

Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden Revitalization Update

Since April 2019, the Smithsonian has held four public Section 106 consultation meetings for the proposed revitalization of the Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden. Section 106 consultation and the assessment of effects on historic resources have identified twenty-three actions, with seven actions acknowledged as adverse effects. This document provides supplemental information on alterations to the inner partition wall and reflecting pool, identified by consulting parties as character defining to the historic design. This document is intended for review in conjunction with the Final Assessment of Effects on Historic Resources to solicit feedback on major design elements.

The Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden Revitalization project proposes changes to the Garden to:

- Fulfill the Hirshhorn's mission to create the most engaging modern and contemporary art experience for our rapidly growing visitation, by creating flexible interior gallery spaces for dynamic expansions in artmaking
- Improve visitor experience through universal accessibility, shade, and seating
- Increase and enhance the display of the Hirshhorn's modern sculpture collection
- Replace and repair failing infrastructure nearing the end of its useful life

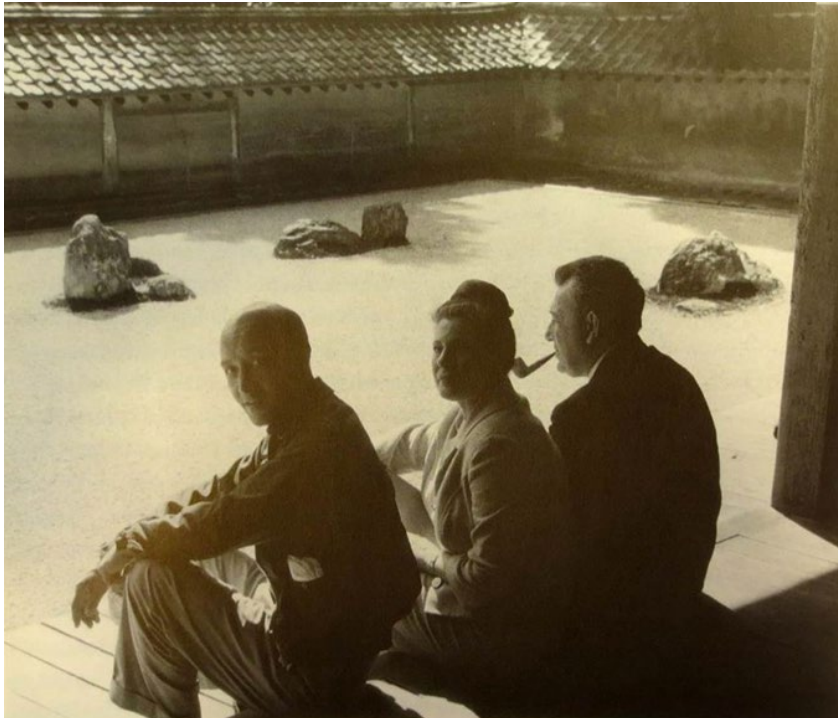


Hirshhorn Complex Rendered Aerial View

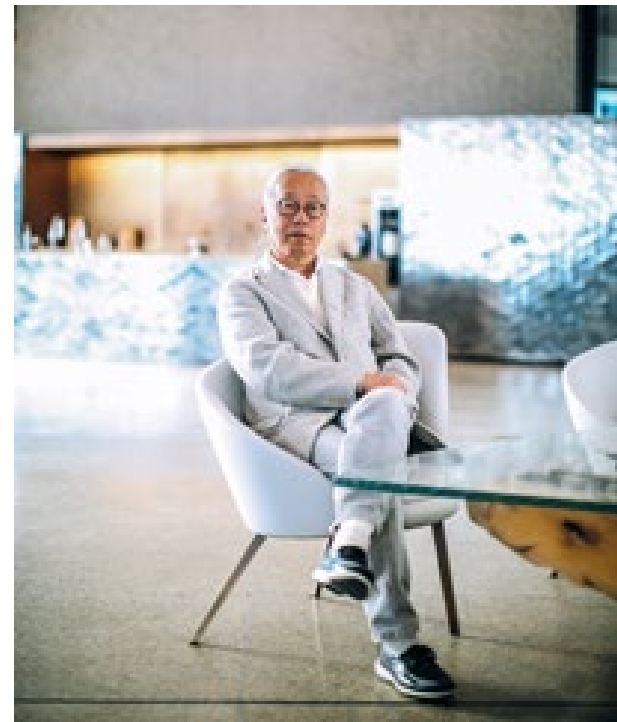


Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden Revitalization Update

In 1974, Gordon Bunshaft established the original Sculpture Garden. And three years later, Lester Collins was commissioned to add elements of shade, seating and accessibility. The proposed design by acclaimed Japanese-American artist and architect Hiroshi Sugimoto builds upon the existing layered inspiration of Asian gardens evident in the evolution of the Sculpture Garden. Bunshaft looked to Japanese Zen gardens for inspiration, and similarly Collins looked to both Japanese design and Chinese cup gardens. Sugimoto's Sculpture Garden design is fully responsive to the needs of a 21st-century national modern and contemporary art museum. The Hirshhorn is committed to reflect diverse, global perspectives; showcase dramatic changes in art making over the last five decades; and offers a dynamic platform for future art innovation. Sugimoto's proposed design introduces intimate and contemplative galleries for modern art and flexible new galleries and art platforms for performance, video, and large-scale new commissions and installations.



