



District of Columbia War Memorial
National Register of Historic Places Nomination

2012

Nomination Prepared For: National Park Service

Nomination Prepared By: Hord Coplan Macht, Landscape Architects
and Vitetta, Preservation Architects

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name District of Columbia War Memorial
 other names/site number District of Columbia War Memorial Bandstand (historic), District of Columbia World War Memorial (historic), District of Columbia War Memorial (historic and current) D.C. War Memorial (current)

2. Location

street & number Independence Avenue between 17th and 23rd Streets SW not for publication
 city or town Washington vicinity
 state DC code DC county N/A code 001 zip code 20024

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
 I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register

other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

District of Columbia War Memorial
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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
 (Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
1	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	2	objects
2	2	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

1 object – listed as an object in East and West Potomac Parks Historic District

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION/CULTURE / music facility =
 bandstand
 LANDSCAPE / park = national park
 OTHER / memorial

RECREATION/CULTURE / music facility =
 bandstand
 LANDSCAPE / park = national park
 OTHER / memorial

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

NeoClassical

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Stone: Vermont Danby marble
 walls: n/a
 roof: Stone: Vermont Danby marble
 other: Columns: Vermont Danby marble
 Floor: Vermont Danby white and pink marble
 Floor hatch: bronze
 Terrace and walk paving: Pennsylvania bluestone

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

See continuation sheets - Page 9

Narrative Description

See continuation sheets - Pages 9 - 16

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Community Planning & Development

Architecture

Social History

Period of Significance

AD 1931 - 1939

Significant Dates

11/11/1931 dedication

1939 site rehabilitation

2011 site rehabilitation and Memorial restoration

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Architects: Brooke, Frederick H.,

Wyeth, Nathan C., Peaslee, Horace W.

Landscape Architects: Cheatham, Maj. Gen.

Benjamin Franklin, Greenleaf, James L.

Builder: James Baird Company

Period of Significance (justification)

See continuation sheets – Page 17

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

See continuation sheets – Page 17

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

See continuation sheets – Page 17

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

See continuation sheets – Pages 17 - 30

Developmental history / additional historic context information (If appropriate.)

N/A

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

See continuation sheets – Pages 31 - 33

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register –contributing – E/W Potomac Pks
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # DC-857
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 2.0 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>322,818</u> Easting	<u>4,306,283</u> Northing	3	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing
2	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing	4	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing

See continuation sheets – Pages 35 & 37, Figures 1 & 3

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

See continuation sheets – Page 35, Figure 1

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries of the site have remained unchanged since the memorial's construction in 1931, and as represented by the original landscape plans and all subsequent rehabilitation work. The boundaries were largely based on the area around the monument from which concert music could be seen and heard, and to include a portion of Ash Woods and its canopy of mature trees.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Julie Higgins
organization Hord Coplan Macht date November 13, 2012
street & number 750 East Pratt Street Suite 1100 telephone 443-451-2337
city or town Baltimore state MD zip code 21202
e-mail jhiggins@hcm2.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** see continuation sheets – Pages 35 – 37, Figures 1 - 3
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map. see continuation sheets – Pages 52 & 53, Figures 18 & 19
- **Continuation Sheets** see continuation sheets for historic plans and photographs – Pages 38 – 51, Figures 11 - 17
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

See continuation sheets – Page 54 for Photograph Log

Name of Property: District of Columbia War Memorial

City or Vicinity: Washington, DC

County: N/A State: District of Columbia

Photographer:

Date Photographed:

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

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Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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Narrative Description

The District of Columbia War Memorial was constructed in West Potomac Park in 1931 as an open-air, circular Greek temple with fluted Doric columns supporting a round dome. The columns sit atop a raised base with two sets of steps leading up to the stylobate, the floor level of the structure. It was designed with the dual purpose of being both a war memorial and a bandstand, and is large enough to accommodate an eighty-piece band. The Memorial is surrounded by a circular terrace of bluestone paving with parallel bluestone paths bordering lawn panels, extending north to Ash Road and south to Independence Avenue. The structure is surrounded by open lawn, flanked on the east and west sides by Ash Woods, a large grove of trees that consists primarily of elm, maple, beech, and oak.¹ (see Photos 1 – 4)

Today, the District of Columbia (D.C.) War Memorial retains a high level of integrity. A restoration / rehabilitation in 2011 returned the immediate cultural landscape and structure to the historic character present in the 1930's, its period of significance. The Memorial is set in wooded surroundings with clear vistas to the north and south and flagstone pathways leading to the memorial. Informal tree plantings frame an open lawn intended for concert audiences. The 2011 restoration has repaired the building's marble to a stable and watertight condition, highlighting its craftsmanship. The removal of non-contributing understory plant material from a number of planting campaigns has restored the vision of the original landscape architect, James L. Greenleaf, who advised that:

The ultimate good effect must rely upon a well developed grove and the beauty of the structure under the resulting light and shade. I would absolutely avoid all fancy planting of flower beds.²

Site / Setting

As part of the National Mall, the Memorial is located within the heart of West Potomac Park, just south of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool, east of the Korean War Veterans Memorial, southwest of the World War II Memorial and north of the Tidal Basin and Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial. (see Figures 2, 3 & 14). The entrances to the site from the north and south are wide clearings, flanked on both sides by Ash Woods, with the Memorial at the center. The clearing provides a glimpse of the Memorial to passersby on Ash Road and motorists on Independence Avenue. The Memorial structure and terrace is surrounded on the east and west by a roughly 50 foot wide open lawn (see Figures 3 & 7).

At the time of construction, the site was a grove of trees consisting of willows and various types of swamp trees of soft wood. At the recommendation of landscape architect James L. Greenleaf, selected trees and undergrowth were removed and replaced with hardwoods. He suggested "an open vista North and South but one formed by trees not too strictly in line or necessarily of the same species....it is proposed to leave as many trees as conform to the idea of informal approaches from North and South and add other trees where required".³

¹ John G. Waite Associates, Architects PLLC, "District of Columbia War Memorial, Historic Structure Report & Cultural Landscape Report". (National Mall & Memorial Parks, PMIS NO 43699, 2006), 21.

² James L Greenleaf to Charles Moore, December 15, 1930, Records of the National Park Service, NCRSF Box 35, File 1430.

³ Frederick H. Brooke to William A. Delano, September 17, 1931, Records of the National Park Service, NCRSF Box 35 File

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In keeping with the trends of the time, the National Capital Chapter of the Garden Club of America sponsored a memorial tree planting project, resulting in large American elms and other hardwoods being planted around the monument, set back to maintain the 50' open lawn for concert viewing. In some cases, concrete pedestals with brass markers naming the donor were installed at the base of the tree.⁴

Over the years, understory trees and shrubs were planted around the Memorial and in the lawn panels, substantially altering the original landscape character and function. To restore the integrity of the landscape, non-contributing understory plants were removed and new elms planted along the walks and around the open circular lawn in an informal pattern.

Hardscape Elements

The site entrances are punctuated with two 10 foot wide parallel bluestone walkways bordering broad lawn panels that lead to a 20 foot wide circular bluestone terrace at the base of the Memorial. The Memorial was originally constructed with an 8 foot wide circular area of flagstone paving at the base of the structure that connected to axial gravel pathways to the north and south (see Figure 5). Today, the innermost ring of the terrace is comprised of dark bluestone laid in the original geometric paving pattern while the outer ring and axial walks utilize a full range of bluestone colors, laid in a random, rectilinear pattern, and reflect the paving patterns that were installed in 1939 (see Figures 9,10 & 18, Photos 3 & 8). While the outer ring and stone paving of the parallel walks were not present during the period of significance, their effect is highly complementary to an understanding of the site as it appeared in the 1930's.

Overall Form

The D.C. War Memorial was designed in the form of a circular Greek temple, or tholos, as an open-air, white marble, Doric structure, with a domed roof and a peristyle of columns. Its wooded setting provides the feeling of "a sacred space and a fit refuge for contemplation."⁵ (see Figure 4)

The Memorial is approximately 45 feet in diameter and 47 feet in overall height from the surrounding flagstone terrace to the top of the dome. The 4 foot tall plinth of the Memorial consists of two circular platforms, a 2 foot 6 inch tall inscribed platform with a 1 foot 6 inch stepped ledge below. Two sets of curved steps, one at the north and one at the south, ascend to the bandstand platform level above. From here, twelve Doric columns rise to support an inscribed entablature, which features 24 guttae⁶ at the top of the architrave, and dentils beneath the corona of the cornice. The pinnacle of the Memorial is the domed roof, clad with 324 marble tiles cut to fit the

1430

⁴ One concrete marker, installed in 1968 northeast of the memorial, is extant without its memorial plaque. An original, damaged, memorial plaque and base were removed in 2010 prior to the 2011 restoration project. Both plaques are maintained in the National Park Service's artifact collection. Source: Jennifer Talken-Spaulding, Cultural Resource Program Manager, National Park Service National Mall and Memorial Parks

⁵ HABS/HAER/HALS Collection (HABS No. DC-857)"District of Columbia War Memorial," (HABS/HAER/HAL Collection at the Library of Congress, Print & Photographs Division, 2004), 6.

⁶ John Fleming, Hugh Honour, Nicholas Pevsner, "Small drop-like projections carved below the tenia under each triglyph on a Doric architrave", The Penguin Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, 5th Edition (New York Penguin Books, 1998) 247.

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spherical shape of the roof.⁷ (see Figures 15 & 17)

The Memorial is clad exclusively in marble from the Danby, Vermont quarry. An inner Guastavino tile dome was also constructed within the attic space (see Figure 16). Guastavino tile domes were constructed using a technique patented by Rafael Guastavino in 1885 that employs interlocking terracotta tiles with layers of mortar to form a self-supporting architectural arch or vault.⁸ Frederick H. Brooke, architect, described the dome construction as:

“One of an inner and outer shell of Guastavino laminated construction. The marble ceiling was erected on wood centers with 6 inch cramps...built into the masonry. The lower Guastavino shell was built around these projecting cramps. In reverse fashion the outer Guastavino shell held dowels which anchor the outer marble dome. Between the inner and outer shell is a space 7 foot 6 inch high at the center. A counter-weighted center marble disc gives access to the space.”⁹

The foundation of the Memorial consists of a 5 foot wide, 12-sided concrete ring at the perimeter of the base braced by concrete crossbeams beneath with two pairs of reinforced composite concrete piles supporting each of the columns and ceiling. The piles are 47-feet-long and 10 and a half inches in diameter with the lower portion comprised of wood while the upper 15-foot sections are concrete.¹⁰

Columns and Ceiling

Twelve Doric columns support the dome of the Memorial. All are baseless, with twenty flutes, terminate into a classic Doric capital, and rise 22 feet from the stylobate to support the 6 foot tall entablature and domed roof above. The four columns on the ordinal points house internal rainwater conductors that carry water from the gutter above to a drainage system below ground. The columns also support the 2 foot 4 inch marble entablature and shallow, coffered, saucer dome on the interior. The coffered ceiling dome is clad with 365 marble panels with a movable marble disc at the center, which allows access into the attic above. The central opening is framed by a series of friezes bordered by an outer band consisting of two courses of Greek key moldings. Below the outer band, four tiers of coffered panels extend down to the interior cornice.

To illuminate the interior of the dome, 24 linear LED surface lighting fixtures are mounted behind the interior cornice (see Photos 4 & 6). The system was installed during the 2011 restoration to replace the previous fluorescent lights. The fluorescent system installed in March of 2003 replaced a set of Pittsburgh Permaflexor light fixtures which may have been the original system or a replacement system installed during the 1939 renovation. Two of these light fixtures have been retained in an artifact collection administered by the National Park Service.¹¹

⁷ HABS/HAER/HALS Collection (HABS No. DC-857), 7.

⁴ “Keystone of D.C. Memorial Temple Laid,” *Evening Star*, September 30, 1931.

⁸ John Ochsendorf and Michael Freeman, *Guastavino Vaulting: the art of structural tile* (New York) 2010.

⁹ Waite, et. al.,92.

¹⁰ On the 4 March 1931 drawing by Frederick H. Brooke. District of Columbia War Memorial Clippings File. National Capital Region.

¹¹ Waite et. al., 30.

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Decorative Floor

The stylobate, 43 feet 5 inches in diameter, rises approximately 4 feet above the surrounding grade and is accessed from two sets of eight steps, aligned to the north and south axis of the Memorial (see Photo 3). The floor is paved with 4 inch-thick, white and pink marble tiles in a radial pattern featuring a twelve-pointed star set within a field of white marble patterned in concentric rings with radiating lines that extend out from the points of the star to an outer pink border.¹² (see Photo 7) The circular bronze plate at the center of the star conceals a hexagonal opening allowing access to electrical equipment that is housed in the small crawl space beneath. The 1 inch thick, solid, bronze, door hatch is a reproduction that was fabricated during the 2011 restoration to replace the original, which was stolen in the 1970s.¹³ (see Photo 7) The design of the hatch is based on the architect's original design and the written description, which called for a cast bronze plaque featuring a "symbolic figure of an eagle" in a low relief.¹⁴ It is set within a circular bronze escutcheon plate adorned with six stars. A partial undated photograph found in the National Park Service files helped to guide the design of the bronze lid.

Inscriptions and Insignias

The adornment of the Memorial consists of an inscription wrapping the frieze of the entablature, inscribed panels along the base memorializing the names of those 499 District residents who died in service during the war, and six circular, bas-relief, medallions interspersed between the inscribed panels at the base (see Photo 5). Originally designed in 1925 to read "In Memory of the Men and Women of the District of Columbia" the text for the inscribed frieze was modified in 1931 and today reads "A Memorial to the Armed Forces from the District of Columbia Who Served Their Country in the World War."¹⁵ A bas-relief eagle, facing west and clutching two arrows and an olive branch is centered in the frieze above the north stair. The north stair is flanked by two inscribed panels. The panel to the east is inscribed:

THIS MEMORIAL WAS ERECTED THROUGH THE VOLUNTARY SUBSCRIPTIONS OF THE PEOPLE OF WASHINGTON. IT WAS DEDICATED ON ARMISTICE DAY NINETEEN HUNDRED AND THIRTY-ONE BY HERBERT HOOVER PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. WITHIN THIS CORNER-STONE ARE RECORDED THE NAMES OF THE TWENTY-SIX THOUSAND WASHINGTONIANS WHO WHEN THE UNITED STATES ENTERED THE WORLD WAR ANSWERED THE CALL TO ARMS AND SERVED IN THE ARMY NAVY MARINE CORPS AND COAST GUARD.

The panel to the west is inscribed with the following dedicatory inscription:

THE NAMES OF THE MEN AND WOMEN FROM THE DISTRICT OF

¹² Waite et. al., 91.

¹³ William Failor, Superintendent of National Capital Parks-Central, to General Superintendent, February 5, 1970. Brief report on DC War Memorial, author unknown. District of Columbia War Memorial File, National Capital Parks-Central, courtesy of Tony Donald.

¹⁴ Through the Ages, "District of Columbia War Memorial" p 35.

¹⁵ Waite et. al., 21.

