

## WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL: FDR D-DAY PRAYER SCHEMATIC DESIGN



Prepared for:

FRIENDS OF THE  
NATIONAL WORLD WAR II  
MEMORIAL, INC

JUNE 15, 2017

# History and Overview



On June 30, 2014, President Obama signed into law the World War II Memorial Prayer Act of 2013 (Public Law 113-123) directing the Secretary of the Interior to “install in the area of the World War II Memorial in the District of Columbia a suitable plaque or an inscription with the words that President Franklin D. Roosevelt prayed with the United States on D-Day, June 6, 1944.”

“1. Short title

*This Act may be cited as the World War II Memorial Prayer Act of 2013 .*

2. Placement of plaque or inscription at world war II memorial

*The Secretary of the Interior—*

*(1) shall install in the area of the World War II Memorial in the District of Columbia a suitable plaque or an inscription with the words that President Franklin D. Roosevelt prayed with the United States on June 6, 1944, the morning of D-Day;*

*(2) shall design, procure, prepare, and install the plaque or inscription referred to in paragraph (1); and*

*(3) may not use Federal funds to prepare or install the plaque or inscription referred to in paragraph (1), but may accept and expend private contributions for this purpose.*

3. Commemorative Works Act

*Chapter 89 of title 40, United States Code (commonly known as the Commemorative Works Act ), shall apply to the design and placement of the plaque within the area of the World War II Memorial.*

*Passed the Senate June 5, 2014.”*

Because the legislation stipulates that no federal funds may be used to implement this directive, the National Park Service (NPS) and the Friends of the National World War II have entered into an agreement that gives Friends the lead role in designing, funding, and installing the addition. Friends will work hand-in-hand with NPS to seek the necessary federal approvals.

In February 2015, the Friends of the World War II Memorial and National Park Service engaged OvS to prepare a site analysis of the WWII Memorial site with the intent of evaluating several placement alternatives for the prayer.

A thorough site analysis of each site was conducted, assessing general site character, views to and from the site, existing circulation patterns, existing furnishings and materials, and existing vegetation. Based on this analysis, the Circle of Remembrance was selected as the preferred site for the D-Day Prayer.

Following the outcome of the site analysis, two alternatives for locating the Prayer within the Circle of Remembrance were presented. The Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) and the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) unanimously approved Alternative II, which incorporated the Prayer into the Circle’s geometry.

Based on this recommendation and specific criteria provided during the review process, two schematic proposals were developed. This presentation includes the schematic proposals as well as set of criteria for evaluating the design.



## President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s D-Day Prayer



During World War II (1929 - 1945), the Battle of Normandy resulted in the Allied liberation of Western Europe from Nazi Germany’s control. The battle began on June, 6, 1944 which is known as D-Day. Approximately 160,000 Allied troops landed on 50 miles of beaches in Normandy in an attempt to liberate France. This invasion was one of the largest amphibious military assaults in history and what Winston Churchill called “the most difficult and complicated operation that has ever taken place.”

Franklin D. Roosevelt chose to commemorate the moment and address the nation with a prayer of his own composition. The White House distributed the text on the morning of June 6, 1944 to be published in newspapers, and FDR would ask American radio listeners to join him in prayer as it was broadcast to an estimated audience of 100 million.

“My Fellow Americans:

In this poignant hour, I ask you to join me in prayer:

Almighty God: Our sons, pride of our Nation, this day have set upon a mighty endeavor, a struggle to preserve our Republic, our religion, and our civilization, and to set free a suffering humanity.

Lead them straight and true; give strength to their arms, stoutness to their hearts, steadfastness in their faith.

They will need Thy blessings. Their road will be long and hard. For the enemy is strong. He may hurl back our forces. Success may not come with rushing speed, but we shall return again and again; and we know that by Thy grace, and by the righteousness of our cause, our sons will triumph.

They will be sore tried, by night and by day, without rest-until the victory is won. The darkness will be rent by noise and flame. Men’s souls will be shaken with the violences of war.

These are men lately drawn from the ways of peace. They fight not for the lust of conquest. They fight to end conquest. They fight to liberate. They fight to let justice arise, and tolerance and good will among all Thy people. They yearn but for the end of battle, for their return to the haven of home.

Some will never return. Embrace these, Father, and receive them, Thy heroic servants, into Thy kingdom.

And for us at home -- fathers, mothers, children, wives, sisters, and brothers of brave men overseas -- whose thoughts and prayers are ever with them--help us, Almighty God, to rededicate ourselves in renewed faith in Thee in this hour of great sacrifice.

Many people have urged that I call the Nation into a single day of special prayer. But because the road is long and the desire is great, I ask that our people devote themselves in a continuance of prayer. As we rise to each new day, and again when each day is spent, let words of prayer be on our lips, invoking Thy help to our efforts.

Give us strength, too -- strength in our daily tasks, to redouble the contributions we make in the physical and the material support of our armed forces.

And let our hearts be stout, to wait out the long travail, to bear sorrows that may come, to impart our courage unto our sons wheresoever they may be.

And, O Lord, give us Faith. Give us Faith in Thee; Faith in our sons; Faith in each other; Faith in our united crusade. Let not the keenness of our spirit ever be dulled. Let not the impacts of temporary events, of temporal matters of but fleeting moment let not these deter us in our unconquerable purpose.

With Thy blessing, we shall prevail over the unholy forces of our enemy. Help us to conquer the apostles of greed and racial arrogancies. Lead us to the saving of our country, and with our sister Nations into a world unity that will spell a sure peace a peace invulnerable to the schemings of unworthy men. And a peace that will let all of men live in freedom, reaping the just rewards of their honest toil.

Thy will be done, Almighty God.”

Commission of Fine Arts  
Letter Re: FDR Prayer Siting

CFA 17/NOV/16-2

LOCATION: West Potomac Park, 17th Street and Independence Avenue, SW Washington, DC

OWNER: National Park Service (N PS)

PROPERTY: World War II Memorial

DESCRIPTION: Install plaque with President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s D-Day Prayer

REVIEW TYPE: Concept

PREVIOUS REVIEW: CFA 15/OCT/15-1

28 November 2016  
Dear Mr. Vogel:

In its meeting of 17 November, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed alternative concepts for a new plaque at the Circle of Remembrance of the World War II Memorial, to be inscribed with the prayer delivered by President Franklin D. Roosevelt by radio on D-Day. The Commission gave its general approval for the second alternative, providing the following comments to guide the development of the design.

