

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

10 February 2005

Dear Mr. McGill:

During its meeting of 25 January 2005, the Commission reviewed the concept submission from the General Services Administration for its proposed new First Impressions Sign Program, a system-wide signs and graphics program for all federal facilities in the National Capital area. While the members were encouraged by GSA's initiative to improve and update the signs at federal facilities, they felt the design of the individual signs presented were overly complicated and should be simplified. The basic graphic layout of the signs was perceived as good, as was the consistency in the hierarchy of the information presented and the uniformity of the lettering. However, members recommended that the "shadow" graphic of the Great Seal of the United States be shown in its entirety and perhaps should be more prominently rendered and centered on the sign's face.

There were also objections to the inclusion of the word "Welcome" on the sign as most felt it would be an inappropriate message to convey at some government facilities. As for the structure of the signs, the members thought the double panels of the freestanding monument signs, with a metallic face panel layered on a larger offset blue-colored backing panel highlighted by strips of contrasting color on the edges, were too elaborate. They suggested that only a single panel be used and that the strips of contrasting color should be eliminated. Modifying or changing the design of the sign to relate to the architecture of the individual building was also thought to be unnecessary. Overall, simplicity should be the operable mantra in developing this system.

When the designs have been further refined, perhaps two or three variations, along with material samples, should be submitted for the next review. It was also suggested that larger models should be produced and a full size mockup that we could see in place at one of the proposed locations.

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We look forward to the review of this important project as the designs continue to develop. As always, the staff is available should you or the design team require guidance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Lindstrom', is written over the word 'Sincerely,'. The signature is stylized and somewhat illegible due to the cursive nature of the handwriting.

Frederick J. Lindstrom
Acting Secretary

Mr. Michael McGill
Special Assistant for Regional Coordination
General Services Administration
301 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20407-0001

cc: Sharon Miedzinski, GSA, Project Manager
Beth Ready, Gensler
Jeff Barber, Gensler