

PROJECT	<b>Smithsonian Institution- Revitalization of the Historic Core (RoHC)</b>	MEETING DATE	10/26/2022
ORGANIZER	<b>Smithsonian Institution, Carly Bond (moderator)</b>	TIME	2:00-4:00pm
LOCATION	Virtual/Zoom		
PANELISTS	Carly Bond- Smithsonian Institution Sharon Park- Smithsonian Institution Christopher Lethbridge- Smithsonian Institution Brenda Sanchez- Smithsonian Institution Lauren Brandes- Smithsonian Institution Matthew Chalifoux, EYP-Loring Faye Harwell, RHI (Rhodeside and Harwell) Anthony Bochicchio, EYP-Loring		
SUBJECT	<b>Consulting Parties Meeting #7</b>		

## MEETING MINUTES

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**Purpose – This was Consulting Parties Meeting 7 for the Revitalization of the Historic Core (RoHC) project of the Smithsonian Institution. The meeting was held in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.**

Earlier during the consultation process the Consulting Parties were informed about the resequencing of the RoHC project, to first focus on the Smithsonian Institution Building (“Castle”). During Consulting Parties Meeting 7 the Smithsonian team outlined a phased Section 106 consultation process, focusing the initial approval on design actions that must be finalized before the initial construction starts in March 2023. These design actions were presented during this meeting and included:

- Areaways and Window Wells- locations and dimensions
- Seismic Control Joint- location and width
- Extent of Excavation Adjacent to the Castle- SIB Extension (B1 level), B2 level cistern
- Excavation Beneath the Castle- base isolation, lowering the Basement floor, mechanical equipment and distribution level, future connection to the Quadrangle Building
- Alternate Pedestrian Routes- during construction

Two additional design actions that will be part of the later approval process in 2023 were also presented.

- South Tower Elevator Penthouses and Louvered Penthouse
- Perimeter Security- Jefferson Drive

Phase 2 of the Section 106 consultation covers the remainder of the project. Section 106 consultation will not pause between the required phasing of the project.

The meeting was assembled virtually and included a slide presentation, which has been posted on the RoHC project website. Attendees were asked to post questions or comments in the chat during the presentation. The majority of questions and comments were reviewed and responded to verbally during breaks in the presentation. The following is a list of the questions and comments with a summary of the responses.

## Questions and Comments

### Written

1. Q: Will the cistern address any potential flooding issues?

R: The primary purpose of the proposed cistern (at the B2 level to the west of the Castle) will be to capture rainwater and reuse it as gray water. Rainwater harvesting by reducing the amount of water that enters the municipal stormwater system helps mitigate flooding, but that is not its primary function. The Smithsonian Institution has issued a Climate Change Action Plan, which was updated and issued on August 13, 2021. This is an Institution wide plan and includes information addressing flooding issues at facilities on the National Mall.

2. Q: Are the cumulative effects of all the Phase 1 work going to be specifically addressed later in this meeting and/or within the Assessment of Effects Report? The cumulative adverse effects may establish a need to evaluate more avoidance measures and/or more or different mitigation measures.

R: The cumulative adverse effects will not be presented in the meeting today but are included in the Assessment of Effects report which will be posted on the project website.

3. Q: What is the proposed roofing material? (Particularly the elevator and mechanical penthouses.)

R: The majority of the roof is finished in slate. There are some areas that are flat-seam metal, copper. We will be replacing these areas in-kind. The existing rooftop mechanical penthouses are typically clad in copper and the proposed mechanical penthouses will be clad in copper. The one exception are the two louvered penthouses on the roof of the West Range facing the Mall. These are painted to blend in with the Seneca sandstone. The proposed design includes two penthouses in the same locations with slightly larger footprints. These are planned to be finished similar to the existing.

Q: For the new elevator overrun penthouses at the south tower was finishing these in slate studied? Similar to the elevator penthouse on the East Wing which is planned to be removed.

R: We agree that using slate as part of the finish (roofs and/or walls) on the new elevator overrun penthouses should be studied as an option. The team will evaluate this option moving forward.

4. Q: Vegetation should not be included in assessing visibility.

R: We understand that proposed additions or modifications must be presented and evaluated without the potential impact of vegetation. We have adjusted the visualizations to crop or “ghost out” existing vegetation that blocks views of proposed modifications.

## Verbal

5. Q: Lowering the basement floor may be considered an adverse effect. Will this be addressed moving forward?

R: Excavation of the B0 and B1 levels has the potential to adversely affect historic fabric such as the existing floor material and the “reverse arch” construction that may exist below grade, and by altering the historic character of the existing basement. Consideration of these interior alterations will be part of Phase 2 of the Section 106 consultation. Where grade is changed and underpinning is added to the historic piers, existing and new construction are to be integrated in appearance.

6. Q: Will the alternative pedestrian path on the west side of the site, adjacent to the Ripley Center entry pavilion, be curved as shown in the plans?

R: The design team is working to identify systems that can be used in the fabrication of the “boardwalk” that will maintain the curved design. Railings will also be curved to match.

7. Q: The strategy for the elevators adjacent to the South Tower is good. It is good to study different architectural vocabularies for the objects, “simple or more architectural/traditional”. The louvered penthouse has become quite large, design options should be explored for reducing the visual impact of the massing. Is it possible to integrate the louvers in the blind arches on the north wall of the South Tower? While this may mean removing “historic fabric” it may be preferable to the freestanding penthouse.

R: We will continue to evaluate detailing and massing of the proposed elements adjacent to the South Tower in an effort to minimize their visual impact. We will study the feasibility of inserting the louvers in the north wall of the South Tower. This will include not just the impact to the material on the exterior wall but also the impact of routing the duct from the attic, into the upper level of the South Tower to connect to the louvers.

8. Q: The advancement of the bench designs at the north entry, both the two adjacent to the porte cochere and the two at the entry points to the accessible sidewalks is good. With regard to the seismic joint cover the narrower the overall detail the better, which means the detail with the exposed metal at the outside edge is preferable.

R: Thank you for the positive feedback. The team is looking to schedule a second on-site opportunity to review and discuss the revised perimeter security designs, additional granite samples, and samples of the seismic joint covers. This may occur in the second week of November (11/15 or 11/18). Please look for more information about this on-site meeting in the near future.

9. Q: Will the interior environment of the Castle (temperature and relative humidity) be “museum quality” or is it focused on human comfort?

R: Creating a “museum quality” interior environment, requiring humidification during the winter, would require significant changes to the building envelope to prevent significant damage. Those changes would themselves have an adverse effect on the historic fabric. The interior environment will provide for the comfort of the occupants.

**END OF MEETING**

The slide presentations from Consulting Parties Meeting 7 (10/26/2022) is available on the project webpage. Written comments are welcome. Please submit to [BondC@si.edu](mailto:BondC@si.edu).