The Commission members expressed strong support for the second option, which treats the plaque as an extension of the circular geometry of the site. However, they recommended more flexibility in the design of the elements defining the circle: for example, they suggested that the circumferential stone bench could be punctuated with gaps or sculpted along its length, and that the paths leading into the site could be asymmetrical in width. They recommended further study of the layout and mounting of the bronze panels to relate them to the logic of the overall revised design of the Circle of Remembrance. They encouraged the careful treatment of materials and details that define the setting of the plaque and circle as a contemplative component of the World War II Memorial, rather than as part of the general recreational area of the adjacent Constitution Gardens.

The Commission looks forward to the review of a revised concept design that responds to these comments. As always, the staff is available to assist you with the development of the design.

Sincerely,  
/s/ Thomas E. Luebke, FAIA  
Secretary

Robert Vogel, Regional Director  
National Park Service, National Capital Region  
1100 Ohio Drive, SW  
Washington, DC 20242

cc: Sheila Brady, Oehme, van Sweden & Associates  
Holly Rotondi, Friends of the National World War II Memorial



In their previous review, CFA suggested the following:

- “more flexibility in the design of the elements defining the circle...”
- “the circumferential stone bench could be punctuated with gaps or sculpted along its length”
- “the paths leading into the site could be asymmetrical in width.”
- “further study of the layout and mounting of the bronze panels to relate ... to the logic of the ... revised Circle of Remembrance.”
- “encouraged the careful treatment of materials and details ... as a contemplative component of the World War II Memorial, rather than ... Constitution Gardens.”



WWII Memorial Context

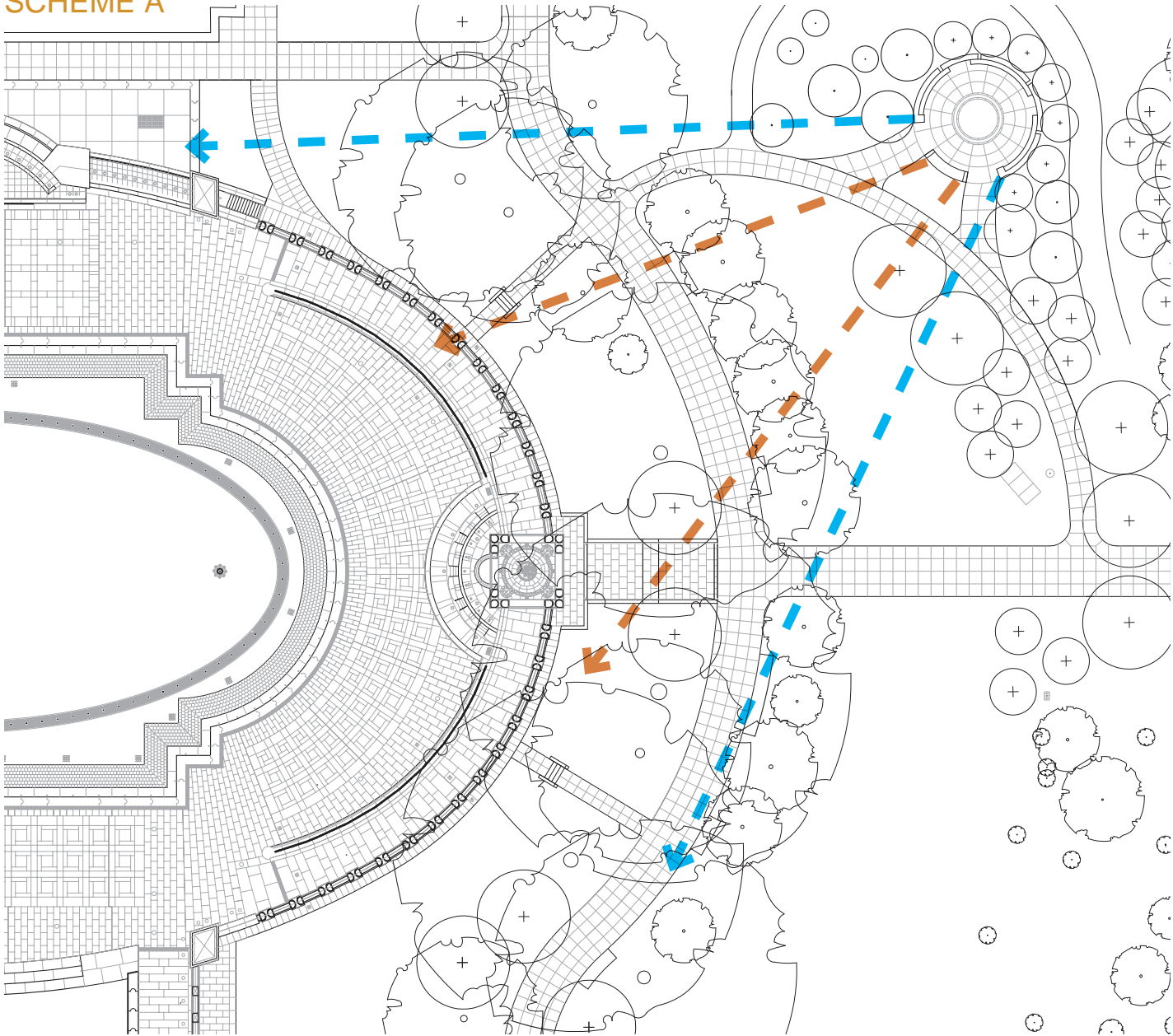
- Both schemes align the Prayer with views of the WWII Memorial



