

National Mall Liberty Fund DC



*National Liberty Memorial
Site Selection Report
December 12, 2013*

National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission



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Executive Summary

National Mall Liberty Fund DC (Liberty Fund DC) asked the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission (NCMAC) for advice on eight (8) potential sites for the National Liberty Memorial during the meeting of July 23, 2013. The Site Selection Report is available at the website of the National Park Service (NPS), NCMAC documents: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?documentID=50005>.

The Commissioners commented on six (6) of the sites and suggested an additional one for consideration. The most comments were reserved for the Jamie L. Whitten Building, which is owned by the General Services Administration (GSA) and managed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). In a letter to Liberty Fund DC of October 28, 2013, NCMAC Chairman Peter May said, "All members agreed that the #5 site, near the U.S. Department of Agriculture, offered great promise." The Whitten Building currently is at the top of a list of preferred sites because of its unobstructed views of the Washington Monument and the proximity of the site to the future National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC). More than any other, this site could convey to visitors the unequivocal story of the fulfillment of the principles of the Declaration of Independence. Sharing the site with an historic building that represents America's agricultural past, only blocks from the White House and Capitol, will demonstrate the resolve of African Americans to travel the rough road, from enslaved plantation workers to patriots and soldiers, second class citizens, elected officials and president of the USA.

The only reasonable alternative, Freedom Plaza, presents significant complications, particularly construction costs and the level of other improvements required to reinvigorate the property. A re-imagination of the site, even one that retains the positive attributes of the design, would impose considerable short-term adverse impacts on downtown Washington, DC. However, while Freedom Plaza presents enormous challenges beyond the scope of the National Liberty Memorial, as one Commissioner accurately observed, the rewards of a new "National Town Square" -- capable of meeting the demands of time and usage beyond the mere 30 years of the current scheme -- are exceptional. Whether the National Liberty Memorial is the catalyst for such a transformation remains to be determined. Other cities, like Boston and Chicago among others, have fashioned compelling spaces from dreary ones that now accommodate both large gatherings and shaded solitary visits. They tapped into the potential of the underground to subsidize and transform the above-ground space. In doing so, they increased space for a larger range of activities while generating sustaining funds from what was a hidden resource underfoot.

Liberty Fund DC reviewed the transcript of the meeting of July 23 and the letter of Chairman May that explains the Commission's considerations. At the upcoming meeting of December 12, we will review (1) the comments and advice of NCMAC; (2) potential sites suggested for additional review; (3) a slide presentation of preferred sites; (4) conceptual design alternatives at preferred sites; and (5) the special demands of the landscape and design of the Jamie L. Whitten Building.

We will ask NCMAC to (1) reaffirm the "preeminent historical and lasting significance" of the history and (2) make a favorable recommendation of a preferred site.

Presentation of December 12, 2013

1. Summary of NCMAC meeting of July 23,2013

- Commissioners' comments
- Walt Whitman Park
- Reservation 113 (Virginia and Maryland Avenues)
- Belvedere

2. Reaffirmation of the “preeminent historical and lasting significance” of the history of African Americans of the Revolutionary War era

3. Slide presentation of preferred sites (reverse order)

- #3 Interior South Triangle (NPS)
- #2 Freedom Plaza (NPS)
- #1 Jamie L. Whitten Building (GSA)

4. Discussion of the Olmstead landscape plan and design considerations for the Jamie L. Whitten Building

5. Discussion of conceptual design alternatives at preferred sites

6. Request for a favorable recommendation of the Jamie L. Whitten Building as the preferred site

Background

National Mall Liberty Fund DC is authorized by the National Defense Authorization Act of 2013, Public Law 112-239, to establish a memorial in either Area I or Area II of Washington, DC. The memorial would honor the contributions of African Americans to the Revolutionary War and illuminate the long struggle to achieve the “blessings of liberty.”

Our Committee on Site and Design (SDC) examined 43 potential memorial sites located in and around the Monumental Core with these objectives:

1. Identify every available site
2. Compare sites to determine characteristics that would enable a memorial to be understood
3. Draft objective site selection criteria that identify sites having the closest association with the subject matter
4. Identify facts that define the criteria and are capable of comparison across multiple sites (Example: “prominence” equates to distance, proximity and sightlines to the Washington Monument – not a panel’s scoring of 1 to 4.)
5. Determine how a memorial could harmonize the physical and historical context of a site into a message about the nation’s principles
6. Explore the benefits a memorial could derive from, and offer to, the area surrounding a site

A Site Selection Report submitted for the NCMAC meeting of July 23, 2013, addresses eight (8) of 10 sites qualified by 18 criteria. Five stood out as the best qualified based on proximity to the Washington Monument, symbols of the Revolutionary War and relevant military, political, and civil rights history. These sites were submitted for the consideration of NCMAC.

- Lincoln Memorial Northwest (Site 1)
- Interior Department Triangle at Virginia Avenue (Site 2)
- Walt Whitman Park (Site 3)
- Freedom Plaza (Site 4)
- Jamie L. Whitten Building, USDA, 14th Street (Site 5)

Whitten and Freedom Plaza ranked highest, based on scores of qualified, excellent and exceptional. Whitten ranked exceptional in 17 categories. Freedom Plaza ranked excellent or above in 14 categories. Freedom Plaza has 12 sightlines to relevant history, including the Pulaski Memorial. However, one of Whitten’s six sightlines is the entire Washington Monument.

Of the eight (8) sites submitted on July 23, Commissioners commented on six. The most comments were reserved for the Jamie L. Whitten Building. They were overwhelmingly positive.

One additional site was suggested for consideration: Belvedere, located along the Potomac River between the Lincoln Memorial and the Kennedy Center. In addition, Chairman May suggested that the search could benefit by taking a second look at the larger list of sites to determine if any are worth reconsideration. Liberty Fund DC took the Commission's advice seriously. We compared the 18 criteria to Belvedere and reviewed the original list of 43 sites to determine if any others were worthy of the same consideration.

