

MINUTES OF MEETING OF COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

HELD IN WASHINGTON, D. C., August 8, 1924.

The first meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts during the fiscal year 1925 was held in its office in the Interior Department Building on Friday, August 8, 1924. The following members were present:

Mr. Moore, Chairman,
Mr. Greenleaf,
Mr. Fraser,
Mr. Lyres,
Mr. Howbray,
Mr. Delano,

Also Mr. H. F. Czemmerer, Secretary and Executive Officer.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m.

- ✓ 1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING: The minutes of the meeting held June 24, 1924, were approved.
- ✓ 2. PLANS FOR THE EXTENSION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY: Under date of August 5, 1924, Hon. John W. Weeks, Secretary of War, submitted the following letter with plans for the extension and improvement of the Arlington National Cemetery:

"Referring to your letter of April 26, 1924, in regard to further study and development of plans for the proposed improvements of the "Arlington Farms" as an addition to the Arlington National Cemetery, also the proposed system of boulevards adjoining the "Arlington Farms", you are advised that there are forwarded herewith in duplicate plans Nos. 6608-146-147-148-149 showing the proposed improvements."

The letter of April 26th, to which the Secretary of War referred, called attention to changes recommended by the Commission in the General Plan for the Extension of Arlington, and which were considered by the Commission at their meeting on April 23, 1924.

Captain Carl H. Jablonsky of the Quartermaster General's Office,

especially designated by the Secretary of War for Arlington work, was present during the consideration of the plans. Mr. Greenleaf said the plans are of great interest to him, as they show the lay-out of the area occupied by the Arlington Farms included as part of the future Arlington, which ultimately is to be enlarged so as to include the whole of the original Custis Estate; and the relocation of the State road, now passing along the east side of Arlington, and an appropriate location for the Virginia terminus of the Arlington Memorial Bridge, with its diverging roadways southward to connect with the Mount Vernon Boulevard, and northward to connect with the Lee Highway.

The plans were given preliminary consideration and will receive further attention at the next meeting.

3. **STONE MOUNTAIN MEMORIAL COIN:** Under date of July 14, 1924, Hon. R. J. Grant, Director of the United States Mint, submitted designs for the proposed Stone Mountain Memorial Coin (which so far as composition is concerned, had been approved by the Treasury Department), by letter as follows:

"I am forwarding herewith a photograph of the obverse and photographs of the reverse of the coin authorized by the Act of March 17, 1924, to commemorate the commencement on June 18, 1923, of the work of carving on Stone Mountain, Georgia, a monument to the valor of the soldiers of the South * * * and in memory of Warren G. Harding, President of the United States of America, in whose administration the work was begun.

"The designs are submitted to you for advice as to their artistic merits, in accordance with Executive Order dated July 28, 1921."

The designs were submitted to Mr. Fraser, sculptor member of the Commission, who disapproved the designs, and a report to that effect was

forwarded to the Director of the Mint under date of July 22, 1924 (Exhibit A).

Mr. Fraser stated that he had heard that Mr. Gutson Borglum, who is making the models, expects to submit revised models for the coin.

Mr. H. N. Randolph, President of the Stone Mountain Confederate Monumental Association, Atlanta, Georgia, was present to consult the Commission with regard to the matter. Mr. Randolph stated that their desire is to produce the coin and begin the sale of them as soon as possible. Mr. Moore, in behalf of the Commission, advised Mr. Randolph that it would be to their interest to wait until Mr. Borglum has produced a satisfactory design. The Act of March 17, 1924, provides that "not more than five million" of these coins shall be coined.

4. IMPROVEMENT OF STREET LIGHTING, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: At the request of the District Commissioners, the Commission inspected, in the court yard of the District Building, several models of proposed lamp posts to improve the street lighting of the District of Columbia. The models were made in accordance with plans which had been considered by the Commission during the past 6 or 8 months. The following models were inspected:

1--20 foot double light lamp post; duplex incandescent light, proposed for avenues and plazas, 600 to 1500 candle power.

