



Delegated Action of the Executive Director

PROJECT

Temporary Display at the National World War I Memorial's Sculpture Fountain

Pershing Park
Washington, DC

NCPC FILE NUMBER

7682

NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER

1.23(73.10)45109

SUBMITTED BY

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

ACTION TAKEN

Approve preliminary and final site development plans

REVIEW AUTHORITY

Approval
Per 40 U.S.C. § 8905

The National Park Service (NPS) has submitted preliminary and final site development plans for a temporary printed fabric scrim with an image of the approved sculpture for the main commemorative fountain at the National World War I Memorial. The temporary scrim will be mounted on a rust resistant metal scaffold and will fill the full height and width of the area allocated for the final sculpture. The park improvements are expected to be completed in advance of the sculpture. As such, the temporary fabric scrim will provide a temporary image of the sculpture until the full installation is complete.

Title 30, Section 3091 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2015 (Pub. Law 113-291) designated Pershing Park in downtown Washington, DC, along with the Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, as national World War I memorials. The Act further authorized the World War I Centennial Commission (WWICC) to honor the service of members of the United States Armed Forces in World War I. A two-stage competition was held to select a memorial designer. Stage I included an open call for design concepts that was completed in August 2015. The competition jury selected five finalists to continue to Stage II. The winning design, "The Weight of Sacrifice," was selected by WWICC in early 2016. One of the most critical components of the design was a commemorative wall with bas-relief sculpture expressing the war experience. The Commission approved the final WWI Memorial on October 3, 2019 and since receiving approval of the design, the WWICC received a construction permit from the National Park Service to begin work on the National World War I Memorial in Pershing Park in January 2020.

On the current schedule, the WWICC expects that the Memorial Park will be restored and to reopen to the public by the end of 2020 or beginning of 2021. At that point, all the new commemorative elements, including the cascading fountains on the west and lower east faces of the sculpture wall, will be installed, except for the central bronze sculpture itself. The sculptor began "A Soldier's Journey" in early fall of 2019. The sculptural armature, based on the maquette design approved by the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA), has been divided into four sections; as the clay sculpture of one section is completed, it will be shipped to the foundry for casting while the sculptor continues working on the next section. It is estimated that the sculpting and casting of the entire work take a little more than four years. Given the amount of time needed to complete the sculpture, there will be about a three-year period between completion of the park and installation of the complete sculpture. During that period, the WWICC proposes to install temporary imagery that will depict the design of the eventual sculpture, and that will track the progress of the sculpture's creation from conceptual drawing to completed clay sculpture. The World War I Centennial Commission is seeking design approval for a temporary installation placed in lieu of the permanent

sculpture during the period of time between the opening of the park and installation of “A Soldier’s Journey.” In general, staff finds the proposed temporary display is in keeping with the design intent of the approved WWI Memorial and is an appropriate design element of the phased installation of the fountain sculpture.

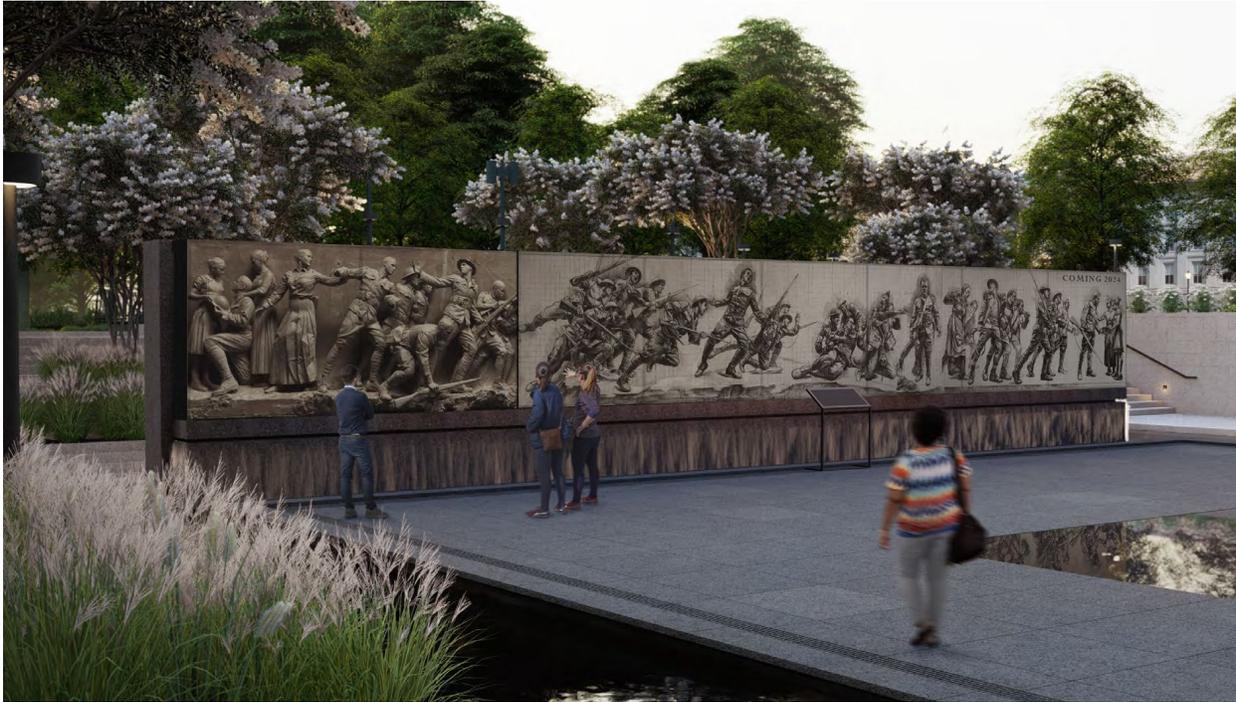


Figure 1 Temporary sculpture scrim



Figure 2 Temporary sculpture scrim



Figure 3 Temporary sculpture scrim

While the installation is temporary in nature, both NPS and NCPC have compliance responsibilities under both the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The site has an approved Environmental Assessment through the final development plan approval. NPS has determined that the project is a phased implementation of the approved sculpture and covered under the approved Environmental Assessment (EA). Because it has an approval authority in the review of this project, NCPC has an independent obligation to comply with NEPA, and believes that the proposed sculptural scrim is covered under the previously approved EA.

As part of the consultation process required under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), NPS consulted with the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office (DC SHPO) and confirmed that this project qualifies for streamlined review under the Nationwide Programmatic Agreement for Section 106. NCPC is designating NPS as the lead agency for compliance with NHPA.

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal at its April 15, 2020 meeting. The participating agencies were NCPC; the District Department of Transportation, The District Office of Planning, the District Department of Energy and Environment; the General Services Administration; the National Park Service; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. Without objection, the Committee forwarded the proposed preliminary and final site development plans to the Commission with the statement that the proposal has been coordinated with all participating agencies.

The U.S. Commission of Fine Arts approved the temporary installation at its April 16, 2020 meeting.

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Pursuant to delegations of authority adopted by the Commission on October 3, 1996 and per Public Law 93-166, Section 610(a), I approve preliminary and final site development plans for the temporary display at the National World War I Memorial's sculpture fountain, Pershing Park, Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, in Washington, DC, until the permanent sculpture is installed.

 5/01/20

Marcel Acosta
Executive Director

Date