



## Peace Corps Commemorative

Peace Corps Park, Washington, DC

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts

June 18, 2020

**PEACE CORPS COMMEMORATIVE DESIGN CONCEPT**  
**JUNE 4, 2020, SUBMISSION DOCUMENT**  
**for**  
**JUNE 18, 2020, PRESENTATION to the COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS**

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*The Peace Corps Commemorative Foundation seeks CFA approval of the revised design concept at the June 18, 2020, meeting. This will enable the next, critical post-concept steps to proceed: fine tuning of forms along with study, exploration and detailed development – aesthetic, functional, technical – of all attributes of the composition: construction materials, trees and plantings, inscriptions, lighting and electrical power, civil and structural engineering. The design will be reviewed phase by phase at subsequent CFA meetings prior to final CFA site and design approval.*

# Peace Corps Commemorative Meanings and Messages

The Peace Corps Commemorative will stand for centuries in the heart of the American capital to honor enduring attributes of the American ethos and character - the spirit of caring and generosity, of outreach to others, of extending a helping hand - that motivated creation of the Peace Corps in 1961 and that Peace Corps service embodies.

Acting upon these attributes through volunteer service embodies the fundamental mission and idea of the Peace Corps: to foster mutual understanding and respect between disparate cultures and peoples of the world as a pathway to peace.

The Commemorative will not be a monument or memorial to war, to a heroic figure, to Peace Corps volunteers or to the Peace Corps as a federal agency. This commemorative work instead will be about a historic idea and timeless American ideals - the better angels of our nature - about the "Corps" as well as "Peace."

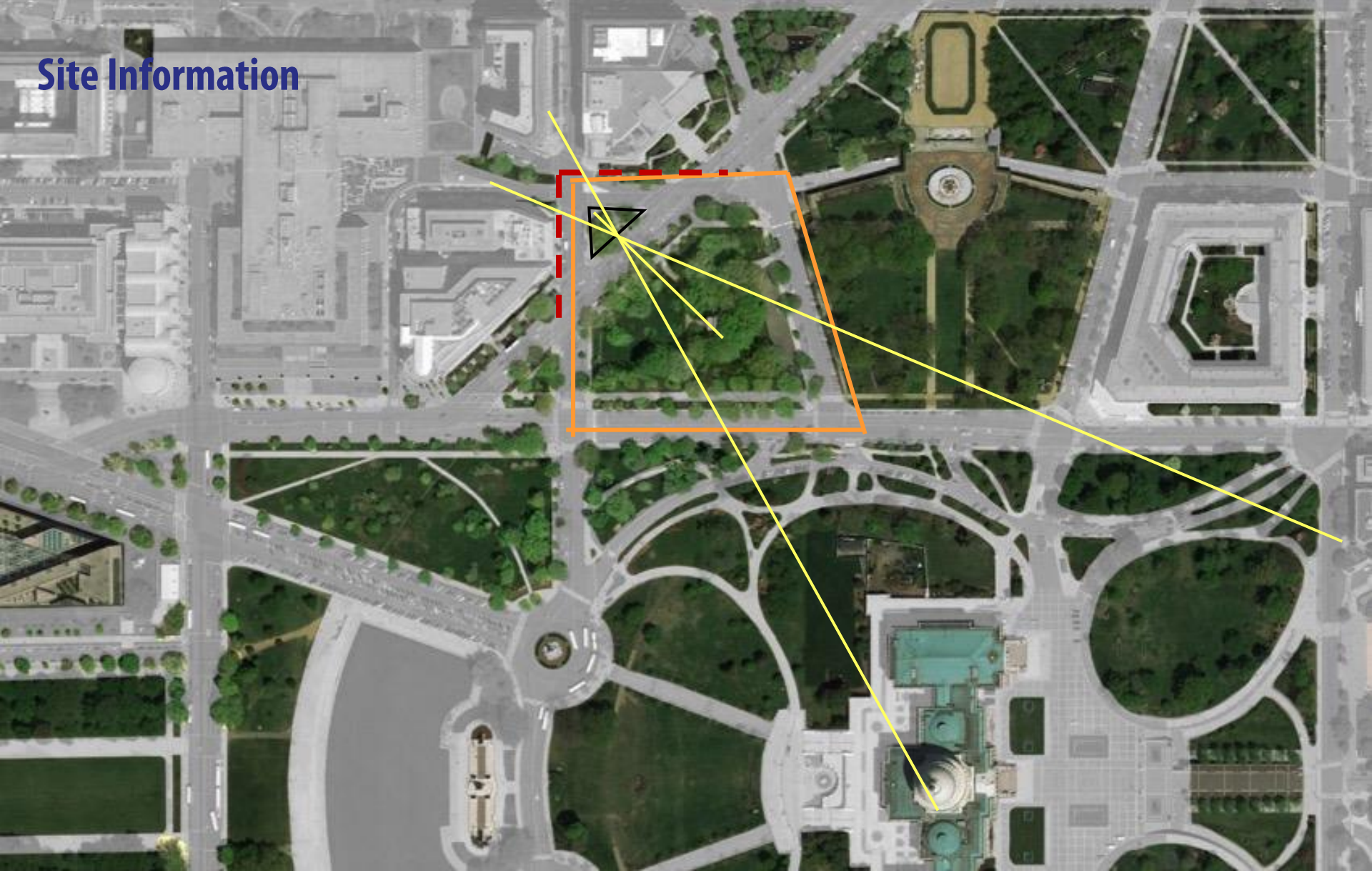
"Corps" represents the real-world substance of the Peace Corps. Dedicated American volunteers have gone abroad to assist those in need within diverse cultures throughout the world; to live and work side by side with people; and to learn more about them while enabling them to learn more about Americans.

