



Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: May 2, 2019

PROJECT Peace Corps Commemorative Work Reservation 727, Bounded by Louisiana Avenue, NW, First Street, NW 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 Commemorative Works Act per 40 U.S.C. § 8905	APPLICANT'S REQUEST Approval of comments on concept design
	PROPOSED ACTION Approve comments on concept design
	ACTION ITEM TYPE Staff Presentation

PROJECT SUMMARY

The National Park Service (NPS), in collaboration with the Peace Corps Commemoration Foundation (PCCF), has submitted concept designs for the Peace Corps Commemorative Work for Commission review and comment. In 2014, Congress authorized the PCCF to build a commemorative work in the heart of Washington, DC to recognize the historic significance of the establishment of the Peace Corps in 1961 and to honor the timeless, enduring American ideals on which the Peace Corps was founded.

The project was submitted for site selection review in December 2014, which included four potential locations for the proposed commemorative work. The Commission ultimately supported two of these locations, including U.S. Reservations 727 and 31. The applicant has selected Reservation 727 as its preferred location, which sits one block from Constitution Avenue and three blocks from Union Station near the grounds of the U.S. Capitol. The site is a relatively small triangular urban park (~7,200 square feet) that is bounded by Louisiana Avenue, NW, 1st Street, NW, and C Street, NW.

The proposed design for the commemorative work is intended to be symbolically interpretive of the mission of the Peace Corps, including sculptural elements of granite, metal, and glass within a landscape of walkways, evergreen ground covers, and deciduous shade trees. Major site elements that comprise the overall composition include an elliptical world map plaza, carved hands and benches in granite, and a metal pergola with glass blades.

KEY INFORMATION

- Congress authorized the PCCF to build a commemorative work in 2014.

-
- The project was submitted for site selection review in December 2014. The Commission indicated at that time that U.S. Reservations 727 and 31 were both viable locations for a Peace Corps commemorative work.
 - The applicant has selected Reservation 727 as its preferred location, which sits in close proximity to several high-profile sites of national importance, including the National Mall and the U.S. Capitol.
 - Regarding Reservation 727, the Commission previously indicated the design should retain all existing healthy, mature trees, retain green space, provide seating opportunities, and consider low impact development stormwater features.
 - The proposed design includes three primary commemorative elements, including a central plaza, pergola, and seating area.
 - Staff finds the design exceeds the capacity of the site and conflicts with comments provided by the Commission in review of site selection. Identified issues relate to visual resources, visitor use and experience, and natural resources.
 - Primary concerns include the removal of several trees to accommodate the memorial design, a pergola that obstructs views of the U.S. Capitol, and impeded pedestrian access from two sides of the site.
-

RECOMMENDATION

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 develop a design concept that preserves all “significant trees” of 10 inches in diameter or greater, and that any smaller trees that are removed are replaced at a one-to-one basis. Further, the applicant should seek to retain more green space to enhance stormwater management and maintain a parklike setting for visitors.

PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

Previous actions	December 2014 – Concept Review of Site Selection
Remaining actions (anticipated)	– Preliminary and final reviews of design

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

In accordance with the NCPC review process for projects authorized under the Commemorative Works Act, the National Park Service, in collaboration with the Peace Corps Commemorative Foundation (PCCF), has submitted concept designs for the Peace Corps Commemorative Work at their preferred location in Washington, DC. Their preferred site, Reservation 727, was one of several that was submitted to NCPC during site selection review, and one of two that was supported by the Commission. Staff notes that the selected parcel sits in close proximity to several high-profile sites of national importance, including the National Mall and the U.S. Capitol, and while desirable for a commemorative work, also demands a high quality of design that serves to complement these existing sites. Further, the presence of existing mature trees poses an additional design challenge, especially considering the relatively small size of the site. Staff believes that the proposed concept design does not adequately embrace the site’s strengths or adequately respond to these challenges, particularly as they relate to visual resources, visitor use and experience, or natural resources. The report and analysis are organized around those topics.

Analysis

In its review of site selection, NCPC analyzed four sites that were under consideration by the PCCF. The first was the parcel at Reservation 727, which the applicant has submitted as its preferred site. The other sites included Reservation 31, Reservation 30, and a parcel along Pennsylvania Avenue adjacent to Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway. As detailed in December 2014 the staff report for site selection, the sites can be described as follows:

- Reservation 727, a 0.25 acre parcel at Louisiana Avenue and 1st and C Streets, NW
- Reservation 31, a 0.33 acre parcel at Pennsylvania Avenue and 18th and H Streets, NW, named for Edward R. Murrow
- Reservation 30, a 0.33 acre parcel at Pennsylvania Avenue and 19th and H Streets, NW
- A 1 acre parcel of Rock Creek Park at Pennsylvania Avenue and 26th and M Streets, NW

In its review of the submitted sites, the Commission found that Reservation 30 and the Rock Creek Park site were not viable due to the existing park improvements and size of the respective sites. The Commission expressed support for Reservations 727 and 31 at that time, but did not state a preference between the two, noting that both sites had the potential to accommodate the memorial program while protecting available open space and public uses. The Commission further indicated that a more modest memorial would be required at Reservation 727. Further, if selected, the design should retain all existing healthy, mature trees, retain green space, provide seating opportunities, and consider low impact development stormwater features. The Commission also noted the memorial design should be coordinated with the Architect of the Capitol because a portion of the site is under its jurisdiction.

The proposed design submitted for Reservation 727 includes three primary commemorative elements. The first element is a large central plaza (48 feet by 35 feet) that displays a world map without national boundaries that is intended to express the goal of breaking down barriers to transcend political, cultural, and ethnic differences between disparate peoples. The second component is three granite benches, sculpted to depict human arms and hands that symbolize the positive attributes of the American ethos in the Peace Corps idea and volunteer service. The third element is a 14 to 22-foot-tall metal pergola with glass blades of varying colors. This element is intended to frame the parcel and symbolize the diversity of humanity and the unity of disparate peoples engaging and interacting with each other.

Staff supports the important principles the commemorative work is intending to convey, but finds that the composition, as presented, exceeds the capacity of the site in terms of developable area and relationship with adjacent sites of national significance. The site modifications proposed as part of the design conflict with comments provided by the Commission in review of site selection. Further, the scale of the proposed pergola may detract from the prominence of adjacent sites of national significance, including the U.S. Capitol and grounds and the National Mall. In general, staff concerns with the design can be organized around the following topic areas, which align with components of the analysis under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): visual resources, visitor use and experience, and natural resources. These topics will be discussed in the sections below, along with staff recommendations to the Commission.

Visual Resources

As noted, Reservation 727 sits directly adjacent to several nationally significant sites and structures, including the U.S. Capitol building and grounds, the National Mall, and Union Station. While the proximity to these important sites would ensure a commemorative work that is highly accessible, it also demands a context-sensitive design that respects important views and vistas. Though largely obscured by trees during the warmer months, the U.S. Capitol can be seen from the reservation, particularly in months when the trees have no leaves. Staff believes that, given this visibility across the Capitol grounds, the proposed pergola could have a notable impact on visual resources, particularly from points west and north of the memorial site at the corner of 1st and C Streets. While the renderings in the submission do not include the U.S. Capitol, the pergola, at a height of 14 to 22 feet, would obscure views of the building and dome from the site and points

further north and west during certain times of the year. The viewing experience would change dramatically as the building and dome are viewed through the steel supports of the pergola, and the removal of trees on the site, which is proposed in the site plans, may serve to expand the impacted viewshed.

