

## WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL: FDR D-DAY PRAYER SCHEMATIC DESIGN



Prepared for:

FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL  
WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL, INC

JUNE 15, 2017



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## History and Overview



On June 30, 2014, President Obama signed into law the World War II Memorial Prayer Act of 2013 (Public Law 113-123) directing the Secretary of the Interior to “install in the area of the World War II Memorial in the District of Columbia a suitable plaque or an inscription with the words that President Franklin D. Roosevelt prayed with the United States on D-Day, June 6, 1944.”

### *“1. Short title*

*This Act may be cited as the World War II Memorial Prayer Act of 2013 .*

### *2. Placement of plaque or inscription at world war II memorial*

*The Secretary of the Interior—*

*(1) shall install in the area of the World War II Memorial in the District of Columbia a suitable plaque or an inscription with the words that President Franklin D. Roosevelt prayed with the United States on June 6, 1944, the morning of D-Day;*

*(2) shall design, procure, prepare, and install the plaque or inscription referred to in paragraph (1); and*

*(3) may not use Federal funds to prepare or install the plaque or inscription referred to in paragraph (1), but may accept and expend private contributions for this purpose.*

### *3. Commemorative Works Act*

*Chapter 89 of title 40, United States Code (commonly known as the Commemorative Works Act ), shall apply to the design and placement of the plaque within the area of the World War II Memorial.*

*Passed the Senate June 5, 2014.”*

Because the legislation stipulates that no federal funds may be used to implement this directive, the National Park Service (NPS) and the Friends of the National World War II Memorial have entered into an agreement that gives Friends the lead role in designing, funding, and installing the addition. Friends will work hand-in-hand with NPS to seek the necessary federal approvals.

In February 2015, the Friends of the World War II Memorial and National Park Service engaged OvS to prepare a site analysis of the WWII Memorial site with the intent of evaluating several placement alternatives for the prayer.

A thorough site analysis of each site was conducted, assessing general site character, views to and from the site, existing circulation patterns, existing furnishings and materials, and existing vegetation. Based on this analysis, the Circle of Remembrance was selected as the preferred site for the D-Day Prayer.

Following the outcome of the site analysis, two alternatives for locating the Prayer within the Circle of Remembrance were presented. The Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) and the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) unanimously approved Alternative II, which incorporated the Prayer into the Circle’s geometry.

Based on this recommendation and specific criteria provided during the review process, two schematic proposals were developed. This presentation includes the schematic proposals as well as set of criteria for evaluating the designs.

## President Franklin D. Roosevelt's D-Day Prayer



During World War II (1929 - 1945), the Battle of Normandy resulted in the Allied liberation of Western Europe from Nazi Germany's control. The battle began on June 6, 1944 which is known as D-Day. Approximately 160,000 Allied troops landed on 50 miles of beaches in Normandy in an attempt to liberate France. This invasion was one of the largest amphibious military assaults in history and what Winston Churchill called "the most difficult and complicated operation that has ever taken place."

Franklin D. Roosevelt chose to commemorate the moment and address the nation with a prayer of his own composition. The White House distributed the text on the morning of June 6, 1944 to be published in newspapers, and FDR would ask American radio listeners to join him in prayer as it was broadcast to an estimated audience of 100 million.

"My Fellow Americans:

In this poignant hour, I ask you to join me in prayer:

Almighty God: Our sons, pride of our Nation, this day have set upon a mighty endeavor, a struggle to preserve our Republic, our religion, and our civilization, and to set free a suffering humanity.

Lead them straight and true; give strength to their arms, stoutness to their hearts, steadfastness in their faith.

They will need Thy blessings. Their road will be long and hard. For the enemy is strong. He may hurl back our forces. Success may not come with rushing speed, but we shall return again and again; and we know that by Thy grace, and by the righteousness of our cause, our sons will triumph.

They will be sore tried, by night and by day, without rest-until the victory is won. The darkness will be rent by noise and flame. Men's souls will be shaken with the violences of war.

These are men lately drawn from the ways of peace. They fight not for the lust of conquest. They fight to end conquest. They fight to liberate. They fight to let justice arise, and tolerance and good will among all Thy people. They yearn but for the end of battle, for their return to the haven of home.

Some will never return. Embrace these, Father, and receive them, Thy heroic servants, into Thy kingdom.

And for us at home -- fathers, mothers, children, wives, sisters, and brothers of brave men overseas -- whose thoughts and prayers are ever with them--help us, Almighty God, to rededicate ourselves in renewed faith in Thee in this hour of great sacrifice.

Many people have urged that I call the Nation into a single day of special prayer. But because the road is long and the desire is great, I ask that our people devote themselves in a continuance of prayer. As we rise to each new day, and again when each day is spent, let words of prayer be on our lips, invoking Thy help to our efforts.

Give us strength, too -- strength in our daily tasks, to redouble the contributions we make in the physical and the material support of our armed forces.

And let our hearts be stout, to wait out the long travail, to bear sorrows that may come, to impart our courage unto our sons wheresoever they may be.

And, O Lord, give us Faith. Give us Faith in Thee; Faith in our sons; Faith in each other; Faith in our united crusade. Let not the keenness of our spirit ever be dulled. Let not the impacts of temporary events, of temporal matters of but fleeting moment let not these deter us in our unconquerable purpose.

With Thy blessing, we shall prevail over the unholy forces of our enemy. Help us to conquer the apostles of greed and racial arrogancies. Lead us to the saving of our country, and with our sister Nations into a world unity that will spell a sure peace a peace invulnerable to the schemings of unworthy men. And a peace that will let all of men live in freedom, reaping the just rewards of their honest toil.

Thy will be done, Almighty God."

## Criteria for Developing the Design Schemes

At the previous meetings with the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Planning Commission, the concept placing the Prayer within the Circle of Remembrance was unanimously selected for further development (Alternative II, see Appendix for reference).

Several points were also discussed regarding the further development of the design. These points have been summarized below and incorporated into the two schemes presented in this package. The design criteria previously presented have been included here for reference as well.

### Design comments provided by CFA / NCPD

#### *ENHANCE SCULPTURAL QUALITIES*

The Commissioners “recommended more flexibility in the design”, suggesting the wall and bench could depart from the WWII Memorial itself, potentially being “sculpted along its length” and showing greater variation.

#### *DIFFERENTIATE AND ARTICULATE THE WALL AND BENCH*

In a similar vein, it was suggested that the walls may be “punctuated with gaps” and reveal tension between the individual pieces that comprise the circle.

#### *PLAQUE DESIGN AND RELATIONSHIP TO THE CIRCLE OF REMEMBRANCE*

The Commission called for the plaque design to be studied in relationship to the “logic of the overall revised design of the Circle of Remembrance.” It was also suggested that the plaque might be a ‘free-standing’ element rather than being embedded in stone.

#### *SCALE AND DETAILING SHOULD BE APPROPRIATE*

While the materials of the wall and bench may draw from the WWII Memorial, the detailing should be specific to the scale and purpose of the Circle of Remembrance, which is an intimate, contemplative space.

#### *PATHWAY SIZE AND SYMMETRY*

The size and layout of the pathways was also discussed, with the suggestion that the paths need not be symmetrical. One path might be more narrow than the other and the appropriate dimension should be studied. The correct dimension will allow for circulation without dissipating the geometry of the circle.

### Criteria for evaluating the design of the D-Day Prayer Memorial

#### *VISUAL CONNECTION WITH THE WWII MEMORIAL*

The D-Day Prayer shall be sited to allow visitors to have views of the WWII Memorial while reading the Prayer.

#### *ADHERENCE WITH ORIGINAL WWII MEMORIAL DESIGN INTENT*

The design of the D-Day Prayer presents an opportunity to more closely align the Circle of Remembrance with the WWII Memorial in material and character. The proposed concepts shall incorporate the granite and bronze used at the WWII Memorial.

#### *COMFORT AND LEGIBILITY*

The D-Day Prayer shall be inscribed or engraved in a size and location sufficient for legibility of the text and with enough space for visitors to gather while visiting the Prayer.

