



Pentagon Memorial

Pentagon Memorial Site Selection Report January 30, 2002

Prepared for:

Department of Defense
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US Army Corps of Engineers
Baltimore District



SEA appendix D

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of Engineers ®**
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Table of Contents

	page
1. Executive Summary	4
2. Map	5
3. Site Selection Process	6
Evaluation Considerations	6
Sites Evaluated	7
4. Site Evaluations	8
5. Recommended Site	12

Executive Summary

Background

Following the September 11 attack on the Pentagon, the Director of the Washington Headquarters Services assigned the mission of constructing a Pentagon Memorial to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The memorial was to commemorate the 184 victims lost on September 11, be modest in scale, and located on the Pentagon reservation.

Research

The Corps began research and coordination activities in mid-October. By the end of January, several coordination meetings had been held with the National Capital Planning Commission and the Commission of Fine Arts. The project team also conducted meetings and site tours for both the Focus Group and for the Family Steering Committee and briefed a number of Corps and Pentagon officials.

Process

The Focus Group includes representatives from the military services and Pentagon offices, Arlington National Cemetery, approval agencies, and a professional advisor. The Focus Group provides technical expertise and practical input to the project. The Family Steering Committee includes approximately a dozen representatives of the victims' families and works with the project team to provide the families' perspective.

Among the first tasks to be addressed by the project team was the identification of an appropriate memorial site. The project team developed a list of considerations to guide the site selection process. The considerations include issues such as family acceptability, visual and physical access to the impact site, security, utilities, noise, and future plans for the use of each site. A preliminary list of six sites was developed in the early weeks of the project and grew, as coordination was accomplished, to the ten sites evaluated in this report.

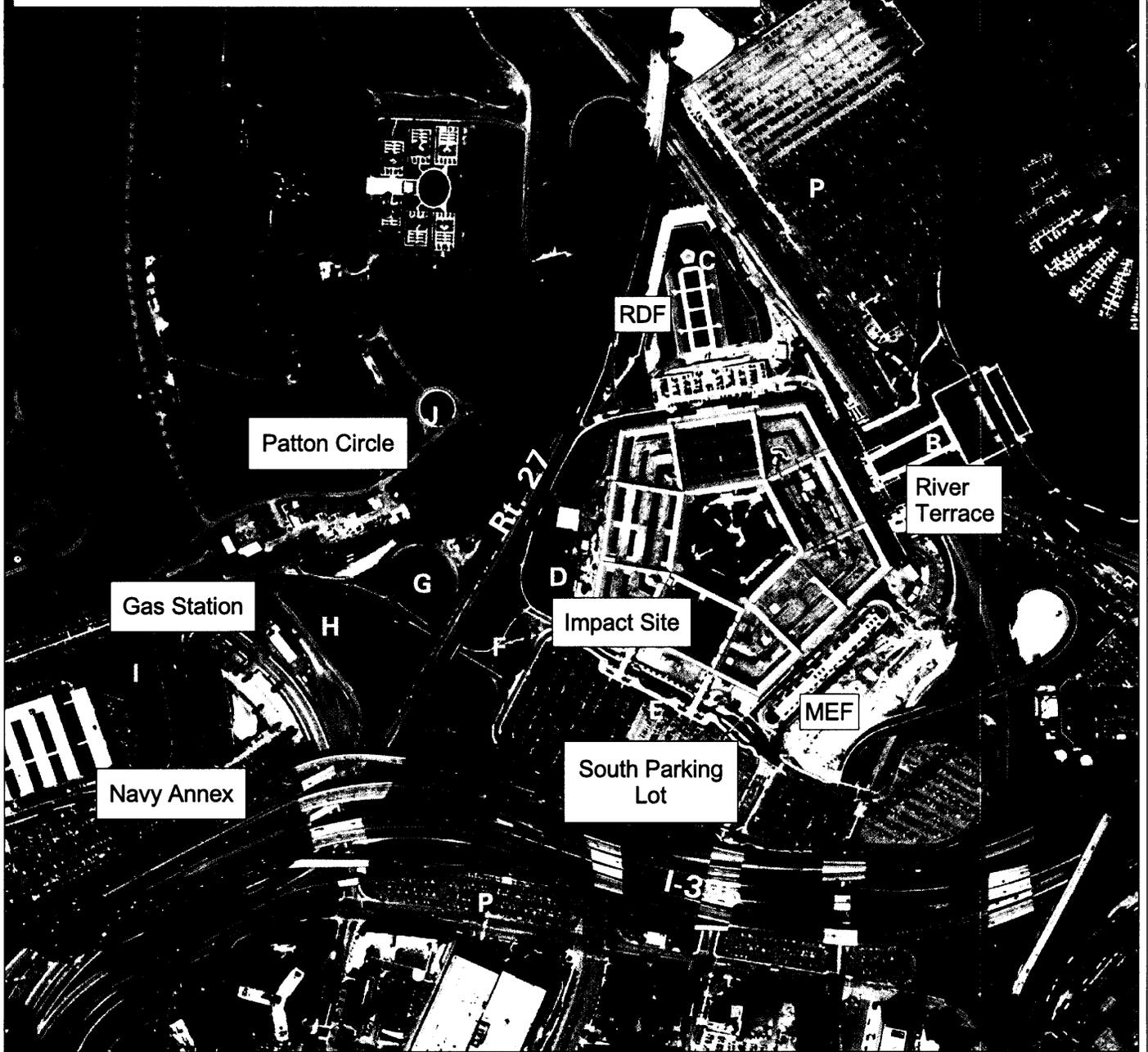
Every site nominated has both positive and negative characteristics. Sites with the most serious obstacles to their use were quickly dismissed during the evaluation process. Several of the sites evaluated can be described as having limited potential for a memorial site, and one site is recommended.