Peace Corps volunteers bring home life-changing experience and knowledge to share with fellow citizens, a legacy benefitting their country and the world.





# Site Information



Setting showing sight line relationships between Commemorative site and U.S. Capitol Building grounds and dome, and Taft Park Carillon.

- Site Building Frame
- Site Landscape Connection
- Sight - Lines



# Site Information

Existing site looking north, bounded by 1<sup>st</sup> and C Streets, and Louisiana Avenue NW; Robert A. Taft Memorial Park and Carillon to the east; Union Station to the northeast.



View looking southwest along Louisiana Avenue sidewalk and across site to 1<sup>st</sup> Street, NW.



View looking northeast along Louisiana Avenue sidewalk.



## Site Information



Views of the site looking southeast toward Taft Park and the dome of the U.S. Capitol Building.



## Previous Design Concept



Previous Design Concept (February 20,2020): view showing the Commemorative site, looking north from the Louisiana and 1<sup>st</sup> Street intersection.



## Previous Design Concept



Previous Design Concept (February 20, 2020): view looking southeast from the 1<sup>st</sup> Street and Indiana Avenue intersection showing the pergola wrapping around the western and northern edges of the site.



# Summary of Key CFA Comments – February 20, 2020



- Two major elements of the design – the pergola and bench-hand ellipse – are “disassociated from each other.”
- Pergola doesn’t convey “recognizable meaning” – potentially interpretable in ways unrelated to Commemorative meanings and messages.
- Limited pergola shading – commissioners questioned the pergola and suggested creating a smaller, space-defining element related to bench-hands, plaza and world map.
- Trees proposed should help shape and create a “sense of place” within the park while providing desirable shade.
- Suggestions were made about sculptural refinements of bench-hands and about selecting an appropriate cartographic projection for map to avoid regional distortions.
- Commissioners questioned nighttime LED lighting of glass elements.



## Response to CFA Comments

After the February 20, 2020, CFA meeting, the Commemorative design team undertook design concept studies to explicitly respond to the CFA's specific comments and concerns.

Reconsidering the form and purpose of the pergola, the team's design concept studies led to its reconceptualization.

Retaining the overall site plan and sculptural approach, the design team explored a new canopy concept.





