

**Application for a Commemorative Work on  
District of Columbia Public Space**

**Washington, D.C.**

Statue of César Vallejo: Universal Poet of the 20th Century

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*Name of Commemorative Work*

1700 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington D.C. 20036

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*Location of Commemorative Work*

Embassy of Peru in the United States of America

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*Name of Sponsoring Organization*

**Submitted to the District of Columbia Commemorative Works Committee**

April 17, 2024

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*Date*

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## **I. SPONSORING ORGANIZATION**

1. Name or title of Proposed Commemorative Work:

Statue of the Peruvian Poet César Vallejo: Universal Poet of the 20th Century

2. Sponsoring Organization

*Name of Sponsoring Organization:* Embassy of Peru in the United States of America

*Address of Sponsoring Organization:* 1700 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington D.C. 20036

*Contact Person:* Minister Counselor Andrés Garrido

*Telephone:* (202) 948-7920

*E-mail:* [agarrido@embassyofperu.us](mailto:agarrido@embassyofperu.us)

*Tax Status of Principal Sponsor:* Tax-exempt

*Appendix A: Proof of Sponsor's 501(c)(3) Status:* It does not apply to Embassies. (i.e. Sec. 501(3) determination letter from the IRS, other non-profit documentation, copies of Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.)

*Appendix B: Site Plans and Drawings*

3. Description of Sponsoring Organization

The Embassy executes Peru's foreign policy, promoting and defending the interests of the Peruvian State, as well as national natural and legal persons. It is in charge of representing the Republic of Peru before the United States, protecting the interests of Peru and those of its nationals by international law, as well as promoting friendly relations and developing economic, cultural, and scientific relations. Among their functions, the Embassy also finds that of carrying out cultural and tourism promotion actions and fulfilling other functions entrusted to them. As historic information, Peru's first diplomatic representative to the U.S. was Plenipotentiary Jose Joaquin de Osma, who presented his credentials in Washington D.C. on December 21, 1846.

## **II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

4. Summary of Proposed Commemorative Work

Bronze statue of the Peruvian poet César Vallejo. The statue of the seated poet will be placed on a new wooden bench. Its location is 1700 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington D.C. 20036. The goal of the project is to strategically place the statue and bench along Embassy Row, where many diplomatic missions are located, so that it

serves as a symbol of the strong cultural ties between Peru and the United States, fostering a sense of international understanding.

#### 5. Subject of Commemorative Work

Cesar Vallejo (1892-1938) is considered one of the most universal poets of the 20th century. His poetry is often described as passionate and tragic, containing universal themes of human suffering deeply influenced by his own experience with a chronic illness that took his life when he was just 46. However, despite this, his work expresses an immense hope for change. In this way, Vallejo's work is reflective of our society today; that even in the difficult times the world now faces, we should maintain hope for the future. Vallejo lived and worked in Europe for much of his adult life. His work is an early example of the globalizing effects of modernity, featuring connections to Europe, Latin America, and Vallejo's indigenous heritage. As such, it is now immensely valued not only by Spanish-speakers, but worldwide.

Moreover, since his death, Vallejo's connection with the United States has only grown. Many of his works have now been translated into English by the poet Clayton Eshleman and have had great influence on the current generation of American poets. His influence is most visible in works related to racial and social justice and marginalization. In this way, Vallejo remains highly relevant today, particularly in the U.S. where debates on these themes rage on.

The District of Columbia is the ideal place to celebrate and educate the public on the link between the American continent and the United States. The proposed statue would constitute a physical connection between Washington DC and Latin America, Peru, and our culture. Installing it in front of the Embassy would be an excellent tribute to Cesar Vallejo by the District of Columbia.

#### 6. Relationship of Commemorative Work to District of Columbia History and Culture

While Vallejo had no personal connection to DC, his life was emblematic of the international exchange of ideas that define DC life and culture. His travels throughout Latin America and Europe fostered his artistic growth, and his cosmopolitan connections should resonate with the statue's location on Embassy Row. Likewise, his poetry included themes of homesickness and celebration of his homeland inspired by his status as an immigrant. These sentiments are surely shared by many people living in DC, particular those working on Embassy Row. Overall, Vallejo's life and

poetry embody the values of cross-cultural exchange and global influence that DC prides itself on.

What is more, DC boasts a significant Peruvian-American population to whom this statue will surely be a source of pride and personal connection. It will also serve to embody and further the deep diplomatic ties and mutual respect between Peru and the United States government here in DC.

