

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
Subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation
Legislative Hearing: March 19, 2013

H.R. 1126 (Bishop): To facilitate the completion of an appropriate national memorial to
Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Testimony of Witness: Arthur Cotton Moore FAIA

Ladies and Gentlemen: I thank you for this opportunity.

I appear before you today with only one goal: To defend and protect the L'Enfant Plan – which is on the National Register of Historic Places, thereby preserving the openness of Maryland Avenue and its 160 foot wide vista of the Capitol.

Washington was created as a completely planned city. Its first plan, by Pierre L'Enfant in 1791, was validated, reinforced, and enriched by the McMillan Commission in 1901. Together they form the planning constitution for our Nation's Capital.

The basic framework of the L'Enfant/McMillan Plans was a mall extending from the Capitol westward to the Washington Monument, bracketed by two grand radiating diagonal boulevards: Pennsylvania Avenue, extending from the Capitol to the White House, and Maryland Avenue, extending from the Capitol to the Potomac River, the principal means of commerce in the early days of the Republic. L'Enfant not only laid out the streets and avenues of the Capital – he also specified the width of the streets, specifically calling for Pennsylvania and Maryland Avenues to be the broadest in the city: each 160 feet wide.

George Washington was intimately involved with the planning of the Capital. There exists not only a painting of the Father of our Country with the L'Enfant Plan spread out on a table before him, but the letter he signed, sending the Plan to the Senate and the House of Representatives for approval.

In 1900, largely at the instigation of the American Institute of Architects, the McMillan Commission was formed, and after much study, it found the L'Enfant Plan to be the best and proper basis for the development of our Nation's Capital. The Commission concentrated on more of a three-dimensional elaboration of L'Enfant's Plan, doubling the size of the Mall to include the sites for the Lincoln Memorial and the Jefferson Memorial. All the McMillan amplifications of L'Enfant's Plan were done strictly within its spirit, geometry, and specifications.

Incredibly, the current proposal for the Eisenhower Memorial does not respect this august planning heritage. Contrary to the requirements of the 106 process, this historical background clearly played no role in the site selection and design development. Also, while the 106 process calls for real alternatives to be considered, only three variants on a single theme have been

offered – and each has giant columns (supporting large metal screens), forming a dominant box which denies the diagonal nature of Maryland Avenue as the mirror sister of Pennsylvania Avenue.

Only one variant allows any semblance of a vehicular street, and that was a narrow road. There is a constant reference to a 50 foot cartway, or vista, which is consistently encumbered with objects right where the 160 foot grand avenue is supposed to be, pursuant to the Historic Plans. It should be noted that streets in non-federal Colonial Georgetown are wider than this cartway by 10 feet. In any case, the models show that the dominant elements form an enormous rigid box completely denying the diagonal nature of Maryland Avenue as the mirror sister of Pennsylvania Avenue.

Importantly, from the inception of the city, for the last 213 years of development in this section of the Southwest, none of the hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of public and private buildings, have been allowed to encroach into the 160 foot right-of-way of Maryland Avenue. The Eisenhower Memorial would be the first project to do that, and it would clearly violate the letter and intention of the Historic Plans, and make a dead-end discontinuity for Maryland Avenue.

Although emphasized in both the L'Enfant/McMillan Plans, Maryland Avenue is the major missing element, because in 1901, in order to get the train stations off the Mall, Congress gave a perpetual-use right for the trains to run down Maryland Avenue. For almost 200 years, no one was able to figure out how to bring Maryland Avenue to reality with the trains there.

In 1986, I proposed a solution to this conundrum in the Washington Post: Because the trains ran in a ditch under the north/south streets, I realized that Maryland Avenue could be put in as a structure above the trains, connecting directly with the north/south streets. (As the Architect of the Portals Development, I put in a section of Maryland Avenue, proving the viability of the scheme, which has a host of benefits including greatly improved access, security and new land for development. The Portals' prototype can be extended to realize a fully completed Maryland Avenue.)

The DC Office of Planning has recently incorporated this program in its Small Area Plan for the Southwest, which has been adopted by the City Council – and -- the National Capital Planning Commission has recently incorporated it in its Framework Plan and its Eco-District Plan.

