



Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: February 7, 2019

PROJECT National World War I Memorial Pershing Park Pennsylvania Avenue between 14th and 15th Streets, NW Washington, DC	NCPC FILE NUMBER 7682
SUBMITTED BY United States Department of the Interior National Park Service	NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER 1.23(73.10)44854
REVIEW AUTHORITY Commemorative Works per 40 U.S.C. § 8905 and Public Law 113-291	APPLICANT'S REQUEST Approve preliminary site development plans
	PROPOSED ACTION Approve preliminary site development plans with comments
	ACTION ITEM TYPE Staff Presentation

PROJECT SUMMARY

The National Park Service (NPS), in collaboration with the World War I Centennial Commission (WWICC), has submitted preliminary site development plans for the National World War I Memorial. WWICC is the project sponsor of the Memorial in accordance with Public Law 112-272, and is responsible for planning, developing, and executing programs, projects, and activities to commemorate the centennial of World War I through 2018. The Commission provided comments on the concept design in November 2016, July 2017 and most recently in October 2018.

Title 30, Section 3091 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2015 (Pub. Law 113-291) designates Pershing Park in downtown Washington, DC, along with the Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, as national World War I memorials. The Act further authorizes the WWICC to honor the service of members of the United States Armed Forces in World War I. A two-stage competition was held to select a memorial designer. Stage I included an open call for design concepts that was completed in August 2015. The competition jury selected five finalists to continue to Stage II, and NCPC heard an information presentation on these finalists in December 2015. The winning design, "The Weight of Sacrifice," was selected by WWICC in early 2016. One of the most critical components of the design was a commemorative wall with bas-relief sculpture expressing the war experience. Since that time, the sponsor has continued to develop the proposed design, with the wall remaining the primary commemorative element. The integration of the commemorative wall into the existing fabric of Pershing Park has been a point of significant discussion throughout the process.

KEY INFORMATION

- The Commemorative Works Act (CWA) establishes requirements for building commemorative works on federal lands within the District of Columbia and its environs. It applies to lands under jurisdiction of the US Department of the Interior (DOI) and the US General Services Administration (GSA).
- Public Law 113-291 designates Pershing Park in downtown Washington, DC, along with the Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, as national World War I memorials. The Act further authorizes the WWICC to honor the service of members of the United States Armed Forces in World War I.
- Pershing Park is located within the 1974 Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation (PADC) Plan area. The Plan called for a public open space at the site to serve as a transition between the more formal landscape of President's Park and the hardscape of Freedom Plaza.
- Pershing Park is also located within the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site (NHS).
- Pershing Park is a work of the landscape architect M. Paul Friedberg, and the park has been determined individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
- The Commission provided comments on the concept plans for the memorial in November 2016, July 2017 and October 2018.
- The Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) reviewed the proposed memorial in February and May 2018, and approved the concept design at its July 2018 meeting, including the freestanding memorial wall. Additional reviews were held in October and November 2018.
- Pursuant to the CWA, NCPC, CFA, and the DOI must each approve the design for the new commemorative work.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commission:

Approves the preliminary memorial and site development plans for the National World War I Memorial in Washington, DC, including a freestanding wall with integrated fountain, and a plaza with pool, scrim, and "island" walkway. The west face of the freestanding wall is comprised of monolithic granite and an inscription. The east face consists of a cantilevered sculpture.

Memorial Wall

Finds the proposed treatment of the western face of the memorial wall has improved to include a monolithic granite finish and water feature reminiscent of the original Pershing Park fountain, while a quotation regarding the search for peace will provide a counterpoint to the wartime imagery and narrative found on the eastern face of the wall.

Finds the space created between the western terrace steps and wall can function as a contemplative space when the water feature is operating.

Requests the applicant include a lighting scheme for the memorial that addresses both sides of the wall.

Pool and Walkway

Notes the applicant has submitted two options for the pool and walkway configuration, including the “U”-shaped walkway, and the “Island” walkway.

Supports the “Island” walkway approach as it reinforces the edge of the original pool and appears as a deliberate and contemporary insertion into the historic park fabric.

Recommends the applicant consider different paving colors and types to help differentiate the scrim area and pedestrian circulation, and to help minimize solar heat gain and reflectivity given the lack of shade.

Notes the applicant has continued to work with NPS to address issues related to safety and fall protection, and has provided additional details regarding the walkway and scrim edge conditions to address these issues.

Park Use and Programming

Notes the berms and limited entry points from the southern perimeter of the site create challenges for pedestrian access and visibility.

Supports simple, horizontal signage integrated into the hardscape, along with accent planting, to help highlight and enhance the pedestrian entrances at the southeast and southwest corners of the site.

Supports programming the park for temporary events, both related to the memorial as well as for other park uses that would attract users from the surrounding area.

Reiterates that the commemorative elements should largely be limited to the memorial wall, kiosk area, and existing Pershing Memorial to highlight their importance and to allow for other types of park uses within the site.

Commends the National Park Service for recent improvements to the legibility of the Pershing Memorial walls, consistent with the Commission's previous request.

PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

Previous actions	December 2015 – Information Presentation on five finalists November 2016 – Review of Concept Plans July 2017 – Review of Concept Plans October 2018 – Review or Revised Concept Plan
Remaining actions (anticipated)	– Final Approval of memorial and site development plans

PROJECT ANALYSIS

The Commission has provided a series of comments on the proposed design of the World War I Memorial at Pershing Park, most recently in October 2018. The applicant has continued to refine the design in response to Commission and other agency comments, including the Commission of Fine Arts. Staff has analyzed this project based on this input, and in consideration of the Commemorative Works Act (CWA) and the Comprehensive Plan. A general principle set forth in the Comprehensive Plan is to protect and improve the open space and character of the Monumental Core and the integrity of each memorial and park element. Further, the Comprehensive Plan includes policies to enhance the quality of the visitor experience to the Nation's Capital, particularly at major cultural sites. Staff has also evaluated policies related to urban design given the memorial's position within downtown Washington, DC along Pennsylvania Avenue, NW.

The Commission has indicated support for several general planning and design principles related to the proposed memorial. These include:

- A memorial design that combines urban park and commemorative features successfully, integrating park uses and dignified commemorative components in a manner that is balanced and enduring.
- A memorial design that respects the historic, symbolic, and civic importance of the Pennsylvania Avenue corridor, and preserves the unified streetscape and framed views of the U.S. Capitol.
- Strategies that enhance Pershing Park while rehabilitating or reusing elements of the original park design.

Staff has evaluated the concept based upon these principles, and the analysis has been organized to focus on three major aspects of the proposal, including the memorial wall, the pool and plaza and the urban park experience.

Analysis

The park and memorial design has changed substantially since the competition winner was selected in 2016. Since that time, the proposal has focused on restoring and rehabilitating much of the original park design. The proposed interventions are more limited than the original scheme, and are focused on those changes necessary to accommodate the memorial program or to enhance the functionality of the site. Overall, the applicant seeks to improve the park and staff believes this will be beneficial to the Pennsylvania Avenue corridor and the surrounding area. Given the design revisions, staff recommends the **Commission approve the preliminary memorial and site development plans for the National World War I Memorial in Washington, DC, including a freestanding wall with integrated fountain, and a plaza with pool, scrim, and “island” walkway. The west face of the freestanding wall is comprised of monolithic granite and an inscription. The east face consists of a cantilevered sculpture.**

Memorial Wall

The memorial wall is a stand-alone element that is placed within the western end of the pool. The original park waterfall is eliminated and the western terrace steps are expanded to fill that space. The freestanding wall includes a sculptural narrative on the eastern face and a water feature and potential inscription on the western face. The freestanding wall is shorter in length (56'-6") than the integrated wall the Commission previously reviewed (64'-6"). It also integrates a water feature at the base.

Previously, the Commission found that the freestanding wall created a clear front and back, and the space at the rear of the wall was not yet fully developed. The Commission requested the applicant provide alternative design strategies to treat the memorial element in a unified way, so that it engages visitors from all sides. In response, the applicant has further developed both faces of the wall. The east side of the wall retains the sculptural narrative that speaks to the history of World War I. The composition of the figures and elements has been refined, and the entire sculpture is proposed to sit on a cantilevered base with a water feature below.

The western face of the wall has also been updated to include a monolithic granite finish that is reminiscent of the existing site fountain. A continuous flow of water over the wall will provide sound and movement, while a quote will be provided on the wall that will reference a narrative related to the search for peace. Planters in the terrace facing the wall have also been adjusted to allow the space to function for gather and contemplation. Overall, staff recommends the **Commission find the proposed treatment of the western face of the memorial wall has improved to include a monolithic granite finish and water feature reminiscent of the original Pershing Park fountain, while a quotation regarding the search for peace will provide a counterpoint to the wartime imagery and narrative found on the eastern face of the wall.**

And further, the **Commission finds the space created between the western terrace steps and wall can function as a contemplative space when the water feature is operating.**

As the design is finalized, there is also opportunity to think about how the wall and the memorial elements are expressed at night. As such, staff recommends the **Commission request the applicant include a lighting scheme for the memorial that addresses both sides of the wall.**

Pool and Walkway

The proposed design restores the central plaza and pool and adds a pedestrian path that would allow visitors to circulate in front of the commemorative wall. The Commission previously reviewed several alignments for the proposed pathway, including an “L” and “U”-shaped design with varying depths of water, including the potential for scrim. To better understand the options, the Commission had requested the applicant describe how the water feature and plaza area will be used throughout the year, recognizing the extreme temperatures of the summer and winter months.

After further review, the applicant has developed another pathway design that is preferred. This new “island” approach includes a central platform in the middle of the pool, with a single pedestrian connection to the plaza. The center of the platform includes a scrim of water that is shallow in depth, while the area around the platform retains deeper water, similar to the original pool design. This design allows the deeper water to encircle the platform and reinforce the footprint of the original pool. As such, staff recommends the **Commission support the “Island” walkway approach as it reinforces the edge of the original pool and appears as a deliberate and contemporary insertion into the historic park fabric.**

As noted above, a scrim is proposed at the center of the platform. The use of water will help cool the space while reinterpreting the original pool design. When the scrim is not in use, the area will also be available for events. Given the amount of hardscape, particularly when the scrim is not in use, staff suggests the **Commission recommend the applicant consider different paving colors and types to help differentiate the scrim area and pedestrian circulation, and to help minimize solar heat gain and reflectivity given the lack of shade.**

Finally, the applicant has continued to work with NPS to address issues related to safety and fall protection. Additional details regarding the walkway and scrim edge conditions have been provided which aim to address these issues. The proposed design makes use of a wide curb at the pool edge, as well as a tactile edge. The intention is to provide several levels of perceptible change to denote the interface between the walkway edge and the deeper water.

Park Use and Programming

The project design should accommodate the memorial program as well as support a successful urban park. Accommodating park activities is critical to the success of the site, as is evidenced by nearby examples such as the Navy Memorial. Pershing Park is located in a thriving downtown, near hotels and other commercial uses, civic uses, such as the Commerce Building and Wilson Building. Given its location on Pennsylvania Avenue near the White House and National Mall, as

well as an active downtown, the memorial has the opportunity to attract and engage a variety of visitors. It can be a destination for residents, office workers, as well as tourists, if designed appropriately.

