

# STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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NCPC File No. 6265



## LINCOLN MEMORIAL LINCOLN MEMORIAL CIRCLE REHABILITATION AND SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS WASHINGTON, DC

Submission by the National Park Service

November 26, 2003

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### *Abstract*

The National Park Service (NPS) has submitted preliminary and final site and building plans for proposed traffic and visitor service improvements at the Lincoln Memorial, and for the installation of vehicle barriers for security. The Commission reviewed and approved a concept plan with similar elements at its July 2002 meeting. The current proposal retains the lane reconfiguration around the Lincoln Memorial Circle and improvements to the traffic islands, traffic signals, and pedestrian access. The concept referred to two concession stands, which have now been designed and sited.

The current proposal also retains the proposed 30-inch-high retaining wall around the inner edge of the circle to prevent vehicle access to the memorial from the north, west, and south sides of the circle. At the east side of the circle, the National Park Service proposes an alternative plan to that seen by the Commission in the July 2002 concept submission, which was based on the scheme under development for the *Urban Design and Security Plan*. The original concept scheme called for the eastern barrier line, in a combination of bollards and retaining walls, to descend alongside the lower steps to the level of the Reflecting Pool and across the front of the lower steps parallel to the end of the Reflecting Pool. The current submission proposes that a barrier line, of 36-inch-high bollards, be placed at the outer edge of the circle. In addition, 36-inch-high bollards would cross the circle roadway in two locations (at Bacon and French Drives) to prevent vehicles from entering the pedestrian area on the east side.

### *Commission Action Requested by Applicant*

Approval of preliminary and final site and building plans pursuant to 40 U.S.C. §8722(d) and Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act (40 U.S.C. §8722(b)(1)) as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.44(73.10) 41259.

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### *Executive Director's Recommendation*

The Commission:

**Approve** preliminary and final site and building plans for the Lincoln Memorial Circle traffic improvements on the circle's west side between Bacon and French Drives.

**Approve** preliminary site and building plans for the concession buildings and for the perimeter security retaining wall.

**Disapprove** the proposed improvements to the east side of the Lincoln Memorial Circle.

**Recommend**, for the east side of the Lincoln Memorial Circle, that NPS develop an alternative that shows:

- **A security line along the inner memorial circle edge**, that extends the proposed retaining wall along the length of the inner circle perimeter edge to abut the ramps at the base of the memorial stair, and places bollards only where needed to block vehicular access across the openings at the base of the stair and across the roadway at Bacon and French Drives.
- **A plaza, of granite or other stone material**, similar to the plaza design approved by the Commission for the base of the Washington Monument.

**Require** that NPS submit the following with its submission for final approval:

- A design and details for the retractable bollards in the circle roadway.
- Design details for a more articulated retaining wall, of a quality commensurate with the memorial and setting.
- Drawings of the lighting scheme for the memorial, including all light poles, etc. to be installed at the site.
- All documents demonstrating that NPS has completed any necessary revisions to the Section 106 and the NEPA processes.

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## **BACKGROUND AND STAFF EVALUATION**

### *PROJECT DESCRIPTION*

#### Lincoln Memorial

The Lincoln Memorial was sited by the McMillan Commission and designed by one of Charles McKim's protégés, architect Henry Bacon. Built between 1914-1922, the national memorial to President Lincoln is the western terminus of the extended Mall and the focal point of West Potomac Park. The Reflecting Pool, Rainbow Pool, steps, and walkways were designed by Bacon, who collaborated closely with Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. Olmsted had been a member of the McMillan Commission and was sitting as the landscape architect on the Commission of Fine Arts during that time. (Olmsted later served as a member of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission from 1926-32).

