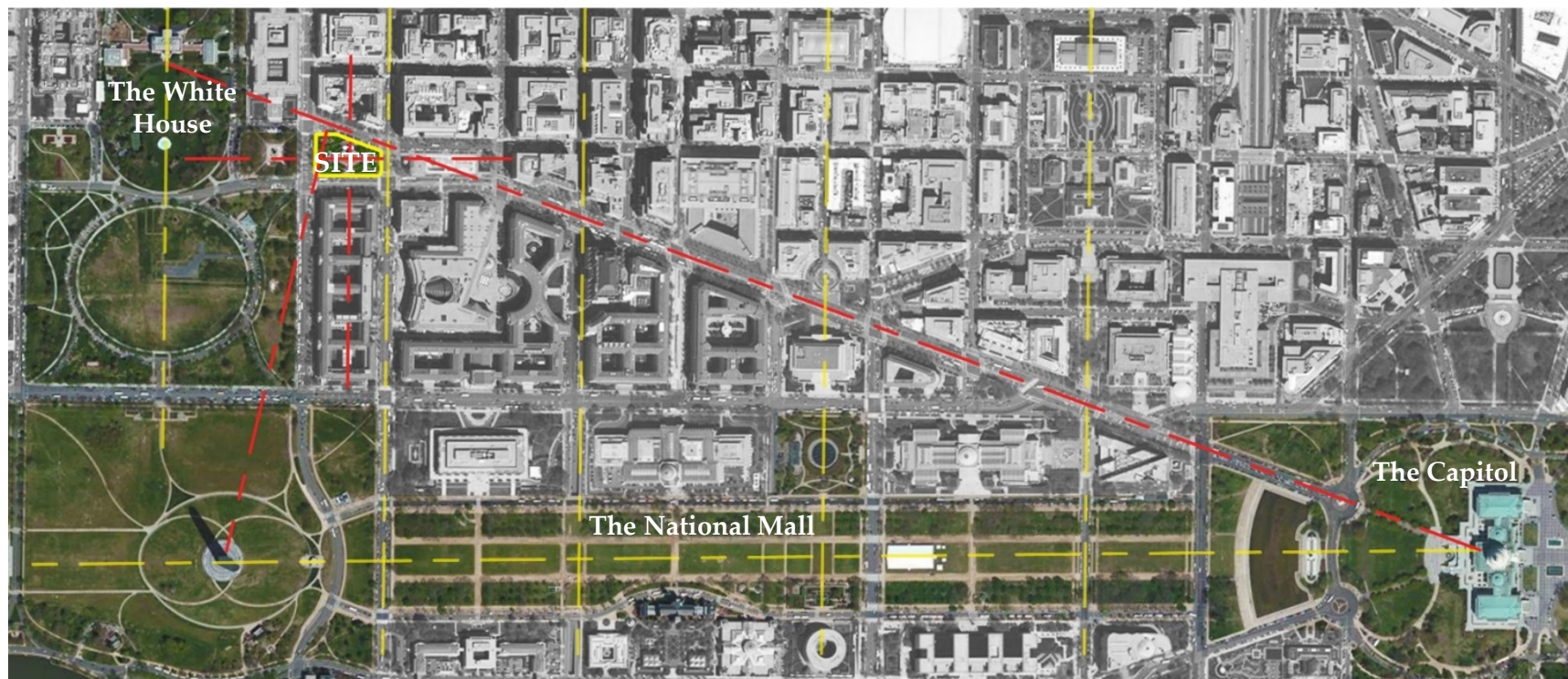


National World War I Memorial | Washington D.C. | Unbuilt Architecture – Professional



Project Description

Aerial of Federal Triangle, National Mall and Proposed Memorial Site

In 2015, the World War I Centennial Commission launched a two-stage international design competition calling for designs to memorialize America's World War I veterans while inspiring Americans today and tomorrow to better understand this consequential event in the history of our nation. The memorial is set to replace the current Pershing Memorial Square, completed in 1982. The design proposal shown here reflects the final submission upon being shortlisted from over 350 international entries down to 5.

The site sits at the crossing of the axis that radiate from the symbolic vectors of the executive branch, as represented by the White House and the Treasury adjacent to the site, and the legislative branch by the U.S. Capitol at the far end of Pennsylvania Avenue. The space where federal authority and power intersect at the crook of "America's Main Street" is occupied appropriately by a remembrance of General John J. "Black Jack" Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Forces. Yet it cries out for greater meaning in the commemoration not of an individual but of a cataclysmic event that brought vast national and cultural change. Increasing the site's symbolic value is the key purpose behind our design proposal. The design has the additional value of creating a more memorable experience for visitors through a blend of monumental grandeur amid a setting of humane landscape, itself set into what can, as a result, become one of the city's most iconic and unforgettable urban places.

