



Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: April 5, 2018

PROJECT National Desert Shield and Desert Storm Memorial Washington, DC	NCPC FILE NUMBER 7745
SUBMITTED BY United States Department of the Interior National Park Service	NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER 00.00(73.10)44729
REVIEW AUTHORITY Per 40 U.S.C. 8905, Public Law 113-291 and Public Law 115-18	APPLICANT'S REQUEST Approval of comments on site selection
	PROPOSED ACTION Approve comments as requested
	ACTION ITEM TYPE Staff Presentation

PROJECT SUMMARY

The National Park Service (NPS), in collaboration with the National Desert Storm War Memorial Association (the Association), has submitted potential sites for the proposed Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial for Commission review and comment. The Association is the project sponsor of the memorial. Congress authorized the establishment of the memorial in Public Law 113-291, which states the Association may establish the National Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial as a commemorative work on Federal land in the District of Columbia to commemorate and honor those who, as a member of the Armed Forces, served on active duty in support of Operation Desert Storm or Operation Desert Shield.

Through Public Law 115-18, Congress authorized the memorial to be located within Area I as defined by the Commemorative Works Act (CWA). The CWA defines approval requirements related to the location, design, and construction of commemorative works in the District of Columbia and its environs. The National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) approve the site and design for new commemorative works.

In December 2017, the Commission provided comments on three potential memorial sites – Walt Whitman Park, the Belvedere along the Potomac River, and the area near Constitution Avenue and 23rd Street, NW. The Commission also requested the applicant develop concept designs for the three sites. In response, the Association and NPS have developed a number of schemes that explore the memorial program and capacity of each of the three sites. The schemes are not intended to be final designs.

KEY INFORMATION

- Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield resulted from the 1990 invasion of Kuwait by Iraq. An international coalition was assembled to liberate the country and prevent further conflict.
- The Commemorative Works Act (CWA) establishes requirements for building commemorative works on federal lands within the District of Columbia and its environs. It applies to lands under jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) and the US General Services Administration (GSA).
- In addition to the CWA site location criteria, the sponsor, in coordination with NPS, has developed more refined site location criteria for the project.
- 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 113-291 states the Association may establish the National Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial as a commemorative work, on Federal land in the District of Columbia to commemorate and honor those who, as a member of the Armed Forces, served on active duty in support of Operation Desert Storm or Operation Desert Shield.
 - Public Law 115-18 authorizes the memorial to be located within Area I as defined by the CWA
 - (2) The sponsor consults with the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission (NCMAC) on alternative sites and design concepts.
 - NPS, in collaboration with the Association, submitted two potential memorial sites for consideration, including the Memorial Circle area and the Constitution Avenue terminus near 23rd Street, NW in Washington, DC.
 - NCMAC commented favorably on advancing both sites for further evaluation at its May 16, 2017 meeting.
 - (3) NCPC, CFA, and the DOI must each approve the site and design for new commemorative works.
 - The site selection analysis of potential memorial locations is an early step towards these approvals.
 - NCPC reviewed the Constitution Avenue and Memorial Circle sites on July 13, 2017 and provided comments to NPS and the applicant.

- NCPC reviewed the Walt Whitman Park, Constitution Avenue and Belvedere sites again on December 7, 2017 and recommended the applicant develop concept designs that further explore each site. The Commission also supported eliminating the Memorial Circle site.
 - CFA reviewed the three sites again at its March 15, 2018, expressing the challenges associated with the various sites. After deliberation, the Commission endorsed the Belvedere site, noting that it could accommodate vertical elements, and would be highly visible from the Potomac River and nearby bridges.
 - In the past, the site and design approval stages had occurred independently. However, site selection decisions can be influenced by the memorial design. As such, the review process has been updated to allow the Commission to evaluate potential memorial sites with some early information about potential designs and programs. At this stage, the applicant has provided those early designs as a way to evaluate the capacity of the site to accommodate the memorial program.
- (4) NCPC, CFA and DOI must approve and permit the final site and design for each new memorial, after the steps above are completed. NPS is generally responsible for the long-term maintenance and interpretation of monuments and memorials.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commission:

Regarding the memorial and site design:

Notes that the applicant has developed conceptual design schemes for the three sites currently under consideration, in response to the Commission's request.

Notes the proposed memorial area will generally occupy less than a half an acre but the specific size varies among concepts. The memorial area has decreased from the original 1.5 acres.

Notes the applicant has stated that a sacred space for reflection is critical to the memorial program.

Finds that a predominant feature of the conceptual design schemes at each location are commemorative walls, which help to create intimacy but pose challenges related to views, visibility, and security, depending on their height and length.

Recommends the applicant consider alternative commemorative elements that achieve the same purpose while distinguishing the memorial from others with similar wall features.

Recommends that if walls are to be used, the applicant reconsider their height and scale to avoid challenges related to views, visibility and security.

Regarding the Constitution Avenue site:

Supports the site as the preferred location of the proposed memorial given its strong thematic connection to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, proximity to other 20th Century War memorials, as well as nearby diplomatic agencies and organizations such as the US Department of State and US Institute of Peace.

Notes the site also allows for a contemplative gathering space that can be set back or buffered from traffic noise and other nearby activity.

Requests the applicant continue to develop the three conceptual design schemes for the site and further address the following comments in the next submission:

- Given the cultural and historic landscape of the Lincoln Memorial, as well as the site's open setting, develop alternative commemoration strategies, including a landscape-oriented approach, that minimize vertical elements. While not preferred, if walls are proposed, detail their purpose and use, and reevaluate their height and length to avoid monolithic elements that block views.
- Provide existing and proposed views from the Lincoln Memorial to the site and from the site to the Lincoln Memorial.
- Show how the proposed memorial will relate to the Constitution Avenue corridor, both in its current condition and if it were to be extended to the river.
- Show how the memorial could relate and connect to future memorials that may also be built on the site or vicinity, and describe any uses or functions that would be appropriate to share across multiple memorials.
- Describe how any existing recreational uses on the site could be accommodated in the future.

Regarding the Walt Whitman Park site:

Finds that while the site is the most flexible in terms of design and could readily accommodate a contemplative gathering space as shown in the proposed concepts, the location of the site in between the White House and Kennedy Center, and near the Department of the Interior, may be better suited for another memorial theme.

Finds that a memorial that does not require a contemplative gathering space may better accommodate active recreational and park uses as part of the memorial, which would be appropriate and desired in this urban setting.

Notes that the *Memorials and Museums Master Plan* recommends the site also incorporate interpretive elements related to the life and work of Walt Whitman.

Regarding the Belvedere site:

Notes the memorial site is located less than twenty feet from Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, which carries over 30,000 vehicles per day, and is near the flight path to Reagan National Airport resulting in airplane noise at certain times.

Finds that access to the site is particularly difficult from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the west side of the National Mall due to the existing street network and limited pedestrian infrastructure.

Finds the proposed design shows that challenges associated with creating a sacred, contemplative space in close proximity to Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway and the existing recreational trail are difficult to overcome.

Finds the use of walls to establish a sacred, contemplative space block views to and along the historic Constitution Avenue corridor, contradicting the historic purpose of the Belvedere to act as a terminus to the corridor at the Potomac River.

Finds the site could be a successful location for memorials that would not require a contemplative gathering space, and therefore could preserve the visual connection of Constitution Avenue corridor and the Belvedere as its terminus.

PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

Previous actions	– July 2017 – Comments on Site Selection
	– December 2017 – Comments on Site Selection
Remaining actions (anticipated)	– Approval of preliminary memorial and site development plans
	– Approval of final memorial and site development plans

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

NPS, in collaboration with the National Desert Storm War Memorial Association, has submitted design concepts for the three memorial sites currently under consideration. These include Walt Whitman Park, the Belvedere along Potomac Avenue, and Constitution Avenue at 23rd Street, NW. The memorial's themes include a focus on the historical pivot that restored the bond between the American people and military; the international coalition and diplomacy that were necessary for success; and the commemoration of those who served.

Additional analysis and designs have been developed following the December 2017 meeting, at which time the Commission asked the applicant to develop one or more alternative design concepts for the sites, including variations in scale, placement and orientation. The studies are intended to explore the physical relationship of the memorial to the surrounding context, and the capacity of each site to accommodate the memorial program. The designs are intended to help inform selection of the preferred memorial site. Staff notes that all the three sites have the potential to be successful memorial locations with varying degrees of intervention; however, the 23rd and Constitution Avenue site offers the most potential in terms of thematic connection and program feasibility.

Analysis

Operation Desert Storm and Desert Shield represented a coalition of 34 countries, an unparalleled international effort led by American Armed Forces to liberate Kuwait. Almost 700,000 American service members participated, and ultimately several hundred members gave their lives in protection of their country. The operations were an unqualified combat success that restored faith in the prowess of the US military. As such, the event holds a unique place in history by helping close the wounds of the Vietnam War, including the treatment of returning service members, and offering the respect given now to veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Staff analyzed this project using guidance in the Commemorative Works Act (CWA), the Comprehensive Plan, and the applicant's site selection criteria and program needs. 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.

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

The Association has adopted additional site selection criteria to result in a memorial that would:

- Establish a prominent place of honor.
- Complement existing attributes of the site.
- Maintain the civic quality of open space.
- Respect the established context and not preclude the addition of future memorials.
- Allow for future connections.
- Create an appropriate visitor experience and include sacred space for reflection.

The Association had previously indicated their preference for a site at least 1.5 acres in size. The proposed site area has been reduced, and staff notes the proposed memorial area will generally occupy less than half an acre, although the specific size varies among the schemes. In addition, the Association has indicated potential memorial design elements may include walls, statuary or sculptures, maintainable landscaping materials, ramps and processional, and a vertical element to terminate an important axis.

All of the concept schemes utilize walls as a major memorial element. While walls can be integrated successfully in the correct context, they can also be monolithic, block views, and be reminiscent of other memorials. As such, staff recommends the **Commission find that a predominant feature of the conceptual design schemes at each location are commemorative walls, which help to create intimacy but pose challenges related to views, visibility, and security, depending on their height and length.**

Further, staff suggests the **Commission recommend the applicant consider alternative commemorative elements that achieve the same purpose while distinguishing the memorial from others with similar wall features.** Staff also suggest the **Commission recommend that, if walls are to be used, the applicant reconsider their height and scale to avoid challenges related to views, visibility and security.**

The above comments generally apply to all the sites and concept designs, while the following comments pertain to the specific site and designs as developed by the applicant.

Constitution Avenue Terminus

The Constitution Avenue site is located southwest of the intersection of 23rd Avenue, NW and Constitution Avenue, just north of the Lincoln Memorial. The site area is approximately 3.8 acres, and is currently open lawn utilized for recreational purposes. Exit ramps from the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge (I-66) form the northern boundary of the site, while ramps to the E Street Expressway and Rock Creek Parkway form the western boundary. The southern boundary is defined by the limits of the Reserve, as defined in the CWA. As provided by the Congressional authorization, the memorial may be in Area I only. The U.S. Institute of Peace is located to the north, the future Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitor Center to the east, and the Lincoln Memorial to the south. A combination of road infrastructure and recreational areas are located to the west. Sidewalks provide pedestrian access along the north and eastern portions of the site. At one time, Constitution Avenue extended to the west and terminated at the Belvedere overlooking the Potomac River. That connection no longer exists due to the network of roads and ramps that currently traverse the area.

Of the sites under consideration, this location provides the strongest thematic connection to the proposed memorial. The welcoming response to returning service members following Desert Storm and Desert Shield is seen as an important closure to the Vietnam War-era. The location near the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and future visitor center would help reinforce this connection. The site is also near other 20th Century war memorials.

The applicant has developed three design concepts to evaluate the site. Schemes 1 and 2 locate the memorial in the northeastern portion of the site, and both include a central sacred space and sculptural element, generally defined by memorial walls. Scheme 1 utilizes a circular plan to arrange the elements, while the axial relationships to the Lincoln Memorial and Vietnam Veterans Memorial are implied through the orientation of the memorial features. Scheme 2 uses a “left hook” form in plan, and incorporates tablets to recognize the 34 coalition nations. Scheme 3 is oriented west to east just south of the Constitution Avenue corridor, and occupies the largest area. This design incorporates a series of rooms that reflect different components of the memorial, while a large commemorative wall defines the northern edge.

