



## Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: December 4, 2025

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| <b>PROJECT</b><br><b>Fallen Journalists Memorial</b><br>300 Independence Avenue, SW<br>Washington, DC | <b>NCPC FILE NUMBER</b><br>8449   |
| <b>SUBMITTED BY</b><br>United States Department of the Interior,<br>National Park Service             | <b>NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER</b><br>1.71(73.10)46082                                       |
| <b>REVIEW AUTHORITY</b><br>Commemorative Works<br>per 40 U.S.C. § 8905                                | <b>APPLICANT'S REQUEST</b><br>Approval of preliminary site<br>development plans       |
|   | <b>PROPOSED ACTION</b><br>Approve preliminary site<br>development plans with comments |
|   | <b>ACTION ITEM TYPE</b><br>Staff Presentation   |

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### PROJECT SUMMARY

The National Park Service (NPS), in collaboration with the Fallen Journalists Memorial Foundation (Foundation) has submitted preliminary site development plans for the proposed Fallen Journalists Memorial. The site is located at Independence Avenue, Maryland Avenue, and 3rd Street SW and is within the Monumental Core. The design consists of a 0.3-acre triangular park with a hardscape stone plaza overlaid with a grove of trees and an array of cast glass elements. The site will have three outdoor areas: Remembrance Hall, news room, and a classroom.

In 2020, Public Law 116-253 authorized the establishment of a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs to commemorate America's commitment to a free press by honoring journalists who sacrificed their lives in service to that cause, in accordance with the Commemorative Works Act (40 U.S.C. §8901) (CWA). The CWA defines approval requirements related to the location, design, and construction of commemorative works in the District of Columbia and its environs. NCPC and the CFA approve plans for new commemorative works.

The CWA allows for the location of a memorial within Area I if it is determined that the subject "is of preeminent historical and lasting significance to the United States." In January 2023, Public Law 117-328 authorized the approval of locating the memorial within Area I as outlined in the CWA. On April 6, 2023, the Commission reviewed the Fallen Journalists Memorial Site Selection and supported advancing the Maryland & Independence Avenue at 3rd Street, SW site (Site O) as well as Edward Murrow Park (Site T) for further evaluation. On April 27, 2023, the CFA reviewed the site selection study and approved Site O. In June 2023, the Foundation initiated a design competition by inviting a broad and diverse group of 118 architects, designers, and artists from the U.S. and abroad to submit proposals. In March 2024, the Foundation announced the selection of John Ronan Architects to design the memorial. The applicant has determined that the Maryland Avenue site is the preferred site.

At the September 4, 2024 National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission (NCMAC) meeting, the Foundation and John Ronan Architects presented the concept plan for the memorial. NCMAC reviewed and supported the concept plan and provided feedback on access, circulation, lighting, safety, landscaping, interpretation, and maintenance of the concept design.

The CFA reviewed the concept design for the Fallen Journalists Memorial at their September 19, 2024 meeting and approved the concept plan. Feedback was given on acoustics, perimeter circulation, design of the right-of-way, dimensions of the glass elements, and tree and landscaping.

In October 2024, NCPC approved comments supporting the design approach but found the design must balance memorial purpose, materiality, and functionality, while considering the site context and visitor experience. In January 2025, CFA approved the revised concept and strongly supported the design but had concerns about the lens, seating width, trees, and shading. The memorial team has continued to refine the proposed design in response to Commission comments and other feedback received through the review process.

## KEY INFORMATION

- The Commission is formally approving a memorial design as well as planning comments that weigh the opportunities and challenges of the preliminary site development plan.
- The CWA establishes requirements related to the location, design, and construction of commemorative works on federal lands within the District of Columbia and its environs. It applies to lands under jurisdiction of the Department of Interior (DOI) and the General Services Administration (GSA).
- In general, in accordance with the CWA, the key benchmarks for authorizing a new monument are summarized below:
  - (1) Congress authorizes each new monument purpose (subject) and a monument sponsor by separate federal law.
    - Public Law 116-253, “The Fallen Journalists Memorial Foundation may establish a commemorative work on Federal land in the District of Columbia and its environs to commemorate America’s commitment to a free press by honoring journalists who sacrificed their lives in service to that cause.”
    - Public Law 117-328 authorizes the approval of locating the memorial within Area I as defined by the CWA.
  - (2) The sponsor consults with the NCMAC on alternative sites and design concepts.
    - At the October 5, 2021, NCMAC meeting, the NPS in collaboration with the Foundation presented the site selection study and the four sites for comment and sought authorization to establish the memorial within Area I as defined by the CWA.
    - NCMAC commented favorably on Site O: Maryland & Independence Avenues at 3rd Street SW and generally dismissed Site A: Freedom Plaza

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given the need to relocate the Pulaski statue, along with likely future redevelopment. NCMAC recommended to the Secretary of Interior that Area 1 be legislated so that the Foundation can obtain its preferred site, which was subsequently enacted in Public Law 117-328.

– In April 2023, NCPC supported advancing Sites O and T: Edward R. Murrow Park for further consideration and recommended that the sponsor no longer consider Sites A: Freedom Plaza and D: Pennsylvania Avenue & Constitution Avenue NW. They requested that the applicant develop one or more design concepts for any sites advanced for further evaluation, including variations in scale, placement, and orientation.

– CFA approved Site O in April 2023.

– At the September 4, 2024 meeting, NCMAC reviewed and supported the concept plan while giving feedback on access, circulation, lighting, safety, landscaping, interpretation, and maintenance of the concept as designed.

(3) NCPC and CFA must each approve the site and design for new commemorative works.

– At the September 19, 2024 meeting, CFA approved the concept plan while giving feedback on acoustics, perimeter circulation, design of the right-of-way, dimensions of the glass elements, and tree and landscaping.

(4) DOI or GSA, as appropriate, must approve and permit the final site and design for each new memorial, after the steps above are completed.

- Site O is under the jurisdiction of the NPS. The site is not in NCPC's Memorials & Museums Master Plan (2M Plan).
  - Site O is sited along Maryland Avenue, SW, which is identified as a preeminent view corridor with a linear view from the U.S. Capitol to the Tidal Basin in the Urban Design Element. These views are critical to maintain as they contribute to the visual importance and hierarchy of nationally symbolic public buildings.
  - Site O is located within the Monumental Core Streetscape boundary and should be consistent with the Monumental Core Streetscape Design Guidelines.
  - The Foundation and John Ronan Architects envision a three-component concept plan for the memorial that will allow for various programming and gathering spaces (Remembrance Hall, news room, and a classroom). In October 2024, NCPC approved comments supporting the design approach and found the design must balance memorial purpose, materiality, and functionality, while considering the site context and visitor experience.
  - In January 2025, CFA approved the revised concept and strongly supported the design but had concerns about the lens, seating width, trees, and shading.
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## RECOMMENDATION

The Commission:

**Approves** the preliminary site development plans for the Fallen Journalists Memorial with comments to be addressed with the next submission.

**Notes** the Commission previously expressed support for the selected site, which is located at the intersection of Maryland Avenue, SW and 4<sup>th</sup> Street, SW, within view of the U.S. Capitol.

**Notes** the Commission previously found the design must balance memorial purpose, materiality, and functionality, while considering the site context and visitor experience, and provided comments related to site design, visitor access and circulation, visitor comfort, and viewsheds, lighting, streetscape design, and material use and durability.

**Notes** the applicant has continued to develop the memorial design in response to Commission comments and other stakeholder feedback through the review process.

### *Visitor Experience*

**Supports** the expansion of the sidewalk widths to 15 feet around the entire perimeter of the memorial site in response to the Commission's previous comments.

**Supports** the addition of granite seating and varied granite paving around the perimeter of the site to help define pedestrian circulation.

**Notes** the Commission previously requested the applicant work with NCPC and the Monumental Core Interagency Working Group to evaluate how the proposed memorial design can align with the Monumental Core Streetscape Design Guidelines and improve the pedestrian experience along Independence Avenue.

**Notes**, in response, the applicant has added two rows of street trees along Independence Avenue and selected two cultivars of honey locusts as the tree which is an approved "vase and spreading" tree in the Monumental Core Street Design Guidelines.

**Notes** the memorial design continues to include a series of elements placed across the site that generally define circulation paths and gathering spaces.

**Notes** the Commission previously requested the applicant to continue to evaluate additional approaches to enhancing visitor comfort and reducing the urban heat island effect, including alternative ground treatments, and other landscaping.

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**Notes** in response to the Commission's comments, the applicant arranged the trees in more linear fashion along the perimeter of the site that fits into the streetscape and clustered more trees around the outside of the Remembrance Hall.

**Finds** circulation and access for visitors may still be challenging to perceive or navigate, especially for those with mobility concerns or visual impairments.

**Requests** the applicant continue to refine the arrangement of the scattered glass elements within the site to help improve the access and circulation, with a focus on more uniform and clear paths of movement that will help guide visitors through the memorial.

**Recommends** the applicant evaluate if more trees and other landscaping can still be added.

**Supports** the information on the programming and interpretation with the addition of pylons and layouts for temporary events.

### *Remembrance Hall*

**Notes** the Remembrance Hall is composed of a series of blocks that together create a more formal gathering space, that contrasts with the more disparate elements spread across the site. The intent is to act as the "home for truth." Upon entering it, disorder yields to order, and things fall into place. Symbolizing the ideal of objective truth, the pure and polished glass lens is protected by the horizontally stacked glass elements which personify the fallen.

**Notes** the site is located along Maryland Avenue, SW, which is identified as a preeminent view corridor with a linear view from the U.S. Capitol to the Tidal Basin.

**Finds** the design of the Remembrance Hall creates a more formal experience within the larger memorial site, with the circular design of the memorial centered around a central lens element and views of the Capitol dome.

**Supports** the proposed addition of a second entryway into Remembrance Hall to help address better circulation throughout the entire memorial.

**Recommends** the applicant consider moving the east entryway to align with the view of the U.S. Capitol as viewed from the central lens element.

**Requests** the applicant to continue to evaluate the overall height of the Remembrance Hall to ensure that views to the U.S. Capitol Dome are appropriately framed once the entryway is aligned.

**Notes** the circular glass "lens" in the center of the space holds the text of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

**Finds** the lens in the new design of the Remembrance Hall has a larger lip, is higher off the ground and could act as a tripping hazard for pedestrians.

**Requests** the applicant explore a lens design that does not create a hazard for visitors.

### *Lighting*

**Notes** the submission indicates the memorial lighting approach includes up-lit glass elements which would create a glow across the site.

**Notes** the lighting approach should respect the visual importance and 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; and therefore

**Recommends** the applicant to continue to refine the lighting study as design changes are made to ensure the proposed lighting levels remain appropriate with the hierarchy of surrounding buildings and memorials.

### *Material Use and Durability*

**Notes** the applicant selected glass elements as the primary commemorative material as it engages with themes of transparency, opacity, distortion, clarity, and light. Each glass element will be unique and slightly different, to represent the unique personal story of each journalist remembered here.

**Finds** the proposed skateboarding deterrence options may detract from the design and comfort for visitors.

**Requests** the applicant explore additional alternatives to deter skateboarding on the memorial.

**Requests** the applicant provide, as part of the next submission, further information about:

- The durability of the glass elements with car exhaust/smog, and how they will be maintained and cleaned;
- Continued refinement of how climbing and skateboarding will be addressed;
- Clearly state how the temporary event will happen on different surfaces without impacting the designed landscape in the median of Maryland Avenue.

### *Coordination*

**Recommends** the applicant continue to work with the District Department of Transportation regarding any transfers of jurisdiction that will be needed for the memorial.

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## PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

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| <b>Previous actions</b>                   | <b>April 2023</b> – NCPC approved both Sites O: Maryland & Independence Avenue at 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street SW and T: Edward R. Murrow Park for the site location.<br><b>October 2024</b> – NCPC approved comments on concept plan. |
| <b>Remaining actions</b><br>(anticipated) | – Approval of final memorial plans   |

## PROJECT ANALYSIS

### Executive Summary

The NPS, in collaboration with the Fallen Journalists Memorial Foundation (Foundation), has submitted preliminary site development plans for the proposed Fallen Journalists Memorial. Staff has analyzed the preliminary site development plans in accordance with the CWA’s guidance on commemorative works and the policies set forth in the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*. Staff recommends the **Commission approves the preliminary site development plans for the proposed Fallen Journalists Memorial with comments to be addressed with the next submission.** The Commission previously expressed support for the selected site, which is located at the intersection of Maryland Avenue, SW and 4<sup>th</sup> Street, SW, within view of the U.S. Capitol. The Commission also previously found the design must balance memorial purpose, materiality, and functionality, while considering the site context and visitor experience, and provided comments related to site design, visitor access and circulation, visitor comfort, and viewsheds, lighting, streetscape design, and material use and durability. The applicant has continued to develop the memorial design in response to Commission comments and other stakeholder feedback through the review process. Additional recommendations, as outlined in the report below, should be considered with the final submission.

### Analysis

#### *Background*

The enabling legislation authorized a memorial that commemorates “America’s commitment to a free press by honoring journalists who sacrificed their lives in service to that cause.” Although the memorial will honor journalists who have died carrying out their profession, the primary subject of commemoration is freedom of the press, as listed in the Constitution. The intent of the memorial is to balance the duality of providing a place of commemoration and serving as an inspiration for journalists and the public. There are three main goals of the memorial: Commemoration, Inspiration, and Education. The memorial design consists of the interplay of three superimposed design elements – a hardscape stone plaza overlaid with a grove of trees that sidestep the array of cast glass elements which aggregate to form the memorial’s circular Remembrance Hall at the heart of the site.

Staff analyzed this project using guidance in the Commemorative Works Act (CWA), the Comprehensive Plan, and in consideration of the applicant's site selection criteria. A general principle set forth in the Comprehensive Plan is to protect and improve the open space character of the Monumental Core and the integrity of each memorial and park element. Further, the Comprehensive Plan includes policies to enhance the quality of the visitor experience to the Nation's Capital, particularly at major cultural sites, such as the Monumental Core.

As a reminder, the CWA (40 U.S.C. 8905) includes decision criteria for site and design approval:

- Surroundings – to the maximum extent possible, a commemorative work shall be located in surroundings that are relevant to the subject of the work.
- Location – a commemorative work shall be located so that it does not interfere with or encroach on, an existing commemorative work, and to the maximum extent practicable, it protects open space, existing public use, and cultural and natural resources.

### **Recommendation Summary**

The applicant has worked over the last year, including two working sessions with stakeholders, to refine the design while considering the site context and visitor experience of the memorial to address the comments previously made by the Commission related to site design, visitor access and circulation, visitor comfort, and viewsheds, lighting, streetscape design, and material use and durability. For the purposes of the analysis that follows, staff has focused on those aspects of the proposed design that have substantially changed since the previous Commission review and organized them under the following topics: Visitor Experience, Remembrance Hall, Lighting, Material Use and Durability, and Coordination.

#### *Visitor Experience*

Visitors would access the memorial from Maryland Avenue, Independence Avenue, and 3rd Street, SW. The revised memorial design includes an addition of three metal pylons at the three corners of the triangular site to assist wayfinding of the memorial site. The applicant also showed two layouts for temporary events, in response to previous feedback. Therefore, staff recommends the **Commission support the information on the programming and interpretation with the addition of pylons and layouts for temporary events.** The memorial design includes granite paving, now varied between the memorial site and the right-of-way (ROW). The sidewalks around the perimeter of the site now are uniformly sized and have granite seating along the perimeter. These changes will all help support visitor use and movement. Staff recommends the **Commission support the expansion of the sidewalk widths to 15 feet around the entire perimeter of the memorial site and the addition of the granite seating and varied granite paving around the perimeter of the site to help define circulation.**

NCPC, along with the Monumental Core Interagency Working Group (IWG), recently completed the Monumental Core Streetscape Guidelines, which reinforces the hierarchy of streets and vistas of the L'Enfant Plan. NCPC and Smithsonian, in consultation with the District of Columbia and other local and federal stakeholders completed an urban design study on Independence Avenue to

improve north-south and east-west connectivity for pedestrians and multi-modal transportation (physical and visual connectivity) and provide streetscape amenities to improve pedestrian accessibility and comfort. At the October 2024 meeting, the Commission previously requested the applicant work with NCPC and the Monumental Core Interagency Working Group to evaluate how the proposed memorial design can align with the Monumental Core Streetscape Guidelines and improve the pedestrian experience along Independence Avenue. In response, the applicant has added two rows of street trees along Independence Avenue and selected two cultivars of honey locusts as the tree which is an approved “vase and spreading” tree in the guidelines

The Commission previously requested the applicant to continue to evaluate additional approaches to enhancing visitor comfort and reducing the urban heat island effect, including alternative ground treatments, and other landscaping. In response to the Commission’s comments, the applicant arranged the trees in more linear fashion along the perimeter of the site that fits into the streetscape and clustered more trees around the outside of the Remembrance Hall. Given the need for shade, staff suggests the **Commission recommend the applicant evaluate if more trees and other landscaping can still be added.**

The memorial design continues to include a series of transparent, solid glass elements placed across the site that generally define circulation paths and gathering spaces. Bench-height glass elements (13”x13”x12’) are arranged to create designated paths for visitors to enter the Remembrance Hall that are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant. Multiple glass elements are stacked together to create the over 9-foot tall walls of the Remembrance Hall. While the arrangement of blocks are ADA-compliant, they are still scattered in a seemingly random manner, which may still be a challenge for various abilities to safely navigate throughout the memorial. The height and width may seem uncomfortable for visitors while contemplating in the memorial, even if ADA-compliant. Therefore, staff recommends the **Commission find circulation and access for visitors may still be challenging to perceive or navigate, especially for those with mobility concerns or visual impairments.** As the plans are finalized, the applicant should still work to improve accessibility and comfort. As such, staff recommends the **Commission request the continue to refine the arrangement of the scattered glass elements within the site to help improve the access and circulation, with a focus on more uniform and clear paths of movement that will help guide visitors through the memorial.**