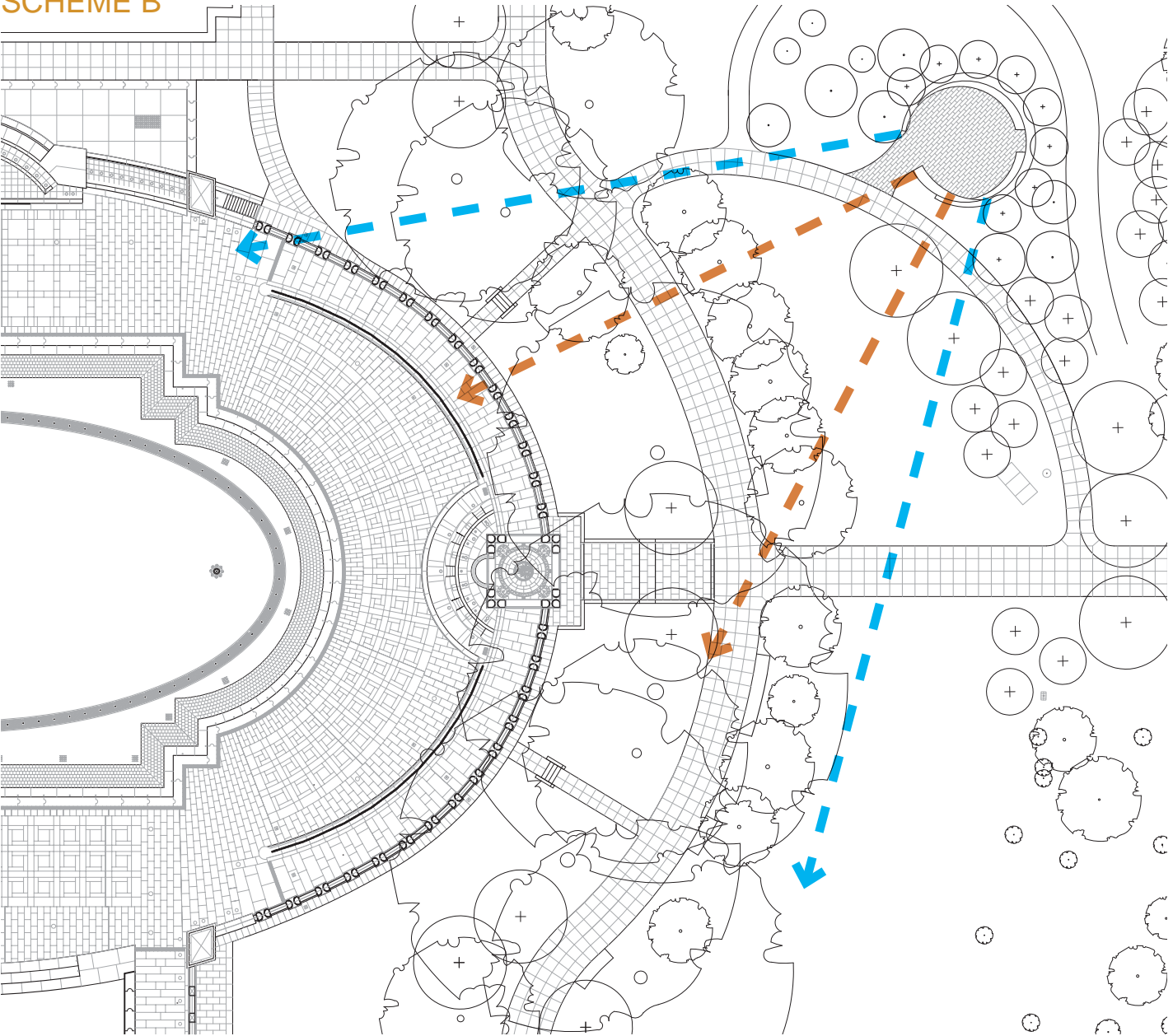
Circle of Remembrance orientation

D-Day Prayer Plaque viewshed

SCHEME A



SCHEME B





## D-Day Prayer Scheme A

- Prayer is free-standing element within the Circle of Remembrance
- Bronze plaque is held by granite piers, providing material continuity and lighter feeling
- Low planting beyond Prayer provides green backdrop that reinforces the form of the Circle





## D-Day Prayer Scheme A

- The walls and bench are punctuated by gaps, allowing views and accessible seating
- The walls are 24" tall, creating a low back for the benches, which are 18" tall
- The Prayer plaque is 36" tall so it can be read standing or seated in a wheelchair





# D-Day Prayer Scheme A

## Design Inspiration

- This scheme takes inspiration from the WWII Memorial, with symmetrical geometries and similar layout to the existing Circle of Remembrance.



Photo courtesy of NPS via ASLA.org



Photo courtesy signaturetours DC.com



# D-Day Prayer Scheme A

## Concept Description

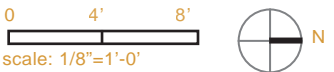
- Walls are ‘punctuated’ with gaps and the Prayer is a ‘free-standing’ element
- Stone bench curves around the Circle, uniting the walls and providing accessible seating
- Prayer is a distinct element within the Circle, separated by circulation on either side.

### Seating and gathering capacity:

- Seating capacity - 33, including 4 wheelchair spaces (based on 21” per seat)
- Gathering space - 51 people (based on IBC 2012 code for classrooms of 20 SF/person)
- Standing room capacity - 205 people (based on IBC 2012 code)