#### *ADHERENCE TO ORIGINAL INTENT / PRAYER FORMAT*

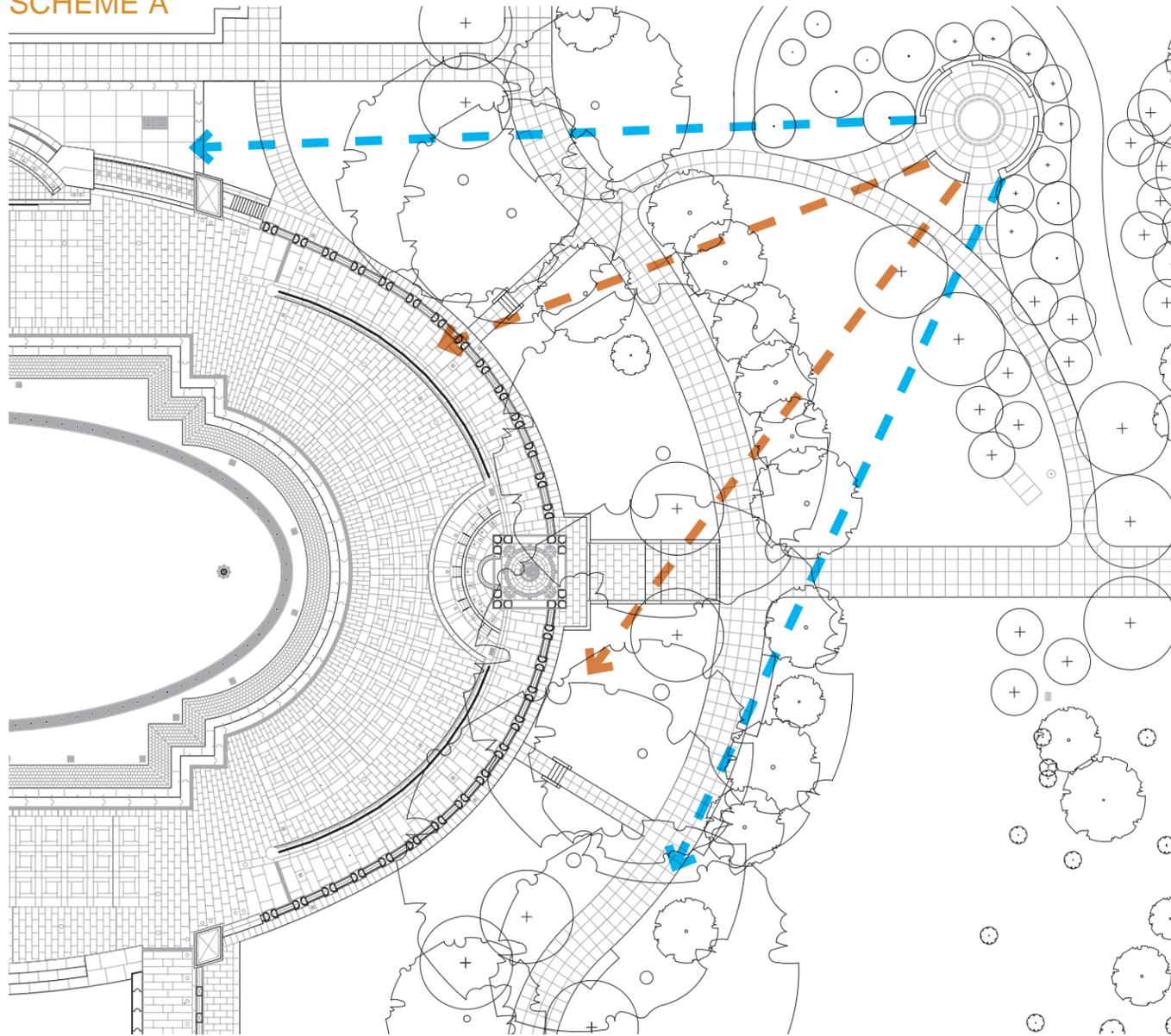
The text of the D-Day Prayer shall be displayed in a manner that is consistent with the tone and language of FDR’s original delivery of the Prayer.

-  — Circle of Remembrance orientation
-  — D-Day Prayer Plaque viewedshed

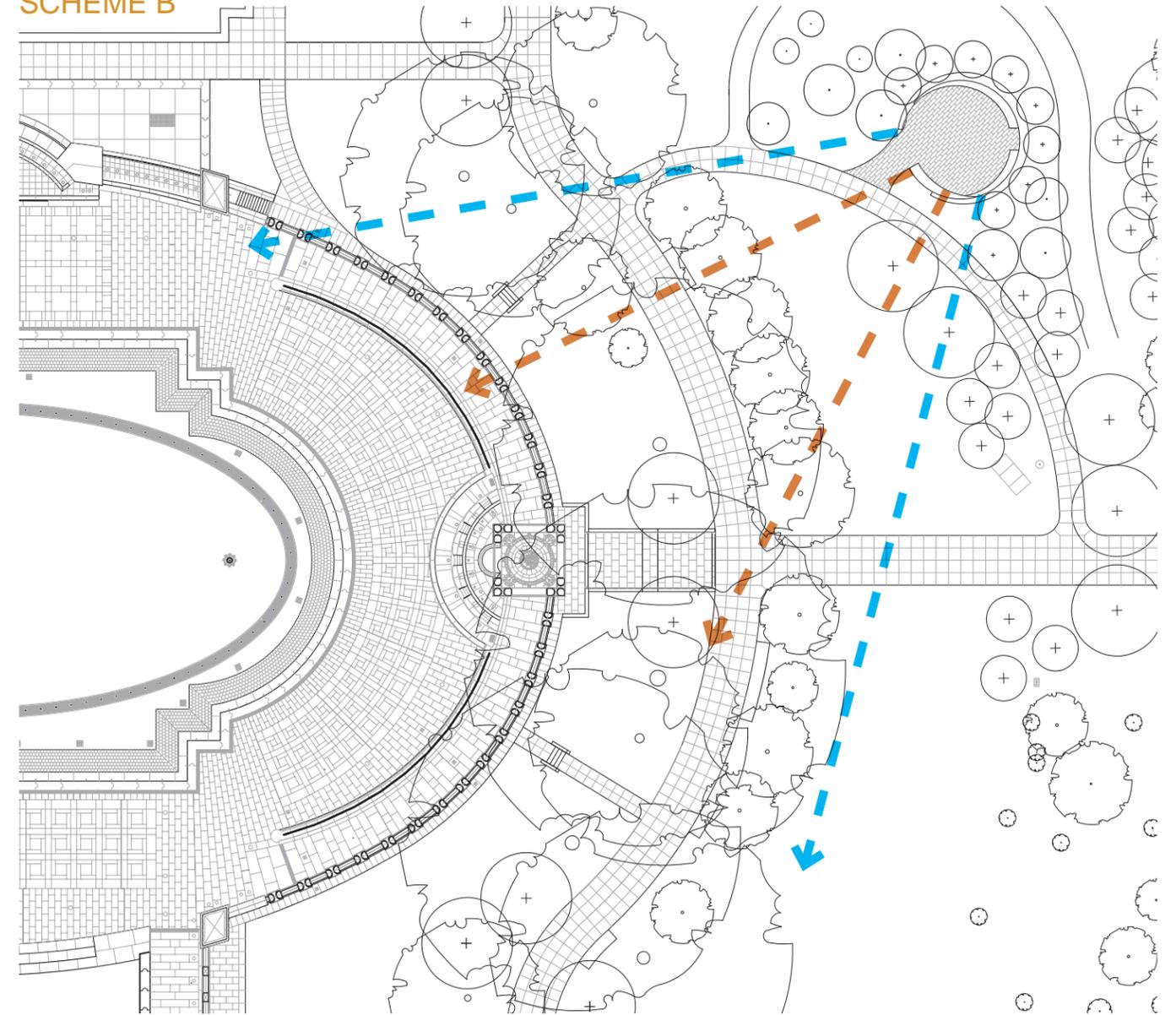
## WWII Memorial Context

Both of the proposed schemes align the Prayer with views of the WWII Memorial, providing the desired orientation and viewshed. Scheme A maintains the existing Circle location and path layout, allowing the Prayer to be a discrete element within the circumference of the Circle. Scheme B maintains the footprint of the Circle, but reorients and shifts its location to allow the Prayer to become a cohesive extension of its geometry.