Isamu Noguchi with Nina and Gordon Bunshaft, Ryoanji, Kyoto, Japan, 1960

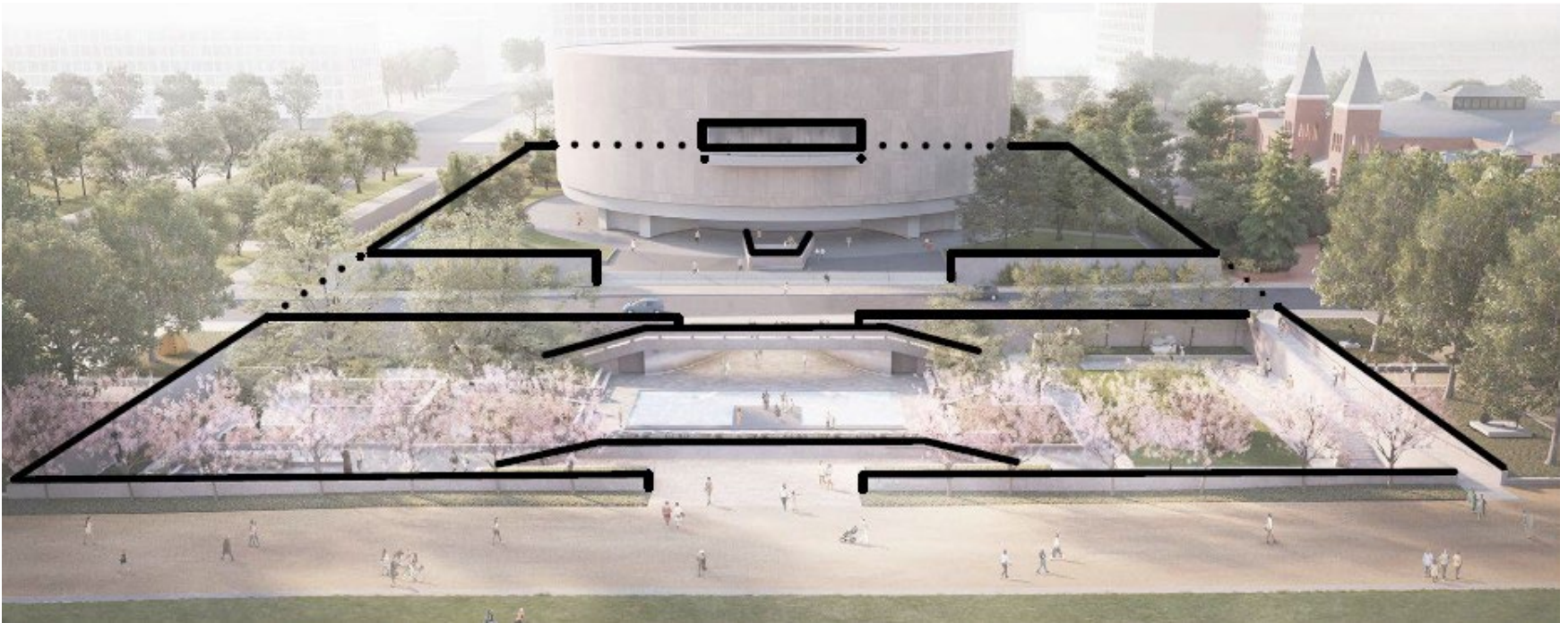


Hiroshi Sugimoto seated in his design for the Hirshhorn Museum Lobby, 2018



Inner Partition Wall - Context

The image below highlights the aggregate concrete walls that have historically formed a strong sense of enclosure and cohesion across the Hirshhorn complex. These concrete walls will continue to be a fundamental unifying feature of the Hirshhorn campus and will be strengthened by the proposed design with an enhanced northern boundary. Within the concrete enclosure, the proposed stacked stone walls of Sugimoto's design are lower than the perimeter walls to establish hierarchy and reinforce the primacy of the concrete walls. The inner partition wall will be reconstructed in stacked stone in its existing location to link the east and west galleries together and create a memorable central gallery experience.

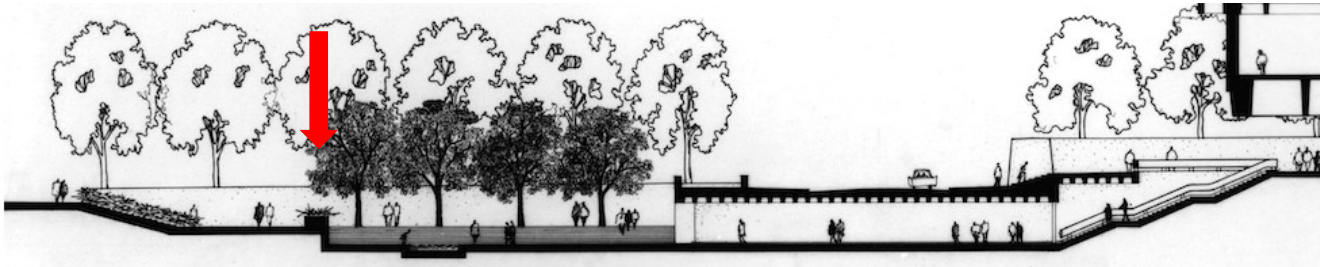


Hirshhorn Complex Aerial View. Aggregate Concrete Walls Annotated in Black.