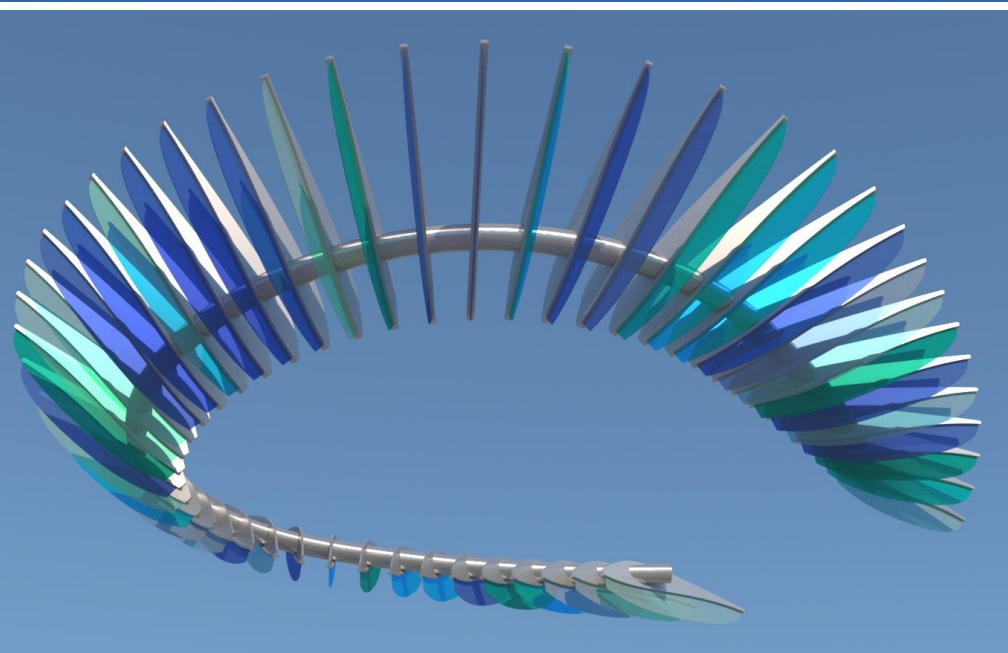


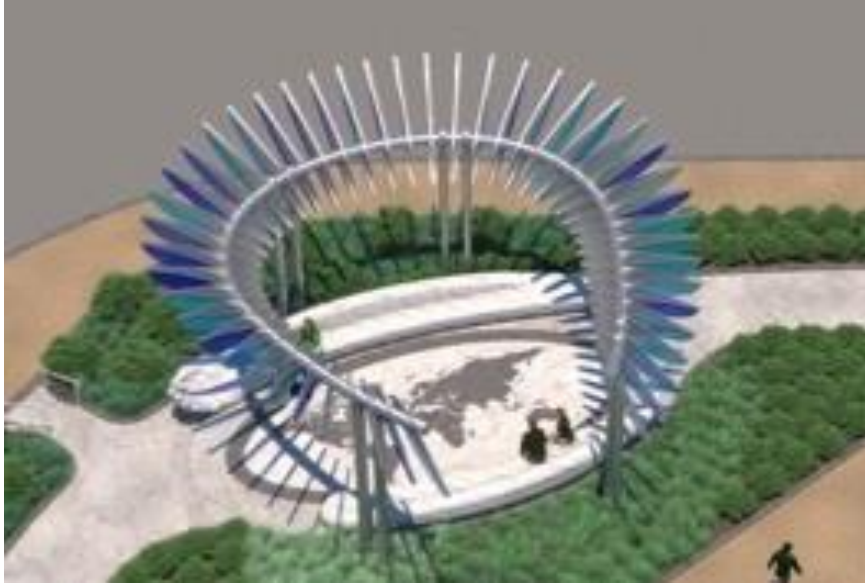
## Canopy Design Concept

The artistically unique canopy compositionally relates to, embraces and enhances the meaning of the elliptical plaza, world map and granite bench/hand sculptures.

With “feathers” of glass and stainless steel, the canopy form abstractly represents wings of a dove in flight, an interpretable reference to a universal symbol of peace.

A place and space definer, the canopy will be a memorable form and create an appealing destination for repose and contemplation.





