



North Atlantic Division
Regional Integration Team

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20314-1000

JUN 22 2009

Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Thomas Gerard
2417 Londonderry Road
Alexandria, VA 22308

Dear Mr. Gerard:

Thank you for your letter dated 17 May 2009 regarding the National Museum of the U.S. Army (NMUSA) project at Fort Belvoir. I have looked into the concerns that you have raised and believe the information presented herein will help clarify the scope and scale of the project. We hope to assure you that USACE is designing this project with the values of integrity and environmental stewardship foremost in consideration.

For your awareness, the National Museum of the United States Army project was legislatively authorized by Congress in 10 U.S.C. 4772. In this legislation, the Army Historical Foundation, (AHF), was designated as the non-profit, non-Government entity that would raise funds for the construction of the NMUSA facility.

The current preferred site for the NMUSA facility utilizes part of the Fort Belvoir North Post Golf Course circa Kingman Road and the Fairfax County Parkway, better known as the "Gunston Road" site. This 40 acre site is desirable for its proximity and access to the Parkway, attractive landscape features, as well as elevated siting on a high plateau befitting a facility with such national significance. Please note that the use of this preferred site is subject to NEPA approval.

A \$20 million Army Military Construction project (PN 71149, Road and Infrastructure Improvements) was developed in December 2007 to provide essential infrastructure improvements necessary for preparing the site for the NMUSA. The scope of work includes access roads, traffic and intersection upgrades, utilities including electric service, IT and communications, water and sewer service, gas distribution, and site preparation to include storm drainage, clearing and grading. The scope of the MCA project, however, does not include paving for parking spaces, nor does it include landscaping. Those features, along with the construction of the museum facility, will be funded by the Army Historical Foundation.

In your letter you mentioned a change in site plans based on your viewing of survey stakes recently placed on the site versus an architectural design you have previously viewed. We believe the design that you are referring to was a conceptual site layout completed in August 2008 by our planning architect-engineer (A-E) firm, Berger/SmithGroup JV (BSG). As part of an overall feasibility study, BSG's concept was developed for both the current (Gunston Road) site as well as another site being considered near Pence Gate. The purpose of this study was to verify that either of the sites could accommodate the NMUSA's requirements. Final site selection and configuration will be accomplished pursuant to completion of NEPA.

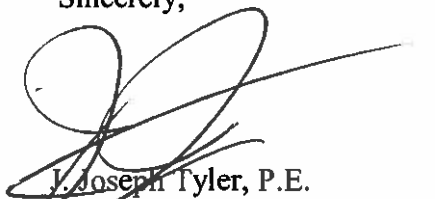
As further background, USACE hired Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, LLC (SOM) in September 2008 to fully design the museum campus, as well as the Army's MILCON infrastructure project. SOM's current site concept utilizes the same locale used earlier in the planning process under BSG, but the new layout in fact represents a slight reduction in the overall area being developed from 44 to 40 acres. Enclosed with this letter is the current concept site layout. A difference we should point out with this latest layout compared to earlier versions is that the main access road to the museum is slightly longer. However, the current design of the access road takes advantage of an old road bed on the western edge of the site and was done to minimize grading and unnecessary tree cutting resulting both in cost savings and reduced environmental impact. The number of parking spaces has not increased with the current concept design. The current overall parking area is larger in space than the earlier layout, but this is because drainage swales will be incorporated at various locations within the parking lot area. As the project is intended to be constructed in phases, current planning also dictates the need to accommodate future facility expansion including parking. Again, these parking and landscaping features will be funded through financing provided by the AHF, not the Army's infrastructure project.

We believe the current concept minimizes development as well as environmental impact to the extent possible and has not encroached on the "natural ravine site border" as you had expressed concern with. Work beyond the site boundaries would involve minimal disturbance due to running utilities that is likely the reason for the survey markings you have seen in the area. Additionally, we have coordinated this site layout with the Fort Belvoir Installation's Department of Public Works and the Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation group in assuring we remain in conformance with their requirements as we move forward.

Finally, with regard to sustainability, the project has been registered with the US Green Building Council and emphasizes a sustainable design and will achieve a Silver LEED Certification under the Council's current guidelines for new construction. Sustainability is an integrated building systems approach, influencing all portions of the design, construction and operation of the new structure and site. The strategies incorporated in the proposed development pay particular attention to five primary areas: Site Sensitivity; Water Efficiency, Energy Efficiency, Materials and Resources, and Improved Indoor Environment.

The US Army Corps of Engineers is very proud to be leading the effort for this important project that will do much to honor the service and sacrifice of all those who have served and will educate the general public on the Army's continued impact on the nation. For further inquiries, please contact Ms. Sheila Bergeron, Project Manager, USACE - New England District at (978)318-8074 or Ms. Kimberly Carpenter, Director of Museum Advancement, National Museum Project Office at phone 703-806-5992.

Sincerely,



J. Joseph Tyler, P.E.
Director of Military Programs



Fig.2 NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY - DESIGN CHARRETTE REPORT 1. DESIGN ELEMENTS