



Commission Action

October 3, 2019

PROJECT Korean War Veterans Memorial Wall of Remembrance National Mall, Independence Avenue and Daniel French Drive, SW Washington, DC	NCPC FILE NUMBER 8107
SUBMITTED BY United States Department of the Interior National Park Service	NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER 1.43(73.10)44998
REVIEW AUTHORITY Approval per 40 U.S.C. § 8905	APPLICANT'S REQUEST Approval of comments on concept plans
	ACTION TAKEN Approved comments on concept design

The Commission:

Finds the existing Korean War Veterans Memorial composition has a strong geometry, sequence, narrative, and circulation organized into two distinctive areas, a triangular Field of Service and a circular Pool of Remembrance.

Notes that the National Park Service (NPS) considered several other design concepts for the Wall of Remembrance with differences in height, material, and composition that significantly changed the character of the memorial and the National Mall, created adverse visual impacts, and increased impervious surface. The applicant has selected the “low wall” option as the preferred concept consisting of a low, angled wall surrounding an expanded circular plaza.

Comments favorably on the preferred “low wall” concept because it is consistent with the original memorial design, is integrated into the landscape, and minimizes visual and environmental impacts to the National Mall, while improving access and circulation.

Circulation

Notes the only formal access to the memorial is from the west via two pathways.

Notes that NPS proposes two new connections to the memorial – one from Ash Road to the north and one from Independence Avenue to the south. Both connections would bring visitors directly into the circular Pool of Remembrance.

Finds that the proposed connection from Ash Road would improve the visitor experience and connectivity of the memorial with the surrounding context given Ash Road connects the Korean War Veterans Memorial to nearby memorials and attractions on the National Mall, including the soon-to-be-renovated US Park Police Stables located immediately to the east.

Finds that the proposed connection from Independence Avenue may have less use because it is located in between the only two crossings on Independence Avenue which already have (or will have with the stables project) formal paths to Ash Road. Visitors would likely follow these two paths to access the memorial from Ash Road as opposed to walking along the more traffic prone Independence Avenue.

Finds that the two proposed walkways leading directly into the Pool of Remembrance provide symmetry to the design. However, they may alter this quiet and secluded space and the sequence of the existing memorial.

Requests that NPS further evaluate how many visitors would be likely to access the memorial from the proposed Independence Avenue connection.

Proposed Wall

Finds that the proposed low, sloped wall is consistent with the geometry of the existing curbstone walls at the Korean War Veterans Memorial.

Requests that the applicant address the following comments regarding the wall visibility, angle, and finish to improve the preferred concept design:

- Consider simplifying the wall profile to soften the transition into the landscape and maintain open views between the existing memorial components and the National Mall.
- Provide a mockup on-site of a segment of the proposed wall to evaluate how the reflective finish and angle impact glare and legibility, as well as visual impacts to the memorial and surrounding context.

Landscape and Visitor Experience

Notes that the memorial's landscape design reinforces its formal composition. It is characterized by a commemorative grove, composed of two rows of linden trees around the Pool of Remembrance, that create a circle of pleached trees, and a triangular field of low juniper bushes emerging from the forest.

Finds that any changes to the landscape should be minimal and avoid competing with the memorial's distinct and formal landscape.

Finds that the memorial has limited seating opportunities given the size of the overall memorial site. There are currently seven benches under the pleached linden trees.

Recommends that the applicant provide a landscape plan at preliminary review that incorporates the following components:

- Low impact development features integrated into the proposed berm to comply with federal and local stormwater management regulations.
- Benches along the proposed walkway that connects to Ash Road to allow for opportunities for rest and contemplation, and if possible, in areas of shade.

Other Comments

Requests that the applicant provide the following information:

- A lighting plan and night views of the proposed wall consistent with the overall lighting design for the memorial that respects the hierarchy of memorials, monuments, and important civic buildings and spaces in the nation's capital, with the U.S. Capitol and Washington Monument the most prominent features in the nighttime skyline.
- Details showing the proposed improvements to the back side of the existing mural wall and how the Wall of Remembrance will terminate at the mural wall.
- Eye-level views from Independence Avenue looking north to better understand the impacts of the proposed design.

Julia A. Koster
Secretary to the National Capital Planning Commission

