



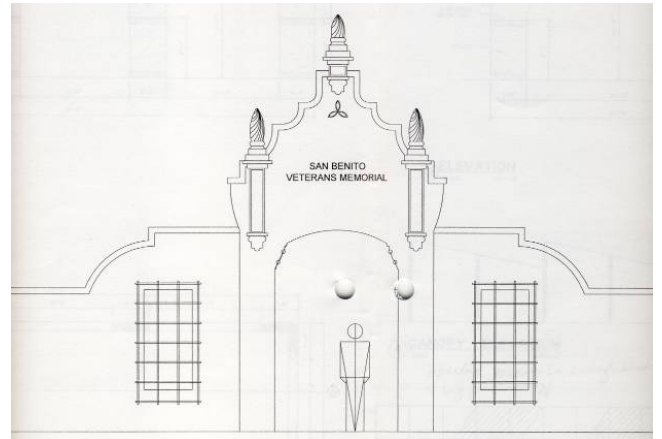
San Benito veterans park renovations approved

[By EDWINA P. GARZA/VALLEY MORNING STAR](#)

SAN BENITO - The City Commission approved a design for renovations at the San Benito Veterans Memorial Park, which will look similar to the train depot from which soldiers once departed.

The Mata-Villarreal-Garcia Design Group of McAllen presented the design. Architect Danny Garcia and intern Christopher Collins showed the commission a video presentation of what the group has spent months creating with the input of the Veterans Advisory Board.

The group worked for six months on the Spanish renaissance design, which is intended to look like the train depot that sits near the Union Pacific rail line. The area runs along Sam Houston Boulevard in the downtown area.



Commissioners got a look at the design at Tuesday's regular City Commission meeting.

In its approval, the commission voted to name the area the San Benito Veterans War Memorial.

Collins walked the audience through a video presentation of the area. In the presentation, the audience was able to preview the design as if they were walking through the memorial.

Past the entrance, architects want to design a water fountain with a statuette topped by an eagle.

The area will also have a number of trees, benches and a canopy area toward the rear.

"The pavilion is based on the original design of the train depot where soldiers we are honoring departed and arrived from major wars," Collins said.

The memorial's rear section would have a bronze statue of a soldier's helmet and rifle, which is intended to be the focal point of the memorial.

Martha McClain, the city's director of community affairs, said the design was approved by the San Benito Veteran's Advisory Board, but has not been shown to the city's parks board.

City Manager Victor Treviño said the restoration was an Economic Development Corporation project with a \$250,000 budget.

Garcia and Collins said, in response to questions, that they didn't know the cost of the restoration.

Commissioner Mark Moody, speaking for Commissioner Victor Garza who was absent from Tuesday's meeting, voted to approve the design.

The approval came with stipulations that included obtaining additional funds from the city.

Since 2001, the community has been working on renovating the veteran's park, Mayor Joe Hernandez said.

"It seems like we've finally got to the point where we were ready," he said.

Charlie Wilson, a member of the advisory board, said San Benito would be home to the only state-of-the-art monument in the Rio Grande Valley if the memorial is built.