



Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: November 7, 2019

PROJECT National Native American Veterans Memorial National Museum of the American Indian Independence Avenue and Fourth Street, SW Washington, DC	NCPC FILE NUMBER 8018
SUBMITTED BY Smithsonian Institution	NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER 1.71(73.10)45010
REVIEW AUTHORITY Pub. L. No. 103-384, §3 (c)(2), 108 Stat. 4067, 4068 (October 22, 1994), as amended and 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)	APPLICANT'S REQUEST Approval of final site development plans
	PROPOSED ACTION Approve final site development plans
	ACTION ITEM TYPE Consent Calendar

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Smithsonian Institution has submitted final site development plans for the National Native American Veterans Memorial located on the grounds of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). Constructed in 2004, the NMAI is located on the southeast end of the National Mall on a 4.25-acre trapezoidal site. The museum is bounded by Jefferson Drive to the north, Third Street to the east, Maryland and Independence Avenues to the south, and Fourth Street to the west. The NMAI is a contributing resource to the National Mall Historic District. Authorized by Congress in 1994, the memorial will “give all Americans the opportunity to learn of the proud and courageous tradition of service of Native Americans in the Armed Forces of the United States.” The memorial will be completed by Veterans Day 2020.

The “Warrior’s Circle of Honor” will be located in the existing wooded area near the northeast corner of the museum grounds. Supported by slender concrete piers, the memorial will cantilever above the existing wetlands water feature. The design consists of a circular contemplative gathering space with a vertical stainless-steel ring centerpiece. The sacred circle serves as a symbol of unity among many Native veterans. The vertical sculpture will be located above a fountain that symbolizes a drum. Other memorial elements include an approach walk, a title wall with signage and the five seals of the Armed Forces etched into the granite cladding, an outer path of life, seat walls enclosing the memorial, four circular benches with accessible seating areas, four lances with bronze spears, an inner path of harmony, and a metal railing. The design incorporates water and fire for sacred ceremonies and four stainless-steel lances with bronze feathers where veterans, family members, tribal leaders, and others can tie cloths for prayers and healing. The memorial also includes landscape and lighting improvements.

The Commission approved the preliminary site development plans in June 2019, with comments to be addressed with the final review. These included improvements to the railing design;

construction access and disturbance plans to limit impacts to the wetland; a landscape plan that includes tree replacement to prevent net loss of tree canopy; a stormwater management plan; and a lighting plan. The applicant has updated the design and provided additional information consistent with those comments.

KEY INFORMATION

- In 1994, Congress passed the Native American Veterans' Memorial Establishment Act (Public Law 103–384), which authorized the Smithsonian Institution (SI) to build and maintain a Native American Veterans Memorial inside the museum and hold a competition to select the design of the memorial. The Act also granted approval of the selected design to the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution.
- In 2013, the Act was amended to allow the memorial to be located outside of the museum on the NMAI site as determined by the SI.
- Due to the unique circumstances of the Act, NCPC does not have review authority for the design and location of the memorial; however, any related improvements that change the previously approved site plan (such as access to the memorial/changes to the landscape) will require NCPC approval under the National Capital Planning Act.
- The Smithsonian conducted a two-stage design competition and received over 120 proposals from around the globe. The jury unanimously selected the “Warrior’s Circle of Honor,” designed by artist Harvey Pratt (Cheyenne Arapaho and Marine Corps Veteran) and Butzer Architects and Urbanism from Oklahoma.
- In February 2019, the Commission participated in a site visit and information presentation.
- The memorial will occupy a total of 2,837 square feet, including the memorial circle and surrounding path (1,717 square feet) and the approach walk (1,120 square feet).
- The National Museum of the American Indian is one of the top ten most visited Smithsonian museums with an annual visitation of approximately 1.1 to 1.2 million people in recent years.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commission:

Approves the final site development plans for the proposed National Native American Veterans Memorial located on the grounds of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) at 4th Street and Independence Avenue, SW in Washington, DC.

Finds the applicant has updated the railing design; prepared construction access and disturbance plans to limit impacts to the wetland; provided a landscape plan that includes tree replacement to prevent net loss of tree canopy; provided a stormwater management plan; and prepared a lighting

plan that is consistent with the illumination strategy for the museum and that respects the hierarchy of lighting on the National Mall.

Notes the applicant will prepare a full-scale mock-up of the railing that staff will be able to review during construction.

Recommends the applicant continue to coordinate with the National Park Service regarding Jefferson Drive before and during construction.

PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

Previous actions	June 1, 2000 – Approval of final site and building plans for the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). February 7, 2019 – Information presentation and site visit to memorial site June 6, 2019 – Approval of preliminary site development plans
Remaining actions (anticipated)	None

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

The memorial location and design are consistent with the National Museum of the American Indian setting and the National Mall. The project is consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*, in particular the Urban Design, Federal Environment, Historic Preservation, and Visitors and Commemoration Elements. Further, the applicant has updated the design and provided additional information consistent with the Commission's comments at preliminary review. The submission includes **an updated railing design; construction access and disturbance plans to limit impacts to the wetland; a landscape plan that includes tree replacement to prevent net loss of tree canopy; a stormwater management plan; and a lighting plan that is consistent with the illumination strategy for the museum and that respects the hierarchy of lighting on the National Mall.**

Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission **approve the final site development plans for the proposed National Native American Veterans Memorial located on the grounds of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) at 4th Street and Independence Avenue, SW in Washington, DC.** The Smithsonian expects construction to begin in the near future. As Jefferson Drive is adjacent to the site and is under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service,

staff suggest the **Commission recommends continued coordination between both agencies before and during construction.**

Analysis

Over the last four months, the design team has refined the memorial design and provided more information about the proposed materials and landscape design. The submission includes additional views and details of the memorial components, including a refined seat wall with accessible seating, railing, title wall, lances, paving, and lighting design. Staff analysis has focused on these elements and the responses to the Commission's comments at preliminary review.

Railing Design

The project includes a protective guardrail at the southern edge of the Approach Walk. The railing is required due to the adjacent water and the height of the walkway above the wetland. The railing system is composed of horizontal corten rails and secondary vertical members that are evocative of a drumbeat emanating from the memorial core. A stainless handrail will be mounted at 36 inches in height. An intermittent path lighting will be integrated into the railing. The railing will be 42 inches in height to meet code requirements.

Previously, the Commission recommended the applicant simplify the railing design to minimize visual impacts, finding its heavy composition competed with the memorial elements, landscape, and the museum's architecture. The railing also appeared dense and overly busy. In response, the design team has revised the railing design to simplify the elements. Further, the railing sizes have been reduced in both thickness and width. The vertical members of the railing are now standardized and have rhythmic spacing, including a continuous vertical member to accommodate wiring for the handrail lighting. Vegetation at the edge of the railing has been revised accordingly to provide a softer backdrop. The railing material is proposed to be corten steel which has a natural finish that will blend into the landscape. Overall, staff finds the design has been simplified while still accommodating the designers' intention of creating a rhythmic element that connects to the memorial, in balance with code requirements. SI has indicated that they will prepare a full-scale mock-up which staff will be able to see during the construction period. SI believes the design is appropriate to the setting and also reflects the design intent of the memorial experience.

Wetland Edge

The wetland is a significant component of the memorial setting. The project will include edge stabilization to limit the erosion at the north edge of the pond through rocks and deep-rooted plantings. Smithsonian will address the other wetland edges as part of a follow-up wetland restoration and maintenance project within the next 5 years. Previously, the Commission requested the applicant protect and restore the wetland's edge biodiversity to enhance the site's ecological quality, scenic character, and prevent erosion. In response, SI has provided construction access and disturbance plans. A certified arborist has also been added to the project team to ensure proper

tree protection measures are in place during construction. Sediment and erosion control measures will also be incorporated during construction.

Tree Replacement

The landscape surrounding the project site at the NMAI is unique to the National Mall. The design intent is to preserve the integrity of this landscape and provide a natural framework to the memorial. The museum grounds feature more than 27,000 trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants. The proposed landscape will respect the existing design and select plant species from the original plant list. The landscape plan will include native trees, shrubs, and herbaceous perennials including aquatic, and wet meadow plants. Disturbed areas will be replanted to seamlessly blend the new and existing material.

Previously, the Commission requested the applicant provide a landscape plan that includes tree replacement to prevent net loss of tree canopy in accordance with the procedures established in the policies related to Tree Canopy and Vegetation in the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital. The requested landscape plan and tree protection plan have been provided, including the tree replacement to prevent a net loss of tree canopy on the site. To mitigate the removal of eight trees at the memorial site for construction, the Smithsonian will plant seventeen new trees nearby. The Smithsonian will also remove and replant four trees at the new bio-retention area, described in the following section. Overall, staff finds the landscape plan will adequately mitigate the loss of trees and will help preserve the character of the site.