Recommendation

The recommended memorial site on the west side of the Pentagon has both positive and negative characteristics, however, the positive characteristics of the site far outweigh the negative. Because of its visual access and location close to the Impact Site, the recommended site is the only truly appropriate site among the ten sites evaluated.

In the words of a member of the Family Steering Committee, "The site was selected on September 11."

- Site A - The Metro Entrance Facility (MEF)
- Site B - The River Terrace
- Site C - The Remote Delivery Facility (RDF)
- Site D - The Impact Site
- Site E - South Parking Lot
- Site F - East side of Cloverleaf, near South parking lot
- Site G - West side of Cloverleaf, near ANC
- Site H - West Side of Cloverleaf, near Gas Station
- Site I - Navy Annex near proposed Air Force Memorial
- Site J - Patton Circle / Arlington National Cemetary



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Possible Memorial Sites Evaluated

Site Selection Process

What the memorial should be and where it should be located were the two questions addressed by project participants during the earliest days of the project. Preliminary discussions resulted in a consensus that the memorial should be on Pentagon property but the team also explored sites that were not on, but close to the Pentagon reservation.

Evaluation Considerations

Project participants identified a number of considerations that began to define what the memorial and the site should be. As the project moved forward and sites were added or locations modified, the list of considerations was also redefined to better reflect the pros and cons of the possible sites. The considerations used to evaluate each of the sites in this report include the following:

1. Family Acceptability. The site should be the one preferred by the families of the victims.
2. Proximity to the Impact Area. The memorial site should be as close to the Impact Area as possible.
3. View of the Impact Area. The memorial should have a good view of the Impact Area.
4. Public Accessibility. The site must be accessible to visitors arriving on foot, by Metro, car, bus, and bicycle. The site must be accessible to handicapped persons and have parking facilities.
5. Site Availability. The site must be authorized for a memorial, and a portion of the site made available for site preparation and construction beginning in the summer of 2002.
6. Security. The site must be capable of security management, the system to be developed as required and to suit the needs of the memorial.
7. Site Size. The site should be an appropriate size for a memorial, landscaping, and accommodate gatherings and ceremonies (estimated size is one to two acres).
8. Utilities and Geotechnical Factors. Underground utilities, soil stability, and other physical factors of the site should accommodate development of a memorial.
9. Noise and Activity Level at site. The site should be able to be designed and developed to provide a feeling of peace and tranquility.
10. Focal Point. The site should have physical characteristics suitable for creation of a Memorial that is the focal point of the space.
11. Visual and Physical Context of Site. The site should provide a memorial location that is compatible with surrounding development, existing or proposed. The site should provide a positive visual experience from a distance and on approach, both by pedestrians and from vehicles, and it should allow undesirable views from the site to be screened.

