

# Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitor Center

Lincoln Memorial Grounds

Washington, DC

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Submitted by the National Park Service

Preliminary Site and Building Plans

**Commission meeting date:** July 12, 2012

**NCPC review authority:** Public Law 108-26 and Commemorative Works Act (40 USC 8905)

**Applicant request:** Approval of preliminary site and building plans

**Delegated / consent / open / executive session:** Open

**NCPC Review Officer:** J. Hirsch

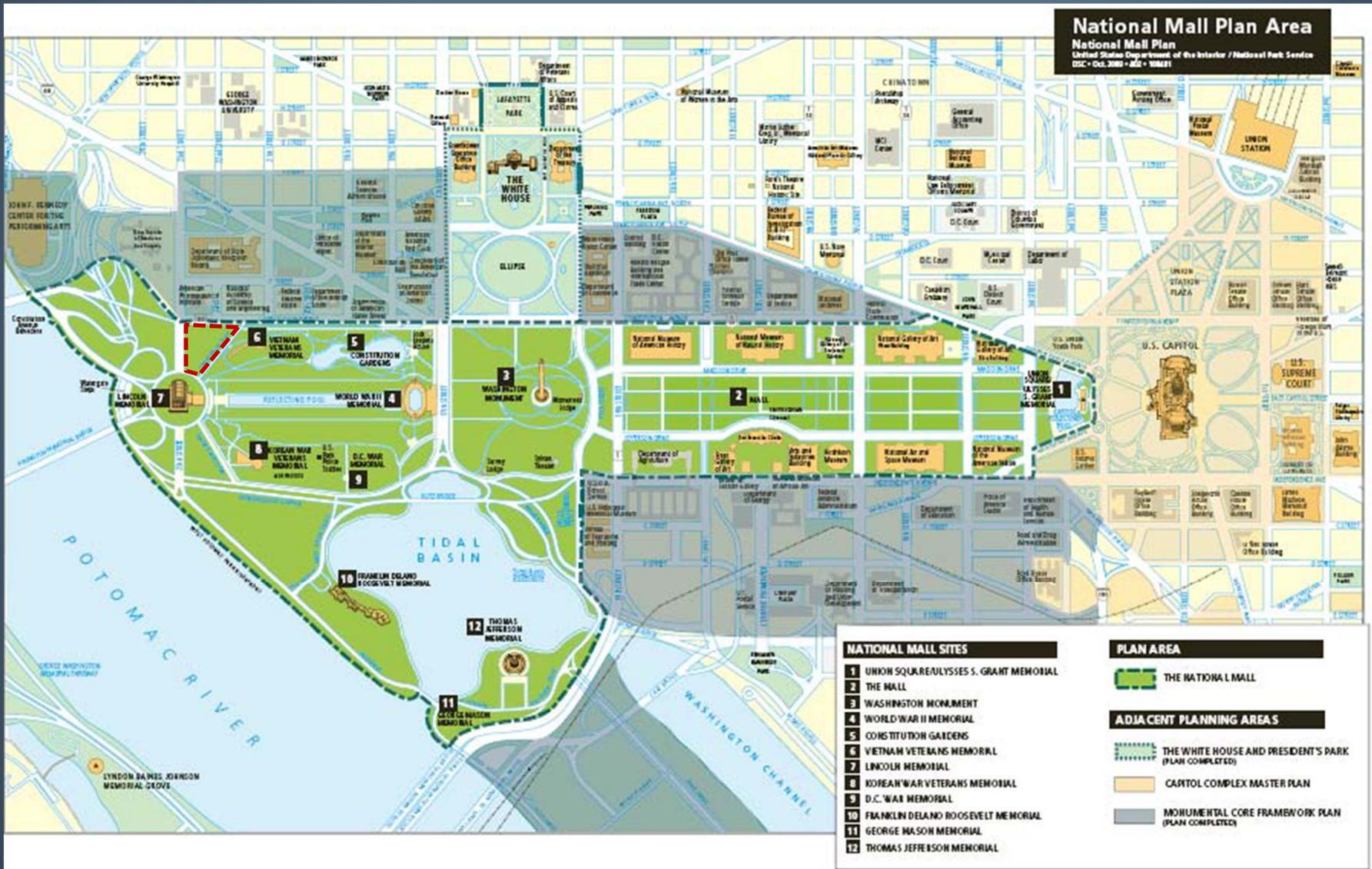
**NCPC File number:** 6597

### **Project summary:**

The National Park Service, on behalf of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, has submitted preliminary site and building plans for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitor Center. The Visitor Center will be located on the Lincoln Memorial Grounds, a site approved by the Commission in 2006. The site is situated north of the Lincoln Memorial across Lincoln Memorial Circle and west of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial across Henry Bacon Drive, and is bounded by Constitution Avenue, Henry Bacon Drive, Lincoln Memorial Circle, and 23rd Street, NW. NCPC and CFA adopted joint design guidelines for the Visitor Center at the time of site selection in 2006.

