



TEAM FOCUSES ON MEMORIAL UNIT DESIGN, PERFORMANCE

Amidst the fundraising, site preparation and other Pentagon Memorial Project activity, the project team is also hard at work making sure that the design for the memorial units is in place before construction begins.

Since the submission of the original memorial concept design, the memorial units (commonly referred to as “benches”) have undergone several enhancements. While the benches will still look exactly as they appear in current renderings, changes to their structural design will produce units that weigh about 3,600 pounds less than those originally proposed. Sample finishes for the top surface of the memorial units are also being considered. The current plan calls for a polished, smooth, terrazzo-like finish that matches the angular cut gravel aggregate that will be found on the ground of the memorial. “The ground cover will feature grey and gold hues, which will pick up the Pentagon facade’s colors,” said Julie Beckman, one of the memorial’s original concept designers. “Mixed with the foliage of the trees, it will look beautiful.” The contractors and designers on the project are hoping to have a memorial unit prototype developed by early 2005.

The team has also been involved in numerous tests on the reflecting pools located under each of the 184 benches. One major design enhancement involves repositioning the plumbing nozzles 16 inches above the originally designed location. This modification has a two-pronged benefit. First, it enhances the desired “ripple effect” in the pools. It also allows for the removal of some excess metal, which contributes to the overall weight reduction on the memorial units. The design team is currently planning a visit to Santa Cruz, CA, where the pools are being developed. The purpose of the visit will be to begin experimentation with various lighting options for the reflection pools.

“We’re right on track with the memorial unit design,” said Beckman. “After so many hours viewing our progress on a computer screen, we’re really excited about seeing the prototype.”