Sites Evaluated

Identifying of the best location for the proposed memorial involved evaluating a number of potential sites and selecting the one that best met the requirements of the considerations. The project team accepted suggestions for possible sites in the earliest weeks of the project and added new sites as the project progressed. Some of the ten sites in the final list had negative characteristics that would have been difficult to overcome, such as not being owned by the Pentagon. In order to reflect the comprehensive approach of the project team, even the difficult sites are evaluated in this report.

The ten sites evaluated in this report include the following:

Site A - Metro Entrance Facility (MEF), southeast side of Pentagon

Site B - River Terrace, facing the Potomac River to the east.

Site C - Remote Delivery Facility (RDF), north side of Pentagon.

Site D - Impact Area, west side of the Pentagon, close to South Parking Lot.

Site E - In the South Parking Lot adjacent to the south side of the Pentagon, currently a restricted area.

Site F - Traffic cloverleaf on the east side of Route 27, between the South Parking Lot and Route 27

Site G - Traffic cloverleaf on the west side of Route 27, between Arlington National Cemetery and Route 27

Site H - Traffic median on the west side of Route 27, between the gas station and the impact site.

Site I - Navy Annex (FB-2) - near location of the proposed Air Force Memorial.

Site J - Patton Circle in Arlington National Cemetery.

Site Evaluations

Site A - Metro Entrance Facility (MEF)

The initial appeal of the MEF to project team members was based on its accessibility and the high visibility of a memorial at the site. Thousands of bus and Metro riders streaming through the MEF every day on their way to work and home would view the memorial. The MEF is a new facility, designed and landscaped to provide an attractive entrance experience for Pentagon employees and visitors. Landscaped berms, constructed in the space between the bus canopies and the building, provide a natural green border for the movement of commuters moving between the buses and the building. The high use of the area suggests that security issues would not be a problem at this site.

Negative factors far outweigh the positive at the MEF. Although the site has many visitors, they are moving fast and the site is designed to facilitate that movement. A memorial at the MEF would have to be glanced at quickly as people moved past. Longer contemplation would require a new traffic pattern or result in pedestrian traffic jams. The project team felt that if a memorial were placed out of the way of traffic at the site, it would seem somewhat incidental and it would be difficult to create the sense of peace and tranquility that should be a key characteristic of the memorial. Parking at the MEF would also be difficult, with the closest visitor parking located at the Hayes Street Parking Lot. The site provides no visual connection to the impact site.

Site B - River Terrace

The River Terrace is an elegant site, with several levels that provide an almost unobstructed view of the Potomac and Washington's principal monuments. The area is relatively tranquil, especially near the river, and the area close to the Pentagon is used for formal ceremonial and informal athletic activities. In its present configuration there is enough room to create a memorial at the site and limited space along the lagoon for visitor parking.

The major drawback of the River Terrace site is the lack of visual or physical connection to the impact site. Its location on the opposite side of the building provides no clue that an attack ever occurred and a memorial at this site would require substantial interpretation and still appear to be inappropriately sited. If a memorial were placed at the River Terrace and the current uses were maintained, the placement would need to be to one side, rather than in a central location. The result would be a memorial that is somewhat incidental, rather than the focal point of the site. Tentative plans to restructure the River Terrace and move Highway 110 away from the Pentagon, if implemented, could create less desirable site conditions for a memorial. In its present configuration, some additional public parking could be provided along the lagoon, at the cost of more limited riverfront access. In addition to the siting, access, and parking constraints, an important consideration - unique to the River Terrace - is that this area is complete as a place. It serves its present ceremonial purpose well and should be left intact.

