

Submission to the National Capital Planning Commission

Project Name: East Wing Modernization Project

NCPC File Number: 8733

Submitted by:

Karl Auerbach  
218 Carbonera Drive,  
Santa Cruz, California, 95060  
email: karl@cavebear.com

The White House belongs to the people of the United States.

The White House is a monument to the United States, not a gaudy honorific to one person.

The sudden destruction of the previously existing East Wing was and remains an insult to the people of the United States – that building is our property, not a Presidential bauble.

The scale of the proposed “ballroom” reeks of haughty, personal pride. The decorations are gaudy and tawdry. This ballroom dishonors everything to which the US aspires. This is a ballroom of a king, not of a President.

The proposed style is suggestive of Albert Speer’s Berlin: the cult of the ubermensch rather than an expression of the balanced powers expressed in our Constitution.

This is a ballroom for Marie Antoinette, not Dolly Madison.

There is not a single atom of Democracy in this ballroom’s size, location, or design. It ought to be heated by fireplaces burning copies of the our Declaration of Independence and Constitution.

This Imperial Palace ought not to be built.

Perhaps Percy Bysshe Shelley best encapsulated this proposed monstrosity: That it is a personal monument that will become a symbol of Royal, even Imperial, hubris:

I met a traveller from an antique land,  
Who said—“Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,  
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,

The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;

And on the pedestal, these words appear:

My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;

Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!"

Nothing beside remains. Round the decay

Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare

The lone and level sands stretch far away.