The design studies show that the site could accommodate the memorial program in several ways. A sacred or contemplative space, as identified in the sponsor's program needs, could also be located in the site with appropriate setback or buffering. As such, staff recommends the **Commission support the site as the preferred location of the proposed memorial given its strong thematic connection to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, proximity to other 20th Century War memorials, as well as nearby diplomatic agencies and organizations such as the US Department of State and US Institute of Peace.**

However, the site's location as a gateway to the monumental core and near the Lincoln Memorial also poses a number of challenges. First, pedestrian circulation to the memorial and through the site could be improved to provide better connections to the National Mall and waterfront. The memorial could help establish the first links in an improved trail or sidewalk network through the site to future memorials. Secondly, the site currently accommodates recreational uses, and those recreational uses should be accommodated elsewhere. Any new memorial should consider how it will connect to and relate with the extension of Constitution Avenue, when it occurs. For example, Scheme 3 proposes a long wall that appears to block views from the avenue looking south. In addition, because the open landscape provides a setting for the Lincoln Memorial, design strategies should consider views to and from the site, as well as how to minimize impacts on these views. Staff notes that in the future, four rows of concentric trees will be installed south of the site, consistent with intent of the original historic planting plan for the Lincoln Memorial and Grounds. These trees should be considered in evaluating views and the setting for the memorial. Finally, given the proposed DC Water and levee projects in the area, the memorial will require continued coordination with those relevant agencies.

Along with the potential for future memorials and other changes to the site, the memorial sponsor should further explore concept designs that address a number of these issues. **As such, staff recommends the Commission request the applicant continue to develop the three conceptual design schemes for the site and further address the following comments in the next submission:**

- **Given the cultural and historic landscape of the Lincoln Memorial, as well as the site's open setting, develop alternative commemoration strategies, including a landscape-oriented approach, that minimize vertical elements. While not preferred, if walls are**

proposed, detail their purpose and use, and reevaluate their height and length to avoid monolithic elements that block views.

- Provide existing and proposed views from the Lincoln Memorial to the site and from the site to the Lincoln Memorial.
- Show how the proposed memorial will relate to the Constitution Avenue corridor, both in its current condition and if it were to be extended to the river.
- Show how the memorial could relate and connect to future memorials that may also be built on the site or vicinity, and describe any uses or functions that would be appropriate to share across multiple memorials.
- Describe how any existing recreational uses on the site could be accommodated in the future.

Walt Whitman Park

Walt Whitman Park is located in the E Street corridor, near the intersection with 19th Street, NW. The site is primarily grass, and includes large shade trees around the perimeter. A gathering area and former playground occupies the east end of the block. The White House is located three blocks to the east, and the Department of State is located two blocks to the west. The context is urban, with a variety of other uses, both public and private, surrounding the site. The site was identified in the Monumental Core Framework Plan as part of a linear commemorative park connecting the White House and Kennedy Center.

Thematically, Walt Whitman Park is more removed from the other 20th Century war memorials located further to the south on the National Mall, such as the Vietnam Veterans, World War II, and Korean War Memorials. The park is near other sites, such as the U.S. Department of State Headquarters, the U.S. Diplomacy Center, and White House, which might be relevant to the memorial but these connections may not be readily evident to memorial visitors.

The applicant has developed two schemes to evaluate the site. Both designs utilize the eastern portion of the block, while leaving the western portion open for another use. The first scheme creates a series of smaller rooms that tell the story of the memorial through a processional experience. The second scheme utilizes a larger central gathering space surrounded by walls and other commemorative features. Both schemes rely on a series of walls to define spaces and provide distinction between sacred spaces, gathering areas and the surrounding context. The park site has the capacity to accommodate vertical elements because it is relatively open and unconstrained by existing conditions. Generally, however, extremely long or tall walls can block views into the memorial, limiting visibility and awareness by the public. Extremely tall walls can also feel overwhelming to pedestrians.

The concept designs show that the memorial program could be accommodated in several ways. However, as noted above, the thematic connection between the memorial and the surrounding context is not likely to be evident to visitors. As such, staff recommends the **Commission find that while the site is the most flexible in terms of design and could readily accommodate a**

contemplative gathering space as shown in the proposed concepts, the location of the site in between the White House and Kennedy Center, and near the Department of the Interior, may be better suited for another memorial theme.

Further, given the urban setting, the site has the opportunity to accommodate a variety of park uses that could benefit the surrounding area, including office workers and students. These uses could be both passive as well as active, and would require additional consideration when in proximity to a memorial with a sacred component. Therefore, staff recommends the **Commission find that a memorial that does not require a contemplative gathering space may better accommodate active recreational and park uses as part of the memorial, which would be appropriate and desirable in this urban setting.** Finally, staff notes that the *Memorials and Museums Master Plan* recommends the site also incorporate interpretive elements related to the life and work of Walt Whitman, which is the current namesake of the park.

The Belvedere

The Belvedere is located along Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, adjacent to the Potomac River. It is immediately across from the confluence of several busy streets and an active recreation area. The Kennedy Center is located north of the site and Arlington National Cemetery is located across the elevated Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bridge. The site is comprised of a circular landscape island approximately 45 feet in diameter, separated from Rock Creek Park trail by a vehicle lay-by. A complex network of streets and ramps have generally isolated the site from the National Mall, though it is accessible along the Rock Creek Trail.

Thematically, the site provides some views of the Arlington National Cemetery grounds, located across the Potomac River. Therefore, the monument could have some relationship to the backdrop provided by the Cemetery. In addition, the site is located west of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and other 20th Century war memorials, though pedestrian access is not direct, easy or intuitive. As such, staff recommends the **Commission find that access to the site is particularly difficult from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the west side of the National Mall due to the existing street network and limited pedestrian infrastructure.** Improvements to the surrounding transportation network are necessary to increase pedestrian and bicycle access.

This location holds limited opportunity for an intimate visitor experience as the adjacent roadway and nearby active recreational uses do not lend themselves to peaceful reflection. As noted previously, the applicant has indicated a sacred space for reflection is critical to the memorial program. However, the memorial site is located less than twenty feet from Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, which carries over 30,000 vehicles per day, and is near the flight path to Reagan National Airport resulting in airplane noise at certain times. The design concept utilizes a series of walls to buffer the adjacent road and trail traffic to establish this space. In addition, a tall vertical element is proposed to help terminate the Constitution Avenue viewshed, while wind sculptures are used to reflect the coalition of participating nations.

The Belvedere was intended to act as the terminus of Constitution Avenue, providing sweeping views of the Potomac River. The use of walls and other similar elements to create a distinct

memorial space effectively cut the memorial off from the Constitution Avenue corridor. As such, staff recommends the **Commission find the use of walls to establish a sacred, contemplative space block views to and along the historic Constitution Avenue corridor, contradicting the historic purpose of the Belvedere to act as a terminus to the corridor at the Potomac River.** A memorial program that does not require a sacred or contemplative space could remain more open and connected to the surrounding context and perhaps better integrate with the adjacent recreational trail. As such, staff recommends the **Commission find the site could be a successful location for memorials that would not require a contemplative gathering space, and therefore could preserve the visual connection of Constitution Avenue corridor and the Belvedere as its terminus.** Further, staff recommends the **Commission find the proposed design shows that challenges associated with creating a sacred, contemplative space in close proximity to Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway and the existing recreational trail are difficult to overcome.**

CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE

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.

Commemorative Works Act

The Commemorative Works Act (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 Plan states that memorials, when properly placed and sensitively designed, can provide a source of community identity and pride, while bolstering revitalization efforts. The sites currently under consideration are identified as sites for memorials within the 2M Plan.

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.

National Environmental Policy Act

NCPC and NPS will each have an independent responsibility to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); NCPC's responsibility stems from its approval authority over the site and design of the monument. NPS will prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) to identify alternatives and assess the potential impacts of the proposed memorial. NCPC is a cooperating agency for purposes of the EA, and NCPC staff will provide comments during the scoping period. A number of topics will be evaluated during the NEPA process, including urban design and visitor experience, historic and cultural resources, transportation systems and sustainability.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal at its March 14, 2018 meeting. Without objection, the Committee forwarded the proposed comments on site selection to the Commission with the statement that the proposal has been coordinated with all participating agencies. The District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office (DC SHPO) noted that their coordination is conditioned upon satisfactory completion of the Section 106 review process. The participating agencies were: NCPC; NPS; the District Department of Transportation; the District Department of Energy and Environment; the DC SHPO; the General Services Administration; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts

The U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) reviewed the proposed sites for the memorial on March 15, 2018. At that time, the CFA discussed the merits of each site, and expressed support for the Belvedere as the proposed memorial location, noting that it could accommodate vertical elements, and would be highly visible from the Potomac River and nearby bridges. They further stated it "provides an appropriate site for an uplifting national memorial that would valorize the veterans of Desert Storm and Desert Shield."

National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission

Section 8905(a)(1) of the Commemorative Works Act requires memorial sponsors to consult with the National Capital Memorial Advisory Committee (NCMAC) on the selection of alternative sites and design concepts prior to submitting the project to NCPC for formal review. NCMAC reviewed the site selection analysis on January 28, 2016 and May 16, 2017. Initial site selection included 18 sites, with the two finalist sites were advanced with NCMAC support. NCMAC has not reviewed the revised site selection. However, the proposed memorial design on the selected site will be submitted to NCMAC for review prior to final approval by NCPC.

ONLINE REFERENCE

The following supporting documents for this project are available online:

- Submission Package

Prepared by Matthew Flis
03/29/2018

POWERPOINT (ATTACHED)

NCPC File #7745

**National Desert Storm and Desert Shield
Memorial**

Site Selection

National Park Service

Concept Review

Commission meeting date: December 7, 2017

NCPC review authority: Commemorative Works Act (40 U.S.C. 8905) & Public Laws 113-291 and 115-18

Applicant request: Concept Review

Delegated / consent / open / executive session: Open Session

NCPC Review Officer: M. Flis

NCPC File number: 7745

Project summary:

The National Park Service (NPS), in collaboration with the National Desert Storm War Memorial (NDSWM) Association, has submitted potential sites for the proposed National Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial, to be located in Area I within the District of Columbia. The Association is the project sponsor of the Memorial and was established in accordance with Public Law 113-291. Congress designated Area I, as defined in the Commemorative Works Act (CWA) as the location of the memorial pursuant to Public Law 115-18. The memorial must be consistent with the CWA, and therefore requires review and approval by NCPC and the Commission of Fine Arts.

The purpose of the memorial is to commemorate and honor members of the Armed Forces who served on active duty in support of Operation Desert Storm or Desert Shield. These operations involved more than a half a million American service men and women. Military action, led by the United States and involving an international coalition of countries, led to the liberation of Kuwait from Saddam Hussein's invasion forces. Nearly 300 Americans perished or are missing as a result of the operations.

The Commission last provided comments on the proposed sites in December 2017; the sites advanced for consideration include E Street, Constitution Avenue, and the Belvedere. In response to previous feedback, the applicant has developed one or more concept designs for each site.

NATIONAL DESERT STORM AND DESERT SHIELD MEMORIAL

The Memorial's Themes

The Memorial's Themes:

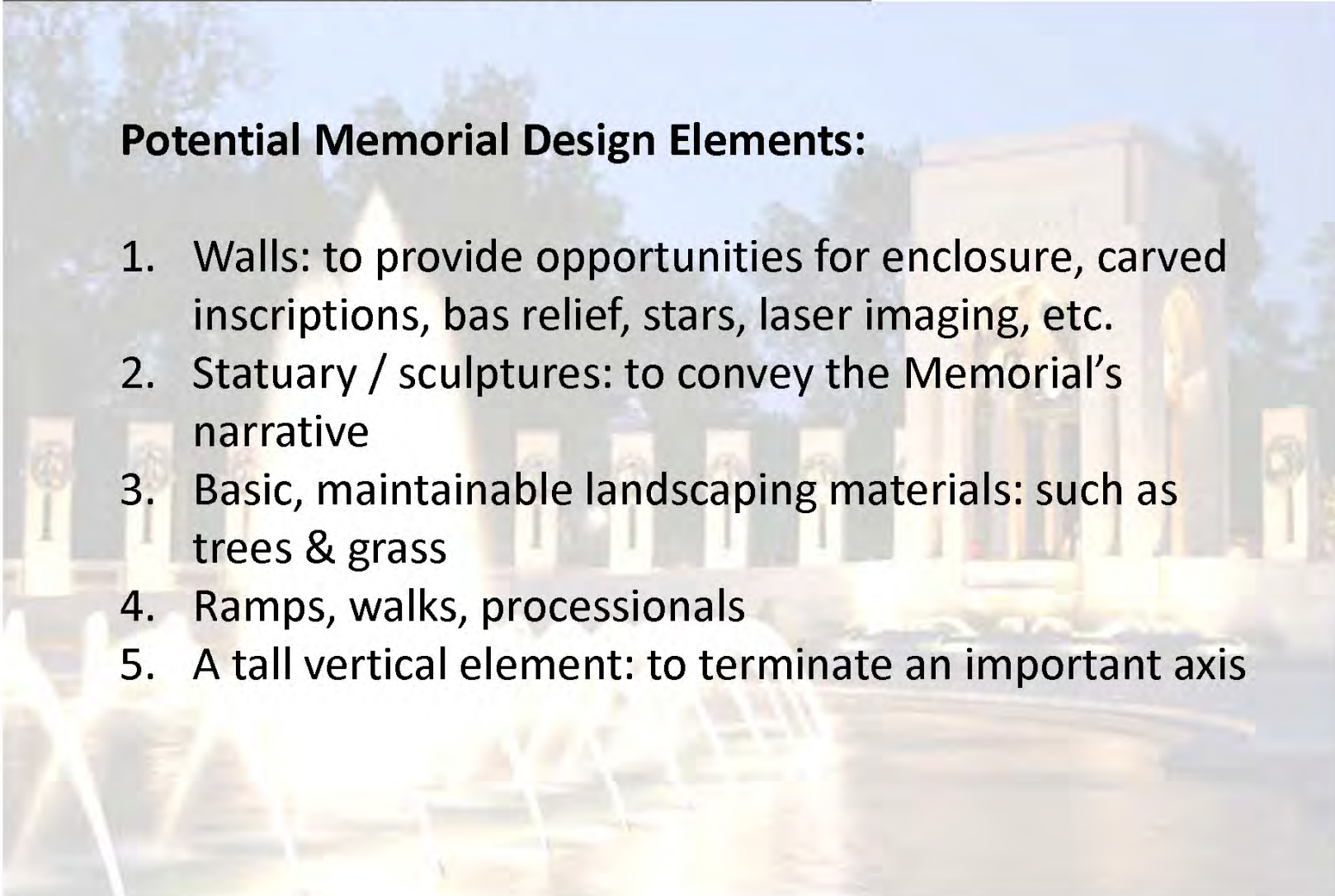
1. **The Historic Pivot:** the restoration of the bond between the American people and the military, as illustrated in the National Victory Parade on Constitution Avenue on June 8, 1991. There were 8,000 military participants and over 200,000 spectators
2. **The 34-nation coalition** & international diplomacy to liberate the country of Kuwait
3. **Commemoration** of the conflict and the Americans who served