### SCHEME A



### SCHEME B



## D-Day Prayer Scheme A

**View to WWII Memorial** In this scheme, the Prayer is a free-standing element within the circumference of the Circle of Remembrance. The bronze plaque is held by two granite pillars, providing material continuity with the walls but allowing for a lighter feeling. Planting beyond the Prayer provides a green backdrop that reinforces the form of the Circle without obscuring views beyond.



**View into the Circle** The walls and bench are punctuated by gaps, allowing views through and providing accessible seating. The walls are consistently 24" tall, creating a low back for the benches which are 18" above the ground. The Prayer plaque is approximately 36" tall, which allows for reading while standing as well as wheelchair access beneath the plaque.



## D-Day Prayer Scheme A

### Design Inspiration

This scheme takes inspiration from the WWII Memorial, with symmetrical geometries and close adherence to the layout of the existing Circle of Remembrance. It departs from the existing Circle by inserting gaps into the walls, allowing for views of the landscape beyond. The stone bench curves around the Circle, uniting the walls, while providing accessible seating through periodic breaks in the bench.

This scheme maintains the existing Circle footprint and symmetrical path layout. The wall is a constant 24" tall, providing a low back to the bench and framing the space. The bench is cantilevered from the circular wall to create lightness and emphasize the overall gesture, while the bronze Prayer plaque is held by stone piers that allow for views into the Circle, creating transparency while completing the circular geometry.



Photo courtesy of NPS via ASLA.org



Photo courtesy signaturetours DC.com

## D-Day Prayer Scheme A

### Concept Description

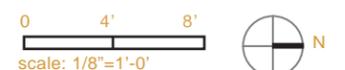
This scheme develops the previous concept by 'punctuating' the wall with gaps and allowing the Prayer to be a 'free-standing' element that is lighter and not embedded in stone. At the same time, this proposal maintains the existing symmetrical pathways and relates closely with the design language of the WWII Memorial. The Prayer remains a distinct element within the circumference of the Circle, separated by circulation on either side.

This scheme provides the following capacity for gathering and seating:

- Seating capacity - 33, including 4 wheelchair spaces (based on 21" per seat)
- Gathering space - 51 people (based on IBC 2012 code for classrooms of 20 SF/person)
- Standing room capacity - 205 people (based on IBC 2012 code for gathering of 5 SF/person)



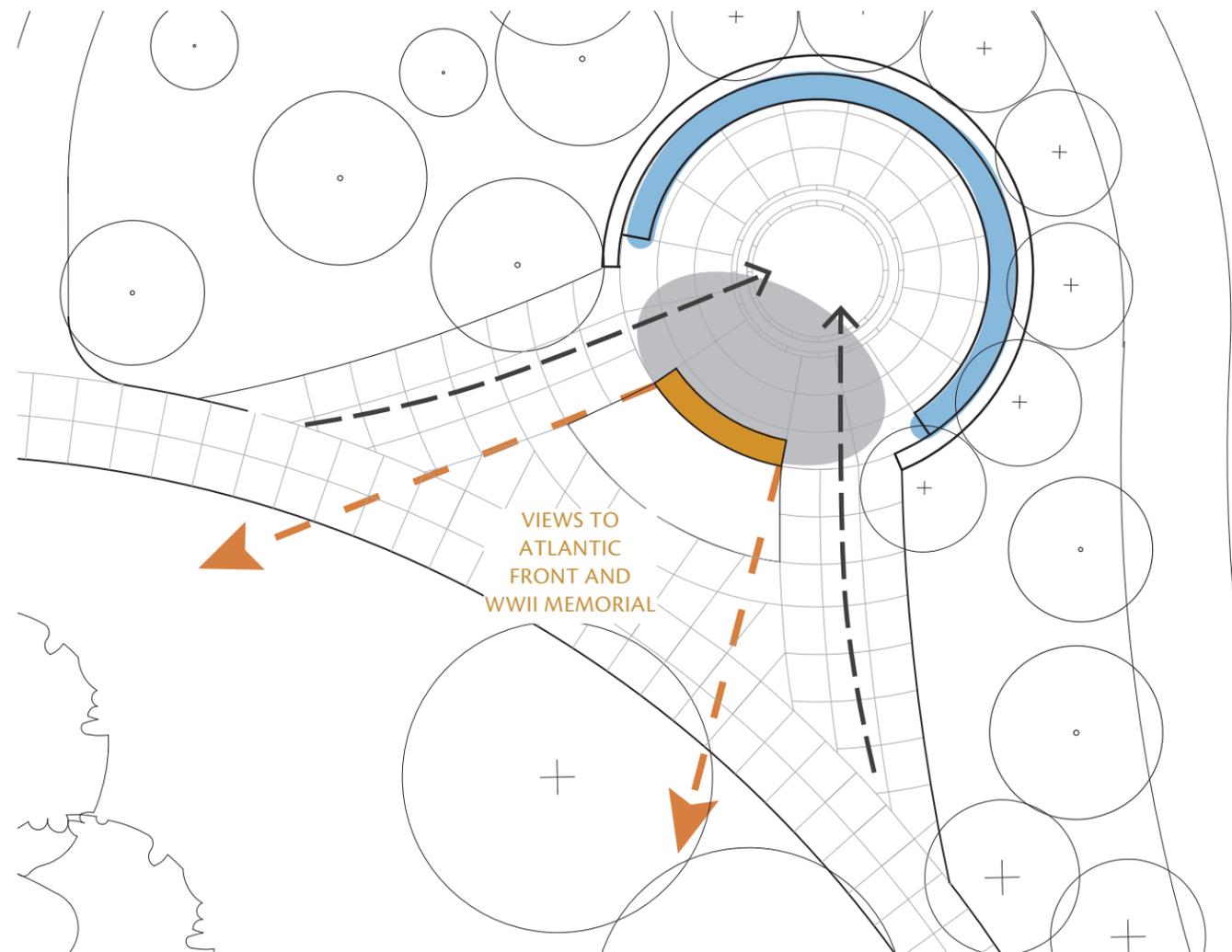
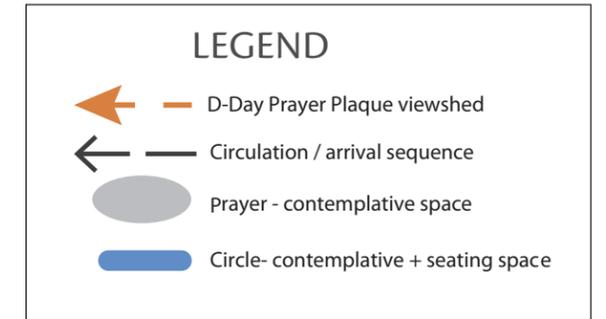
- 1) Proposed granite wall: medium grey granite
- 2) Proposed granite bench: medium grey granite
- 3) New granite paving and curb
- 4) Bronze D-Day Prayer Plaque
- 5) Existing concrete path to remain
- 6) Existing multi-stem canopy trees to remain
- 7) Proposed small flowering trees with groundcover
- 8) Proposed evergreen shrub border
- 9) Existing levee - no built structures or trees within this zone
- 10) Existing light pole to remain



