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Ms Carol Shull
US Department of Interiors
National Park Service
PO Box 37127
Washington DC 20013 7127
USA

Dear Ms Shull,

It has recently come to my knowledge through architectural colleagues that the National Park Service intends to build a new visitor center related to the Wright Brothers Memorial site at Kill Devil Hills in North Carolina.

I am the designer of the existing Visitor Center as a partner of the firm of Mitchell/Giurgola Architects. After a career in which our office successfully completed many buildings in different places of the world, among which have been four projects for the NPS, I am presently living in Australia where Mitchell/Giurgola & Thorp Architects designed the new Australian Parliament House as a result of winning a worldwide competition. Our firms have received many awards throughout the years and I am personally the recipient of the American Institute of Architects' Gold Medal and the Thomas Jefferson Medal in Architecture among others.

I am sincerely saddened by the decision, according to the news, taken by the National Park Service to demolish the existing Visitor Center. I am fully aware that times have changed and that the building must be, by now, thoroughly insufficient. However, the site for it was carefully planned while working closely with the NPS; the low profile of the building is in keeping with the expanse of the land and the gentle undulation of the dunes, and the distribution of the spaces is in relation with the view of the existing monument and of the Wright Brothers' shelters and take-off area.

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The building construction alternates bush-hammered concrete and timber panelling with carefully studied detailing and a singular shell construction for the roof. Finally, the design reflected the particular period of American architecture of the early 60s in which the rigidity of modernism evolved into more articulated solutions integrating internal and external spaces. This single building has been recognized as at the forefront of that period and widely published.

I apologize if I have been unduly extending my comments but I believe that this building is worthy of preservation as a document of that moment of american architecture.

The building could certainly be put to good use as a ceremonial hall for special occasions, lectures and seminars, for conferences and exhibits, distinguishing its use from the mass operation and inevitable commercialism of an "up-to-date" visitor center.

I would very much appreciate your attention on the subject.

Yours sincerely,



Romaldo Giurgola, FAIA FRAIA
Partner

cc. Ms Catherine Bishir
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Mr Paul Stephen, AIA
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