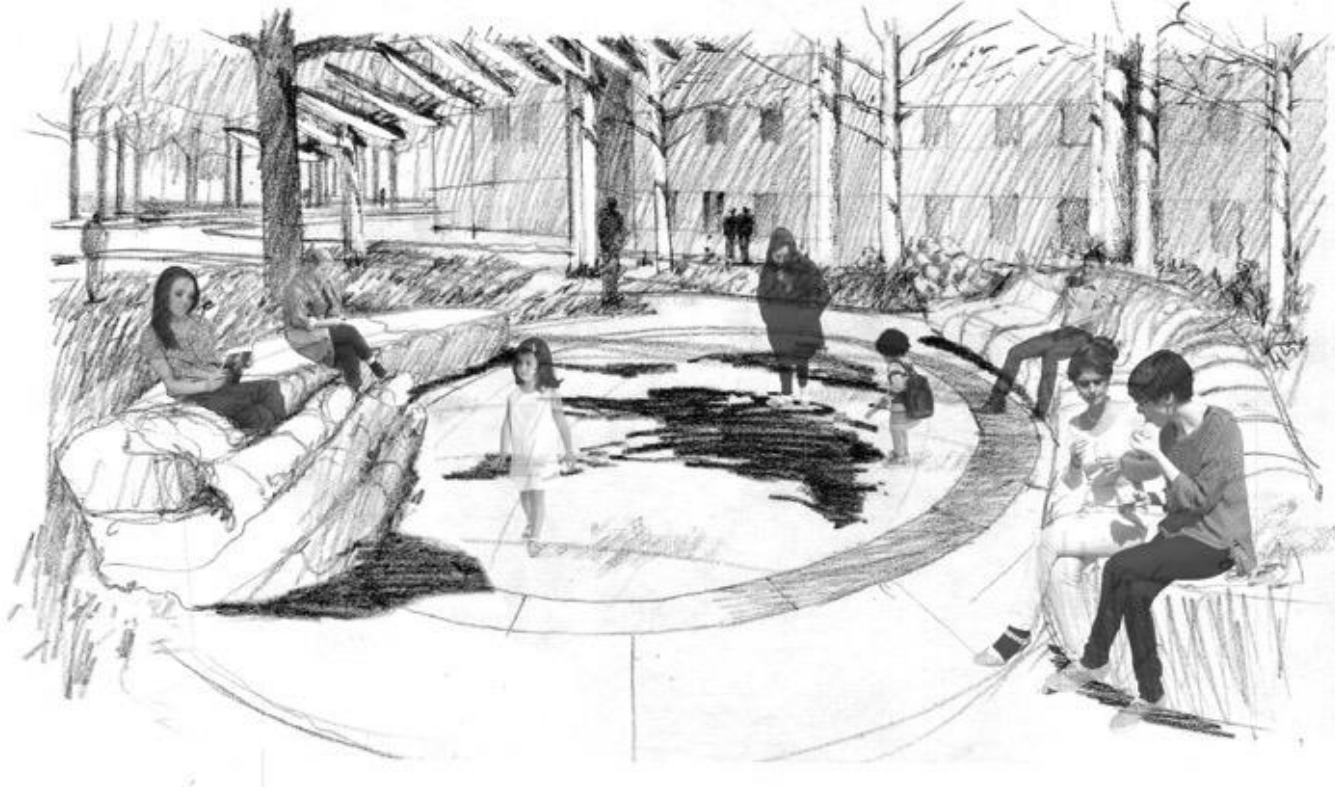
Canopy design concept's compositional geometry related to site and sculptures.





Updated site plan showing revised canopy in relation to: ellipse, world map and bench-hand sculptures; sidewalks and paths; vegetated ground plane; and existing and proposed tree canopies, with new trees in approximate locations .