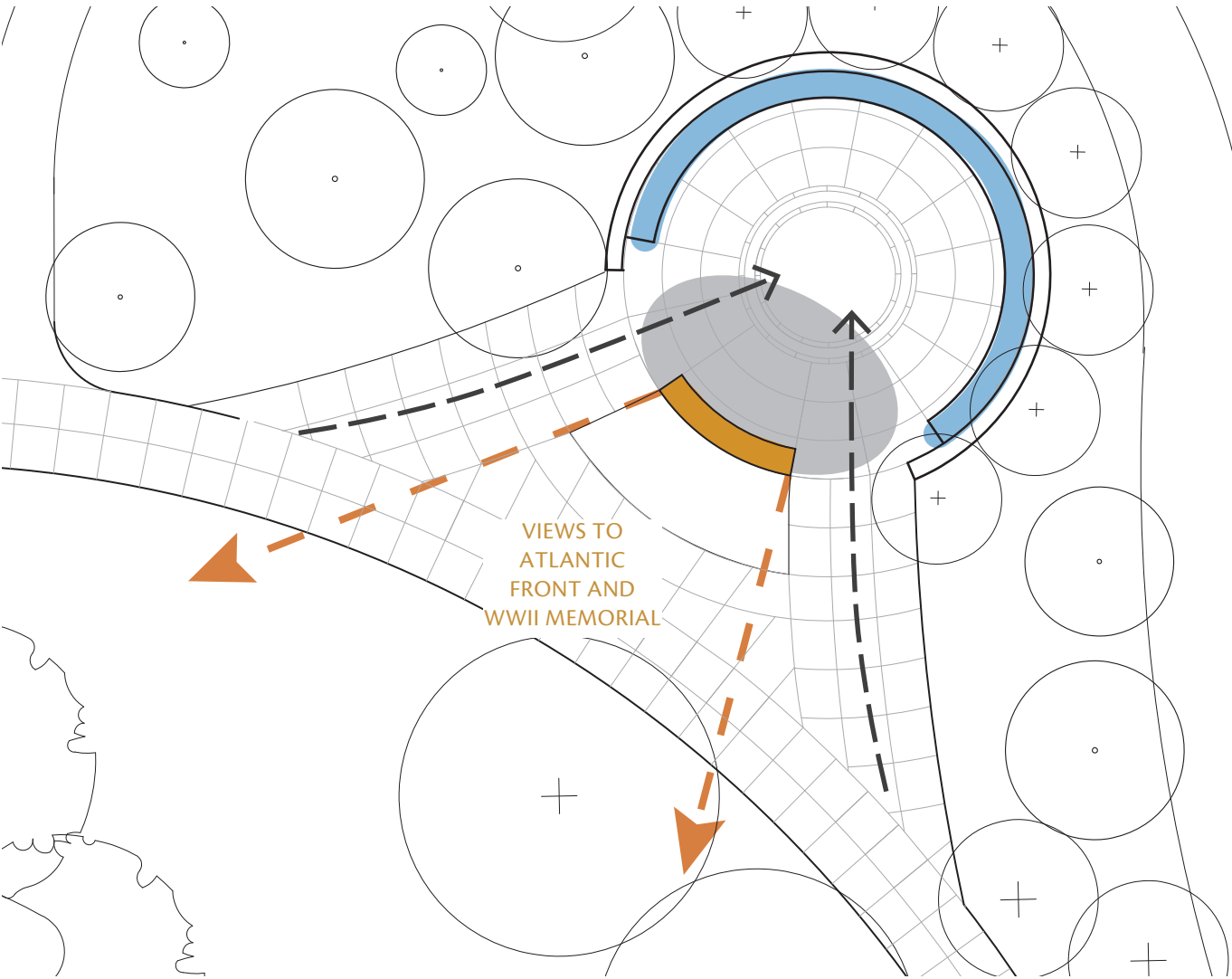


- 1) Proposed granite wall: medium grey granite
- 2) Proposed granite bench: light grey granite
- 3) New granite paving and curb
- 4) Bronze D-Day Prayer Plaque
- 5) Existing concrete path to remain
- 6) Existing multi-stem canopy trees to remain
- 7) Proposed small flowering trees with groundcover
- 8) Proposed evergreen shrub border
- 9) Existing levee - no built structures or trees within this zone
- 10) Existing light pole to remain



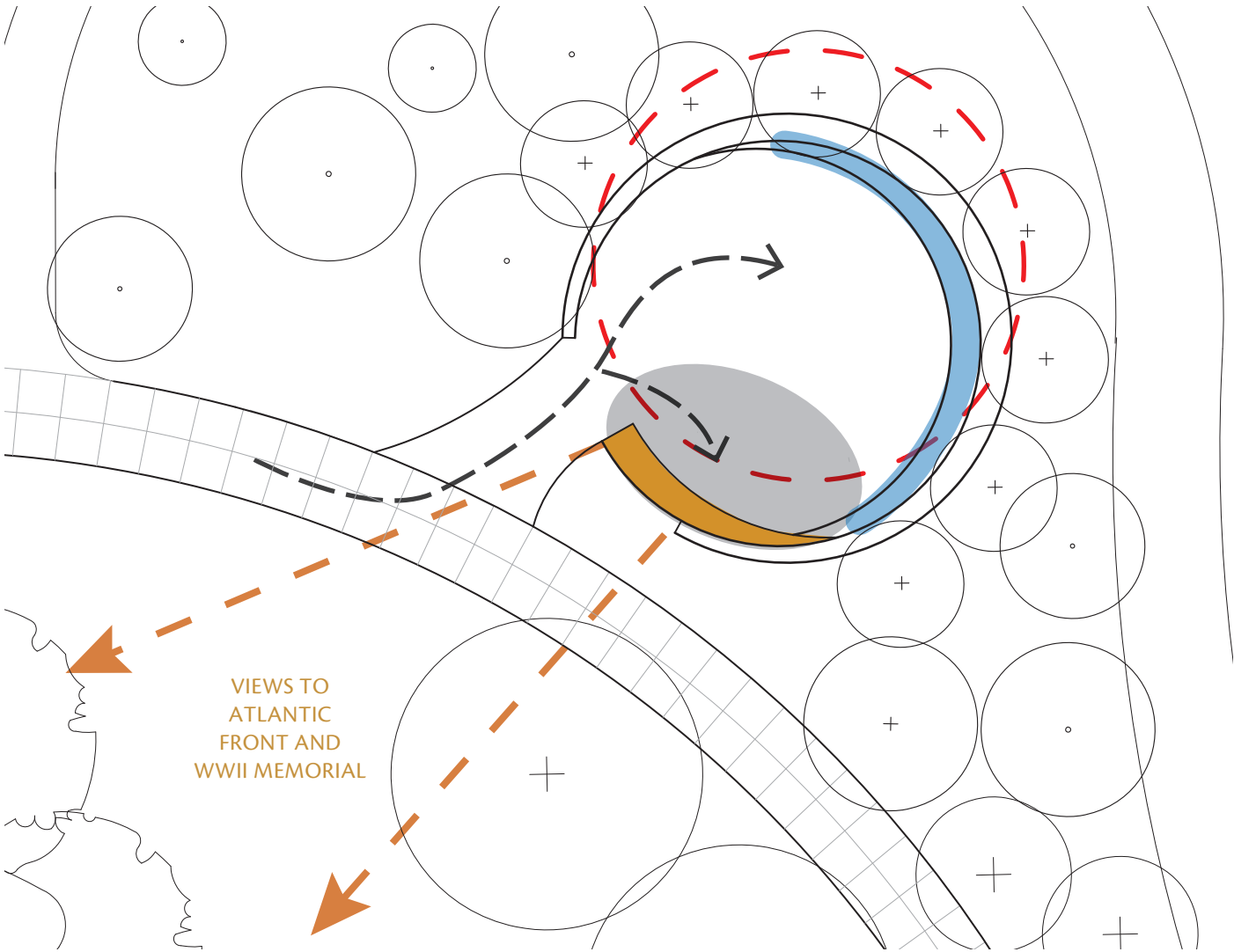
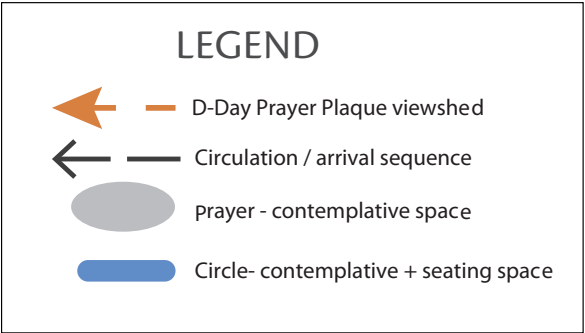


