



Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: May 2, 2019

PROJECT Thomas Jefferson Memorial - Targeted Accessibility Improvements 701 East Basin Drive, SW Washington, DC	NCPC FILE NUMBER 7937
	NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER 1.51(38.00)44915
SUBMITTED BY United States Department of the Interior National Park Service	APPLICANT'S REQUEST Approval of preliminary and final site development plans
REVIEW AUTHORITY Federal Projects in the District per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)	PROPOSED ACTION Approve preliminary and final site development plans
	ACTION ITEM TYPE Consent

PROJECT SUMMARY

The National Park Service (NPS) is requesting preliminary and final site development plans for targeted accessibility improvements at the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, consisting of two new accessibility ramps on the north side of the memorial, adjacent to the Tidal Basin. The Thomas Jefferson Memorial is located at 701 East Basin Drive, southwest of the National Mall. The purpose of the project is to make the experience and facilities of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial accessible to all visitors by removing or reducing barriers.

Currently, the Thomas Jefferson Memorial has only one accessible route to the statuary chamber level. It requires visitors to use a ramp on the south side of the memorial to a sidewalk leading to the lower level entrances from the lower terrace level. When approaching the memorial from the Tidal Basin on the north, visitors must travel all the way around the memorial to the south side ramp and back towards the Tidal Basin to the lower entrances. This current accessible route is over 1,000 feet long. For preliminary and final site development approval, NPS has submitted for approval the design option the Commission previously supported at concept review. For the final design, NPS is requesting the new accessible ramps on the north side of the memorial be located outside the existing historic planters at the Tidal Basin Plaza and lower terrace levels, on both the east and wide sides.

KEY INFORMATION

- The Commission reviewed the concept design on March 1, 2018, and provided comments to be considered as part of the preliminary and final review.
- The Thomas Jefferson Memorial was commissioned by an Act of Congress in 1934 and designed by John Russell Pope with Frederick Law Olmstead appointed as the memorial's landscape architect.

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- The memorial was dedicated in 1943. It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1966, and is designated a National Historic Landmark.
 - In 1975, to initially address issues of accessibility at the memorial, original planters on the south side of the memorial were modified to create two accessible sloped walkways. NPS added restroom facilities on the lower level and a new elevator, providing visitor accessibility to the portico and statuary chamber levels of the memorial.
 - In 1998, the memorial underwent another rehabilitation to expand the lower level of the memorial to allow for an exhibit space, a bookstore, and a gift shop. NPS relocated and enlarged the existing restroom facilities to be accessible for all visitors. They also added a new family restroom and upgraded the elevator in its same location.
 - The landscaping around the memorial has been altered several times from the original Olmsted design. The first alteration occurred in 1972, with a new planting design deferring from Olmsted's original scheme, but still respecting the original narrow vistas to the east and west. In 1986, original hedge material and white pines were replaced in-kind.
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RECOMMENDATION

The Commission:

Approves the targeted accessibility improvements at the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, consisting of two new ramps on the north side of the memorial, to improve accessibility for all visitors.

Notes the Thomas Jefferson Memorial currently has only one accessible route to the statuary chamber level, which requires visitors arriving from the north to use a ramp on the south side of the memorial and traverse back to access the lower level entrances.

PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

Previous actions	March 1, 2018 – Concept review with comments
Remaining actions (anticipated)	None.

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

Staff has evaluated the preliminary and final site development plans for the two new ramps at the Thomas Jefferson Memorial by determining its consistency with the relevant policies within the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital* and the *National Mall Plan*. Staff has found the

proposed improvements are consistent with the Plans and will improve the visitor experience at the memorial. Further, the selected design is consistent with the approach the Commission previously supported at concept review. Therefore, staff recommends the **Commission approve the targeted accessibility improvements at the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, consisting of two new ramps on the north side of the memorial, to improve accessibility for all visitors.**

Analysis

As indicated previously, NPS seeks targeted accessibility improvements at the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, consisting of two new accessibility ramps, on the north side of the memorial, adjacent to the Tidal Basin, in order to make the experience and facilities of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial accessible to all visitors by removing or reducing barriers. The memorial currently has only one accessible route to the statuary chamber level, which requires visitors to use a ramp on the south side of the memorial and traverse to the north side to access the lower level entrances. When approach the memorial from the north (Tidal Basin) side, visitors must travel all the way around the memorial to the south side ramp and back towards the Tidal Basin to the lower entrances. This current accessible route is over 1,000 feet long.

To address initial issues of accessibility at the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, the current accessible ramps were added in 1975 with original planters on the south side of the memorial modified to create two sloped walkways which brought visitors to the lower terrace level where doors on the east and west sides of the approach stairs provide access to the memorial's lower level. Restroom facilities were added on the lower level and a new elevator provided accessibility to visitors to the portico and statuary chamber levels of the memorial. In 1998, the memorial underwent another rehabilitation to expand the lower level of the memorial to allow for an exhibit space, a bookstore, and a gift shop. NPS relocated and enlarged the existing restroom facilities to be accessible for all visitors. They also added a new family restroom and upgraded the elevator in its same location.

Based on the comments received from the Commission at the concept review, NPS has submitted one design option for the new ramps on the north side of the memorial. As with the concept design, the submitted option brings visitors to existing entrance doors located on the lower terrace level from the Tidal Basin Plaza level. The entrance doors provide access to the memorial's lower level where the elevator is located. The new sloped walkways will be constructed completely outside the existing historic planter, with the curb wall constructed of sandblasted Georgia Gray Granite. Flush Granite band details will be used where existing capstones are removed but salvaged. The walkway would have a width of eight feet and a maximum slope of four to four and a half percent. Exposed aggregate concrete paving to match the existing color and finish on the terraces will be used for the walkway. The landscape hedge would remain intact, and the capstone would be removed at the existing terrace wall. Bead blasted stainless steels handrails will be located on both sides of the walkway, mounted to ground on both sides of the sloped walkway to prevent damage to historic material. The plant material will be replaced in-kind and will include Japanese Yews adjacent to the sloped walkways. There will be a slight grade alteration to negate the need for guardrails. The existing floodlights will remain but re-aimed to maintain the existing lighting strategy at the Memorial.

Staff notes that at the agency and Section 106 consultation meetings, NPS stated that it is exploring other potential accessibility improvements program at the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, including relocating designated handicapped parking spots. Those components would be included in future reviews by the Commission.

Based upon staff's analysis, the applicant's proposal of adding two new ramps on the north side of the memorial addresses the desire for accessibility improvements at the Thomas Jefferson Memorial. Therefore, staff recommends the **Commission approve the targeted accessibility improvements at the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, consisting of two new ramps on the north side of the memorial, to improve accessibility for all visitors.**

CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

Staff finds that the proposed preliminary and final design is consistent with policies in the Federal Elements of the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital* (2016) and in particular, those policies contained in the Historic Preservation and the Visitors and Commemoration Element. These policies encourage the federal government to preserve and protect historic properties while also accommodating visitors and balancing the needs of security and accessibility.

