

DESIGN  
ADVOCACY  
GROUP  
of Philadelphia

January 12, 2004

Mr. Robert N. C. Nix, III, Esq.  
Chairman, Fairmount Park Commission  
Memorial Hall, West Park  
4231 North Concourse Drive  
P.O. Box 21601  
Philadelphia, PA 19131-0901

RE: PROPOSED APARTMENT PROJECT ADJACENT TO THE RODIN MUSEUM

Dear Chairman Nix:

The Design Advocacy Group of Philadelphia is very concerned about the proposed transfer of land to the developer of an apartment building planned for the site directly north of the Rodin Museum. We support development of the land adjacent to the Parkway, but only if the new buildings meet the most rigorous standards for design quality. This project would fall far below any imaginable standard.

The sketches we have seen for the proposed apartment building illustrate a design that would be considered pedestrian and unattractive at best. It would loom over the Rodin Museum, an architectural jewel designed by Paul Phillipe Cret, one of the most distinguished architects ever to practice in Philadelphia. We fear that if built as drawn, this building will seriously diminish the quality of the public environment, and will be a continuing embarrassment to the City of Philadelphia.

The timing, moreover, would be absolutely terrible. The Free Library of Philadelphia and the Calder Museum are planning projects designed by award winning architects of world renown. The Central Philadelphia Development Corporation is facilitating the development of a new master plan for the Parkway under the design leadership of an internationally recognized landscape architect and planner. Any action now by the Fairmount Park Commission that facilitates implementation of the apartment project as currently designed would undermine these ongoing efforts.

For all these reasons, we urge you and the members of the Fairmount Park Commission to defer any action on the developer's proposal, and instead to require that the developer resubmit a proposal that has a far superior building design, along with a site plan that has been coordinated with the other planning and design efforts currently underway.

Sincerely,

The Design Advocacy Group of Philadelphia

William P. Becker  
Chair

Cc: The Honorable John Street, Mayor, City of Philadelphia  
Dean Gary Hack, Chair, Philadelphia Planning Commission

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