



Commission Action

May 2, 2019

PROJECT Peace Corps Commemorative Work Reservation 727, Bounded by Louisiana Avenue, First Street, and C Street, NW Washington, DC	NCPC FILE NUMBER 7623
SUBMITTED BY United States Department of the Interior National Park Service	NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER 00.00(73.10)44918
REVIEW AUTHORITY Approval per 40 U.S.C. § 8905	APPLICANT'S REQUEST Approval of comments on concept design
	ACTION TAKEN Approved comments on concept design

The Commission:

Notes that the National Park Service, in collaboration with the Peace Corps Commemorative Foundation, has submitted a concept design that proposes a tentative memorial program for Reservation 727. As outlined in the NCPC Submission Guidelines, the concept review of commemorative design phase of the project provides the Commission with the general design direction for one or more preferred sites with at least one, and preferably multiple, design alternatives.

Notes that, in concept review of site selection, the Commission supported Reservation 727 and Reservation 31 as viable locations for the Peace Corps Commemorative Work, which it noted could support a memorial program that protects both open space and public uses. The Commission indicated that Reservation 727 would be “an appropriate location for a modest memorial in close proximity to the Monumental Core, the U.S. Capitol building, and Union Station.”

Reminds the applicant that the Commission provided the following comments regarding Reservation 727 during concept review of site selection, which were also submitted as part of the National Environmental Policy Act scoping process:

- Any memorial design should retain all existing healthy, mature trees.
- The memorial design should include seating opportunities, retention of green space, and low impact development stormwater management features.
- Development of the memorial design should be coordinated with the Architect of the Capitol, which has jurisdiction over the sidewalk along Louisiana Avenue in this location.

Finds that the applicant has proposed a memorial design that includes a central plaza, pergola, and seating area, and that, overall, the design would adversely impact views of the U.S. Capitol, access to the site, and existing trees.

Requests that, if site elements cannot be modified to respond to site constraints, the applicant consider developing a concept design for Reservation 31. Reservation 31 may be able to accommodate a more prominent commemorative work because of its larger size and less-sensitive natural and historic context.

Provides the following comments to inform modifications to the project design and the development of the draft environmental analysis:

Visual Resources

- **Finds** that the height of the proposed pergola and spacing of steel supports could impact views to the U.S. Capitol at this location during certain times of the year, specifically from vantage points west and north of the site at the intersection of 1st and C Streets. The removal of existing trees at the center of the site, as proposed in the site design, would likely increase these impacts.
- **Requires** that the applicant modify the design to ensure critical views are maintained across the memorial site to the U.S. Capitol during all seasons, and provide a visual analysis as part of future submissions that clearly shows the visual impacts of the proposed design on important viewsheds.

Visitor Use and Experience

- **Finds** that the proposed pergola structure would impede access to memorial from 1st and C Streets, effectively creating a wall along two sides of the site that closes it off from adjacent office uses to the west and north. While the applicant has indicated that this is an intentional design decision, it would restrict pedestrian circulation from adjacent crosswalks to and through the site and may ultimately reduce opportunities for visitors to appreciate the memorial.
- **Requires** that the applicant explore a more welcoming memorial design that allows pedestrian access from all sides, which would allow for better pedestrian circulation and improve the visitor experience.

Natural Resources

- **Finds** that the concept design proposes the removal of five healthy trees on the site, two of which are relatively large and mature, which is inconsistent with previous Commission comments and would cause undue impacts to the tree canopy. While two new trees are proposed to be planted, this would not mitigate the tree loss or provide adequate shade relief for visitors.
- **Finds** that a large plaza would occupy a majority of the site in the proposed design, which does not provide adequate green space for tree growth or stormwater management, which was an area of concern for the Commission on previous review.

-
- **Requires** that the applicant examine design concepts that preserve all “significant trees” of 10 inches in diameter or greater for consideration by the Commission. Further, the applicant should seek to retain more green space to enhance stormwater management and maintain a parklike setting for visitors.

Julia A. Koster
Secretary to the National Capital Planning Commission