The intent of the design of the Visitor Center is to minimize its visibility while welcoming visitors and supporting the Vietnam Veterans Memorial experience. The two-level structure will house exhibit space, a bookstore, restrooms, and lobby areas. As mandated by the authorizing legislation, the Visitor Center will be located underground. In order to build the underground facility, the grade of the site will be raised with berms by approximately 3'6". A central feature of the Visitor Center is a courtyard that will be partially covered by a green roof. Visitors will use a curved path located directly off the sidewalk along Henry Bacon Drive to gain access to the entrance of the structure. The curved path will surround an elliptical green area and a stone seatwall with recessed lighting will border the northern edge of the elliptical green area. Along with the curved path, stairs next to a curvilinear retaining wall will provide access to the below-grade entry. The design incorporates a horizontal rail condition along the entry stair and edge of the green roof. Along the entry stair, a low ground cover will be planted in a wide zone along the edge to prevent people from walking in this area. At the edge of the green roof, a cantilevered structure will support an area of unwalkable infill consisting of metal frames and tension wires. This design is intended to keep people away from the edge as well as protect anyone from falling should they go beyond the planted area of the roof. In addition, the design incorporates a "ha-ha" condition around the courtyard opening to protect an errant vehicle or pedestrians from falling into the courtyard space.

The landscape design maintains most of the trees surrounding the perimeter of the site and the applicant has applied the recommendations in the Lincoln Memorial Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) in developing the landscape design. The landscape design minimizes the use of non-historic plant materials and incorporates American elm trees, as needed, around Lincoln Circle and in the rows of adjacent street trees.





## Existing Conditions



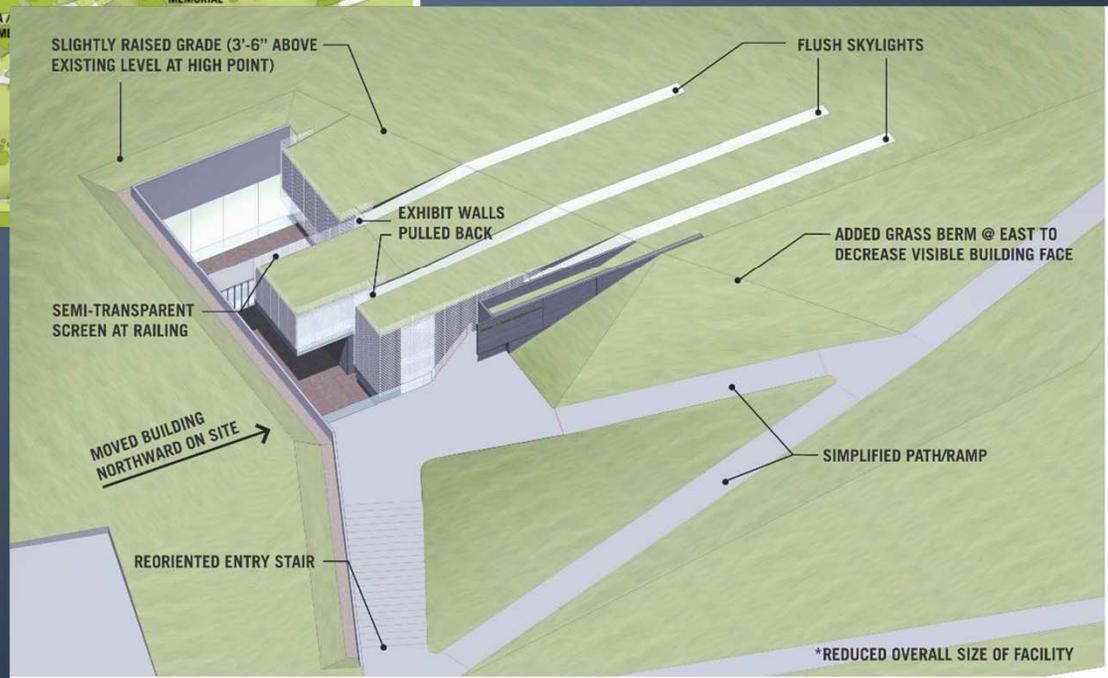
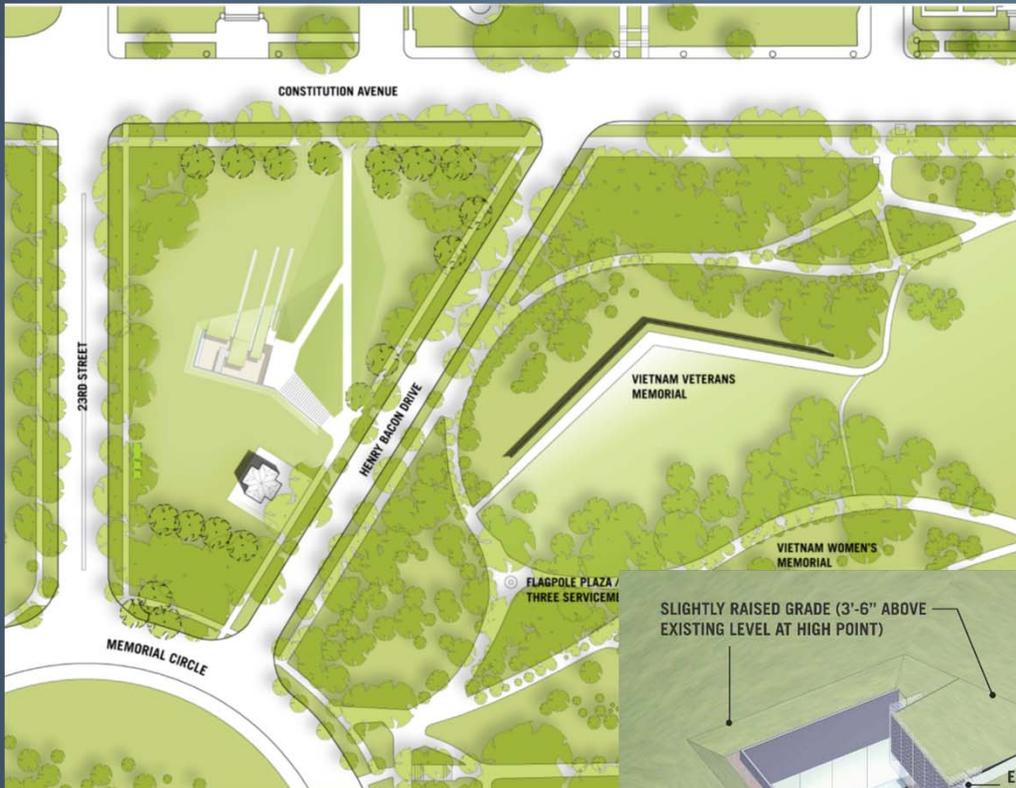
View towards Lincoln Memorial  
across the site