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COLUMBIA WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE WORLD WAR ARE
HERE INSCRIBED AS A PERPETUAL RECORD OF THEIR
PATRIOTIC SERVICE TO THEIR COUNTRY. THOSE WHO FELL
AND THOSE WHO SURVIVED HAVE GIVEN TO THIS AND TO
FUTURE GENERATIONS AN EXAMPLE OF HIGH IDEALISM
COURAGEOUS SACRIFICE AND GALLANT ACHIEVEMENT

Wrapping the base of the Memorial, beginning after the dedicatory inscription above are the list of the names of the 499 D.C. residents who lost their lives during World War I, listed alphabetically, regardless of race, rank or gender.¹⁶ On the cheek wall to the west side of the south steps, the names of the architect, Frederick H. Brooke, and associate architects, Horace W. Peaslee and Nathan C. Wyeth are also inscribed.

Six circular medallions are interspersed equidistantly around the circumference of the base falling on the ordinal points northeast, southeast, northwest, southwest and the cardinal points east and west. The northeast medallion is the seal of the United States Coast Guard. The east medallion "depicts fasces with double-headed axe in front of a shield, six stars and the inscription 'THE GREAT WAR FOR CIVILIZATION', this design was used on the reverse side of the Victory Medal, a medal given to all active duty troops who served in World War I."¹⁷ The southeast medallion is the seal of the U.S. Marine Corps. The southwest medallion is the seal of the United States Navy. The west medallion is the seal of the District of Columbia. The northwest medallion is the Great Seal of the United States featuring a bald eagle with outstretched wings, breast emblazoned with a shield, and clutching a bundle of arrows in the right talon, an olive branch in the left with a glory above its head.

1939 Public Works Administration Rehabilitation

The first major change to the original design occurred in 1939 when the flagstone paving of the Memorial was in a state of decay, requiring complete redesign and replacement.¹⁸ A 1939 grant from the Public Works Administration provided for the rehabilitation of the memorial grounds and hardscape. To maintain the intent of the original design, the 8 foot wide stone terrace surrounding the Memorial replicated the distinctive geometric pattern of the original paving. A second ring of stone paving set in a random rectilinear pattern with grass joints was added, which widened the terrace to 20 feet. The axial walks were also paved in a corresponding random rectilinear paving pattern.

The Memorial itself was suffering from damage caused by continued water infiltration. In June of 1939, repairs were begun to correct the water infiltration, replacing the lead gutter with a nickel-plated copper gutter, repointing the exterior of the dome and entablature, and installing lead wool and caulking compound.¹⁹ In July of the same year, \$80,000 was allocated by the Public Works Administration (PWA) to provide an extensive rehabilitation plan for the Memorial grounds.²⁰ The plan called for landscaping and planting of over 1,600 dogwood trees in the

¹⁶ John Kelly, "For the Great War, a Peaceful Memorial," *The Washington Post* (Washington, DC), (27 May 2004): C11

¹⁷ HABS/HAER/HALS Collection (HABS No. DC-857), 8.

¹⁸ Frank B. Noyes to C. Marshall Finnan, August 29, 1935. RG 79, Records of the National Park Service, National Capital Region Subject Files, 1924-1931, Box 35, File 1430/D.C. Memorial, May 27, 1927 to August 31, 1939, NA-CP.

¹⁹ Waite et. al., 45.

²⁰ Waite et. al., 27.

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neighboring environs, with nearly 800 of them in the immediate vicinity, cleaning of the structure, and modifications to the treatment of vegetation around the monument.²¹ The project added an assortment of oak, holly, ailanthus, dogwood, sweet gum, eastern red bud, cherry and beech trees in close proximity to the Memorial.

This hardscape and planting rehabilitation project resulted in substantial alteration of the cultural landscape, including several important landscape characteristics of the 1930's. In particular, the numerous dogwood and holly trees planted close to the axial walks encroached upon the open feeling of the monument and impacted important vistas.

1940-2008 Alterations

Over time, the use of the Memorial as a bandstand declined and the structure slowly deteriorated due to deferred maintenance and lack of funding appropriations for major repairs. Continued deferred maintenance, including tree pruning, contributed to the overgrown appearance of the site. In 1987, 3,165 azaleas were planted in the understory of the original memorial elms and along the axial walks. By 2008, prolonged water infiltration had left the Memorial's white façade marred with black and orange stains, portions of the marble were chipped and spalling, mortar from joints had deteriorated, and the pathways were broken and crumbling. It was at this time that a renewed interest in the site garnered support for the Memorial's restoration, and \$7.3 million dollars of funding for the restoration was included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2008.²²

2011 Memorial Restoration and Landscape Rehabilitation

The significant funding allowed a comprehensive restoration of both memorial and site, returning both to the historic integrity of the period of significance. The work consisted of a multifaceted approach for the repair and restoration the Memorial, the surrounding landscape, and the pedestrian circulation paths.

The first facet involved determining an appropriate cleaning method and devising a plan to remove the staining, soiling, and mineral deposits from the marble surfaces.²³ Repairs to the marble and extensive repointing of mortar joints were performed. Investigation of the built-in gutter and drainage system was conducted to determine and correct material failures that were allowing moisture infiltration.²⁴ Under-performing gutters were replaced with new stainless steel gutters properly sized to accommodate rainwater loads, lining the internal rainwater conductors, and installing new connections to an updated site drainage system. Two drainage grates from the historic drainage system were capped and left as remnants in the landscape northeast and southwest of the Memorial (see Figure 18).

The second facet involved the restoration of the original landscape character, re-establishing the 50-foot open lawn around the Memorial and north / south vistas. To accomplish this, non-contributing understory plantings

²¹ *Washington Post*, May 23, 1940

²² *Washington Post*, April 26, 2009

²³ Hord Coplan Macht / Conservation Solutions, "Project Specifications, Division 4," *Restore the DC War Memorial NAMA PMIS NO. 150359*, (March 3, 2011).

²⁴ Hord Coplan Macht / Vitetta, "Project Specifications, Divisions 2,4,5,7,8, and 9," *Restore the DC War Memorial NAMA PMIS NO. 150359*, (March 15, 2011).

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were removed, including holly trees, dogwoods and a variety of shrubs (see Figure 12). Unhealthy and hazardous trees were removed, allowing space for planting of new elm trees to replace lost memorial elms.

The third facet involved addressing the surrounding stone terrace and walkways, which required regular attention and were in a state of disrepair due to aging materials, deferred maintenance, and vehicular use to access the site. For the 2011 rehabilitation, the National Park Service sought a sustainable solution that would maintain historic integrity while accommodating contemporary use and improved accessibility. The bluestone terrace and the north / south axial walks were again replaced, with the layout and paving pattern based on the historic 1939 design. The 8 foot wide paths were increased to 10 feet to better accommodate maintenance and security vehicles. Improved bluestone material and construction methods were utilized to insure that the paving would be long lasting. To provide for the vehicular loads, a structural concrete base with epoxy coated rebar reinforcement and a latex modified mortar setting bed support 4 inch thick bluestone pavers.²⁵ This system creates the look of the historic design while allowing for maintenance vehicle access.

In order to complete the restoration, several of the original design elements had to be recreated. The bronze lid at the center of the stylobate was recreated based on historic documentation. Many of the memorial elms surrounding the Memorial had been lost or removed. New disease-resistant elms were planted as replacements, and will ultimately shade the walks and lawn.

Analysis of Integrity

The District of Columbia War Memorial retains a high degree of historic integrity. While some contextual changes have encroached, the historic core landscape and immediate surroundings maintain integrity of location. The essential physical features and spatial organization of the historic design are present. The Memorial was set on a north/south axis within a wooded landscape extending to the east and west. Today, the axis and adjacent woodland survives. Spatial arrangement of the mature and recently planted trees is informal and consistent with the original setting. The materials and workmanship of the Memorial structure have been restored to their original grandeur. The Memorial maintains a high degree of association as a memorial and a bandstand. The District of Columbia War Memorial produces feelings of inspiration and reflection, as intended by the original designers.²⁶

Many contributing features existing today were present during the period of significance. Resources which contribute to the historic integrity include the level topography, surrounding Ash Woods and the elm trees, north/south axial circulation and walk layout, spatial organization, north/south vistas, and the Memorial structure and inner ring of stone paving. Non-contributing resources include the outer ring of paving and the material of the axial walks. While not present during the period of significance, these non-contributing resources do not compromise the overall historic integrity. The present walk and terrace design preserve the essence of the original walks, while providing for contemporary use.²⁷

²⁵ Forrester Construction, "Paving Construction Details, Sheet L4," *Restore the DC War Memorial NAMA PMIS NO. 150359*, (Rockville, MD NPS Files, August 6, 2010).

²⁶ Waite, et. al., 143-44

²⁷ Emily Donaldson, "Cultural Landscape Inventory, DC War Memorial, National Mall and Memorial Parks – West Potomac Park." (US Department of the Interior: National Park Service, 2009), 92.

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Summary Statement of Significance

Constructed in 1931 using funds donated by citizens of the District of Columbia, the D.C. War Memorial honors the 26,000 District residents who served in World War I. Located on the National Mall in West Potomac Park, the temple-like, circular, open-air structure was designed by prominent local architects to serve both as a public memorial and as a bandstand where each concert paid tribute to the those who served. The Memorial possesses **national significance under Criterion C in the area of community planning and development** for the role it played in the early implementation of the nationally important Senate Park Commission Report of 1901, more commonly known as the McMillan Commission Plan (McMillan Plan). It also holds **local significance under Criterion C** for both its **architecture** (Criterion C), as an important example of Greek Revival-style, early-20th-century memorial architecture in Washington, D.C.; and in **social history** as the local manifestation of a nationwide memorialization trend (Criterion A); one that reflects the social and cultural values of the residents' of Washington, D.C. at the time it was conceived and constructed.

Period of Significance Justification

The Memorial site's period of significance extends from the date of construction in 1931 through early 1939, just prior to the implementation of a large-scale, Public Works administration (PWA)-funded landscape renovation that resulted in significant changes to the original landscape design that form the setting of the Memorial. Although, the Memorial continues to function as a public monument to D.C.'s World War I servicemen and women, the period of significance reflects the time period when the Memorial's original design intent and function were most fully reflected in the structure and setting. Alterations to the landscape implemented in the latter part of 1939 compromised the original design and altered the historic function of the site; thus they are excluded from the period of significance.

Criteria Considerations

Although the Memorial's primary function is commemorative, it possesses significance beyond its association with the historic event that it memorializes (World War I). As such, it **meets Criteria Consideration F**. Conceived, funded, and constructed by District residents in the 1920s and 1930s, the Memorial not only reflects the values and historical trends of that period, but is also importantly associated with significant design and planning trends at the national and local levels. The Memorial today reveals important information about the social and aesthetic trends of the period of time in which it was conceived and built.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Introduction to District of Columbia War Memorial

Construction of the D.C. War Memorial began on April 23, 1931 after a five-year long campaign by the residents of the District to raise funds for the erection of a memorial to honor the 26,000 brave soldiers from the District who fought and 499 who died in World War I.¹ Designed by architect Frederick H. Brooke and associate architects, Nathan C. Wyeth and Horace W. Peaslee in the form of a white marble, Doric temple set within wooded grove, the monument served also as a bandstand where commemorative ceremonies could take place. The dedication on November 11th, Armistice Day, 1931 was the first time the bandstand was put to use and included a

¹ "Memorial to Start," *Evening Star* (Washington, DC), April 16, 1931.

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performance by the Marine Band led by Washington native, John Philip Sousa.

The bandstand became an active site for outdoor concerts and commemorative events though the 1930s, but soon began to show signs of deterioration. By 1939, the memorial was in need of considerable repairs and a rehabilitation plan was developed for the memorial grounds. This work included improvements to the grounds, cleaning of the building, and several other modifications to the landscape. While the rehabilitation work in 1939 was necessary, several of the changes significantly altered the character of the site, particularly the increased presence of plantings and vegetation in the area surrounding the Memorial. The decades to follow saw declined use of the site and deferred maintenance, and by the 1990s the Memorial was in poor condition. Renewed interest in the site aided the appropriation of funds by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2008 to restore the Memorial and surrounding landscape. On November 11, 2011 the restored Memorial was unveiled, once again serving as an inspiring setting for commemorative events to honor veterans of war.

The District of Columbia and its part in the Great War

For most Americans, World War I was the first time in U. S. history that soldiers were sent abroad to fight in war. When the U.S. entered the conflict in April 1917, it had a standing army of about 127,500 soldiers.² Less than two years later, the American forces as a whole had grown to over 4.7 million. By the conclusion of the war, the U.S. calculated that its forces had suffered an estimated 320,000 casualties: 204,000 were wounded, and 116,000 were dead.³

Significance in Social History

The conclusion of the “War to End All Wars” on November 11, 1918, marked the end of one of the deadliest conflicts in human history at that time. With more than 35 million casualties worldwide, the nation and the world alike were left grieving those lost in battle and seeking ways to commemorate and honor the heroism of those who fought during the conflict.⁴ In the two decades after the war, thousands of memorials were erected in villages and towns across the globe. These monuments “provided focus for the rituals of mourning and remembrance that communities needed to rebuild their shattered lives. These sites were especially important where the graves themselves were missing or in a foreign land. Thus, memorials that made use of new monuments became the main form of public remembrance.”⁵

In the United States, significant numbers of monuments emerged right after the armistice, ranging from plaques to statues of “doughboys” (common soldiers) at city halls and town squares to massive commemorative centers. America’s fatalities were relatively light, but its memorials were grand and somber.⁶

The 26,000 D.C. residents who served fought in all branches of the military including the Army, Navy, Marine

² Library of Congress, “A closer Look at The Stars and Stripes,” *American Memory* www.memory.loc.gov/ammem/sgphtml/sashtml/aeef.html (accessed April 7, 2012).

³ Anne Leland, “American War and Military Operation Casualties: Lists and Statistics,” (DIANE publishing, February 26, 2010), Congressional Research Service RL32492.

⁴ Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), “WWI Casualty and Death Tables,” *The Great War*, http://www.pbs.org/greatwar/resources/casdeath_pop.html (accessed April 7, 2012).

⁵ Marshall Cavendish Corporation, *History of World War I: Vol. 3*. (New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2002), 796.

⁶ Chambers, John Whiteclay, editor. *The Oxford Companion to American Military History*, (Oxford University Press, 2000), 430

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Corps, and Coast Guard. The war had been over for less than a month when letters in support of erecting a local memorial to veterans and fallen soldiers began pouring into the United States Commission of Fine Arts (CFA),⁷ the organization created by Congress in 1910 to advise the president and federal government on the design and location of public monuments and parks in the District.

Early Proposals for a War Memorial

The early proposals for a war memorial for the District of Columbia varied greatly and ranged from planting groves of memorial trees, to simple inscribed tablets, to erecting multiple monuments throughout the city. The CFA chairman, Charles Moore, was in favor of two types of memorials; one being “tablets bearing the names for the permanent record of the men from the community who fought” and another “more elaborate memorial symbolizing the lessons of war.”⁸

Two prominent citizens, Janet and Frank Noyes, gathered public support for the memorial idea, and were instrumental in the submittal of the first design proposals to the CFA in October of 1919. Frederick H. Brooke, the designer, was an architect based in Washington D.C. and veteran of the war himself.⁹ The design was “a circular, open-air Corinthian temple surrounded by a stepped base. The structure had a domed roof and was located in a formal park-like setting.”¹⁰ His design, after several revisions, was later selected as the design for the D.C. War Memorial.