Site	Commission Guidance and Response
Lincoln Memorial Northwest (Site 1)	Comments about lack of connectedness to the Mall and remoteness caused the elimination of this site.
Interior Department Triangle at Virginia Avenue (Site 2)	While no Commissioner commented on this site, we believe its proximity to the Washington Monument and the Mall entitle it to remain as a finalist site. While it is far smaller than Walt Whitman Park, adjoined by a parking lot, off the tourist path, and in an area associated with affairs of state, its "staging" potential is superior to other sites.
Walt Whitman Park (Site 3)	Uncertainty over future development and its unruly size and slope caused the elimination of this site along with its inscrutability with respect to where to place the memorial precinct -- costs could approach Freedom Plaza without creating an acceptable visitor experience.
Freedom Plaza (Site 4)	Although three comments were cautionary or unfavorable, one suggests that there could be potential if there were a plan to "enhance" and "preserve" what already exists at the site. We believe that Freedom Plaza may possess economic possibilities that could subsidize its renewal
Jamie L. Whitten Building (Site 5)	Favorable comments, and no negative ones, affirmed our initial decision to designate this as the preferred site.
Belvedere	While we concur in the beauty of this site, we are concerned with – the dangers pedestrians would confront by highway traffic, the unfavorable cost-benefit ratio of minimizing the hazards, and the distance from the Washington Monument and other defining structures. A view to the Kennedy Center is obstructed by a roadway overpass.
Reservation 113 (Virginia and Maryland Avenues SW)	A picture taken of the Whitten Building during the 1930s suggests the existence of an open view from this site to the Washington Monument along Virginia Avenue. If such a view existed today, it would be easy to designate this site a finalist, however, there is too much uncertainty about the timing and extent of redevelopment required to rescue this site from obscurity.
Other sites of the original 43	We reviewed the 43 original sites, particularly those near Arlington Cemetery with possible views to the Washington Monument. However, because of their remoteness from the Mall and association with the cemetery, we determined they would not offer the same uplifting celebratory opportunity as the three preferred sites. The sites at and near Hains Point are compelling. However, these sites are remote from the Mall and appropriate for a tall memorial that seeks to be seen from a distance.

Among other things, we tried to determine if there were any common themes running through the Commission's remarks. There were. Moreover, they closely track our memorial criteria. Cautionary terms were used for certain sites even while their good qualities were put forward. We sought to understand how Commissioners sorted through the good and not-so-good qualities of sites and applied them to consideration of Belvedere and the reconsideration of Reservation 113, Walt Whitman Park and others:

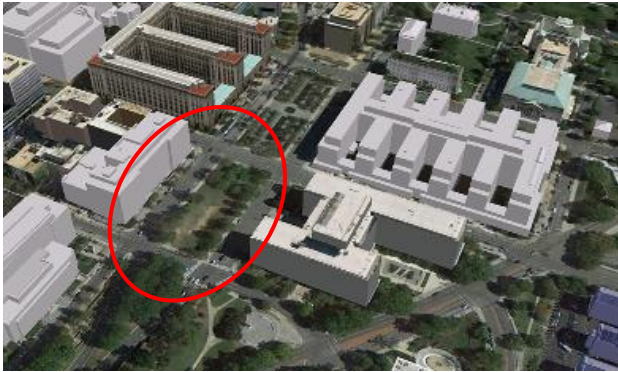
- Highway impact: "maze of freeways"
- Isolation: "not very well connected to the Mall" and "lost in the crowd"
- Accessibility: "hard to physically get to because of the traffic"

- Connectivity: “proximity to the Washington Monument” (also National Museum of African American History and Culture)
- Focus: “beyond the scope of the project”
- Potential: the possibility that stunning vistas will open at one site in particular (Reservation 113)
- Interaction: “engagement with nearby buildings”

Site	Commissioners’ Comments: NCMAC Meeting of July 23, 2013
Lincoln Memorial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>lost in the maze of freeways -- not very well connected to the Mall</i> ▪ <i>I think it's just sort of lost</i>
Walt Whitman Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>anything that moves that forward... is a very positive thing</i> ▪ <i>undefined space, has a lot of freedom as an opportunity</i>
Freedom Plaza	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>if the direction would be to enhance the existing and preserve what was done, this might make sense in that location</i> ▪ <i>enormously difficult, don't know what would change our opinion</i> ▪ <i>a distant last</i> ▪ <i>I think it is going to be beyond the scope of what you want to do</i>
J.L. Whitten West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>has potential , worth keeping on list</i> ▪ <i>there is a lot of potential</i> ▪ <i>in terms of message, proximity to the Washington monument, and African American History Museum, it is maybe the most compelling</i> ▪ <i>I'd associate myself with the comments favoring Whitten West</i> ▪ <i>the Whitten site has a lot of things going for it; a lot of connections there</i> ▪ <i>the Whitten site is marvelous; proximity to the museum is important; integration with people's Garden, makes sense; it works on a number of levels</i>
Reservation 113	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>makes sense to hold while efforts to redevelop area fall into place.</i> ▪ <i>the potential for enormous visibility, certainly wouldn't, have a lot of engagement with surrounding buildings, hinges on SW Ecodistrict</i>
Maryland SW Ext.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>an isolated location, a site for the future, but perhaps not for this one right now</i>
Belvedere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>it's a question of finding the right nexus</i> ▪ <i>can imagine something like you're proposing at that location; hard to get to</i>

Sites Reconsidered

Walt Whitman Park



Walt Whitman Park

Although capable of improvement and the accruals of expression and beauty, Whitman Park lacks any visible relationships to the Revolutionary War and African-Americans. A design in the vein of a mall in miniature or a “new Freedom Plaza,” might steal away some tourists from the popular spots where those elements are in abundance. But the numbers would not justify the cost or considerable effort to obtain the resources and run the gamut of a complex approval process. The location is central to long-standing plans to redevelop the entire E Street Corridor, from the Kennedy Center to Rawlins Park.

Reservation 113

Reservation 113 lacks the inspiring texture molded by the classical buildings of Freedom Plaza or the Whitten Building. The neighborhood is sterile, barren and awkward. It is dominated by a federal building that blocks the sunlight off the Mall and by railroad tracks and a Metro Station. Improvements anticipated by the SW Ecodistrict and other plans promise to liberate the viewshed to the Washington Monument now occupied by enormous office buildings, including the Forrestal. These plans do not coincide with the need for Liberty Fund DC to obtain an unencumbered space that is design-ready.

Neither Whitman Park nor Reservation 113, or their surroundings, offer clues about where a memorial hardscape could be located. Should a memorial at Reservation 113 be oriented toward the Washington Monument, for which no view exists, or toward the U.S. Capitol which would offer a lesser narrative?