### *Remembrance Hall*

The site is located along Maryland Avenue, SW, which is identified as a preeminent view corridor with a linear view from the U.S. Capitol to the Tidal Basin. Remembrance Hall is composed of a series of blocks that together create a more formal gathering space, that contrasts with the more disparate elements spread across the site. The intent is to act as the “home for truth.” Upon entering the hall, disorder yields to order, and things fall into place. Symbolizing the ideal of objective truth, a pure and polished glass lens located at the center is protected by the horizontally stacked glass elements which personify the fallen. Therefore, staff recommends the **Commission find the design of the Remembrance Hall creates a more formal experience within the larger memorial site, with the circular design of the memorial centered around a central lens element and views of the Capitol dome.** In response to previous comments, the applicant has

added another entry into the Hall. Staff finds this beneficial to visitor access, and recommends the **Commission support the proposed addition of a second entryway into Remembrance Hall to help address better circulation throughout the entire memorial.** Regarding internal views, staff notes the central Remembrance Hall is intended to provide a view toward the U.S. Capitol dome. The new entry point, as viewed from the center of the hall, is slightly offset from the view to the Capitol. As such, it may be a missed opportunity to create a more direct visual relationship to the dome. As such, staff suggests the **Commission recommends the applicant consider moving the east entryway to align with the view of the U.S. Capitol as viewed from the central lens element.** Staff also recommends the **Commission request the applicant to continue to evaluate the overall height of the Remembrance Hall to ensure that views to the U.S. Capitol Dome are appropriately framed once the entryway is aligned.**

Within Remembrance Hall is a circular glass “lens” in the center of the space holds the text of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. According to the submission, the lens is about 18 inches tall. Staff recommends the **Commission find the lens in the new design of the Remembrance Hall has a larger lip, is higher off the ground and could act as a tripping hazard for pedestrians.** Therefore, staff recommends the **Commission requests the applicant explore a lens design that does not create a hazard for visitors.**

### *Lighting*

The submission indicates the memorial lighting approach includes up-lit glass elements which would create a glow across the site. The submission included an updated lighting study of the site focusing on the impacts to the hierarchy of the U. S. Capitol and surrounding museums. The Urban Design Element of the Comprehensive Plan states the following policy UD.B.1.5 “Utilize building, street, and exterior lighting 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.” The lighting approach should respect the visual importance and 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. Overall, the proposed lighting approach appears respectful of this hierarchy and staff suggests the **Commission recommend the applicant continue to refine the lighting study as design changes are made to ensure the proposed lighting levels remain appropriate with the hierarchy of surrounding buildings and memorials.**

### *Material Use and Durability*

The applicant selected glass elements as the primary commemorative material as it engages with themes of transparency, opacity, distortion, clarity, and light. Each glass element will be unique and slightly different, to represent the unique personal story of each journalist remembered.

The applicant explored several options for skateboarder deterrence. These included primarily raised elements applied to the glass blocks. Staff finds the options for skateboarding deterrence will take away from the design and comfort for visitors. Therefore, staff recommends the

**Commission request of the applicant to provide additional alternatives to deter skateboarding on the memorial.** Additional alternatives could include decorative fittings that speak to the theme of the memorial.

Finally, as the memorial design further develops, additional details and evaluation will be necessary regarding several issues around safety and cleanliness of the memorial site. In addition, several questions regarding the glass material should be considered. As such, staff recommends the **Commission requests the applicant provide, as part of the next submission, further information about:**

- **The durability of the glass elements with car exhaust/smog, and how they will be maintained and cleaned;**
- **Continued refinement of how climbing and skateboarding will be addressed;**
- **Clearly state how the temporary event will happen on different surfaces without impacting the designed landscape in the median of Maryland Avenue.**

#### *Coordination*

The applicant is currently working with the District Department of Transportation on transferring portions of the right-of-way to NPS in order to implement the sidewalk design and allow for maintenance of the memorial's streetscape elements. Therefore, staff recommends the **Commission recommends the applicant continue to work with the District Department of Transportation regarding any transfers of jurisdiction that will be needed for the memorial.** The Commission will review any future transfer of jurisdiction.

## **CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE**

### **Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital**

This project generally conforms to elements of the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*. As noted above, the planning and design comments are designed to ensure the proposal meets basic goals of the Comprehensive Plan. In particular, policies related to Visitor Experience and Urban Design have been considered.

### **Commemorative Works Act**

The CWA contains a set of foundational level decision criteria that NCPC is required to use when considering site and design proposals for commemorative works. Specifically, the CWA states that in considering site and design proposals, NCPC shall be guided by a number of criteria, including surroundings, location, material, landscape features, and site-specific guidelines. As noted above, the planning and design comments are designed to ensure the proposal broadly meets the CWA criteria.

### **Memorials and Museums Master Plan**

The 2001 Memorials and Museums Master Plan (2M Plan) provides guidance regarding the placement of future commemorative works. In particular, the Plan seeks to reinforce the historic urban design features of the city, minimize intrusion on existing memorials, and reduce adverse environmental and transportation impacts and enhance positive economic and other effects on local neighborhoods. The 2M Plan states that memorials, when properly placed and sensitively designed, can provide a source of community identity and pride, while bolstering revitalization efforts. The site location chosen at Maryland & Independence Avenues was not identified in the 2M Plan, however the Commission expressed support for the site as described in the analysis above.

### **Monumental Core Streetscape Design Guidelines**

The Monumental Core Streetscape Design Guidelines are a set of guidelines of high-quality elements developed to achieve consistency across streetscapes and improve connections and relationships between the monumental core and surrounding neighborhoods. NCPC and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts use the guidelines in their review of major site redevelopment or capital improvement projects within the Monumental Core Streetscape boundary. As noted above, coordination has occurred through design development to ensure consistency.

### **National Historic Preservation Act**

NCPC and NPS each have an independent responsibility to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). NCPC will complete the requirements of Section 106 prior to the Commission's final approval of the project.

Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and its implementing regulations (36 CFR Part 800) "Protection of Historic Properties," the NPS initiated Section 106 consultation with the District of Columbia on October 8, 2024. Additionally, the NPS held one Section 106 consulting party meeting virtually on April 23, 2025, and included a presentation of the APE, existing conditions, and proposed design. Following this consultation, the NPS determined that there would be no adverse effect on historic properties. NHPA will be completed prior to final review.

### **National Environmental Policy Act**

The NPS has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The EA covers specific impact topics that are critical to the project area. The topics include historic districts and structures, cultural landscapes, archeological resources, and visitor use and experience. The EA will be available for public comment from September 12 to October 12, 2025. NCPC is a cooperating agency for purposes of complying with NEPA. The NEPA process will be completed prior to final review.

No wetlands have been identified at the project site. Additionally, the project site is outside the proposed designated habitat for the federally proposed threatened Monarch Butterfly. The project

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site is within the 500-year floodplain. It would be designed to mitigate flood risk and prevent impacts to floodplain values. The memorial design incorporates both area drains as well as a trench drain to manage stormwater effectively. Drainage design would be done in compliance with the Department of Energy & Environment (DOEE) and the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) stormwater regulations.

## **CONSULTATION**

### **Coordinating Committee**

Without objection, the Committee forwarded the proposed preliminary site development plans to the Commission with the statement that the proposal was coordinated with some, but not all, participating agencies. SHPO completed review of the project for effects on built environment resources and has no concerns. Since the archaeological review is on-going, SHPO is coordinating conditioned upon completion of the Section 106 review for effects on any archaeological resources that may exist on the memorial site. DOEE noted that its coordination is ongoing. DDOT wanted to confirm the property line and asked about sidewalk widths, which NCPC confirmed as 15 feet. DDOT wanted to check on the ADA ramps as one looked skewed and asked if the applicant checked with its forestry division regarding the street trees as one of them is a heritage tree. DDOT also noted that the design has a lot of hardscape. NCPC asked which tree is a heritage tree and DDOT identified the tree along Independence Avenue. NPS noted that it has a meeting with DDOT today to discuss the transfer of jurisdiction regarding the sidewalks.

### **U.S. Commission of Fine Arts**

In January 2025, CFA approved the revised concept and strongly supported the design but had concerns about the lens, seating width, trees, and shading. A copy of the letter is attached.

## **ONLINE REFERENCE**

The following supporting documents for this project are available online at [www.ncpc.gov](http://www.ncpc.gov):

- Project Summary
- Submission Package

Prepared by Melissa Lindsjo  
11/24/2025

## **POWERPOINT (ATTACHED)**

# Fallen Journalists Memorial

300 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC

Approval of Preliminary Site Development Plans

United States Department of the Interior

# Project Summary

**Commission Meeting Date:** December 4, 2025

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

**Applicant Request:** Approval of Preliminary Site Development Plans

**Session:** Open

**NCPC Review Officer:** Melissa Lindsjo

**NCPC File Number:** 8449

## Project Summary:

The Fallen Journalists Memorial will be located on parkland at a triangular site (Reservation 201) under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service (NPS) and managed by the National Mall and Memorial Parks. The site is situated at the intersection of Independence Avenue, Maryland Avenue, and 3rd Street, SW.

The memorial design features a hardscape stone plaza overlaid with a grove of trees and an array of cast glass beams that collectively form the primary memorial element. These beams create a circular Remembrance Hall at the heart of the site. Visitors would access the memorial through three entrances located at the northeast, southeast, and southwest corners of the site.

In 2020, Congress authorized the Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs to commemorate America's commitment to a free press by honoring journalists who sacrificed their lives in service to that cause (PL 116-253). In January 2023, the president authorized locating the memorial within Area I as outlined in the Commemorative Works Act (CWA)(Public Law 117-328).

# Project Summary

In April 2023, the Foundation received site approval from the National Capital Planning Commission and the US Commission of Fine Arts to design the memorial on the site (Site O) located at Independence Avenue, Maryland Avenue, and 3rd Street SW.

In June 2023, the Foundation initiated a design team competition by inviting a broad and diverse group of 118 architects, designers, and artists from the U.S. and abroad to submit proposals.

In March 2024, the Foundation announced the selection of John Ronan Architects to design the memorial.

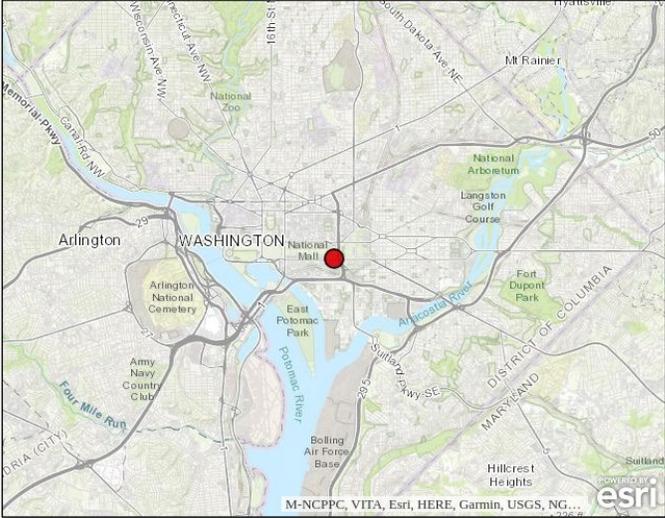
October 2024, NCPC approved comments supporting the design approach but finds the design must balance memorial purpose, materiality, and functionality, while considering the site context and visitor experience.

On January 16, 2025, CFA “reiterated their strong support for the memorial’s proposed design as beautiful and poetic, commenting that it will expand the design vocabulary used for commemorative public spaces.”

NPS initiated Section 106 consultation with the District of Columbia on October 8, 2024 and has determined that there would be no adverse effect on historic properties. The NPS has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

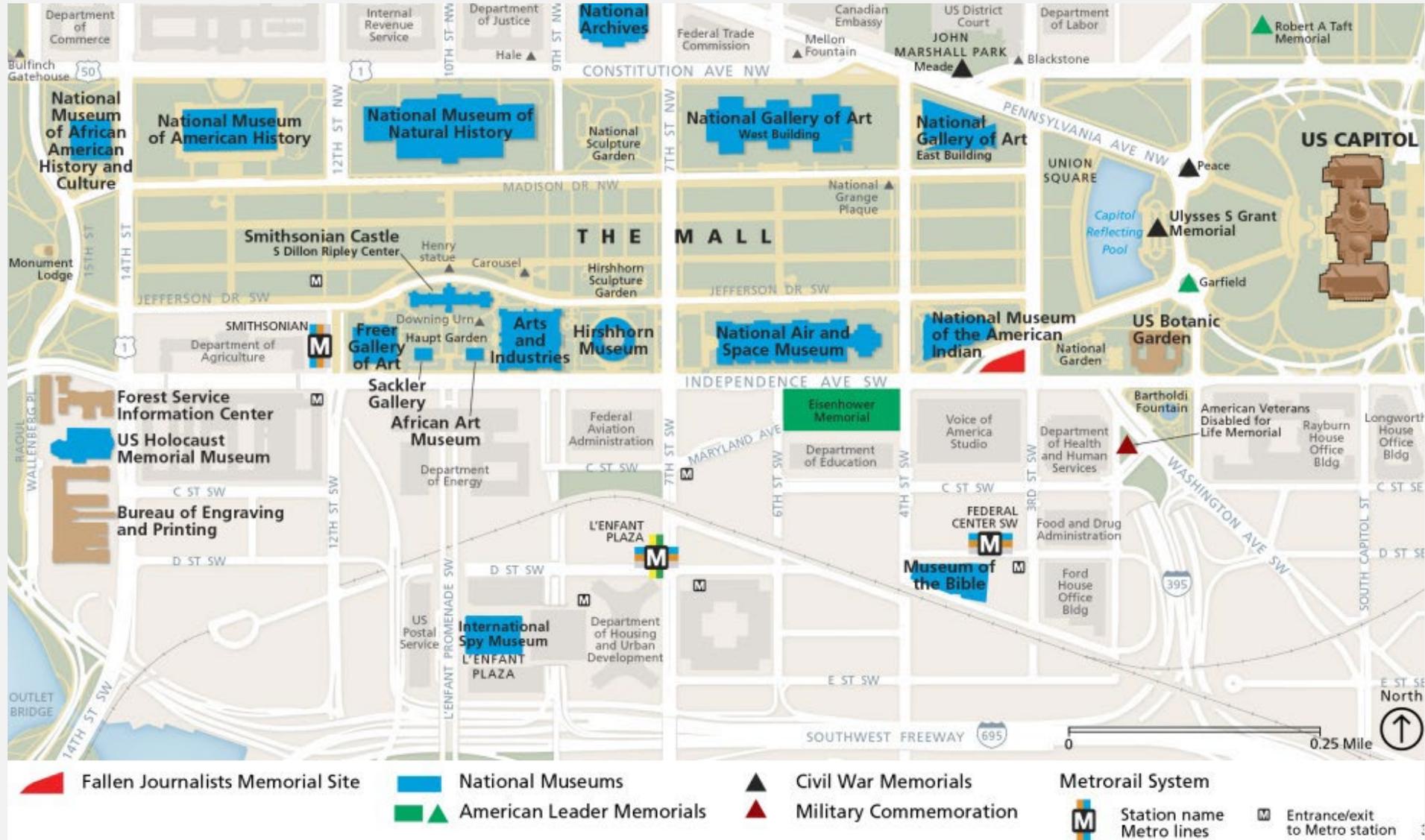
In July 2025 there was a working group session to discuss some of the issues and the proposed changes presented address comments from the October 2024 meeting.

# Site Location



Location Map

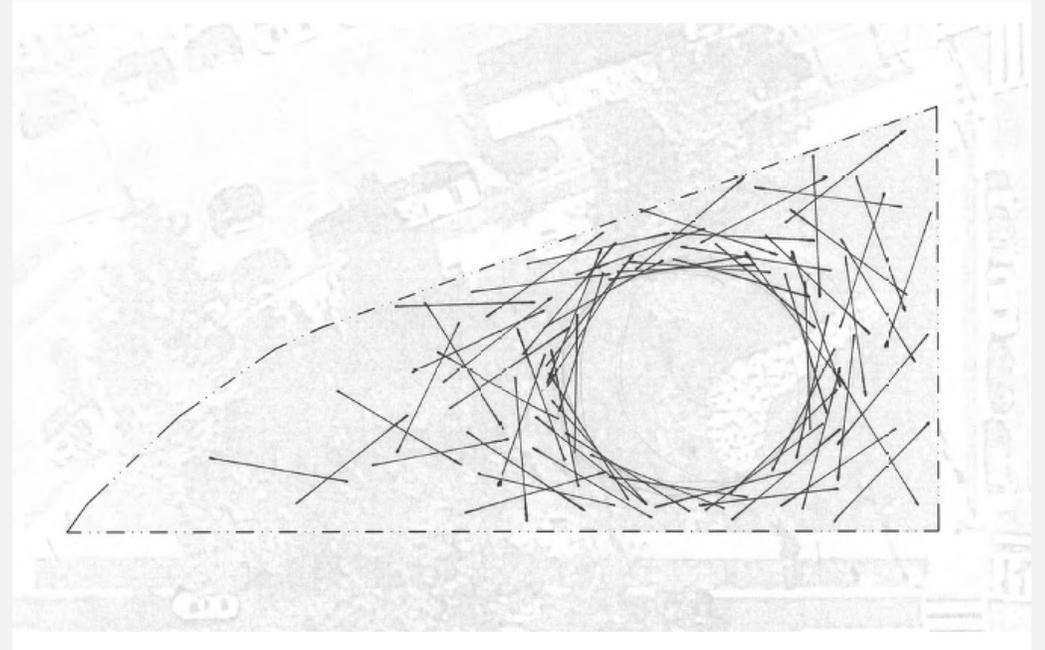
# Site Location with Context



# Memorial as a Story

The memorial design consists of a collection of transparent, solid glass elements arranged on the site in a seemingly accidental manner which aggregate to form a pure cylindrical space at the heart of the site, suggesting the way ostensibly disconnected facts coalesce to form a journalist's story.

