

COMMISSION ACTION

NCPC File No. 6267



PENTAGON MEMORIAL TO THE VICTIMS OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001
CONCEPTUAL DESIGN
Pentagon Reservation
Arlington County, Virginia

Submission by Department of Defense

June 5, 2003

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of concept design pursuant to Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act (40 U.S.C. § 8722 (b)(1)).

Commission Action

The Commission:

- **Approves** the conceptual design of a Pentagon Memorial commemorating those who died as a result of the terrorist attack at the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.62(08.21) 41181.
- **Recommends** that the following information be included with the preliminary and final site and building plans:
 - A design for the memorial gateway that does not overwhelm the space or visually infringe on the memorial.
 - Drawings that clearly show the relationship between the Remote Deliver Facility (RDF) access road and the memorial and memorial gateway.
 - A plan showing pedestrian and vehicular access and circulation around and to the memorial site.
 - Program details outlining any parking in the vicinity of the memorial, hours of operation and how access will be controlled during times of increased security at the Pentagon.

Related Recommendation

- That DoD, during the development of the Navy Annex Master Plan and the Revised Pentagon Master Plan, develop an urban design plan for the area between

the Pentagon Memorial and the future Air Force Memorial with the goal of improving pedestrian and vehicular connections and circulation patterns between the two memorials.

Deborah B. Young
Secretary to the National Capital Planning Commission

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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NCPC File No. 6267



PENTAGON MEMORIAL TO THE VICTIMS OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001
CONCEPTUAL DESIGN
Pentagon Reservation
Arlington County, Virginia

Submission by Department of Defense

May 29, 2003

Abstract

The Department of Defense (DoD) has submitted the winning design concept for the Pentagon Memorial on the Pentagon Reservation. Section 2864 of Public Law 107-107, the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2002, gave the Secretary of Defense the authority to establish a memorial on the grounds of the Pentagon to memorialize those innocent victims who lost their lives on September 11, 2001 at the Pentagon. The Army Corps of Engineers conducted an open design competition for the memorial and the winning design was announced on March 3, 2003 (the designers are Julie Beckman and Keith Kaseman of Kaseman Beckman Amsterdam Studios of New York, New York).

The winning design features six primary elements: 184 memorial units (cantilevered benches), an age line, an age wall, a perimeter bench, landscaping and site material, and a memorial gateway. DoD is in the process of securing a design-build firm to complete the memorial. Following the award of the memorial, the Family Steering Committee initiated a “design lock” on the memorial in order to preserve the design intent and character-defining features of the memorial as work progresses.

Commission Action Requested by the Applicant

Approval of concept design pursuant to Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act (40 U.S.C. § 8722 (b)(1)).

Executive Director’s Recommendation

The Commission:

- **Approves** the conceptual design of a Pentagon Memorial commemorating those who died as a result of the terrorist attack at the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.62(08.21) 41181.

- **Recommends** that the following information be included with the preliminary and final site and building plans:
 - A design for the memorial gateway that does not overwhelm the space or visually infringe on the memorial.
 - Drawings that clearly show the relationship between the Remote Deliver Facility (RDF) access road and the memorial and memorial gateway.
 - A plan showing pedestrian and vehicular access and circulation around and to the memorial site.
 - Program details outlining any parking in the vicinity of the memorial, hours of operation and how access will be controlled during times of increased security at the Pentagon.

Related Recommendation

- That DoD, during the development of the Navy Annex Master Plan and the Revised Pentagon Master Plan, develop an urban design plan for the area between the Pentagon Memorial and the future Air Force Memorial with the goal of improving pedestrian and vehicular connections and circulation patterns between the two memorials.

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BACKGROUND AND STAFF EVALUATION

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

On September 11, 2001, American Airlines Flight 77 was hijacked and flown into the Pentagon in Arlington County, Virginia. In response to this event, Congress passed Section 2864 of Public Law 107-107, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002, giving the Secretary of Defense the authority to establish a memorial on the grounds of the Pentagon to memorialize the victims of the terrorist attack. The Commission is reviewing the memorial pursuant to Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act of 1952. The memorial will be constructed on the grounds of the Pentagon Reservation and is not subject to the Commemorative Works Act of 1986.

