



Smithsonian Institution

January 12, 2022

To: Interested Parties

Re: Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden Revitalization – Public Consultation Process

On behalf of the Smithsonian Institution, thank you for your interest in the Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden Revitalization project. This project undertook a long public consultation process pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Thanks to the dedication of the members of the public that invested a significant amount of time to participate in consultation meetings, review documents, and provide written comments, the project evolved in a way that celebrates historic resources, with sensitive adaptations for climate change, accessibility, visitor experience, and enables the mission of the Hirshhorn.

The Smithsonian Institution acknowledges the significant effort it takes for the public to follow and participate in our projects. Please click on the adjacent link for an executive summary of the public consultation process for the Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden Revitalization project. The documents on this webpage contain the complete history of public consultation for the project and will be maintained per a Memorandum of Agreement.

Comments and questions on the Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden project, and other Smithsonian Institution projects, are welcome any time to preservation@si.edu. We hope that you will consider joining the public consultation on a future Smithsonian Institution project.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy J. Bechtol". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Nancy Bechtol

Director, Smithsonian Facilities



Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden Revitalization - Public Consultation Overview

The Smithsonian Institution (SI) carried out public consultation on the Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden Revitalization in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act between April 2019 and November 2021. A Memorandum of Agreement was executed in November 2021 with the National Capital Planning Commission, District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as signatories. By carrying out the terms of the Agreement, the Smithsonian Institution fulfills its responsibilities under Section 106. This document serves as an executive summary of the consultation history and notes the content of presentation material maintained as a record on the project webpage.

The Sculpture Garden project enables the Hirshhorn to fulfill its mission as the nation's modern and contemporary art museum through the following modifications: replacement of failed perimeter walls and infrastructure for stormwater management; correction of code deficiencies; protection of current and future artwork, trees, plants, and facilities; improvement of access and visitor comfort through universal accessibility, increased shade, and seating; and reestablishment of the Sculpture Garden, Plaza, and Museum as a single interconnected campus. The project increases the ability for the Hirshhorn to display its modern sculpture collection by almost 50 percent and adapt to ongoing evolutions in art-making by creating outdoor galleries for the presentation of performance art, large-format sculpture, and site specific installations.

The SI is appreciative of the interest and involvement of consulting parties. The long public consultation process shaped the design to maintain a greater degree of historic integrity while achieving the project goals. The SI is committed to implementing the terms of the project's Memorandum of Agreement by carrying out design actions that minimize adverse effects and employ mitigation measures.

Public Consultation Process

The SI developed eight design alternatives for the reflecting pool and three design alternatives for the inner partition wall in response to comments from consulting parties. These alternatives minimize adverse effect on character-defining features of the Sculpture Garden. Proposed changes to these two historic features were of greatest interest to consulting parties.

Beginning in April 2019, SI provided opportunities for public participation, review, and comment as the design developed. This project benefitted from over 100 consulting parties and members of the public during design development.

- An active project website has been maintained since April 2019. The project website will be maintained per the project Memorandum of Agreement.
- All meeting materials and supplementary information continue to be available on the project website to serve as a public project record.
- Eight public consultation meetings were held, each with live opportunities to engage with Smithsonian Facilities staff, Hirshhorn Museum staff, and the design team for comments and questions.



Smithsonian Facilities

Each public consultation meeting was followed by a 30-day period for written comments for Smithsonian consideration and the project administrative record.

- Public consultation meetings included three open houses with opportunities to discuss in-situ mock-ups and exhibits with the design team and Smithsonian staff.

Public Consultation Meetings Overview

- **Meeting 1: April 10, 2019.** *Initiation of the Section 106 process and introduction of the Hirshhorn Building Envelope Repair and the Sculpture Garden Revitalization projects.*

Meeting content proposed a draft Area of Potential Effects, coordinated with the South Mall Master Plan Programmatic Agreement. To define the undertaking, the purpose and need, curatorial vision, and concept design details were reviewed. Four (4) reflecting pool alternatives were presented, including alternatives that retained the 1974 pool as a recessed water feature within an enlarged pool. Three (3) alternatives for the Plaza access entrance to the underground passage were presented. An overview of the architectural and landscape history of the Hirshhorn campus, and Determination of Eligibility for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places with a period of significance of 1974 were presented. Extant original features and plantings from 1974 and 1981 were analyzed. Written comments were accepted through May 3, 2019. Comments from consulting parties requested re-evaluation of the significance of the 1981 Lester Collins modifications.

- **Meeting 2: September 11, 2019.** *Evaluation of two stacked stone wall mock-ups installed in the Sculpture Garden.*

The second public consultation meeting provided an open house site visit with SI staff in the Sculpture Garden to evaluate two (2) stacked stone wall mock-up options. Written comments were accepted through September 30, 2019. Comments from consulting parties reached a consensus on “Mock-up A” featuring warm toned neutral granite stones with an organic arrangement

- **Meeting 3: February 24, 2020.** *Public presentation of the findings of the integrity and historic significance of the Sculpture Garden by a third-party consultant, Robinson & Associates, commissioned by Smithsonian Facilities.*

The report researched landscape architect Lester Collins and analyzed changes over time to the Sculpture Garden, including spatial and visual relationships. Written comments were accepted through March 25, 2020. As a result of this analysis and consultation, the Robinson report was finalized and the period of significance for the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden was revised to 1974, 1981.

The public presentation included the finalized the Area of Potential Effects. A fifth reflecting pool alternative was presented, featuring the 1974 pool within a surrounding tier of water, an art and performance platform to the south, and a new tiered water feature. The presentation included an analysis of the evolution of the Garden in 1974, 1981, 2020, and the proposed design including spatial organization, circulation, and views and vistas.