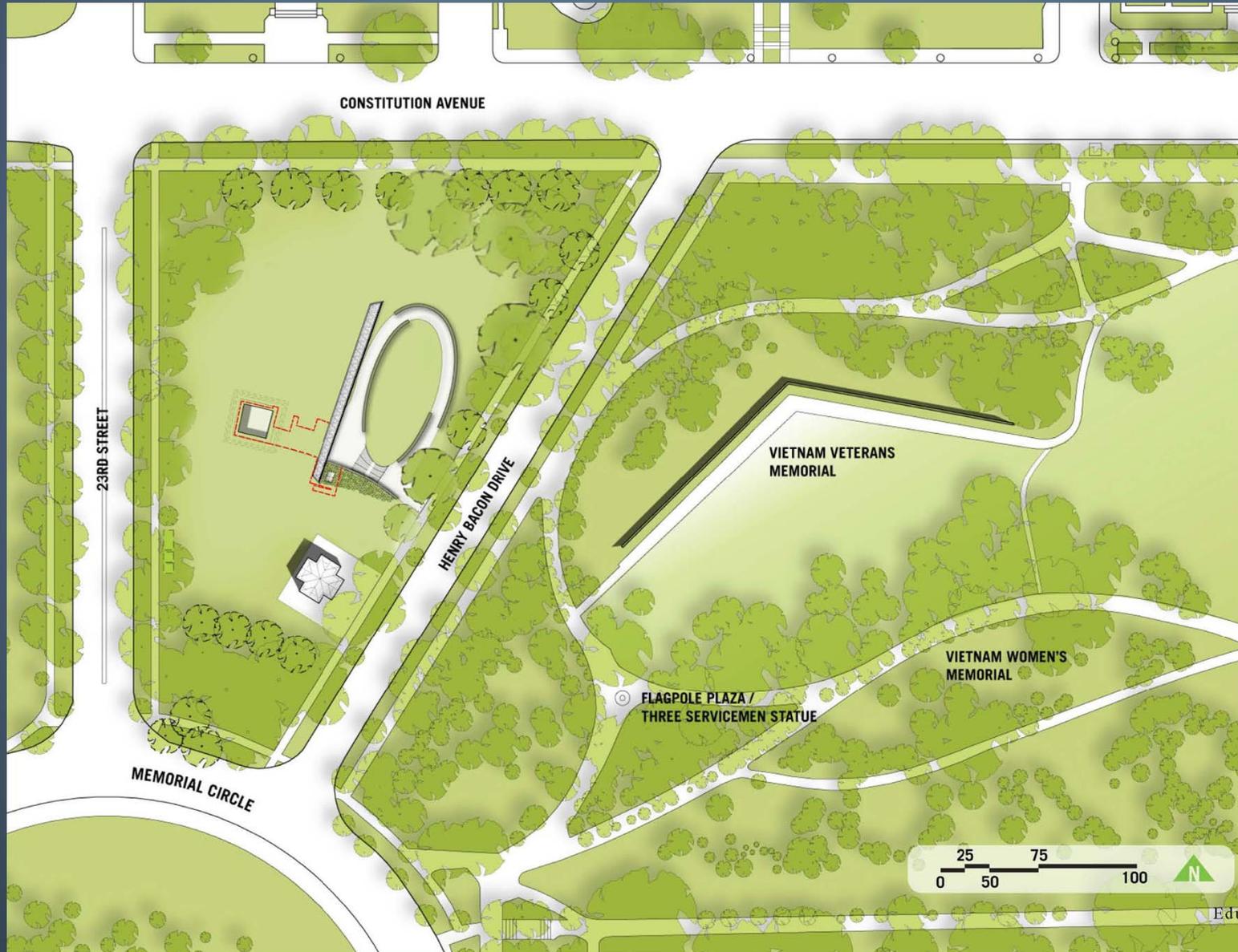
View towards Lincoln Circle along  
Henry Bacon Drive