## Ellipse, Bench-hands & World Map Within the Site

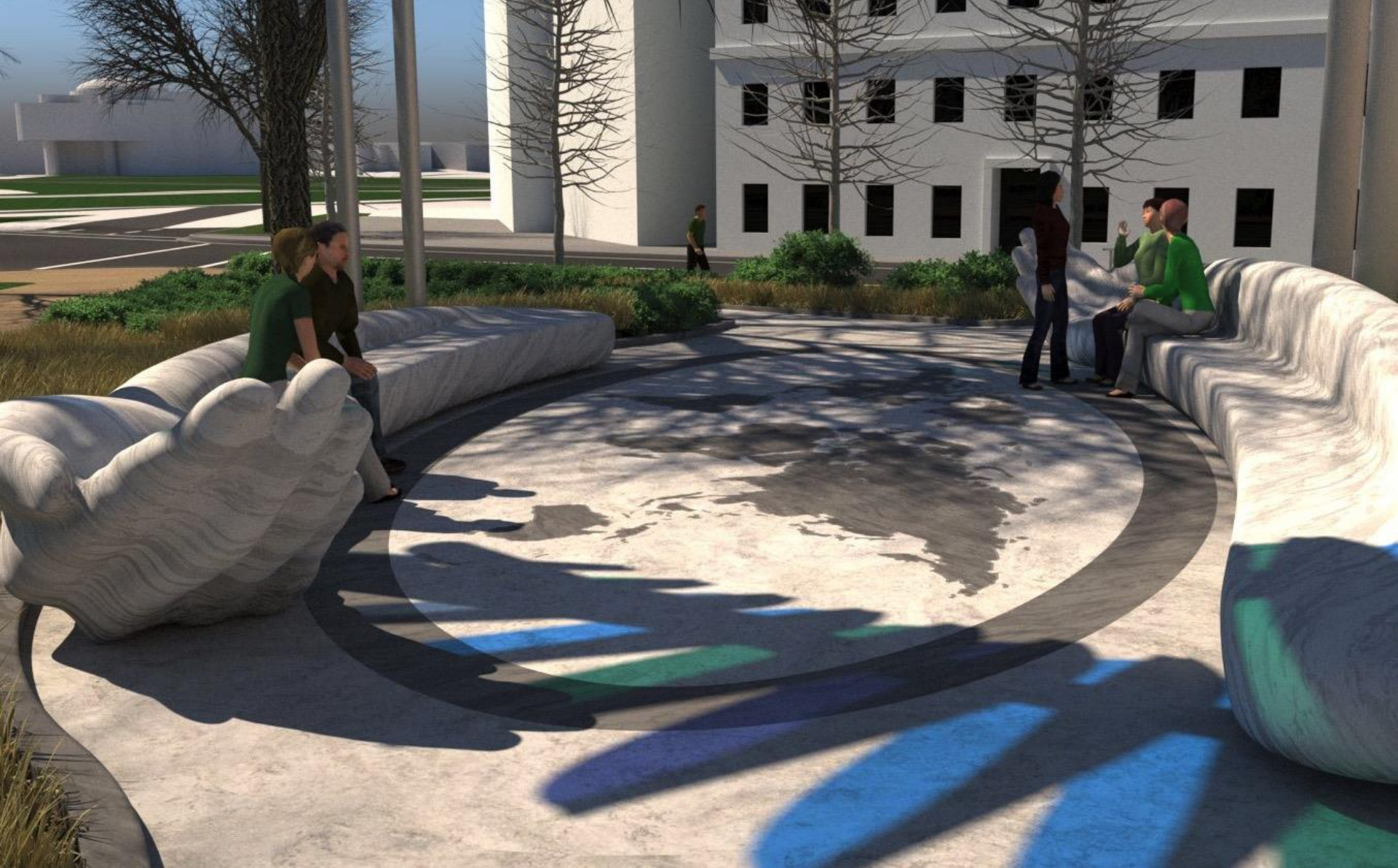


At times a sacred, intimate space for contemplation and inspiration; at times an informal space for relaxing or eating lunch; and sometimes a gathering space for visitors to meet, talk and learn.

Sculpted granite benches define, frame and embrace the elliptical space; the hands emerging from the bench ends symbolize America's voluntary outreach and generosity, expressing giving and receiving, teaching and learning.

