

SAVANNAH - CHATHAM COUNTY HISTORIC SITE AND MONUMENT COMMISSION

**REGULAR MEETING
112 EAST STATE STREET**

ARTHUR A. MENDONSA HEARING ROOM

April 5, 2007

4:00 P.M.

MINUTES

HSMC Members Present:

**Walter Wright, Chairman
Gordon Smith, Vice-Chairman
LaVerne Ricks-Brown, Secretary
Phillip Williams, Commission Member
Frank Lang, Ex-Officio**

HSMC/MPC Staff Present:

**Ellen Harris, Preservation Planner
Sarah Ward, Preservation Planner
Janine N. Person, Administrative Assistant
Brian Carney, Preservation Intern**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

Present for the petition was Mr. Eric Meyerhoff and Mr. Jim Vejar.

Ms. Harris gave the Staff report.

**II. Petition of Chatham County Veterans Council, Jim Vejar
File No.: C-050817-88954-2
Conceptual Design
World War II Monument**

NATURE OF REQUEST: The petitioner is requesting conceptual design approval of the proposed World War II Monument in Oglethorpe Square. On August 24, 2005, the Site and Monument Commission approved the theme of a WWII Monument. On December 15, 2005, the Site and Monument Commission approved Oglethorpe Square as the location for a WWII Monument, subject to coordination with Park and Tree and the City utility departments. City Council approved Oglethorpe Square on April 16, 2006.

In 2006, the Veterans Council conducted a design competition and received a number of proposals, including several from a Savannah College of Art and Design Urban Planning class. A Design Committee chose the design submitted by Eric Meyerhoff, Susie Chisholm, and Garland Weeks.

While "conceptual design approval" is not technically part of the established process for monument approval, given the magnitude, scope, and location of this monument, Staff feels it is

both desirable and important for the Commission to review the plans at this early stage and provide appropriate feedback so that the Veterans Council can move forward with their fundraising efforts, while the design details are worked out.

FINDINGS:

Phasing: The petitioner plans to erect the monument in two phases. The first phase will consist of the globe, its base, paving, and landscaping. The second phase will consist of the erection of nine bronze figures. The sculptors of the figures can produce up to four figures per year. Therefore, Phase II will consist of two unveiling ceremonies, for the installation of four to five figures at each ceremony. Every other figure will be installed at each of the two ceremonies to maintain geometric balance and reduce the appearance of an incomplete monument.

Site: Brockington Associates (through the Tybee Island Historical Society) conducted a ground sonar test of the center of Oglethorpe Square to determine if there are any voids (cisterns) beneath the square. The test revealed no such voids. A report of this ground sonar test will be given to Staff as soon as it is available. There are several utility lines running through the center of the square. The petitioner is working closely with the City departments of Park and Tree, Water and Sewer, and Stormwater to ensure the best location for all elements of the design, including the globe and figures. It has been determined that the globe may be located in the center of the square, but may have to be offset by a few feet. The exact location of the globe and all figures will be submitted at the final design review.

Central Globe Element: The centerpiece of the monument is a globe, divided into two hemispheres, the Eastern Hemisphere and the Western Hemisphere. The sphere portrays the global nature of WWII, which was fought in over 70 countries. The spheres will be tilted slightly outwards to ensure that all continents on which WWII was fought are visible. The entire globe will be 25' wide by 19'4" tall. There will be a walkway through the globe, accessed by three stairs and an ADA compliant ramp. There will be a brick planter around the edge of the globe to add visual interest as well as ensure visitors do not hit their head on the underside of the globe. The materials for the globe have not been submitted for this conceptual approval but will be submitted for final design approval. Initial discussion of the materials includes stainless steel for the frame and bronze for the landmasses. In order to avoid the globe becoming a jungle gym, there will be a cladding over the frame, beneath the landmasses. The drawings indicate this material will be acrylic, however, the petitioner has indicated they will investigate a metal mesh instead. The drawings further indicate a bronze eternal flame in the center of the globe. The petitioner has eliminated this element of the design. There will be plaques on the interior of the globe, the details of which will be submitted later.

