
WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL
ARTWORK DEVELOPMENT DETAILS
Rainbow Pool, West Potomac Park,
17th Street, NW, Between Independence and Constitution Avenues

Report to the National Park Service and American Battle Monuments Commission

April 4, 2002

Abstract

The National Park Service (NPS), on behalf of the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), is submitting artwork development details for various elements of the World War II (WWII) Memorial. The NPS and ABMC have made a commitment to continue to submit artwork details of the memorial as construction proceeds. These elements are submitted so that the Commission may have input into the final design of these elements prior to fabrication and installation.

Authority

Pursuant to Public Law 103-32, the Commemorative Works Act (40 U.S.C. 1001, et seq.), as amended, and Public Law 107-11.

Commission Action

The Commission **approves** the preliminary and final design details for the flagpoles and announcement piers at the 17th Street ceremonial entrance; the announcement stone at the east memorial plaza; and the field of gold stars at the freedom wall, World War II Memorial, Rainbow Pool, West Potomac Park, 17th Street, NW, between Independence and Constitution Avenues, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.43(38.00)-41014.

* * *

BACKGROUND AND STAFF EVALUATION

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

The NPS, on behalf of the ABMC, is submitting artwork details of the WWII Memorial. The details that are submitted include the flagpoles and announcement piers at the 17th Street ceremonial entrance; the announcement stone at the east memorial plaza; and the field of gold stars at the Freedom Wall.

Flagpoles

Two flagpoles flying the American flag feature bronze bases mounted on carved granite benches. The bronze bases are adorned with the seals of the six Armed Services. The ornament on top of the bases is comprised of olive branch and arrowhead motifs, symbolizing peace through strength. At the top of the flagpole, the motif of olive branches and arrowheads embracing a gold-leafed globe symbolizes the global nature of WWII. The carved granite benches will be approximately 13 feet in diameter and the bronze bases will be approximately 7 feet in diameter. The flagpoles will be approximately 60 feet in height.

Announcement Piers

The design of the announcement piers contains motifs based on the great seal of the United States of America, carved in Kershaw granite, the memorial's principal stone. The heads of the American Eagles are facing inwards toward the ceremonial entrance. The inscription "World War II Memorial" is incorporated into the design.

Announcement Stone

The announcement stone of Green County granite—measuring approximately 14 feet long and 6 feet wide—is integrated into the floor pattern of the East Memorial Plaza. With a stone finish that is honed in order to give it a distinct appearance, the surface of the stone is flush with the plaza pavers. The inscription is of inlaid bronze lettering.

Field of Gold Stars

The design of the Field of Gold Stars features a vigorously tooled textured bronze background. The gold stars project approximately one-half inch from the background. Their geometric pattern is rhythmical and achieves an artistic presence.

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTION

At its December 14, 2000 meeting, the Commission:

- Approved the final site and building plans for the ancillary elements (roadway, contemplative area, information pavilion / ranger station, and comfort station) of the WWII Memorial.
- Commended the ABMC, NPS and their design team for a consistently thorough consultation process with Commission staff during the design and development of the WWII Memorial, including the ancillary elements, and looked forward to continuing this process as further refinements were made to the lighting or any other aspects of the approved memorial.
- Recognized that 17th Street is a designated Special Street in the Preservation and Historic Features Element of the Comprehensive Plan and understood that the NPS will not close this street once the WWII Memorial is constructed.

Prior to the Commission's December 14, 2000 meeting, the Commission held a special meeting on September 21, 2000. At that meeting, the Commission approved the final site and building plans for the WWII Memorial, except for the Light of Freedom sculptural element and the proposed lighting. The Commission also deferred action on the ancillary elements of the memorial, including the roadway, contemplative area, information station, and comfort station. The Commission also requested that ABMC provide a more subtle finish for the gold stars on the memorial's Wall of Freedom.

CONSULTATION

ABMC has continued to consult with staff of the Commission in the development of artwork details and is now submitting those details for Commission action.

EVALUATION

Staff recommends approval of the design of the artwork details submitted with this proposal. The flagpoles and the articulation of their bases, which incorporate benches, have an anchoring effect at this ceremonial entrance. Additionally, the American Eagle motifs at the announcement piers at this entrance further highlight the sense of entry into the memorial, particularly since the eagles' heads face inward. The symbolism of the olive branches, arrows, and gold leafed globe are all appropriate for this memorial. Staff is particularly pleased that the announcement stone is flush with the plaza because its location will be one of the principle points from which visitors will take photographs. Highlighting the inscription of this stone in bronze will visually link it with the memorial's other bronze elements.

The Commission, as mentioned, requested that NPS and ABMC provide a more subtle finish on the gold stars on the Wall of Freedom. The current proposal results in a design that staff feels achieves a more "sculptural" and artistic impression than earlier iterations of this element. The

use of a vigorously tooled and textured bronze background has the effect of visually projecting the stars from the wall, thereby creating a slight shadowing and an overall non-machined look to the Freedom Wall. Staff enthusiastically endorses this approach and recommends approval of the submitted artwork.

It is anticipated that, as other artistic elements of the memorial are developed, the NPS and ABMC will submit those elements for Commission review.

COORDINATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed this item at its meeting on March 13, 2002 and forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the project has been coordinated with all agencies participating. The participating agencies were NCPC; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the Department of Public Works; the General Services Administration; the National Park Service; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

CONFORMANCE

Comprehensive Plan

The proposed memorial would be located on a 7.4-acre site at the Rainbow Pool, which is located at the east end of the Reflecting Pool, between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial. The Mall is a national landmark and a designated Special Place in the Preservation and Historic Features Element of the Comprehensive Plan. Seventeenth Street is a designated Special Street in this Element. The proposed artwork development details for the memorial are consistent with applicable policies in the Element relating to the protection and enhancement of historic properties, Special Places and Special Streets.

National Environmental Policy Act

In conformance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), NPS completed a Finding of No Significant Impact for the memorial in late June 1998.

National Historic Preservation Act

NPS concluded its Section 106 review with the D.C. State Historic Preservation Office in 2001. While NPS and DC SHPO understood that they would consult further on any significant elements or changes to the approved plan, the design details before the Commission for review this month constitute further development of approved elements and not a significant level of change.