

WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL
Rainbow Pool, West Potomac Park, 17TH Street, NW.,
Between Independence and Constitution Avenues

Report to the National Park Service and the American Battle Monuments Commission

June 3, 1999

Abstract

The National Park Service (NPS) submits on behalf of the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), preliminary site and building plans for the World War II (WWII) Memorial. The NPS, ABMC, and their design team undertook a thorough coordination process with the Commission and staff during the development of the preliminary plans. These plans represent very strong design development from the revised concept plans that were previously reviewed by the Commission.

Authority

Commemorative Works Act (40 U.S.C. 1007) as amended by Public Law 103-32 requires the Secretary of the Interior, the Commission of Fine Arts, and the National Capital Planning Commission to approve the siting and design of the memorial prior to its construction.

Commission Action

The Commission:

- **Approves** the preliminary site and building plans for the WWII Memorial, Rainbow Pool, West Potomac Park, 17th Street, NW, between Independence and Constitution Avenues, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.43(73.10)-40635.
- **Requests** that, in the preparation of final site and building plans, NPS, ABMC, and its design team:
 - Identify the extent and the type of off-site landscaping (proposed and to remain) and other improvements related to the WWII Memorial.
 - Identify all areas that will contain iconography, sculpture, inscriptions, and plaques.

- Continue to explore methods of incorporating plant material into the memorial plaza in a manner that will not require bollards and chains for maintenance purposes.
- The Commission looks forward to the clarification of the forms of the flame/sculpture and the broken plane elements during the design development of the Sacred Precinct area.

* * *

BACKGROUND AND STAFF EVALUATION

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

The NPS, on behalf of the ABMC, submits preliminary site and building plans for the WWII Memorial. These plans represent further design development of the revised design concept approved by the Commission at its July 1998 meeting.

Site

The site of the WWII Memorial is at the Rainbow Pool located at the East End of the Reflecting Pool, between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial. This site is south of the intersection of Constitution Avenue and 17th Street.

The site is comprised of approximately 7.4 acres and currently serves as the location for ceremonial arrivals, by helicopter, of visiting Heads of State. Additionally, the Fourth of July fireworks display is ignited from this location.

Access to the site is generally from 17th Street and Independence and Constitution Avenues.

Design Intent

The WWII Memorial is to honor this significant historical event while paying full attention to its magnificent site on the National Mall. The memorial is intended to be an inviting and welcoming place to celebrate the American spirit as well as a place for quiet contemplation of the sacrifices made in a common and just cause.

Building Program

The building program provides for the site to be developed with several memorial elements juxtaposed around a reconstructed Rainbow Pool. Additionally, there is a landscape component that creates the setting for the principal memorial space. The memorial is comprised of several major design elements that include:

Memorial Plaza

- The memorial plaza is the principal design element of the memorial. This space is centrally positioned around the reconstructed Rainbow Pool and connects all of the other elements within this plaza.
- Ceremonial steps and ramps lead from 17th Street into the Memorial Plaza. This ceremonial entrance is 170 feet wide with ramps located along the sides. The ceremonial steps are large enough so that they also serve as an amphitheater during ceremonies.
- Sculpted stone pedestals, engraved with appropriate messages, will be placed at the beginning and ending of the ceremonial entrance. An announcement will be at the beginning and a dedication will be at the end of this entrance.
- Two 70-foot-tall flagpoles and six service flags will adorn the 17th Street entrance. The service flags will be 40 feet high and be aligned perpendicular to 17th Street.
- Curvilinear, 11½ -foot-wide ramps at north and south entrances provide access to the Memorial Plaza for visitors travelling along the existing east/west pathways between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument. The southern entrance will also serve the pedestrian traffic coming from the bus drop-off and accessible parking to the south, near Independence Avenue. The northern entrance will serve pedestrian traffic coming from a tourmobile drop-off along Constitution Avenue. Constitution Avenue is also the location for tour bus pick-up.

Memorial Arches

- The two memorial arches, at the north and south entrances, serve as markers and points of reference. These arches are 41 feet high and 24 by 24 feet wide.
- A bronze baldacchino is placed within each arch, suspending laurel wreaths. Four American eagles rising from bronze columns support the laurel wreaths with ribbons held in their beaks.
- The north memorial arch celebrates victory in the Atlantic and the south memorial arch celebrates victory in the Pacific.

Embracing Arms

- The embracing arms elements are to celebrate the unprecedented unity of the Nation during WWII and symbolize the bonding of the Nation. Each state and territory during WWII will have its name inscribed on a 17-foot-high stone pillar adorned with bronze wreaths.

- Each pillar is open in the center to allow viewing into and across the memorial.

Sacred Precinct

- The sacred precinct is located on the western side of the memorial plaza. Two cascading waterfalls distinguish the height difference between the existing Reflecting Pool and the reconstructed Rainbow Pool.
- A cenotaph commemorating sacrifice is the centerpiece of the sacred precinct. This element will be carved in stone with an attached sculptured wreath.
- The ensemble of cenotaph, waterfalls, and wreaths is set against a backdrop of a broken and tilted plane of jaggedly fissured granite. A deep crater at the center will contain a flame (probably simulated) within sculpture to symbolize the triumph of light over darkness.

Rainbow Pool / Water Elements

- The reconstructed Rainbow Pool is at the center of the memorial plaza and provides seating around its edge.
- An additional fountain will be placed at each memorial arch.

Landscaping

- The surface of the memorial plaza will be a combination of different colored stone laid in distinct patterns and large areas of solid colored stone.
- The ceremonial entrance has three lawn panels between the monumental steps.
- Existing Elm trees will be preserved and enhanced with the objective of restoring the double row of these trees to their original condition.
- The outer precincts of the site will be landscaped with under canopy trees, shrubs, and groundcover. This area will include a contemplative area in the northwest corner of the site as well as pedestrian pathways with benches.

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTION

At its July 9, 1998 meeting, the Commission commended the ABMC and approved the revised design concept for the WWII Memorial. At this time, the Commission requested that the ABMC provide direct pedestrian access to the memorial plaza from the west; define the landscape treatment with the objective of incorporating green and white floral elements as well as any other textures landscape areas; and provide additional seating areas in the memorial plaza.

In addition to the above actions, the Commission informed the NPS and ABMC that it anticipated reviewing further development of several critical elements of the memorial that included the design for embellishment such as sculpture, emblems, plaques, inscriptions and seals, and the clarification of pedestrian gathering places within the memorial plaza.

RESPONSE TO COMMISSION ACTION

NPS, ABMC, and their design team have responded to the previous Commission action in a number of ways.

There is still no direct pedestrian access to the memorial plaza from the west; rather, the pathways have been designed in a manner that directs pedestrians to the north or south entrances of the memorial.

The landscape treatment has been defined in terms of *textured* and *non-textured* areas, ground covers, trees, plant schedules, and species. The proposed landscape treatment also includes green and white floral elements. None of these landscape elements are included within the memorial plaza.