Background

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Baltimore District, initiated the Pentagon memorial project in October of 2001. Within a month, a Focus Group and Family Steering Committee had been formed. The Focus Group is made up of representatives from the military services and the Pentagon offices, Arlington National Cemetery, approval agencies (NCPC and CFA) and a professional advisor. The Family Steering Committee includes approximately a dozen representatives of the victims' families and is significantly involved in the memorial project. Throughout the fall of 2001 and into 2002, the Pentagon memorial group identified potential

memorial sites and evaluated them according to a number of site location criteria. The preferred location of the Focus Group and the Family Steering Committee was the site closest to the impact site. Following the selection of the memorial site in summer 2002, the Corps initiated a two-phase open design competition, and on March 3, 2003 the winning design was announced. DoD has been tasked with completing the memorial on the grounds of the Pentagon.

Memorial Site

The irregular, pie-shaped memorial site (memorial park) encompasses 1.93 acres and is located roughly 165 feet from the face of the Pentagon. The site is currently used as a construction staging area. Concurrent with this submission, the Pentagon Renovation Office has requested final approval to construct a secure access lane parallel to Route 27 (and adjacent to the memorial) to the Remote Delivery Facility (RDF). The Commission gave conceptual approval to this project in March 2003. As a result of the realignment of the Route 27 exit ramp, additional site area can now be added to the memorial grounds east of the entrance to the access road in the area currently occupied by the cloverleaf – this area encompasses approximately 0.4 acres and is called the memorial gateway. DoD has also established a buffer zone north of the memorial that will be free of obstructions and will screen the memorial from any construction-related activity associated with the ongoing renovations at the Pentagon.

Memorial Details

The design can be broken into six primary features, including: memorial units, age lines, an age wall, a perimeter bench, landscaping/site material and a memorial gateway.

Memorial Unit

There will be 184 memorial units placed within the memorial park, each dedicated to an individual victim lost on September 11, 2001. Each unit consists of an individual reflecting pool that is illuminated at night under a cast aluminum cantilevered bench that is inscribed with the victim's name. The seating surface of each bench will be made of a polished polymer-gravel mix (terrazzo). The orientation of the memorial units corresponds to whether the victim was killed in the Pentagon or on the airplane. A visitor approaching a unit for a victim killed in the Pentagon will see the victim's engraved name with the Pentagon in the background. For victims killed on the plane, the units face the opposite direction.

Age Lines

The memorial units will be organized within the site along the trajectory of American Airlines Flight 77 on age lines that span the site. The first age line to the south represents the youngest victim (a three-year-old) and the last age line represents the oldest victim (a 71-year-old). Victims of the same age will share the same age line, but are located on that line according to their birth date. The age lines serve as a directory or map of the memorial. The age lines will be constructed of ½" thick aluminum flush to the ground, and will continue for the width of the site and up and over the horizontal seating surface of the perimeter bench.

Age Wall

The age wall runs along the western edge of the site and has two purposes. The first is symbolic – the growing height of the wall corresponds to the growing birth years of the victim's, with the wall starting at a height of three inches for the youngest victim and ending at a height of 71 inches for the oldest victim. Second, as the height of the wall grows it also serves to screen the adjacent highways and the RDF secure access lane. Grasses will be planted at the base of the wall to soften the edge of the memorial park.

Perimeter Bench

The perimeter bench is a continuous smooth seating surface on the eastern edge of the memorial park. The bench will incorporate the age lines and will also integrate a planter with ornamental grasses at the base that will serve as the eastern edge of the memorial park.

Site Material/Landscaping

The ground of the memorial site will be covered with gravel that is hard enough to easily roll a wheelchair or stroller, and is ADA compliant, yet loose enough to hear footsteps. The porous quality allows trees to be planted within the site without separate tree boxes. Trees will be clustered around each memorial unit and will provide a comfortable amount of shade but also opportunities for sunlight to penetrate the site. Three varieties of maple trees are proposed – trident maple, field maple, and paper bark maple – each species has good fall color and loses its leaves late in the season.

Memorial Gateway

Because the area identified as the memorial gateway has been recently added to the overall memorial site, this area was not included in the design competition and therefore has not yet been designed or programmed. DoD has identified the following possible uses for this property:

- May be the location of staging and contractor support activities.
- May contain the underground vault serving the equipment control center for the water circulation system.
- May include an interpretive board, entry sign, benches, and drinking fountains as visitor amenities.