Given the potential impacts to important visual resources, staff recommends that the Commission **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.** To help minimize the impact, staff recommends that the Commission **requires that the applicant modify the design to ensure 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

The applicant has indicated the program for the commemorative sites requires a clearly defined “back” of the site along 1st and C Streets to create a memorable sense of place, with the frontage along Louisiana Avenue acting as the “front” of the site. The proposed pergola is intended, in part, to help achieve this site orientation, which would be comprised of metal elements with a variable spacing from the “front” of the site to the curve of the structure at the intersection of 1st and C Streets. While staff believes that the pergola achieves the goal of defining the space, the height and spacing of the metal slats connote a sense of separation from the outside—particularly from points along the west and north side of the site where the tightest spacing is located. While many visitors may arrive from prominent civic spaces at the front, there are likely more day-to-day users that would arrive from the office buildings behind, who would be physically prevented from directly circulating to and through the site.

In light of these concerns, staff recommends that the Commission **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.** To ensure that these concerns are adequately addressed, staff further recommends that the Commission **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

Reservation 727, while small, contains eight trees, five of which are “significant trees,” which are defined in the *Comprehensive Plan* as trees with a diameter of more than 10 inches. Two of them sit toward the center of the site, while the other three sit along the site perimeter. The submitted

concept design proposes the removal of three larger, mature trees of 15-, 22- and 37-inch caliper, along with two smaller trees of two-inch caliper, for a total of five trees. The 22-inch tree is unhealthy, but the other four are healthy trees. Only two trees would be replanted in the proposed design. One of the smaller trees that would be removed currently obstructs the pathway along the western edge of the parcel. Staff believes that its removal may be unavoidable and could be effectively mitigated through replacement on site. The other small tree could also be mitigated through replacement. The removal of the larger healthy trees, however, are of greater concern.

As noted above, in its previous review, the Commission had specifically requested that the applicant retain all healthy, mature trees. In its own criteria for site selection, the PCCF aimed for a site that is not “complicated and costly to develop for a commemorative work...because of numerous mature trees...necessitating expensive, potentially controversial removal or preservation.” Staff feels that the mature trees on the site are an important part of the tree canopy in this area, and that a more sensitive, compact memorial design could avoid impacts to the trees or their critical root zones, as requested during site selection. Because of these concerns, staff recommends that the Commission **finds that the concept design proposes the removal of four 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.**

Further, staff believes that the level of development proposed on the site reduces the amount of green space, which could be retained to provide areas for stormwater management as requested by the Commission in previous comments. Additional green space would also help retain the parklike character of the existing sites. Accordingly, staff recommends that the Commission **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.** To address these concerns, staff recommends that the Commission **requires that the applicant develop a design concept that preserves all “significant trees” of 10 inches in diameter or greater, and that any smaller trees that are removed are replaced at a one-to-one basis. Further, the applicant should seek to retain more green space to enhance stormwater management and maintain a parklike setting for visitors.**

In conclusion, staff finds that the proposed concept design largely exceeds the capacity of applicant's preferred site, in terms of developable area and relationship with adjacent sites of national significance. The proposed plaza and pathways would occupy about half of the developable area of the site, and the height of the pergola would impede important views across the memorial to the U.S. Capitol building. To ensure that these concerns are addressed, staff recommends that the Commission **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.** Further, the Commission **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.

CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

While the project conforms to a majority of applicable policies in the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*, the primary issues identified and described in the analysis above conflict with tree replacement policies in the Federal Environment Element, open space policies in the Parks and Open Space Element, and policies regarding viewshed management in the Urban Design Element. Further, components of the proposed design are inconsistent with policies in the Visitors and Commemoration Element, particularly as it relates to site access and adjacent land uses.

Monuments and Museums Master Plan

The 2001 *Memorials and Museums Master Plan* identifies 100 potential sites for future memorials throughout the city. These sites are based on an urban design framework of symbolic and natural elements rooted in the original plans for the city. The *Memorials and Museums Master Plan* includes analysis related to site conditions and neighborhood context for each identified location. Reservations 727 and 31 are both identified as memorial sites in the plan, and the proposed memorial program is largely not compliant with the analysis for the selected site because the plan specifically outlines the need for a small scale commemorative feature that reflects the important context and scale of adjacent outdoor spaces associated with the U.S. Capitol grounds. The scale of the proposed monument may exceed this site.

National Historic Preservation Act

Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the applicant initiated consultation with the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on the potential memorial concurrent with the site selection process in 2014. The SHPO provided comments on the proposed sites at that time, finding no compelling reason to eliminate any from further consideration based upon the potential for adverse effects on historic properties. Related to the site proposed in this submission (Reservation 727), the SHPO noted that it is the most visible due to its proximity to historic resources and views, and that sensitive design and consideration of potential indirect effects would be critically important. Consultation is ongoing and will be completed by final review. NCPC is a consulting party in the process.

National Environmental Policy Act

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Park Service, in cooperation with NCPC, is undertaking an environmental assessment to analyze potential environmental impacts from the memorial project. This concept review is following the revised compliance process for projects authorized under the Commemorative Works Act, and as such,

began its NEPA process concurrently with site selection in 2014. The site selection scoping period ran from October 8 to November 18, 2014, and scoping for concept design was conducted in January and February 2015. Consistent with NPS and NCPC regulations, the EA will be released for public review at the conclusion of the review and approval process.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

The Committee forwarded the proposed comments on concept design to the Commission with the statement that the proposal has been coordinated with all participating agencies. The District Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) noted that it was not coordinating and recommended that the applicant reach out to DOEE to determine its local regulatory obligations, as the area of land disturbance may trigger stormwater requirements. The District Department of Transportation suggested reducing the turning radius around the site to reduce the crosswalk distances. The District of Columbia Office of Planning noted that the area is not pedestrian friendly, with wide curb-to-curb widths and high traffic speeds, and suggested that bulb-outs or other pedestrian enhancements be considered. Also, if any part of the proposal, including the pergola, is in the public space, a public space permit and review by the Public Space Committee is necessary. The SHPO is coordinating on this project subject to completion of the Section 106 review process.

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts

The U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) reviewed the site selection for the project at its November 2014 meeting, and approved the concept design at its March 2019 meeting, with comments to be considered as the design is further developed. Applicable letters are attached.

ONLINE REFERENCE

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

- Project Synopsis
- Submission Materials

Prepared by John Gerbich
04/09/2019

ATTACHED

- PowerPoint
- CFA review letters
- Public comment

Peace Corps Commemorative Work

Reservation 727, Bounded by Louisiana Avenue, NW, First Street, NW and C Street, NW
Washington, DC

