

Redefining Overlay: Modernist Park and National Memorial



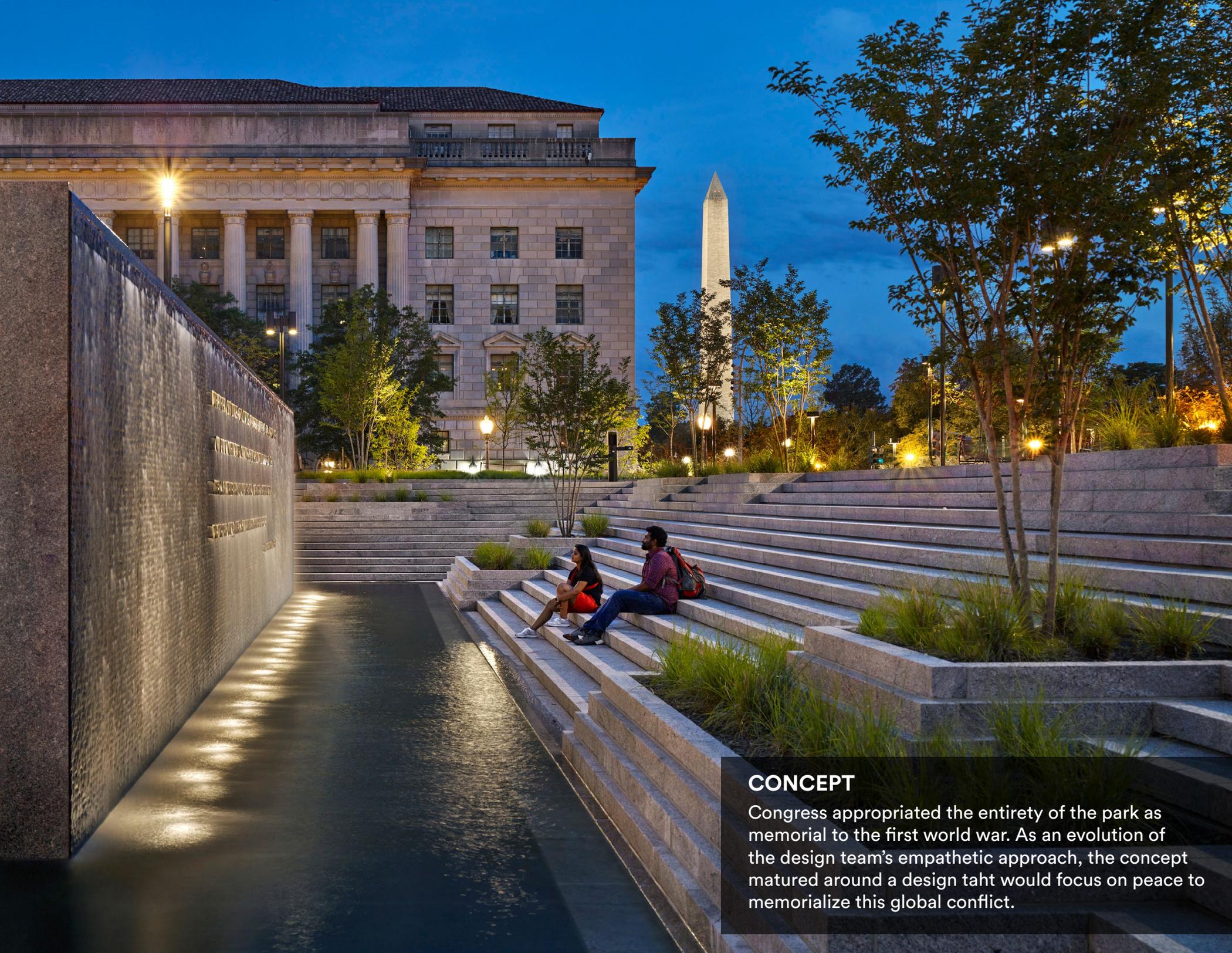
CONTEXT

The National World War I Memorial is strategically located along Pennsylvania Avenue, within the fabric of downtown D.C. Embedded in the city grid, it must serve not only as a place of commemoration, but also as an urban respite.



THE CHALLENGE

Managed change of M. Paul Friedberg's modernist construct and the expanded overlay of a national memorial are read simultaneously, serving as a landscape of relaxation, playful expression, and thoughtful contemplation.



