

architect

MR. RHODESIDE. Good morning.

My name is Elliot Rhodeside. I am a landscape architect and partner in the firm of Rhodeside & Harvell, Incorporated, in Alexandria, Virginia. We perform landscape architecture and planning service to a variety of individuals and clients.

Before I get started, I would like to put these boards in order.

Last year at about this time my firm was hired by the Vietnam Women's Memorial Project to do several things for them. We were hired to perform a site selection analysis which would determine for the project where an appropriate location would be for the Vietnam Women's Memorial statue of a woman, as you see adjacent to these boards.

The second thing we were asked to do was to design the environment for the statue in light of what the conclusions have been for the site selection of the memorial, so we undertook first a step of looking at the environment of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and went through an objective analysis which would show to you and to the project and to others where an appropriate site would be for the statue.

Our first step was to look at places which, based upon the history and the evolution and design of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, it would be inappropriate to locate the statue of a woman. There were several important positions and criteria that you had recalled and recorded in your discussions in siting the wall and in the siting of the statue, and its landscape setting, by Mr. Hart that were important for us to understand in locating the Vietnam Women's Memorial Project.

First, this is the wall and the open space. The areas that you see are areas we believe are inappropriate places to locate the Vietnam Women's Memorial, the yellow areas, where there are very dramatic views toward the Washington Monument to the east and views of the Lincoln Memorial to the west, and also in the open lawn there were a number of discussions of siting the statue by Mr. Hart, which talks about appropriate locations, and I believe those locations were not in the open lawn area, not along the edge of the tree line, not along the back parts of the tree line, where it would be extremely visible, but back into the woods, and secondary to the most important element of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, which is the wall. It was also appropriate not to locate the

statue behind the wall because locating it behind the wall would provide visitors to the Vietnam Memorial a view of the Vietnam Women's Memorial first, before coming to the wall. It is most important for the visitor to view the wall first and then to view other elements afterwards. It was also important for us to not locate the statue of the woman behind the existing statue by Mr. Hart, because it would conflict with the overall esthetic relationship of elements that are part of that sculptural environment, plus the flag pole.

Looking at the areas where it is inappropriate to develop, we identified a number of alternative zones and there were seven zones that we identified and we looked at each of those in more detail and determined that there were several that merited more investigation; perhaps the area around the statue and then 5, 6, and possibly 7, because those were located far enough away from the statue so that there may be some balance to the existing statue group. We looked at these in more detail, plus we looked at another criteria which would influence the positioning of the Vietnam Women's Memorial. We looked at circulation and spoke with people at National Park Service, who indicated to us the main area where visitors to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial come from. Primarily

the greater number come from the east, from Constitution Avenue, and they come through along the walkway down by the wall, viewing the wall first, and then come out and view the sculpture, the flag pole, and then proceed to the Lincoln Memorial or back to the Washington Monument.

There are also great numbers of people that come from the south, from the Lincoln Memorial, but the greater numbers of people come in from this direction. This was important for us to understand, so we could understand the sequence by which people view the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the statue, plus the ways in which people view the overall environment. We realize that axis down toward the alignment of the main trees was an important alignment and the view toward the trees and tree edge was important, and the overall landscape setting for the wall was equally important to the wall in terms of how the viewers perceived and experienced the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. We note that there are several important points in which people view the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. We located those at the entranceways to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and also located those at the end point and at the apex of the wall, so those are primarily

views or view points with which we do not want to interfere with the experience of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, so we excluded those areas.

There are also secondary views, the areas in white and purple, plus there are, again, the important view lines to the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument we wouldn't want to obstruct, with the walkways here where people pass through, and then the wall, and over here the statue.

In conclusion, there are several more detailed areas that provided us with observations about where there may be some compatibility between having the Vietnam Women's Memorial sited in proximity to or in the environment of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. We identified several priority zones, those areas in the drawings here, here, and here, that were candidates again for more detailed investigation, and working in cooperation with the National Park Service we got approval from them to look at these three priority zones, zones that we felt at that point in our analysis were suitable or acceptable for a memorial and the location of the statue.

