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The Commission of Fine Arts
16 February 1956

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Minutes of the Meeting of
The Commission of Fine Arts on
16 February 1956

The Commission met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m., with David E. Finley, presiding. Present were:

David E. Finley, Chairman
Douglas Orr, Vice Chairman
Elbert Peets
Mrs. Emily Muir

L.R. Wilson, Secretary

Dates for next meeting

Having agreed that there would be no meeting held in March, the dates for the next meeting were fixed for April 5 and 6.

Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Theodore Roosevelt Island, Development as a Memorial

Plans were discussed with the sponsors and the designers. Mr. Hagedorn told the members that the National Park Service had worked out the general scheme for the development of Theodore Roosevelt Island, as shown in the drawings, and then called upon Mr. Eric Gugler, architect, to explain his plans, for the proposed memorial. Congressman Stephen B. Derounian, a member of the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Commission, joined with the members and representatives of the National Park Service in discussing the concept and the design for the memorial. After consideration of all the architectural and sculptural details, it was moved and seconded that the design be approved in principle, with details to be presented at later meetings of the Commission. Exhibits A, A-1.

D.C. Department of Highways and Traffic

Bridge at Constitution Avenue, N.W. - progress in design

Meeting with the Commission were Mr. Masters of Masters and Modjeski, Engineers; Mr. Hough of Harbeson, Hough, Livingston and Larson, architects; Mr. Sawyer, Mr. Robertson and Mr. Brinkley, of the District of Columbia Department of Highways and Traffic. Mr. Robertson showed the members drawings for the railings which incorporated the changes recommended by the members at the last meeting. The revised design of the railing was satisfactory.

Mr. Robertson also showed the members the drawings for a stone-faced bridge and two steel-ribbon-type and haunch-type bridges. The members expressed again their preference for the ribbon-type design.

After stating that the Highway Department was also asking bids on a pre-stressed concrete bridge, two designs for a pre-stressed concrete bridge, developed by Moore and Hutchins, architects, were

then presented. The members were impressed by the design labeled "Pre-stressed concrete design-Cast in place construction", but no preference for the pre-stressed concrete over the steel design was expressed, there being some objections to the material.

The design of the piers for the steel bridge was studied, but no decision was reached. A dark granite was preferred to the brownish ashlar was discussed.

The Commission again raised the question of providing the pedestrian access to the Island, as stipulated by the Theodore Roosevelt Association in granting permission to cross the Island. The members also felt that, if the Association desired it, a vehicular access should also be provided.

The Commission stated that, in its opinion, the approach roads on the District of Columbia side of the river were less damaging to the Lincoln Memorial area, now that the connections had been moved at its urging, to the north of Constitution Avenue. The members stated that they could not approve the approach roads on the Virginia side because of their proximity to memorials existing in that area. Exhibit B.

b. Sample Street Lighting Standards on 14th Street
between Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues

The members of the Commission met with General Thomas A. Lane, Engineer Commissioner for the District of Columbia, and Mr. Herbert Friede, to inspect demonstration lighting standards at the above mentioned location. The members considered the standards unsuitable for use within the city of Washington and recommended that, if the present lighting on Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues seemed insufficient, that the power of the present lamps be increased. Exhibit C.

Freer Gallery of Art

Purchase of Works of Art

In accordance with the usual custom, the Commission visited the Freer Gallery of Art, where the Director submitted a number of works of art proposed for purchase. The Commission approved the objects for purchase. Exhibit D.

Tomb for an Unknown Soldier of World War II

Colonel Wall, Colonel Laux, Mr. Lorimer Rich, Mr. Jones and Mr. Duke met with the Commission to consider the plans and sketches developed by Mr. Rich, for the interment of the unknown soldier of World War II and the Korean Conflict at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Mr. Rich's sketches and plans called for enlarging the crypt in front of the present crypt to permit the burial of two bodies, the graves to be marked on the pavement by marble or granite slabs.