Seating, pedestrian circulation, and gathering spaces have been defined to include amphitheater seating along the ceremonial entrance from 17th Street, within the memorial plaza, and at strategic locations throughout the 7.4-acre site.

CONSULTATION WITH NPS AND ABMC

NCPC staff and members of the Commission have met several times with NPS, ABMC, and their design team. Many of the refinements and redesign of memorial elements have taken place over the past several months and resulted in the above responses to previous Commission requests and design issues, as well as evolving the overall design to a very high level of dignity and compatibility with the surrounding environment.

EVALUATION

Approval of the preliminary site and building plans is recommended. As mentioned, the NPS, ABMC, and their design team have met on several occasions with Commission staff as well as with members of the Commission to consult various design iterations and evolutionary advancements of the memorial element. Staff is pleased with the results of these consultations.

Although it was previously recommended that there be access to the memorial from the west, staff is now convinced that visitor access from the west is not needed because of the restructuring of the pathways. Specifically, the pathways now direct pedestrians to the curving pathways at the perimeter of the memorial arms, thereby eliminating the bottleneck and implied need to enter the memorial from the west. The new configuration

better allows visitors to experience the designed sequences of approaches to the memorial.

More seating is provided within the memorial plaza through the incorporation of curving benches. The ceremonial entrance from 17th Street has restructured the ramps and steps in a manner that the steps now serve as an amphitheater that could accommodate seating for 3,000 visitors. In addition, seating is provided around the edge of the reconstructed Rainbow Pool. All of these measures serve to accommodate small and large groups of visitors, particularly during times of ceremonies.

The major memorial elements have been redesigned and refined. The memorial arches now contain a lovely baldicchino that provides visual delight as well as creating the sense of enclosure just prior to entering the open space of the memorial plaza. Also, the ramps from the memorial arches are at a gentle slope (1:20) and therefore, do not require handrails.

The pillars of the embracing arms are now elements that visually evoke quiet strength and solid dignity, while simultaneously providing a sense of transparency of views to and from the memorial plaza. The pillars visually relate to the form and strength of the memorial arches, while the bronze elements of the baldicchino relate to the bronze wreaths on the pillars. This arrangement establishes a dynamic visual tension that affords the visitor the opportunity to focus on smaller individual elements, or perceive the total memorial within its larger visual landscape.

The landscape treatment is now more defined. Textured and nontextured areas are clearly delineated and incorporated with pedestrian pathways within the memorial site. Although landscaping proposals are clearly indicated within the site, there are proposals for new plantings outside of the site boundaries. Specifically, the planting plan shows new plantings north of the site up to the existing terrace at the East End of Constitution Gardens. The design team should determine the extent of new off-site landscaping proposals as well as other improvements that are related to the WWII Memorial.

There is currently no proposal for incorporating plant material within the memorial plaza area. Although measures such as varying patterns and colors of granite paving are proposed to provide some form of visual relief from the expanse of paved surface, the ABMC and its design team should continue to explore methods of incorporating plant material into this area. Staff is confident that the design team can design-in landscaping that will not require NPS to erect chains and bollards for maintenance reasons.

Although the sacred precinct area is more clearly defined with elements such as wreaths, the cenotaph, and the broken plane with a flame/sculpture element, this area still needs additional design. Specifically, the form of the flame/sculpture element and the texture of the broken plane element representing the upheaval of war.

COORDINATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed this item at its meeting on May 12, 1999, and forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the project has been coordinated with all agencies participating. The participating agencies were NCPC; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the Fire Department; the Department of Housing and Community Development; the Department of Public Works; the General Services Administration; the National Park Service; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

Commission of Fine Arts

At its May 20, 1999 meeting, the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) approved the development of the concept of the WWII Memorial. CFA requested further study of the Sacred Precinct area and landscaping proposals.

CONFORMANCE

Comprehensive Plan

The proposed memorial would be located on the Mall at the East End of the Constitution Gardens pool, near the axis of 17th and Constitution Avenue, NW. The Mall is a national landmark and a designated Special Place in the Preservation and Historic Features Element of the Comprehensive Plan. Seventeenth Street and Constitution Avenue are designated Special Streets in this element. The proposed memorial is consistent with applicable policies in the element relating to the protection and enhancement of historic properties, Special Places and Special Streets. These policies specify:

New construction on Historic Landmarks or in Historic Districts should be compatible with the historical architectural character and cultural heritage of the landmark or district. In design, height, proportion, mass, configuration, building materials, texture, color and location, new construction should complement these valuable features of the landmark or district, particularly features in the immediate vicinity to which the new construction will be visually related.

Special Streets and Places should be maintained and enhanced in a manner that promotes their roles as major features that help establish the images and the symbols of the National Capital in the minds of its residents and visitors. They should be embellished, when possible, with monuments, fountains, sculpture, gardens, distinctive buildings, and other features of civic art. These embellishments should be placed strategically to serve as

frequent points of orientation and visual delight. To the extent practicable, public activities and buildings should be located and focused on the Special Streets and Places.

The existing street space and the buildings fronting on Special Streets and Places should be maintained, protected, and enhanced. Any repair, maintenance, improvement or new building should respect the historic elements, enhance the aesthetic quality, and promote the amenity of this space.

Existing Special Places should be protected, enhanced, and strengthened. New ones should be created as new activity centers are developed or neighborhoods revitalized. Historic plans and their underlying principles should be used for guidance in planning major improvements. Civic art should be used to enrich such places and to establish their identity and image.

The distinguishing qualities or character of Historic Landscapes should be protected and enhanced.

The proposed memorial is also consistent with applicable polices contained in the Federal Facilities Element relating to the construction of federal facilities of a monumental nature. These policies state:

Development of Federal Facilities of a monumental nature and affiliated plazas or spaces in the Monumental Core should adhere to and promote the high esthetic standards already established by historic plans and features.

New sites with monumental potentials should be designed so as to insure integration with appropriate natural settings and architectural backgrounds, as well as reciprocity with other monuments and with other features of the National Capital.

Federal Facilities which house very special functions or have nationally important symbolic significance should be designed to have a monumental quality and character and, to the extent possible, should be sited to enhance or accentuate Special Street and Places or special views and vistas in the National Capital.

The proposed memorial would be located within the 100-year floodplain. A policy in the Environment Element would apply to construction within this environmentally sensitive area and specifies:

If construction in a Floodplain is necessary; (1) the site should be returned as close as possible to its natural contours; (2) Floodplain fill should be

minimized; (3) grading requirements should be minimized; and (4) free natural drainage should be preserved.

National Environmental Policy Act

In conformance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), NPS completed a Finding of No Significant Impact for the memorial in late June 1998. Overall, the site contains moderate environmental constraints. No wetlands exist at the site and no threatened or endangered species exist in the project area. The memorial would not generate significant noise or air quality impacts.

Limiting site characteristics are to be addressed in the design of the memorial which include:

- The site is located within the 100-year floodplain of the Potomac River.
- It has poor subsurface drainage and a high water table.
- Site soils have very poor properties for most engineering applications because they tend to have variable drainage and are subject to subsidence.