Stormwater Management

The Commission previously requested a stormwater management plan, prepared in accordance with the Commission submission guidelines, that addresses compliance with the District Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) and Section 438 of the Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA) regulations. SI has been coordinating with the District Department of Energy and Environment regarding stormwater management requirements. As a result, the design team is proposing to incorporate a small bioretention area close to, but not within the actual memorial site. The bioretention area will be approximately 200-300 sf. This bioretention area would be set in among the existing trees and integrated with the existing landscape and plant palette along the north side of the museum site. Staff finds the proposed retention area and new planting are a creative solution that will not alter the character or setting of the site.

Lighting

Finally, at preliminary review, the Commission requested the Smithsonian provide a lighting plan and night views consistent with the overall lighting design for the National Museum of the American Indian. They requested the lighting plan minimize light pollution and respect the hierarchy of memorials, monuments, and important civic buildings and spaces in the nation's capital, with the U.S. Capitol the most prominent feature in the nighttime skyline. In general, the lighting design approach provides adequate lighting for egress while providing minimal lighting for the Warrior's Circle and memorial elements. Staff finds the lighting plan is consistent with the

overall lighting approach for the museum and respects the hierarchy of other important civic building on the National Mall.

CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

As noted above, this project meets basic goals of the Comprehensive Plan. In particular, staff reviewed policies set forth in the Urban Design, Federal Environment, Historic Preservation, and Visitors and Commemoration Elements.

National Historic Preservation Act

The NMAI is a contributing resource to the National Mall Historic District. Both the Smithsonian and NCPC have an independent responsibility to satisfy the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). NCPC has approval authority over federal projects located within the District of Columbia pursuant to the National Capital Planning Act. The Smithsonian Institution has informally consulted with the DC SHPO, and no historic preservation-related concerns are anticipated. The Smithsonian formally initiated consultation with the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer (DC SHPO) on May 23, 2019. On October 11, 2019, the DC SHPO concurred with SI's finding that the memorial would have "No Adverse Effect" on historic properties, thereby concluding the Section 106 process.

National Environmental Policy Act

Due to the unique circumstances of the Native American Veterans' Memorial Establishment Act, which granted approval of the selected design to the Board of Regents of the SI, NCPC does not have review authority for the design and location of the memorial; however, any related improvements that change the previously approved site plan (such as access to the memorial/changes to the landscape) will require NCPC approval under the National Capital Planning Act.

The Smithsonian Institution does not have an independent responsibility to fulfill the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) as it is not considered a federal agency for purposes of NEPA. On June 1, 2000, the Commission approved the final site and building plans for the National Museum of the American Indian, on the Mall between Maryland Avenue, Third Street, Jefferson Drive, and Fourth Street, SW. As a result of its approval authority over the changes to the previously approved site plan, NCPC does have an independent NEPA responsibility. Pursuant to Section 601.12 of NCPC's NEPA Regulations, staff has determined that the project can be categorically excluded from further environmental analysis based on categorical exclusion #2, which pertains to "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

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal at its October 16, 2019 meeting. Without objection, the Committee forwarded the proposed preliminary site and building plans to the Commission with the statement that the proposal has been coordinated with all participating agencies. The participating agencies were NCPC; the National Park Service; the US General Services Administration; the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the District Department of Transportation; and the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer, and the District Department of Energy and Environment.

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts

The U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) reviewed the final plans for the proposed memorial at its October 17, 2019 meeting. The Commission approved the project with some additional comments regarding the railing and paving design to be addressed through coordination with CFA staff. A copy of the action is attached.

ONLINE REFERENCE

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

- Project Synopsis
- Submission Package

Prepared by Matthew Flis
10/30/2019

ATTACHMENTS

- Powerpoint
- CFA letter

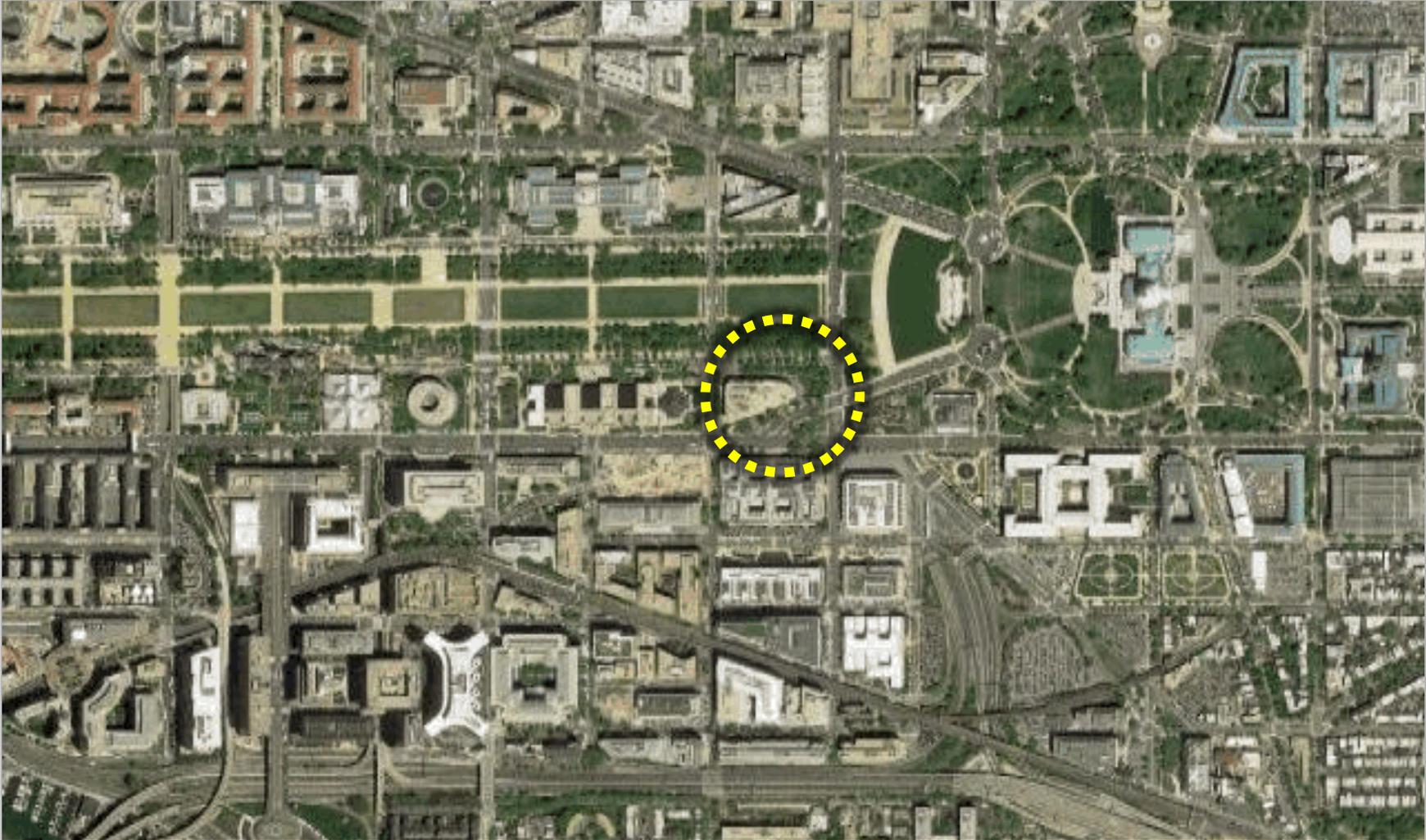
National Native American Veterans Memorial