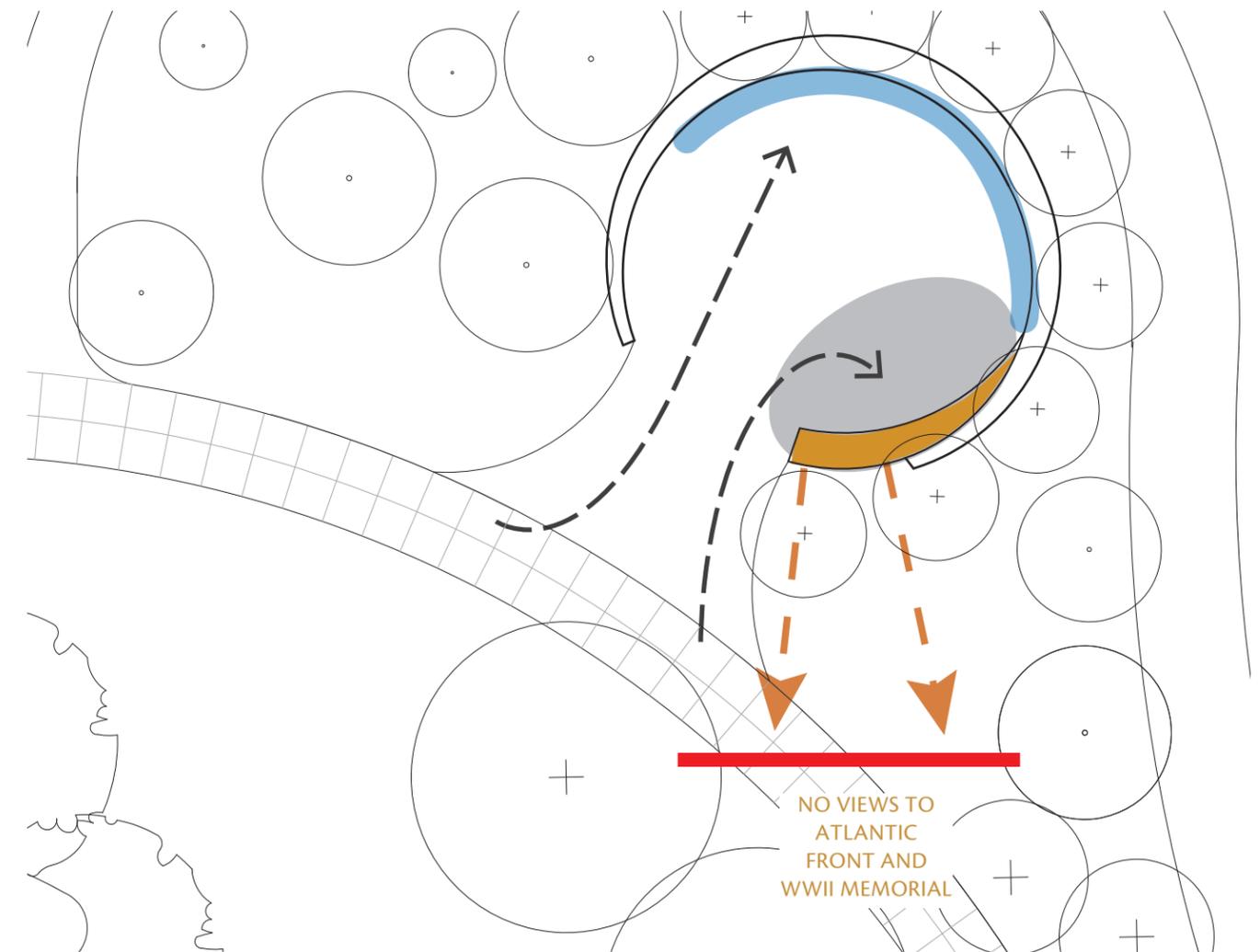
## D-Day Prayer Scheme B: Orientation and Siting Diagrams

### Establishing an arrival sequence and contemplative space

The next scheme arose from the desire to join the Circle of Remembrance with the Prayer plaque through one cohesive gesture. This scheme also endeavors to enhance the contemplative experience of the Circle and Prayer through a revised entry sequence. The diagrams which follow present the conceptual grounding and methodology for Scheme B.

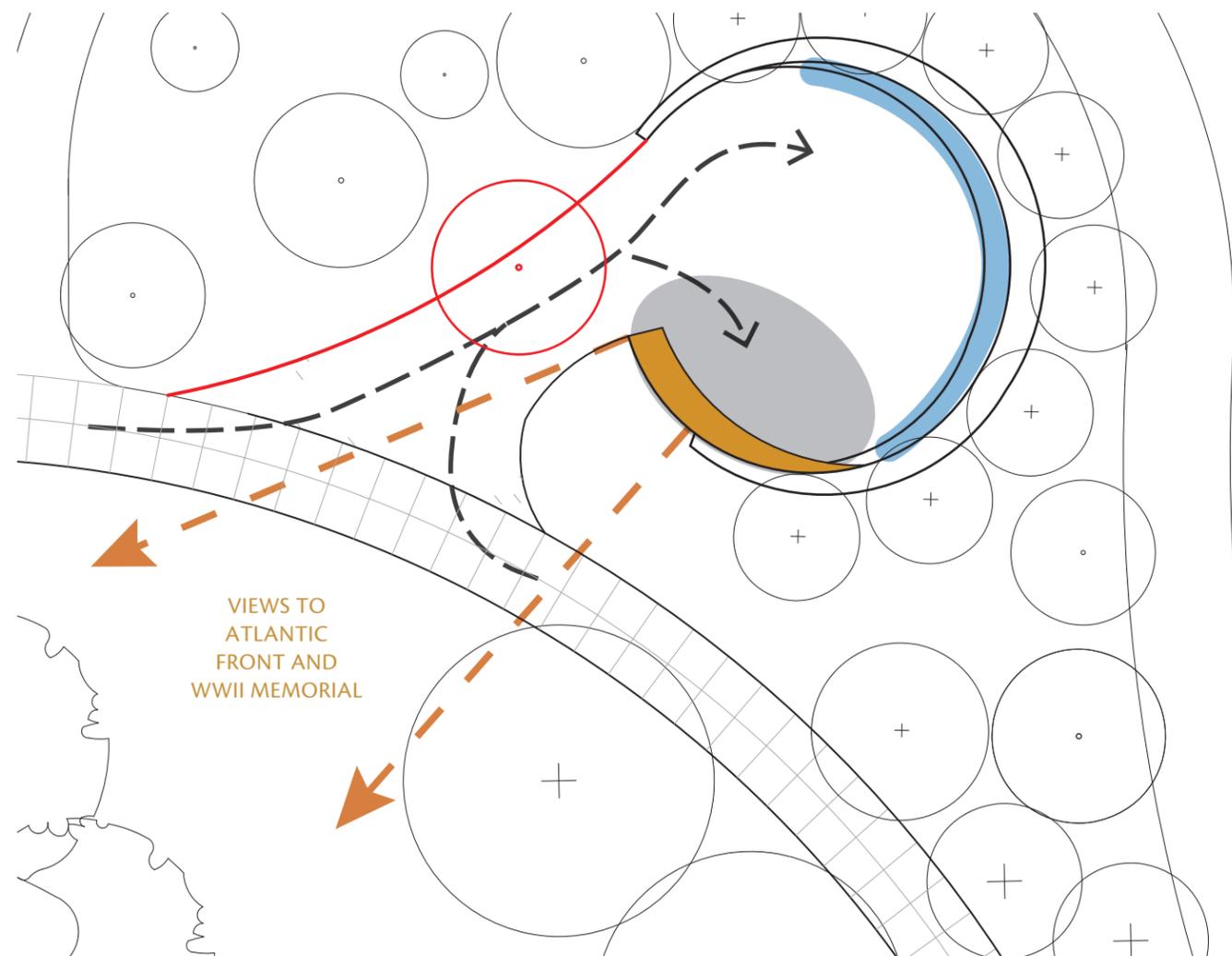


**DIAGRAM I | Existing Orientation and Viewshed:** In Scheme A the Prayer plaque is centered within the circumference of the circle, with paths on either side. This placement could expose readers of the Prayer to traffic coming in and out, reducing the 'contemplative' nature of this experience.