History of the Pershing Park Site



1910. Facing Treasury Bldg & Willard Hotel. Site in yellow.



1960. View from John A. Wilson Bldg towards Treasury Bldg.

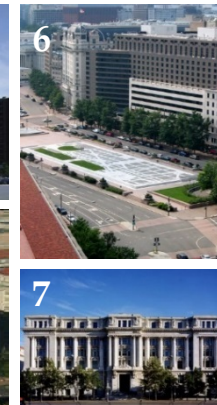
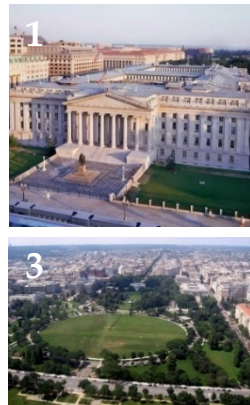


1982. M. Paul Friedberg's Pershing Park shortly after opening.



2015. Current condition of Pershing Park.

Site Context and Surrounding Urban Fabric



1. *Treasury Building*. Mills, Young, Bowman, Rogers, Mullett. (1836-1869)
2. *General William Tecumseh Sherman Monument*. Carl Rohl-Smith. (1903)
3. *The Ellipse* (1867)
4. *The Willard Hotel*. Henry Janeway Hardenbergh. (1901)

5. *Herbert Hoover Building*. Louis Ayres (1932)
6. *Freedom Plaza*. Robert Venturi (1980)
7. *John A. Wilson Building*. Cope & Stewardson (1904)

The site where Pershing Park currently stands was originally occupied by buildings. This was the intention in the original L'Enfant & McMillan plans for the city. Eventually it was cleared out and transformed into an open park until M. Paul Friedberg's design for the space was constructed in the early 1980's. Due to a series of events, the park fell into disrepair which has led to it being named as the potential site for the new National WWI Memorial. Our team has sought to create a memorial that honors the valor of the American men and women who served and died in the war, while also fulfilling its role as an important urban park, public destination, and place of honor and remembrance. The style of the memorial is inspired by the time of the Great War, and thus communicates in a language similar to that of the most notable and beloved memorials in Washington DC and the world over. The Washington Monument, the Lincoln and Jefferson memorials used a powerful civic language which, we feel, uplifts the spirit in all who see those monuments. So does the language of the Capitol, the White House and many other federal buildings encompassing the site. This is the civic design context that our memorial seeks not only to fit into but to strengthen.



Aerial of Proposed Memorial Looking North

The Memorial

The general layout is based on an ellipse with the main sacred space at the center, surrounded by open parks on the east and west axis, plazas at each entrance, and a formal garden in the northwest corner. The tower at the center is the main visual element of the site and plays a major role in conveying the purpose of the memorial. The tower's verticality is reminiscent of the triumphal arches that have long commemorated wars and battles in America and Europe. The tower, however, acknowledges those precedents without stamping the memorial as "triumphal." Instead, it has permitted the design team to speak in a lower key, addressing also the losses that attend any war, evoking sadness however noble its purpose. The elliptical memorial space formed by the inward-facing facades of the tower and portal walls offers a contemplative place, while the relatively large park surrounding it and bounding the trapezoidal site is for visitor relaxation and pedestrian transit.