CONCEPT

Congress appropriated the entirety of the park as memorial to the first world war. As an evolution of the design team's empathetic approach, the concept matured around a design that would focus on peace to memorialize this global conflict.



CONNECTION

The design repurposes a pavilion into a belvedere, establishing a connection between the memorial and Pennsylvania Avenue, allowing for the commemorative components to be understood as individual expressions and as part of the collective consciousness of WWI.



REINTERPRETATION

In the reinterpretation of the site, a commemoration of peace created a new space within the park, serving as the nation's first memorial to conflict with the focus on the outcome of peace.



BALANCE

The dual functions of park and memorial necessitated a balance of materiality and expression, expanding the use of commemorative materials (Carnelian Granite) with the existing language of urban park (Stony Creek Granite).

CRACKED DRAIN COVERS

NO EXPANSION JOINTS IN
SUBSLAB

CONSTRAINED SOIL
VOLUMES

DRAINAGE ISSUES

RAMPS NOT ADA COMPLIANT

NEGLECTED MAINTENANCE
OF POOL/ZAMBONI

RAMPS NOT ADA COMPLIANT

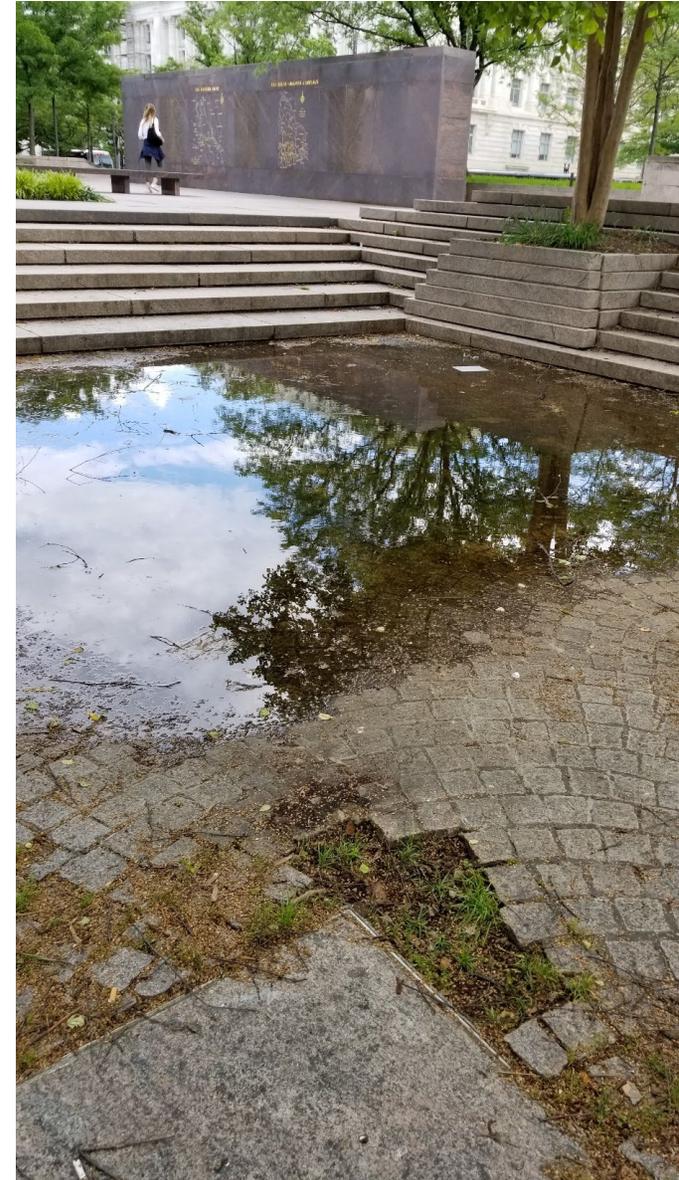
SKATEBOARD DAMAGE

TREES NOT PROPERLY
SPACED APART IN BERMS



ASSESSMENT

The above diagram of existing conditions shows the significant degradation to the arboriculture. The original Oehme Van Sweden tree palette was not supported by an expanse of living systems and soil, and therefore required rehabilitation.



ASSESSMENT

The degradation of the existing park was evident throughout, including fractures within the stonework, limited expanses of viable soil, and drainage systems that were compromised by settlement and lack of maintenance.