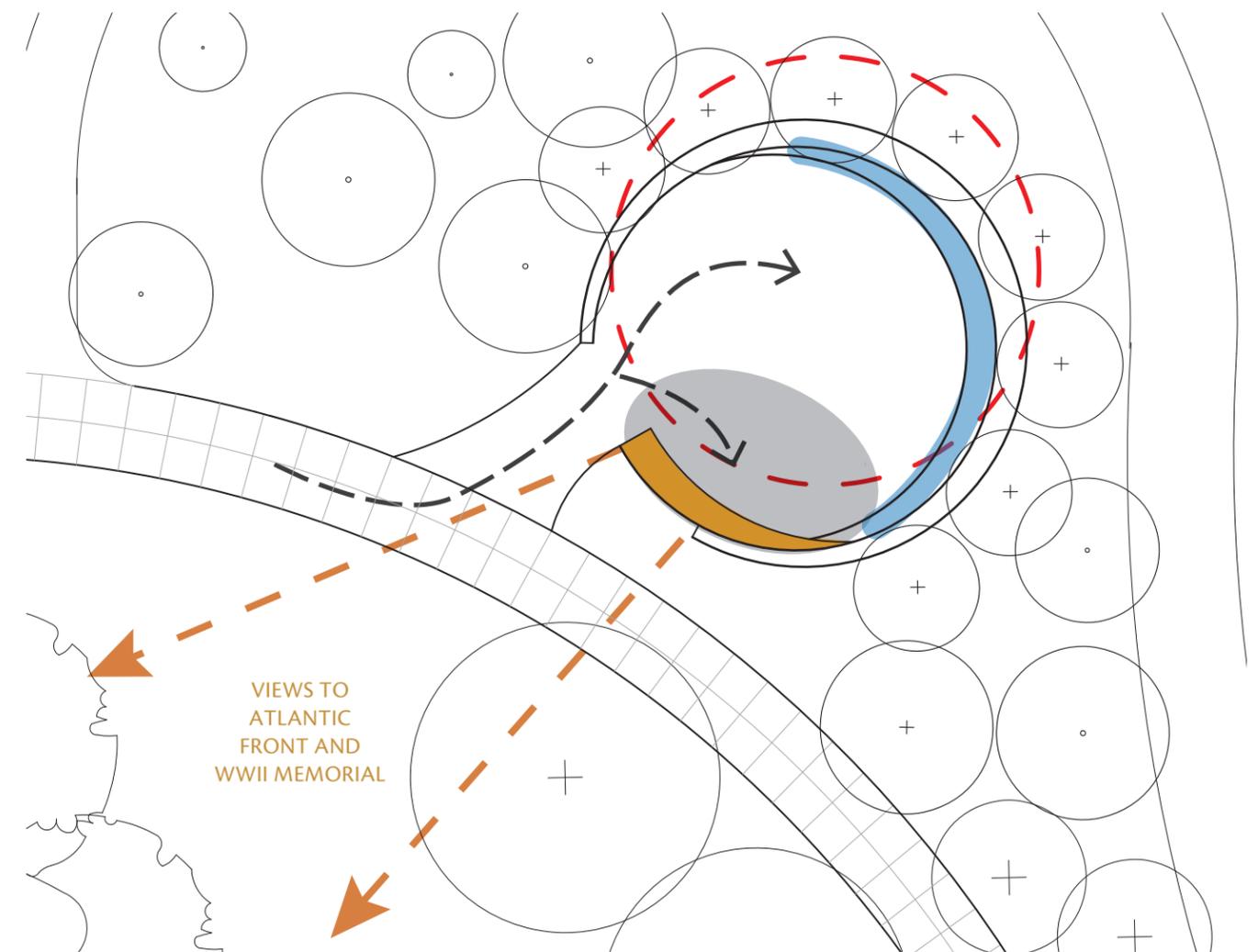


**DIAGRAM II | CONNECTING the Circle and the Plaque:** In Scheme B, the Prayer plaque is joined with the Circle of Remembrance in a single gesture. This also creates a space for the Prayer on the 'side' of the Circle rather than in the center. However, if the orientation of the current proposal is maintained, the Prayer Plaque would not be facing the WWII Memorial.

## D-Day Prayer Scheme B: Orientation and Siting Diagrams



**DIAGRAM III | ROTATING the Circle:** In order to orient the Prayer towards the Memorial, the Circle is rotated. This rotation also enhances the arrival sequence by allowing visitors to enter along the side, rather than into the center. Upon rotation, the entry path becomes unnecessarily long and conflicts with an existing tree.



**DIAGRAM IV | MOVING the Circle:** In order to provide the desirable orientation, a pleasing arrival sequence, and maintain existing trees, the Circle is moved closer to the existing path, minimizing the extent of paving and improving the layout of the walkway. At the same time, this allows sufficient low planting in front of the Prayer to buffer the contemplative experience and maintain views to the WWII Memorial.

## D-Day Prayer Scheme B

**View to WWII Memorial** In this scheme, the Prayer is a quiet extension of the overall gesture of the Circle of Remembrance. At the same time, it orients and frames visitors to the WWII Memorial. Planting beyond the Prayer provides a green backdrop that reinforces the form of the Circle without obscuring views beyond.



**View into the Circle** To enhance the gesture and intimacy of the Circle, circulation is concentrated at one point of entry and exit. The wall rises up gradually from a height of 18", creating a low back for the bench, eventually rising to a height of approximately 36" where it meets the curving Prayer plaque. This height allows for reading while standing as well as wheelchair access beneath the plaque.



## D-Day Prayer Scheme B

### Design Inspiration

The design inspiration for this scheme originates in the form and patterns of tranquil landscapes and natural forces; the concentric rings of rain falling in a pool, the textured shoreline of a beach.

The circular wall embraces two overlapping arcs which comprise the bench and Prayer. **The wall becomes a sweeping gesture that brings visitors in and gives the feeling of enclosure and sanctuary upon arrival.** Meanwhile, the groundplane is variably textured, evoking the patterns of the shoreline and highlighting areas of importance including the Prayer and seating area with a unique pattern.

The form and details of this scheme are intended to be quiet and calming, allowing visitors to focus on their thoughts and the framed views of the WWII Memorial.



Concentric water patterns | unidentified author



'Sunrise Ripples' by Mutua Matheka

## D-Day Prayer Scheme B

### Concept Description

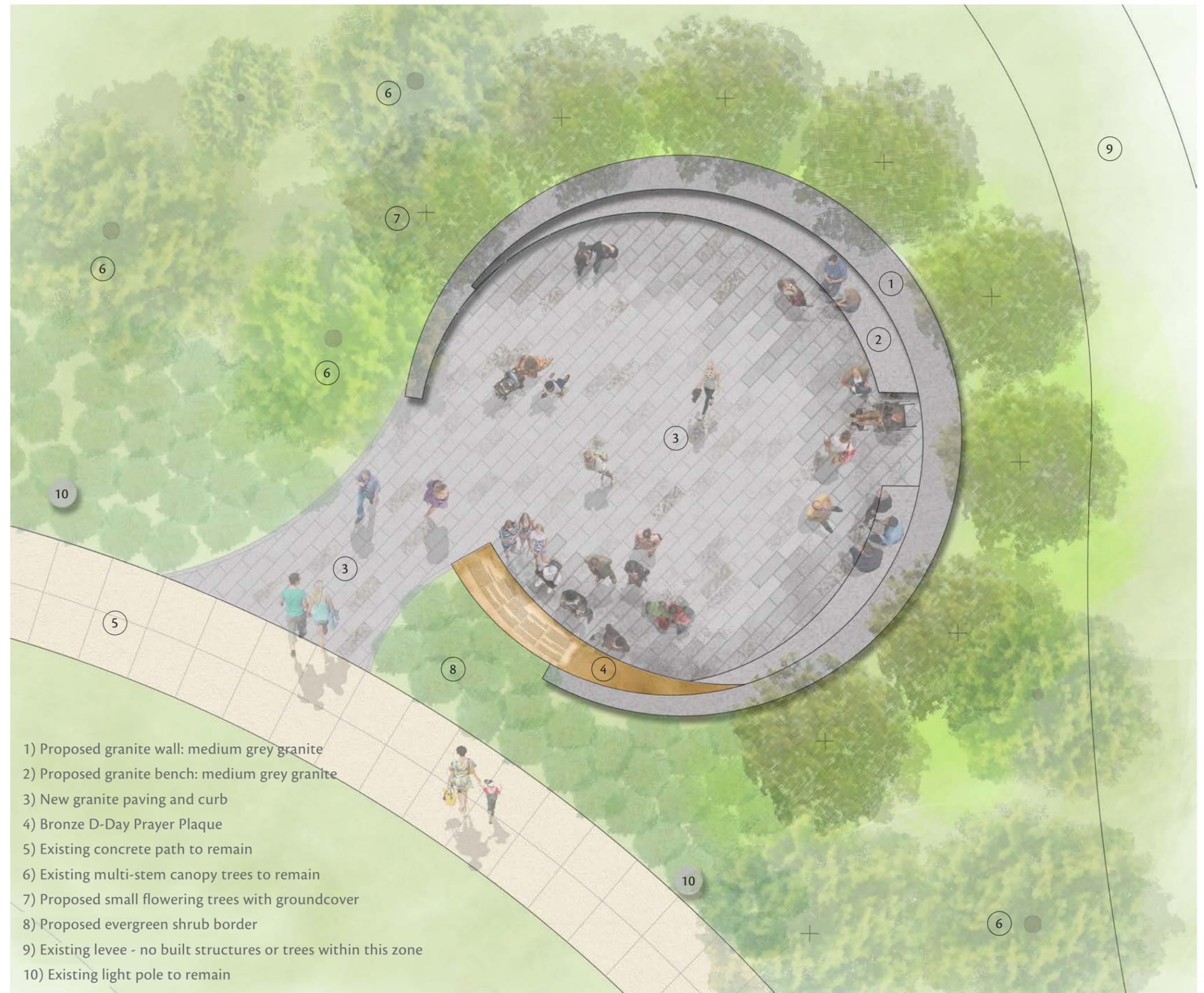
This scheme develops the previous concept through a unified, sculptural gesture that encompasses the retaining wall, bench, and the Prayer itself.