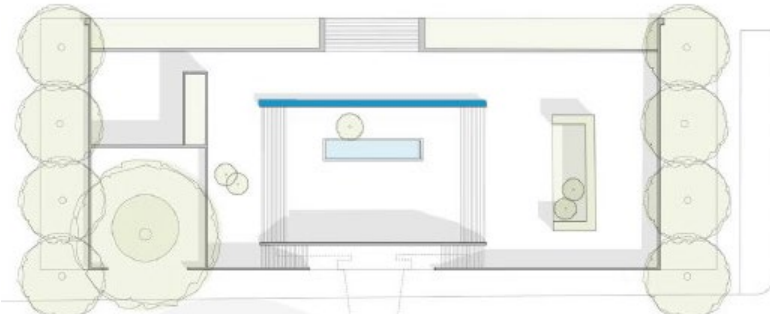


Inner Partition Wall - Evolution

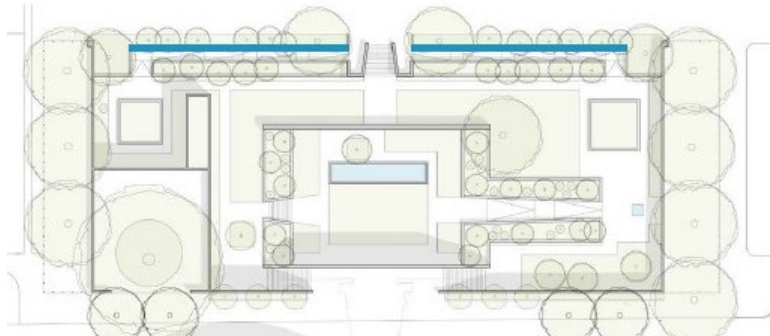
The design and context of the inner partition wall evolved significantly over time. In Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's 1971 drawings, the inner partition wall was depicted as a planter wall and at a reduced height comparable to the proposed condition. In the final 1974 design, the inner partition wall height was raised to serve as a boundary between the Sculpture Garden and the berms of the northern edge. After the 1981 modifications, the inner partition wall no longer served as a boundary, supplanted with the lateral north ramps and landscape boundary.



1971 Section Drawing, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. Note the lower height of the inner partition wall.



1974 Inner Partition Wall as Boundary, Annotated in Blue



1981 Plan, Boundary Shifted North, Annotated in Blue



Sculpture Garden, 1974



Existing Condition of 1981 Wall Configuration



Inner Partition Wall – Stacked Stone

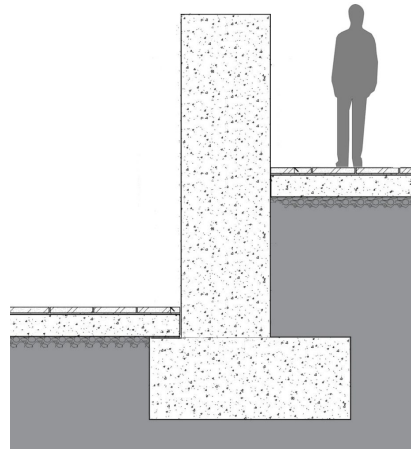
The inner partition wall will be reconstructed in stacked stone as the backdrop for exhibitions, performances and sculpture viewing in the central gallery. The wall will be reconstructed in the same location, and at a reduced height to improve views across the Sculpture Garden, currently blocked by the existing wall. To minimize the adverse effect and highlight the significance of this wall, this will be only stacked stone wall to feature Swenson Pink granite, the original granite used in the historic and new replacement aggregate concrete.