Significance in Architecture

The Memorial is an open-air circular Doric structure skillfully crafted out of Vermont Danby marble. It not only represents the high level of craftsmanship found during the period of construction, but also an outstanding example of Greek Revival memorial architecture in early 20th-century Washington D.C.. Greek Revival architecture sought a classically ideal architecture through form and proportion. The Memorial’s nearly hemispheric dome is in direct proportion to the diameter of the structure. The Memorial fully carries through the design elements related to the Doric order. The columns are fluted and baseless sitting directly on the stylobate (floor level) of the raised platform, they support an entablature and the domed roof structure.

While the design of the Memorial looked to the past for inspiration on form and proportion, it looked to modern technologies in order to carry them out. The dome is constructed with inner and outer Guastavino tile domes, both clad in marble. Guastavino tile is a self-supporting terra cotta tile arch system designed by Rafael Guastavino in 1885. The inter-locking tile system allowed for more economical and structurally resilient dome construction than typical methods of the time. This structural engineering innovation was skillfully executed to create the dome ceiling and roof structure of the Memorial. This included incorporating access into the space between the domes via a counterweighted marble hatch in the ceiling that is undetectable from the ground.

Designers of the Memorial

Frederick H. Brooke, with associate architects Horace W. Peaslee and Nathan C. Wyeth, designed the D.C. War

⁷ “Ask for Suggestion for War’s Memorial,” *Evening Star* (Washington, DC), December 26, 1918.

⁸ John G. Waite Associates, Architects PLLC, “District of Columbia War Memorial, Historic Structure Report & Cultural Landscape Report”. (National Mall & Memorial Parks, PMIS NO 43699, 2006), 6.

⁹ Waite et. al., 7.

¹⁰ Waite et. al., 6.

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Memorial. The architects were all veterans of the war and their architectural styles exemplify the teaching of the Ecole de Beaux Arts in Paris, especially the interest in classical Greek and Roman orders, which is particularly evident in the design of the D.C. War Memorial.

Frederick H. Brooke, FAIA (1877 – 1960) was a native of Birdsboro, PA and graduate of Yale University in 1899. After graduation, he traveled abroad for two years, and in 1901 returned to America to study architecture at the University of Pennsylvania. He continued his studies at the L'Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris until 1906 before returning to Washington D.C. to begin his architectural practice. During his forty years as an architect in the District, he was an active member in the American Institute of Architects (AIA), and designed schools and churches throughout the United States. Locally, he served as the architect for the British Embassy and also designed alterations for Dumbarton Oaks, and the Embassies of Iran and New Zealand, as well as the chanceries of the Swedish, Netherlands, and New Zealand.¹¹

Nathan C. Wyeth, FAIA (1870-1963) was born in Chicago. His formal training began at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's school in New York City and continued at the Ecole de Beaux Arts in Paris where he graduated in 1899. After working for Carrere & Hastings and the Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department for a short time, he became the chief designer for the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) from 1904-1905. Following his time there, he went into private practice for the next 12 years. During this tenure at the AOC, he worked on designs for the remodeling of the White House's west executive offices, the Battleship Maine monument in Arlington Cemetery, and the Kutz Bridge. In World War I, he served as a Major, designing hospitals for the Office of the Surgeon General. Later in life he served as the Municipal Architect for the District of Columbia, working on large commissions such as the Municipal Center and the National Guard Armory.¹² His portfolio of work testifies "to his life-long devotion to the severely simple classic Grecian line."¹³

Horace W. Peaslee, FAIA (1884 – 1959) was born in Malden Bridge, New York. Educated at Cooper Union, Chatham, New York High School, and Cornell University, where he graduated in 1910 with a degree in architecture, he remained on their staff as a fellow in 1911. He began his career in Washington, D.C. in 1911, when he opened an office where he worked until the war. During the war he organized animal transports and instructed at the Engineering school as a Captain of Engineers. He also designed officers' quarters and some of the temporary buildings erected in D.C. for the War Department. He resumed work after the war, and was appointed assistant to the Director of Housing in the Public Works Administration in 1933. In addition to his architectural career, he was actively involved on a wide variety of boards and commissions throughout the District. While his list of accomplishments is long, some of his most recognized work includes Meridian Hill Park, the design of Marine Corps War Memorial Entourage, and the restoration of several important Washington houses, including Dumbarton House, the headquarters of the National Society of Colonial Dames, and the Maples.¹⁴

¹¹ "F.H. Brooke, 84, Dies; Renowned Architect." *The Washington Post*, 25 Dec. 1960

¹² American Institute of Architects (AIA), "Nathan C. Wyeth (firms) Questionnaire for Architects' Roster and/or Register of Architects Qualified for Federal Public Works, Washington, DC, 1946," *AIA Archives-American Architects Directory*, http://communities.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/AIA%20scans/Rosters/WyethNathaC_roster.pdf (accessed April 7, 2012).

¹³ Harry Gabbett. "Nathan C Wyeth, Architect for D.C., Is Dead Here at 93." *Washington Post* (Washington, DC). 31 Aug. 1963: B3.

¹⁴ American Institute of Architects (AIA), "Horace W. Peaslee, Proposal For Fellowship, Washington, DC, February 1, 1935," *AIA Archives-American Architects Directory*, <http://communities.aia.org/sites/hdoaa>

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Designers of the Landscape

Major General Benjamin Franklin Cheatham, a retired quartermaster general of the U.S. Army, had been appointed chairman of a special subcommittee of the National Capital Chapter of the Garden Club of America that was charged with the creation of the memorial grove surrounding the memorial.¹⁵ Upon the committee's urging, landscape architect, James L. Greenleaf was retained to prepare a plan. Greenleaf was a landscape architect familiar with historic settings surrounding the D.C. War Memorial. After studying at the School of Mines at Columbia College, he practiced and taught civil engineering for fifteen years before beginning a career in landscape design. His first commission was at the request of James B. Duke to create parkland from the flat acreage surrounding his Somerville, New Jersey estate. This was followed by many other successful commissions such as the Vanderbilt Estate in Hyde Park, NY; Green Garden estate at Killenworth on Long Island, and Planting Fields in Oyster Bay, NY. He served on the CFA for nine years where he had a significant influence on many historic sites in Washington, D.C., including the Lincoln Memorial.¹⁶ Greenleaf's plan for the D.C. War Memorial suggested, "an open vista North and South, but one formed by trees not too strictly in line or necessarily of the same species."¹⁷

Rousing Political Support

Because the memorial was a local monument and not a federal project, funding would have to be provided entirely through public subscription and the Memorial would almost certainly have to occupy government-owned property.¹⁸ Although grass roots efforts to erect a memorial were underway, a formal committee needed to be formed to organize supporters, raise funds for the project, and carry it through to completion. To accomplish this, a resolution to appoint a commission for the purpose of erecting a memorial was introduced to the House of Representatives in April 8, 1920, but it was not until June 7, 1924, that the District of Columbia War Memorial Commission legislation was passed, to formally establish the Commission.¹⁹ The Public Resolution No. 28 of the 68th Congress stipulated that the memorial was to be "of artistic design suitable for military music and shall take the place of the present wooden bandstand in Potomac Park."²⁰

District of Columbia War Memorial Commission

Frank B. Noyes, an ardent supporter of the construction of a memorial and president of the Associated Press and *Evening Star*, was elected chairman of the Commission. The other members of the Commission were Joseph E. Berberich, Charles A. Baker, Edward F. Colladay, John Joy Edson, Mrs. William Corcoran Eustis, Robert N. Harper, Isaac Gans, Col. E. Lester Jones, Arthur D. Marks, James F. Oyster, Roland S. Robbins, Edgar D. Shaw, Hubert Suter, W.B. Westlake, Gen. Anton Stephan, J.R.-McDonald, and Gist Blair, and Edward B. McLean. They led the design approval and fund-raising campaigns for the D.C. War Memorial until its completion seven years

¹⁵ Minutes of the Meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts, April 15 and 16, 1931. Commission of Fine Arts, Washington, D.C.

¹⁶ The Cultural Landscape Foundation, "James L. Greenleaf," *Biography*, <http://tclf.org/content/james-greenleaf> (accessed April 19, 2012).

¹⁷ IBID.

¹⁸ Waite et.al., 6.

¹⁹ Waite et. al., 6.

²⁰ Joint Resolution providing for the appointment of a commission for the purpose of erecting in Potomac Park in the District of Columbia who served in the Great War. Public Resolution No. 28, 68th Cong, June 1924. RG 79, Records of the National Park Service, National Capital Region Subject Files, 1924-1931, Box 35, File 1430/D.C. Memorial, May 27, 1927 to August 31, 1939, NA-CP.

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later.²¹

Design Approval Process

Noyes presented Brooke’s preliminary study to the District of Columbia Memorial Commission at their first meeting on December 12, 1924 where it was suggested by Noyes “that Brooke submit further studies.”²² In March of 1925, Brooke submitted a second set of sketches in association with Nathan C. Wyeth and Horace W. Peaslee. These sketches were submitted to the CFA who made objections to the details, recommending that Brooke submit a revised design which he did after consulting with New York architect and CFA member, William Adams Delano.²³ The revised design carried a similar tempietto form, replacing the Corinthian columns with baseless columns in the Doric style, modifying the proportions slightly, and introducing several new details. These details included railings at the bandstand level, an inscribed frieze, the inscription of the names of the dead on the ceiling, a basement beneath the bandstand platform, and grilles set into the base of the domed roof. This design was approved by the CFA on May 21, 1925.²⁴ In February of 1926, the public caught their first glimpse of the approved design when a one-half-inch “plaster model of the proposed memorial was placed on display at the Woodward and Lothrop department store on Eleventh and F Streets NW in downtown Washington.”²⁵

Significance in City Planning: The McMillan Plan, The National Mall, and the D.C. War Memorial Site Selection

A point of origin for the D.C. War Memorial is found in 1897, when Congress authorized the designation of over 700 acres of marshland, flats and tidal reservoir, 31 of which would be filled and established as solid ground generally following the natural contours of the silting along the river’s edge. As land creation reshaped the area’s landscape, planning efforts moved forward. In 1901, the McMillan Commission, comprising some of the most prominent American architects and landscape architects of the time, submitted a series of recommendations to Congress for the city’s monuments and parks. The plans honored the design principles that guided Pierre L’Enfant’s layout for the city in the 18th century, including his concept of east / west and north / south axes. The McMillan Plan represents the defining moment for the development of the National Mall and vicinity.²⁶ Today the Plan is recognized as one of the most important and fully realized examples of early-20th –century “City Beautiful” town planning. Its influence is seen nationwide and in cities around the world.

In 1910, President William H. Taft established the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA), created by Congress in a Public Law, to act in an advisory capacity on new construction in the central area of Washington and adjoining federal properties, in accordance with the City Beautiful precepts laid down in the McMillan Plan.²⁷ Reviews of the proposed locations for the D.C. War Memorial by the CFA, and ultimately the final approval, were based on its conformance to the McMillan Plan.

The process of selecting the Memorial’s site reflects a pattern of minor alterations and adjustments that were

²¹ Waite et. al., 7.

²² Waite et. al., 8.

²³ Waite et. al., 8.

²⁴ Commission of Fine Arts, May 21, 1925:4

²⁵ “D.C. War Memorial Campaign Pushed,” *Evening Star* (Washington, DC), February 27, 1926.

²⁶ Heritage Landscapes, “District of Columbia War Memorial – Historic Landscape Character, Evolution & Treatment,” (August 18, 2009).

²⁷ National Park Service, “Cultural Landscape Inventory National Mall, National Mall and Memorial Parks”, (2006), 48

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made to the McMillan Plan as city planners and officials slowly implemented it over the first four decades of the 20th century. In 1920, as final designs and plans were completed for construction of the Lincoln Memorial and its associated Reflecting Pool, the CFA demonstrated flexibility in interpreting and implementing the McMillan Plan. In response to practical considerations, the commission approved the elimination of the north-south cross-arms that initially were proposed for the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool.²⁸

The D.C. War Memorial was the third minor memorial erected in Potomac Park following the approval of the 1901 MacMillan Commission Plan.²⁹ The first two were sculptures, the Commodore John Paul Jones Statue and the John Ericsson Memorial, authorized respectively in 1906 and 1916 and completed in 1912 and 1926. The location of the Jones sculpture was selected by a joint federal committee appointed to oversee construction of the memorial.³⁰ After the establishment of the CFA in 1910, the commission reviewed and advised on all development proposals within Potomac Park and other federal areas. CFA was consulted on the Ericsson Memorial location which was eventually established on a site south of the Lincoln Memorial that appeared as a traffic circle on the 1901 McMillan Plan.³¹

Unlike at the Ericsson Memorial, where the overarching Plan already identified the site as a focal point, the CFA departed from the established Plan when approving the site for the D.C. War Memorial. This departure reflects both the flexibility inherent in the original Plan, and the desire of the CFA and others to manipulate it to fit current needs and aesthetic desires.

When the design of the Memorial structure was approved in 1925, it was understood that the site location was subject to further study. Several locations were proposed. In early 1928, the CFA granted approval for a general location in a grove of willows on flat marshy land about midway between the cross axis of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool and the Tidal Basin. Despite the approval, there was continued discussion among the members of the CFA over the location in West Potomac Park. After examining the McMillan Plan, the CFA recognized that the plan indicated a feature on the north and south side of the Reflecting Pool at the approximate location proposed for the memorial.

²⁸ Kohler, Sue, *The Commission of Fine Arts – a Brief History, 1910-1990* (Commission of Fine Arts, 1991?), 13-15.

²⁹ Based on information included in the 1998 "East and West Potomac Park Historic District National Register Nomination" (Registered in 2001). The Lincoln Memorial was the primary monument sited in West Potomac Park and was part of the original 1901 McMillan Plan. The first memorial statues sited in West Potomac Park were the Commodore John Paul Jones Statue (dedicated 1912) and the John Ericsson Monument (dedicated 1926). Both are sculptures. The D.C. War Memorial was the first functional memorial installed in West Potomac Park.

³⁰ "East and West Potomac Park Historic District National Register Nomination," Section 7, p. 27; Michael Richman, "Study of Public Sculpture in Washington, DC," Volume 2 [binders on file at NPS, National Capital Region office, 1100 Ohio Drive, SW, Washington, DC], n.p., n.d. The joint federal committee was made up of the Secretary of War and the chairmen of the Committee on the Library in the Senate and the House. This joint committee approved the present location in 1909; however, the site was reassessed after the formation of the CFA in 1910. Despite CFA objection to the location because it may impede the "axial development" of the city south of the Mall (see Richman report), the committee reaffirmed the present site at the end of 1910.