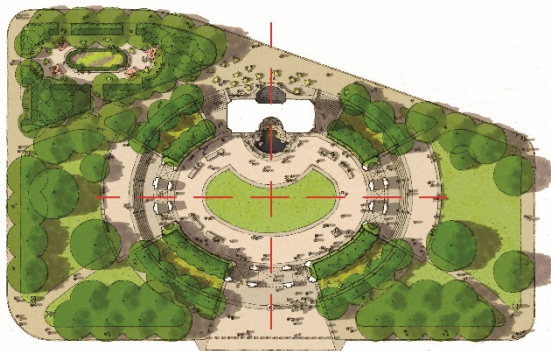


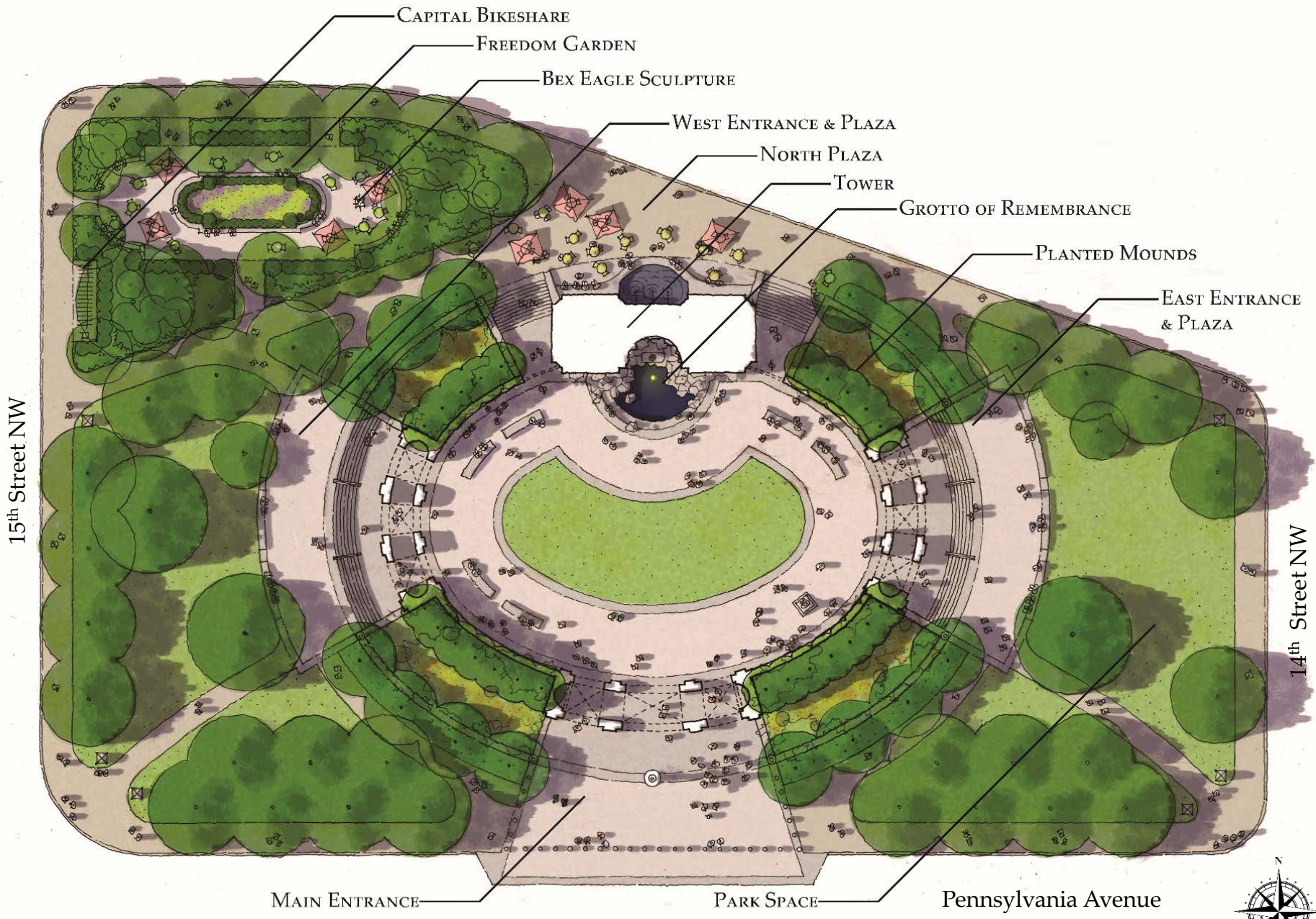
Diagram: Main Axis



Diagram: Separation of Spaces

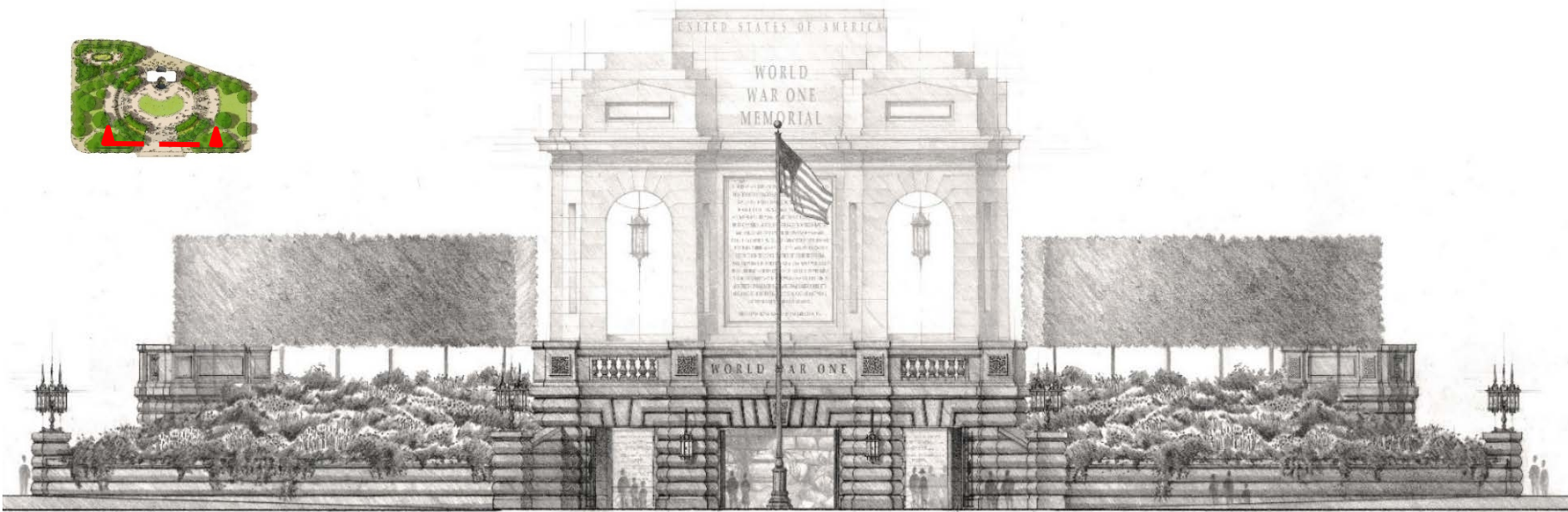
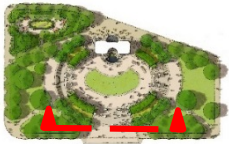


Diagram: Circulation



Proposed General Site Plan

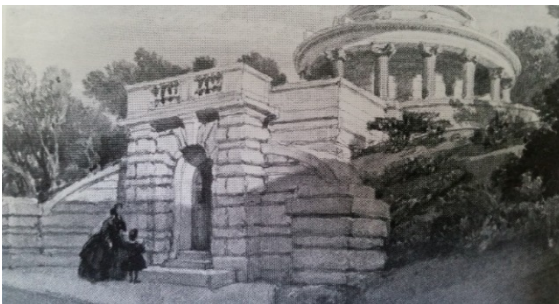




Main Entrance Elevation

The elevation along Pennsylvania Avenue is considered the main ceremonial entrance; however, the memorial is porous and a visitor can enter from all directions without losing importance. This elevation faces due south, toward the National Mall, the Hoover Building, and the sun. It is centered on the block with a plaza and ceremonial flag.

The architecture – The concept was to create a sacred space of remembrance. We looked at ancient ways humans would memorialize their fallen. We used the basic forms of a burial mound with marking stone. Then pushed that idea. We carved out the mound allowing the visitor to occupy the burial (sacred) space. We used walls and portals to create sequence and to divide special functions. The focal is the large tower with a grotto of remembrance at its base. We looked at many memorials to the great war and wanted this memorial to stand among them in remembering the great sacrifices made by American men and women. A grand and powerful architecture, not unlike the work of Sir Edwin Luytens in Thiepval, France.