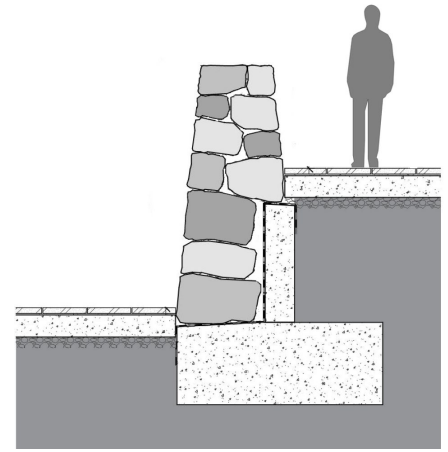
Historic Aggregate Concrete



Swenson Pink Granite



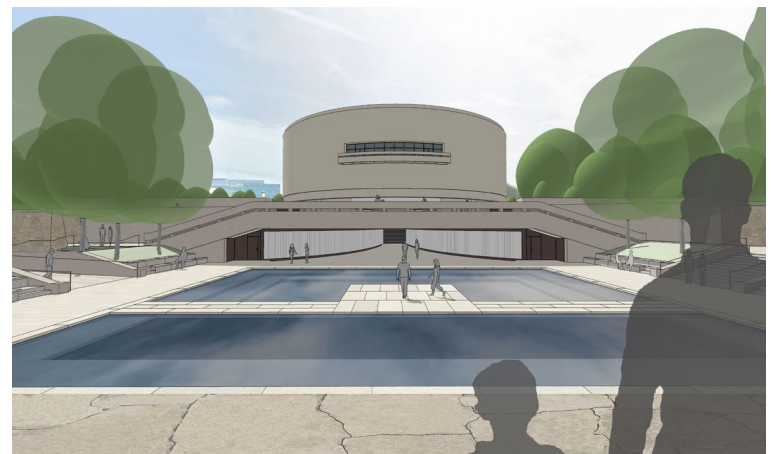
Existing Inner Partition Wall



Proposed Inner Partition Wall



View of Central Gallery from South Overlook

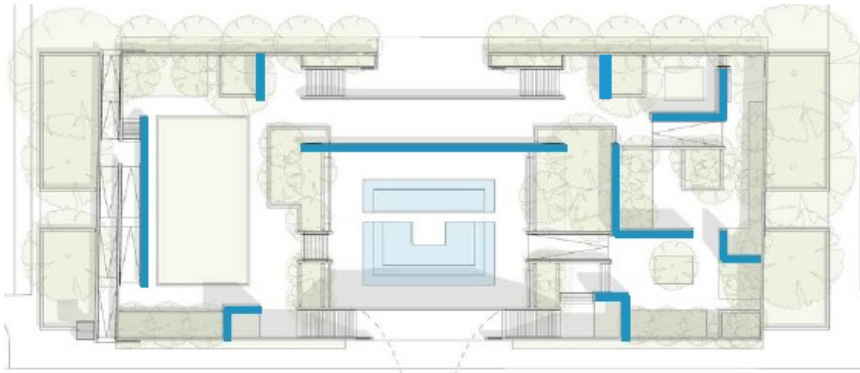


View of Central Gallery from Allee at Inner Partition Wall

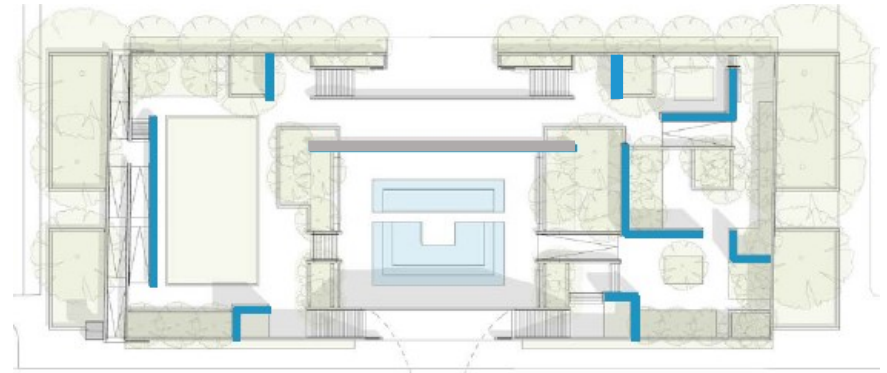


Inner Partition Wall – Stacked Stone

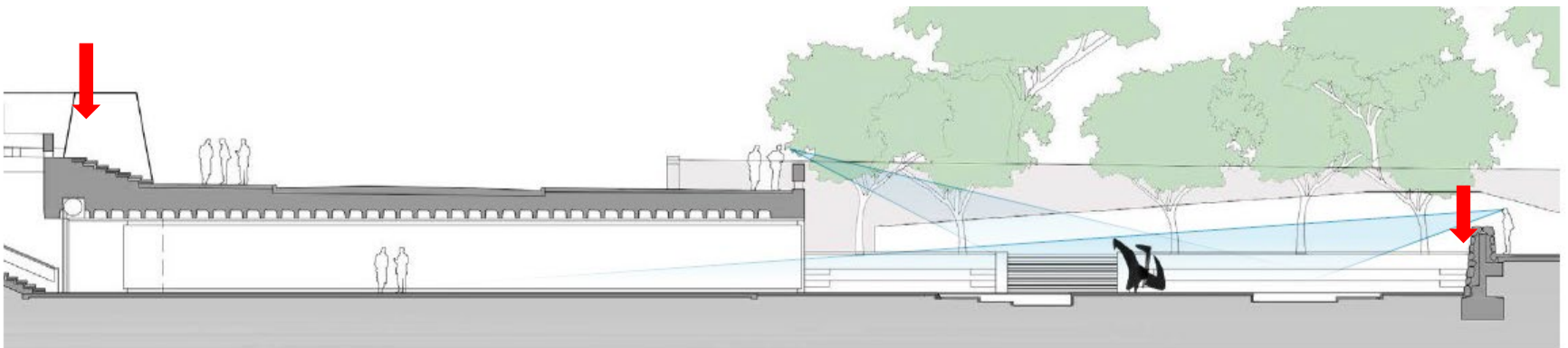
Stacked stone walls will create curated outdoor gallery spaces that are optimized for contemplative encounters with art. These galleries enhance human comfort and delight through shade and light, diversity of views, intimacy and openness, and "hide and reveal" viewer experiences. The inner partition wall creates a timeless aesthetic backdrop for viewing sculpture and performance art and unifies the presence of stacked stone across the Sculpture Garden. By enhancing the northern edge of the Garden, the design maintains the presence and legibility of the concrete walls as the cohesive perimeter feature. In response to consulting party comments, a study to rebuild the inner partition wall in concrete was developed. This study, shown below, loses the essential linking element between the east and west galleries and weakens the central gallery concept. Reimagining the inner partition wall in stacked stone is an essential feature of the curated Central Gallery.



Proposed Plan View illustrating relationship of Inner Partition Wall to Stacked Stone Walls



Study View illustrating locations of Stacked Stone Walls with concrete Inner Partition Wall



Proposed Section through reopened underground passed tunnel into the Sculpture Garden central gallery. Proposed pylon shape for the inner partition wall matches the historic concrete plaza walls.

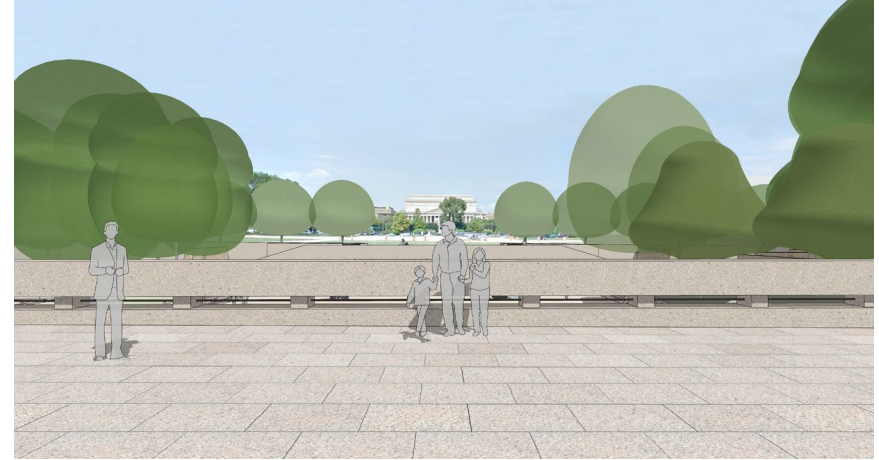


Inner Partition Wall - Visibility

Stacked stone walls, including the inner partition wall, will not be directly visible from the National Mall minimizing adverse effects on the Hirshhorn's relationship with the National Mall Historic District. Visitors will continue to identify the Hirshhorn campus with the consistent use of concrete perimeter walls creating a strong sense of enclosure and cohesion.



