

AGENCIES WORK TOGETHER TO BUILD Firefighters' Memorial

By Dan C.L. Sears, ASLA

Two years before the 9-11-01 tragedy, North Carolina firefighters – who had lost more than 150 of their men and women – organized to create a suitable memorial for those who made this sacrifice of their lives in the line of duty.

Various locations across the state were considered for the memorial. North Carolina's capitol, Raleigh, was selected as the symbolic place for this statement.

Sculptor Carl Regutti conceived a monument of firefighters in battle with one man down. The monument was to show both fighting the fire and rescuing the downed firefighter. It would be in cast bronze. It was to be sited in Nash Square, a State of North Carolina Square that is maintained by the City of Raleigh. After discussion with several landscape architectural firms, Sears Design Group was selected to lead the design, approvals and construction phases for the monument.

The State of North Carolina Fire Marshal/Department of Insurance endorsed the project, as did the Raleigh City Council in 1999. The tragic events of September 11, 2001 led the North Carolina Fallen Firefighters Foundation to turn its efforts to assistance and support of F.D.N.Y. families. A strong bond was created between New York and North Carolina firefighters and even stronger determination to see the memorial completed.

In 2003, preliminary design was set and the approvals phase began. Agencies and departments of the State of North Carolina included: The N.C. Department of Insurance, the N.C. Historical Commission of the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources, and the North Carolina Arts Council had to approve the plans. City of Raleigh



Left: The stone at the base of the memorial is "Tuscan Valley Ashlar Block," and was selected to look like part of a building. The plaza paving stones are Bluestone. The space previously contained a large circular sidewalk with a circular planter containing flowers. The planter was surrounded by inward facing benches.

PHOTOS: SEARS DESIGN GROUP

approval groups included the Citizen's Action Committee (for the neighborhood around Nash Square), the Raleigh Arts Commission, the Raleigh Parks and Greenway Commission, the City Manager's Office and the city council.

The Sears Design Group, led by Dan C.L. Sears, enlisted architectural artist David Hall to prepare the graphics and renderings for the approvals and for fundraising. Hall worked closely with N.C.F.F.F. Project

Manager Captain Andy Woodall and Regutti to polish the final design. Ray Lapino provided construction contract administration for Sears Design Group.

Obtaining a general contractor was the next hurdle. Sears had worked for years with Clancy and Theys Construction Company on parks and streetscapes projects. Brothers Tick and Tim Clancy, sponsors of many civic activities, consented to be the general contractor for the project, pro bono. The Illuminating Engineers Society, North Carolina Chapter, volunteered to design the monument lighting and obtain fixtures at no cost. Progress Energy provided site lighting at no cost. Carolina State Company provided structural soil for use in the root zone of the existing trees to remain. The City of Raleigh provided landscape materials and installation, traffic control liaison with all city departments and the maintenance for the monument and park. Construction began in 2005 and the Memorial Service and Dedication took place on May 6, 2006.

Sears Design Group was involved in nearly every phase of the project, assisting in preliminary design, graphics and presentations to approving agencies, construction detailing for the monument plaza, walls and landscape, solicitation for materials and services donations, liaison with the city and supporting the sculptor's vision. During the

four-year period of their involvement, Sears Design Group provided more than \$40,000 of fees and services pro bono. Dan Sears has said that this project set the high mark in their firm's history of civic and social stewardship activities.

"This project would not have been possible except for the community dedication of companies like Sears Design Group," Woodall said.

Left: The cast bronze statue at the North Carolina Firefighters' Memorial depicts an injured firefighter trapped beneath a steel beam and three fellow firefighters rushing to his aid.