

## 2.0 DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES

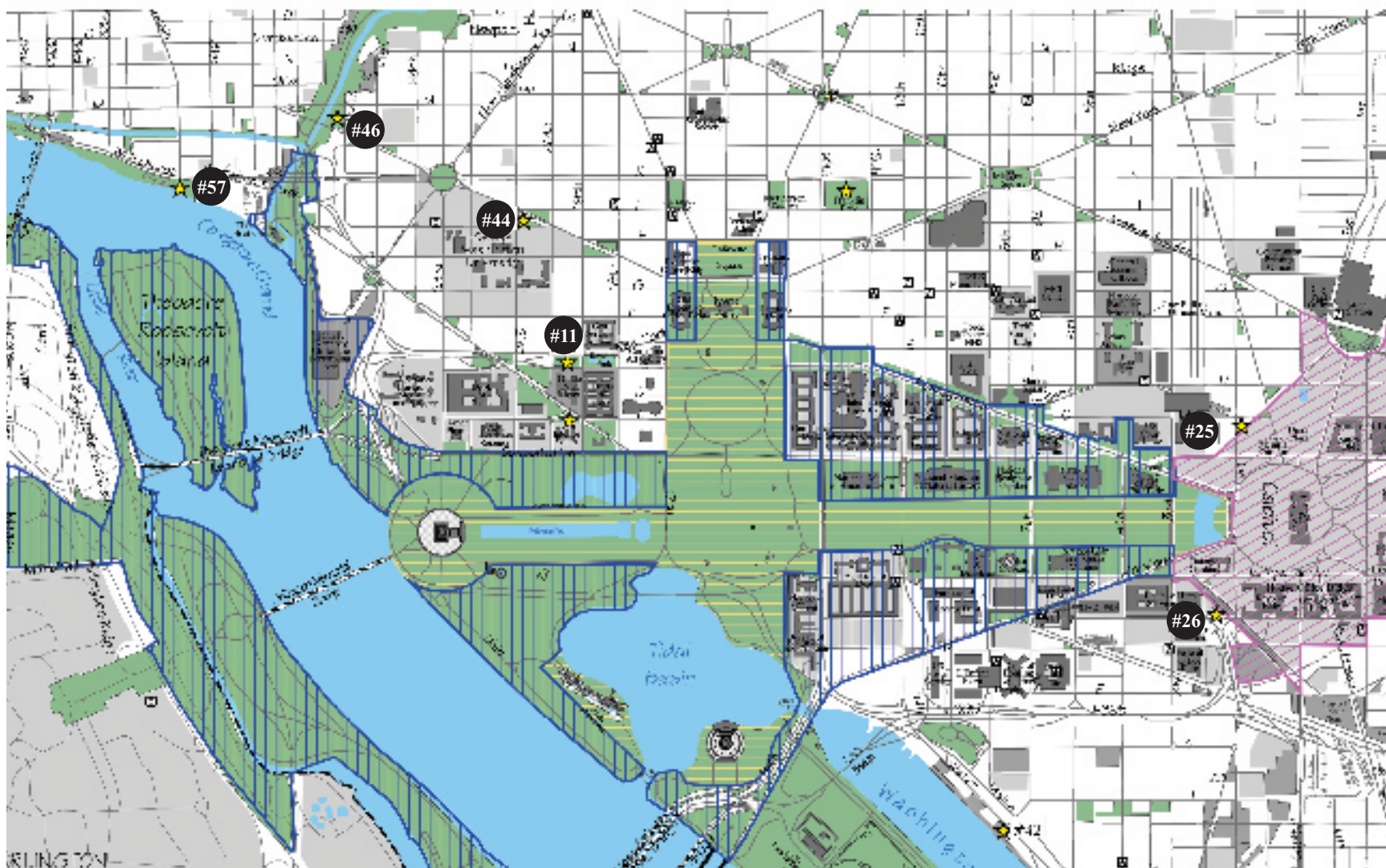


Figure 2-1: Six alternative sites were examined before the selection of Site #26.

Source: The Disabled Veterans' Life Memorial Site Selection Report, 2001.