# D-Day Prayer Orientation Diagrams



## SCHEME A

- Prayer is centered within the circumference of Circle
- Adjacent paths expose readers to traffic, reducing the contemplative experience



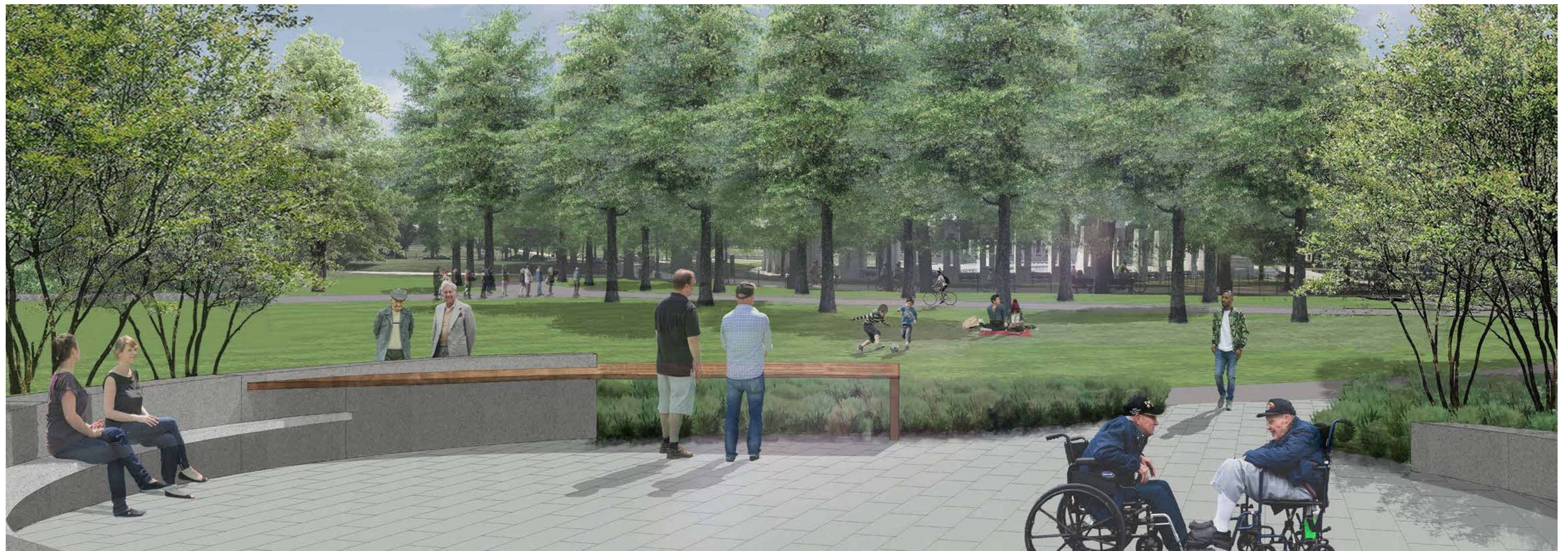
## SCHEME B

- Circle is reoriented to allow circulation along the side, protecting contemplative space



## D-Day Prayer Scheme B | View to WWII Memorial

- Prayer is quiet extension of the Circle of Remembrance
- Maintains desired orientation, framing views to the WWII Memorial.
- Planting beyond the Prayer provides green backdrop that reinforces the form of the Circle





## D-Day Prayer Scheme B | View into the Circle

- To enhance the intimacy of the Circle, circulation is concentrated at one point
- Wall rises up gradually from 18" to 36" where it meets the Prayer
- This height allows visitors to read the Prayer while standing or seated in a wheelchair





# D-Day Prayer Scheme B

## Design Inspiration

- The form of this proposal was inspired by concentric rings of rain falling in a pool, while the groundplane echoes the textured shoreline of a beach.