Previously, the Commission requested the applicant provide information about how the site would continue to function as an urban park, as well as potential programming or activities that could occur there. This request seeks first to understand the locations where park activities could occur on the site; and secondly, to understand what kind of park uses might be reasonable and appropriate near the memorial, from the applicant's perspective.

In response to the Commission's request, the applicant has provided a series of diagram and renderings that demonstrate how the park space could be used for a variety of activities and events. These range from more passive, day-to-day activities, such as eating lunch or reading within the park, to programmed events and special exhibits. The pool platform and the precinct around the General Pershing statue would remain commemorative spaces. In addition, several zones are identified for seating, including both fixed benches as well as movable chairs. These zones are outside the commemorative areas, and can accommodate passive park activities that would not intrude upon the memorial spaces. At the northeast corner of the site, the plaza area could be used for other activities, such as exhibits or special events. This area is most visible to the adjacent streets and therefore could successfully host these kinds of activities, whether related to the memorial, other events on Pennsylvania Avenue, or general activities related to urban life. As such, staff recommends the **Commission support programming the park for temporary events, both related to the memorial as well as for other park uses that would attract users from the surrounding area.**

Finally, the Commission has previously discussed the views and visibility into the park, and in particular connections to the south of the site. In July 2017, the Commission requested the applicant provide alternatives to improve pedestrian access from the southern perimeter of the site, and most recently requested the applicant consider design options to help improve the sense of entry from the southeast and southwest corners of the site to help encourage visitation and visibility. Staff recognizes that the berms and sense of enclosure are important components of the park's original design. However, given the changing context and need to create a place that will attract visitors, enhancing pedestrian access would be beneficial.

In response to this request, the applicant has considered a number of ideas to help enhance the southern approaches to the park. These include enhanced vegetation and the use of entry signage. Overall, staff believe simple, horizontal signage, is appropriate for the site. This in, combination with distinct or colorful plantings will help demark entry points for pedestrians. As noted previously, the improved Pershing Wall have already enhanced visibility at the southeast corner of the site. As such, staff recommends the **Commission support the simple, horizontal signage integrated into the hardscape, along with accent planting, to help accent the pedestrian entrances at the southeast and southwest corners of the site.**

Other Elements

As with the previous design, the gazebo area is proposed to be used for interpretation, and a flagstaff and inscription are proposed at the western side of the site, north of the memorial wall. The Commission had previously indicated that commemorative elements should largely be limited to the memorial wall, kiosk area, and existing Pershing Memorial to highlight their importance and to allow for other types of park uses within the site. The applicant has continued to evaluate the potential for other inscriptions and features through the site, and in general, staff finds the commemorative experience can be strengthened by limiting the number of these elements. As such, staff recommends the **Commission reiterate its previous recommendation regarding this issue.**

Finally, past reviews have noted that the existing Pershing Walls are hard to read. The Commission previously expressed support for improving the legibility of the Pershing Memorial walls. Given these issues, NPS has recently re-finished the inscribed text and they have been greatly improved. Now, the text is visible from the street and the walls no longer look monolithic. As such, staff recommends the **Commission commend the National Park Service for recent improvements to the legibility of the Pershing Memorial walls, consistent with the Commission's previous request.**

CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

As noted above, the planning comments are designed to ensure the proposal meets basic goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

Commemorative Works Act

The Commemorative Works Act (CWA) contains a set of foundational level decision criteria that NCPC is required to use when considering site and design proposals for commemorative works. Specifically, the CWA states that in considering site and design proposals, NCPC shall be guided by a number of criteria, including surroundings, location, material, landscape features, and site specific guidelines. As noted above, the planning and design comments are designed to ensure the proposal broadly meets the CWA criteria.

Memorials and Museums Master Plan

The 2001 Memorials and Museums Master Plan ("2M Plan") provides guidance regarding the placement of future commemorative works. In particular, the Plan seeks to reinforce the historic urban design features of the city, minimize intrusion on existing memorials, and reduce adverse environmental and transportation impacts and enhance positive economic and other effects on local neighborhoods. The Plan states that memorials, when properly placed and sensitively designed, can provide a source of community identity and pride, while bolstering revitalization efforts.

National Historic Preservation Act

NCPC and NPS each have an independent responsibility to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). NPS initiated consultation with the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office (DC SHPO) on May 1, 2015. A determination of eligibility (DOE) for Pershing Park was completed and found the park eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. NPS has prepared a preliminary assessment of effects. The Section 106 process, culminating in a memorandum of agreement (MOA) will be completed prior to the Commission's final approval of the project.

National Environmental Policy Act

NCPC and NPS will each have an independent responsibility to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NCPC's responsibility stems from its approval authority over the site and design of the monument. A public scoping meeting was held on May 20, 2015 to discuss the memorial authorization and site characteristics. NPS is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to identify alternatives and assess the potential impacts of the proposed memorial. NCPC is a cooperating agency for purposes of the EA, and NCPC staff provided scoping comments on June 2, 2015. These recommended evaluation of a number of topics through the NEPA process, including urban design and visitor experience, historic and cultural resources, transportation systems and sustainability. A draft Environmental Assessment (EA) was released on December 17, 2018 for a public review period that ends on February 27, 2019.

Commission of Fine Arts

The Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) reviewed the proposed memorial in February, May and July 2018, and approved the concept design at its July 2018 meeting, including the freestanding memorial wall. Additional CFA reviews were held in October and November 2018. Copies of letters from those actions are attached.

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposed plans at their December 12, 2018 meeting. Without objection, the Committee forwarded the proposed comments on concept plans to the Commission with the statement that the proposal has been coordinated with all participating agencies. The participating agencies included the National Park Service, General Services Administration, District Department of Transportation; the District Office of Planning; the District Office of Energy and Environment; the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority; and the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office (DC SHPO). The DC SHPO noted that its coordination is contingent upon the completion of a Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement.

ONLINE REFERENCE

The following supporting documents for this project are available online at www.ncpc.gov:

- Submission Package

Prepared by Matthew Flis
02/05/2019

ATTACHMENTS

- Powerpoint
- Commission of Fine Arts Letters
- Public Comment

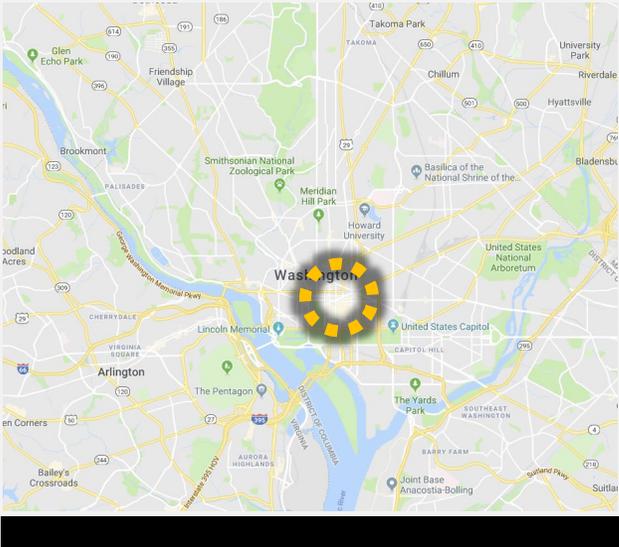
National World War I Memorial

Pershing Park, Washington, DC

Preliminary Review

National Park Service

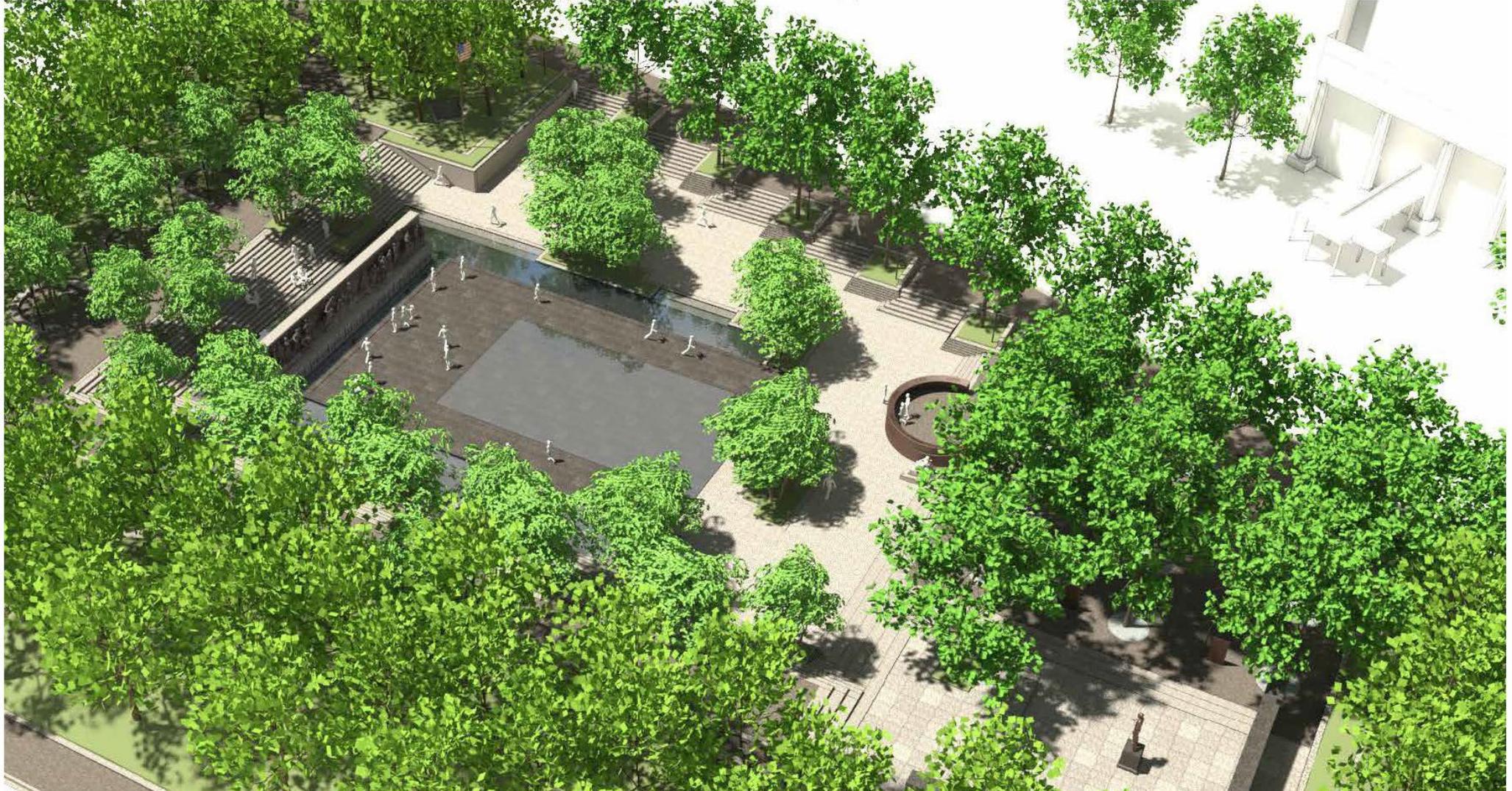
Site Location



Location Map

Applicant Preferred Combination – October 2018

Freestanding with Cap | Front + Back Cascade | U Walkway | North Berm Flag | Interpretive Overlook | Grove Blades



