

MEETING MINUTES / 4 PAGES

Project: St. Louis JNEM, MVVA #10001
Meeting Date: March 23, 2011
Meeting Purpose: **National Park Service (NPS) Meeting – Design Discussion #2**
Distribution Date: April 29, 2011
Prepared by: Gullivar Shepard, Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, Inc. (MVVA)

Participants:	Title:	Affiliation:
Tom Bradley	Superintendent	Jefferson National Expansion Memorial (JNEM), NPS
Nick Chevance	Midwest Region Environment Coordinator	NPS
Ed Dodds	Chief of Facility Maintenance	JNEM, NPS
Jim Jackson	Law Enforcement Specialist	JNEM, NPS
Frank Mares	Deputy Superintendent	JNEM, NPS
Bob Moore	Historian	JNEM, NPS
Kathryn Thomas	Cultural Resources Curator	JNEM, NPS
Randy Biallas	Assistant Director, Park Cultural Resources Program	NPS
Bill Harlow	Midwest Region Historical Architect	NPS
Marla McEnaney	Landscape Architect	NPS
Don Stevens	Senior Historian	NPS
Judith Deel	Archeologist	MO SHPO
Mark Miles	Director	MO SHPO
Kris Zapalac	Historic Preservation Specialist	MO SHPO
Louise Brodnitz	Historic Preservation Specialist	ACHP
Jennifer Sandy	Program Officer, Midwest Office	NTHP
David Newburger	Commissioner on the Disabled	St. Louis City
Gullivar Shepard	Senior Associate	MVVA
Nate Trevehan	Senior Associate	MVVA
James Carpenter	Principal	JCDA (w/ MVVA)
Bill MacIntosh	Partner	Cooper Robertson (w/ MVVA)
Gina Hillberry	Partner	CHA (w/ MVVA)

Distribution: All Participants
Meeting Location: JNEM Maintenance and Training Facility
 11 N. 4th Street
 St. Louis, MO 63102
Meeting Time: 9:30am-1:30pm

GENERAL

The purpose of the meeting was to initiate a review process evaluating MVVA’s CAR 2015 proposal with regard to historic preservation. The design team presented its proposals for overall park circulation, strategies for establishing universal access to the ground floor of the Old Courthouse, and the new entrance to the Museum of Westward Expansion on the eastern edge of Luther Ely Smith Square, and previewed upcoming work regarding the Central Riverfront modifications.

DISCUSSION

A. Review Procedure

1. MVVA will provide PDFs and printouts of presented material as the basis for formal comments to the design team.
2. MVVA will take and circulate meeting minutes for review and comment.
3. Each reviewing agency will be responsible for submitting comments within two weeks of each review.
4. It is anticipated that new issues may arise regarding topics reviewed previously. MVVA encourages reviewers to draw in relevant considerations from prior Design Discussions.

B. Overall Park Circulation

1. MVVA presented a series of slides showing the build-up of added layers of circulation that the proposed plan suggests: the existing processional walks, secondary paths, mown paths, bikeway/circulator loop. The presentation was designed to give context to the reviewer's focus on individual parts of the plan over the course of the Design Discussions.
2. The proposed network of the circulation routes was presented by MVVA as a way to both serve improvements to accessibility challenges that are present throughout the existing facility as well as serve desire-lines between the new programmatic improvements and existing destinations.
3. MVVA presented a few scenarios for a park circulator—an electric-powered vehicle that carries passengers from destination to destination and help support off-site parking, connections to downtown businesses, and the riverfront.
 - 3.1 Gina Hilberry suggested that the MVVA check with manufacturer's to insure that electric vehicles can be made accessible to potential disabled passengers.
 - 3.2 Reviewers commented on how the prospect of a circulator would be a challenge to sustain financially
 - 3.3 David Newburger suggested that the disabled community would have no problem with imposing a charge for use of the circulator. However the circulator should connect from off-site parking facilities to park destinations.
 - 3.4 NPS suggested that there would be a conflict with NPS policy if the circulator was proposed to offer a service that would compete with local businesses such as taxis, bus/coach service, and/or horse carriage.