Concentric water patterns | unidentified author



'Sunrise Ripples' by tt Matheka



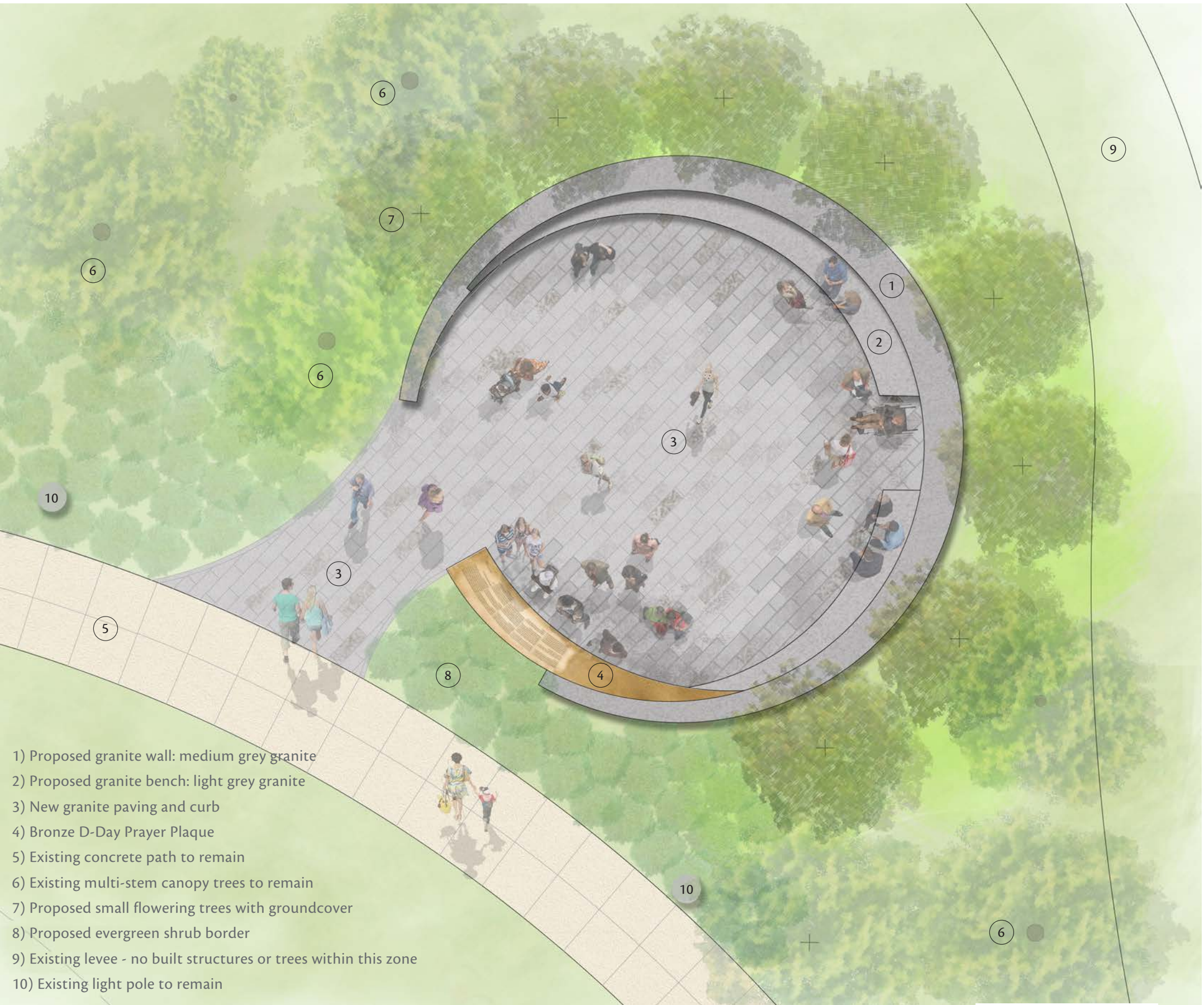
# D-Day Prayer Scheme A

## Concept Description

- A unified, sculptural gesture encompasses the retaining wall, bench, and Prayer.
- Stone bench is cantilevered from the wall to create lightness and emphasize gesture
- Groundplane is textured or patterned to highlight areas of importance

### Seating and gathering capacity:

- Seating capacity - 25, including 2 wheelchair spaces (based on 21" per seat)
- Gathering space - 49 people (based on IBC 2012 code for classrooms for 20 SF/person)
- Standing room capacity - 196 people (based on IBC 2012 code for gathering for 5 SF/person)

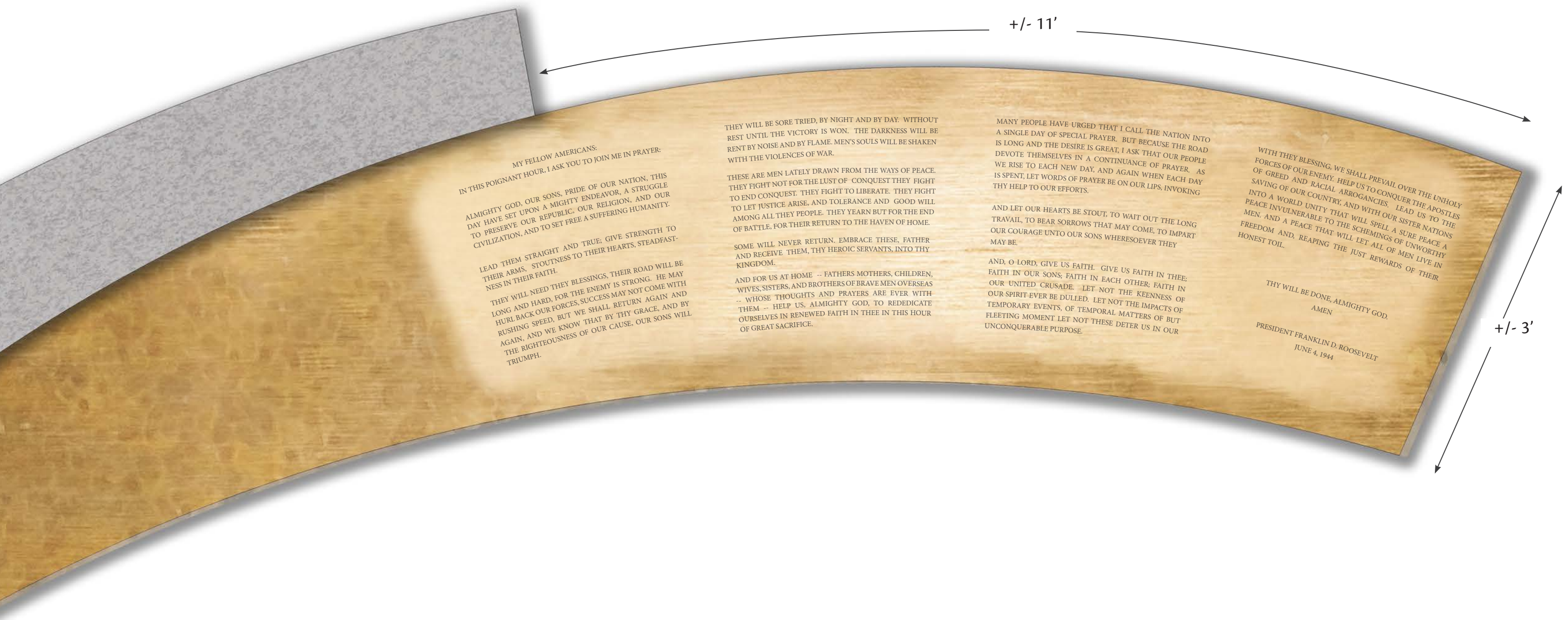




# D-Day Prayer Plaque Design Studies

## Format

- Initial studies suggest text be laid out on the radius and divided into 4 parts.
- Text layout and font selection will be studied further in design development
- Development of plaque design will be coordinated with graphic designer, metal fabricator and other consultants





# D-Day Prayer Proposed Materials

## Materiality and Design Intent

- Proposed materials will be complementary to the WWII Memorial materials.