View from Jefferson Drive



View from South Overlook



View from the National Mall

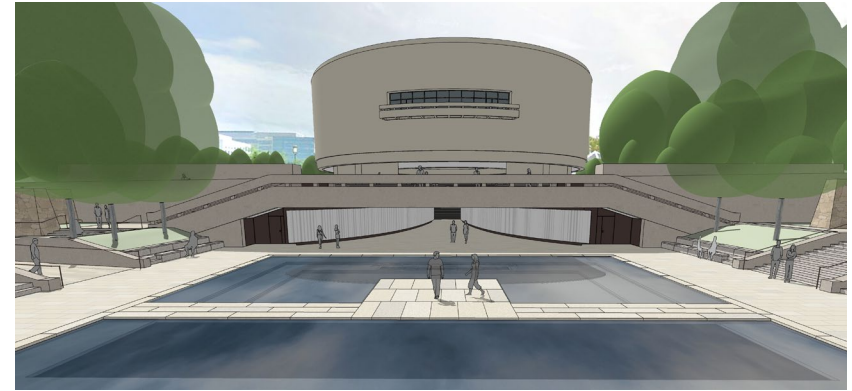
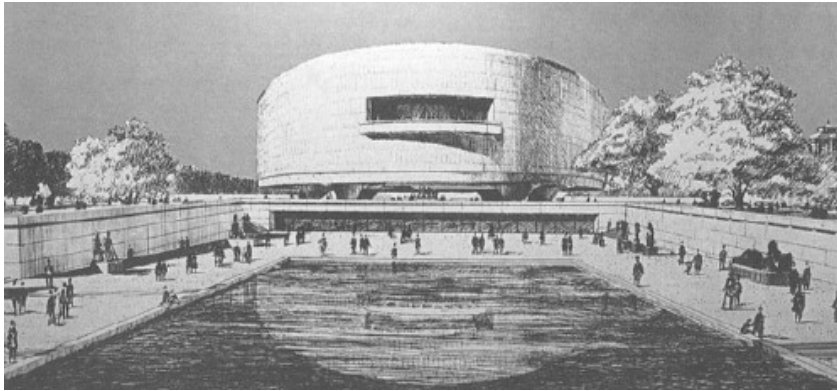


View from West Overlook

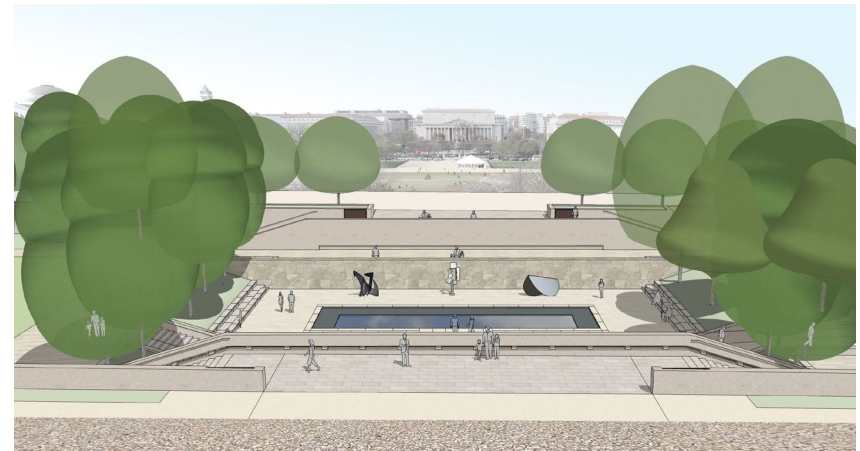
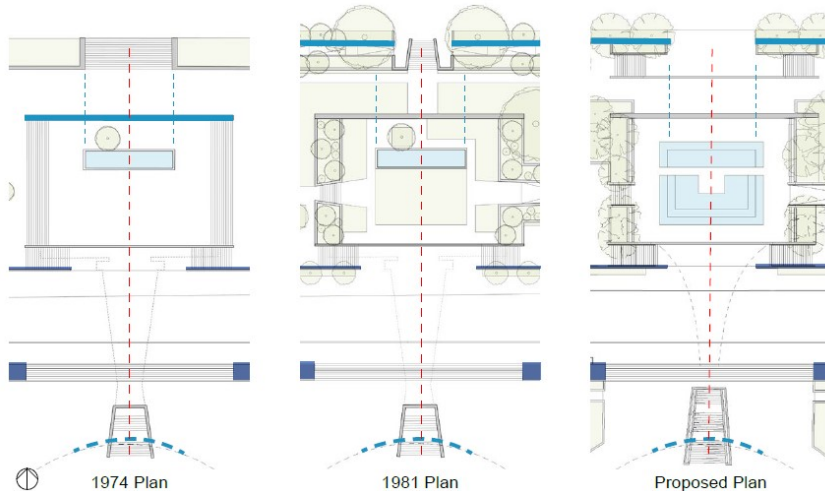


Reflecting Pool - Context

In Bunshaft's 1967 proposed Sculpture Garden design, the reflecting pool assumed a monumental scale, enhancing the visual suggestion of the "floating" Museum. The Preferred Alternative re-envisioned this original design intent and strengthens the Hirshhorn campus connections by keeping the 1974 pool intact, adding an enhanced, flexible water feature, and reopening the underground passage. The 1974 Sculpture Garden design aligned the width of the reflecting pool at 60 feet with the north stair. This relationship was altered in 1981 when Collins reduced the width of the north stair. The Preferred Alternative restores the north stair opening to 60 feet reestablishing the connection with the retained dimension of the 1974 pool, and emphasizing the relationship of the Museum, balcony window, and central garden to the 8th Street axis, the fundamental organizing element of the campus.