NATIONAL DESERT STORM AND DESERT SHIELD MEMORIAL

The Memorial's Design Elements

Potential Memorial Design Elements:

1. Walls: to provide opportunities for enclosure, carved inscriptions, bas relief, stars, laser imaging, etc.
2. Statuary / sculptures: to convey the Memorial's narrative
3. Basic, maintainable landscaping materials: such as trees & grass
4. Ramps, walks, processional
5. A tall vertical element: to terminate an important axis



NATIONAL DESERT STORM AND DESERT SHIELD MEMORIAL

Developing the Narrative: The Historical Context



The Vietnam War Memorial

- Desert Storm is an historical bookend to the Vietnam Era
- The Vietnam War & Operation Desert Storm are contrasting conflicts:
 - Vietnam War was a long divisive conflict with an ambiguous outcome
 - Operation Desert Storm had a clear mission with a rapid & decisive victory
- Historic events could inform the Memorial's narrative & design: descending vs. ascending, angular vs. curved

NATIONAL DESERT STORM AND DESERT SHIELD MEMORIAL

Developing the Narrative: Fine Tuning The Memorial's Message



The American military as heroes and liberators



Kuwaiti liberation celebrations



MOPP: Mission Oriented Protective Posture; an ever-present concern

NATIONAL DESERT STORM AND DESERT SHIELD MEMORIAL

Developing the Narrative: Potential Sources of Inspiration



The Left Hook Map



Wind Sculptures



Joann Grant's 3rd grade class quilt of 1991



Coalition country flags

NATIONAL DESERT STORM AND DESERT SHIELD MEMORIAL

Updated Site Evaluation Criteria

The addition of this memorial to a contemplated site should:

- Establish a prominent place of honor
- Compliment the existing attributes of the site
- Maintain the civic quality of open space
- Respect the established context and should not preclude the addition of future memorials
- Allow for future connections
- Enable an appropriately sized and scaled design
- Create an appropriate visitor experience and include a sacred space for reflection

NATIONAL DESERT STORM AND DESERT SHIELD MEMORIAL

Design Parameters: Primary & Secondary Considerations

The design of the memorial should:

- Be compact and appropriate in size, related to the scale of the site
- Be more than a stand-alone object, it should provide an appropriate place of reflection
- Be integrated within, and be complementary to, the existing landscape
- Maintain existing trees, particularly designed rows of trees, to the extent practicable
- Utilize existing circulation resources (sidewalks, pathways and parking) to the extent practicable

NATIONAL DESERT STORM AND DESERT SHIELD MEMORIAL

Concept Design Review



► The 3 Sites – Vicinity Photo

NATIONAL DESERT STORM AND DESERT SHIELD MEMORIAL

Concept Design Review

► The Belvedere

SITE CHARACTER: The Civic Landscape Site

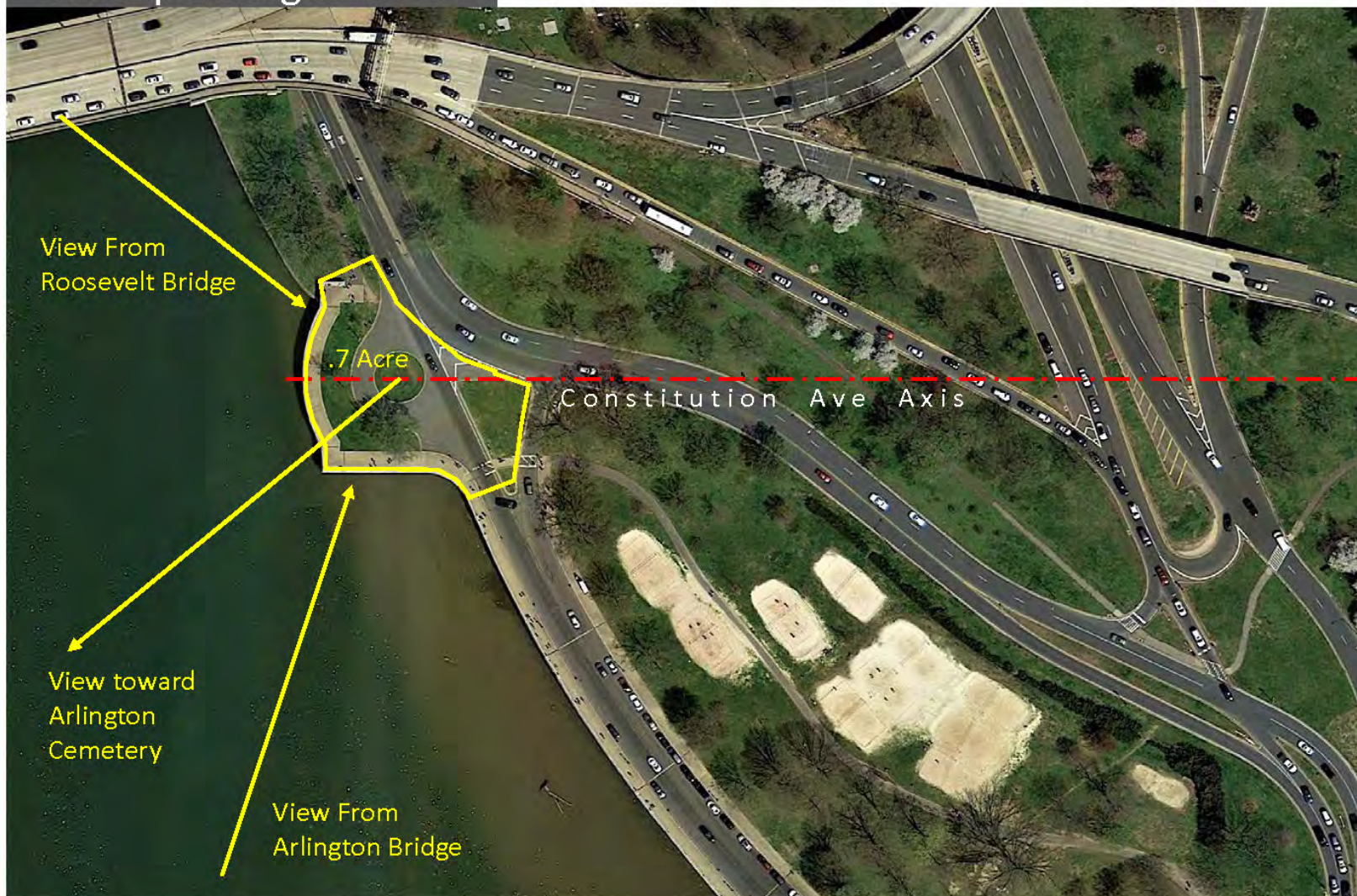
A visible, prominent site on the Potomac River

Site Characteristics:

- The site is the historic terminus to Constitution Avenue
- Visible to & from multiple directions
- Adjacent to the Potomac: boundlessness & floodplain
- Parallel parking on Potomac Parkway
- ½ mile walk to the National Mall & the Lincoln Memorial
- Adjacent vehicular circulation
- Multi-use trail passes through the site

NATIONAL DESERT STORM AND DESERT SHIELD MEMORIAL

Concept Design Review



► The Belvedere – Site Aerial Photo

NATIONAL DESERT STORM AND DESERT SHIELD MEMORIAL

Concept Design Review



The view toward the Washington Monument



The view toward the Roosevelt Bridge



The view toward the Roosevelt Bridge



The view from the Roosevelt Bridge

NATIONAL DESERT STORM AND DESERT SHIELD MEMORIAL

Concept Design Review



The view from Memorial Bridge



The view from the Mt. Vernon Trail



The view from Memorial Bridge

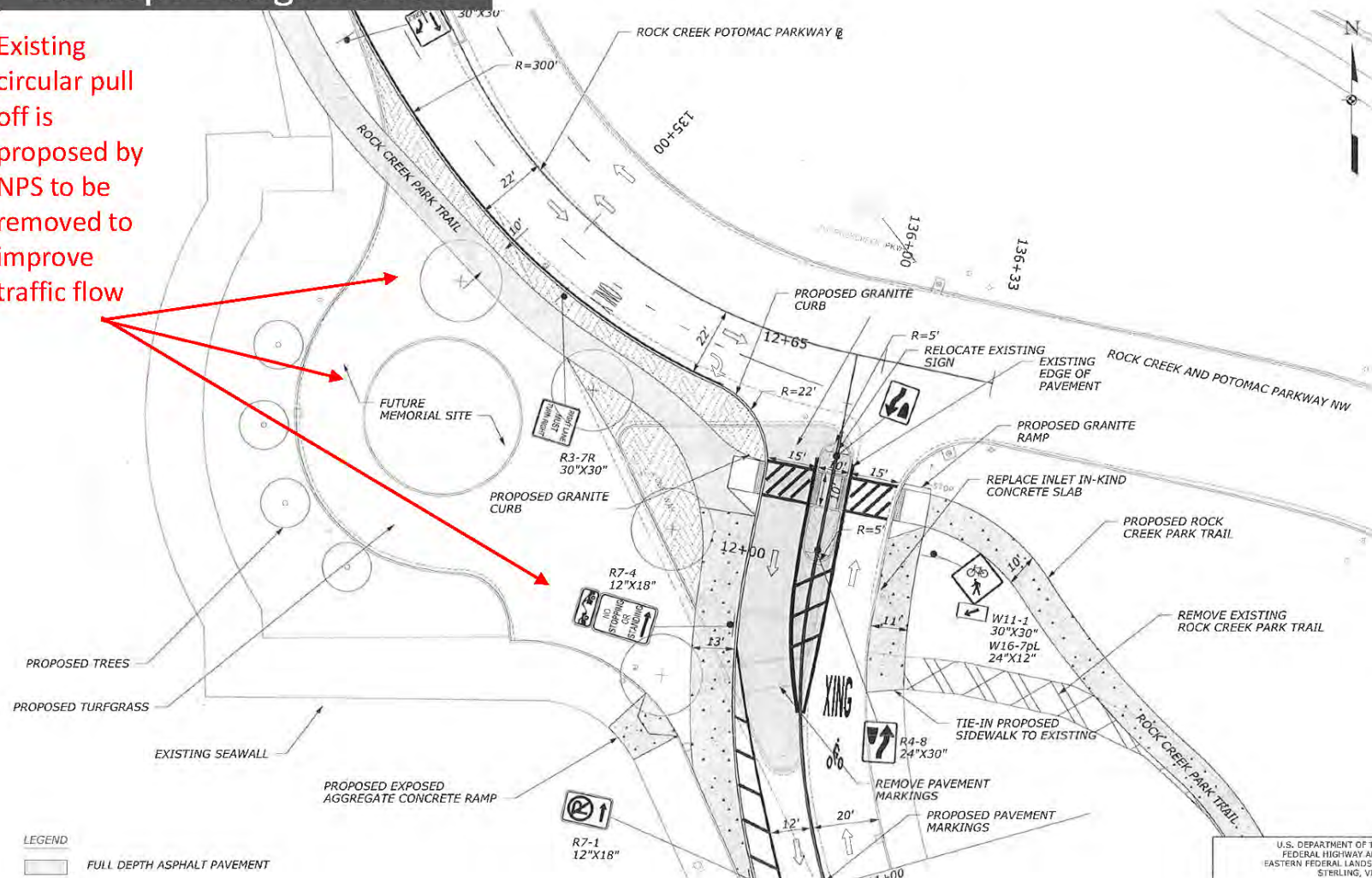


The view from 23rd & Constitution

NATIONAL DESERT STORM AND DESERT SHIELD MEMORIAL

Concept Design Review

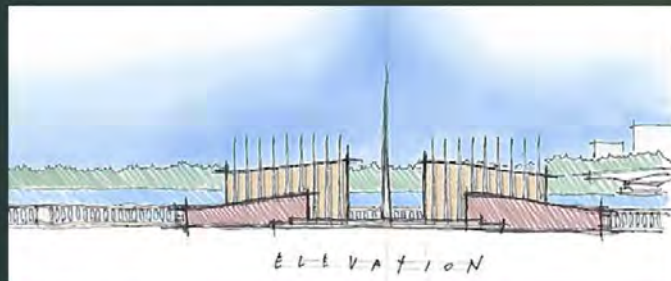
Existing
circular pull
off is
proposed by
NPS to be
removed to
improve
traffic flow