February 21, 1956

Dear Mr. Hagedorn:

The members of the Commission of Fine Arts were glad to confer with you and the architect, Mr. Eric Gugler, on February 16, 1956, and to have you and Mr. Gugler present the design drawings of the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial which will be located on Theodore Roosevelt Island. The design was approved in principle as presented, and the members of the Commission hope that plans may now go forward without delay for completion of this important memorial. We will be happy to confer further with you on the details of the plans as they develop.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Mr. Hermann Hagedorn, Director
Theodore Roosevelt Association
28 East 20th Street
New York 3, New York

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

February 29, 1960

Dear Senator O'Mahoney:

At a meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts on February 16, 1956, the members of the Commission were glad to meet with representatives of the Theodore Roosevelt Centennial Commission, the Theodore Roosevelt Association, and National Capital Parks, Interior Department, to discuss the design of the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial, which will be erected on Theodore Roosevelt Island in the Potomac River, north of Arlington Memorial Bridge in Washington, D. C.

Congressman Steven B. Derounian represented the Centennial Commission; Mr. Hermann Hagedorn represented the Association; and Mr. Harry T. Thompson represented National Park Service, Interior Department. Mr. Hagedorn explained the broad philosophic symbolism underlying the design; and Mr. Eric Gugler, the architect chosen by the Centennial Commission, displayed a set of drawings portraying his conception of the memorial, which, we understand, has been acted upon favorably by the Association and the Centennial Commission.

The Commission of Fine Arts approved the design in principle as it was presented. It is hoped that the accomplishment of this important memorial may now proceed without delay. The Commission will be happy to confer further with your representatives as the plans develop.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Senator Joseph C. O'Mahoney
Vice Chairman
Theodore Roosevelt Centennial Commission
344 Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C.

cc-TR Association
Secretary of Interior
National Capital Parks
National Park Service

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.
February 27, 1950

Dear Senator O'Mahoney:

At a meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts on February 16, 1950, the members of the Commission were given to see with representatives of the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Commission, the Theodore Roosevelt Association, and the Capital Parks, Interior Department, to discuss the design of the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial, which will be erected on Theodore Roosevelt Island in the Potomac River, north of Washington Memorial Bridge in Washington, D. C.

Congressman Steven B. Dymally represented the Central Commission; Mr. Herman Fagobon represented the Association; and Mr. Percy F. Thompson represented the Park Service, Interior Department. Mr. Fagobon explained the broad philosophic symbolism underlying the design and Mr. Dymally, the architect chosen by the Central Commission, played a set of drawings portraying the conception of the memorial which, we understand, has been set upon favorably by the Association and the Central Commission.

The Commission of Fine Arts approved the design if it was presented. It is noted that the acknowledgment of this proposal memorial may now proceed without delay. The Commission will be happy to confer further with your representatives at the time of the presentation.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

David L. Taylor
Chairman

Senator Joseph C. O'Mahoney
Vice Chairman
Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Commission
344 Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C.

65-75 Association
Secretary of Interior
National Capital Parks
National Park Service

