MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
HELD IN WASHINGTON, D. C., JULY 28, 1933.

The second meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts, during the fiscal year 1933, was held in its office in the Interior Department Building on Friday, July 28, 1933. The following members were present:

Mr. Moore, Chairman,
Mr. Mauran,
Mr. Swartwout,
Mr. Clarke,
Mr. Lawrie,
Mr. Howells,
Mr. Savage,
also Mr. H. P. Caemmerer, Executive Secretary and Administrative Officer.

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

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS: The Minutes of the Meetings held May 26, and July 15, 1933, were approved.

2. SCULPTURE, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE BUILDING: The following letter was received from Mr. Jennewein as to his models for sculpture for the Department of Justice Building, together with photographs:

July 26, 1933

"I understand from Mr. Lawrie that you would like an explanation of the subject matter for the overdoor panel, NL-6, in Constitution Avenue of the Department of Justice Building.

As you probably know, I have had an advisor on subject matter, Dr. Alexander, of Scripps College, Philosophy Department, California. Upon his suggestions I have based my designs.

I am sending you some photographs illustrating some of the stages of development of this particular model.

Nos. 1 and 2. These two designs were discarded because of lack of symmetry in balance.

No.3. At this point Dr. Alexander's suggestions were used and became the content matter of all future sketches. The two end figures represent Law and Order, the woman with the child, Peace, and the opposite

figure of the woman with the basin Prosperity, with the central figure showing Opportunity resulting from well balance. This design, however, was discarded as lacking in dignity and not possessing sufficient balance for a composition in the centre of the building.

No.4. Here the central figure of Opportunity is a pretty girl in columns suggesting uprightness and faith in the future. On either side are Peace and Prosperity with the olive and the laurel as symbols, with Law and Order the protecting end figures. On this sketch it was decided that by omitting some of the symbolical accessories dignity was gained.

No.5 and 6. Rearrangement in design and simplification of details are the most marked changes.

No.7. Mr. Lawrie made a few suggestions which resulted in the refinement of arrangement. It was considered having the names of the figures in back of the heads as part of the design, as is practised here in Greek art, but this was discarded for the inscription from Pliny's Epistles: 'Lege atque Ordine omnia Fiunt' 'By law and order all is accomplished.'.

In this panel the architects felt we could avoid the much hit and symbols and with abstract impressions strive for a typical Greek feeling.

I should like to speak of the nudity of the male figures. Do you think it would be possible to adopt the fig leaf for these figures? It is used in the Vatican and various decorations of the church.

The Commission inspected the photographs, and expressed their preference for No.7 (which Mr. Lawrie had approved). Mr. Moore said that while it is understood Mr. Jennewein has a satisfactory model in general, he was certain the nude male figures would be subject to much criticism. The Commission agreed that Mr. Moore should confer with Mr. Jennewein about this matter.

5. GASOLINE SERVICE STATION FROM 17th STREET AND PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE: The secretary presented protests from the Brookings Institute, the Carnegie Foundation and from Mr. Truxtun Beale against the erection of a Gasoline Service Station on 17th Street, between Pennsylvania Avenue and H Street, N.W., in the square west of Lafayette Park. It would be immediately north of the U.S. Court of Claims building. The secretary stated that the D. C. Building Department has issued a permit for a small gas tank (5' x 5' holding 500 gallons) to accommodate a garage in this location, but that they have not issued a permit for the service station.

The Commission concurred in these protests and decided to request the

Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia to adopt an amendment prohibiting the erection of a Gasoline Service Station in this square, which is a block from the White House. At the same time, on the suggestion of Mr. Clarke, the Zoning Commission is requested to study the question of segregating Gasoline Service Stations in Washington, the same as has been done in New York City and in other cities. (Exhibit A)

4. WIDENING E STREET WEST OF 15th STREET: Mr. Clarke submitted a report made by him on the plan presented by Mr. Eliot, at the meeting of the Commission held on July 15th, as to widening E Street west of 15th Street, so as to give it the same width as E Street north of the Department of Commerce Building.

Mr. Clarke had approved the plan in part, and had requested a revised design embodying the recommendations made in the report, which the Commission approved. Mr. Moore suggested making the paragraph as to prohibiting heavy traffic on the road south of the White House grounds the first paragraph. This was agreed to, and the report was accordingly transmitted to Col. J.A. Woodruff, Executive and Disbursing Officer, of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission (Exhibit B).