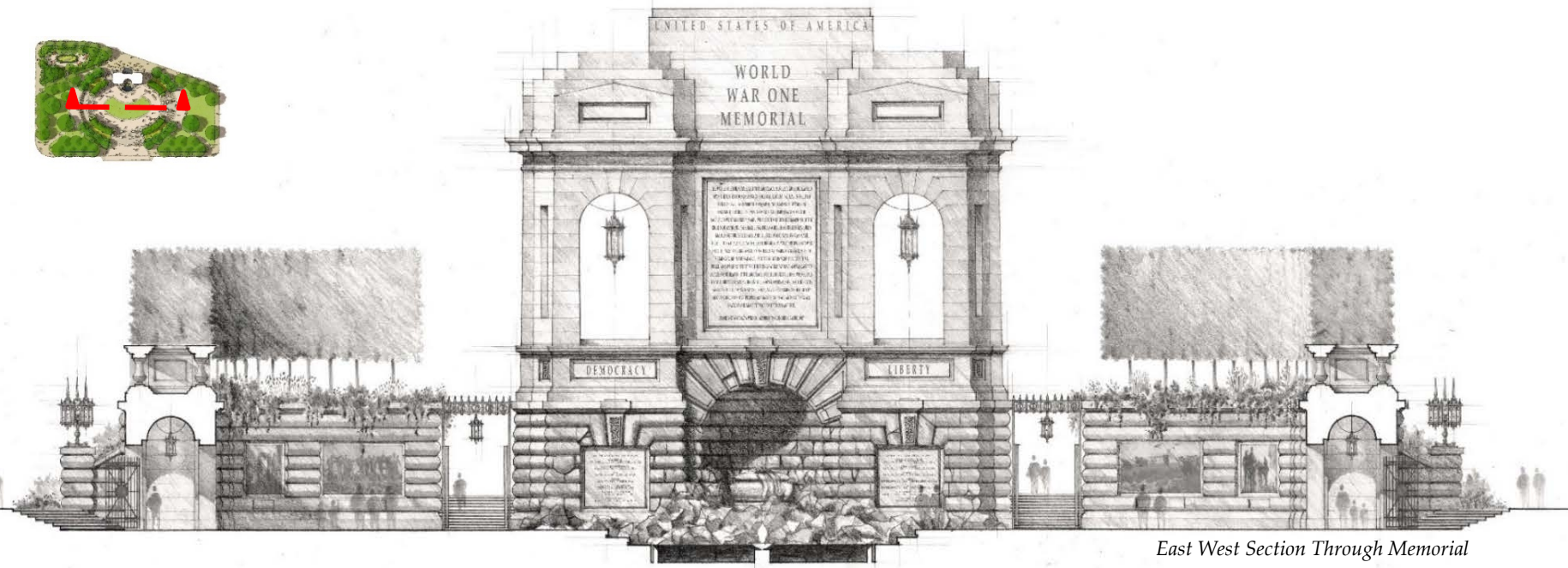
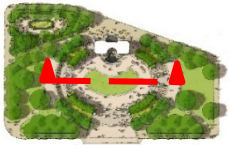
Subterranean Tomb with Circular Temple Above



Prehistoric Tumulus – Subterranean Circular Burial Mound



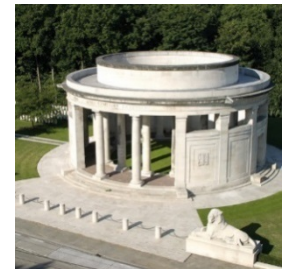
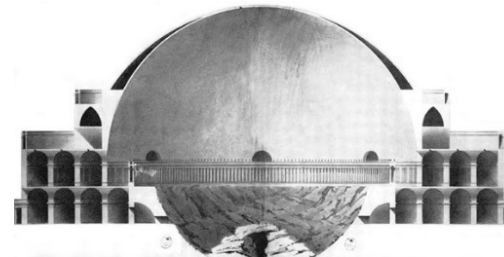
Subterranean Memorial with Temple Above



East West Section Through Memorial

Tower and Grotto of Remembrance (View looking north along main east-west axis)

