## General Comments

The building mass is too close to the Washington Monument, does not provide sufficient setback for trees along 15th Street, and does not defer to the presence of the Monument from the northeast and Federal Triangle from the Monument Grounds. On the other hand, the lower building height helps maintain an appropriate scale within the surroundings, both in close-up and distant panoramic views.

The building is too tall in views from the south and southwest, as well as distant panoramic views. It obstructs the iconic view of the Monument from the Federal Triangle and Post Office tower from the Monument. The free-form shape is sympathetic to the naturalistic Monument grounds, but there is the significant danger of a visual dislocation from the simple geometry of the obelisk. Some manipulation of the form could significantly reduce the effects on important views.

The building is too tall and obstructs the iconic view of the Federal Triangle and Post Office tower from the Monument. As with Alternative 2, the directionality toward the Monument implies an inappropriate frontal relationship. The stepped design could provide a smoother transition between building and landscape, encouraging the visitor to perceive the new building as an integral part of the historic site.

The viewsheds highlight the fact that the projected mass of the new museum is completely isolated with no apparent relationship to NMAH and the other museums on the north side of the Mall. As the above-grade mass of the building is reduced to a reasonable scale in order to address these concerns, as in Alternative 6, the below-grade component of the museum would grow. There are numerous examples of public buildings where a below-grade configuration has been successfully accomplished, but it is not an ideal condition.

The planning task is to make the building seem not out of place on the Monument grounds, but rather a natural terminus of the row of national museums on the north side of the Mall. In this respect the selected site is similar to that of the East Wing of the National Gallery, which completes the same row of museums at its east end, and we believe that some comparison to the East Wing is instructive.

### Alternative 1

**Contextual Building Alignment**

75'

**Washington Monument Orientation**

90'

**Free Form**

105'

**Terraced Roof**

90', 45'

**Enframing**

90'

**Low Profile**

60'

**General Comments**

The building is too tall and obstructs the iconic view of the Federal Triangle and Post Office tower from the Monument. The free-form shape is sympathetic to the naturalistic Monument grounds, and the division into two building blocks helps maintain an appropriate scale.

The lower building height helps maintain an appropriate scale within the surroundings, both in close-up and distant panoramic views. The disposition on the site is the best alternative in preserving open space, views for landscape, and an appropriate balance from the Monument. The iconic view of the Monument from the northeast is obstructed, and the iconic view of the Federal Triangle from the Federal Triangle is partially blocked. These effects could be significantly reduced by manipulating the form and shifting the building placement somewhat to the south. The more subtle shape could strike an appropriate balance between the geometric and free-form alternatives.

The planning task is to make the building seem not out of place on the Monument grounds, but rather a natural terminus of the row of national museums on the north side of the Mall. In this respect the selected site is similar to that of the East Wing of the National Gallery, which completes the same row of museums at its east end, and we believe that some comparison to the East Wing is instructive.
### Alternative 3

Alternative 3 is the other favorable design concept. A free form even with the proposed height could permit an orientation in all directions including 14th Street and the Monument as well and could respect some of the defining features of the Monument and Mall site. It presents a great opportunity for inventiveness in design and for respecting the agreed upon design principles.

### Alternative 5

Alternative 5 offers the greatest opportunity for engaging the public in the sense that it appears to offer an open concept that proposes to draw pedestrians through and to provide an inward glimpse to those driving by in vehicles – it is not closed off from the street. It seems that it also provides an opportunity to reconfigure museum footprint in a non-traditional manner while permitting green space, unobstructed views of the Monument from certain angles.

### Alternative 6

Initially, Alternative 6 seemed appealing because of the lessered impact on the Monument. However, there were objections to having so much of it underground rather than proudly heralding itself.

### DOI

To further minimize adverse effects, the museum should be constructed within the building setback lines of the existing museums located along Madison Drive and along Constitution Avenue. This will minimize the adverse effects that the new building will have on the historic viewpoints and cultural landscape elements of the Washington Monument grounds, and of the Washington Monument itself. Staying within these setbacks and height limitations will also establish the upper limit of total space within the structure above ground.

In order to minimize adverse effects, the museum height should be limited to 60 feet, or less.

As the alternatives are currently configured, only Alternative 6, with a program size limited to 350,000 gsf, successfully minimizes the adverse effects to these significant cultural resources. The DEIS concludes that all six of the alternatives will have significant adverse effects on the National Mall, the Washington Monument grounds, and the Washington Monument. The NPS concurs and recommends that the adverse effects should be minimized first then mitigated to the greatest extent possible.

One important aspect of mitigation will be to ensure that the museum building and grounds are sympathetic to the cultural landscape of the Washington Monument grounds, the National Mall, White House, and President’s Park. The design must be complementary to the architecture of the buildings nearby, and respectful of the relationship to the Washington Monument.