Comments from October 2018

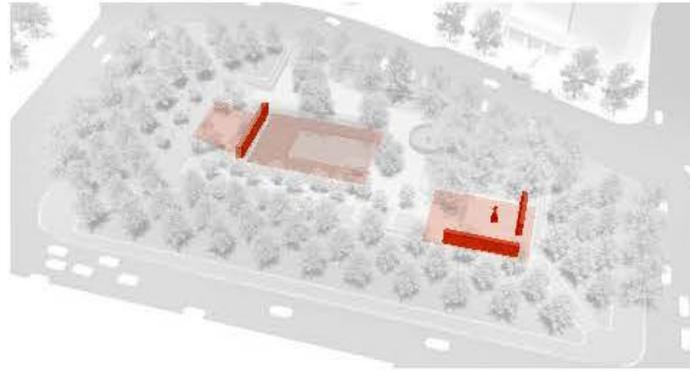
WHAT WE HEARD

1. Support for improvements to the legibility of the Pershing walls
2. Provide design strategies that treat the memorial element in a unified way that can engage visitors from all sides: consider treatment of the western steps and how the space can encourage people to gather
3. Suggestion to show how the water feature and walkway will be used throughout the year, recognizing extreme temperatures of summer and winter months
4. Suggestion to share design options for improved sense of entry at the southeast and southwest corners of the site
5. Planting concerns regarding the maintenance of leaves, maybe too many trees on the western end of the pool
6. Study re-animating some of the underutilized space on the eastern side of the park and identify proposed urban spaces and potential programming / activities

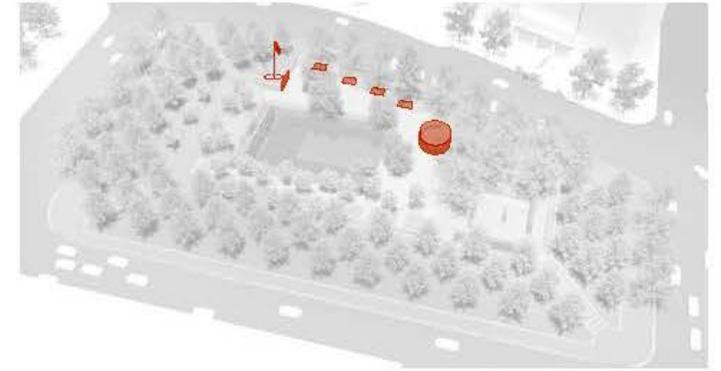
Memorial Park Vision



EXISTING FRAMEWORK



PRIMARY COMMEMORATIVE ELEMENTS



SECONDARY INTERPRETIVE ELEMENTS

Memorial Park Narrative



Summary of Wall Concepts



CANTILEVERED



NESTED

Memorial Wall – Concept 1 - Cantilevered

CONCEPT 1 - CANTILEVERED



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Memorial Wall – Concept 2 - Nested

CONCEPT 2 - NESTED



Memorial Wall as endorsed by CFA

CANTILEVERED OPTION WITH MONOLITHIC WEST SIDE



MONOLITHIC - INSPIRED BY EXISTING SITE FOUNTAIN



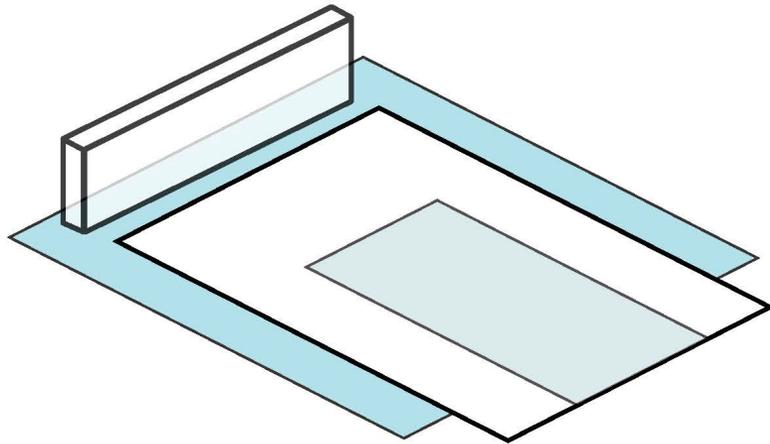
MAHOGANY GRANITE



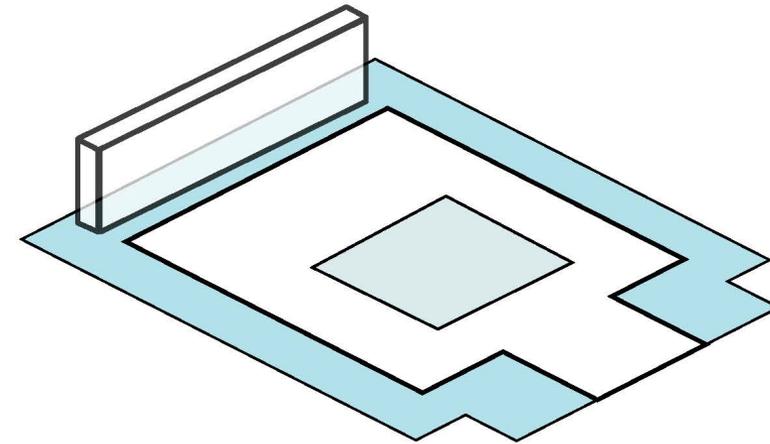
Pool and Walkway Studies

PRIMARY COMMEMORATIVE ELEMENTS: DEVELOPMENT OF POOL AND WALKWAY LAYOUT STUDIES

- Water Perceived as One Body
- Universally Accessible
- Functional / Flexible
- Seasonal Consideration