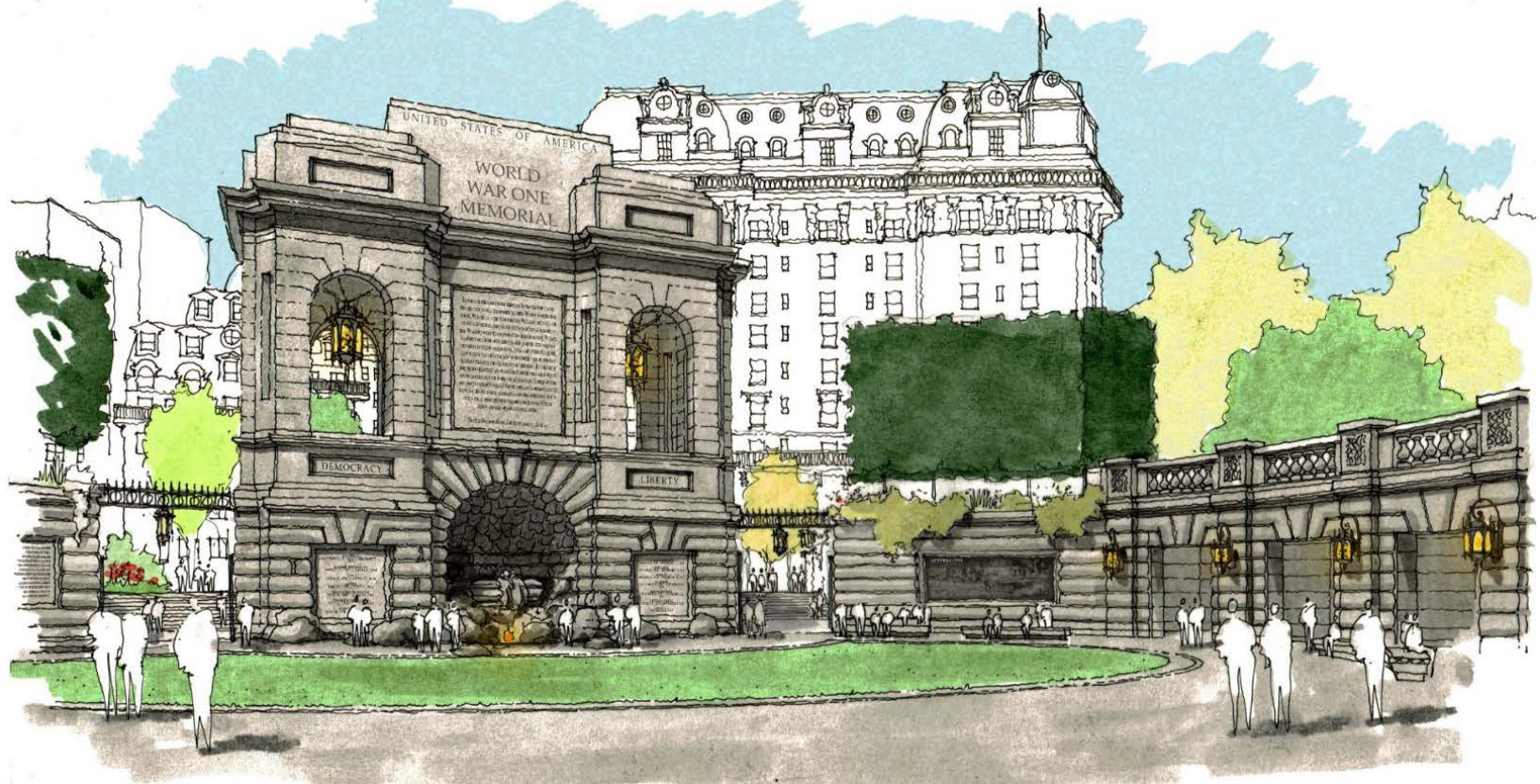
With the benefit of a century of hindsight since World War I, the team sought a symbolic gesture that would be more appropriate to the commemoration of a victory achieved at great cost in lives. Our team believes that the truncated tower offers a tone less exultant and more balanced between the joy of triumph and the sorrow caused by the magnitude of the loss suffered in the war. The articulation of the tower's verticality descends from smooth elegance at the top to a rusticated granite wall, into which is set an arch that forms a grotto of Bernini-esque carved boulders at its base. This progression elucidates the relationship between the beauty of peace, democracy, and liberty, on the one hand, and the ugliness of lives lost at war on the other. This contrast is poignantly represented by excerpts from then President Woodrow Wilson's speech on April 2, 1917 before a joint session of Congress. These excerpts would be etched into the center panel of the tower, representing the key message of the tower, and by extension, of the entire memorial – the tragic nature of war even in victory.