## Project Submission

The project encompasses alterations that fall into three types of improvements—rehabilitation of the circle and reconfiguration of the traffic lanes, construction of physical barriers against unauthorized vehicles, and construction of two concession buildings for visitors and the removal of the present facilities. The current submission includes:

- 1) Traffic and pedestrian safety improvements
  - Reconfiguration of lanes to incorporate left turn signal from the circle to 23<sup>rd</sup> Street northbound, and installation of traffic control signals and signs
  - Repaving of roadway and sidewalks
  - Replacement of asphalt paving at east Lincoln Memorial Circle with dark exposed aggregate concrete, and elimination of curb section of roadway to create pedestrian plaza area
- 2) Vehicle barriers
  - Construction of 30-inch-high Pink Milford granite retaining wall around north, west, and south sides of circle with removable portion on west side for presidential visits
  - Installation of 36-inch-high bollards across circle roadway near Bacon and French Drives
  - Installation of 36-inch-high powder-coated steel bollards painted to match Pink Milford granite, around outer edge of memorial circle between Bacon and French Drives
- 3) Visitor service improvements
  - Construction of two new concession buildings at north and south sides of memorial facing Bacon and French Drives
  - Installation of paved eating area around each building, with tables and chairs for one hundred visitors.

## *PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTION*

The Commission approved a concept submission for this project at its July 2002 meeting. The project was similar to the current submission, except:

- The east barrier security line was below the lower stairs, at the level of the Reflecting Pool, with bollards parallel to the end of the Reflecting Pool, and retaining walls and bollards used to extend the barrier line from the Memorial Circle down the stairs to the Reflecting Pool.  
*NPS has submitted a security line of bollards at the outer edge of the Lincoln Memorial Circle, above the lower stairs to the Reflecting Pool.*
- The material proposed for the pedestrian plaza was scored concrete.  
*NPS has submitted exposed aggregate concrete pavers.*
- The design of the vehicle entrance at the west side of the circle had not been resolved.  
*NPS has submitted a design for the vehicle entrance.*

The Commission gave concept approval, requesting that NPS:

- Use granite or another stone for the pedestrian plaza.  
*NPS has submitted exposed aggregate concrete pavers.*
- Resolve the design of the vehicle entrance at the west.  
*The current submission shows the removable section of wall faced with stone, so that its appearance will match the rest of the retaining wall.*
- Prepare a mock-up of the bollards.  
*This has been done for review by staff and others.*
- Recognize NCPC as a cooperating agency in the preparation of NPS's NEPA document.  
*NPS indicated in its EA that NCPC was a cooperating agency.*

### *EVALUATION*

Staff recommends *final approval* for the rehabilitation of the traffic circle and associated traffic and pedestrian improvements on the west side of the circle between Bacon and French Drives (see illustrations on pages 13-15). These elements will improve the current traffic conditions and pedestrian safety at memorial circle.

Staff recommends *preliminary approval* for the construction of two 34-foot by 34-foot concession buildings, facing Bacon and French Drives, and their seating areas (pages 28-35), so that NPS can continue to assess the appearance of these concession buildings as well as their relation to the two future concession buildings, whose locations are proposed for 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW north of Madison Drive and south of Jefferson Drive, in NPS's Development Concept Plan for the Washington Monument Grounds (approved by the Commission in 1993 and reaffirmed in 2002). This is also consistent with Section 206(2) of Public Law 108-126, The Commemorative Works Clarification and Revision Act of 2003, which directs NPS to work in consultation with NCPC and the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) "to relocate, redesign or otherwise alter the concession facilities that are within the Reserve to the extent necessary to make them compatible with the Reserve's character." Staff looks forward to working with NPS to accomplish this objective in the development of the final design.

Staff also recommends *preliminary approval* for construction of a 30-inch-high retaining wall around the inner edge of the circle, inside the sidewalk (pages 16-17). The wall is of Pink Milford granite, to match the stylobate of the memorial. Although the installation would be accompanied by regrading near the inside of the wall, staff finds this an appropriate solution that complements the landscape and the memorial's setting. The wall could also be used for seating. The Commission, in June 2002, agreed with NPS that the walls were preferable to bollards at this location. Staff considers this design a permanent alteration of the setting. The quality and character of the design, articulation, material finish, and construction should be commensurate with that of the memorial. Staff recommends that NPS advance the design of the retaining wall to accommodate more comfortable seating, to bring the walls to a more appropriately designed termination, and so that the design is commensurate in quality with the character of the memorial and setting.

