

U.S. COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS 17 MAY 1910

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27 May 2021

Dear Ms. Hall:

In its public meeting of 20 May conducted by videoconference, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed a final design submission for alterations to the existing Circle of Remembrance at the World War II Memorial, to include a new plaque inscribed with the prayer delivered by President Franklin D. Roosevelt by radio on D-Day. Citing the resolution of the outstanding design issues, the Commission approved the final submission with the following recommendations for the various options that were presented.

In their approval action, the Commission members endorsed Alternative B for the treatment of the perimeter elements of the circle, in particular the revisions to the profile of the benches and the relationship of the bronze prayer plaque with the stone base. For the identifying inscription on this stone base at the entrance to the circle, they recommended that the text be only “A Prayer for the Nation.” They also endorsed the proposed landscape design and Option 1 for the lighting design, recommending that no additional lighting poles or fixtures be installed to illuminate the plaque. Concerning the options presented for the center of the pavement within the circle, the Commission members unanimously endorsed the inclusion of the circular garland design of olive branches and five stars, suggesting that this element could be made bolder, possibly larger or located in an inner ring of the pavement; to enhance the clarity of this design, they recommended that the elements of the garland be bronze inset into the granite paving stones instead of cast as bronze panels. In their discussion of the option for a bronze medallion at the center, intended to repeat the Victory Medal design in the arches of the World War II Memorial, some Commission members raised concern that the figural composition would create an undesirable directionality to the space and would detract from the importance of the prayer plaque, while others found that the medallion as proposed has strong symbolic importance and reinforces the connection to the main part of the memorial; the Commission concluded by recommending a design featuring both the garland and the medallion.

As part of the final review process, the Commission recommended that additional details be developed and documented in coordination with the staff. These include the possible grading of the plaza toward a slot drain located beneath the perimeter benches; the design of any structural brackets required for the projecting benches; sufficient structural supports to prevent deformation of the prayer plaque; the design for the composition of the medallion and garland within the pavement; and the layout of the proposed graphic design for the plaque and inscriptions.

The Commission congratulates the National Park Service and the project team for their diligence in developing an elegant final design for this important addition to the

World War II Memorial. Please coordinate with the staff to complete the development and documentation of the design in accordance with the final approval.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Luebke', with a large, sweeping initial 'T'.

Thomas E. Luebke, FAIA
Secretary

Kym A. Hall, Area Director
Region 1–National Capital Area
National Park Service
1100 Ohio Drive, SW
Washington, DC 20242

cc: Lisa Delplace, Oehme, van Sweden
Holly Rotondi, Friends of the National World War II Memorial