Among the policies in the Historic Preservation and Visitors and Commemoration Elements that the proposed concept is consistent include the following:

- Sustain exemplary standards of historic property stewardship.
- Ensure the continued preservation of federal historic properties through ongoing maintenance.
- Ensure that sites and settings for federally owned historic assets in the region are preserved and maintained as integral parts of the National Capital Region's historic character.
- Develop and maintain a safe, comfortable and pleasant environment that offers a range and distribution of amenities, services, and access throughout the area (e.g. lighting, accessible restrooms, concessions, and information).
- Ensure that any supporting facilities such as restrooms or concession stands do not detract from the aesthetics or accessibility of the commemorative element and its grounds.

National Mall Plan

The National Mall Plan seeks to rehabilitate and refurbish the National Mall so that very high levels of use can be accommodated and the needs of all visitors and users can be met in an attractive, high-quality, energy-efficient, and sustainable manner. The National Mall Plan establishes a framework to protect memorials and landscapes while maintaining large areas of unprogrammed open space. The plan seeks to balance contemporary uses while respecting the

planned historic landscapes of the L'Enfant and McMillan plans. The proposed preliminary and final design appears to be in keeping with the National Mall Plan.

National Historic Preservation Act

Both NPS and NCPC have an independent responsibility for compliance to satisfy the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), as NCPC has approval authority for this project under the Planning Act. NPS was the lead federal agency for Section 106 consultation and determined that the project has no adverse effects on historic properties. The DC SHPO concurred with this finding in a letter dated June 14, 2018. NCPC has an independent Section 106 responsibility, and has designated NPS lead federal agency for this project.

National Environmental Policy Act

Both NPS and NCPC have responsibilities for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as NCPC has approval authority for this project under the Planning Act. NPS has used a categorical exclusion for their NEPA compliance, CE Citation C.18 for minor structures, including small improved parking lots, in previously disturbed or developed area. NCPC staff has determined the project is eligible for NCPC's categorical exclusion (#2) which applies to the approval of the installation or restoration of minor site elements, such as, but not limited to, identification signs, sidewalks, patios, fences, curbs, retaining walls, landscaping and trail or stream improvements.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

At their meeting on April 10, 2019, without objection, the Committee forwarded the proposed comments on the preliminary and final design to the Commission with the statement that the proposal has been coordinated with all participating agencies. The Coordinating Committee agencies included NCPC, the U.S. General Services Administration; the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority; the NPS; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the District Department of Transportation; the DC SHPO; and the District Department of Energy and Environment.

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts

At their meeting on April 18, 2019, the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts approved the final design for the two new accessibility ramps on the north side of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial on their consent calendar.

ONLINE REFERENCE

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

- Submission Package

Prepared by Lee Webb
04/03/2019

POWERPOINT (ATTACHED)

Thomas Jefferson Memorial - Targeted Accessibility Improvements

16 East Basin Drive, SW
Washington, DC

Approval of Preliminary and Final Site Development Plans

United States Department of the Interior

Project Summary

Commission Meeting Date: May 2, 2019

NCPC Review Authority: 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)

Applicant Request: Approval of Preliminary and Final Site Development Plans

Session: Consent Calendar

NCPC Review Officer: Lee Webb

NCPC File Number: 7937

Project Summary:

The National Park Service has submitted for preliminary and final design review two new accessibility ramps at the Thomas Jefferson Memorial. The ramps are one component of NPS's Targeted Accessibility Improvement Program (TAIP) at the Thomas Jefferson Memorial. The purpose of the project is to make the experience and facilities of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial accessible to all visitors by removing or reducing barriers. Currently, the Jefferson Memorial has only one accessible route to the statuary chamber level, which requires visitors to use a ramp on the south side of the Memorial to a sidewalk leading to the lower level entrances. If coming from the Tidal basin, visitors must travel all the way around the Memorial, to the south side ramp and back towards the Tidal Basin to the lower level entrances (this current accessible route is over 1,000 feet long).

The Commission reviewed and approved the concept design for two new ramps on March 1, 2018.