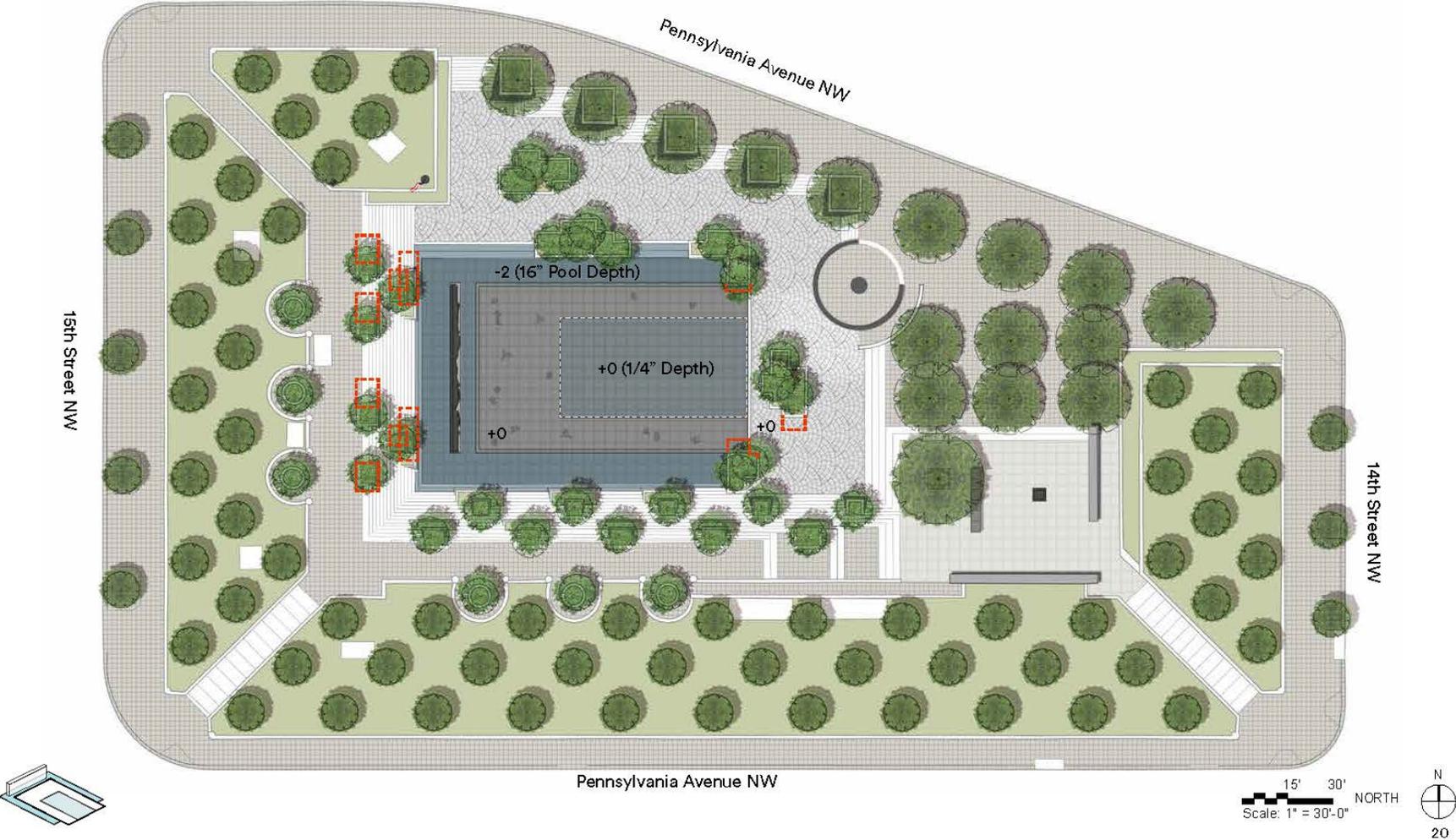
"U" + SCRIM



ISLAND

“U” Walkway and Scrim

PRIMARY COMMEMORATIVE ELEMENTS: DEVELOPMENT OF POOL AND WALKWAY
“U” + SCRIM



“U” Walkway and Scrim

PRIMARY COMMEMORATIVE ELEMENTS: DEVELOPMENT OF POOL AND WALKWAY

“U” + SCRIM: SCRIM ON



“U” Walkway and Scrim

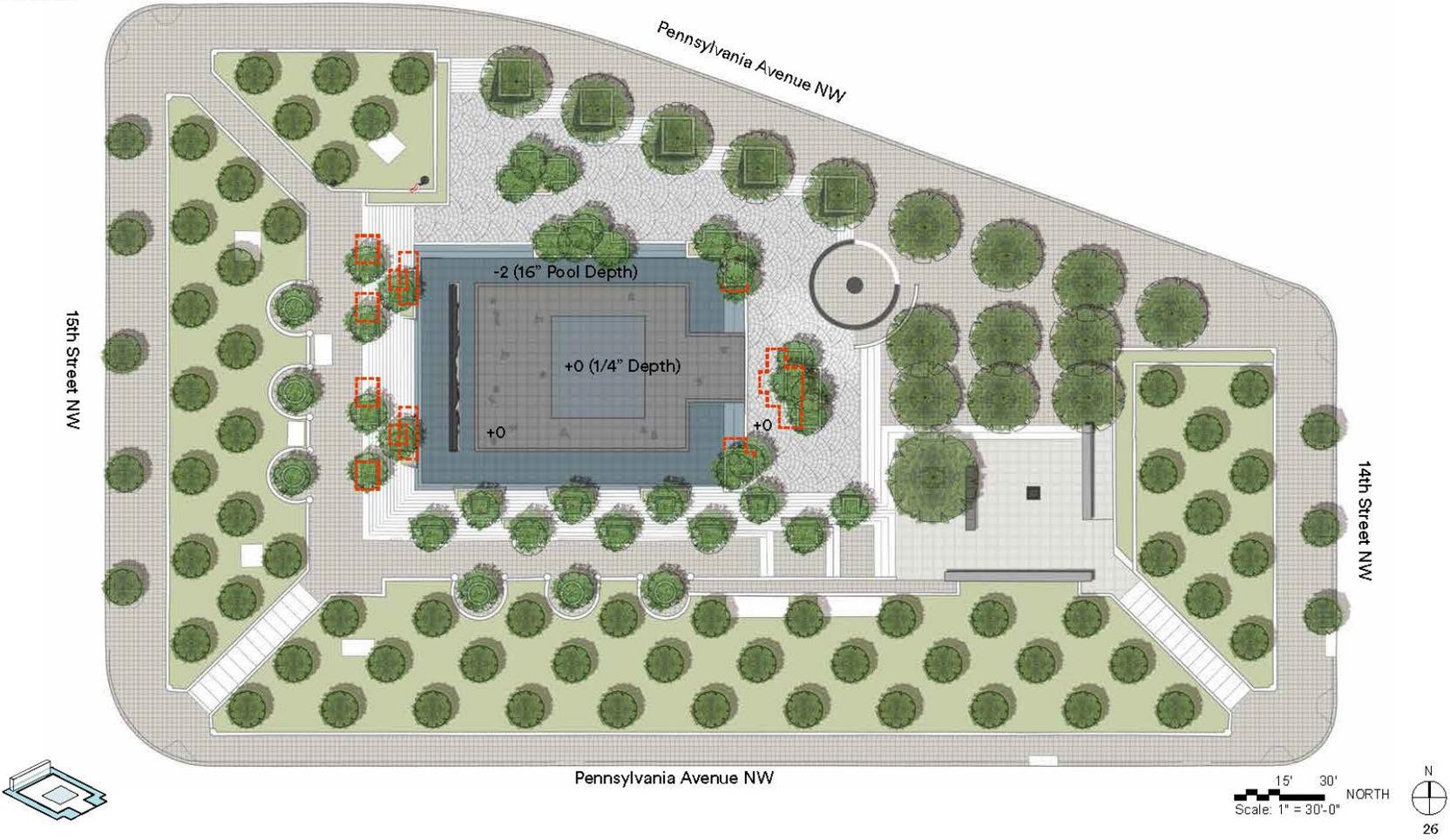
PRIMARY COMMEMORATIVE ELEMENTS: DEVELOPMENT OF POOL AND WALKWAY

“U” + SCRIM - SCRIM OFF



Island Walkway and Scrim

PRIMARY COMMEMORATIVE ELEMENTS: DEVELOPMENT OF POOL AND WALKWAY ISLAND



Island Walkway and Scrim On

PRIMARY COMMEMORATIVE ELEMENTS: DEVELOPMENT OF POOL AND WALKWAY
ISLAND: SCRIM ON



Island Walkway and Scrim Off

PRIMARY COMMEMORATIVE ELEMENTS: DEVELOPMENT OF POOL AND WALKWAY

ISLAND: SCRIM OFF



Walkway and Pool Detail Development

DETAILS - WALKWAY / POOL INTERFACE



Secondary Memorial Elements - Flagstaff



Secondary Interpretive Elements

SECONDARY INTERPRETIVE ELEMENTS: DEVELOPMENT OF BELVEDERE VIEW FROM PA AVE GROVE



EXISTING CONDITION



MAHOGANY GRANITE BELVEDERE

Secondary Interpretive Elements

SECONDARY INTERPRETIVE ELEMENTS: POSSIBLE PA AVE PLANTERS



-  Anticipated Interpretive Post / Signage
-  Anticipated Text / Quotes Along West Face of Sculpture
-  Anticipated Interpretive Elements at Kiosk
-  Anticipated Flagstaff, Possible Location
-  Possible Interpretation along the PA Ave Planters
-  Existing Interpretive Elements