5. NEW CALVERT STREET BRIDGE: A report on the question of design for a new Calvert Street Bridge having been received from the Commissioners of the District of Columbia, the secretary had sent a copy of the report to each member of the Commission for study. Major Hotzels in this report recommended the construction of a single span steel arch bridge.

The Act of Congress on the subject reads as follows (Extract from Public No.70, 72d Congress, approved June 16, 1933, page 9--D.C. Appropriation Act for the fiscal year 1934):

'--the sum of $575,000 is hereby made available for the construction of a bridge to replace the Calvert Street Bridge over Rock Creek, including

~~necessary~~ necessary changes in water and sewer mains, and including the employment of engineering or other professional services by contract or otherwise, without reference to section 5709 of the Revised Statutes (U.S.C., title 41, sec.5), or the Classification Act of 1923, as amended, and engineering and incidental expenses, as the Commissioners are authorized to enter into contract or contracts for construction of said bridge at a cost not to exceed $1,250,000; but no part of said sum shall be available for expenditure in connection with the construction of said Calvert Street Bridge until the Commissioners of the District of Columbia shall have made a restudy and reinvestigation to determine which particular type of bridge is most economical and serviceable, and best suited to the proposed location; and the Commission of Fine Arts shall have approved the type of bridge decided upon, and any street railway company using said bridge shall install thereon, at its own expense, an approved underground system of street-car propulsion and, at its own expense, shall thereafter maintain such underground construction, and bear the cost of surfacing and resurfacing and maintaining in good condition the space between the rails, tracks and two feet exterior thereto as provided by law, and shall defray the cost of excess construction occasioned by such use including the relocation and construction of closed pipe pits at the west approach to the bridge in accordance with plans to be approved by the Commissioners of the District of Columbia."

Mr. Moore and Major Clarke came to Washington on Thursday to inspect the site, and in company with the Secretary, as also Prof. Henry V. Hubbard, Landscape Architect member of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, this was done. Careful study was given to the question of the new bridge in its relation to the Connecticut Avenue Bridge (or Taft Bridge). Major Clarke took note of the high trees in the valley crossed by the Calvert Street Bridge, which is an old iron bridge), the stream of Rock Creek, and the two Rock Creek roads, and decided that a multiple arch masonry bridge would be much more preferable aesthetically, since the arches could be seen through the trees, and it would conform to the Connecticut Avenue Bridge with its concrete arches; whereas a steel bridge of single span would be seen only in sections, and it would be ugly. Mr. Moore agreed with Major Clarke as to this. Also Prof. Hubbard thought it should be a masonry bridge of multiple arches.

In the evening Mr. Moore, Mr. Swartwout, Major Clarke, Mr. Powells, and the Secretary met in the office of the Commission. Very careful consideration

was given to the project. Mr. Totten had submitted his model, and this was inspected and criticized. The members present felt that conditions in the valley had changed since 1917 when this model was before the Commission, particularly as to the number of trees, some of them 80 feet high, and the parkway roads, and that at this time five arches would be too many in the valley, ---a bridge according to that model would not fit the locality; also it was thought bad designing not to have the arches of uniform height, and the model showed unnecessary ornament; so that a redesigning of the model would be necessary. At the same time the members decided that a steel arch bridge of single span would be unsuitable in its relation to the Connecticut Avenue Bridge. A 1/16" scale print of the Connecticut Avenue Bridge, Mr. Totten's design, and the steel arch bridge by Mr. Oret, was also considered. A letter from the secretary of Citizens Association, D.C., [illegible] masonry bridge, was read.

These views were reasserted at the meeting of the Commission on Friday morning, when the matter was discussed further. Thereupon the following "Resolution" was drafted by Mr. Moore and agreed to by the Commission:

> "Plans for a new bridge across Rock Creek Parkway, on the line of Calvert Street, were submitted to Congress. Thereupon, Congress ordered the Commissioners of the District of Columbia to make "A restudy and reinvestigation to determine which particular type of bridge is most economical and serviceable and best suited to the proposed location". The approval of the Commission of Fine Arts was required as to the type of bridge to be decided upon.
>
> In order to determine the advice to be given, the Commission of Fine Arts gave extended consideration to the situation.
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> The Commission recognized the opportunity to develop in connection with the Connecticut Avenue Bridge, a composition of the first order. The two bridges have intimate reciprocal relations and should have a common bridge head at Connecticut Avenue. Each is seen from the other over a comparatively short distance. The Connecticut Avenue Bridge in its general character and outlines has won universal approval through the decades since it was built.
>
> The Commission of Fine Arts advises that the Calvert Street Bridge be of masonry with multiple arches, designed in harmony with the Connecticut Avenue Bridge.