³¹ Commission of Fine Arts, *The National Commission of Fine Arts – Tenth Report, July 1, 1921 – December 31, 1925* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1926), 85. *The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia* (a.k.a. *Senate Park Commission Report*), I. Report of the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia, II. Report of the Park Commission. Edited by Charles Moore, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1902 (see figure no. 20); Michael Richman, "Study of Public Sculpture in Washington, DC," Volume 2.

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In the summer of 1928, a full size silhouette was erected in West Potomac Park to examine the relationship between the structure and its future landscape.³² Although the site selected was not exactly on the axis shown on the McMillan Plan, the CFA superseded the stipulations of the Plan and agreed that it was the wooded character of the site better met the design intent for the Memorial. It was decided that if another memorial were erected in the future “on the north side of the Reflecting Pool, it could be made to balance with the bandstand, with little change to the 1901 Plan.”³³

The landscape plan, created by Greenleaf, was endorsed by the CFA on September 24, 1931, and later approved by the District of Columbia World War Memorial Commission.³⁴ The landscape plan featured a 70-foot approach at the axis of 19th Street on the south side of the Reflecting Pool with the vista to be “50 feet wide, flanked by sidewalks, shaded by trees with a grass panel between.”³⁵ The intent of the plan was to introduce new hardwood plantings at the perimeter of the Memorial by replacing some of the existing trees and leaving:

some of the great willows as a background in the distance, and to plant some large tulip trees some distance away...between this outer fringe of the grove and elms around the memorial will be planted other hardwoods, such as oaks, beech, and elms. They will be irregularly placed so as to avoid the semblance of formal design. Rather the effect will be to create a new forest setting for the classic beauty of the marble temple.³⁶

Fundraising Campaigns

While the official fundraising campaign launch was more than a month away, an endorsement was published in the *Evening Star* on February 27, 1926, in an effort to bolster support and convey the vision for the site:

Every effort has been made to attain in the plans of the memorial a combination of beauty and dignity, which shall at once be appropriate, useful, and unique. It is believed that the temple will adequately meet these requirements. In its lovely natural setting, white and graceful, with the exquisite simplicity of old Greece, it will stand through the years as the expression of the city’s pride in the men who fought in [sic] its behalf. From the grove where it will stand vistas will stretch to the Lincoln Memorial, the Reflecting Basin, and the Arlington shore of Virginia. And used for military concerts, as planned, each concert will be a memorial service for the deeds of the living whom we honor and the dead whose memories we cherish. The building of this memorial is, we believe, a cause in which every Washingtonian will wish to play a part.³⁷

Initial estimates put the project cost at \$200,000. Despite the challenge, the Commission blazed ahead, gaining support even before the official launch. On March 12, 1926, President Calvin Coolidge, himself, contributed to the

³² Frederick H. Brooke to U.S. Grant III, May 4, 1928, RG 70, Records of the National Park Service, National Capital Region Subject Files, 1924-1931, Box 35, File 1430/D.C. Memorial, May 27, 1927 to August 31, 1939, NA-CP.

³³ Waite et. al., 10.

³⁴ Minutes of the Meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts, September 24, 25, and 26, 1931. Commission of Fine Arts, Washington, D.C.

³⁵ IBID

³⁶ “Memorial Grove Will Be Planted at Doric Temple,” *Evening Star*, October 23, 1931.

³⁷ “D.C. War Memorial Campaign Pushed,” *Evening Star*, February 27, 1926.

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fund stating that it was an “exceedingly worthy proposal.”³⁸ He also authorized solicitation of funds for the project from government departments ensuring unmitigated participation in the drive.

On the first day of the official launch, April 11, 1926, the *Evening Star* printed an official statement, echoing the general sentiment surrounding the projects, encouraging “every Washingtonian to contribute to this memorial; to those for whom someone near and dear served and to those not so favored. Your contribution...should not be a burden, but a personal tribute to the one, out of all of the 26,000 names to be enshrined, who means the most to you.”³⁹

Volunteers seeking support for the cause blanketed the city collecting donations door-to-door; many of them were Gold-Star Mothers-those who had lost a son or daughter to the war. Gathering momentum and quickly garnering support, the campaign raised nearly \$45,000 in the first week. Lists of contributors to the effort were regularly published in the *Evening Star* along with notes of thanks to anonymous donors. To promote the campaign, local movie theaters played a short film about the planned memorial and fundraising scheme, along with footage of the District soldiers in action. District banks and police stations soon became ad hoc locations for subscription deposits. Governmental agencies, local women’s organizations, and other clubs pooled their resources, collectively raising contributions for the effort. Despite the initial success, the contributions diminished as the weeks passed and when the first year-long effort came to a close, they had raised less than \$60,000.⁴⁰ A full-page reproof was published in the *Evening Star* on May 1, 1927, reproaching the residents of the District for failing to meet the mark. The article shamed the city, citing “Of all the leading cities in the United States, Washington alone has failed to erect a suitable memorial to those who served. We were not slackers in war. Shall we be slackers in peace?”⁴¹

Although \$140,000 below their goal, the Commission soon organized a second campaign to take place the first week in May of 1927. With a focused approach, the efforts of the past year were concentrated into a harrowing week-long campaign. The city was again blanketed with volunteers, the short film was played on the movie house screens, radio stations broadcasted advertisements, benefit concerts were held, donation-collection booths were set up in government offices, and religious leaders encouraged their congregations to give to the cause. Nearing the end of the week, the campaign committee reported that returns were disappointing, totaling only \$43,231, but that they were unwilling to admit defeat as they had yet to hear from all potential donors. When the campaign came to a close on May 9th, pledges from this drive totaled \$77,256.31, just over half of the amount expected.

While the returns were disappointing, a silver lining lay in the cloud that overshadowed the effort. The cost estimate for the construction of the memorial was revised and the total reduced \$45,000 to make the cost of construction \$155,000, leaving the fundraising just \$19,000 short of the funds needed to begin construction.⁴² The Committee unanimously agreed to continue their efforts until the remainder of the money was raised. A “Dollar Day” initiative and continued pleas for support brought the funds to \$149,138 on May 29, 1927. Over the

³⁸ “President Gives to the Memorial Fund,” *Evening Star* (Washington, DC), April 12, 1926.
³⁹ “D.C. War Memorial Drive Opens Today,” *Sunday Star* (Washington, DC), April 11, 1926.
⁴⁰ Waite et. al., 12.
⁴¹ *Sunday Star* (Washington, DC), May 1, 1927.
⁴² “Memorial to Rise Despite Deficit,” *Evening Star*, May 9, 1927.

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next three years the pledges were collected and by 1930, \$135,000 of the total had been assembled. The final funds proved to be difficult to collect, due to changes in the economic climate, particularly the stock-market crash in October of 1929. It took additional time, but through the support of unions and other organizations who threw fundraising events, the remaining funds had been raised by 1931.⁴³

Thus this beautiful monument, symbolizing Washington's reverent memory of its men and women who gave their lives in the war, will stand as the product of an organized community effort that is unique. The contributions to the memorial have been confined to no class or sect...⁴⁴

Preparation for Construction

In early February 1931, trees were identified for removal from the future memorial site by the Commission of Fine Arts. Later that month, members of the CFA, with Irving W. Payne, landscape architect of the Office of Public Parks, inspected the site to verify that removing the selected trees would provide an appropriate setting for the Memorial while accommodating for the expected crowds. Architectural details of the memorial's design were finalized in the winter of 1931 and the specification completed on March 4, 1931.⁴⁵ The project was put out to bid. Of the six bids submitted by local contractors, the lowest was selected by the Commission. On April 11, 1931 the project was awarded to the James Baird Co., the contractor for the recently constructed Internal Revenue Service Building, for a contract amount of \$137,135.00. Ground was broken on April 23, 1931.⁴⁶

Construction

The marshy land of the construction site provided an opportunity for a feat of engineering innovation. When test borings were conducted in March of 1928, they found only 4 feet of earth above the waterline followed by sand, clay, and river mud, requiring the foundation pile to be driven 53 feet to the bedrock below. As the *Evening Star* reported on May 5, 1931:

Pile driving has been completed, a total of about 50 'combination' piles having been driven into the watery subsoil. These are believed to be the first of the 'combination' piles used on a public building in Washington. They consist part of wood, and part of cement, the wood being at the bottom and the concrete on top. Workmen are now laying the forms for pouring the concrete foundation, on top of the piles.⁴⁷

While the concrete foundations were being poured into place, the marble for the Memorial's construction was being quarried in Danby, Vermont. The first shipment of marble arrived June 27, 1931.⁴⁸ Also that summer, a list of the 26,048 residents of the District who served in the war was typed on special 100 percent cotton fiber paper, typically used for currency, supplied by the division of the Bureau of Standards. This list, along with a copy of that day's *Evening Star* and coins and currency of the latest dates were placed in a specially prepared copper box measuring 12 by 18 inches. Before the box was sealed, the air within was exhausted and replaced with nitrogen to prevent decay. On July 20, 1931, the box was placed within a carved niche in the cornerstone by Maj. Gen.

⁴³ Waite et. al., 15.

⁴⁴ *Evening Star*, November 11, 1930

⁴⁵ Waite et. al., 17.

⁴⁶ Waite et. al., 17.

⁴⁷ *Evening Star* (Washington, DC), May 5 1931.

⁴⁸ Waite et. al., 18.

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Anton Stephan and architect, Frederick H. Brooke and sealed.⁴⁹

Construction of the Memorial progressed and by August 3, 1931, the marble base was complete and the columns were standing, ready to receive the dome. The two part Guastavino tile inner and outer domes were constructed over the next two months, waterproofed, clad in marble, and on September 29, 1931 the keystone was laid in place. Over the next two weeks, the scaffolding was removed and the twelve-pointed-star-pattern laid on the bandstand platform. A week later, the grounds were being graded, new sod installed, and the flagstone walk installation underway. The circular walkways around the Memorial were paved with flagstone, purchased from the government as salvage, from the nearby repaving of Constitution Avenue, and the parallel walks north and south laid with gravel. By the time of the dedication, the construction was nearly complete, with the inscriptions underway, but not yet finished.⁵⁰

The site work continued after the dedication and although the site had been cleared to receive the Memorial before construction began, the memorial elms had not yet been planted. In October of 1931, the first elm – a gift of Janet T. Noyes – was planted in the memorial grove.⁵¹ The planting of three more elms, dedicated by the American Legion, were planned in 1951 as part of the May Day ceremony.⁵² It was not until April of 1956, that the next memorial elm was planted. Each of the trees was marked with a marker post.⁵³

Dedication Ceremony

The dedication of the Memorial took place on Armistice Day of 1931, and included a performance by the Marine Band led by Washington native, John Philip Sousa (see Figure 6). Lieut. Col. U.S. Grant III introduced Frank B. Noyes, the chairman of the District of Columbia War Memorial Commission, who presented the Memorial to President Hoover. The President then delivered a short speech in which he declared:

This monument stands for men who fought not alone for their country, but to establish the principles of justice and peace. We pay tribute here to their valor. We honor them for their sacrifice. We respect their memory by renewing our obligation to the purposes and ideals for which they fought.⁵⁴

The speech was followed by Mrs. George Gordon Siebold, national president of the American Gold Star Mothers, placing a wreath at the Memorial. Taps was played by a bugler, and the benediction was given by the Rev. Arthur L. Smith. The ceremony concluded with the band playing the “Star Spangled Banner.”⁵⁵ The Memorial was further honored with the Washington Board of Trade Committee on Municipal Arts award for architecture in 1931-1932.⁵⁶

The Memorial at its Zenith

For decades, the Memorial continued to serve as a place of remembrance to honor the fallen and as a popular

⁴⁹ “Memorial Corner Stone Sealed,” *Evening Star* (Washington, DC), July 20, 1931.

⁵⁰ Waite et. al., 18.

⁵¹ Waite et. al., 21.

⁵² Donaldson, 71.

⁵³ Donaldson, 71.

⁵⁴ “War Memorial Dedicated,” *Evening Star* (Washington, DC), November 11, 1931.

⁵⁵ Waite et. al., 23.

⁵⁶ Waite et. al., 23.

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venue for commemorative events and outdoor concerts (see Figure 13). A series of band programs were held at the Memorial, often featuring the Marine Band, who performed during annual American Legion commemorative observances.

In the years following the dedication, the authority maintaining and caring for the Memorial transferred several times. Maintenance duties were first placed under the jurisdiction of the Parks Division of the Office of Public Building and Public Parks of the National Capital on February 6, 1932. Then on June 10, 1932, the care of the Memorial was transferred to the Buildings Division, while the site remained with the Parks Division. The following June 10, 1933, under an executive order by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks and other federal parks were consolidated into the National Park Service (NPS). Care of the Memorial transferred to the NPS at this time. Then again, in June of 1939 care of the Memorial transferred to the new superintendent of the National Capital Park division of NPS.⁵⁷ This transfer was followed with much needed improvements made to the site in 1939 to correct a significant amount of deterioration that had occurred during the previous eight years.

The Decline of the Memorial

Little documentation of the Memorial exists during the time of the Second World War, as its use and recognition declined. The summer schedule of concerts that were so popular throughout the 1930s came to an end in 1941 after a busy season that included weekly programs by the Navy, Army, and Marine Bands. Despite the conclusion of musical performances, the annual May Day ceremonies continued to take place at the Memorial and were well attended through the 1940s. At this time, arrangements for the memorial observances were placed under the purview of the newly created District of Columbia World War Memorial and May Day Corporation. The decade brought with it the loss of two of the Memorial's most ardent supporters, Janet T. Noyes and Frank Noyes, who died in November of 1942 and 1948 respectively.⁵⁸

The declining use of the site during the 1940s continued rapidly through the 1950s and 1960s, with only two noteworthy performances recorded. One took place in 1958 when an executive committeeman of the American Legion spoke, paying tribute to the District residents who died in the World War I, World War II, and Korea. The other took place in 1965 when the District of Columbia War Memorial and May Day Corporation held its 25th annual commemorative observance.⁵⁹

In 1965, the care of the Memorial was placed under the jurisdiction of the National Capital Parks-Central, a newly established unit of the National Park Service responsible for the administration of all NPS sites located within the memorial core of D.C.⁶⁰ In a report compiled by William R. Failor, the superintendent of National Capital Parks-Central, in July of 1968, he notes "serious structural deficiencies," drainage problems and recommends repair.⁶¹ With only general maintenance performed over these years, the condition of the monument worsened. Additional inspections were performed, and in 1971, D. Robinson prepared drawings of elevation and the cornice for repairs to the drainage system, walks and lighting. Unfortunately, the work was never carried out. Several reports made

⁵⁷ Waite et. al., 25.

⁵⁸ Donaldson, 70.

⁵⁹ Donaldson, 71.

⁶⁰ Donaldson, 23.

⁶¹ Failor, William, R. "Memorandum: Existing Deficiencies at the D.C. War Memorial." National Capital Parks Center, Washington, DC, August 21, 1968.