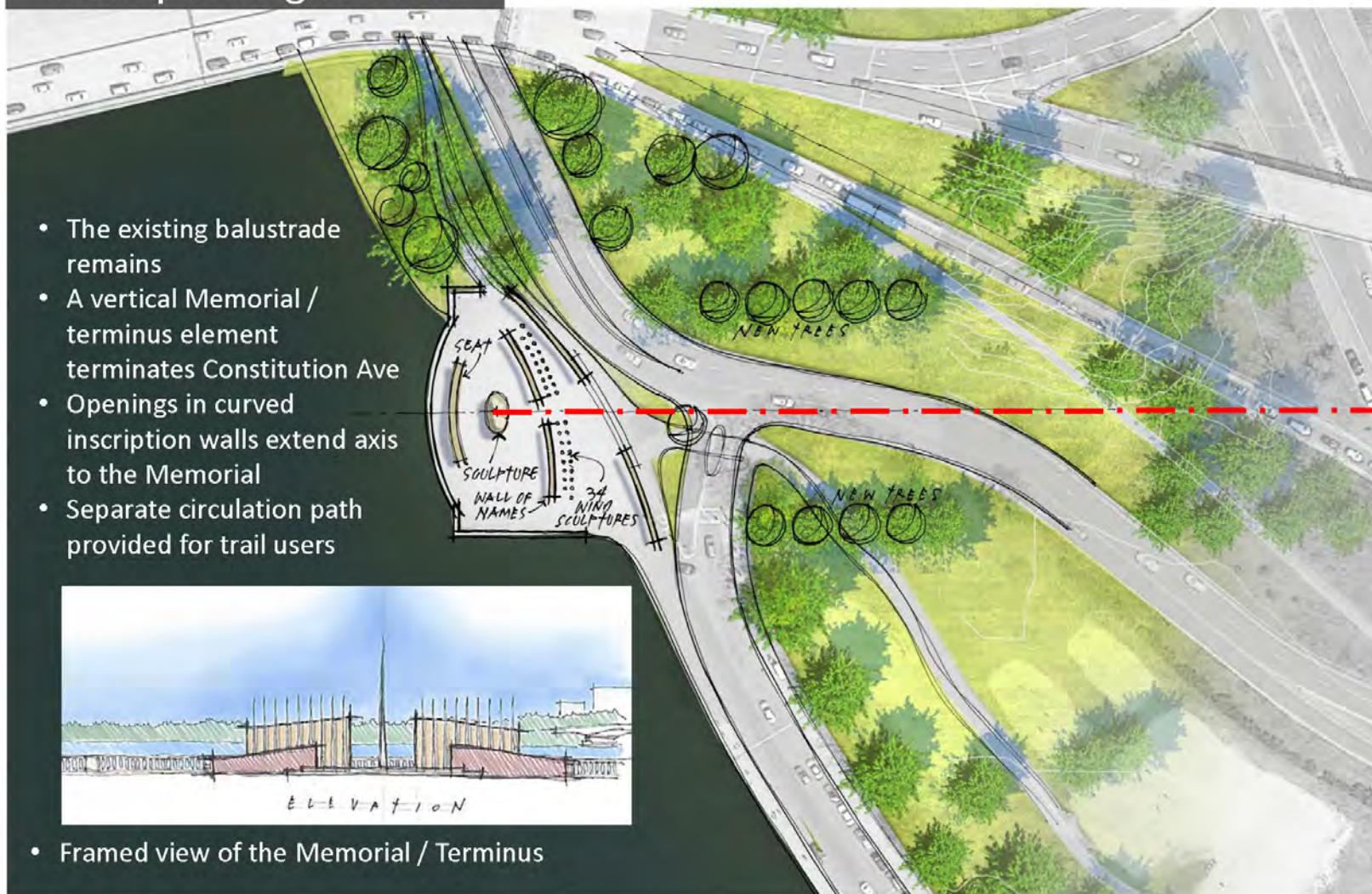
NATIONAL DESERT STORM AND DESERT SHIELD MEMORIAL

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- The existing balustrade remains
- A vertical Memorial / terminus element terminates Constitution Ave
- Openings in curved inscription walls extend axis to the Memorial
- Separate circulation path provided for trail users

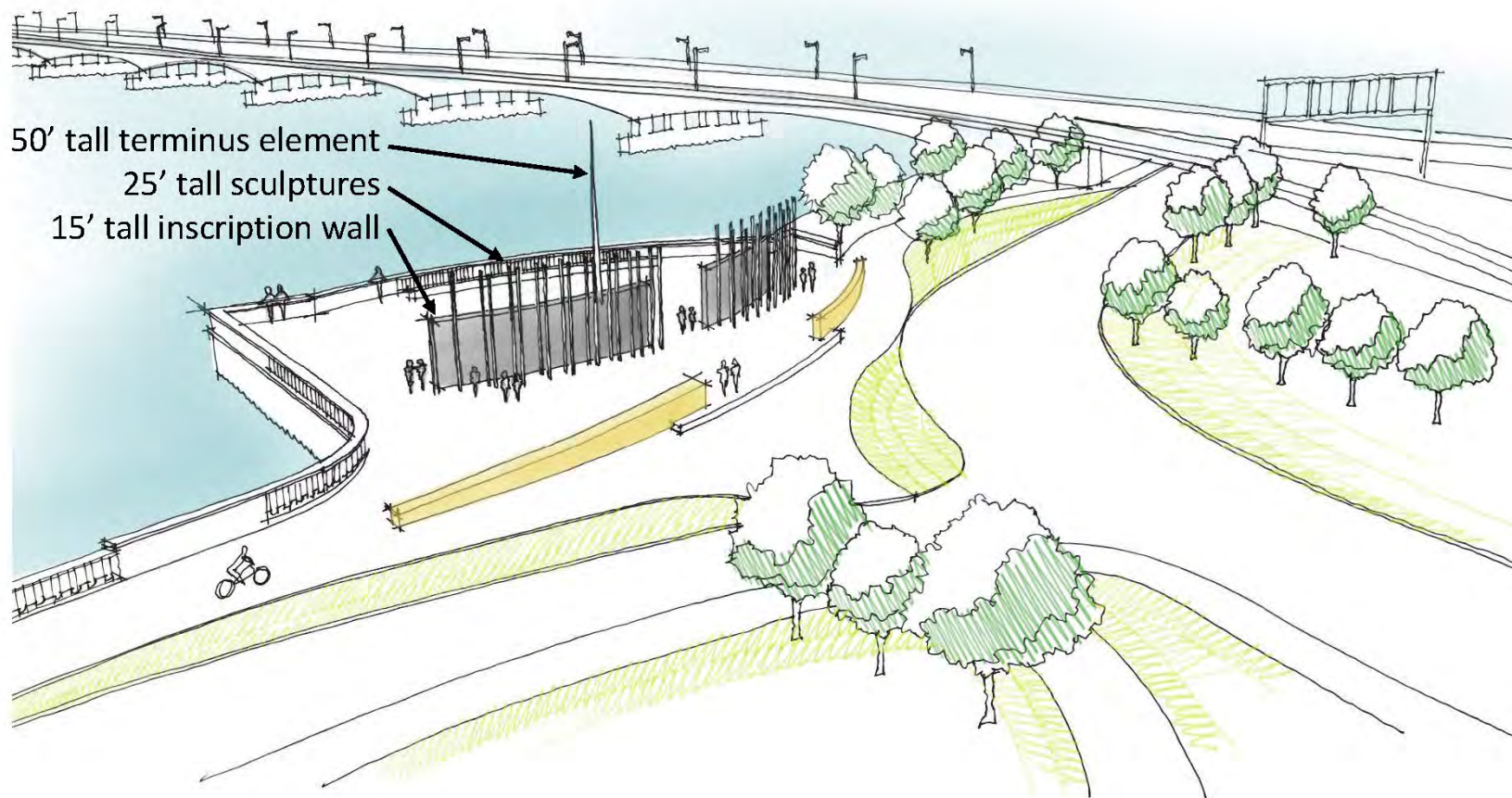


- Framed view of the Memorial / Terminus



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► E Street

SITE CHARACTER: The Urban Landscape Site

An Urban Green Space

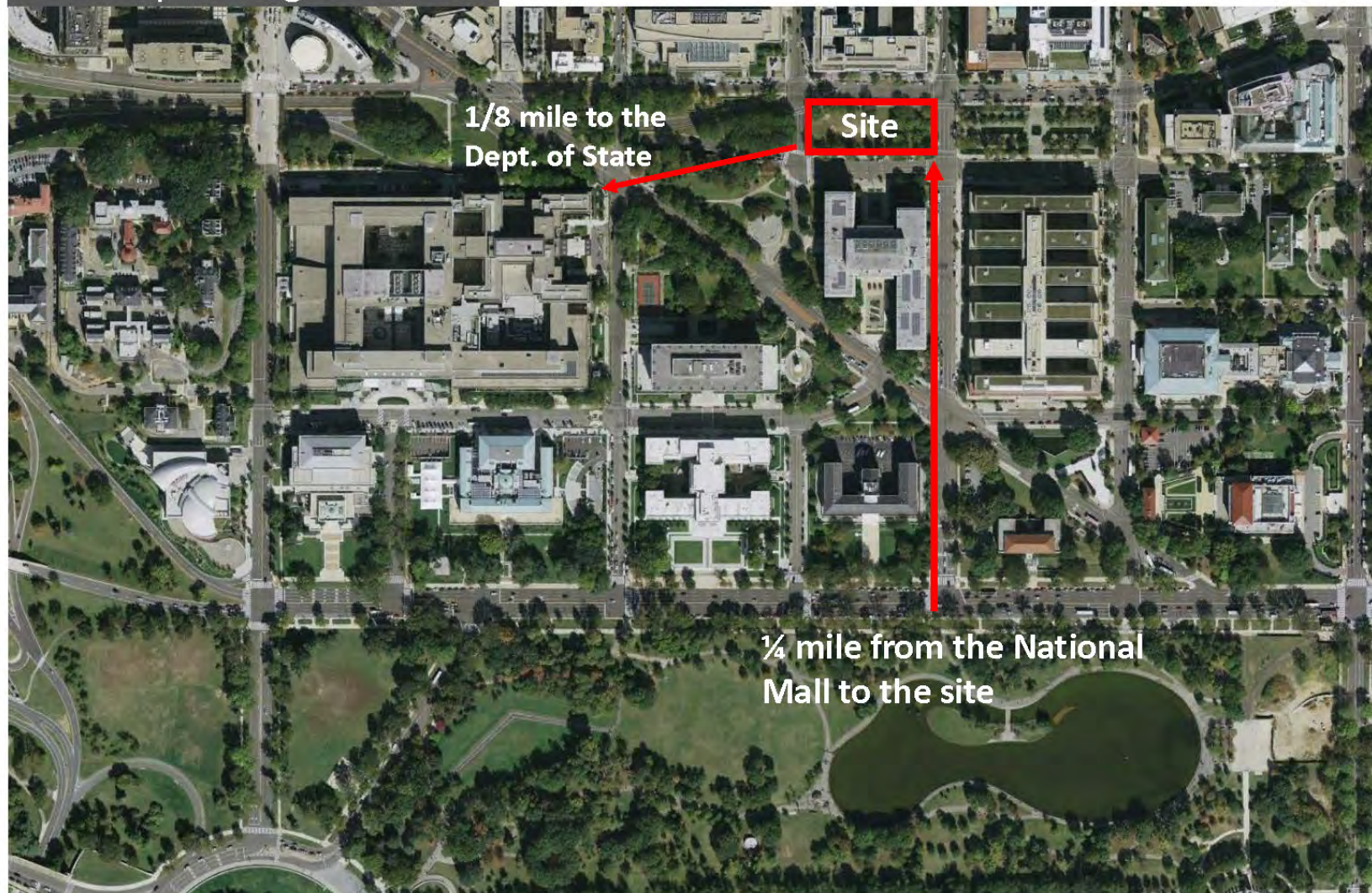
Site Characteristics:

- Urban character, zoned for mixed used (MU)
- Site #11 in the Museums & Memorials Master Plan
- Bounded by 4 streets & multistory buildings
- Existing park occupies east portion of site
- Area II location level of prominence
- ¼ mile to the National Mall via 19th Street
- Adjacent to Rawlins Park, with a shared center axis
- Within anticipated Presidential Corridor
- On-street parking



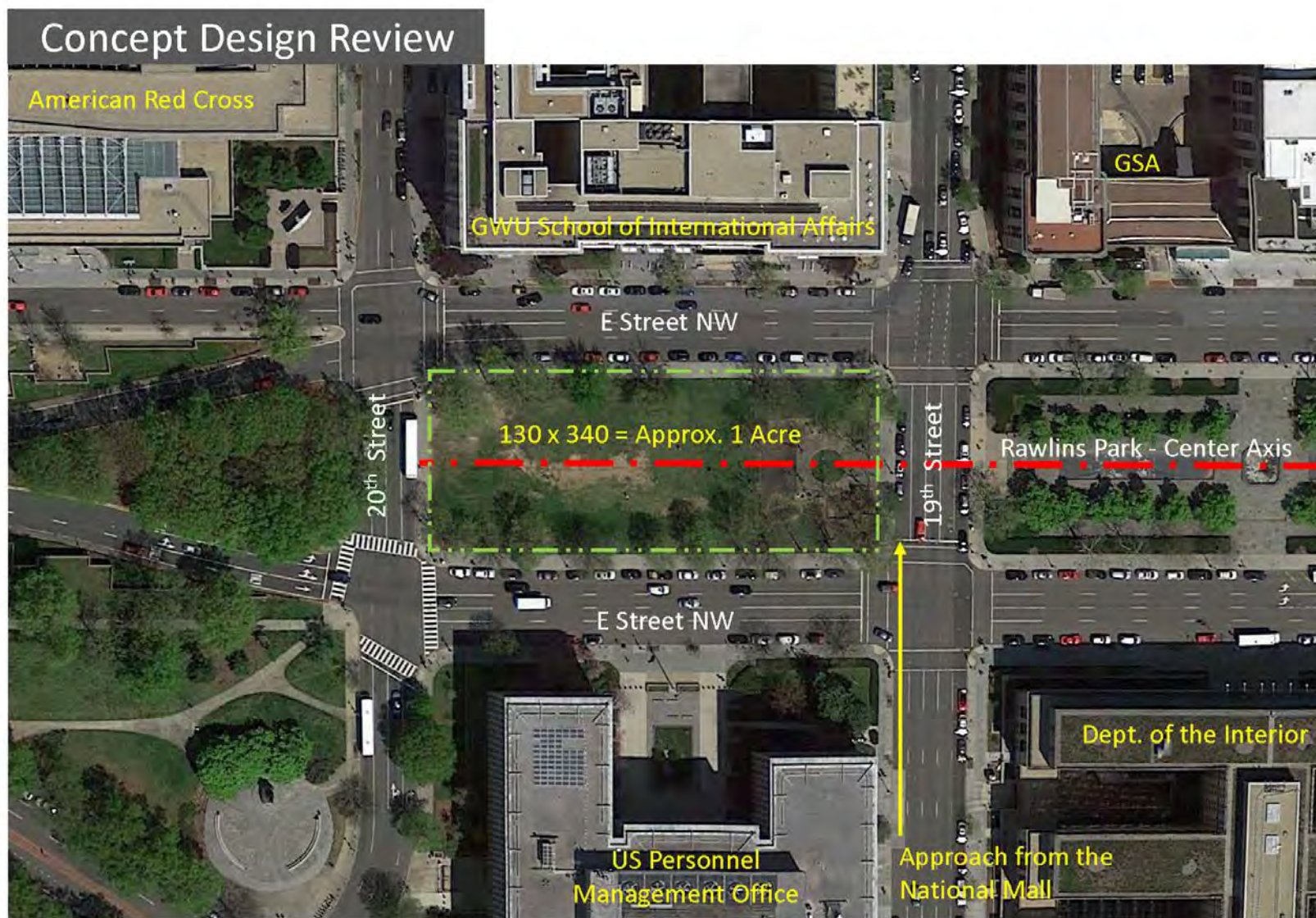
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► E Street – Site Aerial Photo

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► E Street – Site Aerial Photo

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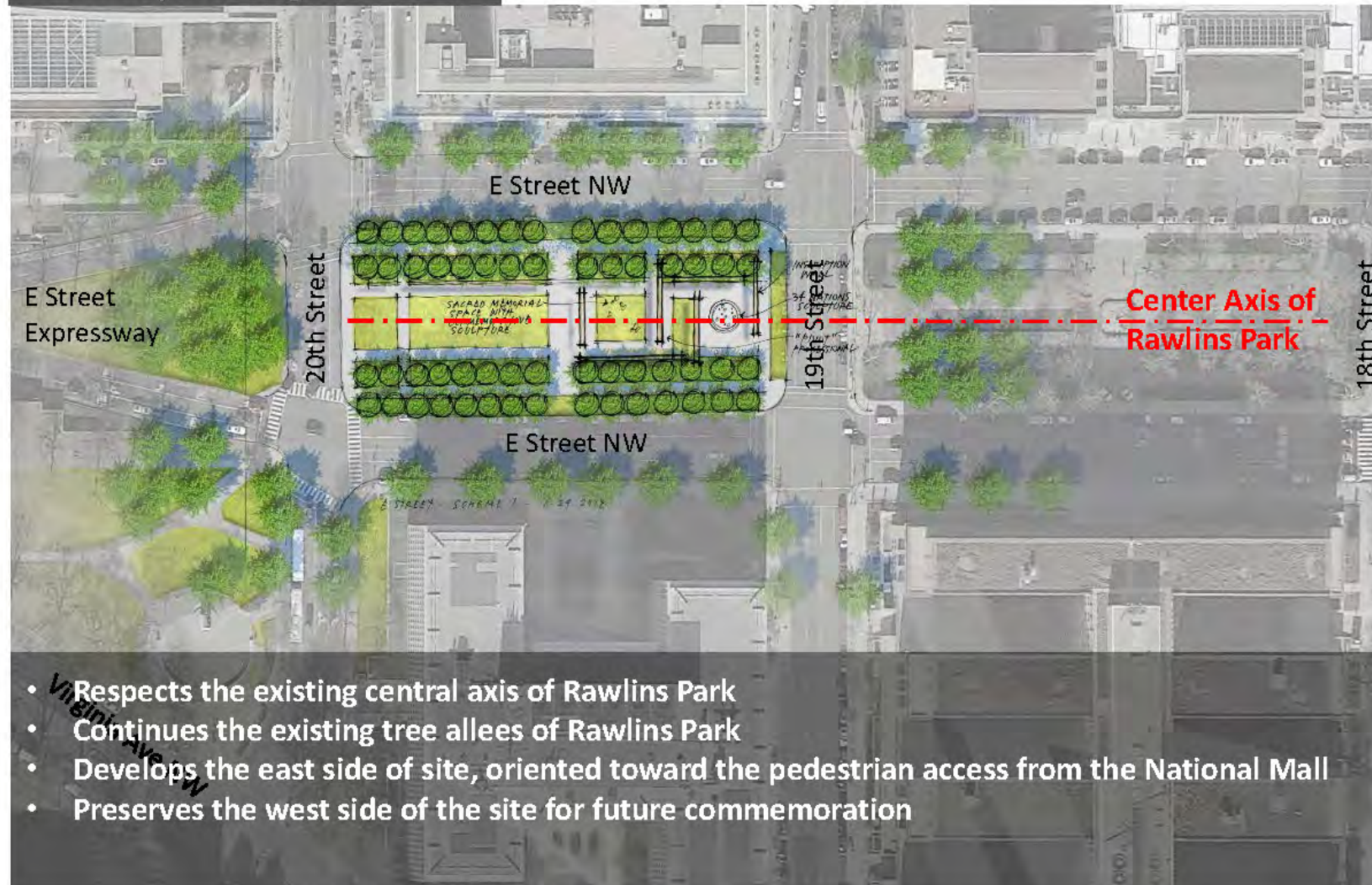
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► E Street – View Looking East Across Site

