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30 July 2008

Dear Mr. Lawler:

In response to a review of the transcript from the 17 July meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts, I am pleased to provide this letter as a substitute for our previous letter of 25 July.

In its meeting of 17 July, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed and approved the revised concept for the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial. The Commission members expressed their appreciation for the progress that has been made in refining and revising the memorial design; however, they identified several unresolved design issues that should be addressed in the next submission.

In their discussion, the Commission members raised a variety of concerns with the revised proposal for the sculptural installation: the use of glass in an outdoor memorial is unusual and they questioned its durability; the new proposal to include photographic images should be carefully considered for its appropriateness to a timeless memorial; and the sense of enclosure provided by these sculptural panels, as well as by the stone wall on the west, should be balanced with the desire for visual openness across the site. They suggested further study of the layout for the quotations and commented on the overall complexity of the sculptural installation, particularly in relation to the effects of sunlight, tree shadows, and artificial lighting. The Commission concluded by recommending that a mockup of the bronze silhouettes and glass panels, in appropriate lighting conditions, be prepared as part of the next submission to facilitate the full evaluation of the revised artistic concept.

The Commission members reviewed the memorial's other design features, including technical details of the fountain and flame treatment, and requested samples of the fountain stone in order to evaluate its character in wet and dry conditions. They recommended that the proposed lighting poles be eliminated, relying instead on accent and ambient street lighting for general illumination. Overall, the complexity of the memorial design was a concern and the Commission recommended simplification where possible.

The Commission looks forward to further review of the design including a mockup. As always, the staff is available to assist you.

Sincerely,

Thomas E. Luebke, AIA  
Secretary

Joseph M. Lawler, Regional Director  
National Park Service, National Capital Region  
1100 Ohio Drive, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20242

cc: Peter May, National Park Service  
Michael Vergason, Michael Vergason Landscape Architects, Ltd.

Barry Owenby, Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation, Inc.

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