Experiencing the memorial is a **journey of discovery** that unfolds slowly, space by space like a story, and casts the visitor in the role of investigative journalist pursuing truth wherever it leads.

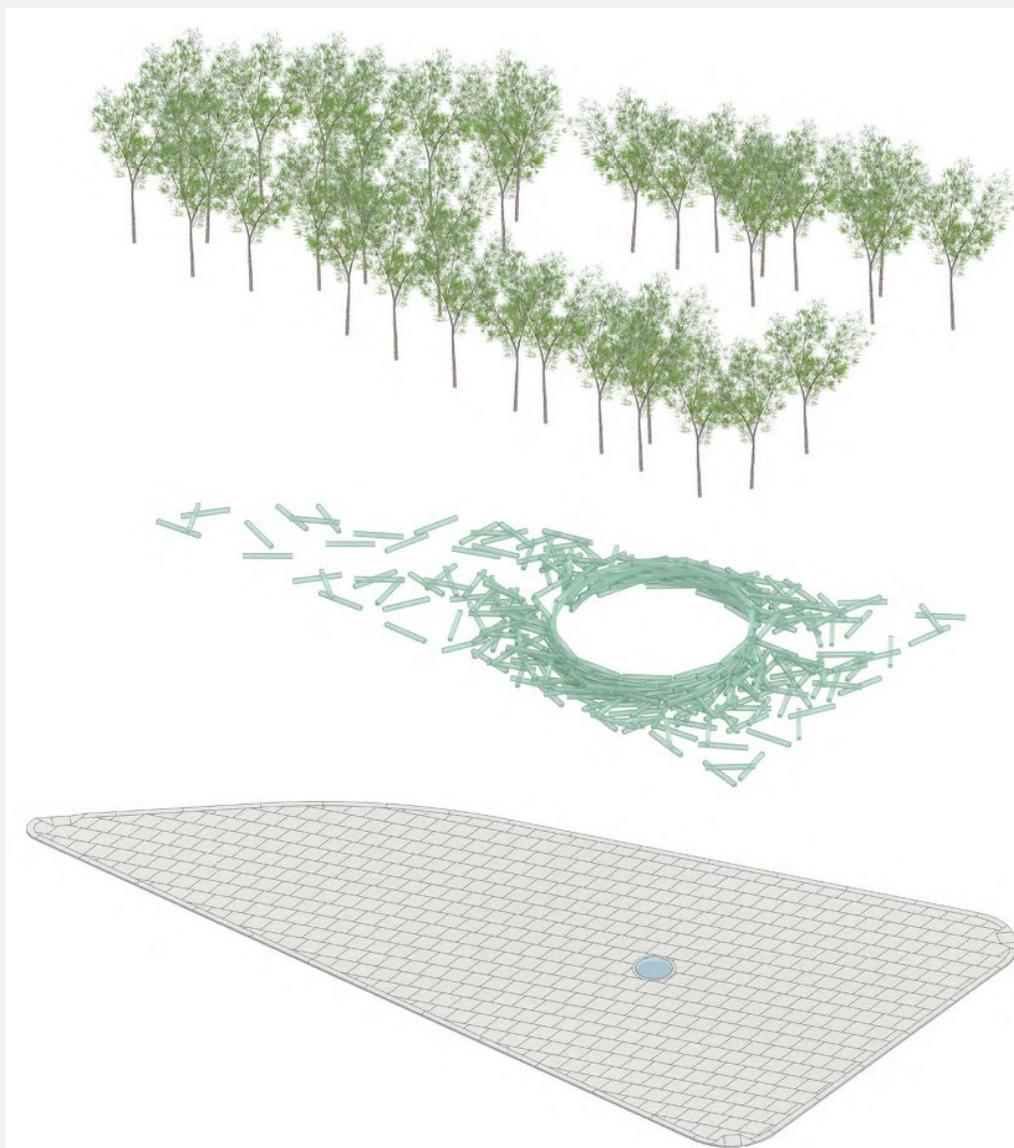


# Aerial View

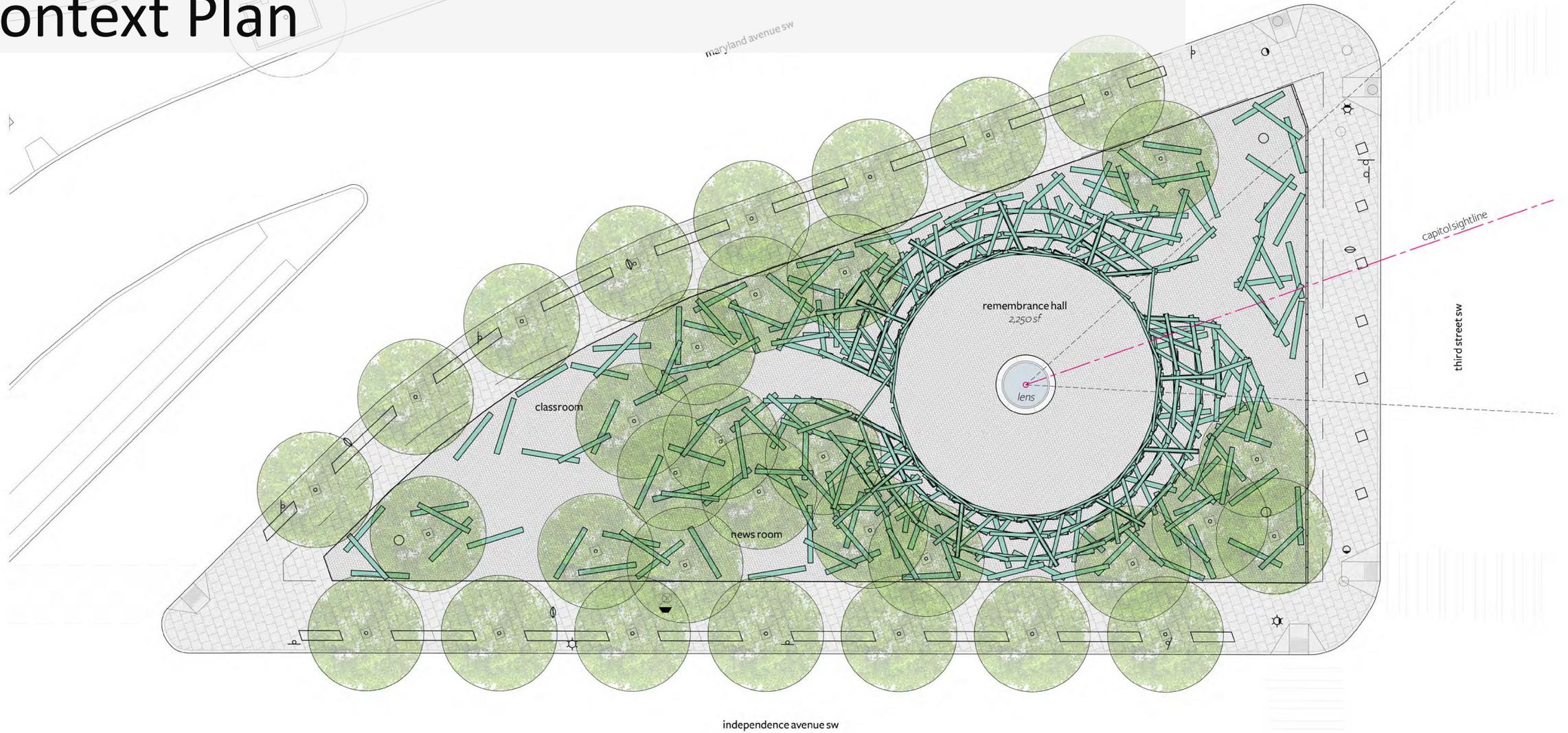


# Memorial Components

The memorial design consists of the interplay of three superimposed design elements –a hardscape stone plaza overlaid with a grove of trees that sidestep the array of cast glass elements which aggregate to form the memorial’s circular Remembrance Hall at the heart of the site.

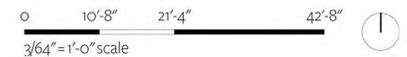


# Context Plan



symbol key

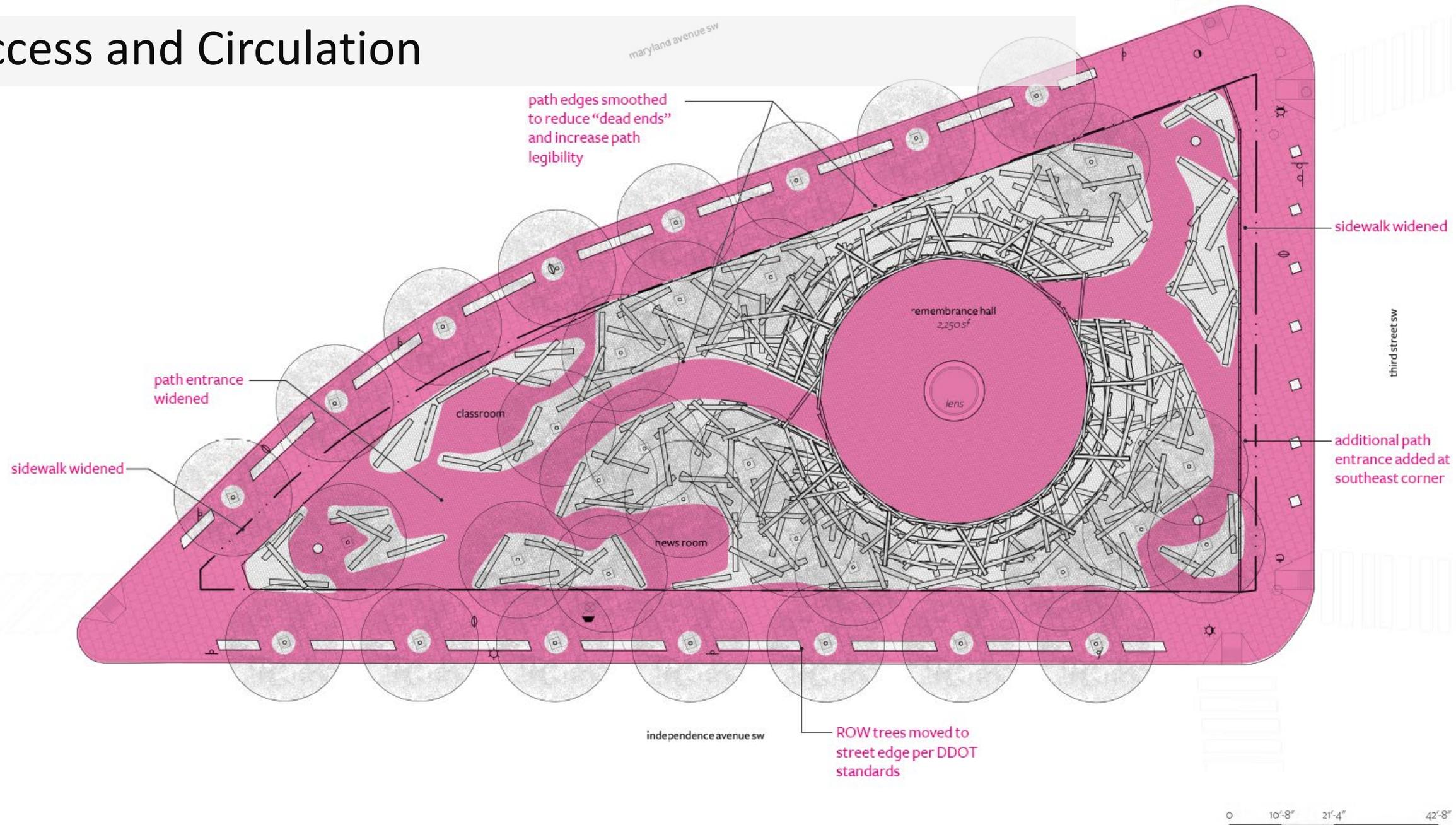
- parking meter
- manhole
- ⊗ water meter vault
- ⊗ water valve vault



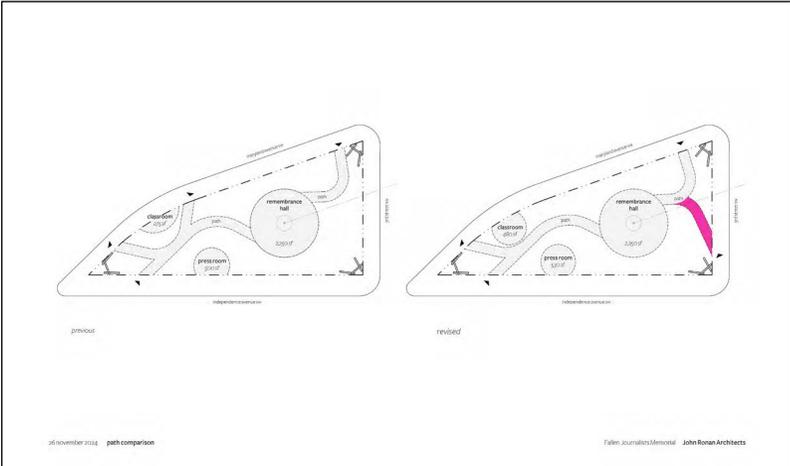
15 July 2007 memorial plan

Fallon Journalists Memorial John Bann Architects

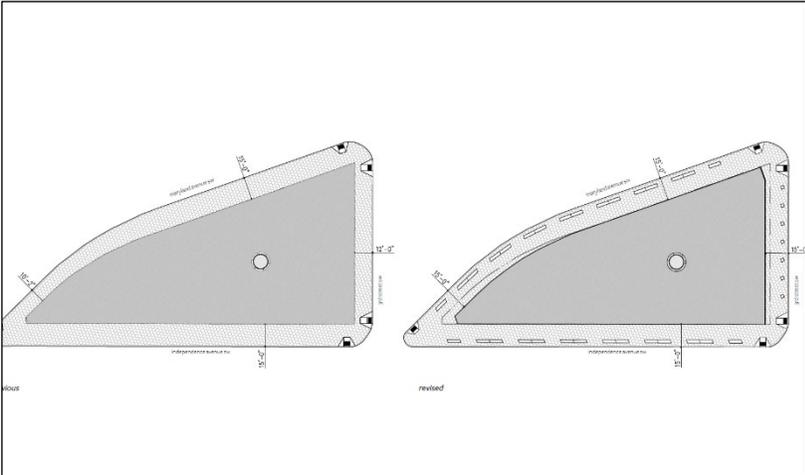
# Access and Circulation



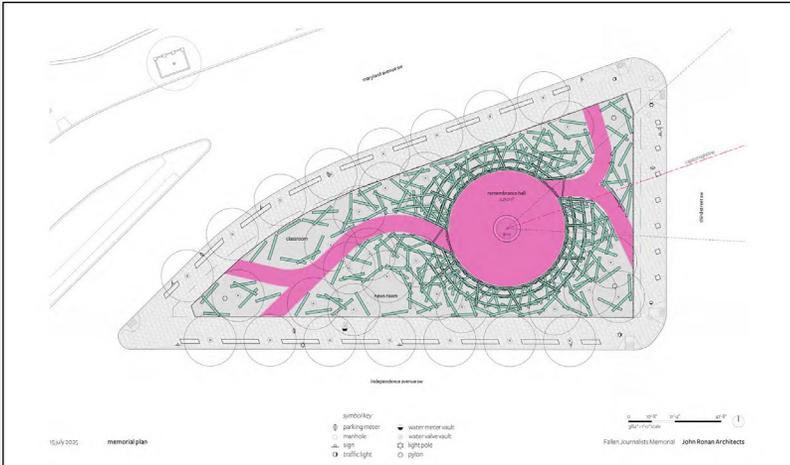
# Access and Circulation



Path Comparison



Sidewalk widths to 15' - 0"



The visitor path maintains an 8' clear width throughout (3' clear width is required per the ADA and ABA).



Path with ADA clear space.