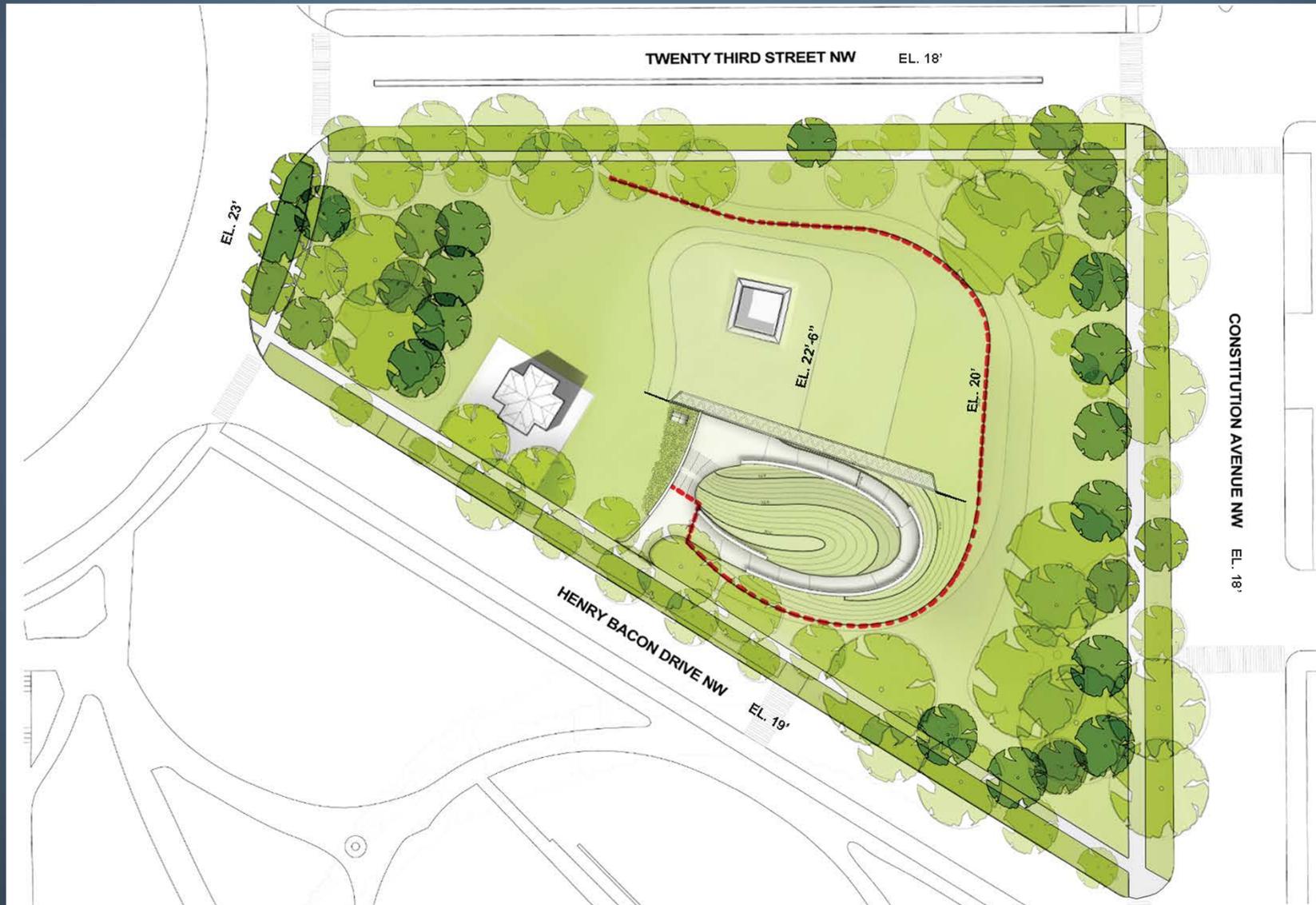


View towards Constitution Avenue across the site

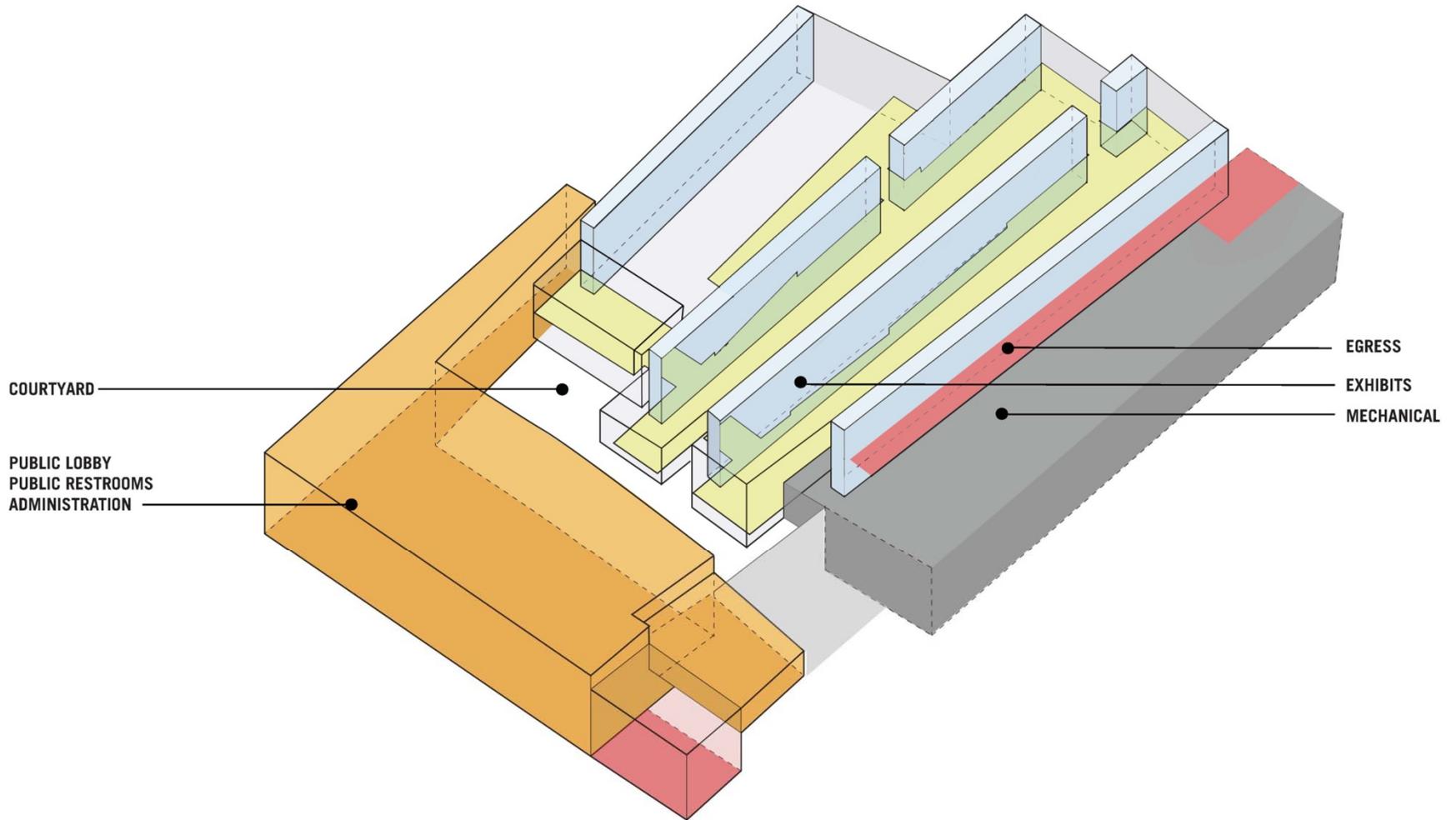




Note: Dashed line indicates