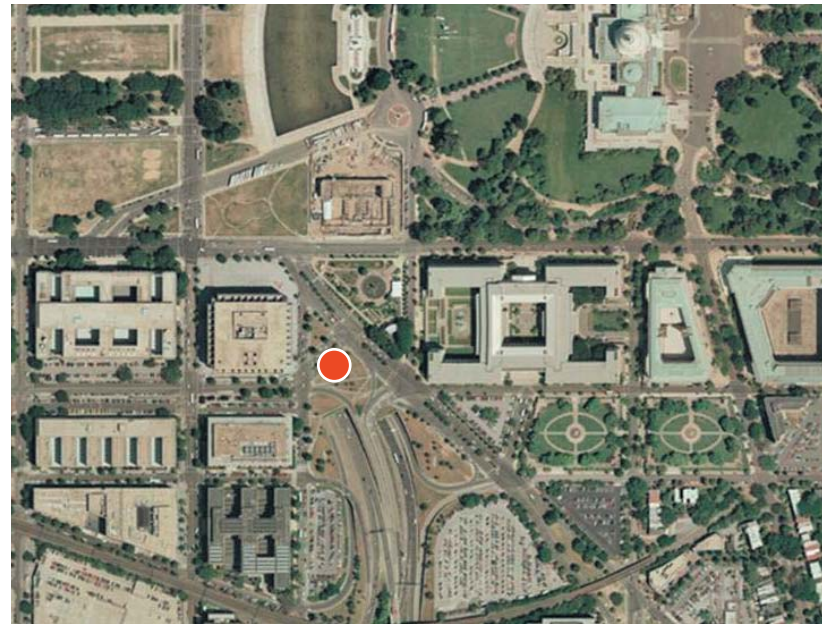
## 2.0 DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES

### 2.1 Consideration of Alternative Sites

Site selection for the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial included a two-step screening process. Ten (10) potential sites were originally identified from the National Capital Planning Commission's (NCPC) *Draft Master Plan for Memorials and Museums*, dated December 2000. All sites were located in Area II of the Commemorative Zone, which is NCPC's designated area for new commemorative works. Four (4) of these sites were immediately eliminated from consideration, while six (6) others were reviewed more closely (see Figure 2-1).

The study of these six sites is summarized in *The Disabled Veterans' Life Memorial Site Selection Report*, dated July 2001. This study provides the following descriptions of the six alternative sites:

1. *Site 26* - Washington Avenue (Canal Street) at 2nd Street, SW (the approved site) - This site is located on public space within the context of the U.S. Capitol Building. Situated between the U.S. Botanic Garden and the Department of Health and Human Services, this parcel features open landscape elements associated with entrance ramps to Interstate 395. This site's proximity to the National Mall and the U.S. Capitol is significant. The site is accessible by existing Metrobus and Metrorail, and the Federal Center, SW. Parking is limited. The site is flat, open and triangular in shape. It is adjacent to offices and parkland.