Secondary Interpretive Elements

SECONDARY INTERPRETIVE ELEMENTS: POSSIBLE PA AVE PLANTERS

PA AVENUE PLANTERS - EXISTING CONDITION



STONE BENCH



TERRACED EDGE



Secondary Interpretive Elements

SECONDARY INTERPRETIVE ELEMENTS: POSSIBLE PA AVE PLANTERS VIEW FROM STAIR AT BELVEDERE

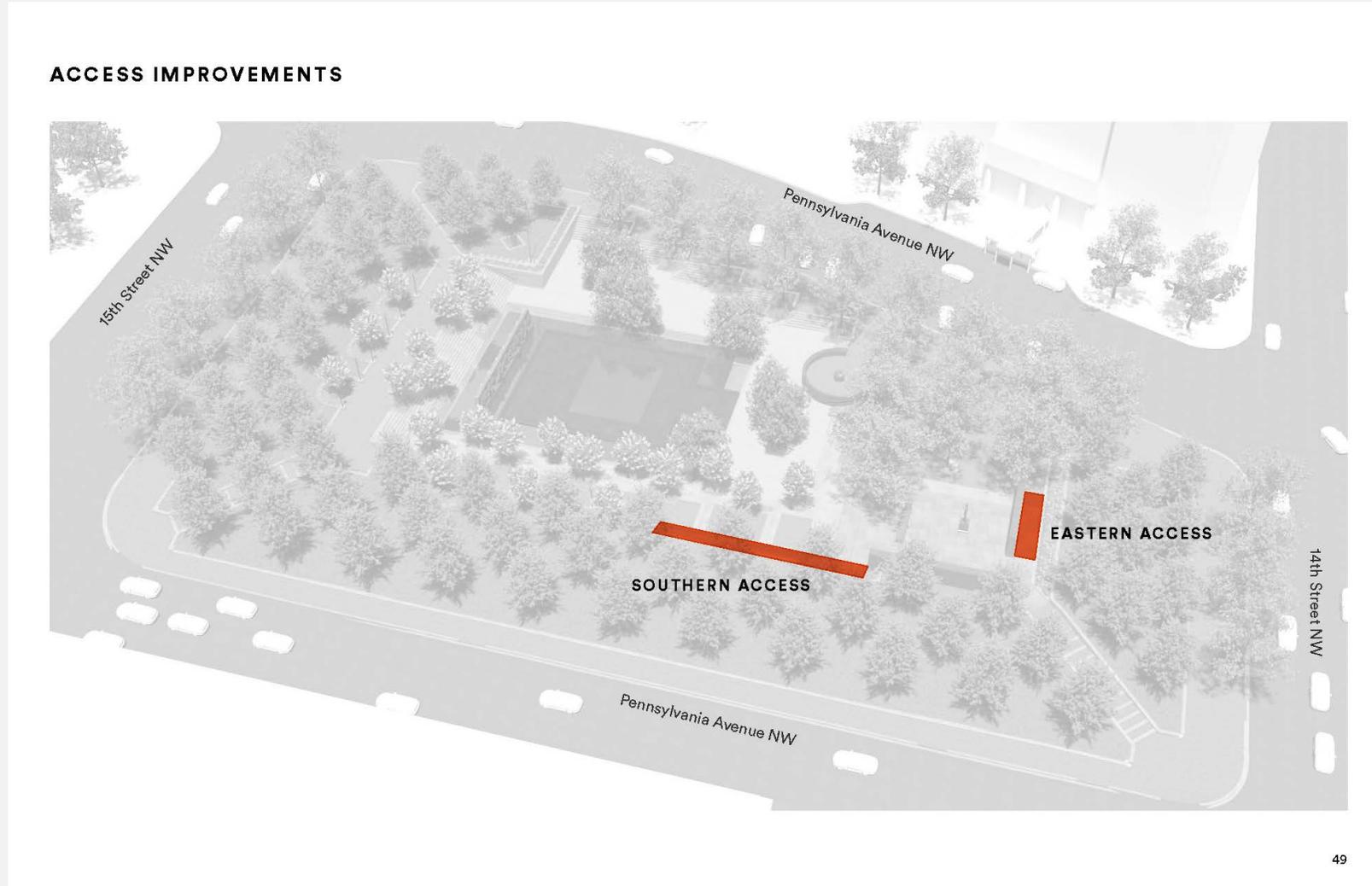


EXISTING CONDITION



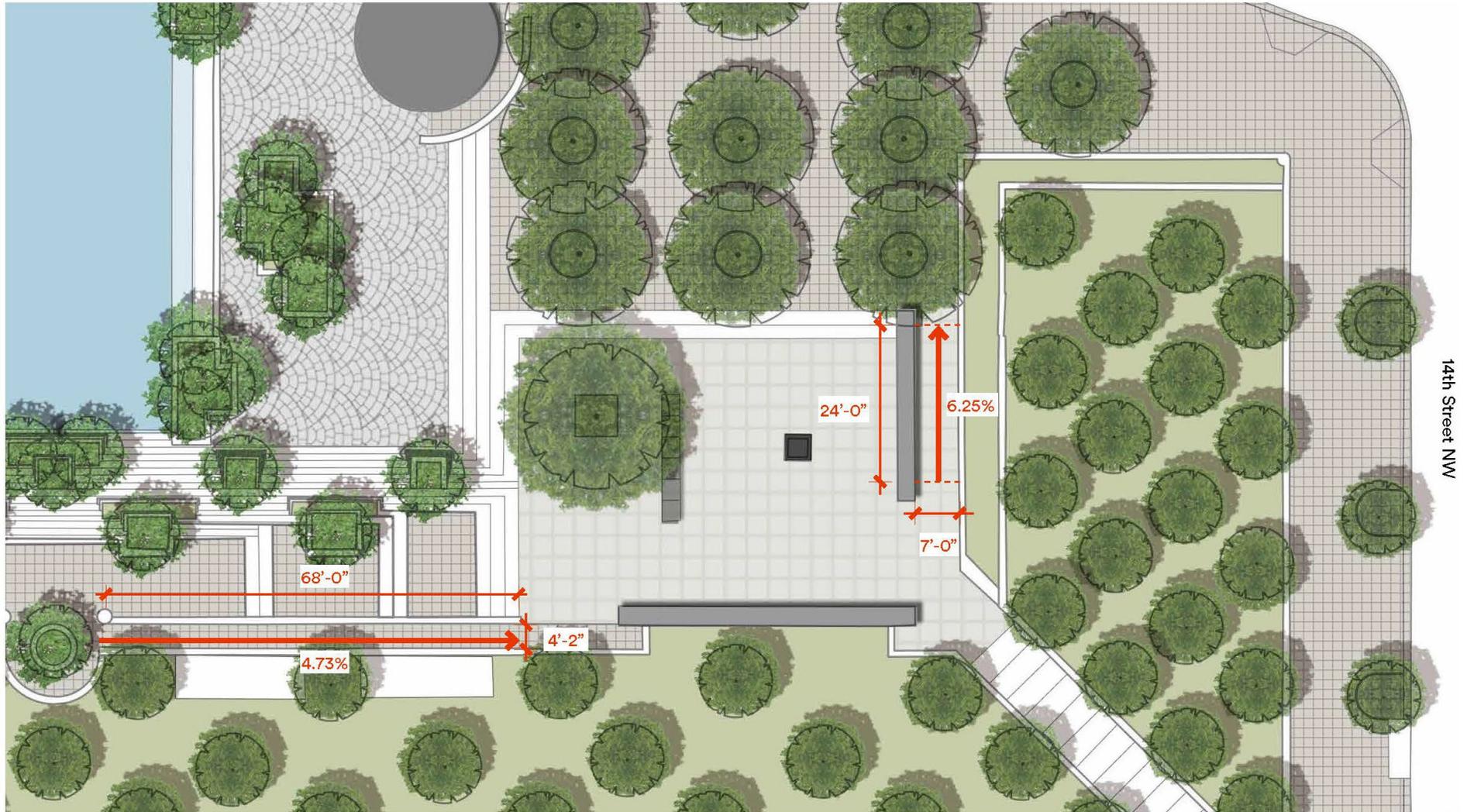
SMOOTH STONE

Access Improvements



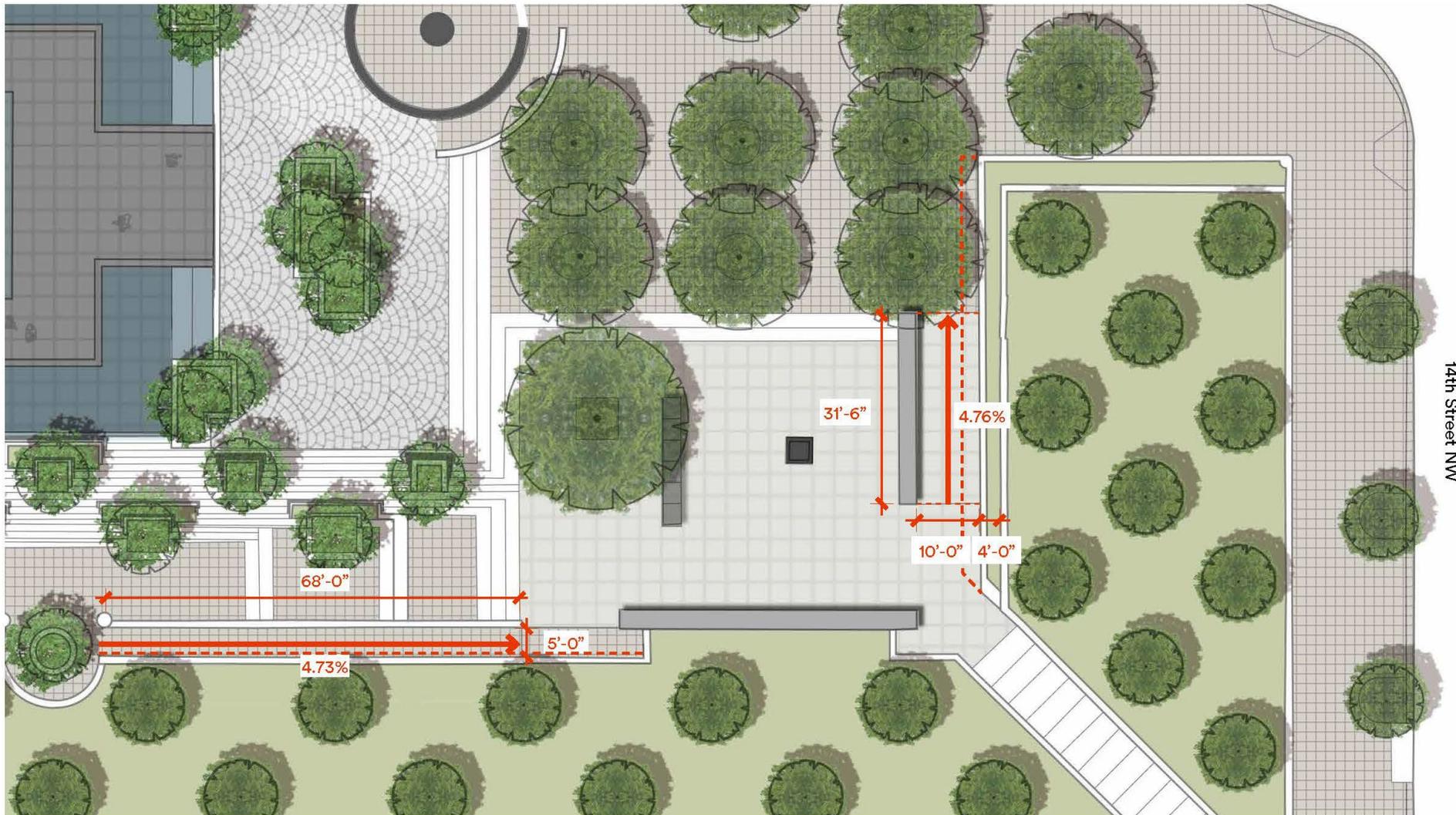
Access Improvements

EXISTING SITE RAMPS / SLOPES



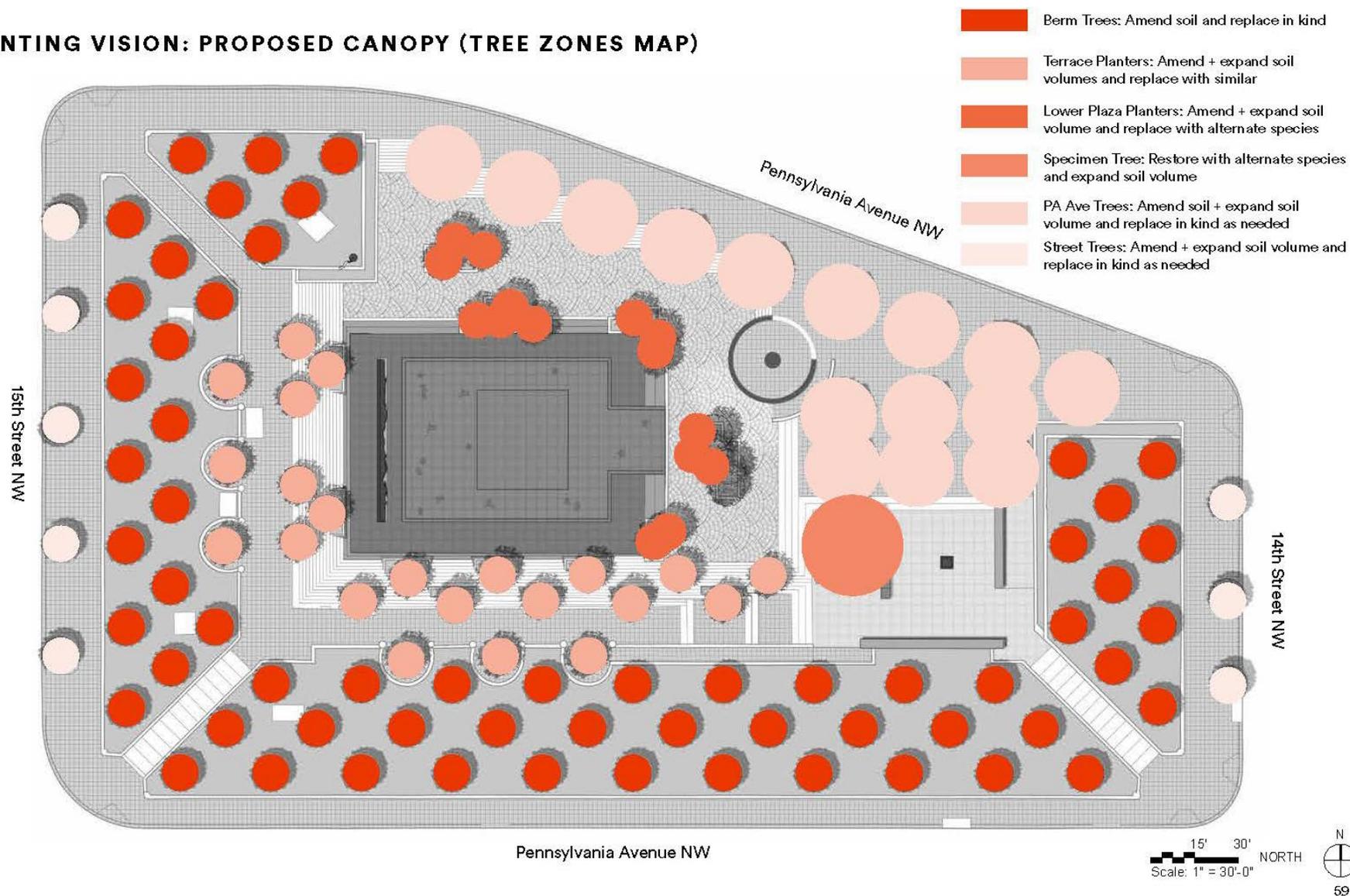
Access Improvements

SOUTHERN AND EASTERN ACCESS: PROPOSED



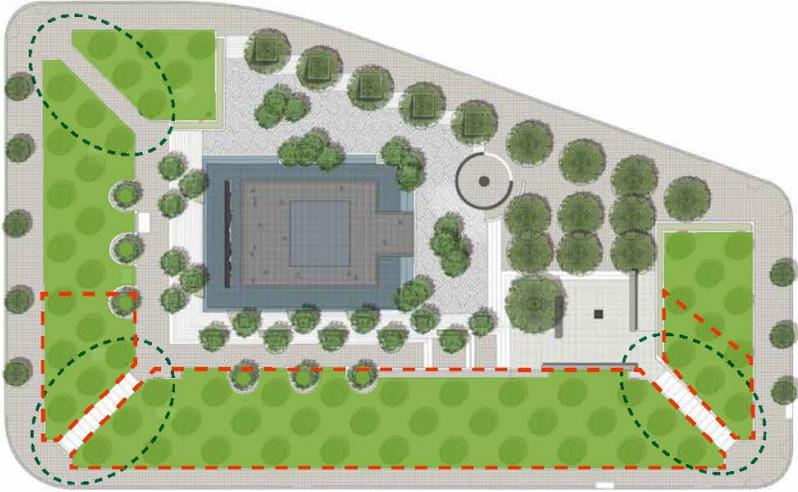
Tree Plantings

PLANTING VISION: PROPOSED CANOPY (TREE ZONES MAP)



Understory Plantings

PLANTING VISION: UNDERSTORY
HEARTLAND INSPIRED BERMS



Year Round: Carpet
Carex pensylvanica | Pennsylvania Sedge



Early Summer: Ephemeral Accent
Papaver orientale | Red Poppies



Early Summer: Entry Planting
Astilbe x arendsii 'Deutschland' | White Astilbe



Late Summer / Early Fall: Entry Planting
Liriope muscari 'Monroe's White' | White Liriope