# Access and Circulation



Independence Avenue ROW



Third Street ROW

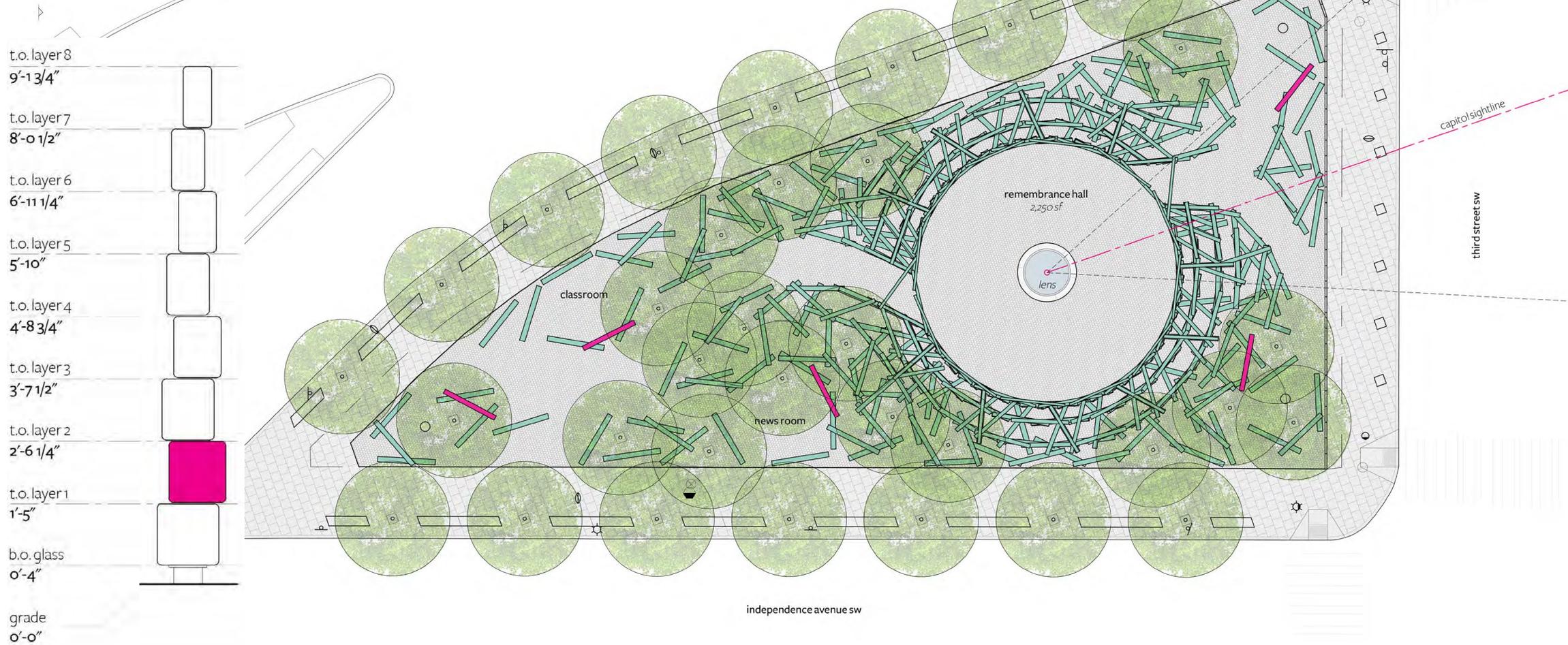


Maryland Avenue ROW



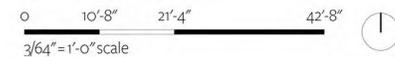
Southeast Corner

# Quote Location Study



symbol key

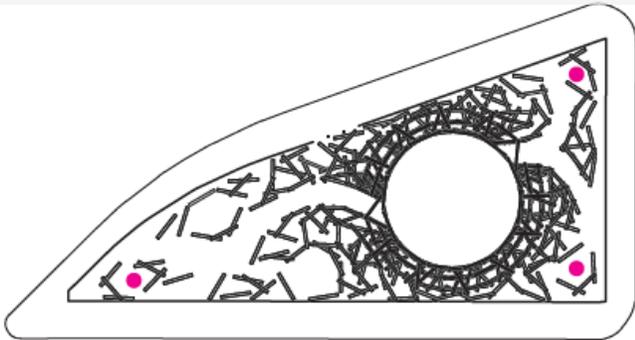
- parking meter
- manhole
- ⊖ water meter vault
- ⊗ water valve vault



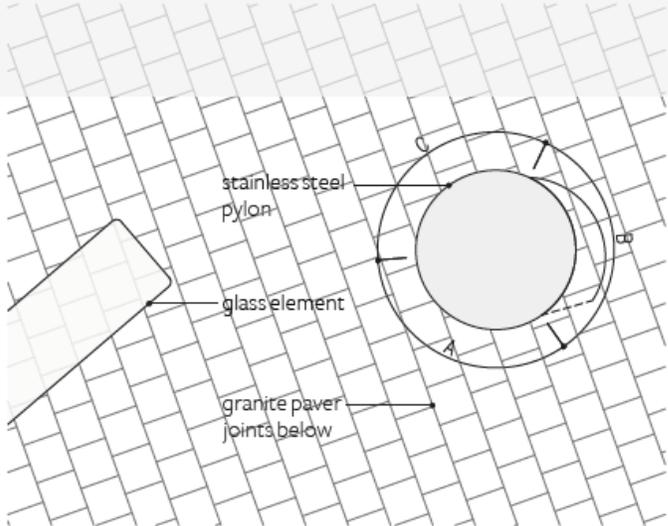
15 july 2022 memorial plan

Fallen Journalists Memorial John Boman Architects

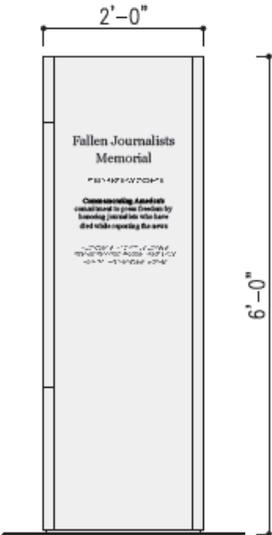
# Pylon Locations



key plan

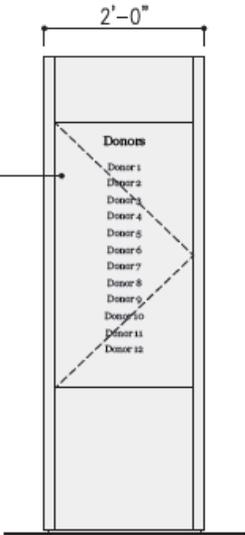


plan

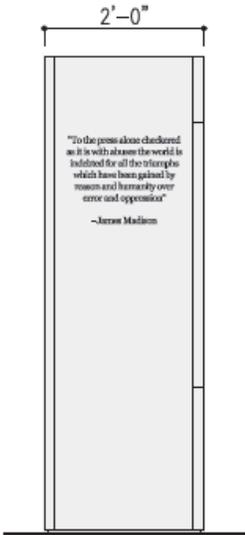


elevation A  
fallen journalists memorial

access panel for  
lighting and  
irrigation controls



elevation B  
donors



elevation C  
quote

# Pylon



# Remembrance Hall

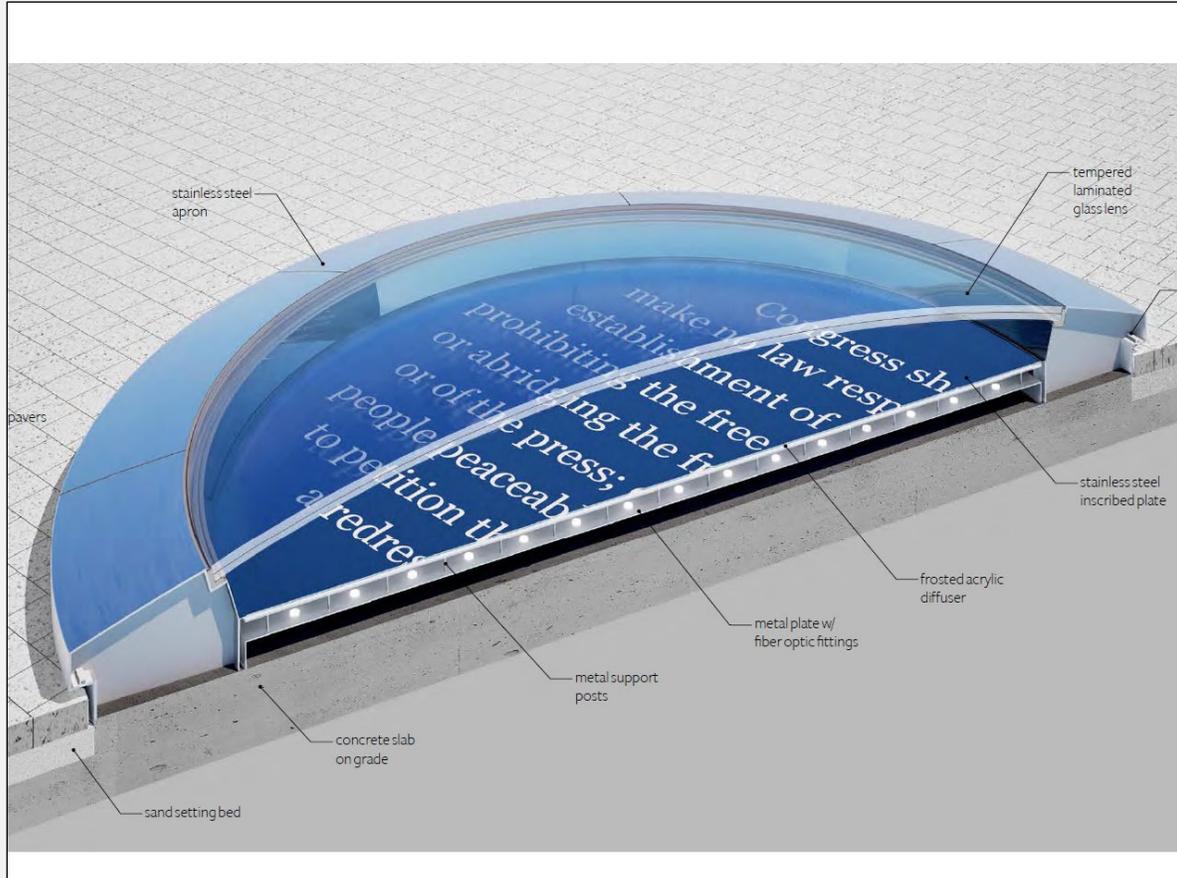


*Congress shall  
make no law respecting an  
establishment of religion, or  
prohibiting the free exercise thereof,  
or abridging the freedom of speech,  
or of the press; or the right of the  
people peaceably to assemble, and  
to petition the Government for  
a redress of grievances.*