Site 26 Location



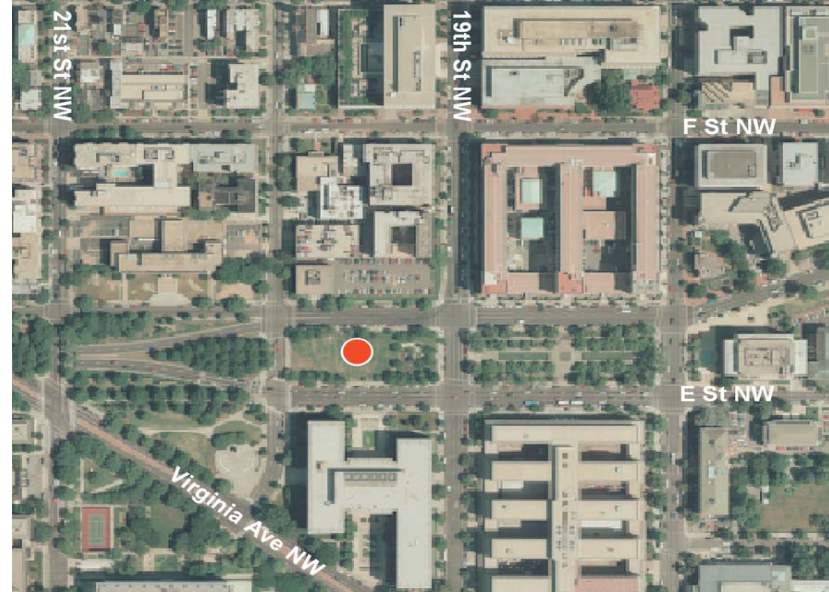
Site 26 Photograph



2. *Site 25* - Northeast Corner of Louisiana Avenue and 1st Street, NW - This prominent triangular park is located on the northern side of Capitol Hill at Constitution and New Jersey Avenues. Established trees and level terrain provide a small scale open space setting that adjoins the U.S. Capitol grounds. This site is accessible by existing Metrobus and Metrorail (Judiciary Square). Parking is good and pedestrian access is good. The area is flat, open and triangular in shape but very small (1/4 acre). It is adjacent to offices and institutional buildings.
3. *Site 11* - Walt Whitman Park, along E Street between 19th and 20th Streets, NW - This site is in the Foggy Bottom area west of the White House. It is located on the E Street corridor at the point where the expressway emerges from its tunnel. The two-acre site has a slightly rolling topography and is primarily green with an open urban feel. Known as the Walt Whitman Park, the eastern quarter of this rectangular site is now a playground. The remaining area is a landscaped lawn surrounded by a tree buffer. Street parking is available. There is no Metrorail or Metrobus access.



Site 25 Location



Site 11 Location



Site 57 Location



Site 44 Location

4. *Site 57* - On the Potomac River at the foot of Wisconsin Avenue, NW - Located within a prominent new waterfront park, this site offers an established public space setting with exceptional views of the Potomac River and good pedestrian access. The existing features include large lawn areas with undulating terrain, pedestrian circulation, and landscape plantings. There is no Metrobus or Metrorail access. Parking is available.
5. *Site 44* – Edward Murrow Park (18th – 19th Streets) or James Monroe Park (20th – 21st Streets) – These existing public parks provide passive recreational and interpretive opportunities for residents, employees and tourists. Their triangular parcels are defined by open landscaped spaces that contrast with nearby higher density office and commercial uses. Existing conditions include landscaped terraces with seating and generally level terrain. Metrobus access is good; Metrorail access is fair. These four triangular areas are small and not connected to one another physically.



6. *Site 46* - In Rock Creek Park between M Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW - Located within a major open space corridor, this prominent site is centrally located on Pennsylvania Avenue and M Street between Georgetown and Foggy Bottom. Portions of the site are wooded with steep slopes, while much of the site is open lawn area. The site's park-like setting and bridge crossings help define the transition between historic Georgetown and the original L'Enfant city. This unique location is characterized by its placement within Rock Creek Park. It is only 1/2 acre in size. Metrorail and Metrobus access is poor to fair. Parking is available.

This site selection study resulted in a preferred site identified at the Washington Avenue and 2nd Street, SW location. Site #26 offers the best access by both Metrobus and Metrorail. Its proximity to the Capitol Building, where the U.S. Congress has the power to declare war and commit troops to action, was also a significant factor in the site's selection. The CFA and NCPC approved, with District concurrence, Site 26 for the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial in August 2001.



Site 46 Location

## 2.2 Design Framework

After the preferred site was selected, the Foundation convened a Technical Advisory Committee to determine the optimal configuration of the site, develop design parameters, and help prepare for a design competition. To ensure that identified and potential issues are adequately considered in the planning process, several agencies, as well as those participating on the Technical Advisory Committee, will be invited to comment on this Draft EA.

In consultation with the Technical Advisory Committee, a *Call for Entries* booklet was prepared to provide a framework for the design competition including a context map as shown in Figure 2-2. This document outlined project goals, opportunities and constraints, and was intended to guide design firms in preparing their concept proposals. The *Call for Entries* defined the following goals, constraints, and requirements for design:

### Design Goals

1. Commemorate the unique strengths and sacrifices of our nation's disabled veterans.
2. Capitalize on the prominence and proximity of the U.S. Capitol.
3. Extend the character of the National Mall to the site.
4. Complement and enhance the vicinity of the site.
5. Facilitate pedestrian circulation, including access to, and within, the Memorial site and adjacent areas.

### Constraints

1. There shall be no enclosed spaces above or below grade, including but not limited to bathrooms, information kiosks, display areas, bookstores, or museums.
2. There shall be no designated bus lay-by area on the portion of C Street immediately adjacent to site, however curb side drop-off by buses may be considered.
3. There shall be no parking on the portion of C Street immediately adjacent to site.
4. Views from the Memorial site to the U.S. Capitol shall be maintained.
5. Proposed lighting shall not compete with the U.S. Capitol.