Reservation 113 (Virginia and Maryland Avenues)

A critical drawback in the Whitman Park and Reservation 113 sites is scale. Each site seems to demand a large and grand memorial solution -- not a modest one. These sites and their surroundings seem at odds with one another. Neither the sites nor the structures around them suggest what, together, they might become. A corridor plan is more likely to find the solution than a single memorial.

Belvedere

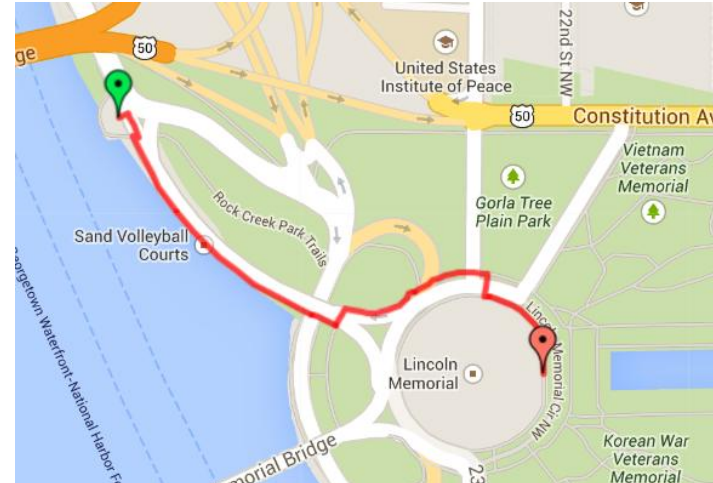


Belvedere

While we concur in the beauty of this site, we are concerned with the dangers pedestrians would confront by highway traffic, the unfavorable cost-benefit ratio of minimizing the hazards, and the distance from the Washington Monument and other defining structures. The backdrop to the north, a view to the Kennedy Center, is obstructed by an overpass connected to a rusting section of the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge. There is no parking available. The passengers of a vehicle stopping for a quick visit are likely to endanger the safety of other vehicles moving southward on the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway. This is a spot to behold in a passing vehicle; it is not likely to attract visitation from the neighborhoods of the Kennedy Center and Lincoln Memorial. A memorial here would be forgotten except to daily commuters and joggers and hikers.

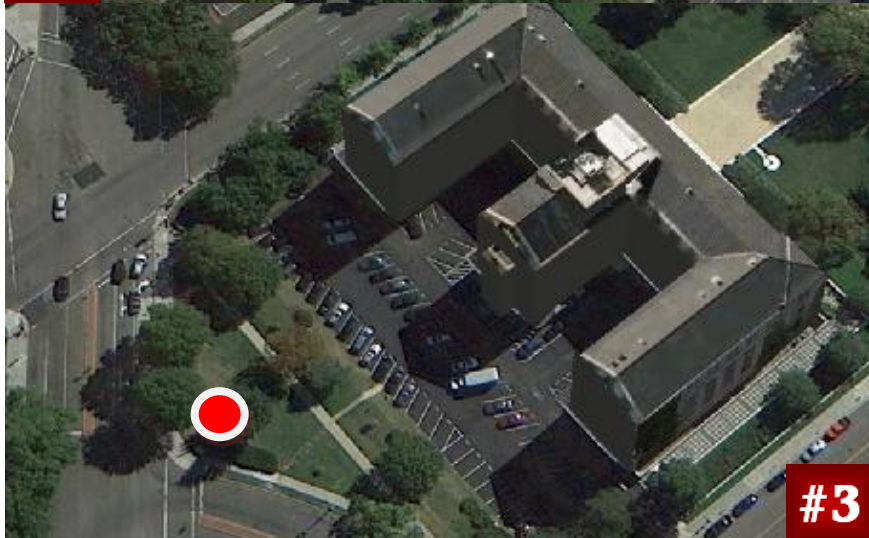
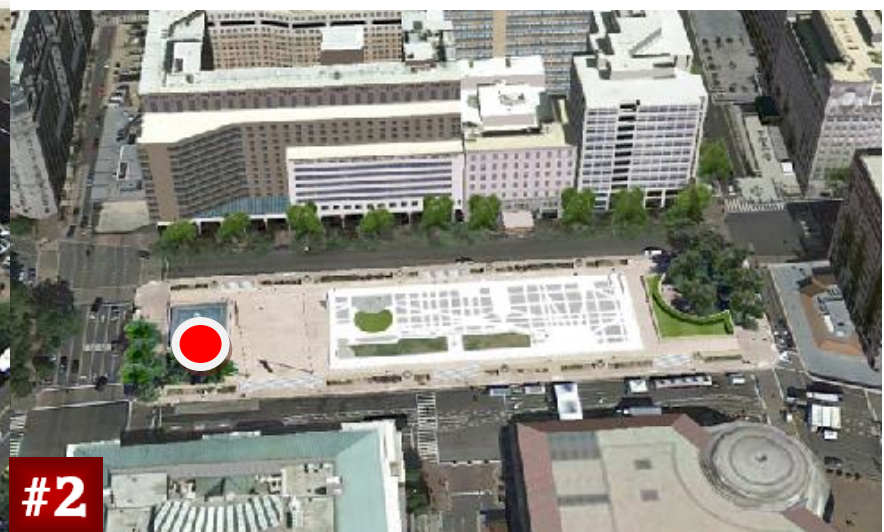
Belvedere is located on the Potomac River about 0.50 miles along an uncertain trail to the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. This nearly 10,000 square foot site is separated from the Mall and the Washington Monument by a ribbon of highways, streets and confusing trails, including the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkways and Route 50. The site is accessible somewhat along the Rock Creek Trails, which requires a walker to be mindful of where they are along the circuitous and uneven terrain leading across Lincoln Memorial Circle, Ohio Drive SW and Rock Creek and Potomac Parkways. The walk presents an adventure, particularly for tourists whose time is limited. There are no views of the Washington Monument.