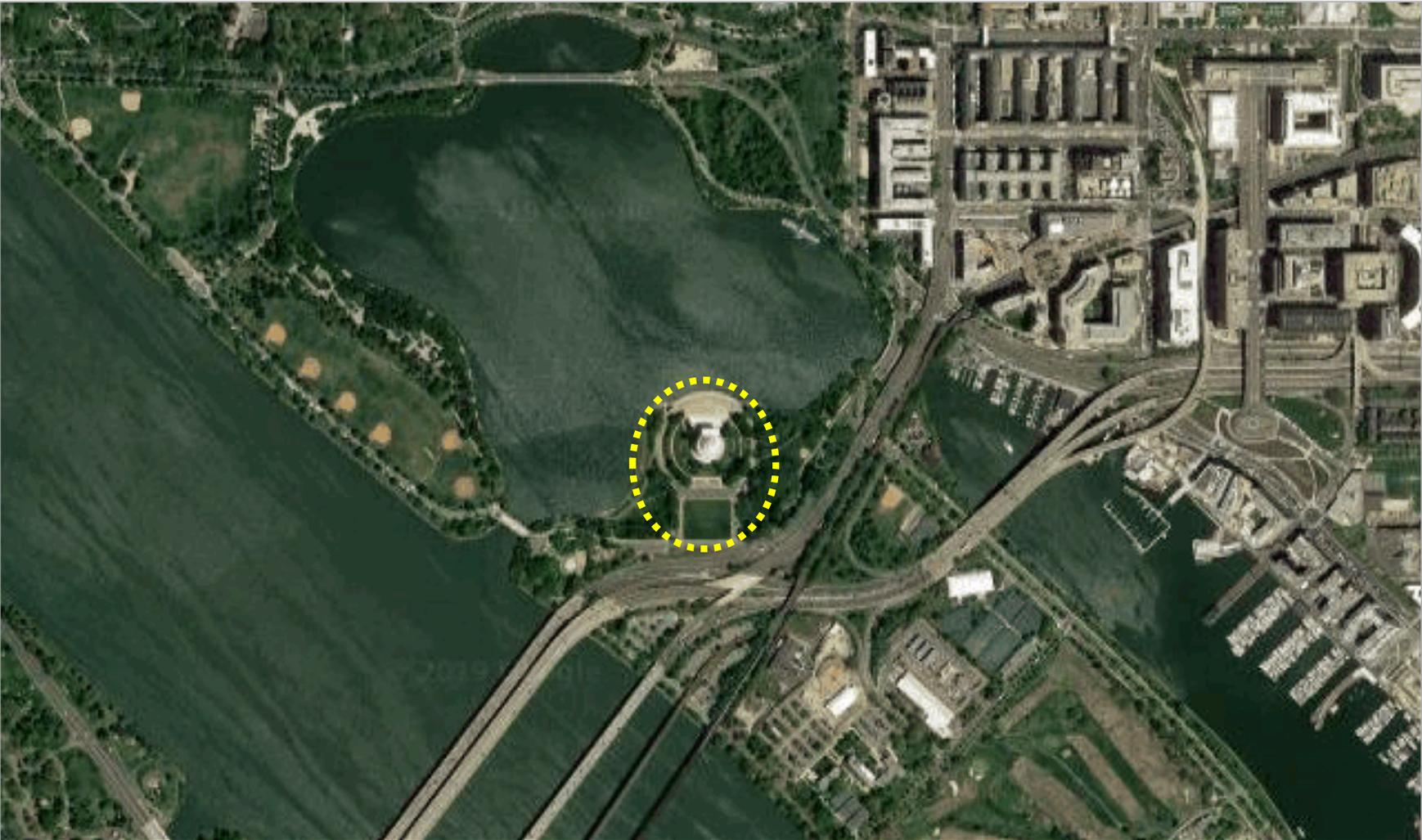
Project Summary

At the concept review, NPS developed three options that had been shared and vetted during the NEPA and Section 106. The Commission supported the 3rd Option, which was NPS's preferred, Option 3: sloped walkway outside existing historic planter. The consulting parties also supported this option as it does not adversely impact any historic features of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial.

Based on the comments received from the Commission at the concept review, NPS has submitted one design option for their preliminary and final site development application for the new ramps on the north side of the memorial. As with the concept design, the submitted option brings visitors to existing entrance doors located on the lower terrace level from the Tidal Basin Plaza level. The entrance doors provide access to the memorial's lower level where the elevator is located. The new sloped walkways will be constructed completely outside the existing historic planter, with the curb wall constructed of sandblasted Georgia Gray Granite. Flush Granite band details will be used where existing capstones are removed but salvaged. The walkway would have a width of eight feet and a maximum slope of four to four and a half percent. Exposed aggregate concrete paving to match the existing color and finish on the terraces will be used for the walkway. The landscape hedge would remain intact, and the capstone would be removed at the existing terrace wall. Bead blasted stainless steels handrails will be located on both sides of the walkway, mounted to ground on both sides of the sloped walkway to prevent damage to historic material. The plant material will be replaced in-kind and will include Japanese Yews adjacent to the sloped walkways. There will be a slight grade alteration to negate the need for guardrails. The existing floodlights will remain but re-aimed to maintain the existing lighting strategy at the Memorial.

At the agency and Section 106 consultation meetings, NPS shared other components of the targeted accessibility improvements program at the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, including relocating designated handicapped parking spots, but those projects are not part of this preliminary and final review, but could be included in future reviews by the Commission.

Site Location



Location Map

Project Purpose and Need

Thomas Jefferson Memorial Targeted Accessibility Improvement Program (TAIP)

National Park Service
US Department of the Interior



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 - Option 3: Sloped Walkway outside Existing Planter

Purpose and Need

- Purpose:
 - The purpose of this project is to make the experiences and facilities of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial accessible to all visitors by removing or reducing barriers.
 - Improve experience of all visitors to the Jefferson Memorial.
- Need:
 - The project is needed because the Jefferson Memorial currently has only one accessible route to the statuary chamber level, which requires visitors to use a ramp on the south side of the Memorial to a sidewalk leading to the lower level entrances.
 - If coming from the Tidal Basin, visitors must travel all the way around the Memorial, to the south side ramp and back towards the Tidal Basin to the lower level entrances (accessible route is over 1,000 feet long).

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Thomas Jefferson Memorial Site History

Thomas Jefferson Memorial Targeted Accessibility Improvement Program (TAIP)

National Park Service
US Department of the Interior



Site History

- Commissioned by an Act of Congress in 1934.
- In 1937, John Russell Pope chosen as the architect for the Memorial.
- In 1938, Frederick Law Olmstead Jr. was appointed as the Memorial's landscape architect.
- Built on land reclaimed from the swampy banks of the Potomac River. Soil used as fill dredged directly from the river.
- Construction started in 1938.
- Franklin Delano Roosevelt laid the cornerstone of the Memorial on November 15, 1939.
- Dedicated in 1943, has since become a National Landmark.
- Listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1966.



HABS aerial photo, 1994



HABS photo, 1994



HABS photo, south elevation, 1994

- In 1975, the first attempts were made to remove barriers to access the Memorial:
 - original planter on the south side of the Memorial modified to create two accessible sloped walkways;
 - toilet facilities provided on the lower level and a new elevator which allowed visitors with disabilities to visit the portico and statuary chamber levels of the Memorial.
- In 1998, the Memorial underwent another major rehabilitation to remove additional barriers.
 - lower level of the Memorial expanded to allow for an exhibit space, a bookstore, and a gift shop.
 - Existing restrooms relocated, enlarged, and made accessible
 - Added a family restroom.
 - Elevator replaced in kind.

