

# Freeway Design Needs Cited by Commission

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Staff Reporter

Street underpasses and freeways deserve the same design attention as buildings in the modern city, members of the Fine Arts Commission agreed today.

"They are as important as buildings," observed Gordon Bunshaft, one of the architect-members.

The comment came as the Commission turned down a design for the 9th Street expressway underpass beneath the Mall and told District Highway Department designers to come back with a detailed report on materials, entrances, railing and lighting.

## Disagree with Earlier View

J. J. Grady, bridge architect for the highway department, presented the proposed design for the 9th Street underpass. This will be paired with the 12th Street expressway tunnel now in use.

Five years ago, when early plans were presented to the previous Commission, the designers were told to study buildings in the surrounding environs and to match the underpass finishing to the type of architecture in the area.

The present Commission members disagreed yesterday with the earlier directive.

It isn't exactly inspiring to "follow some of the least distinguished architecture in Washington," Aline Saarinen observed. She added the Commission perhaps should take a "big look at the whole problem" of freeways since more and more designs will be coming before it.

## To Begin Soon

In other action, the Commission:

- Took another look at the

plans for the National Air Museum and still felt it was a "beautiful building" despite reservations about the depressed plaza.

- Approved plans for a Government Printing Office field plant on the grounds of the old Weapons Plant on 2d street south of M street sw. Construction work of the \$1.4-million first stage is scheduled to begin in April.

- Approved "bumps" on an upper section of one of the Virginia ave. buildings in the Watergate apartment-hotel-office complex overlooking Rock Creek pkwy.

- Sent back a revised design for an elementary school at Wheeler rd. and Mississippi ave. sw. Members liked the changes in the general scheme but asked the architect to "clean up superficial embellishments."