courtyard below green roof



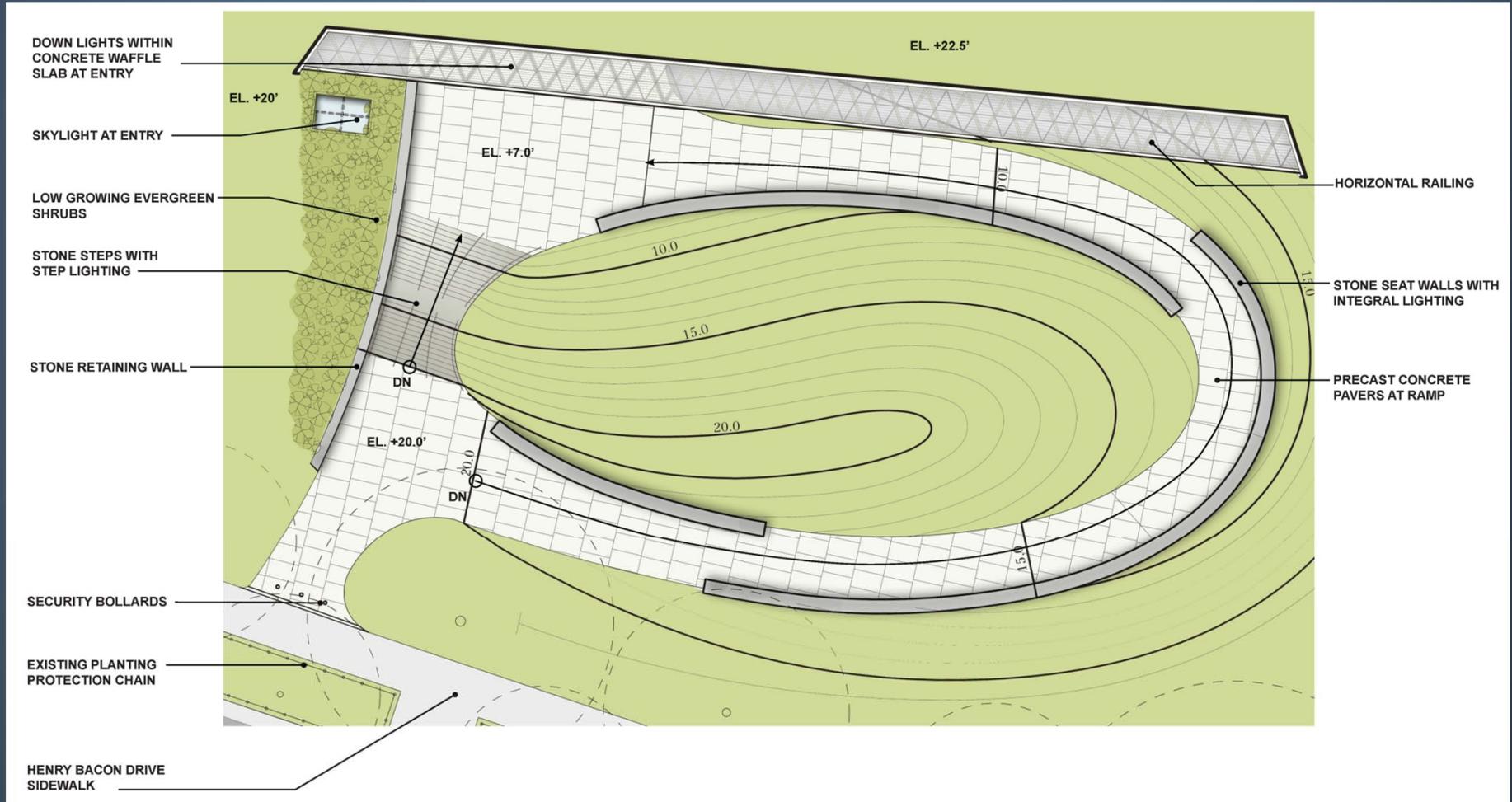
Grade of site will be raised by 3'6" to construct entry ramp and protect from ponding