Independence Avenue and Fourth Street, SW, Washington DC

Approval of Final Site Development Plans

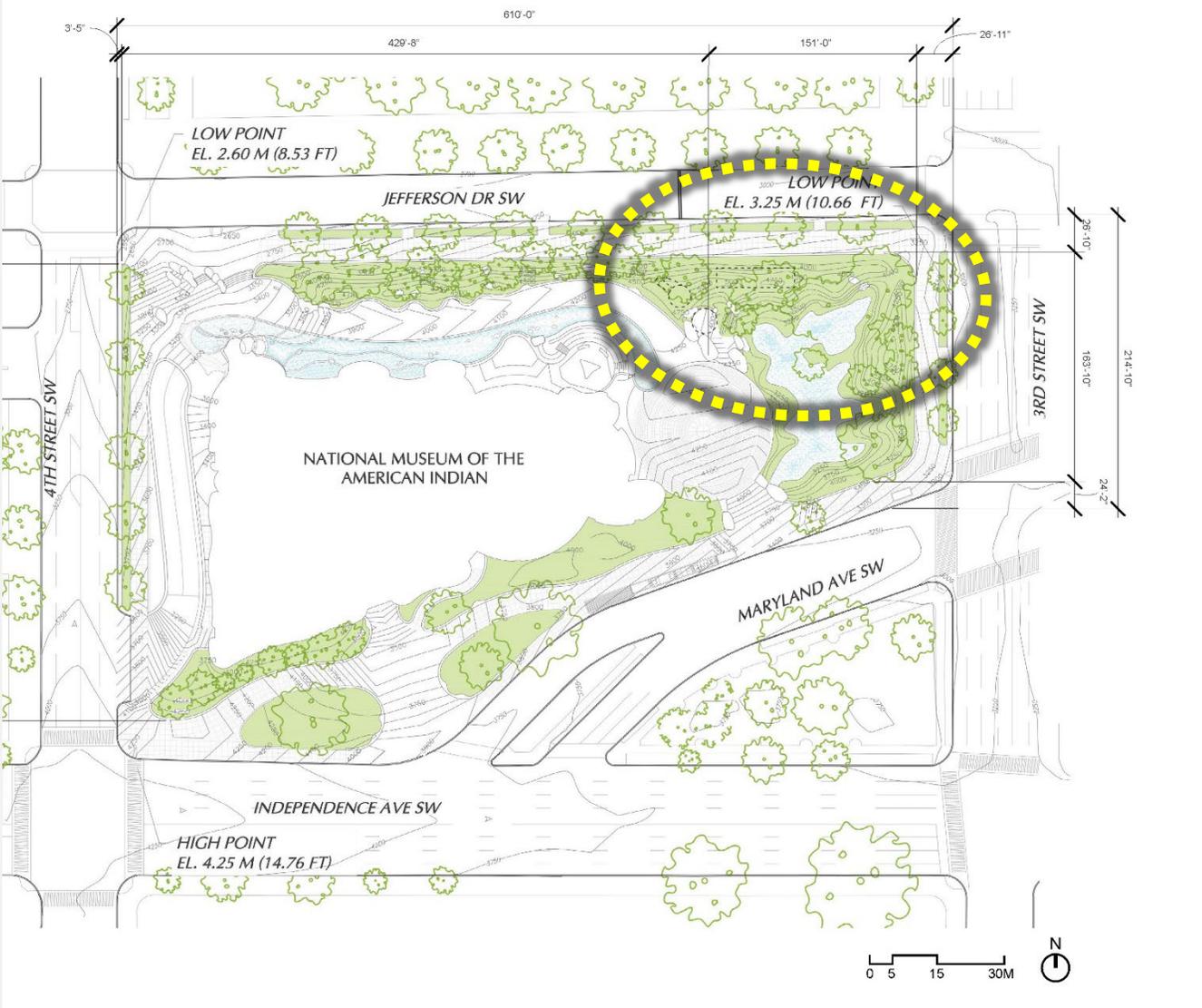
Smithsonian Institution

Site Location



Location Map

Existing Site Plan and Area of Proposed Changes



Existing Conditions

APPROACHES AND VIEWS FROM SITE



11



12



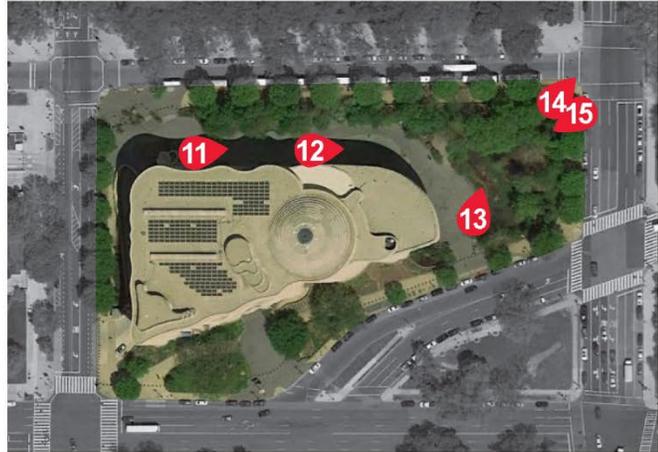
13



14



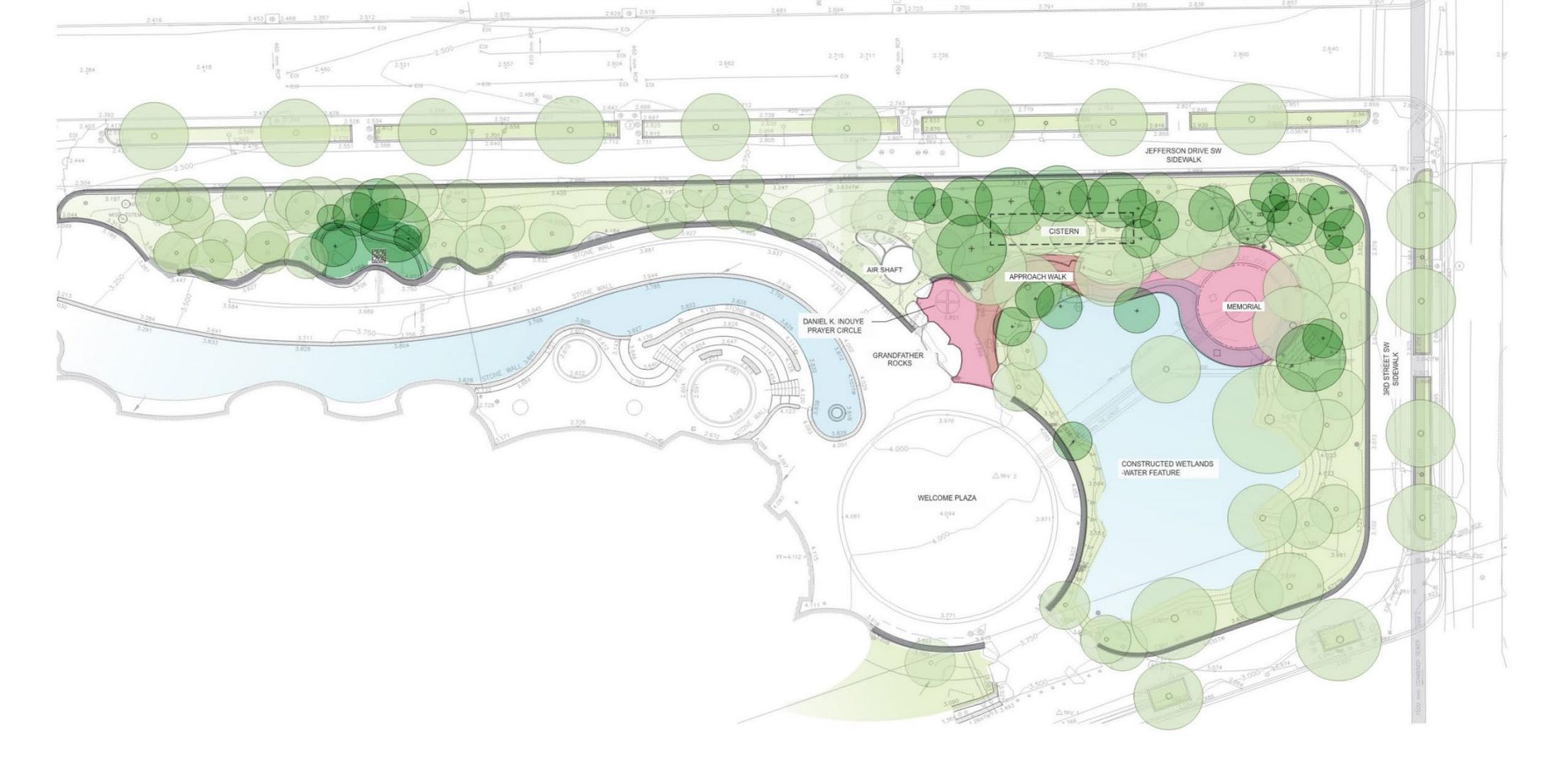
15



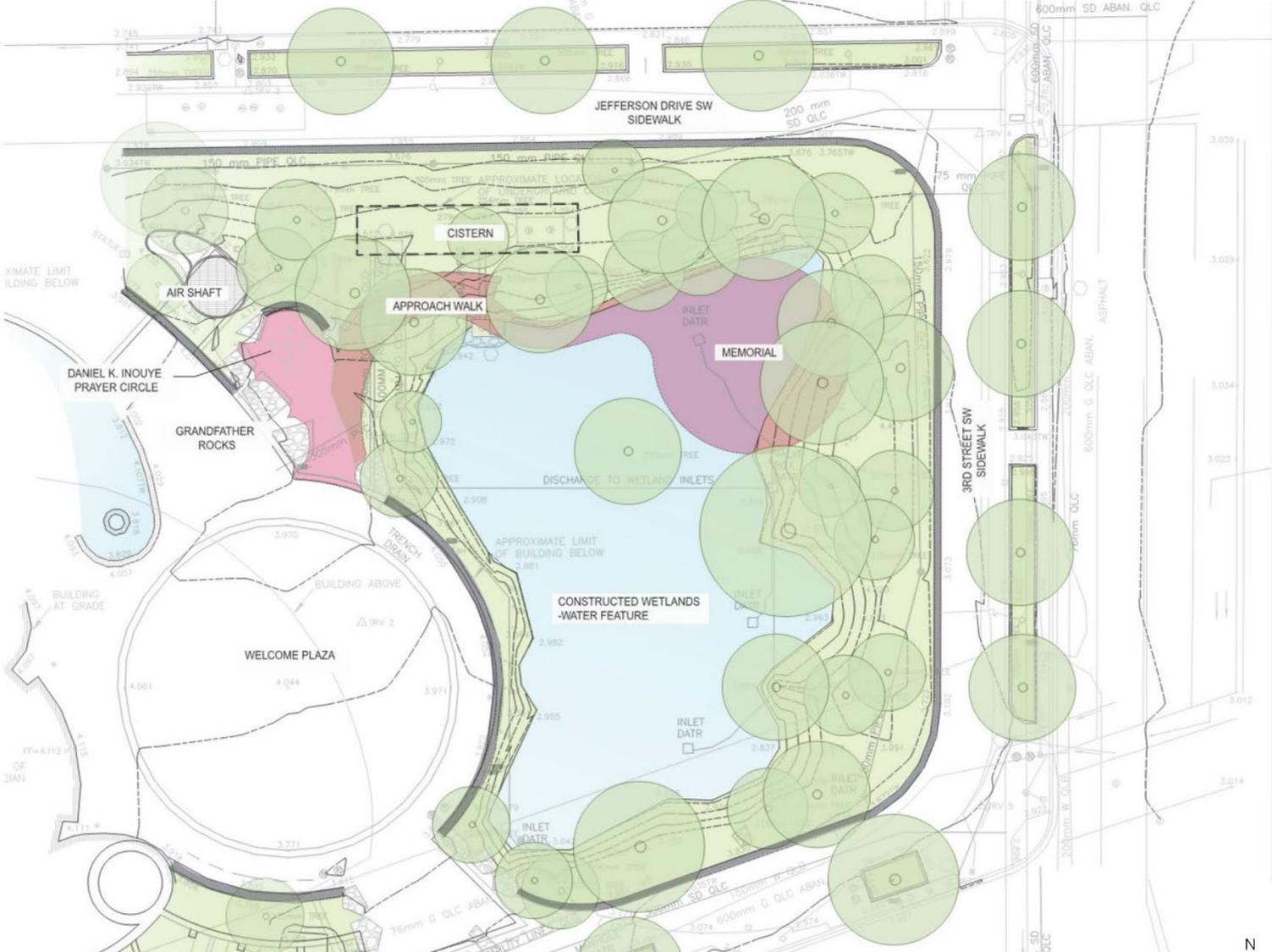
Key Plan

PHOTO CREDIT Google Earth

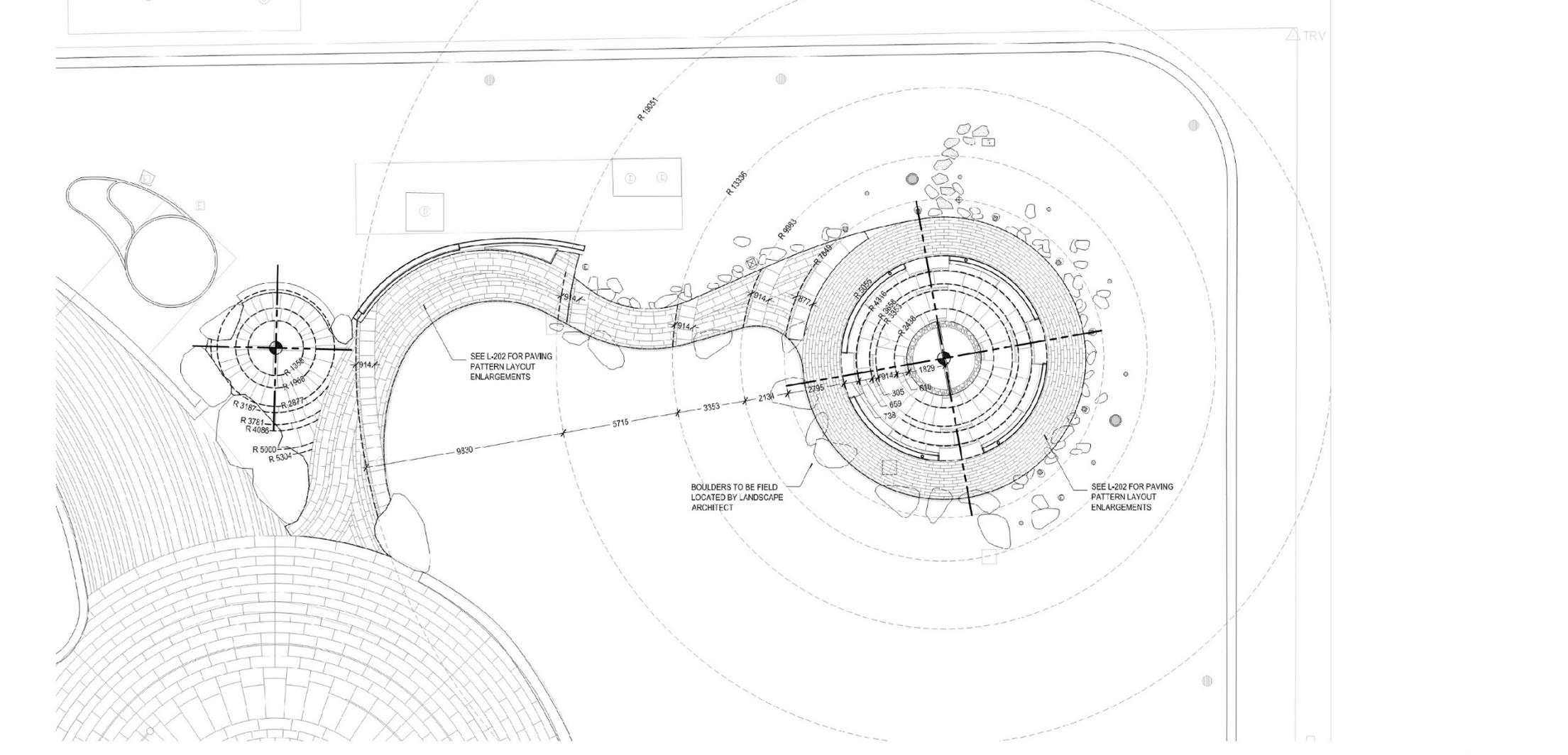
Proposed Site Plan



Enlarged Site Plan with New Memorial



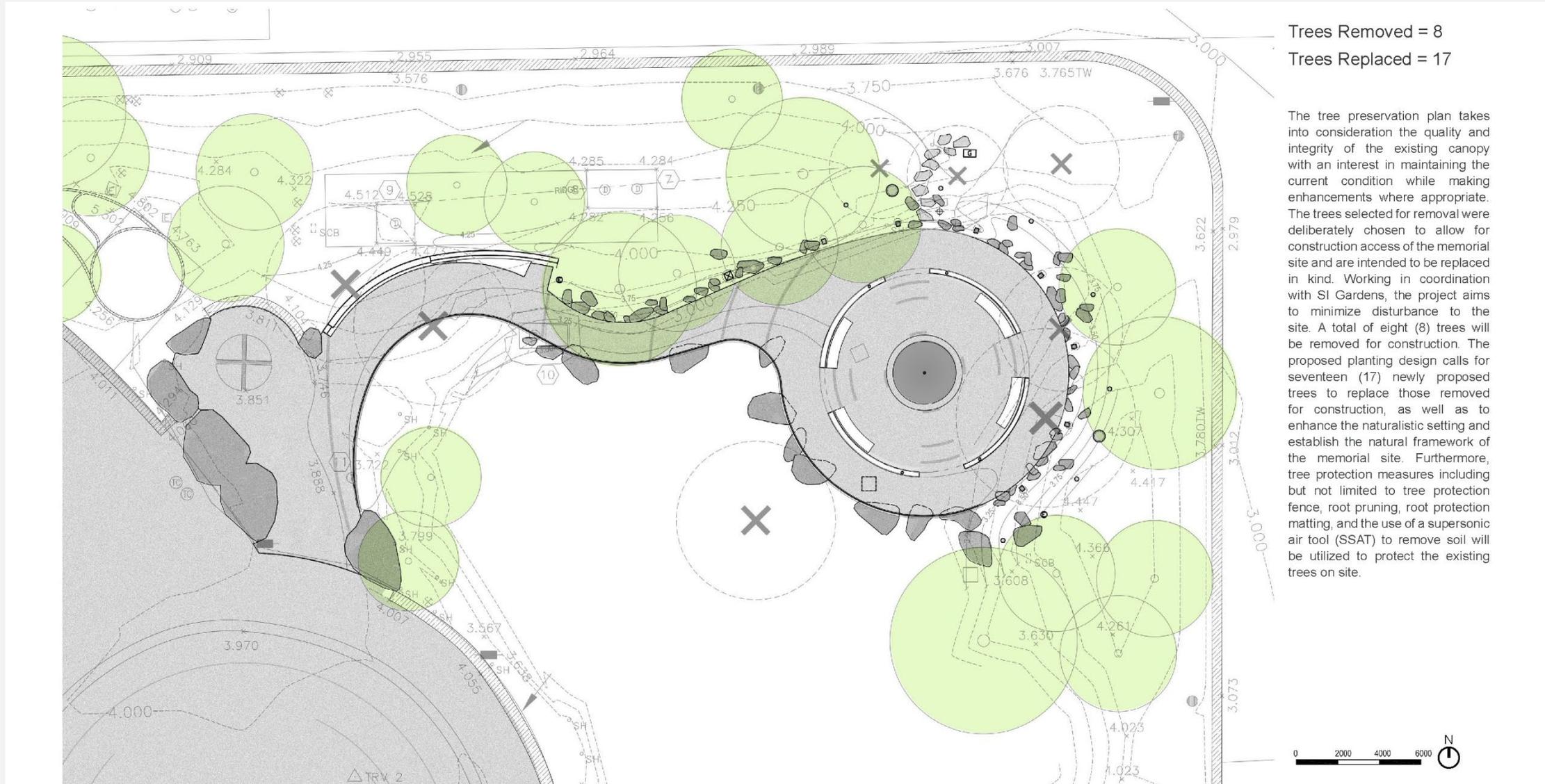
Enlarged Layout Plan



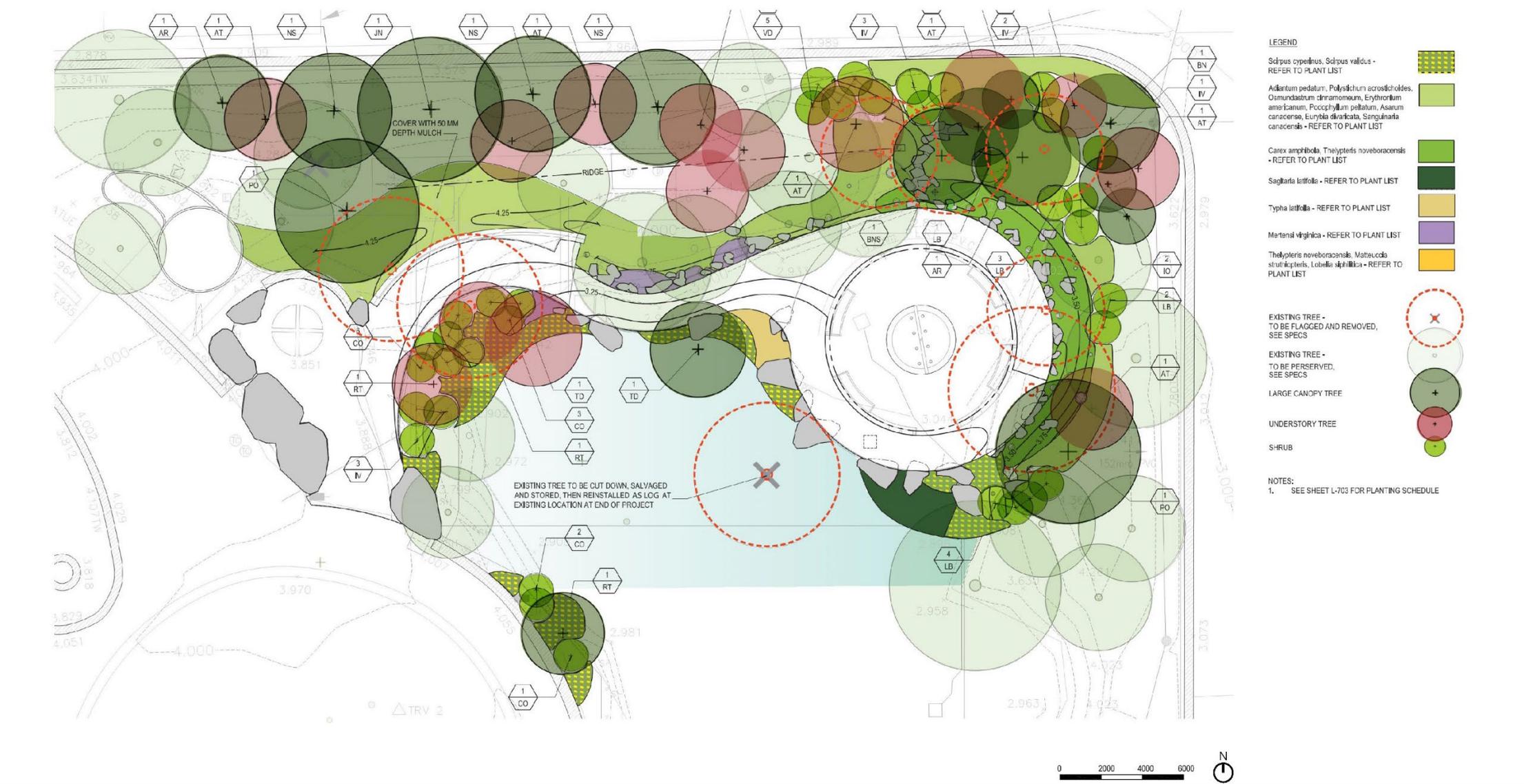
Planting Plan



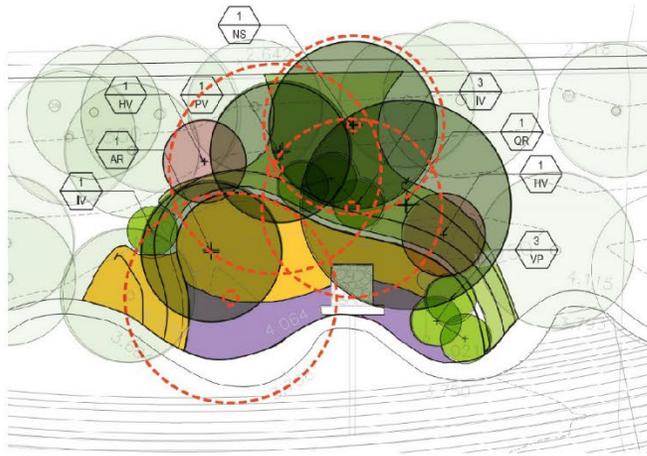
Tree Preservation Plan



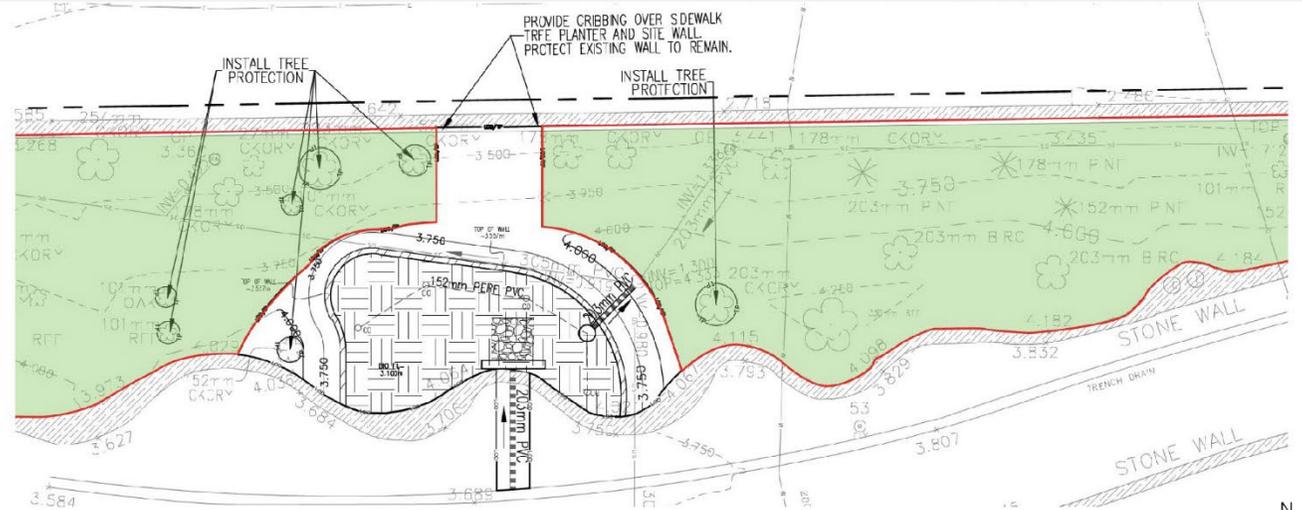
Landscape Plan



Stormwater Management Zone



Planting Plan



Site Plan



EXISTING



Site Photo

PROPOSED



Site Rendering

Trees Removed = 4
Trees Replaced = 4

Proposed Planting Palette

TREES



RIVER BIRCH
Betula nigra



BLACK GUM
Nyssa sylvatica