While we concur in the beauty of this site, we are concerned



Lincoln Memorial to Belvedere

**Preferred Sites
Overhead Views**



#1 Jamie L. Whitten Building

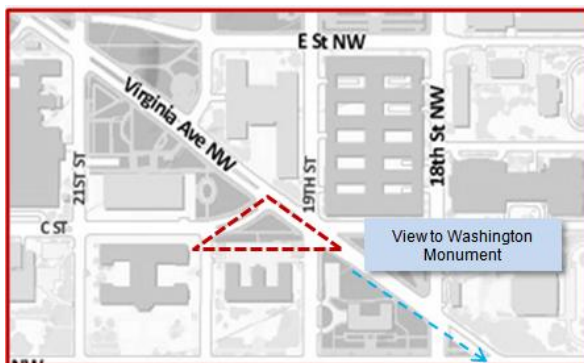
#2 Freedom Plaza

#3 Interior South Triangle

Distances, Sizes and Ownership

Walking Distances from	Washington Monument	Closest Revolutionary War Memorial	African American History Museum	MLK Memorial	Nearest Metro Station	Acres	Ft./Sq. Ft. Sq. Ft. Precinct (Approx.)	Ownership
#1 J.L. Whitten West USDA	05 mins / 0.3 mi	05 mins (Washington Monument)	05 mins	16 mins	05 mins / 0.3 mi (Smithsonian)	0.2 acres more or less of 0.3	160 x 86 Site 13,560 Site 6,000 Precinct	GSA
#2 Freedom Plaza	11 mins / 0.6 mi	01 min (Pulaski)	07 mins	27 mins	06 mins / 0.3 mi (Metro Center)	0.2 acres of 1.4 acres	453 x 143 Site 64,764 Site 6,000 Precinct	NPS
#3 Interior at Virginia & 19th	12 mins / 0.6 mi	03 mins (DAR Constitution Hall)	16 mins	18 mins	13 mins 0.7 mi (Foggy Bottom)	0.3 – 0.4 acres	311 x 95 Site 13,119 Site 3,000 Precinct	NPS

Interior South Triangle #3



This exactly 13,119 square feet site was transferred to NPS in 1969 in a land swap with the District of Columbia. The site is bounded by a sidewalk, parking lot and the South Interior Building that fronts on Constitution Avenue directly across from the National Mall. The eastern boundaries are Virginia Avenue and a portion of 19th Street at the southwest corner of Virginia Avenue. The western boundary is C Street, NW. While the site is surrounded by symbols of international heroes (Simon Bolivar and General Jose de San Martin) and buildings that relate to affairs of state and the economy, Virginia Avenue west has a direct view of the Washington Monument. There is a lesser view from the sidewalk and virtually no view from the site except partially when the leaves are off the trees. The site offers the smallest precinct for a memorial, assuming construction would occur at the point where the sidewalks along C Street and Virginia Avenue interconnect. The site is a short walk to DAR Constitution Hall and a longer one to the Signers Memorial and the Washington Monument. There are no obvious pedestrian hazards posed by the placement of highways. The site falls short for the National Liberty Memorial. It is not connected to any other memorials or buildings that relate to the era. The memorial precinct to the south would be framed by a parking lot, which does not physically interfere with the positioning of the memorial. There would be no reason to ask for its removal except for esthetic purposes or to expand the memorial's gathering space. Any camouflaging would also cover up parts of the Interior South Building from views on Virginia Avenue.

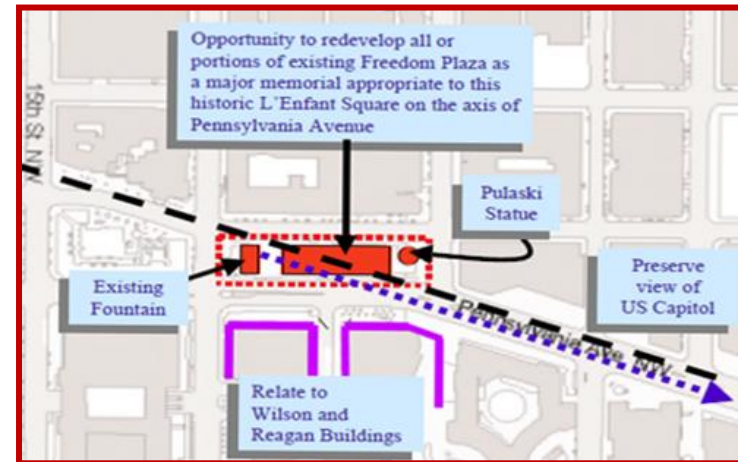
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Freedom Plaza #2

Freedom Plaza (formerly Reservation 32-33 or Western Plaza) is located in the monumental core along the vein of power running from the White House to the Capitol. The site is approximately 64,000 square feet, not including the small square on the eastern end where the General Casimir Pulaski statue is located. The National Liberty Memorial would take up scarcely more space than the non-functioning fountain located at the western end of the plaza. The memorial could consume up to 6,000 square feet over and around the fountain. No construction, other than landscaping, would occur in the central portion of the plaza, which historically has been used for large-scale public gatherings.

The site is a repository of the unfinished design of Venturi, Rausch and Scott Brown and the disappointment of those who see in the long, barren expanse an opportunity missed. Those architects discovered conceptual problems and complexities inherent in the site, which was once split into two stern triangles as durable as the history they had witnessed along Pennsylvania Avenue. General Pulaski continues to guard his domain while Boss Sheppard can only watch from the sidelines of a nearby walk beside the John A. Wilson Building. There was something grand about the drive between those spaces before their union by Venturi's design. One had the feeling Pulaski's horse was cantering alongside for a few haunting yards.

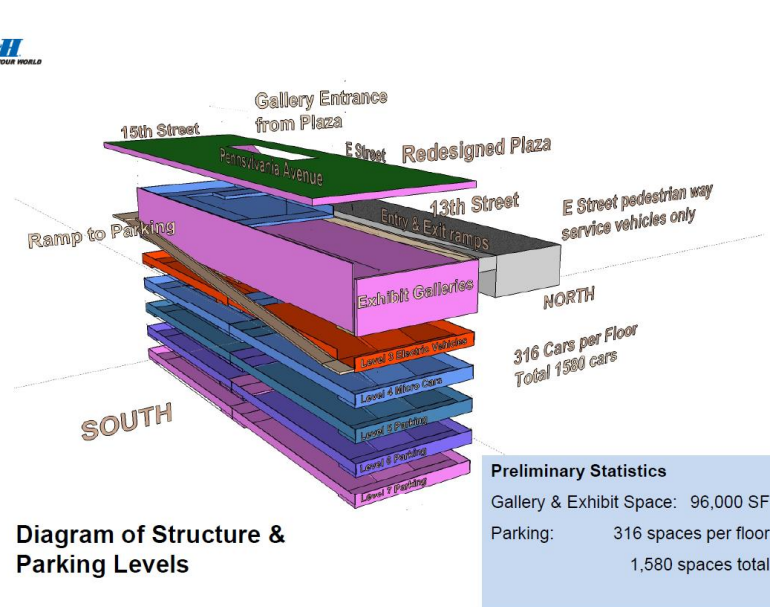
The designers of the National Liberty Memorial would confront this same complexity by not confronting them at all – by leaving well enough alone. Pulaski would continue to ride and the space between his “triangle” and the nonfunctioning fountain would be coaxed to vitality by the introduction of natural elements. The fountain where Sheppard might have stood would become the site of the National Liberty Memorial. No more space is necessary when you consider anything there is amplified by the broadness of Pennsylvania Avenue and the framing of powerful buildings. The wisdom in redesigning Freedom Plaza would be to let it design itself by returning to the “triangles” the freedom they once enjoyed, not by a roadway but by inviting the crossing and relaxation of humanity.