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during the late 1970s and 1980s cite further water infiltration and provide recommend repairs for damage caused from water leaking through the dome, causing areas of black and orangish staining to the marble, deterioration, flaking and spalling of stone. The recommended work was not completed and by late 1990s, the surrounding walks were also in a deteriorated state and in need of extensive repairs. In 2002, remedial repairs, cleaning and repointing efforts were completed.⁶²

The Renewed Interest and Renewal of the Memorial

In 2004 documentation for the Historic American Building Survey (HABS) was completed (DC-857), compiling the first comprehensive history of the site and documenting its condition with measured drawings. This work was followed by the preparation of a Historic Structures Report/Cultural Landscape Report in 2005 by John G. Waite Associates Architects, PLLC and a Cultural Landscape Inventory, prepared by the National Park Service, in 2009. Together these documents provide an extremely detailed account of the history and condition of the structure and the site. Both reports confirmed the need for extensive repairs and rehabilitation of the site and structure.

In 2008 funding was authorized through the American Recovery in Reinvestment Act of 2008 to restore the Memorial and grounds. The act allotted \$7.3 million in funding for an extensive multifaceted project to restore and rehabilitate the Memorial and grounds.⁶² The National Park Service National Mall & Memorial Parks directed the design and review process of plans prepared by Hord Coplan Macht, landscape architects, and their team of preservation architects, conservators and engineers. The National Park Service received approval of the restoration plans from the CFA on September 17, 2009 and from the National Capital Planning Commission on September 24, 2009.

Forrester Construction was awarded a contract for the stone cleaning and repair, new bluestone paving and landscape rehabilitation. Work began in October of 2010. The fully restored District of Columbia War Memorial reopened on Armistice Day, November 11, 2011, seven decades after its original dedication and 93 years from the official date marking the end of the World War I. (see Photos 9 & 10).

⁶² *Washington Post*, April 26, 2009

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Located on Ohio Drive, SW, the National Capital Regional Office houses the original drawings of most of the monuments and memorials that are under the purveyance of National Capital Parks - Central. They are currently in the process of accessioning and scanning these drawings.

National Mall and Memorial Parks

Located on Ohio Drive, SW, the National Mall and Memorial Parks office has clippings files that have copies of several revised drawings from 1925-1931.

National Archives @ College Park, Maryland

The records of the Commission of Fine Arts include several drawings of the District of Columbia War Memorial that include proposed landscaping features.

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- Figure 16** **HABS Section and Roof Plan, 2005**
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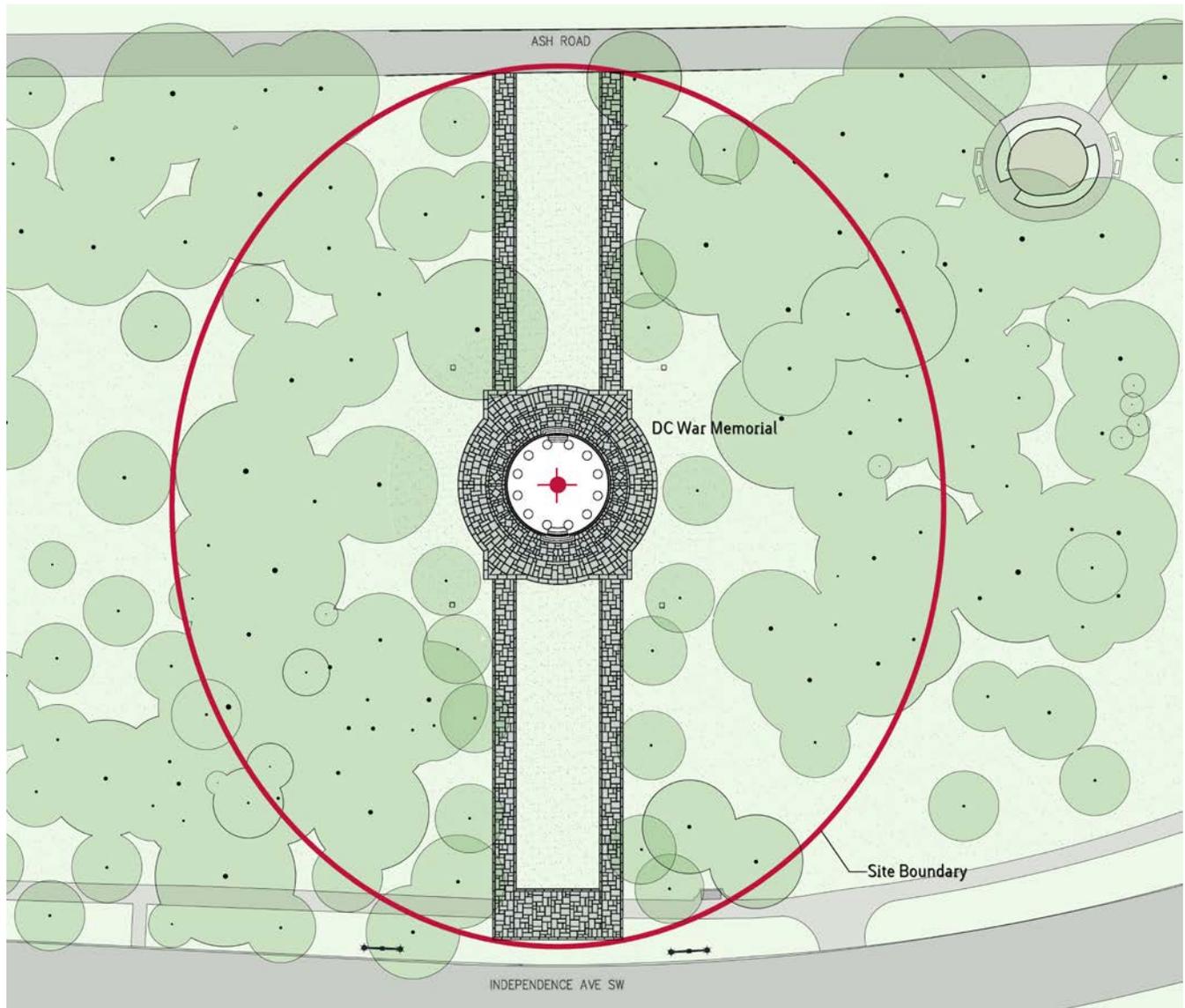
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Figure 1
Site Boundary Diagram

The District of Columbia War Memorial site boundary diagram (North/South 370'+/-, East/West 330' approx.).
UTM: Zone 18S, Easting 322763.04, Northing 4306292.18)



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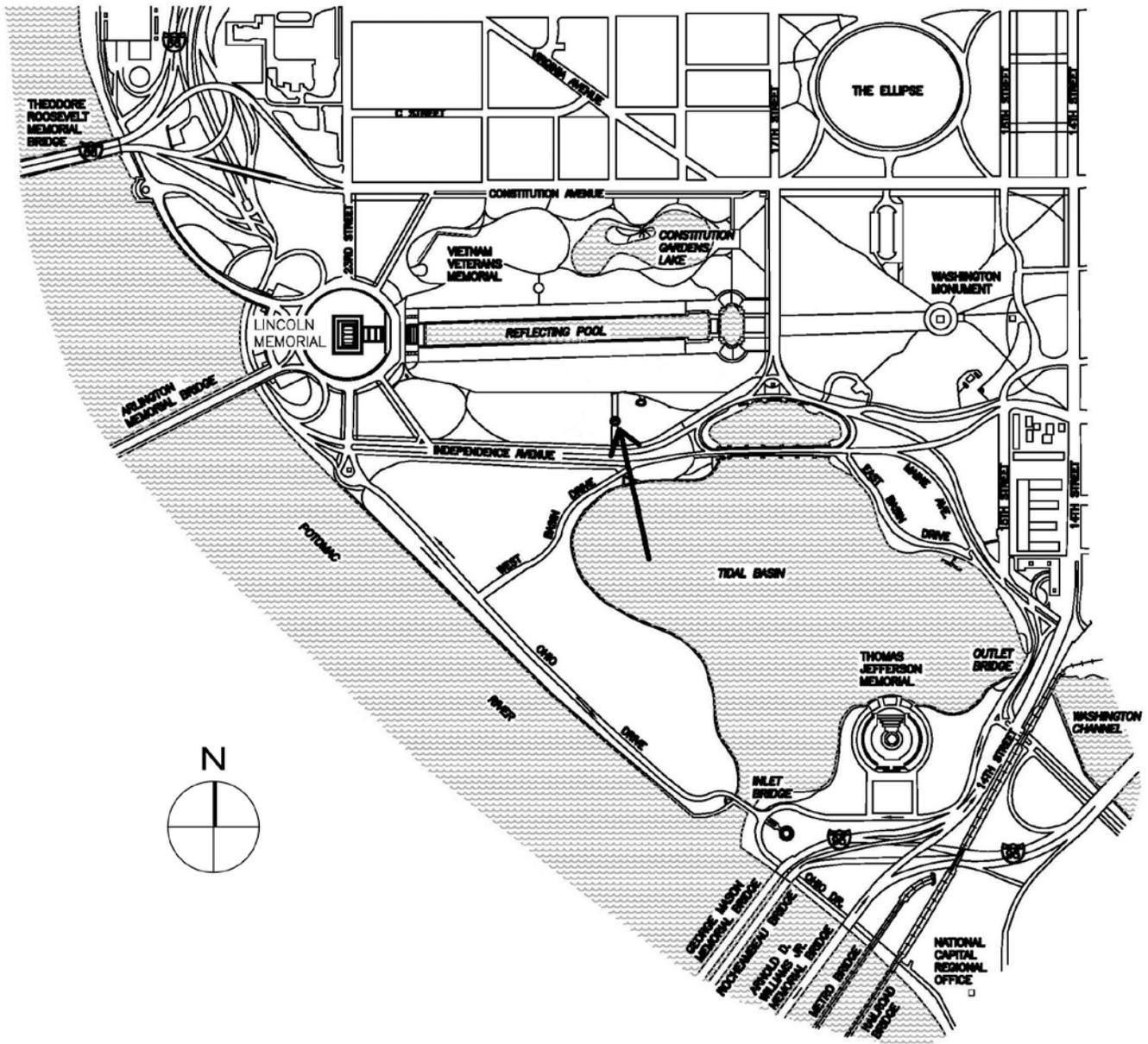
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Figure 2
Location Map

Overview map of the location of the District of Columbia War Memorial (marked by arrow) within the context of the National Mall.



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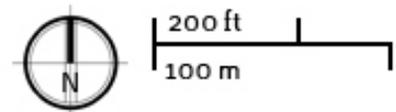
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Figure 3

Geographic Map (source: Google Earth 2012).

UTM: Zone 18S, Easting 322763.04, Northing 4306292.18 (NAD: Latitude 38.887635°, Longitude -77043490°)



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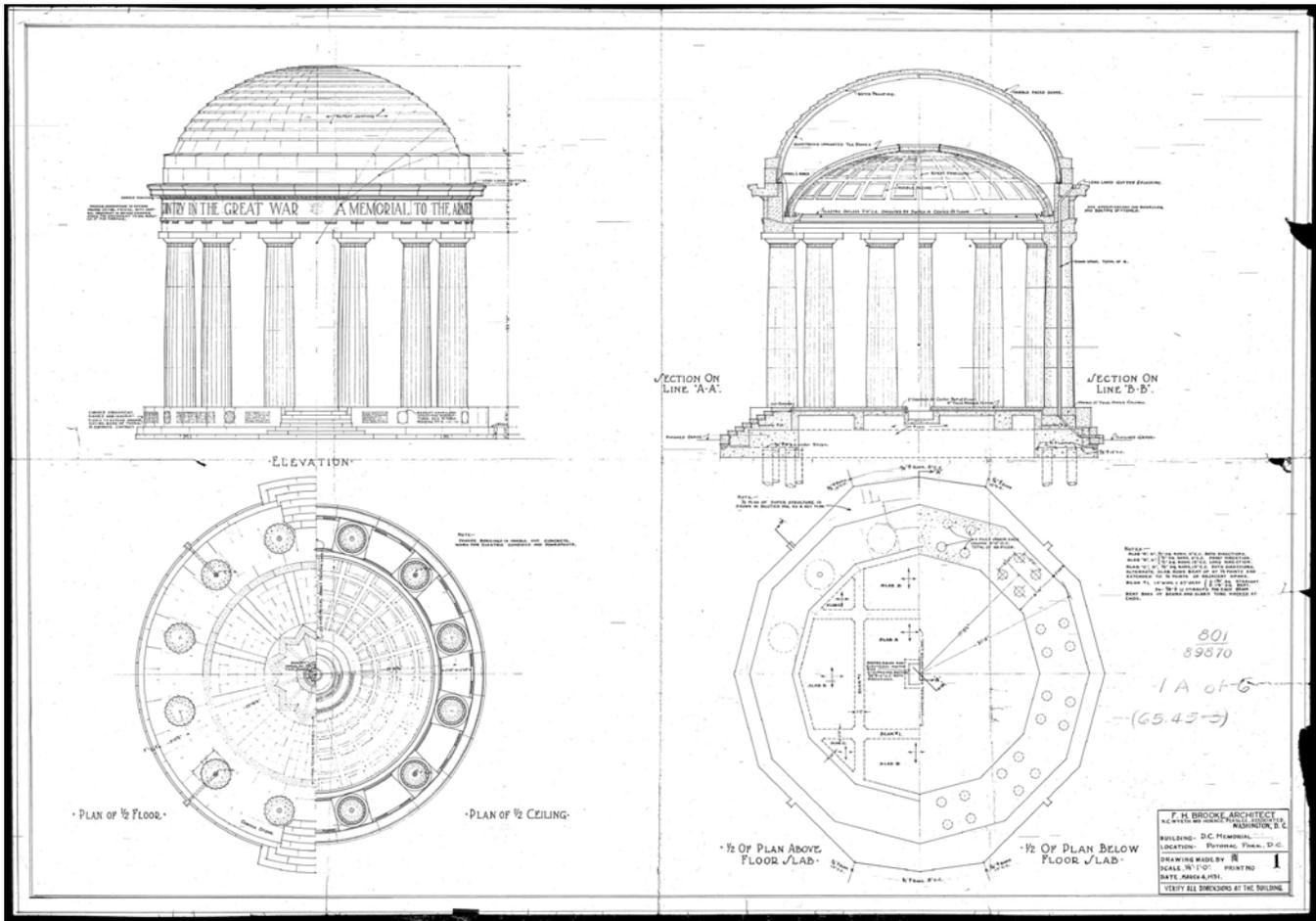
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Figure 4

Architectural Drawing

The preliminary design of the District of Columbia War Memorial as submitted by the architect F.H. Brooke to the Fine Arts Commission (1919).