### **III. PROJECT LOCATION**

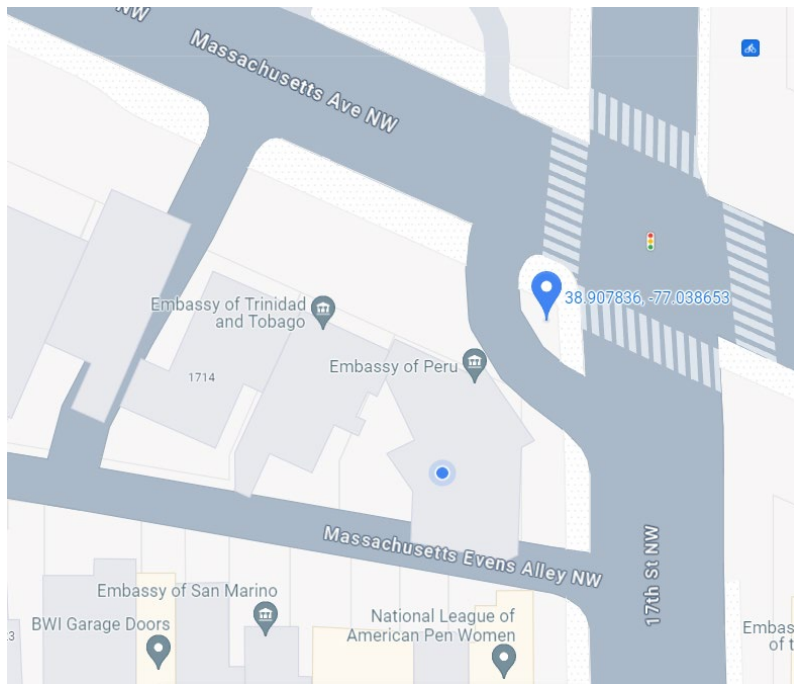
#### **7. Project location**

Green area between the sidewalk and the driveway of the Peruvian Embassy at 1700 Massachusetts Ave, NW. Washington D.C. 20036. This site was chosen because it provides ample green space for the placement of the bench. It is also close to the sidewalk, inviting those that pass by to admire the statue, learn about the life and legacy of Cesar Vallejo, and reflect on the international impact of Peruvian art and literature as well as the wonderful relationship between Peru and Washington, D.C.

While the green triangle chosen as the site for the statue is backed by the driveway of the Embassy of Peru, this should not pose any issue for the installation of the statue. Cars rarely pass through this driveway, and, more importantly, the focus on the statue should be from the front.

Ultimately, this is the best location in DC for the statue of Vallejo. As a prominent Peruvian poet, it is fitting that his statue be placed in front of the Embassy of Peru.

Furthermore, the Embassy of Peru contains an art gallery that is permanently open to the public and features 4 new exhibitions each year. The hope is that the location of this statue will invite passersby to stop to take notice of the statue and that this act will draw attention to the sign advertising the open gallery. Thus, the statue will invite further engagement with Peruvian art by attracting visitors to the gallery, which is free. The Embassy of Peru is very proud of this gallery and views it as a public good and service to DC. It would be delighted if more people knew about the gallery and were able to take advantage of the cultural and artistic enrichment it offers.



*The blue pin marks the site*

8. District Government Agency with Oversight

The location is in public space under the jurisdiction of the DC Department of Transportation.

9. Existing Conditions

The proposed statue will sit on a 294 square foot triangle of grass located just in front of the Embassy of Peru, between the Embassy's driveway and the sidewalk. It lies within a Dupont Circle Mixed-Use Zone. The proposed work will not in any way affect the surrounding sidewalk, buildings, or provision of utilities.



*Current site*

10. Historic Preservation Considerations

The site is located in the Dupont Circle Historic District and Massachusetts Avenue Historic District. The adjacent property is the Emily Wilkins House, former Australian Embassy, and designated landmark.

11. Project Compatibility with Existing or Future Plans for the Area

The proposed project is compatible with the existing context of the Embassy Row area. There is a bust to Miguel Grau, a renowned Peruvian naval officer, located on private property to the right of the main entrance of the embassy. The placement of the proposed work does not detract from this bust however, as its proposed site would not obstruct passerbys' view of the bust. Furthermore, the cohabitation of Cesar Vallejo and Miguel Grau in this area is fitting, given the significance of each man to the history and international legacy of Peru.