The Federal Triangle is replete with stunning classical examples, including the Willard Hotel, John A. Wilson Building, Old Post Office Building, Department of Justice and Reagan Building. Within the classical paradigm in which they work, the design team will find guidance in the surrounding structures and counsel in the L'Enfant Plan, current pedestrian uses and aspirations and the capital's modern design plans that seek to interpret L'Enfant's vision. Liberty Fund DC proposes to consider three options for Freedom Plaza:

Alternative I -- Memorial Only: This alternative would see the construction of the National Liberty Memorial over the fountain on the west side of the plaza. Only minor cosmetic work would be performed on the remainder of the hardscape to give it a “new” or “revived” appearance.

Alternative II -- Memorial and Redevelopment: This alternative would accomplish a complete redevelopment of the site. The memorial would still not take up any more space than contemplated by Alternative I. The new plaza would use as a guide the current configuration to ensure the site can continue to be used as a place of large-scale, scheduled gatherings. However, the design would contain green elements and areas specifically designed to attract individuals and small groups on any day of the year.



Alternative III -- Memorial and Redevelopment with an Underground Facility: This alternative is identical to Alternative II, except that the space beneath Freedom Plaza would be excavated for the construction of an underground civic space and parking garage. With charging stations available, the garage's long-term plan would be to promote the driving of hybrid and electric vehicles. A public private partnership would assemble the resources and design an underground facility similar to Boston's Post Office Square. The parking garage and other opportunities for commercial development would subsidize the redevelopment of the surface of Freedom Plaza. With the redevelopment of the nearby Old Post Office, this site could offer downtown Washington an expanded shopping and cultural venue underground. This could also include a versatile underground space that could be used by the District of Columbia (and other neighbors) for meetings and ceremonies. The National Park Service now has on file for the December 12 meeting

a preliminary prospectus prepared pro bono in 2009 by Reynolds Smith & Hill (RS&H).

Jamie L. Whitten Building Background

The U.S. Department of Agriculture published an Environmental Assessment, “U.S. Department of Agriculture Site and Perimeter Security Plan EA,” September 23, 2013. This comprehensive EA is a roadmap for the complete improvement of the Whitten Building landscape, including the proposed site of the National Liberty Memorial on 14th Street. Since the memorial would encompass corresponding improvements on a small portion of the project area, the data and methodologies necessary to identify and assess impacts, including their beneficial or adverse nature, are identical.

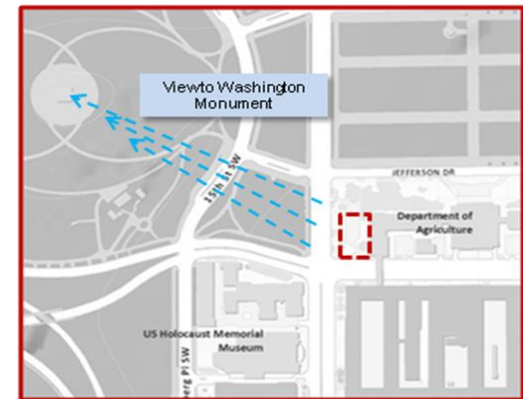
USDA plans to remove the current parking lot and vegetation contributing to the obstruction of the viewshed and concurrently create a garden environment that opens the site to visitation and maximizes its contributions to a “green” and secure environment. Matters attending the construction of a proposed pergola that extends over much of the site are the corollary to the construction of a small memorial. The National Liberty Memorial would add no further short-term adverse impacts to demolition or construction activities.

The potential for long-term beneficial impacts are exceptional. No fewer than 11 projects are under construction, ongoing or planned for the Area of Potential Effects (APE). This does not include the National People’s Garden and the USDA perimeter security plan. The seamless integration of the National Liberty Memorial into the landscape of the Whitten Building (in cooperation with GSA and USDA) would lessen the cumulative impact of those 12 projects on Washington, DC by not adding another construction site to the mix.

Location

The potential memorial site is located between the northwest corner of the Whitten Building and 14th Street (about 86 feet from the moat) and the distance of 160 feet to the sidewalk along Independence Avenue. The total site is approximately 13,560 square feet. The memorial precinct would take up about 6,000 square feet.

The memorial and surrounding landscape will enhance and enliven the streetscape experience. Seating and the opportunity at hand to consider how the American Revolution and the hunger for liberty, could spring from an agrarian economy built on slavery. Like a seedling emerging from the earth, the enslaved saw in the struggle for Independence a route to freedom and citizenship. There is no avoiding reality at this location: the Washington Monument hovers in the sky above while the symbol of America’s once dominant agricultural industry is embedded in the Whitten architecture in form and words.



The National Liberty Memorial would not interfere with either the intent or the anticipated uses of the surrounding landscape by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Construction will create no impacts greater than those anticipated in the planned National People's Garden. The footings for the memorial would go no deeper than the five to eight feet anticipated by elements of the People's Garden design scheme. Grading will be minimal and equivalent to that anticipated by USDA's proposed enhancements. Liberty Fund DC will cooperate with USDA, GSA and NPS to ensure that every element of the People's Garden plan approved by NCPC and CFA is achieved to the highest standards. This includes the installation of the perimeter security plan, flora, signage, walkways and other necessities.