1--19 foot lamp post, single arc light, proposed for important business thoroughfares, such as H Street, N.E., 600 to 1200 candle power.

1--18 foot lamp post; single incandescent light, to serve thoroughfares such as Connecticut Avenue, 600 to 1500 candle power.

1--15 foot lamp post; existing single arc light adapted to the incandescent light; 250 to 1500 candle power.

1--12 foot Millet lamp-post, 100 to 400 candle power, at present in use.

Mejer W. H. Holcombe, Assistant to District Engineer Commissioner

J. Franklin Bell, who has direct charge of street lighting, was present during the inspection, and stated that about \$30,000 is available for this work during the current fiscal year, and that a contract has been made for the making of at least one each of these new lamp posts, equipped with the necessary electrical appliances, before beginning on their installation. Mr. J. W. Gosling, of the General Electric Company, Schenectady, N. Y., who made the designs under the supervision of the Commission, was present, and suggestions in matters of detail were explained to him, which will be embodied in the finished lamp-posts--particularly with reference to the ornamentation of the double light lamp post; and the general design of the 19 foot lamp post, which appeared clumsy. The Commission felt that the new lamp posts should be made to taper to a greater degree than shown in the models, but Mr. Gosling stated that no great improvement could be made in this respect, in view of the electrical appliances to be placed in the pole. Mr. W. H. Hadley, District Electrical Engineer, who was also present, said he had advised placing a strong iron rod in these large lamp posts to strengthen them, as at present from 25 to 40 of the existing lamp posts are being broken by automobiles each month. Mr. Hadley was much pleased with the proposed new lamp posts and felt it would bring about a decided improvement in the street lighting of the National Capital. He also thought that just as the Millet lamp post, which was designed and adopted by the Commission of Fine Arts several years ago, has been adopted in a number of cities throughout the United States, so the new lamp posts will also be adopted by other cities. It is proposed to install the first of the double light lamp posts along Pennsylvania Avenue, in front of the White House.

At the suggestion of Mr. Gosling, and with the approval of the

Commission, the double light lamp post will include an attachment for a pennant, to take the place of the ordinary street decorations used on holidays. Mr. Gosling said the pennants have been used in Schenectady on double light lamp posts very satisfactorily.

5. **McKINLEY MANUAL TRAINING HIGH SCHOOL:** The Commission called at the office of Mr. A. L. Harris, Municipal Architect, who submitted a Preliminary Plan for the McKinley Manual Training High School, to be erected at Second and T Streets, N. E., adjoining the Langley Junior High School. Mr. Ayres and Mr. Delano thought the scheme interesting, and upon their recommendations the Commission approved the plan.

6. **JOHN F. COOK SCHOOL:** Mr. Harris submitted a drawing of the proposed John F. Cook School, to be erected on O Street, between North Capitol and First Streets, N. W. Mr. Harris said it is to be a graded school of 16 rooms for colored children. With minor suggestions the Commission approved the design.

7. **THE HARDING MEMORIAL:** The Commission were in consultation with Mr. A. D. Taylor, of Cleveland, Ohio, appointed by the Harding Memorial Association, upon the recommendation of the Commission of Fine Arts, as the Landscape Architect for the Harding Memorial, at Marion, Ohio.

Mr. Moore and Mr. Greenleaf gave an account of their trip to Marion, where in company with General Sawyer they went over the possible sites for the Harding Memorial and agreed that the 15 acre area contemplated had best be taken in a tract of 42 acres, adjoining and which will be added to the old cemetery at Marion. Mr. Greenleaf said that after inspecting the site both Mr. Moore and he were equally and strongly of the opinion that the Harding tomb and memorial structure had best be built upon a slight rise

of ground backed by a grove of oaks about six hundred feet removed from an obvious entrance at the meeting of certain city parkways. This site they had strongly recommended to the Memorial Association.

The point where the entrance would naturally be is an important crossing of the 300 foot parkway with the main line of motor travel leading through Marion south and east and there a great circle or plaza should be planned as a portal, so to speak, to the city.