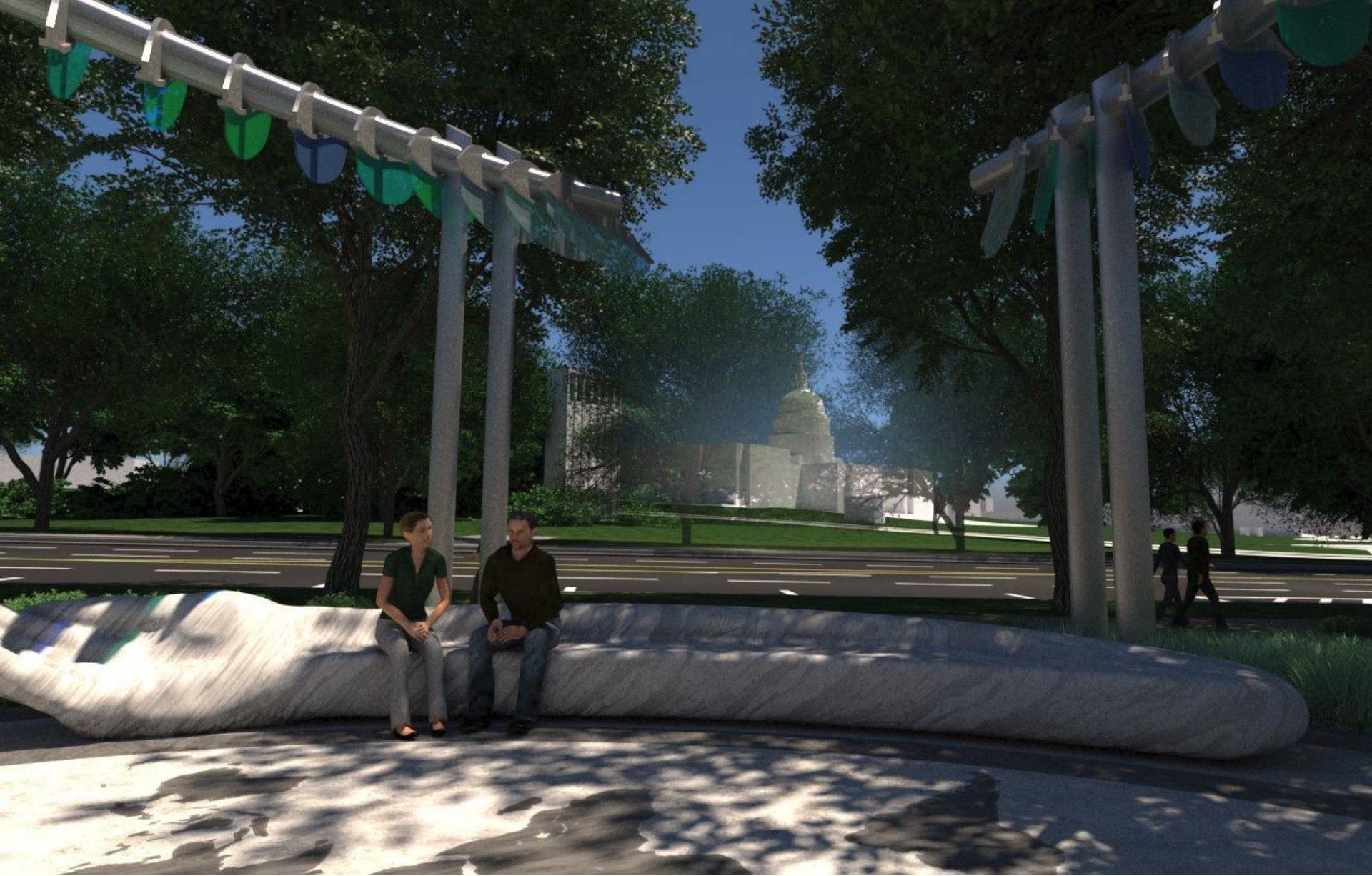
Inscribed on the elliptical plaza is a map of the world without political or national boundaries. It shows that we all share the same planet and symbolizes the foundational Peace Corps idea: transcending barriers between peoples through mutual understanding is the way to achieve peace.





Sunlight filtering through translucent glass feathers will cast colorful, seasonally changing shadows across the world map and bench-hand sculptures framing the elliptical plaza. All these essential elements, beautifully woven together within the site, will ensure a meaningful, inspiring Peace Corps Commemorative experience for visitors.





View from the center of the Commemorative looking southeast toward Taft Park with a framed view of the U.S. Capitol Building dome.





Street view of Peace Corps Park and Commemorative looking northeast up Louisiana Avenue toward Union Station.





Street view of Peace Corps Park and Commemorative looking north across Louisiana Avenue and up 1st Street, NW.





Street view of Peace Corps Park and Commemorative looking east across 1<sup>st</sup> and C Street intersection.





View of Peace Corps Park and Commemorative looking north from Louisiana Avenue sidewalk. Surrounding tree canopies will cast dynamic shadows and provide shade during summer months, with evergreen ground covers and flowering shrubs completing the inviting park landscape.