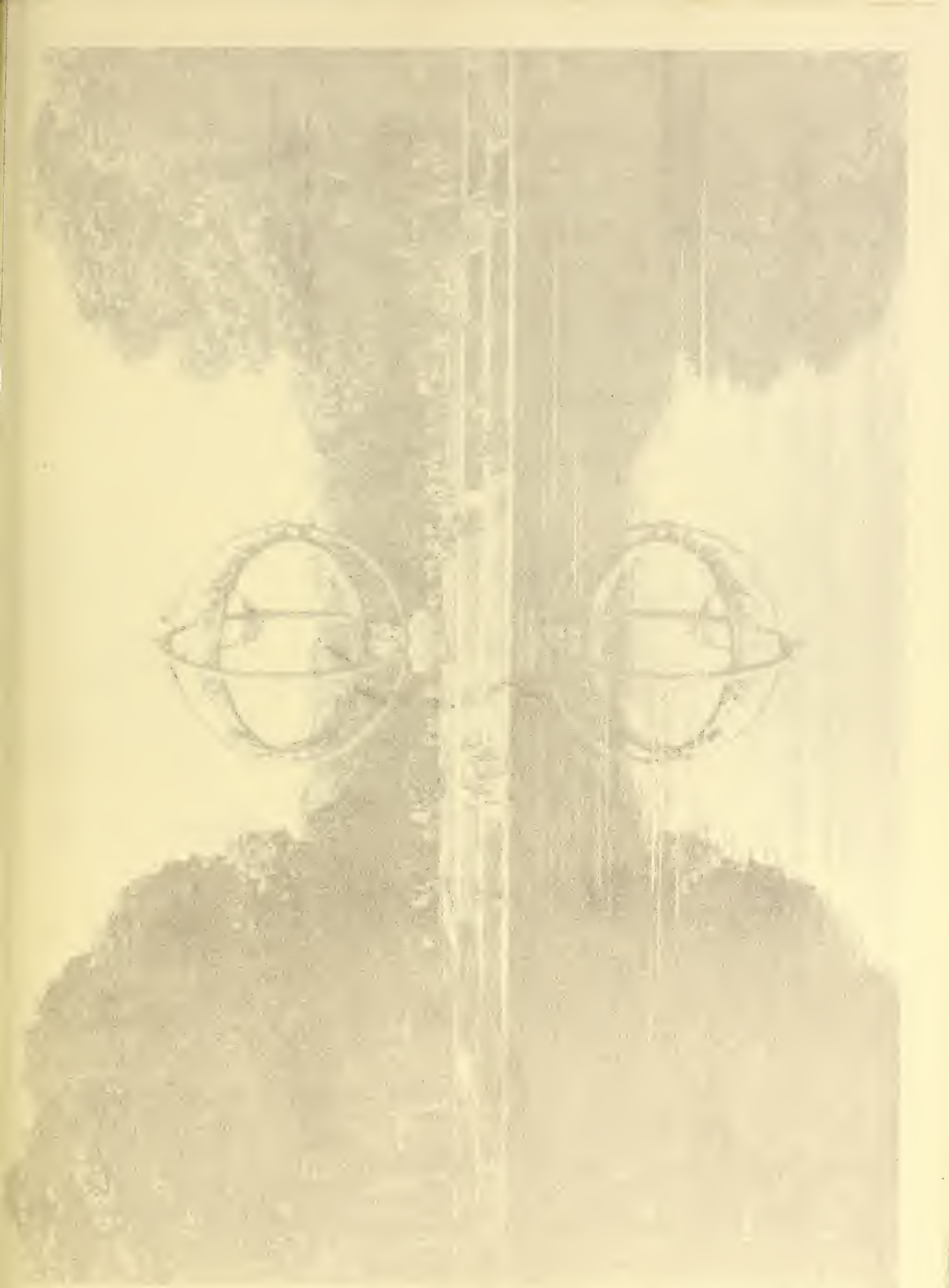


Exhibit A-2



Site for sphere circled in red

March 9, 1956

Dear Mr. Robertson:

We were glad to confer on February 16, 1956, with you, Mr. Brinkley, Mr. Sawyer, and your consultant engineers and architects about the design of the bridge which is projected to cross the Potomac River just north of Constitution Avenue, Northwest, Washington, D. C.

In line with our discussion, we have reviewed our letter of September 14, 1955, in which we stated our approval in principle, of moving the location of the bridge northward from the site authorized by Public Law 704, 84th Congress, as a result of the Theodore Roosevelt Association's granting permission to cross the southern tip of Roosevelt Island. As you will recall, we have always hoped it would not be necessary to bridge the river in this area, but agreed to work closely with you in getting the best possible location and design for the bridge which the Congress approved here. Accordingly, in the interval since September, we have progressively studied, by means of the plans and elevations which you and your consultants have submitted, the overall design of the bridge structure and its approaches on both sides of the river.

Of the three designs submitted by Modjeski and Masters, consulting engineers, and Harbeson, Hough, Livingston, and Larsen, consulting architects, the members of the Commission agreed that the stone-faced bridge design was not so suitable for this location as the steel design. Of the two steel designs, the members preferred the ribbon-type span to the haunch-type span, and you have accordingly developed drawings of the roadway and pier details at a larger scale. No decision has been reached on the design of the pier, nor has any preference of material been expressed, although the use of a dark granite in preference to brownish ashlar has been discussed. The design of the side rail and side walk has been studied, and we believe it will provide as extensive a view of the landscape from the bridge as is possible. The study of the rail and the illumination of the bridge from a central tier of standards appears to be satisfactory.