Staff recommends *disapproval* of the use of exposed aggregate concrete in the pedestrian plaza on the east of the circle. Staff continues to recommend that granite or another stone be used in this location. NPS used exposed aggregate concrete when it repaved the former roadway in front of the Jefferson Memorial. However, it proposed and the Commission approved the use of granite for the circular plaza around the Washington Monument. This area will be used as a pedestrian plaza and no longer as a roadway. Staff recommends the commensurate quality of material at the Lincoln Memorial for visitors at this significant location, at least on the east-west Mall axis. Staff *does* concur with NPS's proposed adjustment in the level of the roadway by removing the curb section. The curb stone itself would be retained to mark the historic edge between the sidewalk and roadway.

Staff also recommends *disapproval* of the proposed barrier line at the outer edge of the east side of Lincoln Memorial Circle (pages 18 and 20). This aspect of the project has been of concern throughout the development of the project, as it requires installing a physical barrier line somewhere between the memorial and the Reflecting Pool, two elements that are physically, historically, and symbolically integrated. Further, these elements are on the east-west axis of the Mall and the barrier line would cross that axis line and be visible between the memorial and the Reflecting Pool.

The Commission approved, in concept in July 2002, a proposed security line on the east side of the memorial that descended the steps to the Reflecting Pool and incorporated that area at that lower level within the security perimeter, essentially creating landscape alterations that extended into West Potomac Park (page 27). This scheme was developed by NPS and landscape architect Laurie Olin in Spring 2002 and was subsequently included schematically in the October 2002 *Urban Design and Security Plan*. At the time that the Commission approved the concept, it was assumed that the bollards at the lower level would not be visible in the viewshed from the memorial chamber. Subsequent bollard mock-ups revealed that the bollards not only would be visible from the memorial chamber but also would be reflected in the Reflecting Pool. This fact, coupled with the proposed alterations to the historic landscape plan, led NPS to further study of alternatives for the site, including consultation with the DC SHPO and other parties.

The current submission shows the other, NPS-preferred alternative, a bollard line extending along the outer edge of the circle from Bacon Drive to French Drive. This alternative was assessed in NPS's EA and was the basis for the Section 106 MOA. This scheme would not require the physical alteration of the historic landscape features at the lower level proposed in the concept scheme and contains the security barrier to the level of the Memorial Circle. It is also visible in the viewshed, however, although the bollard line is placed where it would be more natural, along a roadway and sidewalk. The major drawback of this proposal is the long undifferentiated line of bollards extending approximately a quarter of the way around the circle, from Bacon to French Drives, in the most visually sensitive part of the circle (NCPC photo simulations on pages 21-22).

NCPC staff has suggested, in meetings with NPS during the past year, a third alternative that would preserve the iconic vista between the memorial and the Reflecting Pool (page 23). The Executive Director also referred to this scheme in a July 18, 2003 letter to NPS commenting on the EA, stating that this alternative was worthy of further analysis. This scheme involves the

installation of the bollard line at the base of the memorial steps - at the *inner* edge of the east side of the circle. From a design perspective, this appears to be the best solution for several reasons. First, it would create a significantly shorter barrier line than either the concept or preliminary alternative, and would have the least physical impact on the site. The NPS submission contains 177 bollards. Staff's third alternative (shown schematically) would contain approximately 42 bollards. More significantly, it would have the least impact on the vista. Although bollards would be visible to visitors standing in the plaza or approaching the memorial's steps, they would not become part of the monumental axial east-west viewshed. They would not be visible in the view from the memorial chamber if one were looking out toward the Reflecting Pool and the Mall beyond. From the Reflecting Pool, they also would not be visible, given the angle of view and the distance (NCPC photo simulations on pages 24-25). In summary, the bollards at this third location would not be seen against either sky or water, but solely against the masonry stairs and sidewalk.

In order for the security line along the inner circle to serve its purpose, the vehicle barrier line would need to be drawn completely around the inner edge of the Memorial Circle (page 26). The proposed granite retaining wall would need to be extended toward the east to adjoin the edges of the handicapped ramps behind the memorial's stairs, or some similar physical linkage made. Thus, the barrier line would extend protection beyond the memorial to the inner edge of the circle, the "building yard," in all directions. The proposed bollard lines across the circle roadway at Bacon and French Drives would still be part of the proposal because they would be needed to separate vehicles from pedestrians on the east side. If further barriers were found to be necessary near the outer edge of the traffic circle (near the Vietnam and Korean memorials), a barrier line consisting of elements other than only bollards could be designed, perhaps including benches.