The Memorial Association, in cooperation with the executor's of Mr. Harding's will, can acquire additional land adjoining the present adjacent city park and the Commission of Fine Arts endorsed Mr. Taylor's advice to the Association that they thus acquire for park purpose with restrictions this nearby land adjoining the main motor road so as to prevent its being used in the future for building purposes, or possibly for playgrounds, or for park concessions of an undignified character.

At Mr. Moore's request, Mr. Greenleaf outlined the characteristics the memorial should have as they too had recommended them to General Sawyer, all which were endorsed by the Commission of Fine Arts. The basic idea is quiet dignity and retired beauty in distinction from the spectacular and the conventional mausoleum type. The structure should be somewhat removed from the rush and noise of motor travel, a shrine in peaceful setting to which the public would reverently walk. Yet, as a matter of fact, the Memorial would extend to the actual portal where the motors stopped. From this portal there would be a broad unbroken grass avenue leading straight to the tomb. Down this carpet of lawn, between double rows of arching trees on either side, would be a view of the building backed by the oak grove. At each side, under the double row of trees, would be a broad, shady walk to the architectural climax of the memorial.

Mr. Lyres mentioned the possible disturbing element caused by the usual heterogeneous grouping of cemetery monuments on either side of this approach to the tomb and asked if there could be any control of monument erection. It was pointed out in reply that the land strip should be taken wide enough to get this control and also that General Sawyer had stated the cemetery authorities would, on request, adopt for this new section of the Cemetery the modern landscape method, whereby only stones flat in the sod would be permitted.

As to the character of the building proposed for the Harding Memorial, Mr. Greenleaf said he was much impressed by the idea advanced by Mr. Moore that the Harding Memorial should not be the conventional museum type, sometimes blatant in its over self-assertion, but rather take on the nature of a chapel, exquisitely designed, which with the landscape setting and approach, will be a memorial that, as time passes, the people of this country will visit as something of rare beauty and art as well as a memorial to President Harding. Only in this way can it be enduringly successful. The structure should have classic motive; and in view of the fact that this part of Ohio was largely settled by people from New England, a chapel having in it a suggestion of the Georgian would be very appropriate for this memorial to President Harding. It would also characterize him as a man of simple habits, with love of the well tried and enduring, and devoted to the traditions of this country; the landscape setting would call to mind his love of nature.

The Commission and Mr. Taylor were in entire accord as to these recommendations with reference to the Harding Memorial. Mr. Taylor said up to that moment he had not been officially notified of his appointment as Landscape Architect, but the following telegram, making his appointment definite,

was received from General Sawyer later in the afternoon, addressed to Mr. Taylor, as follows:

"We have authorization to accept your proposition. Proceed accordingly.

Charles E. Sawyer,
Chairman, Executive Committee."

As to the selection of an architect, the Commission unanimously disapproved having a competition. The Commission felt that a competition in this case would be a waste of time and money, and that it called for a memorial which was deserving of the best architectural skill of this country. The Commission considered the names of all the Fellows of the American Institute of Architects, and of other architects residing in cities of the United States from Boston to San Francisco, their qualifications, and the works they have produced. The sum available for the Harding Memorial, including the landscape treatment, is \$600,000. After careful consideration, the Commission of Fine Arts unanimously decided to recommend to the Harding Memorial Association the following three architects, who are recognized among the greatest architects of this country, and any one of whom would produce a worthy memorial to President Harding:

John Russell Pope, 542 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.
Egerton Swartcutt, 18 West 54th Street, New York, N. Y.
Paul Cret, Otis Building, 112 South Sixteenth St., Philadelphia, Pa.

General Sawyer had written that he desired the recommendations of the Commission of Fine Arts as soon as possible, and he was informed by letter accordingly (Exhibit D).

8. THE FRANCIS ASBURY MEMORIAL: Under date of July 24, 1924, Lieut. Col. C. O. Sherrill, Officer in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds, submitted the following letter, with a location plan for the Francis Asbury Memorial, suggesting a slight change in the location of the memorial, on

the same triangle heretofore selected by the Commission of Fine Arts, at the intersection of Sixteenth and Mount Pleasant Streets, and Columbia Road:

"I inclose herewith a sketch of the suggested location plan of the Asbury Memorial, which is different from the one originally considered, due to the fact that recently the triangle on which this statue is to be erected, has been largely increased in size.

