



December 3, 2020

National Capital Planning Commission
401 9th Street, NW, Suite 500N
Washington, DC 20004

My name is Rebecca Miller, Executive Director of the DC Preservation League (DCPL), Washington's citywide nonprofit advocate for the preservation and protection of our city's irreplaceable historic resources.

For nearly two decades, DCPL has focused its DC Modern initiative on educating the public on the value of buildings and landscapes from the recent past, and the preservation and protection of these sites that some find as "hard to love". The Hirshhorn, however, is not hard to love, in fact, it is one of Washington's and the country's most celebrated modern masterpieces – a truly important work of art. This appreciation for the Hirshhorn is evident through the many letters in the record from art experts from across the nation.

Like the other participating consulting parties, DCPL appreciates the Smithsonian's stewardship of the Museum and Sculpture Garden and applauds their efforts to rehabilitate and address infrastructure issues.

DCPL was encouraged when the Smithsonian responded to the request made by the DC State Historic Preservation Office's (DCSHPO) at the March 25, 2020 Consulting Parties Meeting to develop and evaluate an alternative that retained the reflecting pool. The approach put forth in Alternative 2 preserves the visual connection between the Bunschafft designed historic pool and the museum's similarly sized glazed north balcony – an important connection that is discussed in the pending DC Landmark Nomination submitted by the Smithsonian in 2018. The DCSHPO in its September 4th, 2020 letter to the Smithsonian wrote that Alternative 2 would "significantly minimize, or possibly avoid the adverse effect on this critically important feature of the Sculpture Garden. Many of the SI's program goals would still be met by implementing Alternative 2." Unfortunately, this Alternative was quickly abandoned by the Smithsonian prior to presentation or discussion at any Consulting Parties Meeting.

As with many of the other Consulting Parties, DCPL finds Bunschafft's reflecting pool to be the central feature to the historic Sculpture Garden and its modification would pose a significant adverse effect to this historic resource.

DCPL appreciates the thoughtful work put forth by the designers and encourages the Smithsonian to reevaluate their preferred alternative that alters the Bunschafft pool to minimize the adverse effect.

We thank the Commission for considering the DC Preservation League's comments.

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Thank you,



Rebecca Miller
Executive Director

Alternatives for the Bunschaft Reflecting Pool:



Alternative 1, Partially Drained



Alternative 2, Filled