be treated as the bridge that it really is, in a way similar to the best examples of bridges in Italy and in France. The pier between the road and the sidewalk could be somewhat less in width and give more clear opening for the sidewalk, gaining power and strength by greater thickness; that is to say, the pier

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might not be so flat but be built out even more than shown, somewhat in the fashion of a bridge pier, possibly with a splay, which could receive the segmental line of the bridge, and some three or four feet further back the main arch in a slightly eliptical form. This would give the warped surface which is such an admirable feature in French bridges, and by using this slightly eliptical form at the spring, the thrust would be apparently carried down to the ground rather than directly against the pier. The other openings over the sidewalk could be made somewhat wider, as has been said, and possibly a little higher so that both arches would seem to spring from the same level, as is done in bridges. The chief abutments would then be the buildings themselves, which would be visually powerful enough.

It seemed also to the Commission that the upper part of the bridge, that is to say, the passage itself, is unnecessarily heavy, and the suggestion was made that the passage be made narrower than the bridge below, so that there would be room for a narrow walkway on each side of the passage, this walkway being on the line of the face of the bridge with a balustrade. This would make a pleasant place in summer and the general effect would be of a structural bridge with a lighter enclosed corridor above it. This enclosed corridor could be made of stone and might have a series of small glass enclosed arches to lighten the effect. Or if it should be found there was not height enough for arches, there could be a line of piers or small colonettes.

Particular attention should be given to the plan through the main piers of the bridge. There seems to the Commission no reason for the extra width back of the piers. This space is not valuable and will only be a catchall, and a possible source of danger. It would also appear from the drawing that the bridge consisted of two main arches on each side, the

space between the arches going up back of the arch and having a flat ceiling. The Commission considered that this would be most unfortunate, and the suggestion was made that these piers be ten to eleven feet wide and fifteen or sixteen feet deep; this need not be made solid, but it would be the masonry form surrounding the structural concrete. The space between these two piers could be entirely open from the sidewalk to the road, which would give an opening of about sixteen or seventeen feet. The soffit of the main and side arches could be vaulted in concrete with penetrations, the face of the vaults being left in concrete, treated to give a rather pleasing rough texture.

The Commission would request that a revised sketch be made on the above basis, showing the plan and perhaps a section, and the further suggestion is made that the drawing be made in direct elevation and not in perspective, although this latter is not important. The next meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts is to be held in Washington on May 26th.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Very respectfully, yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Hon. N. W. Robert jr.,

Assistant Secretary of the Treasury,

Washington, D.C.

EXHIBIT A

COPY

May 10, 1933.

Dear Major Gotwals:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting on May 6, 1933, considered the revised design which you submitted with your letter of May 5, 1933, for the Woodrow Wilson High School at Fort Reno.

First. The Commission approve the idea of facing the buildings towards the city rather than the minor Chesapeake Street; but they would eliminate the columns and the portico. This quite elaborate portico comes between windows not at all in harmony with it. These windows are not well proportioned. A quite simple front, well designed, could be made more attractive than the porticoed front shown in the sketches.

Second. The Commission advise that the Chesapeake Street front be so designed as to bring it down to the street level, continuing the series of arches at the sides and making entrances directly from the street for the pupils. The treatment of the varying levels as used at Columbia University, New York City, gives the suggestion of the effective use of the lower stories to build up to the main level. Both economy of construction and utilization of space make such modifications desirable.

Third. The Commission suggest the possibility of incorporating the heating plant in the main building, utilizing the walls to minimize the apparent height of the stack. Also the treatment of the top of the stack in fashion similar to the design of the stacks in the new Government Power Plant would improve the design. It is not regarded as a solution of the problem to transfer an obtrusive stack from Nebraska Avenue to the Fort Drive.

The stack itself should be made as unobtrusive as possible.

Fourth. Both for the sake of appearance and also in order to secure a considerable degree of comfort in this hot city, the Commission would be pleased to consider sketches showing the roofs of the buildings.

All these matters were explained to the group of Associated Architects at the meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts on April 21st, and were agreed to by them as fundamental. Few of them had visited the site; but they went away with the assurance to the Commission that they would make studies and sketches along the lines suggested. Such studies nowhere appear in the revised plans.

The Commission will consider these plans further when a rough model is submitted at their next meeting, May 26th.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

(signed)Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Major J. C. Gotwals,
Engineer Commissioner of the
District of Columbia,
Washington, D.C.

EXHIBIT B

COPY

May 8, 1933.

Dear Mr. Wenig:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting on May 6, 1933, approved the design you submitted for a Gasoline Station at 27th Street and New Hampshire Ave., N.W. The Commission suggest that you omit the lattice work.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Very respectfully, yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Mr. Julius Wenig,

917 Fifteenth Street, N.W.,

Washington, D.C.

EXHIBIT C

COPY

May 11, 1933.

Dear Sir:

Your letter of May 2d, protesting against the disapproval by the Commission of Fine Arts of your application for a permit to repaint the roof sign on the Acacia Life Insurance Company's office building at First and Indiana Ave., N.W., and the roof sign on the Hotel Plaza, received the attention of the Commission at their meeting on May 6, 1933.

The Government has made expenditures of many hundred thousand dollars to create the Union Station Plaza and the Congress Gardens between the Plaza and the Capitol. When the Union Station was built, the architect of the station, Mr. Daniel H. Burnham, who was a member of the Park Commission of 1901, worked with his clients, the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, and depressed the station to the lowest possible point so as to maintain the domination of the United States Capitol over the whole area, and having got the station down to the lowest point the railroad engineers thought advisable, the architect secured a further depression of 5 feet, which was made at considerable cost to the Railroad Company, but which accomplished its great purpose. Again, in order to create a harmonious composition around the Plaza, the height of buildings was limited to 80 feet, which has in part accomplished its purpose, although the character of the buildings erected during the transition period is not what they would be if their erection had been postponed to this time; an instance,-the excellent building of the Standard Oil Company facing Constitution Avenue at Third Street, Northwest.

Then Congress began to light the dome of the Capitol and recently has installed a lighted fountain and pool. These are intended to be the chief features which the visitor coming into Washington by the Union Station would see at night. Unfortunately these features, beautiful in themselves, have their beauty destroyed largely by the prevalence of these great electric signs, two of which you wish to repaint.

When the Shipstead-Luce Act was enacted by Congress with the view of protecting the appearance of private buildings as seen from the monumental works of the Government, the Commission of Fine Arts in carrying out the manifest intentions of Congress made it a reule to disapprove the erection or reerection of roof signs with a view to maintaining the supremacy by night as well as by day of the Government buildings. Manifestly it was impossible to have the signs already erected removed, but as applications for new signs or the repair of old signs have come to the Commission, the members have decided unanimously that one of the essential things in carrying out the Shipstead-Luce Act would be the quieting down of the area between the Capitol and the Union Station. It was recognized that this ruling woulc cause more or less annoyance at first, but inasmuch as all persons were to be placed on the same footing, it is confidently believed that the resulting good order would be worth the sacrifice. Furthermore, the objections that have been raised to these large illuminating signs on the part of Government officials concerned in the good appearance of the city have seemed to justify the Commission in their action. So that the members of the Commission of Fine Arts have felt that in making these rules

they have simply carried into effect the desires of Congress as embodied in legislation.

I trust this explanation of the reasons which govern the Commission of Fine Arts will be satisfactory to you.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Very respectfully, yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Mr. N. A. Hill, President,

Claude Neon Lights of Maryland, Inc.,

Baltimore, Md.

EXHIBIT D