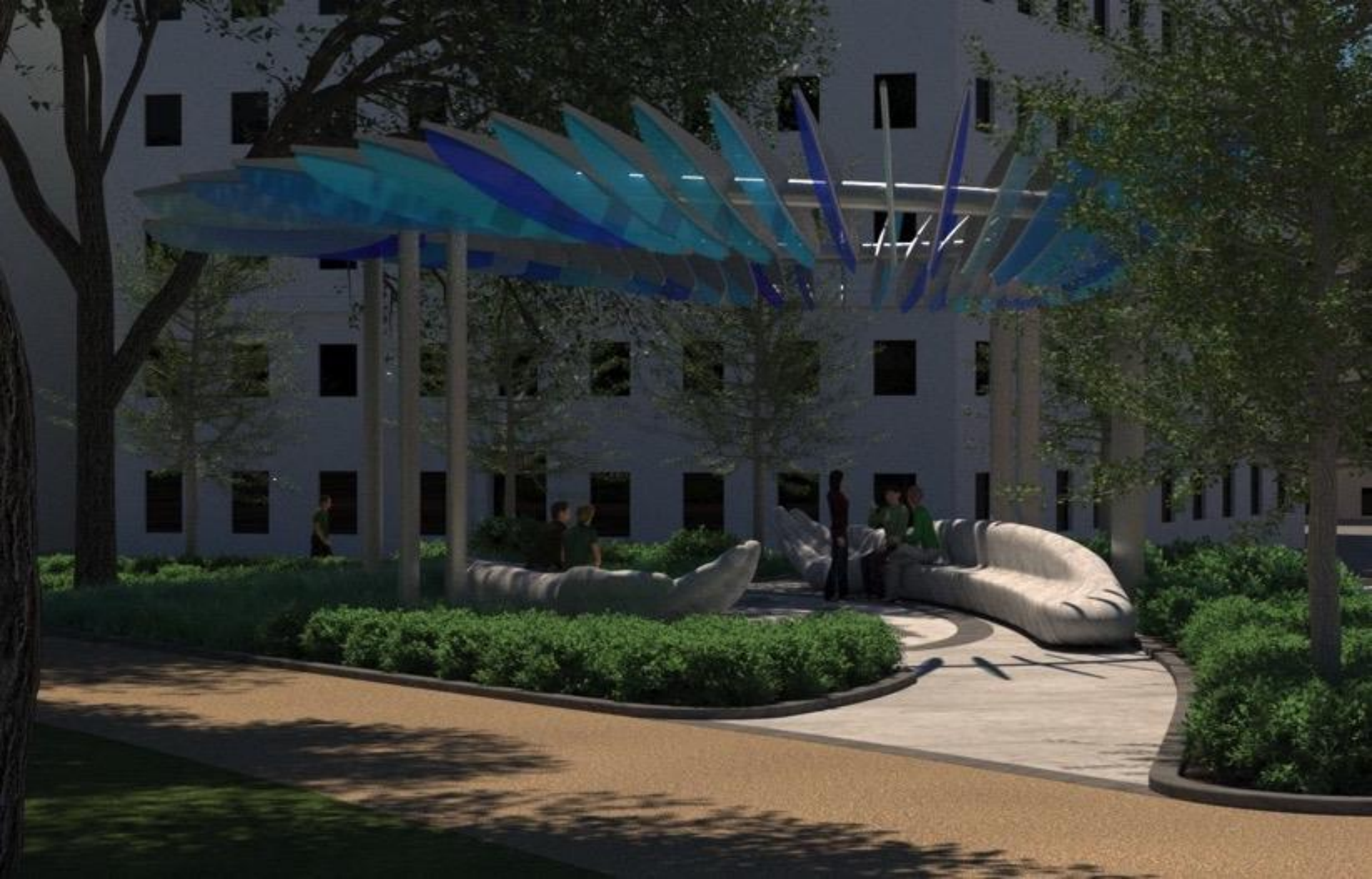


View of Peace Corps Park and Commemorative looking northwest from Louisiana Avenue showing the placemaking relationship between the hand benches and the canopy.



View looking west at Peace Corps Park and Commemorative, across Louisiana Avenue sidewalk showing the central gathering place.





View of Peace Corps Park looking southwest from Louisiana Avenue sidewalk.





## **AGENCY**

### **National Park Service**

## **CLIENT**

### **Peace Corps Commemorative Foundation**

**Roger K. Lewis**, FAIA, President (Tunisia 1964–66):  
Architect; Professor Emeritus of Architecture,  
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**Bonnie Gottlieb**, Vice President &  
Secretary/Treasurer (Ivory Coast 1972–74): Senior Vice  
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National Peace Corps Association

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Center & Whitman School of Management, Syracuse  
University