Site C - Remote Delivery Facility (RDF)

The above ground surface area of the RDF is a handsome landscaped open space. Following completion of the structure linking it to the Pentagon, employees will be able to use the site like an urban park. Its apex is a perfect place for an important monument. But that location, by its nature, would seem to call for a monument on a heroic scale, visible to fast-moving traffic on the roadways bordering the site.

The purpose of the RDF as a bomb-proof secure delivery area precludes any public access. The site also lacks a visual or physical connection to the impact site, public parking facilities, and other features necessary for a memorial site.

Site D - Impact Site

Site D is located on the west side of the Pentagon, close to the South Parking Lot. The ground on that side of the Pentagon ordinarily provides the largest open grassy lawn at the Pentagon with a heliport located approximately in the center of the space. The center portion of the west wall of the Pentagon was destroyed during the September 11 attack and Site D provides a clear view of that part of the wall. Since the attack, what was formerly the grassy lawn is being used for construction staging.

Positive characteristics of the site include the best visual and physical access to the impact area of all of the sites evaluated, good access to the site itself by pedestrian and vehicular traffic, and the potential availability of additional parking, improved access, and room for additional development in the future. Most important, Site D is the preferred site for members of the Family Steering Committee. Members prefer the site because it has clear visual access to the place where their loved ones "paid the ultimate price," and also is as close as practical to the place where 184 lives were lost.

Constraints at the recommended site include several underground utilities, security management issues common to most of the sites, a heliport located at the center of the site, and the possibility of future road relocations and other proposed development in the area. Current construction activities at the site are an additional, and potentially the most limiting, constraint for this site. Because of its location close to the impact area and the relatively open condition of the west side of the Pentagon, the site is used for construction staging for post-impact reconstruction. Construction activities are scheduled to continue over the next few years until restoration of this side of the Pentagon is complete.

Site E - South Parking Lot

Site E is the portion of the South Parking Lot that is closest to the Pentagon. The area is barricaded off for security reasons and is now an empty paved area. The site has several advantages as a possible location for a memorial: it is accessible to both pedestrians and vehicles, a memorial at that location would complement the two

great stairway entrances on the south side of the Pentagon, and could be available for construction fairly soon.

The major negative aspect of Site E is the lack of visual access to the Impact Site. Visitors to a memorial at Site E would simply continue walking toward the east side of the Pentagon to view the "real" site - where the impact occurred. Tentative plans for future development of new office buildings in this area are another disadvantage to using the site for a Pentagon Memorial.

Site F - East side of cloverleaf, between the South Parking Lot and Route 27

Since Rt. 27 was reopened to traffic and "Camp Unity" completed work, this site has become the unofficial location for a clear view of the Impact Site. The slight elevation of Site F above the ground level of the Impact Site allows visitors to see over the construction-area fencing and into the Impact Site. Visitors to the Pentagon arrive at the Metro station and walk from the MEF, past the South face of the building, cross the cloverleaf roadway, and stand with other visitors to see the side of the building where the attack took place. (This site replaces Site G, the original viewing and informal memorial site, which has been closed.) Site F is closer to the Impact Site and seems safer than Site G because the roadway that encircles it has less traffic.

Negative characteristics of Site F include its ownership by the Virginia Department of Transportation, its location in the center of a cloverleaf, with the normal traffic noise and safety issues of such a site. Other negative aspects include a distinct slope that would need to be addressed in designing the placement of a memorial and gathering areas. Preliminary plans are being developed for the relocation of roads in the area and construction of a new truck route from this area to the Remote Delivery Facility. Conflicts resulting from implementing these plans could be managed by careful coordination during the planning stages of each potential project however, the greater distance to the Impact Site than from than Site D still renders Site F to be substantially less appropriate as a memorial location.

Site G - West side of cloverleaf, between Arlington National Cemetery and Route 27

The site is owned by the Virginia Department of Transportation and is located between ANC and Route 27. The site is somewhat elevated above Site F and the area toward the Pentagon and provides visual access to the Impact Site.

Negative aspects of Site G include its location inside a traffic cloverleaf, with the noise and safety issues inherent in such a location. As with Site F, the greater distance to the Impact Site than from than Site D renders this site to be substantially less appropriate as a memorial location.