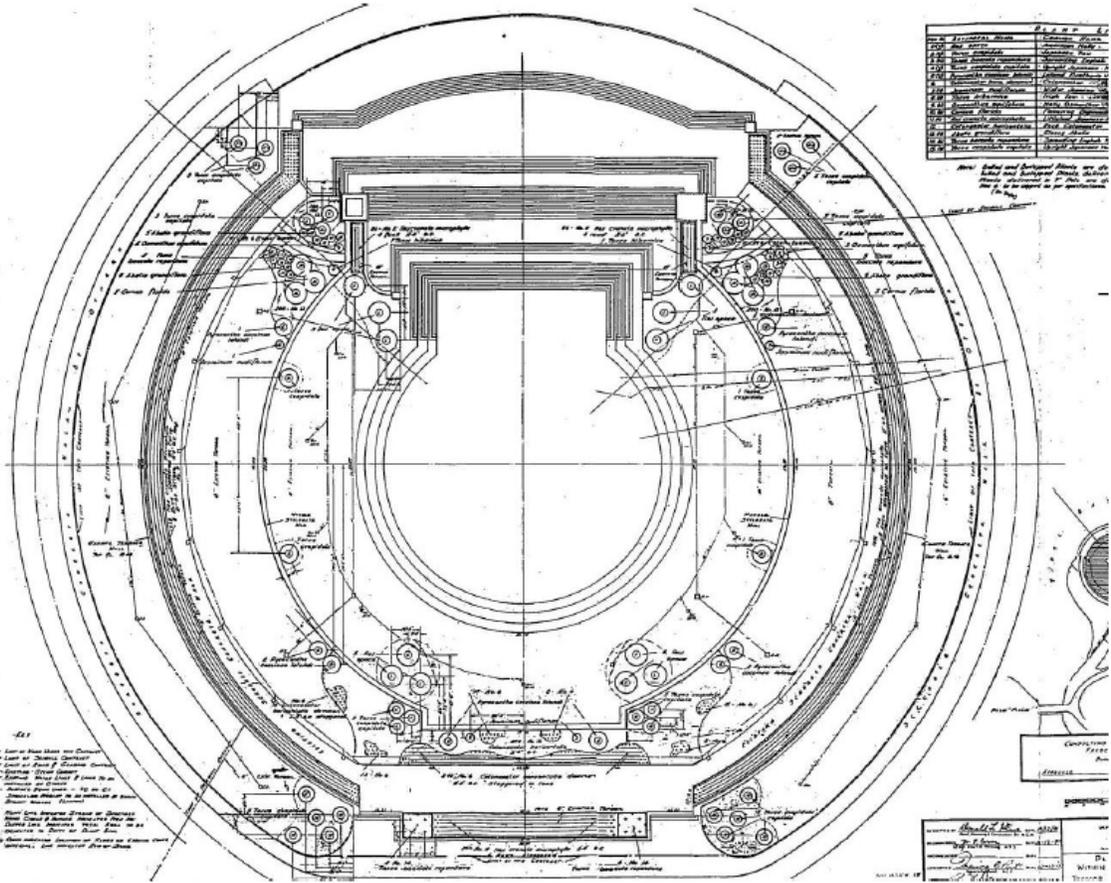
A4

Site History



Site History

- Original plant material included: cotoneasters, yew and thorn trees, and small leafed Japanese hollies
- 1972 project:
 - Additional Yews (*Taxus cuspidate* 'Nana') planted on the Stylobate Mall
 - Fourteen Zelkovas planted inside the circular road (where none originally existed).
 - Planting design was a departure from Olmsted's original scheme, but still respects the original narrow vistas to the east and the west.
- 1986 project:
 - Original hedge material (*Ilex glabra compacta*) was replaced with *Ilex glabra* 'Shamrock'.
 - Original white pines (*Pinus strobus*) removed and replaced with six foot high specimens



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Photographs of Existing Conditions

Existing Conditions



1 Tidal Basin Plaza Level



2 Littleleaf Japanese Hollies along Lower Terrace Level



3 Steps to Lower Terrace Level



4 Yew plantings at Tidal Basin



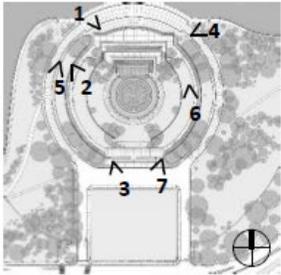
5 Yew Plantings with Zelkova in foreground



6 Littleleaf Japanese Hollies



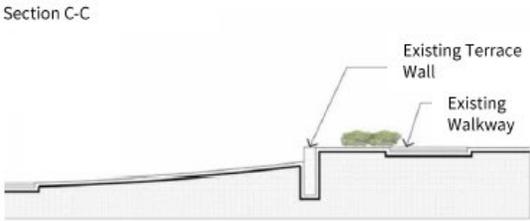
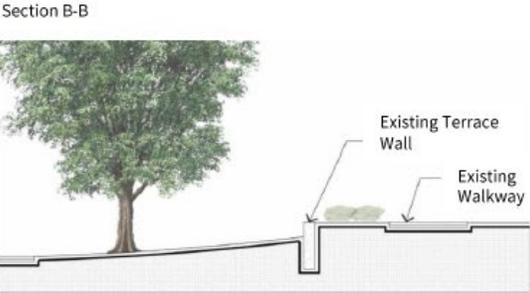
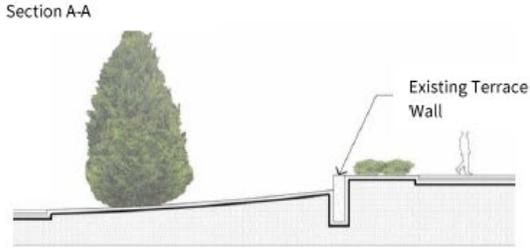
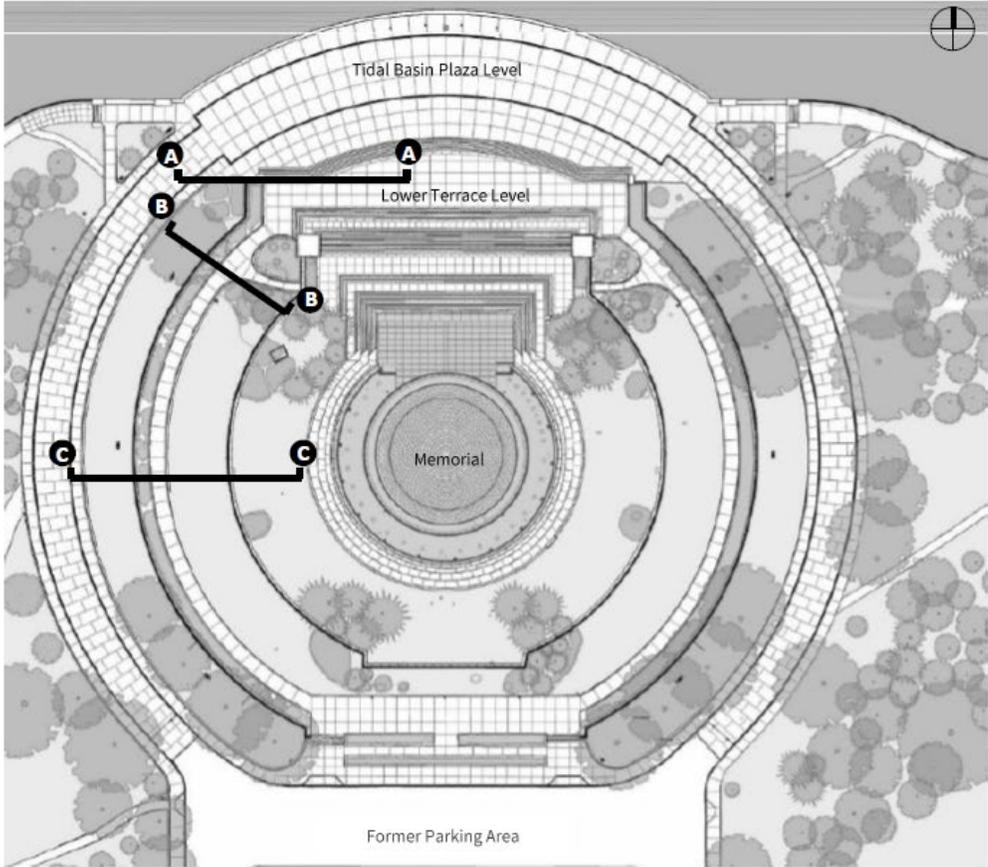
7 Zelkovas on southeast side of Memorial



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Site Plan of Existing Conditions