1967 Sculpture Garden Design, SOM. Note the larger reflecting pool and floating Museum building similar to the Preferred Alternative at right.

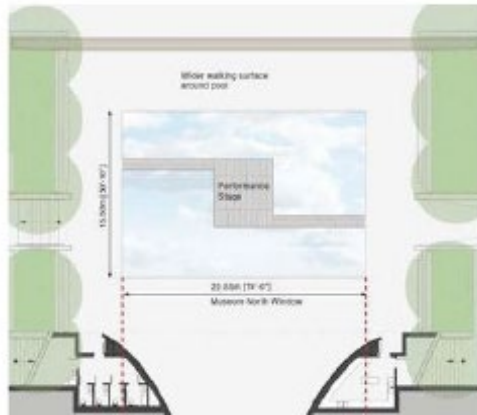


Preferred Alternative, View from the Museum's balcony. Note the restored relationship to the North Stair.

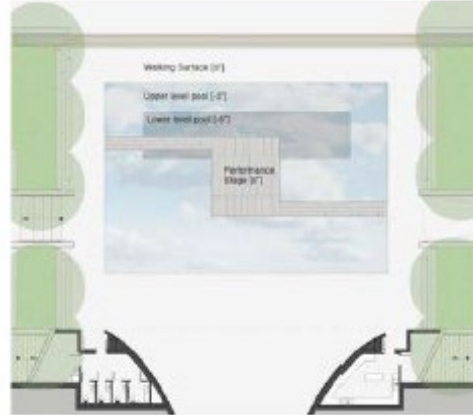


Reflecting Pool Alternative Development, April 2019 – May 2020

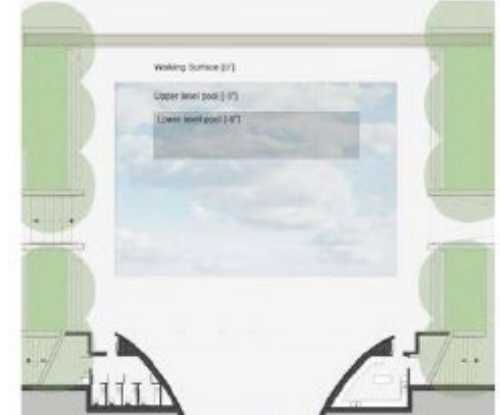
Over the course of Section 106 consultation initiated in early 2019, six pool alternatives were developed in response to comments from consulting parties. An enlarged reflecting pool maintains the organization of the Sculpture Garden around the central 8th Street axis and tempers the environment with evaporative cooling. The art platform within the reflecting pool facilitates broad exhibition types and programming. In all the alternatives, the reflecting pool is recessed and provides the flexibility to be drained or filled dependent on the current exhibition or event.



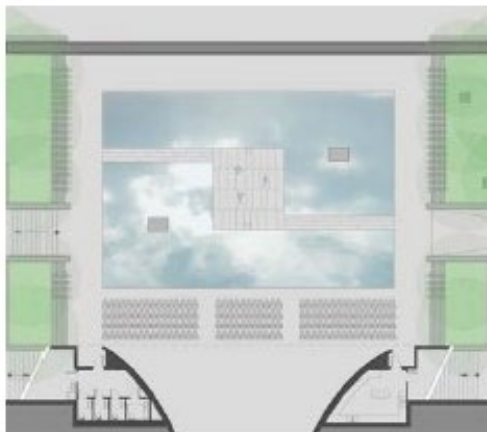
April 2019 Consulting Parties Meeting
Reduced Width Aligns with Balcony



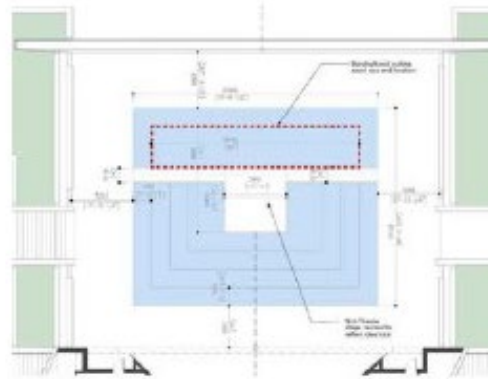
April 2019 Consulting Parties Meeting
1974 Dimensions with Art Platform



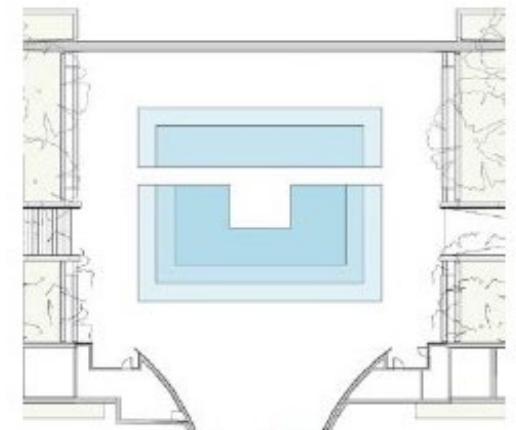
April 2019 Consulting Parties Meeting
1974 Dimensions, No Art Platform