NPS has responded to this third scheme by stating that it does not meet the project's security objectives, which include the protection of pedestrians in the plaza (as well as the memorial itself and the visitors in it), and therefore cannot be considered further because it does not meet the project criteria. NPS has assessed one of the threats as coming from a vehicle approaching the Memorial from the Mall - from the lower level of the Reflecting Pool or from one of the Elm Walks, climbing the lower steps, crossing the plaza and approaching the memorial steps.

Staff recommends that NPS reassess the security design criteria for this project so that it can consider this solution in order to preserve an uninterrupted vista. NPS has described a desire to protect visitors in the public plaza area in front of the memorial, but staff notes that there are many large areas of the Mall that do not have such protection for visitors, including areas where visitors congregate. These proposed security barriers will be a permanent—or at best a long term--alteration. As with other projects recently seen by the Commission, the smallest possible security perimeter should be drawn, so that the barrier line remains in the "building yard" to the extent possible, consistent with the principles of the *Urban Design and Security Plan*. The *Plan's* introduction states:

The nation must not guard against terror at the expense of a long-standing national ideal: the appreciation—indeed, aspiration—for openness, accessibility, and comfort within the public domain.

Staff finds that a better balance between security requirements and the significance of this site must be achieved. Staff recommends that the barrier line be contained inside the circle, rather than extended across the public open space, in order to protect one of the nation's most significant vistas at one of its most important and symbolic locations.

## *COORDINATION*

### Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed this item at its meeting on November 12, 2003, and forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the project had been coordinated with all agencies participating. The participating agencies were NCPC; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the Department of Housing and Community Development; the District Department of Transportation; the General Services Administration; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

## *CONFORMANCE*

### Urban Design and Security Plan

The proposed security barrier for the Lincoln Memorial in the *Urban Design and Security Plan* indicates a retaining wall around the north, west, and south sides of the inner edge of Lincoln Memorial Circle, as also shown in the current submission. The submission deviates from the *Plan's* barrier line on the east side of the memorial, which extended the line down the lower steps to the level of the Reflecting Pool. This lower barrier line was submitted with the July 2002 concept submission, but has since been reassessed by NPS in favor of the current submission. Staff has recognized that security elements shown in the *Plan* are schematic only and are subject to further analysis as design development proceeds for individual projects.

### Comprehensive Plan

The following are the applicable policies in the Parks, Open Space and Natural Features Element and in the Preservation and Historic Features Element of the Comprehensive Plan:

- The great cross-axes of the Mall, from the Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial and from the White House to the Jefferson Memorial, constitute a unique national place and that must be protected. The Mall is considered complete and any improvements should be limited in scope and sensitively designed to reinforce the integrity of this unique place.
- New construction of Historic Landmarks on in Historic Districts should be compatible with the historic architectural character and cultural heritage of the landmark of district.

## Commission of Fine Arts

CFA approved the concept in June 2002.

Staff observed CFA's discussion of the current submission, reviewed at its November 20, 2003 meeting. They gave approval to the project in general, but asked for further study by NPS and review by CFA of certain features of the proposal, including the retaining wall (asking for further articulation and a "softer" shape to the wall), and the concession buildings (suggesting they be painted a darker color such as green-gray and that the sign band be restudied). CFA also recommended that granite be used in the plaza rather than exposed aggregate concrete pavers, at least in the central area of the circle between the series of steps.

The bollard line was generally approved. The discussion of the bollards included the suggestion that retractable bollards be considered for the portion of the bollard line crossing the central area on the east side, with the bollards being in the "down" position except in times of heightened threat. NPS agreed to discuss the matter with its security consultants and U.S. Park Police.

## National Environmental Policy Act

The Executive Director issued NCPC's FONSI (Finding of No Significant Impact) on November 17, 2003, concluding that the analysis was sufficient and demonstrated no significant environmental impacts from the planned action. As part of the EA review, staff stated in a July 18, 2003 letter to NPS that a third alternative be analyzed: the placement of the bollard line on the inner edge of the Lincoln Memorial Circle.

The Commission's review of NPS's site and buildings plans for the Lincoln Memorial Circle Rehabilitation is governed by NCPC's Environmental Policy and Procedures, in coordination with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NCPC staff analyzed, in conformance with the requirements of NEPA, the prepared Environmental Assessment (EA) completed by NPS in June 2003.

