

A copy of this is in all press kits.

Briefly, our agreement was to propose these solutions. We fulfilled our agreement to the letter, and then some. We made no guarantee on the location. We made our best effort to get them approved by this Commission in October, and with that we fulfilled the totality of our agreement.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you very much.

All right. Members of the Commission, I think we should have a chance to deliberate.

The agenda item, as I understand it, is to react to the three proposals before us, as to the location of the sculpture and flag staff additions to the Vietnam Veterans memorial. It is a site plan review. It does not include detailing as to surface treatment and so forth. The subject of lighting is not involved, and it is purely a question to complete the process that was begun at the October meeting and in which this Commission wholeheartedly and unanimously approved the idea of including these two additional elements. It is really three elements when one recognizes that the flag pole base is the vehicle that will bear the proposed inscription. So that is what is before us, and we have three options here, labeled "A", "B" and "C" on the graphics on the wall.

MR. CHASE: Could I ask one question? Since the

agenda makes no reference to the directory, is it true, then, that you do not want that taken into consideration?

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Let's have a separate discussion on that. Let's do this agenda item first. We are delighted to review the directory, and there may be other issues we want to discuss.

MR. STONE: May I make a motion, Mr. Chairman? I think we have deliberated on this a number of hours; we have conducted a number of site inspections, and I think I would like to make a motion that alternative "A" be considered as the preferred plan site of the Commission of Fine Arts.

MR. CHASE: I will second it.

MR. NOVAK: Second.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Any discussion?

I might, for purposes of the record, explain a little about what my own thinking is, and then we will see whether this would represent a consensus of the Commission.

My own view is that scheme "A" is the preferred of the three schemes, although I think that there are things to be said in each of the other cases. The problem is trying to visualize what it will feel like eventually, and we operate in the design world with various shorthand techniques, one of which is a plan, another is a model, both of which can

be extremely misleading.

The plan for option "B", for example, has, in purely aesthetic terms, a certain asymmetry and appeal to it because the flag pole and the sculpture have lined up with the apex of the footprint of the memorial wall. This, for the record, I think should be pointed out is a departure from the proposal of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund and the Department of Interior at the October meeting, when, as I recall, these elements were in slightly different positions. They have become more regularized now and have the logic of axial siting to them. However, one must consider that in context. First of all, these elements will, presumably, hardly ever, if not never, be approached in an axial way. The greatest density of trees defends an approach from the axis from the south. One cannot see the wall if one approaches it from the north. Therefore, they will always be seen in parallax, and as one enters from either the west or the east, they will not seem to line up with the apex of the wall, and so whatever symmetry and aesthetic quality that plan might have, that plan is simply not going to work in actuality.

The second question is that of the vertical experience, and this is where models can be very distorting. If you come down the wall as the path that has been put in would

lead one to reading the names, and coming to the apex where its inscription is, and looks up, the sight-lines for the flag pole in the position of Plan "B" would be greatly cut off and one would, in a sense, be doing a disservice to the experience of the flag and its pole by lopping it off at the bottom.

Furthermore, a part of the function of the flag is to provide a vehicle for the inscription, and if you think of the route, particularly of the handicapped, but also of any normal individual for coming down to read the inscriptions and experience the memorial, it would be asking him or her to make a tremendous detour to go all of the way around and go over to the base of the flag pole, having nothing to give an indication there is an inscription there, I would think the inscription would be largely overlooked by the visitors. I find the inscription very moving. I think it is a solution that puts it right in the path of the visitor, which is a better solution.

Finally, as to the sculpture, I have had, personally, a certain amount of experience in placing sculptures. There was one time when there was a White House exhibition of sculpture and I was put in charge of placing it on the White House lawn, and my first impulse was to give this sculpture the maximum impact, and except for where the helicopter had to come down, I

had pretty free hand, and I found that the first cutout of putting the pieces in the middle of the grass was the least successful, and as we worked at it, we began to move the sculpture more and more into scale-giving context, with most of it going into the Rose Garden, where there were small scale trees around it, architecture around it, and things that brought it down to human scale, and, by that definition, made the sculpture seem much bigger and much more powerful, and, in many ways, the great disservice that could be done to the Vietnam veterans represented by that sculpture is to have their portrayal out in the midst of a large large green yard, with no scale-giving element close to them, and where they would be put in kind of opposition to a wall, which will knock them out. That wall is, in total length, almost as tall as the Washington Monument is high. Its power has been attested to today. It is an extraordinarily strong form, and three anamorphic sculptures eight feet tall, and I don't care how tall they could be inflated to, don't stand a chance visually up against a memorial of that power, and so they will lose and it will be, I think, a sad thing.

Therefore, Scheme "A", which puts the sculpture into coppice, which is hard to visualize now because it doesn't exist -- the landscape architect has very imaginatively created

a very special precinct for it -- will be in a position where it not only will have these scale-giving elements, but it will be the foreground of an experience of approach to the monument which will be that of an enormous number of visitors because as people come from the Lincoln Memorial and as the tourmobile routes are changed and as the paths would be changed, this would be the front door, the major entrance, the overture, the first impression, and would have, I think, greatly increased and improved the impact.

As to the flag, putting it at the juncture of the path routes would give it a focal point that, to me, would give it maximal prominence. It would be framed by trees, and I have walked to that site, too, and visualized that you will see it beautifully from the wall as you go down to it. It will be very much in evidence, and yet it will be a rallying point to provide exactly the kind of entrance that is not yet provided in the memorial precinct. By grouping them that close together, these two elements, plus the directories, which will all be in the same precinct, they tend to reinforce each other and take advantage of their proximity as a counterfoil to the scale and weight of the existing wall.

One should recognize that the proposal "A" position for the sculpture brings it closer to the wall in terms of

footage than proposal "B" does, so that all that we have been reading about the idea that somehow there is a proposal to take this sculpture and flag and move it -- I think the phrase is usually "half way to the Lincoln Memorial", is simply not justified.

The Commission, I think, should now take a vote as to which of these three they would approve of and make any further comments or footnotes that they feel appropriate.

MR. NETSCH: I think our motion, obviously, is in agreement with what you have said. I do only want to add that upon the completion of this motion that the architect and planners and landscape architect take into serious consideration those issues of access to the disabled and the issue of access on the weather, so that we will not have recriminations later on on the basis of technicalities for what I think is the proper decision.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Do you want to call for the question?

All in favor of scheme "A", aye?

(Chorus of ayes)

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Any opposed?

(No response)

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Then it is carried.

Before we leave this, I think there are a couple small issues we should probably face. We recognize this is a site