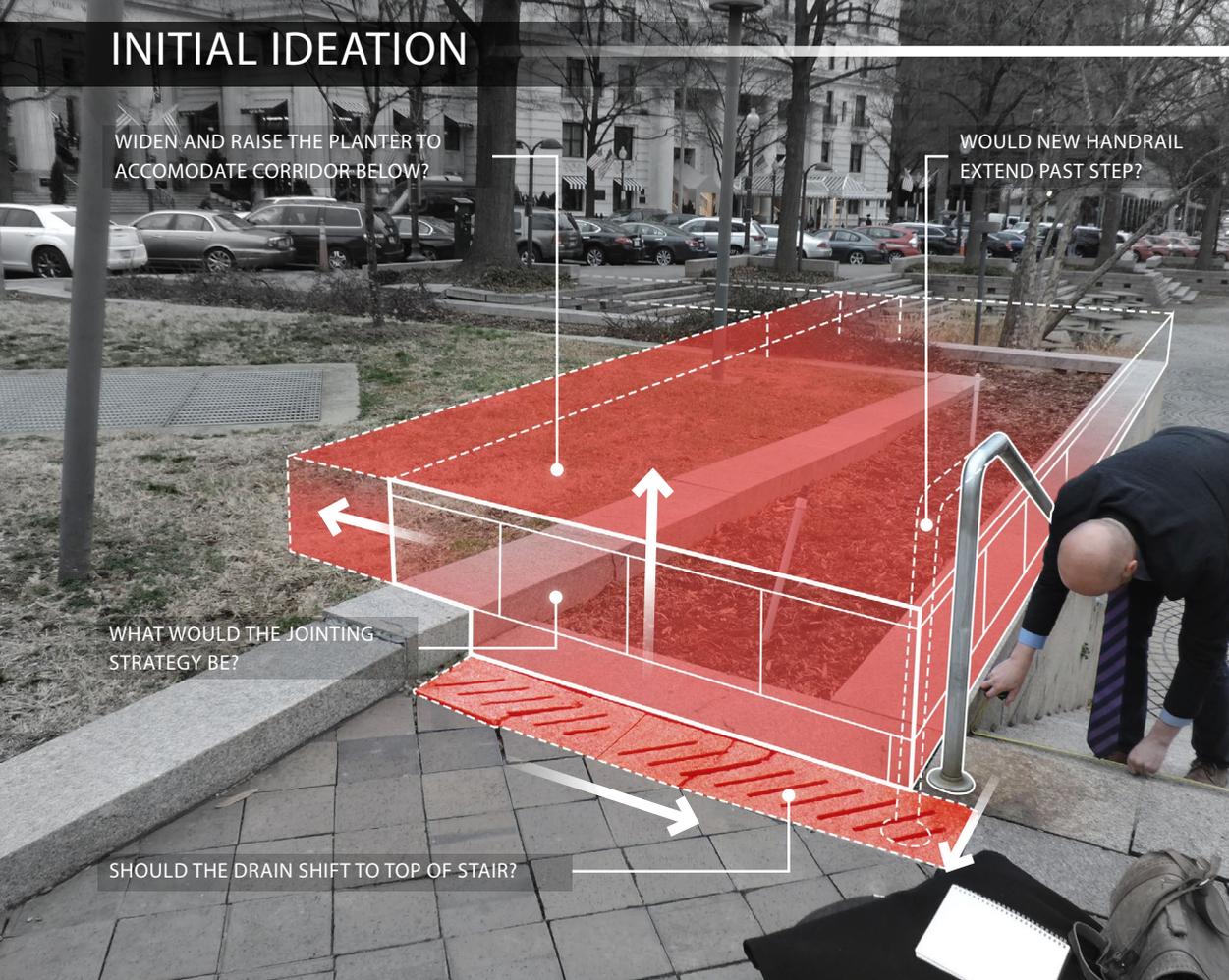
INITIAL IDEATION

WIDEN AND RAISE THE PLANTER TO ACCOMODATE CORRIDOR BELOW?