The proposed action will slightly impact vegetation. As noted in the Environmental Assessment (EA), NPS plans to implement several precautionary measures to protect elm trees in the vicinity of the project:

- NPS will identify and fence the areas involved in the principal work, root prune at the perimeter of any excavation, limb prune the crowns of some trees.
- Additional mitigation will include fertilization, root bio-stimulus, aeration, and mulching of the root zones.
- NPS will monitor trees to identify stress and take appropriate action.

The Baltimore District Army Corps of Engineers conducted investigations for hazardous materials and found contamination to be mostly associated with an old dredged fill layer which is buried, but will be disturbed. The EA notes that additional site sampling and testing would be performed as site-engineering surveys are accomplished to better identify the levels of contamination. Mitigation must occur in accordance with the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act provisions for disposal of hazardous materials.

Pedestrian and vehicular modes of travel provide access to the site. Heavy pedestrian use occurs on paths on either side of the Reflecting Pool that lead to and from various monuments and memorials on or near the Mall. Access to the site is established across 17th Street via crosswalks at Constitution Avenue and 17th Street, Independence Avenue and 17th Street, and midway between Constitution and Independence Avenues. Vehicular

circulation is characterized by 17th Street to the east, which connects to Constitution Avenue to the north and Independence Avenue to the south.

Visitor parking and public transportation are located in the area. The EA states that about 2,000 parking spaces exist within a reasonable walking distance of the site. The nearest parking spaces are located at the Tidal Basin and along Constitution Avenue. Parking is also available near the Washington Monument along Madison and Jefferson Drives, near the Jefferson Memorial, and along Ohio Drive in West Potomac Park. Metrorail stations near the project site include the Smithsonian Station (0.6 mile walking distance), and the Federal Triangle Station (0.9 mile walking distance).

The planned memorial as designed will not, over the long term, increase visitation over current levels according to the Park Service. There will be no long-term increase in demand for parking, vehicle traffic or transportation service such as Metrorail or Metrobus.

Changes in the immediate area of the memorial site to improve the transportation network include:

- A revised Tourmobile turn-out north of the memorial, adjacent to Constitution Gardens for the Tourmobile and tour bus pick-up
- A new paved drive to the south of the memorial for tour bus, taxi, and visitor drop-off (no visitor parking) and only handicapped accessible parking

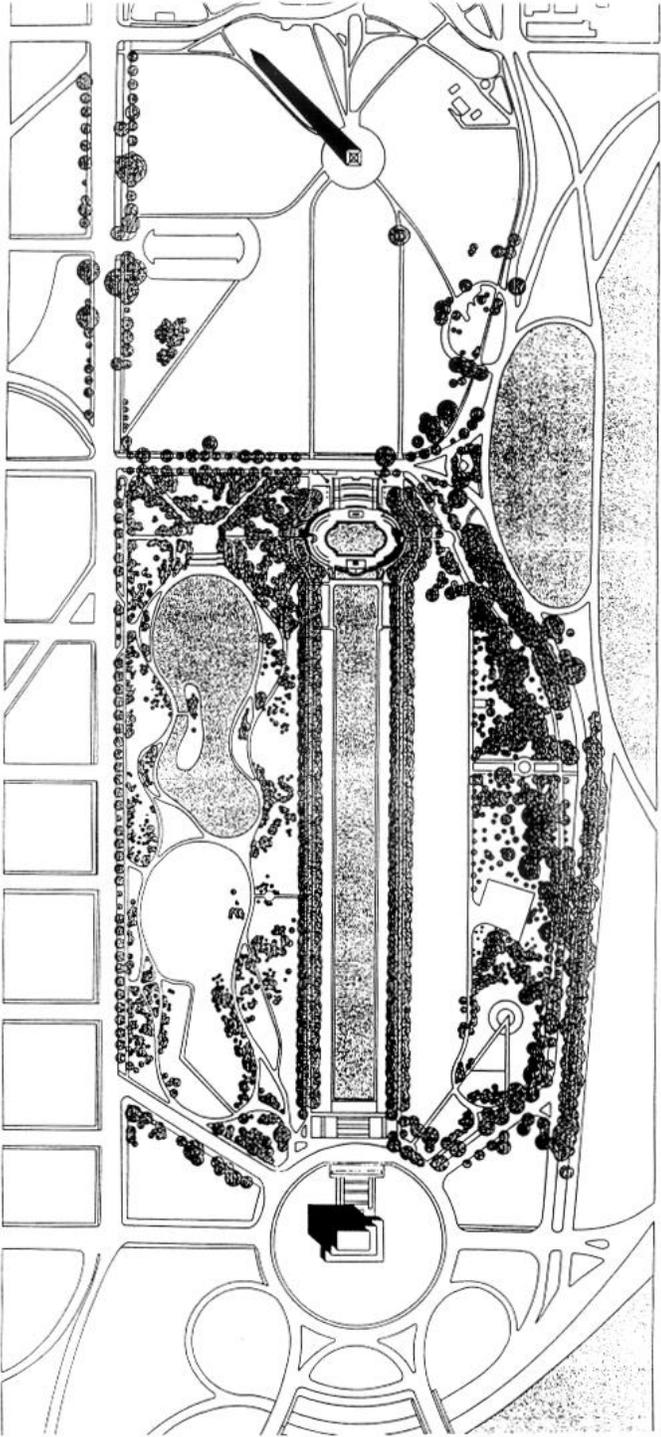
These features will minimize the transportation effects of the memorial design on general traffic flow in the vicinity of the site. Other alterations will include establishment of a signal at 17th Street and Independence Avenue as part of the rehabilitation of that roadway. New pedestrian walkways will be constructed to lead visitors from the new Tourmobile stop at the north, and from the new memorial access drive to be constructed at the memorial's south. Walkways at the memorial facing 17th Street are located to facilitate the signalized crossing of that roadway at two locations.