We, similar to what you had done before when you were working on the siting of Mr. Hart's statue and the

landscape setting for that statue, we did a photographic analysis of the statue, taking a mock-up out on the field one morning, and put that in each of the six locations that you see in dark purple, and then we photographed each of those six mock-ups from these four locations, places where most of the viewers either view the wall or view out toward the landscape surrounding it. Our conclusions from that study were that site No. 3, the area in purple here, was the most desirable location for several reasons:

You have been to the site this morning or yesterday. As a landscape architect, I felt that that place has the most impact. It provided inspiration for me and, hopefully, for others who would view it, because there is a circle of trees and an opening in the woods which provides one a feeling of specialness, separateness. To me it had a feel of, a cathedral-like feeling, that you are in an opening surrounded by beautiful arches and trees, unlike the area between here and here where there were a lot of trees quite closely spaced together.

We felt that the Vietnam Women's Memorial, the statue of the woman, should not be either in close proximity to the existing statue or in the landscape setting, nor should it be

to this, because this requires its own space and integrity.

We also felt by locating it here at this location that it would balance the other sculpture and landscape setting that you have on the west side. We also felt from the visitor's experience, that locating the statue in either one of these locations, 2 and 4, or 5, would be totally inappropriate because what one would see when one would come down this walkway would not be the wall first, but one would view the statue and we felt that that was totally out of character with the philosophy and principles of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Also, locating it at 6 would be an inappropriate location because that would be having the Vietnam Women's Memorial first before coming to see the wall and the primary element that one is to view.

We also felt that the location for Mr. Hart's statue had certain principles that we felt were important for us to follow. We believe that our environment, our memorial, needs to fit within the context of the overall Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Therefore, like this statue, and its setting, it needs to be close to this walkway, so that we are not creating new walkways through the open space that provide new landscape forms. We also believe by being

far enough away from the wall that it will fit within the overall context of the woods and not provide direct conflict with the primary focus of the wall and the visitor's experience.

Following the selection of this site, we looked at the design of the wall, the planting, the wall, and then the statue and the landscape setting for the statue. We believe very strongly that our memorial and the landscape setting for the memorial needs to fit with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. It needs to be a part of, it needs to not conflict, it needs to have materials that are similar, it needs to have forms which are similar, it needs to have texture which is similar, it needs to not draw attention to itself in its details. The focus is the statue and the statue is located in the opening. It faces south, so there is always a lot of sun, and that is different than in the area from here over to here, where there is primarily thin shade cover caused by the canopy of trees, so the statue looks out toward the wall. And this is a wonderful site, because at this point there is a vantage point from here when the visitor stands at this point, where one sees, because of the terrain sloping down, the extent of the wall from here all of the way through to the



apex and then out to the other side, and then one glimpses through the woods the ground cover plants that are part of the existing sculpture environment, so one captures a complete view from end to end of the wall, so this is part of the wall, but yet it is separate because it stays back within the woodlands.

We believe that we should not have a major effect on the land. One of the important aspects about the site is that the site is relatively flat, and there is more or less a ring of trees that exist. There is also a beautiful growth of evergreen trees, white pine trees, and we believe that that provides wonderful cover for the visitors coming to this area not to see this, the same way that when one comes in this area one does not see this statue and the landscape setting for the statue, but one comes in and sees the wall, which is the primary focus for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, but the statue is surrounded by a granite cobble paved area similar to the granite cobble paved area around Mr. Hart's statue, and the statue looks out -- that statue looks out toward the wall, over the ground plane framed by these trees of oaks and maples and walnut trees. Surrounding the statue is a 6 foot wide granite paved walkway. It is the same material as this;

it is the same dimension. It is smaller because we are dealing with one figure, rather than three, so a lone figure we believe requires less physical space than the grouping of three. We also believe that the smaller circle, which is a 60 foot diameter, fits perfectly within this existing grouping of trees, so we don't need to remove trees. We also don't need to add a great number of trees in order to reinforce the circle.

