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Frank Gehry, Moshe Safdie on Ike's short list

4:30 PM, October 29, 2008

A competition to pick a designer for the National Eisenhower Memorial, slated for a site just off the Mall in Washington, D.C., is down to seven finalists, including Frank Gehry and Moshe Safdie.

The short list also includes Berkeley-based landscape architect Peter Walker, who has teamed with Michael Arad on the forthcoming, much-delayed 9/11 memorial at Ground Zero; San Francisco architect Stanley Saitowitz; New York firm Rogers Marvel; and a pair of Chicago architects, Ralph Johnson (of Perkins + Will) and Ron Krueck.

The competition to honor the 34th president is being run by the Eisenhower Memorial Commission and the federal government's General Services Administration. Under former director Edward A. Feiner, the GSA helped boost the design standards for federal courthouses and other sizable government buildings, enlisting the likes of Richard Meier and Thom Mayne.

The last major design project on the Mall, the National World War II Memorial, is a rather lifeless neoclassical design by Friedrich St. Florian. To judge by these finalists, the Eisenhower Memorial Commission is clearly going for something a bit more contemporary -- even if Ike seems an unlikely candidate for the avant-garde treatment. We'll let you know how this unfolds.

--Christopher Hawthorne

Los Angeles Times file photo