The Commission will be pleased to consider such designs as may be submitted by the Commissioners of the District of Columbia along the lines indicated."

The Commission inspected both the Connecticut Avenue Bridge and the present Calvert Street Bridge, driving through the Rock Creek Parkway in the locality, at noon. The Commission again emphasized the fact that an opportunity was offered to build a bridge of the first order, and that an architect should give careful study to a design for the bridge in proper relation with the Connecticut Avenue Bridge. The decision of the Commission as to a multiple arch masonry bridge was confirmed.

The "Resolution" was presented at a joint meeting with the National Capital Park and Planning Commission in the afternoon.

The "Resolution" was formally transmitted to the Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia (Exhibit C).

6. LEE HIGHWAY: Major Clarke reported that he, Mr. Moore, Prof. Hubbard, Mr. Kinnear, Engineer of Arlington County, Mr. Settle and Mr. Jeffers of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and the Secretary, made an inspection trip over the proposed Lee Highway connection with the Arlington Memorial Bridge by way of the north side, and the south side, of Arlington National Cemetery, going back as far as station 107 west of Fort Myer. From there the Lee Highway has been built to Shenandoah National Park, 20 miles, and from there it extends westward across the continent.

It was noted in particular that it would be a very simple matter to build the roadway by way of the south side of Arlington National Cemetery. Mr. Moore said this should be done, but the $25,000 which Congress has made available for paving the existing road on the east side of Arlington, connecting with the Memorial Bridge should not be spent for this purpose, as the road interferes with

the Greater Arlington Plan, in which a direct roadway connecting with Columbia Island, leading to the Arlington Memorial Bridge, is omitted. The secretary stated that he was in Richmond a week ago in conferring with a Committee as to this Lee Highway project, and that the Virginia State Highway Commissioner, Col. Shirley, had advised that it would take an act of the Virginia Legislature to build the 'southern route', which could be done for $110,000; whereas the Legislature has adopted the 'northern route' (which calls for an expenditure of fully $500,000).

Mr. Settle presented the plan of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission showing an alternate route 'B' along the south side of Arlington Cemetery, going through a valley the greater part of the distance, and the straight route (A). Both of these routes were thoroughly inspected. Major Clarke and Prof. Hubbard were consulted as to the amount cut and fill involved in building route A, and the necessity for moving many large houses, as compared to the easy grade of route B. Both routes would make about the same connection with the Arlington Memorial Bridge, and it was thought route B could be built for considerably less money than route A. It would require the removal of but a few small houses, and only one of the large ones.

This matter was brought to the attention of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission during the joint meeting Friday afternoon. At this meeting also Mr. Moore, Mr. Clarke and Prof. Hubbard called attention to the fact, as set forth in a letter of Mr. Hodge in 1926, that to construct Route A would seriously impair the main, central composition of the National Capital, which begins at the Capitol and terminates at the Lincoln Memorial. The axis of the Mall ends at the Lincoln Memorial, and any seeming attempt to carry it across the Potomac River would be an anti-climax. The location of the Lee Highway

on Route A would have it appear that the bridge is being carried across the Potomac River. Major Clarke and Prof. Hubbard protested particularly against cutting a deep gash, possibly 100 feet wide, into the beautiful, wooded Virginia hillside. The Commission felt that the entire hillside from the Key Bridge to Arlington Cemetery should be acquired by the Government, as a protection to the National Capital and for additional park area. As to the proposed Woodrow Wilson Memorial site, on the Virginia hillside, near Arlington Cemetery, the Commission advised that the construction of route D would not interfere with providing a suitable approach to such memorial whenever it is built. The secretary stated that no official information is at hand from the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Foundation that it is proposed to build the memorial in the immediate future.

It was thereupon suggested that the Commission of Fine Arts write to the Governor of Virginia informing him of the facts, and recommending the construction of the 'southern route' at this time. A letter was sent to Governor Pollard accordingly (Exhibit D).

7. LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE REFORMATION: Mr. Porter submitted in person the following letter received from the Building Committee of the congregation building this church:

July 27, 1933.

"The Building Committee of the Church of the Reformation is in receipt of your letter of July 20, 1933, including a copy of a letter addressed to you under date of July 17, 1933, by the Secretary of the Commission of Fine Arts, in which it is stated, among other things, that the Commission of Fine Arts have approved a plan for the setting back of the building line of East Capitol Street by about twenty feet, and that the Church of the Reformation should be governed accordingly in the erection of its proposed church building.

The Church authorities are desirous of cooperating with the Commission of Fine Arts wherever possible to do so. However, the setting back of the building line by twenty feet would totally destroy the land for the purpose for which it was purchased, and the erection of a church building to meet absolute requirements would be impossible.

The Building Committee understands, upon competent authority, that any change in the building of East Capitol Street is a matter solely under ~~[illegible]~~

the jurisdiction of Congress, and that no action of that kind has been taken or is even contemplated. Therefore, the decision of the Building Committee is that the original plan should go forward as rapidly as possible."

The Commission considered the matter very carefully. It was pointed out that the new building, if built according to the new building line for widening East Capitol Street, as agreed upon at the meeting of the Commission on July 18th, would be reduced in length from 127 to 109 feet. They have a 94 foot frontage. Mr. Moore said it creates a serious problem, as East Capitol Street should be uniformly developed according to the plan adopted.

The matter was brought to the attention of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission in the afternoon. The Plat Book was consulted and it was found that possibly an adjustment could be made in the alley back of the building lot. Mr. Nolan, City Planner, stated that during the morning session of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission the question of drafting legislation for the widening of East Capitol Street was considered, and providing for reimbursement to future builders on East Capitol Street, who would erect buildings to conform to the new building line.

The Commission of Fine Arts decided that Mr. Porter should confer with the National Capital Park and Planning Commission on the question of location of the new church building (Exhibit E).

8. RURAL PAINTINGS FOR GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS: The Commission gave careful consideration to correspondence received from the White House (Exhibit F) suggesting a scheme for providing rural paintings for the Government buildings.

The correspondence had been referred to Mr. Savage, who reported fully on the subject, disapproving the scheme. The Commission unanimously adopted the report of Mr. Savage, and it was embodied in a letter to the President. (Exhibit G)

9. STORE BUILDING, CONNECTICUT AVENUE AND CULVERT STREET: Mr. David A. Baer, builder, and Mr. Robert W. Scholz, architect, 1025 F Street, N.W., submitted a design for a new store building, at the northwest corner of Connecticut Avenue and Culvert Street, two stories in height.

The architect members of the Commission inspected the design and were not at all pleased with it. Mr. Swartout suggested placing the entrance on the corner and simplifying the facade. Mr. Baer said he would like to use limestone, but the Commission thought a light brick was suitable. He regarded the adjacent building, to which the Commission of Fine Arts had given approval a few years ago, much inferior to the one he intends to build.

At noon, during an inspection of the Connecticut Avenue Bridge, the Commission had luncheon in May's Restaurant, which is adjacent to the lot on which the new store building is to be built. Mr. Lauren and other members of the Commission took note of the architecture of the building, and said it was well designed; and requested the secretary to advise Mr. Baer and Mr. Scholz that they were mistaken in saying that the existing building was badly designed and that they should take it for a pattern and build the same style of building to the corner. Also they should take note of the arrangement of the windows on the second floor, and to use light brick for building.

The secretary gave this information and criticism to Mr. Baer and Mr. Scholz and a revised design embodying the ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ recommendations will be submitted to the Commission.

10. BUST OF GOETHE: Under date of July 20, 1933, the following letter was received from Col. J. A. Woodruff, Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, requesting the Commission to inspect a bust of Goethe in Meridian Hill Park:

Reference is made to previous correspondence on this subject. This Office now has the bust and has constructed a temporary wooden pedestal therefor as shown in the enclosed sketch.

Colonel Grant has selected a location in Potomac Park and I will be glad to have the bust set up in time for the next meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts if you will be so kind as to let me know the date and hour when the Commission can inspect the bust in place. It is not believed desirable to leave the bust in place any longer than necessary at this time.