Family of WWI Memorials this memorial would join

Boullée – Classical connection to nature

Precedent Images



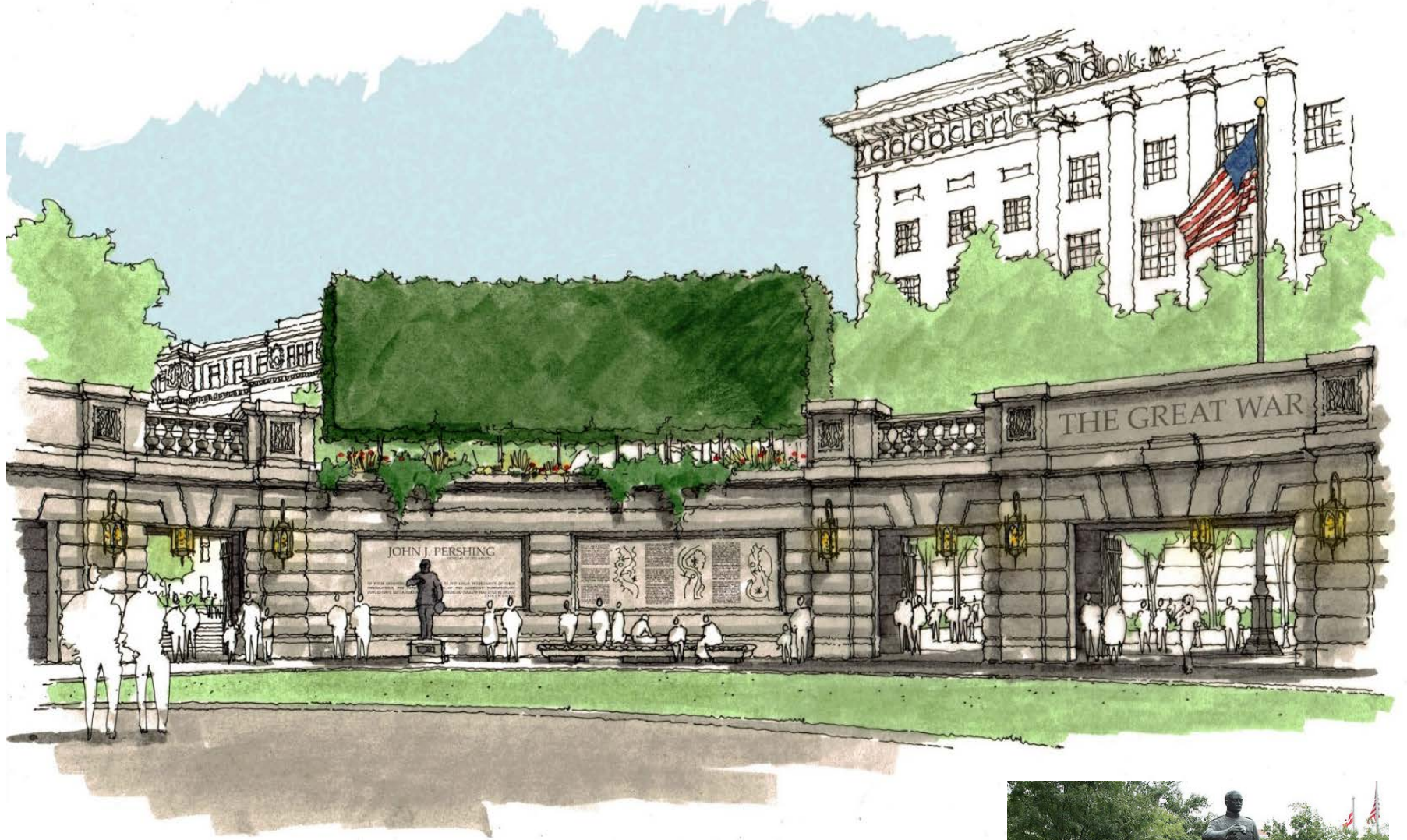
The Sacred Space (View looking north-east from main entry toward the Willard Hotel)

Inside the memorial space, the noble architecture of the tower fills the visitor with awe, offering an invitation to approach closer to the tower and sit down on a boulder or a step near the grotto. From this more intimate view, the visitor is able to examine the poetic notions of the tower up close, taking in the Wilson quote and viewing the large lamps to either side that represent democracy and liberty.

The stone benches carefully located along the interior of the walls entice the visitor to sit down to take in the scene. The interior walls between each portal are set with recessed panels, featuring etched collages of imagery of the war as well as the revamped version of the existing Pershing Memorial. The imagery comprising these collages would consist of drawings done by American artists hired to document the war first hand.



Artwork from the American Artists Commissioned by the U. S. War Department to record the Conditions of War.