AMERICAN SYCAMORE
Platanus occidentalis



AMERICAN HOLLY
Ilex opaca



BALD CYPRESS
Taxodium distichum

SHRUBS



PAWPAW
Asimina triloba



WINTERBERRY HOLLY
Ilex verticillata



STAGHORN SUMAC
Rhus typhina



ARROWWOOD VIBURNUM
Viburnum dentatum



BUTTONBUSH
Cephalanthus occidentalis

Proposed Planting Palette

EMERGENT & WET MEADOW



ARROWHEAD
Sagittaria latifolia



BULRUSH
Scirpus validus



BULRUSH
Scirpus cyperinus



BROADLEAF CATTAIL
Typha latifolia



BLUE BELLS
Mertensi virginica

PERENNIALS



NEW YORK FERN
Thelypteris noveboracensis



OSTRICH FERN
Matteuccia struthiopteris



BLUE LOBELIA
Lobelia siphilitica



MAYAPPLE
Podophyllum peltatum



CREEK SEDGE
Carex amphibola

Existing and Proposed Views – Jefferson @ 3rd Street

EXISTING: SUMMER



Existing site photograph of site from intersection of 3rd Street and Jefferson Drive SW. Season: summer.

PROPOSED: SUMMER



A layered landscape is maintained using a diverse palette of native plants. A filtered view through the understory provides a view to the memorial.



Key Plan