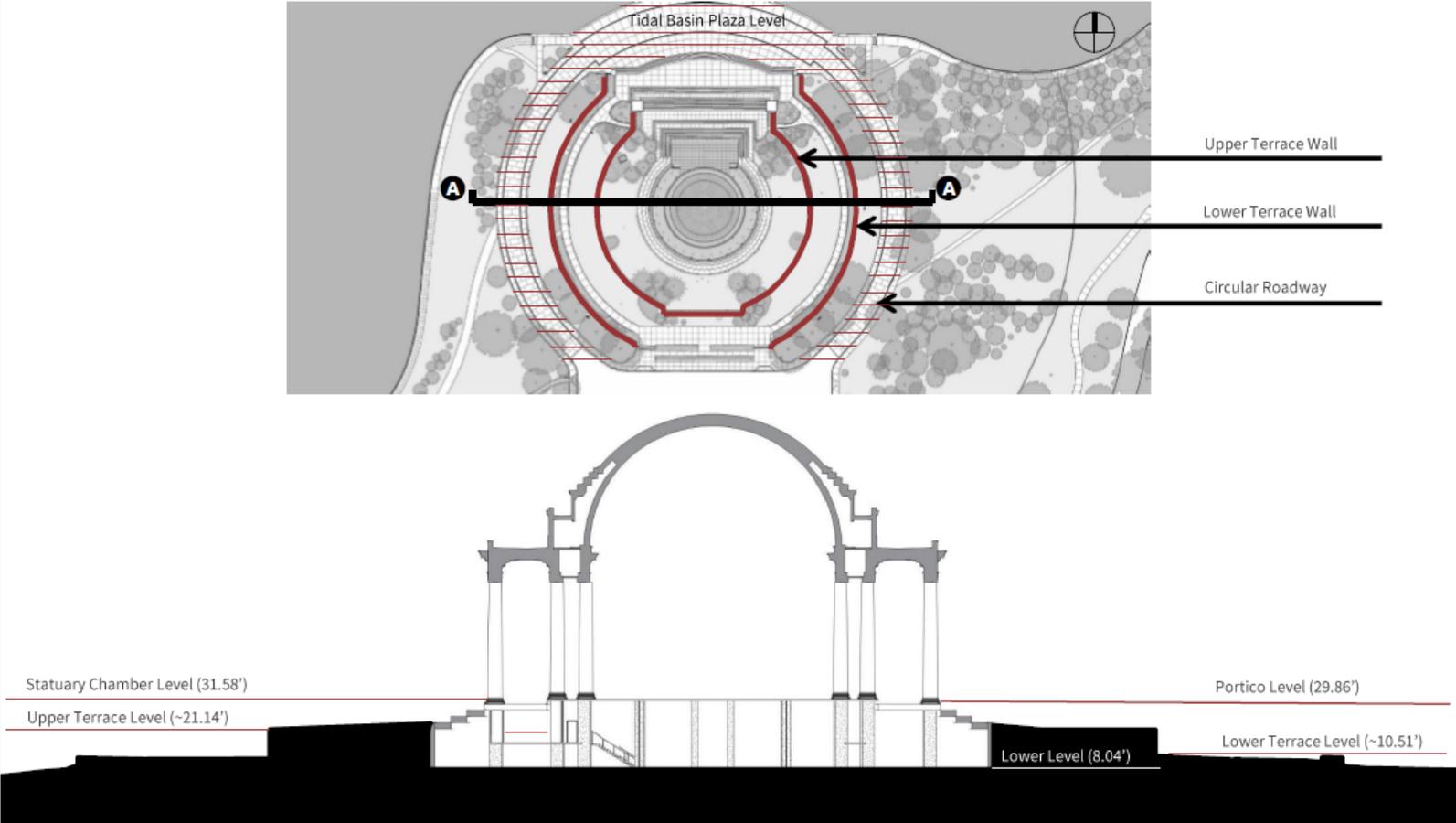
Existing Conditions



A7

Existing Conditions

Existing Conditions



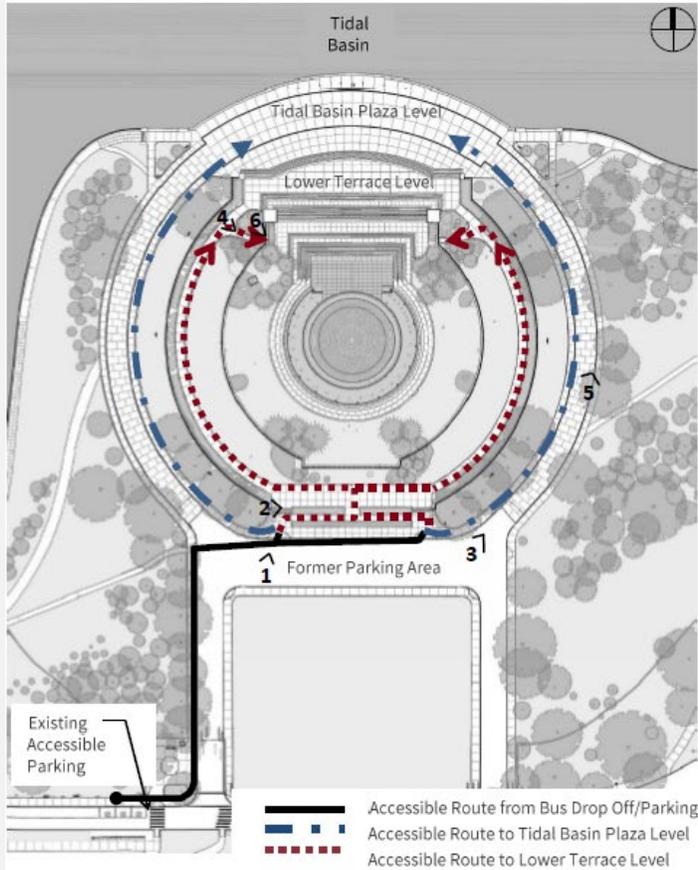
A8

Existing Conditions

Thomas Jefferson Memorial Targeted Accessibility Improvement Program (TAIP)



