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The Washington Post

**November** 18, 2005 Friday  
Final Edition

**SECTION:** Metro; B01

**LENGTH:** 616 words

**HEADLINE:** A Design Airy and Aglow Is Backed for Mall;  
**Headquarters for Peace** Institute Endorsed by Fine Arts  
Commission

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**BODY:**

The view near one end of the Mall will change when the imposing marble monuments, formal gardens and row after row of stern federal buildings are joined by giant, curving swoops of white glass that glow in the night.

With a roof of sweeping wings that look like giant paper doves landing on the building, the preliminary design for a new headquarters for the U.S. Institute of Peace was unveiled and heartily approved by the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts yesterday.

The institute, now on 17th Street NW, is a government think tank created after the Vietnam War as a federal counterpoint to the Defense Department. It was conceived as an institution that seeks resolution through peace, not war. Last year, Congress gave the institute \$100 million for a headquarters on one of the last available building sites on the edge of the Mall, Constitution Avenue and 23rd Street NW, north of the Lincoln Memorial and near the State Department.

Designed by Moshe Safdie, the institute's 154,000-square-foot

headquarters will overlook the Lincoln Memorial and will be prominent in the skyline, especially at night, when it will be lighted from within and the translucent wings will be aglow, Safdie said.

"The Mall is always a challenge because it is a classic space," said arts commissioner Witold Rybczynski, who complimented Safdie on a design that he said met the challenge successfully.

Safdie gave the commission a peek at his plans two years ago in an informational meeting. The panel did not vote, but its suggestions were taken seriously and resulted in a redesign of the building's entrance, a change that won praise for an airy atrium unencumbered by security checkpoints and coat racks, which were moved to the side, and a less grand doorway. The grand entrance will instead be outside, where visitors will be able to walk along a curving moat and landscaped plaza toward the front.

The building is not only new office space but is also envisioned as a federal building open to the public that will host many meetings, dinners and receptions. Because of that, it promises to be glowing quite a bit, which concerns the National Park Service and the arts commission.

At yesterday's session and at a public meeting held by the National Capital Planning Commission on Wednesday night, Safdie was asked to ensure that the glowing wings do not compete with the grandeur of the Lincoln Memorial at night.

The structure now must go through an approval process with the planning commission and more detailed approval for the aesthetics of building materials before the groundbreaking in 2007.

Also yesterday, the arts commission gave reluctant approval to the complete design of a security perimeter around the Lincoln Memorial, something it has struggled with for years.

"No one wants to do this; no one likes this," said commission member Pamela Nelson, echoing the sentiment of a board that

disliked the idea of an obtrusive security perimeter and wrestled with having to retrofit such a carefully designed monument. "It's squeezing your heart to vote on this."

The design places a row of bollards in front of the memorial and hidden in rows of hedges, where designers originally wanted to place cables but later learned that cables would not be effective. The sticking point was whether to integrate the bollards as part of the memorial or set them far back and hope their presence is diminished by the surroundings.

The final design, which sets the bollards far back from the plaza in front of the memorial, received preliminary approval from the National Capitol Planning Commission last month pending approval of other agencies, and the arts commission approved the design yesterday.

**LOAD-DATE:** November 18, 2005