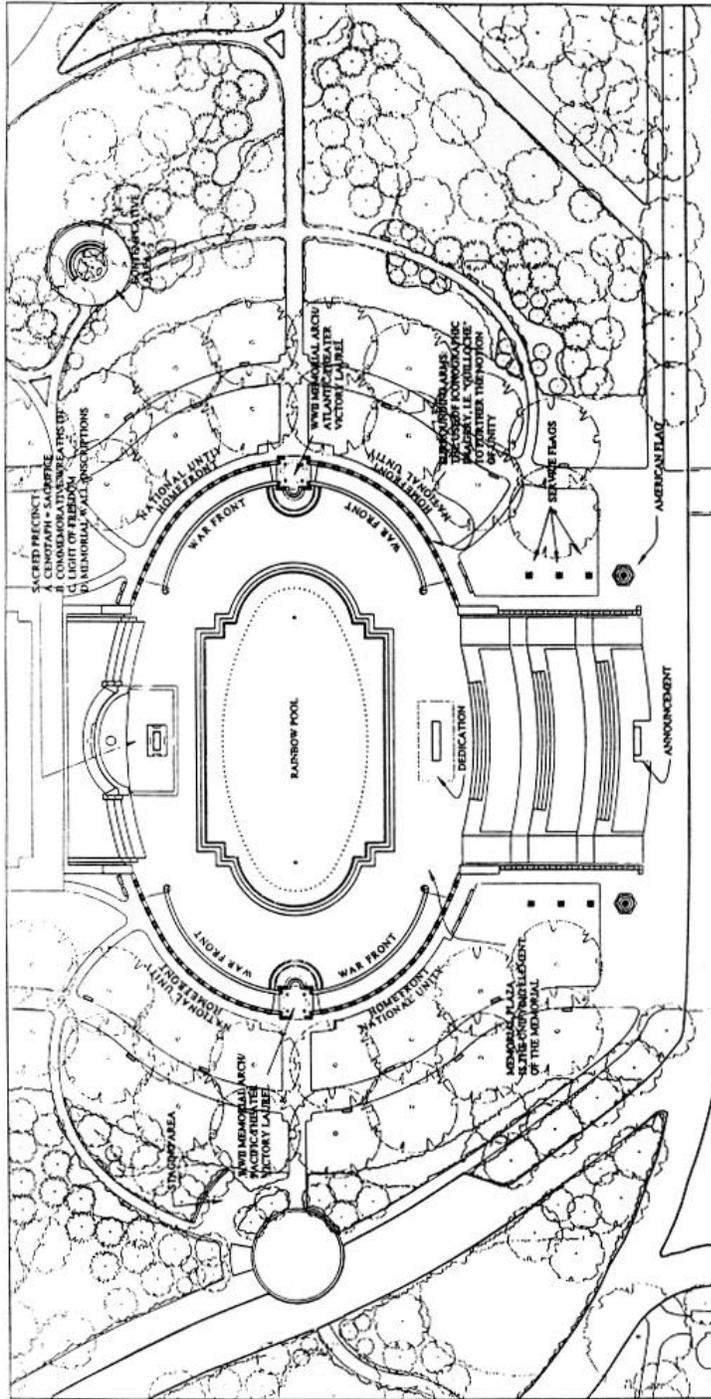
The proposed roadway changes will reduce open space on the Independence Avenue side. In addition, the traffic revisions on the north at Constitution Avenue will introduce elements somewhat out of character with the south side of Constitution Avenue. However, the new curb cuts will be offset by the removal of the existing Tourmobile road along Constitution Avenue and will return that total area to green space.

Given that most visitors are anticipated to be pedestrians traveling between the various memorials and monuments on the Mall, West Potomac Park at the Tidal Basin, or from Tourmobiles, air quality impacts will be minimal. Buses using the south access drive will allow for the drop-off of passengers but will not be allowed to idle for any extended time. This is monitored through the establishment of the Park Service ranger station at the south location.

National Historic Preservation Act

NPS is in consultation with the D.C. State Historic Preservation Office and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as the design development progresses. NPS has determined that the memorial would have an adverse effect on the existing setting, including the Rainbow Pool, which was completed in the 1920s as an element of and complement to the Reflecting Pool and the Lincoln Memorial. A Memorandum of Agreement has not yet been written, although preliminary discussion among the signatories has occurred.





NATIONAL WWII MEMORIAL

The National World War II Memorial

CONTENT LOCATION PLAN A-01

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

DATE: 1/12/01

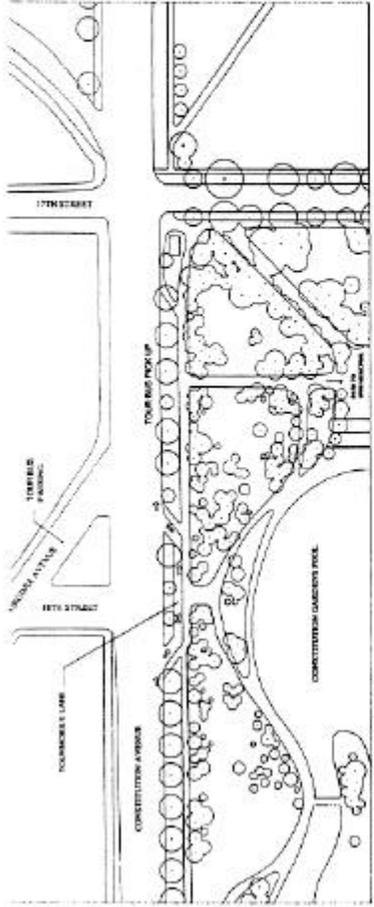
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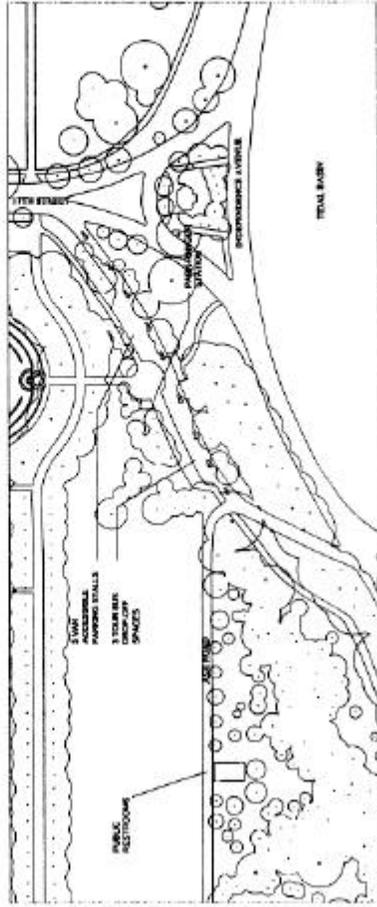
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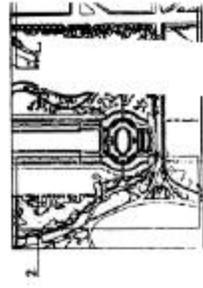
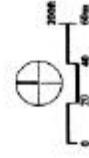
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1. ROADWAY ALTERATIONS-NORTH, 1:500