Existing Conditions



1 Path to sloped walkways



2 Sloped walkway to Lower Terrace Level



3 Entrance to east side Circular Roadway



4 West entrance to Lower Level



5 East side Circular Roadway

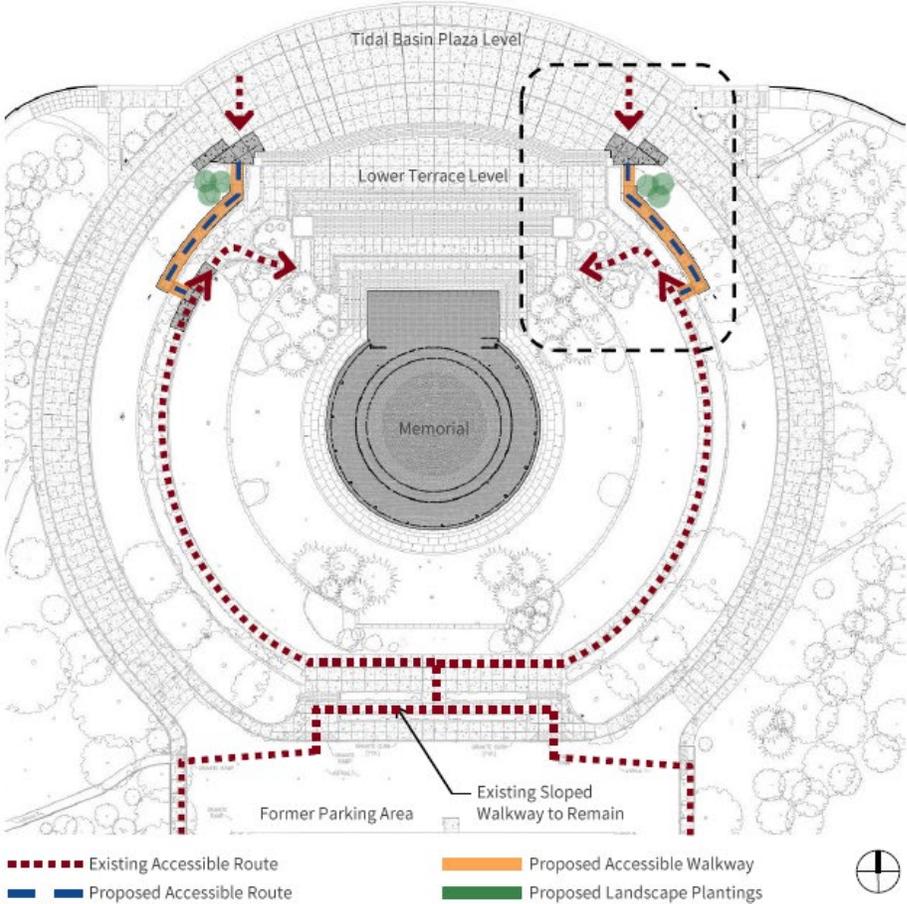


6 West side entrance at Lower Terrace Level

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Concept Design Approval: March 2018

Concept Design Approval: March 2018



Existing east terrace wall and planter



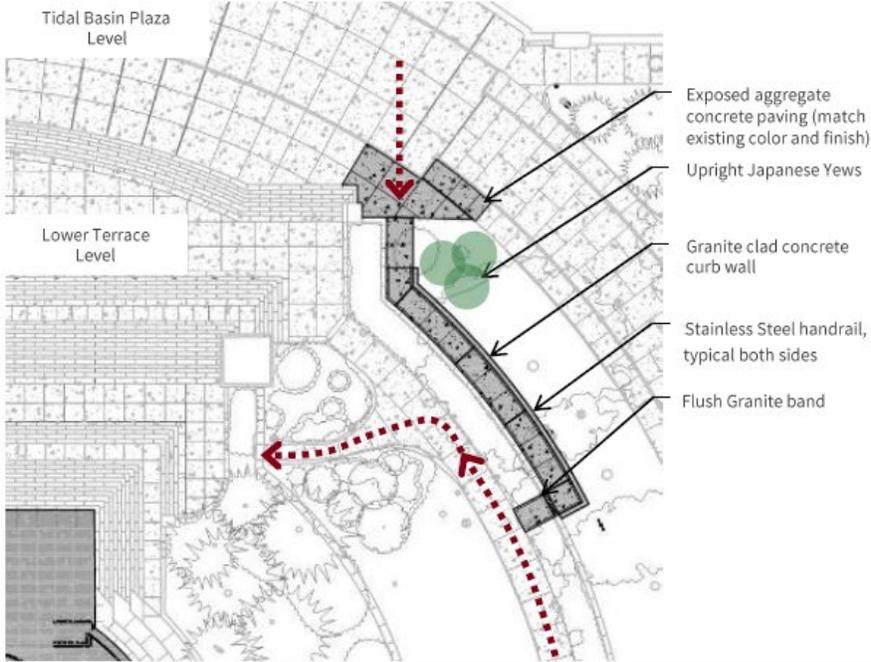
Render of previously proposed east sloped walkway at terrace wall and planter

Concept Design Approval: March 2018

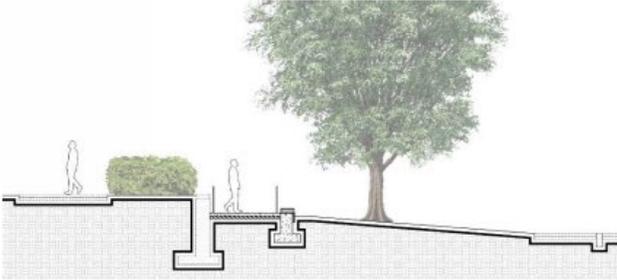
Thomas Jefferson Memorial Targeted Accessibility Improvement Program (TAIP)



Concept Design Approval: March 2018



Render of previously proposed east sloped walkway at terrace wall and planter



Section through previously proposed sloped walkway



Section through previously proposed sloped walkway

Concept Design Approval: Commission's Action

Thomas Jefferson Memorial Targeted Accessibility Improvement Program (TAIP)

National Park Service
US Department of the Interior



Concept Design Approval: NCPC Recommendations March 2018

- The Commission supports the applicant's proposed targeted accessibility improvements at the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, consisting of two new ramps on the north side of the memorial to improve accessibility for all visitors.
- The Commission notes that the Thomas Jefferson Memorial currently only has one accessible route to the Statutory Chamber Level, which requires visitors arriving from the north to use a ramp on the south side of the Memorial and traverse back to access the Lower Level entrances.
- The Commission recommends the applicant continue to explore their preferred design of new accessible ramps on the north side of the Memorial outside the existing historic planters on the Tidal Basin Plaza Level.

Topics to Discuss

- Handrails
- Material: Granite
- Material: Concrete
- Proposed Vegetation
- Lighting

Proposed Handrail Design

Thomas Jefferson Memorial Targeted Accessibility Improvement Program (TAIP)

National Park Service
US Department of the Interior



Proposed Design: Handrails

- Bead Blasted Stainless Steel
- Two handrails provided based on recommendation from the disabled community members
- Mounted to ground on both sides of sloped walkway to prevent damage to historic material
- Slight grade alteration to negate need for guardrail



Render of proposed east sloped walkway at terrace wall and planter



Render of proposed east sloped walkway at terrace wall and planter

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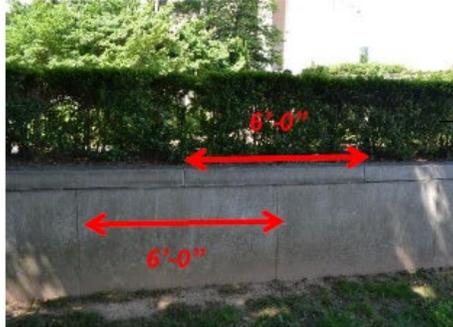
Existing Conditions: Granite

Thomas Jefferson Memorial Targeted Accessibility Improvement Program (TAIP)