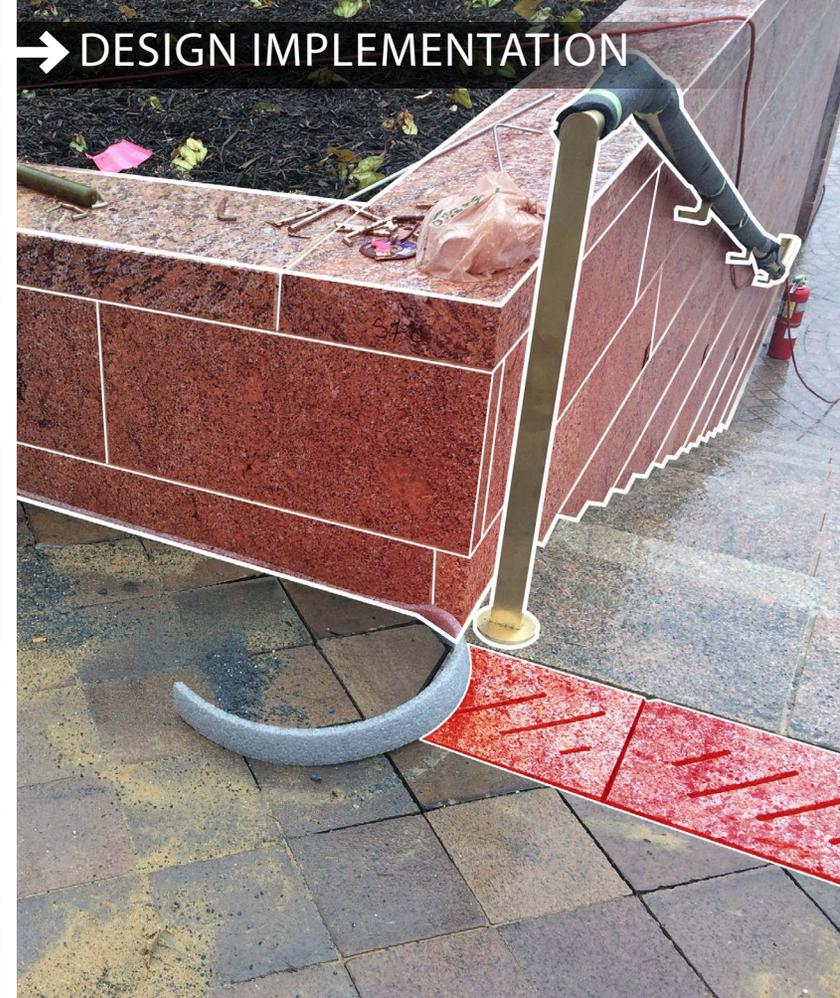
WOULD NEW HANDRAIL EXTEND PAST STEP?

WHAT WOULD THE JOINTING STRATEGY BE?

SHOULD THE DRAIN SHIFT TO TOP OF STAIR?



DESIGN IMPLEMENTATION



ASSESSMENT

The evaluation of existing conditions led to a solution that fixed incomplete design expressions from the original plan, identified non-compliant components to be upgraded to meet contemporary standards, and modified the existing fabric with new infrastructure.



REHABILITATION

Advances in the understanding of soil sciences allowed many technical improvements in the park's revival. The new design provides expanses of structural soil, giving newly planted trees the capacity to grow as if in nature, while also increasing the viability of static and living systems.

