The thoughtful responses to my essay bring important issues to the fore that beg further discussion. A common thread among them is that regulation as much as physical apparatus can generate a landscape of fear and that that landscape encompasses mental as well as concrete realms. The perpetrators of regulation, Mark Leone reminds us, are seldom identifiable as individuals; regulation emanates from bureaucracies. The matter-of-fact nature in which many security plans are developed intensifies, in my opinion, their ominousness, for they tend to be taken for granted and accepted as part of the everyday world. These plans are not the work of villains, but of well-dressed, polite, and frequently young men and women who have families, faith, and good intentions. Like the highway engineers whose aim of maximum efficiency in vehicular movement is pursued without study of the implications their plans may have on the places through which they traverse, the security planners hold safety (of people and/or things) as their paramount concern without necessarily considering the full effect of their projects. A strong sense of mission is tied to such endeavors, but hubris can be part of the equation, too: How could the public possibly know what’s best under these circumstances? People do not realize all the dangers they are confronting. We have studied the situation closely. We have the answers. When public officials have the temerity to challenge aspects of a security plan, the planners often reply by asking whether those officials are willing to accept responsibility if even one person is killed as a result of a terrorist attack. The chances that such an attack would occur may be ridicu-
ously low, but such probabilities are impossible to verify and so the precautionary bar is raised.

The growing pervasiveness of security measures matches their banality, as Setha Low emphasizes. Her remarks on the phenomenon in New York illustrate that the process feeds on itself; too much is never enough. The consequence of this progressive growth is the privatization of the public realm. This tendency has certainly been accelerated in response to the threat of terrorism, but I think it has deeper roots. The protests, riots, and assassination of public figures in the 1960s and early 1970s not only intensified a sense of national paranoia among all parties involved, they gave the infrastructure of security a baroque, self-aggrandizing character it seldom possessed before. Even when the extraordinary events of that era subsided, crime seemed enough to perpetuate the need for an ever more lavish outlay of equipment. Security measures began to assume an aura of spectacle. Although unaffected by crime and long before terrorism became a plausible threat, senior administration officials in Washington began being escorted around town and elsewhere by fast-moving phalanxes of cars, vans, police motorcycles, and sometimes even press busses—with sirens blazing. It now costs Washington taxpayers $10,000 each time the vice president goes from home to office. A presidential visit to someone’s residence may mean that neighbors are “frozen” in or out of their abodes for hours.

Geoffrey White correctly delineates that the Mall remains very accessible in its overall character. The landscape of fear, however, does not necessarily prevent or even inhibit access. Pedestrians can easily negotiate the bollards, planters, and all the other security devices being installed throughout the federal precinct. As the cruder, temporary impediments are removed, the chances are that visitors are giving ever less thought to the matter. Just as with regulation, the commonality and acceptance of this landscape can contribute to its long-term deleterious effect. The more we tolerate limitations, the greater those limitations are likely to become. The World War II Memorial, which White discusses, is a case in point. At present, no physical security devices demark its perimeter. On the other hand, elaborate security precautions have been taken at the Washington Monument and the Lincoln and Jefferson memorials. Once these plans are implemented, can the World War II Memorial be far behind, especially given the analogies that White notes senior federal officials make between that conflict and the current war on terrorism?

I am sorry James Holston responded just to the preliminary and necessarily brief observations made in the paper I delivered.
at the conference instead of to the more fully developed one published herein, for he misreads my interpretation in several respects. A strictly visual reading of the landscape is as unacceptable a method for interpretation in architectural and urban history as it is in anthropology. A certain kind of space or architecture never denotes a certain kind of activity or outlook. To the contrary, physical similarities often mask fundamental differences in use and meaning. The specifics are often particularized, linked to time and place as well as to social, political, economic, and other conditions. Similarly, it is preposterous to suggest that the spatial order of Washington or any other governmental center in the United States is intrinsically more democratic, more conducive to public interface or protest, or in any other respect “better” than those in Europe. My point was simply to delineate a basic difference in space and to suggest that by the early nineteenth century a major public building surrounded by park-like open space began to be identified with the idea of democracy.¹ A sense of openness may indeed have nothing to do with actual access, let alone democracy, as the example of New Delhi well illustrates (for background see Irving 1981; Volwahsen 2002; Soane 2003 ch.5). Nevertheless, this coupling has long existed in the United States and remains part of the equation as more and more Americans actually get to share in the democratic experience. That is one of the key reasons why the Mall has become such a poignant place for protest as well as for celebration.

Notes

¹Although Holston introduces the L’Enfant Plan in his rebuttal, I never used it in my initial argument. Recent scholarship has clearly shown that the hard evidence on L’Enfant’s intentions for his plan, which itself was completed by others after his dismissal, is quite meager and that barring some extraordinary discovery of new documents our knowledge of the plan is not going to increase. Pamela Scott’s pathbreaking work on L’Enfant suggests that embodying the democratic ideals of the new nation were indeed part of his aim in developing the plan, but there is no indication that the kind of spatial order discussed in my essay was a component of that scheme. See Scott 2002[1991].
References cited

Irving, Robert Grant

Scott, Pamela

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Volwahsen, Andreas