Figures: There will be nine bronze figures in total, each representing an important role played by Americans in WWII. The nine figures will portray the six branches of the armed services (Army, Navy, Marines, Army Air Force, Coast Guard, Merchant Marines), two auxiliary corps (Women Army Corps and Army Nurses Corp), and Rosie the Riveter. The sculptors of these figures will be Susie Chisholm and Garland Weeks, who exceed the professional artistic qualifications provided in the Master Plan and Guidelines. Rosie the Riveter will be positioned within the interior of a hemisphere, working on the frame. The other eight figures will surround the monument, in an evenly spaced circle, approximately eight feet from the outermost element of the hemisphere, and will face away from the monument. The figures will be cast in bronze, life-size and installed on granite or marble bases. The dimensions of the bases will be provided later, but will be substantial enough to also serve as benches. There will be text on each of the bases (to be submitted later). Each figure will be clothed in the appropriate uniform. The

Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum will be providing the uniforms to the sculptors to ensure accuracy. The details of the figures will be provided with the final design submittal.

Text: The petitioner has provided a number of proposed quotations to serve as examples of the proposed text for the various plaques. The exact location of all the text, as well as the specific proposed text will be provided in the final design submittal.

Hardscaping: The center of the square will be bricked over and these bricks will have donors names inscribed as a part of the fundraising effort. The bricks will be laid in a sand bed.

Landscaping: There are two main components of the of the landscape plan: the brick planter surrounding the globe and two planting beds on the two corners of the center of the square. Specific landscaping will be provided in the final design submittal.

Recommendations:

The Technical Advisory Committee reviewed the above application on April 5, 2007 at 11:00 AM and recommends a continuance of the design concept approval. The following items were discussed in detail at the meeting:

- Scale- dominates Oglethorpe Square
 - Too many figures
 - Globe too large
- WWII Monument should be very large and grand in scale- consider Daffin Park- could accommodate this scale
- 9 Figures represent too many things- during WWII there were only 3 branches of the armed services- trying to be overly inclusive opens floodgates
- Not enough local focus- incorporate a low “wall of honor” with names of Chatham County service members who were killed with where they were killed to replace the 9 figures- will relate back to globe
- Globe appears too massive- should be more transparent though without acrylic- perhaps a three-dimensional globe not the best representation for the war- consider a flat wall or mosaic illustrating the theaters of war
- Diversity of the figures- will they be generic? Diverse? If generic, loses artistic value; if diverse, opens floodgates
- Incorporate pattern of existing sidewalk into path through center of globe to relate back to the square and eliminate the need for a separate ramp and steps
- Difficult to visualize layout with site shifted to west section of the square- need more details
- Too much paving
- Provide a computer generated, to scale, three dimensional rendering

The Technical Advisory voted unanimously to recommend that the Site and Monument Commission continue the petition so that the petitioner can reconsider the design incorporating comments, particularly as they relate to the scale and location of the monument.

PETITIONER’S COMMENTS:

Mr. Eric Meyerhoff (Architect) stated the rendering of the square was done with an overlay shown from President Street looking west. He said the monument represents a “World Apart” depicted as the Eastern theatre of war and the Pacific theatre of war. The globe will not show

the far southern hemisphere and the Antarctic because American troops were not there. The eight branches of service are represented. The war consisted of the Marines, the Navy, and the Army, but there were also merchant marines, women, and the Air Force. The idea is to show the branches as life-size sculptures on a granite podium. The monument represents the 300,000 American service people killed in World War II. He said there is not a tourist or local resident that did not have a relative in World War II. As you walk through the globe there will be a plaque with the names of each service person from Chatham County on the inside. It was suggested to have the names, age, date of birth, date of death, where they were killed and in what country. There will be quotes from individuals referencing the war. The City did a survey of the utilities under the square and there are major sanitary and storm sewer lines, and a 16-inch water main through the center. The globe will be raised on a concrete platform with ramps for the handicapped. There is an alternate plan with the monument to the west but they thought it would be better in the center, until they found about the underground utilities. He said the globe flooring could be a raised slab on steel joists with a wood deck and outdoor carpet over it with removable sections, so that the utility lines could be reached at any time.