Historical Connections



West façade Jamie L. Whitten Building

The National Liberty Memorial at the Whitten building would speak of liberty, fidelity and the nation's agrarian beginnings. Many African American patriots, including some who labored at Mount Vernon and Monticello, were engaged in farming. Even those who remained behind to raise food and keep up plantations contributed to Independence; they also constituted enormous national wealth. Some of Washington's officers were compensated with slaves, instead of currency or land. The general was among the leading farmers and holders of agricultural land and free labor when called away from wealth-building to serve the nation. His plantation functioned throughout the war.

The placement of the National Liberty Memorial at the Whitten Building would present an opportunity for the truthful telling of agricultural history. Until the Revolutionary War, African Americans were treated as no more than a free supply of labor to maximize the plantation profits of Washington, Jefferson and other wealthy Founding Fathers. However, the enslaved saw in the conflict an opportunity for liberty through fighting and acts of patriotism. They continued to fight in other wars while remaining the nation's greatest wealth-building commodity through the Civil War. At the dawn of the 20th Century America's agricultural wealth (and capacity to erase inconvenient history) transformed us into a world power and, ironically, a symbol of liberty against tyrannical governments. Through the 1990s and over the preceding 125 years after the Emancipation Proclamation and President Lincoln's creation of the "People's Department," the policies of USDA ran contrary to Lincoln's principles. The unequal treatment of African American farmers was a major factor in the diminishment of a once robust community. Although history argues it is obvious that they should, few African Americans are likely to identify with the agrarian roots of their ancestors. More likely, they see them as an indicia of slavery. More Americans will come to appreciate agricultural history if they understand the dynamics at play with national principles, not simply the farming ingenuity of Washington or Jefferson.

Design



Northwest façade Jamie L. Whitten Building on Jefferson

The National Liberty Memorial will be designed in a style harmonious with the theory and practice of both landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and building designers Rankin, Kellogg & Crane (RKC). Franck & Lohsen Architects (F&L) of Washington, DC will create a small-scale and modest memorial in sympathy with the Beaux-Arts aesthetic of the Jamie L. Whitten Building. The memorial will complement Whitten's classical architectural expression and reassert this neglected landscape as a co-equal partner of the built Mall.

The spatial character of the memorial will be concordant with Olmsted's vision and conform to Whitten's original site plan. It will punctuate Olmsted's intent with elements appropriate to the landscape, including

materials, design, workmanship and scale. The memorial will strive to achieve the bold quietude and easy mastery remarkable in the architecture of RKC. There will be no violent pushing and pulling of elements or challenges to existing aesthetics or the intents of Olmsted or RKC.

The low-to-the-ground elements will uplift Olmsted's vision of a grand landscape linked to the Mall's green-swath. In addition, the memorial offers an opportunity for visual continuity, practicality and environmental expression. Sensitive design will allow it to disguise the intrusive and architecturally incompatible perimeter security features planned for Whitten. Green design will include porous ground materials to easily absorb rainfall. Only a portion of the existing parking lot on the site will be hardscape.

Landscape

The four-acre lawn surrounding the Whitten Building was conceived in the Classical Revival style of the early Twentieth Century. It offers the frame within which that Beaux-Arts building is showcased. Olmsted understood how the geometries of a lawn effect the appreciation of a building -- as did the building architects. Here, geometries are regular and broad; they move in pace to the rhythm of wall-column to window-bay; they open to the larger lawn of the National Mall; they reach crescendos at entrances, at terminal points, and they relax at walls. These regular, relaxed rectangles of lawn allow the rhythms of the wall to create a kind of music, a music undisturbed by the loud exclamations of haphazard punctuations in the misplaced do-dads of benches, specimen trees, amusements and distractions. This style is

both picturesque and grand. Broad, deep shadows; rich textures; contrasts of green did as best they could to answer criticism of placement and design at the time of the building's conception.

Benefits of the National Liberty Memorial at Whitten



*National Liberty Memorial
by David Newton*

The National Liberty Memorial would recreate the long-ago destroyed geometry of the Whitten Building's western, semi-circular path; it would employ materials consistent with the Whitten Building; it would create a statuary both comparable and compatible with A.A. Weinman's statuary while not challenging the pediment's monumental scale; it would address the great concepts of the various axis' along the expanse of views; it would remember the picturesque quality of the period's landscape art, especially that of Olmstead in the episodes of lawn edits and amendments. There would be a statue on a low pedestal in a style that would have been appreciated by the patriot honorees, a style that continues to be favored by the larger portion of America's citizenry; there would be narrative scenes carved or set into an exedra to remind us of the sacrifice and heroic struggle; there would be quotations carved in stone or bronze; and all elements would be conceived to improve the aspect of the building and the character of the site.

Design Team

The memorial site and design team composed of F&L, sculptor David Newton and chairman Michael Curtis are fully conversant (and career-long advocates) with the Picturesque style employed by Olmstead. Each member received Beaux Arts training similar to Rankin, Kellogg & Crane. F&L has designed formal estate gardens, public parks in the City Beautiful style and statues in the classical tradition. They have studied and embraced as the bible of design the L'Enfant and McMillan Commission plans for Washington. They continuously participate in exercises that apply Beaux Arts landscape design and city planning

theory to a renewal of the classical vision of Washington.

The design team has a plan of how to honor patriots with classical forms closely associated with those they challenged to set them free. It will be achieved by adding their story to the narrative spread out across the 18 landmarks between the Capitol and the Washington Monument.

Coordination

Every aspect of the design and construction of the National Liberty Memorial at the preferred site at the Whitten Building would be coordinated with GSA, NPS, NCPC, CFA and USDA. Among these considerations are:

- Low Impact Development (LID) and wet weather green infrastructure in filtration trenches, curb and gutter eliminations, filters and organic filters and soil amendments.
- Reinforcing the picturesque, Beaux-Art landscape elements envisioned by Olmstead and expanding the historic context of Rankin, Kellogg & Crane's architecture.
- In some measure, recover, restore and reestablish both the L'Enfant plan of the Capitol City and the McMillan plan for the monumental core.
- Continuity of roadways, streets and walks, open spaces and elements whose precedents date to the L'Enfant Plan and the McMillan Commission.
- Preservation of building access to USDA employees and guests; preservation of street and walkway access by residents and visitors to near-by monuments and buildings.
- Securing safety and minimizing the impacts and duration of construction.
- Truthfulness to the Monumental Core Framework Plan that will help the Southwest Rectangle become a more lively and sustainable urban center.
- Design techniques that will enable the Whitten Building, future African American History and Culture Museum, American History Museum and Holocaust Museum to tell a powerful story of a people's journey up from slavery and Revolution to slavery and sustained struggle for liberty.
- New plantings of lawns, groundcover, shrubs, hedges, and perhaps trees that are in sympathy with the USDA's plan for the People's Garden and with the historical precedent or original intent of the Olmsted brothers.
- Inculcation into the design of the curved drive referenced in drawings by Rankin, Kellogg & Crane and in actual use for a few decades.