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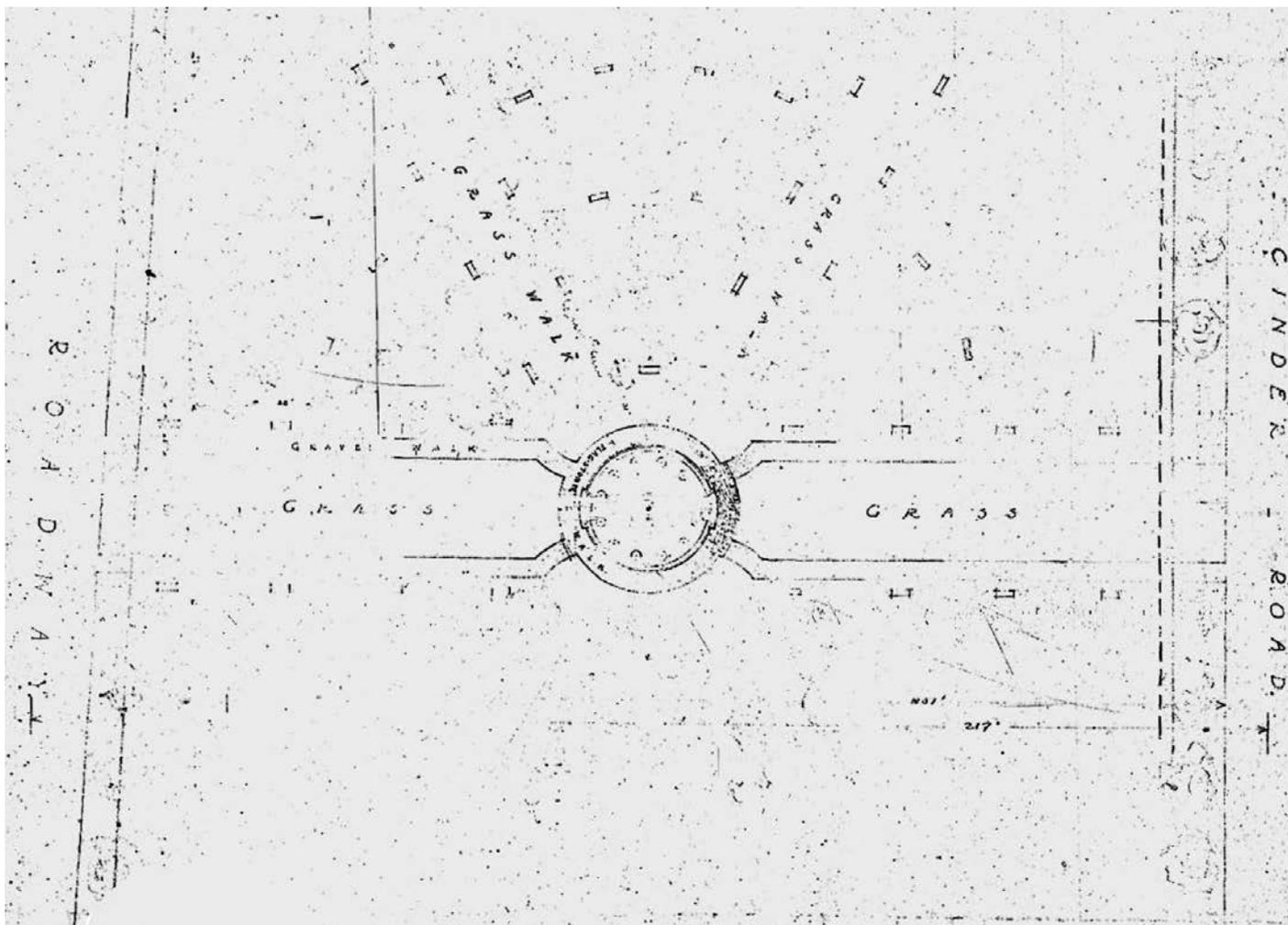
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Figure 5

Landscape Plan by Major General Benjamin Franklin Cheatham, as drawn by architect F.H. Brooke (April 1931).
(Current Independence Avenue on the left, and "Cinder Road" on the right, later called Ash Road.)



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Figure 6
Photograph, Dedication (1931)



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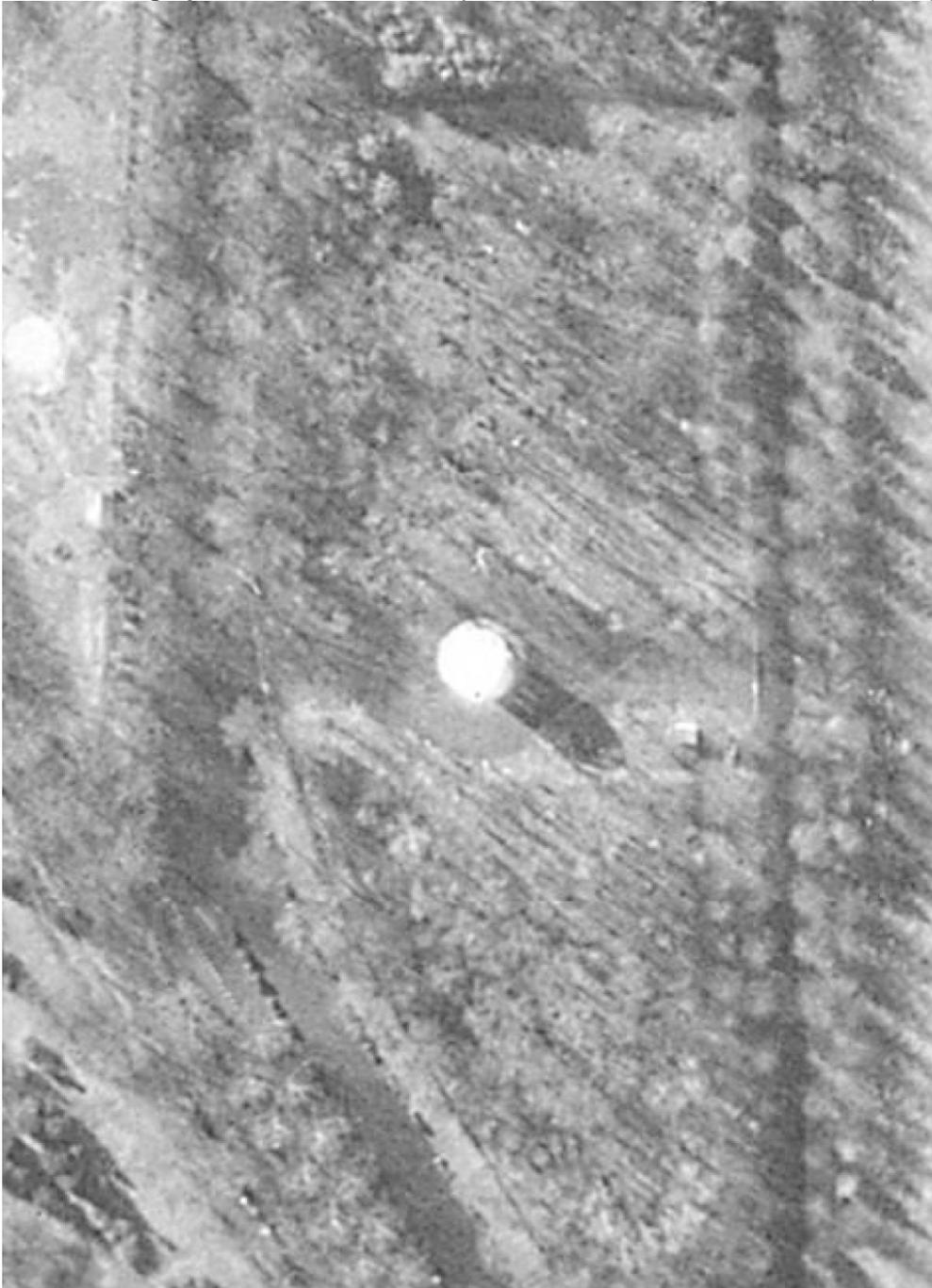
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Figure 7

Aerial Photograph Note the distinctive open lawn area around the Memorial. (1932)



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**Figure 8
Aerial Photograph**

Aerial view looking east toward the Washington Monument and the Capitol building. The District of Columbia War Memorial is highlighted with the arrow, just south of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool. (1938).



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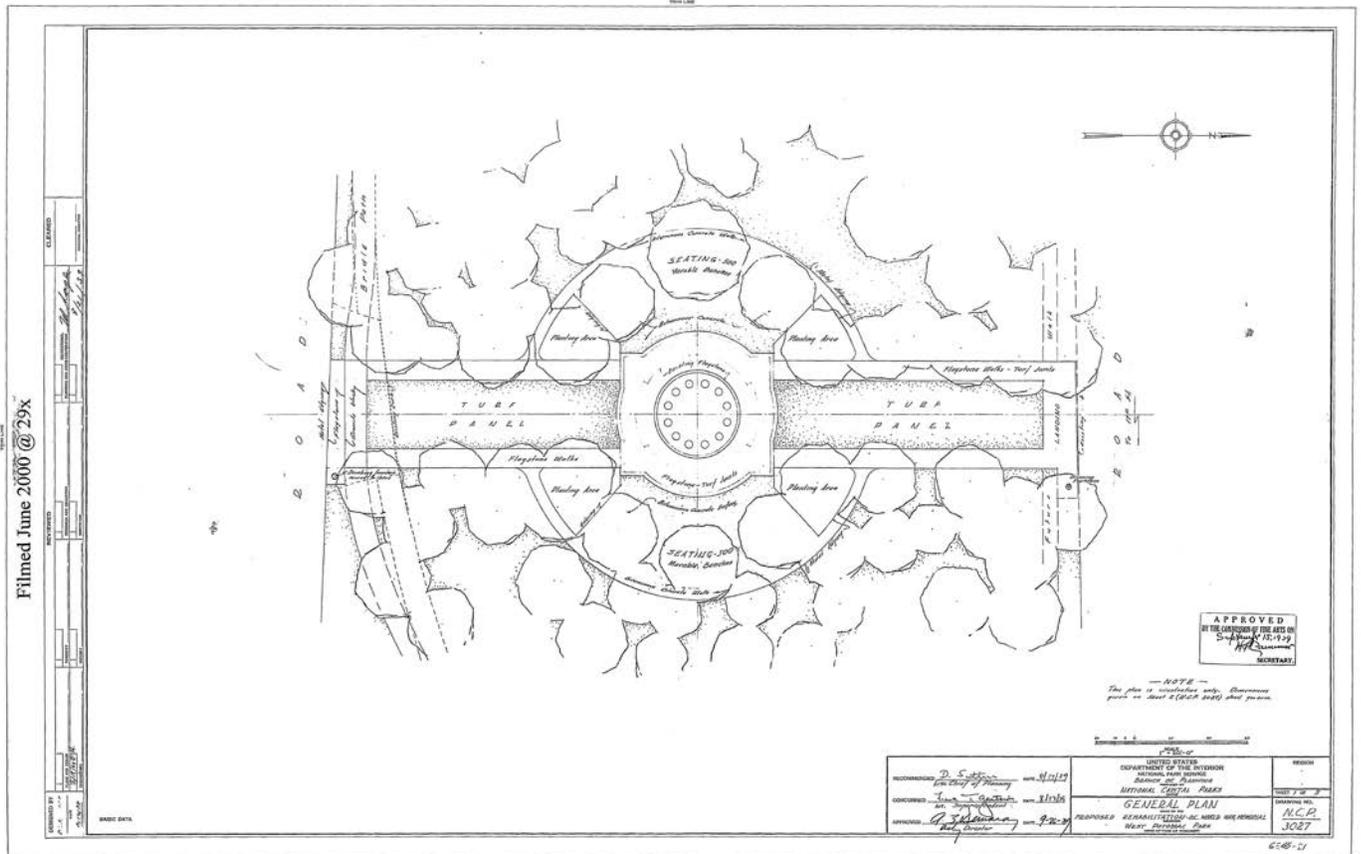
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Figure 9
Site Plan

The 1939 rehabilitation plan prepared by the National Park Service. The plan calls for the re-seeding of the grass panels, thinning of vegetation within the surrounding grove, rebuilding the original inner ring of bluestone paving, adding an outer ring of bluestone to the plaza, paving the gravel walks with bluestone and planting 800 white dogwoods.



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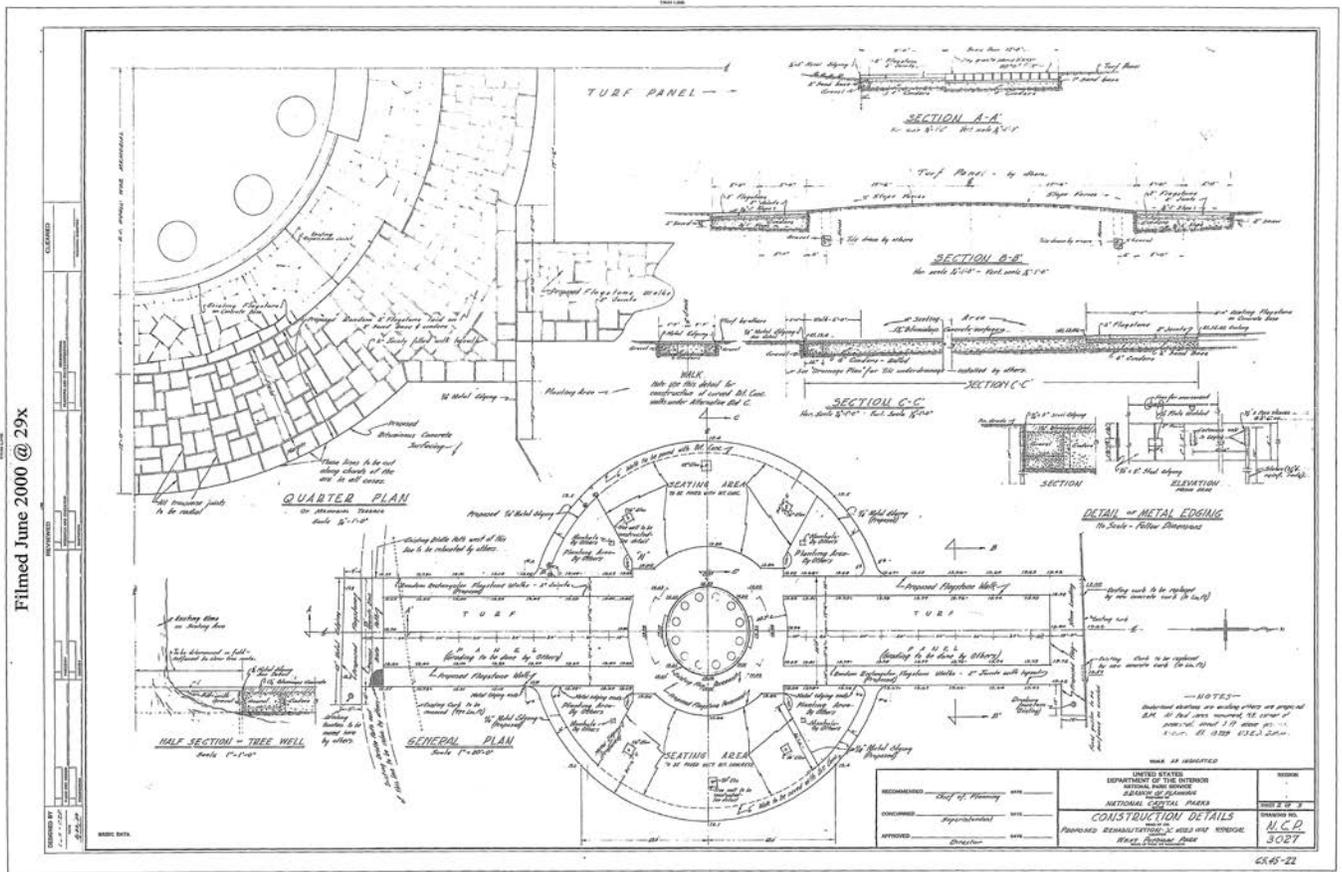
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Figure 10
Site Plan Details

The 1939 rehabilitation plan showing details of the new bluestone walks and the planned, but never implemented, addition of bituminous concrete walks around the perimeter of the lawn seating areas.