Approval of Comments on Concept Design

United States Department of the Interior

Project Summary

Commission Meeting Date: May 2, 2019

NCPC Review Authority: 40 U.S.C. § 8905

Applicant Request: Approval of Comments on Concept Design

Session: Open Session

NCPC Review Officer: John Gerbich

NCPC File Number: 7623

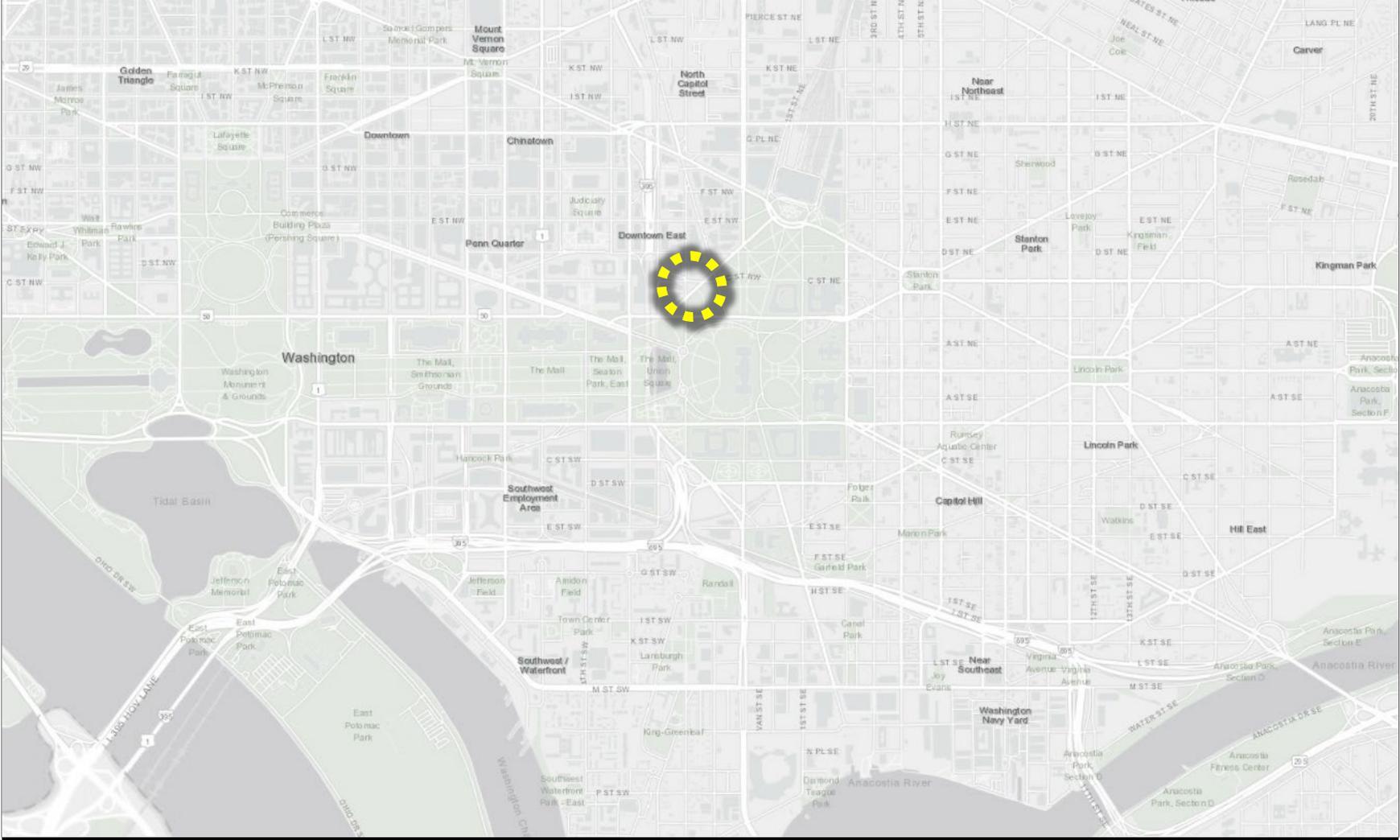
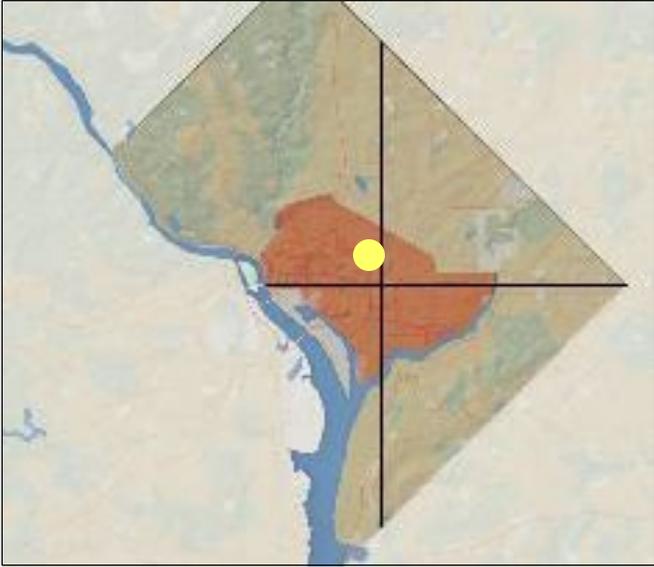
Project Summary:

The National Park Service (NPS), in collaboration with the Peace Corps Commemoration Foundation (PCCF), has submitted concept designs for the Peace Corps Commemorative Work for Commission review and comment. In 2014, Congress authorized the PCCF to build a commemorative work in the heart of Washington, DC to recognize the historic significance of the establishment of the Peace Corps in 1961 and to honor the timeless, enduring American ideals on which the Peace Corps was founded.

The project was submitted for site selection review in December 2014, which included four potential locations for the proposed commemorative work. The Commission ultimately supported two of these locations, including U.S. Reservations 727 and 31. The applicant has selected Reservation 727 as its preferred location, which sits one block from Constitution Avenue and three blocks from Union Station near the grounds of the U.S. Capitol. The site is a relatively small triangular urban park (~7,200 square feet) that is bounded by Louisiana Avenue, NW, First Street, NW, and C Street, NW.

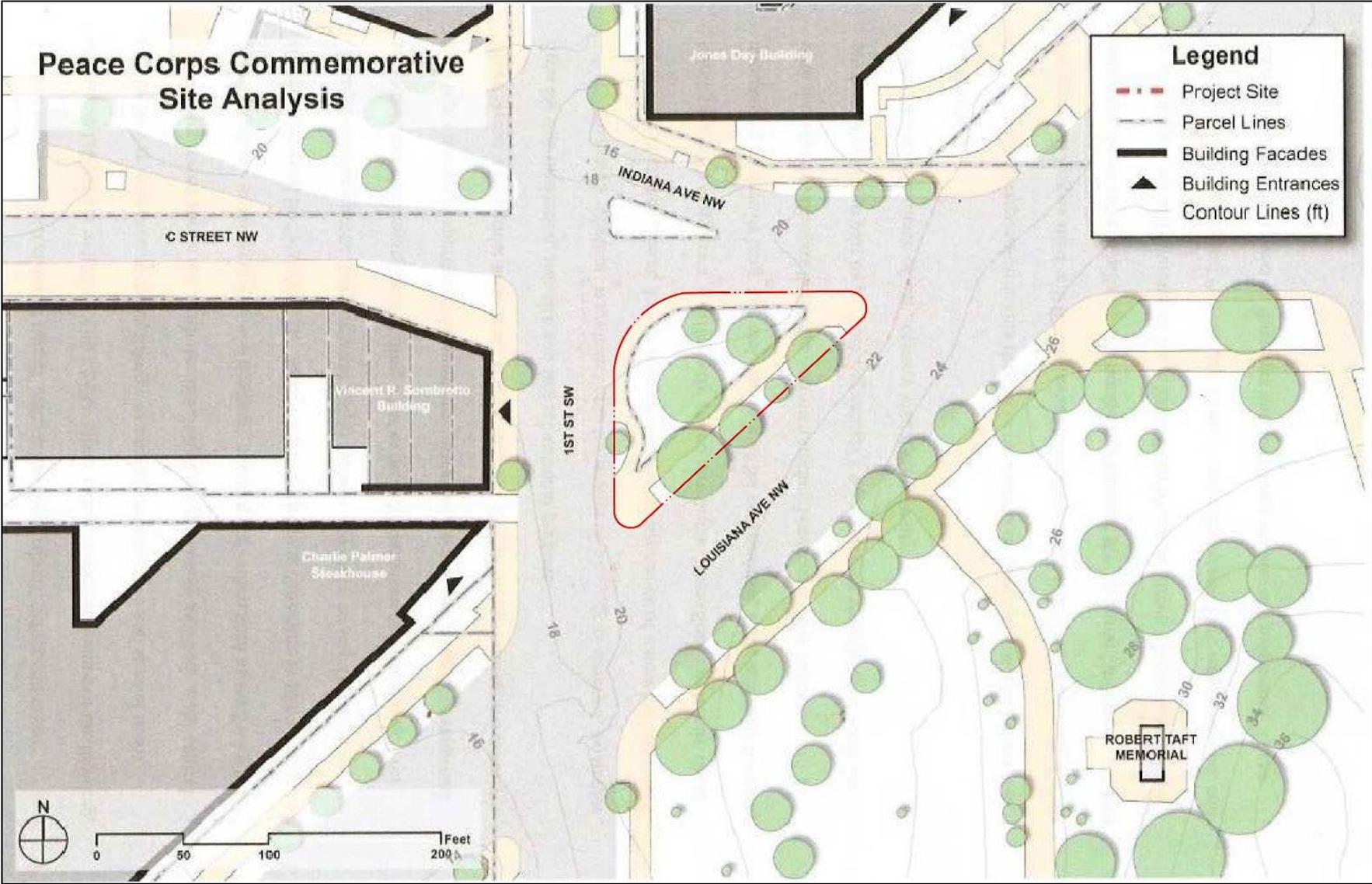
The proposed design for the commemorative work is intended to be symbolically interpretive of the mission of the Peace Corps, including sculptural elements of granite, metal, and glass within a landscape of walkways, evergreen ground covers, and deciduous shade trees. Major site elements that comprise the overall composition include an elliptical world map plaza, carved hands and benches in granite, and a metal pergola with glass blades.