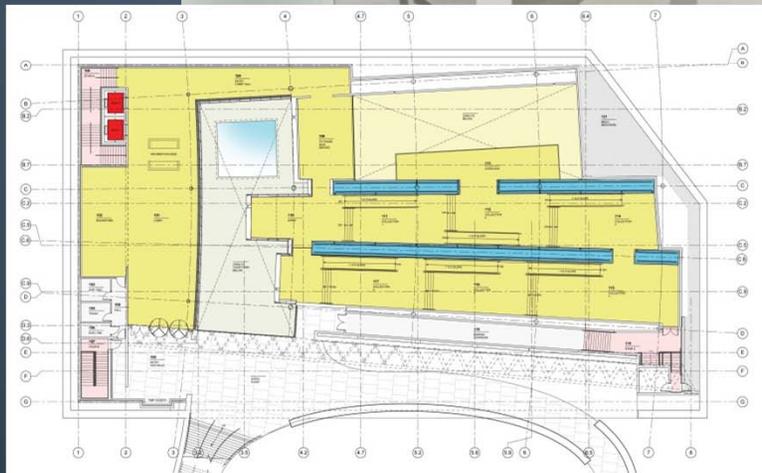


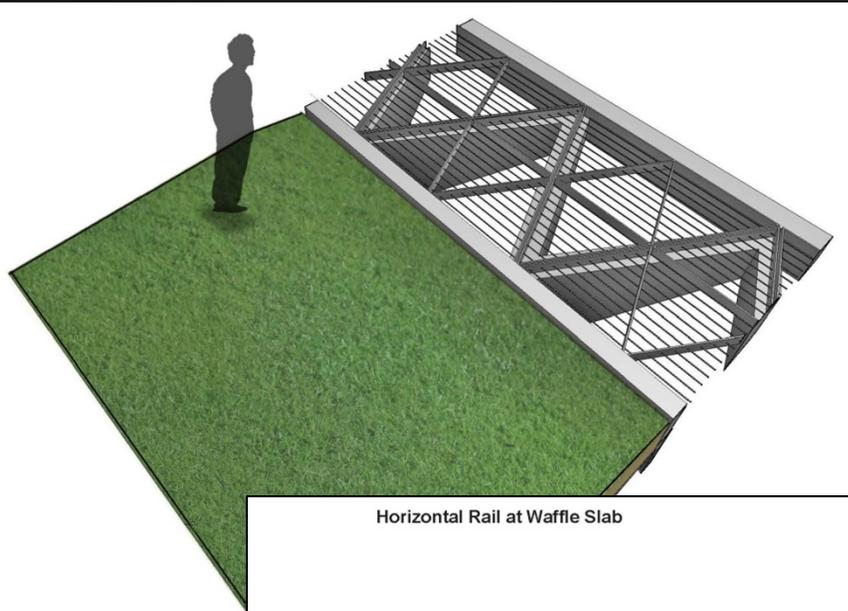
## Approach from Henry Bacon Drive