The EA reviews two alternatives for developing security measures at the memorial as follows:

- Alternative B (The NPS Preferred Alternative that proposes to rehabilitate Lincoln Memorial Circle, construct a vehicular barrier system, and enhance visitor services areas.)
- Alternative C (To rehabilitate Lincoln Circle, provide security against a potential terrorist attack from a vehicle bomb, and improve visitor services.)

A third alternative action, Alternative A, is the "No Action" (the alternative specified as a requirement for NEPA) and is reviewed and evaluated in the EA.

In any of the assessed alternatives there would be no change to the Lincoln Memorial itself.

Under Alternative B, the Preferred Alternative of the Park Service, NPS proposes to rehabilitate Lincoln Memorial Circle, construct a vehicular barrier system, and enhance visitor services areas.

The Commission staff reviewed the EA analysis and concluded that the environmental effects for Alternative B would have minimal impacts on environmental attributes of the immediate memorial site. Important visual effects are essential in comparing the various alternatives and staff has determined the proposed project review and approval does not require an environmental impact statement, pursuant to NEPA, because no resources are significantly impacted by either the intensity of the action or its context.

Mitigation actions accomplishing the project, through the NCPC project review process, are listed below as associated with the attribute resource potentially affected:

#### *Floodplains*

No mitigation measures are required. In compliance with the District of Columbia Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs permitting regulations, and the *1987 Standards for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control*, erosion and sediment control measures will be implemented to avoid or minimize the potential for sedimentation and contamination impacts to surface waters due to development of the proposed project. These efforts would address development activities with the objective:

- To reduce the potential for erosion, and to accelerate the reestablishment of vegetation, disturbed or denuded areas will be re-vegetated.
- To further reduce the potential for sedimentation and contamination impacts to surface waters, proposed impervious surface features such as walking paths will be designed to minimize surface area *to the extent practicable*.

#### *Transportation Effects*

The mitigation of any potential traffic or vehicle impacts would require synchronization of traffic signals at 23rd Street (north)/Lincoln Circle and Constitution Avenue/Henry Bacon Drive during afternoon peak times and may include timing of pedestrian crossing signals as well. This effort would help control traffic at these two intersections; however, they should not adversely impact other traffic/flows. NCPC staff review would assure appropriate signage will be installed to warn motorists and pedestrians of potential conflict areas in the vicinity of the Memorial reservation. Appropriate traffic control measures would be used during construction.

#### *Visual Impacts*

Mitigation of any potential viewshed impacts involving Alternative B would be mitigated through the use of compatible appropriate sympathetic context design and materials in keeping with the cultural landscape and historic setting of the Lincoln Memorial. These would include:

- Design techniques and construction materials that would preserve the aesthetic qualities of the original roadway design at its historic location, including curb line
- Restoration of the east side of the Memorial to its historic layout
- Rehabilitation of the sidewalks to their historic appearance

- Restoration of the historic tree landscape plan
- Construction measures that would minimize any disturbance to roots, limbs, and branches that are character defining features of the Lincoln Memorial Grounds
- Massing, scale, and materials reflective of or consistent with the surrounding park resources and historic designed landscape

### *Historic Resource Effects*

To comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the National Park Service would enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the DC State Historic Preservation Office and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to provide consultation in order to avoid major adverse effects associated with the views and vistas of the Lincoln Memorial. Consultation and coordination would continue with the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Planning Commission. Alternative B would be mitigated through the use of compatible appropriate sympathetic context design and materials in keeping with the cultural landscape and historical setting of the Lincoln Memorial. These would include:

- Design techniques and construction materials that would preserve the aesthetic qualities of the original roadway design at its historic location, including curb line
- Restoration of the east side of the Memorial to its historic layout
- Rehabilitation of the sidewalks to their historic appearance
- Restoration of the historic tree landscape plan
- Construction measures that would minimize any disturbance to roots, limbs, and branches that are character defining features of the Lincoln Memorial Grounds
- Massing, scale, and materials would be reflective of or consistent with the surrounding park resources and historic designed landscape

Specifically, the agreed-upon Memorandum of Agreement identifies the following:

- To the extent possible, the undertaking shall be compatible with the historic and architectural qualities of the Memorial and grounds in terms of scale, massing, color, and materials and shall be consistent with the recommended approaches to rehabilitation and new construction set forth in *the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings* (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1995).
- To minimize the adverse effect caused by the introduction of the low stone retaining wall around the memorial, historic Pink Milford granite will be used to match the material of the memorial's stylobate wall. The finish of the new retaining wall will be complementary, but will not be identical to the historic wall finish.
- A new pedestrian plaza will be constructed on the eastern quarter of the Lincoln Memorial Circle that would feature metal bollards and will be compatible with the memorial. The bollards also would be placed at the outer edge of the plaza and circle to minimize their appearance on the east side of the memorial.
- Future concession kiosk structures will be placed outside the memorial area and the existing food service trailers would be removed. The design of the kiosks would be a

modified version of the four existing food kiosks located on the Mall at the Air and Space Museum, the Museum of American History, the Natural History Museum, and the Arts and Industries Building.

Consultation and coordination of all physical planned improvements would continue to be coordinated with the Commission of Fine Arts and NCPC.

*Impacts to visitor use and experience*

To mitigate effect to the visitor experience, the following actions will be monitored by NCPC staff during the review submissions of the project:

- Design techniques and construction materials that would preserve the aesthetic qualities of the original roadway design at its historic location, including curb line
- Restoration of the east side of the memorial to its historic layout
- Rehabilitation of sidewalks to their historic appearance

*Visitor service improvement effects*

To mitigate impacts to visitors during the construction of the visitor services areas, the north service area would be constructed first and would allow the existing gift shop and concession stand to remain open. The gift shop, concession stand, and information kiosks on the south side would then be transferred to the north side so that construction could begin on the south visitor services area, thereby eliminating disruption to visitor use and experience.

*Effects to park operations*

No mitigation measures are recommended or required.

National Historic Preservation Act

NPS initiated consultation with the D.C. State Historic Preservation Officer (DC SHPO) and with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) on July 1, 2002, determining that the proposed security alterations and the loss of the roadway in the eastern portion of the traffic circle would have an adverse effect on the National Register qualities of the Lincoln Memorial. The consultation included both of the above agencies, as well as NCPC staff and public groups and individuals such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Committee of 100, the National Coalition to Save Our Mall, and the ANC representative.

The MOA (attached to this report as pages 36-38) has been executed by the signatories, NPS, the DC SHPO, and the ACHP. It contains several stipulations for concurrent review of the plans and for possible future review if design changes are made. First, it stipulates a 30-day comment period by the agencies and consulting parties on the currently submitted plans, especially on the concession buildings, which were not discussed except by reference during the consultation (stipulations #5 and #6 of the attached MOA). This comment period occurred during the month

of November. NPS must take into account any comments and make modifications to the final design plans as it deems appropriate.

Another stipulation allows for further consultation if any design changes are made subsequent to the date of the MOA (October 31, 2003). Therefore, the MOA establishes the process for continuing consultation if NPS revises the design in response to comments from review agencies or consulting parties. Stipulation #7 states:

NPS shall ensure that any change to the Undertaking proposed subsequent to the execution of the Agreement and not covered by this agreement will be developed in consultation with the SHPO, the ACHP, and any interested consulting parties, and all such changes will be submitted to the SHPO and the ACHP for review and to NCPC for approval.

A brief summary of the development of the memorial design appears at the beginning of the Project Description section of this report. The elements of the memorial and site are of high historic significance and designed to be seen and experienced as a whole, creating a symbolic and commemorative landscape setting for the Lincoln Memorial within the spacious precinct of West Potomac Park and the Mall itself, and extending westward across the Memorial Bridge to Arlington National Cemetery.

The memorial itself, the circle, and the series of steps and turf and stone terraces leading to the memorial from the level of the Mall at the Reflecting Pool form a significant historic designed landscape that deliberately evokes through calibrated levels of ascendance a reverence for Lincoln as the savior of the Union. In addition, however, the site is heavily visited and over the years the Park Service has incorporated alterations for handicapped accessibility, visitor services, and construction for temporary events. Lincoln Circle used to be a true traffic circle, and even though the eastern portion has been closed to general traffic for some years, the rest of the circle continues to serve as a commuter route for traffic entering and leaving the District of Columbia via Memorial Bridge.