### Requirements

1. Design must accommodate the intended audience.
2. Identify primary and secondary site entrances.
3. Pedestrian circulation must be clearly identified.
4. Provide universal accessibility for pedestrians.
5. Designate passenger drop-off area(s).
6. Designate area(s) for universally accessible parking.
7. Streetscape design must comply with the District of Columbia Streetscape Manual.
8. Lighting design must be addressed.
9. Plant material must be appropriate for local climatic conditions.
10. Security issues currently affecting Washington, DC shall be considered.

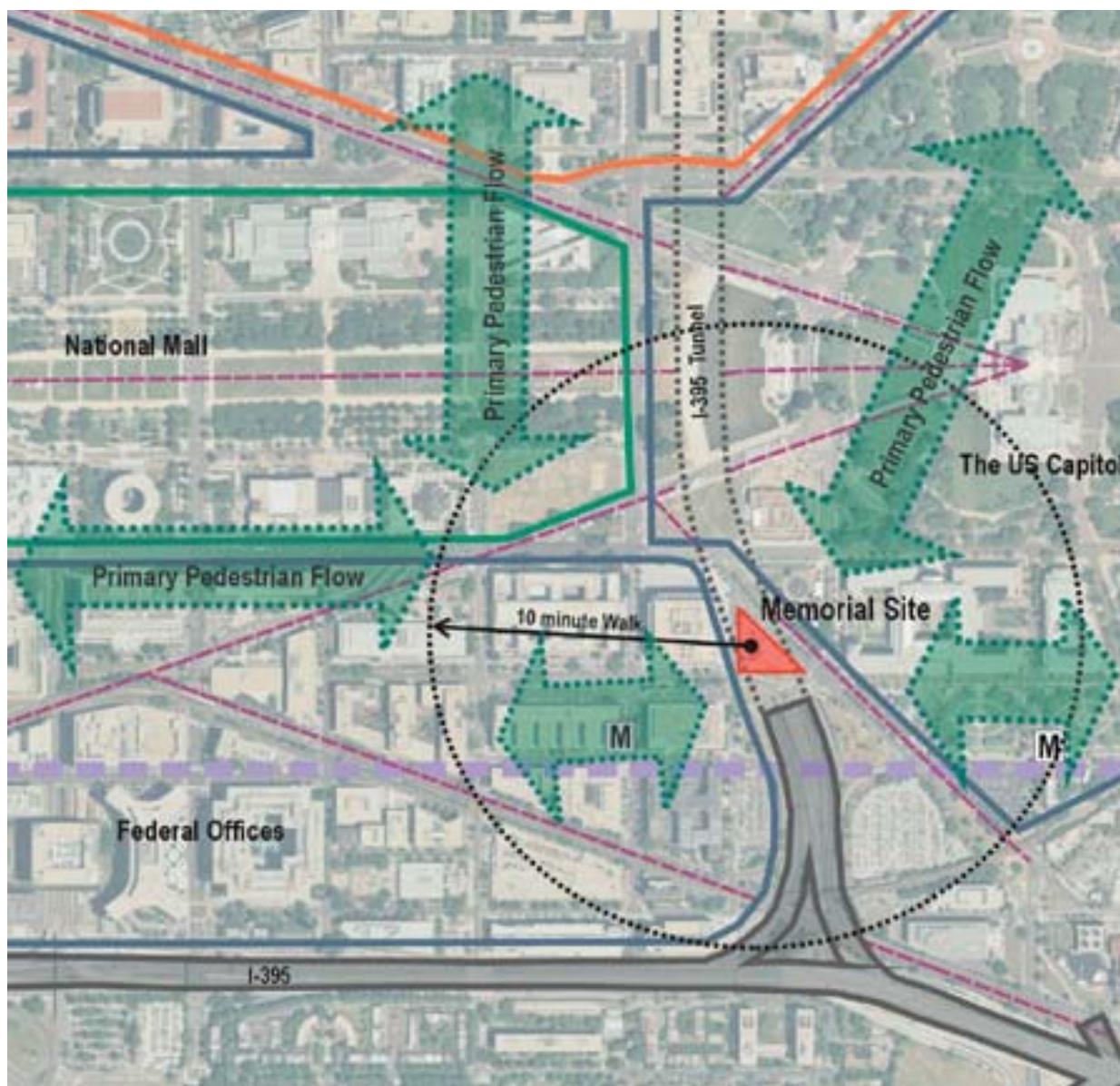


Figure 2-2: Diagram of site context from *Call for Entries* booklet.