Potential Environmental Impacts

Topic	No Action Alternative	Preferred Site: Whitten West
Visual Resources	Maintaining status quo of a parking lot on the Mall would perpetuate long-term adverse impacts.	The removal of camouflage obstructing the viewsheds along Independence, 14th Street and Jefferson Drive would result in long-term beneficial impacts.
Land Use	Maintaining status quo of a parking lot on the Mall would perpetuate long-term adverse impacts.	Short-term impacts would be negligible. Beneficial long-term impacts will occur, particularly with the removal of an underutilized and unsightly parking lot and the opening of the site to visitation.
Planning Policies	Maintaining status quo of a parking lot on the Mall would perpetuate long-term adverse impacts.	There would be long-term beneficial impacts on plans and policies consistent with those anticipated by USDA's designs for the People's Garden.
Visitation	Maintaining status quo of a parking lot on the Mall would perpetuate long-term adverse impacts.	There would be no short-term minor adverse impacts to visitor circulation around the site during construction activities, since the existing parking lot is used by employees only.
Public Space	Maintaining status quo of a parking lot on the Mall would perpetuate long-term adverse impacts.	The memorial would not change the public realm near the Whitten Building, except to create a new public space out of a parking lot. Long-term beneficial impacts will result.
Historic Resources	Maintaining status quo of a parking lot on the Mall would perpetuate long-term adverse impacts.	There would be long-term beneficial impacts to the Whitten Building landscape and surrounding area. Short-term minor adverse impacts would occur during construction due to the visual impact of construction equipment and materials staging. These would be created largely by the security elements and other undertakings required to complete the People's Garden in the larger context of Whitten.
Archeological Resources	Maintaining status quo of a parking lot on the Mall would perpetuate long-term adverse impacts.	There could be potential effects to archaeological resources as a result of the ground disturbances caused by construction. Subsurfacing testing is anticipated.

Preeminent historical and lasting significance

The Combatants

Enslaved and free African Americans served in all of the major battles of the Revolutionary War, from Lexington and Concord to Yorktown. Most served in integrated units -- something that did not recur until the Korean War.

Besides soldiers, sailors, and marines, thousands of blacks served in the salt and lead mines of Virginia, drove wagons, made weapons and ammunition, felled trees, built defenses, and spied on the British. They were killed, captured and wounded. Many applied for pensions, married and raised large families. Some received bounty land and praise from Washington, state legislatures and officers.

Blacks had been serving in the military since the French and Indian Wars. When skirmishing commenced along the road, between Lexington and Concord, there were about 500,000 blacks among the estimated population of 2.5 million. Just over 40 percent, or 820, of Connecticut's eligible black males served from a population of around 5,100. Rhode Island contributed about the same, while the lion's share, 1,570, came from 194 communities in Massachusetts.

Around half of the black population lived in Virginia where the fear of revolts and mass escapes tempered the will to make soldiers of the enslaved. Nonetheless, at least 600 served from 82 counties.

Patriots from every state made conscious choices to serve. Boston's free black soldiers won an exemption when all blacks were barred for a time after Bunker Hill. Among the men on Lexington Green on the morning of April 19, 1775, was Prince Estabrook. Later that day the enslaved 34 year old was the first casualty of his race. He recovered and served multiple enlistments until 1783, including at Ticonderoga.

Also at Lexington was Peter Salem, a Framingham minutemen, who received his freedom upon enlistment. Others were freed at the completion of service. Some masters reneged on their promises after pocketing soldiers' pay. Legislatures acted to stop the backsliding; courts often found for the patriots.

After years of speculation over how many served, a 2008 publication, "Forgotten Patriots," lists over 5,000. Some authorities estimate there were over 10,000.

There could be up to 8 million descendants. The first black mayor of Hartford, Connecticut, a Harvard scholar, a Raleigh firefighter, a private investigator and a retired federal judge are among them.

There are whites who embrace distant black ancestors and share the pride with fellow descendants.

The Liberty Seekers

Among the most compelling men, women, and children are those who saw opportunity in the era's rhetoric of liberty and disarray. Blacks by the thousands ran away to freedom. Some fled to the British after the Royal Governor of Virginia offered freedom to any slave who stood with him. Others filed freedom petitions with courts and legislatures.

Elizabeth Freeman, whose husband was a casualty of war, won a law suit in 1781 that set her free and brought down slavery in Massachusetts. A Stafford County slave holder advertised in the Virginia Gazette of February 3, 1776, that Charles had run off the previous November by "a determined resolution to get liberty..."

Although comparatively small, the population of free blacks increased enough after the Revolution to spur community-building and spawn leaders. Leaders did not simply materialize in the 1950s; they are rooted in institutions dating back to 1776. The creation of churches and resilient institutions continued the fight for the principles of the Declaration of Independence.

The businesses and enterprises they undertook enabled descendants to pass on hard-won lessons of education, persuasion and frugality. The Revolutionary War ancestor of scholar Paul Robeson, a baker, bought his own freedom and supplied the army with provisions.

Wealthy Philadelphia sail maker, James Forten, then a 15 year old powder boy, was held a prisoner after his privateer was captured by the British. His granddaughter, Charlotte, was an educator and abolitionist.

Many ancestors are known because they are described in war records as "negro," "black," "mulatto," "yellow," brown," "man of color," and "slave." Others are identified by slave names like Caesar, Pomp or Primus. Or by aspirational names like Liberty or Freedom. Census, birth and death records and the records of slave holders may shed new light on the identities of others.

Last year, the Alexandria city council honored John Pipsico, Benjamin Whitmore, Joseph Longdon and William Lee. Prince William and Fairfax counties honored their patriots, including John Sidebottom who helped carry the wounded 18 year old James Monroe off the battlefield at Trenton.