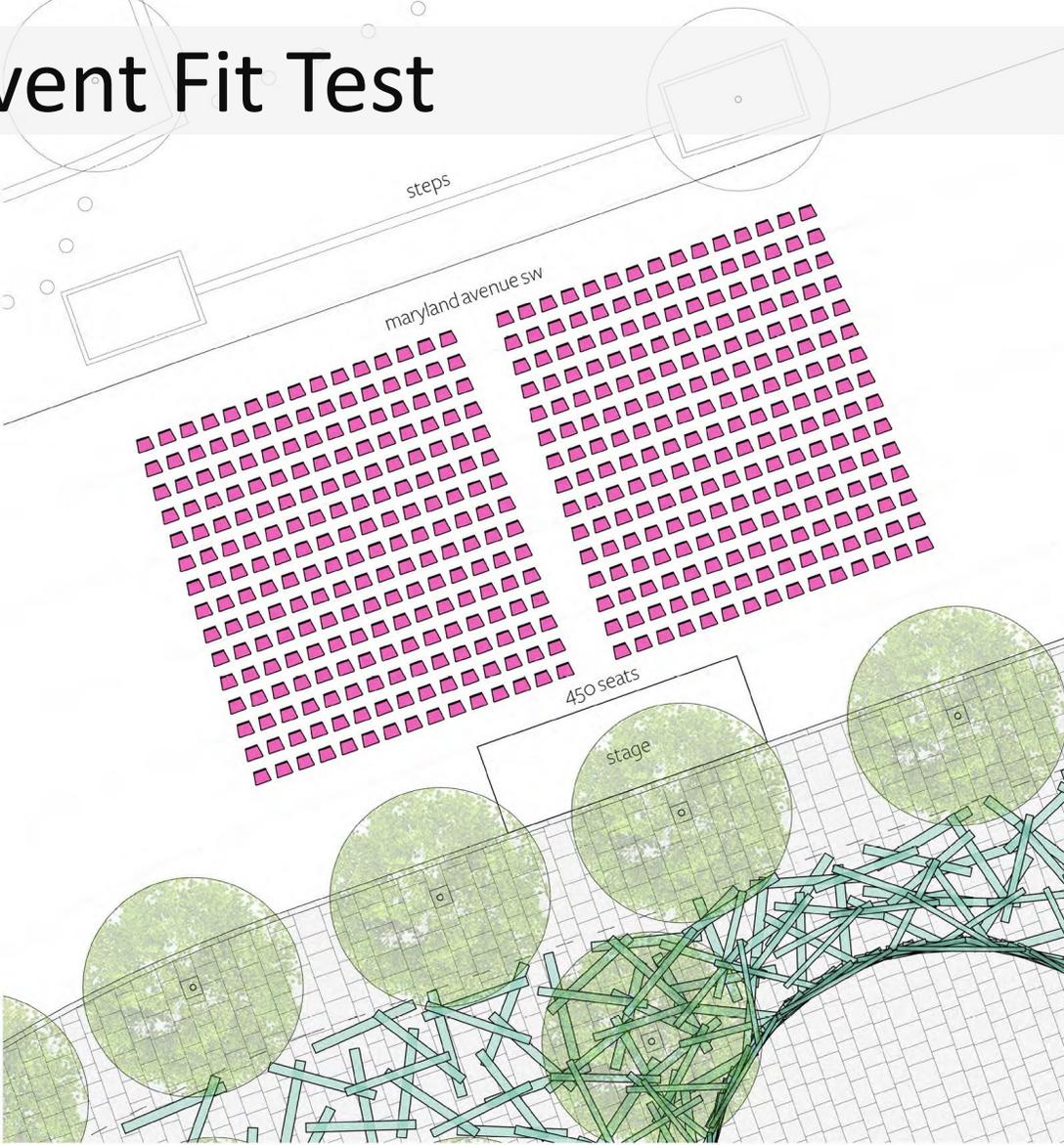
# Lens Revision



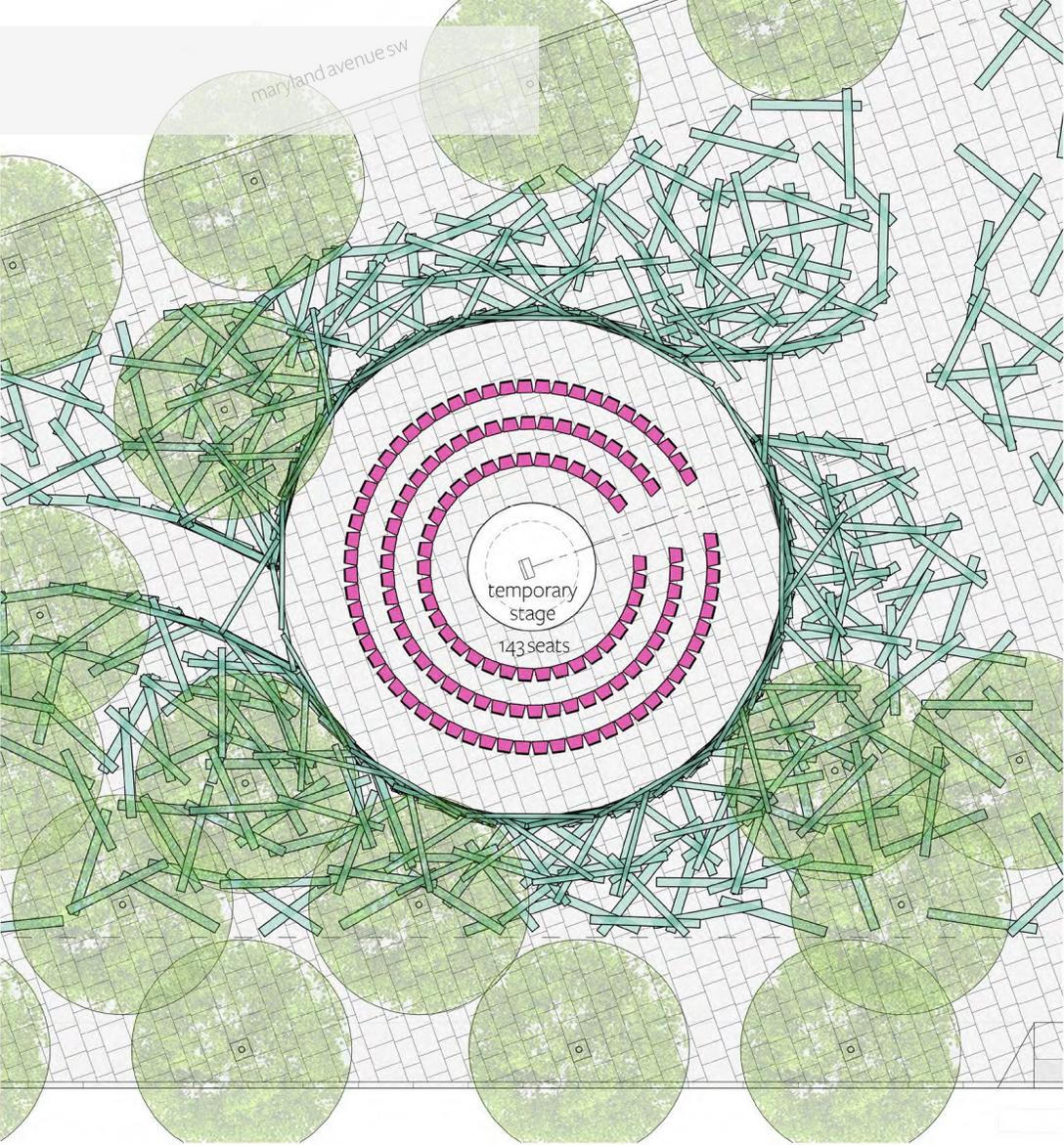
# Lens



# Event Fit Test



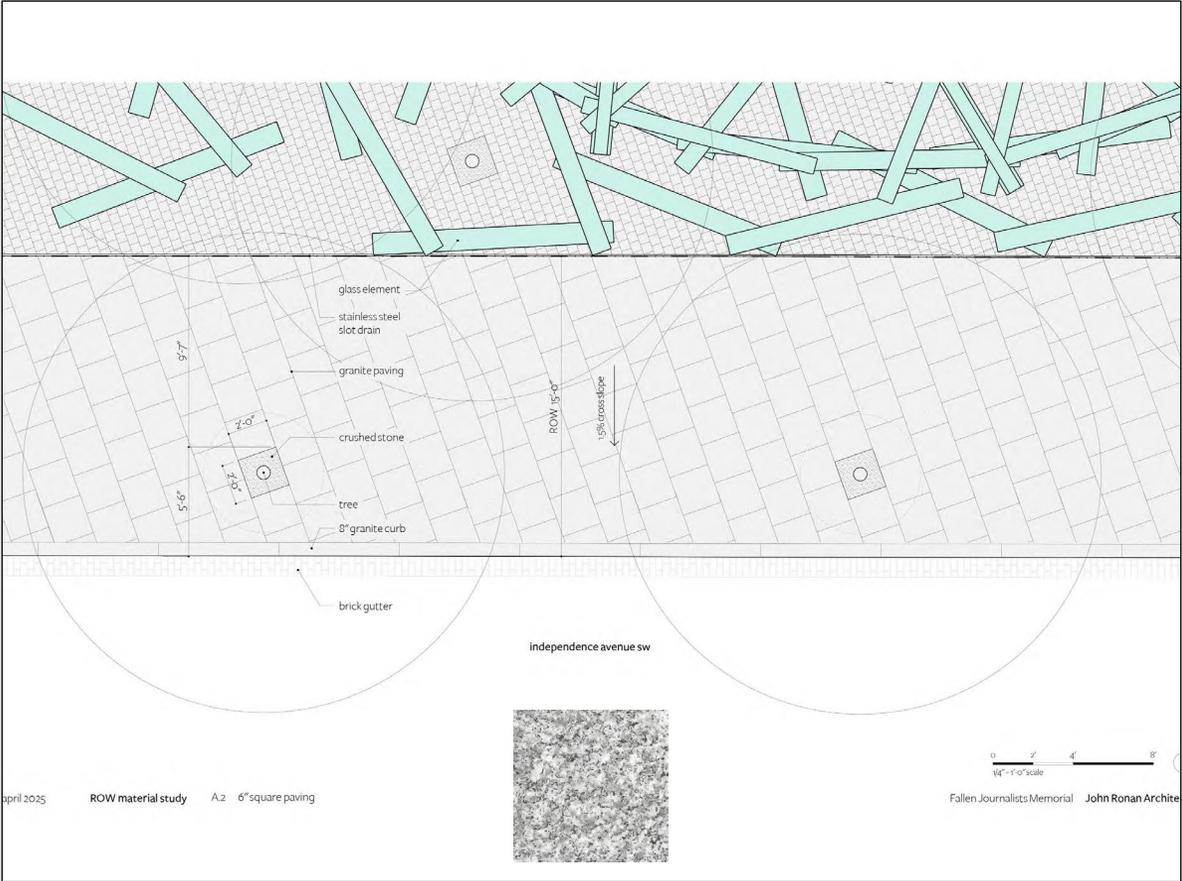
maryland ave test fit 450 seats



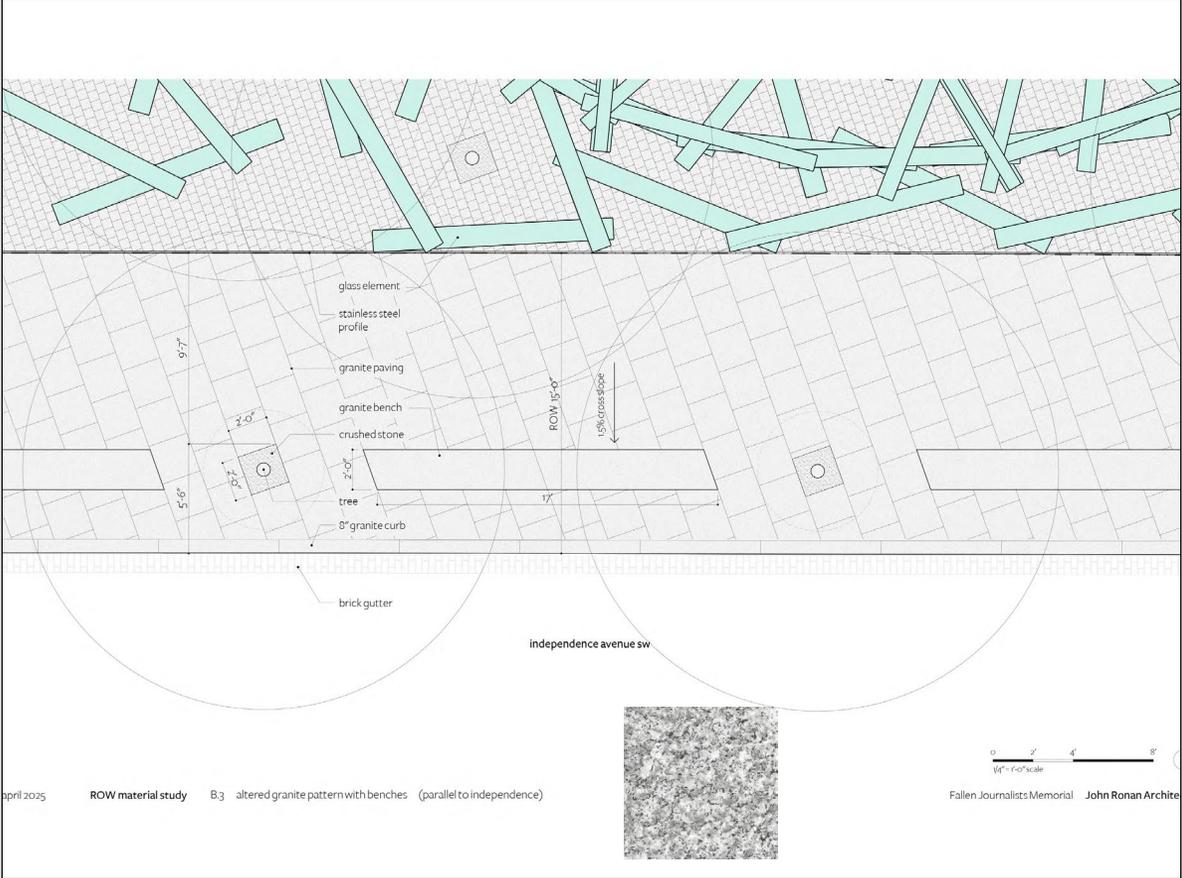
remembrance hall test fit 143 seats



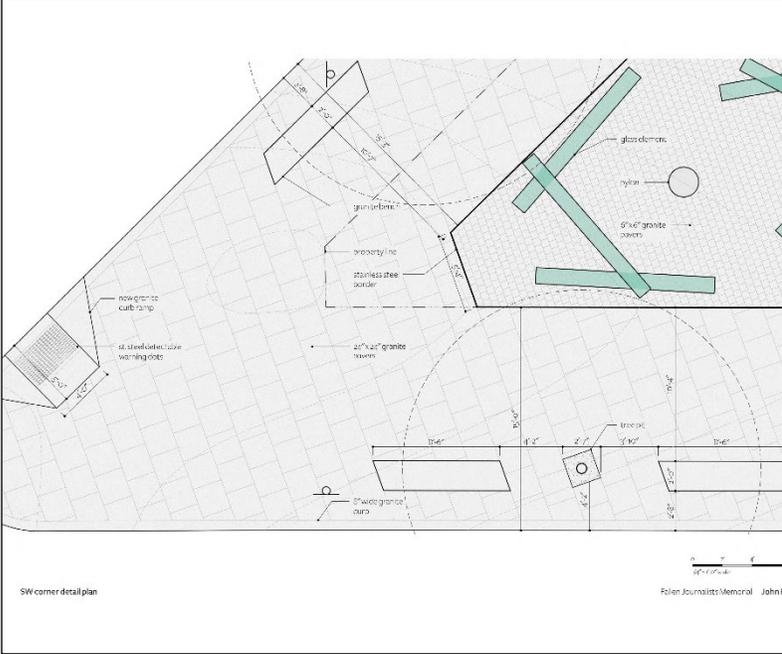
# Streetscape Design – Proposed ROW



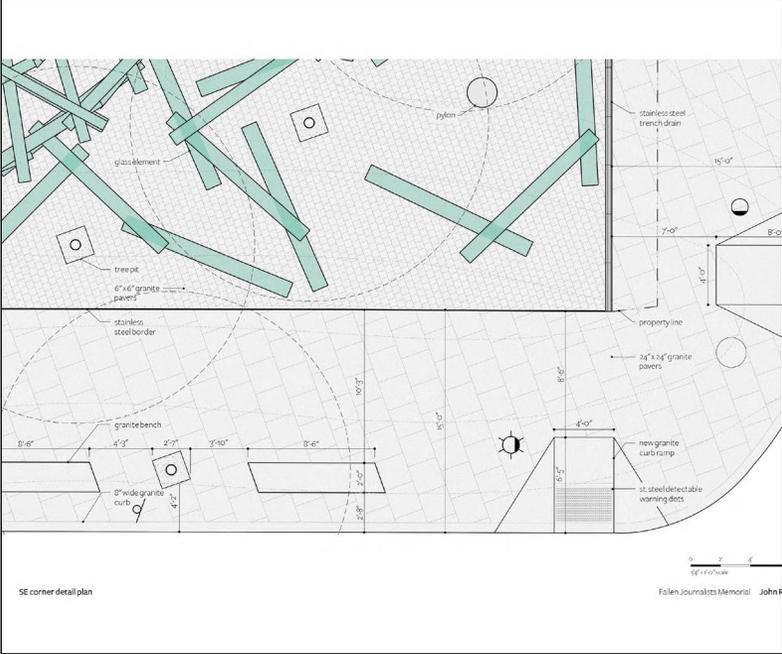
# Streetscape Design – Proposed ROW with Granite Benches



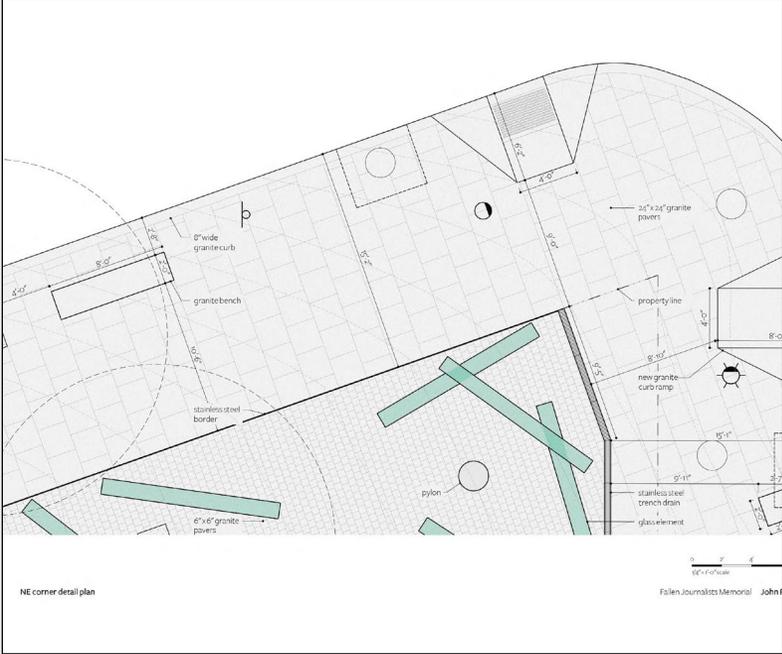
# Streetscape - Corners



SW Corner

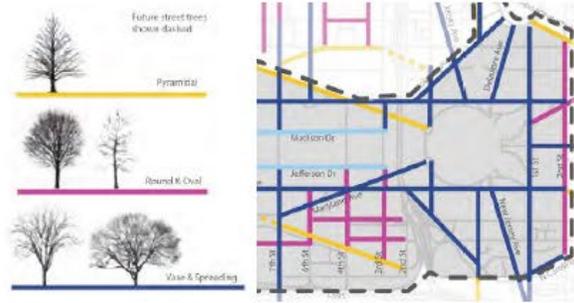


SE Corner



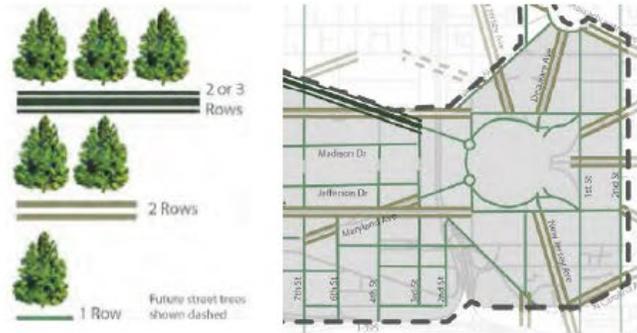
NE Corner

# Streetscape - Trees



| VASE & SPREADING  |
|---|
| Medium (40-60 feet mature height)   |
| <i>Celtis occidentalis</i> / Common Hackberry                             |
| <i>Chionanthus retusus</i> and cultivars                                  |
| <i>Eucommia ulmoides</i> / Hardy Rubber Tree                              |
| <b><i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i> / Thornless Honeylocust</b>               |
| <b><i>Gymnocladus dioicus</i> / Kentucky Coffee Tree</b>                  |
| <i>Gymnocladus dioicus</i> [Espresso-JFS] / Espresso Kentucky Coffee Tree |
| <i>Ulmus</i> [Morton Glossy] / Triumph Elm                                |
| <i>Ulmus</i> [Patriot] / Patriot Elm                                      |

a mix of honey locust cultivars cover the site. honey locusts are listed as an approved "vase and spreading" tree in the monumental core streetscape design guidelines.



2 rows of street trees are provided along independence avenue.



# Streetscape – Additional Planting



*Schizachyrium scoparium*  
Little Blue Stem



*Salvia lyrata*  
Lyre Leaf Sage



*Fothergilla gardenii*  
Dwarf Fothergilla



*Pycnanthemum tenuifolium*  
Mountain Mint



*Rhus aromatica 'gro-low'*  
Aromatic Sumac



*Carex flacca*  
Blue sedge



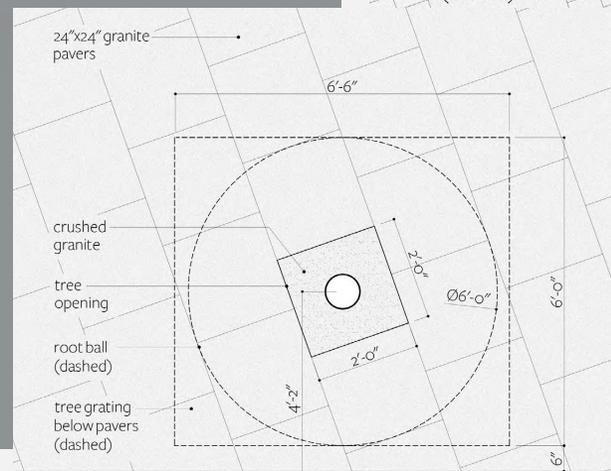
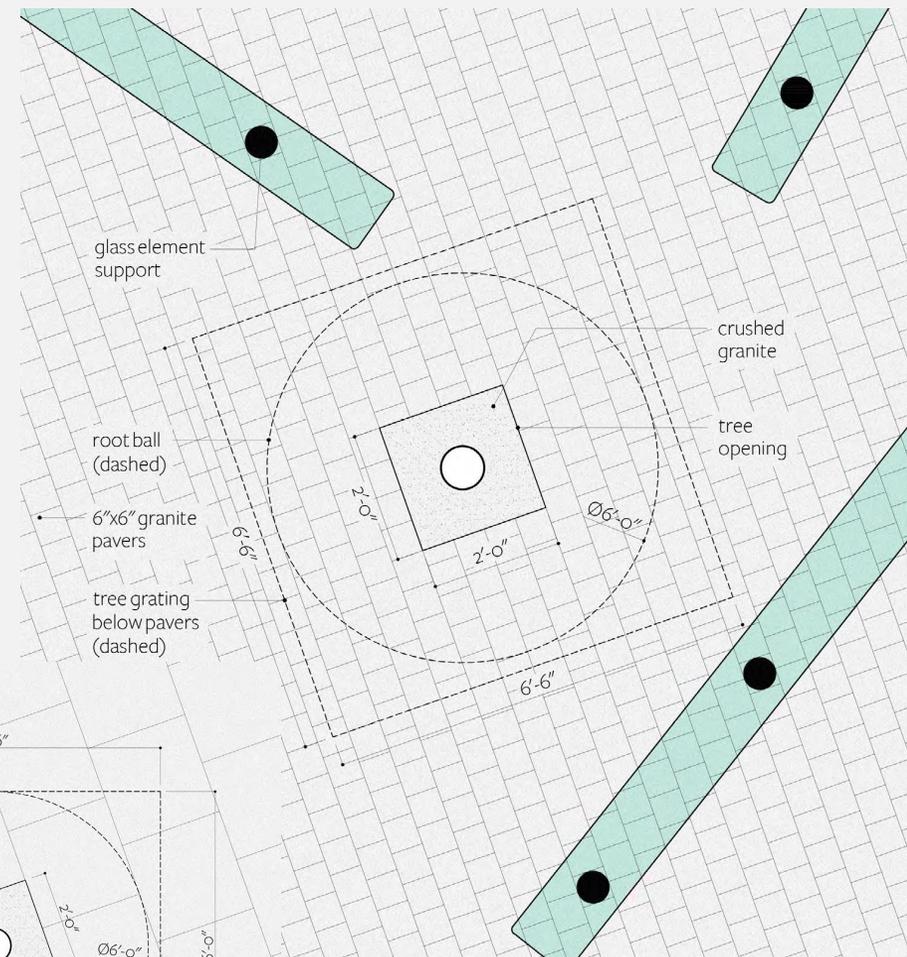
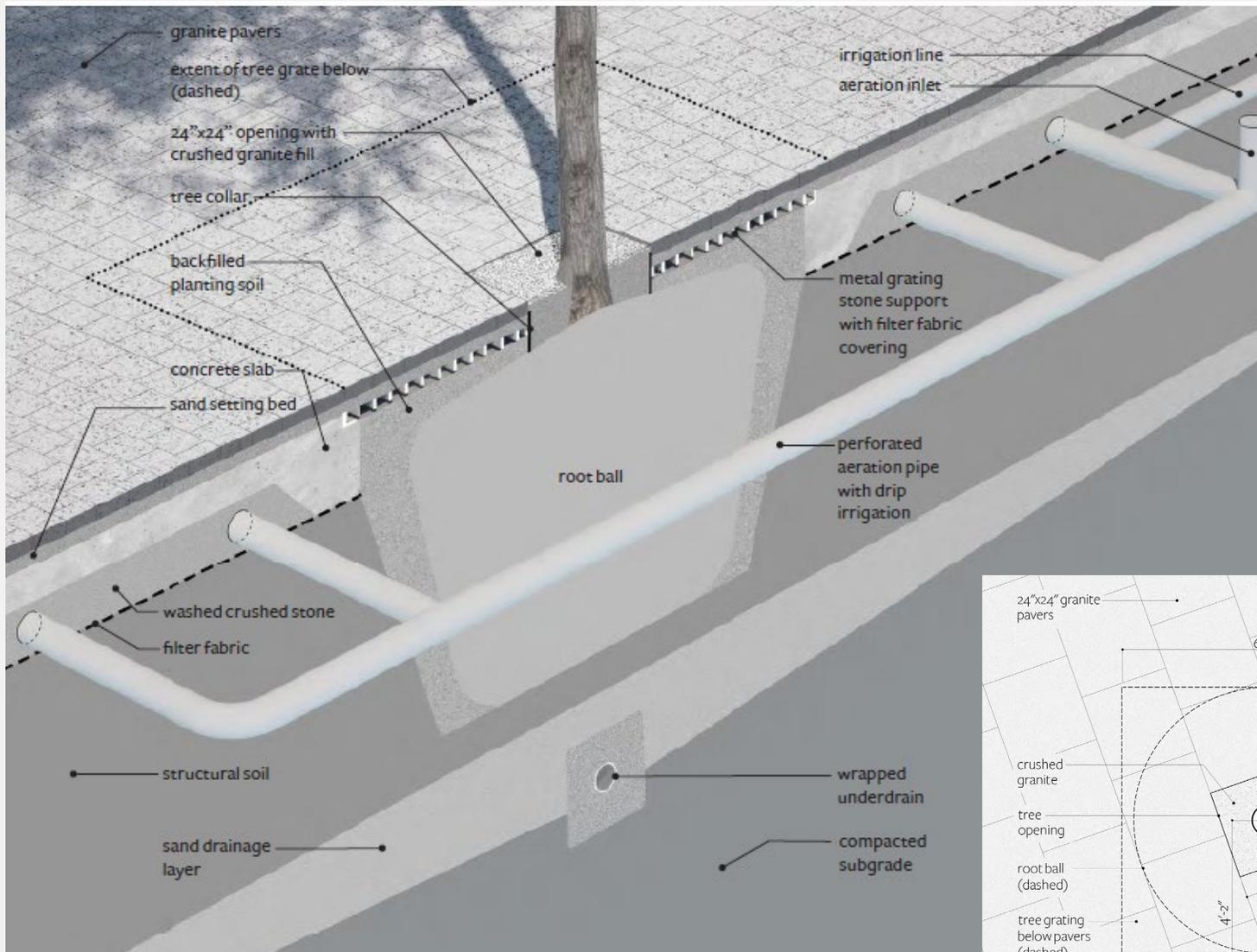
*Symphiotrichum ericoides*  
Heath Aster



