ASLA

American Society of Landscape Architects

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June 16, 2000

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
'00 JUN 16 P3:04

Government of the District of Columbia
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW
Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

Attn: Ms. Jerrily R. Kress

Ref: BZA Application No. 16555

Dear Ms. Kress:

I am forwarding to you a copy of a letter dated March 29, 2000 from me to Edward L. Keenan, Director of Dumbarton Oaks.

This letter is the current official position of the ASLA's Executive Committee regarding the development of plans by Dumbarton Oaks for the construction of a new library. Please note that it is our request that this letter be added to the public record and noted as our official position, superceding the one taken in our earlier letter on the subject. We wish to correct any misimpressions that we are in opposition to the library expansion and renovation at Dumbarton Oaks.

Thank you for this opportunity to clarify our position as you consider the matter now before the Board of Zoning Adjustment.

Sincerely,

Janice C. Schach, President
American Society of Landscape Architects

BZA
Case No. 16555
Exhibit No. 52

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16555
EXHIBIT NO.52

ASLA

March 29, 2000

'00 JUN 16 P3:04

Dr. Edward L. Keenan
1706 32nd Street, NW
Dumbarton Oaks
Washington D.C. 20007

OFFICE OF ZONING
DISTRICT

By Fax: 202-339-6416

Dear Dr. Keenan,

AMERICAN
SOCIETY OF
LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTS
636 EYE STREET, NW
WASHINGTON, DC
20001-3736
202 898-2444
FAX 202 898-1185

Thank you for taking the time to personally review with us your plans for the Dumbarton Oaks library expansion and for providing us with a tour of the grounds. The additional information you provided has been most helpful in formulating a thoughtful response to your letter of February 17.

It is the stated purpose of the American Society of Landscape Architects to "to advance knowledge, education and skill in the art and science landscape architecture." It was with this intent that we wrote our original letter to you in February. ASLA does not endorse projects or pass judgment on the adequacy of the works of its members, except where the ASLA Code of Ethics has been breached. Our original letter was intended neither as a condemnation or endorsement of the proposed library expansion project at Dumbarton Oaks. However, we offer the below comments to help clarify our original intent.

Harvard University's stewardship of the gardens at DumbartonOaks has been most commendable last half century and has well preserved the legacy of Beatrix Farrand. We believe that the institution will continue to protect the integrity of this historic landscape, as it strikes a delicate balance between issues of garden preservation and rehabilitation of the Research Library and Collections.

ASLA understands the importance of a library that is contiguous with the research facilities and collections. We endorse a design process for the library expansion that considers alternative sites and develops a treatment strategy that minimizes the impact to the integrity of this important historic landscape.

ASLA commends Dumbarton Oaks for undertaking a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR), which will be prepared following the recommendations of the National Park Service. This step acknowledges the importance of the CLR process to the management of privately held historic landscapes, as well as publicly held ones, and will serve as an important precedent for other properties.

Additionally, while it would be a great honor for Dumbarton Oaks to be a National Register Property, ASLA is pleased to learn that Dumbarton Oaks is already protected by other designations, including its place on the National Register as a part of the Georgetown Historic District.

The level of thought and care in the study and design of this project, combined with the positive efforts by Dumbarton Oaks to participate in a dialog with members of the ASLA, may provide a model for the way that modifications to privately-held historic properties should be dealt with. We look forward to future discussions on the subject as your project moves forward through the administrative and legislative approval process.

Once again, thank you for taking the time and effort to foster an open dialog on your project.

Sincerely yours,

Janice Cervelli Schach, FASLA
President, American Society of Landscape Architects