ORIGINAL FOCAL POINTS

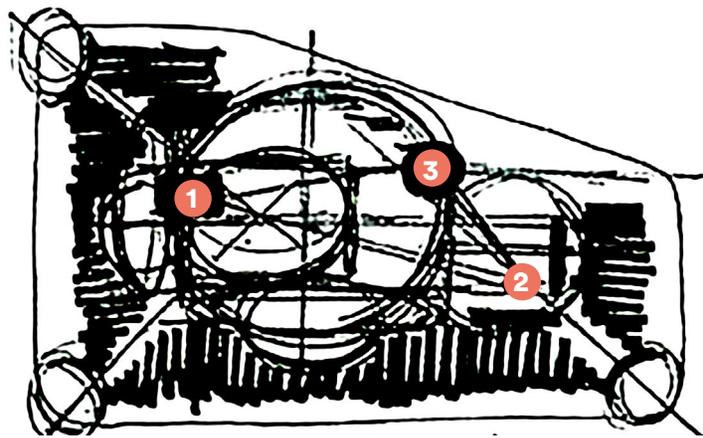


CURRENT FOCAL POINTS

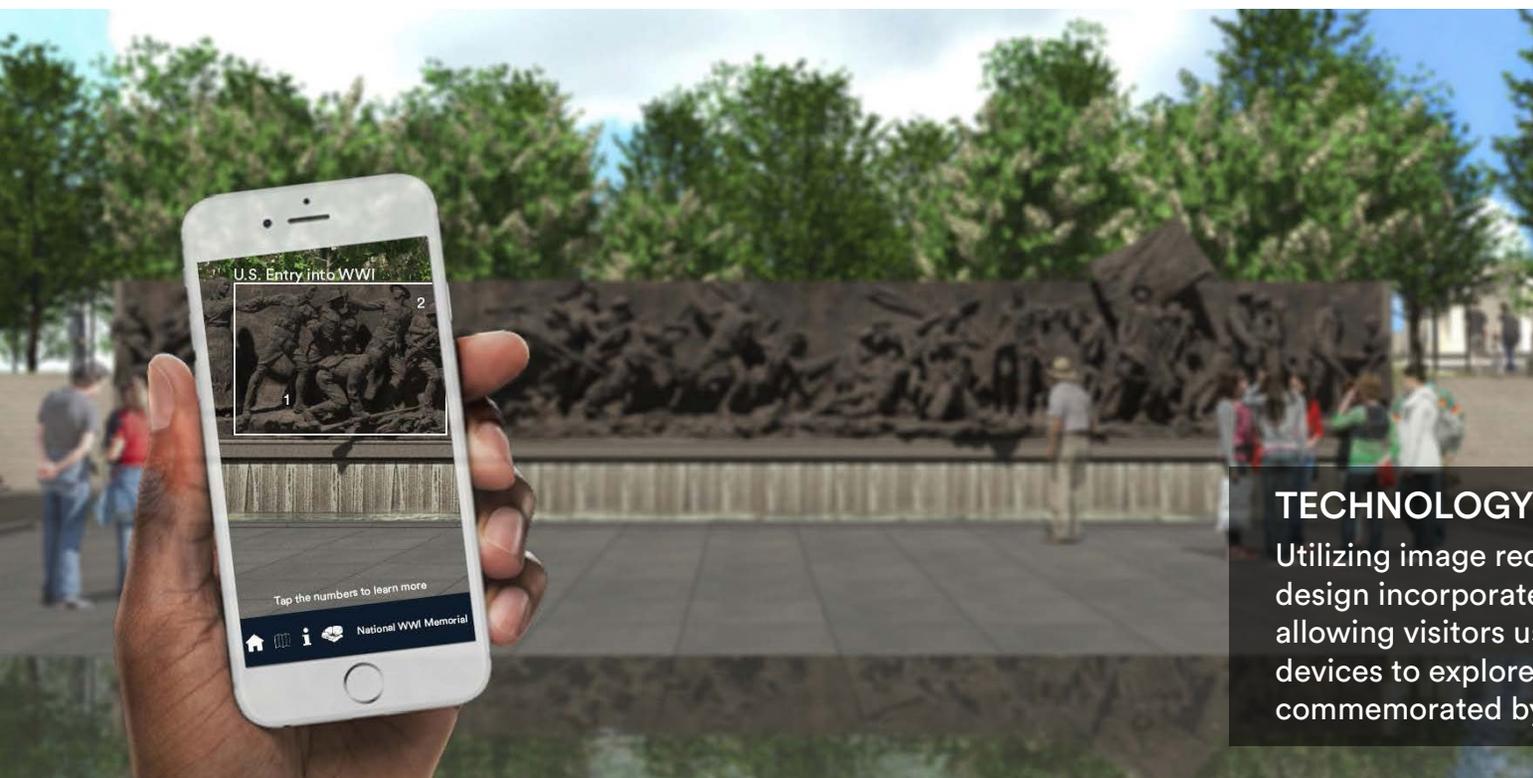


3 FOCAL POINTS

In deference to Friedberg’s original intent – to have three architectural elements in dialogue – a sculptural element replaces the fountain, and a belvedere replaces the kiosk, so that three objects remain in dialogue – the memorial to Pershing, the belvedere, and the sculptural narrative.



Sketch of Pershing Park by Paul Friedberg



TECHNOLOGY

Utilizing image recognition and geolocation, the design incorporates contemporary technology allowing visitors using their personal electronic devices to explore the rich history and events commemorated by the memorial.



COMMEMORATE

Occupying the center of the memorial, a platform is incorporated to establish a stage for both visitors and commemoration ceremonies. Daily, the platform serves to focus people circulating through the site, encouraging movement from left to right, allowing the arc of the sculptural narrative to be understood.



REFLECT

The memorial and park are situated in the comprehensive narrative of Washington D.C., integral to the fabric of commemoration and of civic asset.



CELEBRATE

The completed design becomes a shared space, commemorating the history of WWI and providing a civic park to the constituents and visitors of Washington D.C.