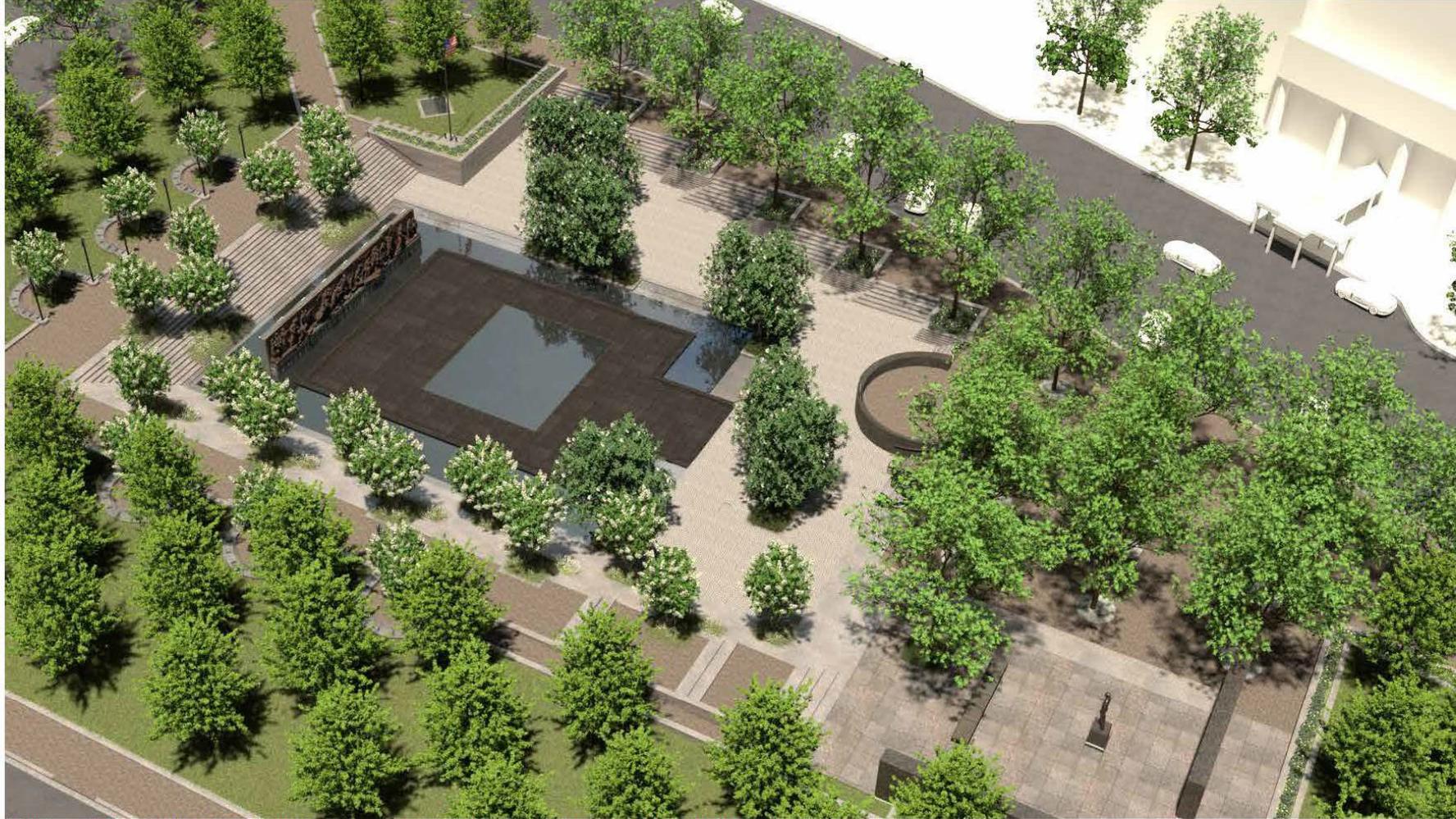


Winter / Early Spring: Ephemeral Accent within Carex Carpet
Galanthus | Snowdrops

Applicant Preferred Combination – December 2018

PREFERRED COMBINATION:

Cantilevered Sculpture with Monolithic Fountain | Island Configuration | Belvedere | Flagstaff | Access Improvements | Planting Strategies



* Preferred direction based on October & November CFA Presentations with additional refinements requested

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Park Use and Programming – Passive Seating

PARK USE AND PROGRAMMING PASSIVE SEATING - STANDARD USE



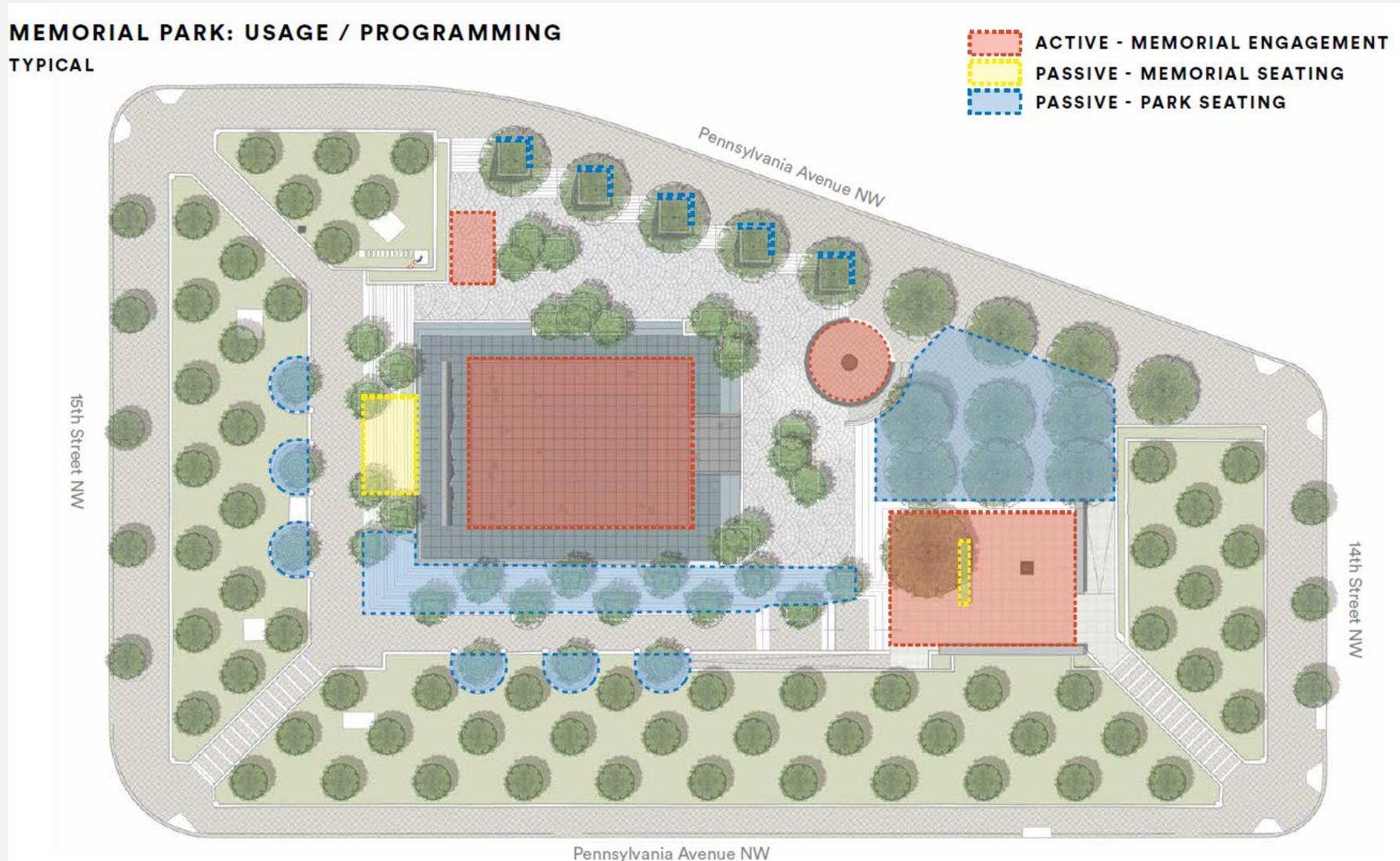
Park Use and Programming – Temporary Exhibits

PARK USE AND PROGRAMMING PASSIVE SEATING - USE DURING TEMPORARY EXHIBITS



Site Programming

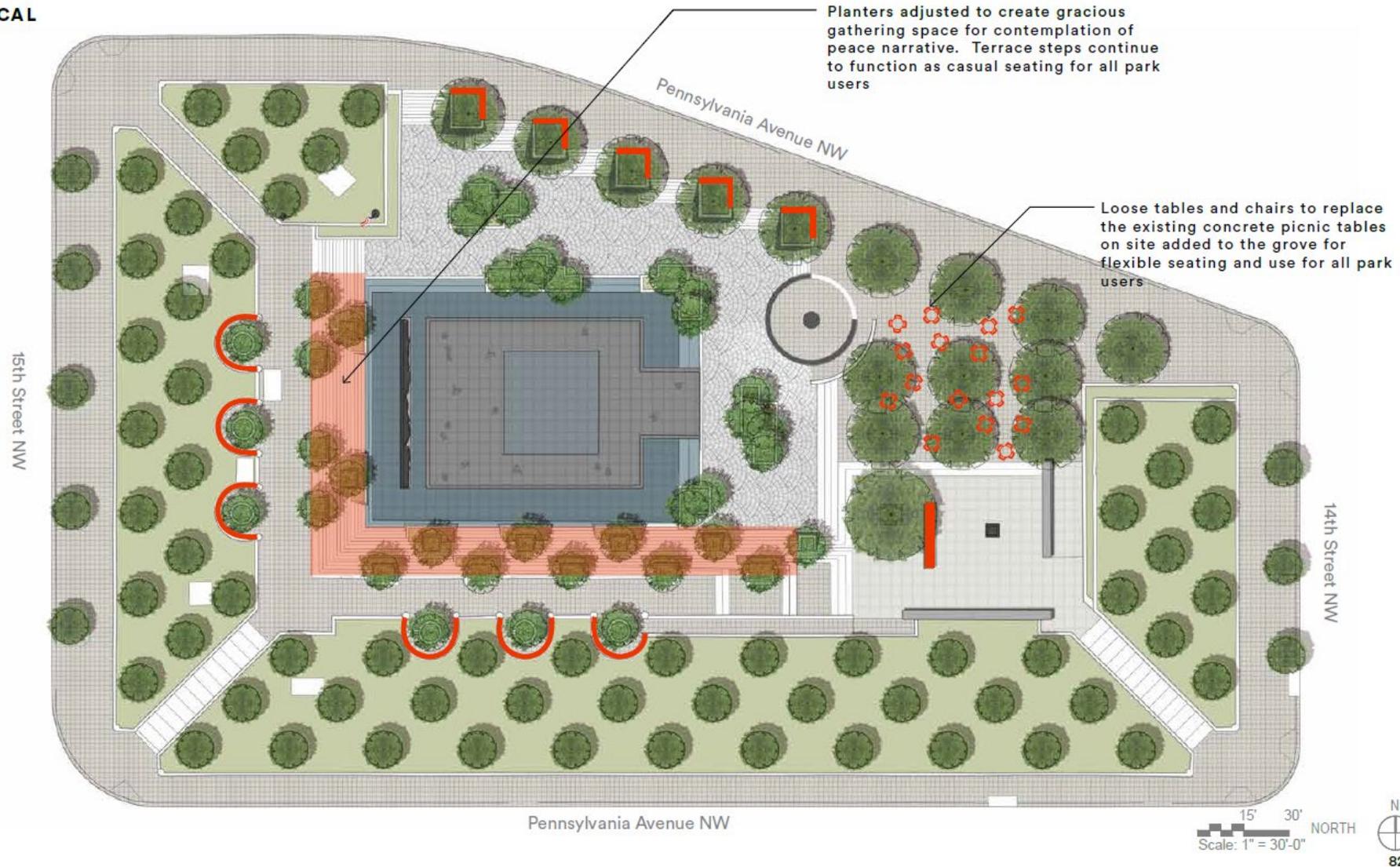
MEMORIAL PARK: USAGE / PROGRAMMING TYPICAL