This statue is also a block from the Daniel Webster Memorial, General Winfield Scott statue, and Hahnemann Memorial.

12. Economic Impact

The proposed project will have minimal economic impact upon its immediate location. Its only potential impacts would be positive, as it could attract visitors and potential patrons of nearby businesses to this part of Embassy Row.

13. Concurrent Reviews

<b><i>Review Body</i></b>	<b><i>Meeting Date</i></b>
Commemorative Works Committee – Concept Review	May 17, 2024
Advisory Neighborhood Commission	TBD
National Capitol Memorial Advisory Commission	TBD
Commission of Fine Arts	N/A
Public Space Committee	TBD
Historic Preservation Review Board	N/A
National Capital Planning Commission	TBD
Neighborhood Association	TBD
Commemorative Works Committee – Final Review	TBD

**IV. PROJECT DESIGN**

14. Concept and Materials

The project consists of a life-size statue of Cesar Vallejo, seated on a bench. The statue, made of reconstituted bronze with polyester resin and fiberglass, will be 6 feet tall and weigh approximately 130 lbs. The bench is about 5 feet wide and 16.5 inches off the ground with a back 31 inches tall and weighs about 75 lbs. It is made from certified American pine wood. These materials were chosen as they are lightweight and durable, ensuring both ease of installation of the statue and that it will continue to serve as a meaningful memorial for years to come.

The position of the statue was modeled off of an iconic photo of Cesar Vallejo (Photo A). However, in the statue Vallejo is reading a book with a furrowed brow that clearly indicates deep concentration (Photos B, C, and E). The artist, David Flores, chose to represent him in this position so as to make him more easily identifiable for viewers unfamiliar with Vallejo's life and work. The idea is that the viewer takes the moment of recognition of the statue as an invitation to join him on the bench, to interact more physically with the memorial and Peruvian literary history. Though this type of physical interaction is what the artist had in mind when creating the statue, it is not necessary to the viewer's enjoyment and appreciation of the statue.



The decision to dress the statue in a suit and tie is also based on the aforementioned photograph (Photo A). As an intellectual, particularly a Peruvian intellectual that often sought to blend in among white European academics, he almost exclusively wore and is pictured in Western business attire. Even so, his poetry and its themes were in many ways accessible to the average person, be they from Europe, Latin America or the United States. Vallejo's seated position on the bench, at eye level with passersby, embodies this accessibility.

Finally, Vallejo is sculpted in his later years, just before a chronic illness took his life. This was when he was at his most prolific. The tragedy and suffering his illness caused him are clearly visible in the themes of his work.