Of the two pre-stressed concrete designs presented on February 16, 1956, by Freyssinet-Preload, consulting engineers, and Moore and Hutchins, architects, the members of the Commission preferred the design labeled "Pre-stressed concrete design-Cast in place construction." In general, the pre-stressed concrete design was favorably received, although no preference between it and the steel design was registered at the time. The

March 9, 1956

design and spacing of the piers was especially noted. However, the use of special aggregates on the surface of the concrete was definitely considered undesirable. More time is needed to analyze fully the merits of these designs.

The Commission has stressed the point that access to Theodore Roosevelt Island from the bridge is a stipulation made by the Theodore Roosevelt Association in giving permission to cross the southern part of the island. We believe that pedestrian access, and if the Association insists upon it, vehicular access, should be provided where the bridge crosses the island. Pedestrian access should be from both sides of the traffic lanes.

We have never been satisfied about the maze of roadways designed to give access to this bridge. The approaches to the bridge on the District side are, in the opinion of the Commission, less damaging to the Lincoln Memorial now that the connections have been located to the north of Constitution Avenue away from the immediate vicinity of the Lincoln Memorial. However, the overpass at 23rd Street and Constitution Avenue is still considered to be undesirable. We wish definitely to record our opposition to this overpass, which we feel will seriously mar the termination of Constitution Avenue.

The complexity of the approaches to the bridge on the Virginia side of the river is also unfortunate, even with the elimination of a triple overpass. Possibly this complexity could be reduced by omitting some of the connections. The Commission believes, by reason of the proximity of the great memorials that exist or are planned in this vicinity, that we cannot approve the Virginia approaches as now planned.

The making of a beautiful bridge structure stretching above the water from bank to bank is the easiest and most feasible part of this problem, even though it will be achieved at the cost of bisecting a serene river landscape of unique and monumental appeal. Our studies of the problem of the approaches, up to this time, have convinced us that your cooperation and our own efforts can scarcely result in anything but an alleviation of a situation that will long be regretted. The compromise solutions, involving constricted approaches on both sides of the river, serve only to emphasize our conviction that there is too little land available in this area for a traffic artery. Such a bridge and its proposed approaches will irreparably damage the parkland and grassy slopes of the areas surrounding the great memorials on both sides of the river. The members of the Commission fully appreciate the beauty which a fine bridge and well-designed approaches can create in suitable surroundings, but it is their considered opinion

Mr. J. N. Robertson

March 9, 1956

that the most we can hope for here is a twisted complex of approaches to the bridge, on both sides of the river that will scar and mutilate this monumental river landscape, which is so important to the city of Washington.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Rinley
Chairman

Mr. J. N. Robertson, Director
Department of Highways
District of Columbia Government
Washington, D. C.

cc Natl. Acad. of Arts
M. G.

February 29, 1956

Dear Mr. Robertson:

After our side-walk conference and inspection of proposed street lamps, on February 16, the members of the Commission gave the matter extended consideration. We were unanimous in not liking any of the demonstration standards for use within the city of Washington. We also agreed that we would prefer that the existing standards be retained. If the present lighting is insufficient on Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues, we would like to see this shortcoming remedied by increasing the power of the present lamps or by adopting more modern lamps to the existing posts.

We like the appearance of the present lighting system. It is a unified, city-wide system, with similar types of standards and lamps for use in the different classes of streets. Although quite simple in design, they were intended to harmonize with the architecture of our public buildings and national monuments. Thus the lighting system carries throughout the city an expression of Federal dignity and unity, which is a very important asset to the city and one that would lose much of its value if some important streets were lighted with incongruous equipment. Constitution Avenue, for example, is made very impressive at night, and even in daylight, by its dignified, and closely spaced lighting standards. Their design and height are perfectly proportioned to the design and height of the monumental buildings along the avenue and harmonize also with the trees. If much higher standards were used, spaced at wider intervals, and of a design foreign to the architectural style of the buildings, much of the harmony and dignified scale of the avenue would be lost.

We do not at all mean to imply that the new vapor lamp and high standards of modern design are necessarily lacking in artistic merit. Our criticism refers only to their use in the special conditions of the city of Washington. If improved lamps can be employed in harmony with the present system, we shall be glad to consider their use. We admire the way in which you have used colored vapor lights on high standards at the point where the Baltimore-Washington Parkway enters the city. These lights form a dramatic deceleration zone, marking the change from a high

Mr. J. N. Robertson

February 29, 1956

speed freeway to the mixed traffic of urban streets. They are as appropriate to that function as the present street lights of Washington are appropriate to their own special function.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Mr. J. N. Robertson, Director
Department of Highways
District of Columbia Government
Washington, D. C.

COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

The Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, The Commission of Fine Arts, and Miss Katharine N. Rhoades, or Mrs. Eugene Meyer, as provided in Paragraph 4 of the Codicil to the Will of the late Charles L. Freer, have examined the following objects:

- 1 Jade pi; Chinese, early Chou dynasty;
- 1 Gospel manuscript; Armenian, 13th century; in cloth-bound box;
- 1 Painting, winter landscape; Chinese kakemono, I Shan;
- 1 Painting, landscape in ink and color; Chinese, by Wang Chien, dat d 1668;
- 1 Painting, elephants and landscape; Tughal miniature, early 17th century;
- 1 Pottery saucer, white; Chinese, T'zu Chou;
- 3 Pottery figurines (set), female; Chinese, Han dynasty; two standing figures, one kneeling;
- 1 Pottery shallow, footed bowl; Japanese, Kutani ware;
- 1 Pottery haniwa, figure of a warrior; Japanese;

RECEIVED
THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
WASHINGTON, D. C.

FEB 16 1956

NOTED.....

which have been recommended for purchase for the Freer Gallery of Art by Mr. A. G. Wenley, Director, and they hereby approve the purchase.

For the Regents of the Smithsonian Institution.

February 16, 1956

~~David G. Wenley~~

For the Commission of Fine Arts.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION
FOLLOW-UP CONFERENCE ON THE
PREPARATION OF THE TOMB FOR THE WORLD WAR I UNKNOWN

RECEIVED
THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
WASHINGTON, D. C.
FEB 27 1956

16 February 1956

NOTED.....

The Commission of Fine Arts met at 2 p.m. on 16 February 1956 to consider further the plans for the modification of the Tomb of The Unknown Soldier.

Present at the invitation of the Commission were Mr. Lorimer Rich, Architect of the Tomb of The Unknown Soldier, and the following representatives of the Army:

- a. Brigadier General Hugh Mackintosh
- b. Colonel Ray J. Laux, Assistant Quartermaster General for Administration and Services, OQMG
- c. Colonel Roy A. Wall, Chief, Memorial Division, OQMG
- d. Mr. Thomas Hudson Jones, Sculptor, Research and Development Division, OQMG
- e. Mr. Charles J. Dorman, Architect, Cemetery Branch, OQMG
- f. Mr. Aladino Duke, Engineering Division, OCE

Colonel Wall stated that Army representatives, including a representative of Assistant Secretary of the Army Roderick's Office, had viewed a new plan for the modification of the Tomb. The plan is designed to incorporate the following principles recommended by the Commission of Fine Arts on 11 January 1956:

- a. To leave the present sarcophagus unchanged;
- b. To embody simplicity; and
- c. To provide for the burial of additional unknowns on about the same horizontal plane as the one on which the World War I Unknown Soldier is interred.

It also includes the following modifications suggested by The Quartermaster General:

- a. Extension of the plaza area to the north and south to compensate for the loss of space resulting from the addition of the two new crypts;

- b. Construction of sentry boxes of granite; and
- c. Restoration of the landscaping along the approaches to the tomb.

Mr. Rich presented his plan to the Commission, and it was approved in principle. Certain variations in details were suggested by Commission and Army personnel for consideration. These included:

- a. Whether the type of material for capping the crypts should be granite or marble;
- b. Whether the inscription should be limited to the years of the wars or should include the names of the wars;
- c. Whether the inscription should include an upright wreath, an inverted wreath, or any wreath at all; and
- d. Whether the caps should rise above or be flush with the level of the plaza.

The Commission requested the Army to prepare wooden mock-ups, embodying the various ideas and simulating both granite and marble in the models. At 5:30 p.m. on 5 April 1956 the Commission members and Army representatives will proceed to Arlington to view the mock-ups as an aid to the resolution of the items which are in question.

Colonel Wall expressed the thought that the plan would, in his opinion, be supported by the major veteran organizations.

The meeting was adjourned on this matter to reassemble at the Tomb of The Unknown Soldier on the 5th of April at 5:30.