## Wall and Bench

- Walls can be warm grey granite to transition from Memorial grounds to Constitution Gardens.
- Bench can be same granite in different finish to provide contrast

## Prayer Plaque

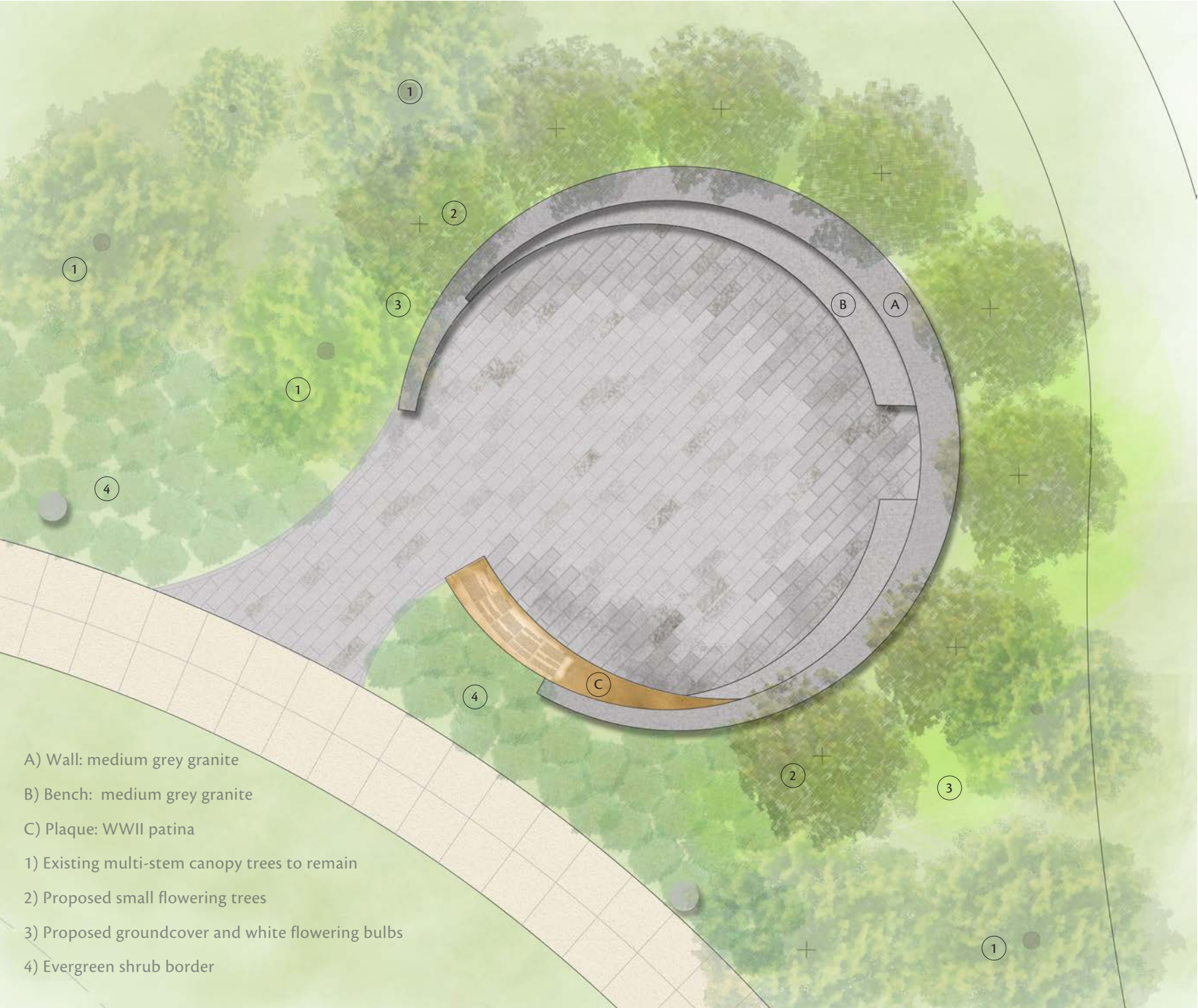
- Bronze plaque may have finish and patina similar to the emblem in the Atlantic and Pacific Arches

## Paving

- Paving may be mix of light to medium grey stone, with differently textured finishes



The proposed materials will be complementary to the stone and bronze used at the WWII Memorial, but appropriate for the context



- A) Wall: medium grey granite
- B) Bench: medium grey granite
- C) Plaque: WWII patina
- 1) Existing multi-stem canopy trees to remain
- 2) Proposed small flowering trees
- 3) Proposed groundcover and white flowering bulbs
- 4) Evergreen shrub border



# D-Day Prayer Planting Design

## Preliminary Planting Concept

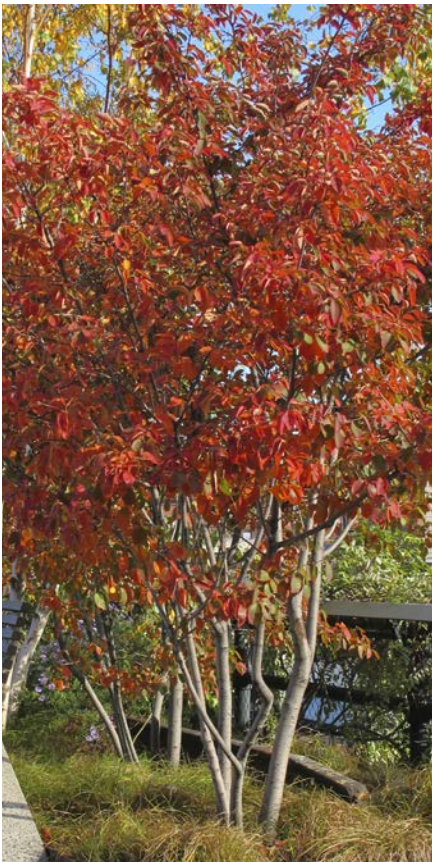
- Planting design and selection is preliminary and will be developed in the next design phase
- Small, multi-stem trees for filtered enclosure and views
- Retention of existing trees provide immediate shade
- Hardy groundcovers for yearlong greenery and low maintenance
- White bulbs provide seasonal interest and reference ‘floral memorial’
- Low, evergreen shrubs frame threshold and provide seasonal color



Existing multi-stem canopy trees: *Chionanthus retusus*



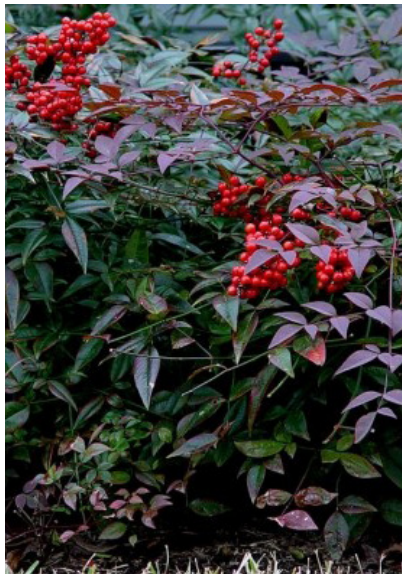
Proposed trees: *Amelanchier grandiflora* 'Autumn Brilliance'