## 2.3 Proposed Alternative

The proposed alternative is to build the new American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial on the triangular assembly of land bounded by Independence Avenue, Washington Avenue, realigned C Street, and 2nd Street in Southwest Washington, DC, also known as Site 26 in the NCPC's *Memorials and Museums Master Plan*. This proposal, which requires redefining the landscape, would create a new cultural experience on approximately two acres of land by providing a new commemorative work to honor disabled veterans.

The Memorial would be located on what are currently two smaller parcels of land created during the 1960s construction of the Interstate-395 (I-395) tunnels that pass under the site, and an existing section of C Street which cuts diagonally between the two parcels. Under this proposal, C Street would be realigned to its historic configuration. When assembled with the realignment of C Street, the new triangular parcel would consist of 1.16 acres of land (Parcel A in Figure 2-3). Two other parcels, consisting of 0.91 acres of land (Parcels B and C in Figure 2-3), are situated directly to the south of the primary Memorial site and would be used for supporting uses, including surface parking, pedestrian circulation, and a vegetative and/or masonry screening wall.

The major elements of the Memorial include:

- a central fire element within a water feature;
- a grove of trees adjacent to a reflecting pool; and
- stone and glass walls that enclose the site and delineate its paths.

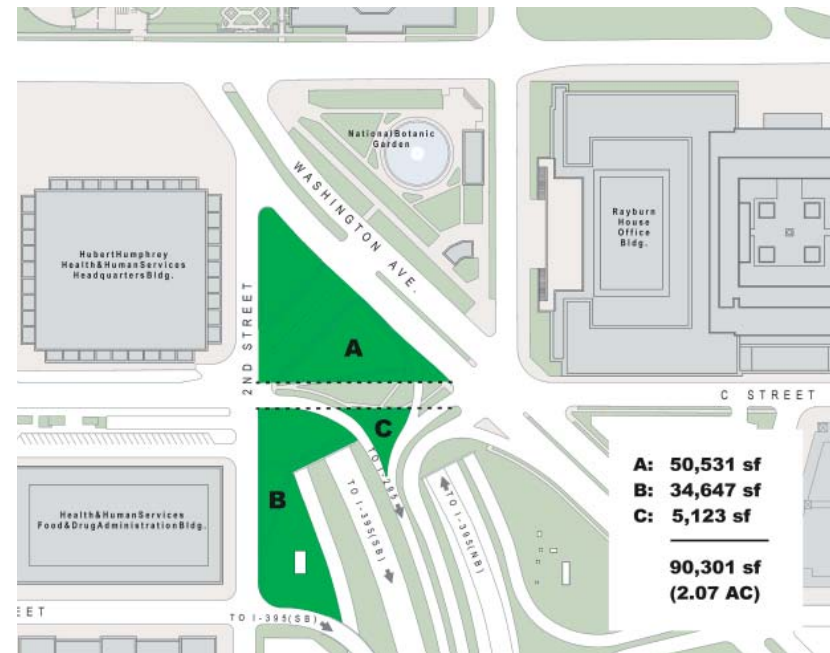


Figure 2-3: After the reconfiguration of C Street, the site for the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial will consist of three parcels of land. The fire, which would sit within a star-shaped stone basin of water, is the Memorial's physical and symbolic centerpiece (see Figure 2-4). The grove of trees and reflecting pool would be oriented toward the Capitol and frame its reflection.

Solid stone (granite) walls would form a quiet frame for the Memorial and would be inscribed with a "Statement of Intent" and figurative relief impressions intended to evoke the human form. Translucent glass walls would be inscribed with quotations of gratitude from state officials and world leaders on the east face of the western wall, and statements of experience from individual veterans on the north face of the southern wall. The "outdoor room" that would be formed by the walls is illustrated in Figure 2-5.