2. ROADWAY ALTERATIONS-SOUTH, 1:500



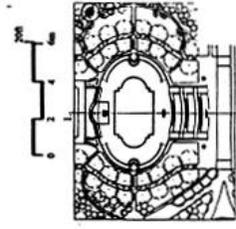
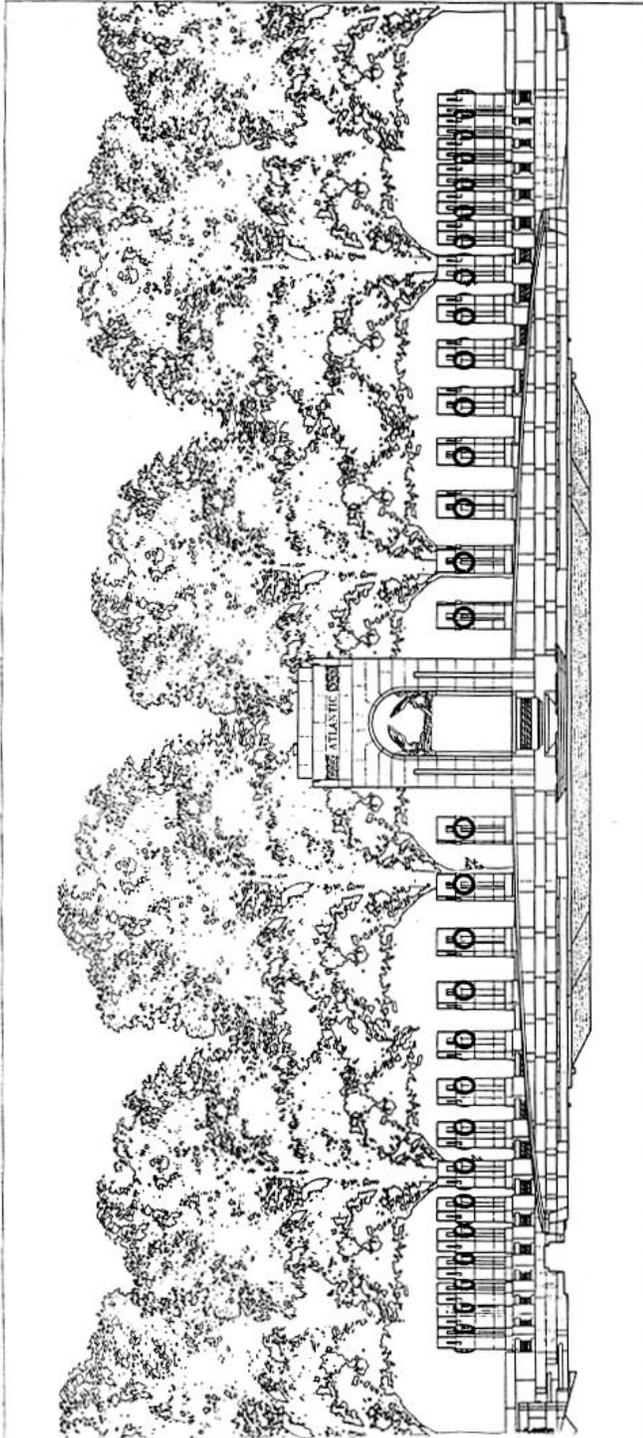
ROADWAY ALTERATIONS
SCALE: 1:500

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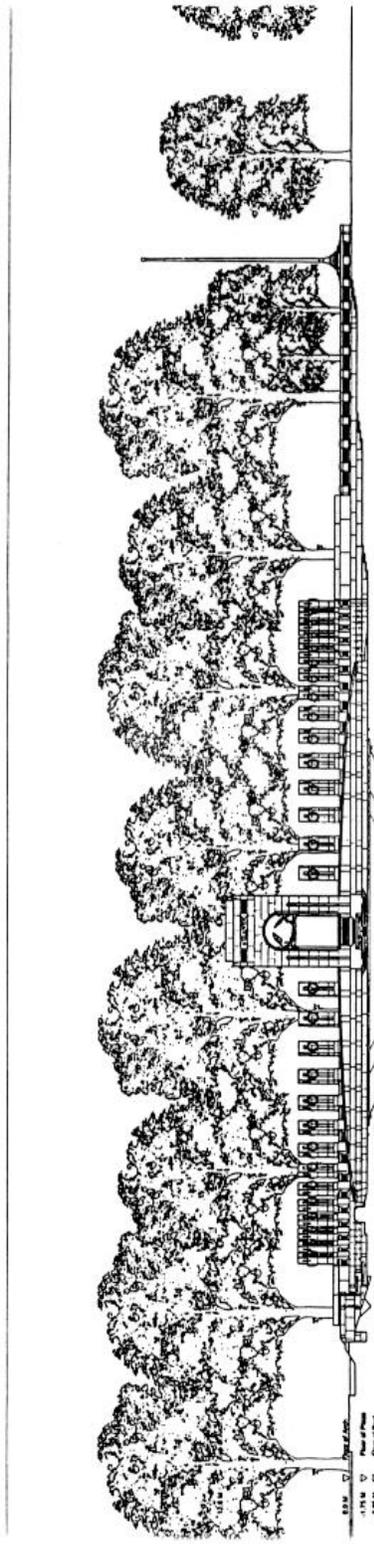
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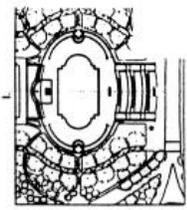
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The National World War II Memorial

TION



SECTION
A-E 1:400



MEMORIAL PLAZA
SECTION / ELEVATION I
SCALE 1:400



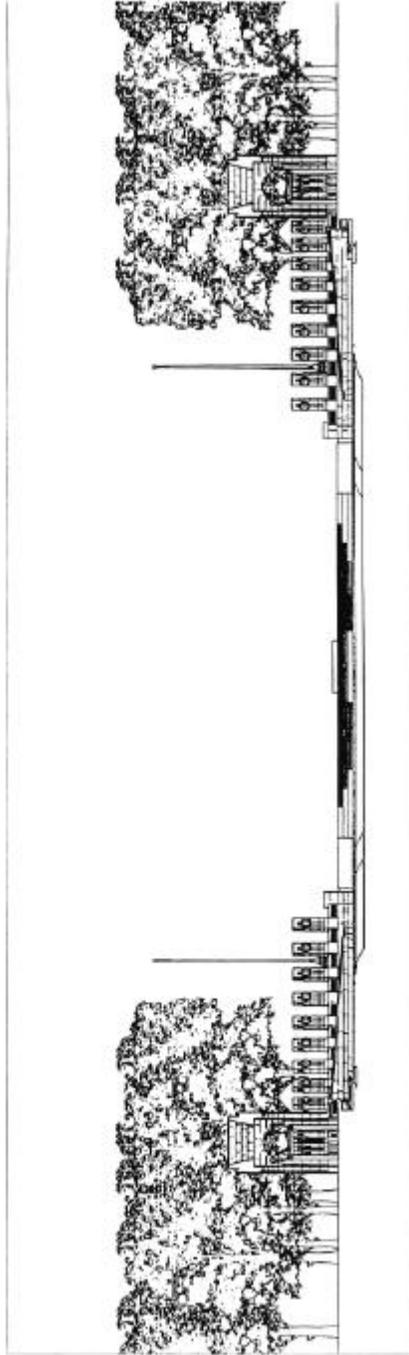
The National
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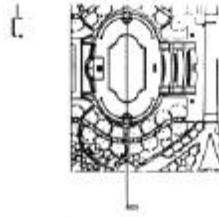
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SECTION
Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"



MEMORIAL PLAZA
SECTION / ELEVAT
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



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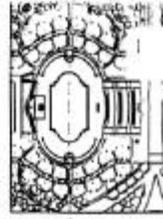
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SECTION