Proposed trees: *Amelanchier grandiflora* 'Autumn Brilliance'



Proposed evergreen shrub/groundcover: *Nandina domestica* 'Harbor Dwarf'



Proposed shrub: *Hydrangea quercifolia* 'Sikes Dwarf' | Oakleaf Hydrangea



Proposed groundcover: *Carex appalachica*



Proposed bulbs: White narcissus, Snow drops species TBD







Previously presented concept: D-Day Prayer Design Alternative II

Concept Description

This alternative ‘completes’ the Circle, placing the prayer on a curved granite wall within the bounds of the Circle’s circumference. Similarly to Alternative I, The Prayer is inscribed onto a bronze plaque that is placed on top of the wall. The wall is approximately 2.5’ tall, 3.5’ wide and 14’ long.

Adherence to Design Criteria

CONTEMPLATIVE CHARACTER

- The Prayer is placed within the Circle, so the contemplative space of the Circle and the Prayer Memorial are shared.

VEGETATIVE SCREENING

- A sense of enclosure is provided by small, multi-stem flowering trees that surround the circular wall, while low shrubs at the entry provide visual separation of the Circle from the path.

COMPATIBILITY WITH EXISTING CIRCULATION AND VISITATION PATTERNS

- The layout of the existing pathways would be modified to allow entry into the Circle on either side of the proposed Prayer .

EASE OF LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE

- The Prayer is proposed to be engraved on a bronze plaque for easy long-term maintenance.

VISUAL CONNECTION WITH THE WWII MEMORIAL

- Visitors to the D-Day Prayer would have views of the WWII Memorial in the background.

ADHERENCE WITH ORIGINAL WWII MEMORIAL DESIGN INTENT

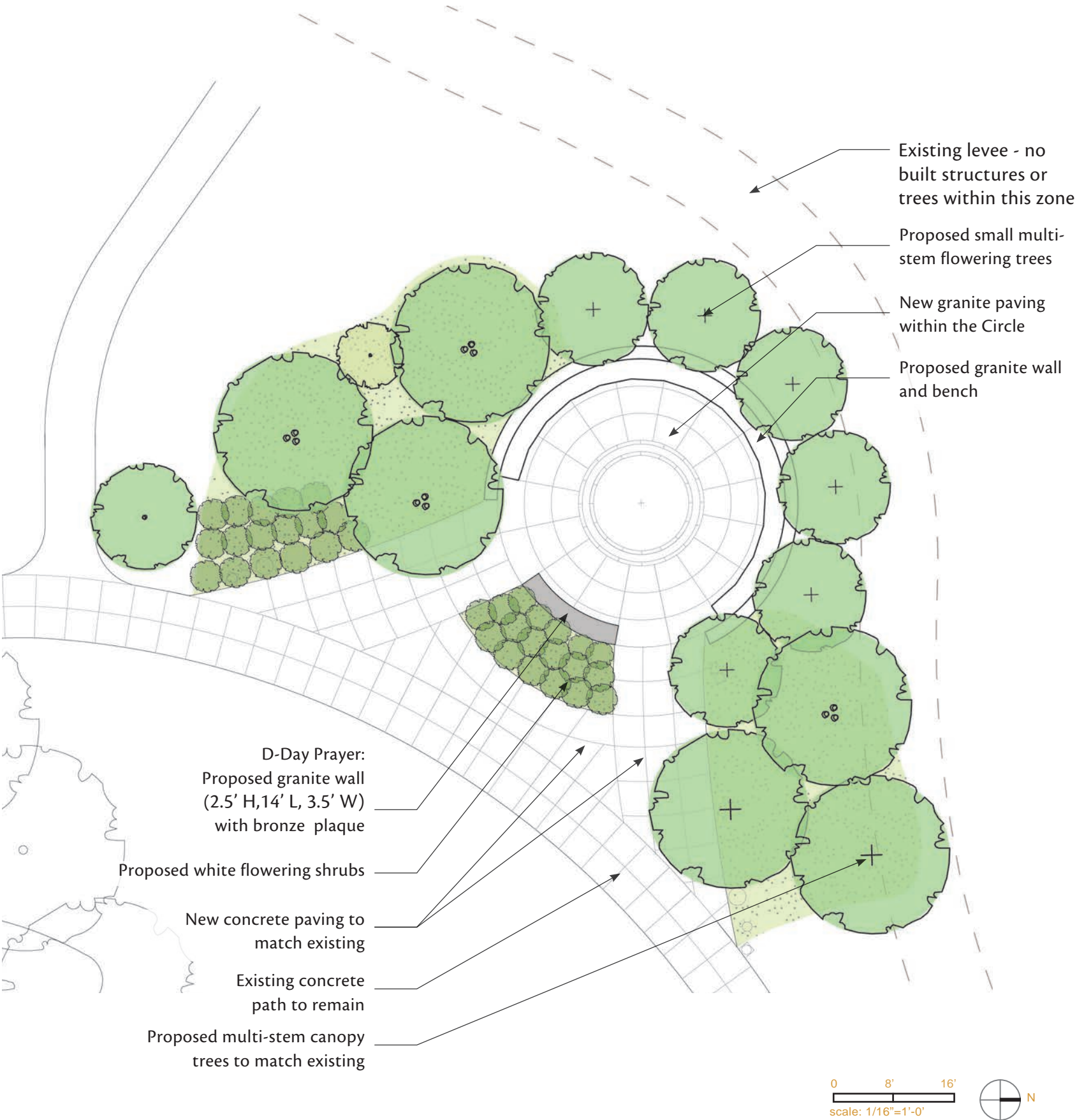
- The benches, paving and walls of this alternative are consistent with the materials and aesthetics of the WWII Memorial.

COMFORT AND LEGIBILITY

- Visitors will be able to comfortably read the Prayer from a standing position.

LEGIBILITY AND PRAYER FORMAT

- The bronze engraving will ensure long term legibility and the font will be sized to meet accessibility standards.





## Previously presented concept: D-Day Prayer Design Alternative II

Design Alternative II was selected as a preferred concept because it emphasizes the ‘circular’ form of the Circle of Remembrance and creates a strong visual connection with the WWII Memorial. This alternative would provide additional enclosure for the Circle, while creating a defined threshold.