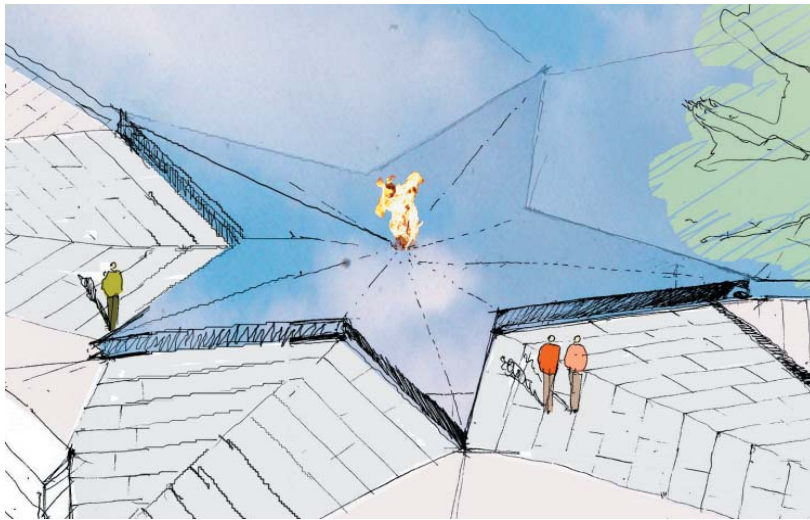


Figure 2-4: Detail of central fire element within star-shaped water feature.  
[Rendering by Michael Vergason Landscape Architects.]



Figure 2-5: The central portion of the Memorial is intended to serve as an 'outdoor room'.  
[Rendering by Michael McCann]

The Memorial would have three entrances (see Figure 2-6). Two entrances would provide a direct line of sight to the fire. The fire would not be immediately visible at the third entrance. All entrances would be accessible to disabled visitors.

Most pedestrian visitors would enter the site at its northwestern corner at 2nd Street and Washington Avenue. This entrance would be framed by trees and a glass wall. The flame would be visible at the end of the path.

A second entrance to the Memorial would be located at the southwestern corner. Adjacent to bus drop off and handicapped parking areas, this entrance provides an “outdoor foyer” for the Memorial for group assembly and dispersal. Stone walls would frame a dramatic view of the fire and the Capitol, forming a strong gateway to the Memorial.

A third entrance to the Memorial would be located at the southeastern corner. It would be framed by the end of a glass wall on one side and trees on the other.

New sidewalks, at least six feet in width, would be installed at the periphery of the Memorial to allow for safe pedestrian movement through the area. Trees would be added throughout the Memorial site to enhance the experience of visitors.





Figure 2-6: There are three points of entry into the proposed Memorial. A special need parking area with approximately 8 extra-wide metered parking spaces is planned along C Street.

## 2.4 No Action Alternative

As part of the environmental assessment process, the consequences of a No Action Alternative are examined to provide a baseline for comparing impacts and to inform the decision-making process. The No Action Alternative assures that the site would remain in its existing condition as an undefined and underutilized space with minimal plantings as shown in Figure 2-7, unlike the proposed Memorial (Figure 2-8). Under the No Action Alternative there would be no reconfiguration of the site. C Street would retain its existing alignment and would not be restored as an element of the L'Enfant Plan. Vehicles and pedestrians would continue their present circulation pattern, and public attraction would not be established at this location.