MEMORIAL PLAZA
SECTION / ELEVATION
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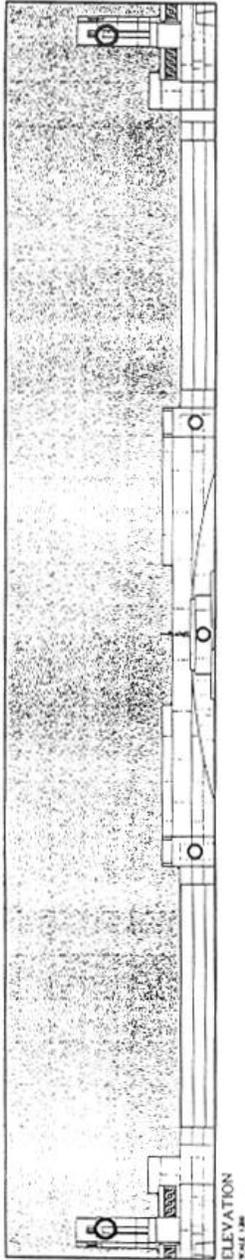
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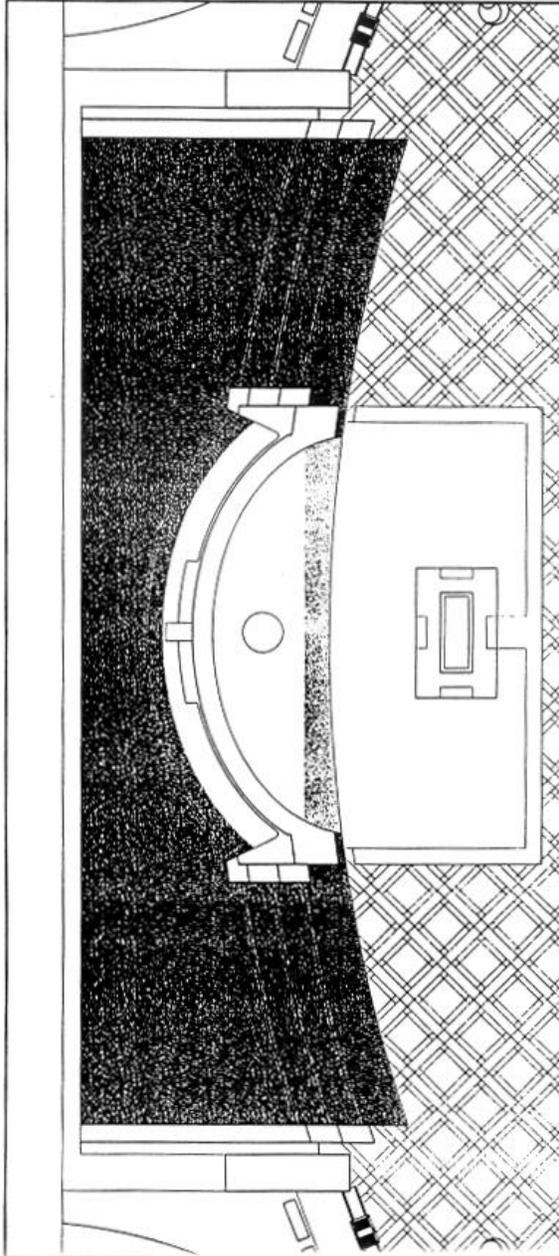
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NATIONAL WWII MEMORIAL
The National World War II Memorial



ELEVATION
PAGE 19B



LAN
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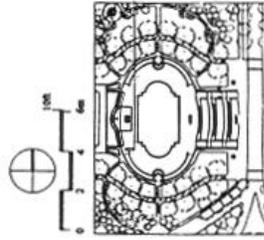
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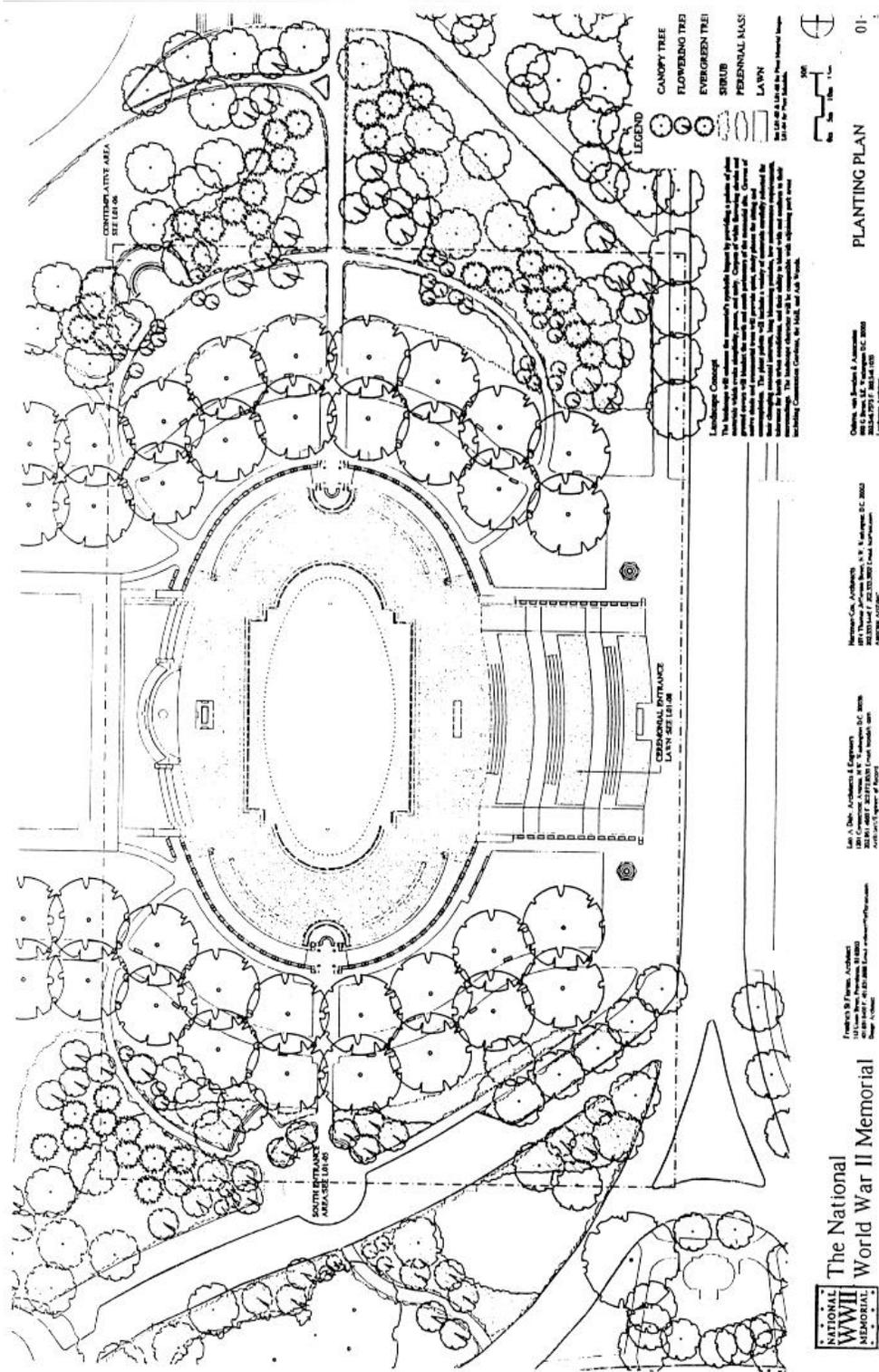
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SACRED PRECINCT
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