Site Programming

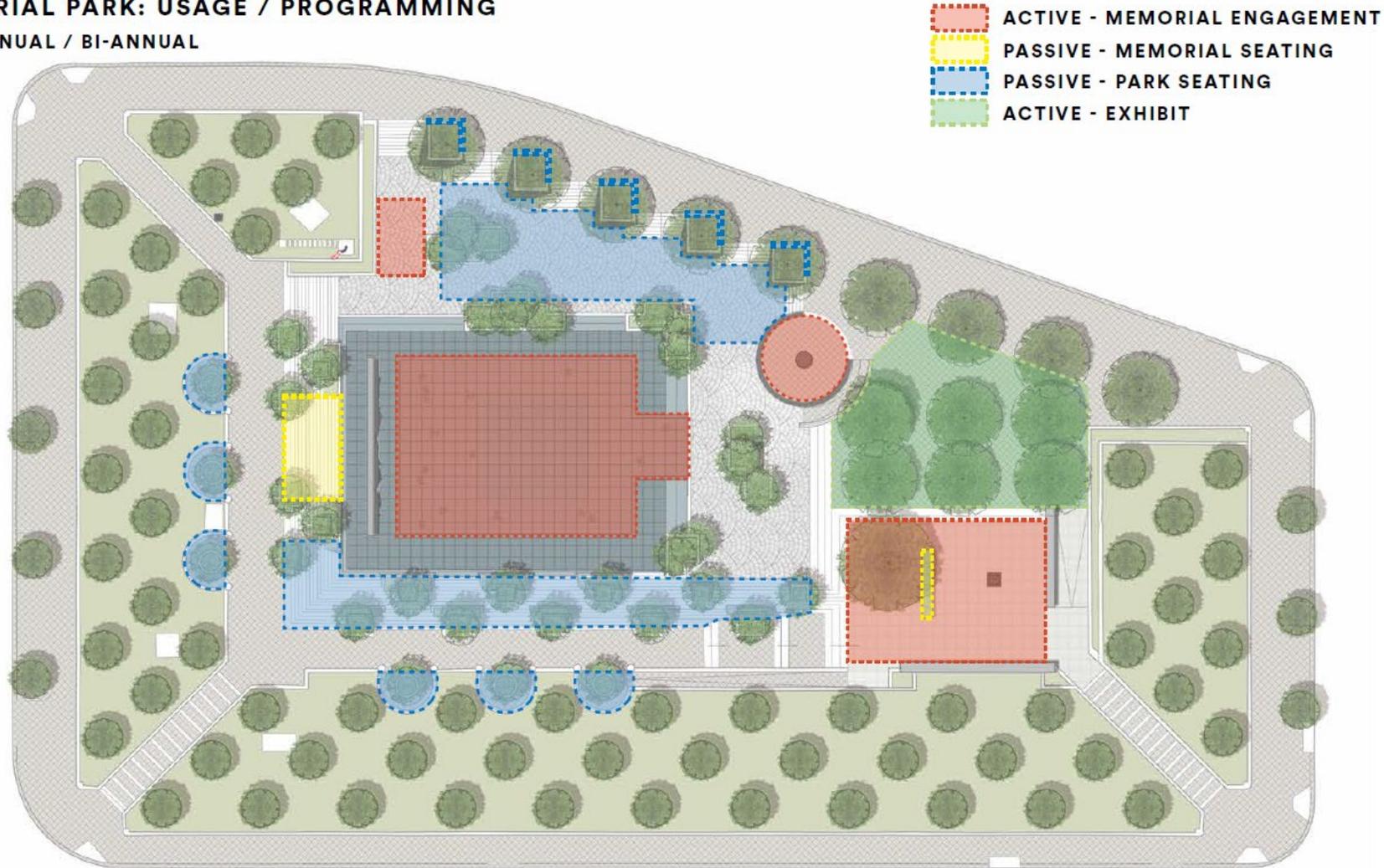
MEMORIAL PARK: USAGE / PROGRAMMING

TYPICAL



Site Programming

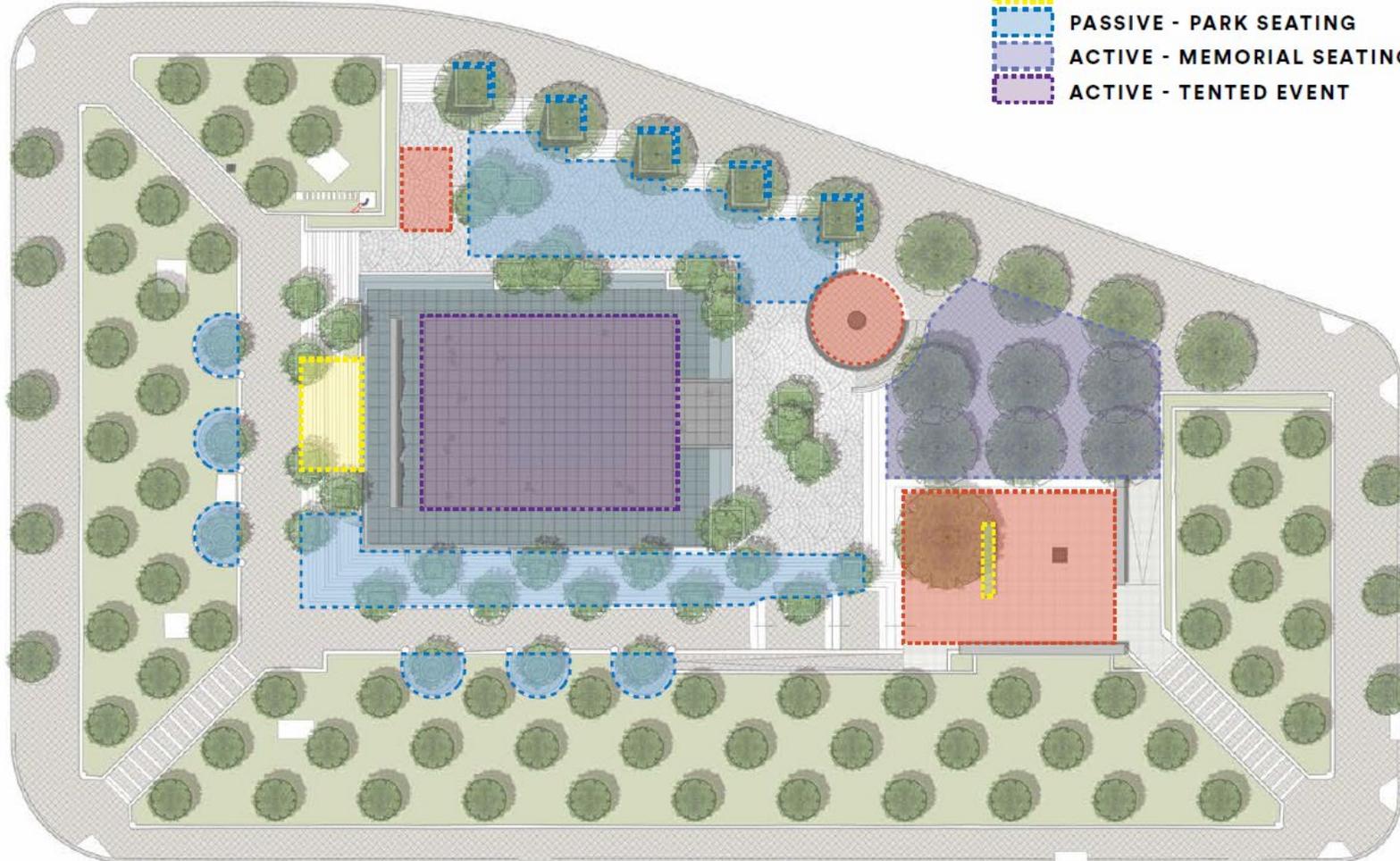
MEMORIAL PARK: USAGE / PROGRAMMING SEMI-ANNUAL / BI-ANNUAL



Site Programming

MEMORIAL PARK: USAGE / PROGRAMMING MEMORIAL EVENT

- ACTIVE - MEMORIAL ENGAGEMENT
- PASSIVE - MEMORIAL SEATING
- PASSIVE - PARK SEATING
- ACTIVE - MEMORIAL SEATING
- ACTIVE - TENTED EVENT



Site Signage

FURNISHINGS

ENTRY SIGNAGE

-  PRIMARY PARK SIGN
-  SECONDARY PARK SIGN



Passive Seating – Grove



83

Passive Seating – Pennsylvania Avenue



84

Passive Seating – Alcoves



85

Passive Seating – South Terrace



86

West Terrace

PARK USE AND PROGRAMMING
PASSIVE SEATING - CONTEMPLATION AREA



87

West Terrace

MEMORIAL PARK: USAGE / PROGRAMMING

TYPICAL - CONTEMPLATIVE GATHERING



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Signage Exploration

FURNISHINGS

ENTRY SIGNAGE EXPLORATION



Signage Proposal

FURNISHINGS ENTRY SIGNAGE



CFA 18/OCT/18-1

LOCATION:

Pershing Park, Pennsylvania Avenue, NW between 14th and 15th Streets
Washington, DC

OWNER:

National Park Service

PROPERTY:

National World War I Memorial

DESCRIPTION:

New memorial

REVIEW TYPE:

Revised concept

PREVIOUS REVIEW:

[CFA 19/JUL/18-2](#)

Letter

25 October 2018

Dear Ms. Mendelson-Ielmini:

In its meeting of 18 October, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed a revised concept design for the proposed commemorative elements and planting plan for the National World War I Memorial within Pershing Park, located on Pennsylvania Avenue between 14th and 15th Streets, NW. The Commission expressed appreciation for the advancement of the design for these components of the memorial and provided the following comments for the project's further development.