Filmed June 2000 @ 29x

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Figure 11

Photograph The District of Columbia War Memorial during a night time concert in 1939.



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Figure 12
Photograph

A ground level view looking north from Independence Avenue. Note the impact of mass plantings of understory trees. (1946)



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**Figure 13
Photograph**

An undated ground level view of the District of Columbia War Memorial taken during a ceremony, Note the bluestone walks which were added in 1939. (undated photo)



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Figure 14
Aerial Photograph

A view looking west of the National Mall. The top of the District of Columbia War Memorial dome is marked with an arrow, visible just south of the reflecting pool (2007).



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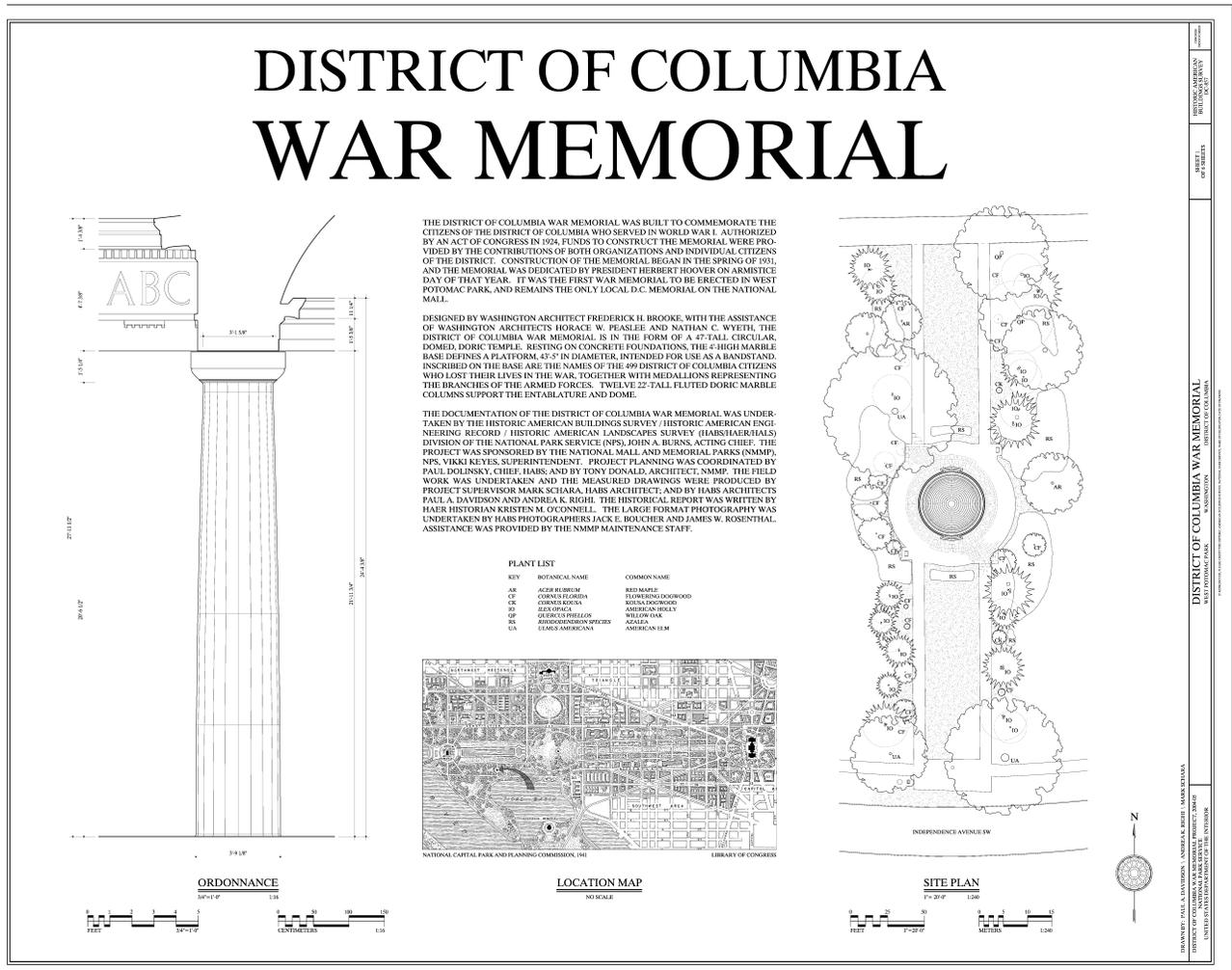
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Figure 15

HABS Cover Sheet

Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) drawing set, completed in 2005.



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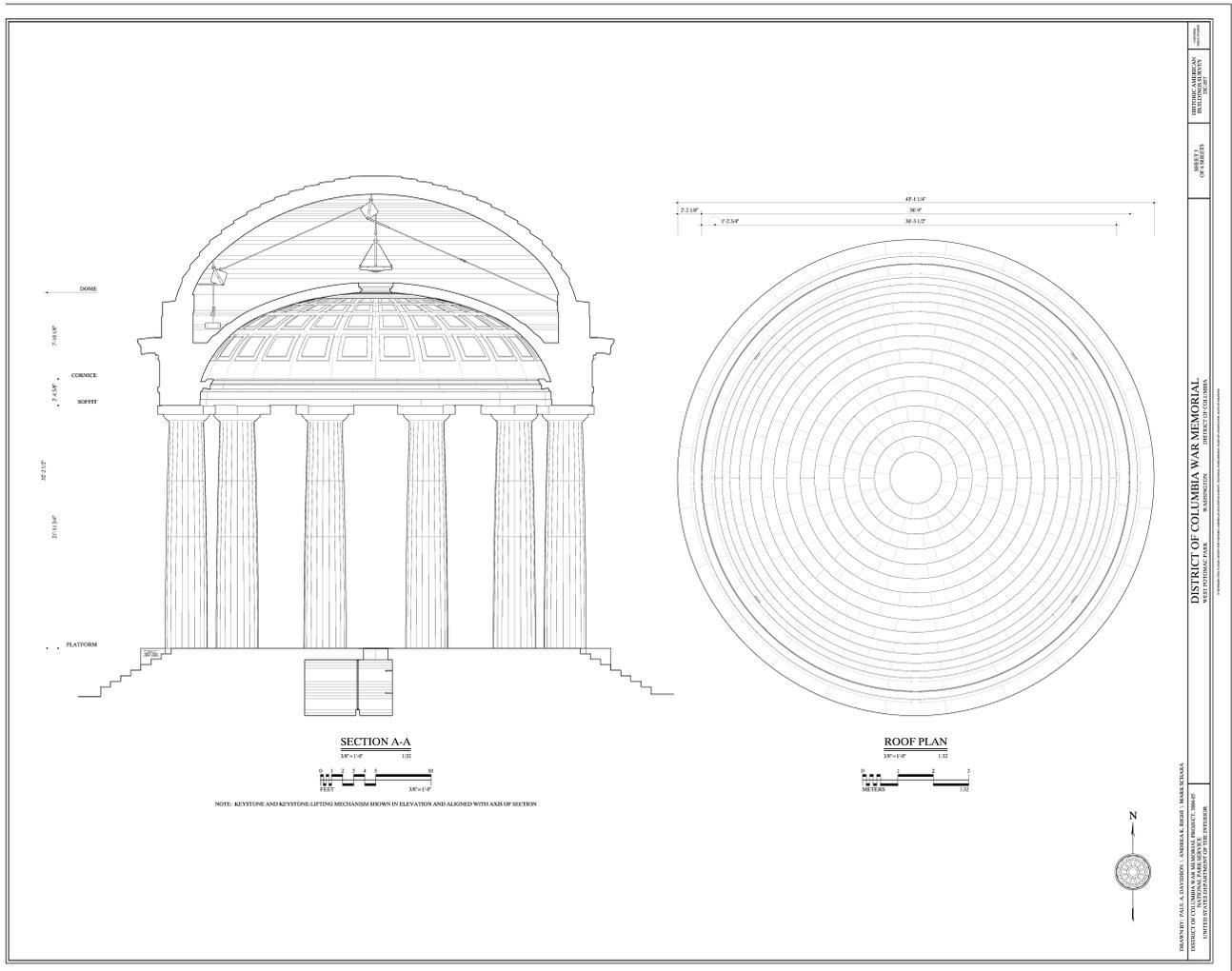
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Figure 16

HABS Building Section And Roof Plan

Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) drawing set, completed in 2005.



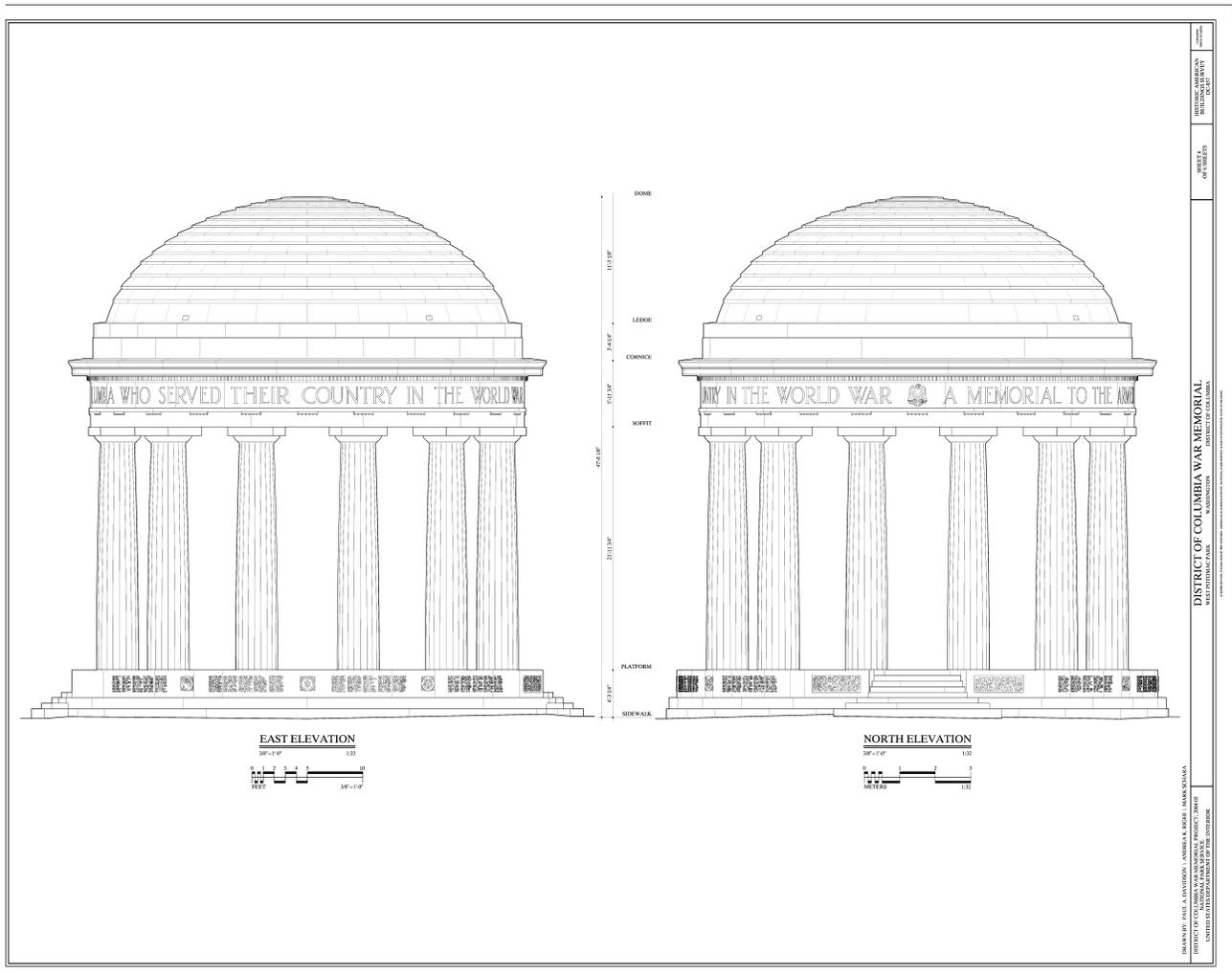
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Figure 17
HABS Building Elevations
Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) drawing set, completed in 2005.



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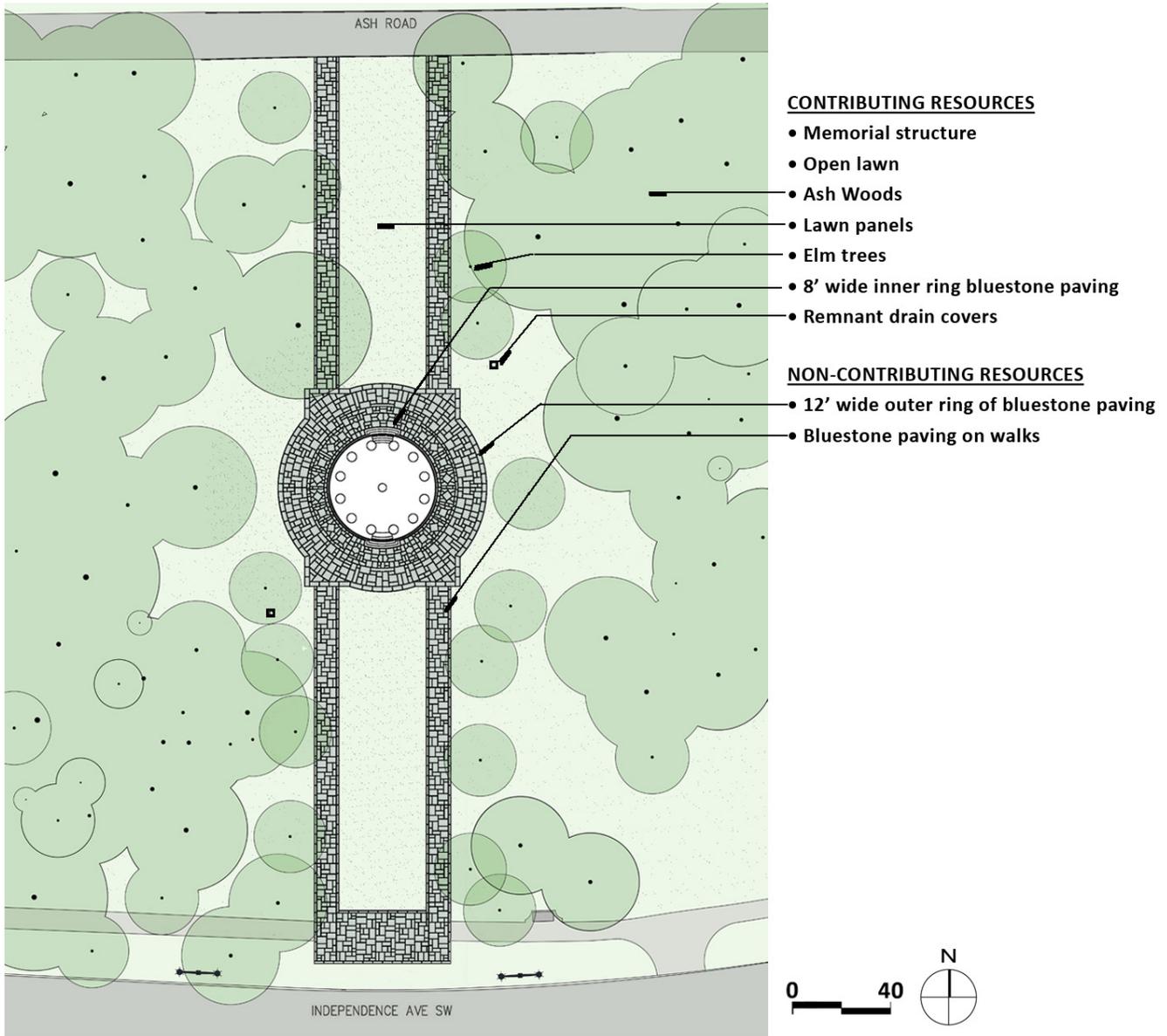
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Figure 18
Sketch Plan

Current conditions as well as contributing and non-contributing resources are noted (2011).