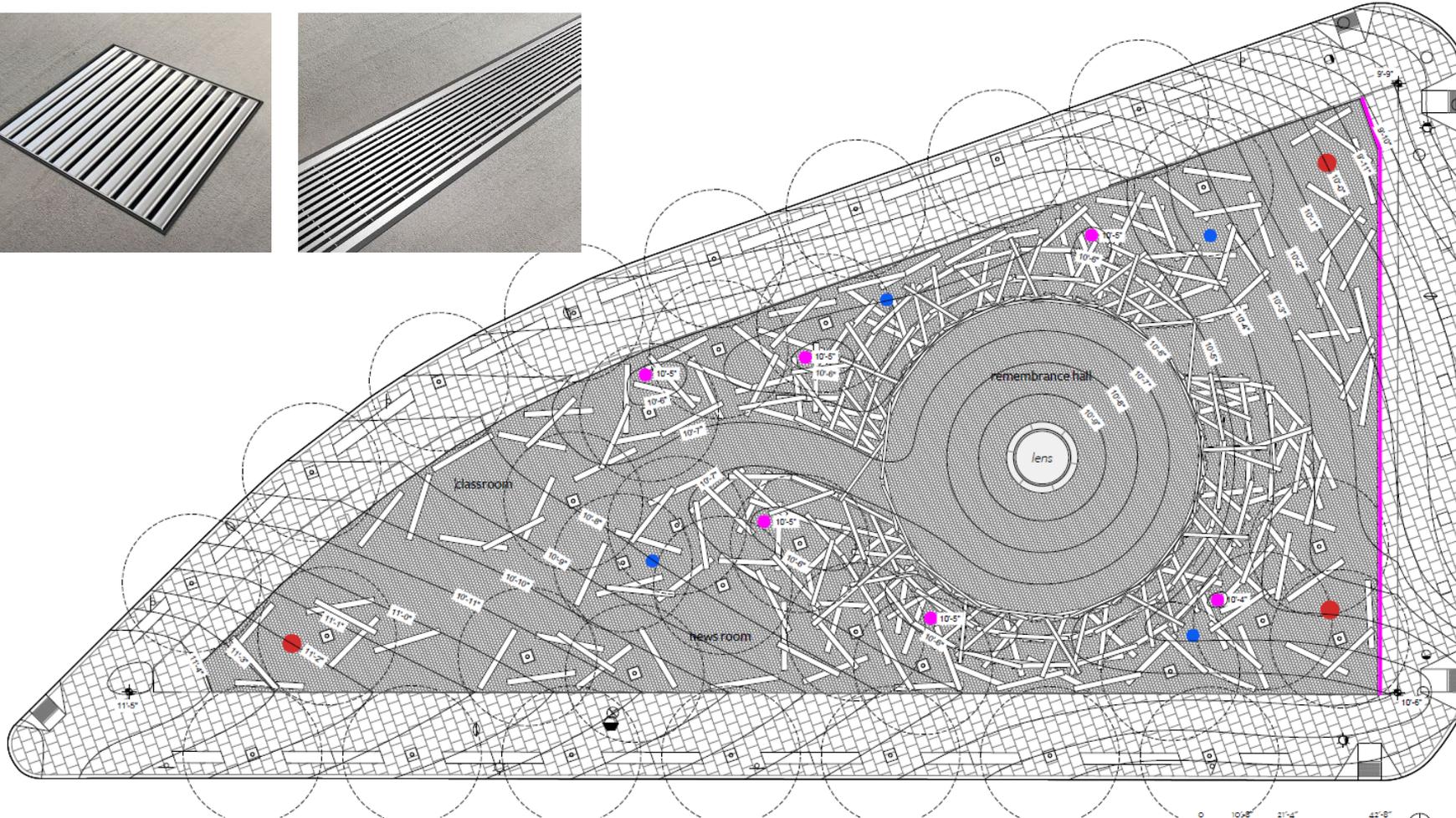
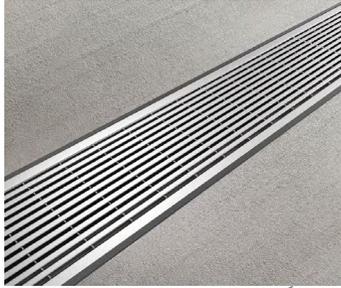
*Liriope spicata*  
Creeping Liriope



# Streetscape – Tree Pits and Wells



# Site Drainage and Utilities



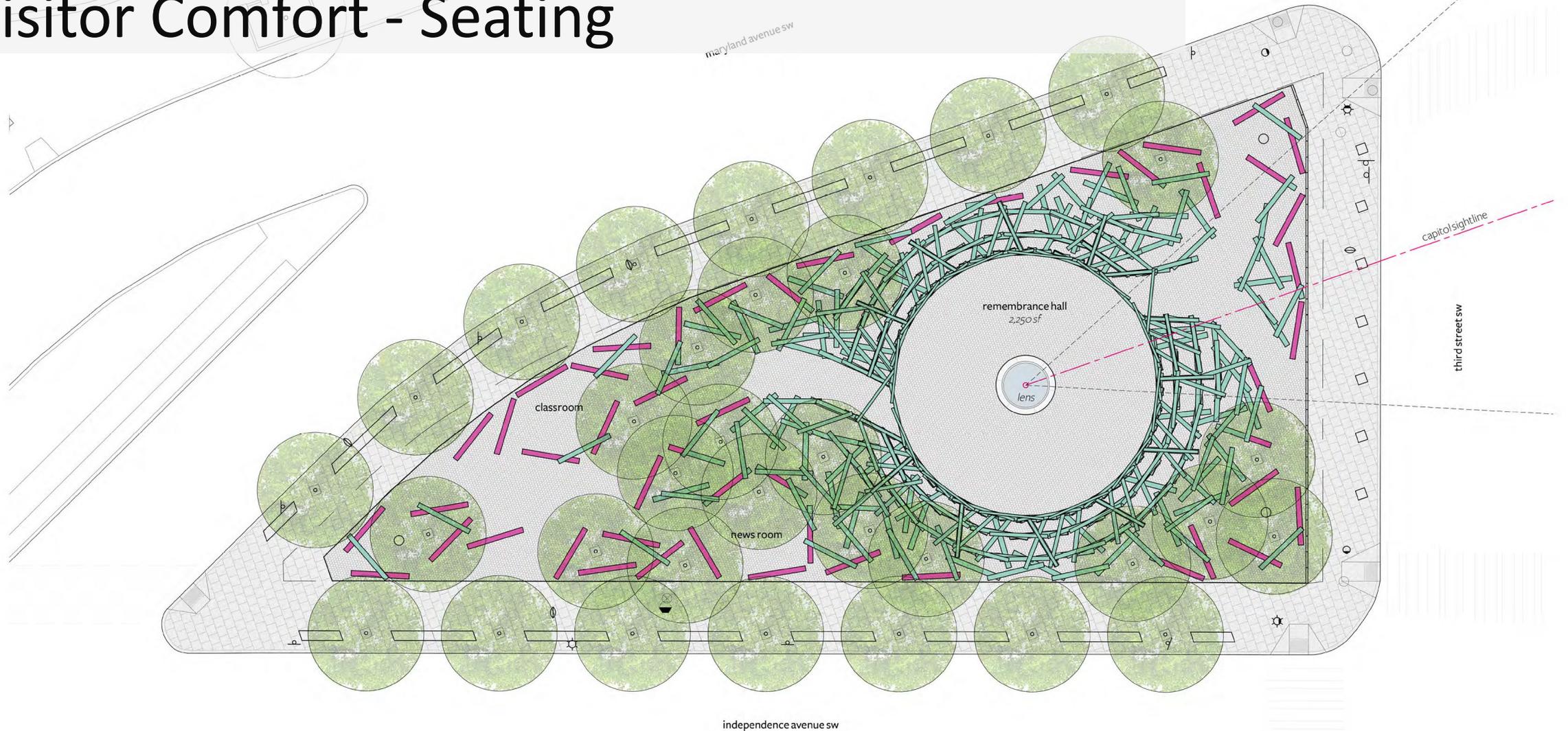
02 october 2025 site drainage and utilities

| symbol key |                   |
|------------|-------------------|
| Ⓜ          | parking meter     |
| ○          | manhole           |
| △          | sign              |
| Ⓜ          | traffic light     |
| ⊖          | water meter vault |
| ⊗          | water valve vault |
| ☆          | light pole        |
| ⊕          | tree              |
| ●          | pylon             |
| —          | trench drain      |
| ●          | area drain        |
| ●          | hose bib          |



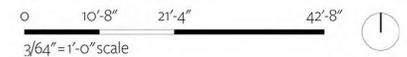
Fallen Journalists Memorial John Ronan Architects

# Visitor Comfort - Seating

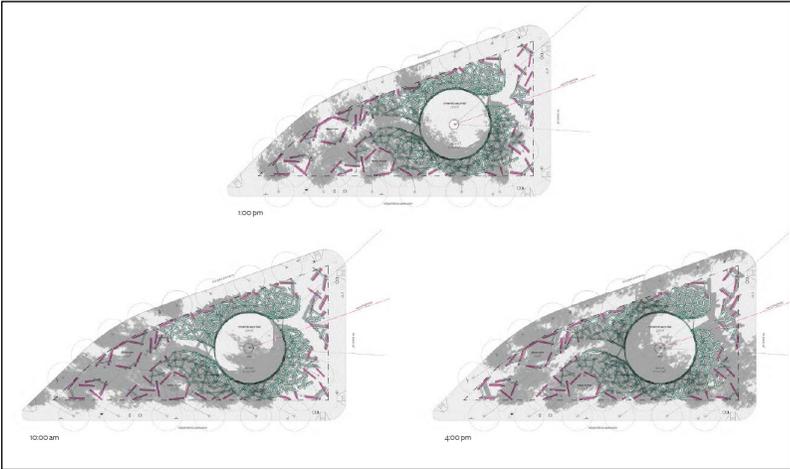


symbol key

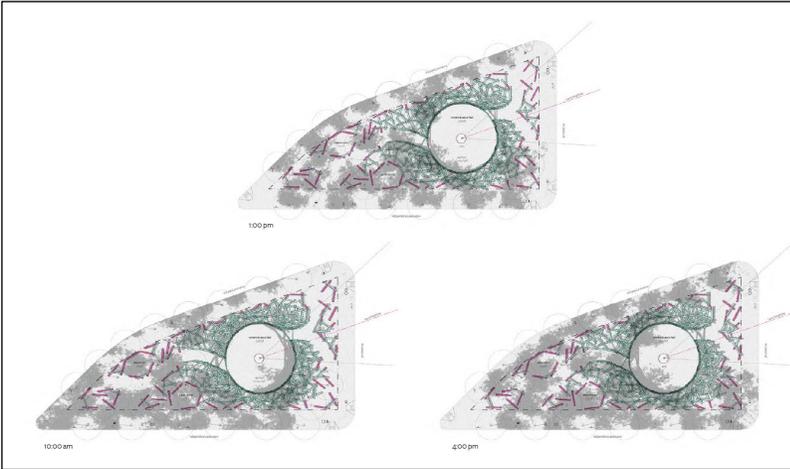
- parking meter
- manhole
- ⊖ water meter vault
- ⊗ water valve vault