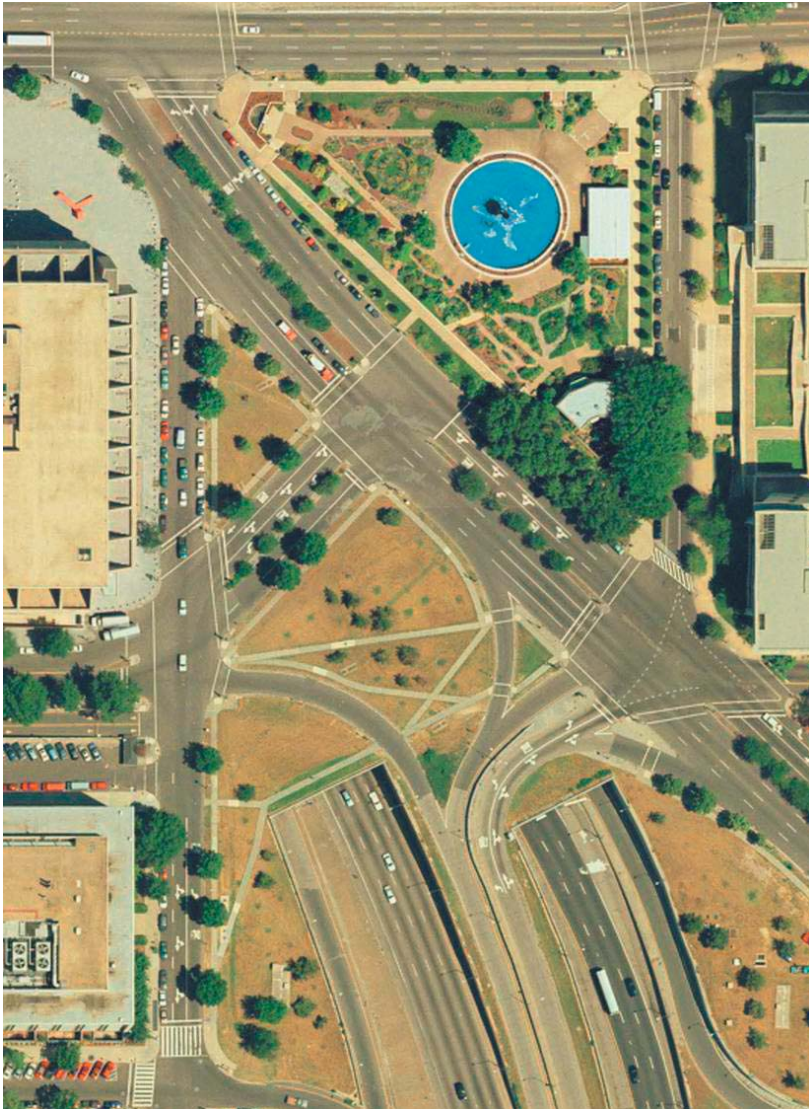


Figure 2-7: No Action Alternative.

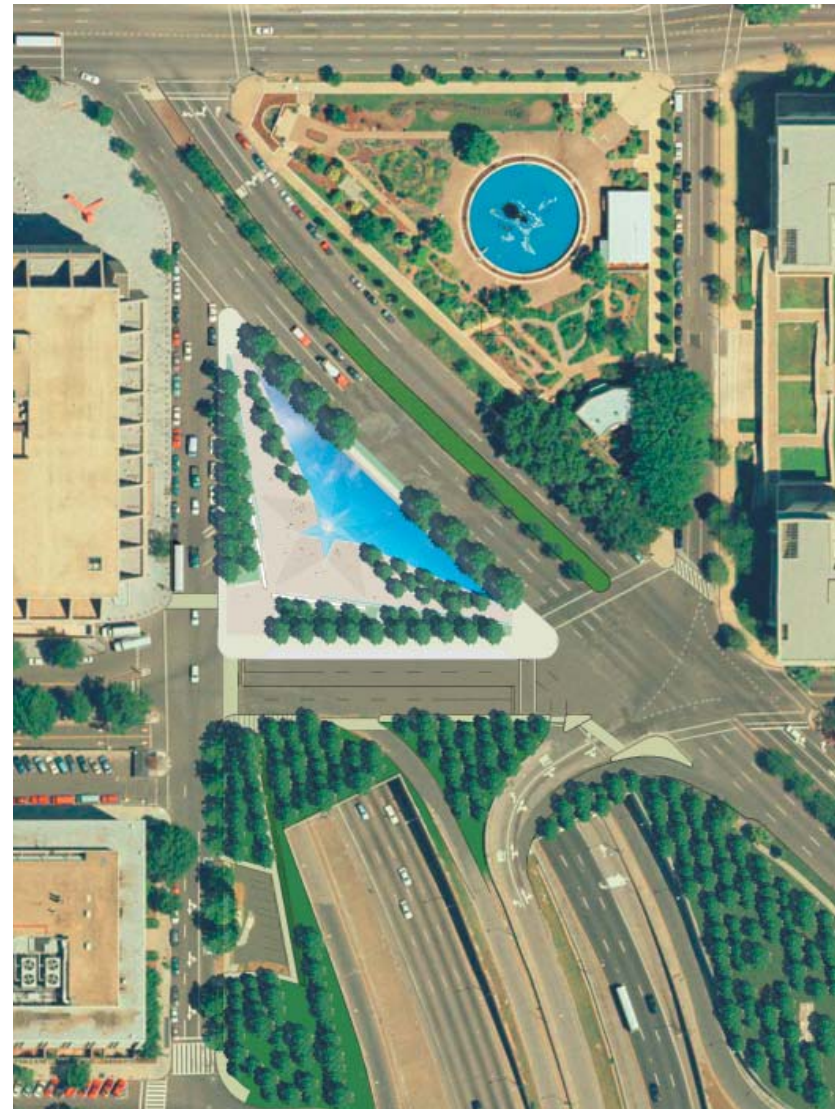


Figure 2-8: Proposed Alternative.