The National
World War II Memorial

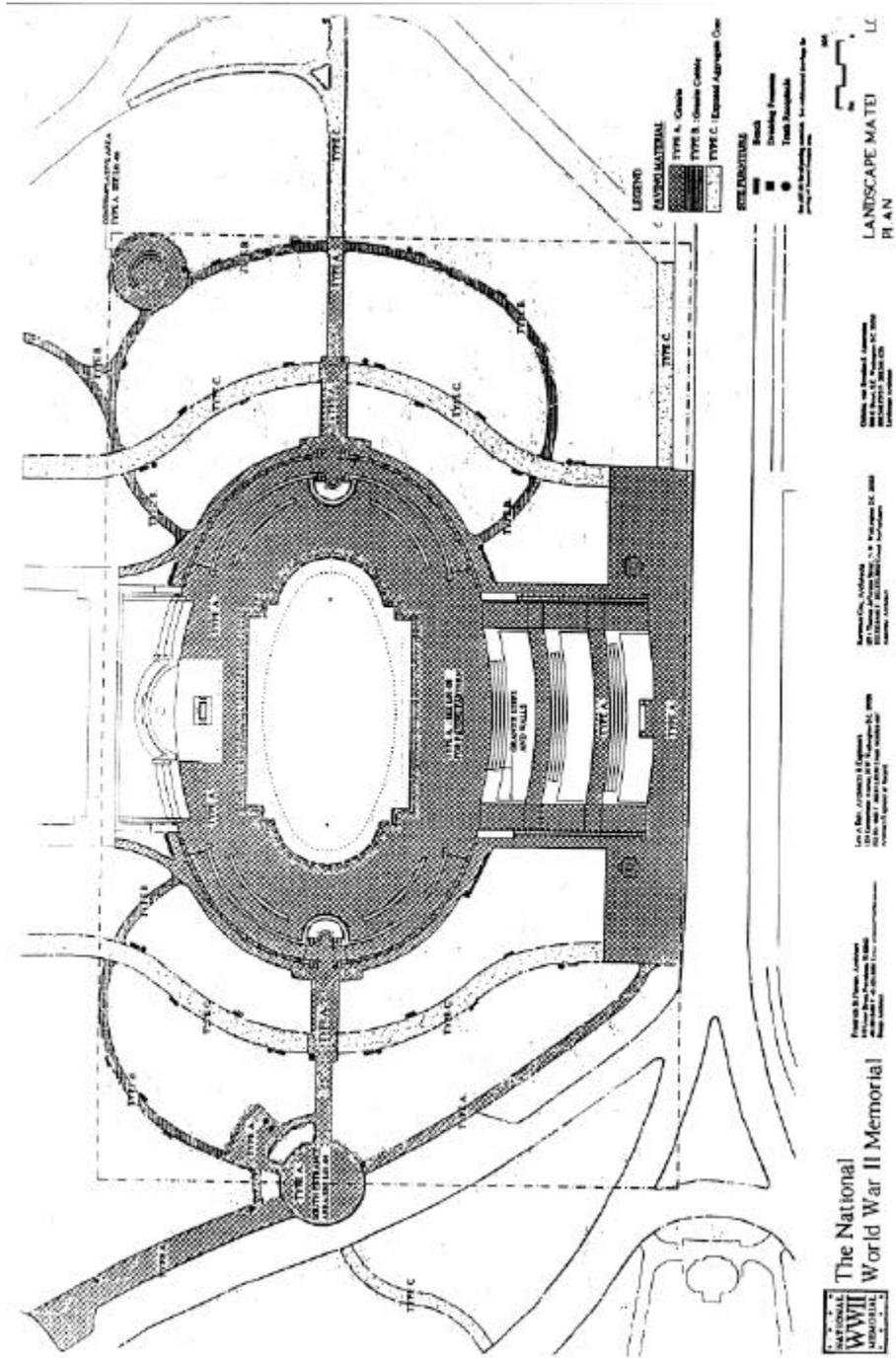
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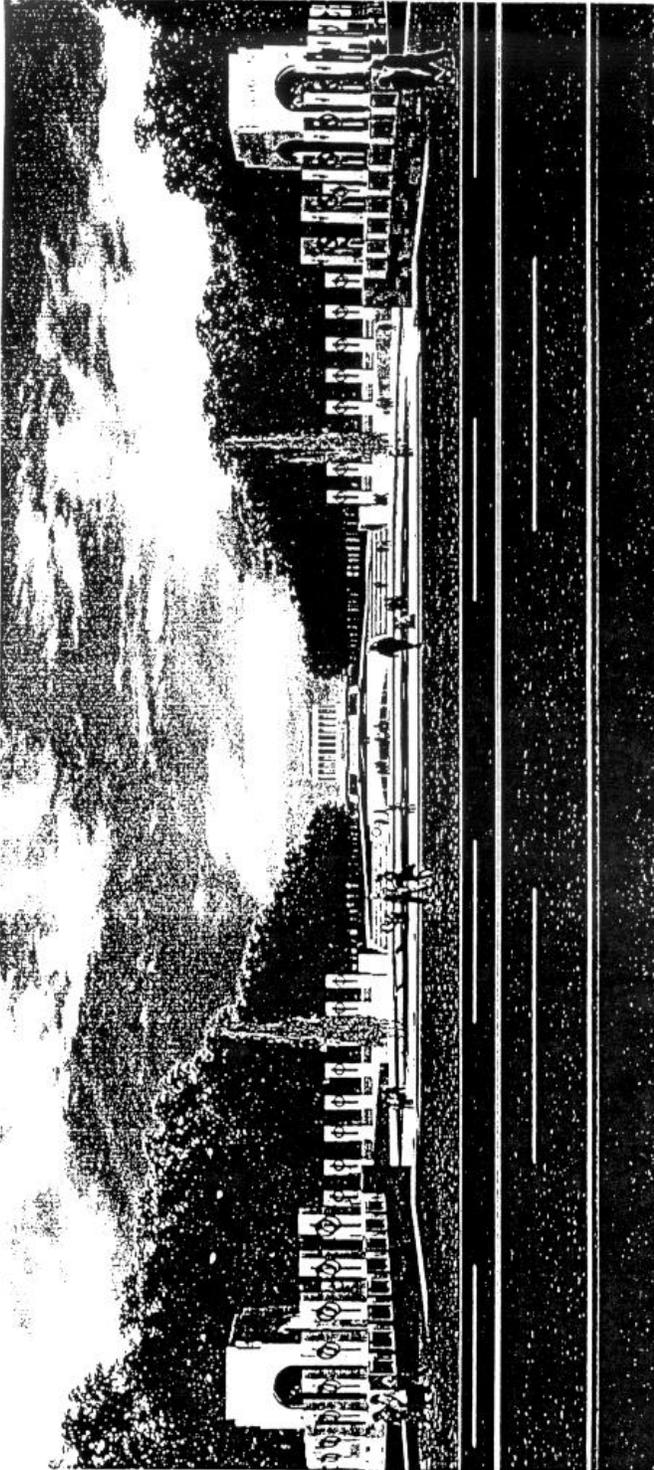
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PLANTING PLAN 01