National Park Service
US Department of the Interior

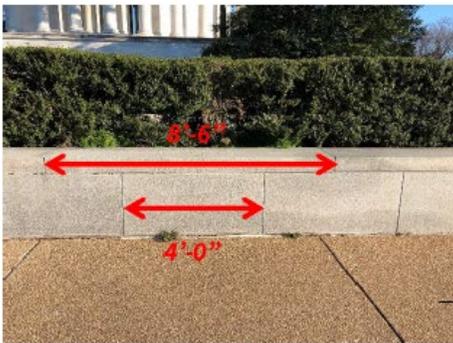


Existing Conditions: Granite

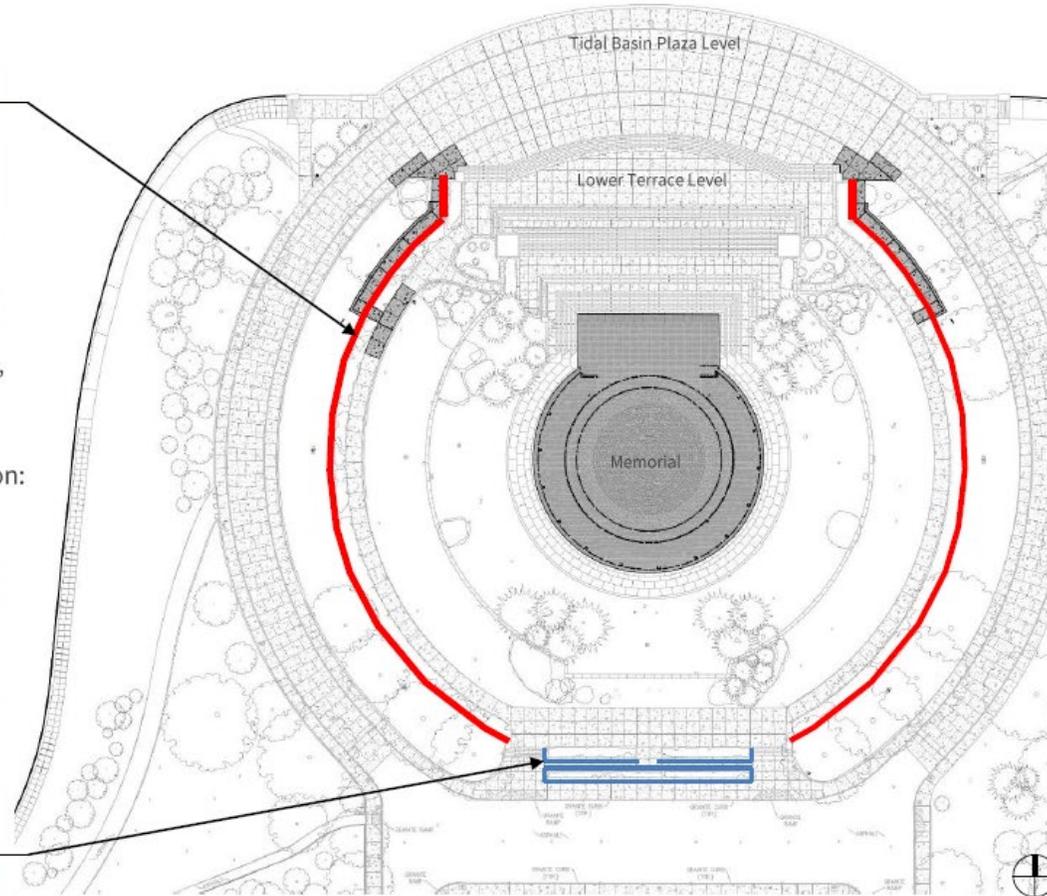


Original Terrace Wall Construction

- Original Terrace Wall construction: 6'-0" capstones & 6'-0" panels (3'-0" offset)
- 1975/1996 Accessible Route construction: 8'-6" capstone & 4'-0" panels



1975/1996 Accessible Route Construction



Proposed Granite Design

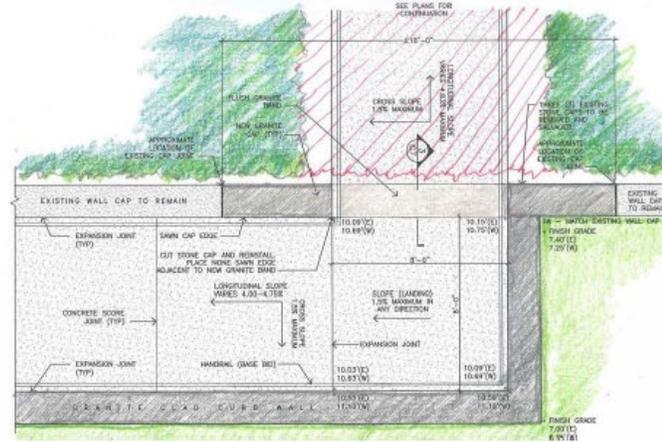
Thomas Jefferson Memorial Targeted Accessibility Improvement Program (TAIP)

National Park Service
US Department of the Interior



Proposed Design: Granite

- Sandblasted Georgia Gray Granite
- 8'-6" capstone & 4'-0" panels
- Flush Granite Band detail where existing capstones removed and salvaged



Render of proposed flush granite band



Render of proposed east sloped walkway at terrace wall and planter

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Existing Conditions: Concrete

Thomas Jefferson Memorial Targeted Accessibility Improvement Program (TAIP)

National Park Service
US Department of the Interior



Existing Conditions: Concrete

- Multiple colors of exposed aggregate throughout the site
 - Tan throughout
 - Gray at Tidal Basin
 - Tan at Circular roadway
- Existing non-compliant exposed aggregate due to cross slope and slope issues and aggregate size being too big



Existing exposed aggregate – south side of Memorial



Existing exposed aggregate – Circular roadway



Existing exposed aggregate – east side of Memorial



Existing exposed aggregate – east side of Memorial



Existing exposed aggregate – east side of Memorial



Existing exposed aggregate – south side of Memorial

Proposed Design: Concrete

Thomas Jefferson Memorial Targeted Accessibility Improvement Program (TAIP)

National Park Service
US Department of the Interior



Proposed Design: Concrete

- Exposed aggregate concrete color to match color of existing concrete at walkways