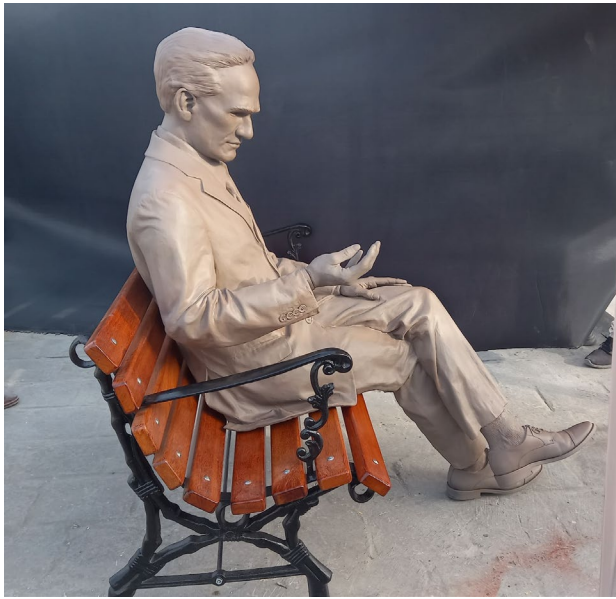
*Photo A: Iconic photograph of Vallejo*



*Photo B: Statue with book*



*Photo C: Statue with book (daylight)*



*Photo D: Statue (unfinished) from the side*

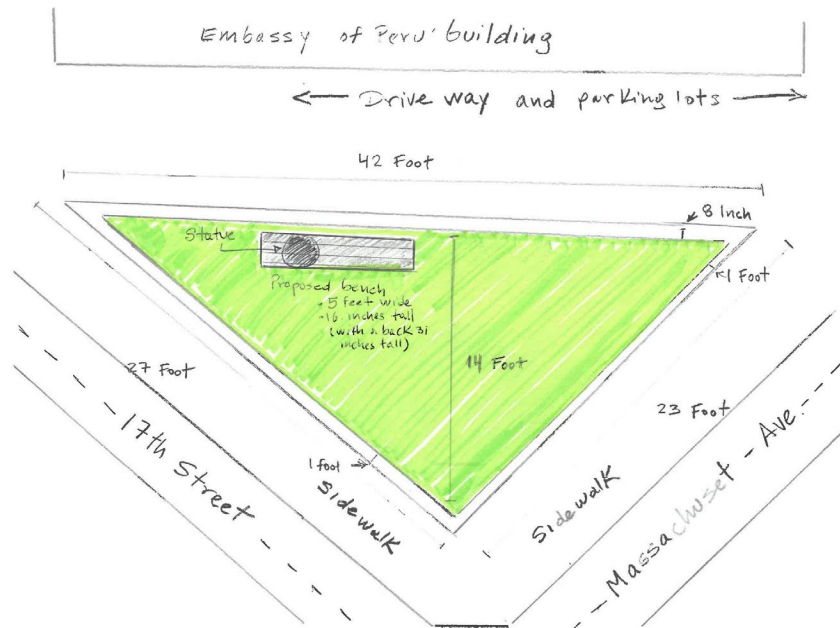


*Photo E: Statue (unfinished) from the front*

15. Design



*Mock-up of site with proposed work*



*Site plan to scale*

As is evident from the mock-up and site plan above, the proposed work will have very little impact on the site and requires no engineering, landscaping, signage, or any other elements. The design is very simple, but effective and would be very easily implemented and installed.

While the Embassy is open to other suggestions for where to locate the statue, it believes this site is the best option for the following reasons. First, while it is clearly visible from the sidewalk, it is not actually on the sidewalk which will aid the upkeep of the statue and encourage the respect it deserves. Second, it is placed slightly to the left so as not to obstruct the bust of Miguel Grau. In this way, both Peruvian figures are able to complement one another in their celebration of the international impact of Peru. Thirdly, it is positioned facing the sidewalk and possible viewers, acting as an invitation for education, reflection, and appreciation of Peruvian history.

The proposed site of the statue invites the appreciation of viewers while maintaining a separation from pedestrians and drivers that engenders respect. Even so, the memorial remains easily viewable to passing pedestrians. For these reasons, the Embassy of Peru believes that the indicated site is the best possible option for placement of the statue. However, if the Committee has another recommendation, the Embassy would be open to discussing it. What is most important is that this statue finds a proper home where Vallejo's life and legacy will be celebrated and appreciated not only by Peruvians, but also the greater DC community.

16. Infrastructure

There are no infrastructure or site improvements required to complete this project. The installation process of the statue is quite simple, and, seeing as it weighs very little, it requires very little of its site other than an open area large enough to fit it. As such, the Embassy is prepared to undertake all of the costs and labor associated with installing the statue.

17. Environmental Analysis

As the proposed project is not a building but rather a statue, neither an Environmental Impact Form nor an Environmental Impact Screening Form is required. This project will not have any traffic impacts nor will it require any change to the pre-existing pedestrian and vehicular access to this part of Embassy Row. The statue will be easily accessible and viewable from the sidewalk as people pass by.



18. Proposed Timeline

Review Body	Meeting Date
Planning	October 2023 to January 2024
Review Process	January 2024 to June 2024
Begin Construction	July 2024
Complete Construction	August 2024

**V. COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

19. Community Outreach Program

We have reached out to the appropriate Advisory Neighborhood Commission and are awaiting a response.

20. Letters from Local Stakeholders

Note that after the application is submitted it will be formally transmitted to the appropriate ANC for review and comments.

**VI. PROJECT BUDGET**

21. Budget

The total estimated cost of the project is \$19,000.

22. Budget and Financing Plan

<i>Stage</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Construction	\$17,000
Installation	\$2,000
Maintenance	\$1,000/yr

The Embassy of Peru will finance all costs of construction, installation, and maintenance with funds from its budget. It will take full responsibility for installing the statue, maintaining it, and is prepared to absorb the cost of any future damage to the work.

23. Maintenance Budget

The Embassy of Peru plans to spend approximately \$1,000 each year on the cleaning and maintenance of the statue.

24. Insurance

The Embassy of Peru assumes complete responsibility and liability for the construction, installation, and maintenance of the statue.