Horton • Lees' involvement on the new terminal project at Washington National Airport began in July 1991 when the firm participated in a thorough photographic and written survey of the existing conditions. The historic nature of the original terminal became both a source of design inspiration and a dilemma (restoratively speaking) for the team. Ultimately, the new terminal reflects the historic and civic nature of Washington, D.C. It utilizes state-of-the-art energy-conserving lighting systems as well as addressing critical maintenance issues. The project responds to the nation's energy concerns by using less than one watt per square foot of connected lighting load.

The lighting was integrated into the architectural structure to softly illuminate the corrugated metal vaults which enhances their grandeur. Small metal halide PAR38 fixtures discreetly placed in the vaults add sparkle and a lively animated character to the public areas. A family of signature fixtures using 3500° Kelvin fluorescent T8 lamps was developed and used in various ways to illuminate piers, circulation corridors, baggage claim and the departures curb area. The character of these fixtures echoes the dynamic form of an airplane wing. The form is used in a variety of locations from the building entrance to the departure/arrival gate areas.

This project is a fitting gateway to our nation's capital. The different themes of the roadway, site and interior lighting have been integrated to create a poetic cohesion in tune with the functional requirements of the airport.