In order to distinguish real alternatives, as called for in the 106 process, rather than the minor variants presently being offered by the Eisenhower Commission, I would like to proffer two alternatives:

(1) The first begins with the idea that Maryland Avenue and Independence Avenue should come together in a fashion which is the exact mirror of the intersection of Constitution Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue to the north. In each case, the diagonal avenue would be dominant as L'Enfant specified. The intersection of Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues works quite well for traffic, and it could be assumed to work equally well at the intersection of

Maryland and Independence Avenues. Furthermore, the symmetry fundamental in the L'Enfant/McMillan Plans would be maintained.

Although there could be many different concepts with this layout, I would like to offer one as an illustration. The Eisenhower family has expressed an interest in a more modest proposal, principally featuring a statue. In this example, in my power point, I show two statues representing the two major roles in which Dwight Eisenhower served our country: One as Supreme Allied Commander for the European theater in World War II, and the other as a two term President of the United States.

The two statues could serve as a gateway to Maryland Avenue as entrance sculptures, much as has been done elsewhere at important points like at the entrance to Memorial Bridge. The paving around the statues could list or represent his extraordinary achievements in each of these roles. The two areas around the statues could be linked under Maryland Avenue just as the National Gallery West Wing is linked to the East Wing under Fourth Street. This underground connection would afford an opportunity for further exhibits about his life and service to our country.

(2) Another alternative which demonstrates the possibility of a new site altogether, could be at the contemplative area northwest of the World War II Memorial. This site, which is virtually never used, could contain the two statues expressing his two major roles as General and as President, with the one as General facing the adjacent World War II Memorial, and the other as President facing the White House. The paving around the statues could represent the world, and piezoelectric-activated lights could show the key battles of the war. Since there are fewer and fewer remaining veterans of that war to explain this significant conflict, this could serve as a history lesson for generations to come.

In any case, these are two real alternatives that rely on simple statues and paving, and are far more modest and less costly than the variants on a single theme proffered by the Memorial Commission. More important, however, is that these proffered alternatives conform to – and do not violate -- the L'Enfant and McMillan Plans.

With respect and gratitude,

Arthur Cotton Moore FAIA

ARTHUR COTTON MOORE FAIA

ACM is a sixth-generation Washingtonian, a graduate of St. Albans School, Princeton University, and Princeton University School of Architecture.

He is a national award-winning, internationally recognized Architect, Preservationist, and Planner. Since 1965, ACM has practiced in 38 cities across the United States, and has received over 70 Design Awards, including two National Residential Design Awards from *Architectural Record* Magazine, and three National AIA Honor Awards.

ACM projects have been published in over 2,700 articles in magazines and newspapers throughout the United States, Europe, Scandinavia, and Japan, and have been included in many books. His buildings have been in group architectural exhibitions at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Columbia University's Center for the Study of American Architecture, and Columbia University's Avery Library Centennial Archive Exhibition, "Contemporary Architectural Drawings."

He has served on design award juries throughout the country, including regional and state AIA programs, as well as the country's two most prestigious – the National AIA Honor Award Program, and the National *Progressive Architecture* Magazine Design Award Jury. He is one of 600 Architects around the world included since 1980 in all editions of the British compilation "*Contemporary Architects*," recognizing 20th/21st century Architects on an international level.

ACM has traveled to 113 countries, several multiple times, to photograph and study their Architecture, and has written on Architecture, urban affairs, preservation, and art.

He has lectured widely at universities and professional conferences, including several lectures at the Smithsonian Institution, where in 1978, he gave a four-part series entitled "The Architecture of the Absurd." In 1979, he gave the Annual Guest Lecture at Trinity College in Dublin. In 1982, he gave the Henry Hornbostel Memorial Lecture at Carnegie-Mellon University, and in 1985 was honored by the Hirshhorn Museum with an invitation to give a Retrospective Lecture on his work, marking the 20th anniversary of his practice.

ACM has had solo painting exhibitions in New York, Chicago, Washington, and Paris, and has participated in group painting shows in New York and Cologne. His travelling museum exhibition, "Visions of the Future," was shown in museums in Prague and Poland. His "Industrial Baroque" furniture series was awarded *Architectural Record* Magazine's 1990 Award for Excellence in Design.

His first book, "*The Powers of Preservation*," which focused on his historic building work and urban planning projects, was published by McGraw-Hill in 1998. His next two books, to be published in 2013, are "*Interruption of the Cocktail Hour*," (a Washington yarn) and "*Washington Comiks*," a book of paintings of our nation's capital.

www.arthurcottonmoore.com

