

For those wishing to comment on the impacts of the design of the National Museum of African American History and Culture on historic resources, you may review the summary comments from the Tier II Draft EIS on historic resources, or go to the full document under NMAACH TIER II Draft EIS and see the evaluations in section 3.3.3. You should also review the maps for the Area of Potential Effects and the associated historic resources.

Summary of Effects, minimization and mitigation:

It has been determined that the design and construction of the new National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) on the grounds of the Washington Monument will be an “adverse effect” under the definitions of Section 106 on the National Historic Preservation Act. This is because a new structure will go on a site that has not had a structure before and which is within an historic district and surrounded by historic properties of outstanding national significance. As such, the new museum will be on land that was once open as part of the Washington Monument Grounds and by extension part of the National Mall.

The forthcoming building will have an effect on the historic resources in the Area of Potential Effect. Following are the most commonly identified adverse effects, although for a full list view the full text of the section 3.3.1 of the EIS document noted above:

- **Land Use:** The adverse effects are first one of use. The land, as part of the Washington Monument Grounds, has been a setting serving as an informal space for recreation, celebration, and public demonstrations. It will no longer be part of the National Park Service open space used for demonstrations regarding First Amendment Rights nor for permitted recreational activities.
- **Views and Vistas:** The size and massing of the building will obscure views and vistas once open to and from the Washington Monument, towards the expanse of the Federal Triangle, and along the Mall.
- **Vegetation:** The adverse impact on the grounds and vegetation will be the removal of mature trees from the site and reduced pedestrian movement across the site as an approach to the Washington Monument. In addition, the plaza and pool at the south entrance remove grass areas currently in place. The plantings of the water features at the north end of the site may not be fully consistent with the formality of Constitution Avenue.
- **Building and Structures:** The height and massing of the museum will have an adverse effect on the historic Bullfinch Gatepost located on the North West corner of the site and would diminish the visual impact of the Monument Lodge, a historic building on the grounds of the Washington Monument. Projection of the canopy/porch on the south side continues to project beyond the 445’ setback line established in the McMillan Commission Plan.

- Materials choices: The effects of these elements are not fully defined. The reflectivity level of the Corona metallic skin and the possible inclusion of photo-voltaic cells on the roof may be inconsistent with material choices for other buildings on the Mall.
- Lighting: The lighting of the building is not fully defined and will be studied.

Summary of Efforts to Minimize Impacts:

The concept designs have evolved over a period of four years based on public comment and Federal Agency reviews by the DC Historic Preservation Office, the National Capital Planning Commission and the Commission of Fine Arts. The Preferred Alternative of April 2011 is a refinement of earlier concepts in order to minimize impacts on the site, landscape, building size and mass, architectural and site details. The preferred alternative design is of a pavilion in a landscape. Efforts to minimize impacts include:

- The size has been reduced by placing approximately 55% of the usable space below grade.
- The massing of the building has been reduced by approximately 17% from its largest bulk to be approximately 210-216 feet on a side forming the outside dimension of the Corona.
- The height has been reduced in order for the top of the Corona cladding to be in alignment with the parapet of the Herbert C. Hoover Commerce building north of the site.
- The landscape has been made more fluid by reducing the berm effects of the landscape on the north side of the site and increasing the grass area for seating and small group gatherings.
- The first floor has been maintained as a glass wall and the size of the interior core elements, such as elevators, have been regularized to increase the clear area for views through the building.
- Security walls have been integrated into the landscape in a seamless way with only the minimum number of bollards at pathways intersections to avoid a “hardened” appearance of the site.
- The entrance to the service drive has been pulled back to increase the sidewalk planting lanes to soften the effect of the driveway.

Proposed Mitigations:

As part of the public review process, the public is asked to make comments on impacts to historic properties in the Area of Potential Effects and to recommend measures that may offset or reduce the intensity of adverse effects that have not already been avoided or minimized. This list will be updated as proposed mitigations are deemed appropriate by the State Historic Preservation Office, the Advisory Council, and members of the Consulting Parties for this project. So far the mitigations include:

- Undertake photo-documentation of the site before construction, using Historic American Building Survey standards and provide documentation for inclusion in the Library of Congress.

- Develop an exhibit for the public to be housed in the museum illustrating the archeological finds of interest, the history of development of the museum on the site, and a history of the prevalent uses of the site, such as for First Amendment demonstrations.
- Document found features on the site, such as the abandoned subterranean Water Intake Tunnel that crosses the site and the Bulfinch Gatepost.
- Work with the National Park Service as they develop the listing of the National Mall by providing historical documentation of the Smithsonian Buildings to gain eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
- Expand the historical information on the Horatio Greenough sculpture of George Washington owned by the Smithsonian's American Art Museum and include this information as part of the National Register of Historical Places multiple resource nomination on Sculpture. In addition consider laser scanning of the sculpture for full physical documentation.
- Undertake stewardship responsibilities for the Bulfinch Gatepost and ensure that preservation work is undertaken when needed and is consistent with the conservation methods established by the National Park Service for the other gateposts.
- Continue to study the history of the site as it pertains to African American history of Washington, D.C.