Design Lock

Shortly after the winning design was selected, the Family Steering Committee decided to place a “design lock” on the memorial in order to ensure that the integrity of the design is preserved as final design drawings and construction take place. The Steering Committee stated: “The ‘Design Lock’ is a formal acceptance of the winning design and a dedication to preserve its profound intent and characteristics throughout the construction phase.” This is particularly important because a design-build firm will construct the memorial. Previous examples of this type of limitation on modifications to a design include Maya Lin’s Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial and the Oklahoma City National Memorial. DoD is expected to award the design-build contract in early summer and construction is expected to be complete by the fall of 2004.

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTION

The Commission has seen the Pentagon Memorial on two separate occasions:

- July 11, 2002: Commission granted approval of the memorial site location on the Pentagon Reservation.
- February 6, 2003: Information presentation on the six Phase I competition winners for the memorial design.

EVALUATION

Shortly after the tragic events of September 11, 2001 it became clear that a memorial to the victims of the terrorist attack at the Pentagon was crucial to the healing process for both the victims' families and the nation. The project's challenge was designing a memorial that would allow for reflection in a site that is adjacent to the Headquarters of the Department of Defense, large surface parking lots and a system of highways. One of the entries that emerged from the Corps open design competition met that challenge in a special way. Staff strongly supports the winning memorial design, which subtly honors the individual victims of the attack and collectively creates a positive new addition to the Pentagon Reservation.

Because the proposed RDF access road has just recently been designed and resulted in additional square footage for the memorial, staff recommends that DoD provide additional information on that space (memorial gateway) and the interface between the memorial and the features associated with the RDF access road. Staff further recommends that DoD develop a program and design for the memorial gateway that does not overwhelm the space or visually infringe on the memorial.

Access to the memorial will be challenging for both vehicles and pedestrians. DoD has not indicated if visitor parking will be provided in the south parking lot adjacent to the memorial. It is hoped that the majority of visitors will arrive via Metro, either from the Pentagon Station or from the Pentagon City Station. DoD should include a plan with the next submission showing how pedestrians and vehicles will access the site. Furthermore, DoD should identify any dedicated parking in the vicinity of the memorial, and provide details on the hours of operation and how access to the site will be handled, especially during times when the security level may prevent visitors to the memorial.

This memorial is one of two new memorials proposed in the vicinity of the Pentagon (the Commission gave conceptual approval to the Air Force Memorial in March 2003), and in conjunction with DoD's ongoing work on the Navy Annex Master Plan and the Revised Pentagon Master Plan staff recommends that DoD develop an urban design plan for the area between the Memorial and the future Air Force Memorial with the goal of improving pedestrian and vehicular connections and circulation patterns between the two memorials.

CONFORMANCE

National Historic Preservation Act

The Pentagon is a National Historic Landmark listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its continuing nationally significant role as the headquarters of the Department of Defense since World War II. The Department of Defense has consulted with the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office (VA SHPO) throughout the site selection phase, and is continuing to consult with the VA SHPO as the memorial design progresses. On April 30, 2003 the DoD wrote to the VA SHPO with a determination of no adverse effect for the following reasons:

- No direct impacts on any of the five distinguishing elements of the Pentagon.
- Historic envelope of the building will be unchanged as a result of the Memorial.
- Alteration of the property will be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

The VA SHPO has indicated previously that the memorial likely would not adversely affect the architectural and historic qualities of the building and its setting that qualify the Pentagon for listing in the National Register.

National Environmental Policy Act

Pursuant to the regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the responsible officials of the Pentagon have reviewed the project site selection and location in accordance with the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The project is categorically excluded pursuant to Department of the Army Regulation, AR 200-2, Appendix A, when no extraordinary circumstances exist.

Comprehensive Plan

The Pentagon is a national landmark and is designated for national defense facilities in the Federal Facilities Element of the Comprehensive Plan. As the proposed memorial site is located outside the Monumental Core, the Comprehensive Plan contains no specific policies that would apply to the placement of a memorial at this location. However, the site location is unquestionably consistent with the general intent of Comprehensive Plan policies for the placement of memorials at fitting locations that commemorate great events or national tragedies.