

PROJECT	<b>Smithsonian Institution- Revitalization of the Historic Core (RoHC)</b>	MEETING DATE	11/30/2022
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)		
SUBJECT	<b>Consulting Parties Meeting #8</b>		

## MEETING MINUTES

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**Purpose – This was Consulting Parties Meeting 8 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.

Consulting Parties Meeting 8 provided a recap of the November 15<sup>th</sup> Consulting Parties site visit, which reviewed mock-ups of the seismic control joint and granite samples; the Castle’s existing south areaways; and mock-ups of the revised perimeter security benches. The Assessment of Effects on Historic Resources report was finalized for Phase 1 actions, including:

- **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 Distribution Level, Future Connection to the Quadrangle Building**
- **Alternate Pedestrian Routes- During Construction**
- **Phase 1 Cumulative Effects**

Two additional design actions that will be part of the Phase 2 consultation process in 2023 were also presented.

- South Tower Elevator Penthouses and Louvered Penthouse, and New Alternative with Through Wall Louvers
- Dual Egress for the Southwest and Southeast Areaways

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. A general outline for the Programmatic Agreement that will oversee both phases of the project was reviewed. The mitigation package was introduced.

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: Are there any structural concerns related to lowering and expanding the areaways around the base, especially as it is different on the south and north?

R: No. The areaways and window wells are not part of the structural system supporting the building. The building loads are currently carried through the load-bearing masonry walls and masonry piers to stone spread footings. The new concrete foundation walls and piers that will be constructed in this project will pick-up the existing loads.

2. Q: Could you create a tunnel from the staff side to the mechanical side to only have one egress stair in the SE areaway option that is split around the Southeast Tower?

R: As shown in the presentation the proposed areaways on the south side of the Castle are approximately nine feet deep measured from existing grade. There is not enough depth to connect the two areaways on the southeast side of the building with a below grade "tunnel" and to have landscape on top of the connection.

3. Q: Southeast areaway- I think the green space at the base of the SE Tower is important as a visual hint of how the building historically met the land. Any reference point like that will help reduce the impact and intrusion of these new areaways. Plus, you won't have a safety railing running across gating the building from its setting.

R: Noted. As stated in the presentation we are concerned about the visual impact of a narrow area of landscape to the south of the Southeast Tower flanked by areaways and guardrails on both sides. The eastern areaway footprint cannot be changed, the configuration as shown is required to accommodate mechanical equipment. The design team will study options for reducing the size of the western portion to pull it away from the west side of the Southeast Tower.

4. Q: Allowing the towers to “touch the ground” helps to break down the perceived size of the areaways so SHPO supports the “Additional Alternative” approach on the southwest and the “separated egress” option on the southeast.

R: Noted.

5. Q: What is the specific vibration level (inches/second) in the Monitoring Plan that will trigger a stop work order?

R: The documents identify a vibration level of 0.5 in/sec as the threshold at which the Contractor must modify construction procedures to mitigate vibrations. This threshold is identified as a starting point that will be evaluated and adjusted as appropriate as field data is collected before and during construction.

6. Q: Would you go over the dropping for the basement floor?

R: The lowering of the basement floor by approximately three feet is to provide an acceptable amount of headroom for the proposed public uses on this level including a café, retail, restrooms, and convening space. Areas of the basement slab have been lowered in the past to accommodate mechanical equipment and program space.

7. Q: Thank you for developing this alternative (placing the relief louvers in the north wall of the south tower) for the south tower.

Will the material/ location of the louvers in the blind arches be determined in the future?

If the color of the louvers is dark enough, they probably don’t need to be centered in the blind arch, as long as they are in the arches.

R: The relief air louvers at the South Tower are a Phase 2 review issue. The details of the design including the louver materials will be included in future Consulting Parties presentations.

8. Q: What will be the design and finish of the elevator overrun dormers at the South Tower? In a prior Consulting Parties Meeting a question was raised asking if the dormers need to be copper-clad. Could they be clad in slate instead with a simple shed roof?

R: The location of the elevator overrun dormers at the South Tower is a Phase 1 review issue since the shaft location includes excavation under the Castle. The final design of the dormers, including the materials, is a Phase 2 design issue and will be included in future Consulting Parties presentations.

9. Q: Can we have additional time to submit written comments on the Phase 1 and 2 AOE report? Maybe a week?

R: Yes, please submit final comments on the AOE report by December 21<sup>st</sup>.

## **Verbal**

10. Q: Can the eastern end of the areaway that is labeled “staff use only” (SE areaway) move west, towards the South Tower, to free up the Southeast Tower?

R: The design team will study options for reducing the size of the western portion of the southeast areaway to pull it away from the west side of the Southeast Tower.

- 11: Q: When the areaways are split does the seismic control joint run through the landscape?

R: Yes, where grade extends to the base of the building there will be a seismic control joint at the intersection of grade and the masonry wall of the Castle.

12. Q: After the site visit on 15 November an idea was shared in sketch form to try and further minimize the visual impact of the metal trim of the seismic joint covers. Has this been reviewed and taken into consideration?

R: We appreciate the input to explore ideas for improving the visual appearance of the seismic control joints. The sketch was shared with the design team. In the Phase 1 review we are focused on the size and location of the seismic control joint covers. The insert materials and finish of the seismic control joint covers will be included in the Phase 2 review process. The design team will evaluate the design ideas shared and comments received as the designs are developed and shared in future Consulting Parties meetings.

13. Q: Does the lowering of the B0 floor really constitute “No Adverse Effect”? This is also relevant to what may be discovered under the existing floor, such the “reverse arches” that are described in the early construction documentation. Suggest changing this to “Adverse Effect”.

R: The Assessment of Effects report was organized separating the act of physical excavation under the Castle in Phase 1, and the treatment and finish implications on the Basement interior under Phase 2. These actions do not have independent utility, and the AOE report has been updated to change this to “Adverse Effect”, noting that this effect may be remedied provided certain monitoring and stop work stipulations are met. The PA includes stipulations describing the process if historic fabric is uncovered during construction.

- 14: Q: “Conditional, No Adverse Effect” is a vernacular term used throughout the country but is not actually defined in the federal regulations. Suggest that the terminology be changed to “Temporary Adverse Effect” to properly reflect that there will be an Adverse Effect, even if temporary and that there may be mitigation measures related to that temporary period.

R: SI has updated the Assessment of Effects report as follows: all “Condition No Adverse Effect” determinations have been changed to “Adverse Effect” with language that describes how the effect can be remedied or mitigated. The PA will include these stipulations.

## **END OF MEETING**

The slide presentations from Consulting Parties Meeting 8 (11/30/2022) is available on the project webpage. Written comments are welcome. Please submit to [BondC@si.edu](mailto:BondC@si.edu).