The Act of Congress, permitting the placing of the bust of Goethe in the National Capital, approved March 4, 1911, reads as follows (Public Resolution No. 75, 72d Congress):

> BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED, that the President of the United States is hereby authorized to accept as a gift of the Goethe Society of America (Incorporated) a bust of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe for erection on the public grounds of the United States in the city of Washington, District of Columbia, on a site selected by the Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, with the approval of the National Commission of Fine Arts: provided, That if no such site suitable for the purpose shall be found, the bust shall be accepted for display in the National Museum or such other appropriate location as may indicate an appreciation of the intellectual achievements and services of Goethe to mankind.'

The Commission made the inspection toward noon. The site selected for the bust was one of the niches at the north end of Potomac Park, where the bust had been placed on a temporary pedestal, and it was disapproved. Mr. Lamb did not consider the bust a work of art, but the other members of the Commission concurred in this. The bust is in bronze, by L. Boes, sculptor, of Germany.

The Commission felt the bust could be placed in one of the niches in the ledge of the Upper Garden and treated as a garden ornament; or else in the National Museum. A report was sent to Col. Woodruff accordingly (Exhibit V).

The Commission met with the National Capital Park and Planning Commission for a joint session at 2:00 p.m.

The Commission adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

COPY

July [illegible], 1[illegible].

The Zoning Commission,
District Building,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sirs:

At the meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts on July [illegible], 19[illegible], the Commission had before them several protests, from property owners in the square east of Lafayette Park, against the erection of a gasoline service station in that square, to face Seventeenth Street immediately north of the United States Court of Claims building.

The Commission unanimously concur in these protests, and respectfully advise that the zoning regulations be amended, so as to prohibit the erection of a gasoline service station in the square above mentioned. The Commission regard a gasoline service station of an industrial character and they should not be erected so near to the White House.

At the same time, the Commission suggest that a study be made of the gasoline service stations that are in the National Capital with a view to segregating them in particular areas. This has been done in New York City and other cities.

Respectfully yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

EXHIBIT A

COPY

July [illegible], 1[illegible].

Dear Colonel Woodruff:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting on July [illegible], 1[illegible], gave consideration to a plan submitted in your behalf by Mr. Elliot for the widening of E Street west of Fifteenth Street, to conform to the present width of E Street north of the Department of Commerce building. The plan was referred to Major Gilmore D. Clarke, landscape architect member of the Commission, and he reports as follows:

It is important to eliminate all business traffic from the roads located between 16th and 17th streets, Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues. These roads should be considered as park drives, and only such commercial traffic permitted as may be necessary to reach the service entrances of the White House; State, War and Navy building; and the Treasury Department. If this were done it would go a long way in solving the increasingly difficult problem in this area. I think this is an opportune time urgently to recommend that the parking of cars along these drives be prohibited, with the exception of the necessary parking on East Executive Avenue. From the standpoint of the visitor to Washington, it is most unfortunate to have to drive between rows of Government employes' parked automobiles. I fully realize that the parking problem is a serious one. However, if there is only a limited space for parking these vehicles the whole situation will work itself out, with the result that many Government employes will be forced to take buses or street cars to work. It is to be hoped that in the near future the parking of automobiles will be prohibited in the parks of the

National Capital in the City Beautiful.

It is our understanding that, at the present time, we are only interested in that portion between 15th Street and the Ellipse, south of the White House grounds. I recommend approval of this portion of the plan with the following exceptions:

A. The curb lines of the west side of Sherman Square should be changed in accordance with the orange pencil lines shown on the blue print. This is desirable in order to eliminate a harsh tangent originally shown on the print. The radius of the curve of the curb, at a point where E Street joins East Executive Avenue, should be increased approximately as indicated on the blue print in orange pencil.

B. The Commission agreed that it is undesirable to have a steep bank along the north side of E Street, between 15th Street and East Executive Avenue. They further agreed that the walk on the west side of 15th Street, between Treasury Avenue and E Street, is undesirable, and therefore I suggest that the area outside of the circular walk surrounding the General Sherman Statue be regraded to provide a uniform slope between the surrounding streets and this circular park, eliminating all walls and steep embankments. This curve should be slightly O'd so as to be pleasing in profile. This will necessitate the removal of a good deal of the planting outside of the Circle, which I think is most desirable. The planting of the area should be the subject of careful study and I think should be limited to grass and trees, omitting bushes. It may be desirable to plant hedges which may be necessary to restrict the public to the use of the walks. The two paths between the circular walk around the Sherman Statue and E Street should be restudied, in view of the new grading which is to be accomplished.