The bench is cantilevered from the circular wall to create lightness and emphasize the overall gesture. Similarly, the Prayer is an extension of the circular wall, overlapping with the curving bench, and providing an elegant transition. This treatment allows for greater transparency both into the Circle and outward, towards the Memorial.

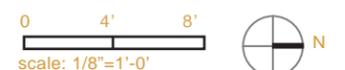
In this proposal, the Circle of Remembrance is rotated and shifted to allow the Prayer plaque to be oriented towards the WWII Memorial, while allowing for circulation on the edge of the space, rather than into the center.

This scheme provides the following capacity for gathering and seating:

- Seating capacity - 25, including 2 wheelchair spaces (based on 21" per seat)
- Gathering space - 49 people (based on IBC 2012 code for classrooms for 20 SF/person)
- Standing room capacity - 196 people (based on IBC 2012 code for gathering for 5 SF/person)



- 1) Proposed granite wall: medium grey granite
- 2) Proposed granite bench: medium grey granite
- 3) New granite paving and curb
- 4) Bronze D-Day Prayer Plaque
- 5) Existing concrete path to remain
- 6) Existing multi-stem canopy trees to remain
- 7) Proposed small flowering trees with groundcover
- 8) Proposed evergreen shrub border
- 9) Existing levee - no built structures or trees within this zone
- 10) Existing light pole to remain



## D-Day Prayer Plaque Design Studies

### Design Intent

In their review of the initial concept, **the Commission suggested the plaque “relate to the logic of the overall revised design of the Circle of Remembrance.”** In that regard, the Prayer plaque is **envisioned as an extension of the geometry of the Circle** which orients viewers to the WWII Memorial.

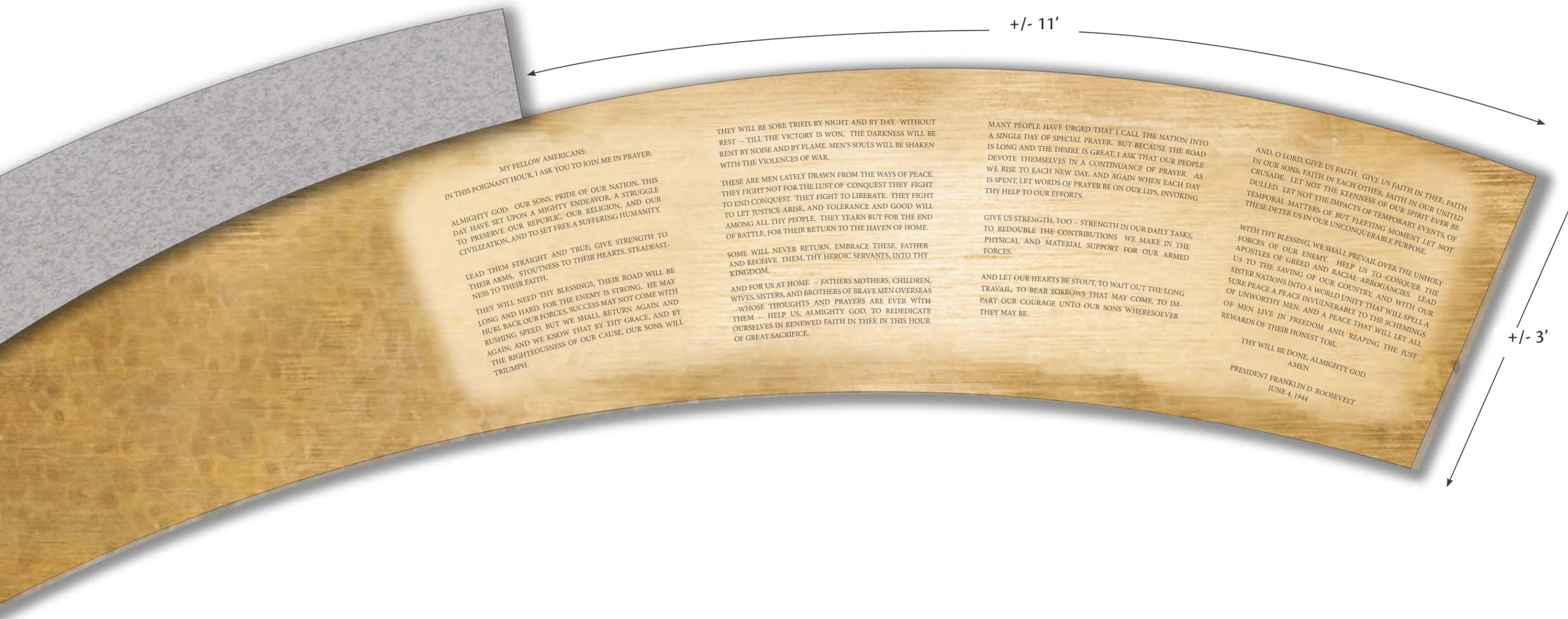
### Format

The form of the Prayer plaque requires careful attention to the layout and design of the text. Initial studies suggest the text should be laid out on the radius, aligning with the arc of the plaque. The prayer is placed in the widest area of the crescent-shape, allowing for the greatest legibility and space around the text, as well as corresponding with the primary views towards the WWII Memorial.

Based on the scale and form of the proposed plaque, the study at right breaks the text into 4 parts, depicting the Prayer in upper case text, similar to the font used at the WWII Memorial.

However, future studies will also consider the use of upper and lower case text, an approach that would carry a different aesthetic and perhaps relate to the personal nature of FDR’s address over the radio.





+/- 11'

+/- 3'

## D-Day Prayer Proposed Materials

### Materiality and Design Intent

The proposed materials for the Circle of Remembrance and D-Day Prayer will be complementary to the WWII Memorial materials.

### Wall and Bench

The proposed material for the wall is a warm grey granite to provide a transition from the Memorial grounds to the 'park' landscape of Constitution Gardens.

The bench material could be the same granite in a different finish, or a grey granite that is lighter or darker in tone to provide contrast.

