

Subj: RE: NPS Design Review: no cover note
Date: Thursday, February 14, 2002 1:13:13 PM
From:
To:

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of 3

In Memory Plaque JCAIA 9708.10-VVMF
13 February 2002

MEMORANDUM:

TO: Kenneth S Pond
Executive Director
American Battle Monuments Commission
Courthouse Plaza II, Suite 500
2300 Clarendon Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia
22201
FROM: James Cummings, AIA

Washington, DC
20007

telephone
telecopier

PROJECT: In Memory Plaque
(Vietnam Memorial Commemorative Plaque, PL 106-214)
Vietnam Veterans Memorial
Washington, DC
JCAIA 9708.10-VVMF

RE: National Park Service Review Comments, regarding
Design Proposal Report, dated 1 November 2001

REMARKS:

The following responses are to comments conveyed to the Design Team as
an
attachment to American Battle Monuments Commission letter to James
Cummings

AIA, dated 15 January 2002, signed by ABMC Executive Director Kenneth S Pond:

(Comments are indicated in italicized text; Responses are in plain text, indented)

PART I

Design Proposal Report

1. Page 4 - This analysis describes the "Sacrosanct Zones" that encompass the Memorial Wall

and the Vietnam Women's Memorial. These areas are shown on the Sacrosanct

Zones Diagram

before Page 7.

The Site Analysis Study does not use this same terminology or graphic. The terminology between

the two studies should be consistent.

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The terminology is not consistent, because the documents and the supporting analyses have had different objectives and criteria.

2. George Dickie has previously defined the "soul of the memorial" as being along the

Centerline extending south from the apex of the wall. This sacrosanct zone, an important design

element, should be fully described.

This centerline area of the memorial is not mentioned in the Site Selection Study or the Design

Proposal Report. See "Critical Views" diagram before Page 8 of the Site Selection Study or the

Visual Experience Diagram before Page 8 in the Design Proposal Report. This important design

element should be included.

The comment seems to understand the meaning of "sacrosanct" to be "inviolable." In this report, the word "sacrosanct" is intended to mean "hallowed." A careful study of visitors to the Memorial was performed to identify when most visitors became aware of the Memorial and modified their behavior in a way that suggested they believed they had entered hallowed ground.

An early design decision was made to investigate locations (and suitable designs) inside the Sacrosanct Zone for the Plaque, as a way to increase the honor afforded to those named in the commemoration.

The centerline "axis" of the Memorial Wall had no apparent impact on the visitors to the memorial grounds. It, therefore, is not reflected in the defined Sacrosanct Zone.

The criteria of the Sacrosanct Zone analysis will be added to the report and the term "sacrosanct" will be replaced.

3. Page 10 - Describes the proposed design as monolithic gray granite stone.

a. the color must match the color and finish of the curved paving stones.

b. the inscription would preferably be engraved into the stone.

c. no grout or metal should be used to fill the inscribed letters.

a. We concur.

b. We concur.

c. We look forward to the opportunity to develop this aspect of the design in partnership with the ABMC and the National Park Service.

4. Page 11 - Proposed Locations

The site which has been defined and supported by the memorial coalition and its professional

advisors, Site B, is an innovative and simple solution which integrates well with the carefully designed environment.

The "small reveal" of the stone in the submitted concept drawing will be a tripping hazard. The inscribed stone must be set level with the existing or new curved walkway panel stones.

We look forward to the opportunity to develop this aspect of the design in partnership with the ABMC and the National Park Service.

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5. Page 11 - Other improvements

There is insufficient information to comment on the new design for the cobble walk, perimeter curb, lighting or plant replacements.

The existing water flow into the trees and shrubs on the east side of the statue plaza should not be

altered. Does the plaque proposal imply that its installation will result in the regrading of the entire plaza, and that all the stone work would be removed and reset? Disturbance of the site should be kept to a minimum.

A new curb is an additional element to the landscape which is not desirable. The addition of Barberry into the area is not desirable.

We look forward to the opportunity to develop this aspect of the design in partnership with the ABMC and the National Park Service.

6. Page 10 - the inscription is good. Is there a preferred layout? The layout on Page 10 is traditional, whereas the layout on Page 1 shows an alignment of the inscription with a rigid right border.

The inscription at the center of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial as shown on Page 6 has text that is aligned to both left and right margins. An alternative that could be shown is:

IN MEMORY OF MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED IN THE VIETNAM WAR
AND LATER DIED AS A RESULT OF THAT SERVICE
WE HONOR AND REMEMBER THEIR SACRIFICE

These layouts (or others) should be shown for review and comment.

The proposed layout for the inscription, shown on Page 10, is preferred, because it provides an arrangement that is "self-contained." We believe it is

important that the In Memory Plaque not be misconstrued as a dedication of the adjacent Three Servicemen Statue.

7. Page 6 - Please consider deleting the last sentence on this page regarding the Informal asphalt walk.

We will change the text to read: "The Vietnam Women's Memorial was installed and dedicated in 1993. Minor improvements to the grounds have been made since then."

8. Page 14 - The post and chain needs to remain at the site.

We look forward to the opportunity to develop this aspect of the design in partnership with the ABMC and the National Park Service.

End of Memorandum.

-----Original Message-----

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Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2002 12:52 PM
To:
Subject: Fwd: NPS Design Review: no cover note

----- Headers -----

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