The blue print shows the location of a possible future [illegible], which is to be on south of East Executive Avenue, between E Street and the Ellipse. In my opinion this should never be built, since it cuts the area up into too many small parts. I would much prefer to have it omitted from the plans.

The Commission of Fine Arts concur in the report of Major Lewis, and advise that a revised plan be submitted to the Commission embodying these suggestions as to changes in the Sherman and the Rochambeau Statues.

Very truly yours,

Col. J. A. Tompkins,
Executive and Disbursing Officer,
National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

(Signed) Charles Moore,
Chairman.

EXHIBIT B

July [illegible], 1[illegible].

Dear Sirs:

I have to report that at the meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts on July 30, 1[illegible], the Commission adopted the following Resolution with reference to a new Calvert Street Bridge:

> Plans for a new bridge across Rock Creek Park, on the line of Calvert Street, were submitted to Congress. Thereupon Congress ordered the Commissioners of the District of Columbia to make a 'full report on reinvestigation to determine which particular type of bridge is most economical and advisable and best suited to the proposed location'. The approval of the Commission of Fine Arts was required as to the type of bridge to be decided upon.
>
> In order to determine the advice to be given, the Commission of Fine Arts gave extended consideration to the situation.
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> The Commission recognized the opportunity to develop in connection with the Connecticut Avenue bridge, a composition of the first order. The two bridges have intimate reciprocal relations and should have a common bridge head at Connecticut Avenue. This is seen from the other side a consideration of short distance. The Connecticut Avenue bridge in its general character and outlines has won universal approval through the decades since it was built.
>
> The Commission of Fine Arts believes that the Calvert Street bridge be of reinforced concrete arches, designed in harmony with the Connecticut Avenue bridge.
>
> The Commission will be pleased to consider such designs as may be submitted by the Commissioners of the District of Columbia along the lines indicated.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Very respectfully, yours,

(Signed) H. L. Stimson,
Secretary.

The Board of Commissioners
of the District of Columbia,
Washington, D.C.

EXHIBIT C

COPY

July 20, 1932.

Dear Governor Pollard:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting on July 18, 1932, gave further consideration to the question of the proposed Lee Highway connection with the Arlington Memorial Bridge, both by way of the north side and the south side of the Arlington National Cemetery.

The Commission recommend construction of the road by way of the south side of Arlington National Cemetery at this time. The south connection is economical and simple. It provides for everyone, esthetic and practical.

There are serious and fundamental objections to route A, along the north side of Arlington National Cemetery. To construct Route A would seriously impair the main, central composition of Washington, which begins at the Capitol and terminates at the Lincoln Memorial. The axis of the Mall ends at the Lincoln Memorial. Any seeming attempt to carry it across the Potomac River would be an anti-climax. The location of the Lee Highway on Route A would make it appear that the Mall axis is being carried across the Potomac River. The Highway would cut a deep gash in the beautiful, wooded hillside. This the Commission feel is a fatal objection to Route A.

On inspection of the line of Route A by the Landscape Architect member of the Commission of Fine Arts, Major Gilmore D. Clarke, in company with Professor Henry V. Hubbard, Landscape Architect member of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, it was evident that the line is not only a disturbance to the Washington composition, but it is also unduly expensive;

because the road that fit the topography.

In the opinion of the Commission of Fine Arts a route combining less costly, and open to none of the objections above mentioned, is indicated as Route D on the accompanying print. This route extends through a valley the greater part of the distance. It would connect with the Arlington Memorial Bridge in about the same manner as Route A.

The Commission understand that legislative action will be necessary by the State of Virginia to permit constructing the "southern route". We trust that with your approval such action will be taken. As you are aware, Congress has approved the construction of the "southern route". The Commission have been informed that it could be built in expense of $110,000, whereas fully $500,000 would be needed to build the "northern route".

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Very respectfully, yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Hon. John Garland Pollard,

Governor of the State of Virginia,

Richmond, Virginia.

EXHIBIT D

COPY

July 21, 1930.

Dear Mr. Porter:

With reference to the letter from the Building Committee of the Lutheran Church of the Reformation, dated July 17th, which you presented to the Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting on July 18th, requesting the inclusion of their new church building on East Capitol Street, I wish to inform you that the Commission decided that you should work up this matter with the National Capital Park and Planning Commission at once. The Commission brought the matter to the attention of the Park and Planning Commission during the day, and it would seem important that no delay in the matter, giving rise to a fine church building.

