
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Landmark/District:	Pennsylvania Avenue NHS/Municipal Center	<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	300 Indiana Avenue, NW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	May 24, 2018	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction
H.P.A. Number:	18-375	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
		<input type="checkbox"/> Conceptual Design

The Washington Metropolitan Police Memorial & Museum Inc., in cooperation with the DC Department of General Services, propose to make improvements to the historic DC Police Memorial. The memorial is located within the boundaries of the Pennsylvania National Historic Site, immediately northwest of the Municipal Center Building (aka Henry J. Daly Building). The memorial, building and site are all listed in the National Register of Historic Places and the DC Inventory of Historic Sites.

Pennsylvania Avenue NHS / Municipal Center

The Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site (NHS) is one of the most notable historic districts in the city. In addition to its namesake, it features a wide variety of historic property types including the Municipal Center Building and the DC Police Memorial – both of which contribute to the significance of the historic district. The Municipal Center was also recently designated a DC Landmark.

The Municipal Center was designed by noted Municipal Architect Nathan Wyeth and constructed between 1938 and 1941 using Public Works Administration funds. The term “Municipal Center” originally referred to a complex of buildings that was planned to house municipal functions around Judiciary Square but the term was eventually applied to the building itself since most of the other buildings were never constructed. Along with the Wilson Building, it represents some of DC’s finest municipal architecture. The National Register nomination refers to it as the “most perfect example of ‘Greco-Deco’ public buildings in the city.”

The DC Police Memorial was designed by the John J. Earley Studio and constructed in 1941. The memorial consists of a raised platform with benches arranged around an octagonal fountain constructed out of J.J. Earley’s decorative, polychromatic, exposed-aggregate concrete. Other notable examples of his work exist in Meridian Hill Park and the National Zoo.

Proposed Improvements

The existing DC Police Memorial is not in good condition. Several cracks and patched areas are apparent, a considerable amount of decorative aggregate has eroded away, and the fountain is reported to leak to such an extent that it is only activated during ceremonial events. The memorial is also considered lacking in terms of its commemorative features, especially when compared to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial two blocks to the north. To remedy these deficiencies, the project proposes to restore J.J. Earley’s decorative concrete and to introduce a new, curvilinear wall that will display the carved names of the DC Police Officers who lost their lives in the call of duty.

Careful repair and restoration will be critically important given the historic significance of the memorial. Although a full scope of work has yet to be submitted for review, the project sponsors have indicated their commitment to carry out a full restoration and discussions to-date suggest that the proposed restoration work will be implemented in an appropriate manner, and in consultation with HPO.

The proposed new construction, the commemorative wall and its associated walkway, will connect to the back and side edges of the existing memorial but will not alter any historic fabric. The subtle curvature of the new elements will allow the historic fountain to remain a primary focus of the memorial while also providing a prominent place for commemorative names to be displayed. These new elements will also provide the means to make the entire memorial fully accessible. The stone that will be used to make these improvements will relate to the color of the Daly Building and the J.J. Earley concrete. Relatively minor landscape improvements that are compatible with their historic context are also proposed as part of the project. Specifically, the non-historic flagpoles will be relocated to the east, and the non-historic angular sidewalk will be eliminated from the site.

Finally, a museum to interpret the history of the DC Metropolitan Police Department and related topics is proposed for the interior of the Municipal Building but that aspect of the project will be the subject of a separate review.

Recommendation

HPO recommends that the Board approve the concept for the DC Police Memorial improvements and delegate the remaining review of rehabilitation plans and design details to HPO.

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