Proposed View – Jefferson @ 3rd Street

PROPOSED: AUTUMN



Native plants selected from the existing plant palette will provide design compatibility and maintain visual interest throughout the seasons.

EXISTING: WINTER



Existing site photograph of site from intersection of 3rd Street and Jefferson Drive SW. Season: winter.



Key Plan

Views from Welcome Plaza – Existing and Proposed

EXISTING: SUMMER



1 Existing photograph of site from Welcome Plaza at main entry of the museum, looking east. Season: summer.

PROPOSED: SUMMER



1 Key views from the Welcome Circle inviting visitors to the memorial will be framed by existing native plants.

EXISTING: WINTER



2 Existing photograph of site from Welcome Plaza, looking north. Season: winter.

PROPOSED: SUMMER



2 The existing vegetation at the Welcome Circle will be carefully maintained and selectively pruned to allow for the 'key' views.



Key Plan

Proposed Lighting Plan



The lighting design approach for the memorial is to provide adequate lighting for egress while providing minimal lighting of the Warriors' Circle and accenting its design elements. The lighting plan for the memorial is consistent with the overall lighting design for the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). The lighting approach minimizes light pollution while respecting the hierarchy of other memorials, monuments, and important civic buildings on the National Mall.

The lighting of the memorial meets the NFPA 101 regulation. As such, illumination is not less than an average of 1 ft-candle (10.8 lux) and, at any point, not less than 0.1 ft-candle (1.1 lux), measured along the path of egress at floor level.

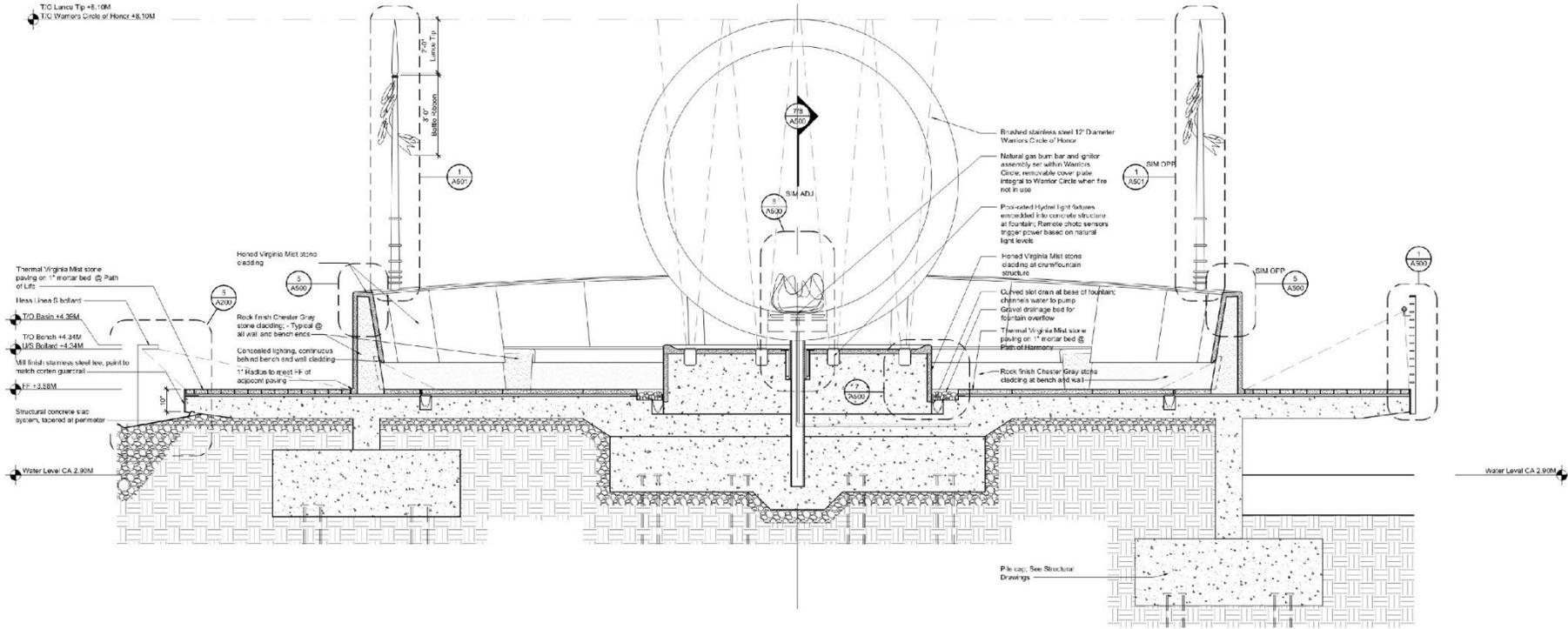
Due to the distances and vegetative foliage, the existing NPS and DDOT street lighting does not impact the lighting of the memorial during the spring, summer, and autumn months. With the lack of tree canopy during the winter months, a minimal amount of light trespass from the street lights will be present at the memorial.

Memorial Section and Details

MEMORIAL NORTH-SOUTH SECTION

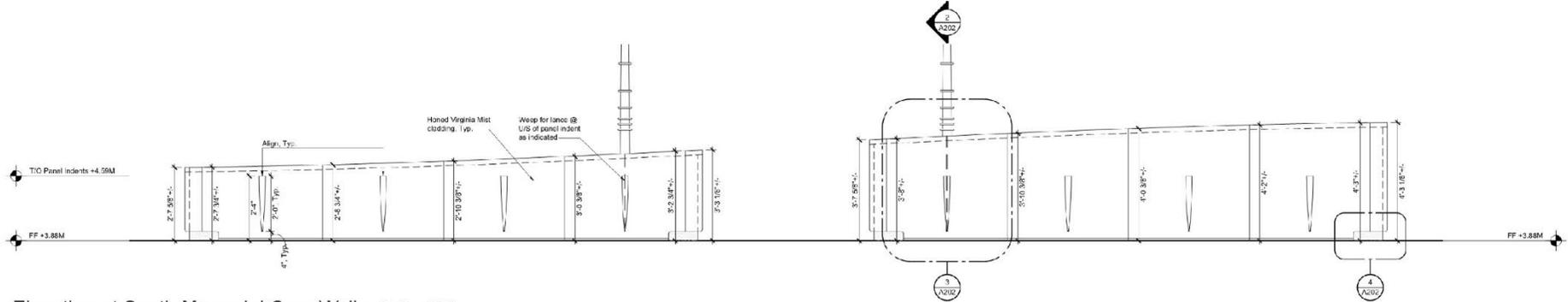


Rendering of memorial.