May 2019 CFA/NCPC Concept Approval
Art Platform and Sculpture Pedestals



February 2020 Consulting Parties Meeting
1974 Pool, Terraced Levels, Reduced Size



April 2020 Consulting Parties Meeting - Preferred
1974 Pool, Fewer Terraces, Reduced Size



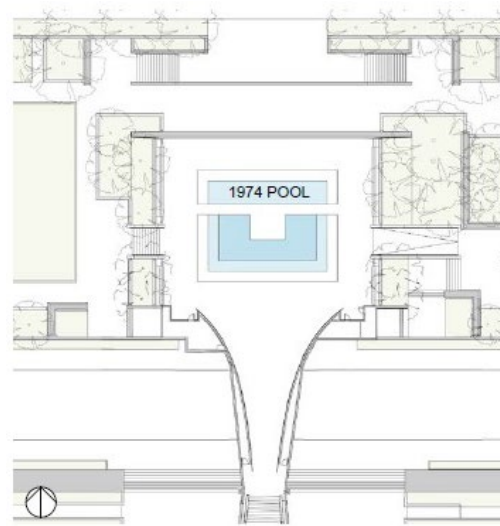
Reflecting Pool – Preferred Alternative

The Preferred Alternative integrates the historic 1974 reflecting pool dimensions into a cohesive design that also responds to the rigorous programming needs of a modern and contemporary art museum. At the heart of the Sculpture Garden, the reflecting pool presents an opportunity to enliven the central gallery, enhance visitor experiences, and build upon the history of this space. The proposed solution retains the 1974 pool dimensions as a terrace feature in an enlarged reflecting pool. An art platform at the center of the pool serves as a flexible programming space for a variety of performances and facilitates diverse exhibition opportunities. The terrace concept is integrated in the southern portion of the pool as well by introducing several tiers that can be filled or drained as needed to support variable water levels and seating arrangements.

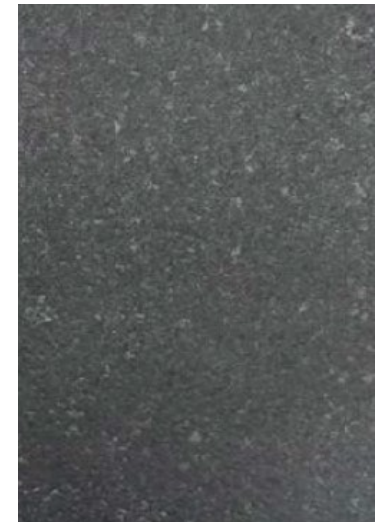
To minimize adverse effects of the Preferred Alternative, the enlarged pool will feature black granite in keeping with the historic reflecting pool material. The black granite could be treated differently, such as with a honed or thermal finish, to further differentiate the 1974 section of the pool. Only the historic portion of the pool will be heated year-round to allow its enduring presence, in contrast to current conditions where the pool is drained in winter and during rain events to mitigate flooding. Highlighting the 1974 pool with a year-round water presence and distinct material, paired with informational signage on the Sculpture Garden's history, highlights the layered design of the current garden and preserves a memory of the historic pool.



Preferred Alternative Aerial View, Partially Filled



Preferred Alternative Plan



Black Granite



Reflecting Pool Study – Alternative 1 of 2

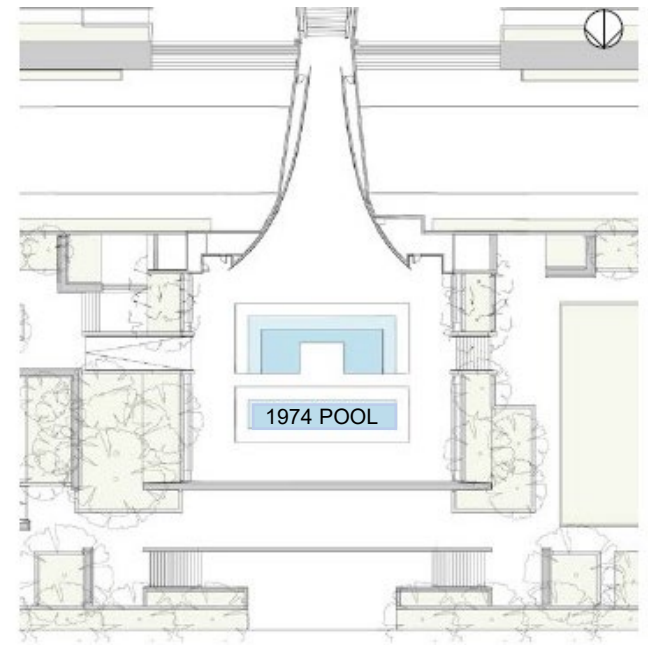
At the request of the consulting parties to consider additional alternatives to further minimize or avoid adverse effects on the reflecting pool, two additional studies have been developed.

In Alternative 1, the art platform is shifted south to further distinguish the 1974 pool area. The 1974 pool is encircled with a terrace level, with the art platform and the remaining terraced portion of the pool to the south.

Shifting the art platform to the south, compromises its function as a setting for performances in the round and reduces seating area capacity on the south terraces of the reflecting pool. Shifting the art platform south to the center of the enlarged reflecting pool creates two disjointed pool areas.



