

U.S. COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS 17 MAY 1910

NATIONAL BUILDING MUSEUM
401 F STREET, N.W., SUITE 312
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001-2728

202-504-2200
202-504-2195 FAX

4 May 2005

Dear Mr. Lazor:

During its meeting of 21 April 2005, the Commission reviewed the concept for the proposed security modifications at the James Forrestal Building, located at 1000 Independence Avenue, SW and currently housing the Department of Energy. Since the Commission views the design and location of this building as a barrier to good urban design, the desire for stronger security measures may provide an opportunity to improve the current condition of the urban environment.

The proposed security modifications do not seem to be an effective design solution that will protect people working in and around the building. Therefore, the Commission strongly supports the removal of the center section of the building that bridges 10th Street, SW. In addition to removing the threat of a vehicle under the building, this solution would reestablish the important view corridor from the Smithsonian Castle, down 10th Street, past the proposed new location for the National Children's Museum to the Banneker Overlook which is a prominent site for a future monument or museum. The office space lost by the removal of the center part of the building could be recovered by enclosing the exterior space under the building and a re-skinning of the remaining portions of the structure. While this might necessitate the reconfiguration of the mechanical systems which supply the building, these systems may require an overhaul regardless of removal of the center portion of the building.

The Commission strongly recommends against all of the modifications to the Forrestal Building proposed by the Department of Energy that will only make a bad situation even more problematic, creating a bunker-like construction within the core of a vibrant urban context. The Commission looks forward to the review of other projects for the Department of Energy. As always, the staff is available should you require guidance.

Sincerely,



Thomas Luebke, AIA
Secretary

John D. Lazor, Director, Office of Headquarters Security Operations
Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

cc: Jeffery Zarkin, DOE
Greg Knoop, Oudens + Knoop Architects
Michael McGill, GSA