C. The Old Courthouse

1. Bill MacIntosh (CRP) presented a series of plan diagrams and existing condition photographs to illustrate strategies for establishing universal access to the ground floor of the Old Courthouse. The overall goal of the study is to provide a common access point to the courthouse on both the east and west sides of the building for all people. Establishing universal access could be achieved through various methods including:
 - 1.1 Accessible ramps located adjacent to the existing courthouse steps on the east and west sides of the building. These ramps could be designed to be solid stone construction similar to the courthouse or light steel structures that would attempt to not cover as much of the base of the building.
 - 1.2 Mechanical lifts located on both the east and west sides of the courthouse. Alternately, the elevators could be minimal glass enclosures.
 - 1.3 Both access strategies could modify the top step into the courthouse located directly at the existing doors.
 - 1.4 A strategy was also discussed for an infill floor on the ground floor of the courthouse that would provide access to all the rooms that are currently inaccessible by one step.

2. Randy Biallas (NPS) suggested that CRP and MVVA explore the idea of providing ramps down to the lower level of the courthouse and then utilizing an elevator to access the ground floor. This strategy could take advantage of the existing areaways of the courthouse and minimize modifications to the building. It was suggested that the design team visit the Second Bank Building in Philadelphia as a possible similar precedent.
3. David Newburger (StLC) stated that ramps are preferable to elevators and lifts during an emergency evacuation of the building. It was also noted that accessing the ground floor directly by ramps located on both the east and west sides of the building would be more desirable.
4. David Newburger (StLC) suggested modifying the top step in the portico was an idea worth pursuing, as it would provide universal access to the view from the Old Courthouse steps to the Arch.
5. Gina Hillberry (CHA) stated that the expanded paved areas at the bottom of the access ramps could be used as gathering places for all people, not just the disabled community. This is a strength of the ramp strategy and much truer to the tenets of universal design.
6. Bob Moore (NPS) suggested exploring access through the north and south sides of the courthouse, as these access points to the building are used for large events.
 - 6.1 The north entrance is used primarily for security.
 - 6.2 The south entrance is currently used for large deliveries.
7. Bob Moore (NPS) informed the design team that a structural report was prepared for the Old Courthouse by Quinn Evans Architects.

D. Museum of Westward Expansion Entrance

1. James Carpenter (JCDA) presented four alternatives for the proposed Museum of Westward Expansion on the east side of Luther Ely Smith Square. The alternatives were developed to assess the impacts of the museum entrance on the landscape of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial. The alternatives reveal the challenges creating a minimally sloped entrance plaza while trying preserve the height and design intent of the berm along Memorial Drive.
2. James Carpenter (JCDA) presented a series of skylight options. The skylights would be used to provide natural daylight into the underground museum and museum entry.
3. The reviewers asked what programs would occur at the level of the museum entrance, including the potential for retail or concessions.
4. Cooper Robertson and JCDA suggested that with the selection of the exhibit designer, certain aspects of the museum interior and programming would be premature to discuss in this discussion, and that the focus would have to be more about the potential for impact to the NHL designation of the Arch Grounds.
5. The National Park Service expressed concern with the alternatives where the new entrance was expressed in the landscape, as this would change the design intent for the landscape of the Memorial.
6. The reviewers expressed concern with the terraced entry plaza. One concern was that the steps would be used as a place of assembly.
7. The reviewers expressed concern over the program expansion of the museum and the potential increases to museum staffing that would be greater than is financially feasible.

8. James Carpenter (JCDA) presented a series of options regarding an accessible means of exiting at the legs of the Arch. This new exit was also presented as another opportunity for bringing in daylight to the below-grade facility.
 - 8.1 Cooper Robertson and JCDA began by saying that there was a need for a study of the existing servicing tunnels (to the loading dock and service area) as to whether they can be counted toward life-safety egress
 - 8.2 Reviewers suggested that guardrails associated with the ramps in these proposed locations seemed problematic within the context of the use of the lawn and the proximity to the Arch monument.
 - 8.3 David Newburger suggested that perhaps a more straightforward glass elevator would have less impact
 - 8.4 Randy Biallas suggested that perhaps the design team should look into locations further away from the Arch, perhaps somewhere between the proposed museum entry and the Arch legs for the museum exit.

ACTION ITEMS

1. *MVVA and CRP will prepare comprehensive drawings that show access strategies to both the east and west sides of the building.*
2. *MVVA and CRP will explore access to the south side of the Old Courthouse and explore additional strategies based on the comments from the meeting.*
3. *NPS to provide MVVA with the structural assessment of the Old Courthouse prepared by Quinn Evans Architects.*