## **DESIGN AND FABRICATION TEAM**

### **Larry Kirkland, Artist**

**Michael Vergason Landscape Architects, Ltd.**

**Zahner Architectural Metals**

**Mayer of Munich Glass**

**Cutting Edge Granite**

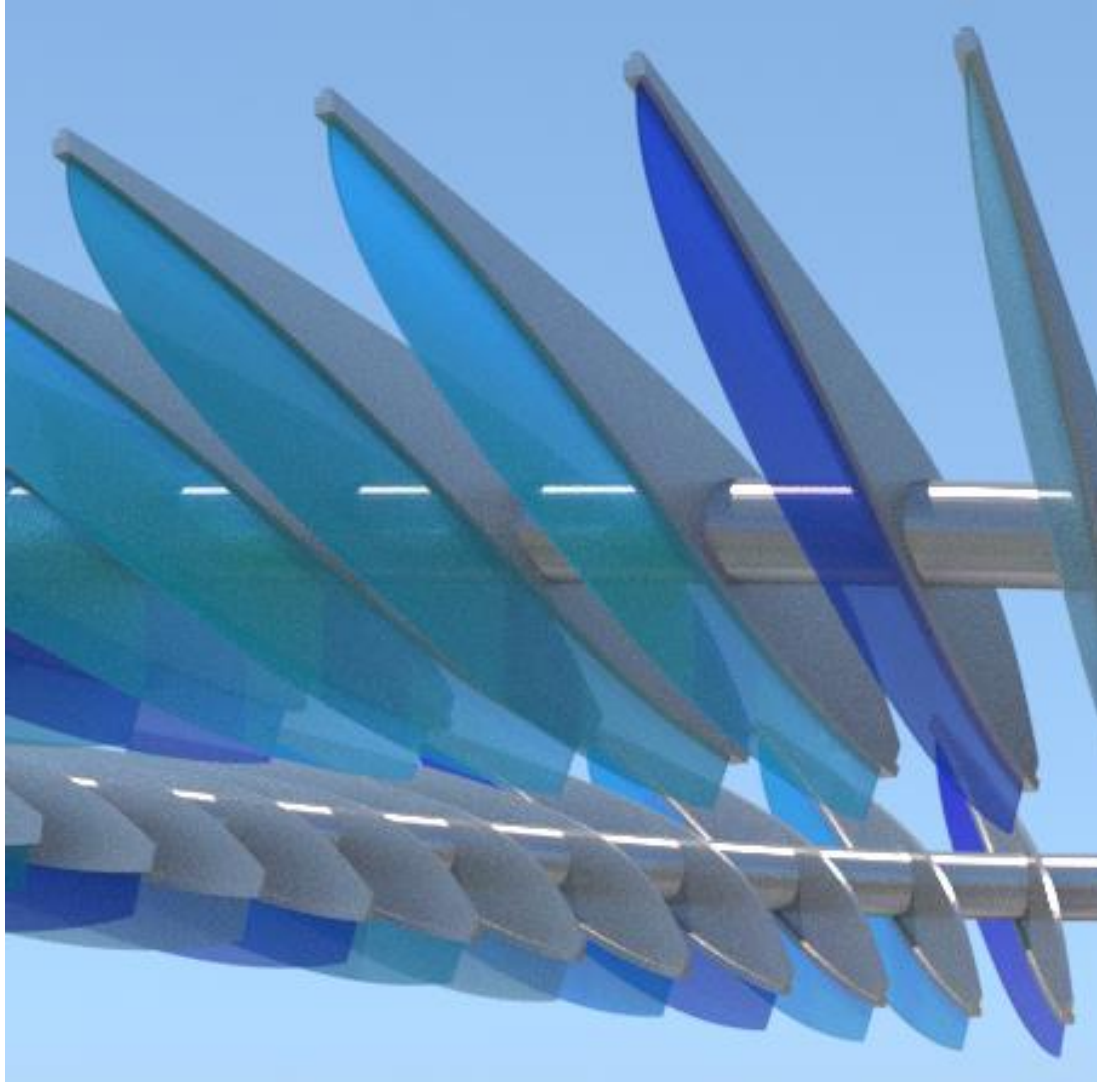
**SGF Scultura**

**Martin/Martin , Structural Engineers**

### **AECOM**

Environmental Analysis & Section 106 Historic  
Preservation Consultant

## APPENDIX: Canopy's Steel and Glass Feathers



Each cantilevered feather will consist of a stainless steel upper element holding a larger, translucent element of colored glass in the violet-blue-green range. The feather's steel upper element is attached to the stainless steel, structural tubular beam supporting all the feathers. Each glass element is a multi-layered, high-strength lamination engineered to permanently maintain its color, remain structurally stable and, being well out of reach, be essentially unbreakable. Inscribing a very subtle, feather-like texture on the glass surface is a possible consideration.