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Stephen Staudigl
202-482-7279 or stephen@ncpc.gov

Julia Koster
202-482-7211 or julia@ncpc.gov

NCPC Approves Final Plans for the National World War I Memorial

Commission Provides Initial Feedback on Korean War Veterans Memorial Wall of Remembrance

Washington, DC—At its October 3 meeting the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) approved final site development plans submitted by the National Park Service in collaboration with the World War I Centennial Commission for the [National World War I Memorial](#). The memorial will be located in downtown Washington, DC's Pershing Park and honor the service of members of the United States Armed Forces during World War I.

The primary memorial features include a freestanding wall with integrated fountain, and a plaza with pool, scrim, and "island" walkway. The west face of the wall includes an inscription, while the east face consists of a cantilevered sculpture that traces a soldier's journey through the conflict. The memorial also incorporates a renovated General John J. Pershing Memorial, a flagpole, and a "belvedere" area (located at the site of a former gazebo) that provides additional information about the memorial and the war.

The Commission commended the applicant's thoughtfulness and depth of the memorial's interpretive program, which will not only improve the existing Pershing Park but enhance the Pennsylvania Avenue Corridor. They also noted that the design was revised to incorporate NCPC's previous comments regarding appropriate lighting, simplified signage, and material selections for the pool and walkway. Today's action concludes NCPC's review.

"The memorial has come a long way. The landscape and memorial design, combined with the water element, reinforce each other in a positive way. I can't wait to attend the ribbon cutting," said NCPC Vice Chairman Thomas Gallas.

The Commission then provided comments on concept plans for a [Wall of Remembrance at the Korean Veterans Memorial](#). Plans submitted by the National Park Service, on behalf of the Korean War Veterans Memorial Foundation, call for the addition of a new wall to the existing memorial dedicated on July 27, 1995 and located on the National Mall southeast of the Lincoln Memorial in Ash Woods. The 384 foot-long wall will list the names of 36,574 members of the United States Armed Forces killed or missing in action in the Korean War, as well as approximately 8,000 members of the Korean Augmentation to the United States Army.

The preferred design concept seeks to incorporate the new wall as if it had been part of the original memorial's design while maintaining the site's integrity. Features include a low angled wall integrated into the landscape; an expanded circular plaza outside the existing two rows of linden trees; two new pedestrian paths that would connect the memorial's Pool of Remembrance to Ash Road and Independence Avenue; and rehabilitation of the existing memorial.

The Commission commented favorably on the proposed design, noting that it is a sensitive and fitting design. They did request that the applicant consider simplifying the wall's profile to soften the transition into the landscape and maintain open views between the existing memorial and the National Mall. Commissioners liked the idea of increasing accessibility to the memorial. They also requested a lighting plan with nighttime views.

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Before adjourning, NCPC heard two information presentations. In the first, representatives from Johns Hopkins University discussed their plans to [convert the Newseum](#) building located at 555 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW into a state-of-the-art educational facility. The Newseum will close at the end of 2019. Johns Hopkins plans to relocate their existing graduate programs based in Washington from three buildings on Massachusetts Avenue, NW that will be sold. Through the relocation the university plans to enliven and extend the hours of activity along this portion of Pennsylvania Avenue. Design plans call for opening up the facade to let in more light, filling in the existing front window, recladding the exterior, relocating an expanded entrance towards the building's eastern end, and adding a publicly accessible café. Hopkins hopes to begin construction in mid-2020 with an estimated late 2023 completion.

The building is located in the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation (PADC) boundary, within which NCPC has review authority as defined by Congress. Changes in use from museum to educational and design changes will necessitate updates to the PADC plan (which NCPC anticipates reviewing in December along with concept design plans) and related square guidelines (anticipated spring 2020 review, along with preliminary/final design plans).

In the second presentation, [Arlington National Cemetery](#) representatives discussed the proposed expansion of the cemetery to be done in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Representatives discussed how they plan to seamlessly add a 70-acre parcel (Southern Expansion) located south of the cemetery into the existing grounds. Plans call for increasing capacity of the cemetery by 40,000-60,000 spaces. The site is currently divided by roadways, which will require a land transfer between the cemetery, Arlington County, and the Virginia Department of Transportation before the project is submitted to NCPC for review later this fall. Other components include making the portion of Columbia Pike that crosses through the site into a parkway, adding a new parking deck for visitors, and incorporating the Air Force Memorial site into the cemetery grounds. NCPC does not take action on information presentations.

Video, Commission actions, and related materials are available [online](#) within five days of the meeting.

This month's agenda included three consent calendar items (no presentations were given):

1. Preliminary and final site and building plans for exterior improvements at the National Gallery of Art East Building, 6th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW. (8111)
2. Final site and building plans for expansion of the Firing Range Facility at Joint Base Andrews, Camp Springs, Maryland. (8056)
3. Preliminary and final site development plans for St. Elizabeths West Campus Interstate 295 Facing Wall Change in Cladding, 2700 Martin Luther King Jr Avenue, SE. (8109)

The Executive Director approved three items under authority delegated by the Commission.

1. Preliminary and final site development plans for interpretive signage at the St. Elizabeths West Campus, 2700 Martin Luther King Jr Avenue, SE. (8110)
2. Preliminary and final site and building plans for a revised guard booth, mail screening room, and site improvements at the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates, 3522 International Court, NW. (7135)
3. Approval of a report to the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia regarding a map amendment at Square 1193, Georgetown 29K Acquisition, LLC, 1051 - 1055 29th Street, NW. (ZC 19-08)

The National Capital Planning Commission is the federal government's central planning agency in Washington, DC and surrounding counties of Maryland and Virginia. The Commission provides overall guidance for federal land and buildings in the region. It also reviews the design of federal projects and memorials, oversees long-range planning for future development, and monitors capital investment by federal agencies.