### Prayer Plaque

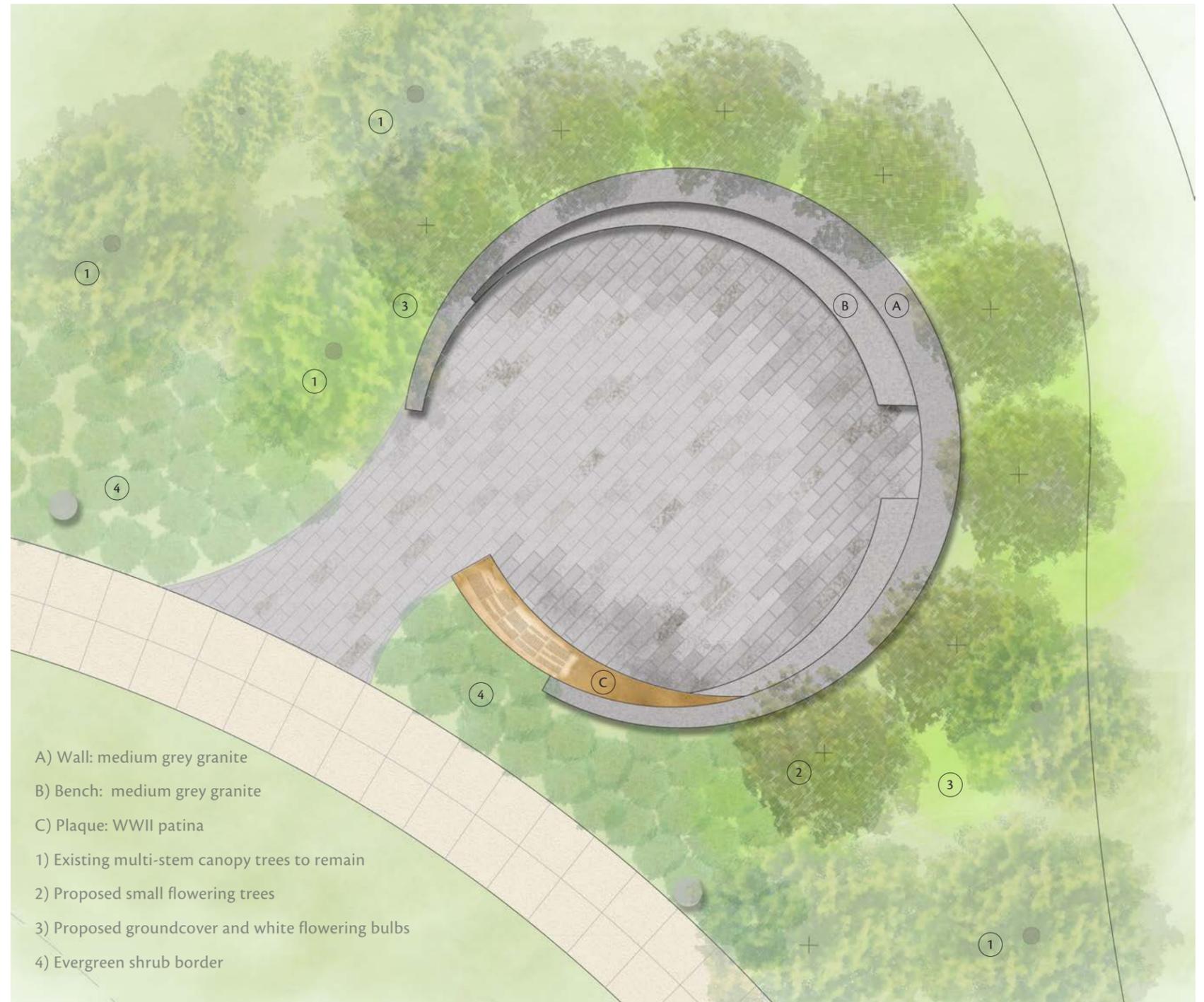
The bronze plaque will have a finish and patina similar to the emblem in the Atlantic and Pacific Arches ( see image below).

### Paving

The paving is proposed to be a light to medium grey stone, with differently textured finishes, ranging from a thermal finish to a bushhammered finish.



The proposed materials will be complementary to the stone and bronze used at the WWII Memorial, but appropriate for the context



## D-Day Prayer Planting Design

### Concept Description

The planting design is intended to emphasize the form of the space, encircling the walls with small, multi-stem flowering trees that provide a sense of enclosure and filtered views towards Constitution Gardens. This proposal also incorporates existing trees, taking advantage of their established scale and shade.

Existing and proposed trees are underplanted with hardy groundcovers that will provide yearlong greenery with minimal maintenance. To provide seasonal interest, a mix of spring and summer bulbs are interspersed throughout the groundcover. The inclusion of white flowers also references a beautiful but unrealized vision for a 'floral memorial' symbolizing peace and honoring the fallen and their families.

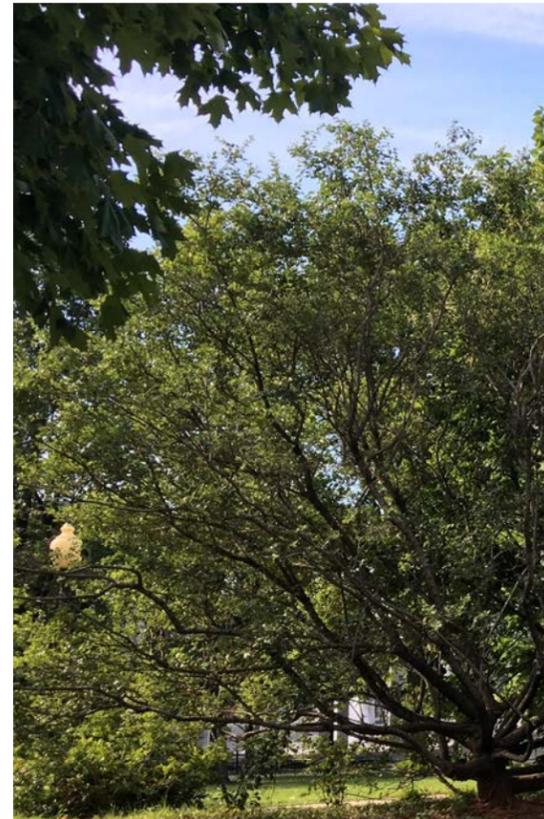
At the Circle's entry, an evergreen threshold of low, hardy shrubs frames views in and out of the Circle, while providing seasonal interest through fruit and fall color.

### Potential species

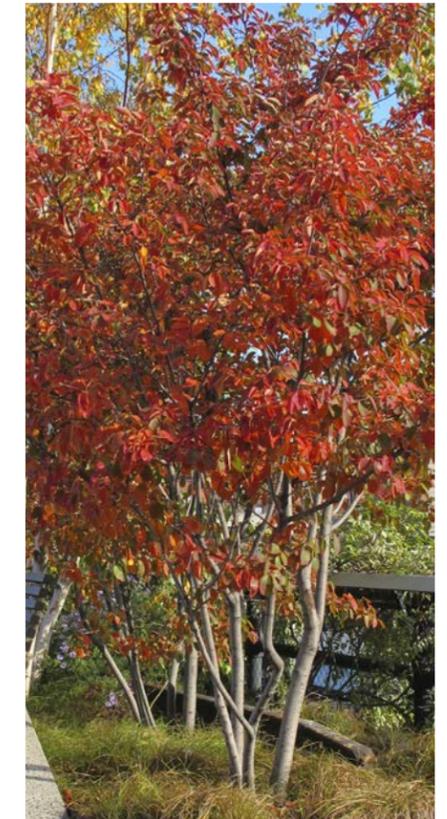
The following images are representative of initial species being considered. The final plant selection will be developed in concert with Friends of the WWII Memorial and the National Park Service to ensure consistency with the design vision, fulfillment of maintenance requirements, and consideration of the plant palette of the Memorial and National Mall context.