Site Location



Location Map

Site Detail



Existing Conditions

Looking north toward the Commemorative site, bounded by 1st and C Streets, and Louisiana Avenue NW; Robert A. Taft Memorial Park and Carillon to the east; Union Station to the northeast terminating Louisiana Avenue.



View looking southwest along Louisiana Avenue sidewalk and across site to 1st Street NW



View looking northwest along Louisiana Avenue sidewalk and across site to C Street NW

Existing Conditions

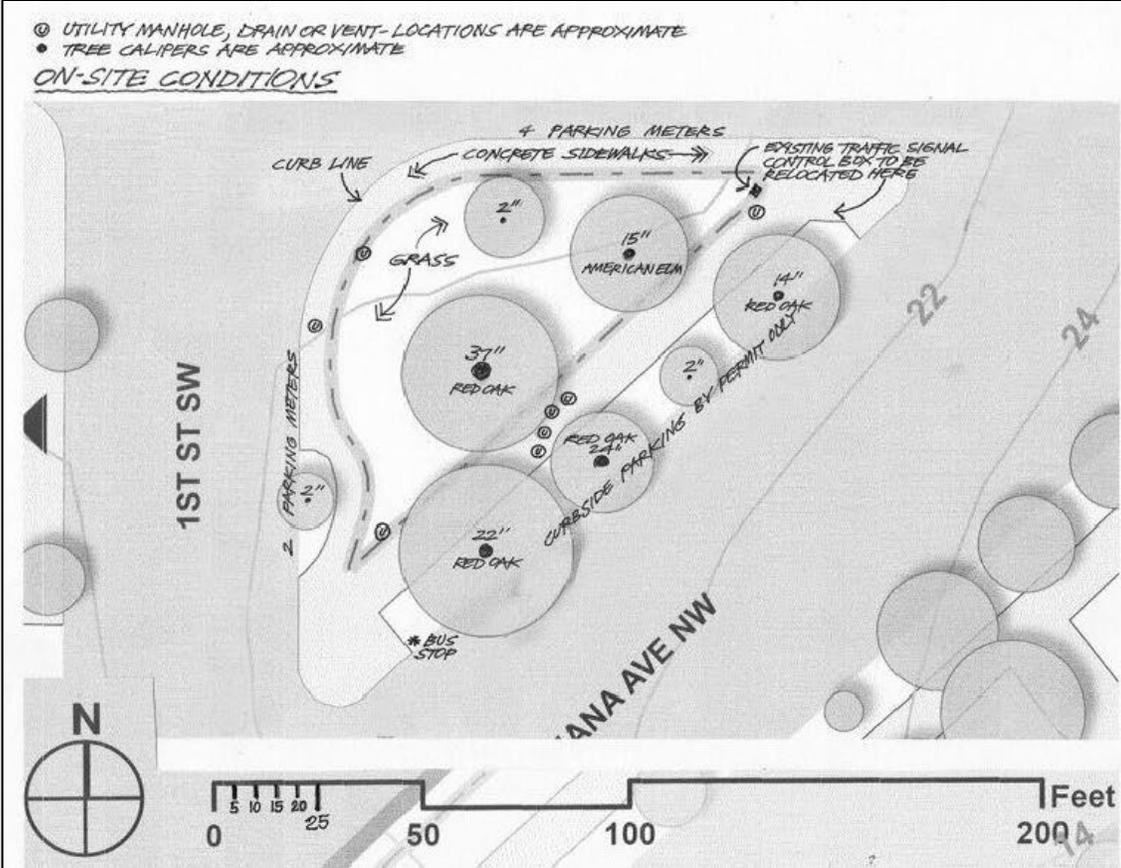


View of site looking southeast from Indiana Avenue, the U.S. Capitol dome visible in the background.

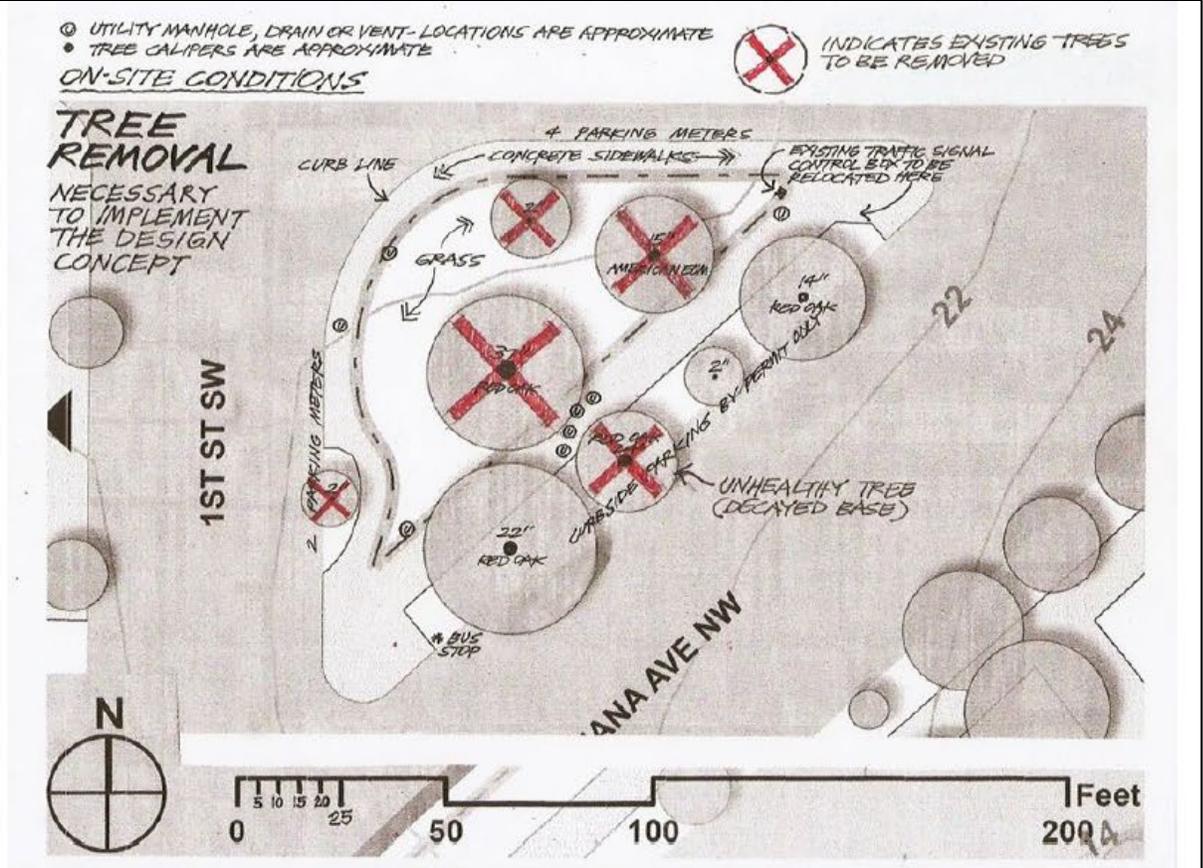


View looking southeast across site and Louisiana Avenue, NW, toward Taft Park, Carillon & U.S. Capitol Building

Tree Plan



ON-SITE CONDITIONS



ON-SITE CONDITIONS – TREE REMOVAL

Design Concept

DESIGN CONCEPT

Since 2015, the Peace Corps Commemorative Foundation (PCCF) and its invited review committees have received hundreds of Commemorative design concept submissions from artists, architects and landscape architects, first through an open competition and then through invited solicitations. But until last year, no design concept adequately captured and successfully expressed visually the historic meanings and messages of this commemorative work on this challenging site.