We believe that we should have a minimal impact. The circle is somewhat different than this form. We believe that one should be able to walk on the pathway, come in easily, view the statue and then walk around, so that one can be intimate with, touch, feel, have a close relationship with the statue. One can stand back on the granite cobble plane, as one does here, or one can look at the back, which has a great deal of texture and detail, and then walk around so that one can view the statue from a different vantage point, or one can move somewhat away and contemplate the statue and what one is coming to view.

We propose to mount, just very gently, several -- six inches, approximately -- a grass plane, so we are not

adding any ground cover, we are not adding any more trees than just several evergreen trees to provide a backup and backdrop to the statue that you see here. We also are locating the statue on a granite plinth that comes out of the granite cobble paved surface, so there wouldn't be an affect on vegetation as planted at the base of the statue, so our overall philosophy is simplicity, compatability, fit within the context, have dignity, and work within the overall framework of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

That concludes my presentation.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: All right. We have to worry a little about time here, as we have a fairly extensive agenda.

MR. ATHERTON: We have two people that called in the last few days. Mr. Carl Stout, representing the Vietnam Veterans of America, has asked to speak briefly.

MR. STOUT: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen of the Commission:

I will be very brief. The Vietnam Veterans of America in a resolution in 1985 unanimously passed support for a Vietnam Women's Memorial Project. We joined the other major veteran organizations in support of this particular activity.

I would like to comment briefly that you will hear negative comments about whether or not women want to have a memorial. The people with whom I speak, the women with whom I speak, really desperately need to have this particular symbol. The men with whom I speak -- this particular convention resolution was passed predominantly by men -- almost 99 percent spoke for half an hour in support of this resolution. Not a single one stood up in opposition to it. This is an important event to them also.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and ground is a tremendous symbol for this entire country. I daresay that not a single person in the room not a veteran would say otherwise. In some way that area is so important it is on the cover of your book that describes this particular Commission.

What I would like to do is enter the Convention resolution, if I may, for your review.

I would also like to make a few comments, personal comments. In my 22 years of service in the Army prior to my retirement, one of the jobs I had was to counsel women at military academies. One of the important events which came out or important trends which I identified in talking to women about future careers was the profound absence of symbolism,

the profound absence of role models, which is developing for them in this particular point in time. You can't look anywhere and find women in large numbers who receive awards; you can't look anywhere and find women in charge of major commands throughout the military. What you will find basically are quiet, and, unfortunately, honorable hidden women in our military services.

There are so few symbols you have to go back to the Revolutionary War to talk to somebody like Mollie Corbitt as a tremendous symbol of service.

Another thing I found is a trend, when talking to women, that they were concerned about their femininity in this macho world of being involved in the military.

This particular symbol right here is a very feminine symbol, it is a very caring symbol of somebody involved in combat operations, and I would enthusiastically, as a retired lieutenant colonel in field artillery in the Army, support this particular monument.

Thank you very much.

MR. ATHERTON: The second person is John Bender, who served as a volunteer at the site of the Vietnam Memorial.

MR. BENDER: Captain John Bender, Coast Guard,

retired.

I am a volunteer at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and have been so since November, '82. I came up in the previous hearings of the Commission, as you may remember, to represent the views of the public. I put in 2,000 hours at the Memorial. I probably talked to 25-50 people in an hour, so I have had contact with tens of thousands of the public coming through the Memorial. Recently I have been getting a lot of questions about this statue. They ask where it is, is it already finished. They want to see it. They offer support for it, and with all of the people I have talked to, I have heard nothing from the public that even hints of any opposition to it.

The view of the public, as far as I can see, is they want this statue and they are looking forward to it.

I was concerned when the proposal for Mr. Hart's statue was being considered, that in some way it would detract from the Memorial. Obviously I was totally wrong, and that was twice before I was completely wrong. It has complemented the Memorial. It has met some very deep felt need of people coming to the Memorial, and, after all, that is what we are trying to do here, is to meet the needs of the people.