Alternative 1, Partially Drained



Alternative 1, Plan



Reflecting Pool Study – Alternative 2 of 2

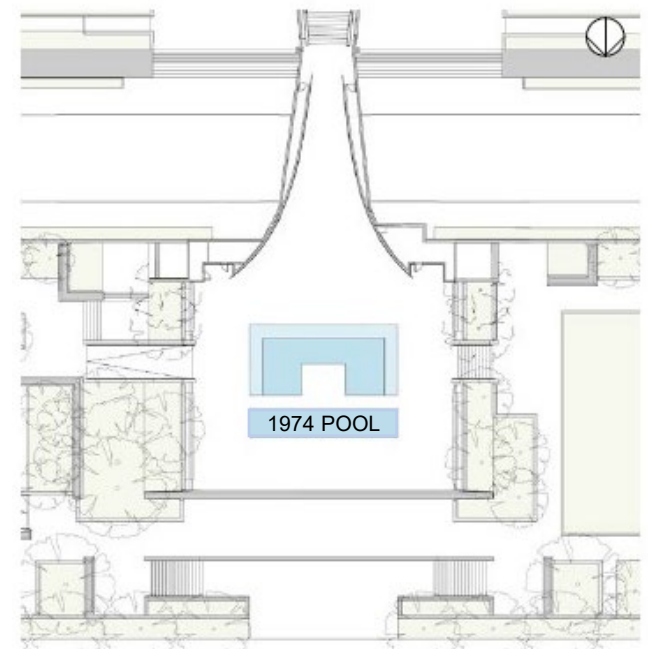
At the request of the consulting parties to consider additional alternatives to further minimize or avoid adverse effects on the reflecting pool, two additional studies have been developed.

In Alternative 2, the outer terrace level is removed from the Preferred Alternative, to feature only the 1974 pool area north of the art platform. Alternative 2 corresponds approximately to the size of the sod panel currently in the Sculpture Garden south of the 1974 reflecting pool. A border treatment around the reflecting pool is required to resolve safety considerations at the 1974 pool edge due to the lack of visual contrast between paver and pool.

Alternative 2 hinders the programming of the central gallery by removing an entire tier of seating space. Additionally, the high hardscape to pool ratio reduces the effectiveness of the reflecting pool to temper the Sculpture Garden microclimate with evaporative cooling. These pool proportions may not be successful in supporting a central feature for art, performances, and contemplation in the Sculpture Garden.



Alternative 2, Filled



Alternative 2, Plan

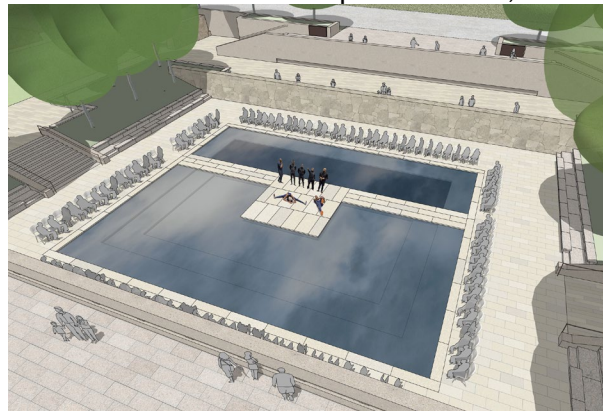


Reflecting Pool – Preferred Alternative

In response to the Museum program, the reflecting pool design can be configured in a variety of ways to host exhibitions, performance art, commissioned installations, or events. Some options are depicted below to illustrate the range of programming opportunities and the potential of the space. The central gallery can transform to be quiet and contemplative or activated by performances and groups. Terraces provide places for informal gathering and formal seating arrangements. The Hirshhorn Museum envisions this space as an opportunity to invite artists to create site-specific works, a venue for contemporary art yet to be imagined.



Typical Summer Configuration – Pool Filled



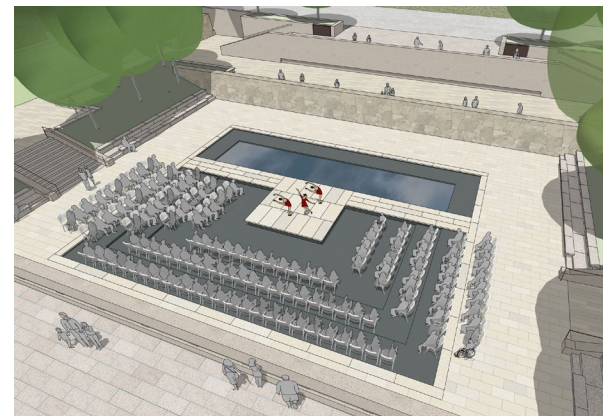
Performance Seating around Pool



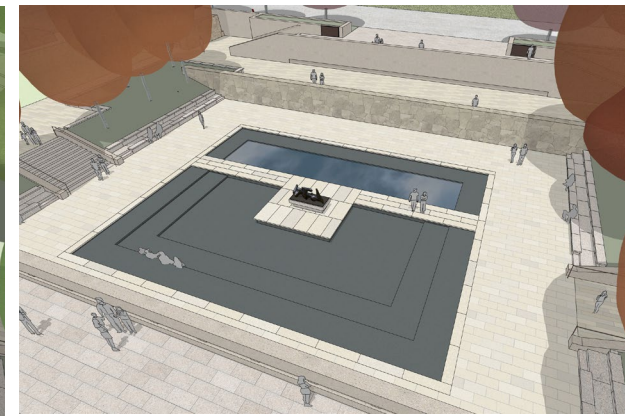
Curated Exhibition



Informal Group Gathering



Performance Seating in Terraces



Typical Winter Configuration - 1974 Pool Heated

The Hirshhorn Museum and the Smithsonian have identified the Preferred Alternative and the current design of the Inner Partition wall as adverse effects, but fundamental to the project's goals and curatorial vision. Please submit any written comments for Carly Bond, Smithsonian Senior Historic Preservation Specialist via the webpage comment box on the additional pool alternatives, the Preferred Alternative, and the final Assessment of Effects on Historic Resources by September 4, 2020.