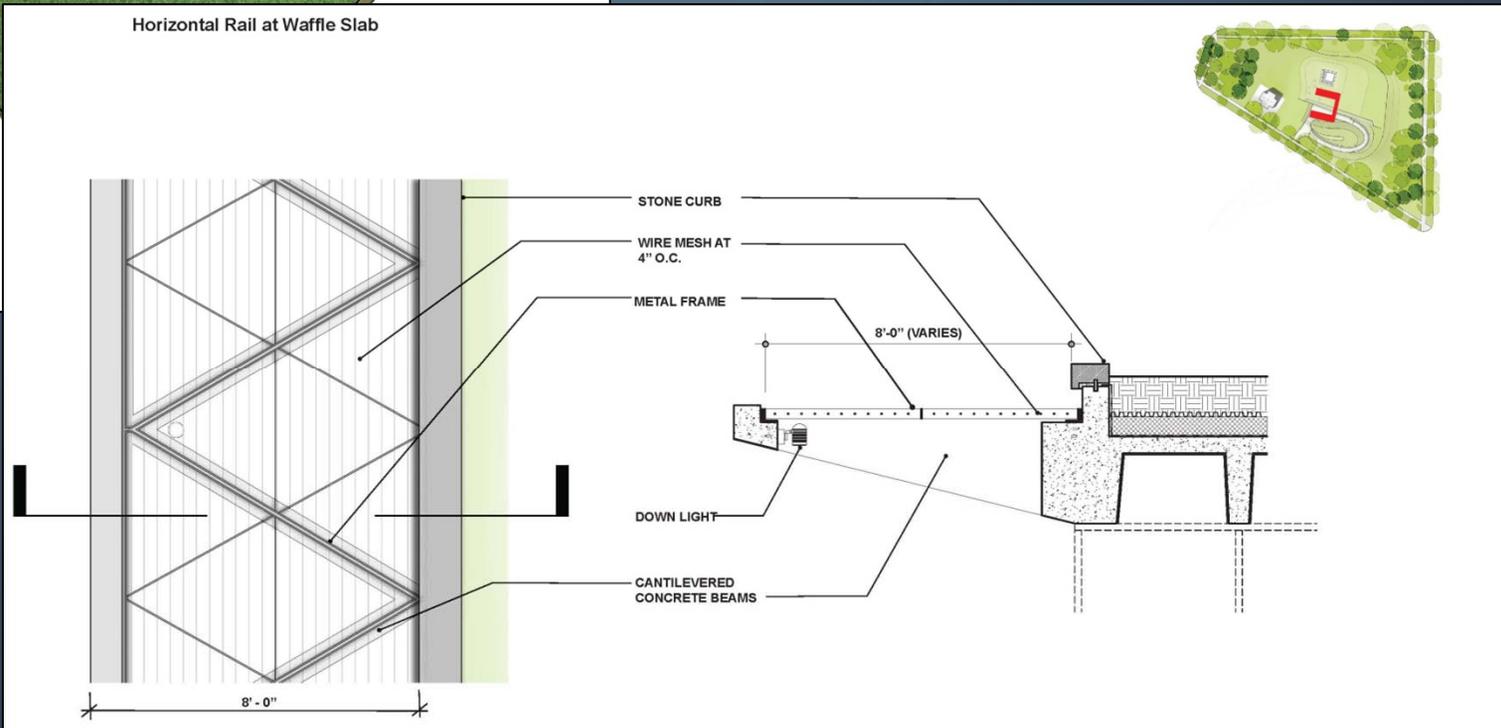


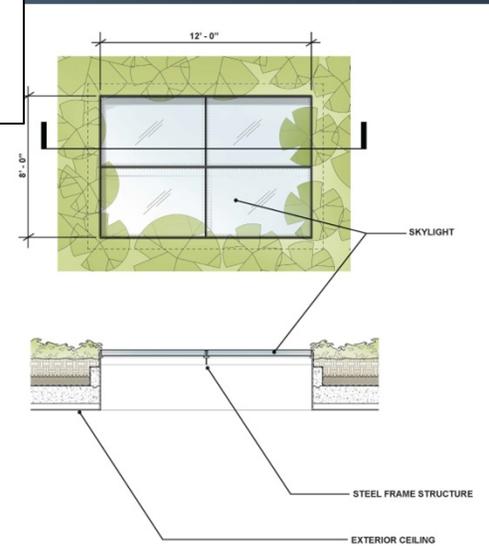
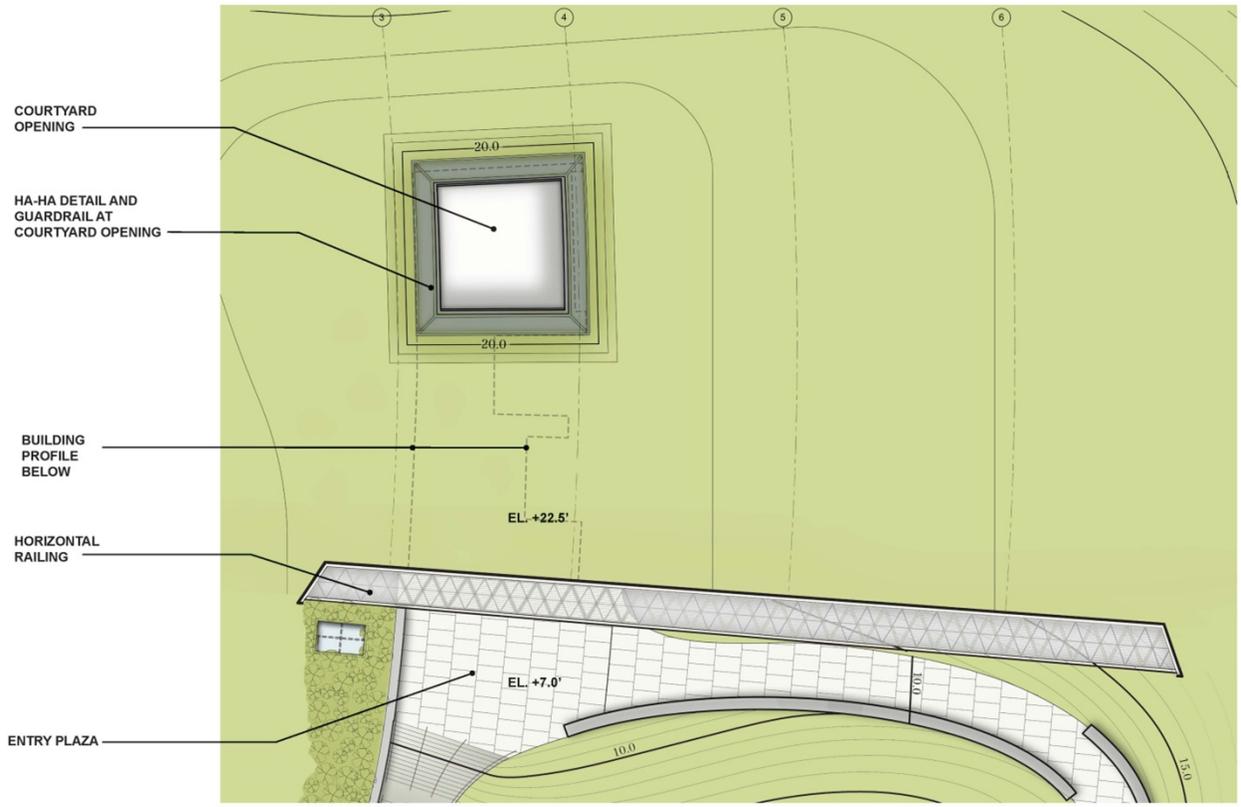