The National
World War II Memorial

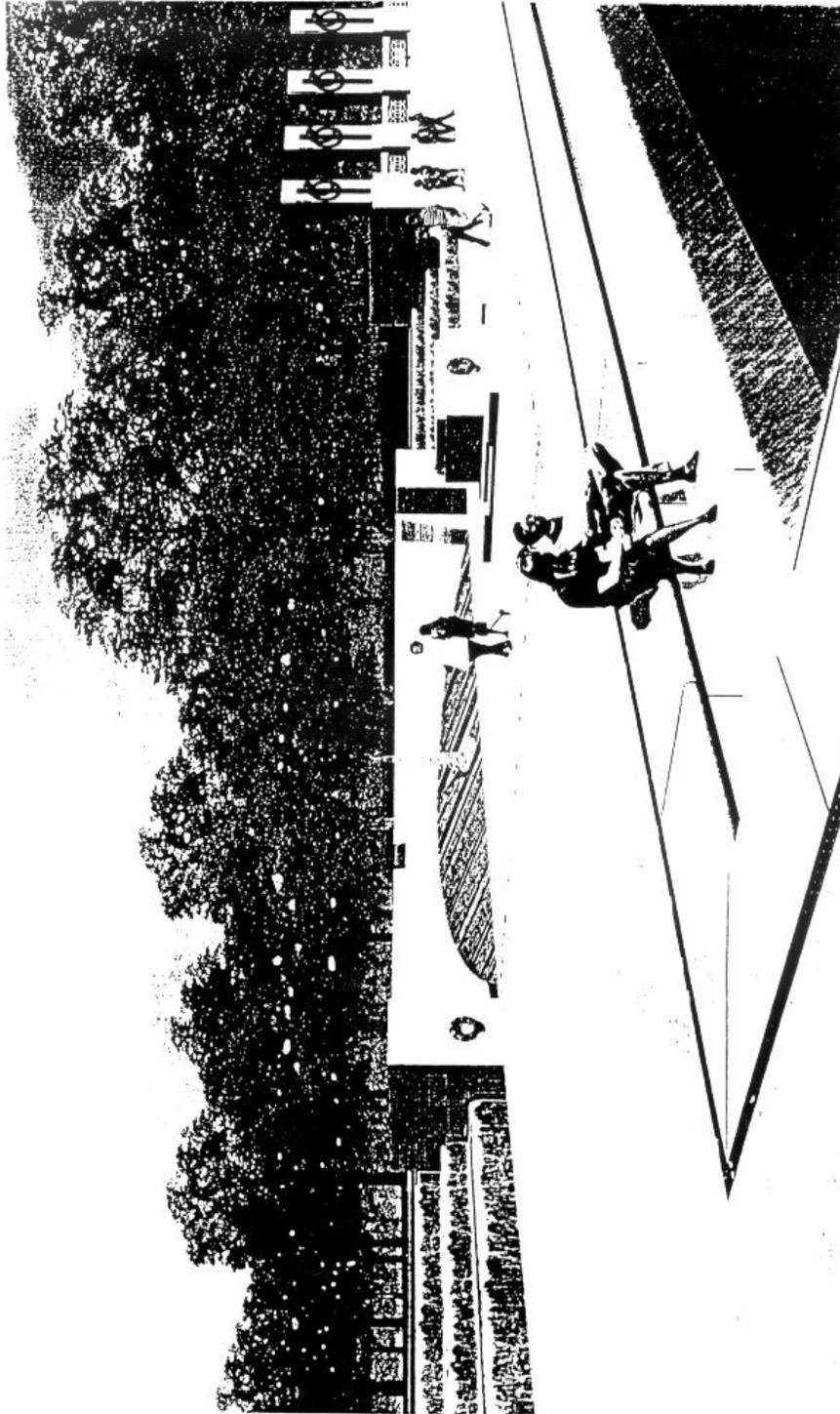
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VIEW FROM 17TH STREET



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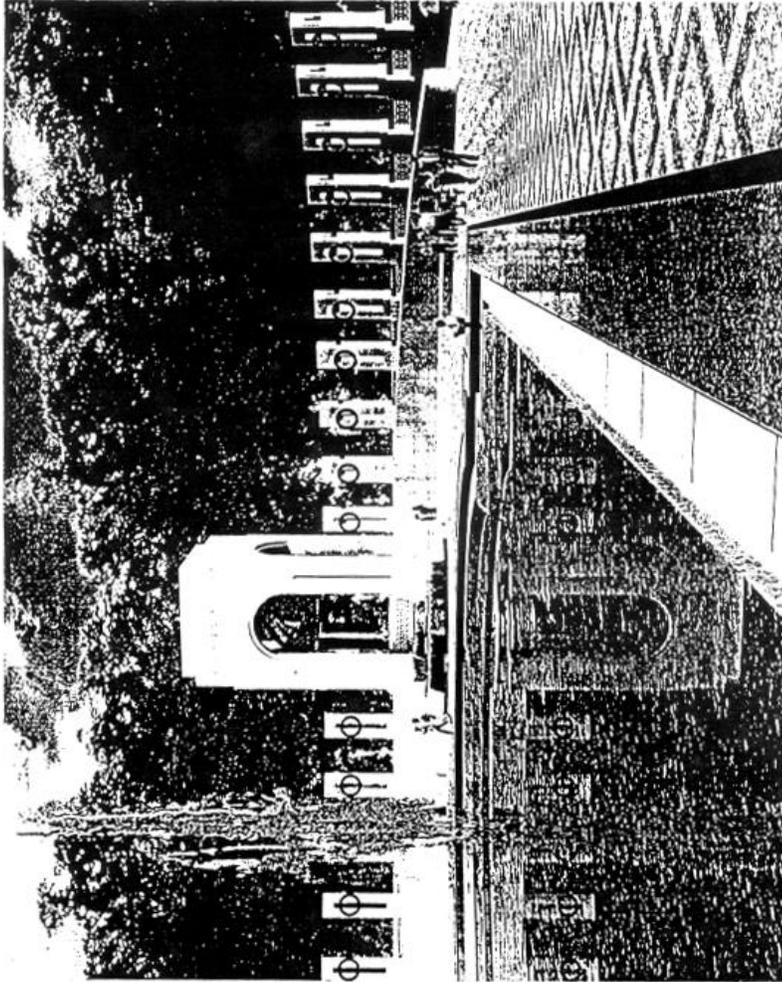
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VIEW FROM PLAZA



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