In 2018, the PCCF selected artist Larry Kirkland and Michael Vergason Landscape Architects to design an original design concept that achieves the artistic and interpretive goals of this project.

For this special site, the design concept blends abstraction and figuration in a composition unlike other monuments and memorials in America's capital city. Through visual form and interpretive text, the aesthetically compelling ensemble will symbolically convey the Commemorative's inspirational messages.



Concept Sketches

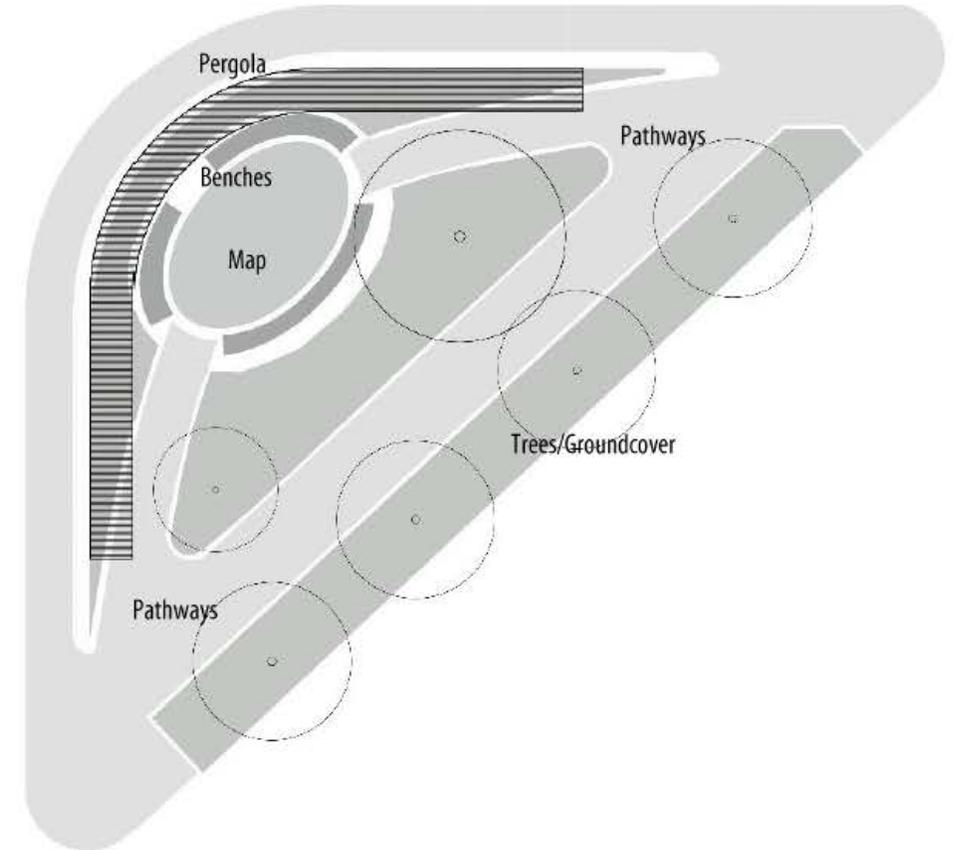
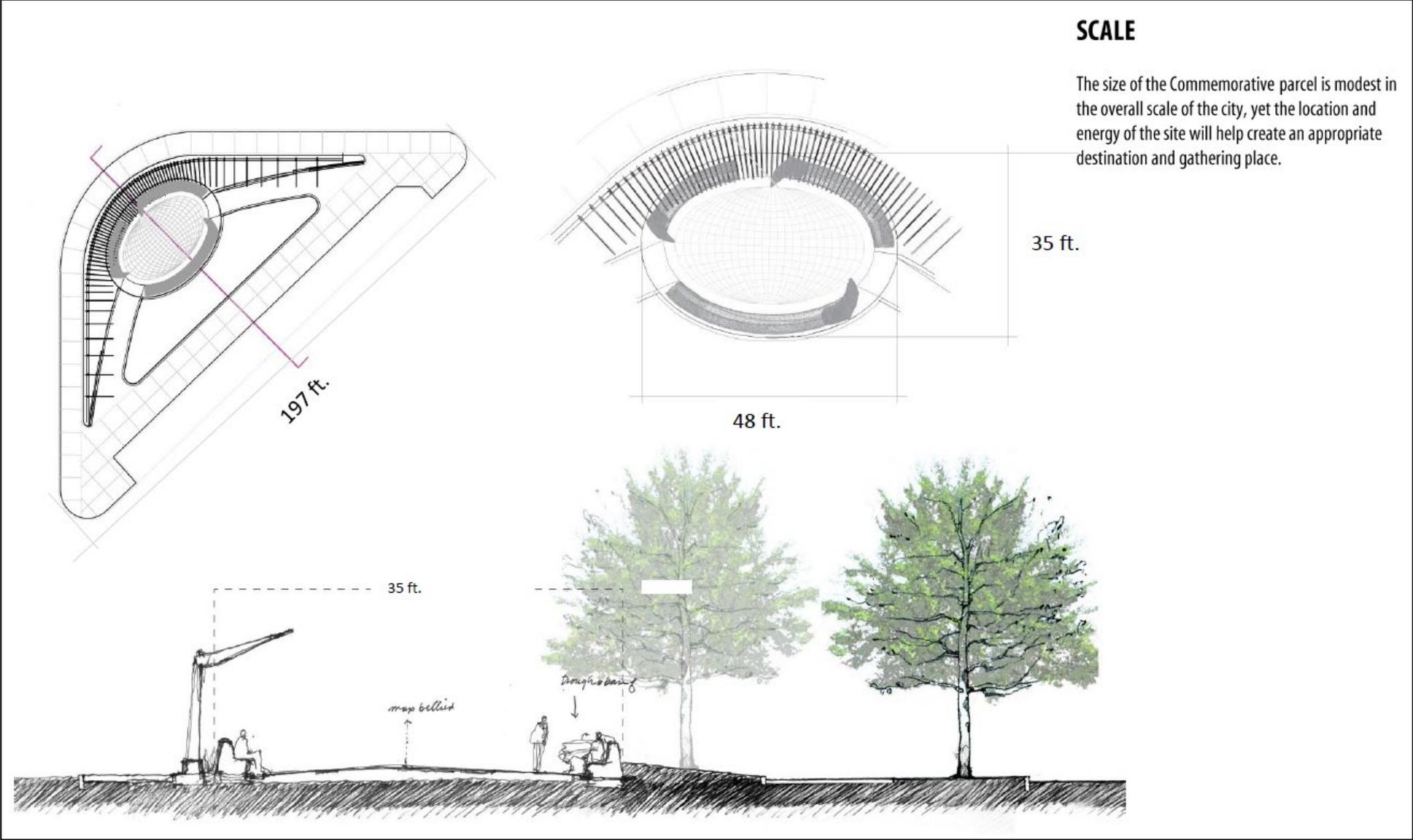