Existing multi-stem canopy trees: *Chionanthus retusus*



Proposed trees: *Amelanchier grandiflora* 'Autumn Brilliance'



Proposed trees: *Amelanchier grandiflora* 'Autumn Brilliance'



Proposed evergreen shrub/groundcover: *Nandina domestica* 'Harbor Dwarf'



Proposed shrub: *Hydrangea quercifolia* 'Sikes Dwarf' | Oakleaf Hydrangea



Proposed groundcover: *Epimedium x versicolor* 'Sulphureum'



Proposed bulbs: White narcissus, Snowdrops species TBD

## Appendix



LETTER FROM PREVIOUS CFA HEARING  
PREVIOUSLY APPROVED CONCEPT

23

24 - 25

## Commission of Fine Arts Letter Re: FDR Prayer Siting

CFA 17/NOV/16-2

LOCATION: West Potomac Park, 17th Street and Independence Avenue, SW Washington, DC

OWNER: National Park Service (NPS)

PROPERTY: World War II Memorial

DESCRIPTION: Install plaque with President Franklin D. Roosevelt's D-Day Prayer

REVIEW TYPE: Concept

PREVIOUS REVIEW: CFA 15/OCT/15-1

28 November 2016

Dear Mr. Vogel:

In its meeting of 17 November, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed alternative concepts for a new plaque at the Circle of Remembrance of the World War II Memorial, to be inscribed with the prayer delivered by President Franklin D. Roosevelt by radio on D-Day. The Commission gave its general approval for the second alternative, providing the following comments to guide the development of the design.

The Commission members expressed strong support for the second option, which treats the plaque as an extension of the circular geometry of the site. However, they recommended more flexibility in the design of the elements defining the circle: for example, they suggested that the circumferential stone bench could be punctuated with gaps or sculpted along its length, and that the paths leading into the site could be asymmetrical in width. They recommended further study of the layout and mounting of the bronze panels to relate them to the logic of the overall revised design of the Circle of Remembrance. They encouraged the careful treatment of materials and details that define the setting of the plaque and circle as a contemplative component of the World War II Memorial, rather than as part of the general recreational area of the adjacent Constitution Gardens.

The Commission looks forward to the review of a revised concept design that responds to these comments. As always, the staff is available to assist you with the development of the design.

Sincerely,  
/s/ Thomas E. Luebke, FAIA  
Secretary

Robert Vogel, Regional Director  
National Park Service, National Capital Region  
1100 Ohio Drive, SW  
Washington, DC 20242

cc: Sheila Brady, Oehme, van Sweden & Associates  
Holly Rotondi, Friends of the National World War II Memorial

## Previously presented concept: D-Day Prayer Design Alternative II

### Concept Description

This alternative 'completes' the Circle, placing the prayer on a curved granite wall within the bounds of the Circle's circumference. Similarly to Alternative I, The Prayer is inscribed onto a bronze plaque that is placed on top of the wall. The wall is approximately 2.5' tall, 3.5' wide and 14' long.

### Adherence to Design Criteria

#### CONTEMPLATIVE CHARACTER

- The Prayer is placed within the Circle, so the contemplative space of the Circle and the Prayer Memorial are shared.

#### VEGETATIVE SCREENING

- A sense of enclosure is provided by small, multi-stem flowering trees that surround the circular wall, while low shrubs at the entry provide visual separation of the Circle from the path.

#### COMPATIBILITY WITH EXISTING CIRCULATION AND VISITATION PATTERNS

- The layout of the existing pathways would be modified to allow entry into the Circle on either side of the proposed Prayer.

#### EASE OF LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE

- The Prayer is proposed to be engraved on a bronze plaque for easy long-term maintenance.

#### VISUAL CONNECTION WITH THE WWII MEMORIAL

- Visitors to the D-Day Prayer would have views of the WWII Memorial in the background.

#### ADHERENCE WITH ORIGINAL WWII MEMORIAL DESIGN INTENT

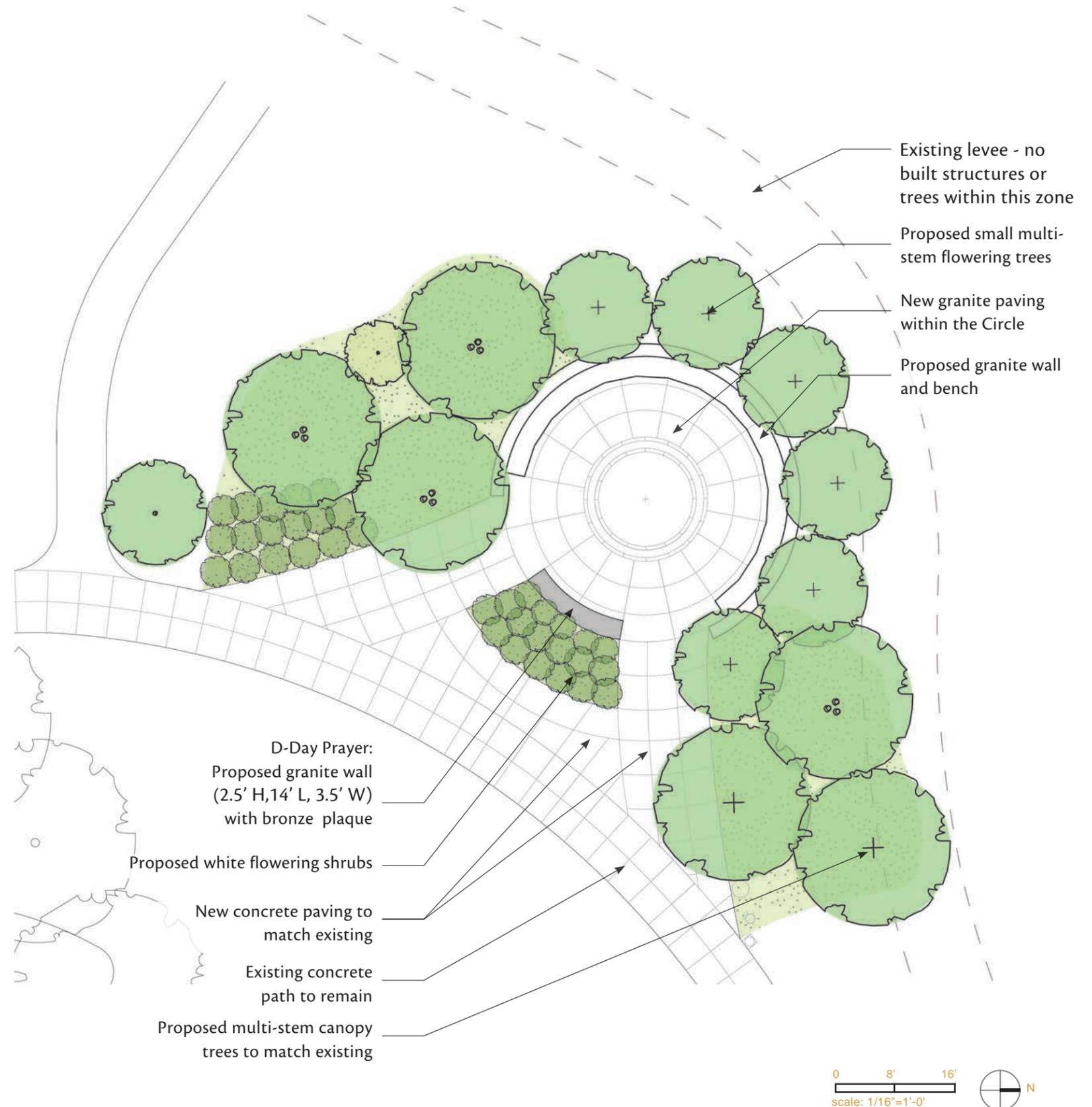
- The benches, paving and walls of this alternative are consistent with the materials and aesthetics of the WWII Memorial.

#### COMFORT AND LEGIBILITY

- Visitors will be able to comfortably read the Prayer from a standing position.

#### LEGIBILITY AND PRAYER FORMAT

- The bronze engraving will ensure long term legibility and the font will be sized to meet accessibility standards.



## Previously presented concept: D-Day Prayer Design Alternative II

Design Alternative II was selected as a preferred concept because it emphasizes the 'circular' form of the Circle of Remembrance and creates a strong visual connection with the WWII Memorial. This alternative would provide additional enclosure for the Circle, while creating a defined threshold.