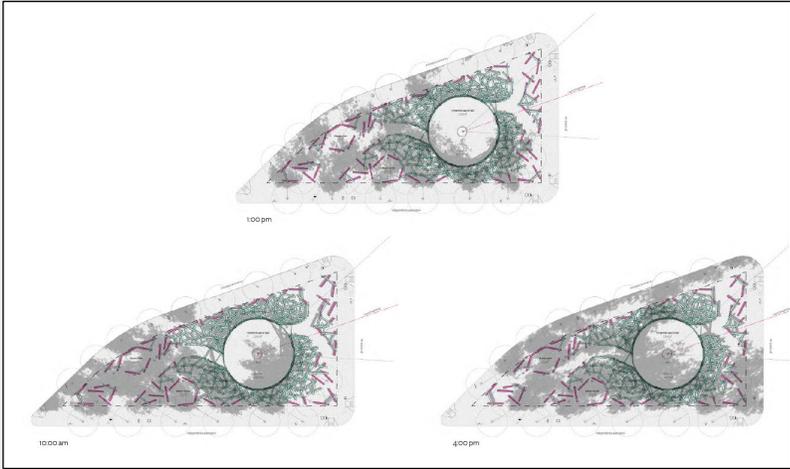
# Visitor Comfort – Shade Study



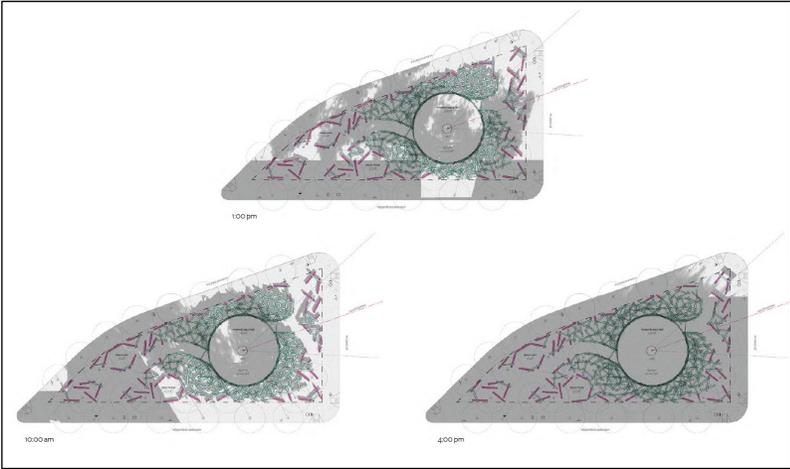
March



June



September



December

# Seasonal Views



Spring/Summer



Fall



Winter

# Viewshed Analysis



Existing



Proposed



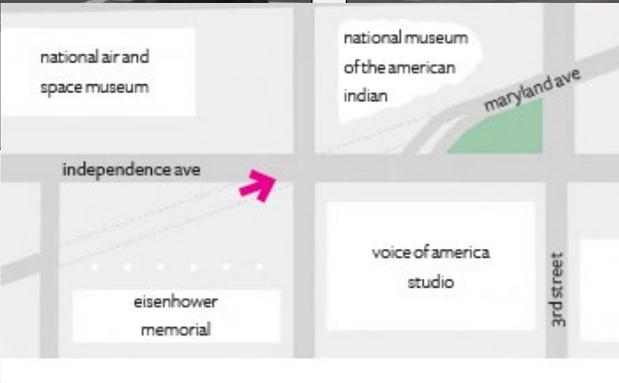
# Viewshed Analysis



Existing



Proposed



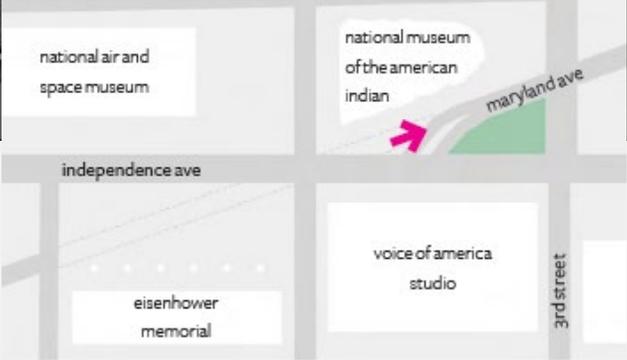
# Viewshed Analysis



Existing



Proposed



# Viewshed Analysis



Existing



Proposed



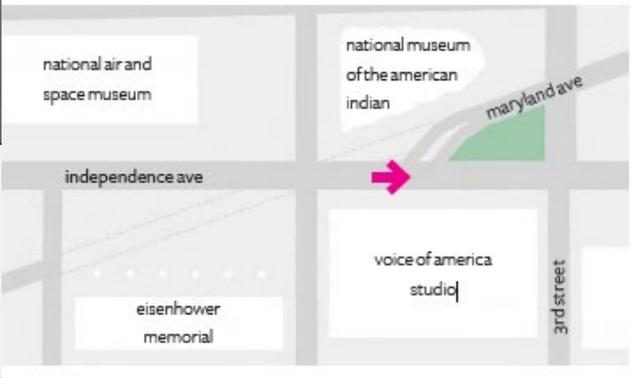
# Viewshed Analysis



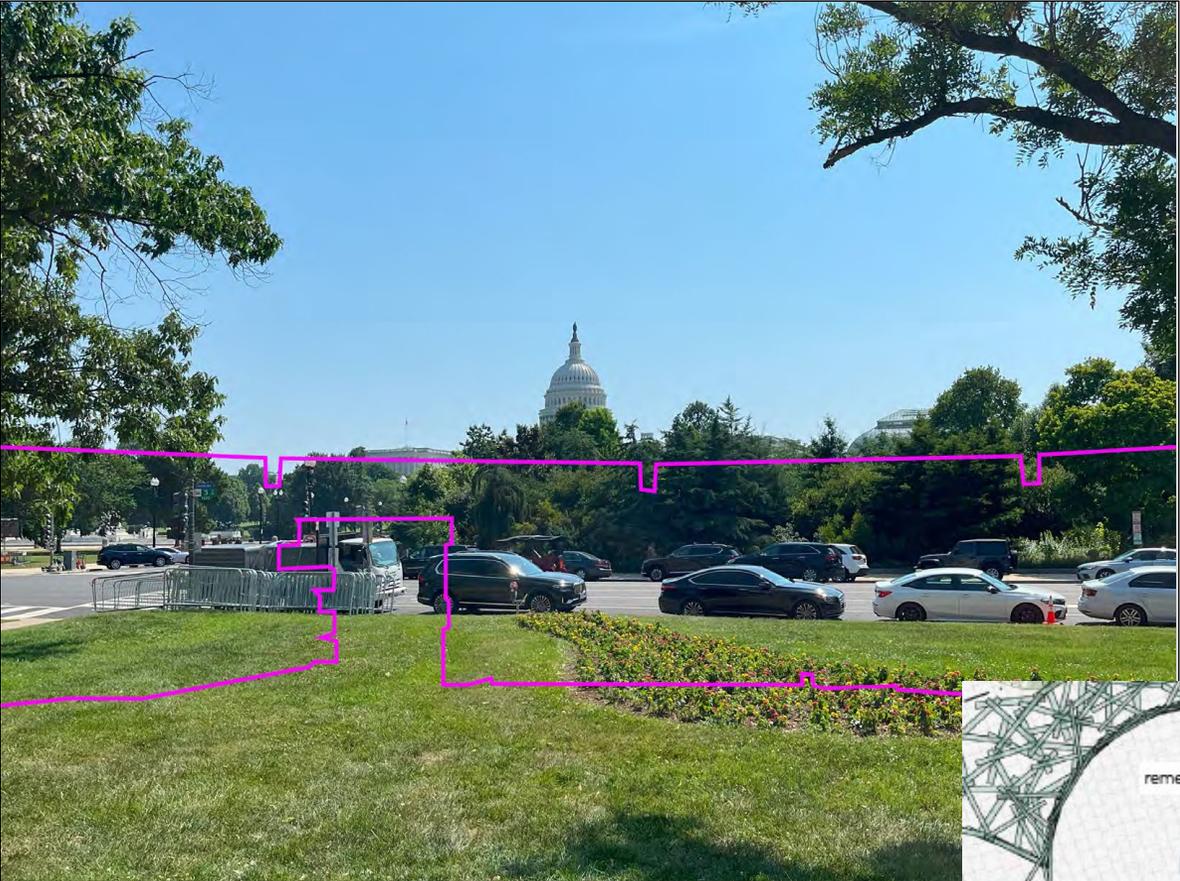
Existing



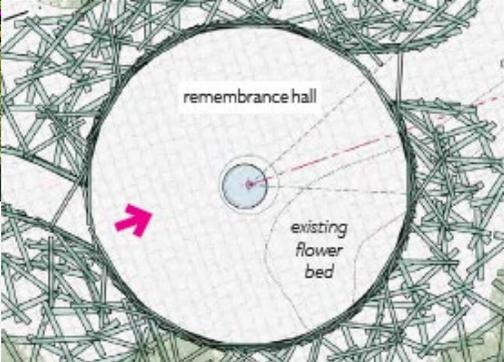
Proposed



# Capitol View Study

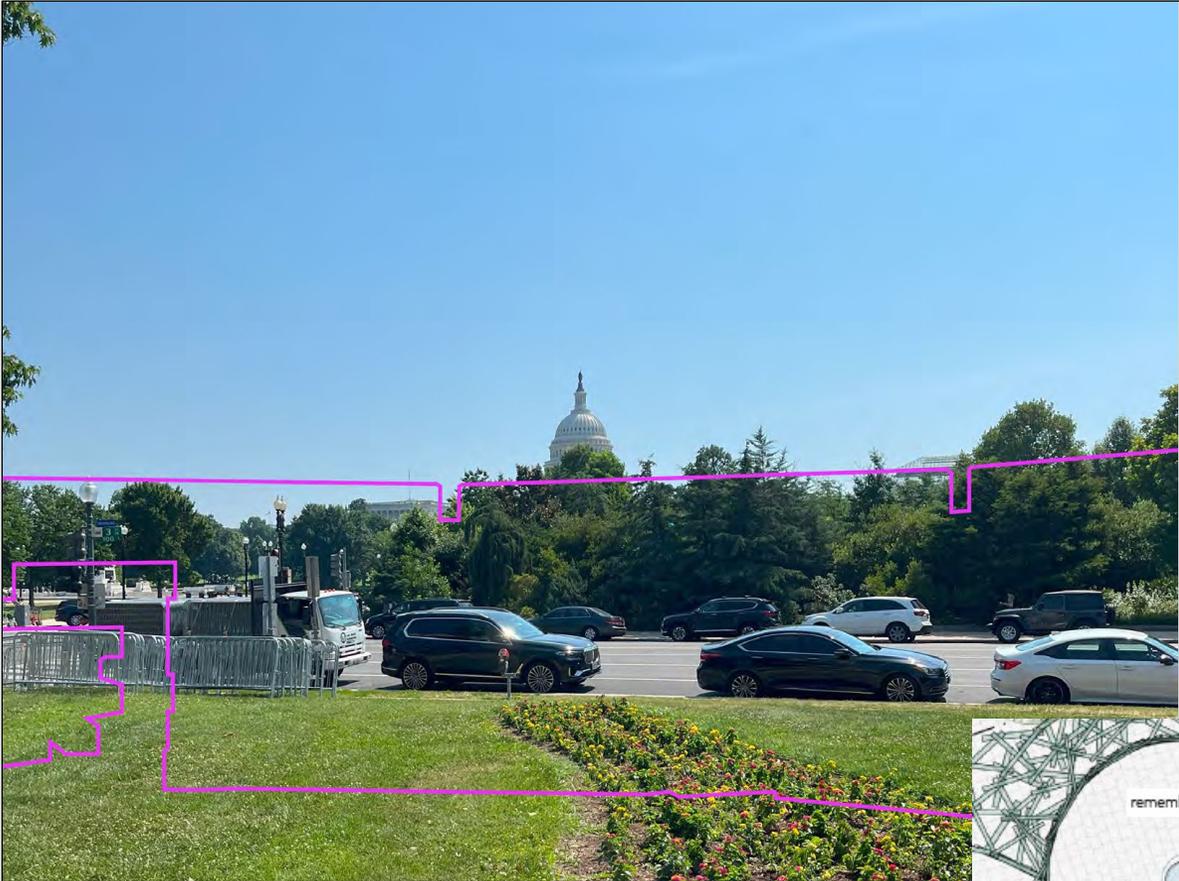


Existing

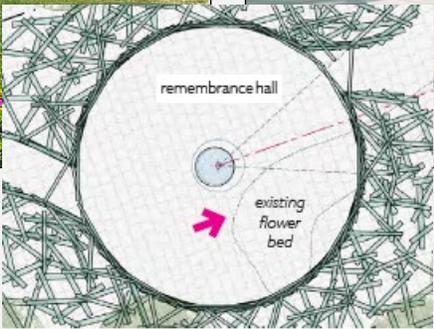


Proposed

# Capitol View Study

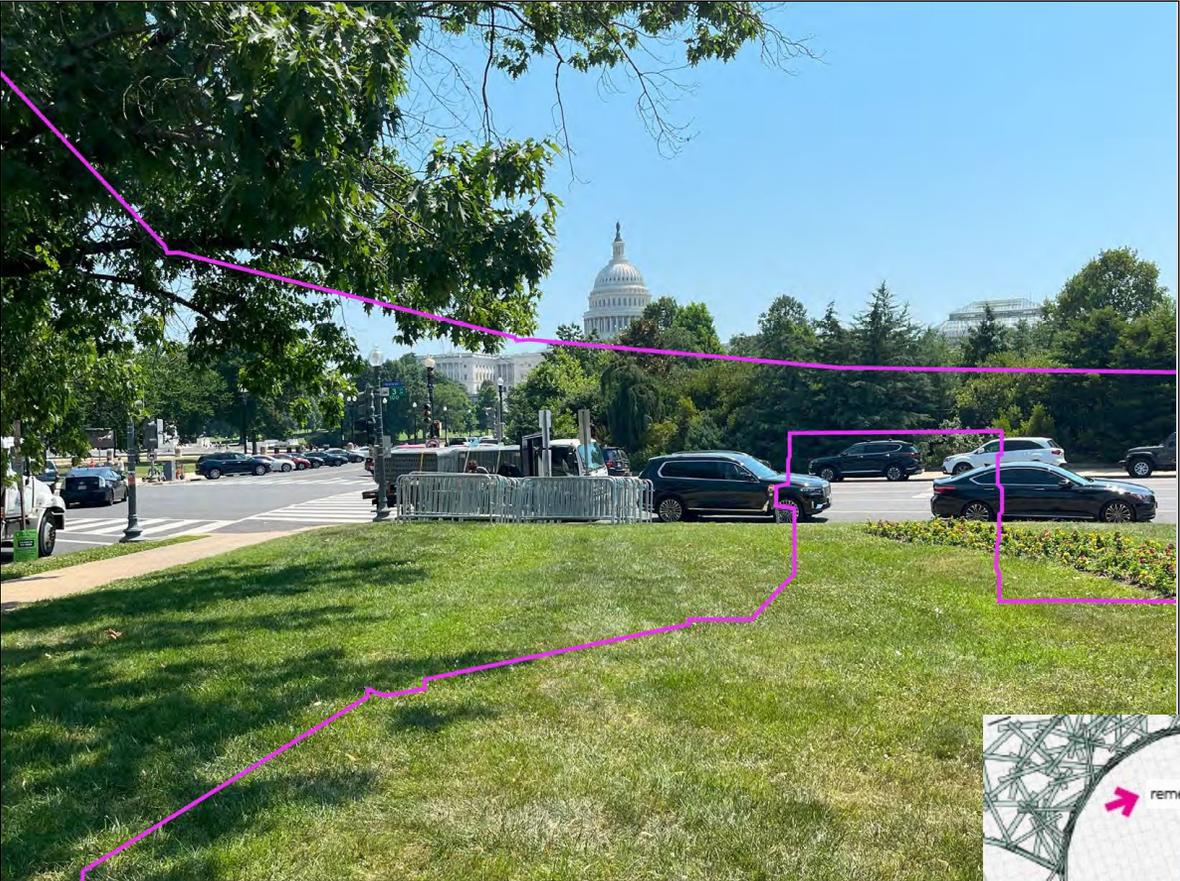


Existing

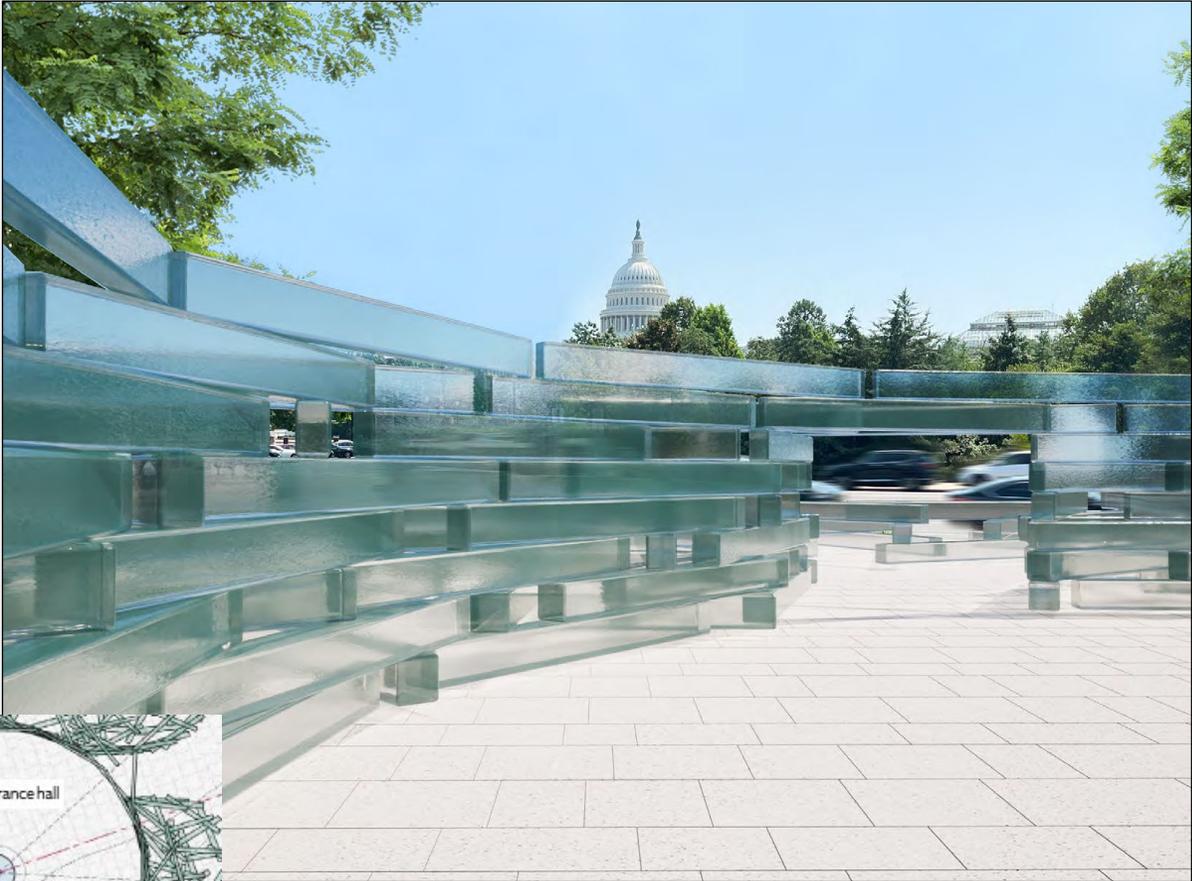
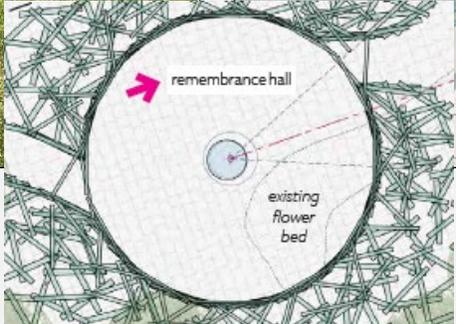