Horizontal Rail at Waffle Slab





# Tree root protection and Geothermal Well Field

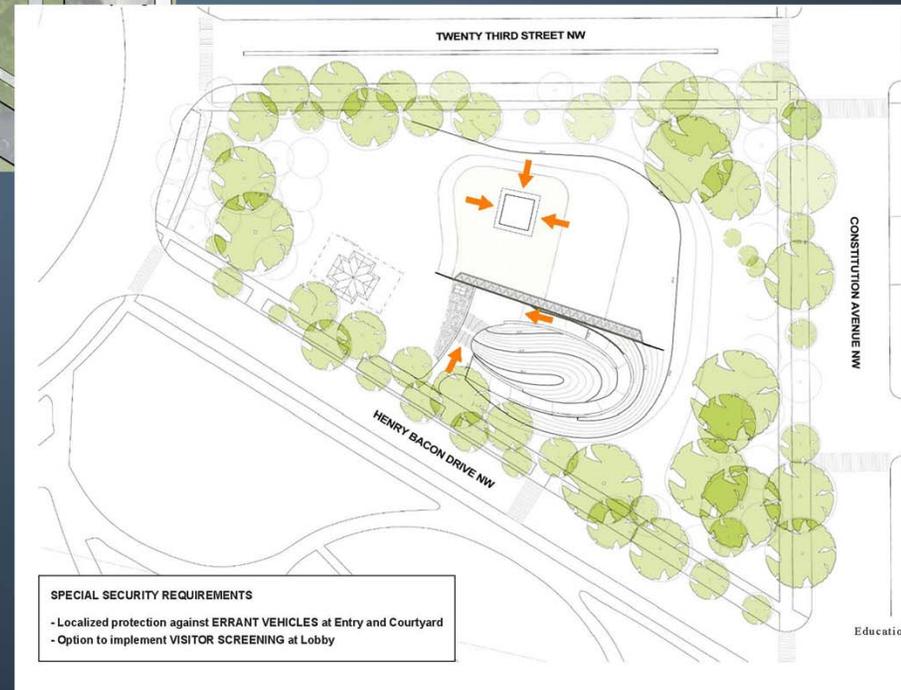


Visitor Center has been designed to minimize any damage to existing trees on the site and also incorporates geothermal wells in order to reduce the need for visible mechanical equipment



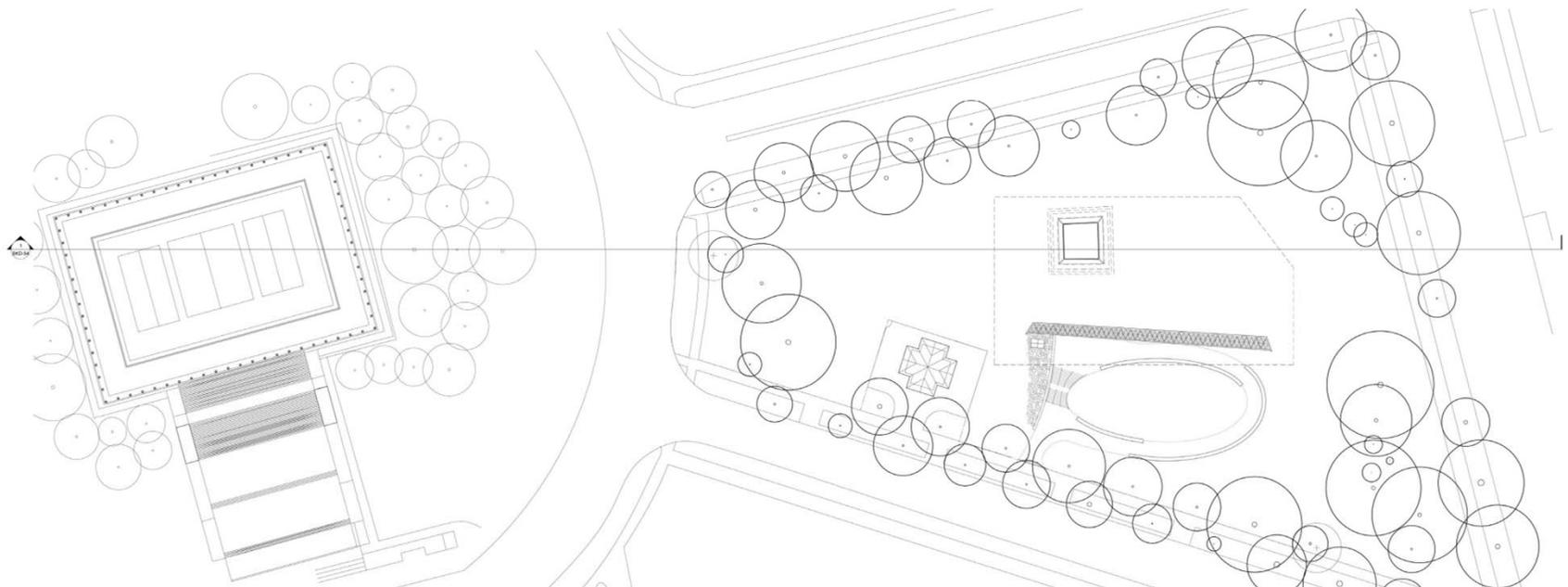
# Recreation and Security

By eliminating skylights, additional space is available for multi-purpose recreation



Limited perimeter security elements are needed to protect against errant vehicles

Sight line Section Through Courtyard





Visitor Center will not be visible from 23<sup>rd</sup> and Constitution Avenue



By placing the Visitor Center underground and minimizing intrusions in the landscape, the visibility of the facility has been minimized



View south on Henry Bacon Drive – horizontal rail is visible