The Commission of Fine Arts will be pleased to consider further sketches for your church building project whenever you wish to present them.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) C. M. Goethe,

Secretary.

Mr. Irwin T. Porter,
Porter & Lockie, Architects,
Dupont Circle,
Washington, D.C.

EXHIBIT C

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

July 14, 1933

My dear Mr. Moore:

I am sending herewith a letter and accompanying statement on the subject of mural painting from Mr. George Biddle. Will you not be good enough to look over these papers and with their return let the President have your opinion?

Very sincerely yours,

M. A. LeHand

M. A. LeHAND
Private Secretary

Charles Moore, Esq.,
Chairman, The Commission of Fine Arts,
Interior Department Building,
Washington, D. C.

Enclosures

Exhibit F.

GEORGE BIDDLE
CROTON-ON-HUDSON
NEW YORK

June 28, 1933.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I wrote a letter to Franklin, whom I had known in school, about the possibility of organizing a national school of modern mural art. Rivera had told me personally that his success in Mexico was due because he went directly to President Obregon and asked that the younger modern artists be given an opportunity, at workmen's wages, to carry out in murals the ideals of Mexican nationalism.

There are many of our younger mural modern artists today who are conscious of the economic and social revolution through which America is going and who would be eager on the same conditions to express in permanent art forms the ideals for which the present administration is fighting.

Franklin wrote me that he was interested in helping modern art through mural painting and suggested that I should talk the matter

GEORGE BIDDLE
CROTON-ON-HUDSON
NEW YORK

over with Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Robert who has charge of the Public Buildings Work.

Since then I have organized a group of the younger mural painters and have spoken to leading architects and such persons as Walter Lippmann, Susan LaFollette, Bruce Bliven and Stark Young. They are all genuinely enthusiastic.

I saw Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Robert in Washington. I think he too was really interested and promised to talk the matter over with me at greater length in a few weeks when he will be less snowed under with the reorganization of his department. Rexford Tugwell, at whose house I stopped, has also promised to help me.

I believe that you will be really interested in this movement which is essentially liberal and educational. Mural art can never be important unless it is interpreting a great social and collective idea. That is why the best in Radio City was doomed to failure. And official mural art can never

GEORGE BIDDLE
CROTON-ON-HUDSON
NEW YORK

develop unless it is freed from the morass of red tape which at present stifles it.

I am taking the liberty of enclosing you a statement, which more or less covers our position. If it is possible, and you are not too busy, I should much appreciate the occasion of talking the matter over with you either in New York or at Hyde Park.

I think this may be a rare chance which may not occur again for another generation to create a vital school of American Mural Painting.

Sincerely
George Biddle

GB:EG

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt,
Hyde Park,
New York.

A REVIVAL OF MURAL PAINTING

American art is today ripe for a national school of mural painting, with which to express in a permanent art form the social and democratic ideals for which the present administration is fighting. The younger, liberal artists are socially conscious of the economic adjustment through which America is passing. If given a free hand they would be willing to work at mechanic's wages on government projects.

The contemporary Mexican school of fresco painting is acknowledged to be the most vital national mural art since the Italian renascence. It was made possible because a small group of Mexican painters asked Obregon, the President, to be given mural space on government buildings, at workmen's wages, on which to express, unhampered, the social ideals of Mexican nationalism.

Three things are needed to give the necessary impetus to such a movement -

(1) a few social minded, creative artists of the first rank, representing the modern movement, and experienced in mural painting;

(2) the assignment to them by the government of public wall space on which to express the social ideals of the government and people;

(3) the understanding that in the personal expression and technical execution, the artist be given as complete freedom as possible. Interference would only tend to emasculate his work. The government may exercise the right to assign mural subjects and veto any expression of opinion which it considers embarrassing.

With such a general understanding certain artists have expressed their enthusiasm to cooperate with the government. Among them are Thomas Benton, George Biddle, Edward Laning, Reginald Marsh, Henry Varnum Poor, Boardman Robinson and Maurice Sterne. These artists have done work at the mural exhibition at the New York Modern Museum, for Radio City, for the Century of Progress and elsewhere. They are represented in leading Museums throughout the country.

They would agree to work at mechanics' wages for the government in Washington or in other assigned cities.