Proposed

# Capitol View Study



Existing

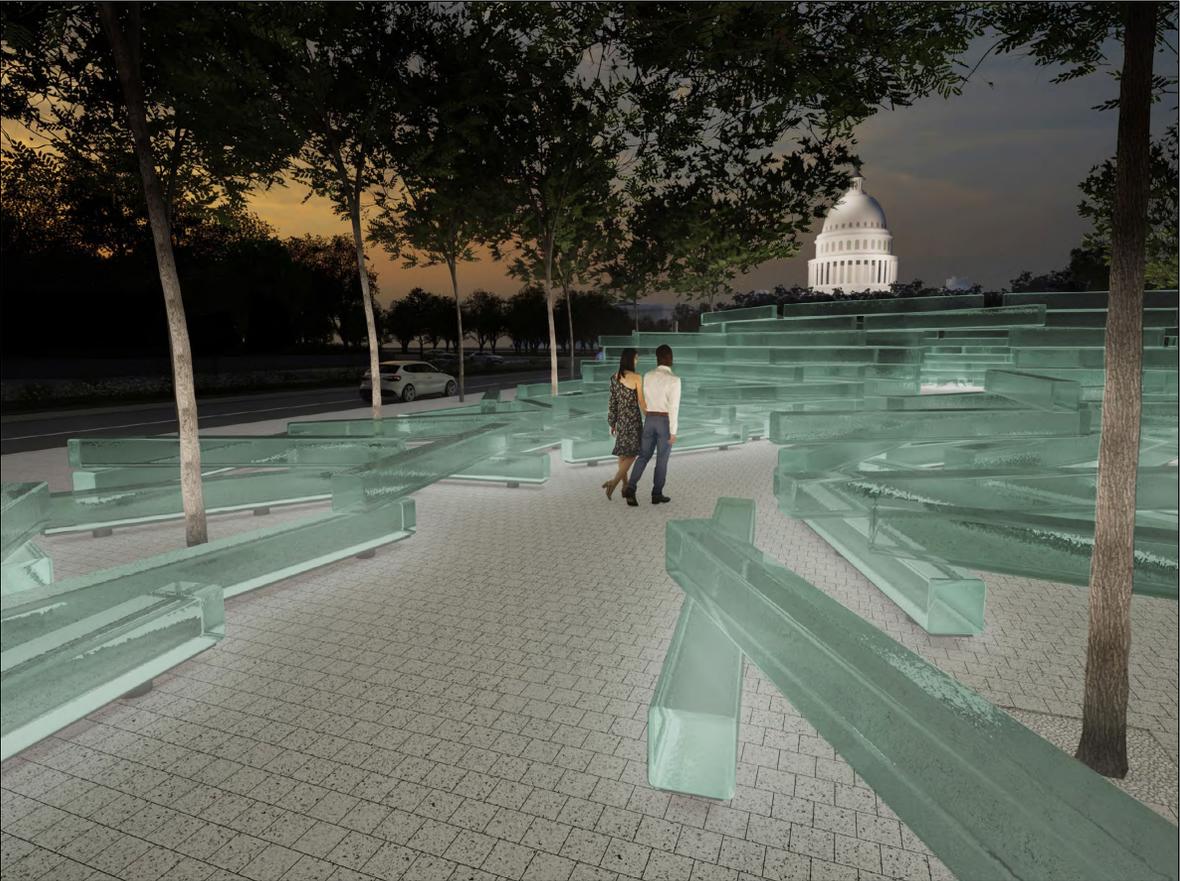


Proposed

# Lighting



# Lighting Study

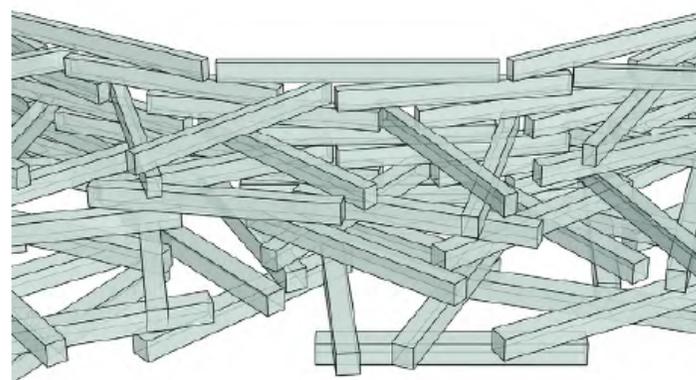
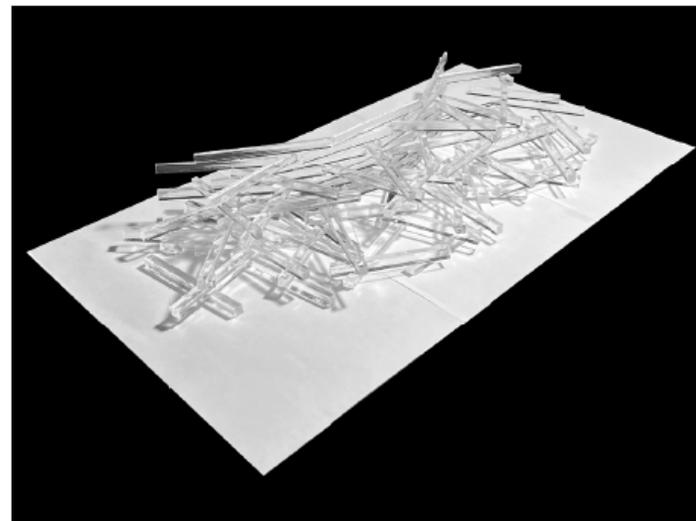
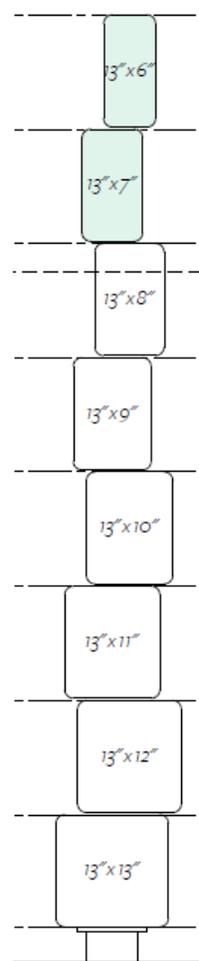
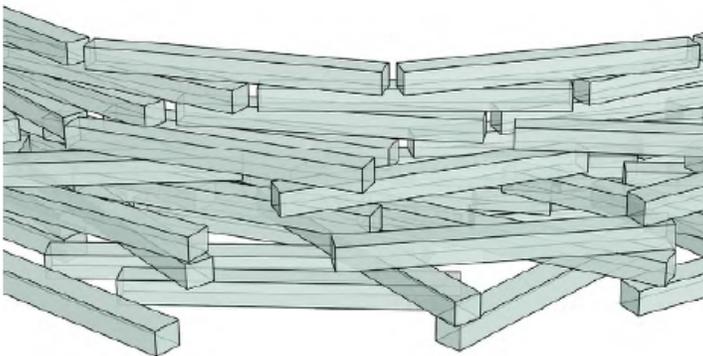
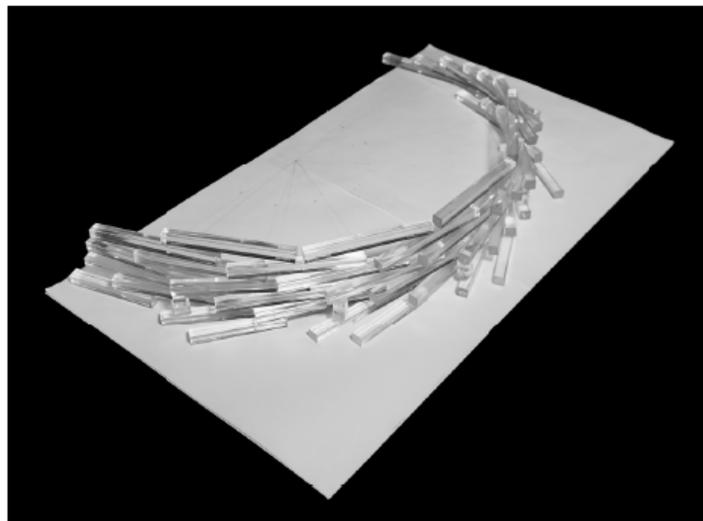
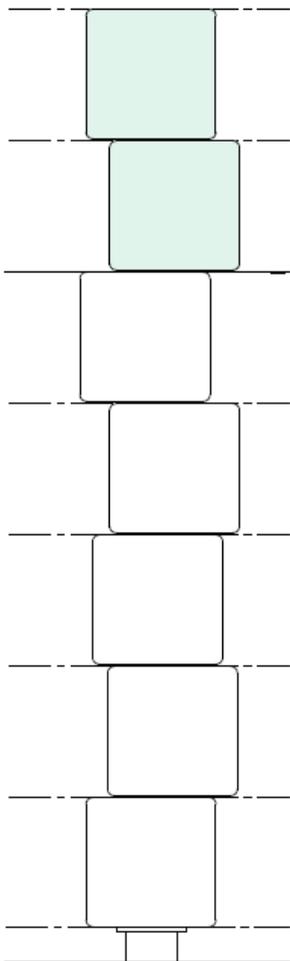


Path



Remembrance Hall

# Glass Elements



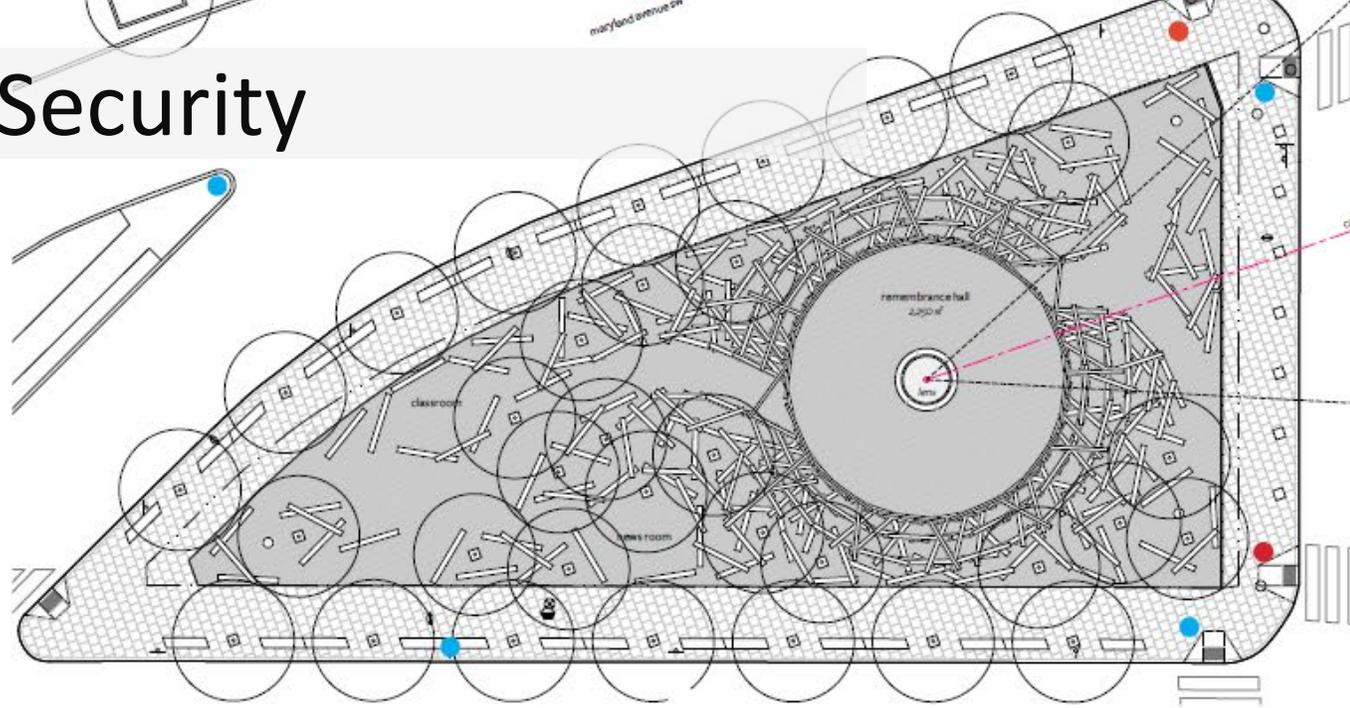
previous

revised

# Skateboard Deterrence



# Security



- potential security camera locations at existing street light posts
- potential security camera locations at existing traffic light posts



# Fallen Journalists Memorial National Capital Planning Commission Review October 2, 2025

## Background

The Fallen Journalists Memorial was conceived in June 2019 on the one-year anniversary of the deadliest attack on American journalists in U.S. history, when a gunman shot his way into the newsroom of the Capital Gazette in Annapolis, Maryland, killing five people and wounding two others.

In December 2020, President Donald J. Trump signed bipartisan legislation, Public Law 116-253, authorizing the memorial sponsor to establish a commemorative on federal land in Washington, DC, to commemorate America’s commitment to a free press by honoring journalists who sacrificed their lives in service to that ideal. In December 2022, the foundation was further authorized by bipartisan legislation, Public Law 117-328, to design and build the memorial within Area I, which is reserved for works of pre-eminent and lasting historical significance.

In April 2023, the foundation received site approval from the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) to design the Fallen Journalists Memorial on the site located at Independence Avenue, Maryland Avenue, and 3rd Street, SW, between the National Museum of the American Indian and the Voice of America. This site was one of the two sites supported by the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) during its review.

On January 16, 2025, CFA “reiterated their strong support for the memorial’s proposed design as beautiful and poetic, commenting that it will expand the design vocabulary used for commemorative public spaces.”

In accordance with the Commemorative Works Act, the memorial will be 100 percent privately funded. In addition, the memorial sponsor will arrange for routine and long-term cleaning and maintenance of the memorial and establish an endowment that is sufficient to provide long-term memorial maintenance and repair.

The intent of the Fallen Journalist Memorial is to balance the duality of providing a place to commemorate a key pillar of the First Amendment – freedom of the press – while honoring those of have died while reporting on wars, corruption, and civil unrest or seeking to inform local communities.

The memorial sponsor plans to support and supplement the physical memorial by hosting ceremonies and events that commemorate the First Amendment and honor fallen

journalists, as well as developing curricula for high school students and long-term programming and digital content on the internet.

## **Submission Overview**

This submission for the preliminary review of the memorial design includes updates to various aspects of the memorial design based on comments from the Commission. These updates address:

- Visitor Access and Circulation
- Streetscape Design
- Site Drainage and Utilities
- Visitor Comfort
- Viewsheds
- Lighting
- Material Use and Durability

As part of this submission, the project team has also included an overview of outreach and coordination efforts and environmental and historical considerations.

## **Project Summary**

The Fallen Journalists Memorial will be located on parkland at a triangular site (Reservation 201) under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service (NPS) and managed by the National Mall and Memorial Parks. The site is situated at the intersection of Independence Avenue, Maryland Avenue, and 3rd Street, SW.

The memorial design features a hardscape stone plaza overlaid with a grove of trees and an array of cast glass beams that collectively form the primary memorial element. These beams create a circular Remembrance Hall at the heart of the site. Visitors would access the memorial through three entrances located at the northeast, southeast, and southwest corners of the site.

## **Outreach and Coordination**

The NPS held two scoping meetings and 30-day public comment periods related to the Fallen Journalists Memorial: one period for site selection (between April 3 and May 5, 2023, with a public meeting on April 19, 2023) and one for the design (between September 30 and October 30, 2024, with a public meeting on October 16, 2024). The public, agencies, and interested parties were invited to submit comments.

Comments focused on the L'Enfant Plan and the proposed design's treatment of public space.

## **Environmental and Historical Considerations**

### *National Historic Preservation Act*

Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and its implementing regulations (36 CFR Part 800) “Protection of Historic Properties,” the NPS initiated Section 106 consultation with the District of Columbia on October 8, 2024. Historic districts and structures partially or entirely within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) include the L’Enfant Plan of the City of Washington, National Mall Historic District, U.S Capitol and its Grounds, U.S. Botanic Garden, Wilbur J. Cohen Building, Hubert H. Humphrey Building, and several memorials and statues.

Additionally, the NPS held one Section 106 consulting party meeting virtually on April 23, 2025, and included a presentation of the APE, existing conditions, and proposed design. Following this consultation, the NPS determined that there would be no adverse effect on historic properties.

### *National Environmental Policy Act*

The NPS has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The EA covers specific impact topics that are critical to the project area. The topics include historic districts and structures, cultural landscapes, archeological resources, and visitor use and experience. The EA will be available for public comment September 9-October 9, 2025.

### *Other Environmental Considerations*

No wetlands have been identified at the project site. Additionally, the project site is outside the proposed designated habitat for the federally proposed threatened Monarch Butterfly. The project site is within the 500-year floodplain. It would be designed to mitigate flood risk and prevent impacts to floodplain values. The memorial design incorporates both area drains as well as a trench drain to manage stormwater effectively. Drainage design would be done in compliance with the Department of Energy & Environment (DOEE) and the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) stormwater regulations.



August 18, 2025

National Capital Planning Commission  
401 9th Street, NW, Suite 500N  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Commissioners:

I write in strong support of the preliminary site plan for the Fallen Journalists Memorial. As a citizen who values our nation's founding principles and the importance of First Amendment freedoms, I believe this memorial will stand as a fitting reminder of journalists who have died while in pursuit of truth.

Transparency in government is not a partisan issue; it is a principle rooted in the very fabric of our republic. In a democracy, journalists serve as vitally important watchdogs.

The preliminary site plan reflects a design that is dignified and respectful. It will provide a much needed place for solemn reflection where Americans of all backgrounds can honor those who gave their lives while doing their critically important work. In an era when mistrust of institutions runs high, this memorial underscores the enduring principle that the search for truth, is an essential part of self-governance.

I urge the commission to advance the site plan so that we can move closer to honoring fallen journalists in a manner consistent with what makes America great — our values of transparency, accountability, and freedom.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christopher Ruddy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Christopher Ruddy  
Chief Executive Officer

National Capital Planning Commission  
401 9th Street, NW, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposal to establish the Fallen Journalists Memorial in Washington, D.C., which was authorized by President Donald J. Trump in December 2020.

Honoring those who gave their lives to pursue the news is a fitting tribute to the First Amendment.

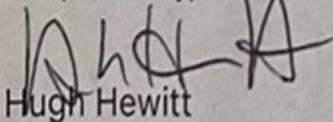
From Ernie Pyle and Andy Rooney to today's journalists covering hot wars in Ukraine, the Middle East and elsewhere, the free world's free press has made the courageous and dangerous choice to cover the story wherever they could reach. Some did not come home. Honoring their sacrifice honors the freedom they were exercising and indeed protecting.

From the very beginning of our country, patriots have run to the sound of guns to report on our military's battles. All the journalists in that long line have faced danger every day they are in combat zones. Many survive harrowing experiences. Some are wounded. And some do not come home. This last group of fallen journalists deserves the nation's respect and their place of honor in the nation's capital.

In addition, the memorial, as currently conceived, reflects a deep respect for American values of honor, sacrifice, and constitutional liberty. Its focus on openness, reflection, and permanence ensures that the memorial will stand as a unifying tribute to press freedom, reminding all Americans, regardless of political affiliation, that our rights are secured by those willing to bear witness and hold the powerful accountable.

Thank you for considering these perspectives in your deliberations.

Respectfully,



Hugh Hewitt

Host, The Hugh Hewitt Show