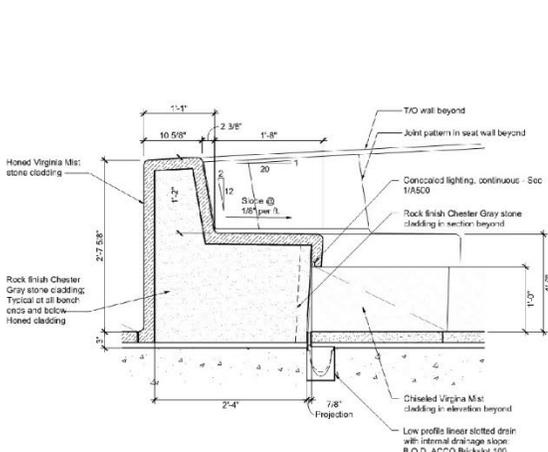


1/4" = 1'-0"

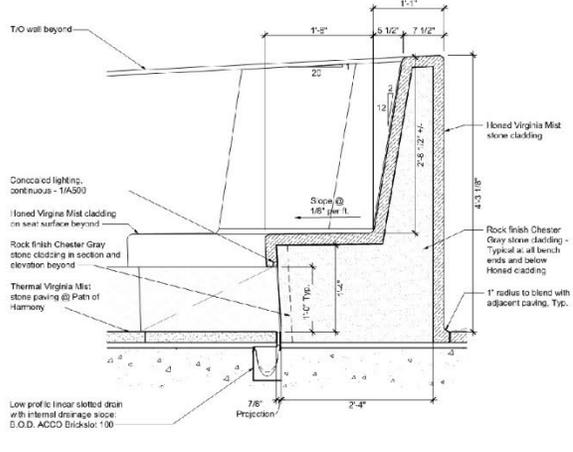
Memorial Core Details



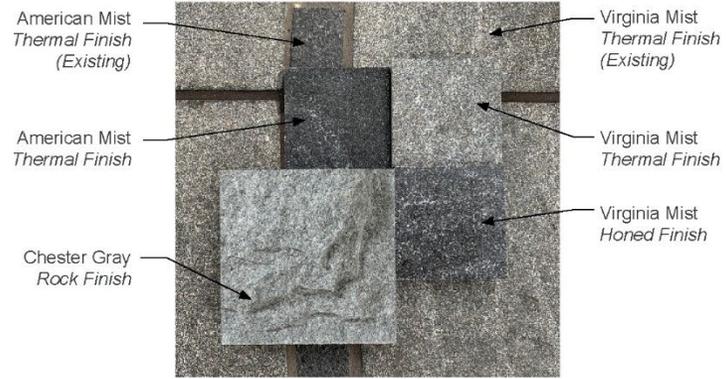
Elevation at South Memorial Core Walls 1/4" = 1'-0"



Section Detail at Low Bench 1/2" = 1'-0"



Section Detail at High Bench 1/2" = 1'-0"



Stone samples.

View from Warriors' Circle



Rendering of the Warriors' Circle of Honor at dusk with NMAI beyond. Visitors arrive at the Warriors' Circle, defined by sounds of flowing water, ceremonial fire on special occasions, the sun's rays on the edge of the sacred circle, the smells of native plants, and four lances with prayer cloths dancing in the wind.



Key Plan

View of Memorial from Above



Rendering of memorial from above. The Warriors' Circle of Honor is nestled between the existing NMAI Upland Hardwood Forest and Lowland Freshwater Wetland living landscape exhibits. The memorial provides a contemplative space for the visitors to reflect.



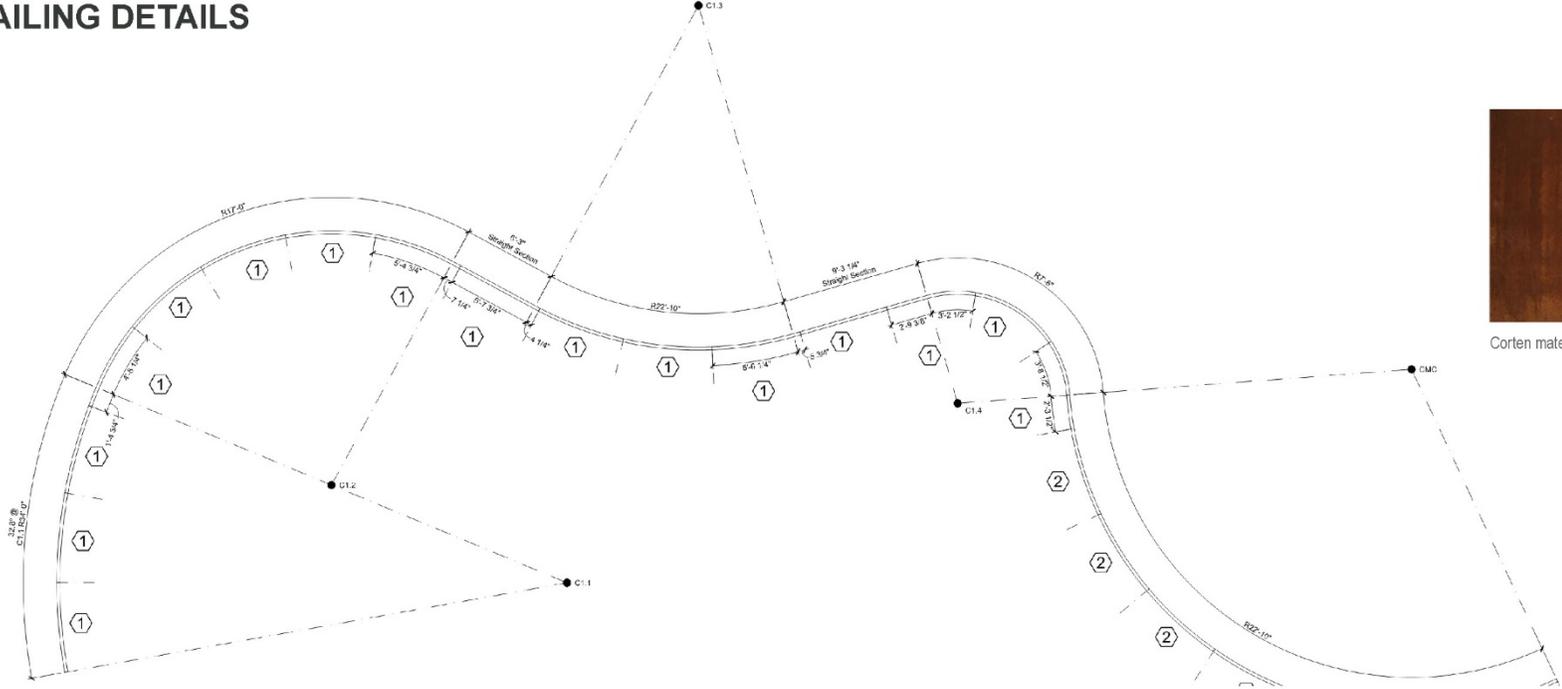
Key Plan

View from Approach Walk



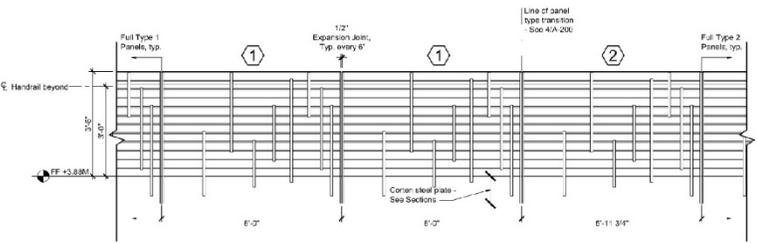
Railing Details

RAILING DETAILS

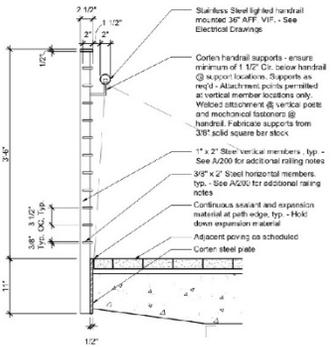


Corten material sample.