Diagram of Commemorative Elements

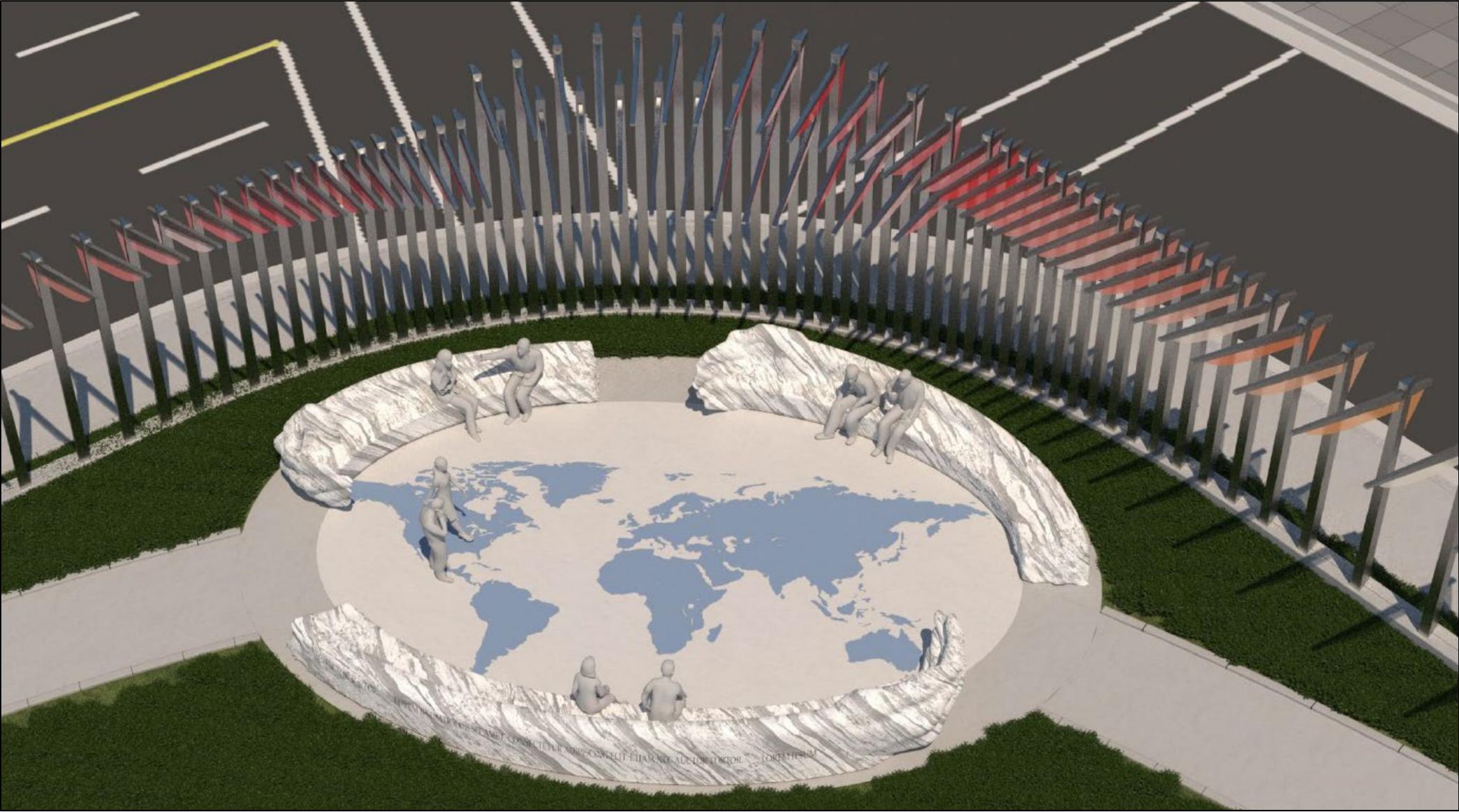
Scale



Rendering – Aerial



Rendering – Aerial



Rendering – NW from Louisiana Avenue



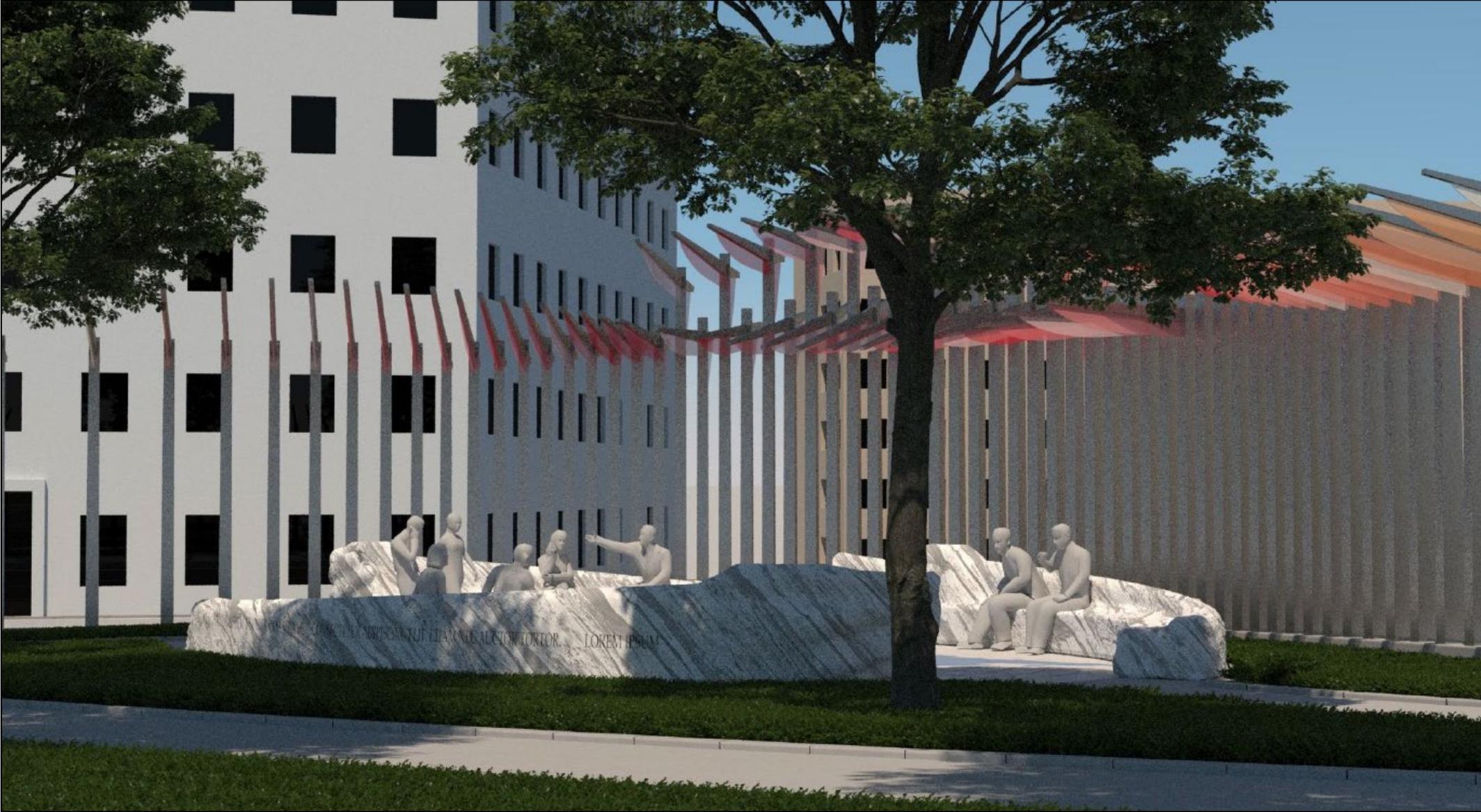
Rendering – SE from C Street and First Street