In addition to the contract price paid the artist, the cost of execution is negligible. In fresco painting the only cost is the scaffolding and preparation of the wall surface, which can be done by any mason working an hour a day on a suitably prepared surface.

We understand that the Treasury Department which has charge of Public Buildings Works has the authority through its proper administrative channels to directly commission artists to do mural work on government buildings.

It is suggested that a single director be appointed who shall coordinate the artists in their work and to whom they shall be responsible. He in turn shall be directly responsible for their work either to the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury or to the advisory committee of architects under him.

Once the government has given this impetus it is intended to do all that is possible through the publicity of the press, liberal magazines and other agencies to strengthen the movement in other cities. Such a campaign can foster the idea among architects and the general public of cooperating with painters and sculptors in planned construction. At the same time the younger mural artists and architectural sculptors may be organized in various cities, and they, themselves, eventually select the men to whom work is given. In this way the movement which has been endorsed by the government can be stimulated and developed through local interest.

TO SUM UP

(1) It is believed that a vital national school of mural art can be started through the endorsement and cooperation of the national government;

(2) That the free expression of the artist can be galvanized to express the social and economic ideals for which the present administration is fighting;

(3) That in a period of economic depression the government should give the same relative assistance to our artists as to other branches of labor;

(4) That such assistance from the government will encourage other agencies and that the movement is economically sound and in keeping with the government's policy to stimulate recovery.

COPY

July 26, 1933.

The President,

The White House.

Sir:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at their regular meeting, gave careful consideration to the correspondence from Mr. George Biddle, referred to this Commission by your Private Secretary, on the subject of mural painting for the Government buildings. The matter was brought to the particular attention of Mr. Eugene F. Savage, painter member of the Commission, who reports as follows:

"If I understand the matter correctly, Mr. Biddle asks that mural spaces in Government buildings be turned over to them, for the founding of a painting tradition in complete freedom from interference, for which they are to be guaranteed a mechanic's wage without the usual incidental financial obligations.

I am not competent to pass upon the question as to whether the Government might want to found an art school or directly sponsor a movement, but I shall mention several assumptions and conditions in the statement that would probably prove fatal to the project, however worthy its general intention.

The men named in the group are painters of easel pictures of an incidental nature, one of them having taken up mural painting to some extent. It is their intention to execute their designs al fresco - a medium both noble in itself and economic, but slightly questionable in a climate where artificial heating is required throughout the year, the wall being only that of crystallized lime, which cannot stand repeated cleaning.

The request and intention ignores the architect, who as master builder has conceived the building as a complete, harmonious unit, and is entitled to individual consideration to achieve it.

The efforts at mural painting by some of the group and others of their persuasion, though not without good merit in many respects, have been attended by much controversy and embarrassment to those authorizing the work, condemned by the profession for chaotic composition, inharmonious in style and scale with the building and in subject matter, professing a social faith which the general public does not share. I think the Government would be glad to avoid such experiences.

The group also ignores other branches of the mural painting profession, the National Society of Mural Painters, and also an already established tradition built up by its pioneers and fostered by the American Academy at Rome, which was chartered by Congress for that purpose, and which has brought forth a younger, more liberally minded and murally trained modern talent.

The generally recognized beauty of Washington has in no sense been the result of experimentation in its planning and building; on the contrary, the men selected - architects, sculptors, painters and landscape architects - who have brought it about, were chosen for being of tried and proven dependability, socially minded enough in their work to submit themselves to the larger plan and achieve real collaboration in the various associated arts. I would favor the retention of the open door.

The Commission heartily approved this report by Mr. Savage.

The correspondence is herewith returned, as desired.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Very respectfully, yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

EXHIBIT G

Draft

July [illegible], 1930.

Dear Colonel Sherrill:

In accordance with your request, the Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting on July [illegible], 1930, inspected the bust of Goethe at [illegible] suggested as your preference for one of the two niches at the north end of Meridian Hill Park.

The Commission disapproves the location. The bust and pedestal are out of scale with the niche. If the bust is to go in Meridian Hill Park it should be placed in one of the niches in the hedge and treated as a garden ornament. The bust itself is without distinction as a work of art. Perhaps the owners would prefer to have it placed in the National Museum, as the act of Congress of the [illegible] permits.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Col. U. S. Grant 3rd, Director,
Public Buildings and Public Parks
of the National Capital,

Washington, D.C.

[illegible]