Mr. Wright asked if you had to get to the lines for repair could the globe be lifted.

Mr. Meyerhoff stated the flooring could come off.

Mr. White stated if there was a break in the 16-inch line it would create a crater in a short period and the globe would sink. If repair work needed to be done on a 16-inch water line, they would need excavating equipment.

Mr. Meyerhoff stated he understands that would only occur in an extreme situation

Mr. Wright stated the solution to locate the globe in the center is beyond the Commission's expertise. It requires engineering, planning, utilities, and park and tree staff.

Mr. Meyerhoff stated there are sanitary and storm sewer lines on the west side, and they would have the same problems with the utilities. They feel that every square has a symmetrically placed monument; they should do the same in Oglethorpe Square. It is one of the largest squares in the city. The globe to the top is 19 feet 4 inches and it could be brought down to an 18-foot height. The dimensions from ramp to ramp is 34 feet in diameter, the globe is 25 feet at the outer edges. He mentioned different monuments from different squares and compared them to the World War II monuments dimensions.

Mr. Williams asked how Mr. Meyerhoff feels about a scale model rather than a rendering.

Mr. Meyerhoff stated a scale model could be done but is expensive.

Mr. Williams asked why Oglethorpe Square is the only location for the monument.

Mr. Meyerhoff stated the Veterans went to the City and City Council approved Oglethorpe Square for the World War II Monument.

Mr. Wright stated that was contingent upon an acceptable design. He said there would not be an issue with Daffin Park.

Mr. Wright stated the TAC was unanimous in continuing the petition so that the design could be reconsidered to incorporate their comments, particularly as they relate to the scale and location of the monument.

HSMC ACTION: **Mr. Smith made a motion that the Savannah – Chatham Historic Site and Monument Commission does hereby accept the recommendation of the Technical Advisory Committee, that the petition be continued for reconsideration of scale and location of the monument. Ms. Ricks-Brown seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

Mr. Meyerhoff stated they heard the comments of the TAC that morning and had come up with a different concept to accommodate access to the utility lines. He said moving the monument to the west does not relieve the utility problem, and increases the amount of foliage to be cut.

Mr. Wright stated they want to see it built, but they are asking for approval of ten monuments, and if they reduce the scale, it might work. However, the Commission is not going to override the TAC. He said the Commission wants to make it happen, but not with the current proposal.

Mr. Meyerhoff clarified that the Commission voted for a continuance but did not vote that it could not go in Oglethorpe Square.

Mr. Wright stated they could locate the monument in Oglethorpe Square if they could come up with an acceptable design.

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

- A. December 21, 2006
- B. February 1, 2007
- C. February 23, 2007
- D. March 1, 2007

Ms. Harris stated there was a change to the February 23, 2007 minutes.

Mr. Smith stated that he was in opposition to the motion because there was not an opportunity for a nay vote.

Mr. Wright stated it is noted and the attachment Mr. Smith provided will be placed with the file copy of the minutes.

HSMC ACTION: **Mr. Williams made a motion that the Savannah – Chatham County Historic Site and Monument Commission does hereby approve the minutes, with a correction made to the February 23, 2007 minutes. Ms. Ricks-Brown seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Ricks-Brown stated in the February 1, 2007 minutes the monument at Lake Mayer was discussed, specifically that the Commission would like to be informed in the future. She asked if contact had been made with the County and if there had been a response.

Ms. Harris stated the Commission was going to vote and no one made a motion.

HSMC ACTION: Mr. Smith made a motion that the Savannah – Chatham County Historic Site and Monument Commission does hereby approve the writing of a letter to the County asking them to inform the Commission about approvals of monuments. Ms. Ricks-Brown seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Savannah - Chatham County Historic Site and Monument Commission, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Harris
Preservation Planner

EH/jnp