



## Commission Action

June 4, 2026

---

<b>PROJECT</b> <b>New Monumental Arch</b> George Washington Memorial Parkway Memorial Avenue Washington, DC	<b>NCPC FILE NUMBER</b> 8778
<b>SUBMITTED BY</b> United States Department of the Interior	<b>NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER</b> 1.45(73.10)46209
<b>REVIEW AUTHORITY</b> Federal Projects in the District per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)	<b>APPLICANT'S REQUEST</b> Approval of comments on concept plans
	<b>ACTION TAKEN</b> Approved comments on concept plans

---

The Commission:

**Approves** the following concept comments on the proposed monumental arch located in Memorial Circle, on Columbia Island in Washington, DC.

**Notes** at the concept review stage, the Commission provides comments and requests additional information from the applicant that will inform the preliminary and final reviews by the Commission.

**Notes** that according to the applicant, the purpose of the arch is to celebrate the triumphs of the American people, inspire patriotism and love of country, and beautify our nation's capital.

### *Vehicular and Pedestrian Accessibility*

**Notes** that Memorial Circle is an integral part of the vehicular access between the Arlington Memorial Bridge and the George Washington Memorial Parkway, Washington Boulevard, and Memorial Avenue with significant vehicular traffic, especially on the eastern side of the circle.

**Notes** that visitors cannot currently access the center of Memorial Circle, and the applicant proposes to alter the east triangular island and provide crosswalks on the east and west sides of the circle. However, the plans do not provide details regarding visitor parking, loading/unloading, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access.

**Notes** the project introduces a visitor attraction to Memorial Circle, and as such, additional information is necessary to ensure the safety of those accessing the site and minimizing impacts to vehicular travel around the site; and therefore,

**Requests** the applicant submit for the next review:

- A transportation or traffic study that identifies any potential impacts of the proposed project on the road network and level of service, and evaluates the proposed pedestrian access to ensure that visitors can avoid pedestrian and vehicular conflicts; and
- Information regarding parking and loading/unloading for visitors to the arch to ensure safe access for those of all abilities and minimize disruption to the traffic network.

### *Visitor Safety*

**Notes** the arch sits within an at-grade plaza surrounded by a seat wall and openings with bollards for pedestrian access aligned with the openings of the arch.

**Supports** the use of the seat wall as a designed security feature around the arch plaza.

**Requests** the applicant provide, as part of the next review, a risk assessment and evaluation of the project to ensure that the proposed design will address security considerations.

### *Aviation Safety*

**Notes** the applicant is currently working with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to evaluate whether the proposed project would impact air navigation given its proximity to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.

**Recommends** the applicant continue consultation with the FAA to evaluate potential impacts of the proposed project on air navigation and provide an update to the Commission as part of the next review.

**Advises** that any design recommendations provided by the FAA should be incorporated into the proposed project prior to the Commission's final action.

### *Viewsheds*

**Notes** the sight line, design, and landscape features of Memorial Avenue, which includes Memorial Circle, are contributing elements of the National Register-listed Arlington National Cemetery Historic District and Arlington Memorial Bridge.

**Notes** the panoramic views from Arlington House at Arlington National Cemetery to the west, and the Lincoln Memorial to the east, have been in place since the 1920s and reflect the visual connectivity characteristic of the McMillan Plan, as noted in the National Register of Historic Places registration form for Arlington National Cemetery.

**Notes** that, according to the submission materials, the view of the Lincoln Memorial from Arlington House will be blocked by the proposed arch, and views from the Lincoln Memorial to the Arlington House will be altered.

**Encourages** the applicant to provide, as part of the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act, any design options that were explored to avoid or minimize impacts on the visual connection between Arlington House and the Lincoln Memorial.

**Requests** the applicant provide, as part of the next review, updated photo-visualizations (renderings) of existing and proposed pedestrian-level views from the additional locations noted below:

- View from north steps of the Jefferson Memorial looking toward the Lincoln Memorial; and
- Views from the George Washington Memorial Parkway, one looking south toward the circle from a point immediately south of I-66, and one looking north toward the circle from a point near the LBJ Memorial Grove.

#### *Project Design and Materials*

**Notes** that NCPC has consistently taken the position that the Height of Buildings Act applies to all habitable structures in the District of Columbia, including federal projects, which is consistent with Comprehensive Plan Policy UD.B.1.3, highlighting the focus on preserving Washington's picturesque, horizontal character, and reinforcing the Height of Buildings Act.

**Requests** the applicant provide, as part of the next submission, an analysis and justification for the project's height in light of the Height of Buildings Act.

**Notes** that the submission does not include information on the site and building materials, the proposed lighting, or the stormwater management compliance.

**Requests** the applicant provide, as part of the next submission, information regarding the following information:

- The proposed arch and site materials palette, including cladding, paving, pedestrian features, and security elements.
- The proposed lighting strategy, including nighttime renderings from key views demonstrating the lighting concept in context.
- The proposed stormwater management strategy.


#### *Project Coordination and Next Steps*

**Recommends** the applicant work with the Federal Highway Administration, District Department of Transportation, Arlington County, and other agencies as appropriate regarding any proposed changes or impacts to the surface transportation network.

**Recommends** the applicant work with the District Department of Energy & Environment regarding the proposed stormwater management approach.

**Recommends** the applicant work with the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office and other consulting parties regarding the National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 process.

**Requests** the applicant provide, as part of the next submission, updates on the Section 106 process and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) evaluation process, as completion of both processes are required for NCPC final action.

  
6/5/26  
Meghan Hottel-Cox  
Secretary to the National Capital Planning Commission