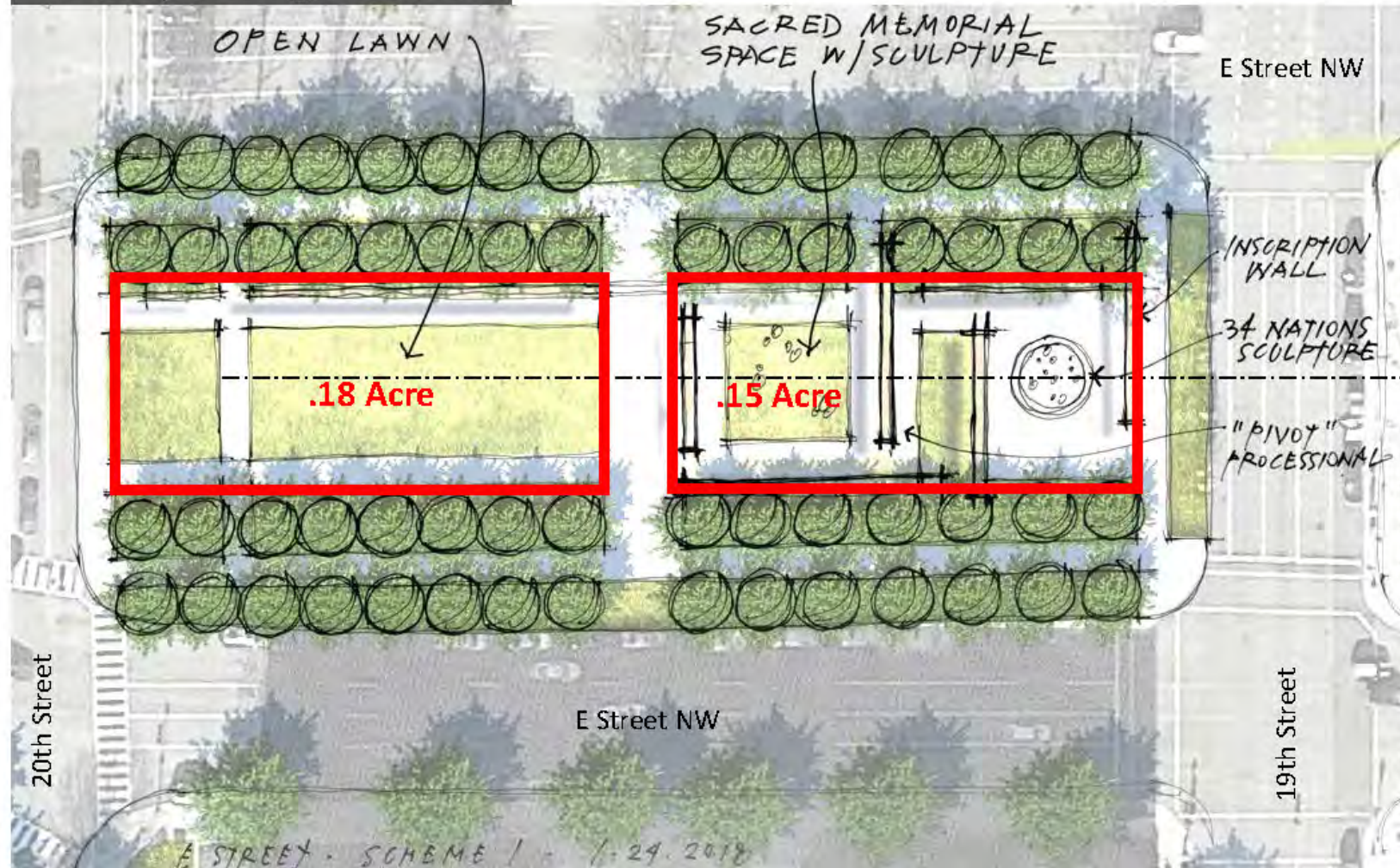
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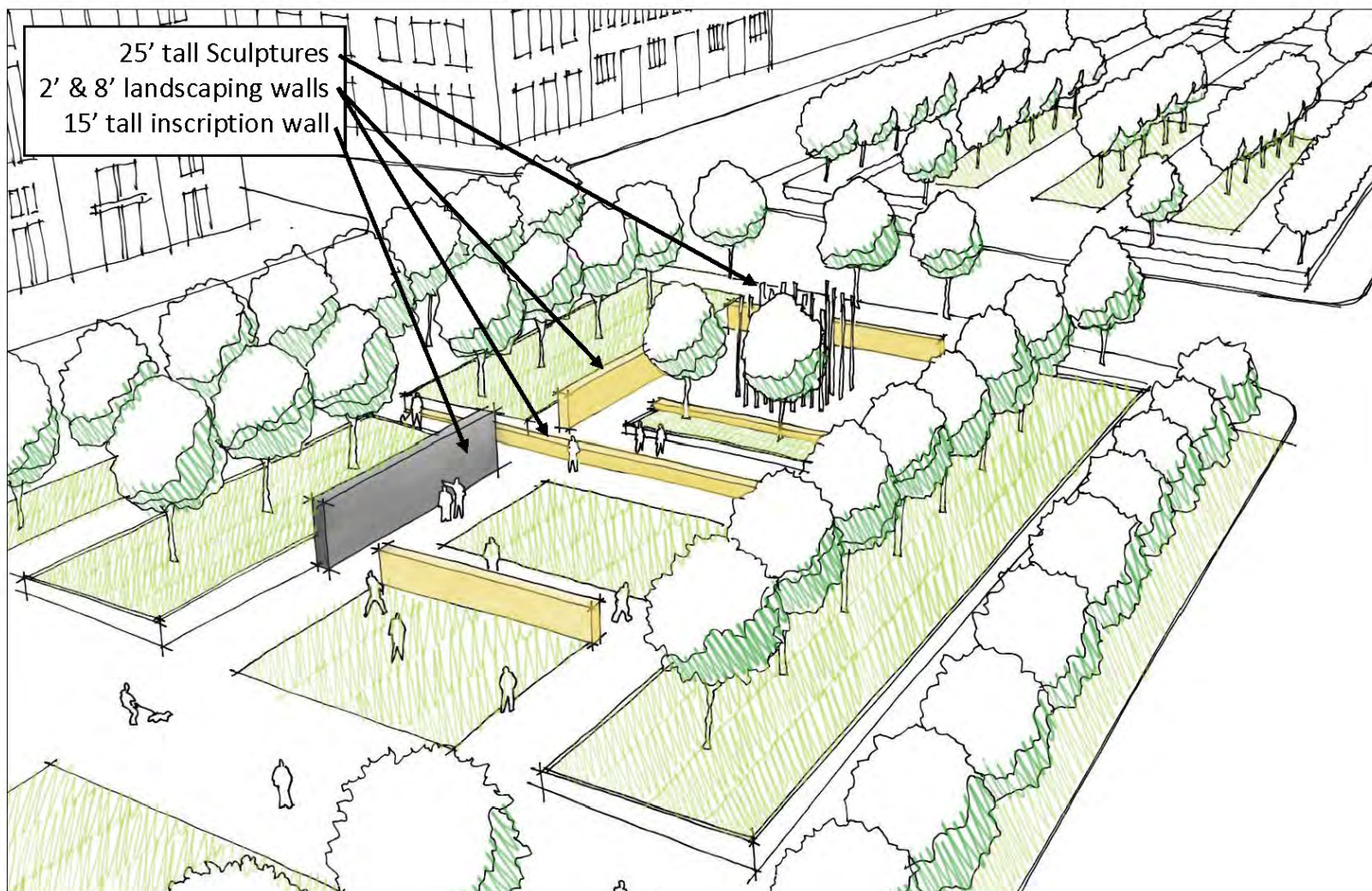
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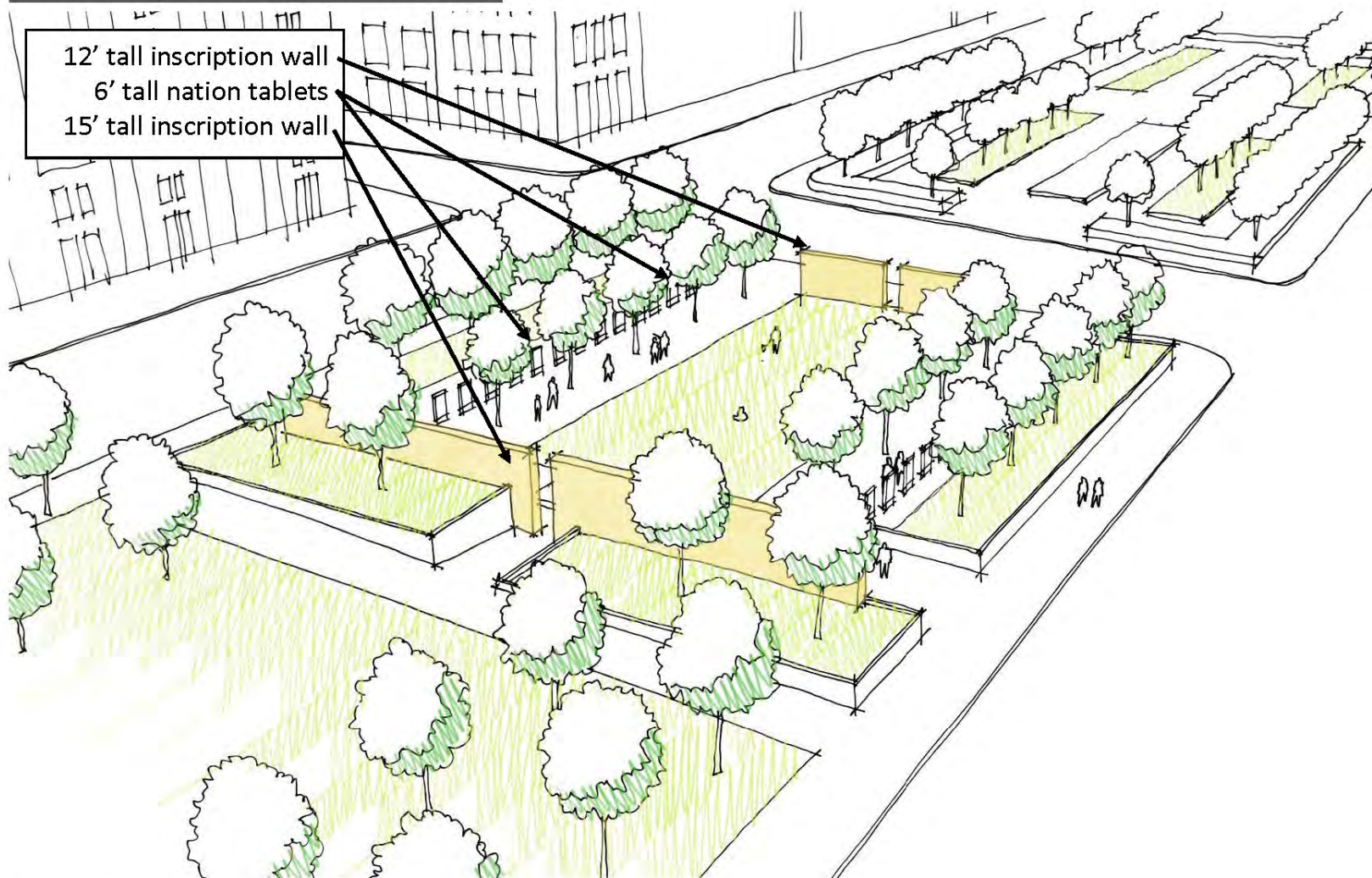
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► 23rd & Constitution Avenue

SITE CHARACTER: The Cultural Landscape Site

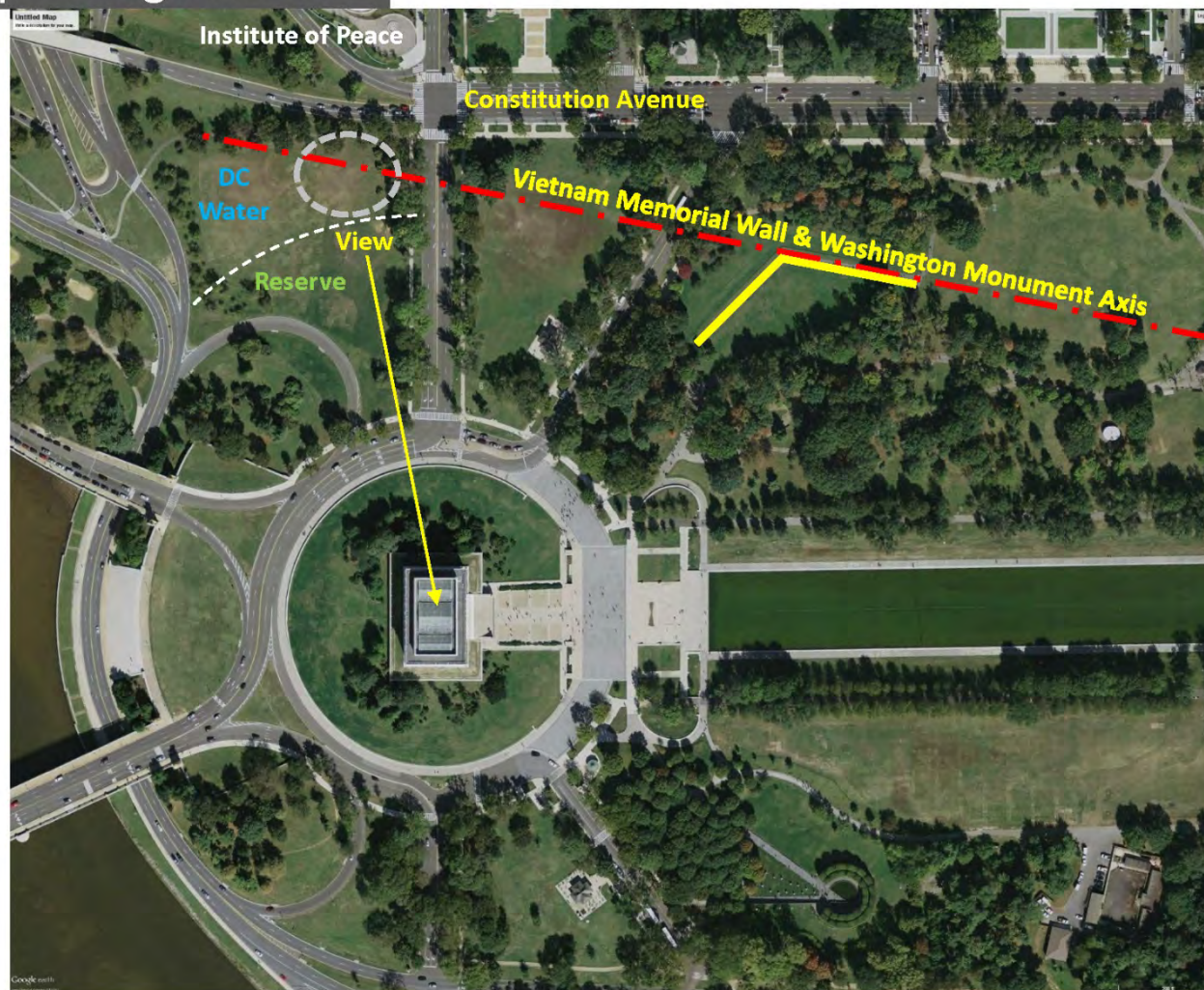
Near the National Mall

Site Characteristics:

- Site #6 in the Memorials and Museums Master Plan
- Thematic connection to the 1991 Victory Parade on Constitution Ave
- Adjacent to the National Mall
- Area I location, the Reserve is to the south
- Lincoln Memorial adjacency: A symbol of liberation & freedom
- Connections to other national memorials
- On-street parking on Constitution Avenue
- Outside of 100-year flood plain, within 500-year floodplain
- Coordination with future DC Water & levee projects