It is not probable that the Asbury Memorial Commission can at this time construct the walk indicated in the drawing, but this design is included as this ultimately will be included.

In view of the fact that the Commission in charge of the construction of this Memorial is ready to proceed with the work at once, will you kindly advise me at your earliest convenience the views of the Commission of Fine Arts on the suggested location.

Your attention is invited to the fact that a very similar situation was solved in much the same way in reference to the Hancock statue at 7th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue.

The Commission inspected the location plan, whereupon it was

approved. (Exhibit C). (The sculptor, Mr. Lukeman, subsequently advised that the specific location indicated in the drawing would interfere with the scale of the monument, whereupon a compromise site was agreed upon between the sculptor and the Officer in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds. A drawing showing that site was submitted, and accepted by authority of the Chairman (Exhibit C-1), in lieu of the drawing considered August 8th).

9. **STATUE OF SERENITY:** On August 7, 1924, Lieut. Col. C. O. Sherrill, Officer in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds, submitted a landscape plan prepared by Mr. H. W. Peaslee, architect, for the Statue of Serenity. The Commission had at their meeting on April 23, 1924, approved a site for the statue on the upper level of Meridian Hill Park, near the main entrance on Sixteenth Street. The plan submitted proposed placing the statue in the planting at a convenient point on the west side of the upper level so that the statue, which would face west, may be seen from the outer path extending to Euclid Street. The statue is to be erected on a pedestal 2 feet 6 inches high, in accordance with recommendations heretofore made by the Commission. The location proposed for the statue was approved. The Commission endorsed Mr. Greenleaf's request that the statue be placed in the planting and that the landscape treatment proposed for the statue be such as would interfere as little as possible with the approved landscape plan of Meridian Hill Park. The Commission requested a plan showing the lay-out

of the inscription (Exhibit D).

10. STATUE OF GENERAL SAN MARTIN: The Department of State and the Officer in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds, having requested the Commission of Fine Arts to select a location for the statue of General San Martin, given by the Republic of Argentina to the United States, the Commission in pursuance of the Act of Congress approved June 7, 1924, authorizing the erection of the statue on public grounds of the United States, inspected several locations during the afternoon, and after careful consideration decided that a very appropriate site for the statue would be along Massachusetts Avenue, on the triangle between Tenth and Eleventh Streets, N.W. The Officer in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds was advised accordingly (Exhibit E).

11. NEW FILTRATION PLANT: The Commission called at the office of Major James A. O'Connor, District Engineer in charge of Washington work, to inspect scale drawings for the new Filtration Plant, which had been revised in accordance with recommendations heretofore made by the Commission. Mr. Ayres and Mr. Delano inspected the drawings. With suggestions in matters of detail, which were explained to Major O'Connor, the designs were approved. The suggestion of Major O'Connor that asbestos be used for the roof was approved in the absence of better material, slate being preferred.

At the request of Major O'Connor, and in company with him, the Commission visited the proposed site for the new Filtration Plant on the Conduit Road, near the District line. Work on the foundations was in progress. Major O'Connor asked advice with reference to brick to be

used and requested the Commission to inspect two sample walls--one, the Homewood Colonial Brick (manufactured by the Hydraulic Press Brick Co), and the other, the Hampton Colonial Film-marked, smooth face, brick (manufactured by the United Clay Products Company). This latter type was preferred by the Commission for this structure.

The new Filtration Plant is being built in connection with the new conduit, which it is expected will be opened January 1, 1927, and which will increase the water supply of Washington from 70,000,000 to 150,000,000 gallons per day.

The Commission adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

C O P Y

July 22, 1924.

Sir:

In accordance with your letter of July 14, submitting designs for the coin to commemorate the beginning of the work of carving Stone Mountain, Georgia, and in memory of Warren G. Harding, President of the United States, in whose administration the work was begun, the Commission of Fine Arts respectfully report that artistic merit is lacking in the design.