- **Meeting 4: May 27, 2020.** *Public presentation via Zoom on the draft Assessment of Effects on Historic Resources and concept design development.*



Smithsonian Facilities

Meeting content presented a draft Assessment of Effects on Historic Resources, provided to consulting parties in advance of the meeting. Each action identified with the undertaking was described with the proposed assessment of effect, with eight (8) adverse effects identified, including: Inner Partition Wall, Reflecting Pool, North Stair and Lateral North Ramps, Accessibility, Underground Passage Art Installation, Underground Passage Plaza Access, Paving, and Cumulative Adverse Effect on the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. Two (2) design alternatives to reconstruct the historic balustrade to meet code were presented. Three (3) revised Plaza access alternatives to the underground passage were presented. Written comments were accepted through June 26, 2020. Comments from consulting parties requested reassessment of the effect determination on the new stacked stone walls, inner partition wall, and reflecting pool.

• **Supplementary Information: August 21, 2020.** *SI provided an electronic document via the project website with supplemental information on alterations to the inner partition wall and reflecting pool intended for review in conjunction with the final Assessment of Effects on Historic Resources.*

SI provided documentation on the reevaluation of the use of concrete for the inner partition wall, found detrimental to the curatorial vision. Two (2) additional pool alternatives were developed, noting the SI's preferred alternative. Written comments were accepted through September 24, 2020.

• **Meeting 5: October 7, 2020.** *Public presentation via Zoom on the final Assessment of Effects on Historic Resources, and to introduce minimization and mitigation measures to resolve adverse effects.*

Meeting content presented the final Assessment of Effects on Historic Resources, with new stacked stone walls re-assessed and determined an adverse effect. Nine (9) adverse effects were identified, including: Inner Partition Wall, Stacked Stone Walls (New), Reflecting Pool, North Stair and Lateral North Ramps, Accessibility, Underground Passage Art Installation, Underground Passage Plaza Access, Paving, Cumulative Adverse Effect on the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. Minimization and mitigation measures were proposed, with specific design actions and alternatives that minimize adverse effects. Written comments were accepted through November 6, 2020. Comments from consulting parties requested SI to reconsider changes to the inner partition wall and reflecting pool and suggested specific mitigation items which were adopted.

• **Meeting 6: March 10, 2021.** *Public presentation via Zoom on a Supplemental Narrative requested from the December 2020 National Capital Planning Commission preliminary approval on the programmatic rationale for changes to the inner partition wall and reflecting pool.*

Supplemental Narrative was provided to consulting parties in advance of the meeting. Meeting content proposed a Revised Reflecting Pool alternative, consisting of the 1974 pool maintained with a new water feature to the south. Design updates were provided, including landscape changes.

Written comments were accepted through March 31, 2021. Per consulting parties request, SI subsequently posted a memo to the project website explaining diagrams on the acoustical analysis of the Central Gallery. Comments from consulting parties urged the SI to reconstruct the inner partition wall in-kind, and some comments noted the Revised Reflecting Pool alternative minimizes adverse effect. SI subsequently provided an update to the consulting parties of the intent to use the Revised Reflecting Pool alternative in the final design.



Smithsonian Facilities

- **Meetings 7 and 8: June 16 and July 7, 2021.** *Public presentation of the draft Memorandum of Agreement and open house site visit to evaluate mock-ups and exhibits.*

The July meeting content reviewed the draft Memorandum of Agreement, which was provided to consulting parties in advance of the meeting and posted to the project website on June 4, 2021. Both meetings included an open house in the Sculpture Garden to review a full-scale stacked stone wall and planting mock-ups, and exhibit renderings with Smithsonian Facilities staff, Hirshhorn staff, and the design team. Exhibit renderings addressed the inner partition wall changes effects in the upper Garden and Central Gallery. Written comments were accepted through July 21, 2021. This meeting was held across two dates per the request of consulting parties.

- **Supplementary Information: September 14, 2021.** *SI provided an electronic document via the project website to provide supplemental information on a new design alternative for the inner partition wall.*

At the request of consulting parties and agencies, SI developed a new design alternative for the inner partition wall, which reconstructs the wall at a reduced height to meet accessibility and wayfinding goals, but in aggregate concrete to retain a higher degree of historic integrity. Written comments were accepted through October 6, 2021. There was some consensus from consulting parties that the lowered inner partition wall in aggregate concrete minimizes adverse effect.

- **Final Memorandum of Agreement: October 20, 2021.** *SI provided the final Memorandum of Agreement for consulting parties review prior to execution.*

The final Memorandum of Agreement was posted for consulting parties review prior to execution. The Agreement was accompanied by a cover letter explaining final changes, written in coordination with the Signatories to the Agreement. The Memorandum of Agreement was executed on November 15, 2021, signed by the Smithsonian Institution, District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the National Capital Planning Commission.

External Agency Review Summary

US Commission of Fine Arts

| | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Concept Design Approval | May 16, 2019 |
| Final Design Approval with delegated accessibility condition | July 15, 2021 |
| Final Design Approval of signage package | November 18, 2021 |
| Staff Acceptance of accessibility approach | November 29, 2021 |
| Final Approval for NCPC approved inner partition | January 20, 2022 (expected) |

National Capital Planning Commission

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Concept Design Approval of Comments | June 6, 2019 |
| Preliminary Design Approval, except inner partition and pool | December 3, 2020 |
| Informational Briefing on inner partition and pool | June 3, 2021 |
| Final Design approval with modified pool and partition | December 2, 2021 |