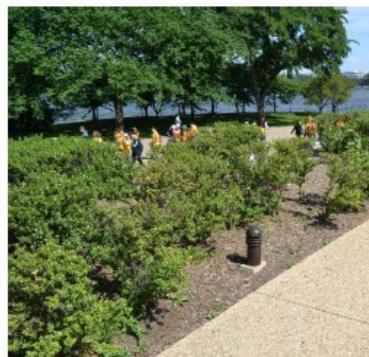
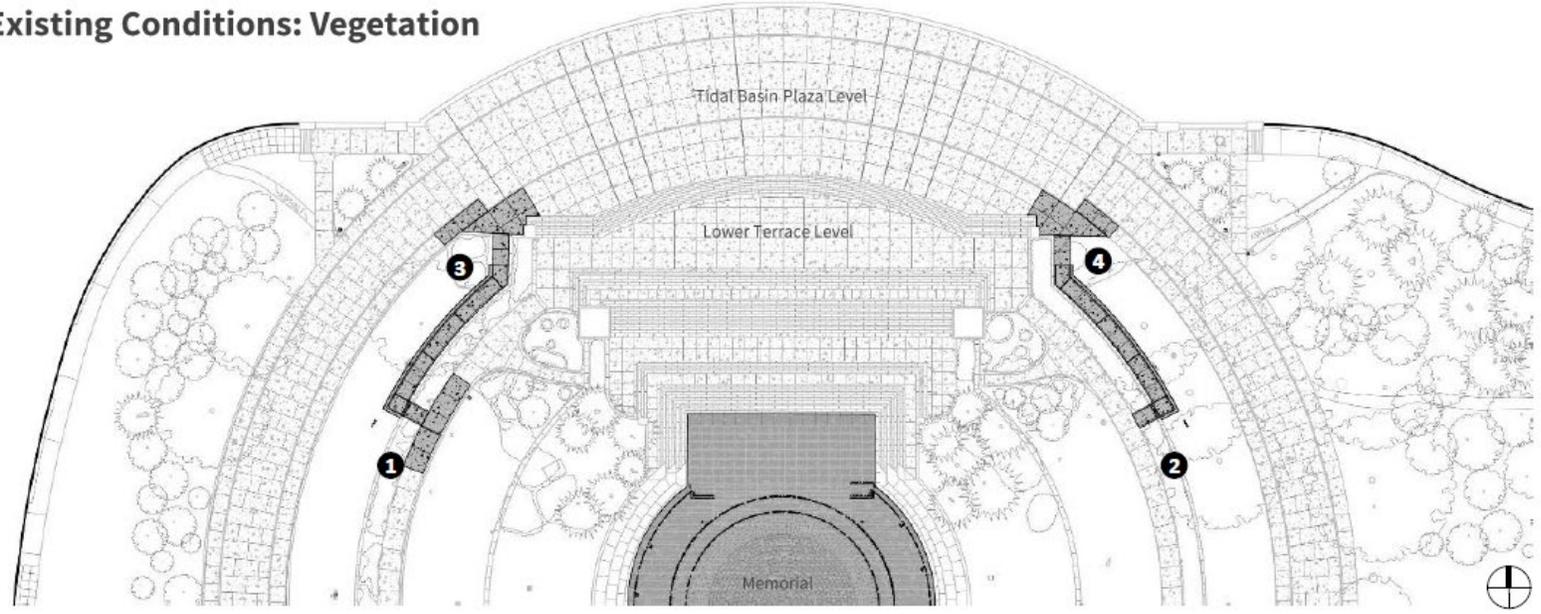
Aerial render of proposed concrete color

Existing Conditions: Vegetation

Thomas Jefferson Memorial Targeted Accessibility Improvement Program (TAIP)



Existing Conditions: Vegetation



1 Littleleaf Japanese Hollies



2 Littleleaf Japanese Hollies



3 Yews at the Tidal Basin



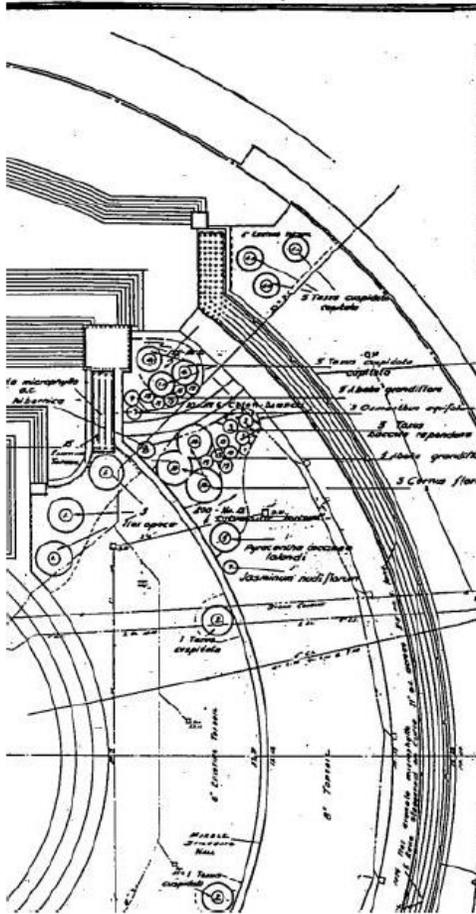
4 Yews at the Tidal Basin

Proposed Vegetation Design

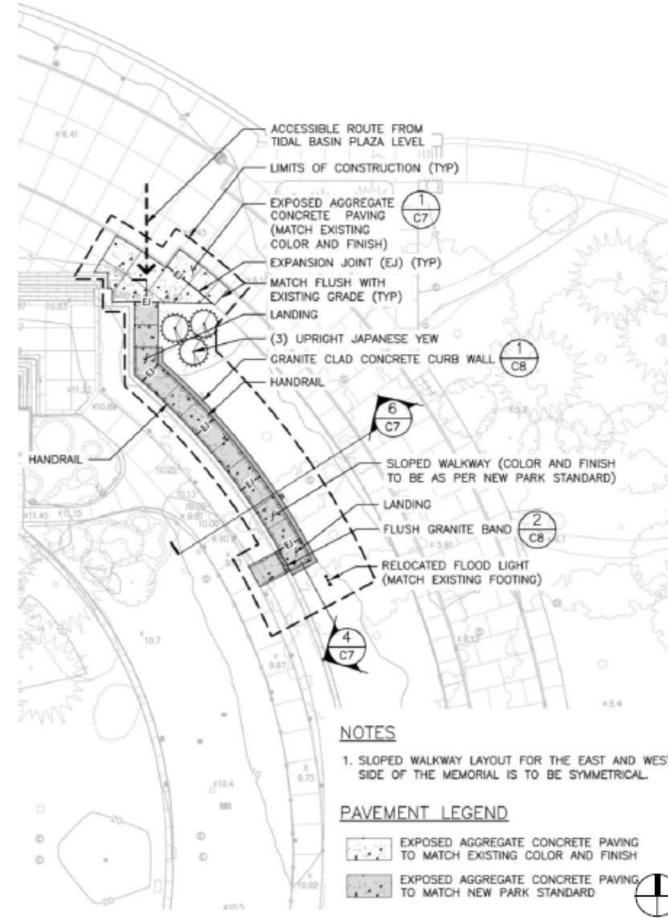
Thomas Jefferson Memorial Targeted Accessibility Improvement Program (TAIP)



Proposed Design: Vegetation



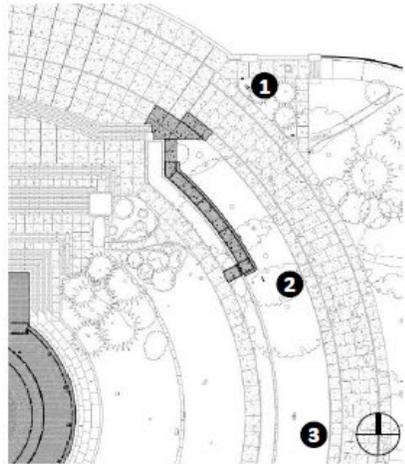
- Original plant material included: cotoneasters, yew and thorn trees, and small leafed Japanese hollies
- Proposing 6 upright Japanese Yews (3 per side) adjacent to the sloped walkways
- Replacing existing plantings in kind



Proposed Lighting Design

Proposed Design: Lighting

- Re-aim existing floodlights to maintain existing lighting strategy



Existing floodlight



Thomas Jefferson Memorial Existing Conditions