Rendering – W from C Street and Louisiana Avenue



Rendering – W from Louisiana Avenue



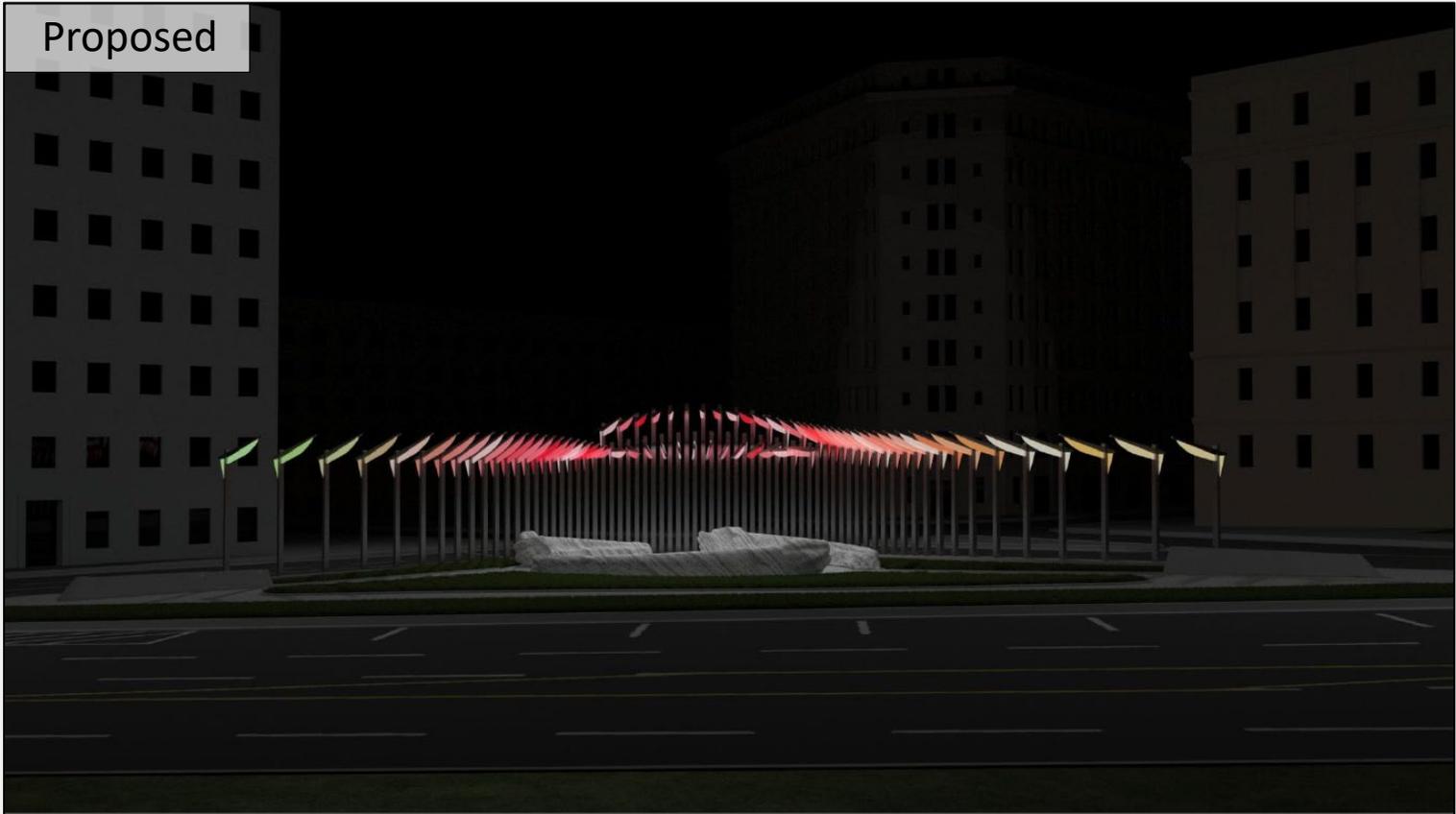
Rendering – SW from C Street



Rendering – NE from Louisiana Avenue



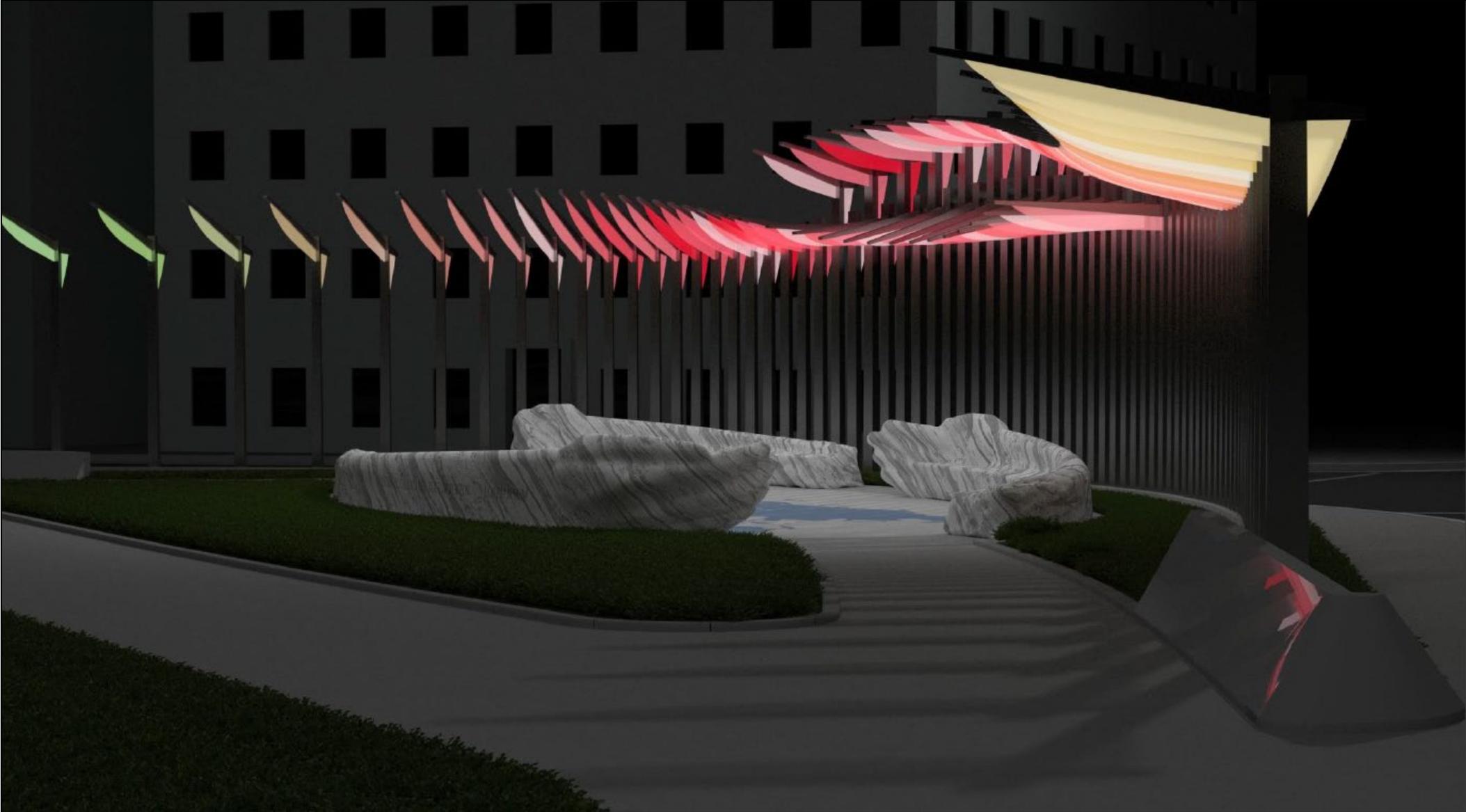
Site Lighting Overview



Rendering – Lighting



Rendering – Lighting



CFA 21/MAR/19-2

LOCATION:

Louisiana Avenue at 1st and C Streets, NW (Reservation 727)
Washington, DC

OWNER:

National Park Service

PROPERTY:

Peace Corps Memorial

DESCRIPTION:

New memorial

REVIEW TYPE:

Concept

PREVIOUS REVIEW:

[CFA 20/NOV/14-4](#)

Letter

28 March 2019

Dear Ms. Mendelson-Ielmini:

In its meeting of 21 March, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed a concept design for the proposed Peace Corps Memorial, to be located in the triangular park reservation bounded by Louisiana Avenue and First and C Streets, NW. Expressing support for the general idea of the memorial, the Commission approved the concept and provided the following comments to be addressed in the development of the design.