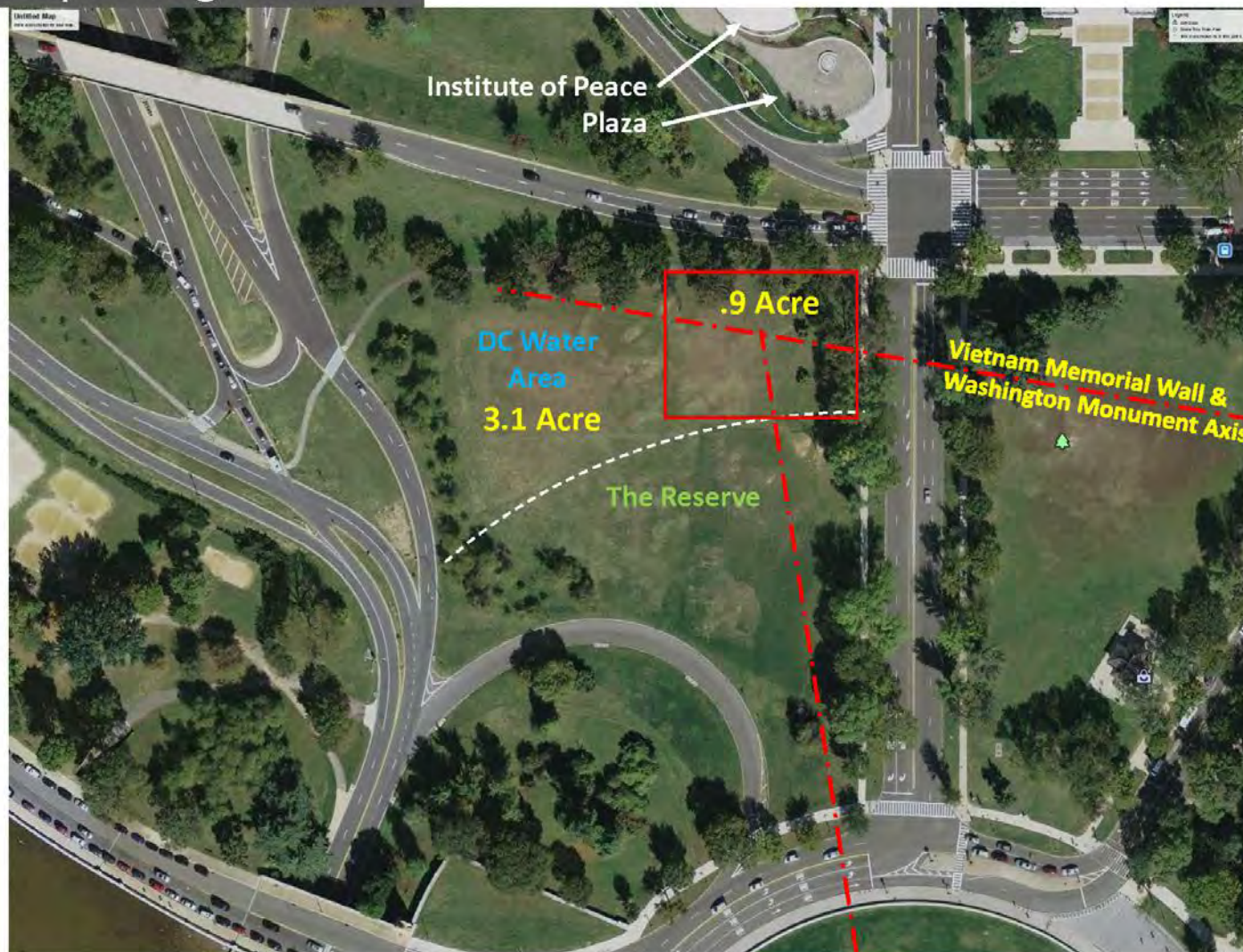
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► 23rd & Constitution – Site Aerial Photo

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► **23rd & Constitution** – Site Photo – looking toward the Lincoln Memorial

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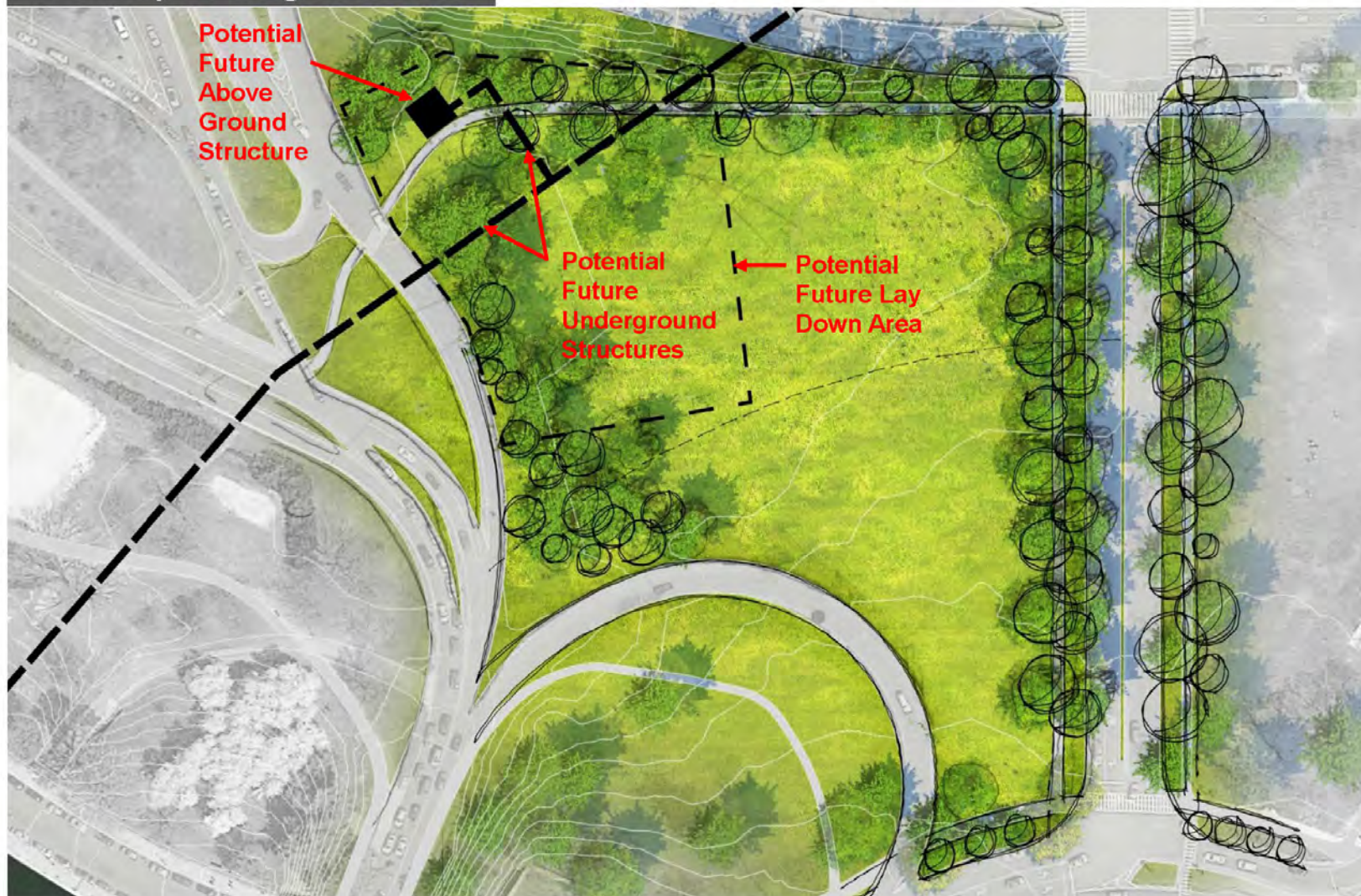


► **23rd & Constitution** – Site Photo - Looking toward the Institute of Peace

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► 23rd & Constitution – DC Water Drop Shaft

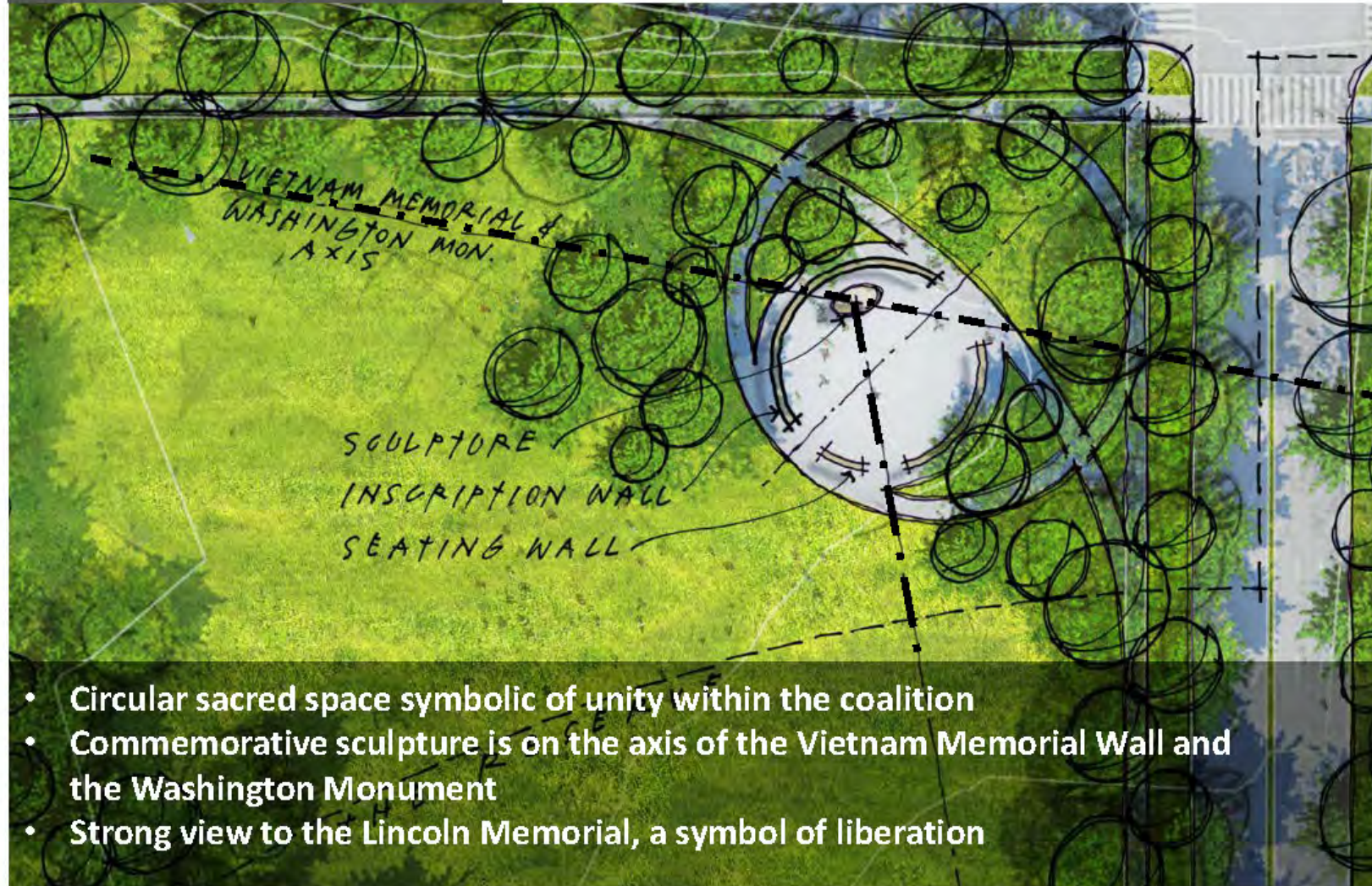
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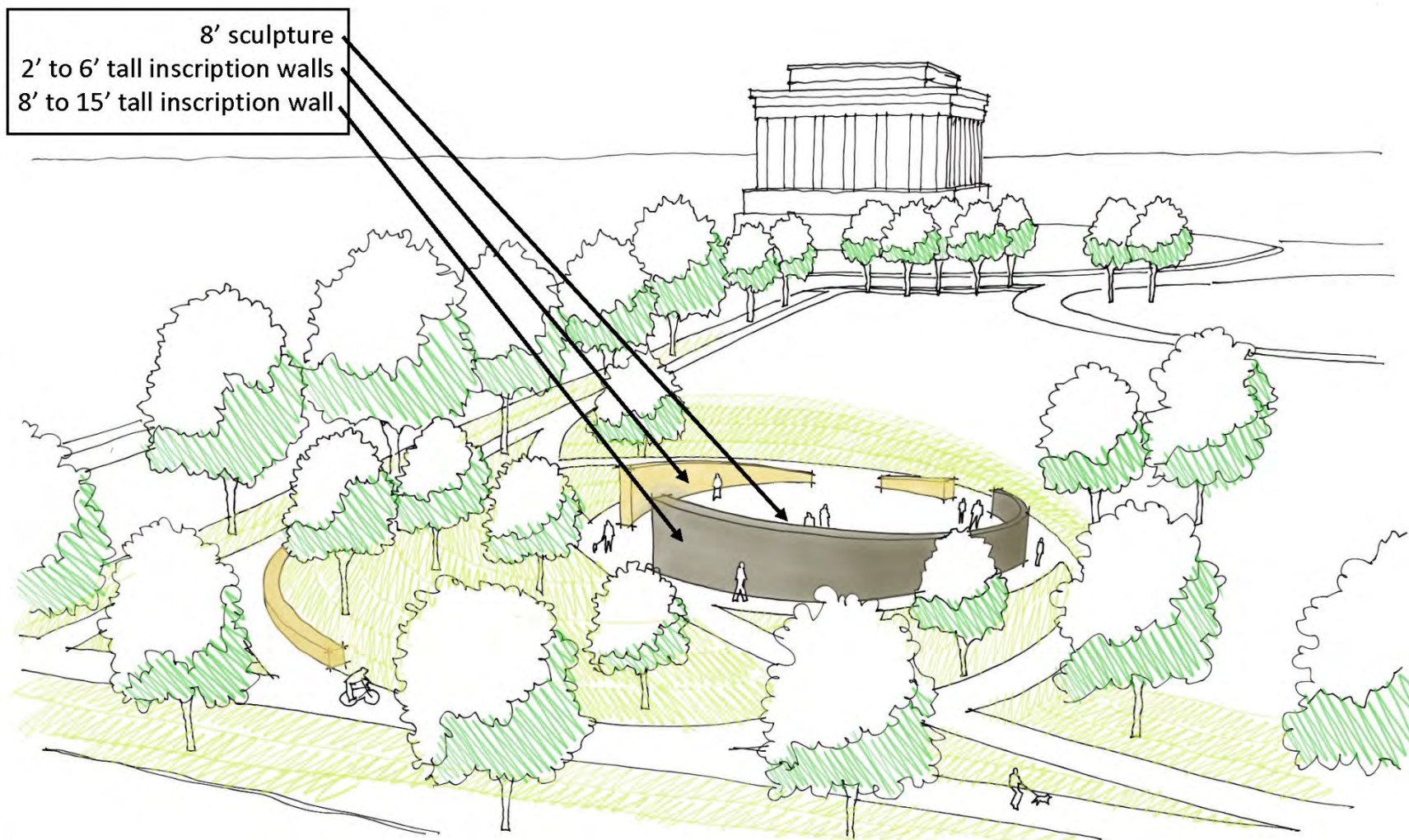