Robert Randall of Fairfax County -- wounded and hospitalized for six months -- was later captured and brought to Yorktown by the British where he escaped and reenlisted once again.

Nearly 70 similar resolutions were approved in Virginia, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. North Carolina's governor declared the week of June 24-30, 2012, "Forgotten Patriots Week."

Conclusions

Thousands of enslaved and free black persons performed countless patriotic acts and served as soldiers, sailors, marines, and civilian workers in the cause of independence and the creation of the United States of America. Even more saw the Declaration of Independence as a call to run away from the tyranny of slavery wherever it led. Others argued that the phrase “all men are created equal” validated petitions asking courts and legislatures to set them free.

While many earned the freedom they sought, only gradually, and sometimes grudgingly, are they gaining recognition for the durability of their achievements. The reason: Up to two generations ago, history and government were complicit in a cover up and human beings were not free to choose where to sit or stand.

Less fortunate contemporaries of the 1776 generation continued to be bought and sold on and around the Mall. Later, their great-grandchildren were excluded from public places on Pennsylvania Avenue in the sightline of the Capitol, White House and Washington Monument. As the last of them died off through the 1840s, including residents of Washington, D.C., they witnessed the continued carving up of the fruits of independence among those who perceived slavery and segregation as a right secured to them by the founding fathers.

Because the direction of local government was determined by Congress, African Americans likened Washington to a plantation. The disenfranchisement of residents was characteristic of practices in cities and towns across the nation. Blacks were assumed to having done nothing worthy of respect, equal rights or memorialization.

In the face of seemingly unbending willpower, the descendants of the forsaken men and women of the American Revolution served the nation nobly through every war and peaceful interlude. No depravation or indignity could cause them to suspend their patriotism or scorn the promise of 1776.

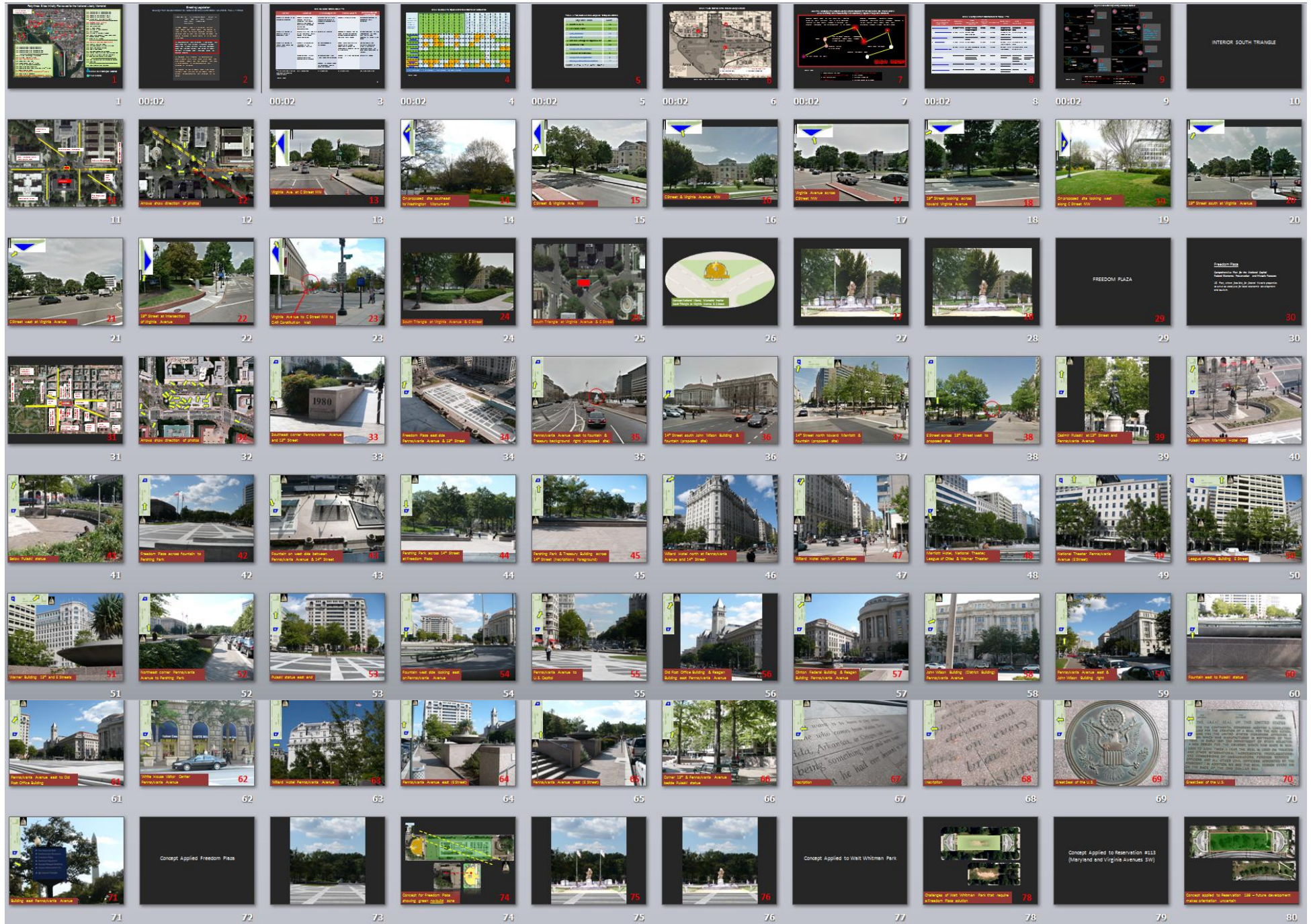
Offspring imbibed their example that liberty only flourishes if the principles of the union, and the union itself, are safeguarded by the fellowship of its citizens. “...I do expect it (the nation) will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other,” Lincoln cautioned in 1858.

Some in Congress in the 1980s, who promoted a memorial and acknowledged the preeminent value of the history, had been officeholders during Jim Crow, including Sen. Strom Thurmond, the former segregationist governor of South Carolina.

This year’s anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington will remind us of how far America has journeyed. However, landmarks in Area I could tell the whole story of triumph spanning 10 generations, if the National Liberty Memorial comes to share their sightlines.

The Revolutionary War, national independence, Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement affirm that their vision for America prevailed.

Interior South Triangle & Freedom Plaza



Jamie L. Whitten Building