Consistent with their previous guidance to treat the central high-relief sculpture and its supporting wall as a single integrated element, the Commission members expressed a strong preference for the option in which the bronze sculpture rests on a stone shelf projecting above a recessed linear waterfall—paired with the monolithic option for the stone wall on the west side, which would provide a favorable counterpoint to the bronze figures. They cited the simplicity and lightness of this solution as superior to the other option featuring a more massive base, which they said may be reminiscent of a tomb; they recommended developing this quality of lightness to emphasize an ethereal character for the sculptural figures, such as by making the supporting stone shelf as thin as possible and further recessing the waterfall. For the stone of the sculpture wall, they expressed a general preference for the darker Dakota Mahogany granite, citing its relationship to the existing Pershing Memorial and its potential harmony with the new bronze sculpture, but they remained open to other options pending the refinement of the design.

Regarding the other presented memorial elements, the Commission members raised concern about the proposal to modify the stepped tree planters along the park's northern frontage as locations for the display of quotations; they commented that too many secondary inscriptions may weaken the power of the most prominent inscription, proposed to be on the east-facing retaining wall of the terrace at the northwest corner of the site. However, they expressed a willingness to again consider modifying the planters if presented as an integral part of a developed program of

quotations within the site concept's established tripartite hierarchy of Pershing Memorial, overlook, and statuary wall. Likewise, for the proposed overlook at the location of the existing kiosk, they recommended that fewer panels would be best as part of the overall program of interpretation. Acknowledging the potential need for an access door to the utility area beneath the northwest terrace, they advised that this door should not be located on the inscription wall, but may possibly be incorporated into the terrace's south-facing retaining wall with an unobtrusive flush door. More generally, they expressed strong support for the planting plan, which simplifies the landscape's existing color palette and provides for the long-term viability of the trees within the park.

The Commission looks forward to further review of the refinement of the sculpture wall and other components of the National World War I Memorial as the final design is developed. Please consult with the staff for guidance on these future submissions.

Sincerely,

/s/Thomas E. Luebke, FAIA
Secretary

Lisa Mendelson-Ielmini, Acting Regional Director
National Park Service, National Capital Region
1100 Ohio Drive, SW
Washington, DC 20242

cc: Libby O'Connell, U.S. World War I Centennial Commission
David Rubin, Land Collective
Sabin Howard, Sabin Howard Sculpture

CFA 15/NOV/18-1

LOCATION:

Pershing Park, Pennsylvania Avenue between 14th and 15th Streets, NW
Washington, DC

OWNER:

National Park Service

PROPERTY:

National World War I Memorial

DESCRIPTION:

New memorial

REVIEW TYPE:

Revised concept

PREVIOUS REVIEW:

[CFA 18/OCT/18-1](#)

Letter

26 November 2018

Dear Ms. Mendelson-Ielmini:

In its meeting of 15 November, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed a revised concept design for the central water feature, accessibility alterations, and refinements to the high-relief sculpture for the National World War I Memorial within Pershing Park, located on Pennsylvania Avenue between 14th and 15th Streets, NW. Expressing appreciation for the advancement of the design for this second set of components comprising the design of the memorial, the Commission approved the submission with the following comments to guide the project's further development.

In their discussion of the proposed configuration of the central pool and the viewing platform within it, the Commission members expressed strong support for the idea of accommodating public programming in this space, particularly with a design that encourages use in all seasons of the year. Emphasizing the importance of retaining the original character of the park's central pool, they observed that the U-shaped scheme provides more area of water scrim, whereas the island configuration creates the greatest sense of the pool's continuous edge. Citing advantages in both of these options, they endorsed the island configuration as the one that best conveys the original sense of the body of water, although they suggested increasing the area of the scrim on the platform to give it a stronger presence. They also recommended further study of the material and scale of the paving on the platform, possibly using lighter-colored granite in the areas surrounding the scrim or on the bridge in order to reduce solar heat gain. For the design of the bridge, they suggested that it might be articulated as lighter in character than the main platform, emphasizing its conceptual role as a passage over water; they also requested further study of the edge conditions along the perimeter pool generally to maximize safety while avoiding the need for handrails.

For the design of the central high-relief bronze sculpture depicting a soldier's journey through the experience of the war, the Commission members praised the refinements to reduce the length and make adjustments for historical accuracy; they found that the result has been to increase the artwork's emotional impact and potential for engaging the visitor with

a deeper understanding of the past. Characterizing the effect of the revised work as hauntingly realistic and wrenching, they supported the depiction of figures in genuine reaction to the battle experience, such as the staring countenance of the shell-shocked soldier toward the right side of the composition. Acknowledging the memorial sponsor's intent to present a revised maquette in the coming year, they requested that this model encompass related elements of this central commemorative feature, including the surrounding stone wall and the adjacent water elements. In general, the Commission members advised that the presence of interpretative information for the central sculpture should be minimal, perhaps limited to the former kiosk site, and augmented by such technologies as mobile apps.

In its review, the Commission also endorsed the interventions proposed on the east and south sides of the park to accommodate contemporary standards for barrier-free access.

The Commission looks forward to further review of the refinement of other components of the memorial as the final design is developed; please consult with the staff for guidance on these future submissions.

Sincerely,

/s/Thomas E. Luebke, FAIA
Secretary

Lisa Mendelson-Ielmini, Acting Regional Director
National Park Service, National Capital Region
1100 Ohio Drive, SW
Washington, DC 20242

cc: Libby O'Connell, U.S. World War I Centennial Commission
David Rubin, Land Collective
Sabin Howard, Sabin Howard Studio

The Committee of 100 on the Federal City



www.committeeof100.net

January 18, 2019

Marcel C. Acosta, AICP
Executive Director
National Capital Planning Commission
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SUBJECT: Comments on the Latest Design for the World War I Memorial in Pershing Park

Dear Mr. Acosta:

The Committee of 100 on the Federal City (Committee of 100), founded in 1923, is the District of Columbia's oldest citizen planning organization. The Committee of 100 has been especially interested in the design of the proposed World War I Memorial in Pershing Park, located at Pennsylvania Avenue NW and 14th Street, NW. This is an important location, just south of Downtown, at the north edge of the Monumental Core and just east of the White House area.

The Committee of 100 has submitted various comments on the design of the WWI Memorial over the past three years. The last Committee of 100 comment letter to NCPC was dated October 1, 2018 in preparation for the Commission's October 4, 2018 meeting. Now the World War I Centennial Commission has submitted a somewhat revised design for the World War I Memorial to NCPC for review at the Commission's meeting which was scheduled for January 10, 2019. Our comments below are based on that design.

The review and discussion of the design of the World War I Memorial by the Consulting Parties, and the National Capital Planning Commission and the Commission of Fine Arts, has been a lengthy and a somewhat contentious process.

On one hand, there are a number of members of the Consulting Parties who did not want any changes to the historic Pershing Park landscape and wanted to see the original elements of the design, especially the pool and fountain, retained in the World War I Memorial design. The design team for the World War I Memorial has presented a range of proposed designs over the last several years. Gradually, these designs have evolved to more respect the original design of Pershing Park, though still proposing significant changes.

The Committee of 100 has advocated retaining as much of the original Pershing Park design as possible while still accommodating the World War I Memorial in a meaningful way. We therefore offer the following observations and recommendations. These comments build on previous C100 comments to the National Park Service (letter of March 15, 2018) and to the National Capital Planning Commission (letter of October 1, 2018) and have been adjusted and updated based on the latest design proposal which was to be reviewed by the National Capital Planning Commission at its January 10, 2019 meeting. However, NCPC has been closed due to the Partial Federal Government Shutdown. We assume that the World War I Memorial in Pershing Park will be reviewed at the next NCPC Meeting

Pool and Walkway Design

The Committee of 100 has advocated a simplified design in terms of the walkways and the pool and with better connecting the World War I Sculptural Wall to the surrounding park. However, the World War Centennial Memorial Commission, and its design team, has advocated designs in which the area for viewing the World War I Memorial Sculpture Wall is isolated from the surrounding urban park area. First there was the “L Shaped Walkway” and then the “U Shaped Walkway”. The latest design has two alternatives arrangements of pool, scrim and walkways. The first is the “U Shaped Walkway” and the second is the “Island Walkway” in which visitors to the Memorial Wall enter the area for viewing the Memorial Wall by a walkway from the east. The large “Island” is therefore cut off from the south and north sides of the overall park.

Modification to the “U Shaped Walkway” Design

As indicated in our October 1, 2018 letter to NCPC, the Committee of 100 suggests shifting the southern walkway south so that it adjoins the sloping steps to the south. This would mean the pool would not be broken up by a walkway. This change would provide a direct walk from the Pershing Statue area to the World War I Memorial Wall and could also provide for a stair walkway to the upper level on the west side of the park.

The north side of the “U Shaped Walkway” could also be shifted north. These changes would make the pool more meaningful and be closer to the original design of the pool in Pershing Park. We believe these changes would also simplify visitor access to the WWI Memorial Sculptural Wall. The Committee of 100 believes this modified design would be the best solution for the WWI Memorial in Pershing Park.

Modification to the “Island” Design

If the “Island” design is to be considered, the Committee of 100 suggests that some modifications would make it more useful and improve overall accessibility. A new walkway could be provided adjacent to the sloping steps on the south side of the park, with a walkway connection to the main “Island” area. On the north side of the island there could also be a walkway connection to the north side of the park. These changes would make the “Island” more accessible and useable.

Interpretation of the Sculpture Wall

The sculpture wall is a symbolic work of art but there is a question of how visitors can understand what it means, and how well it represents the progression and meaning of World War I. The latest design suggests an information area at the site of present kiosk. We believe that is appropriate. Information could be provided on walls or plaques, by information brochures, and by electronic means. It is very important that visitors to the World War I Memorial be able to gain an understanding and perspective on World War I and not just look at a sculpture wall.

Pershing Statue Area

The Committee of 100 is pleased to see the recent work that has been done, and is being done, to make the engraved text and maps on the walls in the Pershing statue area more readable. This is an important place, in addition to the present kiosk area, to provide visitors with information about World War I, especially American involvement in that war.

The Importance of Pershing Park as an “Urban Park”

In deciding on the final design for the World War I Memorial in Pershing Park, it is important to continue to stress the “urban park” role of this overall park. Probably half of the visitors to the park will be there to enjoy the urban park features of Pershing Park. The Committee of 100 is pleased to see the strong support for the urban park use of Pershing Park in the “Executive Director’s Recommendation” prepared for the Commission Meeting which was scheduled for January 10, 2018.

Next Steps

Once a design is approved and constructed, the World War I Memorial in Pershing Park will be in place for many years will be visited by millions of people, both Americans and foreign visitors. It is important to get the design right so that visitors to the memorial will not only see the physical memorial but will gain some better idea of what the World War I Memorial commemorates.

Respectfully submitted,



Stephen A. Hansen, Chair

cc: Patricia Trap, Acting Superintendent, National Mall and Memorial Parks, National Park Service
Thomas Luebke, Secretary -- U.S. Commission of Fine Arts
Andrew Trueblood, Acting Director -- D.C. Office of Planning
David Maloney--State Historic Preservation Officer for the District of Columbia
Edwin Fountain – World War I Centennial Commission
Claire Sale -- AECOM