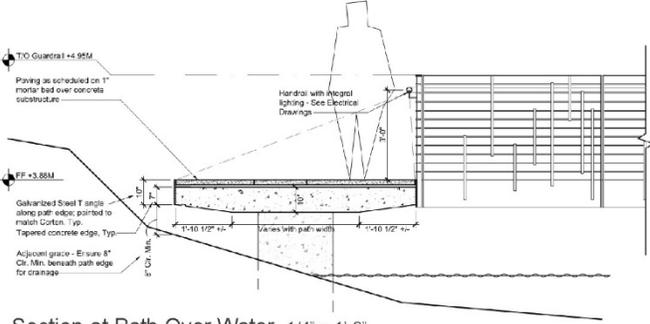
Guardrail Control Plan 1/8" = 1'-0"



Elevation at Guardrail 1/4" = 1'-0"



Section at Guardrail 1/2" = 1'-0"

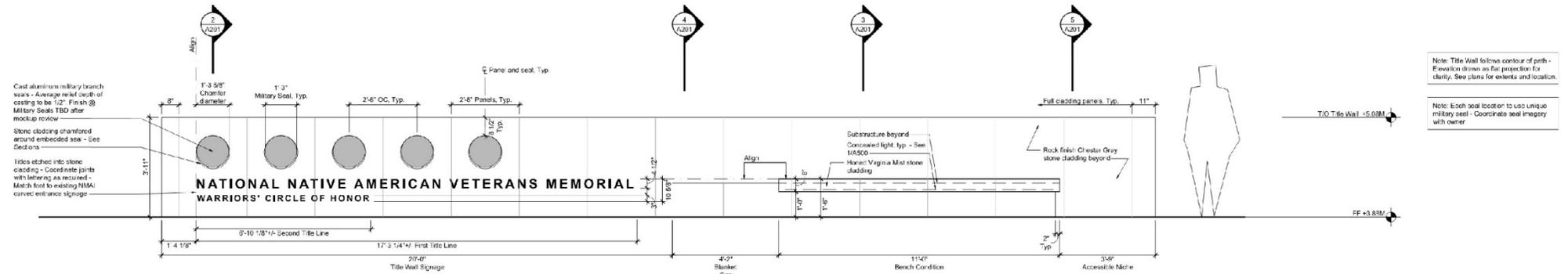


Section at Path Over Water 1/4" = 1'-0"

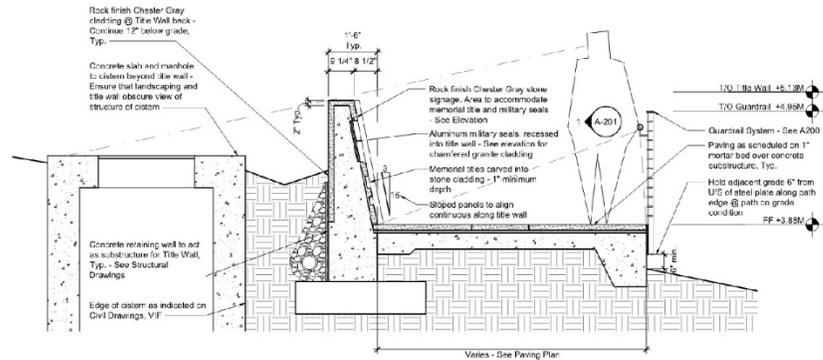
View of Title Wall and Approach



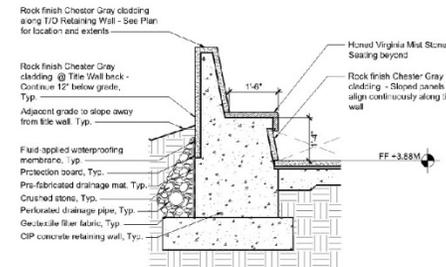
Title Wall Details



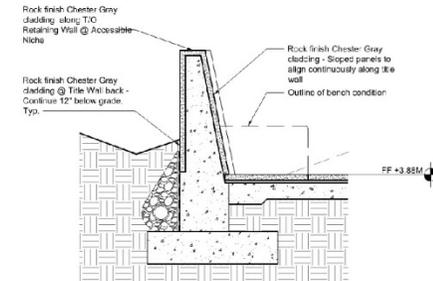
Elevation at Title Wall 1/4" = 1'-0"



Section at Title Wall Path on Grade 1/4" = 1'-0"



Section at Title Wall Bench 1/4" = 1'-0"



Section at Title Wall Companion Seating 1/4" = 1'-0"

Note: Title Wall follows contour of path - Elevation drawn as flat projection for clarity. See plans for extents and location.

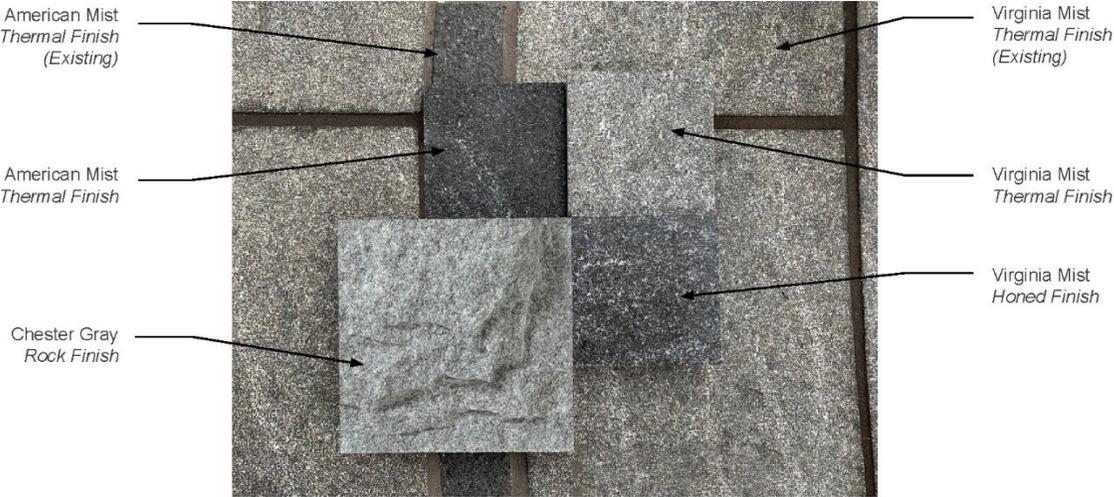
Note: Each seal location to use unique military seal - Coordinate seal imagery with owner.

Proposed Materials

GUARD RAIL: WEATHERED STEEL (CORTEN)



PAVING AND CLADDING: STONE



BATTLE STREAMERS AND FEATHERS: ACIDIZED BRONZE



- WHITE**
 Southeast
 REPRESENTING PURITY
 AND A NEW BEGINNING.
- RED**
 Southwest
 REPRESENTING THE CREATOR
 AND HIS POWER.
- YELLOW**
 Northwest
 REPRESENTING THE MOTHER
 EARTH AND ALL SHE PROVIDES.
- BLACK**
 Northeast
 REPRESENTING ANCESTORS AND
 THE CEREMONIES THEY PROVIDED.

(27 May 2019), *The Gift*. By A. Thomas Schenberg. American Indian Veterans Memorial. Riverside, CA: The Press-Enterprise.

WARRIORS' CIRCLE AND LANCES: STAINLESS STEEL



MILITARY SEALS: CAST ALUMINUM



(2019), U.S. Marine Corps Cast Aluminum Plaque. Mishawaka, IN: American Plaque Company

U.S. COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS 17 MAY 1910

401 F STREET NW SUITE 312 WASHINGTON DC 20001-2728 202-504-2200 FAX 202-504-2195 WWW.CFA.GOV

24 October 2019

Dear Mr. Gover:

In its meeting of 17 October, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed the final design submission for the National Native American Veterans Memorial, to be constructed on the grounds of the National Museum of the American Indian at Maryland Avenue and 3rd Street, SW. The Commission approved the final submission, conditional upon the resolution of the designs for the guardrail and paving.

In their review, the Commission members commended the project team for its responsiveness to their previous comments and for sensitively integrating the new memorial into the existing wetland landscape. However, they commented that the railing proposed along the path bordering the water appears dark, heavy, and reminiscent of a cage—potentially imposing a sense of separation instead of connection between visitors and the lush, elegant landscape. While they recognized the need for a safety barrier along the water's edge, they recommended making the railing appear lighter and more transparent, perhaps through reducing the number and thickness of its components, or even lowering or eliminating it at locations as allowable by safety regulations. They supported the overall hierarchy of metal materials proposed, including the use of CorTen steel for the railing in contrast to the stainless steel of the memorial's honorific elements such as the central sculpture, the Warriors' Circle of Honor. In general, they requested a more recessive and open treatment for this barrier, whether by reducing its scope and extent, minimizing its apparent density, or adding lighting to the background vegetation. They characterized the design of the paving as elegant throughout the length of the winding walkway and within the memorial circle, but awkwardly unresolved at the location where these two treatments meet; they recommended refining this detail, possibly using paving stones of varying widths so that the walk appears to feather into the circle. Finally, they suggested considering the effects of climate change in the specification of plant materials and the long-term viability of particular species.

The Commission looks forward to the completion of this new memorial on the National Mall. In its conditional action, the Commission delegated the approval of the designs for the guardrail and paving to the staff which, as always, is available to assist you in completing this final review.

Sincerely,



Thomas E. Luebke, FAIA
Secretary

Kevin Gover, Director
Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian
P.O. Box 37012
Washington, DC 20013-7012

cc: Harvey Pratt, Harvey Phillip Pratt Art
Hans Butzer, Butzer Architects and Urbanism
Elliot Rhodeside, Rhodeside & Harwell