A glance at the drawing of General Lee's body will show you that if properly drawn it would extend into the horse's back a good six inches and that his leg seems to come from the region of his waistcoat pocket. The horses' heads and necks are good, but not good enough to redeem the general design, which is poor and weak.

The reverse is crowded, and the reference to President Harding is most unfortunately made subordinate.

The entire design lacks study and appreciation of the art of the medal as distinct from the art of sculpture in general. The execution of the design would result in a coin below the standard of United States coins. The design therefore is disapproved.

Very respectfully,

Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Hon. Robert J. Grant,
Director of the Mint,
Treasury Department.

EXHIBIT A.

C O P Y

August 9, 1924.

Dear General Sawyer:

The Commission of Fine Arts gave long and careful consideration yesterday to the recommendation they are making to the Harding Memorial Association in regard to the choice of an architect. The Commission considered the names of all the Fellows of the American Institute of Architects, going over the list with care, and where a man seemed promising, discussed his name in connection with the work that he had done in his profession. They considered not only his qualifications as an artist but also his adaptability to work in harmony with the Landscape Architect and with the Harding Memorial Association. They considered qualifications of men in San Francisco, as well as those of men in Boston, Chicago, and other cities. For example, there were two architects in San Francisco that might well have been recommended had they possessed certain qualifications; and if they had been considered preeminent, the distance would not have prevented the Commission from recommending them.

The object of the Commission in making their recommendations is to enable the Harding Memorial Association to employ an architect whom the Commission believe to be capable of producing a worthy memorial to President Harding and a work of art in which will be embodied that characteristic of charm which will make it live in ages to come. In other words, the Commission of Fine Arts desire to assist your Association in finding a man from whose work the element of time has been eliminated. He should design a memorial which will last for all time. In making the recommendations, the Commission had clearly in mind certain memorials which have been erected during the past 50 years and which already have become obsolete. Moved by such considerations, the Commission of Fine Arts recommend to the Harding Memorial Association:

John Russell Pope, 542 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.,
Egerton Swartwout, 18 West 34th Street, New York, N. Y.,
Paul Cret, Otis Building, 112 South Sixteenth Street,
Philadelphia, Pa.

The Commission will be pleased to confer with you further and give you such explanations as may help you to understand fully their position.

Sincerely, yours,

Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Brig. Gen. Charles E. Sawyer,
Chairman, Executive Committee,
The Harding Memorial Association,
Marion, Ohio.

EXHIBIT B.

C O P Y

August 9, 1924.

Dear Sir:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting yesterday, approved the location plan of the Francis Asbury Memorial, which you submitted with your letter of July 24th. The plan is returned to you herewith.

Yours very truly,

Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Lieut. Col. C. C. Sherrill,
Officer in Charge of
Public Buildings and Grounds.

EXHIBIT C.

C O P Y

August 22, 1924.

Dear Sir:

Your letter of August 21, with which you submitted the location plan of the Francis Asbury Memorial, has been received.

The statement is noted that the sculptor, Mr. Lukeman, regards the location of the statue considered on August 8th, on the triangle at the intersection of Sixteenth and Mount Pleasant Streets, too far back from the apex of the triangle, and the Commission of Fine Arts hereby approve the erection of the Asbury Memorial on the triangle above mentioned, at the point agreeable to the sculptor, indicated in brown on the plan; instead of at the point approved by the Commission of Fine Arts on August 8, 1924.

The location plan is returned to you herewith.