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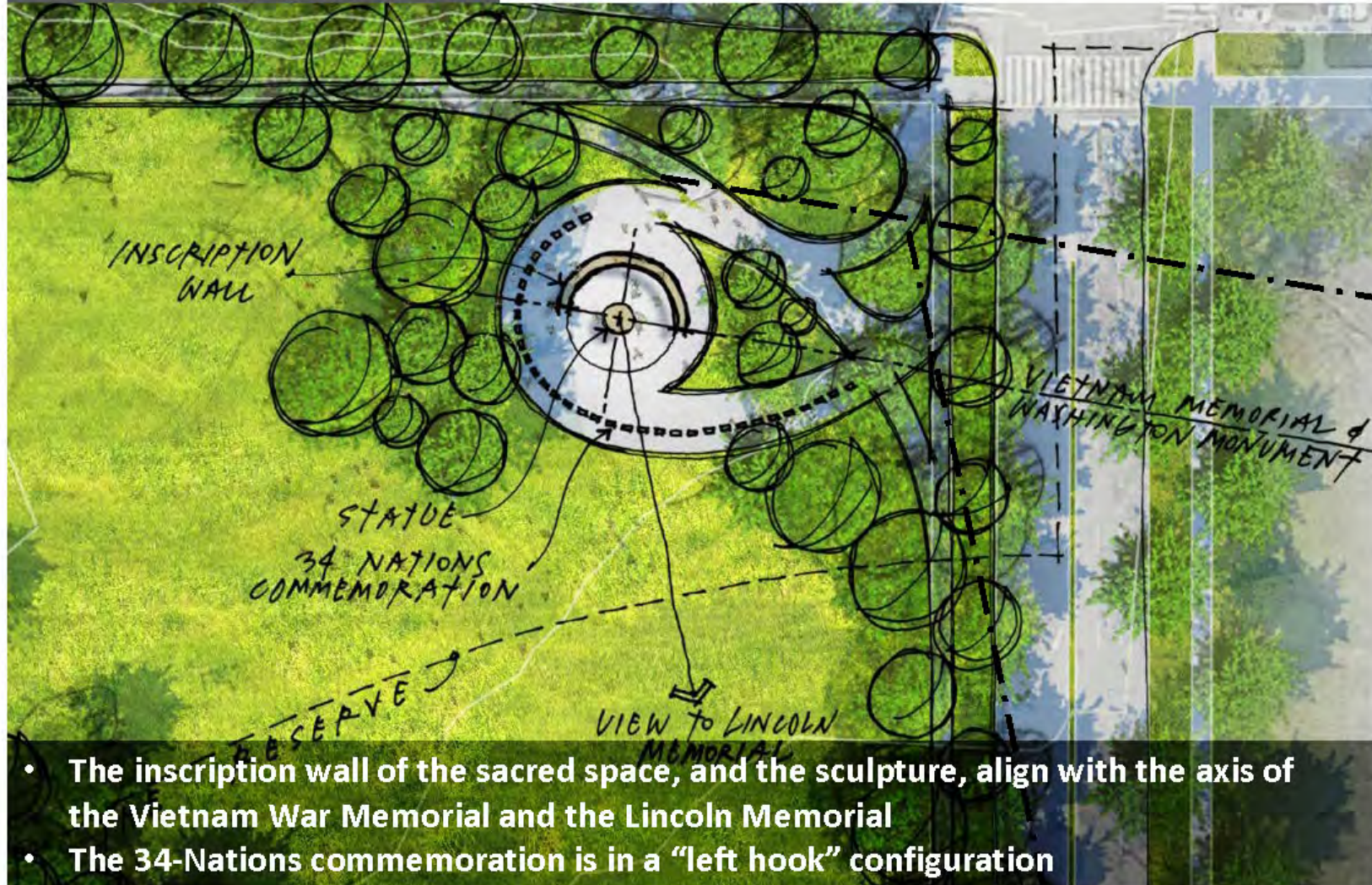
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- Occupies NE portion of site, accommodating the DC Water project
- Strong thematic connections to the Vietnam War Memorial (change in public attitudes) and the Lincoln Memorial (symbol of liberation)
- 34-Nation commemoration in Left Hook configuration

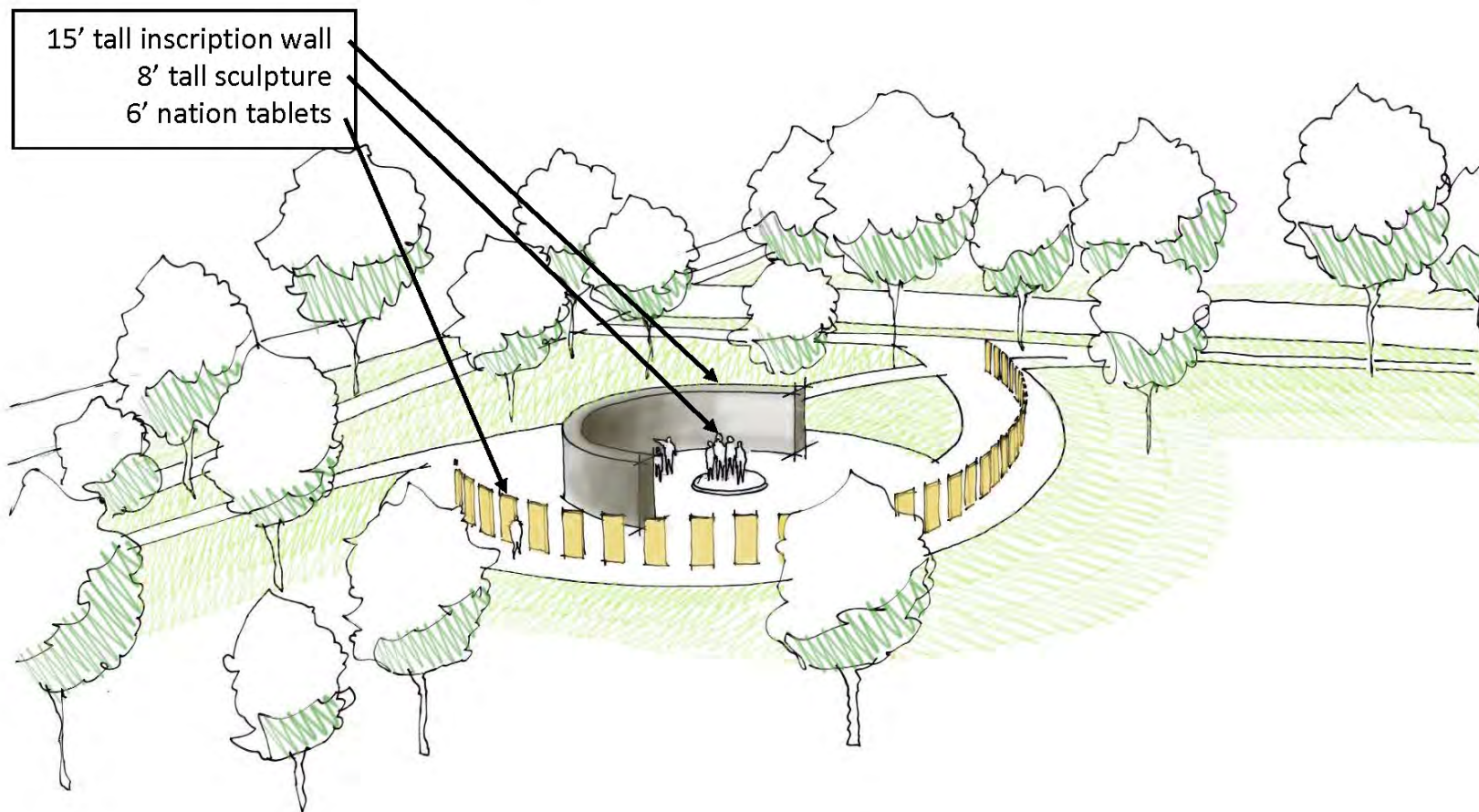
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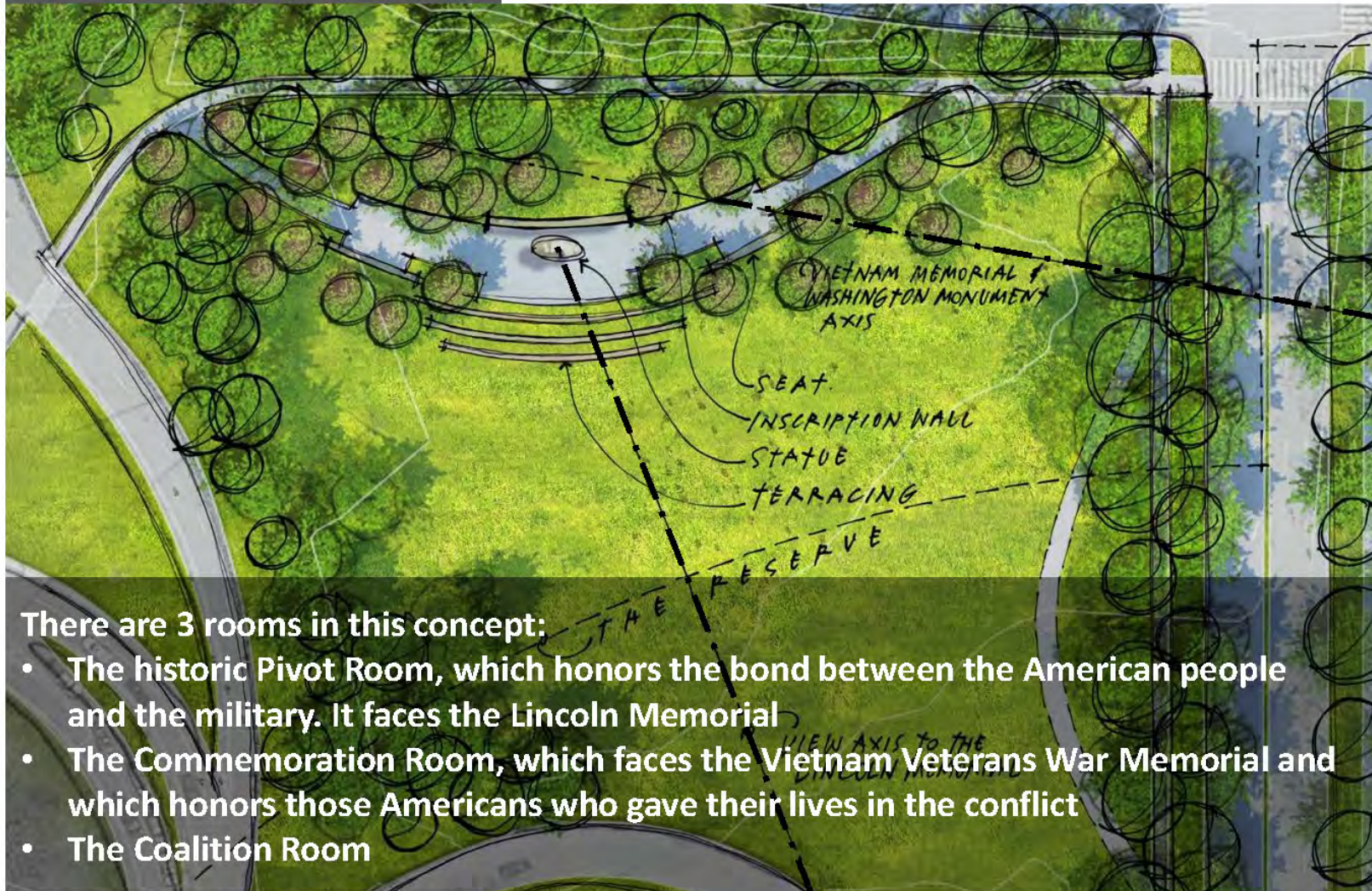


Concept Design Review



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There are 3 rooms in this concept:

- The historic Pivot Room, which honors the bond between the American people and the military. It faces the Lincoln Memorial
- The Commemoration Room, which faces the Vietnam Veterans War Memorial and which honors those Americans who gave their lives in the conflict
- The Coalition Room

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