Site H - Traffic Median, west of Route 27, near the gas station

Site H has an excellent view of the Impact Site and was well used by visitors and the press in the weeks following the attack. Its elevation above the surrounding areas made it popular for television and other photographic crews.

In spite of its visual access to the impact area, Site H is less preferable as a memorial site than Site D for the same reasons that Sites F and G failed: the risks to pedestrians moving to and from the site and its distance from the Impact Site.

Site I - Navy Annex (FB-2)

Site I is located at the foot of the hill sloping down toward the road in front of FB-2. The site was the closest accessible location to the Impact Site during the weeks immediately following September 11, and was spontaneously selected by the public for viewing the destruction and placing informal memorials. Although the site is "closed," photographers and reduced numbers of visitors still come to the site. The site is an excellent location for a memorial and a location at the top of the hill is the proposed location for the Air Force Memorial. For that reason, Site I was eliminated from serious consideration as a location for the Pentagon Memorial.

Site J - Patton Circle, in the Arlington National Cemetery

The major advantages of the Patton Circle site are its tranquility and the proximity to the graves of many of the September 11 victims. For those reasons several members of the Family Steering Committee initially expressed a preference for this site. There is a clear but somewhat distant view of the impact area in winter when trees bordering Route 27 have lost their leaves. The area provided on the circle and/or the two triangles adjacent to it provide a large enough area for a memorial.

There are several negative aspects of this site that are all fairly equal in importance. Key disadvantages include its location outside the Pentagon reservation and the legal prohibition on placing memorials in the ANC, requiring Congressional authorization for a Pentagon Memorial. Another disadvantage is the use of the Circle as an organizing area for funeral corteges several times a day. In addition, the ANC has preliminary plans to place a group marker for the September 11 victims near the graves, making a Pentagon Memorial at the site redundant. Another negative is the lack of easy access except for family members, who are allowed to drive to the site. Non-related visitors would be required to walk approximately one half mile from the entrance. And finally, and most important, families do not welcome the idea of visitors/strangers "walking on the graves."

The Recommended Site

The recommended site for the Pentagon Memorial, Site D, was selected for reasons that are deeply symbolic as well as completely practical. Its location on the side of the Pentagon where the attack occurred, with full visual access and as physically close as practicable to the spot where 184 victims died, were crucial considerations in its selection. An even more important consideration was that members of the families of victims, as represented by the Family Steering Committee, after carefully weighing many factors, selected this site as the recommended memorial location.

Site D also ranked high in evaluations based on the other considerations.

Public Accessibility - Existing public access to the site is better and safer than at the other nine sites. Currently, visitors arrive at the Metro Station and walk from the MEF to an area close to Site D, but located in the cloverleaf intersection. Existing parking is available at the commercial Hayes Street Parking Lot (on the south side of Interstate 395) or, on week-ends, at the western end of the South Parking Lot, located adjacent to the site. Future development in the area around Site D - the proposed new truck route and other potential road relocations and development - can be coordinated with the development of the memorial site, to the benefit of all the projects. As each of the projects is planned, pedestrian and vehicular access and parking requirements can be integrated into the memorial site plan in a way that enhances the experience of the site.

Availability - Current construction activities on the west side of the Pentagon limit the short-term availability of Site D. Full coordination with the Pentagon's construction program will be necessary to ensure an adequate and appropriate location for the first-anniversary commemorative installation and site dedication ceremony on September 11, 2002. Prior to the first anniversary, construction equipment and structures will need to be relocated away from the southern boundary of the site to allow room for equipment and ceremony-related site preparation. Following the first-year anniversary, the site would continue to be used for the memorial-related work as site preparations and construction work for the final memorial were completed. In the more distant future, careful coordination could dovetail the potential road relocations and other development with the memorial site plans, to the benefit of each of the projects.

Security - Security issues at Site D, as at any location in the area, will vary according to the level of alert at the Pentagon. Security at the proposed memorial will require management, such as maintaining the armed guards that currently patrol the area, or other techniques.

For the reasons outlined above: Site D, located close to the impact area and to the South Parking Lot, is the recommended Pentagon Memorial site.