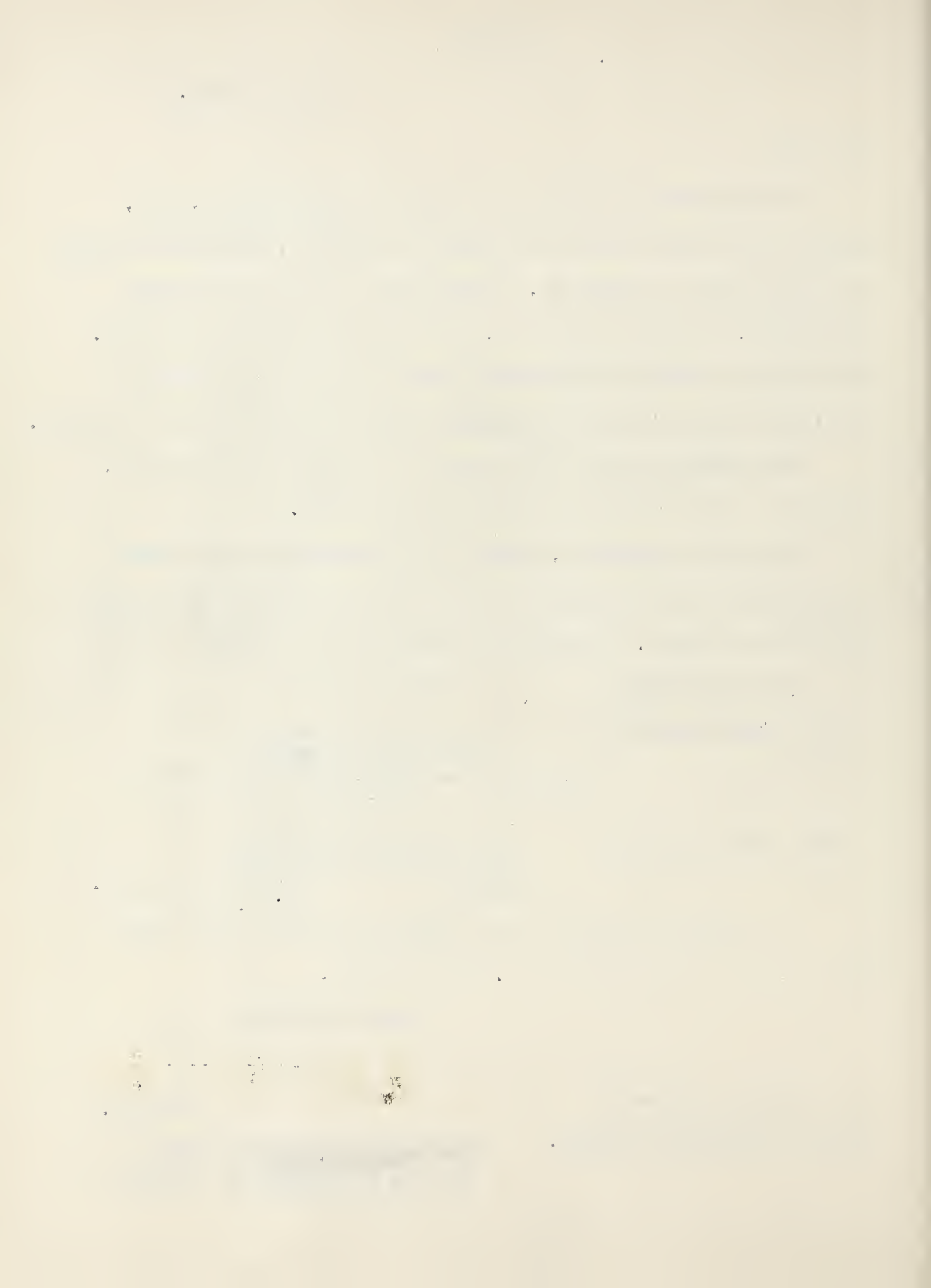
Yours very truly,

Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Major O. N. Solbert,
Senior Assistant,
Office of Public Buildings
and Grounds.

EXHIBIT C-1



C O P Y

August 9, 1924.

Dear Sir:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting yesterday, inspected several sites for the equestrian statue of General San Martin, the gift of the Republic of Argentina to the United States, and recommend that the statue be erected along Massachusetts Avenue on the triangle between Tenth and Eleventh Streets, N. W.

Yours very truly,

Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Lieut. Col. C. O. Sherrill,

Officer in Charge of

Public Buildings and Grounds.

EXHIBIT E