The Commission members commented on the promise of the design—featuring sculptural benches terminating in overscaled human hands that create a gesture of embrace surrounding a plaza paved with a map of the world, as well as an array of posts supporting colored glass blades forming a backdrop to the site—as potentially very beautiful. In particular, they expressed great enthusiasm for the ethereal quality of the watercolor renderings in establishing a compelling character for the memorial. However, they raised concern that the presented documentation does not yet convey how this character will be achieved, and they advised that many details of the overall design require considerable development in order to realize this potential as an appropriate commemoration of international service and understanding.

In their discussion, the Commission members commented that the memorial's symbolism should be understood as consistent with the values and spirit of the Peace Corps, and they cautioned that the physical forms proposed may be subject to misreading. For example, they observed that the line of posts may seem like a tall fence intended to constrain human movement; that the glass blades may appear like weapons; that the red and yellow palette of the glass blades could be associated with particular political regimes; and that the enormous hands could appear intimidating as much as welcoming for some visitors. In order to address these potential problems of unintended meanings, the Commission members made the following specific comments regarding the elements proposed for the memorial:

Site design: They commented that the small site is very tight, especially behind the canopy posts, and they recommended increasing the dimension of the planted border between it and the adjacent streets so that the entire composition is spatially comfortable within the triangle. They also requested further exploration of the memorial as more open from all sides rather than as a composition meant to be viewed and approached only from Louisiana Avenue.

Plaza benches/hands: They expressed appreciation for the organic form of the benches in general, but raised concern about the surreal quality of the hands, suggesting perhaps a more abstract approach to the sculpted ends of the benches. They also suggested reducing the number of benches from three to two, and encouraging pedestrian movement past the benches into the north and west edges of the site.

Canopy structure: Observing that the overall effect of the posts together is to create a barrier, they recommended refining the shape and spacing of the canopy posts to make the array more visually open and less fence-like, possibly allowing pedestrians to pass through it. For the glass blades supported by the posts, they recommended making these larger and more flag-like, with a billowing gestural effect and more range of color. They also recommended greater consideration of the array from the north and west, suggesting that the canopy's glass and lighting be extended outward in order to allow the memorial to present itself in all directions.

The Commission looks forward to further review of the refinement of the concept design for this important addition to the commemorative landscape of the nation's capital. As always, the staff is available to assist you in the development of the next submission.

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: Larry Kirkland
Michael Vergason, Michael Vergason Landscape Architects
Alan Harwood, AECOM
Roger Lewis, Peace Corps Commemorative Foundation

CFA 20/NOV/14-4

LOCATION:

Washington, DC

OWNER:

National Park Service

PROPERTY:

Peace Corps Memorial

DESCRIPTION:

Site selection. Four sites

REVIEW TYPE:

Concept

Letter

1 December 2014

Dear Ms. Mendelson-Ielmini:

In its meeting of 20 November, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed the site selection study for a memorial commemorating the establishment of the Peace Corps in 1961. The Commission provided the following comments for consideration as the site selection process is completed.

The Commission members complimented the project team for its preference for the smallest of the candidate locations. Among the sites analyzed, they expressed support for the small triangular park at Louisiana Avenue and First and C Streets, NW, commenting that this site would fit within a thematically related series of memorials extending north from the recently dedicated American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial, past the Grant and Peace Memorials toward this location.

The Commission members appreciated the opportunity to provide comments and look forward to review of a formal site proposal. As always, the staff is available to assist you with the next submission.

/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: Roger Lewis, Peace Corps Commemorative Foundation
Mary Kay Lanzillotta, Hartman Cox Architects

The Committee of 100

on the Federal City



Founded 1923

April 25, 2019

Chair

Stephen A. Hansen

Vice-Chair

Kirby Vining

Secretary

Erik Hein

Treasurer

Carol F. Aten

Trustees

Charlie Bien

Judy Chesser

George R. Clark

Monte Edwards

Alma Gates

Larry Hargrove

Kathy Henderson

Naima Jefferson

Nancy MacWood

Meg Maguire

Elizabeth Purcell

Marilyn Simon

Jim Smailes

Pat Tiller

Evelyn Wrin

945 G Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20001

202.681.0225

www.committeeof100.net

info@committeeof100.net

Jeffrey P. Reinbold, Acting Superintendent
National Mall and Memorial Parks
National Park Service
1100 Ohio Drive, SW
Washington, D.C. 20242

SUBJECT: Comments on the Design of the Peace Corps Commemorative

Dear Acting Superintendent Reinbold:

The Committee of 100 on the Federal City (Committee of 100), founded in 1923, is the District of Columbia's oldest citizen planning organization. We are pleased to present these comments on the Peace Corps Commemorative. These comments are based on the text and plans recently mounted on the NPS PEPC website and on the presentation and discussion at the Section 106 Consulting Parties Meeting on Monday, April 15, 2019, held at the office of the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts.

We know that the design of the Peace Corps Commemorative was reviewed by the Commission of Fine Arts on March 21, 2019 and will be reviewed by the National Capital Planning Commission at its May 2 meeting. We understand that the design will likely be reviewed again by the Commission of Fine Arts in June or July. Since the design is evolving, our comments are preliminary.

The Peace Corps Commemorative is located on a small triangular site bounded by Louisiana Avenue, C Street, and First Street, NW. This site is one block north of Constitution Avenue and is just west, across Louisiana Avenue, from the U.S. Capitol Grounds. The basic design consists of a circular plaza, surrounded by low stone benches, with a map of the world in the center of the plaza. A metal pergola is proposed to border the plaza and park area on the west and north.

We understand that the design of the pergola is now evolving based on review comments at the March 21 Commission of Fine Arts meeting, so we are not commenting on that element of the design. It was also indicated that the world map projection may change. Whatever the projection, this interesting "map on stone" will be an addition to the collection of such art works in Washington.

Our major concern at this point is how visitors will understand the purpose and meaning of the Peace Corps Commemorative. The design drawings indicate some text carving on the low stone walls but we question if that will be sufficient to inform visitors about the formation and history of the Peace Corps and its continuing role. Assuming the Peace Corps Commemorative is completed by 2021, or at least is moving forward, that will mark the 60th anniversary of the foundation of the Peace Corps. Some additional easily read information would be useful. We also feel that a clearer name than “Peace Corps Commemorative” may make it easier for the visitor to understand the significance of this place.

We are also concerned with the design of the stone benches and especially the stone hands at the ends of the benches. Though we realize this is not the intended meaning, this design can be read as the United States alone holding or guiding the world. That is not a meaning that should be implied.

Finally, this project provides the opportunity to think about the larger setting, especially the eastern sector of Downtown. The eastern portion of Downtown has long been cut off from the main section of Downtown by the Center Leg Freeway and the Department of Labor Building. Now some changes are happening, and we believe it is a good time for District and Federal agencies, the Downtown BID, the private sector, and community organizations to think more about the future development of this area. This effort would, of course, be separate from the review of the Peace Corps Commemorative.

In summary, we appreciate seeing the design of the Peace Corps Commemorative at this time and look forward to seeing this project in the future after it has passed through the concept review stage by the National Capital Planning Commission and the Commission of Fine Arts.

Respectfully submitted,



Stephen A. Hansen, Chair

- cc: Marcel C. Acosta, Executive Director, National Capital Planning Commission
Thomas Luebke, Secretary, U.S. Commission of Fine Arts
Andrew Trueblood, Director, D.C. Office of Planning
David Maloney, State Historic Preservation Office for the District of Columbia
Roger Lewis, FAIA, President and Chairman, Peace Corps Commemorative Foundation
Catherine Dewey, National Park Service, National Mall and Memorial Parks
Claire Sale, AICP, AECOM