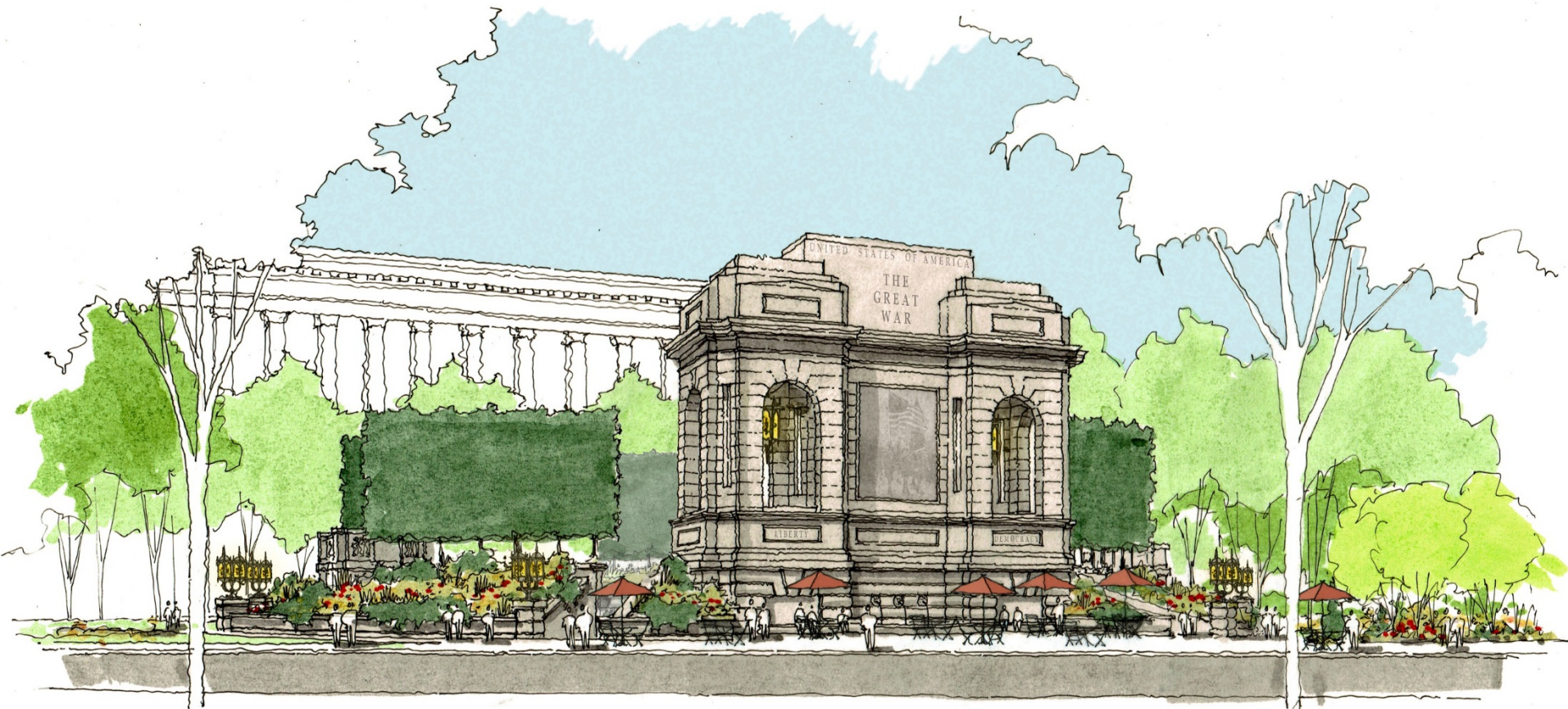


General Pershing Memorial (View looking south-east from within the memorial)

The General Pershing Memorial is to be relocated within the memorial's sacred space. All the text from the existing Pershing Walls will be reused and updated for better visibility. The Pershing statue will be placed in front, facing the Grotto of Remembrance. The porosity of the memorial can be seen from this perspective. Through the main entry to the right is Pennsylvania Avenue and through the secondary entry on the left is 14th Street NW. Again, one can see the monumental scale of the surrounding context with the Herbert Hoover Building peering over the upper right side, as well as, the John A. Wilson Building beyond.



Existing General Pershing Statue and Wall



North Plaza And Freedom Garden (View looking south-west from the Willard Hotel)

The Northwest corner garden, which could be named “Freedom Garden,” is structured in a formal layout surrounded by plantings and is an oasis in the city, with views to the Washington Monument. This will be the perfect spot for tourists, families, and local business people to relax.

The area just north of the outside facade of the memorial tower extends the corner garden’s array of tables and chairs into a paved area that takes advantage of the tower’s north, or exterior, fountain to soften the traffic noise on that side of the memorial trapezoid. Visitors who pass through this space will experience the majesty of the tower to the same degree as those who choose to enter the memorial ellipse to confront it intimately. Movable tables and chairs, built in benches, and shade trees will provide city goers with a place that connects the memorial park with the retail and commercial uses across the street and to the north of the site. The memorial will be lit at night providing wonderful views from all directions.



North Plaza idea with movable sitting



The design competition was seeking a memorial that serves the nation's need to commemorate World War I in our nation's capital, and fits that commemoration into the nation's commemoration of other conflicts, especially vis-à-vis World War II. We selected the neoclassical style because of its timelessness, its civic stature, and reconcilability to serve that purpose through the eloquence and the subtlety of that language. The poetic notions of our design serve to create a National WWI Memorial fitting to the nation's capital, the surrounding architecture & landscape, and the era of the Great War itself. Our memorial park, influenced by funerary & monumental architecture, Olmstedian landscapes, and well thought through urban design, come together to create an enduring & meaningful memorial that expresses the magnitude and tragedy of war even through victory while still offering an encompassing functional urban park. This design took extensive hours of research and development to get to its current state, a process that we felt honored to undertake. We hope that our efforts are evident and distinguishable to the jury. Thank you for your consideration!