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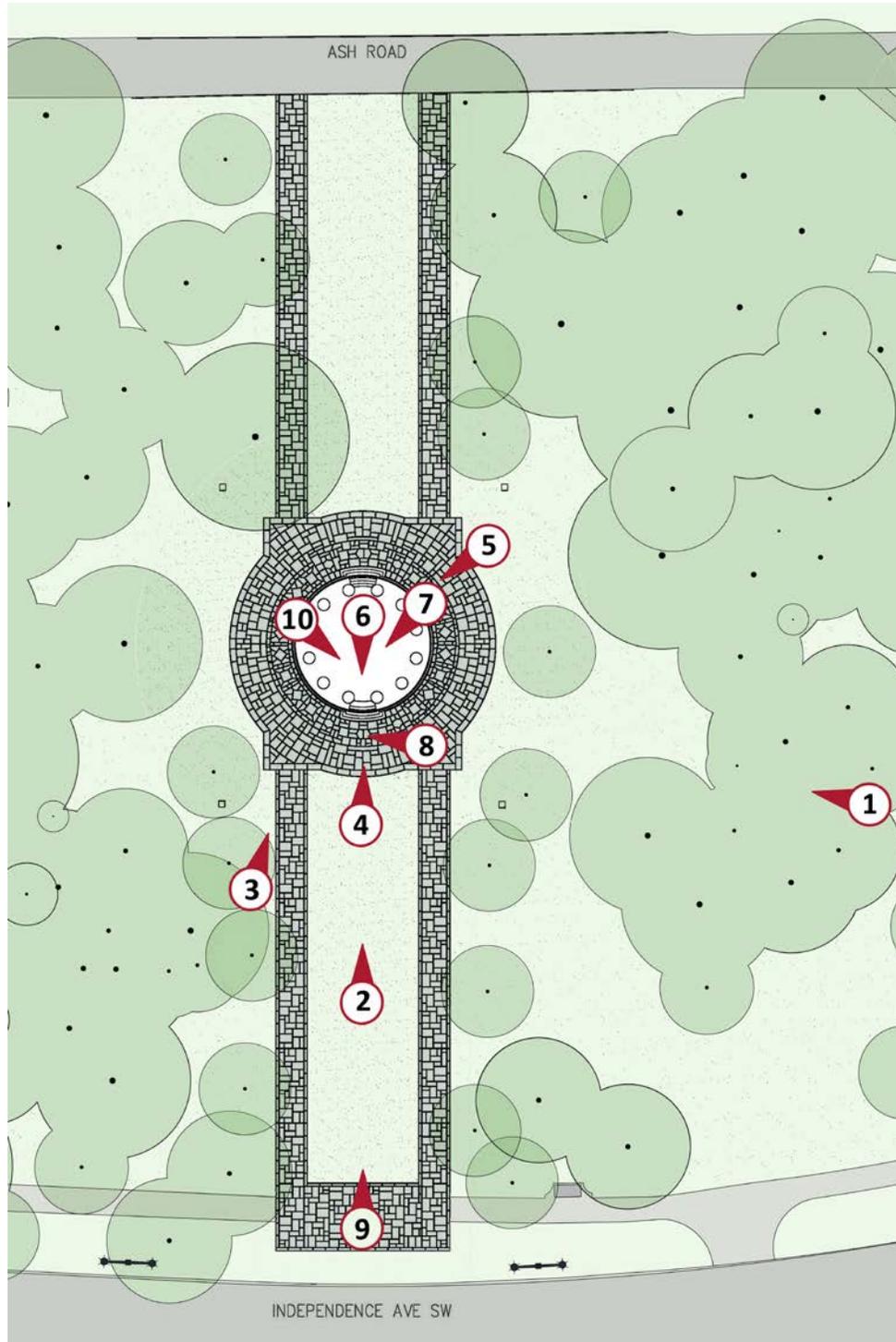
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Figure 19
Photograph Location Plan



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PHOTOGRAPH LOG

- Photo 1** **East elevation of the DC War Memorial, taken from Ash Woods**
 Photographer: Julie Higgins
 Date: 11/10/2011
- Photo 2** **South Elevation of the DC War Memorial, taken from the south lawn panel**
 Photographer: Alain Jaramillo
 Date: 6/15/2012
- Photo 3** **South Elevation of the DC War Memorial, including the bluestone paving.**
 Photographer: Alain Jaramillo
 Date: 6/15/2012
- Photo 4** **South Elevation of the DC War Memorial, taken from the south lawn panel**
 Photographer: Alain Jaramillo
 Date: 6/15/2012
- Photo 5** **Northeast quadrant of the Memorial base, showing details of the inscription panels**
 Photographer: Alain Jaramillo
 Date: 6/15/2012
- Photo 6** **The interior dome of the Memorial, looking south**
 Photographer: Alain Jaramillo
 Date: 6/15/2012
- Photo 7** **The Memorial's interior floor and bronze hatch, looking southwest**
 Photographer: Alain Jaramillo
 Date: 6/15/2012
- Photo 8** **View of the historic pattern of bluestone paving at the base of the Memorial, looking northwest**
 Photographer: Alain Jaramillo
 Date: 6/15/2012
- Photo 9** **South Elevation of the DC War Memorial, taken from the south lawn panel**
 Photographer: Alain Jaramillo
 Date: 11/10/2011
- Photo 10** **The interior of the Memorial, looking southeast**
 Photographer: Alain Jaramillo
 Date: 11/10/2011



Photo 1
Julie Higgins, November 10, 2011

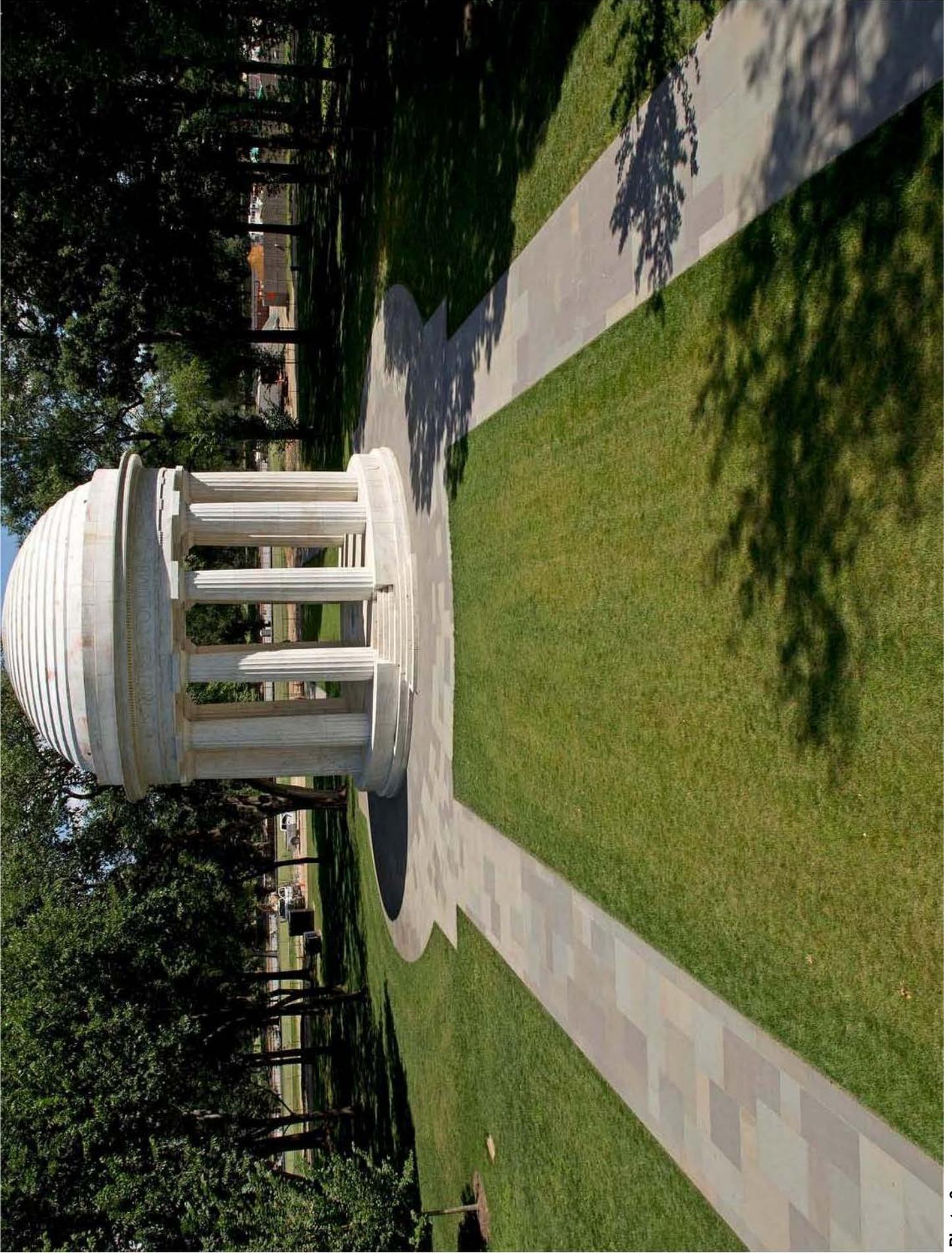


Photo 2
Alain Jaramillo, June 15, 2012



Photo 3
Alain Jaramillo, June 15, 2012



Photo 4
Alain Jaramillo, June 15, 2012



Photo 6
Alain Jaramillo, June 15, 2012



Photo 7
Alain Jaramillo, June 15, 2012



Photo 8
Alain Jaramillo, June 15, 2012

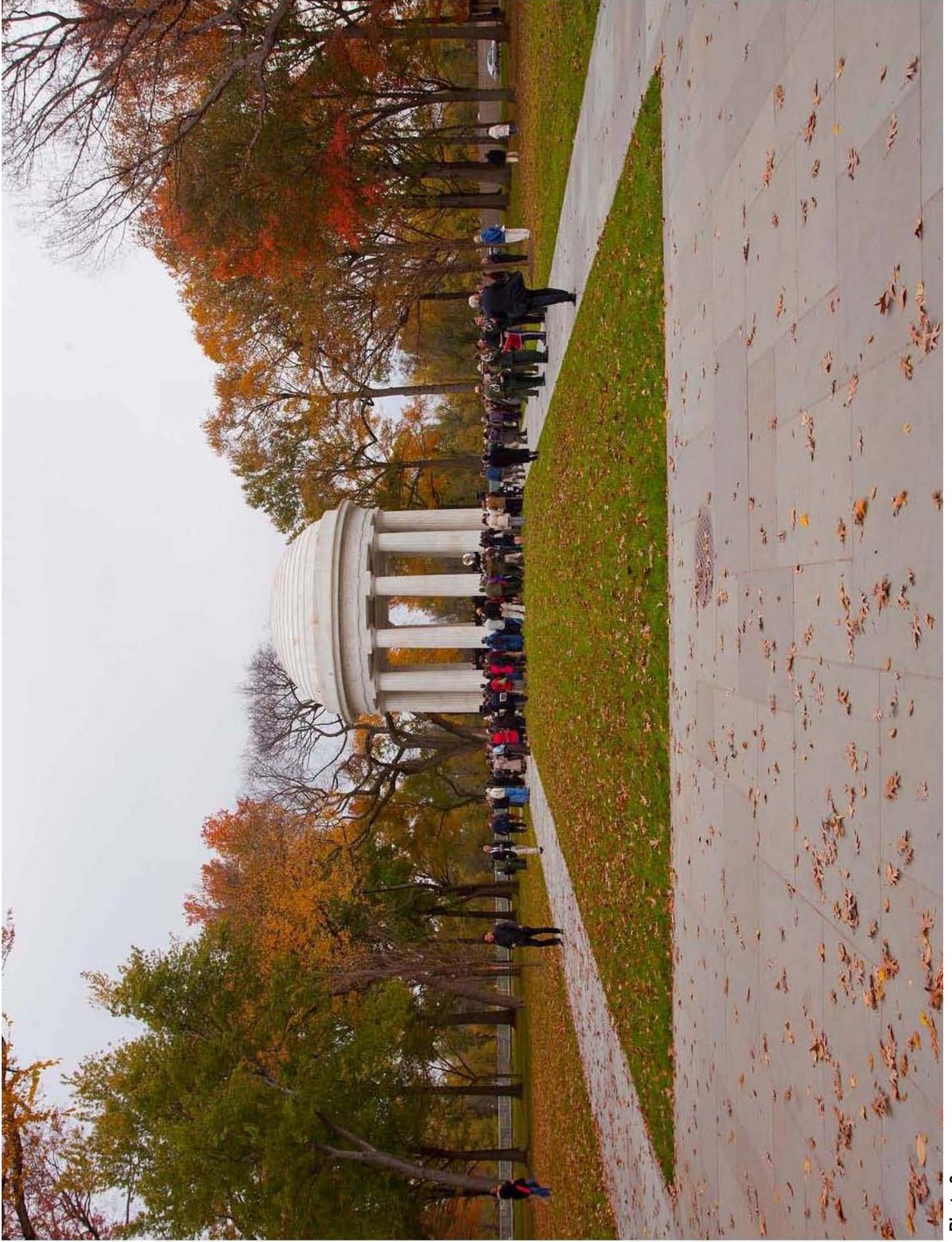


Photo 9
Alain Jaramillo, November 10, 2011



Photo 10
Alain Jaramillo, November 10, 2011

